

# "LOVE BYTES" IN ACTION: STUDENT RESPONSES TO DIGITAL INTIMACY EDUCATION

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25<sup>TH</sup> RETROSPECTIVE WEBINAR  
March 27, 2026

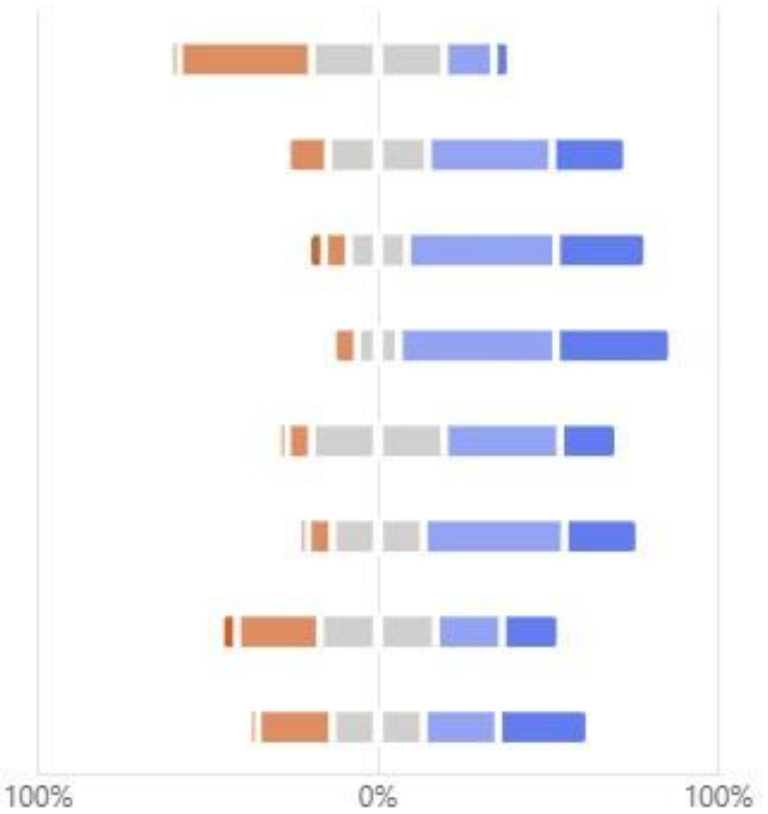
# Trending Concerns

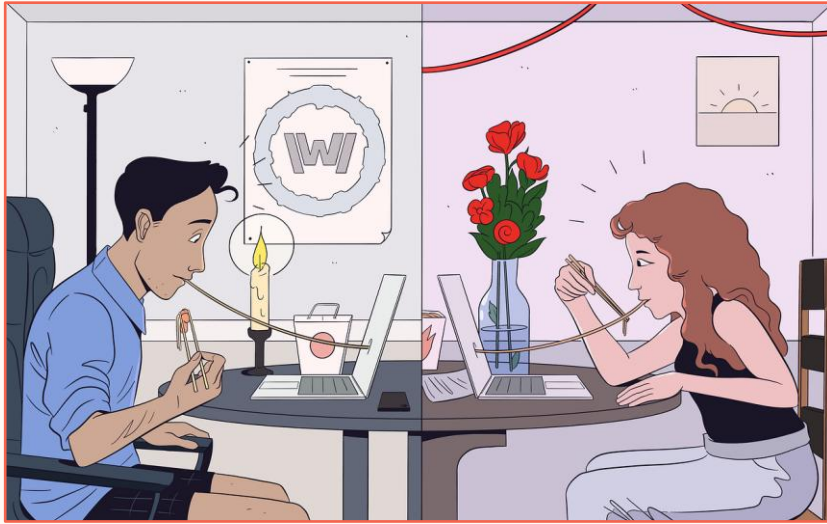
17. How urgent do you believe it is to expand prevention efforts in the following areas?

