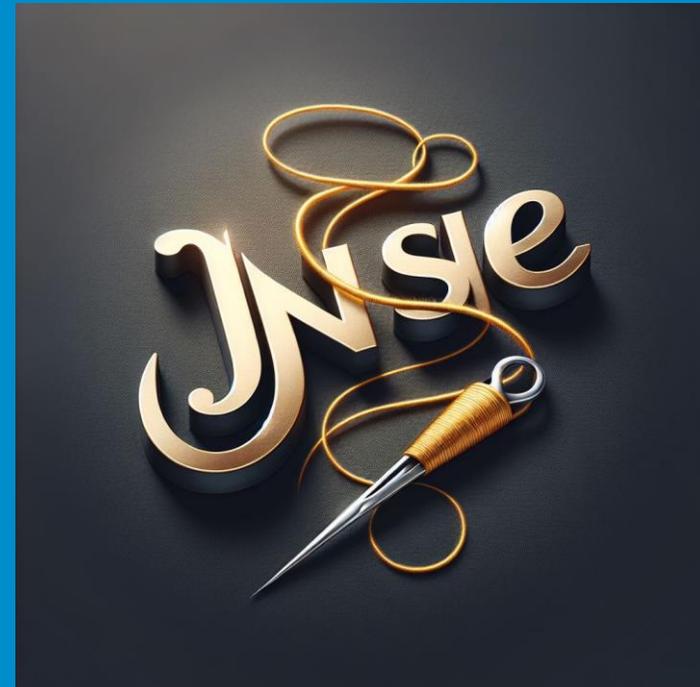


IRL – A New Approach to Sexting

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JN-SIE



Session Aims

- Explore a definition of sexting
- Explore the theory of motivational determinants
- Examine sexting incidence by:
 - Age & Sexual Orientation,
 - Ethnicity, Nationality & Faith,
 - Within different educational provision.
- Identify a typology model that moves beyond 'content' to address 'motivation'
- Consider the role of the school safeguarding and boarding teams

Hard to hear & hard to talk about the subject without being explicit

Peter's Story



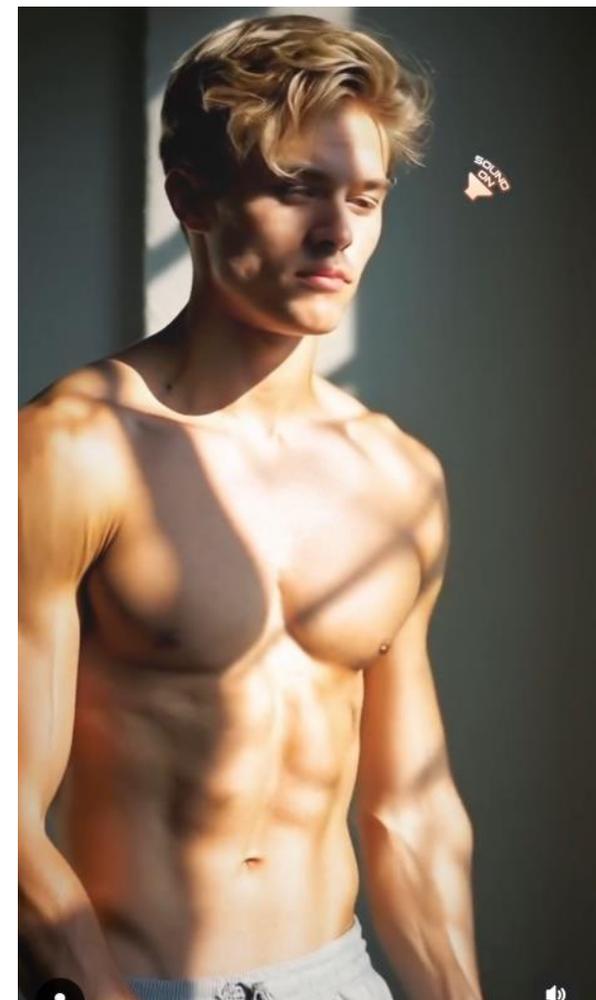
- 14 years old – boarding school
- Drop in attendance, attainment and engagement
- Exploring his sexual identity, met a man on-line
- Raped in a toilet in Covent Garden
 - Ashamed – ‘it was his fault’
 - Embarrassed – because of what had happened
 - Confused - heteronormative curriculum. Sports based culture
- Crisis management rather than early intervention

Sexting – some definitions

- ✓ Passive – recipients of sext
 - ✓ Active – senders of sext
 - ✓ Known or Unknown participants
-
- Self-generated imagery - Nude or Semi-nude pictures
 - Sexual email/text message
 - Sexual voice note
 - Line drawings – Yaoi or Hentai
 - Downloaded images
 - Downloaded porn
 - AI Generated images / Adapted images

AI Generated Imagery

www.instagram.com/aidonismodels/



Dual Paradigm

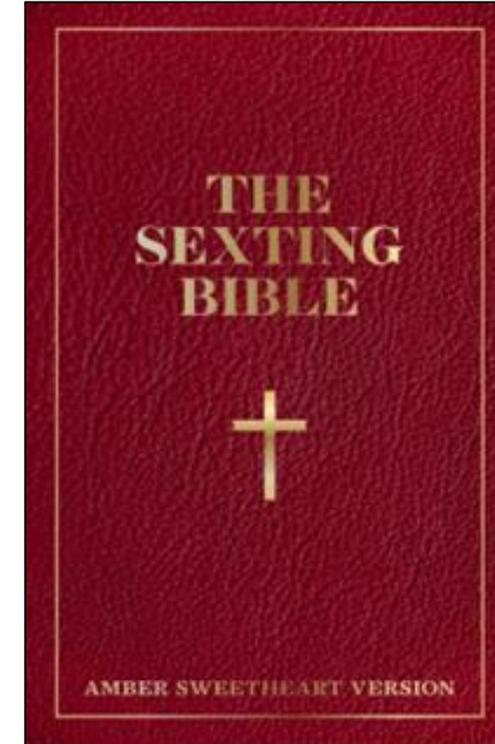
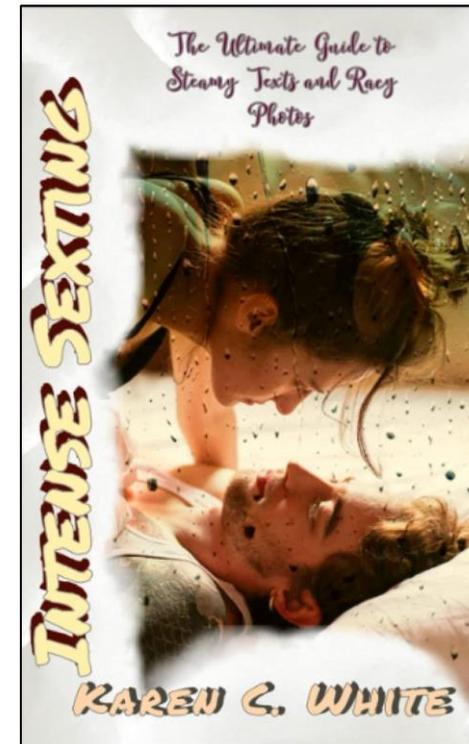
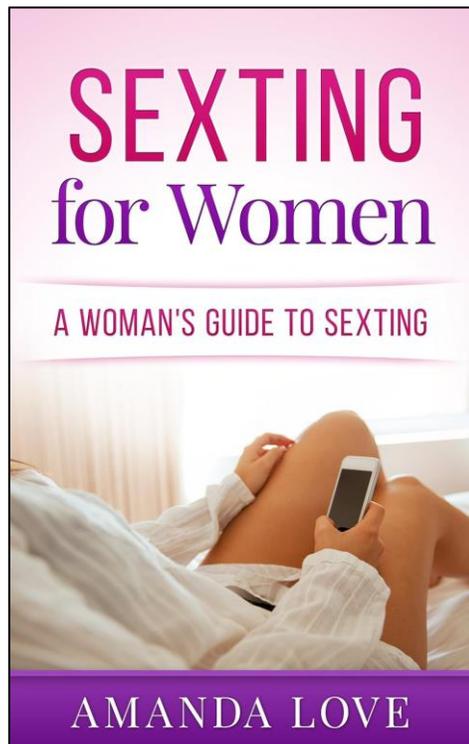
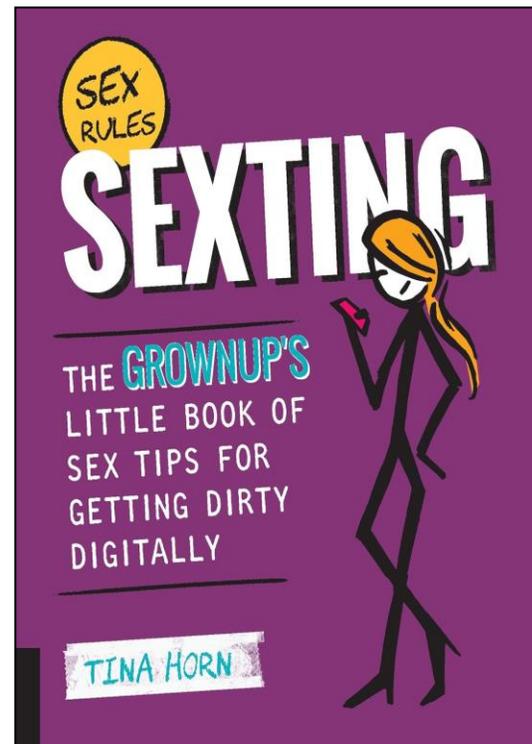
Sociological Stance

- Normative behaviour
- Sexual Agency
- Adolescent Human Right
- Digital Citizenship
- Technology mediated sexual interaction

Safeguarding & Risk

- Aberrant behaviour
- Immature response
- Risk laden
- Long term effect
- Self-generated images of child abuse

Them & Us – a seeming hypocrisy



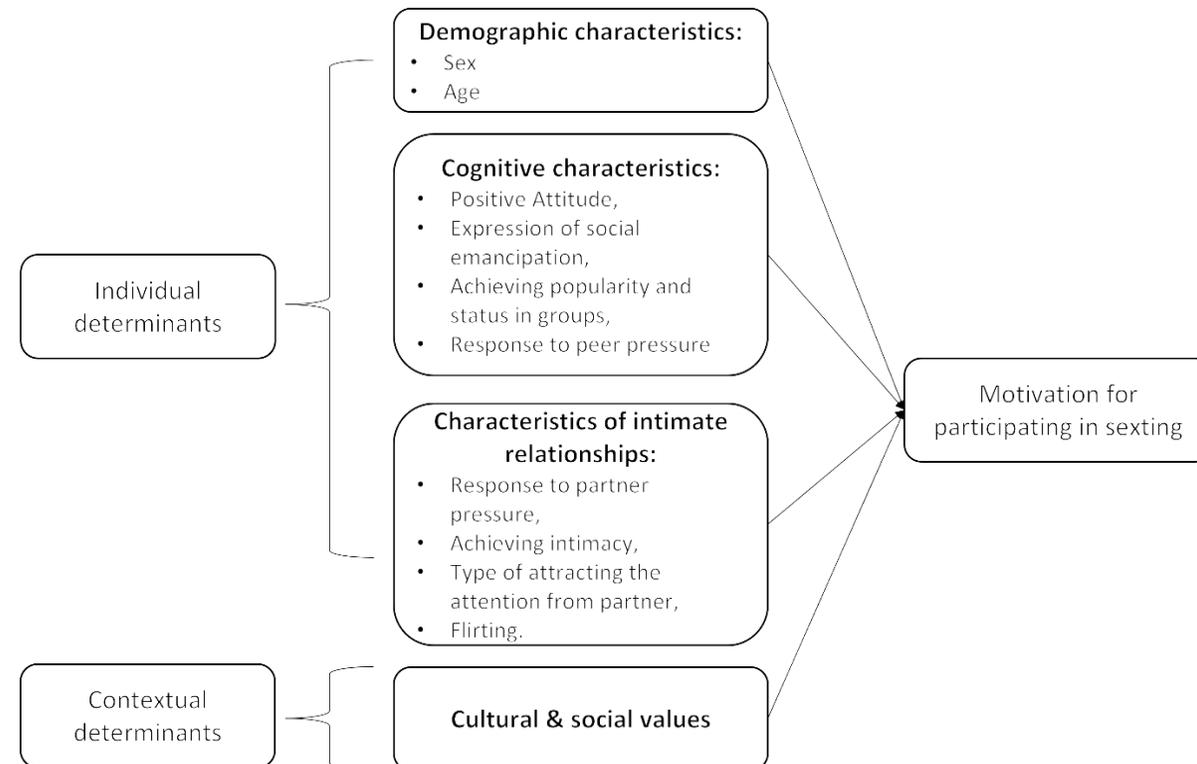
Motivational Determinants

Sesar, Dodaj and Šimić (2019)

