

Emily's Story

This is the first person, account of a girl who had her image shared on line without her consent.

There are four other parts to the story where she shares her perspective on how people supported her, the people that didn't support her in the way she expected and needed, how she told her family about what happened, and how things got better.

Emily's Story

Probably from about grade seven onwards I started to feel almost pressured to send photos to guys. They would ask for them and I would sort of think that they wouldn't ask if it was an unreasonable request.

Everyone did it. Well I mean I can't say everyone, but it was a common thing...almost more uncommon to not send photos.

I remember the first time I sent a photo I was so scared. My hands were shaking...and then it was alright...like nothing bad happened the first time. And then it sort of almost became, not quite a normal thing, but it just wasn't as big a deal anymore. And we'd still get those talks at school and I guess I'd just have in my head like, oh I've done it and it was fine.

And then one day in grade twelve, a guy asked one of my friends to send him some photos. She jokingly said to me "Oh, can you just do it?" I think I was just fresh out of a relationship, I was feeling playful maybe and confident, so I said "Yes I will". I sent him three photos, and then I didn't really hear anything more about it. I'd never met him myself. I'd talked to him online a bit and there was never anything that I did to him that would warrant a retaliation or any revenge or anything like that.

And probably two years later when I was in my second year of uni, my boyfriend at the time said he needed to talk to me about something. He said his friend had found pictures of me with my full name, my city.... and he showed me the pictures and they were of me. And they were in multiple locations online. I was in disbelief.

He was the one telling me not to go to the police because he was worried about his friends getting in trouble because he knew they had been involved as well. And I just felt like girls were being put second and it just really didn't seem fair that it was these people who'd done the wrong thing in the first place by sharing the photos who were then being protected.

Once I realised that my pictures were online I could see the names of other girls whose pictures were online, and some of them I'd gone to school with. I reached out to them and the majority of them just didn't want to do anything. They were scared of getting their ex-boyfriend's in trouble.

It just made me frustrated that non-one else wanted to do the harder thing which is to not forget about it.