● Not Urgent ● Slightly Urgent ● Moderately Urgent ● Very Urgent ● Critically Urgent

Digital and online sexual misconduct *WHY?*

- Prevention for graduate and professional students
- Prevention tailored for LGBTQIA+ communities
- Prevention addressing racial and cultural diversity
- Digital and online sexual misconduct
- Dating violence/ domestic violence awareness/ prevention
- Stalking awareness/ prevention
- Community-based approaches beyond campus
- Prevention for faculty and staff





# WHAT IS DIGITAL INTIMACY

- Refers to the emotional closeness and connectedness that individuals feel through digital platforms
- Can be relationships using or completely created on social media, online gaming, discussion forms, text, Facetime, etc
- Though lacking physical presence, can be as meaningful, intense, and authentic as in-person



## THE HI-LO GAME

- 88 ~~5~~0% of American adults have done some type of sexting activity in their life
- 18 ~~3~~0% of sexts are shared with others
- 78 ~~6~~0% of people under 30 who have sexted say they "don't see any bad consequences"

# LET'S TRY MENTI – GRAB YOUR PHONE!



# GRAB YOUR PHONE!



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# LOVE BYTES

SEXTING, SAFE CITIZENSHIP,  
AND DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

A CATHARSIS PRODUCTIONS PRESENTATION

# Why Make “Love Bytes”

- Technology-facilitated sexual violence is rapidly increasing and often misunderstood or minimized
- Digital harm has real-world consequences, including psychological, academic, professional, and safety impacts that extend beyond screens
- Laws, policies, and norms around digital sexual harm are evolving, leaving many institutions and individuals unclear about accountability and boundaries
- TFSV frequently intersects with existing power dynamics (gender, status, access, etc), amplifying harm and complicating reporting
- Institutions are struggling to respond effectively, creating a clear need for focused, expert-led prevention and response programming

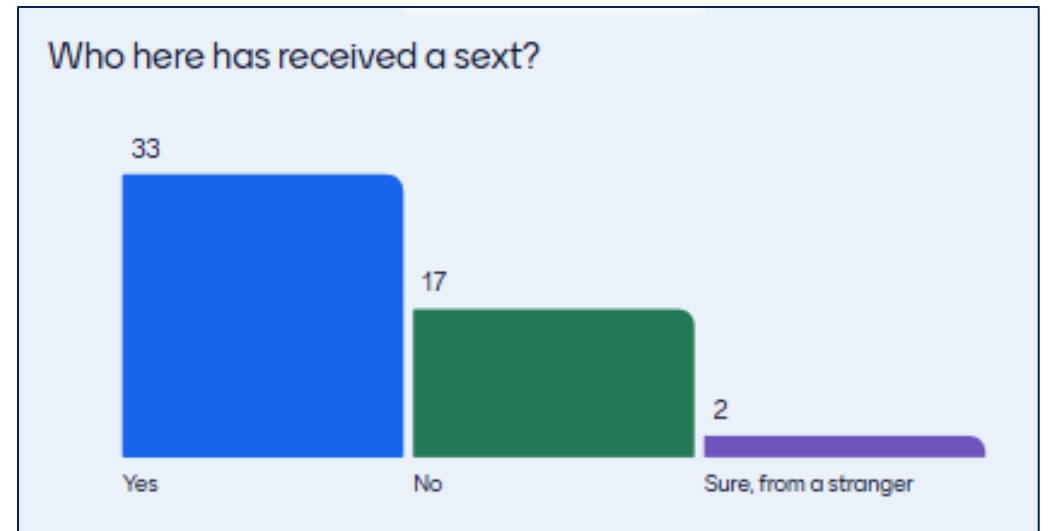
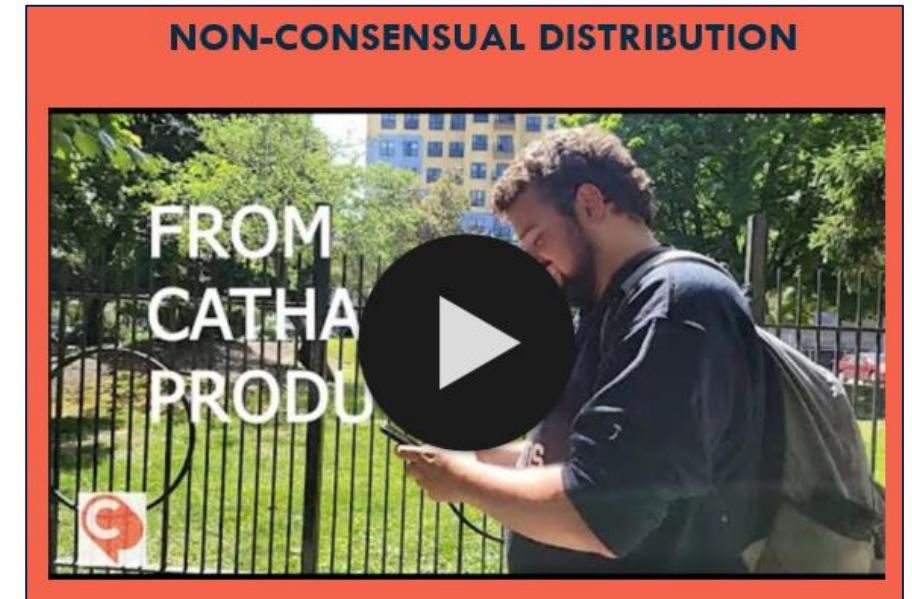


