



{ WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT... }

NUDE SELFIES

...and how to protect ourselves.

You may not have heard about the porn ring that's running wild through Australian schools, but it's something everyone should know about. Put simply, boys have been posting private pics of high-school girls (friends, girlfriends, ex-girlfriends) on a dedicated porn website for the whole world to see, and each one that's posted gives the guy who put it there a 'win'.

Soon after it was launched, the website quickly filled up with requests: "Anyone have any Wenona wins?", "I've got heaps of Miami High girls. Kik me if you wanna trade!", "Who has nudes of this b*tch? I hear she throws it around!", "Add this sl*t on Snapchat, might be ugly but a good root". It's incredibly shocking for us to hear regular high-school boys are behaving like this, but imagine how horrifying it's been for the victims.

Forensic psychologist Alicia Corbett explains that the guys involved in this most likely suffer from extremely poor social skills.

"These individuals tend to have difficulty understanding and managing their own psychology and emotions. This, coupled with poor social skills, often means they have very poor relationships, so the internet becomes a source for connecting," she says. "For predators who look at underage pornography, there is often a focus on the element of control; many of them are able to satiate their need for power and control by targeting younger victims in vulnerable situations."

The boys involved in this are completely to blame for exploiting and disrespecting the victims, but it's essential to remember that no selfie is ever 100 per cent secure. Sharing a pic might seem harmless at the time, especially if it's with your boyfriend who you love and trust, but what if you break up one day? Once you hit send on that 'for his eyes only' pic, you lose control over what happens to it and, as the girls on the next page discovered, they can end up being seen by thousands of people.



**AUSTRALIAN
BOYS HAVE
BEEN POSTING
PRIVATE PICS OF
HIGH-SCHOOL
GIRLS ON A
DEDICATED PORN
WEBSITE FOR THE
WORLD TO SEE.**

'IT HAPPENED TO ME'

When news.com.au exclusively broke the porn ring story, a few girls decided to share their experiences as a way of spreading awareness to other young women.

Four years ago, Megan, now 20, sent out nude photos. This year she found them on the underage porn website. "I instantly broke down. I was shaking. I didn't know what to do," she told Triple J's Hack. "I haven't slept, I can't eat, I can't think."

Sarah, now 18, Snapchatted nude pics to a guy at her school when she was 15. It was supposed to be private, but he shared them with his friends. Then things got even worse – she found them online. "It is scary thinking those photos are out there. It is disgusting," she told *The Daily Telegraph*. "I know so many girls who are on that website."

Two years ago, when Tiahna was 16, she posed naked while she was on a boat, and that photo was sent out as a private Insta message. Then she learnt 'bonus points' were being awarded to guys who posted more naked pics of her on the website. "It was like I had been sold," she explained to the team at news.com.au. "It's just horrible, especially when they want it of you specifically – that's when it's really disturbing."

Madeleine*, now 20, was horrified when she realised photos she'd posed for naked at the age of 15 – because of the promise of becoming a model – were now online. "It's disgusting and vile," she told news.com.au. "Stuff like this could push someone over the edge."

Some mums even felt so strongly about what has been happening that they did everything in their power to

bring attention to the issue. After all the girls at her daughter's school were called in to an assembly to be lectured on the topic, Catherine vented on Facebook about how shocked she was that girls were being blamed for what was happening. "[The girls] were ... told not to post photos of themselves online, and to refuse any request from a boyfriend for a 'sexy selfie', as their boyfriends will only be

around for a couple of days – maximum a year – but definitely not in 10 years' time," she wrote. "The problem is not with the girls and the length of their skirts, not whether or not they choose to share photos with their boyfriends or anyone else. It's with the boys themselves; their sense of entitlement and sexist attitudes towards women and girls, their lack of respect, and the trust they choose to break."



WORDS SARAH FRIGGIERI. **PHOTOGRAPHY** BAUER SYNDICATION. MODELS ARE IN NO WAY ASSOCIATED WITH THIS STORY. *NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED FOR ANONYMITY PURPOSES. IF YOU'RE FEELING OVERHELMED, CONTACT THE KIDS HELPLINE ON 1800 55 1800.

"IT WAS LIKE I HAD BEEN SOLD... WHEN THEY WANT [PHOTOS] OF YOU SPECIFICALLY, THAT'S WHEN IT'S REALLY DISTURBING."

TIAHNA, 18



HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Firstly, and most importantly, you should probs know it's illegal to take, keep or share images that contain full or partial nudity of people under the age of 18 – that includes taking them of yourself. If caught, it comes with some pretty heavy consequences, including charges of child abuse and even the risk of being added to the

Australian Sex Offenders Register (the one that's usually reserved for the likes of paedophiles – eek!).

To keep us all in control of our lives, Leonie Smith, cyber-safety educator at The Cyber Safety Lady (thecybersafetylady.com.au), has offered to share a few pointers on safely sharing images.

- **DISAPPEARING-MESSAGE APPS** like Snapchat are not a safe way to share intimate pics, as recipients of the message are still able to take screenshots or take photos of the image with a second device, such as an actual camera.
- **BEWARE OF THE CLOUD** – you may have deleted photos from your device, but they might still sync to your Cloud account.
- **IF YOU'RE SENT A NUDE PHOTO OF AN UNDERAGE PERSON**, delete it immediately and tell an adult; you may have to consider blocking the sender. And never, ever forward a nude photo of an underage person to someone else.
- **DON'T GIVE IN TO THREATS OR BLACKMAIL** for nude photos. If you feel you are being pressured to send them, tell an adult you trust and report it to the police and on esafety.gov.au. 📌