



# The Body Shop® Australia's survey of community attitudes, understandings and responses to abuse in relationships 2006

A summary of findings



STOP VIOLENCE IN THE HOME



## Thanks!

The Body Shop Australia would like to thank and acknowledge the following people for their efforts in making this report possible:

- The Research and Education Unit on Gendered Violence at the University of South Australia. In particular Dr Donna Chung, Dr Patrick O'Leary and Tammy Hand, as well as those who collated the data from the surveys
- Lyn Walker and Kim Webster from VicHealth, and Mandy McKenzie from DVIRC, for their support
- Our staff, in stores and offices across the country, who have campaigned passionately to 'Stop Violence in the Home' since 2004
- Our customers, more that 30,000 of them, for taking the time to complete our community attitudes survey about relationship abuse and enabling us to produce this report.

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## Background to the survey

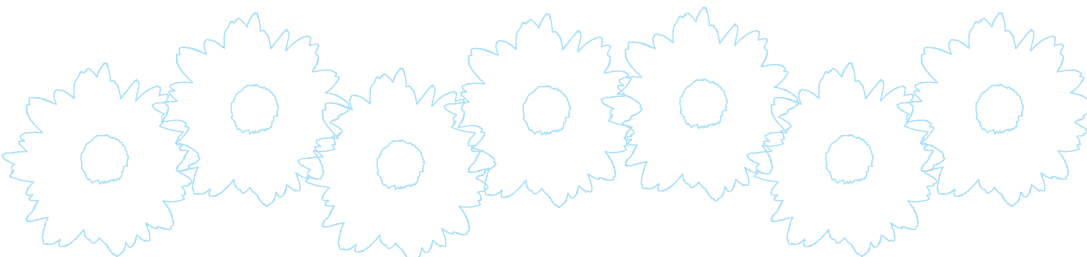
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As part of its ongoing commitment to defend human rights and to stop violence in the home, The Body Shop Australia commissioned the Research and Education Unit on Gendered Violence, University of South Australia, to develop and analyse a customer survey of knowledge and understandings about relationship abuse.

In 2006 a survey of customers was conducted in The Body Shop stores nationally over a three-week period. Over 30,000 surveys were completed during this time, making it the largest Australian study of relationship abuse, knowledge and attitudes.

The survey asked people:

- Some information about themselves (age, gender, occupation)
- What they defined as abusive behaviour in a relationship
- How widespread they thought the problem of relationship abuse was in the community
- What they identified as reasons for relationship abuse
- Where they would advise people to seek help about relationship abuse



# What was already known about relationship abuse

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## PREVALENCE OF RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

Violence against women has repeatedly been demonstrated to be a major public health problem for women, locally, nationally and globally. Despite the increased awareness of such violence, the use of violence and abuse within intimate relationships is generally well concealed. Research shows that women are over-represented as victims of domestic violence (80-95%) that they are more likely to be subjected to sustained abuse and that they are at far greater risk of morbidity and mortality. Perpetrators and victims come from every culture and from all walks of life, and can include the affluent and the educated.

As with other hidden social problems, the true incidence of relationship abuse is unlikely to be ever known. Prevalence rate studies are estimates based on personal disclosure and attendance by support services. Factors that impact the prevalence rates are the research methods that have been utilised, the definitions, sample selection, location of data (population based, hospital records, police statistics, recall of victims), and the methods of recording of data within services.

However, despite the shortcomings of the various research methodologies, there is overwhelming evidence from the body of research that relationship abuse is a prevalent and a serious health problem. The following discussion highlights current major research, with samples drawn from state, national and international populations.

The national Women's Safety Australia survey, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 1996) with 6300 women participants, found that 1 in 5 women were subjected to violence at some time in their adult lives. The survey also reported that:

- 7.1% of the women surveyed reported physical or sexual violence in the previous 12 months, usually in the home. In 87.7% of incidents males were reported as the perpetrator;
- 23% of women who had ever been in a previous relationship (married or de facto) experienced physical and/or sexual violence from a partner;
- 8% of partnered women reported an incidence of violence during their current relationship;
- 42% of women who had been in a previous relationship reported an incident of violence by one or more of these partners; and
- Of women who experienced violence by a previous partner, 41.7% experienced violence during a pregnancy including 20% who experienced the violence for the first time while they were pregnant.

