



When Abuse Goes Digital Technology- Facilitated Violence for Healthcare Providers

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Learning objectives

Discuss the term technology-facilitated violence (TFV)

Review some of the types of TFV affecting children & youth today

Provide some interventions for healthcare providers



Please Take Care



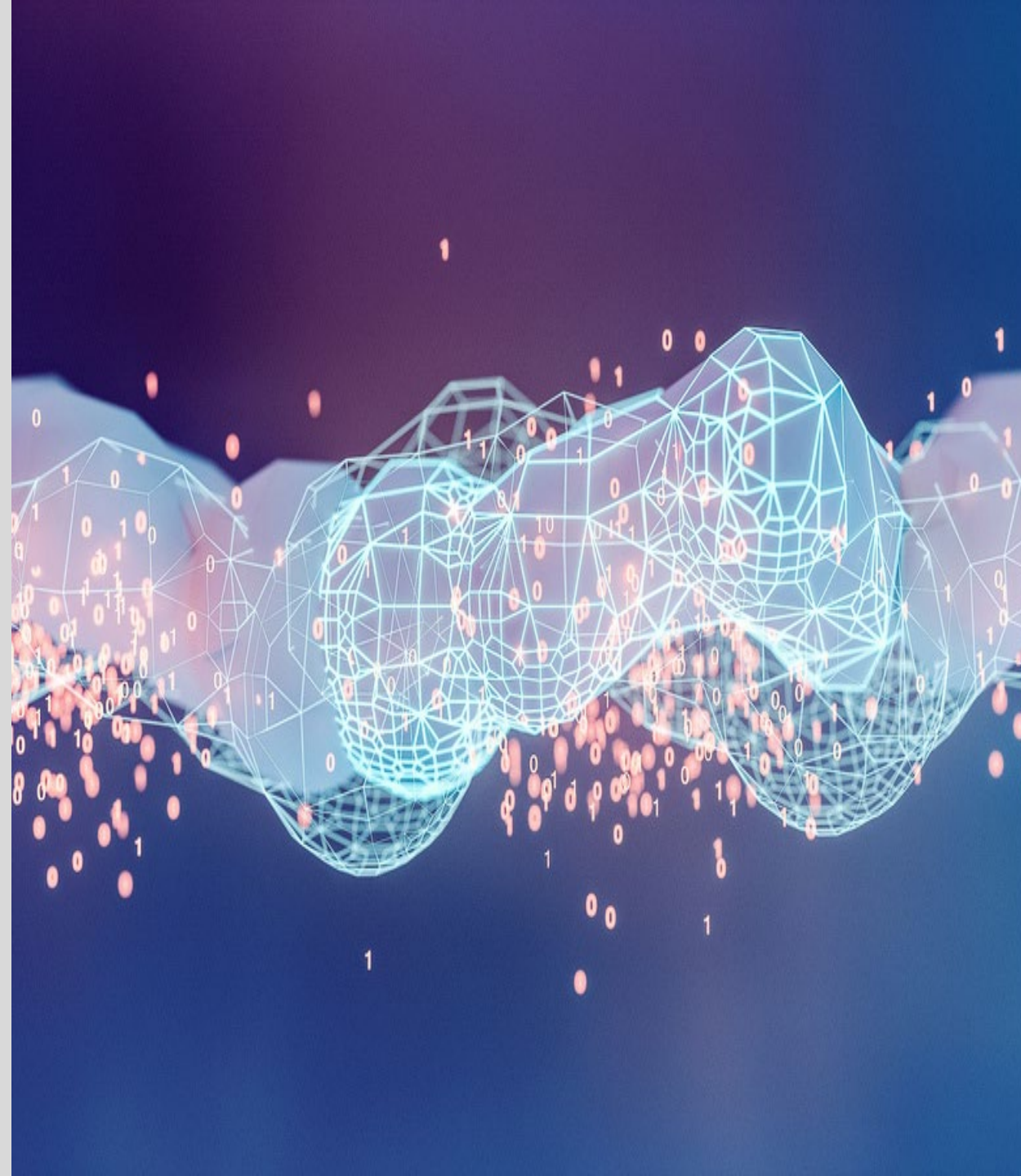
Child abuse

Physical
Sexual
Emotional
Neglect

As the times change...
How does technology impact our
children & youth??

What is technology-facilitated violence?

The use of technology to facilitate the perpetration of abuse





9835799.jpeg nils-art pixabay



Man checking pager while holding cellular phone to ear Stockbyte from Photo Images



A Woman Playing a Video Game Michele Raffoni Pexels



Kids & youth are using technology at
very young ages

We have opened Pandora's Box



The New "Norm"



Kids Coding Getty Images Signature



Kids vadinguzhva Getty Images



Teens with Cell Phones FatCamera from Getty Images Signature



Three happy kids taking selfies underwater Imgothand Getty Images Signature



KOMO News, 2023

Perpetrators
are no longer easily visible

Abusers can often hide in anonymity



a man in a hood sits in complete darkness with a phone Dmitry Nogaev Getty Images



We are in a Digital Revolution

COVID-19 pandemic

Exacerbated existing forms of gender-based violence

Created new opportunities



Who is Targeted?

Intersectionality in gender-based violence

People of color (BIPOC)
Individuals with disabilities
LGBTQIA+

Disproportionately affected

Perpetrators target the
VULNERABLE!



Doctor Examining Child's Teddy Bear with Stethoscope nugrohoiif Nugroho

Healthcare providers

Trained and prepared to deal with many injuries, illnesses, & ailments,

but

What about technology-facilitated violence??



Erikson's Developmental Stages

Trust vs. Mistrust (0-1)

Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt

Initiative vs. Guilt (3-5)

Industry vs. Inferiority (6-11)

**Identity vs. Role Confusion
(adolescence)**

Impulsive

Judgement

Peer pressure

Insecurity



Girl in Gray Digital Tablet Sitting on Bed Kampus Production Pexels

Desire for social connection and validation

Lack of true relationships

Reality is that it can create more isolation

It may not be a real, genuine relationship

What are the long-term harms?
(especially for children!)

Can I get your socials?

What's your Snap?



