

CRUSH CARDS

What are the Crush Cards?

The cards have an image on one side and a quote or selection of quotes from young people on the other. At the bottom of the card is a link to the project website where you can find out what proportion of young people (aged 16-24) who took part in the Natsal survey over the years selected as their main source of information about sex growing up.

Why use the Crush Cards?

The cards invite you to explore and potentially **CRUSH** your assumptions about how young people are learning about RSE in three key ways. They might...

- **support** you to unbox the Natsal statistics on how young people learn about RSE with real life experiences in young people's own words.
- **offer** new ways of noticing what matters to young people across a range of contexts (school, online, media, family, friends etc).
- **enable** you to reflect upon how your school's RSE provision might meet the needs of all young people.

This suite of cards focuses on 'how' young people (age 13-17) are learning about RSE in key contexts. These contexts are the same contexts that Natsal uses to ask people what their main source of information is about sex growing up.

Doctor

Sexual health websites

Social media

TV/Film

Parents/Carers

Pornography

DVDs/video

School

Books

Partners

Friends

Siblings

Other

How to use the Crush Cards

You can use and adapt the cards in any number of ways. Here is one starter activity of how the cards can be used with educators:

- Print out the Crush Cards.
- Spread them out with the image facing up.
- Pick one image and guess what the story might be behind the image.
- Are you surprised when you turn over the card?
- What norms or expectations are over-turned when you explore what or how young people are learning about RSE?
- How do you feel about what you have read?
- What more do you want to know?



If you want to use the cards without the young people's quotes, you can download a set of image-only cards at agendaonline.co.uk/crush-cards

The research data on the cards comes from the Wellcome Trust funded research and engagement project "Unboxing Relationships and Sexuality Education: a creative audit with young people (age 13-17). For further details about this project, go to: www.natsal.ac.uk/engaging-sexual-stories



The National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal) is one of the largest and most comprehensive studies of sexual behaviour and lifestyles in the world, and is a major source of data informing sexual and reproductive health policy in Britain www.natsal.ac.uk

For further information on Natsal and how to engage with the Natsal statistics go to: www.open.edu/openlearn/britishsexstats

For further information on the issues and terminology that are raised in the cards, go to: www.brook.org.uk/resources



Please read the Safety and Support section from the AGENDA resource before using the Crush Cards agendaonline.co.uk/safety-and-support



Crush Card print files available at: agendaonline.co.uk/crush-cards



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Fay: “I’ve got one of those ‘When you grow up’ books and on masturbation it said, ‘When you do something that makes you feel good’ and that was the description of it. And I was like, ‘okay anything I do that makes me feel good - that’s masturbation!’

Shanon: You weren’t to know!

Fay: Exactly! I was nine. So I looked, and it wasn’t an explicit description. It was like when you do something that makes you feel good. So I was like, ‘so everything I do that I enjoy, that’s masturbation’. That was what I was thinking about it and my brain was like, ‘no’. I was like 9.

Shanon: My mum got me one when I was 12. She bought me three books: one about puberty, one about periods and one about body image. I only read half of one. One talked about cancer, and I got scared.

(age 14)

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Natsal



Go to www.natsal.ac.uk/engaging-sexual-stories to find out what proportion of young people (aged 16-24) who took part in the Natsal survey over the years selected ‘MOTHER/FATHER’ when asked what their main source of information was about sex growing up.



Renold and Timperley (2021) *Unboxing Relationships and Sexuality Education: a creative audit with young people (age 13-17)*. Cardiff University; Open University; University College London.



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"I have been on Tumblr since like year 10. It is a cesspit. It is! There are some lovely people and some really, really horrible people. There are certain Trans YouTubers who are transphobic which is very strange. Very strange line. But it's like they are very much like, 'This is the only way to be Trans. Non-binary does not exist'. And they're almost transphobic in the way that they say stuff (...) and people have like really been hurt by the stuff that they say. And they have quite big platforms as well" (Ty, age 15).

"All of my learning about that has come from Tumblr, which is not necessarily the greatest place, but it's taught me a lot (...). RSE has a tendency to be, "here's what straight sex is. Here's how not to get an STD. Here's what being a gay person is." It's not necessarily RSE, it's... gay people exist and it's... it doesn't really go beyond that. Sometimes there's mentions of bisexual people. There's a little bit of mention about trans people, but it's very, very like basic. I don't think that's the... the fault of the school necessarily. I think it's just across the board" (Vinny, age 15)

"TikTok and YouTube have taught me most of what I know. And it made me realise that a lot of that should have come from the school, and should be in just general curriculums. But you're not going to be able to learn everything from school. So, being able to get that opportunity to learn online (...) I think it would be good (...) Because like Thomas Anders (...) for the last two or three years at the end of every June him and a lot of his friends who all different like identities and stuff just answer questions from quite young fans quite often about like different LGBT experiences - which taught me a lot. A lot of it's to do with like coming out, because a lot of people always want advice on that. And just like genuine questions about like, 'Hey, one of my friends has come out and I'm trying to adjust to like these pronouns or this thing', or whatever.

But as I've gotten older there have been - most of the LGBT people I watch are trans people. There's one in particular. His name's Jamie. And his content's really good because he's a trans guy and his fiancé, I think she's Muslim (...) and it's really interesting to see both of their perspectives on it and how they talk about stuff like this. It's really, really nice to see them talk it in such a casual way. It's actually just like... they're... they're very straight with their facts. And it's nice to hear the perspective of two completely different people, who are together, who come from different walks of life but have learned a lot of the same things. But that's not always the first result you're going to see (when searching for LGBT content online)" (Sam, age 15)

