



"IT WOULD BE **AWKWARD** TO TELL THEM":

Why Adolescents Do **Not** Confide in Their Parents About Online Sexual Solicitation

Barbora Lisztwan Honusova
Lenka Dedkova
Vojtech Mylek

MASARYK UNIVERSITY
BRNO, CZECH REPUBLIC

01 Introduction

Receiving **sexually loaded messages** is a **common** part of adolescents' online experiences (Madigan et al., 2018).

When such messages are **unexpected**, they are usually **perceived as bothersome** (Finkelhor et al., 2000).

After receiving them, adolescents **rarely seek social support from parents** (Mishna, 2023), despite evidence suggesting this can be an **effective coping strategy** (Kaiser et al., 2020).

02 Objective

To investigate adolescents' experiences with online sexual solicitations and provide insights into how adolescents manage information disclosure about them.

03 Methodology

A **mixed-method** study with survey data from 1,500 Czech adolescents (aged 13–18, 52.3% female) collected online in 2022.

QUANTITATIVE → experience with online sexual solicitation (frequency, perceived severity, disclosure patterns)

QUALITATIVE → a Structured Tabular Thematic Analysis of 1,397 open-ended answers from 871 adolescents



04 Results in numbers

57.7 % of teens have received such message at least once

69.8 % found the message upsetting

85.0 % confided in a peer

44.5 % confided in a parent

05 Reasons not to tell parents

RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS

"I don't want to burden them."

"They wouldn't get it."

NATURE OF THE INTERACTION

"It was not that serious."

"I know these are spam."

SHAME & EMBARRASSMENT

"I would be ashamed."

"It's my personal thing."

FEAR OF CONSEQUENCES

"They'd ban my computer."

"Endless questioning."

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

"Blocking the user is enough."

"I'd rather tell my friend."

THE INITIATOR

"Bullying me."

"Someone my parents know."

06 Conclusions

- **Open and respectful family communication** plays a key role in addressing adolescents' online challenges.
- **Overly restrictive or punitive** parental responses can contribute to **secrecy** rather than disclosure.
- Viewing unwanted online interactions as a normal part of online life may **hinder recognition of boundary violations and help-seeking**.



References

- Madigan, S., Villani, V., Azzopardi, C., Laut, D., Smith, T., Temple, J. R., Browne, D., & Dimitropoulos, G. (2018). The prevalence of unwanted online sexual exposure and solicitation among youth: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 63*(2), 133–141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2018.03.012>
- Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K. J., & Wolak, J. (2000). *Online Victimization: A Report on the Nation's Youth*. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/188393NCJRS.pdf>
- Mishna, F., Milne, E., Cook, C., Slane, A., & Ringrose, J. (2023). Unsolicited Sexts and Unwanted Requests for Sexts: Reflecting on the Online Sexual Harassment of Youth. *Youth & Society, 55*(4), 630–651. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X211058226>
- Kaiser, S., Kyrrestad, H., & Fossum, S. (2020). Help-seeking behavior in Norwegian adolescents: The role of bullying and cyberbullying victimization in a cross-sectional study. *Scandinavian Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Psychology, 8*(1), 81–90. <https://doi.org/10.21307/sjcap-2020-008>

