

# Unveiling the Digital Temptation: Investigating the Impact of Online Pornography on Children and Adolescents



Dr Elena Martellozzo



# Concerns

- + Pornography is now the most prominent sexuality educator for many young people.
- + Most young people discover porn well before they encounter sex – perhaps even before they have kissed or held a partner.
- + Pornography may lead to aggressive behaviours

# What's in bestselling pornography videos

High levels of aggression in pornography in both verbal and physical forms.

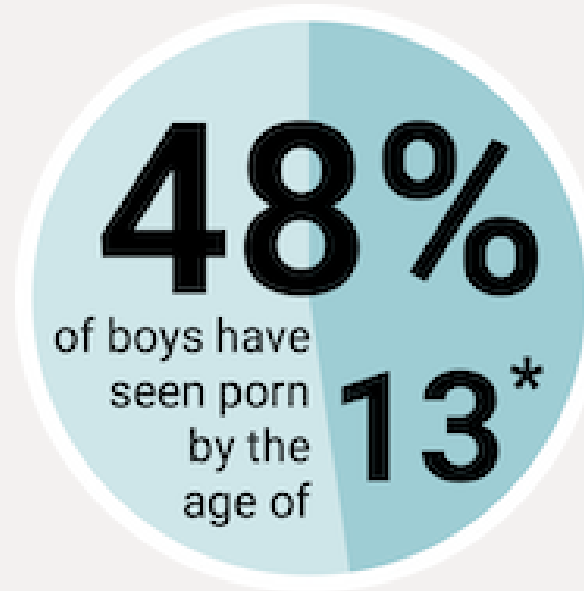
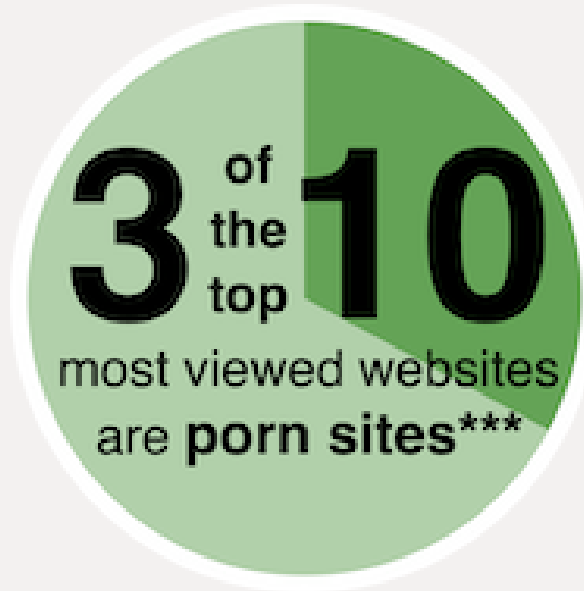
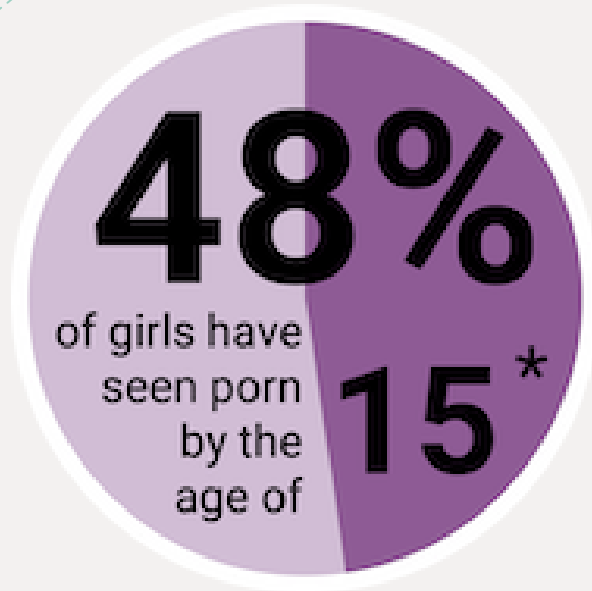
Of the 304 scenes analysed, 88.2% contained physical aggression, principally spanking, gagging, and slapping

48.7% of scenes contained verbal aggression, primarily name-calling.