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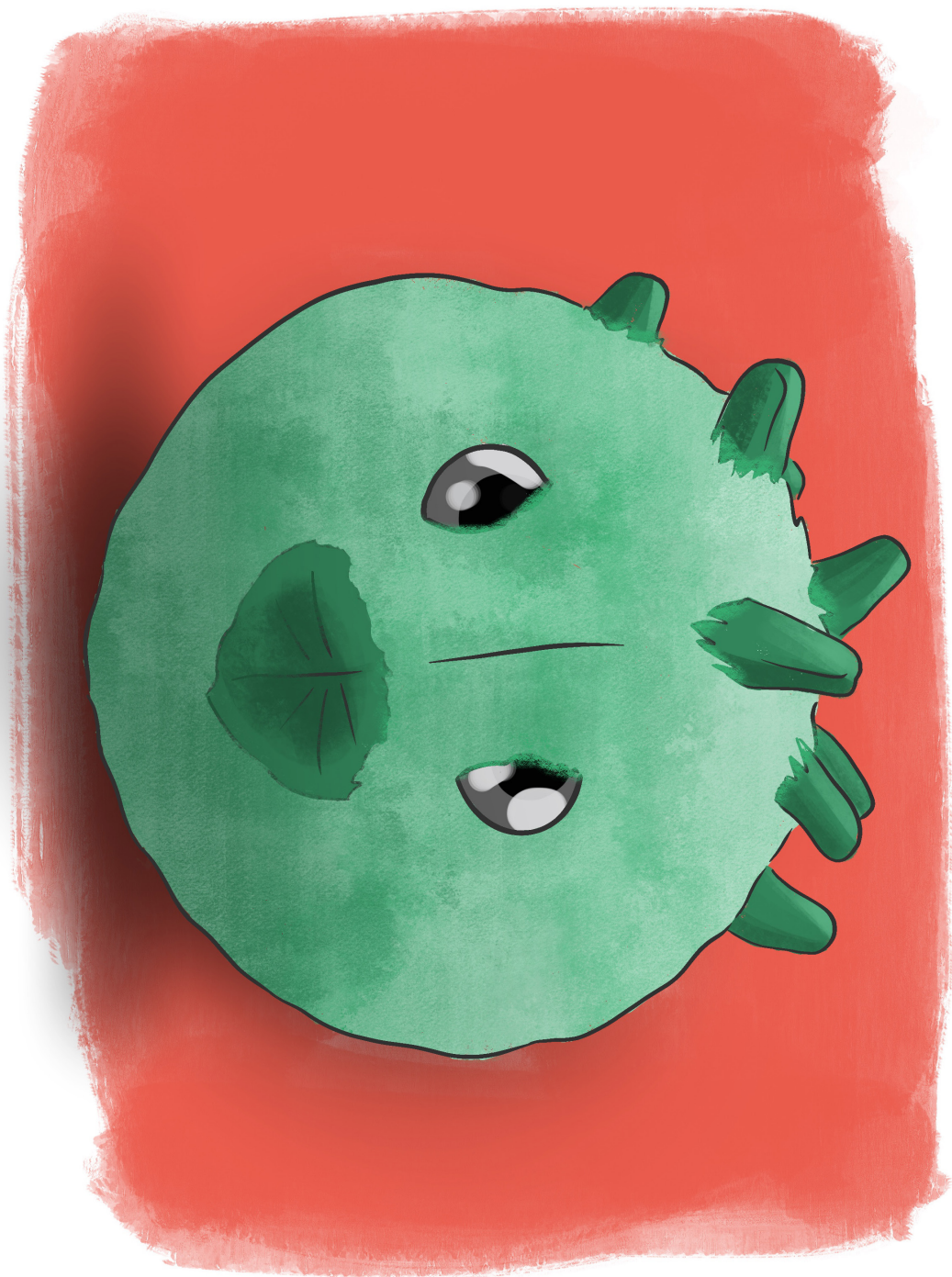
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Go to www.natsal.ac.uk/engaging-sexual-stories to find out what proportion of young people (aged 16-24) who took part in the Natsal survey over the years selected 'SOCIAL MEDIA' when asked what their main source of information was about sex growing up.



Renold and Timperley (2021) Unboxing Relationships and Sexuality Education: a creative audit with young people (age 13-17). Cardiff University; Open University; University College London.



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“I think it was an STI session (held in an assembly hall) and they had different teddies representing different STIs. They were ... I can't remember, it must have been Year Nine, Year Eight. So, it's not that clear and vivid, but I can remember having these teddies and they talked you through different symptoms.

I think (the message) was like, 'Wear protection'. 'Don't get one'. Rather than, 'Okay, you might get one. This is how you deal with it'. (...) It's like the likelihood's really high (but) those conversations have been like exempt from like RSE that I've kind of participated in. Kind of like they want to shy away from the reality and look at the idyllic world and what should happen isn't always what does happen (Ryan, age 16)

'In Year Eight or Nine we had someone come in from outside of the school to talk about STI's and stuff and he was amazing. Like everyone remembers him. Everyone was engaged. Everyone absolutely like was like all-ears (...) because he was like this really just bubbly guy and he was talking about... he had little toys of all the diseases you could get (...) he was from an organisation outside of school (...) you definitely need someone outside of school. Because when a teacher does it, it's kind of like, 'Ugh'. It's more robotic. It's like they're following a script. It's a bit awkward. So, I think having someone from outside the school is always a bit better.

But again, I still don't feel like we've been educated enough. I think I'd still have to ask someone, or... I don't know, educate myself even more because even though it was such a good thing, it was a long time ago so you kind of need a bit of a refresher ... it's the more you talk about it the more normalised it becomes. And then, the more comfortable people feel about getting help because it's not like a stigma. (Dan, age 16)

[after the STI session] I think we were given maybe like a helpline or two which is handy (...) they had like the, "Has anyone got a question?" at the end. But then it was like no-one put their hand up and we all just walked out and that was it. (Lacie, age 16)

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Natsal



Go to www.natsal.ac.uk/engaging-sexual-stories to find out what proportion of young people (aged 16-24) who took part in the Natsal survey over the years selected 'HEALTH PROFESSIONALS' when asked what their main source of information was about sex growing up.



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Tambara and Leila (age 13) are talking about vaginas and vulvas, and the difference between them, following a conversation about sex education lessons in primary school.

Tambara: I'm... I'm just too bored to differentiate (between vulva and vagina). I know they're different. I know they're different, I just use ... vagina ... it's more widely used.

Leila: Hmm.

Tambara: Some people don't even call it a vagina as well, they like... I remember in primary school they had, like, all different names for it (...)

Leila: Vajuju. That's what my friend used to call it (...) and Vajayjay!

Tambara: Yeah. So, like, people don't actually know, it's like it's a normal body part, like any other part and I feel like we need to know from a young age.

Leila: Yeah. But then people would say penis, so...

Tambara: I know, people say that... people say that and then, like, well...

Leila: Yeah.

Tambara: VAGINAL!

Leila: People are more, like, grossed out.

Tambara: There's way more stigma around vaginas than there are penises.

Tambara: Last week I realised everyone's vagina looks different, that's like ... no, I didn't realise it, I Googled it and I was like, What?

Leila: (Laughs)

Tambara: And I thought... [laughs]... that's just... that's a view of, like, me being dumb. But then I realised everyone's vaginas actually look different and that's weird (...) google is like my saviour (laughs)

You don't really learn about masturbation at all. In science... did we? No, I don't think we did (..) But it ... because you hear about boys talking about. "Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." All the time. And it's only recently when you get older where girls start to talk about it. But I remember from... it was kind of like... it's... it's kind of like a sin, as in like you would never hear about it. It was never on TV, but I've seen it a lot more on TV now, and talk about it more with friends now as you get older and it's kind of like, "Whoa. So, it's actually okay." It's... it's like... it's really eye-opening... yeah!

