# Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence Among Teens

## Closing the Gap in Canadian Knowledge & Resources

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**diY**

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YOUTH

DIYDIGITALSAFETY.CA

# AGENDA

- *Our Report Findings: We don't know enough about TFGBV among teens in Canada*
- What can we learn from research in other jurisdictions?
- How can law help?
- How can tech/ online resources help?
- How can education help?
- What is our project doing to help?
- Q&A

# Our Report on TFGBV Among Teens

Knowledge synthesis of research on TFGBV among teens aged 13-18

- English-Language International & Domestic Scholarship
- French-Language Domestic Scholarship, Reports, Resources
- Canadian Educational Policies & Curricula

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) happens when someone uses technology like texting, social media, or GPS tracking to harm someone because of their gender, how they show their gender, or what gender people think they are. It includes other kinds of harm that disproportionately hurt women, girls, and transgender people. People also experience tech-facilitated harm because of their sexual orientation and other parts of their identity.

TFGBV can have serious negative impacts like

Anxiety and depression | Harassment and violence | Social isolation | Suicidal thoughts, feelings, or intentions

48% of youth experienced TFGBV

Girls experience HIGHER RATES of victimization while boys are more often the ones causing the harm

Source: Attaberry-Ash, B., Kattari, S. K., Speer, S. R., Guz, S., & Kattari, L. school youth across sexual orientation and gender identity. Children 104403.

Despite the serious impact people are not reaching

1 in 4 young people did nothing after experiencing at least one form of harm

3% reported experiences of harm to the school

39% discussed it with a friend

1 in 5 young people reported it to their parents

Source: Horack, T., Ringrose, J., Milne, B., and Mendes, K. (2023). Postdigital Teens: Gender based violence and tech facilitated harms during Covid-19: Final Report, University College London.

If you have experienced TFGBV, you are not alone!

Kids Help Phone
Canada's only 24/7 e-mental health service offering free, confidential support to young people.

Techsafety.ca
Offers knowledge and resources to support women, children, and gender-diverse people with their experiences of TFGBV.

DiY DIGITALLY INFORMED YOUTH

LEARN MORE AND FIND SUPPORT AT www.diydigitalsafety.ca

@diydigsafety

Click here for this infographic available on our website

# WHAT DID WE FIND?

- TFGBV is common & occurs using multiple forms of tech

- Those from marginalized groups are at a higher risk & are more severely impacted

- TFGBV can have serious negative impacts on teens' health and safety

- Despite its commonality & impact, there are many gaps in Canadian knowledge on this issue
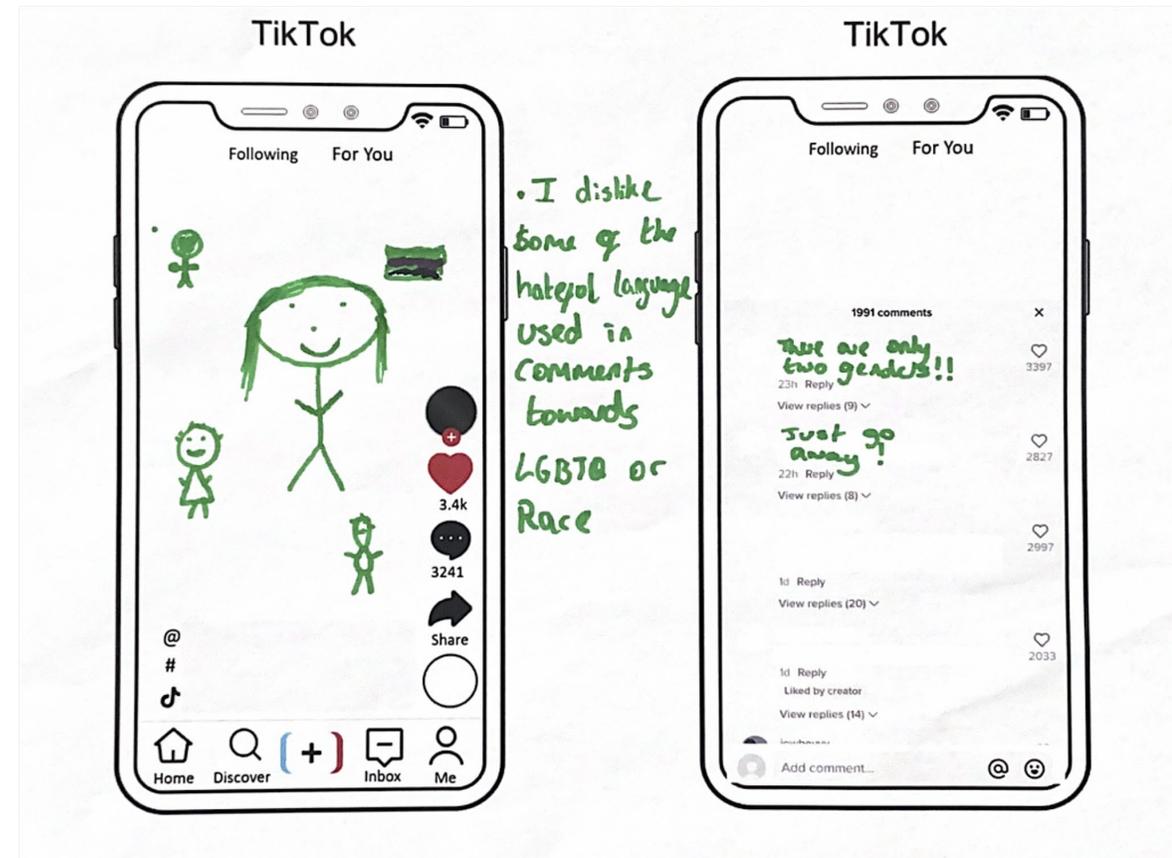
# RECOMMENDATIONS