Social Media Influencers

Everything “must” be documented & recorded

“Role models”



The Manosphere

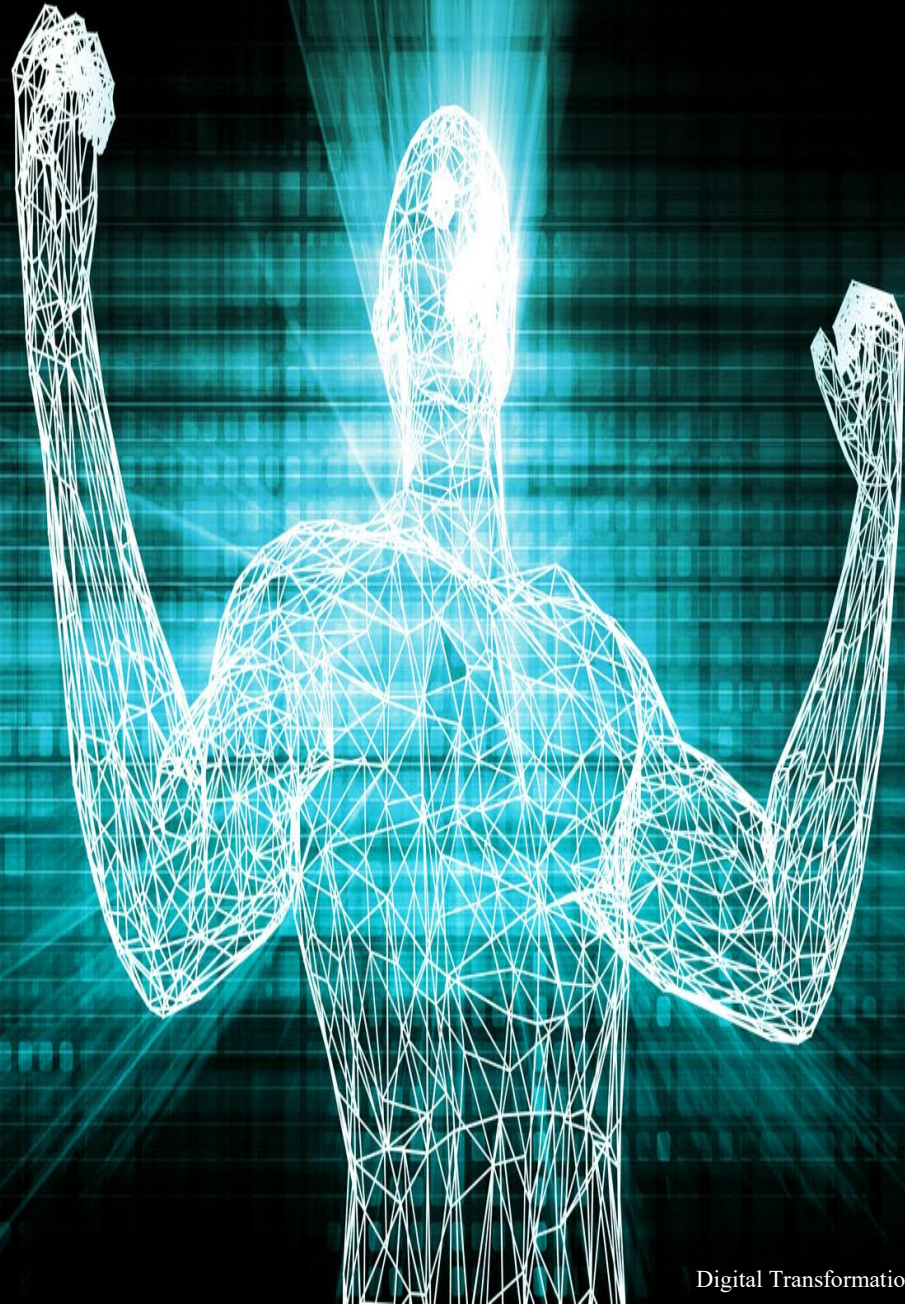
Masculine influencers
(It's not only females)

“Looksmaxxing”

”The perfect face and body”

Eating disorders, body dysmorphia
plastic surgery, steroids

(UN Women, 2025)





Hammer smashing floor Dhb-Getty Images

Social Media IG TikTok

Plastic surgery, self-harm
smash your face w/ hammer
 (“Bonesmashing”)
For a more “chiseled look”



Feeds Gender Based Violence Expectations & Stereotypes

An ecosystem of misogynistic content

Seeping into mainstream
culture, shaping public attitudes
towards females

“Your body, MY choice”

Fueling misogynistic violence



Forms of Digital Violence & Abuse



Pixabay

Bullying & Trolling

Bullying on a whole new level
Digital is much more widely
seen & shared

Perpetrators create antagonizing &
inflammatory comments

Often hide behind anonymous or fake
profiles

(Dunn, 2020; Mitchell et al., 2022)

Sextortion

Often contact with a “similar age” peer

1 in 7 minors have experienced sextortion &
harmed themselves in response
Almost 28% **LGBTQIA+** youth

