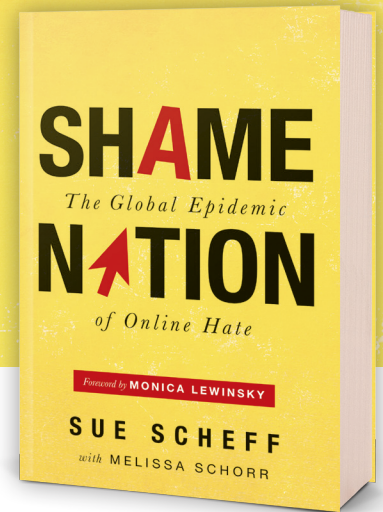# SHAME NATION

*by* SUE SCHEFF *and* MELISSA SCHORR

Book Club Discussion Guide

1. From body shaming to baby shaming, we have all witnessed the rise of incivility in our country today. How do you agree or disagree with the authors that we have become a "Shame Nation," where online shaming has become the norm?

2. One study said that 28% of Americans have engaged in posting malicious comments to people they didn't know. Why do people believe they can hide behind a screen? Have you ever left a mean or unflattering comment about a stranger, or even created a fake account to post an anonymous comment?

3. Some 70% of employers say they now review social media feeds before interviewing candidates, and 35% of college recruiters check the online profile of student applicants. Have you ever searched online for someone before a date or job and decided not to hire/date/associate with them because of what you found online?

4. Many of the digital disasters covered in *Shame Nation* resulted from victims' own ill-advised posts. What are some changes you can implement in your life to help prevent yourself from making a similar cyber-blunder?

5. Shaming is not just an online phenomenon – it can extend far beyond what you personally post. With 92% of Americans owning cell phones with cameras, the chance of an "oops" moment going viral is higher than ever. Will you change your behavior when out and about as a result? How likely are you to video a stranger who is acting out in a public place? Do you think it is acceptable to share that online without permission?

6. After reading about nonconsensual porn victims like Annmarie Chiarini and the Duxbury High School girls, would you consider sending a sext to your significant other? What would you tell your teenager if they brought it up? Is it different for adults and teens to do? Married couples vs. dating? Why?
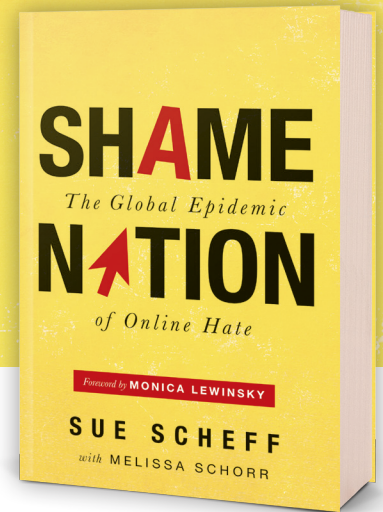
7. According to studies, women tend to report online harassment more than men. How do you think gender plays into online shaming? What strategies could women use to avoid being victimized?

8. Celebrities from Lady Gaga to Kelly Clarkson tend to be high-profile targets for online shaming. Do you believe this is just the cost of fame? How much right do they have to complain?

9. Chapter 7 covers several different possible responses to online trolls, from responding with empathy to flouncing. How do you think you would choose to react if you ever experienced online harassment? What are the pros and cons of the different methods?

10. "Sharenting," or sharing images of one's children online, has become commonplace among this generation of parents. As these children come of age, should minors have some say over what their parents can post about them without their consent?

11. Digital literacy has been proven to reduce cyberbullying and online harassment and help with critical-thinking skills. Should schools be more active in implementing or mandating digital literacy classes? Does your community's schools offer such a curriculum?

12. Researchers predict that online shaming and harassment will only get worse over the next decade. When so many have become victims of online embarrassment, is it possible we become a "shameless" nation, feeling immune from that traditional sense of shame?

13. It's been proven that empathy combats cruelty, and "upstanders" can make a difference. What will you do the next time you witness online hate?