

Parent Education - SEXTORTION targeting youth ages 14-18

The purpose of this communication is to alert families about a troubling pattern of online cyber abuse, which targets youth aged 14-18, particularly males, referred to as *Sextortion*. Sextortion occurs when someone is coerced into sending explicit images and once those images are received, they are used to threaten and extort (usually for money). In most cases, the teen believes they are exchanging the images with a teen of a similar age - this is part of the scam.

Recently, federal law enforcement warned schools to be on the lookout for warning signs so that we may have the opportunity to intervene in potentially dangerous situations before things go too far. Last week, Hulu released a powerful documentary called [IMPACT X Nightline: Sextortion](#) that serves as an urgent warning and call to action for parents. While we recommend the film, we do so with caution as teen suicide is discussed throughout - please take care when watching.

Included below are links to information, tips, and resources we've gathered about protecting teens from harm by online predators. We hope it will encourage conversation at home and between teens within their peer groups. As always, we welcome your feedback.

Report concerns to [Safe Oregon](#) using any of the following methods:

**TIPS CAN BE
SUBMITTED IN A
VARIETY OF WAYS:**



**REPORT A TIP
ONLINE**



**REPORT A TIP ON
OUR APP**



**CALL
844-472-3367**



**TEXT
844-472-3367**



**EMAIL
tip@safeoregon.com**

Resources for Families - Sextortion

Recommendations from the [FBI](#) regarding sharing online photos/videos and engaging with others online:

- Monitor children's online activity and discuss risks associated with sharing personal content
- Use discretion when posting images, videos, and personal content online, particularly those that include children or their information.
 - Images, videos, or personal information posted online can be captured, manipulated, and distributed by malicious actors without your knowledge or consent.
 - Once content is shared on the internet, it can be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to remove once it is circulated or posted by other parties.
- Run frequent online searches of you and your children's information (e.g., full name, address, phone number, etc.) to help identify the exposure and spread of personal information on the internet.
- Apply privacy settings on social media accounts—including setting profiles and your friends lists as private—to limit the public exposure of your photos, videos, and other personal information. Info about safety and how to protect your child's information for the most popular social media apps is [available here](#).
- Consider using reverse image search engines to locate any photos or videos that have circulated on the internet without your knowledge.
- Exercise caution when accepting friend requests, communicating, engaging in video conversations, or sending images to individuals you do not know personally. Be especially wary of individuals who immediately ask or pressure you to provide them. Those items could be screen-captured, recorded, manipulated, shared without your knowledge or consent, and used to exploit you or someone you know.
- Do not provide any unknown or unfamiliar individuals with money or other items of value. Complying with malicious actors does not guarantee your sensitive photos or content will not be shared.
- Use discretion when interacting with known individuals online who appear to be acting outside their normal pattern of behavior. Hacked social media accounts can easily be manipulated by malicious actors to gain trust from friends or contacts to further criminal schemes or activity.

- Secure social media and other online accounts using complex passwords or passphrases and multi-factor authentication.
- Research the privacy, data sharing, and data retention policies of social media platforms, apps, and websites before uploading and sharing images, videos, or other personal content.

Additional Resources

For more information on sextortion, see the 2 September 2021 PSA, "FBI Warns about an Increase in Sextortion Complaints," at <https://www.ic3.gov/media/Y2021/PSA210902>.

[A Parent's Guide to Protecting Kids Privacy on Social Media](#)

[Violent Online Groups Extort Minors to Self-Harm and Produce Child Sexual Abuse Material \(September 12, 2023\)](#): The groups target minors between the ages of 8 and 17 years old, especially LGBTQ+ youth, racial minorities, and those who struggle with a variety of mental health issues, such as depression and suicidal ideation.

TAKE IT DOWN: The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children provides a free service known as Take It Down, which could help victims, who have possession of the image or video files, remove or stop the online sharing of nude, partially nude, or sexually explicit content that was taken while under 18 years old. For more information, visit <https://takeitdown.ncmec.org>.

If you believe you are the victim of a crime using these types of tactics, retain all information regarding the incident (e.g., usernames, email addresses, websites or names of platforms used for communication, photos, videos, etc.) and immediately report it to:

- FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov
- FBI Field Office [www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices or 1-800-CALL-FBI (225-5324)]
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children [1-800-THE LOST or www.cybertipline.org]

Reporting these crimes can help law enforcement identify malicious actors who target children.