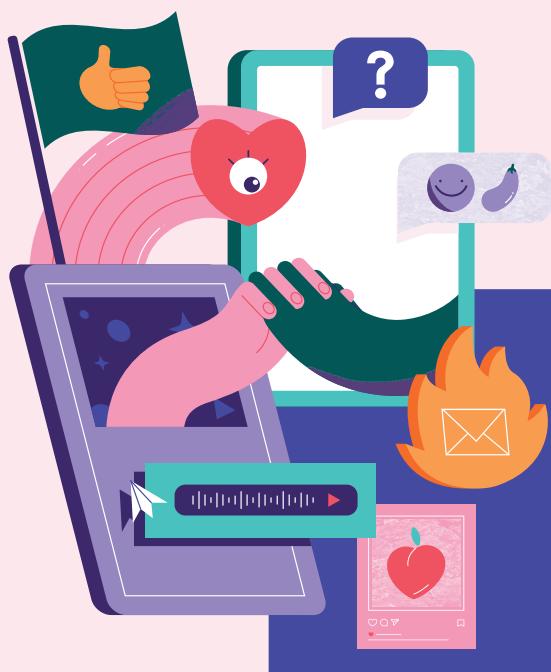# Cybersexuality

Understand   Prevent   Intervene

Understand cybersexuality

Cybersexuality refers to all forms of online sexual behaviour.
It can be experienced in different ways:
- Passive ⟶ searching for information, consuming pornography, etc.
- More interactive ⟶ sexting, interactive online sexual games, etc.

Why turn to cybersexuality?

- Explore sexuality, desires and limits
- Test power of seduction
- Build self-esteem
- Create intimacy
- Assert identity
- Control digital image
- Respond/conform to social pressures
- Monetize image and sexuality (generate income)

Legal framework

For minors, the legal framework surrounding cybersexuality is a central issue, especially when it comes to sharing intimate images. Sharing intimate images without consent is a criminal offence.

- Any production, sharing or distribution of a sexual image of a person under the age of 18 is illegal and is considered child pornography
- Sexting between minors raises legal issues: it is prohibited by law, although cases brought before the courts are rare

Legal consequences

Under 18 years old

Seizure of electronic devices, fines, YCJA files, etc.

18 years old and over

Seizure of electronic devices, imprisonment, criminal record, registration as a sex offender, etc.

Online sexual violence

This is a form of violence carried out using the various digital technologies available.
It is part of a dynamic of control, power and violation of personal boundaries online. It's aggressive, unwanted and unsolicited.
This type of violence has a real impact on young people's mental health as well as their social, professional and academic life.

It can manifest itself in many ways, including:
- Revenge porn
- Sextorsion
- Deepfake
- Online sexual harassment
- Grooming and Child Luring
- Online touching via avatars

Questions to ask yourself before sending an image of yourself:

- What is the worst thing that could happen if I share this image?
- Do I know other, less risky ways to flirt or attract someone?
- Do I know what to do if a photo of me is shared without my consent?
- How would I feel if other people saw this image of me?

How can you intervene ?

In order to properly support and guide young people in the world of cybersexuality, some approaches are recommended to help build trust:
- Be curious and ask non-judgmental questions about young people's digital practices
- Create discussion spaces on the subject
- Recognize the expertise and reality of young people in the digital world
- Present real-life cases without moralizing
- Recognize that online experiences can be just as meaningful or life-changing as offline experiences
- Show humility and refer to specialized resources when necessary
- Remind young people that what goes online, stays online

Digital technology is part of young people's reality: let's listen to them and support them

More information

For more information

Check out the tools and resources on cybersexuality at the following address (in French only):

https://santepubliquemontreal.ca/professionnels-et-partenaires/thematiques-de-sante-publique/sante-sexuelle/cybersexualites