

False Promises and Glamorization of the Commercial Sex Industry

Cover Page: National Center on Sexual Exploitation's Policy on Sharing Proof

WARNING: *The material in this document may contain graphic text, blurred images, and survivor quotes that may trigger the viewer.*

Why do we post proof in the first place?

NCOSE researchers have collected this proof as evidence of the material that is made, contained, and/or distributed by the corporations and institutions NCOSE is confronting.

Proof is shared with corporate executives, shareholders, and/or board members, as well as with policymakers, law enforcement, journalists, and the general public to **give witness to the sexual exploitation and abuse that is often rampant, yet sometimes hidden, on these platforms.**

Why do you blur out images, including faces, if they're publicly available?

While we believe it is important to provide ample evidence of wrong-doing to support our claims and inspire change, **we also strongly believe that no one – neither adult, nor child – should be exposed to the type of material our researchers collect:** either for their own well-being, or out of respect for those being exploited. It is for this reason we pixelate/blur/block not only nudity or sexually graphic content, but also the faces of those being exploited.

We also want to limit access to this material (unfortunately, a luxury not afforded to children and adults using many of the platforms and products made by these companies). Therefore, we add several layers before someone can access the proof, and also don't include all the proof that we have obtained. If someone feels they need to see more evidence to understand the extent of the problem or the type of exploitation that is happening, they may request it of NCOSE by writing to public@ncose.com.

Did you receive people's permission to post?

Any personal testimony shared to NCOSE directly is posted only with the affected parties approval.

For material that is publicly available, we do not seek permission to post. However, we redact names and usernames of survivors from articles, social media, etc. even when publicly available. To read more about our commitment to ethical engagement with survivors, please go [here](#). We do not redact names or usernames of exploiters who have posted publicly.

Disclaimer: while we do collect information on those who request access to more proof, that information will only be used for our own, internal analysis. It will not be distributed, shared, or posted publicly or with outside parties.

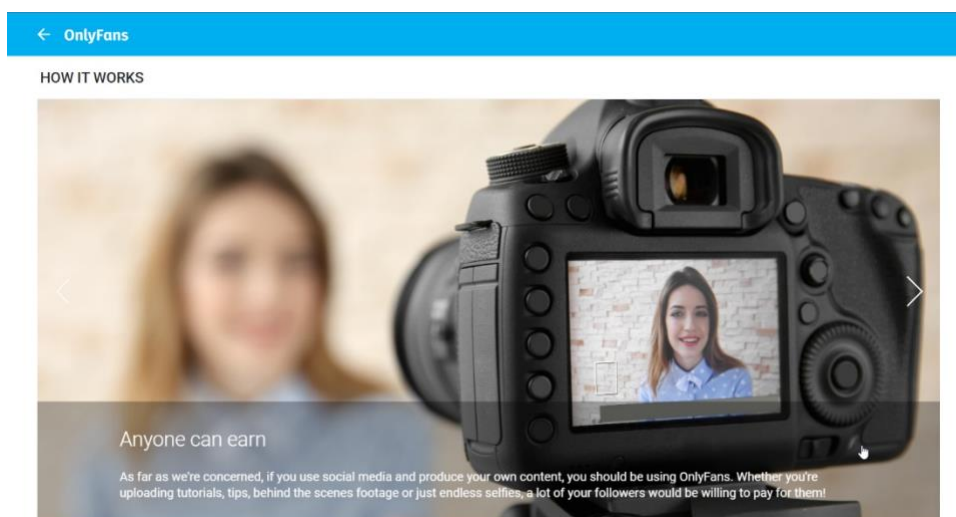
OnlyFans glamorizes the commercial sex industry and offers false promises of fast cash and fame. This has resulted in many people engaging in the commercial sex industry who otherwise may not have and who are doing so without understanding all the risks involved.

OnlyFans promises easy money to new and amateur creators with their slogan: [“Anyone can earn.”](#) They declare on their [website](#) that earnings could be between \$1,499 and \$7,495 per month. In reality, [the average content creator makes only \\$151 per month.](#)

You could earn between \$1,499 and \$7,495 per month*

*Based on estimate of between 1% and 5% of your followers subscribing. Earnings figure does not include income from tips and Paid messages.

OnlyFans normalizes the commercial sex industry by intentionally blurring the lines between mainstream social media and commercial sex. For example, on their website they say: “If you use social media and produce your own content, you should be using OnlyFans.”



Furthermore, OnlyFans’ referral system sets up a type of “pyramid scheme” or multi-level-marketing scheme where creators are incentivized to recruit other creators, since they then profit up to 5% of the new creator’s earnings. This means that some OnlyFans creators have a vested interest in making the life seem more glamorous than it is and to flood social media with these messages.

Compiled by the National Center on Sexual Exploitation: www.endsexualexploitation.org.

