



BECAUSE I AM A GIRL

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Listening to U.S. Adolescents on Gender & Equality

Results from a National Survey and Focus Groups with Adolescents
Conducted for Plan International USA by Perry Udem
July 2026

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INTRODUCTION

In 2018, Plan International USA commissioned PerryUndem to conduct a national survey of adolescents ages 10 to 19 on experiences and views toward gender equality. That survey was fielded at the peak of the #MeToo movement, when the dominant public discussion on gender centered on justice for sexual assault victims. We took the opportunity to explore attitudes about consent, harassment, and assault.

The environment has changed since then. Increasingly, how young people experience and learn about gender happens online, where AI deepfakes, the “manosphere,” and curated feeds of idealized bodies and “perfect” lives may shape views.

Additionally, we’re now in a constant state of emerging cultural trends on gender, often at whiplash pace — from women “decentering men” to becoming “trad wives.” Men navigate the “red pill movement,” unrelenting self-improvement narratives, “looksmaxxing” memes, while also challenging norms around emotional suppression.

Beyond trends, old ideas on gender are both re-emerging and falling away — at the same time. New ideas are emerging and facing resistance — at the same time.



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With this new environment in mind, Plan International USA set out to understand how adolescents think about gender equality today. What pressures are adolescents feeling? What do they see, hear, and experience online? How are they experiencing and reacting to online harassment? Are those reactions different by gender?

To explore these questions, PerryUndem conducted a national survey and focus groups with adolescents.

The full research results, reported here, aim to help policymakers, media, and others understand how young people view and experience gender, equality, and how those views take shape.

METHODS

PerryUndem conducted a national survey of $n = 1,037$ 10- to 19-year-olds, fielded April 28 through May 5, 2026, using Ipsos' KnowledgePanel. Final data were weighted by demographic variables to align with Census data (CPS). The margin of sampling error is ± 3.5 percentage points for the total results.

With topline data in hand, we conducted two focus groups — one among girls and one among boys — among 14- to 17-year-olds. We wanted to listen to teens, how they perceive and talk about gender, and get their feedback on some of the survey results. The focus groups were conducted July 20, 2026. Each group lasted approximately 105 minutes.

The following page provides the demographic composition of each phase of research.

Note: In some areas of the report, we compare results to Plan's 2018 survey. This survey was conducted among $n = 1,006$ 10- to 19-year-olds, fielded April 26 through June 25, 2018, using NORC's AmeriSpeak panel. The margin of error for those results is ± 5.0 points.

Survey composition

The survey asked respondents: “Which best describes you: male, female, neither, or something else?” All 14- to 19-year-olds were also asked: “Do you think of yourself as transgender?”

	Weighted %	Sample size (Unweighted)
Total	100%	1,037
Girls	48%	470
Boys	51%	557
Nonbinary / self-describe	1%	8
Transgender	<1%	3
Ages 10 to 13	39%	401
Ages 14 to 19	61%	636
Girls 10 to 13	19%	174
Girls 14 to 19	30%	296
Boys 10 to 13	20%	219
Boys 14 to 19	31%	338
White	61%	711
Latino/e	27%	167
Black	18%	188
AAPI	8%	92
Northeast	16%	141
Midwest	20%	231
South	40%	423
West	24%	242

Focus group composition

	Total
Total	14
Girls	7
Boys	7
White	4
Latino/e	1
Black	3
AAPI	1
2 or more races	5
Northeast	1
Midwest	4
South	7
West	2

SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

The research explores many questions: What are adolescents' aspirations for their futures? Where do traditional milestones around marriage and kids fit in? Are new trends around gender affecting their views? Do they support gender equality? Do they think it exists? Have these perceptions shifted since 2018? What gender-related pressures or worries are on their minds? How has social media and the online world changed their views and behavior — from experiencing harassment to limiting their participation in online dialogue?

We learned a lot.

Data suggest gender-based pressures are alive and well, particularly for girls. They're internalizing messages to look pretty, seem confident, always be positive, and be perfect. Even pressures traditionally coded as masculine — be emotionally strong, don't ask for help, don't share feelings — are more prevalent among girls.

These messages turn into everyday worries and mental health concerns that reach significantly more girls than boys.

Additionally, social media exacerbates comparison culture, intensifies the pressure to conform, and amplifies a focus on beauty. It's no wonder that girls' top goals in life include "being my true self" and "feeling at peace."

Harassment and objectification of girls are regular experiences, both personally and in media. Half of girls hear boys making sexualized or demeaning comments at least once a week.

Online, they're navigating harassment issues by taking safety into their own hands — blocking people, changing their privacy settings, filtering what they post, or not posting at all. They don't trust social media companies to take issues like sexual harassment or assault seriously, nor do they trust the government. Many also don't trust their schools.

Narratives around "trad wives" and traditional gender roles don't seem to be affecting many girls. If anything, traditional milestones like marriage and kids may be becoming less important to girls.

Girls want gender equality and they don't think it exists, which makes sense given how they're experiencing gender in their lives and what they're seeing in our culture.

Many boys, too, are facing gender-based pressures, like needing to be confident, physically strong, and to fit in.

New cultural messages may also be seeping in — a little more than half of boys agree "our culture blames boys and men for society's

problems.”

While boys in the focus groups talk about increased social acceptance around sharing their feelings, continued pressure to withhold emotions is the number one correlate in our data with how boys rate their own mental health.

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Online, boys are just as likely as girls to be on the receiving end of hateful comments. While they’re less likely to encounter forms of sexual harassment, they aren’t immune: one in five boys tell us they’ve experienced things like someone sending them sexual content they didn’t ask for or being asked to send someone else a sexual photo or video.

Like girls, boys support gender equality. Younger boys and white adolescents are more likely than others to think full equality exists. But, fully two thirds of older boys still perceive inequality for women.

We don’t see much evidence that trends like “looksmaxxing” and regressive views toward women’s roles are having a big impact on boys. Much more relevant, like girls, is the ability to be one’s true self.

Here are key findings....

Adolescents have many aspirations. Being their authentic selves tops the list.

Having financial security is also a top priority across the board. Feeling at peace also rises to the top, especially among girls (see right).

While traditional goals of marriage and kids are at least “somewhat” important for many (65% and 61% respectively), they land at the bottom of this list.

Data suggest these traditional milestones may have become less important for girls recently. Compared to our 2018 survey, girls are less likely now to say getting married (-11 points) and having kids (-7 points) are “very” important goals for their life.

Why authenticity is so important.

We asked teens in our focus groups why adolescents may be prioritizing authenticity right now.

Girls talk about pressures around conformity that come from social media. In this intensified reality, there's a relief and appeal of being oneself.

Boys say being their true self is important in relationships — so that “people like the real you instead of someone else” — and for living a happier life.

”

I feel like in this generation, especially with social media...it seems like a lot of people are very similar or the same in a way, like [in] the way they dress, the way they take their pictures, what they post. And so I feel like so many people now are starting to realize that and want to be their own selves in a way that's unique or just different than the norm of their area.
— 14- to 17-year-old girl

I feel like people find it more important recently to be themselves because...a lot of people are falling into the same category. And sometimes when you see people being their authentic self, it's like, man, I could do that, too. And so, it's just it feels nice to just be who you want to be and not fall into the crowd of what everybody else expects you to be. — 14- to 17-year-old girl

You're going to be a lot happier of a person [if you can be yourself]. You're going to enjoy life more, and then you're going to meet people with like the same interests. — 14- to 17-year-old boy

What gets in the way of being oneself?

We also asked focus group participants about what gets in the way of being their true selves.

Boys mention barriers around peer pressure and fear of being excluded. One boy explains: “When people are telling you to do something you don’t want to do, but it’s a lot of pressure, [and you] end up doing it...it can make you into someone you’re not.”

They also talk about the pressure to fit in and its effects on mental health. Not fitting in can create frustration and sadness. As one boy says, “everyone wants to be loved,” and without a group of friends, “it gets harder for you.”

Girls say pressure to conform to trends gets in the way of authenticity. One girl says: “If people don’t follow the trends, then people might start bullying them and stuff so it kind of forces them to try to be perfect and fit in.”

On trends, girls say pressures are less intense for boys — “there’s so many trends revolving around girls rather than guys who have a... simpler standard.” We see these differences reflected in the survey data, with 40% of girls feeling pressure to keep up with trends vs. 22% of boys.

That said, boys are not immune. One boy says that trends “telling you what you need to do to be normal or popular” impede his ability to be himself.



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The vast majority of adolescents support equality between men and women.

More than nine in ten (94%) agree that “men and women should be treated equally” and a large majority (84%) agrees that “I want equal numbers of men and women who are leaders in work, politics, and life.”

Overall agreement with these ideas hasn’t wavered since our 2018 survey. That said, 58% of adolescents in our 2018 survey strongly agreed with wanting equal numbers of men and women leaders. In the current survey, 44% strongly agree.

In the focus groups, we explored responses from a few participants who just somewhat agree with the statement. One girl says she wants to see more women leaders than men because women are “more thoughtful and considerate of others.” She wonders if “war would calm down... or the economic state would improve.” The boys who somewhat agree say that, while they want gender equality, they also just want whoever is best for a job, regardless of demographic.

”

[Gender equality is] important to me because I know there’s a little girl or a little boy out there who feels as if their dream job or a goal that they have in life...isn’t right. And I feel as if giving them that hope that it’s OK, and that there is no right or wrong to what they want to do with their life. I feel like having gender equality would...open more doors to new ideas and acceptance.... I know for myself, there wasn’t a woman figure who I could look to and be like, she accomplished goals similar to mine to go to college and do different things like that and get a job....I would want someone like that for younger me, and so I feel like gender equality will help make that happen. — 14- to 17-year-old girl

I feel like [gender equality is] important so everyone gets an equal chance in society, like the right to vote, the right to get a lawyer in court, stuff like that, equal pay, and all that. And if everything’s kind of more equal in the world, the world becomes more peaceful, more of a happy place. If men have all the power, then there’s going to be more wars. — 14- to 17-year-old boy

Cultural trends around gender, such as the emergence of “trad wives,” “looksmaxxing,” and cosmetic procedures, do not appear to be directly influencing majorities of teens.

18%

Of girls say they’d want to be an at-home housewife and mother (39% are unsure)

N = 435: heterosexual girls 14 to 19 and all girls 10 to 13

22%

Of boys would want their wife to be an at-home housewife and mother (49% are unsure)

N = 540: heterosexual boys 14 to 19 and all boys 10 to 13

16%

Of girls say they’re interested in cosmetic procedures like lip fillers and Botox to change how they look

27%

Of boys have heard of “looksmaxxing,” and most of them reject the trend

We asked a survey question about traditional gender roles. But, the question may not be measuring what we think it is.

In the survey, we asked respondents whether they agree or disagree with the statement: “I’m more comfortable with women having traditional roles in society, such as caring for children and family.” Roughly half of adolescents (54%) agree, which is unchanged since 2018.

We were curious about adolescents who believe in gender equality and also agree to this question. We turned to the focus groups for insight.

What we learned is the question may be measuring perceptions about who might be better or less harmful in caring for children — rather than comfort with shifting gender roles. For example, one girl agrees with the statement because she says men are likely to be perpetrators of sexual abuse. As a result, she’s more comfortable with women taking care of children. A boy agrees because he says women are more caring and kinder than men. In their responses, participants in both groups reiterate support for women choosing what they want to do, without feeling constricted by roles.

”

There’s just a lot more stories that you hear, and studies show that men are the main perpetrators behind... sexual abuse, that type of thing. It’s just a lot more common to see in men, and a lot of times it does happen in the family. — 14- to 17-year-old girl

I feel like women are more caring.... If I had to choose between a girl babysitting me or a guy babysitting me, I’d rather have a girl because I feel like more comfortable with a girl. — 14- to 17-year-old boy

Women are more family kind of orientated.... I just think that they should just be able to choose whatever they want, whether they want to have that traditional role, caring for the kids, or being independent, having their jobs and all that stuff. — 14- to 17-year-old boy

Girls and boys are equally likely to think of themselves as leaders.

Black respondents are most likely to consider themselves leaders (70%).

Among girls, participation in team sports is correlated with seeing themselves as leaders and with considering a career in politics.

Younger girls are about as likely as boys to play team sports (48% and 52%). The gender gap widens with age: 41% of 14 to 19-year-old girls play team sports vs. 50% of boys their age.

Do you think of yourself as a leader?

50%

Of girls say yes

49%

Of boys say yes

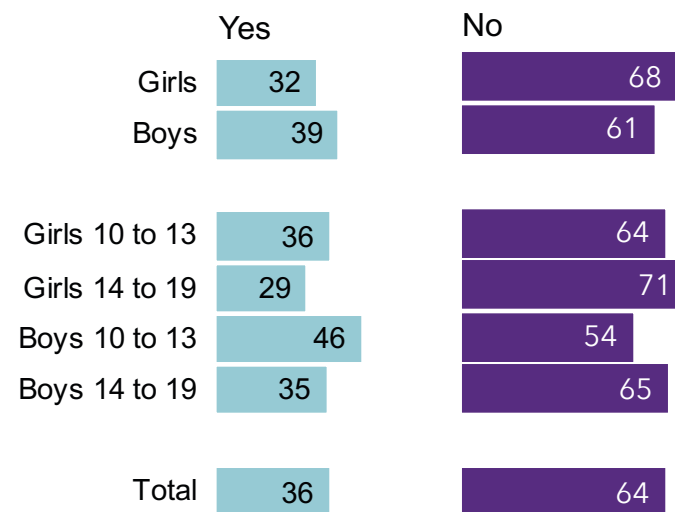
A majority of adolescents (64%) say gender equality has not yet been achieved.

Older girls are among the most likely to say equality does not yet exist.

There are sharp racial differences. White adolescents are much more likely to say gender equality exists (45%) than their Latino/e (29%), Black (28%), and Asian American / Pacific Islander (23%) peers.

We asked girls in the focus group why they don't think gender equality has been achieved. Their responses range from the overturning of Roe v. Wade to unequal opportunities to lack of women leaders in government.

Do you think there is full equality for women in work, politics, and life right now, or not?





I don't think [full equality exists] because just the way with the Roe v. Wade getting overturned, I feel like it's starting to go downhill. Especially because of the fact that we're starting to reopen the topic of women's rights. When we just got to the point of like, oh, we're allowed to vote, we're allowed to have our own money, we're allowed to have independency - it's like now we're going back into, are we allowed to have certain medical procedures done because of ethics? And it's starting to go back, taking [women's rights] back, which doesn't make any sense to me. — 14- to 17-year-old girl

In some homes, I do feel like [there is full equality]. But in society as a whole, I feel as if it is not true - simply just from opportunities, to certain laws, to certain elected officials and their actions and what they say, and how that becomes a standard. — 14- to 17-year-old girl

I feel like there is no equality. And you can easily see that in different workforces — there's many more males than there are females. And even in the government, we've never had a female president. There's way more males. — 14- to 17-year-old girl

There are many reasons girls may feel gender equality doesn't yet exist.

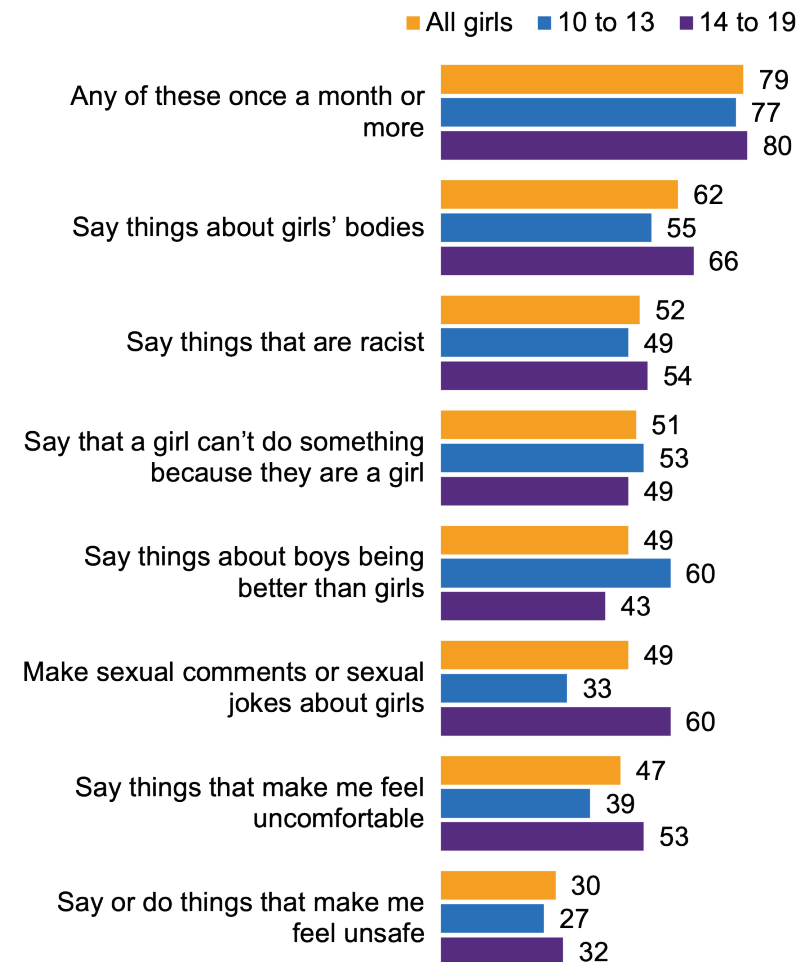
One reason might be peer environments in which sexist or demeaning comments are common.

We explored various kinds of remarks girls may be hearing from boys (see right).

Close to eight in ten girls (79%) say they're hearing these types of comments at least once a month.

Fully half (54%) say they're hearing these things once a week or more.

% Hear boys _____ at least once a month or more

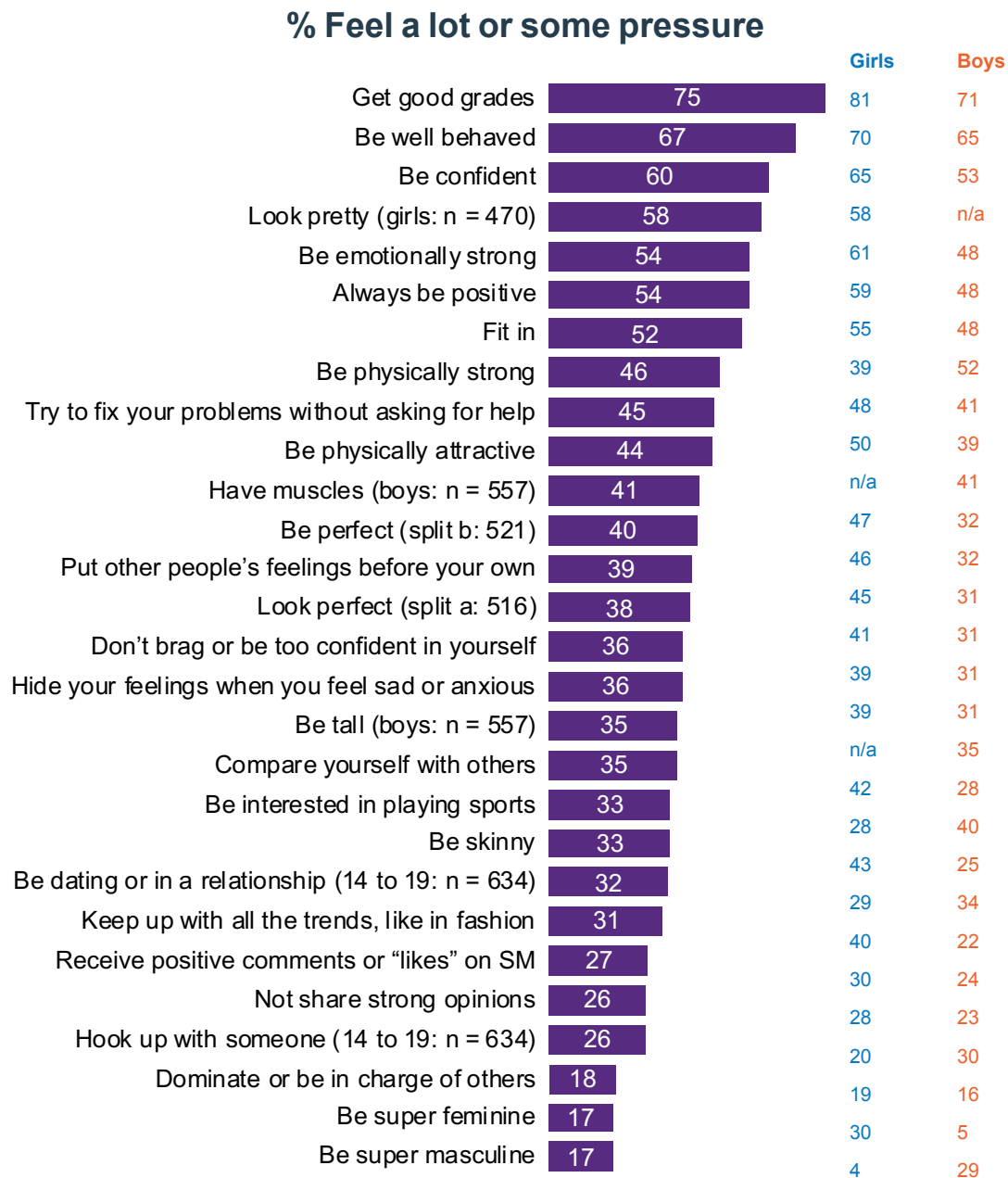


Data suggest girls navigate more pressures than boys.

We asked adolescents how much pressure they feel from parents, friends, teachers, and society on a number of dimensions.

Everyone, regardless of gender, feels pressure to get good grades and be well behaved.

But from there, much of the load lands unevenly.



Many older girls feel pressure to perform, look the part, and be perfect.

Older girls are feeling pressure to be confident (67% of girls 14 to 19 say “a lot” or “some”), look pretty (60%), and always be positive (58%).

Roughly half also feel pressure to be perfect (51%) and look perfect (47%).

Pressures related to perfection may stem in part from social media. A majority of older girls on social media (69%) say that once a week or more they see female influencers who look perfect.

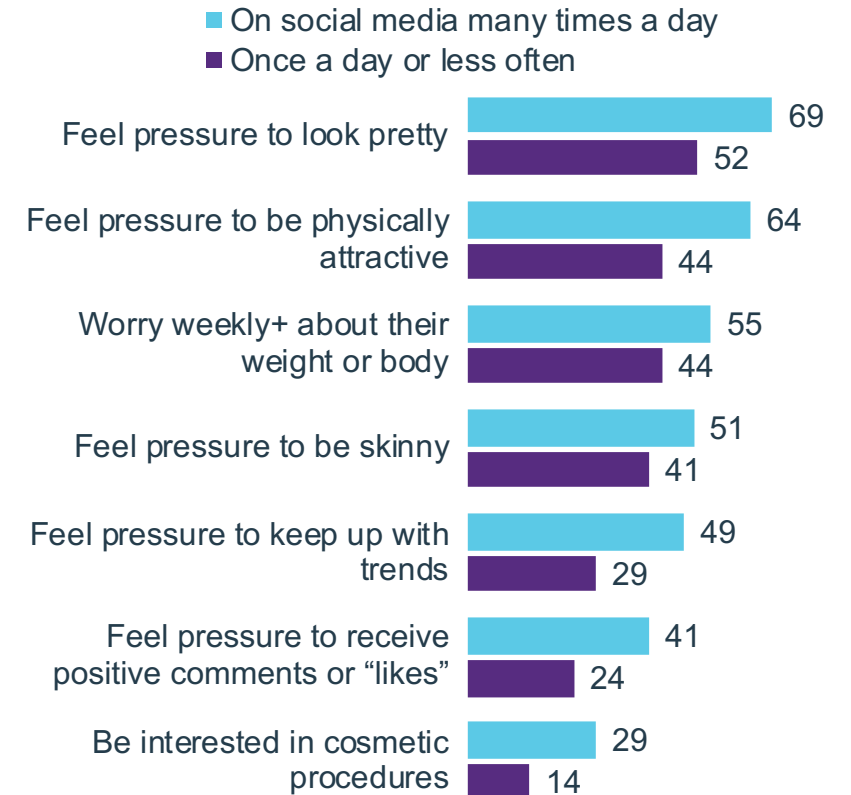
Among older girls, appearance-related pressures are correlated with heavy social media use.

For example, girls ages 14 to 19 who are on social media several times a day are more likely than other girls their age to:

- Feel pressure to look pretty
- Worry about their weight or body at least once a week
- Feel pressure to keep up with trends
- Be interested in getting cosmetic procedures like lip fillers or Botox

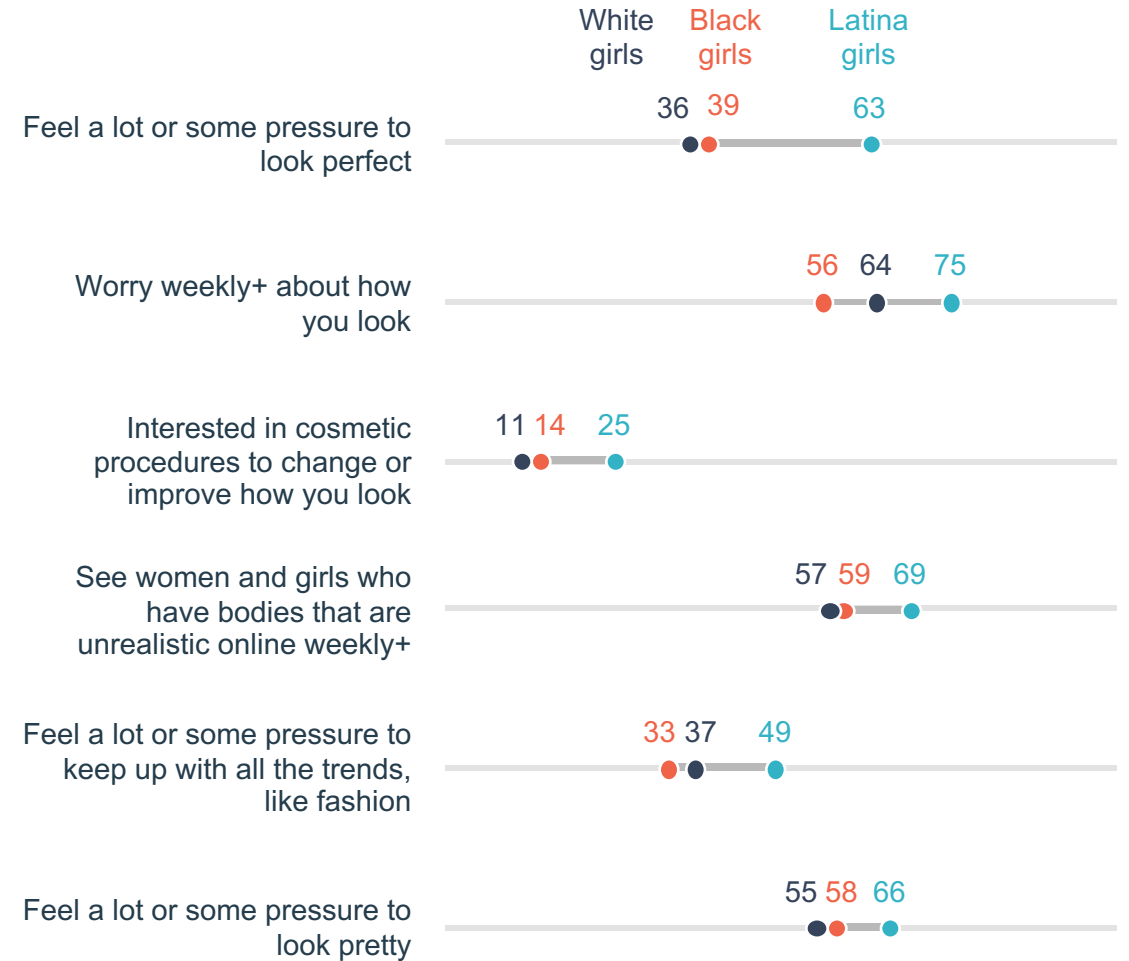
Appearance-related pressures by social media use

Among n = 296 girls 14 to 19



Data suggest Latina girls feel more pressure related to appearance than other girls.

They're also more likely to see women and girls with unrealistic bodies online at least once a week.



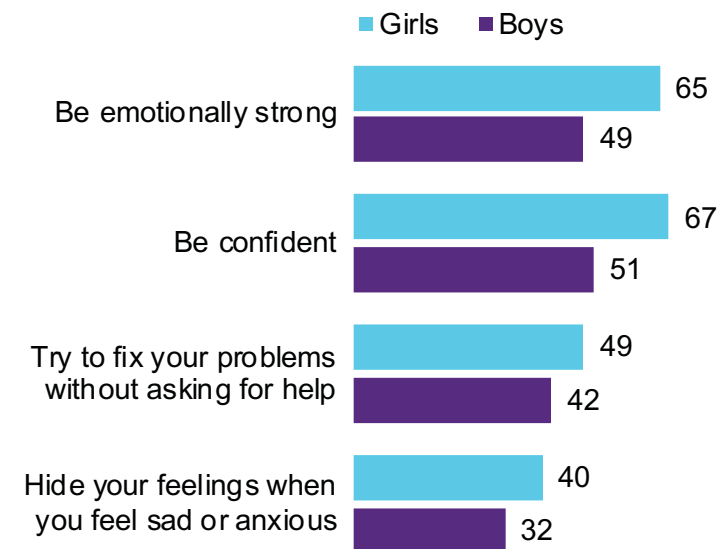
Older girls are more likely than boys to feel pressures traditionally coded as masculine.

These include the pressure to be emotionally strong, to try to fix their problems without asking for help, and to hide their feelings when sad or anxious.

Teens in the focus groups shed some light on these differences. For example, girls say that social media can drive the pressure to hide emotions.

% Feel a lot / some pressure to...

N = 634 adolescents 14 to 19





I feel like there's a difference between me and my friends [who are on social media] that I see often, is that with me, if I'm sad and I want to cry, I'll cry wherever I am. I don't feel the need to confine my emotions. But I feel like with other people...they feel like they need to confine who they are, hide it or show less of what they want and who they want to be, solely because they're impacted by the expectations of society and social media and what everyone has to say.

— 14- to 17-year-old girl

Girls also say that hateful online comments create incentives to withhold emotions. One girl connects the pressure to be perfect with suppressing sadness or anxiety.

