

# Reporting Child Sexual Exploitation

There are many groups working to remove CSAM from the internet and many others providing support and resources to affected children and families. By reporting these incidents, you can help many children and families.

If you or your child are exposed to CSAM online immediately report this to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) at [www.cybertipline.org](http://www.cybertipline.org). Reports may be made 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Reporting these incidents to NCMEC is the first step in addressing the situation. Your report will allow law enforcement to start an investigation, help keep other children safe, and start the recovery process for you and your child.

To make a report of CSAM exposure online, please provide the following information:

1. The username of the individual sharing the explicit content,
2. The date and time the content was shared,
3. The URL or meeting link where content was shared, and
4. The meeting number and password, if applicable.

**Please remember:** If you have CSAM on your computer or device, do not share content to help identify a child or to express outrage. This is illegal and can further victimize the child in the images.

## Additional Resources

**Federal Bureau of Investigation**  
[www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)

**National Center for Missing & Exploited Children**  
Resources for victim and family support, more information about CSAM.  
[www.missingkids.org](http://www.missingkids.org)  
[www.missingkids.org/support](http://www.missingkids.org/support)  
[www.missingkids.org/theissues/csam](http://www.missingkids.org/theissues/csam)

**National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth**  
Resources about healthier responses to and prevention of problematic sexual behavior in youth.  
[www.ncsby.org/content/parents](http://www.ncsby.org/content/parents)

**National Childhood Traumatic Stress Network**  
Sexual Health and Trauma  
[www.nctsn.org/resources/sexual-health-and-trauma](http://www.nctsn.org/resources/sexual-health-and-trauma)

Digital Safety Resources  
[www.nctsn.org/resources/staying-safe-while-staying-connected-facts-and-tips-teens](http://www.nctsn.org/resources/staying-safe-while-staying-connected-facts-and-tips-teens)  
[www.nctsn.org/resources/staying-safe-while-staying-connected-tips-caregivers](http://www.nctsn.org/resources/staying-safe-while-staying-connected-tips-caregivers)

**Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn Proofing Today's Young Kids**, Kristen A. Jenson. ISBN-10: 0997318724

**National Sexual Assault Hotline**  
1-800-656-HOPE (4673)  
Online chat: [www.hotline.rainn.org/online](http://www.hotline.rainn.org/online)

**Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
Online chat: [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/)

# Coping with Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) Exposure



NCTSN

The National Child  
Traumatic Stress Network



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# Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)



Sometimes legally referred to as child pornography, CSAM is the documented sexual abuse and exploitation of children. Unfortunately, children and adults can be exposed to these images and videos over the internet without warning or consent. Examples of this unwitting exposure include being shown a video during a hacked video conferencing webinar or being sent images over social media platforms.

CSAM exposure can be traumatic for you and your child. You may have feelings like shock, anger, sadness, and disgust at what you have seen. You may find it hard to get the image out of your head. You may experience nightmares, trouble concentrating, or forgetfulness about things that should be easy to remember. These are very common reactions that can disrupt your sense of safety. You are not alone! This guide outlines how to report CSAM to the appropriate authorities and the resources available to you and your family to better cope with this exposure.

Report cases of CSAM to [cybertipline.org](https://www.cybercrime.gov).

## Coping

Everyone will react differently to CSAM exposure, and not all strategies for coping will work for everyone. Below are some suggestions of common ways to deal with your initial reactions to CSAM:

- 1. Engage in positive activities:**
  - a. Connection to others: talking to friends, reaching out to see if a neighbor needs help
  - b. Movement: walking, yoga, swimming, dance, sports, playing with your child
  - c. Creative Expression: art, drama, music, gardening
  - d. Connection to self: meditation, mindfulness, reading, writing
- 2. If the images are on your mind**, try actively replacing that image with something that is more soothing and positive – focus on images that bring you comfort.
- 3. Be intentional about looking after yourself for several weeks after exposure.** Consider checking in with yourself daily to see if you notice a change in your day-to-day behavior, such as having trouble sleeping, disturbing and repeating nightmares, feeling easily agitated, or increased anxiety.
- 4. Taking note of changes in your behavior allows you to best advocate for your wellbeing.** A trusted person who is close to you can also help you with identifying concerning changes to your behavior. If your reactions become troublesome, resources are available to help you. For more information on how to find mental health guidance and referrals, please go to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) website: [www.nctsn.org/about-us/contact-us/get-help-now](https://www.nctsn.org/about-us/contact-us/get-help-now). As this exposure has increased across the country, crisis hotlines are also available as a resource.

### For Children

With online schooling and other activities now virtual, children and youth are experiencing an unprecedented amount of time online and may be at risk for exposure to CSAM. Talk with your child about internet safety and specifically what to do if they see child sexual abuse images. There are resources available to help you.

Before you use an online platform or website, familiarize yourself with the privacy and safety settings, as well as reporting mechanisms. Review your own profiles to know what information is shared with the public. Ensure your settings are set to prevent unauthorized users from joining your video call or connecting with you on social media or online gaming. Talk with your school or other online community groups about what they are doing to ensure a safe online experience.

Exposure can be especially traumatic for children. The way in which you help a child cope will depend on their age, how the exposure happened, and their past experience with stressors or other traumas. Seeking professional assistance may be helpful

for children who have had previous traumatic experiences. Talking with your child directly is a good first step. The NCTSN has helpful resources to talk with your children, and below are some best practices:

- 1. Ask your child what happened.** Listen and remain calm while they try to explain. Hearing that your child was exposed may upset you, but it is important to not avoid the conversation.
- 2. Pay attention** to how your response is affecting your child's response.
- 3. Ask your child how they feel and be open to a range of responses.** Offer reassurance and comfort if your child shows signs of distress such as worry or fear. Avoid asking your child direct questions repeatedly.
- 4. Explain to your child that these crimes are reported to officials** whose job it is to protect children, and this is the best way to help the child who is being hurt in the image. Tell your child there are people working to make sure all children are safe.
- 5. Remind your child that they are safe** and will be safe moving forward.
- 6. Pay attention to your child's behaviors and take notice of anything that seems different or concerning.** If you or your child continue to be worried and are struggling to feel better after the exposure, seek additional help. Visit [www.nctsn.org/audiences/families-and-caregivers](https://www.nctsn.org/audiences/families-and-caregivers) for assistance and more information.
- 7. Be prepared that your child may want to talk about the images several days, weeks or months later.** Some children may want to have a conversation about what abuse and exploitation are and how they can be stopped. Use this time to discuss safety and remind your child of their personal safety rules, both online and offline. For resources about these topics visit [www.missingkids.org/netsmartz](https://www.missingkids.org/netsmartz)
- 8. Some children may be curious or confused, and these are normal responses.** Teaching your child about sexual health is important. For more information, please seek resources in your local community, and refer to the websites below:
  - a. **AMAZE** – information about everything from babies to gender to consent to relationships [www.amaze.org](https://www.amaze.org)
  - b. **Futures Without Violence** – resources about healthy relationships [www.startstrong.futureswithoutviolence.org/](https://www.startstrong.futureswithoutviolence.org/) [www.thatsnotcool.com/](https://www.thatsnotcool.com/)
  - c. **Sex Positive Families** - education, resources, and support to raise sexually healthy children [www.sexpositivefamilies.com/](https://www.sexpositivefamilies.com/)