

## Abstract

# Measures to Improve Support for Child and Youth Victims of Online Sexual Exploitation

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Recently, as atrocious aspects of sexual exploitation crimes involving children and youth as victims have been revealed, the public's demand to eradicate such crimes has been rising. Child and youth victims of online sexual exploitation are controlled either by people close to them or by strangers, and they are enduring victimization. Because the victims are immature, it takes a long time for them to realize by themselves that they are being victimized and to ask for help, or for people around them to finally discover that this is happening. Since victimization through the online distribution of sexually exploitative materials causes

severe damage to the victim in comparison to the length of time it takes to inflict the damage, it is very important to prevent the spread and circulation of such videos and to quickly report the victimization of children and youth in order to support them and to arrest the perpetrators.

In this study, we explored ways to support child and youth victims of online sexual exploitation. For this purpose, we conducted in-depth interviews with practitioners from various agencies, collected related press releases, and analyzed regulations and literature. Since there were not much data related to the current situation of child and youth victims of online sexual exploitation, we utilized data from media press releases, and we conducted in-depth interviews with practitioners from various agencies supporting children and youth.

The following were the paths that people used to request help from agencies that support victims of online sexual exploitation:

- ① The victim or the victim's parent/guardian did an internet search and requested counseling.
- ② The parent/guardian realized that their child had been victimized and then requested help.
- ③ The victim received help from their friends and then directly contacted the center themselves, or the victim's friends contacted the center.
- ④ The contact point was the Wee Center inside the school, the teacher in charge of school violence, or the counselor in charge of handling or reporting student victimization, etc.
- ⑤ During the course of an investigation, a police officer made an introduction and the victim visited a counseling agency, and then the police directly tasked the center with video deletion and monitoring.
- ⑥ The victim's parents called a sexual violence counseling center or an agency that supports children and youth, and they were then introduced to a relevant agency and connected.

At the agency for supporting victims, services such as initial counseling support for the victim, support for deletion of videos, investigation and legal support, support for the psychological healing of the victim, and counseling for the families of victims were provided.

In the support of child and youth victims of online sexual exploitation, the following points should be improved. First, provide preventive education that provides specific and practical information about the risk of becoming victimized by online sexual exploitation, as well as effective preventive education tailored to the level of children and youth. Second, actively promote knowledge to the general public informing them that even viewing, possessing, or transferring sexually exploitative videos is a crime. Third, if someone is victimized by online sexual exploitation, actively promote relevant information to teachers, students, and parents/guardians so they can ask for help from a victim support agency. Fourth, strengthen the capabilities of agencies that support child and youth victims, improve the awareness of practitioners in investigation and educational institutions, and support exchanges among relevant agencies. Fifth, measures are necessary to designate a legal representative for the parent/guardian with regard to settling the sexual exploitation problem.

Measures to improve support for child and youth victims of online sexual exploitation are as follows.

First, for an effective response, the resources that each agency holds must be able to be utilized in a timely manner. For this, it is necessary to construct a comprehensive system that enables information-sharing and cooperation among agencies. Second, examine the support system that the victim has in their family and

with people around them, and continuously provide information related to deletion during the course of support. During the course of investigation, due to the perpetrator not being arrested or the occurrence of additional victimization, crisis support and counseling tailored to the victim's situation should be provided. Third, support measures should be prepared to raise the ability of victims to respond internally so they can return to their daily lives, and finally, healing counseling should be conducted to ease the pain caused by complex emotions, and to restore the self-esteem of child and youth victims of online sexual exploitation.

The direction proposed for counseling and prevention education programs regarding child and youth victims of sexual exploitation is as follows.

First, digital sexual violence is gender violence that arises from the commercial structure that is made by selling violent videos, and in order to eradicate this, online and offline campaigns to create a gender-equal sex culture online should be activated, as well as online youth supporter training and an online reporting system. Second, in order to connect sex education to other subjects in schools, every school subject is made with a particular educational theme. They should also do this with digital sexual violence prevention education by connecting it to adjoining subjects. Third, because there may be differences in the effectiveness of education depending on teachers' awareness about online sexual exploitation, it is necessary to boost teachers' awareness. Finally, the development direction of online sexual violence prevention education programs should focus on creating a safe and gender-equal digital sex culture, and having children and youth participate to put it into practice. To create a safe and gender-equal digital culture, children and youth have to be taught

"Do not become a perpetrator," "Prevent victimization," "Enhance crisis response ability in certain situations," and "Keep a gender-equal culture."

Research areas: gender-based violence•safety

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