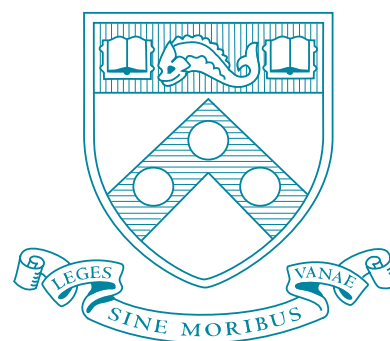


# ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: THE RESULTS OF A SURVEY OF ADULTS IN PHILADELPHIA

A report prepared by Robin Nabi, Ph.D., Tracy Meehan-Starck  
and Antonia Sunderland for the Annenberg Public Policy Center  
at the University of Pennsylvania

*March 2000*



# Foreword

The Annenberg Public Policy Center was established by publisher and philanthropist Walter Annenberg in 1994 to create a community of scholars within the University of Pennsylvania which would address public policy issues at the local, state and federal levels. Consistent with the mission of the Annenberg School for Communication, the Center has four ongoing foci: Information and Society, Media and the Developing Mind, Media and the Dialogue of Democracy, and Health Communication. The Center supports research and sponsors lectures and conferences in these areas. This series of publications disseminates the work of the Center.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson  
Director

# Attitudes and Beliefs about Domestic Violence: the Results of a Survey of Adults in Philadelphia

A report prepared by Robin L. Nabi, Ph.D., Tracy Meehan-Starck, and  
Antonia Sunderland for The Annenberg Public Policy Center at the  
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## Summary of Selected Survey Results

### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

The sample's demographic characteristics were comparable to 1990 Census data for the Philadelphia population, though the sample slightly over-represents females, those with more education, those with more income, and 35- to 49-year-olds.

### **PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

More than half the sample (52.8%) had at some point in their lives known a man or woman involved in an abusive relationship. One-third knew or suspected that in the past year, a woman they knew was being abused.

In terms of personal history of abuse, about 1 in every 6 respondents (16.5%) said that their mother had been abused by her husband or boyfriend at some time. In addition, about 1 in 4 of the female respondents (24.5%) reported having been abused by a husband or boyfriend at some time in her life.

### **PUBLIC RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Of those who knew or suspected that a woman was being abused in the past year, almost three-quarters (72.8%) said they spoke with her about the abuse, while about one-quarter (28.3%) said they spoke to the abusive man. Six in ten respondents (60%) said they consulted with others. One in five (20.7%) sought advice from a domestic violence program.

### **INTENTION TO RESPOND TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Of those who did not know of a domestic violence incident in the past year, three-quarters (74.7%) indicated they would be likely to speak to the woman about her situation if they knew of abuse. In comparison, less than half said they would be likely to talk with the man about his abusive behavior. More than half indicated they would be likely to consult with others about the situation (58.8%), while about half indicated they would seek help from a domestic violence program (50.4%).

While many people engaged in somewhat passive behaviors with regard to domestic violence, e.g., watching a TV show about domestic violence, few engaged in more active forms of involvement, such as donating money to or volunteering for a domestic violence organization.

Awareness of people's anti-domestic violence activities can create a social environment that encourages others to take similar actions, but most respondents knew few people or were not aware that their friends and acquaintances had taken actions in the past year to stop domestic violence.

### **BELIEFS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

The majority of those surveyed agreed that domestic violence is a very important issue, and that its consequences can be very serious. This was especially true of women compared to men. About three-quarters of the sample agreed that counseling helps battered women to improve their lives.

Though more than half the respondents believed they would be able to talk with an abusive male friend, many had reservations in terms of the negative outcomes such action might have, as well as about acting in an unsupportive social environment. However, respondents generally felt that talking with a woman about her situation was a useful action that they would be willing to take, and one that others would support.

Respondents seemed to believe that a number of explanations play a major role in understanding why domestic violence occurs. In particular, a man's inability to control his anger and a man's desire to control women were perceived as the most significant factors contributing to abusive behavior.

### **INSTITUTIONAL ROLES IN REDUCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Eighty percent of the respondents believed the employer should take some role in addressing domestic violence. Slightly more than one-third of the sample (35.9%) believed that employers should take a major role in addressing domestic violence, and a little less than half (44.5%) said they thought the employer should take some role. Fewer than one-third of the sample (29.6%) said their workplace had distributed information about domestic violence in the past year.

Slightly fewer than half the respondents (44.6%) mentioned that their religious leaders had talked publicly about domestic violence in the past year.



## Introduction

With the lives and well being of millions of American women at risk every year, domestic violence is increasingly recognized as a pressing public health concern. As with other health issues, like drunk driving and heart disease, domestic violence may be addressed through media campaigns that promote more 'healthful' activities by trying to alter the beliefs and attitudes underlying specific, problem-related behaviors. To address spousal abuse, a campaign could target those who engage in the abusive behavior to get them to stop, or those who are victimized to encourage them to leave the abusive situation. A campaign might also target the general public to raise awareness of the issue, encourage assistance to victims, and change attitudes about domestic violence to create an environment less tolerant of abusive behavior. While a number of efforts have focused on helping abused women and even abusive men, campaigns have paid little attention to the relatives and friends of those involved in abusive relationships, and the ways in which their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors may be changed to reduce the incidence of domestic violence.

In an effort to make such a change, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, a national anti-domestic violence organization, in collaboration with four local domestic violence programs – *Congresso de Latino Unidos*, Lutheran Settlement House, Women Against Abuse, and Women In Transition – initiated the *Philadelphia: Let's Stop Domestic Violence!* campaign. The two- to three-year, anti-domestic violence campaign is based on the assumption that episodes of domestic violence are a function not only of stresses on and within families, but also of cultural norms which may tacitly approve or accept such physical violence, discourage others from helping victims, and discourage battered women from seeking available aid.

While recognizing the immediate need for direct intervention with the victim, and perhaps with the batterer as well, the project instead complements direct intervention strategies by targeting social norms that perpetuate the acceptance of domestic violence. By mobilizing individuals and groups to take action in response to violence against intimate partners, and by encouraging media coverage of such events, the project hopes to change beliefs and attitudes toward the problem throughout the community. Such change may result in shifting behavioral response to domestic violence situations, thereby reducing the incidence of domestic violence in Philadelphia.

To help direct campaign efforts, a survey of Philadelphia adults was conducted to identify the attitudes and beliefs underlying actions in response to domestic violence. The ultimate goal was to identify whose behavior the campaign should target. This report presents the results of that initial survey.



## Methodology

The project's research component was designed to evaluate the extent to which 1) the campaign successfully mobilized community actions and 2) the population at large changed its beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors regarding domestic violence. An on-going telephone survey was the primary means used to assess the program's success. Data collection began in September 1996, before the program was initiated, with a baseline telephone survey of 400 Philadelphia residents. Collection of monthly data began in January 1997 and ended in December 1999, with 100 to 150 adults representing the target population interviewed each month. The sample was selected from all adults in the Philadelphia metropolitan area based on random digit dialing procedures and sampling frames provided by a sampling contractor. A survey contractor conducted all interviews using consistent interview protocols. This report outlines results from the baseline survey and all monthly data collected through November 1997, for a total of 1,850 respondents.

During interviews, respondents were asked questions about their attitudes regarding domestic violence generally; personal knowledge of any abuse of a relative, friend, or co-worker that had occurred in the previous year; and actions respondents had taken in response to that abuse. The survey measured respondents' knowledge of possible actions to prevent or respond to abusive situations, and of other, more general actions they or people they knew had taken to raise awareness about and to help stop domestic violence. Respondents were asked about their exposure to the campaign's outreach activities; media habits; and demographic information such as age, gender, race, education, and income level.

This report summarizes demographic characteristics of the respondents, their perceptions of the importance of domestic violence as a problem; their personal experience with domestic violence; actions they may have taken or might take in response to an abusive situation; beliefs people hold about those actions; and other domestic violence-related beliefs and opinions. For some of these questions, the responses are broken out by sub-group, i.e., comparisons are made between females and males, white and African-American respondents,<sup>1</sup> those with a high school education or less and those with more than a high school education, and finally, those who had ever known someone in an abusive relationship and those who had not.

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<sup>1</sup> There were too few respondents of other ethnic backgrounds to make meaningful comparisons.

**Table 1: Percent of Sample in Demographic Categories**

<b>Demographic Variable</b>	<b>Response Categories</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Gender (n=1,850)</b>	Male	34.2
	Female	65.8
<b>Race (n=1,826)</b>	White	54.4
	African-American	37.1
	Hispanic	3.5
	Asian	1.5
	Native American	1.0
	Other	2.4
<b>Age (n=1,834)</b>	18-24	11.5
	25-35	22.8
	35-49	30.2
	50-64	18.0
	65+	17.5
<b>Marital Status (n=1,833)</b>	Married or Living with Partner	44.5
	Single	28.9
	Divorced	14.4
	Widowed	12.2
<b>Education (n=1,836)</b>	Less than High School	11.5
	High School	38.3
	Some College	25.1
	College Degree or Higher	25.1
<b>Household Income (n=1,583)</b>	Under \$30,000	53.5
	\$30,000 - \$50,000	27.2
	Over \$50,000	19.3
<b>Employment (n=1,836)</b>	Employed Outside the Home	59.9

This report is intended to provide frequency data only. The *Summary of Selected Survey Results* highlights the main findings. Where appropriate, an asterisk (\*) is used to indicate chi-square statistics significant at  $p < .05$ . It is important to keep in mind that a statistically significant difference does not necessarily translate into a big difference between groups, but rather a difference that is likely to really exist in the population, regardless of its size.

