

ANNUAL REPORT

2024–2025

Digitally Informed Youth (DIY): Digital Safety is a five-year research project implemented by a team of scholars, researchers, and students that aims to empower young people and provide them with tailored resources against technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV). The team strives to ensure that young people have safe and enjoyable experiences both online and offline. This report provides an update on our SSHRC Insight Grant from May 2024 to April 2025.

DIY: DIGITAL SAFETY AIMS TO ACHIEVE **FOUR OBJECTIVES:**

1

Explore how educational curricula, policies, and legislation address TFSV

2

Analyze the effectiveness of educational, policy, and legal responses to TFSV

3

Identify what education, policies, and supports young people want to combat TFSV

4

Create resources for youth and best practice recommendations for people who work with youth



Our team

Principal investigator

Dr. Kaitlynn Mendes



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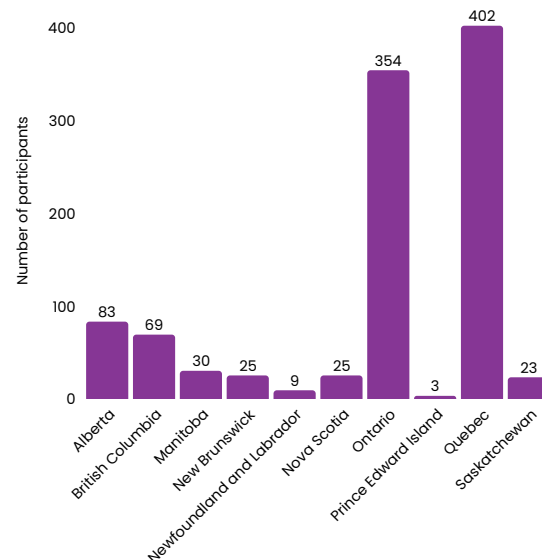
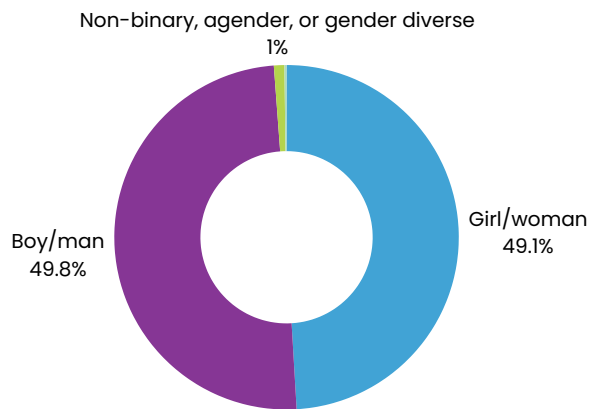
PhD Candidate
Western University

Our Research Efforts

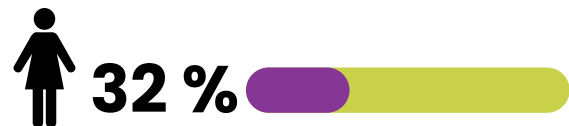
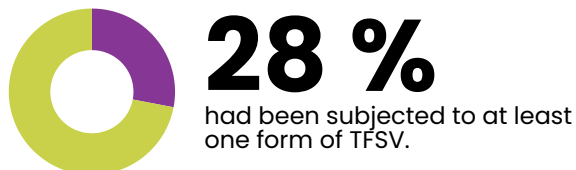
National survey

We conducted a **general population survey** among 1,023 young people (aged 13-18) in Canada to assess the prevalence of tech-facilitated sexual violence and evaluate various support sources. Data collection took place between October 15 and November 26, 2024. Participants were recruited through their parents using the LEO Survey Panel, run by the research company Leger. The survey was administered in English and French.

Demographic information



Exposure to online harms



Girls or women were subjected to harms at a higher rate than **boys or men**.

Knowledge Mobilization

Alliances and community connections



25 ORGANIZATIONS AND COLLABORATORS

- Centre for Sexuality, Calgary
- Community Safety Research Table
- ETOP
- It's Not Ok
- La Barak : Maison des jeunes de Granby
- Lanark County Interval House
- Mary Wright Public School, Strathroy
- New Zealand Classification Office
- One Child
- Ophea
- Opportunity Labs
- Parkview Public School
- Power House Youth Centre
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region
- Simon Fraser University
- South London Neighborhood Resource Centre
- Stoney Creek Elementary School
- The Centre, Sarnia
- Unifor
- Western University
- Wilton Grove Public School
- WizeGuyz
- Women and Gender Equality Canada's Gender-based Violence Knowledge Centre
- Youth Opportunities Lab

“

It was such an impactful presentation! I know that everyone who attended took so much away from it. We are grateful for the work the DIY team is doing. We have already learned so much from your team and really hope to stay connected moving forward. Your research is so intertwined with the work we do, and the supports we are trying to offer the youth and communities we connect with.

Wize Guys

”

“

Kaitlynn not only helped provide important additional content for our social media presentations, but greatly assisted in the delivery of these conversations with youth, highlighting the importance of providing resources to youth for circumstances where they may not seek help from a trusted adult.