On the other hand, teen boys in the focus group feel it's becoming easier for men to open up about their feelings. Culturally, they're feeling more acceptance. At the same time, they also continue to get messages that it's not okay to be vulnerable.

”

[The pressure to be perfect] definitely does affect [girls'] mental health because it's really draining to try to be perfect all the time and not sharing emotions. And then it all just gets bundled up and builds up even more. And then when it comes out, it's really, really intense. — 14- to 17-year-old girl

I've been seeing a lot on social media when guys are venting.... There's a lot of hate and there's a lot of positivity. And on the positivity side, I see a lot of other guys trying to advocate for that equality [in] being able to share their feelings.

— 14- to 17-year-old boy

Cultural pressures translate into everyday worries for many girls.

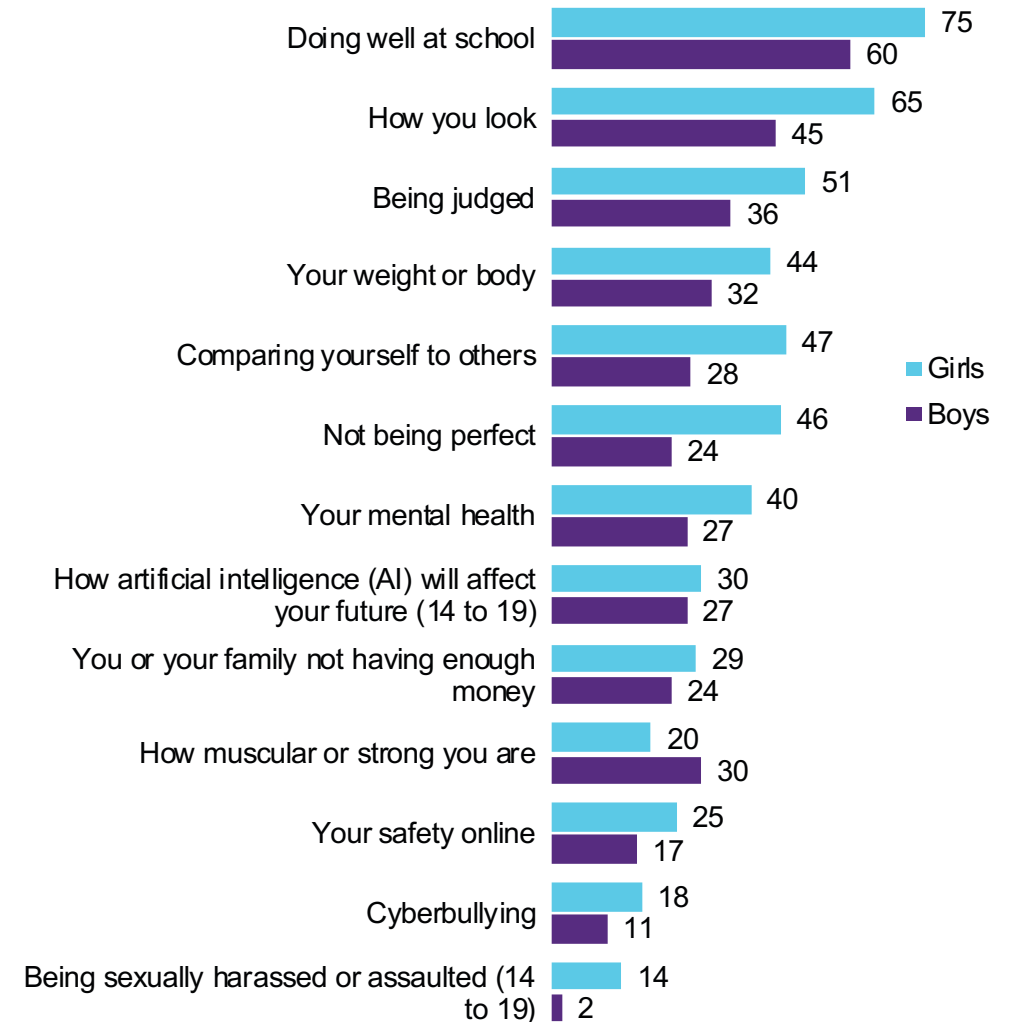
Data suggest girls are more likely than boys to have a number of worries on their minds.

The widest gender gaps relate to appearances, judgment from others, and perfection.

Four in ten girls (40%) worry about their mental health at least once a week (vs. 27% of boys).

These disproportionate worries may be one reason that older girls say feeling at peace is a “very” important life goal for themselves — 16 points higher than boys their age (84% vs. 68%).

% Worry about once a week or more



Almost six in ten girls who have gotten their period (59%) say it's interfered with one or more aspects of their life.

Among girls who've gotten their period, many say it's:

- Made it harder to focus on school (41% have experienced in the past 12 months)
- Made them miss school (30%)
- Stopped them from playing sports or activities (27%)
- Stopped them from spending time with friends and family (26%)
- Affected their mental health negatively (26%)

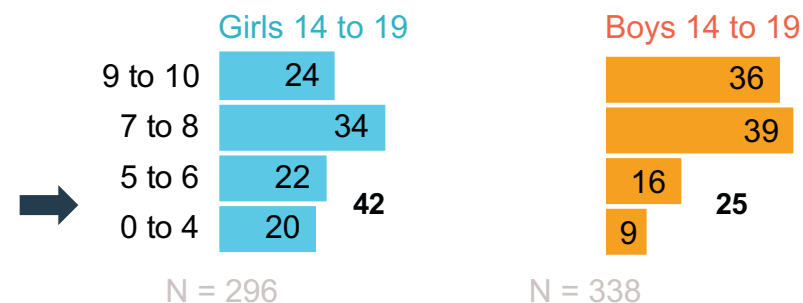
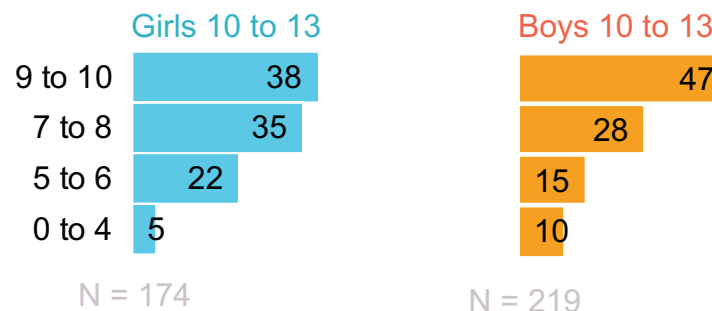
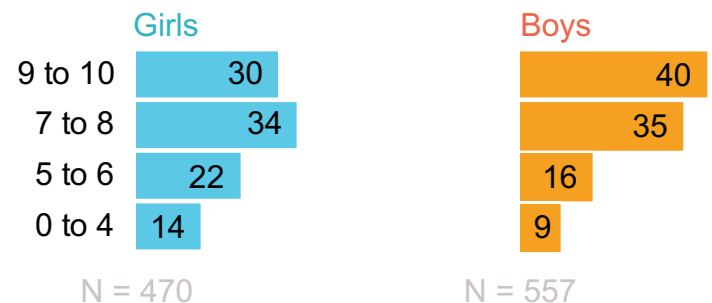
Period stigma still exists. More than a third of girls who've gotten their period (38%) say they've felt embarrassed or nervous to talk about it.

Girls rate the state of their mental health lower than boys.

About four in ten girls ages 14 to 19 rate their mental health as a six or lower on our scale (42% vs. 25%).

How would you rate your mental health — things like stress, anxiety, sadness, and upset?

(0 to 10 scale with 0 being very bad and 10 being very good)



For girls, poorer mental health is correlated with pressures to withhold emotions, comparison culture, perfection culture, and harassment.

We examined whether any specific pressures or experiences measured in the survey correlate with mental health ratings on our zero to 10 scale.

Several items correlate with these ratings, including feeling pressure to hide emotions, compare oneself with others, and look perfect.

Experience with harassment is also correlated with mental health. For example, girls who say they've experienced sexual harassment online are +38 points more likely to report lower mental health ratings than those who haven't experienced it (71% vs. 33%). A similar divide exists for online harassment generally (65% vs. 36%).

One bright spot: girls who play team sports report better mental health than those who don't (36% rate their mental health zero to six vs. 46% who don't play team sports).

Correlations with lower mental health ratings for girls

In order of strength *N* = 296 girls 14 to 19

- Feel pressure to hide feelings when sad or anxious (.47)
- Feel pressure to compare oneself with others (.43)
- Feel pressure to look perfect (.39)
- Experience with general harassment online (.35)
- Feel pressure to be perfect (.34)
- Feel pressure to fix their problems without asking for help (.34)
- Hear boys make demeaning comments weekly+ (.33)
- Experience with sexual harassment online (.33)
- Period has made it harder to focus at school (.31)
- Worried about women losing their reproductive rights (.27)
- See unrealistic female bodies in culture or media (.25)
- Period has limited spending time w/ loved ones (.24)
- Know a peer who has ranked girls by appearances, shared nudes, or created AI nudes (.21)
- How often they're on social media (.14)

For boys, mental health connects most to what they hold in.

Experience with harassment online does not correlate as strongly with mental health for boys.

Instead, withholding emotions, pressure to fit in, and worry about family finances are among the most correlated with ratings.

For example, boys who feel pressure to hide their feelings are nearly three times more likely to rate their mental health more poorly (43% rate their mental health a zero to six vs. 16% of those who do not feel pressure to withhold emotions).

Correlations with lower mental health ratings for boys

In order of strength *N* = 338 boys 14 to 19

- Feel pressure to hide feelings when sad or anxious (.43)
- Feel pressure to fit in (.29)
- Worry about their family not having enough money (.29)
- Feel pressure to be emotionally strong (.28)
- Hear boys say things that make them feel uncomfortable (.27)
- Hear boys say racist things (.25)
- Have seen porn online (.24)
- Feel pressure to be super masculine (.23)
- Feel pressure to be confident (.23)
- Feel pressure to compare themselves with others (.22)
- Feel pressure to fix own problems without asking for help (.22)
- Have heard someone say mean, sexist, racist, or anti-LGBTQ+ comments online (.21)
- See self-improvement influencers online (.19)
- Have heard of looksmaxxing (.16)



I feel like a lot of girls do have that kind of pressure to be perfect because I feel like a lot of girls are told they're not being fun or they're not being very interesting, and they just want to be there for the good moments, and I feel like that comes a lot from other girls as well. It's just that thing of having to maintain friendships and having to be fun and performing all the time.... I feel like [girls] have to have a strong reason why they're feeling what they're feeling, and I feel like they can't just come out of the blue, hang out with somebody just to vent to them... it's acceptable when a girl is crying over a breakup or something like that, but I feel like if they just come out of the blue and they're like, "I'm having a bad day," it's just like, "Whatever." You know what I'm saying? Let's just get to laughing or making videos or something.

— 14- to 17-year-old girl

I feel like the pressure that boys get to fit in, and if they try to fit in and they don't fit in...they can get sad or angry. — 14- to 17-year-old boy

Yeah, when you can't find a group, everyone needs companionship, everyone wants to be loved, and when you can't find that, it gets harder for you. Especially if you have a pre-existing mental health condition, which a lot more people are being diagnosed with. Because it's just been hidden in your family for so long that it just builds up to the point where it's very rampant in you, and mental health and just not having companions can lead to boys feeling depressed about themselves.... the rates for self-harm and suicide are up, and that probably has a lot to do with it.

— 14- to 17-year-old boy

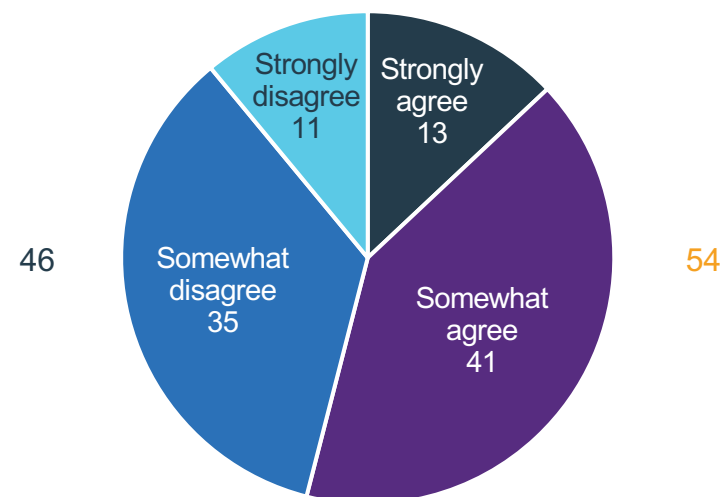
Many boys are absorbing different cultural messages than girls, including that they're to blame for society's problems.

Slightly more than half of boys in our survey (54%) agree that "our culture blames boys and men for society's problems."

Interestingly, similar proportions of girls also agree with the statement (49% agree; 49% disagree).

Do you agree or disagree:
Our culture blames boys and men for
society's problems.

N = 557 boys



Boys are most likely to experience gender-based pressures around confidence and physical strength.

Other pressures include interest in playing sports, dating or being in a relationship, and withholding emotions.

In the focus groups, both boys and girls talk about a cultural norm that “boys don’t cry.” One boy says that sharing vulnerable feelings “kind of makes [men] appear as weak. And a lot of guys don’t want to feel that way or be seen that way...because they want to be more socially accepted.”

Boys also talk about an imbalance in social norms where girls can express their emotions, get emotional support, and do so in a culture of acceptance.

Girls agree that boys are “supposed to be strong and carry the world on their back.” One teen girl says that a consequence of emotional suppression among boys is that they grow up to be “emotionally unavailable.”

% Of boys who feel a lot or some pressure to ...

53%

Be confident

56% ages 10 to 13

51% ages 14 to 19

52%

Be physically strong

48% ages 10 to 13

54% ages 14 to 19

41%

Have muscles

38% ages 10 to 13

44% ages 14 to 19

40%

Be confident

42% ages 10 to 13

38% ages 14 to 19

34%

Be physically strong

Only asked of ages 14 to 19

31%

Have muscles

30% ages 10 to 13

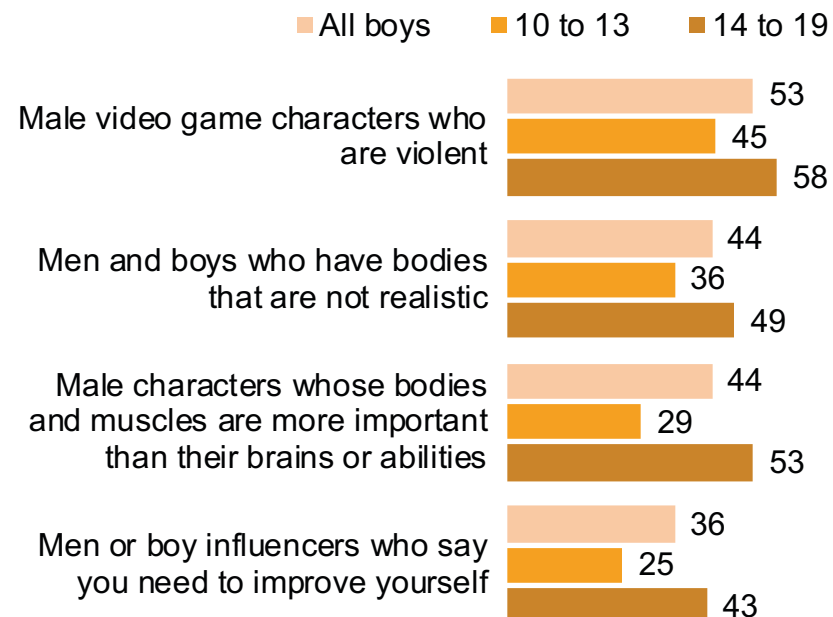
33% ages 14 to 19

Data suggest that as boys age, they become more exposed to cultural images of unrealistic male bodies and violence.

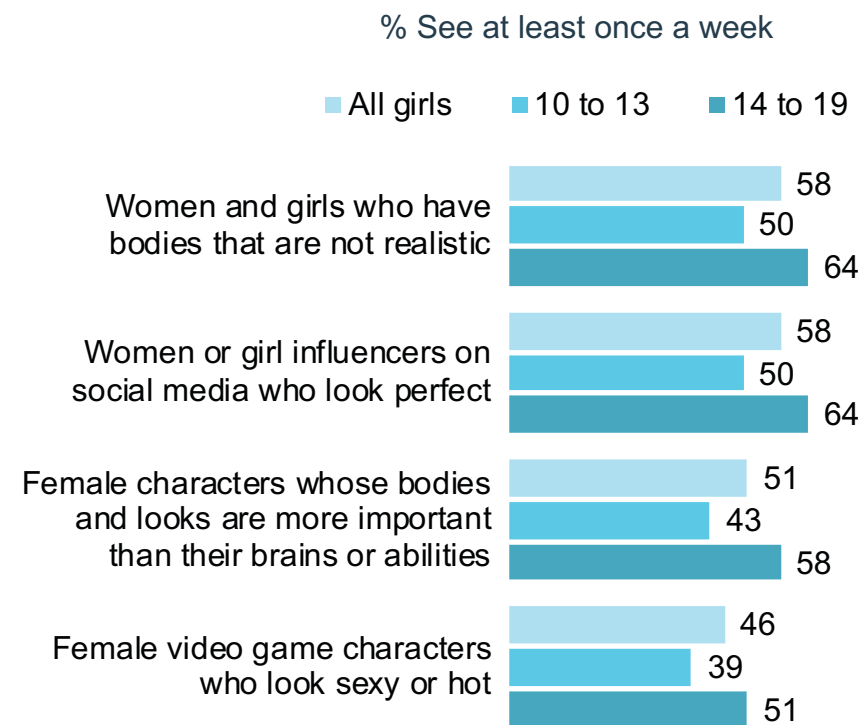
Additionally, 43% of older boys are regularly seeing cultural content about self-improvement, which is often linked with the “manosphere” and masculinity narratives.

Think about people and celebrities on social media, in movies, TV, music videos, games. How often do you see...

% At least once a week



Girls also see objectification of their bodies and unrealistic portrayals in media as they age.



About one-third of older teens know someone who has participated in behavior related to the objectification of girls.

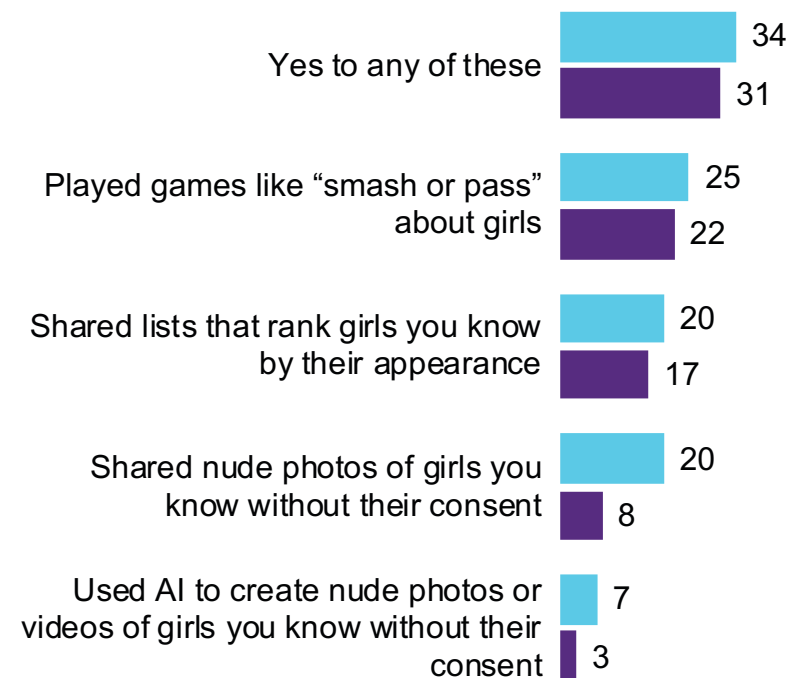
One in five girls (20%) say they know someone who has shared nude photos of girls without consent.

Do you know anyone who has:

N = 637 adolescents 14 to 19

% Yes

■ Girls ■ Boys



Girls and boys are equally likely to have encountered hateful comments online.

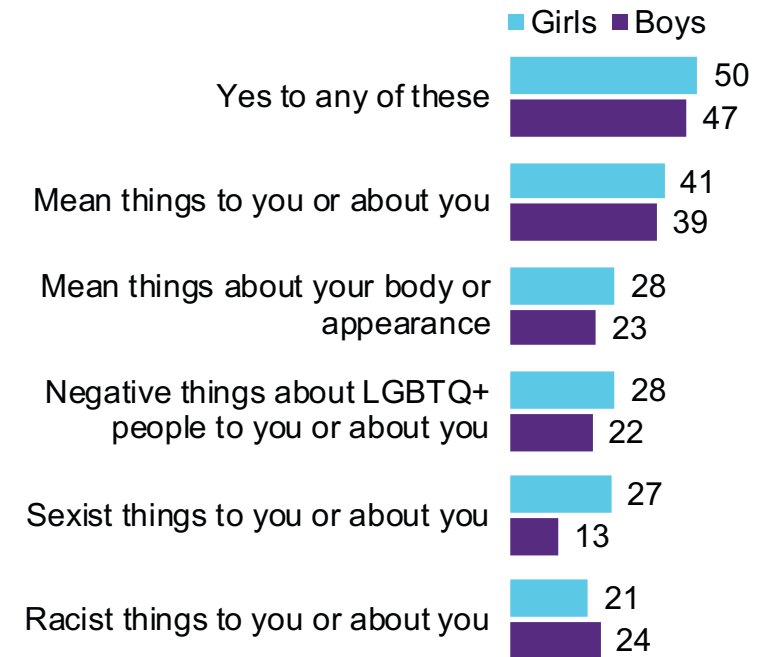
About half of girls and boys who are on social media say they've encountered various types of mean comments.

One quarter or more of Latino/e (30%), AAPI (28%), and Black (27%) adolescents say they've received racist comments or messages online.

Girls are twice as likely as boys to say someone has made sexist comments to them or about them online.

Interestingly, when we ask adolescents if they've ever experienced "online harassment," alongside a definition, only 21% say yes. That suggests a need for more education or for using different terms among teens.

In comments or messages online, has anyone ever said _____ ?
N = 774 adolescents on social media



Girls are significantly more likely than boys to experience sexual harassment online — but still about one in five boys have had these experiences.

Again, respondents don't necessarily label these experiences as "sexual harassment" (24% of girls and 6% of boys say they've experienced "sexual harassment" online).

Note: About a third of older girls 14 to 19 (35%) worry at least once a month about being sexually harassed or assaulted (vs. 8% of boys 14 to 19).

Has any of the following ever happened to you online or by text?

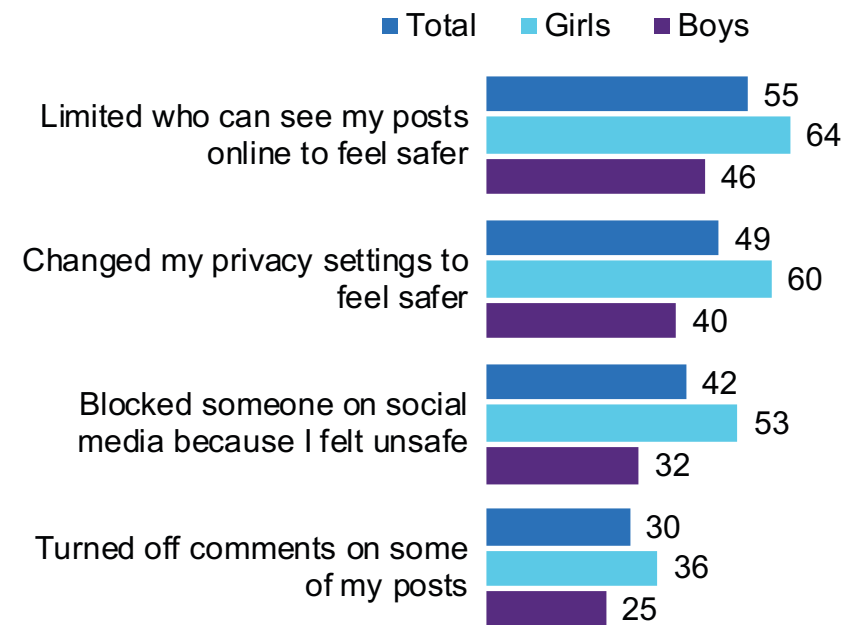
N = 560 adolescents 14 to 19 on social media



Adolescents — particularly girls — are doing the work of staying safe online themselves.

They're doing things like limiting who sees their posts, changing their privacy settings, blocking people, and turning off comments to posts.

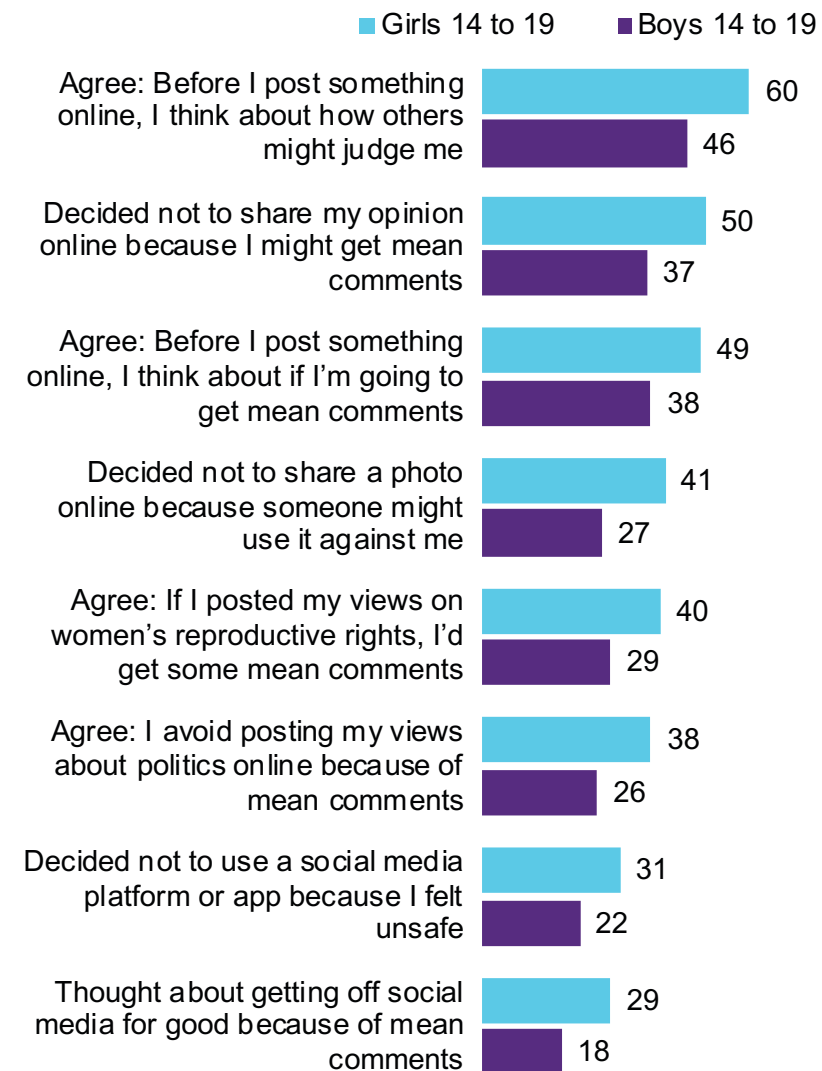
Have you ever...
N = 774 adolescents on social media



For many girls, concerns about safety and judgment lead to self-censorship, bracing for negativity, or a desire to forego online spaces entirely.

Self-censoring and bracing for negativity online

N = 560 adolescents 14 to 19 on social media



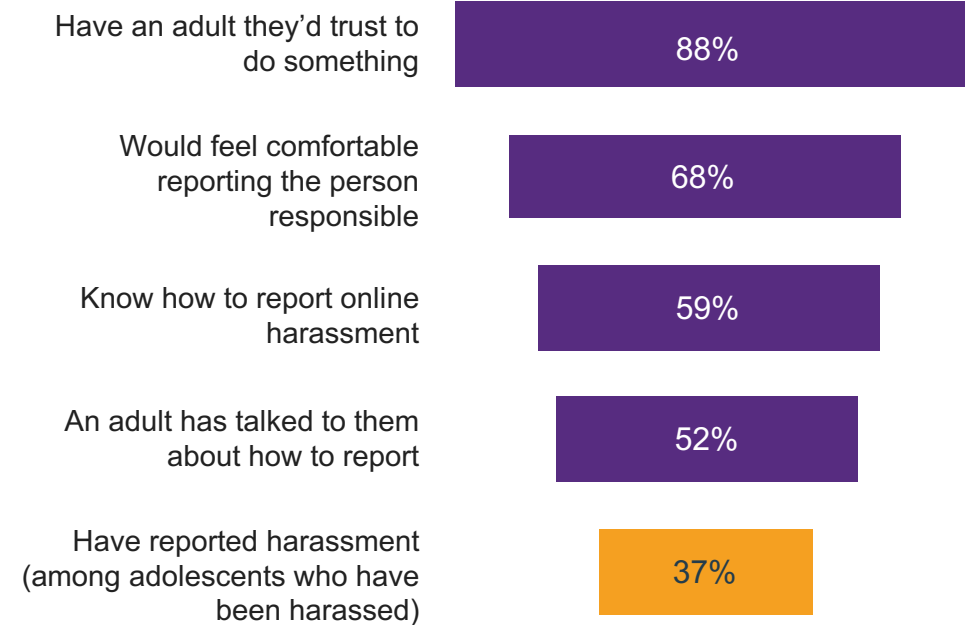
Adolescents say they're comfortable reporting online harassment and have trusted adults to turn to. But, limited guidance and distrust of institutions may leave most incidents unreported.

Two-thirds of adolescents on social media (68%) say they'd feel comfortable reporting someone who harassed them online, and nearly nine in ten (88%) have an adult they trust to take action on such a situation.

Fewer may be equipped to act. Four in ten adolescents don't know how to report harassment. Just half (52%) say an adult has talked with them about how to do so.

The result may be a reporting gap. Most adolescents who've experienced online harassment (63%) have never reported it to a social media company.

Views related to reporting online harassment



Many express a lack of trust in institutions to take sexual harassment and assault seriously.

Most adolescents do not trust social media companies or the government to take issues of sexual harassment and assault seriously.