Personal attitude (A) towards a behaviour is directly proportionate (\propto) to the expectancy value (Σ) of the participant's salient beliefs (b_i) and the personal evaluation (e_i) of the subjective norms. This model implies that the attitude towards a behaviour is proportionate to the participant's belief structure and evaluation of the normative influences

$$A \propto \sum b_i + e_i$$

(If it feels good – do it)



Sext and the Law

It is important to be aware that people involved in sharing sexual videos and pictures may be committing a criminal offence.

Specifically, crimes involving indecent photographs (including pseudo images) of a person under 18 years of age come under the Protection of Children Act (1978) and Section 160 Criminal Justice Act (1988) & the proposed Police & Crime Bill (2025)

Under this legislation it is a crime to:

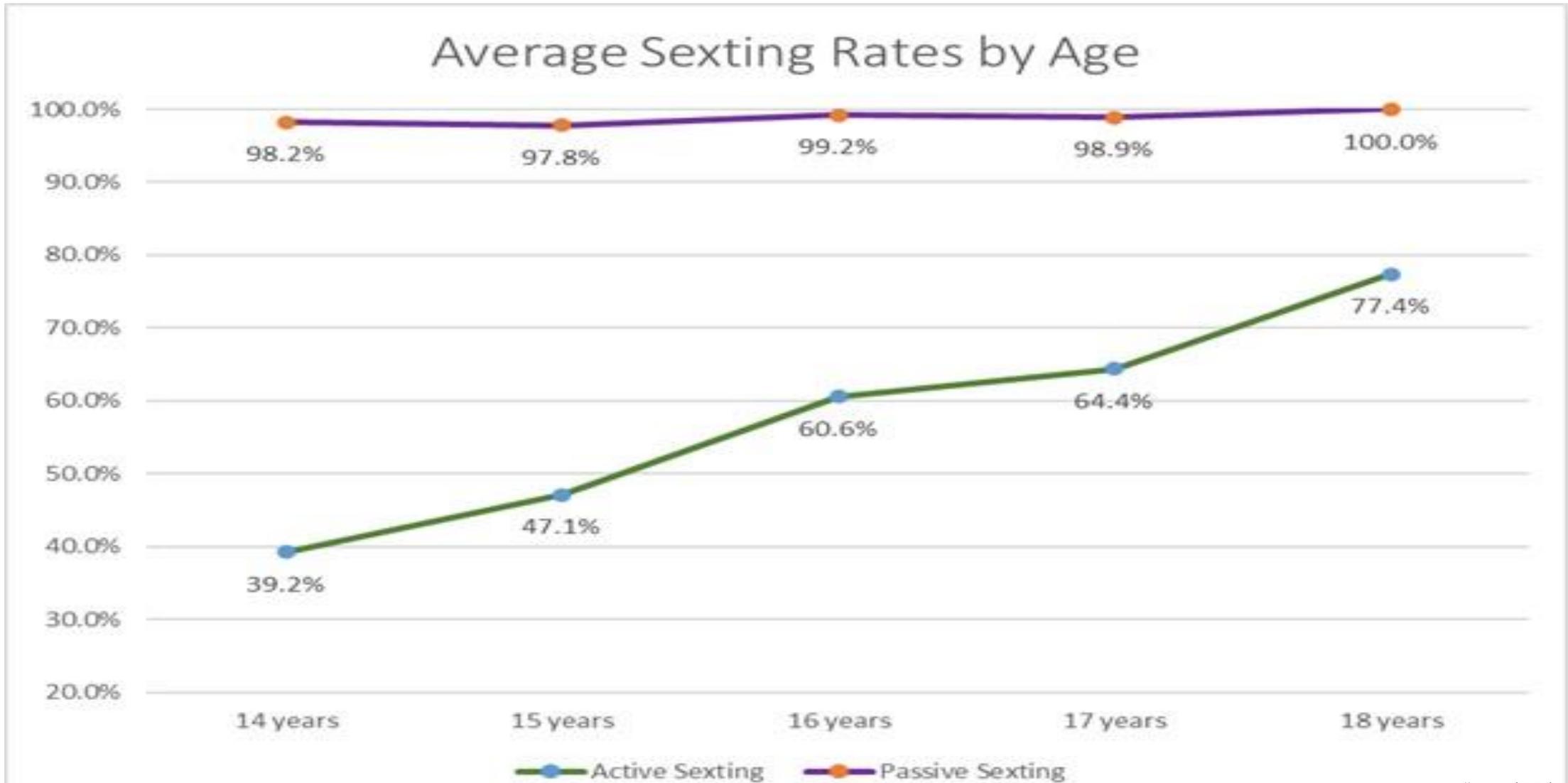
- take an indecent photograph or allow an indecent photograph to be taken;
- Make/create an indecent photograph (this includes downloading or opening an image that has been sent via email);
- possess with the intention to distribute or show such an image;
- Disclose without consent so as to cause distress (revenge porn >18 years only).
- *N.B. – the Police & Crime Bill is potentially introducing a clause for consensual 13-18 sexting.*

Sexual or Indecent?

'Indecent' isn't defined in legislation. When cases are prosecuted the indecency of a photograph or film is decided by the court.

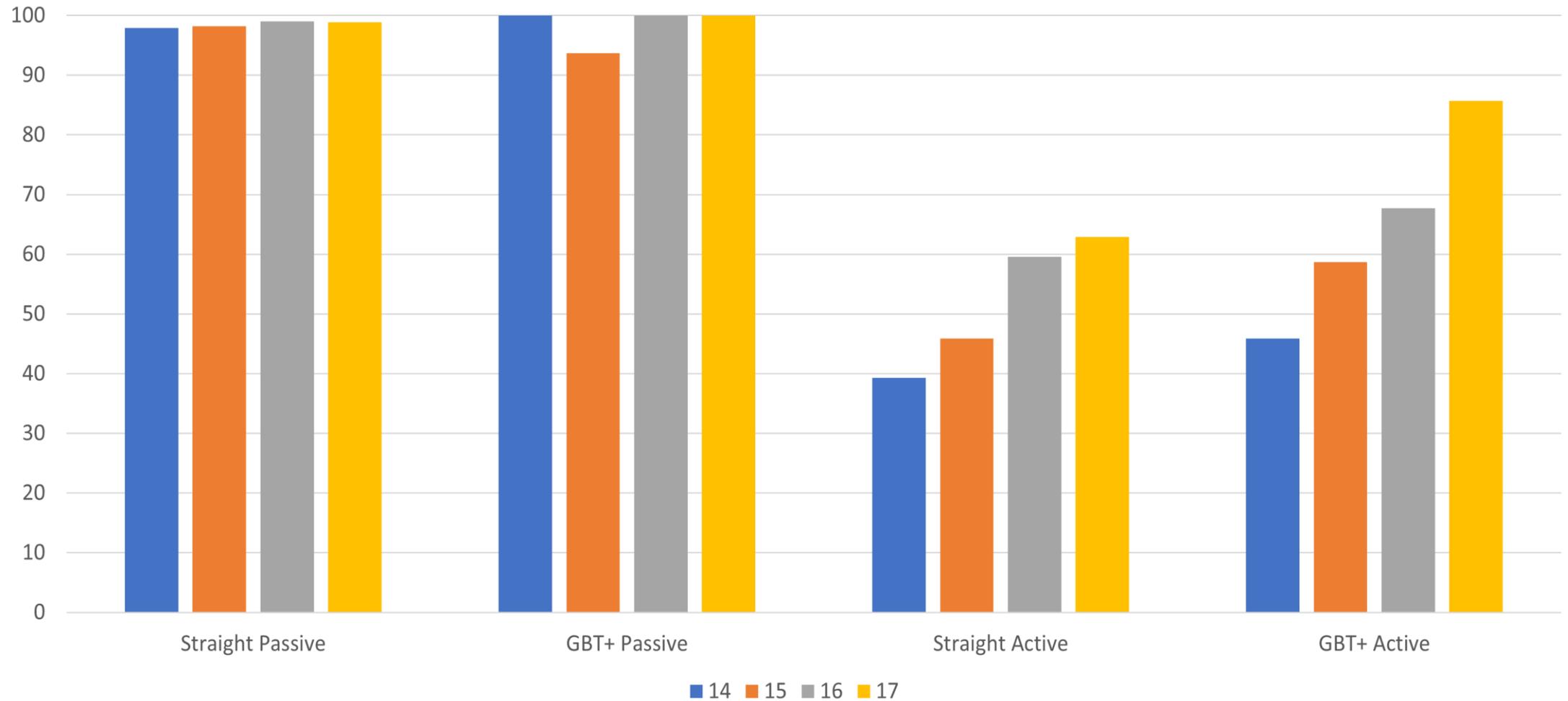
- Judgment is based on a recognised standard of propriety.
- In most cases if imagery contains a naked young person, topless girl, displays of genitals, sex acts or masturbation it will be deemed indecent.
- Indecent may also include overtly sexual images of young people in their underwear.

