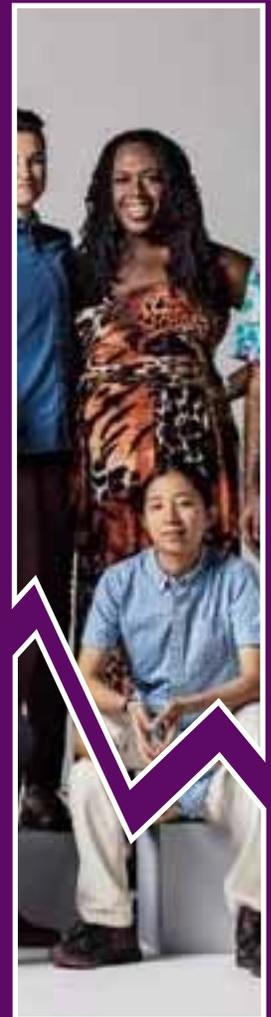


SEX, GENDER & CYBERVIOLENCE:

MISOGYNY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Eileen Kerwin Jones, PhD

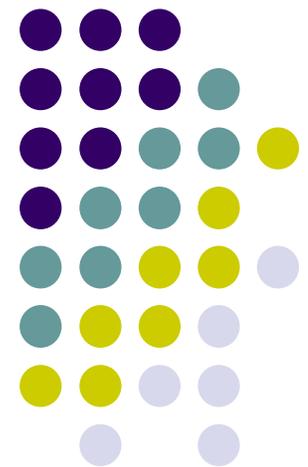


CNWE
CONFERENCE
May 27, 2017

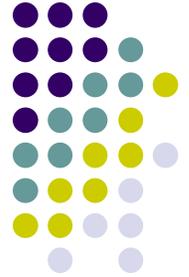
SEX, GENDER & CYBERVIOLENCE :

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OVERVIEW



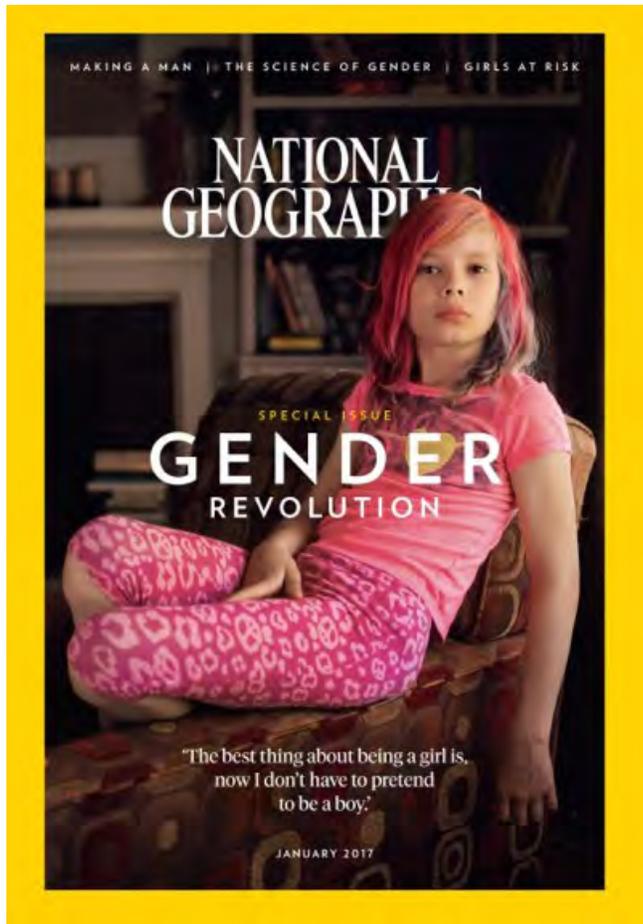
- My Ah-ha Moments...
- What are they Saying about Sex & Gender?
- *Mapping Gender Terms *
- What's wrong with the Gender Binary?
- Are We Gender Equal?
- What is Cyberviolence/Cybermisogyny?
- *Mapping Cybermisogyny Terms*
- Examples of Cybermisogyny
- Impacts of Cybermisogyny
- Challenging Cybermisogyny
- Case Studies



MY Ah-Ha Moments...



