

**CONGRESS: HANDLING CONFLICT WITHOUT VIOLENCE**  
**FRANKFURT/MAIN, GERMANY**  
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**“I’M SORRY, BUT WE DON’T HELP MEN”**

**MALE PARTNER VIOLENCE VICTIMS’  
EXPERIENCES WITH SHAME AND  
SEEKING HELP**

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**WPI**

# **BACKGROUND: MALE VICTIMS OF PARTNER VIOLENCE**

- Best population-based studies show that 25%-50% of all PV victims in a given year are men.
- Existence of male victims has been source of much controversy.



# **BACKGROUND: MALE VICTIMS OF PARTNER VIOLENCE**

- Qualitative accounts show that men who suffer from IPV and seek help:
- May not be believed
- May be accused of being a batterer when they come forward
- May not get help from the domestic violence social service system





# TODAY'S TALK

- Describe male helpseeker's experiences with PV victimization and perpetration
- Their health and well-being
- Internal/External barriers to helpseeking
- Where they seek help
- Experiences with helpseeking



# TALK ABOUT A VARIETY OF STUDIES/RESEARCH

- Two national-based studies of male victims of PV who sought help (*Denise Hines*)
  - 2007-2008 and 2012-2013
  - Online survey
  - 300-600 men
  - All men must have sustained physical violence to qualify and sought help
- Focus groups with male victims (*Elizabeth Celi, Louise Dixon, Denise Hines, & Alexandra Lysova*)
  - Australia, Canada, England, and USA
  - Conducted online/live video chat
- Existing literature



# SOCIAL-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

	Mean/%
Male Helpseekers's Age	40-44 years
Male Helpseeker's Approximate Income	~\$50,500
White	76-89%
Relationship Length	8-9 years
Involved marriage	71%
Time Since Relationship Ended	6 mo. – 4 yrs
Minor children present	68-73%





# TYPE OF VIOLENCE SUSTAINED



# AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS

	% Female Partners Who Perpetrated	% Male Helpseekers Who Perpetrated
Minor Psychological Aggression	100.0	95.4
Name-Calling	76.8	27.2
Isolation/Monitoring Behaviors	89.1	32.8
Severe Psychological Aggression	94.0	40.4
Insisting on Sexual Intercourse	41.1	13.6





# AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS: NUMBER OF TIMES IT HAPPENED

	Female Partners: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year		Male Helpseekers: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year	
	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>
Minor Psychological	65.12 (302)	24.15	27.88 (288)	23.40
Name-Calling	18.16 (232)	15.82	5.65 (82)	8.29
Isolation/ Monitoring	27.43 (269)	20.11	5.93 (99)	6.82
Severe Psychological	31.00 (284)	29.67	5.24 (122)	7.81
Insisting on Sexual Intercourse	9.60 (124)	8.48	5.59 (41)	7.31

# AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS

Additional Aggressive Behaviors	%
Partner falsely accused helpseeker of hitting or beating her	67.2%
Partner filed restraining order against helpseeker under false pretenses	38.7%
Partner falsely accused helpseeker of physically abusing children	35.8%
Partner falsely accused helpseeker of sexually abusing children	11.3%



# TYPES OF PHYSICAL AGGRESSION

	% Female Partners Who Perpetrated	% Male Helpseekers Who Perpetrated
Minor	98.7	53.3
Severe	90.4	19.5
Very Severe	54.0	8.3
<b>Any</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>55.0</b>



# FREQUENCY OF PHYSICAL AGGRESSION

	Female Partners: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year		Male Helpseekers: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year	
	<i>M</i> ( <i>n</i> )	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> ( <i>n</i> )	<i>SD</i>
Minor	32.01 (298)	34.33	6.17 (161)	11.83
Severe	16.74 (273)	22.06	4.86 (59)	6.52
Very Severe	7.46 (163)	10.59	3.74 (25)	5.65
<b>Any</b>	<b>46.72 (302)</b>	<b>53.48</b>	<b>7.71 (166)</b>	<b>14.25</b>





# LAST ARGUMENT...

- *“I am in the middle of it right now and have contacted a national abuse hotline via email. I have never hit my wife, but today I came close to doing this. It should be noted she has hit me more times than I can remember and kicked me. I grabbed her arms in self defense and held her to the floor. I am a very big and strong man, my wife is tall but thin, not strong at all. I know I will be the one who goes to jail even though she is the one hitting and kicking.”*
- *“I went to sleep. She said she was calling police. I said fine. She did. They arrested me with no proof or evidence of me doing anything....They dropped charges but not before a 6 month restraining order on me which destroyed my family and business, all based on her false allegations.”*



# LAST ARGUMENT...

- *“Grabbed her to stop her from assaulting me again. Asked her to stop. She called the police. (I think she was sleep deprived also - and very angry and aggressive and was not thinking clearly.). I spent 7 days in jail for stopping her throwing things in my face. Lost all faith in the legal system for men.”*



# INJURIES

	% of Females Who Were Injured	% of Males Who Were Injured
Minor	25.2	77.5
Severe	7.3	35.1
<b>Any</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>78.5</b>

	Mean # of Female Injuries		Mean # of Male Injuries	
	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>
Minor	4.51 (76)	6.22	9.73 (234)	12.75
Severe	3.05 (22)	3.58	4.64 (106)	7.50
<b>Any</b>	<b>5.19 (79)</b>	<b>6.40</b>	<b>11.68 (237)</b>	<b>15.61</b>



# ADDICTION / MENTAL HEALTH

	Population-Based Sample (n = 1,601)	Helpseeking Sample (n = 611)		
	% or M (SD)	% or M (SD)	$\chi^2$ or t	p
<b><u>Substance Abuse</u></b>				
Ever Abused Alcohol	27.5%	27.8%	0.03	.873
<i>Ever Abused Prescription Drugs</i>	17.5%	22.4%	7.09**	.008
Abused Illicit Drugs in Past Year	1.1%	0.5%	1.89	.170
<b><u>Mental Health</u></b>				
<i>Depression (scored above clinical cut-off)</i>	19.1%	73.0%	572.18	<.001
<i>PTSD (scored above clinical cut-off)</i>	2.0%	42.9%	641.33	<.001





