

This guide is for anyone who has shared an intimate image or video of someone without their consent. It outlines how you can begin to make amends.

Righting the wrong

A quick guide to image-based abuse

In this guide:

- What is image-based abuse?
- What are the impacts of image-based abuse?
- What is meant by 'consent'?
- What could happen if you share an intimate image of someone without their consent?
- How can you make amends for some of the hurt you have caused?
- How can you get help and support?



What is image-based abuse?

Image-based abuse is when someone shares, or threatens to share, an intimate photo or video online of you without your consent.

It is also image-based abuse when someone shares an image or video of a person without religious or cultural attire (such as a niqab or turban) they would normally wear in public, without the permission of the person.

The images can be real photos or videos, or ones that have been changed or altered, for example, Photoshopped.

It is also image-based abuse if someone threatens to share an intimate image of you.



Examples of image-based abuse include:

- Your ex-partner sharing an intimate image of you on Facebook without your consent
- Someone altering an image of you to make you appear naked and then emailing it to lots of people.
- An anonymous account threatening to share an intimate image of you on a website or porn site.

What are the impacts of image-based abuse?

For every person who has been a target of image-based abuse, the experience is different. People who have experienced image-based abuse report feeling, humiliated, embarrassed, annoyed, overwhelmed, depressed or completely devastated. For those targeted, it can be terrifying to discover that their intimate image has been shared without their consent. Even more distressing can be the knowledge that other people, such as their friends, family or work colleagues, may see this image. It can also feel overwhelming to learn that they have no control over who the image is shared with.

As someone who has shared an intimate image or video without consent, it is important that you understand the devastating impacts image-based abuse can have on people. Try to think about what it would feel like if this happened to you — stop and think before you ever share another intimate image.

Everybody has the right to live without online abuse or the threat of abuse.



What is meant by 'consent'?

Consent is when someone clearly agrees to do something.

Image-based abuse happens when someone has shared another person's intimate, nude or sexual images online, without their consent. Even if they agreed for someone to take or have an intimate image of them at one point in time, this does not mean that consent has also been granted for it to be shared with others or for other people to have or see this image.

Even if you possess intimate images of someone, it is not OK to share them with anyone else. Only the person depicted can give consent for these images to be shared.

What could happen if you share an intimate image of someone without consent?

Image-based abuse can have serious consequences for the person responsible. Image-based abuse is unlawful and can be reported to eSafety and/or the police. There are also Commonwealth, state and territory laws against asking for, accessing, possessing, creating or sharing sexualised images of children and young people under 18.

Find out more about the laws relating to [image-based abuse](#).

There may also be other consequences such as:

- Exclusion from school / university, which may affect your studies.
- Damage to your reputation and character.
- Loss of trust from others.

How can you make amends for some of the hurt you have caused?

Your actions may have already deeply hurt the person in the image.

It's important to act quickly to minimise harm to the person.

These steps may go some way towards reducing the damage you have caused:

- Delete the intimate images from your phone, hard drive or any other device.
- If you have posted the intimate images online, remove them from the social media site or website right away.
- Ask people you have shared the intimate image with to delete it immediately and let them know to do the same if they have on-shared it with anyone else or posted it online.
- If you know the person in the image, consider apologising to them, but only if it's OK to contact them.

How can you get help and support?

There are specialist services who can provide help and support free of charge.

Lifeline

All ages. All issues. Phone counselling available all day, every day. Online chat available 7pm to 4am AEST daily.

Phone: 13 11 14

Web: lifeline.org.au

Mensline

Supports men and boys who are dealing with family and relationship difficulties. Phone counselling and online chat available all day, every day.

Phone: 1300 78 99 78

Web: mensline.org.au

Help in languages other than English

Call the [Translating and Interpreting Service](#) on 131 450 and ask them to contact one of the helplines above for you.

If you are deaf or have a hearing impairment

Contact [Speak and Listen](#) (relay call options) on 1300 555 727 and ask them to contact a helpline for you, or to speak to us once you have made report.

Image-based abuse

You can find more information about image-based abuse, including advice about how to report to eSafety and get help to remove intimate images in the [image-based abuse](#) section of our website.