Management of non-consensually shared youth-produced sexual images: A Delphi study with adolescents as experts

# Details

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## Topics

Risks and harms

## Sample

124 adolescents from the United Kingdom aged between 14–18 years who self-identified as having direct experience of taking and distributing nude or nearly nude images of themselves.

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

## Implications For Educators About

Digital citizenship

# Abstract

There is an increased availability of online child abuse images, a proportion of which is created
by young people in coercive and non- coercive relationships (sexting).
Objectives: This Delphi study with adolescents as "experts" who had taken and shared sexual
images, was conducted to identify appropriate responses to sexting where images are shared
without consent and identify indicators of distress and ways to facilitate disclosure when the
sharing of images causes anxiety or is associated with further victimization.
Participants and setting: 124 adolescents from the United Kingdom completed an online survey.
All self-identified as taking and sharing sexual images of themselves. 45 provided full survey
responses (73% female; mean age 16.24) and of these 23 completed the second round.
Recruitment was through social media and local schools.
Methods: An online two-round Delphi method was completed using a vignettes-based questionnaire.
To assess consensus, a defined average percentage agreement (80% cut-off) was used.
Qualitative content analysis identified relevant themes in responses to Round 1 which informed
the Round 2 items.
Results: In the first round 60 items were identified that endorsed views of problem identification,
facilitation of disclosure, proportionate responding, and problem management. Overall, participants
agreed that the clear majority of statements identified in Round 2 were important and thus
achieved consensus.
Conclusions: This study represents a novel and inclusive approach through the formation of an
expert panel of young people. These views may inform appropriate victim-centered management
of cases where images have been shared without permission.

# Outcome

"Most participants
agreed that important indicators that images were shared without permission were rumors and gossip by peers as well as the
use of social media to post insulting messages or her nude images. This points very strongly to expectations about victim-blaming
where, in this instance, female
adolescents are subject to social shaming and harassment (Burén Lunde, 2018; Setty, 2018) and potential re-victimization.
Participants expressed preference to discuss others’ bullying behavior and disrespectful behavior with a trusted person (e.g., family,
teacher, police), and in particular, that teachers should protect the victim from being bullied or harassed by others and discuss with
pupils underlying reasons for bullying behavior. Coping strategies focused on seeking support, exercising a non- judgmental attitude
towards the self and remaining confident, rather than seeking isolation or directly confronting others about their disrespectful
behavior. Indicators from the boyfriend about non-consensually shared images included avoiding the victim seeing or using his
mobile phone alongside not giving a clear answer when asked about the nude images. A dichotomy emerged between active behavior
by others targeting the person depicted in the images (e.g., spreading rumors or gossip, or making comments), and the boyfriend’s
behavior characterized by avoidance." (Quayle and Cariola, 2019: 8). "What constituted helpful responses from parents or carers was being reassuring and respecting privacy, along with offering to
work with the young person to resolve the problem together. Parents or carers talking to others about what had happened was seen to
be important but only when the young person’s permission had been secured. Participants preferred parents to approach a teacher who could then help by speaking to the boyfriend and his parents... many children report that they would not go to parents for fear of punishment, getting told off or having their phones monitored.... Respondents agreed that what they expected from the police was reassurance that the matter would be dealt with appropriately
and safely and that this would happen quickly and with few repercussions. Dealing with the problem included stopping imagesharing
and enabling their removal from social media (also identified in Jørgensen et al., 2019 study). Anxieties about the legacy of
images once they are non-consensually shared seem to be intensely felt by female adolescents with an assumption that there was a
double standard with “leaked nudes” as female adolescents’ actions and images are
subject to greater scrutiny and judgment than those of males." ((Quayle and Cariola, 2019: 8-9).