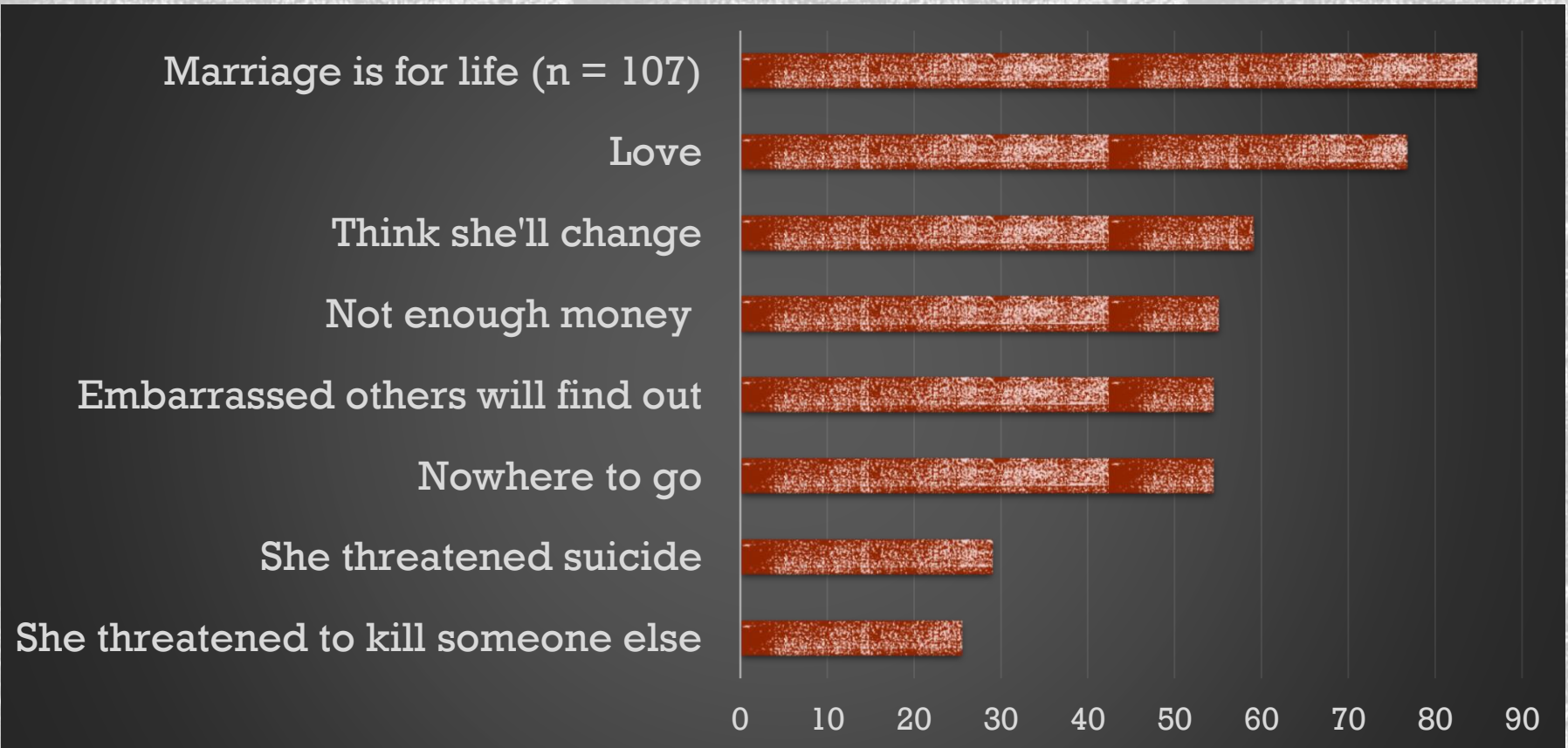
# PHYSICAL HEALTH / DISABILITY

	Population- Based Sample (n = 1,601)	Helpseeking Sample (n = 611)		
	%	%	$\chi^2$ or t	p
<b><u>Diagnosed with a cardiovascular problem:</u></b>				
Angina	1.4%	6.9%	44.83	<.001
High Cholesterol	29.6%	40.5%	23.92	<.001
High Blood Pressure	28.9%	44.8%	49.96	<.001
Heart Attack	2.1%	4.2%	7.59	.006
Heart Disease	1.9%	5.4%	18.00	<.001
Stroke	0.9%	2.9%	12.14	<.001
<b><u>Diagnosed with another disorder:</u></b>				
Arthritis	12.8%	18.2%	10.46	.001
Asthma	9.1%	15.7%	20.02	<.001
Cancer	3.0%	5.2%	5.92	.015
STD	4.1%	13.4%	60.14	<.001
<b><u>Uses disability equipment</u></b>	2.9%	7.2%	20.59	<.001



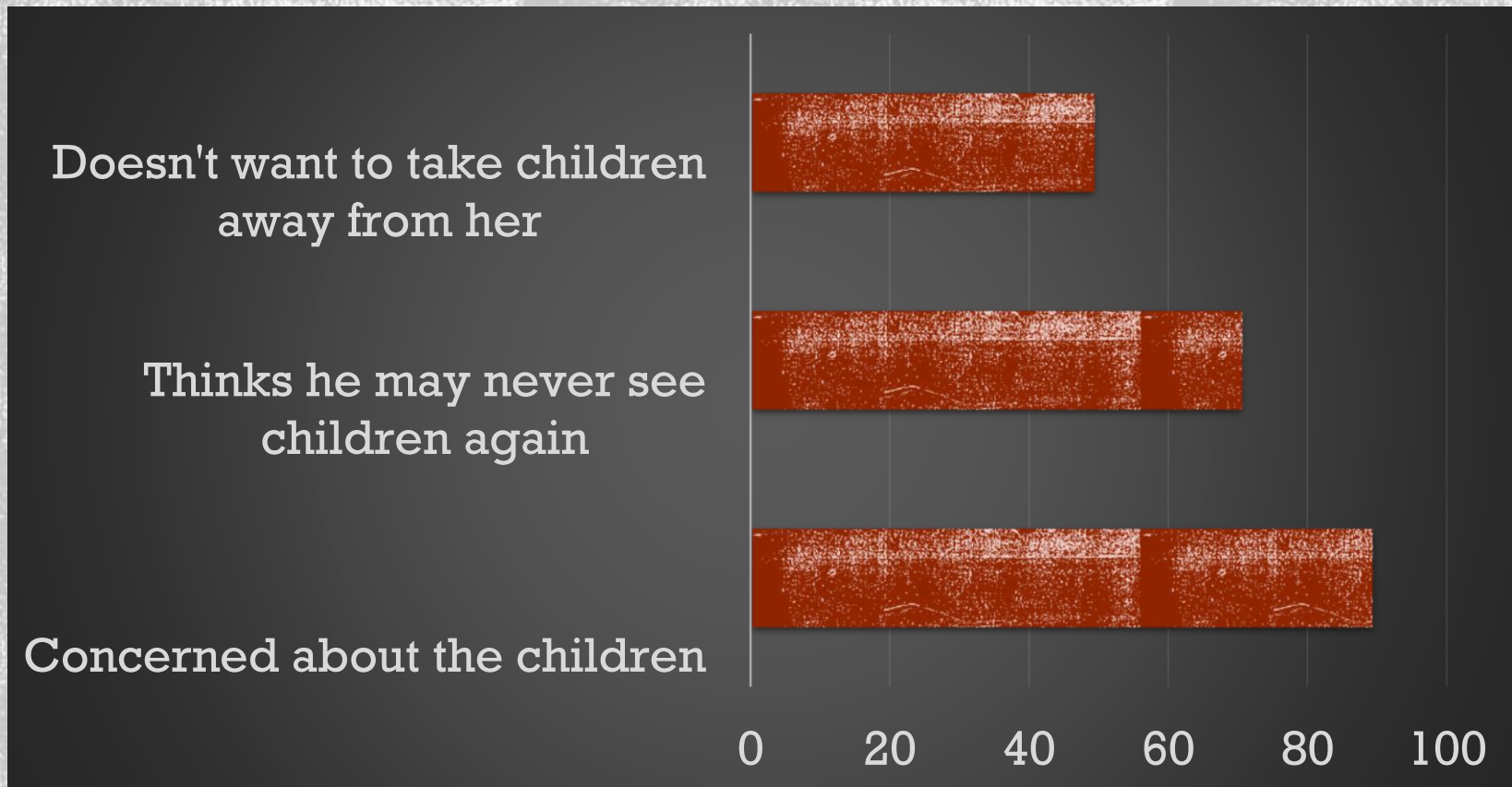
**WHY DO THEY STAY?**

# WHY DO THEY STAY?





# WHY DO THEY STAY? FOR MEN WITH CHILDREN...







# **BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP**

# BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP

## INTERNAL

- How men are socialized
- Strong
- Providers
- Shame
- Disappointment
- Disbelief

