



## **Online Safety and Cyber Sexual Assault**

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# Goals

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- Understand terms related to cyber-related sexual violence
- Understand what cyber-related sexual violence may look like
- Understand how to maximize safety and cybersecurity in social media relationships
- Understand role of consent in social media relationships
- Understand how social media can be involved in sexual violence and may present in a campus adjudication process
- Understand resources available if a victim/survivor of cyber-related sexual violence seeks University help

# Game of Terms

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# Terms to Know

Term	Definition
<b>Sexual Violence</b>	any sexual act committed against someone without that person's freely given consent. An umbrella term used to refer to many different experiences.
<b>Cyberbullying</b> <b>Cyberstalking</b>	the use of technology to send/post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person. the use of technology to stalk, harass, or threaten another person, often used in conjunction with offline stalking.
<b>Extortion</b>	a form of sexual exploitation that employs non-physical forms of <b>coercion</b> to extort sexual favors or gratification.
<b>Image Based Sexual Exploitation</b>	A method of extortion, commonly referred to as “revenge porn”. The nonconsensual use of someone else’s sexual images or texts, including being a recipient of someone else’s sexual images or texts without the consent of subject.

# Virginia Laws

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Very complex, but basically?

- Harassment (anything obscene, illegal, or immoral done to harass, intimidate, or coerce) = Class 1 misdemeanor.
- Possession of ANY sexually explicit visual material utilizing or having as a subject an underage person = Class 6 felony.
- Image based sexual exploitation = Class 1 misdemeanor.

A longer description of each law is in your reference packet.

Note that this is for reference and not as legal advice or certification.

# Statistics 100

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- One in four young adults experiences harassment or abuse through technology.
- 52% of youth who experience digital abuse are also experiencing physical abuse.
- 33% of digital abuse victims said they were also sexually coerced.
- 84 % of digital abuse victims said they were also psychologically abused.

**Citation:** Urban Institute

# Statistics 100

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- 28% of youth say they would not know what to do if they were harassed or bullied online.
- 20% of young adults have engaged in cyberbullying behaviors.
  - Posting mean/hurtful information, embarrassing pictures, spreading rumors, publicizing private communications, sending anonymous emails, or cyber-pranking
- 52% of young adults have given out personal information online to someone they don't know offline.
  - One in four (25%) have shared personal photos and/or physical descriptions of themselves (twice as many females as males).

**Citation:** McAffey Survey

# Grooming & Social Media

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Perpetrators use social media to build intimacy and trust with their victims by:

- Graduating from online messages → sharing photos → video chatting → meeting in person
- Using information accessible on social media to pretend to be someone else or to pretend they have similar interests
- Online chatting feels “safer” than in-person meeting
- Creating multiple profiles to “vouch” for themselves
- Using info to stalk their victims or punish them if cut off

# Internet is Not Evil...

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But it can be used as a tool for people to facilitate abuse and SV.

This can look like:

- Spreading someone else's information without their consent, whether the information is itself sexual or as a means to facilitate sexual violence (ex. sharing someone's address)
- Taking, copying, or reproducing sexual photos, video, recordings, or messages of another person without someone else's consent
- Demanding access to social media or restricting use of digital communication as a means of control

- Pretending to be someone else on social media in order to destroy social or professional relationships
- Sending abusive messages through digital means
- Threatening to release someone's information unless they perform sexual acts/produce sexual content
- Stalking someone based on information received from digital communication OR stalking someone through digital communication
  - 1 in 4 stalking victims reported some form of cyberstalking such as e-mail (83%) or instant messaging (35%). (DOJ 2012)



# Safety Tips for Your Social Media

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- Blocking is not for the Weak!
- Be wary of friending strangers, esp. if your info is highly sensitive
- Do a sweep to see what info is publicly available
  - Google yourself!
- Learn about and use privacy settings
- Limit how many people have access to social media passwords
- Ask consent before tagging, sharing, or posting other people's info
- Respect the limits and boundaries of others on social media

