

November 2021

# Self-Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material: Youth Attitudes and Experiences in 2020

Findings from 2020 quantitative research among 9–17 year olds

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Research conducted by Thorn in partnership with Benenson Strategy Group

THORN <sup>1</sup>



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# Introduction

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## TERMINOLOGY

### SG-CSAM:

Explicit imagery of a child that appears to have been taken by the child in the image. This imagery can result from both consensual or coercive experiences. Kids often refer to consensual experiences as “sexting” or “sharing nudes.”

Self-generated child sexual abuse material (SG-CSAM) has become a vital area of concern for those combating online child sexual exploitation. SG-CSAM, explicit images of a child with no clear offender present in the frame, presents distinct risks for kids and unique challenges for the communities committed to protecting them. The interventions we pursue must be uniquely tailored to the experiences of young people and the offenders who may target them for victimization.

In 2019, Thorn launched its first SG-CSAM: Attitudes and Behaviors research initiative. This survey, fielded to 1,000 9–17 year olds and 400 caregivers, explored the rates at which young people were taking and sharing nudes, as well as re-sharing or receiving the intimate images of others. The findings were clear: (1) sexting is becoming viewed as a “normal” activity among peers; (2) coercion plays a critical role and exponentially increases risk to the victim; and (3) attitudes of blame and shame can compound the harms of online threats and unintentionally isolate young people.

Thorn refielded this study in October and November of 2020, the results of which are provided in this report. The central concerns highlighted in the 2019 report remained consistent in the 2020 data. Additionally, data increasingly points to unique vulnerabilities among some demographics and a concerning increase in risk among 9–12 year olds.

This research, in conjunction with a parallel study of caregiver attitudes and behaviors, will continue to be fielded and reported out annually. It is our hope that this research can serve to elevate the experiences of those closest to these issues, supporting data driven interventions and triggering a more expansive body of research into the evolving landscape of online child sexual exploitation.

# Methodology & Research Design

Research on SG-CSAM continues to present unique challenges within an ever-changing digital environment. Survey authors have included here a brief discussion of some of these challenges and their corresponding mitigation strategies.

## Challenges

**CHALLENGE** — The issues and risks associated with online SG-CSAM exist within a dynamic online environment: the technologies and platforms intersecting with this issue area are in constant flux, as are the habits of the kids who use them.

**Actions:** This research relies on dynamic social research methodologies, which enable expedited collection and analysis of data, to ensure it best reflects the current digital landscape. Because design limitations restrict the number of platforms shown to participants, this survey includes a diverse but non-exhaustive list of platforms, with top priority given to social platforms. The final list is informed by historical research, external reports, and expert consultation, and is re-evaluated for the needs of each individual survey.

**CHALLENGE** — Attitudes towards sexuality vary widely across demographics.

**Actions:** This is a universal issue, but the way it impacts kids differs across demographics. This research aimed to identify trends among kids overall, as well as within age groups (i.e., 9–12 years and 13–17 years). A secondary objective was to get a broad understanding of how trends around this issue manifest differently across demographics. Given sample size limitations, some of the identified trends within subgroups are more appropriately viewed as starting points. Future research will continue to focus on understanding differences between demographics at a more granular level.

**CHALLENGE** — Entrenched stigma and sensitivity surrounding the topic may lead to an undercounting of the scale and frequency.

**Actions:** Asking individuals —especially kids— to open up about a subject as delicate and personal as sharing nude images of themselves or their peers requires the design of survey instruments that are safe and supportive. Sequence was important in our research instruments; sensitive questions were prefaced with a note acknowledging the difficulty of discussing the topic and reiterating the anonymity of the responses. Questions were also written in

a manner that gave the space or permission for individuals to answer generally about “people they know” in lieu of exclusively asking respondents point blank about their own engagements with sharing nudes. Resources for additional information and referrals for real-time support were highlighted in all survey instruments

**CHALLENGE** – The present study captured SG-CSAM attitudes and behaviors during 2020 – a year in which a worldwide pandemic (COVID-19) was actively influencing online behaviors and relationships.

**Actions:** While we can compare data collected in 2020 to data collected in 2019, we cannot definitively determine if differences in these data points represent anomalies or lasting change, nor can we distinguish precisely the role COVID-19 has had in these changes. However, this survey did include one question to record participants’ perception of the pandemic’s impact on the frequency of SG-CSAM experiences among their peers. A brief discussion of this data is included on page 24.

## Research Design

This research represents a continuation of research originally performed in 2019.<sup>1</sup> Quantitative survey tools were used in 2019 and 2020 to collect self-reported data from minors aged 9–17.<sup>2</sup>

### *Quantitative Online Survey*

In 2020, the research was designed to identify and monitor changes in minors’ behaviors and attitudes related to SG-CSAM as originally benchmarked by the quantitative research conducted in 2019. The 2020 survey repeated the majority of the questions originally fielded in 2019 and added a small number of questions designed to deepen our understanding of this issue. Throughout the report, figures presenting data collected from the new questions will be marked with: **NEW**

In total, 2,002 minors from across the United States participated in a 20-minute online survey from October 26 to November 12, 2020. Specifically, sample makeup included:

- N=742: 9–12 year olds
- N=1,260: 13–17 year olds

<sup>1</sup>Thorn. (2019). Self-Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material: Attitudes and Experiences. Available at <https://www.thorn.org/self-generated-child-sexual-abuse-material-attitudes-and-experiences/>

<sup>2</sup>In the context of this report, and unless otherwise noted, the term “minors” is used to describe young people represented in the survey sample (9–17 year olds).

However, only the demographic questions and some of the broader questions, such as platform usage, were asked of the entire sample. For the majority of the survey, kids were split evenly and randomly into two groups and shown a set of questions based on the group to which they were assigned. One group was shown questions pertaining to perceived hurdles to disclosure. This data was previously reported on in Thorn's 2020 Responding to Online Threats: Minors' Perspectives on Disclosing, Reporting, and Blocking.<sup>3</sup>

The current report will focus on the Experience Of and Attitudes About Sharing SG-CSAM questions, which were asked of 1,002 minors. Specifically, this group included:

- N=351: 9–12 year olds
- N=651: 13–17 year olds

To ensure a representative sample nationwide, data was weighted to age, gender, race, and geography, based on US Census data. These weights were also held within each of the two groups to ensure they independently represented the nation's demographics.

## A Note on Privacy and Safety

Ensuring the privacy and safety of those who chose to participate in this research was paramount. In each phase of research, in order for minors to participate, their caregiver had to sign a release form detailing the nature of the study. In addition, help resources were provided to participants in the event they wanted to learn more about the topics discussed or needed professional support to talk about these issues.

