

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE & INTERSECTING VULNERABILITIES

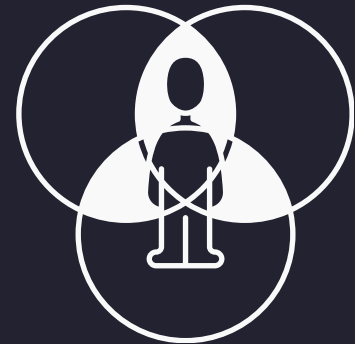
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CSAE

Some children are more vulnerable to Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) due to specific risk factors:

- gender
- sexual orientation
- age
- presence of a disability
- socio-economic background
- mental health issues, dysfunctional dynamics (family, social etc.)

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that helps us think about overlapping or intersecting factors that can be empowering or oppressive. Over the past three decades, the concept of intersectionality has broadened from considering the compounded oppression of gender and race to a limitless set of factors, including socioeconomic class, age, sexual orientation and disability.

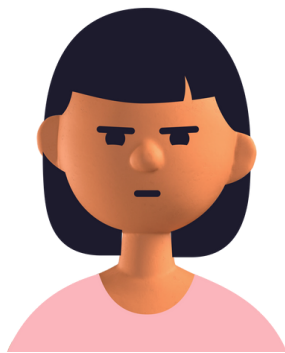


CSAE

CSAE is a form of **gender-based violence** (GBV), which always involves **power imbalances**.

CSAE is GBV because gender affects the **risk factors** to become a victim, it shapes **the manifestation** of CSAE and the **needs** of the victim change depending on the gender.

GENDER INEQUALITY FUELS CSAE, WHICH IN TURN REINFORCES GENDER INEQUALITY.



“BOYS SHOULD NOT HAVE FACEBOOK ACCESS. I USED TO HAVE AN ACCOUNT WHEN I WAS YOUNGER AND I GOT TAGGED IN PORNOGRAPHY PAGES, AND THAT IS NOT OK.”

Girl from Bolivia, 15 years old.

SOGIESC

SOGIESC stands for **Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, gender Expression & Sex Characteristics**. These factors influence the incidence of child sexual abuse and exploitation as well as its manifestation, depending on the category, as can be seen in data aggregated by gender and sexual orientation:

DID YOU KNOW?



1 in 5

One in 5 girls and one in 13 boys have been **sexually exploited or abused** before reaching the age of 18 ([UNICEF 2020](#))



1 in 13



4 times

LGBTQI+ children are on average **4 times more likely** to be sexually abused than heterosexual ones (Lodha 2019)



1 in 20

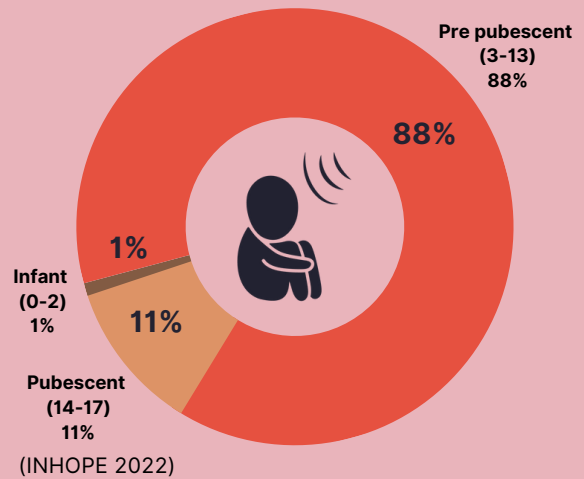
1 in 20 men reported online sexualised behaviour towards children who were known to be below the age of 12. ([UNICEF 2020](#))

AGE

Risk changes across age categories

- **Younger children** are more at risk of online abuse from known family members, peers, and friends than from strangers. A young child will have difficulty saying no to a person they know
- **Adolescents** are more at risk as they are more likely to be targeted for grooming. They are risk-takers, lacking impulse control abilities, in search of autonomy, validation and acceptance, thus oversharing content that could be further shared without consent.
- Children are more vulnerable to all forms of CSAE at the **onset of puberty** (11-13 years for girls and 14-15 years for boys)

Age of child victims of CSAM



DISABILITY

Disability increases the risks of experiencing abuse, including in-person sexual exploitation, often perpetrated by known adults. Several factors can contribute to the vulnerability of children with disabilities:

- **Loneliness and isolation** experienced by children with disabilities may lead to spending extensive time online and may influence to accept sexual requests to seek attention and social approval.
- A lack of access to **(sex) education** and/or (perceived) intellectual impairments, make children with disabilities more susceptible to grooming.
- **Social stigmas** associated with disabilities and sexual needs can also hamper safe exploration of sexuality for adolescents with disabilities.



SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

FAMILY STRUCTURE

- Poverty and exposure to child labour
- Dysfunctional family dynamics
- Foster care and runaway children
- Homelessness
- Growing up in a single-parent household

ETHNICITY & RACE

Ethnic & racial minorities are more likely to experience CSAE.

MIGRATION

Being undocumented and/or on the move induces risk of sexual exploitation.



PSYCHOLOGICAL & BEHAVIOURAL FACTORS

MENTAL HEALTH FACTORS

- post-traumatic stress disorder and historical exposure to CSAE
- suicidality and self-harm

RISK TAKING BEHAVIOURS are led by:

- Seeking **autonomy**, struggles with **social interaction** and lack of **impulse control**
- **Social dysregulation**
- Low **self-esteem** associated with changing **body image**, coupled with craving approval from others



VULNERABILITIES AND RISK FACTORS are not to be used to victim-blame, rather to understand that some characteristics are used by **offenders to take advantage of**. Vulnerabilities are not weaknesses nor are to be used to excuse a crime.

Victim-blaming occurs when the victim of a crime or any wrongful act is held entirely or partially at responsible for the harm that was caused to them.