Girls are less likely than boys to trust their school and the police to take these issues seriously.

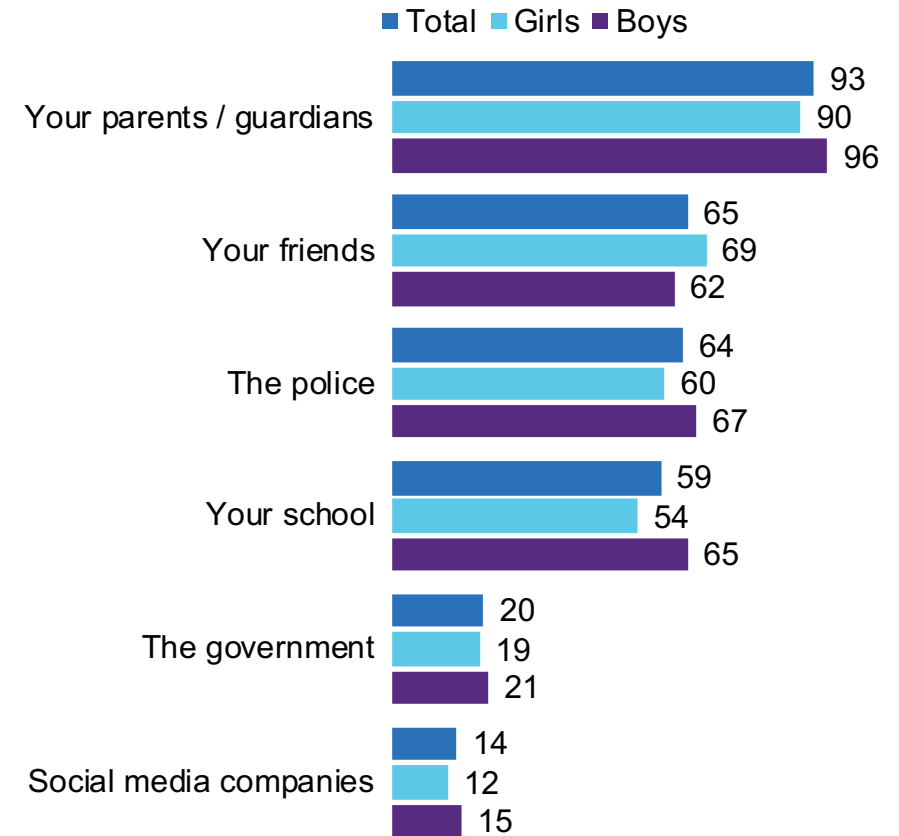
Boys are slightly less likely than girls to trust their friends on the issue.

In the focus groups, teens say they don't trust social media companies because of profit motives or because current approaches don't work. For example, simply "banning" someone from a platform doesn't prevent the person from creating a new account and continuing the behavior.

Trust in schools may relate to how administrators have dealt with sexual harassment and assault in the past. In both focus groups, some have seen schools not holding offenders accountable and blaming the victims. On the flipside, others in the groups trust their school because they have seen accountability in action or because schools have communicated well on the issue.

Do you trust these people and groups to take sexual harassment and assault seriously?

% Yes, trust them





Certain social media platforms, I feel like they wouldn't take [sexual harassment] as seriously considering that they're just running the platform for the money. But if the social media app you're using does happen to actually care about their users, then I think reporting would be a good option. But if it doesn't, then I guess there's no use in doing it.

— 14- to 17-year-old girl

The most that's going to happen is just that the person's going to get banned. Nothing really else is going to happen. [The offender] can just make a new account and do it again. It's not really going to change anything.

— 14- to 17-year-old girl

Snapchat is built around the whole idea that what you send can't be screenshotted. Photos you send immediately delete after you send them. It's basically a paradise for people who want to harass other people and that's the main demographic using those sites. Why would [Snapchat] not accommodate them?

— 14- to 17-year-old boy

I don't really trust the government, because...if we look at the president, he's done a bunch of weird things, like [he's] mentioned in the [Epstein] files, and it's just really weird how that's our president.

— 14- to 17-year-old girl

I don't have a lot of faith in the government to do something about things like that due to the fact that just in general the prison sentences for people who are rapists are definitely not long enough. Legal battles against them are often very quickly turned down. It's normally in their favor. A lot of people who work in the government even have records of sexual abuse or assault in general. So I don't expect the people who want to be walking free to do anything about it.

— 14- to 17-year-old boy

And looking at my local government, once again, I'm from a small town, so if you have a name or if you have money, same rules don't apply to you, or the level of enforcement.

— 14- to 17-year-old girl



I said that I trust my school because it's happened before and they take it serious and they contact the police and they do all this stuff and expel and punish the kids and stuff and talk to their parents.

— 14- to 17-year-old boy

My school, they talk a lot about that, and we have to do like surveys about it like monthly, and if you want to report or have a meeting about it, then you can. So that's why I say that I trust my school to handle the problem.

— 14- to 17-year-old boy

Adolescents whose parents or teachers have talked with them about sexual harassment feel more prepared to report it.

	No	Yes, parent(s)	Yes, teacher(s)	Yes to both
Know how to report online harassment	49%	65%	62%	66%
Would feel comfortable reporting	59%	72%	75%	78%
Trust an adult to do something about it	79%	92%	90%	92%
Trust their school to take it seriously	52%	63%	67%	69%
Trust parents to take it seriously	91%	94%	95%	96%

Girls in the focus group talk about the impact on them when institutions don't take sexual harassment and assault seriously.

They see direct consequences on girls, such as making them feel unseen, "below human," and removing any incentive to report these experiences. One girl also says that a lack of institutional action creates a culture that normalizes sexual harassment and assault.

”

I think [institutions that don't take sexual harassment and assault seriously make girls] feel not seen and...like they're worth something that's below human, like their feelings and their situations [are] just discarded to the side because it's not being taken seriously. And that can affect them, because their self-worth is lowered now. They're like, oh, I guess I'm just not that important — but that's not true.

— 14- to 17-year-old girl

[It] fosters a culture [and] a society that's more accepting of [sexual harassment and assault]. And so whenever things do happen, people [are like] "okay" rather than, "what action can we take?" Because I feel like it creates a sense where it's normal, as sad as that is to say....[and] when things do happen, [victims have] these people around them, and the society telling them it's not a big deal, or that their voice won't be heard.

— 14- to 17-year-old girl

I feel like a lot of girls feel like if no one does anything, there's not even a reason to report it. I've seen that happen a lot, where girls will have an experience where someone didn't take them seriously at school or something. And then, in the future, something happens again, and they're like, I don't want to report it because I don't really feel like anyone takes it serious or anyone does anything.... I feel like a lot of times girls just feel like no one's going to do anything, and no one is listening to them.

— 14- to 17-year-old girl

Black adolescents

Across questions, Black respondents show the most affinity for leadership. They're far more likely to see themselves as a leader (70% vs. 45% of all other adolescents), be seen as a leader by others (54% vs. 38%), and call leadership an important life goal (74% vs. 58%). Black adolescents are also more hopeful of reaching their life goals (69% "very" hopeful vs. 53%).

Black respondents are more likely than others to hold egalitarian gender views and perceive current inequality. For example, they're more comfortable using someone's preferred pronouns (76% vs. 54%). They're also more likely to say full equality doesn't yet exist (72% vs. 63%), and to be concerned about the loss of reproductive rights (73% vs. 56%).

Latino/e adolescents

Latino/e respondents are particularly likely to feel pressures related to appearance and body-image. Latina girls are +28 points more likely than other girls to feel pressure to look perfect (63% vs. 35% of other girls), and three in four worry at least weekly about how they look (75% vs. 60%). That pressure comes alongside heavier exposure to unrealistic portrayals of women's bodies (62% among Latino/e adolescents vs. 52%) and female characters in media valued for looks over abilities (54% vs. 47%).

Data suggest that worries may also extend beyond appearance. Latino/e respondents worry about doing well in school (61% vs. 51% of others) and they're more likely to rate their mental health lower on our scale (26% rate zero to five vs. 20%).

AAPI adolescents

AAPI respondents are the least likely of any group to say full gender equality has been achieved (23% vs. 37% of all other adolescents). Older AAPI teens are also more likely to say they're worried about women losing reproductive rights (69% vs. 59%).

White adolescents

Ideologically, white teens stand apart most in their belief that gender equality has already been achieved (45% vs. 29% of all others). They're also significantly less likely than others to be concerned about the loss of reproductive rights (45% vs. 70%).

White teens also report more conformity-driven pressure than others. They're more likely to say they feel pressure to fit in (57% vs. 49%) and to compare themselves to others (41% vs. 31%).

DETAILED FINDINGS.

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Their goals and aspirations.

To better understand adolescents, we wanted to explore their goals and dreams. What are they prioritizing for their futures? Where do traditional milestones around marriage and kids fit in? Do they feel optimistic about their futures — or nihilistic?

Being their true self tops a list of life priorities.

Other top goals include having enough money, feeling at peace, and having a successful career.

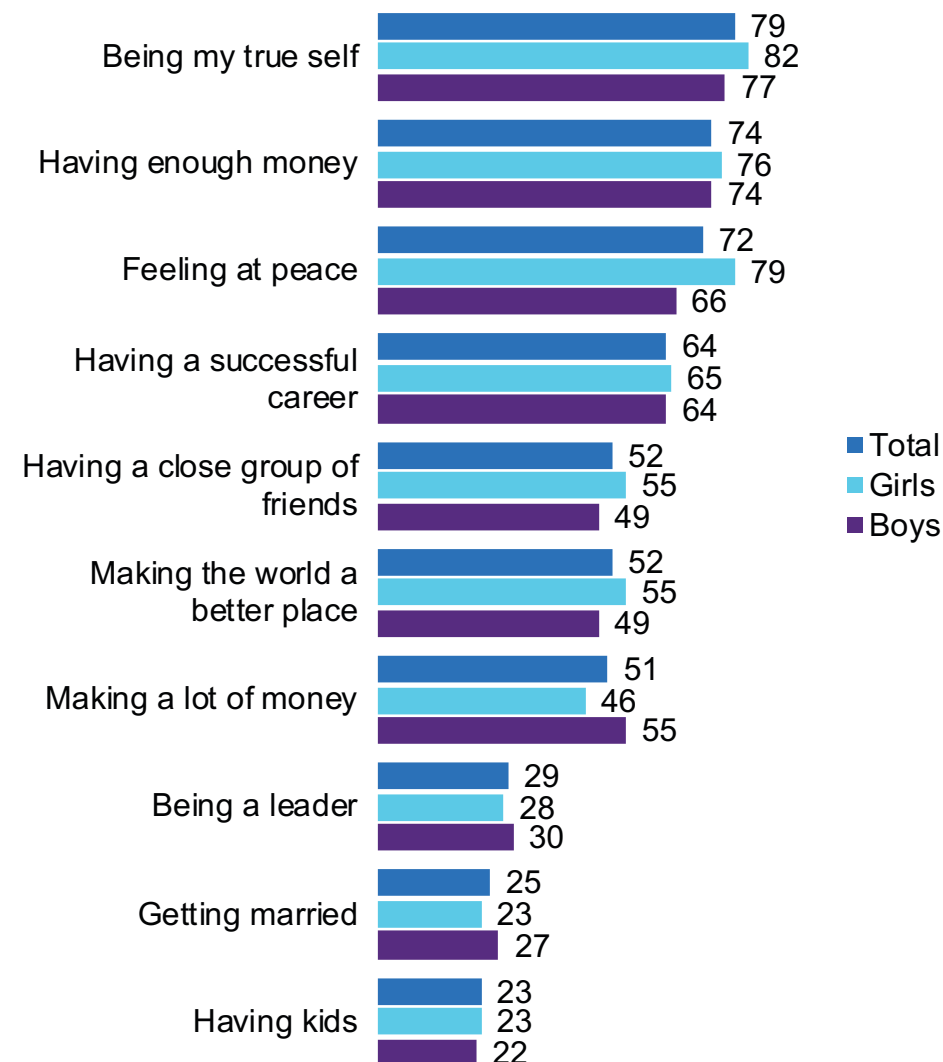
Girls are more likely than boys to prioritize feeling at peace (+13 percentage points). Boys are more likely than girls to want to make a lot of money (+9 points).

While marriage and having kids are at least somewhat important for many adolescents (65% and 61%), they land at the bottom of this list of priorities.

Black respondents are +16 points more likely than respondents overall to say being a leader is a “very” important goal (45% vs. 29% overall).

How important is each of these goals for your life?

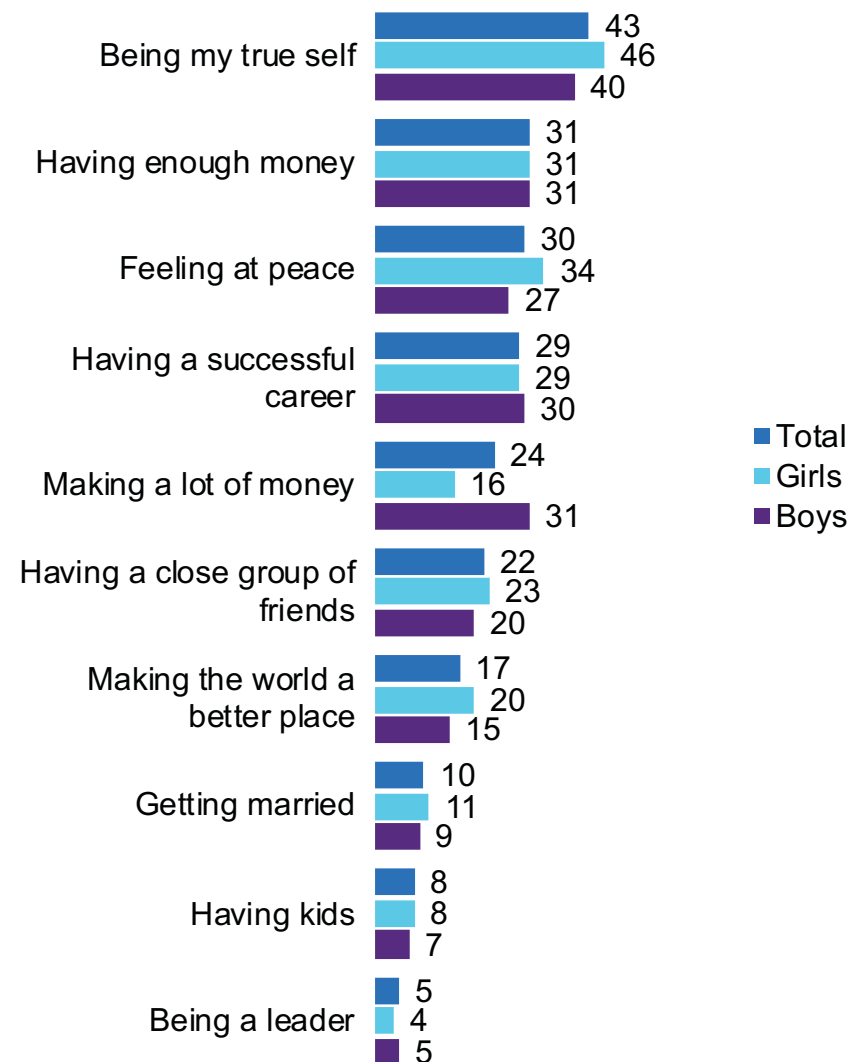
% Very important



Being themselves also tops the list when we asked them which goals are most important.

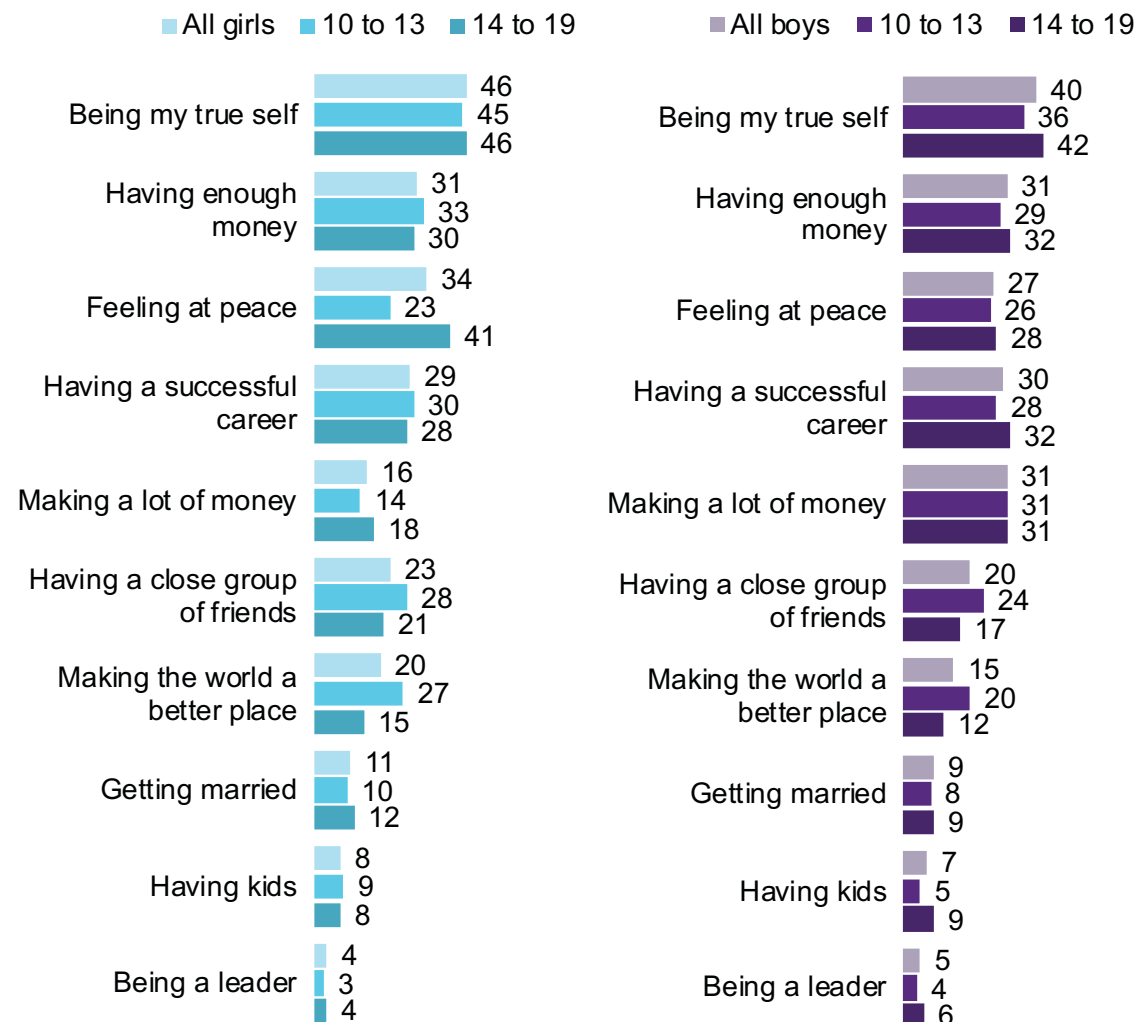
Black adolescents are slightly more likely than others to name as top goals having a successful career (38% vs. 29% overall), feeling at peace (36% vs. 30%), and making a lot of money (33% vs. 24%).

Which of these is most important to you? Choose 3



Older teen girls are especially likely to prioritize feeling at peace — second to being themselves.

Which of these is most important to you? Choose 3.



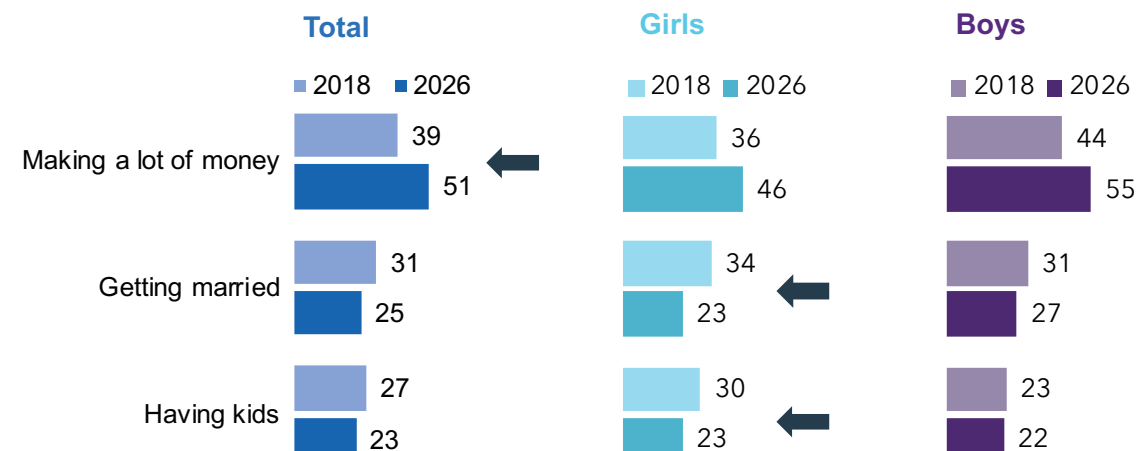
In comparison to 2018, girls are less likely to prioritize marriage and kids.

Boys' prioritization of marriage and kids has mostly held steady.

Adolescents also may be prioritizing money more compared to adolescents in 2018.

How important is each of these goals for your life?

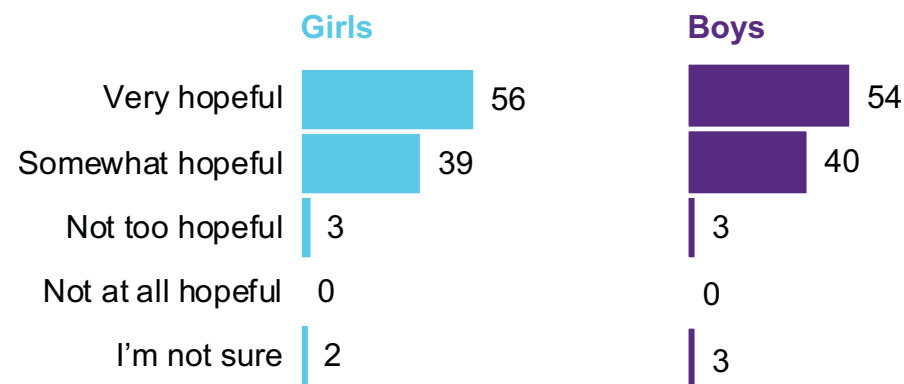
% Very important



We don't see much evidence for nihilism — majorities of adolescents feel hopeful about reaching their life goals.

Black adolescents (69%) and girls ages 10 to 13 (61%) are the most likely to be “very” hopeful about reaching their goals.

How hopeful are you that you will reach all of your goals?

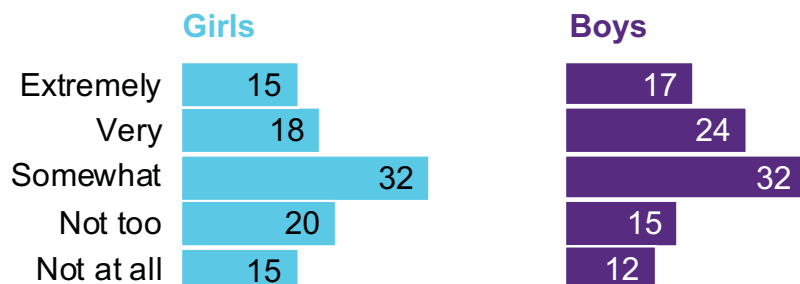


Interest in STEM and leadership.

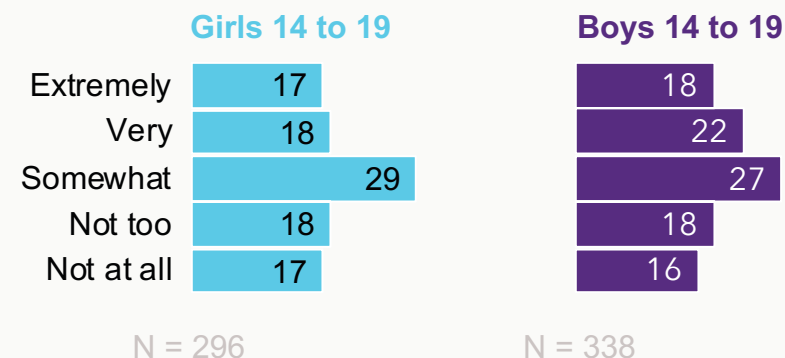
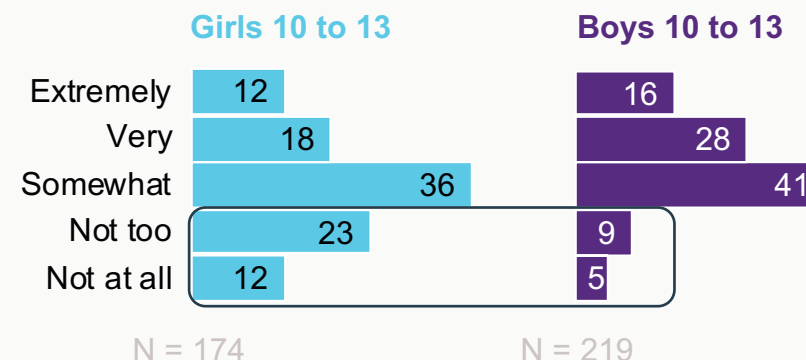
In our 2018 survey, we explored how girls compare to boys in interest in STEM and in running for elected office. We continue to see boys slightly more interested in STEM. Girls and boys are equally likely to have never thought about running for office.

Younger girls are less interested in STEM than boys, but older girls and boys are about equally interested.

Even if it's a long ways away, how interested are you in a job someday that deals with science, technology, math, or engineering? (Engineering is about building or designing things.)

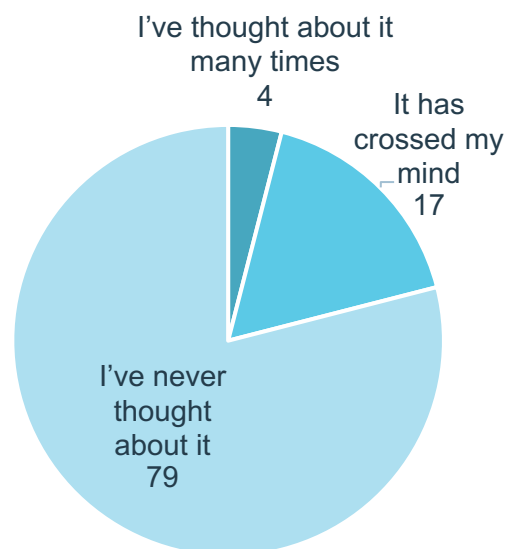


Black adolescents are more likely to be interested in STEM (43%) than Latino/e (35%) or white adolescents (33%).

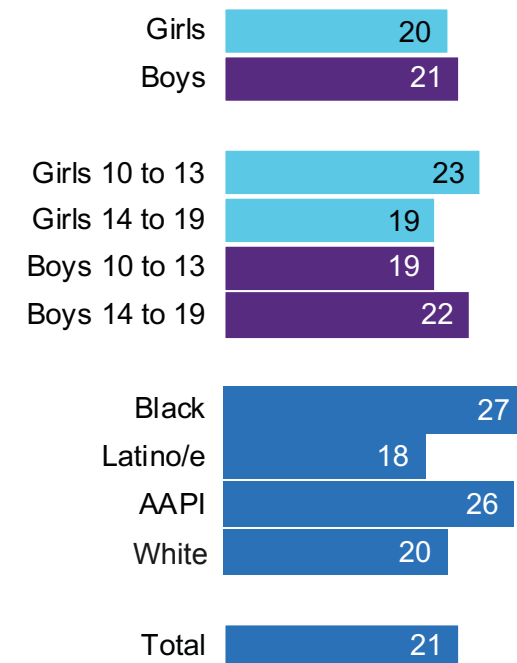


Most adolescents have never thought about running for elected office.

Have you ever thought that, when you are older, you might want to be a politician or run for elected office?

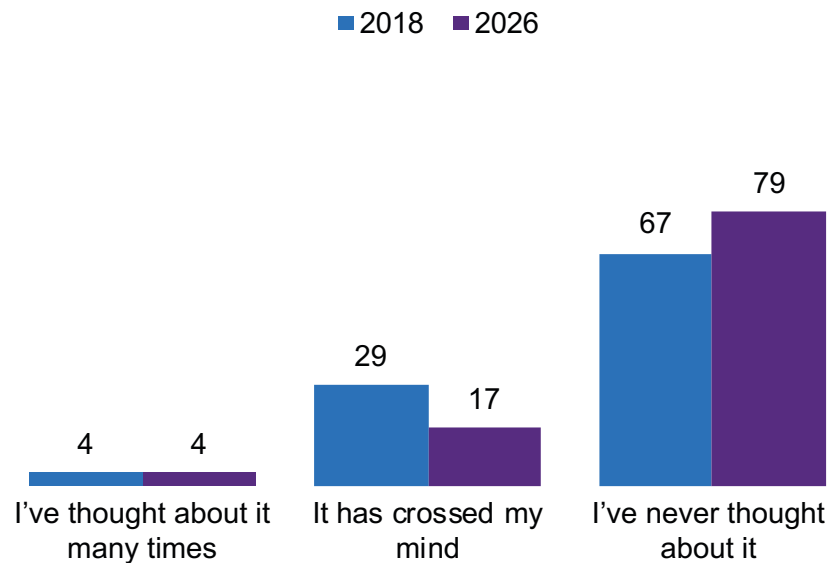


% Have thought about it



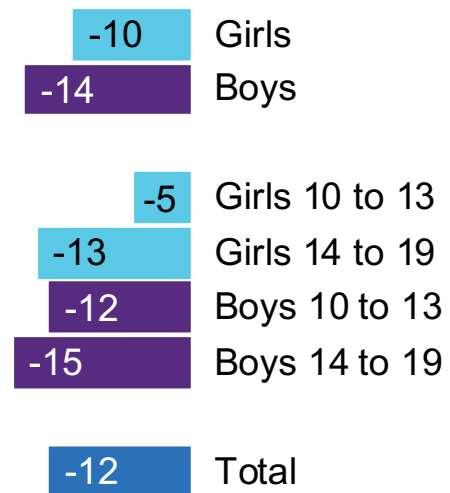
Data suggest fewer adolescents have thought about running for office now vs. in 2018.

Have you ever thought that, when you are older, you might want to be a politician or run for elected office?*



*2018 wording: Have you ever thought that, when you are older, you might want to be a politician?