### *Sample*

The 1,850-person sample was two-thirds female and one-third male (see Table 1). About one-tenth of the sample were 18-24 years old, one-fifth were 25-34, one-third were 35-49, and one third were 50 or older. More than half the respondents were white, more than one-third were African-American, and the balance were Hispanic-, Asian-, or Native American, or from another ethnic background. In terms of education, one-tenth of the sample had less than a high school education, more than one-third had graduated from high school, one-quarter had some college education, and one-quarter had a college degree or higher. Regarding income, more than half of the sample had an annual income under \$30,000, one-quarter had an annual income of \$30,000 to \$50,000, and one-fifth had an annual income greater than \$50,000. Slightly less than half of the sample was married or living with a partner, about one-quarter were single, about 1 in 7 were divorced, and 1 in 8 were widowed.

The sample's demographic characteristics, according to the 1990 Census, were generally comparable to those of the Philadelphia population; however, our sample was slightly more female (65.8% vs. 55%), more educated (25.1% vs. 18% had a college degree), and had a higher income (34.3% vs. 42% had an income under \$20,000). Our sample slightly over-represents those 35 to 49 years old (30.2% vs. 24%).

## Detailed Findings

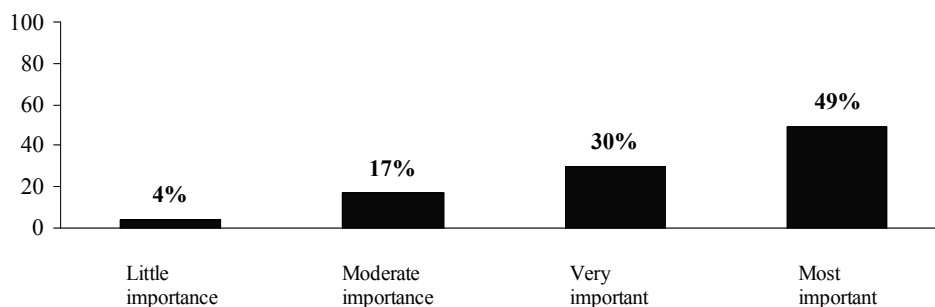
### 1. Importance & Seriousness of the Domestic Violence Issue

The majority of the sample agreed that domestic violence is a very important issue. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 indicated the most important problem facing American families, half the sample rated domestic violence at 10 while nearly an additional third rated it at 7, 8 or 9 (see Figure 1.1). Less than 5% of the sample felt domestic violence was a problem of little importance to American families.

Among sub-groups, women were significantly more likely than men to agree that domestic violence is a very important issue (53% vs. 42%)\*. Whites and African Americans were almost equally likely to agree that domestic violence is a very important issue (about 50%). Those with less education were more likely than those with more education to agree that domestic violence is a very important issue (54% vs. 44%)\*. Those who had ever known someone in an abusive relationship were nearly as likely as those who did not to agree that domestic violence is a very important issue (about 50%) (see Figure 1.2).

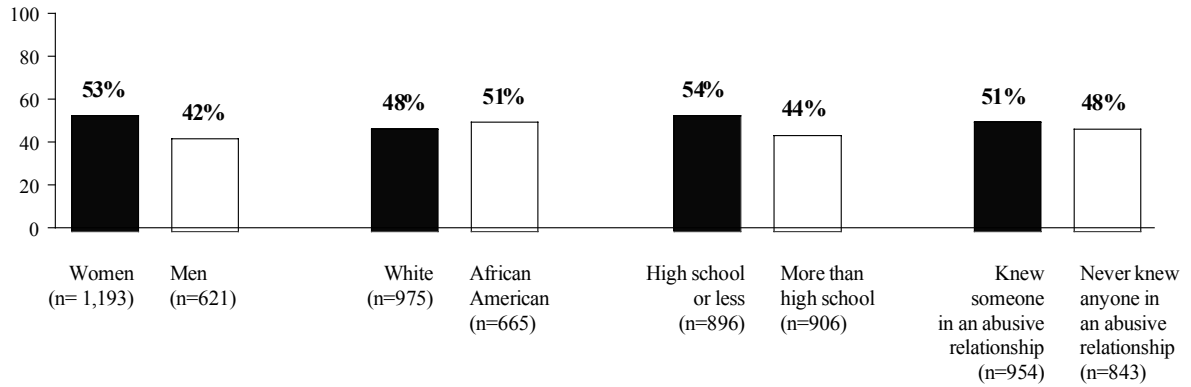
When considering how serious the consequences of domestic violence are, an overwhelming majority of the respondents believed children were likely to have psychological problems if their mother were abused (86.2%), and that women were always or often badly injured during a domestic violence incident (76%) (see Figures 1.3 and 1.4). Only 1% of the sample believed that children almost never suffer psychologically or that women are almost never badly injured as a result of domestic violence.

**Figure 1.1:**  
Importance of the domestic violence problem (rated on a scale of one to ten; n=1,814)



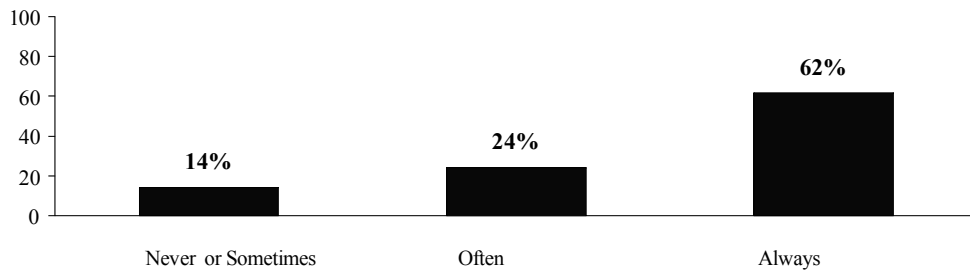
**Figure 1.2:**

Importance of the domestic violence problem, by gender, race, education and ever having known someone in an abusive relationship



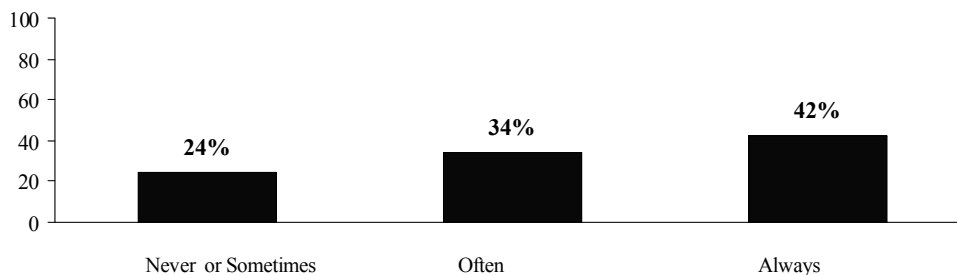
**Figure 1.3:**

Likelihood of child having psychological problems (n=1,829)



**Figure 1.4:**

Likelihood of abused woman being badly injured (n=1,808)



Among sub-groups, a greater proportion of women than men believed that children were likely to have psychological problems if their mother were abused (88% vs. 83%)\* and that a woman is likely to be badly injured during a domestic violence incident (80% vs. 68%)\* (see Figures 1.5 and 1.6). Compared to African Americans, whites marginally more often believed that children were likely to have psychological problems if their mother were abused (88% vs. 84%)\*. However, a slightly larger proportion of African Americans than whites believed that a woman is likely to be badly injured during a domestic violence incident (79% vs. 74%)\*.

Compared to more educated respondents, those with less education were more likely to believe that children would suffer psychological problems if their mother were abused (90% vs. 83%)\*. Both groups believed almost equally that a woman would be badly injured during a domestic violence incident (about 76%).

Respondents who had ever known someone in an abusive relationship were slightly more likely than those who had not to believe that children would suffer psychological problems if their mother were abused (89% vs. 83%)\*. Both groups were equally likely to believe that a woman would be badly injured during a domestic violence incident (about 76%).

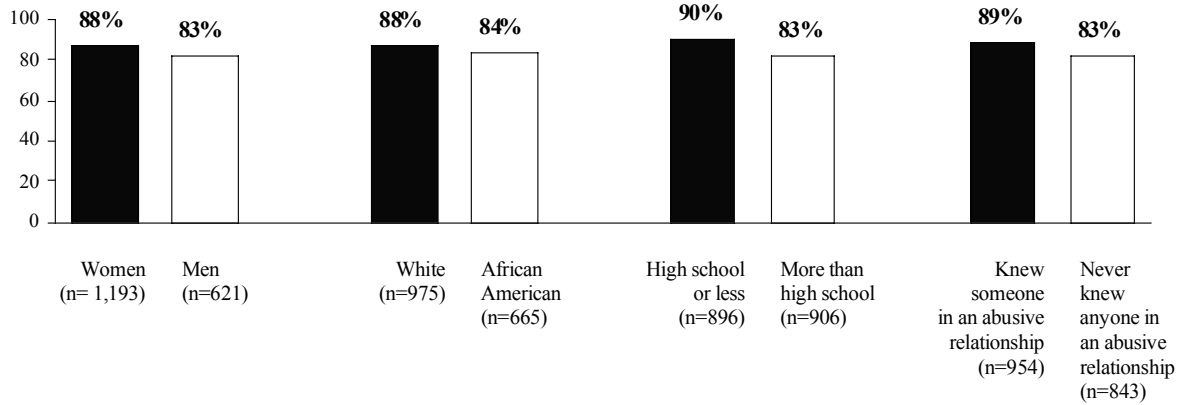
## **2. Personal Experience with Domestic Violence**

More than half the sample (52.8%) had at some point in their lives known a man or woman involved in an abusive relationship, and one-third had known or suspected that a woman they knew had been abused in the past year (see Figure 2.1). Of those who knew of or suspected abuse, one-third (33.7%) actually saw or heard an abusive incident while slightly less than two-thirds (60.6%) suspected the abuse occurring.