<sup>3</sup> For analysis related to the Hurdles to Disclosure questions, see Thorn. (2020). Responding to Online Threats: Minors' Perspectives on Disclosing, Reporting, and Blocking. Available at <https://www.thorn.org/thorn-research-minors-perspectives-on-disclosing-reporting-and-blocking/>

# SG-CSAM Metrics at a Glance

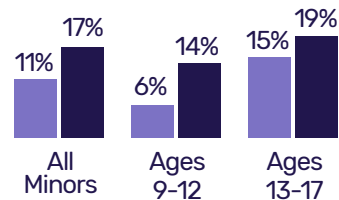
In order to generate insight into the scale and nature of youth experiences with SG-CSAM, it is essential to track the related attitudes and behaviors of youth over time. In particular, monitoring year-over-year changes related to how youth share, receive, and re-share SG-CSAM and the perceptions they have of their peers doing the same can help expand the aperture of the field's

understanding of these important issues. This section is intended to provide a bird's eye view of kids' SG-CSAM attitudes and behaviors in 2019 and 2020. In-depth demographic segmentation, including age, gender, and sexual identity, is featured in subsequent sections of this report.

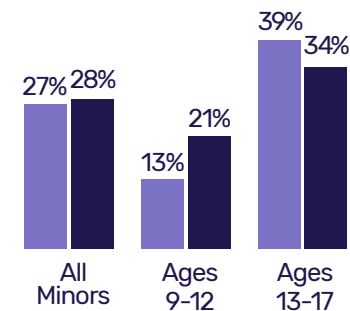
**Fig 1 | Experiences with initial shares and perceptions of normalcy**

% of all minors who have shared their own SG-CSAM

■ 2019 ■ 2020



% of all minors who agreed it's normal for kids their age to share their own SG-CSAM

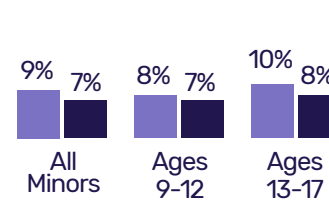


[Q40X] Have you ever sent or shared a nude photo or video of yourself either directly with someone else or with your social media followers? Please remember that your answers are anonymous. [Q40] How strongly do you agree with the following statement? "It's normal for people my age to share nudes with each other."

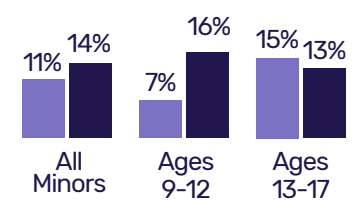
**Fig 2 | Experiences with re-sharing SG-CSAM and perceptions of normalcy**

% of all minors who have re-shared someone else's SG-CSAM

■ 2019 ■ 2020



% of all minors who believe their close friends "often or sometimes" re-share another kid's SG-CSAM



[Q50] Have you ever shared a nude photo or video of someone else without that person's knowledge online? [Q35Br3] And how often do your close friends...send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others?

Fig 3 | Experiences with seeing non-consensually re-shared SG-CSAM

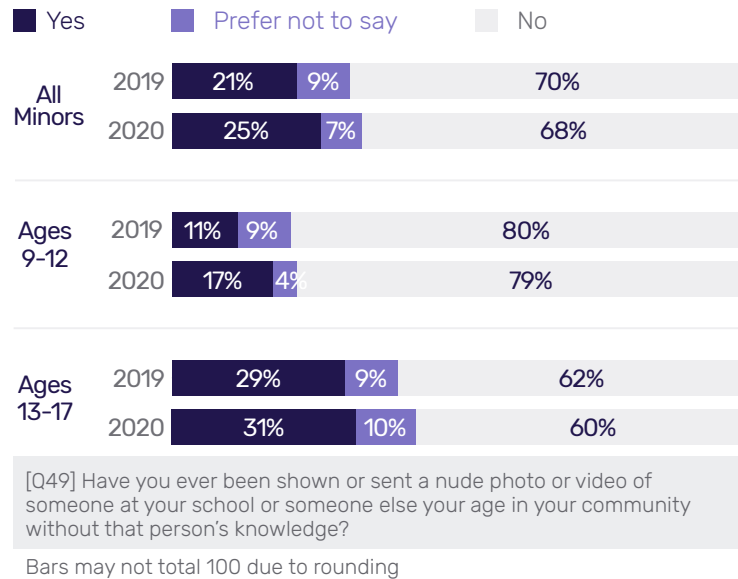
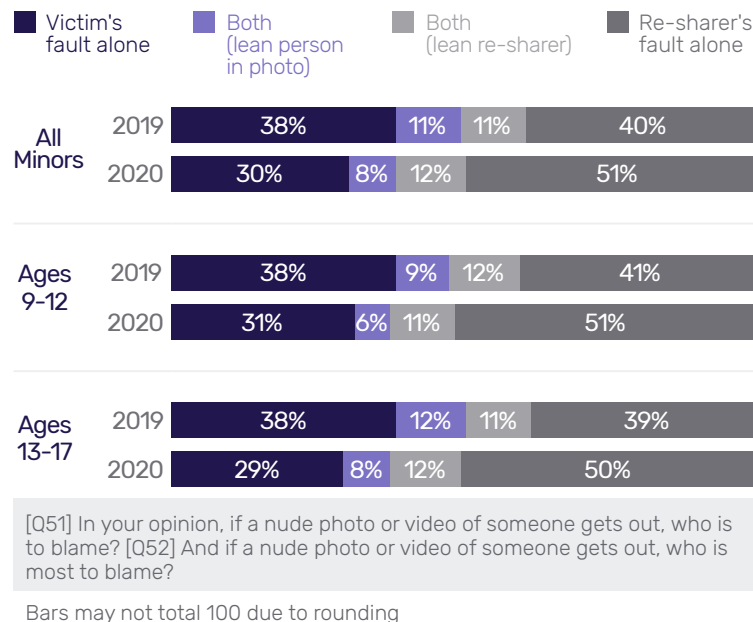


Fig 4 | Perceptions of blame



## COVID-19

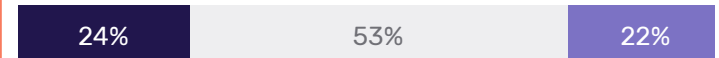
As we continue to collect and analyze data to understand the impact of COVID-19 on minors' experiences with SG-CSAM, the 2020 survey included the addition of one COVID-specific question to begin recording kids' opinions on the pandemic's impact. A more comprehensive discussion of this data is included on page 24.

NEW

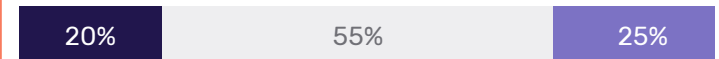
Fig 5 | Perceptions of peer's SG-CSAM experiences since pandemic onset

Legend: Happening more (dark blue), No change at all (light blue), Happening less (medium blue)

Sending or sharing photos or videos of themselves that are nude to others



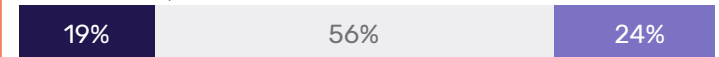
Sending or sharing photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others



Receiving or getting sent photos or videos that are nude



Having nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission



[Q37] If you had to say, are kids at your school doing the following more or less since the start of the coronavirus pandemic?

