

## Guide 7:

# Dealing with image-based abuse

Image-based abuse is when an intimate image is shared, or threatened to be shared, without the consent of the person in that image. This practice is also often called ‘revenge porn’.

One in ten Australians have experienced image-based abuse.

Image-based abuse can make you feel humiliated, ashamed, powerless and afraid. It can affect your self-esteem, mental and physical health and relationships with friends, family and partners.

You are not to blame if someone shares or threatens to share your image without consent. You have done nothing wrong and there are steps you can take if this is happening to you.

### What is an ‘intimate image’?

**An intimate image is an image or video that shows, or appears to show:**

- a person’s genital area or anal area (even if covered by underwear)
- a person’s breasts (if the person is female, transgender or intersex)
- private activity (e.g. if the person is undressing, using the toilet, showering, bathing or engaged in sexual activity)
- a person without their religious or cultural clothing, if they normally wear that clothing in public.



### Make a report and get help

You (or someone authorised to act on your behalf) can report to our team at the Office of the eSafety Commissioner, using the form on our site [esafety.gov.au/iba](https://esafety.gov.au/iba).

When you report to us, we will work with you to try and get the intimate image removed. This might include giving enforceable removal notices to the service where your intimate image is posted, or directly to the person who posted your image.

In some cases, we may take action against the person who posted, or threatened to post, your intimate image, if that is something you want us to do. Actions could include issuing formal warnings, giving infringement notices and even seeking an injunction or civil penalty order from a court.

For us to take action, there needs to be an Australian connection. This means that either:

- you live in Australia; or
- the person who posted or threatened to post your intimate image, lives in Australia; or
- the intimate image or video is hosted in Australia.

### It is easy to make a report

Go to [esafety.gov.au/iba](https://esafety.gov.au/iba) and click on the 'report' button at the bottom of the page.

In the report form you will need to tell us:

- What you want help with – for example, images that have been posted on a website or threats you have received to post an image.
- How you are doing, so we can make sure you have the emotional support you need.
- Whether you were under 18 when the photo or video was taken and what age group you are in now.
- Where the image/s or video/s can be found online – with as many details as possible.
- What has happened – this helps us assess whether there are other risks we can help you manage; for example, if there are any domestic or family violence protection orders in place.
- Whether you know who is responsible, including whether you are comfortable for us to contact that person (this helps our team assess whether we can take action against the person responsible).
- What outcome you are seeking – whether you want our help to remove your intimate image, whether you want us to take action against the person responsible, or both.
- If police are involved (we may need to contact them to check that any evidence needed for your case has been preserved before we seek removal of the image).

Once you have reported to us, we will be in touch as soon as we can – usually within 1-2 business days.

If your intimate images have been posted on a social media service, you can also report directly to the social media service involved—this is often the quickest way to get images taken down from these services.

Most social media services will have a Help or Report section on their site, and terms of service which prohibit the posting of certain kinds of content, including image-based abuse.

You can find more information (in English) on our website about how to report to social media sites: [esafety.gov.au/image-based-abuse/action/remove-images-video/report-to-social-media-service-website/how-to-report-to-popular-sites](https://esafety.gov.au/image-based-abuse/action/remove-images-video/report-to-social-media-service-website/how-to-report-to-popular-sites).

### Get help

Remember! Abuse through technology is not OK and not your fault. Help is available, and you do not have to face this alone.

If you are feeling unsafe, contact police and emergency services by calling **Triple Zero (000)** immediately.

### If you do not speak English

Call **Triple Zero (000)** from a landline phone and ask for 'Police', 'Fire' or 'Ambulance'. Stay on the line and you will be connected to an interpreter.

If this is not an emergency, call or visit your local police station.

For further help, contact **1800RESPECT** from a safe phone or device as soon as possible:

**1800 737 732**

[1800respect.org.au](https://1800respect.org.au)

**1800RESPECT** offers 24-hour, free and confidential safety planning, counselling and support for all types of abuse, including family abuse and sexual abuse. They can also connect you to other services in your area. Go to [1800respect.org.au/languages](https://1800respect.org.au/languages) for more information, advice and videos in other languages.

**Lifeline****13 11 14**[lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)

Lifeline provides 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services to people in urgent need of help.

Lifeline's 24-hour crisis support centre can help you with:

- Suicidal thoughts or attempts
- Personal crisis
- Abuse and trauma
- Self-help information for friends and family

If you do not speak English and need an interpreter, follow these instructions:

1. Call the national Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS) on 131 450
2. Ask to talk to Lifeline on 13 11 14 in your language.
3. TIS will call the Lifeline number and interpret for you.
4. Continue your conversation with Lifeline and the TIS interpreter on the line.

*A call to TIS is the cost of a local call from landlines. Additional charges apply for calls from mobile phones.*

Go to [tisnational.gov.au](http://tisnational.gov.au) to find out more.

**Beyondblue****1300 22 4636**[beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support](http://beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support)

Beyondblue provides 24/7, free and confidential support from qualified mental health professionals. They can help identify if you are experiencing depression or anxiety, which are treatable conditions.

If you need assistance with English, you can get free interpreting from the national Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) [tisnational.gov.au](http://tisnational.gov.au)

Beyondblue also provides information and support for mental health in other languages. Visit [beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/multicultural-people/translated-mental-health-resources](http://beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/multicultural-people/translated-mental-health-resources).

**Get legal help**

**If the image-based abuse is part of family or domestic violence, staying safe is your number one priority.**

Speak to 1800RESPECT, the police or a legal service, to make sure you have a safety plan in place before you ask for intimate images to be removed.

If image-based abuse has happened to you, different laws might apply, depending on which state or territory you live in. A lawyer will be able to advise what your options might be.

You may also consider making a report to police. If you feel unsafe, you may need legal protection through a protection order to stop the person abusing you from:

- threatening to share your intimate photos or videos
- approaching you
- contacting you
- monitoring where you go and what you do.

**Collecting evidence**

Recording and collecting evidence of image-based abuse can help you prove your case. Examples of evidence include:

- screenshots
- saved voicemail messages
- printed emails and social media posts
- written accounts of what has happened in a log or journal.

Further information about collecting evidence can be found (in English) on the eSafetywomen site [esafety.gov.au/women/take-control/esafety-planning/collecting-evidence](http://esafety.gov.au/women/take-control/esafety-planning/collecting-evidence).