

NOMV Anti-Cyber Harassment Task Force

crisis folder



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NOMV 
Elevating Veterinary Wellbeing



ABOUT US

Our veterinary industry is at a tipping point, heavy from compassion fatigue, burnout, and increased risk for mental health challenges.

Veterinary teams feel undervalued, underappreciated, and fed up. We must tightly ally with our industry and have planned strategic collaborations.

Together, we can make a positive change for our veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and support teams through education and outreach to our industry and the pet parent community.

This resource provides tools to prepare for a potential cyber harassment attack and actionable steps to take during an attack.



Hey there, it's ok.
We're going to get
through this
together.



NOMV

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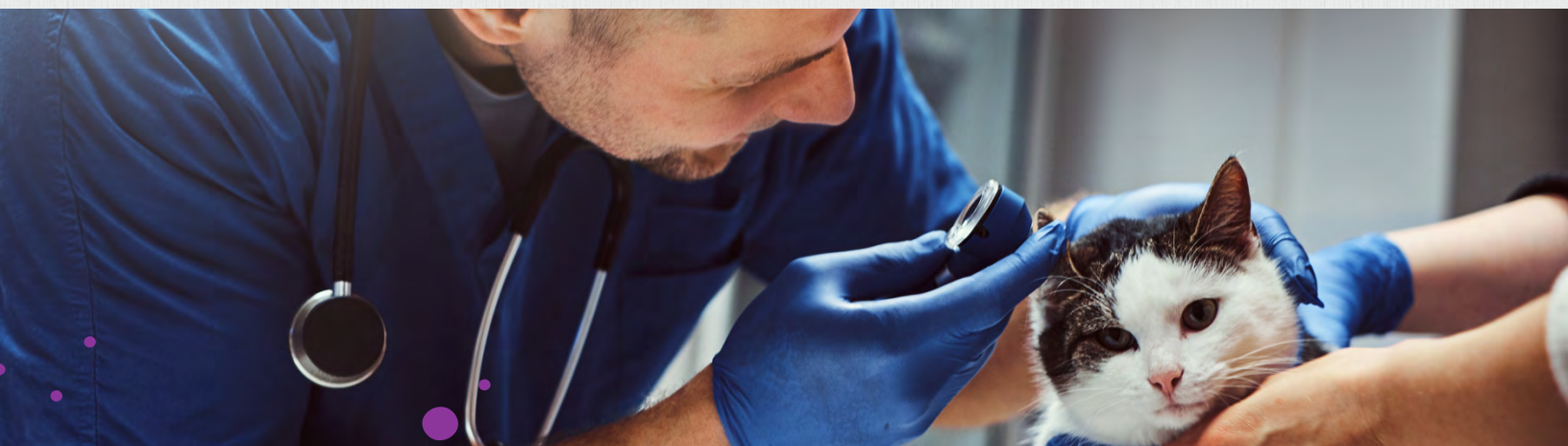
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What is cyber harassment?

Cyber harassment, also referred to as cyberbullying or online harassment, is the deliberate use of technology to target an individual or business with the intent to intimidate, harass, embarrass, discredit, or otherwise cause emotional distress. This may take the form of harassing emails, voicemail messages, texts, or posts on social media. While harassment often shows up as a pattern of abusive communications, a single instance can be enough to cause distress or damage to the reputation of an individual or business.

In the veterinary profession, cyber harassment may be experienced as unfounded accusations of misconduct, malpractice, general incompetence, or lack of perceived compassion. Communications may make misleading or untrue assertions with reference to the treatment of an animal or client with the intent of casting doubt on the competence or trustworthiness of an individual or business.