Profile: Age



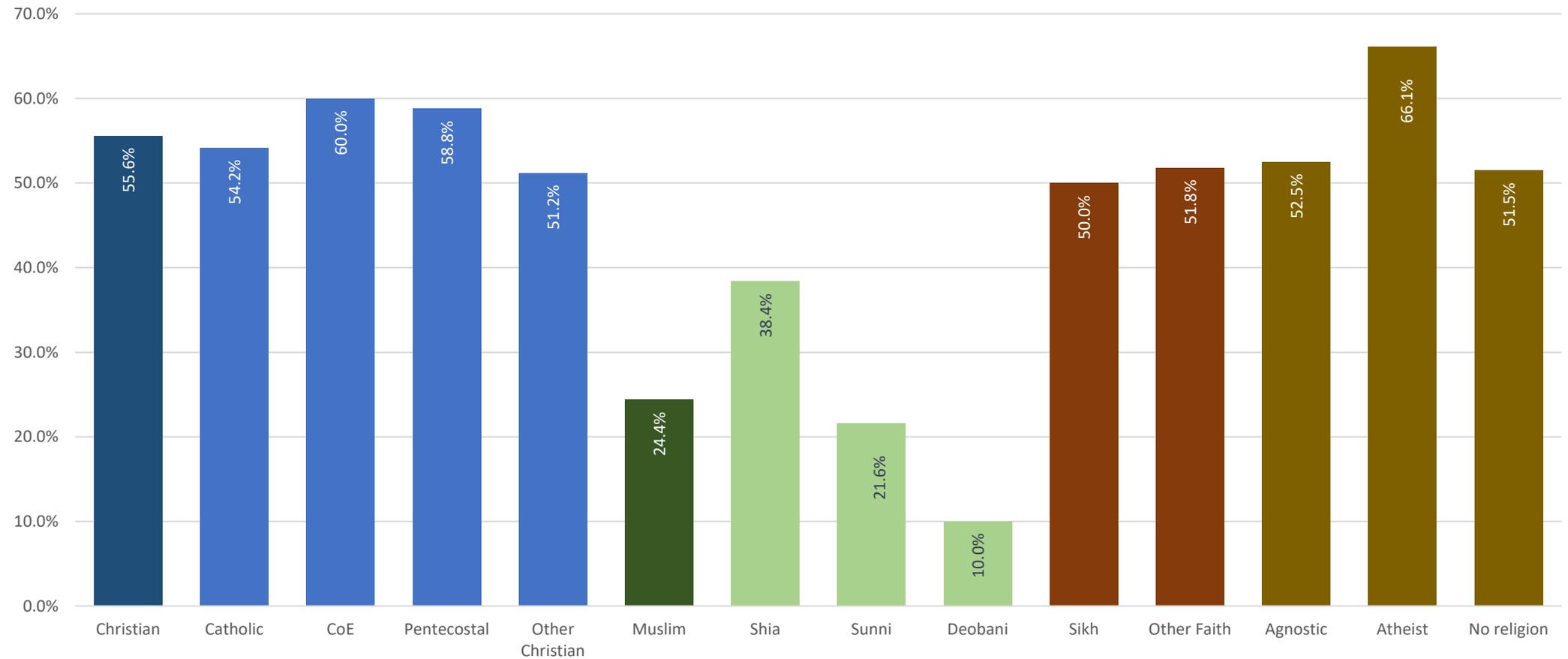
Profile: Orientation

Active & Passive Sexting rates by Sexual Orientation

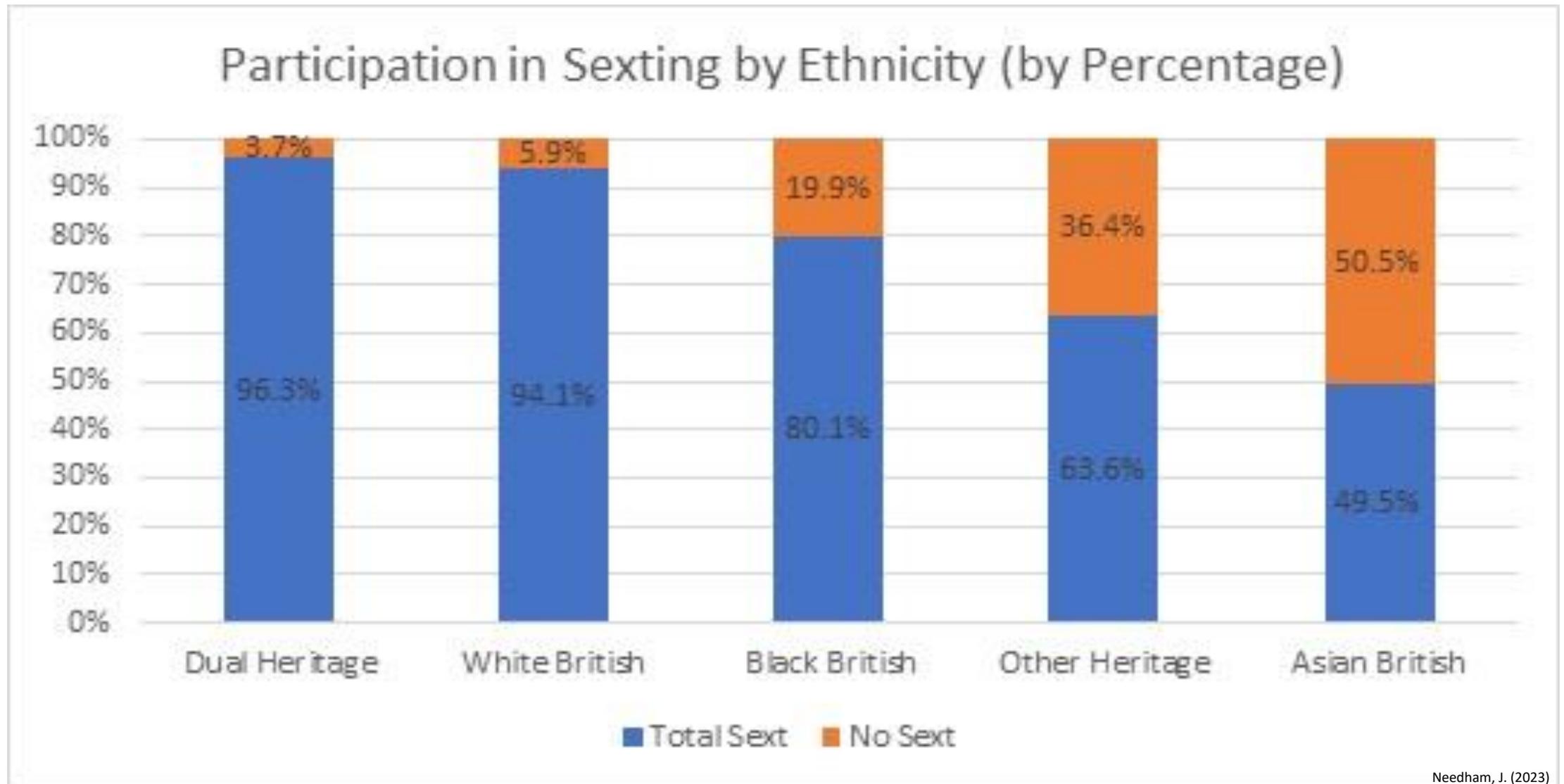


Profile: Faith

Active Sexting by Faith

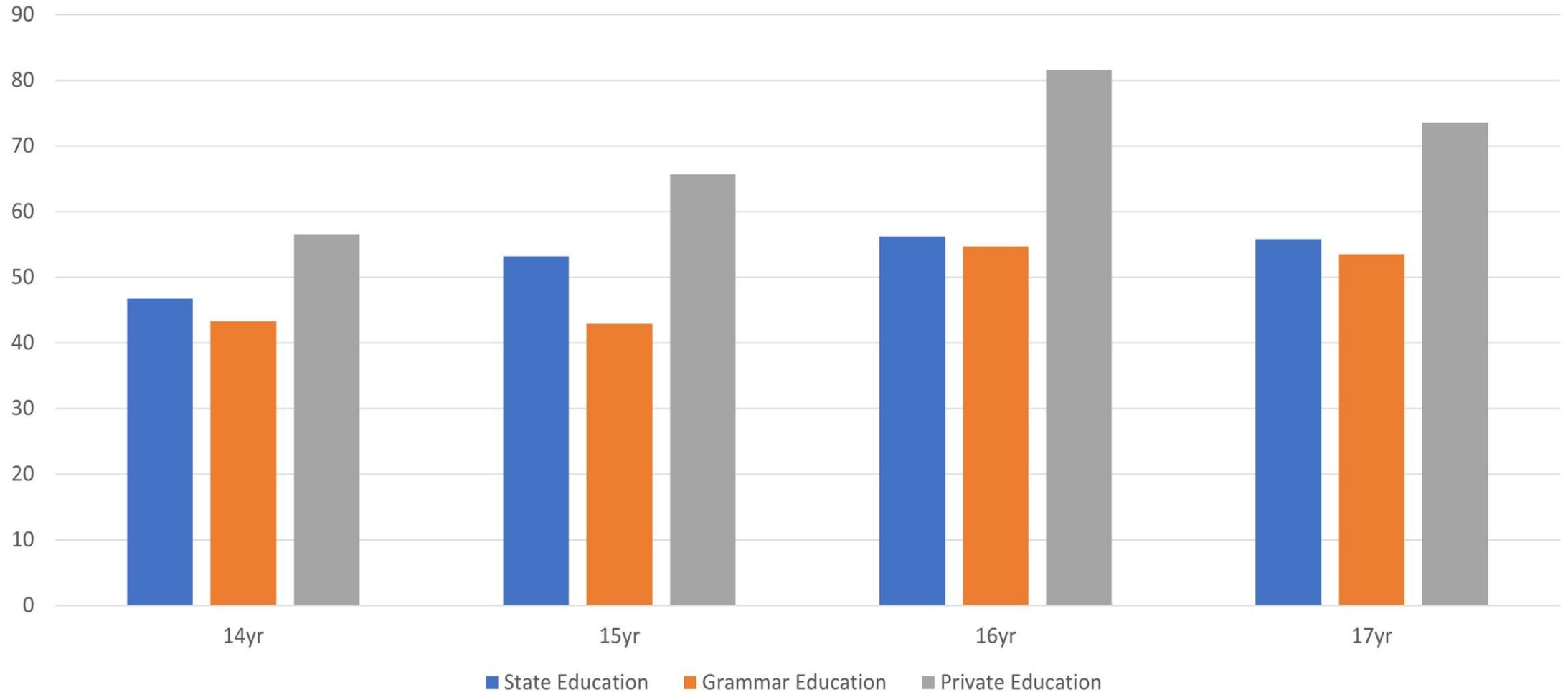


Profile: Ethnicity



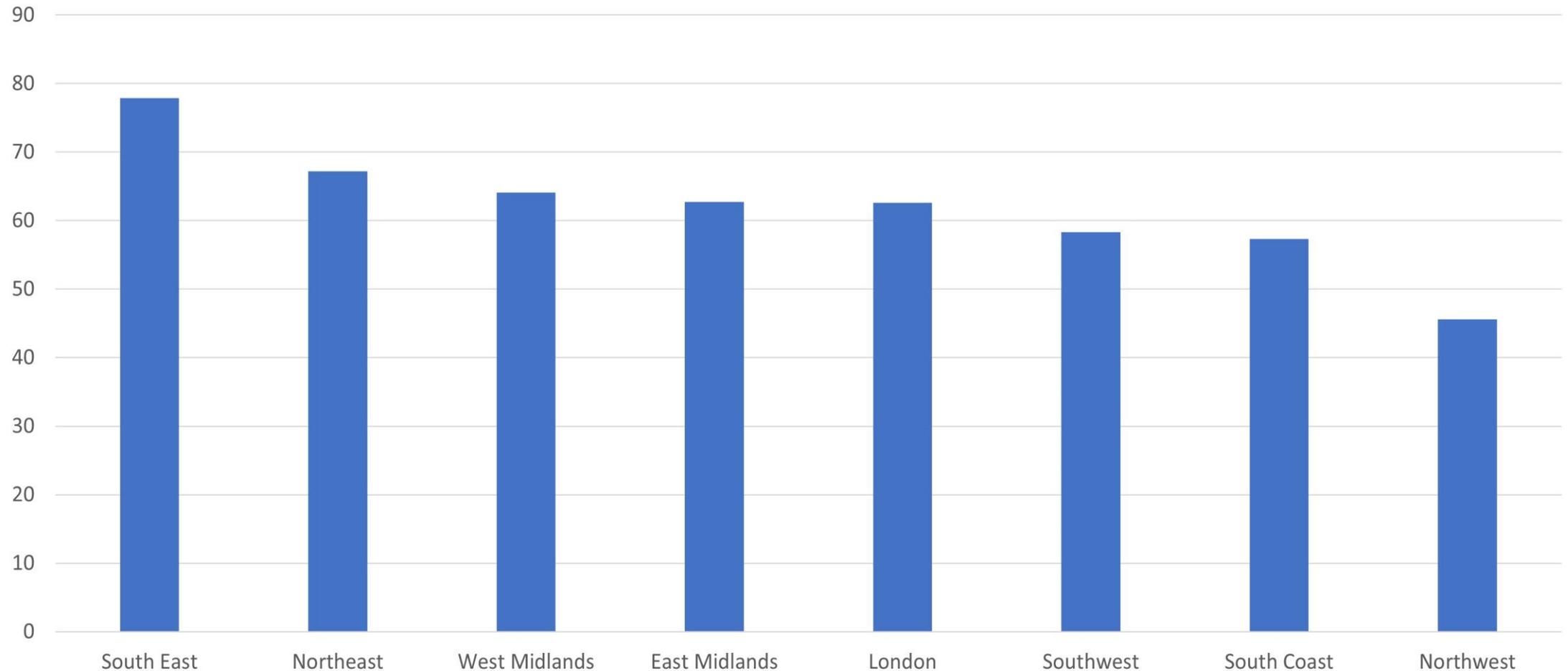
Profile: Setting

Sexting Rates by Education Type

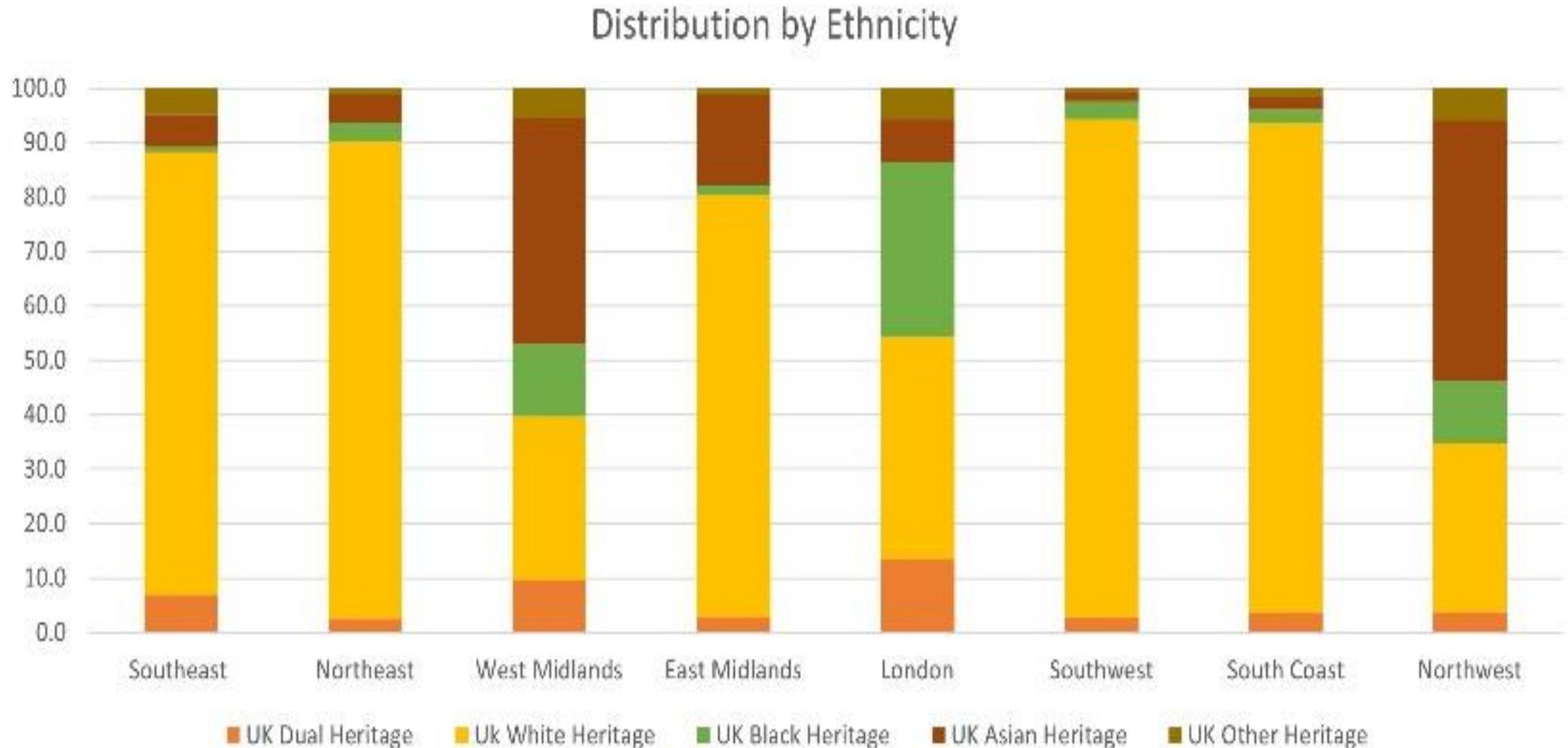


Profile: Region

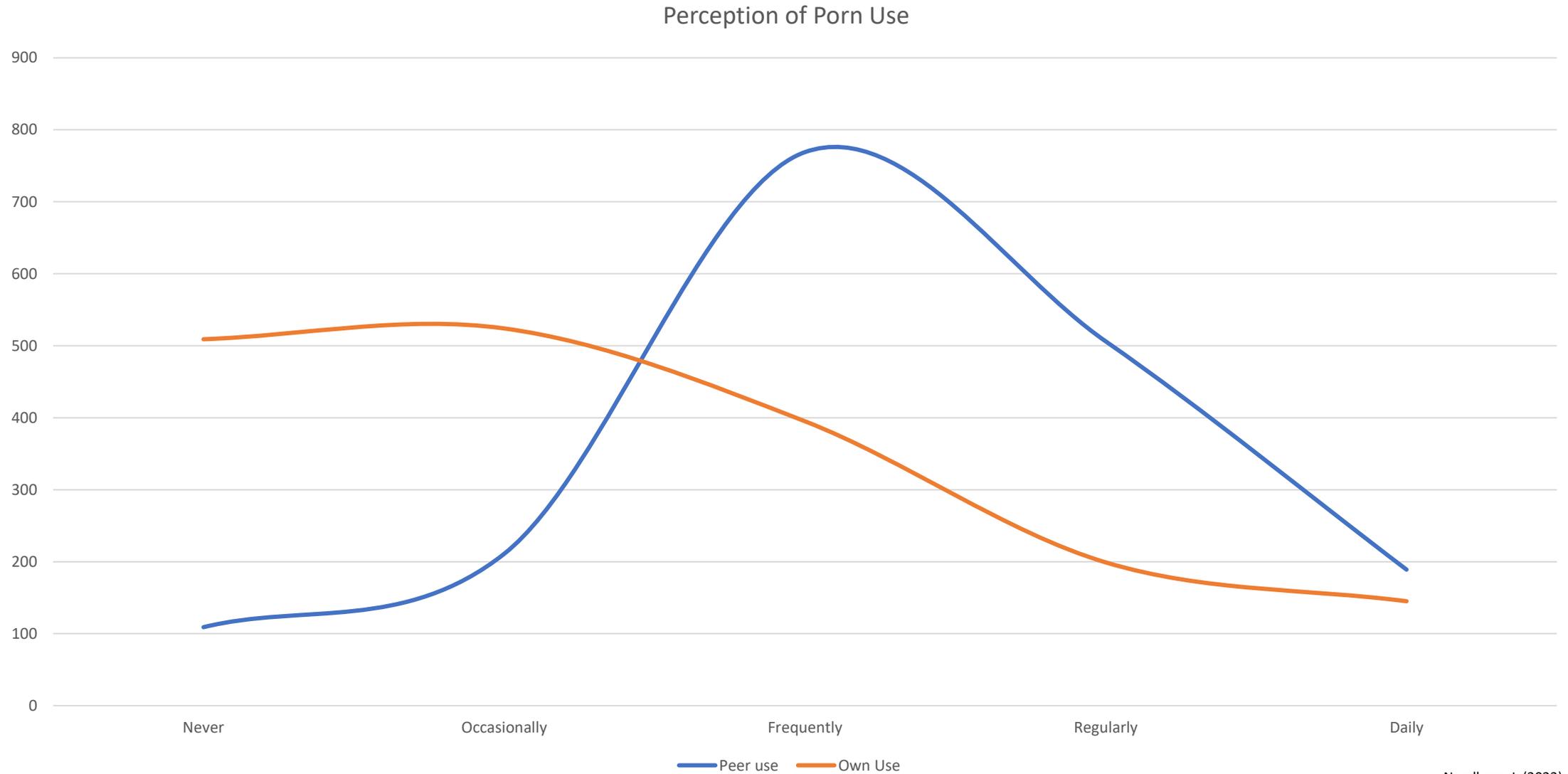
Percentage sexting by Region



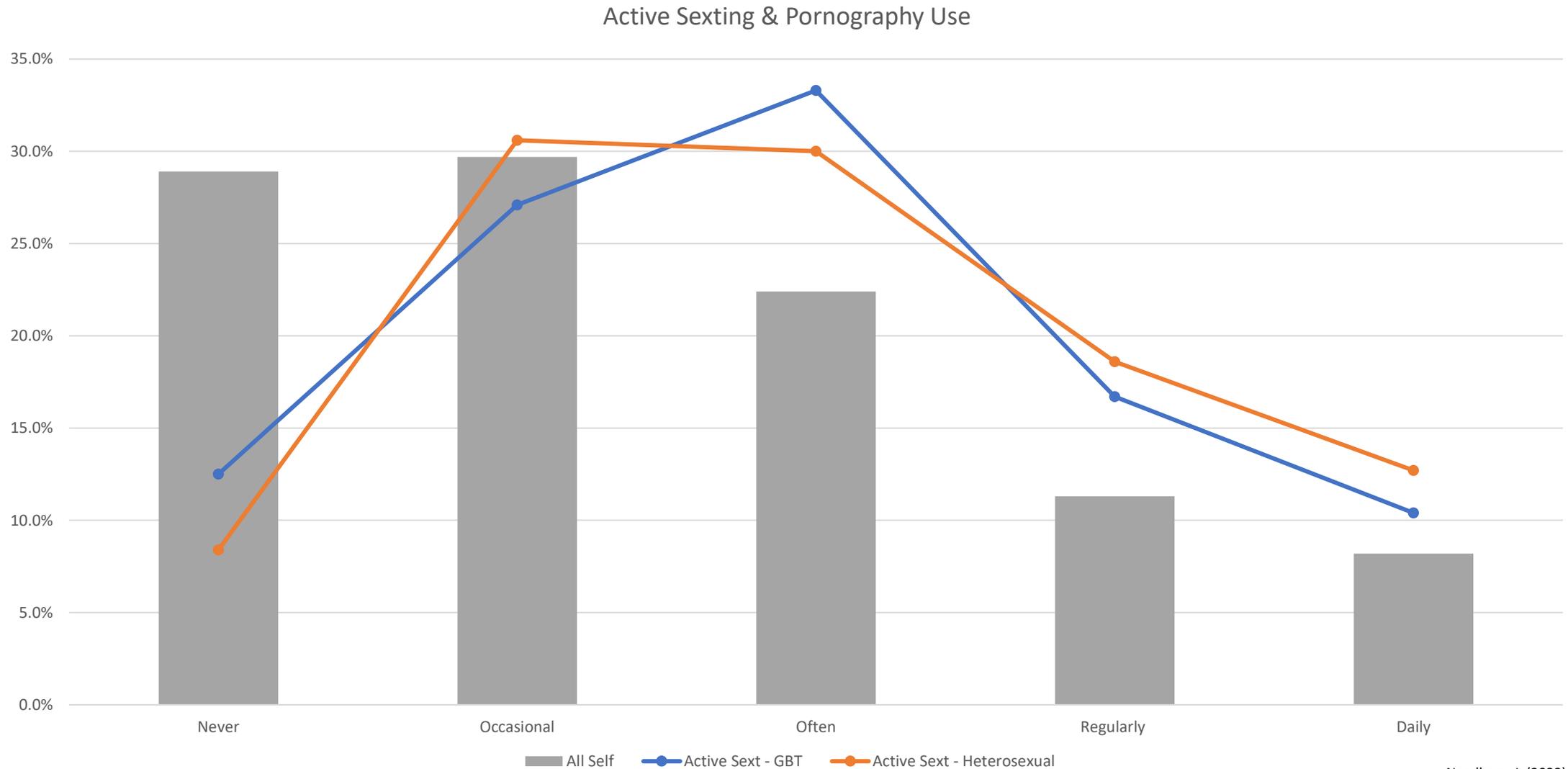
Profile: Region & Ethnicity



Perception of Porn Use

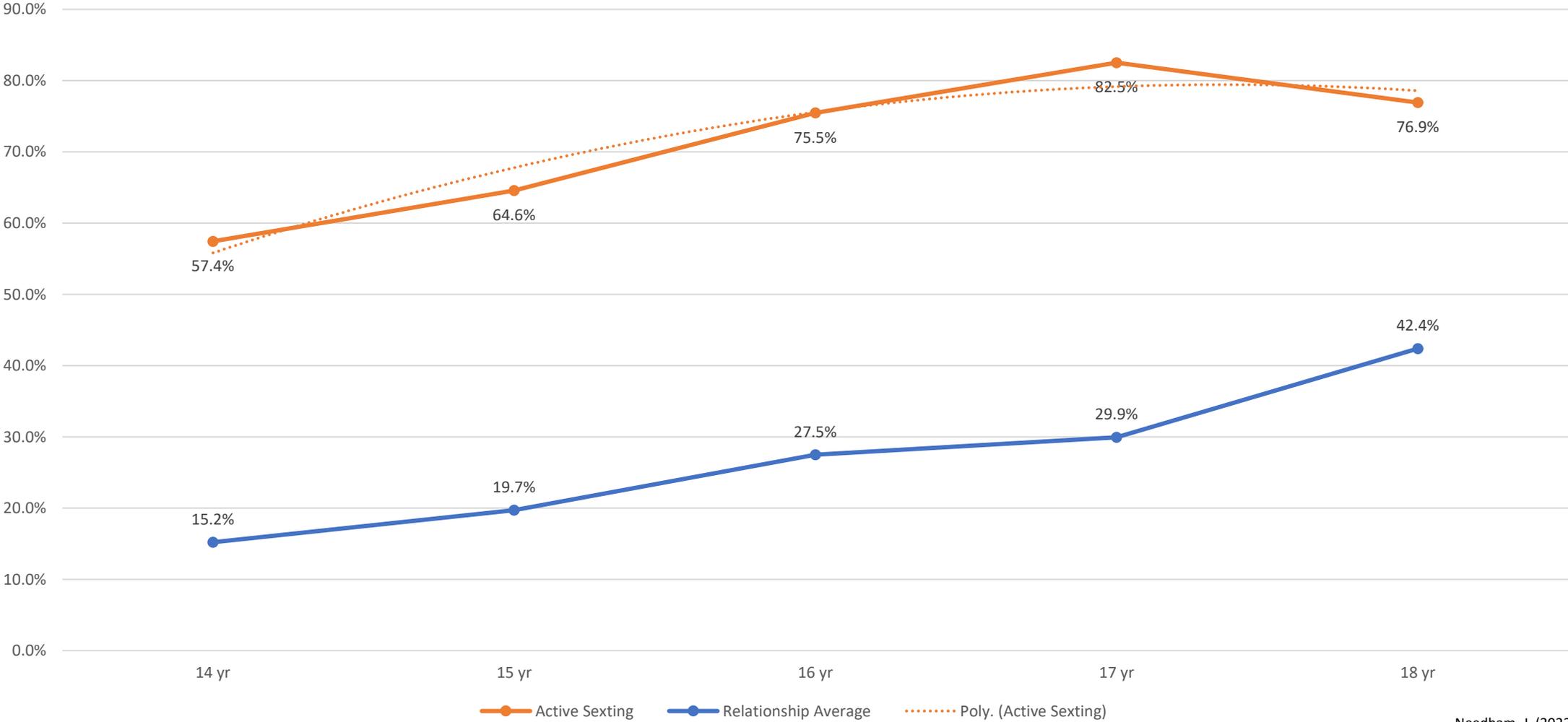


Porn Use & Sexting



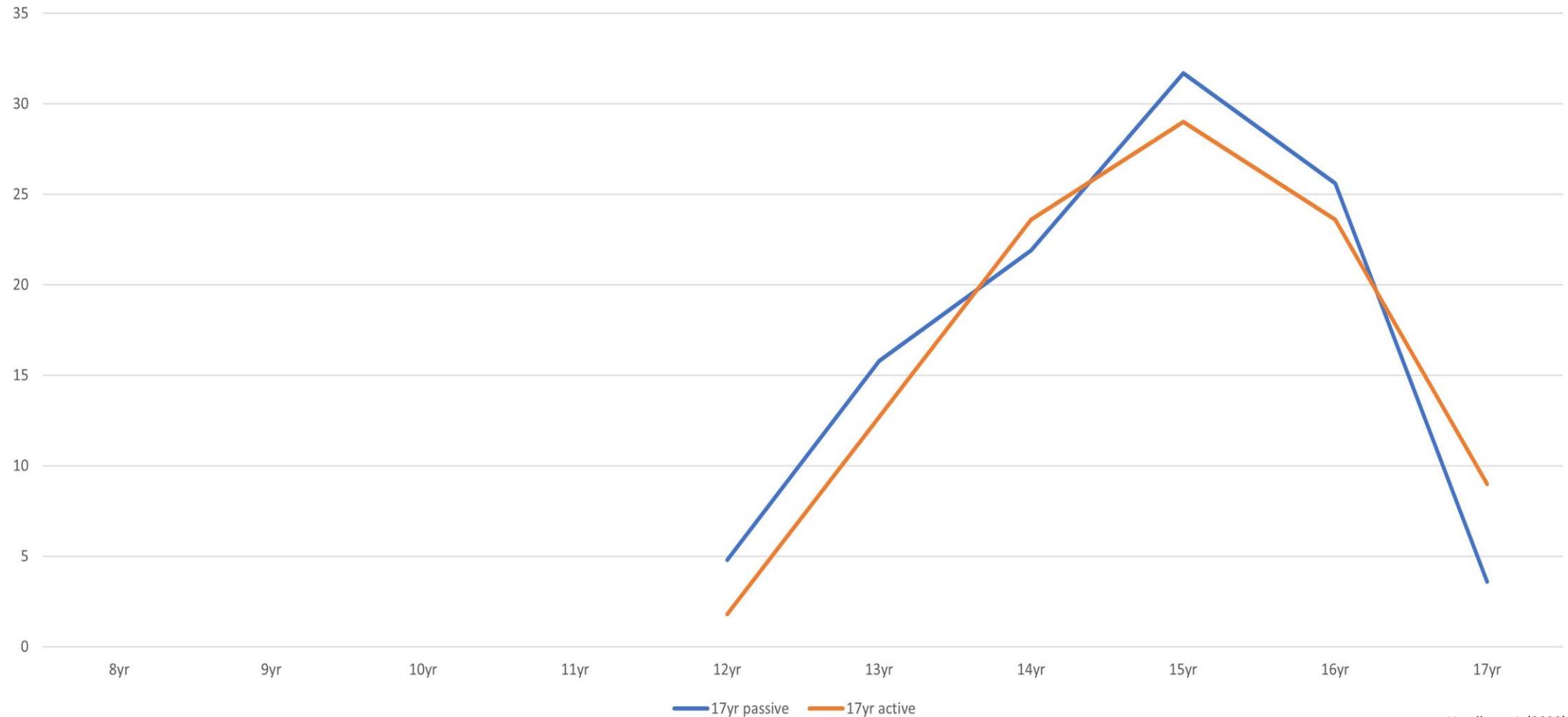
Sexting in Relationships

Active Sexting by Relationship Status



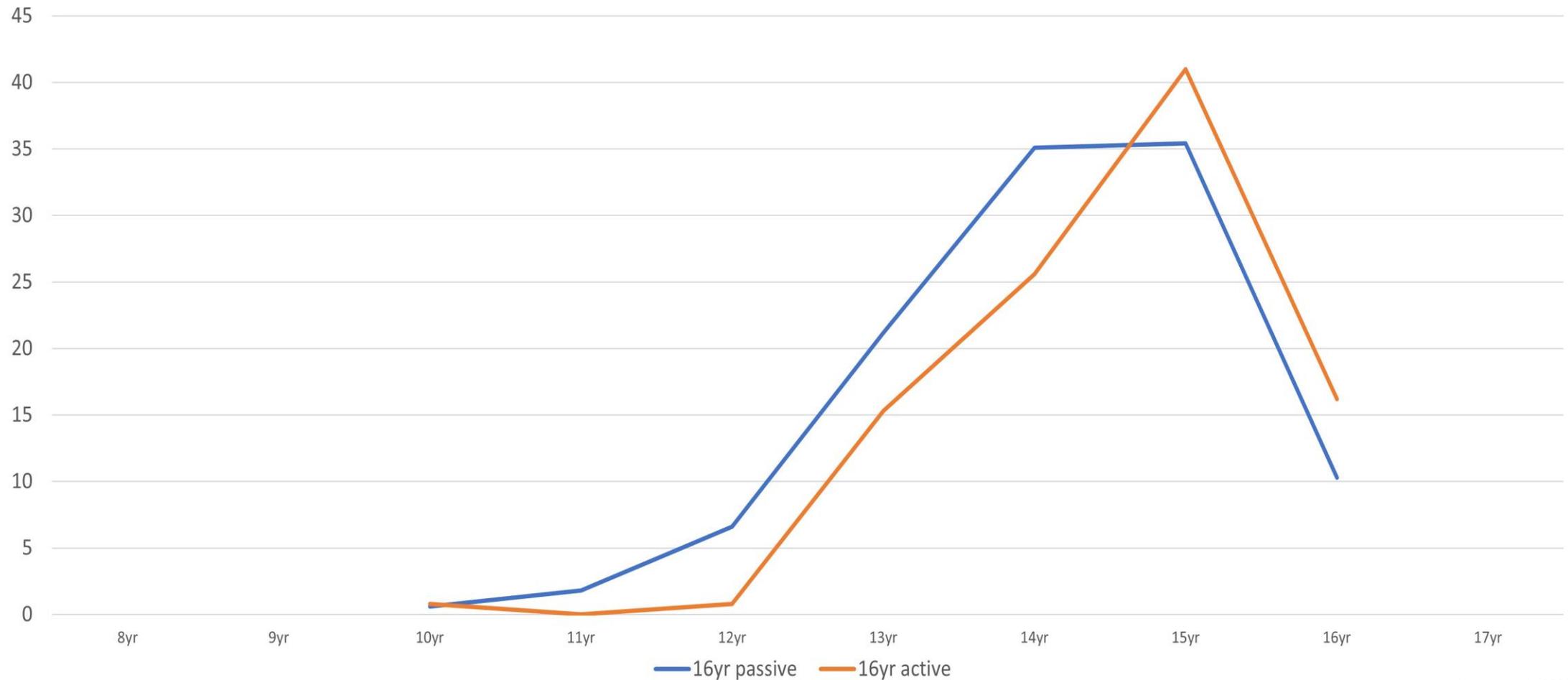
Profile: Initiation -17 yr. old

Initiation into Sexting



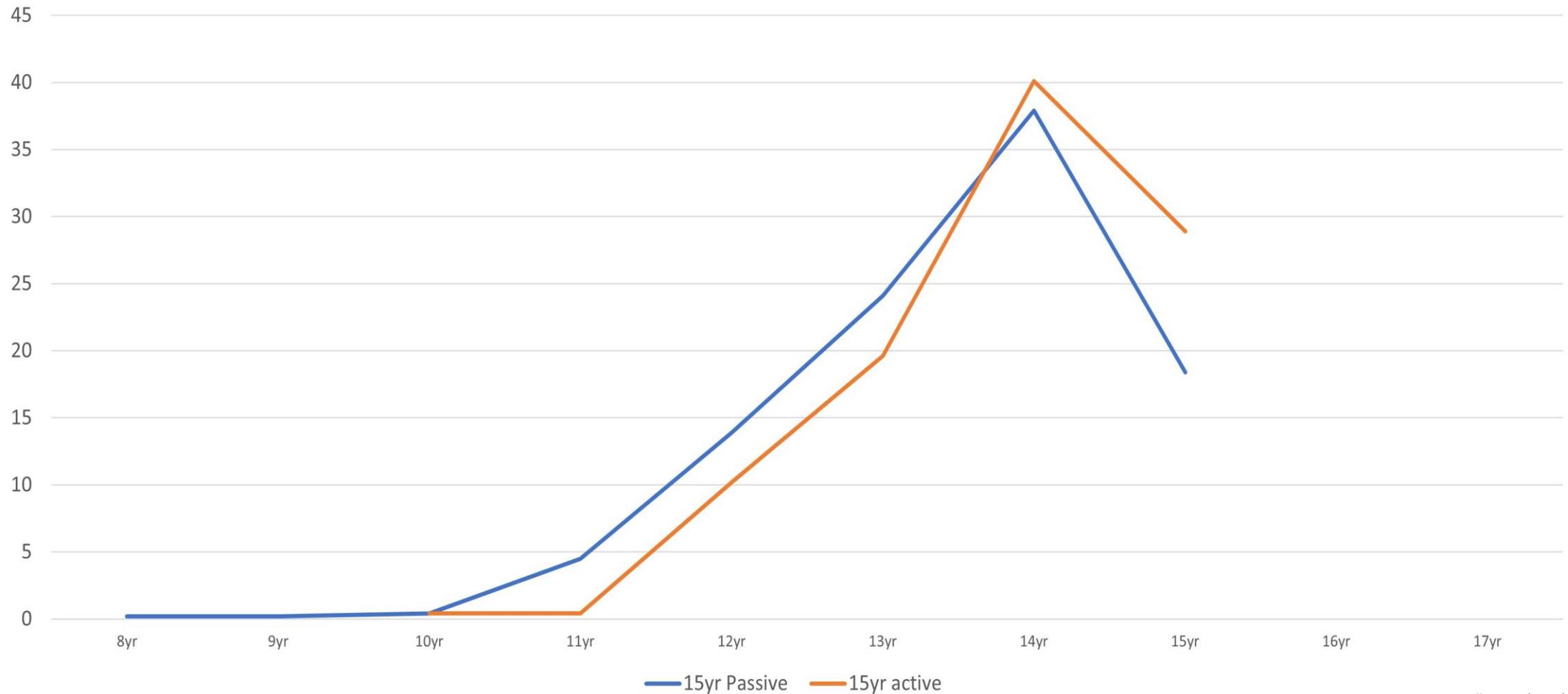
Profile: Initiation -16 yr. old

Initiation into Sexting

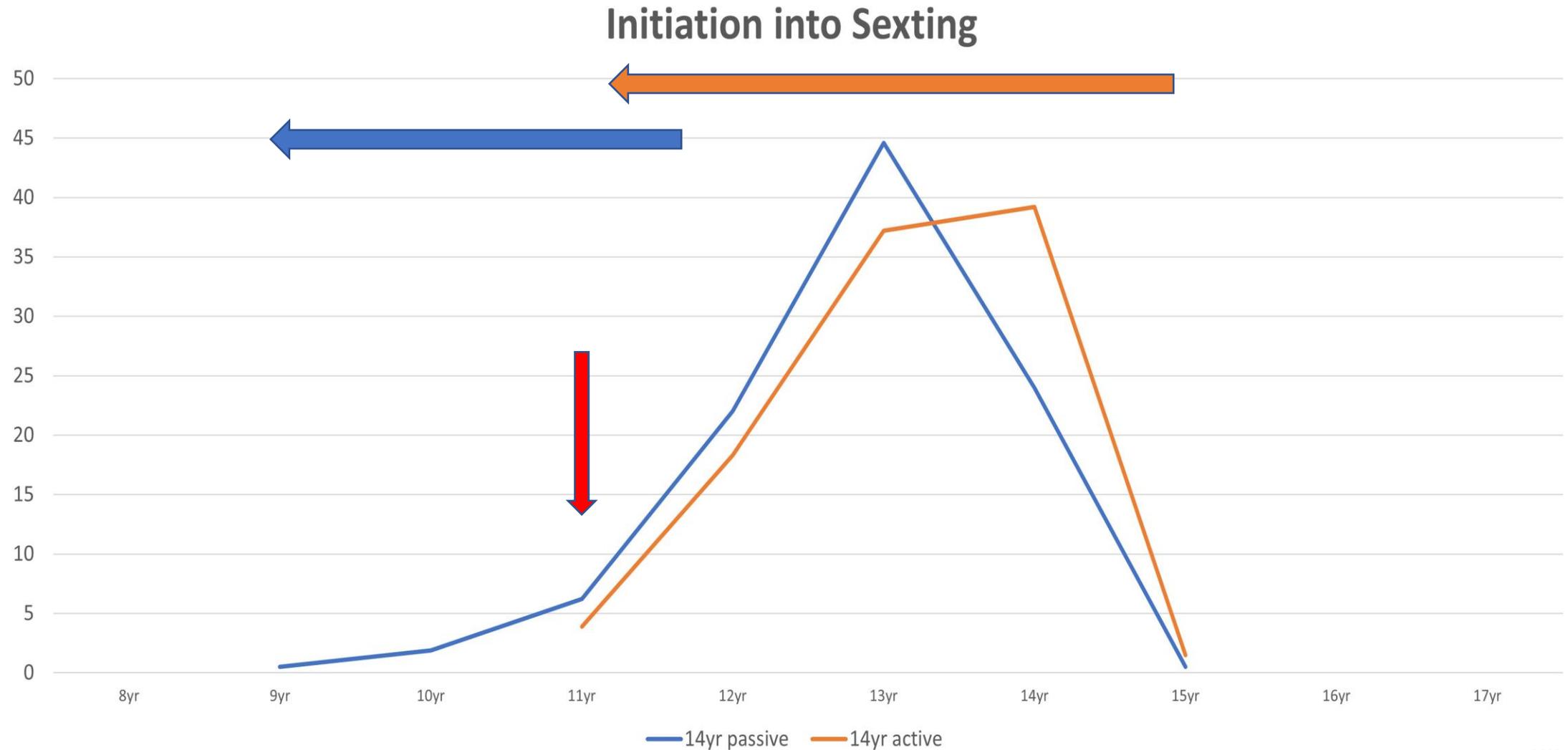


Profile: Initiation – 15 yr. old

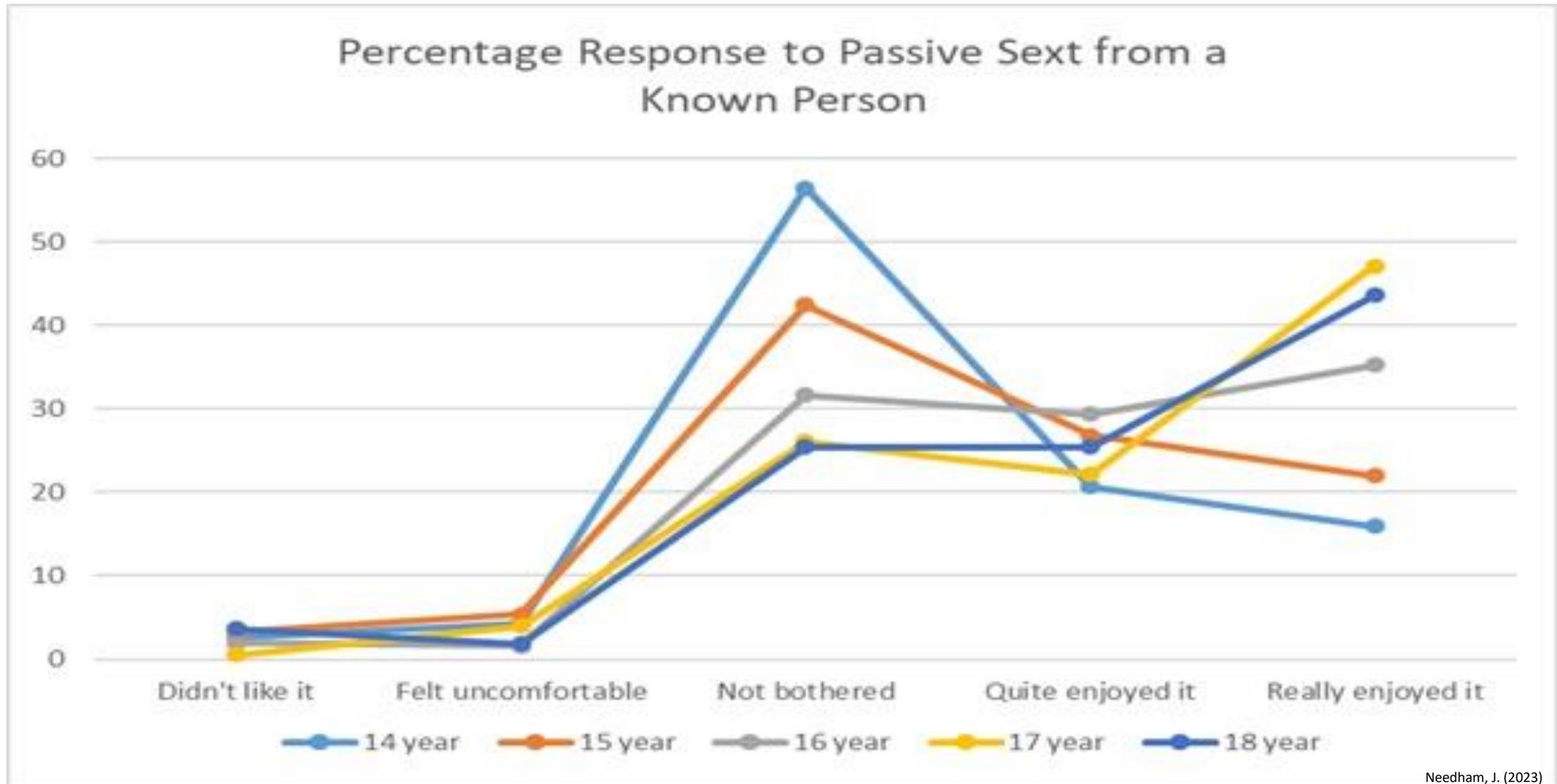
Initiation into Sexting