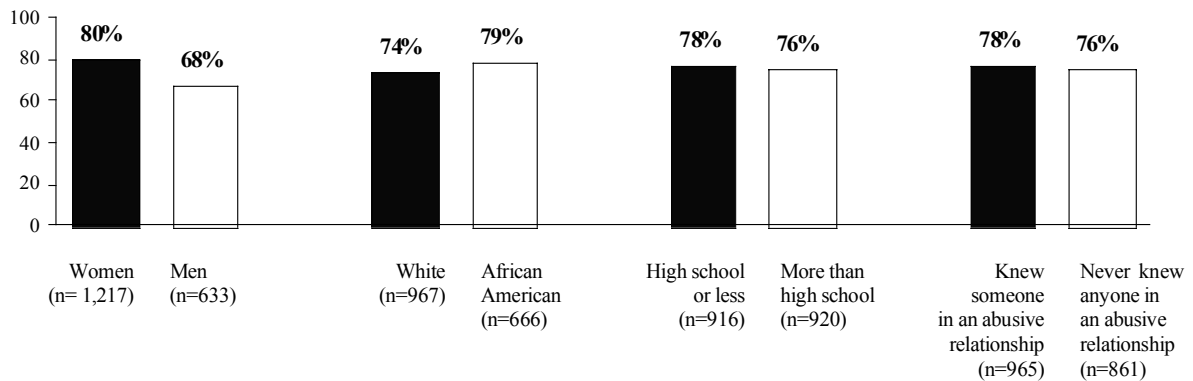
**Figure 1.5:**

Likelihood of children having psychological problems by gender, race, education and having known someone in abusive relationship (% who answered 'often' or 'almost always')



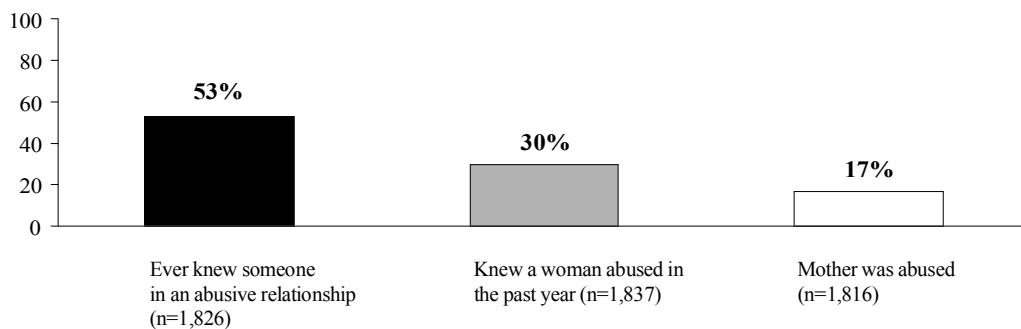
**Figure 1.6:**

Likelihood of abused woman being badly injured in a domestic violence situation, by gender, race, education and having known someone in an abusive relationship (% who answered 'often' or 'almost always')



**Figure 2.1:**

Personal experience with domestic violence (% who answered 'yes')



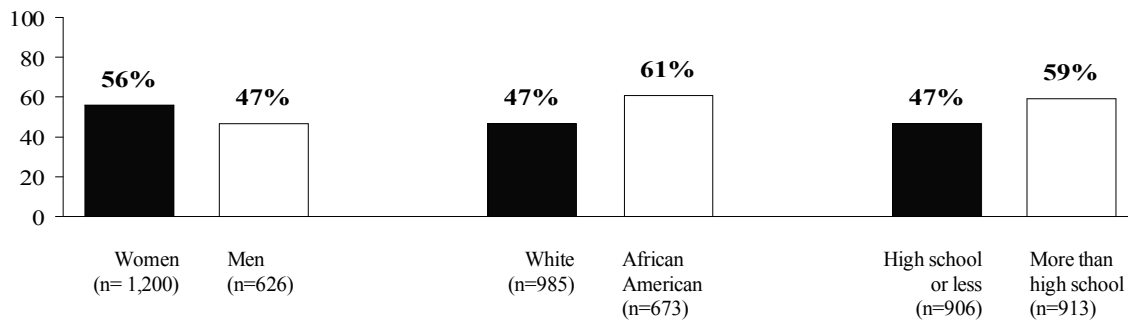
Among sub-populations, women were more likely than men ever to have known someone involved in an abusive relationship (56% vs. 47%)\*. A smaller proportion of white than African-American respondents had known someone involved in an abusive relationship (47% vs. 61%)\*. Less educated respondents were less likely than more educated respondents ever to have known someone involved in an abusive relationship (47% vs. 59%)\* (see Figure 2.2).

In terms of personal history of abuse, about 1 in 6 respondents (16.5%) said their mothers had ever been abused by husbands or boyfriends (see Figure 2.3). Among sub-groups, a similar proportion of women and men reported that their mothers had been abused (about 16%). Whites were less likely than African Americans to report that their mothers had been abused (12% vs. 22%)\*. Less educated respondents were nearly as likely as more educated respondents to report that their mothers had been abused (about 17%).

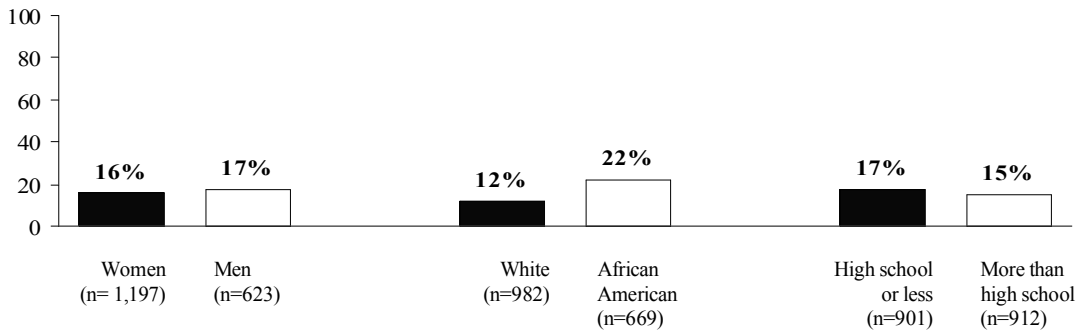
In addition, about 1 in 4 female respondents (24.5%) reported having been abused by a husband or boyfriend at some time in their lives (see Figure 2.4). Of these women, about 1 in 7 (15.4%) reported having sought help from a domestic violence program. Whites were slightly less likely than African-American women to report ever having been abused (20% vs. 28%)\* (see Figure 2.5). Less educated respondents were as likely as those with more education to report having been abused (about 24%).

**Figure 2.2:**

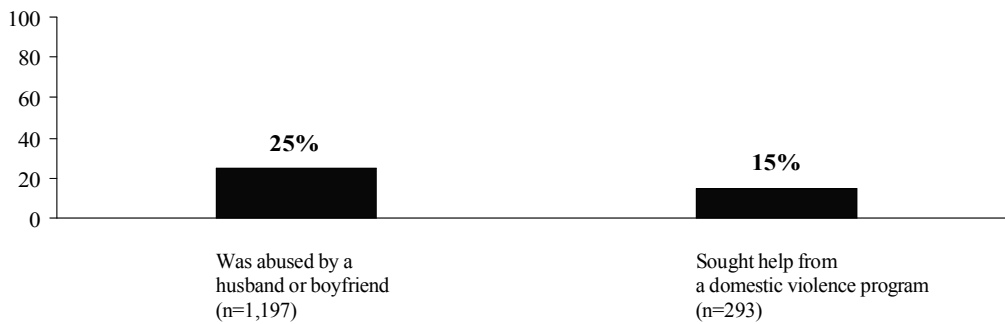
Ever knew someone involved in an abusive relationship, by gender, race and education



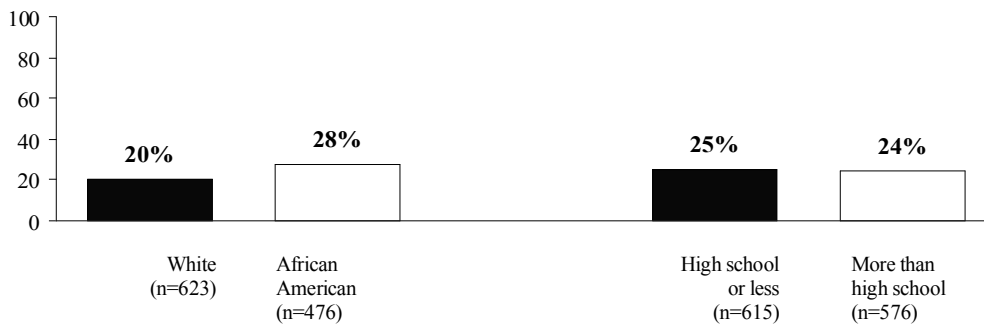
**Figure 2.3:**  
 Mother was abused, by gender, race and education



**Figure 2.4:**  
 Women abused by a husband or boyfriend, and abused women who reported having sought help from a domestic violence program



**Figure 2.5:**  
 Women who reported having been abused, by race and education



## Summary of Selected Survey Results

### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

The sample's demographic characteristics were comparable to 1990 Census data for the Philadelphia population, though the sample slightly over-represents females, those with more education, those with more income, and 35- to 49-year-olds.