I don't really like Googling things because I don't ... I have like ... I'm like, "What if someone will know, or blah, blah, blah, blah." I kind of have that in the back of my mind.

(Tess, age 13)

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Natsal



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Since Year 1 Lou (age 15) found “a lot of comfort in Harry Potter as a series (...) it was like, ‘Hey, these are weird people. I’m like these weird people. I don’t fit in and it makes me feel like I fit in a place or I have a place to go to.’ Lou describes how ‘it sucked’ when the author of the series “came out as a massive trans-phobe ... because it’s like, ‘She made my childhood and now she hates me’. Lou describes another author, Rick Riordan, which has ‘been better’ for them since ‘getting older’, ‘but you could probably read it in Year 5 and 6’. Lou describes how ‘he writes like stuff about like modern day follow-ups of like all the Greek myths and Roman myths (...) and there’s an Egyptian one, and a Nordic one’:

‘There is a character who is gender fluid in it (...) but it’s not their entire character. Like there are characters who just are queer in it. Even back to, I think, the third book he released, there’s a queer character in it. The Egyptian one has two half Black kids, which is immediately a bit more representation. You have a bunch of different characters of different ages doing different things. There’s a pansexual character, and it’s gotten to the stage where it is really good casual representation. I think that’s what we need more of especially for younger people because it’s like kid-friendly books and it’s just nice to see that kind of thing’.

Lou goes on to talk about gender and sexual stereotypes in books and on TV, from the ‘fetishization of gay sexualities’ in Riverdale to their school library which holds a couple of books which have stereotypical ‘gay characters’:

‘Becky Albertalli is a very good writer, though. She... she’s the one who wrote ‘Love, Simon’ and she is a bisexual writer and she’s got a second book. It’s the sequel to ‘Love, Simon’ called ‘Leah on the Off Beat’. And the main character is a plus-size bisexual woman’.

‘I think the problem is, in general there isn’t much queer rep in that many books. So, when you find one, you grab onto it’.

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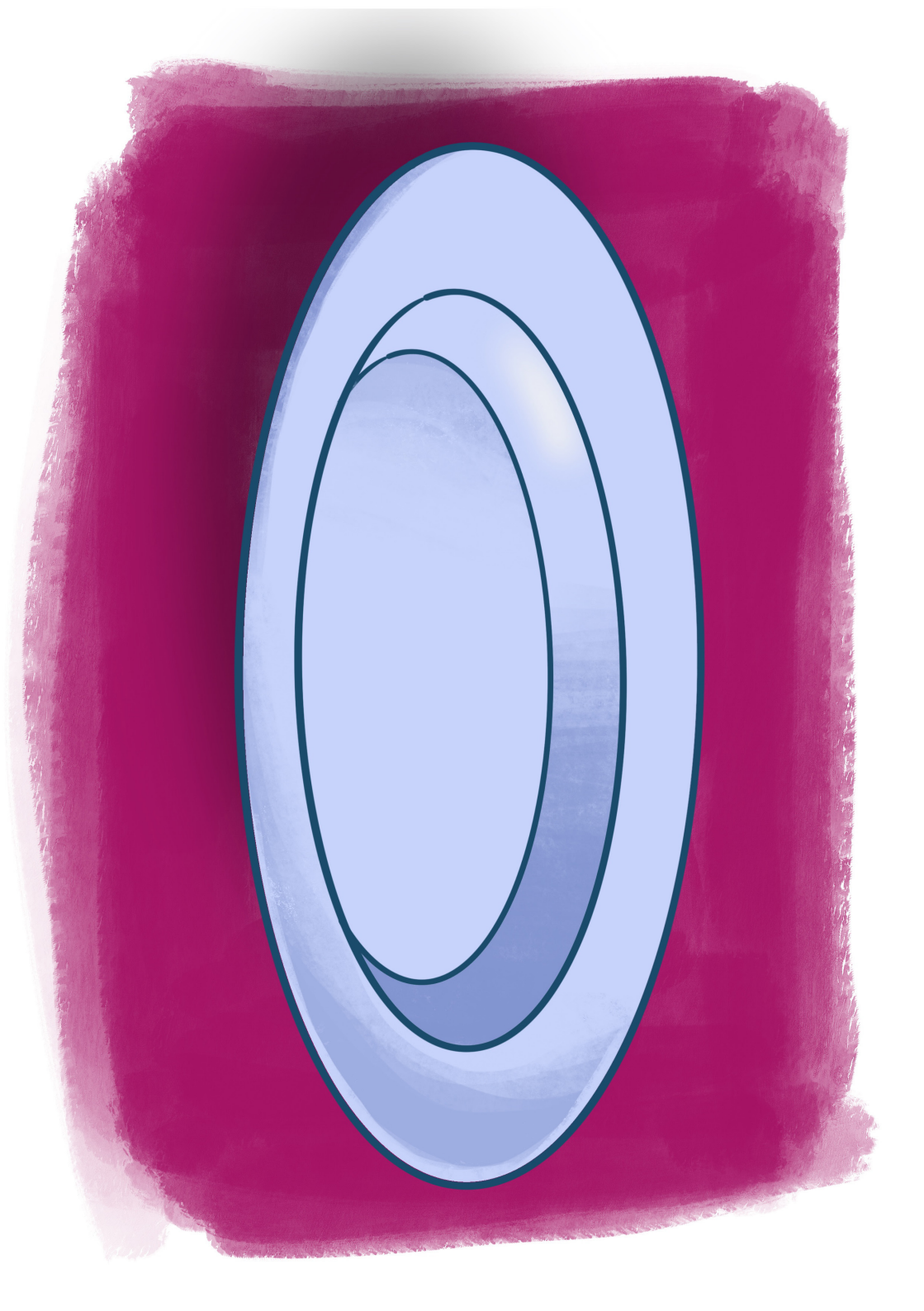
Natsal



Go to www.natsal.ac.uk/engaging-sexual-stories to find out what proportion of young people (aged 16-24) who took part in the Natsal survey over the years selected ‘OTHER’ when asked what their main source of information was about sex growing up.



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Kat: My mum was very upfront about these things (RSE issues). Like my (younger) brother, who would ask any question, she would just answer just like that. Only sometimes she got embarrassed but really rarely. We were just eating dinner sometimes. And my brother would go, “What’s a prostitute?” And she’d answer. I was just sitting there eating my dinner. So it brought up all the questions because my (younger) sister and brother, they’re quite open with how they want to talk.

