The Issue

Sextortion

Overview

NCMEC's CyberTipline receives reports regarding suspected child sexual exploitation, including "sextortion," a new online exploitation crime directed towards children in which non-physical forms of coercion are used, such as blackmail, to acquire sexual content from the child, engage in sex with the child, or obtain money from the child.

In October 2013, NCMEC began tracking this disturbing new form of online sexual victimization of children and NCMEC has seen a dramatic increase in sextortion cases being reported. Based on reports made to NCMEC, we have learned that children who are victimized are often targeted and blackmailed by an individual they met online and who had obtained a sexual image from the child through deceit, coercion, or some other method.

Red Flags

Those involved in the sextortion of children often:

- Approach a child on social media after using it to learn about the child's interests, friends, school, family, etc.

- Intentionally move their communications with the child from one online platform to another (e.g., moving from social media to private video chat or messaging apps)

- Use tactics to coerce a child, including:

    o Reciprocation ("I'll show you, if you show me")

    o Initially offering something to the child, such as money or drugs, in exchange for sexually explicit photos/videos

    o Pretending to work for a modeling agency to obtain sexual images of the child

    o Developing a bond with the child by establishing a friendship/romantic relationship

    o Secretly recording sexually explicit videos of the child during video chats

    o Physically threatening to hurt or sexually assault the child or the child's family members

    o Using multiple online identities to contact a child

    o Pretending to be younger and/or a member of the opposite sex

o Accessing the child's online account without authorization and stealing sexual images or videos of the child

o Threatening to create sexual images or videos of the child using digital-editing tools

o Threatening to commit suicide if the child does not provide sexual images or videos

o Saving sexually explicit conversations with the child and threatening to post them online

Risk Factors

There are certain online behaviors that may increase the risk for a child to be a victim of online enticement or sextortion. Some of these behaviors include:

- Lying about his or her age to access platforms which would allow a child to communicate with older individuals

- Initiating contact with an individual online or offering to provide sexually explicit images to the individual in exchange for financial compensation, alcohol or drugs, gifts, etc.

- Sending sexually explicit photos or videos (known as "sexts") of oneself to another individual

By the Numbers

Between October 2013 and April 2016, there were

1,428

reports of sextortion of minors made to NCMEC's CyberTipline.

78% female

male 15%

(for the rest of reports gender could not be determined)

People engaged in sextortion typically had one of three main objectives:

- To acquire increasingly more explicit sexual content of the child
- To obtain money or goods from the child
- To meet in order to engage in sex with the child

The ages of child victims ranged from **8-17** years old.

What NCMEC is Doing About it

Creating a Place to Report

In 1998, NCMEC launched the CyberTipline® to provide the public and electronic service providers with the ability to report suspected child sexual exploitation including online enticement of children for sexual acts, extra-familial child sexual molestation, child pornography, child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, unsolicited obscene materials sent to children, misleading domain names, and misleading words or digital images on the internet. After NCMEC's review is completed, all information in a CyberTipline report is made available to the appropriate law enforcement agency. To make a CyberTipline Report, visit report.cybertip.org.

> More than 12.7 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation were made to the CyberTipline between 1998 and June 2016. More than 8.2 million in 2016 alone.

Helping Victims Take Back Control

Is a sexually explicit image of you or your child out there? Learn how to contact the internet service providers and platforms to help mitigate the spread of the image.

Get help now. https://www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/isyourexplicitcontentoutthere

Preventing Abuse Through Education

Because of the massive amount of information that comes through the CyberTipline, NCMEC is in a unique position to spot trends and evolving threats to children- especially online. NCMEC's digital citizenship and safety program, NetSmartz, is an innovative educational program that utilizes games, animated videos, classroom-based lesson plans, activities, and much more to help empower children to make safer choices online.

Learn More About NetSmartz and Online Safety.

Supporting Victims & Families

For families with a missing or sexually exploited child, NCMEC provides support services like crisis intervention and local counseling referrals to appropriate professionals. Our Team HOPE program connects families with peers who have had similar experiences and can offer coping skills and compassion.