Bars may not total 100 due to rounding



# The Digital Landscape

The digital landscape in which minors spend time remains fluid. In 2020, while many minors reported increased usage on some platforms, others dropped off.<sup>4</sup> Google Hangouts/Meets (+38%), WhatsApp (+20%), and Twitter (+18%) showed the greatest increase in the

number of minors who reported they have ever used them (Fig 6); Google Hangouts/Meets (+24%), TikTok (+15%), and WhatsApp (+14%) showed the greatest increases in minors who reported daily use (Fig 7).

Fig 6 | **General platform use among minors – Ever used**

	2019			2020			% CHANGE (+/-)				2019			2020			% CHANGE (+/-)		
	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17		ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17
Amino	-	-	-	10%	8%	11%	-	-	-	Reddit	32%	24%	39%	32%	20%	41%	-	-4	+2
Among Us	-	-	-	43%	23%	59%	-	-	-	Roblox	-	-	-	47%	42%	50%	-	-	-
Byte	-	-	-	5%	5%	4%	-	-	-	Signal	12%	12%	13%	2%	3%	2%	-10	-9	-11
Call of Duty	-	-	-	48%	45%	51%	-	-	-	Slack	12%	14%	11%	6%	5%	6%	-6	-9	-5
Discord	32%	23%	40%	34%	20%	45%	+2	-3	+5	Slither.io	-	-	-	31%	17%	42%	-	-	-
Facebook	56%	51%	59%	62%	66%	60%	+6	+15	+1	Snapchat	68%	61%	74%	71%	67%	74%	+3	+6	-
Fortnite	52%	60%	46%	47%	47%	47%	-5	-13	+1	Tagged	-	-	-	4%	5%	3%	-	-	-
Google Hangouts/Meet	26%	21%	31%	64%	63%	65%	+38	+42	+34	Telegram	13%	13%	13%	11%	17%	7%	-2	+4	-6
Grand Theft Auto	47%	45%	49%	39%	36%	42%	-8	-9	-7	TikTok	52%	55%	50%	69%	66%	71%	+17	+11	+21
Houseparty	19%	20%	19%	15%	10%	19%	-4	-10	-	Triller	-	-	-	7%	8%	7%	-	-	-
Instagram	69%	56%	79%	76%	65%	85%	+7	+9	+6	Tumblr	25%	21%	28%	40%	45%	36%	+15	+24	+8
Kik	18%	18%	18%	14%	11%	16%	-4	-7	-2	Twitch	31%	28%	32%	36%	30%	41%	+5	+2	+9
Marco Polo	18%	23%	14%	10%	12%	8%	-8	-11	-6	Twitter	41%	28%	51%	59%	56%	62%	+18	+28	+11
Messenger	53%	51%	54%	62%	69%	56%	+9	+18	+2	VSCO	18%	16%	20%	12%	8%	15%	-6	-8	-5
Minecraft	-	-	-	62%	57%	65%	-	-	-	WhatsApp	27%	23%	31%	47%	55%	40%	+20	+32	+9
Monkey	17%	17%	17%	7%	7%	8%	-10	-10	-9	Whisper	-	-	-	4%	5%	4%	-	-	-
Nintendo Switch	-	-	-	43%	43%	42%	-	-	-	Wink	-	-	-	5%	6%	5%	-	-	-
OnlyFans	-	-	-	6%	4%	8%	-	-	-	YouNow	-	-	-	7%	10%	5%	-	-	-
Pinterest	45%	39%	50%	45%	36%	52%	-	-3	+2	YouTube	96%	95%	97%	97%	98%	97%	+1	+3	-

[Q14B] How often do you use/check/play each of the following?

<sup>4</sup>In Fig 6 and Fig 7, platforms where 2019 data is not available represent platforms added to the 2020 survey. For more detail on how platforms were selected for this survey, see the Methodology & Research Design section of this report.

Fig 7 | General platform use among minors – At least once per day

	2019			2020			% CHANGE (+/-)				2019			2020			% CHANGE (+/-)		
	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17		ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17	ALL MINORS	AGES 9-12	AGES 13-17
Amino	-	-	-	3%	4%	3%	-	-	-	Reddit	12%	12%	11%	10%	8%	12%	-2	-4	+1
Among Us	-	-	-	23%	13%	31%	-	-	-	Roblox	-	-	-	17%	22%	13%	-	-	-
Byte	-	-	-	1%	1%	1%	-	-	-	Signal	5%	3%	6%	1%	2%	1%	-4	-1	-5
Call of Duty	-	-	-	18%	20%	16%	-	-	-	Slack	4%	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%	-2	-2	-1
Discord	15%	10%	18%	19%	12%	25%	+4	+2	+7	Slither.io	-	-	-	3%	2%	4%	-	-	-
Facebook	29%	29%	29%	36%	45%	28%	+7	+16	-1	Snapchat	49%	41%	55%	47%	40%	52%	-2	-1	-3
Fortnite	23%	31%	17%	17%	22%	13%	-6	-9	-4	Tagged	-	-	-	1%	2%	0%	-	-	-
Google Hangouts/Meet	9%	8%	9%	33%	36%	30%	+24	+28	+21	Telegram	4%	4%	5%	6%	10%	3%	+2	+6	-2
Grand Theft Auto	14%	15%	13%	12%	14%	11%	-2	-1	-2	TikTok	30%	33%	28%	45%	41%	49%	+15	+8	+21
Houseparty	5%	6%	4%	3%	3%	3%	-2	-3	-1	Triller	-	-	-	2%	2%	2%	-	-	-
Instagram	46%	34%	56%	50%	40%	59%	+4	+6	+3	Tumblr	8%	7%	8%	13%	18%	9%	+5	+11	+1
Kik	5%	7%	3%	4%	5%	3%	-1	-2	-	Twitch	10%	12%	9%	14%	14%	14%	+4	+2	+5
Marco Polo	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%	1%	-1	-1	-2	Twitter	19%	14%	23%	28%	30%	27%	+9	+16	+4
Messenger	27%	27%	27%	32%	38%	27%	+5	+11	-	VSCO	6%	5%	6%	3%	2%	4%	-3	-3	-2
Minecraft	-	-	-	20%	23%	17%	-	-	-	WhatsApp	12%	11%	14%	26%	39%	16%	+14	+28	+2
Monkey	4%	6%	3%	2%	2%	2%	-2	-4	-1	Whisper	-	-	-	1%	1%	1%	-	-	-
Nintendo Switch	-	-	-	17%	21%	13%	-	-	-	Wink	-	-	-	2%	2%	2%	-	-	-
OnlyFans	-	-	-	3%	2%	3%	-	-	-	YouNow	-	-	-	3%	5%	1%	-	-	-
Pinterest	15%	14%	16%	16%	13%	17%	+1	-1	+1	YouTube	79%	80%	79%	80%	78%	81%	-	-2	+2

[Q14B] How often do you use/check/play each of the following?

## Platform Popularity Among Sharers & Re-sharers

Data collected in 2020 reinforced findings from 2019 that found young people who have shared, re-shared, or been sent SG-CSAM use many of the same platforms as their peers who have not. In 2020, the top 10 most popular platforms, by daily usage rates, were consistent throughout the entire sample, with little exception: Tumblr does not appear in the top 10 for the broader sample but does for sharers and re-sharers.

