



APRIL-OCTOBER 2021  
UKRAINE

# SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN UKRAINE

from recognition to protection



FAMA.AGENCY



This project has been implemented by Fama Research Agency at the request of and in cooperation with UCU Child Dignity Center. The views of the authors presented in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Center. Realized with the support of Porticus.

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- **Mariana Kuzko**, Fama Research Agency project manager



**Child Dignity Center** started its activity in January 2021 at the Ukrainian Catholic University. It is a key expert, educational, and research center for combating sexual violence against children in Ukraine. Its mission is to create such a culture in the Church and society, where the dignity of children will be upheld as an absolute value. The Center aims at promoting a safe environment and preventing sexual violence.

Today the Center's activities cover four different areas: scientific, and academic areas, work with the clergy and church environment, public education.

Our task is to make every child feel safe and every adult able to identify a child or a troubled peer who needs help. We want to lift the taboo on the topic of sexual violence against children and to ensure that everyone working with children has appropriate security skills, implemented policies, and knows how to act in crisis situations.



**Fama Research Agency**

**BRight Data for Right Decisions**

We examine society and find answers for those who create the present. Having grown from a student startup, today we develop research solutions for management challenges in the field of public administration, business, and politics, carry out large-scale comprehensive interdisciplinary studies together with Ukrainian and international partners. We are accredited by the Sociological Association of Ukraine (SAU) and have successful experience in implementing projects within the framework of a grant support program for Ukrainian enterprises from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. In the course of ten years of work, we have implemented more than 450 projects using our own innovative methods, due to which the results of Fama's research have repeatedly proved to be one of the most accurate.



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# PREFACE

## CHILD DIGNITY CENTER AT UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

In December 2019, on behalf of the Synod of Bishops, His Beatitude Sviatoslav (Shevchuk) addresses Ukrainian Catholic University with a request to establish a Center to support the training of seminarians, religious organizations and secular institutions regarding child protection issues.

When we started our work in January 2021 we had so many unknowns in our “equation” that it seemed that no formula could solve it.

We did not know where to start. On the one hand, we knew that Ukraine is among the top three world producers of child pornography, on the other hand, we were also aware that there are about 400 cases of child sexual abuse crimes registered over a year. Later we realized that the statistical data provided by different institutions do not add up, so we could not get any objective information to analyze the pain points.

As an organization that consistently works with the Church we also wanted to understand how the Church can promote the concept of zero tolerance for violence in society and what we should put emphasis on. Another reason for this research is the fact that since 2018 the Catholic Church throughout the world has been working strenuously to create safe environment and ensure zero tolerance for violence within its structures. Thus, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church has become one of the first organizations in Ukraine which does not only openly declare its zero tolerance for violence position, but has also set up structures within the Church to receive reports of sexual abuse crimes and has formed immediate response mechanisms.

In order to comprehensively address the issue of child sexual abuse in Ukraine we decided to study the experience of Ukrainians. Do the figures reported by the WHO really reflect the actual situation in Ukraine? Is it true that victims tend to keep quiet? What effective mechanisms can help prevent sexual violence and, most importantly, who has to implement them?

Due to this research, which we have been preparing for more than six months, we have found answers to these questions and have even come up with a possible model of sexuality education in schools. Why is it important? Because one needs to understand the problem from within. It often seems to us that violence against children is not our problem, rather American or European. Nevertheless, we do have it here, and the horrible statistics prove it. This research has also helped us confirm the existence of various stereotypes (e.g. these are usually strangers who become perpetrators or that pornography can be educational material for children).

Therefore, both in the system of home upbringing and of general education we continue to teach children to be afraid of strangers, instead of being able to set their own safety boundaries. The notion of safety has changed. It is no longer equivalent to “material security”. Parents want their children to know about safety, children want their parents to tell

them about safety, while parents rely on schools, schools rely on parents, and so we end up in a silent vicious circle, whereas every fifth child in Ukraine has experienced sexual violence at least once in their life and one in 25 children has been raped. What awaits next? Next is time for actions. The only efficient action is prevention. We are launching work on raising awareness mechanisms in the Church and society. Everyone involved in the work with children must know how to identify a child suffering from violence and what steps to take. We need online and academic training, seminars, courses. It is high time we all started understanding what a truly safe childhood is.



**Khrystyna Shabat,**  
head of UCU Child Dignity Center

## FAMA RESEARCH AGENCY

“We barely know anything about the statistics of sexual violence against children in Ukraine”. That was the request with which Child Dignity Center addressed Fama Agency in early 2021.

It is not surprising, since the topic of sexual violence in our country is a very sensitive issue, a taboo even. The data regarding seeking medical aid or appealing to law enforcement officers demonstrate the scale of the problem in a very distorted way because by all means not every victim of violence is willing or able to voice the problem. It is often the case that the perpetrator’s relatives stand up for them refusing to believe that such a crime could have happened in their family. Alternatively, families often refuse to “air their dirty laundry in public”, thus traumatizing the victims even more. At the same time, many juvenile victims are not even aware that they have been sexually abused. Sometimes, they come to the realization in adulthood. Sometimes they do not.

Therefore, as a research agency, we faced a challenge – how to study the topic of sexual violence against children and get honest answers without traumatizing those who had such an experience?

We could have used global data regarding sexual violence. A lot of research has been conducted on this topic, yet there is no single standardized methodology. In Ukraine, there have been several studies on sexual violence and sexuality education, including:

- Public opinion survey on violence against children (KIIS, 2015),
- Awareness and attitudes of parents and teachers’ community to comprehensive sexuality education (Cedos, 2020),
- The specifics of investigating and prosecuting cases of sexual violence against children, inter alia, online crimes, and child trafficking (International Charity Organization “Child Rescue Service”, 2021),
- Sexual violence against children and sexual exploitation of children on the Internet in Ukraine (International Charity Organization “Child Rescue Service” in cooperation with the Presidential Commissioner for Children’s Rights, 2021)

Within the framework of our research, we decided to cover several areas at once, which would not only allow us to assess the scope of the problem, but also to minimize the relevant problems in the future. Thus, we studied society’s perceptions of sexual safety, respondents’ personal experience, their behavior when suspecting child sexual abuse, and their attitudes towards introducing sexuality education in Ukraine as a prevention mechanism.

### Perceptions of sexual safety

The problem of sexual violence is discussed by doctors, law enforcement officers, representatives of advocacy groups, but does this topic really resonate with the general public?

In this study, our team made a great focus on determining whether Ukrainian society views sexual violence as a burning issue in the country.

Who should be responsible for preventing sexual violence against children? How do respondents interpret the concept of sexual violence – is it or not limited to rape only? How widespread are misconceptions and stereotypes connected with sexuality education of children and sexual violence? What is the image of the perpetrator and the victim?

### Number of victims

It was important for us to understand the number of people who have gone through traumatic sexual experience, real or imaginary. What proportion of citizens over 16 years of age experienced sexual violence in different periods of their life? Do they normally seek help? Did they inform anybody about what had happened to them?

This study does not reveal the current situation with sexual violence at the example of a group of minors, but allows analyzing the situation in retrospect through the answers of today’s adults who were abused as children. This can help us examine and understand the consequences.

### Actions in case of sexual violence

Avoid, wait, delegate or take an active part in resolving the problem – what will an adult do when they suspect that a child has been sexually abused? Will their behavior change depending on whether they know the child well or do not know at all? We have answers to these questions.

### Sexuality education

The topic of sexuality education is essential in the context of preventing sexual violence and studying its causes. It was important for us to understand respondents’ personal experience of sexuality education in childhood. Should this topic be included in the academic programs? How many Ukrainians support the introduction of sexuality education in Ukraine and who should take care of the process: schools, health workers, public organizations, parents or someone else?

This report will present answers to all these and other questions. We hope that the study of sexual violence against children will be ongoing and the obtained data will become the basis for the development of prevention programs and measures.



**Mariana Malachivska-Danchak,**  
PhD in Sociology, founder of Fama Research Agency

# SUMMARY OF DATA

Ukrainian families do not talk about sex. Study participants state they first learned about sex from their friends (42%). 17% of respondents did have such a conversation with their parents. Other sources of information were teachers or counselors (5%), books (5%), entertainment films and videos (4%).

At the same time, study participants consider parents to be responsible for sexuality education (93%). While friends, who in majority of cases actually were the ones who told respondents about sex, are the least fit for this role (5%).

In general, Ukrainians are aware of the importance of sexuality education for children. 46% of respondents believe that sexuality education should start before the age of 8, 80% – at the age of 9-13, 92% – after 14. Those respondents who have children support systematic and early sexuality education more eagerly than those who do not have children. The educational program should be adapted to children's age and include not only an overview of anatomical differences between boys and girls, and information about the reproductive function of the body, but also topics related to the acceptance of oneself and one's sexuality, gender equality, Internet safety, etc.

33% of Ukrainians became sexually active at the age of 16-17, another 51% – after reaching adulthood. The first partners are usually slightly older [for 24% – 16-17 years old, for 72% – older than 18].

The younger generation learns about sex earlier [66% of the 16-35 age group learned about sex before the age of 13, in the 36-55 age group this indicator makes up 52%] and starts practicing sex earlier [14% of respondents aged 16-35 and 7% of respondents aged 36-55 became sexually active at the age of 14-15, at the age of 16-17 – 41% and 30%, respectively, at the age of 18 and more – 44% and 62%, respectively; cases of sexual activity before the age of 13 have also increased: 3% among respondents aged 16-35 and 1% among respondents aged 36-55].

The study recorded about 2% of cases when the first sexual experience occurred before the age of 14, which according to the Criminal Code of Ukraine is considered a crime (even with the consent of the child).

Study participants interpret the term of "sexual violence" quite broadly. It includes various acts of a sexual nature [from sex itself to unwanted touches or staring] committed against minors. Many of those acts are also characterized as sexual violence when talking about adults. These include oral sex [64% of respondents regard it as

sexual violence in adulthood], prostitution (64%), spying on naked people (65%), receiving unwanted sexual text messages (69%), receiving unwanted intimate photos or videos (73%), exhibitionism (75%).

In most cases it is the perpetrator of sexual violence who gets blamed (77%). However, there are respondents who believe in the guilt of both parties (21%).

In respondents' view, in most cases the perpetrators of child sexual abuse are strangers (62%), non-blood relatives (41%), friends / classmates (33%) or other acquaintances (32%). Most often, the perpetrator of child sexual abuse is perceived as someone aged 35-49 (35%). 21% of respondents believe that women are not able of committing sexual violence acts.

According to study participants, victims of sexual violence are children aged 9-17 (41%).

According to respondents' statements, about 4% of them were raped in childhood, 23% were sexually abused / harassed (including rape). About 40% of those who were sexually abused or harassed in childhood told somebody about the situation, about 43% did not, while 17% did not answer the clarifying question.

Survey participants believe that these are parents (92%), teachers (52%), school psychologists / guidance counselors (52%) and law-enforcement bodies (52%) that are responsible for the prevention of sexual violence against children.

In case of suspecting child sexual abuse Ukrainians promise to react to it [about 5% of respondents will ignore such a situation if it involves a child they do not know, about 1% will ignore such a situation if it involves a child from their immediate environment]. Respondents will more actively react to the situation which concerns a child they know well (rather than a child they do not know), regardless of the age of the child.



