

Civility, Safety & Interaction Online

Analysis of Gender differences

December 2021

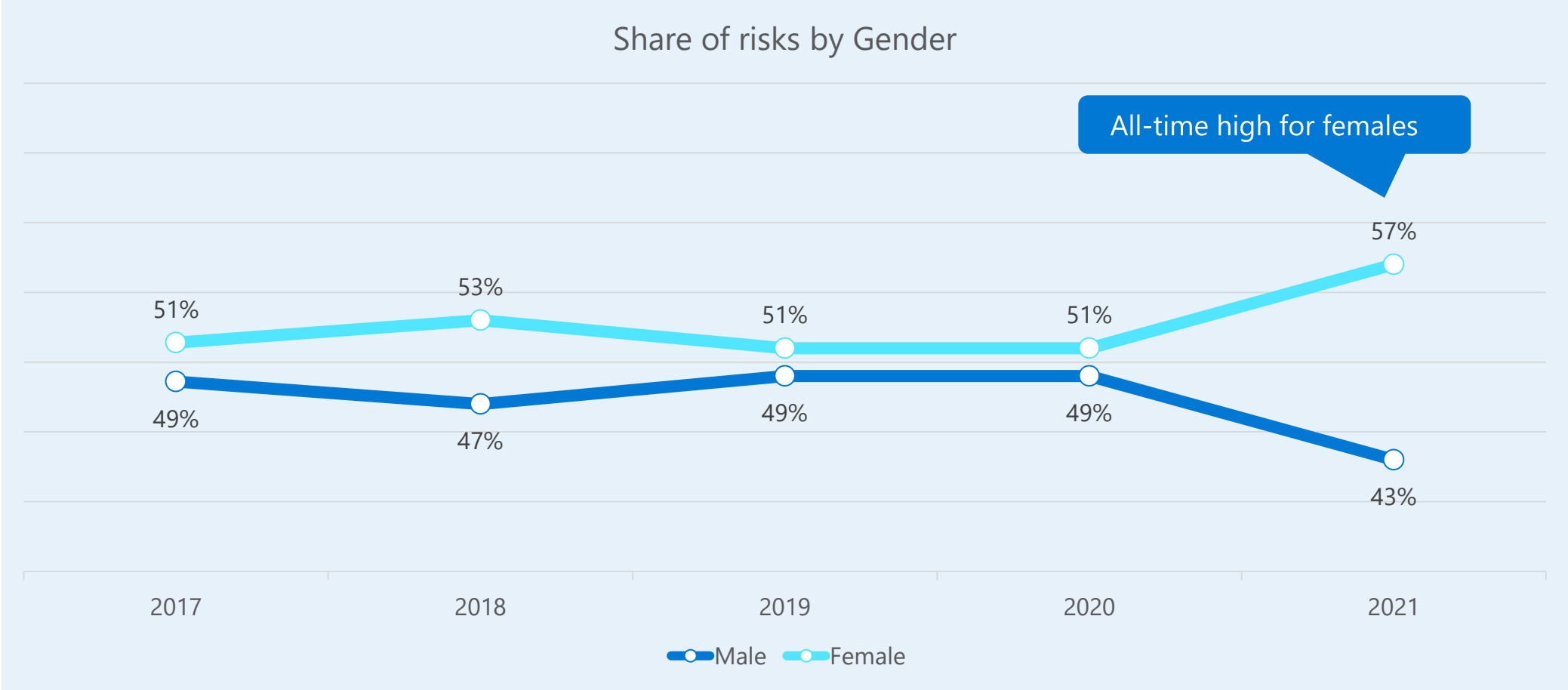
The burden of risk exposure falls hardest on females

Historically, results from the Digital Civility study have shown that females experience and process risk exposure (i.e., uncivil online behavior) differently than males. Females have consistently reported a higher incidence of online risks and generally suffer greater emotional, physical and psychological consequences.

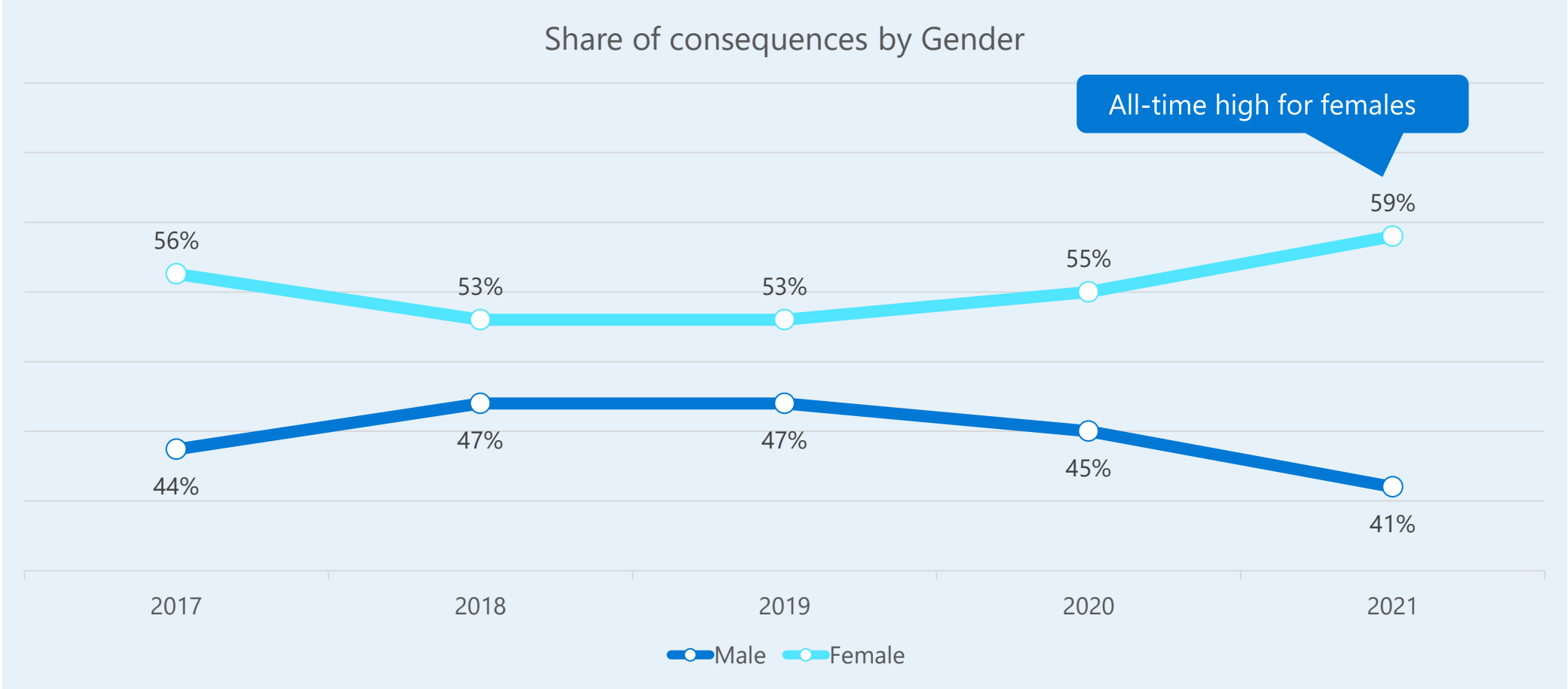
These trends were more pronounced in 2021 as share of risks and consequences reached all-time highs. Perhaps this development should not be surprising given how the Covid-19 pandemic pushed people to interact online with unprecedented duration and frequency.



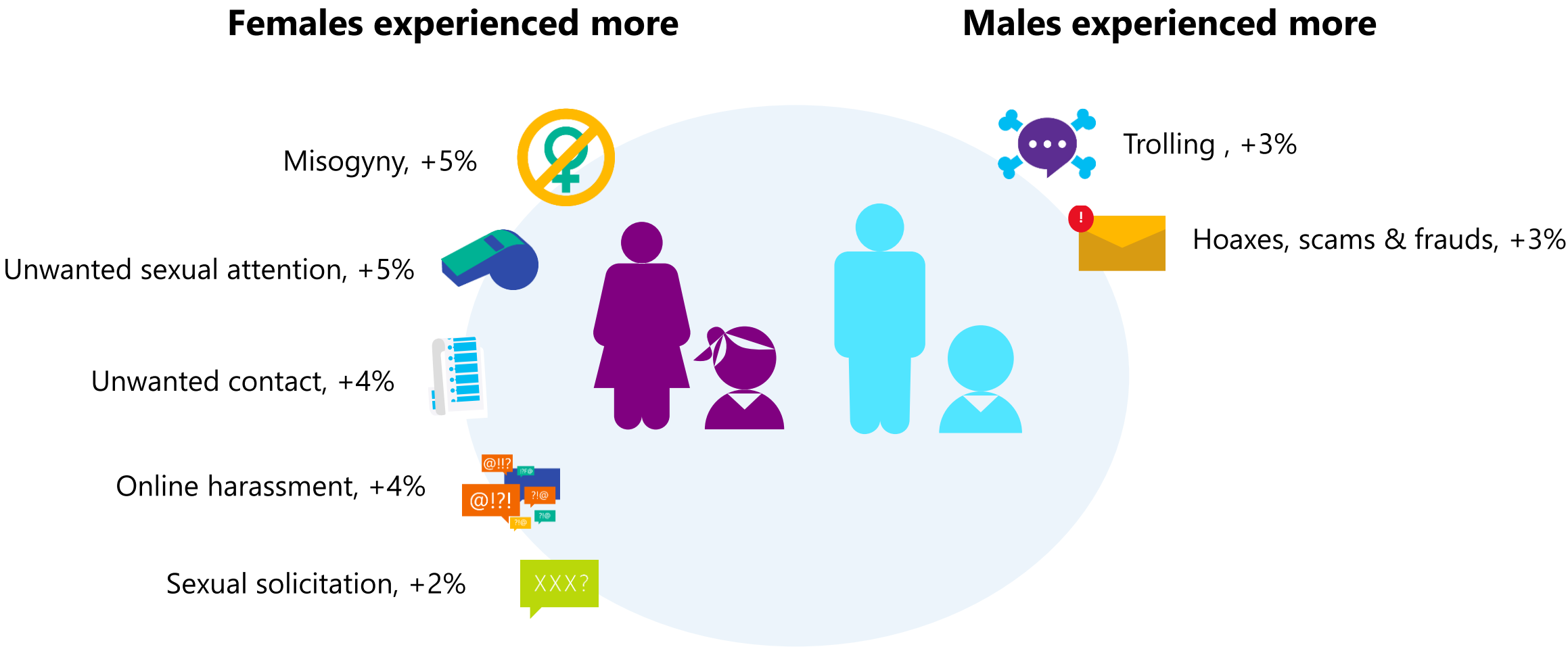
Females experienced an all-time high of nearly six in ten risks reported in 2021



Females experienced nearly six in ten of all consequences reported in 2021



Online risks experienced vary by gender: Total, 2016-2021 average



Top ten Consequences of 2021 – Total: Females vs. Males 2016-2021 average

90% of the top ten consequences were greater for females than males.

The largest gaps by gender were:

- Losing trust in others online
- Lower self-esteem
- Lost sleep

Total	Women (W)	Men (M)	Difference (W-M)*
Became less trusting of other people online	47%	40%	+7
Less likely to participate in social media	35%	31%	+4
Became less trusting of other people offline	36%	31%	+5
Lower self-esteem	38%	32%	+6
Lost sleep	32%	26%	+6
Felt more lonely and alone	30%	26%	+4
Personal reputation was damaged	21%	20%	+1
My life became more stressful	29%	24%	+5
Lost money	19%	21%	-2
Was more constructive in my criticism of other people	26%	24%	+2

Note
2020 Lower self-esteem added

*A difference of +/- 2% is statistically significant. One point discrepancies due to rounding error

Key findings

Incidence and share of online risks

- The incidence and number of risks experienced in the first five years of this research tracked closely for females and males. That pattern was broken in 2021 as incidence and share of risks for females rose significantly higher than males. Share of risks for females hit an all-time high of 57% up 6 points YoY.
- Females were more likely than males to experience misogyny, unwanted sexual attention, unwanted contact, sexual solicitation and online harassment. Males were more likely to report higher levels of hoaxes, scams and frauds and trolling. Teen girls experienced higher risk levels than teen boys on misogyny, unwanted sexual attention, unwanted contact, online harassment, sexual solicitation, unwanted sexting and being treated mean.

Consequences from online risks

- Females experienced more consequences from online risks than males; especially teen girls. Nine of the ten most common consequences in 2021 were higher for teen girls than teen boys. Seven of the ten most common consequences in 2021 were higher for adult women than adult men. The share of consequences for females has steadily increased since 2018 and currently stands at 59%, an all-time high. Among the most common risks, the largest gaps between females and males were losing trust in others online, lower self-esteem and lost sleep.

Online civility changes during Covid-19

- A significant number of risks and consequences rose during the pandemic when compared to pre-pandemic levels. Unwanted sexual attention jumped for females during the pandemic. The increase for females was more than twice the increase among males. Regarding consequences, both genders registered double-digit increases in damage to personal reputation and a reduction in social media usage.
- Females more than males saw positive changes in online civility decrease compared to last year as influenced by Covid-19. Year two of the pandemic was associated with all-time high readings among females for share of risks and share of consequences. Perceptions of online civility worsening increased three times as much among females compared to males.

Key findings

Pain from online risks

- On average, females scored 8-points higher on severe to unbearable pain compared to males. The same gap in pain levels exists between adult women and adult men, but the gap is smaller among teen girls and teen boys.

Attitudes

- Females more strongly believed than males in a variety of approaches to addressing the problems of incivility online. These included better education, reducing the ability to post anonymously and policing of social media platforms.

