

# Can Male Victims of Domestic Violence Get the Help They Need?

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## 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: Possible Consequences of Controversy

- 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



# Purpose of Present Two Studies

- Provide empirical descriptive data on
  1. The aggressive behaviors that occur in the men's relationships and how frequently.
  2. The possible consequences of being in such a relationship for the men.
  3. What prevents them from leaving.
  4. The help-seeking efforts they engaged in and the responses they got when seeking help.
  5. The extent to which domestic violence service agencies report that they are able to help male victims.

# Study 1 Methods: Sample

- Criteria:
  - Heterosexual men
  - Ages 18-59
  - In a relationship lasting at least one month in the previous year
  - Physically assaulted by female partner within previous year
  - Sought outside assistance/support
  - Lived in U.S.
- $N = 302$



# Study 1 Methods: Survey

- Data collected through Internet survey
  - Demographics
  - Conflict Tactics Scales
  - PTSD Checklist
  - Closed-ended and open-ended questions on:
    - Last physical argument
    - Why man has not left
    - Help-seeking efforts

## Demographics ( $n = 302$ )

	Mean	SD
Male Helpseekers's Age	40.49 years	8.97
Female Partner's Age	37.91 years	8.61
Male Helpseeker's Approximate Income	\$50.4K	\$25.7K
Female Partner's Approximate Income	\$30.1K	\$24.3K

## Demographics ( $n = 302$ )

Race/Ethnicity	Male Helpseeker	Female Partner
White	86.8%	74.2%
African American	6.0%	7.3%
Hispanic	5.0%	7.6%
Asian American	4.3%	9.3%
Native American	2.0%	2.6%



# Relationship Characteristics

	Mean	SD
Relationship Length ( $n = 302$ )	97.90 months (8.16 years)	82.06
Time Since Relationship Ended ( $n = 112$ )	6.10 months	7.69

% of relationships with minor children: 73.2% ( $n = 221$ )



# Relationship Characteristics

Relationship Status	Percent
Married	45.7%
Separated	17.9%
Ex-dating	7.3%
Divorced	7.0%
Ex-cohabiting	6.3%
Cohabiting	6.0%
Ex-engaged	4.3%
Dating	3.6%
Engaged	1.7%

## Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

### *Psychological Aggression*

	% 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

# Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

## *Psychological Aggression*

	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

## Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

### *Psychological Abuse*

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%

## Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

### *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>

## Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

### *Physical Aggression*

	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	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>

## Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

### *Description of Last Physical 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.”*



## Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

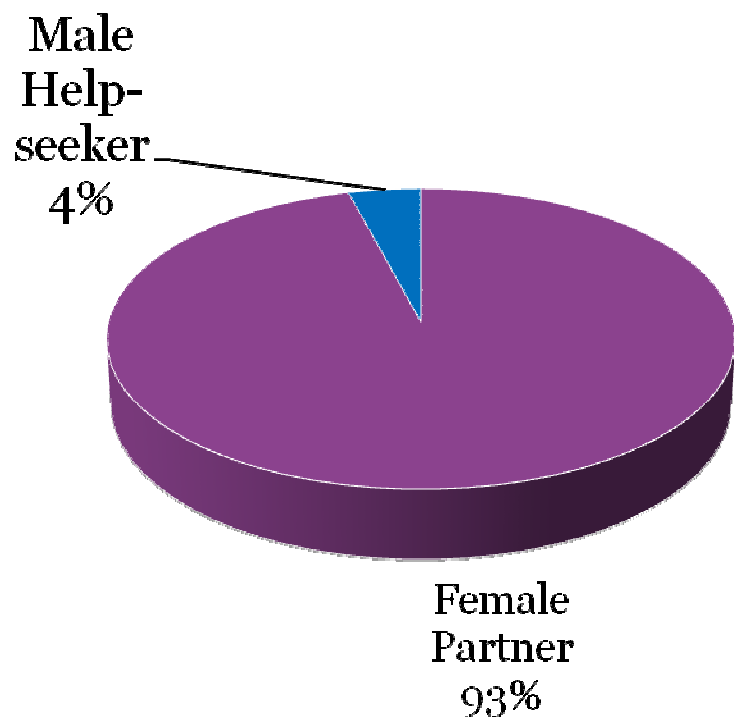
### *Description of Last Physical Argument*

- *“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.”*
- *“I had been holding the baby during the argument, when she threw the TV remote control towards my head just missing the baby. The control is still missing the battery cover due to impact. I treated my facial, chest, arm scratches with ointment.. got stressed, cried at night as I've often done.”*

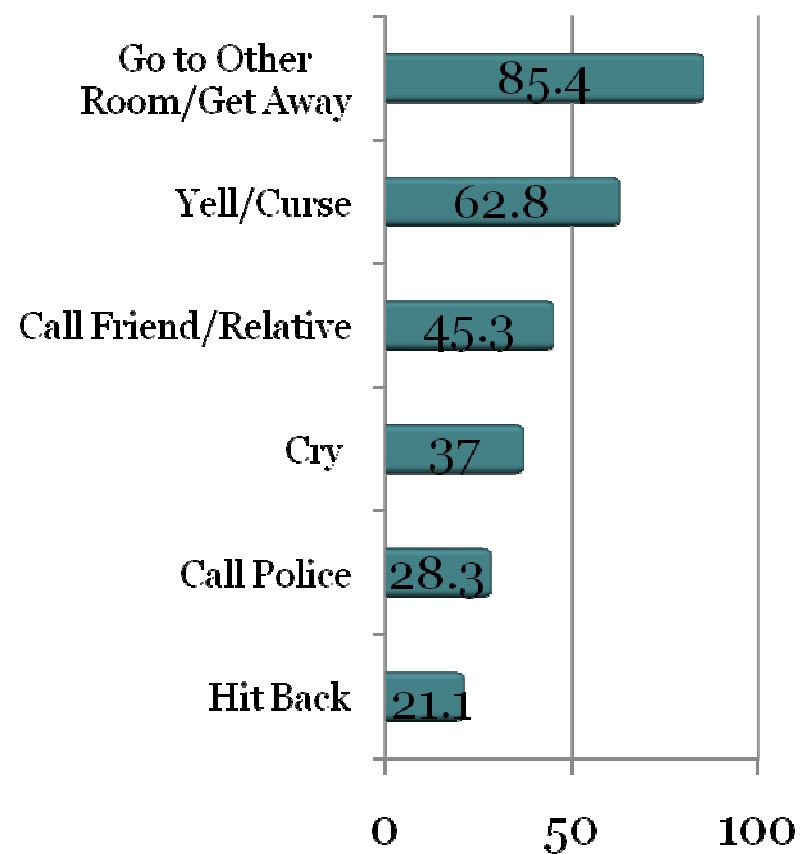
# Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

## *Description of Last Physical Argument*

### Who Was the First to Use Physical Aggression in Last Physical Argument?



### What did the Male Partner Do As a Result?



## Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

### *Description of Last Physical Argument*

### *Qualitative Responses*

- Asked her to calm down/attempted to talk or reason with her (7.5%)
  - *Tried to talk to her about it calmly, saying "now, if I did that to you, you'd call it abuse." She answered that she was defending her honor.*
  - *I tell her that it is not acceptable for her to hit me, or yell at me, especially in front of the children. I also ask her to apologize.*
- Failed attempts at getting away or getting intervention (6.8%)
  - *She refused to give me my cell phone and car keys and wouldn't let me leave the house. When I took the car keys from her she called the cops and I was arrested and convicted.*
  - *I had an emotional break down. Further when I called the police, they refused to arrest her because even though I feared for my safety, they felt that I was not in danger of being physically harmed.*

## Q1: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

### *Description of Last Physical Argument*

### *Qualitative Responses*

- **Restrained her (5.3%)**
  - *She seemed to be panicking so I wrapped my arms around her...and tried to hold her still until she calmed down - she later said that my holding her that way was physically abusive.*
- **Protected self (4.6%)**
  - *Put my hands up to stop her hands from hitting my body and backed away*
- **Took it/did nothing (3.6%)**
  - *Mostly I just sat there and took it and tried to act like I was above it.*



## Q2: Consequences of Aggressive Behaviors

### *Physical 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>

## Q2: Consequences of Aggressive Behaviors

### *Physical Injuries*

	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>

## Q2: Consequences of Aggressive Behaviors

### *PTSD*

	Mean ( <i>SD</i> )
Total PCL Score	46.56 (14.22)
Re-Experiencing	14.98 (5.15)
Avoidance/Numbness	17.25 (6.01)
Hyperarousal	14.32 (5.04)