Impacts of cyber harassment

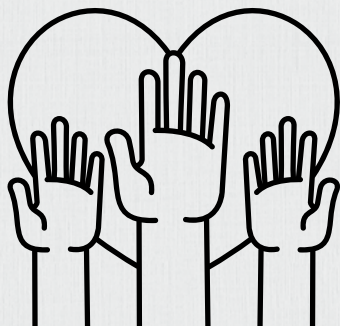
More evidence is being shared about the mental health impacts of social media usage and engagement and the impacts of cyber harassment on an individual. Without proper boundaries and overuse of social media it can lead to an increase in

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance use

It is important to recognize that a presence in social media can put an individual at a higher risk for cyber harassment, and without proper safeguards and supports cyber harassment can have a negative impact on one's mental health, such as

- Trouble sleeping
- Withdrawing socially
- Increase in sadness or anger
- Overall stress
- Depression
- Anxiety

If you are experiencing personal cyber harassment please know you are not alone and that there are resources for individuals, and many that are listed in this folder can be applicable to individuals.





How to support yourself during a cyber harassment attack

It is important to tend to yourself and your team during a cyber harassment attack, and the attacker can make one feel like they are not worthy, important, or capable. Not One More Vet provides [peer-based support](#). Additionally, a variety of peer-suggested resources can be found on [NOMV's List](#) or through [NOMV's partner organizations](#).



Steps you can also take to support yourself mentally during this time

- Protect yourself by limiting your social media exposure and engagement
- Connect with peers who will support you
- Engage in self-care activities, such as exercise, mediate, reading a book
- Utilize mental health supports



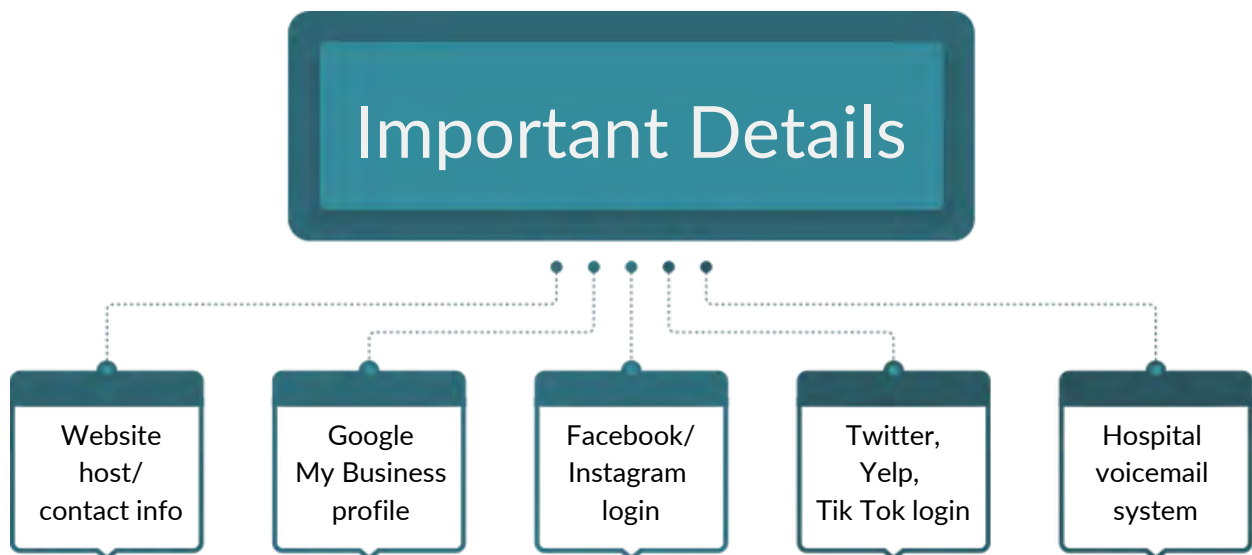
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How to be proactive

Making sure you have full access to your website and social platforms before a crisis arises is critical to managing cyberattacks. If you are being harassed online, you may consider shutting down your website or social channels to protect yourself, your team, and your hospital.

Write down and keep usernames and passwords in a safe place. We recommend this easy printable sheet [linked here](#); be sure to share it with a couple of other people.



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Crisis Management

What is it?

We hope that you are never involved in a cyber harassment crisis, but if you are, you are not alone. Please call your NOMV crisis team—we are here to help you.