Need Canadian data to inform policies and resources

Need to include the experiences of marginalized young people

Need to hear from young people about what they want and need

Report available in [English](#) & [French](#) on our website

# UK TEENS' EXPERIENCES OF TFGBSV

# Covid Rapid Response Study: Study Design

## Online Survey

- Survey with 551 teens (13-18)
- Survey with 72 parents
- Survey with 47 teachers

## Focus Groups

- 17 focus groups with 65 young people
- 4 schools
- 4 focus groups with 9 parents

## Interviews

- 29 follow up interviews with teens
- Interviews with 17 teachers

# Creative Methodologies

*Mobile Phone Templates*

Writing down and drawing what young people liked and didn't like about social media in focus group interviews on social media templates
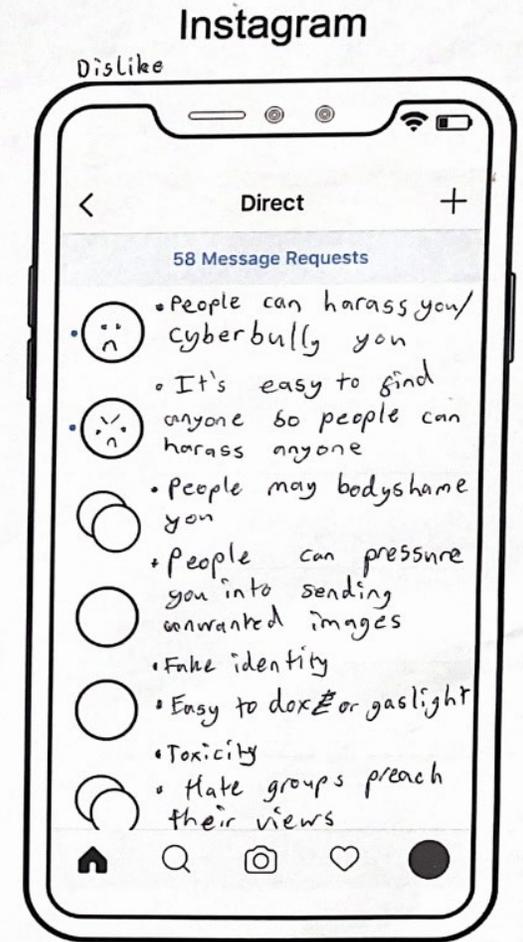
# KEY STATS

78% of young people said they experienced at least one type of online harm during this period

➢ 88.9% of gender minorities

➢ 88% of sexual minorities

# KEY STATS

## *Sexuality Based Harassment*

40% of sexual minorities and 36.4% of gender minorities experienced sexuality-based harassment

Top Platforms for 'Outing':
(1) Instagram
(2) WhatsApp

Top Platforms for Mean Comments about Sexual Orientation:
(1) WhatsApp
(2) Instagram
(3) Snapchat
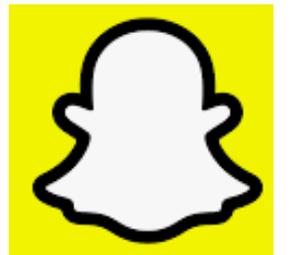
# KEY STATS

## *Gender Based Harassment*

27.3% of gender minorities and 35% of sexual minorities experienced offensive and/ or degrading messages, comments or 'jokes' online about their gender identity

