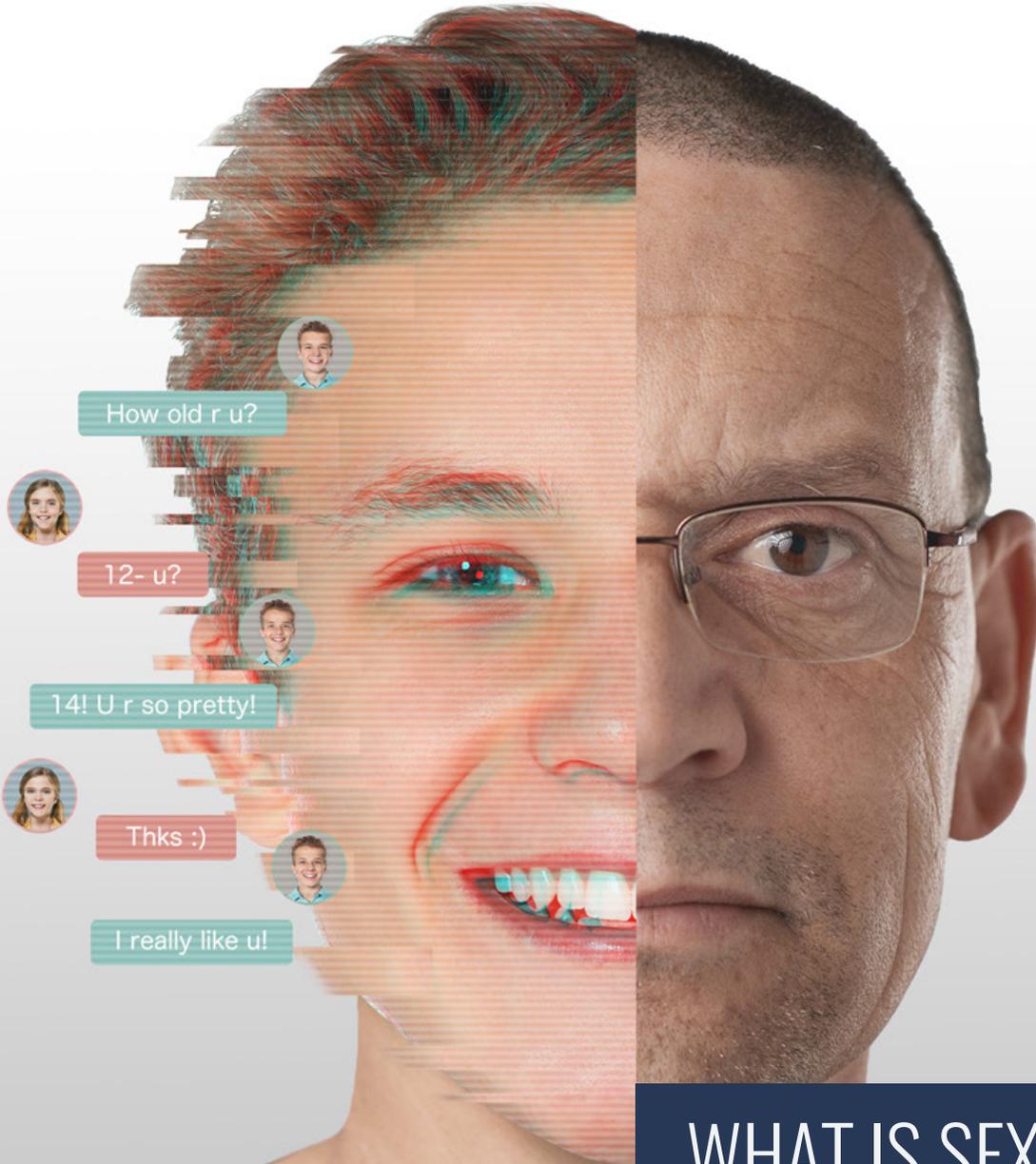


ANY KID ONLINE. ANY TIME. ANYWHERE.



WHAT IS SEXTORTION?

# SEXTORTION

the hidden pandemic

Talking to young people about sextortion is difficult for two primary reasons: first, it can be difficult to have conversations with young people about their use of technology, with many adults often feeling behind the tech curve, and teens perceiving these adults as out of touch.

Second, conversations about sextortion are at their core conversations about sex and sexuality, which many find uncomfortable. These video-based activities and discussions are written to help adult facilitators overcome both of these obstacles and guide productive conversations with young people about sextortion- a quickly growing crime here in the United States and around the world.

# What is Sextortion?

[Link to Video Here](#) Length: 5 minutes

**Video Summary:** In this video, Homeland Security Agents give definitions and examples of sextortion.

## Learning Objective

Students will be able to define sextortion, explain common tactics and threats used by extorters, learn how to avoid being sextorted online, and outline options available to victims of sextortion.

