



## POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

### Many Americans have engaged in age-gap dating

New Ipsos poll finds gender imbalances in what Americans find socially acceptable when dating

#### Topline Findings

**Washington DC, May 10, 2022 --** A new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of Cougar Life finds that many American adults have engaged in age-gap dating — that is, have previously dated someone with an age difference of 10+ years. Additionally, a large majority of Americans believe it is socially acceptable for both men and women to date someone 10+ years younger than them. However, gender imbalances exist. The poll also explores the perceived benefits and challenges of age-gap dating.

#### Detailed Findings

1. A sizeable portion of American adults have engaged in age-gap dating.
  - Nearly four in ten (39%) have previously dated someone with an age difference of 10+ years.
  - Men are more likely to have dated someone 10+ years younger than them compared to women (25% vs. 14%). Meanwhile, women are more likely to have dated someone 10+ years older than them compared to men (28% vs. 21%).
  - Many single Americans are open to age-gap dating, with 57% saying they would be open to dating someone 10+ years older than them and 49% saying they would be open to dating someone 10+ years younger than them.
  - Unmarried Americans who are 35 years of age or older are more open than those under 35 to dating someone 10+ years younger than them.
2. Although a majority of Americans believe it is socially acceptable for both men and women to date someone 10+ years younger than them, gender imbalances exist.
  - Six in ten (60%) Americans believe it is acceptable for a woman to date someone 10+ years younger than her, while 71% believe it is acceptable for a man to date someone 10+ years younger than him.
    - Americans over the age of 35 are more likely than those under 35 to believe it is socially acceptable for a man to date someone 10+ years younger than him (75% vs. 60%).
  - Men are more likely than women (65% vs. 56%) to say it's acceptable for a woman to date someone 10 or more years younger than her. However, there are no gender differences in perceptions of men dating younger, where 72% of men and 70% of women agree it's socially acceptable.
  - A majority (55%) believe it's more socially acceptable for a man to date someone 10+ years younger than him than it is for a woman to date someone 10+ years younger than her.



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### Many Americans believe it's acceptable to date someone younger

However, differences exist based on gender

*It's socially acceptable for a woman to date someone 10+ years younger than her*

% Strongly agree or somewhat agree



*It's socially acceptable for a man to date someone 10+ years younger than him*

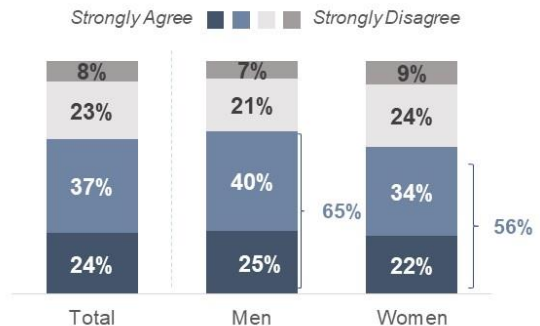
% Strongly agree or somewhat agree



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*It's socially acceptable for a woman to date someone 10+ years younger than her*

% Selecting...



Ipsos

3. Generally speaking, Americans see more benefits to age-gap dating than challenges.
  - Physical attractiveness (39%) and open-mindedness (37%) are the top perceived benefits of dating younger.
    - Men are more likely than women (46% vs. 33%) to list physical attractiveness as a benefit of dating younger.
  - Emotional maturity (55%) and financial freedom (44%) are the top perceived benefits of dating older.
  - Those that have been in an age-gap relationship before, or are single and open to one, are more likely to say all the items asked about are a benefit to dating both younger and older partners.
  - Americans cite not having anything in common (25%) as the top perceived barrier to age-gap dating. However, of the potential barriers asked about, nearly half (45%) said none of the above.
    - Concerns over what others will think decrease with age. Nearly a quarter (24%) of Americans ages 18-34 are afraid of what people might think of them if they engaged in age-gap dating, versus 14% of those ages 35-54 and 6% of those ages 55+.

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4. Among women who have dated younger men and men who have dated older women, an organic connection is what most likely brought them together, while practical life decisions (such as marriage and kids) present the largest challenge.
  - Of the survey options given, the highest share (44%) of women who have dated younger men and men who have dated older women indicate that experiencing an organic connection with someone most influenced their decision to enter a relationship.
    - Second tier influences include living in the moment/focusing on having fun (27%) and improving their sex life (25%).
  - Of the items asked about, the top challenge for women who have dated younger men and men who have dated older women is wanting different things out of life (36%).

*These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between May 5-6, 2022. For this survey, a sample of 1,005 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. The poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.8 percentage points for all respondents.*

**For full results, please refer to the following annotated questionnaire:**

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### Full Annotated Questionnaire

*NOTE: All results show percentages among all respondents, unless otherwise labeled. Reduced bases are unweighted values.*

*NOTE: \* = less than 0.5%, - = no respondents*

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following?

#### Total Agree Summary

	<u>Total</u>
It's socially acceptable for a man to date someone 10+ years younger than him	71
It's socially acceptable for a woman to date someone 10+ years younger than her	60
<b>[Asked if not married]</b> I would be open to dating someone who is 10+ years older than I am (N=516)	57
It's more socially acceptable for a man to date someone 10+ years younger than him than it is for a woman to date someone 10+ years younger than her	55
<b>[Asked if not married]</b> I would be open to dating someone who is 10+ years younger than I am (N=516)	49

- a. It's socially acceptable for a woman to date someone 10+ years younger than her

	<u>Total</u>
Strongly agree	24
Somewhat agree	37
Somewhat disagree	23
Strongly disagree	8
Don't know	9
<b>Agree (net)</b>	60
<b>Disagree (net)</b>	30

- b. It's socially acceptable for a man to date someone 10+ years younger than him

	<u>Total</u>
Strongly agree	27
Somewhat agree	44
Somewhat disagree	15
Strongly disagree	6
Don't know	8
<b>Agree (net)</b>	71
<b>Disagree (net)</b>	21

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1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following?