# ABOUT THE PROJECT

This study focuses on the topics of sexual violence and sexuality education. In this research we abide by the following definitions:

- **Sexual violence** includes non-consensual completed or attempted sexual contact; non-consensual acts of a sexual nature not involving contact (such as voyeurism or sexual harassment); acts of sexual trafficking committed against someone who is unable to consent or refuse, and online exploitation.

[According to INSPIRE Handbook: Action for implementing the seven strategies for ending violence against children, WHO]

- **Sexuality education** is the process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and, understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

[According to the United Nations Population Fund's International technical guidance on sexuality education]

## METHODOLOGICAL REFERENCE

The study was conducted on August 6-19 by a face-to-face recruitment method and completion of the questionnaires by respondents themselves. A total of 1,600 respondents aged 16 to 55 were interviewed.

We applied multi-stage proportional stratification sampling using the route method and quotas at the last stage. The quotation was carried out on the basis of such socio-demographic characteristics as age and sex. The regions under study:

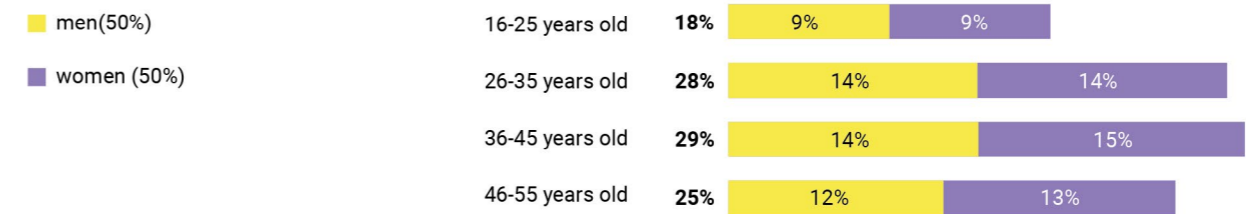
- West – Zakarpattia, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, and Chernivtsi regions;
- North – Volyn, Rivne, Zhytomyr, Kyiv regions, and the city of Kyiv;
- East – Chernihiv, Sumy, Poltava, Kharkiv, and Luhansk [except for the temporarily uncontrolled by Ukraine territories] regions;
- South – Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Zaporizhia, and Donetsk [except for the temporarily uncontrolled by Ukraine territories] regions;
- Center – Khmelnytskyi, Vinnytsia, Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, and Dnipropetrovsk regions.

Sample representativeness error with a confidence level of 0.954 does not exceed:

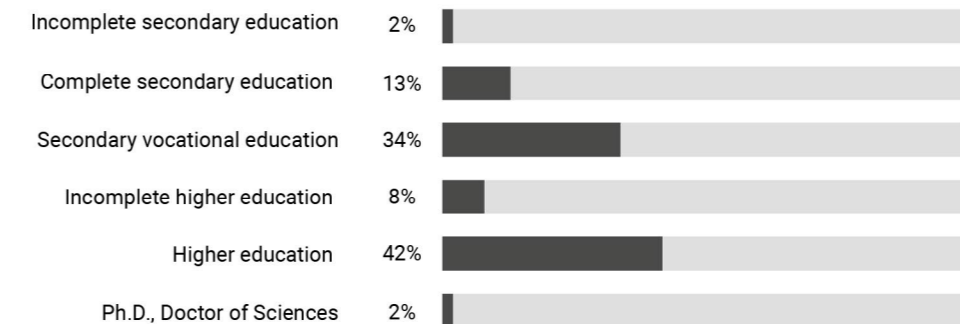
- 2.5% – for the indicators approximating to 50%;
- 2.1% – for the indicators approximating to 25% or 75%;
- 1.5% – for the indicators approximating to 10% or 90%;
- 1.1% – for the indicators approximating to 5% or 95%;
- 0.5% – for the indicators approximating to 1% or 99%.

## PROFILE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

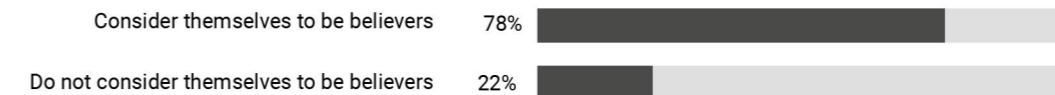
### SEX AND AGE DISTRIBUTION



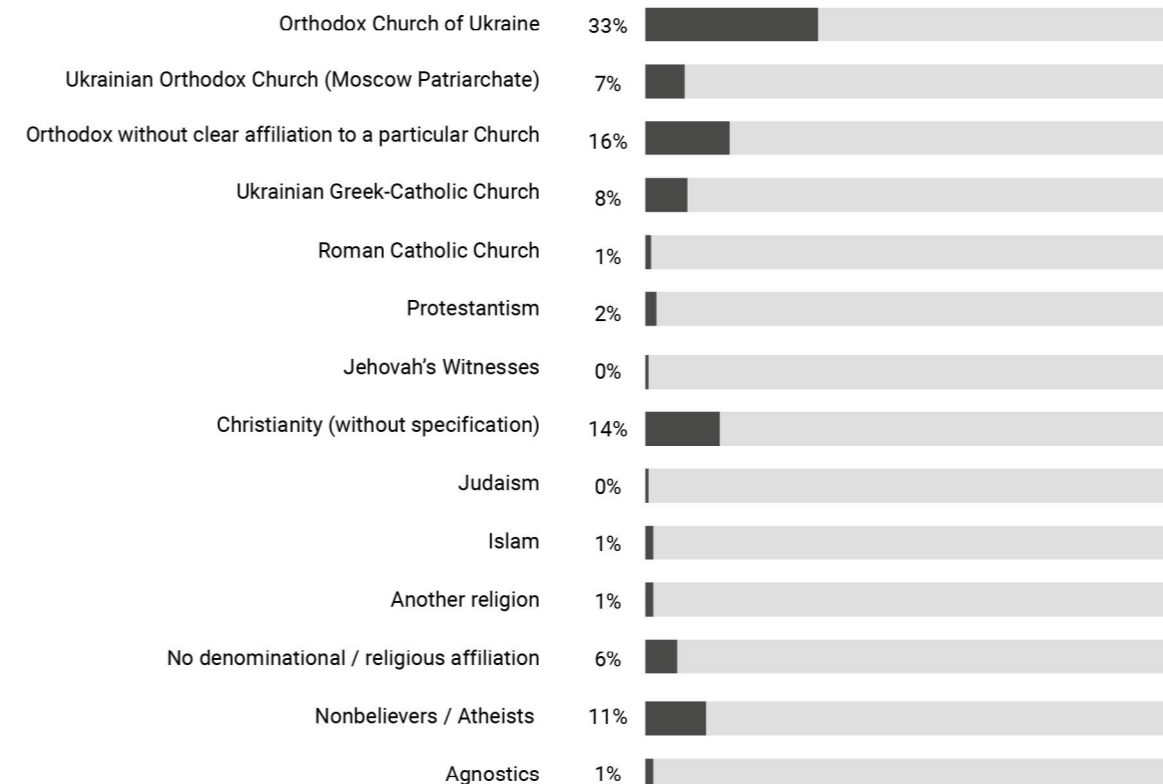
### EDUCATION



### BELIEFS



### RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION



PARENTAL STATUS



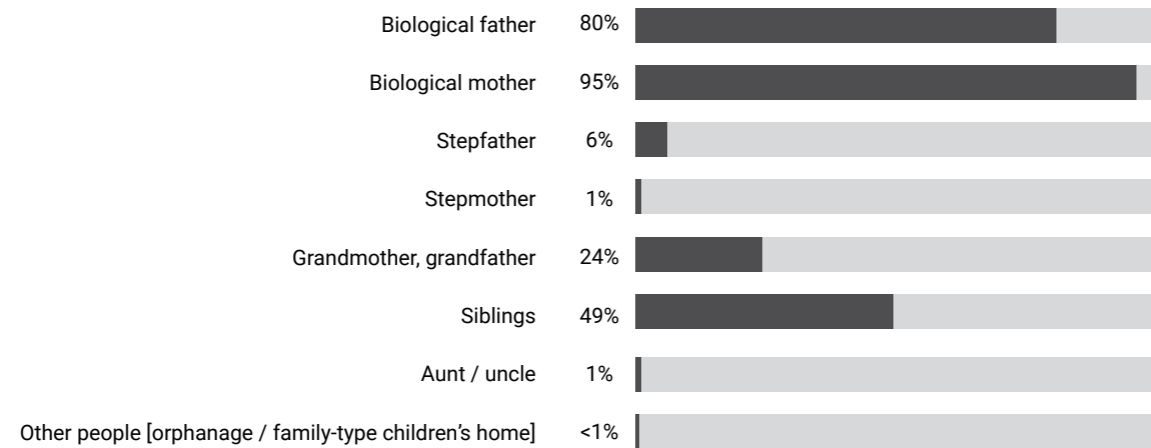
CHILDREN'S AGE (AMONG THOSE HAVING CHILDREN)



TYPE OF THE FAMILY IN WHICH RESPONDENTS WERE BROUGHT UP [LIVING TOGETHER]



