

**A LADBIBLE REPORT:  
UNDERSTANDING  
GEN Z'S RELATIONSHIP  
WITH *porn***

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# CONTENTS

## OUR OBJECTIVES:

- To understand how young people think about and interact with porn today
- To uncover how porn is shaping young people's relationships and intimacy.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT:

- This report synthesises data from **5,300** young adults (aged 18-29) in the UK exploring their relationship with pornography
- The report focuses on usage, how it makes young people feel, the topic of consent and what young people would like to see from porn and sex education.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## FOREWORD

We know young people watch porn – there have been countless studies over the last couple of years that show its widespread use. Most recently the Children's commissioner for England reported that 27% of young people in the UK first saw porn before the age of 11.

LADbible's research shows that 77% of Gen Z watch porn and those who watched it from a young age are more likely to watch it frequently. 50% of those who start watching porn before the age of 10 went on to become daily viewers.

Despite its widespread use, porn is a taboo subject, and for many people, their relationship with it is shrouded in shame, secrecy and guilt. This means that despite the increasing availability of porn, its ripple effects are still under-discussed in a meaningful way.

Porn is never going to go away, and nor should it, when it is consumed consciously and ethically. However young people's access over the last decade has completely changed the way young people engage with porn.

For a lot of people, porn is something we can get value and enjoyment from. Women (1 in 2) are more likely to report feeling significantly more satisfied and excited and 35% of those in a relationship reported improved sex with their partner. Porn is also instrumental in people learning about and discovering their sexual orientation.

However, porn cannot, and should not be, the sole place young people find relatable education, stimulation, enjoyment and connection. From its role in being the #1 educator about sex to it becoming a growing replacement of real-world sex – it's having significant implications to our generation.

LADbible's mission is to give a voice to the youth generation on the universal issues that matter most to them. This report demonstrates that this is a key issue that requires attention.

# THE IMPACT OF PORN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our research has indicated some key issues that have arisen from widespread porn use.

### Men with heightened shame

34% of men feel guilty after watching porn and 22% feel ashamed. This is significantly higher in men than in women. A lot of this is associated with the wider stigma associated with porn consumption, but also with the type, and volume, of content they're watching. 45% of men compare themselves to the people they see in porn (vs. 40% of women) and this increases to 51% for daily porn viewers.

### Porn addiction is an increasing problem

Many young people are struggling to curb the volume of porn they're watching. 49% of men and 31% of women say they have struggled to reduce or quit how much porn they watch. 1 in 2 men worry they watch too much porn.

### Porn is the #1 sex educator for young people

Sex education today in the UK cannot compete against porn – which primarily delivers pleasure and entertainment, and can be enjoyed in private. 49% of men use porn as a way to learn about sex and 76% have wanted to replicate what they've seen in porn. This means that porn is influencing the way young people have sex in the real world, despite porn increasingly becoming more extreme to stand out in a crowded space.

### Porn is setting unrealistic expectations

Whilst young people know that porn isn't depicting reality – it's still affecting their attitudes towards sex and how they see themselves. 64% agree that porn has influenced what turns them on and nearly a third (32%) say their interest in real life sex has decreased since consuming porn. Therefore the glossy, highly edited and aspirational scenes are presenting a distorted, inaccurate depiction of sex which reality cannot match.

### Male to female sexual dominance is becoming normalised

Women are significantly more likely than men to think porn reinforces sexual dominance (52% vs 39%) and aggression/violence (36% vs 25%). Which, coupled that 64% of 18–29s do not recall seeing a scene where the performers discussed consent before or during the scene, means that young people aren't being exposed to important conversations that ensure pleasurable, respectful, safe sex.

# WHAT ARE WE CALLING FOR

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Whilst the Online Safety Act has been successful in reducing the access of porn for those under the age of 18, what is clear is that reducing access is not the only solution in curbing some of the challenges that have arisen from porn consumption.

80% of young people are worried about the impact porn is having on their generation. And crucially, 77% would like more resources available to navigate their porn usage and sex lives.

LADbible, alongside our charity partners Movember, Fumble and Pivotal Recovery are calling for the following changes:

### 1. Education / informational resources:

Introduce age-appropriate sex (and relationships) education that is delivered by specialists and not teachers in sixth-form colleges and even universities beyond the age of 16.

Offer better digital resources that appeal to youth audiences, for those outside of education and all online audiences.

#### Why:

61% of Gen Z want better sex education at ages 16–21

79% of Gen Z would be uncomfortable talking about porn with their teacher.

### 2. Greater support for young people:

Create a task force that can organise free, accessible resources for young people (similar to mental health services) who are struggling with porns effects, such as addiction or other associated problems.

#### Why:

1 in 2 men say they have struggled to reduce or quit their porn consumption

77% of Gen Z want more resources to help navigate porn and sex.

See the recommendations in full on page 35.

# METHODOLOGY

This report draws on two waves of research conducted via online surveys amongst 18–29 year olds in the UK.

The sample had a 60% male / 40% female split.

- **Wave 1:** Fieldwork was carried out between 13th–17th March 2025 with a total sample of 2,927 respondents. Within this group, 77% reported watching pornography. As the study was designed to explore attitudes and behaviours among porn consumers, subsequent analysis was restricted to this subgroup. The 23% who reported they did not watch pornography were excluded from further questioning. Respondents completed approximately 25–30 closed quantitative questions covering consumption, attitudes and the impacts of pornography.

- **Wave 2:** A second wave of fieldwork was conducted between 1st–5th September with a sample of 2,381 respondents. This wave was conducted after the introduction of the Online Safety Bill in July, to understand the potential impact this had on Gen Z's porn consumption. 68% of Gen Z's reported watching pornography in this wave, a 9–percentage–point decrease from Wave 1. This wave was a shorter follow up consisting of 10 quantitative questions alongside 3 open–ended, qualitative–style questions to capture more in– depth responses.

## Analytical Approach

Data was weighted by age and region to ensure representativeness in these key demographics. Gender was not weighted, as the 60/40 male–female split was a deliberate design choice to reflect consumption patterns.

All findings presented in this report are based on respondents who reported watching pornography. Analysis was conducted across key demographic and behavioural splits.

## These included:

- Gender\* (male vs female respondents)
- Frequency of porn usage
- Relationship status

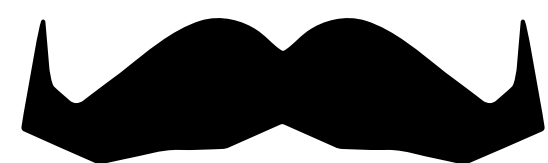
## Potential Limitations

There are a few important considerations when analysing the findings in this report. First, all data is self–reported, meaning responses rely on participants accurately reporting their behaviour. Therefore reported usage may be affected by recall bias (misremembering past behaviour) or social desirability bias (answering in a way that seems more socially acceptable). Secondly, while data was weighted by age and region, the 60/40 male–female split was deliberate and does not reflect the exact Gen Z population of the UK.

\* Sex assigned at birth

# CAMPAIGN PARTNERS

We have worked with some of the leading organisations that have robust experience in this space, to help us craft the research and analyse the findings.



MOVEMBER® INSTITUTE  
OF MEN'S HEALTH

The Movember Institute of Men's Health unites global experts – and guys themselves – to crack the toughest health challenges men and boys face today.

Together with sector partners, they look to improve health outcomes, challenge outdated norms, strengthen connection, and help men engage with care that actually works.



Fumble began in 2017 when a group of young women came together to tackle a root cause of gendered violence: the lack of relationships and sex education addressing the challenges young people face in the digital age.

Today, Fumble's a nationally recognised, award-winning charity, delivering world-class sex and relationships education across the UK.



pivotal  
RECOVERY

Founded by renowned sex therapist Dr. Paula Hall, Pivotal Recovery provides confidential, evidence-based support for anyone concerned about their pornography use.

Their programmes use research-backed methods to help individuals reduce or stop their porn use in ways that are effective and sustainable. Guided by a sex-positive ethos, Pivotal empowers people to make informed choices and create the life they want to lead.

# SECTION 1: CONTEXT & USAGE *Behaviours*

This section explores what porn is to Gen Z, their porn usage, how they access porn and the types of porn they are watching. Initial research was conducted before the introduction of the Online Safety Bill on 25th July 2025 with a further round of research highlighting the impact the introduction of age gating laws has had on 18-29s since.

# WHAT IS PORN TO GEN Z

Gen Z's relationship with porn reflects a mix of curiosity, arousal, concern and critique. When asked what porn is to them, Gen Z associate porn with sexual pleasure and exploration, but also with unrealistic expectations, objectification, and negative impacts on their mental health or relationships. As this report will show Gen Z have both positive and negative associations of porn, with the word porn evoking many different emotions to Gen Z.



## WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD PORN, WHAT COMES TO MIND?

*When I hear the word porn, I think of temptation, curiosity, instant gratification, but also guilt, secrecy, pressure, unrealistic intimacy, and its complicated impact on relationships. - Male, 25-29*

*When I hear porn it's just addiction, covid was probably a trigger for many porn addictions. - Male, 18-20*

*I think it's a controversial topic which should be more normalised however it also needs to be protected and awareness needs to be raised. - Female, 18-20*

*It is generally a negative thing that can lead to unrealistic views and expectations. - Male, 25-29*



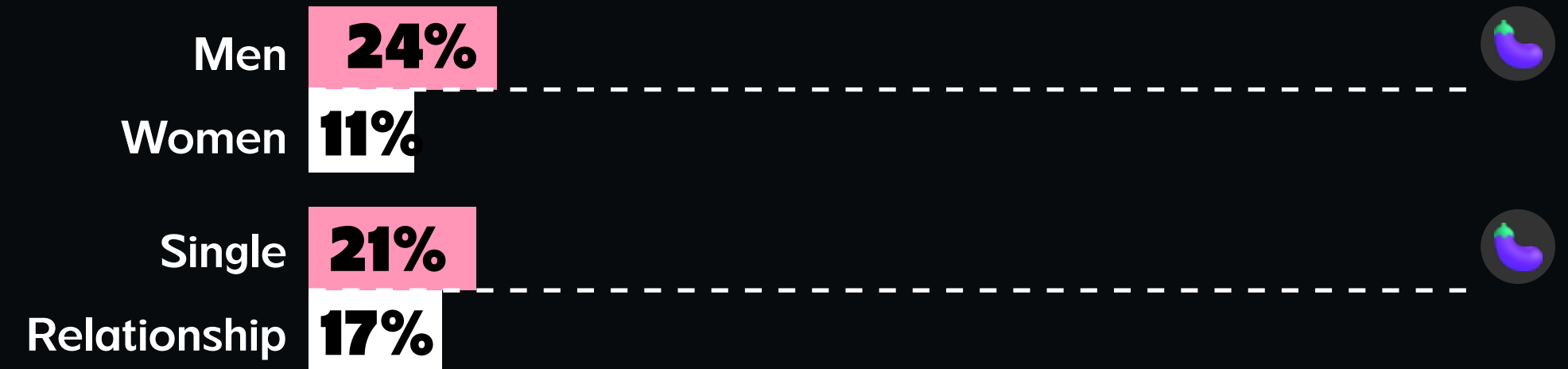
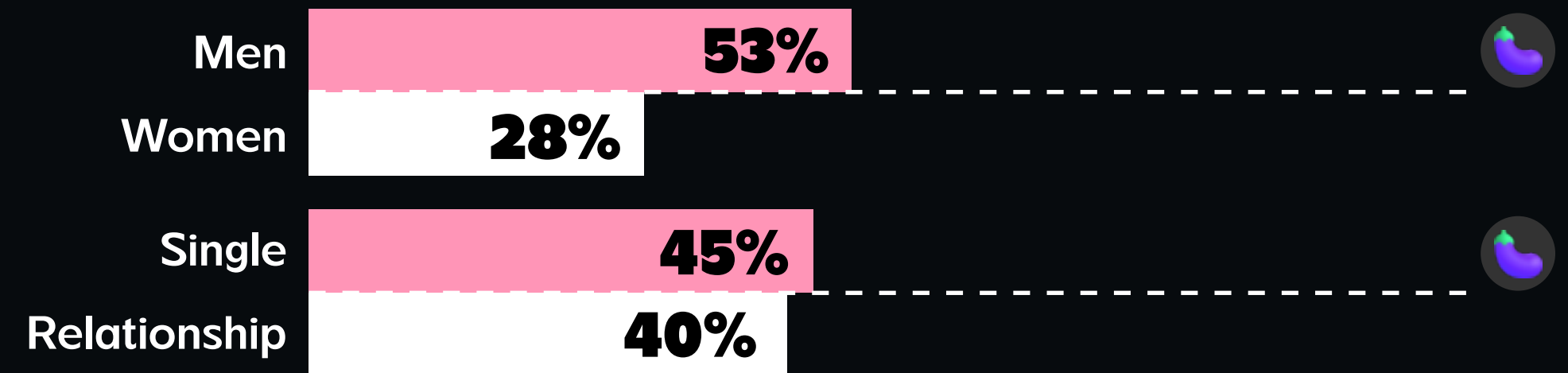
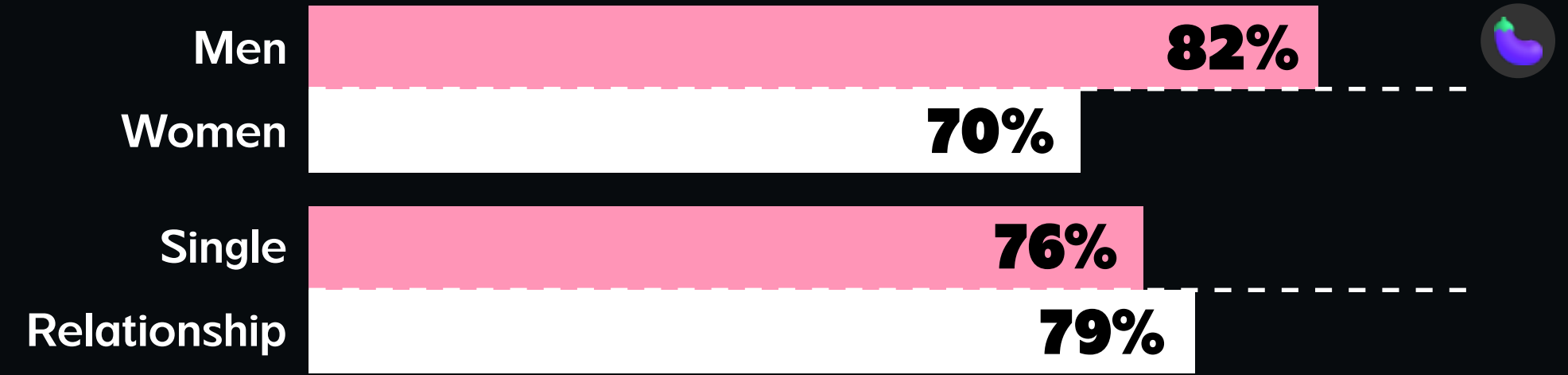
# HOW WIDESPREAD IS PORN USAGE AMONGST GEN Z?


