



Challenges of early adolescence: New insights from Growing Up in Ireland

Growing Up in Ireland Research Team
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Fás Aníos in Éirinn
Growing Up in Ireland

About Growing Up in Ireland



- The national longitudinal study of children and young people
 - Established in 2006
 - Currently run by Central Statistics Office and DCEDIY (previously ESRI/TCD/DCEDIY)
- **AIM:** Provide evidence to create effective and responsive policies and services for children, young people and their families
- Originally a dual cohort study
 - **Cohort '08: 11,000 recruited at 9mths, most recently visited at 13yrs**
 - Cohort '98: recruited at age 9, most recently visited at 25yrs (**also visited at 13yrs**)
 - *New birth cohort being added in Q4 of 2024
- **Longitudinal:** visit the same young people and their families every few years
- **Topics:** physical health, socio-emotional well-being, education, relationships, family context

About This Report

- This wave of data collection took place in 2021/22, during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - All interviews were administered remotely; online and telephone
 - Surveys were shorter than originally planned
- Respondents: 13-year-old, primary caregiver, secondary caregiver
- Two questionnaires:
 - Main questionnaire (by phone) – *Key Findings Report, July 2023*
 - Sensitive questionnaire (self-completed online)
 - Relationships, mental health, bullying, risky behaviours
- Differences explored using a set of socio-demographic characteristics:
 - maternal education
 - family income/type
 - region
 - child gender



Sample for Cohort '08 at age 13

	N	% of phone interviews
Mother	3,963	60%
Father	2,445	51%
13-year-old	3,128	49%

- **Mode effect:**
 - Response rates for online questionnaire were substantially lower than telephone interview (>6000)
 - Both telephone/online lower than traditional response rates for GUI fieldwork (in-person)
- **Data were reweighted** to ensure representativeness with originally recruited sample



RESULTS

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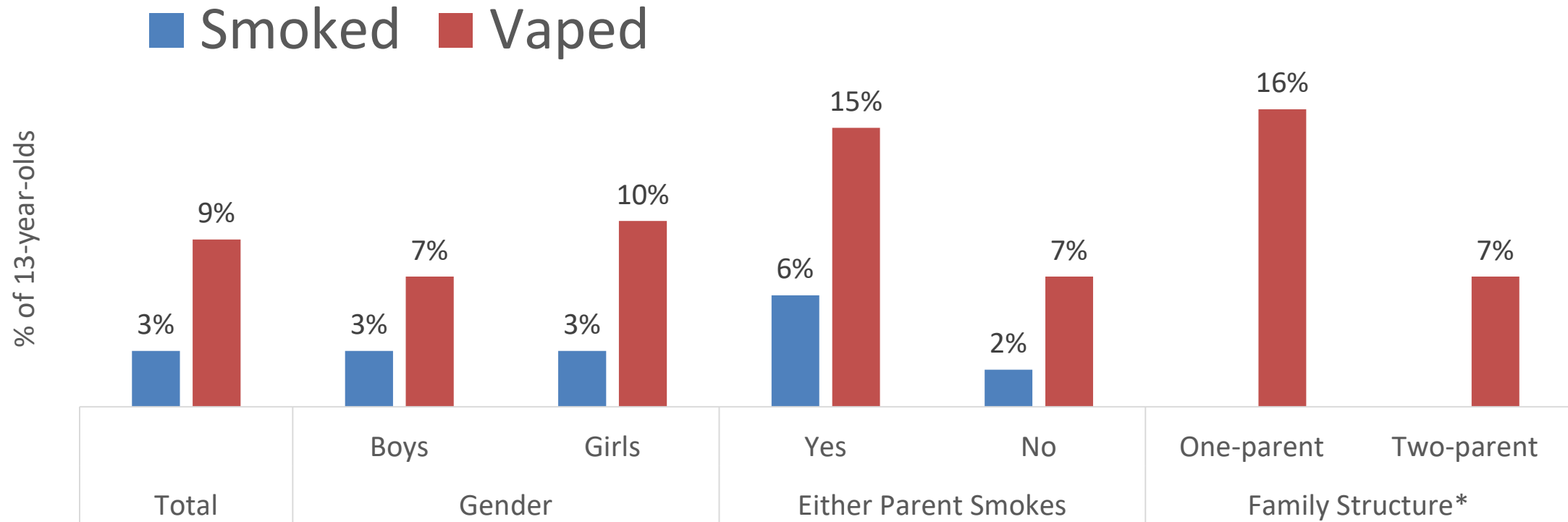


