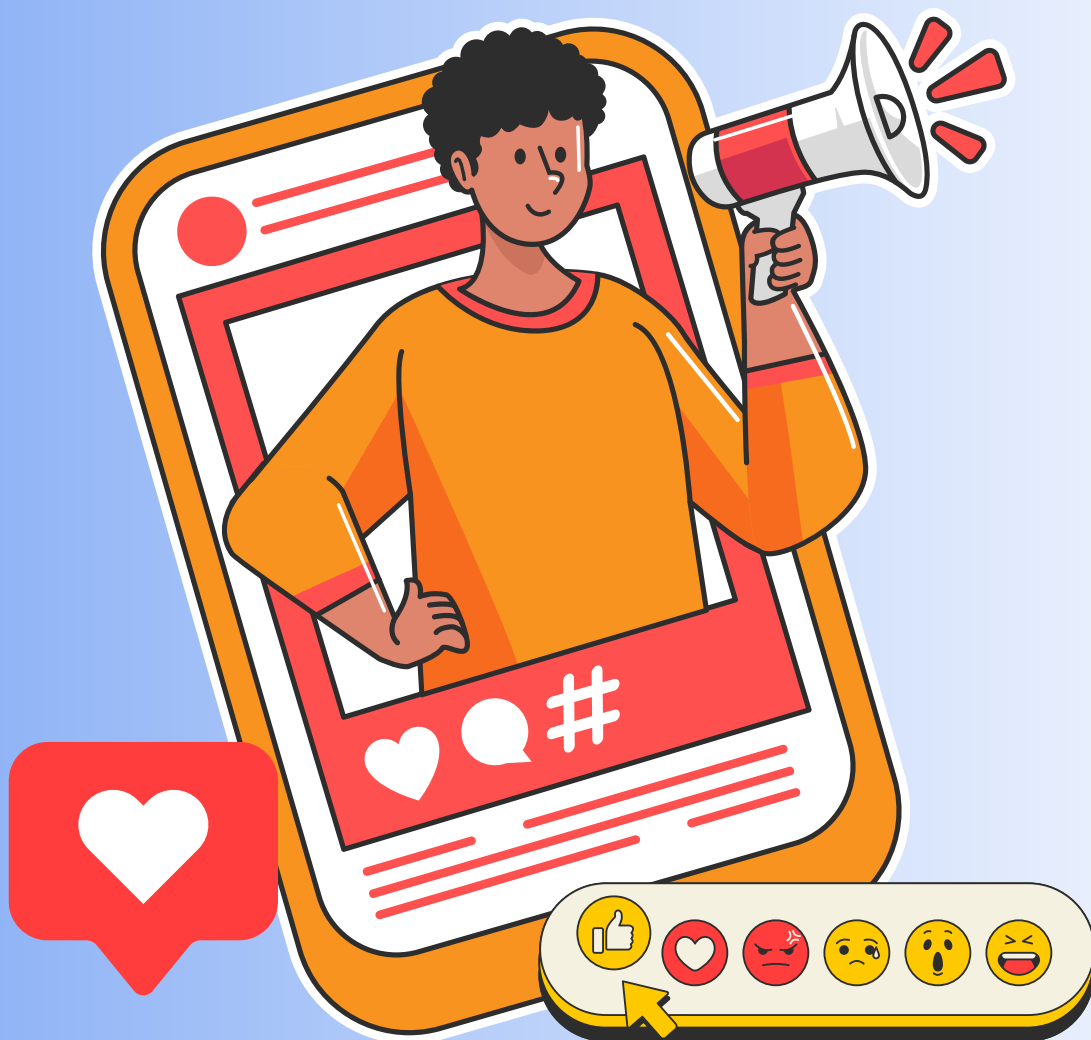


# Let's Talk About Deepfake Harm

A Guide for Youth, By Youth

May 2026



**Center for  
Gender  
Equitable AI**

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## Introduction

**As we know, AI has profoundly changed what it means to be a young person in school.** Most of the national conversation centers around how AI impacts learning. But another less visible challenge of AI in schools is also emerging: AI-driven harassment, manifesting primarily as **nonconsensual explicit deepfakes**.

**This form of harassment goes by many names, from “deepfake nudes” to nonconsensual intimate imagery (NCII).** Regardless, the fundamental issue is simple: bad actors using generative AI or other digital media tools to create fake explicit images or videos of real people. This content can be used to facilitate a variety of harms, from distributing it to others without the victim’s knowledge or consent, or used to blackmail and coerce the victim.