- % Scoring Above Clinical Cut-Off for PTSD: 58%

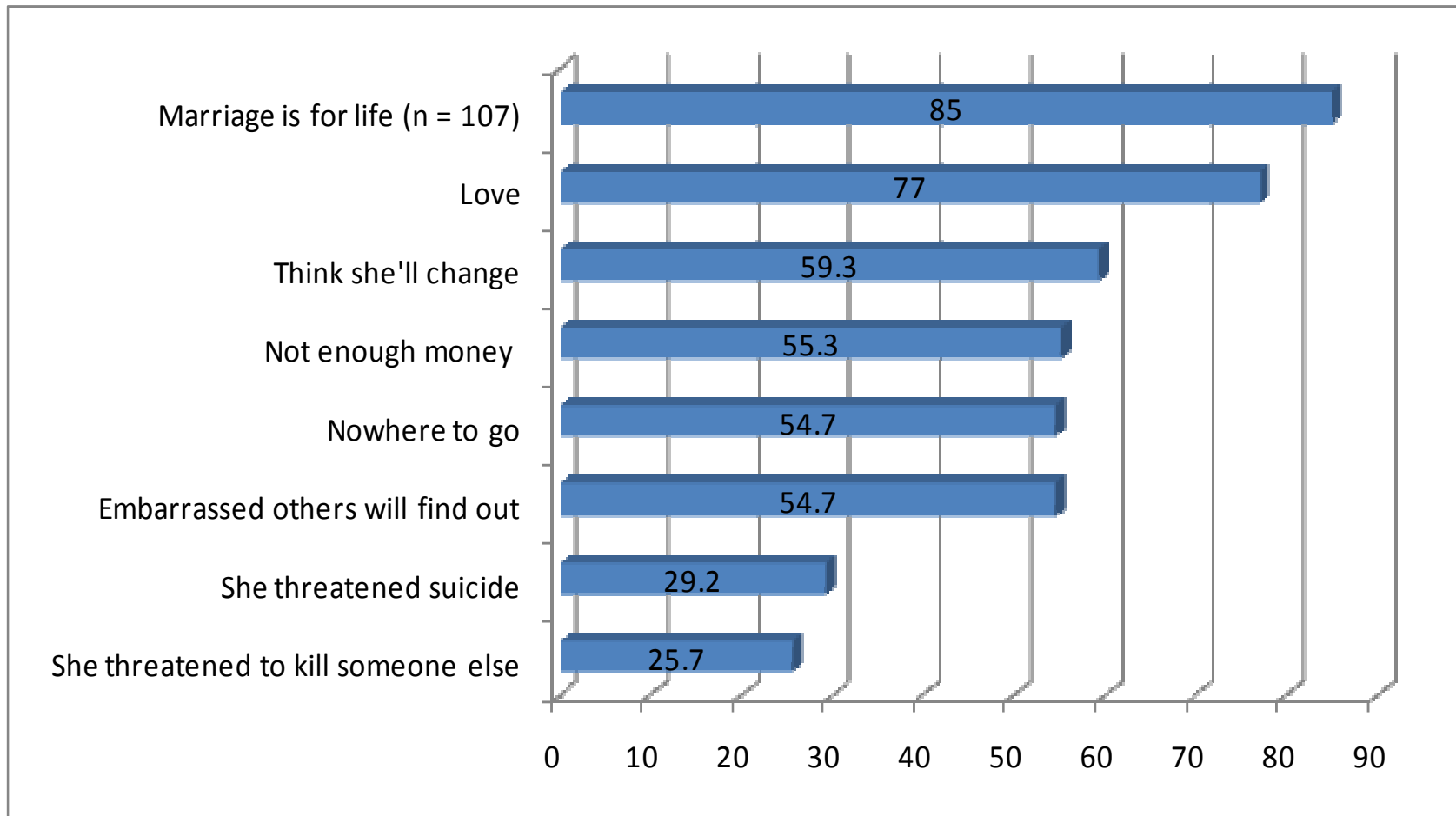


## Q3: Why Not Leave Her?

- 94.2% of men who are still with their partners (178 out of 189) have seriously considered leaving, but haven't yet.
- Why not?

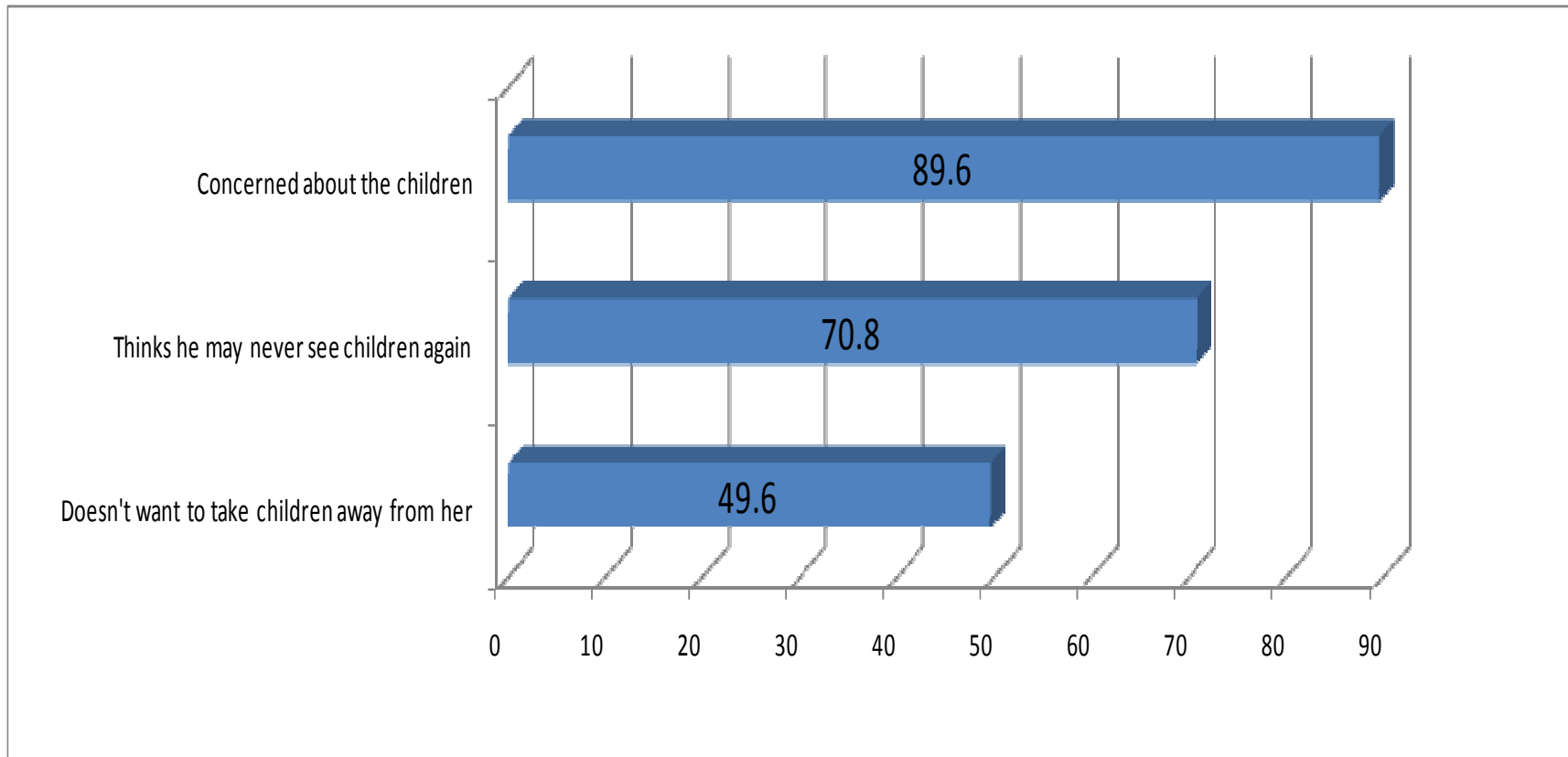


## Q3: Why Not Leave Her?



## Q3: Why Not Leave Her?

*Men with Children (n = 125)*



## Q3: Why Not Leave Her?

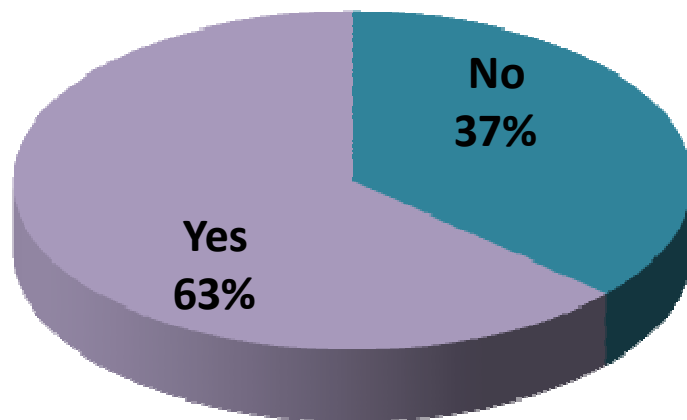
- Possible financial/professional/other unspecified repercussions (12.7%)
  - *She spends every penny that comes in and has racked up thousands in debt. I would lose everything I've tried to save. Or at least half including half my retirement.*
  - *She threatened to ruin me financially, ruin my professional reputation (we work together), lock me out of the house, and tell the police anything she wants to tell them (domestic situations being as difficult to ascertain as they are, men are guilty until proven innocent).*
  - *I was advised that if I leave, I would hurt my chances of gaining custody of the children in the long run.*
- Feels it's morally wrong to split family and/or abandon her (6.9%)
  - *"For better or for worse," and, well, this was worse. I didn't care that she was too psychologically disturbed to love me back, I didn't care. I loved her. And I hoped I could get help for her condition before it was too late.*

