

ONLINE SEXUAL VIOLENCE

MAKE THE LEAP: LEARN MORE ABOUT ONLINE SEXUAL VIOLENCE TO KEEP YOURSELF SAFE AND REDUCE YOUR RISK OF COMMITTING A CRIME.

Communicating, flirting, sharing information and getting to know others online are common practices.¹ A recent Canadian study showed that approximately “one fifth of older students use the internet as a resource for information about sexuality and relationships.”² A quarter of the youth surveyed said that they sent a ‘sext’ (a sexually explicit text or photo) that was forwarded to someone else without their agreement.³ Online sexual violence is any act of aggression, using power and control. Cyber-bullying is a common term that often includes sexual violence.

Important to know!
It is illegal to produce, distribute or view sexually explicit material involving young people under the age of 18. This includes teens who share with each other.

— Criminal Code of Canada S.163.1

WHAT IS ONLINE SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT?

- Spreading lies about someone’s sexual reputation.
- Pressuring someone to send something sexy or a nude picture.
- Sending an unwanted sext (sexual, nude or hookup text).
- Under 18 years of age, it is considered child porn to receive or send a sext.
- Putting sexual putdowns or comments on someone’s Facebook or Tumblr.
- Making online / text threats or jokes to sexually assault someone.
- Stalking someone online.

TIPS TO STAY SAFE

1. Don’t post any personal information online – like your address, email address or mobile number.
2. Think carefully before posting pictures or videos of yourself. Once you’ve put a picture of yourself online most people can see it and may be able to download it, it’s not just yours anymore.
3. Keep your privacy settings as high as possible.
4. Never give out your passwords.
5. Don’t befriend people you don’t know.
6. Be cautious about people you’ve only met online. Talk to your parent or care person when someone asks to meet in person.
7. Remember that not everyone online is who they say they are.
8. Think carefully about what you say before you post something.
9. Respect other people’s views, even if you don’t agree.
10. If you see something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried: leave the website and tell a trusted adult immediately.⁴

¹ Adapted from Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres: Online/Digital Sexual Violence. A Resource for Parents, professionals and other support people.

² Young Canadians in a Wired World. Phase III: Sexuality and Romantic Relationships in the Digital Age.

³ A sext is a sexually explicit text or photo

⁴ Safety net Kids. See: <http://www.safetynetkids.org.uk/personal-safety/staying-safe-online/>