



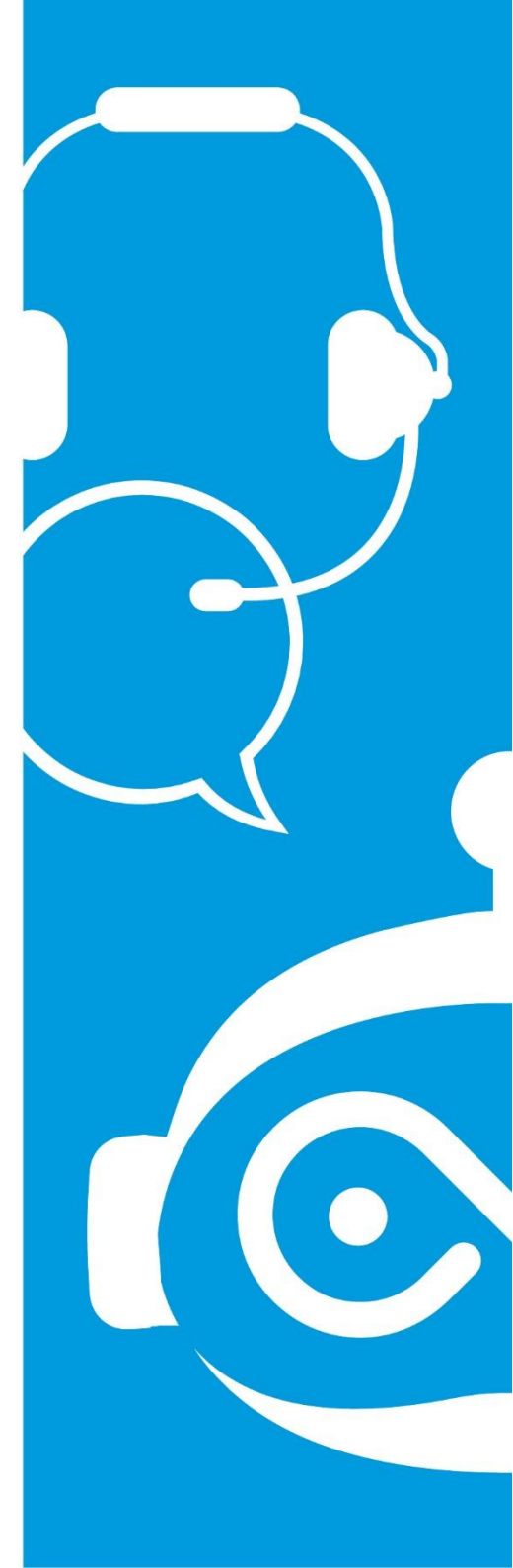
## CYBERBULLYING: CYBER STALKING

### What is it?

Cyber stalking is a **digital phenomenon** which manifests as persistent harassment via email, text messages or on internet platforms. It disturbs the sense of security of the victim and creates anxiety, fear or apprehension in the victim. It can take on the following forms:

- Sending abusive or threatening e-mails and text messages.
- Posting offensive comments online directed to an individual.
- Sharing intimate images or videos of a person online or via mobile phone.

The most common victims of cyberstalking are young women aged 18-29 years old.

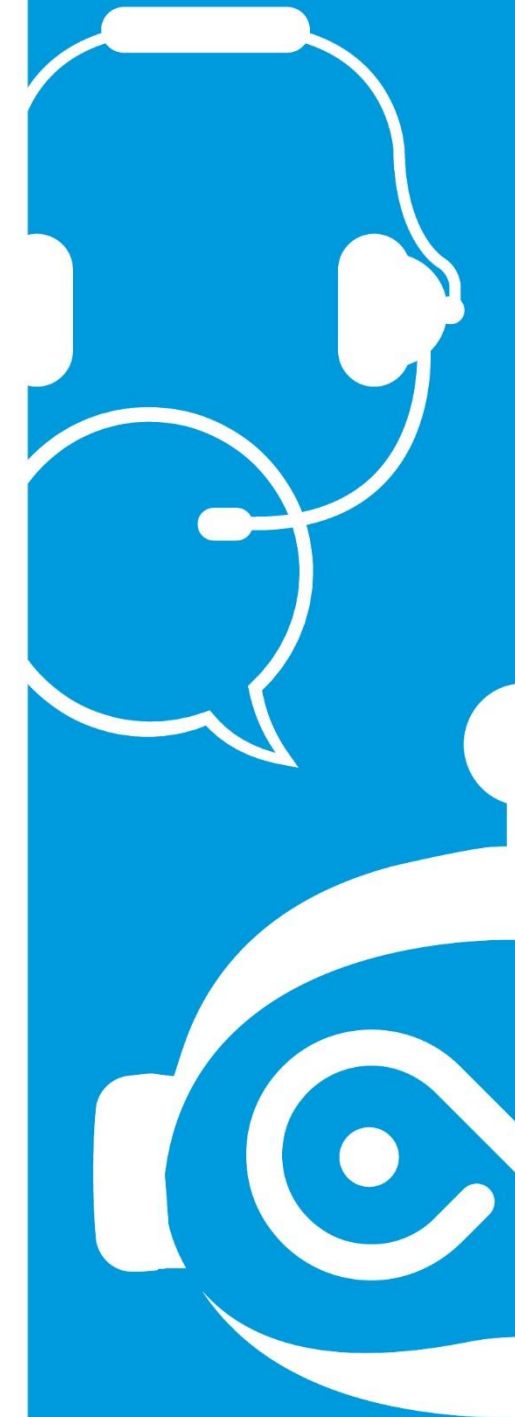


### How can it impact the sexual and reproductive health of youth?

Cyber stalking can have very negative consequences for the SRH of young people. The most common manifestations of such violence include:

- dissemination of pornographic material without the consent of the person involved
- slander and gender-based harassment
- attacking and insulting individuals in relation to their sexuality or gender identity
- sending unwanted pornographic material
- blackmail in the form of threats to disclose compromising material or information, such as doxxing
- threats of rape or death.
- trafficking of human beings carried out by electronic means.

The indicated forms of violence, such as threats, blackmail, and sexual humiliation, can be highly detrimental to mental health and have negative effects on one's perception of their SRH. This situation can lead to the cessation of sexual activity in the real world, induce fear of intimate encounters, and even discourage engaging in romantic and/or sexual activities. Furthermore, a serious consequence of cyberstalking can be a loss of trust in people, avoidance of interpersonal contacts, and a constant sense of threat.



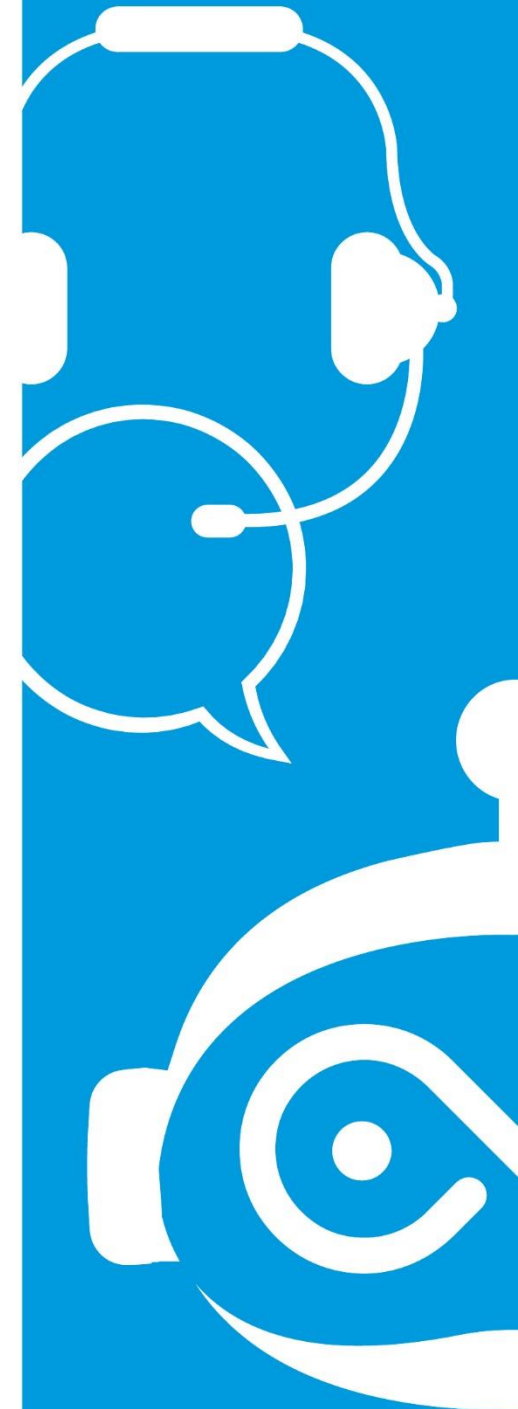
### What are some ways in which youth can be supported?

- Help young people identify whether they are experiencing cyberstalking and persistent harassment, and inform them of their rights as victims of a crime.
- Highlight that sharing private photos or sexually explicit materials without the consent of the person depicted in those materials, spreading so-called revenge pornography, and storing intimate photos of a former partner when they have asked for their deletion constitutes a crime punishable by imprisonment in many countries.
- Teach assertive responses to receiving unwanted emails, SMS messages containing sexual content, and inappropriate propositions received through social media platforms or online chats.
- Provide information on where to seek help in case of physical or sexual violence threats via emails and SMS messages or the use of hate speech based on a person's gender or sexual orientation.

### Related digital phenomena/tools:

See sheets:

- Cyberbullying: Doxxing
- Cyberbullying: Trolls and bots
- Online abuse: Hate speech



### Further reading:

- European Institute for Gender Equality. *Przemoc wobec kobiet i dziewcząt w sieci*. LU: Publications Office, 2017. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2839/190067>.
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *Violence against Women :An EU Wide Survey : Results at a Glance*. LU: Publications Office, 2014. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2811/60683>.
- Siemieniecka, Dorota, Małgorzata Skibińska, and Kamila Majewska. *Cyberagresja: Zjawisko, Skutki, Zapobieganie*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2020.