What are they saying about sex & gender?



“The best thing about being a girl is, now I don’t have to pretend to be a boy.”

*Avery Jackson, Kansas City
9 year old transgender girl*

THE GENDER ISSUE

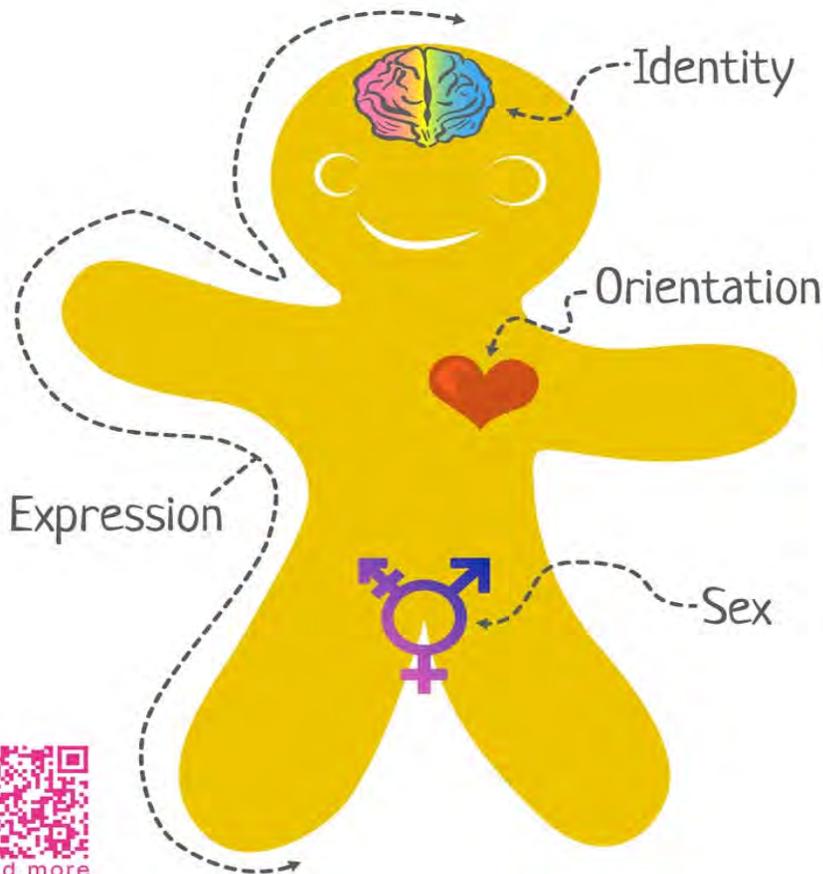


What are they saying about sex & gender?



The Genderbread Person

by www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com



Gender Identity

Woman Genderqueer Man

Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It's the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.

Gender Expression

Feminine Androgynous Masculine

Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.

Biological Sex

Female Intersex Male

Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes; male = penis, testes, XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual Bisexual Homosexual

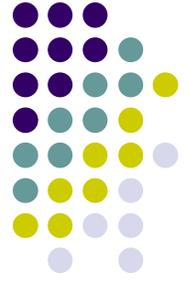
Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to, based on their sex/gender in relation to your own.

