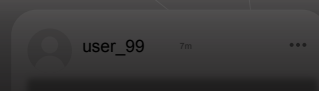
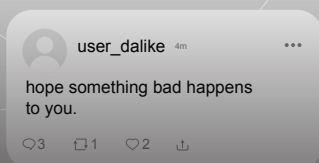
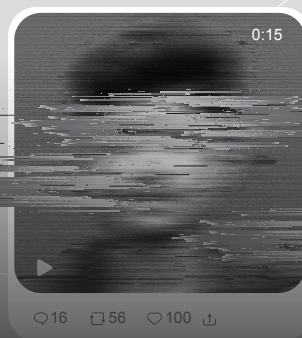
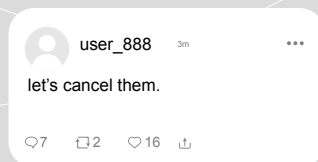
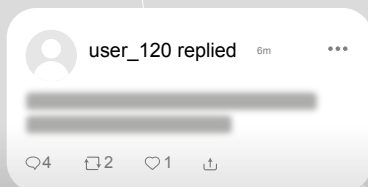
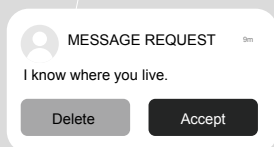
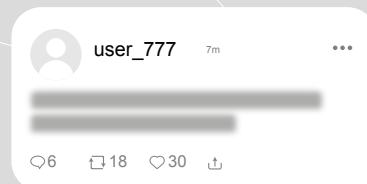
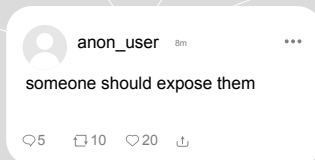
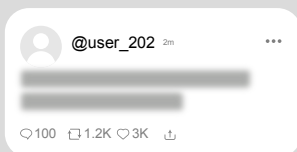


STUDY ON ONLINE HARMS IN SINGAPORE (2026)

FINDINGS



CONTENT WARNING

This report contains references to online harms including online sexual harassment, cyberbullying, intimate image abuse (IIA), impersonation, defamation, cyberstalking, cancel campaigns, hate speech, and doxxing. It discusses emotional, psychological, and physical effects including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Some readers may find this content distressing.

If you or someone you know has experienced online harm, please reach out to SHECARES through the contact details provided at the end of this report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	3
About this study	4
Key Findings	5
Part One: Prevalence	
01 Who is affected?	7
02 Where do online harms occur?	7
03 What types of online harms are most common?	8
04 What online harms are people most concerned about?	11
Part Two: Impact	
01 How are people impacted by online harms?	12
02 How safe does the public feel in online spaces?	13
03 How are people protecting themselves?	13
Part Three: Recourse	
01 Do survivors seek help?	15
02 Are there differences between genders in awareness and reporting behaviours?	17
Part Four: Strengthening Our Ecosystem of Care	
01 How can we improve as an ecosystem?	19
02 How does the public view responsibility among actors in an online harm?	20
03 How do upcoming measures meet survivors' needs?	21
Recommendations	23
Methodology	26
Appendix: Demographic Profile of Respondents	28

FOREWORD

At SHE, we have always believed that understanding the full picture of online harm requires both depth and breadth: listening closely to the experiences of individual survivors, and tracking what is shifting across the population at large. Our qualitative research has given voice to survivors' lived realities. This report does something different – it assesses the scale of the problem in our society today.

Three years on from our 2023 Study on Online Harms, this repeat study takes stock of what has changed, and what the state of online safety is in Singapore today. In many respects, the reality is sobering. The patterns we identified in 2023 have proven stubbornly persistent. Survivors continue to bear the burden of harm. Many still feel unheard. And too many remain reluctant to seek help, unsure of where to turn or whether it would make a difference.

This persistence is itself a finding, and it demands a response. Singapore has made meaningful legislative and regulatory strides in recent years – the Online Safety (Relief and Accountability) Act and the establishment of the Online Safety Commission chief among them. These are significant and welcome developments. But as our research has consistently shown, the lived reality of survivors, and the attitudes of the public around them, will not shift through policy alone. Legislation and the Online Safety Commission provide an important foundation. The next phase is to ensure these new pathways are well understood, well used, and complemented by trusted support across the ecosystem.

What this study also makes clear is that while the experience of online harms is often gendered – in the forms it takes, and in who is most exposed to them – many of the challenges survivors face are shared, regardless of how they identify. Women continue to bear a disproportionate weight of online sexual harassment. But men, too, are harmed, and too often feel they have no place to turn.

SHE will not stand by while any survivor is left behind. Violence and harm – whether online or offline, and whoever it targets – should never be normalised, excused, or accepted as the price of participating in public life.

We must be clear-eyed about what is at stake. The online world is no longer a place apart from public life – it *is* public life, where we work, learn, form relationships, and take part in society. To be driven out of that space by harassment, or to be made to feel unsafe within it, is to be denied full participation in the life of our community. This is not a peripheral concern or a matter of individual misfortune. It is a question of who gets to belong, safely and equally, in the spaces where our shared life increasingly takes place. And the urgency is only growing. Harms are evolving with the introduction of generative AI, capable of inflicting damage at greater scale and speed than ever before. The norms we set, or fail to set, today will shape what our society is willing to tolerate for years to come. Every day that harm goes unchallenged is a day it becomes more entrenched, more expected, more ordinary. That is precisely what we refuse to accept.

Change requires every actor in this ecosystem to take their role seriously: platforms that act with transparency and speed, agencies that coordinate rather than operate in silos, social services that are genuinely accessible to those who need them, communities that refuse to normalise what is harmful, and individuals who choose to act rather than look away.

This is the work SHE has committed itself to since our founding: as a frontline provider of survivor support through SHECARES, as a data-driven voice, and as a convenor of the partnerships that this challenge demands.

We are grateful to everyone who made this study possible, and to the partners across government, industry, and the community who continue to walk this path with us.

How Kay Lii
CEO
SG Her Empowerment (SHE)

ABOUT THIS STUDY

In 2023, SHE surveyed over 1,000 Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents aged 15 and above. That Study documented the prevalence of nine categories of online harm, their impact on individuals, and the adequacy of existing recourse mechanisms. From that survey, **38% of respondents in the survey had personally experienced online harms** and that existing support pathways fell significantly short of survivors' needs.

In the years since, that evidence has informed policy and public discourse on online harms. SHE has consistently advocated for stronger recourse measures for survivors, including those now taking shape through the Online Safety (Relief and Accountability) Act (OSRAA). Passed in Parliament in November 2025, OSRAA established the office of the Commissioner of Online Safety (Commissioner). The Online Safety Commission (OSC) supports the office of the Commissioner and provides a dedicated avenue for redress for survivors. New statutory torts were also introduced, which set out clear duties for communicators, administrators, and platforms not to cause or facilitate online harm. OSRAA came into effect at the end of June 2026 and while it will take some time for its full impact to be felt, these developments mark an important step forward in strengthening support for survivors.

Alongside these changes locally, the wider online harms landscape has not stood still. Platform policies have evolved. The rise of generative AI has created new vectors for harm – most notably AI-generated intimate image abuse. Throughout, SHECARES, Singapore's first specialist support centre for targets of online harms, has continued to walk alongside survivors to navigate help-seeking options.

This report was conducted against the backdrop of these developments, offering a timely opportunity to examine how the population's experiences and perceptions of online harm compare to the changes in legal or institutional environment now taking shape around them.

SHE thus commissioned a second run of its survey to answer four core questions:

1. **Prevalence:** Has the scope and nature of online harms in Singapore changed since 2023?
2. **Impact:** Has the nature and severity of harm experienced by survivors evolved?
3. **Perceptions:** How does the public view online safety accountability when online harms occur? What do they think of the new legislative initiatives arising from OSRAA?
4. **Recourse:** Are the available avenues for help and redress meeting survivors' needs?

The 2026 iteration of this survey was conducted in April 2026. 1,048 Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents aged 15 and above completed an online survey administered via a panel provider. The sample was designed to be nationally representative by age, gender, and race, with quotas set in accordance with the Singapore Department of Statistics' population estimates. The survey instrument was adapted to preserve core item wordings, where possible, to enable comparisons across the two waves. New items were added to address emerging online harm typologies along with perceptions on the latest reforms and online safety here in Singapore.

The findings from this Study will inform SHE's advocacy, public education, and ongoing work with SHECARES. As the help-seeking landscape evolves, we remain committed to working with ecosystem partners to close the gaps that remain, and to cultivate online spaces that prioritise the safety and dignity of users.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Online harms remain prevalent in society

- **4 in 10 (38%)** of the sample personally experienced at least one online harm in their lifetime, with no observable change since 2023.
- **1 in 4 (26%)** personally experienced at least one online harm in the past 12 months.
- **6%** of respondents faced inauthentic deepfakes i.e., sexual/non-sexual.
- Those facing Intimate Image Abuse (IIA) and Statements Affecting Reputation (SAR) experienced these harms more frequently in the **past 12 months**.

2. Online harms continue to impact survivors' lives deeply; left unchecked, such harmful conduct could impact Singaporeans' sense of safety and quality of discourse.

- Close to **4 in 10 (36%)** survivors experienced at least one severe impact, including mental/physical health issues, financial losses, etc.
- Only **4 in 10 (38%)** agreed they felt safe in the online space. More respondents in 2026 did not engage in discussions with others online to avoid online harms.

3. Both women and men's lives are impacted by online harms but women can benefit from improved access to justice and help-seeking channels.

- Overall, male respondents were more likely to indicate that they personally experienced online harms in their lifetime (F: 32%, M: 43%). It is unclear, however, whether women and men differ in their thresholds for self-identifying as victims of online harm in a survey context.
- While other harms such as cyberbullying were experienced to a similar degree between female and male youth aged 15-34 years:
 - **Female youth were more likely to face online sexual harassment** as compared to male youth, similar to that in 2023 (F: 14%, M: 6%).
 - **Male youth were more likely to face cancel campaigns** (F: 1%, M: 10%) and **inauthentic IIA** i.e., sexual deepfakes (F: 3%, M: 10%).
- Generally, female survivors were **less likely to report online harms** (F:55%, M:65%).
- Female respondents had lower awareness (not aware at all/slightly aware) of legal (F:53%, M: 42%) and non-legal sources (F:66%, M:59%). Overall, **female respondents were less likely to feel safe online** (F: 35%, M:42%).

4. Even as many survivors report the harms they face, barriers continue to hold others back.

- **6 in 10 (60%)** survivors reported online harms to various channels such as platforms, administrators/moderators, police or schools/workplaces, or sought help. **1 in 10 (12%)** survivors pursued legal proceedings.
- **About 3 in 10 survivors** who did not report to platforms (36%) or did not pursue legal action (32%) respectively felt what they faced was not serious enough.
- Among those who did not report, **4 in 10 (43%)** survivors did not report to platforms due to perceived inaction or delays.

5. There was room for improvement across the help-seeking ecosystem. General awareness of sources of help can be improved, including non-legal sources of help, as could reporting satisfaction across different channels.

- **6 in 10 (63%) respondents** had low awareness of non-legal sources of help such as services offered by SHECARES. The centre seeks to grow its public presence to better reach survivors who require support.
- Reported satisfaction was modest across all channels, although many respondents were neutral and base sizes differed across channels. The findings point to opportunities to improve survivors' experience across the ecosystem. Satisfaction rates among survivors for reporting ranged from **2 in 10 (Platforms, Police) to 3 in 10 (Admins, Legal Proceedings)**.¹
- A more coordinated ecosystem which benefits survivors is possible through partnerships across sectors. Examples include SHE's Trusted Flagger partnerships and survivor support initiatives with police for certain cases of serious sexual crime.

6. The operationalisation of OSRAA and introduction of the OSC is timely given the need for swift action against online harms, the need to hold a wider range of actors accountable for online harms.

- **7 in 10 (69%) respondents** said directions for the removal of harmful content would be useful for them or survivors of online harms.
- Aside from perpetrators, respondents felt administrators/moderators and platforms were responsible parties when online harms occur. **6 in 10 (59%) respondents** felt administrators/moderators and platforms (58%) respectively were mostly/completely responsible.