Difference in having thought about running for office in 2026 vs. 2018

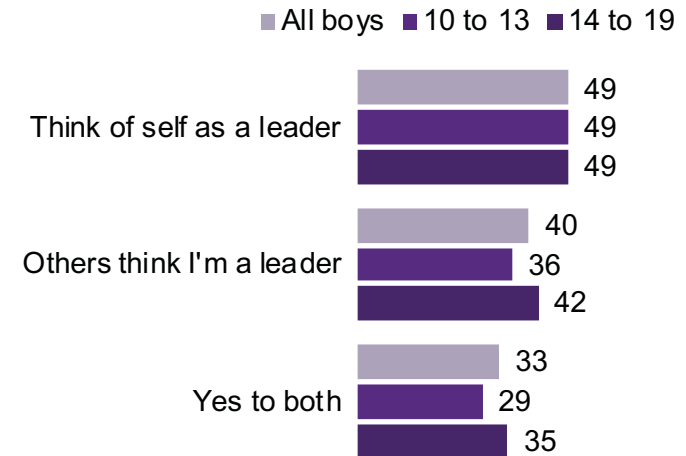
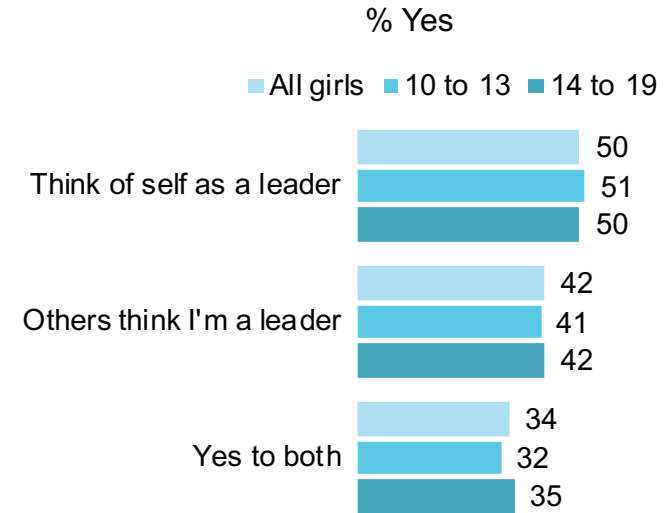


That said, half of adolescents see themselves as a leader.

Girls and boys are equally likely to consider themselves leaders and to say that others view them as one.

Black adolescents are more likely than adolescents overall to see themselves as leaders (70% vs. 50%) and say others view them as a leader (54% vs. 41%).

Do you think of yourself as a leader?
Do other people think you are a leader?

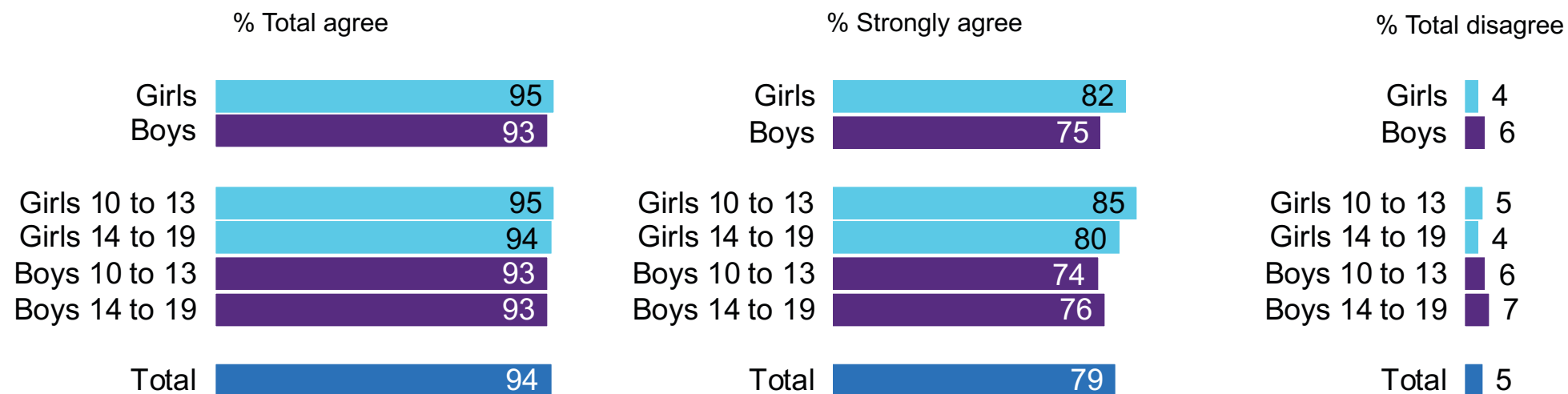


Views toward gender equality.

We measured views toward different aspects of gender equality — from belief in equal treatment to traditional roles to whether or not they think gender equality has been achieved. We also asked new questions, including whether or not adolescents think our culture blames boys and men for society’s problems.

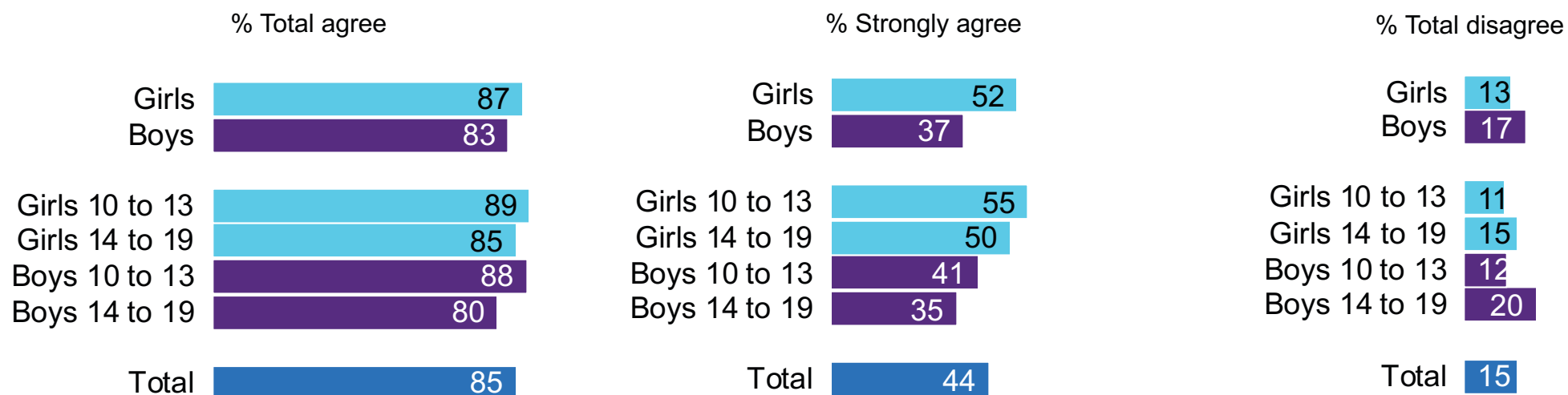
Adolescents universally agree that men and women should be treated equally.

Do you agree or disagree: Men and women should be treated equally.



Large majorities also agree they want equal numbers of men and women in leadership — although fewer “strongly” agree.

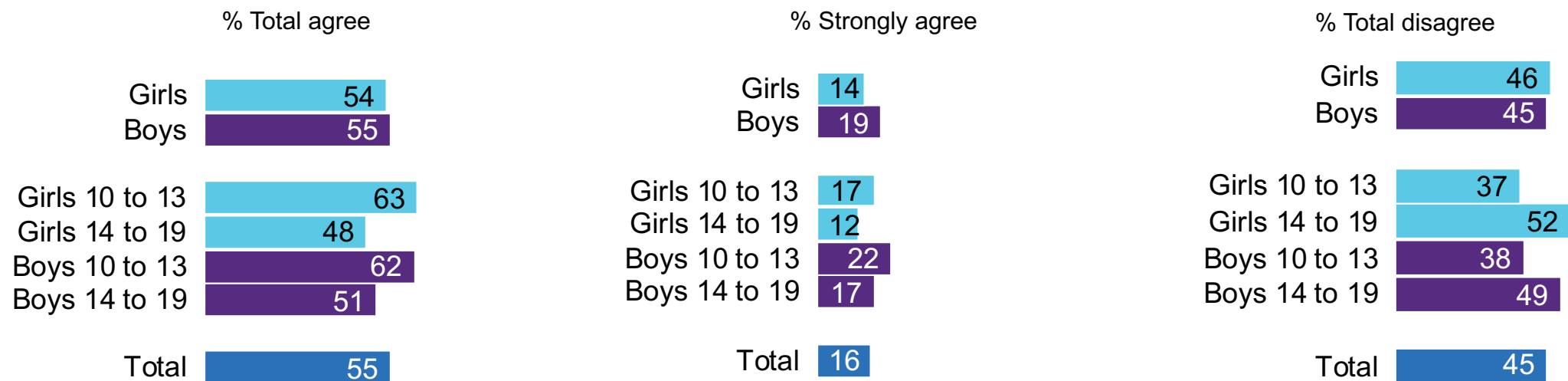
Do you agree or disagree: I want there to be equal numbers of men and women who are leaders in work, politics and life.



Black (57%), AAPI (46%), and Latino/e (45%) adolescents are more likely to strongly agree than white adolescents (38%).

About half of adolescents — and majorities of younger respondents — say they're more comfortable with women having traditional roles.

Do you agree or disagree: I'm more comfortable with women having traditional roles in society, such as caring for children and family.



But far fewer plan to fill traditional roles for themselves.

About one in five adolescents say they'd want a future where the woman is a traditional housewife and mother.

Girls are more likely to outright reject the idea than boys (43% vs. 29%), who are more likely to say they're not sure.

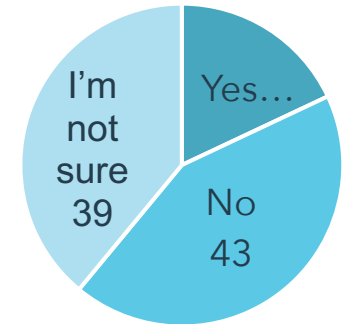
Question wording:

It used to be that most women were stay-at-home housewives and mothers. They would cook, clean, and take care of the kids, while their husbands worked. If you were to get married and have kids:

Girls

Would you want to be an at-home housewife and mother?

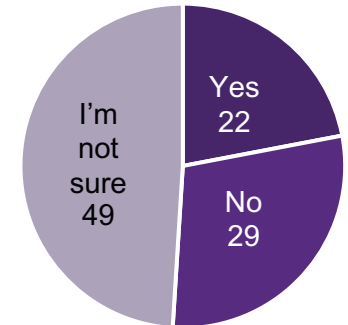
N = 435: heterosexual girls 14 to 19 and all girls 10 to 13



Boys

Would you want your wife to be an at-home housewife and mother?

N = 540: heterosexual boys 14 to 19 and all boys 10 to 13



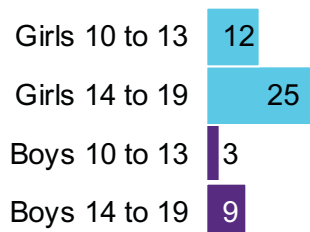
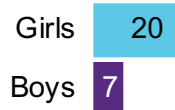
Close to half of respondents aren't sure if they'd label themselves a feminist — or don't know what the term means.

Do you consider yourself a feminist, or not?

13%

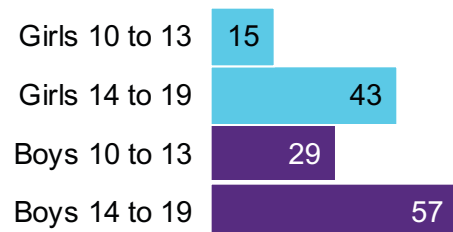
Yes (overall)

V



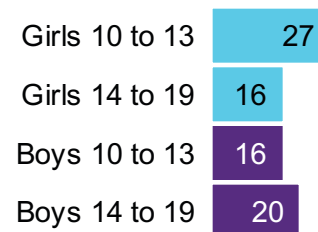
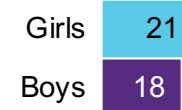
39%

No



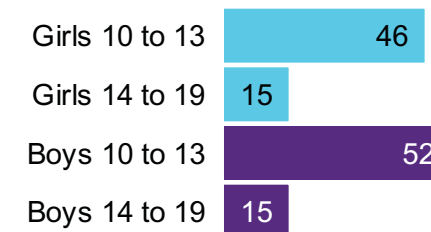
20%

Not sure



28%

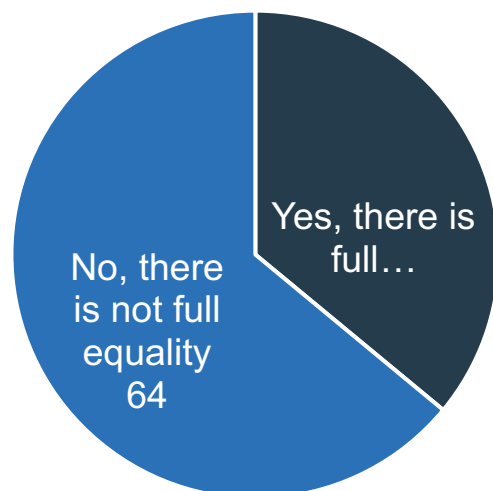
Not sure what the term means



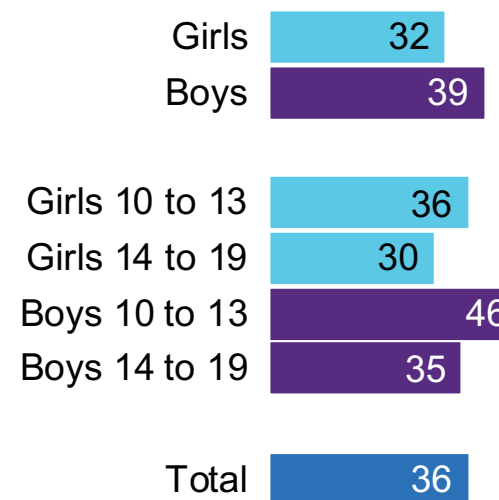
Compared to 2018, adolescents are +8 points more likely to say they're not sure whether they consider themselves a feminist or don't know what the term means.

A majority of adolescents (64%) say women do not have full equality.

Do you think there is full equality for women in work, politics, and life right now, or not?



% Yes, there is full equality

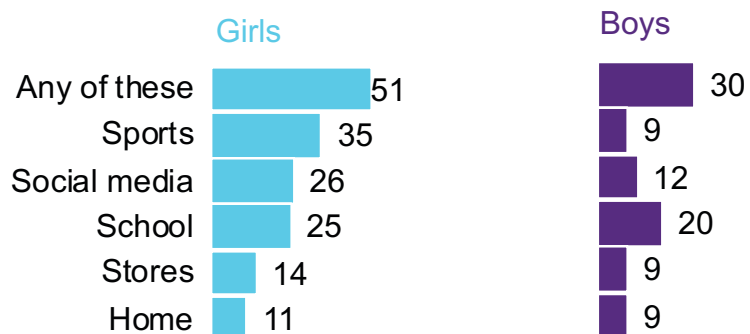


Boys are slightly more likely than girls to say full equality exists.

White adolescents (45%) are much more likely to say full equality exists compared to Latino/e (29%), Black (28%), and AAPI (23%) adolescents.

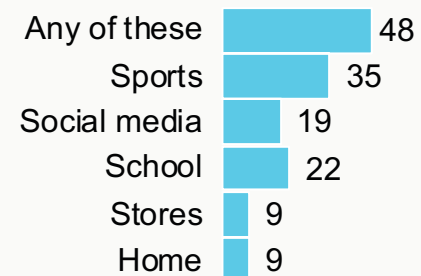
Girls are more likely than boys to feel treated unfairly — especially in sports and on social media.

As a [girl/boy], do you ever feel treated more unfairly than [boys/girls]...



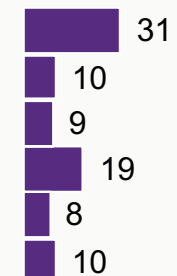
Black boys (19%) are more likely to report unfair treatment in stores than white (7%) or Latino/e (7%) boys.

Girls 10 to 13



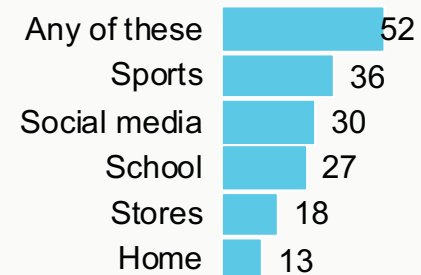
N = 174

Boys 10 to 13



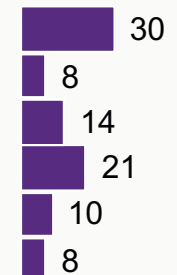
N = 219

Girls 14 to 19



N = 296

Boys 14 to 19

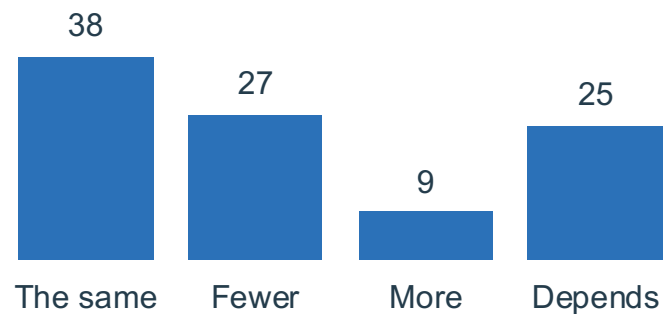


N = 338

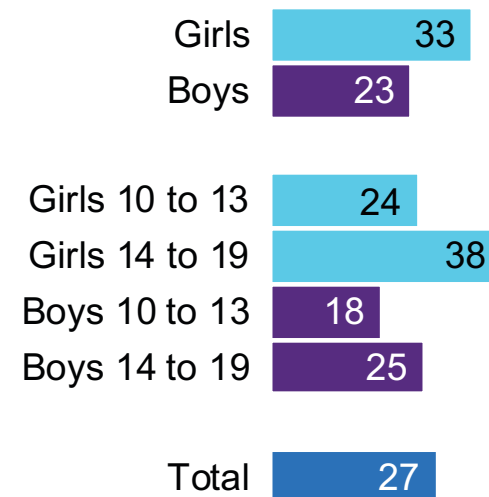
A plurality of adolescents think girls and boys have equal opportunities at school — but one in four says girls have fewer.

Older girls are more likely than others to say they have fewer opportunities than boys.

In school, do you think that girls have more, fewer, or the same opportunities as boys?

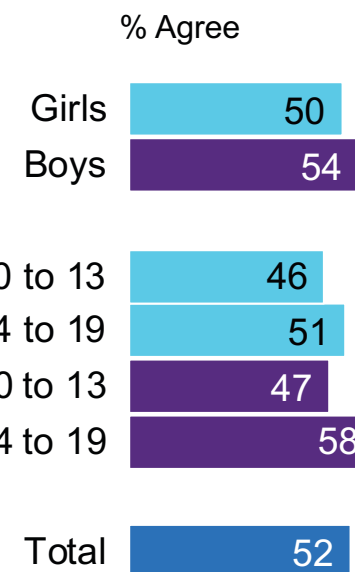
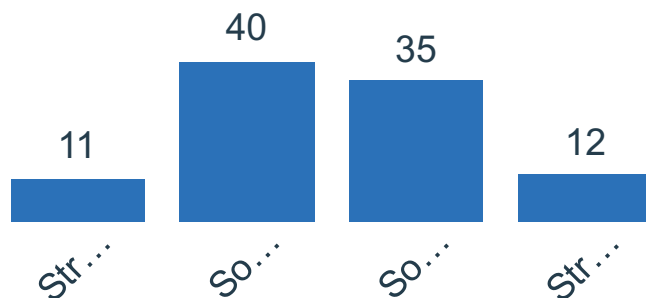


% Say girls have fewer opportunities than boys



About half of adolescents — both girls and boys — agree that our culture places blame on boys and men for society's problems.

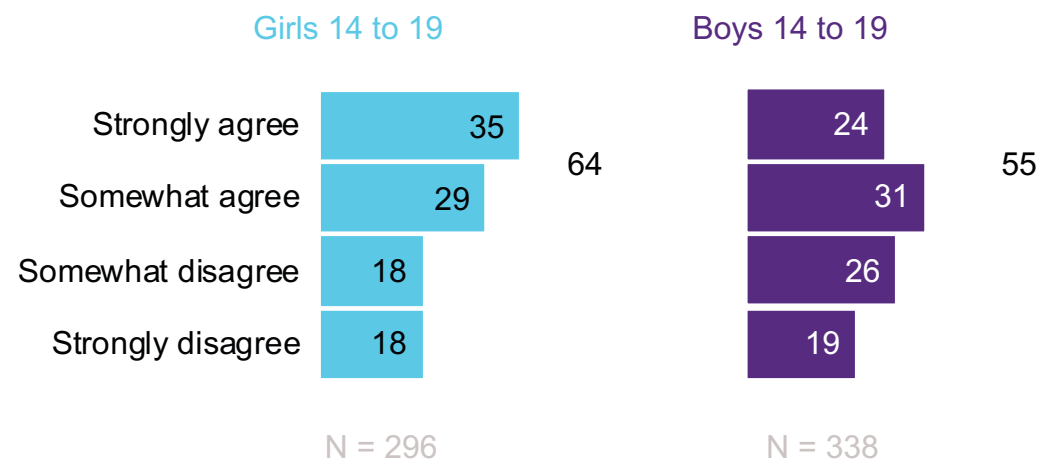
Do you agree or disagree: Our culture blames boys and men for society's problems.



A majority of older adolescents worry about women losing their reproductive rights.

Black (73%), Latino/e (66%), and AAPI (69%) adolescents are significantly more likely than their white counterparts (45%) to worry about a loss of reproductive rights.

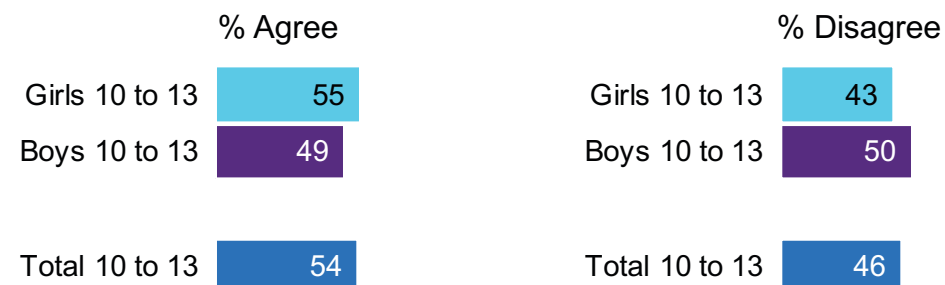
Do you agree or disagree:
I'm worried about women losing their
reproductive rights.



Girls are more likely than boys to feel comfortable using someone's preferred pronouns.

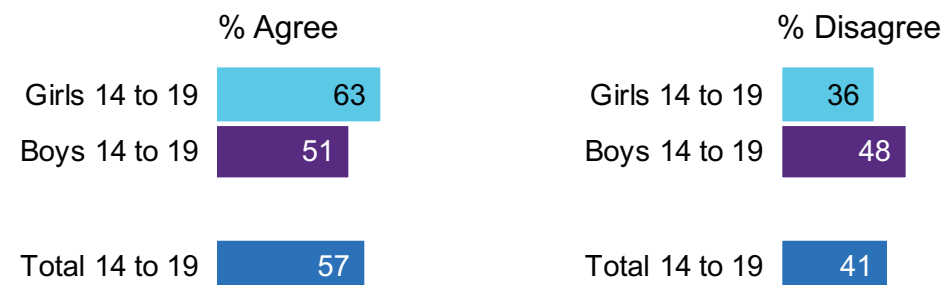
I'm okay calling someone the gender they want like "he" or "she," even if it doesn't match how they were born.

N = 400 adolescents 10 to 13



I am comfortable using someone's preferred pronouns regardless of their biological sex.

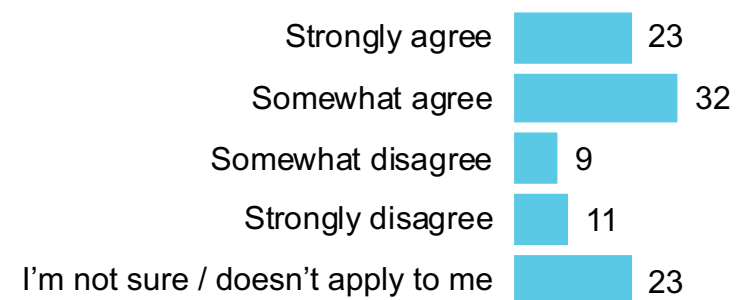
N = 637 adolescents 14 to 19



Over half (55%) of older girls worry about sexist content impacting the boys around them.

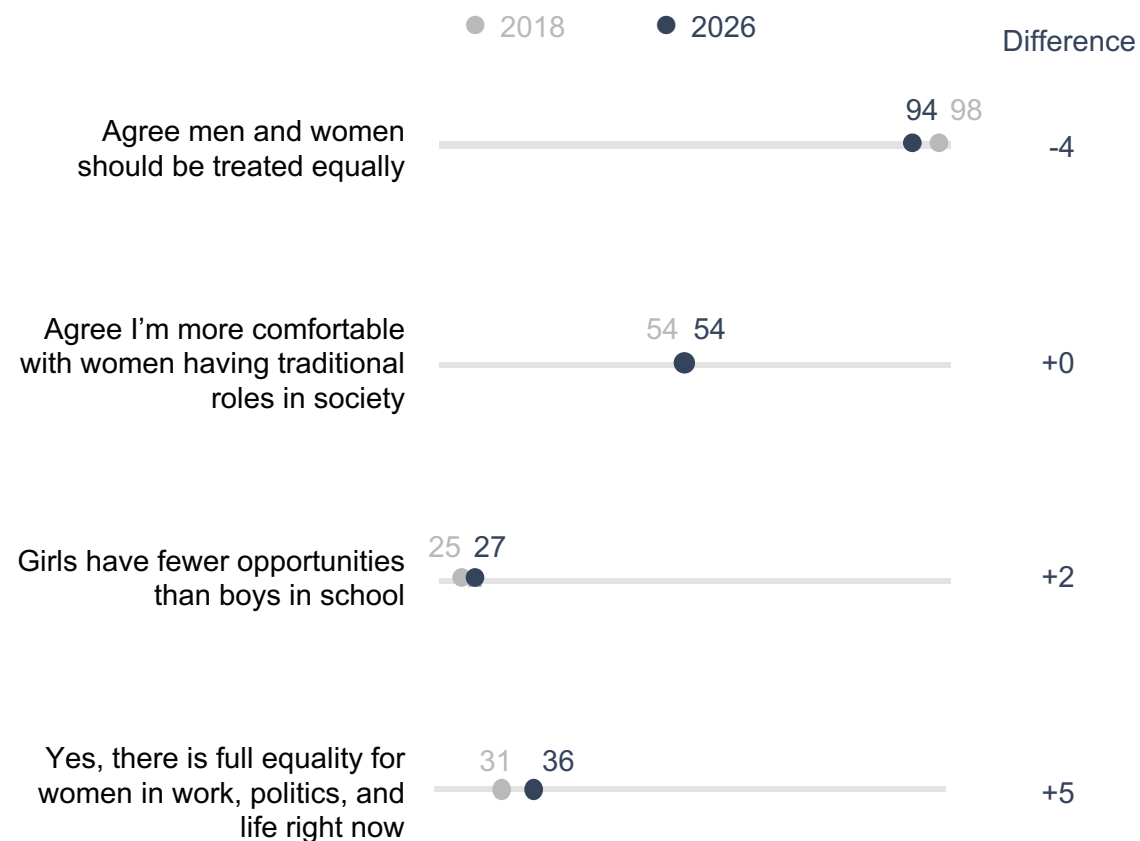
I worry that sexist content online is influencing boys my age.

N = 296 girls 14 to 19



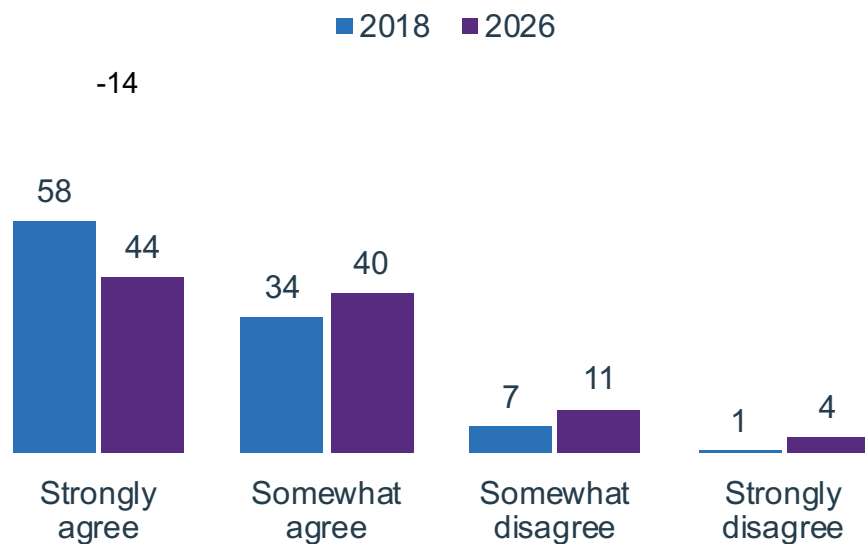
Overall, attitudes toward gender are fairly similar to what we measured in 2018.

Views on gender equality among adolescents: 2018 vs. 2026

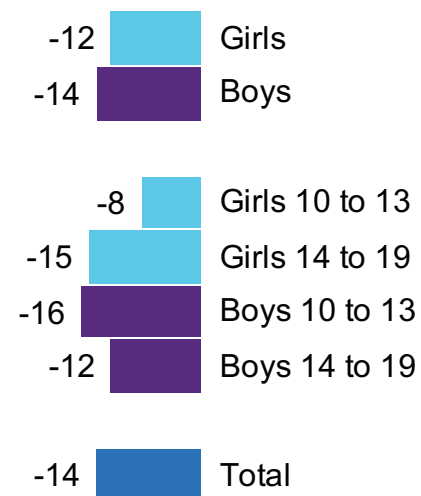


The exception is fewer respondents strongly agree with wanting equal numbers of men and women in positions of power.