Mapping Gender Words:



- A) Two Spirit 1) Gender identity not matching sex assigned at birth
2) Gender identity neither male nor female, between, beyond and/or a combination of genders.
- B) Cisgender 3) Umbrella term for Indigenous North Americans who embody one of many traditional mixed gender roles and are viewed as healers or spiritual leaders.
- C) Gender Binary 4) Sexual attraction to others--can be to the same sex, opposite sex, both sexes or one can be asexual (those who do not experience sexual attraction and/or lack interest in sex)
- D) Gender Dysphoria 5) Acronym for lesbian, gay, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, two spirit, evolving.
- E) Genderqueer 6) Gender identity matches sex assigned at birth.
- F) Intersex 7) Gender seen as a rigid option of either male/man/masculine or female/woman/feminine based on sex assigned at birth
- G) LGBTQQI2S+ 8) Medical term for transgender
- H) Sexual Orientation 9) Persons born with variations in sex characteristics (chromosomes, sex hormones and genitals) that do not fit the typical definitions of male and female anatomy and genetics.
- I) Transgender [A-3, B-6, C-7, D-8, E-2, F-9, G-5, H-4, I-1]

What are they saying about Sex & Gender?



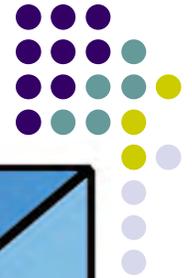
- Sex is biological
- Gender is a social construction
- Sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation are on a spectrum
- **LGBT(+) Rights = HUMAN RIGHTS**
- UN THE RIDDLE
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYFNfW1-sM8>

THE GENDER BINARY: Stereotypes persist and function in both F-2-F and virtual reality

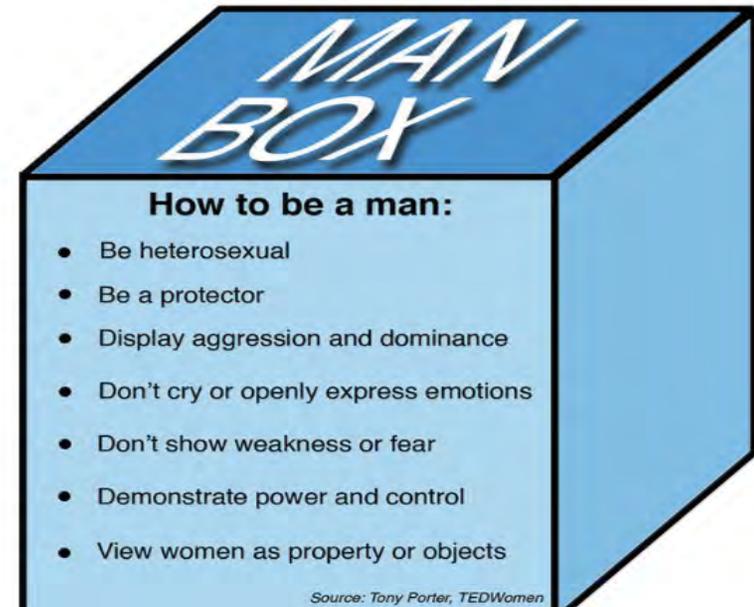


(Graphic by Spencer Brown)

GENDER BOXES



- Gender Policing
- Human Qualities Gendered
- Human Potential Limited
- Tony Porter: “A Call to Men” sums up the collective socialization of men:
(https://www.ted.com/talks/tony_porter_a_call_to_men)



- WOMEN ARE VIEWED AS BEING:
- LESS VALUE
+
- PROPERTY OF MEN
+
- OBJECTIFIED =
- VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

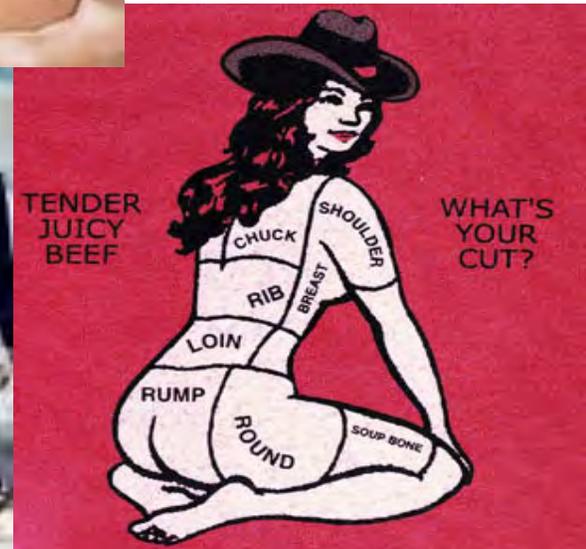


To be in a culture in which women are routinely naked where men are not is to learn inequality in little ways all day long.”