Researcher: So you were learning from the answers your siblings asked questions about?

Kat: Yeah. And, um, just like jokes that go around in the playground and things that people like, oh, you’re this, this, this, this. Things like that, and then you’re like, ‘oh, I don’t get it’. And then someone will eventually explain it to you, whilst laughing, but you’ll still understand (...) And now I’ll be scrolling through TikTok and I’ll see something, and I won’t understand the joke or anything. I’ll go through the comments and then I’ll realise or I’ll find out.

Reflecting upon how Kat has been learning from the questions, comments or jokes of others, she suggests the following:

Kat: In Year 6 and like moving forward, the entire school should be based off what we’re thinking about and opinions and like different questions we have.

(age 14)

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Natsal



Go to www.natsal.ac.uk/engaging-sexual-stories to find out what proportion of young people (aged 16-24) who took part in the Natsal survey over the years selected ‘SIBLINGS’ when asked what their main source of information was about sex growing up.



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Rosa and Lissy (age 14) describe annual visits from a school community police officer in Year's 7 and 8. As part of the lesson the policeman shows the class a video on 'sexting'.

Lissy: We were just sitting there for, like, two hours just talking to this police officer, who was talking at us, not with us, in terms of what to do and what not to do.

Rosa: We learned about it, but all we really do is... like, they just tell us it's wrong and then show us a video, that's just kind of it.

Lissy: Yeah! I was just about to say about the video, it's the same video every year and it's still boring.

Rosa: It just looks really staged, it's not very... it's not very accurate, I don't think.

Lissy: Really stereotypical as well.

When asked about the kind of video they would create ...

Lissy: I would probably show, like, how you would actually deal with it, because at the end it just says, like, "Don't send nudes," not ... it doesn't talk about the, like, pressure, and how to, like, actually say no, it just says, "Don't do it," at the end.

Rosa: Like, it doesn't go into any, like, detail and also, it doesn't talk about how you shouldn't shame people when they get that kind of thing, like ... because people just shame them automatically and call them a slut. Or they, like, stereotype it, it's always the girl doing it to ... like, it's always the boy asking for it or something.

Lissy: Yeah... yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, it is'!

Rosa: I don't think there should be a video at all.

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Natsal



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Jayson (age 14) describes how a well intentioned Pride Day was renamed 'Gay Day, in a bad way' by boys who didn't want to come to school on that day and take part in the activities to celebrate gender and sexual diversity, including 'learning about neo-pronouns' and 'LGBTQ+ history'. His friend Tilly (age 14) describes what happened:

Tilly: Barely anyone came in actually, there were, like, a lot of people missing. I remember one of the teachers said there was only ten people in the class. Like, she came in and said to our Head of Year, 'There's only ten people in my class, like, there's no-one here' (...) one of the boys came in and he refused to go to lesson, he was standing outside our lesson and he said, like, he thought it was a different day, he thought it was about something else. And then he was like, "I don't want to be here, like, I want to leave, I don't want to learn about THAT".

Jayson later describes his dislike of sexual identity labels and being asked about how he identifies:

'It feels like there's like no room for change either. Like I know in year seven I kind of said that like... I kind of decided... because with all these labels being put onto me, it kind of did make me question a little bit, and I thought, 'Okay. Maybe I'm bisexual'. So, I kind of went with that in year seven and year eight. But then going into year nine I thought I'd ... I don't feel like that anymore ... but then I've never really been able to get away from that, and I think right now I just hate... I just don't like labels at all. But this ... it's constantly like, 'Are you...? Are you still bisexual?'. Like, 'Are you...? Are you gay then?' And I'm just like, 'I don't ... I don't know. Stop asking me'.

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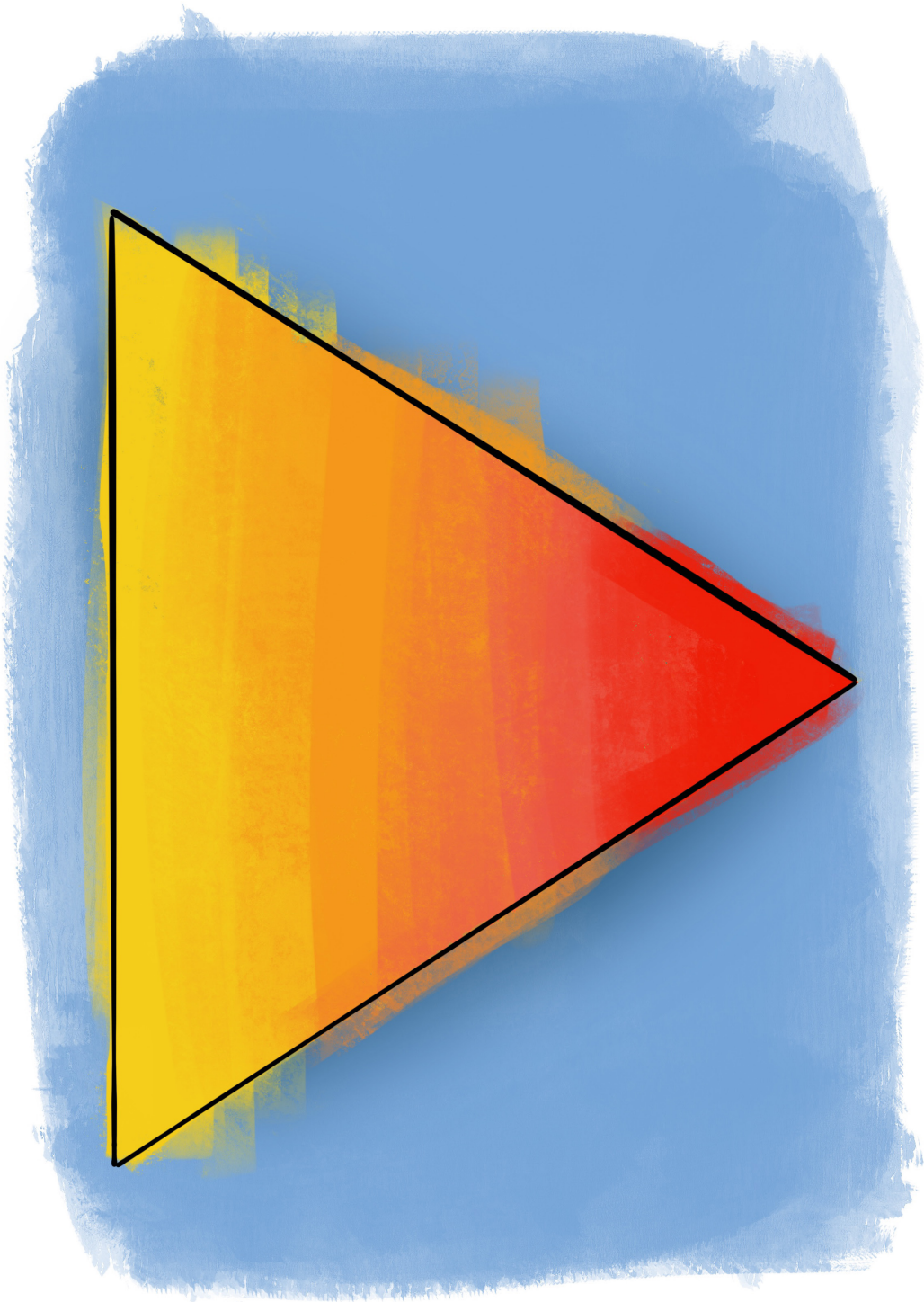
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Go to www.natsal.ac.uk/engaging-sexual-stories to find out what proportion of young people (aged 16-24) who took part in the Natsal survey over the years selected 'SCHOOL' when asked what their main source of information was about sex growing up.