Once have explicit photo
coerce for more money, images

1 in 6 report sending more images when
threatened

2023 NCMEC reports financial sextortion
more than doubled





Getty Images, kentoh

Generative AI

Using AI to create new content

Non-consensual deepfake pornography
AI-generated CSAM

Undressing apps

67,000 cases reported in 2024

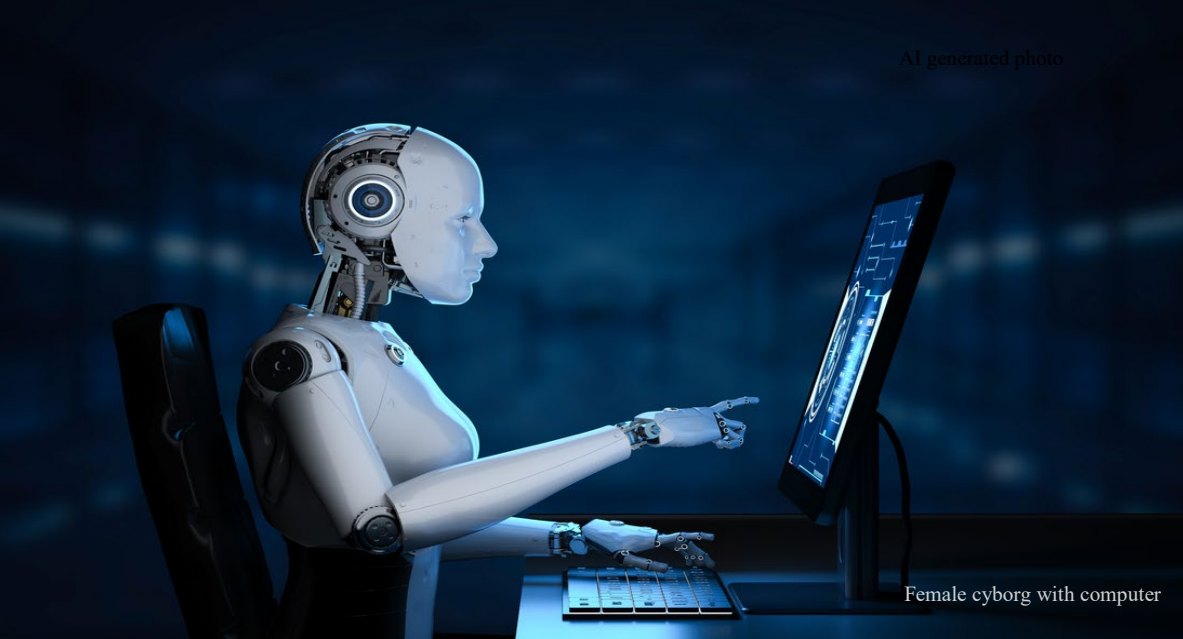
1 in 17 teens report been target of
someone creating deepfake nudes of
them

1,325% increase in nude images, fake
imagery, AI bullying and
peer victimization

(NCMEC, 2025; Thorn, 2025)



Canva, Piyato



AI generated photo

Female cyborg with computer

The lines of reality are blurred

“Hi, Siri” or Alexa
“humanized”

AI “girlfriend” or “boyfriend”
Relationships are hard

Can specify exactly what you want
Will always reaffirm what you think or feel
Loss of navigating conflict or relationships

AI “therapist” is easy to access online
But AI is not a trained professional!

Human Trafficking

Social media

Gaming

“Jobs” Modeling



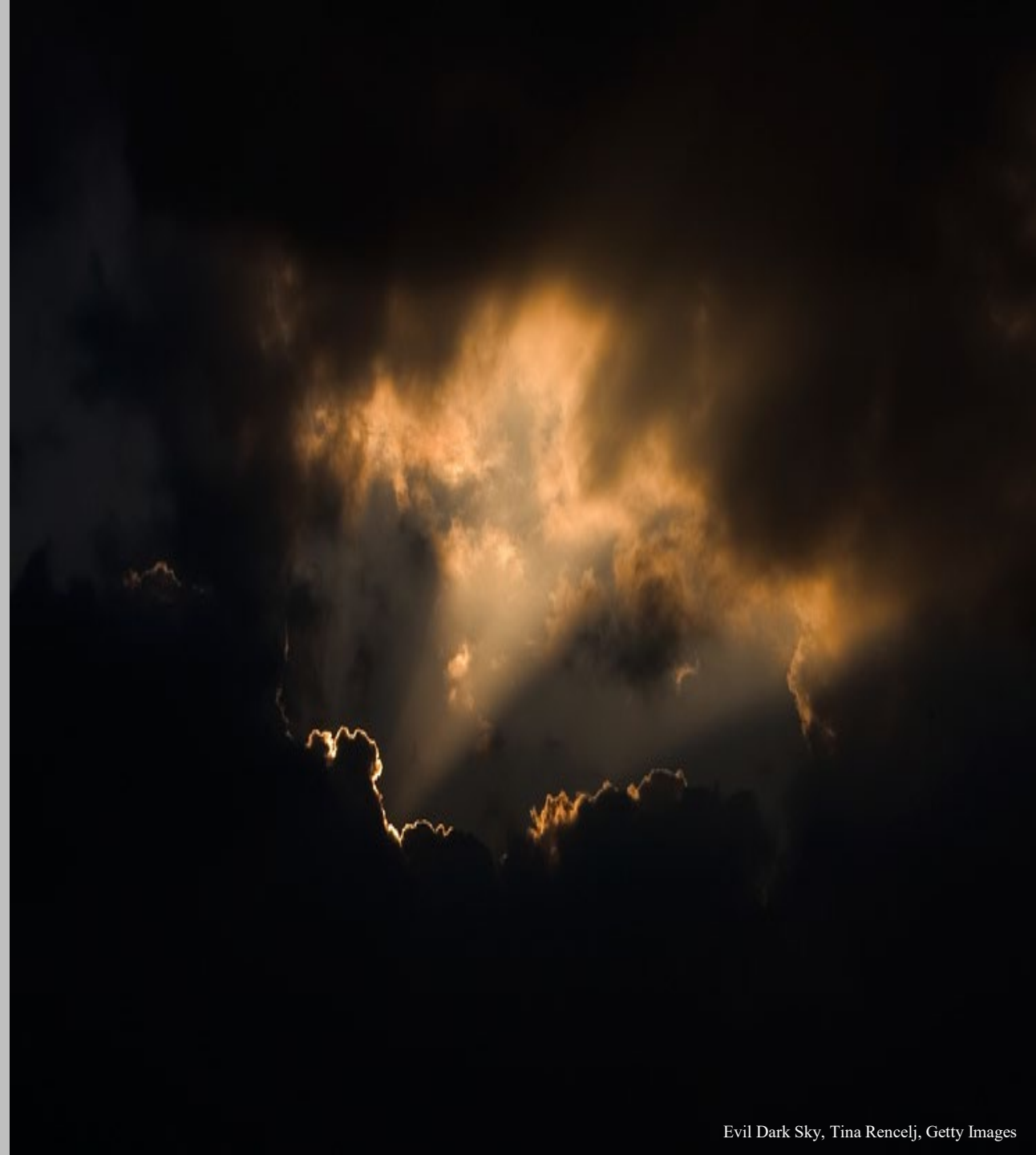
Online Extremist Groups

Extremism is supporting extreme beliefs

Usually refers to a religious or political ideology, generally not acceptable to mainstream society

