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Victim-survivors' proposed solutions to addressing image-based sexual abuse in the U.S.: Legal, corporate, educational, technological, and cultural approaches

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Abstract

Sexual violence is a world-wide health problem that has begun to escalate in online and virtual spaces. One form of technology-facilitated sexual violence that has grown in recent years is image-based sexual abuse (IBSA), or the nonconsensual creation, distribution, and/or threat of distribution of nude or sexual images. Using a trauma-informed and victim-centered framework, we asked victim-survivors for structural solutions to IBSA based on their own experiences. Using thematic analysis on 36 semi-structured interviews with adult U.S. victim-survivors of IBSA, we found that victim-survivors proposed structural solutions to IBSA along five general dimensions: legal (creating/strengthening laws, enforcing laws, facilitating legal navigation), corporate (corporate responsibility/activism and solutions for employers), educational (IBSA education, outreach and advocacy, and developing communities of support), technological (more platform accountability, improved procedures for uploading images, better avenues for reporting and removing images, and enhanced platform policies), and cultural. Many solutions built on existing structures (e.g., sexual education in

schools) and frameworks (e.g., creating support groups like those for people in recovery from alcohol abuse), enabling educational professionals, policy makers, victim-support service providers, and corporations to readily implement them.

INTRODUCTION

In the last 20 years, perpetrators of sexual violence have begun to use online and technology-facilitated methods to abuse victims.[1] Technology-facilitated sexual violence runs the gamut from online sexual and gender-based harassment, to cyberstalking, to sextortion (Henry & Powell, 2018). One growing form of technology-facilitated sexual abuse is image-based sexual abuse (IBSA). IBSA is part of a spectrum that involves the nonconsensual creation and/or distribution of nude or sexual images and threats to distribute such images (Citron & Franks, 2014; McGlynn et al., 2017). This could involve disseminating images from an intimate relationship outside the context of that relationship without consent (Eaton & McGlynn, 2020), nonconsensually taking pictures under someone's skirt or dress ("upskirting"; McGlynn, 2018), image-based sextortion (when a perpetrator threatens to distribute sexually-explicit images unless a victim complies with their demands; Eaton et al., 2022; O'Malley & Holt, 2022), cyberflashing (McGlynn & Johnson, 2020), and the creation and distribution of sexualized "deep fakes" (altering images to portray someone in a nude or sexual way; Lucas, 2022). IBSA victimization appears to have escalated during the pandemic (FBI, 2020, 2021; The Cyber Helpline, 2022), and has been labeled an epidemic by human rights and health organizations (Glitch UK and End Violence Against Women Coalition, 2020; Web Foundation, 2020).

IBSA has been estimated to affect 1 in 8 US social media users, with women typically being more likely to be victimized than men (Ruvalcaba & Eaton, 2020), and racial/ethnic minority women being at especially high risk for victimization (Eaton et al., 2022). However, some research finds that for certain subtypes of IBSA, men are at greater risk than women. For example, men were about twice as likely as women to have experienced sextortion during the pandemic (Eaton et al., 2022). For both women and men victims, IBSA can have severe and long-lasting consequences, from anxiety and depression (O'Malley, 2023; Ruvalcaba & Eaton, 2020), to PTSD (Bates, 2017), to social rupture (McGlynn et al., 2021).

The media often uses the label "revenge porn" to refer to the nonconsensual dissemination of intimate images by a former or current partner (Maddocks, 2018). However, reasons for IBSA perpetration and types of perpetrators are vast (Eaton et al., 2017). Some instances of IBSA are perpetrated by current or former intimate partners to maintain power and control over the victim (Eaton & McGlynn, 2020; Lucas, 2022). In other instances, perpetrators appear to be motivated by sexual gratification and proving masculinity to peers (Henry & Flynn, 2019), or to extort someone for money or favors in the context of romance fraud (Cross et al., 2022). Finally, some perpetrators claim they shared images just "for fun" with friends (Eaton et al., 2017), in stark contrast to the lasting, substantial, and wide-ranging harms experienced by victims (McGlynn et al., 2021).

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[1] When discussing research on the rates and harms of IBSA victimization generally, we use the term "victims"; when discussing participants' individual experiences with IBSA we use the term "victim-survivor."

Existing structural solutions to IBSA

At present, a number of individual-level and structural solutions to IBSA have been implemented in the United States. At the individual level are efforts such as "safe sexting" education and awareness campaigns (Skeldon, 2015), that encourage people to avoid catfishers and use apps that allow for images to be automatically deleted after a specified period (Patchin & Hinduja, 2020). While these individual-level tactics have the benefit of being free and available to many, they also place the onus of preventing IBSA on victims, rather than perpetrators or bystanders (Mckinlay & Lavis, 2020), and do not account for power dynamics in sexting (e.g., victim coercion; Ross et al., 2019) or cases of nonconsensually obtained images (e.g., hacked images or deep fakes). In this paper, we aim to investigate structural solutions to IBSA as a broad-reaching and longer-term approach to preventing IBSA and its harms, and achieving justice for victim-survivors.

The challenge of structurally addressing IBSA in the United States was first taken on by victim-survivors themselves, who often found no legal, social, or economic recourse for their abuse (Said & McNealey, 2023). Victim-survivor Dr. Holly Jacobs, for example, launched the End Revenge Porn (ERP) campaign in August 2012 after multiple failed attempts to receive help from law enforcement (CCRI, 2023a). A year later, she founded the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI), whose purpose is to "combat online abuses that threaten civil rights and civil liberties" (CCRI, 2023b). Since its inception, CCRI drafted the first model criminal statute on IBSA, and advised lawmakers on legislation related to IBSA in over 30 states and Washington, D.C. (CCRI, 2023c).

Legal solutions

Today, 48 US states, DC, and two territories have laws against the nonconsensual distribution of intimate images (CCRI, 2023d), though far fewer states have explicit laws against sextortion and deep fakes (CCRI, 2023e, 2023f). Moreover, the laws against the nonconsensual distribution of intimate images vary widely across states, with some offering better protections for victims than others (for a list of US laws by state, see CCRI, 2023d). Further complicating matters is the fact that these crimes can be perpetrated in one state while victims are harmed in another. While most cases are prosecuted where the perpetrator uploaded and/or distributed the image, this depends on the state's jurisdictional practices. In Florida, for example, the law stipulates that the crime can be prosecuted in the state "…if any conduct that is an element of the offense, or any harm to the depicted person resulting from the offense" occurs in Florida (Florida Title XLVI, 2022).