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Ada and Serena (age 14) are discussing if rape culture is too difficult to address in secondary school:

Ada: I said it's a difficult topic, not too difficult to cover. Like, it should definitely be covered.

Serena: Yeah, definitely.

Researcher: So, because everyone has their own take on what that (rape culture) means, could you define for me what you understand by rape culture?

Serena: Hmm... like, teaching people that, like, you don't have autonomy over your own body)... like, teaching girls that and, like, teaching boys that they can do what they want to girls.

Ada: It's like the big things and the small things, it's like the plot that ... Serena, you sent me the triangle actually.

Serena: Oh, yeah.

Researcher: The triangle?

Ada: The... the rape triangle.

Serena: The rape culture triangle.

Ada: So, at the bottom there is, like, locker room talk, like, jokes...

Serena: Unwanted sexual comments.

Ada: Unwanted comments, and it slowly got like worse and worse...

Serena: Yeah.

Ada: And worse until it got to, like, assault.

Serena: Like, stealthing.

Ada: And revenge porn, that kind of stuff.

Ada: But like, most of the girls, when something happens to them, like they get sexually assaulted or something they don't tell the teachers.

Serena: No. No, they don't.

Ada: Everyone in the year could know...

Serena: Yeah, everyone.

Ada: But unless... unless someone else has told a teacher, it won't get dealt with.

Serena: Yeah. Because they don't want that attention...

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Natsal



Go to www.natsal.ac.uk/engaging-sexual-stories to find out what proportion of young people (aged 16-24) who took part in the Natsal survey over the years selected 'FRIENDS' when asked what their main source of information was about sex growing up.



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"I was about ten. I had this book, I wrote down every single experience that I had, I still have it under my bed (...) My mum read it once and she was like, "Oh, I didn't know you were going through that", I was like; yeah, please don't read this again, it's my diary. I called it a puberty diary.

I've never told anyone this, but I used to have this little group of people (in primary school) and we used to meet up in the bathroom every break and lunch, bearing in mind there was two breaks as well, so it's like maybe an hour a day we were just in these toilets, just talking about puberty!

Because the teacher didn't actually teach us very much in the puberty talks we just... we kind of, you know, learnt for ourselves and bounced off other people's ideas, and it was kind of open. And so, we talked about that then in the bathroom, and then some other girls came in and saw that we were talking about it, and they joined in as well. But they found it really gross.

I had my book that my mum gave me, and I took that in my bag once or twice, and we just read through that and anything that came up, we'd like talk from our own experiences. But we wouldn't judge the other person either. So, if somebody had said, "Oh yeah, I'm, like, really hairy", you wouldn't say anything, that you wouldn't be like, "Oh, you should shave"! You'd just be like, "Oh right, okay, I'm not that hairy. What about blah, blah, blah?", you know? Yeah, it's just the way the body works to be honest. I mean, it wasn't always about puberty, it could be like, how long we wanted to cut our hair, because it looked good for the boys, or whatever. And it was just about anything.

Yeah, it's like a support group to be honest. It's good to talk to other people. And I think it wasn't staged or anything by teachers either, which made it, like, much more comfortable and everyone was open"

Ffion, age 13

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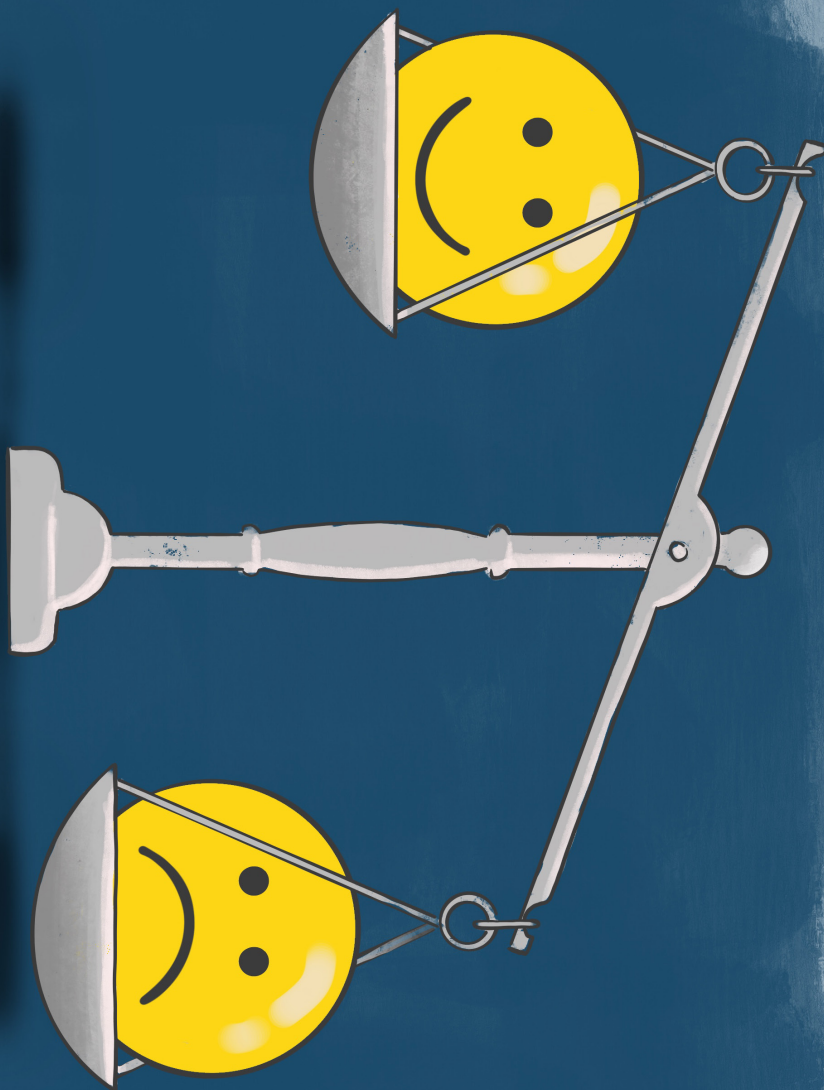
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Shay: At the... at the moment, I know we're only like in Year 9. But still, the things that the teachers have told us about sex, it's if you don't wear a condom you get an STI. If you don't have consent, it's rape. That's it. They're all negative. At this point they want us to die a virgin because they're so like hellbent on everyone just not having sex and not having STIs and things like that. Like what happened to the point where like you're not doing it to have a baby? You're doing it just because