While the list of the most popular platforms are almost the same, minors who have shared, re-shared, or been sent SG-CSAM, reported notably higher usage rates of these platforms than the broader sample (Fig 8). More research is needed to explore the role of generally increased internet usage rates versus platform specific differences.

Fig 8 | **Platform popularity among minors with SG-CSAM experiences** - *At least once a day*

AMONG MINORS WHO'VE SHARED OWN SG-CSAM			AMONG MINORS WHO'VE BEEN SHOWN SG-CSAM			AMONG MINORS WHO'VE RE-SHARED SG-CSAM		
Use at least once per day	ALL MINORS	SHARED OWN SG-CSAM	Use at least once per day	ALL MINORS	SHOWN SG-CSAM	Use at least once per day	ALL MINORS	RE-SHARED SG-CSAM*
YouTube	80%	78%	YouTube	80%	85%	YouTube	80%	88%
Snapchat	47%	71%	Instagram	50%	67%	Snapchat	47%	72%
Instagram	50%	65%	Snapchat	47%	64%	Instagram	50%	71%
TikTok	45%	60%	TikTok	45%	58%	Messenger	32%	63%
Facebook	36%	50%	Facebook	36%	45%	TikTok	45%	62%
Messenger	32%	47%	Google Hangouts/Google Meet	33%	45%	Facebook	36%	62%
Google Hangouts/Google Meet	33%	44%	Messenger	32%	40%	Google Hangouts/Google Meet	33%	60%
Twitter	28%	41%	Twitter	28%	33%	Twitter	28%	53%
WhatsApp	26%	39%	Among Us	23%	33%	WhatsApp	26%	53%
Tumblr	13%	26%	WhatsApp	26%	30%	Tumblr	13%	37%

[Q14B] How often do you use/check/play each of the following?

Percentages featured in the "All Minors" column for Fig 8 are among all participants (n=2,002). Percentages of SG-CSAM related behaviors are among participants of the Experience Of and Attitudes About Sharing SG-CSAM survey group (n=1,002). See Methodology & Research Design section for more detail.

\*Base size is < 100

## Online Behaviors

Data from the 2020 survey suggests minors may be operating with less supervision in online spaces, particularly among 9-12 year olds, compared to 2019 numbers. Use of secondary accounts, such as but not limited to “finstas”<sup>5</sup> and intended to keep content

private from some groups like caregivers or friends, was up most significantly among this group (Fig 9) and 9-12 year olds reported the most significant drop in their frequencies for following set online safety rules (Fig 10).

Fig 9 | Use of secondary accounts

	ALL MINORS			AGES 9-12									AGES 13-17									SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY					
				ALL 9-12 YEAR OLDS			GIRLS			BOYS			ALL 13-17 YEAR OLDS			GIRLS			BOYS			LGBTQ+			NON-LGBTQ+		
	2019	2020	+/-	2019	2020	+/-	2019	2020	+/-	2019	2020	+/-	2019	2020	+/-	2019	2020	+/-	2019	2020	+/-	2019	2020	+/-	2019	2020	+/-
Yes	23%	27%	+4	14%	25%	+11	15%	21%	+6	13%	28%	+15	29%	30%	+1	38%	32%	-6	21%	27%	+6	37%	36%	-1	19%	25%	+6
Prefer not to say	66%	66%	-	75%	73%	-2	75%	78%	+3	77%	68%	-9	60%	60%	-	52%	58%	+6	67%	63%	-4	46%	55%	+9	71%	69%	-2
No	11%	7%	-4	11%	2%	-9	10%	1%	-9	11%	4%	-7	11%	11%	-	10%	10%	-	13%	10%	-3	16%	9%	-7	9%	5%	-4

[Q17] Some people have a “finsta”— or multiple accounts on one social network so that they can share some stuff more privately. Across the social media platforms or apps that you use, do you have a second private account that allows you to share content without certain people such as your parents, family, or people at school seeing it?

Columns may not total 100 due to rounding

<sup>5</sup>While the term “finsta” refers to the use of “fake Instas” or “fake Instagram” accounts, use of secondary accounts appears across platform types and, as a phenomenon, is not limited to Instagram.

Fig 10 | **Following online safety rules** – *Among minors who say they have to follow each rule*

		Check-ins			Blocked websites or apps			Limits on games			Social media monitoring			Permission to open a new social media account			Permission to download new apps			Common areas only			Limits on screen time		
		2019	2020	+ / -	2019	2020	+ / -	2019	2020	+ / -	2019	2020	+ / -	2019	2020	+ / -	2019	2020	+ / -	2019	2020	+ / -	2019	2020	+ / -
ALL MINORS	Always	45%	37%	-8	65%	52%	-13	43%	37%	-6	53%	47%	-6	61%	54%	-7	52%	50%	+2	45%	36%	-9	35%	30%	-5
	Most of the time	37%	35%	-2	25%	24%	-1	37%	34%	-3	29%	28%	-1	27%	26%	-1	36%	30%	-6	35%	36%	+1	42%	44%	+2
	Only sometimes	13%	22%	+9	4%	16%	+12	16%	23%	+7	13%	17%	+4	7%	11%	+4	8%	14%	+6	15%	20%	+5	17%	19%	+2
	Rarely or never	6%	5%	-1	6%	9%	+3	4%	6%	+2	6%	8%	+2	5%	8%	+3	4%	6%	+2	5%	7%	+2	6%	7%	+1
AGES 9-12	Always	52%	38%	-14	71%	49%	-22	47%	37%	-10	65%	49%	-16	70%	50%	-20	58%	48%	-10	50%	35%	-15	36%	28%	-8
	Most of the time	34%	38%	+4	24%	24%	-	38%	35%	-3	27%	29%	+2	25%	32%	+7	36%	33%	-3	34%	40%	+6	48%	46%	-2
	Only sometimes	12%	19%	+7	2%	17%	+15	13%	24%	+11	7%	17%	+10	4%	9%	+5	4%	15%	+11	15%	19%	+4	14%	20%	+6
	Rarely or never	1%	5%	+4	3%	10%	+7	2%	5%	+3	2%	5%	+3	1%	8%	+7	1%	4%	+3	1%	6%	+5	2%	6%	+4
AGES 13-17	Always	33%	36%	+3	51%	56%	+5	34%	37%	+3	37%	43%	+6	47%	60%	+14	41%	53%	+12	36%	39%	+3	34%	34%	-
	Most of the time	40%	31%	-9	27%	22%	-5	35%	33%	-2	31%	27%	-4	30%	16%	-14	35%	27%	-8	36%	29%	-7	31%	40%	+9
	Only sometimes	13%	28%	+15	11%	14%	+3	22%	22%	-	21%	18%	-3	12%	15%	+3	14%	12%	-2	17%	22%	+5	23%	18%	+5
	Rarely or never	13%	6%	-7	12%	8%	-4	9%	8%	-1	11%	12%	+1	11%	9%	-2	9%	8%	-1	11%	10%	-1	12%	8%	-5
ALL GIRLS	Always	45%	40%	-5	66%	57%	-9	43%	45%	+2	49%	48%	-1	60%	55%	-5	58%	55%	-3	44%	36%	-8	35%	27%	-8
	Most of the time	38%	36%	-2	24%	22%	-2	38%	27%	-11	32%	30%	-2	26%	27%	+1	28%	28%	-	34%	37%	+3	41%	48%	+7
	Only sometimes	13%	20%	+7	4%	15%	+11	14%	24%	+10	14%	13%	-1	9%	9%	-	10%	11%	+1	17%	19%	+2	16%	17%	+1
	Rarely or never	4%	4%	-	5%	6%	+1	5%	4%	-1	4%	8%	+4	5%	9%	+4	5%	6%	+1	5%	7%	+2	7%	7%	-
ALL BOYS	Always	46%	35%	-11	64%	48%	-16	43%	32%	-11	57%	45%	-12	61%	53%	-8	47%	47%	-	46%	37%	-9	36%	33%	-3
	Most of the time	36%	34%	-2	26%	24%	-2	38%	39%	+1	26%	27%	+1	28%	26%	-2	43%	31%	-12	35%	36%	+1	43%	40%	-3
	Only sometimes	12%	24%	+12	4%	16%	+12	16%	21%	+5	11%	20%	+9	6%	13%	+7	6%	16%	+10	14%	20%	+6	17%	21%	+4
	Rarely or never	6%	6%	-	6%	12%	+6	4%	7%	+3	6%	8%	+2	5%	8%	+3	4%	5%	+1	5%	7%	+2	4%	6%	+2