STRUCTURE OF THE FAMILY IN WHICH RESPONDENTS WERE BROUGHT UP

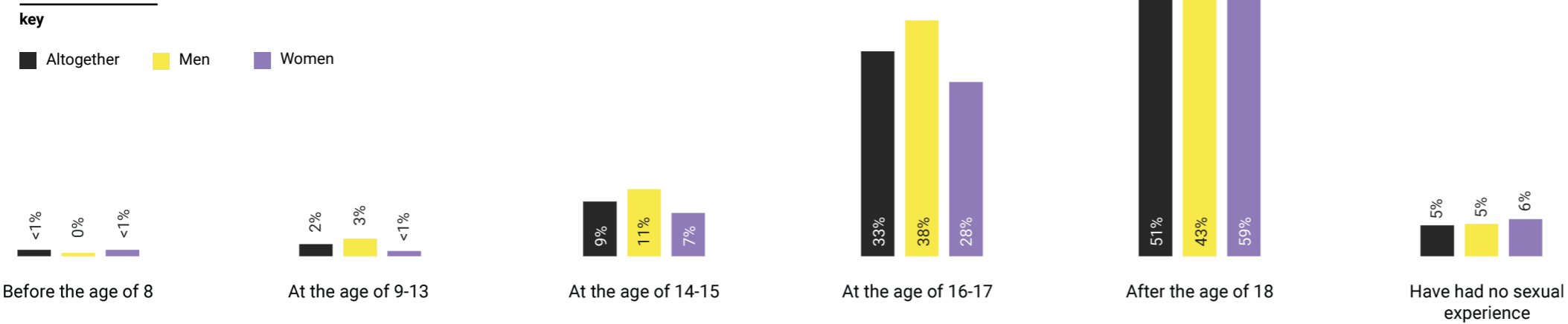


# 01 SEXUALITY EDUCATION



# SEXUALITY EDUCATION

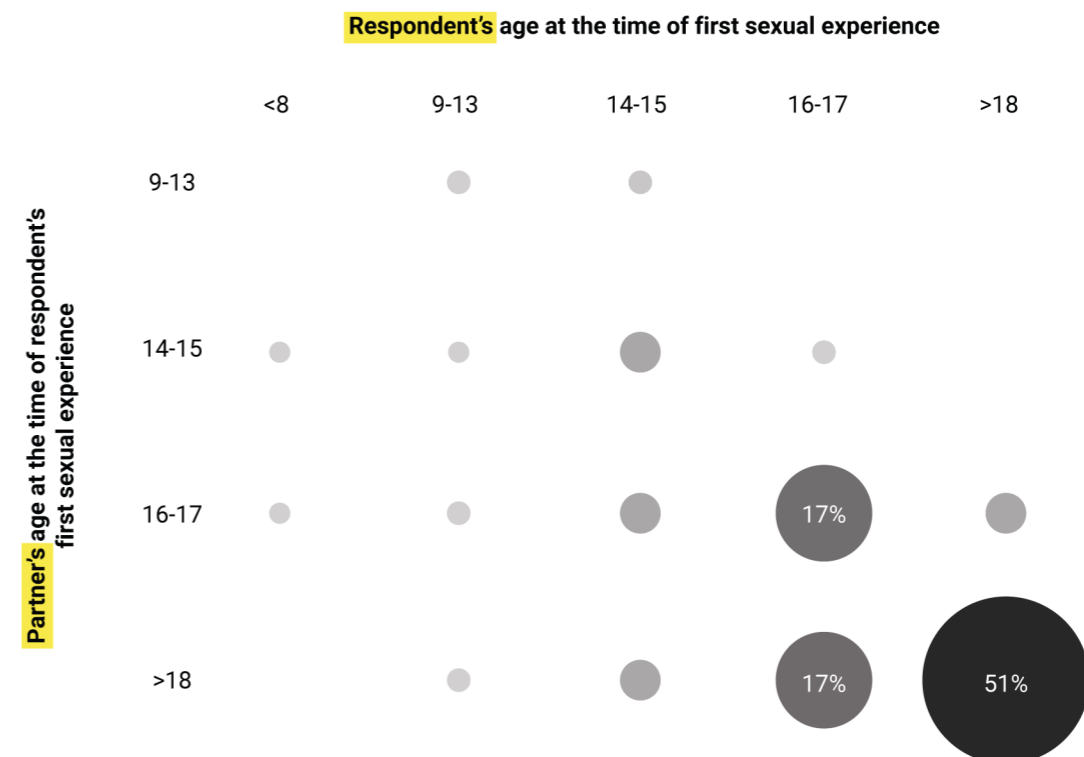
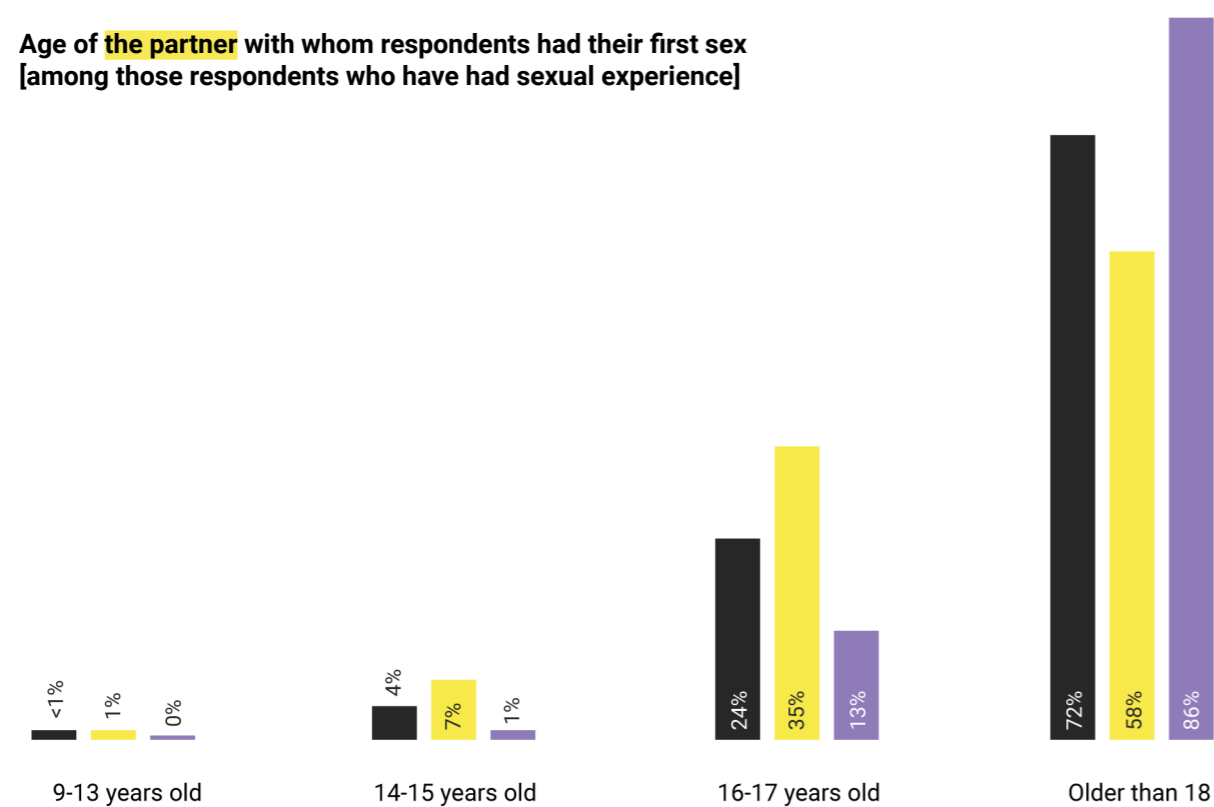
## FIRST SEXUAL EXPERIENCE



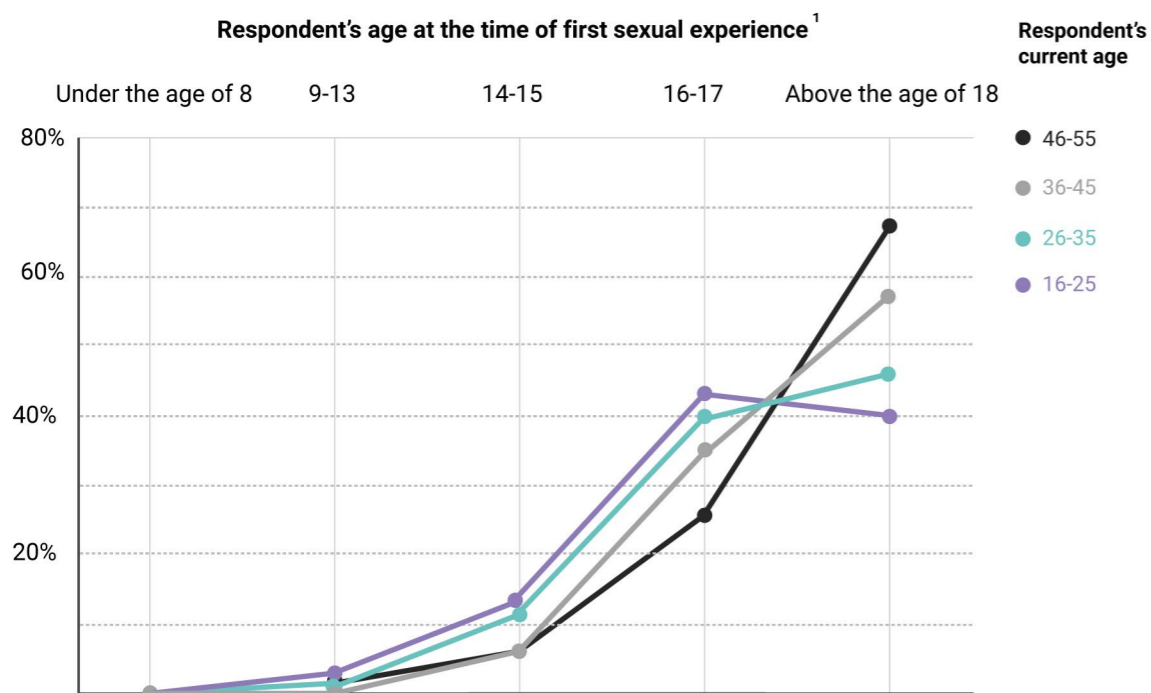
Typically, Ukrainians become sexually active at the age of 16+ [33% at the age of 16-17, 51% after 18]. Men tend to start their sex life a little earlier. At the same time, this tendency is not observed when it comes to the age of the sexual partner; this leads to an assumption that first sex usually happens with a more experienced partner.

One can also observe lowering of the age at which first sexual intercourse took place. While 67% of respondents aged 46-55 "waited" until they were 18, among the age group of 36-45 it was 57% who did so, among the 26-35-year-old respondents – 46%, among the 16-25-year-old respondents – 40%. At the same time, the share of those who had their first sex in adolescence (14-15 years) is higher among young people (16-35 years old).

## Age of the partner with whom respondents had their first sex [among those respondents who have had sexual experience]







## SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT SEX

Experts do not specify a particular age at which one should talk with children about sex. The majority of Ukrainians first learned about sex at the age of 9-13 (66%). Today's youth (16-35 years old) learned about sex a little earlier than the young people of the 1970s and 1980s.

42% of respondents learned about sex from their friends, and 17% from their parents. These sources of sexuality education are equally relevant for all age groups.

The development of technology has left its mark on the choice of other (uncommon) sources of information. Hence the Internet became the first source of information about sex for 8% of respondents aged 16-25 (among all respondents the corresponding figure amounts to 2%), respondents aged 16-35 more often than others learned about sex from entertainment films and videos (5% as opposed to 3% among all respondents), respondents aged 26-35 used specialized films and videos more often than others (5%), while in the age group of 46-60, books were used relatively more often than in other groups (7% as opposed to 5% among all respondents).

