When the internet becomes a weapon in DFV
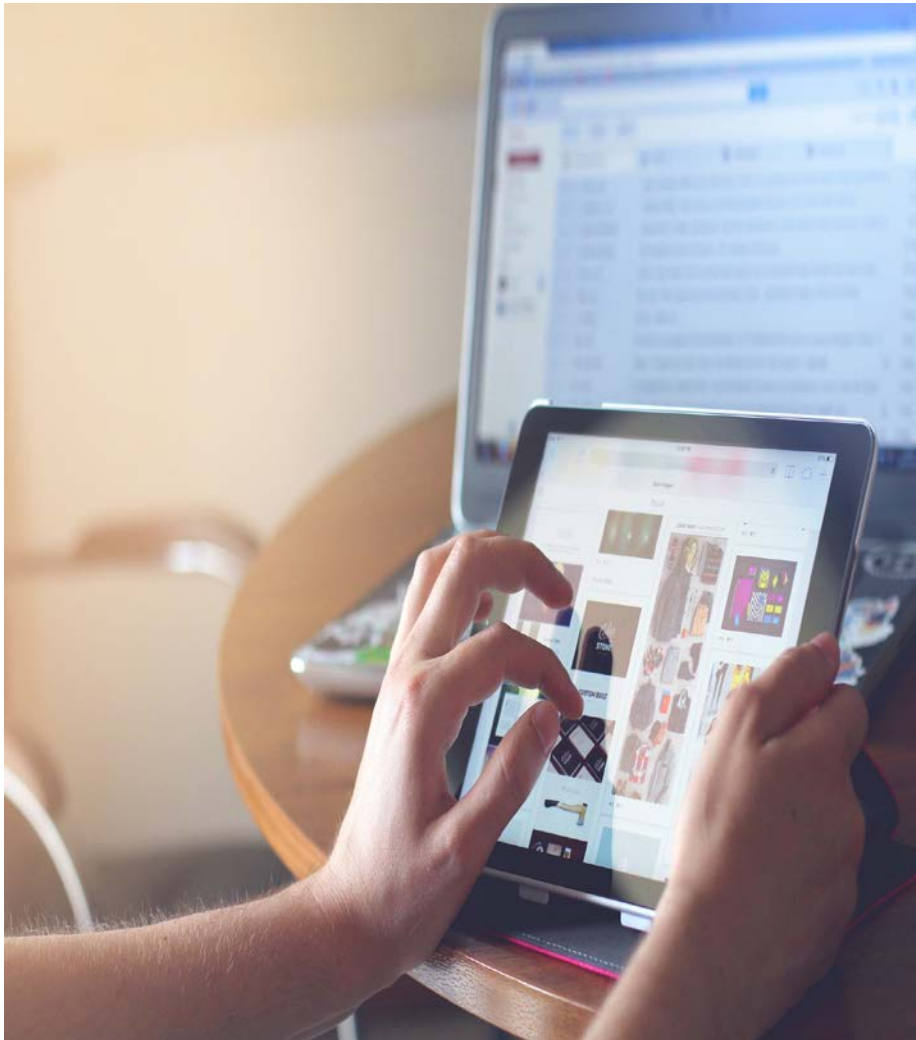
Dr Marika Guggisberg

Internet

Sexuality and Crime

"...the majority of internet pornography, whether it is soft core sexual imagery or even hard core imagery depicting penetration and other sexual acts... even 'extreme' pornographic materials depicting acts on the borders of consensuality are unlikely to be prosecuted so long the acts are consensual" (pp. 107-108)
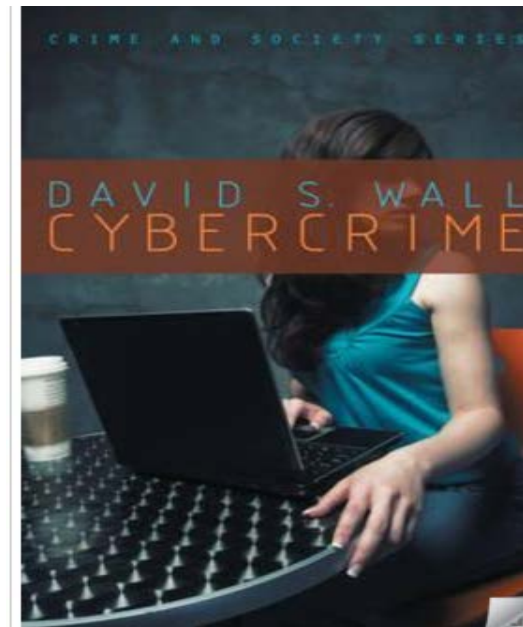
Sexting