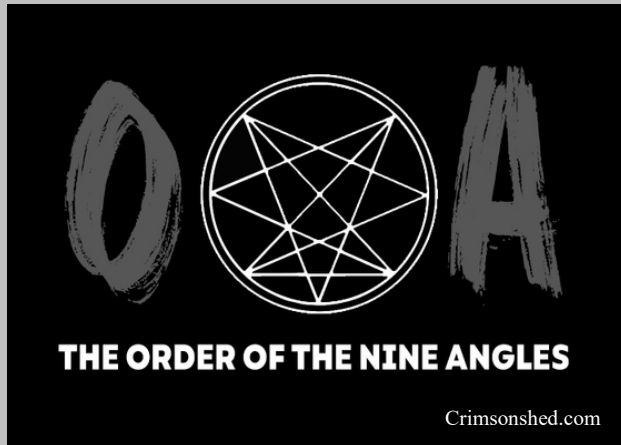
Communities of individuals who are causing extreme chaos and harm to children and youth

Sounds outrageous, but more common than you would expect



Rapidly Growing Groups

Order of 9 Angles O9A



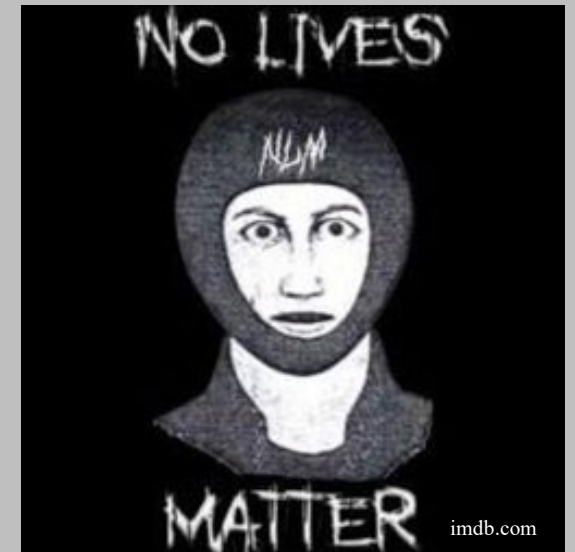
CVLT

“The Cult”

International Neo-Nazi
nihilistic online
organization- child
exploitation, coercing
minors self-harm

Maniac Murder Cult

No Lives Matter (NLM)



Morphed into offshoot groups inspired by other online extremist groups

Conglomeration of:

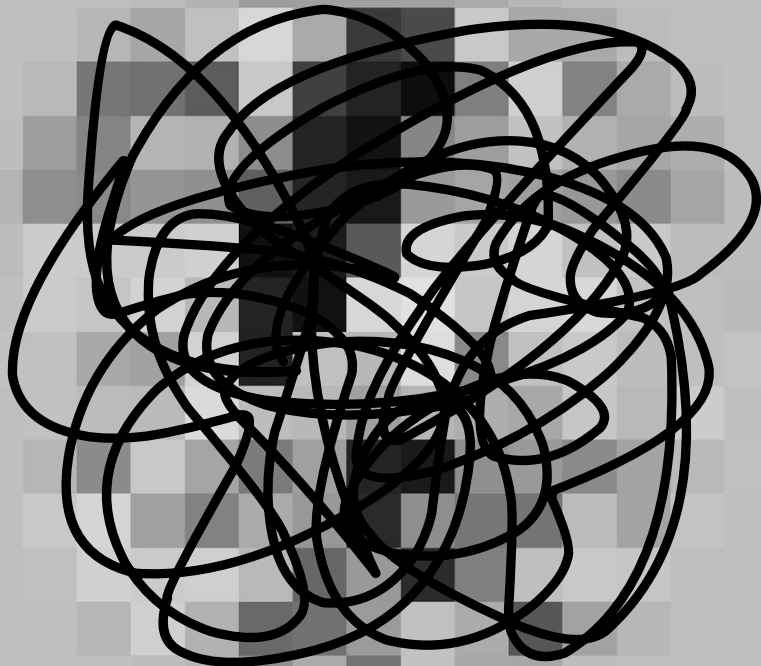
Radicalism

Nihilism

Racism and Fascism

Darwinism

Satanism



764 Gore Groups

Nihilistic violent extremist network
U.S. and international

Mission: destroy modern civilization,
corrupt, and exploit the vulnerable

Sadistic online exploitation ~ more driven by
status, influence, attention than ideology
“A group that glorified violence, weaponized
abuse, & targeted children to advance a
deeply depraved ideology”





(Charlie, Medium)

764

Started in 2021
(COVID)

Bradley Cadenhead 16 y.o. Texas
self-described cult leader

Lured 13 y.o. Gig Harbor on
Discord server

Coerced online “content” (live
streaming violent acts & suicide)

Prison

Parents suing Discord



(imdb.com)



764 Texas area code

FBI Alert

“764”

**and other
violent online
networks
targeting minors**



764 TACTICS

- **Targets children and other at-risk individuals via social media, gaming platforms, and mobile apps**
- **Often pose as friends to groom and lure victims**
- **Uses extortion, blackmail to get victims to engage in self-harm**

1-800-CALL-FBI or tips.fbi.gov

FBI Public Service Announcement

March 6, 2025

**Violent Online Networks Target
Vulnerable and Underage
Populations Across the United
States and Around the Globe**

Alert Number: I-030625-PSA

Recruitment

Target the most vulnerable

Youth 8-17

Eating disorders

LGBTQIA+

Racial/ethnic minorities

Mental health

This is happening all over the US
and abroad

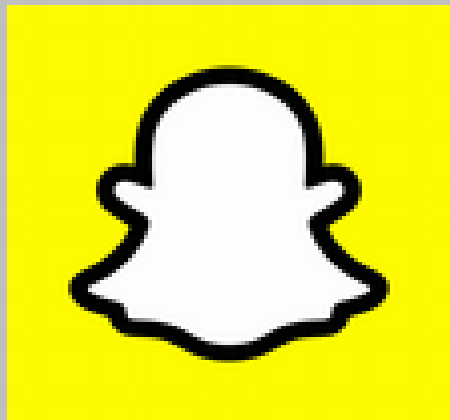
Perpetrators are often international





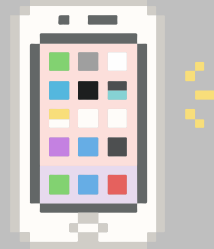
Kik- Messenger app

Support Groups



Snapchat

Chatrooms



(King Printables)



(Wallpapers.com)



Typical Grooming Process

Identify vulnerability

Befriend or “love bomb”

“Relationship” moves quickly

Move conversation to private
server
(Discord or Telegram)



Chat, Video, IM



“Group chat that’s all fun & games”

“Discord is great for playing games and chilling with friends, or even building a worldwide community”

“Customize your own space to talk, play, and hang out”

(Discord.com)



End to end encryption



Telegram

“A messaging app, cloud-based delivers faster than any other application

“Popular for the privacy-conscious.”