## Core Content: What Students Learn

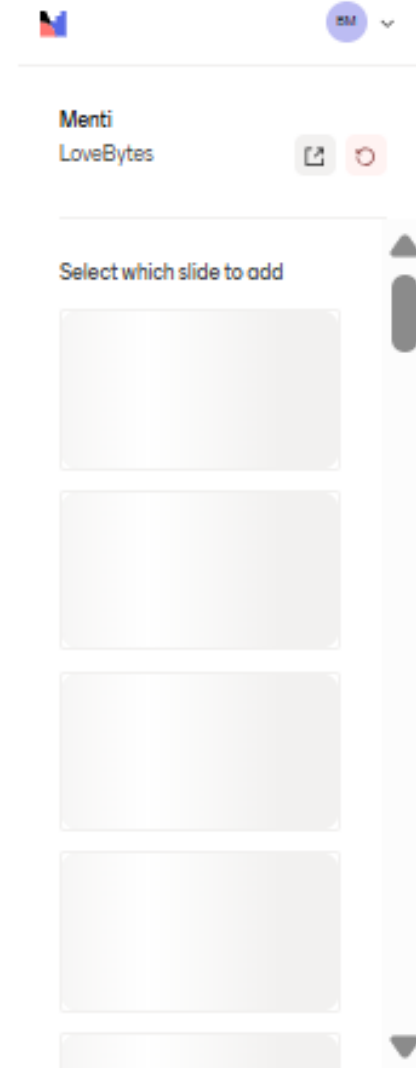
- Role of Digital Communication in Relationships
  - Explore its role in interpersonal relationships in positive and negative ways, and how it differs from in-person communication.
- Definitions and Dangers of TFSV
  - Learn about the various forms of technology-facilitated sexual violence and image-based sexual abuse (IBSA), including non-consensual sharing of intimate images, “revenge porn,” and “deepfakes”
- Risk Reduction Strategies
  - Understand various strategies including best practices for digital communication, privacy settings, and where to find additional prevention and legal resources.
- Ethical Engagement
  - Discover principles and practices to consider when engaging online that allow participants to know they are treating others with respect and equity and not crossing any boundaries.
- Online Bystander Intervention
  - Embrace digital citizenship by appropriately responding to events that may be TFSV and call out victim-blaming attitudes when engaging in online communities.