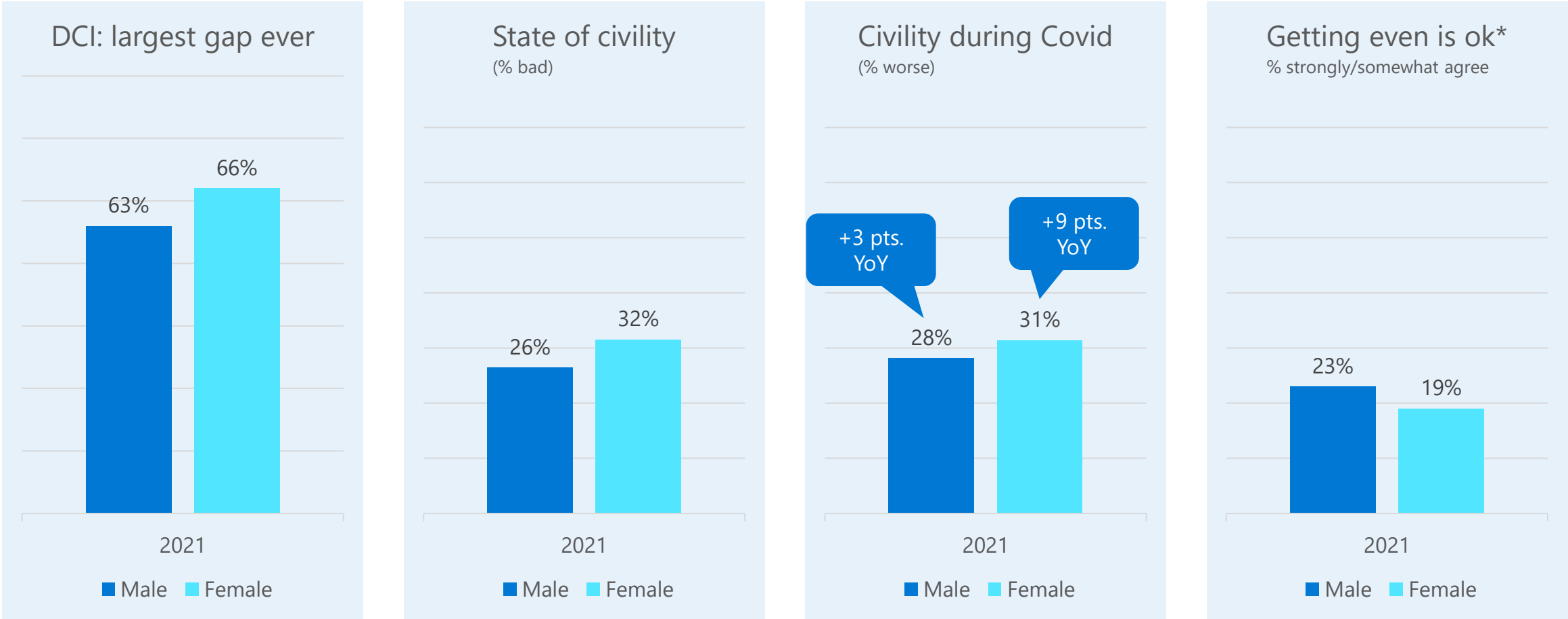
Confidence managing risks

- Confidence in dealing with online risks registered the widest gaps between females and males since the study began. This was true for adults and teens, although the gap for adults was twice as large compared to teens. Confidence levels for all groups rebounded from their 2020 lows.

Knowing where to find help with risks

- Females and males have similar levels of knowledge about where to find help. The proportion of people who know where to find help has plateaued. Teens are much more knowledgeable than adults about where to find help managing risks. Less than 4 in 10 adults know where to find help managing online risks.

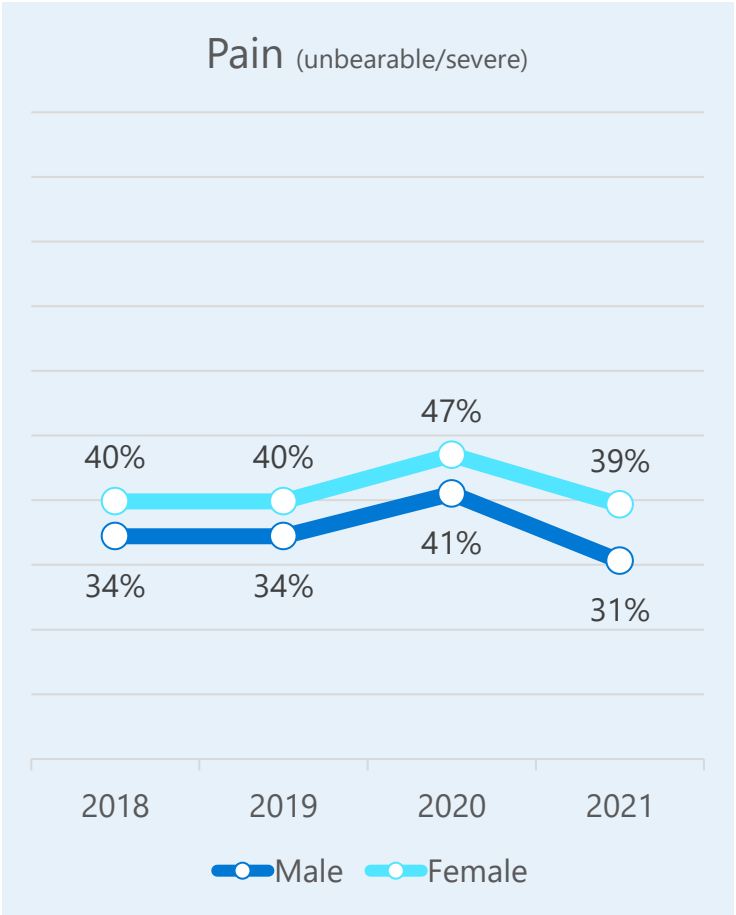
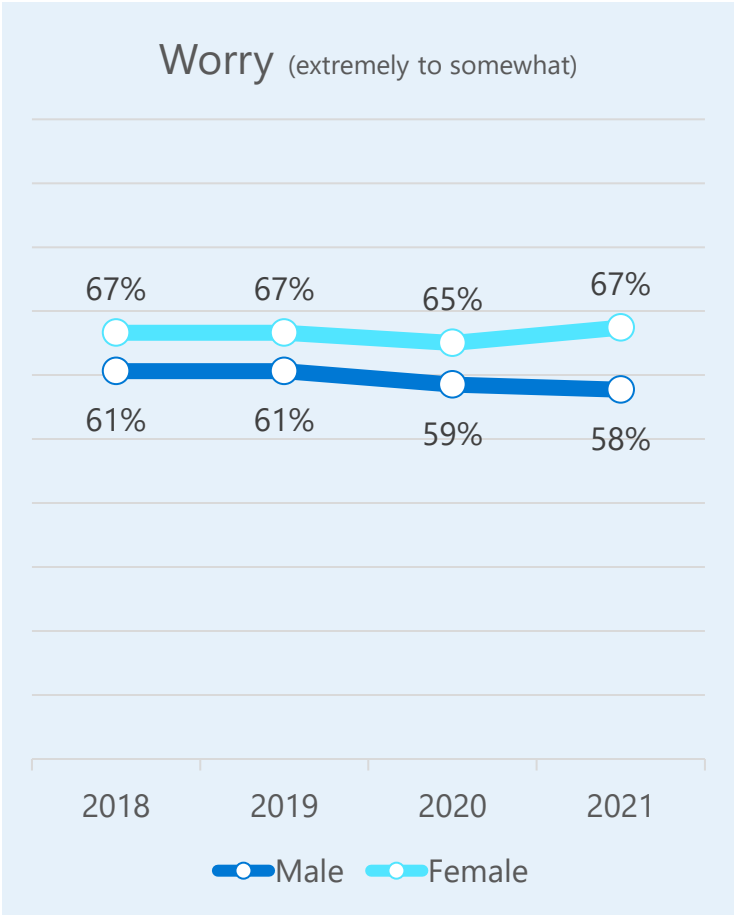
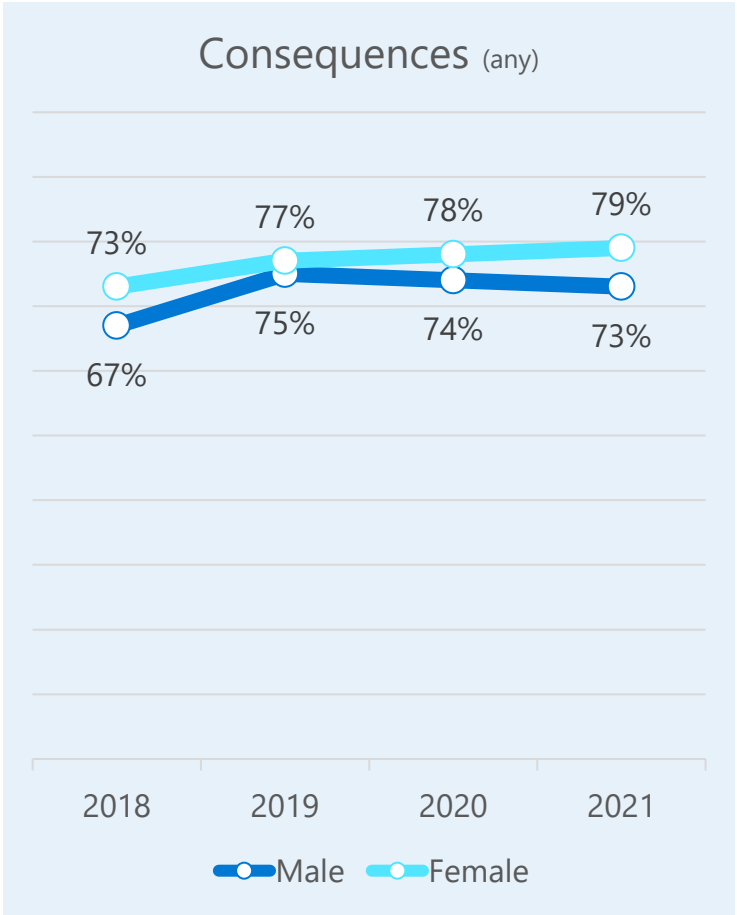
Males and females experience and view online civility differently



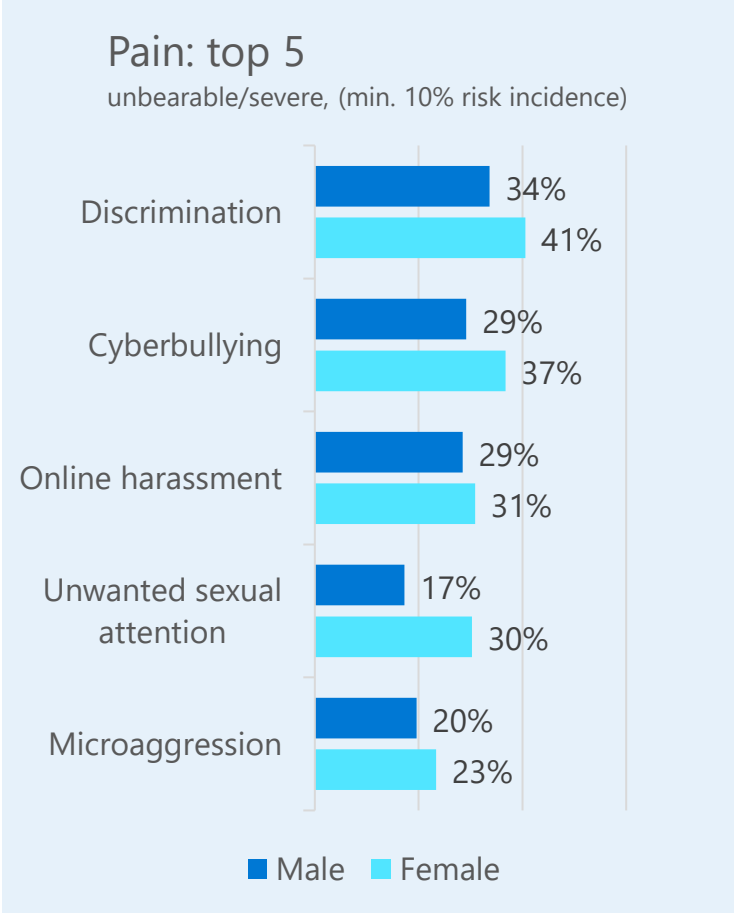
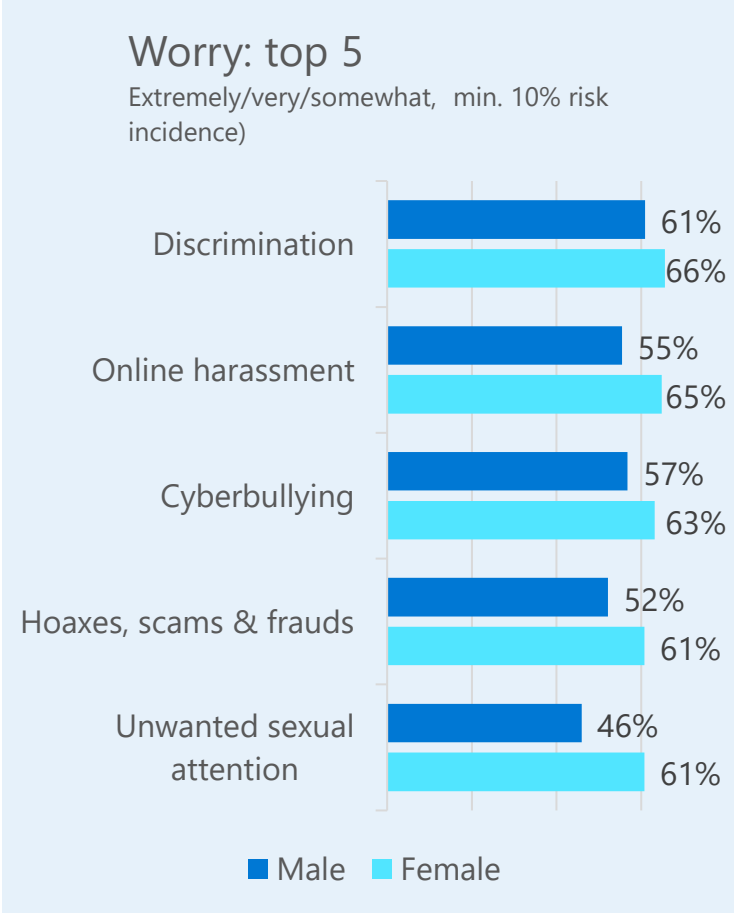
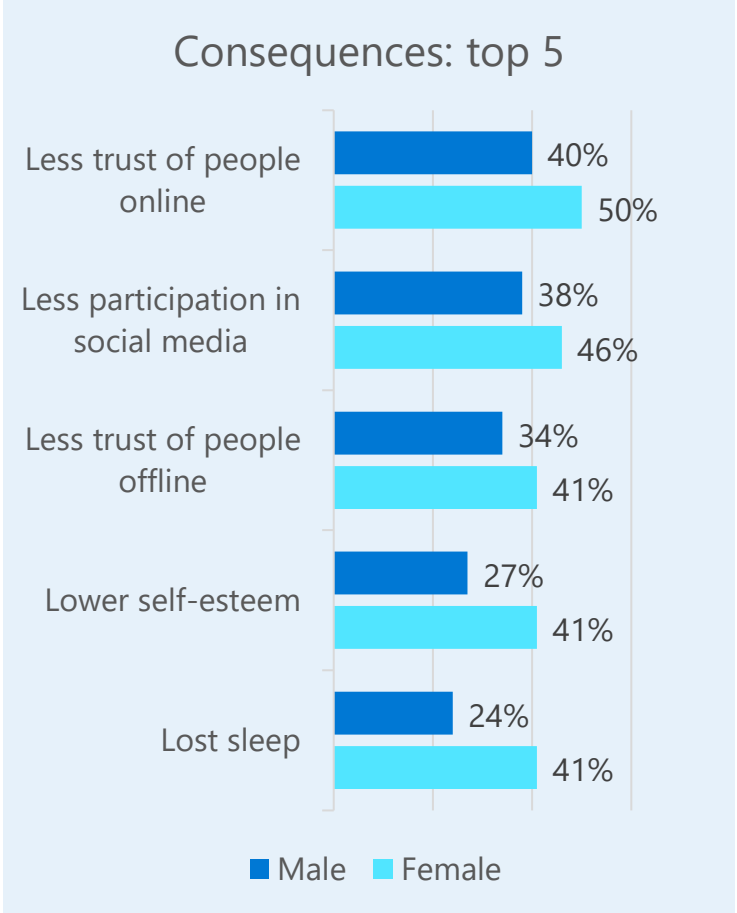
*I have sent mean messages to others after they have made hurtful comments about me