7. Still, OSC represents only one piece of the puzzle in improving trust and user experiences in the help-seeking ecosystem.

- **4 in 10 survivors** felt support in reporting to platforms or administrators was helpful, (38%), followed by legal information (35%). **1 in 3 (33%)** felt emotional support would be helpful.

¹Base numbers regarding reporting behaviour vary for platforms (n = 153), police (n = 68), administrators (n = 124) and legal proceedings (n = 48). This difference in numbers arise based on respondents who answered that they had reported their online harm to any of the following reporting channels, in a multiple answer question.

PART ONE:

PREVALENCE

01 WHO IS AFFECTED?

Online harms remain prevalent. 4 in 10 (38%) stated that they had personally experienced online harms in their lifetime. 1 in 4, or 26% of the total population experienced at least 1 in the past 12 months, and half of them experienced more than 1 online harm in the past 12 months.

Respondents aged 15 to 44 were more likely to be affected. Continuing the trends seen in 2023, a larger proportion of respondents aged 15 to 44 personally experienced online harms in 2026, with about 1 in 2 in this age group experiencing an online harm in their lifetime.

38%

personally experienced
online harms in their
lifetime (vs. 38% in 2023)²

26%

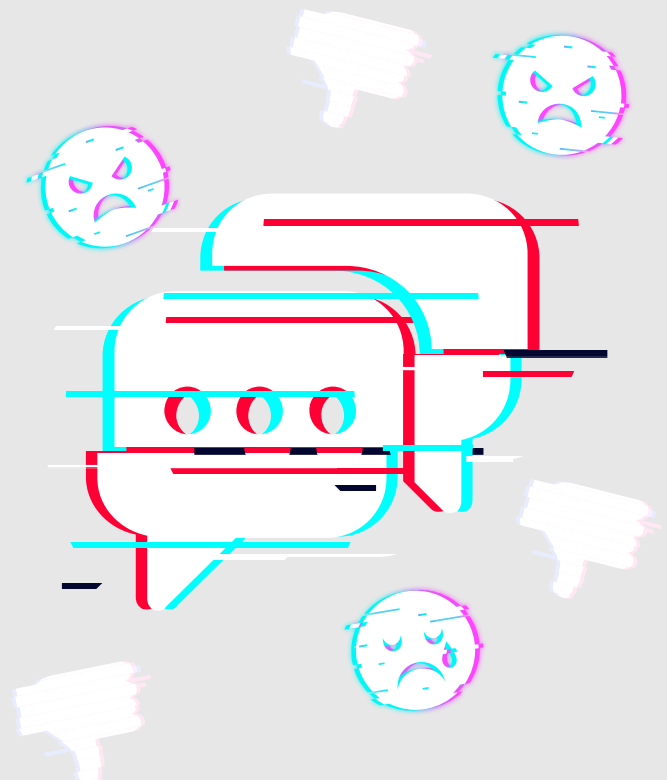
personally experienced
online harms in the
past 12 months³

12%

personally experienced
more than 1 online harm
in the past 12 months

02 WHERE DO ONLINE HARMS OCCUR?

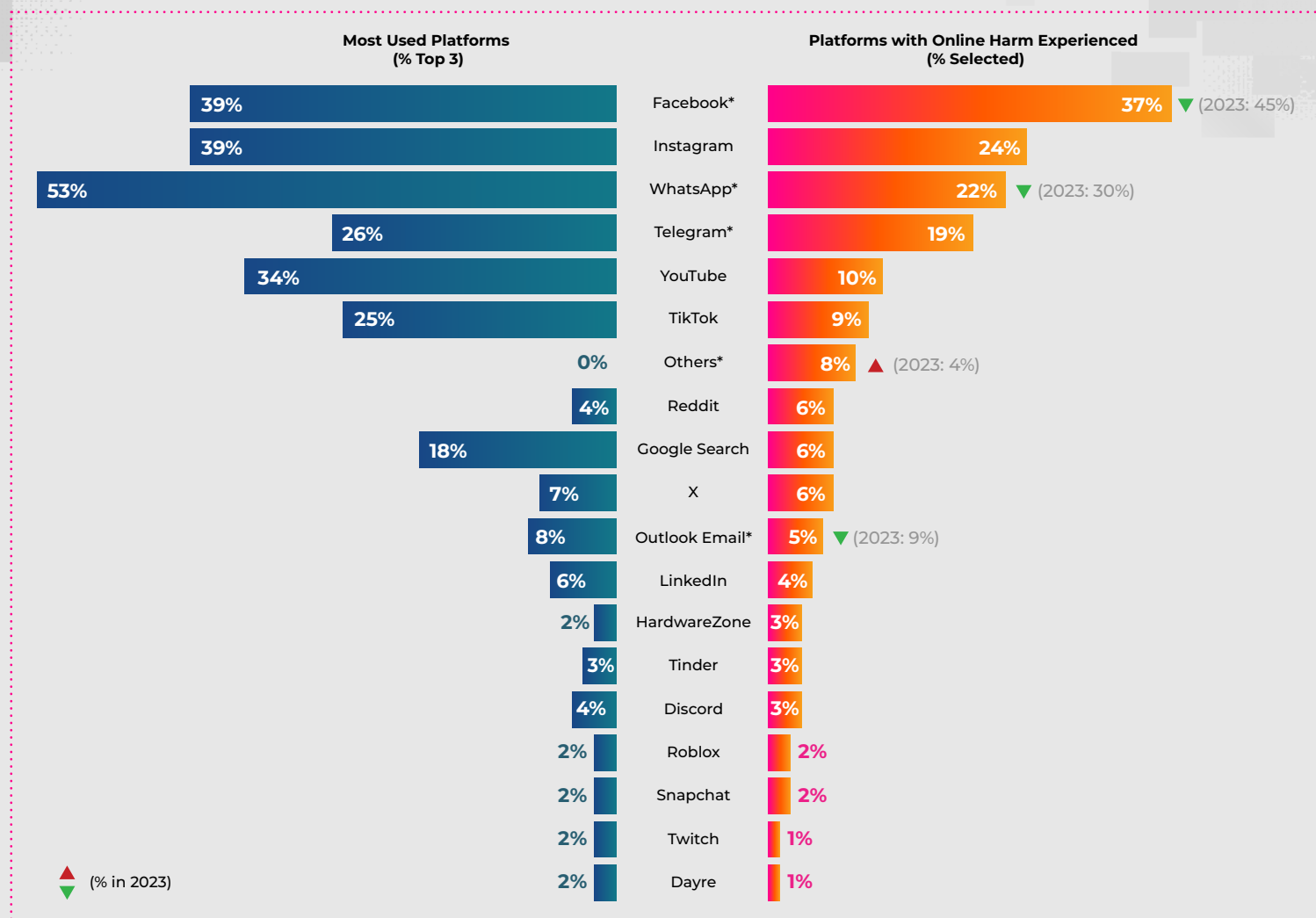
Platforms where harms occur remain relatively unchanged. As in 2023, online harms were most commonly experienced on platforms and applications with high usage and interpersonal interaction, such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram and YouTube. These platforms have remained relatively consistent as in 2023.



²Weighted. Base: All respondents. n=1048.% do not add up to 100%.

B1. Have you personally experienced any of the following harmful online content/conduct directed at you online before? [Multiple answers allowed, or henceforth known as MA]

³Weighted. Base: All respondents. n=1048.% do not add up to 100%. B2. How often have you personally experienced this online harm in the past 12 months? Select all that apply.

Figure 1: The comparison between most used platforms and occurrence of online harms (n = 393)⁴

03

WHAT TYPES OF ONLINE HARMS ARE MOST COMMON?

We assessed the lifetime and past 12-month prevalence of online harms by asking respondents to indicate if they had experienced any of the following 14 harm types in their lifetime and in the past 12 months respectively. The definition of these harms are as follows:

1. **Cyberbullying/Online Harassment:** Online bullying, harassment, threats, insults, or abuse (including body shaming and hateful comments based on race, religion, sexuality, etc.)
2. **Online Sexual Harassment:** Unwanted messages of a sexual nature or obscene images
3. **Doxxing:** Publishing a person's identity information to cause harassment, alarm, distress, fear of violence or provoke or facilitate the use of violence

⁴Weighted. Base: Respondents who have experienced online harms. n=393. % do not add up to 100%.

B5. Where did you personally experience these online harm(s)? Select all that apply.

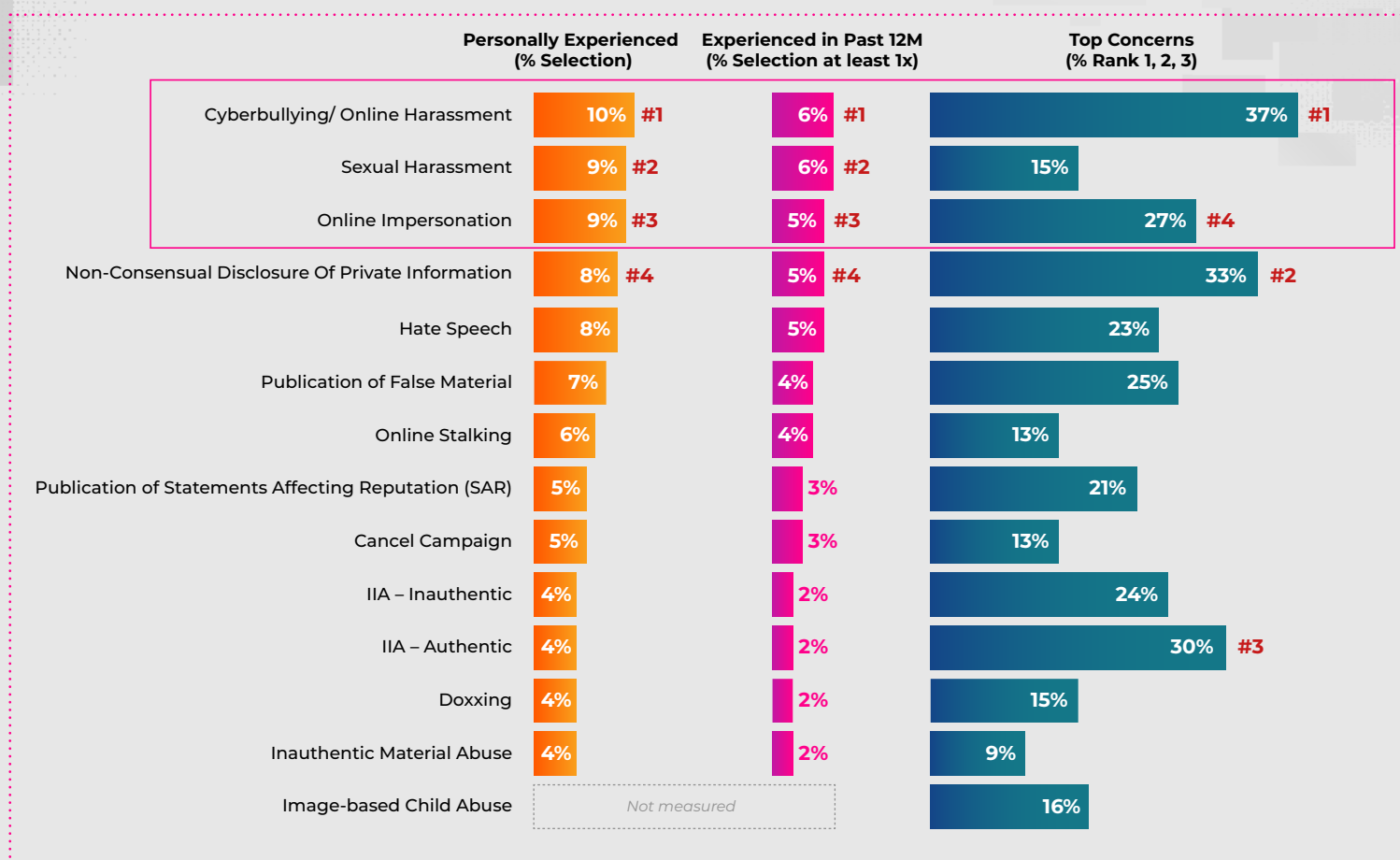
G1. Please select the top 3 online platform(s) that you use the most. Choose up to 3 options only.