Before the introduction of the Online Safety Bill we found that viewing porn for 18-29s was a common experience for many...

**77%**  
of Gen Z watch porn...

**43%**  
watch weekly...

**19%**  
watch daily...



 Sig. Higher tested to 95%

# WHAT TYPES OF PORN ARE GEN Z WATCHING?

Men are more drawn to dominant, taboo, role playing- driven categories like MILF/DILF, anal or step-family content. Women gravitate towards more romantic, softer or more exploratory genres such as lesbian porn, masturbation or BDSM. These differences not only reflect varying sexual interests but highlight how porn might shape ideas around connection, intimacy and gender dynamics. In the next section we will see how this impacts men and women differently.

WHAT ARE THE GENRES OF PORN YOU WATCH MOST OFTEN?



**22%**

Role playing e.g. teacher/  
student, doctor/patient

**22%**

Romantic/softcore

**21%**

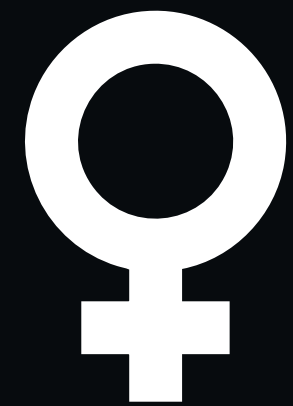
MILF/DILF

**21%**

Amateur

**19%**

Step family scenarios



**30%**

Romantic/softcore

**26%**

Lesbian

**23%**

Masturbation

**21%**

Role playing e.g. teacher/  
student, doctor/patient

**20%**

BDSM

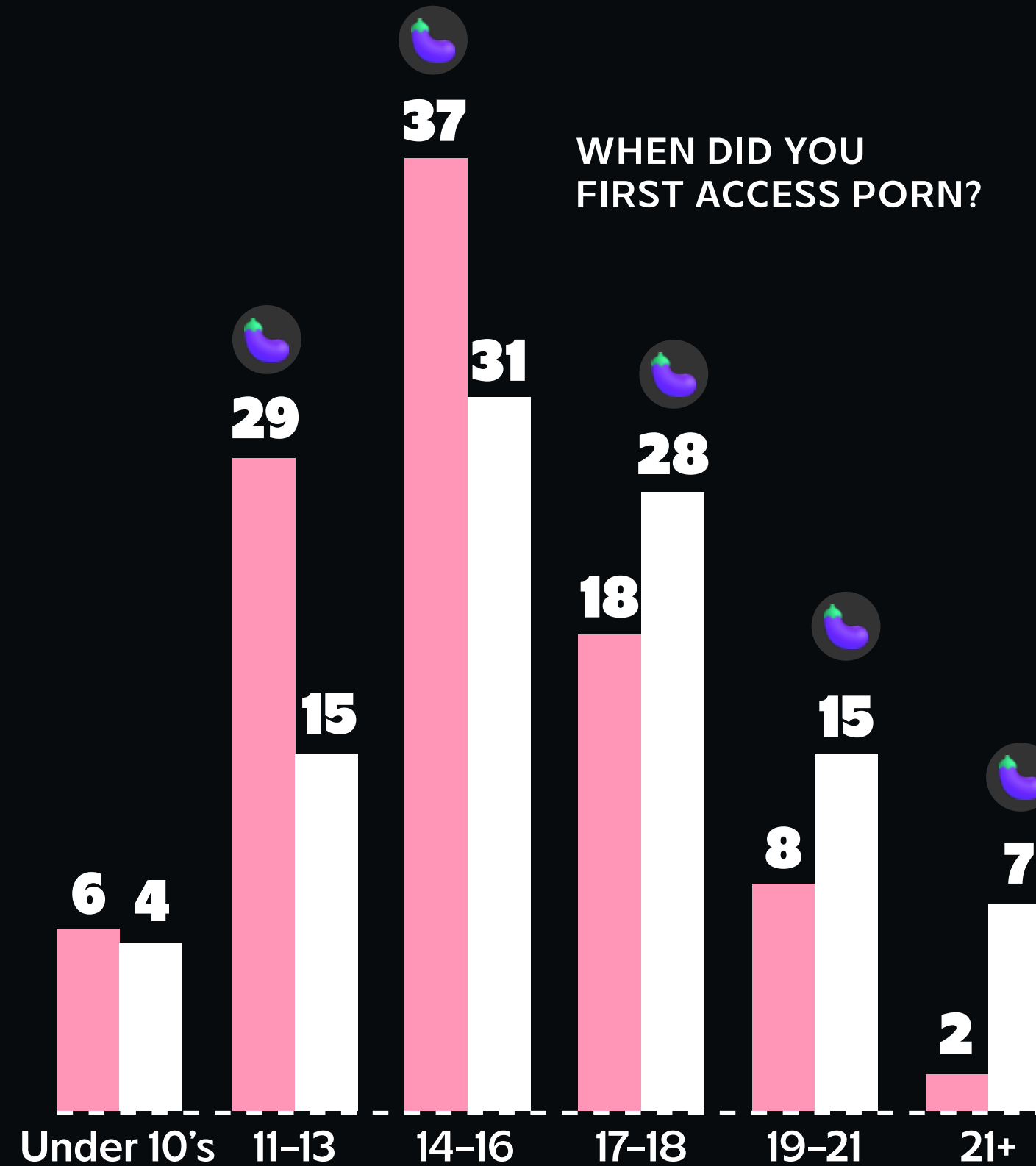
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# GEN Z ARE EXPOSED TO PORN FROM A VERY YOUNG AGE

63% of Gen Z start viewing porn before the age of 16. This is a trend that looks to be getting younger as well with 75% of 18-20s accessing porn before the age of 16 compared to 51% of 25-29 year olds.

1 in 20 Gen Z are accessing porn before the age of 10 and we do see a direct correlation between those who are accessing porn from an early age with those watching porn daily, with 50% of those who start watching porn before the age of 10 becoming daily viewers.

Being exposed to porn from a young age is problematic with 40% of those who struggle with porn addiction being exposed to porn before the age of 16\*.



Sig. Higher tested to 95%

## HOW GEN Z ARE ACCESSING PORN? (TOP 4)

**79%**

Free porn sites

**36%**

Social media

**16%**

Erotic stories/text based

**16%**

Paid subscription sites

8 in 10 Gen Z access porn via free porn sites such as PornHub or Xvideos and remains the most popular source for viewing porn.

Over a third of Gen Z now access porn via social media, with this highest amongst 18-20 year olds (39%). As heavy users of social media - often turning to them to explore and learn about new topics - it's perhaps unsurprising that social media has become the second most common way they access porn. This shift not only reflects how seamlessly porn has been woven into everyday digital life but also been normalised within the broader media landscape.

# THE ONLINE SAFETY BILL HAS SEEN A SLIGHT DECREASE IN VIEWERSHIP OF PORN

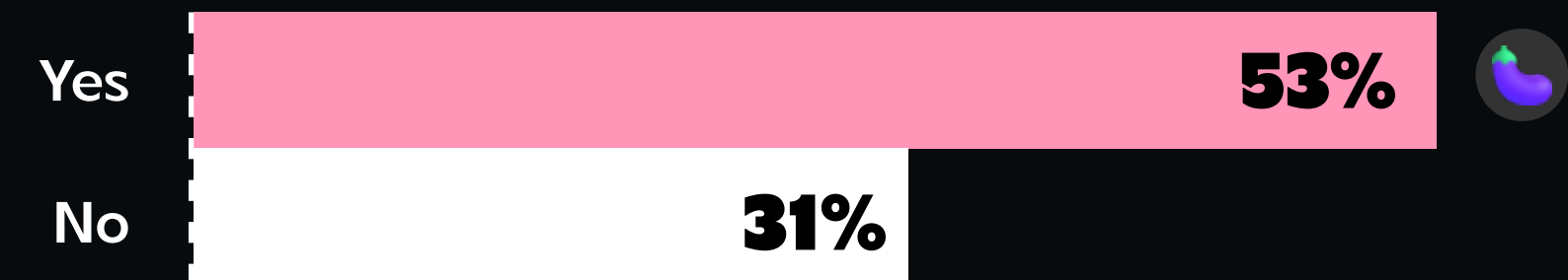
Awareness of the Online Safety Bill was high with 84% knowing about the introduction of the bill and this does seem to have had an impact on the volume of porn 18-29s are claiming to watch.

# 55%

Claim they are now **watching less porn** than they were before the introduction of the online safety bill.


DESPITE OVER HALF FEELING IT IS A GOOD IDEA, IN PRACTICE MANY FEEL THAT CHILDREN WILL FIND A WAY TO VIEW PORN IF THEY WANT TO

IS ONLINE THE SAFETY BILL A GOOD IDEA?



*I don't think new-age gating laws on accessing porn online will work because there is too many ways you can bypass these restriction. It will not stop under 18s being able to access porn because there's still Twitter, Reddit and other platforms where porn can still be accessed without restriction. - Male, 18-20*

*I think it will be effective to some extent however, the internet is vast and anything is possible on the internet. There are multiple running porn sites that do not require age verification. The gating laws will potentially push more people to disperse unapproved content through private messaging apps, potentially sharing more damaging, violent and illegal content. - Female, 21-24*

 Sig. Higher tested to 95%

# SECTION 2: IMPACT ON IDENTITY & *well being*

This section will unpack the impact porn has on Gen Z's identity and general well-being. Digging into topics of self-esteem, how porn makes them feel, the good and the bad.

