OPP works to combat teen victimization

 Young people who create and send sexual images through social media can often find themselves overwhelmed by the circumstances. Teens can experience fear, despair and victimization after engaging in self-peer exploitation or ?sexting' and cyber bullying.

A website has been developed to help young people manage the helplessness they feel when they realize the negative consequences that can occur when they create and send sexual images through social media.

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection (CCCP) has created a web-based, bilingual resource at www.NeedHelpNow.ca . This website is a place where teens can turn to find out how to regain control over what can quickly become a frightening and overwhelming experience. The website provides young people with practical advice and helpful information to manage the harassment they might feel over what they may have done online.

The OPP is supporting this important initiative to enhance safety and help reduce fear and despair among young people. NeedHelpNow.ca provides strategies to empower youth to take action to protect themselves.

NeedHelpNow posters are being distributed by OPP detachments for schools to display, to help raise awareness. The OPP is also distributing a business card with information in communities across the province to promote this program.

?As a public safety organization, we have great concern for the safety of any teen victimized by the distribution of photographs on the internet and we will provide support in any way we can. The OPP will use every avenue available to promote NeedHelpNow.ca as a potential resource for teens,? said OPP Commissioner Chris Lewis. ?Teens need to realize the short and long term risks of sending out inappropriate or illegal photographs. Those who distribute such photos also need to be aware of the possible criminal ramifications of doing so. The OPP strongly supports any initiative to enhance awareness of this issue, and possibly prevent tragic outcomes in the future.?