Z-test for proportions only on Platform with Online Harm Experience. *denotes statistical difference from the 2023 cohort, $p < .05$, Chi-square test.

4. **Online Stalking:** Tracking one's whereabouts through his/her social media accounts
5. **Intimate Image Abuse (IIA) (Authentic):** Distribution of another person's authentic nude, intimate or sexually explicit images or videos of a person without their consent
6. **Intimate Image Abuse (IIA) (Inauthentic):** Distribution of another person's inauthentic nude, intimate or sexually explicit images or videos of a person without their consent (e.g. a deepfake nude image of a person)
7. **Inauthentic Material Abuse:** Distribution of non-sexual inauthentic material that causes harassment, alarm, distress or humiliation against another person (e.g. a deepfake video depicting a person in a humiliating situation)
8. **Online Impersonation:** Posing as someone else online (e.g., setting up a social media account under another person's identity)
9. **Publication of False Material:** False or misleading statements, images, or videos about a person
10. **Cancel Campaign:** Participate in and encourage others to call for and create pressure to punish a person for what he/she may have said or done (or what is sometimes referred to as "cancellation") (e.g. punishing a person by shaming him/her, or pressuring employers to fire him/her)
11. **Hate Speech (Incitement of enmity or violence):** Being targeted with hate speech/hate comments because of the community / segment of society you belong to or identify with (e.g. racist comments)
12. **Publication of Statements Affecting Reputation (SAR):** Statements, images or videos which are harmful to the reputation of a person, (e.g. sharing a person's old social media posts which contain racist content, and accusing the person of being a racist)
13. **Non-consensual disclosure of private information:** Disclosure of a person's private information without their consent (e.g. sharing information about a person's medical condition)
14. **Image-based Child Abuse:** Distribution of child abuse material (e.g. child sexual abuse material)⁵

Top harms remain relatively unchanged. The rankings in online harms between 2023 to 2026 remained relatively the same. The top four online harms encountered in 2026 were as follows: Cyberbullying or Harassment (10%), Sexual Harassment (9%), Online Impersonation (9%), and Hate Speech (8%). Non-consensual disclosure of private information, which was newly measured in 2026 ranked fourth in prevalence, instead of publication of false material in 2023, and was 2nd in concern among those who answered the survey.

⁵Aligning with ethical considerations, survey respondents were only asked regarding their perceived concern for this harm. Experience and exposure of this online harm was not explored in this survey.

Figure 2: Lifetime, 12-month prevalence and top concerns of online harms (n = 1,048)^{6,7}

Among youth, gendered patterns in online harm experiences were more nuanced than a simple male-female divide.

Overall, 32% of female and 43% of male respondents stated having personally experienced online harms in their lifetime. Specific to those aged 15-34, female youth remained more likely than male youth to indicate experiencing online sexual harassment (F: 14%, M: 6%) [similar to that in 2023: F: 22%, M: 12%].

However, male youth in the survey were more likely to experience inauthentic forms of intimate image abuse (F: 3%, M: 10%) and cancel campaigns than females (F: 1%, M: 10%).⁸

For the remaining harm types examined, lifetime prevalence rates were statistically similar across genders among youth, suggesting that online harms in general are by no means the exclusive experience of any one gender.

Similar patterns were reflected in cases seen through the SHECARES online harms support centre. Female clients were more likely than male clients to experience online sexual harassment, while male clients had a higher proportion of sextortion cases within the centre.

Certain online harms are experienced on a repeated basis within the past 12 months. Statements harmful to reputation and IIA (both authentic and inauthentic) were less common than other online harm categories (see figure 2, ranging for 4-5%), but survivors of these harms were more likely to experience them more frequently in the past 12 months compared to other harm types.

⁶ Weighted. Base: All Respondents. n=1,048. % do not add up to 100%. B1. Have you personally experienced any of the following online harms directed at you before? Select all that apply. B2. How often have you personally experienced this online harm in the past 12 months? Select all that apply. A9. Please rank the top 3 online harms which concern you the most

⁷ The 2023 top online harms were: (1) Online Sexual Harassment; (2) Cyberbullying/Harassment; (3) Online Impersonation; (4) Publication of false material.

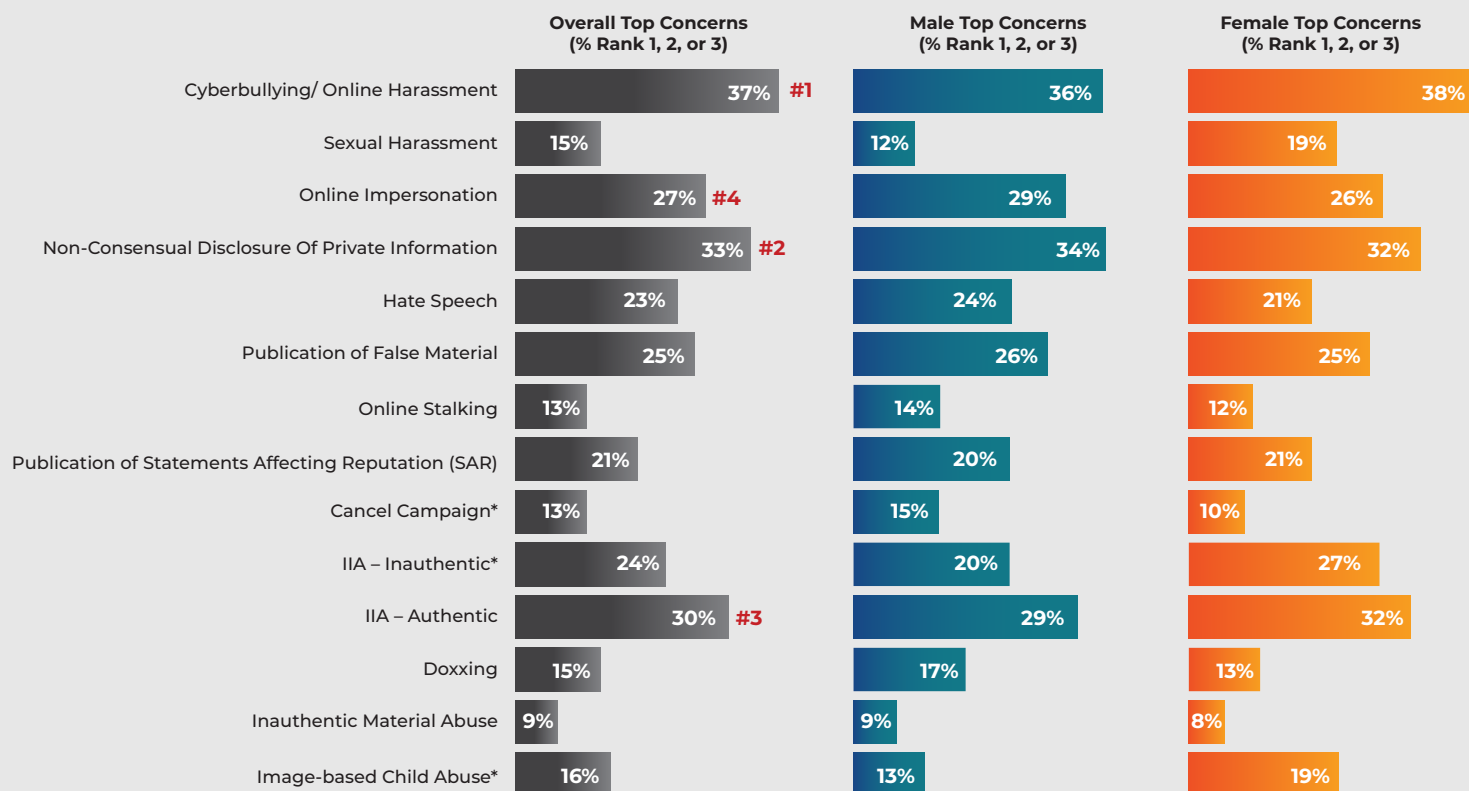
⁸ You may view our earlier report "404 Help Not Found: Lived Experiences of Online Harms Survivors" for examples among our male survivors suffering from Intimate Image Abuse (Inauthentic) (Jack, page 13) and Cancel Campaigns (Aidan, page 6) through this url: https://api2.she.org.sg/uploads/404_Help_Not_Found_-_Lived_Experiences_of_Online_Harms_Survivors_-_SHE_Study_20251.pdf

04

WHAT ONLINE HARMS ARE PEOPLE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT?

The top four harms of greatest concern among 2026 respondents are Cyberbullying or Harassment (37%), Non-consensual disclosure of private information (33%), Intimate Image Abuse (IIA) (Authentic) (30%), and Online Impersonation (27%) [see figure 3].

Figure 3: Top concerns by gender (n = 1,048)⁹



Gender differences in levels of concern persist. A greater proportion of females expressed concern for Inauthentic forms of IIA (F: 27%, M: 20%) and Image-based Child Abuse (F: 19%, M: 13%) than their male counterparts. Males on the other hand were more concerned about cancel campaigns than females (F: 10%, M: 15%).

⁹Weighted. Base: All respondents. n=1048. % do not add up to 100%. A9. Please rank the top 3 online harms which concern you the most. *denotes statistical difference between genders, $p < .05$, Chi-square test

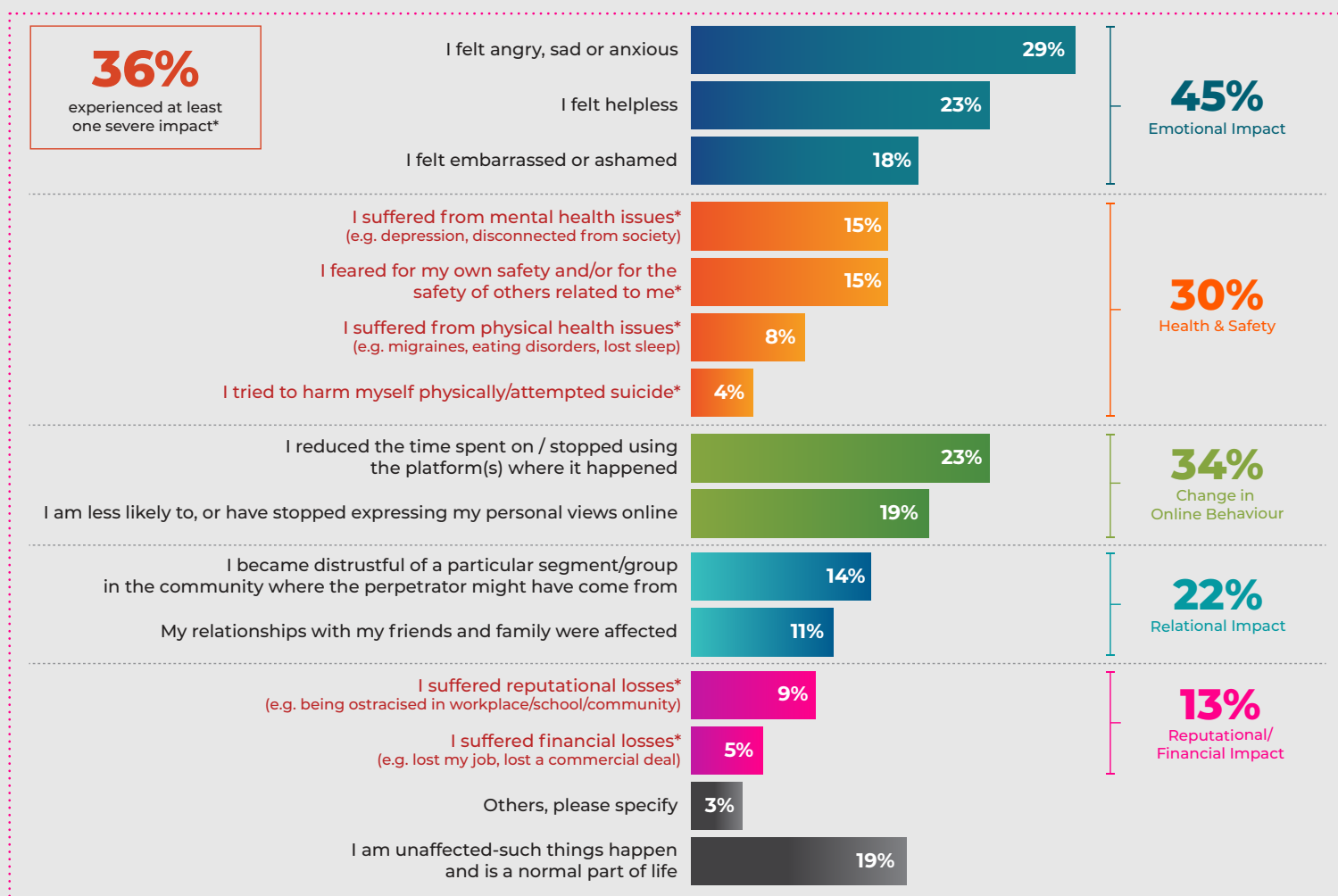
PART TWO: IMPACT

01 HOW ARE PEOPLE IMPACTED BY ONLINE HARMS?

Of the 38% who were survivors of online harms, close to 4 in 10 experienced at least one severe form of impact.

