



*Li taan paasii. Li taan ki vyayn.
From our past. For our future*

Child Youth & Family

Fall Online Education & Awareness Series

2024

Keeping Children and Youth Safe Series-Agenda

November 14th, 2:00pm–3:30pm (Part#2)

Staying Safe Series: This three-part series is based keeping children and youth safe from online predators, includes what is youth sexual exploitation and child luring and how to keep our children safe.

- Introductions-What is Staying Safe Series
- What is Child and Youth Sexual Exploitation? What is Exploitation?
- Law Overview
- Who is Vulnerable? / Review of Types of Exploitation of a Child and Youth
- Definition of Grooming, Child Luring, Sexting & Sextortion
- Online Grooming-Tactics Used on a Child or Youth Online
- Signs Your Child or Youth May be a Target
- What is Considered Child Luring?
- What are the Impacts of Sexual Exploitation?
- What Type of Social Platforms to be aware of?

Definitions:

“Child sexual exploitation refers to situations where youth (under the age of 18) are forced or incited (1) to exchange sexual acts or images for material items such as food, shelter, drugs, clothing and/or non-material items such as protection, love, and belonging through the use of power, control and manipulation”.

- Exploitation can involve the use of threats, manipulation, or force to get someone to do something they do not want to do for the benefit of another person.

What the Law States:

“The Criminal Code includes the use of telecommunications in its definition of luring a child, and agreement or arrangement (sexual offence against a child). In addition to these two types of offences, police-reported data show that child pornography and non-consensual distribution of intimate images (involving child victims) are often committed online. In total, between 2014/2015 and 2019/2020, criminal courts in Canada processed 27,522 charges related to these child sexual offences which were likely committed online. More than eight in ten (85%) were processed in adult courts”.

What the Law States: All Children have the Right to Protection

“Every child has a right to protection, as a fundamental human right”. Children (under age 18) also have specific rights, recognized in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, given their vulnerability and dependence. In 1991, Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, pledging to protect children from all forms of exploitation and abuse, among other forms of harm and endangerment. The provision and protection of children’s Convention rights is the primary responsibility of governments at all levels (UNICEF Canada 2022).

Canada has also signed on to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2022). As the use of technology among Canadians has increased in recent years, so too have Canada’s efforts to protect children from online predators.

What the Law States:

- In 2004, the National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet was developed to combat this crime in Canada. Since then, the National Strategy has been renewed and expanded, and in 2019, a renewed commitment was made with the Government of Canada allocating funds to support efforts to raise awareness, reduce the stigma associated with reporting, increase Canada's ability to pursue and prosecute offenders and work together with the digital industry to find new ways to combat the sexual exploitation of children online.
- Most recently, budget 2021 proposed to provide \$20.7 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to enhance its ability to pursue online child sexual exploitation investigations, identify victims and remove them from abusive situations, and bring offenders to justice—including those who offend abroad (Public Safety Canada 2022).

Who is Vulnerable?

The main risk factors that increase a youth's likelihood of being sexually exploited are:

- Being the victim of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse or trauma
- Lack of security and sense of belonging
- Isolated and disconnected from social support structures
- Lack of family and social bonds, dysfunctional family (violence, neglect, substance misuse)
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- FASD/FAE or learning disorders

Who is Vulnerable? Continued...

- Dropping out of school
- Low self-esteem
- Living in rural and remote communities
- Poverty (and increasing feminization of poverty)
- Socioeconomic marginalization
- Youth unemployment/homelessness
- Leaving home at an early age
- LGBTQQ2S
- Indigenous, immigrant, refugee youth

What are the Different Forms of Sexual Exploitation?

- Luring a young person via the internet or social media for sexual purposes
- Involving a child in sexual activity in exchange for money, food, shelter, clothes, electronics or other items of value to the child or youth
- Making, selling or distributing child pornography
- It includes trafficking and sex trade (prostitution)
- Sexual abuse means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions
- It includes sexual slavery, child abuse and sexual assault
- Provide sex for a place to sleep, a meal or a ride
- Trade sexual activities in exchange for money, drugs, alcohol, gifts, services, or other items

Statistics in Canada- 2014-2020: Highlights- Online

Online child sexual exploitation and abuse in Canada: A statistical profile of police reported incidents and court charges, 2014 to 2020.