Perpetrators of aggression were usually male, whereas targets of aggression were overwhelmingly female.

Targets most often showed pleasure or responded neutrally to the aggression.

# Mainstreaming of pornography

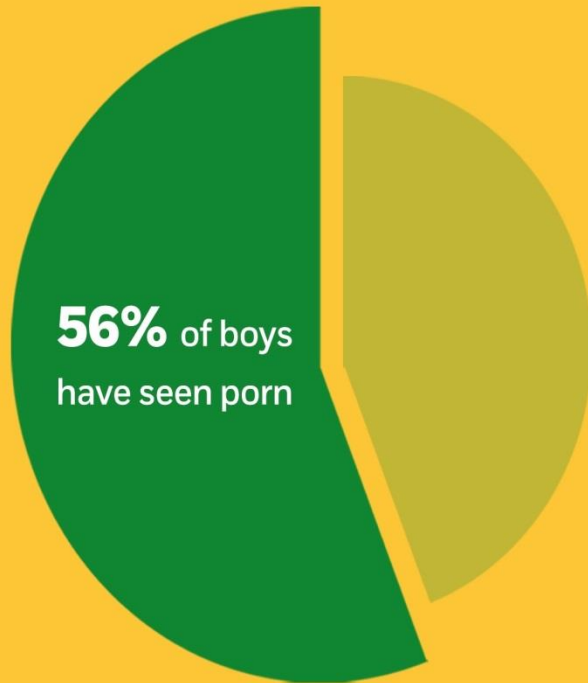




What did we find?



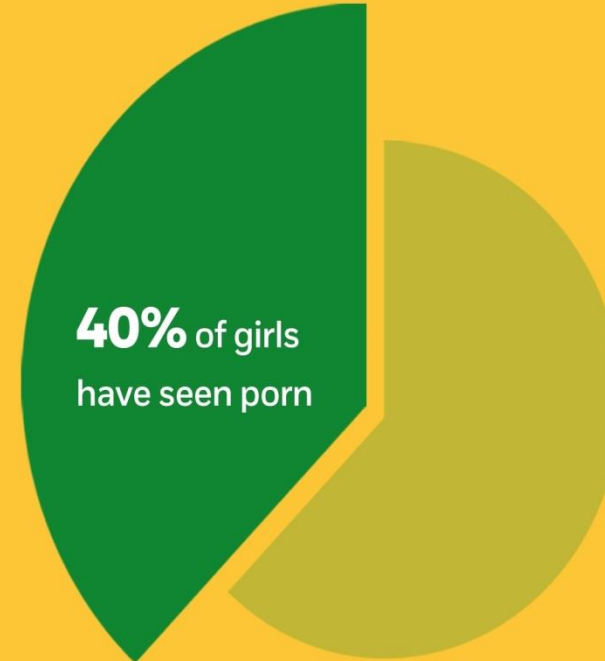
## Differences between boys and girls



Boys:

Feel more positive about online porn

Are less likely to see online porn as exploitative, degrading or humiliating.



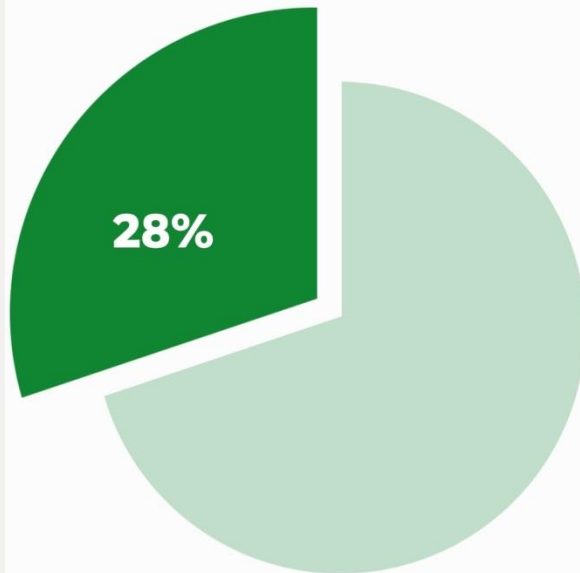
Girls:

Feel more negative about online porn

Are worried about how boys who have seen porn will see girls and how they would expect girls to behave sexually.