Katie: Like there are good things about it as well but they just don't teach that. And I don't think they should because people would be very hmmm about it.

INT: Who are the people? You? Or other people?

Katie: Not really us, I don't think. But I think more like the boys because they... they are very... they don't take things seriously. But in a bad way.

Shay: It's not even all of them. It's just...

Katie: Some of them are okay. But it's... they just... like I said about reading the room, like knowing when to just... this is actually something that you might want to know.

Shay: It would just be nice if it was a bit more balanced.
Like sex is good for this but then this could also happen.

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Natsal



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Riley: We do have quite a bit about consent, which is good. But it's always that... that video that they show about the tea, and they're like, "Oh, do you want tea?", "no, you don't want tea"! And everyone is laughing at it but, like, it is a good message. But (...) but I think it doesn't really help how... like, it... it's more of a society thing, that ... that people don't really care much about rape and things, and like sexual assault I think the students care about it A LOT MORE more than the schools do.

Jay: We've got all the extremes, but none of the basics.

Kiera: We did... we did consent, which was like nobody cared, nobody took it seriously, because half the class didn't – do you remember that? They showed us the video about, like, the tea video.

Jay: Oh, the tea video!

Kiera: I love it!

Jay: But, like, nobody took it seriously.

Kiera: I feel like.... I think the class we were in, wasn't the worst because there was a girl in there who had experienced sexual abuse and rape before, so obviously she was very passionate about the subject, so I feel like people... like, the more disrespectful ones, kind of toned that down because they didn't want to make a... you know, a huge scene.

Jay: They didn't tone it down that much considering they were sitting next to her basically (...) it was like, "Oh, do I need consent to hold her hand?" or like, "Do I need consent to, like, touch her back? Or can I... do I need consent to pull out a chair?", stuff like that.

Tia: I wish they would just stop showing us humorous videos about consent!

Yasmin: It's a good video for little kids, but if you don't name what it is, you don't know what it is. Because it's not tea!

Izzy: They talked about consent like it was a cup of tea and it pissed me off, because it's NOT!
(age 15 and 16)

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Natsal



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Nia and Ally (age 15) talk about “what we’ve learnt about relationships” in school. “But it’s not really relationships”, Ally says, “it’s like.... it’s extreme, so it’s how to recognise, like, emotional abuse and physical abuse, stuff like that. It’s not... like, the basics! We’ve got all the extremes, but none of the basics!”

Ally: ‘I feel like there’s so many different sides, I feel like... I feel like during lockdown it was Tik-Tok and stuff like that, which I have found out so much about, like, LGBTQ and feminism and stuff like that, just through social media. And it’s really weird how coming back and realising that other people haven’t seen all that, because they were just on a completely different side.’

Nia: I reckon the boys learn it from porn, which is so....

Ally: Wrong!

Nia: I feel like it’s, like, fantasy sex as well.

Ally: Because I feel like, at the point we’re at, everyone’s seen some sort of porn, because it gets spread around classrooms for one thing.

Nia: It’s on TV shows like normal as well.

Ally: And, like, obviously I’ve heard that, like, it’s not realistic. Like, that’s not what it’s supposed to be like.

Nia: They... even when they watch that, they also have, like, idealistics of what a woman’s body should look like then.

Ally: Oh my god, and...

Nia: And then they... they bring that so it’s real life.

Ally: Like, someone put on their [Instagram] story last night how they were 15 and they hadn’t done.... oh, what was it?

Nia: Rimming.

Ally: Rimming. And I was like, I haven’t had my first kiss yet! I was like, WHAT?

Nia: Yeah, I seen that, I just didn’t know what it was, so I got really confused!

Ally: Yeah, he was like, “Oh, I haven’t done it yet, like, that’s not fair”.

Nia: I’m 15 years old and I haven’t done this, what the hell? Like, that sort of vibe.

Ally: It’s like, WHAT?

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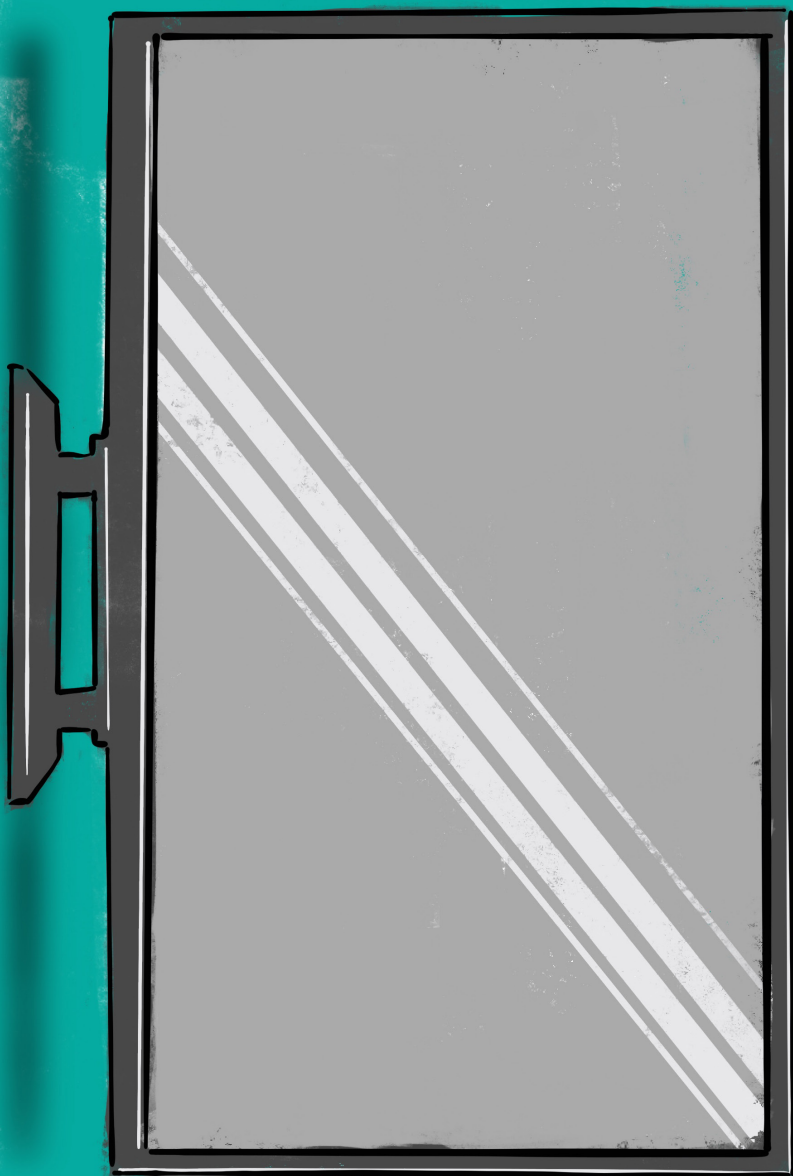
Natsal