Top Platforms for Mean Comments about Gender:
- (1) TikTok (40%)
- (2) Instagram (20%)
- (3) YouTube, Reddit & Social gaming platforms (10%)
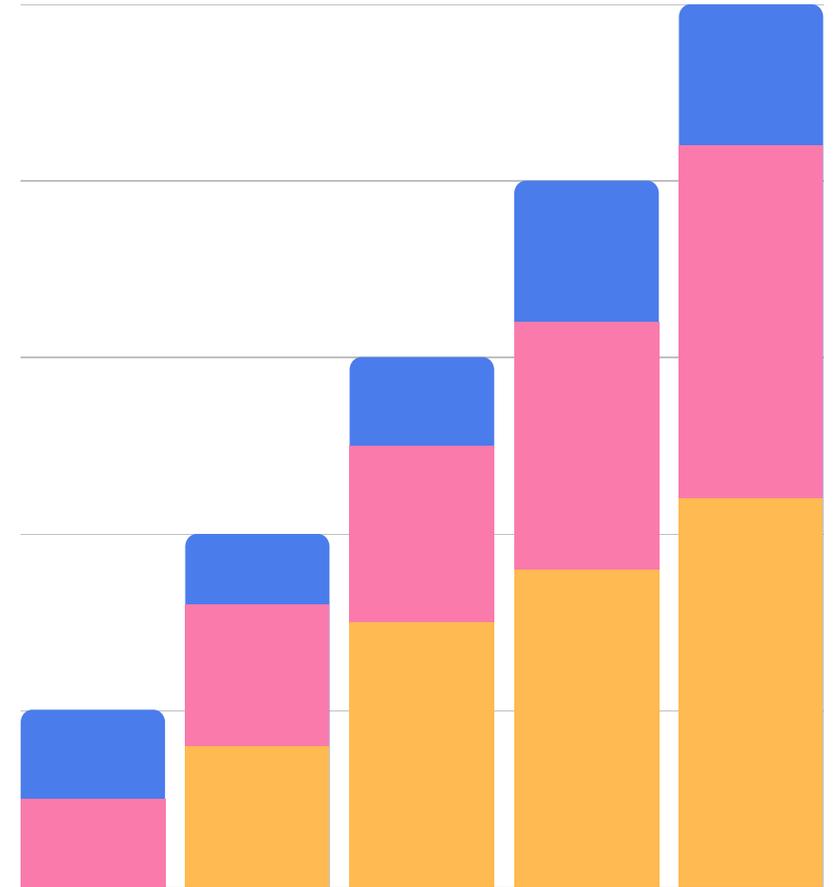
# Commenting: TikTok, YouTube & Instagram
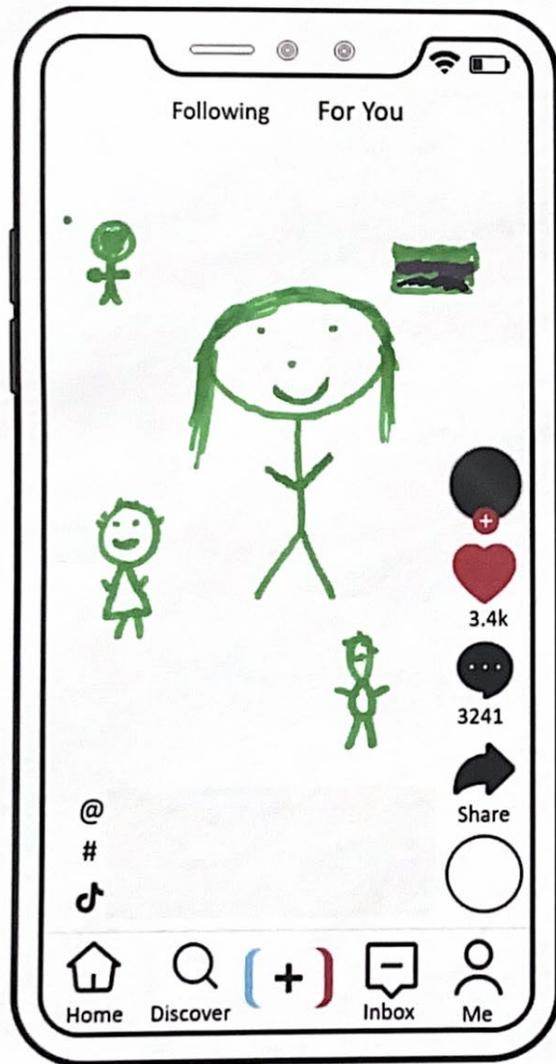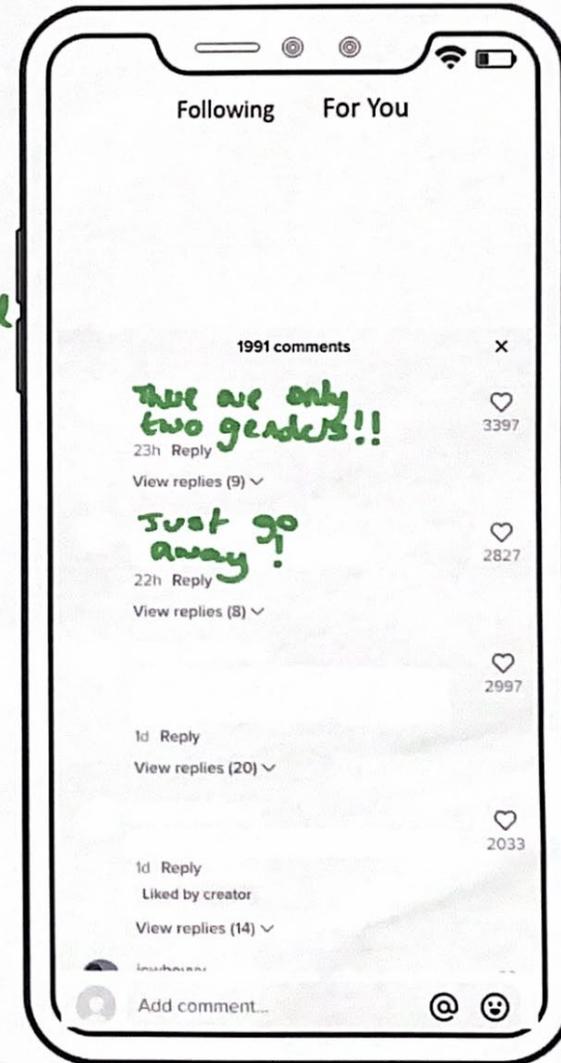
# Content Creation: TikTok, Instagram & Snapchat

