



# Blue Whale Challenge: Guidelines for Parents

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*A dangerous online game that promotes suicides & self-harm. It has reportedly taken the lives of 135 adolescents.*

In India, a 14-year old boy in Mumbai, a 17 year old in Haryana, a 15 year old in Lucknow, committed suicide because of this game. More children have attempted it but were saved. Most people have this notion *“yeh to mere saath, mere parivaar mein nahin ho ga, mere bachche aisa kabhi nahin karenge / aamar chele-meye eii shob korbe na.”* The reality is it can happen in anyone’s family. No parent imagines that their loved one would take their own life, but having this attitude may make you ignore signs that your child may display.

**The Game Rules:** It is an online game which involves the player to complete 50 levels in 50 days. **The seriousness and degree of threat keeps**

**increasing by the level.** This game started on a social-media site in Russia; it cannot be searched for on the internet/app store for one to download. But the creators track down and target individuals to play the game.

**Dangers associated: The game brainwashes the young child & teen’s psyche into following the rules.** The online groups associated with Blue Whale are said to have thousands of members. In general children find it **difficult to stand up to peer pressure**, so under such circumstance it becomes all the more challenging. They may also enjoy the attention and adrenaline rush they get from the group.

## The 50 Levels of the Game ...

- Wake up at 4:20 am daily
- Stand on the edge of a terrace
- Overcome a fear
- Do not talk to anyone all day
- Talk to a “whale” on skype
- Kill an animal
- At 4:20 am watch a horror movie sent by the admin
- Carve a whale on the hand
- Stand on a bridge
- Cut yourself with a razor
- **The last level is to kill yourself.**



Photos of every task needs to be sent to the game administrator for approval before he unlocks the next level.

Apparently once you agree to play the game, there is **no way to back out**. They hack into the device and personal information of the person, which they use for blackmailing. A teenaged girl who was rescued said *“if I don’t complete the task, my mother will be killed.”*

**What can Parents do?** As a parent, games like these is extremely worrying. Keeping your young away from social media/devices is not the **ONLY** answer. **Be vigilant and observant to any changes**



**in behaviour or signs;** along

with open lines of communication. Most importantly, **have these “difficult” conversations regularly – whether it is about the Blue Whale game, cyber bullying, relationships or any other teen concerns.** Your son must know he can find good advice and support from you.

You can’t be afraid to have these conversations with your



children or think it’s not going to happen in your family... **their life is too precious for that!**

### Spot the Signs



- Very secretive, especially about what they do online
- Spend a lot of time on the internet. May have many new numbers & email addresses
- They appear withdrawn, low, disturbed or aloof
- Wearing clothes that cover their complete body
- Disinterest in daily activities

Teens and Pre-teens who are **Easy targets** for such **self-destructive games** are usually -

- Emotionally disturbed
- Depressed
- Neglected at home
- Victim of Bullying or Abuse
- Have a lot of free time
- Put under constant pressure
- Unhappy

***Positive family relationships is the most valuable prevention resource available to a young mind!***

**Build a relationship of trust and communication** with your son. This will help you in keeping him safe from all sorts of dangers.

1. **Listen to Understand** - Listen to what your son’s views, his concerns and experiences. This will help him share any worries or issues he would usually be reluctant to talk about.
2. **Emphasize on saying “no”** - Talk to your son about ways to stand up to peer pressure. Refrain from telling him to be like his brother or classmate or a cousin. Instead, reassure him that he will be accepted by people even if he doesn’t go along with the crowd. Allow him to make some of his own decisions (responsible ones!).
3. **Online Safety** - It would help you to be get educated on social media, learn to use phones/computers. Check their Profile privacy, check-ins, photos are not on “public” mode. Discuss the dangers of adding strangers & sharing personal information online. **You do not need to violate their privacy to know what they’re doing online, but keep an eye out and be observant.**
4. **Gadget use** – Avoid refraining them from it as it creates higher urge to use the phone. This makes them hide and use the phone at odd hours or lie to use it. Instead let them use it to a moderate degree.