## EXTERNAL

- Is PV against men real?
- Will they be believed?
- Are there places that serve men?
- Being turned away, not believed, ridiculed



# IN THEIR WORDS...

- “So I started to tell my colleagues. I just had to. So I did tell my colleagues and I did tell her mum and dad but I told them to keep it quiet. That was the thing, you know, I was ashamed because that's how I felt because this little woman was attacking me and I couldn't control her and that's how I felt. So that was basically how I came to start telling people was when I started realising that I was suffering domestic abuse. So I started to confide in colleagues and her mother and father.”
- “Yep. I didn't tell anyone. I was too embarrassed. I was too shameful. And I thought by speaking about it, it was just going to, there is no point of return. I only started talking about it when it was obvious. When, you know, she said she wasn't coming back and so on.”





# IN THEIR OWN WORDS

- “I tried to get help from [the police] for so long, they treated me like crap for so long, and then when they decided to protect me, I was angry at them because I thought, she is just going into the court, she is going to plea not guilty, she is going to say that I was the rapist or something like... I said the police... “hey now you are going to get me in troubles, now I asked for your help and now I am going to be in trouble and...they said: “you are crazy, why do you think that way? ...“...we are going to arrest her and we are going to put this in order... and believe me this is for your own good” and it wasn’t until after the court proceedings went through and she actually pled guilty and acknowledged the fact that she had done this, that was the moment of truth for me...that I did the right thing. It took until that exact moment, because the rest of the time I was sitting there feeling shame about what going to happen to me next and I was convinced that it was going to be me getting arrested in the end.”







# WHERE DO MEN SEEK HELP?

# RESOURCES FOR HELPSEEKING

- Online resources
- DV agencies
- DV hotlines
- Police
- Mental health professionals
- Medical professionals



# WHICH MEN SEEK HELP WHERE?

- Internet
  - Violence less severe
  - Higher levels of post-traumatic stress
- DV Agency
  - Older men
  - Children witnessed PV
  - False allegation made against helpseeker
- DV Hotline
  - Sexually abused in childhood





# WHICH MEN SEEK HELP WHERE?

- Police
  - Older
  - False allegation made against helpseeker
  - Taller men
- Mental Health Professional
  - Children in home
  - Higher levels of education
  - Mental health diagnosis
  - Violence bidirectional
- Medical Professionals
  - Disability
  - False allegation made against helpseeker
  - Very severe physical assault
  - Higher levels of post-traumatic stress



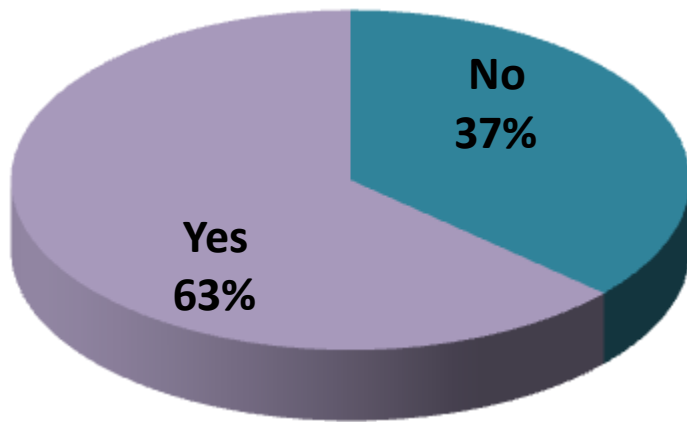




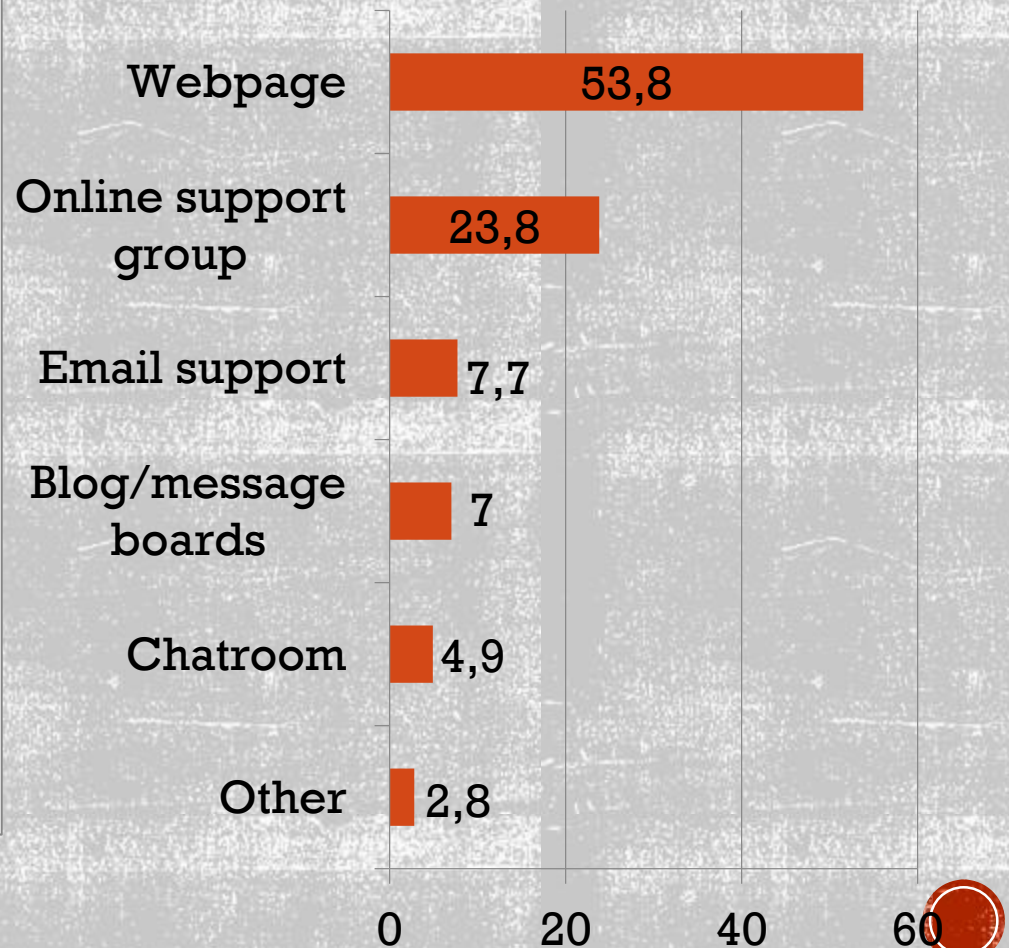
# EXPERIENCES WHEN SEEKING HELP

# HELPSEEKING: *ONLINE HELPSEEKING*

Ever Seek Help Over the Internet?