Definition:

'the use of digital devices such as computers and mobile phones to create and exchange messages and images of a sexual nature' (Kosenko, Luurs, & Binder, 2017, p. 141).

Important to note:

- Sexting is not only practiced among adolescents

- Sexting does not necessarily have negative outcomes
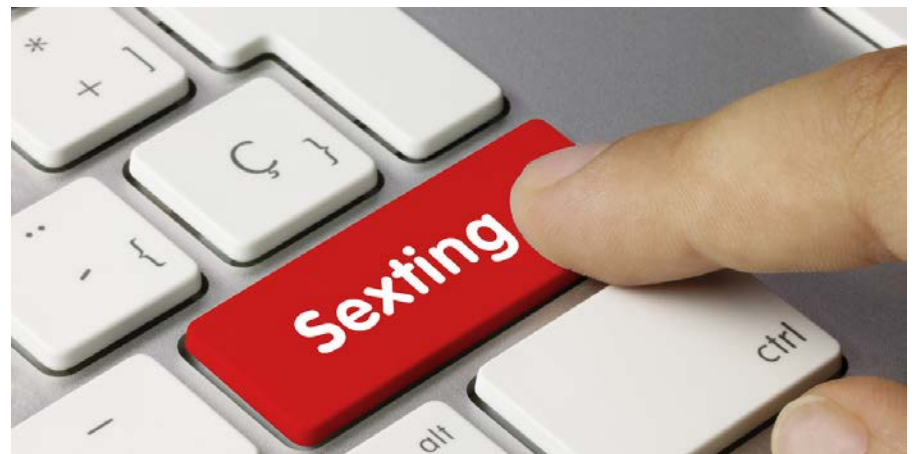
Sexting Coercion

Term coined by Drouin, Ross and Tobin (2015)

- Association with physical and/or sexual forms of IPV

- 1 in 5 women felt obligated 'to give in' or was threatened
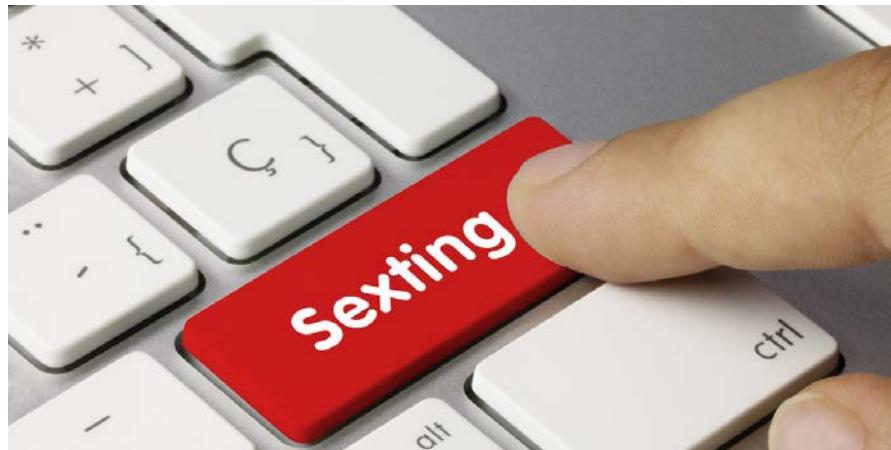
'Revenge Porn'

Definition:

'distribution of sexually graphic images of individuals without their consent. This includes images originally obtained without consent' (Citron & Franks, 2014, p. 345).

