How can I support a friend who is being sexually extorted?

Resources by young people, for young people

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Mobile Alliance to Combat
Digital Child Sexual Exploitation

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Recognising that a friend is being sexually extorted can be tricky. However, there are some signs you can look out for. Your friend might:

- Seem withdrawn or different from usual.
- Be extra protective of their phone or social media.
- Start mentioning someone they met online, but avoiding the details.
- Seem stressed or ask to borrow money to pay someone online.

They may not know how to tell you – that's why listening matters.

Sexual extortion often makes people feel ashamed, even though it's not their fault. That shame can make it even harder to open up. Remember that your friend doesn't deserve to be extorted. You could try telling them:

"I want you to be safe."
"I am here to listen."
"I am glad you told me."

What you can do

1. **Be there for them**. Let your friend know you're on their side.

2. **Don't pressure them for information**. You don't need the full story – just being calm and non-judgemental helps.

3. **Remind them it's not their fault**. Whoever is doing this is the one in the wrong.

4. **Encourage them to tell a trusted adult**. A parent, carer, teacher or someone else they trust can help them report what happened and help get their content taken down through the **Take It Down Tool** (if they're under 18) or the **StopNCII** site (if they're 18 or over).

   If they aren't ready to tell an adult or report what happened, that's OK too. Be patient and let them know that support is there if they change their mind.

5. **Look at the resource "I've been a victim of sexual extortion – what do I do?"** for step-by-step guidance on reporting it and getting the images taken down.

Look after yourself too

Supporting a friend can be exhausting – and you don't have to do it alone. It's OK to ask for support and to take a break if you need one.

Where to get support

Find your local child helpline for support and counselling: **childhelplineinternational.org/helplines**

For more support, you can visit:

- Take It Down Tool
- StopNCII
- I've been a victim of sexual extortion – what do I do?
- Child Helpline International

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