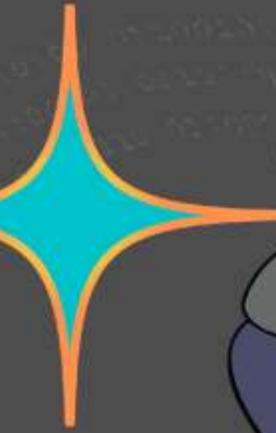


SPARK

TEEN DIGITAL DATING VIOLENCE



BC Society of
Transition Houses

RESPONDING TO TEEN DIGITAL DATING VIOLENCE BC ANTI-VIOLENCE WORKER SURVEY RESULTS

MARCH 2021

Acknowledgements

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Background

The BC Society of Transition House's (BCSTH) Technology Safety Project provides anti-violence workers across British Columbia with information, resources and training about technology safety and technology-facilitated violence. The Project received funding from the Civil Forfeiture Office at the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General for the SPARK: Responding to Teen Digital Dating Violence Project, to research and develop materials for anti-violence workers and the teens (aged 13-18) they support regarding teen's experiences of digital dating violence in BC.

Digital Dating Violence means physical, sexual, or psychological/emotional violence that occurs between dating partners by texting, social media, and related online mediums. This term is also known as, and will be used interchangeably with, technology-facilitated violence throughout this report.

As technology evolves and becomes more prevalent in our daily lives, it is important to understand the impacts of teen digital dating violence. For anti-violence workers, teen's experiences of digital dating violence may be disclosed during support and safety planning sessions. It can also be disclosed as part of violence prevention presentations (such as BCSTH's Violence Is Preventable), referrals from schools and other community programs and when engaging in community outreach.

As of the writing of this report, there are very few statistics related to teen digital dating violence in Canada. In June 2020, BCSTH surveyed British Columbia's anti-violence workers to get a better understanding of the digital dating violence experienced by the teens they serve in their programs. Broadly, the survey was interested in:

- What anti-violence workers have heard from teens who have been threatened, harassed, stalked or monitored through technology by a dating partner?
- Which mobile devices (e.g. smartphones, laptops, and computers) teens report are most commonly misused in digital dating violence?
- What resources and information would be helpful to support teens who are experiencing digital dating violence?

Anti-violence organizations provide a continuum of services, which share a common mission: to support women, children and youth with experiences of domestic and/or sexual violence.

This report summarizes the findings from the June 2020 “SPARK: Responding to Teen Digital Dating Violence Project - BC Anti-Violence Worker Survey.” The online survey results summarize the scope and methods of digital dating violence experienced by teens accessing anti-violence programs in BC.

The findings of this survey will support the SPARK Project to:

- Research relevant and practical information for teens and the anti-violence workers that support them;
- Develop resources and training about teen digital dating violence for anti-violence workers and teens experiencing digital dating violence; and
- Recommend next steps to address technology-facilitated violence.

All BCSTH Technology Safety Project resources are published and available on the BCSTH website at www.bcsth.ca.

SPARK: Responding to Teen Digital Dating Violence

Summary of BC Anti-Violence Worker Online Survey Results

Survey Respondent Information

52 anti-violence workers responded to BCSTH’s “SPARK: Responding to Teen Digital Dating Violence Project - BC Anti-Violence Worker Survey” online.

Survey respondents worked in anti-violence organizations across British Columbia (figure 1). Most commonly, respondents worked in Region 2: Lower Mainland (23.08%), followed by Regions 1: Vancouver Island, Region 3: Fraser Valley and Region 4: Kootenays with all three reported at (15.38%).

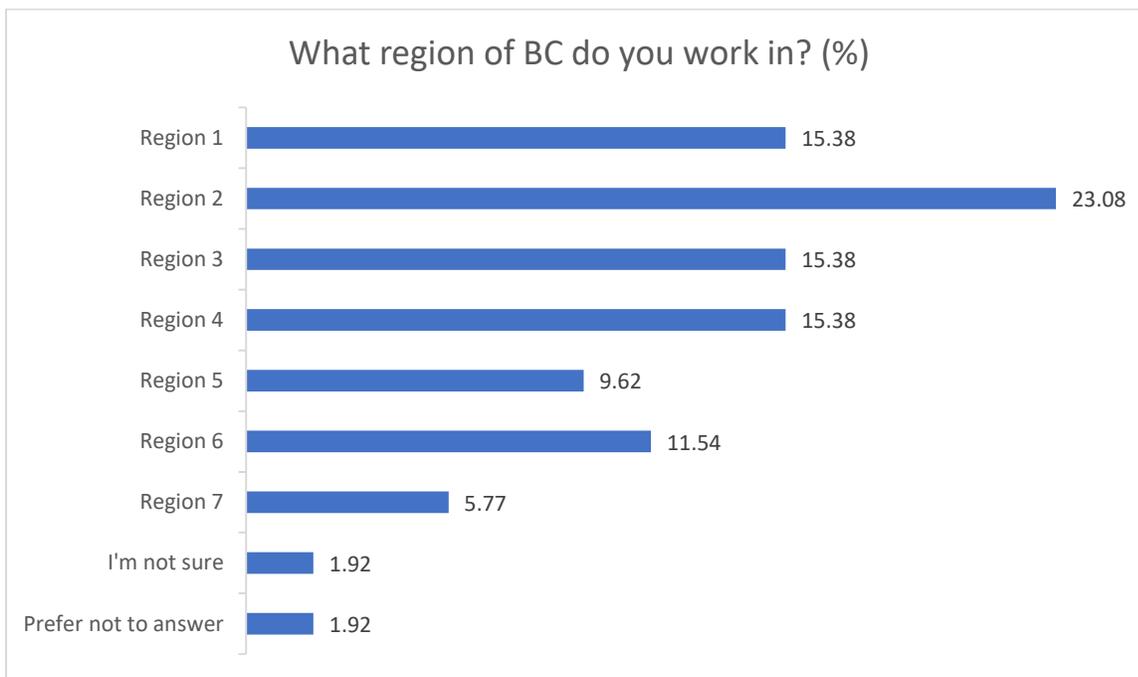


Figure 1: What region of BC do you work in? (n = 52).

Figure 2 displays the type of anti-violence program respondents were employed in at the time of the survey. Most commonly, respondents worked in a program focused on supporting children or teens who experience violence such as the PEACE Program (38.46%), followed by a Residential program (Transition House, Second or Third Stage Housing or Safe Home) (34.62%), and Community Based Victim Service Programs (11.54%).

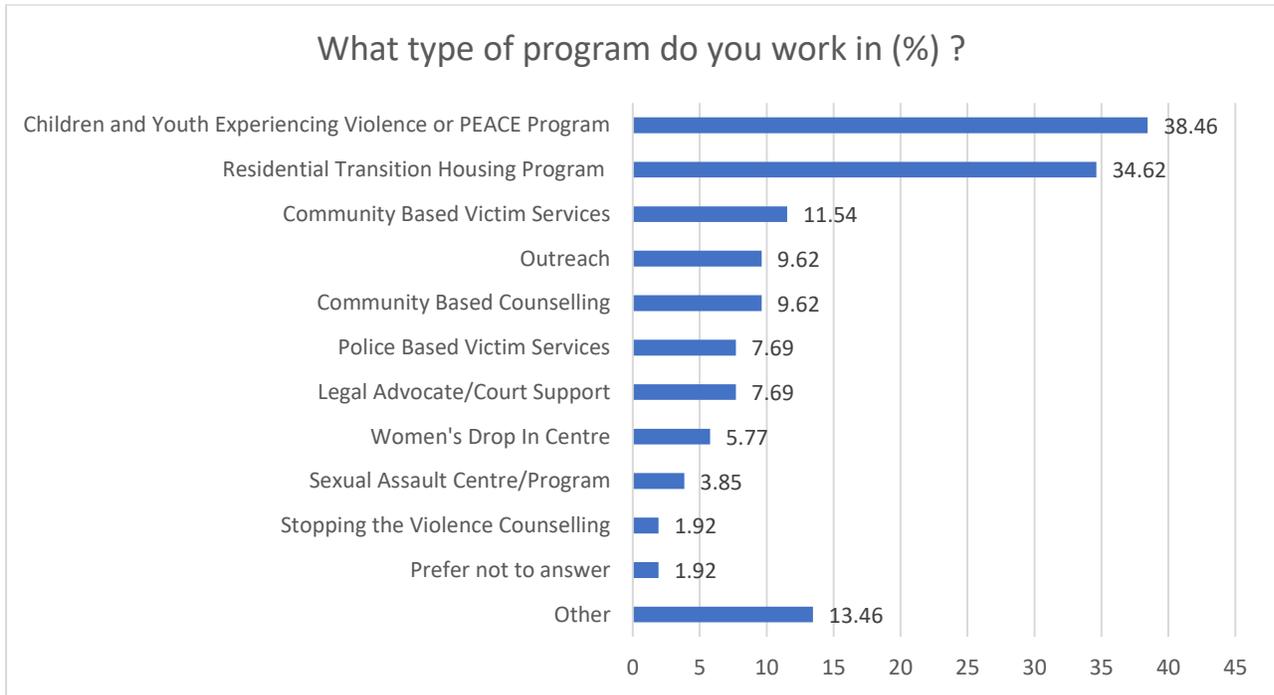


Figure 2: What type of program do you work in? (n = 52).

Teen Digital Dating Violence in BC

43 of 44 respondents (97.73%) said, “Yes,” teens have disclosed that they have experienced digital dating violence (figure 3).

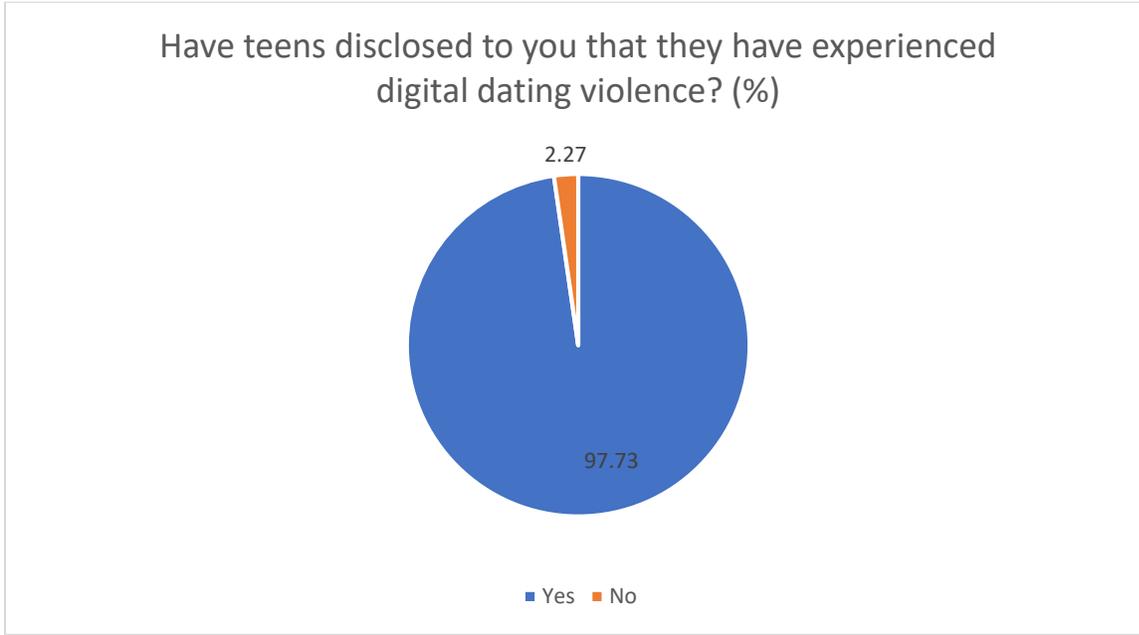


Figure 3: Have teens disclosed to you that they have experienced digital dating violence? (n = 44).

When asked about abusive partners, respondents identified that males were most often the perpetrators of digital dating violence (figure 4).