Normalisation of harms remains a concern. Similar to 2023, about 2 in 10 (19%) of survivors were unaffected because online harms has become a 'normal part of life'. This persistence suggests that desensitisation to online harms remains a pertinent issue to address.

Figure 4: The self-reported impact of online harms among survivors (n = 393)¹⁰

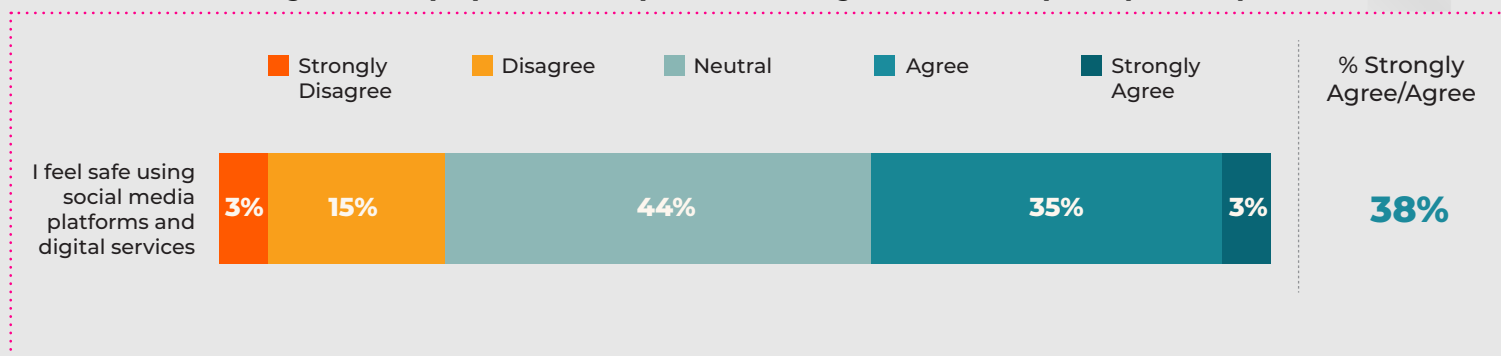


¹⁰ Weighted. Base: Respondents who have experienced online harms. n=393. % do not add up to 100%. B6. Which of the following describe(s) the impact of these online harm(s) on you? Select all that apply. Severe impact is defined by the options in the red font.

02

HOW SAFE DOES THE PUBLIC FEEL IN ONLINE SPACES?

Figure 5: The proportion of respondents feeling safe in online spaces (n = 1,048)¹¹



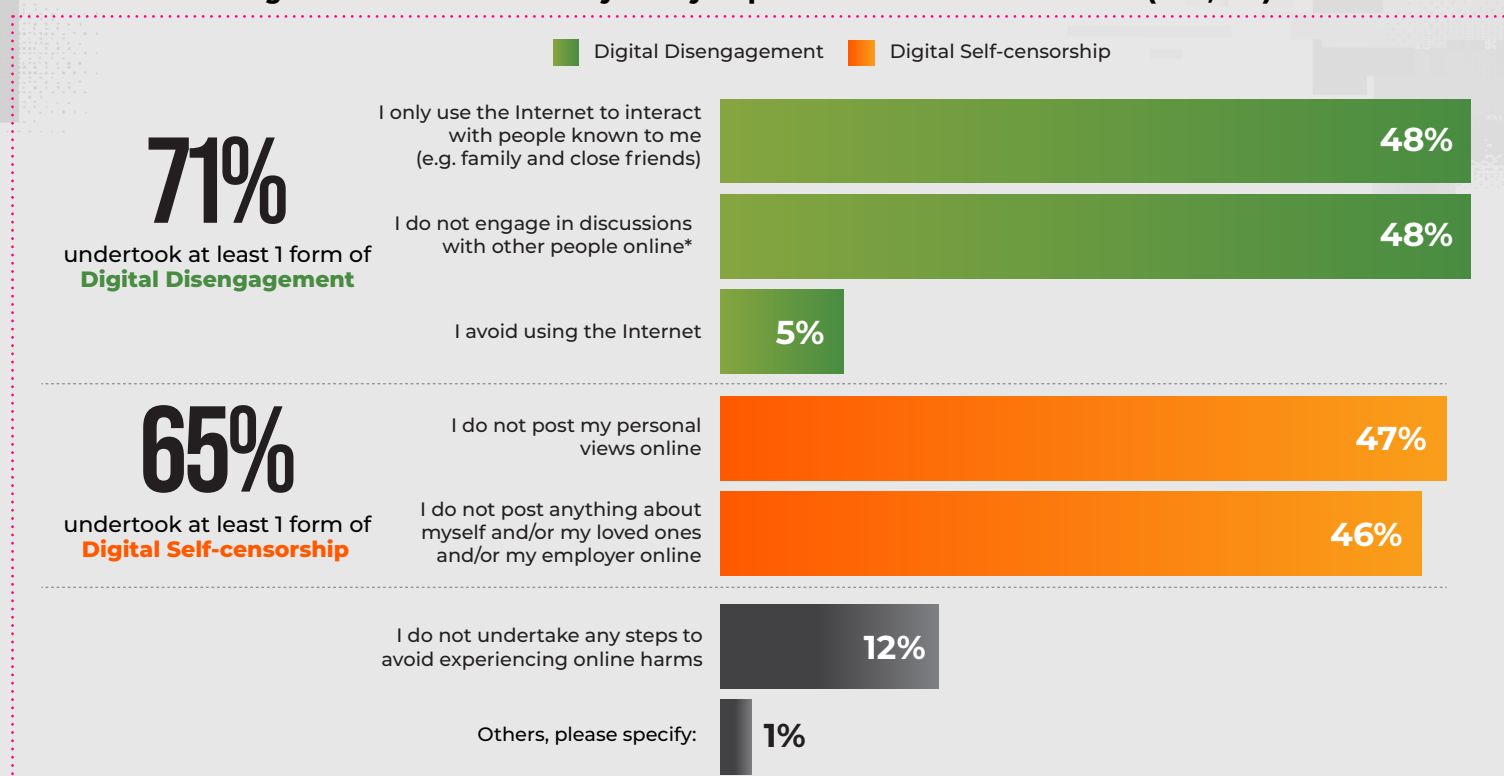
Public perceptions of online safety leave room for improvement. Alongside the personal toll of online harms on survivors, the survey also captured how Singaporeans perceive the safety of the digital spaces they inhabit more broadly. To that end, the public perception of online safety leaves room for improvement, with only 4 in 10 (38%) respondents who agreed that they felt safe in the online space (see figure 5). Gendered and age differences were also observed. Females (F: 35% agreed, M: 42% agreed) and respondents aged 55 and above (55+: 27% agreed; 15-24: 57% agreed) were less likely to agree.

03

HOW ARE PEOPLE PROTECTING THEMSELVES?

Self-censorship and disengagement remain widespread. To avoid online harms, 65% of respondents self-censored their online expression and 71% disengaged from their online activities (See figure 6). Compared to 2023, a higher proportion of survey respondents (48%, vs 44% in 2023) stated that they did not engage in discussions with people online. Considering these behavioural tendencies in view of the perception of online safety, it is no surprise then that the majority of respondents shy away from online discussions to protect themselves.

¹¹Weighted. Base: All respondents. n=1048. % do not add up to 100% due to rounding. A1. I feel safe using social media platforms and digital services. *: denotes statistical differences between groups of interest, where relevant. *ps* < .05, *Chi-square test*

Figure 6: The actions taken by survey respondents to avoid online harms (n = 1,048)¹²

Gendered differences reveal distinct strategies in navigating online spaces. Gendered differences in protective behaviours also emerged, reflecting distinct strategies for navigating a digital environment perceived as unsafe. Female respondents were more likely to confine their online interactions to people they knew (F: 53%, M: 43%) but were less likely to avoid posting about themselves entirely (F: 43%, M: 50%). Male respondents, however, were more likely to avoid using the internet altogether (F: 3%, M: 7%).

These divergent responses suggest that while the impulse to self-protect is shared across genders, the form it takes differs and both carry implications for who remains visible, and who shapes, online discourse.

Left unchecked and unaddressed, this retreat from the online space could negatively impact the quality of discourse online. When survivors and those who fear harm step back from digital participation, the conversations that follow become less representative, less diverse, and less honest – with real consequences for how communities understand shared issues and hold one another accountable.

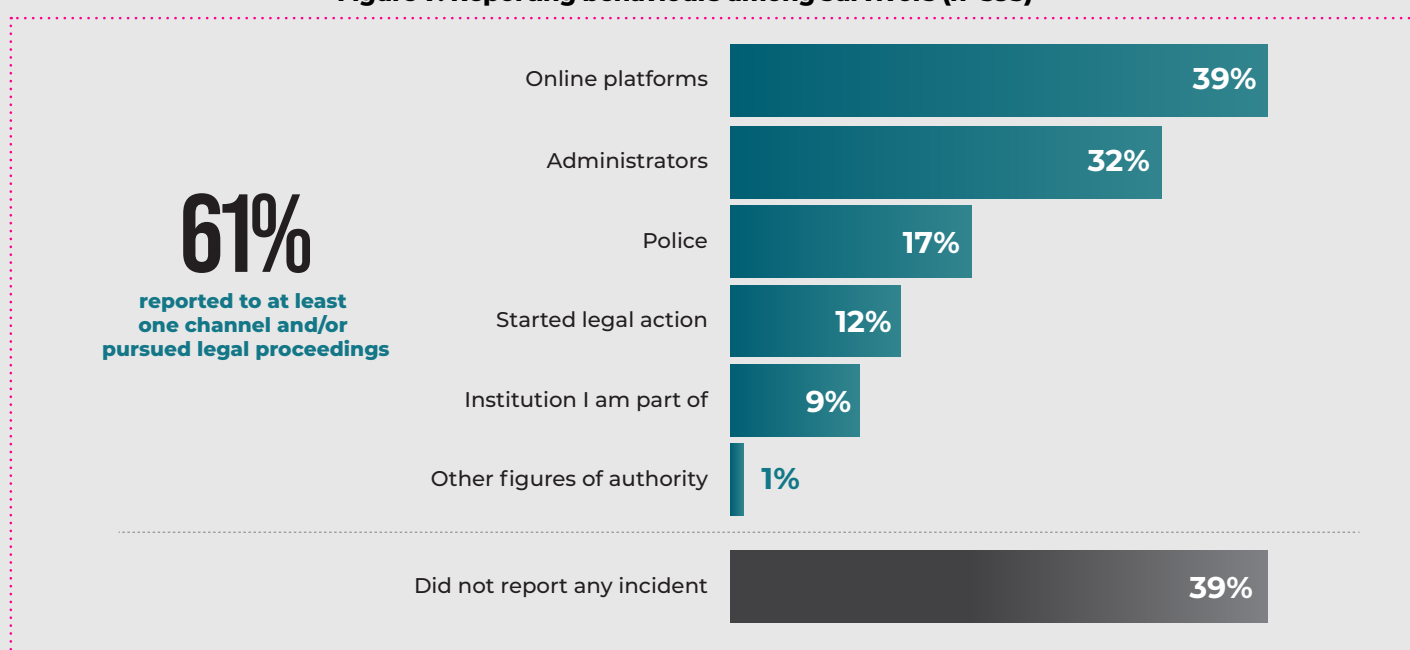
¹²Weighted. Base: All respondents. n=1048. % do not add up to 100%. B7. How have you avoided the risks of experiencing online harms? Select all that apply. *: denotes statistical differences between genders or the 2023 cohort, where relevant. *ps* < .05, Chi-square test

PART THREE: RECOURSE

01 DO SURVIVORS SEEK HELP?

Of those who personally experienced online harms, 6 in 10 (60%) survivors reported online harms to various channels such as platforms, administrators/moderators, police or schools/workplaces. 1 in 10 (12%) survivors pursued legal proceedings, as seen in figure 7.