St. Leonard's Community Services

”

Knowledge Mobilization

Talks and workshops



4

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
(AGED 13-18)

Topics:

- Online safety
- Tech-facilitated sexual violence
- Digital rights for youth



9

FOR PARENTS AND
CAREGIVERS

- Parenting in a digital age



25

FOR ADVOCATES,
SCHOLARS, EDUCATORS,
POLICYMAKERS, JUDGES,
LAWYERS, JUSTICES OF THE
PEACE, POLICE AND FRONT
LINE WORKERS

- Tech-facilitated gender-based violence
- Tech-facilitated sexual violence
- Young people and harmful content
- Technology and online sexual interactions
- Deepfake nudes, sextortion, digital harassment, and more.
- The importance of digital consent
- Online child exploitation

+1,500 people reached

“ As researchers who receive public funding, we have a tremendous responsibility to make sure the insights and lessons learned are fed back to our communities, in ways that make the most sense for them. From what are the biggest risks youth experience, to how parents, educators, governments and policy makers can best support them as they navigate an ever changing digital landscape.

”

Dr. Kaitlynn Mendes, Principal Investigator

Knowledge Mobilization

Infographics



Sextortion: How trusted adults can support youth (available in English and French).

This infographic explains what adults need to know about sextortion, and it provides specific instructions about how they can help support youth.



Sextortion: What youth need to know (available in English and French). This infographic explains what youth need to know about sextortion, including who is affected, how they are affected, and ways to get help.

Support services lists

We compiled detailed lists of support services for youth affected by technology-facilitated violence. These guides can help people seeking resources tailored to specific identity groups or locations across Canada.

By location:

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Canada wide
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Nunavut
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Québec
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon

By identity:

- 2SLGBTQ+ youth
- Black and racialized girls and women
- Boys and men
- Disabled individuals
- East Asian youth
- Girls and young women
- Immigrant youth
- Indigenous Peoples
- Latino and Spanish-speaking youth
- Muslim youth
- South Asian youth

By language:

- English
- French

Additional resources



Kids Help Phone

What to expect as an user



NeedHelpNow.ca

What to expect as an user



Techsafety.ca

What to expect as an user



These infographics and lists can be found on the Resources and Support Services pages of our website, diydigitalsafety.ca.

Media Engagement



15

News articles and features where members of the team were quoted. Including:

- Big Issue Japan
- CBC
- CBC London
- CBC Montreal
- City News
- CTV News
- Financial Post
- Globe and Mail
- Halifax Examiner
- Herizons
- Sherbrooke Record
- Toronto Star
- Western News



9

Podcasts, TV, and radio interviews given by team members. Including:

- 880 CHED Calgary
- 980 CFPL London Radio
- Afternoon Drive with Matt Allen
- CBC Radio London
- CBC Radio Sydney
- Elles parlent Podcast
- Mornings with Simi, 980 CKNW QR Calgary
- The Mike Farwell Show
- NewsRadio 570, Kitchener



2

Op-ed articles authored by team members. Including:

- The Conversation
 - ◆ 11,363 reads
 - ◆ 11 republications

Social media



402 ▲ 40%

Followers



185

Posts



19.5K

Impressions (times our content has been displayed on screen)

Website



4272 ▲ 12%

Total visits

781

Visits to the **Resources** and **Support services** sections

Policy Engagement

In the last year, we engaged with several government institutions and officials at international, federal, provincial, and municipal levels to offer expert opinions on how to improve current frameworks and approaches to addressing TFSV among youth in Canada. Below are some examples of the actors we have engaged with.



Recommendations for MPP Jess Dixon, the Ontario Ministry of Education, Subcommittee on Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence and Ontario's Intimate Partner Violence Committee Report. Government of Ontario, Canada.



Meeting with Minister Virani's Office about Bill C-63, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.



Offered a expert testimony to Ontario Government Subcommittee on Gender-Based Violence about the role of technology in gender based sexual violence. Government of Ontario, Canada.



Advised Government of Alberta's Ministry of Technology on deepfake regulation. Government of Alberta, Canada.



Advised British Columbia Ministry of Attorney General, Justice Services Branch on Child Safety, Social Media Policies and Platform Liability. Ministry of Attorney General of British Columbia, Canada.



Advised United Nations (UN Women and UN Population Fund) on global standards for technology-facilitated gender-based violence regulation.



“

The information you presented was necessary for the committee to hear. The weaponization of technology and how it affects young people is so important to address. Thank you for noting that the education system needs to keep up with the speed of change and how education systems need to react.

”

**Ontario Government Subcommittee on
Gender-Based Violence**

Conferences



11 PRESENTATIONS IN 2024

- International Association of Media and Communication Researchers (2)
- Brain Canada: Igniting Hope conference (1)
- Megaweek Conference (2)
- International Communication Association (1)
- Association of Internet Researchers (1)
- National Judicial Institute Family Law Conference (1)
- National Judicial Institute Civil Law Conference (1)
- Ontario Justice of the Peace Fall Conference (1)
- OECD Global Roundtable on Equal Access to Justice (1)



2 PRESENTATIONS IN 2025

- iMPACTS Annual Meeting (1)
- Annual Victoria International Privacy & Security Summit (1)



Extended Team

Research assistants



2 undergraduate students



7 graduate students

Next Steps

Objectives for the next period:



Create educational resources for young people and best practice recommendations for educators and policy makers.



Publish two research reports that display the results of our focus groups and the national survey conducted with young people across Canada.



Collect more qualitative data on the effectiveness of interventions addressing young people's experiences with TFSV across various sectors (e.g., education, law and policy, technology) and implemented by diverse stakeholders (e.g., parents, educators, community workers).



www.diydigitalsafety.ca



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