

## Online Safety & Security

There are important concerns to address in the online space, especially for survivors of technology-facilitated child sexual abuse and exploitation. Images and videos can be repeatedly shared on the internet, causing ongoing harm and trauma.

Many survivors may need to stay anonymous for safety reasons. Abusers can use these images and videos to harm victims over time with threats and/or stalking. AI technology can make this issue worse as well by creating or allowing for the sharing of child sexual abuse imagery.

### Benefits of the Online Space

While the internet does pose risks, it can also be a powerful and healing place.

As the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence notes in their resource of survivor-led social media groups [found here](#) the online space can allow for:



#### **Anonymity**

It can be easier for some survivors to speak about difficult topics with honesty and authenticity online than would happen face-to-face.



#### **Accessibility**

Social media is free and accessible 24/7, which can help survivors who need connection or support outside of business hours, or who cannot access services in their community.



#### **Acceptance**

Social media and community groups offer a shared space for people. This can be appealing for survivors who feel isolated, misunderstood, or unsupported in their daily lives.

### Potential Risks

All social media engagement from your personal accounts is completely your choice. We also want to outline some potential risks if you choose to publicly identify yourself or even your experience of childhood sexual violence abuse online. This could be items such as:

- Mocking or making light of your experience
- Discrediting your experience or shaming you about it
- Making critical remarks to content shared
- Content could be taken from you and shared in other forums that you haven't agreed to
- Potential death threats and doxing

## Creating a Plan

Our technology tools can be great, but their default settings do not prioritize survivor safety and healing. Find time to meet with those you trust to develop a shared plan. Then take action to keep yourself safe online.

### Create shared boundaries

- Consider what your personal boundaries need to be with others including personal information, photos, or even mentions that you aren't comfortable with.
- Commit to share your hesitations and concerns openly with people in your circle.
- Don't post any personal details about others without their consent.

### Discuss engaging new people

- If you receive any emails, DMs, or messages that appear to be suspicious, delete and/or block
- Review settings for who can connect with you. Think twice about accepting friend requests from individuals you don't know.
- Familiarize yourself with how to report content. Understand that reporting inappropriate content creates a safer internet.
- Don't click unknown links, especially from people you don't know.

### Safeguard your technology

- Make sure your computer is regularly updated and that you have a standard firewall
- Create strong passwords that aren't associated with anything that others could find online
- Update your software when prompted

### Protect your data

- Limit your personal details online:
  - Your address
  - Phone number
  - Name (including your last name)
  - Birthdate
  - Schools you attended
  - Employers including past and present
- Familiarize yourself with privacy settings on all of your accounts ([Read a guide to privacy settings](#))

### Find a confidential tool

- For sensitive conversations, use secure communication platforms. Avoid discussing sensitive topics over regular email or SMS.
- Avoid the usage of all AI tools when discussing sensitive topics.

### Consider other practical tips

- **Use aliases if needed** – This means changing your name or using a different name
- **Safeguard yourself legally** – Do not name or declare the guilt of anyone if they have not been convicted of abusing anyone. You could be sued for libel or defamation of character.

### Stop & Reflect

Take 30 minutes to view the following two resources and consider your online presence and ways you want to make sure you feel good about engaging in this work:

- Tech Safety [found here](#) outlines how you can create a personal technology safety plan, tips of documenting potential abuse, how to secure devices and accounts, guides to emails and more.
- Privacy Rights Org [found here](#) outlines how online data collection works, what different privacy policies entail, how accessing the internet works, etc.
- Conversations with children about online technology assisted harm can be [found here](#)

*“Be prepared for the fact that if you do share your experience online, you [may] have trolls. Know the risks ahead of time and prepare for them.”*

*Robert Shilling, Survivor Leader & SAGE Member*

### Safety of the Work

Advocacy does not happen in a vacuum. It is important to check the context and broader risks when preparing

What is the political climate where you are?

Is it safe to speak against governmental authorities, figures, or politicians?

What are the potential negative shifts in the public’s opinion of you?

What are the potential risks of threats or violence you could face?

Is your family able to support you? Are they comfortable with the public scrutiny?

What are the potential social risks you could face for speaking out?

What considerations should be made for women survivors choosing to speak out?

What considerations should be made male survivors choosing to speak out?

What considerations should be made for those who have been historically marginalized?

***If you want to discuss safety with us more in-depth, please contact us at [info@bravemovement.org](mailto:info@bravemovement.org)***