

LIGHT

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CRIME

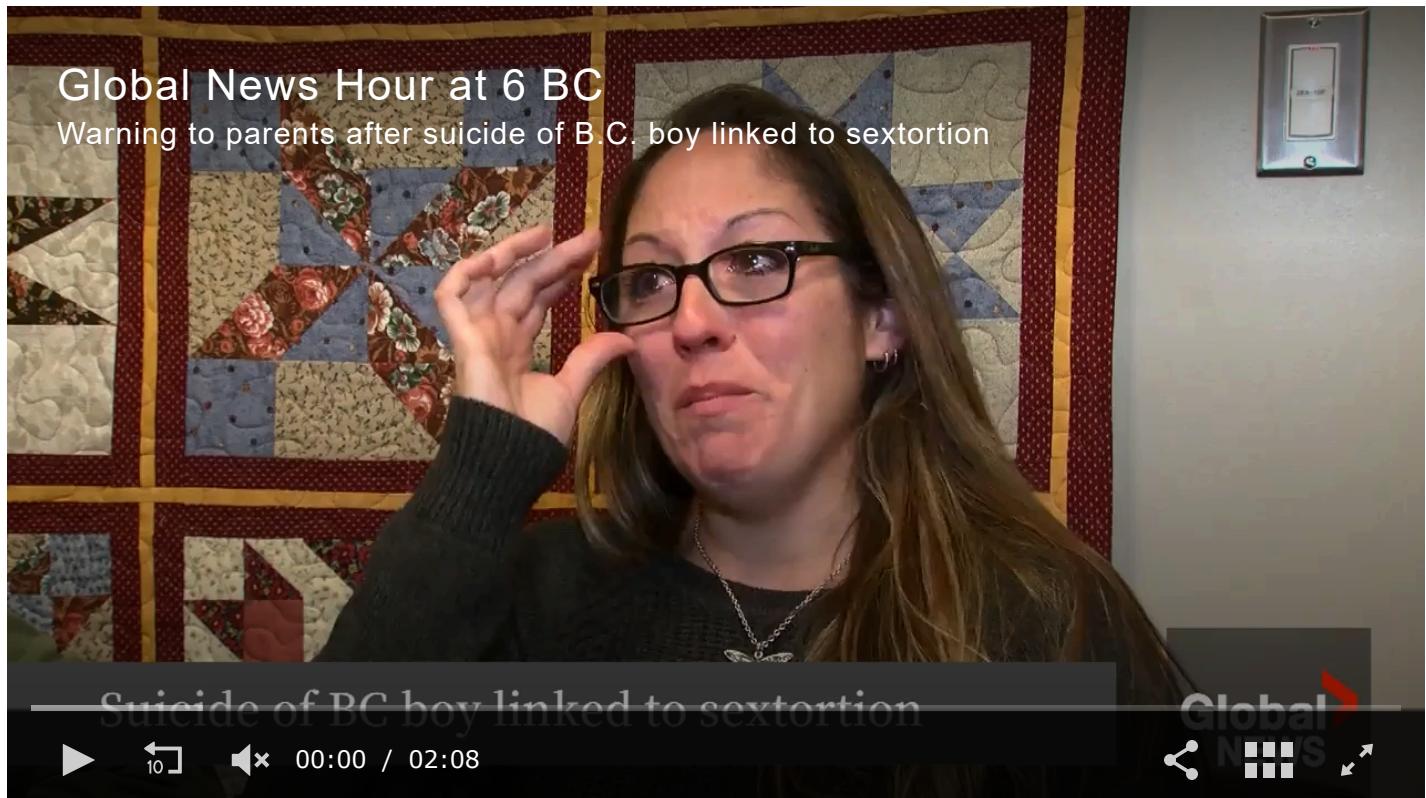
12-year-old boy in B.C. dies by suicide in response to online sextortion, police say



By Amy Judd • Global News

Posted November 27, 2023 1:37 pm ▾

3 min read



Global News Hour at 6 BC
Warning to parents after suicide of B.C. boy linked to sextortion

