Online Sexual Offenses against Children in the US

One in six respondents (16%) had one or more episodes of online sexual abuse before age 18.

Subcategories of online child sexual abuse

- Image-based sexual abuse: 11%
- Nonconsensual sexting: 7%
- Self-produced sexual abuse images: 7%
- Online grooming by adult: 5%
- Revenge pornography: 3%
- Sextortion: 3%
- Online commercial exploitation: 2%

30% of perpetrators were under age 18
62% of perpetrators were people known offline
A majority of those (33%) were intimate partners

Summary
Many children are being sexually abused online, often through image misuse. Most offenders are people they know offline, not strangers. A large portion are also other juveniles.

Implications
Online safety education needs to do more than warn children about interacting with strangers or being groomed online by unknown adults. It needs to help youth navigate risky and inappropriate requests, particularly about images, from persons they already know.

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