[Q9] And would you say that you follow each of these rules...?

Columns may not total 100 due to rounding

# SG-CSAM & Initial Shares

## REPORT HIGHLIGHT

# 17%

Of kids have shared their own SG-CSAM

# 15%

Of 9-10 year olds have shared their own SG-CSAM

# 32%

Of kids who identify as LGBTQ+ youth have shared their own SG-CSAM

## SG-CSAM Production

Minors' self-reported data from 2020 revealed higher rates of SG-CSAM production compared to 2019. While up across nearly all demographic variables related to gender, age, and sexual identity, increased rates of initial shares were most pronounced among 9-10

year olds, young boys (aged 9-12), and LGBTQ+ youth (Fig 11). Youth who identify as LGBTQ+ remained at heightened risk in 2020; compared to their non-LGBTQ+ peers, they reported being two and a half times as likely to have shared their own SG-CSAM.

Fig 11 | Experiences with sharing SG-CSAM

		2019	2020	+ / -
ALL MINORS	ALL AGES	11%	17%	+6
	GIRLS	12%	14%	+2
	BOYS	9%	19%	+10
GROUPED AGES	9-10	3%	15%	+12
	11-12	7%	13%	+6
	13-14	6%	13%	+7
	15-17	19%	24%	+5
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12 YEAR OLDS	6%	14%	+8
	GIRLS	3%	11%	+8
	BOYS	7%	18%	+11
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17 YEAR OLDS	15%	19%	+4
	GIRLS	19%	17%	-2
	BOYS	11%	20%	+9
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	21%	32%	+11
	NON-LGBTQ+	8%	13%	+5

[Q40X] Have you ever sent or shared a nude photo or video of yourself either directly with someone else or with your social media followers? Please remember that your answers are anonymous.

Numbers shown reflect the percentage of minors who reported they have shared their own nude photos or videos.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHT

21%

Of kids (aged 9-12) agreed that "it's normal for people my age to share nudes with each other"

26%

Of boys (aged 9-12) agreed that "it's normal for people my age to share nudes with each other"

## Perceptions of Normalcy

Survey results among all minors in 2020 did not reveal a significant change in their perceptions of normalcy related to whether or not they thought it was normal for people their age to share nudes with each other. While older minors (aged 13-17) reported a 5% decrease

in their perceptions that it is normal for their peers to share nudes, younger minors (aged 9-12) reported an 8% increase. Where perceptions of normalcy increased, it was most notable among 9-12 year olds (Fig 12) and among young boys in particular (Fig 13).

Fig 12 | **Percentage of minors who agree sharing nudes with peers is normal**

		2019	2020	+ / -
ALL MINORS		27%	28%	+1
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12 YEAR OLDS	13%	21%	+8
	GIRLS	10%	16%	+6
	BOYS	16%	26%	+10
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17 YEAR OLDS	39%	34%	-5
	GIRLS	39%	37%	-2
	BOYS	38%	32%	-6
SEXUAL/ GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	39%	34%	-5
	NON-LGBTQ+	25%	27%	+2

[Q40] How strongly do you agree with the following statement? "It's normal for people my age to share nudes with each other."

Numbers shown reflect the net percentage of minors who selected they "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree"

Fig 13 | **Perceptions of close friends sharing SG-CSAM**

		2019	2020	+ / -
ALL MINORS		14%	15%	+1
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12 YEAR OLDS	10%	14%	+4
	GIRLS	10%	6%	-4
	BOYS	8%	22%	+14
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17 YEAR OLDS	17%	16%	-1
	GIRLS	19%	14%	-5
	BOYS	16%	18%	+2
SEXUAL/ GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	17%	22%	+5
	NON-LGBTQ+	12%	14%	+2

[Q35BR2] And how often do your close friends...send or share photos or videos of themselves that are nude to others?

Numbers shown reflect the net percentage of minors who selected "often" or "sometimes"

**REPORT HIGHLIGHT**

Among kids who have shared nudes

# 50%

reported they had shared a nude photo or video with someone they had not met in real life

Among kids who have shared nudes

# 41%

reported they had shared a nude photo or video with someone age 18 or older

**FIG 14 RESPONSE OPTIONS**

**Yes** – I had met the person/people before

**Both** – I had met some of the people but not all of them

**No** – I had not met the person/people before

**SG-CSAM Recipients**

In 2019, 37% of minors who had shared their own SG-CSAM, self-reported that they had shared it with someone they did not know offline. In 2020, this number increased to 50% (Fig 14). To deepen our understanding of who minors are sharing their

Fig 14 | **Sharing nudes with someone you know versus a stranger** – Among minors who've shared nudes

		2019	2020	+ / -
<b>ALL MINORS</b>	Yes	62%	50%	-12
	Both	27%	36%	+9
	No	10%	15%	+5
<b>AGES 9-12</b>	Yes	70%**	42%*	-28
	Both	23%**	44%*	+21
	No	7%**	14%*	+7
<b>AGES 13-17</b>	Yes	60%*	54%	-6
	Both	28%*	31%	+3
	No	11%*	15%	+4
<b>ALL GIRLS</b>	Yes	65%*	50%*	-5
	Both	23%*	45%*	+11
	No	12%*	5%*	-7
<b>ALL BOYS</b>	Yes	59%**	47%	-12
	Both	33%**	31%	+2
	No	8%**	22%	+14
<b>LGBTQ+*</b>	Yes	51%	59%	+8
	Both	42%	28%	-14
	No	7%	13%	+6
<b>NON-LGBTQ+</b>	Yes	70%	45%	-25
	Both	18%	41%	+23
	No	12%	13%	+1

[Q44] And had you met the person or people you shared this nude photo/video with in real life before you shared it? Please remember that your answers are anonymous.

