

Gendered harassment

What to do if you experience online abuse

Online abuse can be overwhelming and distressing. It often leads to physical harms offline and can seriously damage a person's confidence and sense of personal safety.

More than 70% of the online abuse complaints received by eSafety are reported by women and girls. If you are experiencing online abuse, it is not your fault and you are not alone. Use this guide to find out how to respond and take control of your online safety.



1. Collect evidence

Take a screenshot of the comments or record the URL. Collect evidence and review it later, before you decide whether to take action. Take the time to decide if you are experiencing a difference of opinion or online abuse. You can delete the message at any time if you decide it is not abuse.

Learn how to take a screenshot and save URLs on your device:
esafety.gov.au/collect-evidence



2. Assess the threat

What type of abuse is this? Consider whether it is intended to cause harm and who might have sent it. This will help to decide whether you block, mute, ignore or report the message.

You should always call Triple Zero (000) if you feel there is a threat to your physical safety.

Learn about the types of online abuse:
esafety.gov.au/wits/online-abuse

Find out how to handle different types of abuse and know when and how to mute, block or ignore it:
esafety.gov.au/wits/taking-action



3. Check-in with your own wellbeing

Online abuse can be overwhelming. Acknowledge how you feel and get help when you need support. eSafety provides advice about how to gather digital allies, create a safe space offline and be kind to yourself.

Tips to look after your own wellbeing:
esafety.gov.au/wits/manage-impact



4. Report the behaviour

You should always report online abuse to the social media platform hosting the conversation. This will help to build a picture of behaviour and highlight patterns of abuse, so the platform can act more quickly.

If the abuse happens in the workplace, talk to your manager or another trusted senior colleague. You can also report online abuse to eSafety or the police, depending on the level of harm.

Learn how to report to social media platforms:
esafety.gov.au/report-to-social-media-services

Find out how to report to eSafety:
esafety.gov.au/report

Use these tips to help you when reporting to police:
esafety.gov.au/get-help-from-police



5. Decide whether to comment

Women are often silenced by online abuse and lose their confidence to interact freely.

If you feel it is safe and constructive, you may wish to join the online conversation and respond. This will give you an opportunity to express your viewpoint, highlight bad behaviour and seek support.

Be aware that your response might encourage further abuse. Protect yourself by using conversation controls to manage who can reply to your comment and what you can see, so you can stay in control of the conversation.

Visit The eSafety Guide to learn more about the different social media platforms and conversation controls:
esafety.gov.au/esafety-guide



6. Review your privacy and safety settings

Check that your privacy and security settings on your social media platforms and devices are current and up to date. Simple solutions such as 'two-factor authentication' offer extra layers of security and protection.

Access eSafety's video library for step-by-step guides to setting up devices and social media accounts safely:
esafety.gov.au/dfv-video-library

Book an eSafety social media self defence session for your workplace:
esafety.gov.au/wits/social-media-self-defence

Visit the [eSafety](https://esafety.gov.au) website or contact [Beyond Blue](#) or [1800RESPECT](#) for support and information.