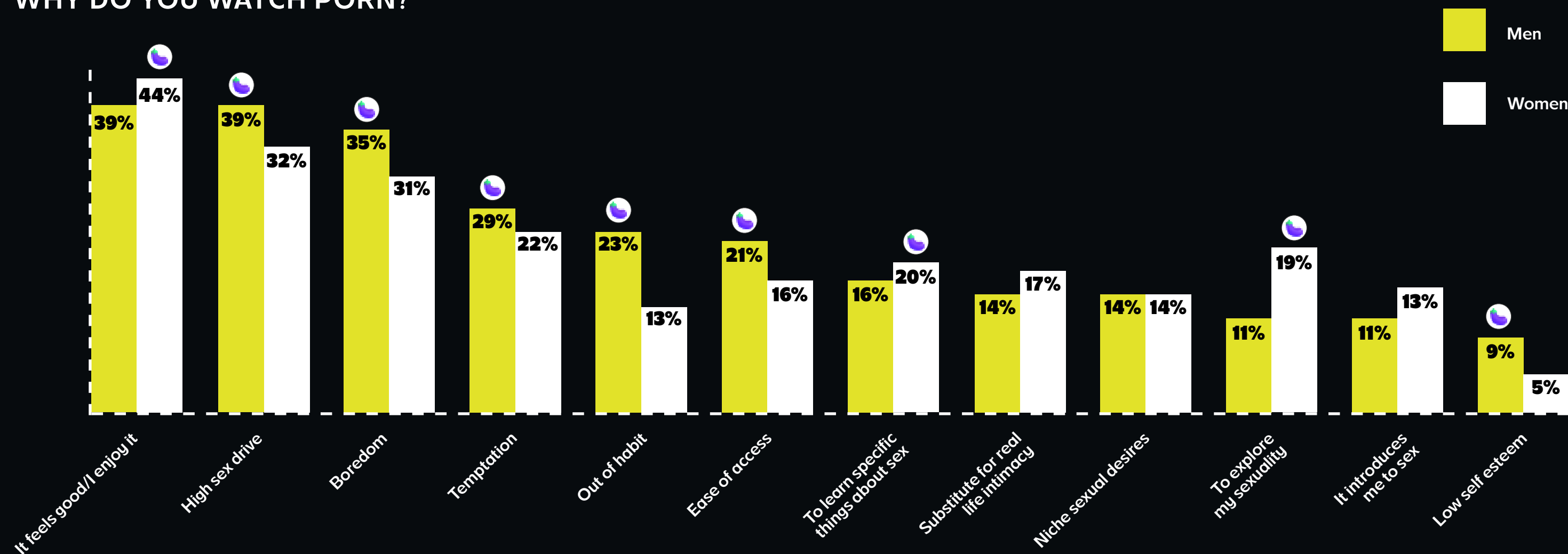


# GEN Z ARE WATCHING PORN FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS THAT EXTEND BEYOND JUST SEEKING PLEASURE

## 4 IN 10 WATCH PORN BECAUSE IT FEELS GOOD/THEY ENJOY IT


Whilst Gen Z are viewing porn for their pleasure with it feeling good and high sex drives coming out as the top reasons for viewing porn, the research shows that boredom and habit score highly showing how normalised it has become for many, especially amongst men. Women are significantly more likely to be watching porn for exploratory reasons than men whether that be learning specific things about sex or exploring their sexuality.

### WHY DO YOU WATCH PORN?



*I watch porn to satisfy my emotional cravings at times and also to learn and educate myself about some sexual styles in order to satisfy my partner.*  
 - Female 25-29

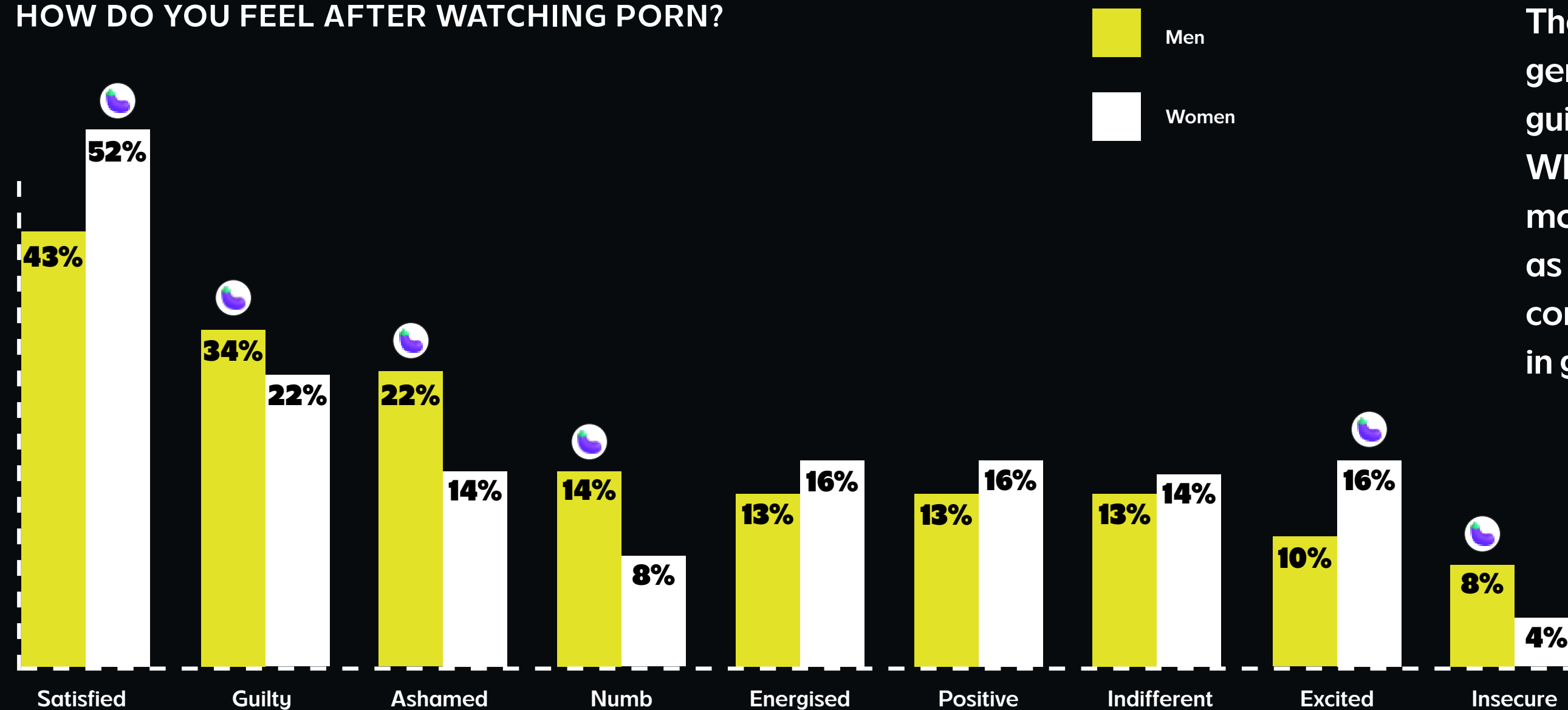
*I watch it when I am bored and need a quick dopamine hit or feel sexually aroused, I feel bad afterwards it's a mix of disappointment, sadness and also feeling tired.*  
 - Male 21-24

 Sig. Higher tested to 95%


# MEN REPORT MORE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AFTER VIEWING PORN COMPARED TO WOMEN

For many porn offers instant gratification and pleasure, however when digging deeper into how Gen Z feel after viewing porn there is a difference between genders with men reporting higher negative emotions after viewing porn.

HOW DO YOU FEEL AFTER WATCHING PORN?



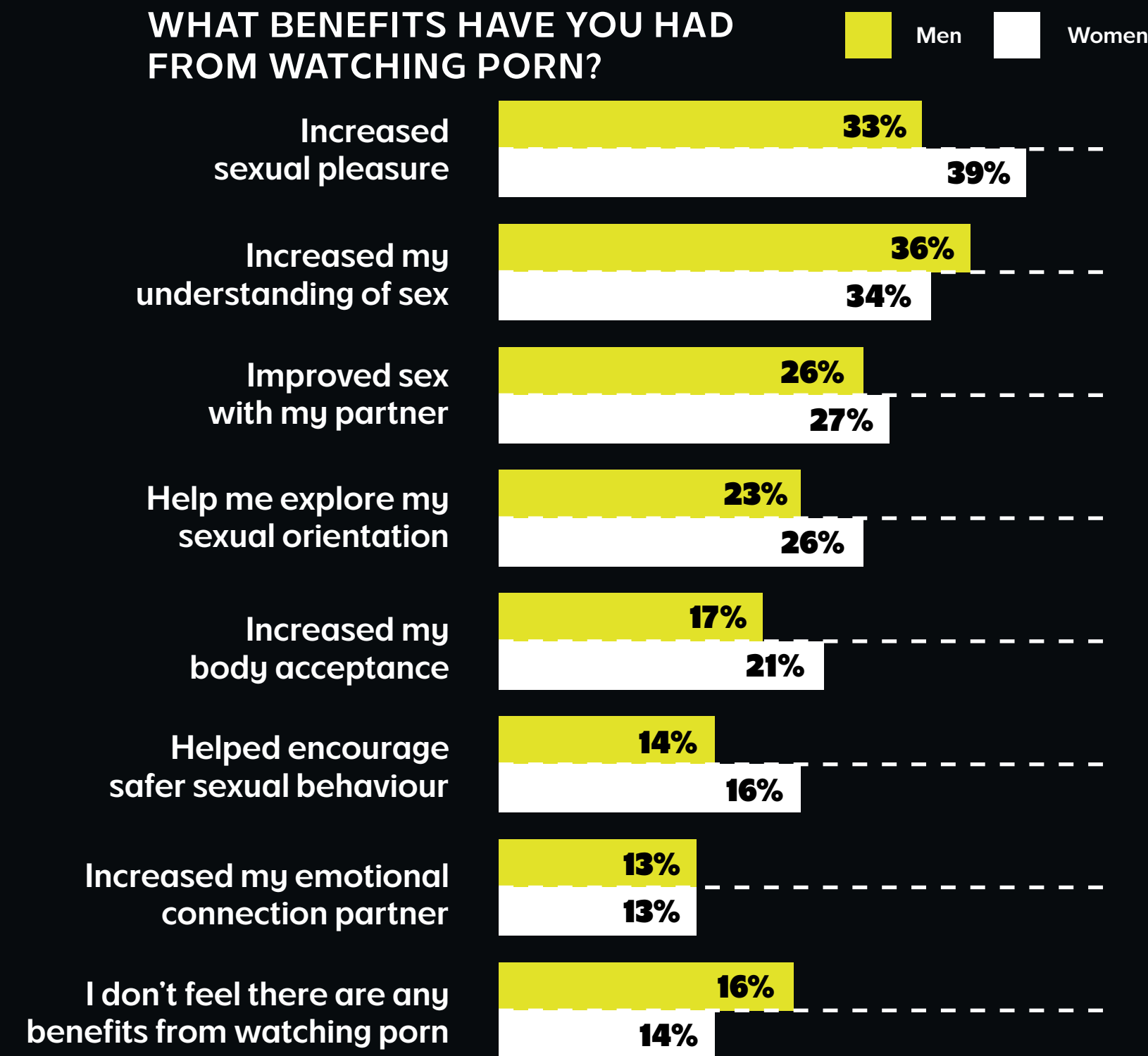
The research shows that there are some differences between gender with men significantly more likely to report feeling guilty, ashamed, numb or insecure after viewing porn. Whereas women are more likely to report feeling significantly more satisfied and excited. Female daily viewers are twice as likely to report feeling excited (28%) after watching porn compared to male daily viewers (14%) showing a difference in genders between heavy porn users.

 Sig. Higher tested to 95%

# GEN Z DO FEEL THERE ARE BENEFITS TO VIEWING PORN

Over a third of Gen Z report increased sexual pleasure from viewing porn, rising to 4 in 10 amongst daily viewers. Porn is a source of education for Gen Z as well with 36% agreeing porn has helped increase their understanding of sex – porn as an education tool will be explored more later in the report.

There seems to be a link between watching porn and frequency of real life sex with daily viewers reporting having the most sex with 76% having sex weekly compared to 50% of those watching porn less than once a month. Whilst daily porn viewers are reporting positive benefits there could be some concern about the type of content they are watching which is explored later.