RESULTS

Health Behaviours

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Smoking and Vaping

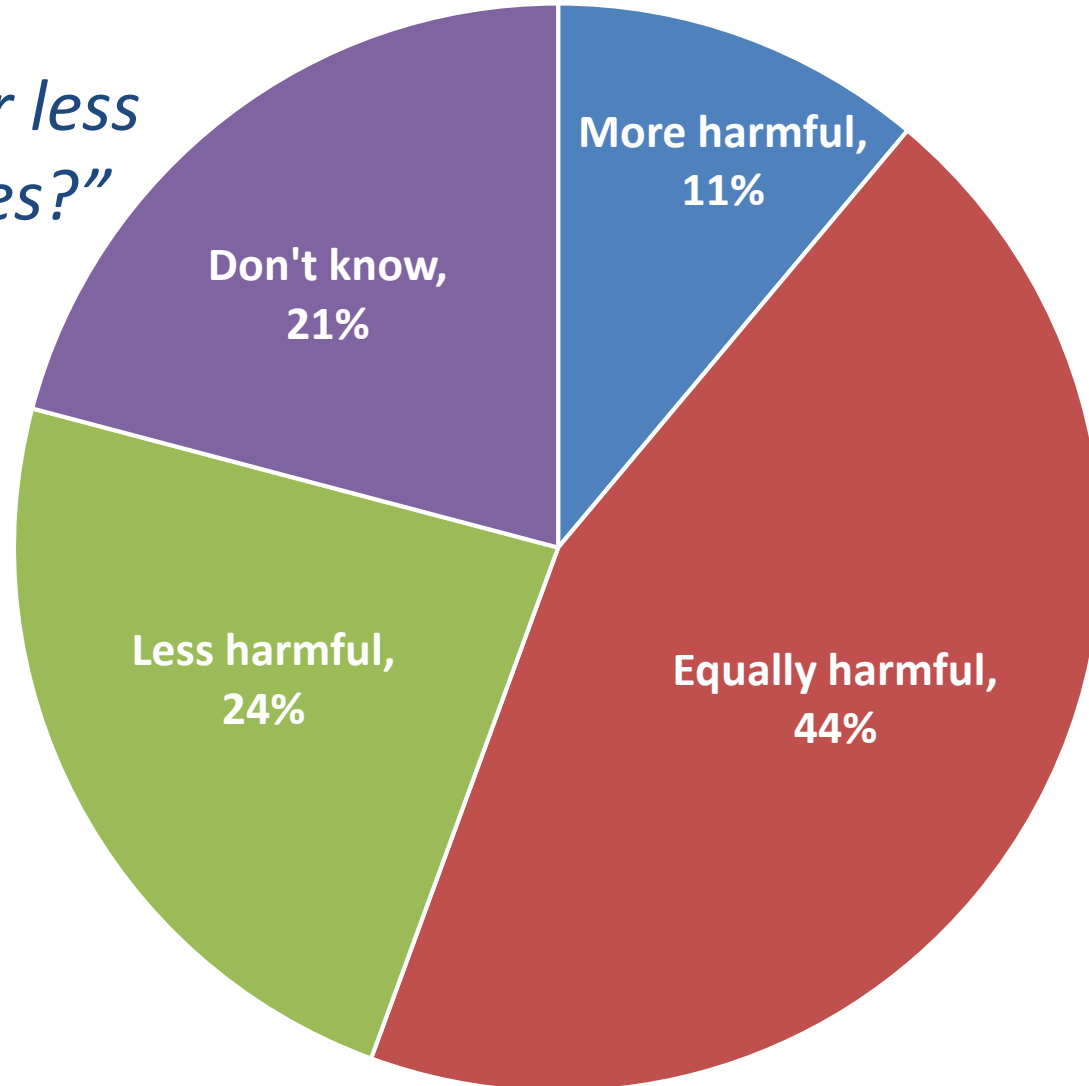


+ Much less prevalent than Cohort '98 = 9%

? No equivalent vaping data for Cohort '98

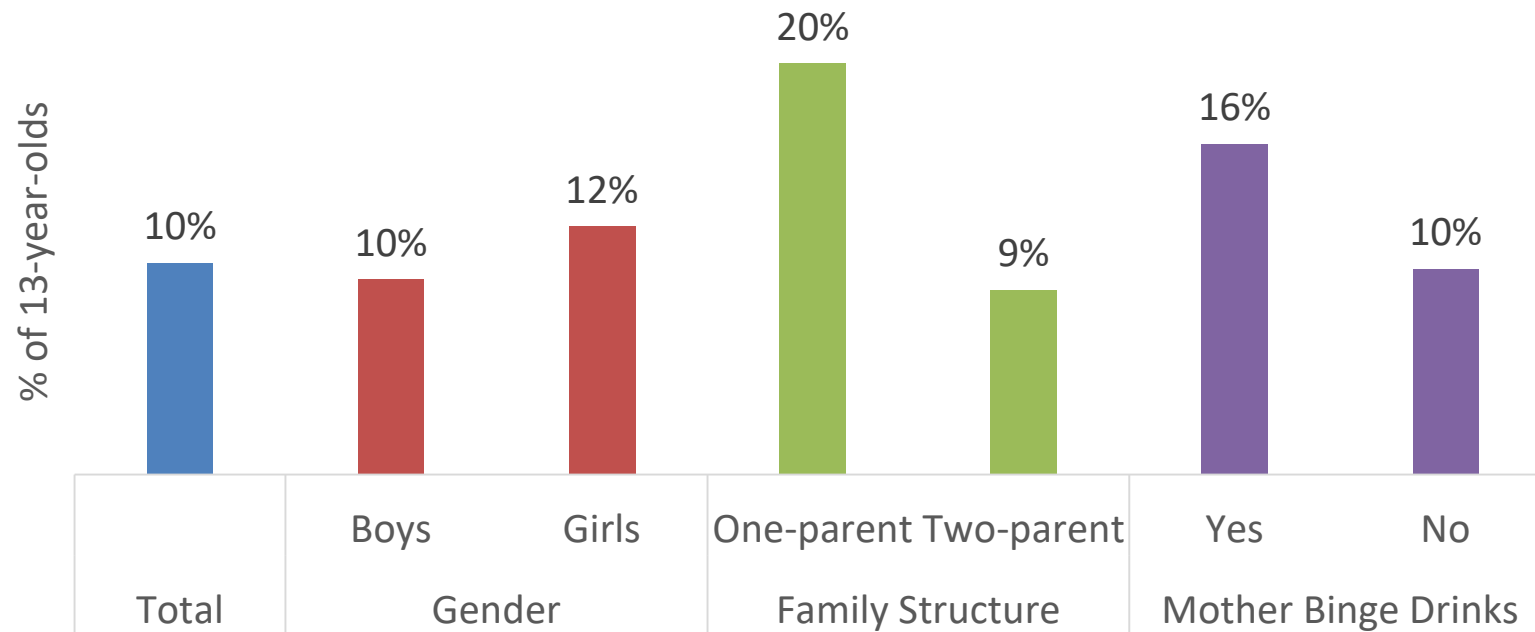
Smoking and Vaping

“Do you think vaping is more or less harmful than smoking cigarettes?”



