



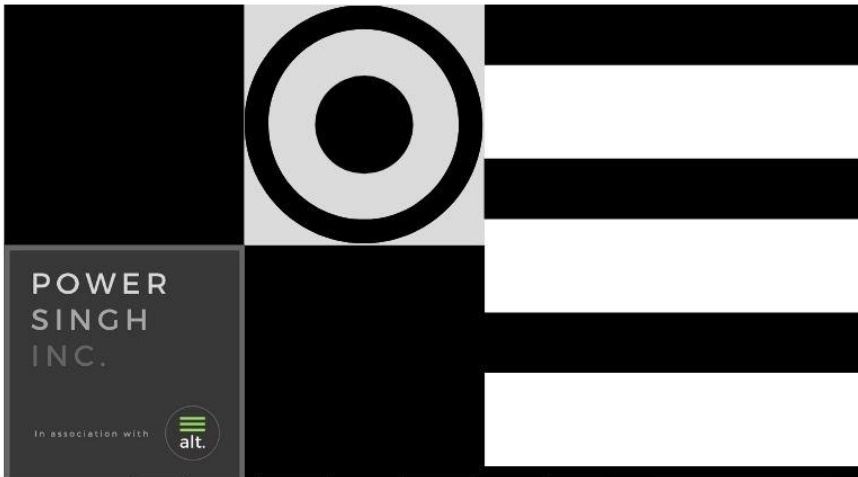
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ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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CHILDREN'S SAFETY
ONLINE
Toolkit





DECONSTRUCT | ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (OGBV)

Children's Online Safety Toolkit

A Power Singh Inc. Special Project

South Africa, 2021

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UNPACKING CHILDREN'S ONLINE SAFETY

Children are prominent participants in the digital world, and all the protection, care, and support they receive offline apply online. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recently confirmed that “the rights of every child must be respected, protected and fulfilled in the digital environment.” Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) explains:

“The internet is a playground for children: space where they can learn, develop and participate; where they can experience the world; and where they can dream, imagine and aspire. The internet provides innumerable opportunities for children and is filled with exciting potential. However, not all children have access, and those who do may be faced with threats to their safety. As the world moves increasingly online, there is a need to ensure that all children are able to access the benefits that the internet provides, and are able to do so in a manner that is both safe and facilitates their rights to learn, express themselves and participate in decisions that affect them.”

The online world has undoubtedly been a positive catalyst for children's creativity, education and development, however, and unfortunately, it also becomes another space in which people may seek to abuse, harm, or take advantage of children. UNICEF explains that child sexual abuse and exploitation is not a new phenomenon, but the online world has amplified the accessibility of common forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation. According to ECPAT International (ECPAT), “as technology advances, new forms of this crime emerge. Never before has it been easier for perpetrators to make contact with children, share images of abuse, hide their identity and profits – and inspire each other to commit further crimes.”

In light of the increased risks and threats, children's online safety is an ongoing process that requires effective and continued engagement with children, as well as an understanding of the opportunities and challenges of the online world. Children's position in society necessitates unique and appropriate measures to protect them online. These measures require a balance between protection, empowerment, and participation. When considering measures to ensure children's online safety it is important to recognise that children are growing, developing and have evolving understandings of the world around them. In South Africa, our courts have on multiple occasions endorsed the principle that the best interests of the child must be a paramount consideration in all matters concerning the child. This means:

- We have a duty to ensure that children receive the support and assistance that is necessary for their **positive growth and development**.
- Every child is unique and has their own individual dignity, special needs and interests, and should be treated with **dignity and compassion**.
- Children have **evolving capacities** and need **appropriate support, care, and protection** to ensure they reach their full potential, which includes enabling them to form opinions, make choices and learn and participate in their communities.

These principles apply both on- and offline and should inform our thinking and actions as we work with children to advance their safety online.