- c. It's more socially acceptable for a man to date someone 10+ years younger than him than it is for a woman to date someone 10+ years younger than her

	<u>Total</u>
Strongly agree	22
Somewhat agree	33
Somewhat disagree	20
Strongly disagree	16
Don't know	10
<i>Agree (net)</i>	55
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	36

- d. **[Asked if not married]** I would be open to dating someone who is 10+ years older than I am

	<u>Total (N=516)</u>
Strongly agree	23
Somewhat agree	34
Somewhat disagree	16
Strongly disagree	21
Don't know	6
<i>Agree (net)</i>	57
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	37

- e. **[Asked if not married]** I would be open to dating someone who is 10+ years younger than I am

	<u>Total (N=516)</u>
Strongly agree	25
Somewhat agree	24
Somewhat disagree	17
Strongly disagree	29
Don't know	5
<i>Agree (net)</i>	49
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	46

2. Regardless of your current relationship status, which of the following, if any, would you personally consider a benefit of dating or marrying someone 10+ years younger than you? (Select all that apply)

	<u>Total</u>
Their physical attractiveness	39
Their open-mindedness	37
Their free spirit	33
Their sexual energy or stamina	33
Their attentiveness in the bedroom	23
Other	5
None of the above	26

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3. Regardless of your current relationship status, which of the following, if any, would you personally consider a benefit of dating or marrying someone 10+ years older than you? Select all that apply.

	<u>Total</u>
Their emotional maturity	55
Their financial freedom	44
Their professional success	35
Their sexual experience	24
Their attentiveness in the bedroom	21
Other	2
None of the above	22

4. Regardless of your current relationship status, which of the following, if any, would you personally consider a barrier of dating or marrying someone with a 10+ year(s) difference in age than you? Select all that apply.

	<u>Total</u>
I don't think I would have anything in common with them	25
I don't think such a partner would fit in with my friends and family	17
I don't think I would be attracted to them	16
I would be afraid of what other people might think	14
I don't know anyone else in this type of relationship	11
None of the above	45

5. At any point in your adult life, that is since you turned 18, have you... Select all that apply.

	<u>Total</u>
Dated someone 10+ years <u>older</u> than you	25
Dated someone 10+ years <u>younger</u> than you	19
None of the above	61

6. For the relationship(s) you've had where there was a 10+ year difference in age between you and your partner, what was your partner's gender? *(Select all that apply)*

- a. **[Asked if dated someone 10+ years older]** Relationship where partner was 10+ years older than you

	<u>Total (N=281)</u>
Male	61
Female	36
Non-binary	3
Prefer not to answer	3

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6. For the relationship(s) you've had where there was a 10+ year difference in age between you and your partner, what was your partner's gender? *(Select all that apply)*

- b. **[Asked if dated someone 10+ years younger]** Relationship where partner was 10+ years younger than you

	<u>Total (N=203)</u>
Female	60
Male	37
Non-binary	2
Prefer not to answer	2

7. **[Asked if female and dated a man 10+ years younger OR if male and dated a woman 10+ years older]** You mentioned earlier that you have [dated a man that is 10+ years younger than you OR a woman that is 10+ years older than you]. Which of the following, if any, influenced your decision to do this? Select all that apply.

	<u>Total (N=144)</u>
Experienced an organic connection with someone and didn't let an age difference interfere	44
Allows me to live in the moment/focus on having fun	27
My desire to improve my sex life	25
Naturally curious about it	20
My desire for a confident and secure partner	19
Less pressure on the outcome of the relationship	19
My desire for a sophisticated, experienced partner	18
My desire for a financially successful partner	11
I saw others doing it	10
I'm drawn to the taboo nature of the relationship	7
Other	7
Prefer not to answer	6

8. **[Asked if female and dated a man 10+ years younger OR if male and dated a woman 10+ years older]** You mentioned earlier that you have dated [a man that is 10+ years younger than you OR a woman that is 10+ years older than you]. Which of the following, if any, were the challenges in this relationship? Select all that apply.

	<u>Total (N=144)</u>
We wanted different things out of life (marriage, children, etc.)	36
We did not have common interests/hobbies	20
Money became an issue	15
We were sexually incompatible	13
My friends and family did not approve	12
I felt uncomfortable with them when in public because of what others may think	12
I did not find them attractive	5
Other	18
Prefer not to answer	13



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9. Some questions can be sensitive in nature. We would like to remind you that your participation is strictly voluntary and that your responses are used for research purposes only. A “Prefer not to answer” option is available for you to select, if the case. Do you consider yourself to be:

	<u>Total</u>
Straight/Heterosexual	89
Bisexual	5
Gay/Lesbian	3
Don't know/Not sure	*
Prefer not to answer	2

### About the Study

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between May 5-6, 2022. For this survey, a sample of 1,005 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English.

The sample was randomly drawn from [Ipsos' online panel](#), [partner online panel sources](#), and “[river sampling](#)” and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing a sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2019 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online non-probability polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.8 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=1,005, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/- 5.3 percentage points).

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### About Ipsos

Ipsos is the world's third largest Insights and Analytics company, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people.

Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has been listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

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