- Young people described a range of LGBTQ+ discrimination and hate which changed based on app affordances

- TikTok of a friend 'coming out' led to "huge amounts" of hate including boys from school calling her a f****t" and "making jokes about her doing weird stuff to her cousin."

- How does the TikTok Algorithm perhaps change expectations around the social milieux that do not resonate with the dominant peer group in school?
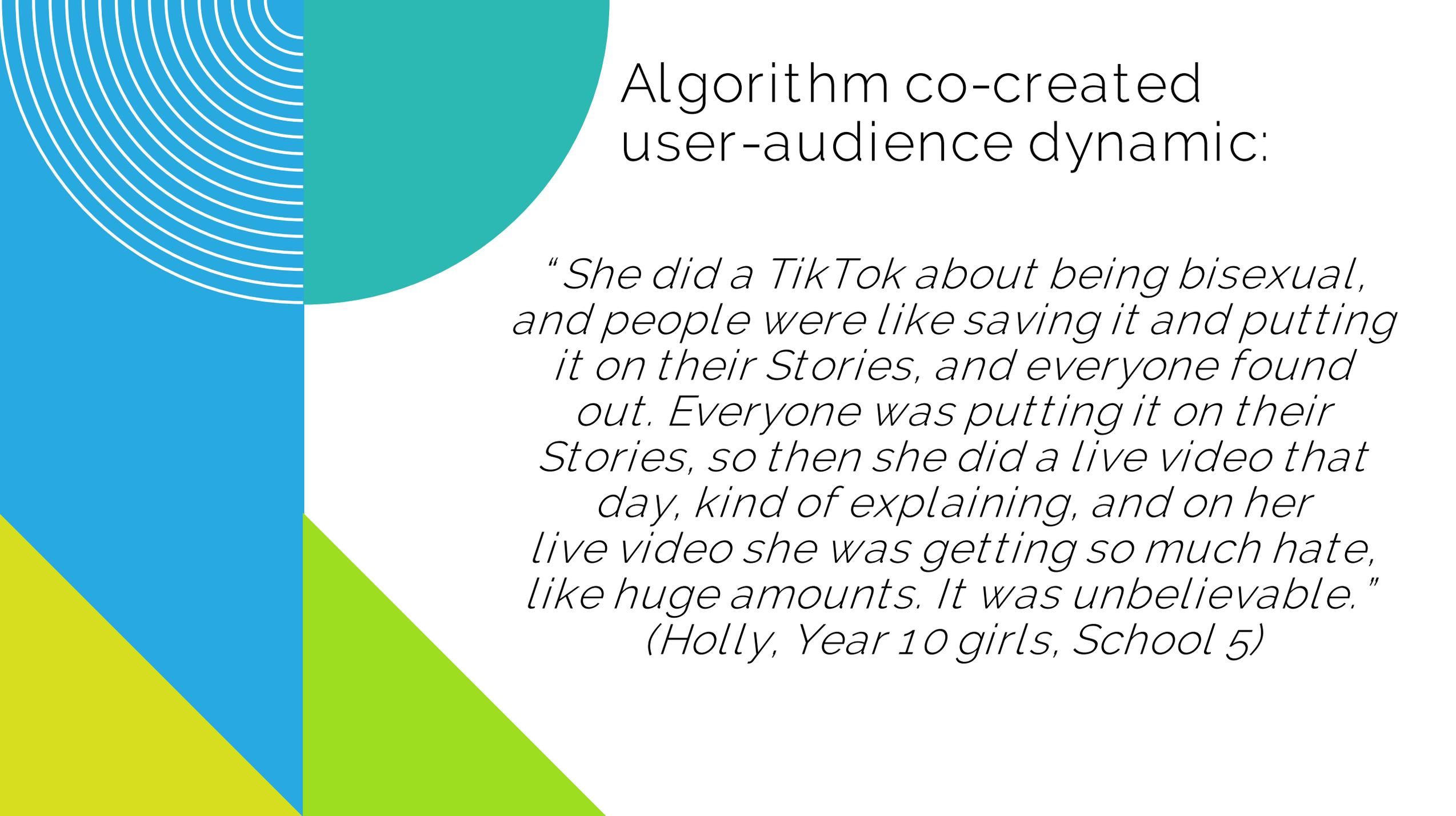
# Algorithm co-created user-audience dynamic:

*"She did a TikTok about being bisexual, and people were like saving it and putting it on their Stories, and everyone found out. Everyone was putting it on their Stories, so then she did a live video that day, kind of explaining, and on her live video she was getting so much hate, like huge amounts. It was unbelievable."* (Holly, Year 10 girls, School 5)

# Tellonym & anonymous platforms spreading hate

Tellonym became popular during lockdown, key features are users can create profiles and send anonymous messages. Affordance: Anonymity

The girls went on to describe how their friend had a link to her Tellonym profile in her 'bio' on Instagram and TikTok, and their friend received an abundance of anonymous hateful messages on this platform following the spread of her 'coming out' video

*"Maybe that would have stopped them saying as much as they did, because that app, you can literally just say anything, and it won't be traced back to you."* (Year 10 girls, School 5).
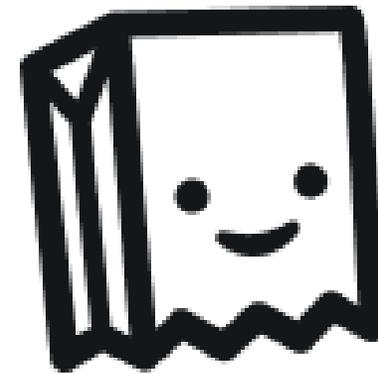
# CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Sexuality and Gender Diverse (SAGD) Youth are experiencing higher rates of tech facilitated gender based and sexual violence (TFGBSV) than heterosexual and cisgendered youth.

SAGD are also experiencing particular forms of TFGBSV, including sexuality based harassment, outing, and 'mean comments' about their genders.
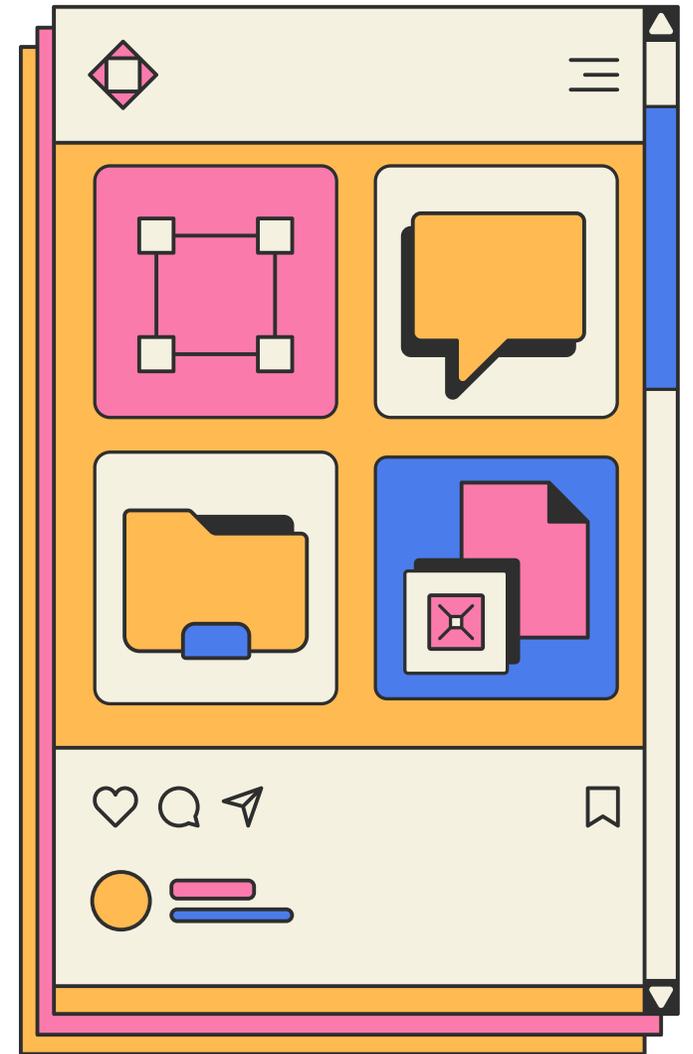
CANADIAN LEGAL LANDSCAPE