In short:

- **The same rights children have offline apply online.**
- **There are real and dangerous threats to children’s online safety, and the internet has, in many ways, made it easier for offenders to produce, access, and share child sexual abuse material, and reduce their risk of detection.**
- **It is important to recognise children’s involvement in the advancement of their safety, taking into account their best interests and evolving capacities.**

What is online child sexual exploitation and abuse

We recognise that there are many components that contribute to children’s online safety, and we recognise that there are a variety of threats that may jeopardise their enjoyment of the on. However, for purposes of this toolkit, and in line with the overarching theme of online gender-based violence, this toolkit will focus on online child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Online child sexual abuse and online child sexual exploitation involves the “use of information and communication technology as a means to sexually abuse and/or sexually exploit children”. The Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the ‘Luxembourg Guidelines’) defines online child sexual exploitation (OCSE) as:

“all acts of a sexually exploitative nature carried out against a child that has at some stage, a connection to the online environment. It includes any use of ICT that results in sexual exploitation or causes a child to be sexually exploited or that results in or causes images or other material documenting such sexual exploitation to be produced, bought, sold, possessed, distributed, or transmitted.”

ECPAT explains further that this OCSE is not, in and by itself, a distinct type of sexual exploitation of children, but is an umbrella term, that captures all criminal conducts and manifestations of the sexual exploitation and violence of children that have an online or technology-related component.

Examples of online child sexual exploitation and abuse

There are different types of conduct and abuse that amount to OSCE. According to the [CRC](#), “sexual offenders may use digital technologies to solicit children for sexual purposes and to participate in online child sexual abuse, for example, by the live video streaming, production and distribution of child sexual abuse material and through sexual extortion.” The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)), [ECPAT](#), and the [Luxembourg Guidelines](#) provide some explanations and examples of the different types of conduct that falls under the category of online sexual abuse and exploitation:

- **Online child sexual abuse material (OCSAM):** This includes accessing, possessing, producing and/or distributing images and/or videos of child sexual abuse and sexualised material depicting children. OCSAM may be distributed over email, messaging platforms, chat rooms, and social media platforms. OCSAM was commonly referred to as “child pornography”, but this term has been rejected because it minimizes the seriousness of the offences, centres the blame on the child rather than on the offender, and may give the impression that the conduct is consensual.
- **Online grooming:** This has developed into a practice whereby adults “befriend”, or develop a relationship with a child with the intention of sexually abusing the child either on or offline.
- **Live streaming of child sexual abuse:** This involves the real-time broadcasting of child sexual abuse and can occur on online chat rooms, social media platforms, and communication apps. This represents a dual abuse of the child as they are forced or coerced into participating in sexual activities, alone or with other persons – an act that already constitutes sexual abuse – then the sexual activity is, at the same time, transmitted live and watched by others remotely online.
- **Online sexual extortion and coercion:** Sexual images, videos or other content depicting a child may be produced or used for purposes of sexual, financial or other personal gains. This is a form of blackmail where an offender may use images or videos of a child in order to extort sexual favours, money, or other benefits from the child under the threat of having the material shared.

LEGAL OPTIONS

If you, your friend, or a child you care for has experienced online sexual abuse or exploitation, there are some legal options you may want to consider. This section unpacks relevant laws and reporting options.

What does the law say about child online sexual exploitation and abuse?

Before turning to specific laws, it is worth mentioning that the South African Law Reform Commission (SALRC) is reviewing laws that apply to children in respect of exposure to pornography and child sexual abuse material. SALRC has recognised that there is a need to ensure that our laws are reflective of present-day challenges, particularly the challenges of the online world. SALRC has identified five areas of concerns:

- Access to or exposure of a child to pornography;
- Creation and distribution of child sexual abuse material;
- The investigation, procedural matters and sentencing;
- Explicit self-images created and distributed by a child; and
- Grooming of a child and other sexual contact crimes associated with or which are facilitated by child sexual abuse material.

While this process is still underway, with SALRC having received input from a variety of stakeholders, our laws will likely be changing to address more contemporary challenges relating to children's online safety. These toolkits – as living documents – will be updated to reflect the legal positions as they develop and change.

Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act Amendment Bill

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act ([Sexual Offences Amendment Act](#)) 32 of 2007 makes specific reference to the sexual exploitation and sexual grooming of children and child sexual abuse material.

The Sexual offences Amendment Act defines “child pornography” – **child sexual abuse material** – as any images, description, or presentation, whether simulated or real of a child where the child is:

- engaged in an act that constitutes a sexual offence, an act of sexual penetration; an act of sexual violation; or self-masturbation;
- displaying the genital organs in a state of arousal or stimulation, or unduly displaying their genital organs or anus;
- displaying any form of stimulation of a sexual nature of the child's breasts; or
- engaged in sexually suggestive or lewd acts; or as the subject of sadistic or masochistic acts of a sexual nature, or any conduct or activity characteristically associated with sexual intercourse.

The Sexual Offences Act criminalises the following conduct:

- **Sexual exploitation of children:** This includes unlawfully and intentionally engaging the services of a child for financial or other reward.
- **Sexual grooming of children:** This relates to the facilitation of a sexual act with or by a child or encouraging, enabling, instructing or persuading a child to perform a sexual act.
- **Child sexual abuse material:** It is a criminal offence to expose or display child sexual abuse material or to show pornography to a child. It is also an offence to create or produce child sexual abuse material.
- Compelling or causing children to **witness** sexual offences, sexual acts or self-masturbation.
- Exposure or display of or causing exposure or display of genital organs, anus or female breasts to children ("**flashing**").

While the Sexual Offences Amendment Act does not specifically mention online harms, the above definitions and conduct would extend to **online sexual exploitation and abuse**.

Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act Amendment Bill

The Sexual Offences Amendment Act is undergoing some changes in terms of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, Amendment Bill. At this stage, the proposed changes do not appear to directly relate to child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Children's Act and Children's Amendment Bill

While the Children's Act does not expressly mention children's online safety, or include provisions relating to child online sexual exploitation and abuse there a few provisions that may be relied on when framing the legal position of children in this context. For starters, there are a few important definitions to note:

- **Abuse** includes any form of harm or ill-treatment that is deliberately inflicted on a child such as:
 - Assault or any other form of deliberate injury;
 - Sexual abuse or allowing a child to be sexually abused;
 - Bullying by another child;

- Exploitative labour practice; or
 - Exposing or subjecting a child to behaviour that may harm the child psychologically or emotionally.
- **Sexual abuse means:**
 - sexually molesting or assaulting a child or allowing a child to be sexually molested or assaulted;
 - encouraging, inducing or forcing a child to be used for the sexual gratification of another person;
 - using a child in or deliberately exposing a child to sexual activities or pornography; or
 - procuring or allowing a child to be procured for commercial sexual exploitation or in any way participating or assisting in the commercial sexual exploitation of a child.
 - **Sexual offence** means sexual offence as defined in the Sexual Offence Amendment Act.
 - **Exploitation** includes using, procuring, offering or employing a child for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation.

Abuse, sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation are **prohibited** in terms of the Act. It is important to note that the Act includes certain **mandatory reporting responsibilities** when an adult becomes aware that a child may be subject to any of the above acts. The reporting obligations will be discussed in more detail below.

Children’s Amendment Bill

The Children’s Act is presently undergoing some changes in terms of the Children’s Amendment Bill. While the amendment process is still at an early phase, it is worth noting some of the changes that may be relevant:

- **Sexual abuse** will be defined more broadly as “any sexual offence against a child”. This appears to be an attempt to align the Children’s Act with the Sexual Offence Amendment Act.
- The **reporting obligations** are extended to include more categories of people who must report the suspected abuse of a child. The amendment further extends the reporting obligations to exploitation and sexual exploitation.

Child Justice Act

The Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 establishes a criminal justice system for children, who are in conflict with the law and are accused of committing offences. Like adults, children can be punished for certain conduct which is criminal in nature. For present purposes, this includes exposing or displaying child sexual abuse material.

