

ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:

IT'S NOT JUST WORDS.

Technology-facilitated violence is an often-dismissed form of gender-based violence in which people are targeted online due to their gender. Also referred to as online violence, it can be extremely emotionally harmful as online harassment can reach victims anywhere.

According to the United Nations, cyberviolence worldwide is as harmful to women and girls as physical violence. So why don't we treat it in the same way?

ONLINE VIOLENCE COMES IN MANY FORMS

While some forms of online violence, like harassment, can also happen offline, other forms are unique to the Internet, like:

DOXING

publishing private or identifying information about someone online

FLAMING

posting insults or personal attacks on the Internet

CYBERSTALKING

using social media or GPS trackers to stalk someone using technology

REVENGE PORN

intimate or sexual images or videos posted without consent online, often after a breakup

THOUGH THERE ARE MANY FORMS OF ONLINE VIOLENCE THEY HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON:

WOMEN ARE MORE TARGETED BY AND EXPERIENCE MORE HARM FROM THEM. i

IN FACT,

18% OF WOMEN IN CANADIAN PROVINCES EXPERIENCED UNWANTED SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR ONLINE. ii

Some groups are more targeted by unwanted behaviour online than others.

33%

of women between 15 and 24

30%

of Indigenous women iii

50%

of all bisexual women

reported experiencing online harassment in a 2018 survey about the previous 12 months. i

But online violence doesn't stay online. It often results in the type of harm caused by other forms of GBV.

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Can cause depression, anxiety and fear, suicidal tendencies

PHYSICAL

Risk of physical harm increases when somebody's details are posted online

SEXUAL

Sexual harassment is common, along with the sharing of photos without consent

ECONOMIC

Perpetrators can post information and photos that make it harder for their victims to find work

ONLINE HARASSMENT HAS LED

28% OF WOMEN

TO TAKE PROTECTIVE MEASURES LIKE REDUCING TIME ONLINE AND DELETING ACCOUNTS. ii

It can also result in social isolation, whereby victims/survivors withdraw from public life, isolating themselves from friends and family.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

By treating online gender-based violence as the serious issue that it is and challenging it in online spaces (safely), reporting it, or telling someone you trust, we can lessen the damage it can do.

LEARN HOW TO STOP DISMISSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AT

Canada.ca/ItsNotJust

SOURCES

i Report on online violence against women. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/SRWomen/Pages/OnlineViolence.aspx
ii Gender-based violence and unwanted sexual behaviour in Canada, 2018: Initial findings from the Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces, Statistics Canada, 2019
iii Unwanted behaviours in public spaces and online in the past 12 months, by gender and selected characteristic of victim, provinces, Statistics Canada, 2018