Distribution for revenge – jilted lovers; other behaviours and motivations:

- Sexual assault recorded on mobile device
- Images obtained from spyware/hidden cameras
- Images stolen from the Cloud
- Images photo-shopped

Image-based sexual abuse

Image-based sexual abuse

Negative long-term impact

- Mental health problems – anxiety, depression, sleep difficulties

- Social impact – relationship problems/breakdown, social withdrawal

- Financial impact – loss of employment; medical expenses

"In May 2013 a young woman's (Jane Doe) ex-boyfriend created a fake profile of her on an online dating website. He impersonated her, posted sexually suggestive images of her, and shared her personal cell phone number and home address....[He] continued his assault on her privacy and reputation by creating additional fake profile pages on porn websites, including several revenge porn sites, where he posted sexually explicit images and videos of her. He linked her profiles on these pages to her LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram accounts (Canon, 2015, p. 472).

Image-based sexual abuse in IPV context

Intimate Partner Violence

'a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. This includes any behaviours that intimidate, manipulate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure or would someone' (Doerner & Lab, 2017, p. 248).

- Physical; sexual; emotional; economic; psychological

Image-based sexual abuse – victim blaming

Victim blaming attitudes seem to exacerbate the many negative impacts for victims of image-based sexual abuse.

- You took the pictures/videos yourself
- You agreed to have the pictures/videos taken

Stalking

Laurie Baughman (2010):

'As wonderful as it is for individuals to share their daily lives online with friends and family, Internet users who are victims of domestic violence may be vulnerable to further abuse or may experience harassment or stalking through these social networking mediums' (p. 935).

- Stalking by intimate partner
    - Harassing phone calls
    - Sending letters / text messages / emails
    - Physically following
    - Cyberstalking

Stalking - Myths

There are a number of myths about stalking and stalkers – here are the top three:

- Myth 1: Ex partner stalkers are less dangerous than stranger stalkers
- Myth 2: Stalking is a form of flattery
- Myth 3: An ignored stalker will give up and go away

Stalking Typologies

No universally accepted typology in the literature

- Type 1: Partner stalking – most frequent and most dangerous
    - Bitterness and hate – linked to history of past intimate relationship
    - Need to re-establish control after relationship breakup
    - High levels of verbal threats, physical violence and property damage
- Type 2: Love obsession – no prior relationship ' obsessed fan'
- Type 3: Delusional stalker (often females)

Examples

K: - I remember, when we were separated for 6 months, He used to follow me everywhere. He knew everything, where I went shopping, the car and registration number... it was just so frightening to see him follow me everywhere. He would just appear everywhere.

L: - He came to my workplace secretly watching me ... he used to 'pop in and say hello'. He then said 'you were talking to a man with a blue shirt'…. He used to watch me and say 'why did you laugh with your colleague'… I became totally depressed and I suffer from anxiety. This makes my life difficult.

Cyberstalking

- Ex-partners
  - Mobile phones; computers; cameras; GPS devices

  Creation of a sense of Omnipresence

  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaJZTjOdM7g

Consequences of stalking

- Financial consequences (e.g. loss of income; medical costs)
- Social consequences (e.g. change of routine; stay indoors)
- Psychological and physical consequences (e.g. fear, distrust, appetite disturbances, chronic distress, anxiety, depression, panic attacks; sleep disturbances).

S: - He sometimes harasses me at work and checks up on me all the time. He is obsessed with jealousy. He rings me in my office sometimes 10x one day. That can drive me crazy. I am still working but not for long anymore. I wouldn't be able to cope with this. I think it's just harassment out of jealousy. ..It is not only the stalking that frightens me so much but the pressure from various people. I got to the stage where when people ring to ask me out, I am not going. Of course, people stopped ringing me. I lost a lot of friends. He is using the kids to check up on me. I think, part of this is probably his revenge, because I made a step to actually start and leaving him. He has caused me so much heartache, he has caused me so many tears… he has just caused me so much pain.

Summary

Sexting – image-based sexual abuse - Stalking

Future directions

Causes of violence against women
White Ribbon Australia

Stand up Speak out
Prevent men's violence against women
White Ribbon Australia

global movement #standup4whiteribbon

How to talk to friends about men's violence against women
Play video

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