### **PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

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In terms of personal history of abuse, about 1 in every 6 respondents (16.5%) said that their mother had been abused by her husband or boyfriend at some time. In addition, about 1 in 4 of the female respondents (24.5%) reported having been abused by a husband or boyfriend at some time in her life.

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### **INTENTION TO RESPOND TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Of those who did not know of a domestic violence incident in the past year, three-quarters (74.7%) indicated they would be likely to speak to the woman about her situation if they knew of abuse. In comparison, less than half said they would be likely to talk with the man about his abusive behavior. More than half indicated they would be likely to consult with others about the situation (58.8%), while about half indicated they would seek help from a domestic violence program (50.4%).

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Awareness of people's anti-domestic violence activities can create a social environment that encourages others to take similar actions, but most respondents knew few people or were not aware that their friends and acquaintances had taken actions in the past year to stop domestic violence.

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Slightly fewer than half the respondents (44.6%) mentioned that their religious leaders had talked publicly about domestic violence in the past year.

## Introduction

With the lives and well being of millions of American women at risk every year, domestic violence is increasingly recognized as a pressing public health concern. As with other health issues, like drunk driving and heart disease, domestic violence may be addressed through media campaigns that promote more ‘healthful’ activities by trying to alter the beliefs and attitudes underlying specific, problem-related behaviors. To address spousal abuse, a campaign could target those who engage in the abusive behavior to get them to stop, or those who are victimized to encourage them to leave the abusive situation. A campaign might also target the general public to raise awareness of the issue, encourage assistance to victims, and change attitudes about domestic violence to create an environment less tolerant of abusive behavior. While a number of efforts have focused on helping abused women and even abusive men, campaigns have paid little attention to the relatives and friends of those involved in abusive relationships, and the ways in which their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors may be changed to reduce the incidence of domestic violence.

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This report summarizes demographic characteristics of the respondents, their perceptions of the importance of domestic violence as a problem; their personal experience with domestic violence; actions they may have taken or might take in response to an abusive situation; beliefs people hold about those actions; and other domestic violence-related beliefs and opinions. For some of these questions, the responses are broken out by sub-group, i.e., comparisons are made between females and males, white and African-American respondents,<sup>1</sup> those with a high school education or less and those with more than a high school education, and finally, those who had ever known someone in an abusive relationship and those who had not.

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<sup>1</sup> There were too few respondents of other ethnic backgrounds to make meaningful comparisons.



**Table 1: Percent of Sample in Demographic Categories**

<b>Demographic Variable</b>	<b>Response Categories</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Gender (n=1,850)</b>	Male	34.2
	Female	65.8
<b>Race (n=1,826)</b>	White	54.4
	African-American	37.1
	Hispanic	3.5
	Asian	1.5
	Native American	1.0
	Other	2.4
	<b>Age (n=1,834)</b>	18-24
25-35		22.8
35-49		30.2
50-64		18.0
65+		17.5
<b>Marital Status (n=1,833)</b>	Married or Living with Partner	44.5
	Single	28.9
	Divorced	14.4
	Widowed	12.2
<b>Education (n=1,836)</b>	Less than High School	11.5
	High School	38.3
	Some College	25.1
	College Degree or Higher	25.1
<b>Household Income (n=1,583)</b>	Under \$30,000	53.5
	\$30,000 - \$50,000	27.2
	Over \$50,000	19.3
<b>Employment (n=1,836)</b>	Employed Outside the Home	59.9

This report is intended to provide frequency data only. The *Summary of Selected Survey Results* highlights the main findings. Where appropriate, an asterisk (\*) is used to indicate chi-square statistics significant at  $p < .05$ . It is important to keep in mind that a statistically significant difference does not necessarily translate into a big difference between groups, but rather a difference that is likely to really exist in the population, regardless of its size.

### *Sample*

The 1,850-person sample was two-thirds female and one-third male (see Table 1). About one-tenth of the sample were 18-24 years old, one-fifth were 25-34, one-third were 35-49, and one third were 50 or older. More than half the respondents were white, more than one-third were African-American, and the balance were Hispanic-, Asian-, or Native American, or from another ethnic background. In terms of education, one-tenth of the sample had less than a high school education, more than one-third had graduated from high school, one-quarter had some college education, and one-quarter had a college degree or higher. Regarding income, more than half of the sample had an annual income under \$30,000, one-quarter had an annual income of \$30,000 to \$50,000, and one-fifth had an annual income greater than \$50,000. Slightly less than half of the sample was married or living with a partner, about one-quarter were single, about 1 in 7 were divorced, and 1 in 8 were widowed.

The sample's demographic characteristics, according to the 1990 Census, were generally comparable to those of the Philadelphia population; however, our sample was slightly more female (65.8% vs. 55%), more educated (25.1% vs. 18% had a college degree), and had a higher income (34.3% vs. 42% had an income under \$20,000). Our sample slightly over-represents those 35 to 49 years old (30.2% vs. 24%).

## Detailed Findings

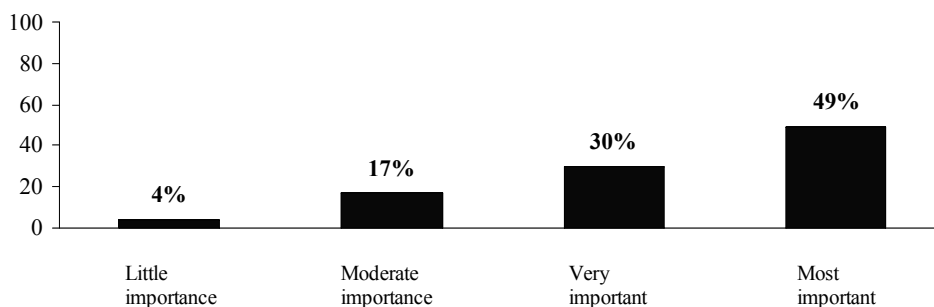
### 1. Importance & Seriousness of the Domestic Violence Issue

The majority of the sample agreed that domestic violence is a very important issue. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 indicated the most important problem facing American families, half the sample rated domestic violence at 10 while nearly an additional third rated it at 7, 8 or 9 (see Figure 1.1). Less than 5% of the sample felt domestic violence was a problem of little importance to American families.

Among sub-groups, women were significantly more likely than men to agree that domestic violence is a very important issue (53% vs. 42%)\*. Whites and African Americans were almost equally likely to agree that domestic violence is a very important issue (about 50%). Those with less education were more likely than those with more education to agree that domestic violence is a very important issue (54% vs. 44%)\*. Those who had ever known someone in an abusive relationship were nearly as likely as those who did not to agree that domestic violence is a very important issue (about 50%) (see Figure 1.2).

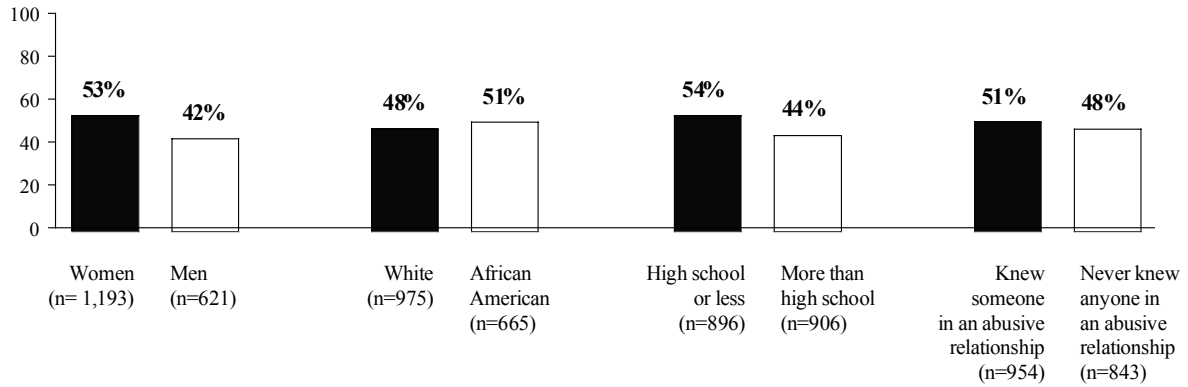
When considering how serious the consequences of domestic violence are, an overwhelming majority of the respondents believed children were likely to have psychological problems if their mother were abused (86.2%), and that women were always or often badly injured during a domestic violence incident (76%) (see Figures 1.3 and 1.4). Only 1% of the sample believed that children almost never suffer psychologically or that women are almost never badly injured as a result of domestic violence.