Suicide of BC boy linked to sextortion

▶ 10 ▶ 00:00 / 02:08

Global  NEWS

WATCH: The parents of a 12-year-old Prince George boy who took his own life are speaking out. RCMP say he was the victim of online sextortion. As Angela Jung reports, a majority of reported sextortion victims are boys. – Nov 27, 2023



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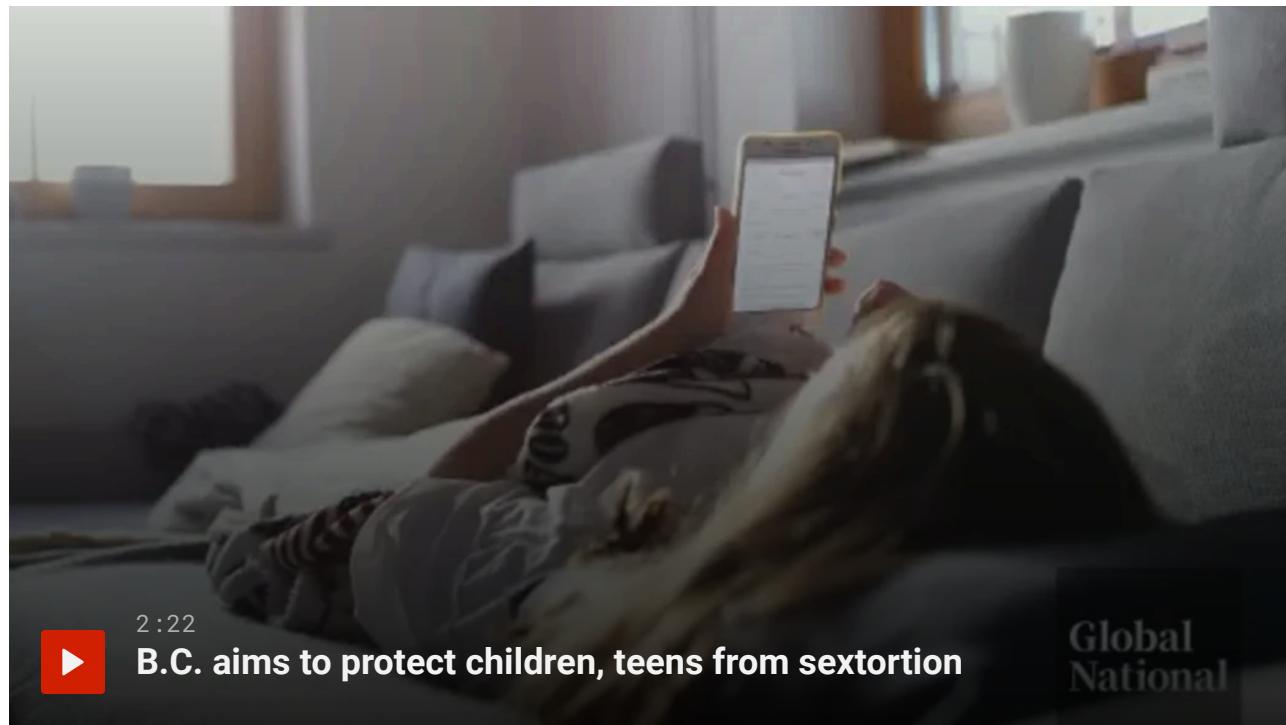
The family of a 12-year-old boy who died by suicide after he was sexually extorted online is speaking out about what happened.

Carson Cleland took his life on Oct. 12 after being the victim of online **sextortion**, Prince George RCMP said Monday.

"Nothing was worth doing this," Ryan Cleland, Carson's father, told **CKPG News**.

Reports of sextortion, the practice of extorting money or sexual favours from someone by threatening to reveal evidence of their online sexual activity, are on the rise, Prince George RCMP said.

Sextortion is most prevalent in youth between the ages of 13 and 18, police said.

