

Everything you need to know about sextortion

Resources for organisations supporting young people.



**IF SEXTORTIONISTS
WERE HONEST**



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Introduction

Hi there, and thanks for being here.

Sextortion is a growing issue, and we're seeing increasing reports from young people in Australia. It rarely looks harmful at first. It starts with fake profiles, flirty messages or someone pretending to be interested. They'll ask the victim to share a nude, then it quickly turns into pressure, threats or demands for money or more images.

To help raise awareness, eSafety has developed a new campaign:

If sextortionists were honest.

If they were honest, the conversation might begin like this: 'Hey, I'm fake. I'll pretend to like you, so you'll share a nude, then I'll blackmail you for money.'

This campaign flips the dynamic by imagining what it would sound like if sextortionists said the quiet part out loud from the start. By exposing tactics, the campaign is designed to help young people recognise warning signs earlier, reduce shame, and seek help sooner.

The message is simple: **Report. Block. Get support.**

This kit includes ready-to-use assets, messaging and resources to help you raise awareness of sextortion through your channels and communities.

About eSafety Commissioner

The [eSafety Commissioner](#) (eSafety) is Australia's independent regulator for online safety.

We educate Australians about online safety risks and help remove harmful content such as [cyberbullying of children and young people](#), [adult cyber abuse](#), ['revenge porn' or image-based abuse](#), and [illegal and restricted content](#).

Through partnerships with law enforcement, industry, workplaces, schools and other government agencies, we amplify our reach and drive impactful, real-world change so Australians have safer online experiences.



What is sextortion?

Sexual extortion or ‘sextortion’ is a form of blackmail where someone threatens to share a nude or sexual image or video of you unless you give in to their demands.

Those demands might include money, more images, cryptocurrency or gift cards.

It escalates faster than people expect, sometimes in a matter of hours.

That’s because many blackmailers follow a deliberate and strategic pattern. They use tactics designed to build pressure and trigger panic before someone has time to stop, think clearly or ask for help.

In many cases, it starts with a fake profile photo, a direct message or someone pretending to be interested. They may then try to move the conversation to a private or encrypted messaging app before threats begin. In some cases, they’re organised scammers operating anonymously from elsewhere.

Why awareness matters

Many people don’t recognise what is happening until the pressure has already started. Sextortion can move quickly and leave people feeling panicked, isolated and unsure what to do next. Shame and fear can make it even harder to ask for help.

The impacts can be serious, including emotional distress, financial loss and mental health harm. In some tragic cases, sextortion has been linked to suicide.

That’s why awareness is so important.

By helping young people understand the warning signs and know support is available, you can help them:

- recognise the warning signs
- reduce shame and know that they’re not alone
- seek help sooner.

Young men are at risk

Sextortion is increasingly affecting young men. In 2025, eSafety received more than 3,300 reports of sexual extortion.

86% of these were from males

42% were from males aged 18-24 years



Many blackmailers are skilled at building trust quickly and creating panic once threats begin. Young men can feel pressure to handle situations like this on their own or feel embarrassed about what’s happened.

When things escalate quickly, it can be hard to know what to do next. Knowing the warning signs, understanding the reporting options available and having someone to reach out to for support can help in those moments.

Report. Block. Get support.

The reporting pathway will depend on the age of the person being targeted.

1

Collect evidence

Save a record of the contact from the blackmailer, including how they contacted you, when it happened, usernames, payment requests, and any reports already made.

Take screenshots, screen recordings or photos of messages or profiles.



2

Report sexual extortion

If you are under 18

Report to the [Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation \(ACCCE\)](#).

If you are 18 or older

Report it to the platform or service where the blackmailer contacted you. If intimate content is shared, you can [report it to eSafety](#).



3

Stop contact and tighten security settings

After you have collected evidence and made a report, use in-app functions or your device settings to block the blackmailer. You can also update your account settings so only people you know can contact you.



4

Get support

- Try contacting an expert [counselling and support service](#), especially if you're feeling anxious or depressed.
- Read our advice on how to [manage the impacts of image-based abuse](#), including tips for taking care of your wellbeing.