Drinking

Percentage of 13-year-olds who had ever had an alcoholic drink



Just **1%** of 13-year olds said they drank regularly



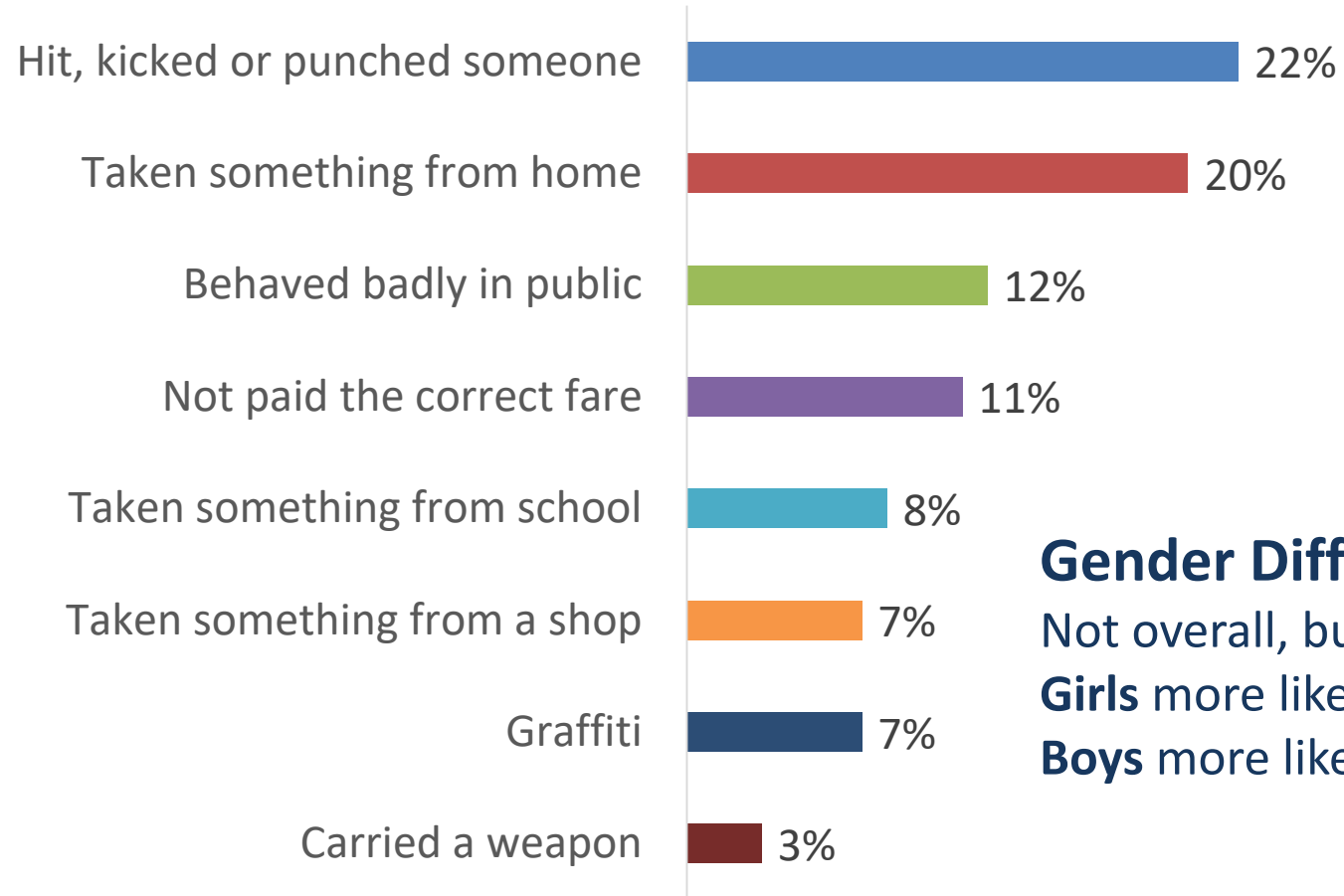
RESULTS

Socio- emotional well-being

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Anti-social behaviours

At least once in the previous year...



Gender Differences?