Technological solutions

At the same time that victim-survivors and advocates were advancing legal solutions to IBSA, technological advances to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable began to emerge (Franks, 2017). Google, for example, made efforts to remove IBSA from search results when cases are brought to their attention, and introduced a "right to be forgotten" rule in which victim-survivors can get images and links to images deleted (Hartzog & Selinger, 2015). YouTube, meanwhile, uses standard tools that block previously identified NCP from being re-uploaded. Social media sites like Facebook and Instagram also have explicit bans against IBSA, ban those identified as having perpetrated IBSA, and use photo matching software to stop further attempts at sharing a removed image (Meta, 2023). Finally, a newer online resource, StopNCII.org, offers victim-survivors a tool

to entirely prevent the spread of IBSA. Specifically, it generates a hash or "digital fingerprint" of the intimate image from the user's device, which participating companies use to identify and remove matches from their system if it violates their intimate image abuse policy (StopNCII.org, 2023).

Other solutions

The other structural solutions to IBSA that have been developed are less prevalent than the legal and technological ones, and include educational/social-cultural solutions (MyImageMy-Choice.org, 2023), hotlines (Revenge Porn Helpline, 2023a), and mental health resources (Reid, 2023). Many of these might best be described as secondary or tertiary prevention (Simeonsson, 1991), as they often only apply after the victim has been abused. For example, the CCRI Crisis Helpline is able to provide assistance to victims of IBSA from the United States, including providing information about take-downs, referrals, and non-legal advice. In terms of education and outreach, the incorporation of technology-facilitated sexual violence into high school sexual education (Spiker, 2023) and Title IX trainings for college students (Authors, under, review) is highly limited. Finally, some support groups for victim-survivors exist online, though these can be private and hard to locate.

Victim-centered structural solutions to IBSA

The purpose of the current paper is to develop victim-centered structural solutions to IBSA by collecting victim-survivors' own ideas and preferences. Victim-centered approaches to addressing sexual violence have become increasingly common in the last several decades. This includes victim-centered research (Bennett Cattaneo et al., 2011), policies (UNHCR USA, 2023), and International Chiefs of Police (IACP, 2023) services. The key feature of these approaches is centering survivors' needs and well-being in all decisions and interactions with providers, designers, and organizations (Campbell et al., 2019; EIGE, 2023). One example of a victim-centered solution to domestic violence and sexual assault is the law enforcement training in the Violence Against Women Authorization (VAWA) Act that specifies the use of techniques designed to prevent re-traumatization of victims (SaveServices, 2022).

Despite the shift towards victim-centered approaches in addressing sexual violence, research consistently identifies a substantial gap between the desires of victim-survivors to address violations and their available options and/or resources (Lonsway & Archembolt, 2012; Koss et al., 2017). Using the experience of victims-survivors to modify and create legal, technological, social-cultural, and health service responses to IBSA has the potential to reduce victimization and improve justice and well-being for victim-survivors (Carroll, 2023). While victim-survivors may not have detailed technological and legal knowledge of existing or hypothetical IBSA remedies, understanding their subjective experience with existing tools and their desires for new or modified tools can direct technicians and practitioners towards more user-friendly, trauma-informed designs and principles.

Current study

Given the cost of IBSA to people, organizations, and nations, and the gap between victim-survivors' needs and accessible solutions, we conducted trauma-informed one-on-one confidential semi-structured interviews with victim-survivors to solicit their wisdom and perspectives on how to address IBSA. For the present paper, we were specifically interested in people's

ideas for new and modified IBSA policies and practices. In doing so, we also elicited victim-survivors' experiences with existing policies and practices. Our primary research question was: *What suggestions do victim-survivors have for new or modified structural solutions to IBSA in the U.S.?*

Researcher positionality

Researchers' personal and professional values and beliefs are inextricably related to their research choices and approaches (Roberts et al., 2020). These values and beliefs are shaped by a variety of factors, including researcher gender, race, social class, political affiliations, ability status, nationality, and more (Darwin Holmes, 2020). In recognition of these subjectivities, we will describe some of the assumptions and experiences we brought to the current work. The authors all identify as White, cisgender, women. Many of the authors are victim-survivors of sexual abuse (including technology-facilitated sexual abuse), some are heterosexual, and some are bisexual. All authors engage in research that examines structural solutions to sexism and related oppressions, influencing the structural and victim-centered approach of the current paper. While the diversity of our team broadens the perspective we bring to this analysis, our collection of privileges provides us with an otherwise-narrow lens through which we analyze this data, and we are at risk of upholding systems of power through oppressive ideologies and practices. We sought to mitigate the potential bias resulting from these privileges by using an inductive methodology that allows participant voices to form the foundation of our analysis, as well as interview practices centering the victim-survivor's experience (e.g., using their terms and language in reflecting back and asking questions).

METHOD

Participants

Thirty-six participants were interviewed for this study. Fifty three percent ($n = 19$) self-identified as male, 39% as female ($n = 14$), and 8% as transgender female ($n = 3$). Participants' ages ranged from 22 to 47 ($M = 31.01$, $SD = 8.12$). Forty seven percent ($n = 17$) identified as Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African, 31% as White ($n = 11$), 8% as Latino/a or Hispanic ($n = 3$), 6% as Asian ($n = 2$), and 3% as other-multiracial ($n = 1$); one participant did not disclose their race. Of those who responded to the question about their sexual orientation ($n = 34$), 65% ($n = 22$) self-identified as heterosexual, 15% ($n = 5$) as bisexual, 12% ($n = 4$) as gay, 6% ($n = 2$) as lesbian, and 3% ($n = 1$) as other. See Appendix A for participant demographics and types of IBSA experienced.

Procedure

This study was part of a larger qualitative study on technology-facilitated sexual violence during COVID-19. For the current paper, we analyzed data from only those participants who self-identified as being victimized by IBSA. Most participants were recruited from a database of participants in a large quantitative study on technology-facilitated sexual violence (Eaton et al., 2022). In this online study of US adults, participants had the opportunity to enter their email

addresses at the end of the survey if they were interested in potentially participating in the current qualitative study. Participants were also recruited using snowballing, social media posts, and the CCRI listserv.

Eligible participants were contacted by a research coordinator via email, and assigned a trained interviewer who arranged a mutually-agreeable time for an interview. All seven interviewers were women, trained in trauma-informed interviewing procedures such as being empathetic and avoiding re-traumatizing the interviewee (Alessi & Kahn, 2023; Isobel, 2021). Previous research has suggested that qualitative research on sensitive topics include suicide safety protocols as a "universal equity practice" (Hawk et al., 2021). As such, we used a suicide screener and trained interviewers in using it and providing resources to participants who reported suicidal ideations. Specifically, we asked participants "are you having any thoughts of harming yourself?" Potential participants who indicated they were considering self-harm ($n = 2$) were provided with a list of suicide support resources specific to their state and asked if they gave permission to receive a follow-up phone call from the PI the next day to check on their well-being. The interviewer then terminated the session. For participants who did not report thoughts of self-harm, the interviewer proceeded to review the consent form with them.