**Being targeted by nonconsensual explicit deepfakes can feel terrifying to navigate.** Facing this form of abuse can be incredibly hard to talk about. It’s normal to feel uncomfortable, and you may have thoughts in your head saying, **“this is my fault,” “this isn’t worth making a big deal about,”** or **“nobody’s going to believe me.”** None of those things are true.



# 1

**Being victimized by nonconsensual explicit deepfakes can happen to anyone.** Explicit deepfakes can be generated from nearly any content with your face, from an Instagram selfie to a TikTok dance. Research from the Department of Education suggests that **15% of American high school students** (that's about **2.3 million people**) had heard about explicit deepfakes shared in their school in the 2023-24 academic year.<sup>1</sup> AI-generated abusive material is, unfortunately, very common and never the victim's fault.

# 2

**Explicit deepfake harm is absolutely worth reporting.** There is an array of free resources available to you, from **in-app takedown forms** to government-backed support via the **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)**.<sup>2</sup> There are mechanisms to get abusive images taken down, as well as to have perpetrators face consequences, in a way that doesn't jeopardize your safety. While it may not feel this way at first, there are tons of people and resources in your corner.



# 3

**You will be believed about your experiences with nonconsensual explicit deepfakes.** Even though these are fake images, they present a real harm. The recent **TAKE IT DOWN Act** made it a federal crime to distribute nonconsensual intimate imagery, including AI-generated NCII.<sup>3</sup> Many states consider AI-generated explicit content of minors to be a form of child sexual abuse material and, thus, specifically outlawed.<sup>4</sup> Being targeted by explicit deepfakes is a recognized harm and, in most cases, a crime.



## Terms to Know

**Explicit Deepfakes:** sexually explicit AI-generated content (e.g., videos, photos, audio) depicting a real person

**Nonconsensual Intimate Imagery (NCII):** the broader category of sexually explicit content shared without consent; encompasses explicit deepfakes, as well as authentic content

**Recourse:** a legal term that simply means seeking a solution to a problem; in the context of nonconsensual explicit deepfakes, it can refer to getting punishment for perpetrators, support, and takedowns of the content

## What's the TAKE IT DOWN Act?

The TAKE IT DOWN Act was signed into law in May 2025. The Act:

- Makes distributing NCII a federal crime.
- Requires platforms (think Instagram, Reddit, etc.) to implement a content takedown mechanism for victims of NCII.<sup>5</sup>



This takedown mechanism must be a form written in clearly understandable language.<sup>6</sup> If the request is approved, platforms must remove the reported content and known duplicates within **48 hours** or risk a fine from the FTC.<sup>7</sup>

The criminal provisions of the Act went into effect right away, in May 2025.<sup>8</sup> But the takedown mechanism requirements have only just gone into effect this month. Now, as the Act requires, **most major platforms that include user content-sharing should have a takedown form available.**



Platforms must now have a clearly understandable form to take down NCII.



## What to Do If You Are Targeted by Explicit Deepfakes

If you end up being targeted by explicit deepfakes, first, breathe and remember that **this is not your fault**. Remember that there is a vast network of support and resources in your corner.

### Document the Harm

# 1

It's important to take screenshots of the content in order to facilitate takedown and reporting processes.

Make sure to capture:

- The **username** of the account that posted the content
- The **URL** of the post
- The **time and date** of the post
- The **time and date** you found the content
- Any **threats or extortion** that might have accompanied the content

It might feel distressing to spend time with this content. Consider asking a trusted friend or guardian to capture the content for you, if that makes it easier. Store the content in a secure location, like a secure cloud service or an encrypted hard drive.



## Submit a Platform Takedown Request

# 2

Here are the takedown form links for a few major platforms. Keep in mind that these links may become outdated. We recommend visiting [this RAINN list](#) for a comprehensive and up-to-date breakdown.