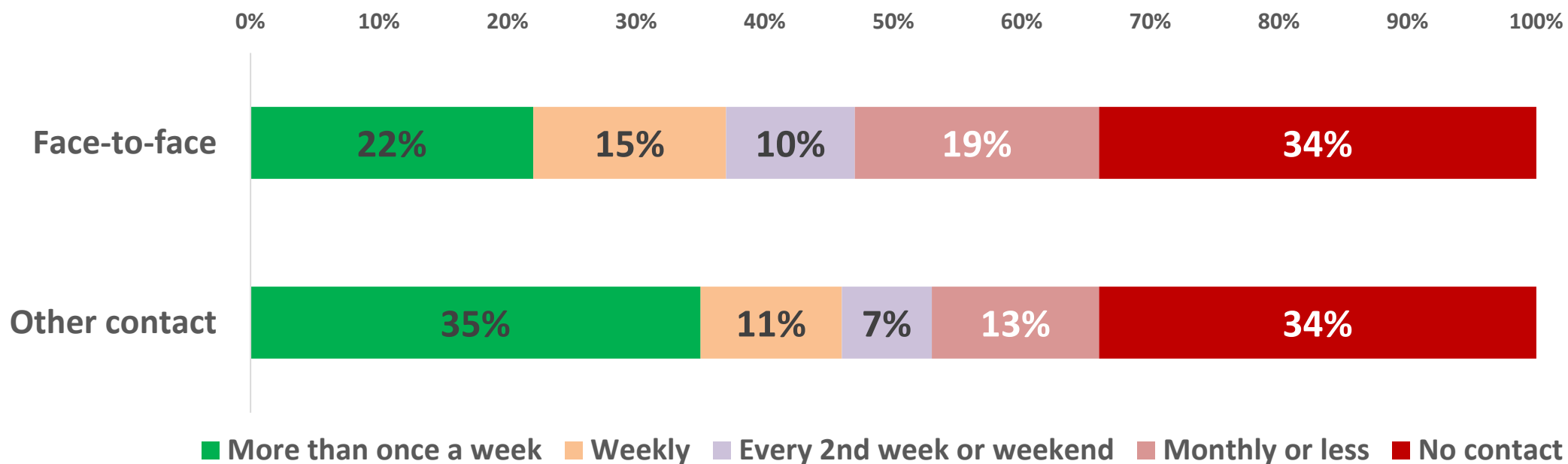
Not overall, but...

Girls more likely to avoid paying the correct fare or to graffiti

Boys more likely to have hit, kicked or punched someone

Family relationships

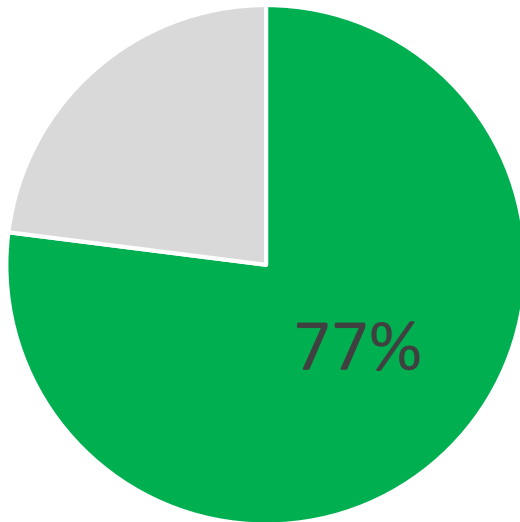
- Three-quarters of 13-year-olds lived with a married couple
- One-fifth had a biological parent living elsewhere (i.e. 'non-resident')
 - There was considerable variation in the amount of contact with the non-resident parent



Getting on with parents

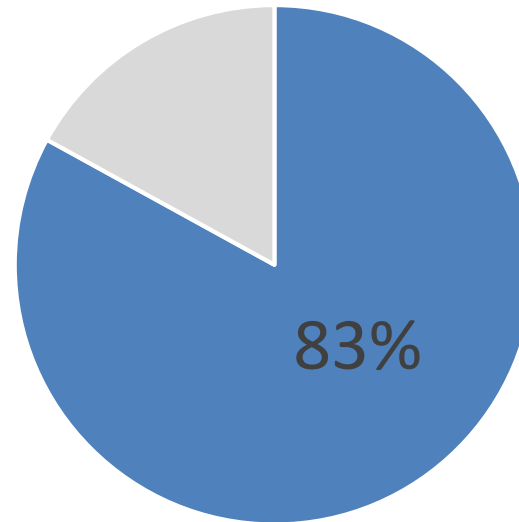
- A majority of 13-year-olds got on 'very well' with the parent who usually looked after them
 - But girls were less positive than boys

TOTAL



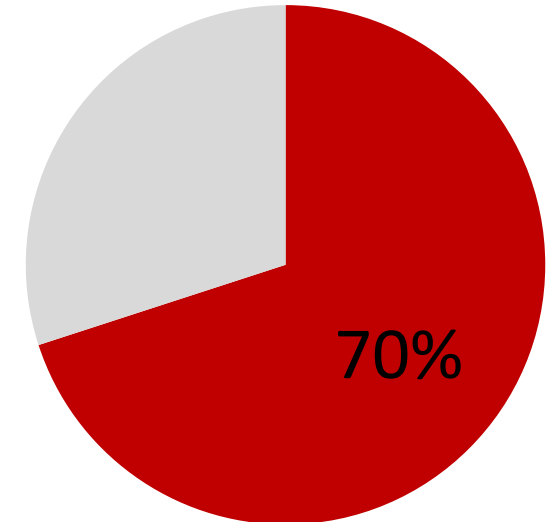
■ Get on well with parent ■ DO NOT Get on well with parent