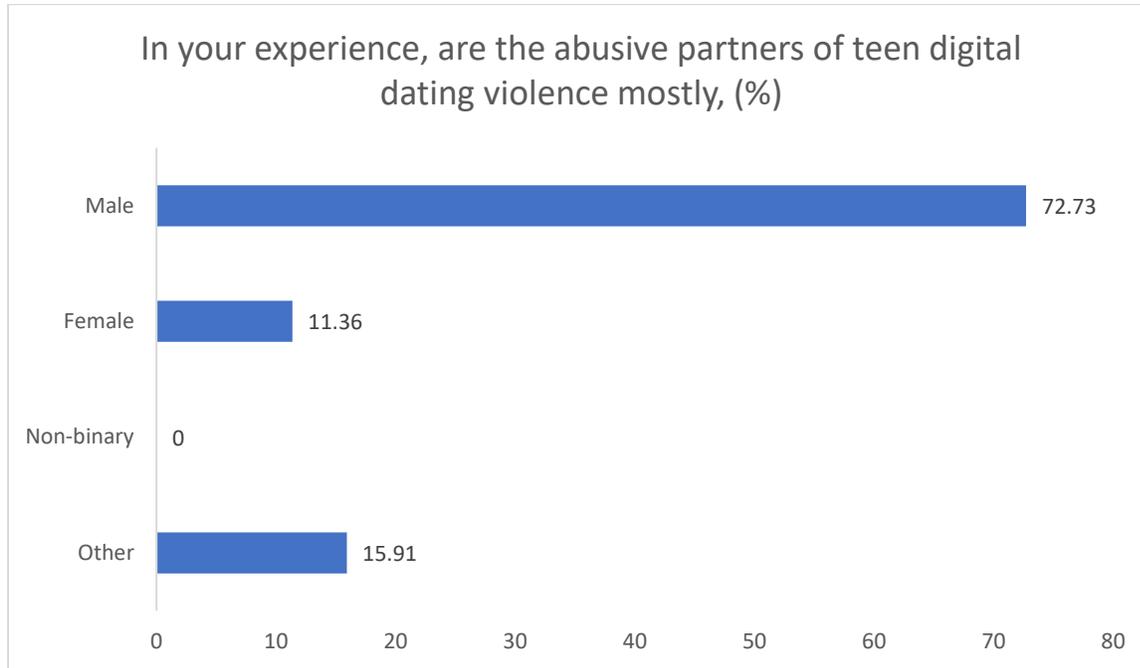


Figure 4: In your experience, are the abusive partners of teen digital dating violence mostly, (n = 44).

Of those who selected “other,” respondents identified the following as abusive partners of teen digital dating violence:

- online scam
- both and all
- work more with kids and cyberbullying-more girls
- both, everyone does it, it is not gender specific
- Mostly male, although when females support the males they have exhibited abusive behaviours towards teen.

When asked “who are the teens reporting experiences of digital dating violence mostly”, 88.37% indicated that females report more experiences of digital dating violence (figure 5).

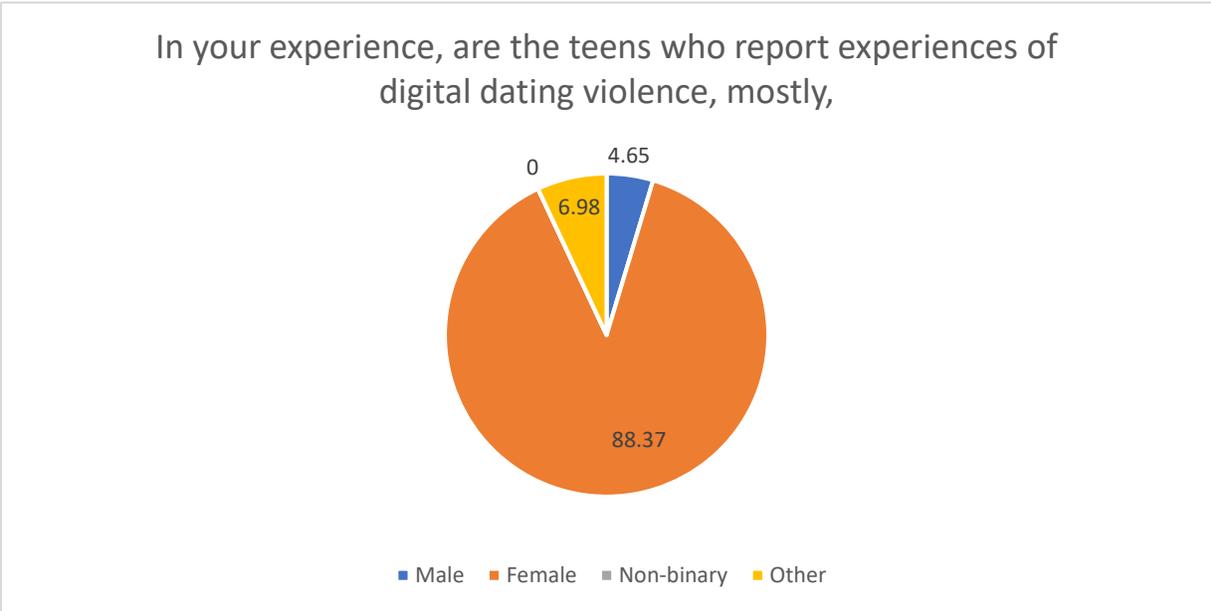


Figure 5: In your experience, are the teens who report experiences of digital dating violence mostly, (n = 43).

Of those who selected “other,” respondents reported that both or all report experiences of digital dating violence.

Figure 6 highlights that, of those teens who disclose experiences of digital dating violence, they also disclose traditional forms of dating violence by the same abusive partner, with 25 of 43 respondents answering “yes” or “mostly yes”.

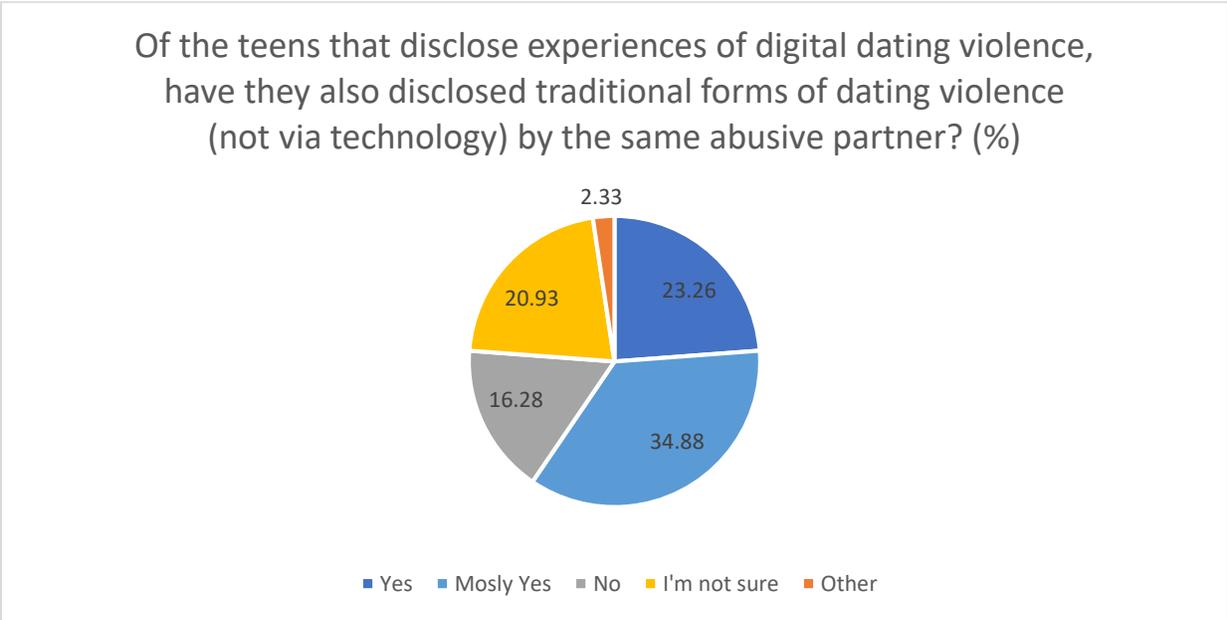


Figure 6: Of the teens that disclose experiences of digital dating violence, have they also disclosed traditional forms of dating violence (not via technology) by the same abusive partner? (n = 43).

Of those who selected “other,” respondents said:

- No, but they have often seen violence in other close-relationships between parents or siblings.

Furthermore, just over half of respondents (52%) said “yes” they have supported a teen whose perpetrator of digital dating violence is over the age of majority and the age difference is greater than two years (figure 7).

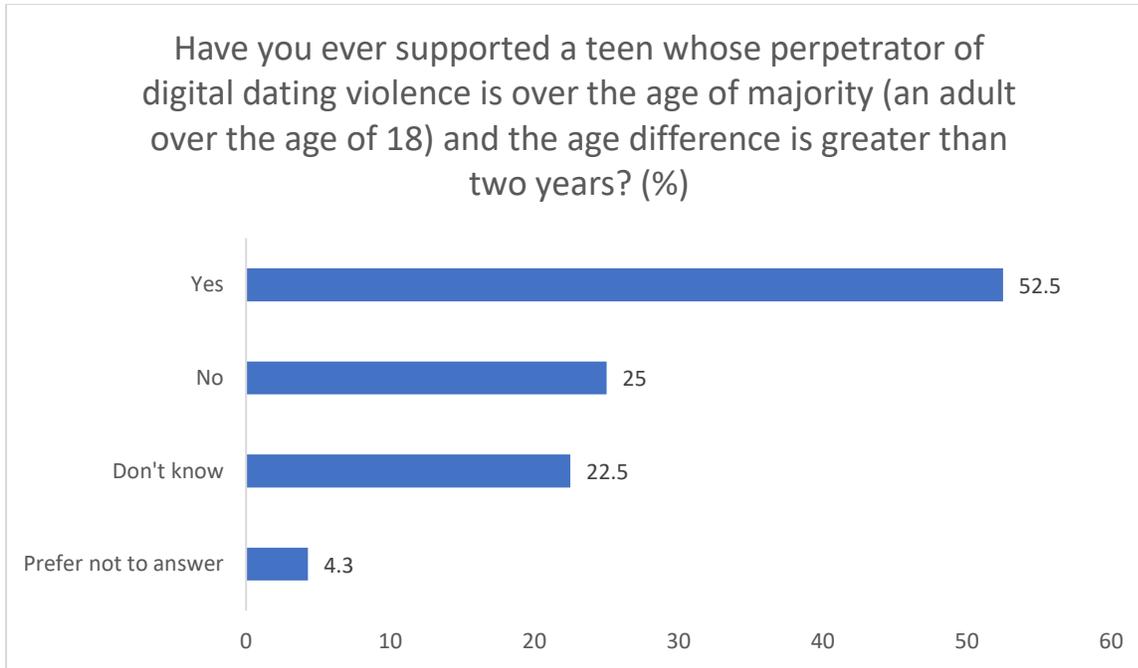


Figure 7: Have you ever supported a teen whose perpetrator of digital dating violence is over the age of majority (an adult over the age of 18) and the age difference is greater than two years? (n = 40).

There is more about perpetrators over the age of majority in the “Forms of Technology-Facilitated Violence” section.

Devices and Methods

Respondents report that smartphones (100%), followed by laptops (45.45%), and tablets (36.36%) were the devices most commonly misused in teen’s experiences of digital dating violence (figure 8).

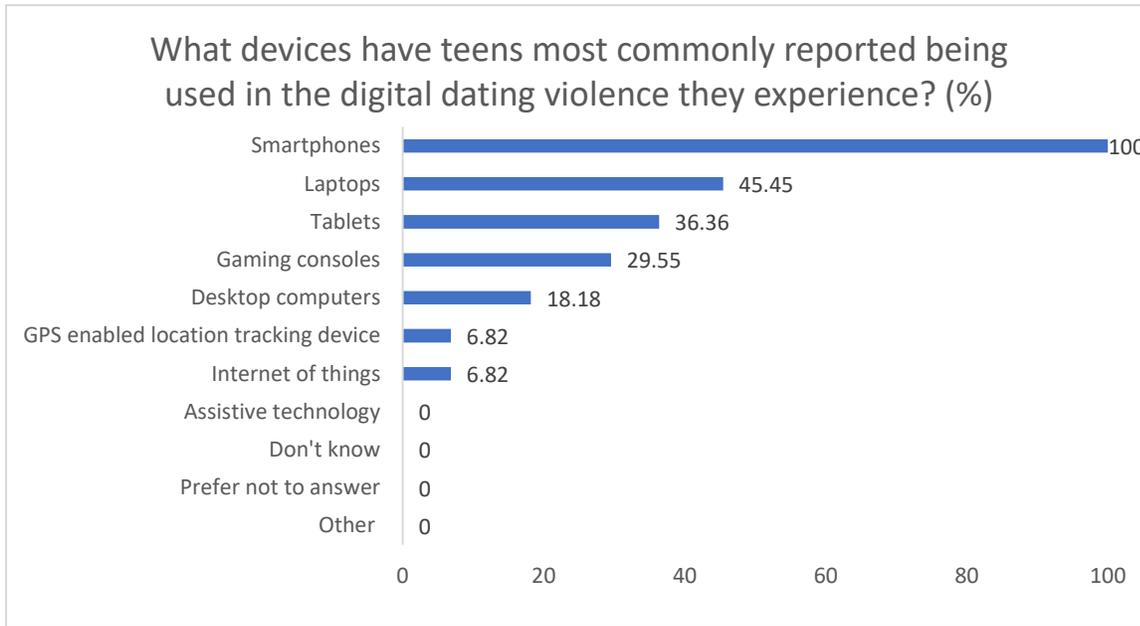


Figure 8: What devices have teens most commonly reported being used in the digital dating violence they experience? (n = 44).