Australian findings support the overwhelming international research that women and children are the main victims of domestic violence (Access Economics, 2004). In 2002-03:

- The estimated total number of Australian victims of domestic violence was 408,100, of which 87% were women;

- 87% of the perpetrators of domestic violence were male;
- Around 263,800 children were living with victims of domestic violence; and
- 181,200 children witnessed domestic violence.

The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health involved a survey of 14,000 young women in 1996. The follow-up survey in 2000 involved 10,000 young women (Taft, Watson and Lee 2003).

The 1996 survey of 18 to 23 year olds showed that:

- 24% of the women had already experienced some form of violence;
- 6% had a history of previous partner violence; and
- 5% had experienced recent violence from a current partner.

The 2000 survey of 10,000 young women aged 22 to 27 showed that:

- 7% reported previous partner violence; and
- 3% reported current partner violence.

The recent Australian national study of dating violence involved 5,000 Australians aged between 12 and 20 years, from all States and Territories in Australia (Western Australia Crime Research Centre and Donovan Research 2001). The study showed that:

- 22% of young women had experienced dating violence;
- 5% of young men had experienced dating violence;
- 26% of 12-20 year old young women reported that they had been pushed, grabbed or shoved by their boyfriend;
- 19% of young women have been physically threatened by their boyfriend;
- 14% of young women reported that their boyfriend tried to force them to have sex; and
- 25% of young women experienced an attempt to be physically controlled (e.g. held) by their boyfriend.

## **GENDER AND RELATIONSHIP ABUSE**

Women are and have been predominantly the victims of relationship abuse. Men are primarily the perpetrators of violence and abuse against female partners. Studies generally show a trend where women are the victims in 85-95% of cases and men are the victims in 5-15% of cases. It is important to note that all intimate relationships will involve conflict and this is not the same as relationship abuse. In contrast, relationship abuse is when one partner systematically abuses the other controlling their life and the victim lives with an ongoing sense of fear.

## **EXPLANATION OF THE REASONS FOR AND CAUSES OF RELATIONSHIP ABUSE**

### **Explanation of reasons**

Both male and female perpetrators of relationship violence typically deny, minimise, and justify their use of violence (Henning, Jones, & Holdford, 2005). Tactics employed to justify the use of violence include; arguments of self-defence, and that the characteristics of their partners was the cause.

However, an important gender difference is that females' motivation for perpetrating violence was primarily defensive. When the motivations are considered in combination with the finding that females tend to use less severe forms of violence and abuse, it suggests that the violence perpetrated by females in intimate relationships is qualitatively different in its motivations and impact from that perpetrated by males.

In examining the qualitatively different nature of the violent acts perpetrated by males compared with females, it is useful to consider perceived responsibility for the violence. Most of the studies investigating 'who is responsible' have found that participants attribute joint responsibility for the violence (Henton et al 1983, Le Jeune & Follette 1994). Such findings may be the result of a common assumption that abuse occurs in relationships as a result of two people arguing.

### **Explanation of causes**

The body of knowledge regarding the theoretical explanations for the existence for the relationship abuse can be categorised into two general areas:

#### **1. Individualistic explanations**

Individual explanations for relationship violence focus on identifying individual characteristics of perpetrators. These explanations focus on a particular problem or characteristic that makes the individual deficient and thus predisposes them to use violent behaviour. Deficits have been attributed to such factors as alcoholism, a personality trait, poor impulse control, mental illness and social immaturity. Other explanations include: learned behaviour, personal stress, inter-generational theory, and dysfunctional family of origin. Such explanations locate the use of violence as the result of the character deficit or particular problem thus shifting the responsibility for the use of violence away from the perpetrator.

#### **2. Social and structural explanations**

Social and structural explanations place emphasis on the social and cultural conditions, which underpin the use of relationship abuse. Structural stress includes pressures that are exerted upon the family from the outside environment, for example unemployment. Other explanatory factors include: low socio-economic status, sub-culture of violence, and gendered-power analysis.

In Australia over the past 20 years feminist explanations have been the strongest influence on policy and programs aimed at stopping domestic violence and increasing women's and children's safety. An important reason for their influence has been that they prioritise the safety of women and children, and place responsibility solely on the male perpetrator for his use of violence.

The significance of these differing explanations on the reason and causes of relationship violence is that they inform understandings about the nature of this form of violence subsequently influencing the intervention systems and professional responses to victims and perpetrators. Understanding the community beliefs on the reasons and causes of relationship violence is critical in the development of strategies aimed at prevention, and intervention.

