



Public Attitudes Towards Family Violence: A Syndicated Study

Final Report

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Submitted by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ❑ This research on *Public Attitudes Toward Family Violence* takes the approach of a syndicated study, collecting baseline information on opinions in Canada on this topic. This initial picture is based on a national telephone survey of over 2,000 Canadians, supplemented by a series of 10 focus group discussions held across the country.
- ❑ The key objectives of this baseline study are to: examine issues related to public understanding and awareness of family violence; test levels of tolerance for family violence; explore behavioural intentions with respect to intervening in a situation of family violence; and examine support for various ways to deal with family violence, including institutional/professional responsibilities and effectiveness of judicial interventions.

Definition

- ❑ Canadians have a quite expansive definition of family violence that goes well beyond traditional conceptions focusing on physical violence within the immediate family. While there is a broad consensus among Canadians that family violence refers to violence among immediate family members, including parent-adult child relationships, most Canadians also include violence occurring in a relationship of trust in their understanding of family violence (e.g., caregiver relationships).
- ❑ Violence between spouses and by parents toward their children are the types of relationships Canadians tend to think of most when thinking about violence occurring in the immediate family. (Violence among siblings is considerably less likely to come to mind when Canadians think about violence within the immediate family and abuse of elderly parents is rarely mentioned.) Yet, violence toward children, particularly children under 12, elicits the greatest degree of concern.
- ❑ Of nine types of behaviours that were presented to respondents as potentially being family violence, virtually everyone indicated using or threatening a family member with a gun or knife and inappropriate, unwanted or forced sexual activity as always being family violence. There is also consensus that kicking, biting and hitting, and throwing, smashing, hitting or kicking another family member's things or hurting pets are always considered to be family violence. Three in five Canadians identified failing to provide food, shelter or medical attention as family violence in all cases, and one in two consider emotional and physical forms of abuse to be family violence. Least

agreement is evident about the extent to which financial control (e.g., preventing access to family income) constitutes family violence.

- ❑ Individuals who have the most expansive definition of family violence tend to be women, people between the ages of 25 and 44, those who know someone who has experienced family violence or read or heard information about the subject, individuals who have children in the home and who are employed.

Attitudes

- ❑ A significant majority of Canadians (more than three-quarters) believe that family violence should be an urgent priority for the federal government, as well as at the community level. The majority of Canadians perceive the problem of family violence in our society as more serious today than ten years ago and there is a widely shared opinion that neither the media nor women's groups exaggerate the seriousness of family violence. More detailed discussion in the focus groups suggests that the perception of increasing seriousness of family violence may be fuelled, in part, by greater comfort in discussing and reporting family violence.
- ❑ Canadians see a wide variety of complex factors influencing the occurrence of violence in the family. Stress in the family (e.g., financial) and alcohol and drugs were most frequently identified as reasons for family violence. Other determinants mentioned included: history of violence in the family, poor communication and need to control others.
- ❑ Respondents most often cited negative psychological effects and low self-esteem/confidence as direct impacts of family violence, as well as increased violent behaviour amongst other family members and perpetuation of a cycle of violence. Most agree that exposure to family violence can have a negative impact on one's health. There is a broad recognition of the intergenerational effects of family violence resulting in poor development of children, and youth crime or school bullying. Canadians view the impacts of family violence as being similar in nature for both family members who are the direct targets of family violence and for those who are witnesses to family violence.

Information

- ❑ Most Canadians (more than eight in ten) reported that they have heard or read something about family violence in the last 12 months, most often through television or newspapers.
- ❑ More than four in five people indicated that they feel personally well enough informed about family violence. Those who do not feel well-informed are most interested in obtaining information on helping them recognize family violence when it is occurring and practical information on how to respond.
- ❑ When asked what they would suggest if someone who was experiencing family violence needed information or support, the most common response was local community services.

Exposure

- ❑ Survey results indicate that the issue of family violence has touched many Canadians in a personal way, with approximately six in ten Canadians reporting that they know (or have known) someone who has experienced family violence.
- ❑ The nature of the most recent incident of family violence that respondents knew about most often involved spousal violence, followed by violence toward children. This most recent family violence situation typically involved physical and/or emotional abuse. Incidents of sexual or financial abuse were rare.
- ❑ In about half of the cases, individuals were able to provide help or assistance in the most recent situation of family violence that they knew about. The nature of the family violence situation is an important determinant of the extent to which individuals are able or willing to intervene (e.g., people are more likely to provide assistance when they know the family “very well”).
- ❑ The nature of the family violence situation is also an important predictor of the type of intervention. The most common response in a family violence situation is to provide support to the person who is being harmed. Talking to or providing support to the victim or the person causing harm is much less probable, however, if the relationship to the family is not a close one and is also less likely when the victim is a child. One in four indicated that the reason they did not provide help or assistance was reluctance to intrude on a family matter.

Tolerance

- ❑ To test social tolerance for various types of family violence, a series of family violence scenarios were presented to respondents. The hypothetical scenarios were constructed to include variations in the relationship of the abuser to the respondent (i.e., stranger, neighbour, close friend or family member), the type of behaviour (e.g., physical, emotional, financial and sexual) and the type of victim (i.e., spouse, child, older parent).
- ❑ Concern is highest for scenarios involving kicking/hitting and sexual abuse, but drops drastically in situations involving “milder” forms of physical violence such as pushing/grabbing and situations involving verbal abuse such as insulting/humiliating. Concern is highest when a child is the victim and decreases when a spouse/partner or an older parent is involved. Greatest concern is elicited when the person responsible for causing harm is a close friend or family member. The rated level of concern decreases somewhat in scenarios where a stranger is involved and drops again when the scenario involves a neighbour.
- ❑ Regardless of the specifics of the scenario, the vast majority of individuals (more than eight in ten) say they would intervene in some way in the situations of family violence described to them. Individuals are far more likely to choose informal means of intervening such as talking to or providing information to the person causing harm or being harmed when the relationship specified in the scenario is a close one. Conversely, responses that involve authorities such as calling 911 or the police are more frequently cited when the scenario involves a neighbour or stranger.

- ❑ For scenarios related to emotional or verbal forms of abuse, pushing or grabbing and financial abuse, respondents' most likely response would be talking to or providing information to the person causing harm. In cases involving more severe forms of physical abuse and sexual abuse, individuals would be more likely to involve authorities by calling 911 or police. Individuals are least likely to say they would approach the person being harmed when the scenario involves kicking or hitting.
- ❑ The reasons why individuals might not intervene in the family violence situation described in the scenarios were varied. Reluctance to intrude on a family matter is a more frequently-mentioned reason for not intervening in a family violence situation as the relationship to the respondent becomes closer – that is, privacy of the family is more likely to be a barrier when the scenario involves a friend or family member and least important when the scenario involves a stranger. Being unsure of the facts and fear for personal safety are cited more often as reasons for not intervening as the relationship to the respondent becomes more distant.
- ❑ Considering the reasons for not responding by the type of victim involved, privacy of the family is the most significant barrier across all scenarios, but is less important when the scenario involves a child. Individuals are more likely to have cited being unsure of all the facts as a reason for not intervening in scenarios involving children or older parents compared to when the victim is a spouse. Fear for personal safety is cited more often as a reason for not intervening in scenarios involving spousal violence.

Social Responses

- ❑ Almost three in four Canadians feel that they have at least some personal responsibility for helping to reduce family violence in their community.
- ❑ Canadians indicated that they are generally quite comfortable approaching either the victim or the abuser in situations of family violence, although the gender of the victim is an influencing factor (fewer are willing to intervene if the victim is a man). Indeed, as described above, informal responses to family violence by talking to or providing information to those involved is often chosen over options that would involve authorities when respondents are confronted with a real or hypothetical situation of family violence. Barriers to intervening are perceived to most often include reluctance to intrude on a family matter and not knowing what actions to take.
- ❑ In terms of responses to family violence on the part of institutions or professionals, Canadians see health care professionals and community workers as perhaps being more knowledgeable and in the business of helping Canadians in need and are therefore more likely to assign them a legal obligation to report family violence. People are less inclined to believe that clergy and employers should have a legal obligation to report family violence and the financial industry is the least likely to be assigned a legal obligation to report financial abuse.
- ❑ In terms of the justice system response to family violence, two in three Canadians believe that the courts treat cases of family violence too lightly. Fewer than one in three see the courts as being supportive and responsive to victims. The police are seen in a somewhat more positive light. Just under one-half of Canadians believe that the police treat cases of family violence too lightly. One in two view the police as being supportive and responsive to victims.

- ❑ When asked in the focus groups specifically about the question of charging in situations of family violence, participants were hesitant about charging in all cases. At least some of the caution around charging appeared linked to confusion that charging equates with a jail sentence or that non-criminal code behaviours such as emotional abuse could be included in a criminal charge. Participants also feared that charging would not be appropriate in all instances, especially where complaints were made maliciously or rashly. Some participants worried that charging in every instance would have the effect of clogging the courts and slowing the processing of all complaints. Circumstances that were viewed as meriting a charge included situations involving serious physical harm and cases where there is a history of repeated incidents. Situations involving children also provoked greater support for charging.
- ❑ Regardless of whether a criminal charge is laid or not, the majority of Canadians view the most appropriate and effective response to family violence to be counselling and treatment. Some suggested counselling and treatment, focusing on both the victim of family violence and on the offender, be compulsory.
- ❑ Public education and awareness programs received equal recognition as other means of addressing family violence, and one in ten selected parenting programs. A small proportion of respondents chose harsher penalties.

Typology of Canadians

- ❑ In order to identify the underlying dimensions and patterns of attitudes, the survey variables were included in factor and segmentation analyses that yielded a typology of Canadians based on their attitudes toward family violence.
- ❑ The *Unconcerned* segment of Canadians has a narrow definition of family violence and is most likely to believe that the problem of family violence in today's society is less serious than ten years ago, and that family violence does not often take place in their community. Members of this group are most likely to include: men, younger Canadians, those with a university education and average household incomes.
- ❑ The *Adamant Denier* group also holds a narrow definition of the types of relationships and behaviours that constitute family violence, does not believe that the issue is as serious as it was ten years ago, and is the most apt to believe that the problem has been exaggerated by women's groups and the media. They demonstrate less concern about children's exposure to violence and the resulting impacts. On the other hand, they believe that the issue should be a priority for others, while eschewing personal responsibility for reducing family violence. This group has the lowest reported personal exposure to family violence and are less likely to have heard/read information about family violence. They are more apt to include: retired seniors, individuals with a lower socio-economic status and Francophones.
- ❑ The *Informed Moderate* segment has a wide definition of family violence, is particularly concerned about family violence toward children under 12 and is more likely to be sensitive to the psychological and behavioural impacts of family violence on children. They are more likely to say that they would not know what to do when faced with a situation of family violence, yet believe that they have a personal responsibility to deal with family violence in their community. A high proportion of

this group include: men, individuals 30-49 years age, married parents of young children, and those with a higher socio-economic status.

- ❑ The *Uninformed Concerned* group has a wide definition of family violence, generally expresses greater concern for all types of family violence, is more apt to believe that the issue has become more serious in the last ten years, and is quite concerned about children's exposure to violence in a variety of settings. They also believe that family violence is an urgent priority for government and their community and that most groups and institutions in society should take responsibility, yet they take somewhat less personal responsibility than some other segments in helping to stop family violence. They also say that they are not well informed and need additional information. This group is most likely to include: women, older Canadians, those with a fairly low socio-economic status, Francophones and visible minorities.
- ❑ The *Active Concerned* segment is particularly sensitive to and concerned about the problem of family violence in Canadian society and children's exposure to violence, has the broadest definition of family violence, generally feel that the issue should be an urgent priority for the government and their own community, and tend to advocate harsher penalties for abusers. This group has the highest reported incidence of individuals who themselves have experienced family violence, who know someone else who has experienced it, and/or have been exposed to information about family violence. They are most likely to include: women, Anglophones, individuals 30-50 years of age and those with a higher socio-economic status.

Concluding Observations

- ❑ From the survey results we find that Canadians express a high level of concern for the issue of family violence and see it as a high priority for both government and communities. The general public is quite well informed and sophisticated in their understanding of family violence and its causes and consequences. These perceptions are based on media accounts and, for many, personal experience of family violence in their own lives or in a family with which they are familiar. Abuse of elder parents and financial abuse are less well-recognized at this point in time.
- ❑ Respondents ascribe a moral (and in some cases, legal) responsibility to a wide array of institutions and professionals in addressing family violence. They also accept personal responsibility in this area. Intervening in a situation of family violence often involves informal measures. Canadians are reticent to involve the authorities in situations of family violence, particularly when they know the family well, unless the circumstances are perceived to be dire. Key barriers to intervening in a situation of family violence include fear of intruding on a family affair and not knowing what actions to take.
- ❑ Public information/awareness campaigns may assist in eroding both of these barriers. If people are sent consistent messages that family violence is a crime and not getting involved (or involving authorities) allows these crimes to continue unchecked, as well as providing information about how to help, Canadians may feel better equipped to deal with these circumstances. Designers of future communications strategies may at least take comfort in the fact that fear of intruding on a private family matter and lack of knowledge about what to do are significantly easier to combat than fear for personal safety, which is not perceived to be a strong barrier. Additional messages, which may be of benefit are related to barriers which prevent victims from removing themselves

from situations of family violence and information about the nature of financial abuse and abuse of elderly parents and their potential impacts.

- ❑ The reluctance to report family violence to authorities may be, in part, fuelled by the perception that the judicial system is not dealing effectively with cases of family violence. Canadians advocate fairly decisive handling of cases of family violence, including the removal of the offender from the home at the time of the occurrence of the offence. While Canadians reported limited knowledge of criminal justice processes and the implications of procedures such as charging they do not generally believe that jail is the right answer (i.e., counselling and treatment is more appropriate for abusers, who are perceived to be dysfunctional in some way, and for the family, which requires longer-term solutions to address violence).
- ❑ Views expressed throughout the nationwide survey are surprisingly consistent. Differences are often evident between Quebecers and the rest of Canada and between those in the middle-age categories and those at the either end of the age spectrum (i.e., youth and seniors). There are some systematic differences according to gender, socio-economic status and personal engagement in the issue.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Objectives

There is currently a paucity of research in Canada on public opinion and attitudes toward family violence. Yet, government and community interest in family violence is high and there are numerous initiatives aimed at improving awareness and debunking myths around the issue. Reliable and valid insights into Canadians' perceptions, as well as their behaviour would improve our understanding of where the family violence issue is located in the broad public opinion landscape. This insight could then inform efforts to effectively respond to family violence and to shape the direction of future policy development in the area.

The purpose of this first syndicated study is to collect baseline information on public attitudes toward family violence in Canada. This initial picture is based on a national telephone survey, supplemented by a series of ten focus group discussions held across the country.

The key objectives of this baseline study are to:

- ❑ Examine issues related to public understanding and awareness of family violence (e.g., broad definition of family violence, perceived priority of the issue, perceived causes and consequences of family violence);
- ❑ Test levels of tolerance for family violence (e.g., level of acceptance of different forms of family violence, extent to which family violence is seen as a private vs. public issue, barriers to intervening);
- ❑ Explore behavioural intentions with respect to family violence (e.g., willingness to intervene, provide support, communicate information);

- Examine support for various ways to deal with family violence, institutional/professional responsibilities and effectiveness of judicial interventions; and
- Understand the key correlates associated with attitudes and behaviour regarding family violence (e.g., socio-demographic, experiential variables).

Additional questions were added on related topics by individual partner organizations. The study partners who contributed to this research are:

- The Family Violence Initiative
- The Department of Justice
- Canadian Council on Social Development
- The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
- The University of Toronto

1.2 Methodology

The research draws on the results of a national telephone survey of a random sample of 2,053 Canadians. The national sample was stratified to ensure a minimum number of cases in each region (n=275). Telephone numbers were randomly drawn from an exhaustive database of all telephone directories published in Canada, and supplemented by randomly generated telephone numbers. The margin of error of a sample of this size is \pm 2.2 per cent, based on a 95 per cent confidence interval. The data were weighted by age, gender and region, based on the latest population figures provided by the Statistics Canada Census.

The questionnaire was extensively tested with over 70 interviews, conducted in French and English, prior to data collection. Data collection was split across two time periods, from December 6 to 18, 2001 and January 2 to 10, 2002. The average length of an interview was 27 minutes and the overall response rate was quite high at 34 per cent. Appendix A presents the final survey questionnaire and Appendix B presents the details of calls made and associated response rate for the survey.

The study also includes a series of ten focus groups conducted across the country. Two groups were conducted in each of Vancouver, Saskatoon, Toronto, Montreal and Fredericton. In Toronto, Montreal and Saskatoon separate groups were held with parents and non-parents, while the other cities featured mixed groups. Participants were screened to ensure they had at least some interest in the topic.

1.3 Organization of the Report

This report is organized into ten chapters. The second chapter explores Canadians' definition of family violence, while Chapter Three profiles attitudes to family violence, including overall priority of the issue, perceived causes and consequences and historical trends. Chapter Four examines access to information on family violence and information needs. The fifth chapter profiles situations of family violence that people are aware of in their own personal lives. Chapter Six explores personal tolerance levels and anticipated responses to dealing with family violence, while Chapter Seven presents people's attitudes to broader public/societal responses to the issue. Chapter Eight examines concerns about children's exposure to violence in a broader context. Chapter Nine attempts to bring much of the data into a more cohesive picture of the Canadian public – segmented into a typology of views on family violence and children's exposure to violence in general. Finally, Chapter Ten summarizes the evidence and highlights key themes.



2

CANADIANS' DEFINITION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

One of the key issues for this research is to understand how Canadians define family violence, both in terms of the types of relationships that are included in their understanding of “family” and the types of behaviours that they would classify as “violence”. This is particularly important since the traditional understanding of family violence, has expanded in recent years. For example, children witnessing spousal violence is currently considered to be a form of child abuse. Also, researchers are linking abusive behaviours witnessed at home to aggressive behaviour they exhibit in school, and in dating and working relationships. Over time, the general public’s understanding of family violence may also shift, so a baseline snapshot will be a useful measure against which to track future change.

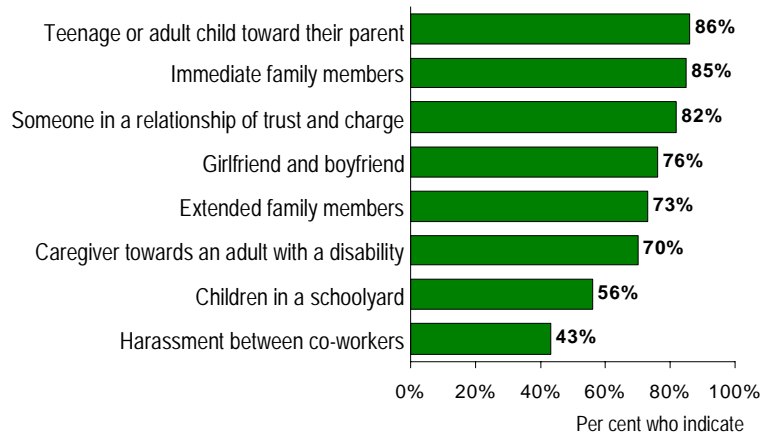
2.1 Relationships and Family Violence

a) *Types of Relationships*

There is a broad consensus among Canadians that family violence refers to immediate family relationships, including parent-adult child relationships. Well over 80 per cent of individuals include these types of relationships when they think of violence in the family (Exhibit 2.1). Over 80 per cent of Canadians also include violence occurring in a relationship which involves a position of trust to be family violence.

Exhibit 2.1 Definition of Family Violence — Relationships

“Which of the following relationships do you consider to be included in your understanding of family violence?”



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A somewhat lower proportion, though still a firm majority (70 per cent of Canadians or more), would include violence that occurs in a dating relationship, between extended family members and between a caregiver and an adult with a disability, to be family violence.

There is significantly less agreement about the extent to which violence in the schoolyard or harassment between co-workers is considered family violence. Still, 56 and

43 per cent of respondents, respectively, would consider these situations to be included in their understanding of family violence.

The relatively high level of acceptance of schoolyard and workplace forms of abuse as family violence was explored in more detail in the focus groups. Participants did not spontaneously raise these types of relationships as being included in their understanding of family violence, nor did they generally view them as family violence per se when asked directly. They did, however, view family violence as intimately linked with other aggressive or violent behaviour and saw schoolyard bullying as a likely result of family violence. Similarly, harassment at the workplace is seen to be part of a broader pattern of abusive behaviour and could, in itself, possibly lead to violence in the home. Other participants added that perhaps some people view peer and co-worker relationships as “family-like” and thus abuse within these relationships becomes akin to family violence.

Sub-group differences in Canadians’ understanding of family violence based on the survey responses are highlighted below:

- Those with personal experience with family violence (either directly or knowing someone who has experienced family violence) or who are aware of information on the topic are more likely than others to include all of the relationships provided in the survey in their understanding of relationships to be considered when speaking of family violence (with the exception of schoolyard and workplace violence).
- Women also consistently choose all of the relationships offered as being included in their understanding of family violence more often than men.
- Those with higher levels of education and income (over \$80,000) are also more likely to consider family violence to include violence in dating and extended family relationships. Conversely, people with a high school education or less are more likely to include schoolyard violence in their definition of family violence (as do older Canadians).
- People who indicated violence among extended family members are most likely to include those 25 to 44 years old (and to a significantly lesser extent, by those 65 years and older), with higher levels of education and income, employed and have children in the home.
- When violence occurs within a relationship of trust, university-educated respondents are more likely to define it as family.
- Dating relationships which involve violence are more likely to be included in one’s definition of family violence by 25 to 44 year olds (and much less so by those 65 years and older) and the university-educated.

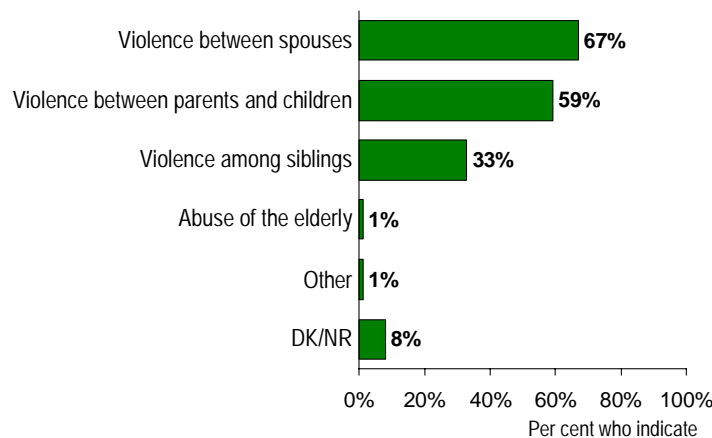
- Canadians with a high school education or less are more likely to include schoolyard violence and harassment between co-workers in their understanding of family violence. Residents of Quebec are also more likely to include harassment between co-workers as family violence.

b) Relationships Within the Immediate Family

When asked to think about violence that occurs in the immediate family, the kinds of relationships Canadians think of most often are violence between spouses (67 per cent) and violence between parents and children (59 per cent) (Exhibit 2.2). Violence among siblings is considerably less likely to come to mind when Canadians think about violence within the immediate family (mentioned by 33 per cent) and abuse of elderly parents is rarely mentioned.

Exhibit 2.2 Definition of Family Violence —Immediate Family

**“Thinking about violence occurring in the immediate family,
what kinds of relationships do you tend to think of?”**



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- People who tend to think of violence between spouses when they think of violence within the immediate family are most likely to include women, those between 25 and 44 years of age, and people who are married. They are also more apt to have reported direct personal experience of family violence and to have read or heard information on the subject.

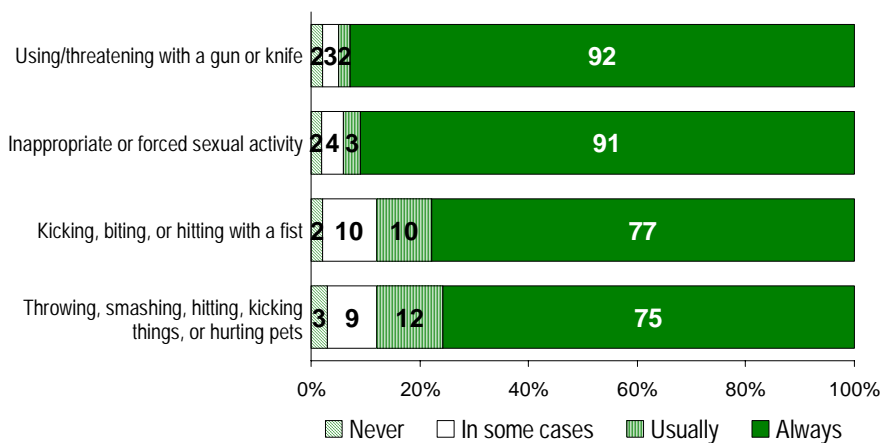
- Violence between parents and children is more likely to come to mind when thinking about violence within the immediate family for women, those who are single, and people with a college or university education. These individuals are also most likely to have reported personal experience of family violence or to have read or heard information about family violence. Less likely to think of this relationship are older respondents (65 years and older) and allophones.

2.2 Forms of Violent Behaviour

Of the nine forms of violence presented to respondents, virtually everyone indicated using or threatening a family member with a gun or knife and inappropriate, unwanted or forced sexual activity as “always” being family violence (92 and 91 per cent, respectively) (Exhibits 2.3 and 2.4). There is considerable consensus as well that kicking, biting and hitting, and throwing, smashing, hitting or kicking another family member’s things or hurting pets are always considered to be family violence (77 and 75 per cent, respectively).

Exhibit 2.3 Definition of Family Violence — Behaviours

“Please tell me whether you think each of the following should be considered family violence.”



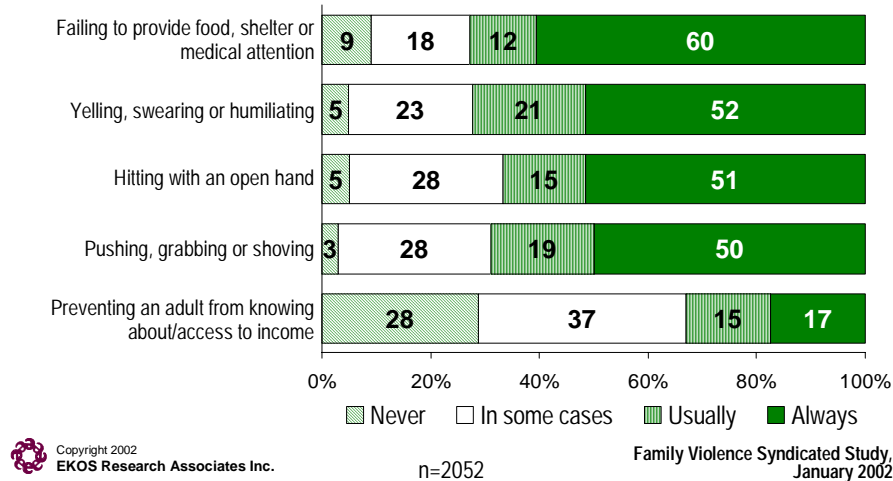
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Exhibit 2.4 Definition of Family Violence — Behaviours

“Please tell me whether you think each of the following should be considered family violence.”



Three in five Canadians identified failing to provide food, shelter or medical attention as family violence in all cases. Following these responses is a middle tier of behaviours where one in two Canadians consider the behaviour to always be family violence, with a significant proportion saying that circumstances are also important in defining whether these behaviours are family violence. This middle tier includes a mix of emotional and physical forms of abuse. Approximately half of Canadians feel that yelling, swearing or humiliating a family member, hitting with an open hand and pushing, grabbing or shoving a family member are always considered to be family violence. The focus group discussions confirmed that many Canadians accept emotional forms of abuse within their understanding of family violence and some participants argued that emotional abuse can be as serious and sometimes more damaging than physical violence.

Least agreement is evident around the issue of financial abuse. Preventing an adult family member from knowing about or having access to family income or savings is considered to always be family violence by 17 per cent of the general public. On the other hand, this is the only form of behaviour suggested in the list for which more than one in four said the behaviour is “never” to be considered as family violence. Focus group participants,

too, displayed little awareness of financial abuse. When asked specifically about financial abuse, the notion brought to mind behaviours such as controlling money, hoarding family income or running up debts. Financial abuse was viewed as more subtle and linked with other forms of emotional and physical control. Several participants pointed out that financial abuse can have particularly significant consequences when it limits a family member's ability to leave an abusive situation.