Q2: Which of these has ever happened to you or to a friend/family member ONLINE?
Q.1: How would you rate the overall state of online civility in your country?
Q.CV1B: How has civility online been worse during the Coronavirus crises?
Q.1A: Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about online civility

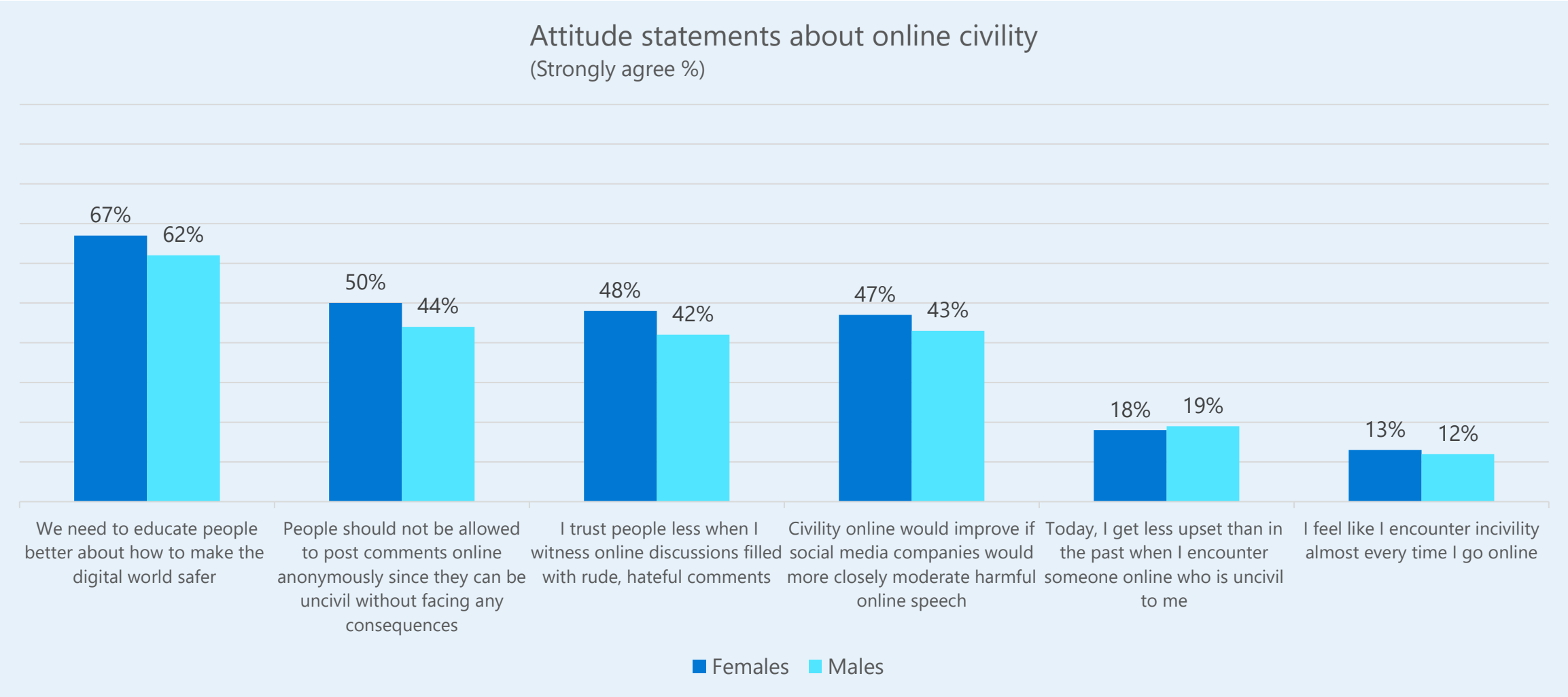
Negative outcomes from risks were higher for females than males



The top consequences, worries & pains were higher for females than males



Females held different attitudes than males towards online civility



Top ten Risks – Total: Females vs. Males 2016-2021 average

Females reported higher rates of sexual risk and online harassment

Males reported more exposure to hoaxes, scams & frauds and trolling

Total	Women (W)	Men (M)	Difference (W-M)*
Unwanted contact	42%	38%	+4
Hoaxes, scams & frauds	23%	26%	-3
Treated mean	23%	22%	+1
Unwanted sexting	26%	24%	+2
Trolling	18%	21%	-3
Hate speech	17%	18%	-1
Online harassment	18%	14%	+4
Unwanted sexual attention	14%	8%	+5
Discrimination	13%	13%	0
Sexual solicitation	16%	14%	+2

Notes

2018 Unwanted sexual attention added
2017 Hoaxes, scams & frauds added

*A difference of +/- 2% is statistically significant.

Top ten Risks – Adults: Females vs. Males, 2016-2021 average

Adult females reported higher rates of sexual risk and online harassment

Adult males reported more exposure to hoaxes, scams & frauds, trolling and hate speech

Adults	Women (W)	Men (M)	Difference (W-M)*
Unwanted contact	46%	43%	+3
Hoaxes, scams & frauds	27%	31%	-4
Treated mean	21%	21%	0
Unwanted sexting	28%	28%	0
Trolling	16%	20%	-4
Hate speech	15%	18%	-3
Online harassment	18%	14%	+4
Unwanted sexual attention	16%	10%	+6
Discrimination	13%	13%	0
Sexual solicitation	19%	18%	+1

Notes

2018 Unwanted sexual attention added
2017 Hoaxes, scams & frauds added

*A difference of +/- 2% is statistically significant.

Top ten Risks – Teens: Girls vs. Boys, 2016-2021 average

Teen girls reported higher rates of sexual risk and online harassment

Teen boys reported more exposure to hoaxes, scams & frauds, trolling and hate speech

Teens	Women (W)	Men (M)	Difference (W-M)*
Unwanted contact	39%	33%	+6
Hoaxes, scams & frauds	19%	20%	-1
Treated mean	26%	23%	+3
Unwanted sexting	23%	20%	+3
Trolling	20%	22%	-2
Hate speech	19%	18%	+1
Online harassment	19%	15%	+4
Unwanted sexual attention	12%	7%	+5
Discrimination	14%	13%	+1
Sexual solicitation	13%	10%	+3

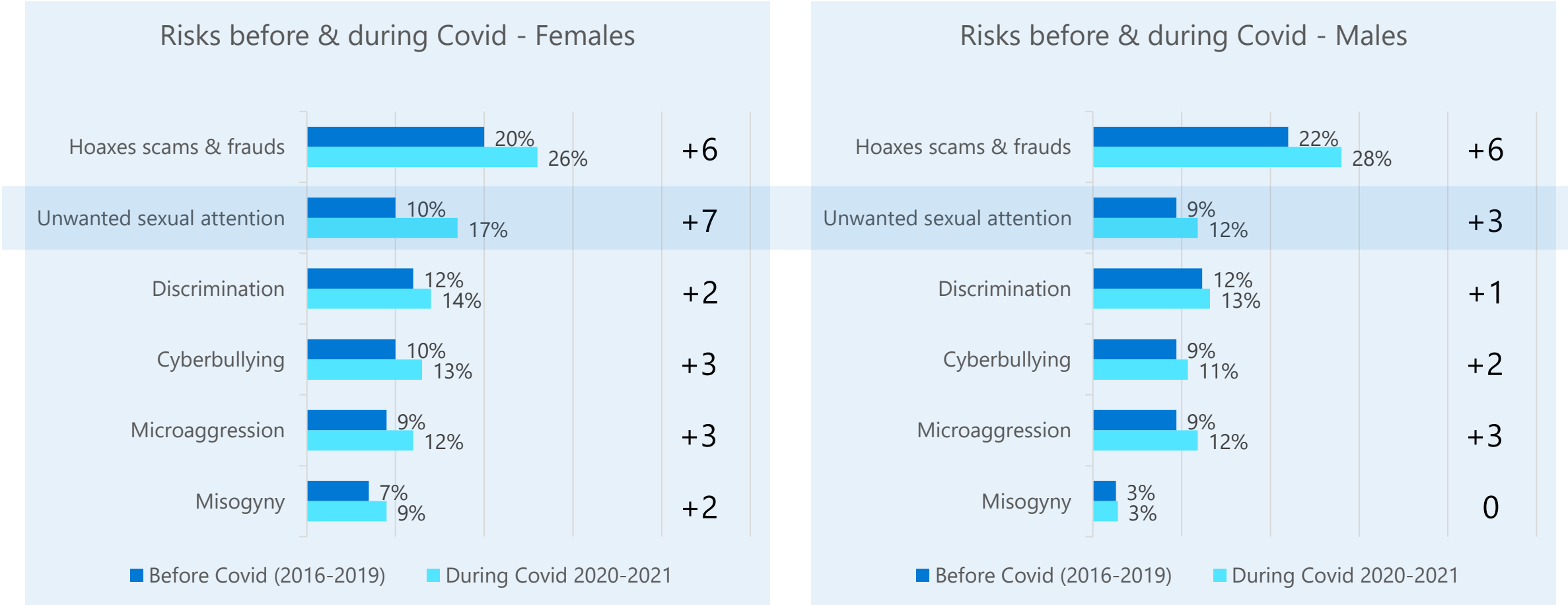
Notes

2018 Unwanted sexual attention added
2017 Hoaxes, scams & frauds added

*A difference of +/- 2% is statistically significant. One point discrepancies due to rounding error

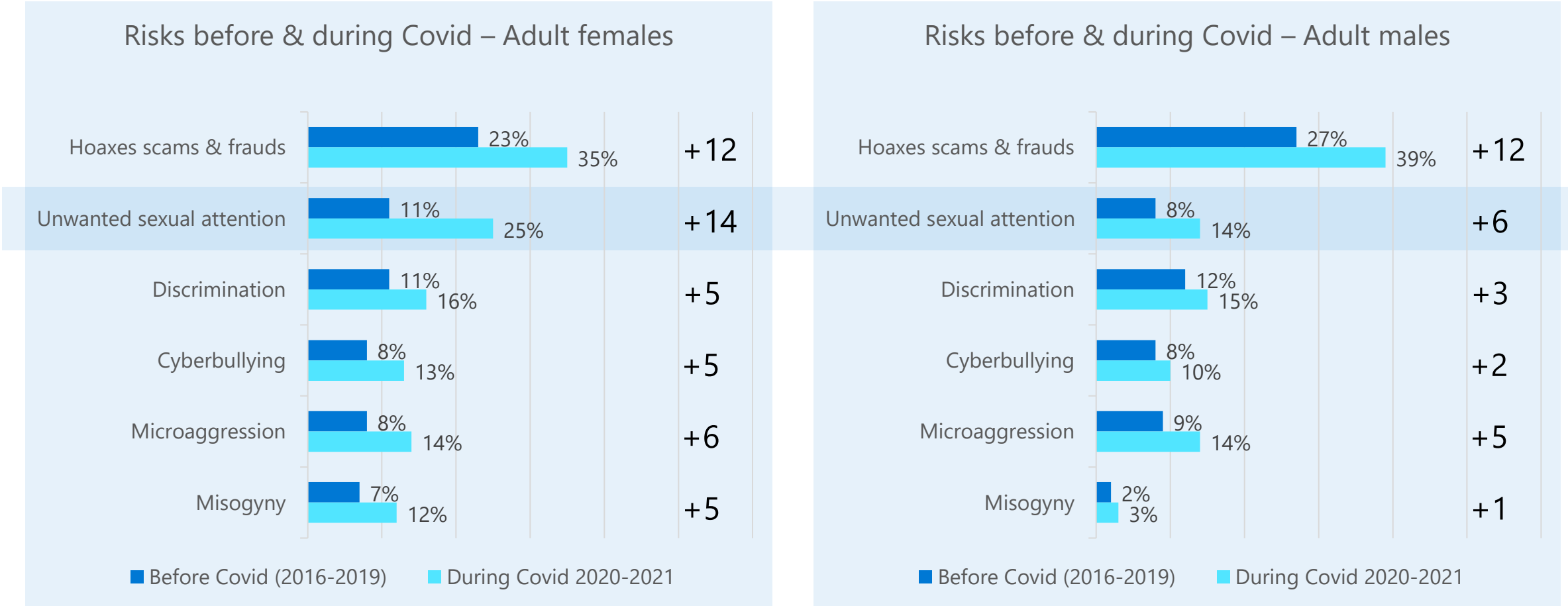
Risks that worsened the most during Covid – Total: Females vs. Males