## Q3: Why Not Leave Her?

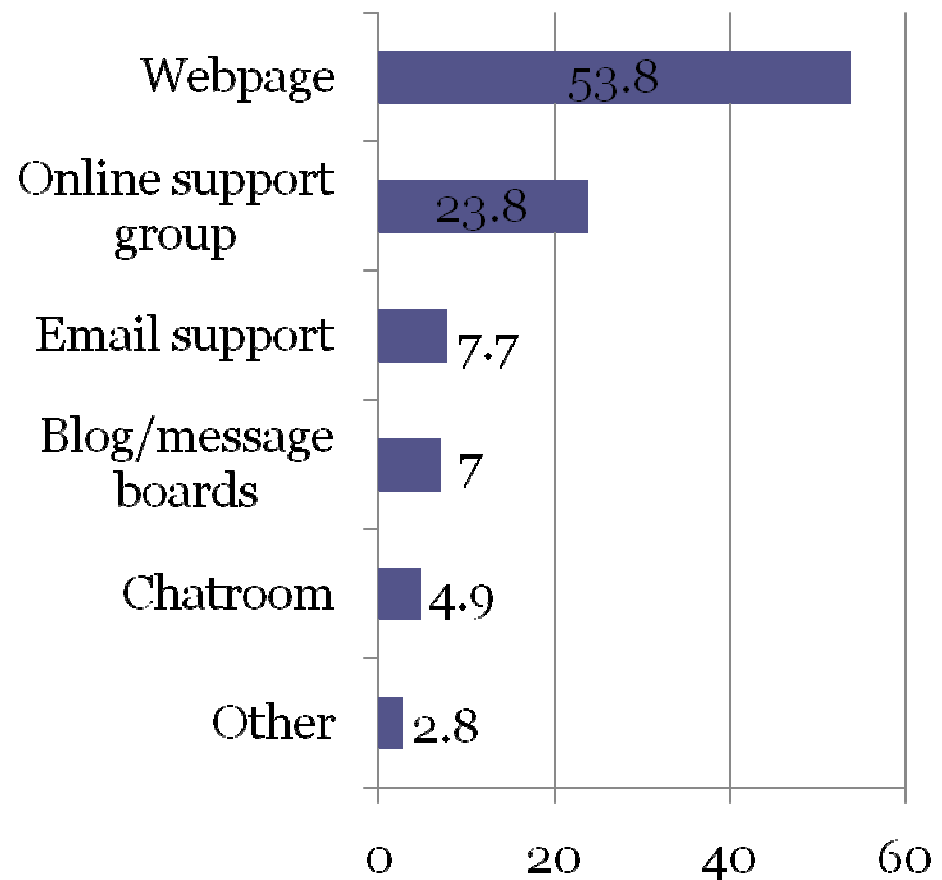
- Fears for safety of loved ones or pets (4.2%)
  - *I fear for my children's lives. I have to protect them and I can't take them away.*
- She threatened with false accusations (3.7%)
  - *She has promised to lie and accuse me of physical abuse against her, sexual abuse of our daughter, if that helps her win custody*
- He feels it's not her fault (e.g., something in her past/mental illness makes her do it) (2.6%)
  - *She's mentally ill. I know she's not doing this on purpose. I know she loves me.*

## Q4: Helpseeking: *Online Helpseeking*

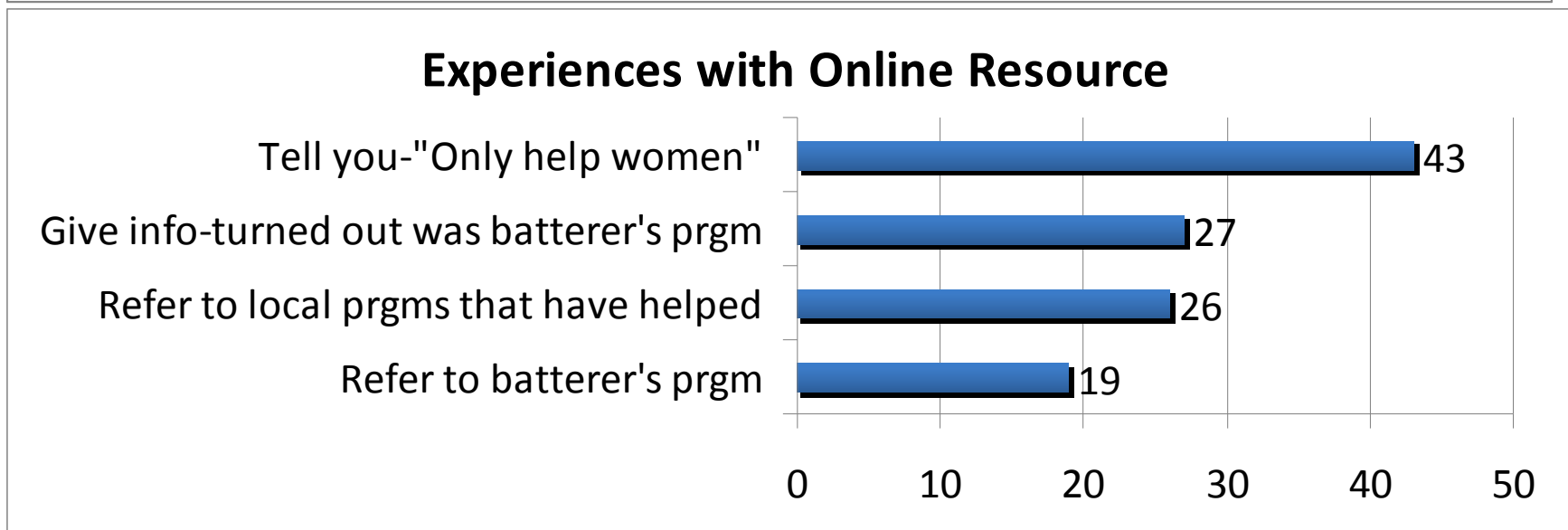
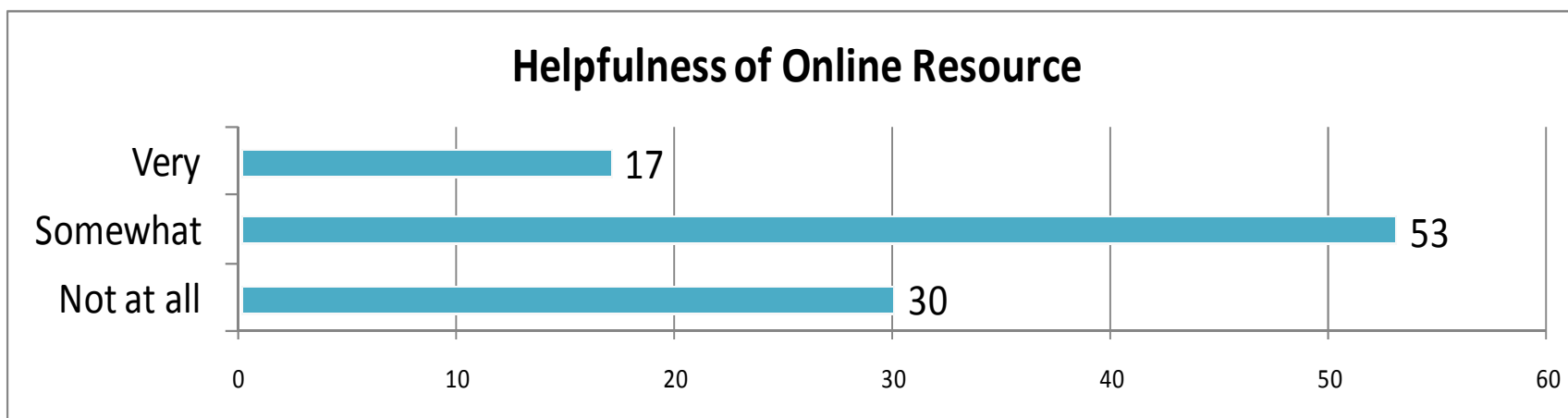
**Ever Seek Help Over the Internet?**



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



## Q4: Helpseeking: *Online Helpseeking*



## Q4: Helpseeking: *Online Helpseeking*

### *Other Responses*

- 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.*

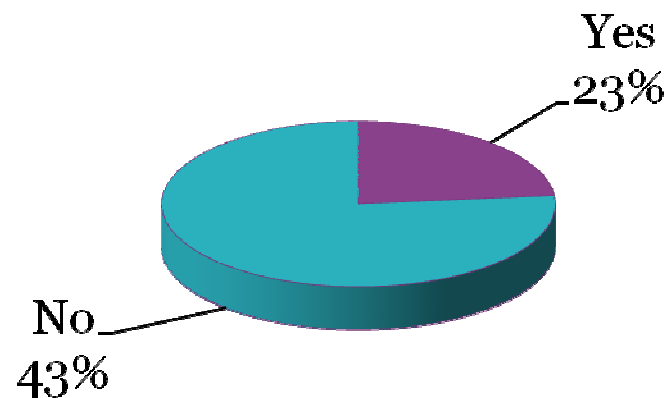
## Q4: Helpseeking: *Online Helpseeking* *Other Responses*