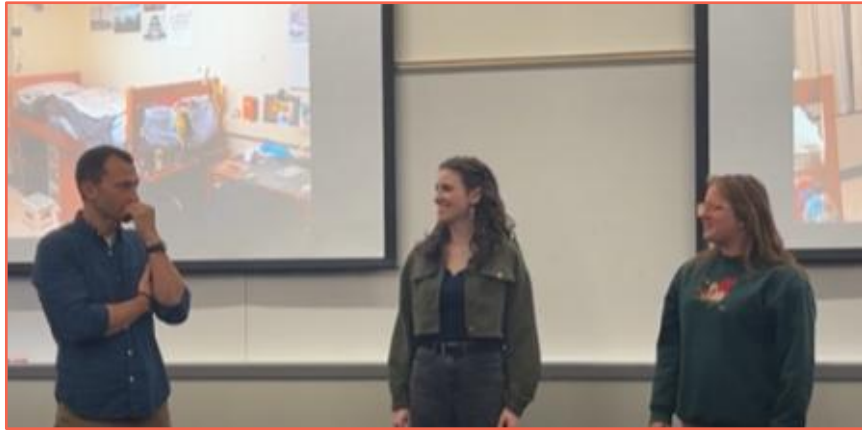
## Application: How They Learn It

- Realistic, facilitated dialogue
  - Normalizes discussion without normalizing harm
  - Students dictate prevalence and norms to disrupt “everyone does it” or “no harm” thinking
- Interactive technology
  - Live polls and exercises via phones
  - Short videos with talkback
- Realistic, campus-relevant scenarios
  - Mirrors how cases surface in real life: screenshots, peers, rumors — not formal complaints
- Critical Analysis
  - Motivation (“What does the person gain?”)
  - Impact (emotional, relational, academic, professional)
  - Points of intervention (before, during, after harm)



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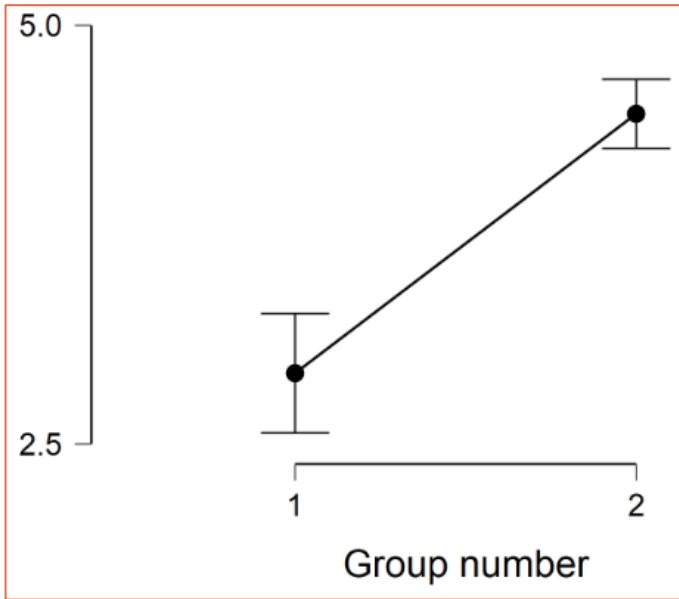


## "Love Bytes" in Action

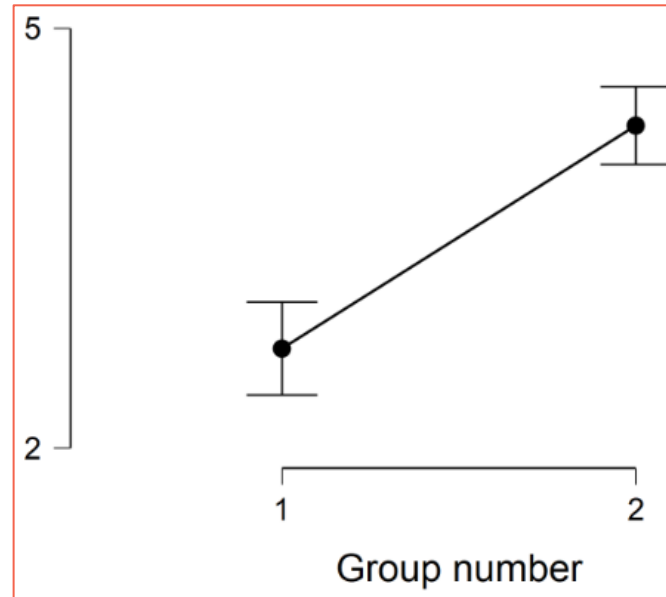
- Pilot presentations conducted at five Chicagoland-area institutions during Fall 2025
- Pre and Post Intervention surveys administered
- Data showed significant positive changes in student awareness of digital safety and privacy, including:
  - increased knowledge of safer digital intimacy practices
  - empowerment to self-advocate and employ digital bystander skills
- Data showed significant reductions in victim blaming attitudes around digital abuse.