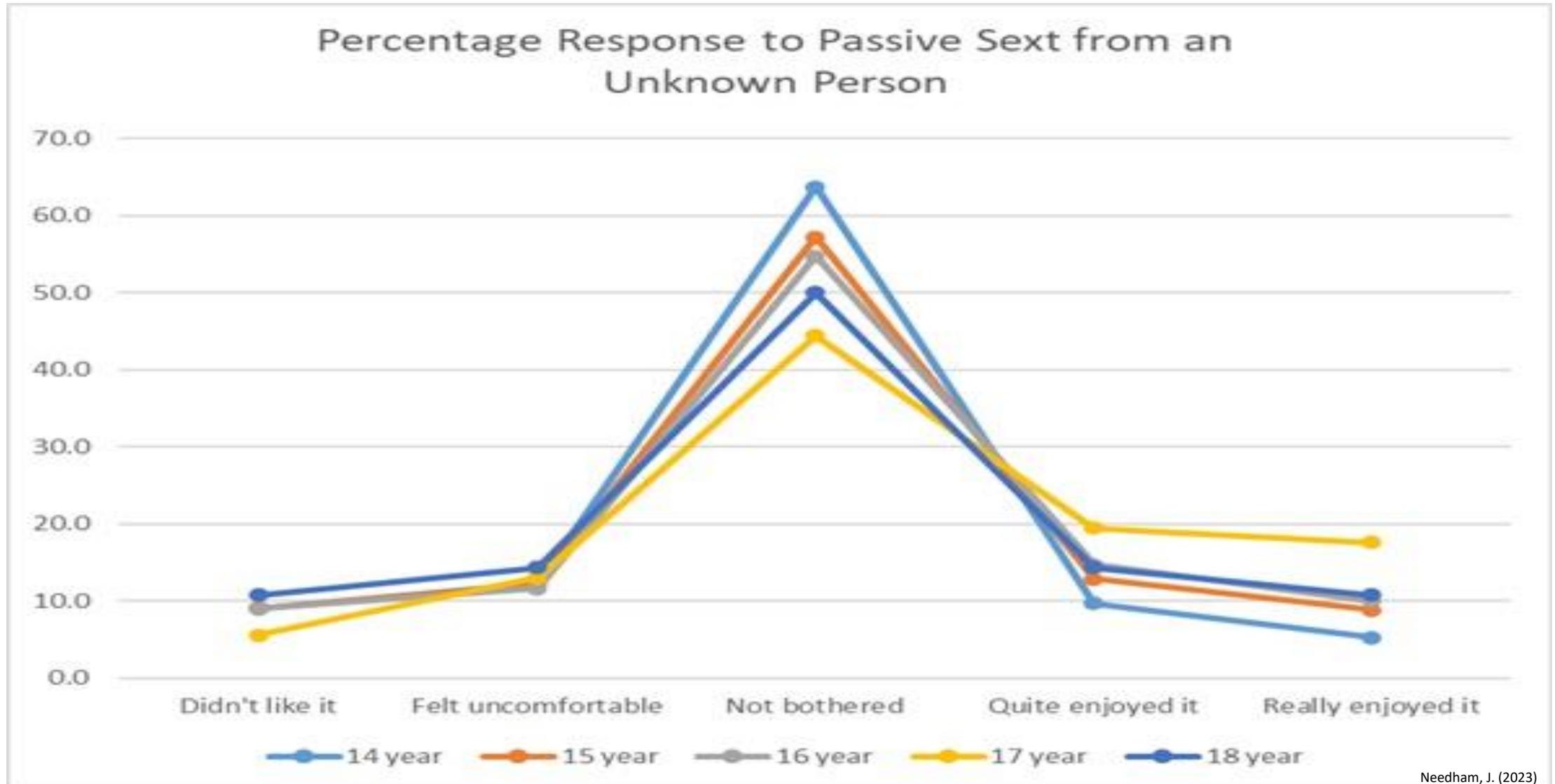
Profile: Initiation – 14 yr. old



Feelings about Receipt - Known



Feelings about Receipt - Unknown



IRL:

- Passive sexting: Almost 100% exposure
- Active sexting: 62.7% average (39.2% - 77.4% range)
- LGBTQ+: Higher incidence
- Independent Education: Higher incidence (11.8% - 13.5% higher in boarding)
- International: UK:  sexting,  porn, Europe:  sexting  porn
- Faith: No discernible influence other than Islam
- Ethnicity: Similar pattern across ethnic groups other than South Asian
- Porn: Higher incidence linked to porn use
- Relationships: Sexting now a normalised activity
- Effect: Majority are not bothered by it

Step 1 – Who should deal with the incident?

- Initial disclosure may be to Staff, volunteer or peer.
 - Safeguarding Policy must be followed
 - Initial concern completed and reported immediately
- All disclosures must be passed on to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
 - Clear record the incident should be made
- Senior Leadership should be informed
 - There may be instances where the image needs to be viewed and this should be done in accordance with protocols.