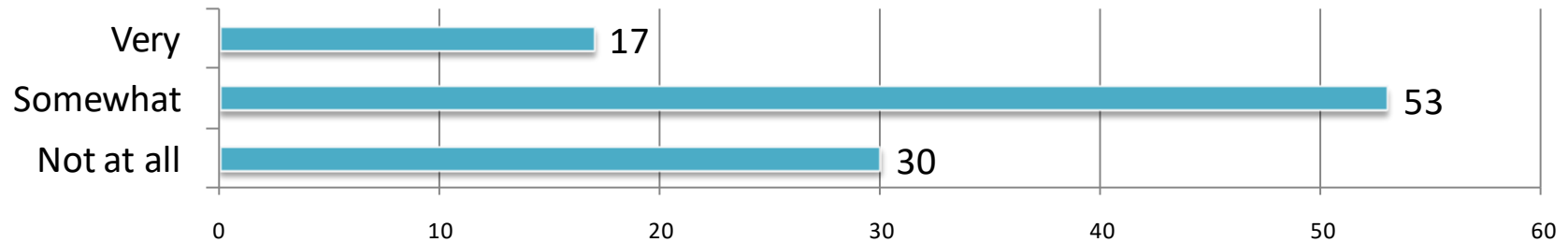


What Type of Web-based Support Did You Use Last?

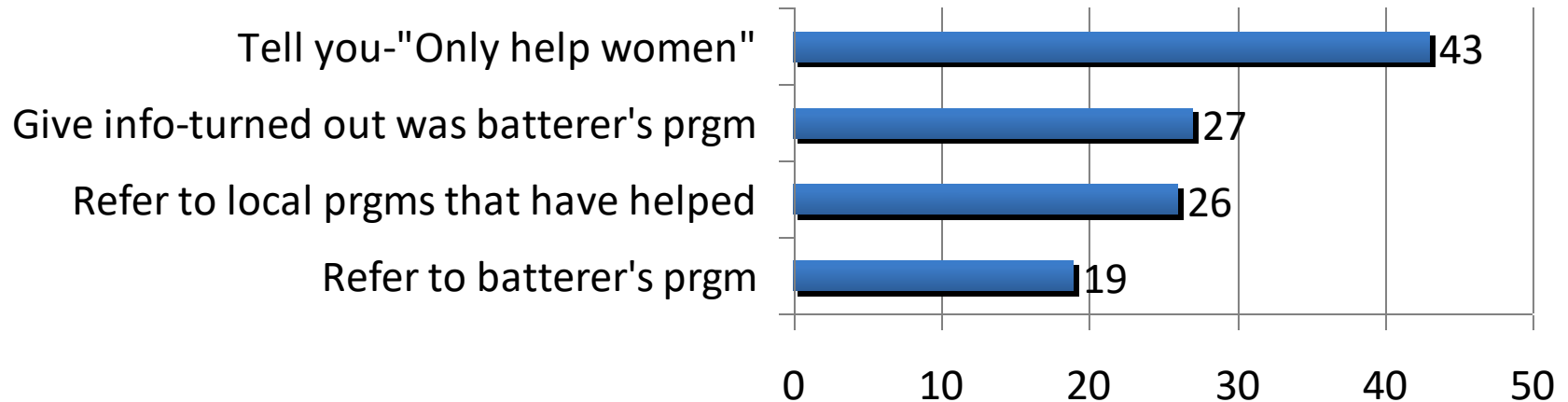


# HELPSEEKING: *ONLINE HELPSEEKING*

**Helpfulness of Online Resource**



**Experiences with Online Resource**





# HELPSEEKING: *ONLINE HELPSEEKING*

- Gave helpful information that made him feel less isolated (14.6%)
  - *Made me realize I was not alone and how bad the abuse really was because she was so verbally abusive and a bully.*
  - *It gave me perspective about the situation and that I was not the only one out there, that other men had been through this as well. It listed out signs of abusive relationships and why men don't report or talk about it like women do.*
- Gave the impression that they were biased against men or that it was his fault (11.8%)
  - *Turned out they could not believe I was being abused and mentioned it must have been my fault for her attacks. There was no way she could have been as violent as I stated.*
  - *It makes me feel like there is no help for men. That we as men are weak and it takes away from our masculinity for being abused.*





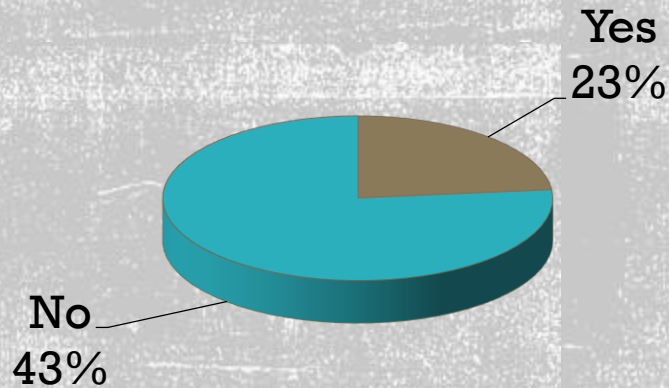
# HELPSEEKING: *ONLINE HELPSEEKING*

- Were not able to provide any help or references (6.3%)
  - *Just told me that there was no agencies available in my area for men- only for women*
- Listened/believed/supported him (4.2%)
  - *They have National and State Chapter hotlines that people can call 24 hours a day. They also stayed in touch long term via e-mail, an online support group, online support forums and provided me with a Court Advocate, a social services advocate and lots of resources.*
- Gave him references to programs that have not helped (2.1%)
  - *They referred me to a local shelter that does not provide overnight shelter to men.*

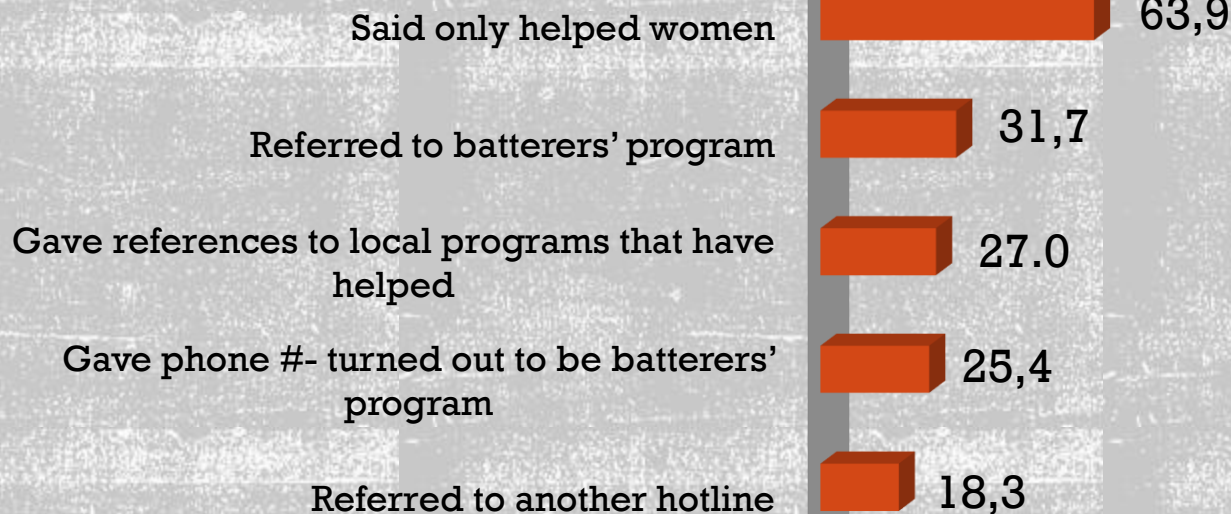
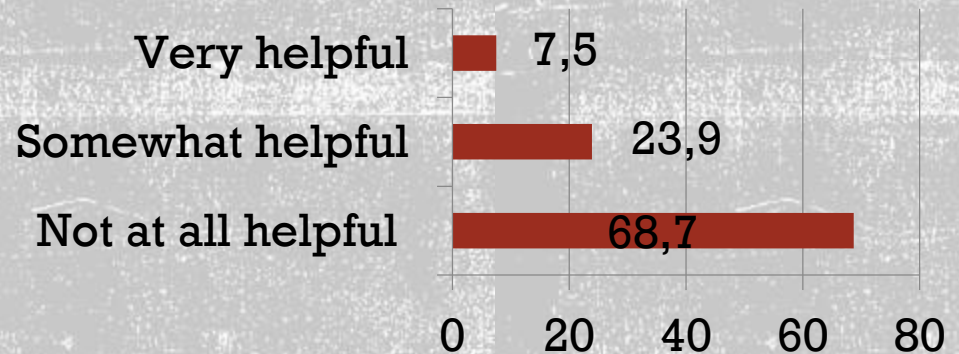