# "Love Bytes" in Action

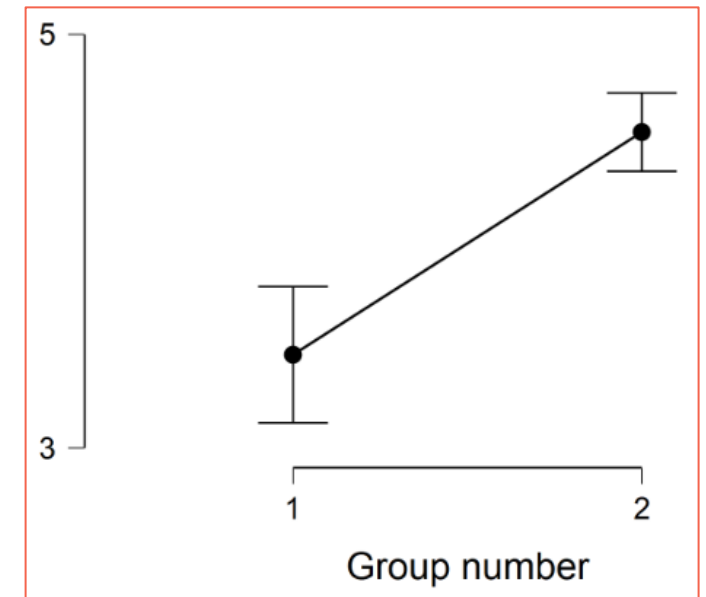
Please indicate the degree to which you agree or not with the following statements  
(1= Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strong Agree)



I know where someone can get help if they experience image-based abuse (Cohen's  $d = -1.545$ ).



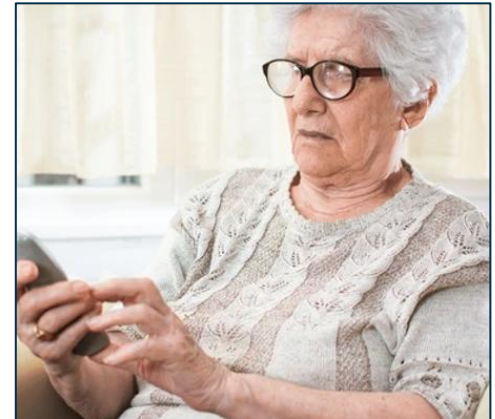
I would know what to do if I became a victim of sextortion (Cohen's  $d = -1.555$ ).



I can confidently explain safer, healthier ways to engage in sexting or digital intimacy (Cohen's  $d = -1.173$ ).

## Key Takeaways

- TFSV does not occur in a vacuum
- Not “Real Life” ≠ Not Harmful
- Responsibility exists across platforms, creators, sharers, and bystanders
- Digital citizenship is an ethical obligation, not just about personal safety
- Responsible social media and technology use includes:
  - Keeping yourself safe
  - Understanding the impact of your actions
  - Being a good digital bystander
  - Knowing potential legal impacts and resources