## **ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS OF YOUNG PEOPLE TOWARDS RELATIONSHIP ABUSE**

The choices and reactions of victims, offenders and potential offenders are shaped by what they believe to be true, regardless of the accuracy of these beliefs; they may be influenced as well by the advice and opinions of family members, friends, and neighbours (Carlson and Worden 2005: 1198).

While there have been substantial efforts directed towards public education campaigns about the nature and causes of violence, Carlson and Worden (2005) argue that such initiatives have provided limited information about public opinion on the nature and causes of domestic violence. Information about public perceptions is important because the success or failure of strategies directed towards relationship abuse may depend on people's assumptions and beliefs about violence and the impacts of violence (Carlson and Worden 2005, Indermaur 2001). Therefore it is important that relationship abuse awareness campaigns focus on promoting community values and attitudes that condemn violence and abuse in relationships, promote equality in relationships, and encourage community responsibility for domestic violence (Bagshaw, Chung, Couch, Lilburn and Wadham, 2000).

Research has often focussed on young people's attitudes to relationship abuse as an indicator of whether this influences their behaviour with dating partners. There have been contradictory findings as to whether those who have experienced dating violence differ in their attitudes from those who have not. Carlson (1987) and others (for example see, Bethke and De Joy 1993; Cate et al 1982; Western Australia Crime Research Centre and Donovan Research 2001; Smith and Williams 1992) have found attitudes towards dating violence do not consistently differentiate between those who have and have not used violence in dating relationships.

The Australian study of dating violence found that the majority of young people are generally not supportive of violence in intimate relationships (Western Australia Crime Research and Donovan Research Centre 2001). The vast majority of respondents (92%) believe relationship violence to be either very or quite serious. Males, younger age groups and disadvantaged young people were more likely than other groups of young people, to express attitudes supportive of relationship violence. Female respondents were more likely, than the male respondents, to consider violence in relationships as very serious and were more aware of domestic violence as a social issue.

Given the choice between 'normal conflict' and 'domestic violence', approximately 90% of young people consider forcing a partner to have sex, throwing things like plates and regular slapping and/or punching as acts of domestic violence. 53% of young people identify denying a partner access to their



own money as domestic violence and 65% stated that not letting a partner visit family and/or friends as domestic violence. Interestingly, only 7% of young people consider not talking to a partner for long periods of time as domestic violence, instead the majority of respondents (79%) identifying it as part of normal conflict in relationships (Western Australia Crime Research Centre and Donovan Research 2001).

## **ABOUT COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEYS**

The Body Shop Australia has a commitment towards promoting community values and attitudes that condemn violence and abuse in relationships, and to promoting equality in relationships. This commitment resulted in The Body Shop Australia conducting a community attitudes survey in stores around the country and on-line in 2006. Over 30,000 people participated; the largest ever Australian survey on community attitudes about relationship violence.

In the past community campaigns about relationship violence have provided limited information about public opinion on the nature and causes of relationship violence (Carlson and Worden 2005). Information about community attitudes is important because the success or failure of strategies directed towards relationship violence may depend on people's beliefs about violence and the impacts of violence (Carlson and Worden 2005, Indermaur 2001).

## **ABOUT THE TERM 'RELATIONSHIP ABUSE'**

As a community, we are generally familiar with the term 'domestic violence', but The Body Shop's use of the term 'relationship abuse' is designed to capture not only abuse that may occur in marriages or long-term relationships, but also abuse that may occur in dating relationships amongst younger people. It is easy to overlook dating abuse, but the evidence clearly shows that it is a problem in Australia and overseas.

## **ABOUT THE TERM 'HELP SEEKING'**

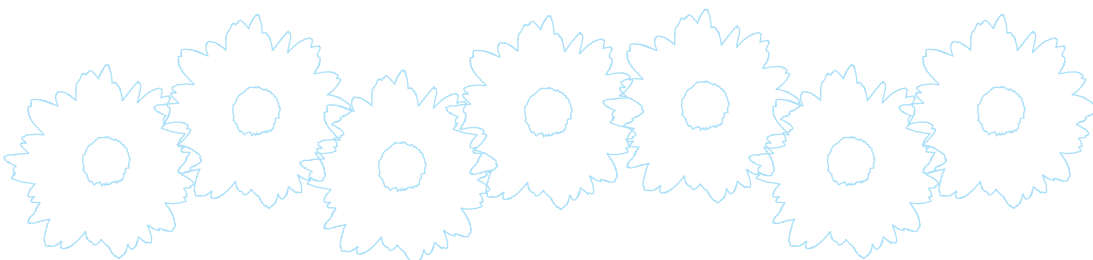
One question in our survey was about help-seeking. People were asked to suggest where to go for help if a friend was in an abusive relationship.