“secret chats”

(Fedewa, 2022)

Mechanisms of Abuse **Unique 764 Tactics**

Expose victims to extreme pornography and or acts of violence, mass shootings, videos, images of horrific violent acts
(Normalizing, gaining trust)

Obtain nude images- sextort for \$\$
or coerce into committing acts





Forced self-harm cutting perpetrator's
names, symbols ("fan-signing")
on body & genitals

Perform animal cruelty

Produce CSAM- often with/ younger
siblings

Livestreaming violent acts or photos
("cut or sex shows")



Escalation!

Rapidly escalating acts of violence to
self and others

Cut deeper

Commit more & more violent acts

Final barbaric act

Showing “devotion”

Victims may become perpetrators

Seek out new victims



Playbook

(Recipe for success)

“Gain her trust”

“Make her feel comfortable, she will do anything for you”

“Make her want to cut for you, get to her emotions, you are the only person she could ever need in her life”

~ Rinse and repeat ~





Intimidation tactics if a victim refuses to comply

There are consequences!

“Swatting”

SWAT team response

Bomb threats

Active shooter anonymous tip

Doxxing – Dropping Documents

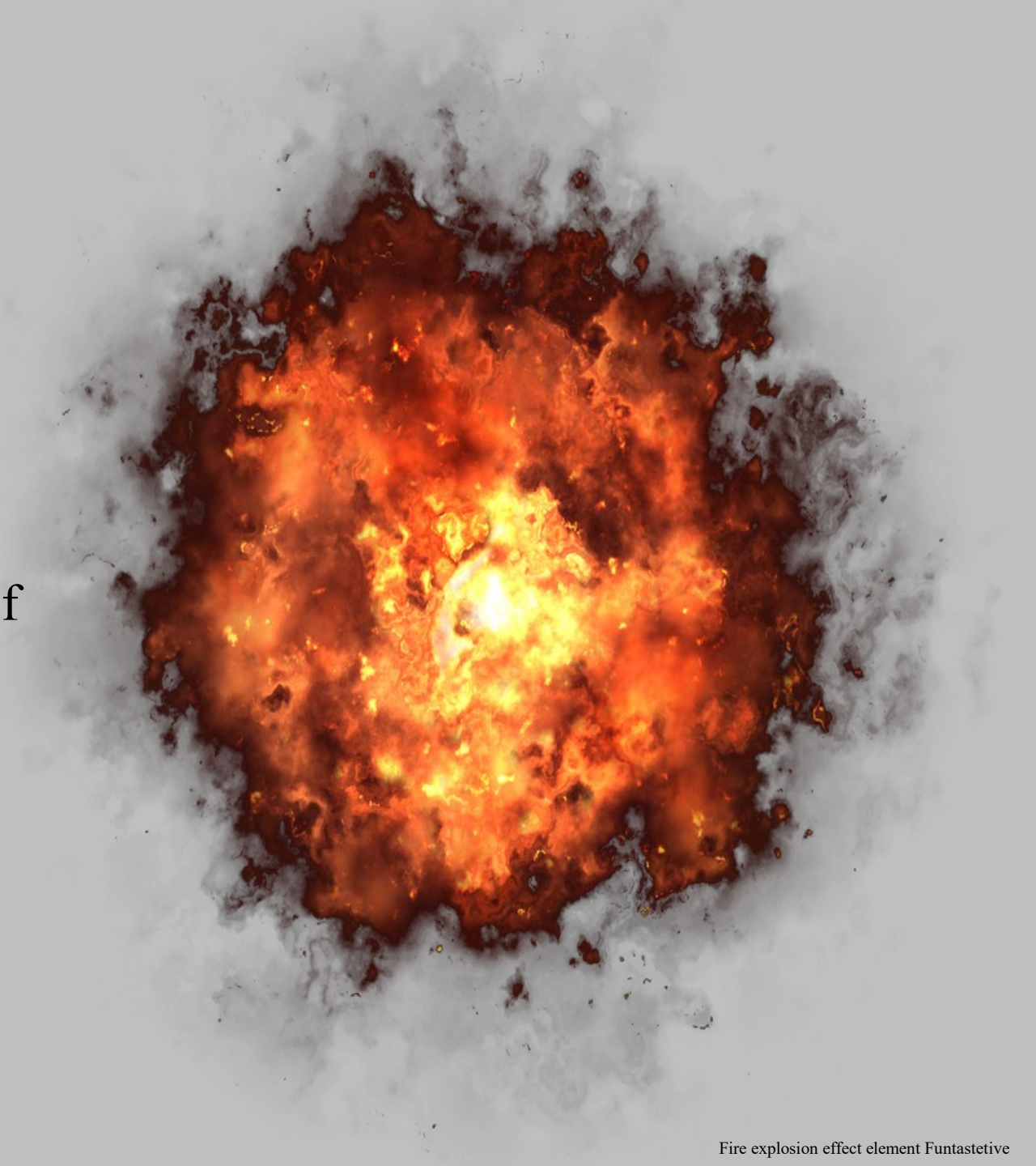
“Lorebooks”

Set of files

Includes personal identifying information,
documentation of victim committing acts of
violence

Shared between perpetrators

Digital currency \$\$\$



Sextortion vs. Gore Groups

Sextortion is about making quick \$\$\$

Gore groups are built on terror, abuse, and
the deliberate targeting of children
(cult-like)

Seek to create chaos & destroy civilized
society

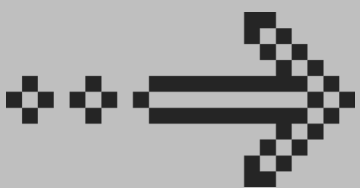


“Game Plan”

Online recruitment
(Gaming sites
social media)



Befriending
Recruiting



Love Bombing



GAIN TRUST



**Acts of self-harm
& violence**
Animals or
Property



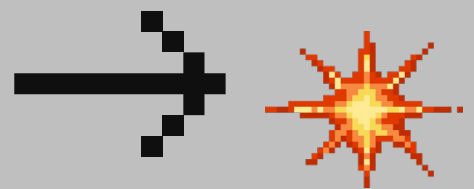
Extremely violent
Gore exposure
(Desensitization)