# HELPSEEKING: *CONTACTING HOTLINES*

## % Who Called Hotline



## How helpful was this hotline?





# HELP-SEEKING: *CONTACTING HOTLINES*

- Dismissed or made fun of him (16.4%)
  - *They were confused, belligerent, patronizing, offended, indifferent. Thought I was making up a story.*
  - *Laughed at me and told me I must have done something to deserve it if it happened at all.*
  - *They asked how much I weighed and how much she weighed and hung up on me...I was told by this agency I was full of BS.*
- Accused him of being the batterer or responsible for the abuse in some way (11.9%)
  - *Told me that women don't commit domestic violence -- it must have been my fault.*
  - *They accused me of trying to hide my "abuse" of her by claiming to be a victim, and they said that I was nothing more than a wimp.*
  - *When I called to explain that I had been hit, they kept misunderstanding me and asking me who I hit. It was frustrating.*



# HELP-SEEKING: *CONTACTING HOTLINES*

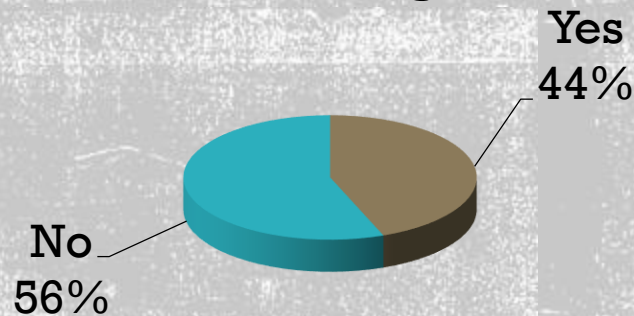
- Provided counseling, emotional support, or helpful information (11.9%)
  - *They did not find anyone local to help men. Setup phone counseling sessions. Very helpful. Refer to books for additional resources. Somewhat helpful.*
- Recommended he seek help elsewhere (9.0%)
  - *They mentioned they could not help because they help women, I asked where the help for family was. They said maybe your church or friends. I was astounded that there was no help for families anywhere. I was hopeful there was a mandated service by the State to get help, to find out there was none.*
- Were unbiased, but couldn't help (7.5%)
  - *They offered to listen if I wanted to recount what had happened, but indicated that no support services were available.*



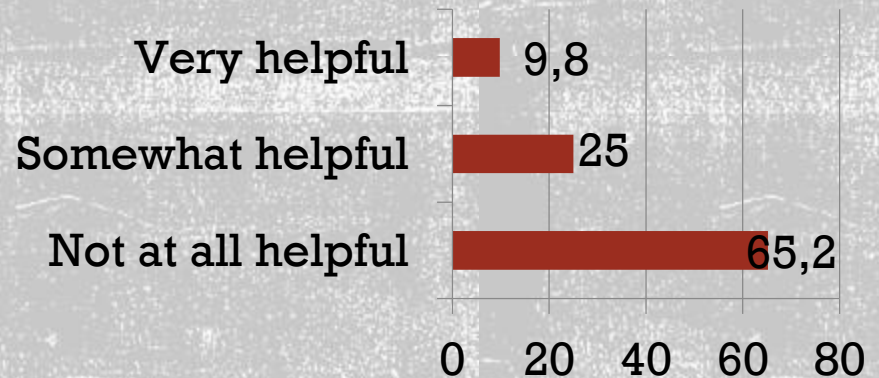


# HELP-SEEKING: *DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS*

## % Who Contacted a Local DV Program



## How Helpful was the DV Program?



Gave impression that they were biased against men



Said they don't help male victims



Suggested that he's the batterer



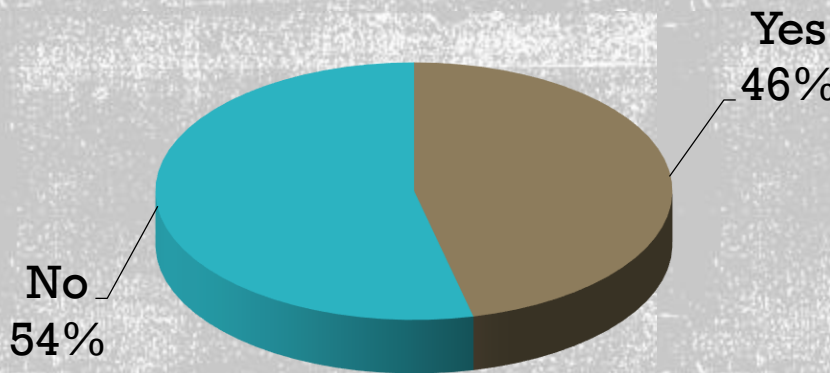
# HELP-SEEKING: *LOCAL DV PROGRAMS*

- Dismissed him or made fun of him (15.2%)
  - *I would say they simply don't believe men can be victims – I especially asked if I could speak to a male counselor; they told me they didn't have one and didn't need one.*
  - *They just laughed and hung up.*
- Made accusations that he's the batterer or that he's responsible for the abuse in some way (10.6%)
  - *They didn't really listen to what I said. They assumed that all abusers are men and said that I must accept that I was the abuser. They ridiculed me for not leaving my wife, ignoring the issues about what I would need to do to protect my 6 children and care for them.*
  - *The support and help was female-centric. I felt uncomfortable going and felt that like I was somehow responsible, that they would laugh.*

