Childhelp | **PREVENTION EDUCATION**

RESPONDING TO ONLINE HARM

STEP 1 · BE A SAFE ADULT

When online harm happens, it can be hard for youth to speak up, so if they do come to you about something that has happened online, it's important to respond appropriately. If a young person discloses that they or someone they know are being harmed or exploited online, follow these guidelines. **IF SOMEONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, CALL 911.**

LISTEN calmly and avoid reacting with shock. Be empathetic and let the youth know you are a safe adult that will help and support them.

REASSURE them that online abuse or exploitation is NOT their fault. Tell them that asking for help takes courage and you are proud of them for coming to you.

SUPPORT them with next steps. Explain the importance of reporting and help them make a report and seek professional help.

If your child is the victim of sextortion, remind them they are not to blame. Do not pay, send additional images, or comply with demands. Preserve evidence without downloading or sharing any sexual images of a minor, including your child. Report the incident to law enforcement and the CyberTipline and seek professional guidance and support.

STEP 2 · MAKE A REPORT

Online abuse or exploitation is often a crime. It is vital that a report is made, both to support the youth who has been harmed and prevent the perpetrator from harming others. Report to:

CyberTipline (cybertipline.org) is a national online abuse/exploitation reporting system hosted by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). You can call 1-800-THE-LOST or make a report online. Reports are reviewed and submitted to appropriate law enforcement agencies for investigation and follow-up. They can also provide helpful resources and support.

DHS How to Report Guidelines (dhs.gov/know2protect/how-to-report) provides information about reporting, including the Know2Protect Tipline at 833-591-KNOW (5669).

Take It Down (takeitdown.ncmec.org) is a free service provided by NCMEC that can help get explicit online photos removed. Reports can be made anonymously.

Internet Crime Complaint Center (ic3.gov) is the nation's central hub for reporting cybercrime, hosted by the FBI.

STEP 3 · GET SUPPORT

When online harm happens, it's important to seek professional support. Help youth reach out to:

Childhelp National Hotline (childhelphotline.org) is a 24/7 confidential hotline staffed by trained crisis counselors who can answer questions, provide local resources, and help you make a report.

Thorn (thorn.org) provides resources to help youth and caregivers safely navigate online harm and exploitation. Thorn for Parents (parents.thorn.org) offers resources and information for caregivers and NOFILTR by Thorn (nofiltr.org) provides a risk assessment and resources for youth.

Know2Protect (dhs.gov/know2protect) is a Department of Homeland Security site that educates and empowers children, teens, parents, adults and policymakers to prevent and combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse, explains how to report online enticement and victimization, and offers resources for victims, survivors, and supporters.

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