Unwanted sexual attention jumped twice as much for females as males during Covid



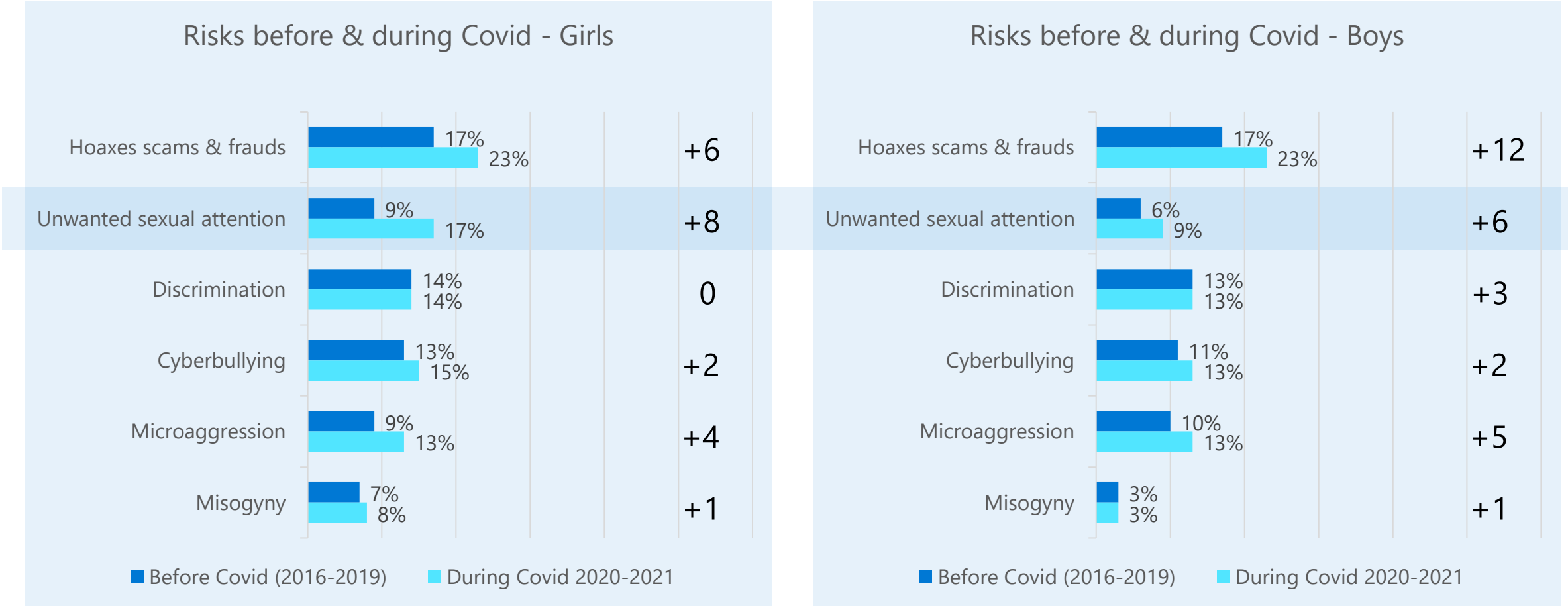
Risks that worsened the most during Covid – Adults: Females vs. Males

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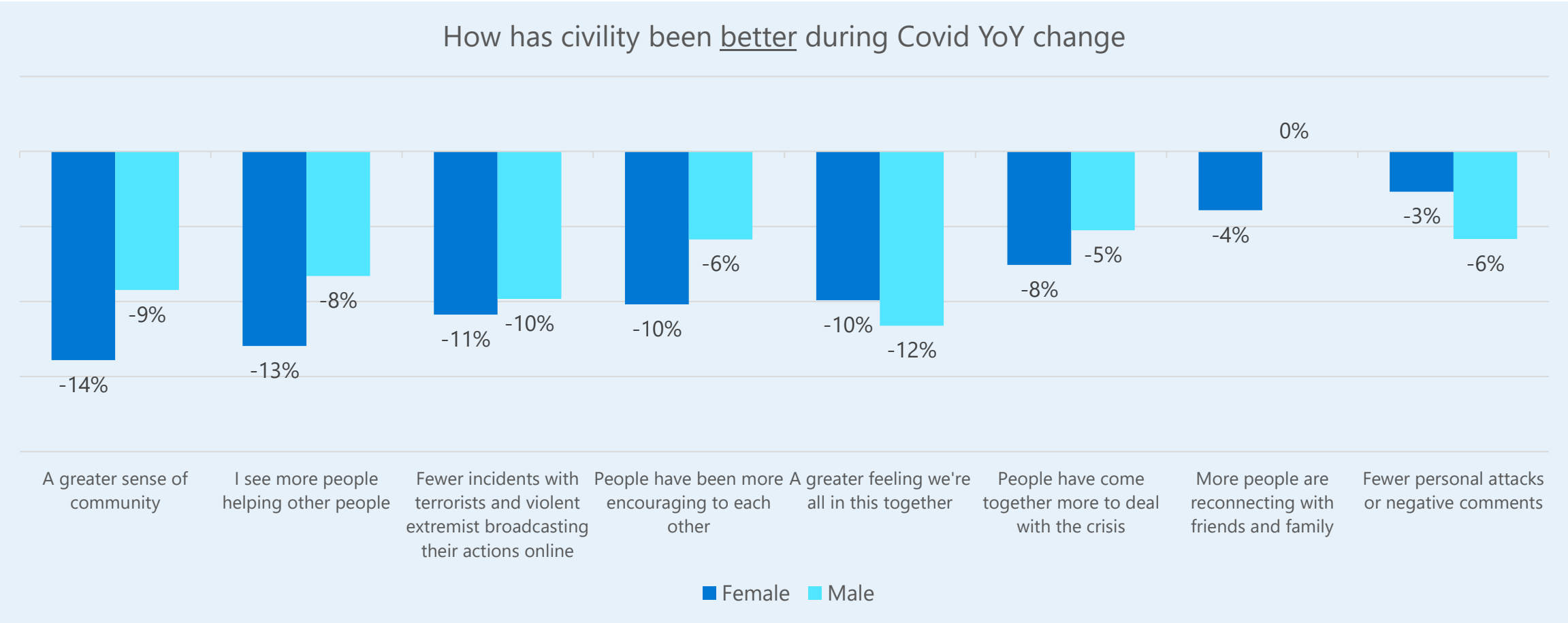


Risks that worsened the most during Covid – Teens: Girls vs. Boys

Unwanted sexual attention jumped twice as much for females as males during Covid

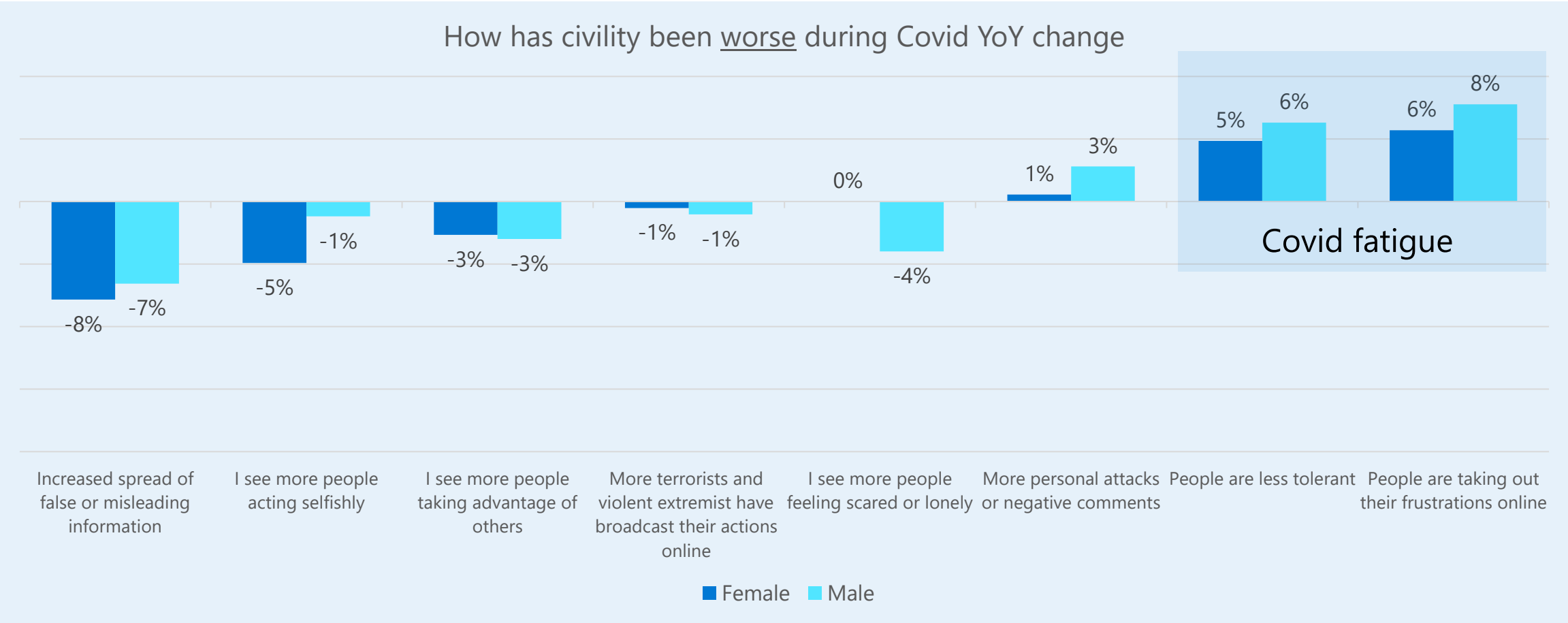


Females reported a bigger decline in positive changes than males



Covid fatigue sets in as lack of tolerance and frustration with others increased

No large differences by gender



Top ten Consequences of 2021 – Adults: Females vs. Males 2016-2021 average

70% of the top ten consequences were greater for adult females than adult males.

The largest gaps by gender were:

- Losing trust in others online
- Losing trust in others offline
- Lost sleep
- Life became more stressful

Adults	Women (W)	Men (M)	Difference (W-M)*
Became less trusting of other people online	48%	41%	+7
Less likely to participate in social media, blogs & forums	37%	33%	+4
Became less trusting of other people offline	37%	31%	+6
Lower self-esteem	13%	10%	+3
Lost sleep	31%	26%	+5
Felt more lonely and alone	30%	26%	+4
Personal reputation was damaged	21%	20%	+1
My life became more stressful	29%	24%	+5
Lost money	21%	23%	-2
Was more constructive in my criticism of other people	25%	27%	-2

Note
2020 Lower self-esteem added

*A difference of +/- 2% is statistically significant. One point discrepancies due to rounding error

Top ten Consequences of 2021 – Teens: Girls vs. Boys 2016-2021 average

90% of the top ten consequences were greater for teen girls than teen boys.

The largest gaps by gender were:

- Life became more stressful
- Lost sleep
- Losing trust in others online
- Felt more lonely & alone