# CRIMINAL LAW

Applying existing laws

- Harassment
- Extortion
- Invitation to sexual touching
- Sexual interference

# CRIMINAL LAW

**Tech-specific Laws**

- Child pornography
  - Private use exception (*R v Sharpe*)
- Voyeurism
  - *R v Jarvis*
  - *R v Downes*
- Non-consensual distribution of intimate images
- Child luring
- Making sexual material available to a child

# CIVIL LAW

**Injunctions and damages**

- Non-consensual distribution of intimate images
  - BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI
  - Cyber Scan (Nova Scotia), C3P (Manitoba)
  - Quick take down option (BC)
- Privacy Acts
- Online harassment (Ontario)
- Privacy rights

ONLINE HARMS & RESOURCES

# TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED HARMS

- Interpersonal
  - Online
    - Text-based messages
    - Images, videos, and media
  - Offline
    - Identity-based harassment
    - Violence (e.g., physical, sexual)
    - GPS-enabled stalking
    - Surveillance w. smart devices
    - Doxing and swatting

- Technological
  - Algorithms
  - Artificial intelligence

- Organizational
  - Community guidelines, data privacy, and other policies
  - Content moderation
  - Business practices

Note: This is not an exhaustive list.

# RESPONSES TO TECH-FACILITATED HARMS

- Blocking and reporting
- Support from organizations
- Policy interventions
- Legal authorities

**RIGHT TO BE**

*Right to Be*, launched in 2010 as *Hollaback!* to address street harassment, is now a global movement that aims to address all forms of harassment.

# STAYING SAFE ON SOCIAL MEDIA- WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK!

Introducing our Social Media Safety Guides for Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Tumblr, and Youtube! Every guide gives user-friendly information on how use different platforms' reporting and privacy tools – and for the very first time all of this information is gathered in one location.