In general, individuals who have the most expansive definition of family violence – i.e., classify more of the behaviours as “always” being family violence tend to be women, people who know someone who has experienced family violence or read or heard information about the subject, have children in the home and be employed. Those between 25 and 44 years of age also have a broader definition of family violence, particularly compared to youth and seniors who are more likely to classify the various behaviours as family violence “in some cases” or “never”. Sub-group differences for those behaviours that generated less consensus are highlighted below.

- ❑ Throwing, smashing, hitting or kicking another family member's things, or hurting pets is rated as always being family violence more often by women, those in the 25 to 44 years old category, English-speakers and individuals who know someone who has experienced family violence or read information on the subject. Quebeckers, youth and those with a high school education or less are more likely to say these behaviours are never family violence or family violence only in some cases.
- ❑ Kicking, biting or hitting is considered to always be family violence more often by college-educated respondents, those who know someone who has experienced family violence or read or heard information on the topic, and employed individuals. Quebeckers and lower income earners are more likely to respond “never” or “in some cases” for this item.
- ❑ Failing to provide food, shelter or medical attention is more likely to always to be considered to be family violence by women, residents of Alberta, those with a post-secondary education, higher income earners, employed individuals, those with children in the home and people who have read or heard information on the topic. Quebeckers and older Canadians (65 years and older) are more likely to rate this behaviour as “usually” family violence on only “in some cases”.
- ❑ Yelling, swearing or humiliating a family member is rated as “always” being family violence more often by women, those between 25 and 44 years of age, individuals who are married and have children in the home, and who know someone who has experienced family violence or have read or heard information about family violence. Youth and higher income earners are more likely to consider this behaviour as family violence “in some cases”.

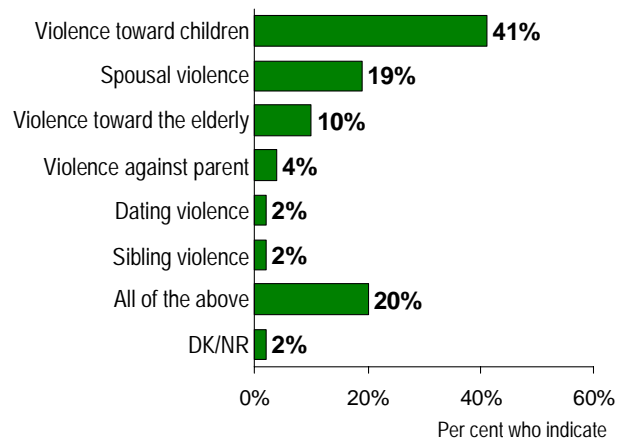
- ❑ Pushing, grabbing or shoving is more likely to be considered family violence by women, those with children in the home and those who know someone who has experienced family violence.
- ❑ Hitting a family member with an open hand received higher ratings by individuals with children in the home, employed respondents and those who know someone who has experienced family violence. Older individuals and those with a high school education or less are more likely to say this behaviour is family violence “in some cases”.
- ❑ Preventing an adult family member from knowing about or having access to family income or savings was more strongly rated among women, those with children in the home and people who know someone who has experienced family violence. There is little difference in responses by age of respondent.

2.3 Greatest Cause for Concern

The survey indicated that, by far the greatest cause for concern in terms of family violence is violence toward children (Exhibit 2.5). Two in five Canadians (41 per cent) view violence toward children as the greatest cause for concern. Spousal violence is the greatest cause for concern for one in five (19 per cent) and one in ten (10 per cent) are most concerned about violence toward the elderly or disabled. Fewer than one in twenty identified violence against a parent by their teenage or adult child, dating violence or sibling violence to be the greatest cause for concern. One in five (20 per cent) indicated that all of the types of violence discussed are cause for concern.

Exhibit 2.5 Greatest Cause for Concern

“Which of the following types of violence in the family do you consider to be the greatest cause for concern?”



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Sub-group differences include:

- Those most likely to identify violence toward children as the greatest cause for concern are youth (under 25 years of age) and those 25 to 44 years of age, single individuals, and parents with children at home, the employed and allophones. They are also more likely to know a family that has experienced family violence.
- Spousal violence is more apt to be named as the greatest cause for concern by men, seniors (and also individuals who are out of the labour force and do not have children

in the home) and people with household incomes of \$40,000 to \$60,000. They are also most likely to have read or heard information about family violence.

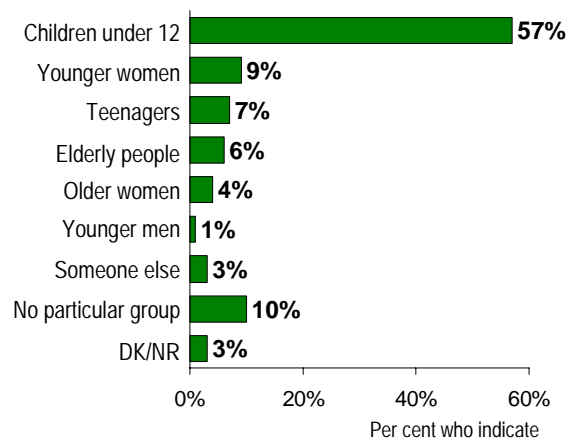
- ❑ High proportions of people expressing greatest concern for violence toward the elderly or disabled are seniors (and therefore, not in the labour force and without children in the home) and individuals who do not know anyone who has experienced violence.
- ❑ Women and 45 to 64 year olds are most likely to have chosen all of the groups as being of greatest concern.

2.4 Family Members at Greatest Risk

Similar to the findings in the previous section, children under 12 are perceived (by far) to be at greatest risk within the family of experiencing family violence (57 per cent) (Exhibit 2.6). Fewer than one in ten identified younger women, teenagers and elderly people as the type of family member at greatest risk.

Exhibit 2.6 Greatest Risk Group

“What group of people within the family do you think is the most at risk of experiencing family violence?”



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- ❑ People most likely to have identified children as being at greatest risk are youth (under 25 years of age) and those between 25 and 44 years, Albertans, those who are

employed, individuals who are single, and parents with children in the home. There is also a lower concentration among allophones.

- Individuals who indicated that teenagers are the most at risk of experiencing family violence include a high percentage of youth under 25, individuals who have not heard or read about family violence, and allophones.
- People who indicated that elderly people are the most at risk of experiencing family violence include a disproportionate number of seniors and residents of Quebec.

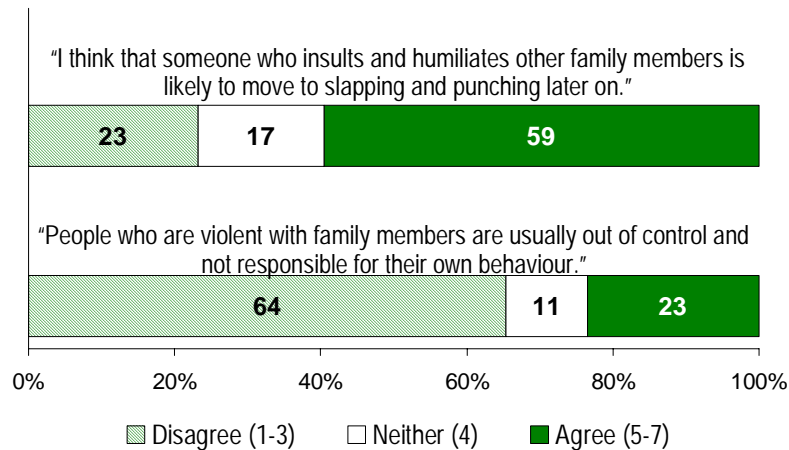
**3****ATTITUDES TOWARDS FAMILY
VIOLENCE**

The purpose of this section is to examine Canadians' views about family violence in general. This includes, first a discussion of the perceived seriousness and priority of the issue. Other issues include the relationship between psychological and physical forms of violence, the causes and consequences of family violence and perceived prevalence of family violence in one's own community and within different segments of society. The purpose of this survey overall, and the attitudinal measures examined in this chapter in particular, is to gather a baseline profile. In some cases, findings are more obvious, however, a quantitative measurement was not previously available.

3.1 General Attitudes Towards Family Violence

A majority of Canadians (59 per cent) agree that “someone who insults and humiliates other family members is likely to move to slapping and punching later on” (Exhibit 3.1). Nearly one in four (23 per cent) disagree with this statement.

Exhibit 3.1 Continuum of Violence and Individual Responsibility



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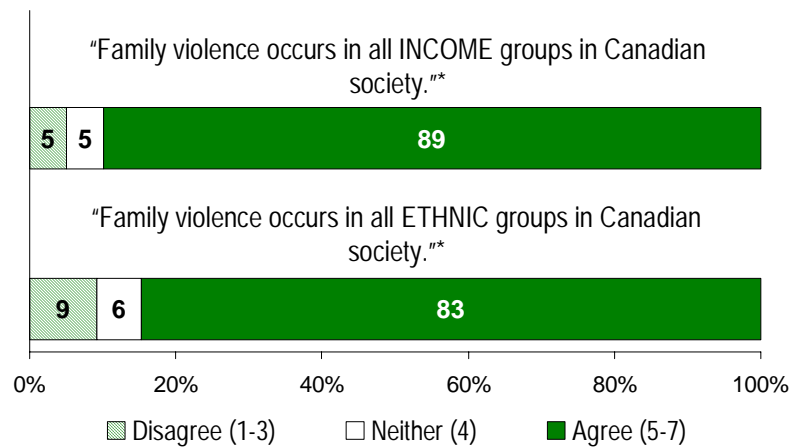
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Most Canadians do not agree with the assertion that people who are violent with family members are usually out of control and not responsible for their own actions. One in four (23 per cent) agree with this statement.

- While there is a slight gender difference (26 per cent of men agree, vs. 21 per cent of women), the most significant difference in responses is along education lines. Only 16 per cent of Canadians with a university-level education think that when family violence occurs, the aggressor is usually out of control and cannot be held responsible, whereas among the high school-educated 28 per cent agree.
- People who do not know anyone who has experienced violence, as well as those who have not read or heard anything about family violence are also more inclined to agree with this statement.

Most agree that family violence occurs in all income groups (89 per cent agree) and a similarly strong majority believes that family violence occurs in all ethnic groups (83 per cent agree) in Canadian society (Exhibit 3.2).

Exhibit 3.2 Prevalence of Family Violence



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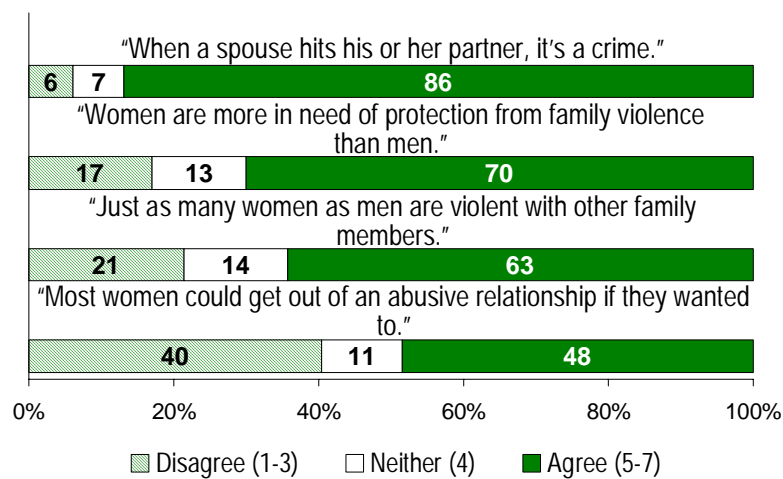
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- Canadians with higher education are more likely to think that family violence is prevalent across all ethnic groups in Canadian society.
- People who say that they have heard or read about family violence, as well as those who know someone who has experienced violence are more likely to believe that family violence cuts across all income and ethnic groups.

3.2 Particular Attitudes Towards Spousal Violence

Most Canadians agree with the idea that spousal violence involving hitting is a crime (86 per cent) (Exhibit 3.3). Only one in twenty disagree with this statement.

Exhibit 3.3 Attitude to Spousal Violence



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- Although almost everyone agrees that hitting a spouse or partner is a crime, women, 25 to 44 year olds and Francophones agree in proportionately higher numbers (of greater than 90 per cent).

Most people believe that women are more in need of protection from family violence than men (overall 70 per cent, slightly higher among men than women).

- The view that women are more in need of protection from family violence than men is more widely shared among Canadians over the age of 45 (three out of four agree, compared to approximately two out of three in younger age cohorts) and Quebeckers (74 per cent agree).

Two in three Canadians believe that just as many women are violent with other family members as men. Just over one in five, however, disagree with this statement.

- ❑ There are some regional variations, with a higher proportion of Canadians from the Atlantic and Alberta agreeing that men and women have an equal propensity for violence within the family. Women, those with a high school or college education and Canadians between the ages of 25 and 44 are also more likely to agree that the perpetration of family violence is as widespread among women as it is among men.
- ❑ This statement is also more likely to be supported by people who have had personal experience of family violence. Similarly, those who know someone who has experienced violence are slightly more inclined to have agreed (64 per cent) that there are just as many women as men who are violent with other family members.

There is a strong divide among Canadians about whether they believe “most women could get out of an abusive relationship if they wanted to”. About as many people agree with this statement as disagree and there are surprisingly few people who rate themselves in the middle, as neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

- ❑ People who tend to agree in greater numbers that most women could get out of abusive relationship are residents of Quebec and the Atlantic, Francophones, those with lower levels of education and income, people who are neither married nor single (i.e., widowed, separated, divorced), and those who attend religious services occasionally.
- ❑ Individuals who do not know anyone who has experienced family violence, those who have not seen or read about it recently, and (surprisingly) those who have had indirect experience with family violence in their homes are all more likely to agree with this statement.
- ❑ Residents of BC, Anglophones, those with a university degree and upper ranges of income (i.e., \$60,000 or above), people who are married, and individuals who attend religious services rarely agree with this statement. People who reported knowing someone who has experienced family violence are also more likely to disagree with the statement.

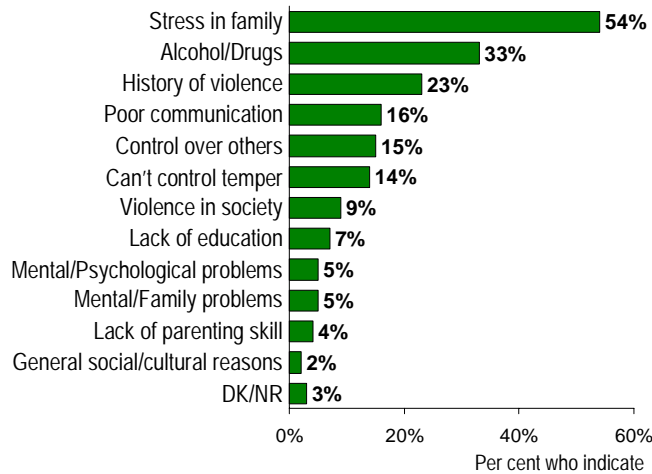
Women’s ability to leave an abusive situation was explored in more detail in the focus group discussions. On the whole, the sentiment of focus group participants tended toward disagreeing that most women could get out of an abusive relationship if they wanted. Participants showed a significant appreciation for the barriers that prevent women from leaving an abusive situation or make leaving more difficult (e.g., difficulty even recognizing one is in an abusive relationship, lack of financial resources, poor support from family and friends, concern for children, lack of self-confidence/self-esteem, fear for personal safety, lack of services such as in rural areas). On the other hand, some participants pointed out that there have never been more information and resources available to support women to leave an abusive relationship (e.g., shelters, societal pressure) than are currently available.

3.3 Perceived Causes of Family Violence

When asked why violence occurs in some families, respondents were most likely to identify stress in the family due, for example, to money problems and unemployment (54 per cent) (Exhibit 3.4). Alcohol and drugs were mentioned by one-third of Canadians (33 per cent). Approximately one in five (23 per cent) identified a history of family violence as a determining factor. A middle tier of causal factors include: poor communication, a person's need to control others/lack of respect/jealously, and an inability to control one's temper. A variety of other risk factors (e.g., violence in society, poor education) were mentioned by fewer than one in ten.

Exhibit 3.4 Causes of Family Violence

“Why do you think violence occurs in some families?”



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- ❑ Individuals who identified stress in the family as influencing the occurrence of family violence tend to include 25 to 64 year olds, individuals with a college education, and those who had read or heard information about family violence.
- ❑ Alcohol and drugs were mentioned as a cause of family violence most often by individuals with a high school education or less, residents of the Atlantic. Youth and those who are single are less likely to mention this factor.
- ❑ A high proportion of respondents who cited a history of violence in the family as a risk factor for family violence include those between 25 and 44 years of age, individuals

with a university education, those with a household income higher than \$80,000 and residents of British Columbia. They are also most likely not to know a family that has experienced violence or read or heard information on the subject.

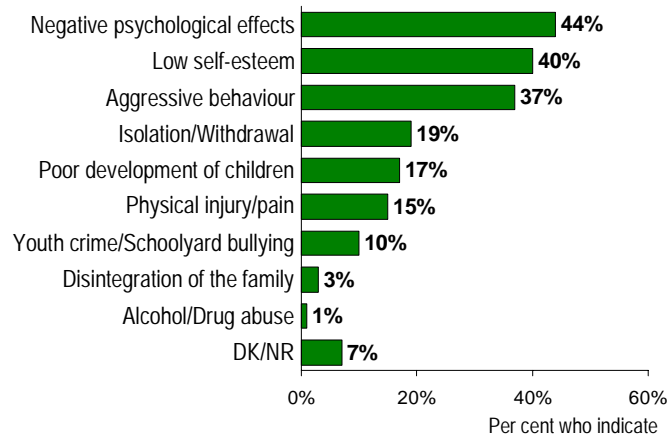
3.4 Perceived Impacts of Family Violence

a) *Impacts on Family Members*

In terms of identifying some of the impacts on individuals who directly experience family violence, respondents most often cited negative psychological effects (i.e., depression and fear) (44 per cent) and low self-esteem and confidence (40 per cent) (Exhibits 3.5a and b). A slightly lower proportion mentioned impacts of family violence that encourage violent behaviour in other family members or perpetuates a cycle of violence.

Exhibit 3.5 Impacts of Family Violence (a)

“What do you think are some of the impacts on family members who DIRECTLY experience family violence?”



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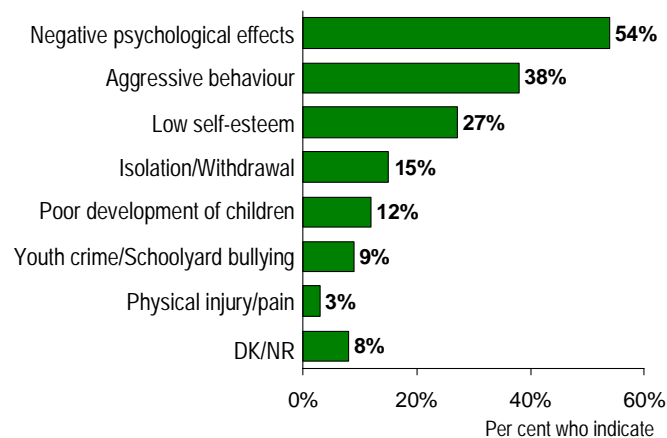
About one in five mentioned isolation and withdrawal. Many pointed to the intergenerational effects of family violence resulting in poor development of children (e.g., in school or health), and youth crime or school bullying. Fifteen per cent mentioned physical pain or injury as an impact of family violence.

- Negative psychological effects were more likely to be mentioned by individuals who know someone who has experience family violence or have read or heard information on the topic.
- People who cited low self-esteem and confidence as some of the impacts on family members who directly experience family violence tend to include individuals with a university education, those who know someone who has experienced violence or have read or heard information on the subject.
- Individuals who link family violence with aggressive behaviour in children are more likely to include people with a university education, and those with children in the home.
- More likely to not be able to name any impacts are seniors, those with a high school education or less and those who do not know anyone who has experienced family violence and have not read or heard information on the topic.

Canadians view the impacts of family violence as being similar in nature for both family members who are directly targeted and for those who experience family violence indirectly. For example, when asked about the impacts on those who witness family violence, respondents again emphasized negative impacts on mental health. Negative psychological effects (e.g., depression and fear) were mentioned by 54 per cent, followed by aggressive behaviour (38 per cent) and low self-esteem and confidence (27 per cent). Other factors that were identified less often were isolation and withdrawal, poor development of children (e.g., in school or health), physical pain or injury, and youth crime or school bullying.

Exhibit 3.5 Impacts of Family Violence (b)

“What do you think are some of the impacts on other family members who ARE EXPOSED TO OR WITNESS family violence?”



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- Individuals with direct personal experience of family violence, people who knew someone who had experienced family violence and those who are informed on the issues are more apt to recognize low self-esteem and confidence as impacts on those who have indirectly experienced family violence.
- Individuals who cited aggressive behaviour as an impact of witnessing family violence on family members are more apt to include people with a university education and individuals with direct personal experience of family violence.
- More frequent “don’t know” responses come from those with a high school education or less, individuals who do not have prior personal experience or exposure to family violence and those who have not read or heard information on family violence.

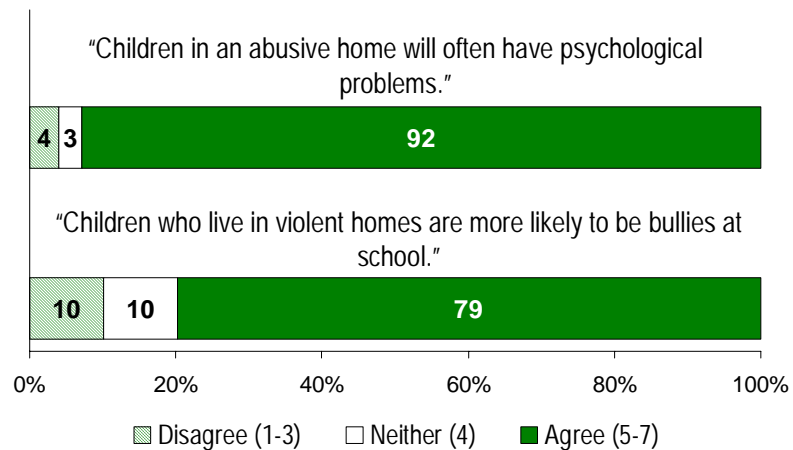
b) Impact on Children From Violent Homes

Virtually all Canadians agree that children in abusive homes can have an increased incidence of psychological problems (92 per cent) (Exhibit 3.6).

- Given that the agreement is so high across the board, there are few profiling differences. Nonetheless, women, individuals who are married and those who regularly attend religious services are even more likely than other Canadians to agree with this potential outcome of family violence in the home.

A majority of Canadians believe that children who live in violent homes are more likely to be bullies at school (79 per cent agreed with this statement, 10 per cent disagreed and a further 10 per cent were neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing). There are no major sub-group differences in this view.

**Exhibit 3.6
Effect on Children**

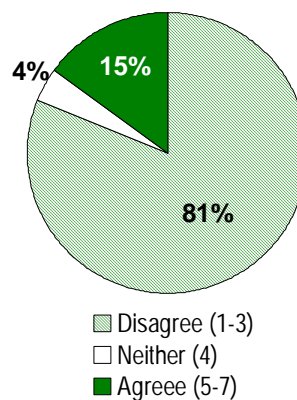


c) **Impact of Family Violence on Health**

There is a strong level of agreement that living with family violence affects one's general health (81 per cent believe that this is the case, compared to 15 per cent who think that it does not affect your general health) (Exhibit 3.7).

Exhibit 3.7 Effect on Health

“Living with family violence doesn't affect your general health.”



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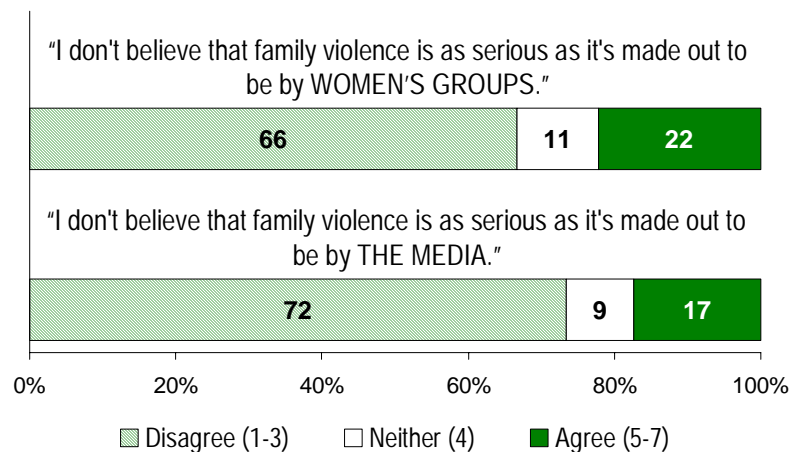
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- The idea that family violence affects one's health is generally shared across most demographic groups, but is particularly strong among women, those with children at home, Canadians under the age of 65, and those with a college or university-level education. As well, people with a greater level of awareness and exposure to family violence also tend to make the link between family violence and its impact on general health.
- On the other hand, Canadians who do not think that exposure to family violence has any impact on general health tend to have lower levels of education and income, have neither English nor French as their mother tongue, be widowed, separated or divorced and be either unemployed or not in the labour force. They are also less likely to know someone who has experienced family violence.

3.5 Family Violence in Context

Overall, there is a widely shared opinion that neither the media nor women's groups exaggerate the seriousness of family violence. Fewer than one in five (17 per cent) think that the media has overstated the problem of family violence and only 22 per cent believe that women's groups have exaggerated the seriousness of the problem (Exhibit 3.8).

Exhibit 3.8 Seriousness of the Problem



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- ❑ There are, however, significant gender differences in the perception of how the media and women's groups portray the problem of family violence. Women are more likely than men to agree that the media does not overstate the seriousness of family violence (78 per cent, vs. 66 per cent of men) – and a larger proportion of women do not think that women's groups exaggerate extent of the problem either (75 per cent, vs. 57 per cent of men).
- ❑ Those with a high school level of education or less are more likely to have indicated that they do not believe that family violence is as serious as it is made out to be by the media or by women's groups.
- ❑ Knowing someone who has experienced violence is one of the key factors in determining whether or not people believe that the media or women's groups are overstating the seriousness of the problem. Those who know someone who has experienced violence tend to say that the media and women's groups are not exaggerating the seriousness of family violence. Those who have read or heard information about family violence are more likely to believe the media does not

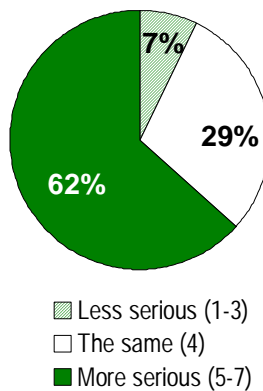
exaggerate. Also, those with direct personal experience of family violence are more likely to believe that women's groups don't exaggerate family violence.

a) *Family Violence Today Compared to Ten Years Ago*

The majority of Canadians (62 per cent) perceive the problem of family violence in our society as more serious today than ten years ago (Exhibit 3.9). Three in ten (29 per cent) rate the extent of family violence as the same as ten years ago (higher among people who had directly experienced family violence). A small minority (seven per cent) believe family violence is less serious compared to ten years ago (higher among those under 25 years of age).

Exhibit 3.9 Family Violence Today

“How would you rate the problem of family violence in our society today compared to ten years ago?”



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- People who believe that the problem of family violence has become more serious are more apt to be women and individuals with lower levels of education and income. These individuals are also more likely to have neither English nor French as their first language, attend religious services regularly or occasionally and not be employed.

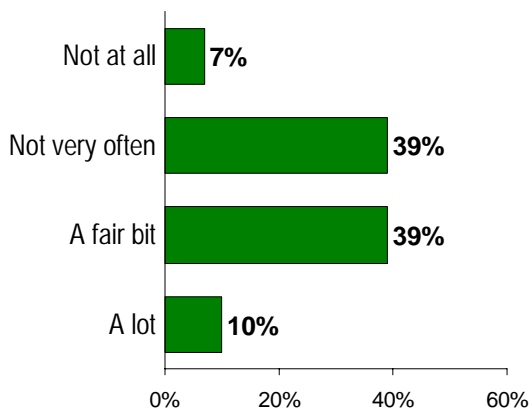
The focus group discussions pursued a similar line of questioning, asking participants whether they thought family violence had increased, decreased or stayed the same in the last 10 years. Initially, many participants indicated that family violence had increased. The increase was attributed to greater stress on the family (e.g., difficulty making ends meet coupled with greater consumerism, dual income families), more violence in society in general and greater cultural diversity. For some, however, the increase was attributed to greater awareness and a broader social definition of family violence. In other words, for at least some individuals, the perceived increase in family violence is more an artifact of reporting, rather than a real increase in violent behaviour.

b) *Family Violence in Local Community*

When asked to rate the extent to which family violence exists in their community fewer than one in ten believe that it does not occur at all (seven per cent). Four in ten people believe that it occurs “not very often” and the same proportion say “a fair bit” (both at 39 per cent) (Exhibit 3.10). One in ten (10 per cent) believe that family violence occurs a lot in their community.

