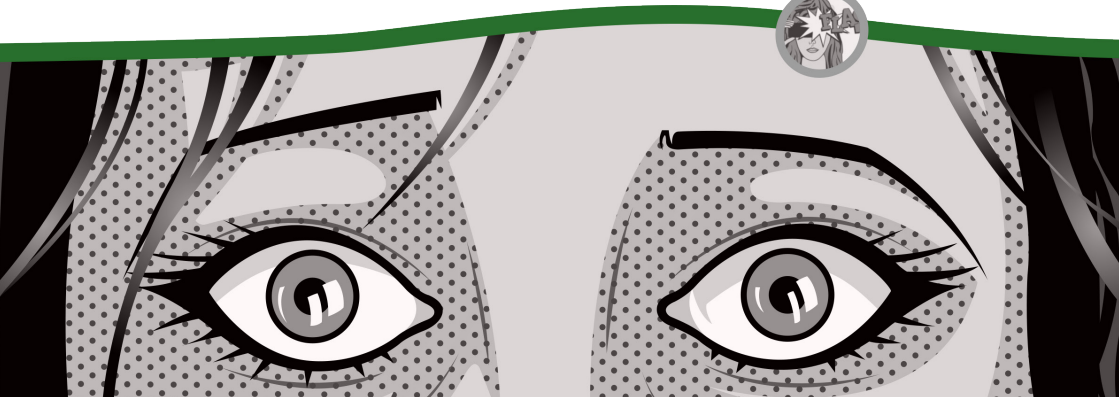


# so you got **naked** online...

A resource provided by South West Grid for Learning

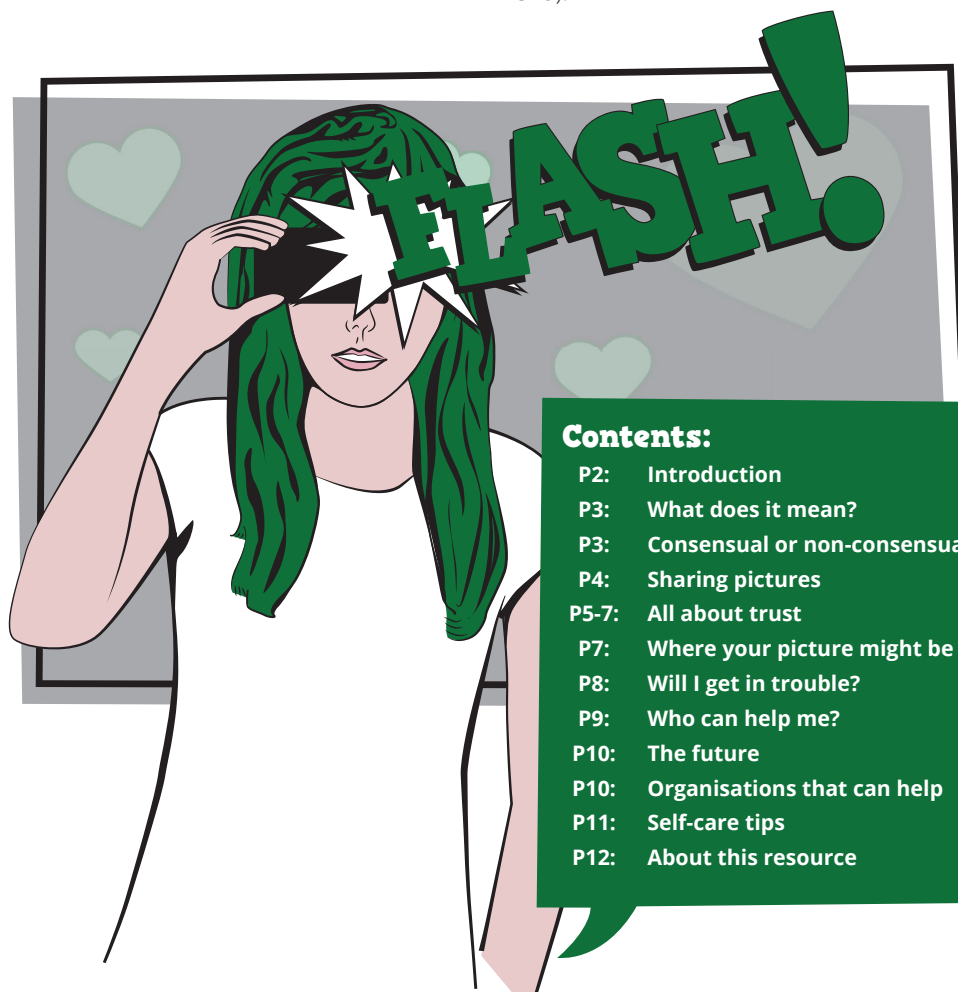


# So you got **naked** online...

**OK...** so I guess if you have picked this up and started to read, it's likely that you have done something online that you are now regretting. Or perhaps you are trying to help someone who has done something? And if that something involved nakedness or something sexual, then that may look more serious than other things you see happening online.

