

Identifying TFGBV

Accessibility, Assistive Tech, & Inclusion Toolkit

This info sheet provides more information about Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) and supporting survivors with disabilities experiencing TFGBV.

TFGBV and Using Tech in Support Services

Technology can be used as a tool for service delivery and to support survivors. For example:

- A shelter uses a crisis line or chat messaging service to provide outreach and emergency support
- A survivor uses a screen reader to learn about tech safety resources online
- A Transition House uses a smartphone to access video relay service to communicate with a survivor in American Sign Language (ASL).

Technology might also be a tool that an abuser is using to harm the survivor. Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence is when someone misuses technology to harm or control a survivor. It could mean behaviours like:

- Sharing someone's intimate image when they didn't consent to it being shared
- Controlling someone's access to their accounts that they use to communicate with others.
- A survivor's phone is factory-reset, deleting their accessibility set up (apps, settings, etc).

Women with disabilities might experience TFGBV at higher rates or in specific ways compared to women without disabilities.

A [2023 Women's Shelters Canada survey](#) found that **1 in 3** Canadian frontline workers reported that in their experience, survivors with disabilities experienced more extreme TFGBV, which was closely related to isolation and reliance on assistive tech.

Identifying TFGBV: Supporting Survivors with Disabilities

Tech might be **misused to harm survivors**, for example through harassment or stalking. An abuser might:

- Send harassing messages to a survivor's phone
- Monitor their Cloud account & track their location
- Use a GPS device to track a survivor's vehicle

Tech abuse might also look like **taking away or limiting a survivor's technology**. An abuser might:

- Break a survivor's assistive technology
- Alter the device so certain features can't be used
- Misuse or manipulate a survivor's assistive technology
- Withhold internet or account access to prevent a survivor from connecting with others/support services

Phones can be assistive tech devices. They offer a number of tools that can support survivors with disabilities, which might include:

- Text-to-voice
- Voice-to-text
- Connection to video-relay services

The ways an abuser might misuse technology against a survivor may be “low tech”, like:

- Moving a mobility device (e.g., assisting someone to bed and then moving the wheelchair away)
- Taking someone's prosthetic away

They may also be “higher tech” forms of TFGBV. For example, a survivor’s tablet that they use for communication might be altered or set up to not include words needed to report abuse (e.g., violence, abuse, touching).

If someone is controlling or limiting a survivor’s use of tech, it is a serious concern- it can impact their access to emergency services, support services, or important social connection to friends, family, and community.

Survivors’ relationship to tech is personal. It is shaped by many factors, like:

- How poverty impacts access and options
- Personal preference
- Comfort with technology

What tech and adjustments one person uses will look different than those another person uses.

More Resources about Identifying TFGBV

[Is Tech Abuse Happening to You?](#) | Tech Safety Canada

[Assessing for Technology Abuse: Tips for Anti-Violence Workers](#) | Tech Safety Canada

For our full toolkit, visit BCSTH’s [Accessibility, Assistive Tech, & Inclusion page](#).

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