Exhibit 3.10 Family Violence in Community

“To what extent do you think that family violence exists in your own community?”

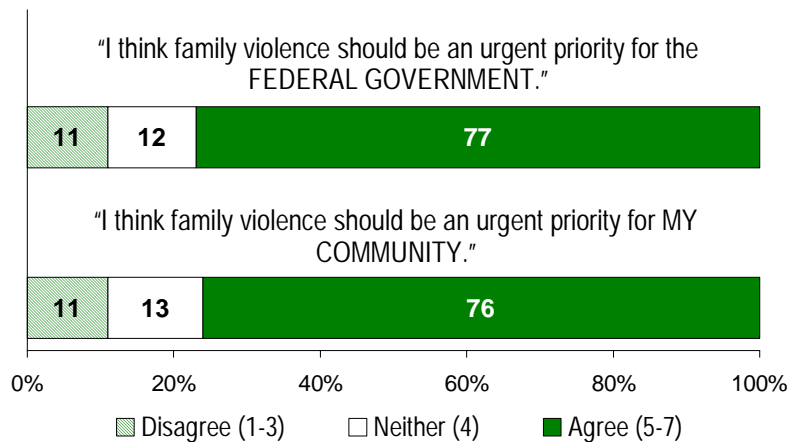


- ❑ Respondents who believe that family violence occurs a lot or a fair bit in their communities are more likely to be women and those 25 to 44 years of age. They are also most likely to include individuals who have themselves experienced or know someone who has experienced family violence, and have read or heard information on the subject.
- ❑ In comparison, individuals who report that family violence does not exist very often or not at all in their community are most likely to include men, youth under 25 and seniors 65 years of age and older, be out of the labour force and have lower levels of education and income (though earners of \$80,000 or more are most likely to respond not very often to this item). They are also more apt to live in Quebec and report that their mother tongue is French.

c) Level of Government Priority

A significant majority believes that family violence should be an urgent priority, for the federal government (77 per cent agree) as well as at the community level (76 per cent agree) (Exhibit 3.11).

**Exhibit 3.11
Priority for Family Violence**



- ❑ Those who believe most strongly that family violence should be an urgent priority are women (approximately 85 per cent). Support for designating family violence as an urgent priority (nationally and locally) is echoed by approximately two out of three men.

- ❑ Canadians with a university-level education are much less inclined than others to think that family violence should be an urgent priority for the federal government (69 per cent agreed compared with 80 and 83 per cent of those with less education) – whereas education level has little impact on the level of support for making family violence a priority at the community level.
- ❑ Exposure to and awareness of family violence are important factors. Those who know someone who has experienced violence, as well as those who have heard or read something about family violence are more inclined to think that family violence should be an urgent priority for their community and for the federal government. In contrast, personal experience with family violence has no effect on the level of support for making family violence an urgent priority.



4

INFORMATION ABOUT FAMILY VIOLENCE

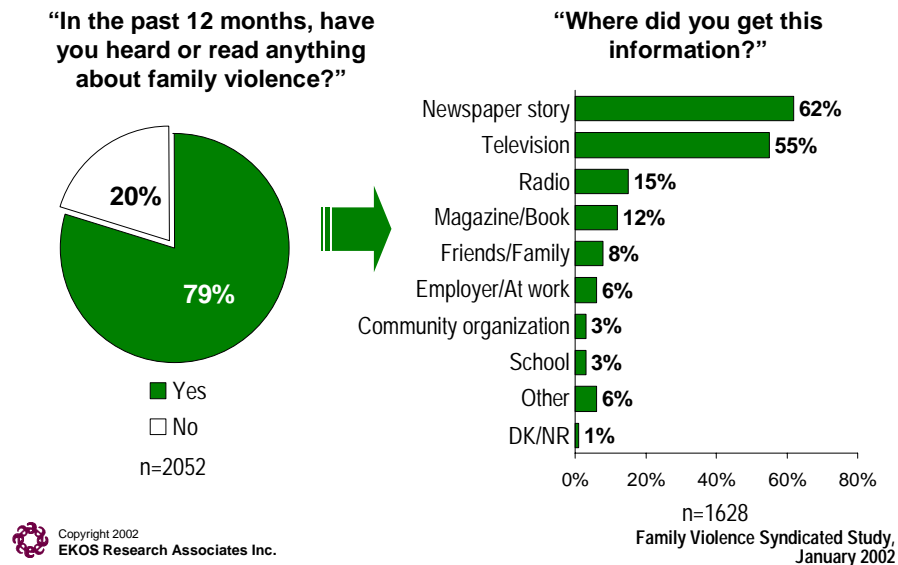
This section examines Canadians' self-assessed awareness and knowledge of issues related to family violence. The level of interest in or need for information on the subject is also profiled. As well, the correlation between individuals' knowledge and attitudes about family violence is explored.

4.1 Heard or Read About Family Violence

Most Canadians (79 per cent) reported that they have heard or read something about family violence in the last 12 months (Exhibit 4.1).

- These individuals are most likely to include women, those who are married, people between 45 and 64 years of age, and the post-secondary educated. They are also more apt to have had personal experience with family violence or know someone who has experienced family violence.

Exhibit 4.1 Information on Family Violence



Newspaper and television are by far the most prevalent sources of information about family violence (mentioned by 62 and 56 per cent, respectively), followed by radio and magazines or books. Various other sources are mentioned by fewer than one in ten people.

- Individuals who reported that they got their information from a newspaper story include those 45 years of age and older, married individuals, those with a university education, people with household incomes of \$80,000 or more, residents of Ontario, and Anglophones.

- Television is a more likely source of information on family violence for seniors, those with a lower socio-economic status, residents of Quebec, Francophones and those neither married nor single.

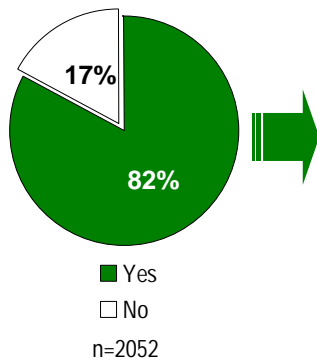
The importance of newspaper and television as sources of information about family violence was reiterated in the focus group discussions. Participants indicated that much of their information was in the form of high profile news stories or public service announcements. Other significant sources of information included talk shows and the entertainment media (e.g., movies, TV shows). Participants also noted that personal experience with family violence (or knowing someone) can be an important source of information.

4.2 Information Needs

More than four in five (82 per cent) people indicated that they feel personally well enough informed about family violence (higher among those between 45 and 64 years of age, married and with children in the home) (Exhibit 4.2).

Exhibit 4.2 Informed about Family Violence

“Do you feel you are personally well enough informed about family violence?”



“What kind of information do you feel you need?”



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- Individuals who indicated that they do not feel that they are personally well enough informed about family violence are most likely to include those under 25 years of age, people who are single and those with no children in the home.

Among those who indicated that they are not well enough informed about family violence, the most frequently mentioned kind of information that is needed is on warning signs and types of family violence (22 per cent). Just under one in five said they need information on the prevalence of family violence and information about resources in their community (18 and 17 per cent, respectively).

Focus group participants, as well, indicated that information on recognizing the warning signs of family violence and what constitutes family violence would be useful, particularly for those forms of family violence that are less familiar (e.g., financial abuse). Participants also favoured more concrete information on strategies or avenues to deal with family violence. The best ways to provide information to the public were thought to be television, the schools, doctor's offices/community health centres, community newspapers, movie trailers, and web-sites.

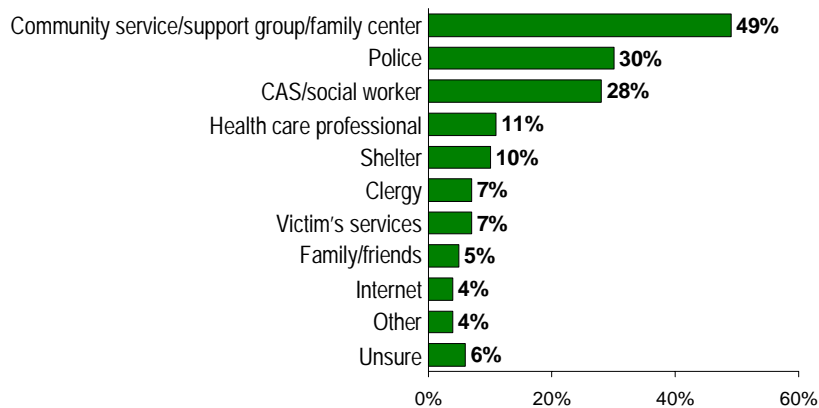
4.3 Suggestions for Information or Support

Respondents were asked what they would suggest to someone who was experiencing family violence and needed information or support. The most frequently cited source was local community services (including, for example, a support group or family centre) (Exhibit 4.3). Three in ten individuals would direct someone to the police. A similar proportion (28 per cent) would recommend social service agencies such as the Children’s Aid Society or a social worker. About one in ten would suggest a health care professional or shelter if someone asked them where to get information or support. Six per cent of individuals admitted that they were unsure what they would suggest.

- Those who have read or heard information about family violence are more likely to have mentioned community resources, as are women, Francophones and those in the middle age category (45 to 64 years).

Exhibit 4.3 Getting Information / Support

“If someone who was experiencing family violence asked you where to get information or support, what would you suggest?”



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- More likely to direct someone to the police are seniors (65 years and older). Anglophones and those who have known of a situation of family violence are more apt to have mentioned CAS/social worker.

- ❑ Individuals with a personal experience of family violence or who have known someone experiencing family violence, as well as women and people who had heard or read information about family violence are more apt to have mentioned health professionals and shelters as avenues for information. Ontarians and those between 25 and 44 years of age are also more likely to have mentioned shelters.
- ❑ The proportion saying “unsure” to this question is higher among residents of Alberta and Saskatchewan and Manitoba, among men, youth (under 25 years of age) and those who had not recently read or heard anything about family violence.



5

EXPOSURE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

While the focus of this study is on attitudes toward family violence (as opposed to incidence rates or behaviour), the level of personal exposure to family violence was also addressed. This section provides a reading of the extent of Canadians' exposure to family violence and attempts to gauge under what circumstances and how individuals are prepared to intervene in a situation of family violence based on their actual experiences. The reasons why individuals in some cases do not or cannot respond in a family violence situation are also examined.

5.1

Extent of Exposure to Family Violence

Overall, the survey results indicate that many Canadians have been touched by family violence in a personal way. About six in ten Canadians (61 per cent) reported that they know (or have known) someone who has experienced family violence.

- People who are most likely to know someone in a situation of family violence are residents of BC and Alberta, those in the middle age groups (25 to 64), English-speakers and those currently employed.
- Quebeckers and Atlantic Canadians are less apt to report knowing someone experiencing family violence compared to residents of other regions.
- Individuals who indicated that they have personally experienced family violence are more likely to say they know of someone in a situation of family violence. This may suggest that some respondents are either recalling episodes of family violence within their own family or tend to have a heightened sensitivity/greater awareness of these events in other peoples' lives.

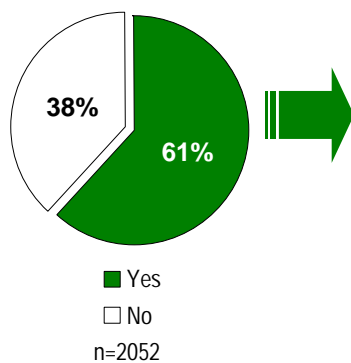
5.2 Profile of Most Recent Incident

Individuals who reported knowing someone in a situation of family violence were asked a series of follow-up questions referring to the most recent incident they are familiar with. The purpose of these items is to profile the kinds of family violence situations to which people are exposed and then to examine willingness to respond in light of these circumstances.

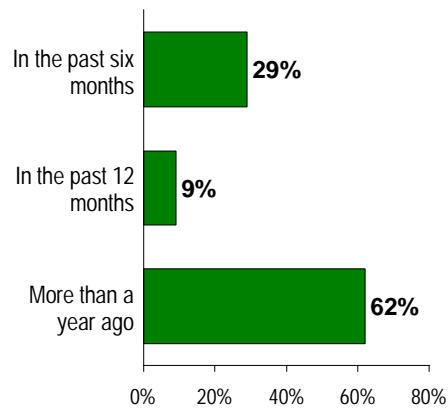
For most people who know someone who has experienced family violence, the most recent incident took place over a year ago (62 per cent) (higher among older respondents) (Exhibit 5.1). Three in ten indicated a more recent experience (in the past six months) and nine per cent reported that the incident took place in the past 12 months.

Exhibit 5.1 Personal Knowledge of Situation

“Have you ever known someone who was experiencing family violence?”



“How long ago did you become aware of this situation?”



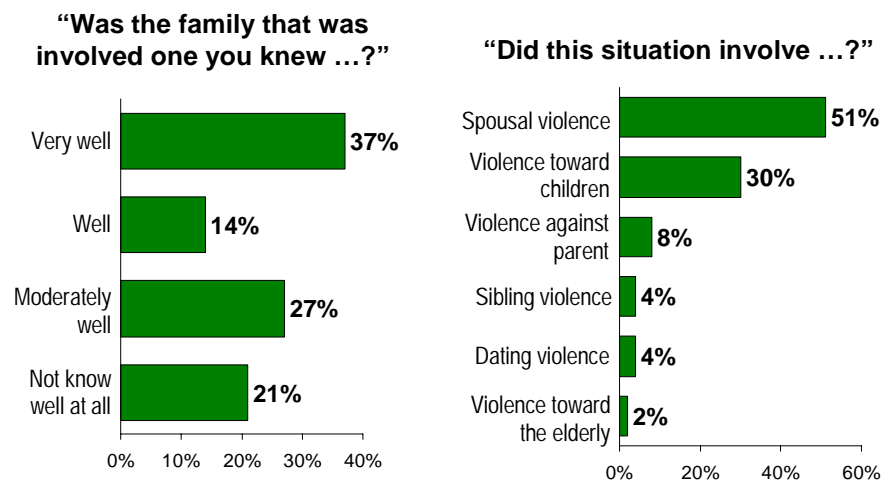
Almost four in ten individuals (37 per cent) said that the most recent incident of family violence that they know about involves a family they know very well (Exhibit 5.2). Another 41 per cent know the family well or moderately well. One in five indicated that they do not know the family well at all (higher in cases involving violence toward children).

- ❑ Those who are university-educated are more apt to say they do not know the family well at all. Those who have themselves had a personal experience with family violence and who were separated, divorced or widowed more often know the family very well.

The nature of the most recent incident of family violence is most likely to have involved spousal violence (51 per cent), followed by violence against children (30 per cent) (Exhibit 5.2). A minority indicated that the most recent situation of family violence they know of involved violence against a parent, dating or sibling violence or violence toward the elderly or person with a disability.

- ❑ Those who are single are more likely to be aware of a situation of violence toward children or sibling violence, and less apt to be aware of a situation of spousal violence.

Exhibit 5.2 Personal Knowledge of Situation

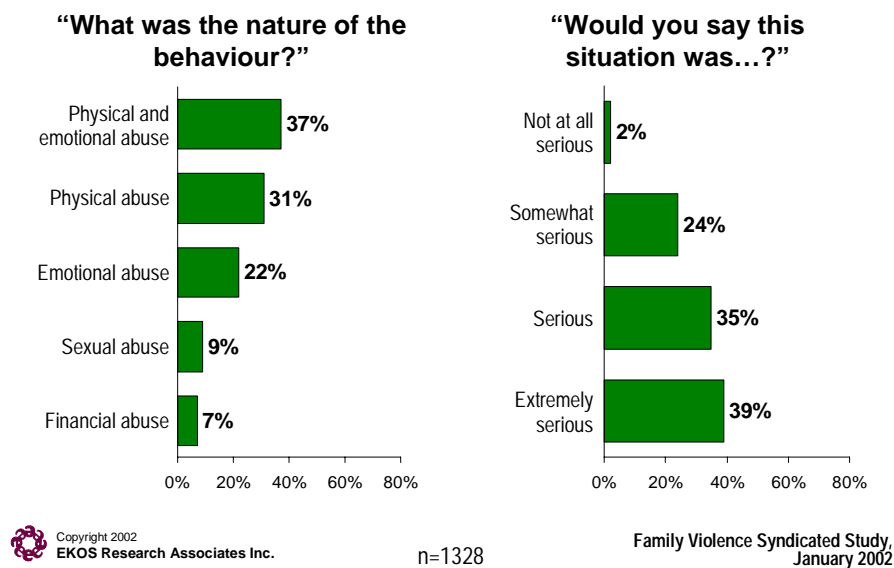


In many cases, the most recent family violence situation that people know of involved physical and emotional abuse (37 per cent), followed by physical abuse only (31 per cent) and emotional abuse only (22 per cent) (Exhibit 5.3). Fewer incidents were described concerning sexual abuse or financial abuse. Two per cent did not know or refused to divulge the particular circumstances of the situation.

- Quebeckers and Francophones are more likely to be aware of a situation involving emotional abuse. Women, those who know the family very well and who have themselves experienced family violence more often indicated the most recent situation of family violence that they knew about to involve both physical and emotional abuse more often.

Exhibit 5.3

Personal Knowledge of Situation



5.3 Rated Seriousness

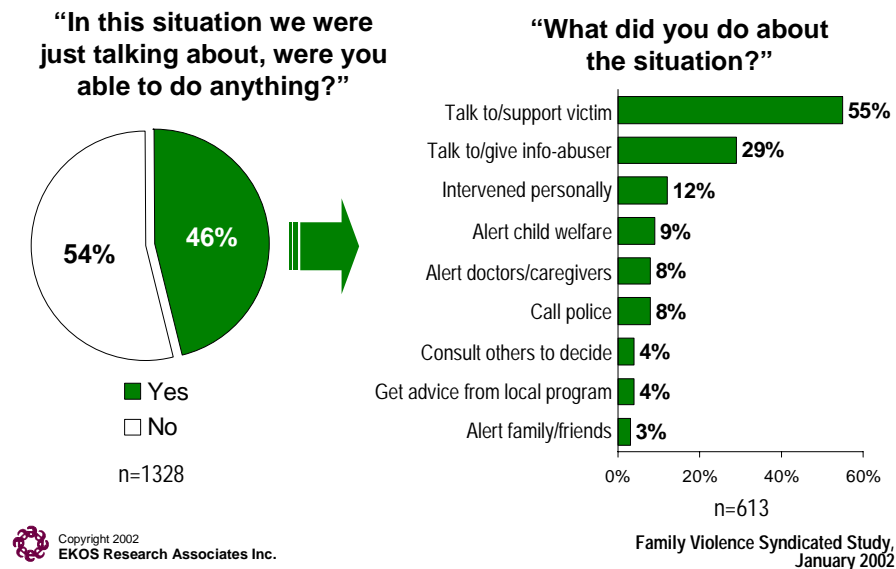
In the majority of cases, respondents characterized the most recent situation of family violence that they know of as serious (35 per cent) or extremely serious (39 per cent) (Exhibit 5.3).

- Those who know the family well are more likely to characterize the situation as extremely serious. Women, those who have read or heard information about family violence and individuals responsible for dependent elderly also characterized the situation as extremely serious more often.

5.4 Response in Most Recent Incident

Individuals were able to provide help or assistance in about half of cases (46 per cent) of the most recent situation of family violence that they know about (Exhibit 5.4). The nature of the family violence situation itself has an impact on whether individuals are able or willing to intervene. For example, people are more likely to provide assistance when they know the family “very well” rather than when they do not know the family well at all. People are more likely to act in situations of family violence involving both physical and emotional abuse.

Exhibit 5.4 Personal Knowledge of Situation



- Women and employed individuals are more likely to have intervened in the most recent case of family violence that they knew about. Less likely to have intervened are

people with a high school education or less and those with no direct personal experience of family violence.

- ❑ Having read or heard information about family violence increases the likelihood that individuals intervened in the situation of family violence that they knew about (though there is no way to determine whether individuals sought this information as a result of their experience or had read the information prior to the incident in question).

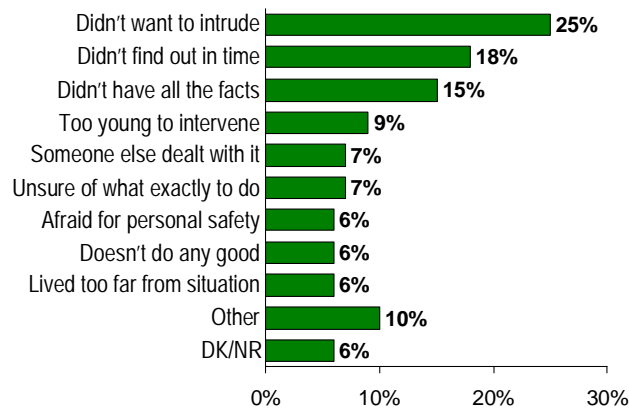
Among those who reported being able to provide help, the most frequent form of assistance was support to the person who was being harmed (55 per cent) (Exhibit 5.4). Three in ten respondents gave information or talked to the person in the family who was causing harm. Direct action (i.e., removing the person from the situation) was taken by 12 per cent. The remaining responses were mentioned by fewer than 10 per cent and include actions such as alerting child welfare authorities or police, informing health care or other professionals, consulting others about the situation, getting advice from a local family violence program, and alerting family and friends.

- ❑ Talking to or providing support to the victim or the person causing harm is much less probable if the person does not know the family well. The probability of talking to or providing information to the person causing harm is higher when the situation is perceived to be not very serious. Individuals are more inclined to alert officials from child welfare or the police when the situation is rated as being “very serious”.
- ❑ Women are more likely than men to have provided support to the victim, while men were more apt to report talking to the person causing harm.

Exhibit 5.5 presents results related to individuals' reasons for not intervening in the most recent situation of family violence that they are aware of. One in four indicated that the reason they did not provide help or assistance was reluctance to intrude on a family matter. For about one in five (18 per cent), intervention was not a real option as the situation had occurred in the past or the respondent found out about the situation too late to be of assistance. Other reasons mentioned, in order of frequency, are: not having all the facts of the situation; too young to intervene; unsure of what to do; someone else intervened in the situation; fear for personal safety; the belief that intervening would not do any good; and lived too far away.

Exhibit 5.5 Personal Knowledge of Situation

“Even though people might want ..., many reasons why they don't. What were your own reasons in this instance?”



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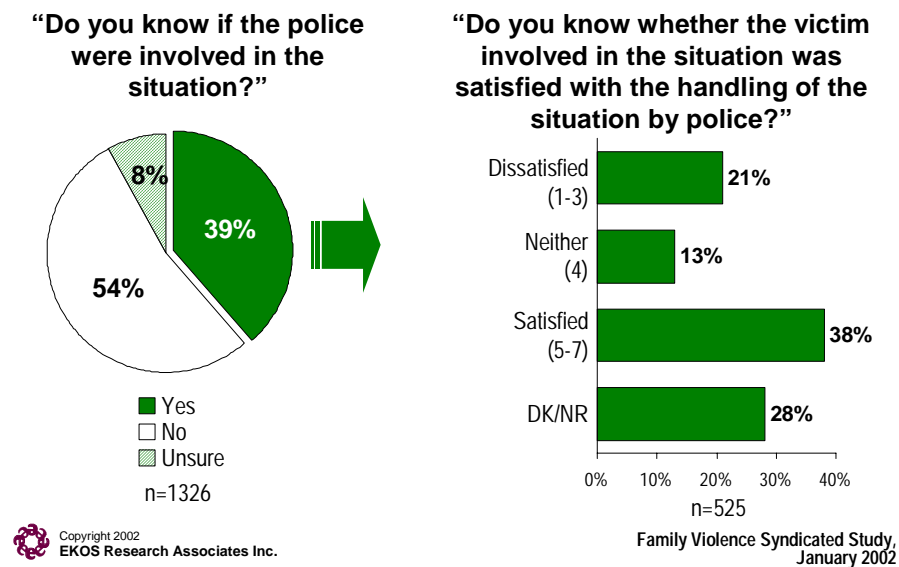
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- Those who did not know the family well are more likely to have cited being unsure of the facts of the situation as the reason for not providing help. Unwillingness to intrude in a family matter is mentioned more often when the situation is perceived to be not very serious. Not knowing about the situation in time or being informed after the fact was more likely to occur in situations that were perceived to be “very serious”.
- Women are more likely to express a fear for personal safety and less apt to cite privacy of the family as the reason for not intervening in the most recent situation of family violence that they knew of.

5.5 Involvement of Authorities in Most Recent Incident

About four in ten individuals (39 per cent) reported that police were involved in the most recent situation of family violence that they know of (54 per cent reported that they were not and eight per cent didn't know) (Exhibit 5.6).

Exhibit 5.6 Involvement of Police



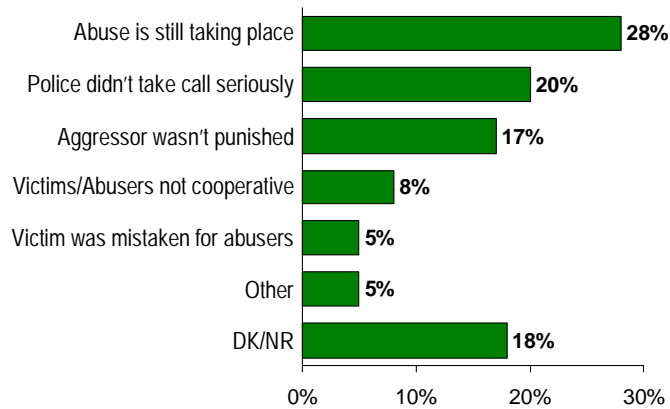
- Those who did not know the family well provided a “don’t know” response more frequently when asked whether police were involved. Police are less likely to have been involved in cases of sibling violence and emotional/psychological abuse. The likelihood that the police were reported to have been involved increases with respondents’ (perceived) seriousness of the situation.

When asked whether the victim involved in the family violence situation was satisfied with the handling of the situation by police, almost three in ten did not know (higher among those who do know the family well). Of the remainder, 38 per cent indicated that the victim was satisfied and one in five reported the victim to be dissatisfied.

The reasons why the victim was dissatisfied with the police response (in the view of the respondent) typically have to do with a perceived lack of seriousness on the part of the police or ineffectiveness in dealing with family violence (Exhibit 5.7). For example, 28 per cent of people reported that the victim was dissatisfied because a solution was not reached and the abuse is still taking place. Another one in five reported that the police did not take the call seriously or exhibited bias in their handling of the situation and 17 per cent indicated that the aggressor was not punished or justice was not served.

Exhibit 5.7 Involvement of Police

“Can you tell me briefly in your own words, why the victim was not satisfied with the handling of the situation by police?”



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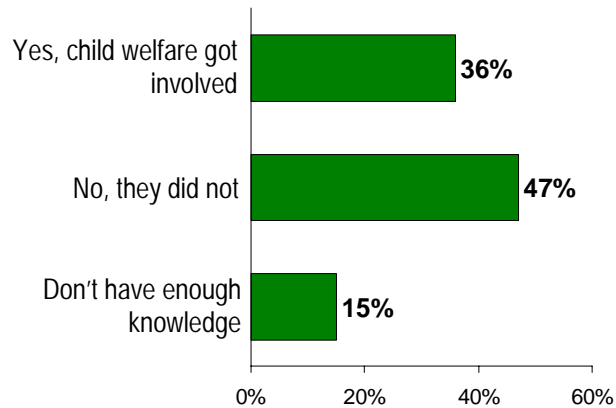
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Just over one-third of respondents (36 per cent) reported that child welfare authorities were involved in the most recent case of family violence that they know of (47 per cent said child welfare authorities were not involved and 15 per cent of respondents did not have enough knowledge to comment) (Exhibit 5.8). Involvement of child welfare authorities is higher in situations perceived to be “very serious”.

Exhibit 5.8 Involvement of Authorities

“Do you know whether child welfare authorities were involved in the situation?”





6

TOLERANCE LEVELS FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE AND INTENTIONS TO RESPOND

To test the level of tolerance for family violence and individuals' willingness to become involved in a situation of family violence, a series of hypothetical family violence scenarios with varying circumstances were devised and presented to respondents in the survey. The scenarios contained variations in the information provided in terms of: 1) the nature of the relationship of the perpetrator to the respondent (i.e., close friend or family member, neighbour or stranger), 2) the type of victim (i.e., spouse, child, older parent); and 3) the nature of the behaviour or type of abuse (i.e., insulting or humiliating, pushing or grabbing, kicking or hitting, sexual abuse, and financial abuse). Following the presentation of the scenario, respondents were asked to rate their level of concern, what kind of response they would take if they encountered this situation and, if they would elect not to intervene, what would prevent them from responding.