[Instagram](#) [Snapchat](#) [TikTok](#)

[X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) [Discord](#)



*Example: Instagram's takedown form*

### Help Center

Instagram Features	>	<b>Reporting specific harms in the US</b>
Login, Recovery and Security	>	You're about to make a report for something that you believe should be removed in the US.
Manage Your Account	>	We use either technology or a review team to assess your reports. You'll be notified as soon as there is an update on your report. <a href="#">Learn more</a> about our reporting processes.
Staying Safe	>	<b>What are you reporting?</b>
Privacy and Reporting	>	Include the URL for what you're reporting. Copy the link from your browser and paste it below.
Terms and Policies	>	<input type="text"/>
Instagram for Businesses	>	<b>What is the reason for this report?</b>
Threads	>	<input type="radio"/> <b>Intimate imagery</b> Nudes, partial nudes or sexually explicit content shared without consent.
		<input type="radio"/> <b>Deepfake intimate imagery</b> AI-generated or fake sexual content made to look like someone without their consent.
		<input type="button" value="Send"/>



## Report Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) if the Content is of a Minor

# 3

Explicit deepfakes of minors carry more severe consequences, as CSAM is a highly penalized state and federal crime.<sup>10</sup> Report the content via the government's **CyberTipline**.<sup>11</sup> Keep an eye out for any follow-up communications from law enforcement regarding the reported CSAM.

## File a Complaint With the FTC if Needed

# 4

If a platform fails to remove your reported content within 48 hours, you can **file a complaint** with the FTC.<sup>12</sup> Note that the FTC will not send status updates.

## Take Care of Yourself

# 5

Consider using free resources like **RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline**, the **Cyber Civil Rights Initiative hotline**, or the **National Domestic Violence Hotline**, if applicable. Consider seeking the support of a trusted guardian or mental health professional.



## Conclusion

Our steps are inspired by a [resource from RAINN](#), which we recommend visiting for comprehensive support.

Nonconsensual explicit deepfakes are a growing form of harm that is impacting countless young people. But through a **shared understanding of takedown and recourse mechanisms**, as well as an effort to destigmatize the issue, we can support each other to nip this harm in the bud.

If you're facing this form of abuse, remember that you are not alone. **This is not your fault. We got this.**



## Endnotes

1. Laird et al., "In Deep Trouble Surfacing Tech-Powered Sexual Harassment in K-12 Schools," 11.
2. Federal Trade Commission, "Complying With the Take It Down Act."
3. Mithani, "The Take It Down Act Is in Full Effect."
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. RAINN, "Report & Remove NCII."
10. Mithani, "The Take It Down Act Is in Full Effect."
11. RAINN, "Report & Remove NCII."
12. Ibid.



## Bibliography

Federal Trade Commission. "Complying With the Take It Down Act." May 8, 2026. <https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/complying-take-it-down-act>.

Laird, Elizabeth, Maddy Dwyer, and Kristin Woelfel. "In Deep Trouble Surfacing Tech-Powered Sexual Harassment in K-12 Schools." Center for Democracy & Technology, September 2024. <https://cdt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2024-09-26-final-Civic-Tech-Fall-Polling-research-1.pdf>.

Mithani, Jasmine. "The Take It Down Act Is in Full Effect. What Is It and How Do You Use It?" 19thnews.Org, The 19th, May 19, 2025. [https://19thnews.org/2025/05/take-it-down-act-signing-explicit-images/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=paidsearch&utm\\_campaign=19th-marketing&utm\\_content=traffic&utm\\_term=takeitdown&gad\\_source=1&gad\\_campaignid=20815903674&gbraid=0AAAAAqdrGw7QpeDczo7NltsyRM-kuyy7d&gclid=CjwKCAjwrNrQBhBjEiwAoR4VO4IUgfOg5IAO5filWc8leYCqIkq1g57iYCRjppq8kT6VmgiTaJFRRjxoC320QAvD\\_BwE](https://19thnews.org/2025/05/take-it-down-act-signing-explicit-images/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=paidsearch&utm_campaign=19th-marketing&utm_content=traffic&utm_term=takeitdown&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=20815903674&gbraid=0AAAAAqdrGw7QpeDczo7NltsyRM-kuyy7d&gclid=CjwKCAjwrNrQBhBjEiwAoR4VO4IUgfOg5IAO5filWc8leYCqIkq1g57iYCRjppq8kT6VmgiTaJFRRjxoC320QAvD_BwE).

RAINN. "Report & Remove Intimate Images, Sexual Deepfakes, & Fake Nudes." Rainn.Org. [https://rainn.org/reporting-sexual-assault-to-law-enforcement/how-to-report-tech-enabled-sexual-abuse/#headline-H2\\_1](https://rainn.org/reporting-sexual-assault-to-law-enforcement/how-to-report-tech-enabled-sexual-abuse/#headline-H2_1).



## Follow Our Work



[centergeai.org](https://centergeai.org)



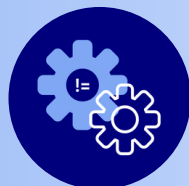
[contact@centergeai.org](mailto:contact@centergeai.org)



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