**FACEBOOK**

**INSTAGRAM**

**REDDIT**

**TIK TOK**

**TUMBLR**

**TWITTER**

**YOUTUBE**

**ZOOM**

https://righttobe.org/guides/how-to-use-social-media-safely/

# RIGHT TO BE _____



# INSTAGRAM SAFETY GUIDE

# CONTENTS

**Instagram's Policies**

**Report on Instagram**

# RESOURCES FROM RIGHT TO BE

- Social media safety
- Online harassment
- Bystander intervention
- Self-care
- Digital security
- Legal rights
- Organizational resources
- Workshops and training
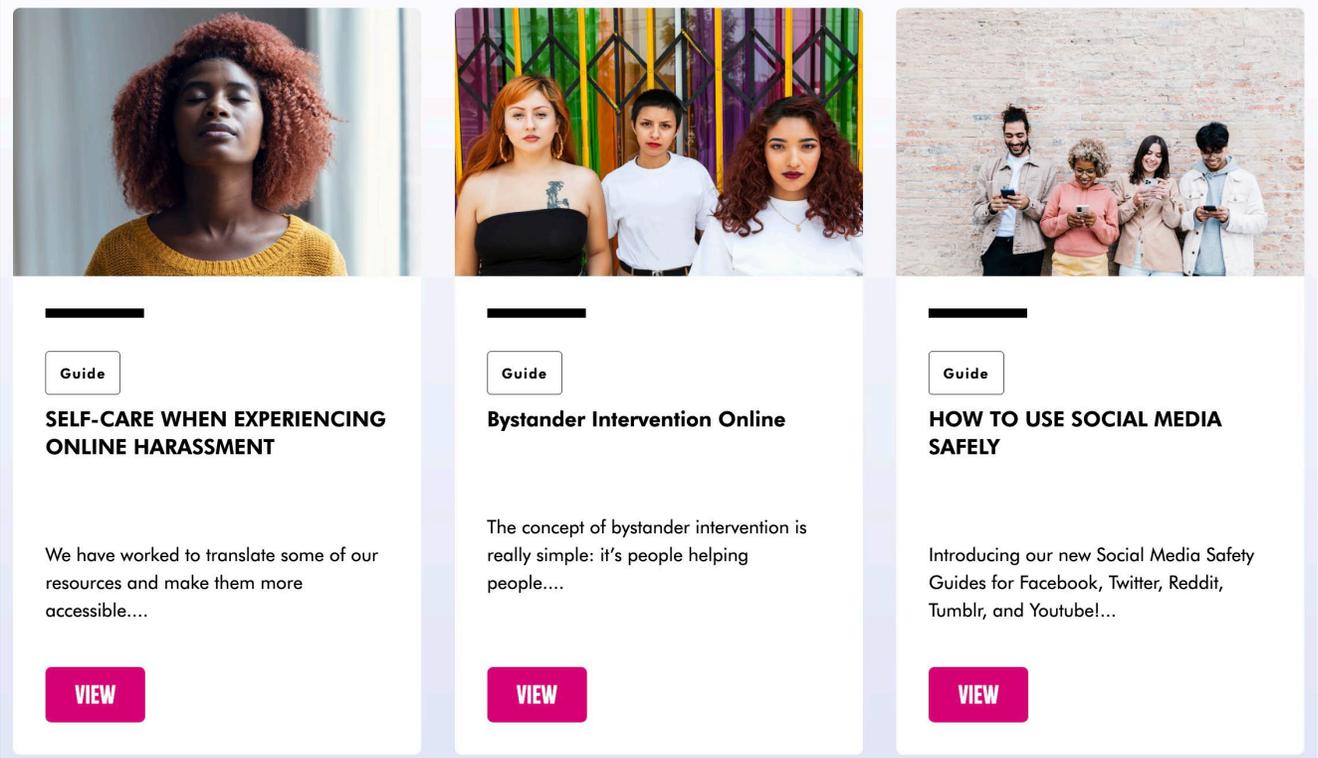
**Guide**

**SELF-CARE WHEN EXPERIENCING ONLINE HARASSMENT**

We have worked to translate some of our resources and make them more accessible....

**VIEW**

**Guide**

**Bystander Intervention Online**

The concept of bystander intervention is really simple: it's people helping people....

**VIEW**

**Guide**

**HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA SAFELY**

Introducing our new Social Media Safety Guides for Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Tumblr, and Youtube!...

**VIEW**

https://righttobe.org/resources

# LGBTQ+ DIGITAL SAFETY GUIDE FROM GLAAD



https://glaad.org/smsi/lgbtq-digital-safety-guide

# DIGITAL SAFETY MAP

- A dynamic database that is intended for users, policy-makers, parents, designers, etc.
  - Click on a particular app to bring it up, shows info and safety features
  - Compare and contrast apps, features, policies, etc.
  - Click on a safety feature to show the apps with this feature
  - Embed comments from users (e.g., comments from research participants and/ or public)
  - Link to other sites and resources

- About the research project
  - DIGS Lab at Concordia University – www.digslab.net
  - Collaborative on Digital Equity Research (CODER) – https://research.cnr.ncsu.edu/coderdigitalequality

# EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

# COMMON ISSUES IN EDUCATIONAL RESPONSES TO TECH-FACILITATED HARMS

Scare tactic approach (focus on law/punishment over respect/rights)

"Cyber Safety" delivered as Victim blaming/shaming

Overemphasizing the dangers of tech & underemphasizing the role of systemic

discrimination
Treating "online" & "offline" lives as separate

# RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Consider: what is okay & not okay to share about others online (when is it okay to share someone's photo or a private conversation?)

Reflect: what information do I share about myself online (why might people misuse this info? what rights do I have to safety in online spaces?)

Advocate: for tech companies to delete information about us that we don't want shared anymore / for schools & other institutions to help protect our rights