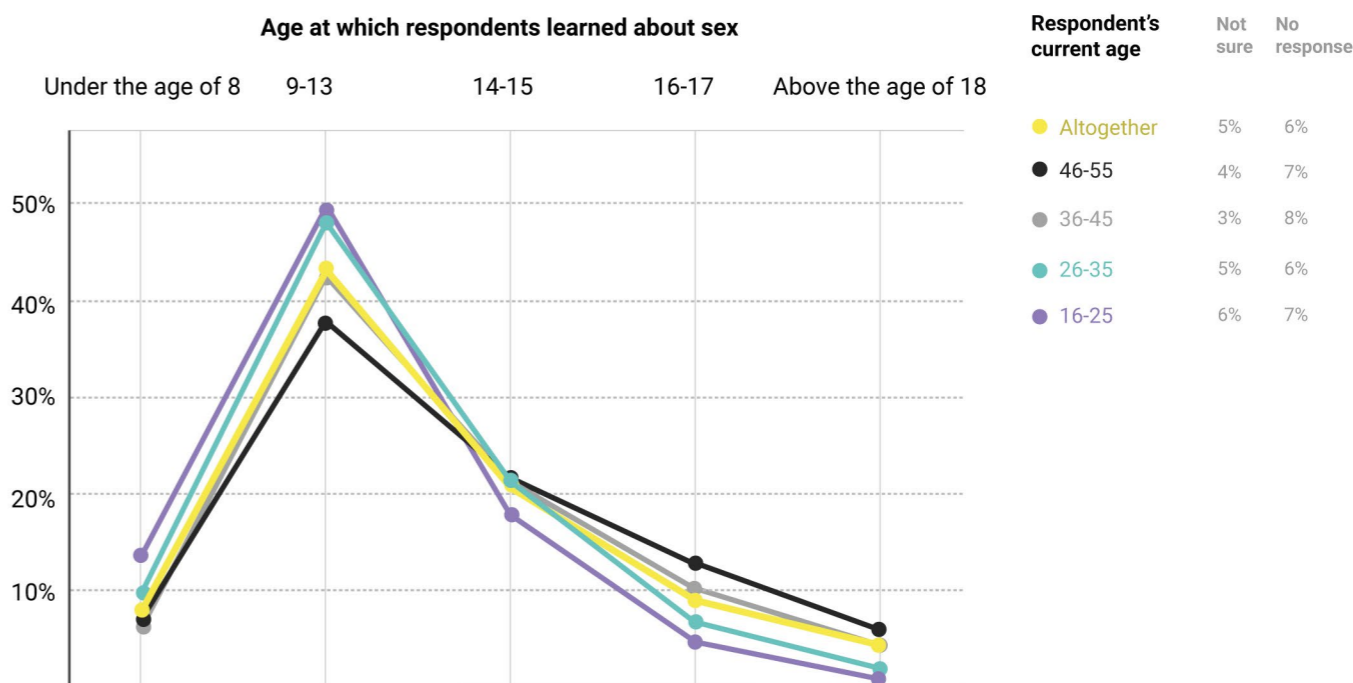
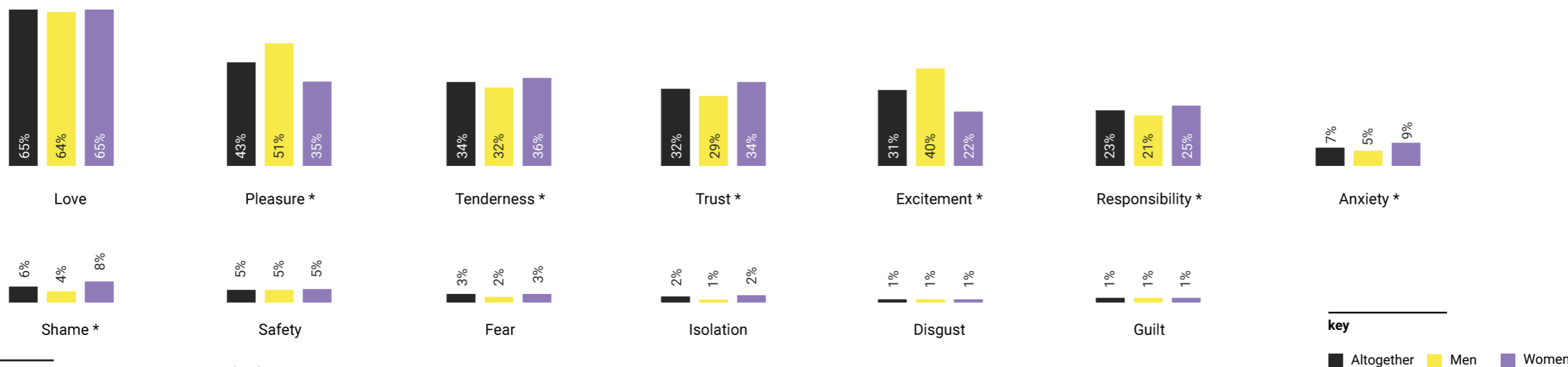
## EMOTIONS CONNECTED WITH THE WORD "SEX"

In most cases the word "sex" has a positive connotation: love (65%), pleasure (43%), tenderness (34%), trust (32%), excitement (31%), responsibility (23%). However, sex is not always perceived as something positive: 7% of respondents feel anxious hearing the word, 3% feel fear, 2% – isolation, 1% – disgust or guilt. Emotions, associations or attitude towards something can arise from personal experience or knowledge. It is not improbable that the cause of the negative associations lies in some unpleasant events connected with sex which happened to or were witnessed by respondents.

**IN GENERAL, PURELY POSITIVE ASSOCIATIONS ARE PRESENT IN THE ANSWERS OF 84% OF RESPONDENTS, PURELY NEGATIVE IN THE ANSWERS OF 3% OF RESPONDENTS. 13% OF RESPONDENTS CHOSE BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS.**

Men's and women's associations with sex differ. In particular, 51% of men and 35% of women choose "pleasure", 40% of men and 22% of women choose "excitement". 8% of women feel ashamed when they hear about sex. Among men such reaction is twice as rare (4%).

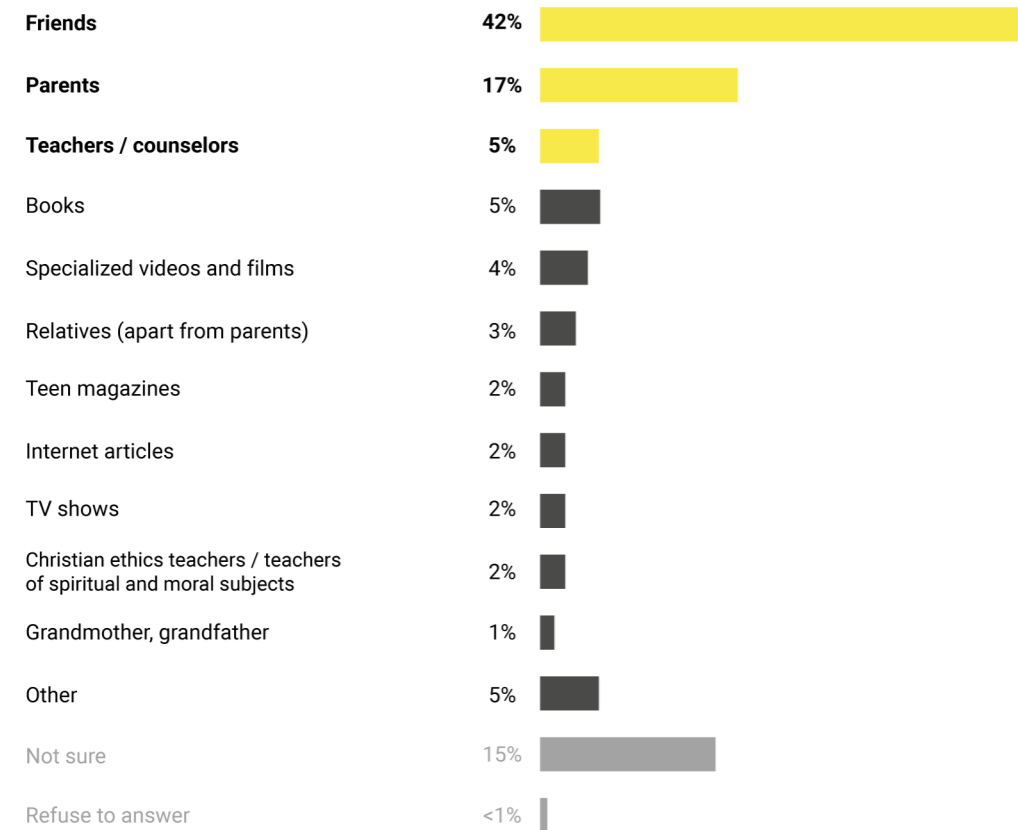
### Emotions and feelings triggered by the word "sex" <sup>2</sup>



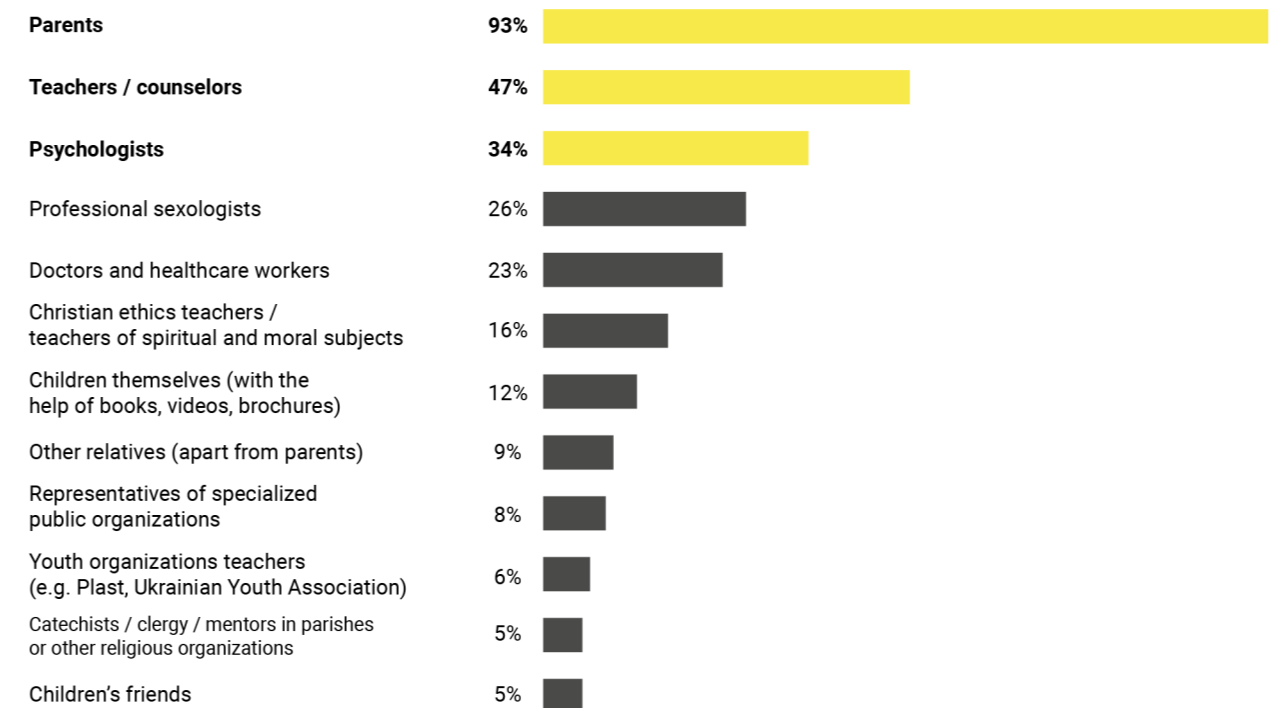
<sup>1</sup> Among those who have had such an experience (75%).

<sup>2</sup> Respondents were presented with a list of 13 emotions / feelings that the word "sex" can evoke. They could select up to three of them. The difference of the indicators marked with \* is statistically significant for men and women.

**Primary source of information about sex**



**Responsible for sexuality education**



Either drawing on their own experience or not, study participants place primary responsibility for sexuality education upon parents (93%). Other answers include teachers and counselors (47%), psychologists (34%), sexologists (26%), healthcare workers (23%).

12% of respondents believe that a child can acquire all the necessary knowledge from books, brochures or videos on his/her own.