**Figure 1.1:**  
Importance of the domestic violence problem (rated on a scale of one to ten; n=1,814)



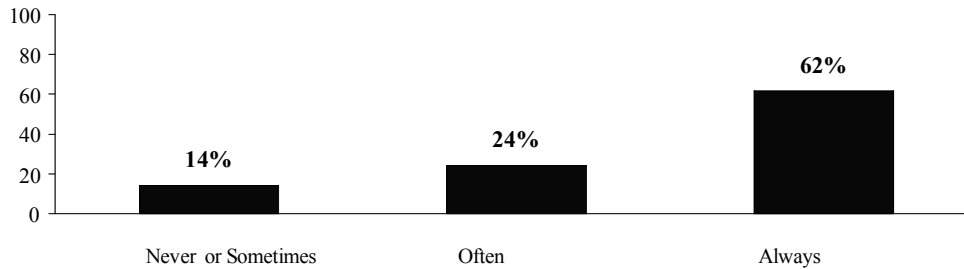
**Figure 1.2:**

Importance of the domestic violence problem, by gender, race, education and ever having known someone in an abusive relationship



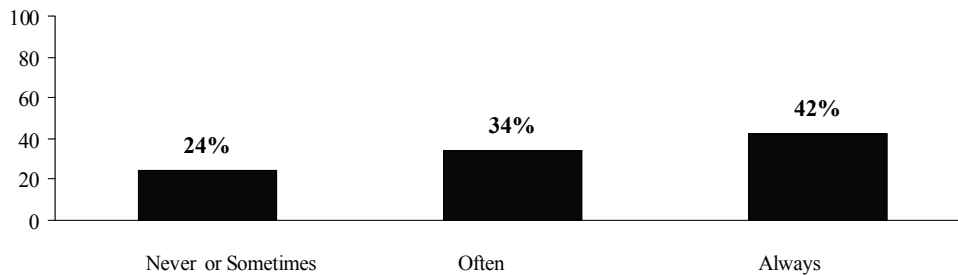
**Figure 1.3:**

Likelihood of child having psychological problems (n=1,829)



**Figure 1.4:**

Likelihood of abused woman being badly injured (n=1,808)



Among sub-groups, a greater proportion of women than men believed that children were likely to have psychological problems if their mother were abused (88% vs. 83%)\* and that a woman is likely to be badly injured during a domestic violence incident (80% vs. 68%)\* (see Figures 1.5 and 1.6). Compared to African Americans, whites marginally more often believed that children were likely to have psychological problems if their mother were abused (88% vs. 84%)\*. However, a slightly larger proportion of African Americans than whites believed that a woman is likely to be badly injured during a domestic violence incident (79% vs. 74%)\*.

Compared to more educated respondents, those with less education were more likely to believe that children would suffer psychological problems if their mother were abused (90% vs. 83%)\*. Both groups believed almost equally that a woman would be badly injured during a domestic violence incident (about 76%).

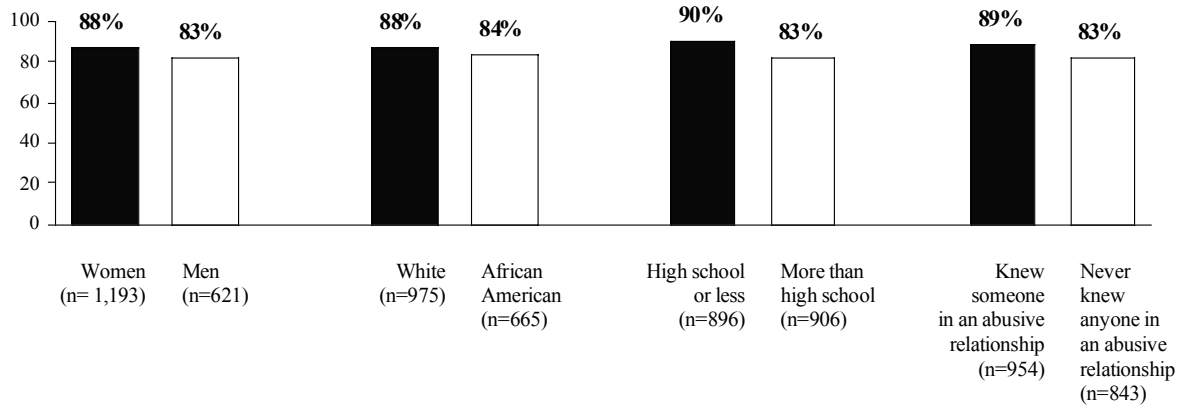
Respondents who had ever known someone in an abusive relationship were slightly more likely than those who had not to believe that children would suffer psychological problems if their mother were abused (89% vs. 83%)\*. Both groups were equally likely to believe that a woman would be badly injured during a domestic violence incident (about 76%).

## **2. Personal Experience with Domestic Violence**

More than half the sample (52.8%) had at some point in their lives known a man or woman involved in an abusive relationship, and one-third had known or suspected that a woman they knew had been abused in the past year (see Figure 2.1). Of those who knew of or suspected abuse, one-third (33.7%) actually saw or heard an abusive incident while slightly less than two-thirds (60.6%) suspected the abuse occurring.

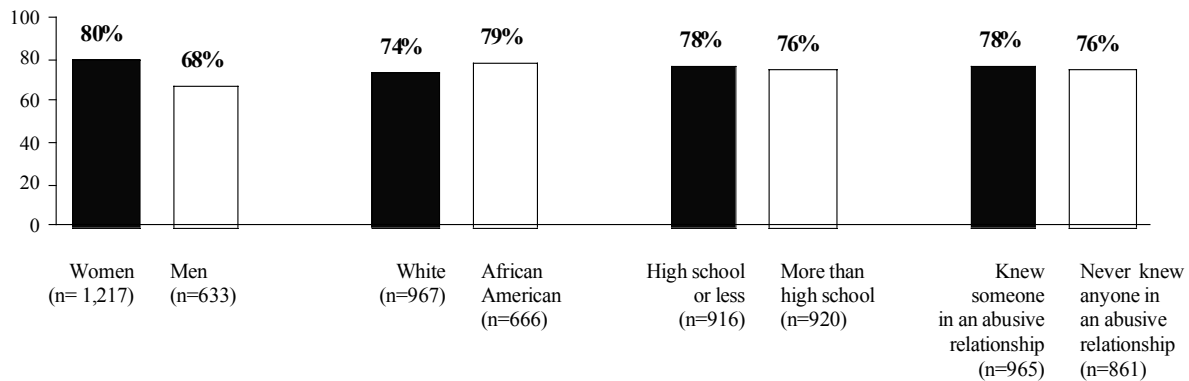
**Figure 1.5:**

Likelihood of children having psychological problems by gender, race, education and having known someone in abusive relationship (% who answered 'often' or 'almost always')



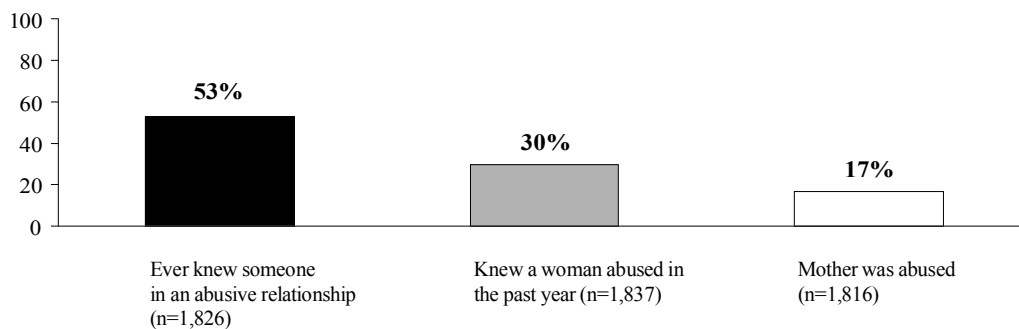
**Figure 1.6:**

Likelihood of abused woman being badly injured in a domestic violence situation, by gender, race, education and having known someone in an abusive relationship (% who answered 'often' or 'almost always')



**Figure 2.1:**

Personal experience with domestic violence (% who answered 'yes')

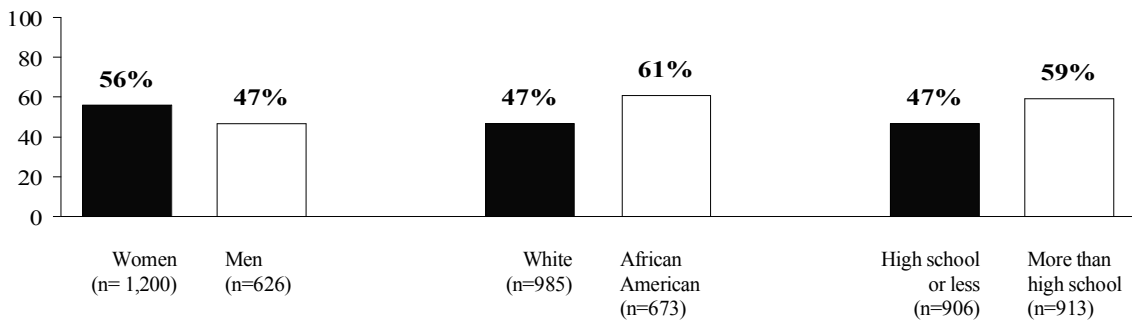


Among sub-populations, women were more likely than men ever to have known someone involved in an abusive relationship (56% vs. 47%)\*. A smaller proportion of white than African-American respondents had known someone involved in an abusive relationship (47% vs. 61%)\*. Less educated respondents were less likely than more educated respondents ever to have known someone involved in an abusive relationship (47% vs. 59%)\* (see Figure 2.2).

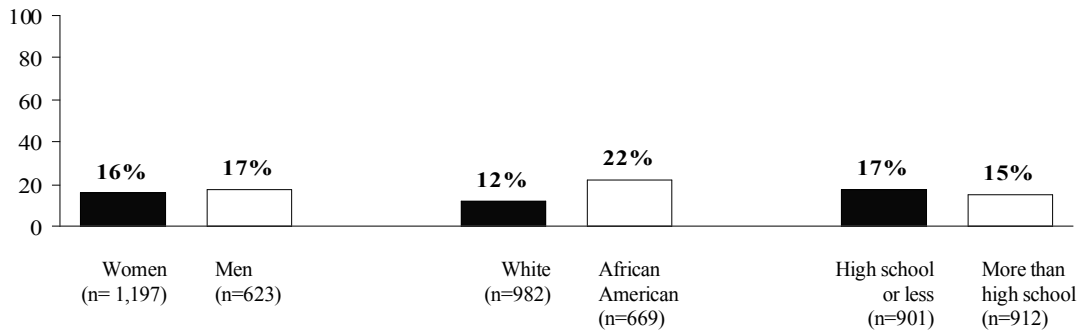
In terms of personal history of abuse, about 1 in 6 respondents (16.5%) said their mothers had ever been abused by husbands or boyfriends (see Figure 2.3). Among sub-groups, a similar proportion of women and men reported that their mothers had been abused (about 16%). Whites were less likely than African Americans to report that their mothers had been abused (12% vs. 22%)\*. Less educated respondents were nearly as likely as more educated respondents to report that their mothers had been abused (about 17%).