Film and Publications Amendment Act

One of the objects of the Film and Publications Amendment Act 11 of 2019 (FPPA) is to protect children from harmful content or premature exposure to adult experiences. The FPPA defines “child pornography” in the same way as the Sexual Offence Amendment Act. In terms of the FPPA it is an offence to possess, create, produce or in any way contribute to, or assist in the creation or production of **child sexual abuse material** or content **depicting scenes of sexual assault and violence against children**. Any person who knowingly creates, produces or in any way contributes to or assists in any film or photograph which contains depictions, descriptions or scenes of sexual assault and violence against children, shall be guilty of an **offence**. Additionally, the FPPA places a **positive obligation** on **internet service providers** to take reasonable steps, including filing a report to the South Africa Police Services, if they have knowledge that their services are being used to host or distribute child pornography.

What does the law say about reporting obligations?

As noted, certain laws require certain individuals to report child abuse. The table below provides some guidance on the reporting obligations under the different laws:

	Sexual Offences Amendment Act	Children’s Act	FPPA
Who must report	Any person who has knowledge that a sexual offence has been committed against a child.	Specific professions and occupational groups (see section 110).	Any person who has knowledge of an offence relating to child sexual exploitation material.
What must be reported	Your knowledge of the sexual offence – this must be done immediately.	The reasonable grounds that have led to the conclusion that a child has been sexually abused.	Knowledge or suspicion of the offence.
Who must you report to	SAPS	Designated child protection organisation, the provincial department of social development or a police official.	SAPS
Consequences of not reporting	Guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period up to five years or to both a fine and imprisonment.	The reporting is mandatory, and specific professions and occupational groups may be found guilty of an offence.	Guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period up to five years or to both a fine and imprisonment.

Deconstructing the legal framework

The legal framework in relation to online child sexual exploitation and abuse is complicated as there are different laws that cover these topics to different degrees. However, deconstructing the legal framework reveals that the position is fairly straightforward:

- *The sexual abuse or exploitation of a child is a **criminal offence**. This includes online sexual abuse or exploitation.*
- *It also includes producing or obtaining **child sexual exploitation material**.*
- *In the event that you become aware that a child is being sexually abused – online or offline – you have a **duty to report** it to the police.*

How to report online child sexual exploitation and abuse

Who do you report to?

- Online child sexual exploitation and abuse can be reported to the South African Police Services. You can send an email to childprotect@saps.org.za, call the hotline on 0860 010 111 or visit your nearest police station.
- In addition to reporting to SAPS, which is mandatory as discussed above, you may also want to reach out to the Department of Social Development – you can report a case online through their reporting portal.
- The Film and Publication Board (FPB), established in terms of the FPAA seeks to protect children from sexual exploitation and has a hotline for reporting online child sexual abuse.
- Childline may also be a useful reporting and support structure. They have a referral service that may assist you in your reporting.
- As will be discussed below, you can also report abuse to the social media platforms where the abuse occurred.

Reporting tips

When you are reporting to the police remember the following:

- You are reporting a **crime**, and even though it occurred online, it is still a crime, and it must be reported in the same way as any other crime that may need to be investigated.
- You will need to provide a **statement** of what happened and why the matter needs to be investigated.
- If you have access to **evidence** of online child sexual abuse or exploitation, make copies of this evidence available to the police – but remember to keep **copies** for yourself.
- You may need to speak to both the **Child Protection Unit** and the **Cybercrimes Unit**.
- Make sure you obtain a **CAS** (reference) number and the details of the police officer who is assisting you so that you can follow up.

Getting a protection order

Similarly to the processes discussed in the Toolkits on Online Gender-based Violence, and Online Sexual Harassment, you can obtain a protection order for a child who is a victim or survivor of online sexual abuse. The process for getting a protection order is set out in the Online Gender-Based Violence Toolkit.

TECHNICAL OPTIONS

Education and Awareness

The first and most important action to be taken to ensure the safety of children online is educating yourselves and them about how the online world works and how to protect themselves, including the consequences of their actions online and on social media. This should include general education about privacy settings and about how the internet works, as well as healthy password practices and how to report anything that looks suspicious or that makes them uncomfortable.