Figure 7: Reporting behaviours among survivors (n=393)¹³



Perceived platform inaction and delays top reason hindering reporting. Among those who did not report to an online platform, 43% reported perceived platform inaction or delays in aiding survivors in requests relating to their online harm experiences (as seen in figure 8).

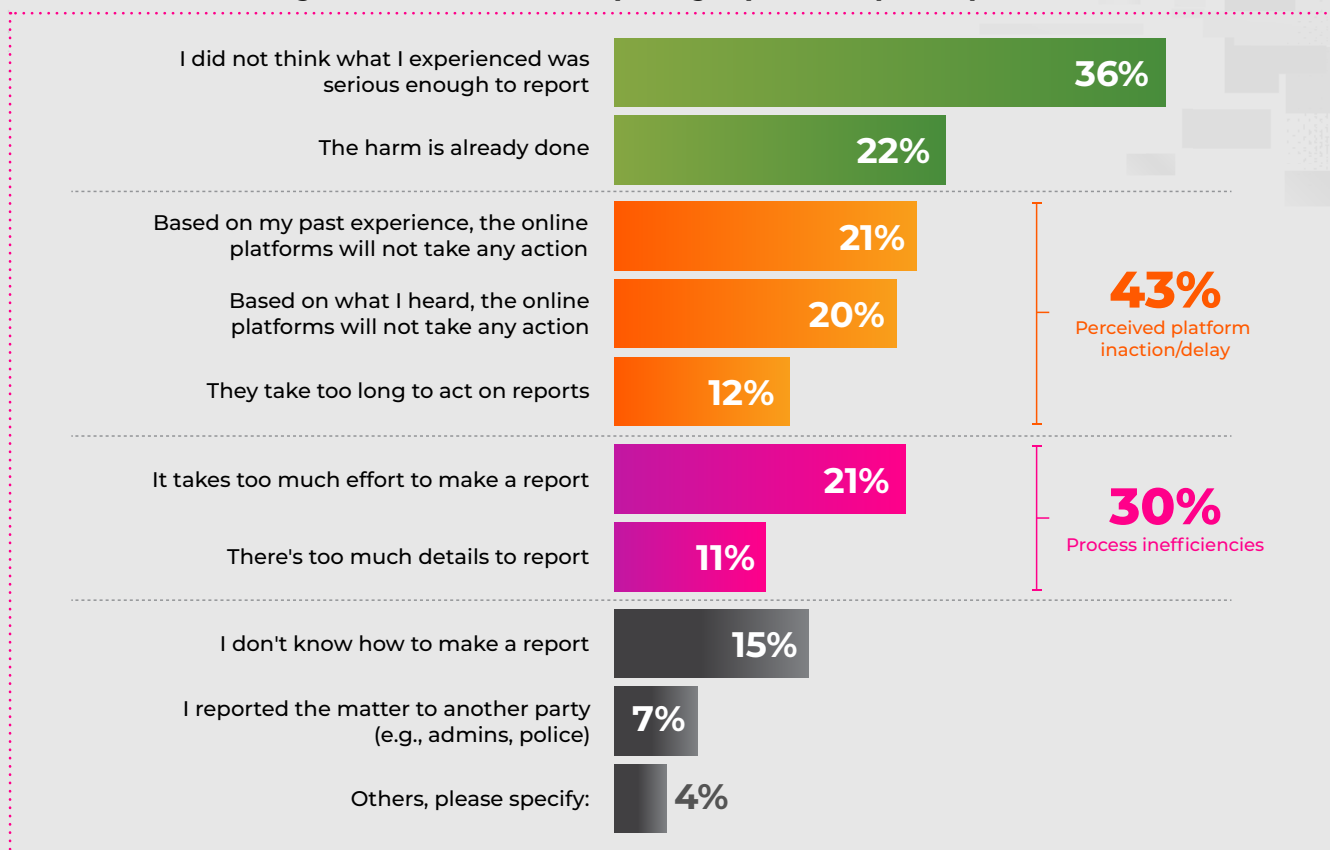
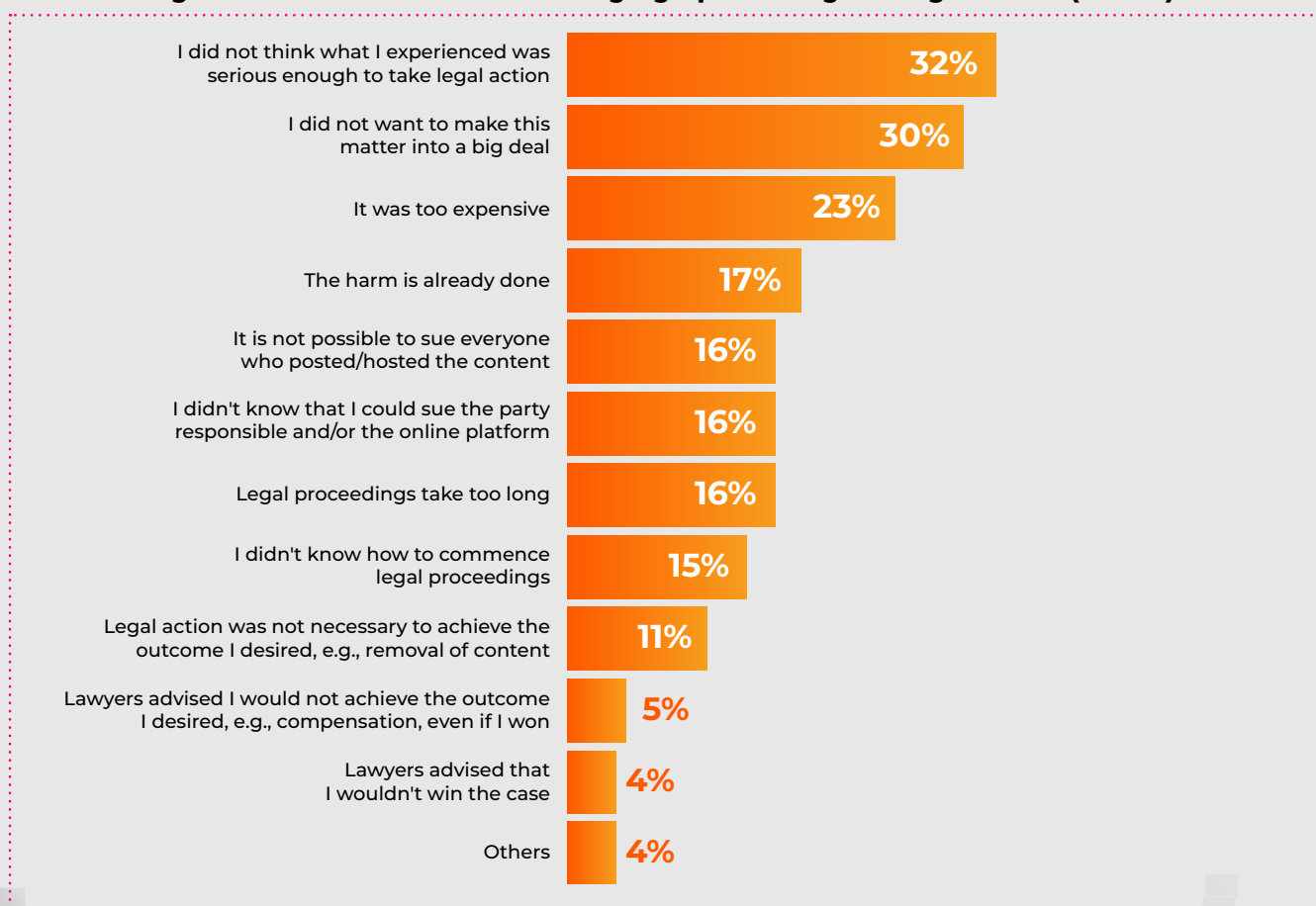
Normalisation continues to be a barrier to reporting. 36% of survivors did not report their incident to an online platform as they felt it was not serious enough. This highlights a persistent, worrying trend of normalisation regarding online harm experiences among survivors. Among those who did not take legal action, 32% cited the same reason compared with 29% in 2023 (See figure 9).

¹³ Weighted. Base: Respondents who have experienced online harms. n=393. % do not add up to 100%.

C1. You mentioned that you have personally experienced <online harms respondent selected here>.

Did you report the incident(s) to any of the following? Select all that apply.

C9. What other action(s) have you taken after personally experiencing the online harm(s)? Select all that apply

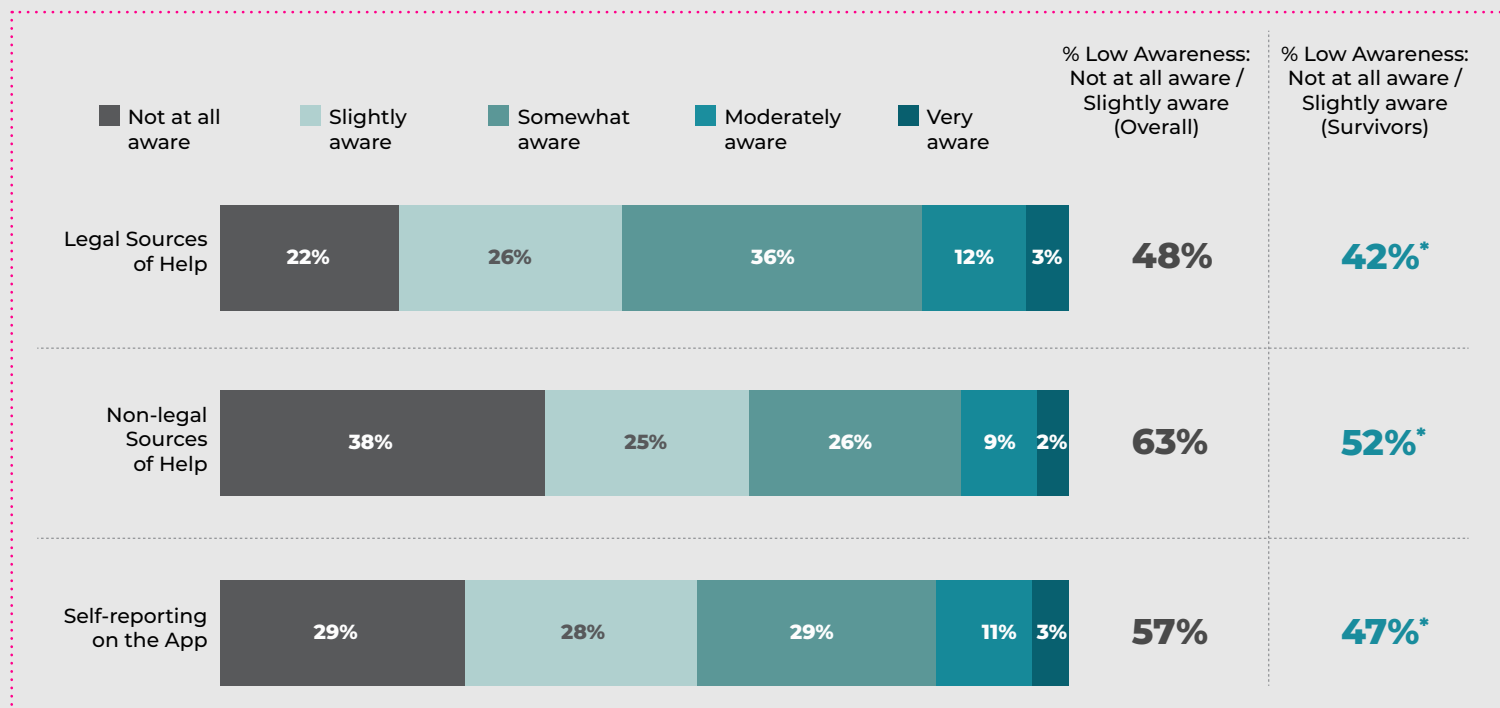
Figure 8: Reasons for not reporting to platforms (n = 240)¹⁴**Figure 9: Reasons for not commencing legal proceedings among survivors (n = 386)¹⁵**

¹⁴ Weighted. Base: Respondents who have experienced online harms but did not report any incident to online platforms. (n=240). % do not add up to 100%. C1. You mentioned that you have personally experienced <online harm respondent selected here>. Did you report the incident(s) to any of the following? Select all that apply. C4. Why did you not report the online harm to the online platform(s)? Select all that apply.