BOYS



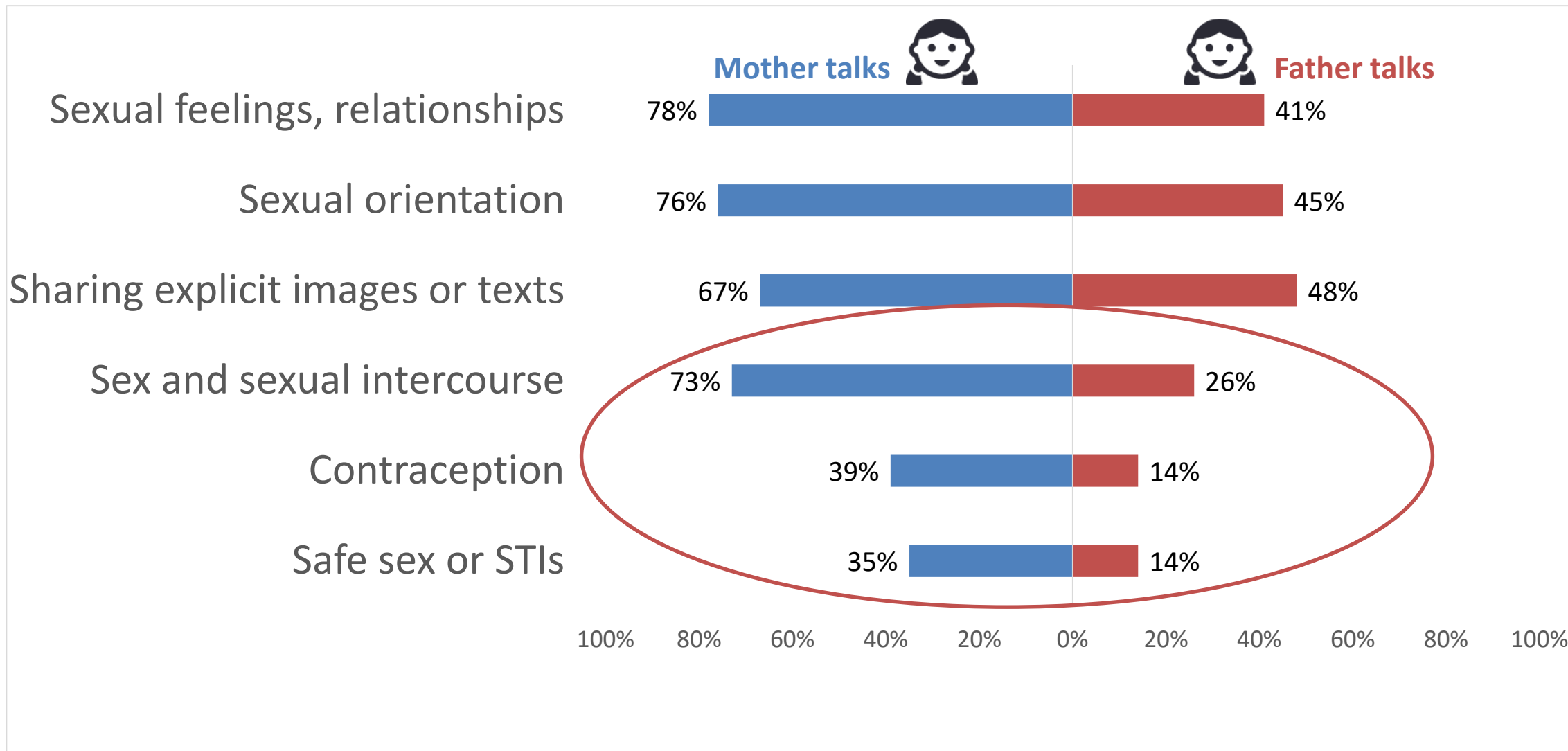
■ Get on well with parent ■ DO NOT Get on well with parent

