



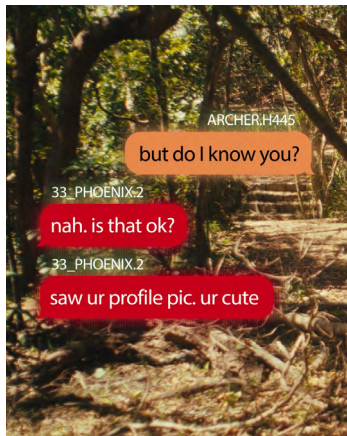
About this guide

This guide is designed to support parents and caregivers to have meaningful conversations with their young people about their safety online.

Sextortion: Break the silence

How it happens and why it's never your fault

A guide for caregivers



About the film

Duration: 5 - 6 minutes

Audience: 13 - 15 year olds

Follow Archer, Rohan and Jade as they form online relationships that quickly turn dark. What begins as trust and flirtation becomes grooming, manipulation and blackmail as their conversations spiral into sextortion.

Through their stories, guided by an expert voice, we **recognise** how easily sextortion unfolds and how shame traps victims into silence. We see how difficult it can be to know how to **react** in these situations, and how reaching out for help or to **report** what's happened can help the young people reclaim control. We are reminded that sextortion is never the victim's fault, and support is always available.

This film aims to encourage young people to reach out for help if they experience sextortion online. It has been created through deep consultation with teams of Young Advisors, Educator Advisors and subject matter experts. Each young character's story is grounded in research and lived experience script consultation.

About sextortion

Child online sexual exploitation impacts young Australians every day, but it's scarcely discussed and the deep shame young people feel when it happens is stopping them reaching out for help.

Sextortion: a form of blackmail where someone threatens to share a nude or sexual image or video of you unless you give in to their demands.

[Research](#) tells us that more than 1 in 10 adolescents experience sexual extortion in their lifetime, usually before they turn 16, and often more than once. The perpetrator is usually someone the young person meets online, and 90% of the time they make first contact. Demands may be for money or intimate images. Young people who have more visibility online are vulnerable to being targeted, and 40% of victims are sextorted with images which have been digitally manipulated. The perpetrator [grooms](#) the young person, gaining their trust, then quickly turns against them. The situation often escalates quickly, in the worst cases, resulting in [tragic loss of life](#).

Like any technology-facilitated harm, sextortion will continue to evolve, as will the laws related to it and the supports available for those who experience it. For this reason, the video does not include specifics, but these can be explored in associated learning activities.

Approaching conversations with curiosity

Content notice: This film is based on true stories. It explores online child sexual exploitation, technology-facilitated abuse and suicide.

Having regular and open-minded conversations with your young person about their online world can help you to notice if something doesn't seem right. Regular conversations may increase the likelihood they'll talk to you if they're worried about something online. Remember, if your child experiences sextortion, it is never their fault.

We asked our Young Advisors what they'd recommend parents and caregivers keep in mind when having conversations about this topic ...

'Start with open, curiosity-based questions that invite conversation rather than judgment... [this] can open the door to honest discussion without making the child feel blamed or watched.'

'Affirm that you would offer full support and zero judgement and also create a space for open conversation.'

Conversation starters

These conversation starters were written by our Young Advisors. These suggestions are designed for you to choose ways to speak with your young person which feel supportive of you both. We recommend you watch the video and to read eSafety's guidance on [dealing with sextortion](#) to familiarise yourself with the topic.

Specific questions to ask after your child has seen this video:

- What stood out to you in the video today? Was there anything that surprised you or made you think differently?
- How do you think someone your age might feel if that happened to them?
- Did anything in the video feel familiar, like something you've seen online or heard about?

Questions about your child's online experiences:

- Why do you think people your age feel pressure to share personal stuff online?
- If you could redesign the internet to make it safer, what would you change first?
- Do you ever see stuff online that makes you feel uncomfortable?
- Can I ask you some questions about the internet? You're not in trouble for anything at all, I'm just curious about the internet because things have changed so much since I was a kid (you might then ask anything you're curious about, or use some of the other questions listed here).

Questions which explore responding to unsafe situations online:

- What would you do if someone online made you feel uncomfortable or pressured?
- Who would you feel safe talking to if something like this happened?
- What would make it easier for you to come to me if something ever felt wrong?
- What do you think adults sometimes get wrong when they talk about this stuff?
- Do you think adults make it easier or harder to talk about stuff like this?
- How do you think I'd react if I knew you were sharing nudes with your boyfriend/ girlfriend/ partner? Would this stop you from talking to me?
- Do you know what you can do if someone shares or edits images without permission?

Our Educator Advisors also shared their recommendations for continuing these conversations at home.

Things to keep in mind:

- Sometimes it can be easier to speak in the third person (e.g. 'If this happened to someone you know').
- Be open to the fact that this process of sexual development and exploration online is common in adolescence.
- Tell your young person: 'If someone ever made you feel trapped or scared about something online, I'd want to help you through it, not judge you.'
- It's okay not to have all the answers straight away. These harms aren't talked about enough and the technology changes quickly. There are always opportunities to learn about it, and you could do that together.

More questions you could ask:

- What do you think you'd notice if a friend of yours was experiencing this? What about you - how would we know?
- What would you do if a friend told you that something like this had happened to them?
- What would you do if you saw a fake image of a friend being shared?
- What is your school process when issues like this happen?
- If this happened to you, how are you most likely to get help?
- What does it mean to "know" someone? - Explain how this means you need to know them in person.
- How can you report these kinds of issues?

If your child experiences sextortion

1. **If they are at immediate risk of harm, call 000.**
2. **Make it clear you support them. Young Advisors say it's helpful to hear things like:**
 - a. "I believe you."
 - b. "This should never have happened to you."
 - c. "You're not in trouble."
 - d. "I'm so glad you told me this."
 - e. "We can figure this out together."
3. **Together, read advice about sextortion and what to do from [eSafety](#) and [ACCCE](#) including:**
 - a. Stop contact with the blackmailer and don't send money or images.
 - b. [Collect evidence](#).
 - c. Block the blackmailer.
 - d. Report to the platform (use [eSafety's guide](#) to find out how) and to [ACCCE](#).
4. **If your child has already complied with the blackmailer's demands for:**
 - a. Money - contact their bank who may be able to cancel the transfer.
 - b. Images - contact [eSafety](#) who can help to quickly remove any images which have been shared.
5. **Identify places your child could get support, either now or in the futures, for example:**
 - a. [Kids Helpline](#).
 - b. [Bravehearts](#).
6. **Remind them they're not alone, and they're not to blame.**
7. **Be aware of your own wellbeing as their caregiver and reach out for support, for example:**
 - a. [Lifeline](#).
 - b. [13YARN](#).
 - c. [Parent helplines and hotlines](#) (state by state).

You can read more about supporting someone who has experienced image-based abuse on the [eSafety website](#).