Sextortion



**Victim becomes
perpetrator**



Self harm
Suicide





Loyalty through
obedience

The Power of Coercive Control

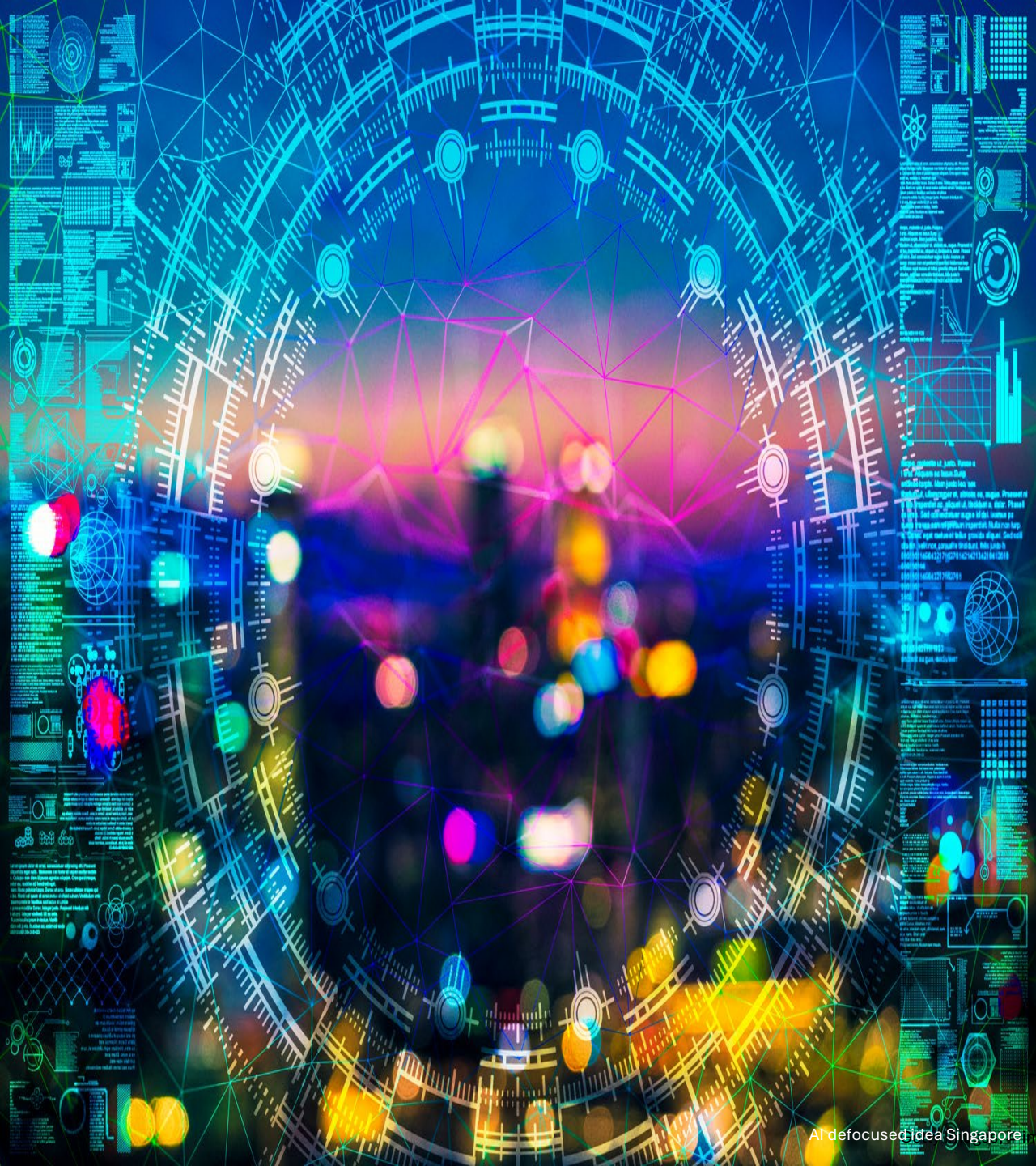
Abuse is a tool to
manipulate & radicalize

Like joining a cult

Survivor term “psychological kidnapping”

