



SG HER EMPOWERMENT

# 10 ONLINE HARM MYTHS



01

**Online harms are less serious than “real life” harms**

• FALSE

They can cause traumatic long and short-term effects.

 23% of youths believe online harms are less dangerous.<sup>^</sup>



02

**Online harms stop once you switch off your device**

• FALSE

Harmful conduct can continue offline, and can be accompanied by physical abuse. The effects can also be long-lasting as part of one’s digital footprint

 17% of youths believe that online harms stop once you go offline.<sup>^</sup>



03

**Online harms only impact you online**

• FALSE

Victims can be targeted both online and offline. For example, the online grooming of minors can lead to “real world” physical sexual abuse. Likewise, online stalking can lead to fears over physical safety.



04

**You willingly post content online, so you deserve the negative responses you get**

• FALSE

Insults, bullying, harassment, or abusive comments are never acceptable. It is the perpetrator who decides to act and we must not blame the victim.

 27% of youths believe that a woman who uploads her images should accept all forms of comments directed towards her, including disrespectful ones.<sup>^</sup>



05

**Women and men face the same online risks**

• FALSE

Women are more likely to have experienced online stalking and bullying, with those aged 25 to 34 more likely to experience gender-based online harms. Men are more likely to have received unwelcomed images.<sup>#</sup>



<sup>^</sup> SHE and Global Shapers Singapore Hub Survey, 2023. Based on a nationally representative sample of n=500 Singaporean youth aged 16-35.

<sup>#</sup> Sunlight Alliance for Action Sensing Poll, 2022. Based on a nationally representative sample of n=1049 Singaporeans aged 15 and above. Reproduced with the permission of the Ministry of Communications and Information.

**06****Sending unrequested sexually explicit images is acceptable****• FALSE**

Possessing and sending obscene images may be a criminal offence. Just because something is prevalent, doesn't mean it should be accepted.



*16% of youths aged 16 to 24 feel that sending sexually explicit images, even if unrequested, is acceptable.\**

**07****People do not get affected by sensitive content they see online that is not directed to them****• FALSE**

63% of youths have seen sensitive content on their feeds (e.g., graphic violence, adult nudity), even though they did not explicitly search for such content. A majority of 68% felt upset after this.<sup>^</sup>

**08****You can't prove an online harm occurred if the content has been deleted****• FALSE**

Your account of events can also be considered evidence, as can eyewitness accounts. Digital forensics can also be used to recover deleted content.

**09****There are no avenues for targets of online harms to seek help****• FALSE**

Many apps and platforms offer tools to report breaches of their community standards. The SHECARES@SCWO centre also offers counselling and pro bono legal advice.



*Half of youths have low awareness of legal and/or non-legal sources of help available if they encounter online harms.\**

**10****Online harms are not criminal offences****• FALSE**

Many online harms (e.g. stalking, threats, or scams) may be criminal offences. If you are unsure, you may visit the SHECARES@SCWO centre's pro bono legal clinic for assistance.



*23% of youths are unsure which online harms warrant a police report.\**



\* Ipsos Survey, 2022. Based on a nationally representative sample of n=501 Singaporeans aged 21-74, as part of a 29-country study.

There's a place you can turn to for help in Singapore if you encounter online harms.

• TRUE



SHECARES@SCWO centre is a safe space for counselling relating to online harms.



SHECARES@SCWO centre can help with pro-bono legal support.

If you, or anyone you know, have been experiencing online harms, we are here to help.

Launched by SG Her Empowerment (SHE) in collaboration with the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations ("SCWO"), the SHECARES@SCWO centre provides holistic support and a safe space for targets of online harms, through counselling, pro bono legal clinic services and referral to police. No case is too small and every case is important to us. If you have been affected by such harms and want someone to talk to, reach out now.

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Visit <https://www.she.org.sg> for more information.



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