- 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.*

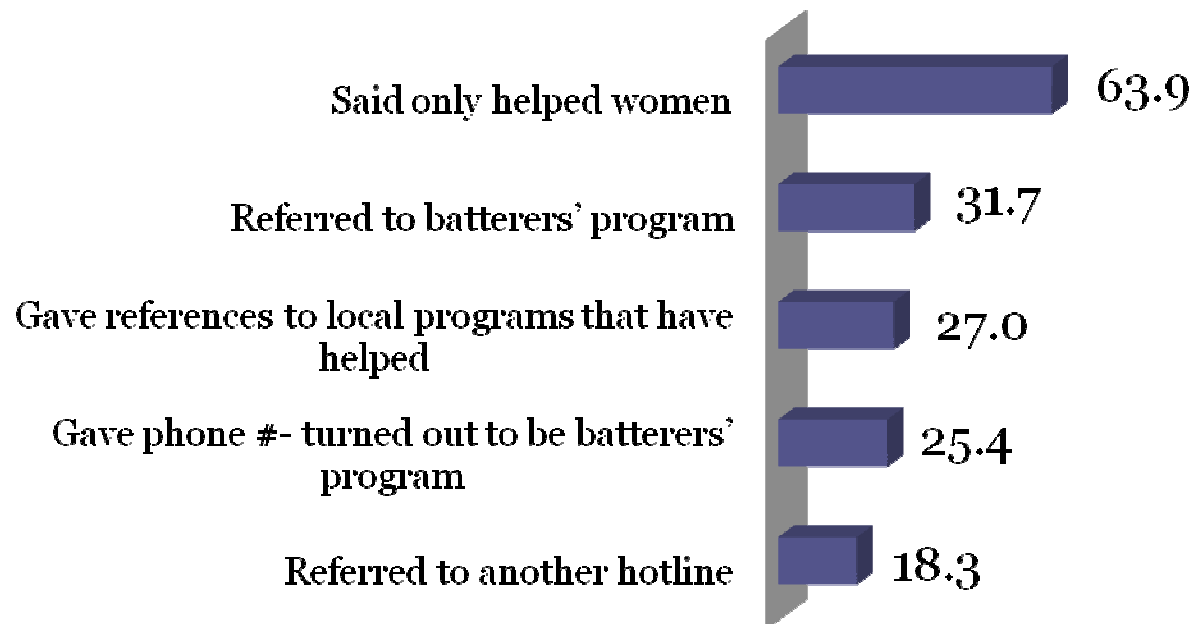
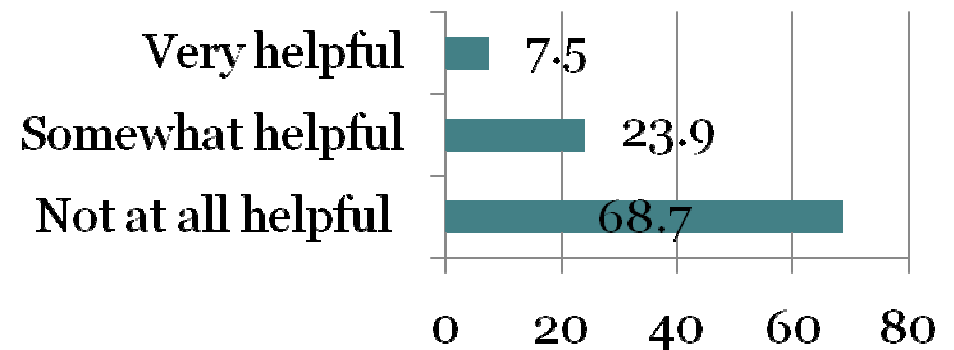


## Q4: Helpseeking: *Contacting Hotlines*

### % Who Called Hotline



### How helpful was this hotline?



## Q4: Help-seeking: *Contacting Hotlines*

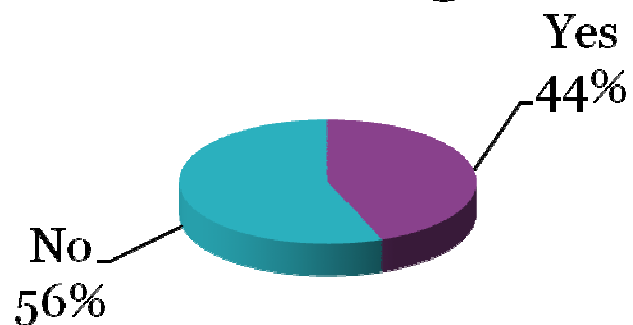
- Dismissed or made fun of him (16.4%)
  - *They were confused, belligerent, patronizing, offended, indifferent. Thought I was making up a story.*
  - *Laughed at me and told me I must have done something to deserve it if it happened at all.*
  - *They asked how much I weighed and how much she weighed 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.*

## Q4: Help-seeking: *Contacting Hotlines*

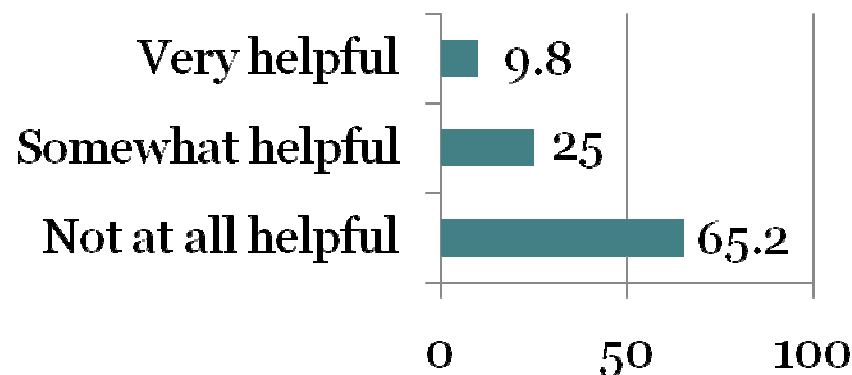
- Provided counseling, emotional support, or helpful information (11.9%)
  - *They did not find anyone local to help men. Setup phone counseling sessions. Very helpful. Refer to books for additional resources. Somewhat helpful.*
- Recommended he seek help elsewhere (9.0%)
  - *They mentioned they could 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.*

## Q4: Help-seeking: *Local DV Programs*

### % Who Contacted a Local DV Program



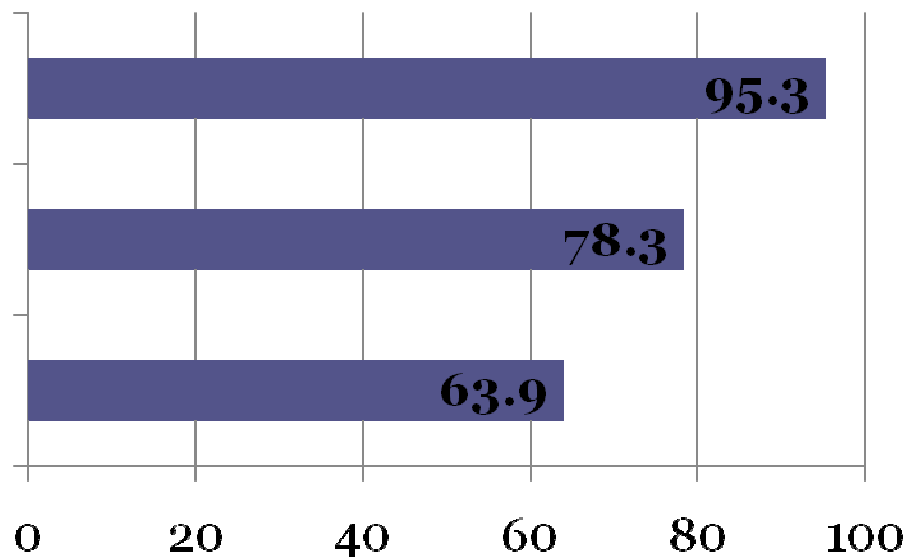
### How Helpful was the DV Program?