# Talking to College Students About Social Media

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- Don't judge!
  - Students today have been around social media most of their lives, and can be sensitive to the idea that older folks "just don't get it."
  - Teach students about consequences
  - Can't take back something once you post it or share it
  - Posting or sharing pictures of people under 18 is considered child porn
  - Posting or sharing sexually explicit content without the subject's consent is considered sexual exploitation under University policy
  - The "online world" affects the "real world"
- Encourage students to learn about and use privacy settings
- Model these limits yourself – do you accept friend requests from students?
- Talk about the limits of social media communication
  - Lack of body language, tone, context
  - Inaccurate/biased info
- Talk about boundaries, consent, and social media

# If You Experience Cyberstalking/Cyberbullying:

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- Save all emails, messages, and other communications.
  - Have both electronic and print copies
- Save all records of threats against the victim's safety or life.
  - Include written/recorded threats, date, time, and circumstances
- Contact the perpetrator's internet service provider.
  - ISPs prohibit their users from using their service to harass others
  - May result in discontinuation of the harasser's internet service/will put the ISP on notice to maintain record of the harasser's internet use
- Keep detailed records of contact with ISP and law enforcement officials.

Citation: U.S. Department of Justice



# Social Media & Intimate Partner Violence

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- Relationships on social media can make it appear as though other people have “perfect lives”.
- Digital communication can seem less serious than other types of abuse.

“It’s 2018, but in many families there is still shame associated with being a victim of domestic violence, and survivors often try to ‘put a good face’ on the relationship,” said NNEDV President and CEO Kim Gandy.



[About this website](#)

HUFFINGTONPOST.COM

**A Picture-Perfect Marriage On Facebook That Was Anything But**

# Social Media & Intimate Partner Violence

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- Having full access to someone else's social media is considered a sign of trustworthiness.
- Consent is often assumed for social media.
  - Ex. Sending nude pictures to people on dating sites without consent
- Digital communication can move a relationship more quickly.
  - Sexting doesn't feel like "real sex".
  - Escalation from messages to photos/video

If we **date** you can  
have my phone  
password, read my  
texts, answer my  
phone. I have  
**NOTHING to hide.**

Type **Yes** if you agree.