Do you agree or disagree: I want there to be equal numbers of men and women who are leaders in work, politics, and life.



Percentage-point difference in
“strongly” agree
2018 to 2026



The pressures adolescents face.

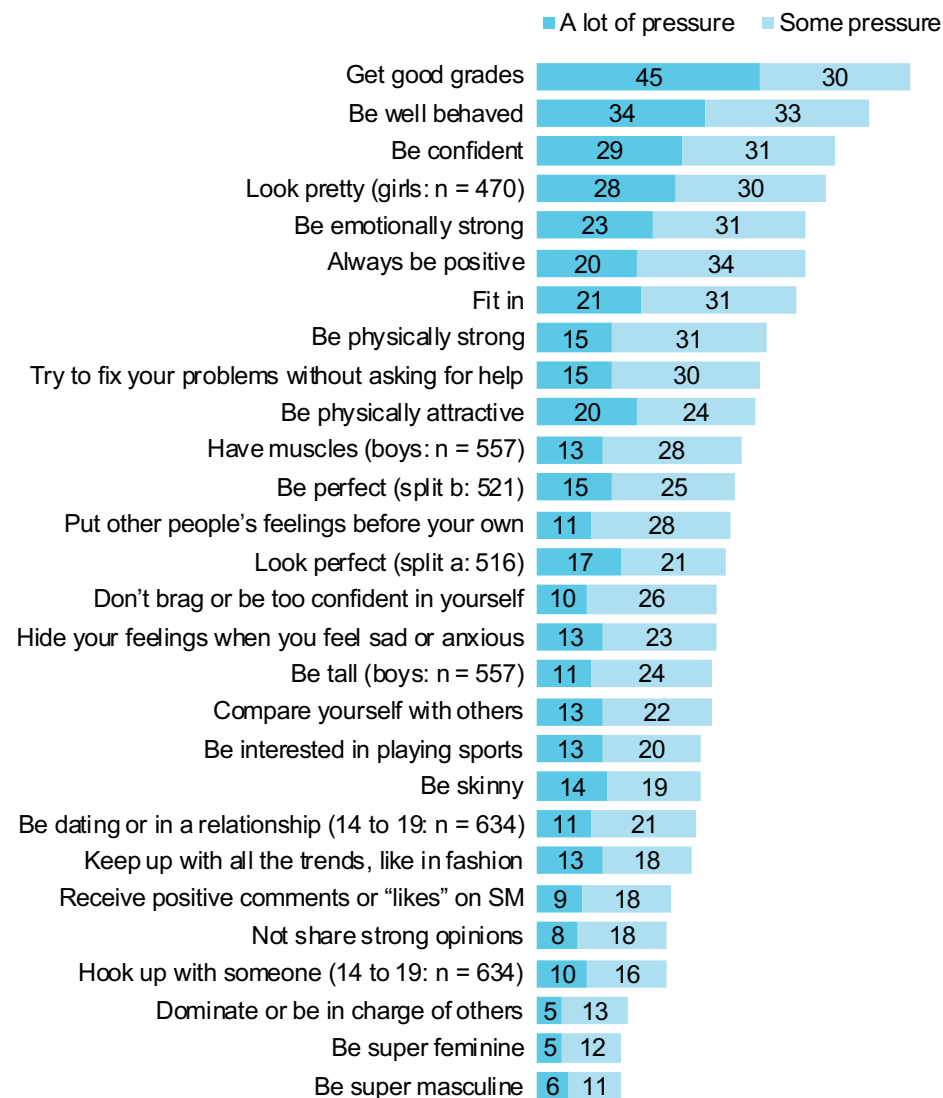
The survey examined a range of pressures adolescents face, including many rooted in gender-based cultural expectations.

We explored a range of pressures adolescents may feel.

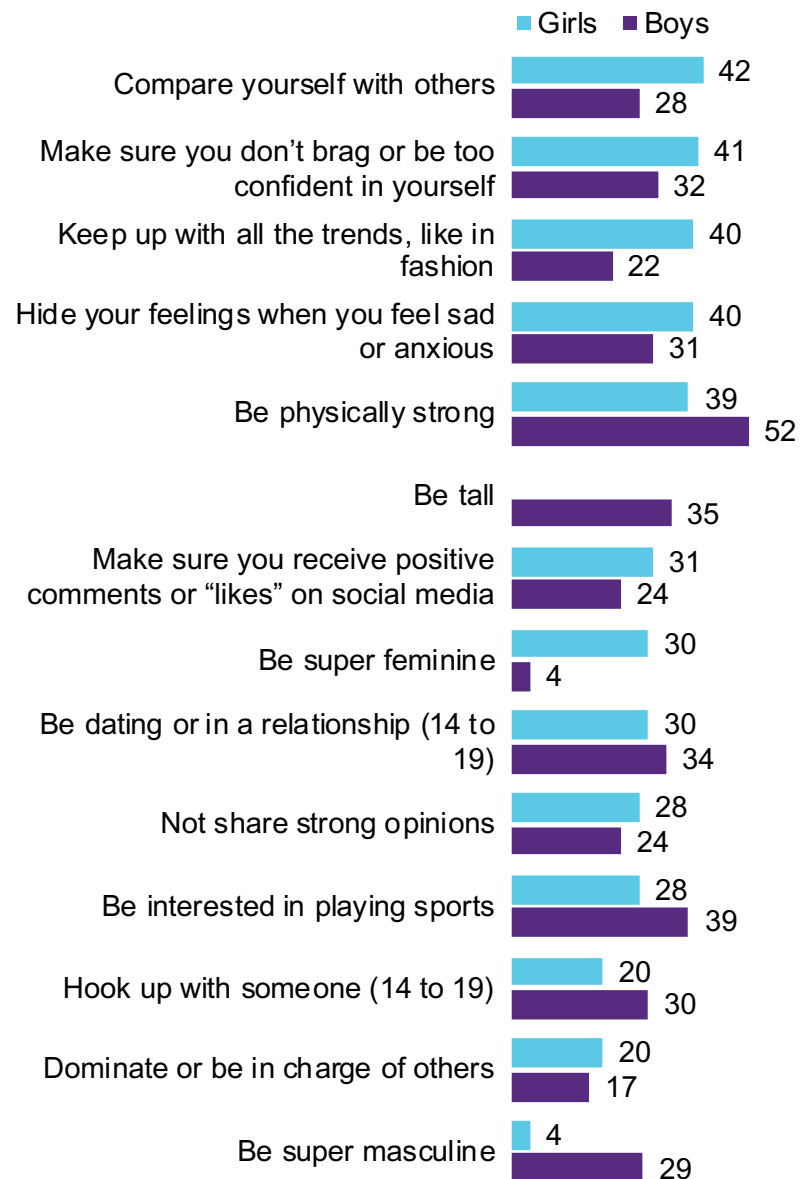
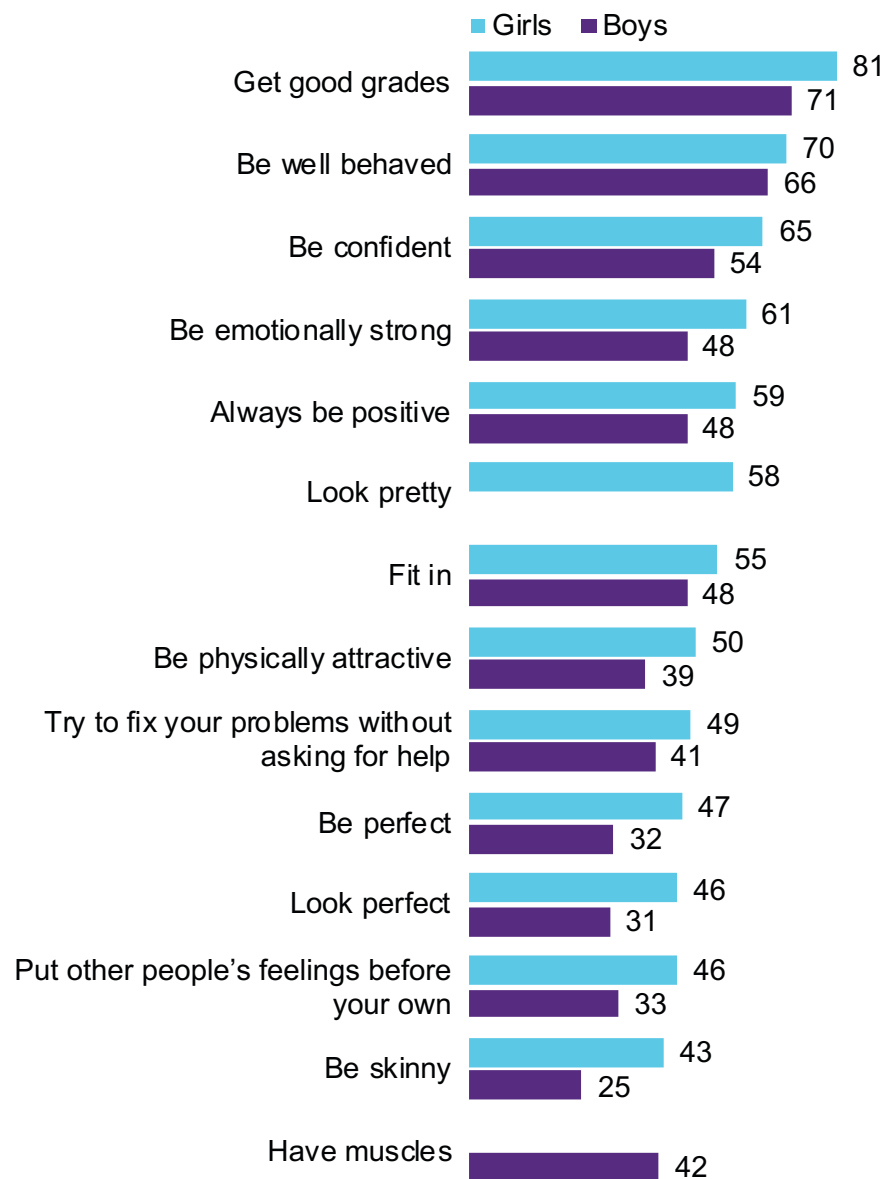
Most feel pressure to get good grades and be well-behaved.

Across the board, girls are more likely than boys to be navigating several pressures and expectations. See next page.

Sometimes we can feel pressure from parents, friends, teachers, or society to be a certain way. How much pressure, if any, do you feel to...



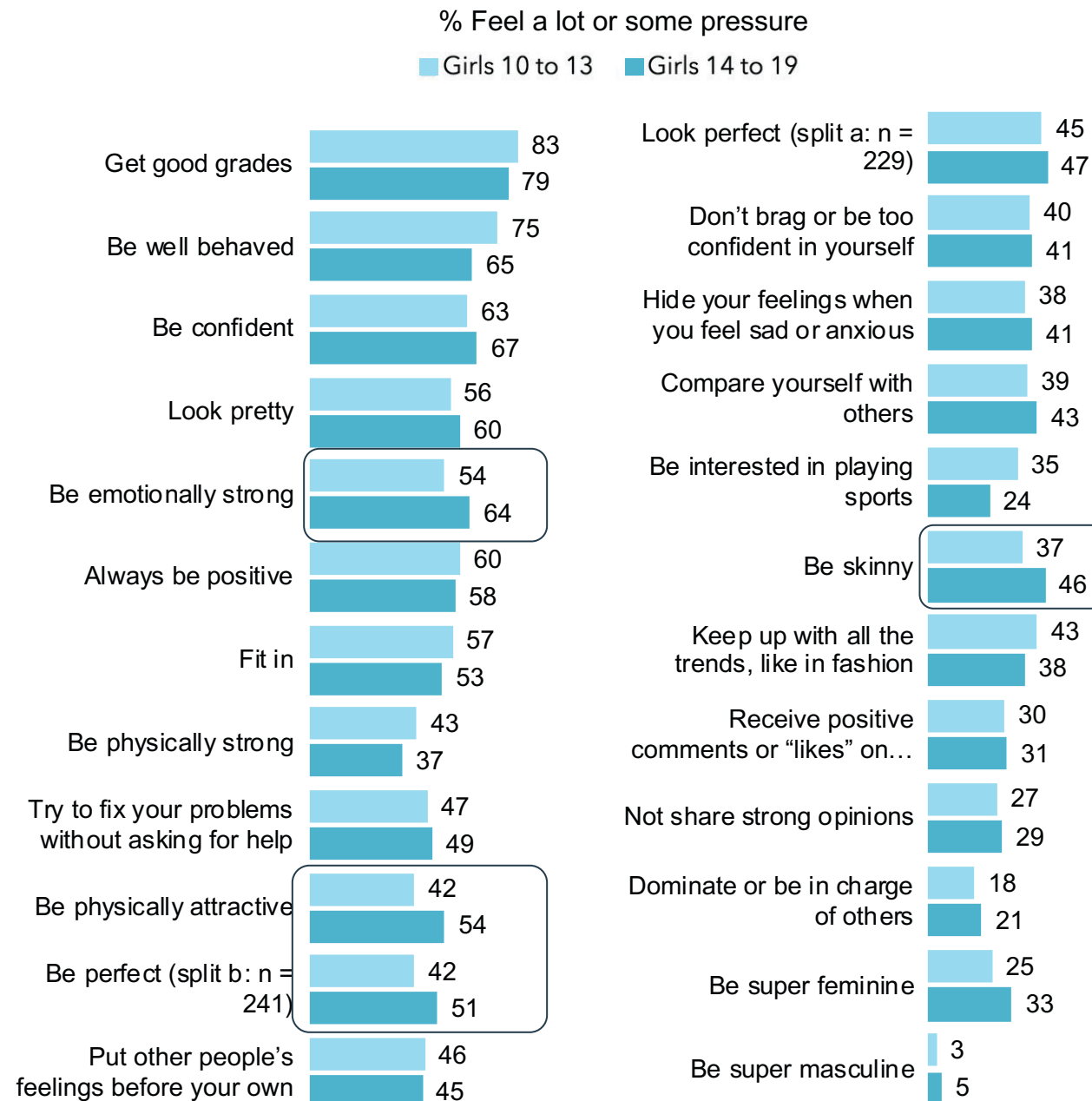
% Feel a lot or some pressure



Many girls feel pressure to perform and to look the part.

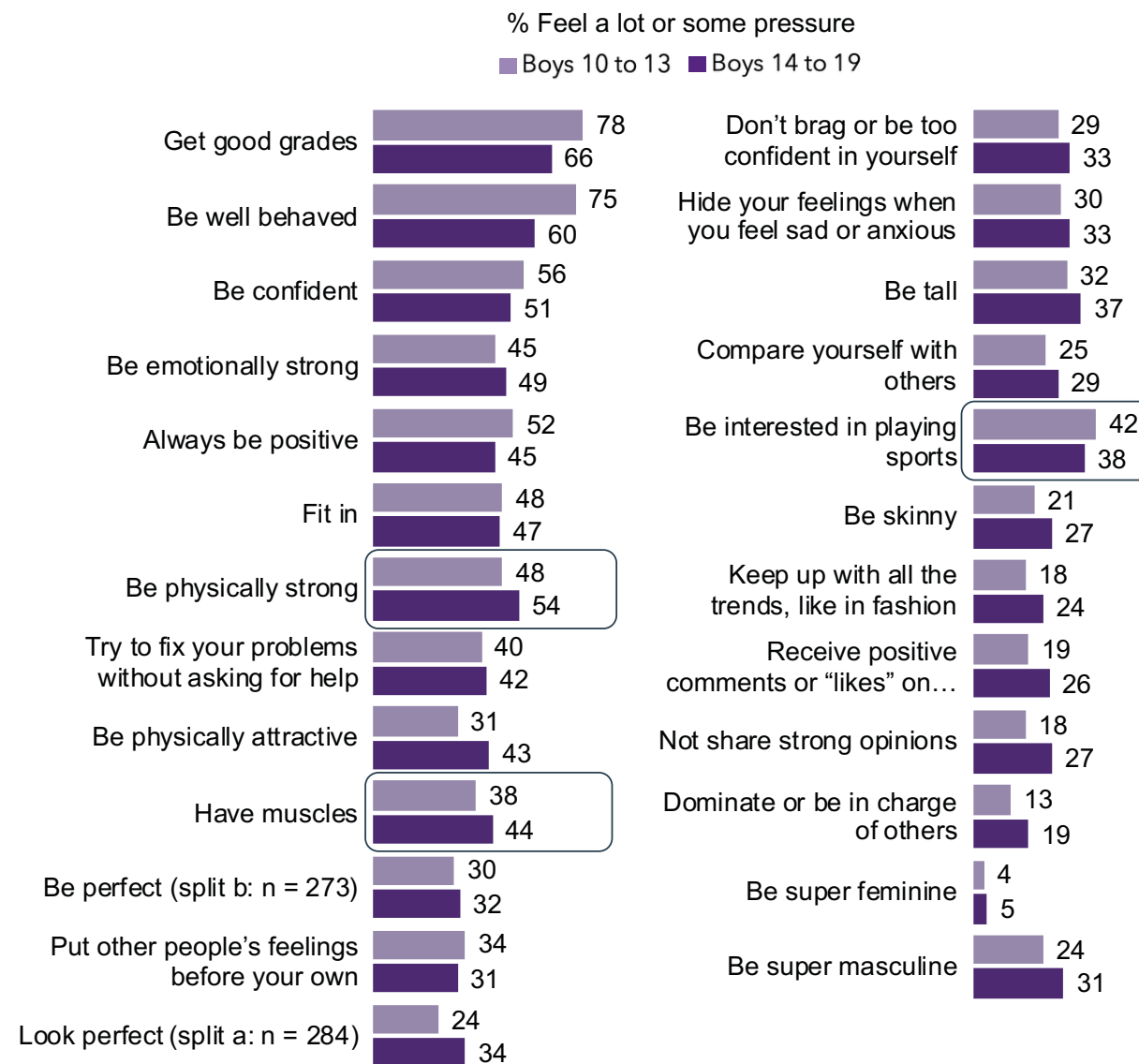
About half or more girls ages 14 to 19 feel pressure to be emotionally strong, confident, always be positive, to look perfect, and be perfect.

Compared to girls overall, Latina girls feel more pressure to look perfect (+17 points), keep up with trends (+9), look pretty (+8), be skinny (+6), and be super feminine (+6).



Beyond grades and behavior, many boys feel pressure to be physically strong.

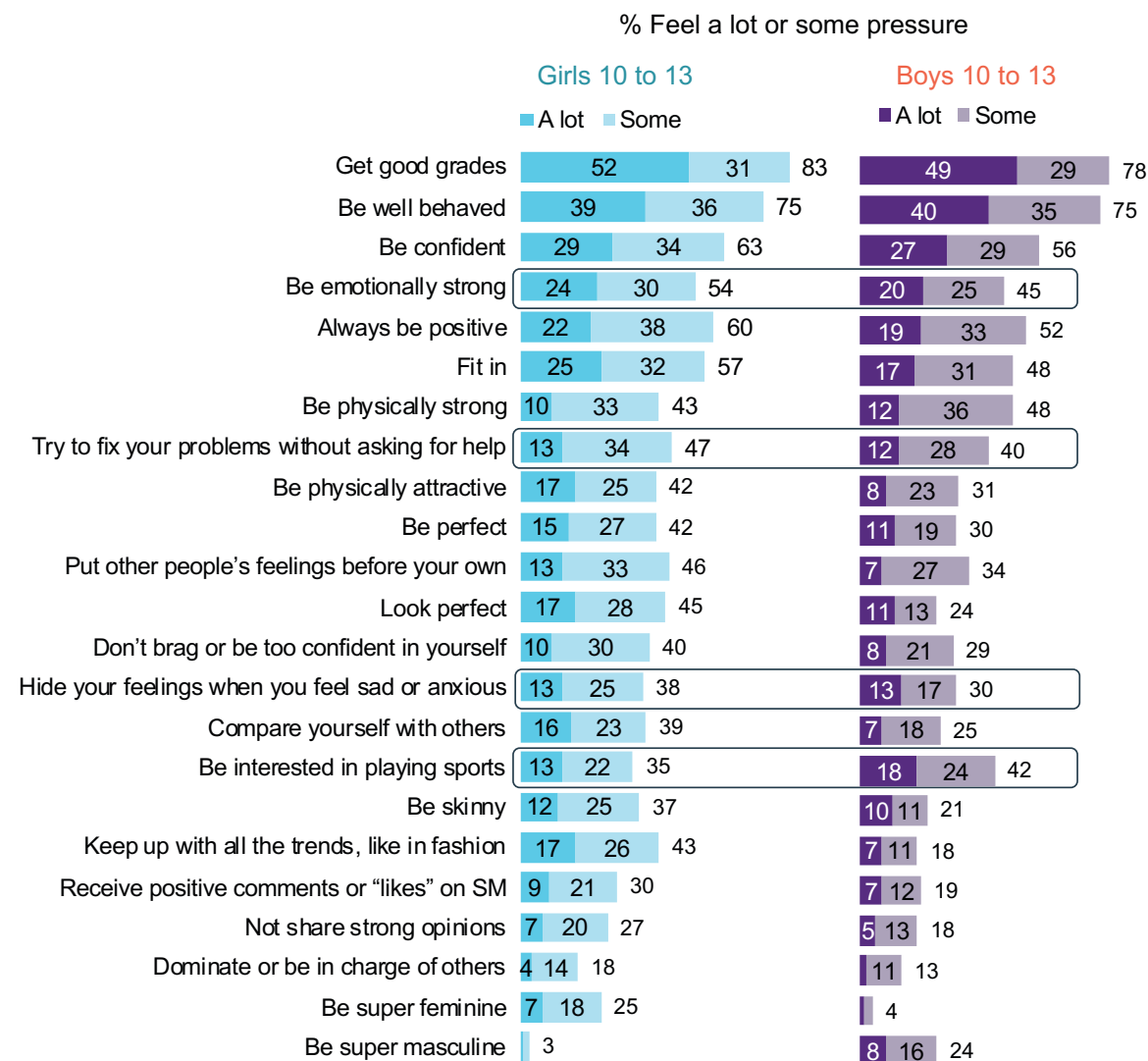
Four in ten younger boys also feel pressure to be interested in playing sports.



Gendered pressures are already set for many young adolescents.

Girls are more likely to feel most pressures, including those typically associated with masculinity — like being emotionally strong, hiding one's feelings, and fixing problems without asking for help.

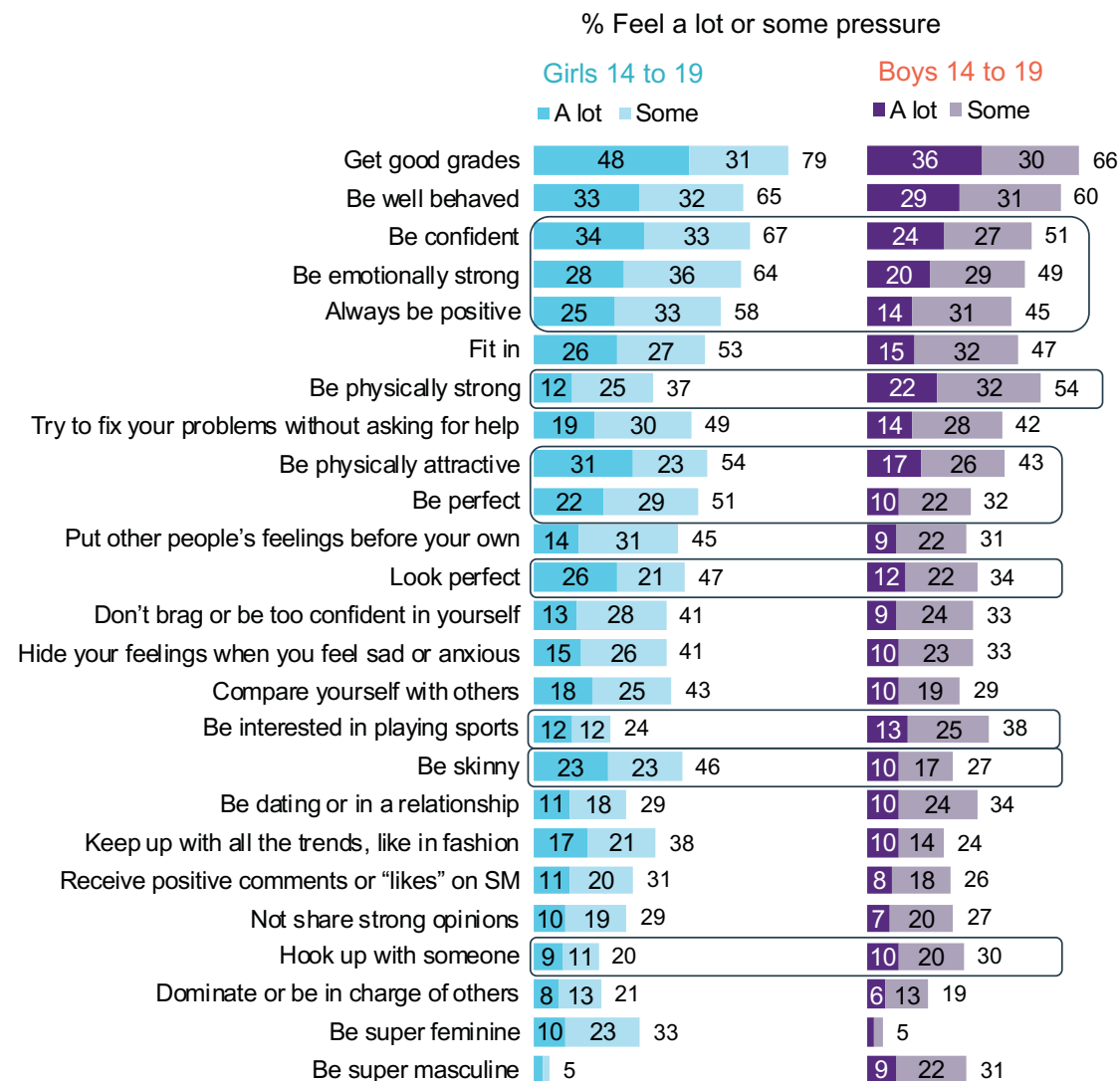
Young boys face slightly more pressure than girls around sports.



As adolescents age, pressures seem to intensify for girls.

Older girls feel even more pressure to be confident, emotionally strong, always positive, and to be perfect.

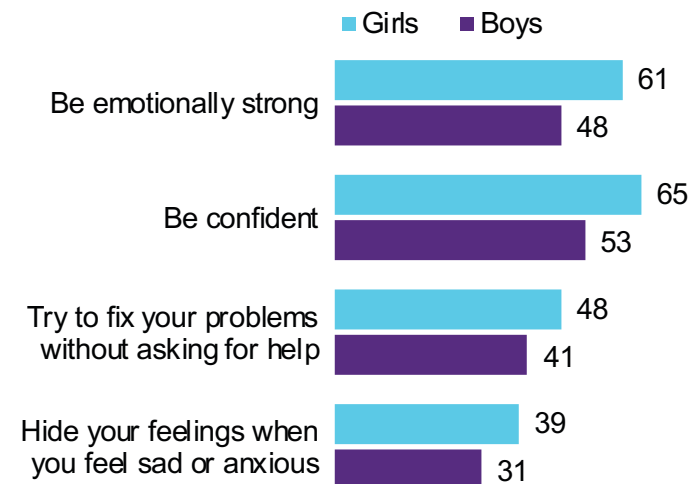
Older boys are more likely than girls to feel pressures around being physically strong, interested in playing sports, and hooking up with someone.



Girls feel more pressure than boys around traits usually coded as masculine.

Whether the rules of masculinity are loosening for boys or tightening for girls, the burden of emotional toughness falls heavily on girls.

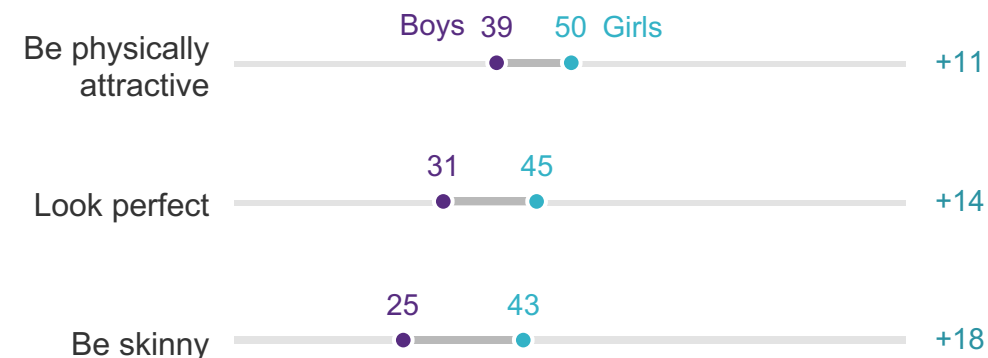
% Feel a lot or some pressure



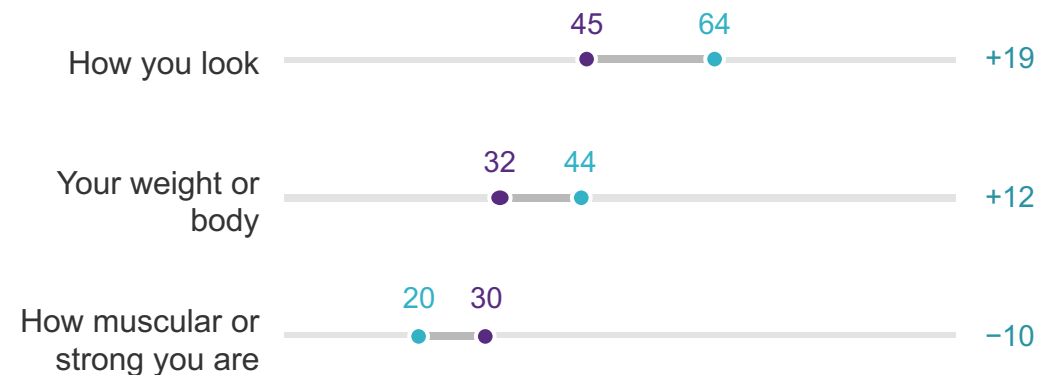
Appearance-related pressures land more on girls than boys.

The exception is pressure to be muscular.