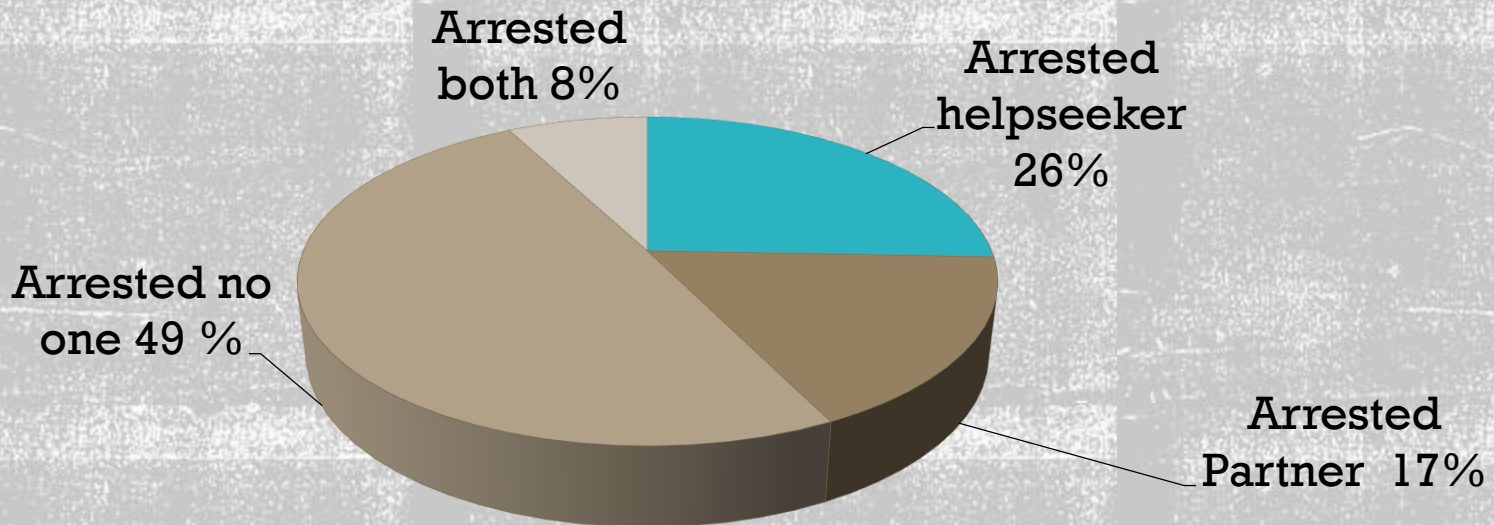
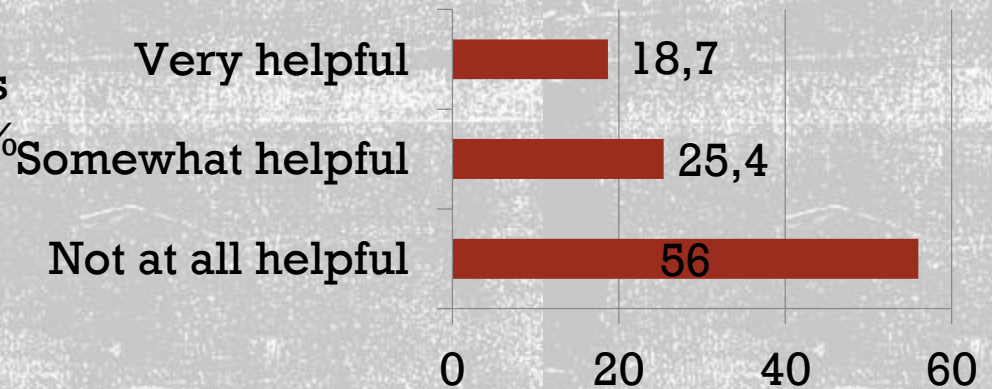


# HELP-SEEKING: *POLICE*

**% Who Contacted the Police**



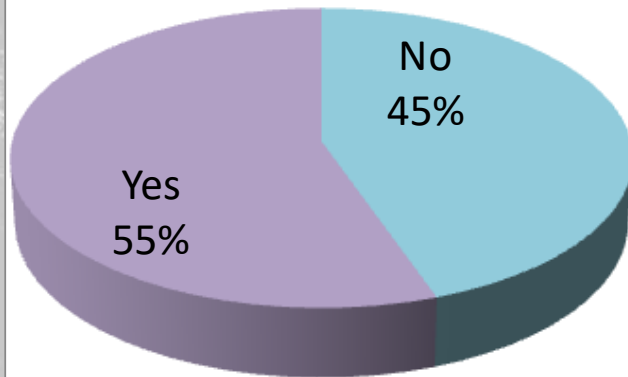
**How Helpful were the Police?**



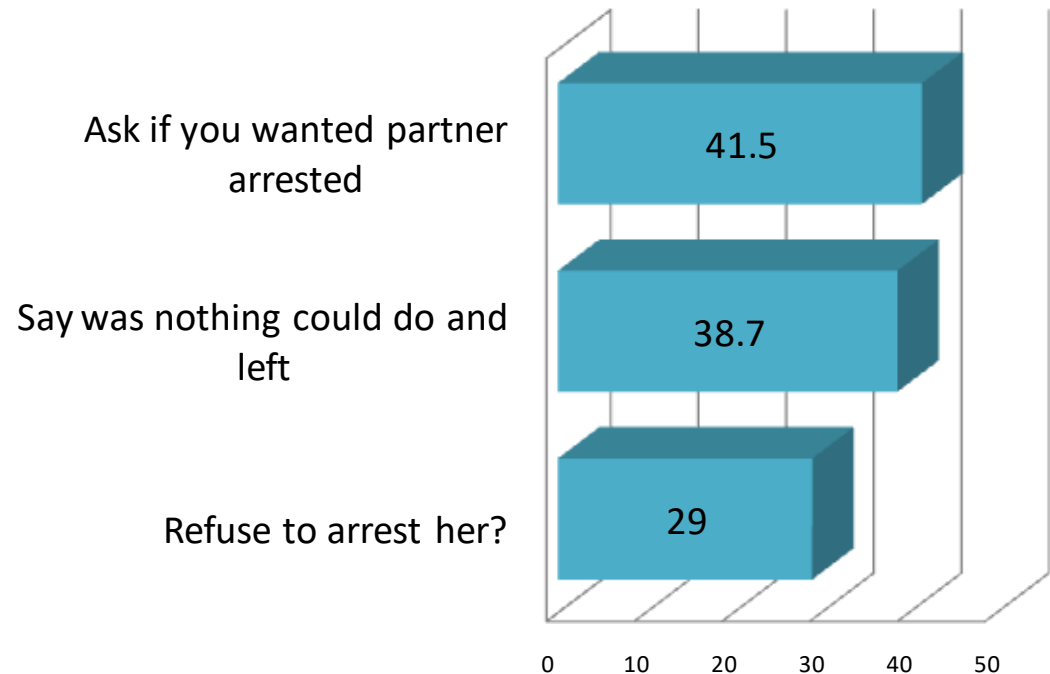


# HELPSEEKING: *POLICE*

## Did Police Determine Partner Was Aggressor?



## When Partner was Determined as Aggressor...



# HELP-SEEKING: *POLICE*

- Did nothing/ignored him/dismissed him (25.4%)
  - *The first response they arrested me, even after she turned on them, they did nothing. Second time they just wrote a scathing report against her but did nothing.*
  - *Her attorney threatened to sue the local police department for violating her civil rights and favoring me because I am a cop. After that the police ignored every call I made.*
- Separated them (11.9%)
  - *They asked her to confine herself to her bedroom, she was drunk, and asked me to sleep in the baby's room. We did, she passed out and they left.*
- Listened to his wishes/treated his concerns seriously (7.5%)
  - *Worked hard not to arrest her when I indicated I did not want her arrested. (They figured out how to get around a supervisor who would have required them to arrest her.) Insisted that she sleep somewhere else that night. No other follow up.*