There are several useful resources on children's online safety that you may want to review with your child:

- Web rangers, [Tutorials](#)
- Media Monitoring Africa, [Hashplay](#)
- Media Monitoring Africa, [Children's Rights Online: Towards a Digital Rights Charter](#)
- Film and Publications Board, [Safer Internet South Africa](#)
- Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, [Child Online Protection](#)
- Safer Spaces, [Digital Parenting in South Africa](#)
- SAPS, [Child Safety – Internet Safety](#)
- Internet Service Providers' Association, [Cyber Safety Resources](#)
- ChildNet International, [Resources](#)
- SafeKids, [Safety Advice and Tools](#)
- International Telecommunication Union, [Child Online Protection](#)

Tips for parents

Many of the above resources are interactive and designed to be child friendly. In line with promoting children's participation, and respecting their agency and evolving capacities, it is important to work with children to navigate the online world in a safe and empowering way. There are various steps that parents can take to stay informed about their child's online activity and to help protect them:

- Parents can **educate** themselves about the sites which their kids frequently access – understand how the sites work, the minimum age requirements, and your child's technological skill level.
- Make use of **safety features** to filter out or block harmful content.
- Regularly update the **software** on your home devices and ensure that you have adequate security programs installed.
- Agree on some **boundaries** to limit screen time.

- Create a **safe space** to have discussions with your child about the internet – enquire about who they talk to, engage them about how to distinguish between reality and what may be untrue, and remain calm when they share information with you.
- **Learn with your child**, work through resources together in the online world in a safe and empowering way.

Tips for children

The internet should be a positive and fun space. Here are a few ideas to help you recognise any potential harm or concerns:

- Ensure that your social media accounts remain **private** so that you can control who has access to your profile, your posts and your photos.
- Do not share your **passwords** or login details.
- Do not share your personal information, such as your address, contact details or location, with **strangers**.
- You do not have to respond to negative messages or any content that makes you uncomfortable.
- Speak to an **adult you trust** if you experience anything that makes you scared or uncomfortable.

Blocking Content and Parental Controls

The simplest step that can be taken to protect children online is the targeted blocking of potentially harmful or unwanted accounts. However, users should be aware that a person who has been blocked may take various other steps, such as continued communication or harassment on other online platforms or even shifting it offline into the real world. Nevertheless, blocking can serve as both a protective and a reactive step. To enable the latter, some social media platforms enable some form of parental controls or limiting of access to certain content for children.

Key principles to keep in mind when considering parental controls

When considering parental controls it is imperative to reflect on the **best interests of the child**, their **evolving capacities** and their right to **participate in decisions that affect them**. Promoting agency and empowering children is often the most effective way of advancing their safety. Accordingly, to the extent that parental controls become necessary, it may be worth engaging with your child about these options.

MMA has given thought to the role of children as participants in the advancement of their digital rights, and highlight key elements that relate to children participating in decisions that affect them:

- **Creating time and space for children to formulate their opinion:** this requires adequate, age-appropriate, accurate prior information, including possible outcomes or consequences of a decision they make take. Further to this, participatory spaces must be safe spaces, where children feel comfortable and secure. This includes informing children that they are not forced to participate, and they do not need to continue to participate if they no longer feel safe.
- **Ensuring inclusivity:** building on the general principle of non-discrimination, it is important that participation is inclusive and allows for equal participation by all children involved in the process, or who are being affected by the decision.
- **Allowing children to share and express their views before a decision is made** involves allowing children to be part of conversations, to the extent that it is appropriate, and to the extent, they feel comfortable participating.
- **Accepting the evolving capacities of children:** children develop at different paces and have had different life experiences which may impact the way in which they feel comfortable participating, it is, therefore, important to be aware of the differing capacities and backgrounds that children come from.
- **Considering the views raised by children:** often adults are quick to dismiss a child's viewpoint, however, in order for there to be genuine and meaningful participation, decision-makers need to take the views of children seriously and not merely consider them at face value.
- **Informing children of decisions that have been taken:** once a decision has been made children should be informed of the decision, and where appropriate be afforded the opportunity to ask questions and possibly appeal a decision.