- If you feel threatened – **CALL your emergency services number immediately!** Your priority is to keep you, your team, your hospital, and your clients safe.
- Our toolkit includes mental health resources you can share with your team.

We are here to:

- Support you with online tools to keep your team and hospital safe from personal attacks and threats
- Help you manage press releases and conversations
- Share mental health resources with you and your team

WHAT TO DO if you're being harassed



you can do this

If you are being harassed, be prepared to take the following steps

- Pause your website temporarily (please contact your website host if you don't know how)
- Hide your Meet Our Teams page so online trolls can't target your team individually on other platforms
- Turn off all review platforms (but do not delete them)
- Turn off all social media commenting
- Switch your phones to voicemail and update your voicemail message asking pet parents to leave a message (make sure you are checking voicemails for pet parent calls)
- Block any numbers that call with harassing messages
- Send a message through your client communications tool (PetsApp, AllyDVM, etc.) to your pet parents so they are aware of any temporary changes (curbside, voicemail, locked door entry, etc.)
- Contact the medical board to alert them that someone may file a complaint.

Reputation management

- Monitor, refute, remove comments, and reviews
- Un-pause your website and social channels
- Turn your Meet Our Team page back on
- It is important to share veterinarian names and bios on your website, but for the rest of your team, a picture and first name is enough (always ask your team if they feel comfortable with this option)
- Turn Google and Yelp reviews back on
- Turn on social channels and comments
- Post a thank you to your pet parents and community for their positive support (socials and website and through your client communications tool)
- Remember, never engage in back-and-forth arguments online with clients.

When you feel comfortable and safe, you can take these steps to turn things back on and manage any damage that was caused online.



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Other important considerations

Harassment Records

Please make sure to save all threatening voicemails, emails, social comments, and reviews. If you know the person (or people) that are harassing you, keep a log of all communications. This information is vital to any police investigation. If you plan to press charges or file a report, be prepared to share all of this information with the authorities and lawyers.

Medical Records

If your medical care is in question by the pet parent, save every note and make really great, descriptive notes as close to the event as possible. This will protect you from litigation and board complaints. The pet parent can ask for these and could share them with the public or the press. If you are reported to the medical board, they will also require every single detail. It is harder to remember meticulous details days or weeks later, so please take notes on everything. It is far better to be over than under prepared with all of the details. If you are in a place where you need legal advice, our team can guide you to resources.

Education and Awareness

It is important that we take a stand with our pet parents, peers, and the public. We will not tolerate harassment on any level. Write a letter of agreement stating this and have everyone on your team sign it. Ask your clients to sign it too.

Veterinary care costs money and our industry does not have a legal obligation to offer care for free. Be upfront about estimates and costs for routine and emergency care for pets. Please encourage your clients to enroll in pet insurance for emergencies (before the emergency) and to apply for payment options like Scratchpay or CareCredit.



