



**WCSAP**  
Washington Coalition of  
Sexual Assault Programs

## RESEARCH & ADVOCACY REVIEW

### **PRELIMINARY REPORT: WITHOUT MY CONSENT SURVEY OF ONLINE STALKING, HARASSMENT, AND VIOLATIONS OF PRIVACY**

[Without My Consent](#), a nonprofit organization that seeks to combat online invasion of privacy and empower individuals to stand up for their privacy rights, recently released the findings of its survey about online harassment. Although this survey focused on online harassment in general, a large focus of the organization's work is nonconsensual pornography, sometimes referred to as "revenge porn." Without My Consent's definition of this includes "the nonconsensual publication of explicit images as a way to emotionally abuse, sexually exploit, and rob people of control over their own bodies." In other words, using technology as a tool of sexual violence.

This issue has been brought to the forefront in recent months by media coverage of celebrities whose personal photos were shared without consent. Little is known about the prevalence of this type of online harassment. Without My Consent's [Preliminary Report](#) focused on gathering information from people who indicated that they have experienced online harassment. Due to its small sample size (359 people completed the survey), it cannot be said to represent all possible experiences and responses to online harassment. However, it is an excellent start to understanding the impact that this harassment has on those who experience it.

#### Survey Findings

- 46.4% of respondents experienced multiple harassment episodes and multiple harassers (p. 4)
- Many respondents reported online harassment that included: abuse, stalking, shaming, revenge porn, and gender-based discrimination (p. 5)
- Common methods of harassment reported included: threats to safety, photos, statements attacking gender, and statements attacking sexual orientation (p. 6)
- The four most common sites of harassment were: Facebook, personal email, other social media, and a blog (p. 7)

- About half (51%) of the survey respondents experienced harassment on and offline (p. 8)
- Most respondents knew at least one of their harassers. Among those respondents, the most common reported perpetrator was a former intimate partner (p. 8 – 9)
- Most participants (71%) reported that the harassment impacted their use of technology
- The vast majority (92%) reported emotional impacts, with some of the most common being: anger, anxiety, depression, sadness, hyper-alertness, and isolation (p. 12)
- Participants who responded to an open-ended question about impacts that were not addressed in the survey reported: trauma symptoms, shame, loss of self-esteem, and suicidal ideation (p. 14)

The final section of the report addresses action respondents took to address the harassment and what they would suggest to others experiencing online harassment. Many took more than one action, and talking to a friend was the most common action taken by respondents, followed by asking the harasser to stop. When asked what they would suggest to someone else, "by far the most frequent suggestion was to get support from others." Some participants specifically listed talking with victim advocacy groups.

#### Advocacy Tips

- Recognize technology being used as a tool of sexual violence when survivors you are working with talk about it.
- Understand that some of the impacts of this form of sexual violence, listed above, are very similar to the impacts of other sexual assault trauma that you currently address with survivors.
- Technology is an important resource for survivors who want to find help, locate information and resources, and stay connected with support networks. Many individuals change or reduce their use of technology in response to experiencing this type of harassment online. So, be prepared to talk with survivors about alternative means of connection and support.
- Think about how you can support a survivor who wants to ask their harasser to stop. Role play with coworkers at your next staff meeting.

- Talk with others at your agency about how people who have been victims of nonconsensual pornography or other gender-based online harassment will know your agency is a place they can find help.
- Learn more about this issue so you can support those experiencing this type of sexual violence when they seek your services.
- Start with this resource from the Safety Net Project on Images, Consent, and Abuse that addresses the impact on survivors and action survivors can take: <http://nnedv.org/resources/safetynetdocs/153-online-safety-privacy-tips/4236-images-consent-abuse.html>

### ***References***

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Without My Consent. Preliminary Report: Without My Consent Survey of Online Stalking, Harassment and Violations of Privacy. 2014. Retrieved from: [http://www.docstoc.com/docs/document-preview.aspx?doc\\_id=172507797](http://www.docstoc.com/docs/document-preview.aspx?doc_id=172507797)