¹⁵ Weighted. Base: Respondents who have experienced online harms but did not commence legal proceedings against both party responsible and online platform. n=386. % do not add up to 100%. C12. You mentioned that you did not commence legal proceedings against the party responsible for the online harm/or the online platform. Why did you not commence legal proceedings? Select all that apply.

Many survivors are unaware of where to turn. Another barrier in seeking help and recourse among survivors is the lack of awareness they may have towards different sources of help. Awareness of sources of help was low among both survivors and the overall sample. About 1 in 2 felt they had low awareness across all sources of help, especially non-legal sources of help (63%) – highlighting a gap that support services like SHECARES would need to improve on (See figure 10).

Figure 10: Level of awareness among survey respondents regarding sources of help (n = 1,048)¹⁶

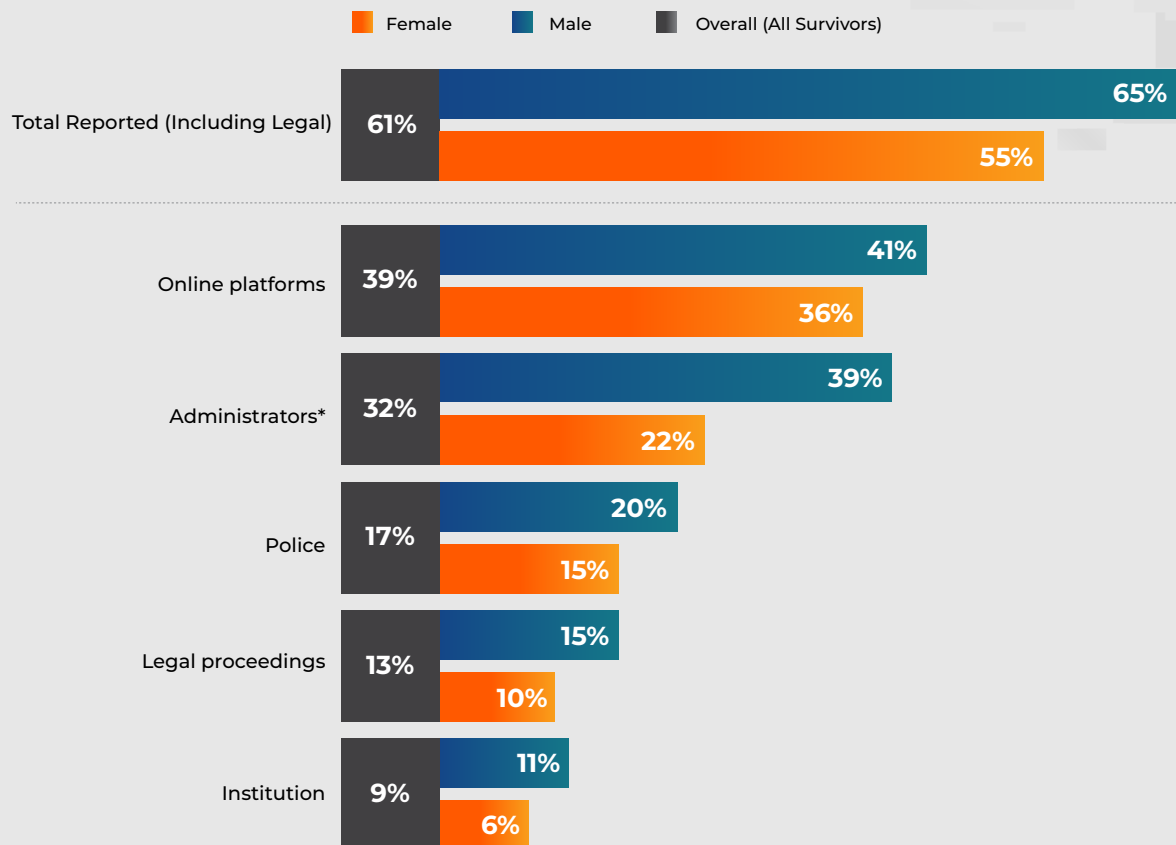
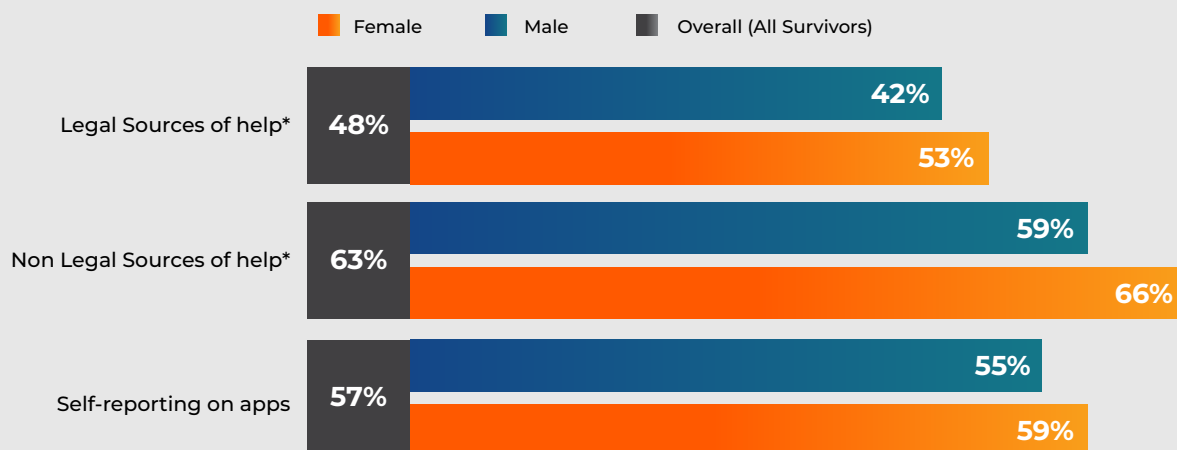


02

ARE THERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENDERS IN AWARENESS AND REPORTING BEHAVIOURS?

Gendered differences in awareness and reporting. When considering reporting behaviours and awareness levels, females were less likely to report harms and had lower awareness of legal and non-legal help than males within this Study (as seen in figure 11 and 12). This speaks to SHE's continued work in closing gaps in women's access to help and information on online harms.

¹⁶ Weighted. Base: All Respondents. n=1,048. A2-A4. To what extent are you aware of ... if you experience any online harms?
 *denotes statistical differences between survivors and non-survivors, $p < .05$, Chi-square test. *Low awareness is denoted as the proportion of individuals who answered Not at all or slightly aware. % do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 11: Reporting behaviours among survivors by gender (n = 393)¹⁷**Figure 12: Proportion of low awareness (% Not aware at all/Slightly aware) among survey respondents regarding sources of help by gender (n=1,048)¹⁸**

¹⁷ Weighted. Respondents who have experienced online harms. n=393. C1. You mentioned that you have personally experienced <online harms respondent selected here>. Did you report the incident(s) to any of the following? Select all that apply.

¹⁸ Weighted. Base: All Respondents. n=1,048 A2-A4. To what extent are you aware of ... if you experience any online harms?

*denotes statistical differences between genders, ps <.05, Chi-square test. ^Low awareness is denoted as the proportion of individuals who answered Not at all or slightly aware.

PART FOUR:

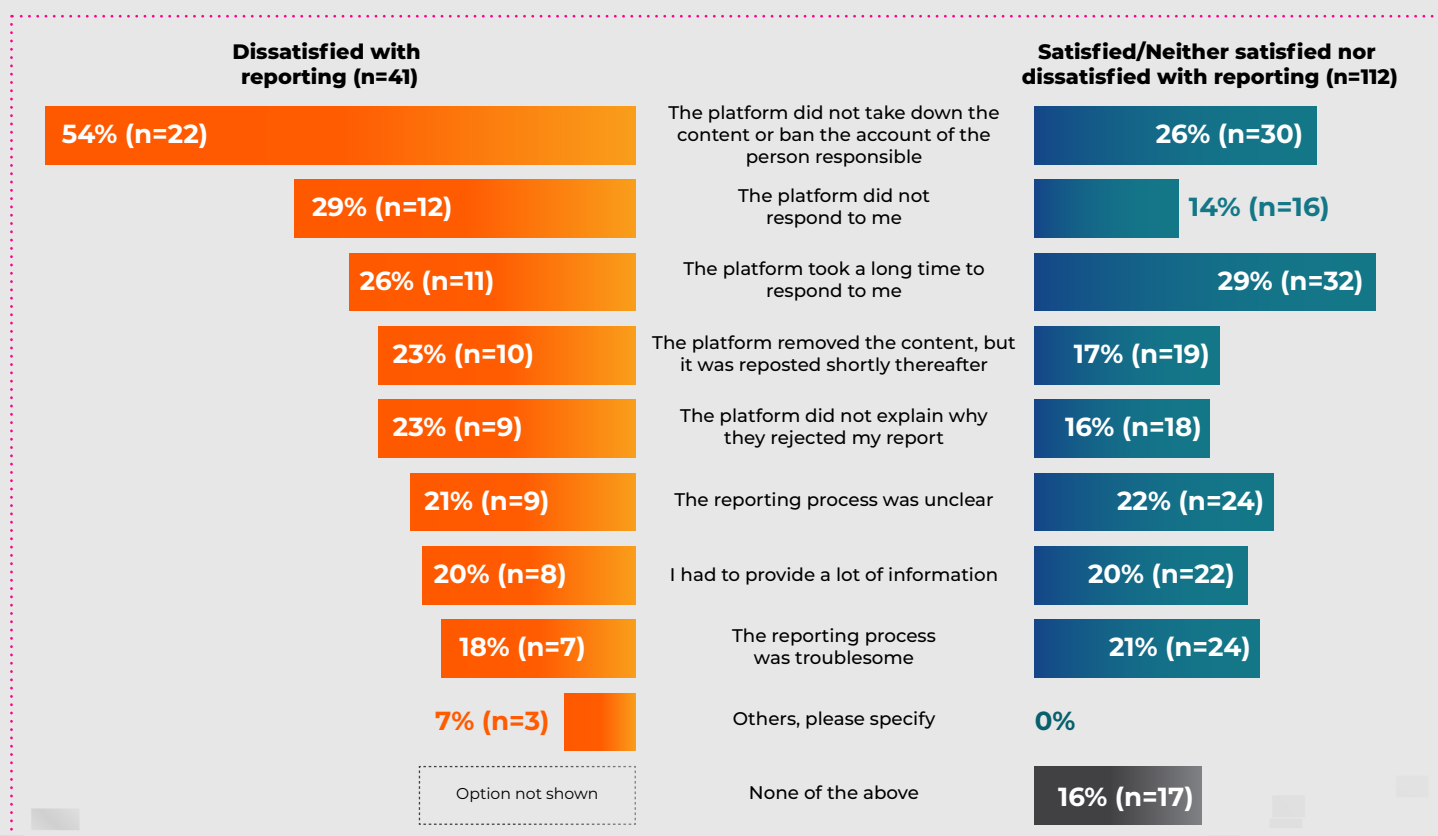
STRENGTHENING OUR ECOSYSTEM OF CARE

01 HOW CAN WE IMPROVE AS AN ECOSYSTEM?

Recourse experiences leave room for improvement. Continued efforts to improve the reporting experience for survivors across the ecosystem remains a vital. Across all channels respectively, about half of those who reported felt neutral towards their reporting experience. Along with concerns highlighted in the earlier section on the lack of awareness, satisfaction rates with help-seeking leave room for improvement - ranging from 2 in 10 (Platforms, Police) to 3 in 10 (Admins, Legal Proceedings).¹⁹

Lack of action against harmful content removal and responsible accounts. Exploring the reasons behind this dissatisfaction reveals a consistent pattern across reporting channels: survivors felt that their reports did not translate into meaningful action. Among those dissatisfied with platform reporting, the top reasons were that platforms had not removed the content or banned the person survivors held responsible, followed by platforms failing to respond at all (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Issues encountered during reporting among those who reported to platforms (n = 153)²⁰



¹⁹ Base numbers regarding reporting behaviour vary for platforms (n = 153), police (n = 68), administrators (n = 124) and legal proceedings (n = 48). This difference in numbers arises based on respondents who answered that they had reported their online harm to any of the following reporting channels, in a multiple answer question. Select all that apply. - Sample break between those who were dissatisfied and those who were not may not sum to n=153 due to weighting.

