

# Cybersexuality

Understand

Prevent

Intervene

## Specific resources for young people

Need help now: your rights

[needhelpnow.ca/en/#your-rights](http://needhelpnow.ca/en/#your-rights)

En Mode Ado: Les sextos

[enmodeado.ca/les-sextos](http://enmodeado.ca/les-sextos)

The PlaMP: sexting guide

<https://piamp.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SextingPiampSiteInternetENG.pdf>

Tel-jeunes: Les sextos

[teljeunes.com/fr/jeunes/sexualite/sextos](http://teljeunes.com/fr/jeunes/sexualite/sextos)

Kids help phone: Sexting basics: How to stay safe

[kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/sexting-basics-how-stay-safe](http://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/sexting-basics-how-stay-safe)

More information



## Intervention resources

**Alterado:** Tools and videos for facilitators on healthy relationships in the age of social media (in French only)

[rmjq.org/projets/alterados](http://rmjq.org/projets/alterados)

**Cybertip.ca:** Sexual assault facilitated by technology

[cybertip.ca/en](http://cybertip.ca/en)

**Marie-Vincent Foundation:** Preventing Online Sexual Violence among Youth with a Peer-Based Prevention Approach (PBPA)

[marie-vincent.org/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/08/Training-Guide-PBPA\\_Marie-Vincent.pdf](http://marie-vincent.org/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/08/Training-Guide-PBPA_Marie-Vincent.pdf)

**MediaSmarts:** Talking to your kids about sexting

[mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/tip-sheet/tipsheet\\_talking\\_your\\_kids\\_about\\_sexting.pdf](http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/tip-sheet/tipsheet_talking_your_kids_about_sexting.pdf)



## For more information:

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

[santepubliquemontreal.ca/professionnels-et-partenaires/thematiques-de-sante-publique/sante-sexuelle/cybersexualites](http://santepubliquemontreal.ca/professionnels-et-partenaires/thematiques-de-sante-publique/sante-sexuelle/cybersexualites)

## Understand cybersexuality

Cybersexuality refers to all forms of online sexual behaviour. It can be more passive (e.g. searching for information, consuming pornography) or more interactive (e.g. sexting, sexual interactive online games). A better understanding of these realities helps us support young people with kindness and understanding.



## Why turn to cybersexuality?

Adolescence is a key period where young people seek to better understand and know their bodies, sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Cybersexuality can let them:

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

## Sexting: between exploration and risk

What it can allow:

- Exploring one's sexuality at their own pace
- Expressing desires or identity

What it can lead to:

- Non-consensual sharing
- Harassment (cyberbullying)
- Blackmail (sextortion)
- Social or relational pressure

## Safe Sexting

- Make sure to get the person's explicit consent
- Protect your identity by avoiding showing your face, tattoos, or other identifying feature
- Set clear, shared rules (confidentiality, boundaries)
- Use secure platforms with end-to-end encryption

QUESTIONS TO ASK  
YOURSELF BEFORE SENDING  
AN IMAGE OF YOURSELF:



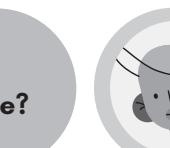
Do I know what to do if a photo of me is shared without my consent?



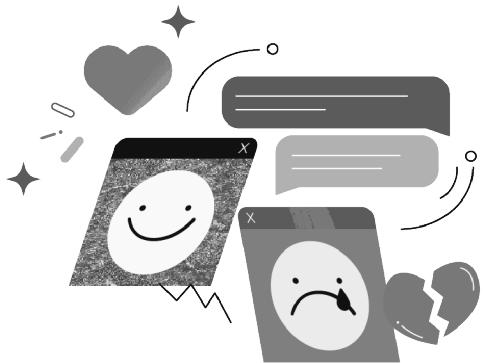
Do I know other, less risky ways to flirt or attract someone?



How would I feel if other people saw this image of me?



What is the worst thing that could happen if I share this image?