In addition, about 1 in 4 female respondents (24.5%) reported having been abused by a husband or boyfriend at some time in their lives (see Figure 2.4). Of these women, about 1 in 7 (15.4%) reported having sought help from a domestic violence program. Whites were slightly less likely than African-American women to report ever having been abused (20% vs. 28%)\* (see Figure 2.5). Less educated respondents were as likely as those with more education to report having been abused (about 24%).

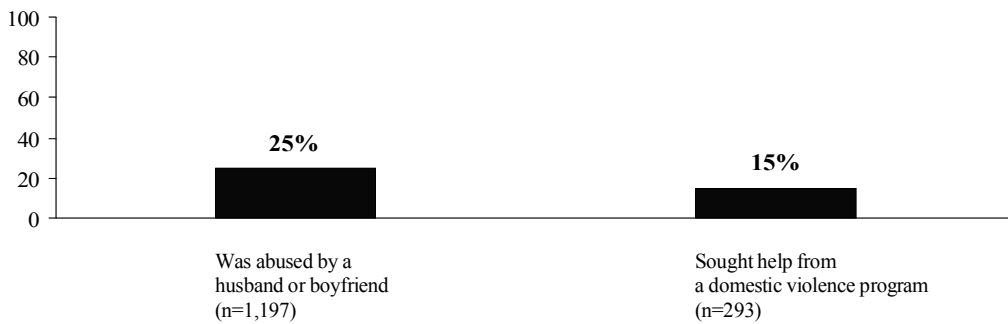
**Figure 2.2:**  
Ever knew someone involved in an abusive relationship, by gender, race and education



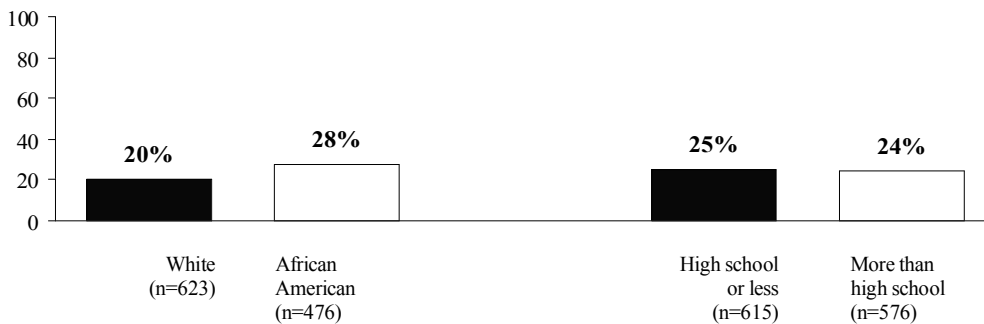
**Figure 2.3:**  
Mother was abused, by gender, race and education



**Figure 2.4:**  
Women abused by a husband or boyfriend, and abused women who reported having sought help from a domestic violence program



**Figure 2.5:**  
Women who reported having been abused, by race and education





### 3. Actions Taken in Response to an Abusive Situation

Of the 552 people in the sample who knew of or suspected an abusive situation in the past year, nearly three-quarters (72.8%) reported that they did speak with the woman about the abuse while about one-quarter (28.3%) said they spoke to the man who was being abusive (see Figure 3.1). Six in 10 respondents had consulted with others, and 1 in 5 sought advice from a domestic violence program. Of the 214 people who had seen or heard an abusive incident in the past year, about 41% reported having called 911 and a little more than one-third (37%) directly intervened in the incident.

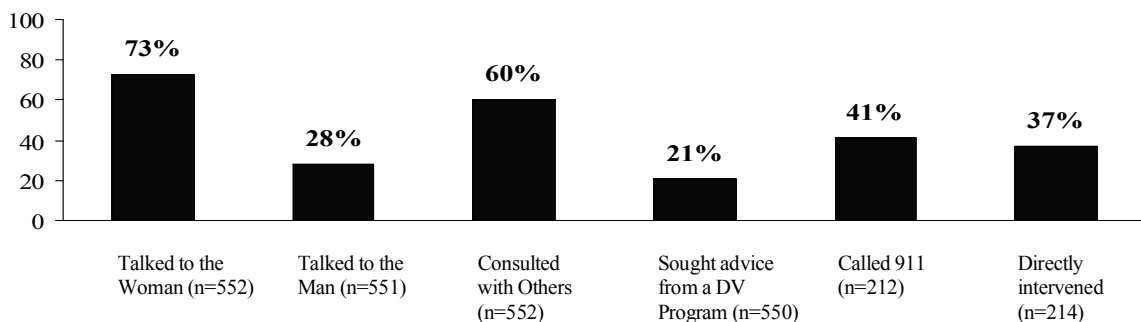
Among sub-groups (see Figure 3.2), women were significantly more likely than men to talk with the woman being abused, consult with others, seek advice from a domestic violence program, call 911, and directly intervene during the incident. Women were nearly as likely as men to talk with the abusive man.

Whites and African Americans were about equally likely to talk with the woman, talk with the abusive man, consult with others, seek advice from a domestic violence program, call 911, and directly intervene in the situation (see Figure 3.3).

Those with less education were more likely to talk with the woman than those with more education. Both groups were equally likely to talk with the man, consult with others, seek advice from a domestic violence program, call 911, and directly intervene (see Figure 3.4).

**Figure 3.1:**

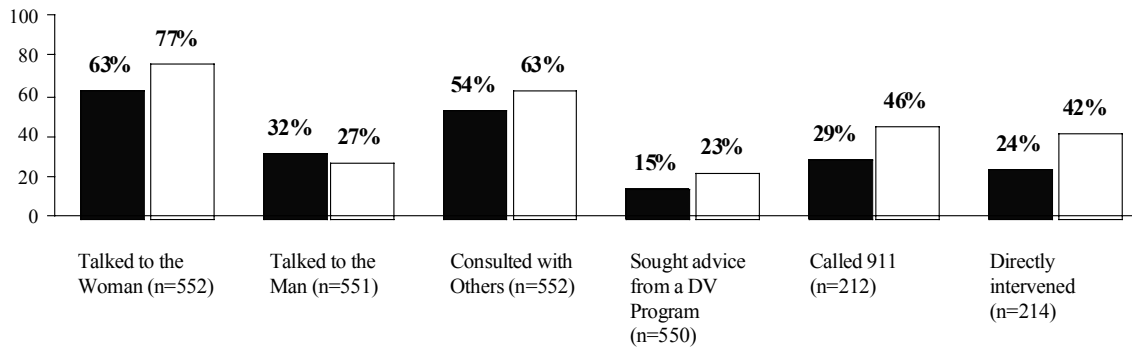
Took action in response to a domestic violence incident in the past year



**Figure 3.2:**

Took action in response to DV situation in the past year by gender

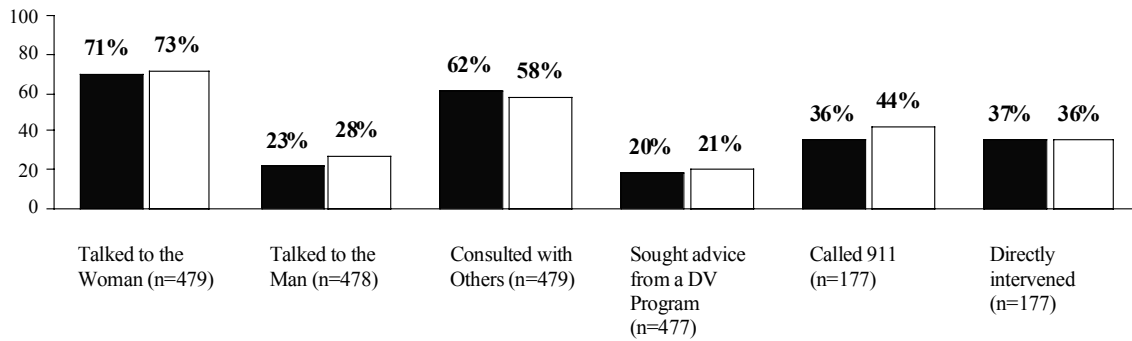
(■ male, □ female)



**Figure 3.3:**

Took action in response to DV situation in the past year by race

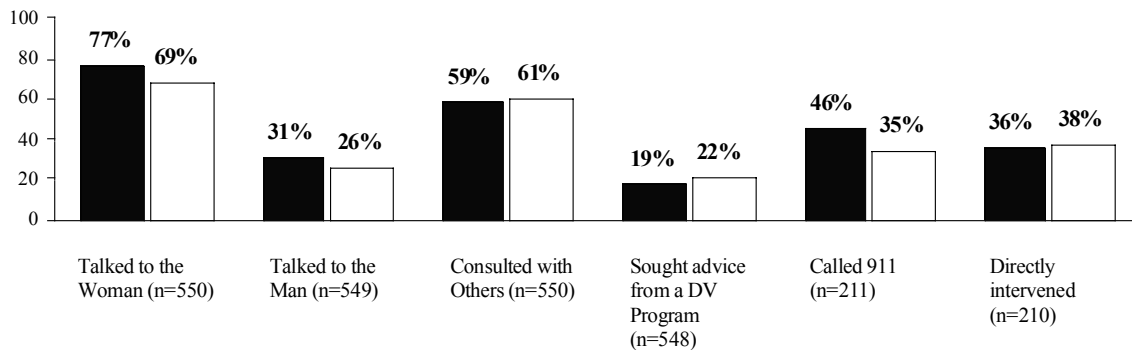
(■ white, □ African-American)