²⁰ Weighted. Base: Respondents who reported to online platforms. n=153. C3. Why were you dissatisfied with the reporting process/ outcome? OR Have you encountered any of the following issues during reporting? Select all that apply.

Regarding reporting to administrators, the most common frustrations were likewise the failure to remove content or ban the responsible party, and an absence of response to the survivor's request. For those dissatisfied with the police, this same sense of inadequate action took a different but related form: investigations that did not produce a desirable outcome, and cases that survivors felt were not being taken seriously.²²

Partnering the Ecosystem to Improve Help-Seeking Experiences

SHE is actively engaging and working with partners to shape a holistic ecosystem of care for online harm survivors. Here are two examples of such partnerships:

Trusted Flagger Partnerships with Major Platforms

SHE holds accredited trusted flagger or priority flagger status with major platforms including Google/YouTube, Meta (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp), TikTok, and X, and is a community partner of LinkedIn and Snapchat. Trusted flagger channels allow SHECARES to provide more context to platforms on how the harmful content reported by our clients violates platforms' community guidelines. This additional context has typically aided in expedited or prioritised removal of harmful content.

Police Partnership through SHECARES

In collaboration with the Singapore Police Force to enhance survivor support, survivors of certain serious sexual crimes may be interviewed by police officers at SHECARES premises. This arrangement allows survivors to engage with police in a familiar, supportive environment, helping to address concerns that cases are not being taken seriously, and reducing the barriers that may otherwise prevent survivors from pursuing formal action.

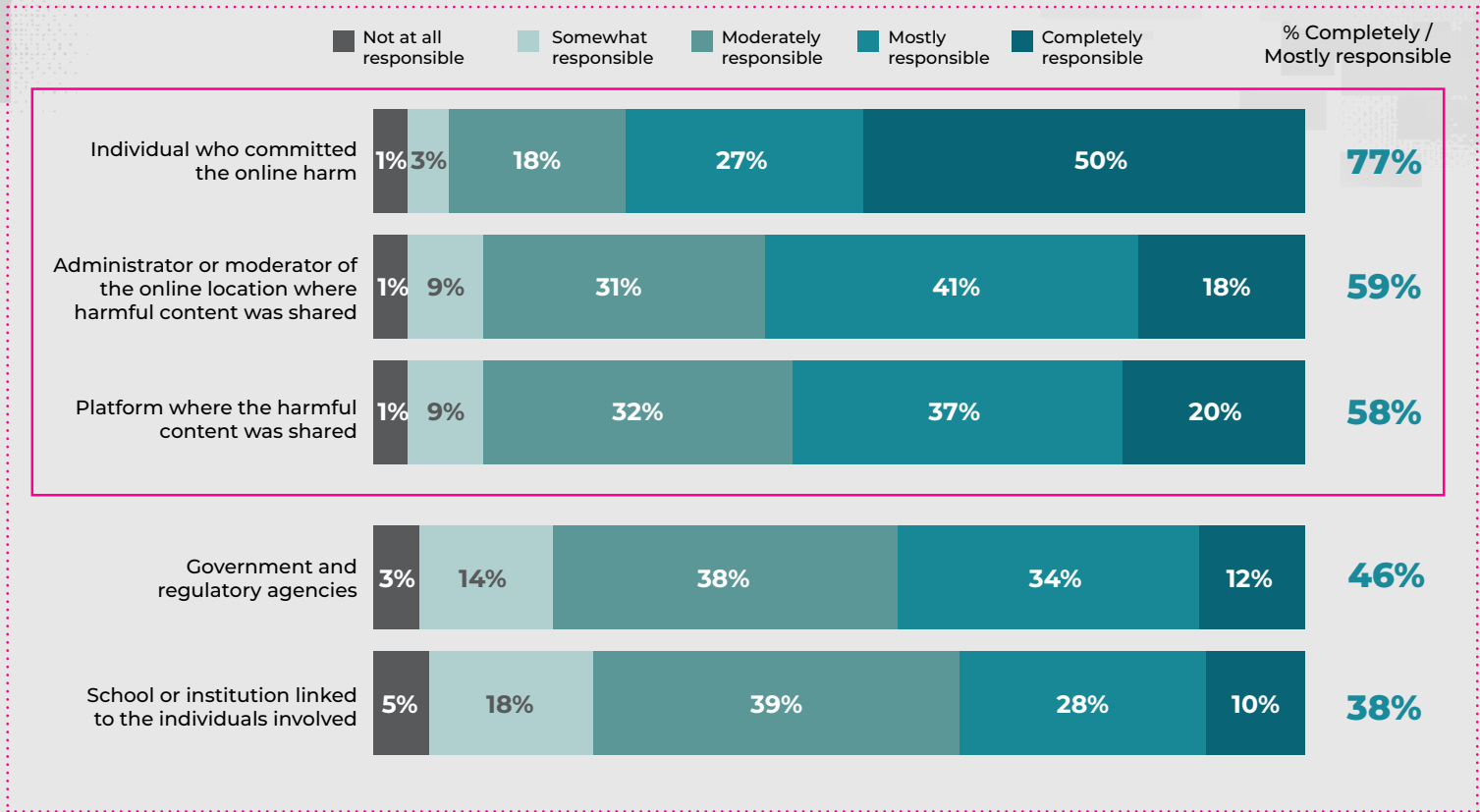
Together, these and other partnerships represent a shared commitment to ensuring that survivors who report do not face silence and that their reports lead to meaningful outcomes.

02 HOW DOES THE PUBLIC VIEW RESPONSIBILITY AMONG ACTORS IN AN ONLINE HARM?

Responding to harm is a duty, as recognised by the public. These improvements are pertinent across all actors in the ecosystem as it aligns with how the public views responsibility in an act of online harm. When respondents were asked to rate whom they felt was the most responsible when an online harm occurs – perpetrators, administrators/moderators, and platforms were seen as the most responsible parties in an act of online harm, as seen in figure 14 below. That said, almost all respondents attributed some level of responsibility to all listed actors in the event of online harm. Effective recourse therefore depends on each stakeholder in the ecosystem playing their part.

²¹ As the sample of respondents who indicated they were dissatisfied with reporting to administrators (n = 23) and police (n = 15) was small, the breakdown of reasons have been shared qualitatively.

Figure 14: Perceived responsibilities across different actors in an online harm (n = 1,048)²²

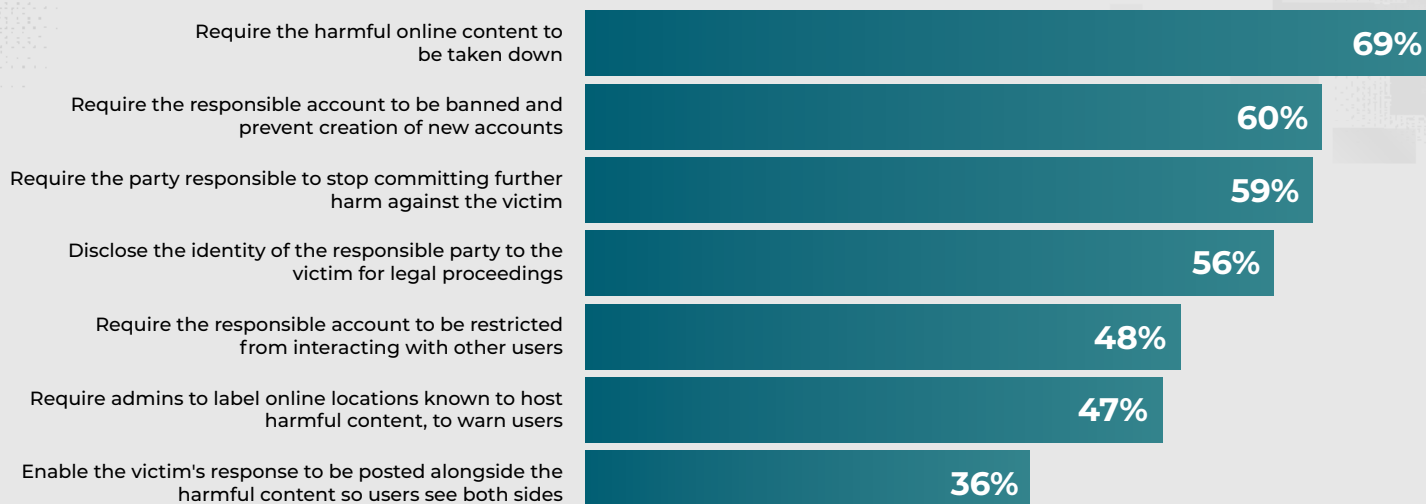


03 HOW DO UPCOMING MEASURES MEET SURVIVORS' NEEDS?

The Commissioner’s powers to issue directions under the Online Safety (Relief and Accountability) Act (OSRAA) addresses the need for swift content removal. The Online Safety Commission (OSC), a dedicated government agency that supports the office of the Commissioner, provides survivors of online harms with a faster, more accessible avenue for relief. Operational since 29 June 2026, the Commissioner can issue directions to communicators, administrators, and platforms to stop or limit harm. Such directions include disabling access to content or restricting a perpetrator’s account with non-compliance treated as a criminal offence.

Consistent with SHE’s previous research and reasons for dissatisfaction explored earlier, content removal and the banning of perpetrator accounts remain the most useful directions to respondents. The findings underscore strong public support for measures that enable faster responses to online harms.

²² Base: All respondents n = 1,048. Weighted proportions. F1. The following items will seek your perceptions on the responsibility of stakeholders when online harms occur. *denotes statistical difference between survivor and non-survivor, *ps* <.05, *Chi-square* test. % do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 15: Perceived utility of OSC directions (n = 1,048)²³

Survivors value support in navigating online harms reporting processes. Yet the OSC is only one piece of the puzzle. Meaningful support extends well beyond regulatory directions: 4 in 10 survivors identified help with reporting to authorities and platforms as useful, with legal information and emotional support following closely behind (as seen in figure 16).

Survivors do not just need systems that act against harm – they need people and services that walk alongside them through the process.

Figure 16: Types of assistance or support survivors perceived as helpful (n = 393)²⁴

²³ Base: All respondents n = 1,048. Weighted proportions. D1. When launched, the Online Safety Commission will be able to issue directions to address online harms reported by victims. The following items are about your views on the different types of directions that the OSC may issue. Please select the directions that would be useful for you or people who experience online harms. (Select all that apply).