We noticed a range of curious peculiarities in the answers of respondents from different regions of Ukraine to this question:

- Respondents from the Central cluster are the ones who most eagerly approve of the involvement of specialists in the field of medicine, psychology, and sexology in the process of sexuality education (35%, 50%, and 39%, respectively). Residents of East and South also often talk about the involvement of psychologists in the process (38% and 37%).
- Residents of Western and Eastern regions tend to place more responsibility for that process on teachers and counselors (52% and 54%, respectively) than residents of Northern and Southern regions (42% and 41%; 48% in the Central part of the country).
- Respondents from West and South approve of the involvement of Christian ethics teachers in the sexuality education process (26% and 17%, respectively), while these are mostly the residence of West that choose other religious representatives [catechists / clergy / mentors in parishes or other religious organizations / societies] as suitable for the role of educators (9%).

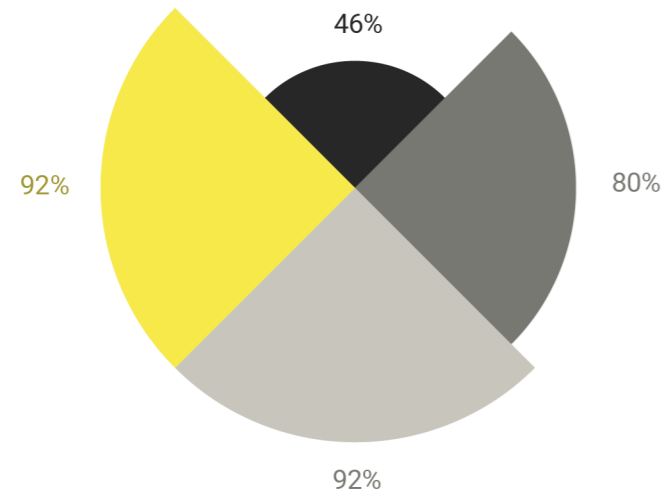




### Components of sexuality education for the children of different age<sup>3</sup>

key

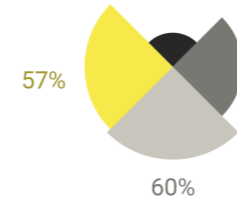
Under the age of 8    At the age of 9-13    At the age of 14-15    At the age of 16-17



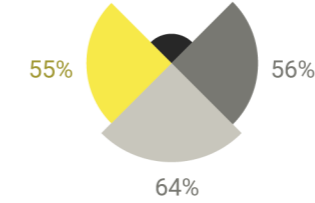
Share of respondents who believe sexuality education to be necessary for the children of a specific age group



Intimate body parts hygiene



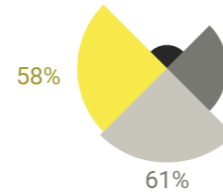
Tolerance, respect for others



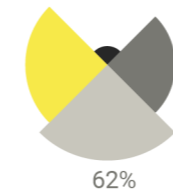
Sexual safety on the Internet



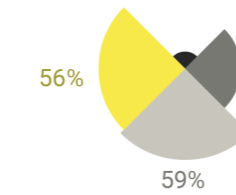
Anatomical features of boys and girls (menstruation / pollution)



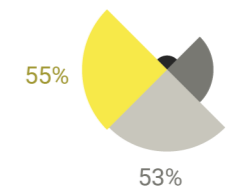
Privacy, the ability to set boundaries and say "no", distinguishing between pleasant and unpleasant touches



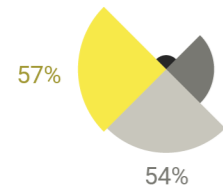
The concept of sexual violence and ways to counteract it



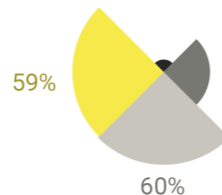
The spiritual aspect of relationships



Gender equality and gender stereotypes



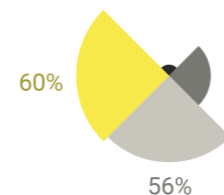
Religious aspects of sexuality education and the meaning of sexuality in human life



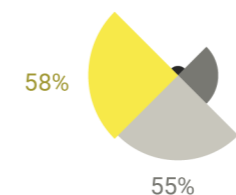
Romantic relationships, relationship building



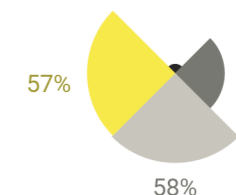
Accepting yourself and your sexuality



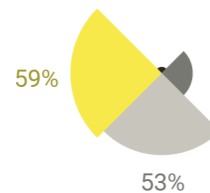
Human rights and sexuality



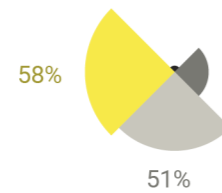
Reproductive health



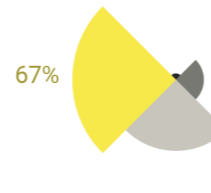
Ways of preventing and overcoming sexual addictions (including pornography)



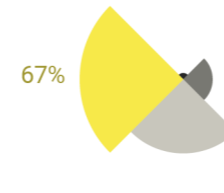
Forms of sexual behavior and pleasure



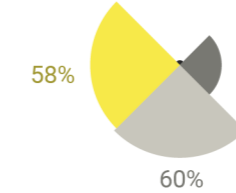
Orderly and disordered forms of sexual behavior



Responsible parenthood



Sexual life's purpose of expressing marital love and creating life



Methods / means of contraception

<sup>3</sup> Selection of sexuality education components was performed by those respondents who consider sexuality education necessary for children of a certain age. Nevertheless, the table shows the percentage among all respondents; therefore, we can observe the support for a particular component among the whole population.

The list of sexuality education components is based on the "Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe", established by the WHO in 2010. The main topics include relationships, values, rights, culture and sexuality, gender, violence and safety, skills for health and well-being, peculiarities of human body development, sexuality and sexual behavior, sexual and reproductive health. Some components, such as "Spiritual aspect of relationships", "Religious aspects of sexuality education and the importance of sexuality in human life", "Ways of preventing and overcoming sexual addictions (including pornography)", "Orderly and disordered forms of sexual behavior", "Sexual life's purpose of expressing marital love and creating life", were added to the list at the Customer's request.

**Sexuality education components for the children of different age**

	Before the age of 8	At the age of 9-13	At the age of 14-15	At the age of 16-17
<b>Share of respondents who believe sexuality education to be necessary for the children of a specific age group</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>92%</b>
Intimate body parts hygiene	40%	49%	43%	38%
Anatomical features of boys and girls (menstruation / pollution)	17%	58%	45%	31%
Accepting yourself and your sexuality	8%	35%	56%	45%
Forms of sexual behavior and pleasure	4%	20%	53%	59%
Orderly and disordered forms of sexual behavior	4%	22%	51%	58%
The concept of sexual violence and ways to counteract it	12%	44%	62%	53%
Sexual safety on the Internet	19%	56%	64%	55%
Methods / means of contraception	3%	27%	60%	58%
The spiritual aspect of relationships	11%	36%	59%	56%
Romantic relationships, relationship building	8%	30%	60%	59%
Reproductive health	6%	26%	55%	58%
Responsible parenthood	4%	18%	46%	67%
Human rights and sexuality	7%	27%	56%	60%
Tolerance, respect for others	22%	45%	60%	57%
Gender equality and gender stereotypes	9%	30%	53%	55%
Sexual life's purpose of expressing marital love and creating life	4%	19%	48%	67%
Privacy, the ability to set boundaries and say "no", distinguishing between pleasant and unpleasant touches	15%	39%	61%	58%
Ways of preventing and overcoming sexual addictions (including pornography)	6%	32%	58%	57%
Religious aspects of sexuality education and the meaning of sexuality in human life	9%	31%	54%	57%
Other aspects	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Without specification	6%	2%	1%	5%

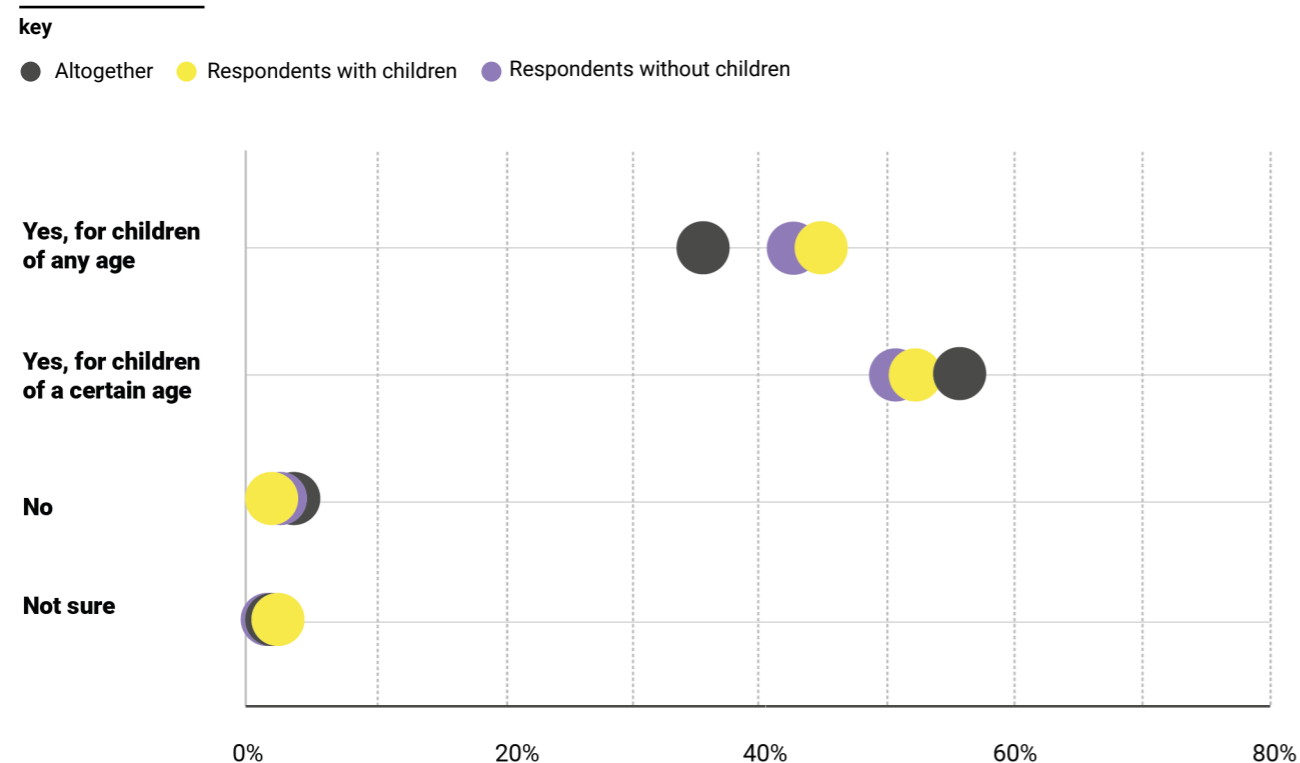


## SEXUALITY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

96% of Ukrainians consider sexuality education to be necessary for children. 43% believe it to be necessary regardless of the child's age, 53% specify the age at which this process should start taking place. 46% deem it appropriate to start the process before the age of 8, 80% – at the age of 9-13, 92% – after 14.