GIRLS

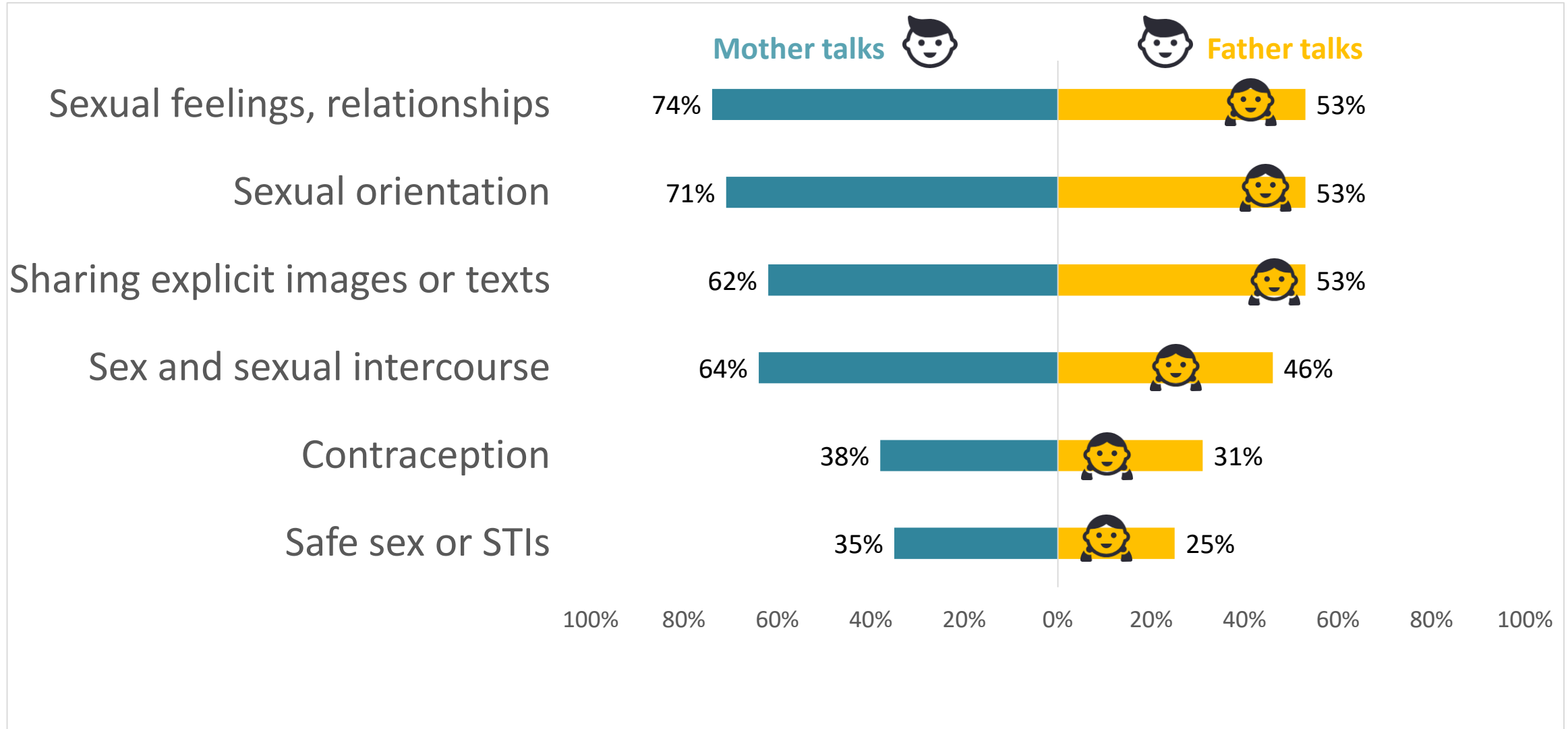


■ Get on well with parent ■ DO NOT Get on well with parent

Mothers and/or fathers talking to girls about sex and relationship issues



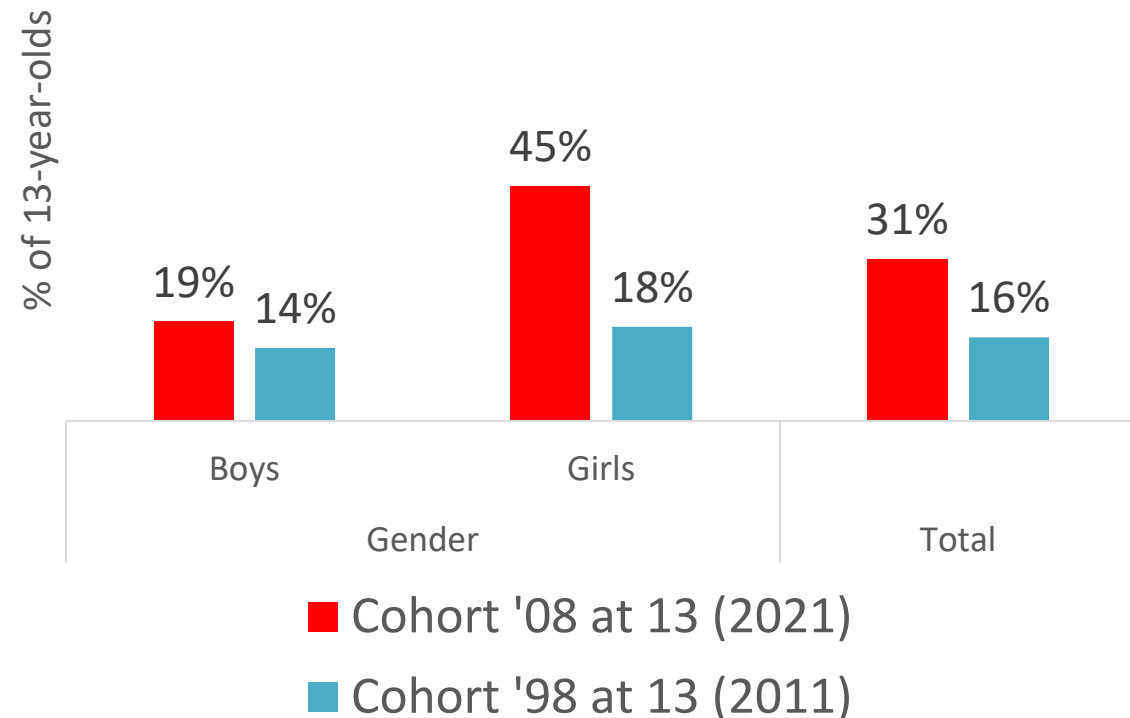
Mothers and/or fathers talking to boys about sex and relationship issues