# HELP-SEEKING: *POLICE*

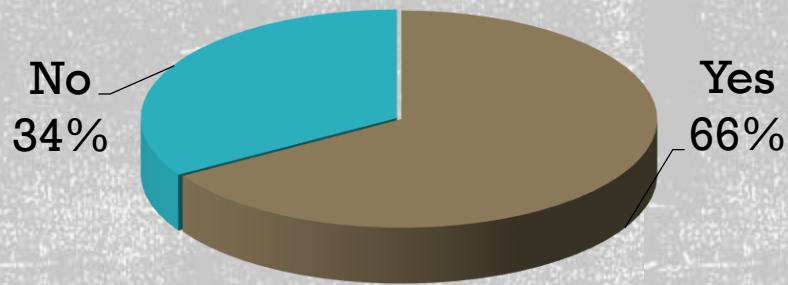
- Offered resources (6.0%)
  - *We were referred to the Family Advocacy Program.*
- Gathered evidence (4.5%)
  - *They asked me what happened, asked me to write a statement of what happened, took photos of my upper body, said someone is going to go arrest her, someone from the Victim Services Program talked with me.*
- Provided help to the female partner/told him to seek help for her (4.5%)
  - *Told me to get her help. Told me to spend the night in a hotel. Told me that "crazy people don't know they are crazy"*



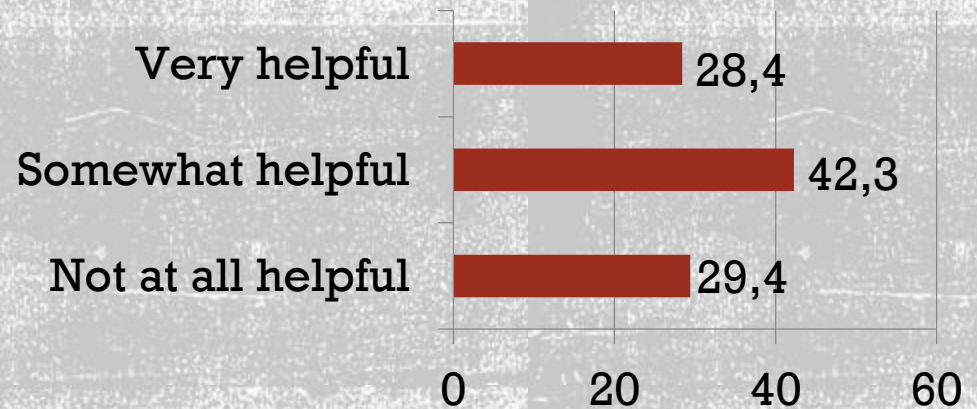


# HELPSEEKING: *MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS*

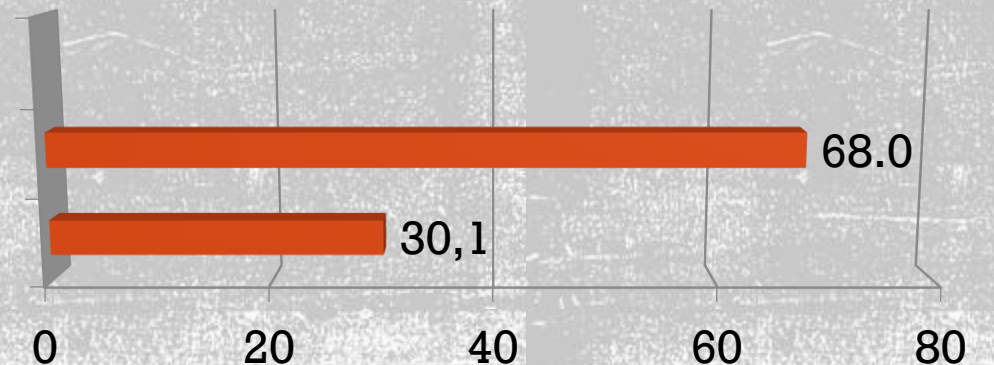
**% Who Saw a Mental Health Professional**



**How Helpful was the Mental Health Professional?**

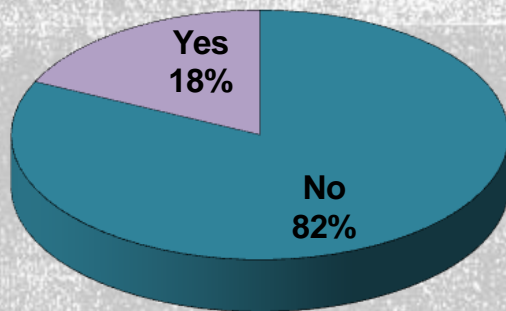


**Took DV Concerns Seriously**  
**Gave Information about DV**

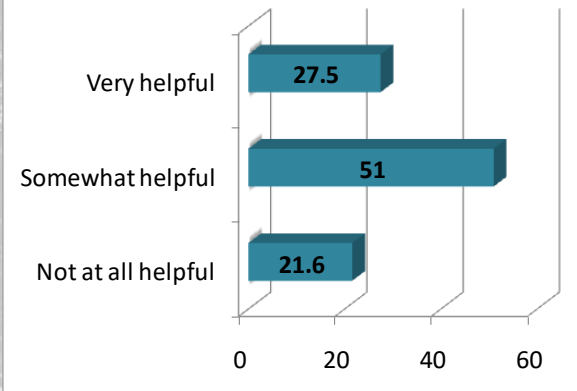


# HELPSEEKING: *MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS*

Ever go to Doctor/ER  
Because Partner Injured  
You?



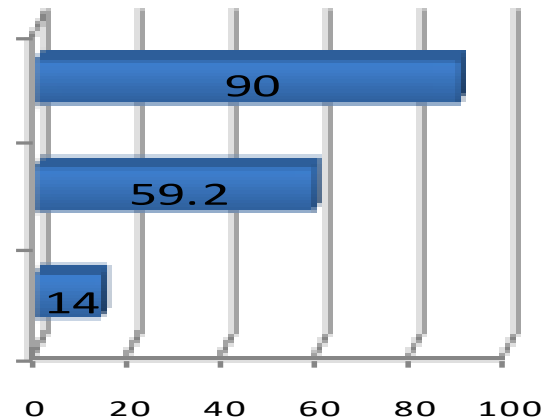
How Helpful was the Doctor or  
Nurse who Treated you?