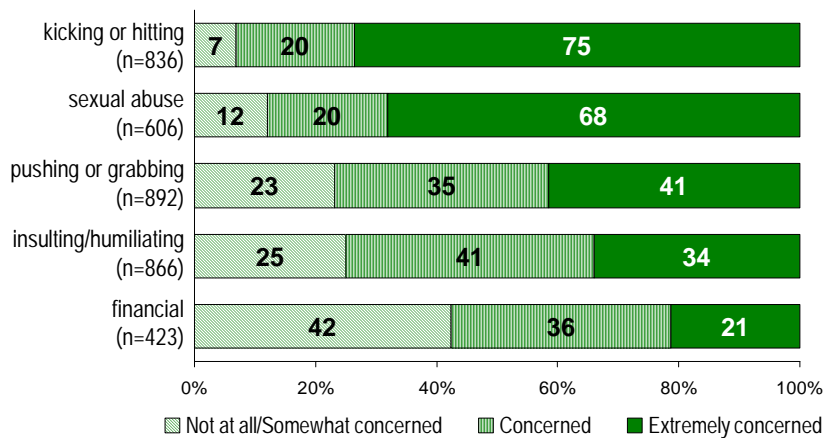
6.1 Rated Concern

Exhibits 6.1 to 6.3 present respondents’ rated level of concern with each of the scenarios collapsed by the differentiating variables in the scenarios: relationship to the person causing harm, type of victim and type of behaviour. The greatest variation in rated concern occurs for the type of behaviour (Exhibit 6.1). Rated concern is highest for scenarios involving kicking/hitting and sexual abuse (75 and 68 per cent, respectively say they would be extremely concerned in these situations). Rated concern drops drastically in situations involving “milder” forms of physical violence such as pushing/grabbing (41 per cent extremely concerned) and situations involving verbal abuse such as insulting/humiliating (34 per cent extremely concerned). One in five would be extremely concerned in a situation of financial abuse.

Exhibit 6.1 Hypothetical Scenarios — Level of Concern

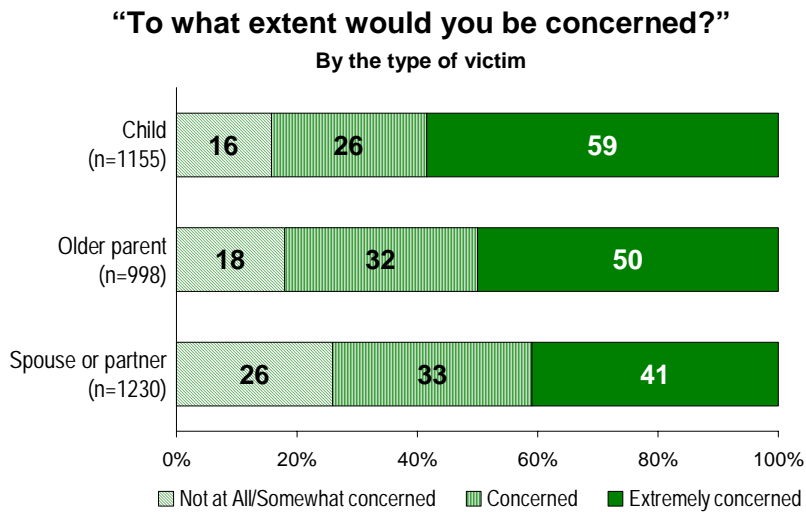
“To what extent would you be concerned?”

By the type of behaviour



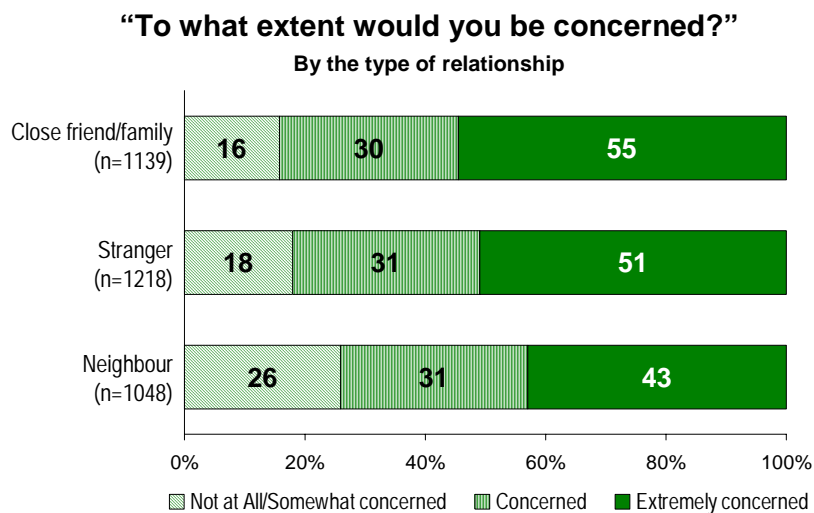
There is less variation in ratings based on the type of victim and even less in terms of the relationship of the perpetrator to the respondent. Concern is highest when a child is the victim (59 per cent concerned) and decreases when an older parent is involved (50 per cent concerned). The level of concern decreases again when a spouse/partner is the victim in the scenario (41 per cent concerned) (Exhibit 6.2).

Exhibit 6.2 Hypothetical Scenarios — Level of Concern



In terms of the type of relationship, greatest concern is elicited when the person responsible for causing harm in the scenario is a close friend or family member (55 extremely concerned) (Exhibit 6.3). The rated level of concern decreases somewhat in scenarios where a stranger is involved and drops again when the scenario involves a neighbour (51 and 43 per cent extremely concerned respectively).

Exhibit 6.3 Hypothetical Scenarios — Level of Concern



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- ❑ Looking at ratings of concern across the different types of scenarios (i.e., by type of victim, type of relationship, type of behaviour), there are some consistent patterns that are evident by socio-demographic group. For example, women are consistently more concerned than men when presented with the various scenarios. Youth provide the lowest ratings of concern in response to the various scenarios in virtually all instances. Older (and out of the labour force) Canadians (65 years of age or older) have substantially higher levels of concern for circumstances of family violence relating to older parents and to financial abuse.
- ❑ Marital status is an important predictor of rated levels of concern. People who are single are less concerned by many of the types of scenarios (consistent with the finding that youth provide lower ratings of concern). On the other hand, people who are neither married nor single (i.e. separated, divorced, widowed) are generally more concerned in many of the types of scenarios.
- ❑ By region, Quebeckers tend to be less concerned when presented with the scenarios than residents of other provinces (though this does not apply in all instances). Albertans register less concern with scenarios related to financial abuse. Residents of

Ontario are less concerned in situations involving children and scenarios involving insulting/humiliating or pushing/ grabbing.

- ❑ Lower levels of concern for most of the scenarios are evident among those who have not had personal experience with the issue (i.e., in their own lives or having known someone experiencing family violence). Similarly, people who have not recently heard or read anything about family violence are consistently less concerned across the different types of scenarios.

6.2 Intentions to Intervene

Tables 6.1 through 6.3 examine respondents' hypothetical response to the scenarios presented to them, again, broken down by type of relationship to the respondent, the type of victim in the scenario and the type of behaviour.

Considering the results by the type of relationship, individuals are far more likely to choose informal means of intervening such as talking to or providing information to the person causing harm or being harmed when the relationship is a close one (i.e., friend or family member) (Table 6.1). Conversely, responses that involve authorities such as calling 911 or the police are more frequently cited when the scenario involves a neighbour or stranger. Only a small minority of individuals (between four and eight per cent) would do nothing in response to the scenarios as they were presented (somewhat more likely in a situation involving a stranger).

Peoples' intentions to respond based on the type of victim are presented in Table 6.2. Individuals are far more likely to intervene by talking directly to the person being harmed when the victim is a spouse and more reluctant to take this approach when the scenario involves a child or older parent. In these instances, particularly with respect to children, people would involve authorities, either the police or child welfare authorities. Again, only a minority would elect to do nothing (somewhat higher for situations involving spousal violence).

Hypothetical responses considering different types of behaviours are presented in Table 6.3. For scenarios related to emotional or verbal forms of abuse, pushing or grabbing and financial abuse, the most frequent intervention would be talking to or providing information to the person causing harm. In cases involving more severe forms of physical

abuse (i.e., kicking hitting) and sexual abuse, individuals would be more likely to involve authorities by calling 911 or police. Individuals are least likely to approach the person being harmed when the scenario involves kicking or hitting. People are less likely to involve the authorities and more likely to do nothing or to not know what they would do in situations of financial abuse.

TABLE 6.1
Intervention by Type of Relationship to Respondent

	Type of Relationship		
	Close friend/ family member %	Neighbour %	Stranger %
Talk to/give information to person causing harm	39	22	23
Talk to/give information to the person being harmed	17	13	8
Call 911/police	16	26	31
Intervene directly in situation	8	5	10
Alert child welfare authorities	4	8	5
Consults others/get advice	4	4	3
Alert doctors/caregivers/other professionals	3	3	3
Alert family/friends	2	2	3
Do nothing	4	4	8
DK/NR	4	4	6

TABLE 6.2
Intervention by Type of Victim

	Type of Victim		
	Spouse %	Child %	Older Parent %
Talk to/give information to person causing harm	25	29	34
Talk to/give information to the person being harmed	23	5	10
Call 911/police	22	26	25
Intervene directly in situation	7	8	8
Alert child welfare authorities	0	13	0
Consults others/get advice	4	4	5
Alert doctors/caregivers/other professionals	2	3	5
Alert family/friends	1	2	3
Do nothing	9	5	5
DK/NR	7	3	5

TABLE 6.3
Intervention by Type of Behaviour

	Type of Behaviour				
	Kicking/ hitting %	Sexual Abuse %	Insulting/ humiliating %	Pushing/ grabbing %	Financial Abuse %
Talk to/give information to person causing harm	25	14	39	32	31
Talk to/give information to the person being harmed	9	14	15	13	18
Call 911/police	33	35	14	21	6
Intervene directly in situation	11	5	5	10	2
Alert child welfare authorities	8	11	3	3	1
Consults others/get advice	4	5	5	4	5
Alert doctors/caregivers/other professionals	3	4	3	3	4
Alert family/friends	2	4	2	2	3
Do nothing	3	3	9	7	19
DK/NR	3	4	5	6	12

- Looking at subgroup differences across the different types of scenarios in terms of intentions to respond yields a number of different trends. For example, by gender, women are more likely than men to respond by talking to or supporting the person who is being harmed. Men, on the other hand, are more apt to talk to the person causing harm or to say they would intervene directly in the situation.
- Differences in the responses by age are also evident, with older Canadians being more likely to intervene by involving authorities and less willing to become personally involved with the victim in the scenarios presented. Youth (under 25) are more likely not to intervene at all.
- Individuals who have been exposed to information about family violence are less likely to do nothing and more willing to talk to or support the person being harmed. Those with direct personal experience of family violence would be less inclined to talk to or provide information to the person causing harm.

- Quebeckers and Francophones are more likely to intervene by talking to the person causing harm and less apt to involve authorities. On the other hand, those with lower levels of income, a marital status other than single or married and who are members of visible minorities would be less apt to intervene by talking to the person causing harm and would rather be likely to call police.

6.3 Reasons for Not Intervening

People who indicated that they would not take action in the particular circumstances described to them were asked a follow-up question as to why they would not intervene. Tables 6.4 and 6.5 present the results based on the type of relationship and type of victim specified in the scenario.¹ Reluctance to intrude on a family matter is given as a more important reason for not intervening as the relationship to the respondent becomes closer – that is, privacy of the family is more likely to be a barrier when the scenario involves a friend or family member and least important when the scenario involves a stranger. Being unsure of the facts and fear for personal safety are cited more often as reasons for not intervening as the relationship to the respondent becomes more distant (i.e., highest for scenarios involving a stranger).

Considering the reasons for not responding by the type of victim involved, privacy of the family is the most significant barrier across all scenarios, but is less important when the scenario involves a child. Individuals are more likely to have cited being unsure of all the facts as a reason for not intervening in scenarios involving children or older parents compared to when the victim is a spouse. In situations of spousal violence, fear for personal safety is cited more often as a reason for not intervening.

¹ Note that there are a small number of cases for this item (given that most respondents indicated in the previous question that they would have taken some kind of action). Only the top three responses are presented, broken down by type of relationship and type of victim (the number of cases not supporting analyses by differences in the type of behaviour).

TABLE 6.4
Reasons for Not Responding by Type of Relationship to Respondent

	Type of Relationship		
	Close friend/ family member (n=68) %	Neighbour (n=48) %	Stranger (n=109) %
Do not want to intrude in family matter	59	56	47
Unsure of situation/do not have enough facts	16	18	23
Afraid for personal safety	1	9	14
Other	24	17	17

TABLE 6.5
Reasons for Not Responding by Type of Victim

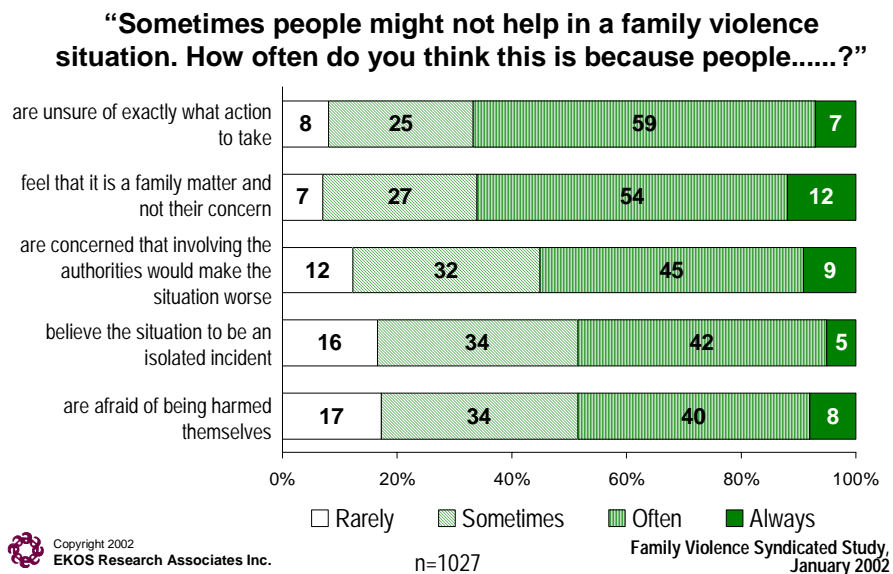
	Type of Victim		
	Spouse (n=171) %	Child (n=77) %	Older Parent (n=74) %
Do not want to intrude in family matter	69	59	65
Unsure of situation/do not have enough facts	17	30	30
Afraid for personal safety	15	7	7
Other	24	25	16

6.4 Barriers to Responding to Situations of Family Violence

Exhibit 6.4 presents Canadians' views on the reasons why people sometimes do not respond in a situation of family violence. Of the possibilities offered, being unsure of what action to take and viewing the situation as a private family matter are seen as the most frequent barriers (66 per cent believe both of these happen "always" or "often"). Concern that involving the authorities would make matters worse is perceived to be the next most likely barrier to helping in a family violence situation. Believing the situation to be an

isolated incident and fear for personal safety receive similar ratings – 47 and 48 per cent respectively believe these barriers occur often or always.

Exhibit 6.4 Barriers to Responding



Sub-group differences on the scale items on barriers to responding include:

- Being unsure of what action to take is seen as a more frequent barrier by those with personal experience of family violence or knowing someone in a situation of family violence. Those with a high school education or less also provide a stronger rating of this barrier.
- Privacy of the family is rated a more common barrier by those with personal experience with the issue (either in their own lives or knowing someone), and individuals with a high school education or less.
- Concern that involving authorities would make the situation worse is rated a more likely barrier to responding by those with a high school education or less.
- Fear for personal safety is perceived to be a more common barrier to responding to situations of family violence by those with personal experience with the issue and those with a lower socio-economic status.

**7****SOCIAL RESPONSES TO
FAMILY VIOLENCE**

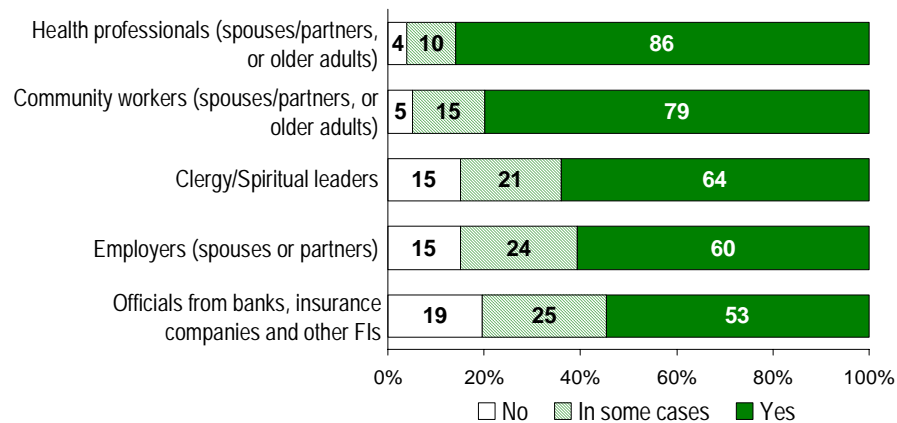
A key objective of this study was to examine the institutional responses to family violence that Canadians believe to be most appropriate. Included in this issue area are questions related to the responsibility of various professionals and institutions in reporting family violence, as well as the response on the part of the criminal justice system. For example, what is the correct response for various professionals, institutions and the criminal justice system upon discovering and dealing with instances of family violence? Perceived effectiveness of measures to address family violence is also examined.

7.1 Responsibility of Public Institutions

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which a variety of organizations and professionals should be legally obligated to report cases of family violence.² In the case of each of the five groups identified in the survey, at least half of all Canadians believe that each institution should be held **legally responsible** for reporting family violence (Exhibit 7.1). Fewer than one in five are ready to say that these groups should categorically **not** be legally obliged to report family violence.

Exhibit 7.1 Obligation to Report

“Which of the following organizations or individuals do you think should be legally obligated to report family violence ...?”



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Health care professionals and community workers, whose business it is help Canadians in need are most likely to be seen as having a legal obligation to report family violence. People are less inclined to see clergy and employers as having a legal obligation to report family violence. Even for these two groups, however, almost two in three said they would like to see obligatory reporting of family violence to authorities.

² Note that because obligatory reporting exists for some professionals in the area of child abuse, these items focused only on family violence involving spouses/partners and older parents.

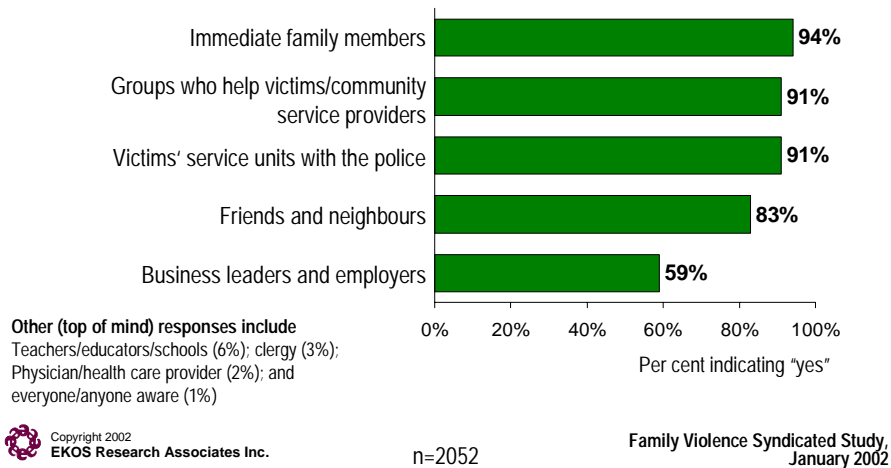
Respondents were least likely to indicate that the financial industry should have a legal obligation to report financial abuse. This is likely to be explained by another finding that showed that most respondents did not include financial abuse in their definition of family violence. Nonetheless, over half of Canadians are ready to place a legal obligation on these organizations to report financial harm where they are aware of it.

- ❑ Across all five types of organizations/professionals, women are more likely than men to charge the various organizations and professionals with a legal obligation to report family violence. This is also the case with Canadians with a lower socio-economic status, in terms of both education and income.
- ❑ In the case of the less obvious groups: clergy, employers and financial institutions, respondents who reported that they are responsible for a dependent adult are more likely to say that legal obligations should be put in place.
- ❑ Canadians who attend religious services tend to support a legal obligation for reporting family violence for employers and FI's more often than people who do not attend religious services (although this split is not evident in terms of views about obligations for other groups).

Respondents to the survey were also asked to consider whether a number of other groups should play a role in helping to stop situations of family violence. Immediate family members are charged with the responsibility of stopping family violence by virtually all Canadians (Exhibit 7.2). Victims' service units and groups who help victims are also obvious choices (91 per cent believe these organizations should play a role in stopping family violence).

Exhibit 7.2 Having a Role in Stopping Family Violence

“Beyond legal obligations to report family violence, who else is touched by family violence and therefore should play a role in helping to stop situations of family violence?”



As with many other findings in this survey, a large proportion of Canadians also give the broader Canadian public the responsibility of assisting in situations of family violence. In this case, 83 per cent of respondents feel that friends and neighbours should become involved. Canadians are somewhat less willing to suggest that business leaders and employers should become actively involved in stopping situations of family violence. Nonetheless, 59 per cent of Canadians believe that even private industry has a responsibility to become involved in this way.

- ❑ Women and middle to upper income Canadians are even more likely than their counterparts to give friends and neighbours the responsibility of stopping situations of family violence. Individuals who know someone who has experienced family violence,

as well as parents with children living at home are also more likely to have expressed this view.

- ❑ Women are more likely than men to have suggested that employers and the business community become involved. This is also the case for 25-64 year olds compared with youth under 25 or seniors, 65 and over; although this is not surprising since 25-64 year olds largely comprise the work force in Canada.
- ❑ Those who reported having directly experienced family violence in their lives, as well as those who know (very well) a family that has experienced family violence are somewhat more likely to feel the need for involvement of the business community.

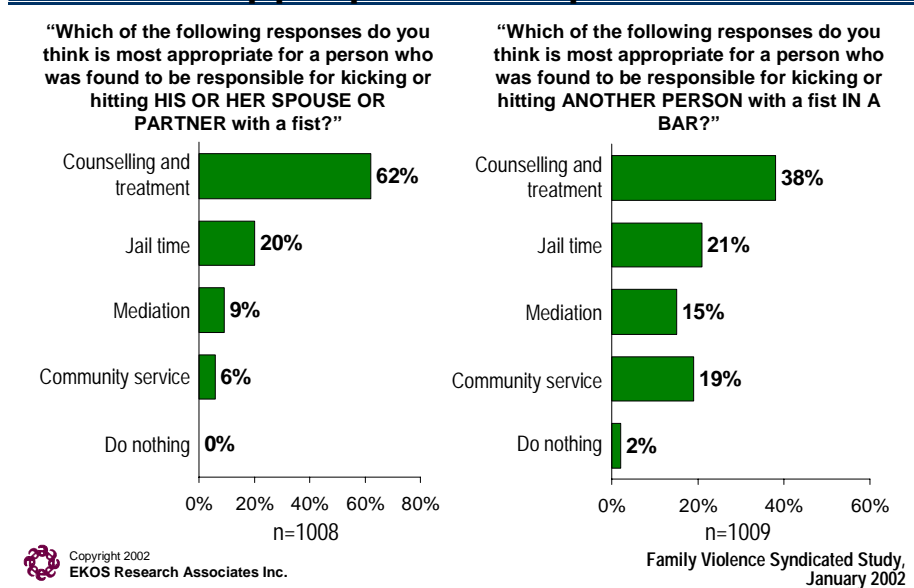
The issue of responsibility for reporting of family violence to the authorities was also explored in the focus group discussions. Like survey respondents, focus group participants assigned significant responsibility for reporting and dealing with family violence to health professionals and those in the “helping” professions. Other groups that were mentioned as having a heightened responsibility in the area of family violence included coaches, counsellors, daycare workers, clergy and home care/nursing home care workers. Participants in the groups were somewhat cautious around the issue of assigning a legal obligation for reporting for these groups, favouring an approach that emphasized a moral obligation bolstered by additional training and sensitization to family violence and strategies to address the issue.

In terms of the role of employers, again, focus group participants stopped short of assigning a legal obligation for reporting. Rather, employers were seen to have a role to play in recognizing family violence and providing support or information to employees. According to participants, employers can play a further role by providing supports such as access to employee assistance programs, peer support systems and awareness materials at the workplace.

7.2 Appropriate Responses to Family Violence

The survey examined Canadian’s preferences in responding to situations of family violence and juxtaposed these against responding to incidents of violence that occur outside the family. Respondents were asked about the most appropriate response in a situation involving kicking and hitting when the situation involved spouses, strangers in a bar,³ between a parent and a child and between youth in a schoolyard. The most appropriate response for the largest majority of people (in all circumstances) is counselling and treatment (Exhibits 7.3 to 7.5). There are some substantial differences, however, based on the circumstances of the violence. Comparing preferred responses based on whether spouses or strangers are involved, counselling and treatment is the primary option for both. For assault of a spouse, however, counselling and treatment are preferred over jail time by a factor of three to one. In contrast, mediation and community service are selected as viable options in the case of the bar fight between strangers, but tend not to be considered appropriate in a situation of spousal violence.

Exhibit 7.3 Appropriate Responses



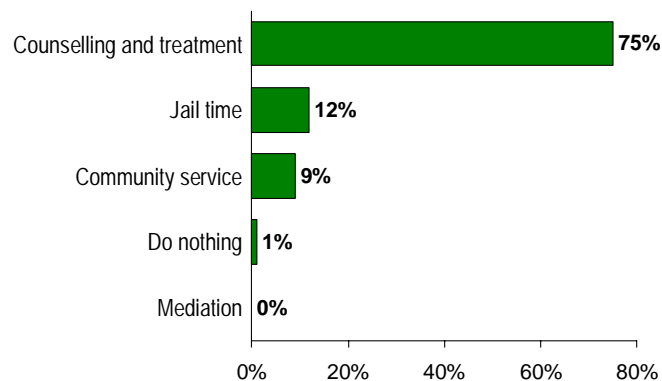
³ The purpose of this question was to test whether people would prescribe different approaches for spousal violence.

- ❑ Counselling and treatment as a response to a bar fight is seen as appropriate by a higher proportion of women, and people with university education.

Considering a situation of a parent kicking or hitting a child with a fist, the most appropriate response is overwhelmingly counselling and treatment (Exhibit 7.4). Three in four Canadians choose this option, an even higher proportion than in a situation involving spousal violence. One in eight said that jail time is more appropriate and only one in eleven believe that community service is the right approach.

Exhibit 7.4 Appropriate Responses

“Which of the following responses do you think is most appropriate for A PARENT WHO WAS FOUND TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR KICKING OR HITTING HIS OR HER CHILD WITH A FIST?”



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- ❑ People suggesting jail time as the most appropriate response are somewhat more likely among parents of children living at home.
- ❑ Community service, on the other hand, is more apt to have been suggested by those in lower socio-economic situations (e.g., high school education or less and income under \$20,000). Individuals choosing community service are also less likely to have reported having experienced family violence and do not know anyone who has.

The focus group discussions further examined the issue of responding to family violence, focusing specifically on the issue of charging and consequences for offenders. Participants generally expressed the view that police should have greater discretion in terms of whether or not to charge individuals. The wishes of the victim are an important context for some, but most felt that police should have the authority to charge regardless of the wishes of the victim, where warranted (participants believed that, in many cases, victims' unwillingness to charge would be linked to fear of reprisals from the abuser).

Participants were cautious, however, around the question of whether an individual who is reported to have been abusive should always be charged. At least some of this caution appeared to be linked to confusion as to whether charging necessarily equates with a jail sentence or to the concern that non-criminal code behaviours such as emotional abuse could result in a criminal charge. Participants also feared that charging would not be appropriate in all instances, particularly where complaints were made maliciously or rashly. Some participants felt that charging in every instance would have the effect of clogging the courts and slowing the processing of complaints.

Participants tended to view the decision to charge as one that requires investigation and consideration on a case-by-case basis. Participants appeared willing to trust the discretion of the police to evaluate individual cases of family violence (though additional resources and training were often recommended). Charging, participants felt, would be most appropriate under circumstances where the violence was severe, where there was a history of repeated incidents of abuse, and where the capacity/resources of the victim were limited where the capacity/resources of the victim to address or to leave the abusive situation were limited (e.g., cases involving children) where the capacity/resources of the victim to address or to leave the abusive situation were limited (e.g., cases involving children).