Survey respondents said that social media (90.91%), texting (86.36%) and phone calls (38.64%) were the most common methods that teens report being used in the digital dating violence they experience (figure 9).

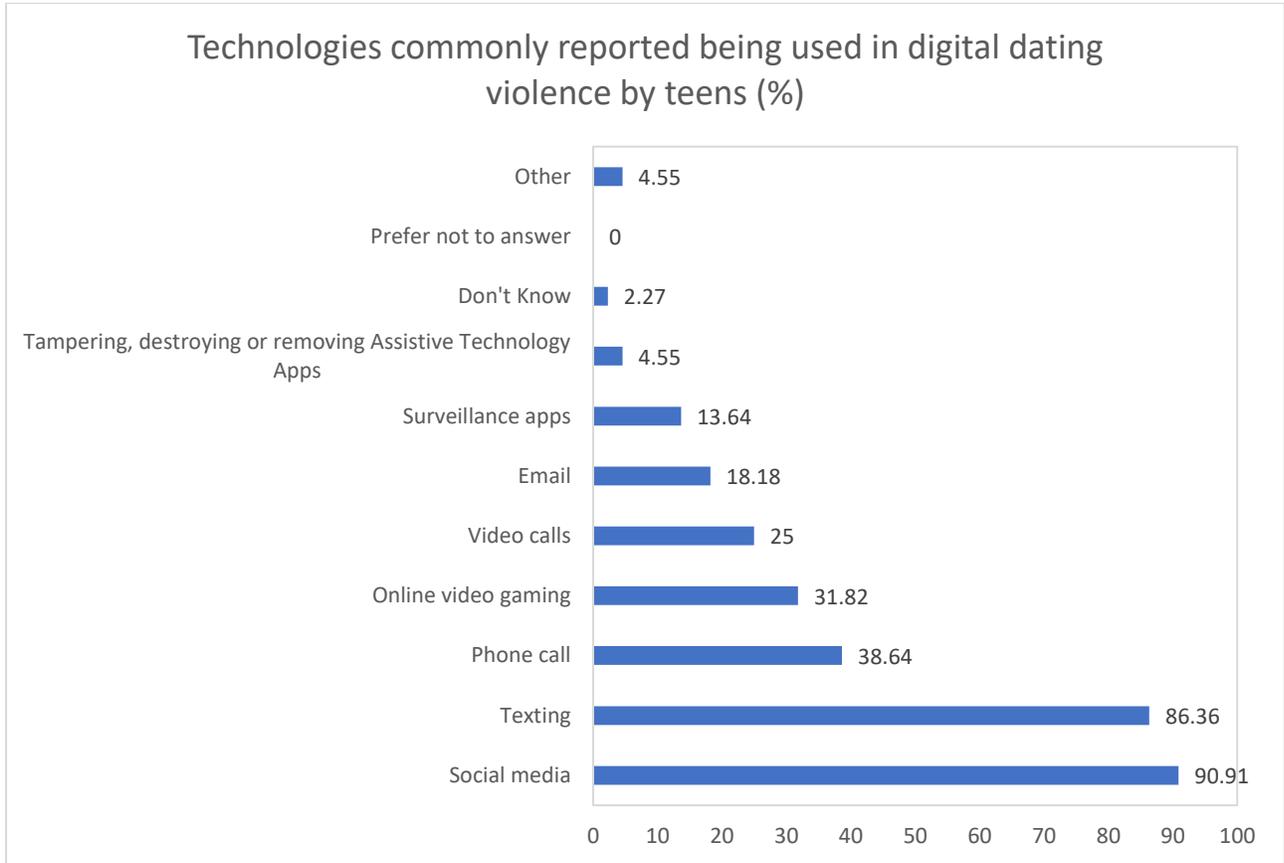


Figure 9: Which technologies do teens most commonly report being used in the digital dating violence they experience? (n = 44).

Of the one respondent who selected “other,” **number spoofing** was identified as a common misuse of technology.

Forms of Technology-Facilitated Violence

Respondents were asked specific questions about the types of digital dating violence teens disclosed they experienced. Respondents were given a list of 10 common forms of technology-facilitated violence and asked to rank each form based on what teens disclose they experience. A definition of each form of technology-facilitated violence was included in the question. A list of the definitions is provided in the text box below.

Criminal Harassment (Stalking): dating partner REPEATEDLY communicates with a teen or engages in threatening behavior that makes a teen fear for their safety and/or the safety of a family member.

Harassment: dating partner intentionally targets a teen with behavior that is meant to alarm, annoy, torment.

Impersonation: dating partner fraudulently impersonates another person either to gain advantage or cause disadvantage to a teen or impersonates the teen in order to cause harm.

Monitoring/Surveillance (voyeurism): dating partner monitors and/or watches a teen and/or monitors their online activities via technology.

Threats: dating partner makes threats via phone call, video call, email, text message and/or social media platforms.

Non-consensual distribution of images: dating partner shares or posts intimate photos or videos of a teen without her consent.

Grooming: dating partner builds an online relationship with a teen over time to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, soliciting of images and videos and/or trafficking.

Doxing: dating partner posts personally identifying information (e.g. name, address, phone number, email address, passport/SIN numbers) on social networks or websites without a teen's consent.

Extortion: dating partner blackmailing a teen via technology.

Abuse of Assistive Technology: dating partner destroying, breaking, taking away assistive technology devices such as hearing aid, screen reader, Teletypewriter (TTY) machine.

Figure 10 displays the most common forms of technology-facilitated violence as ranked from 1 (being the most common form) to 10 (being the least common form) by survey respondents. Harassment followed by criminal harassment and threats were ranked the top three forms of technology-facilitated violence that teens have told respondents they experienced.

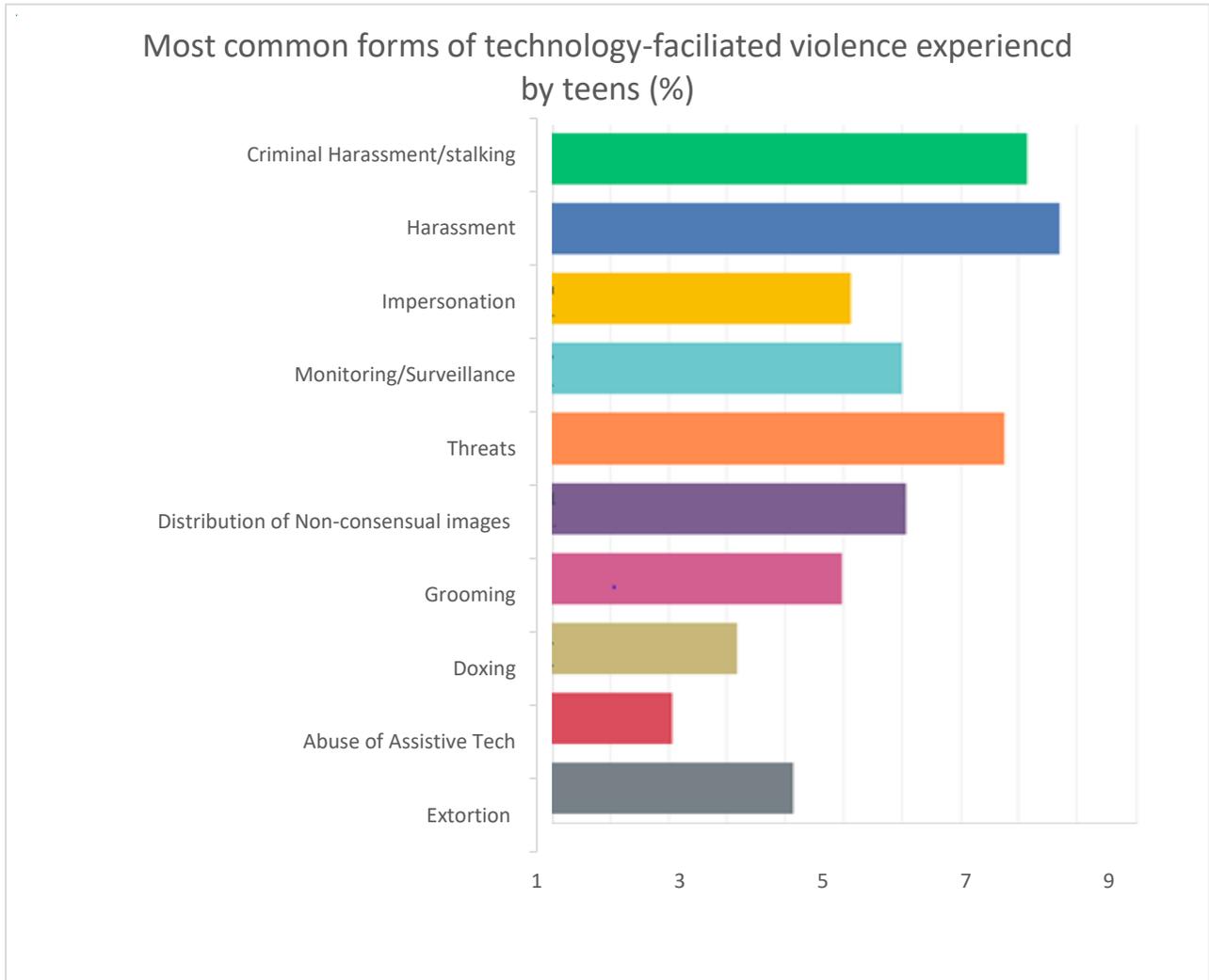


Figure 10: Please rank the following forms of technology-facilitated violence, based on what teens tell you they most commonly experience: 1 being the most common form of digital dating violence teens tell you they have experienced and 10 being the least common. (n = 35).

Harassment

38 of 44 survey respondents (86.36%) reported that teens have disclosed experiences of technology-facilitated harassment by an abusive dating partner. By selecting as many examples of harassment that applied from a multiple-choice list, anti-violence workers reported that the following are the most common ways dating partners intentionally target a teen with behaviour that is meant to annoy, upset, or bother (figure 11):

- Receiving abusive, threatening or unwanted text messages (94.74%),
- Receiving abusive, threatening or unwelcome messages and/or comments from their dating partner on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram) (94.74%) and,
- Having negative information posted about them on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Instagram) (78.95%).



Figure 11: If yes, please check all forms of harassment that teens have told you that have experienced. (n = 38).

Of those who selected 'other,' the following responses were provided:

- taking over their account by guessing their password
- abusive, aggressive, or harassing messages over game chat rooms and calls

Criminal harassment (Stalking)

26 of 43 survey respondents (60.47%) reported that teens have disclosed they have experienced technology-facilitated stalking (legally known as criminal harassment). By selecting as many examples of criminal harassment that applied from a multiple-choice list, anti-violence workers reported that the most common ways that abusive dating partners have repeatedly communicated with a teen or engaged in threatening behavior that makes a teen for her safety or the safety of someone they know are (figure 12):

- Repeatedly receiving abusive, threatening or unwelcome text messages (96.30%),
- Repeatedly receiving abusive, threatening or unwelcome messages and/or comments from someone they know on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok) (96.30%) and,
- Repeatedly having negative, harmful and/or false information posted about them on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram, and TikTok) (85.19%).