**41%**  
Of daily viewers report increased sexual pleasure – the highest of any group

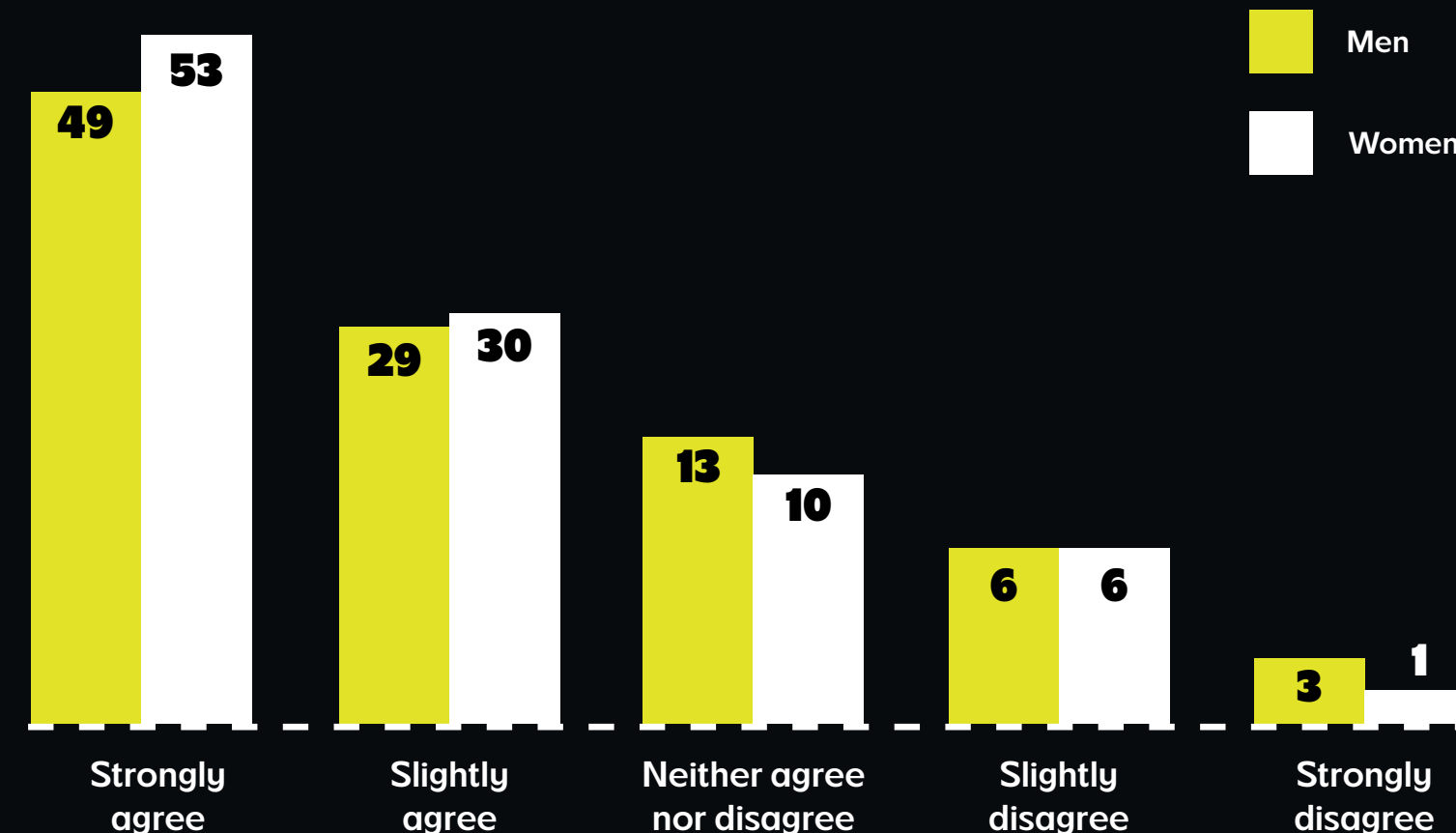
**35%**  
Of those in a relationship report improved sex with their partner – the highest of any group

Sig. Higher tested to 95%


# HOWEVER THERE IS CONCERN AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE IMPACT PORN IS HAVING ON THEM

Across both men and women, concern about the impacts of porn on young people is widespread, with 80% agreeing they are worried. Those viewing porn the least are the most concerned about the impacts: 87% of those watching porn less than once a month are worried compared to 73% of daily viewers, the group least concerned about the impacts albeit still concerned at high rates. As previously reported, daily viewers do report feeling the highest levels of increased sexual pleasure and enjoyment from watching porn, highlighting how many can experience pleasure whilst equally worrying about the potential impacts.

80% OF GEN Z AGREE THEY ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF PORN ON YOUNG PEOPLE



*I'd say my feelings about it are pretty mixed, on one hand, I see it as something a lot of people use for curiosity or pleasure, but on the other hand, I also think about the negatives, like how unrealistic it can be, or the way it sometimes shapes expectations about sex and relationships in ways that aren't very healthy. There's also the side of it that makes me worry about exploitation or whether the people involved are treated fairly. So, for me, it's a bit of a blend of neutral, slightly cautious, and sometimes uneasy feelings rather than one strong reaction. - Female 25-29*

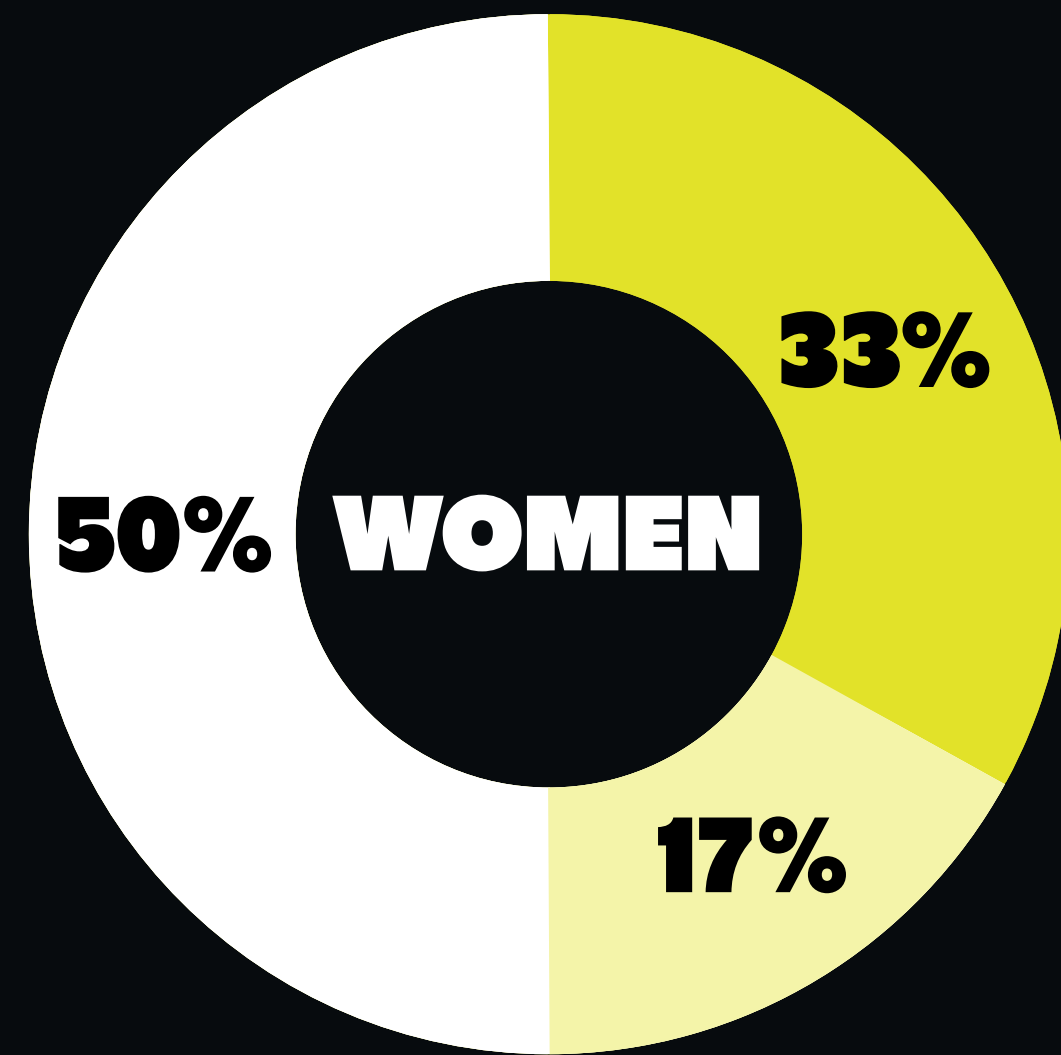
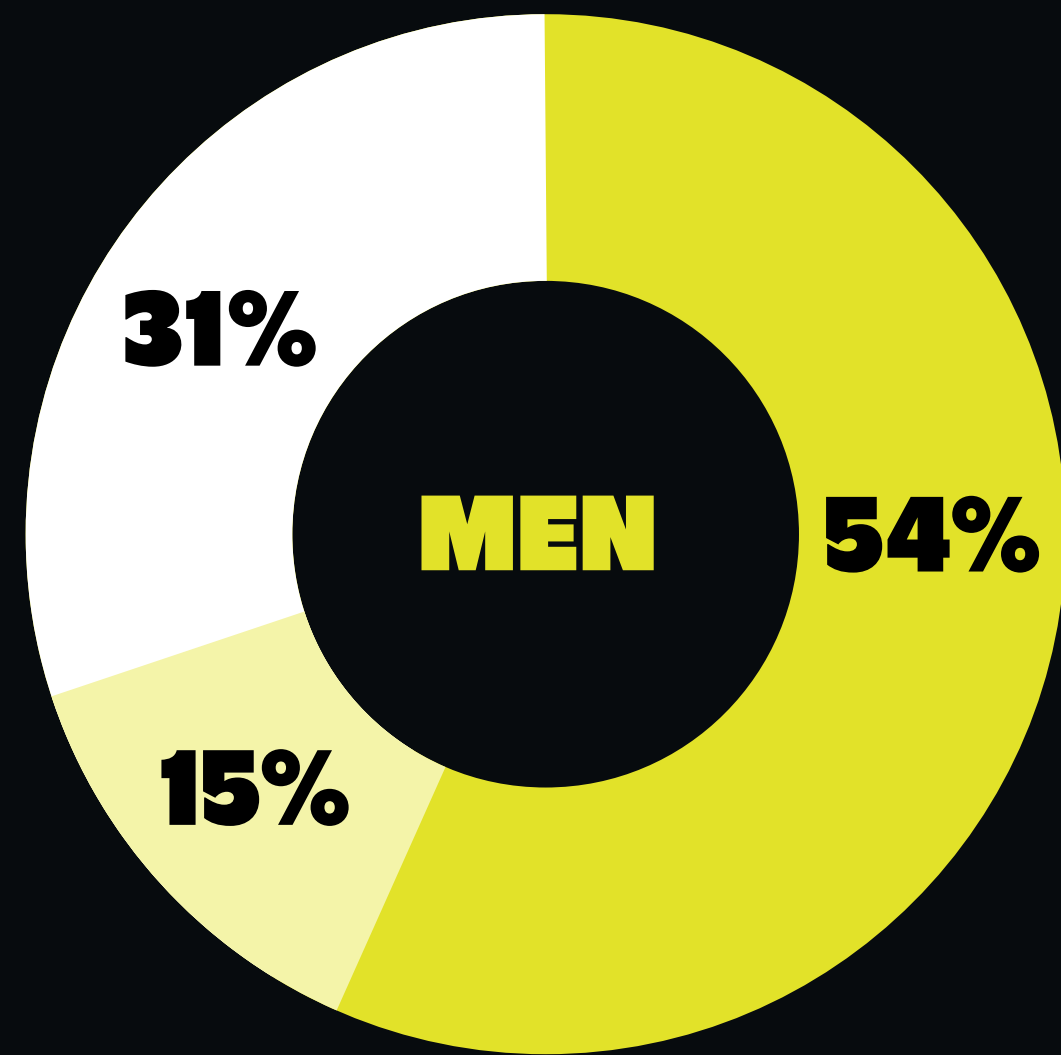
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# OVER 4 IN 10 GEN Z WORRY THEY WATCH TOO MUCH PORN

We do see a gender split here with over 1 in 2 men worrying they watch too much porn compared to 1 in 3 women. The majority of Gen Z are watching porn there is little communication about it amongst friends and 38% of Gen Z worry they watch more porn than their friends.

## STATEMENTS ON PORN USAGE

■ I worry I watch too much porn - agree  
■ I worry I watch too much porn - neither agree or disagree  
■ I worry I watch too much porn - disagree



## I HAVE STRUGGLED TO REDUCE/QUIT HOW MUCH PORN I WATCH - NET AGREE

**MEN**  
**41%**

**WOMEN**  
**31%**

**DAILY VIEWERS**  
**62%**

The worry about porn usage can be linked to increasing anxiety or depression men experience from viewing porn. For many young men, this concern is often bound up with shame and uncertainty around what counts as 'too much' when watching porn or masturbating. Social pressures and shame amplified by media stories risk reinforcing stigma around masculinity and porn use making it harder for young men to open up or seek support when they feel their use is becoming problematic.