The screenshot shows the OnlyFans Help Center page for the Referral program. The breadcrumb trail is: Help Center > Referrals > Referral program. The page content includes:

- General Questions** (dropdown)
- Fan Questions** (dropdown)
- Creator Questions** (dropdown)
 - Can I become a Creator from my country?
 - Earnings and Payouts
 - The Referral Payout will be 5% of the Referred Creator's Earnings:
 - For the first 12 Months of their Account.
 - Limited to the first \$1 Million Dollars earned by each Referred Creator. This allows Referrers to earn up to \$50,000.00 per Referred Creator.
 - There are no limitations on the number of Referred Creators or your total Referral Earnings.
 - Tips
 - If someone signed up but did not use your referral code, we are unable to link that account to your referral. It is automated and cannot be changed.
 - Account
 - For additional details, please read the "Referral Program Terms" in the Terms of Service.
- Account and Page Settings
- Tagging
- Promoting Your OnlyFans Account

- Related articles**
- [Referral income](#)
- [Referral link](#)

[“A college OnlyFans creator says sex work isn’t the best creative outlet”](#), February 2022, Her Campus

This article details how a 19 year old named Gabrielle Castro tried OnlyFans because of the glamorization on social media and in pop culture, but didn’t know what she was getting into and experienced unexpected negative consequences.

- Castro explains how the only narrative available is white-washed, glamorized “hype” about OnlyFans, but no real information about what she would be getting herself into:
 - “Castro scoured Twitter and YouTube for tutorials, hidden threads, and any evidence that would provide insight on the secret life of an OnlyFans performer. She found information about how to start an account and encountered dozens of influencers who claimed to be making bank off of their content. However, much to Castro’s dismay, details about the actual OnlyFans experience were few and far between — and she soon realized that the internet was making sex work sound much easier than it actually was.
 - “I was seeing all the hype around making money off of OnlyFans, but I really didn’t know what to expect,” she says. “There’s no way to really prepare for the interaction aspect of it. You have no idea what you’re going to be in for.”
- Castro also explains how, consistent with the mainstream narrative, she expected OnlyFans would be empowering for her and help her express herself sexually, but that was not her experience at all.
 - “[A]ll Castro wanted to do was use OnlyFans to share her passion for feminine sensual expression. She thought people would connect with the way she viewed her individual photos: divine, strong, and confident. However, because it was so easy to access any nudes at any time, people saw her through a pornographic lens. Her artistic approach was quickly disregarded by her viewers, and after a while, Castro herself.”
 - “She would receive requests from subscribers wanting her to wear erotic outfits or reenact pornographic films . . . ‘People would ask me to wear a specific outfit, or wear

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my hair a specific way, and I would comply, but I didn't want to do anything like that. There was no creative outlet for me. Just because I take pictures that people find sexual and feel 'turned on' by that doesn't mean I have to play the part of their fantasy, which I felt like I had to do on OnlyFans,' says Castro."

- Castro speaks to how OnlyFans was harming not only her romantic relationship, but was also getting in the way of subscribers pursuing authentic romantic connections.
 - "At the time, Castro was also in a committed relationship. And although Castro shares that her partner has always been supportive of her OnlyFans journey — and that he would even help take her photos for the account — she recalls how her new side hustle began subtly impacting her relationship dynamic. 'I felt like I was being unfaithful,' she says. 'I had to entice these other guys and talk to them a certain way. It made our relationship a little weird. It made us drift apart a little bit.'"
 - "OnlyFans also impacted her interest in intimacy. 'Because of the amount of sexual energy I was putting into the photos and all these different guys, I felt like I didn't really want to actually partake in sex with my boyfriend,' she says. 'I was so drained from the sexual interaction I was constantly forced to have.'"
- Castro speaks to the uncomfortable blur that started happening between her "work" and personal life:
 - "This one guy at college approached me and said, 'Do you want to f*ck? Can you come over and f*ck me?'" she says....Ever since joining OnlyFans, she felt overwhelmingly sexualized by everyone she came in contact with. She was paranoid into thinking about who was *truly* subscribing to her account. The fact that she didn't have control over who viewed her content scared her into overanalyzing the actions and words of her classmates, professors, or even people at family gatherings. "I put myself at risk and made myself really vulnerable when I never even had to in the first place."
 - The reality became clear when Castro had an unsettling interaction with someone at a family gathering, and realized that the boundaries between life and work were becoming more blurred every day. "I had this feeling in my chest, like, 'Oh my God, what if he could be one of the people that subscribes to me?' And I'm knowingly talking to this person and I have no idea. Subscribers could be my age or 50, so it was just creepy."
- Castro speaks about the exaggerated promises of easy money
 - "At first glance, OnlyFans might seem like a relatively easy way to make money... seeing celebrities like [Bella Thorne make \\$1 million in 24 hours](#) — while scamming 1.5 million lesser-known OnlyFans creators in the process — can be misleading. However, Castro quickly learned that generating an income on the platform isn't easy — and if you're not an influencer with millions of followers, it can take extensive effort to pay off."
 - "I made \$3,000 in six months."
 - "[H]er discomfort grew when she noticed that many of her subscribers were craving a genuine romantic connection with someone, AKA [the Girlfriend Experience](#)... 'Some guys were like, 'Can we just pretend to be something?' It made me feel so sad. I really wanted them to go out and find a real, genuine connection.'"
- Castro speaks to the overall negative effect on her mental health:

- “[T]he emotional toll it took on Castro’s mental health was more important than any \$250 lingerie photo.”
- “After 10 months of creating content, that was the end of Castro’s OnlyFans journey. She... worked to heal after such a draining situation.”