The interview began upon receiving consent from the participant. All interviews were conducted and audio-recorded via Zoom, and the interviewee had the opportunity to appear on camera or not. Interviewees chose a pseudonym that was used for the duration of the interview. During the interview, we asked all participants about their ideas to prevent and address IBSA. At the end of the interview, participants were debriefed and provided with a support sheet containing contact information for support hotlines and online resources, should the interview have caused them distress. Following the interview, participants received a $30 Amazon gift card in appreciation of their participation.

Interviews lasted from 13 min to 1 h and 35 min ($M = 39.0$, $SD = 17.7$). While the interviews had a wide range of times, this is not unusual for research with survivors of sexual abuse (e.g., Lorenz et al., 2019), who vary in their ability and desire to process and talk about the experience with others. Most interviews were between 30 and 45 min in length. In our analysis, we focused primarily on victim-survivors' suggestions for structural ways to end or reduce victimization. Participants coping strategies were analyzed independently (Authors, under, review). We operationally defined solutions as "structures that are in place or should be in place to address IBSA dissemination, help/protect victims, stop harms, to prevent perpetration, etc." Interviews were initially transcribed by Otter.ai. After the initial automated transcription, interviews were reviewed for accuracy and revised by trained Research Assistants.

Analysis

To investigate our research questions, we conducted an inductive codebook thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). We identified themes that we culled from data themselves, and did not attempt to organize them into a pre-existing coding frame (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). The data were analyzed by the first and second authors of this manuscript. First, both authors separately read the same eight transcripts to familiarize themselves with the data. Next, they developed initial codes, which captured features of the data relevant to the research question. Each code was then organized into subordinate themes, or codes that were similar across participants. Next, they created an initial codebook, in which each subordinate theme was operationally defined. Throughout the coding we used a semantic approach, analyzing the explicit (vs. latent) content of

the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013), within an essentialist or realist epistemological framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013) that assumed a simple unidirectional relation between meaning and language.

Using the initial codebook, the first two authors individually coded the next eight transcripts, being mindful of additional codes that might be developed or changes to existing codes. The authors compared their codes and notes, revised the codebook to include super-ordinate themes that captured sub-ordinate themes, and updated theme definitions. Then, they coded the next eight interviews based on the revised codebook. Using the third set of eight interviews, the authors met to discuss agreement on how the content was organized into themes, and the interrater reliability was $\kappa = .71$, indicating substantial agreement (McHugh, 2012). Inconsistencies between the themes were addressed together until there was 100% agreement, resulting in six superordinate themes and 13 subordinate themes. The authors updated the coding manual to reflect these decisions. Finally, using this codebook, the first and second authors finished coding the remaining interviews independently. All final inconsistencies between the themes were addressed again until there was 100% agreement. Quotes presented were modified to remove repetitions and utterances (e.g., "um" and "like") for clarity.

RESULTS

Survivors proposed five structural solutions: legal solutions; corporate responsibility and actions by employers; formal education, training, and outreach; technological solutions, and; changing the culture of support for IBSA (for examples of each theme and subtheme, see Table 1). Victim-survivors also spontaneously discussed their perceptions of existing solutions and responses to IBSA (the sixth superordinate theme). This yielded the insights that (i) many victim-survivors were not aware of any existing solutions, and (ii) those who were thought that current solutions did not work well and were skeptical about their efficacy. In particular this highlighted a perceived gap, which victim-survivors felt could be addressed through the five types of solutions.

Victim-survivors perceive a need for (new) solutions

Victim-survivors offered their perspectives on current solutions as part of their reflections on how to address IBSA going forward. Central to these reflections was the fact that many people did not know that anything existed to address IBSA, and if they did, they generally did not find these offerings to be effective. Both of these findings support a general idea that victim-survivors perceive a need for new solutions to IBSA that would effectively address their concerns, as well as a need to promote these within the population.

Many victim-survivors were unaware of existing solutions

Victim-survivors had different levels of awareness of existing solutions. Awareness ranged from a belief that there were no solutions at all to having some knowledge about some solutions (with varying degrees of accuracy) to detailed and accurate knowledge of solutions.

TABLE 1 Themes, subthemes, definitions, and additional exemplary quotes for codebook thematic analysis.

Theme	Subtheme	Definition	Example quotes
Perceived Need for (New) Solutions	Unaware of existing Solutions	Victim-survivors have little or no awareness of existing solutions.	"There's really no policies to change because there's nothing in place now to help us… There's nothing here for protection. There's nothing here that makes us feel safe. There's nothing stopping these people from continuing to do what they do." (Debra)
			"I believe that there should be laws that protect people who are victims" (Franklin)
	Current Solutions are Not Working Well	Existing strategies for addressing IBSA are ineffective.	"[The police] just don't take it seriously … I was surprised because nothing happened. I reported it, I had videos, I had pictures, I had everything … I think this is just in general what a lot of women have to experience is they have to literally get hurt by a man for the police to do anything." (Liyah)
Legal Solutions	Creating and/or Strengthening Laws that Criminalize IBSA and Online Harassment	Victim-survivors want new legislation to be created or enhanced.	"Federal law is number one, because unless an agency, a platform, [or] a state is forced to implement something, they're not going to do it out of the goodness of their hearts. Bottom line is they're not so federal law is needed." (Yvonne)
			"I believe there should be laws to protect people who their images [are] leaked … The people who do infringe people's privacy should be jailed." (Bob)
			"The biggest change to policy would be making it a federal violation to produce or distribute nonconsensual pornography" (Jessica)
	Enforcing Current Laws Consistently	Victim-survivors want police and other law enforcement / legal offices to apply the law to all cases.	"I would have a law where if anybody, if you are White, Black, Hispanic, Chinese, Indian, religious, non-religious, a child, adult, everything holds true for every single person. If you're breathing in this life, you are upheld to the same standards and there is no place for anything less than respect on any platform." (Debra)