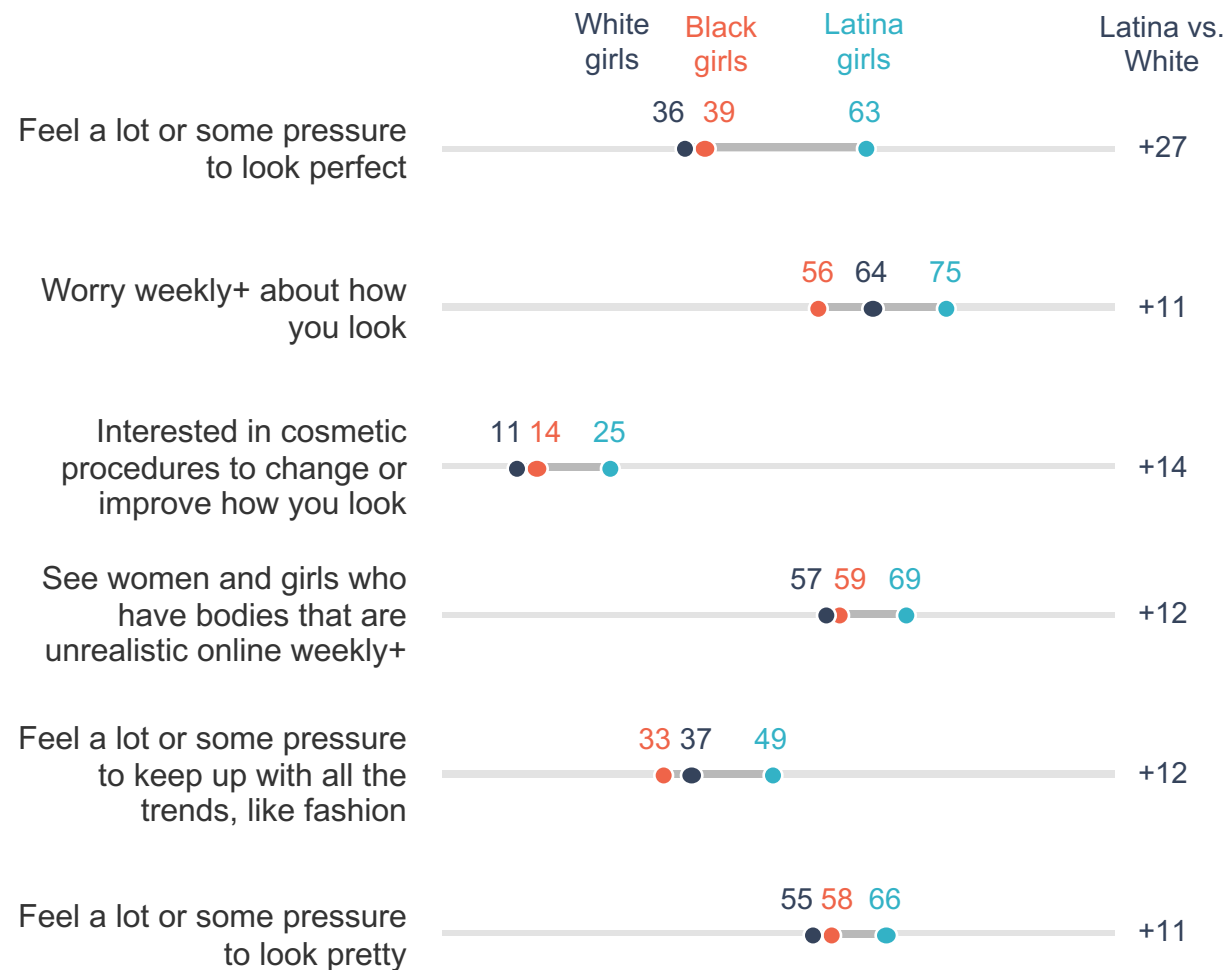
% Feel a lot or some pressure to:



% Worry weekly+ about:



Data suggest Latina girls feel more pressure related to appearance than other girls.



Among girls 14 to 19, heavy social media use is correlated with appearance-related pressures.

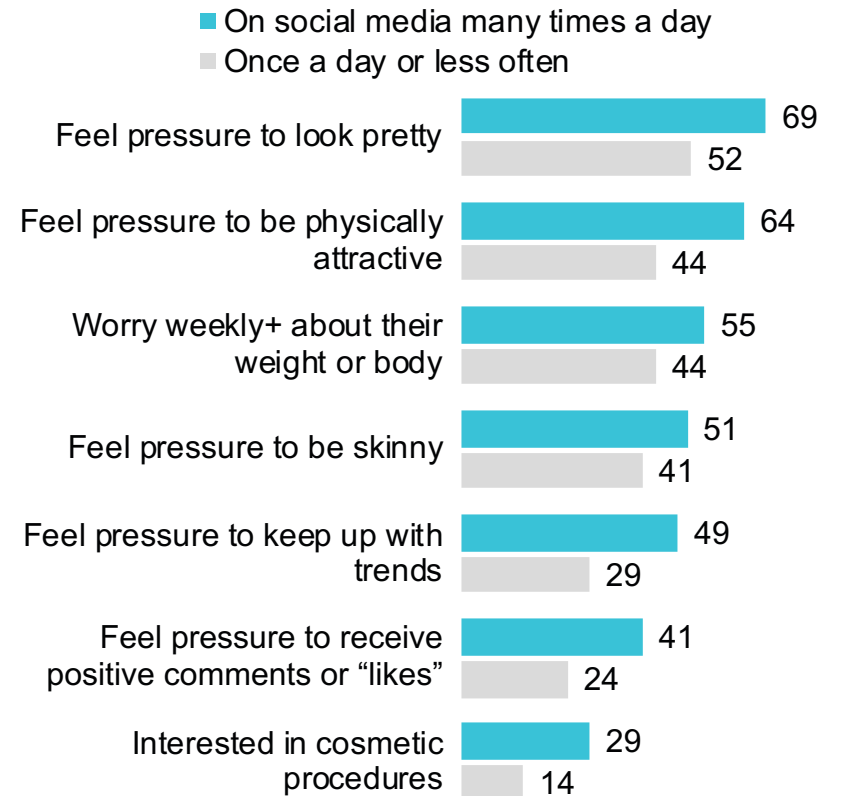
Majorities of older girls who are on social media multiple times a day feel pressure to look pretty and attractive. They're also more likely than their peers to worry regularly about their body or weight.

Heavy social media users are twice as likely to express interest in getting cosmetic procedures like lip fillers or Botox.

Among boys, we don't find a strong relationship between appearance pressures and social media use. However, older boys who use social media many times a day feel more pressure to hide feelings when they're sad or anxious (+13 points) and be dating or in a relationship (+11 points).

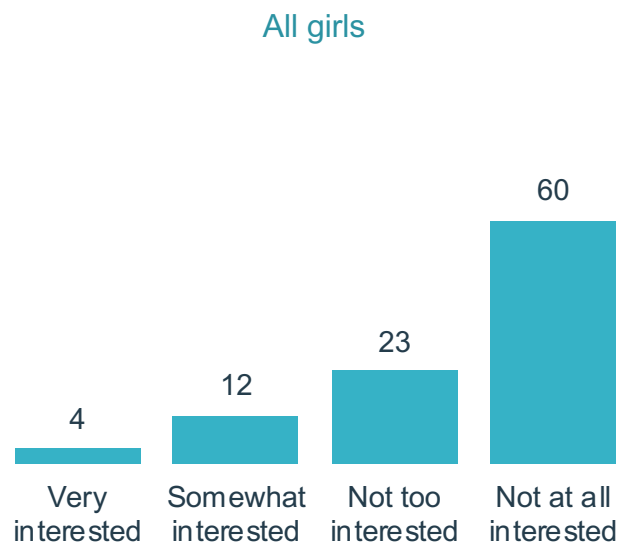
Appearance-related pressures by social media use

N = 296 girls 14 to 19



One in five older girls are interested in cosmetic procedures to change how they look.

How interested are you in cosmetic procedures, like lip fillers or Botox, to change or improve how you look?

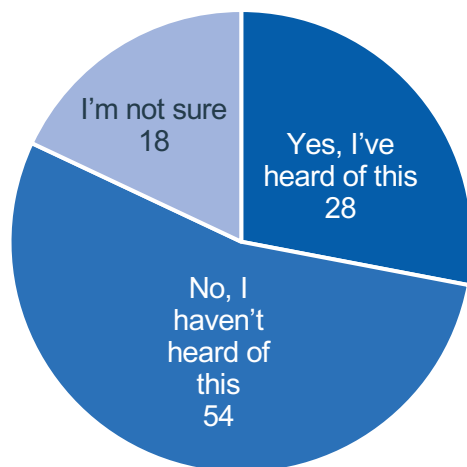


% Very or somewhat interested

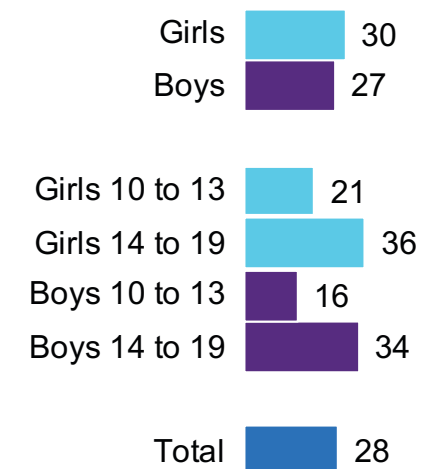


About a third of older adolescents — girls and boys alike — have heard of “looksmaxxing.”

Have you heard of “looksmaxxing?” This is a trend where men and boys do things to improve their looks — like jawline exercises or skin care.

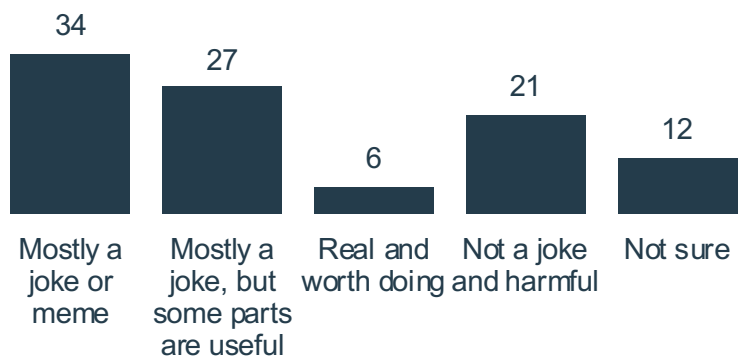


% Have heard of looksmaxxing



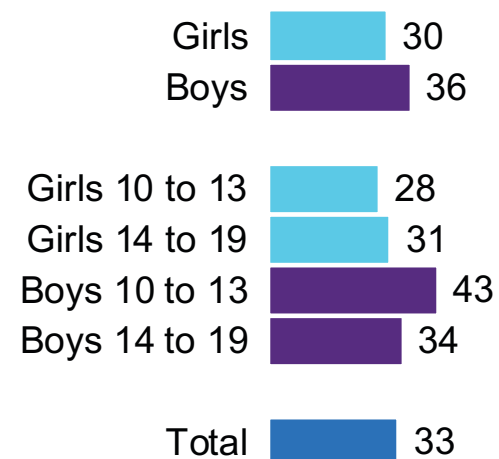
Most who've heard of looks maxxng don't take the trend to heart.

Do you think looksmaxxing is:
N = 294 adolescents who've heard of looksmaxxing



% Real and worth doing or
some parts are useful

N = 294 adolescents who've heard
of looksmaxxing



Caution:
Small sample sizes

Pressures translating into everyday worries.

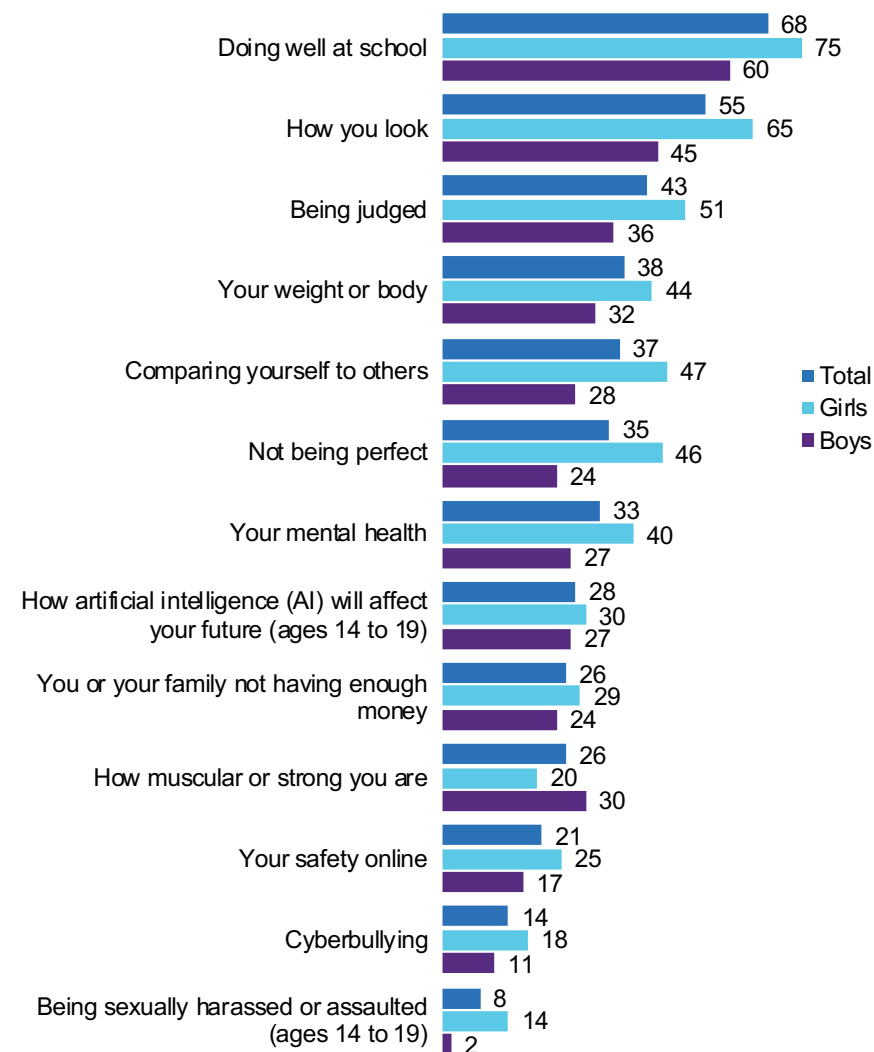
We wanted to learn whether any pressures and expectations translate into everyday worries — and whether there are differences by gender.

Girls are more likely than boys to have many worries on their minds.

The widest gender gaps are on worrying about not being perfect (+22 points more) and how they look (+20 points).

Latino/e adolescents are more likely than others to worry about them or their family not having enough money (34% vs. 26% overall).

How often do you worry about ...
% Worry about once a week or more



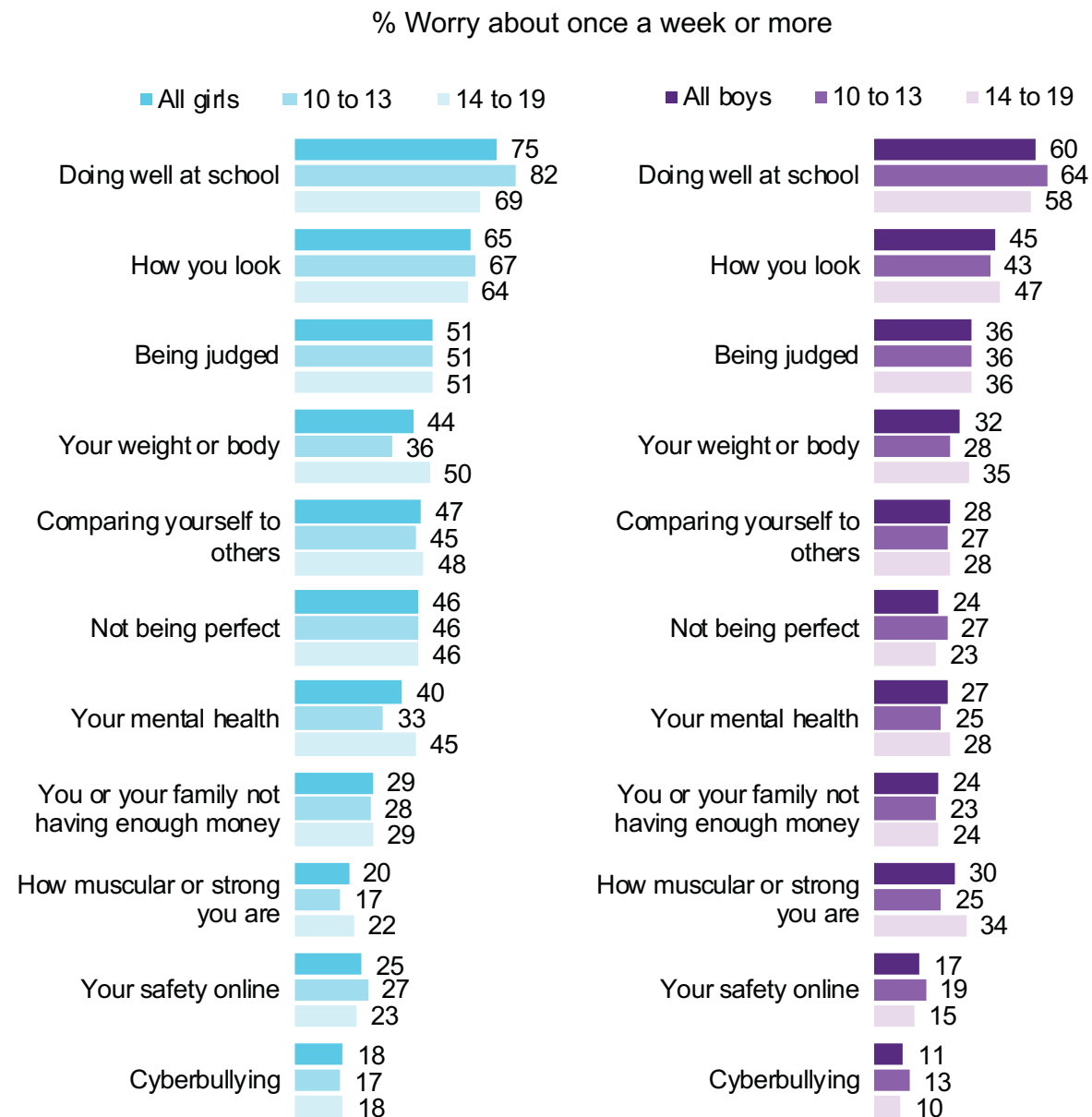
Worry among girls exists across age cohorts.

Adolescents 10 to 13 are about as likely as older girls to worry frequently about how they look and about not being perfect.

Older girls are more likely to worry about their weight or body (+14 points vs. younger girls).

Nearly half of older girls (45%) worry about their mental health at least once a week.

Older boys are slightly more likely than younger boys to worry about their body (+7 points) and how muscular or strong they are (+9 points).



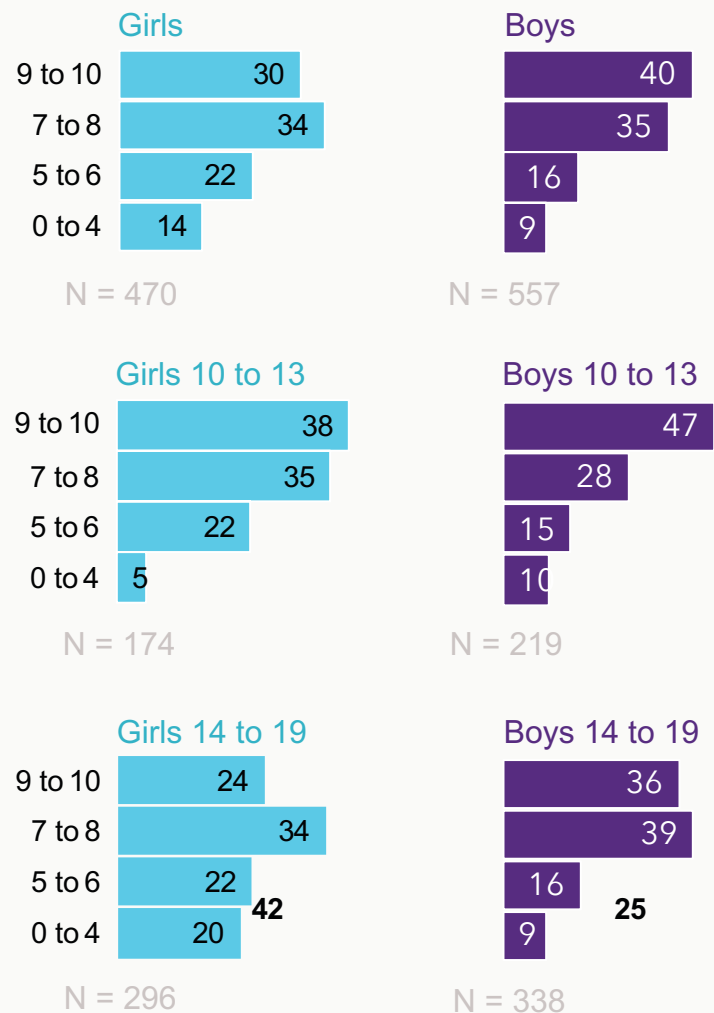
Girls rate their mental health well below boys.

About four in ten girls ages 14 to 19 (42%) rate their mental health as a six or lower on our scale.



How would you rate your mental health — things like stress, anxiety, sadness, and upset?

(0 to 10 scale with 0 being very bad and 10 being very good)



Exposure to harmful portrayals in culture.

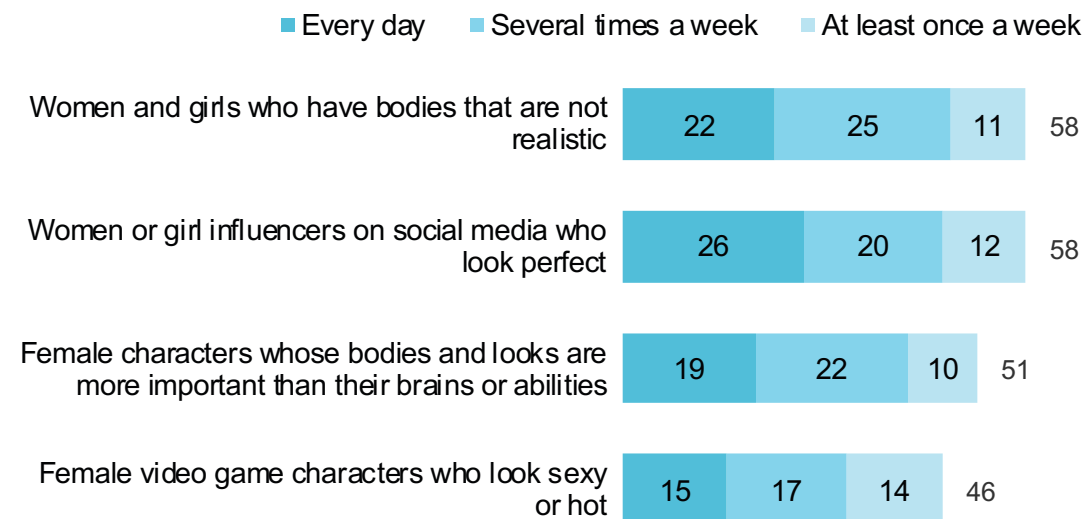
We examined how often girls and boys see idealized and objectifying portrayals of women and men.

More than half of girls frequently see idealized, unrealistic, and objectified women in the media they watch.

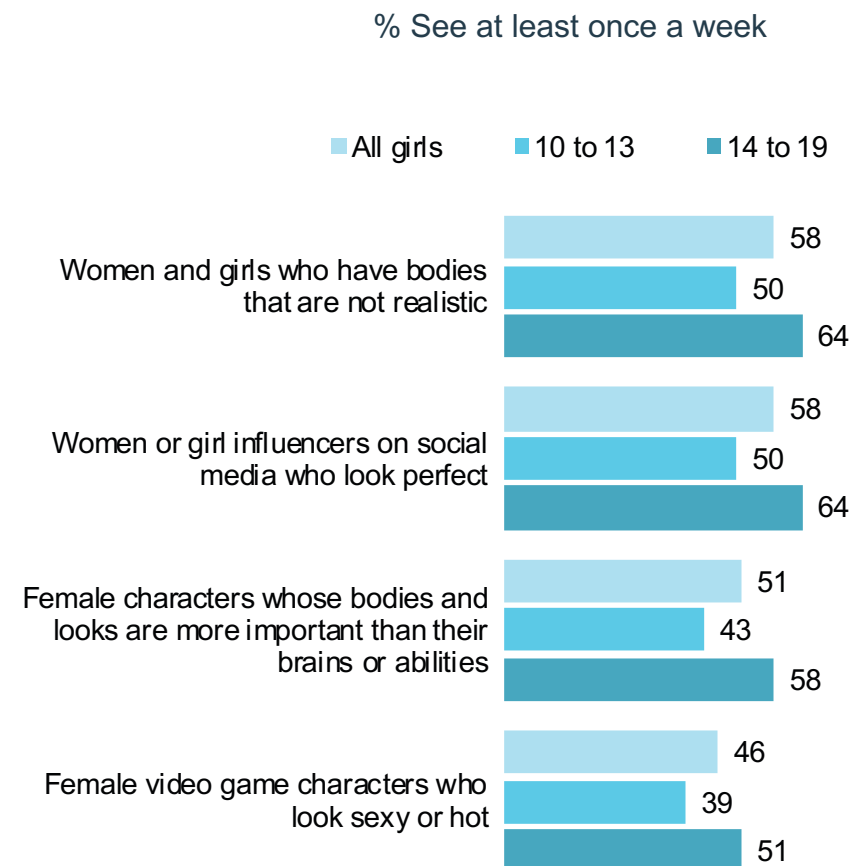
Latina girls are more likely than others to report seeing women and girls with unrealistic bodies (69% at least once a week) and women or girls on social media who look perfect (64%).

Think about people and celebrities on social media, in movies, TV, music videos, games. How often do you see...

N = 470 girls



Reported exposure to idealized and objectifying imagery increases with age.

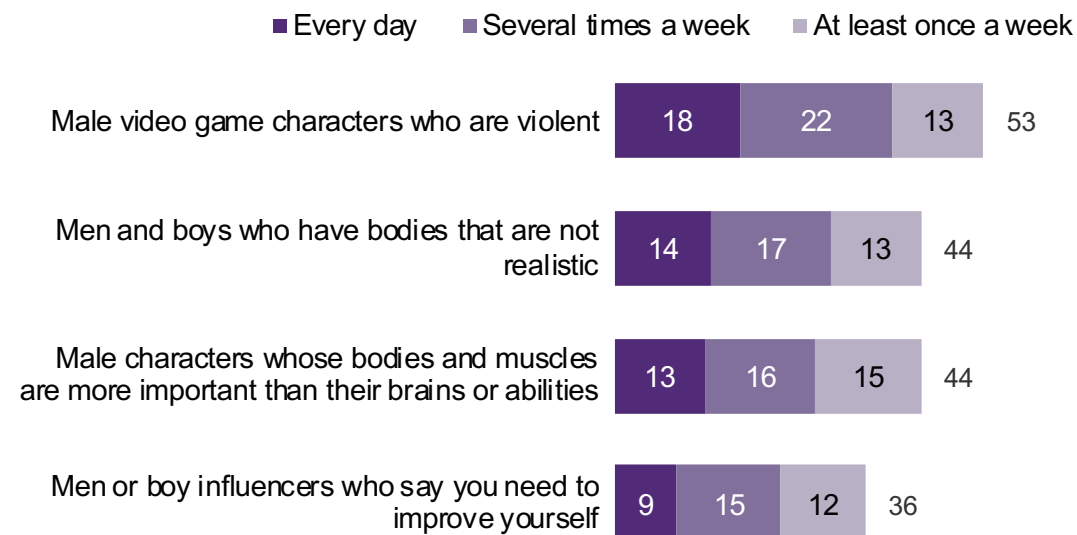


About four in ten boys report regular exposure to unrealistic and objectifying media portrayals of men.

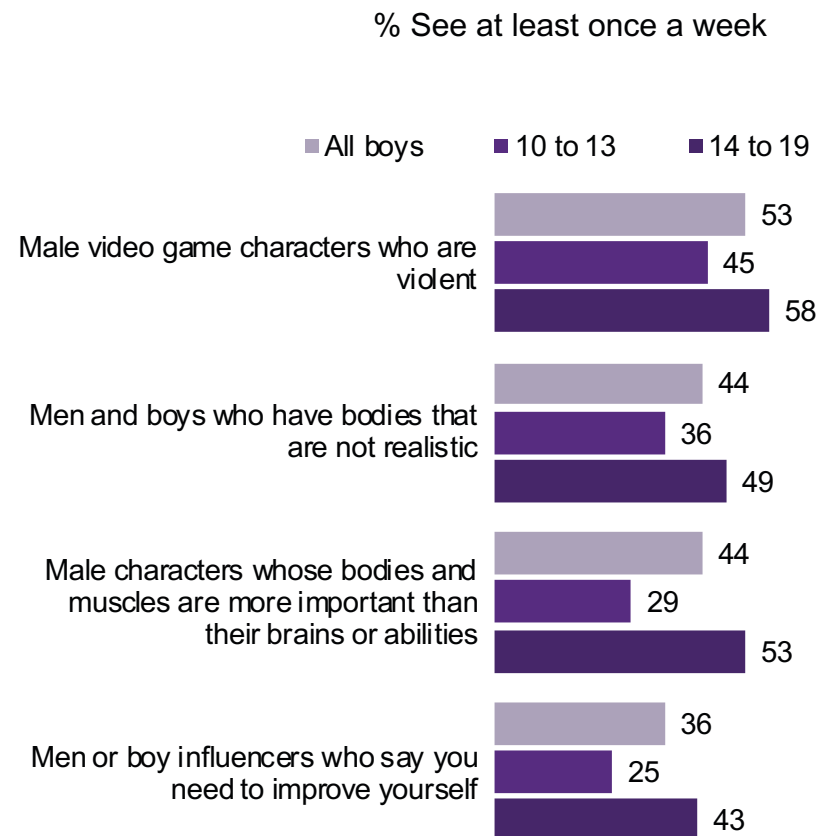
Half say they see violent male video game characters at least once a week.

Think about people and celebrities on social media, in movies, TV, music videos, games. How often do you see...