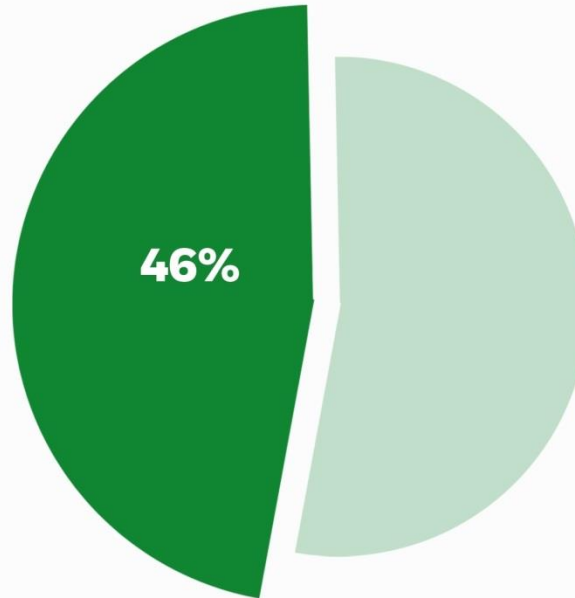
## Who has seen porn: differences by age

**11-12 year olds**



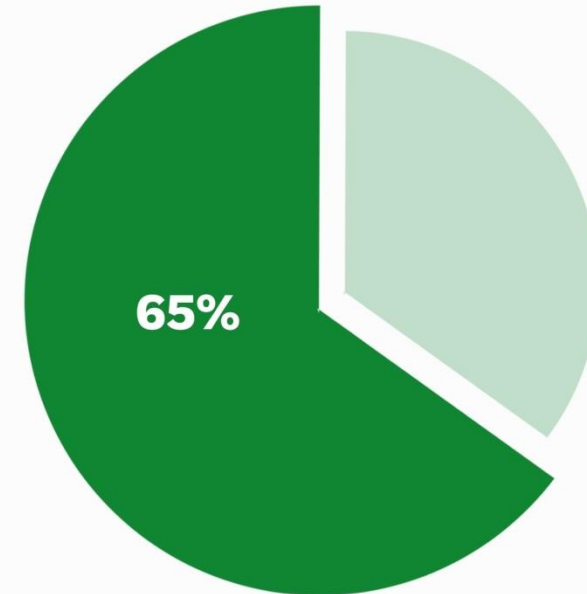
**21%** who have seen porn want to copy it

