

What is sextortion?

Sextortion is a type of cyber extortion. It involves the threat of having sexual information, images or clips shared.

This is done to get money from you. It doesn't always matter if the images actually exist or not.

The extortion often takes place when a victim is asked to take off their clothes in front of a webcam. They can also be asked to perform sexual acts.

The victim believes this to be a private act but it is not. The victim doesn't know that they are being recorded.

The offender will then threaten the victim. They may demand money. They may threaten to share the images or videos on social media or share publicly.

What can you do to reduce the likelihood of it happening?

Here are some tips:

1. Be cautious when using the internet. Only activate your camera when you want to. Make sure it is 'off' at all times or use a webcam cover. Never allow yourself to be duped into activity that you will later regret.
2. If using video chat apps, be alert to the fact that 'contacts' are not always who they say they are. If you allow a relationship to develop be guarded if unusual requests are made of you.

3. If you use online chat rooms looking for a person to chat with be careful. Be careful about any getting into a relationship and if you are asked to move to a different chat platform.
4. If you are chatting with somebody using a webcam be guarded on what you say and do.
5. Relationships are quick to develop. End any that you are not comfortable with. Stay in control of what you do.
6. You may make mistakes, have doubts or need support or advice. If so, contact the police or a support agency immediately.
7. Remember, what goes on the internet, stays on the internet, forever.

What to do if you're a victim of sextortion

Here are a few points to follow if you are a victim:

Do not panic. The police will take your case seriously. They will deal with it in confidence. You will not be judged.

Do not pay. Some victims who have paid hear no more about it, others pay and are asked for more money. In some cases, even when money is paid the offenders posts the videos or images anyway

Do not talk any further to the offenders. Take screen shots of any communication. Keep it as evidence.

Make a note of all details provided by the offenders. Screenshot their social media profile as evidence.

Deactivate your social media account. Report the matter to the platform and deactivate your social media account rather than shut it down. This helps the police to gather evidence. The account can also be reactivated at any time. This means your online memories are not lost forever.

Access help to take down intimate images or videos shared online:

Revenge Porn Helpline -

www.revengepornhelpline.org.uk

Stop Non-Consensual Intimate Image Abuse -

www.stopncii.org

Report the matter to the police and your online service provider.

Remember that you're the victim of organised criminals. You're not alone and confidential support is available:

NSPCC Helpline - 0808 800 5000

or help@nspcc.org.uk

CEOP - www.ceop.police.uk

Revenge Porn Helpline -

www.revengepornhelpline.org.uk

Advice for young people -

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Stop Non-Consensual Intimate Image Abuse -

www.stopncii.org