Like survey respondents, focus group participants strongly favoured counselling and treatment for abusers, and for many felt it should be compulsory. Many hesitated about requiring jail time of abusers, largely because incarceration is perceived to be ineffective and could cause additional financial and emotional stress for the family. The most appropriate response, however, was said to vary based on the circumstances of the situation. For example, severe injury, sexual crimes or repeated offences would merit jail, according to

many. Even in these instances, however, counselling and treatment was viewed as a necessary complement to a jail sentence.

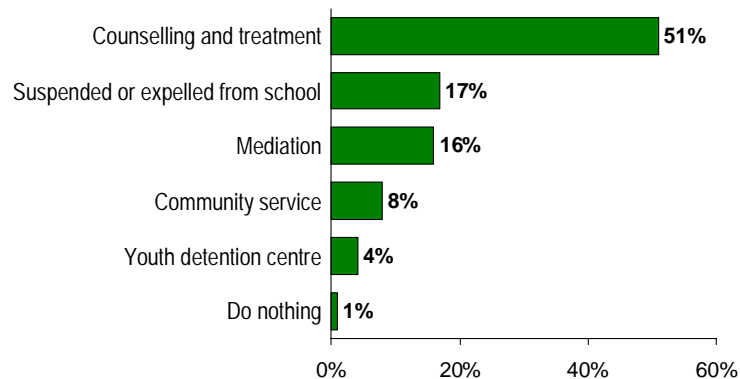
Mandatory counselling was viewed as highly ineffective by some participants, while others felt “it couldn’t hurt”. Failure to attend or complete counselling should have consequences even in the absence of an initial criminal charge. According to participants, consequences might include a criminal charge, or a harsher penalty should another incident of family violence be reported. Some were doubtful of the effectiveness of counselling for someone who is not a willing participant, citing that “You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make them drink.”

In the case of children, focus group participants were far more willing to see authorities involved and most participants believed that all cases of child abuse should be reported. Reasons why a case of child abuse might not be reported according to participants include: fear of reprisals, fear of being wrong, reluctance to intrude on a family matter and concern about making the situation worse. The effectiveness of child welfare authorities was questioned in many of the groups, and participants expressed concern about under-staffing and inadequate funds.

Counselling and treatment is also seen as the most appropriate response for a child found to be bullying other children (Exhibit 7.5). In this situation, however, roughly half of Canadians would pick an alternative solution. About half of these (21 per cent overall) would pick a harsher solution such as being expelled from school or youth detention. The other half (24 per cent overall) would pick a “lighter” solution such as mediation and community service.

Exhibit 7.5 Appropriate Responses

“Which of the following responses do you think is most appropriate when A YOUTH WAS FOUND TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HITTING OR KICKING ANOTHER YOUTH AT SCHOOL?”



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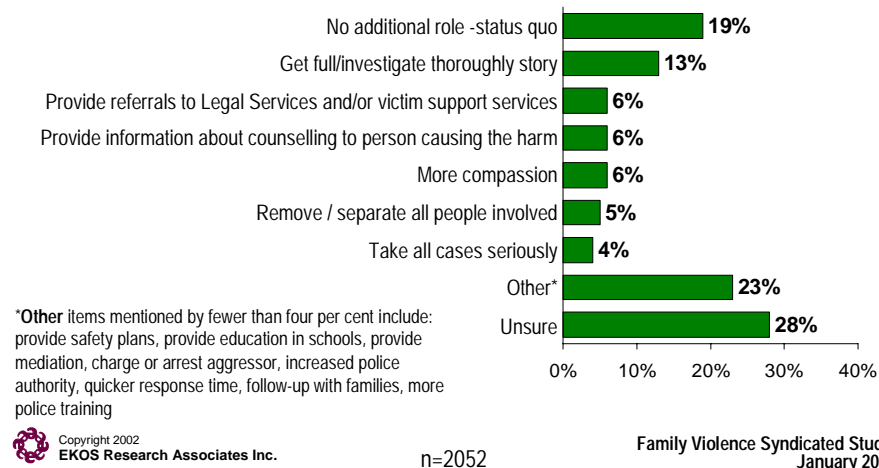
7.3 Additional Roles of the Police

People were asked in the survey to think about the role of the police in responding to situations of family violence and indicate additional roles that the police could play or suggest changes to their current role. Over one in four are unsure of what else the police could do (or how their role could be changed) (Exhibit 7.6). One in five prefer the status quo. Although just over half of respondents (53 per cent) provided a suggestion, the ideas are quite varied. The response provided by the largest proportion (13 per cent) is to get all of the details and facts from all sides of the situation. In other words, to investigate the situation thoroughly before acting. Provision of more support and information, either to the victim or

accused, is another area suggested fairly frequently. Bringing more compassion to the situation is an issue for a small proportion of people and taking cases (all cases) seriously was also mentioned.

Exhibit 7.6 Additional Roles for Police

“... What additional roles would you like to see the police play or what changes would you like to see in [police] role?”

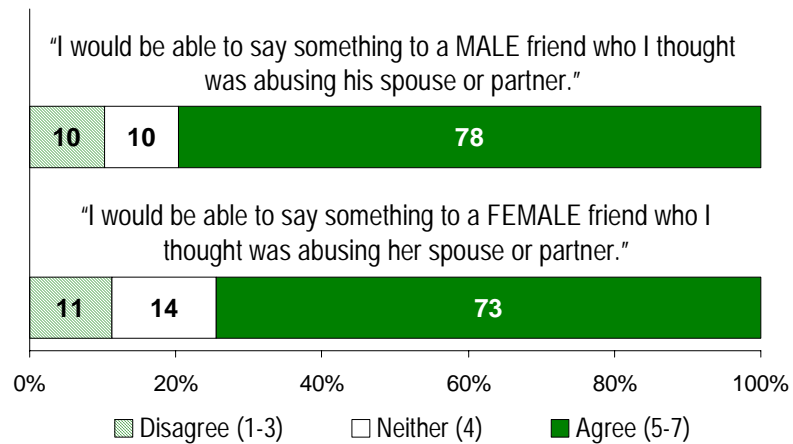


- People who do not know what changes or additions could be made to the role of the police are more likely to be residents of the Atlantic, be under the age of 25, and have a high school level of education or less. These individuals are also less likely to have experience with family violence (either directly or through knowing someone else who has experienced family violence or read or heard information on the subject).
- Canadians who believe that the police should not change their current role are more apt to reside in Quebec and speak French as their mother tongue.
- Those who suggested that the police get full details and investigate thoroughly are somewhat more likely to reside in BC. They are also slightly more apt to be men, Anglophones and have a university degree.

7.4 Responses from Individuals

Canadians indicated that they are generally quite comfortable with approaching either the victim or the abuser in situations of family violence. Roughly three in four feel comfortable speaking to someone who is abusing their partner, although the number is slightly higher for approaching men who abuse, compared with women who abuse their partners (Exhibit 7.7).

Exhibit 7.7 Confronting the Abuser



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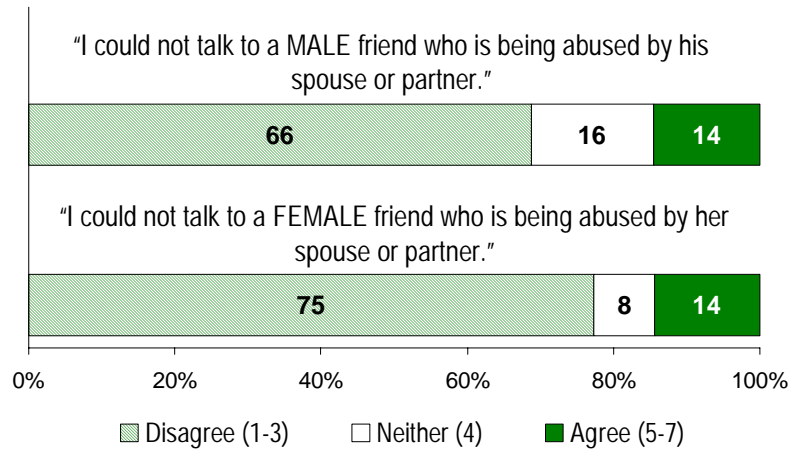
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January 2002

- There is a slight gender differentiation in approaching men and women. Men are more likely to say that they could speak to a male friend who they thought was abusing his partner, whereas women are more likely to say that they are comfortable in approaching a woman who they thought was abusing her partner. Those who know someone who has been in a situation of family violence are also more comfortable saying something to a female friend who was being abusive.

Most respondents indicate that they would be able to approach a victim of spousal violence, if the victim is a woman (75 per cent). If the victim is a man, two in three Canadians are still comfortable with this prospect (Exhibit 7.8).

Exhibit 7.8 Confronting the Abused



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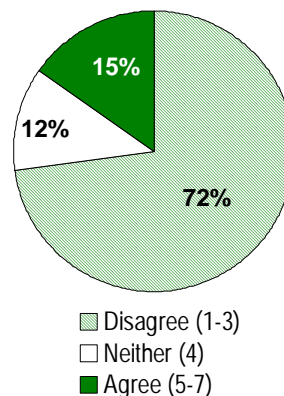
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- Women are more comfortable approaching a female victim than men are. Those who know someone who has experienced family violence are more likely to feel they could talk to a male or female friend who was being abused.

Almost three in four Canadians feel that they have at least some personal responsibility for helping to reduce family violence in their community (Exhibit 7.9). On the other hand, more than one in seven believe that they have no responsibility at all in this area.

Exhibit 7.9 Personal Responsibility

“I don’t think that I personally have any responsibility for helping to reduce family violence in my community.”



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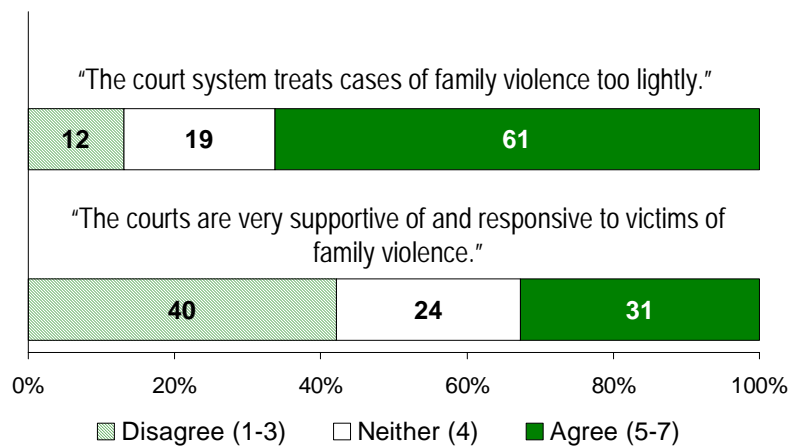
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- People who are more likely to feel a personal responsibility for reducing family violence are 25 to 44 year olds, those with upper levels of education and income, individuals who are married, people with children at home and Anglophones.
- Canadians with experience with family violence (either directly or through knowing someone else) are also more apt to feel a personal responsibility for reducing family violence. This is also the case with individuals who have recently read or heard information about family violence.
- Canadians who are more apt to eschew responsibility in this area are residents of Quebec, Francophones, senior citizens, people with lower levels of education and income, people who are widowed, separated, divorced, those who do not have children living at home, and individuals who do not know anyone who has experienced family violence.

7.5 Responses from the Courts and Police

Two in three Canadians believe that the courts treat cases of family violence too lightly (Exhibit 7.10). Only one in eight believe otherwise. Also, fewer than one in three see the courts as being supportive and responsive to victims, whereas 40 per cent believe that the courts are not supportive and responsive.

Exhibit 7.10 Response from the Courts



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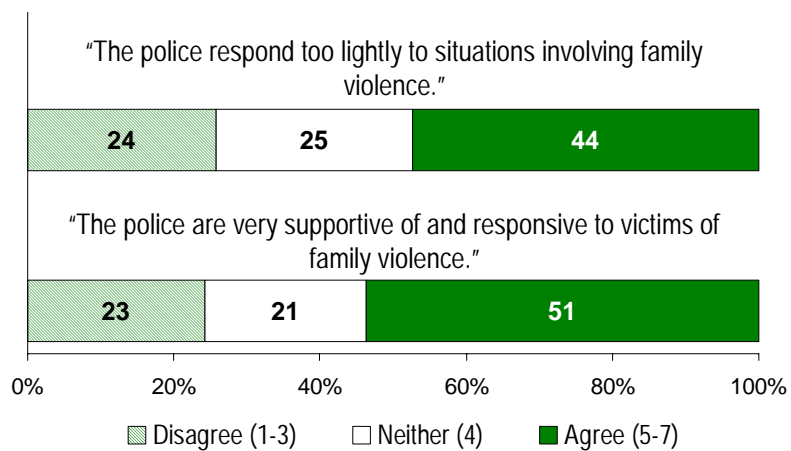
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- Women are more likely than men to believe that the courts treat cases of family violence too lightly. This is also true of people reporting lower levels of education and those who have an older adult in their care.
- Canadians who believe that the courts are not supportive or responsive to victims are more apt to be women. They are also more likely to have had experience with family violence (either directly or through knowing someone who has experienced it) or have read or heard information on the topic.

Compared to the courts, the police are seen in a somewhat more positive light. Overall, 44 per cent of Canadians also believe that the police treat cases of family violence too lightly, although one in four disagree with this view (Exhibit 7.11). Half of Canadians, however, believe that the police are supportive and responsive to victims. One in four believe that this is not the case.

Exhibit 7.11 Response from Police



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- There are very few systematic differences in how people view the police on this issue, with the exception of households that care for an older adult — who are more likely to view the police as being generally supportive and responsive to victims compared to other respondents.

7.6 Protection of Children Who Witness Family Violence and Dependent Adults

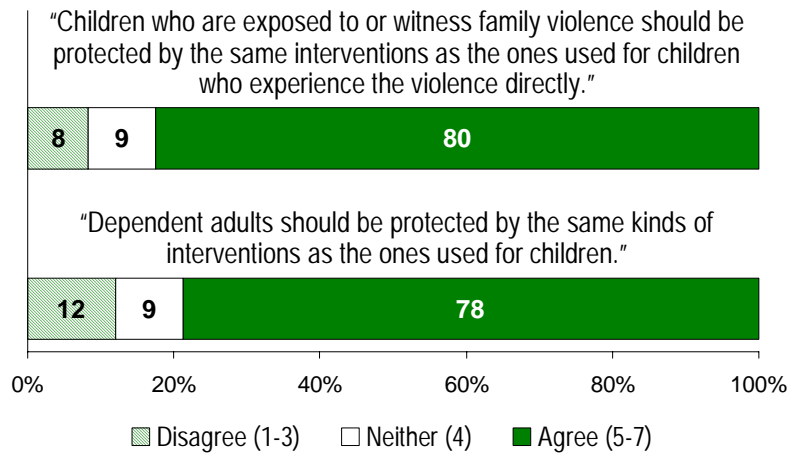
Canadians believe that children who witness family violence should be entitled to the same protections as children who experience family violence directly (Exhibit 7.12). Fewer than one in eleven do not see the need for similar protections for children witnessing violence as those available for children who are the targets of family violence.

- Women and people with lower to middle levels of education (i.e., college) and income (i.e., \$20-\$40,000) are slightly more likely to believe that the same protections should apply for children witnessing family violence, as they do for those experiencing it more directly.

The focus groups examined the issue of protections for children witnessing violence in more detail. Participants viewed the consequences of witnessing family violence as very serious for children. The issue of how to provide additional protections provoked a mixed response, however. Again, counselling and treatment for the child involved was recommended as an important aspect of any response.

Canadians also generally believe that dependent adults should be entitled to the same protections from family violence as those that are given to children. Fewer than one in eight disagree with this idea.

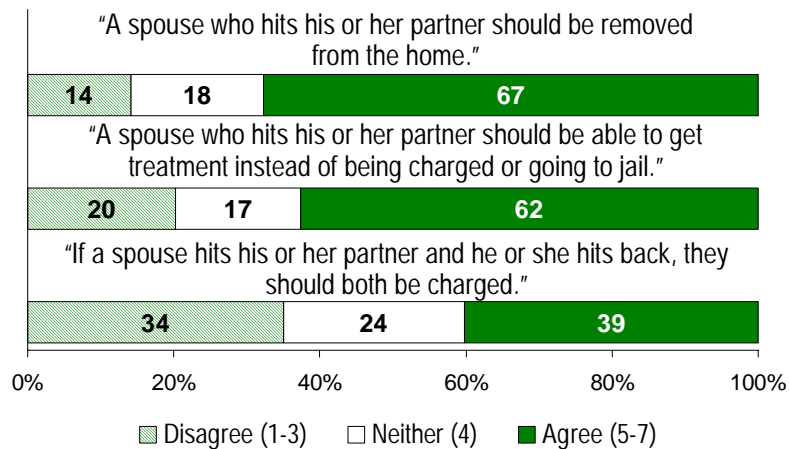
Exhibit 7.12 Protection for Victims



7.7 Response to Spousal Violence

Two in three Canadians believe that a spouse who hits his or her partner should be removed from the home (67 per cent) (Exhibit 7.13). One in seven believe otherwise.

Exhibit 7.13 Spousal Violence



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- People more likely to believe that an abuser should be removed from the home are residents of the Atlantic, women, people with dependent adults in the home and Anglophones.
- Conversely, those who are somewhat less apt to agree with removing the abuser are Francophones, residents of Quebec and men.

Two in three Canadians also believe that abusers should be able to seek treatment instead of being charged or going to jail. One in five disagree with this statement.

- Those most likely to agree that a spouse who hits his or her partner should be able to get treatment rather than being charged or going to jail are residents of Quebec, Francophones, Canadians between the ages of 44 and 64 and those who attend religious services occasionally.
- Those mostly likely to disagree with the statement are younger Canadians (under 25).

Canadians are divided on the issue of charging both parties when one spouse hits another and he or she hits back. Almost equal proportions agree as disagree with the statement “If a spouse hits his or her partner and he or she hits back, they should both be charged”. Only one in four Canadians is undecided and rated their response as neither agree nor disagree.

- ❑ People who tend to agree with the idea of charging both parties are residents of Quebec, Francophones, women and those with lower levels of education and income. They are also slightly more apt to attend religious services occasionally and indicated that they are neither married nor single. Individuals who reported that they had not read or heard anything about family violence recently are also somewhat more likely to espouse the view that all parties should be charged.
- ❑ On the other hand, residents of the Atlantic, those with a university degree and/or incomes of \$60,000 or greater are more likely than others to disagree with charging both parties.

The responses of focus group participants were also mixed, with many saying they would need more information to make a decision. Some participants argued that the situation described in the statement could involve self-defense, in which case only the spouse who initiated the violence should be charged. Others felt that if the response entailed an escalation of violence then both should be charged.

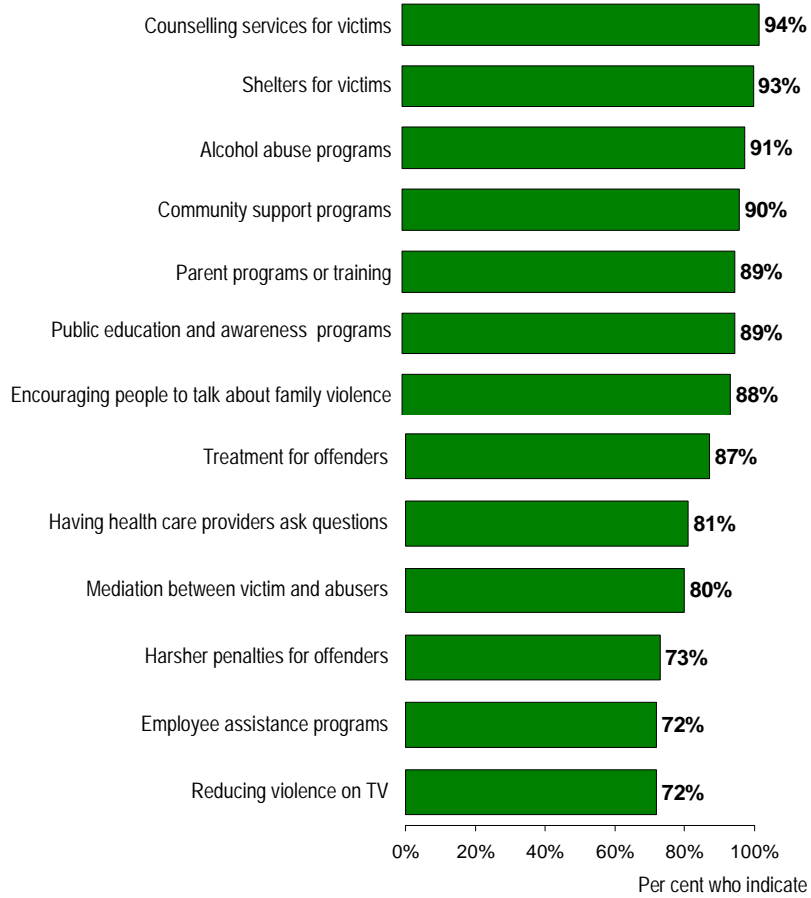
7.8 Societal Response to Family Violence

Survey respondents were asked to indicate effective methods of dealing with family violence from a list of 13 options. Respondents were asked to provide a “yes or no” response as each one of the 13 were read to them (in a randomized order). It was anticipated that there would be a high degree of agreement with most or all of the areas suggested, given the method of administering the question. As such, the question was followed-up with a subsequent item asking people to select the *single most effective method*, from the list that they had originally selected.

As expected, virtually all of the 13 areas are seen as being effective ways of dealing with family violence. Having health care providers ask questions and mediation between the two parties, however, are seen as effective by a slightly lower proportion of Canadians (Exhibits 7.14). Harsher penalties, employee assistance programs and reducing violence on television are seen as effective by an even smaller proportion of the general public.

Exhibit 7.14 Dealing with Family Violence

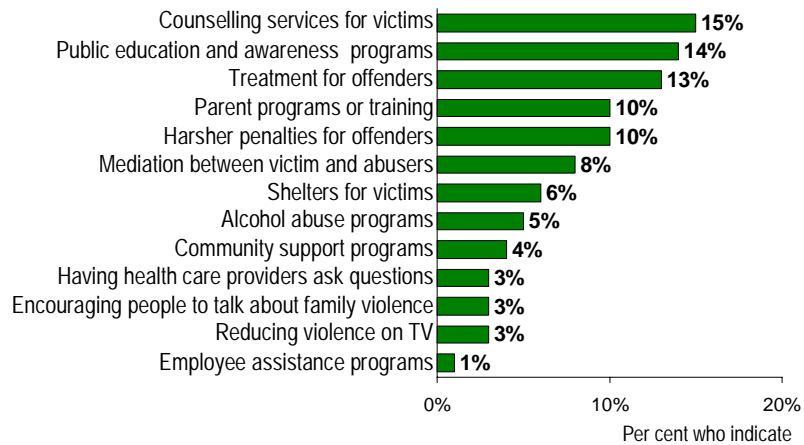
“Which of the following do you consider to be an effective way of dealing with family violence?”



In the single, summary question, mentioned among the most effective ways of dealing with family violence are counselling and treatment focusing on both the victim of family violence (15 per cent) and on the offender (13 per cent) (Exhibit 7.15). Roughly the same proportion selected public education and awareness programs as the most effective way of dealing with family violence. One in ten selected parenting programs as the most effective way of addressing family violence. Harsher penalties is also chosen by 10 per cent, in spite of the fact that it was initially selected by the third lowest proportion of respondents in the survey.

Exhibit 7.15 Most Effective Ways of Dealing with Family Violence

“Which do you consider to be the MOST effective way to deal with family violence?”



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- Counselling services for victims are somewhat more likely to have been selected as the most effective method to deal with family violence by residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba and the Atlantic and by seniors over 65 years of age.
- Parenting programs are believed to be an effective way to deal with family violence and the most effective option by one in ten. This is a particularly attractive option for those with upper household incomes of \$60-\$80,000 and by those who have had direct (personal) experience with family violence.
- Public education programs are considered to be an effective approach by many Canadians, but more so by 25 to 44 year olds and those with a university degree and or the highest levels of income (\$80,000 or more).
- When the thirteen possible methods were read out, treatment for offenders was selected quite frequently as an effective method of dealing with family violence; it was the third most popular response as the most effective method of handling family violence. It was

selected more often by residents of BC and Quebec, Francophones and youth (under 25).

- ❑ Harsher penalties for abusers is not as frequently cited among the many listed, however, it is among the top four “best approaches”. It is selected more often by women, 25 to 44 year olds, and those with lower levels of education and income. It is selected as the most effective method by a higher concentration of the unemployed.
- ❑ Reducing violence on TV is not indicated by most people as an effective way of dealing with family violence nor is it chosen often as the most effective method of dealing with family violence. It is a method that brings about the widest gaps in points of view, however. It is selected as one of several methods by a higher proportion of residents from Quebec and women, 25-64 year olds, households with modest incomes of \$20-\$40,000 and people who attend religious services on a regular basis.
- ❑ People who are least likely to have cited reduction of violence on TV as a method of dealing with family violence are residents of Ontario, men, youth (under 25), people with the highest incomes, people who are single and people who do not attend religious services.



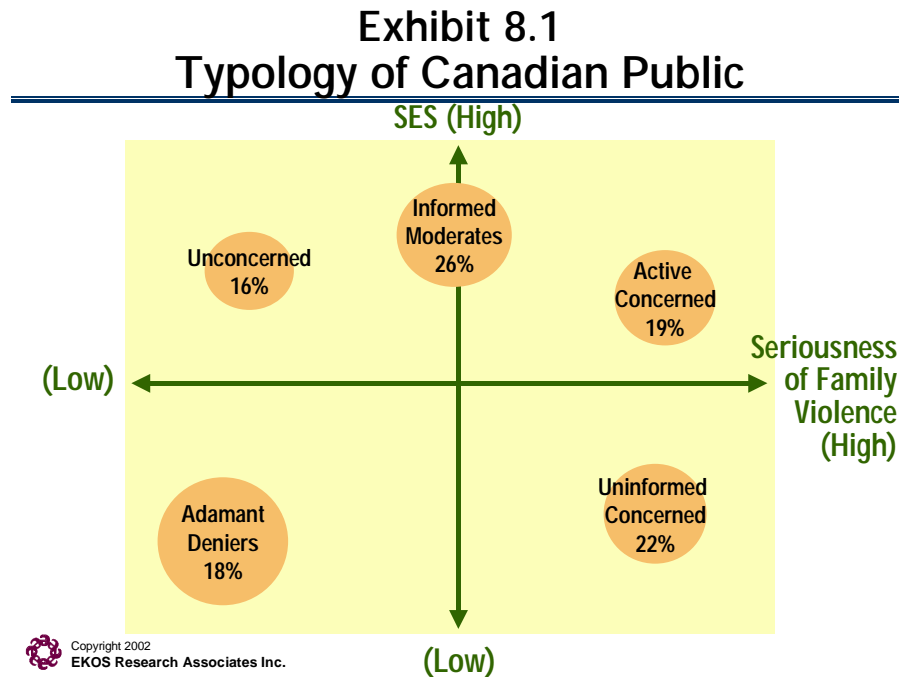
8 TYPOLOGY OF THE CANADIAN PUBLIC

8.1 Typology of the Canadian Public

In order to identify underlying dimensions in attitudes and to limit the redundancy of the measurement variables, all scale-based variables from the survey were included in a factor analysis. The factor analysis was performed with 25 composite variables and resulted in the extraction of four dimensions:

- Concern with children's exposure to violence in general and on TV and the Internet:** Variables constituting this factor are: In general, to what degree do you feel children/your children are exposed to violence on a regular basis; How worried are you about children's/your children's exposure to violence on television, or in the movies and videos; How worried are you about children's/your children's exposure to violence in computer or video games or on the Internet;
- Concern with the children's exposure to violence in their immediate environment:** Variables included in the summary scale are: How worried are you about children's/your children's exposure to violence on the streets, in your community or neighbourhood; How worried are you about children's/your children's exposure to violence at school, in the playground, involving bullying or witnessing fights; How worried are you about children's/your children's exposure to violence when participating in sports;
- Family violence perceived as a serious issue:** Variables constituting this factor are: A spouse who hits his or her partner should be removed from home; When a spouse hits his or her partner, it's a crime; I think family violence should be an urgent priority for the community/federal government; If a spouse hits his or her partner and he or she hits back, they should both be charged; and
- Family violence perceived as a non-issue:** Variables constituting this factor are: I don't think that I personally have any responsibility for helping to reduce family violence in my community; I don't believe that family violence is as serious as it's made out by the media/women's groups; Most women could get out of an abusive relationship if they want to.