N = 557 boys



Older boys are more likely than younger boys to report exposure to idealized, violent, and objectifying male imagery.



Sexual harassment and objectification of girls in peer interactions.

The survey explored how often adolescents are experiencing day-to-day comments and behavior related to sexual harassment.

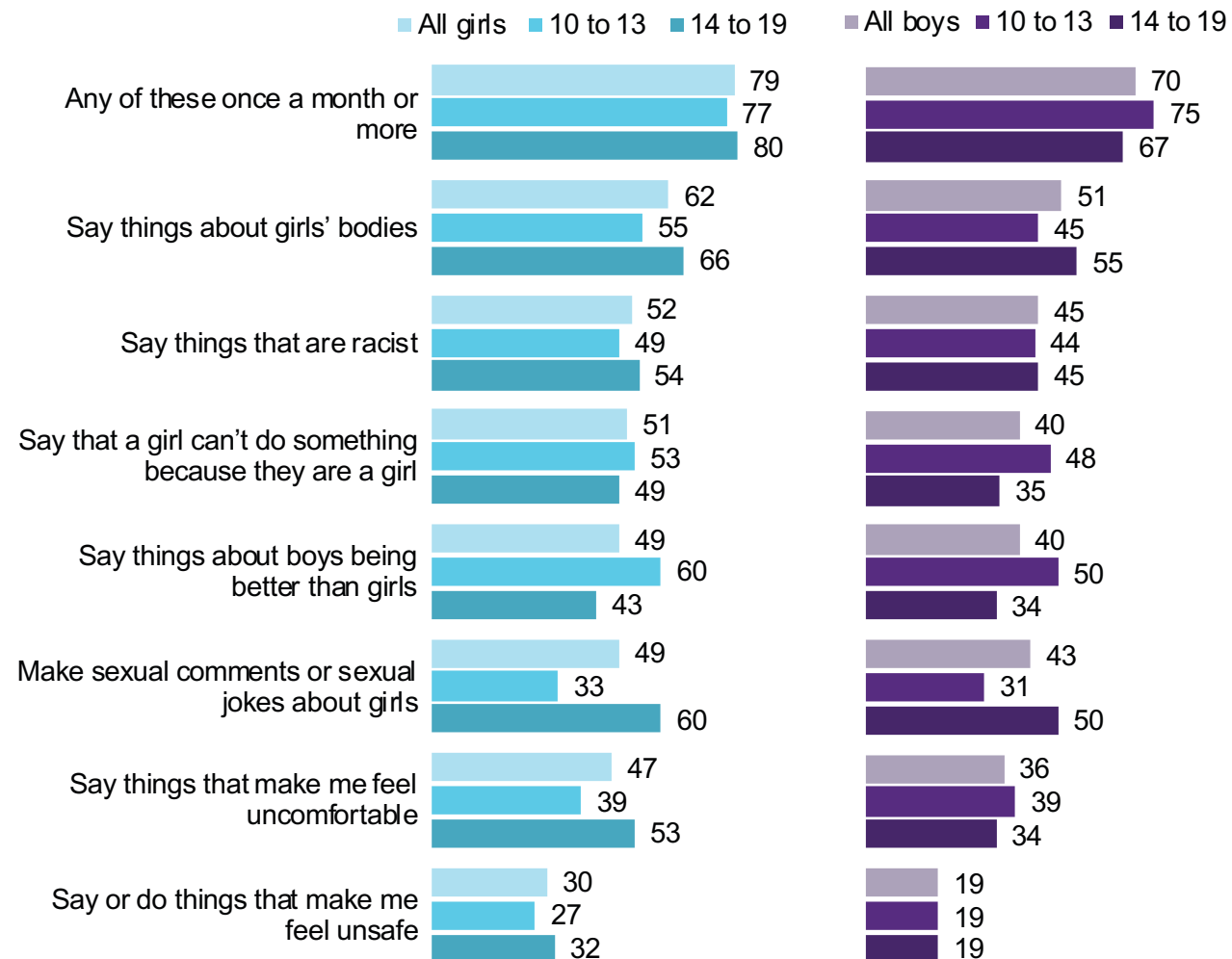
Many adolescents say they hear sexist, sexual, and racist comments from boys at least once a month.

For older girls, the most frequent comments are about their bodies. Younger girls are most likely to hear boys say they're better than girls.

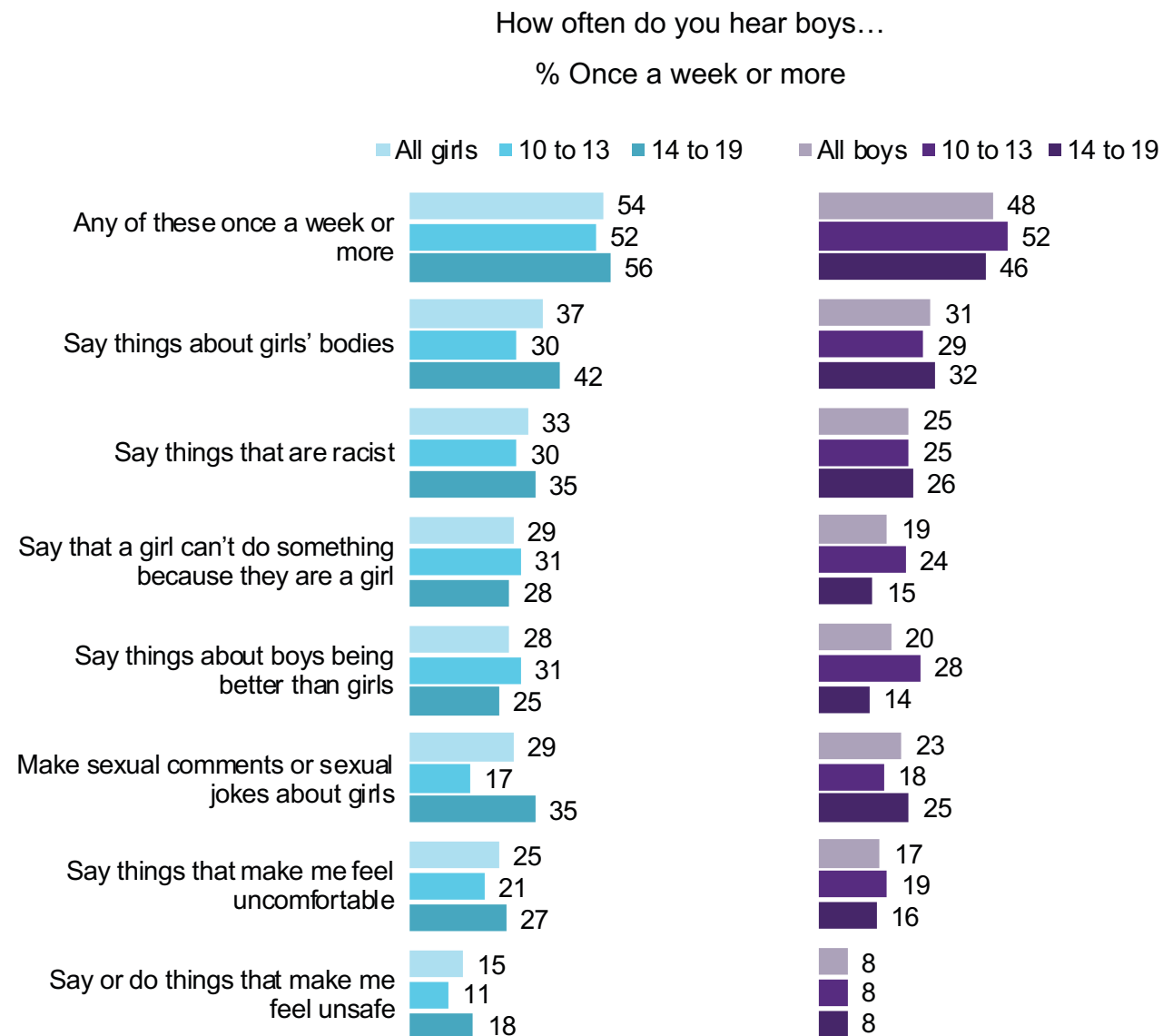
Black boys (52%) are more likely than white (43%) or Latino/e (44%) boys to report hearing other boys say racist things.

How often do you hear boys...

% Once a month or more



Half of adolescents hear at least one of these comments on a weekly basis.



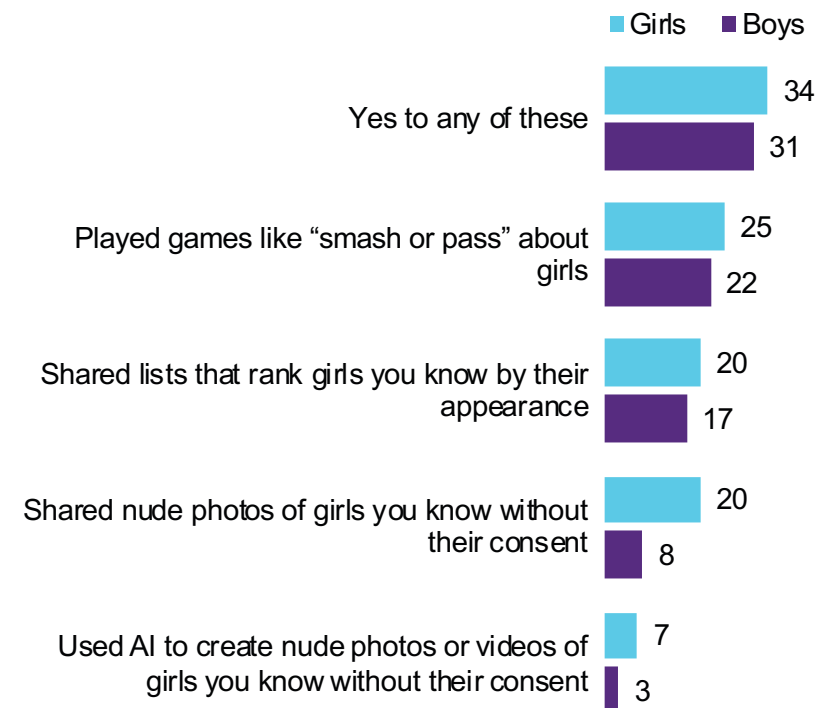
About one-third of older teens know someone who has participated in behavior related to sexual harassment or objectification.

One in five girls (20%) say they know someone who has shared nude photos of girls without consent.

Do you know anyone who has:

N = 637 adolescents 14 to 19

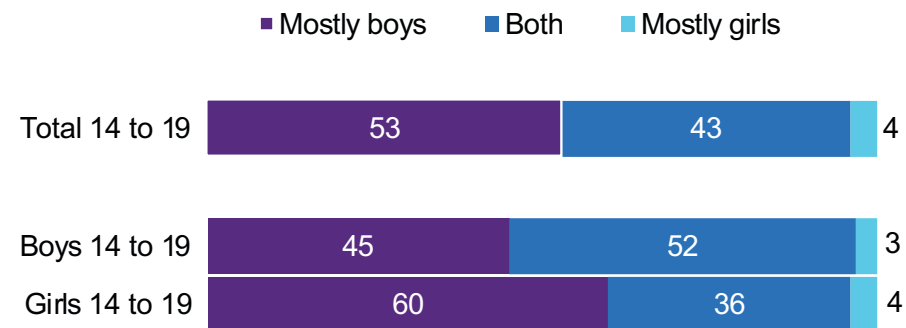
% Yes



Teens witnessing this behavior say it's mostly boys or both boys and girls taking part.

Girls are more likely to say that it's mostly boys doing these things.

Are the people you know doing this mostly:
N = 213 adolescents 14 to 19 who know a peer who's
participated in behavior related to sexual harassment
or objectification of girls



Experiences with online harassment.

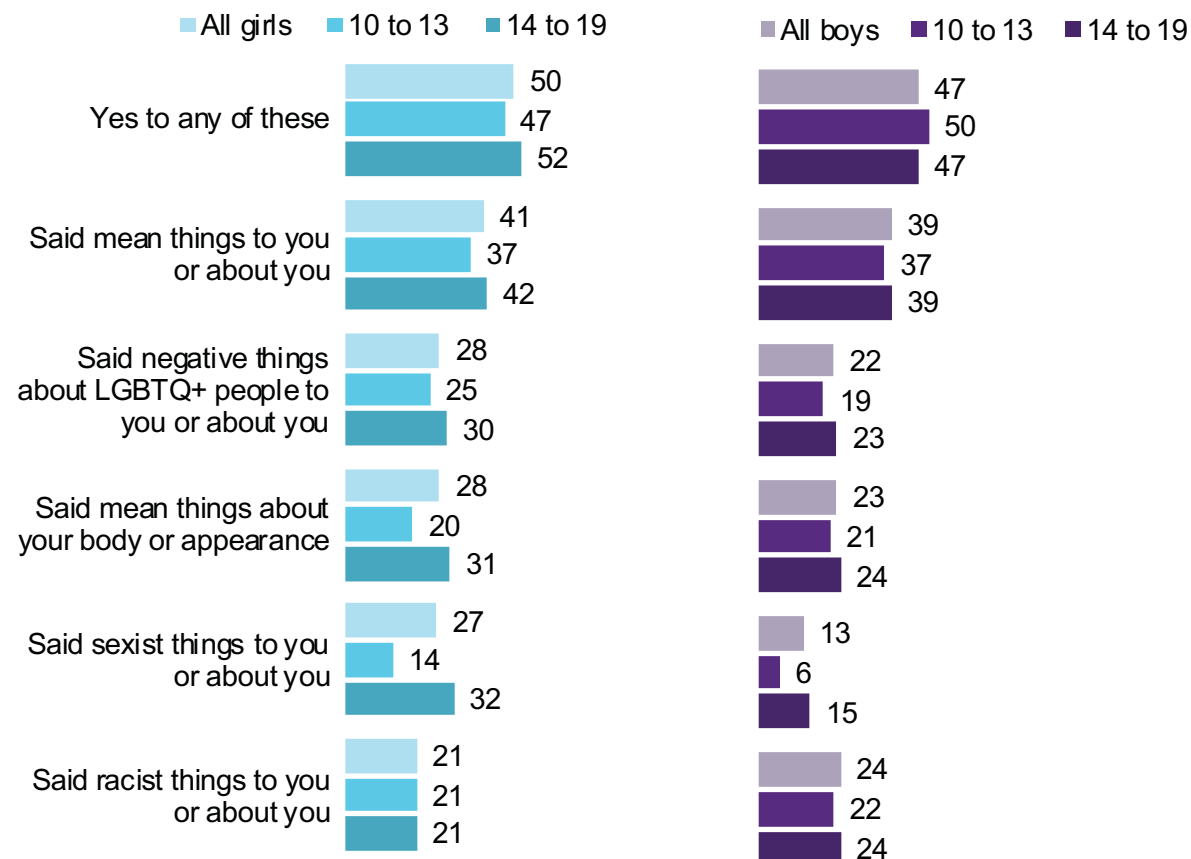
The survey explored the prevalence of online harassment adolescents experience and what they're doing about it.

Half of adolescents on social media — boys and girls — report receiving mean or hateful comments.

At least a quarter of Black (27%), Latino/e (30%), and AAPI (28%) adolescents report experiencing racism online.

In comments or messages online, has anyone ever:

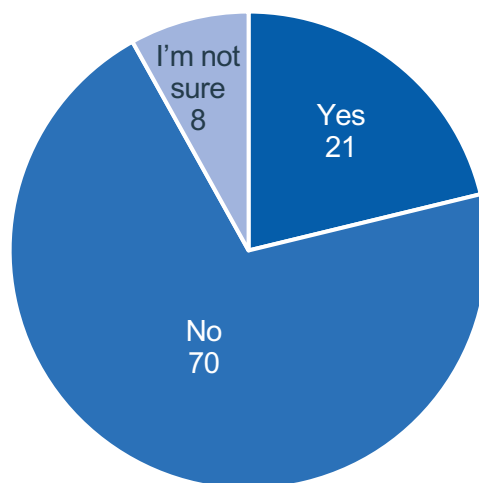
N = 774 adolescents on social media



When asked directly, one in four girls (26%) and one in six boys (17%) say they've experienced "online harassment."

Online harassment is when someone uses the internet, texts, or social media to say mean things, share embarrassing photos, or bother someone repeatedly. Have you ever experienced this?

N = 774 adolescents on social media

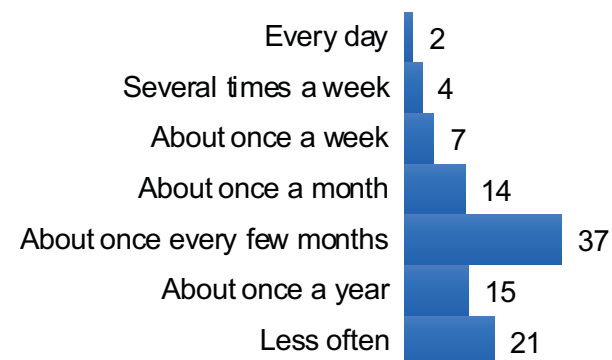


% Yes
Girls: 26%
Boys: 17%

Girls 10 to 13: 22%
Girls 14 to 19: 27%
Boys 10 to 13: 18%
Boys 14 to 19: 17%

IF YES: How often have you experienced this?

N = 163

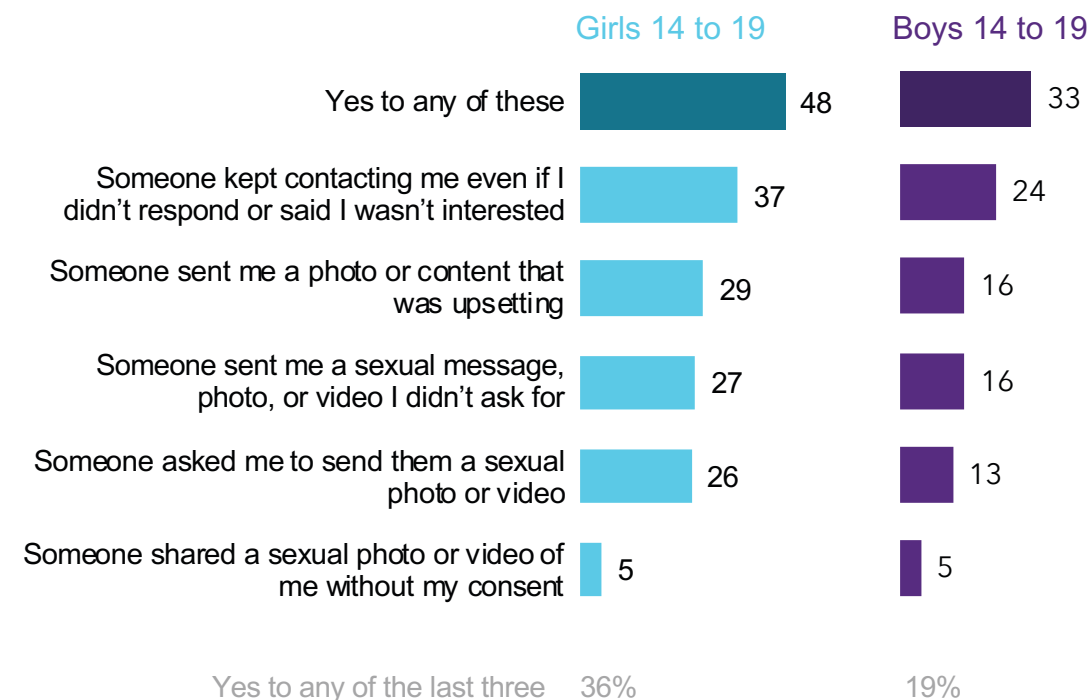


Half of girls 14 to 19 on social media have experienced online harassment.

Over a third of these girls (36%) and 19% of older boys on social media say they've had experiences that were specifically sexual in nature: having received unwanted sexual messages, been asked for sexual content, or had a sexual photo or video of them shared without their consent.

Has this ever happened to you online or by text?

N = 560 adolescents 14 to 19 on social media

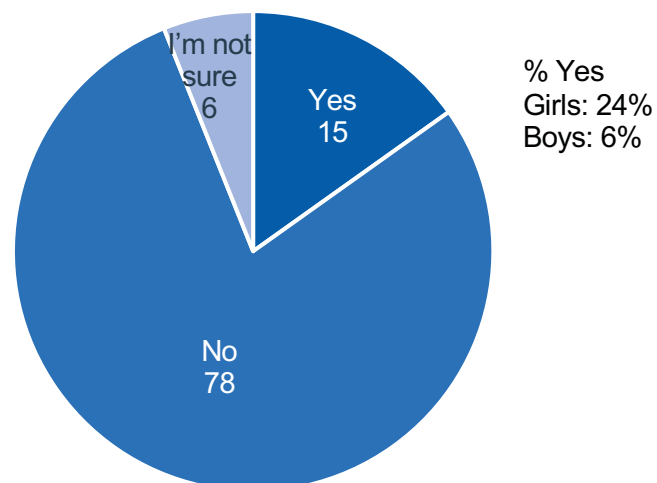


One in four older girls on social media say they've experienced online sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment online is when someone shares sexual messages, photos, or comments on social media or by text that make you feel uncomfortable, scared, or upset.

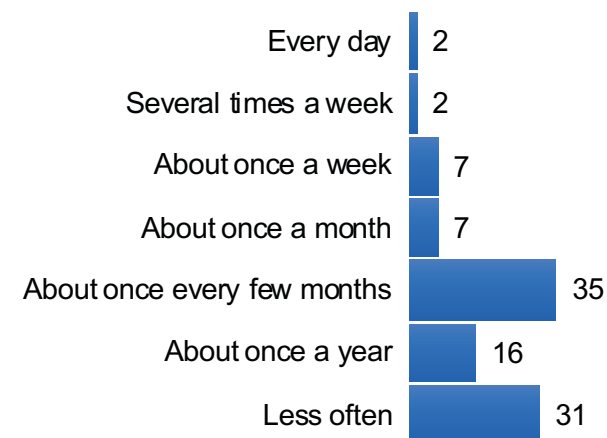
Have you ever experienced this?

N = 560 adolescents 14 to 19 on social media



IF YES: How often have you experienced this?

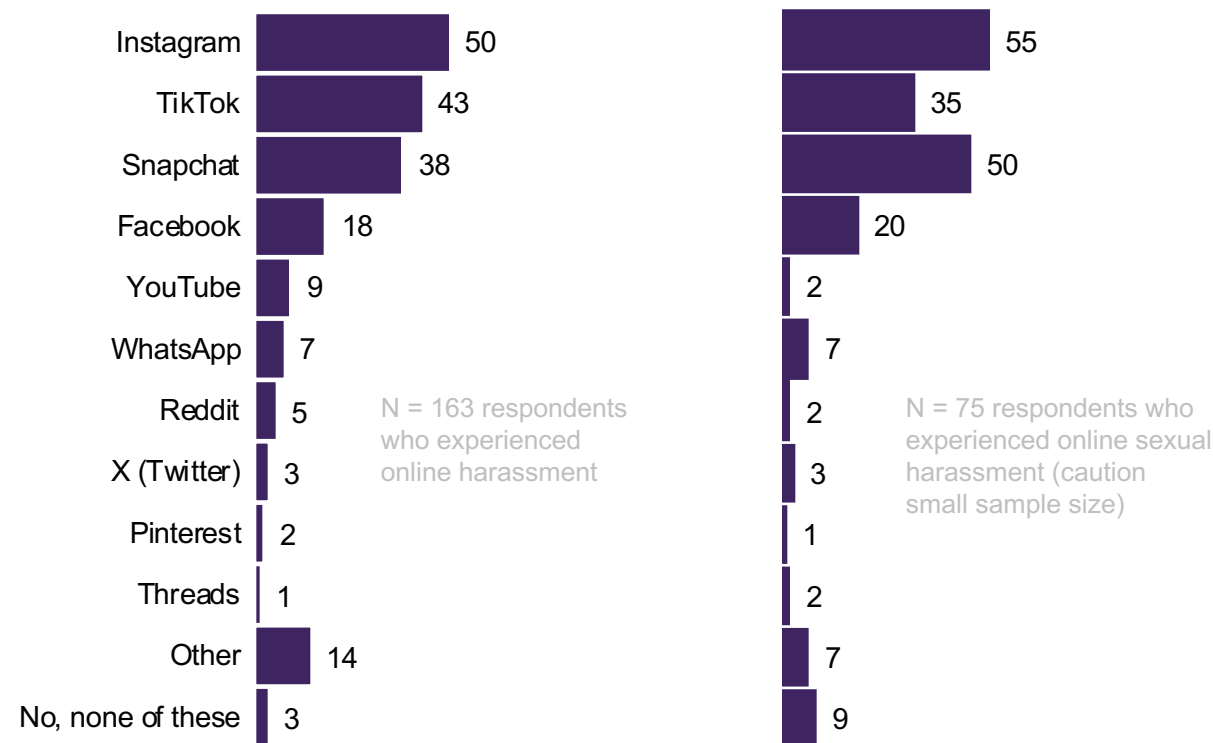
N = 75 – caution small size



Those who say they've experienced online "harassment" or "sexual harassment" are most likely to name Instagram as the platform on which they experienced it.

Snapchat is also at the top among those who have experienced sexual harassment online.

Has this ever happened to you on:
Select all that apply.



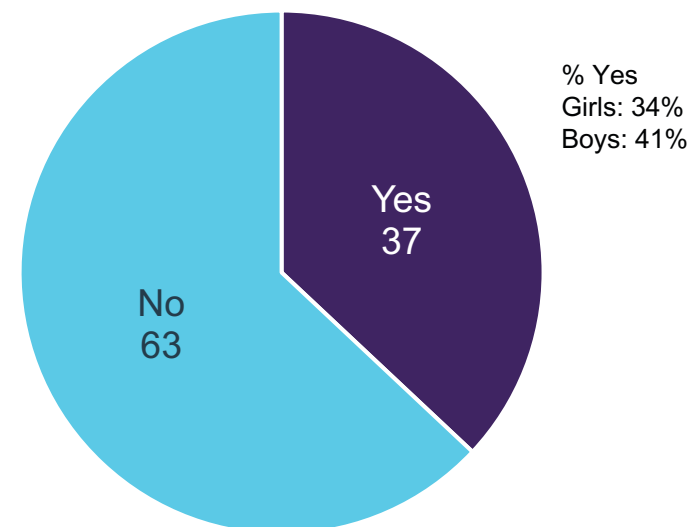
How adolescents are responding to online harassment.

Online harassment is a relatively new phenomenon young people face. We wanted to know: Are adolescents reporting harassment? Are they taking actions into their own hands? What effects does harassment have on their online behavior?

Most adolescents who have experienced online harassment have not reported it to any social media companies.

Have you ever reported harassment to any social media companies (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, etc.)?

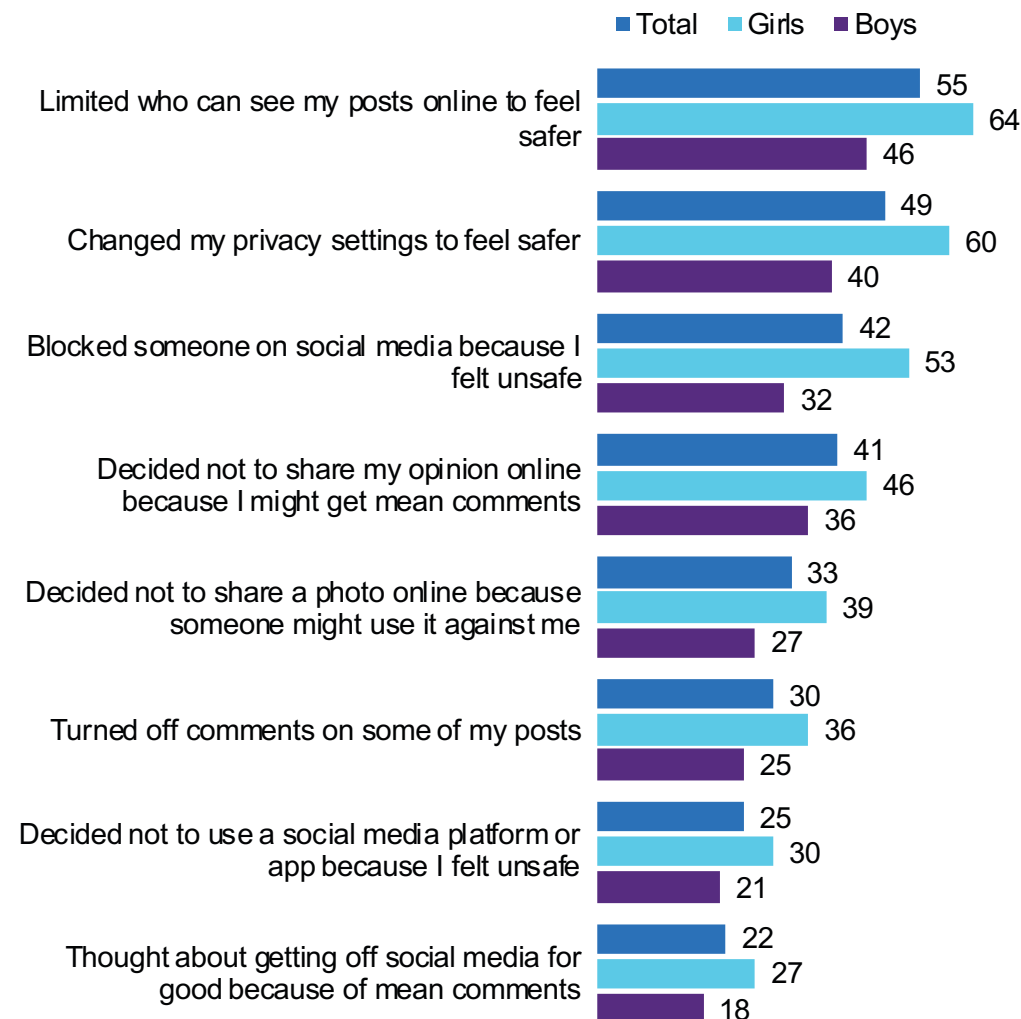
N = 182 respondents who've experienced online harassment or online sexual harassment



Many adolescents on social media, particularly girls, are taking online safety into their own hands.

Four in five girls (80%) have taken at least one protective action as have 64% of boys.