**13-14 year olds**



**39%** who have seen porn want to copy it

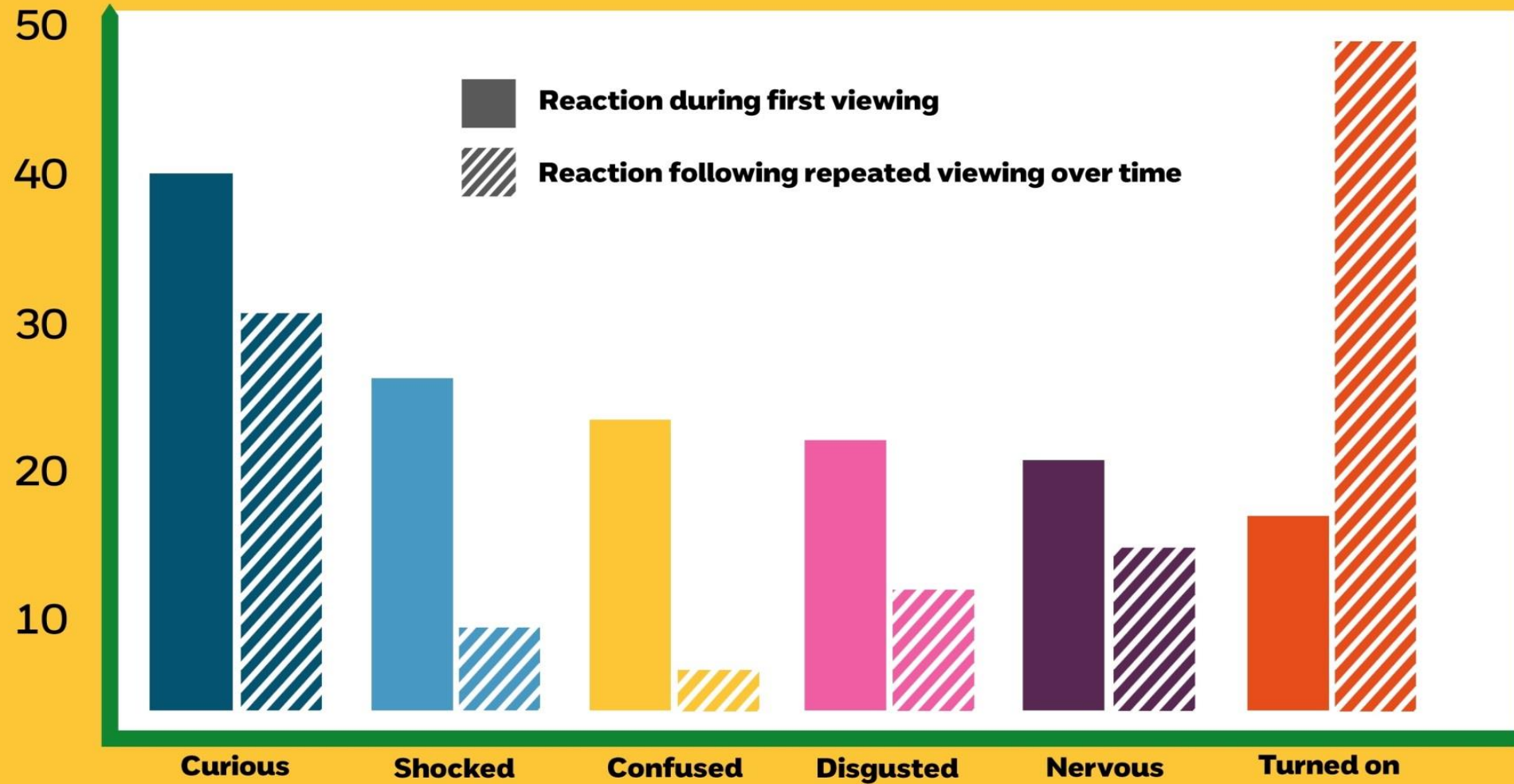
**15-16 year olds**



**42%** who have seen porn want to copy it

# How do young people feel when they see porn online?

Percentage (%) of children





# Validating our findings



183.102

+

154.178

245.5

## Encounters with online pornography, attitudes towards age verification and age restriction.

- 15-minute online survey with young Australians aged 16-18 years.
- A total of 1,004 young people participated in the survey.

## Accidental, unsolicited and in your face.

Young people's encounters with online pornography: a matter of platform responsibility, education and choice