For more information visit [eSafety.gov.au/spot-sexortion](https://www.esafety.gov.au/spot-sexortion)

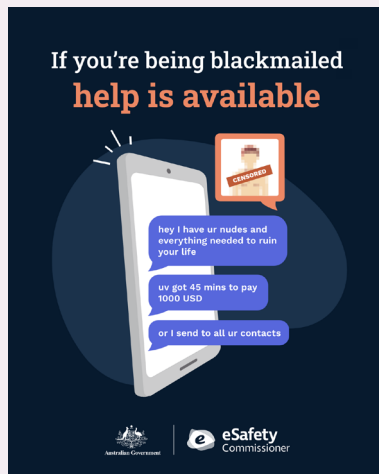
Ready-to-use resources

Use these resources across your channels and community spaces to help raise awareness of sextortion, highlight warning signs and encourage young people to **Report. Block. Get support.**

Some campaign assets use generative artificial intelligence. This is intentional and reflects tactics used by offenders, including fake profiles and deceptive identities.

Social media tiles and suggested copy

Best for: Instagram or Facebook



Sextortion is a growing form of online blackmail affecting Australians, especially young people. It can start with a fake profile sending flirty messages, before asking you to share a nude. Then it escalates into blackmail for money or more nude images. If you're targeted, block the account, make a report and get support. @eSafetyOffice has practical advice and reporting options. Learn more: [eSafety.gov.au/spot-sex-tortion](https://www.esafety.gov.au/spot-sex-tortion)



🚨 I'm fake. I'm pretending to like you so you'll share a nude. Then I'll blackmail you for money or more nude images. 🚨

That's the kind of honesty sextortionists (blackmailers) won't give you. Sextortion is a growing form of online blackmail affecting Australians. If you're targeted, make a report, block the account and get support.

@eSafetyOffice has advice and reporting options. Learn more: [eSafety.gov.au/spot-sex-tortion](https://www.esafety.gov.au/spot-sex-tortion)

If sextortionists were honest...

Sextortion may not be a word you hear every day, but it's a growing form of online blackmail affecting Australians, especially young people.

A random add. A follow from someone attractive. A flirty DM. Someone who wants to chat privately. They'll ask you to share nude or even send one first to make it feel normal. It can feel exciting or harmless at first, and that's exactly how people get drawn in.

If sextortionists (blackmailers) were honest, they'd say: 'I'm fake. I'm pretending to like you but am really going to blackmail you for money or more images.'

Bit less charming when they say it like that.

Instead, these blackmailers are skilled at building trust quickly and using pressure once they have your attention. They're trained in what they do, which means it is never your fault, and you are definitely not alone.

Be mindful of random adds, fake profiles and people pushing things to move fast.

If it ever happens to you, make a report, block the account, and get support.

Learn more at [eSafety.gov.au/spot-sex-tortion](https://www.esafety.gov.au/spot-sex-tortion)

Poster / digital signage

Best for: Waiting rooms, noticeboards or campus



Information sheet

Everything you need to know about sextortion



What is sextortion?

Sexual extortion or 'sextortion' is a form of blackmail where someone threatens to share a nude or sexual image or video of you unless you give in to their demands. If this happens to you, you're not alone – there's help available.

How does it happen?

Sextortion escalates faster than people expect, sometimes in a matter of hours. That's because many blackmailers follow a deliberate and strategic pattern. They use tactics designed to build pressure and trigger panic before someone has time to stop, think clearly or ask for help.

1. First contact

A follow request, DM or fake profile reaches out. They may look legitimate, attractive, or even appear to have mutual friends.

2. Fast connection

They try to bond with you quickly. They flirt or give you compliments, and show you attention and strong interest.

3. Move it somewhere private

They suggest chatting somewhere more private, like WhatsApp or another messaging app.

4. Pressure for content

They ask for an intimate image or video that is sexual or shows you naked.

5. The switch

Once they receive your intimate image or video, the tone changes fast.

6. Blackmail

They claim they've screenshotted your followers, friends or contacts and threaten to send them everything unless you give into their demands. Those demands might include money, more images, cryptocurrency or gift cards.

Blackmailers usually give up when they realise you won't pay. But if they do share your intimate image or video online, you can report it.



[eSafety.gov.au/spot-sextortion](https://esafety.gov.au/spot-sextortion)

For more **information** visit

eSafety.gov.au/spot-sex-tortion

