

Grooming and Predatory Behavior on Kik

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 proofs, that information will only be used for our own, internal analysis. It will not be distributed, shared, or posted publicly or with outside parties.

Grooming and Predatory Behavior on Kik

Kik has a severe, years-long problem with predatory adults using the platform to contact, groom, and abuse the many minors who use Kik. These bad actors know Kik lacks the moderation or safety tools to catch them, and the lack of identity and age verification allow these predators to remain completely anonymous. This has resulted in pain, exploitation, and lasting trauma for the many victims who were abused through Kik.

Important information concerning online predators:

- It only takes [8 minutes](#) for a predator to form a bond with a child.
- Last year, there was a [97.5%](#) increase in online [enticement reports](#), according to NCMEC. MediaLab AI, which owns Kik, reported 14,515 instances in 2020 alone.

Here are just a few examples of Kik being used to facilitate child abuse and grooming in the news:

- A 13-year old girl was [lured out of her home and ultimately murdered](#) by an older user she met and talked to through Kik.
- A former Congressman was found to be [sending sexually explicit images to a 15 year old](#) girl through Kik.
- A [man pled guilty](#) to distributing sexually explicit images of himself and a two-year old child occasionally in his care to approximately 25 other Kik users, some of whom he talked with about what to do to the infant.
- Admitting to [coercing as many as three teenage girls](#) into sending him sexually explicit images of themselves over Kik, a 33 year old man was sentenced to 17 years in prison.
- While on probation for another child abuse crime, a man used Kik to communicate with others about sexually abusing children, including [distributing child sexual abuse material](#).
- Another man was [sentenced to eight years in federal prison](#) for using Kik to distribute CSAM.
- In 2018, [UK law enforcement told BBC News](#) that Kik was featured in more than 1,100 child sexual abuse cases in the last five years and was the app that concerned them the most.
- A [former elementary school principal was arrested in 2020](#) after using a private Kik group called “Loving Kids” to try and meet up with a mother and her 4-year old daughter for a sexual encounter.
- In a [particularly egregious 2022 case](#), an undercover FBI employee began interacting with a child predator on the social media application Kik. In the chats, he made statements that he had sexually abused children, and that he had trafficked a child to engage in commercial sex acts. He also said that he had recently traveled out of state to have sex with another 12-year-old girl.
- A man was arrested in February 2022 for [uploading CSAM through Kik](#).
- In January 2022, another man was [sentenced to 35 years in prison](#) for several severe child sexual abuse crimes facilitated through Kik.
- [Over 4,000 images and videos](#) depicting sexual victimization of pre-pubescent girls, including toddlers, engaged in sexual acts with adults were found after a man distributed them through Kik.

- A man [actively solicited and distributed child exploitation material](#) through participation in several group chats on Kik, some of which he was a group administrator.
- [A Kik group](#) called “Abduction and R@pe 3” hosted users who described various fantasies, requested the sexual assault of others (with either a knowing or unknowing victim), and traded rape/sexual assault videos.

On social media sites like Reddit and TikTok, young users share stories of how they were groomed on Kik and didn’t realize the damage it was doing until it was too late.

Below are a few posts that highlight how common grooming is throughout Kik.



This young, vulnerable user had her insecurities preyed upon by adult men who used her from the ages of 12-16:

I started to get depressed, my first signs of anxiety showed up and I cried often. I felt alone and lost, without meaning as a child. Which honestly looking back now was silly, but my brain has always seemed to work differently than others, so it was hard to deal with when I didn't know how.

So I made my dreaded mistake. Something I hate that I did and sent me on a spiral that nobody around me even knew I was on. I used kik to talk to my friends back then, and suddenly they came out with a place you could post on and people could add you to make friends. I thought that was a great idea! My friends at school sucked, so why not check out some online friends? What I didn't know, was how awful the people who filled those posts were. They were looking to groom me and convince me to send photos of myself. At first I was confused, but when the compliments kept coming... I was hooked. At 12! It wasn't even about the sexual aspect. I became desperate for attention, affection, comfort and reassurance... There were some men I would talk to for weeks at a time. I came up with different ways to hide the conversations, the notifications... I would stay up until 3am talking to them and nobody was the wiser.

Over the next four years, whenever I was sad I would go back... The longer I did it, the more scared I became of somebody recognizing me in public or somebody I know finding my photos somewhere online. I really thought I would go to jail and I was the more horrible person on planet earth. I would post a message under a fake name, a fake photo and sometimes even a fake age, just so nobody could ever find out. It was like a drug... becoming addictive at times... and I did it to myself. I went to these men over and over, year after year and traumatized myself.

This user was sent unsolicited nudes from an adult man after she told him she was only 15:

↑ Posted by  2 years ago 

105 ↓ So on Kik, I got a message from this guy. I was in a group for 14-20 year old. I ended up talking to him but through out the small conversation, maybe 45 minutes later, he sends me a "photo". So I get upset and i spam him with things that usually keep creeps away but he kept asking for "pictures".

Kik remains one of the most well-known apps for adult predators to target young children, so much so that teenagers from around the world can share these stories and even make jokes about the danger they faced on Kik. Clearly, teenagers and young people are still processing these predatory interactions years after they occurred, while Kik made little to no improvements over the years to better protect them.