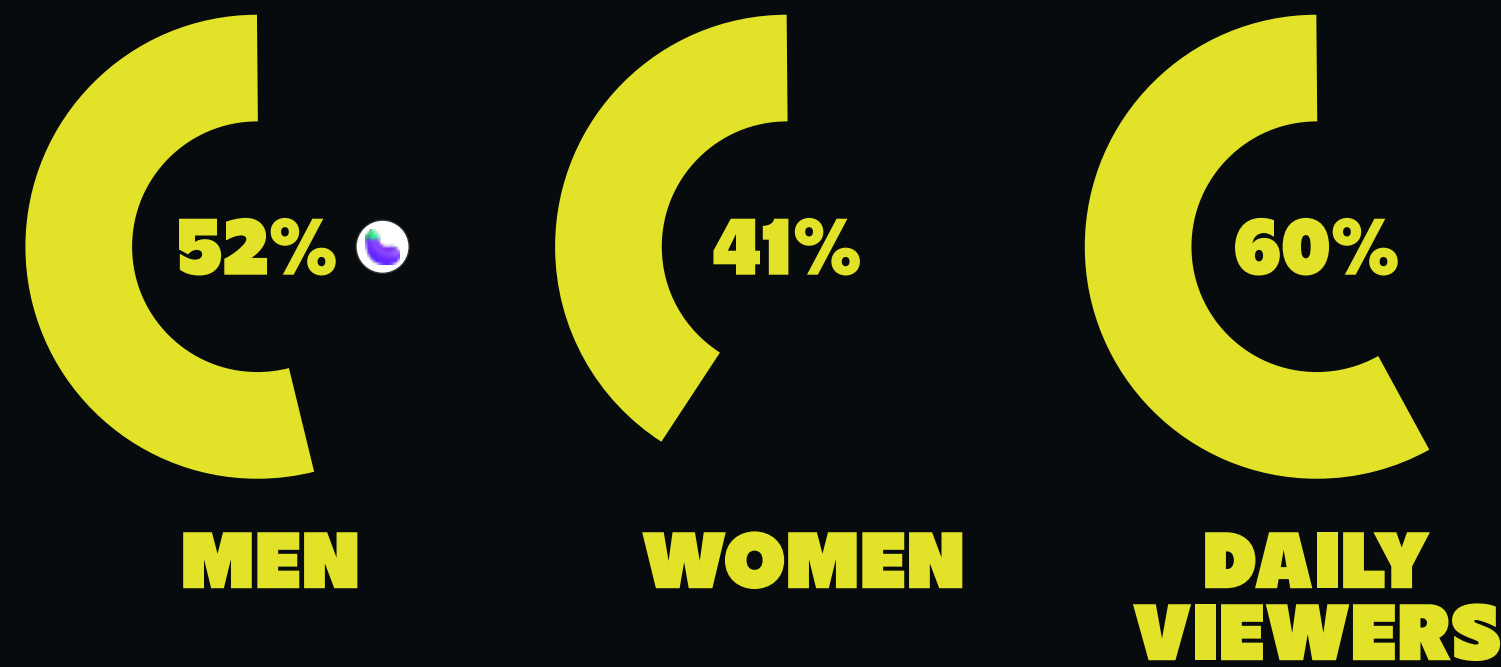
67% of daily viewers worry they watch too much porn highlighting the potential development of problematic pornography use. There is little difference between those in a relationship (45%) and single Gen Z's (47%) who worry about their porn usage, highlighting that it's a concern regardless of relationship status.

Sig. Higher tested to 95%

# PORN IS GREATLY IMPACTING VIEWERS SELF ESTEEM

Almost half of Gen Z (48%) report porn has affected their self esteem or body image, with men and daily viewers feeling this the most. This comes from a place of comparison with just over 4 in 10 Gen Z's reporting they compare themselves to people in porn. This comparison has led to daily porn viewers and men reporting higher levels of depression and anxiety.

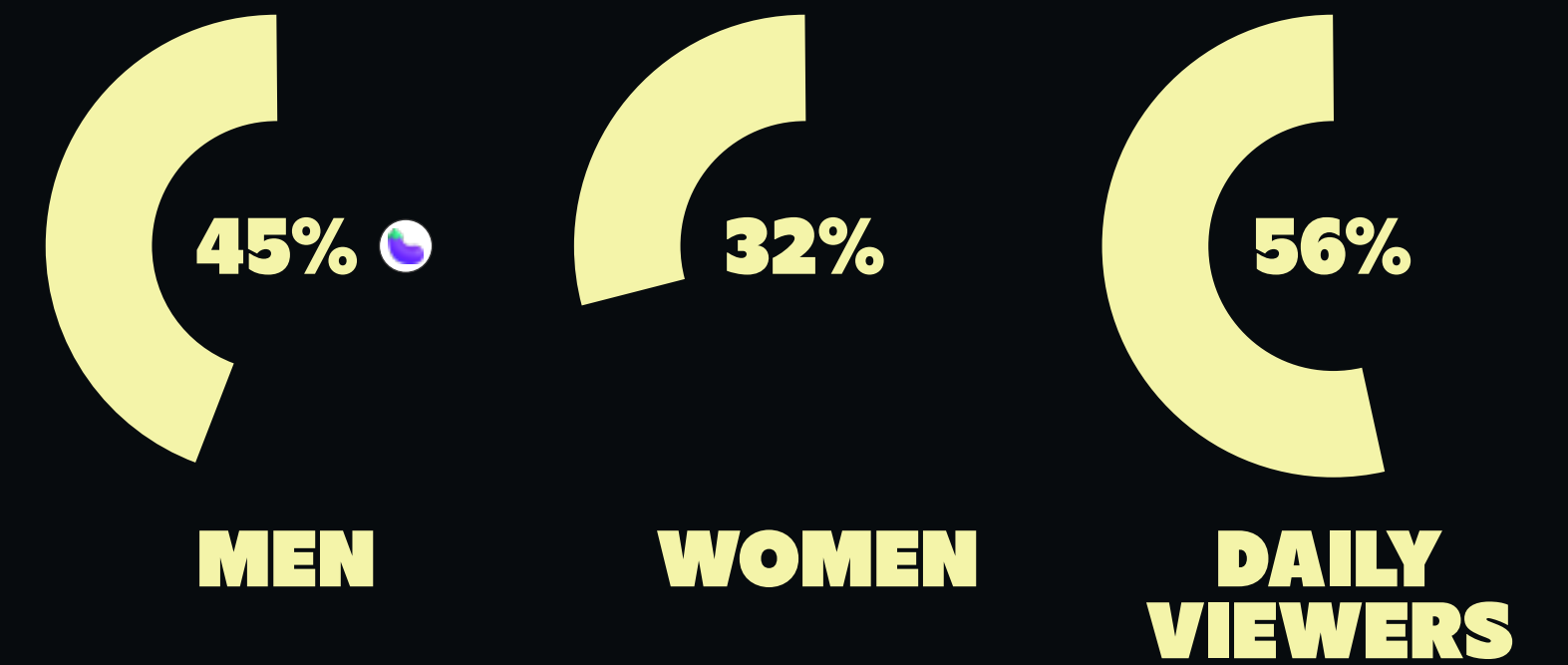
PORN HAS IMPACTED MY SELF ESTEEM OR BODY IMAGE




I COMPARE MYSELF TO PEOPLE IN PORN



PORN HAS CONTRIBUTED TO ME HAVING SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION



 Sig. Higher tested to 95%

# 1 IN 4 GEN Z FREQUENTLY HAVE THE NEED TO WATCH MORE EXTREME/DIFFERENT TYPES OF PORN OVER TIME

With over half of Gen Z reporting they have felt the need to watch more extreme or different types of porn over time, porn use can act as a catalyst for increasing variance in viewing. This shift is not only personal but also shaped by algorithms, both on porn sites and across social media, that are designed to keep users engaged by pushing more extreme content, ultimately encouraging longer and more frequent viewing.

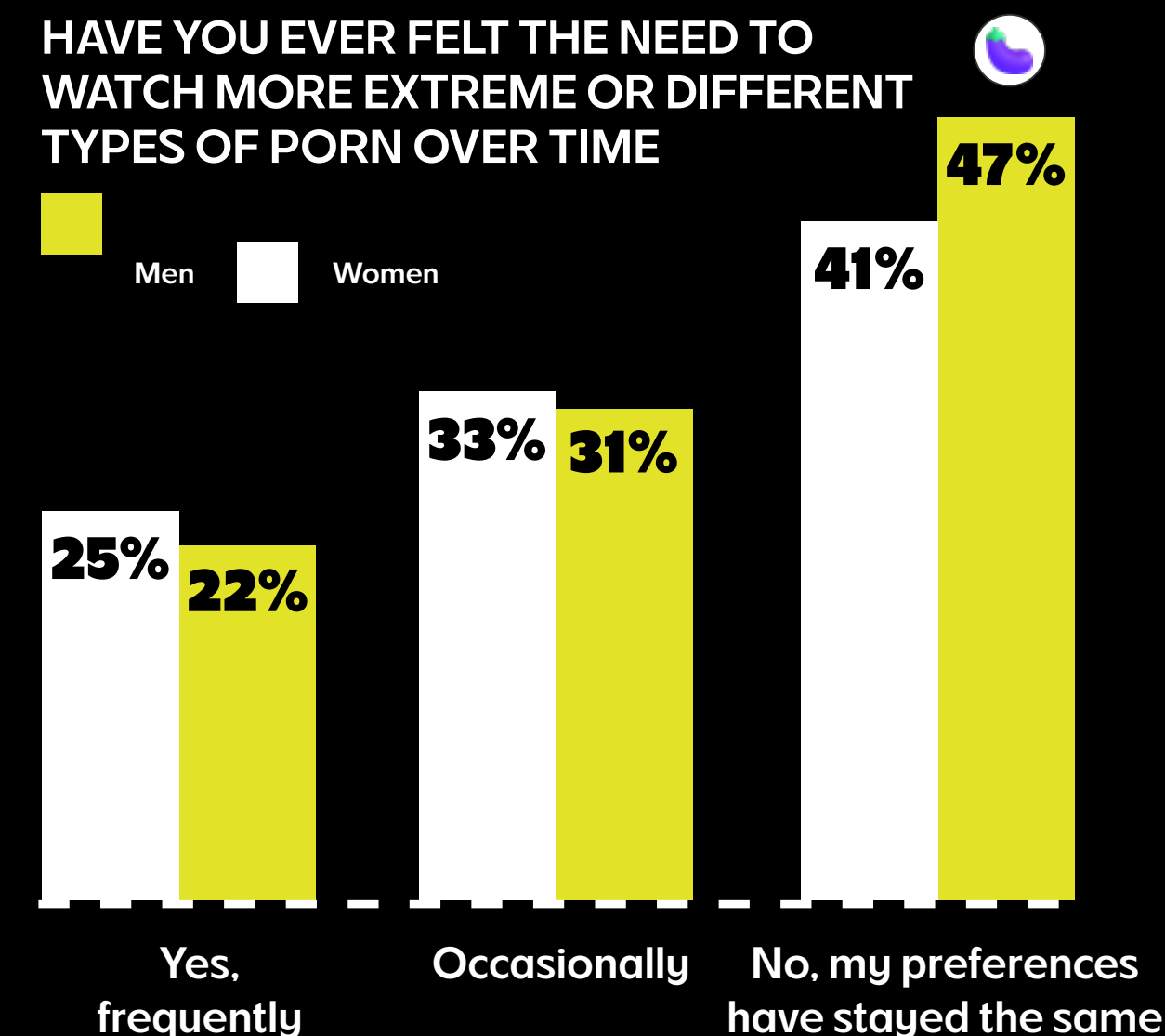


*I have but I've stopped because I felt disappointed in myself for watching it, after watching a lot of porn you get into more rough videos but I've stopped watching rough videos. - Male, 18-20*

*I like rougher sex and porn so yeah I've seen and been interested in a lot more extreme porn, didn't impact me much, just made me more aware of what I like in sex. - Female 25-29*



HAVE YOU EVER FELT THE NEED TO WATCH MORE EXTREME OR DIFFERENT TYPES OF PORN OVER TIME



42% of daily viewers say they frequently access different types of porn over time, suggesting that regular exposure can influence and shift what Gen Z find attractive or sexually arousing. Whilst there may be some concern about escalation into more extreme types of porn, others were more positive about exploring their porn usage, framing it as a way of exploring curiosity and better understanding their own likes and dislikes.