The summary dimensions were subsequently included in a segmentation analysis in order to better understand the interaction of the different sets of variables. The analysis resulted in a five-cluster solution. Exhibit 9.1 plots these five groups of Canadians along two axes: perception of family violence as a serious issue and socio-economic status of individuals.



a) Segment One: Unconcerned

The *Unconcerned* constitute 16 per cent of the Canadian public. They have the narrowest definition of family violence. For example, they are least likely to include yelling and swearing, pushing and shoving, destroying family member's things or preventing family member from access to family income as forms of family violence. (They are, however, among the most likely to have indicated that violence toward the elderly or disabled and violence against parents are the greatest cause for concern.) Members of this segment are also more likely than other Canadians to believe that the problem of family violence in today's society is less serious (or at least no more serious) than ten years ago and that family violence does not often take place in their own communities. They are systematically less concerned with the various scenarios presented to them and cite fewer impacts resulting from family violence.

They are most likely to believe that the issue has been exaggerated by the media and women's groups and that most women could get out of a situation of spousal abuse if they wanted to. The *Unconcerned* do not believe that dependant adults require special protections (in spite of the fact that elder abuse concerns them), nor do they think that protections should be put in place for children witnessing violence (similar to those for children experiencing violence directly). They are least likely to believe that family violence exists on a continuum that can escalate from verbal to physical forms of violence.

This group is also least likely to acknowledge any kind of personal responsibility for helping to stop family violence. Nor are they as likely as other Canadians to feel that family violence should be an urgent priority, either for the government or their own community. They are less apt to believe that the courts or police are treating cases of family violence too lightly of all Canadians and are also less likely to accord the general public or groups and institutions in society with a responsibility for stopping family violence.

The *Unconcerned* reported personal experiences with family violence and exposure to others with these experiences with the same frequency as others, however, they are least likely to have seen or heard information about the issue recently. In family violence situations that they have been exposed to, or in scenarios presented to them, they are most likely to have said that they would do nothing and suggest that fear of intruding into a family matter is a strong barrier to responding. They are most reticent to approach someone who is abusing their partner.

Demographically, this group is largely comprised of men (eight out of ten *Unconcerned* are males). They tend to be somewhat younger (under 25) or in the oldest age category (65 years of age or older). They are slightly more likely than others to have a university degree, however, they did not report above average incomes for the household.

b) *Segment Two: Adamant Deniers*

This segment constitutes 18 per cent of the Canadian public. Like the *Unconcerned*, they are also less concerned about family violence, holding narrow definitions of the types of relationships and behaviours that constitute family violence. Although this group's

views are not as consistent as the *Unconcerned*, their opinions are typically stronger. For example, they are least likely to consider kicking or hitting a family member with a fist or threatening them with a gun or knife as usually or always family violence. They do not believe that the issue is as (or any more) serious as it was ten years ago and are the most apt to believe that the problem has been exaggerated by women's groups and the media. They also do not demonstrate great concern about children's exposure to violence and view the impacts of children's exposure to violence and family violence as fewer/less than most other Canadians.

Adamant Deniers are far more likely to believe that women could get out of an abusive relationship if they wanted to and that people who abuse are "out of control". They are the most likely of any other group to eschew any personal responsibility for stopping family violence. They are also somewhat less likely to have heard or read information about family violence in the last 12 months, nonetheless, they are among those most likely to say that they are well informed on the issue of family violence and do not need additional information.

Adamant Deniers are also the least likely to have had personal experience with family violence or know anyone who has experienced family violence. In family violence situations they have been acquainted with, or in hypothetical scenarios presented to them, they demonstrate less concern and they are less likely to do anything to address the situation. They believe that these situations are private family matters and they tend to balk at talking to victims directly or calling authorities.

This group, however, expresses a rather strong view with regard to public action. They believe that family violence should be an urgent priority for the government and for their community and that spousal abuse is a crime that should be dealt with decisively, including removing offenders from the home and charging both parties when one spouse hits another and he or she hits back. This group is highly likely to think that the court system treats cases of family violence too lightly and advocates stronger punishments, as well as citing harsher penalties as the most effective means of dealing with family violence, along with alcohol abuse programs.

This group is equally represented by men and women, however, there is a higher representation of seniors (over 65). This is the group with the lowest socio-economic status, in terms of both education and household income, and is more highly represented by retired individuals than any other group. There is also an overrepresentation of Francophones and Quebeckers.

c) *Segment Three: Informed Moderates*

The *Informed Moderates* segment is comprised of 26 per cent of the Canadian public. Their definition of family violence is wide, they are typically parents and they are particularly concerned about children under 12 (they are typically parents themselves). They are also more likely to be sensitive to the psychological and behavioural impacts of family violence on children. They are less concerned than some other groups with children's exposure to violence from a variety of sources, however, this may relate back to the design of the survey, with parents being asked about their own children (since this group also rates the extent of occurrence of family violence in their local community as relatively low). They reported the second lowest incidence of personal experience with family violence.

This group does not believe that abusers are out of control, nor that most women could get out of an abusive relationship if they wanted to. They do not believe that women are as violent as men and do not believe that both parties should necessarily be charged if both are being abusive.

Informed Moderates are more likely than others to say that, when faced with a situation of dealing with family violence they would not know what to do, however, they do believe that they have a responsibility to deal with family violence in their community. They also believe that treatment, not jail, is the right approach to dealing with offenders. They also indicated that parenting programs and training, as well as community supports are the most effective methods of dealing with family violence.

Demographically, they are only slightly over represented by men, and people who are married with young children at home. They are the second youngest age group

(after the *Unconcerned*), being slightly over represented by 30-49 year olds. They have the highest socio-economic status of any group, in terms of both education and income, and are more typically employed full-time or self-employed than other groups.

**d) *Segment Four: Uninformed
Concerned***

The *Uninformed Concerned* group is made up of 22 per cent of the population and is characterized by a high degree of sensitivity and concern about family violence in society, coupled with a lack of information about the issue. This group has a wide definition of family violence and generally expressed great concern for all types of family violence described. They are more apt to believe that the issue has become more serious in the last 10 years and are quite concerned about children's exposure to violence from a number of fronts. For example, seven out of ten believe that children /their children are exposed to violence on a regular basis and that it has a high impact on children's well-being. They are particularly worried about exposure to violence from television and the Internet.

This group is the second most likely to have reported exposure to family violence, either personally or through someone else they know, however, they feel the least informed about the issue. They feel that the courts and police treat family violence too lightly, however, they are strong advocates of treatment rather than jail as a response to family violence. They believe that violence can exist on a continuum from verbal to physical forms and that it is a problem in all income and ethnic groups in society.

The *Uninformed Concerned* believe that family violence is an urgent priority for government and their community and that most groups and institutions in society should take responsibility. On the other hand, they see a number of barriers to becoming involved (fear for personal safety, family matter and not wanting to involve authorities). They also take somewhat less personal responsibility than some other groups in society in helping to stop family violence. When faced with actual or hypothetical situations they are reticent to approach the abuser (particularly if the abuser is male). They are also more likely than some others to believe that women could get out of an abusive relationship if they wanted to.

This group is slightly over-represented by women, older Canadians (55 and over) and parents. They are the second lowest group in terms of socio-economic status, and are slightly over represented by Francophones, Quebeckers and visible minorities.

e) *Segment Five: Active Concerned*

The *Active Concerned* segment constitutes 19 per cent of Canadians and represents individuals who are particularly sensitive to and concerned about the problem of family violence in Canadian society, as well as children's exposure to violence in general. The *Active Concerned* hold a distinctively strong set of views related to all aspects of family violence. They have the broadest definition of family violence and are most likely to think that yelling and swearing, pushing and shoving, destroying family member's things or preventing access to family income is family violence. Violence toward children under 12 is the greatest cause for their concern. The *Active Concerned* tend to think that their children and/children are exposed to violence on a regular basis, express a very high level of concern about exposure to violence and agree that witnessing violence has a significant impact on children's well-being. They are the most likely to think that family violence is more serious than it was ten years ago, that it occurs with relatively greater frequency in their community and express the most concern for real and hypothetical family violence situations. They generally feel that this is an issue that should be an urgent priority for both the government and their own community.

This group cites the widest number of causes and consequences of family violence. They believe that family violence cuts across all ethnic and income groups and can move along a continuum from milder behaviours (e.g., verbal) to more extreme forms. They are most likely to advocate the same protections for dependent adults and children witnessing family violence as are accorded to children who experience family violence directly.

The *Active Concerned* group does not agree that abusers are out of control and tend to advocate harsher penalties for abusers. They are most apt to disagree, for example, that abusers should be given treatment instead of jail. Responsibilities for stopping violence are also placed far and wide by this group (social institutions, friends and family, support groups) including the highest rating of personal responsibility for stopping violence in their own community.

The Active Concerned group has the highest reported incidence of individuals who themselves have experienced family violence, who know someone else who has experienced it and/or who have heard or read information about family violence. They have the widest number of information sources to provide to someone who is experiencing family violence. They are most apt to assist in a situation of family violence. Because they often see the situation as serious (real or hypothetical), they are the most likely to involve authorities and generally alert others to the situation. They are most likely to agree that the courts (though not police) treat cases of family violence too lightly and are unsupportive of victims. They also suggested (more than anyone else) that the police should treat victims with more compassion.

Seven out of ten of the *Active Concerned* are women. This group is typically Anglophone, and has a higher than average number of individuals in their late 30's to 50's. They are represented by a disproportionate number of upper socio-economic status individuals (e.g., university degree and slightly higher than average household income). They are not the highest SES group, however, and have a slightly higher than average proportion of part-time workers. This group is somewhat over represented in BC and Ontario. *The Active Concerned* also have the highest proportions of individuals attending religious services regularly.



9 CONCLUDING THEMES

This public opinion research on family violence has covered a great breadth of topics and provided information on Canadians' opinions overall, as well as an understanding of how these vary within segments of society. Some of the key themes that have emerged from the survey research are summarized below.

9.1 Understanding of Family Violence

Canadians have quite an expansive definition of family violence that goes well beyond traditional conceptions focusing on physical violence within the immediate family. Other relationships such as dating and extended family members relationships, as well as caregiver relationships are also included in most Canadians' understanding of family violence.

Canadians' understanding of the types of behaviours that define family violence is similarly broad. While serious forms of physical and sexual abuse top the list of what is "always" considered to be family violence, certainly, emotional and psychological forms of violence are also seen as serious and with significant consequences. In fact, yelling and swearing at a family member is viewed in a similar way to pushing, shoving and grabbing.

Financial abuse is least likely to be included in individuals' understanding of family violence. Throughout the survey, financial abuse is viewed as a less serious concern and also sparks greater apathy and confusion in terms of appropriate ways to respond or

intervene. Canadians are similarly less likely to assign responsibility to financial institutions for reporting or addressing this form of abuse.

9.2 Level of Concern

When thinking of relationships within the immediate family with respect to violence, individuals more often think of spousal relationships. Yet, violence toward children, particularly children under 12, elicits the greatest degree of concern.

Concern about violence toward children is also reflected in the responses to the hypothetical family violence scenarios and in the way individuals characterize the actual situations of family violence they have known about. Incidents of family violence (actual or hypothetical) that involve children generally elicit greater concern. Situations involving close family or friends also generate greater concern than those involving neighbours or strangers.

Levels of concern about family violence also tend to follow the particular “interests” of the respondent. For example, youth under 25, while generally expressing less concern about family violence than other groups, exhibit relatively greater concern when violence involves children. Older Canadians treat situations involving older parents and financial abuse with greater seriousness than other segments. Women have consistently higher levels of concern about family violence than men.

Level of personal exposure to the issue, either through direct personal experience, knowing of a situation of family violence or having read or heard information about family violence has a profound impact on attitudes. These individuals in general have a more expansive definition of family violence, stronger ratings of the seriousness of family violence, are more sensitive to the consequences of family violence, assign greater responsibility to institutions and individuals for addressing family violence and generally place a higher priority on the issue both for government and the community.

9.3 Priority of Family Violence

Canadians generally believe family violence has become a more serious problem over the last ten years. The focus group discussions revealed that at least part of the perceived increase in family violence is due to greater awareness of the issue and more willingness among individuals to talk about and report their abuse. While recognizing that family violence is a serious social problem, there is a tendency to view family violence as occurring far from one's own backyard. Almost half of Canadians think that family violence occurs not very often or not at all in their own community.

The majority of Canadians (three-quarters) place a high priority on the issue of family violence both for governments and for their own community. Individuals generally disagree that the issue has been overstated by the media or women's groups (though the former is perceived to be more credible than the latter).

9.4 Causes and Consequences

The causes of family violence are most often attributed to outside stresses on the family such as financial strains, unemployment and so on; substance abuse is also viewed as a key causal factor. Following is a middle tier of complex factors that respondents recognize as determinants such as a history of violence in the family, poor communication, a need to control others and violence in society. At the same time, however, Canadians do not absolve abusers of personal responsibility for their behaviour; two-thirds disagree that those who cause harm are out of control and therefore not responsible for their behaviour.

Family violence is viewed as having serious consequences both for those who are directly exposed to or are the target of the violence, as well as for other family members who are witnesses to violence. The perceived consequences yielded a wide variety of responses for both victims of direct and indirect family violence, however, negative psychological consequences (e.g., fear, depression) are mentioned most frequently, as well as negative impacts on self-esteem. Canadians also appear to be very familiar with the cyclical or intergenerational impacts of family violence which lead to aggressive behaviour in children or

other family members. Negative impacts of family violence on health impacts are seen to be significant as well.

There is a distinct gender issue with respect to the perceived prevalence and consequences of family violence. The majority view is that women are as prone to violence as men, however, women are also viewed as more in need of protection than men from family violence. There is a significant split in terms of the extent to which people believe women could leave an abusive situation if they wanted to. Participants in the focus group discussions were, on the one hand, very appreciative of the enormous barriers women face in leaving a violence relationship. On the other hand, participants pointed out the greater community resources and social support now available to those who have made the decision to leave.

9.5 Availability of Information

Most individual have read or heard information about family violence in the last year and the majority of Canadians feel well-informed about the issue, with television and newspapers being most frequently mentioned sources. Focus group participants noted this information to be in the form of high profile news stories, talk shows, or fictional accounts in the entertainment media. Nevertheless, the extent to which individuals have been exposed to information about family violence has an important and positive impact on a number of other attitudes about family violence (e.g., broader definition of family violence, concern about the issues heightened) and is correlated with a greater willingness and capacity to intervene in situations of family violence.

There are some pockets of individuals who have less access to or interest in information about family violence. Youth, individuals who are single and those with a lower socio-economic status are less likely to have read material on the subject. Individuals are most interested in obtaining information which will help them recognize when family violence is occurring and practical information on how to respond.

9.6 Tolerance for Family Violence

According to these survey data, the majority of Canadians have been touched in some way by family violence, either directly in their own lives (one-third) or having known someone who was in a situation of family violence (six in ten). In terms of the latter, the most recent situation of family violence that respondents knew about most often involved physical and/or psychological abuse among spouses or toward children and was perceived to be serious in nature. Incidents of sexual or financial abuse or involving relationships such as siblings, older parents or dating relationships were in the minority. This may reflect comparatively lower incidence rates in fact, or may also be partially attributed to lower levels of awareness or greater reluctance to discuss these types of situations. Just under half of individuals were able or willing to intervene in the most recent situation that they knew about.

The responses to the hypothetical scenarios when compared to the actual experiences of individuals who have known of a family violence situation suggest that people's intentions to intervene are probably exaggerated (for example, fewer than one in ten claimed they would do nothing across the different hypothetical scenarios presented, whereas more than four in ten did not respond in the recent situation of family violence that they knew about). Nevertheless, looking comparatively, the hypothetical scenarios suggest that the way in which Canadians would intervene in a situation of family violence are quite similar between the actual and hypothetical situations, as are the barriers that would prevent them from responding.

When people respond to a situation of family violence (actual or hypothetical), this response is most often informal. Individuals respond by talking, supporting or giving information to the person who is being harmed or to the person who is causing harm. This is particularly true when a family violence situation involves a family that one knows well and for situations involving emotional/psychological or financial abuse. In general, most Canadians indicate a high level of comfort in approaching a friend who is causing harm or experiencing family violence (particularly when this person is of the same gender).

Individuals reacting to an actual situation of family violence by involving authorities, such as child welfare or police, is relatively rare (this was much higher in the hypothetical scenarios, particularly in cases that were characterized as very serious and/or

involved children or strangers). Older Canadians, visible minorities, and those with a lower socio-economic status are more likely to say they would rely on police in the hypothetical situations that were presented.

While less than 10 per cent indicated calling police themselves in the most recent situation of family violence that they knew about, 39 per cent said that police were involved in this situation. In other words, other persons involved or perhaps the victims themselves involved police. This finding is repeated with respect to involvement of child welfare authorities.

9.7 Barriers to Intervening

Taking together respondents' actual behaviour, their hypothetical intentions and some direct questions on barriers to helping in a family violence situation, the key obstacles to intervening in situations of family violence are reluctance to intrude on the privacy of the family and being unsure as to what action to take. The former is more likely to be a factor in situations involving a family that one knows very well and for situations of emotional/psychological abuse and financial abuse. Privacy of the family is less likely to be a barrier in situations involving a stranger or when a child is involved. Youth are more likely to cite privacy of the family as a barrier. Fear for personal safety and believing the situation to be an isolated incident are less important concerns.

9.8 Institutional Responsibility for Addressing Family Violence

Canadians assign responsibility for addressing the issue of family violence to a broad range of groups and institutions. Individuals themselves and friends and family members are perceived to bear great responsibility in this area, as do health and community workers. Business and clergy are assigned less responsibility in this area. Still, over one half of Canadians believe these groups should have at least some role in reporting and stopping family violence. While the survey responses support a legal obligation for reporting family violence

for many professionals and organizations, the focus group discussions emphasized a moral obligation for reporting, coupled with the need for more training and sensitization of some groups to recognizing and effectively taking steps to address a situation of family violence.

Judicial responses to family violence were also examined. In general, respondents felt that the police respond more effectively and appropriately to situations of family violence than courts (the latter being viewed as too soft on family violence). There is no clear consensus on what police could be doing differently. Canadians generally support additional protections for dependent adults and for children who witness family violence, though the nature of these protections was not explored in detail.

In terms of appropriate judicial responses, the family relationship is an important context for Canadians in terms of responding to family violence. In the focus groups, participants were hesitant to recommend charging in every instance of reported family violence. At least some of this caution is due to a lack of knowledge of criminal justice processes, but also reflects a general preference for investigation and consideration of complaints on an individual basis. Canadians on the whole see counselling and treatment as more effective than jail time in cases of family violence (compared to violence involving strangers). In the focus group discussions, it was suggested by some that counselling be made mandatory and that this form of intervention also encompass the victim and other family members who are witnesses to violence.

9.9 Bottom Line

From the survey results we find that Canadians express a high level of concern for the issue of family violence and see it as a high priority for both government and communities. The general public is quite well informed and sophisticated in their understanding and perception of family violence.

Yet, spousal and child abuse are the only two forms of family violence that are truly front and centre in people's minds. These are the two groups that have historically been in the public eye and as such draw the greatest attention and concern. Elder abuse, for

example, is as yet not registering very highly on the public radar. Physical (and to a lesser degree emotional) abuse is more commonly understood as family violence compared to other forms such as financial abuse or failing to provide basic necessities.

The general public ascribes a high level of moral (and for some, legal) responsibility for stopping family violence to a wide variety of sources including those directly involved, family, friends and neighbours, as well as a wide array of public institutions and professionals. They are even willing to involve the business community, such as employers and financial institutions (albeit to a lesser degree), in order to reduce family violence.

In spite of high levels of concern across a variety of family violence situations, there is, nonetheless, a fairly strong recognition that it is not easy to approach a situation of family violence. Key barriers include fear of intruding on a family affair and not knowing what actions to take. The former barrier is particularly important when the situation involves someone that one knows well. In these cases, when an individual elects to intervene, the response tend to be quite informal. Canadians are reticent to involve the authorities in situations of family violence, particularly when they know the family well, unless the circumstances are perceived to be dire.

Public information/awareness campaigns may assist in eroding both of these top barriers to responding. If people are sent consistent messages that family violence is a crime and not getting involved (or involving authorities) allows these crimes to continue unchecked, as well as providing information about how to help, Canadians may feel better equipped to deal with these circumstances. Designers of future communications strategies may at least take comfort in the fact that fear of intruding on a private family matter and lack of knowledge about what to do are significantly easier to combat than fear for personal safety, which is not perceived to be a strong barrier. Additional messages, which may be of benefit are related to barriers which prevent spouses from removing themselves from situations of family violence and information about the nature of financial abuse and abuse of elderly parents and their potential impacts.

The reticence to report family violence to authorities may be, in part, fuelled by the perception that the judicial system is not dealing effectively with cases of family

violence. Suggestions were also made for the improvement of police services, however, this is a much less salient concern. Canadians seem to advocate fairly decisive handling of cases of family violence, including the removal of the offender from the home at the time of the occurrence of the offence. In terms of responding beyond the immediate situation, there is limited knowledge of criminal justice processes and the implications of procedures such as mandatory charging. Canadians do not generally believe that jail is the right answer, viewing counselling and treatment as more appropriate. The position of advocating counselling and treatment, rather than jail seems to rest largely on the perception that jail in itself is not an effective remedy, that abusers are dysfunctional in some way (though not out of control), and that the family context is complex and one that requires longer-term solutions to address violence.

Throughout the survey findings there is surprising consistency of views across the country, with only a few salient differences. Differences are often evident between Quebecers and the rest of Canada and between those in the middle-age categories and those at the either end of the age spectrum (i.e., youth and seniors). There are some systematic differences according to gender, socio-economic status and personal engagement in the issue, identified throughout the report, but perhaps best depicted in the typology of the five groups of Canadians. Knowledge of these differences may help to guide future communications strategies.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

9: INTRO

SHIFT + ? TO TERMINATE

Hello, my name is...from Ekos Research Associates. We're conducting a survey about people's attitudes toward various social issues on behalf of the federal government. All of your replies to the survey will be kept confidential. Are you 16 years of age or older? IF YES: May I begin? IF NO: Ask for person in household over age of 15.

Continue1

31: SEX

DO NOT READ

Record sex of respondent

Male.....1

Female.....2

32: AGE

READ CATEGORIES IF NECESSARY

Before we begin the interview, may I ask which of the following age groups you belong to?

16-17 years01

18-24 years02

25-29 years03

30-34 years04

35-39 years05

40-44 years06

45-49 years07

50-54 years08

55-59 years09

60-64 years10

65 years or older11

(DO NOT READ) DK/NR.....99

33: PRCCS

We would like to get people's perceptions regarding the various forms of violence that children can be exposed to in a variety of places.

In order to do that, I'd first like to ask if you have children in the household? @chil

1=yes

2=no

9=DK/NR

How many are:

Under 5 @chil2

Between 5-11 @chil3 0=DK/NR

Between 12-17 @chil4

39: CCSDC

=> * if IF((CHIL=#2,#3),1,IF((CALC==1),2,3))

calculate nonparent/parent of 1/parent of more than 1

children's.....	1
your child's.....	2
your children's.....	3

40: CCSD

=> * if CCSDC

children.....	1
your child.....	2
your children.....	3

41: CALC2

=> * if IF((CCSDC=#1,#3),1,2)

are.....	1
is.....	2

42: CCSD1

In general, to what degree do you feel <ccsd > <calc2 > exposed to violence on a regular basis? Would you say that <ccsd ><calc2> never exposed to violence, exposed to violence occasionally, often, or all the time?

Never.....	1
Occasionally.....	3
Often.....	4
All the time.....	5
DK/NR.....	9

43: PCSD1

How worried are you about <ccsdc > amount of exposure to violence in each of the following places. Would you say that you are not worried at all, somewhat worried, worried or very worried.

44: CSD1A

Rotation => CSD1F

How worried are you about exposure to violence...

At school, in the playground, involving bullying or witnessing fights, for example.

Not at all worried.....	1
Somewhat worried.....	2
Worried.....	3
Very worried.....	4
DK/NR.....	9

45: CSD1B

How worried are you about exposure to violence...

On television, or in the movies and videos, or music videos

Not at all worried	1
Somewhat worried	2
Worried.....	3
Very worried.....	4
DK/NR	9

46: CSD1C

How worried are you about exposure to violence...

In computer or video games or on the Internet

Not at all worried	1
Somewhat worried	2
Worried.....	3
Very worried.....	4
DK/NR	9

47: CSD1D

How worried are you about exposure to violence...

On the streets, in your community or neighbourhood

Not at all worried	1
Somewhat worried	2
Worried.....	3
Very worried.....	4
DK/NR	9

48: CSD1E

How worried are you about exposure to violence...

When participating in sports

Not at all worried	1
Somewhat worried	2
Worried.....	3
Very worried.....	4
DK/NR	9

49: CSD1F

How worried are you about exposure to violence...

Between siblings in the family

Not at all worried	1
Somewhat worried	2
Worried.....	3
Very worried.....	4
DK/NR	9

50: CCSD2

=> CCSD3 if CSD1A=#1,#2 AND CSD1B=#1,#2 AND CSD1C=#1,#2 AND
CSD1D=#1,#2 AND CSD1E=#1,#2 AND CSD1F=#1,#2_

Some people believe that exposure to violence has relatively little impact on the well-being of children, while others believe that the impact is

much greater. For each of the following sources I'd like you to tell me what you think the impact of witnessing violence is on <ccsd > on a scale where 1 is no impact at all, 7 is a very strong impact and the midpoint 4 is a moderate impact.

51: CSD2A

Rotation => CSD2F
=> +1 if CSD1A=#1-#2

How much of an impact is there from witnessing violence...

At school, in the playground, involving bullying or witnessing fights, for example.

1 No impact at all.....	1
2.....	2
3.....	3
4 Moderate impact.....	4
5.....	5
6.....	6
7 very strong impact.....	7
DK/NR	9

52: CSD2B

=> +1 if CSD1B=#1-#2

How much of an impact is there from witnessing violence...

On television, or in the movies and videos, or music videos

1 No impact at all.....	1
2.....	2
3.....	3
4 Moderate impact.....	4
5.....	5
6.....	6
7 very strong impact.....	7
DK/NR	9

53: CSD2C

=> +1 if CSD1C=#1-#2

How much of an impact is there from witnessing violence...

In computer or video games or on the Internet

1 No impact at all.....	1
2.....	2
3.....	3
4 Moderate impact.....	4
5.....	5
6.....	6
7 very strong impact.....	7
DK/NR	9

54: CSD2D

=> +1 if CSD1D=#1-#2

How much of an impact is there from witnessing violence...

On the streets, in your community or neighbourhood

1 No impact at all.....	1
2.....	2
3.....	3
4 Moderate impact.....	4
5.....	5
6.....	6
7 very strong impact.....	7
DK/NR	9

55: CSD2E

=> +1 if CSD1E=#1-#2

How much of an impact is there from witnessing violence...

When participating in sports

1 No impact at all.....	1
2.....	2
3.....	3
4 Moderate impact.....	4
5.....	5
6.....	6
7 very strong impact.....	7
DK/NR	9

56: CSD2F

=> +1 if CSD1F=#1-#2

How much of an impact is there from witnessing violence...

Between siblings in the family

1 No impact at all.....	1
2.....	2
3.....	3
4 Moderate impact.....	4
5.....	5
6.....	6
7 very strong impact.....	7
DK/NR	9

57: CCSD3

DO NOT READ ACCEPT UP TO 3

Where do you typically turn when you are looking for information about parenting?

Doctor/GP/pediatrician	01	
Internet.....	02	
Brochures.....	03	
Non-profit agencies.....	04	
Counsellor	05	
Schools/teachers/guidance counsellors	06	
Friends or neighbours.....	07	
Family	08	
Books.....	09	
Other (specify)	97	O
DK/NR	99	X

58: PEOP1

READ LIST AS YES/NO FOR EACH ONE, SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Many of the following questions in this survey are about the issue of family violence in Canada. Which of the following relationships do you consider to be included in your understanding of family violence? Does it include...

Rotation => 7

Violence between immediate family members.....	01	
Violence between a girlfriend and boyfriend	02	
Violence by a teenage or adult child toward their parent.....	03	
Violence among extended family members such as cousins or uncles or aunts.....	04	
Violence between someone in a relationship of trust and the person in their care (e.g., foster care).....	05	
Violence between children in a schoolyard.....	06	
Harassment between co-workers	07	
Violence by a caregiver towards an adult with a disability	08	
(DO NOT READ) None of the above.....	97	X
(DO NOT READ) DK/NR.....	99	X

59: PEOP2

PROMPT IF NEEDED ACCEPT AS MANY AS APPLY

Thinking about violence occurring in the immediate family, what kinds of relationships do you tend to think of?