Le Jeune et al's (1994) study of dating violence found 46.3% of respondents did not tell anybody. Of the remaining 43.7%, 87% told a same sex friend, 72% an opposite sex friend, 34% mother, 31% sibling, 3% father and 7% a counsellor. None of the participants reported the violence to the police. Makepeace (1981) found that only 5% reported it to legal authorities such as the police. Mahlstedt and Keeny (1993) in a study of female survivors of dating violence found that 92% told at least one person, most told between two and four people. Like Le Jeune et al, Mahlstedt and Keeny's (1993) participants most often told a friend (80%), followed by sister (47%), mother (43%), brother (33%), other relative (25%), professional (25%), father (15%) and legal authorities (9%). In an Australian study asking young people if they told anyone about the experience of domestic violence in their home, of the 64% who had told someone, friends were the most frequent source of disclosure (Western Australia Crime Research Centre and Donovan Research 2001).

A large proportion of young people do not tell anybody about their experiences of dating abuse. Of those who do, informal help from friends and family members appear to be the primary forms of assistance used by young people. The studies show a trend towards fathers being told at a lower rate than mothers. This could be suggestive of a more authoritative role for the father in the family and/or the mother's role as the primary caregiver and the gender of the victim (female). Friends consistently have been identified as the main group for disclosure, which has implications for intervention strategies as professionals are contacted only by a relatively small number of young people.

Young people reported being reluctant to inform others of their dating violence for two main reasons: belief that it was private because they felt embarrassed; some respondents feared that by telling their parents they (their parents) may attempt to end the relationship or take over the situation and not let the participant deal with it themselves.

The research findings show young people can face barriers to seeking help that are specific to their developmental stage as well as facing many of the same barriers as those that adults involved in domestic violence experience. It is therefore essential to consider what barriers may be unique to young people and those that they share with adults.



## Findings from The Body Shop Australia's survey

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The survey resulted in 30,000 people providing data about their understandings and attitudes to relationship abuse, which provides a rich source of information for future education and prevention initiatives in Australia.

The majority of those participating in the survey were women, representing 87% as can be seen in the table below. This largely reflects The Body Shop Australia's customer base.

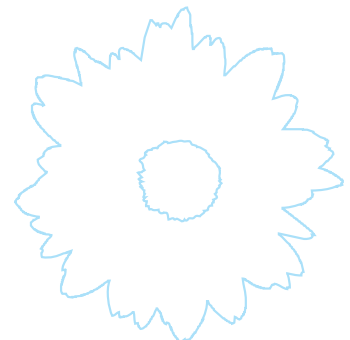
**Table 1: Gender of participants**

Gender	Percentages
Male	13%
Female	87%

### KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT CONSTITUTES RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

On the whole, there was a high level of awareness amongst those surveyed of what behaviours are considered abusive in a relationship. Interestingly, while there was a high level of awareness of relationship abuse, those surveyed thought that it only occurred amongst a small percentage of the population.

Most people demonstrated a good knowledge of what behaviours are considered abusive in a relationship. In particular physical and psychological abuses were considered serious forms of relationship abuse. However, the less well recognised forms of relationship abuse were not identified by as many of the respondents. These included: being given the 'silent treatment', being told how to dress and partners checking mobile phone/text messages/callers.



**Table 2: Relationship abuse behaviours**

Type of Behaviour	% reporting it as abusive
Punching	98
Kicking	98
Hitting	97
Slapping	96
Pushing	92
Not being allowed to see family and friends	92
Pressure for sex	91
Put downs	88
Being called names	87
Being followed around	87
Partner checking your mobile phone/text messages/calls	75
Being told how to dress	66
Silent treatment	53

When asked how common relationship abuse was in the community

- 95% of respondents believed that it occurred in 40% of relationships or more.

Therefore it was not seen as a rare social problem, which reflects the extent to which the problem has been publicised and the fact that people have come into contact with others who have or are in abusive relationships.

## **GENDER DIFFERENCES AND TRENDS IN UNDERSTANDINGS OF RELATIONSHIP ABUSE**

There were no significant gender differences in agreeing that physical forms of violence were abusive. However, there were significant gender differences about other behaviours considered to be abusive in the following areas.