## Discussion Questions

1

In your own words, define “sextortion.”

**Video definition:** Sextortion is manipulating a child to send inappropriate pictures, to do inappropriate things – on camera, or to eventually meet up with the predator.

2

Have you heard of “sextortion” before today? If, so how has knowing about sextortion affected how you think about your safety online?

3

How might gender affect how a person thinks about online safety? Think about the ways sextortion of a female victim versus a male victim were described in the video.

## Discussion Questions

## Potential Answers

What are some of the ways discussed in the video that sextortion is often different for male and female victims?

3a

*Male victims often think they are talking to an older woman, while females often think they are talking to someone closer to their age or a potential romantic partner.*

What are some of the ways they are often the same?

3b

*Both involve asking for and blackmailing with sexually explicit images, both involve catfishing, both play on the human need for attention and affection, both prey on young people's desire to explore their sexuality.*

What societal factors (ie. social pressures or norms) do you think play into the different ways young people are blackmailed? Think about gender, sexual orientation, cliques at school, etc.

3c

*LGBTQ+ individuals may face additional barriers to reporting sextortion, especially if their sexual orientation or gender identify is not known or accepted by family members or others from whom they may need to seek help or support. Male victims often face barriers to accessing help as victims of sexual violence because of persuasive cultural norms about masculinity. Victims may face a host of other barriers related to various social factors within their family, school, or community environments.*

What are some of the ways that someone may try to manipulate you online?

4

*They may be able to get information about you online and use that information to build a trusting and even a romantic relationship with you. They may lie about living near you and knowing some of your friends. They may also do things to try to control your behavior (like getting angry when you are not available to talk online) and try to isolate you from your friends and family.*

In your opinion, is it an automatic red flag if someone you only know online begins asking for or sending you sexual content? Why or why not?

5

*NOTE: It is important here for adult facilitators to allow participants to voice opinions freely without immediately interjecting feedback. The facilitator should listen carefully to the conversation and thank participants for sharing their thoughts on the topic. After participants have shared the facilitator should direct participants back to the film and the fact that sending sexual images to anyone is always risky, but sending them to someone whose identity you cannot verify is incredibly risky and that if someone you do not know well or who you met recently online is asking you for sexual images there is a very good chance that person will try to sextort you. Remind them also that people who sextort others are very, very good at making you think you can trust them- you won't be able to tell if someone is going to sextort you until they do, so the safest thing to do is to not share sexual pictures online.*

## Discussion Questions

## Potential Answers

What other red flags can you think of that might indicate that an online relationship is unhealthy or that someone you are talking to online might be trying to exploit you?

6

*6 PA: Healthy relationships are characterized by equal sharing of power and mutual respect. Someone asking you to keep your communication or relationship a secret, getting angry when you are not available online, or making you feel guilty for having other friends and activities are all "red flags." You should also expect the other person to share information about themselves and to be willing to communicate in the same ways they are asking you to communicate. For example, if they want you to be on camera or use your microphone to communicate, they should also be willing to do so. The other person refusing to be on camera or talk to you with a microphone while asking or pressuring you to do so is a "red flag."*

After an extorter has acquired sexually explicit pictures, what do they often do next to the victim?

7

*7 PA: They threaten to share the images with the victim's friends and family if they do not do what the extorter demands. Often, they demand more pictures or payment. They promise that the images and the demands will go away once they are sent, but often this is not true and the threats continue.*

What do you consider to be the best way to avoid sextortion?

8

*8 PA: Only talk to people online that you know, make sure the person you talk to is who they say they are, don't send nude images that can be identified as you specifically, or don't send nude images to anyone at all- even a romantic partner you're involved with offline.*

What options does a victim of sextortion have to stop the extortion and begin healing?

9

*9 PA: Stop sending images. Know that blocking the user is often not enough- the person may just start a new profile and keep threatening you. The most important thing to do is to tell a trusted adult (parent, teacher, counselor, therapist, doctor, etc) about what is happening, and they can help you report to the site or app, report it to the CyberTipline, and make a report to local police department.*

What are ways you could talk to a friend about sending nudes and sextortion?

10

*10 PA: You can talk with your friends about supporting each other if anyone's inappropriate pictures are online and about agreeing never to share these kind of pictures if you see or receive them. If you see your friend's behavior change significantly- if they seem more anxious or depressed, if they share or you observe evidence of self-harm behaviors like cutting, if they seem fearful or secretive about social media and other online communications, ask them about it and let them know that you want to support them. Talk also to a trusted adult like a parent or a guidance counselor about the best ways to support your friend.*