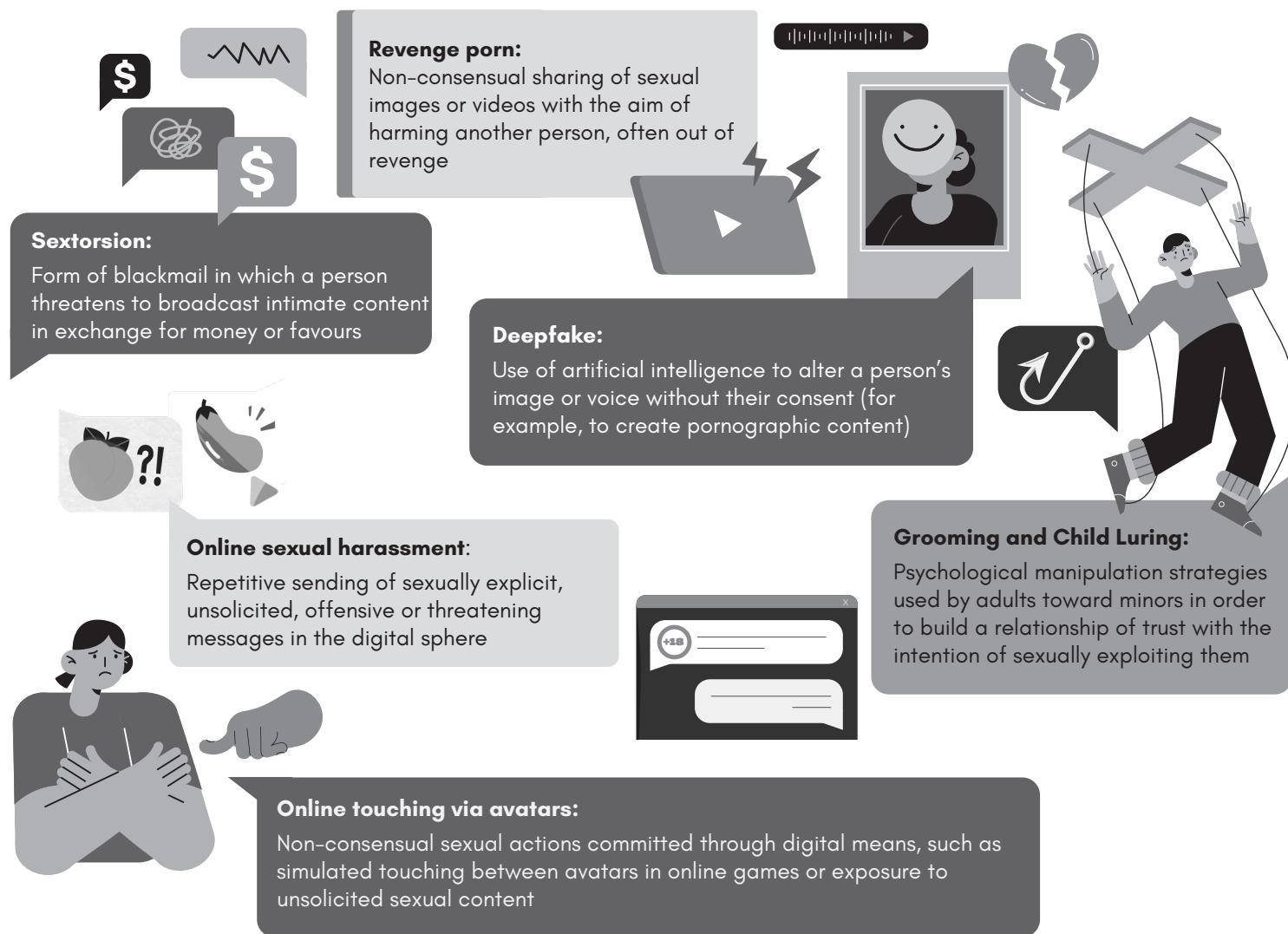
## Why might cybersexuality be a cause for concern?

Many people turn to cybersexuality out of curiosity, without knowing all the implications and issues involved. Some experiences with cybersexuality can be very positive, allowing for healthy sexual and identity exploration, while others can be unpleasant and even destructive.

## 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:



## 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	18 years old and over
Seizure of electronic devices, fines, YCJA files, etc.	Seizure of electronic devices, imprisonment, criminal record, registration as a sex offender, etc.

## Digital permanence: what goes online, stays online

Any shared content may remain accessible indefinitely and damage the reputation, relationships or professional future of the person concerned. Online actions are often impulsive, but they can have long-lasting effects. It's vital to make young people aware of these realities.

### Strategies for better online security

- Check that the privacy settings of each application are activated
- Use secure, encrypted applications

## 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