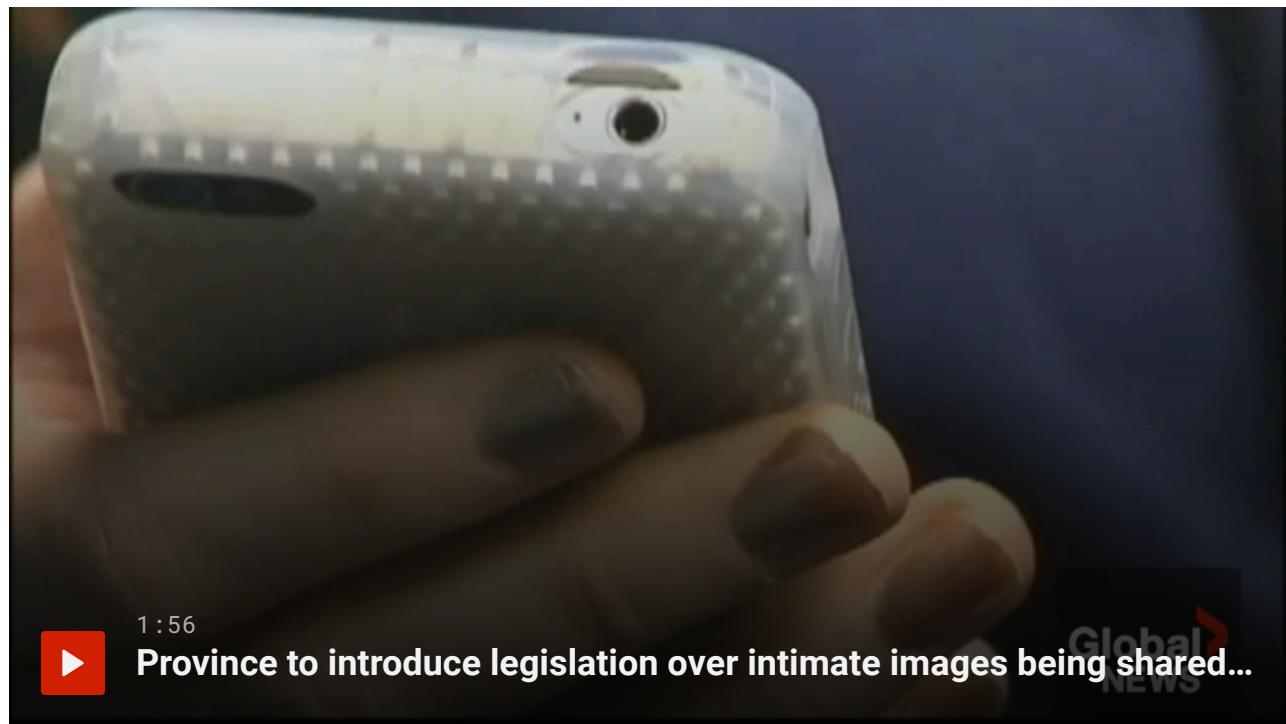


So far this year, Prince George RCMP has received 62 reports of online sextortion, already surpassing the 56 reports received in 2022, police confirmed.

"Be more active with your kids, even if you are active, which we were," Carson's mother, Nicola Smith, told CPGK News.

"Talk to your kids about predators and all the things that's happening and the safety of online. As much as younger kids hate parents going on their phones,

maybe they have to."