**Figure 3.4:**

Took action in response to DV situation in the past year by education

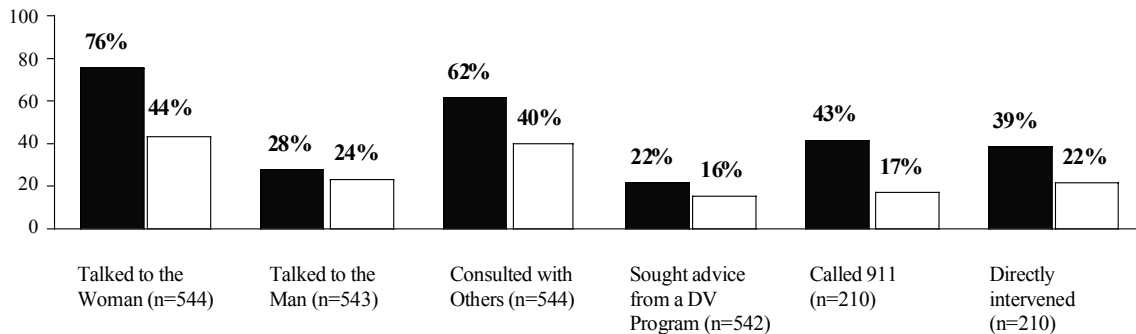
(■ high school degree or less, □ more than a high school degree)



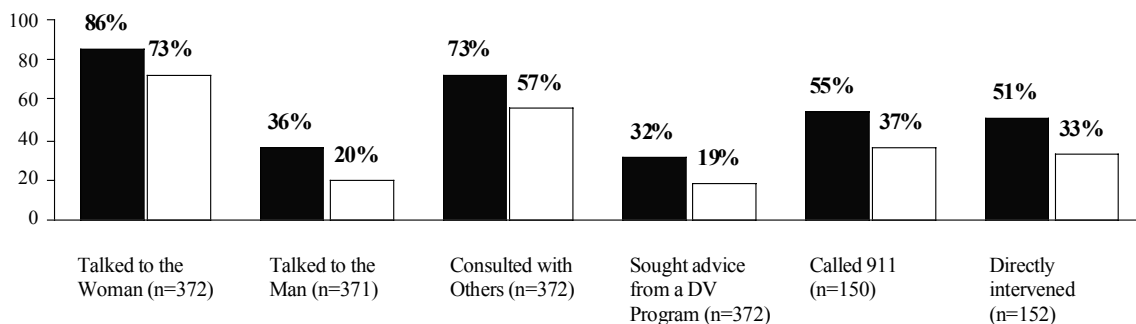
Those who had ever known someone in an abusive relationship were more likely than those who had not to have talked with the woman (76% vs. 43%)\*, consulted with others (62% vs. 40%)\*, sought advice from a domestic violence program (22% vs. 16%), called 911 (43% vs. 17%), and directly intervened (39% vs. 22%). Both groups were about equally likely to talk with the man about his behavior (see Figure 3.5).

Women who had been abused by a husband or boyfriend were significantly more likely than other respondents to have talked to the woman (86% vs. 73%)\* or man (36% vs. 20%)\*, consulted with others (73% vs. 57%)\*, or sought help from a DV program (32% vs. 19%)\*. They were also more likely to have called 911 (55% vs. 37%) or directly intervened (51% vs. 33%) (see Figure 3.6).

**Figure 3.5:**  
Took action in response to a domestic violence situation in the past year, by having known someone in an abusive relationship  
(■ knew someone in an abusive relationship, □ never know anyone in an abusive relationship)



**Figure 3.6:**  
Took action in response to a domestic violence situation in the past year, by having been abused by a husband or boyfriend  
(■ had been abused, □ never abused)

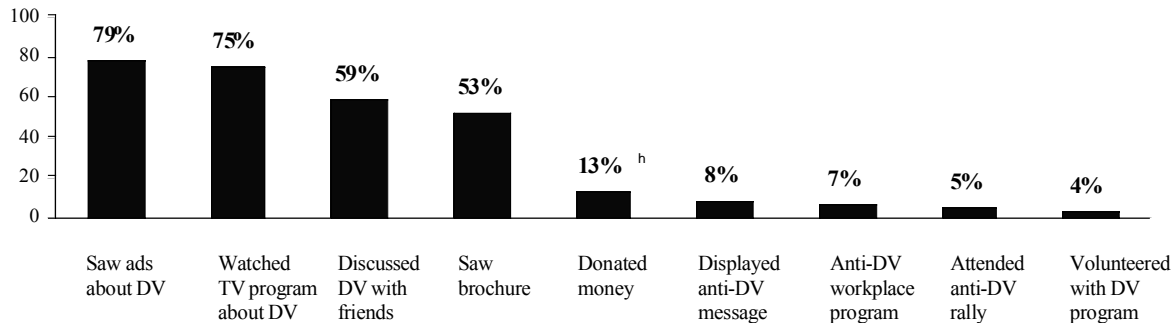


#### 4. General Actions Taken Against Domestic Violence

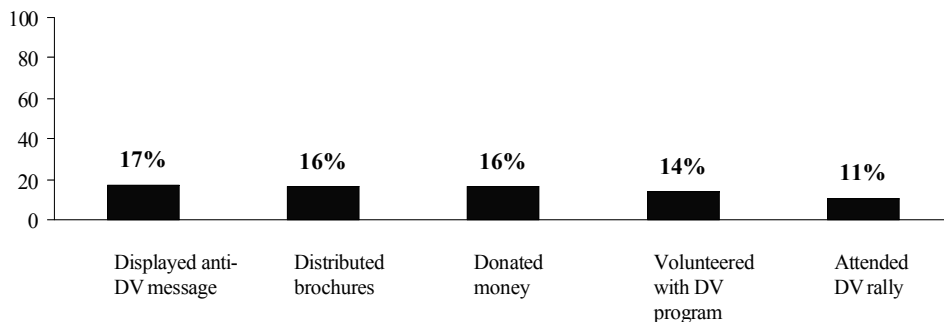
While many people seemed to engage in somewhat passive behaviors with regard to domestic violence, few engaged in more active forms of involvement (see Figure 4.1). More than three-quarters of the sample remembered seeing TV ads or watching a TV program about domestic violence (79.1% and 74.9% respectively), and more than half had discussed the issue of domestic violence with friends (59.1%) or had seen a brochure about domestic violence (53.2%). In addition, 71.2% had heard of a telephone number to get information about domestic violence. However, only 12.9% of the sample had donated money to a domestic violence organization in the past year. Less than 10% had displayed an anti-domestic violence message or had participated in a workplace program, and less than 5% had attended a domestic violence rally or volunteered for a domestic violence organization. Almost half the sample (47.2%) believed that they did not know what they could do to help stop domestic violence.

The vast majority knew of few general actions their friends and acquaintances had taken against domestic violence in the past year (see Figure 4.2). Approximately 1 in 7 respondents knew someone who had displayed an anti-domestic violence message, distributed brochures, or donated money. About 1 in 8 knew someone who had volunteered with a domestic violence organization, and 1 in 9 respondents knew someone who had attended a domestic violence rally in the past year.

**Figure 4.1:**  
General actions taken in the past year against domestic violence (n=1,850)



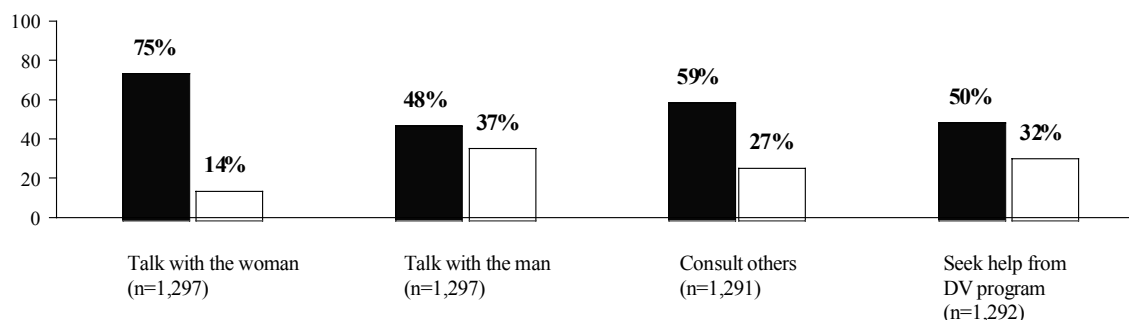
**Figure 4.2:**  
Knew someone who had taken general actions in the past year against domestic violence (n=1,850)



## 5. Intention to Act in Response to a Domestic Violence Situation

Individuals who did not know of or suspect a domestic violence situation in the past year were asked how they would respond if they had known of a situation involving people to whom they were fairly close. Of the nearly 1,300 people surveyed, three-quarters (74.7%) indicated they would be very likely to speak to the woman about her situation, though slightly less than half said they would be likely to talk with the man about his abusive behavior (47.5%) (see Figure 5.1). More than half said they would be likely to consult with others about the situation (58.8%), and half said they would seek help from a domestic violence program (50.4%).