Go to www.natsal.ac.uk/engaging-sexual-stories to find out what proportion of young people (aged 16-24) who took part in the Natsal survey over the years selected ‘PORNOGRAPHY’ when asked what their main source of information was about sex growing up.



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“Some kids will feel like they don’t belong. Kid will feel out of place. And Sex Education, the (Netflix) programme, picked up on it on really well, where there was an asexual character. I have watched bits of it. It’s a bit of an awkward programme for me because I just can’t deal with cringe and stuff very well.

They had a character who was asexual, but the first thing she says is, “I don’t want to have sex. Am I broken?”, which tells you a lot about why, why we need representation. Because people feel out of place and people feel broken. And it’s like just that gentle introduction of, “Hey, you might be asexual. This is valid. This is normal.” You can see like the relief in the character’s face and it’s like why...? Why isn’t this a thing? Why isn’t this taught?

(Taylor, age 15)

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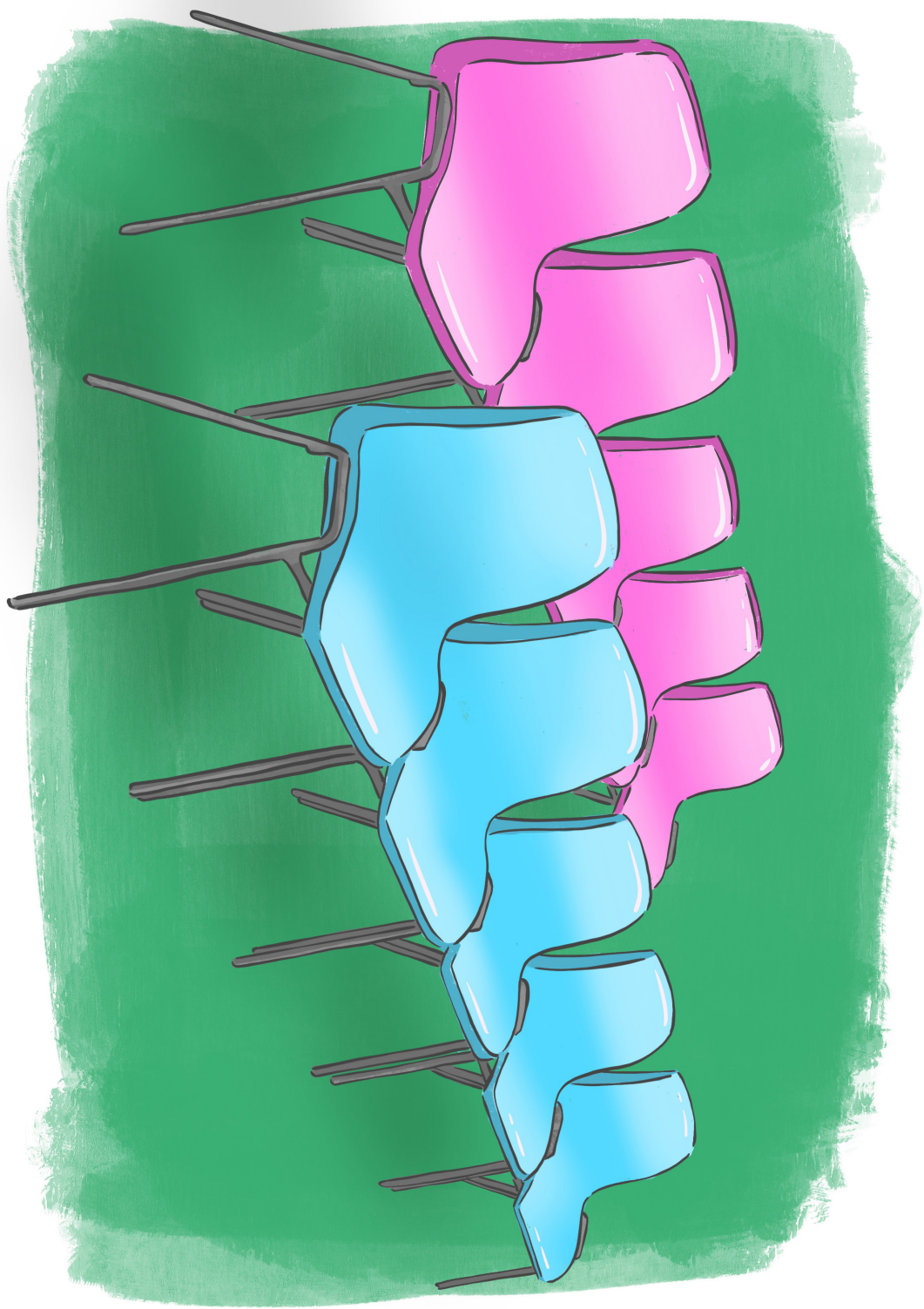
Natsal



Go to www.natsal.ac.uk/engaging-sexual-stories to find out what proportion of young people (aged 16-24) who took part in the Natsal survey over the years selected ‘MEDIA’ when asked what their main source of information was about sex growing up.



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Casey: I cried when I got my first period, I cried because I thought I'd never be able to wear, like, regular underwear forever, and I thought I had to wear pads for, like, the rest of my life.