Rely on trauma, shame & fear to enable
perpetration

May be more likely to perpetrate rather than ask
for help



Technology-Facilitated Violence

Interventions for Healthcare Providers



Signs

Behavior changes

Sleeping, eating

Withdrawal from social activities, sports,
friends

764 Gore Groups ~ Red Flags

Carvings on body (symbols, words, names)
may be hidden under clothes

Missing animals/cruelty

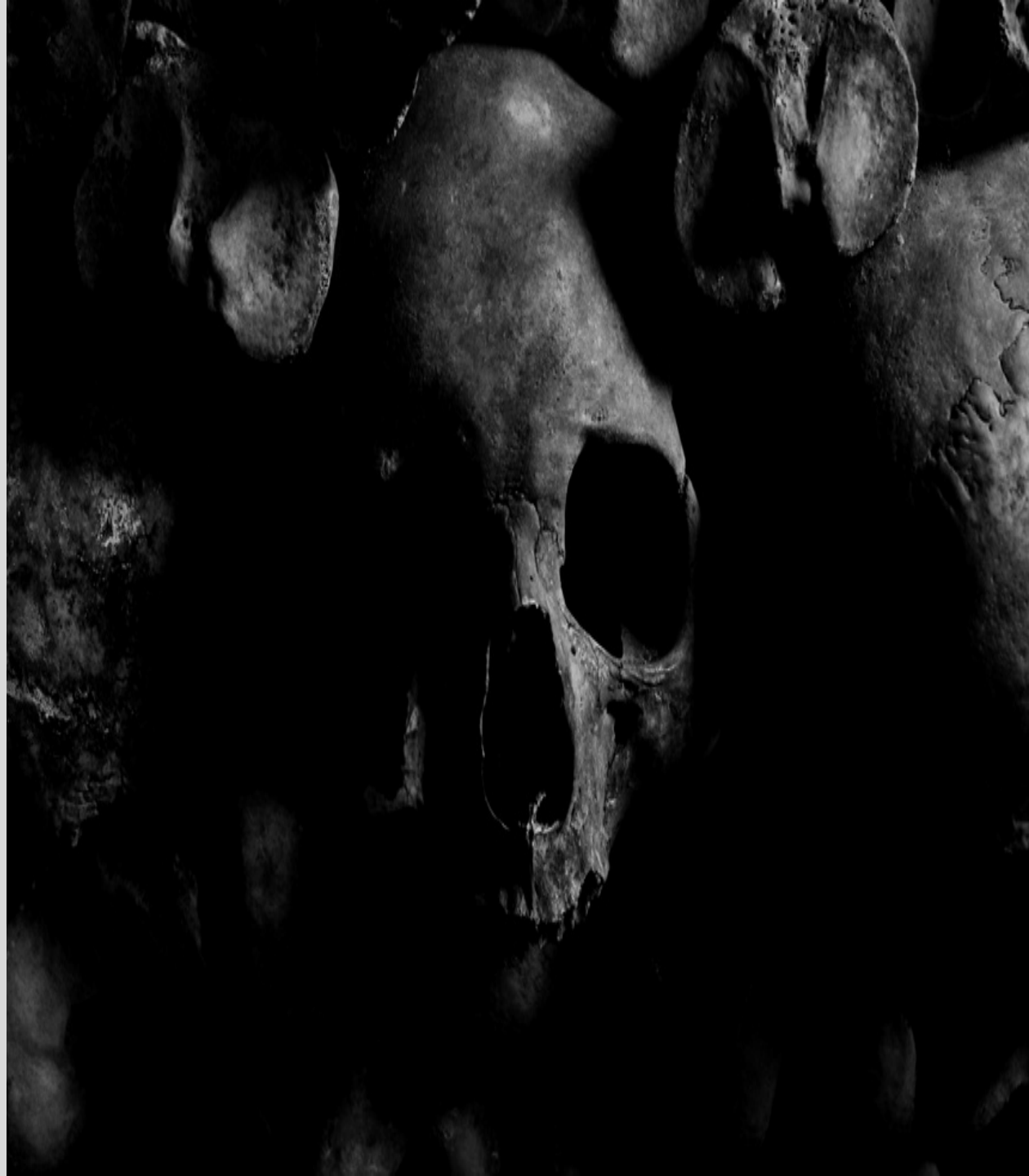
Unusual items arriving to home, gifts,
packages

*Sending a message to victim

Asking to move to a more private room or
area of home

“Odd” things happening

Swatting (Doxxing, bomb threats)



We cannot ignore this!



Three wise monkeys in a row Three wise monkeys in a row



Adolescence time of developing your
own identity

Peer relationships

Kids & teens think they can “handle it”

In December of 2025 Australia
banned social media under 16 y.o.

Is this the solution??

Does this really make it safer for kids??

Empower kids with skills!





How Do We Start the Conversation???

Build rapport & trust

Start with the easy questions

Focus on child's strengths and supports

Conversation can identify **protective factors** in place

“Awkward!”

But need to normalize the
discussion!

Kids need to have the
opportunity to talk to a safe
adult!



Start with a Broad Question

"Because so many people are affected by online violence and violence committed with technology, I always ask my patients some questions about their use of social media and technology"

(In your own words)





Pediatricians are checking health children and development shisuka

Age-Appropriate Screening

Is there anything you are worried about?

What online sites or games do you use regularly?

Do you “talk” to people you only know online?

Have you ever had any interactions online, or chat,
text, etc

that make you feel uncomfortable?

Do you know anyone who has sent naked pictures or
videos of themselves to someone?

Is anyone making you do things you do not want to
do, make you feel uncomfortable, scared or you think
are dangerous?

Remember mandated reporting

Disclose your limitations
(mandated reporting)

Do not make promises you cannot
keep!

Screen alone

Biases

(They are from a “good family,”
“The parents act very loving”)





Loyal Police German Shepherd with Police Uniform Andrew Poplavsky

What Actions to Take??

Report to Law Enforcement/DCYF

Do not delete any messages, photos, screenshots, or other potential electronic evidence from their phone or device

Screenshot messages

Change passwords

Do not engage with the perpetrator

Do not send money



Case Study “Layla”

12-year-old female (she/her)

History of anxiety, depression, ADHD

Struggle with body image and weight

Lives w/ mom and dad and 6 y.o. sister



Met “Jay” is sweet, understanding,
“gets her”

Chatting on gaming site

Invited to Discord chat

Sending “weird” videos (likes horror
movies, but these are not regular
movies and porn videos)

Wants Jay’s approval & sent
intimate photos...



After sending photos...