Mental health

- Depressive symptoms among young people measured with the Short Mood and Feelings Questionnaire (SMFQ)
 - Also used with Cohort '98 at 13
 - Use same cut-off points to compare across time (8+)

% 'at risk' on SMFQ measure of depressive symptoms



*Cohort '98 values taken from Nixon (2021)



RESULTS

Peer relationships

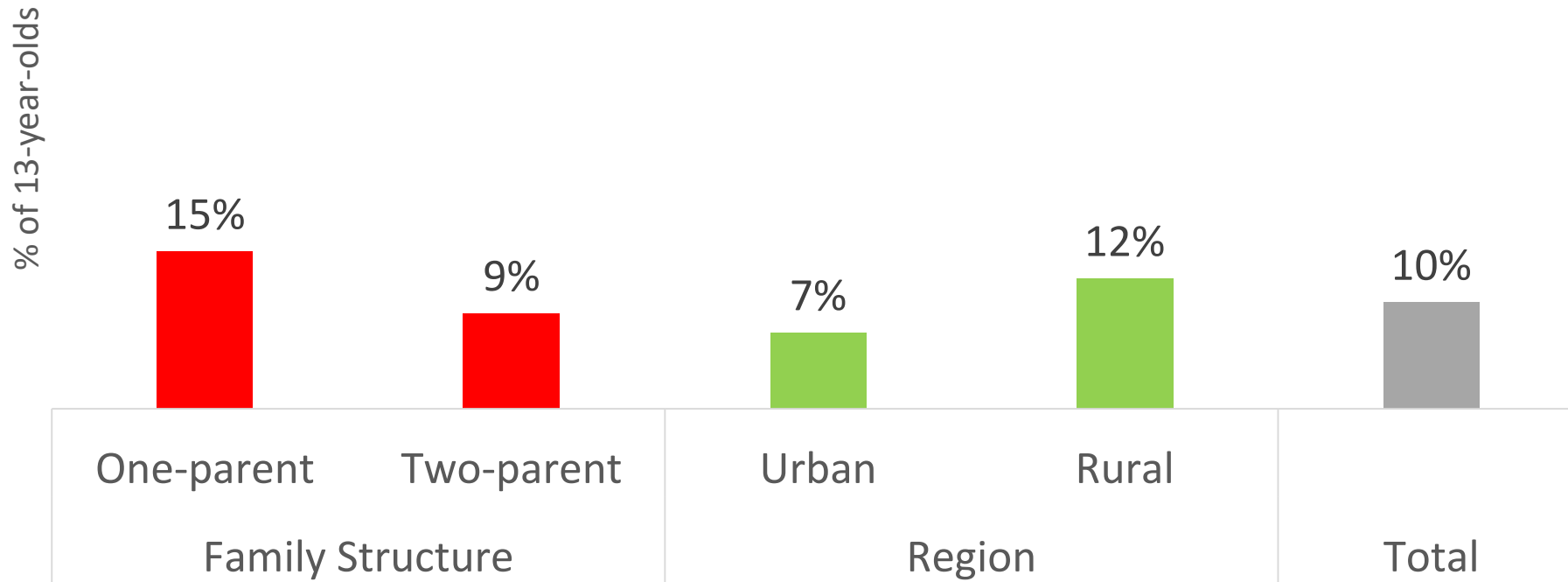
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New types of peer relationships



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- 10% of 13-year-olds said they had a boyfriend or girlfriend
- No significant gender differences but differences by other characteristics . . .



Experience of bullying behaviours

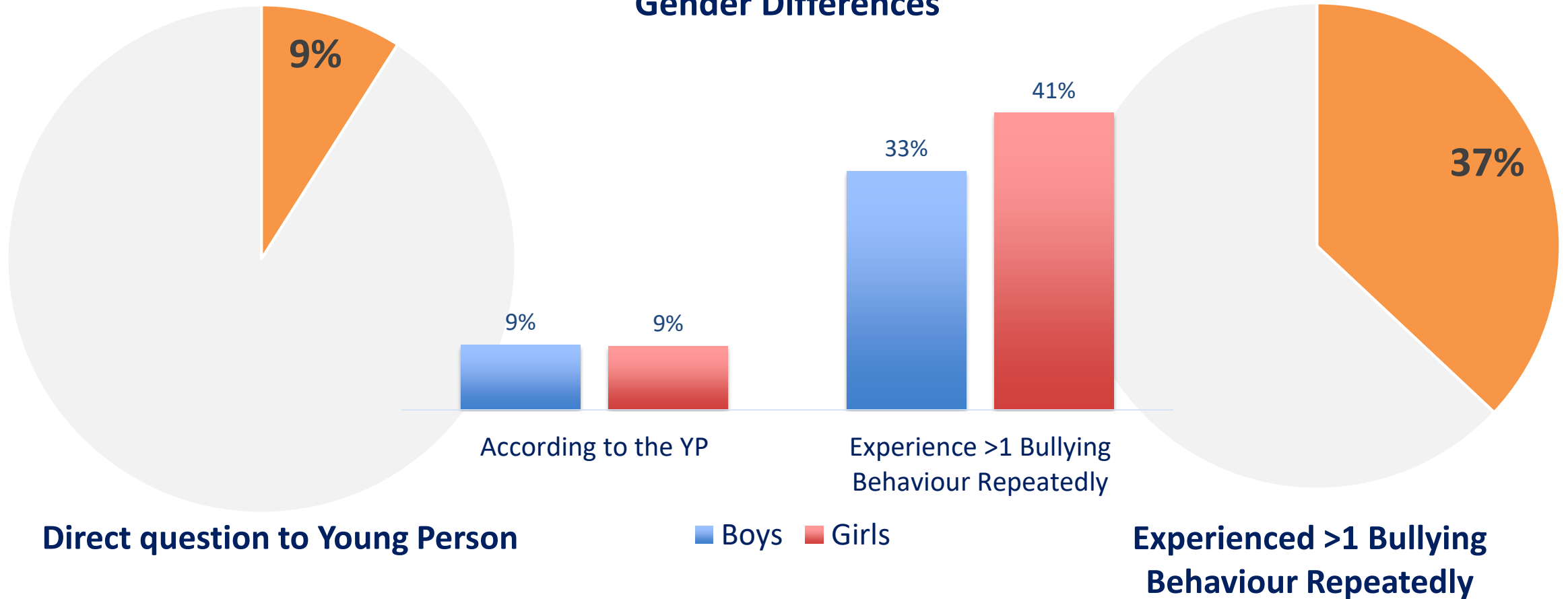
Experience of . . .	Ever in last 3 months
Exclusion (being left out)	34%
Name-calling, hurtful slagging	33%
Pushed, shoved or slapped	30%
Hit, kicked or punched	23%
Gossip, rumours spread	22%
Possessions taken or damaged	18%
Hurtful message by text, email	15%
Threatened or forced to do something	10%
Something hurtful posted online	9%
Circulation of an upsetting note or photo or video or graffiti	6%