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Theme	Subtheme	Definition	Example quotes
	Making it Easier for Victim-Survivors to Navigate the Legal System	Victim-survivors want additional supports or guides for simplifying the reporting and legal processes, including tools to better understand the language of legislation.	"I think from like a legal perspective, there should be more material out there for it. And it should be easier to find … a little easier of a process [and] how to do that." (Sarah)
Corporate Responsibility / Activism and Employers	Corporate Responsibility / Activism	Corporations and websites have a responsibility to address and tackle IBSA on their platforms.	"They make billions of dollars … They could [contribute] financially or make a social stance for incidents like this." (Anna)
	Employers	Employers should provide benefits to employees who experience this new form of abuse.	"[If] a member of the company have suffered the cyber sexual abuse, they should not discriminate [against] the person and should … help him or her go through that particular incident." (Lucy)
			"If it's occurring within a workplace, the number one thing is to make sure [to stop] the person from being able to have contact with the other person. Because if you do not do that, you are just re-traumatizing the victim over and over and over again … They would be separating the employees if there's an issue between two employees. [That's] the most important part and then also getting the victim the necessary resources, the counseling and legal resources." (Jessica)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Theme	Subtheme	Definition	Example quotes
Formal Education, Training, and Outreach	IBSA Education	Victim-survivors want education and training for the public and professionals (e.g., police, counselors) about what IBSA is and how best to respond.	"So I think that if companies at least, if nothing else, like go learn about this stuff. Go speak to people who are experiencing it, and see what's going on and see how detrimental it is to them and understand that these are the people buying your products." (Camille)
	Outreach and Advocacy	Outreach and advocacy activities were means for victim-survivors to use their experiences to educate and improve systemic responses to IBSA.	"Eventually, I kind of spoke out about it publicly online partly as a way to try and inform and educate people about the nature of this kind of abuse." (Gordon)
			"I want to either contribute to or create my own organization that helps educate people on this." (Yvonne)
	Developing Communities of Support	Victim-survivors want shared spaces (formal or informal, online or offline) where they could gather to discuss their experiences and seek support from others.	"I think one important thing about people who are victims of one form of, what would I call it, abuse or the other, creating a community where they see people who have experienced the same thing as them and they get to share their thoughts, their views about it without being judged … I think a community should be created at the state level, maybe at a federal level, where individuals could go up and join." (V)
Technological Solutions	Automated and/or Enhanced Procedures for Uploading Images	Platforms should use automated or enhanced procedures to prevent, or make it harder to, upload / distribute nonconsensual images.	"I would think maybe if, say a video was uploaded to a pornography website and it had two people in there, maybe there would be some way of having consent of both parties involved before that video was uploaded." (Michelle)

(Continues)

TABLE 1   (Continued)

Theme	Subtheme	Definition	Example quotes
			"I think there should be a procedure [in which] the platform sees what each client wants to post so they can decline such photos and videos." (Willy)
			"I think they should come up with a way if something is posted that can affect someone negatively, they have a way to reach that person to see if he or she is in agreement or whatever is posted and delete [it] before it spreads to other people." (Banks)
	Improved Avenues for Reporting and Removing Images	Platforms should have easy ways for people to report IBSA and procedures to remove images quickly and completely.	"Easier reporting tools on technology platforms for when the abuse does occur, shorter waiting times for resolution, more advanced, potentially automatic detection of abuses … I do think that there must be some advanced technology that can be employed as a powerful tool for removal to prevent this kind of abuse. I would like to see more creative technological solutions in that regard." (Leah)
			"The thing is, they all have them, they're just not good. You know … you can report on pornographic images or personal images that you haven't consented to. You can report all this. But it's not streamlined, it's very vague what you can actually expect to be taken down. There's a long process involved so I can't speak to the nitty gritty of what exactly social media companies should do but it shouldn't be as difficult as it is to bring clear violations of personal privacy to their attention and to expect some kind of action." (Anonymous)
	Development and Enforcement of Platform Policies	IBSA policies on platforms/websites where content may be shared, as well as a need to enforce policies that currently exist.	"I would like for a policy to give the victims somewhere to say what's going on. Because there isn't always that option or that option isn't always clear." (Mallory)

(Continues)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Theme	Subtheme	Definition	Example quotes
	Platform Accountability	Platforms should be responsible for the content they host and take steps to prevent IBSA.	"They need to put policies into place where they don't tolerate it. There should be a zero tolerance policy." (Debra)
			"If it's possible for the company to have, like special funds for people that have been victimized by such problems … [and] distribute it out to persons as a compensation … [There] could be an organization set up for this, especially for cyber bullying cases, so each company will have to pay taxes to those organizations." (John)
			"I believe that platforms that host the content should face the consequences of choosing to host that content." (Leah)
			"So pretty much, politicians as well as big companies, app developers, software managers, and the likes … [should] ensure that applications that they are creating for the public are free of all forms of violence such as sexual violence." (F)
Changing the Culture of Support for IBSA	Solutions that challenge the social norms and discourse that support IBSA perpetration	N/A	"Why is it called revenge porn? It's not like anybody did anything wrong to deserve it. Revenge is like you did something wrong. And then … porn is consensual. And so… those two words don't mesh together … So that bothers me as well as like, maybe we could change the wording." (Sarah)
			"I definitely think it needs to be more normalized, like people need to feel it's okay to go get help instead of feeling trapped by it." (Luna)
			"Stop the stigmatization." (Grace)

Current solutions are not working well

Victim-survivors were generally skeptical that existing measures to prevent and respond to IBSA are working well and would meet their needs if they chose to use them. For example, experiencing/anticipating difficulties removing images from websites because the reporting function does not work or there is nothing preventing banned users from making another account and reposting the images: e.g., "*I think Facebook needs to do a better job of trying to remove these kind[s] of people … [so they] wouldn't be able to come back … [Now] they can get a new ID so that's the problem*" (JJ).

In some cases, perceptions of solutions were informed by victim-survivors' personal experiences with existing solutions (e.g., requesting their images be removed or reporting to the police). For instance, Anonymous shared, "*when I tried to contact Google just to have them delist search results featuring my revenge porn website. I mean, we couldn't. We couldn't even get a person on the phone. And the automated report thing doesn't do anything.*" In other cases, perceptions of current solutions appeared to be based on indirect knowledge (i.e., on what people have heard from others or societal discourse) and/or beliefs about how similar solutions operate in other contexts (e.g., reporting people for posting offensive comments on social media). Participant F shared, "*when it happened, I couldn't picture myself walking up to the police and making a case that I was actually, you know, involved romantically with a lady and I'm being blackmailed. Like it's not a case I think I could make at a police station.*"

Legal solutions

Victim-survivors talked about three types of legal solutions: (i) creating and/or strengthening laws that criminalize IBSA; (ii) enforcing current laws; and (iii) making it easier for victims/survivors to navigate the legal system.