Jay changed

Making demands

Threatening to share photos

Cutting

Asking for more & more graphic
images/videos

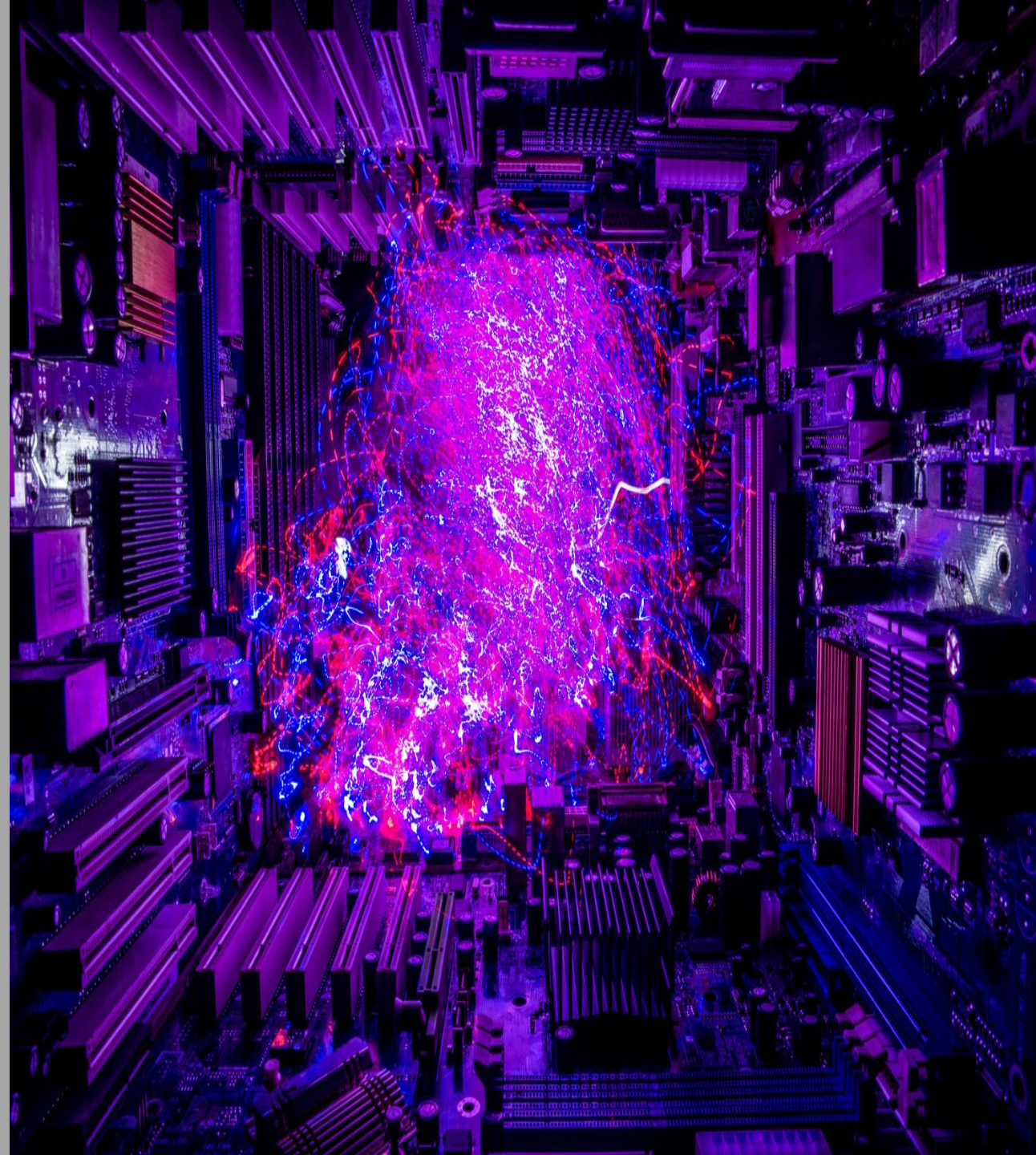
Parents notice Layla's recent behavior

Irritable, jumpy, disheveled,
rapid weight loss

Falling asleep at school

Unexpected packages were arriving for
Layla

Started having frequent panic attacks
after bomb threat at school





One night, mom gets up in the
middle of the night, hears Layla in
bathroom

Razor & on her phone

Bloody scene

Mom is hysterical

Throws her in car & goes to ED

Upon examination provider found

Deep carvings

~ required suturing ~

swastikas, symbols, names on
body

Provider spoke to Layla alone





Provider asking open-ended questions ~
“Can you tell me more about that?”

Starting with “easy” questions, school &
friends in-person or online?

Online activity- gaming, social media,
what types of sites do you spend a lot of
time on?

Layla crying hunched over, no eye contact

Online BF “Jay” encouraged eating
disorder, cutting, self-harm

Spinning out of control

My parents can't find out
Doing things she doesn't want to do,
but I love him!

“He's the only one who understands
me!”

My parents won't let me see him
anymore





Law enforcement → FBI

CPS/DCYF

Advocacy

Mental health services for
Layla & parents



Normalize talking to kids about
internet, technology

This is their norm

Think before you share

”Stranger Danger”



What Else Can Healthcare Providers Do??

Educate

Teach digital literacy

Open communication

Safe adults- normalize help seeking

“Simple,” Right???

Equip you with additional tools



Open red toolbox with tools Sabina Iliescu's Images



Girl with Broken Arm ronnachai



Man Juggling on a Tightrop Christopher Welsch Leveroni Pexels

Interprofessional Collaboration

Medical, Mental Health

Social Work/DCYF

Law Enforcement, Prosecutors

Community Partners- Schools, Churches

Warm handoffs!

(versus “just call this number”)





Middle aged black dad helping Monkey Business Images

Discuss & Teach Internet Safety

Tell kids, you might see some things that
make you uncomfortable

Talk about it

Monitor internet use

Password awareness

Location sharing

Social media posts- how much
information is disclosed without thinking
(check-ins, selfies at school)

Safety settings are not enough!

Boundaries!



Adorable Dog Licking Cat on Sunny DaySusi Lessing from Pexels

Consent

Respect for yourself & others

Body safety & body image

Healthy gender roles

Safe relationships!

How do you want to be treated?

How do you treat others?

*Online **and** in real life*

TFV

We need to consider

Sense of safety and well-being

Psychological safety

Interferes with school and social
relationships

Images may live online or screenshots
forever, unknown

***Increased risk of long-term mental
health issues- anxiety, depression, self-
harm, suicidal ideations*

(Dunn, 2021; Rogers et al. 2023)



nomadoulphotos



Cute Cat and Puppy Sitting in Cardboard Boxes Africa images

Remember!

There may be multiple types of
violence, coercion
or
abuse!



Group of Multi Ethnic Kids in Classroom with Smartphones Zurijeta

Victims of TFV

Especially, kids may not recognize
that they are being abused or
harmed

May not seek out support or care

Shame

Embarrassment

Don't know how to seek help



Technology is new

Legislation has not caught up yet

Constantly changing!

Need to stay educated

Work with legislators to advocate for
online safety

Kids need adults to keep them safe!

Remember!

The internet & technology are not
the problem

Perpetrators will always find a way
to perpetrate!



New Zealand government uses 'Porn Actors' in ad campaign on cyber safety

Actors show up at child's home

*"We don't even talk about consent do we?" Sue says. "No, we just get straight to it."
"Yeah, and I would never act like that in real life," Derek adds.*

Kids learning about sex from
pornography





Survivor story from The Fifth Estate
on YouTube

Canadian documentary

**“Trapped the Online Terror
Network”**

Resources

**National Center for Missing and Exploited
Children (NCMEC)
Missingkids.org**

FBI Tipline

<https://tips.fbi.gov/home>

Internet Crime Complaint Center ~

Internet Crimes Against Children (IC3) ~ ic3.gov

<https://report.cybertip.org/>

Take it Down

takeitdown.ncmec.org (<18)

Stopncii.org (>18)

988

Suicide Prevention Lifeline





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Let's Collaborate!

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