

Combatting cybercrime  
through collaboration



[KnowledgeFlow.org](https://www.knowledgeflow.org)

# SEXTORTION

## HOW TO SUPPORT A VICTIM

# What is **Sextortion**?

Sextortion is the practice of **extorting money or sexual favours from a victim by threatening to reveal evidence of their sexual activity.** Scammers create fake accounts and profiles and make contact with teens and adults in order to convince victims to send nude photos or participate in intimate actions on video. The scammer uses the images or videos in order to **blackmail the victim** into sending them money or more explicit material. Even though the victim sent the images or video consensually, it is still sextortion and it's a crime.

# What does the **law** say?

In Canada, it is illegal under Canadian law to share or publish intimate images of anyone, regardless of their age, without their consent.

Distributing or possessing intimate images or videos of individuals **under 18 (or depicted as being under the age of 18 years)** is illegal and considered child pornography. This is in accordance with section 163.1 of the Canadian Criminal Code. The maximum penalty for producing, distributing, or selling child pornography is a term of imprisonment of up to 14 years. Possession of child pornography carries a maximum penalty of up to 10 years imprisonment.

**There is an exception** for intimate images of a person under 18 if the images are consensually created by and only shared between the individuals involved.

# Sextortion **Statistics**

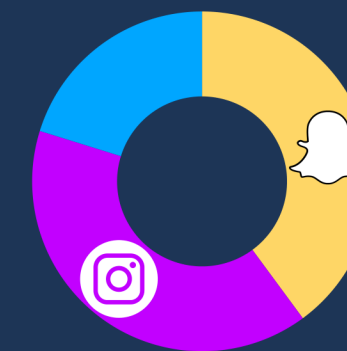
There has been a significant increase in online extortion crimes targeting teens. **Increasingly, young boys are specifically being extorted by criminals.** The scammer will trick the victim into sending intimate images or to participate in intimate activities while online. They will then blackmail the victim with the threat of publishing or sharing the pictures or videos.



**90%** of sextortion victims are **male** when gender is known



There has been a 150% increase in reports of sextortion in the past six months



79% of sextortion cases occur on Instagram and Snapchat

(cybertip.ca)

Recent cases report victims receiving threats within a **few hours** from the initial message. In 2017, 60% of victims were threatened within **two weeks.** (Thorn.org)

Communication usually **begins on Instagram and later moves to Snapchat**, where users can send pictures to one another. Scammers will demand 'payment' in various forms including: e-transfers, virtual gift cards, cryptocurrency payments, additional images/videos, personal information, etc.

# How to **Prevent** Sextortion

It is important for youth to be aware of tactics scammers use in order to get the victim to trust them, and in turn send explicit messages and photos. Pre-teens and teens naturally seek social interaction. This means scammers can take advantage of their curiosity and inexperience in order to exploit them.

Scammers make fake accounts on all social media platforms. They pose as teens or young adults to initiate contact. Scammers will encourage that the conversation move to more 'private' channels that enable picture and video sharing or recording, live chatting, etc. Scammers will socially engineer victims into participating in intimate actions on camera or sharing videos/images. They will often share intimate content to encourage a sense of trust and legitimacy. There are no definite red flags to indicate that it is a scammer you are interacting with.

You just can't be certain if you are talking and interacting with a real person with genuine intentions. Today's technology makes it possible for scammers to alter their voice and edit photos and videos to make it seem like you are talking to another teen.

There is no completely safe way to send intimate images or videos.

We suggest you **do not answer** or forward messages with **sexual content**, just delete them. If sending intimate images or videos to anyone, remember that even if it is to someone you trust, devices and accounts can be hacked or stolen. Livestreaming of video interactions can also be recorded without your knowledge and are **not guaranteed to stay private**.

# What can you do if someone has demanded **money**?

93%

93% of scammers who demand money will return again if they are paid by the victim  
([thewhitehatter.ca](http://thewhitehatter.ca))

They believe the victim is easy to manipulate, and will keep extorting them.

When someone is demanding money from you, be aware that **paying the scammer typically leads to further demands and threats**. Most often, if you do not pay, the scammer gives up.

It is important to **save as much evidence as possible** (screenshots, emails, texts, etc.). Stop all communication with the scammer, and block their account. Report the scammer's account on the platforms they have contacted you on. Do not accept any new social media contacts or friends for at least several days after the threat - it is likely the scammer in disguise looking for new ways to contact you.