**But don't stress just yet...** you are obviously keen to find out more about how you can help yourself or your friend, get some advice and a plan for how to improve things. Well, you're in the right place.

You don't have to read this whole thing through but it does help to browse each section to get a really good understanding of how and why this stuff causes problems. The more clued-up you are, the better decisions you are going to make for yourself (or friend).



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## What does sexting mean?

“Sexting” is a term used to describe the sharing of intimate images or videos with another person.

This content can be anything from flirty texts to naked pictures and videos. Very often it is between partners, but can be between groups and can be shared across various online spaces. Sexting is not always about sex or sexual gratification. Some people use sexual images of others to abuse, harass and bully them. Sexting isn't always consensual either, just because someone took a naked selfie, that doesn't always mean that they wanted to. But we will talk about that a bit more later...

## Consensual or non-consensual

If you are reading this booklet, you probably already know what sexting is but you might not recognize what's happened to you as sexting. In the news and online there is usually one narrative in sexting: that it's bad, that it always goes wrong and the people involved are in trouble or distraught. We know however that's not always the case and sexting is a bit more complex than just that one version.

Most sexting is consensual and takes place within a healthy relationship. You may have willingly and happily shared your nude with your partner and vice versa, it's when the image gets shared beyond the trusting relationship that things can get a bit scary.



**If you have shared your image with**

**just one person and then they share it with other people, you did not consent for them to do so and they have therefore broken your trust, and the law.**

Just because someone has taken and then sent a nude, that doesn't always mean they wanted to either. Controlling or coercive behavior in sexting can happen. It might start with flirty texts and selfies. Then they want to see more. They might say if you don't send more, they'll stop talking to you or start being mean to you. This pressure might make you feel like you have to send more revealing pictures to fit in or keep their interest.

Even if you already sent a picture, that doesn't give anyone else the right to expect more from you. If you make your friend a cup of tea but half way through they decide they no longer want the tea, you don't force them to drink it! It's the same with sex and sexting, consent is a fluid thing and you can change your mind at any moment.



Unintended sexting is more likely to happen if your judgement is clouded and the consequences don't seem important e.g. if you have had alcohol or taken drugs or are under pressure from those around you. This might be:

- getting confused and pressing the wrong send button
- feeling brave about sending a risky photograph
- feeling more sexually confident
- being encouraged by mates to do it as a dare
- thinking that it is a good laugh and there is no harm in it

Sometimes you might receive images that you didn't ask for or expect. It could be from someone you know well or not so well; perhaps they like you and think by sending an image they are flirting with you, trying to get your interest or hoping you will send one in return.

Occasionally, somebody might send you an image of someone else, perhaps that you both know.

Even images you have taken or shared that were innocent but revealing can be used by others with the intent to cause trouble e.g. dieting shots, modelling or swimming poses.

Celebrities too have had private images hacked, stolen and published. It can affect anyone.

As complex as these situations might be, there is no single solution for how to deal with them. Your response depends on your relationships (both online and offline) and context is everything.

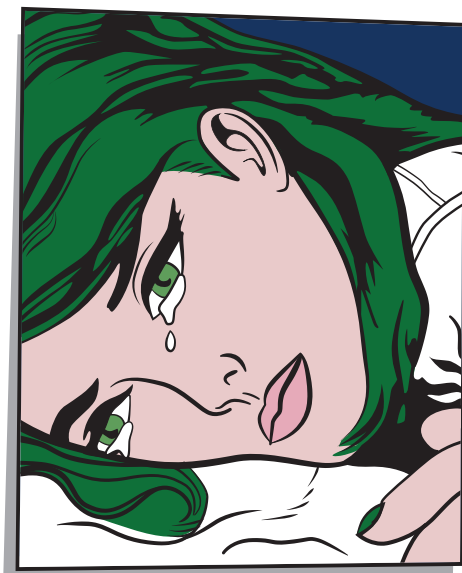
But as we will discuss later, there are some quick wins in protecting yourself and hopefully your friends if you or they have problems.