Creating and/or strengthening laws that criminalize IBSA and online harassment

At a minimum, victim-survivors felt that IBSA should be criminalized. In at least one instance, there was a desire for legal consequences to apply not only to the person who took/posted the images, but to anyone who downloaded or retained them: "*Tough consequences to those who are found having th[ose] kind of photos and videos in their gadgets*" (Walter). Of the people who knew that laws were in place, many expressed a desire to strengthen them. When discussing these, victim-survivors focused on the deterrent and punishment functions of the law: "*We should have laws that protect people. For example, people [whose] images or videos which are private … are posted without their knowledge or consent, [there] should be laws prohibiting or punishing people*" (Martin).

Some victim-survivors also wanted laws that compelled companies to provide protections against IBSA. People talked about using the legal system to enforce accountability for platforms that host/facilitate IBSA content and saw this as having a preventative function. Others felt that responses to IBSA would be improved if the government coordinated with private companies (i.e., technology platforms) and organizations (e.g., non-profits) in their prevention and response to incidents of IBSA.

Enforcing current laws consistently

Some victim-survivors who were aware of current IBSA laws talked about the failure to enforce them (e.g., not investigating, not knowing the laws), or the failure to enforce the laws consistently (e.g., investigating for some people and not others). In general, existing laws were not viewed as a "solution" to IBSA, as the lack of enforcement meant that they did not offer support or protection. However, some people believed legal solutions would be effective if they were actually used/enforced:

> The policies exist, there are actually remedies in my state. The problem is law enforcement does not know them, the courts don't know them, the attorneys don't know them … I think the best way to make changes [is] to go back and actually utilize what we have in place. (Camille)

Making it easier for victim-survivors to navigate the legal system

Some victim-survivors had sought or attempted legal recourse following IBSA, or had thought about doing so. For these people, factors related to the experience of interacting with the legal system—real or anticipated—played a role in their decision whether to take legal action or not. This included responses from police officers when reporting the incident, the ease of interacting with the legal system (paperwork, process, and procedure-related concerns), and the anticipated outcomes of reporting or taking a case to court. For example, one participant shared:

> The informed decision is important, if I go the police route, what's going to happen? I'm going to be expected to tell my story, I might even be expected to give them the images … I wanted to know what the second and third order effects were before I made that decision. (Yvonne)

Victim-survivors who took legal action felt that the process could be improved by minimizing administrative and psychological burdens. On the administrative side, victim-survivors who had pursued actions such as restraining orders or criminal charges expressed that the system needed to be easier to navigate, including simplifying paperwork and processes, and providing more information as people navigate the system. Participant Sarah stated, *"I went through the process of getting [a restraining order] and the legal system is just so hard to navigate… There should be more material out there for it. And it should be easier to find."* Psychological burdens encompassed the trauma and emotional experience of documenting the IBSA, including repeatedly telling their story and giving the images to multiple, unknown people to view. Sarah further explained, *"Documenting the photos was extremely painful. And really disgusts me. And the thought of somebody else looking at those photos made me want to vomit and still kind of does to be honest with you."*

Corporate responsibility/activism and employers

Some victim-survivors identified private companies and employers as having a role to play in preventing and responding to IBSA, even those that are not directly responsible for hosting IBSA

content. These solutions focused on organizations either as "corporate citizens," drawing on notions of corporations' responsibility to society and the public good, or as employers.

Corporate responsibility/activism

These solutions involved companies: (i) using their position or platform for advocacy (e.g., to raise awareness or take a public stand against IBSA) and; (ii) using their financial resources to support prevention or response efforts, both indirectly via business practices and through direct support to services or victim-survivors. When talking about corporate responsibility, almost all of the solutions were similar to actions that corporations have historically taken in response to social issues like climate change and racism (e.g., making public statements or donating to organizations). Participant Anna explained, *"They make billions of dollars … They could [contribute] financially or make a social stance for incidents like this."* Participant F said, *"Well the companies do play major roles, they make investments and … where they put their money says [something] about what the company stands for."*

Employers

As employers, victim-survivors suggested that organizations could: (i) provide financial and non-financial support to employees that have experienced IBSA (e.g., paid time off or access to counseling); (ii) take action against employees who have perpetrated IBSA; and (iii) take steps to prevent discrimination against victim-survivors when hiring. For example, *"[If] a member of the company have suffered the cyber sexual abuse, they should not discriminate [against] the person and should … help him or her go through that particular incident"(Lucy).*

Formal education, training, and outreach

These were concrete solutions aimed at creating support for, and improving specific responses to, victim-survivors and incidents of IBSA. Some solutions focused on preventing IBSA, but most were aimed at enhancing responses to IBSA after it had already occurred. Solutions were focused in three areas: IBSA education; outreach and advocacy, and; developing communities of support.

IBSA education

Education was seen as an important part of preventing and responding to IBSA, and victim-survivors talked about a need to raise awareness among the population more generally. Victim-survivors cited education as a strategy to (i) prevent IBSA, (ii) improve responses from informal supports and non-professionals, as well as (iii) improve responses from formal supports and systems (e.g., counselors, legal system).

First, victim-survivors talked about education as a tool for prevention and cited a need to educate both potential victims and perpetrators. Solutions for potential victims generally focused on raising awareness and/or promoting cyber security (e.g., *"I think that there needs to be so much more education around technology, and how imagery can be weaponized against people"—Leah).*

Although these address a real need for cyber security education, some people discussed education in ways that reinforced and reflected victim-blaming in that they focused exclusively on the behavior of potential victims instead of potential perpetrators. For example, "*maybe coming up with education materials that will help people to avoid cyber bullying*" (Div) or "*I think counseling sessions should be schools to advise the peer groups on how to run their lives in a more disciplined way so that they can avoid nudity in social media*" (Romi). The idea that IBSA can be prevented by stopping people from taking or sharing images frames the primary cause of IBSA as victims' own behavior and not the action of those who use images without consent.

Second, education was suggested as a way to improve responses from informal supports, such as family and friends, via decreasing victim-blaming and stigma. This is conceptually related to Changing Cultural Support for IBSA but envisions education functioning at the interpersonal versus systemic level. Victim-survivors often used the language of "raising awareness" in reference to these aims, but seemed less clear on how this would be implemented.