# Steps to take if you encounter a **scammer**

## 1 Immediately **stop all contact**

The moment you realize the conversation is going in a direction that suggests sexual content, do not reply to any more messages. It is easy to let your curiosity get the best of you, but entering the conversation can allow the scammer to take advantage of you.

## 2 Save **as much evidence** as you can

Saving evidence can help authorities and sites to identify patterns and techniques scammers use to manipulate their victims. If pictures/ videos have been posted or shared without your consent, the evidence you collect will help the authorities with the removal of the images from the internet.

## 3 **Block and report** the scammer on the platform(s) they contacted you on

It is important to **remember that what the scammer is doing is illegal**. Blocking them will minimize their access to your profile. Social media platforms take these cases seriously, and if you are able to report and present the evidence to user support, they will stop the scammer from making new accounts, and remove any pictures that have been posted.

## 4 **Get support**

Places like [needhelpnow.ca](http://needhelpnow.ca), [cybertip.ca](http://cybertip.ca), [stopsextortion.com](http://stopsextortion.com), [kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca), local Victim Services groups, and the police are places to go for additional advice, support, and action. Speaking with a trusted adult is also recommended, as they can help you with your situation and give you the support you need!

# What to do if **your images or videos** get posted

If you have sent images/videos, or have been recorded without your consent, **contact [needhelpnow.ca](https://www.needhelpnow.ca)**. They provide services that allow victims to have their images removed from the internet. You can also request the removal of these images from the platforms they were posted on through their reporting and customer service feature. In Canada, it is illegal to post intimate pictures of anyone, with or without their knowledge ([cybertip.ca](https://www.cybertip.ca)).

It is important that you provide certain details when reporting your case to the platforms the pictures/videos have been posted on.

Providing as many details as possible will speed up the process.

When **reporting** your case, **make sure to include:**

- **Screenshots** of the conversation and image/video
- **URL** to where it was posted on the platform
- **Confirmation** that **you are the person in the image/video**
- Confirmation of **your age** (if you are under the age of 18yrs, the image/video would be considered 'child sexual abuse material'). **This is a federal crime in Canada** and other countries.
- Include that you did not post the image/video, and that it was uploaded without your consent. Posting a picture or video of someone without their consent is a federal crime in Canada.
- In the Terms of Service of any social media platform, there is a section that prohibits the posting of nudity, consensually or non consensually. Include this section in your report, as the scammer's actions are a clear violation of their terms.

**Check out [this resource](#) from The White Hatter for more in-depth steps on removing your images/video!**



# A note to **teens**

Please remember that **there is no way to trick a potential scammer.** Experience shows that **ignoring and blocking the account is the best response.** Scammers will usually give up trying to extort victims after about **48hrs** if you stop all contact. In the vast majority of cases, the images/videos are not shared publicly. If your images do get posted, there are steps you can take to have them **removed.** This situation is the **scammer's fault and not yours.** There are services and individuals available to help guide you through this traumatic experience.  
**Support is available.**

# A note to **caregivers**

Sextortion is a scary situation for **all involved**. If someone comes to you for support, please remember that **they are a victim of a crime**. We suggest that first you **ensure that they feel loved and supported**. They are coming to you about a situation that has made them feel scared, used and alone. **Providing support and help** to resolve the situation is most important. Once the situation has passed and the **victim is no longer in danger**, is when further safety education and planning on the subject should take place. It is important to remember that the situation is the scammer's fault, not yours or the child's.

# For more **information** and **resources**:

## **The White Hatter**

<https://thewhitehatter.ca/sextortion/>

## **KidsHelpPhone.ca**

<https://kidshelpphone.ca/>

## **United States Department of Justice (FBI)**

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-vi/pr/fbi-and-partners-issue-national-public-safety-alert-financial-sextortion-schemes>

## **Thorn.org**

<https://www.thorn.org/sextortion/>

## **Cybertip.ca**

<https://www.cybertip.ca/fr/dangers-internet/sextorsion/>

## **NeedHelpNow.ca**

<https://needhelpnow.ca/app/fr/>

## **StopSextortion.com**

<https://www.stopsextortion.com/>

## **Boostforkids.org**

<https://boostforkids.org/for-families/intervention-programs/internet-child-exploitation/>