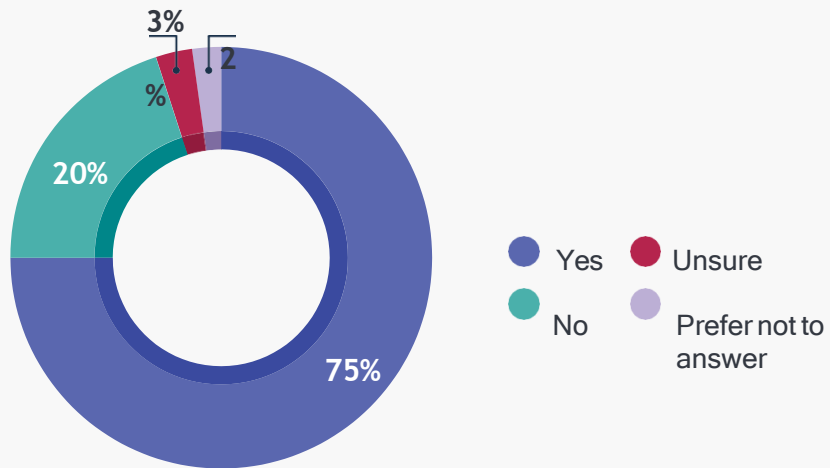


September 2023

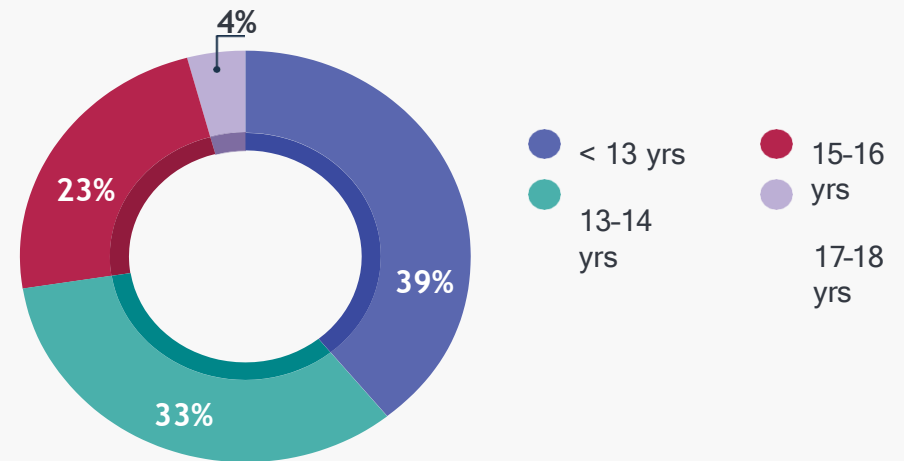


[eSafety.gov.au](https://www.esafety.gov.au)

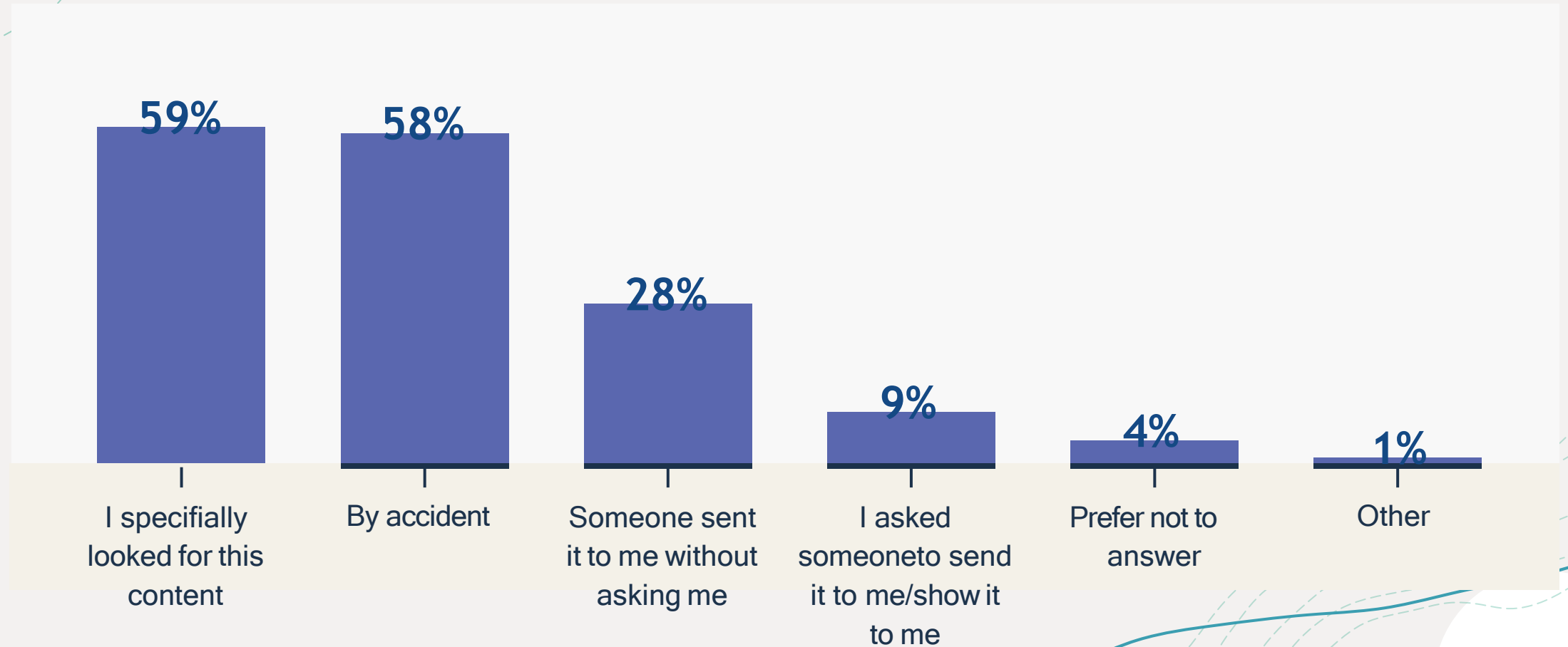
## + Have you ever seen online pornography?



