

# Supporting a child or teen through **collecting evidence**

Information can be collected to report as evidence of cyberbullying. It can also be collected and used as 'fuel' for cyberbullying.

For some people who are subject to cyberbullying, collecting evidence may be perceived as stressful. This is because some platforms inform the sender if a screen capture has been taken.

**So how can we support young people to confidently collect evidence of intentional online harm, without adding to their stress?**

**Answer:** Better understand why collecting evidence may be difficult to do on some platforms (without playing into the power dynamic). If you haven't already participated in the [online Cyberbullying training] and you want to learn more about how to identify which platforms notify of a screenshot [CLICK HERE](#).

## Tips on how to support someone to collect evidence

### Ask the obvious

Ask if they are able to collect evidence of the online behaviour.

Asking for more of a background to better understand the situation, will likely be the fastest way to understand if there may be complications in capturing the harmful content.

This will also help you understand the power dynamics between your child and the person or people causing them harm online.

If all the online harm is carried out on a platform that notifies the sender and the child is hesitant to screen capture it - **this is demonstrating a power dynamic and you may need to provide guidance to help manage further harm - read on!**



## Encourage short term goal setting

Finding a short term goal together will help strengthen your connection.

**Your goal:** Facilitate open communication that empowers the child to find a solution.

**Their goal:** Come up with an idea that will that will reduce some of the power imbalance and help reduce/stop the online harm.

This goal setting should be led by the child and be implemented with the support of the parent. **(Not the other way around).**

## Steps to regain a sense of control

Encourage solutions that are practical and can be actioned by the child in the first instance.

- Allow the child to problem solve first.
- Listen to the child's solutions and encourage good decision making.
- Prompt only when practical solutions are not identified.

**Note:** confidence may be low, or anger may be present. This is ok – try not to reprimand the behaviour, instead validate their feelings and show calm, patient support.

### TIP:

Resist jumping in and solving the issue. Help guide the child to find what practical solutions they think would help them feel a little more in control.



## Suggestions may be:

- Asking the child if collecting the evidence will help and, if so, how they can do this/what their next steps should be. This will also help you assess their understanding of reporting methods.
- If the child states that collecting evidence will notify the account holder and they don't want this to happen, a useful alternative may be to take photos or video of the child's screen displaying the harmful content, on a secondary phone or device, therefore protecting them from further stress of notification.
- Allow/help the child to identify a strategy to report the abuse. Support their decision and tell them you will do it together.

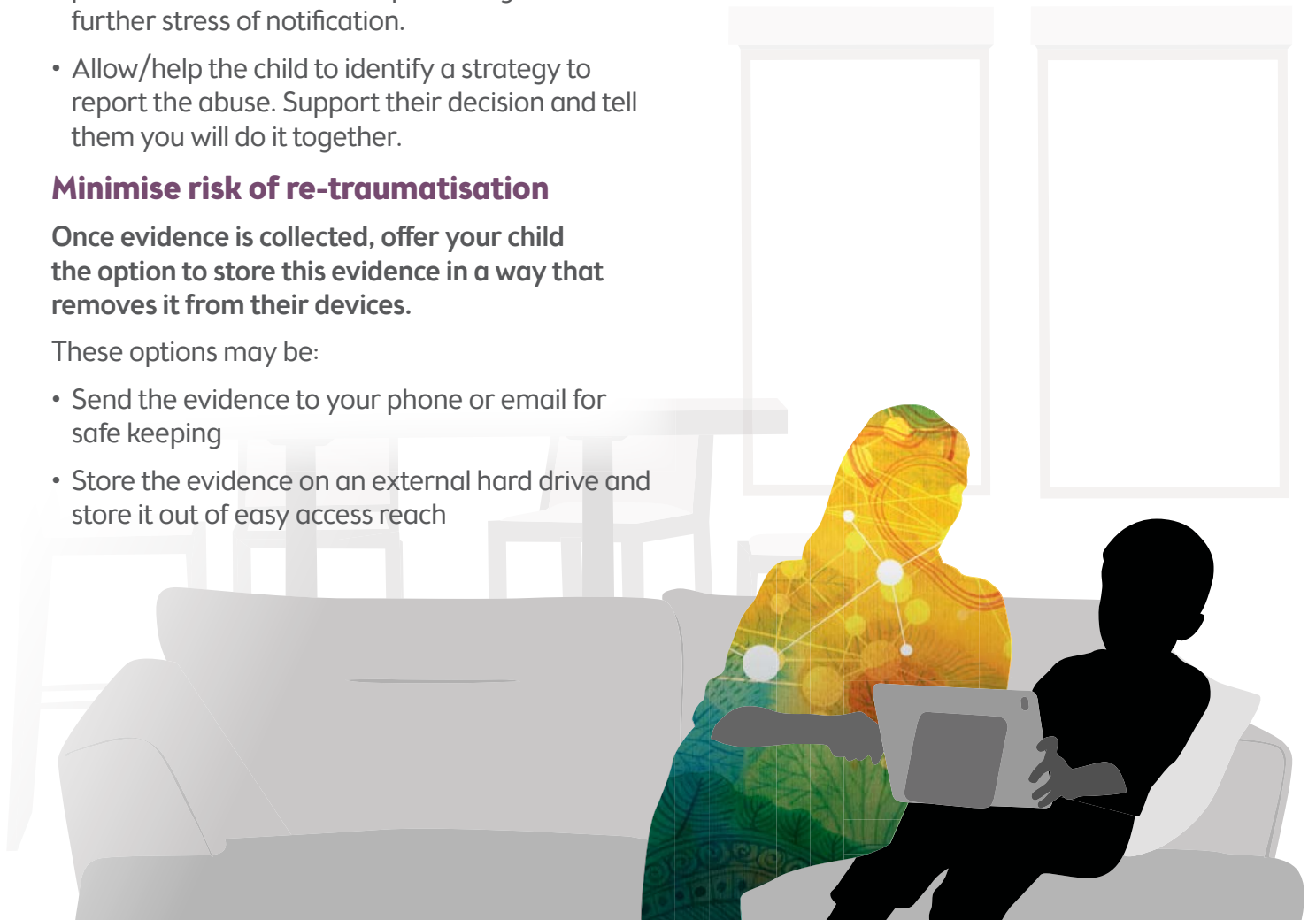
## Minimise risk of re-traumatisation

Once evidence is collected, offer your child the option to store this evidence in a way that removes it from their devices.

These options may be:

- Send the evidence to your phone or email for safe keeping
- Store the evidence on an external hard drive and store it out of easy access reach

**IMPORTANT:** have understanding and patience if the child does not want to part with the images – this may be their way of containing or controlling the harm they have felt. Encourage them to at least remove it from their everyday device – explaining that the desire to look at it is understandable but not helpful to be reminded of the hurt.



If you are interested in learning more about cyberbullying behaviour, warning signs, how to start a conversation, how to increase your security and privacy setting, along with how to report cyberbullying, you can do so in the full Parentline Training. It takes approximately an hour and is designed to be easily accessed from your mobile device or tablet. [Click HERE to begin.](#)

Service funded by



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[parentline.com.au/cyberbullying](https://parentline.com.au/cyberbullying)

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