It may be useful to reflect on these principles as you navigate your role in ensuring your child's safety online.

- **WhatsApp:**

WhatsApp allows only users over the age of 13 in most countries or 16 in the European region. It is also considered a violation for anyone, including a parent, to register an account on behalf of a child under the allowed age. Parents may, however, report an underage account belonging to their own child by notifying WhatsApp, with supporting evidence, of the existence of the account.

Because of their robust age policy, WhatsApp does not provide extensive parental controls. However, it is possible to place some limits on the use of an account by a child. For example, in 'Settings' a parent can block certain contacts, control who can see visible public information such as the 'Last Seen' feature, the profile photo, 'About' (a mini-bio) and Status, and turn off Live Location, all of which are highly recommended for children using the service.

It is important to note that because WhatsApp is not a public social media platform and is encrypted, WhatsApp itself does not have access to the content of messages sent using the service, therefore has limited control over the content on its platform. As a result, if you wish to report something to WhatsApp, you should take a screenshot of the message to send to the company.

- **Facebook:**

Similarly to WhatsApp, which is owned by Facebook, Facebook does not allow children under the age of 13 on their platform and will remove the accounts of minors if reported to them. First and foremost, parents should ensure that their child's Facebook account correctly lists their actual age. This will cause Facebook to place certain automatic controls on the operation of the child's account, for example reminding them who they're sharing information with and protecting sensitive information such as their contact information, school, or birthday from appearing in public searches. Location sharing will also be set to off by default, although it can be turned on again.

You should also consider walking through the Privacy Basics tool provided by Facebook with your child to ensure you both agree with the privacy settings on their account. Parents should also use the Tag Review tool to approve tags people add to their posts before they appear, as tagging may automatically increase the audience of a post. A similar process should be followed with Timeline Review.

Facebook provides specific controls for the Facebook Messenger Kids app, a platform designed specifically for children under the age of 13, including a Parent Dashboard that provides much greater control for parents over the content and activity on their child's account. However, Messenger Kids is currently only available in select regions.

- **Twitter:**

Twitter also requires all users to be 13 years of age or older to create an account. In some countries, parents may be required to give consent on behalf of the child who is over 13 but under the age of consent in that country before allowing the child to use their services.

Although Twitter does not explicitly provide parental controls, parents should take care to go through all privacy and security settings on their child's account to ensure basic protections are in place, such as limiting tweets to followers of the account ('Protect your Tweets'), allowing people the account follows to tag you in photos, and disabling the receipt of messages from unknown accounts. Further privacy settings can be viewed here.

- **Instagram:**

Instagram, which is also in the suite of products owned by Facebook, abides by the same policy of allowing accounts only for persons aged 13 years or older. Underage accounts, or those impersonating someone who is underage, may be reported here. Instagram does not allow parents to have access to their children's accounts and does not take action for parents on their children's accounts.

However, Instagram does provide a comprehensive guide for parents on how to manage privacy, interactions and time on Instagram. The guide outlines steps to take to manage privacy settings on Instagram together with your child, and how to report unwanted interactions. It is recommended to take

similar steps on Instagram like other social media sites, such as limiting who can see photos to followers only. Further detail on important privacy settings on Instagram is available [here](#).

- **TikTok:**

TikTok also only allows users aged 13 years and above. Underage users or privacy violations may be reported through [this form](#). TikTok provides a separate experience for children under the age of 13 in the United States only.

Because TikTok is designed to be used by a younger demographic, notably teenagers, the platform provides numerous parental control features. For example, [Family Pairing](#) allows parents to link their own account to that of their child, enabling parents to set controls such as screen time management, restricted mode, discoverability, and restricting comments or likes. Furthermore, the ability to send direct messages is limited to the accounts of persons aged 16 and over only. It is thus important that a parent verifies that their child has signed up for an account with the correct age.

