



Sometimes this experience is so distressing,
people don't feel there is a way out.
There is always a way out.

Anonymous and confidential help is available.
Scan the QR Code for the Kids Helpline Website.



Sextortion: How it happens and why it's never your fault

If you experience sextortion, it is never your fault. Ever.

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.

Statistically either you or someone you know will be experiencing this. It can happen to anyone. No one 'deserves' it, no matter what.

How you'd know if this is happening to you

If someone threatens to share a nude picture or video of you, that's image-based abuse and it's illegal.

Sometimes people deliberately pretend to be a different person to trick you into liking them and trusting them with personal information or nude images/ videos.

You might notice things like:

1. **They contact you first. Usually, it's someone you don't know.**
2. **They make you feel like you can trust them.** They might say things like: 'You're so easy to talk to,' 'You're so mature for your age,' 'you can trust me'.
3. **They make you feel like you shouldn't tell your friends or family.** They might say things like: 'Don't tell anyone, they wouldn't understand,' 'We'll keep this between us,' 'I won't tell anyone if you don't.'
4. **They talk about sexual or very personal things.** You might share nude image or personal information.
5. **They threaten you and make you feel ashamed.** They might say things like: 'Give me money or I'll send these nude images to all your contacts,' 'If you don't send me more pictures, I'll show everyone these,' 'I'll ruin your life.' **It's important to remember, it's very unlikely that they will actually do these things. They are trying to scare you.**

Sextortion can happen very quickly, even in just a few hours. People who do this target people and deliberately manipulate them. **It is a crime. It is never your fault,** even if you've shared information or images with them.

What to do if this happens to you

1. **If you are at immediate risk of harm, call 000.**
2. **Tell someone you trust. This could be a friend or adult.** If you can't tell anyone around you, call or webchat Kids Helpline. They can support you anonymously and confidentially.
3. **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 them to the platform (use eSafety's guide to find out how) and to ACCCE.
4. **If you have already complied with the blackmailer's demands for:**
 - a. Money - Contact your 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. **Get support**
 - a. Kids Helpline (for children and young people aged between 5-25) on 1800 55 1800 <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>
 - b. Bravehearts (support for child sexual abuse survivors) on 1800 272 831 <https://bravehearts.org.au>
 - c. 13YARN on 13 92 76 www.13yarn.org.au

How to tell someone

It can be difficult to know what words to use to talk about this if it happens to you. Here are some ideas:

- Plan a time you think is best to talk about it - e.g. in the car, while you're out walking, before school, after dinner.
- Think about the words you'd like to use - e.g.
 - 'I was wondering if I could tell you about something that's been happening online?'
 - 'Someone online has been making me feel unsafe, could we talk about it?'
 - 'I sent someone photos online and they're saying they'll show everyone unless I give them money.'
- Think about what you'd like from the conversation - to feel heard, help making it stop, what would you like them to do?
- Think about what you might do if they don't respond the way you hope - what would you say? Make a plan for who you will talk to next. Never give up. Keep telling people until someone helps you.
- You could write yourself some notes to help you to say what you want to say, even if you're feeling nervous or unsure.

What to do if this happens to a friend

Helping create a supportive environment with your friends/peers means everyone is more likely to tell someone and get help if something bad is happening online.

- Notice if your friend's behaviour changes. If someone's acting secretive or stressed, ask kindly if there's anything worrying them.
- Talk about online safety like any other wellbeing topic, share the things that make you feel safe or unsafe.
- Encourage digital kindness: don't screenshot, share, or tease others' private moments.
- Encourage one another to get help or report if something bad is happening.

Myth busting

Myth: I'll get in trouble if people find out what's happening.

Truth: This isn't your fault, and you shouldn't get in trouble. Think about people you trust, who have supported you before. If you are worried about getting in trouble and don't feel there is anyone you can tell, contact Kids Helpline and tell them. No one should handle this alone, and there are people who can support you and give you advice without getting in trouble.

Myth: It's my fault because I shared images I shouldn't have.

Truth: Sextortion is a crime, and it's the person blackmailing you who has done the wrong thing. It is normal to experiment with sexuality online as an adolescent. Victims of sextortion have been deliberately manipulated. They haven't done anything wrong.

Myth: I can't tell my teacher or parent, so there's no one who can help me.

Truth: Even if you can't tell an adult around you, there are organisations who are trained to help with exactly this stuff, and who help young people like you everyday. They won't be shocked or react badly. They will listen and help you stop what's happening. You can talk to [Kids Helpline](#), [eSafety](#) and [ACCCE](#).

Myth: No one is going to believe me or take me seriously.

Truth: Supportive responses include "I believe you", "I'm so glad you told me", "We can figure this out together". If you tell someone and they don't believe you or take you seriously, tell someone else. Keep telling people until you get a supportive response and get the help you need. Unfortunately, people don't react the way we'd hope, but there is always someone else who will believe you and help you. You deserve to be heard and it is never your fault.

Myth: My parents will find out if I tell police, eSafety or Kids Helpline.

Truth: Every situation is unique, and the priority is your safety. If you make a report, tell the police if there's a reason that you're worried about your parents finding out. The police will want to ensure you are safe and have the support of a responsible adult to guide and assist you through this difficult time. Seek help and support from a trusted adult, which could be a relative or school counsellor. Nothing is so bad that you can't tell someone. You don't have to go through this alone, and there is help available. You should feel in control of your story, and if they do feel your parents need to be told, you can speak how that might happen with the police.