



When a Boy Hurts a Girl in Cyberspace: Mapping Challenges and Successes in Restorative Justice

Ronen Shehman, Natalie Hadar, Tali Gal

School of Criminology, Faculty of Law

University of Haifa



Research assisted by:

Marit de Haan, Human Rights Centre of Ghent University

Heidi Defever, Leuven, Flanders, Belgium



WORLD SOCIETY OF VICTIMOLOGY

Advancing research, services and awareness for victims

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What is Cyber-victimization?



Fraud, Hacking

- Violations:
- Privacy
 - Dignity
 - Free will
 - Sexuality
 - Freedom
 - Sense of safety



Bullying



Humiliating
photoshopping



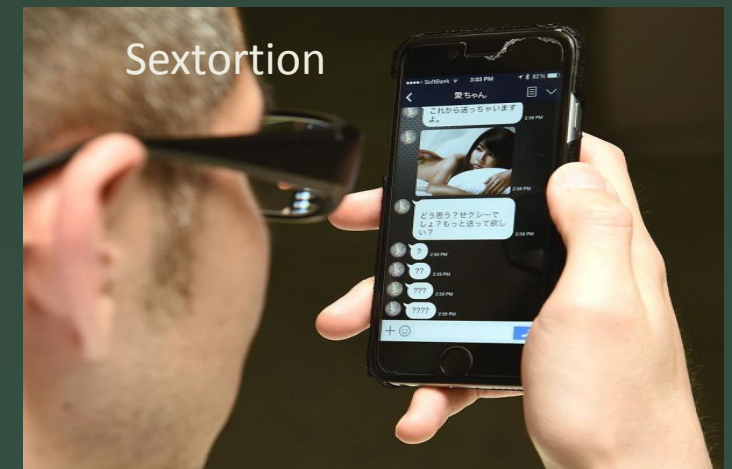
Slander

What is Cyber-sexual victimization?



Violations:

- Privacy
- Dignity
- Free will
- Sexuality
- Freedom
- Sense of safety



Cyber-Victimization Outcomes among Youth

- Fear of being re-victimized, self blame (*Mandau, 2020*)
- Avoiding going out (*Quitana-Ortes et al., 2021*)
- Anxiety (*Landoll et al., 2015, Núñez et al., 2021*)
- Eating disorders (*Marco and Tormo-Irun, 2018*)
- Substance use (*Diaz and Fite, 2019*)
- Depression (*Bannick et al., 2014; Cole et al., 2016; Gao et al., 2021; Vieno et al., 2014*)
- Suicide ideation/ attemp (*van Geel et al., 2014; Perret et al., 2020*)
- Reduced academic achievements (*Gardella et al., 2017*)
- Long-term damage to reputation and privacy (*Salters, 2015*)

Why Restorative Justice in Youth Cyber-crimes?

- Growing prevalence
- Common in existing social circles
- Youth-to-youth offence
- Inadequacy of existing reactions

Community

Setting boundaries

Involving bystanders

Normalization of future encounters

Offender

Opportunity to understand consequences

Reintegrative shaming

Addressing family concerns

Victim

Controlling the process & outcomes

Acknowledgment and voice in a safe environment

Controlling levels of exposure

Two Arenas of RJ in Youth Cybercrime

Israeli Youth Probation Service RJ Program

- Statutory referral from police or prosecution in most juvenile offending
- FGC, VOM in youth offences
- 10 Cases of cybercrimes:
 - 5 finalized, 3 of them with victim
 - 5 discontinued
- Offences:
 - Indecent images or videos
 - Threat of publishing an image
 - Sexting
- **In-depth interviews with 5 facilitators**

VOM Programs in Flanders, Belgium

- Statutory referral from court or prosecution in all juvenile offending
- Mostly VOM, few FGC
- Hundreds of cases of cybercrime
 - 5 full processes, of them 4 with victim
 - 7 indirect mediation
- Offences:
 - Images or videos
 - threats of publishing s video
 - Installing a fake Facebook page
 - Hacking
- **In-depth interviews with 5 mediators**

Four Themes

- The uniqueness of youth cyber victimization
- Direct or indirect encounter?
- Children and their parents in cybercrime context
- Managing expectations: What is “success”

The Uniqueness of Youth Virtual Victimization

- **Detrimental effects:**

- It can appear like something very small, but I have seen a lot of misery come from this, girls who really need psychological help, and who are severely affected by sending something to someone they trust, and then see it appear on the internet. Some pictures go through the whole school, appear in the classroom... there are far-reaching consequences. (Dominique).

- **Intense Encounters:**

- It is so different... the cases.. Are still in my head, because they had a different intensity... they are loaded in a different way... if they occur, you remember them (Bart)

Unique Challenges:

- **Difficulty talking about the incident:**
 - Some of the mediators don't want to do sexual offences, because they find them too difficult. I like to do them, but the start is often complex. (Dominique).
- **Difficulty finding the appropriate reparation:**
 - You can't clean the web, these things will remain forever (Leah).
- **Difficulty bringing people to the process:**
 - Because it is often so sensitive.. People are more easily tended not to do it (Bart)
 - **Difficulty understanding the seriousness:**
 - Juveniles that forward pictures... they have no clue that ... forwarding 1 or 2 photos to 1 or 2 friends, can have immense consequences... (Inte).

Indirect or Non-victim Encounter

- **An encounter without the victim:**
 - The girl didn't want to attend. She said that if she came, she would have lost the little pride she still had (Ruth).
- **Parents-Only Encounters**
 - ...Although the minor does not want to mediate, it can also be valuable if the parents partly take over this process... the parents are also victims... (Inte)

Why Direct Encounter?

- In this kind of case, it is about a very emotional experience of the facts and consequences. And that remains difficult to transfer in all its nuances to the other party. So if you can put the parties together, it gives an extra dimension, a connective aspect. It also works on the empathy of the other party (Stephanie).
- I think that if you put people together, they start to understand each other (Inte)

Parents and Children

- **Importance of separate preparation**
 - One of the kids spoke much more freely with me, because his mother always started crying. So he felt he could not say everything... (Dominique).
- **Who is our partner?**
 - I had the feeling I was mainly mediating with the father, and that I had "lost" the daughter (Dominique).
- **Addressing minimization**
 - The mother continued to blame the victim: What girl takes a photo of herself like that? (Abigale)
- **Parental overprotectiveness**
 - You often have parents that step in front of their kid and take over the conversation (Stephanie).

What is a Successful RJ Process?

- **Decreased negative *emotions*?**

- You have to be humble with your goals. RJ cannot fix everything. It's how better off the victim feels. (Michelle)

- **Improved *cognitive* processing of the event?**

- Parents call and say their kids are in a different place following the FGC (Leah).

- ***Behavioural* normalization?**

- A successful mediation.. Is when parties can go through one door again... (Dominique)

What's Next?



Potential for increased use



Unique challenges:

Shame as ultra-central
Infinite damage, time and space
Diverse needs



A platform for taking responsibility and making amends



Getting to "yes"



Need for further research



THANK YOU!

ronens176@gmail.com
nataliehadr@gmail.com
tali.gal.04@gmail.com