

Introduction to intimate image abuse: Summary

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What is Intimate Image Abuse?

Intimate image abuse can also be referred to as 'revenge porn', or 'image based sexual abuse', can include behaviours such as:

- Intimate images shared without consent.
- Threats to share intimate images.
- Intimate images taken without consent.
- Sextortion (webcam blackmail).

Intimate image abuse is rarely isolated and can be part of a wider pattern of abuse, e.g. domestic abuse, or harassment.

Other trends and behaviours surrounding intimate image abuse include synthetic content, doxing, and collector culture.

Synthetic content

Synthetic sexual content, also known as 'deepfakes' are sexual images of adults created by use of AI technology. Synthetic harmful content includes other types of content created to mislead, misinform, or otherwise cause harm.

Doxing

Doxing is the act of revealing personal or private information about someone publicly online, often done maliciously with the intent to expose someone. This could include someone's identifying details such as their full name, home address, workplace, or other personal details such as their gender identity or sexuality.

Collector culture

Online spaces used to share, swap, trade and sell intimate images and personal information (usually of women), with the motivation of gaining money, status, or sexual gratification.

Sextortion

Sextortion, also known as 'webcam blackmail', is when intimate images and videos are recorded and used for financial exploitation and coercion.

The blackmailers are often criminal gangs, operating overseas, in a call-centre-like environment. Men are the main targets; however, children often are victimised in the scattergun approach of the blackmailers.

Awareness video:

youtube.com/watch?v=KlHsjEFPkSQ&list=PLATGbOf2gtr5PzVIClnMRInhTaTqdH-aK

Victimisation, Perpetration, and Motivation

Perpetrators can include previous partners, known persons, criminal gangs, and others. Distress, embarrassment and sexual gratification can be the motivation. Victims can be anyone over 18, all genders, though women are disproportionately affected:

- 28x more images of women shared than men.
- 95% of content removal requests involve women.
- 93% of sextortion cases affect men.

revengepornhelpline.org.uk/resources/helpline-research-and-reports/

Impacts of Intimate Image Abuse

Victim-survivors may experience mental health issues, suicidal ideation, job disruption and relationship breakdowns. Cultural complexities can exacerbate these impacts.

Criminalising Intimate Image Abuse

[The Criminal Code Amendment \(Non-consensual sharing of intimate images\) Act 2021](#) in Bermuda, implemented on 15th June 2021, outlines the legal framework. The offences carry a maximum conviction of up to 5 years imprisonment, with additional penalty if further orders are not complied with.

- 199A: Observations or recordings in breach of privacy
- 199B: Distributing intimate images without consent.
- 199C: Distributing prohibited visual recordings.
- 199D: Threats to distribute intimate images or recordings.
- 199E: Rectification order which courts can use to order offenders to remove an intimate image or visual recording.

Intimate images show a person engaged in sexual activity, not typically done in public, their genital or anal region (bare or covered with underwear), or their breasts. This includes images digitally altered or digitally obscured to appear intimate.

Prohibited Visual Recordings are made in situations where a person expects privacy, including activities like showing, bathing, toileting, undressing, and intimate sexual activities, as well as in locations where private acts are reasonably expected.

Supporting victim-survivors

Practical steps to support an adult affected by intimate image abuse can include reassuring the victim that they are not to blame, advising to collect evidence (e.g., screenshots, where the content has been shared and a timeline of events) and supporting to make reports of the crime to relevant authorities. Here are some top tips reporting the content where it may have been shared online, to social media or adult platforms and websites:

- Find out how to correctly report the content, to the website or platform.
- Provide a direct URL link to the image address, or the post you wish to report.
- Be careful with sharing your personal information.
- When explaining the issue in the message of the report, keep it concise, polite, and clear.

revengepornhelpline.org.uk/information-and-advice/reporting-content/

Key Messages:

- Intimate image abuse is against the law.
- The victim is not at fault for the abuse.
- Preserve evidence for reporting and legal processes.
- Intimate image abuse often forms part of a broader pattern of abuse and has complex impacts.

StopNCII.org:

StopNCII.org: A tool to hash intimate images of adults, creating a digital fingerprint to help remove content from online platforms.

A hash, sometimes referred to as a 'digital fingerprint', as it is unique to that image. StopNCII.org then shares the hash bank with participating companies so they can help detect and remove the images from being shared online.

StopNCII.org can be used by:

- Anyone over the age of 18 (in the images).
- The image must be sexual in nature: include sexual acts, nude or semi-nude.
- The image must show the person creating the hash, but it doesn't have to show their face.

Current participating platforms are Facebook, Instagram, Threads, TikTok, Bumble, Reddit, OnlyFans, Pornhub (Aylo), Snapchat and Niantic.

Takeitdown.org is available to hash sexual images of children under the age of 18.