## **LOL or OMG?!**

**People sharing naked pictures as part of a safe relationship is not a new thing.**

What has changed though is the speed with which you can share, and how many people you can share with at any one time.

Live streaming can be a really fun and exciting experience. Gaining live followers and seeing your numbers



increase can be very exciting, but would you take your top off if it meant you got more followers and felt popular?

**From 1 January to 30 June 2019: IWF dealt with 22,484 reports of self-generated child sexual abuse material. That's just 6 months. A lot of these images were captured during live streams and then found their way onto darker corners of the internet.**

The thing is, when you are on a live stream it is possible for your viewers to take a screenshot and that image can then be shared, stored or even sold on to people that have an unhealthy sexual interest in children. Validation from likes and followers is fleeting. You may end up sharing way more than you wanted to just for that short moment of feeling good about yourself, that's why it's important you have hobbies and interests in your life that make you feel happy and proud of yourself.

In your parents' younger years, the embarrassing stuff they did was rarely seen by anyone else. Today with mobile phones and the internet, that has changed. The internet has the potential of a huge audience and of course, if a photo is shared and uploaded, it could unfortunately be there forever.

**But this is not the end of the world. It just needs some thought on how you can minimise the effect and take back some control.**

## **Was I right to have trusted the person I sent it to? Was I being naive?**

Most of the time, intimate pictures are shared within a relationship and don't get shared any further, even when the relationship ends. But we have to be mindful that when relationships breakdown, we often see a different side to people. Feelings of jealousy and anger may provoke people to break your trust, acting out of character.

## **Sometimes, yes, you can trust the person you text.**

But, and this is a big but, do you really need to send them pictures of your body? If the person asking acts up when you refuse, is this someone you can trust? If they accept your refusal without question they sound like a good partner who respects your decisions.

## **Others letting you down...**

Some of the problem will be around people you thought you could trust sharing the image or joining in the negative comments. This might be the person who you sent the image to in the first place, or friends, or others who then circulate it. People get caught up in the gossip, banter and bitching sessions, often without meaning harm to the victim, either to impress other people, to "belong", or because it starts as a joke which escalates. Sometimes people just do it to bully someone.

## **What if other people see it?**

There is a big difference between worrying and understanding how far the image may have gone beyond your control. It depends how the image was published; if you sent it directly to someone and have then had second thoughts, you need



## I REALLY NEED A FRIEND RIGHT NOW!

to have an honest conversation with them as soon as possible to ask them to delete it. Posting it directly to social networks makes it harder to regain control. DMs and Snaps can feel like a less risky way to send nudes, but it's important to be aware that images sent in this way can be saved or screenshot by the person you sent it to. On Snapchat it tells you if someone takes a screenshot, however there are apps you can download that can save Snaps without notifying the sender. DMs on Instagram do disappear after a while, but again they can be saved or screenshot and the sender is never notified.

### **Once shared, it can be hard to know where the image has gone and who has got it.**

But you can challenge content about you that has been published by others using the site's "report abuse" option. It is important to draw their attention to it and why you think it should be removed. It's not enough to just say "I don't like it", your request needs to show that it breaks the terms of service and/or community guidelines on the site.

Sites like Facebook and Instagram won't allow nudity so it should be straightforward. We've included some links to the relevant reporting routes at the end of this booklet. If your report fails, let a teacher know

and they can call the Professionals Online Safety Helpline to have this report escalated.

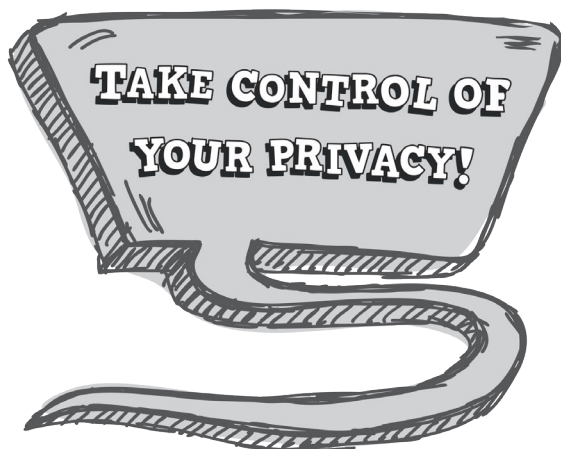
It is also important to understand how you yourself can change or remove content that you have posted but changed your mind about.