Finally, victim-survivors wanted training for professionals that support victim-survivors (e.g., social workers, therapists) about what IBSA is and how best to provide support. They also discussed a need to train non-support professionals who regularly encounter IBSA, such as police officers, human resources officers, and healthcare workers:

> I think creating support networks and systems that help victims find resolution without being re-traumatized is very important. For example, doing the education that police and lawyers shouldn't do searches with the names of these victims, because then they're just experiencing that violation and trauma all over again. (Leah)

These solutions extended to other people victim-survivors might interact with, such as employees of private companies or technology platforms:

> … trying to explain to [technical support] for the nth time that … there's something going on. And instead of being like, 'wow, that stinks'. Like, what do I do with this? How do I undo this? But don't tell me how to reset my password. I did that, I've done that many times. It's still happening, now what? Give me real resources. Understand what's happening instead of pretending 'not my product, my product is awesome'. Understand it did happen, figure out where it went wrong, do [a] postmortem, and make sure it doesn't happen again … Make people at least feel like they're being heard. Being told, oh no, no, no, I feel like I was gaslighted by Amazon. I feel I was gaslighted by Apple, which just made it worse. (Camille)

Outreach and advocacy

Victim-survivors talked about advocacy to improve systemic responses to IBSA, primarily by using their experience as a vehicle to educate and create change. The victim-survivors who raised these solutions tended to already be involved in advocacy efforts, such as speaking at local council meetings or sharing their story with news outlets:

> [county name] has a family court improvement committee and they allow public speakers to come in, you know, people that have had experiences in family law, and I signed up to speak at the next meeting. And it will give me a three minute forum to

express some of my frustrations and give suggestions to how to do it better. And then I sent a message to some friends and just said, 'Hey, maybe you guys want to speak too.' … Because if we all go in together, and it's [not] just my three minutes, and then it's the next guy's three minutes. If we all go in … our three minutes are kind of like a concerted effort to express something about this. (Camille)

I did a feature on CNN … and so I went global with my story … I went public and that was with the help of [name] from the Cyber Civil Rights Legal Project. (Nikki)

The goal of advocacy-focused solutions included raising awareness, improving local processes/responses, and making systemic changes to benefit others experiencing IBSA. Several victim-survivors said they were volunteering, going back to school/changing jobs, or intended to start organizations to raise awareness and help future victims of IBSA. From a graduate student who intends to use her research to advocate for change upon return to her former organization:

I know my thesis will help contribute to improving the culture in the [Military Branch] … I'll get to be at the Pentagon. I know I'm going to find whoever I need to find, to support me to implement different ideas I have, to also contribute to making the culture better. (Yvonne)

Developing communities of support

One of the most common types of support victim-survivors discussed, either as something they had used and found helpful or wished would be created, were communities of support. They defined these as shared spaces (formal or informal, online or offline) in which victim-survivors of IBSA could gather to discuss their experiences and seek support from others. Some expressed a preference for online groups in which they could remain anonymous, but preferences for online or offline settings were mixed. In many cases, victim-survivors cited Alcoholics Anonymous as a model for what community support groups could look like:

I know there's a lot of groups that can kind of help with things. I know [if] people have a drinking problem, they have a supportive group of people they can talk about their experience [with] and where everybody with a similar experience … I went online and searched for that group but couldn't find any information. I'm thinking if only people like me, who have similar previous experience[s], we can form this group. We can share our stories and, you know, someone could understand what I went through and … we could go through this all together. (Anna)

Some victim-survivors talked about support communities as part of larger, more formal services that they desired. For example, drop-in centers where victim-survivors could meet each other, be connected to resources, and/or access professional services: "*[It] might be offline, might be online, where they can go share experiences [and] seek counseling*" (A). Victim-survivors felt that such spaces should be funded, generally by the government, and free to access. For example, *"the government can open up places to offer therapy sessions for people maybe who are not able to afford such" (Banks).* In some cases, victim-survivors made explicit links to policy and the role that legislators can play in addressing IBSA: *"I think that in terms of policy making, there needs to be some consideration to support networks for victims" (Leah).*

Building on this, one victim-survivor talked about the need for a national strategy and coordinated response to IBSA involving the government, private companies, and organizations. This was similar to coordinated Legal Solutions that were raised, but with a different focus:

> I feel that there needs to be easier recourse whether it's a national sort of resource center or nationally coordinated helpline…there needs to be a little more triangulation between the government, private companies like Google or other companies, but large corporations like Google, and then some private resource centers like the Cyber Security Initiative and just these different offices. (Anonymous)

Technological solutions

Technological solutions are those that (i) prevent IBSA on social media platforms and (ii) provide quick, easy, and effective responses that protect victim-survivors following incidents of IBSA. Overall, victim-survivors spent the most time talking about technological solutions (as compared to the other types of solutions). However, victim-survivors also expressed skepticism alongside these ideas, often informed by their past experiences attempting to use them (e.g., unsuccessfully requesting that images be taken down). These solutions were focused in four areas: automated and/or enhanced procedures for uploading images; improved avenues for reporting and removing images; development and enforcement of platform policies, and; platform accountability.

Automated and/or enhanced procedures for uploading images

Victim-survivors discussed the use of automated or enhanced procedures when images are (trying to be) uploaded to interrupt, delay, add friction, or ultimately prevent images from being put online. They identified this as a key moment in which IBSA could be prevented and that technological solutions would be uniquely positioned to address. Specific ideas included using artificial intelligence to scan and flag images prior to "going live" to prevent their upload and requiring individuals to attest that they own an image before uploading it, especially if the content may be suspect (again, potentially using artificial intelligence or automated scanning).

Improved avenues for reporting and removing images

Victim-survivors wanted easy and reliable ways to report images and have them removed from social media, search engines, and other sites that host images. Victim-survivors wanted processes that were quick, transparent, and provided complete removal of images (particularly from search engines). Some people also wanted the ability to report anonymously.

Development and enforcement of platform policies

Victim-survivors expressed a need for IBSA policies on platforms/websites where content may be shared, as well as a need to enforce policies that currently exist. For instance, zero tolerance policies non-consensual content, removing offenders and preventing their return.

Platform accountability

Victim-survivors thought platforms should be responsible for the content they host (tying into regulatory solutions) and use technology to prevent IBSA. For instance, automated screening to verify image content/permissions or additional steps to verify users.