 Sig. Higher tested to 95%

# SECTION 3: HOW PORN IS IMPACTING REAL LIFE *Sex*

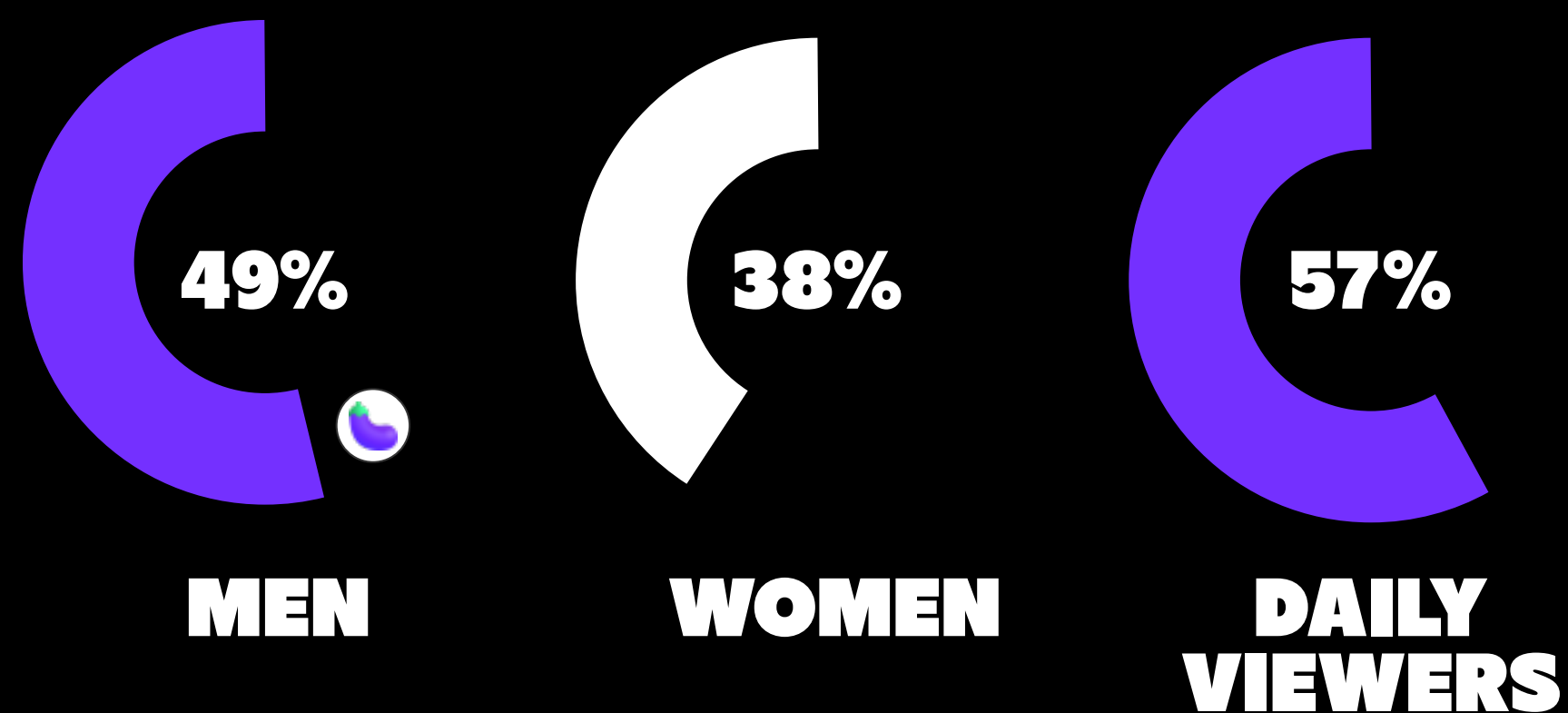
This section explores how Gen Z are using porn as an education tool to understand sex and how this is impacting their expectations around gender roles, their bodies and the nature of consent. The findings also show that increased exposure to porn is impacting sexual dysfunction and reducing Gen Z's desire to have real sex



# PORN IS GREATLY IMPACTING VIEWERS' SELF ESTEEM

Almost half of Gen Z (48%) report porn has affected their self esteem or body image, with men and daily viewers feeling this the most. This comes from a place of comparison with just over 4 in 10 Gen Z's reporting they compare themselves to people in porn. This comparison has led to daily porn viewers and men reporting higher levels of depression and anxiety.

PORN WAS ONE OF MY MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT SEX - NET AGREE



*Sex education in school doesn't do enough - the mechanics of sex are explained in what many find to be the most embarrassing setting. Surrounded by peers, it often doesn't meet the mental wellbeing and individual sexual health needs of young people today, particularly in this fast-evolving digital age. And so it is only natural for young people to go searching for their most vulnerable and private answers online. Porn can be a fun way for people to explore their sexuality and think about what they like/don't like. But it becomes a problem when mainstream porn (typically free videos showing more hardcore and violent content) forms an idea of what real-life sexual intimacy 'should' look like. This is what we need to speak more about.* - Emilie Cousins, Fumble Charity

*I was exposed when I was far too young, so porn was the first instance of sex education for me. I remember absolutely no sex education in school, aside from one very rushed lesson in secondary school that didn't give much info as the teachers knew kids wouldn't take it seriously. I definitely grew up with a very unhealthy outlook on sex, especially when my parents finally found my search history, and I felt a lot of shame and had basically no sex drive because of it well up until my late teens.* - Male, 18-20

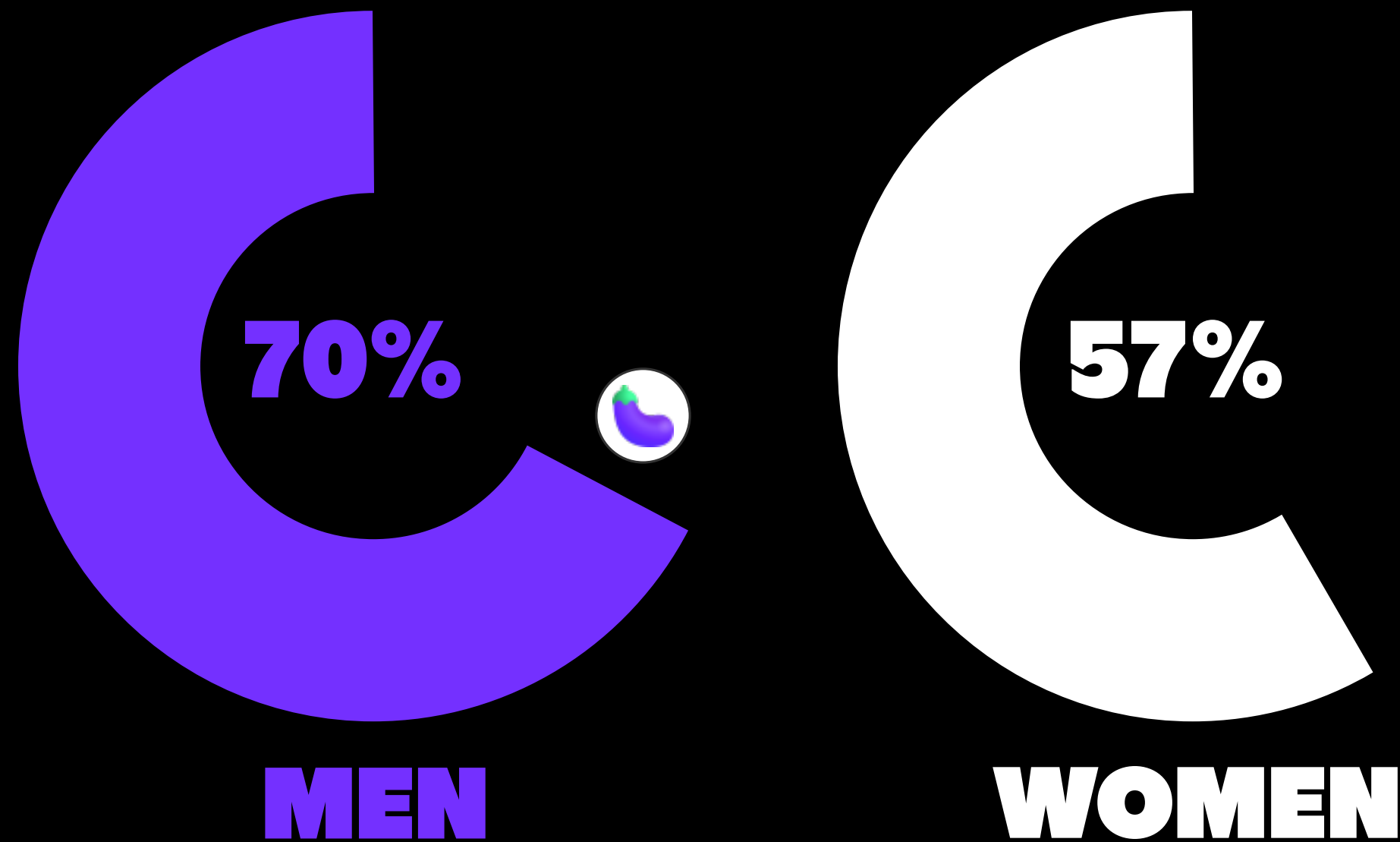
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# PORN IS OFTEN THE FIRST EXPOSURE GEN Z HAVE TO SEX

65% OF GEN Z SAY PORN WAS THEIR FIRST TIME BEING EXPOSED TO SEX

For the majority of Gen Z, porn is therefore having a big impact on what they are expecting from real life sex.

WAS PORN YOUR FIRST TIME BEING EXPOSED TO SEX? - YES



*It was my main source of education. I had no other education other than partners or porn. It resulted in a very unhealthy relationship with sex - including some non consent experiences and more aggressive forms - as I thought that was the expectation - Male, 18-20*

*Porn played more of a curiosity role than true education it showed acts but not the reality of intimacy, consent, or emotions. Other sources like school, conversations, and personal experiences shaped my real understanding far more. - Female 25-29*

Men are significantly more likely than women to be introduced to porn before any real-life sexual experiences, with the vast majority saying it was their first exposure to sex. Previous research, shows those who deliberately sought out porn vs those who were accidentally exposed to porn experienced more problems such as addiction. This highlights how for a large majority of Gen Z porn is often their first form of sexual education, with it shaping expectations and understandings of sex long before reliable information is available to them.

 Sig. Higher tested to 95%

# PORN IS SHAPING SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

With porn being accessed from such a young age and acting as a source of information about sex, it is unsurprising the findings show that porn is changing Gen Z's expectations of what real life sex is. We see a direct correlation between porn usage and changing expectations of real life sex with 60% of daily viewers agreeing porn has changed their expectations of real life sex compared to 38% of those watching porn less than once a month. Our research also shows that porn is impacting what turns Gen Z on, what they find attractive in a partner and influencing what Gen Z want to try in the bedroom. The findings show that:

**49%**

**AGREE**

watching porn has changed my expectations of real life sex

**50%**

**AGREE**

Porn has influenced what they find attractive in a partner

**67%**

**AGREE**

Porn has influenced what turns me on

**76%**

**AGREE**

I've wanted to try something I've watched in porn

*Porn often shows idealised bodies, exaggerated performances and behaviours that don't reflect authentic intimacy or consent. While it can create the impression that sex should look a certain way, highly performative and others. I understand that real sexual relationships are about communication, comfort and connection. In terms of appearance, porn tends to promote body types which I don't see as a realistic measure of attractiveness. Performance wise, it suggests that endurance, intensity or certain acts are the standard, whereas in reality, sexual experience vary and should prioritize mutual satisfaction. – Female, 25-29*

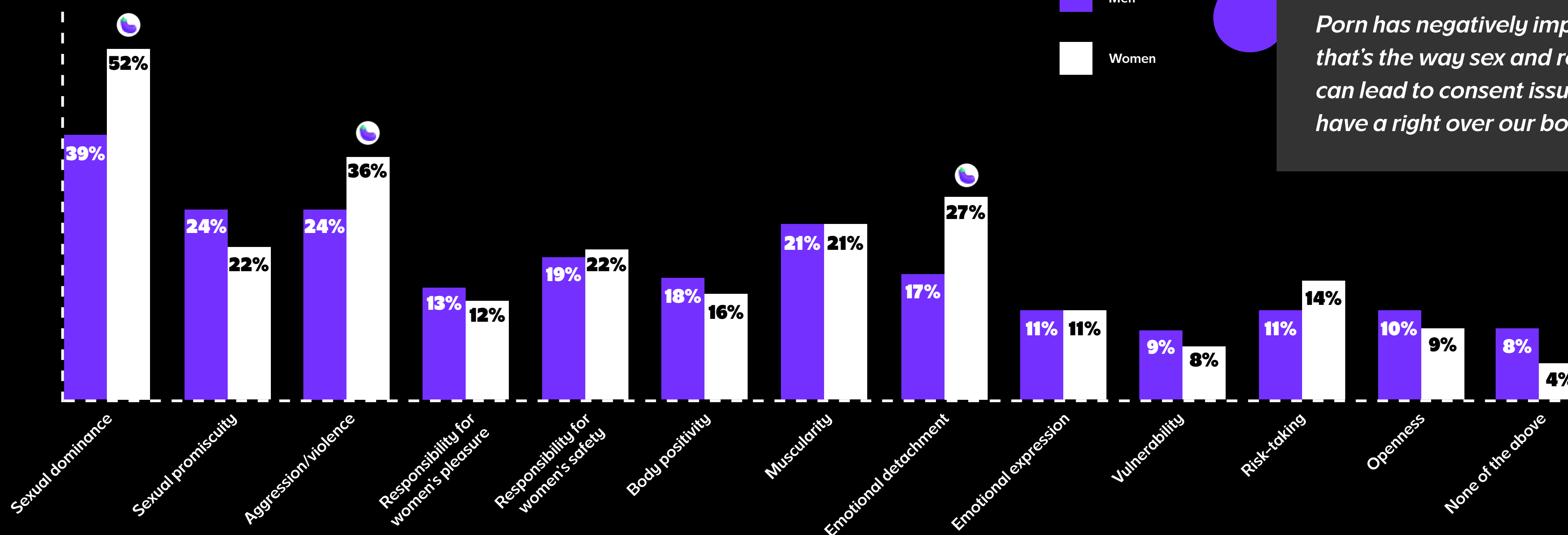
*Porn has influenced society by creating unrealistic expectations about sex and relationships, especially around appearance and performance. – Male, 21-24*

*I think porn has shaped what I think of sex from a young age due to when I first ever had sex I thought moaning and dirty talk was all normal during sex due to watching porn but I found out not long after that it isn't a normal thing and porn just shapes it into a normal thing. – Male, 18-20*

# PORN IS SHAPING GENDER ROLES

Women are significantly more likely to think porn reinforces behaviours like sexual dominance, aggression/violence or emotional detachment in men. Similarly, those who watch porn monthly are more likely than daily or weekly viewers to hold these concerns. This suggests that women, in particular, are noticing and flagging the ways porn may shape male behaviour – concerns that men themselves might not be aware of/see as important.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TRAITS, IF ANY, DO YOU BELIEVE PORN REINFORCES IN MEN?



