



PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

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SEXTORTION- PREDATORS USE ONLINE GAMES AND CHAT

You are probably aware of scammers using the phone system and email to steal money and identities. This crime affects the elderly and young adults.

Did you know that sexual predators use online gaming and social networks to abuse children under the age of 18?

Sextortion is where an adult convinces or coerces a child to share sexual pictures or perform sexual acts on a webcam.

The FBI says that it has seen an increase in sextortion in recent years. The FBI, last year, noted that it was prosecuting 60% more people for the production of child pornography than it prosecuted five years earlier.

It also noted that it is seeing higher numbers of victims to sextortion than in previous years. Predators are not just extorting one, two, or three kids, but are victimizing 20, 40, 100, 200, 300 kids.

Between 2015 and 2018 the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's (NCMEC) CyberTipline received 5,017 reports of sextortion.

Sexual predators have traditionally used their personal relationships to victimize

youth. That can be through activities such as their church, as a volunteer in a youth activity, or at a school. More often a youth is victimized by someone they know or has authority over them than by a stranger.

Online activities such as gaming, social media, or apps on a smartphone give sexual predators a new dimension to contact potential victims.

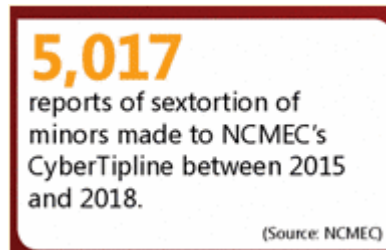
The consequences for a child who becomes victimized from sextortion can be very serious. Most sextortion cases do not result in hands-on abuse. However,

the damaging effects can include depression, anxiety, hopelessness, fear, and suicidal thoughts.

As a result of this trend, last fall the FBI began an educational campaign

that targets middle school and high school students about the dangers of sextortion. That is in addition to educational materials aimed at parents, caregivers, and educators. Resources about sextortion can be found on page 4.

The important thing is to learn about sextortion, how you and your child can avoid it and to talk to your child so that they are aware as they use their computer and smartphone.



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SEXTORTION- WHY KIDS BECOME VICTIMS

- *The crime occurs where kids feel most comfortable. They are often at home and are operating devices, games, and apps that they are familiar with. They feel safe playing the games and socializing with their friends and people they meet online.*
- *You child makes imperfect decisions. Their brains are still developing and they are not always thinking about consequences.*
- *Sexual predators learn how to target kids. They pose as kids online then gradually build trust.*

Victims are not from any specific gender, ethnic or socioeconomic group. They can be anyone's child. The only common trail is their access to the internet.

SEXTORTION- WHAT IT IS

Someone who conducts sextortion uses our modern computer technology to take advantage of a child. The FBI has developed a definition for this crime:

“Sextortion occurs when an adult, through threat or manipulation, coerces a minor into producing a sexually explicit image and sending it over the Internet.”

Like most other sexual predators, people who use sextortion can groom their targets by showing interest, sympathy or offering something of value.

The FBI describes a sexual predator's method as using entry points into the child's life.

The first entry point is through mobile or online web sites, software applications, or apps on a phone, or through games. These entry points give the sexual predator the opportunity to find out information about his potential victims and then to communicate with the victims.

The predator might strike up an online conversation then compliment or flatter the child. They may also use the pretense of starting a romantic relationship to encourage sending the pictures.

A second entry point is to offer the child something they value in exchange for taking a quick picture.

This could be the possibility of a modeling contract; online game credits or codes; or money, cryptocurrency, or gift cards. The FBI is seeing an increasing number of cases involving gaming where competition can be intense and game credits or codes can give an advantage.

Finally, another entry point is to threaten the child up front by claiming to already have compromising photos that they will distribute or to threaten to harm the child or to harm other people or things that the child cares about.

Once the perpetrator has an image, they will use the threat of exposure or harm to keep the child producing more and more explicit material.

