

Have you ever heard of gender-based violence?

Gender-based violence is a daily, global phenomenon that overwhelmingly affects women, young girls, and LGBTQ+ people. It is distinguished from other forms of violence because **a) its motivation is misogynistic/homophobic b) it stems from social inequality between men and women, which results in systematic discrimination against women.**

It includes any act or threat against the integrity, freedom, and dignity of those who suffer it. It can happen to you at home, at school, at the gym, on public transport, in public places, at university, at work, etc. It is a means of exercising social control and punishment, especially for women and girls.

The types of gender-based violence are: sexual, physical, psychological, and economic.

- **Gender-based violence causes physical, sexual, or psychological trauma.**
- **Gender-based violence is a criminal offense and is punishable by Greek law.**

Domestic violence

It is one of the most widespread forms of gender-based violence, worldwide and in Greece. It occurs within the family or a relationship. **It is verbal, psychological, physical, sexual or financial abuse perpetrated by one member of the family/relationship towards another.**

Sexual violence/harassment

It is any sexual act (e.g., kissing, touching private parts of the body, sex), attempt to do so, and/or verbal behaviour (unwanted sexual comments) **without the free consent of the other person.** Physical violence, coercion and threats of violence are often (but not always used) in cases of sexual violence.

What is online sexual harassment/violence?

It occurs online or through the use of new technologies. It is also a form of gender-based violence, quite widespread in recent years. It has traumatic consequences (physical, sexual, psychological, or financial harm), like all other forms of gender-based violence, and often extends beyond the digital world. Recent research highlights that this form of violence disproportionately affects women and young girls, but also LGBTQ+ people:

- 1-4 women in Europe have experienced some form of abuse or harassment online (*Cybersafe 2021*)
- 9-15% of LGBTQ+ people in the EU, aged 15-54, have experienced online violence (*FRA, 2020*)

Forms of cyber violence

Grooming

A systematic manipulative process in which a, usually, older person tries to gain the trust of a child or adolescent, possibly vulnerable, for the purpose of sexual exploitation/abuse. Grooming is widespread on the internet, with children and adolescents being the victims. It occurs through social media and in most cases, groomers pose as peers, using fake identities and photos. Groomers psychologically manipulate the victim, showing at first excessive interest, appreciation and understanding. They build a close relationship with the young person, isolating them from those close to them, implying that only they understand and support them. They gradually violate the minor's boundaries with sexual allusions or demands for naked photographs, presenting these behaviours as a sign of intimacy. **They aim to gain the child's trust in order to meet the child in person and exploit them sexually.**

Image based sexual abuse

The online sharing of photos and videos of sexual content without the consent of the person depicted. The material may be uploaded on websites, chat groups, etc., usually by ex/former partners but also by strangers, with the aim of humiliating the victim and/or for the financial gain of the abuser. You will often hear it referred to as revenge porn, which echoes the revenge motives of the perpetrator (ex/former partner). Several times it functions as an extension of intimate partner violence in the internet space as well.

Sextortion

A threat by an ex/former partner/date/stranger that they will make public nude/sexual photos/videos of you so that you a) send them more content b) have sex with them c) give them money. This is sexual blackmail for the purpose of harassing, shaming and controlling the victim.

Cyberstalking

The online monitoring, information gathering, and repeated, harassing communication with a person, via email/social media/SMS, even against the expressed refusal of the victim. Often stalking can occur in parallel outside the digital realm, with persistent phone calls, stalking, and/or intrusion into school, family space, etc.

Doxxing

The online searching and posting of personal information online (name, address, place of work, email, phone number, social media profiles) for the purpose of harassing, threatening, or causing harm to the individual.

Non-consensual sexting

Sending sexual messages without the consent of others. The same category includes the publication on the internet of personal messages with sexual content (abusive sexting) without the consent of all persons who have exchanged them, with the purpose of shaming the victim.

Cyber harassment

Harassment of a person using digital media. It often targets children and adolescents. In the context of cyber sexual harassment, aggressive sexist and offensive language, misogynistic and homophobic rhetoric is used.

Creepy shots/up skirting

The secretive taking of non-consensual photos/videos in public, aimed at the genitals of women/girls, for sexual gratification, resulting from violating another person's boundaries. Often these photos are posted online accompanied by a hashtag, such as #creepshot.

Cyberflashing

The sending, usually via chat, of a person's genitals to an unaware individual online without their consent.

Sexist hate speech

Expressions that spread, provoke, promote, or justify hatred based on gender. In practice, the term refers to sexist verbal attacks and threats (rape, torture) directed at women, girls, and lgbqil+.

Consent

Consent is the key word for any action you take that is erotic/sexual (flirting/ touching/kissing/sex). Consent must be free, informed, enthusiastic, and specific. Remember that it is always reversible: if you had sex once with someone, it doesn't mean your consent is active every time - just because you flirted/sexted with someone doesn't mean you consent to have sex.

#Learning about the culture of consent

- Be specific when you ask for something
- Listen to the other person more
- Be prepared to hear "no"
- Thank the other person even when they say "no"
- Recognise when they don't respect your "no"
- If the other person says "maybe" consider it a NO
- Everyone has the right to change their mind
- We all make mistakes, apologize meaningfully

What to do if it happens to me?

If you are experiencing or suspect that you are experiencing an incident of online sexual violence/harassment, know that it is not your fault. It is important to remember that you are not alone, you can contact an adult you trust or the following agencies/services. If it's not for you but a friend give them all the information.

To report/complain about the incident:

1) cyberalert.gr - Cybercrime Unit: call 11188 (toll-free) or send to ccu@cybercrimenit.gov.gr.

2) safeline.gr - Greek Safer Internet Centre: you can contact via email: report@safeline.gr

3) National child protection line 1107: call 1107 24 hours a day. The Line cooperates with the competent authorities and services for the immediate social protection of children and adolescents at risk.

For psychological support or counselling:

1) help-line.gr: call free of charge at 210-6007686 or send to info@help-line.gr. You can contact via chat, which can be found on the page, every day from 14:00 to 17:00. All calls and reports are anonymous and confidential.

2) The Smile of the Child Line 116111: You can call 116111 24 hours a day. Specialist psychologists are provided.

3) National Child Protection Line 1107: Emergency counselling, psychological and social support is provided to minors, and liaison is made, when required, with specialised Child Protection Services.

4) Diotima Centre: if you are a girl (16+) you can call 210-3244380 or email diotima@otenet.gr. Specialized psychosocial and legal assistance is provided.

Information:

saferInternet4Kids.gr: you can get information and materials related to the safe use of the internet and social networks.

What should I do if it happens to a friend of mine?

- We listen
- Encourage him/her/them to share what has happened in their time, without pressure
- We do not judge
- We create a climate of trust and confidentiality
- We try to empathise with them when they express their feelings
- We ask what they need, what they want
- We suggest that they talk to an adult person they trust
- We are there for them

It is important if a friend is experiencing online sexual harassment that we seek out and give them information about where they can go for support. For example, give them this leaflet. If he/she is experiencing grooming, image-based sexual abuse, sextortion, or cyber-stalking contact an adult person you trust.

For more information and materials download the GBV Pocket Guide [here](#).