Changing the culture of support for IBSA

Cultural and social solutions aimed to challenge, and ultimately change, the social norms and discourse that support IBSA perpetration. This included changing how IBSA is understood and discussed, including narratives that fail to frame it as sexual violence and a criminal act, as well as increasing awareness of IBSA itself and the potential harms. Several people referenced the language of "revenge porn" as particularly problematic: *"why is it called revenge porn? It's not like anybody did anything wrong to deserve it. Revenge is like you did something wrong. And then … porn is consensual. And so… those two words don't mesh together" (Sarah).*

Some victim-survivors discussed IBSA as a gendered phenomenon (e.g., "*This is a very real situation that happens to a lot of us women*"—Debra) and discussed solutions common to gender-based violence more generally. For instance, decreasing victim blame and stigma, both for being victimized and seeking help:

> I know it's a cultural thing. Why is this happening? It's happening because our culture still has forms of misogyny, still has forms of sexism, because that's what's at the core, that leads to the act of sharing images nonconsensually from one person to another person to another person. So [this solution] is more like teaching integrity and increasing moral values in society. (Yvonne)

Finally, one victim-survivor highlighted how culture change is needed for top-down structural responses to IBSA:

> I think one of the main impediments in this area is a struggle for people in positions of authority, to get them to take this seriously and to acknowledge this isn't something that just belongs in the private realm, … that should[n't] carry some level of shame or secrecy, or that it's something that isn't serious or harmful and … trivializing this kind of abuse, I think, is something that stands in the way of meaningful policy reform … there are certain facets of this that are unquestionably gendered … many women's experiences are downplayed disproportionately. (Gordon)

DISCUSSION

In this study, we interviewed 36 diverse adult victim-survivors of IBSA during COVID in the United States. We asked them to describe a variety of aspects of their experiences as victim-survivors, including their suggestions for structural solutions to IBSA. In general, victim-survivors felt current solutions were not working well and described a pressing need for new and refined structural solutions, including legal, corporate, educational, technological, and cultural solutions. While victim-survivors did not know about all existing solutions, and may lack technical

knowledge of how to implement some suggestions, the multi-pronged approaches they outlined are consistent with best practices in addressing sexual violence (CDC, 2023; Flynn et al., 2023). This work provides victim-centered starting-points for technical experts in the fight against cyber sexual abuse, including identifying key players and desired outcomes.

Victim-survivors consistently discussed legal solutions, even if they were unaware of current laws, or felt they were inadequate. Sexual violence, and to a lesser extent IBSA, often enters the public discourse in coverage of legal cases. Thus, to the extent that victim-survivors draw parallels to their own experiences, or think of what happened as a "crime," it makes sense that people default to legal solutions despite maintaining skepticism toward them. In terms of specific legal solutions, victim-survivors suggested creating and/or strengthening laws that criminalize IBSA and online harassment, enforcing laws consistently, and making it easier to navigate the legal system. In terms of creating and strengthening laws, as of the writing of this paper there is no national law criminalizing IBSA in the United States (CCRI, 2023d). Several such laws have been proposed and voted on (Eaton, 2021), but none so far have passed. This is an urgent area of concern, as the recourse and protections available to victims via state laws is highly variable. For example, IBSA laws vary from state-to-state in terms of the forms of dissemination of images that are criminalized, the criminal penalty for perpetrators (e.g., felony or misdemeanor), whether or not they require that the perpetrator intended to harm the victim, and so on (CCRI, 2023d).

Even with a federal law, however, the enforcement and understanding of IBSA laws among police officers in the United States likely needs to be strengthened. While there is little published research on officer's training on or understanding of IBSA in the United States, research on police officers and staff in England and Wales found that only a few had investigated an instance of IBSA, and many expressed confusion regarding local and federal IBSA laws (Bond & Tyrrell, 2021). In addition, 94.7% of police officers stated that they had not received any specialized training in IBSA (Bond & Tyrrell, 2021). Similar findings were reported by Henry et al. (2018) and Powell and Henry (2018) in their interviews of law enforcement, domestic violence support staff, and legal representatives in Australia.

The need to make the legal system easier to navigate for victims of IBSA is also consistent with previous research. Victims of sexual abuse frequently report that efforts to seek justice through the legal system can result in victim-blame, inaction, and re-traumatization (Jackson et al., 2017). This may be especially true for victims of IBSA in the United States, who have to know the particulars of the laws in the state(s) where the image was weaponized, and in many cases they are not able to use the laws (e.g., if the image was disseminated by text message and that form of dissemination is not explicitly criminalized). Reasons like these may be why so few victims even report technology-facilitated abuse to law enforcement (e.g., Fissel, 2021).

In terms of corporate solutions, victim-survivors asked for increased action and responsibility from corporations and from individual employers. For example, they wanted to see powerful corporations publicly condemn IBSA and employers materially and explicitly support victims of IBSA while holding perpetrators accountable. Although the role of corporations and employers in ending IBSA may not be immediately apparent, they are often part of the conversation around the harms of IBSA. For example, victims report losing jobs because of their victimization (Barnum, 2016), suffering damage to their professional reputations (Seifullah, 2018), being unable to perform their normal work duties due to depression, anxiety, and trauma (Bates et al., 2017), problems securing new employment (Citron & Franks, 2014), and even being victimized in the workplace, such as through emails to one's boss or co-workers (DeGregory, 2022). Because these organizations are part of the conversation around harms, they can also be conceived of as a natural and (largely) untapped opportunity for prevention and harm reduction. For example, workplaces can

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employ non-discrimination policies to protect victims from being discriminated against in the hiring or promotion process. Organizations can also include IBSA in workplace harassment policies, and outline disciplinary actions for those who perpetrate at work. Finally, as mentioned directly by participants, organizations can take public stands against IBSA when they occur in the workplace, such as education and messaging campaigns as well as charitable donations. Thanks to the activism of shareholders, similar actions have already been taken around sexual harassment at companies like Microsoft (Chiu, 2021).

Next, victim-survivors pointed to the need for educational solutions, including formal IBSA education, outreach and advocacy, and developing communities of support. For example, they discussed the need to teach about IBSA as part of sex education, and to have online spaces where victim-survivors could share knowledge, experiences, and resources. In terms of formal IBSA education, researchers and the public have, for years, been calling for greater attention to cyber abuse in sex education (Fido, 2018; Patchin & Hinduja, 2020). In the UK such calls have taken hold, with the recent guidelines by the UK's Department of Education for sex and health education including lessons on cyber safety (Busby, 2019). In the United States, efforts to incorporate technology-facilitated sexual violence into college Title IX training are beginning (Authors, under review), but implementing comprehensive standards for sex education in K-12 schools is still a long way off (Spiker, 2023). Therefore, education efforts should also aim to train adults who serve and come into contact with IBSA survivors, including health professionals, legal professionals, victim-advocates, and government and non-profit workers.

In terms of outreach and advocacy, organizations that do serve survivors of IBSA were mentioned positively, but rarely. This is likely because small non-profit organizations like CCRI, and its associated hotline, are financially and structurally limited in terms of the number of survivors they can support as well as the types of supports they can give. In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, the Revenge Porn Hotline is directly funded by the government, and can even help victims with reporting and removing content online (Revenge Porn Helpline, 2023b). Based on victims' narratives in this study, we suggest increasing governmental and private funding to organizations that directly serve IBSA victims, especially as IBSA rates rise to affect more and more Americans.