- Police should be informed of illegal activity

Step 2 - Disclosure by a teenager

Is the teenager disclosing about themselves receiving an image, sending an image or sharing an image?

- Is there an immediate risk to a young person or young people?
- Should a referral be made to the Police and/or Children's Social Care?
- Is it a school device or a personal device?
- How widely has the image been shared and is the device in their possession?
- Do they know where the image has ended up?
- Is there a need to contact other settings

Step 3 – Risk assessment

The DSL role:

- Why was the image shared – was their coercion or blackmail?
- Who has shared the imagery?
- Where has the image been shared?
- Were any adults involved in the sharing of the image?
- What is the impact on the pupils involved?
- Do the pupils have any additional vulnerabilities?
- Does the young person understand consent?
- Does the victim know the perpetrator?
- Has the young person taken part in this kind of activity before?

Step 3 - Assess Intention & Risk

Normal

- Developmentally expected
- Socially acceptable
- Consensual, mutual, reciprocal
- Shared decision making

Inappropriate

- Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group
- Context for behaviour may be inappropriate
- Generally consensual and reciprocal

Problematic

- Problematic and concerning behaviours
- Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected
- No overt elements of victimisation
- Consent issues may be unclear
- May lack reciprocity or equal power
- May include levels of compulsivity

Abusive

- Victimising intent or outcome
- Includes misuse of power
- Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance
- Intrusive
- Informed consent lacking, or not able to be freely given by victim
- May include elements of expressive violence

Violent

- Physically violent sexual abuse
- Highly intrusive
- Instrumental violence which is physiologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator
- Sadism

Step 4 – Viewing the image

Adults should NOT view youth produced imagery unless there is good and clear reasons to do so. Responses to incidents should be based on what the DSL has been told about the content,