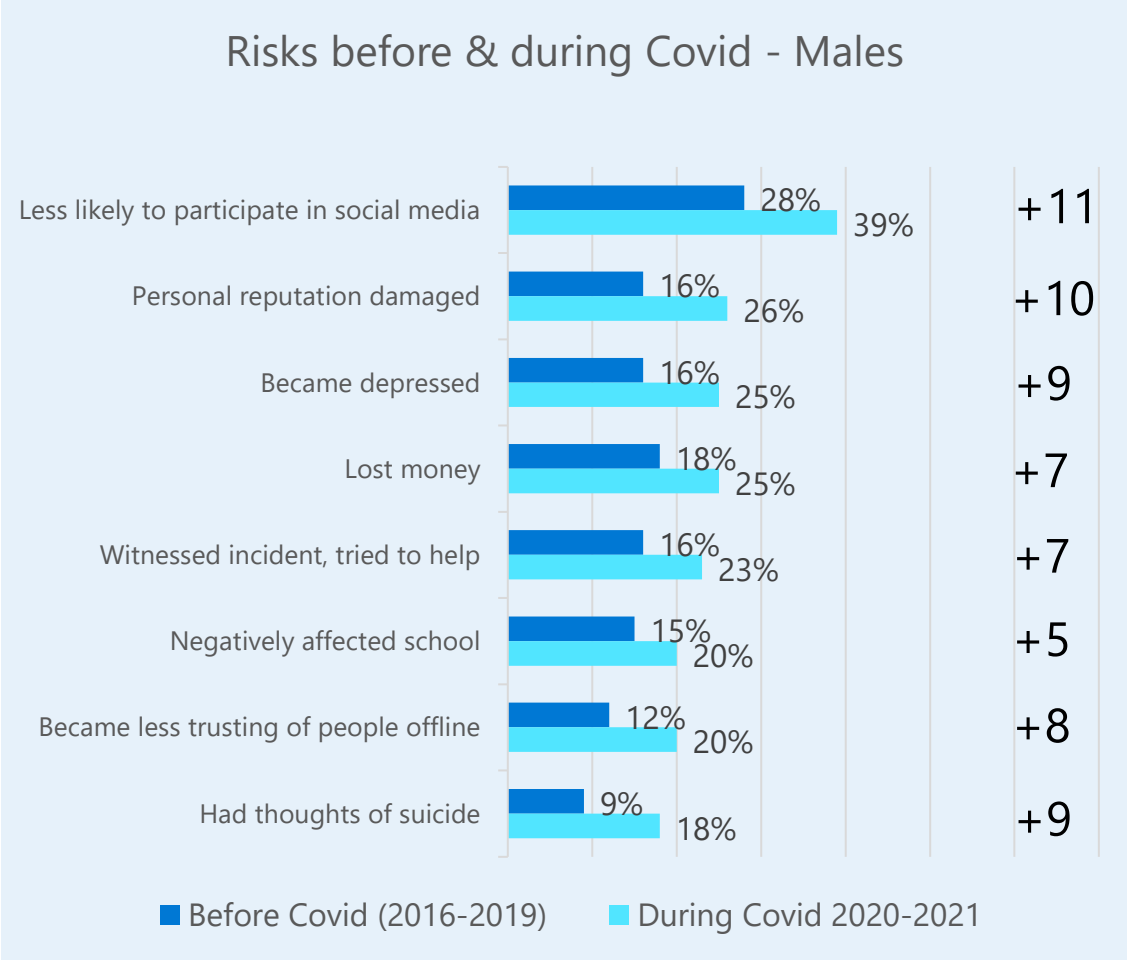
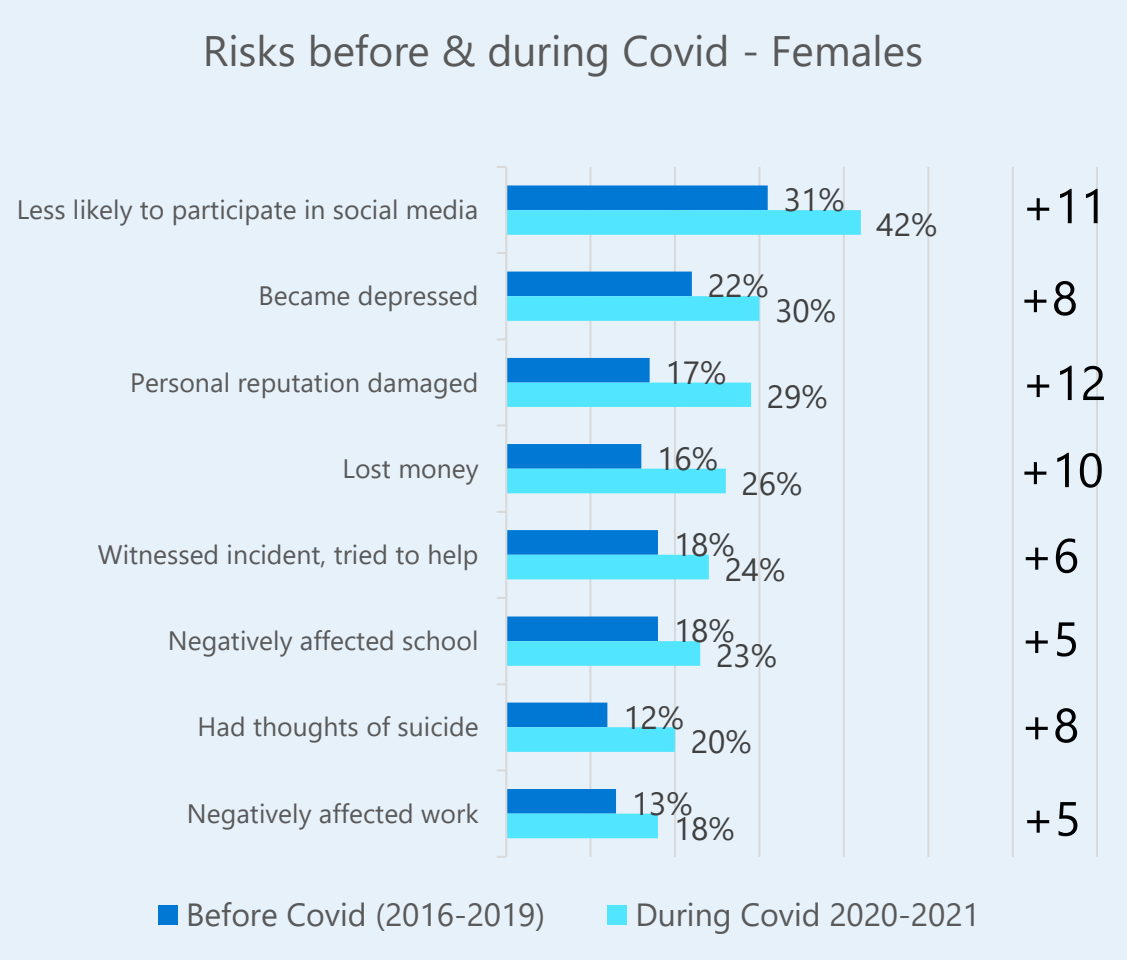
Teens	Women (W)	Men (M)	Difference (W-M)*
Became less trusting of other people online	45%	40%	+5
Less likely to participate in social media, blogs & forums	33%	30%	+3
Became less trusting of other people offline	35%	31%	+4
Lower self-esteem	13%	11%	+2
Lost sleep	32%	26%	+6
Felt more lonely and alone	31%	26%	+5
Personal reputation was damaged	21%	19%	+2
My life became more stressful	29%	23%	+6
Lost money	17%	18%	-1
Was more constructive in my criticism of other people	26%	24%	+2

Note
2020 Lower self-esteem added

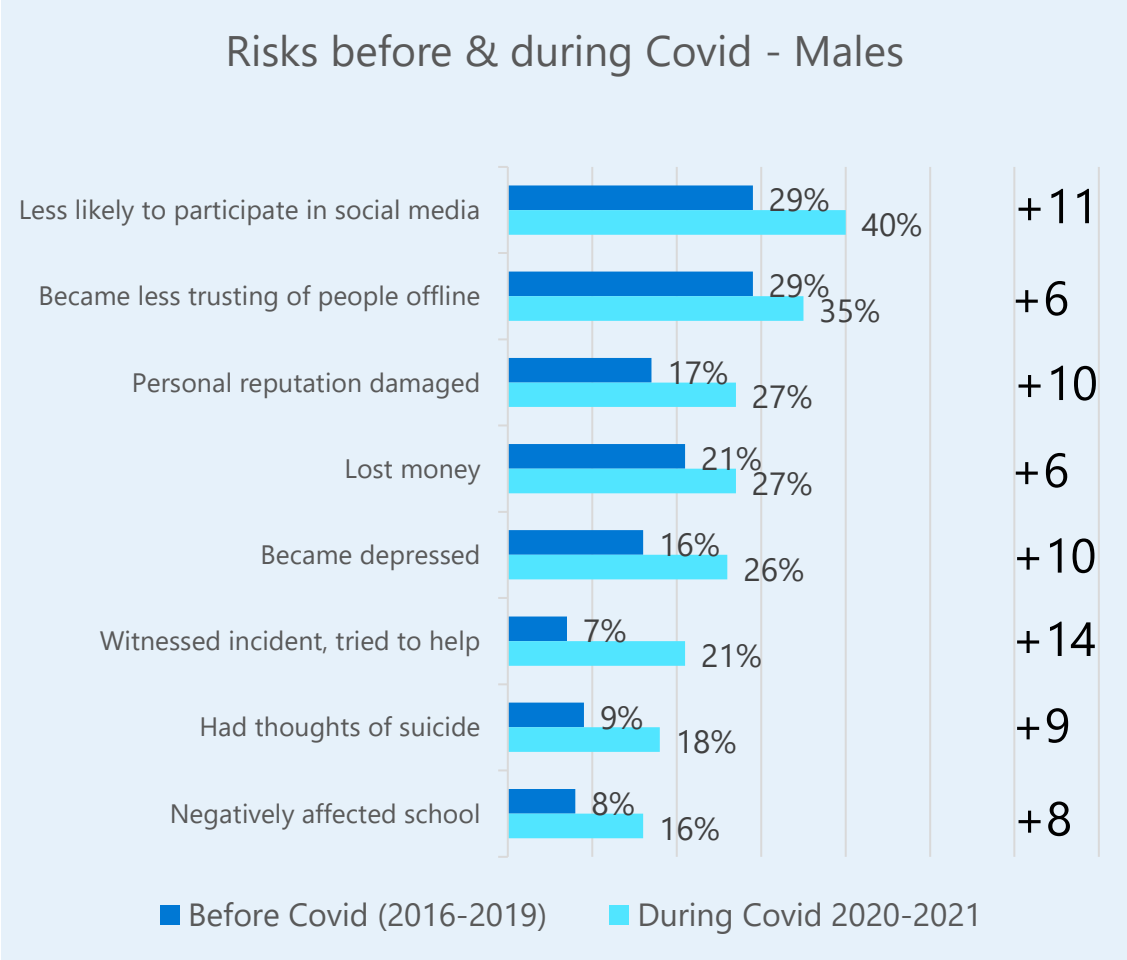
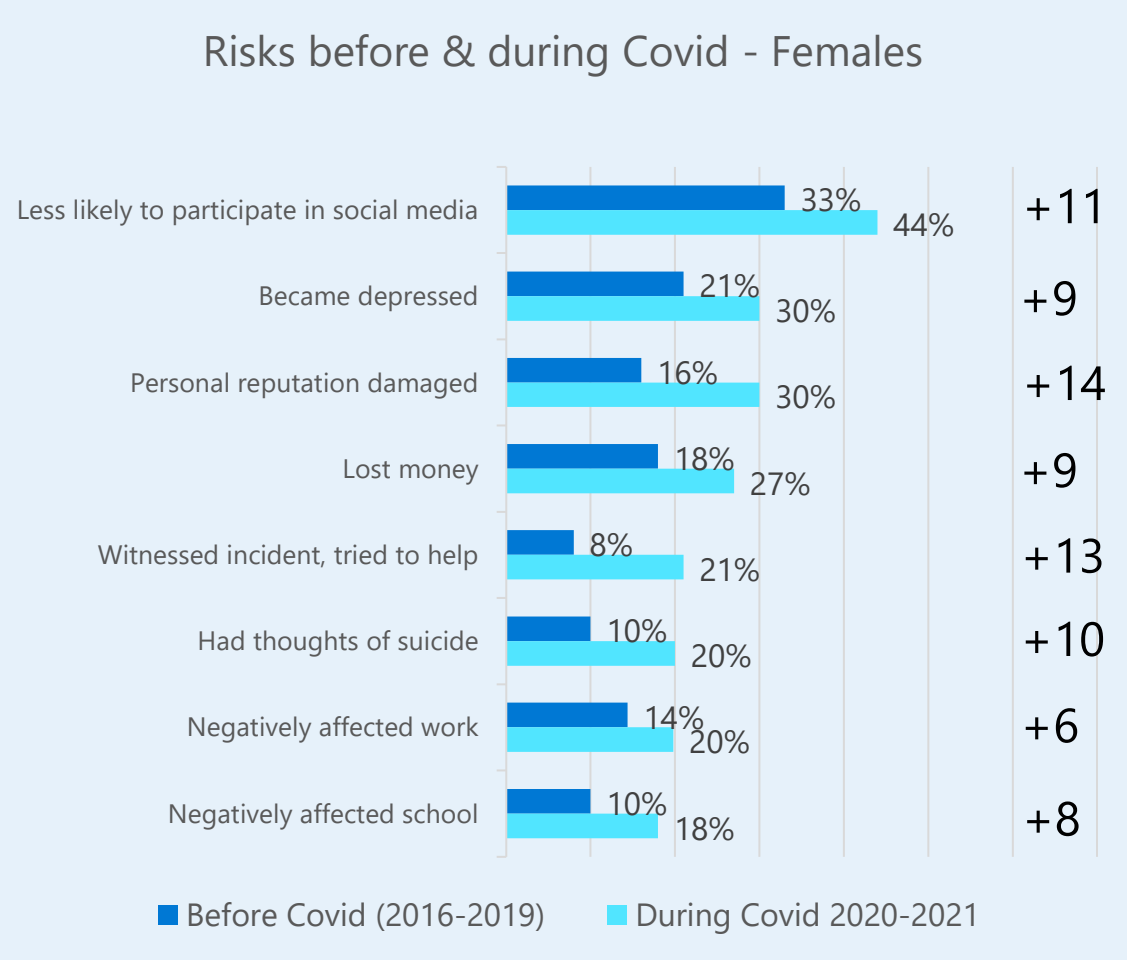
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Consequences that worsened the most during Covid – Total: Females vs. Males