While these settings are envisaged to protect children, it is important to remember that children are active participants in the online world, and are likely to be able to overcome barriers to access, particularly those centred around age. Stricter and more prohibitive approaches are often unlikely to genuinely advance children's safety. However, open, meaningful, and consistent engagement with children about their online safety and their participation in the online world can have an empowering effect that advances their safety and enjoyment online.

Children as active digital citizens

While the above control options may be necessary in certain instances, education, engagement and participation should not be discounted.

There are exciting opportunities for children to become **active digital citizens**. A great example of this is the [Web Rangers Programme](#). Through this programme young digital citizens are **empowered to use the internet responsibly** and encourage their peers to do the same, and encourages the development of digital literacy skills that allow young people to gain critical skills and **knowledge around online safety**. The primary objectives of the Web Rangers programme are to:

- Improve children's digital literacy skills.
- Create and promote awareness around safe and responsible internet usage.
- Empower children to take ownership of their digital footprint.
- Empower children to be in a position to take full advantage of the opportunities that the digital world has to offer in order to make South Africa a better place.



PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

The trauma and harm associated with online child sexual abuse or exploitation can manifest in a variety of ways, at different times, and in ways, you may not understand. In order to help a child who is a victim or survivor is important to ensure that there are safe, appropriate, and accessible psycho-support structures available to them.

In many instances, a parent, caregiver or trusted adult is likely to be the first port of psycho-social support for a child. If this is the case there are a few initial responses you may want to consider:

- Respond with care and urgency
- Believe the child
- Re-assure them that it is not their fault
- Reinforce and re-establish safety, support and love
- Explain what the next steps might look like

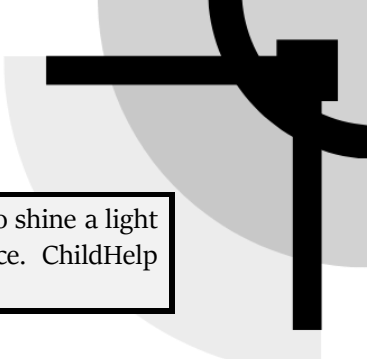
Here are some resources that may assist you with this process:

- Stop It Now, [Resources for Parents of Children Who Have Been Sexually Abused](#)
- Viva, [Tools and resources for targeted psychosocial support for children](#)
- RAINN, [A Guide for Friends & Family of Sexual Violence Survivors](#)
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network, [What parents need to know about sexual abuse](#)

Please note that these resources are targeted at a global audience and do not specifically address online child sexual abuse and exploitation but speak about sexual violence more broadly. Notwithstanding this, these resources may still be of use to you as they contain helpful explanations and guidance.

Telling and sharing stories – to all the survivors out there: you are not alone

Depending on what is in the best interest of your child, and only if and when it is appropriate, it may be helpful to share stories with them of other children who are victims and survivors. This may help with feelings of shame and isolation. ECPAT has facilitated a survivor-led and driven [forum](#) where survivors speak out, collect their voices and opinions, and take initial steps towards a survivor-led movement to combat the scourge of sexual exploitation of children.



EndCAN has established structures to allow children to share their stories as a means to shine a light into dark places, create healthier communities, and empower others to break the silence. ChildHelp also has a story and resources center.

Following initial engagement with your child as well as appropriate reporting responses it may be necessary to get professional support for the child, here some organisations that may be able to provide some guidance in this regard:

- [Childline](#)
- [FAMSA](#)
- [South Africa Depression and Anxiety Group \(SADAG\)](#)
- [Teddy Bear Clinic](#)

It is important to remain available as a support structure to your child throughout the process, conducting regular check-ins and creating safe spaces. It is equally important that you take steps to safeguard your well-being. You are likely to provide far more effective support when you are supported as well. Reaching out to your personal support structures and professional support structures can be an important component of supporting your child.

Always remember:

- **It is not the child's fault**
- **Love, support, safety, and reassurance are key ingredients to supporting a child**
- **You are not alone**



DE CON STRUCT

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