\*Base size is < 100

\*\*Base size is < 50; Columns may not total 100 due to rounding

SG-CSAM with, in 2020 Thorn introduced additional survey questions. Concerningly, 41% of minors who have shared their SG-CSAM also reported sharing it with someone they believed to be 18 or older (Fig 15).

**NEW**

Fig 15 | **Who minors share their SG-CSAM with** – Among minors who've shared nudes

	2020 ONLY	Someone age 18 or older	Someone under the age of 18	Someone whose age you didn't know	Other
<b>ALL MINORS</b>		41%	57%	30%	4%
<b>AGES 9-12*</b>		36%	45%	37%	1%
<b>AGES 13-17</b>		43%	63%	25%	6%
<b>ALL GIRLS*</b>		41%	68%	26%	1%
<b>ALL BOYS</b>		40%	47%	34%	6%
<b>LGBTQ+*</b>		36%	62%	31%	3%
<b>NON-LGBTQ+</b>		45%	52%	30%	5%

[Q46] Have you ever sent or shared nude photo(s)/video(s) of yourself with any of the following...? Please remember that your answers are anonymous.

\*Base size is < 100; Columns will total more than 100 because question was select multiple

Answer choice "other" was included as an option for minors who might feel uncomfortable disclosing their perception of the age of the person/people with whom they have shared SG-CSAM



## Considerations for Sharing Personal SG-CSAM

In 2020, the percentage of minors who have not shared their own SG-CSAM, but reported having considered sending it remained stable at around 1 in 7 (14%) (Fig 16). As in 2019, the potential to have one's nudes be re-shared or "leaked" remained the primary reason minors who considered sharing their SG-CSAM ultimately decided against it (Fig 17). However, in 2020, minors decreasingly identified pride and self-respect as deterring considerations for their initial shares.

Fig 16 | **Percentage of minors who considered sharing a nude, but chose not to**

	2019	2020	+ / -
<b>ALL MINORS</b>	13%	14%	+1

[Q41] Even though you have never shared a nude photo, have you ever considered doing so?

Numbers shown reflect the percentage of minors who selected "yes"

Fig 17 | **Reasons for not sharing a nude photo**  
- Among minors who have not shared nudes, but have considered it

	2019	2020	+ / -
Photo being leaked/ shared	29%	25%	-4
Pride/ self-respect	11%	2%	-9
Parents/ wouldn't want parents to find out	7%	8%	+1
Generally scared	5%	8%	+3
Personal insecurities	5%	5%	-
It's wrong/ inappropriate	5%	3%	-2
Once it's out, you can't take it back	4%	4%	-
Hurt my future career	4%	2%	-2
Negative social consequence	4%	6%	+2
Can't trust people	4%	2%	-2
Embarrassment	4%	4%	-
It is illegal	3%	6%	+3

[Q42] And what made you decide not to share a nude photo in the end?

Answers coded from open-ended responses

*"I decided to be smart. People can easily say they won't screen shot and still will. People can screen shot without you knowing. I also realized these people don't care about me just my body."*

— Cis Female, 13, Hispanic/Latino, Northeast

# Non-Consensual Re-Sharing & Intimate Image Leaks

## TERMINOLOGY

### NCII:

Non-consensual intimate images, also referred to as non-consensual re-shares or “leaked” nudes.

## Experiences with Re-Shared SG-CSAM

In 2020, 7% of minors admitted to re-sharing someone else’s SG-CSAM (Fig 19). This represents a relatively stable rate compared to 2019 data. At the same time, minors who re-shared someone else’s nudes without the person in the photo’s consent were more likely to face consequences than reported in 2019; of minors who had non-consensually re-shared, 29% reported that they got in trouble with their parents or caregivers as a result of re-sharing and 20% reported they got in trouble at school (Fig 18).

Self-reports from young people of having seen non-consensually re-shared images of others appeared to increase; however, the rate of minors reporting they had *not* seen non-consensual re-shares stayed relatively stable (Fig 20). The seeming increase noted in 2020 may be the result of more minors explicitly selecting “yes” – that they had seen non-consensual SG-CSAM – rather than selecting “prefer not to say.” In other words, this data may be more representative of a shift in attitudes about admitting to having seen SG-CSAM than the experience of receiving it. Some of the notable shifts related to minors who have seen non-consensual re-shared content occurred among 9-12-year-olds; in 2020, they were more likely to report they had seen it (Fig 20), and were more likely to believe the re-shared content could be legal (Fig 21).

Fig 18 | **Consequences of re-sharing someone else’s nudes** – Among minors who’ve non-consensually re-shared

	2019*	2020*	+ / -
Nothing happened	32%	17%	-15
You regretted sending it	20%	23%	+3
You felt bad for the person in the photo or video	19%	22%	+3
The person in the photo or video felt bad	15%	22%	+7
Your friends got mad at you	15%	19%	+4
The person in the photo or video found out	13%	18%	+5
Your friends thought it was funny	12%	15%	+3
You got in trouble at school	12%	20%	+8
You got in trouble with your parents or caregivers	8%	29%	+21
You got in trouble with the police	8%	12%	+4

[Q50A] After you re-shared a nude photo or video of someone else without that person’s knowledge online, which, if any, of the following happened?

\*Base size is < 100; Columns will total more than 100 because question was select multiple

Fig 19 | Experiences with re-sharing SG-CSAM

			2019	2020	+ / -
ALL MINORS		Yes	9%	7%	-2
		Prefer not to say	7%	6%	-1
		No	84%	86%	+2
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12 YEAR OLDS	Yes	8%	7%	-1
		Prefer not to say	6%	5%	-1
		No	86%	88%	+2
	GIRLS	Yes	5%	5%	-
		Prefer not to say	3%	8%	+5
		No	92%	87%	-5
	BOYS	Yes	12%	9%	-3
		Prefer not to say	7%	3%	-4
		No	81%	88%	+7
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17 YEAR OLDS	Yes	10%	8%	-2
		Prefer not to say	8%	7%	-1
		No	82%	85%	+3
	GIRLS	Yes	9%	7%	-2
		Prefer not to say	6%	7%	+1
		No	85%	85%	-
	BOYS	Yes	10%	9%	-1
		Prefer not to say	10%	7%	-3
		No	80%	84%	+4
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	Yes	12%	5%	-7
		Prefer not to say	9%	13%	+4
		No	79%	81%	+2
	NON-LGBTQ+	Yes	8%	8%	-
		Prefer not to say	5%	3%	-2
		No	86%	88%	+2
GEOGRAPHY	SUBURBAN	Yes	8%	6%	-2
		Prefer not to say	6%	4%	-2
		No	86%	90%	+4
	RURAL	Yes	5%	6%	+1
		Prefer not to say	9%	12%	+3
		No	86%	81%	-5
	URBAN	Yes	13%	11%	-2
		Prefer not to say	7%	5%	-2
		No	80%	84%	+4
ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	Yes	10%	4%	-6
		Prefer not to say	7%	14%	+7
		No	82%	82%	-
	LATINX	Yes	8%	8%	-
		Prefer not to say	10%	6%	-4
		No	82%	85%	+3
	WHITE	Yes	10%	9%	-1
		Prefer not to say	5%	5%	-
		No	86%	87%	+1

[Q50] Have you ever shared a nude photo or video of someone else without that person's knowledge online?

