Non-Consensual Sharing of Intimate Images: 
BEHAVIOURS AND ATTITUDES OF CANADIAN YOUTH

Methodology
800 young people aged 16-20 years across Canada were surveyed in August of 2017.

Definitions
“Sext” means a sexy, nude or partially nude photo
“Sending” sexts refers to the creator of a sext sending it to a recipient
“Sharing” sexts refers to distributing them to unintended audiences without the original sender’s consent

Research partners
366 males
419 females
15 trans, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, non-binary or other

42% of youth who’ve sent sexts have had one shared whether by being shown to others in person (38%), forwarded electronically (38%), or posted to a public forum (50%)
46% of youth who’ve received sexts have shared one
More boys (53%) than girls (40%) have done so
AGE IS NOT A PREDICTOR

Sending and receiving sexts

Half of 16-year-olds have received a sext (53%) while three-quarters of 20-year-olds have received one (78%)

FOUR IN TEN (41%) have sent a sext
TWO IN THREE (66%) have received a sext

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Factors associated with youth being more likely to share sexts

GENDER STEREOTYPES
Youth who believe in traditional gender stereotypes are significantly more likely to share sexts:
53% who scored highest in these beliefs have shared a sext
18% who scored in the medium range shared sexts
9% who scored in the lowest range shared sexts

There is a strong gender difference: boys who held these beliefs were much more likely to share sexts than girls who did

Almost a third of participants felt that nobody should be surprised if boys share sexts with each other

MORAL DISENGAGEMENT
Finding a way to justify an action as being actually positive, e.g. “When a girl’s sext gets shared, it shows other girls the risks”
Denying the harm of the action, e.g. “Sharing sexts is so common, nobody cares about it”
Shifting responsibility to someone else, e.g. “If a boy shares a text he received with one friend and that friend shares it, then it isn’t the first boy’s fault”
Blaming the victim, e.g. “A girl shouldn’t be surprised if her sext gets shared after a breakup”

These attitudes were held by a worrying number of youth:
53% who scored in the highest range have shared a sext
17% who scored in the medium range shared sexts
11% who scored in the lowest range shared sexts

Unlike gender stereotypes, this correlation was as strong for girls as for boys

Some of these attitudes were held by a worrying number of youth:
Almost half (46%) felt it was the original sender’s fault if a sext was shared
More than a third (38%) felt that there’s nothing you can do to help when a sext is being passed around
More than a fifth (21%) felt that a girl shouldn’t be surprised if her boyfriend shares her sexts after they break up

A CULTURE OF SHARING
Peer pressure to share sexts they receive can lead youth to see sharing as normal and expected

There is a strong correlation between these attitudes and sharing sexts:
53% of youth who expect their friends to share sexts with them have shared a sext
17% of those who do not expect their friends to share have shared sexts

There is a strong gender difference: boys who held these beliefs were much more likely to share sexts than girls who did

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