

Sexual Assault Awareness Month: Let's Make Online Spaces Safer

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month — a time to draw attention to the prevalence of [sexual assault](#) and educate individuals and communities about how to prevent it. Sexual harassment, abuse, and assault are widespread problems. [Every 73 seconds](#) in our country, someone is sexually assaulted. And in the United States alone, nearly one in five women and one in 67 men have been raped at some time in their lives ([Smith et al., 2017](#)), and that one in four girls and one in six boys is sexually abused before the age of 18 ([Dube et al., 2005](#)).

You, or someone you know, can get free, confidential help 24/7: contact the National Sexual Assault Hotline, [by phone at 800.656.HOPE](#) or [via live chat](#).

Sexual harassment, assault, and abuse happen in all communities — and that includes online communities. We are spending more and more of our lives online, especially since the onset of COVID — whether for work, school, or entertainment. Unfortunately, with this increase in virtual connection comes an increase in online abuse and harassment. Since COVID began, many people are more isolated and unable to freely interact with their communities, so signs of violence and harassment might go unseen. For example, children whose teachers may have recognized signs of abuse -- such as bruises and unexplained absences -- are at a serious disadvantage online. In a virtual environment, educators and other caring adults outside of the home can look out for these possible signs of domestic or sexual violence:

- Yelling in the background of video or phone calls;
- Behavior changes such as social withdrawal, difficulty concentrating, or loss of interest in usual activities
- Unexplained absences
- Complaints about soreness, pain, or trouble sleeping

If you are concerned that a child is in an unsafe situation at home, you can contact the [Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline](#) for local resources and referrals. Children are not the only ones who may be vulnerable within the home: if you suspect that someone is experiencing domestic/intimate partner violence, you can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline [over the phone or via live chat](#). Advocates can help you to identify abuse and talk through options for next steps.

Together we can build online spaces that are safe and respectful for everyone, built on the foundational values of [practicing consent](#), [keeping kids safe](#), [taking action to protect ourselves and others](#), and [supporting survivors](#).

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Frontline Employee Newsletter

And, here are some additional resources, from [RAINN.org](https://www.rainn.org), [NSVRC.org](https://www.nsvrc.org), [MeTooMvmt.org](https://www.meetoomvmt.org) and [iHollaback.org](https://www.ihollaback.org):

- A toolkit to [help survivors of sexual assault during COVID](#)
- How to step in and help prevent sexual assault, using [Hollaback!'s 5 D's](#) (Distract, Delegate, Document, Delay, Direct) – also available as a [downloadable guide \(PDF\)](#)
- [Warning signs](#) of possible sexual assault and abuse, by age group
- How to respond when someone you care about tells you they've experienced sexual assault, using [the TALK method](#)
- How to talk about something needed in every relationship: [consent and boundaries](#), including [5 rules for obtaining, confirming, and honoring consent](#), and a variety of [comics to help you talk about consent](#) such as [safe dating tips for teens](#) and [talking with your child about sexual abuse](#)

If you're struggling and looking for caring support and helpful resources, EAP is here for you: contact us at 1-877-313-4455 or [online](#).

Zoom Fatigue: Resources to Help You and Your Family

About a year ago, many of us started communicating using Zoom and other online platforms intensively. The strain of using online platforms as our primary mode of communication has come to be called "Zoom fatigue." Here are a few resources to help you and your family take better care of yourselves as we continue to heavily rely on online platforms and video conferencing.

- As reported on [OpenCulture.com](https://www.openculture.com), [new research from Stanford University](#) about "Zoom fatigue" focuses on four possible explanations ("excessive amounts of close-up eye gaze, cognitive load, increased self-evaluation from staring at video of oneself, and constraints on physical mobility.") and offers corresponding solutions such as: using the "hide self-view" button, muting our video regularly and [more](#). In addition, you can [take the Zoom fatigue survey](#) and see where you rank in the survey categories of *general fatigue*, *visual fatigue*, *social fatigue*, *motivational fatigue*, and *emotional fatigue*.
- To support your colleagues who are working mothers/caregivers, [this Science magazine article](#) recommends: 1) being flexible about the methods that can be used to call into meetings, outlining the policy with explicit language; 2) avoid making anyone feel uninvolved or not committed to work when their cameras are turned off; and [these additional ideas](#).
- Especially for teachers and others who talk on Zoom all day, every workday: experts at the University of Washington's Performing Voice Clinic developed this [short video of healthy voice tips for video chats](#) to help you protect your voice.

Upcoming Live Webinars

Orientation to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Presented by: Kari Uhlman, MA, LMHC- EAP Counselor

- Thursday, April 22, 2021 1:30pm – 2:00pm [Register](#)
- Wednesday, May 19, 2021 9:00am – 9:30am [Register](#)