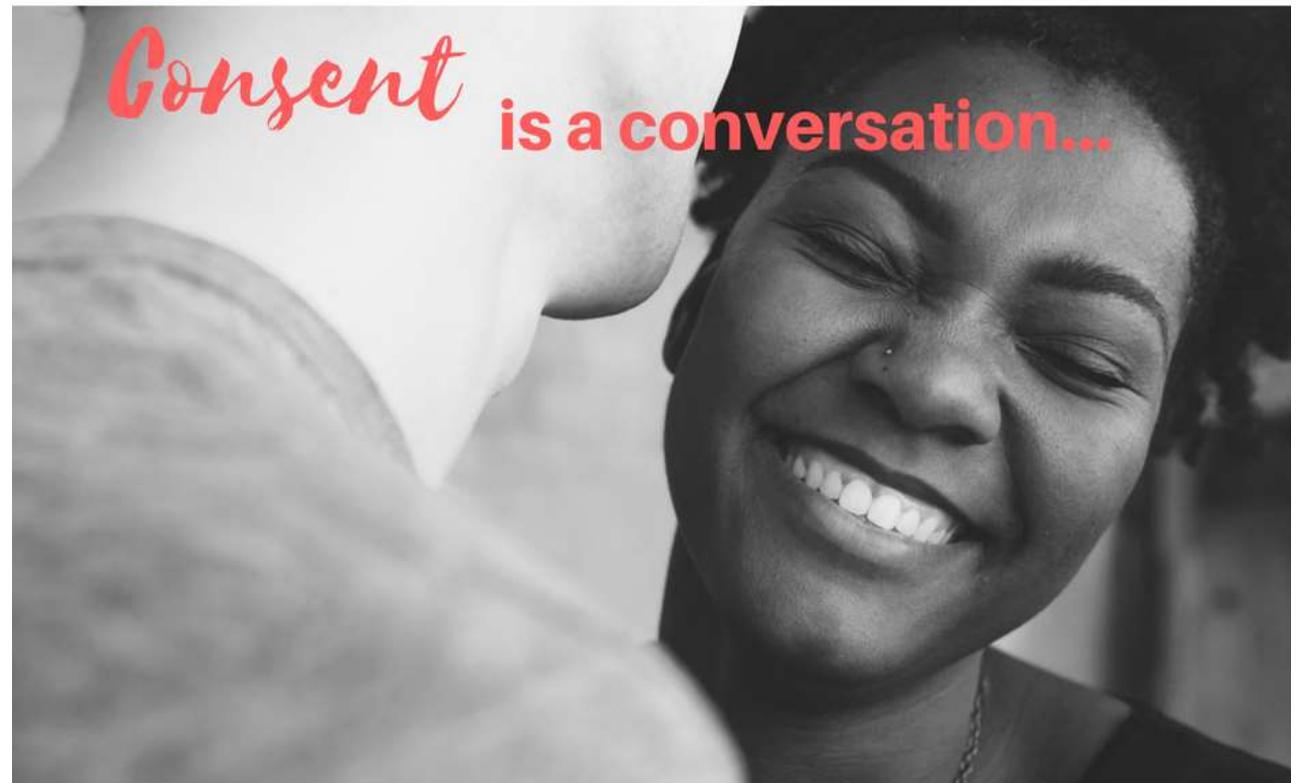
# Consent & Social Media

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Consent is permission that is sober, verbal, conscious, willingly given, enthusiastic, continuous, and revocable.

It is absolutely mandatory.

- [Can I Borrow Your Phone](#)



# Social Media & Relationships Example

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A student comes to you, visibly upset. After some comforting, the student discloses that they had recently broken up with their partner.

They are upset about the break up, but also worried – their partner has some nude photos the student had sent while they were together. Your student knows their ex-partner is angry and is worried about what they might do with the photos.



**What could you do next?**



# Social Media & Relationships Example

## Questions To Ask:

1. Does doing this go against any personal/legal/physical boundaries?
2. Do you trust this person?
3. Does this person's past behavior show that they respect your boundaries?
4. Do you want to do this or feel like you have to?
5. Has this person consented to receiving your message?
6. What would you expect to happen if you split up and this message is still in their possession?
7. If your partner was mad at you and in possession of this message, what could you expect them to do?

# How Do I Support Someone Who Is Already A Survivor/Victim?

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# Social Media & Survivor Support

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- Ability to capture, record and/or share evidence
- A way of sharing one's own story and connecting with other survivors or resources
- Accessible way to get help for dealing with assault/abuse
  - Helplines with IM, text, or chat functions; online peer support groups
- Public demand for accountability from institutions
  - #MeToo, #TimesUp campaigns
- Easily sharable information about resources, red flags, symptoms of abuse, and coping skills

# Example: I Am Jada

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- “I Am Jada”
- 16 year old Jada was drugged and assaulted at a party. She didn’t know what had happened until photos of her naked, unconscious body circulated around the Internet, tagged #jadapose.
- She took a new photo with a new hashtag #IamJada, which was posted by Team Ronan Daily.
- Twitter and Instagram removed the original pictures, but GIFS (moving pictures) still remain.
- **“Everybody has already seen my face and my body, but that’s not what I am and who I am.”**



# Resources

**Cyber Civil Rights Initiative Hotline: 1-844-878-2274**  
[www.cybercivilrights.org](http://www.cybercivilrights.org)

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255**

**Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 in the US.**

**Cyber-Tipline for Child Sexual Exploitation:**  
<https://report.cybertip.org/>

# Contact Us

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- Crisis Hotline: 540.371.1666
- Office: 540.371.6771
- E-mail: [info@rcasa.org](mailto:info@rcasa.org)
- Website: [www.rcasa.org](http://www.rcasa.org)





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**Questions?  
Comments?**