# Online Safety

Keep yourself safer online against bullying, Sexual Image based abuse & cyber misogyny

**DANDELION INITIATIVE**

Women and Gender Equality Canada | Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

# *Facebook groups/online chat rooms*

cyber misogyny and violence against women/girls is currently amplified by our double pandemic. Here are some offerings to create online safety or boundaries.

**TIP:**

Introduce the group to a set of norms for the space, have everyone set one norm they want to see or hear to create online safety. Here you can use your boundary to assert what you do not want to hear or experience and what you do. If you can't do this or don't feel safe DELEGATE to someone who has more assumed privilege to work alongside you or do it for you.

**TIP:**

Use a set of non-verbal cues, like this example below or make your own. This helps guide people when the behaviour can be called in or we can ask someone to stop, before harm or abuse happens. It also set's safety rules and thresholds which are necessary in online (and in person) spaces.

**Example:** Pink means you are removed from the online space. Green means you are not being safe and need to stop the behaviour or script before you continue in the space. Blue means warning: the behaviour or language is not welcome here and breaks norms, trying again is welcome in the space.

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# Intimate Photos and Personal Data

If you are sending photos of any kind to anyone, **make sure you are safer and know your rights.** Exploitation and sexual image based abuse has amplified as a form of retaliation against women and youth using online dating sites and apps.

**What is exploitation online or sexual image based abuse?**

*Non-consensual creation and/or distribution of private, sexual images' – includes what some know as revenge porn, as well as consensually taken images that have been hacked or stolen and then shared without consent.*

**How do I keep myself safe(r)?**

- Sexual image based abuse happens often by ex partners to women and girls between the ages of 16 to 30, report any photos or images being circulated that you did not consent to and seek support from friends and service providers or police. If you see something like this report it to the survivor first if you know them and ask them what they want to do.

- Consider making your account private and encourage your friends to do the same adding only who you know or can look up.

- If you are sending "nudes" no shame or judgment, this is your right and you have the right to do this without retaliation. Consensual and safe sexting is great! As long as no one is coercing you or bargaining with you to send them these photos. We encourage you blurring out your face or making sure your face is not in the image.

- Do not post photos where you can see your school, house, workplace or locate your physical position

- Try and get a VPN there are free ones!

# Online bullying or cyber-misogyny.

Today, we see digital spaces and platforms are being used to bully and perpetuate hate towards women, girls and trans folks.

This democratized punishment, as writer Richard Seymour calls it, is a part of the digital toxicity social media breeds and encourages, the effects are long-lasting, life-changing and can, and often does, result in death from suicide or self-harm.

If you find that you are using social media in harmful ways to yourself or your community we encourage a break or a reduction in exposure to screen time and engagement. Stop for a moment, Breathe the air, and get some support.

**If you are a victim or survivor of online bullying, please remember:**

- There are resources and services to support you **(see our resources list in the last 2 slides)**

- Keep screenshots or save emails or letters or images that are sent to you, that you are tagged in or that others have seen circulated about you.

- Disengage with social media and get family and friends to support connecting with you on the phone, through using safer apps like What's App or Signal. Write letters to one another! Go for distanced and safe walks outside together.

- Report it to the appropriate authorities or supports, if you don't feel safe going to the police, workplace or school consider disclosing to a mental health practitioner or community worker who can safety plan with you.

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# Safer Ways to Engage with Social Media

- Limit the amount of time you spend on your phone or on social media, start with tracking how often and for how long you engage with twitter, instagram, tiktok, facebook?

- Really go through your list of friends or followers, do you like engaging with these people or organizations? You will not "miss out" if you choose to limit what you see and hear from social media.

- "Doomscrolling" is real and social media uses similar algorithms that gambling uses, consider this, can there be room for both learning and engaging with current event, news, community concerns/actions AND make room for other types of engagement that feed your spirit, your heart and your compassion/hope?

- Fact Check- please, and not through more social media platforms.

- Cyber misogyny and incel activity has amplified over the last year with the colliding pandemics, If you are noticing abusive and misogynistic behaviours or language online, we encourage you as an ally to check in with the person who may be the target, or use an empowered bystander intervention to stop the abuse or harm.

**Examples of empowered bystander interventions can look/sound like:**

" I don't like the language you are using towards _____ I'd like to talk about this in private can you DM me or call me?"

"Hey, you turned your video off on that work call when XYZ said XYZ are you ok? I didn't like it and I'm here to talk if you would like.

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# *Resources for victims/survivors*

YWCA has a comprehensive page of resources for victims of sexual image based abuse: **https://ywcacanada.ca/guide-on-sexual-image-based-abuse/**

Support for Victims of cyberbullying and their families: **https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/2015-r038/index-en.aspx**

Here are resources for Black, Indigenous, Latin and LGBTQ women & Non-binary survivors/victims: **https://www.bwss.org/support/**

Legal Responses to Cyber Misogyny: **http://www.westcoastleaf.org/our-work/cyber-misogyny/**

**Assaulted Women's Helpline and online chat - https://www.awhl.org/**

**Or see a list of resources on our website under supports - www.dandelioninitiative.ca**

If you are looking to learn more about awareness and prevention of online misogyny and violence ask community members for resources or look here for some online and accessible options

**http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/online-ontario-resources/index.html**

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