

Adult cyber abuse quick guide



What is adult cyber abuse?

Adult cyber abuse is when the internet is used to send, post or share content that is harmful to the physical or mental health of someone who is 18 years or older.

It can happen on a social media site or any other online or electronic service or platform. It can include posts, comments, emails, messages, chats, livestreams, memes, images and videos.

What should I do?

If someone is just being rude, annoying or upsetting, or you don't like their opinions, you can use simple strategies such as changing the settings on your device or online account to limit contact with them.

If the content is seriously harmful, you should report adult cyber abuse material to get it removed from the social media site, online service or platform.

If the service or platform doesn't help, eSafety can direct them to remove seriously harmful content that is likely to have a severe negative impact on your physical or mental health. This includes serious distress that goes beyond ordinary emotional reactions, such as anger, fear or grief.

Steps to report adult cyber abuse



1. Collect evidence

You will need proof to show what happened and where, if you decide to report harmful content to the platform, eSafety or the police.

Things to screenshot or save a copy

- What the content says or shows
- The user profile of the person who sent, posted or shared it
- The date and time it was sent, posted or shared
- The name of the site, game or app
- The online address of the webpage or feed (URL)





2. Report harmful content

Report the harmful content to the service or platform used to send, post or share it – you can find reporting links to the common ones in [The eSafety Guide](#). This is often the fastest way to have the harmful content removed.

If the content is severely abusive and meets the legal definition of adult cyber abuse, and the service or platform does not remove it, you can report it to eSafety using our online form, at [eSafety.gov.au/report/forms](https://www.esafety.gov.au/report/forms).

The legal definition of adult cyber abuse means that the content is intended to cause serious harm and it is menacing, harassing or offensive.

We will ask you for proof of the adult cyber abuse, and also that you have already made a report to the site or platform where it happened.

eSafety can help to get the harmful content removed and has the power to issue fines or penalties to the service, platform or person responsible if they don't remove the content.

You can also report the abuse to the police. This is very important if someone is threatening you, or your family or friends.



3. Prevent further contact

Don't respond to the person. Change your privacy settings on your device or online account so you don't see so many messages, posts or comments from them. You can use the in-app functions to ignore, mute or block the other person or account.

If someone you know is the target of adult cyber abuse, you can report this to eSafety on their behalf, if they authorise you to do so and the service or platform has not helped.



4. Get more help

Experiencing or helping someone who has experienced serious online abuse can be very distressing. Take care of your wellbeing and speak to someone you trust about what has happened. You can also speak to someone from a counselling and support service.



Counselling and support services

Beyond Blue

1300 22 4636

beyondblue.org.au

Phone counselling and online chat available all day, every day for all ages and all issues.

Lifeline

13 11 14

lifeline.org.au

Phone counselling and online chat available all day, every day for all ages and all issues.

1800RESPECT

1800 737 732

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 for more information, advice and videos in other languages.

QLife

1800 184 527

qlife.org.au

QLife offers counselling and referrals for people of all ages who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and/or intersex. Phone counselling is available from 3pm to 12am, every day. Online chat is available 3pm to 12am, every day.

Support in your language

Call the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450** and ask them to contact one of the helplines for you or to assist with making a report to eSafety. Or visit the website at tisonational.gov.au.

Support for hearing or speech impairment

Call the National Relay Service on **133 677** for a teletypewriter (TTY) and voice calls and ask them to contact one of the helplines for you. Or visit the website at infrastructure.gov.au/national-relay-service.

Stay safe

Emergency help in Australia, any time of the day or night:

If your life or safety is at risk and you need urgent help call **Triple Zero (000)**.

If you're having thoughts about suicide or self-harm call Lifeline on **13 11 14** or the Suicide Call Back Service on **1300 659 467**.

More information

For more information on [adult cyber abuse](#) and tips on [managing the impacts](#), visit eSafety.gov.au.