Gave impression that they were biased against men

Said they don't help male victims

Suggested that he's the batterer

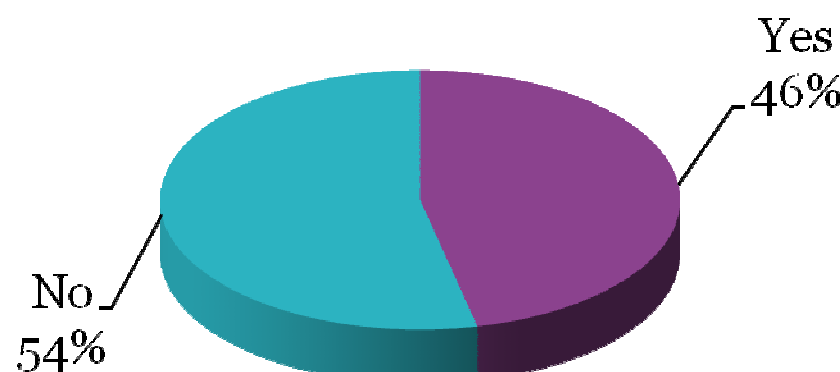


## Q4: Help-seeking: *Local DV Programs*

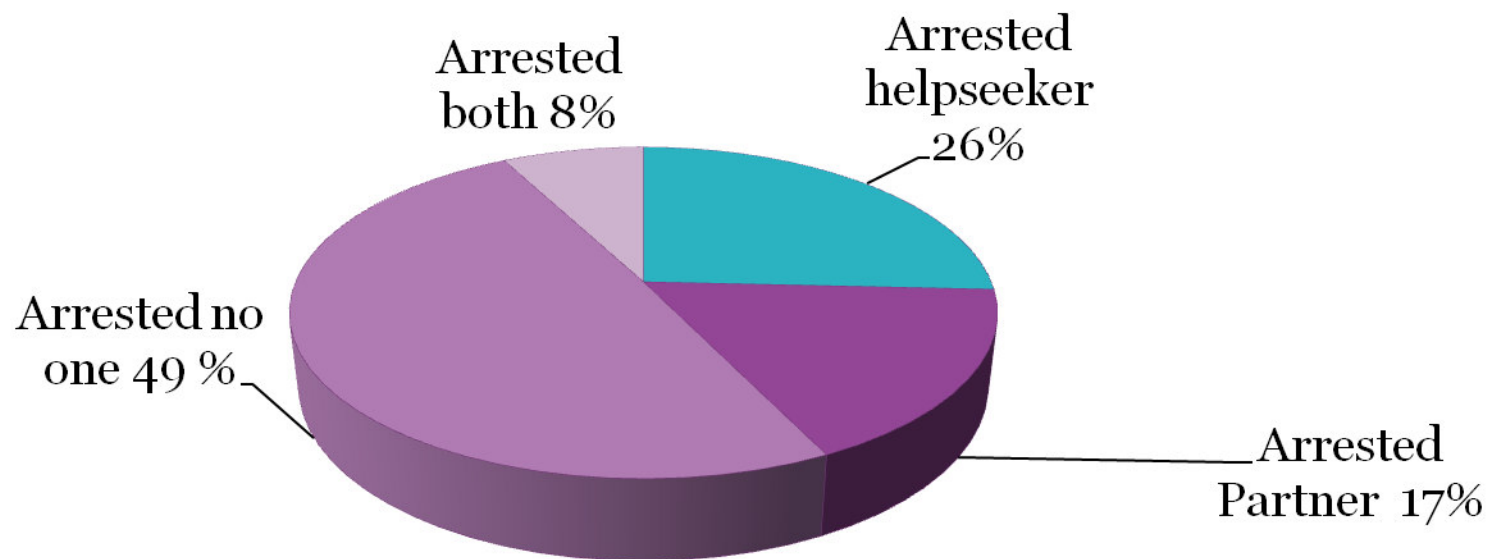
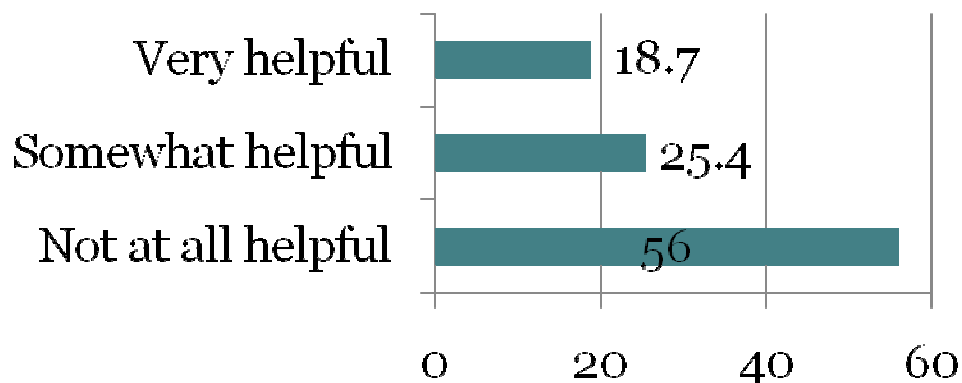
- Dismissed him or made fun of him (15.2%)
  - *I would say they simply don't believe men can be victims – I especially asked if I could speak to a male counselor; they told me they didn't have one and didn't need one.*
  - *They just laughed and hung up.*
- Made accusations that he's the batterer or 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.*

## Q4: Help-seeking: *Police*

**% Who Contacted the Police**

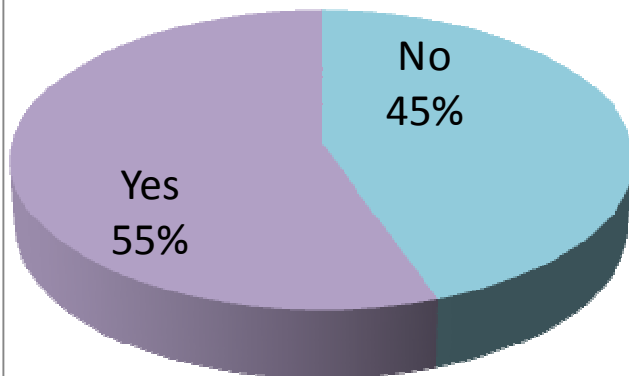


**How Helpful were the Police?**



## Q4: Helpseeking: *Police*

### Did Police Determine Partner Was Aggressor?

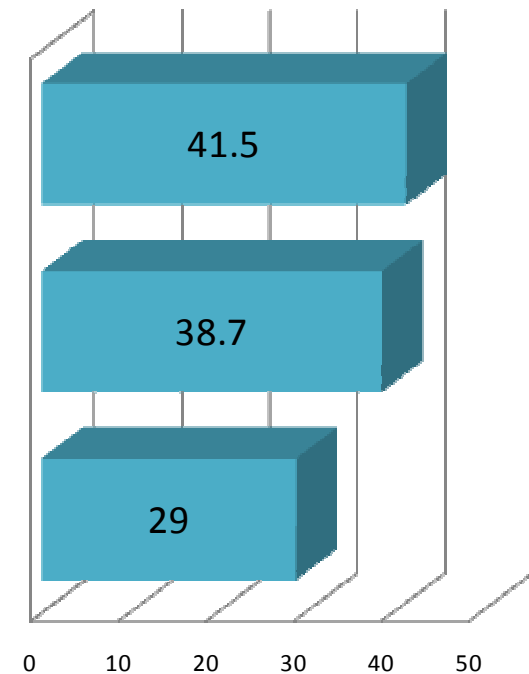


### When Partner was Determined as Aggressor...

Ask if you wanted partner arrested

Say was nothing could do and left

Refuse to arrest her?



## Q4: 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.*



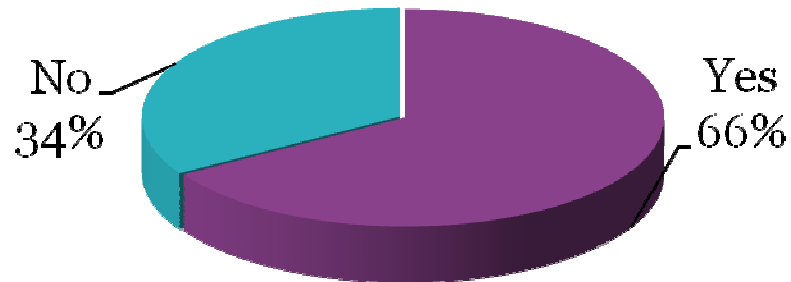


## Q4: Help-seeking: *Police*

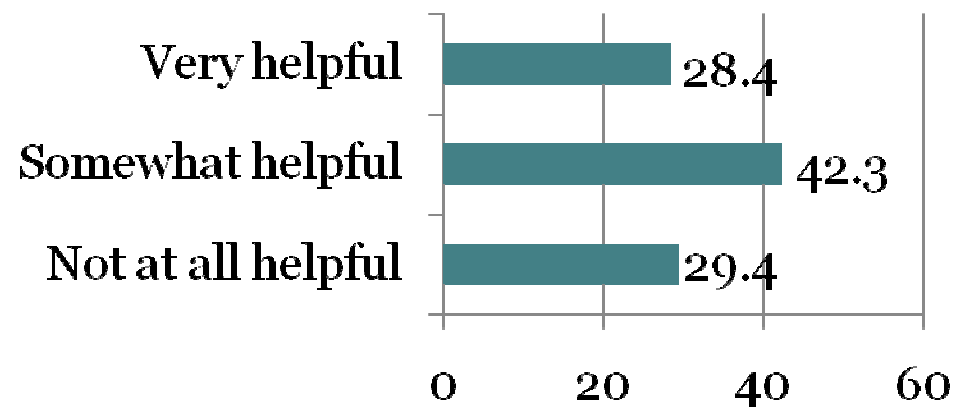
- Offered resources (6.0%)
  - *We were referred to the Family Advocacy Program.*
- Gathered evidence (4.5%)
  - *They asked me what happened, asked me to write a statement of what happened, took photos of my upper body, said someone is going to go arrest her, someone from the Victim Services Program 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"*

