Victim-survivors' proposed solutions to addressing image-based sexual abuse in the U.S.: Legal, corporate, educational, technological, and cultural approaches

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Abstract

Sexual violence is a world-wide health problem that has begun to escalate in online and virtual spaces. One form of technology-facilitated sexual violence that has escalated in recent years is image-based sexual abuse (IBSA), or the nonconsensual creation, distribution, and/or threat of distribution of nude or sexual images. Using a trauma-informed and victim-centered framework, we asked victim-survivors for structural solutions to IBSA based on their own experiences. Using thematic analysis on 36 semi-structured interviews with adult U.S. victim-survivors of IBSA, we found that victim-survivors proposed structural solutions to IBSA along 5 general dimensions: legal (creating/strengthening laws, enforcing laws, facilitating legal navigation), corporate (corporate responsibility/activism and solutions for employers), educational (IBSA education, outreach and advocacy, and developing communities of support), technological (more platform accountability, improved procedures for uploading images, better avenues for reporting and removing images, and enhanced platform policies), and cultural. Many solutions built on existing structures (e.g., sexual education in schools) and frameworks (e.g., creating support groups like those for people in recovery from alcohol abuse), enabling educational professionals, policy makers, victim-support service providers, and corporations to readily implement them.

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