Naomi Wolfe, *The Beauty Myth* (Harper 2002)

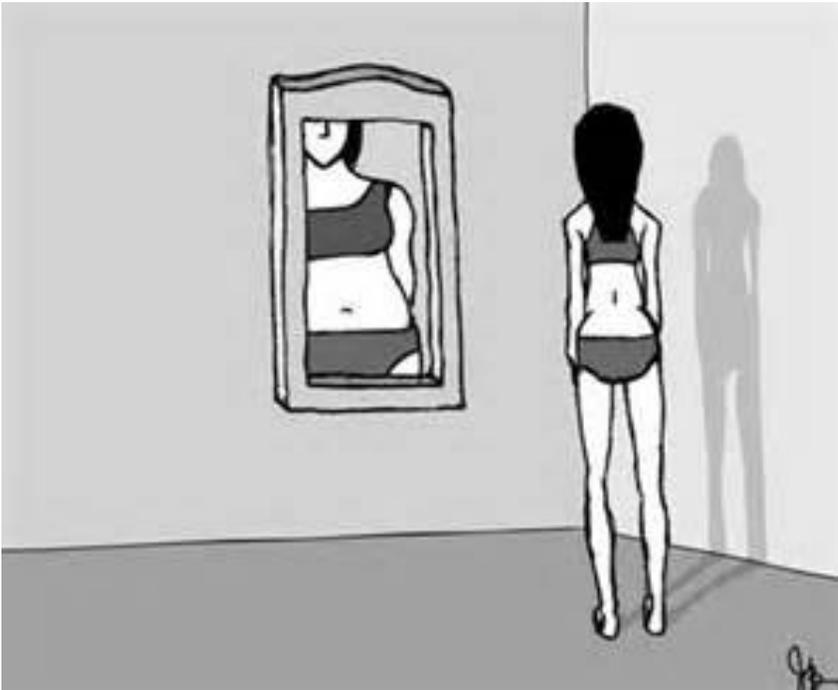


"To live in a culture in which women are routinely naked where men aren't is to learn inequality in little ways all day long" - Naomi Wolf ("The Beauty Myth")



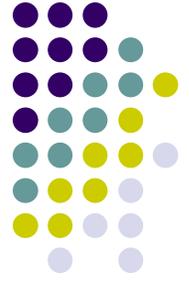
“Girls get the message from very early on that what’s most important is how they look.”