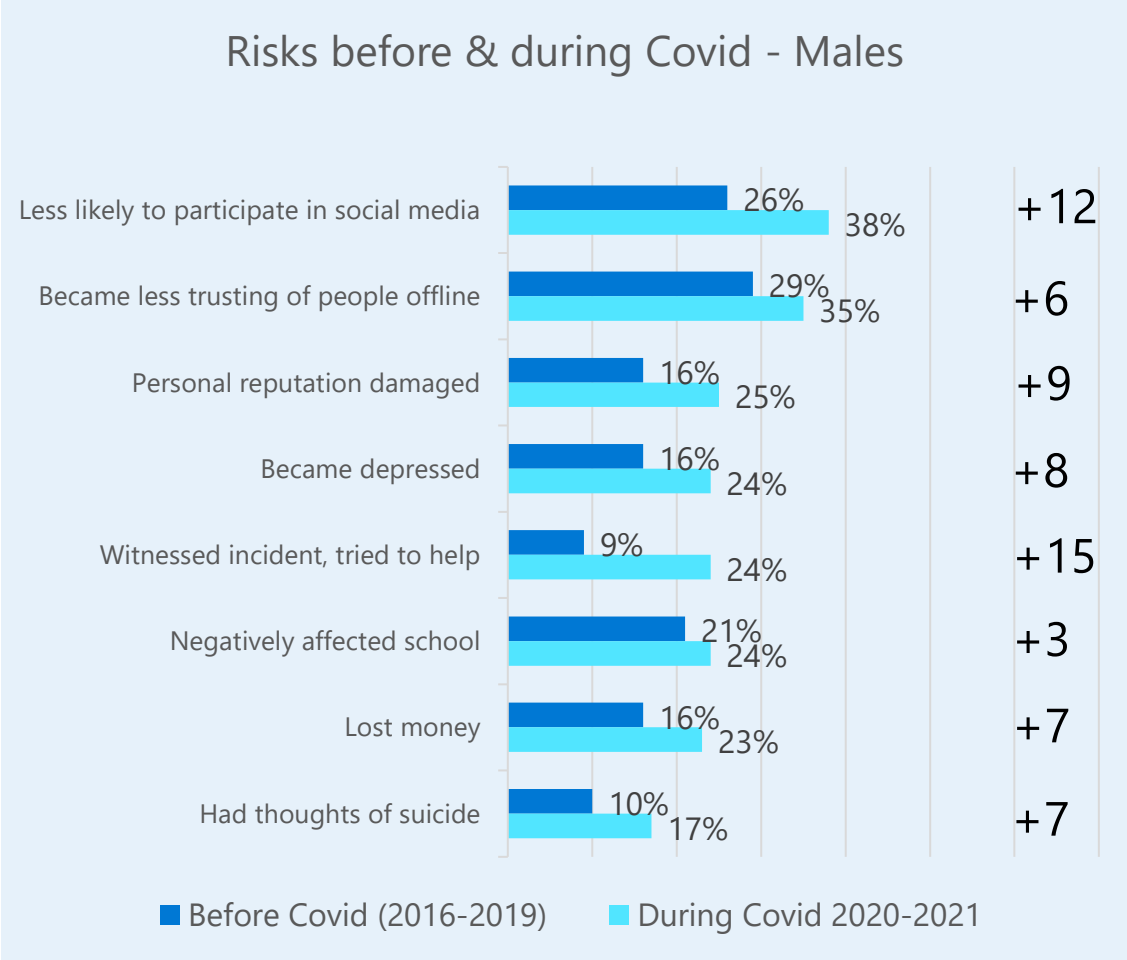
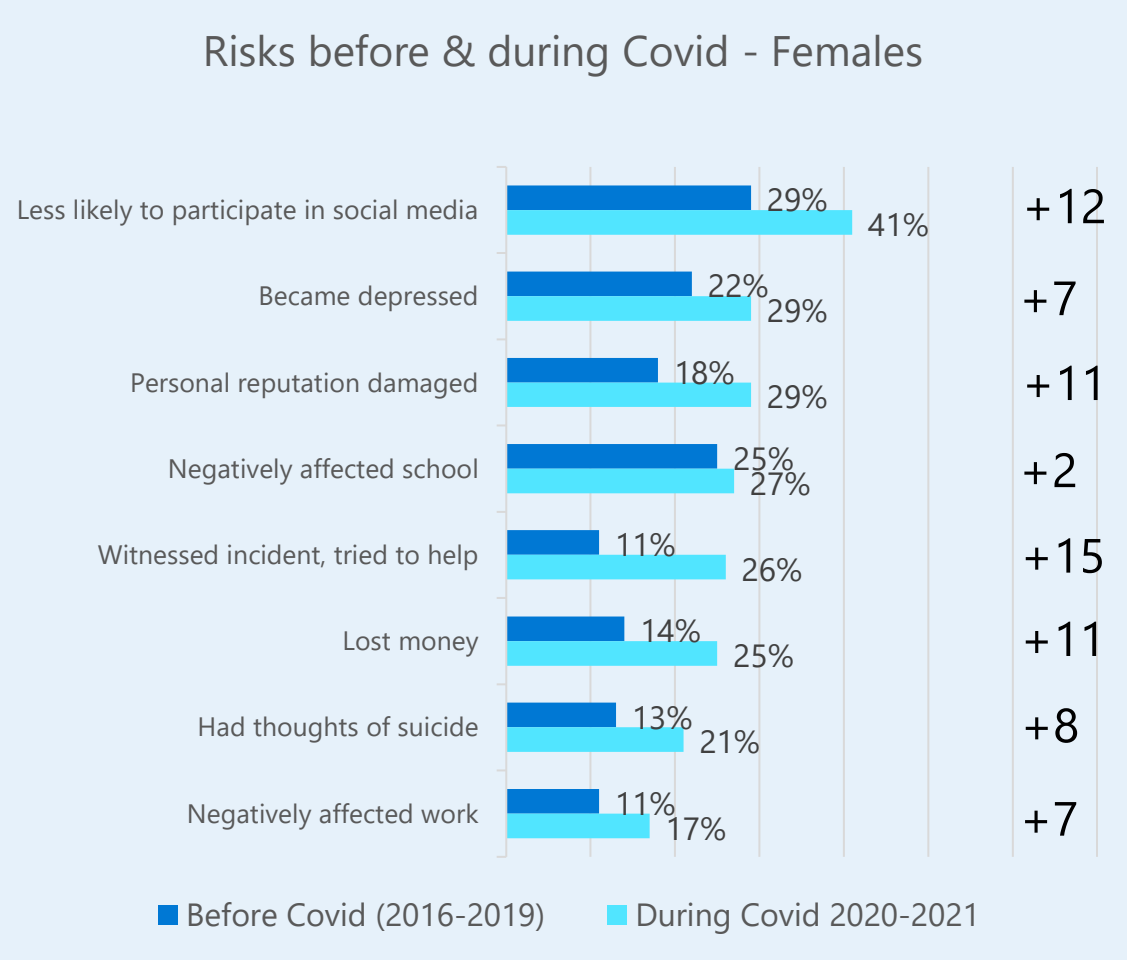
Reduction in social media and damage to personal reputation had the largest increases



Consequences that worsened the most during Covid – Adults: Females vs. Males



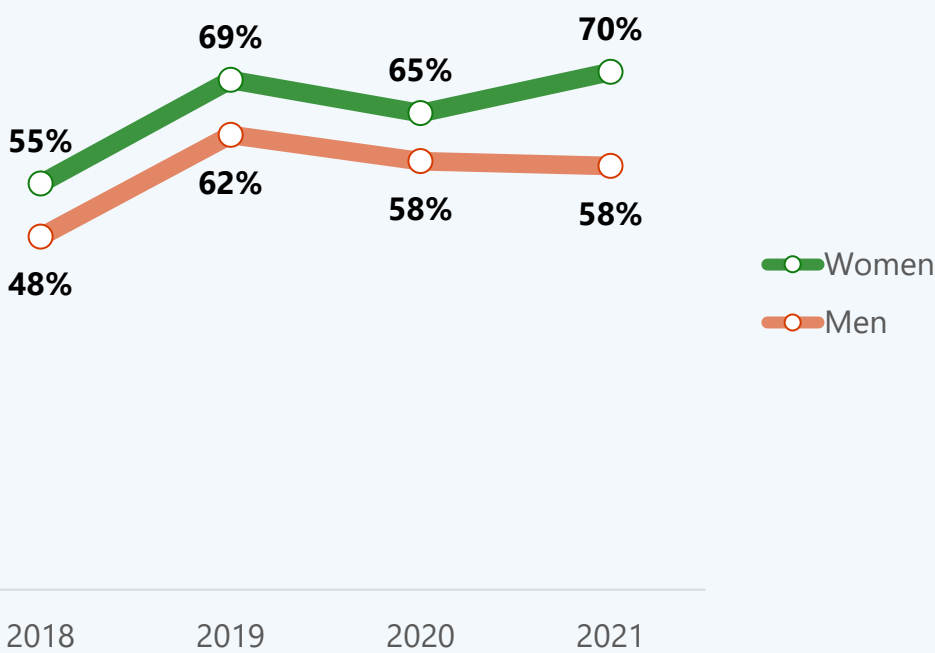
Consequences that worsened the most during Covid – Teens: Girls vs. Boys



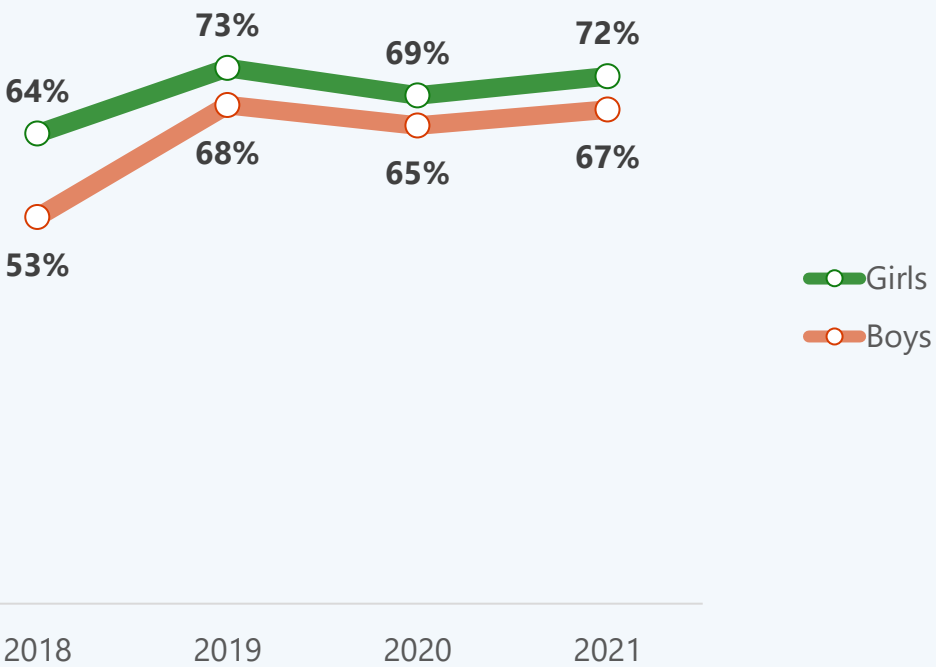
Pain: emotional, physical, psychological by age & gender

(Moderate to unbearable pain)

The level of pain for women and the gap with men are at all-time highs

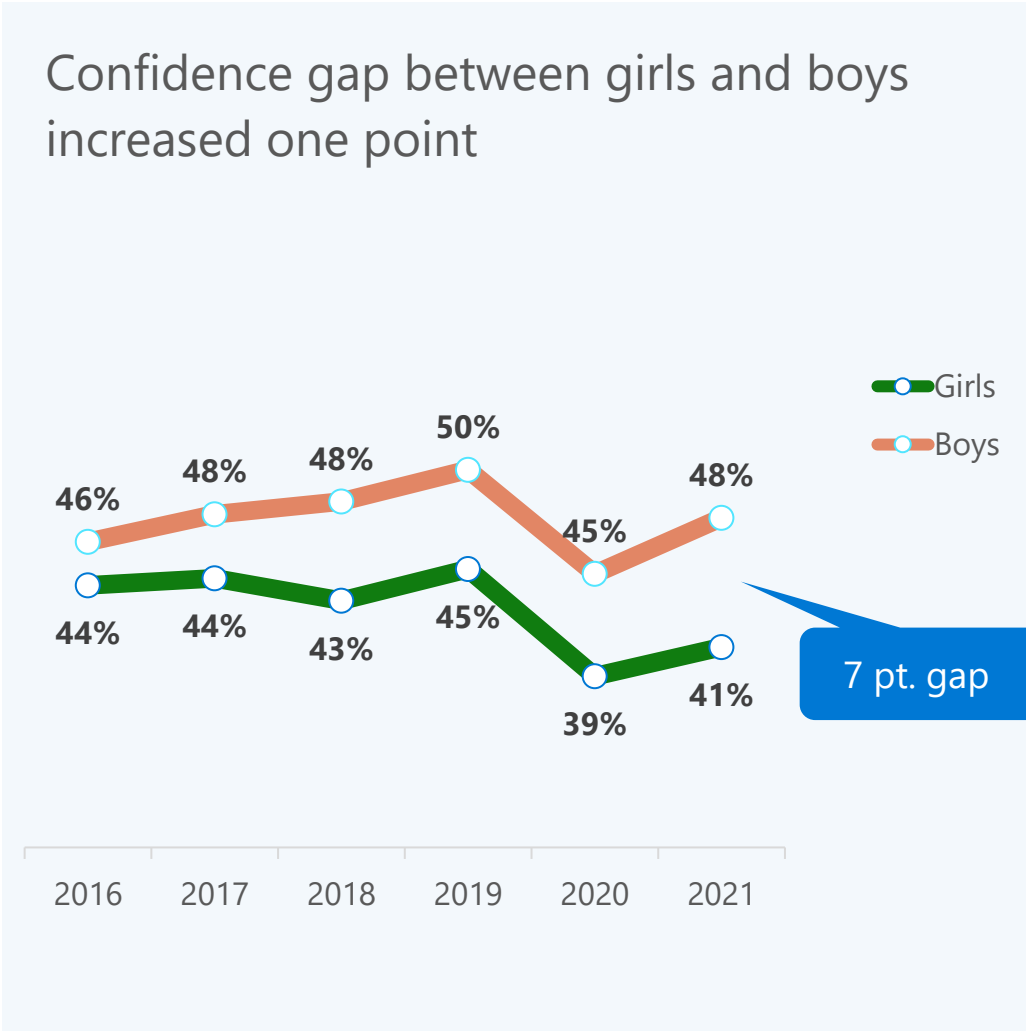
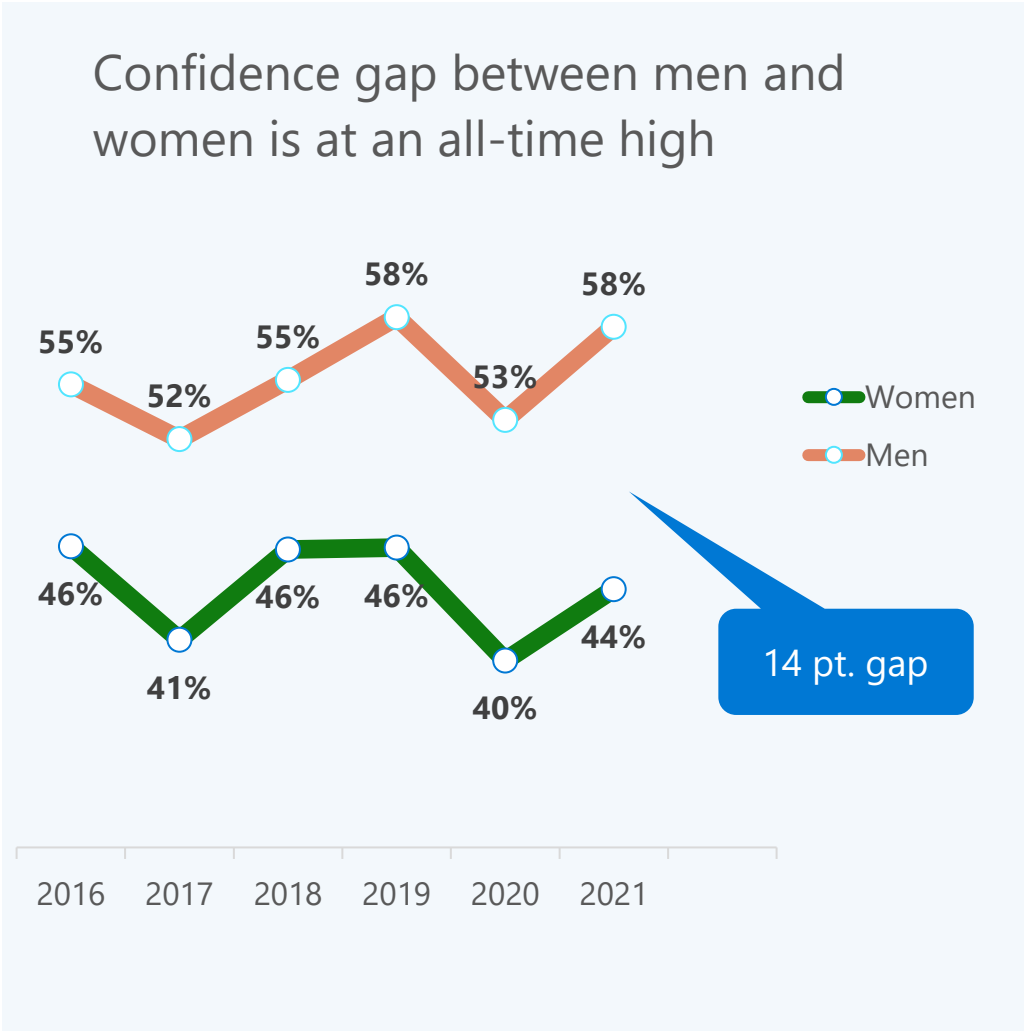