Columns may not total 100 due to rounding. Only subgroups with base samples above n=100 are featured in Fig 19.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHT

25%

Kids say they have seen non-consensually re-shared SG-CSAM

17%

Kids (aged 9-12) say they have seen non-consensually re-shared SG-CSAM

*"It made me feel bad. I didn't want to see it. But other kids at school that are bullies and the grade above us wanted to make fun of the girl in it."*

— Cis Male, 11, Hispanic/Latino, Midwest

Fig 20 | Experiences having seen non-consensually re-shared SG-CSAM

			2019	2020	+ / -
ALL MINORS		Yes	21%	25%	+4
		Prefer not to say	9%	7%	-2
		No	70%	68%	-2
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12 YEAR OLDS	Yes	11%	17%	+6
		Prefer not to say	9%	4%	-5
		No	80%	79%	-1
	GIRLS	Yes	9%	17%	+8
		Prefer not to say	8%	4%	-4
		No	84%	79%	-5
	BOYS	Yes	13%	18%	+5
		Prefer not to say	9%	4%	-5
		No	79%	79%	-
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17 YEAR OLDS	Yes	29%	31%	+2
		Prefer not to say	9%	10%	+1
		No	62%	60%	-2
	GIRLS	Yes	32%	30%	-2
		Prefer not to say	7%	11%	+4
		No	61%	59%	-2
	BOYS	Yes	27%	31%	+4
		Prefer not to say	12%	8%	-4
		No	61%	61%	-
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	Yes	29%	28%	-1
		Prefer not to say	12%	10%	-2
		No	59%	62%	+3
	NON-LGBTQ+	Yes	20%	24%	+4
		Prefer not to say	8%	5%	-3
		No	73%	71%	-2
GEOGRAPHY	SUBURBAN	Yes	18%	25%	+7
		Prefer not to say	9%	5%	-4
		No	73%	70%	-3
	RURAL	Yes	19%	21%	+2
		Prefer not to say	14%	14%	-
		No	67%	65%	-2
	URBAN	Yes	26%	26%	-
		Prefer not to say	6%	7%	+1
		No	68%	67%	-1
ETHNICITY	AFRICAN AMERICAN	Yes	29%	21%	-8
		Prefer not to say	7%	5%	-2
		No	64%	74%	+10
	LATINX	Yes	21%	27%	+6
		Prefer not to say	12%	8%	-4
		No	67%	65%	-2
	WHITE	Yes	19%	24%	+5
		Prefer not to say	7%	7%	-
		No	74%	69%	-5

[Q49] Have you ever been shown or sent a nude photo or video of someone at your school or someone else your age in your community without that person's knowledge?

Columns may not total 100 due to rounding. Only subgroups with base samples above n=100 are featured in Fig 20.

## Perceptions of Legality

Perceptions of legality surrounding re-shared SG-CSAM increased slightly among all minors (Fig 21). Increases in perceptions of legality were more notably pronounced among 9-12-year-olds, and younger girls in particular

(+16%). Other notable increases in the perceived legality of re-sharing SG-CSAM occurred among minors who had re-shared SG-CSAM of others (+16%) and those who had shared their own SG-CSAM (+8%).

Fig 21 | Perceptions of re-shared SG-CSAM legality

Fig 21   Perceptions of re-shared SG-CSAM legality			2019	2020	+ / -
ALL MINORS		Illegal	88%	84%	-4
		Other	2%	3%	+1
		Legal	10%	13%	+3
AGES 9-12	GIRLS	Illegal	95%	82%	-13
		Other	3%	0%	-3
		Legal	2%	18%	+16
	BOYS	Illegal	88%	86%	-2
		Other	5%	2%	-3
		Legal	7%	12%	+5
AGES 13-17	GIRLS	Illegal	85%	88%	+3
		Other	1%	3%	+2
		Legal	14%	10%	-4
	BOYS	Illegal	85%	79%	-6
		Other	0%	6%	+6
		Legal	15%	15%	-
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	Illegal	86%	81%	-5
		Other	2%	4%	+2
		Legal	12%	14%	+2
	NON-LGBTQ+	Illegal	89%	85%	-4
		Other	2%	2%	-
		Legal	9%	13%	+4
HAVE SHARED OWN SG-CSAM		Illegal	81%	72%	-9
		Other	0%	2%	+2
		Legal	19%	27%	+8
HAVE RE-SHARED SG-CSAM*		Illegal	84%	67%	-17
		Other	0%	1%	+1
		Legal	16%	32%	+16
SEEN RE-SHARED SG-CSAM		Illegal	83%	82%	-1
		Other	1%	2%	+1
		Legal	16%	17%	+1

[Q55] As far as you know, which of the following is most true?

\*Base size is < 100; Columns may not total 100 due to rounding

### FIG 21 RESPONSE OPTIONS

**Illegal** – it is illegal to re-share nude photos or videos of someone under age 18 no matter what

**Legal** – it is legal to re-share nude photos or videos of someone under age 18 if you have consent or permission

## REPORT HIGHLIGHT

22%

Of boys (aged 9-12) believe their friends at least sometimes share nudes of other kids

## Perceptions of Normalcy

In 2020, perceptions of normalcy around seeing or re-sharing nude photos or videos of others increased

notably among 9-12-year-olds and young boys in particular (Fig 22).

Fig 22 | Perceptions of close friends' SG-CSAM experiences

			2019	2020	+ / -
ALL MINORS		Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	19%	22%	+3
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	11%	14%	+3
		Send or share photos or videos of someone who is nude to others	13%	15%	+2
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	11%	13%	+2
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12 YEAR OLDS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	13%	19%	+6
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	7%	16%	+9
		Send or share photos or videos of someone who is nude to others	9%	14%	+5
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	8%	15%	+7
	GIRLS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	15%	16%	+1
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	8%	10%	+2
		Send or share photos or videos of someone who is nude to others	9%	10%	+1
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	9%	10%	+1
	BOYS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	10%	22%	+12
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	6%	22%	+16
		Send or share photos or videos of someone who is nude to others	7%	19%	+12
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	7%	21%	+14
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17 YEAR OLDS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	25%	24%	-1
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	15%	13%	-2
		Send or share photos or videos of someone who is nude to others	16%	16%	-
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	13%	12%	-1
	GIRLS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	30%	24%	-6
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	14%	11%	-3
		Send or share photos or videos of someone who is nude to others	17%	13%	-4
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	15%	10%	-5
	BOYS	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	20%	24%	+4
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	15%	15%	-
		Send or share photos or videos of someone who is nude to others	15%	20%	+5
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	12%	14%	+2
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	26%	30%	+4
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	12%	15%	+3
		Send or share photos or videos of someone who is nude to others	16%	16%	-
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	14%	12%	-2
	NON-LGBTQ+	Receive or get sent photos or videos that are nude	17%	20%	+3
		Send or share photos or videos of another kid that is nude to others	10%	14%	+4
		Send or share photos or videos of someone who is nude to others	11%	15%	+4
		Have nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without their permission	10%	14%	+4

[Q35B] And how often do your close friends...?