Jean Kilbourne, Killing Us Softly IV



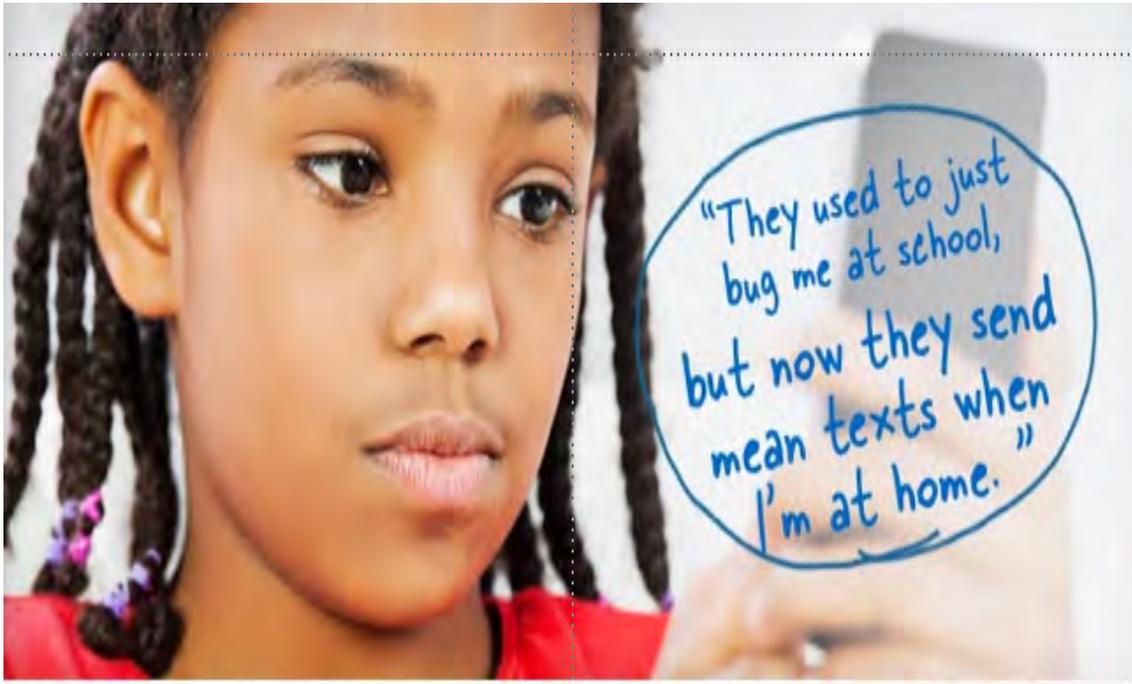
- 53% of 13 year olds are unhappy with their bodies...this increases to 78% by age 17
- 42% first to third grade girls want to be thinner while 81% of 10 year olds fear getting fat
- 48% of teenage girls wish they were as skinny as models
- 3 of 4 teenage girls feel depressed, guilty and shameful after spending 3 minutes leafing through a fashion magazine
- 31% admit to starving to lose weight
[www.missrepresentation](http://www.missrepresentation.com), 2013

Are we Gender Equal yet?



- The annual *Global Gender Gap's* report identifies the relative gaps between men and women across four key areas: health, education, economy and politics. It signals that if a person is born today, they will be 80 years of age before the gender gap is closed in 2095.

What is Cyberviolence?



“Online behavior that constitutes or leads to harm against the psychological and/or emotional, financial , physical state of an individual or group. Although cyberviolence occurs online it can have serious offline consequences.”

Atwater Library & Computer Centre's
Digital Literacy Project, in Partnership with
Technoculture, Art & Game Research Centre
(TAG),
Concordia University, Montreal, Qc

What is Cybermisogyny?



“Various forms of gendered hatred, harassment, and abusive behaviour targeted at women and girls via the Internet. It draws attention to the discriminatory nature of this behaviour, which occurs within a context of power and marginalization.”

-Cyber Misogyny Violence against Women Learning

www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/cybermisogyny

-Disproportionate impact on girls and women

-Women and girls harassed solely because of their **gender**; men harassed for defying the gender binary (eg. LGBT youth experience online bullying 3 x more than straight peers)

-Reinforced by sexism, racism, ageism and other forms of discrimination

-Serves to “put women in their place;” many girls and women feel unsafe, disengage from their online lives and are once again silenced. West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF)

Mapping Cybermisogyny Words:



- A) Gamergate 1) Non-consensual distribution of intimate images by text/email
 - B) Slut Shaming 2) Controversial sexist targeting and harassment of females in the video gaming industry & culture
 - C) Luring & Grooming 3) Repeated use of electronic communications to harass or frighten someone
 - D) Sexting 4) Posting inflammatory/inappropriate comments online to upset another and provoke a response
 - E) Revenge Porn 5) A form of blackmail where sexual information/images are used to extort sexual favors from the victim
 - F) Sex Trafficking 6) Sending sexy pictures and sexual messages often using cell phone texts.
 - G) Rape Culture 7) Web site or part of an online service that provides a venue for users with a common interest to communicate in real time.
 - H) Trolling 8) Recruiting harboring, transporting a person-especially a minor--for the purpose of exploiting them for sex
 - I) Cyberstalking 9) Stigmatizing a female for engaging in behavior judged to be promiscuous or sexually provocative
 - J) Sextortion 10) Connecting online with a minor aimed at lowering the minor's inhibitions in order to sexually exploit them.
 - K) Chat Room 11) Sending sexual pictures/messages using cell phone texts.
 - 12) A society or online environment that normalizes or trivializes sexual assault and abuse against girls/women.
- [A-2, B-9, C-10, D-6, E-1, F-8, G-12, H-4, I-3, J-5, K-7]

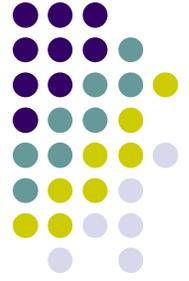
CYBERMISOGYNY: An old issue taken to new extremes.



- Sexism is ubiquitous online because it is a real world problem that mirrors the pre-existing discrimination & inequalities
- Expands opportunities to harass and abuse in **permanent and anonymous ways**
- Many do not see it as a reality because we live in a rape culture both on and offline.
- **Message: Being online is fine--as long as you do not identify as a female** (practice of most female gamers)
- **Misogyny becomes a social norm online & when this happens women go offline**



Cybermisogyny



- **Caroline Criado-Perez:**

UK Journalist whose successful campaign to have author Jane Austen featured on the British £10 received hundreds of rape threats and hateful posts.



- **Anita Sarkessian:** Canadian-American feminist media critic, blogger, public speaker and founder of Feminist Frequency, a website that hosts videos and commentary analyzing portrayals of women and LGBT; received constant harassment and death threats and **cyber-mob attacks** for signaling sexism in the video gaming community.

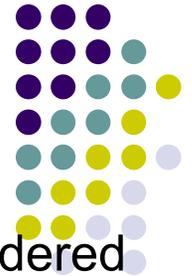


- Women in chat rooms attacked just for espousing an opinion---especially if blogging about women's issues or if they belong to a woman's group.

- Amanda Hess' Research: fake online accounts created with feminine & masculine usernames--feminine ones received (100) threatening/explicit messages daily versus masculine usernames (3.7) [Amanda Hess: The Next Civil Rights Issue: Why Women Aren't Welcome on the Internet.](#)



Sexting (Sending sexy pictures and sexual messages often using cell phone texts).



- Part of contemporary dating norms--gendered expectation for girls to do this (8% of students in grades 7-11 have sent a sext; 24% have received them (Canadian study)
- Power relations of sexting are gendered: Girls photos travel further than the intended recipient and girls experience more negative ramifications for sexting while boys feel empowered by circulating photos
- 25% teens report that their images were forwarded to others without their consent
- Teen suicides linked to harassment and abuse experienced from the non-consensual forwarding of images

REVENGE PORN (non-consensual distribution of intimate images)



- Frequently associated with end of an intimate relationship; aim is to humiliate and get revenge
- 1/10 ex-partners threaten to expose photos; 60% follow through; 90% of those targeted are women
- Websites exist for purpose of posting embarrassing photos and forwarding these to family, friends, work places
- Teenagers and celebrities alike targeted-- computers sometimes hacked into to get images
- Women have lost jobs, opportunities and personal relationships
- 47% of revenge porn targets contemplate suicide; 97% suffer significant emotional distress (US Cyber Civil Rights Initiative)