Girls consistently report higher levels of pain compared to boys



Confidence in managing risks by age & gender, 2016-2021

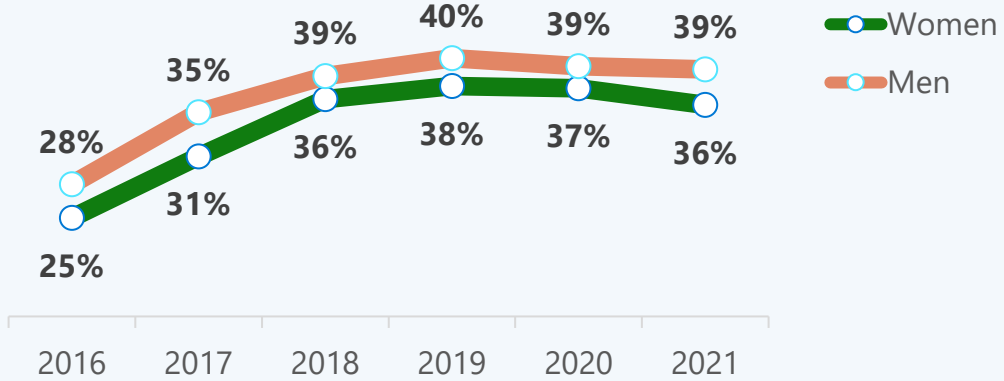
Adults reported higher confidence than teens



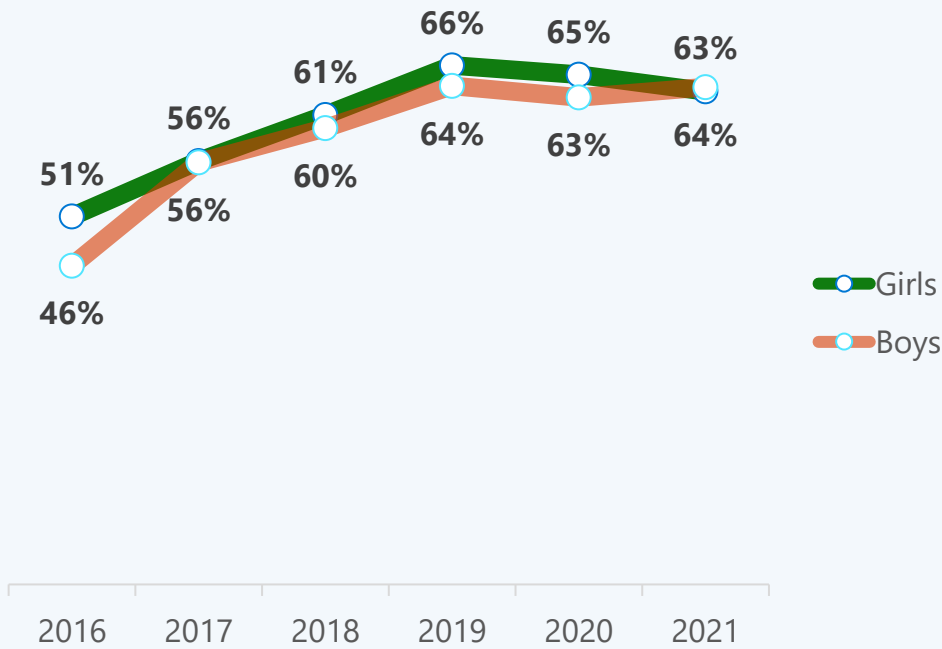
Knowing where to find help with risks by age & gender, 2016-2021

Less than 4 in 10 adults don't know where to find help managing online risks

The proportion of people who know where to find help plateaued for both men and women

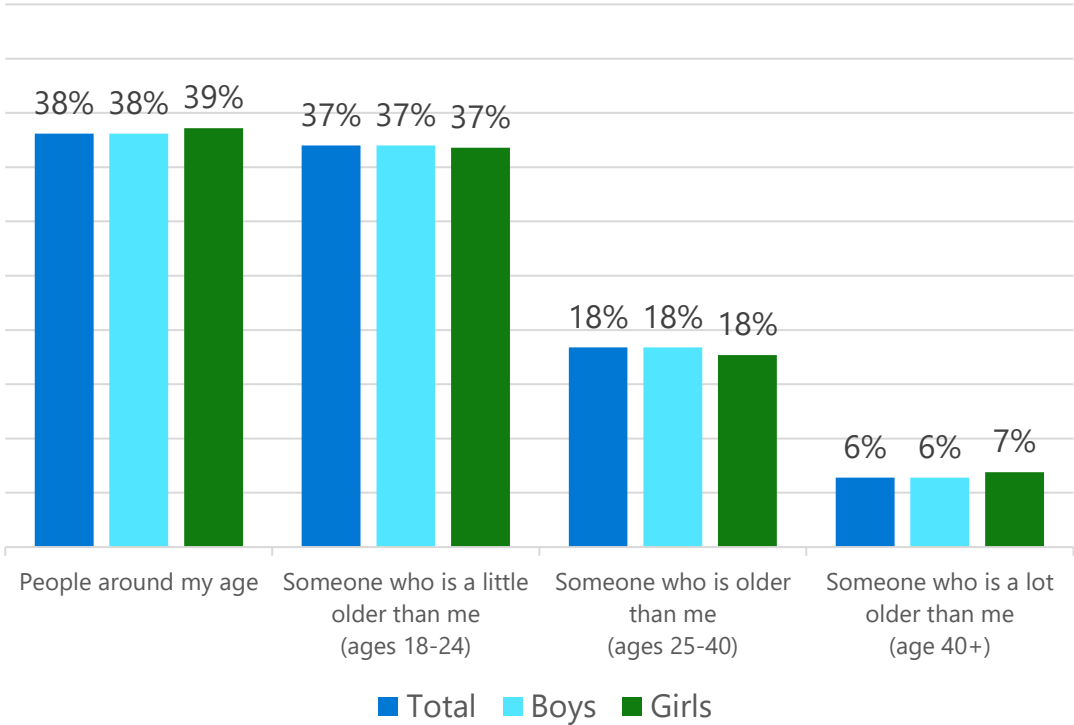


Girls & boys had equal levels of knowledge about where to find help and much higher than adults

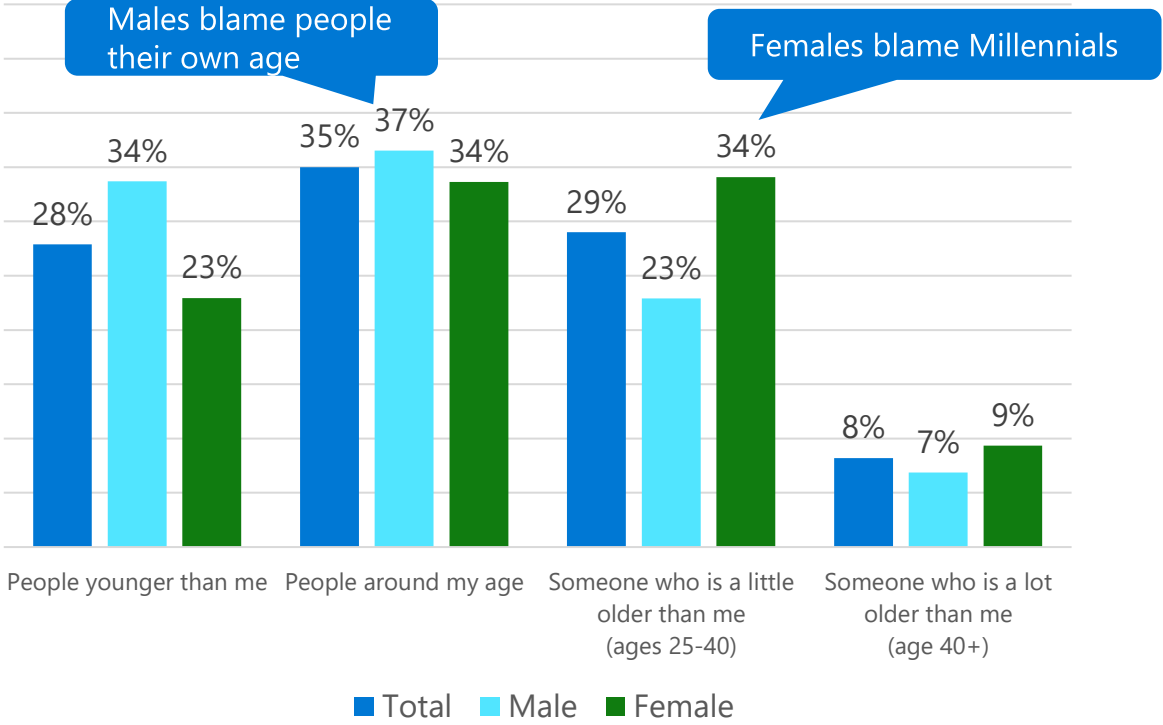


Most incivility for teens & 18-24-year-olds comes from people their own age

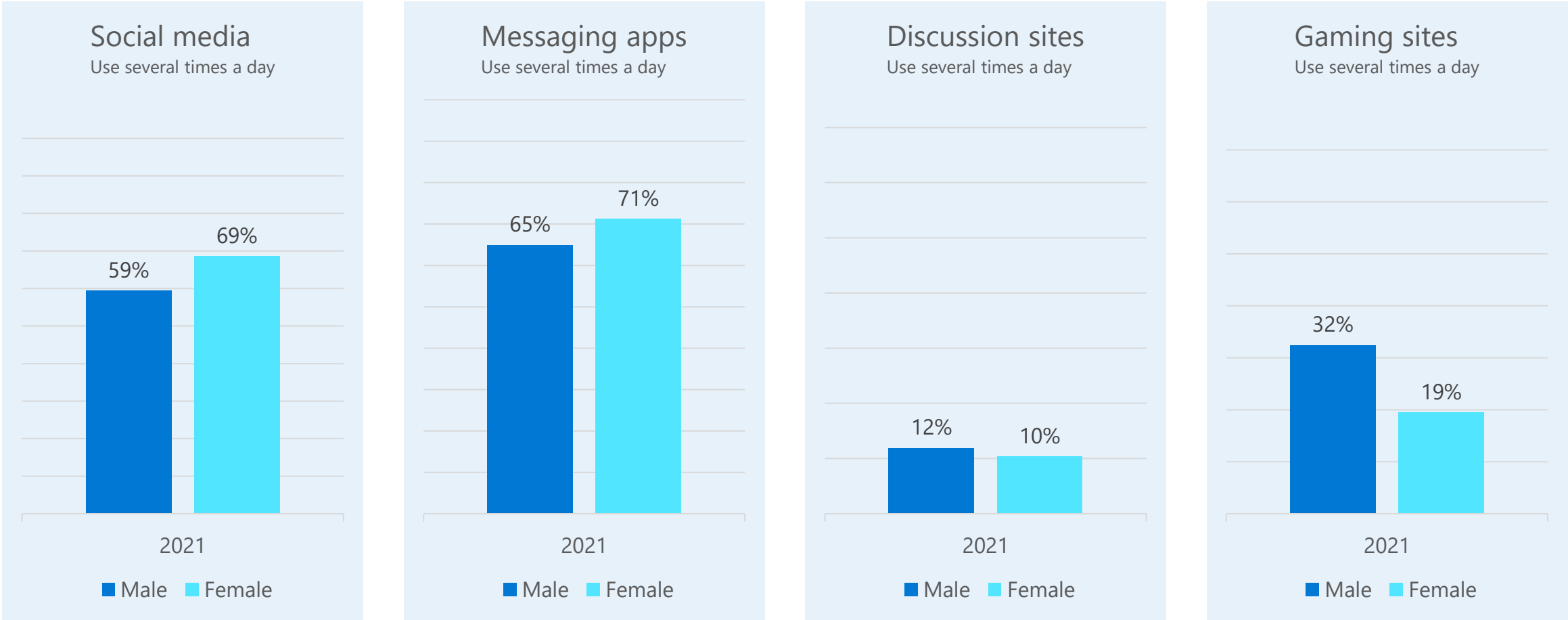
Teens blame incivility equally on people their age or a little older