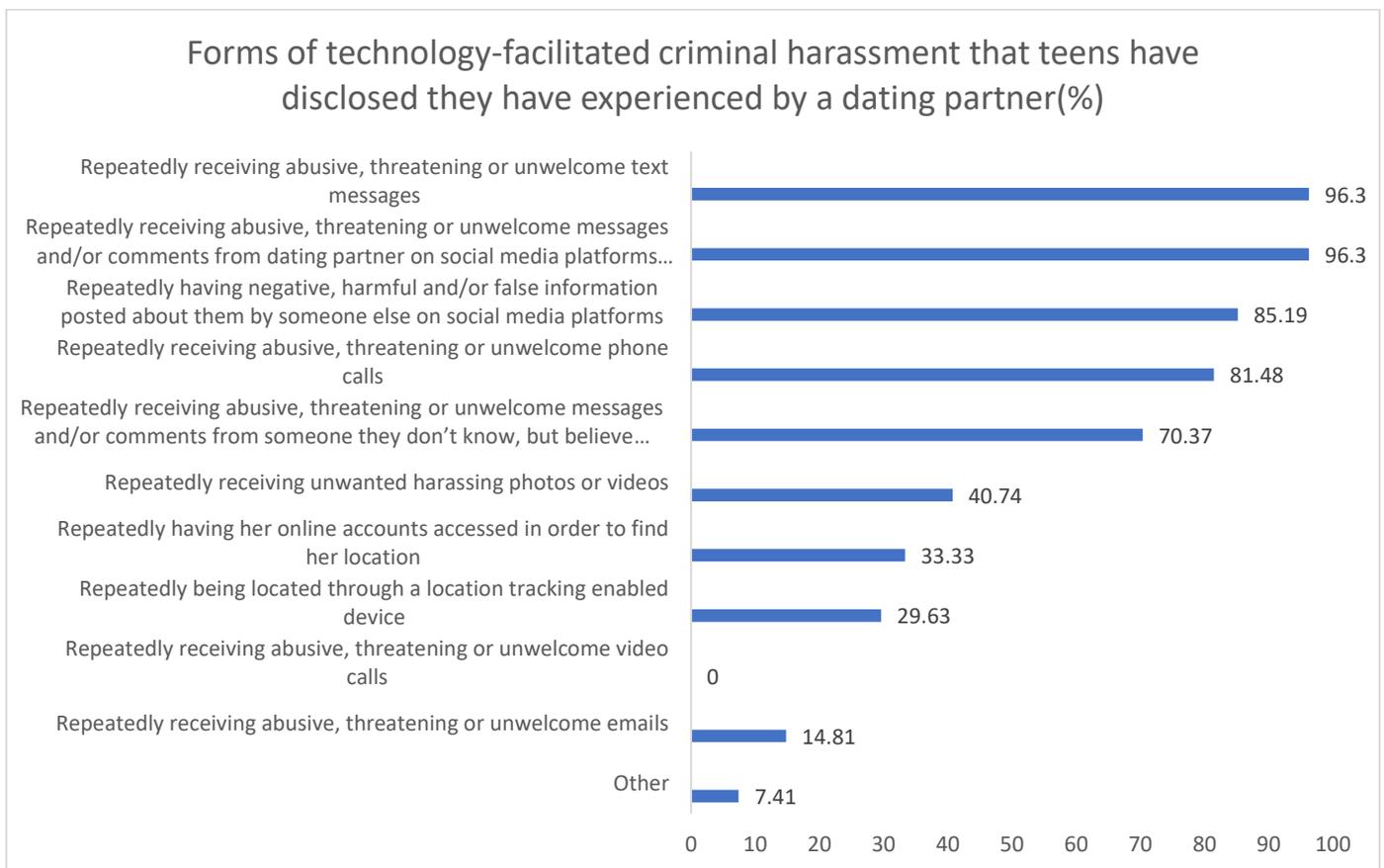


Figure 12: If yes, please check all forms of technology-facilitated criminal harassment that teens have disclosed that they have experienced (n = 27).

Of those who selected 'other', the following responses were provided:

1. Being forced to allow the abusive partner check their phone on a regular basis is by far the most common form of abuse the teen girls are experiencing.
2. It is difficult to prove for certain that GPS was used to discern the teen's location, but it is very possible and the teenaged client believed it was the case.

Threats

35 of 42 survey respondents (83.33%) reported that teens have disclosed experiences of technology-facilitated threats by a dating partner. By selecting as many examples of threats that applied from a multiple-choice list, anti-violence workers reported that the most common types of threats received by teens they support are (figure 13):

- Dating partner threatening to post personal information, photos and/or videos of a teen online (88.24%)
- Dating partner blackmailing teen via phone calls, text messages, emails and social media platforms (50%) and,
- Dating partner threatening to lock the teen out of social networks, email or other online accounts including banking (29.41%).

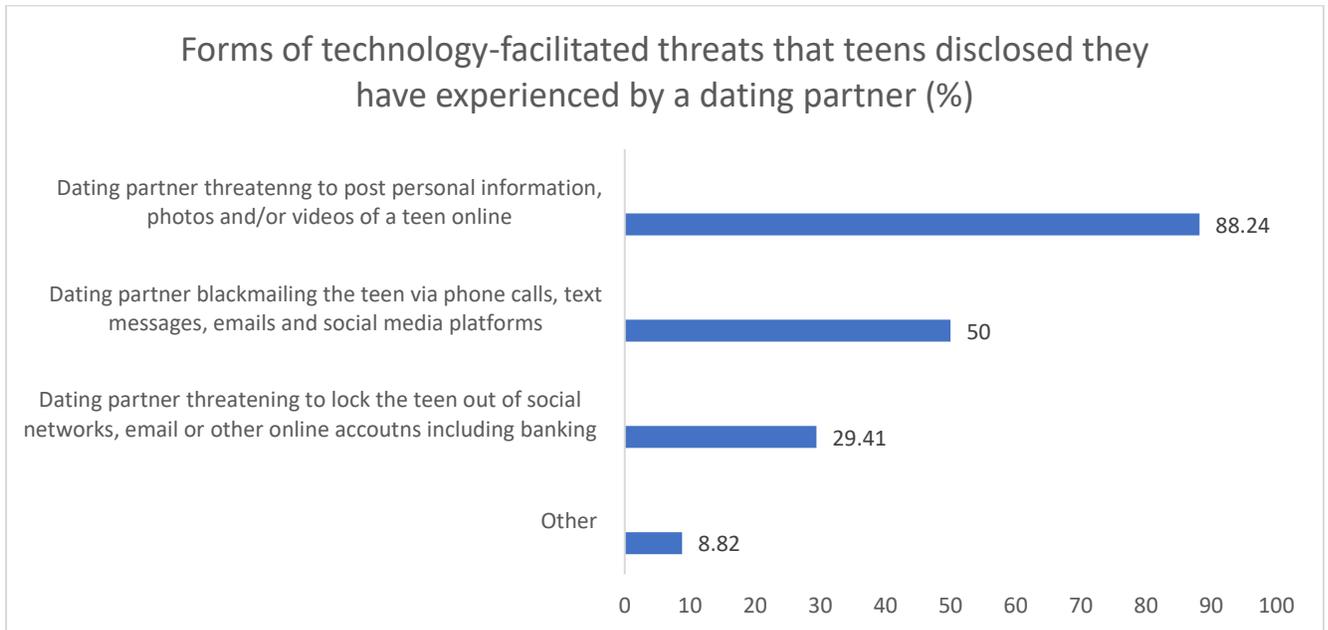


Figure 13: If yes, please check all forms of technology-facilitated threats that teens have disclosed that they have experienced by a dating partner. (n = 34).

Of those who selected 'other,' the following responses were provided:

1. friend of dating partner blackmailing teen, posting on social media
2. dating partner & friends threatening via online gaming
3. threatening to send the photos to police, under the belief that she will get in trouble by authorities

Non-consensual distribution of images and/or videos

25 of 40 survey respondents (62.5%) reported that teens have disclosed they have experienced technology-facilitated distribution of non-consensual images and/or videos by a dating partner. By selecting as many examples that applied from a multiple-choice list, anti-violence workers reported that the most common forms of electronic distribution of non-consensual images and/or videos experienced by teens accessing their program are (figure 14):

- Intimate and/or private photos or videos of a teen posted online with the intention to embarrass, humiliate, harass, degrade and/or harm (76%),
- Unwanted soliciting/asking for sexual photos or videos (76%) and,
- Receiving unwanted intimate and/or private photos of their dating partner (68%).

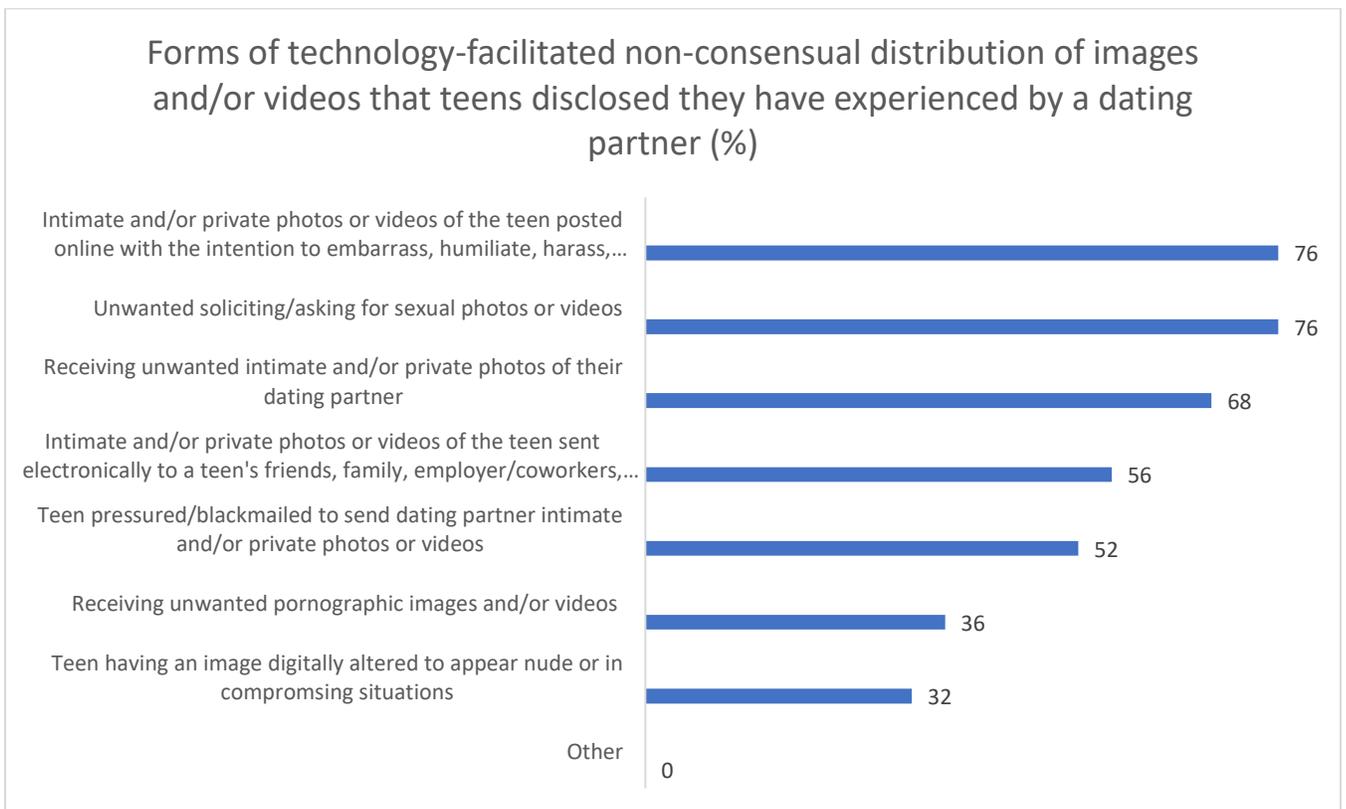


Figure 14: If yes, please select all forms of technology-facilitated non-consensual distribution of images and/or videos that teens disclosed that they have experienced by a dating partner (n = 25).

Humiliation

Respondents were asked about the types of humiliating, shaming and punishing actions teens reported being perpetrated by their abusive dating partners. Out of a multiple choice list, 40 respondents identified the most common forms of humiliation and shaming as (figure 15):

- Negative information posted by the abusive partner on social media sites (77.5%),
- Dating partner coercing teen to film/record intimate images (65%), and
- Dating partner threatening to distribute or post private videos of a teen (65%).