Dr/Nurse asked you how  
you got injuries

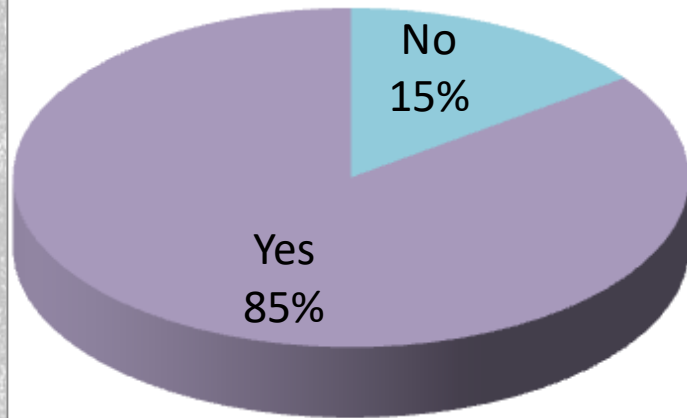
You told the Dr/nurse  
that partner hurt you

Given info about getting  
help for DV

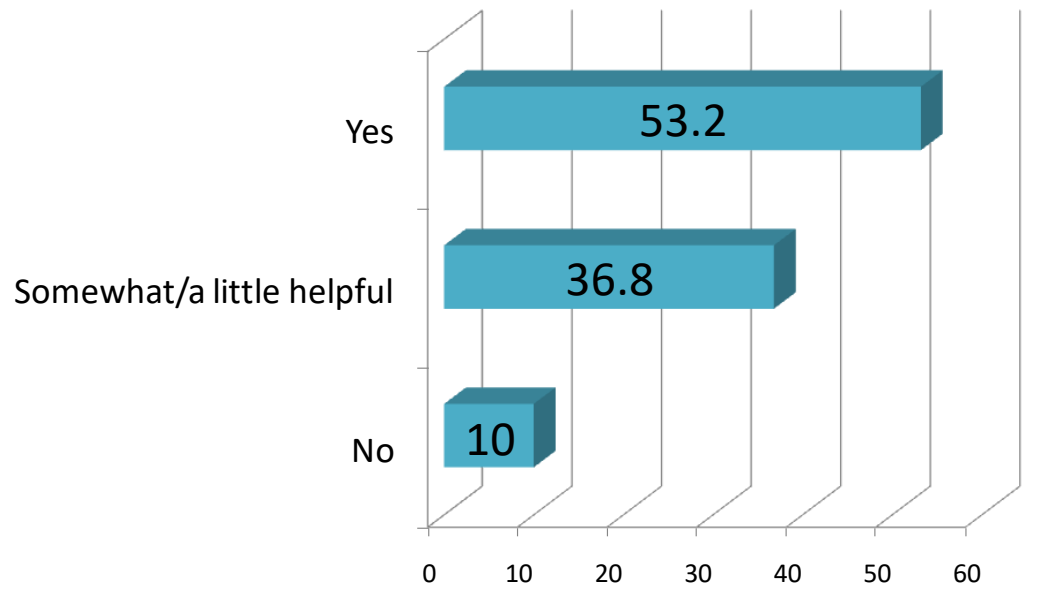


# HELPSEEKING: *TALKED WITH ANYONE ELSE ABOUT PARTNER'S VIOLENCE*

Talked with anyone else about partner's violence?

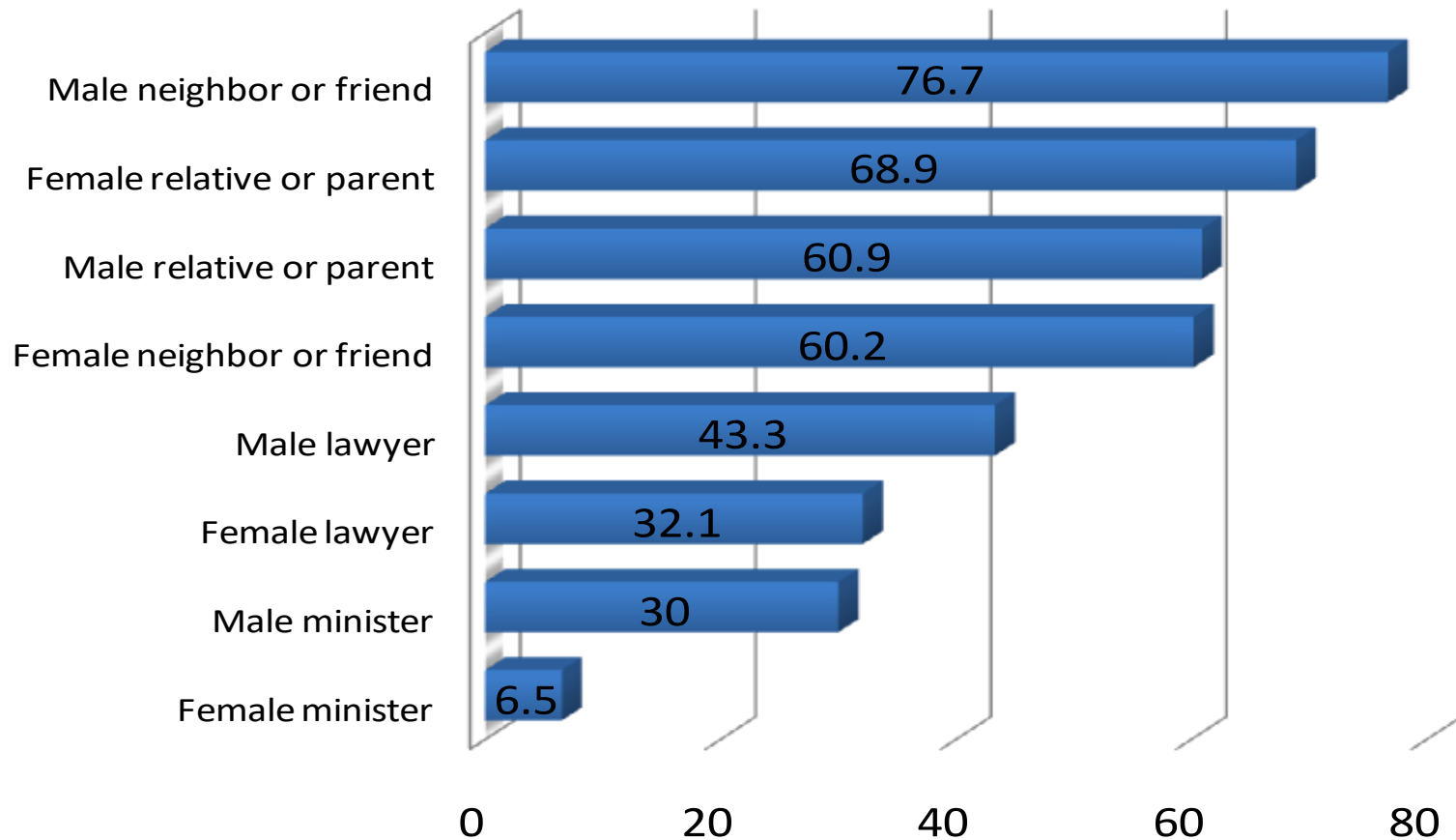


Were any of these people supportive or helpful?





# HELPSEEKING: *TALKED WITH ANYONE ELSE ABOUT PARTNER'S VIOLENCE*



# CONCLUSIONS



# CONCLUSIONS

- Male helpseekers sustain substantial levels of physical and psychological PV from female partners.
- Physical and mental health ramifications
- Don't leave because of:
  - Concerns for children
  - Commitment to marriage
  - Love





# CONCLUSIONS

- Most common type of helpseeking: talking with informal sources of support
  - Also the most helpful
- Most common type of *formal* helpseeking: seeking mental health services
  - Also the most helpful, along with medical professionals & web-based sources of support
- Seeking help through the domestic violence service system (i.e., community programs, hotlines, police) was used by 23-46% of helpseekers.
  - More than 50% of sample found these services not at all helpful



# CONCLUSIONS

- Men sustain violence from female partners
- Face substantial internal and external barriers to seeking help
- Men seek help from a variety of services
- Reports from male helpseekers indicate a need for increased training and education concerning range of dv victims and their needs
  - Mental health practitioners
  - DV agency staff
  - Law enforcement officials
  - Policy / decision-makers



**THE END.**

**Thank  
you!**

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