

Online Harassment Response Toolkit

A comprehensive guide to recognizing, documenting, and responding to online harassment. You have the power to take control of your digital safety.



Types of Online Harassment

ANGRY
CREATIVE

Cyberbullying & Threats

Repeated hostile messages, intimidation tactics, or direct threats of violence sent through social media, email, or messaging platforms.



Impersonation & Identity Theft

Someone creates fake accounts using your name, photos, or personal information to damage your reputation or deceive others.



Doxxing

Malicious publication of your private information online—home address, phone number, workplace, or family details—without consent.



Image-Based Abuse

Sharing intimate images without permission, deepfakes, or manipulated photos designed to humiliate or blackmail.

Your First Response: Document Everything

Why Documentation Matters

Thorough documentation creates a clear record that strengthens your case with platforms, employers, law enforcement, and legal professionals. The more evidence you preserve, the more options you have.

Time is critical. Content can be deleted quickly, so act immediately when harassment occurs.

01

Screenshot Everything

Capture the full context: usernames, timestamps, URLs, and surrounding conversation. Use multiple screenshots if needed.

02

Record Digital Evidence

Save emails with full headers, download videos, capture stories before they disappear. Note dates and times in your timezone.

03

Archive URLs & Profiles

Use web archiving tools like Archive.today or Wayback Machine to preserve pages that might be deleted or modified.

04

Create a Secure Log

Maintain a password-protected document with chronological entries, descriptions of each incident, and your emotional state at the time.

Collecting and Organizing Evidence



Storage Strategy

- Keep evidence in multiple locations: cloud storage, external drive, and printed copies
- Use encrypted folders with strong passwords
- Never store evidence only on the platform where harassment occurred

What to Preserve

- Screenshots showing full context and metadata
- Original messages and emails with headers
- URLs and archived web pages
- Witness statements from others who saw the harassment

Documentation Details

- Date and time of each incident
- Platform where it occurred
- Harasser's username and profile information
- Your response or lack thereof

Platform Reporting and Blocking

Report to the Platform

Use built-in reporting tools on social media, dating apps, or forums. Be specific about policy violations. Most platforms have dedicated forms for harassment, threats, and impersonation.

Block Aggressively

Block the harasser and any associated accounts. Don't engage or respond—it often escalates the situation. Your silence is not weakness; it's strategy.

Lock Down Privacy Settings

Review privacy settings across all platforms. Make profiles private, limit who can tag you, disable location sharing, and restrict contact to known connections only.

Follow Up and Escalate

If platforms don't respond within 48-72 hours, escalate. Tag official support accounts publicly or request a case review. Persistence matters.

Understanding Your Legal Options



When to Involve Law Enforcement

Contact police immediately if harassment includes credible threats of violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, or blackmail. Bring your documented evidence.

Civil Legal Remedies

Restraining Orders: Protective orders can legally prohibit contact

Civil Lawsuits: You may sue for defamation, emotional distress, or invasion of privacy

DMCA Takedowns: Remove copyrighted intimate images using Digital Millennium Copyright Act claims

Finding Legal Help

Many organizations offer free legal consultations for harassment victims. Cyber Civil Rights Initiative and local legal aid societies are good starting points.

Responding to Doxxing

Immediate Security Actions

Alert family members and close friends. Vary your routines temporarily. Consider staying elsewhere if you feel unsafe. Contact local police to file a report and request extra patrols if needed.

Protect Your Accounts

Change passwords immediately using a password manager. Enable two-factor authentication everywhere. Set up account alerts for unusual activity. Consider freezing your credit with all three bureaus.

Remove Exposed Information

Contact data broker sites (Spokeo, WhitePages, PeopleFinder) and request removal. Use opt-out services. Google yourself regularly and request removal of sensitive results through their content removal tool.

Monitor and Maintain

Set up Google Alerts for your name, address, and phone number. Check regularly for new postings of your information. Document every instance and continue reporting to platforms.

Addressing Image-Based Abuse

Immediate Removal Steps

Report to the platform immediately using specific "intimate image" or "revenge porn" reporting options. Most major platforms have expedited review processes for this content. File a DMCA takedown if you hold copyright.

Legal Protections Available

46 states have laws criminalizing non-consensual intimate image sharing. You can pursue criminal charges and civil remedies. Organizations like CCRI offer free legal support and removal assistance.

Search Engine Removal

Google, Bing, and other search engines will remove intimate images from search results. Use their dedicated removal request forms. This doesn't delete the content but makes it much harder to find.

Professional Support Services

Organizations like Take It Down by NCMEC help remove intimate images if you're under 18. StopNCII.org creates digital fingerprints to prevent image sharing across platforms. Both services are confidential and free.

Notifying Your Employer or School

Why It Matters

If harassment affects your work or school environment, official notification creates a record, triggers institutional support, and may provide legal protections. Many employers have duty-of-care obligations.

What to Include

- Clear description of the harassment
- How it impacts your work or safety
- Specific requests for support or accommodations
- Copies of your documentation

01

Document in Writing

Email HR or school administration with a formal report. Keep copies for your records. Follow up in writing after any verbal conversations.

02

Request Specific Actions

Ask for schedule changes, remote work options, security escorts, or other reasonable accommodations. Be clear about what you need to feel safe.

03

Know Your Rights

Employers must address harassment that creates a hostile work environment. Schools have Title IX obligations. If they fail to act, you have legal recourse.



Prioritizing Mental Health Support



Professional Counseling

Seek therapists experienced in trauma, especially those familiar with cyber harassment. Many offer sliding scale fees or work with victim compensation programs. RAINN and Crisis Text Line provide immediate support.



Support Networks

Connect with others who've experienced similar harassment. Support groups—online or in-person—provide validation and practical advice. You're not alone in this experience.



Self-Care Practices

Establish boundaries around technology use. Take breaks from social media. Engage in activities that ground you—exercise, creative pursuits, time with trusted friends. Healing isn't linear; be patient with yourself.



Crisis Resources Available 24/7: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988), Crisis Text Line (text HOME to 741741), RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline (800-656-4673)

Organizations That Can Help



Cyber Civil Rights Initiative

Free legal support, removal assistance, and advocacy for victims of non-consensual intimate image sharing and online abuse.

cybercivilrights.org



Online SOS

Guides for removing non-consensual intimate content, reporting impersonation, and navigating platform policies across major social networks.

onlinesosnetwork.org



Without My Consent

Resources and support for victims of privacy violations, with state-by-state legal information and platform reporting guides.

withoutmyconsent.org



Crash Override Network

Support for people experiencing severe online harassment, including strategic assistance and emotional support from trained advocates.

crashoverridenetwork.com



HeartMob (RightToBe)

Online platform offering real-time support, documentation tools, and a community of helpers for those facing online harassment.

iheartmob.org



NNEDV Safety Net

Technology safety resources and training specifically for survivors of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault.

nnedv.org/safetynet

About Cybersecurity Non-Profit

Making cybersecurity knowledge accessible to everyone through education, community, and practical resources.

Business & Non-Profit Security

Kids Safety

Women's Security

Family Cybersecurity

Senior Digital Safety

Parents & Educators

Everything we offer is completely free.

Visit us: csnp.org

Access our resource library:

csnp.org/resources