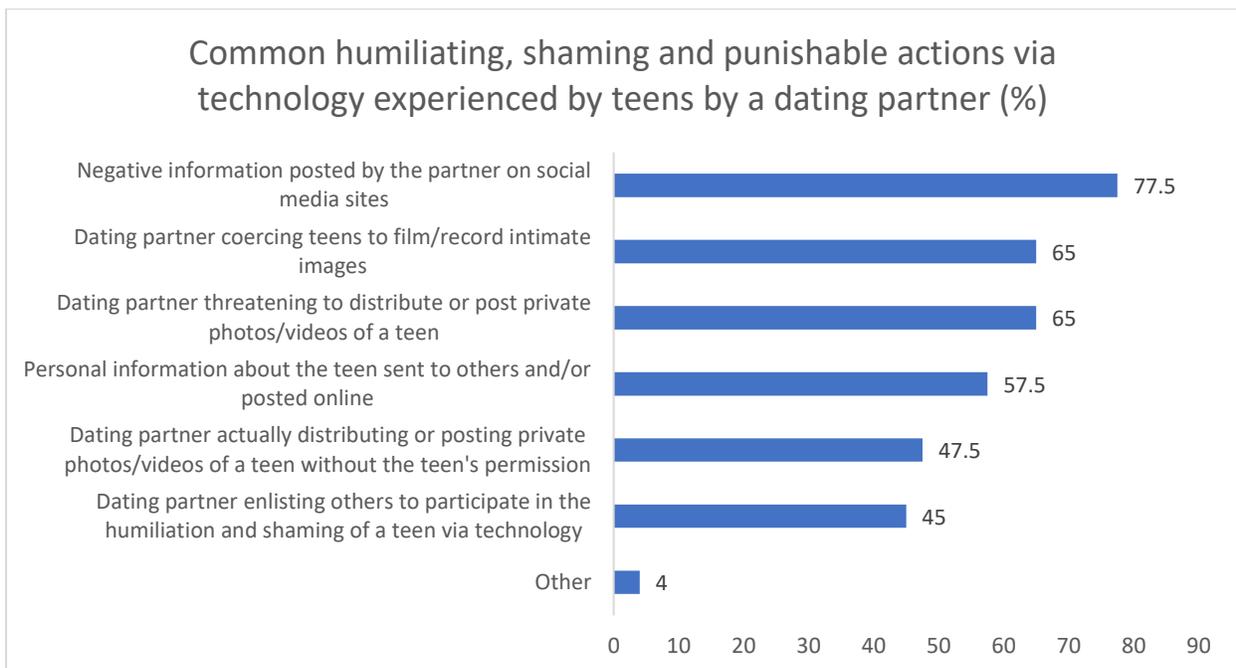


Figure 15: What types of humiliating, shaming and punishing actions via technology are teens reporting to you? (n = 40).

Monitoring and/or surveillance (Voyeurism)

21 of 43 survey respondents (48.84%) reported that teens have disclosed that they have experienced technology-facilitated monitoring and/or surveillance by a dating partner. By selecting as many examples that applied from a multiple-choice list, anti-violence workers reported the following as the most common forms of monitoring and surveillance of a teen by a dating partner (figure 16):

- Checking a teen's text messages and phone without permission (95.24%)
- Using social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram) for surveillance and to check where the teen is (95.24%), and
- Teen having to share electronic passwords/account access/device access with their partner (90.48%).

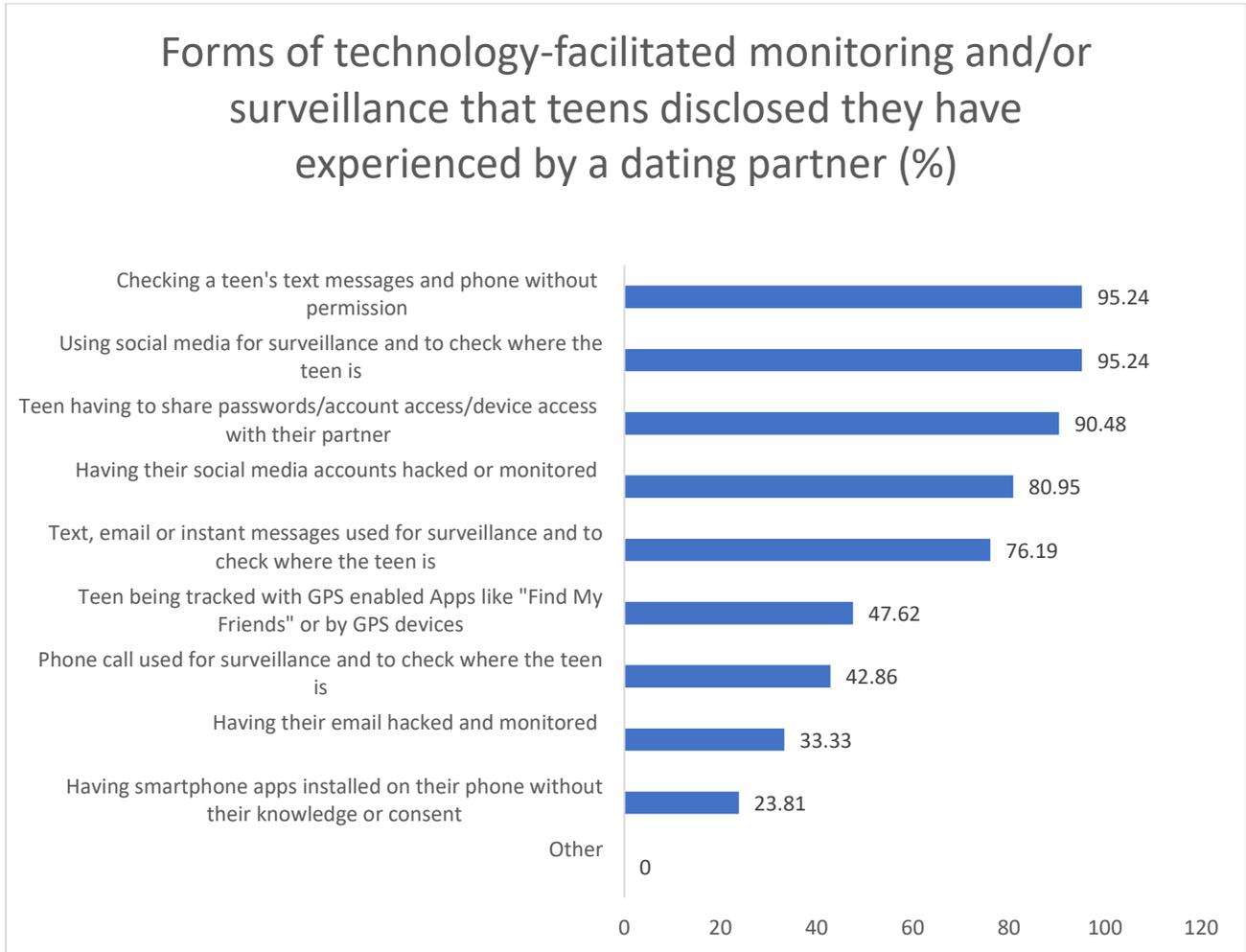


Figure 16: If yes, please check all forms of technology-facilitated monitoring and/or surveillance that teens have disclosed that they have experienced by a dating partner (n = 21).

Impersonation

23 of 43 survey respondents (53.49%) reported that teens have disclosed they have experienced technology-facilitated impersonation. By selecting as many examples that applied from a multiple-choice list, anti-violence workers reported that the most common ways dating partners fraudulently impersonate another person either to gain advantage or cause disadvantage are (figure 16):

- Being impersonated via social media platforms (e.g., Facebook What’s App, SnapChat, Instagram, and TikTok) (86.36%),
- Being impersonated via text messages (77.27%) and,
- Dating partner impersonating a teen’s new partner or friend online (e.g., on a dating, social media or gaming platform) to get close to a teen (54.55%).

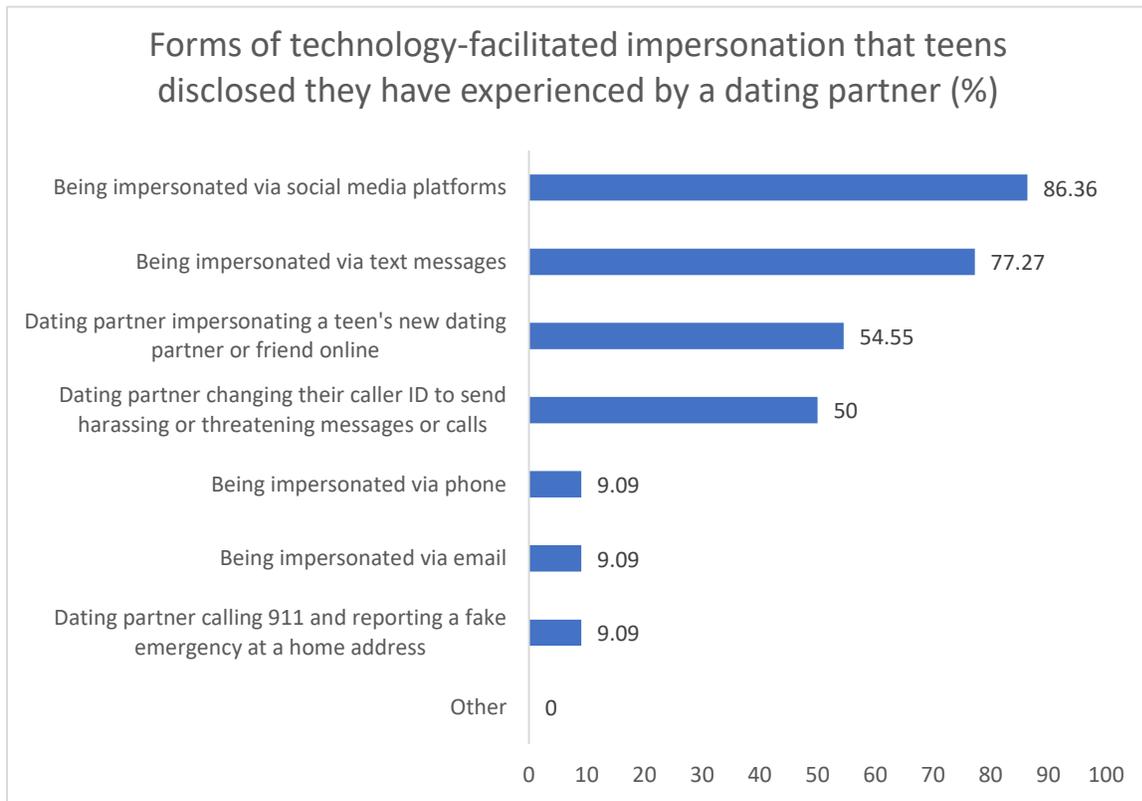


Figure 16: If yes, please check all forms of technology-facilitated impersonation that teens have told you they have experienced (n = 22).

Teen digital dating violence perpetrated by an adult

As mentioned in an earlier section, 21 of 40 respondents said “yes” they have supported a teen whose perpetrator of digital dating violence is over the age of majority (18) and whose age difference is greater than two years. By selecting as many examples that applied from a multiple-choice list, anti-violence workers reported that the most common ways adult dating partners perpetrate technology-facilitated violence on teen dating partners are (figure 17):

- Harassment (70%)
- Criminal Harassment/Stalking (65%), and
- Grooming (60%)

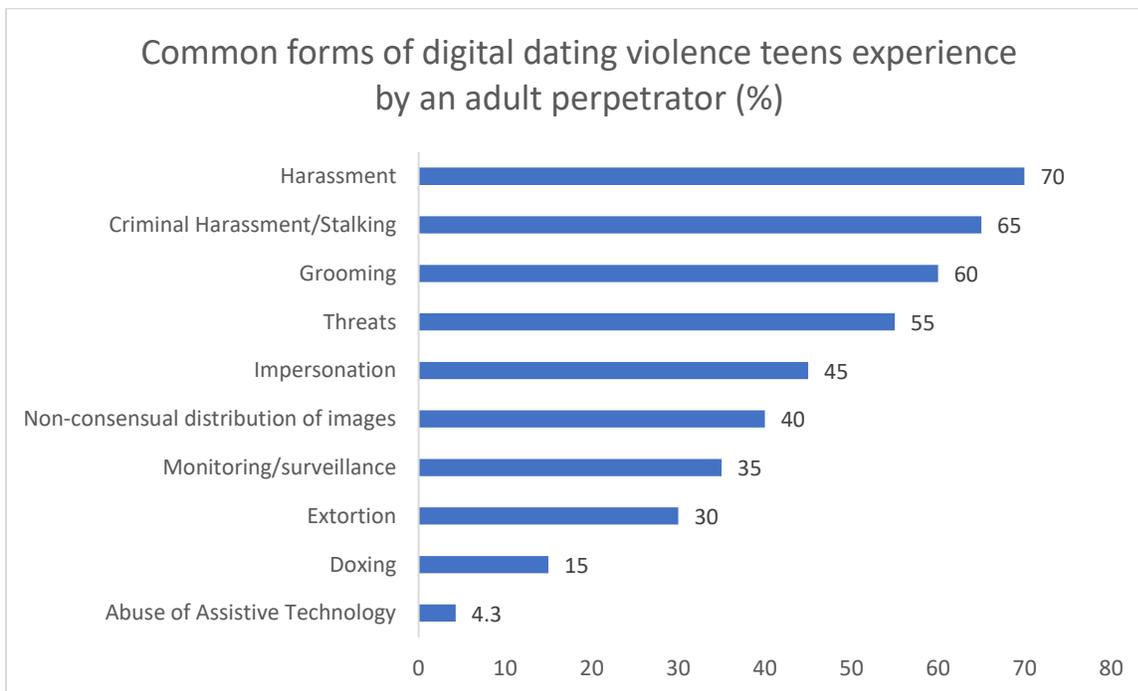


Figure 17: If yes, check all forms of digital dating violence are experienced by a teen from an adult dating partner whose age difference is over 2 years? (n = 20).