²⁴ Base: Respondents who have experienced online harms. n = 393. Weighted proportions. D4. What other types of assistance or support would be helpful for you, or those who have experienced online harms?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Singapore is entering a new phase in how it responds to online harms. New laws and a dedicated OSC have set the stage. Yet legislation is only the starting point.

Our survey findings have reinforced and clarified our understanding of gaps in help-seeking. Survivors' experiences with help-seeking can be improved across the ecosystem. Women and girls can benefit from more support and information on reporting harms. Men need more help, too. The latest survey reinforces that meaningful support for survivors is built on more than a single intervention; new laws and institutions are most effective when complemented by an ecosystem of trusted avenues for assistance and recovery.

We outline four interconnected reforms to carry this momentum forward, toward a more sustained, resilient ecosystem and culture of support for survivors.

1 Strengthen Trust and Accountability in Online Spaces

Trust in the redress system rests in part on the actors who have a formal duty within it. Platforms, administrators who run online spaces, and users all have a role to play in the safety of the online space and should be answerable for how they carry it out. Regulators and Government agencies also play an important role in shaping and upholding the broader accountability frameworks within which such actors operate. Acting visibly and consistently is part of what gives survivors confidence the system can work for them.

This recommendation covers accountability in the face of an online harms incident. Changing wider social conduct that enables harm is a broader and longer task, which we cover in recommendation 4.

1. **Users** should be mindful that their actions online can cause real harm to others. Such actions, whether undertaken knowingly or unknowingly, may already attract legal consequences. This awareness is part of what it takes to build a safer online culture for everyone.
2. **Platforms** should act quickly and openly when harm is reported. That means taking down harmful content fast, keeping survivors informed as a case moves along, giving priority to verified cases and repeat offenders, catching repeated abuse even when someone changes accounts, and making sure the consequences for perpetrators match how serious and lasting the harm is. For a survivor already in distress, an automated reply or silence is not an adequate response.
3. **Administrators and moderators** of groups, forums and other online spaces should take reasonable steps to stop their spaces from being used to cause harm, and should act promptly when harm is reported to them. They are usually closest to where harm happens, which puts them in the best position to respond first.

4. **Regulators** should continue to make consequences clear to actors that fail to remove or reduce a reported harm. Explanations for decisions should be clear, including when a report does not meet the threshold for action, and tackle the anonymity that lets perpetrators avoid accountability.
5. **Government agencies** should continue raising awareness of OSRAA, the OSC and available recourse, and where appropriate, share information on how these pathways work and what users can expect.

2 Improve Tailored Support Resources and Recourse for Survivors

Reporting is only one step, and survivors need help across the whole process of seeking recourse, not just a channel to file through. Support should be designed around how survivors actually experience harm, rather than assuming one approach fits all. Our research shows that female and male survivors differ in the harms they face, in how aware they are of their options, in how they go about seeking help, and in the barriers they run into when they try. Support should therefore be better tailored to their needs.

1. **SHE and research partners** should build a fuller understanding of how female and male survivors experience harm differently: the nature and impact of that harm, the barriers each group faces, and what services need to look like to meet those needs.
2. **Support services** should tailor help to the different needs of female and male survivors. The survey shows women are far less aware of both legal and non-legal avenues for help, so they should be given clear guidance on their options and their legal rights. Male survivors should be able to see a male counsellor where they would prefer one, since the gender of a support professional can affect whether someone feels able to speak openly. Support should be gender-sensitive by design, recognising that the harms men and women face, and the help they are ready to accept, are not the same.
3. **Survivors should be met with trauma-informed care** at every point they turn to for help, so that seeking support does not add to the harm they have already experienced. This matters most in specialist mental health care, where professionals should be trained to handle these cases, but it holds just as true for the first responder who takes a report, the platform contact who handles a case, and the service that explains legal options. Ideally, the standard of care a survivor experiences should not depend on where they happen to turn first.
4. **Government, agencies, platforms and community partners** should strengthen coordination among the organisations that already receive survivors of online harms, so that support carries through from one service to the next. Making the forms of help survivors value most more widely available, through services well connected to one another, means a survivor is more likely to find the right support wherever they first turn. The OSC's no-wrong-door policy is a positive step towards this effort. Additionally, continuing to widen the network of organisations able to support survivors with reporting, to the OSC and through other channels would build a more robust and survivor-centred ecosystem of care.

3 Raise Awareness of Online Harms, Particularly Among Vulnerable Groups

Public education needs to do more than raise awareness. It should help people recognise harm when they encounter it, question the attitudes that let it carry on, and know where to go for help before they need to. The aim is to give survivors and the public what they need to act on their own behalf.

1. **Public agencies, community organisations and educators** should run and sustain campaigns that explain what online harms looks like in plain, accessible terms, push back on the silence and the gendered assumptions that stop people seeking help, and widen public understanding of who it can happen to.
2. **Parents and educators** should introduce age-appropriate digital literacy that builds awareness of the different kinds of harm, the confidence to seek help, and a clear sense of how young people should expect to be treated online and how they should treat others. This should cover legal, non-legal and platform self-reporting options, and correct the common misconceptions people hold about reporting. Tailored interventions should reach the youth groups most at risk of particular harms, such as online sexual harassment among young women, and inauthentic intimate image abuse and cancel campaigns among young men.
3. **SHE and research partners** should keep studying the impact of online harms on individuals and on society, including harms facilitated by AI and their effects on gender equality and social cohesion, so that public education keeps up with how the landscape is changing.

4 Shift Culture with a Whole-of-Society Response

Harm is sustained not just by negative conduct but a wider societal culture – one that facilitates silence, blame and normalisation. Recommendation 1 asks the formal system to be accountable, yet we all have a duty to wider society to uphold a higher standard of conduct together.

1. **Institutions and individuals** should help shift the norms around online conduct, by being clear about what behaviour is unacceptable, why it causes harm, and what bystanders and institutions are expected to do about it.
2. **Communities and individuals** should confront the quiet complicity among friends, family and colleagues that keeps survivors silent. That includes the assumptions that treat online sexual harassment of women as normal, and that picture online harm survivors as only being women. A survivor should never be left wondering whether what happened to them whether what happened to them counts as harm.
3. **Schools, workplaces and communities** should build in trauma-informed practices and responsible-bystander habits, so that when someone discloses what has happened to them, the people and institutions around them ease the harm rather than add to it. Whether a person feels able to report is shaped as much by these everyday responses as by any official channel.

METHODOLOGY

STUDY DESIGN

This 2026 Study replicates the methodology of SHE's 2023 Online Harms Study to enable direct trend comparison. The survey instrument was substantially retained from the 2023 version, with the optimisation of previous questions to match the context of the current online harms landscape, and addition of new question blocks addressing perceptions of online safety, OSRAA and OSC directions. Where relevant, comparisons with the 2023 data were listed.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey covered fourteen harm types (see Part One: Prevalence) across four thematic domains: Prevalence, Impact, Protective Behaviours, and Recourse. New modules added for 2026 include questions on online safety, awareness of the OSRAA, OSC initiatives, and the perceived utility of directions and non-legal services for online harms survivor care. The instrument was piloted by 4 staff members prior to full fieldwork.

FIELDWORK

Fieldwork period: 13th to 21st April 2026

Mode of administration: Online Panel Survey

Total main sample: n = 1,048 Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents aged 15 and above

Sampling approach: Quota sampling to ensure national representativeness by age, gender, and race, derived from the Department of Statistics (DOS) population data

ANALYTICAL APPROACH

Frequencies and cross-tabulations are presented across the main sample and key demographic segments (age group, gender). Where comparisons are made with 2023 baseline data, these are indicated in the text and in the figures. Differences between subgroups are noted where they are meaningful; statistical significance testing was applied at $p < 0.05$ where indicated.

This report was prepared with the assistance of AI tools to enhance clarity and language. The substance, interpretation, and recommendations are those of SHE.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The survey was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of IHH Parkway Ethical Committee. The approved ethics license number is: PIEC/2025/052. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. No personally identifiable information was collected. Respondents were provided with information about SHECARES support services at the outset of the survey, before and after questions inquiring about their experiences with online harms.

DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS STUDY

The fourteen online harm types surveyed are defined as listed in Part One: Prevalence of Online Harms. Additional definitions used in this Study:

1. **Generative AI:** Artificial intelligence models that use machine learning to generate novel content such as text, images, audio, and video in response to prompts (e.g. ChatGPT, DALL-E, Sora).
2. **Deepfake:** A digitally altered photo, video, or audio file that uses artificial intelligence to falsely depict a real person saying or doing something they never actually said or did.

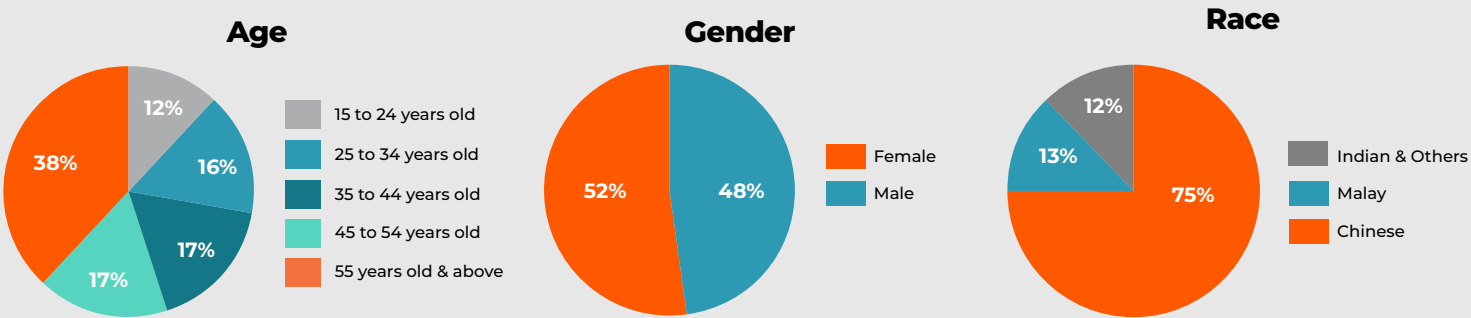
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Study was brought to you by the SHE Team with the support of the SHE Board, and likeminded partners. This report was designed by Claire Chang. We thank all who have contributed to this effort.

APPENDIX

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The following tables and figures present the demographic profile of the main sample surveyed in this Study.



Characteristic	2026 Main Sample (n = 1,048)
Gender: Male	48%
Gender: Female	52%
Age: 15–24	12%
Age: 25–34	16%
Age: 35–44	17%
Age: 45–54	17%
Age: 55+	38%
Race: Chinese	75%
Race: Malay	13%
Race: Indian & Others	12%

REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT

If you or anyone you know has been a target of online harm, reach out through the channels below.



ONLINE HARMS SUPPORT FOR ALL

Singapore's First Support Centre for Targets of Online Harms



Helpline
8001 01 4616



WhatsApp
8985 5528



Email
shecares@she.org.sg



Website
www.she.org.sg



Hours
Monday-Friday, 9am-9pm



Address
44 Jalan Merah Saga, #01-54,
Singapore 278116

ABOUT SHE

SG Her Empowerment (SHE) is an independent non-profit organisation, with Institution of a Public Character (IPC) status, that strives to empower girls and women through community engagements and partnerships and advocating for gender equality and equity in Singapore. SHE facilitates conversations, listens to the community, and gives voice to their views. We take a rigorous, research-based approach to defining solutions, forging partnerships with and between key interest groups, organisations, and the Government to advocate for meaningful change.

More information: www.she.org.sg

ABOUT SHECARES

SHECARES is Singapore's first support centre for targets of online harms. The centre provides holistic support and a safe space for those affected by online harm, particularly women and girls. It offers a helpline and WhatsApp textline staffed by trained counsellors, trauma-informed free counselling, and pro bono legal assistance through legal clinics run in partnership with Pro Bono SG. SHECARES also operates as a Trusted Flagger on major platforms, enabling expedited reporting and content removal for clients.