‘old-fashioned’ bullying experiences were more common than ‘cyber-bullying’

However, only 9% of 13-year-olds answered ‘yes’ to the question, “have you been bullied in the last 3 months?”

Different estimates of bullying victims: direct question vs repeated experience of at least one bullying behaviour

Gender Differences





And finally

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Cohort '08 at 13

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Looking Forward to Adulthood . . .



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Travelling to different countries

32%



Living in my own place

18%



Getting a job

16%



Having my own money to spend
as I wish

15%

Acknowledgements

- The study participants
- Original ESRI/TCD team and interviewers
- Colleagues in DCEDIY and CSO
- Internal and external reviewers
- Members of the governance structures (Steering Group, REC)



And more from this survey . . .

Cohort '08 at 13

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Accessing responses from the GUI survey – AMF data



- Anonymised Microdata File – primarily from main interview
- Tables displaying response frequencies for each question
- Introduce data and encourage further investigation
- Respondents: Young Person, Primary Caregiver, Secondary Caregiver, School Principal

Survey Responses to Questionnaires Used with Cohort '08 at age 13

An Introduction to the Anonymised Microdata File (AMF) for Policy-Makers and Data Users

June 2024



A Note on How to Read the Tables

No Answer

Many questions will display the row “No answer” as observed in the table below:

Person 3 gender Wave 6 Grid					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	5702	85.7	89.5	89.5
	Female	672	10.1	10.5	100.0
	Total	6375	95.8	100.0	
No answer		280	4.2		
Total		6655	100.0		

This row covers respondents who refused to answer that question, didn't know how to answer or the question was not applicable. For the above question, it is likely that the majority of the “No answer” responses come from households with only a Primary Caregiver and a Young Person and no 3rd person.

Understanding the Different “Percent” Columns

Person 3 gender Wave 6 Grid					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	5702	85.7	89.5	89.5
	Female	672	10.1	10.5	100.0
	Total	6375	95.8	100.0	
No answer		280	4.2		
Total		6655	100.0		

The **percent** column displays each response category as a percentage of the total sample; in this case, only **95.8%** (6,375 participants) of the total sample (6,655 participants) answered the question and **4.2%** (280 participants) did not. The **valid percent** column displays each response category as a percentage of the participants that responded to the question (i.e., as a percentage of the 6,375 participants who answered “male” or “female”). The **cumulative percent** column displays a running sum of the valid percent.



Principal Questionnaire

Sent to 13-year-old's Principal

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COVID Questions

P3a. During the first period of school closures (around April 2020); How satisfied were you with the remote learning your school was able to provide to students ?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very satisfied	905	13.6	18.4	18.4
	Fairly satisfied	2436	36.6	49.6	68.1
	Not very satisfied	1343	20.2	27.4	95.4
	Not at all satisfied	225	3.4	4.6	100.0
	Total	4909	73.8	100.0	
No answer		1746	26.2		
Total		6655	100.0		

Type of school

P13. What type of school is it?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Fee-paying secondary	276	4.2	5.6	5.6
	Non-fee-paying secondary	2234	33.6	45.6	51.2
	ETB school	1388	20.9	28.3	79.6
	Educate Together school	73	1.1	1.5	81.1
	Community college	159	2.4	3.3	84.3
	Community school	663	10.0	13.5	97.9
	Comprehensive school	104	1.6	2.1	100.0
	Total	4898	73.6	100.0	
No answer		1757	26.4		
Total		6655	100.0		

Voluntary contributions

P52a. Does the school receive voluntary contributions from parents?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	3356	50.4	69.2	69.2
	No	1494	22.5	30.8	100.0
	Total	4850	72.9	100.0	
No answer		1805	27.1		
Total		6655	100.0		



QUESTIONS

- growingup.gov.ie
- growingup@equality.gov.ie

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