Grooming

19 of 40 survey respondents (47.5%) reported that teens disclosed that they experienced technology-facilitated grooming, i.e. when a perpetrator builds an online relationship with a teen over time to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, soliciting of images and videos and/or trafficking

Doxing

4 of 40 survey respondents (10%) reported that teens disclosed that they have experienced technology-facilitated doxing, i.e. perpetrator posts a teen's personally identifiable information (e.g. name, address, phone number, email address, passport/SIN numbers) on social networks or websites without their consent.

Assistive Technology

0 of the 40 survey respondents (0%) have had teens report their Assistive Technology (e.g. hearing aid, screen reader, Teletypewriter (TTY) machine) has been tampered with or destroyed by a dating partner.

Isolation

23 of 44 survey respondents (52.27%) reported that teens have disclosed that they have been isolated because the abuser has limited or prevented access to or destroyed their technology (e.g., phone, laptop and tablet).

Other forms of technology-facilitated violence

7 of 39 survey respondents (17.95%) reported that teens have disclosed that they have experienced other forms of technology-facilitated violence by a dating partner that were not provided in the examples within our survey. The following responses were provided and categorized.

1. Emotional Blackmail, Coercion/Threats of Suicide
 - Using emotional blackmail, i.e. threatening suicide if the teen breaks up with them and then refusing to answer calls or messages to make the person think they had done it.
 - Had a male say he was an Instagram investigator. Started asking questions to confirm her identity. Then stated she was being removed due to inappropriate content. Proceeded to show her pictures of herself that she had posted as well as some from her personal files. Manipulated her into video chat still trying to prove her identity. Then demanding she partake in making a lewd video as he watched her.
 - Partner sends a pic of himself with a knife to his neck. Showing her he will kill himself if he can't be with her.
 - Lots of drama between and among 'friends' locally.
 - Cyber-bullying (including but not limited to, rumor spreading, threats of bodily harm from peers).
 - Former friend continually calling & texting teen, to hang out, then adult abuser offering teen drugs and alcohol followed by coercing/pushing them into sex and/or sexual acts.

2. Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images

- A teen I worked with had a group of boys that took turns feigning interest in her in an attempt to get her to engage in sending nudes or sexting, facetime phone sex etc. They would tell her they were alone but the other boys were there.

System Responses

The following section summarizes the survey findings related to systemic responses to teen’s experiences of technology-facilitated in BC.

Schools

When asked if schools in their community are responsive to teen’s reports of digital dating violence, 9 of 40 survey respondents (22.5%) answered “yes” (figure 18).

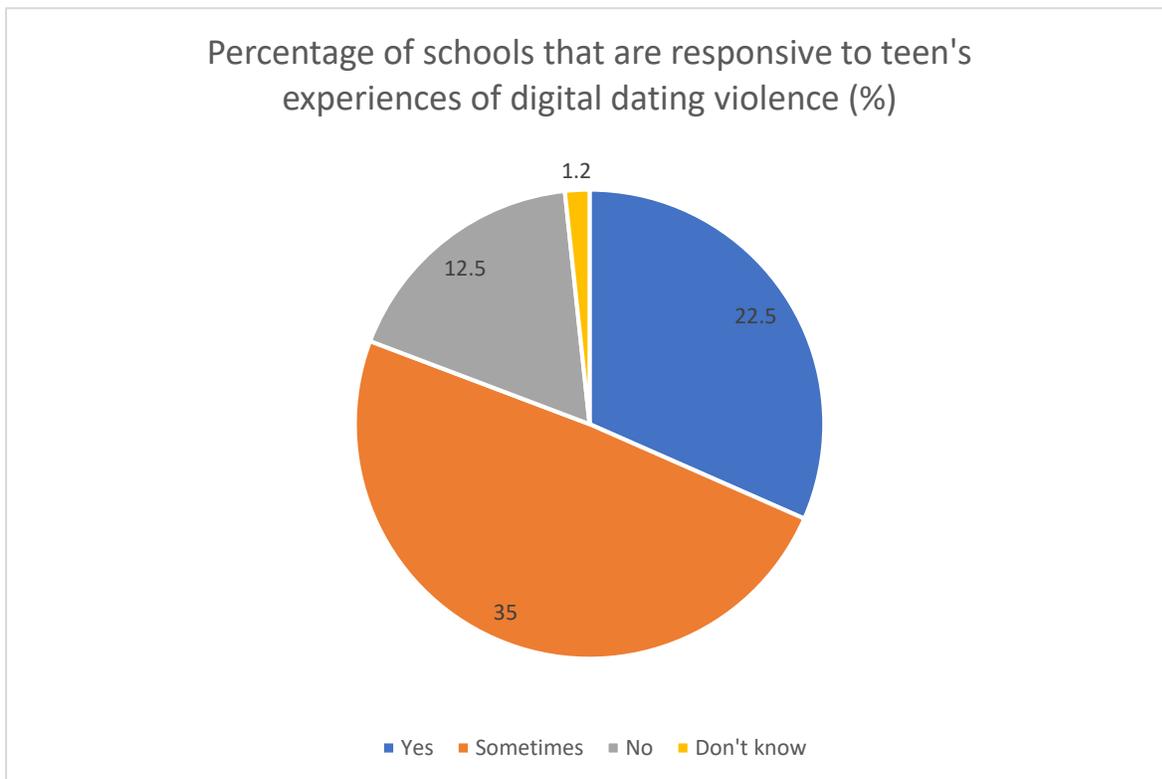


Figure 18: Are schools in your community responsive to teen’s reports related to digital dating violence? (n = 40).

39 respondents identified the common reasons why they believe schools in their community are not responsive to teen’s reports of digital dating violence (figure 19).

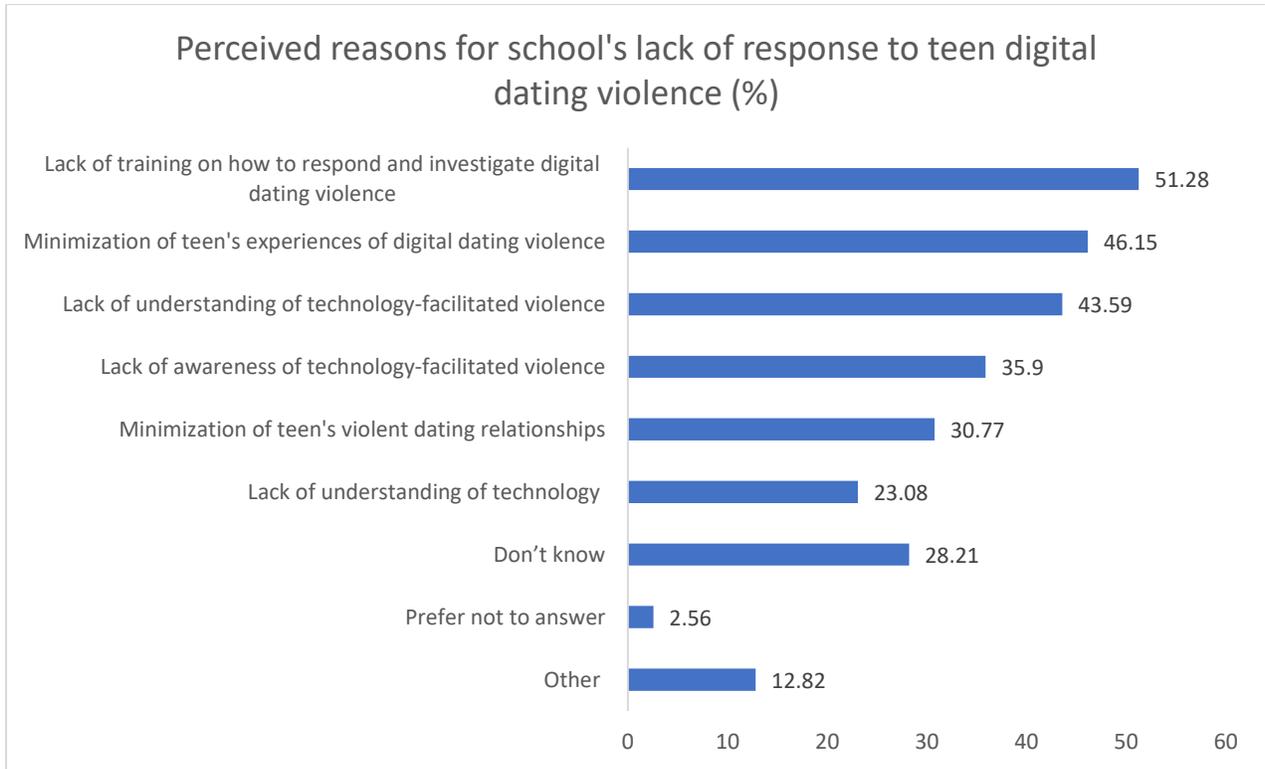


Figure 19: If schools in your community are not responsive to teen’s reports related to digital dating violence, what do you think is the reason? (n = 39).

Of those who selected “other,” the following reasons were specified:

1. They can't control what students do outside of school time.
2. Lack of resources and time.
3. Prejudice, socioeconomics.
4. Not enough staff. They do not have the support to investigate or act as counsellors or support people when they are teaching a class size of thirty students, many with special-needs.

Law Enforcement

Figure 20 displays how responsive law enforcement is to teen’s reports of technology-facilitated violence according to survey respondents. Most commonly, respondents reported that law enforcement was “sometimes” (35%) responsive to teen’s reports of technology-facilitated violence, followed by “yes” (32.5%) and “don’t know” (22.5%).

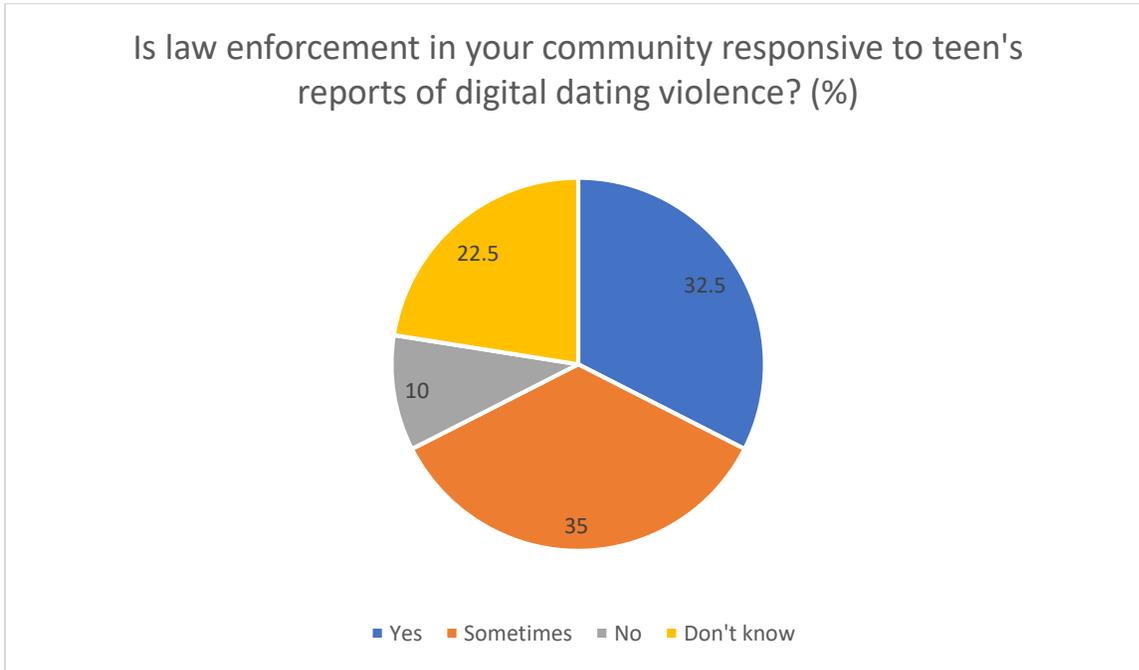


Figure 20: Is law enforcement in your community responsive to teen’s reports of digital dating violence? (n = 40).