Numbers shown reflect the net percentage of minors who selected "often" or "sometimes"

## REPORT HIGHLIGHT

62%

Of kids exclusively or predominantly blame the re-sharer

*"I felt like it was wrong of the person to share the picture without permission but at the same time if the person didn't want it shared, maybe they should not have sent it in the first place."*

— Cis Female, 13, African American, South

## Perceptions of Blame

In 2020, across all age, gender, and sexuality demographics, minors were less likely to blame the

person in the photo and more likely to blame the re-sharer compared to 2019 numbers (Fig 23).

Fig 23 | Perceptions of blame when nudes are leaked

Fig 23 | Perceptions of blame when nudes are leaked

		2019	2020	+ / -	
ALL MINORS		Re-sharer's fault alone	40%	51%	+11
		Both (lean re-sharer)	11%	12%	+1
		Both (lean person in photo)	11%	8%	-3
		Victim's fault alone	38%	30%	-8
AGES 9-12	ALL 9-12 YEAR OLDS	Re-sharer's fault alone	41%	51%	+10
		Both (lean re-sharer)	12%	11%	-1
		Both (lean person in photo)	9%	6%	-3
		Victim's fault alone	38%	31%	-7
	GIRLS	Re-sharer's fault alone	38%	51%	+13
		Both (lean re-sharer)	11%	16%	+5
		Both (lean person in photo)	13%	5%	-8
		Victim's fault alone	38%	29%	-9
	BOYS	Re-sharer's fault alone	42%	50%	+8
		Both (lean re-sharer)	13%	8%	-5
		Both (lean person in photo)	6%	8%	+2
		Victim's fault alone	39%	34%	-5
AGES 13-17	ALL 13-17 YEAR OLDS	Re-sharer's fault alone	39%	50%	+11
		Both (lean re-sharer)	11%	12%	+1
		Both (lean person in photo)	12%	8%	-4
		Victim's fault alone	38%	29%	-9
	GIRLS	Re-sharer's fault alone	38%	57%	+19
		Both (lean re-sharer)	13%	12%	-1
		Both (lean person in photo)	14%	7%	-7
		Victim's fault alone	35%	24%	-11
	BOYS	Re-sharer's fault alone	39%	42%	+3
		Both (lean re-sharer)	10%	12%	+2
		Both (lean person in photo)	9%	10%	+1
		Victim's fault alone	42%	35%	-7
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	Re-sharer's fault alone	49%	56%	+7
		Both (lean re-sharer)	12%	13%	+1
		Both (lean person in photo)	10%	4%	-6
		Victim's fault alone	29%	28%	-1
	NON-LGBTQ+	Re-sharer's fault alone	37%	48%	+11
		Both (lean re-sharer)	12%	12%	-
		Both (lean person in photo)	11%	9%	-2
		Victim's fault alone	41%	31%	-10

[Q51] In your opinion, if a nude photo or video of someone gets out, who is to blame? [Q52] And if a nude photo or video of someone gets out, who is most to blame?

Columns may not total 100 due to rounding

# Perceptions of COVID Impact

Survey responses were collected from October 26 to November 12, 2020 and at the time of this report's publication, COVID-19 remains a global pandemic – the true long-term impacts of which remain largely undefined. In an initial attempt to understand the potential impact the pandemic has had on minors'

experiences with SG-CSAM, a COVID-specific question was included in the 2020 survey. That question asked minors whether or not they perceived their peers were having SG-CSAM-related experiences more or less since the onset of COVID.

NEW

Fig 24 | Perceptions of peer's SG-CSAM experiences since pandemic onset

			Sending or sharing photos or videos <b>of themselves</b> that are nude to others	Sending or sharing photos or videos <b>of another kid</b> that is nude to others	Receiving or getting sent photos or videos that are nude	Having nude photos or videos of themselves shared or leaked without permission
ALL MINORS		No change	53%	55%	52%	56%
		Happening more	24%	20%	26%	19%
		Happening less	22%	25%	22%	24%
AGES 9-12	GIRLS	No change	54%	64%	56%	63%
		Happening more	21%	12%	19%	10%
		Happening less	25%	24%	25%	27%
	BOYS	No change	49%	47%	47%	52%
		Happening more	18%	20%	23%	20%
		Happening less	33%	33%	30%	28%
AGES 13-17	GIRLS	No change	51%	53%	51%	53%
		Happening more	31%	24%	31%	23%
		Happening less	18%	23%	18%	24%
	BOYS	No change	59%	58%	54%	58%
		Happening more	24%	21%	26%	22%
		Happening less	17%	21%	20%	20%
SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY	LGBTQ+	No change	44%	47%	43%	50%
		Happening more	30%	23%	30%	19%
		Happening less	26%	30%	27%	31%
	NON-LGBTQ+	No change	55%	58%	54%	58%
		Happening more	23%	19%	25%	19%
		Happening less	22%	23%	21%	23%

[Q37] If you had to say, are kids at your school doing the following more or less since the start of the coronavirus pandemic?

Columns may not total 100 due to rounding





Minors' responses revealed that they were generally split in their perceptions of COVID's impact on their peers' SG-CSAM experiences. Approximately 50% of minors reported that they did not think the pandemic had an impact on the rates at which their peers send or share SG-CSAM or have intimate images leaked. The remaining 50% of minors thought COVID did have an impact on their peers' SG-CSAM experiences, yet they were split on the direction of that impact. Around 25% perceived that their peers' experiences with SG-CSAM had increased during the pandemic and around 25% perceived that their peers' experiences with SG-CSAM had decreased during the pandemic (Fig 24). Thorn will continue to collect data on this issue as we seek to understand the impact of COVID on young people's online experiences.

### Final Thoughts

Young people continue to engage with SG-CSAM both through exploratory and higher risk coercive pathways. The findings from our 2020 survey underscore the persistence of demographic differences in kids' attitudes and behaviors related to SG-CSAM. Continued data collection and analysis related to this topic, along with the impact of COVID, remains a vital need to deliver successful interventions that safeguard and support young people as they navigate their digital experiences.



Understanding the complex intersection of technology and child sexual abuse empowers us to safeguard kids from the ever-evolving threats they face online. Without direct insights from kids who are encountering these issues every day, we risk falling behind in developing valuable resources for them to navigate the digital age safely.

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#### THANK YOU

We are grateful to the kids who took time to participate in our survey. Without their gracious participation, we would not be able to share these key insights about Self-Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material.

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