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POWER UP↑

A (Quick!) Intersectional Feminist Guide
to Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based
Violence and Differential Vulnerability

WHAT IS TFGBV?

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence, or TFGBV for short, is the use of technology to harm, harass or abuse people based on gender, gender expression, gender identity or perceived gender.

FAST FACTS



“Almost 2 in 3 women globally have been subjected to TFGBV.”

(United Nations Population Fund, 2025).

“61% of women and gender-diverse people in Canada have experienced gendered digital harm.”

(Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2025).

“Across Canada more than 1 in 4 young women and gender diverse youth have been personally targeted by online hate.”

(YWCA, 2022).

EXAMPLES OF TFGBV

TFGBV is complex, with many forms of harm frequently overlapping and reinforcing each other. Some examples include:

- Online Harassment: Harming someone by sending threats, insults, or abusive messages online.
- Doxxing: Revealing or publishing private or identifying information without consent to intimidate, harass or cause harm (including to one’s credibility or reputation).
- Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images (NCDII): Sharing or threatening to share sexual or intimate photos/videos without someone’s consent, including ‘revenge porn’.
- Deepfakes: Digitally manipulated media that uses artificial intelligence to replicate someone’s likeness. Deepfakes can be used to spread misinformation and create non-consensual, pornographic media.
- Online Stalking and Surveillance: Using digital tools to monitor or track someone (online or offline) without their consent.
- Impersonation: Impersonating someone online (such as creating fake profiles) to harass, exploit, damage reputations, or deceive others for financial gain.

WHERE DOES IT HAPPEN?



TFGBV occurs on many types of digital platforms, including Social Media Platforms (Twitter/X, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook), Messaging Apps (WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, Discord, Snapchat), Dating Apps (Tinder, Bumble, Hinge), and Gaming Platforms (Twitch, Xbox Live). Surveillance and Tracking Technologies (Apple AirTags, Stalkware) and AI Tools (Deepfake Generators) can also be used to carry out TFGBV.



WHO DOES IT HARM?



TFGBV IS EXPERIENCED UNEQUALLY ACROSS DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES.

TFGBV disproportionately affects cis and trans women, trans men, non-binary, Two-Spirit, and other gender-diverse people — particularly those who are Black, Indigenous, people of colour, and/or people with disabilities.

INTERSECTIONALITY



Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality is a framework that looks at how multiple systems of oppression intersect to shape people's experiences. While TFGBV is rooted in gender-based oppression, it often intersects with other forms of oppression like racism, ableism, colonialism, queerphobia and transphobia, which can compound one another, especially online.

THIS MEANS THAT PEOPLE EXPERIENCE HARM IN ONLINE SPACES DIFFERENTLY.

Differential vulnerabilities refer to how individuals experience unequal exposure to harms or risks. The concept helps us understand who is more frequently targeted by online harms, more deeply impacted, and less likely to be protected, supported or believed – often due to their intersecting identities and social positions.

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence is an “oppressive tool” that not only causes harm, but also reinforces, perpetuates and amplifies systemic oppression and discrimination (Dunn, Vaillancourt, & Brittain, 2023).

KEY TAKEAWAYS



TFGBV is Structural: It isn't just about individual bad actors—it's rooted in larger systems of power like sexism, racism, ableism, colonialism, queerphobia, and transphobia which make some people more vulnerable to harm than others.

Not Everyone Experiences TFGBV the Same Way: People face different levels of risk and harm online depending on their positionality. Power and inequality shape who is most exposed and least protected from digital forms of harm.

“Logging Off” Isn’t a Solution: This ignores how essential digital spaces are for expression, connection, and activism. Logging off can mean losing vital access to community, visibility, information, and democratic participation.

Online Harm IS Real Harm: Even if it happens through a screen, TFGBV can lead to serious mental, emotional, and even physical consequences. It affects people’s sense of safety, dignity, and well-being, both online and offline. It can also lead to offline harm like physical assault, stalking, or harassment in public spaces.

Solutions Must Be Flexible and Context-Aware: For example, solutions like identity verification may seem helpful, but they can create new risks, especially for trans people, undocumented folks, sex workers, and survivors of gender-based violence who rely on anonymity for safety.