- 15.8% of males thought it was not abusive or were unsure whether it was abusive to pressure someone for sex, compared to 7.5% of females.
- Being told how to dress: 29.5% of males thought this was not abusive and 22% were unsure about it, whereas 15.4% of females thought it was not abusive and 16.8% were unsure.

- Name calling: 22.7% of males reported it was not abusive or were unsure, compared to 11% of females.
- 8% of males thought that 'put downs' were not a form of relationship abuse compared to 3.8% of females.
- 19.9% of males thought being followed around was either not abusive or they were unsure, whereas only 12.5% of females thought this.

Being given the silent treatment was the behaviour considered least likely to be abusive in a relationship across both genders, however, only 41.2% of males saw it as abusive compared to 54% of women.

One third of males and one quarter of the females did not consider checking texts and phone calls of a partner's mobile phone was abusive.

## THE TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS IN WHICH ABUSE OCCURS

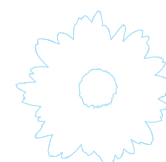
Nearly all respondents believed that relationship abuse occurs in all types of intimate relationships in society.

**Table 3: Relationship types**

Types of Relationships	Yes	No
Marriages	98%	2%
Living together	98%	2%
Dating	93%	7%
Gay/Lesbian relationships	93%	7%

## THE GENDER OF THE PERPETRATOR AND VICTIM OF RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

There is some research about community knowledge that shows up to about 30% of people think that men and women are equally violent in relationships. This contradicts what is known from evidence showing that women are the victims in 85-95% of cases, and men in 5-15% of cases. This survey shows that males and those in the age group 22-35 years were more likely to think that there are equal numbers of male and female victims of relationship abuse. The younger age groups (13-21 years) were more likely to identify a higher number of males as victims of relationship abuse than were older age groups.



**Table 4: Gender and relationship abuse**

<b>All Respondents</b>	
<b>Who is the Abuser</b>	
Male	64%
Female	1%
Equally Male and Female	35%
<b>Who is the Victim</b>	
Male	6%
Female	64%
Equally Male and Female	30%
<b>Male Respondents</b>	
<b>Who is the Abuser</b>	
Male	57%
Female	4%
Equally Male and Female	39%
<b>Who is the Victim</b>	
Male	6%
Female	59%
Equally Male and Female	35%
<b>Female Respondents</b>	
<b>Who is the Abuser</b>	
Male	64%
Female	1%
Equally Male and Female	35%
<b>Who is the Victim</b>	
Male	3%
Female	67%
Equally Male and Female	30%

## ABUSIVE BEHAVIOURS CONSIDERED TO BE AGAINST THE LAW

Importantly this research shows that nearly all respondents knew that physical abuse, sexual abuse and stalking behaviour were against the law. People accurately understood that controlling behaviours and emotional abuse were often beyond the realm of the law in responding to relationship abuse.

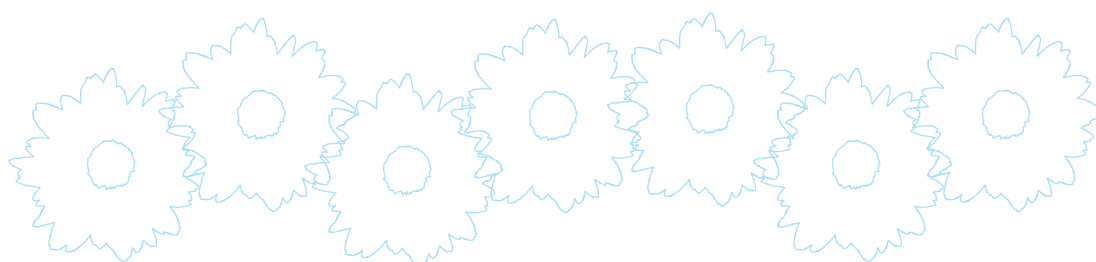
**Table 5: Abusive behaviours and the law**

	Yes	No
Physical	98%	2%
Sexual	98%	2%
Stalking	94%	6%
Controlling behaviour	53%	47%
Emotional Abuse	59%	41%

## REASONS FOR RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

An important contribution that this study makes to existing knowledge is that it asked respondents why they thought people were abusive in relationships. This is valuable because it enables community misperceptions and myths about the reasons for relationship abuse to be rectified when targeting future education campaigns.

