

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Children's Rights

<https://www.missingkids.org/theissues/sextortion>

Campaign and Advocacy

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Sextortion is a form of child sexual exploitation where children are threatened or blackmailed, most often with the possibility of sharing with the public a nude or sexual images of them, by a person who demands additional sexual content, sexual activity or money from the child. This crime may happen when a child has shared an image with someone they thought they knew or trusted, but in many cases they are targeted by an individual they met online who obtained a sexual image from the child through deceit, coercion, or some other method. In many cases, the blackmailers may have stolen or taken images of another person and they are communicating through a fake account. The blackmailer may have sent images as well.

NCMEC has seen a dramatic increase in sextortion cases being reported to our CyberTipline, especially financial sextortion where the offender demands money from the child. Teenage boys have been the most common targets in these recent cases.

If you or a friend have experienced sextortion, there are some steps you can take now to make things better.

Get help before deciding whether to pay money or otherwise comply with the blackmailer. Cooperating or paying rarely stops the blackmail.

REPORT the account via the platforms safety feature

BLOCK the suspect but DO NOT DELETE your profile or messages because that can be helpful in stopping the blackmailer.

Ask for help. The problems can be very complex and require help from adults or professionals. If you don't feel that you have adults in your corner, you can reach out to NCMEC for support at gethelp@ncmec.org or you can call us at 1-800-THELOST.

Those involved in the sextortion of children often:

Since 2016, the CyberTipline has received **262,573** reports of Online Enticement, the category that includes sextortion.

Between 2019 and 2021, the number of reports involving sextortion **more than doubled**.

In an earlier analysis, the dominant motive of offenders was to get more explicit images of a child, but in reports from early 2022, **79%** of the offenders were seeking money.

NCMEC's CyberTipline provides the public and electronic service providers with the ability to report multiple forms of suspected child sexual exploitation, including sextortion and online enticement. After NCMEC's review is completed, all information in a CyberTipline report is made available to the appropriate law enforcement agency. To make a CyberTipline Report, visit report.cybertip.org.

Is a sexually explicit image of you or your child out there? Learn how to contact the internet service providers and platforms to help mitigate the spread of the image or how NCMEC can help in that process.

[Is your explicit content out there](#)

NCMEC's digital citizenship and safety program, [NetSmartz](#), is an innovative educational program that utilizes games, animated videos, classroom-based lesson plans, activities, and much more to help empower children to make safer choices online.

This program addresses the issue of sextortion in age-appropriate ways. Examples of resources include videos and discussion guides and a poster for educators, school resources officers, counselors and others who work with children to display.

Learn more at MissingKids.org/NetSmartz/Sextortion.

For families with a missing or sexually exploited child, NCMEC provides [support services](#) like crisis intervention and local counseling referrals to appropriate professionals. Our [Team HOPE](#) program connects families with peers who have had similar experiences and can offer coping skills and compassion.

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