In addition to keeping the transmission of pictures going, the perpetrator will want to isolate the child with added threats that the child is producing pornography and will be in trouble with the law. As a result, the child is reluctant to tell anyone, including their parents. An FBI study showed that in sextortion cases more than one-quarter of them led to suicide or attempted suicide.

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SEXTORTION- PROTECTING YOUR CHILD

As a parent, you will want to protect your child from a sexual predator using sextortion.

The FBI emphasizes that you should talk to your child about sextortion and that you should make it clear that your door is open to them and that you are there to help them. As one FBI Special Agent puts it,

“Your child’s bravest moment may be the moment they tell.”

Some points to emphasize that the FBI recommends include,

- Many people online are not who they say they are. Sexual predators often pose as a child when they are online.
- Don’t talk to people you don’t know online.
- Understand that any content produced on a web-enabled device can be made public. Photos or videos, even sent in private, can be made public. And information that has been overshared can be used for bad purposes.
- If you are being threatened or coerced online, tell someone. There is help and there is hope.

For more tips on teaching your children about sextortion and safe online surfing check out the following links:

NCMEC NetSmartz- <https://www.missingkids.org/netsmartz/resources>

FBI- <https://sos.fbi.gov/en/>

“Your child’s bravest moment may be the moment they tell.”

What to do if your child is caught up in a sextortion scheme.

If your child tells you about being caught up in sextortion, remember that they may be embarrassed and scared. The sexual predator may have threatened their family, friends, or school. They may also have been told that they have broken the law.

The FBI suggests that you comfort your child.

Be sure that they understand that they are a victim of a crime and that the sexual predator has broken the law.

Report the sextortion to the FBI Seattle Field Office, 24 hours a day, seven

days a week:

Phone- (206) 622-2904

You can also report sextortion to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) at the Cyber Tipline report.cybertip.org.



SEXTORTION- RED FLAGS

Perpetrators often:

- Move communications with a child from one online platform to another
- Offer reciprocity (“I’ll show you, if you show me”)
- Use multiple online identities to contact a child
- Access the child’s online account without permission and steal sexual images or videos of the child
- Threaten to create sexual images or videos of the child using digital-editing tools
- Threaten to commit suicide if the child does not provide sexual images or videos
- Pretend to work for a modeling agency

SEXTORTION – RESOURCES

For more information about sextortion check out the following resources:

The Seattle Times-

Video games and online chats are 'hunting grounds' for sexual predators-

<https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/video-games-and-online-chats-are-hunting-grounds-for-sexual-predators/>

FBI-

Stop Sextortion-

<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/stop-sextortion-youth-face-risk-online-090319#Resources-for%20Parents>

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)-

Sexting & Sextortion-

<https://www.missingkids.org/netsmartz/topics/sexting>

Sextortion-

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

Cyber Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI)-

<https://www.cybercivilrights.org/>

While physical abuse is rare in sextortion cases, but there can be psychological affects including feeling anxious, desperate, scared, alone, or embarrassed. In some cases a sextortion victim may feel like attempting suicide.

For help, you can go to-

Providence Intervention Center for Assault and Abuse-

24-Hour Crisis Line-

(425) 252-4800

<https://washington.providence.org/locations-directory/i/intervention-center-for-assault-and-abuse-everett>

UW Medicine Center for Sexual Assault & Traumatic Stress-

depts.washington.edu/hcsats/

Rape, Abuse, Incest Nation Network (RAINN) Confidential Hotline-

(800) 656-4673

<https://hotline.rainn.org/>

The average age of children in CyberTipline reports of sextortion was **8-17 years old.**

OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOODS

MAKING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER

<https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/311/Office-of-Neighborhoods>

Homeless Outreach-

Sgt. Ryan Boyer

Phone: (425) 308-0037

Email: neighborhood-watch@snoco.org

Nuisance Properties-

Deputy David Chitwood

Email:

David.Chitwood@snoco.org

SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:

<http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/289/Crime-Prevention>

NEWSLETTER INFO

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If you have questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that appear in it, please contact the editor at neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org

TIP



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: 425-388-3845

<http://snohomishcountywa.gov/303/Anonymous-Tips>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477