While advice has been described as face-threatening act (Brown and Levinson 1987), advice solicitation and advice-giving serve an important sociability function for Russian speakers; “Russians perceive advice as cooperative, socially positive speech act” (Belyaeva 1996: 21). Advice is a staple of Russian women’s online discourse. One of the oldest Russian-language websites, eva.ru, places a special emphasis on peer advice available through its forums; participants seek and receive advice on issues related to family life (such as pregnancy, childbirth, adoption, childrearing, relationships with spouses and relatives). But while advice-giving is the expected response to advice-solicitation, it is not the only option available to participants; communal co-complaint is one widespread response option when advice on offensive or problematic behavior by a third party is being solicited. In this strategy, forum posters respond with complaints of similar behavior, often using impersonal constructions, or a subject ellipsis construction (e.g. ‘мне сказали...; ’) to refer to an offensive third party. Participants affiliate with each other through their negative attitude towards depersonalized offenders, thus boosting positive face and creating a sense of community.


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