Supporting children and young people experiencing tech-based abuse

Contacting the police

If you are in Australia and in immediate danger, call the police on **Triple Zero** (**000**).

If the situation is not urgent, call the Police Assistance Line on **131 444** to talk to someone, get advice and make a report. They can provide information, based on your situation.

Support services for children and young people

- Young people aged 5 to 25 can contact **Kids Helpline** (**1800 55 1800**). They are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, free of charge. Counsellors can also chat online at Kids Helpline.

- **eHeadspace** offers free online counselling for young people, aged 12 to 25, and their families. Headspace (**1800 650 890**) offers free or low-cost face-to-face support for young people aged 12 to 25 and their families. Appointments can be made by contacting one of their centres which are located around Australia.

Other support services

You can also contact:

- a specialist domestic and family violence service for counselling support and safety planning, like **1800RESPECT** on **1800 737 732**.

- a legal advice service, such as **Family Violence Law** which has a good overview of the legal options across Australia, as well as advice and links to resources.

Visit eSafety.gov.au for more information about how to be safe online and report abuse.

Keep up to date with the latest online safety news

Sign up now **eSafety.gov.au/subscribe**

More than 27% of children in domestic and family violence situations experience technology-facilitated abuse.

What is technology-facilitated abuse?

Technology-facilitated abuse, also known as 'tech-based abuse', means harming someone through the use of digital devices or online platforms and services.

Tech-based abuse may include:

- sending a lot of abusive messages or making threatening phone calls over and over
- creating fake accounts and making hurtful posts
- restricting or controlling access to devices and online accounts
- sharing or threatening to share an intimate image or video of someone online
- tracking where someone is, or secretly using cameras to film someone.

How to talk with children and young people about tech-based abuse

Use these tips to support children and young people:

1. Keep in mind that they are a victim-survivor in their own right.
2. Use age-appropriate language and calmly discuss what's happening, based on the child's level of understanding.
3. Try not to make assumptions about how they might be feeling about what's happening, including how they might feel about the abuser.
4. Explain that what is happening to them is a type of abuse, that it's not OK and that it's not their fault.
5. Let them express freely, without feeling judged.
6. Take their concerns seriously, listen and respond with age-appropriate honesty.
7. Encourage them to ask questions and talk about their tech experiences.
8. Acknowledge the important role that tech plays in their life and let them know they can stay in touch with their trusted friends and family if the situation is safe, if they follow some important tips and understand the risks.
9. Help them think of ways to be safe if they want or need to stay connected with the abuser.
10. Do what you say you will do to help them, and don't overpromise.

How to help children and young people be safer online

Technology is a big part of a child's life and there are things children and young people can do to be safer online.

You can suggest they:

- avoid sharing photos, videos or backgrounds that could identify their location on social media, gaming or video calls
- avoid posting photos online
- avoid checking-in themselves (and others) at venues
- avoid tagging family members online
- turn off location services on devices (if safe to do so) – in case the location is embedded in photos and the device and location can be tracked
- where possible, use safe devices and secure online accounts that the abusive person can't access.

It's a good idea to help children to prepare for different scenarios and unexpected situations, taking into account the behaviour and potential actions of the abuser.

Identify trusted adults

Children and young people experiencing tech-based abuse may lose their confidence and feel unsafe on their own devices, making it hard to stay connected with others.

Help the child or young person write a list of trusted adults they can speak with and go to for help. They might include a family member, school counsellor, or support line like **Kids Helpline** or **headspace**.

Supporting families

There are many ways that trusted adults and families can support children and young people dealing with abuse. You can help them to learn about the safety settings on the child's apps and websites or explain how to create a family tech agreement to keep children safe.

Find out other ways you can help trusted adults to support children and young people dealing with domestic and family violence at **eSafety's webpage**.

Other online issues and risks

Children and young people may find themselves dealing with many different situations online.

Visit the eSafety website and find out more about how they can safely deal with:

- **cyberbullying**
- **online pornography**
- **image-based abuse**
- **sexual extortion**
- **unwanted contact and grooming by abusers**
- **digital reputation**
- **balancing time online**.