## Q4: Helpseeking: *Mental Health Professionals*

**% Who Saw a Mental Health Professional**

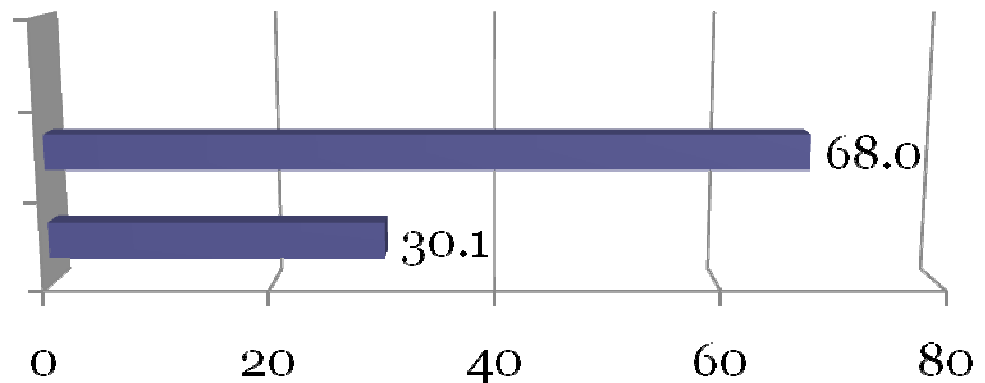


**How Helpful was the Mental Health Professional?**



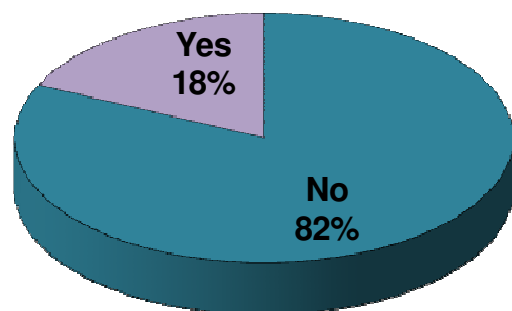
**Took DV Concerns Seriously**

**Gave Information about DV**

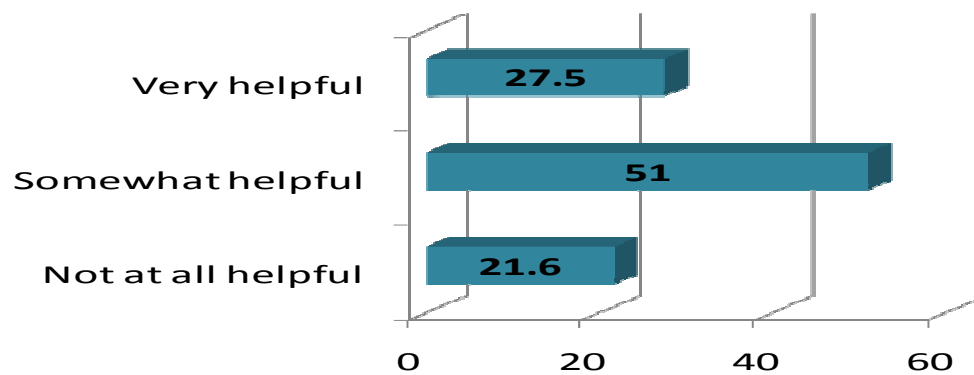


## Q4: Helpseeking: *Medical Professionals*

**Ever go to Doctor/ER  
Because Partner Injured  
You?**



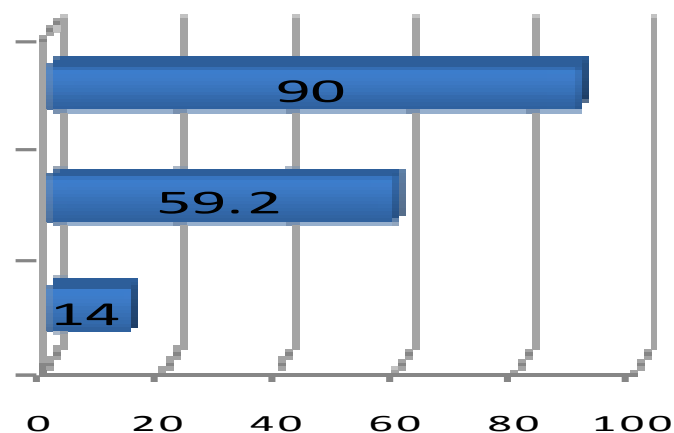
**How Helpful was the Doctor or  
Nurse who Treated you?**



**Dr/Nurse asked you how  
you got injuries**

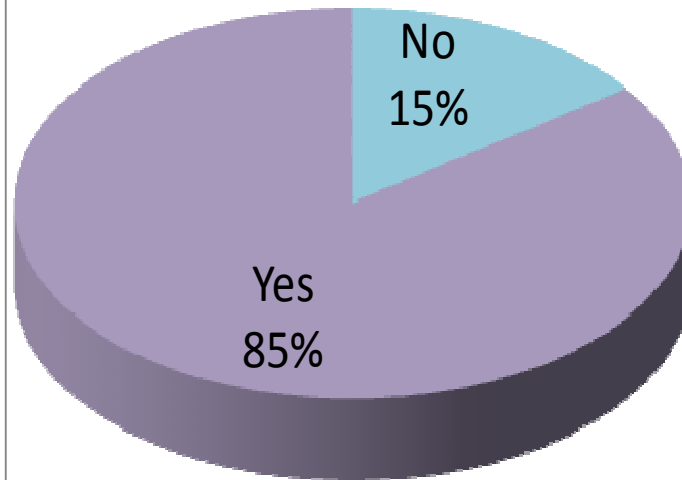
**You told the Dr/nurse  
that partner hurt you**