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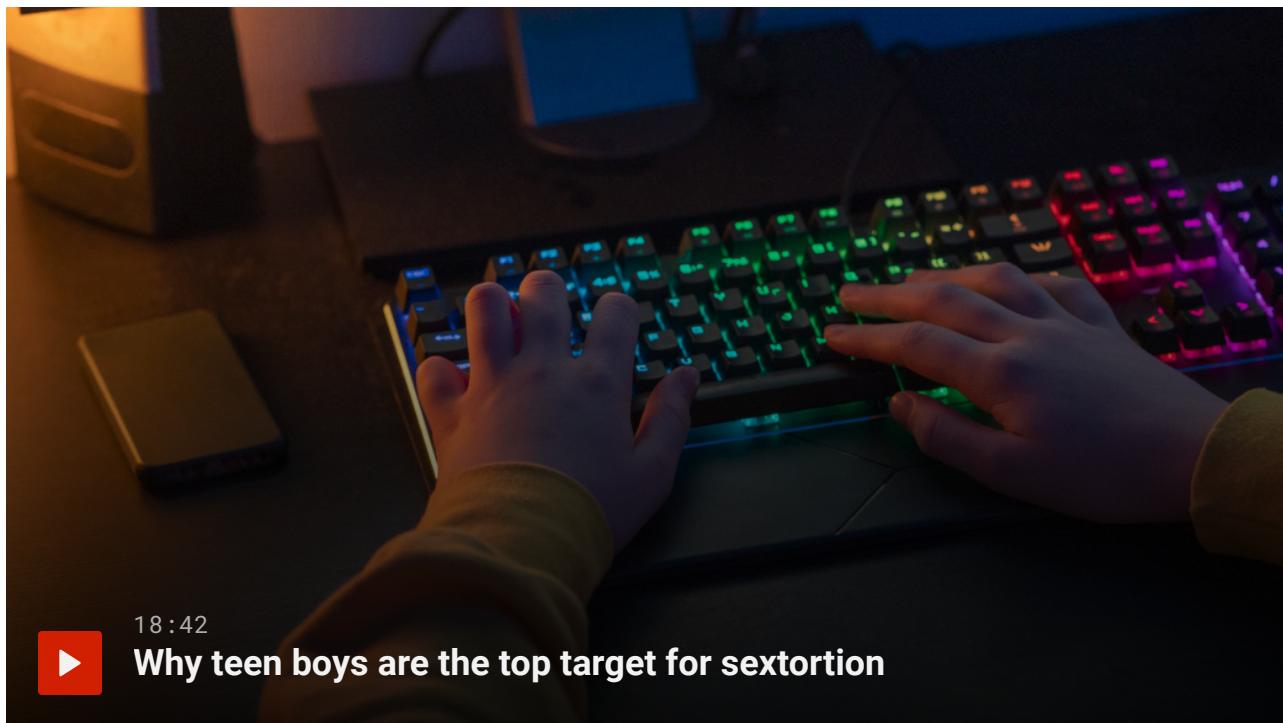
Police said parents need to know about the dangers for kids online.

"We are calling for parents and caregivers to be honest with their youth about the dangers of online activity, especially if they are engaging in chats with people they don't know in real life," Cpl. Jennifer Cooper said in a news release.

"While not every case of online sextortion will end in tragedy, the consequences of this kind of activity can follow a youth for their entire life, which needs to be something we talk about openly with our kids."

Carson's family said he preferred to use Snapchat to talk to others.

"They're just not built for problems like this yet," Cleland said. "They're not built for adult problems like this yet."



18:42

▶ Why teen boys are the top target for sextortion

Law enforcement agencies have seen a huge increase in cases relating to online sexual abuse against children as outlined in this **report from The New Reality.**

Although internet blackmailers target all youth, the largest increase in cases involves teen boys.

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"About 90 per cent of the sextortion victims that are reporting to us are young males," Stephen Sauer, director of Canada's national youth tipline for online sexual crimes, Cybertip.ca. told *The New Reality*.

Teen boys between 14 to 17 are the most impacted by these crimes. Experts said boys are more likely to start communicating with someone on social media – especially when they think it's with someone their own age who is sexually interested in them.

If you are the victim of sextortion, it is important that you stop all communication immediately with that person and do not give in to their demands. Deactivate the accounts that you are using to communicate with that person and, most importantly, reach out for help and report it. Call your local police and contact **NeedHelpNow.ca** and **Cybertip.ca** for support.

In Carson's case, police said they are still looking for a suspect.



If you or someone you know is in crisis and needs help, resources are available. In case of an emergency, please call 911.

The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, Depression Hurts and Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 – all offer ways for getting help if you, or someone you know, is suffering from mental health issues.

For a directory of support services in your area, visit the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention.

Learn more about how to help someone in crisis on the Government of Canada website.

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