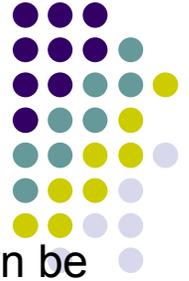


Cyberstalking (Repeated use of electronic communications to harass or frighten someone)



- Monitoring emails, sending abusive messages, viruses, using person's online identity to send false info to others, using sites to collect personal data
- Social network sites and global positioning systems facilitate stalking by making it easier to track a person's activities and location
- Survivors of domestic abuse cannot escape abusers: "Being bullied online brings it all back-- you can heal from a punch in the face, but the mental torture never goes away." (West, Cyber-violence against Women p. 11)
- US study: between 29-54% of all female murder victims are battered women. In 90% of cases, stalking preceded the murder-- stalking, including cyberstalking is a predictor of escalating violence (West, Cyber-violence against Women, p.10)

Sexual Assault & Technology



THERE ARE **460,000** SEXUAL ASSAULTS
in Canada every year



- Cyber-violence against women can be an extension of F-2-F violence
- Increasingly social media is used both during sexual assault and after the assault-- to re-victimize women and girls subjected to sexual assault (eg. Steubenville)
- Tragic stories of Rehtaeh Parsons, Amanda Todd, Jessica Logan, Hannah Smith--and many, many more teens are reasons to take cyber-misogyny seriously

Human Trafficking and Technology



- Majority of those trafficked for sex and forced labour are girls and women and the Internet is now a major sales platform for advertising and buying and selling people.
- Social media is used by traffickers to lure, groom, control and coerce persons for the purpose of exploiting them in the sex trade
- Major risk factors include: being female, LGBT+ Aboriginal, homeless or experiencing unstable living conditions, no family support, history of physical or sexual abuse, using chat rooms, talking about sex online, sending personal info and pictures to people known only online, seeking pornography online (See

Project ImPACT www.pact-ottawa.org, 2014)



IMPACTS of CYBERMISOGYNY



- Misogyny becomes a social norm online & when this happens women go offline
- Psychological impacts (anxiety, shame, - self esteem, fear for safety)
- Social impacts--(multiple) from being kicked off school teams to being forced to move & leave communities; isolation from real and virtual communities of support
- Job loss and financial opportunities
- Can be lethal- Leah Parson spoke of her daughter: “It wasn’t the rape that sent her over the edge, as horrible as that was..it was the public humiliation and shame from her peer group, an everyone saw a picture of her getting raped..”



Challenging Cybermisogyny

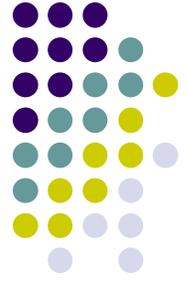
- Global feminist activism creating positive & safe online spaces for females and all persons -through research, dialogue, lobbying and legal recommendations
- Recognition that cyberviolence is a serious form of VAW and telling women to go offline is not a solution; challenge Rape Culture and a culture of Victim Blaming
- Educate & empower on available options to increase safety online
- 9 Notable VAW Facebook Groups from Ontario-(Assaulted Women's Helpline, Draw the Line, Neighbours, Friends & Families, ONWA, White Ribbon Campaign, Miss G Project, Draw the Line, Ontario Network of Sexual Assault, OWJN, Springtide Resources...)
- Importance of Digital Citizenship & Netiquette in schools workplaces, community centers
- Humanize technology, empathy in responding to those who experience online bullying; Upstanders Initiative-not passive online bystanders--we create our online spaces!
- Digital literacy for police and frontline workers on all forms of cyberviolence
- Role of online service providers in development of corporate policies with zero tolerance to all forms of cyberviolence, rapid response to online VAW
- Bill C-13-(Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act) positive cyberbullying provisions but negative privacy concerns due to broad law enforcement provisions: Legal reform, Include cyberviolence within VAW laws
- Challenge toxic masculinities & rigid gender stereotypes



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Thank you very much for your attention!
Your comments and questions are appreciated!