**Given info about getting  
help for DV**

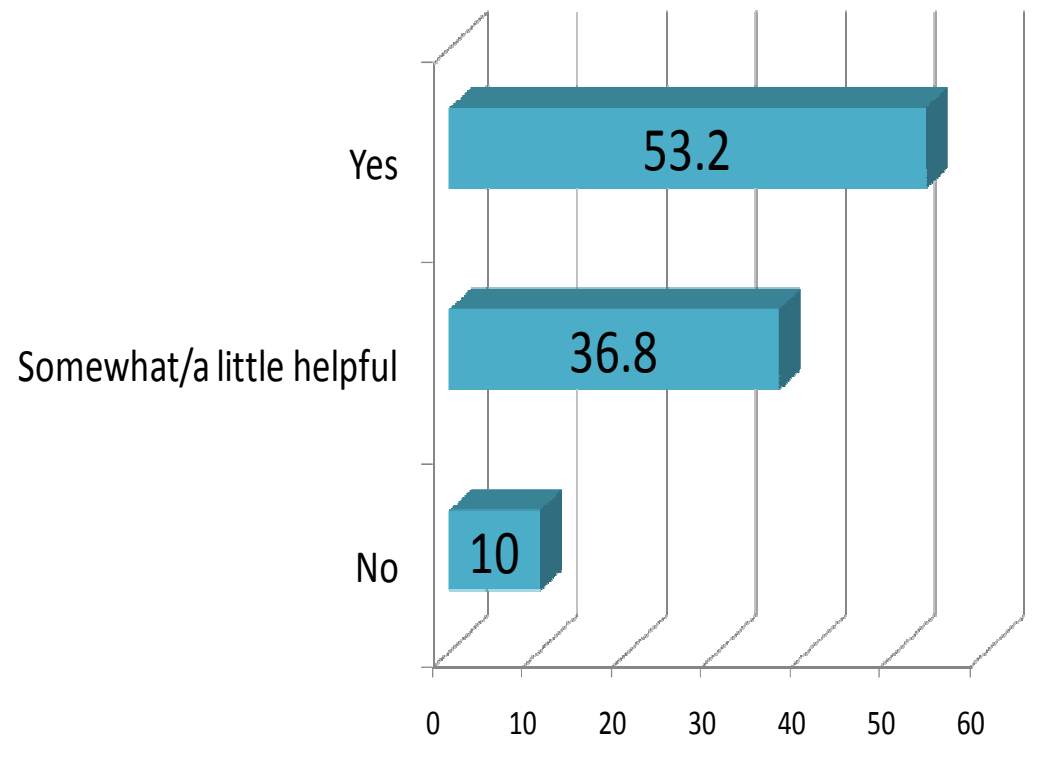


## Q4: Helpseeking: *Talked with anyone else about partner's violence*

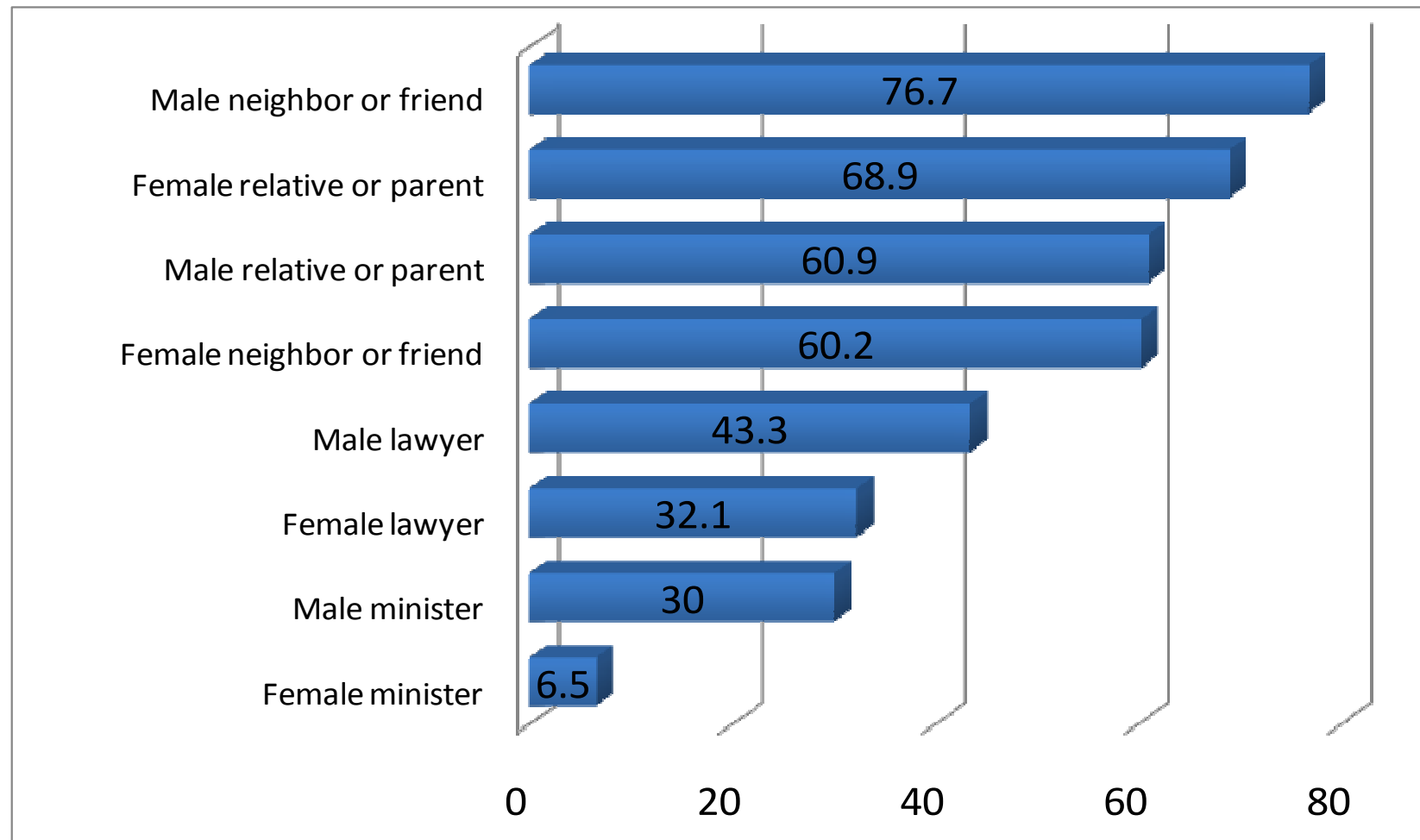
**Talked with anyone else about partner's violence?**



**Were any of these people supportive or helpful?**



## Q4: Helpseeking: *Talked with anyone else about partner's violence*





# Conclusions: Study 1

- Male helpseekers sustained 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: Study 1

- 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



# Conclusions: Study 1

- 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



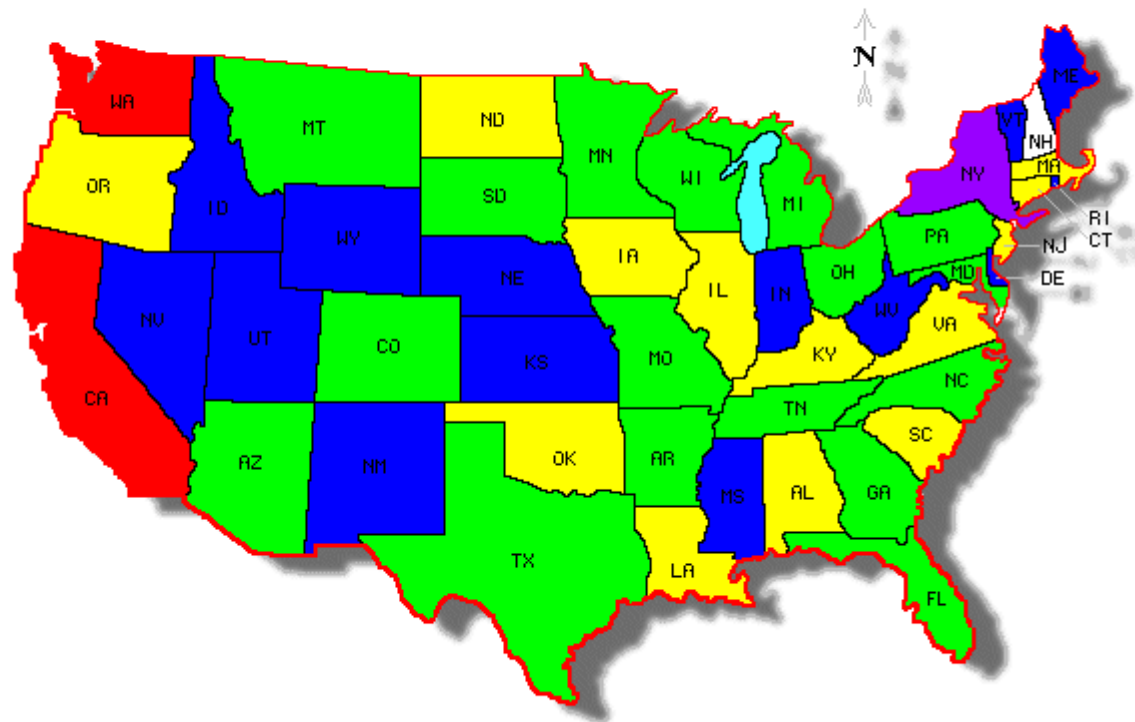


## Study 2 Methods: Sample

- Internet survey about various underserved domestic violence populations
- Random sample of DV agencies from directory of National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- E-mailed 371 agency directors to participate in Internet survey
- Full responses = 213 agencies

# States Represented

- - 1-2 DV Agencies
- - 3-4 DV Agencies
- - 5-9 DV Agencies
- - 10-14 DV Agencies
- - 15-19 DV Agencies



# Information About the Agencies

Characteristic	Mean/Median	Range
Number of years in operation	Mean = 24.15	4-95
Number of paid staff	Median = 14	0-100
Number of volunteers	Median = 19.5	0-784
Agency budget	Median = \$638,000	\$25,000-\$5,000,000



# Information About the Agencies *Victims & Male Victims Served*

Characteristic	Median	Range
Number victims provide direct services to/year	800	30-39,735
Heterosexual Male Victims	15	0-1,550
Senior Male Victims	0	0-200
Gay Male Victims	1	0-100