Respondents were asked what they believe are the reasons that law enforcement in their community is not responsive to teen’s reports related to technology- facilitated violence. 36 respondents reported that most commonly, they believed that the “minimization of teen’s experiences of digital dating violence” (55.56%), followed by “lack of training on how to respond to, investigate and charge, crimes linked to technology-facilitated violence located within Canada” (44.44%) and “lack of training on how to preserve and use evidence in crimes related to technology located outside of Canada” (44.44%) contributed to the lack of response to technology-facilitated violence by law enforcement in some BC communities (figure 21).

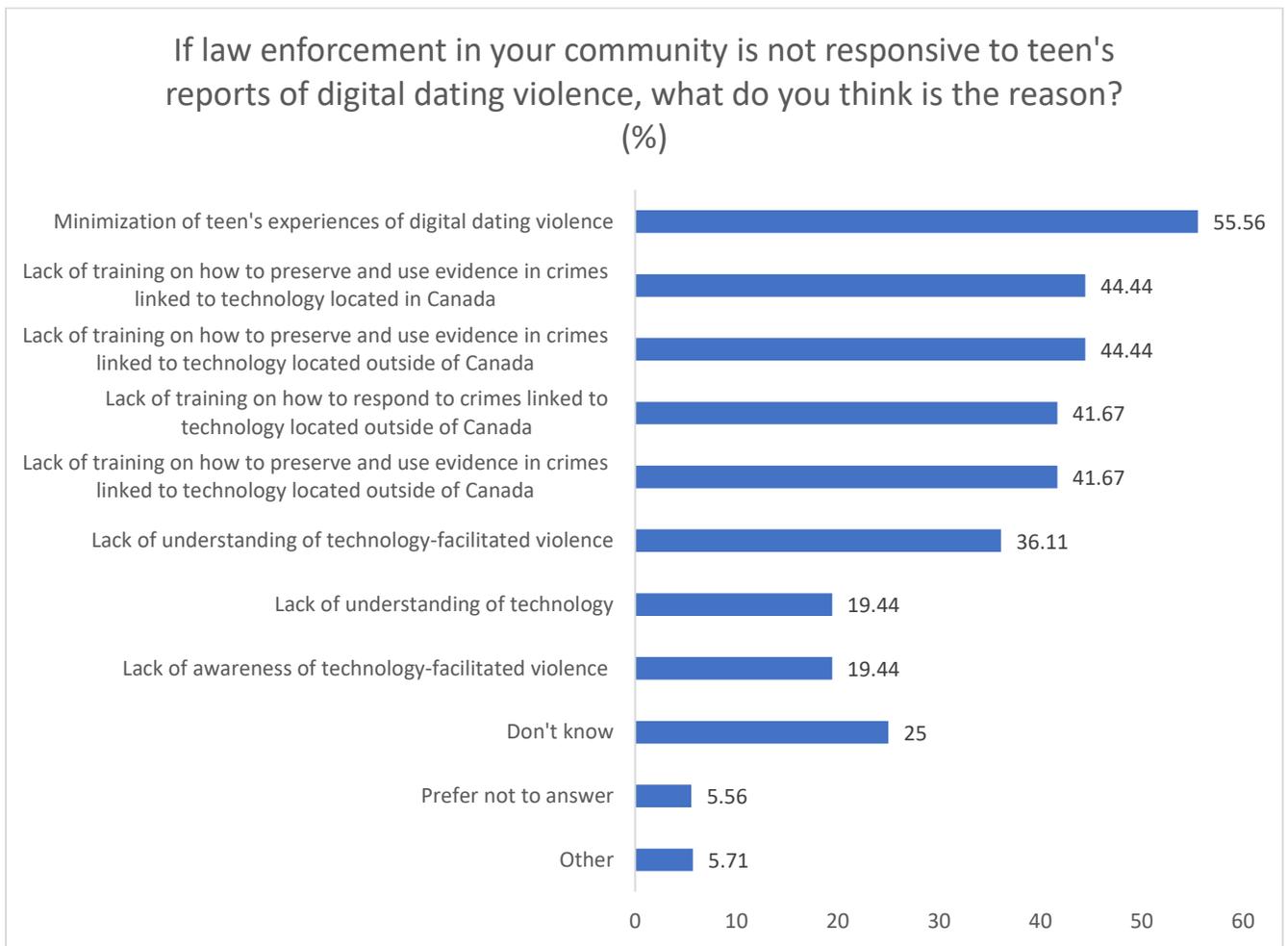


Figure 21: If law enforcement in your community is not responsive to teen's reports of digital dating violence, what do you think is the reason? (n = 36).

Of those who selected “other,” the following reasons were specified:

1. In my experience it depends who the police are, and as they change some are excellent and others ignore concerns.
2. Prejudice, socioeconomics.
3. Victim shaming and blaming, lack of awareness & understanding of issue and impact.
4. Lack of skills for working with teens.

Telecommunication Companies

Survey respondents were asked what they thought telecommunication companies and internet service providers could do to enhance teen’s online safety. Figure 22 outlines their responses.

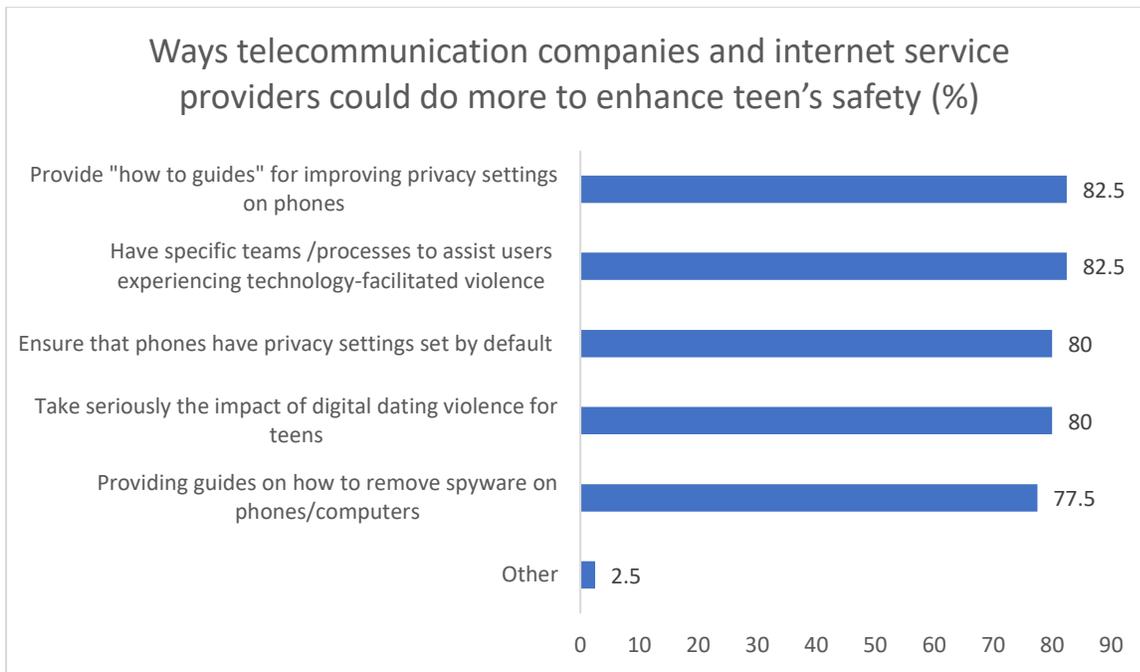


Figure 22: In what ways do you think telecommunication companies and internet providers could do more to enhance teen’s safety online (n = 40).

Impact of Digital Dating Violence

When asked if teens are aware of what constitutes digital dating violence, 24 of 40 respondents (60%) answered “no”.

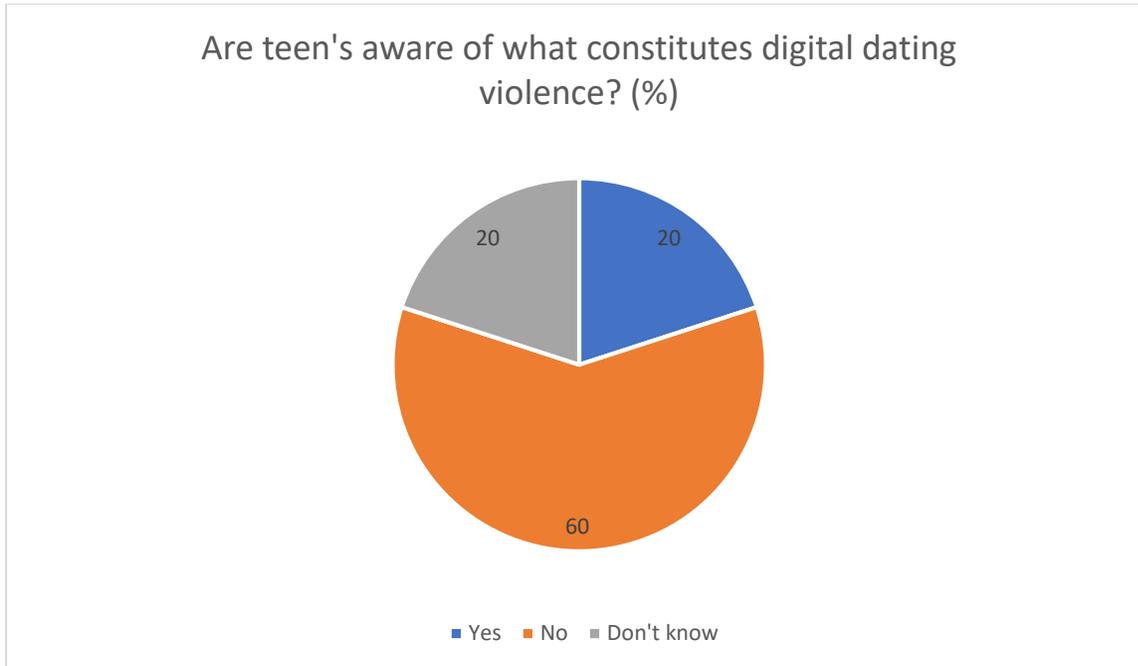


Figure 23: In your experience, are teens aware of what constitutes digital dating violence? (n=40).

When asked, “what has been the impact of digital dating violence on teens you have worked with?” 28 respondents answered. The open ended answers have been separated into three categories.

1. Mental Health

- Low self-esteem, feeling cornered or stuck in a sense, scared and lonely.
- Low self-esteem and self-confidence, trust issues, depression, anxiety.
- Depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety, fear, lowered self-esteem, isolation.
- Scared, loss of confidence, angry, sad, depressed.
- Teens allow a certain level of this form of violence, in order to save/maintain/salvage a relationship that is important to them. The victims carry the weight/responsibility that is that not theirs to bear and transfer blame on themselves. All of this taking away from the accountability of the aggressor.
- Depression, low self-esteem, social consequences i.e. Loss of status or friendships, suicidal ideation, need for counselling supports.
- Increased knowledge of their technology, more tech savvy, fear, anxiety.

- Anxiety; isolation; fear; self-harm.
- Misguided views of what appropriate relationships are, including within peer and friend groups. Poor view of self-esteem and ability to fit in with those around them. A huge sense of obligation to their online community, even if in neglect of themselves. Impulsivity.
- Increase in anxiety in teens, missing school, low self-esteem and some suicidal thoughts.
- Anxiety and fear surrounding creating boundaries with the perpetrator; feeling unable to ask for help from adults/friends/family; not understanding their rights and feeling powerless; negative impacts to self-esteem.
- Humiliation, reputation damaged beyond repair, fear, lowered self-worth, putting themselves in harmful situation. Damaging emotional scaring that time years to recover from.
- Low self-worth; depression; self-harm; suicidal ideation; increase in risky behaviours like drugs or alcohol use.
- Self-harm, isolation, emotional trauma, mental health negatively impacted.
- Dealing with their feelings of guilt and shame for 'letting it' happen to them.
- A lack of trust, depression, anxiety, poor performance in schools, feeling bullied, isolation, feeling like they are being watched, hypervigilance, disclosure of feelings of worthlessness, feeling violated, angry.
- The teen's self-esteem, confidence and feelings of worthiness have been eroded.

2. Trauma

- It can be devastating and traumatizing.
- Traumatic and considered normal behavior.
- Very traumatized. A feeling of not being safe anywhere at all...they are always watching. No support from police when placing a complaint. Being told it happens and there was no way the police could track him down or help her in anyway. Frustration, fear and terror are words used.

