

A How-To Guide: Staying Safe from Technology-Facilitated Violence

Women of Egypt Network



Technology can connect us, uplift us, and open doors — but it can also be used to control, threaten, and harm. Technology-Facilitated Violence Against Women (TFVAW) is real, growing, and often misunderstood. TFVAW refers to any act of gender-based violence that is carried out using digital technologies. It can take many forms — some are obvious, others more subtle.

This guide is here to help you recognize it, protect yourself, respond if targeted, and support others.

1. How to Recognize the Signs of TFVAW

Technology-facilitated violence against women is a growing form of abuse that extends beyond physical spaces into the digital world. It includes behaviors such as online harassment, cyberstalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, and the use of technology to control or intimidate. Often subtle and difficult to detect at first, this type of violence can have serious emotional, psychological, and even physical consequences. Recognizing the signs early is crucial to preventing harm and ensuring women's safety both online and offline. This guide outlines key indicators to help individuals, communities, and institutions identify and respond to technology-facilitated abuse effectively.



Common Types to Watch For:

Cyberstalking: Repeated, unwanted messages or online surveillance that makes you feel unsafe.

Doxxing: Someone publishing your personal information (address, phone number, school, workplace) online without your consent.

Non-Consensual Image Sharing: Also known as “revenge porn.” Sharing or threatening to share private or sexual images.

Deepfakes: Digitally manipulated videos or photos used to humiliate or blackmail.

Online Harassment: Persistent hate comments, threats, or sexual messages.

Impersonation: Someone creating fake accounts in your name to damage your reputation or manipulate others.

Important: Even if the person is someone you know (ex, friend, classmate), it's still abuse. Abuse is about power, not just strangers.



2. How to Protect Yourself Online: A Digital Safety Checklist for Women

Think of online safety like locking your front door—it's a basic but essential step to protect yourself and your personal space. In today's digital world, women face unique risks that require practical and proactive measures to stay secure. This checklist offers simple, effective tips to help you safeguard your digital presence, from strengthening passwords to managing privacy settings and recognizing red flags.

Here's your personal security checklist:

Digital Safety Basics

Use strong passwords: 10+ characters, mix of letters, numbers, and symbols.

Turn on two-factor authentication (2FA) for all accounts — especially email, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp.

Review privacy settings: Limit who can see your posts, profile, and photos.

Google yourself regularly: See what information is publicly available about you.

Don't overshare: Avoid posting real-time locations, ID numbers, or school/work info.

Be cautious with links: Phishing attacks can trick you into giving up passwords or installing spyware.

Avoid storing sensitive photos on your phone or cloud if possible.



 If you're in a toxic or controlling relationship, assume your phone might be monitored. Use a trusted device if you need to ask for help.

3. How to Respond if You're Targeted by TFVAW

You are not alone. Many Egyptian women and girls have faced technology-facilitated violence, and it's important to remember that the abuse is never your fault. If you find yourself being targeted, there are steps you can take to protect yourself, seek support, and report the incident. This section offers clear guidance on what to do, who to reach out to, and how to begin the process of reclaiming your safety and peace of mind.

Here's what to do:

1. Document Everything

Take screenshots of messages, posts, or emails (with date and username visible).

Save URLs, usernames, and any other digital evidence.

2. Report & Block

Use platform tools to report abuse (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc.).

Block the abuser immediately if it's safe to do so.

3. Seek Legal Support

In Egypt, Law No. 175/2018 on cybercrime can be used to report online harassment and abuse.

Contact:

The National Council for Women (Hotline: 15115)

General Directorate for Combating Cybercrime (Ministry of Interior)

Lawyers or NGOs like CEWLA, El Nadeem, or Nazra for legal guidance.

4. Get Emotional Support

Experiencing technology-facilitated violence can be deeply upsetting and isolating, but you don't have to go through it alone. Getting emotional support is just as important as taking practical steps. Whether it's talking to a trusted friend, joining a support group, or seeking help from a mental health professional, reaching out can help you process your experience and begin to heal.

Talk to someone you trust.

Reach out to a women's support group or counselor.

Mental health support is just as important as legal action.

 **Reminder:** You did not cause this. You have the right to be safe, online and offline.



4. How to Support a Friend Experiencing TFVAW

When a friend opens up about experiencing technology-facilitated violence, your response matters more than you might realize. Listening without judgment, offering support, and knowing what steps to take can make a powerful difference in their safety and recovery. This section will guide you on how to be there for someone facing this kind of abuse—with empathy, discretion, and practical help.

Do:

Believe her. Say: “I’m so sorry this happened. I’m here for you.”

Help her stay safe. Offer to help document, change passwords, or find resources.

Ask what she wants. Don’t assume. Let her lead the next steps.

Check in regularly. Support doesn’t end after the first talk.

Don’t:

Don’t blame her (“Why did you send that photo?” or “Why didn’t you block him?”).

Don’t pressure her to report if she’s not ready.

Don’t gossip about her situation.

 Support = empowerment. Even one friend who listens can change everything.

Conclusion

Technology-facilitated violence is not just “online drama”. It’s real, serious, and affects thousands of Egyptian women and girls every day. But together, we can build safer digital spaces, speak up, and support each other.

Knowledge is your first layer of protection. Solidarity is your second.