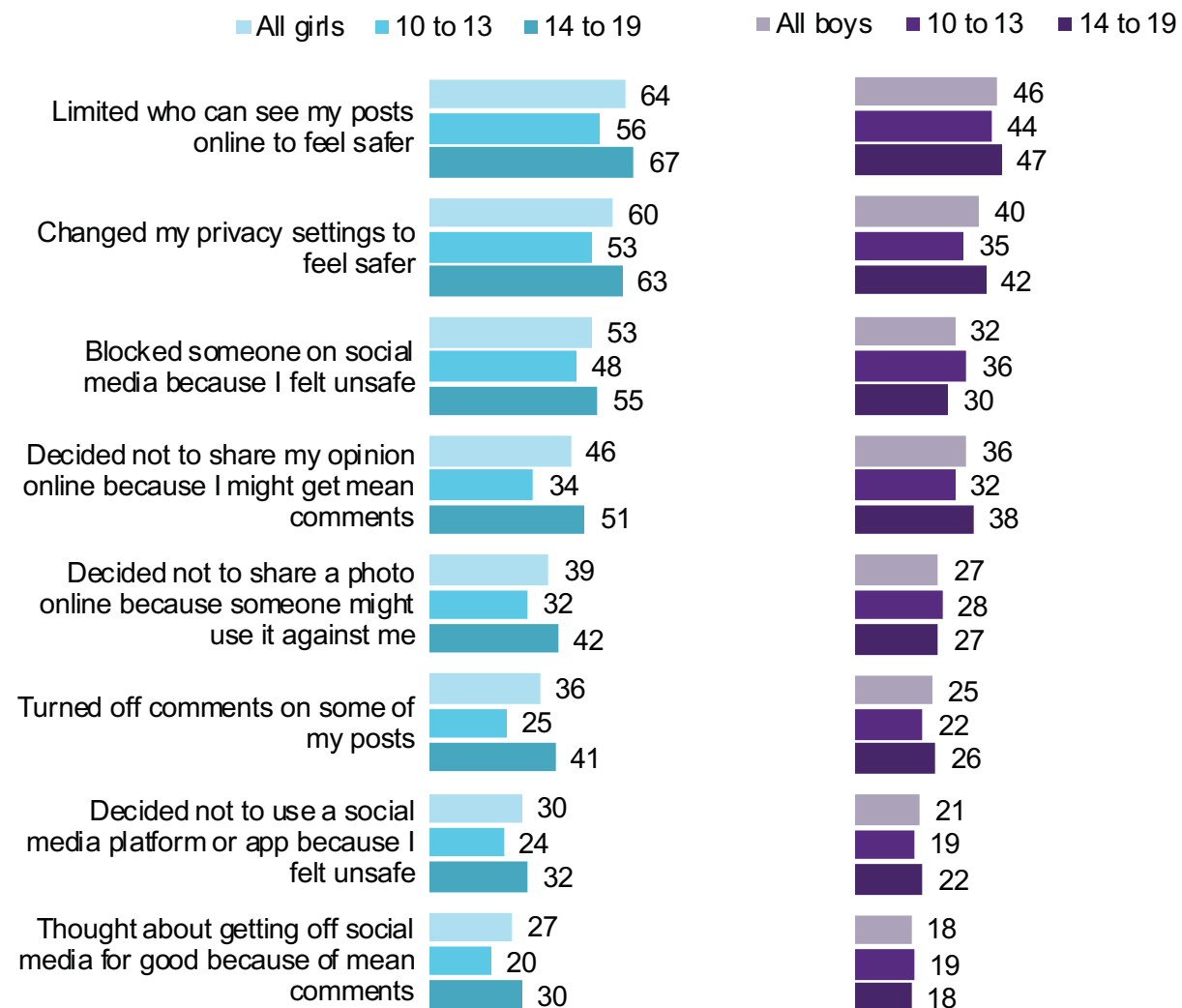
Have you ever...
N = 774 adolescents on social media



Older girls are the most likely to protect themselves online — 84% have taken at least one of these steps (vs. 64% of older boys).

Many younger girls and boys have also taken at least one of these actions (73% and 65%).

Have you ever...
N = 774 adolescents on social media

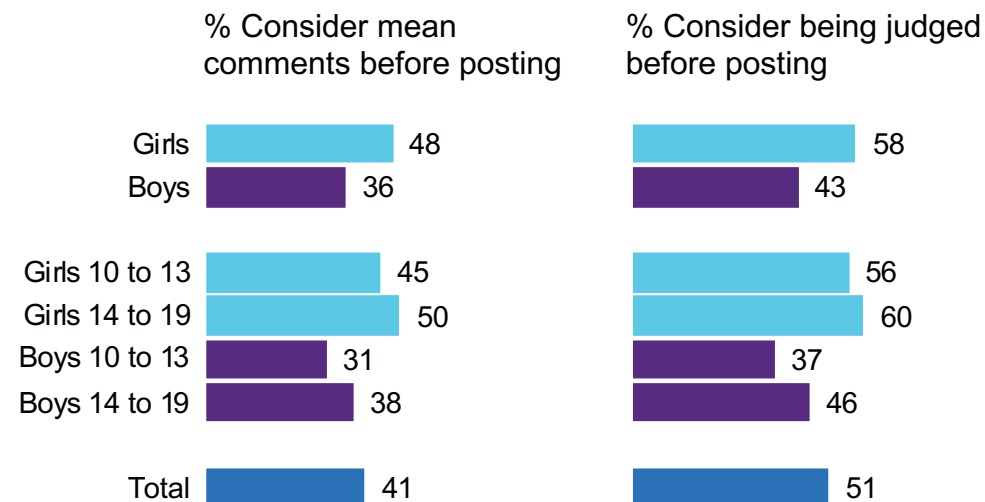
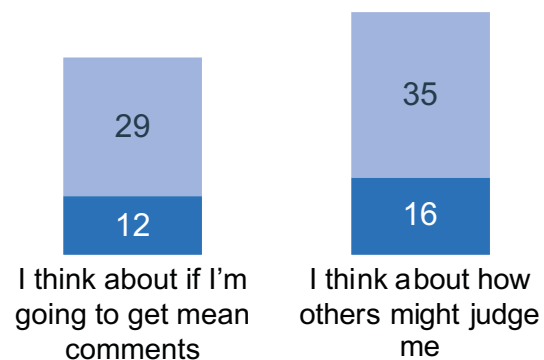


Before they post something online, many girls first consider whether they'll be judged or receive mean comments.

Do you agree or disagree: Before I post something online, _____.

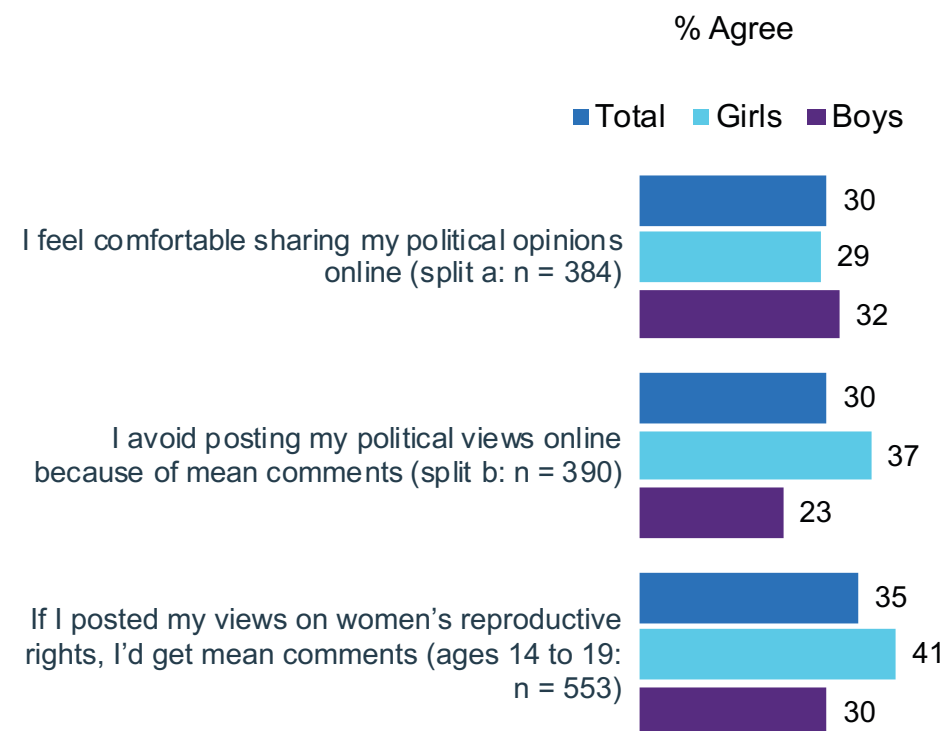
N = 774 adolescents on social media

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree



Girls are +14 points more likely than boys to avoid posting about politics because of mean comments (37% vs. 23%).

Do you agree or disagree:
N = 774 adolescents on social media



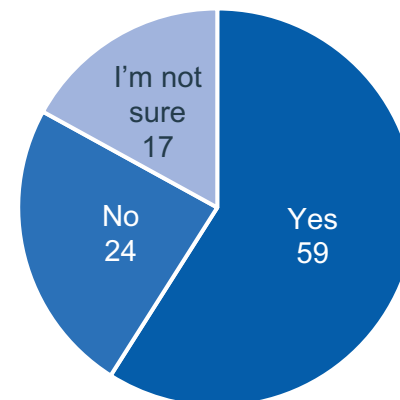
Views on reporting harassment.

We wanted to learn how adolescents feel about reporting harassment: Have they reported it? Do they know how to report it? Do they feel comfortable reporting it? Do they trust institutions to take these issues seriously?

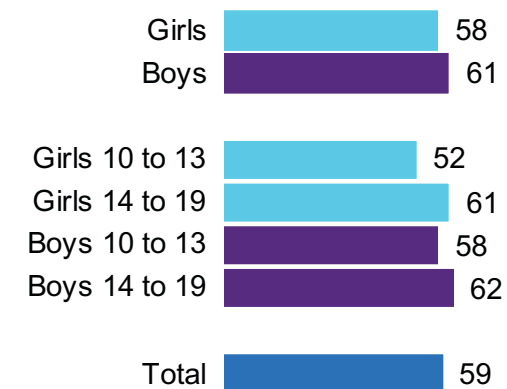
About four in ten adolescents say they don't know how to report harassment.

Half of adolescents say an adult has talked to them about how to report online harassment — younger girls are most likely to say an adult has talked with them.

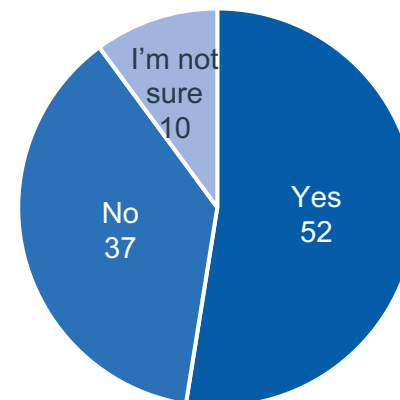
Do you know how to report online harassment?



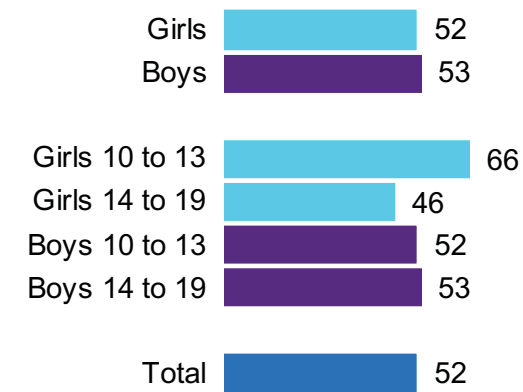
% Yes, know how



Has an adult ever talked to you about how to report online harassment?



% Yes, an adult has talked to them about harassment



Two-thirds of social media users say they'd feel comfortable reporting someone who harassed them online — and 88% say they have an adult they'd trust to do something about it.

68%

Of social media users say they would feel comfortable reporting someone who harassed them online

Girls 70% Boys 67%

88%

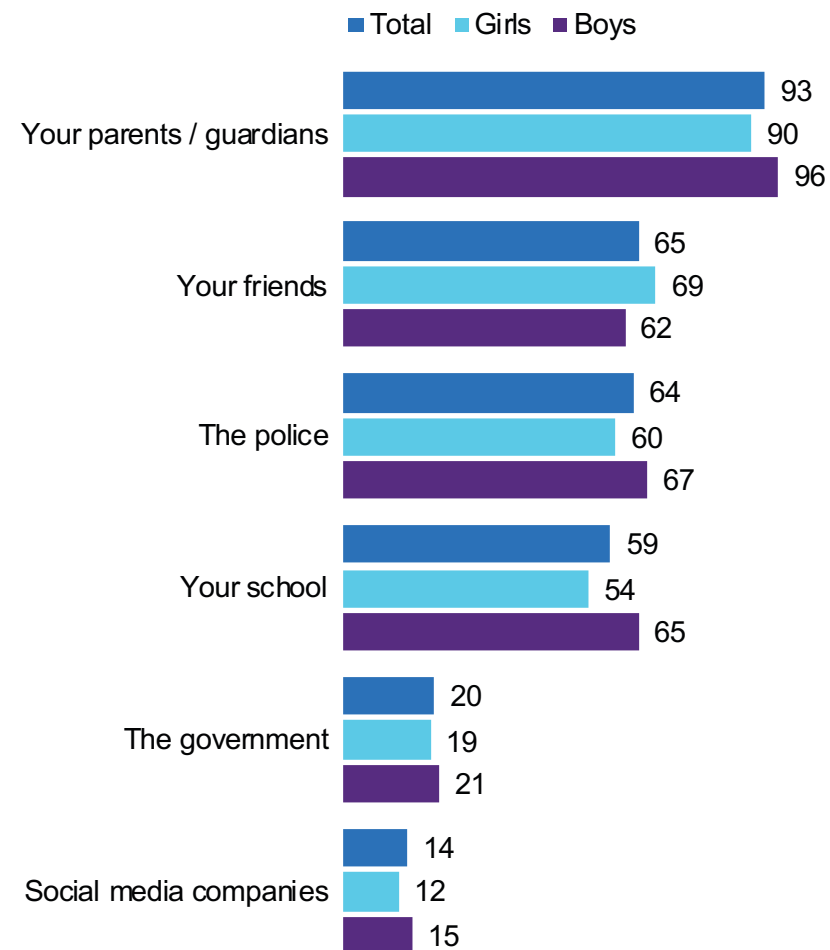
Of social media users have an adult they'd trust to do something about online harassment

Girls 86% Boys 90%

**On sexual harassment,
adolescents trust parents the most
— and social media companies
and the government the least.**

Do you trust these people and groups to take
sexual harassment and assault seriously?

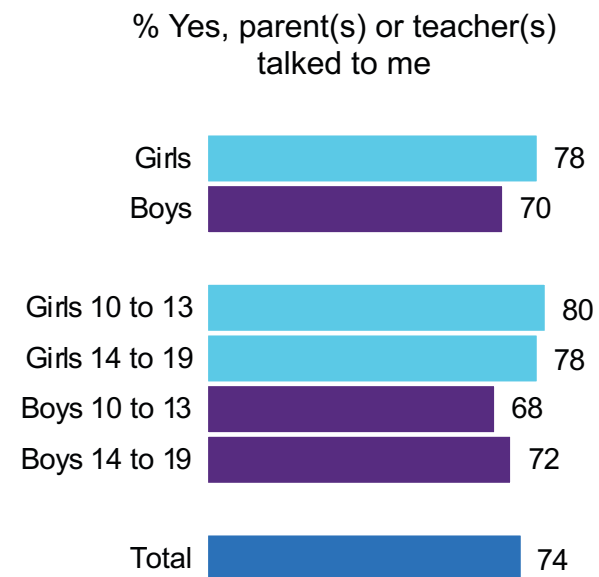
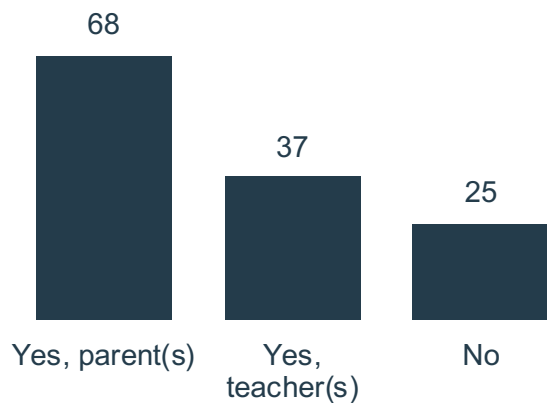
% Yes, trust them



Most adolescents say a parent or teacher has talked to them about preventing sexual harassment.

Boys are less likely than young girls to report having these discussions.

Have your parents or teachers talked to you about how to prevent or stop sexual harassment, or not?
(You can choose more than one.)



Adolescents whose parents or teachers have talked with them about sexual harassment feel more prepared to report it.

Have your parents or teachers talked to you about preventing sexual harassment?

	No	Yes, parent(s)	Yes, teacher(s)	Yes to both
Know how to report online harassment	49%	65%	62%	66%
Would feel comfortable reporting	59%	72%	75%	78%
Trust an adult to do something about it	79%	92%	90%	92%
Trust their school to take it seriously	52%	63%	67%	69%
Trust parents to take it seriously	91%	94%	95%	96%

Period stigma.

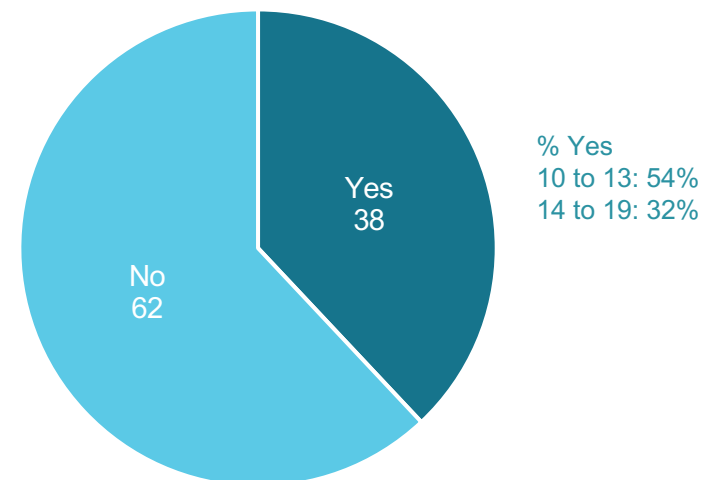
The survey explored the prevalence of period stigma among girls and the effects their periods have on their lives.

About four in ten girls feel embarrassed or nervous to talk about their period.

Over half (54%) of girls 10 to 13 say they've felt embarrassed or nervous.

Do you ever feel embarrassed or nervous to talk about your period?

N = 386 girls who have gotten their period

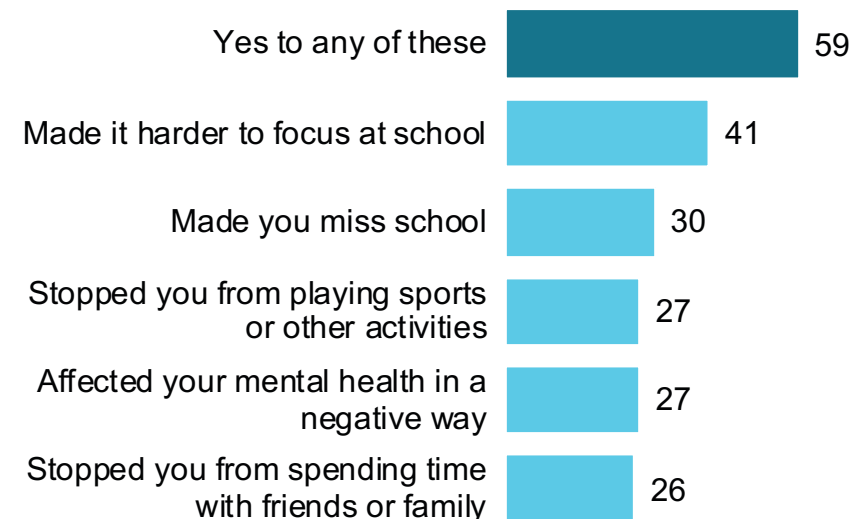


A majority of girls say their period has interfered with their lives in various ways.

Three in ten say their period made them miss school in the past year and four in ten say it's affected their ability to focus at school.

In the past 12 months, has your period:

N = 386 girls who have gotten their period



Potential influences on adolescents' views toward gender equality.

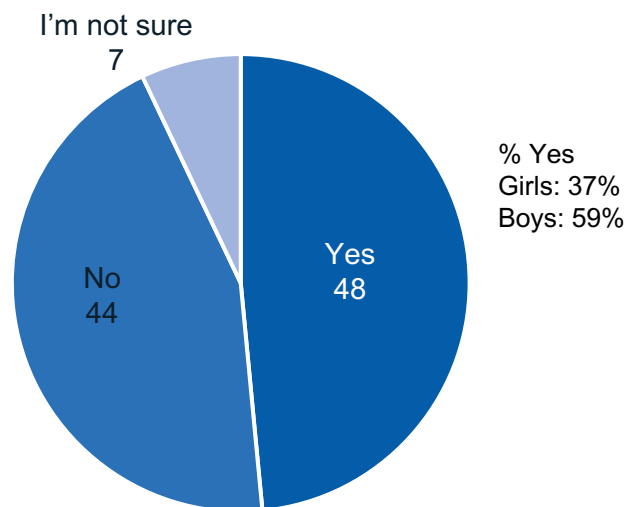
We asked a few additional questions to explore various factors that might correlate with attitudes toward gender equality.

About half of older adolescents say they've seen porn online.

In our 2018 survey, significantly more (65%) said they'd seen online porn.

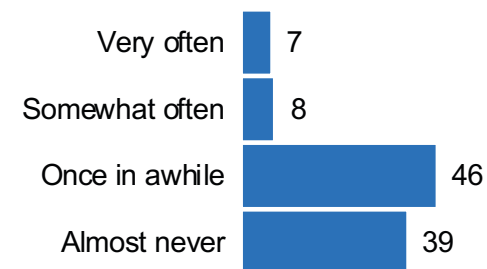
Have you ever seen porn online,
even if by accident?

N = 637 adolescents 14 to 19



IF YES: How often do you
see porn online?

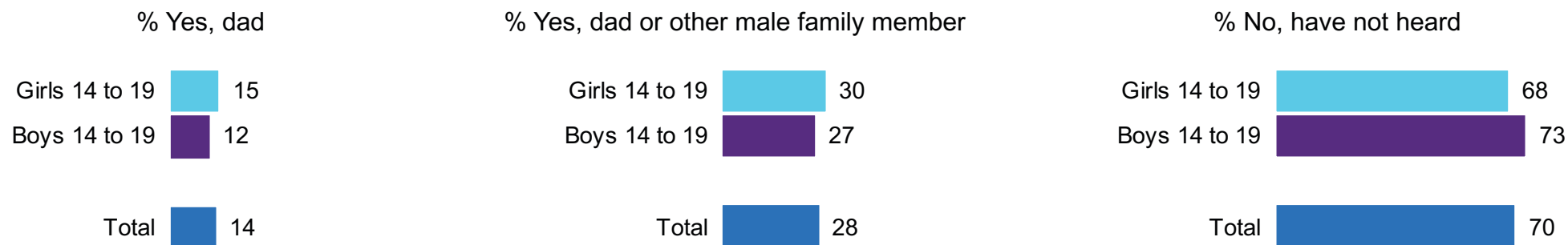
N = 293



Nearly three in ten older adolescents have heard a man in their family make sexual comments about women — down from four in ten in 2018.

Have you ever heard your dad or other men in your family make sexual comments or sexual jokes about women? (You can choose more than one.)

N = 637 adolescents 14 to 19



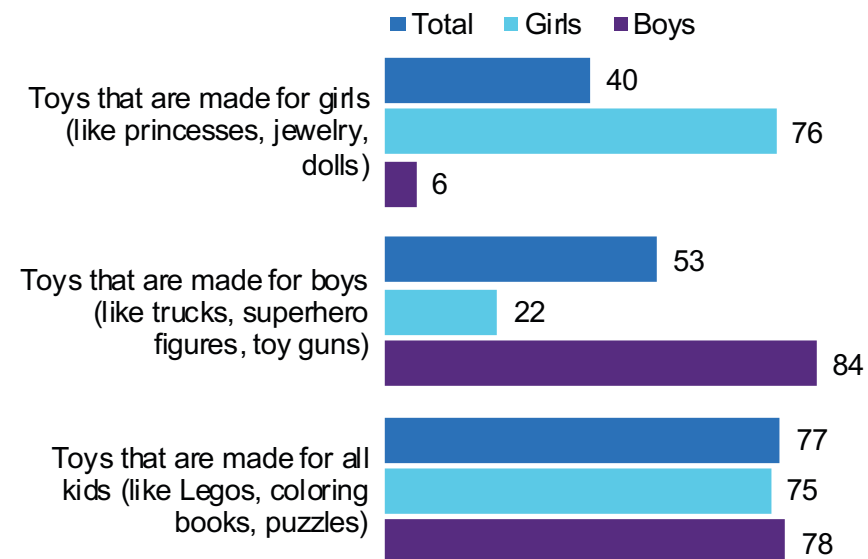
Italic numbers = percentage-point change vs. 2018

Most adolescents say they played with toys made for all kids.

Girls are more likely than boys to say they played with toys made for another gender.

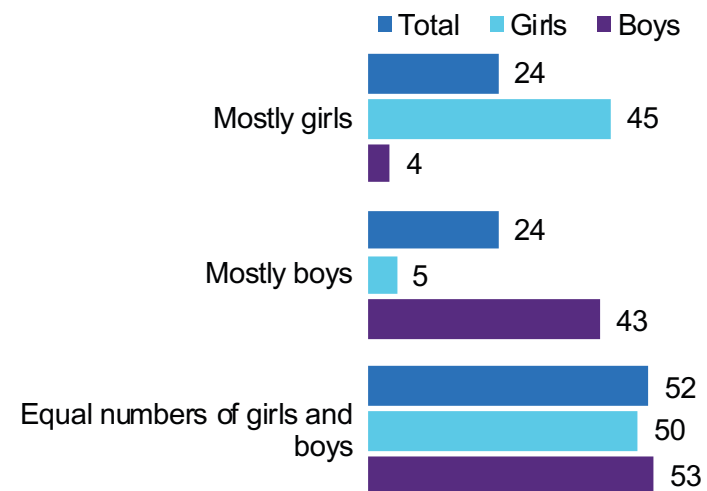
When you were younger, what types of toys did you play with most of the time? (You can choose more than one.)

ROTATE FIRST TWO



Half of adolescents grew up playing with an even mix of girls and boys, while the rest stuck with their own gender.

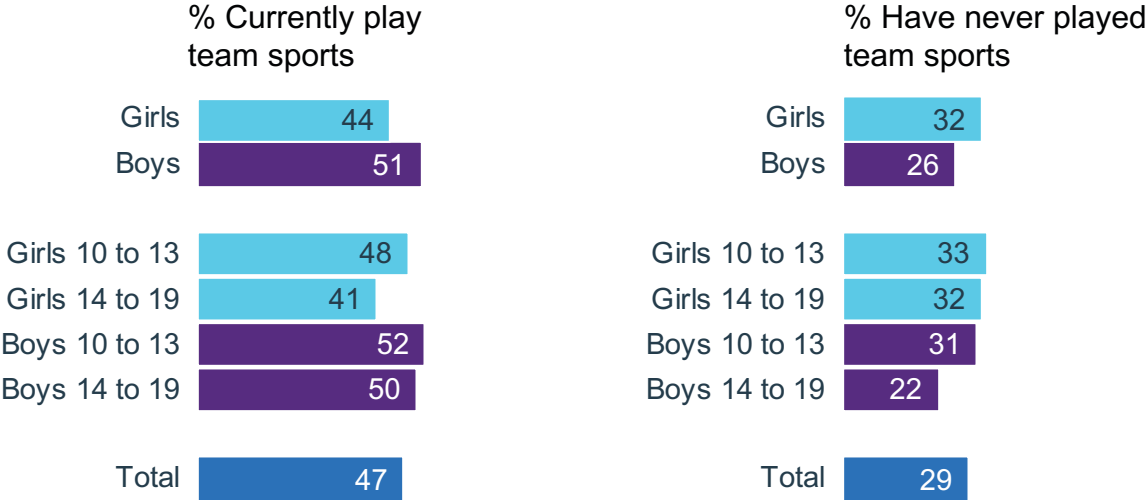
When you were younger, did you mostly play with:



Boys are more likely to play team sports than girls.

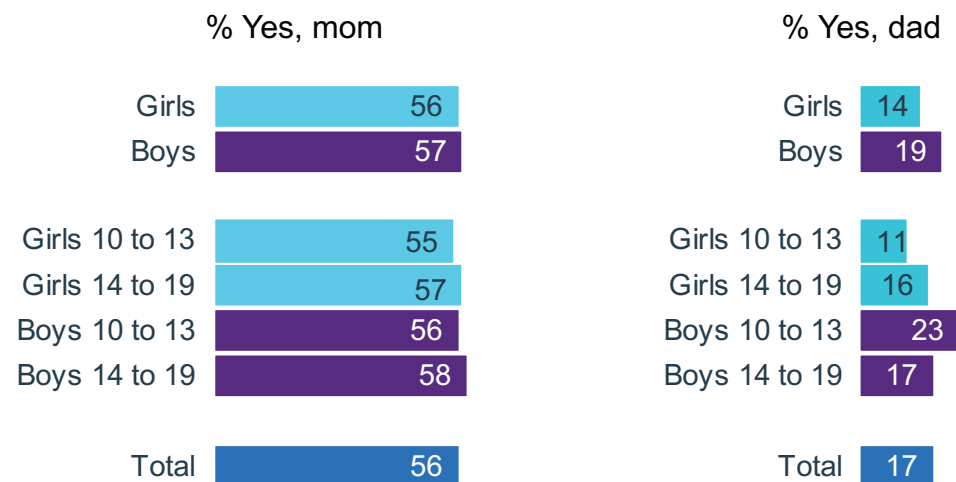
Older girls are least likely to be playing sports currently.

Do you play any team sports? IF NO: Have you ever played team sports?



More than half of adolescents say their mom has stayed home with them at some point — few say their dad has.

Did your [mom/dad] ever stay home to take care of you instead of having a job?



BECAUSE
I AM A GIRL

POWERED BY PLAN INTERNATIONAL