3. Lack of Trust/Fear

- Lack of trust and fear around digital technology but also just a general suspicion and lack of trust around any dating relationship. Also the break up time seems harder emotionally and longer.
- Threats of sharing images with family members.

- They rely on one another for information, to keep it secret, and normalize the violent behaviour as a group.
- Not trusting.
- Teens live in fear of experiencing violence from abusive partners, and fear that harm will come to their family. Isolation from friends due to widespread sharing of harmful images.
- They are terrorized and second guessing their decision to leave him.
- Isolation. Dating partner and dating partner's mother spread false, malicious gossip to dating partner's friend's parents and others throughout the high school. The high school did NOT support my client, even with a NCO in place. My client has been treated as the accused. My client lost her social circle due to bullying behaviour by dating partner and friends. Dating partner's mother phoned all in her social circle and the dating partner's social circle parents. Bullying by dating partner and mother at my client's workplace. My client has been through hell! I am shocked that the school has not intervened with the bullying and has offered zero support to my client.
- Kids I work with are mostly under 12 but cyber-bullying is real so I imagine digital dating violence happens and is scary and terrible as well.

Training and Resource Development

Technology Safety Planning

33 of 38 respondents (86.8%) identified that “yes” they do include technology safety in their safety planning conversations with teens (figure 24).



Figure 24: Do you currently include technology safety in conversations about safety planning if a teen you are supporting has experienced technology-facilitated violence? (n=38).

Training

When asked if respondents have received training about teens and technology-facilitated violence, 14 of 40 respondents (35%) replied yes.

11 of 39 respondents have received training about how to support teens experiencing digital dating violence. Of those who have received training about how to support teens experiencing digital dating violence, respondents were asked to specify this training:

1. I have attended workshops and conferences but I find the teens that I work with know so much more about technology than I do that I am not very helpful or don't understand completely.
2. Children who witness abuse training. RCMP /victims services training.
3. I follow any BCSTH recommendations re tech safety.
4. Have no training.
5. N/A
6. Assisted in facilitating the BELIEVE Project in both Valemount and McBride Secondary Schools. Content is discussed in group format in the R&R program delivered under school curriculum. But I believe specific training to update would be applicable and ideal.
7. No I haven't, but I would love to take specific training!
8. Ways to make technology safer, education around healthy relationships, safe proofing technology.
9. Have received a little through BCSTH ATF
10. I have received training around support teens through providing privacy training and how to spot spyware installed on technology devices. I've also been trained on how to remain safe on the internet regarding information sharing.
11. No
12. None
13. Relias training courses, experience in university education and volunteer programs, BCSTH online training and webinars that have included pieces of technology related violence
14. I received technical info on spy ware and basic info around not sending personal information and pictures over the internet.
15. GRIP, TRIP, ERASE.
16. Prefer not to say.

- 17. We had a webinar about technology-facilitated stalking, although the focus was on adults and teens.
- 18. Tech safety.
- 19. More learning about how abusers use technology to continue abusing.

Resource Development

35 of 40 respondents felt that they needed more information and resources to respond to teen’s support needs related to digital dating violence.

Figure 25 identifies the resources respondents would like to see developed.

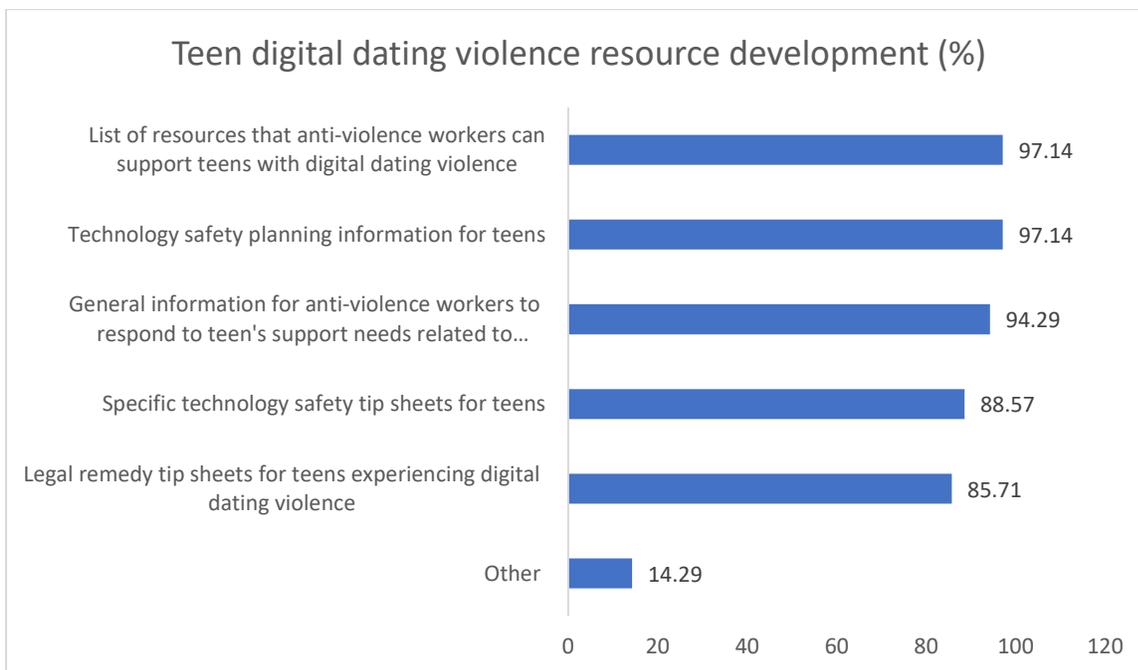


Figure 25: Do you feel that you need more information and resources to respond to teen’s support needs related to technology-facilitated violence. If yes, check all that apply? (n=35).

Of those that selected “other”, “Resources for parents around teen digital dating violence” was a suggested resource for development.

Resource Sharing

40 survey respondents identified online training (82.5%), webinars (70%) and in-person training (65%) as the preferred method for receiving information and resources (figure 26).

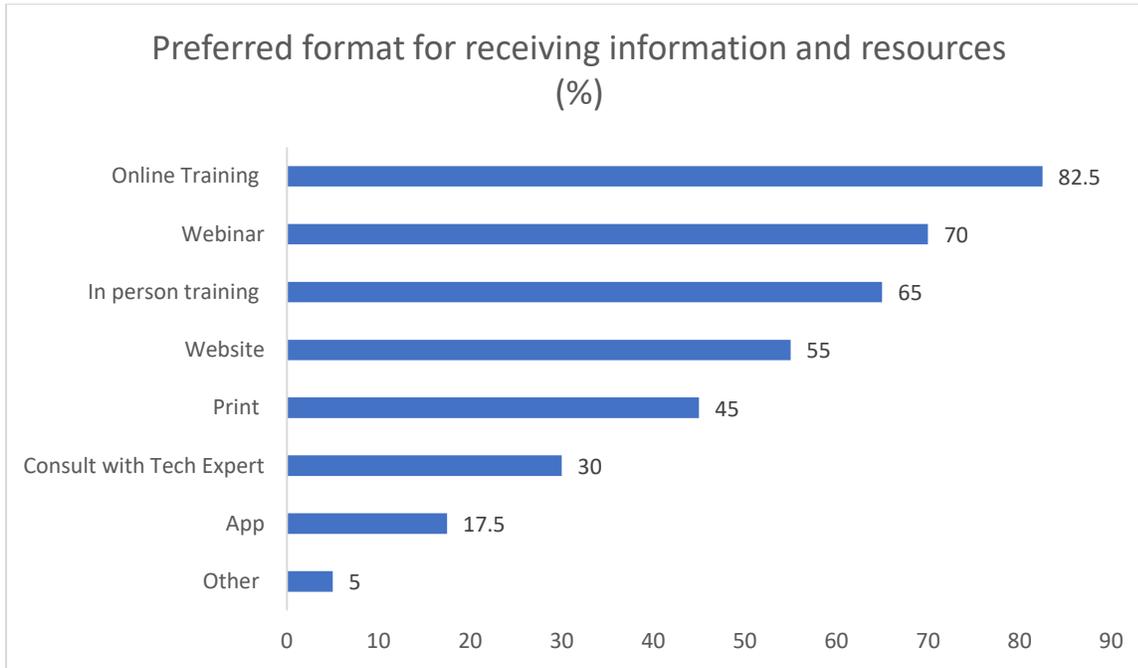


Figure 26: What is the preferred format for receiving information and resources? (n=40).

Recommendations

The survey findings highlight that technology facilitated violence is a common reality for teens in BC. 43 of 44 survey respondents (97.7%) from a range of BC anti-violence programs reported that they have supported teens who have experienced digital dating violence. Anti-violence workers in responding to this survey have identified common devices, methods and modes of digital dating violence perpetrated against teens by an abusive dating partner in British Columbia. Harassment, criminal harassment and threats are most commonly received via text, social media and phone on teen’s smartphones, laptops and tablets. Interestingly, these findings are similar to BCSTH’s findings about women’s experiences in our [“Technology-Facilitated Violence: BC Anti-Violence Worker Survey Report \(February 2020\).”](#) Among teens who are in a relationship with adults (over the age of 18) where there is a two year age difference, the most common forms of technology facilitated violence differs slightly from their peers who are in relationships with dating partners their age. Harassment and criminal harassment (stalking) are still the most common forms of violence, however grooming becomes the third common form, replacing threats, which has been identified in teen relationships.

Based on the responses to this survey, teen digital dating violence is gendered. While people of all genders experience cyberviolence¹, women and girls are at greater risk of experiencing violence online, especially severe types of harassment and sexualized abuse. In 2009, 67% of the victims of police-reported intimidation on the Internet were women and girls². Through our research, males were primarily identified as the perpetrators or abusive partners in experiences of digital dating violence by teens accessing anti-violence programs. Females primarily disclosed being victims of digital dating violence.

The prevalence of teen digital dating violence in British Columbia and its impacts, supports the need for an increased awareness of teen’s experiences and the fostering of supportive responses from schools, law enforcement, tech and communication companies. Systemically, it is important to recognize and validate teen’s experiences of digital dating violence and do “no further harm” when intervening. Tech and communication companies, including the device makers, service providers and developers of apps, websites and social media platforms could help to educate teens and the public by developing products and services with privacy and security at the forefront. The companies should recognize this common reality for teens, create prompt user-friendly remedies for its users if technology-facilitated violence occurs, and offer accessible safety resources and tips for Canadian teens, their families, and the public.

The SPARK: Responding to Teen Digital Dating Violence BC Anti-Violence Worker Survey provides important data that will inform the BCSTH development of resources and training needed to support teens experiencing digital dating violence and anti-violence workers. Survey respondents indicated a gap in resources and training about teen digital dating violence. The findings support a conclusion that information on what constitutes healthy relationships online is needed as 60% of respondents did not believe the teens they support recognized that digital dating violence was what they were experiencing. In addition, the survey identified a need for the development of resources and general awareness related to texting, social media, online gaming, distribution of non-consensual images and grooming to provide relevant and valuable practical resources for anti-violence workers and the teens they support.

BCSTH, with the guidance of the Project’s Advisory Committee members, will draw on the survey’s findings to:

- develop web based training in consultation with other technology safety non-profits engaged in similar work such as the US based National Network to End Domestic Violence to increase the capacity of BC’s anti-violence workers to better support teens experiencing digital dating violence; and
- research and develop accessible online resources for both anti-violence workers and teens regarding digital dating violence;

¹¹ <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/FEWO/Reports/RP8823562/feworp07/feworp07-e.pdf>

² <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2011001/article/11530-eng.htm#a2>

- engage key stakeholders – law enforcement, government, schools, tech and communication businesses- to educate them about the prevalence of teen digital dating violence and engage them to work with BCSTH on practical solutions.

The prevalence of teen digital dating violence as illustrated by almost 100% of the respondents indicating that they supported teens who had disclosed experiences of digital dating violence is alarming. Compounded by the finding that only 40% of the teens identified this behaviour as technology-facilitated violence indicates that much work needs to be done to address this abusive reality in the daily lives of teenagers. The impact of this violence on their lives illustrated in the mental health challenges, trauma, fear and lack of trust described above in the narrative comments supports the need for a cross-sector response to respond and prevent this trauma and violence going forward.

We thank the anti-violence workers across BC for taking the time out of their busy days to fill out the BCSTH survey. These critical survey findings will guide and inform the teen digital dating violence work of the BCSTH Technology Safety Project.

For more information about BCSTH's Technology Safety project go to,
<https://bcsth.ca/projects/technology-safety/>