The DfE have agreed to 3 justifiable reasons why the DSL may have to look at the image:

1. It is the only way to decide about whether to involve other agencies, i.e., it is not possible to establish the facts from the young person
2. It is necessary to report the image to a website, app or other agency to have the image removed, or to support the young person in with this.
3. It is unavoidable because the pupil presents the image directly or the image is found on a school device or network

Where possible the viewer should be the same sex as the victim.

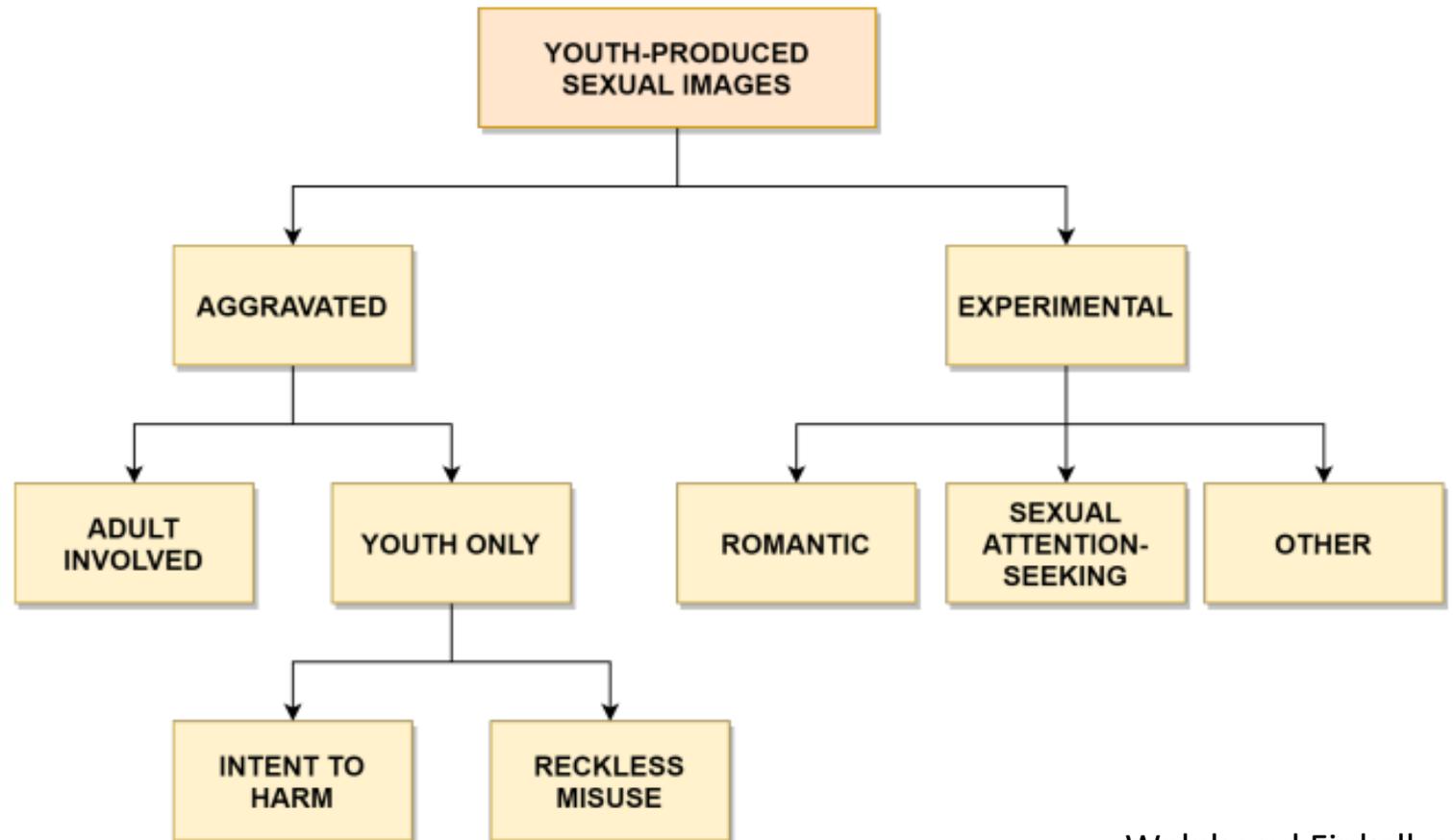
Step 5 – Deciding on a response

If inappropriate images of a child are found:

- Act in accordance with your child protection and safeguarding policy,
- Store the device securely
- Carry out a risk assessment in relation to the young person
- Make a referral if needed
- Contact the police (**when appropriate**)
- Put the necessary safeguards in place for the young person, e.g., they may need counselling support, and immediate protection
- Inform parents and/or carers about the incident and how it is being managed.

