



**AMELIA RISING
SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORT CENTRE**

**ONLINE SAFETY AND
ONLINE/DIGITAL
SEXUAL VIOLENCE
GUIDEBOOK**

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WHAT IS ONLINE AND DIGITAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

It can be any act involving technology (digital) or social media (online) where consent was not respected in a sexual/intimate nature, or someone is being targeted because of their sexuality and/or gender. This includes but is not limited to: doxing, catfishing, non-consensual porn, online coercion, revenge porn, sexual image based abuse, digital dating violence, cyberstalking, location tracking, monitoring phone/ online activity, online hate speech targeting sexuality and/ or gender, sharing unsolicited intimate messages, pictures, videos etc.



ONLINE SAFETY

Below are basic tips that individuals can take at any time to minimize their risks of online violence and enhance safety in their online presence. However, we would like to recognize that it is not the individuals responsibility to protect themselves from harm; the responsibility lies on the perpetrator to not facilitate sexual/gender based violence. Taking precautions can help prevent harm but are not guarantees.

TIPS...

- Use gender neutral/ genderless usernames for your social media accounts and emails.
- Create complicated passwords for online accounts and change them frequently (every season or every day light savings time change).
- Use security and privacy features so only friends/ family have access to view your profiles.
- Flag any spam/ inappropriate posts, profiles, messages etc., you encounter on social media to the respective platform.
- Only use computers/ devices that you trust and that are secure.
- Download up to date antivirus and anti spyware software on your devices.
- Disable or limit the GPS/ location functionality on your apps and devices (unless this is enabled for safety reasons).
- If agreeing to meet someone in-person whom you met online*, agree to get yourself to the location, meet somewhere public, inform a trusted person of where, when and who you are meeting, or bring a friend.



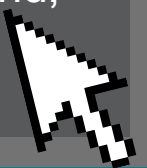


ONLINE SAFETY

Below are basic avoidances that individuals can take at any time to minimize their risks of online violence and enhance safety in their online presence. However, we would like to recognize that it is not the individuals responsibility to protect themselves from harm; the responsibility lies on the perpetrator to not facilitate sexual/gender based violence. Taking precautions can help prevent harm but are not guarantees.

AVOID...

- Meeting an unknown person that contacted you online, face to face, without putting additional security measures in place (see above*).
- Sharing your password with anyone.
- Publishing or sharing any personal information (i.e. location, birthday/ age, school name, place of employment, names of pets/ family etc.) on social media or with someone you have not met in person.
- Leaving your device logged in and unattended.
- Sharing your social media accounts with anyone.
- Sending intimate content to people that you do not personally know.
- Clicking on suspicious messages or links, even if they appear to be shared by someone you know.
- Sharing intimate photos/ videos with your face or personally identifying features such as tattoos, birthmarks, piercings, personal background; this can protect you if an intimate photo/ video is shared without your consent.



STEPS IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING ONLINE OR DIGITAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE

START HERE

This process assumes that there is no imminent danger of harm. If there is such a threat, the individual should attend to their own safety by contacting the police or emergency services via dialing 911 if they feel safe to do so. If not, contact Victim Services or a close friend/ family member.

1) KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE

In this situation you may feel ashamed, overwhelmed or embarrassed but remember that it is not your fault. You have the right to the available support without blame and judgement from others.



2) SEEK SUPPORTS (IF POSSIBLE)

It is crucial to seek the support available to you when experiencing online/ digital violence to avoid feeling isolated and alone. Seeking support can include but is not limited to informing your parents, friend, partner, teacher, principal, counsellor, therapist, victims advocate, social worker, victim services, etc. Supports can look different for everyone depending on their specific situation. A support person can also assist you in advocacy pieces on your behalf by reaching out to resources for support, tips and suggestions for next steps. It can be difficult to have conversations with those who are closest to us. This could be due to not wanting to share details of what happened or the online platforms that were used. If that is the case there are helplines and resources that can be used anonymously and confidentially for support through phone or SMS.

3) DOCUMENT & COLLECT EVIDENCE

The documentation and collection of evidence can be used against the individual committing the offence or for pursuing legal action in the present or future. Record everything you can remember about the situation and use your device's screenshot feature to gather important information. This includes but is not limited to copies of the private images, messages, videos, emails, usernames, time stamps, webpages, etc. Having a support person assist you with this can be beneficial as we understand documenting these harmful actions can be triggering. We understand deleting images, messages, etc., can be a first reaction to try and forget the harm happening. However, deleting content right away erases evidence that may be helpful later.



4) CONSIDER LEGAL ACTION*

You may want to consider criminal or civil action. It may help to strengthen a case and penalty by highlighting the violation in relation to Canadian laws. This includes but is not limited to child pornography, harassment, stalking (criminal harassment), extortion, copyright infringement etc. You can refer to our list of legal resources and supports to guide you or your support person through this process and seek legal advice. Considering legal action or exploring legal resources is not required is should be left up to you only*.





5) REPORT THE MATERIAL *

Most social media and other websites have options for reporting an incident to have it removed from the platform. It may take time for the report to be processed as it varies based on the specific platform. Having your support person look into these options may be beneficial to avoid stress.

The resource "Need Help Now" offers more tips on removing materials. You can also choose to report the incident to your local police station by calling the officer on duty, or going into the station. You do not need to press charges to make a report/ file. We understand this may not be a safe or comfortable option for everyone. Your support person may be able to reach out on your behalf to ask questions on the reporting process. Reporting can also look like reporting the incident to your school or workplace. You are not required to report the incident nor should you ever feel pressured or forced to report*. Reporting options vary depending on the situation, platform and person. Report only if and when it is best or safest for you to do so; only you know what is best for you!

IMMEDIATE CRISIS SUPPORT

Amelia Rising 24H Helpline: 705-476-3355

We Believe Survivors (Chat and Text Services): 613-544-6424

Victim Services Nipissing District: 705-472-2649

Assaulted Women's Helpline: 1-866-863-0511

Hope For Wellness (Indigenous Specific Support): 1-855-242-3310

Trans Lifeline: 877-330-6366

LGBT Youth Line (Text Services): 647-694-4275



LEGAL SUPPORT

We Stand With You (Free Civil Legal Advice): 1-844-446-3866

Legal Aid Ontario: 1-800-668-8258

Nipissing Community Legal Clinic: 705-476-6603

Justice Net (For Non Qualifiers of Legal Aid): 1-866-919-3219

Justice for Children and Youth: 416-920-1633 or 1-866-999-5329

North Bay Police (Officer on Duty): 705-472-1234



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Ontario Women's Justice Network

Cyber Tip

Need Help Now

The Cybersmile Foundation

Tech Without Violence

We Believe Survivors

