

Intimate Images and Cyber-protection Act- What We Heard Report- Executive Summary

Government of Nova Scotia is reviewing the effectiveness of the *Intimate Images and Cyber-protection Act* (“*IICPA*” or “*the Act*”) in achieving its purpose. To do so, stakeholder and public input was needed. As part of this work, Evoke Consulting was hired to design and deliver a public consultation to connect with stakeholders across the province. We designed the consultation using a trauma-informed approach due to the sensitive nature of the cyberbullying and non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The process was inclusive by design, prioritizing participation of diverse stakeholders and those with direct experiences related to the *Act*.

The consultation was launched in January 2022. Feedback was collected through the facilitation of 19 interactive consultation sessions, held virtually, in accordance with public health guidelines. Sessions took place via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or phone, based on the needs of participants. Existing Department of Justice materials were reviewed and researched to learn from staff experiences. An online survey was accessible to the public to voice their perspectives from January 6-28, 2022.

Consultation participants shared perspectives on how well the *Act* is meeting its goals and suggestions for improvement. The majority of consultation participants felt that the *Act* strikes a good balance between protecting their freedoms and protecting citizens from cyberbullying and non-consensual intimate image sharing. The consultation identified needs of those interacting directly with the *Act*, including accessible pathways, awareness, and opportunities to improve support for victims.

The following insights emerged from perspectives shared throughout the consultation.

1. Changes associated with who and how people interact online are impacting instances of non-consensual intimate image sharing and cyberbullying
2. There are multiple barriers related to accessing, understanding, and using the *Act*
3. Acceptable and unacceptable behaviour can be better defined with consideration for desired outcomes of those impacted
4. Navigating complex government systems can result in increased risk to victims
5. The requirements placed on victims significantly impact their decision to proceed, persist, and seek support

This consultation deepened the understanding of the public and stakeholders’ lived experiences related to the *IICPA*, uncovered stakeholder observations and challenges, and identified opportunities to improve the delivery of the *Act*. These consultation insights and opportunities for improvement were shared with the Department of Justice to inform the review of the *IICPA*.