- Between 2014 and 2020, police reported 10,739 incidents of online sexual offences against children (where the victim had been identified by police) and 29,028 incidents of online child pornography (where the victim had not been identified).
- The overall rate of police-reported incidents of online child sexual exploitation and abuse has been on an upward trend, increasing from 50 incidents per 100,000 population in 2014, when cybercrime data were first collected nationally, to 131 per 100,000 in 2020.
- Can you imagine how children and youth do not report? Why do you think this might be the case?

Definitions: Grooming, Child Luring, Sexting & Sextortion

Grooming is when someone builds trust with a child, and sometimes the adults around them, to gain access to and control the child by normalizing certain behaviors and expectations.

Child luring is the criminal use of a computer to entice a known minor for sexual purposes. Under the Canadian child luring law, the term “sexual purposes” covers a range of potential behaviors and situations, including incest, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and child pornography

Sexting is when your child creates, sends or shares sexual messages, images or videos with friends, people they know or even strangers online. Older kids may think it is harmless, especially with someone they know or like, but once an image is sent, it is out of their control, and it can end up hurting them or someone else.

Sextortion is a type of blackmail where someone threatens to send a sexual image or video of your child to friends, family or other people if they don't provide more sexual content, pay them or do what they ask.

Online Grooming – What you as a Caregiver, Parent or Guardian needs to know to keep your Children and Youth Safe

Online tactics a groomer might use:

- Your child is approached; they may falsely identify themselves to make a connection as a peer, or it can be someone they know
- They talk about the child's friends or interests, give gifts and compliments
- They make promises of a better life, a loving relationship or future gifts, money, drugs or alcohol
- They cause division saying “your parents are too strict” or “don't understand you”

Online Tactics Continued...

- They normalize sexual behaviors by showing the child sexual images or videos
- They sexualize the relationship by sending or asking for your child to record and send sexualized images or videos
- They may threaten or pressure your child to do what they ask, which could lead to sextortion
- They may ask to meet your child in person

Signs Your Child May be a Target of an Online Predator:

Signs

- They talk about a new friend you haven't heard of before
- They are very focused on spending more time online
- They have new things you didn't get them (e.g. gifts, devices, video games, new apps or video game upgrades)
- They are more secretive than usual when you are around
- They use sexual language they haven't before
- They are more fragile, moody, or troubled than usual

Signs:

- They isolate themselves in certain locations in the home more than they would normally (e.g. the bedroom or the bathroom)
- They complain of stomach aches, headaches and trouble sleeping
- Remember that the signs of online sexual exploitation are not exclusive to specific acts.
- The tactics offenders use can be interchangeable across different situations, and different types of exploitation can lead to others.

Child Luring- Criminal Code

“Child luring is covered under s. 172.1 of the Criminal Code. You can be charged with child luring if you use the internet to communicate with someone who you know is not 18 years or older with the intent to commit sexual exploitation, incest, child pornography, or sexual assault. Help with removing sexual pictures or videos of your child from the internet”

A person may also face child luring charges if they communicate online with a minor they know or believe to be under 16, when they intend to commit sexual exploitation, abduction, an invitation to sexual touching, or indecent exposure.

Common Examples of Child/Youth Luring:

- The criminal act of child luring can take many forms.
- The most common examples include:
 - Asking a minor to take and send sexual pictures
 - Asking a minor to take and send sexual videos
 - Sending minors sexually explicit photos or videos and asking for sexual images of them in exchange
 - Creating a fake online or social media profile with the intent to communicate with minors
 - Arranging to meet a minor in person

What Can You Do?