It's important in life to have friends around you that you can trust and on whom you can rely; this is no different online. It's less likely your close friends would want to do anything serious to hurt you; very often they're the first ones you might turn to for help.

### **What is your definition of a "friend" or "friend of a friend"?**

We often add friends because our other friends know them. Your friend however may have only added them because one of their friends had, and that friend may have... etc etc

How far back in the chain do you





have to go before someone actually knows this person? Given that many people now meet their future partners online, it's pointless to say "don't talk to strangers online", but it is wise to do some screening before trusting someone you have no "IRL" connection with. Do their pictures look genuine? Do they have pictures with other friends or people that you know? It's easy for anyone to use other peoples' pictures and create profiles that do not reflect who they really are.

### **There are ways in which you can manage who sees your profile or your content.**

Explore the platform's privacy settings and use them. On Instagram and Facebook, you can also set up groups so that you can share content with a select group of friends instead of everyone, for example.

We have created privacy checklists for lots of social networks, they can be found on our website.

### **Does your friend need help?**

You might have noticed that your friend is struggling and suspect something is up. Tell tale signs when someone is worried or upset about something might be: withdrawing from usual activities, not talking much, change in appetite and generally just seeming down.

### **How can you support them?**

Check in and ask how they are, ask twice and have the conversation away from other people so they don't have to share how they are feeling with anyone they don't want to.

Reassure them that you will help and will support them to get this under control. Follow the steps on page 8 to make sure they are getting all the help they need.

### **Where your picture might be**

The truth is, when an image has been shared beyond your control, it could

be in various places. But the content is illegal and you can report it for removal. The internet is a massive place but, that being said, if an image of you is somewhere, you are likely to know about it and be able to report it.

**Well done for asking for help. You are a strong person and this is the first step to getting this sorted.**

**It might seem like the end of the world but try not to panic! Take a deep breath and give yourself a chance to think about how this might affect you.**

**First off, are you ok?** You will need some support to go through this, so think about who is best to support you now... friends, family, school? You choose, it's important that you are comfortable with the person that is going to help you. There is also a list of organisations at the end of this booklet that can help.

Sometimes that first step of asking for help is a difficult one. But you have to be honest with yourself. Real friends and professionals trying to help are only able to do so when they know all the facts and how you feel about it. Noting down a quick timeline before you talk to someone may be a good idea, so you have something to refer back to. If you know of a friend who is trying to deal with this maybe you could show them this booklet.



**If you decide you need to do something, don't wait! The quicker you get help, the better.**

## **Will I get in trouble?**

The law is on your side and was not designed to punish young people for making mistakes while experimenting with their sexuality.

The law is aimed firmly at those who choose to trade or profit from sexual pictures of children. The law was also written in 1978, a time when mobile phones hadn't been invented and the idea of a camera phone was probably mind-blowing! The law wasn't designed to consider sexting and self-generated content. But police and law makers today understand this.

Even though (if you are under 18) the image(s) you sent are indecent image(s) of a child, the Association of Chief Police Officers have clearly stated that young people will be treated as victims in the first instance and only extreme cases may be reviewed or looked at differently. In 2016 the police also introduced something called Outcome 21, which allows the police to record a crime as having happened but for no formal criminal justice action to be taken as it is not considered to be in the public interest to do so. The police are there to help protect and safeguard you, not prosecute.



**I NEED HELP!**



## Who can help me?

### School

You might want to consider telling someone at school. It might seem like a hard thing to do but your welfare is their number one concern. If you are worried about telling your parents, you can tell your school first and they will be able to safeguard and help you and later help you talk to your parents about it, if needed. Schools have trained staff that have access to a whole range of help that will be much more effective than dealing with it on your own. One service they can use is the Professionals Online Safety Helpline.

### Parents

It may be your worst nightmare thinking of telling your parents you shared intimate images, and yes, they may kick off at first but they need to know; how are they going to support you if they don't know?

Use your discretion, if you don't think the pictures will go viral, then don't upset them for no reason. If you feel there is a risk, or if the picture has already been shared beyond your trust, you will probably need them on board. Yes, they will probably be upset, but they will get over it and, in the long run, respect you more for being upfront about it.



If you feel telling them could put you in danger, then please seek support from your school instead. There is a chance they may need to tell your parents, but they will assess the risk and do what is best for you.