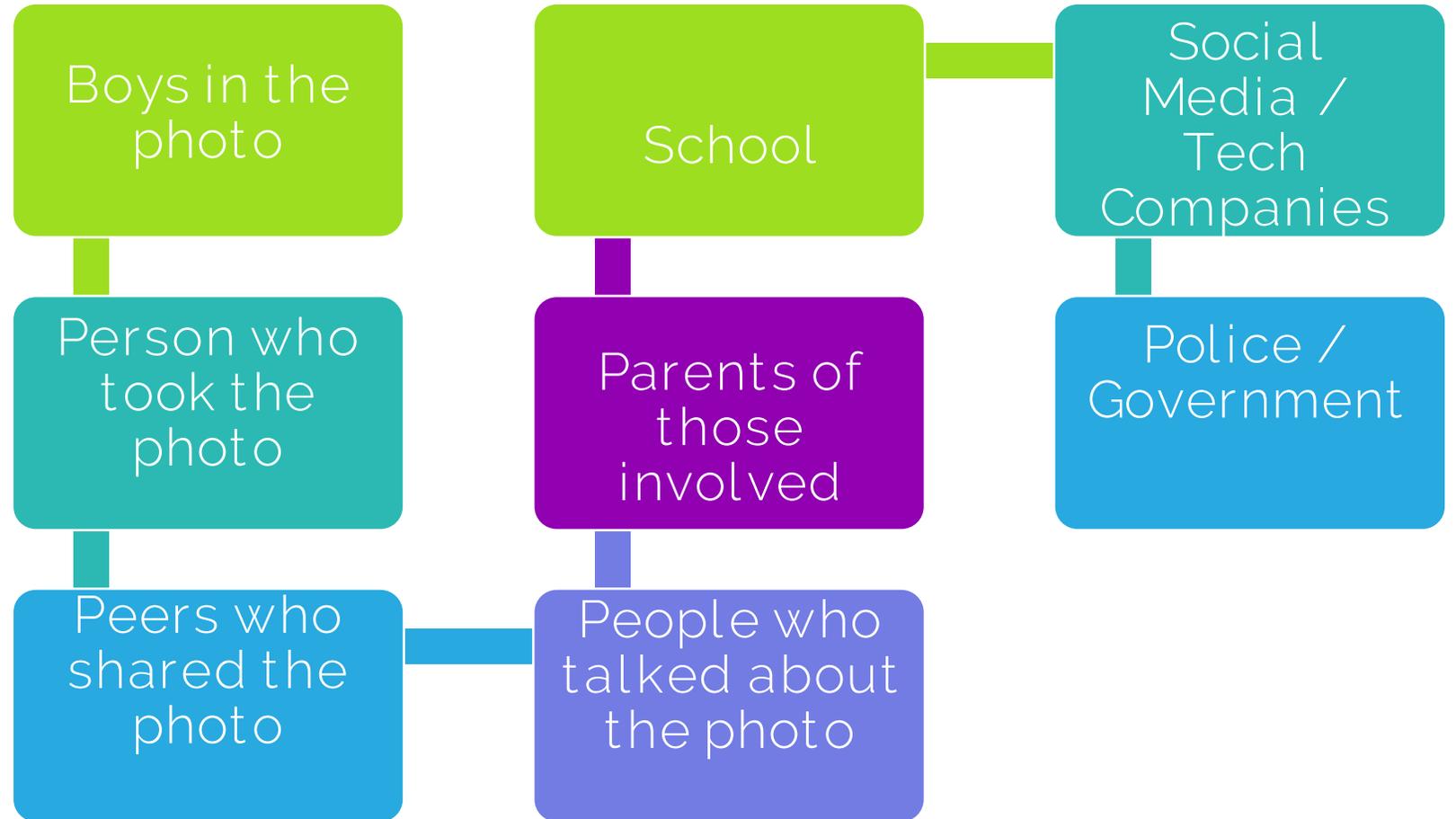# Tragic cases as an opportunity to reflect

Tragic cases - like the Rehtaeh Parsons case - can help us reflect on how people and organizations could better respond to a similar case today

What progress have we made? What progress do we still need?

Choose a relevant scenario for the teens you work with

How could they imagine people and organizations responding well? What role could *they* play?

Boys in the photo

School

Social Media / Tech Companies

Person who took the photo

Parents of those involved

Police / Government

Peers who shared the photo

People who talked about the photo

# TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER TO CREATE HEALTHIER DIGITAL RELATIONSHIPS

Video from ProjectShift about self-care & community-care in the aftermath of digital harm
https://youtu.be/0NzXHk2rzuE?si=TX-lKS-xxHlmD8uU

Not just Digital Safety : Digital Responsibilities & Digital Compassion

Recognize how digital harms are based in pre-existing systemic discrimination & relational issues. BUT also consider why some digital spaces bring out the worst in us

Help young people think about the role all of us & our institutions must play in creating supportive spaces & relationships in our digital world

# WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Our website for educational resources, such as our infographics on " nudes and the law" [for youth](#) & more detailed version [for those who work with youth](#)

[Project Shift: Guide for Trusted Adults](#)

[My review of CyberScan](#) includes thoughts on what not to do in education on tech-facilitated harm & what to do instead

# CONCLUSIONS

To learn more & follow our project, visit our website & follow us on X @DIYdigsafety