# Resources

## Image Take Down

*For images taken before age 18:*

### **Missing Kids.org**

<https://www.missingkids.org/isyouexplicitcontentoutthere>

### **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**

<https://takeitdown.ncmec.org/>

*For images taken after age 18:*

### **Without My Consent**

<https://withoutmyconsent.org/resources/something-can-be-done-guide/take-down/>

## Support Services

### **Cyber Civil Rights Initiative**

<https://cybercivilrights.org/>  
1-844-878-CCRI (2274)

### **National Domestic Violence Hotline**

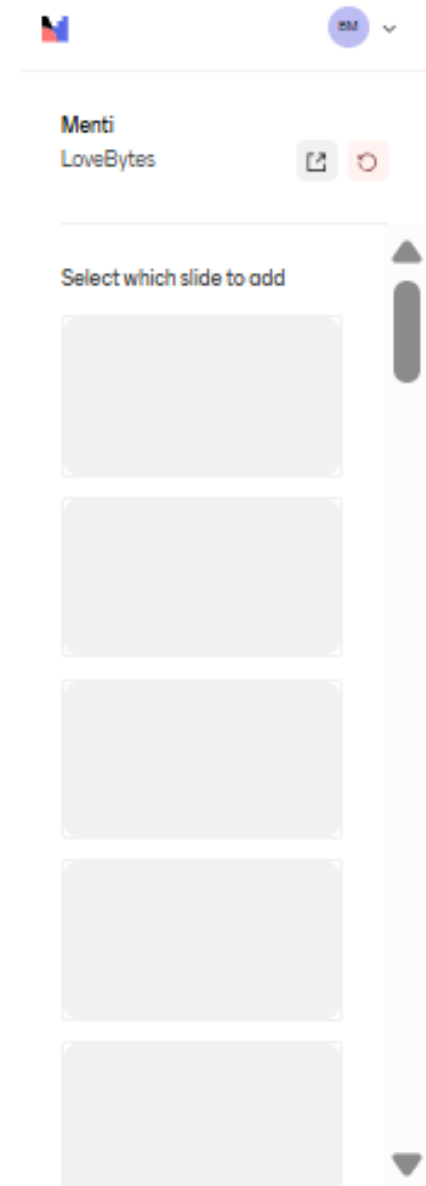
<https://www.thehotline.org/>  
1-800-799-SAFE (7233), or text START to 88788

### **Federal Trade Commission**

<https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/what-do-if-youre-target-revenge-porn>

**For Image Sharing Prevention: <https://stopncii.org/>**

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## Why Does Prevention Programming Matter for Higher Ed Professionals

- Positions students as *witnesses and decision-makers*, not just rule followers
- Prevents cases (and harm!) by addressing behavior before it escalates to violations
- Aligns student understanding with conduct codes and Title IX definitions
- Corrects myths to reduce common barriers and inappropriate referrals
- Builds a shared campus baseline understanding around:
  - Consent in digital spaces
  - Accountability for online harm
  - Peer responsibility across sharers and potential bystanders
  - Normalization of seeking help
- Students leave with concrete resources and tools, not just awareness.

# AS YOU GO HOME.... FROM ZOOM?

- ***Digital Life Is Campus Life*** For today's students; there's no clear line between their online world and their campus experience. TFSV doesn't happen "somewhere on the internet", it happens between people who share classes, residence halls, and dining halls.
  - Does your culture of consent on campus, and the principles that come with it, extend to online spaces and behavior?
- ***Shame Travels Faster Than Support*** When TFSV occurs, students are often more afraid of being seen or judged by their campus community than they are of any formal process. Building a campus climate where students feel safe disclosing requires ongoing, visible cultural work.
  - Does your campus community actually talk about digital harm in a way that centers survivors, challenges victim-blaming, and empowers students to do the right thing?
- ***Prevention Belongs to Everyone, Not Just One Office*** Title IX offices shouldn't be the only place on campus where TFSV is taken seriously. Are coaches, faculty, advisors, and student leaders all equipped to name these harms and model healthy digital norms?
  - Are you working toward a community where participants feel collectively accountable to one another online and off?

# CONCLUSION

~~What are we required to do?~~

What kind of community do we want to be?



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