Rotation => 3

Violence between spouses.....	1	
Violence between parents and children	2	
Violence among siblings.....	3	
Other (specify)	4	O
DK/NR	9	X

60: TYPES

People do not always agree about what types of behaviours are considered family violence. Please tell me whether you think each of the following should be considered family violence: always, usually, in some cases, or never.

61: TYPE1

Rotation => TYPE9

Would you consider...to be family violence?

Yelling, swearing or humiliating a family member

Never.....	1
In some cases.....	2
Usually.....	3
Always.....	4
DK/NR.....	9

62: TYPE2

=> +1 if ROT1=#1

Would you consider...to be family violence?

Pushing, grabbing or shoving a family member

Never.....	1
In some cases.....	2
Usually.....	3
Always.....	4
DK/NR.....	9

63: TYPE3

Would you consider...to be family violence?

Kicking, biting, or hitting a family member with a fist

Never.....	1
In some cases.....	2
Usually.....	3
Always.....	4
DK/NR.....	9

64: TYPE4

Would you consider...to be family violence?

Using or threatening a family member with a gun or knife

Never.....	1
In some cases.....	2
Usually.....	3
Always.....	4
DK/NR.....	9

65: TYPE5

Would you consider...to be family violence?

Inappropriate, unwanted or forced sexual activity with a family member

Never.....	1
In some cases.....	2
Usually.....	3
Always.....	4
DK/NR.....	9

66: TYPE6

=> +1 if ROT1=#2

Would you consider...to be family violence?

Hitting a family member with an open hand

Never.....	1
In some cases.....	2
Usually.....	3
Always.....	4
DK/NR.....	9

67: TYPE7

Would you consider...to be family violence?

Throwing, smashing, hitting or kicking another family member's things, or hurting family pets

Never.....	1
In some cases.....	2
Usually.....	3
Always.....	4
DK/NR.....	9

68: TYPE8

Would you consider...to be family violence?

Preventing an adult family member from knowing about or having access to family income or savings, even if they ask

Never.....	1
In some cases.....	2
Usually.....	3
Always.....	4
DK/NR.....	9

69: TYPE9

Would you consider...to be family violence?

Failing to provide food, shelter or medical attention to a family member

Never.....	1
In some cases.....	2
Usually.....	3
Always.....	4
DK/NR.....	9

70: DOJ1

READ ENTIRE LIST, SELECT ONLY ONE

Which of the following types of violence in the family do you consider to be the greatest cause for concern?

Rotation => 6

- Violence toward children1
- Violence toward the elderly or disabled.....2
- Dating violence3
- Sibling violence.....4
- Spousal violence5
- Violence against parents by their teenage or adult children.....7
- [DO NOT READ] All of the above6
- [DO NOT READ] DK/NR.....9

71: DOJ3

=> +1 if DOJ2=#7

PROMPT IF NECESSARY ACCEPT ONE RESPONSE

What group of people within the family do you think is the most at risk of experiencing family violence?

Rotation => 7

- Children under 12.....1
- Teenagers.....2
- Elderly people.....3
- Younger women4
- Older women5
- Younger men.....6
- Older men.....7
- Someone else8
- No particular group0
- DK/NR9

72: READ

In the last 12 months, have you heard or read anything about family violence?

- Yes1
- No2
- DK/NR9

73: WHERE

=> +1 if NOT READ=#1

DO NOT READ LIST, ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES

Where did you get this information?

Newspaper story	01	
Magazine	02	
Radio	03	
Television.....	04	
Employer/at work.....	05	
Poster/pamphlet	06	
Community organization	07	
Doctor/health care provider.....	08	
Other (specify)	98	O
DK/NR	99	X

74: INFO

Do you feel you are personally well enough informed about family violence?

Yes	1
No	2
DK/NR	9

75: NEED

=> +1 if INFO=#1

DO NOT READ LIST, ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES

What kinds of information do you feel you need?

Warning signs/types of family violence	01	
Statistics/amount/frequency of family violence	02	
Information about resources in community/shelters/crisis line.....	03	
Talking to kids about family violence.....	04	
Material related to justice system	05	
Other (specify)	98	O
DK/NR	99	X

76: COMP

MIRROR APPROPRIATE SCALE LABEL BACK TO RESPONDENT

How would you rate the problem of family violence in our society today compared to ten years ago on a scale where 1 means much less serious today that it was 10 years ago, 7 means much more serious today and the midpoint means about the same?

1 Much less serious today than 10 years ago	1
2 Less serious today	2
3 Somewhat less serious today	3
4 About the same	4
5 Somewhat more serious today.....	5
6 More serious today.....	6
7 Much more serious today than 10 years ago.....	7
DK/NR	9

77: COMP2

To what extent do you think that family violence exists in your own community? Would you say that family violence does not take place at all, does not take place very often, takes place a fair bit or takes place a lot in your community.

Not at all	1
Not very often	2
A fair bit	3
A lot	4
DK/NR	9

78: CAUS

ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES - GIVE FULL ANSWER OF 5-10 WORDS FOR EACH

Why do you think violence occurs in some families?

PROMPT WITH FIRST 2 CATEGORIES IF NEEDED

Rotation => 12

Alcohol/drugs	01	
Inability to control temper.....	02	N
Stress in family (e.g., divorce, death in family)	03	
A history of violence in life of individual/learned to be violent in childhood home/that's what parents did	04	
Violence in society such as in media.....	05	N
Control/need to make family members do what they want.....	06	N
Attitudes/behaviour of family members that provoke violence	07	
Individual's lack of respect for family members	08	N
Jealousy.....	09	N
Family financial difficulties/unemployment	10	
Poor communication	11	
Lack of support/isolation/reluctance of others to get involved.....	12	N
Response	98	O
DK/NR	99	X

79: CONSQ

=> +1 if ROT1=#1

ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES - GIVE FULL ANSWER OF 5-10 WORDS FOR EACH

What do you think are some of the impacts on family members who directly experience family violence?

PROMPT WITH FIRST 2 CATEGORIES IF NEEDED

Rotation => 12

Physical injury/pain	01	
Financial losses/loss of earnings/poverty.....	02	N
Loss of self-esteem and self-confidence.....	03	
Isolation and self-withdrawal.....	04	
Development of aggressive behaviour/cycle of violence/teaching children that's how to behave.....	05	
Negative psychological effects (e.g., depression, fear)	06	
Family breakdown	07	N
Poor/limited development of children	08	N
Youth crime/schoolyard bullying.....	09	N
Poor school performance of children.....	10	N
Poor health	11	N
Loss of respect for violent family member	12	N
Response.....	98	O
DK/NR	99	X

80: CONS2

=> +1 if ROT1=#2

ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES - GIVE FULL ANSWER OF 5-10 WORDS FOR EACH

What do you think are some of the impacts on other family members in the household who are not themselves targeted, but who are exposed to or witness family violence?

PROMPT WITH FIRST 2 CATEGORIES IF NEEDED

Rotation => 12

Physical injury/pain	01	
Financial losses/loss of earnings/poverty.....	02	N
Loss of self-esteem and self-confidence.....	03	
Isolation and self-withdrawal.....	04	
Development of aggressive behaviour/cycle of violence/teaching children that's how to behave.....	05	
Negative psychological effects (e.g., depression, fear)	06	
Family breakdown	07	N
Poor/limited development of children	08	N
Youth crime/schoolyard bullying.....	09	N
Poor school performance of children.....	10	N
Poor health	11	N
Loss of respect for violent family member	12	N
Response.....	98	O
DK/NR	99	X

81: ACT

Have you ever known someone who was experiencing family violence?

Yes	1
No	2
DK/NR	9

82: ACT2

=> PERS if NOT ACT=#1

I would like you to think about the most recent family violence situation that you know about.

83: UOT1

How long ago did you become aware of this situation?

In the past six months	1
In the past 12 months	2
More than a year ago.....	3
DK/NR	9

84: ACT3

Was the family that was involved one you knew very well, well, moderately well, or did not know well at all?

Very well.....	1
Well	2
Moderately well.....	3
Not know well at all.....	4
DK/NR	9

85: ACT3A

READ ENTIRE LIST THEN ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE

Did this situation involve...

Rotation => 6

Violence toward children	1
Violence toward the elderly or disabled.....	2
Dating violence	3
Sibling violence.....	4
Spousal violence	5
Violence against parents by their teenage or adult children.....	7
[DO NOT READ] All of the above	6
[DO NOT READ] DK/NR.....	9

86: ACT3C

PROMPT ONLY IF NEEDED - ACCEPT AS MANY AS APPLY

What was the nature of the behaviour?

Physical abuse.....	1	
Emotional/psychological abuse	2	
Sexual abuse.....	3	
Financial abuse.....	4	
Other	5	O
DK/NR	9	X

87: ACT3E

READ LIST

Would you say this situation was...

Not at all serious.....	1
Somewhat serious.....	2
Serious.....	3
Extremely serious.....	4
(DO NOT READ) DK/NR.....	9

88: ACT4

Sometimes a person can help in a family violence situation. In the situation we were just talking about, were you able to do anything?

Yes.....	1	
No.....	2	=> ACT6
DK/NR.....	9	=> ACT6

89: ACT5

=> +1 if NOT ACT4=#1

DO NOT READ LIST, ACCEPT AS MANY AS APPLY

What did you do about the situation?

Talk to and/or give information to the person causing harm.....	01	
Talk to/listen to/support the person who was being harmed.....	02	
Consult with other people you know to try to decide what to do.....	03	
Get advice from a local family violence program.....	04	
Call 911.....	05	
Call police.....	06	
Alert family/friends.....	07	
Alert physician, caregivers, other professionals.....	08	
Alert child welfare/Children's Aid Society.....	09	
Other (specify).....	97	O
DK/NR.....	99	X

90: ACT6

=> +1 if ACT4=#1

DO NOT READ LIST, ACCEPT AS MANY AS APPLY

Even though people might want to help more in a situation of family violence, there are many reasons why they don't. What were your own reasons in this instance?

Didn't have all the facts/unsure what was really going on/afraid of making mistake.....	01	
Unsure of what exactly to do about the situation/lack of information about what to do.....	02	
Afraid for personal safety if got involved.....	03	
Did not want to intrude on family matter/none of my business.....	04	
Thought it would make the situation worse for person being harmed.....	05	
Doesn't do any good to intervene because person being harmed won't do anything about it to change situation.....	06	
Situation did not appear to be serious.....	07	
Was told about situation in confidence/promised not to tell.....	08	
Authorities don't help the situation/would make matters worse.....	09	
Believed situation was an isolated incident.....	10	
Other (specify).....	97	O
DK/NR.....	99	X

91: RCM1A

Do you know if the police were involved in the situation?

Yes.....	1
No.....	2
DK/NR.....	9

92: RCM1B

=> UOT2 if NOT(RCM1A=#1)

MIRROR APPROPRIATE SCALE LABEL BACK TO RESPONDENT

Do you know whether the victim involved in the situation was satisfied with the handling of the situation by police? IF so, how satisfied do you think that this person was on a scale where 1 is completely dissatisfied, 7 is completely satisfied and the midpoint 4 is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied?

1 Completely dissatisfied.....	1
2 Dissatisfied.....	2
3 Somewhat dissatisfied.....	3
4 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.....	4
5 Somewhat satisfied.....	5
6 Satisfied.....	6
7 Completely satisfied.....	7
DK/NR.....	9

93: RCM1C

=> +1 if RCM1B=#5-#8

Can you tell me, briefly in your own words, why the victim was not satisfied with the handling of the situation by police?

Response97 O
 DK/NR99

94: UOT2

=> +1 if NOT(ACT3A=#2-#4)

Do you know whether child welfare authorities were involved in this situation or not

Yes child welfare got involved1
 No they did not.....2
 Don't have enough knowledge to comment3
 NR.....9

95: PERS

Have you ever experienced or been exposed to family violence personally?

Yes1
 No2
 DK/NR9

96: PERSB

=> +1 if NOT (PERS=#1) OR AGE=#1

Was this direct experience or general exposure to the violence? ***IF ASKED- Was the violence targeted directly at you or were you living in a household where violence was occurring?

Direct experience1
 General exposure.....2
 Both3
 DK/NR9

97: APRE

I'm going to read you TWO different scenarios and ask you about your response in each case.

98: ASC1

Imagine that you found out that <arot1 > <arot2 >

99: ASC2

READ LIST

In this situation, would you be...

Not concerned at all	1
Somewhat concerned	2
Concerned.....	3
Extremely concerned.....	4
(DO NOT READ) DK/NR.....	9

100: ASC4

DO NOT READ, ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES

What do you think you would do in this situation?

Do nothing.....	00	
Talk to and/or give information to the person causing harm.....	01	
Talk to/listen to/support the person who was being harmed.....	02	
Consult with other people you know to try to decide what to do.....	03	
Get advice from a local family violence program	04	
Call 911.....	05	
Call police	06	
Alert family/friends.....	07	
Alert physician, caregivers, other professionals.....	08	
Alert child welfare/Children's Aid Society	09	
Other (specify)	97	O
DK/NR	99	X

101: ASC5

=> +1 if NOT ASC4=#1

DO NOT READ, ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES

Why might you not respond?

Don't have all the facts/unsure what is really going on/afraid of making mistake.....	01	
Unsure of what exactly to do about the situation/lack of information about what to do.....	02	
Afraid for personal safety if got involved	03	
Do not want to intrude on family matter/none of my business	04	
Would make the situation worse for person being harmed	05	
Doesn't do any good to intervene because person being harmed won't do anything about it to change situation	06	
Authorities don't help the situation/would make matters worse	07	
See situation as an isolated incident.....	08	
Other (specify)	97	O
DK/NR	99	X

102: BSC1

Imagine that you found out that <brot1 > <brot2 >

103: BSC2

READ LIST

In this situation, would you be...

Not concerned at all	1
Somewhat concerned	2
Concerned.....	3
Extremely concerned.....	4
(DO NOT READ) DK/NR.....	9

104: BSC4

DO NOT READ, ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES

What do you think you would do in this situation?

Do nothing.....	00	
Talk to and/or give information to the person causing harm.....	01	
Talk to/listen to/support the person who was being harmed.....	02	
Consult with other people you know to try to decide what to do.....	03	
Get advice from a local family violence program	04	
Call 911.....	05	
Call police	06	
Alert family/friends.....	07	
Alert physician, caregivers, other professionals.....	08	
Alert child welfare/Children's Aid Society	09	
Other (specify)	97	O
DK/NR	99	X

105: BSC5

=> +1 if NOT BSC4=#1

DO NOT READ, ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES

Why might you not respond?

Don't have all the facts/unsure what is really going on/afraid of making mistake.....	01	
Unsure of what exactly to do about the situation/lack of information about what to do.....	02	
Afraid for personal safety if got involved	03	
Do not want to intrude on family matter/none of my business	04	
Would make the situation worse for person being harmed	05	
Doesn't do any good to intervene because person being harmed won't do anything about it to change situation	06	
Authorities don't help the situation/would make matters worse	07	
See situation as an isolated incident.....	08	
Other (specify)	97	O
DK/NR	99	X

106: REFER

DO NOT READ LIST, ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES

If someone who was experiencing family violence asked you where to get information or support, what would you suggest?

Their family/friends	01	
Shelter	02	
Police	03	
911.....	04	
Children's Aid/social worker/counsellor	05	
Community services/family centre/support groups.....	06	
Employee assistance program	07	
Physician/health care provider	08	
Internet.....	09	
Clergy.....	10	
Victims' Services	11	
Other (specify)	98	O
DK/NR - Unsure	99	X

107: PRBAR

=> PREID if ROT1=#1

Sometimes people might not help in a family violence situation. How often do you think this is.....?

108: BARR3

Rotation => BARR9

How often do you think that people don't help.....

Because people are afraid of being harmed themselves?
would you say that this happens....read list

Rarely	1
Sometimes	2
Often.....	3
Always	4
DK/NR	9

109: BARR5

How often do you think that people don't help.....

Because people feel that it is a family matter and not their concern?
would you say that this happens....read list

Rarely	1
Sometimes	2
Often.....	3
Always	4
DK/NR	9

110: BARR6

How often do you think that people don't help....

Because people are unsure of exactly what action to take
would you say that this happens....read list

Rarely	1
Sometimes	2
Often.....	3
Always	4
DK/NR	9

111: BARR7

How often do you think that people don't help....

Because people believe the situation to be an isolated incident
would you say that this happens....read list

Rarely	1
Sometimes	2
Often.....	3
Always	4
DK/NR	9

112: BARR9

How often do you think that people don't help....

Because people are concerned that involving the authorities would make
the situation worse
would you say that this happens....read list

Rarely	1
Sometimes	2
Often.....	3
Always	4
DK/NR	9

113: PREID

=> RCMP3 if ROT1=#2

Which of the following organizations or individuals do you think
should be legally obligated to report family violence to the proper
authorities, such as the police or Childrens' Aid? Please respond with a
yes, no or in some cases.

114: ID3

Rotation => ID12

Should...be obligated to report family violence?

Health professionals where spouses, partners or older adults are
involved

Yes	1
No	2
In some cases.....	3
DK/NR	9

115: ID4

Should....

Officials from banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions be obliged to report family violence, where there is financial harm

Yes	1
No	2
In some cases.....	3
DK/NR	9

116: ID8

Should....

Employers be obliged to report family violence where spouses or partners are involved

Yes	1
No	2
In some cases.....	3
DK/NR	9

117: ID10

Should...be obligated to report family violence?

Community workers where spouses, partners or older adults are involved

Yes	1
No	2
In some cases.....	3
DK/NR	9

118: ID12

Should...be obligated to report family violence?

Clergy/Spiritual leaders

Yes	1
No	2
In some cases.....	3
DK/NR	9

119: RCMP3

READ LIST AS YES/NO FOR EACH ONE, SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Beyond legal obligations to report family violence, who else is touched by family violence and therefore should play a role in helping to stop situations of family violence?

Rotation => 4

Immediate family members	01	
Friends and neighbours	02	
Victims' service units with the police	03	
Groups who help victims/community service providers.....	04	
Business leaders and employers.....	05	
Other (specify)	97	O
None of the above.....	98	X
DK/NR	99	X

120: RESP1

Rotation => RESP4

=> +1 if ROT18=#1

READ ENTIRE LIST - THEN ACCEPT 1 RESPONSE

Which of the following responses do you think is most appropriate for a person who was found to be responsible for kicking or hitting his or her spouse or partner with a fist? ****NOTE:** Mediation is where the victim and offender are brought together by a third party to discuss an appropriate way of dealing with the situation

Rotation => 4

Do nothing.....	00
Jail time	01
Community service	02
Counselling and treatment.....	03
Mediation.....	04
(DO NOT READ) Other (specify).....	98 O
(DO NOT READ) DK/NR.....	99

121: RESP2

=> +1 if ROT18=#1

READ ENTIRE LIST - THEN ACCEPT 1 RESPONSE

Which of the following responses do you think is most appropriate when someone was found to be responsible for kicking or hitting another person with a fist in a bar? ****NOTE:** Mediation is where the victim and offender are brought together by a third party to discuss an appropriate way of dealing with the situation

Rotation => 4

Do nothing.....	00
Jail time	01
Community service	02
Counselling and treatment.....	03
Mediation.....	04
(DO NOT READ) Other (specify).....	98 O
(DO NOT READ) DK/NR.....	99

122: RESP3

=> +1 if ROT18=#2

READ ENTIRE LIST - THEN ACCEPT 1 RESPONSE

Which of the following responses do you think is most appropriate when a youth was found to be responsible for hitting or kicking another youth at school? *NOTE: Mediation is where the 2 people involved are brought together by a third party to discuss an appropriate way of dealing with the situation

Rotation => 4

Do nothing.....	00	
Youth detention centre.....	01	
Community service	02	
Counselling and treatment.....	03	
Mediation.....	04	
Suspended or expelled from school.....	05	
(DO NOT READ) Other (specify).....	98	O
(DO NOT READ) DK/NR.....	99	

123: RESP4

=> +1 if ROT18=#2

READ ENTIRE LIST - THEN ACCEPT 1 RESPONSE

Which of the following responses do you think is most appropriate for a parent who was found to be responsible for kicking or hitting his or her child with a fist?

Rotation => 4

Do nothing.....	00	
Jail time	01	
Community service	02	
Counselling and treatment.....	03	
(DO NOT READ) Other (specify).....	98	O
(DO NOT READ) DK/NR.....	99	

124: RCMP2

PROMPT ONLY IF NECESSARY ACCEPT UP TO 4

Thinking about the traditional role of the police in responding to a situation of family violence, what additional roles would you like to see the police play or what changes would you like to see in their role?

No additional role -status quo	00	X
Provide safety plans for victims	01	
Provide referrals to Legal Services and/or victim support services.....	02	
Provide information about counselling to person causing the harm	03	
Provide education in schools and community organizations to raise awareness of family violence	04	
Other (specify)	97	O
DK/NR	99	X
.....	07	

125: PRAGR

Please tell me how you feel about each of the following statements. In each case, I would like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree, on

a scale where 1 is strongly disagree, 7 is strongly agree and the midpoint 4 is neither agree nor disagree.

126: DO1

Rotation => DOJ10

=> +1 if ROT11=#1

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

I would be able to say something to a <ROT3 > friend who I thought was abusing <ROT4> spouse or partner.

1 Strongly disagree.....	1
2 Disagree.....	2
3 Mildly disagree.....	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree.....	4
5 Mildly agree.....	5
6 Agree.....	6
7 Strongly agree.....	7
DK/NR.....	9

127: DO2

=> +1 if ROT11=#2

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

I could not talk to a <ROT3 > friend who is being abused by <ROT4> spouse or partner.

1 Strongly disagree.....	1
2 Disagree.....	2
3 Mildly disagree.....	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree.....	4
5 Mildly agree.....	5
6 Agree.....	6
7 Strongly agree.....	7
DK/NR.....	9

128: AGRE4

=> +1 if ROT12=#1

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

Children in an abusive home will often have psychological problems

1 Strongly disagree.....	1
2 Disagree.....	2
3 Mildly disagree.....	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree.....	4
5 Mildly agree.....	5
6 Agree.....	6
7 Strongly agree.....	7
DK/NR.....	9

129: AGR5

=> +1 if ROT12=#2

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

Children who live in violent homes are more likely to be bullies at school.

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

130: AGR8

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

Living with family violence doesn't affect your general health

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

131: AG11A

=> +1 if NOT ROT14=#1

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

The court system treats cases of family violence too lightly

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

132: AG11B

=> +1 if NOT ROT14=#2

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

The police respond too lightly to situations involving family violence

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

133: AGR12

=> +1 if NOT ROT14=#3#4

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

The <rot7 > are very supportive of and responsive to victims of family violence

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

134: AGR13

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

Family violence occurs in all <rag13 > in Canadian society

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

135: AGR21

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

I don't believe that family violence is as serious as it's made out to be by <ROT9 >.

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

136: AGR25

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

I don't think that I personally have any responsibility for helping to reduce family violence in my community

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

137: AGR26

=> +1 if ROT16=#1

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

Dependent adults should be protected by the same kinds of interventions as the ones used for children

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

138: AGR27

=> +1 if ROT16=#2

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

Children who are exposed to or witness family violence should be protected by the same interventions as the ones used for children who experience the violence directly

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

139: AGR29

=> +1 if ROT17=#1

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

I think that someone who insults and humiliates other family members is likely to move to slapping and punching later on

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

140: AGR30

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

I think family violence should be an urgent priority for <ROT10 >

1 Strongly disagree.....	1
2 Disagree.....	2
3 Mildly disagree.....	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree.....	4
5 Mildly agree.....	5
6 Agree.....	6
7 Strongly agree.....	7
DK/NR.....	9

141: AGR32

=> +1 if ROT17=#2

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

People who are violent with family members are usually out of control and not responsible for their own behaviour

1 Strongly disagree.....	1
2 Disagree.....	2
3 Mildly disagree.....	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree.....	4
5 Mildly agree.....	5
6 Agree.....	6
7 Strongly agree.....	7
DK/NR.....	9

142: DOJ4

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

Women are more in need of protection from family violence than men

1 Strongly disagree.....	1
2 Disagree.....	2
3 Mildly disagree.....	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree.....	4
5 Mildly agree.....	5
6 Agree.....	6
7 Strongly agree.....	7
DK/NR.....	9

143: DOJ5

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

Just as many women as men are violent with other family members

1 Strongly disagree.....	1
2 Disagree.....	2
3 Mildly disagree.....	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree.....	4
5 Mildly agree.....	5
6 Agree.....	6
7 Strongly agree.....	7
DK/NR.....	9

144: DOJ6

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

Most women could get out of an abusive relationship if they wanted to

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

145: DOJ7

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

A spouse who hits his or her partner should be able to get treatment instead of being charged or going to jail

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

146: DOJ8

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

When a spouse hits his or her partner, it's a crime.

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

147: DOJ9

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

A spouse who hits his or her partner should be removed from the home.

1 Strongly disagree	1
2 Disagree	2
3 Mildly disagree	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree	4
5 Mildly agree	5
6 Agree	6
7 Strongly agree	7
DK/NR	9

148: DOJ10

MIRROR BACK LABEL ON SCALE

If a spouse hits his or her partner and he or she hits back, they should both be charged.

1 Strongly disagree.....	1
2 Disagree.....	2
3 Mildly disagree.....	3
4 Neither agree nor disagree.....	4
5 Mildly agree.....	5
6 Agree.....	6
7 Strongly agree.....	7
DK/NR.....	9

149: DOJ2

READ LIST AS YES/NO FOR EACH ONE, SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

I'm going to read you a list of ways to deal with family violence and ask you to tell me for each one, whether you consider it to effective?

Rotation => 13

Alcohol abuse programs.....	01
Parent programs or training.....	02
Employee assistance programs.....	03
Shelters for victims of abuse.....	04
Counselling services for victims.....	05
Treatment for offenders.....	06
Harsher penalties for offenders.....	07
Public education and awareness programs.....	08
Mediation between victims and abusers.....	09
Reducing violence on TV (e.g., entertainment).....	10
Encouraging people to openly talk about their disapproval of family violence.....	11
Community support programs.....	12
Having health care providers ask questions as part of routine medical check-ups.....	13
Anything else (response).....	97 O
DK/NR.....	99

150: DOJ2B

=> +1 if NBR(DOJ2)<2

READ LIST AND ACCEPT ONLY ONE

And which of the ways you just picked, would you consider to be the most effective way to deal with family violence?

Alcohol abuse programs.....	01
Parent programs or training.....	02
Employee assistance programs.....	03
Shelters for victims of abuse	04
Counselling services for victims.....	05
Treatment for offenders.....	06
Harsher penalties for offenders	07
Public education and awareness programs	08
Mediation between victims and abusers.....	09
Reducing violence on TV (e.g., entertainment)	10
Encouraging people to openly talk about their disapproval of family violence	11
Community support programs.....	12
having health care providers ask questions as part of routine medical check-ups	13
Anything else (response)	97 O
DK/NR	99

151: BACK

Finally, I'd like to ask you a few background questions.

152: EDUC

=> +1 if AGE=#1

DO NOT READ, ACCEPT ONE RESPONSE

What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

Elementary school or less	01
Some high school.....	02
Graduated high school.....	03
Some community college/CEGEP	04
Some university	05
Graduated community college/CEGEP	06
Graduated university.....	07
Other (specify)	98 O
DK/NR	99
TRADE SCHOOL.....	09

153: MTONG

What language did you first learn to speak and still understand?

English	01	
French.....	02	
Other (specify)	98	O
DK/NR	99	
ITALIAN.....	04	
CHINESE.....	05	
GERMAN	06	
PORTUGUESE.....	07	
POLISH.....	08	
UKRAINIAN.....	09	

154: MAR

=> +1 if AGE=#1

DO NOT READ CATEGORIES

What is your current marital status?

Married/common law	1
Single (never been married).....	2
Separated.....	3
Divorced	4
Widowed	5
DK/NR	9

155: ELD

=> +1 if AGE=#1

Are you responsible for caring for any dependent adults?

Yes	1
No	2
DK/NR	9

156: EMPL

=> +1 if AGE=#1

DO NOT READ CATEGORIES

What is your employment status right now?

Self-employed	01	
Employed full-time	02	
Employed part-time (less than 30 hours)	03	
Unemployed.....	04	
Student.....	06	
Retired.....	07	
Homemaker.....	08	
Other (specify)	98	O
DK/NR	99	

157: RELIG

READ LIST

Do you attend religious services...