### IWF

The Internet Watch Foundation is an organisation in the UK who have the ability to remove child sexual abuse imagery, hosted in the UK. If your picture has been shared online and you know where it is, you can report the link to the IWF. They will review the image and if it is illegal, will remove it. <https://report.iwf.org.uk/en>

### CEOP

CEOP is the Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre and was set up by the Government in 2006 to help protect children across the UK from online predators. As well as helping UK police forces to bring these people to justice, CEOP can help provide advice to you and your parents when something like this happens.

You can report something to CEOP here: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Get-help/Reporting-an-incident/>

Advice for parents and carers here: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Concerned-about-your-child/>

### Local Police

Police could possibly be involved if what has happened is having a very negative impact on the wellbeing of everyone involved, or there are any other worrying factors at play.

## Is this going to affect things for me in the future?

Hopefully in most cases your continuing digital life will 'bury' this incident. There is, however, no guarantee that the pictures will not be seen by others later. Your reputation could be affected if future employers, college, sixth form friends see this. But most people will be understanding, knowing this could happen to anyone. Being honest and admitting what's happened is the best approach, as it will be with any future relationships.

### Knowing about your reputation

#### Do you know what's online about you?

You should first check what others can see about you. Search for your name using a search engine, Google doesn't always show you everything, so try using a few like Bing and Duck Duck Go.

If you find anything offensive or require anything removed, report it to the hosting site immediately. Remember it will need to break the site's terms and conditions. If it is a naked or semi-naked image of you it is highly likely to breach these conditions and the legal implications mean the site host is likely to remove it quickly when made aware.

Bury the bad stuff! Increase your positive online presence. Sadly there are some occasions where online content can't be removed, for example if your image is shared and posted on a porn website hosted outside the UK, it may fall outside the limits of the IWF, so we advise burying it. The best way to do this is to set up social

networking accounts (you don't have to use them, just set them up and leave your name publicly searchable), to regularly comment on news articles and forums, and create a small blog. The more you add, the further down the search lists this unwanted content will be.

## OK, now we have helped you manage the situation and everything is in hand.

Dealing with these types of issues can sometimes be emotionally draining and you might feel like you've lost all power but **help is out there**. Talking to someone about what has happened might help you to deal with this and most importantly, move on. In your school or college, you might have a teacher or someone in a support position who you can speak to, but to cover all bases, we've also listed some national support services that you could call or talk to online for some more emotional support:

- **Childline** are open all day every day (24/7) to help and support children and young people anywhere in the UK. You can call them on **0800 11 11** or visit their website for more help and support or to access their 1-1 counsellor chat messenger: **childline.org.uk**
- **The Mix** provides free, confidential emotional support for young people aged 16 – 25. Their helpline is open from 5pm – 11pm which you can call on **0808 808 4994** or find their website for more information and speak to them on their webchat: **themix.org.uk**

- **Young Minds** offer a free 24/7 crisis messenger for under 18s to access support when experiencing a mental health crisis. You can access the crisis messenger by texting **YM** to 85258. Find more information on their website: [youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk)
- **Young Minds** also operate a **Parents' Helpline** which offers advice to parents and carers worried about a child or young person under 25. Call: **0808 802 5544** or find their website for more details.

When you feel like you're at a point where you can move on, pause and take some time for yourself. We have put together some suggestions of self-care tips. You don't have to spend hours on it, but any small gesture that recognises that you deserve some care and kindness is only going to benefit you later.



**1 Accept what's happened.** No one is perfect and **this could happen to anyone**. Try to focus on the things you can do, or what you've done to resolve the situation rather than blaming yourself for what happened in the first place.



**2 Get outside.** So cliché we know, but it is scientifically proven that fresh air and exercise can improve your happiness, overall health and help you have a good night's sleep!



**3 Connect IRL.** Why not have a monthly *digital detox*? Meet up with friends or family for the day and keep your phones away. Trust me, Instagram will be there when you get back.



**4 Find some positive social media influencers.** When you are spending time online, make sure you're surrounding yourself with positive and inspirational people to learn good values and boost your mood.



**5 Learn to love yourself.** In the infamous words of Ru Paul, "*if you can't love yourself, how are you going to love anyone else?*" Finding an activity or hobby that you're good at will make you feel proud of yourself and gain a sense of achievement, without needing the likes and followers.

# About this resource:

This is a resource for children, young people and parents that offers advice and explores strategies to support the issues resulting from sexting incidents.

The resource will be available shortly in the following alternative formats:

- A comic book style summary of key advice for young people
- Interactive web resource from the UK Safer Internet Centre

Visit [www.swgfl.org.uk/sextinghelp](http://www.swgfl.org.uk/sextinghelp) for more information.

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