Typologies

- Based on Image content & criminality
 - COPINE Scale
 - Sentencing guidelines
 - Image content



'Why' not 'What'

As a measure of:

Sex or Romance

- Flirting
- Increase passion
- Increase intimacy
- Sexual arousal

Social Status

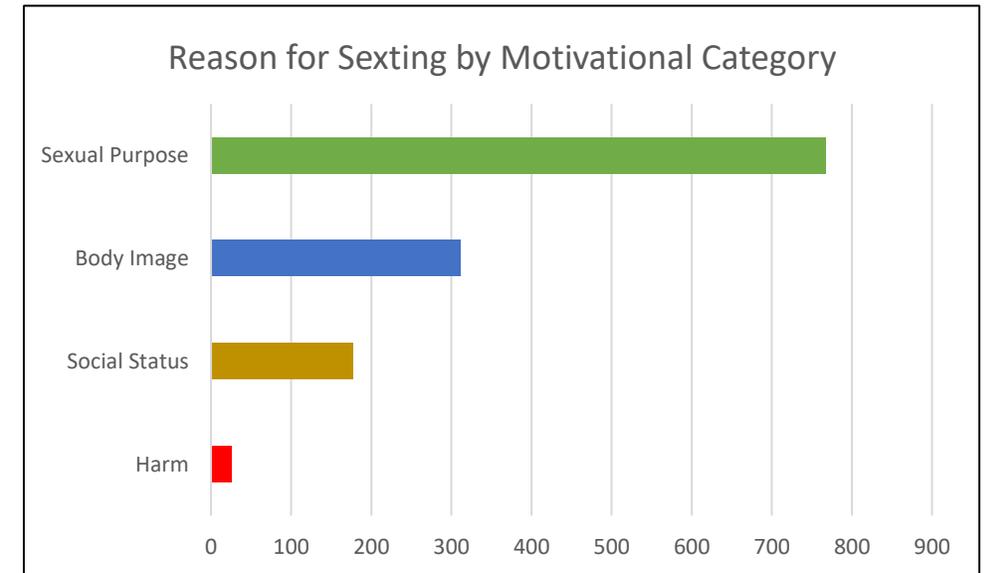
- Jokes with friends
- To feel wanted/belong
- Seeking favour

Body Image

- Attractive enough
- Normal body Shape
- Penile aesthetic / Callipygian attributes
- Sexually attractive
- Scopophilia

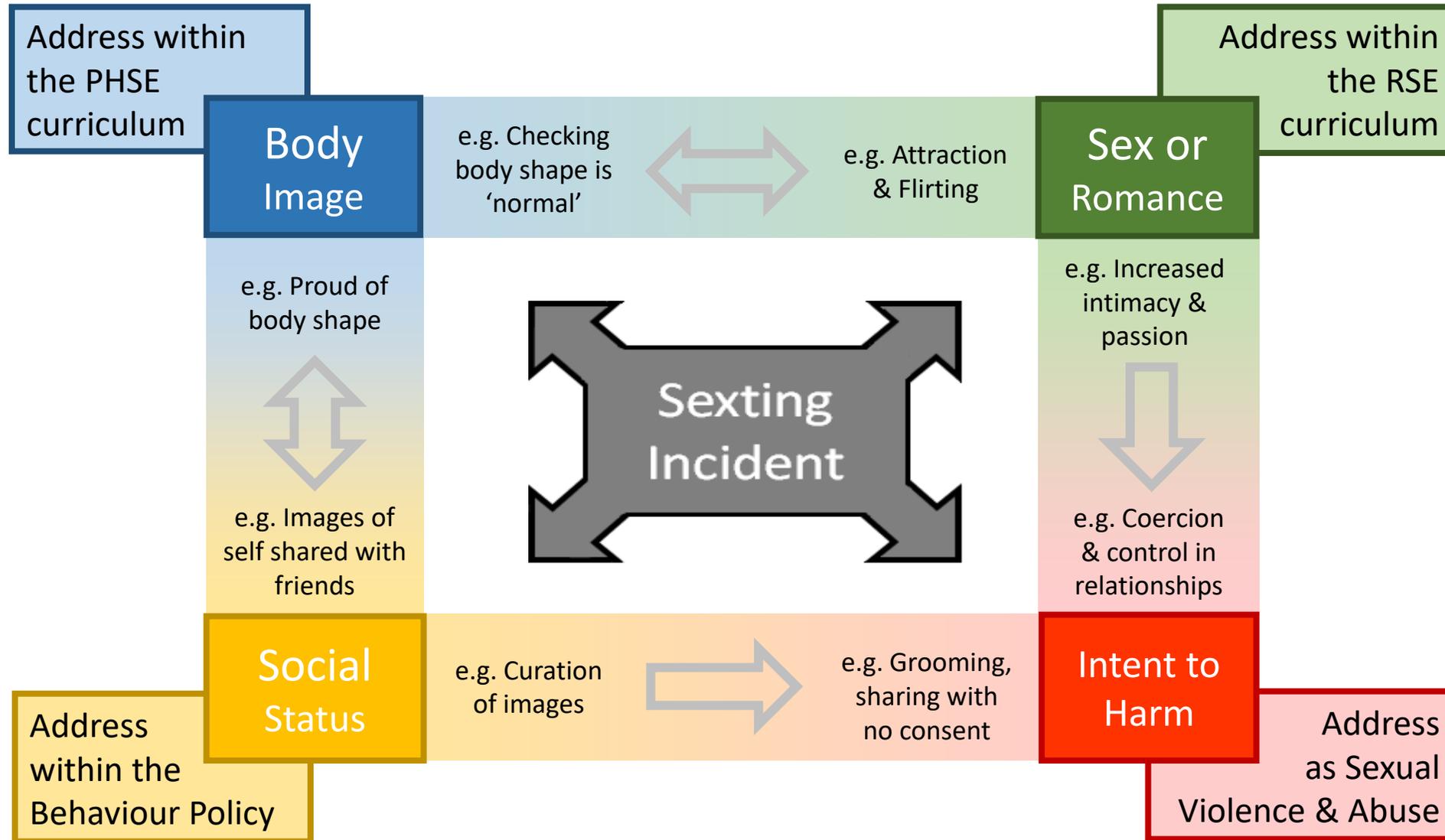
Intention to harm

- In exchange for something
- Forced or Coercion
- For money or gifts



Four Motivation Options Typology

Needham, J. (2025)



Step 7 – Containment & Support

There are cases in which victims have had to leave or change schools because of the impact of the incident.

- **Anxiety** - who has seen the image and where it has ended up.
- **Reassurance** - regarding its removal from the platform on which it was shared.
- **Support** - from the school, youth worker, their parents and their friends.
- **Observation** - parents should usually be told what has happened so that they can keep a watchful eye over their child
- **Curriculum** - reinforce to all students the impact and consequences that this behaviour can have.
- **Support** for the alleged Perpetrator

Agency Approach

Consistent Approach

- Teenage voice – Encourage Disclosure
- Remove heteronormative bias

Assessment Tools

- Brook - Traffic Light tool
- NSPCC – Hackett's Continuum
- Sexually Harmful Behaviour Bullying Categories

Curriculum Review

- Age at which sexting is addressed
- PHSE Curriculum – Body Image
- RSE Curriculum – Sex & Romance

Policy Review

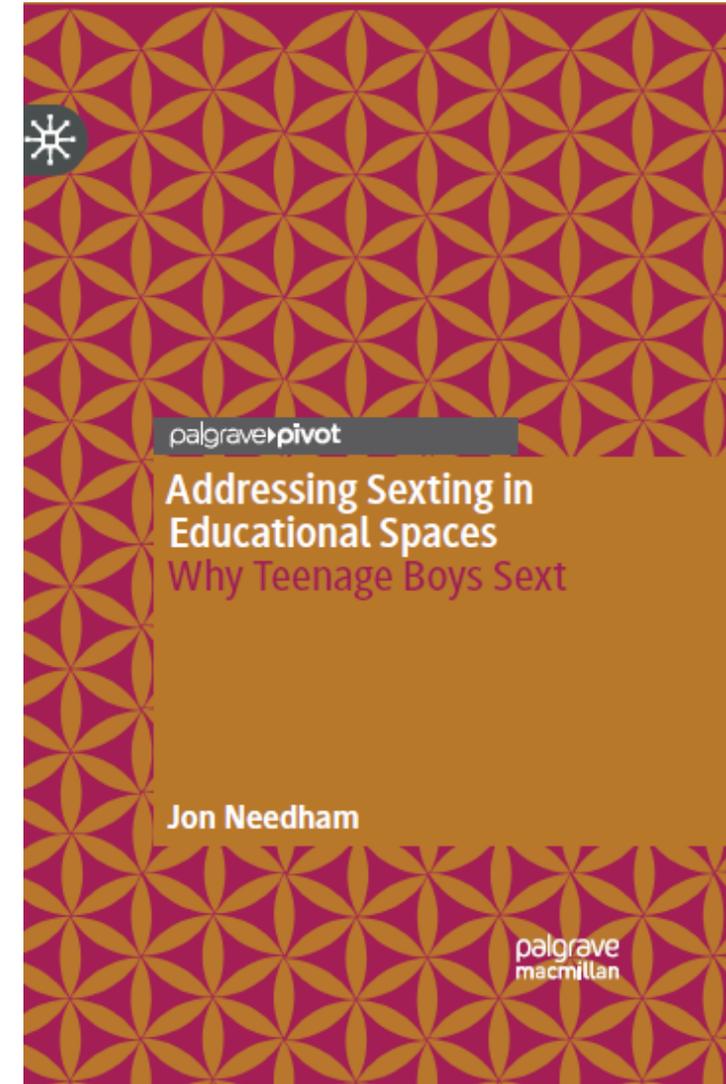
- Behaviour Policy – Social Status
- Inclusion Policy – Group Identity
- Safeguarding Policy – Intent to Harm

Internet Watch Foundation: Think Before you Share Campaign



<https://www.iwf.org.uk/about-us/our-campaigns/think-before-you-share/>

<https://youtu.be/NjreGrGDq38>



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