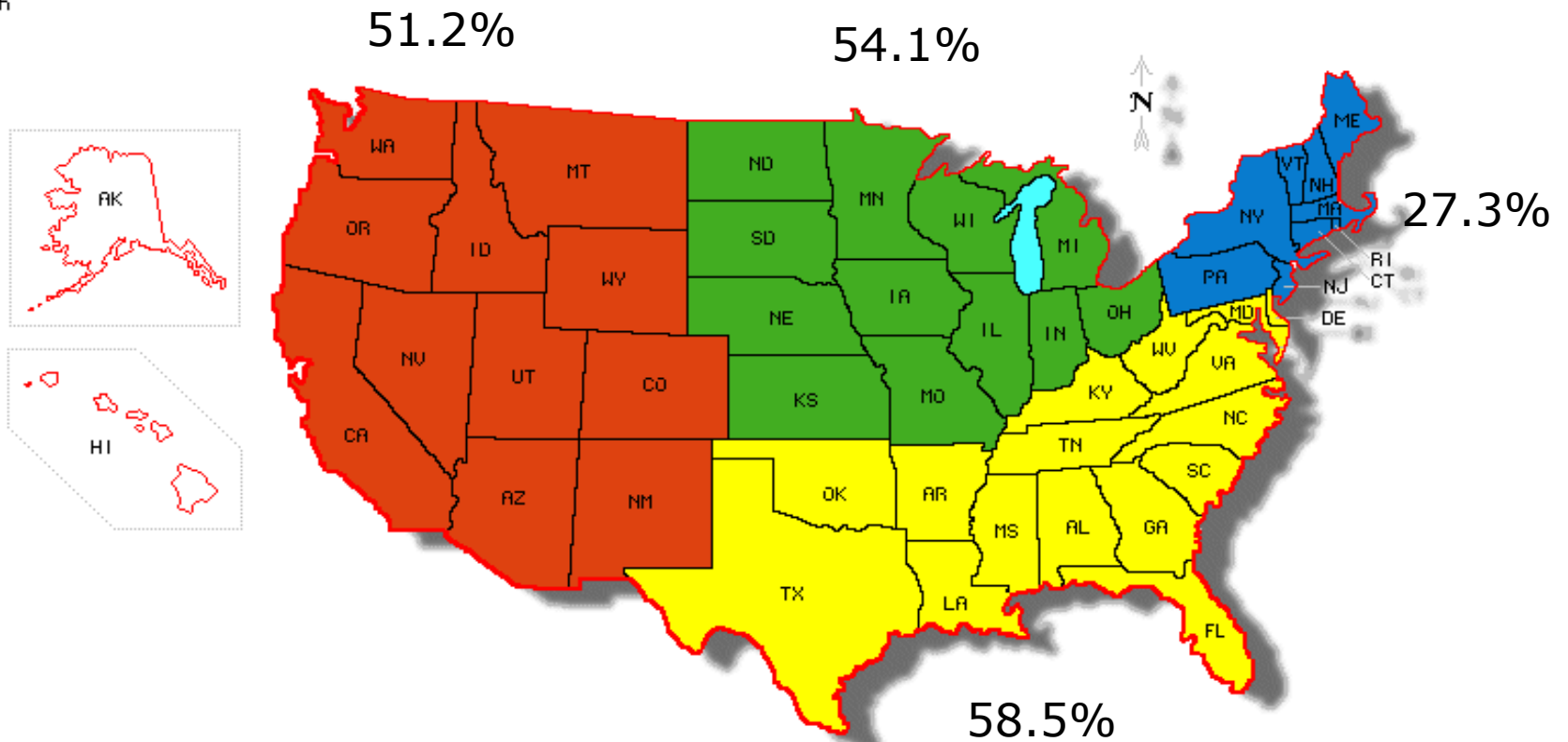
# Housing Services

Type of Housing Services	ANY Services	Of Those Providing Housing Services		
		Adult Males	Senior Males	Gay Males
Shelter Services	80.8% N=172	49.4%	50.6%	49.4%
Hotel Vouchers	60.1% N=128	89.1%	90.6%	87.5%
Transitional Housing	31.9% N=68	35.3%	35.3%	35.3%

# What predicts Housing Services for Men?

- Nothing!

- - Northeast
- - Midwest
- - South
- - West



# Legal Services

Type of Legal Services	ANY Services	Of Those Providing Services		
		Adult Males	Senior Males	Gay Males
Restraining Orders	79.8% N=170	91.1%	91.8%	91.1%
Divorce & Child Custody Issues	46.0% N=98	84.7%	83.7%	80.6%
Victim Advocacy Services	83.1% N=177	87.0%	88.7%	88.1%
<i>Pro bono</i> Legal Services	28.2% N=60	88.3%	88.3%	88.3%



# What predicts Legal Services for Men?

- # of victims served in a year predicts
  - Fewer restraining order services, divorce/child custody, victim advocacy, and pro bono services

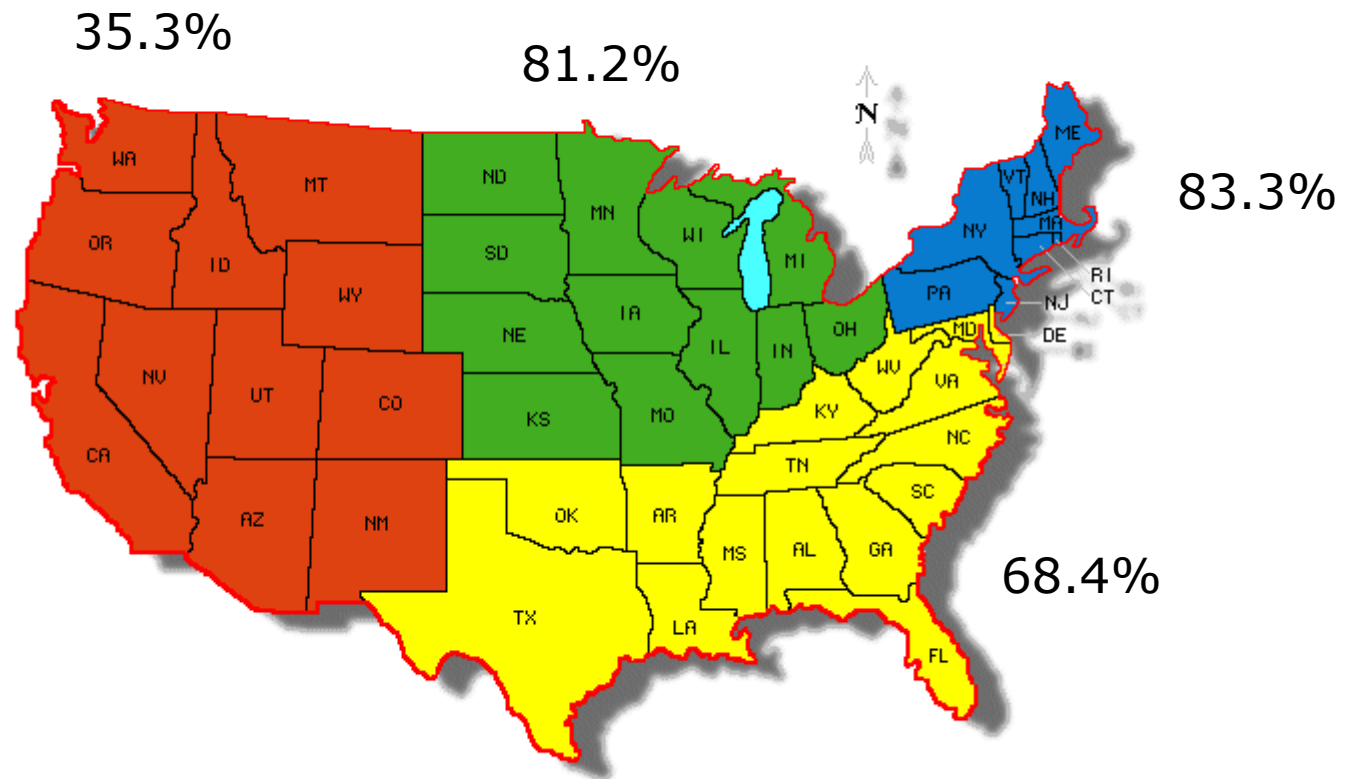
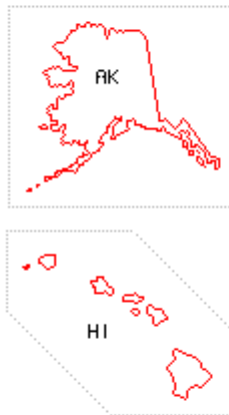


# Counseling Services

Type of Counseling Services	ANY Services	Of Those Providing Services		
		Adult Males	Senior Males	Gay Males
Group counseling	28.6% N=61	60.7%	68.9%	60.7%
Individual Counseling	36.2% N=77	87.0%	87.0%	88.3%
Nonresidential Support Groups	81.2% N=173	44.5%	44.5%	46.2%

# What predicts Group Counseling Services for Men?

- - Northeast
- - Midwest
- - South
- - West



# Additional Services

Type of Service	ANY Services	Of Those Providing Services		
		Adult Males	Senior Males	Gay Males
Outreach Services	92.5% N=197	49.2%	48.7%	47.2%
Emergency Transportation	77.5% N=165	77.0%	76.4%	77.6%
Educational Services	34.7% N=74	82.4%	82.4%	83.8%
Employment Services	16.4% N=35	65.7%	60.0%	62.9%



# What predicts Other Services for Men?

- More victims served:
  - Less likely to provide transportation, employment, or outreach services



## Conclusions: Study 2

- Most available services for men:
  - Hotel vouchers
  - Any type of legal service
  - Individual counseling
  - Educational services
- Least available services for men:
  - Shelter
  - Transitional housing
  - Support groups
  - Outreach



## Conclusions: Study 2

- Few agency characteristics predict which will offer services to men.
  - # of victims served
  - Region
- Agencies that provide one type of service for men are likely to provide other types as well.



## Study 1 & 2 Implications for Policy & Practice

- Helpseeking men report MH services to be among most helpful
  - Individual MH services are available; group counseling & support groups not as readily available
- Barriers to leaving if helpseekers cannot find:
  - Housing services
  - Think that they are alone (low outreach efforts)



# Conclusions & Recommendations

- Men do sustain violence from female partners
- Men do seek help from a variety of services
- Somewhat of a disconnect between reports from helpseekers and DV agencies
  - Many agencies report that they are able to assist male victims
  - Male victims report being turned away by many social service programs





# Conclusions & Recommendations

- Reports from DV agencies reflect point of view of 1 person; not all agency staff
- 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