**Figure 5.1:**  
Intention to act in response to a domestic violence situation  
(■ likely, □ unlikely)

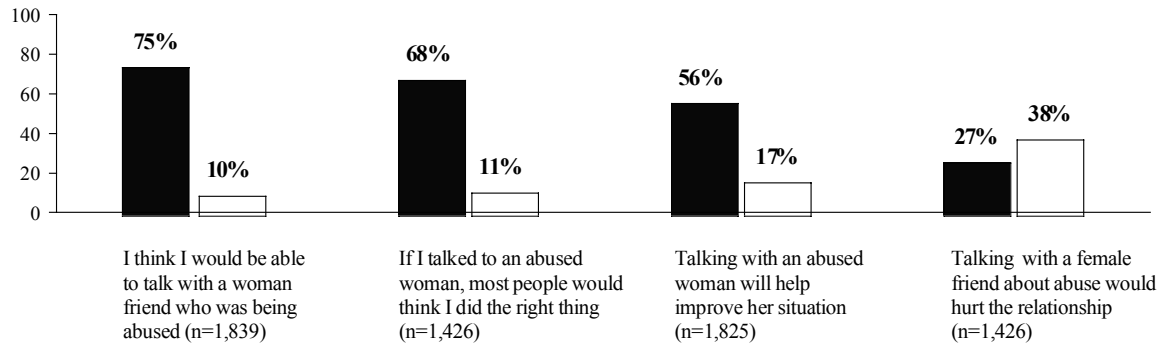


## 6. Beliefs Related to Actions

### A. Beliefs about Talking with a Woman about Domestic Violence

Respondents were asked a series of questions designed to assess certain beliefs relating to the behavior of talking with an abused woman about her situation. Three-quarters of the sample agreed that they would be able to talk with a female friend who was in an abusive relationship (see Figure 6.1). Two-thirds of the sample agreed that most people would think they were doing the right thing if they talked with the woman, and more than half agreed that talking with an abused woman would help her to improve her situation. In addition, only one-quarter of the respondents believed that talking with a friend about the abusive situation would hurt their friendship. In summary, then, respondents generally believed that talking with a woman about her situation was a useful action that they would be willing to take and that others would support.

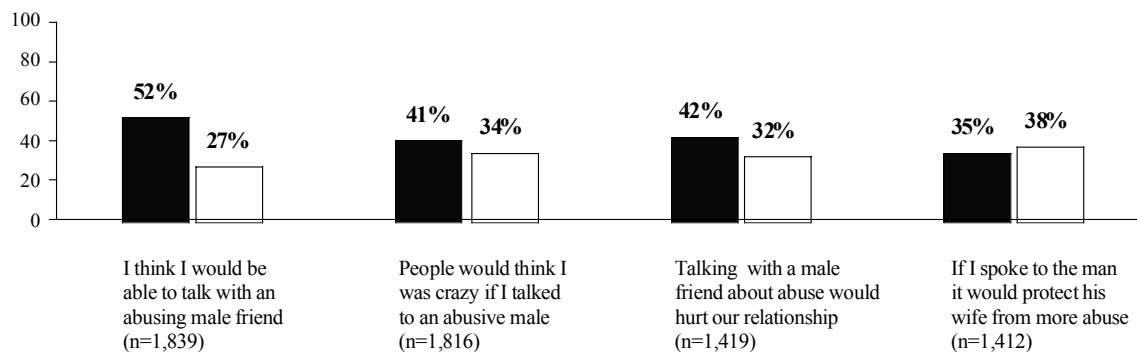
**Figure 6.1:**  
Beliefs about talking with a woman about abuse  
(■ agreed, □ disagreed)



*B. Beliefs about Talking with an Abusive Man about Domestic Violence*

Respondents were asked a series of questions designed to assess certain beliefs relating to the behavior of talking with an abusive man about his behavior. More than half the respondents agreed that they would be able to talk with a male friend about his abusive behavior (see Figure 6.2). However, more than 40% believed people would think they were crazy for doing so, and that talking with the male friend about his behavior would hurt their friendship. Though one-third of the sample believed that speaking with the man would protect his wife from more abuse, slightly more than one third disagreed with this belief. In summary, though more than half the respondents believed they would be able to talk with an abusive male friend, many had reservations about the negative outcomes such action might have as well as about acting in an unsupportive social environment.

**Figure 6.2:**  
Beliefs about talking with the man about his abusive behavior  
(■ agreed, □ disagreed)



### *C. Beliefs about Counseling*

Respondents were asked whether they believed counseling would help a battered woman to improve her life. Nearly three-quarters of the sample (73%) agreed counseling would help battered women, about 1 in 5 (19.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and fewer than 1 in 10 (7.8%) disagreed that counseling is helpful to battered women.

## **7. Explanations for Domestic Violence**

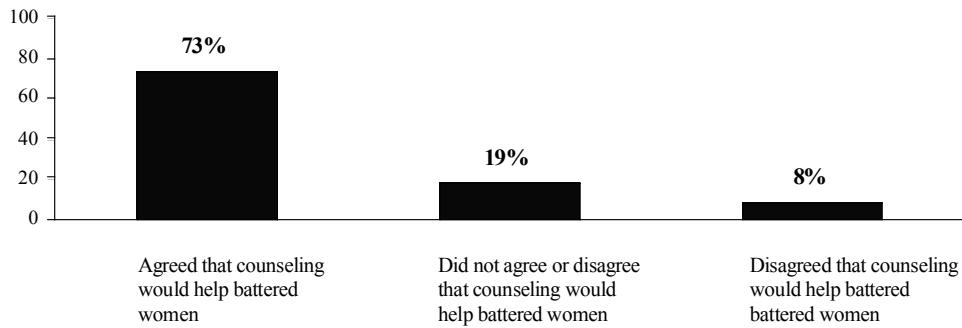
In general, respondents seemed to believe that a number of explanations play a major role in understanding why domestic violence occurs, including issues of personal control, family history of abuse, and the social environment in which the behavior takes place (see Figure 7.1). When presented with a series of possible explanations, approximately four out of five people agreed that a man's inability to control his anger (81.2%) and a man's desire to control women (79.6%) contribute to domestic violence. Two-thirds of the sample agreed that the man's seeing his mother abused while growing up (66.6%) or his being abused as a child (68.8%) play a major role in explaining the man's abusive behavior. Finally, more than half the sample believed that the social environment – a man's friends accepting his aggressive behavior (58.8%), people not offering to help abused women (58.3%), and people accepting violence toward women as normal (53.6%) – contribute to a man's violent behavior.

## **8. The Workplace and the Religious Community**

When asked about the role of the workplace in preventing domestic violence, about 80% of the respondents believed the employer should play some role in addressing the problem. Slightly more than one-third (35.9%) believed the employer should take a major role in addressing domestic violence, fewer than half (44.5%) thought the employer should take some role, and about 1 in 5 (19.5%) said the employer should take no role at all in addressing domestic violence (n=1,761). Less than one-third of the respondents (29.6%) said their workplace had distributed information about domestic violence in the past year.

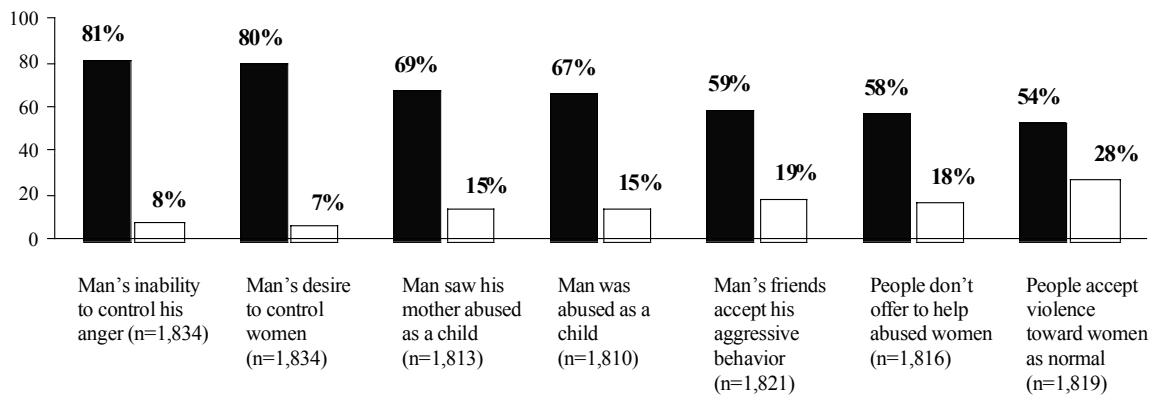
In terms of actions taken by religious communities, a little less than half of the sample (44.6%) said their religious leader had talked publicly about domestic violence in the past year.

**Figure 6.3:**  
Beliefs about counseling for battered women (n= 1,817)

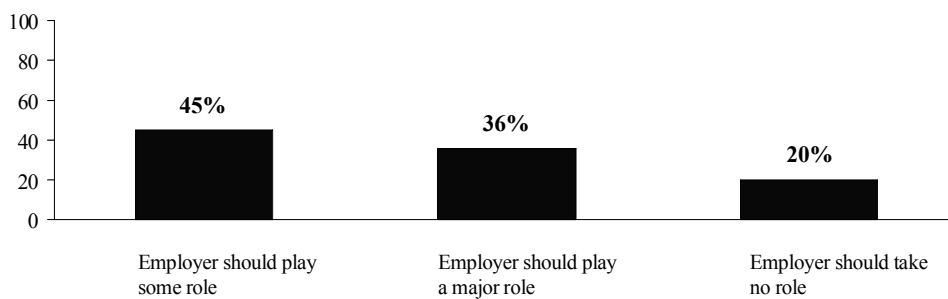


**Figure 7.1:**  
Perceived importance of explanations for domestic violence

(■ major role, □ minor role)



**Figure 8.1:**  
Role employers should take in addressing the problem of domestic violence (n=1,761)





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