

# ENCOUNTERING HARMFUL AND DISCOMFORTING CONTENT ONLINE

Phase IV of Young Canadians in a Wireless World  
Canada's most comprehensive study on young people's digital lives



This data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic amidst lockdowns and shifts between in-person and at-home learning. It's important to consider this context when reading these findings.

## METHODOLOGY

# 1,058

Canadian youth respondents across two surveys, one for Grades 4 to 6 and one from Grades 7 to 11, conducted from September-December 2021.

## DEMOGRAPHICS



Grades 4-6  
Grades 7-11



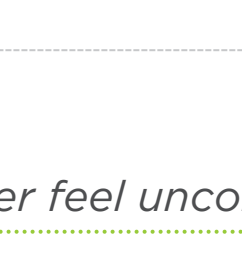
White  
Racialized



LGBTQ+  
Heterosexual



No identified disability  
Identified disability



Boys  
Girls  
Gender diverse & questioning

## DISCOMFORTING CONTENT:

Content that makes the viewer or receiver feel uncomfortable

# 20%

of youth have received content online that made them feel uncomfortable

They were most likely to respond by:

- ✓ Telling a parent or guardian (57%)
- ✓ Blocking the person who sent it (55%)
- ✓ Telling a friend (23%)
- ✓ Telling a teacher (20%)
- ✓ Reporting it to the app/website/platform (13%)

## PORNOGRAPHY

Only asked of Grade 7-11 participants

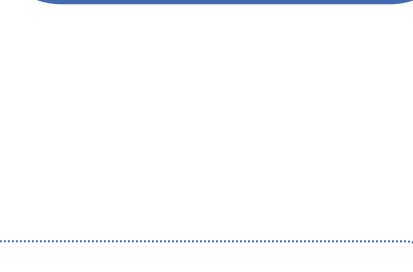
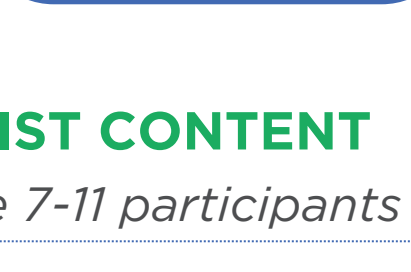
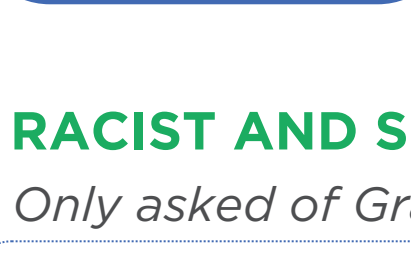
More youth say they try to avoid seeing pornography (42%) than have looked for it online (22%)

Most said they were nine or older when they first looked for it

# 32%

say they've seen pornography online without looking for it

### How did they see it?



## RACIST AND SEXIST CONTENT

Only asked of Grade 7-11 participants

# 47%

see racist or sexist content online at least once a week...

... and LGBTQ+ youth and youth with a disability are more likely to see it



Youth who use an app or device to limit screen time are **just as likely** as those who don't to encounter racist or sexist content online

## ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS

# 88%

of youth agree it's important to speak up about racist and sexist content, but...

# 58%

feel they don't know what to say

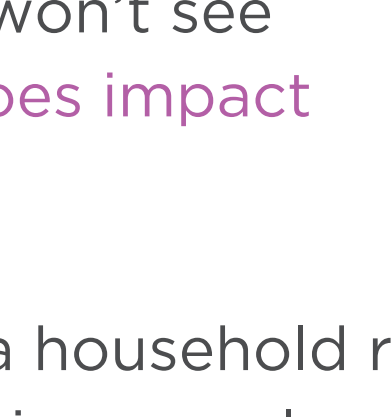
# 81%

of youth agree that tech companies should do more to stop racist and sexist things from being posted or shared online

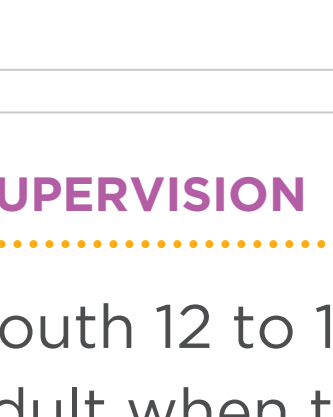
## ADULT INVOLVEMENT AND HOUSEHOLD RULES

### RULES

**51%** say they have a household rule about sites they're not supposed to visit



Having household rules around internet use doesn't mean youth won't see harmful content, but it does impact how they respond



Youth with a household rule about treating people with respect are **more likely to agree it's important to speak out** when they see racist and sexist content online

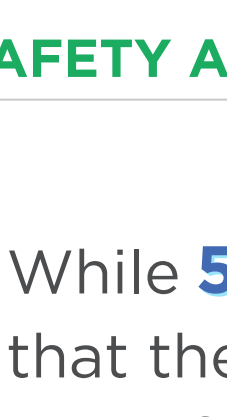
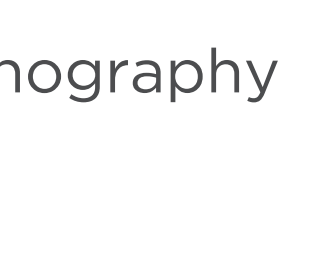
### SUPERVISION

Youth 12 to 13 who are usually with an adult when they go online are more likely to...



**agree that it is important to speak up about racist and sexist content**

**tell an adult when they see that kind of content**

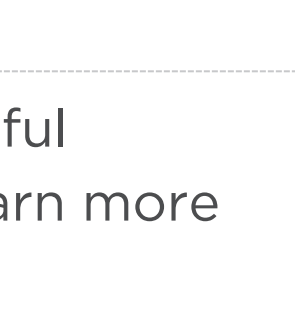


**take steps to avoid seeing pornography**

...and are less likely to see pornography unintentionally

## SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

While **57%** of youth agree that the internet is a safe place for them...



...girls, LGBTQ+ youth and racialized youth are **least likely** to feel that the internet is a safe place

## TRUST AND SUPPORT

When it comes to addressing harmful content, youth say they want to learn more about:



How to be safe online (36%)

How to report inappropriate behaviour or content (17%)

How to deal with hateful, racist or sexist online content (14%)\*

# 86% of youth

say they have people in their lives who can help solve online problems they experience



\*Only the Grade 7-11 participants were asked about racist and sexist content