chapter 05



External + Internal Communication Strategy

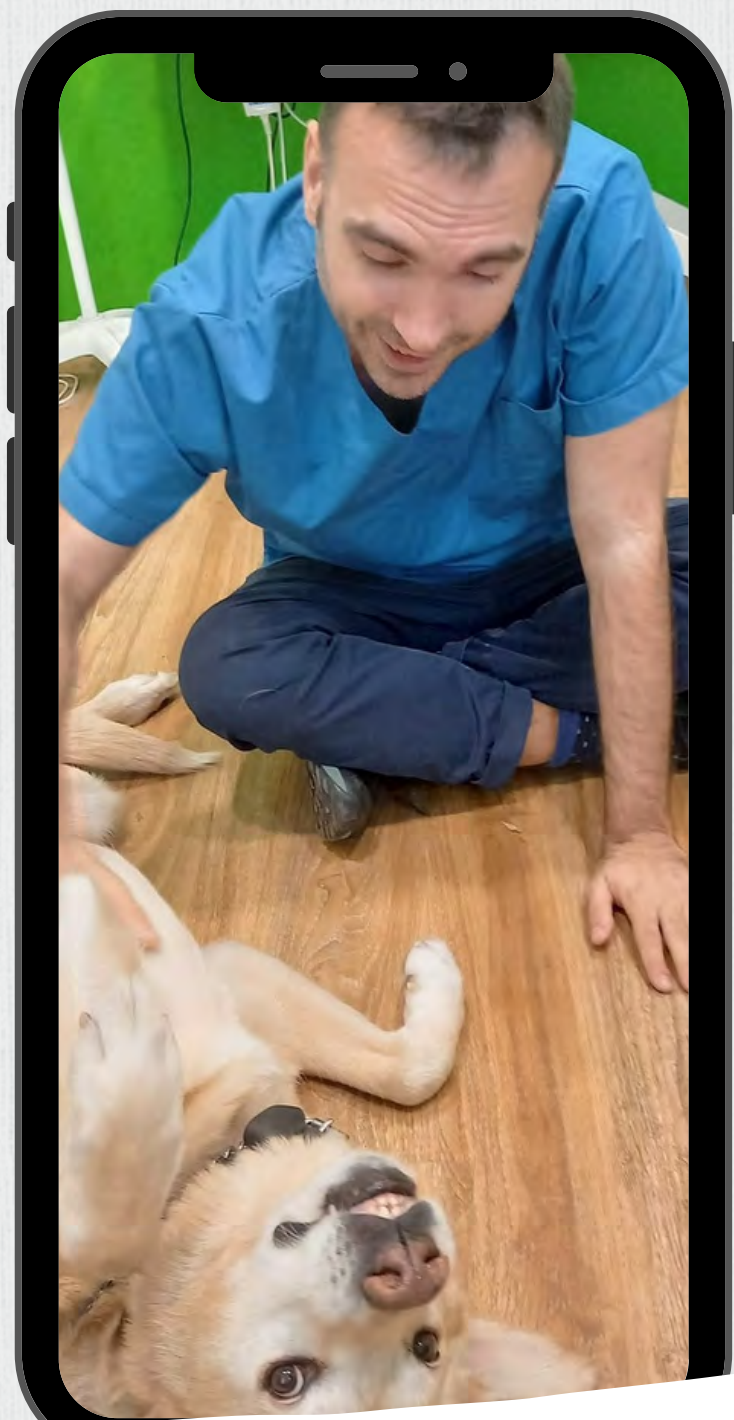
Establish who in your hospital will communicate with your team and the outside community. If press wants any comments on the situation, have a plan on what you feel comfortable sharing, e.g., We respect our pet parents' privacy and don't feel comfortable sharing personal details on this case, but you are welcome to ask the pet parent for a copy of the medical records, which they can obtain through our hospital.

Additionally, please do not share details with friends, family, or the online community (even if you are defending your team/hospital).

Communicate internally: Gather your team for an update on the situation so everyone feels supported, connected, and aware of the details. A safe space to share concerns is important.

Remember: Don't bully the bullies.

THIS IS THE BEGINNING of something good.



It might not seem like it in this very moment, but you are helping us create change. We're working to lock arms with our veterinary peers and create a positive change in the space. Thank you for weathering the storm with us and for all the things big and small you do every day to make this industry a better place.

We appreciate you. We support you. We are here for you.

follow us

THANK YOU

to our Volunteer Task Force



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HAMILTON LAW & MEDIATION
Fostering Peaceful Solutions
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PASSWORD TRACKER

Website Information

 Website Host (who manages the URL, such as whiskercloud)	
 Username -	 Notes -
 Password -	
 Website Login (how can I change the information on the pages of my website)	
 Username -	 Notes -
 Password -	

Social Information

 Google My Business	
 Username -	 Notes -
 Password -	
 Instagram	
 Username -	 Notes -
 Password -	
 Yelp	
 Username -	 Notes -
 Password -	
 Twitter	
 Username -	 Notes -
 Password -	
 Tik Tok	
 Username -	 Notes -
 Password -	
 Facebook	
 Who has admin access to the page? There is no direct password and username for Facebook.	
 Voicemail	
 Username -	 Notes -
 Password -	