Many of the reasons that were popular with respondents tend to focus on the individual's personality. Drugs and alcohol were identified as often being present when relationship abuse occurs, however they were not necessarily the reasons given for the behaviour, rather they were identified as at times 'fueling' the behaviour or increasing its intensity. Relationship abuse is seen by many as being related to the inability to control anger, while this is often one component, it is often more about the need to have power and control over their partner, rather than just anger. Abusive and violent outbursts of anger are often the tactic used to gain the other person's compliance or to intimidate them. The findings indicate the importance of future campaigns targeting the reasons for relationship abuse to include social attitudes, attitudes to women in society and expectations of partners in relationships.



**Table 6: Reasons for people being abusive in relationships**

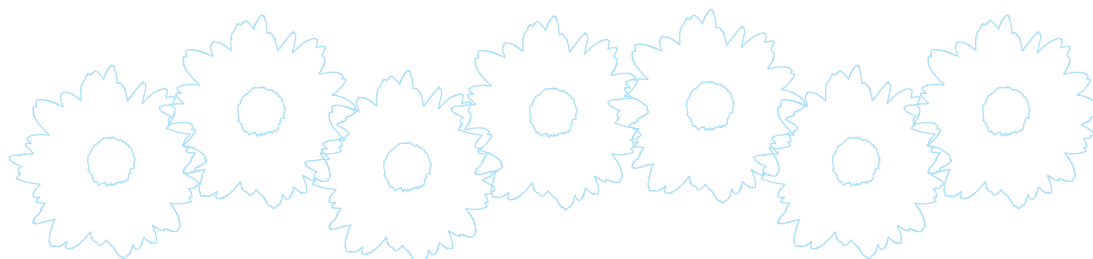
	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Drugs and/or alcohol	97%	1%	2%
Has trouble controlling anger	96%	2%	3%
Violent personality	95%	2%	3%
Very jealous personality	92%	3%	5%
The male wanting to prove that he's the boss/in control	89%	4%	7%
Gambling	88%	5%	7%
Stressed about something in their life	81%	8%	11%
The female wanting to prove that she's the boss/in control	77%	10%	14%
Being poor and not having enough money	63%	20%	17%
Not getting enough sex from their partner	60%	19%	20%

## HELP SEEKING AND RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

When asked who they would recommend a friend seek help from in a situation of abuse, the police rated highly (84%). This is where community attitudes can differ from real life actual experiences.

Studies conducted in Australia and overseas show victims of relationship violence, overwhelmingly women, will most often go to friends and neighbours for help (Dal Grande et al 2003; Hollenshead et al 2006; Johnson 2005; Thompson and Hunter 1998). Despite what people think, the police are usually not contacted because the victim is fearful of further violence and abuse from their partner.

The survey shows that people are aware of the existence of domestic violence services, which is valuable new information about community knowledge in Australia. The high numbers of people suggesting the police as a source of help shows that people are aware that relationship abuse and violence is a crime. The range of help sources is useful for directing future initiatives to combat relationship abuse.





**Table 7: Where would you suggest people seek help for relationship abuse?**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Domestic violence service	89%	11%
Police	84%	16%
Parents	82%	18%
Female friends	73%	27%
School counsellor	62%	38%
Local community centre	61%	39%
Local doctor	57%	43%
Youth service	51%	49%
Male friends	48%	52%
Kids Help Line	48%	51%
Older sister	47%	53%
Other relatives	47%	53%
Someone at the church	46%	54%
Older brother	43%	58%
School teacher	41%	59%
Sporting coach	22%	78%

The Body Shop Australia's community attitudes survey is an important reminder that what we think can be very different to what we actually do. As family members, friends and neighbours, we have a community responsibility to speak out against violence in relationships.

## **THE INFLUENCE OF AGE ON RELATIONSHIP ABUSE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES**

An important trend found was that the older people were the more likely to:

- Think that relationship abuse is common in the community (reflecting actual statistics)
- Identify the newer and more subtle forms of relationship abuse, such as controlling dressing, mobile phone surveillance, and using the silent treatment.