*Porn has negatively impacted younger men who think that's the way sex and relationships should be which can lead to consent issues and men thinking they have a right over our bodies. – Female, 21-24*

Sig. Higher tested to 95%

# THERE IS AN IMPACT ON SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION & A DECREASE IN INTEREST IN REAL LIFE SEX ESPECIALLY FOR DAILY VIEWERS


## 34% OF GEN Z SAY THEY HAVE INCREASED SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION AFTER WATCHING PORN

Just over a third of Gen Z agree that after watching porn they have suffered from increased sexual dysfunction such as difficulty getting or maintaining an erection, delayed ejaculation or inability to reach orgasm. This is significantly higher amongst men (37%) compared to women (28%) and rises to 54% amongst daily viewers of porn.

## NEARLY A THIRD OF GEN Z (32%) SAY THEIR INTEREST IN REAL LIFE SEX HAS DECREASED SINCE CONSUMING PORN

37% of Gen Z men agree their interest in real life sex has decreased since consuming porn significantly higher than Gen Z women (25%). This figure rises to almost 1 in 2 of daily viewers (49%).

*The impact on sexual functioning and relationships is the most common reason men seek help for problematic pornography use. Often, these issues create a frustrating cycle: increased isolation can lead to greater porn use, and greater porn use can lead to even more isolation, forming a self-reinforcing pattern that can be difficult to break.* - Dr Paula Hall, Pivotal Recovery

 Sig. Higher tested to 95%

# SECTION 4: THE NEED FOR *realism*

The final section will explore how exposure to porn impacts how real Gen Z finds porn and their need for further sex education.



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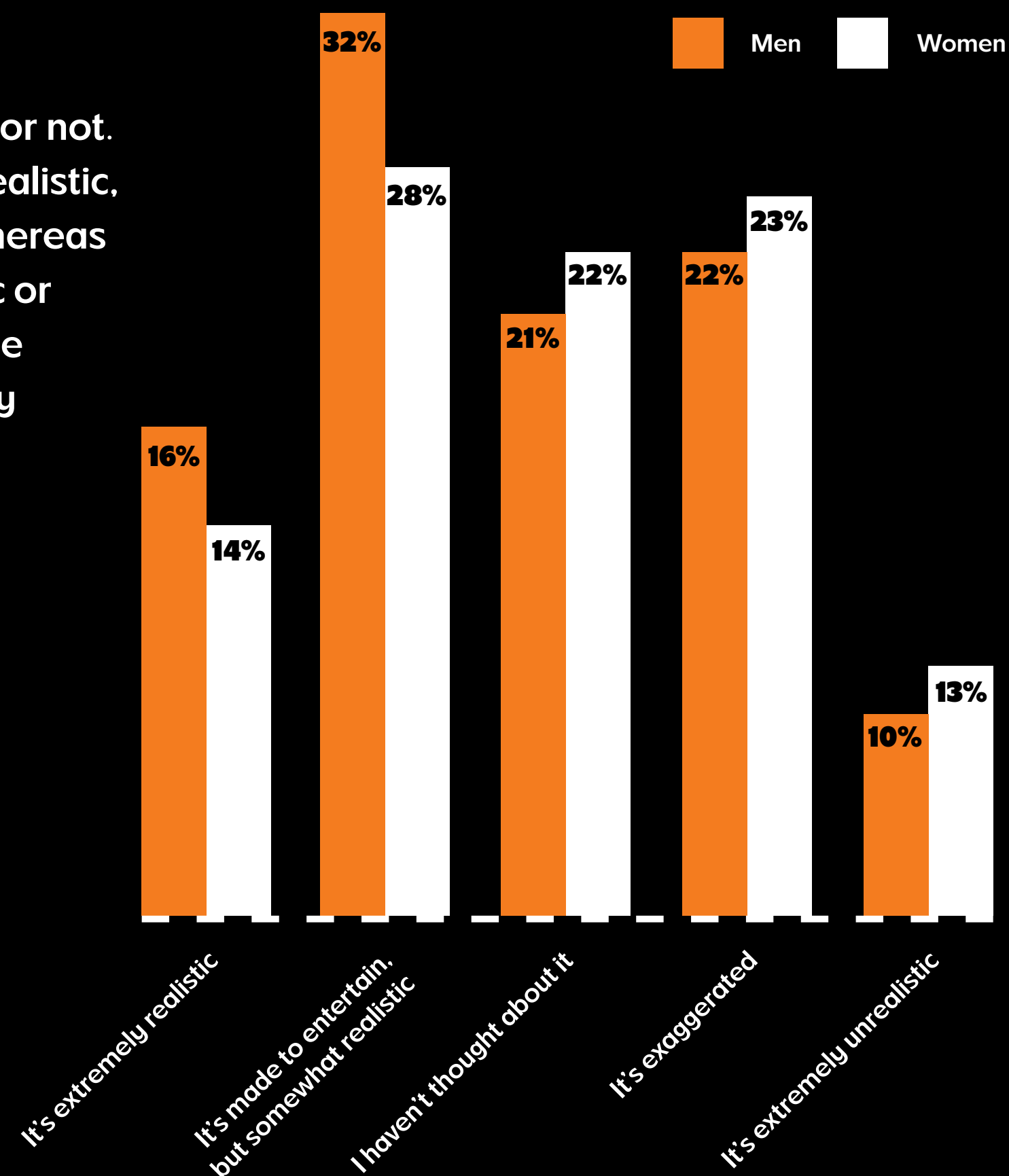
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# EXPOSURE TO PORN IS IMPACTING REALISM

There is a divide within Gen Z viewing porn as realistic or not. 15% of Gen Z view the porn they watch as extremely realistic, with a further 31% viewing it as somewhat realistic. Whereas 34% view the porn they watch as extremely unrealistic or exaggerated. Increased exposure to porn influences the viewpoint that porn is realistic further with 63% of daily viewers agreeing the porn they watch is pretty or extremely realistic.

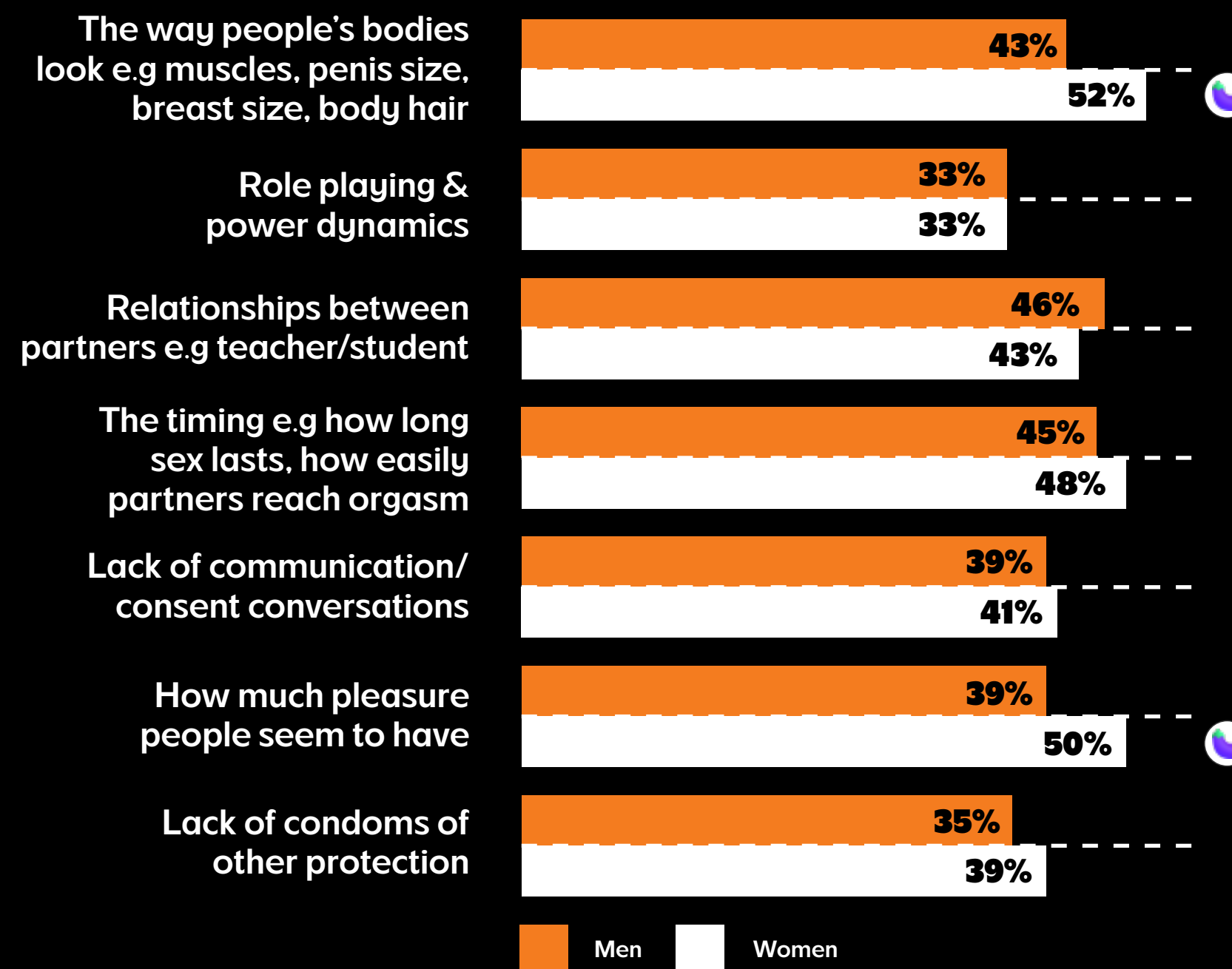
Many Gen Z's are trusting porn as a key source for sex education. With few alternative reference points, it is unsurprising their perceptions are shaped more by exposure than by accuracy.



 Sig. Higher tested to 95%

Despite just under half of Gen Z viewing the porn they watch as somewhat realistic there is still an acknowledgement that aspects of porn are unrealistic. Gen Z view people's bodies (47%), the timing (46%), relationships between partners (45%) and how much pleasure people seem to have (43%) as the most unrealistic aspects of the porn they watch.

## WHAT DO YOU FIND THE MOST UNREALISTIC ABOUT THE PORN YOU WATCH?



# MORE GENUINE, REALISTIC & RELATABLE PORN IS DESIRED FROM GEN Z

Over a third of Gen Z are wanting more genuine pleasure and authentic reactions in porn, including more realistic depictions of sex such as awkward moments or laughter and unsurprisingly given, 47% of Gen Z find people's bodies in porn unrealistic, there is a desire for more realistic body types. Women are significantly more likely than men to want more focus on female pleasure. Communication and safety come up as a concern with women, with them significantly more likely to want more focus on communication between partners, clear use of condoms, and more consent and mutual decision making.

## WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU SAW MORE OF IN PORN? (TOP 5)



**35%**

Want more genuine pleasure and authentic reactions

**30%**

Want more realistic depictions of sex e.g. awkward moments, laughter, foreplay

**30%**

Want more realistic body types

**25%**

Want more focus on female pleasure

**23%**

Want more communication between partners



**37%**

Want more genuine pleasure and authentic reactions

**34%**

Want more focus on female pleasure



**33%**

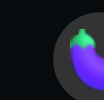
Want more realistic body types


**32%**

Want more realistic depictions of sex e.g. awkward moments, laughter, foreplay

**29%**

Want more communication between partners



 Sig. Higher tested to 95%

# GEN Z ARE CALLING FOR MORE OPEN COMMUNICATION IN PORN

**75%** OF GEN Z BELIEVE THERE SHOULD BE **MORE COMMUNICATION** BETWEEN PERFORMERS IN PORN

Consent in porn is a key concern for Gen Z and there is a desire to see more communication between performers. Only 36% can recall seeing a scene where performers discussed consent before or during sex, THIS was higher amongst men than women (39% vs 32%) and among daily viewers compared to monthly viewers (51% vs 23%). Consequently, 64% of Gen Z do not remember seeing any explicit consent in porn.

*It should be more realistic I think it should show more consent and communication. - Male, 18-20*

*Consent has had increased airtime societally over the last couple of years but as this data shows, it is still a problematic space. Young people are urgently calling for practical advice on how to check in with each other, how to recognise body language rather than relying on a verbal 'no'/'yes', how to feel more comfortable and confident talking about sex and pleasure, and how to repair and resolve genuine misunderstandings during sexual intimacy - which is very rarely shown or acknowledged in porn, if ever in mainstream porn.*

**- Emilie Cousins, Fumble Charity**

# 77% WANT MORE RESOURCES TO HELP NAVIGATE THEIR PORN USE & SEX LIVES

Over three quarters of Gen Z would like there to be more resources available to help young people navigate their porn use and sex lives with 60% feeling the government should do more to respond to the effects of porn consumption on the general public. There is a desire from Gen Z themselves for education on aspects of their sex life. With porn being a key educating tool in Gen Z's sexual education and question marks around the realistic nature of porn it is unsurprising that what constitutes 'good' sex and how to satisfy their partner score highly for both Gen Z men and women.

Men Women

## AREAS WHERE THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HELP MORE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE'S PORN CONSUMPTION

**61%**

Want better sex education from 16 to 18 in schools & colleges

**44%**

More resources available for porn addiction (similar to gambling/alcohol)

**43%**

Greater restrictions on violent types of porn e.g. choking, slapping

**42%**

Address problematic porn use & addiction

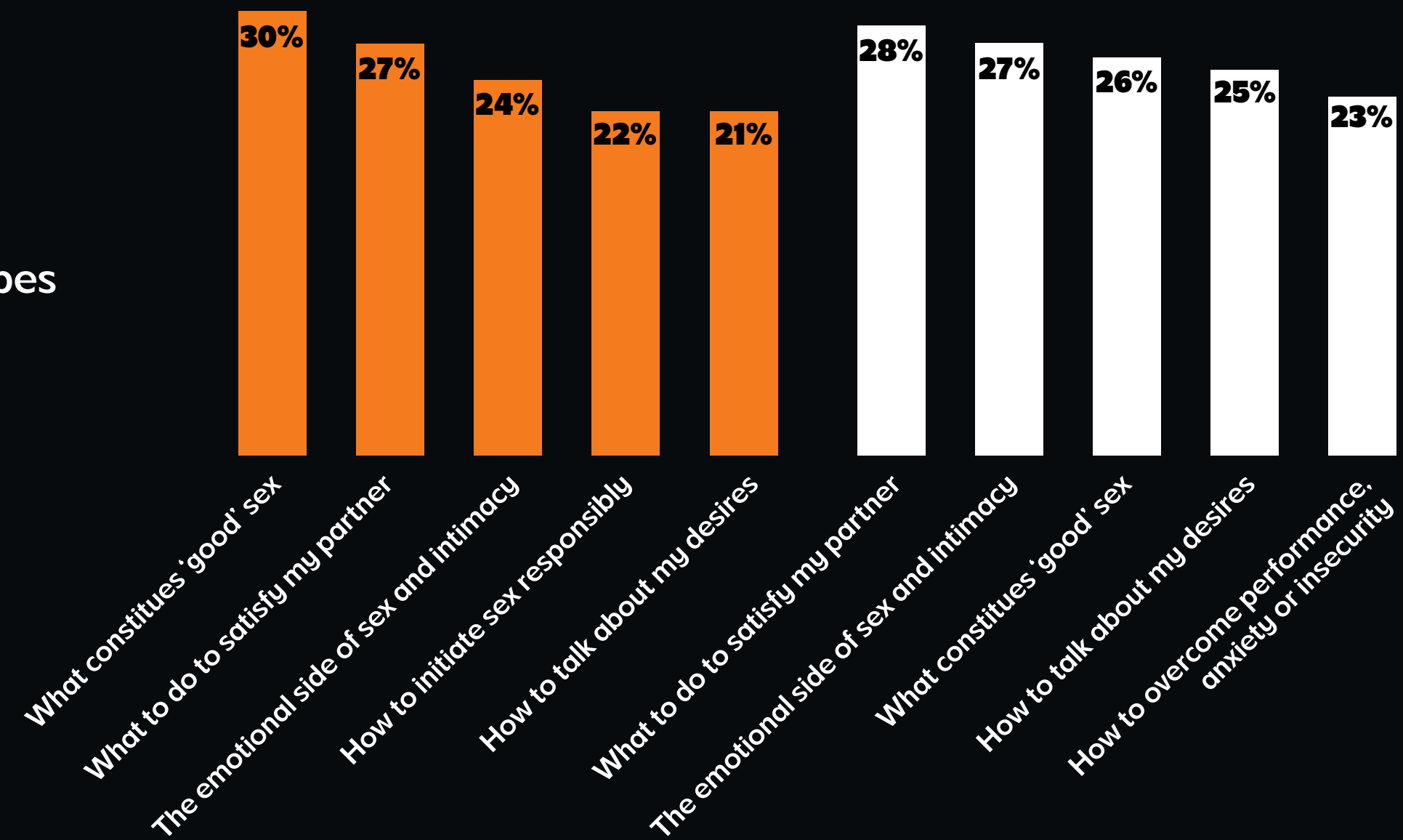
**37%**

Access to a helpline for porn related consumption

**31%**

Greater support for parents to have conversations with teenagers about porn

## WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT SEX? (TOP 5)

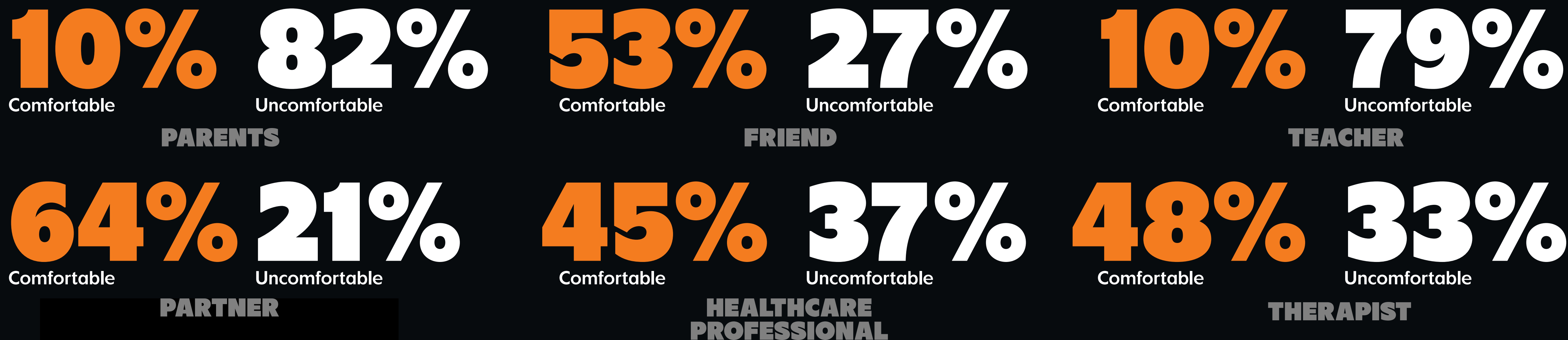



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# GEN Z AREN'T COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT PORN WITH PARENTS OR TEACHERS

This report has highlighted how Gen Z are looking for more resources to have honest conversations regarding porn and sex with them feeling most comfortable talking to their partners or friends as, opposed to teachers or their parents. It raises an important question on how to deliver insightful sex education for young people, if they are not currently comfortable talking about this topic with those currently in positions of authority or academic education.

HOW COMFORTABLE/UNCOMFORTABLE GEN Z WOULD FEEL TALKING ABOUT PORN WITH



 Sig. Higher tested to 95%

## SECTION 5: WHAT *next*

Our findings have shown that porn is the main educator of sex for young people in the UK, shaping expectations of what is 'normal' and setting unrealistic standards around bodies, sex and relationships. But Gen Z themselves are calling for better. They want better sex education, more realistic porn, safe spaces to ask questions and resources that genuinely support them in navigating porn, sex and relationships.

Porn will continue to play a role in young people's education and enjoyment, but it is important that other resources and education is available and it isn't the only voice in the room. The next step is ensuring that the responsibility doesn't fall on young people alone and we provide the tools and environments they need to help build healthier, more informed and more confident relationships.

# CALL TO ACTION

This report has explored Gen Z's relationship with porn, revealing it as a complex and multifaceted issue. Our findings point to two key areas where improvements could be made to better support young people in navigating sex and relationships - these recommendations are backed by all charity partners involved in this campaign.

## 1. EDUCATION / INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

### IMPROVE ACCESS TO SEX EDUCATION THAT IS DELIVERED BY LEADING SPECIALISTS

#### Key insights

**61% OF GEN Z WANT BETTER SEX EDUCATION FROM AGES 16-18**

**79% OF GEN Z WOULD BE UNCOMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT PORN WITH THEIR TEACHER**

## ACTION

- Mandate age-appropriate sex (and relationships) education that is delivered by specialists and not teachers
- Offer better digital resources to get better information about sex, relationships or support.

## KEY THEMES TO COVER

- **Porn literacy:** teach how porn inaccurately portrays consent, bodies, and expectations
- **Media literacy (with a gendered lens):** To partner with community partners with a track-record in educating around masculinity and femininity, emotional literacy, and digital citizenship as digital experiences are so gendered
- **Communication & consent skills:** What healthy, pleasure focused, sexual communication looks like in real life. Helping young people with communication skills that remove the fear surrounding conversations about consent and reframes around learning about things like boundaries and desires.

# CALL TO ACTION

## 2. GREATER SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

### PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE HELP FOR THOSE STRUGGLING WITH PORN'S EFFECTS

Key insights

**77% OF GEN Z WANT MORE RESOURCES TO HELP NAVIGATE PORN AND SEX**

## ACTION

- Create a task force that can organise free, accessible resources for young people (similar to mental health services) such as...
- A national helpline or online hub for questions about porn and relationships
- Youth friendly information & advice services for porn addiction
- Grants for NGOs who have respected credentials in this space like Fumble, Pivotal or Movember to create ongoing digital literacy campaigns

# COMMENTARY

This report has explored Gen Z's relationship with porn, revealing it as a complex and multifaceted issue. Our findings point to two key areas where improvements could be made to better support young people in navigating sex and relationships – these recommendations are backed by all charity partners involved in this campaign.



**Dr Krista Fisher, Research Fellow, Movember** said,

*Guilt and shame can weigh heavily on young men when it comes to porn use. Watching porn doesn't exist in isolation – it's bound up with the drivers and challenges young men navigate before, during and after they watch it. These can include enjoyment, pleasure, connection and more troubling issues like psychological distress, body image concerns, and loneliness. What we're likely seeing is a two-way relationship: underlying challenges in men's lives shape their relationship with porn, while the shame that surrounds watching it only makes those challenges worse.*



**Lucy Whitehouse, Chief Executive Officer, Fumble**

*comments, Porn can be a fun way for people to explore their sexuality, but it can become a problem when mainstream porn (typically free videos showing more hardcore and violent content) forms an idea of what real-life sexual intimacy should look like. This is what we need to address – we need to speak about what's real, and what isn't – and we need to support young people as they explore their sexuality safely.*



**Dr Paula Hall, Clinical Director, Pivotal Recovery**

*added, At Pivotal we see firsthand the devastation porn can have on young people's lives and findings from this study clearly demonstrate that a significant number of them are worried about their porn use and want help navigating it. With more and more people turning to mental health services for pornography related difficulties, now's the time for the Government to step in and invest in resources to tackle this emerging public health concern.*

**THANK YOU**

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