DIGITAL SAFETY PLAN



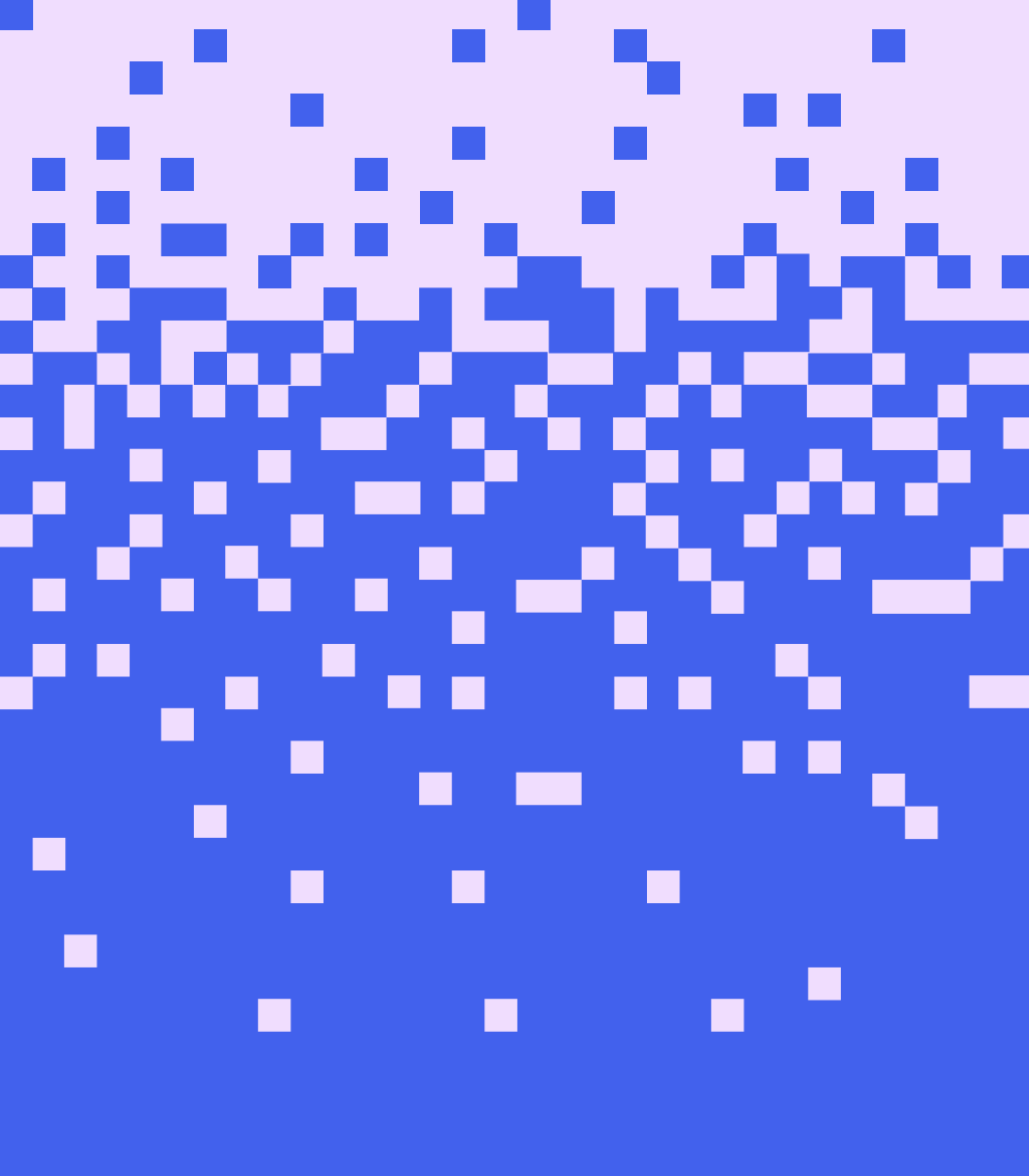
A digital safety plan can't dismantle the systems behind TFGBV, but it helps you stay safer by planning ahead and knowing what to do if harm occurs. Here are some practical steps to protect your online safety and well-being.

1. Identify the online risks you face and which accounts feel unsafe.
2. Secure your accounts by using strong passwords and enabling two-factor authentication.
3. Limit what personal information you share publicly and adjust your privacy settings.
4. Save evidence of any abuse, like screenshots and messages, in a safe place.
5. Report harmful behaviour on the platforms you use.
6. Build a support network and reach out to trusted people when you need help like family, friends and allies.
7. Know your rights and seek legal advice if harassment escalates.

THINGS TO REMEMBER



Recognizing differential vulnerabilities is essential to developing intersectional responses to TFGBV that address both structural inequalities and lived realities.



ABOUT



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