Next, in terms of developing communities of support, online communities do exist to support victims of IBSA, however these communities may be challenging to access because of their privacy settings. In this case, search engines, helplines, and victim resource centers might help to bridge the gap between survivors and existing online and off-line communities of support. Existing communities that serve victims of sexual abuse, such as therapy groups for sexual assault and rape survivors, should also consider extending their membership to include IBSA victims.

The fourth structural solutions theme was the one victim-survivors spent the most time discussing: technological solutions. Proposed solutions focused on four areas: automated and/or enhanced procedures for uploading images; improved avenues for reporting and removing images; development and enforcement of platform policies, and; platform accountability. It is unsurprising that victim-survivors focused on technological solutions, as technology enables IBSA perpetration as well as continued abuse of the images by others. The technological and dispersed element of this form of violence means that instances of IBSA are no longer contained to a specific time, place, setting, or group of people—and this potential for continued victimization is part of the unique harm caused by IBSA (McGlynn et al., 2021). Technology features can also be implemented more quickly and more universally than changes to social attitudes or culture to implement, and more universal in their implementation, than cultural or social change, though perpetrators persist in finding workarounds to existing and new technological protections.

Finally, victim-survivors saw a broader need for cultural transformation around IBSA attitudes, beliefs, and practices. Indeed, research suggests that IBSA victim-survivors live in a culture of victim-blaming (Harper et al., 2023) and that IBSA perpetration is related to sexism (Pina et al., 2017). Victim-survivors in our sample pointed to the stigma and shame around being a victim-survivor, and the general need for society to take IBSA more seriously. These observations and suggestions have ties back to all other structural solutions to the extent that policy change, corporate activism, education, and tech solutions change the salience and seriousness with which people view issues. Victim-centered and trauma-informed media portrayals of IBSA, though not directly mentioned by participants, may also help to influence cultural norms and practices around sexting and IBSA.

Limitations

This paper makes a unique contribution to the literature on IBSA by soliciting victim-centered solutions to end this form of violence. However, our work comes with a number of limitations. First, it is important to note that when participants were able to propose solutions, their responses were often modeled off, or extensions of, existing solutions (e.g., improved avenues for reporting, drop-in centers, and enforcing current laws). Other times, they proposed solutions that already existed, but were unknown to the participant. Thus, the themes and subthemes presented here may be somewhat limited in breadth and specificity. However, the fact that many solutions build on existing structures (e.g., incorporating IBSA into sexual education in schools) and frameworks (e.g., creating IBSA support groups like those for people in recovery from drug/alcohol abuse) may enable educators, policy makers, victim-support service providers, and corporations to more readily implement them. Nonetheless, additional solutions that do not mirror already existing solutions to sexual violence, such as coordinated and centralized response systems that involve cooperation from the government, non-profits, and for-profit organizations, should continue to be explored. The development of solutions to emerging and future IBSA acts, such as deep fakes and IBSA perpetrated in the metaverse, should also remain priorities for researchers and policy makers.

A second limitation of the current data set is that all participants were victimized during COVID-19. While the global pandemic appears to have strengthened the integration and optimization of information communication technologies and their harms and benefits (Storer & Nyerges, 2023), the acts committed during COVID-19 took place in a very specific socio-historical context. As such, the frequency of victimization experienced, or the nature of victimization, may have been different during this time period than before or after. For example, there may have been an increase in the proportion of cybercrime offenders (vs. intimate partner offenders) compared to pre-COVID times (O'Malley & Holt, 2022). Indeed, participants in our dataset were 53% men (a high proportion of victims for most research on IBSA; Ruvalcaba & Eaton, 2020) who were often the victims of sextortion (47% of men in our sample as opposed to 24% of women). This type of IBSA is one men may be at greater risk for (O'Malley, 2023) and may be especially hard to generate solutions for as it can be committed by transnational criminals (FBI, 2023).

A final limitation of the current work is that it was conducted on a sample composed exclusively of US participants with a US-centric lens. While this generated in-depth and specific structural solutions to IBSA in the United States, IBSA occurs globally and is perpetrated across nations. Thus, to end IBSA practitioners and law makers need to leverage successful solutions from across nations and engage in global collaborations. Future research with focus groups of victim-survivors

from different countries would enable the opportunity for victim-survivors to discuss multi-nation and united strategies.

Implications

As participants articulated, there is a clear need for change within the criminal and civil justice system in order to both support survivors and to address perpetrators of IBSA. In order to see these changes actualized, increased funding for organizations that protect potential and support victim-survivors, such as CCRI, is essential. With that funding secured, victims' advocates can begin to draw out a roadmap for the ways that they would like to see IBSA addressed. Our analysis suggests that victim-survivors are interested in seeing enhanced legal solutions, corporate responsibility and actions by employers, formal education, training, and outreach, technological solutions, and changing the culture of support for IBSA.

As mentioned previously, some of the solutions participants described already exist in some forms, but they were not aware of them. For example, communities of support exist on some social media platforms, but they might not have been able to locate these easily. This fact is consistent with the themes of cultural change and formal education, training, and outreach, as reforms at these levels could include helping victim-survivors know more about existing solutions and how to access them.

In addition, while we endeavored to understand victim-survivors' proposed solutions to IBSA, some of the content they generated was more focused on how to meet the needs of victim-survivors following IBSA rather than on primary prevention. This was particularly true for Formal Education, Training, and Outreach, but was present in all types of solutions that victim-survivors discussed. For example, financial compensation for victim-survivors was proposed in relation to multiple domains, including policy solutions and corporate responsibility. This included assistance with the cost of support services (or the provision of free services), paid time off, and so on.

CONCLUSION

In order to comprehensively address IBSA in its various forms, we must take a multifaceted approach to rectifying this increasingly prevalent intimate injustice (CDC, 2023; Flynn et al., 2023). At the legal level, our diverse sample of adult, US victim-survivors recommended making it easier to navigate the legal system, enforcing current laws consistently, and creating and/or strengthening laws that criminalize IBSA and related crimes. At the corporate level, victim survivors in our sample recommended corporations and employers taking a more active role in harm-reduction, such as doing internal or external messaging condemning this form of abuse. In the area of education, they recommended formal education, developing communities of victim-survivors who can support each other, and having the government and non-profits do more outreach and advocacy. From a technological standpoint, victim-survivors saw the need for more automated or enhanced procedures for uploading images, improved routes for removing and reporting images, better development and enforcement of anti-IBSA policies on tech platforms, and greater accountability of tech platforms. Finally, victim-survivors called for wholesale social and cultural change around IBSA attitudes and norms, from media to everyday conversations. These findings present all stakeholders in the IBSA crisis with opportunities to make victim-centered solutions available and accessible.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Data is not available for public use to protect the victim-survivors who participated in this qualitative study.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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