Researcher: Can I ask how old you were?

Casey: Ten.

Rhian: Yeah, we'd only done it in science and not PSE (...) like, we got... we got... we got one in like the last week or something (of primary school).

Casey: Yeah. And then they take the girls away for when they're talking about periods (...) but I think everyone should have been in attendance because, like, it's important for everyone to know about that stuff, because most of the boys don't have much knowledge.

Rhian: For the sex ed lesson (in primary), I think we were split (boys/girls) but for the period lesson, we were together.

Casey: Oh no, it was the other way around for us. I remember, because one boy asked, "What's a vagina?".

Mel: Yeah?

Casey: It's like any other body part, you know, you know where your arm is, you know where your face... like, your eyes, nose, ears are so why shouldn't they know what, like...

Rhian: Yeah. Like, I was having a discussion in Year 7 and... [laughs]... we were discussing how many holes there are and someone thought there was, like, two on it, someone else thought there was, like, five!

Mel: No idea, yeah.

Rhian: No idea!

Sali: I remember once in year five where they would split the girls and the boys up to talk about periods, and we were all a bit like, "Is this really necessary?" As in even at the age of... I don't know, 10, you already know like why...? Why are we being split up? Like why? Because then I remember when we got out and all the boys were like, "Oh, you were talking about periods." And this one kid went, "Is that when blood comes out of your nipples?" That like just shows that, obviously, boys need that education just as much as girls because, yes... girls are the ones that go through it but they need to know as well.

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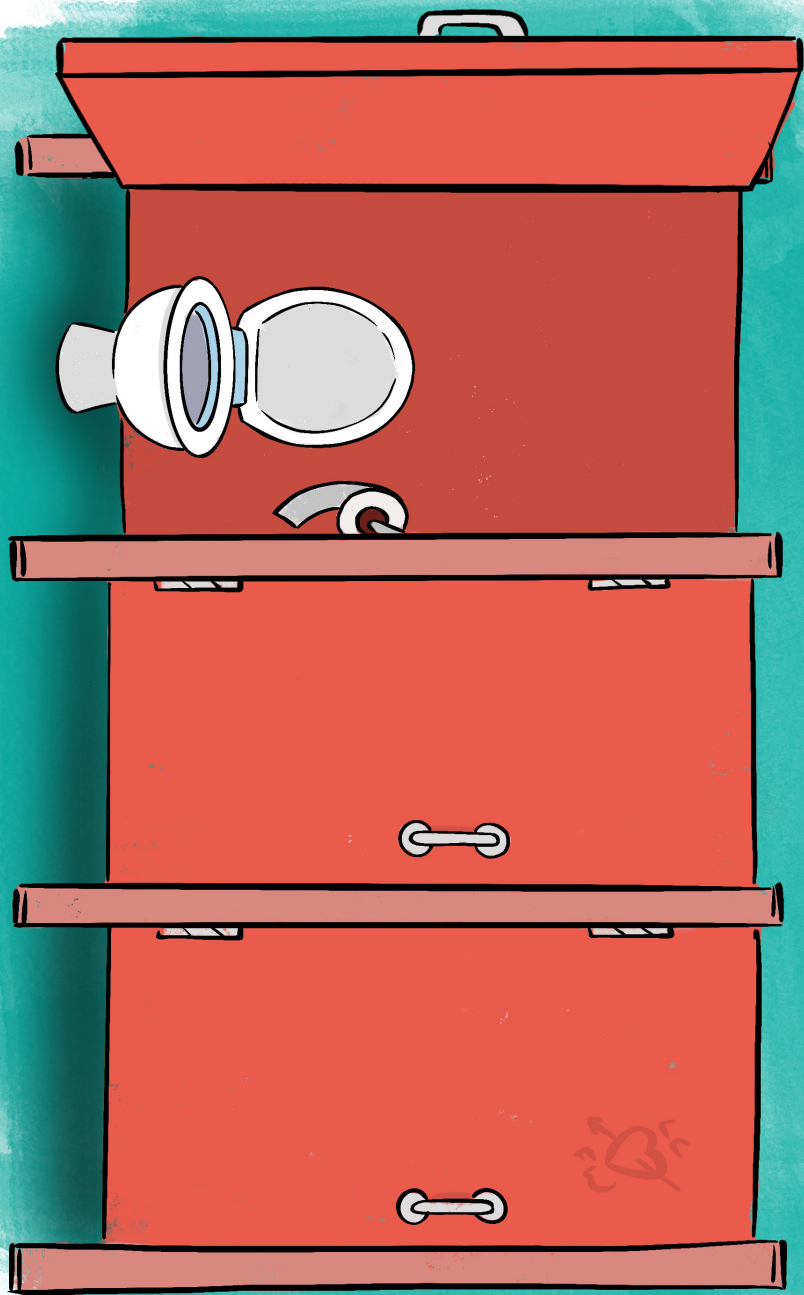
Natsal



Go to www.natsal.ac.uk/engaging-sexual-stories to find out what proportion of young people (aged 16-24) who took part in the Natsal survey over the years selected 'SCHOOL' when asked what their main source of information was about sex growing up.



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Jen and Dara (age 13) talk about the school toilets, and how they like their school's new 'gender neutral' toilets because 'you can't see under the toilet doors', 'it's like a nice little room':

Jen: And then there's the lesbian toilet!

Dara: And there's a lesbian toilet.

Researcher: The lesbian toilets plural?

Dara: No. The lesbian ... toilet.

Researcher: Is it in the gender neutral section?

Jen: No, no.

Jen and Dara describe a cubicle where the inside of the door reveals lots of graffiti. They show the researcher a picture of the graffitied door which includes a question in the top left corner, 'Lesbians, where are you'? Followed by an invitation: 'Lesbians, tell us your wisdom'.

Researcher: And what did you make of that?

Dara: Oh, I said it was really good because, like you can't talk to...

Jen: Yeah, it's fun.

Dara: You can't, like, talk to other students in other years, but through the toilets you can communicate.

Jen: Yeah, it's probably ... they should just put a whiteboard on there!

In the absence of an LGBTQ group at the school, the toilet door seemed to function as an informal space to share advice, solidarity and ask questions. Other graffitied messages include: "You need the knowledge"; "Trans Rights, Gay Rights, Period!"; "Work hard, lick soft", "Trans women are women", "he/him and NB (non-binary) lesbians are valid".

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Natsal



Go to www.natsal.ac.uk/engaging-sexual-stories to find out what proportion of young people (aged 16-24) who took part in the Natsal survey over the years selected 'OTHER' when asked what their main source of information was about sex growing up.



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