Image-based abuse

The eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) is taking the lead on tackling image-based abuse in Australia. In October 2017, eSafety introduced an image-based abuse portal, to support Australians who have had their intimate images or videos shared without their consent.

In accordance with changes to the Enhancing Online Safety 2015 which took effect on 1 September 2018, eSafety can help with the removal of intimate images or videos and in some cases take action against the person responsible for the image-based abuse.

What is image-based abuse?

Image-based abuse is when a person's intimate (nude or sexual) image/video is taken, shared, or threatened to be shared without their consent.

It includes an image or video that shows a person without attire of religious or cultural significance if they would normally wear such attire in public. The issue is growing and pervasive, with research revealing 1 in 10 Australians have had an intimate image/video shared without their consent. esafety.gov.au/research

Victims of image-based abuse often experience anger, depression, anxiety and feelings of humiliation when they find their intimate images online.

Colloquially known as 'revenge porn', we use the term 'image-based abuse' because it more accurately reflects the serious nature, scope and impact of the issue.

About the portal

The image-based abuse portal helps victims regain control by providing helpful resources, a reporting tool, and referrals to support services and legal help. esafety.gov.au/iba

Portal features:

Reporting

- An easy to use online form where people can report:
  - intimate images that have been shared without their consent online
  - threats made to share intimate images online (including sextortion).

- In response to a report, eSafety may take removal action. In some cases, eSafety can also take action against the person who shared or threatened to share the intimate image or video.

Resources

- Links, videos and information on how to report images and request removals from social media services and websites.
- Quick links to counselling support services such as 1800 Respect, Lifeline, eHeadSpace, Kids Helpline, QLife, Mensline and Beyond Blue.
- State and Territory-specific information on relevant legal services and options for victims of image-based abuse.
- Information on collecting evidence and tips on how to report image-based abuse to the police.
- An online template containing the questions police and lawyers are likely to ask a person experiencing image-based abuse.
- Advice on managing the impacts of image-based abuse, including situations where intimate images/videos are being used to extort money – commonly referred to as 'sextortion'.

Real life stories

- Anonymous personal stories by Australians who have experienced image-based abuse, so that others know they are not alone.

Research

- Up to date research about image-based abuse in Australia, including its impact on victims, pathways to redress and the behaviour of bystanders.

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