Adult 18-24 males & females disagree about who's responsible for incivility



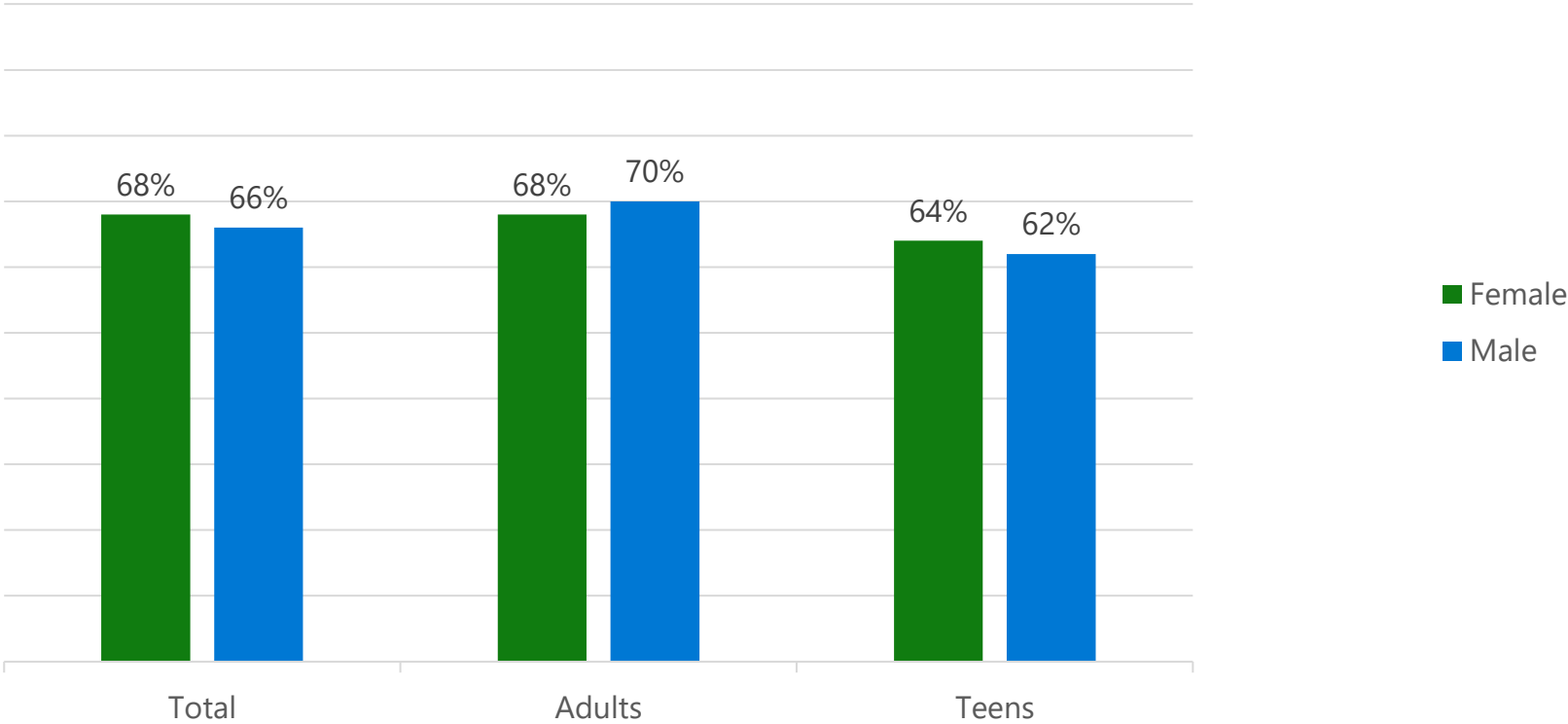
More frequent use of social media & messaging apps by females could be driving share of risks and consequences higher compared to males



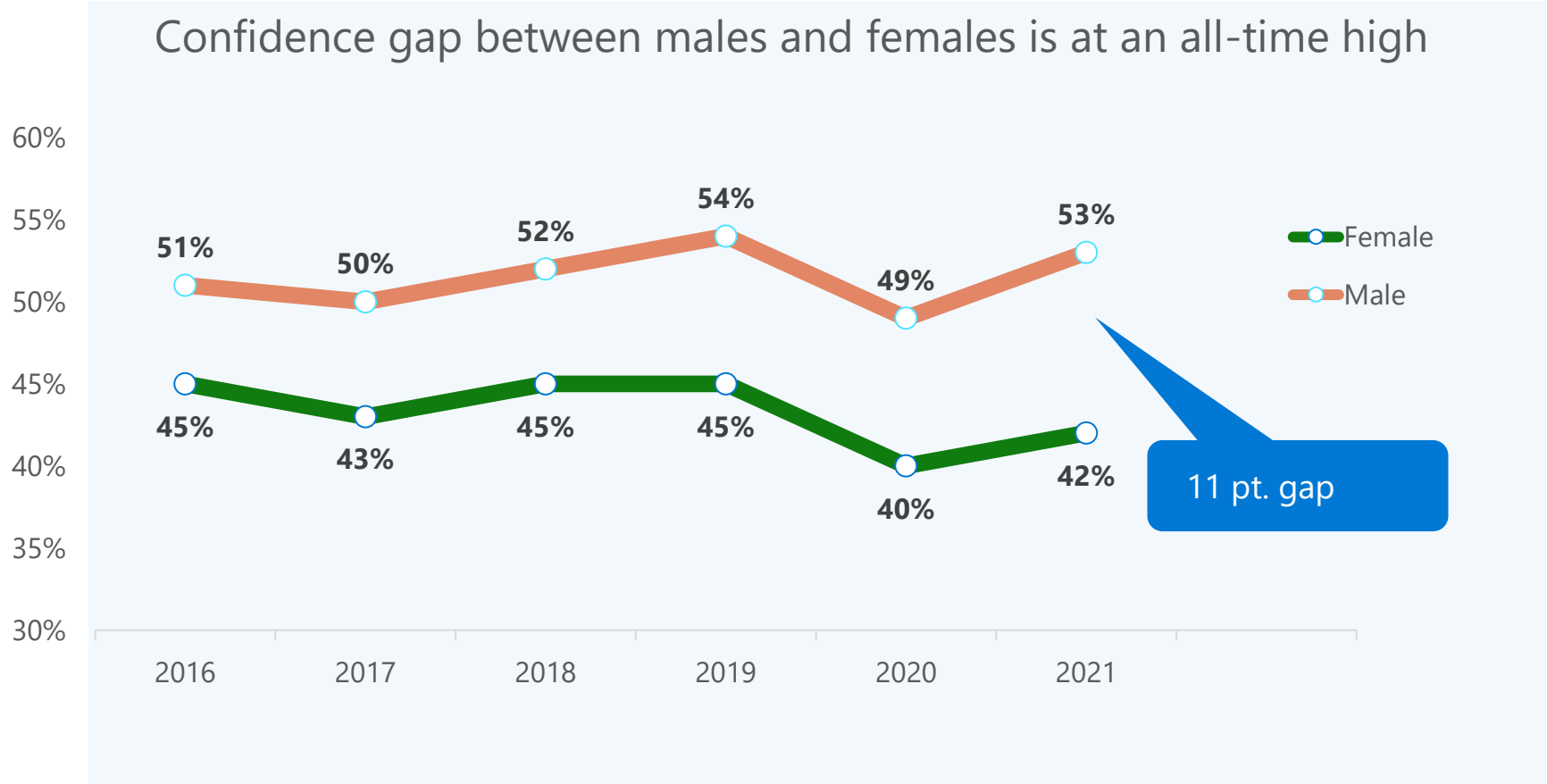
Appendix

Digital Civility Index

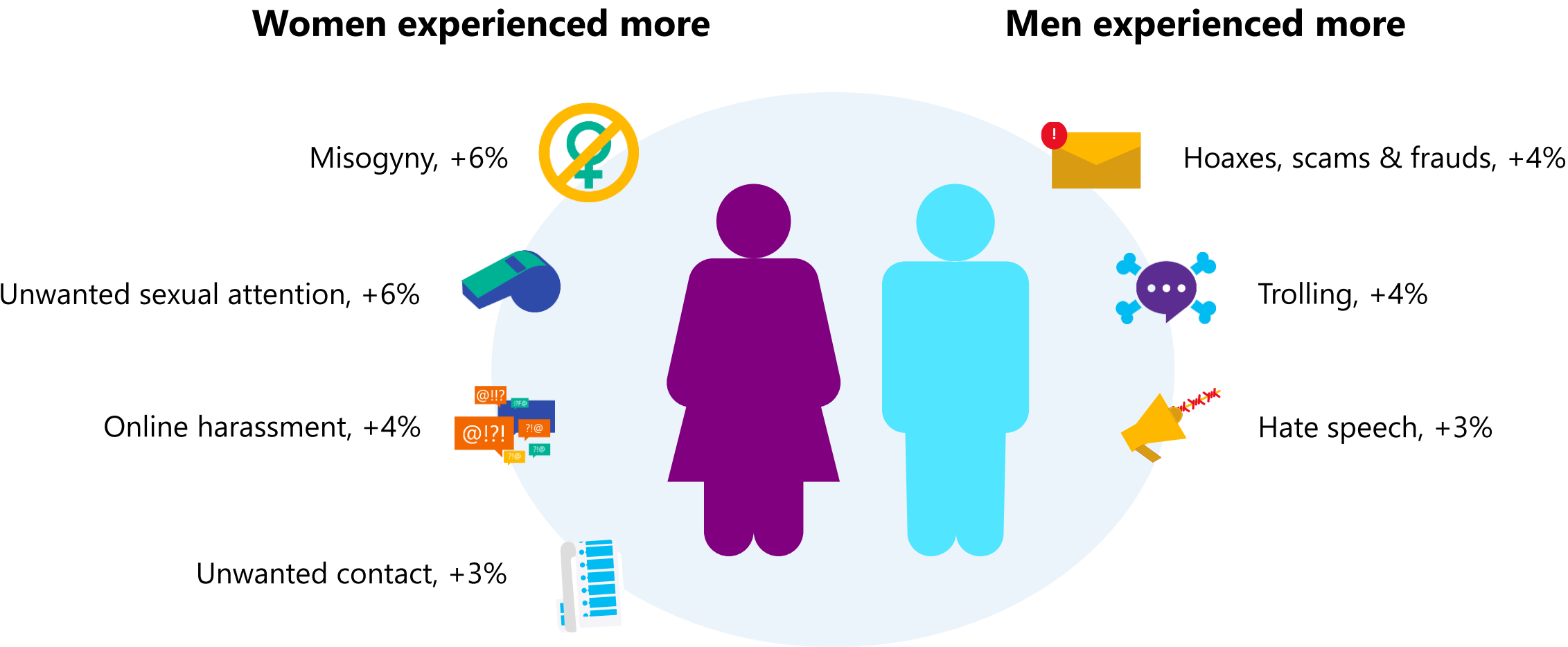
DCI by age and gender
(6-year DCI average, 2016-2021)



Confidence in managing risks by gender, 2016-2021

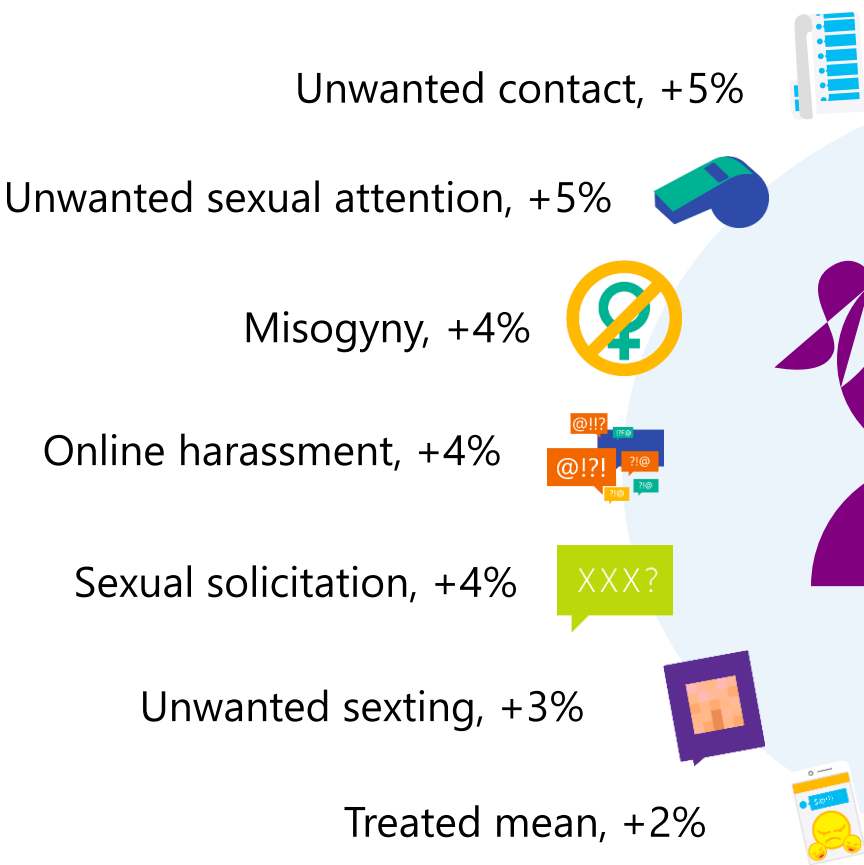


Online risks experienced vary by gender: Adults, 2016-2021 average



Online risks experienced vary by gender: Teens, 2016-2021 average

Girls experienced more



Boys experienced more