Notably, among those respondents who have children there are more supporters of the idea of early and systematic sexuality education: 45% of people in this group consider sexuality education to be necessary at any age [among the childless respondents the corresponding indicator makes up 37%].

### Necessity of sexuality education for children



The smallest percent is observed among the supporters of sexuality education for children under 8 years of age (46%). Topics that are considered appropriate at this age include intimate body parts hygiene (40%), tolerance, respect for others (22%), sexual safety on the Internet (19%), and anatomical features of boys and girls (17%).

80% of respondents believe that sexuality education is necessary for children aged 9-13. Survey participants consider this age to be appropriate for conversations about anatomical features of boys and girls (58%), sexual safety on the Internet (56%), intimate body parts hygiene (49%), tolerance, respect for others (45%), the concept of sexual violence and ways to counteract it (44%).

92% of respondents support the idea of sexuality education for teenagers at the age of 14-16 and 16-17. The majority of the proposed educational components are supported by around (or more than) half of respondents [except for the intimate body parts hygiene (43% for 14-15-year-olds and 38% for 16-17-year-olds) and anatomical features of boys and girls (45% and 31% respectively)]. At the same time, there is a certain rotation of the educational components' priority:

- Topics that are more appropriate to study at the age of 14-15: accepting yourself and your sexuality (56%), the concept of sexual violence and ways to counteract it (62%), sexual safety on the Internet (64%).
- Topics that are more appropriate to study at the age of 16-17: responsible parenthood (67%), sexual life's purpose of expressing marital love and creating life (67%), orderly and disordered forms of sexual behavior (58%), forms of sexual behavior and pleasure (59%).

# 02 SEXUAL VIOLENCE



# SEXUAL VIOLENCE

## COMMON PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

According to Article 153 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, sexual violence is any violent act of a sexual nature, which does not involve penetrating another person's body, committed without the victim's voluntary consent. The act of a sexual nature that involves penetration committed without the consent of one of the parties is classified as rape<sup>4</sup>.

At the same time, 14% of Ukrainians limit the concept of sexual violence to rape only; 15% equate the consent to a kiss or caress to the consent to sex. There are also other stereotypes that are not related to the knowledge of laws [see the table].

Unfortunately, there are no comprehensive statistical data in Ukraine that could dispel these and other myths.

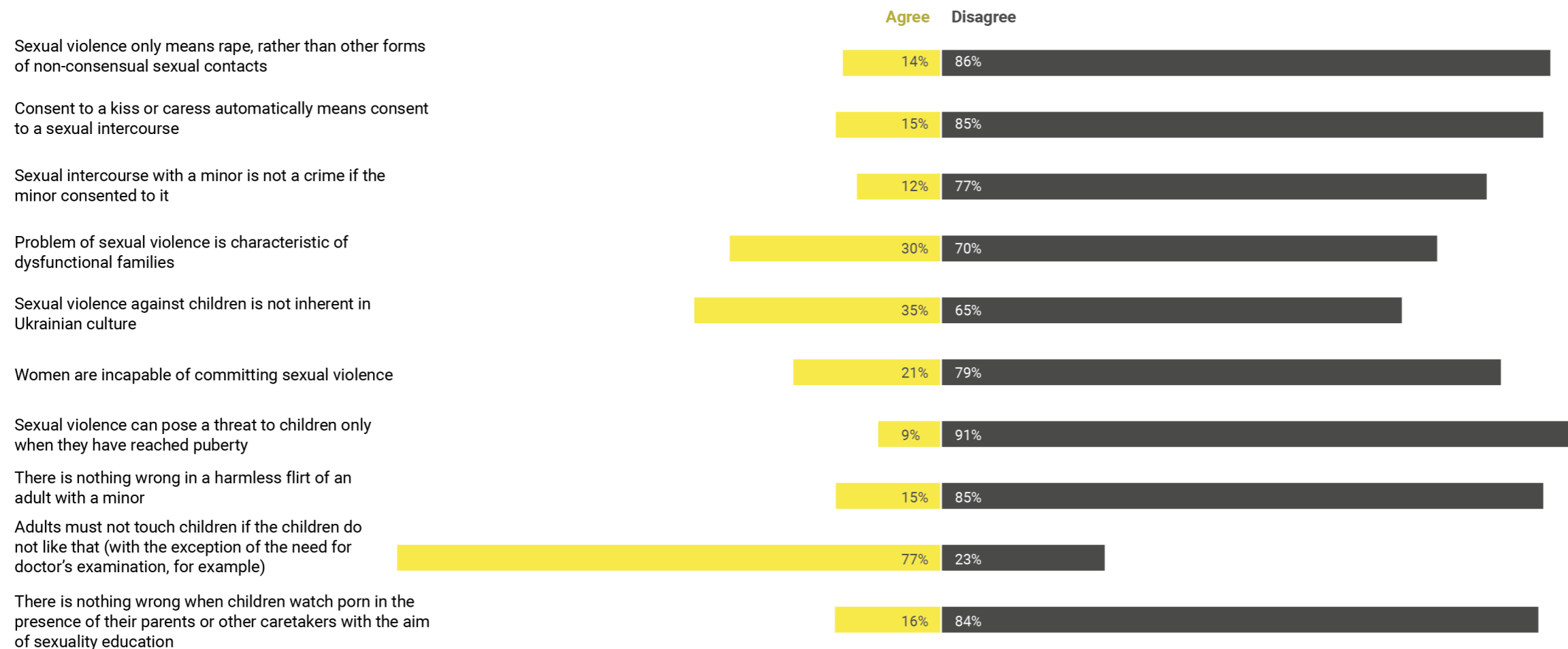
Ukrainians interpret the concept of sexual violence rather broadly, especially when it comes to minors. More than 80% of respondents view each from the enlisted actions (of a sexual nature) as sexual violence. These include consented sex [with the exception of the 16-17 age group, where the corresponding indicator is 65%], touching intimate body parts without consent, forced demonstration of pornography, as well as other more obvious forms of sexual violence.

These include oral sex (55%), sex for money (64%), staring at intimate body parts (65%), spying on naked people (65%), unwanted text messages of a sexual nature (69%), unwanted intimate photos or videos (73%), exhibitionism (75%).

None of respondents considered consensual sex at adult age to be sexual violence.

Some of the enlisted actions are less often viewed as sexual violence when committed against / with the participation of adults (the indicators, nevertheless, remain very high).

### Some perceptions of sexual violence



<sup>4</sup> Act of a sexual nature involving vaginal, anal, or oral penetration of another person's body using the genitals or any other object without the voluntary consent of the victim [Article 152 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine]

**Sexual violence is...**

	Under the age of 8	At the age of 9-13	At the age of 14-15	At the age of 16-17	18+
Consensual sexual contact	89%	87%	82%	65%	0%
Sexual contact without consent	92%	91%	90%	91%	90%
Sexual contact with the application of physical violence	91%	90%	92%	91%	91%
Sexual contact with the threat of applying physical violence	91%	91%	92%	91%	90%
Sexual contact when the person was in a helpless state (intoxication, loss of consciousness, etc.)	88%	87%	90%	91%	88%
Sexual contact for money	88%	87%	88%	85%	64%
Coercion to a sexual contact for money	89%	89%	90%	91%	84%
Sexual exploitation by parents for profit	90%	91%	92%	92%	88%
Forced involvement in the provision of sexual services by someone else than parents (other persons)	90%	89%	92%	93%	89%
Forced demonstration of pornography	91%	91%	90%	86%	80%
Forced demonstration of a sexual contact	91%	90%	90%	89%	83%
Coercion to demonstrate intimate body parts	91%	91%	91%	89%	83%
Exhibitionism – demonstration of genitals (often in public) for pleasure	89%	89%	89%	85%	75%
Coercion to touch other people's intimate body parts	91%	91%	90%	91%	85%
Ignoring requests to stop during foreplay	87%	87%	88%	89%	81%
Receiving unwanted intimate photos or videos	88%	88%	87%	84%	73%
Touching intimate body parts without permission	90%	91%	90%	89%	83%
Forced caresses of intimate body parts	90%	90%	91%	90%	83%
Taking photos or videos of a naked person without their permission	89%	89%	90%	89%	83%
Taking photos or videos of a sexual intercourse without permission	88%	89%	90%	89%	82%
Oral sex	88%	88%	88%	80%	55%
Obtrusive staring at intimate body parts	86%	85%	86%	80%	65%
Receiving unwanted text messages of a sexual nature	87%	86%	86%	81%	69%
Spying on naked people	86%	86%	85%	81%	65%
No answer selected	5%	3%	2%	2%	4%



## PERCEPTIONS OF THE PERPETRATOR AND THE VICTIM

In most cases it is the perpetrator who gets blamed (77%). However, there are respondents who believe in the guilt of both the perpetrator and the victim (21%).

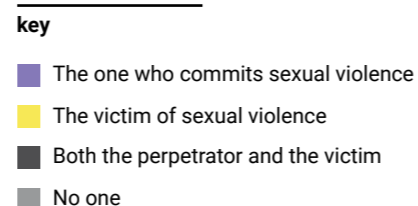
In the opinion of 41% of respondents, the majority of victims of sexual violence against children are persons aged 9-17. 52% of respondents are convinced that age is irrelevant.

Respondents believe that in most cases these are persons aged 35-49 who commit sexual crimes against minors (35%). In majority of cases these are strangers (62%), non-blood relatives (41%), friends / classmates (33%) or other acquaintances (32%).

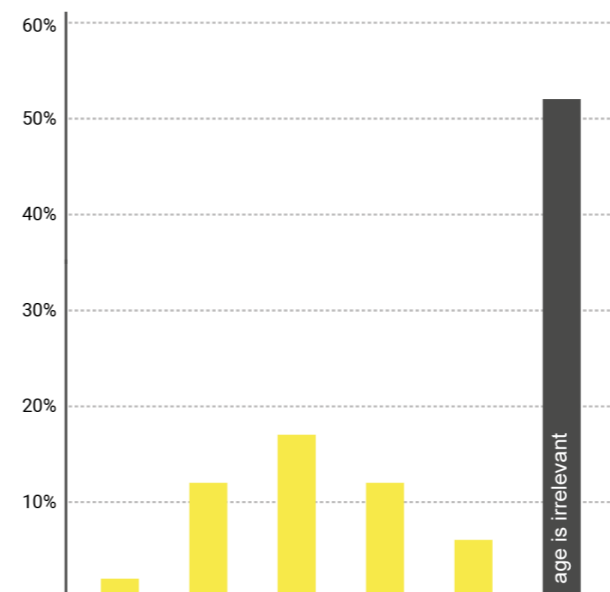
According to RAINNS, in 8 cases out of 10, sexual violence is committed by a person known to the victim.