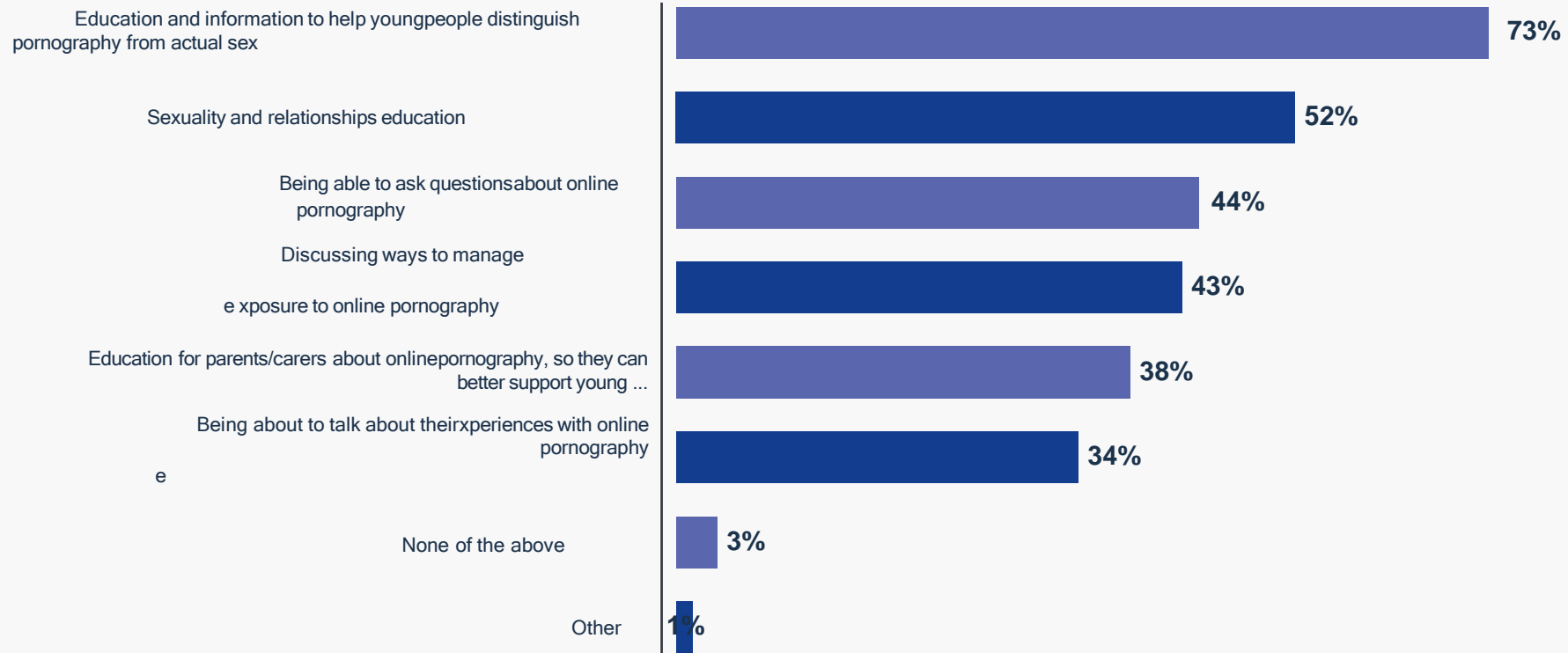
## + How old were you when you saw online pornography for the first time?