The most important thing is to be aware and to talk openly and regularly with your child about:

- Letting them know you are available to talk any time
- Understanding they may be hesitant to share with you
- Using real life examples they can relate to that aren't about them
- Talking about online safety, privacy, establishing boundaries, healthy relationships and consent
- Talking to them about not giving in to pressure and breaking off communication if they feel threatened or uncomfortable
- Telling them it's always okay to come to you or another safe adult, even if they think they've made a mistake
- Telling them about resources like Cybertip.ca and NeedHelpNow.ca in case they are worried and do not want to come to you

How to Keep Your Children & Youth Safe Online:

- Parents and caregivers, a quick reminder that Snapchat's Terms of Service (outside the U.S.) states users must be 13+ to have an account with the app
- Talk with your teen about only adding people or followers they know in real life. On Snapchat, encourage your teen to block random/unknown users who add them
- Tell your teen not to click on or access links or websites sent to them through direct messages, especially if they don't know the individual sending the link
- Work with teens on privacy settings. For Snapchat in particular, review the Who Can section under Settings to modify and limit who can contact your teen, view their stories, see them in Quick Add, and see their location
- Encourage your teen to create a strong password for their social accounts

Safe Online:

- Remind your teen to limit the amount of information about themselves in their profile details. Snapchat profiles can include users' full names, their birthday, and star sign. Encourage teens to use a pseudonym and disable Birthday Party, which will remove their birthday details. Learn more about how to ensure your teen's social media bio isn't giving away too much personal information
- Let your teen know that material in their My Eyes Only section of their Snapchat account is not as secure as they may think and to carefully consider what is stored or shared there
- Encourage your teen not to share their Snap code (a unique QR code that allows people to quick add users to their Snapchat) or other social media usernames online
- Have regular conversations about online safety — talk about the apps they use, games they play, and who they're connecting with
- Remind teens they can always come to you for help if something has happened without fear of getting in trouble or losing their device

Impacts of Sexual Exploitation:

The experiences and outcomes of youth who are sexually exploited include:

- Experiencing high levels of violence in the form of physical abuse, sexual violence, and verbal threats and harassment are at risk of violence in almost all facets of life
- Normalizing violence as it becomes a taken-for-granted part of their lives
- Experiencing verbal harassment and threats from general members of the public live in constant fear

Impacts of Sexual Exploitation:

- Becoming numb or desensitized to violence (key features of posttraumatic stress disorder) are two to three times more likely to have considered or attempted suicide than non-exploited youth
- Becoming more susceptible to self-injury and engaging in self harming behaviours as well as self-destructiveness
- Demonstrating violent and aggressive behaviours
- Becoming more likely to try and use a variety of “harder” drugs than their non-exploited peers (ex. cocaine, hallucinogens, amphetamines, inhalants, mushrooms, steroids, and prescription pills)

Impacts of Sexual Exploitation:

- Becoming more likely to try and use injection drugs such as heroin
- Becoming more vulnerable to becoming harmed by violence when under the influence of drugs and alcohol
- Becoming more at risk to infection of HIV and Hepatitis C and becoming drug dependent
- Becoming pregnant, which can lead to health risks for the mother and fetus and possible removal of the baby at birth
- A lack youth-friendly health services
- A lack routine and identification

Social Platforms to be Aware of:

- WhatsApp: A messaging app that allows texts, video calls, photo sharing and voicemails with users worldwide.
- TikTok: A new app popular with kids lets users create and share short videos. Law enforcement said the app has “very limited privacy controls” and users can be exposed to cyberbullying and explicit content.
- Snapchat: One of the most popular social media apps in the world, Snapchat lets users take and share photos and videos. The app also lets people see your location.
- Instagram: is another of the most popular social media platforms that children send, make or share a nude image or video and share with somebody.

Read the Story about Instagram – Winnipeg — Adolescent boys are being targeted primarily on social media giants Instagram® and Snapchat® as part of an ongoing sextortion crisis, an analysis of July Cybertip.ca data by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P) shows. – August 4/22

- <https://www.cybertip.ca/en/campaigns-and-media/news-releases/2022/sextortion-data-analysis/>

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Resources:

- <https://read-me.org/s/online-child-sexual.pdf>
- <https://www.mycampbellrivernow.com/76986/news/national-news/rcmp-warns-youth-at-risk-of-online-recruitment-by-extremist-groups/>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/human-trafficking/sex-trafficking.html>
- https://www.innovatingjustice.org/sites/default/files/documents/Youth%20Involvement%20in%20the%20Sex%20Trade_3.pdf
- <https://covenanthousetoronto.ca/the-problem/sex-trafficking/>

Final Thoughts:

Thank you on behalf of the Child, Youth and Family Department for the BC Metis Federation

For a copy of this presentation please email the Director of Child, Youth and Family:

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