**IMPORTANT: DATA PRESENTED IN THE GRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS REGARDING THE PERPETRATOR AND THE VICTIM OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST MINORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY CORRESPOND TO THE ACTUAL STATISTICAL DATA.**

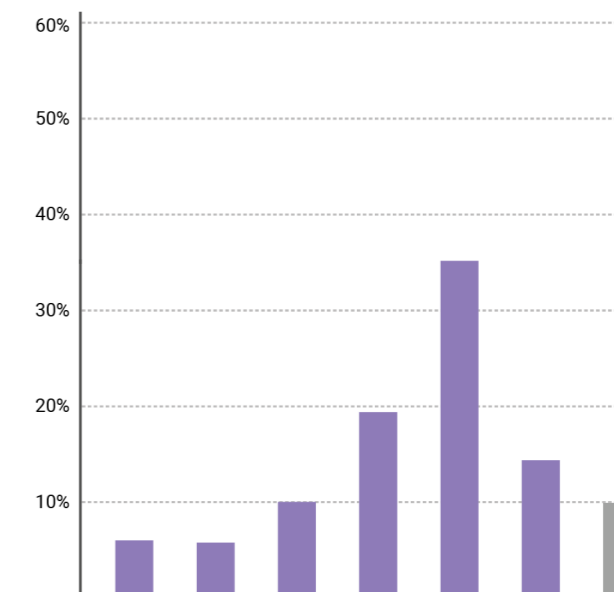
### Guilty of sexual violence



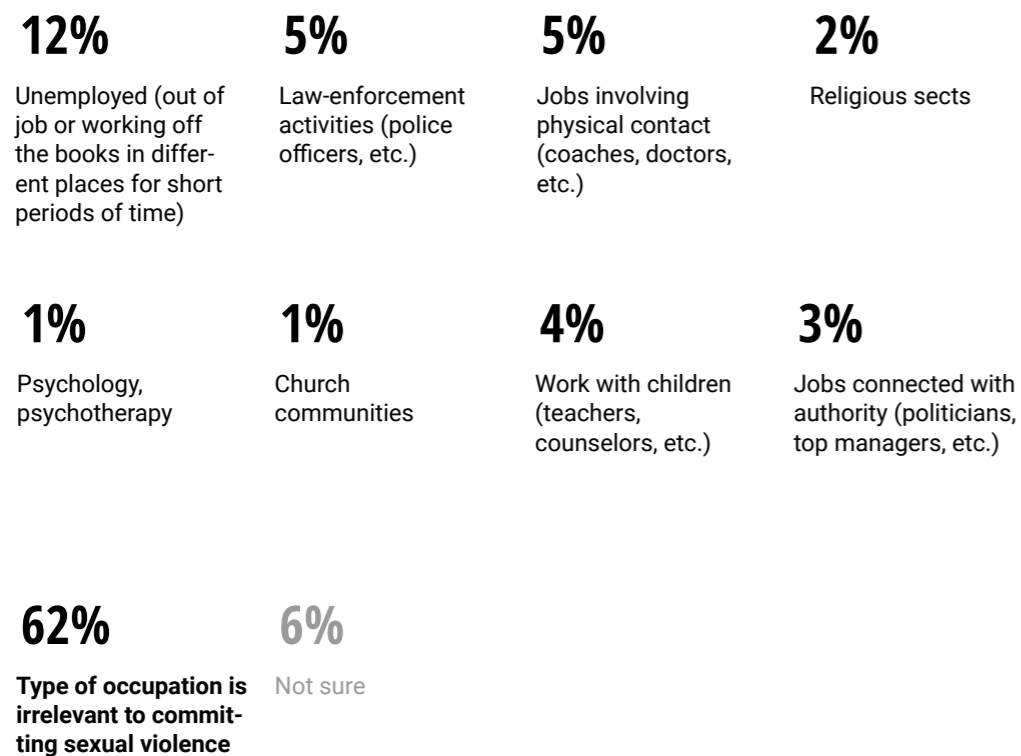
### Age of child victim



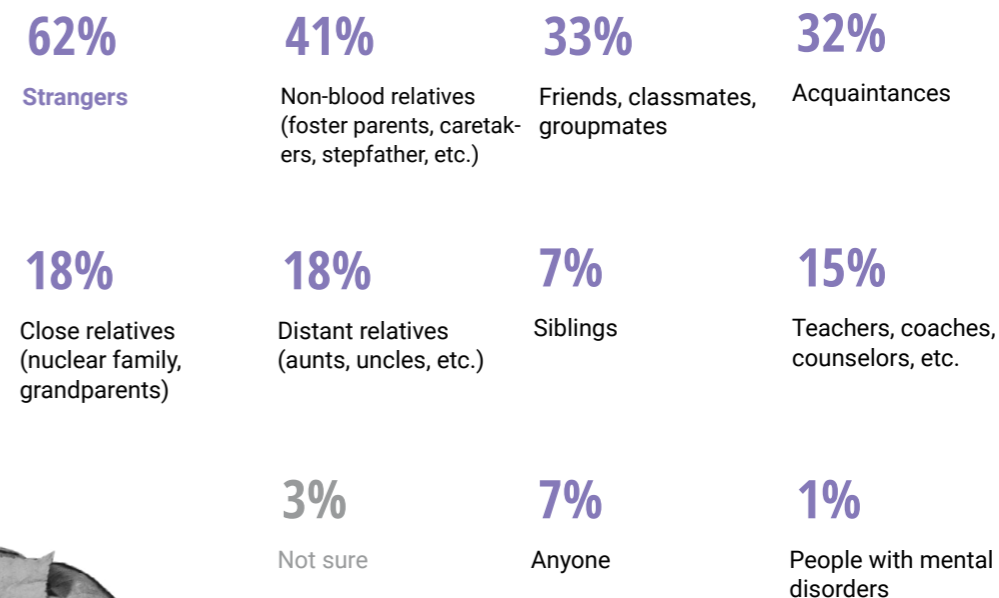
### Age of child perpetrator



### Perpetrator's occupation



### The relationship between the perpetrator and the victim

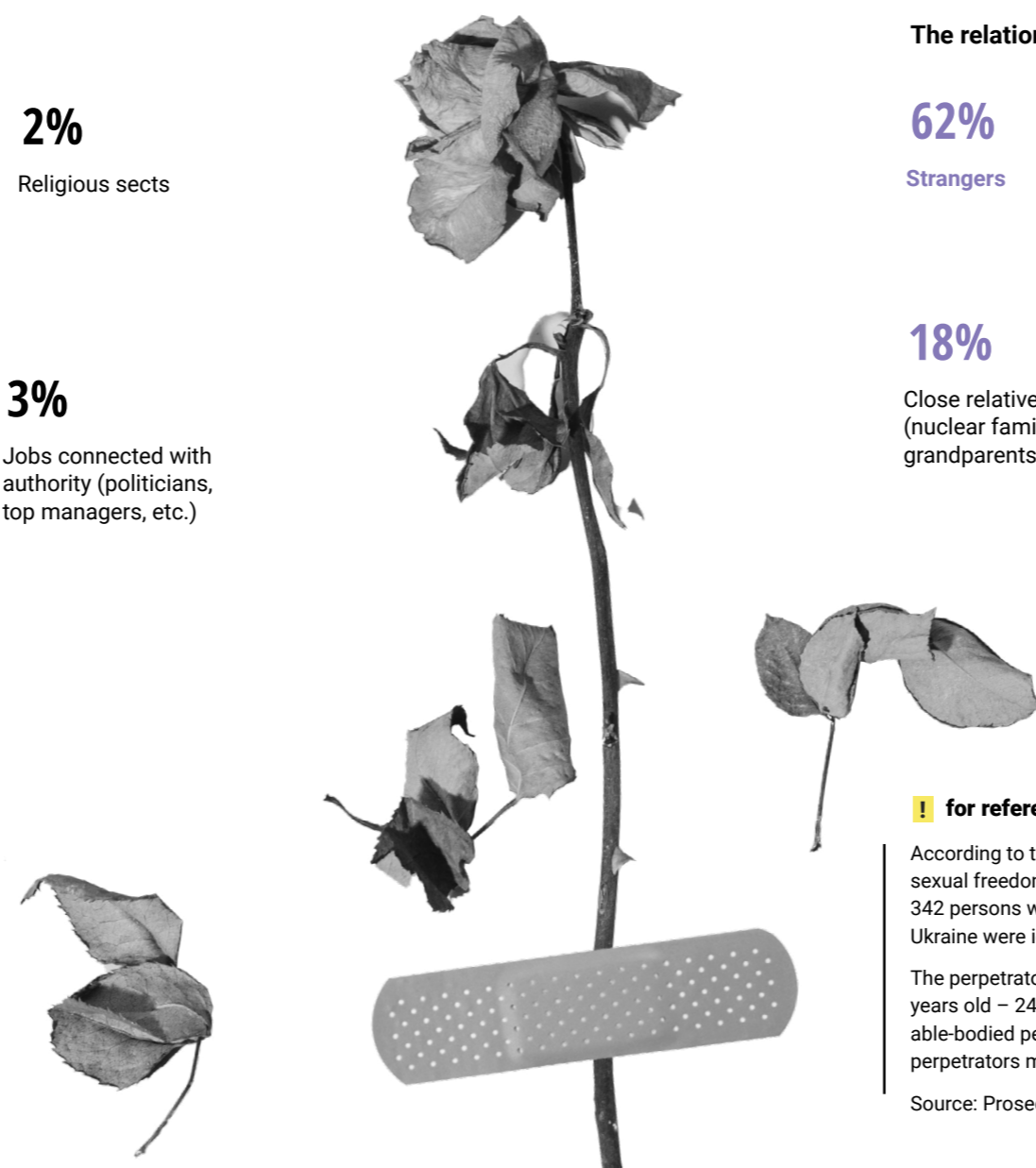


#### ! for reference

According to the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine, there were 487 criminal offenses against sexual freedom and sexual integrity of a person with the relevant court proceedings recorded in 2020. 342 persons who committed criminal offenses under Articles 152, 153, 156 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine were identified.

The perpetrators' age: under 18 years old – 8%, 18-28 years old – 31%, 29-39 years old – 31%, 40-54 years old – 24%, 55 years old and more – 6%. 68% of the recorded offenses were committed by able-bodied persons who did not study or work; 6% were unemployed. The share of women among the perpetrators made up 2%.

Source: Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine





## VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

In the course of the study we asked respondents if they had ever experienced situations that could be characterized as sexual violence. On the basis of their answers (and in accordance with current legislation) it has been determined that about 4% of respondents were victims of rape in childhood, and 23% were victims of sexual violence and / or harassment<sup>6</sup> (including rape). According to the survey results, women are more likely than men to be victims of sexual violence (25% versus 19%).

The respondents who became victims of sexual violence in childhood equally divide into those who told someone about the incident and those who kept silent<sup>7</sup>. In most cases those who shared turned to their friends, less often to parents or other relatives, and very rarely to teachers or other acquaintances. Those respondents who did not share with anyone often attribute their silence to shame or fear (including fear of being judged) or reluctance to share.

**4%**

of respondents were victims of rape in childhood

**23%**

were victims of sexual violence and / or harassment



### Ситуації (сексуального характеру), в яких перебували учасники опитування в дитинстві (до 18 років)



<sup>6</sup> When calculating the proportion of the victims of sexual violence or harassment in the framework of the study, the cases of demonstration of pornography, oral sex (with a person above 14 years of age), spying on the person when they were naked, and having a consensual sexual contact with a person above 14 years of age were NOT taken into account.

<sup>7</sup> About 40% informed someone about the incident, about 43% did not; 17% did not answer the clarifying question.

