

Welfare Awareness Topic: Image Based Sexual Abuse

Overview – *Image-based sexual abuse is when an individual shares private, sexually explicit images or videos of another person without their consent, aimed at causing distress or harm, and is a criminal offence.¹ Image-Based sexual abuse can involve any individual uploading intimate sexual images of the victim to cause the victim humiliation or embarrassment¹. Any sharing of explicit or sexual, images or videos, without the concern of the person in the image is a criminal offence.*

Advances in technology have changed the ways in which sexual violence can be perpetrated, and one new manifestation of this is the non-consensual creation and/or distribution of private sexual images- 'image-based sexual abuse'.¹ Image-based sexual abuse can have a profound negative effect on wellbeing, and victims can experience symptoms of depression, anxiety, and in some cases suicidal tendencies.¹ Image-Based sexual abuse is previously known as 'Revenge Porn', an outdated term that does not encapsulate the array of circumstances or motives of Image-Based sexual abuse. There are various kinds of image-based sexual abuse, this includes Upskirting, Recording Sexual Assaults, Sextortion, and Pornographic Photoshopping (like Deepfakes).

Recording Sexual Assaults and Sextortion - This includes the recording of rape or sexual assaults, whereby images may also be used to harass and humiliate the victim. Sextortion is when perpetrators may coerce victims into creating and sharing images, and then threatening the victim with exposure.

Pornographic Photoshopping – this can include superimposing an individual's face on to pornographic photos or videos without consent (including deepfakes) and is currently not included in English 'revenge porn' laws.

Upskirting - Upskirting is a form of sexual harassment, and is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, anyone, and any gender can be a victim of upskirting. In 2019, The Voyeurism act outlawed 'upskirting' in which the purpose is to obtain sexual gratification, or to cause humiliation, distress, or alarm; including instances where culprits say images were just 'taken for a laugh' or if paparazzi are caught taking intrusive images. Upskirting is not 'just a prank' and victims and culprits should know that reports to the police will be taken seriously.

Article/Source / Find out more

- <https://voic.org.uk/> - Victims of Image Crime: Speak Out! Is a site aimed to empower and help people who have experienced Image Based Sexual Abuse.
- Queen Mary University offers free legal advice for victims of image based sexual abuse [here](#).
- If you want to find out more, there is a podcast [here](#) exploring Image-based Sexual Abuse, its consequences and more information about the world of nudes and leaks.
- You can find support and information on the **victim support** website [here](#).
- The [Revenge Porn Helpline](#) is a service supporting adults who have experienced image-based sexual abuse. Their helpline is open from 10 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays, and a helpline practitioner can give you advice and support, and you can get in touch on 0345 6000 459. You can also get in touch via email, on help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk , or get in touch using their anonymous reporting form, Whisper, [here](#).
- [Galop](#) have support and helplines for anyone in the UK who is LGBT+ and has experienced domestic abuse or hate crime.

Support- If you would like to talk to the safeguarding team about anything you have just read, we will listen without judgement and signpost you to support. If you would like to talk to a member of the Safeguarding Team then please get in touch: safeguarding@bpp.com