Regularly	1
Occasionally	2
Rarely	3
Never.....	4
(DO NOT READ) DK/NR.....	9

158: VIS

READ CATEGORIES, CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY

Do you consider yourself to belong to any of the following groups?
 PROMPT IF NECESSARY [...a members of a visible minority by virtue
 of your race or color]

A member of a visible minority.....	1
A recent immigrant to Canada	2
An Aboriginal person	3
Person with a disability	4
(DO NOT READ) None of the above.....	8 X
(DO NOT READ) DK/NR.....	9 X

159: INCOM

What is your annual HOUSEHOLD income from all sources before
 taxes?

<\$20,000	1
\$20,000-\$29,999.....	2
\$30,000-\$39,999.....	3
\$40,000-\$49,999.....	4
\$50,000-\$59,999.....	5
\$60,000-\$79,999.....	6
\$80,000-\$99,999.....	7
\$100,000 or more	8
DK/NR	9

160: THINK

End of Interview

Thank you for your cooperation and time!

Completion.....	1 D
-----------------	-----

10: ROT1

=> * if IF((ROT1==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),ROT1)

random selection for AGR23, AGR24

.....	1
.....	2

11: ROT3

=> * if IF((ROT3==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),ROT3)
 rot for DO1, DO2, AGRE2
 male1
 female.....2

12: ROT4

=> * if IF((ROT4==0),ROT3,ROT3)
 rot for AGRE2
 his1
 her.....2

13: ROT5

=> * if IF((ROT5==0),ROT3,ROT3)
 rot for AGRE2
 man.....1
 woman2

14: ROT6

=> * if IF((ROT6==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),ROT6)
 rot for AGRE7
 yelling or swearing.....1
 pushing or shoving.....2

15: ROT7

=> * if IF((ROT7==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),ROT7)
 rot for AGR11
 police1
 courts.....2

16: ROT9

=> * if IF((ROT9==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),ROT9)
 rot for AGR21
 the media1
 women's groups.....2

17: ROT10

=> * if IF((ROT10==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),ROT10)
 rot for AGR30
 the federal government.....1
 my community.....2

18: ROT11

=> * if IF((ROT11==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),ROT11)
 random selection for DO1, DO2

.....1
2

19: ROT12

=> * if IF((ROT12==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),ROT12)
 random selection for AGRE4, AGRE5

.....1
2

20: ROT14

=> * if IF((ROT14==0),TRC(RAN(1,4.99999999)),ROT14)
 random selection for AG11A, AG11B, AGR12

.....1
2
3
4

21: ROT16

=> * if IF((ROT16==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),ROT16)
 random selection for AGR26, AGR27

.....1
2

22: ROT17

=> * if IF((ROT17==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),ROT17)
 random selection for AGR29, AGR32

.....1
2

23: ROT18

=> * if IF((ROT18==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),ROT18)
 skip for resp1/2 and 3/3

.....1
2

24: AROT1

=> * if IF((AROT1==0),TRC(RAN(1,37.9999)),AROT1)

random selection #1 for ASC1

your neighbour is insulting or humiliating their spouse or partner.....01

your neighbour is pushing or grabbing their spouse or partner.....02

your neighbour is kicking or hitting their spouse or partner with a fist.....03

your neighbour is forcing their spouse or partner into unwanted sexual activity.....04

your neighbour is preventing their spouse or partner from knowing about or having05

your close friend or family member is insulting or humiliating.....06

your close friend or family member is pushing or grabbing their spouse or partner.....07

your close friend or family member is kicking or hitting their spouse or.....08

your close friend or family member is forcing their spouse or partner09

your close friend or family member is preventing their spouse or partner.....10

a stranger is insulting or humiliating their spouse or partner.....11

a stranger is pushing or grabbing their spouse or partner.....12

a stranger is kicking or hitting their spouse or partner with a fist.....13

a stranger is forcing their spouse or partner into unwanted sexual activity14

your neighbour is insulting or humiliating their child.....15

your neighbour is pushing or grabbing their child.....16

your neighbour is kicking or hitting their child with a fist.....17

your neighbour is engaging in inappropriate touching or sexual activity18

your close friend or family member is insulting or humiliating their child19

your close friend or family member is pushing or grabbing their child20

your close friend or family member is kicking or hitting their child with a fist21

your close friend or family member is engaging in inappropriate touching or.....22

a stranger is insulting or humiliating their child.....23

a stranger is pushing or grabbing their child.....24

a stranger is kicking or hitting their child with a fist.....25

a stranger is engaging in inappropriate touching or sexual activity26

your adult neighbour is insulting or humiliating their older parent.....27

your adult neighbour is pushing or grabbing their older parent.....28

your adult neighbour is kicking or hitting their older parent with a fist.....29

your adult neighbour is preventing their older parent from knowing about30

your close friend or family member is insulting or humiliating their older parent31

your close friend or family member is pushing or grabbing their older parent32

your close friend or family member is kicking or hitting their older parent.....33

your close friend or family member is preventing their older parent from34

an adult stranger is insulting or humiliating their older parent35

an adult stranger is pushing or grabbing their older parent36

an adult stranger is kicking or hitting their older parent with a fist.....37

25: AROT2

=> * if IF((AROT2==0),AROT1,AROT1)
 random selection #2 for ASC1

.....	01
.....	02
.....	03
.....	04
access to household income, even when they ask.....	05
their spouse or partner.....	06
.....	07
partner with a fist.....	08
into unwanted sexual activity.....	09
knowing about or having access to household income, even when they ask.....	10
.....	11
.....	12
.....	13
.....	14
.....	15
.....	16
.....	17
with their child.....	18
.....	19
.....	20
.....	21
sexual activity with their child.....	22
.....	23
.....	24
.....	25
with their child.....	26
.....	27
.....	28
.....	29
or having access to the older parent's own income or savings.....	30
.....	31
.....	32
with a fist.....	33
knowing about or having access to the older parent's own income or savings.....	34
.....	35
.....	36
.....	37

28: RESC

=> * if IF((RESC==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),RESC)

Respect for authority.....	1
Safety and security.....	2

29: INDC

=> * if IF((INDC==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),INDC)

Individual rights and freedoms.....	1
Minimal government intrusion.....	2

30: RAG13

=> * if IF((RAG13==0),TRC(RAN(1,2.99999999)),RAG13)

income groups.....1
ethnic groups.....2

APPENDIX B

Response Rate Table

Response Rate

The fieldwork for this project involved a custom survey of 2052 respondents from across Canada. In calculating response rates, sample attrition considers all numbers not in service, cases of duplicate numbers, and business numbers. Screened out cases were largely individuals who were not living on reserve or who did not have status. Total eligible cases comprised all of the unused cases, all refusals, retired cases (cases called a total of 8 times without success) and cases where the only person able to respond to the survey was unavailable for the duration of the study. The response rate was 34 per cent of the functional sample contacted at the conclusion of the survey.

EXHIBIT 1
Call Results and Response Rates Table

Total Sample	14779
Numbers not in service	1899
Duplicates	17
Non-residential numbers	583
Numbers blocked by Phone companies	27
Total functional sample	12253
No answers	2139
Unavailable	313
Language difficulty	204
Other	113
Retired	111
Total Asked	9373
Refusals	5197
Cooperative Callbacks	4176
Completes	2052
Quota filled	2034
Ineligible	90
Response Rate	34.08%

APPENDIX C

Focus Group Moderator's Guide

Syndicated Study on Family Violence Draft Focus Group Moderator's Guide

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Before the discussion begins, the moderator briefly introduces herself and explains the purpose of the discussion, noting that:

- The group discussions are part of a study on Canadians' attitudes towards family violence being conducted by EKOS Research on behalf of a partnership of federal government departments, academic and non-government organizations.

The moderator also explains that:

- Participants are encouraged to discuss their opinions and say whatever is on their mind. There are no right or wrong answers and differences of opinion are perfectly acceptable.
- The discussion will last for approximately two hours.
- The discussion is being audio-tape recorded so that an accurate summary can be prepared. Therefore, we would appreciate it if only one person speaks at a time. All comments will be kept strictly confidential, and the names of participants will not be reported.
- (If applicable) Behind the glass, there are representatives from EKOS and/or our study partners. These individuals wish to observe the discussion first-hand.

The moderator then goes around the table asking each participant to introduce themselves, including their first name and to describe their current family situation (e.g., married/single, children, ages).

2.0 IMAGES AND UNDERSTANDING OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

1. What kinds of relationships do you think of when you think of “family violence”?
 - PROMPT to discuss relationships not mentioned: In the initial images you had, did anyone think of: abuse in a dating relationship, abuse of elder parents, women abusing men, etc.?

2. Would anyone consider family violence to include bullying among youth in the schoolyard? Why or why not?
 - What about harassment between co-workers? To what extent would you consider this to be family violence? Why or why not?
 - In a recent survey EKOS conducted on attitudes toward family violence, we found that about half of Canadians considered “bullying in the schoolyard” and “harassment between co-workers” to be family violence. What do you think about this finding (e.g., is it surprising, would you have said the same thing, why do you think people indicated that these behaviours were examples of family violence)?

3. What kinds of behaviours do you think of when you think of “family violence”?
 - Did anyone think of emotional abuse such as yelling or swearing at a family member as violence or abuse? Insulting or humiliating them? How does this type of behaviour compare to physical violence (e.g., seriousness, consequences)?
 - Did anyone think of financial abuse? When I say financial abuse, what does this mean to you (e.g., types of behaviours, types of victims)? Do you consider this to be a type of violence? How does this behaviour compare to other forms of family violence (e.g., seriousness, consequences)?
 - In the survey I was talking about, we asked respondents whether they would call different kinds of behaviours family violence. One of the things we found was that insulting and humiliating a family member was considered to be family violence as often as other more physical kinds of behaviours such as pushing and shoving or hitting with an open hand. What do you think about this finding (e.g., is it surprising, would you have said the same thing, why do you think people responded this way)?

4. Would you say that family violence has increased, decreased or remained about the same over the last 10 years?
 - What makes you say this?
 - What else do you think has changed about family violence over the last ten years?

- Do you think are more willing to talk about their abuse than before? Why?
 - (If responses are different from survey) We asked this same question on the national survey we conducted and found that many people felt that family violence has increased over the last 10 years. What do you think of this finding (e.g., is it surprising, why do you think people feel this way)?
5. I'm going to read a couple of statements and I'd like you to tell me what you think.
- The first is "Most women could get out of an abusive relationship if they wanted to". Would you generally agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
 - The second statement is, "If a spouse hits his or her partner and he or she hits back, they should both be charged". Would you generally agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

3.0 WELL-INFORMED/INFORMATION NEEDS

6. How well-informed do you feel you are about family violence? What about other Canadians?
- Where do you usually get information about family violence?
 - What kind of information do you receive about family violence? From whom (e.g., on TV/newspapers, who is the spokesperson)?
 - What kinds of information, if any, are you lacking? What about others?
 - What would be the best way to get more information to the public on family violence?

 - On the survey we found that many people said they felt they were well-informed about family violence. Yet, when we asked people what they would do if they were confronted with a situation of family violence, many said they wouldn't do anything because they were unsure exactly what to do. What do you think of this? Do you know what resources are available in the community to help with these types of situations?

4.0 RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADDRESSING FAMILY VIOLENCE

7. With respect to some aspects of family violence, many professionals such as teachers or doctors have a legal obligation to get involved. What about employers or businesses? Should they have responsibility to become involved? Why or why not? What could they do to address family violence, if anything? Is there anyone else who should have a legal obligation to report/ a moral obligation?

5.0 CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM RESPONSE

8. What do you see as the role for the police and courts in the area of family violence?
 - If a person calls the police to report an incident of abuse, do you think the individual reported to have been abusive should always be charged?
 - Would the kind of abuse reported make a difference to your opinion on whether a charge should be laid? (e.g., physical vs. emotional abuse, child vs. spousal violence)? Are there exceptions? What about if the victim doesn't want the abuser to be charged or taken away?
 - What are the advantages of charging those who are involved? Are there any disadvantages?
 - Are there better ways of dealing with family violence without charging?
 - Why do you prefer not to have people charged? Is this about having a less formal response or is there something about the current police/justice system that does not adequately deal with these issues? What would you suggest changing, if anything?

9. What do you think should happen to an individual who has been guilty of a family violence related offence?
 - Counselling and treatment?
 - Jail time?
 - Mediation?
 - Community service?
 - Other?

 - What is your reasoning? Why is one response more appropriate than another?
 - Does your thinking change depending on the situation (e.g., does it matter about the type of behaviour, who is involved)?

10. What are people thinking of when considering counselling and treatment as an option? (e.g., would this be mandatory, who would offer, who would be counselled)
 - Is mandatory counselling and treatment likely to help?

 - In our recent survey that I've been talking about, we asked people what would be an appropriate response when a person was found to be responsible for hitting their spouse with a fist and when a person was found to be hitting their child with a fist. People were more likely to recommend that the individual have counselling and treatment when a child was involved than when a spouse was involved. What do you make of this finding (is it surprising, why this difference, what do you think people were thinking of?)

11. Up to now we have been talking about family violence in general. Now we would like to ask your views about violence involving children.

- Some people think that all cases of child abuse should be reported to child protection authorities, but others do not. What is your opinion?
- Some professionals such as doctors and teachers are required by law to report child abuse. Who else, if anyone, do you think should be required by law to report child abuse (e.g., neighbours, relatives, therapists, other professionals working with children)? Why/why not?
- Why do you think some people do not report child abuse?
- How about witnessing violence, do you feel the consequences compare to experiencing it directly? Should the response by society be the same as for children who are experiencing violence directly?

12. Finally, I'd like to shift gears for a moment and talk about violence in society in general. We're interested in how people feel about children's exposure to violence these days. I'm talking about exposure to violence in a variety of settings such as on television, the Internet, in sports or in the neighbourhood or schoolyard.

- To what extent do you think children in general are exposed to violence these days?
- Is this a concern of yours?
- What kinds of exposure concern you the most? Why is this?

13. For those of you with children, to what extent are you concerned about your own children's exposure to violence? Are you more or less concerned about your own children compared to children in general? Why or why not? What kinds of exposure concern you the most? Why is this?

14. In our recent survey, we found that people with children at home tended to be less concerned about their own children's exposure to violence than non-parents who were asked about their concern for children's exposure to violence in general? What do you make of this finding?

15. Has children's exposure to violence changed over the last 10 years? How?

- What do you think are the long-term consequences of children's exposure to violence, if any?

16. That's all the questions I have this evening. Does anyone have any last comments they'd like to make?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX D

Focus Group Summary of Results

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD FAMILY VIOLENCE FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Relationships and Family Violence

- ❑ The focus groups opened with a discussion of the types of relationships that come to mind when thinking about family violence. Responses mentioned most often included the spousal relationship and violence by parents towards their children. A minority of participants across the groups mentioned other relationships such as sibling violence and violence toward elderly parents by adult children.
- ❑ Participants did not spontaneously raise schoolyard violence or harassment between co-workers as included in their understanding of family violence, nor did they generally view them as family violence per se when asked directly. They did, however, view family violence as intimately linked with other aggressive or violent behaviour and saw schoolyard bullying as a likely result of family violence. Similarly, harassment at the workplace could be part of a broader pattern of abusive behaviour or could, in itself, possibly lead to violence in the home. Other participants added that perhaps some people view peer and co-worker relationships as “family-like” and thus abuse within these relationships become akin to family violence.

Behaviours and Family Violence

- ❑ The focus group discussions confirmed that many Canadians accept emotional forms of abuse within their understanding of family violence. When asked about the kinds of behaviours that come to mind when thinking about family violence, participants were as likely to mention emotional as physical forms of abuse. Some participants argued that emotional abuse can be as serious and sometimes more damaging than physical violence (“cuts and bruises will heal but emotional stuff goes deeper”). Few were surprised that survey respondents viewed emotional and certain physical forms of abuse in similar terms.
- ❑ In at least two of the groups, participants felt that there is a difference between “violence” and “abuse”, with abuse conjuring up a wider array of behaviours and violence tending to emphasize physical forms of violence.
- ❑ Focus group participants generally displayed little awareness of financial abuse. A minority of participants across the focus groups raised examples of financial abuse without prompting, but the issue is not top-of-mind for most. When asked specifically about financial abuse, the notion brought to mind behaviours such as controlling money, hoarding family income or running up debts. There were some mentions of financial abuse of children (e.g., family-run businesses, spending benefits intended for children on other things). There were mixed views about the seriousness of financial abuse. For some, financial abuse was viewed as part of a pattern of control and likely linked to other forms of emotional and physical control. Several participants pointed out that financial abuse can have particularly significant consequences when it limits a family member’s ability to leave an abusive situation.

Family Violence Compared to Ten Years Ago

- ❑ Focus group participants were asked whether they thought family violence had increased, decreased or stayed the same in the last 10 years. Initially, many participants indicated that family violence had increased. The increase was attributed to greater stress on the family (e.g., difficulty making ends meet coupled with greater consumerism, dual income families), breakdown of the family (and more blended families) which creates anger and stress, more violence in society in general and greater cultural diversity. For some, however, the increase was attributed to greater awareness and a broader social definition of family violence. In other words, for at least some individuals, the perceived increase in family violence is more an artifact of reporting, rather than a real increase in violent behaviour.
- ❑ For those who believe that family violence had decreased over the last decade, the reasons were attributed to: less tolerance for violence within the family and in general (e.g., removal of corporal punishment in the schools), greater education and awareness of violence and their rights on the part of children and women, greater gender equality, more resources available to help and support victims and new rules around obligatory reporting.
- ❑ There was a consensus among focus group participants that people are more willing to talk about their abuse than before. Many participants remarked that family violence was hidden in the past and associated with feelings of embarrassment and shame. Today, there is greater openness around the issue. This new openness was attributed to a number of trends: greater resources available to assist and support victims, media attention to the issue, and more openness in society in general.

Reactions to Statements

- ❑ Focus group participants were asked to react to the statement “Most women could get out of an abusive relationship if they wanted to”. On the whole, the sentiment of focus group participants tended toward disagreeing with the statement. Participants showed a significant appreciation for the barriers that prevent women from leaving an abusive situation or make leaving more difficult (e.g., difficulty even recognizing one is in an abusive relationship, lack of financial resources, poor support from family and friends, concern for children, lack of self-confidence/self-esteem, fear for personal safety, lack of services such as in rural areas). On the other hand, some participants pointed out that there have never been more information and resources available to support women to leave an abusive relationship (e.g., shelters, societal pressure). Therefore, in fact, women can get out of an abusive relationship, though the process requires great strength and support.
- ❑ Focus group participants were asked to react to a second statement: “If a spouse hits his or her partner and he or she hits back, they should both be charged”. The responses of focus group participants were mixed, with many saying they would need more information to decide on a response. Some participants argued the statement could imply retaliation in self-defense in which case only the spouse who initiated the violence should be charged. Others felt that if the response entailed an escalation of violence or greater harm, then both should be charged. In at least two of the groups,

there was a sense of bias in the response, in that no matter who initiated the violence, it would likely be the man who was charged.

Sources of Information/Information Needs

- ❑ Focus group participants were mixed in terms of characterizing themselves as well-informed or not. Some participants felt well-enough informed, though perhaps not well-informed. In some participants view, they know that family violence exists and are informed at a surface level, though if they needed to, they were confident they could find out more (“It’s like diabetes, you don’t go looking for more information until you’re confronted with it”). Some participants felt very well-informed as a result of personal experience or through their work (e.g., social workers, teachers).
- ❑ Newspaper and television are important sources of information about family violence for participants. Participants indicated that much of their information was in the form of high profile news stories or public service announcements. Other significant sources of information included talk shows and the entertainment media (e.g., movies, TV shows). Participants also noted that personal experience with family violence (or knowing someone) can be an important source of information.
- ❑ In terms of information they are lacking or information needs, focus group participants indicated that information on recognizing the warning signs of family violence and what constitutes family violence would be useful, particularly for those forms of family violence that are less familiar (e.g., financial abuse, elder abuse). Participants were also interested in more concrete information on strategies or avenues to deal with family violence. The best ways to provide information to the public were thought to be television, doctor’s offices/community health centres, community newspapers, movie trailers, and web-sites. The importance of disseminating information early (i.e., in the schools) was mentioned in several groups.

Employer (and other) Responsibility

- ❑ The issue of responsibility for reporting of family violence was explored in the focus group discussions. Like survey respondents, focus group participants assigned significant responsibility for reporting and dealing with family violence to health professionals and those in the “helping” professions. Other groups that were mentioned as having a heightened responsibility in the area of family violence included coaches, counsellors, daycare workers, clergy and home care/nursing home care workers.
- ❑ Participants in the groups were somewhat cautious around the issue of assigning a legal obligation for reporting for these groups, favouring an approach that emphasized a moral obligation bolstered by additional training and sensitization to family violence and strategies to address the issue. Instituting legal obligations was thought to be difficult since individuals are often not sufficiently educated about the signs of family violence and, in one group, was thought to be administratively unwieldy (how could you prove someone knew absolutely, what would be consequences, etc).

- In terms of the role of employers, participants pointed out that family violence can have a serious impact on how well one is able to work (“I work with the public...I can’t do that if I’m coming to work with a black eye”). Again, many (though not all) participants generally stopped short of assigning a legal obligation for reporting to employers. Rather, employers were seen to have a role to play in recognizing family violence and providing support or information to employees. According to focus group participants, employers can play a further role by providing supports such as access to employee assistance programs, peer support systems and awareness materials at the workplace.

Criminal Justice System Response to Family Violence

Charging

- The focus group discussions examined the issue of responding to family violence, focusing specifically on the issue of charging and consequences for offenders. Some participants expressed a general unfamiliarity with the workings of the justice system with respect of family violence.
- Participants generally believe that police should have greater discretion and authority for charging individuals. The wishes of the victim are an important context for some, but most felt that police should have the authority to charge regardless of the wishes of the victim where warranted (participants believed that, in many cases, victims’ unwillingness to charge would be linked to fear of reprisals from the abuser).
- Participants were cautious around the issue of charging in all instances when a family violence complaint is made, however. On the one hand, some participants noted that charging emphasizes the seriousness of the crime and can be used to “scare” the aggressor. A charge also provides a “paper trail” or record of some kind. On the other hand, participants feared that charging would not be appropriate in all instances especially where, for example, complaints were made maliciously or rashly. Some participants felt charging in all case could have the effect of clogging the courts and slowing the processing of all complaints. At least some of the caution around charging appeared linked to confusion that charging equates with a jail sentence or that non-criminal code behaviours such as emotional abuse could be included under a family violence charge.
- Overall, participants tended to view the decision to charge as one that requires investigation and consideration on a case-by-case basis. Participants appeared willing to trust the discretion of the police to evaluate individual cases of family violence (though additional resources and training were often recommended). Charging, participants felt, would be most appropriate under circumstances where the violence was severe, where there was a history of repeated complaints and where the capacity/resources of the victim to leave the abusive situation were limited (e.g., cases involving children).
- In several of the groups, the possibility of having an alternative organization respond to family violence complaints was considered as a possibility (a crisis team, a “family force” as opposed to “police force”). Other participants in the groups, however, felt the authority of the police is important to maintain in instances of domestic calls and

worried about the danger of these situations. In several of the groups, the suggestion was made to include a fine component that would cover policing costs.

Counselling and Treatment

- ❑ Like survey respondents, focus group participants strongly favoured counselling and treatment for abusers, and many felt it should be compulsory. Counselling and treatment was felt to provide education and attitudinal change and address the issue in the longer-term. The effectiveness of compulsory counselling for all aggressors was questioned by some. While some participants felt that compulsory counselling “couldn’t hurt” for even the most reluctant individuals, others viewed this approach as highly ineffective and inappropriate for aggressors who don’t accept responsibility or do not want to change.
- ❑ “Counselling and treatment” conjures up a variety of images in people’s minds, from anger management to addressing substance abuse issues. Individual participants suggested further ideas such as: ensuring counselling is intensive and provided by proper professionals, residential treatment, including home-visits or monitoring, including a “buddy” system like “AA”, ensuring it is publicly funded so financial concerns are not a barrier to participation. Several participants noted that a choice of counsellors must be offered to ensure a good match between the abuser and the counsellor.
- ❑ According to participants, failure to attend or complete compulsory counselling should have consequences even in the absence of an initial criminal charge. These consequences were suggested as possibly including a criminal charge, or harsher penalty should another incident of family violence be reported.
- ❑ Many hesitated about requiring jail time of abusers, largely because incarceration is perceived to be ineffective and could cause additional financial and emotional stress for the family. For others, however a stricter approach is needed, citing that property crimes are treated more seriously than family violence. Jail can also be an effective deterrent, according to some. “Put ‘em away” was the sentiment of this group.
- ❑ For most, the most appropriate response, however, was said to vary based on the circumstances of the situation. For example, severe injury, sexual crimes or repeated offences would merit jail for many. Even in these instances, however, counselling and treatment was viewed as a necessary complement to a jail sentence.
- ❑ Many participants suggested the need for counselling and treatment to involve victims and other family members witnessing violence. This is viewed as treatment, as well as a preventative measure to halt the cycle of violence.
- ❑ With respect to the finding on the survey that respondents are more likely to favour counselling and treatment (and less likely to select jail) as a response when a parent hits a child (compared to when a spouse hits their partner), focus group participants had various interpretations. Potential hypothesis for the finding included: 1) the parent-child bond, being a more permanent one, requires repair to ensure the relationship becomes health; 2) the strains of child-rearing can often become overwhelming and could lead to physical abuse. The parent, however, needs help, not punishment; 3) child abuse reflects a highly dysfunctional relationship requiring counselling. The

possibility that respondents had misunderstood the question was also raised in groups that were highly surprised at the results.

Family Violence Involving Children

- ❑ In the case of children, focus group participants were far more willing to see authorities involved and most participants believed that all cases of child abuse should be reported (“better safe than sorry”). Children were variously described as being “innocent”, “more vulnerable” or as one respondent put it, “Children can’t make the decision to leave”.
- ❑ Reasons why a case of child abuse might not be reported according to participants include: fear of reprisals, fear of being wrong, reluctance to intrude on a family matter and concern about making the situation worse (e.g., “no one wants to see children going from foster home to foster home”). Participants noted that discerning child abuse can often be “subjective”, particularly in drawing the line between discipline and abuse. The effectiveness of child welfare authorities was questioned in many of the groups, and participants expressed concern about under-staffing and inadequate resources to properly investigate and respond to complaints.
- ❑ The focus groups examined the issue of protections for children witnessing violence in more detail. Participants viewed the consequences of witnessing family violence as very serious for children. The issue of how to provide additional protections provoked a mixed response, however. Again, counselling and treatment for the child involved was recommended as an important aspect of any response.

Children’s Exposure to Family Violence

- ❑ The focus group discussions confirmed that children’s exposure to violence is a significant concern for many. Children’s exposure to violence was described as “endless”, “all over” and “huge”. Most agreed that exposure to violence had increased over the last 10 years by virtue of the widespread use of computers and video games and some suggested that the violence itself had become more graphic, and the use of foul language more prevalent.
- ❑ The tendency in the survey to rate concern and impact as higher for violence on television or computer games was reiterated in the focus group discussions. Media-based forms of violence were simply seen to be more prevalent or frequent and also to glamorize violence and to absolve the aggressor of any consequences. In most groups, however, participants believed the extent of exposure to violence and its effects “come down to parenting” (e.g., restricting access to violent programming, providing a home environment that promotes discussion, spending time with children in other activities, transmission of appropriate values).
- ❑ The difference in the opinions of parents and non-parents evident in the survey was presented to focus group participants and few were surprised by the finding. The perceived reasons for the difference varied, however. For some participants, the more attenuated concern of parents reflects parents’ greater confidence in their ability to

control their children's exposure to violence within their own household (many of the parents in the groups take steps to monitor and restrict their children's' exposure to certain television programs, games, etc.). For others, the difference more likely suggests parents are blind to their children's exposure and view their children through "rose-coloured glasses".

- ❑ According to most focus group participants, there are long-term consequences of children's exposure to violence. Impacts include a desensitization or numbing of children to violence and a greater propensity for aggressive behaviour.

Conclusions

- ❑ The focus group results generally tend to confirm many of the key findings from the national survey. Like survey respondents, the focus group participants exhibited a quite sophisticated understanding of family violence. This information is drawn from personal experience and from actual and fictional media accounts of family violence.
- ❑ The more in-depth and less structured format of the focus group discussions also revealed some subtleties in attitudes that cannot be found from survey data. These are particularly apparent around opinions about legal responsibilities for reporting family violence and the criminal justice system response to family violence.