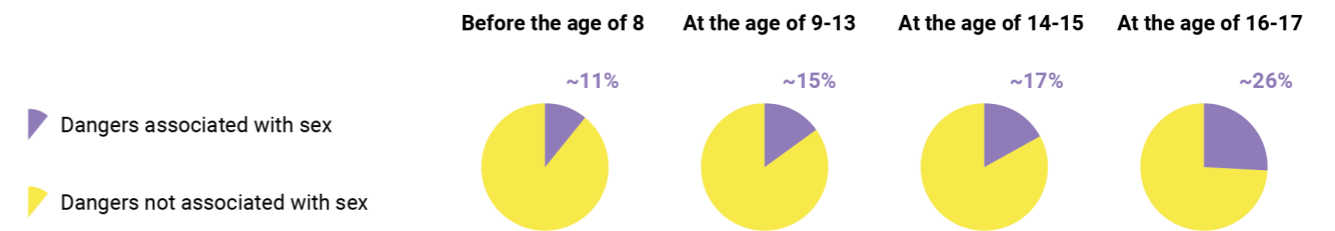
## THREATS TO CHILDREN

Where is the place of sexual violence in the structure of dangers for children? In order to find this out we asked respondents a question (an open question<sup>8</sup>): "In your opinion, what dangers should we protect today's children from?" (with the differentiation by children's age). As a result, we received an array of various answers of varying levels of detail [the "clouds" present generalized categories].

Various manifestations of sexual violence are present among the dangers from which children of different age should be protected. The share of such threats increases alongside with a child's age. The nature of the threats associated with sex changes as well. While it is sexual violence (pedophilia, child molestation, sexual harassment, perversion, etc.) and pornography that predominate among the threats before the age of 13, after the age of 14 there is early sexual life and pregnancy.

### Threats from which children should be protected<sup>9</sup>

### Dangers from which children should be protected



<sup>8</sup> Without the proposed list of alternatives; without hints.

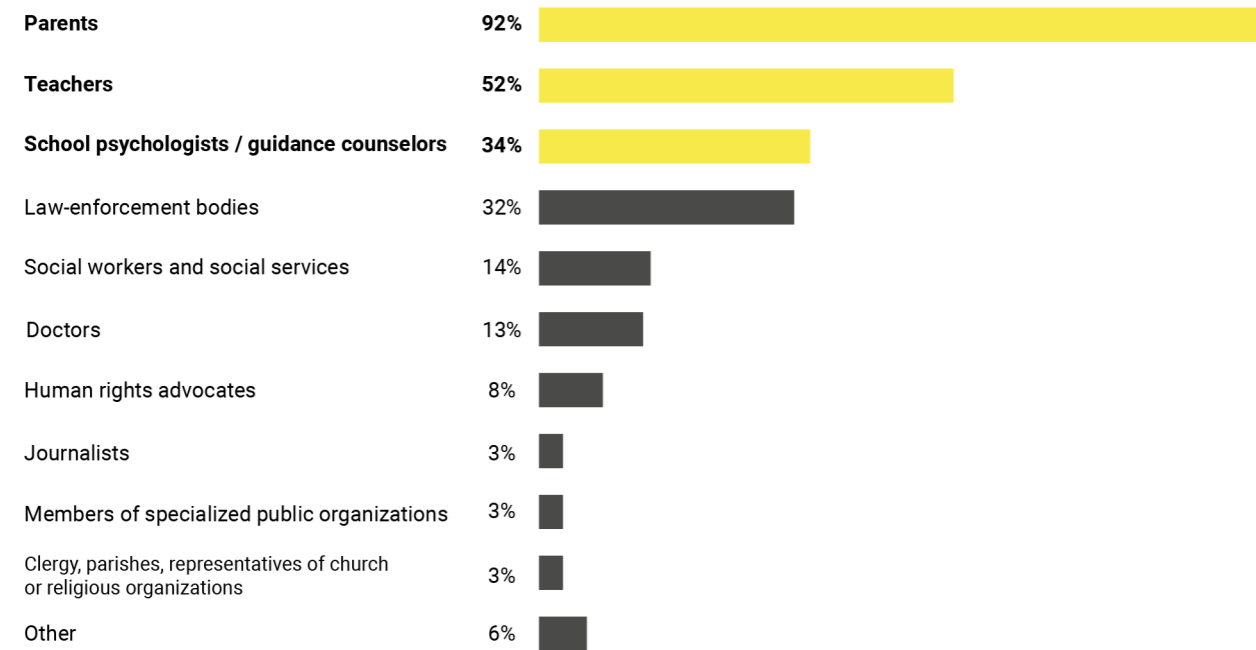
<sup>9</sup> The distribution is conditional because we are dealing with the analysis of open questions here. It should also be noted that some respondents did not answer the questions: 10% did not answer about the dangers for children under 8 years, 11% about the dangers for 9-13-year-olds, 11% for 14-15-year-olds, 13% for 16-17-year-olds.

## BEHAVIOR IN CASE OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE SUSPICION

In respondents' opinion, first and foremost these are children's parents who are responsible for the prevention of sexual violence against children (92%); parents are followed by teachers (52%), as well as school psychologists / guidance counselors (34%), and law enforcement bodies (52%).

Yet, 85% of respondents believe that adults should take active measures to protect unknown children in case of suspecting sexual abuse in the children's families. But what should a person do when suspecting child sexual abuse in their own family?

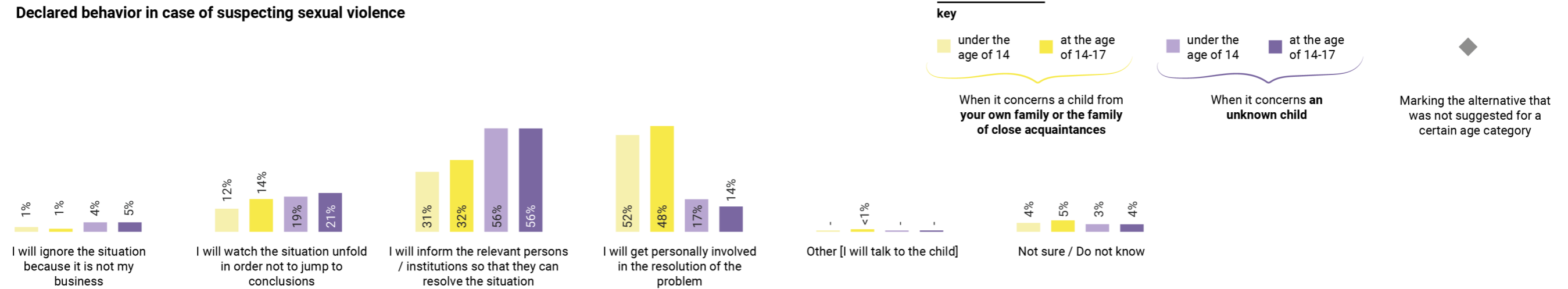
### Responsible for the prevention of sexual violence against children



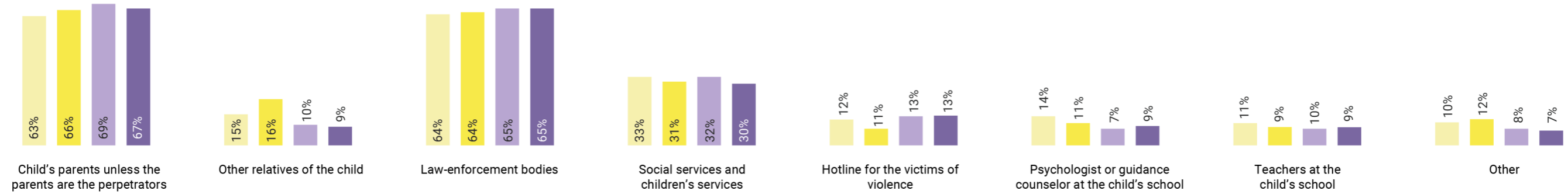
When describing their behavior in a hypothetical situation respondents declare a more active reaction to the situation with the involvement of a child they know well (rather than a child they do not know), regardless of the age of the child. Relatively small shares of respondents choose avoid the situation [which corresponds to the aforementioned data of this study]. When it comes to an unknown child, the typical declared behavior is the delegation of responsibility for resolving the situation to somebody else. In case of suspecting child sexual abuse respondents would turn to the child's parents in the first place (unless the parents themselves are the perpetrators), law enforcement bodies, social services and children's services. When it comes to a child from their own family or the family of close acquaintances, respondents more often tend to choose personal involvement in the situation.



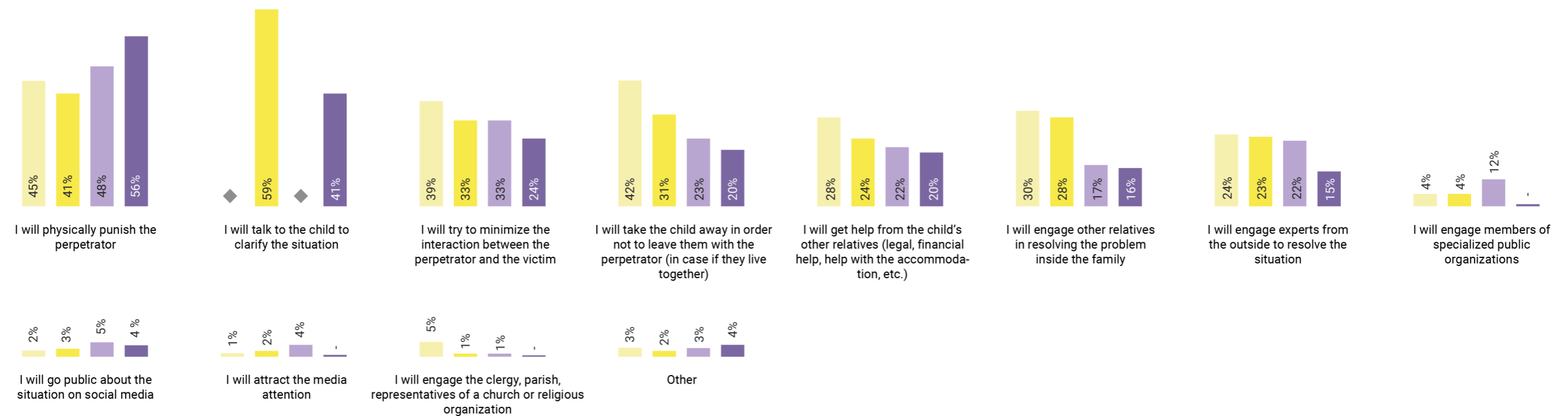
### Declared behavior in case of suspecting sexual violence



### What persons and institutions respondents will inform about their suspicions concerning child sexual abuse [among the respondents who chose the corresponding declared position]



### Forms of personal involvement in the resolution of the situation [among the respondents who chose the corresponding declared position]





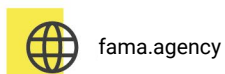
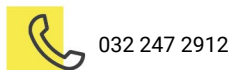
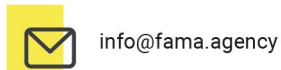
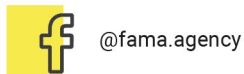
# WE FIND BRIGHT DATA FOR RIGHT DECISIONS



WE FIND ANSWERS FOR THOSE WHO  
CREATE THE PRESENT

## LET'S BE IN TOUCH:

### Fama Research Agency



### Child Dignity Center