# How have you seen online pornography in general?



# What do you think would help young people to manage the negative impacts of online pornography?





***Too much too young: I  
talked to 10,000  
children about  
pornography.***

(Wright, A, 2023)



# Findings



**Children as young as six are encountering pornography**

**For nine- to 11-year-olds, exposure to pornography is frequent**

**Teenagers are learning more from pornography than sex education classes**

**For young people exploring their sexuality, pornography can end up filling gaps in their education**

“For biology GCSE we had to know about vaginal intercourse. It didn’t talk about gay sex. I had never had any education on gay male sex or gay female sex. I didn’t actually find out until I was 14 how gay men had sex and I was like – oohhh.” (18 year old)

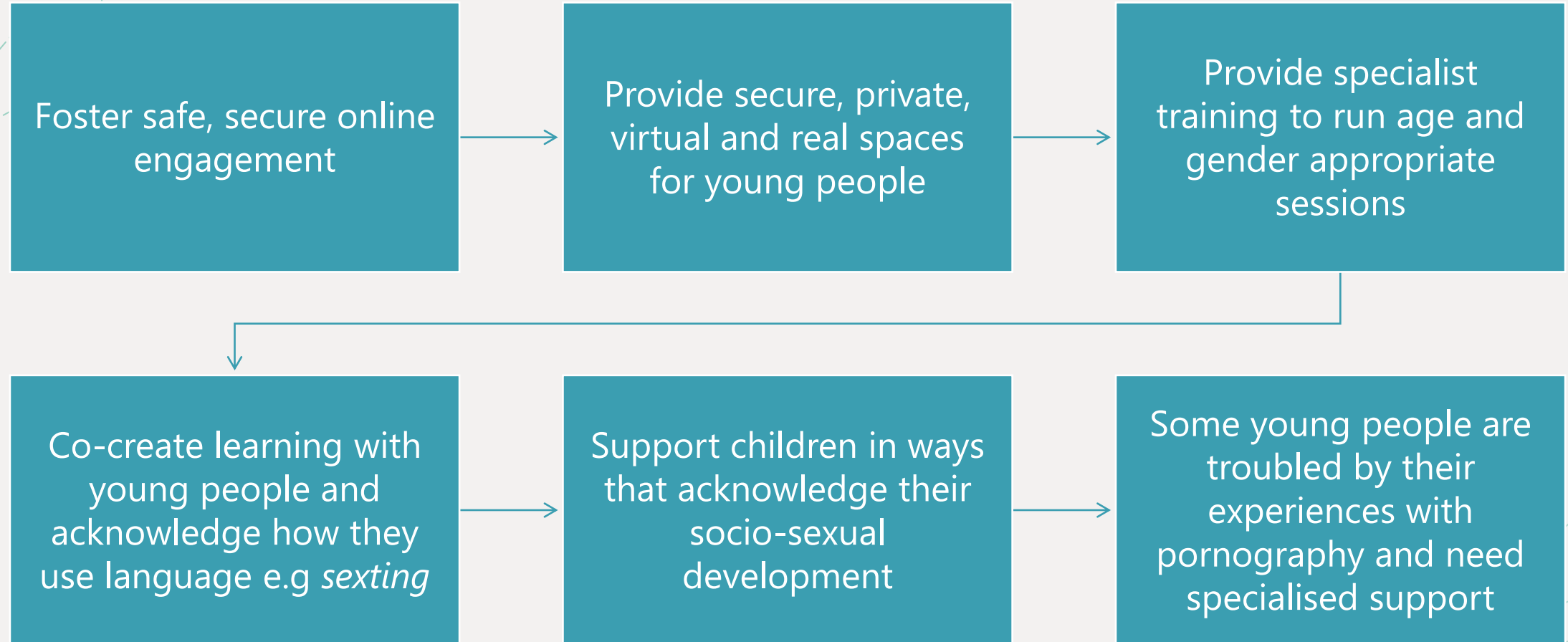
Adults are generally terrified of talking to young people about porn. Your parents have had you from a baby and they want to hold on to that innocent version of you.” (16 year old)

# ...findings

- + Pornography is confusing the issue of consent
- + Pornography use doesn't always conform to gender stereotypes
- + For many young people, pornography is their introduction to sex
- + Pornography is stopping young people from connecting in the real world



# Practical Advice from Participants



# Thank you

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