## Findings from the survey relating to young people

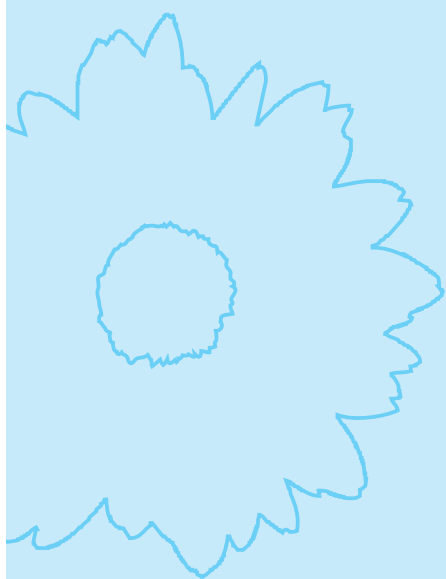
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What is determined as 'young' is contested in the literature, with some suggesting under 18, under 25 and under 30. In this report we have used specific categories, as well as analysis of under 18 and under 25.

### UNDERSTANDINGS OF RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

Overall, it is evident that age increases the chances that people will have a more sophisticated understanding of violence and abuse, especially in regards to the more subtle or hidden forms of abuse, such as 'silent treatment' and 'pressure for sex'.

In the table overleaf this is shown for the issue of 'pressure for sex'. This shows that recognition that 'pressure for sex' as a form of abuse increases incrementally with age and this is statistically significant ( $p=.000$ ). Similar results are recorded for most definitions of abuse.



**Table 8: Pressure for sex (1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure)**

AGE		SEX			TOTAL
		1	2	3	
0-12	% within age categories	82.9%	8.2%	8.9%	100.0%
	% within SEX	1.4%	3.1%	2.5%	1.5%
	% of Total	1.2%	.1%	.1%	1.5%
13-16	% within age categories	89.6%	4.4%	5.9%	100.0%
	% within SEX	11.2%	12.9%	12.8%	11.4%
	% of Total	10.2%	.5%	.7%	11.4%
17-21	% within age categories	88.1%	5.3%	6.6%	100.0%
	% within SEX	22.3%	31.3%	28.8%	23.0%
	% of Total	20.3%	1.2%	1.5%	23.0%
22-26	% within age categories	89.3%	4.7%	6.0%	100.0%
	% within SEX	16.2%	19.9%	18.9%	16.5%
	% of Total	14.7%	.8%	1.0%	16.5%
27-35	% within age categories	91.6%	3.1%	5.3%	100.0%
	% within SEX	19.0%	14.9%	19.1%	18.8%
	% of Total	17.3%	.6%	1.0%	18.8%
36-50	% within age categories	94.3%	2.3%	3.3%	100.0%
	% within SEX	20.4%	11.8%	12.3%	19.6%
	% of Total	18.5%	.5%	.6%	19.6%
51-65	% within age categories	95.0%	2.5%	2.5%	100.0%
	% within SEX	8.2%	5.1%	3.7%	7.8%
	% of Total	7.4%	.2%	.2%	7.8%
66 +	% within age categories	89.9%	2.9%	7.2%	100.0%
	% within SEX	1.3%	1.0%	1.8%	1.3%
	% of Total	1.2%	.0%	.1%	1.3%
Total		90.8%	3.9%	5.3%	100.0%
	% within age categories	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within SEX	90.8%	3.9%	5.3%	100.0%

The gender differences are also incremental according to age, in the degree to which abuse is defined. It is important to note that the results indicate that in all age groups males are less likely to define behaviours as abusive and these differences are most evident in the under 18 groups.

When gender is examined in the under 18 group, differences between males and females are most evident. For example, males are three times more likely to state that pressure for sex is not abusive. The result is statistically significant. This is highlighted in the table below.

**Table 9: Pressure for sex (under 18)**

		SEX 1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure			TOTAL
GENDER		1	2	3	
1=male	% within GENDER	81.1%	12.0%	7.0%	100.0%
	% within SEX	7.6%	21.8%	10.0%	8.4%
	% of Total	6.8%	1.0%	.6%	8.4%
2=female	% within GENDER	90.3%	4.0%	5.8%	100.0%
	% within SEX	92.4%	78.2%	90.0%	91.6%
	% of Total	82.7%	3.6%	5.3%	91.6%
Total	Count	89.5%	4.6%	5.9%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within SEX	89.5%	4.6%	5.9%	100.0%

The table overleaf shows that when under 25 year olds are included the gender difference decreases to about twice the rate. This table also shows that there are significant proportions of males and females that are unsure whether 'pressure for sex' is abusive.

**Table 10: Pressure for sex (under 25)**

		SEX 1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure			TOTAL
GENDER		1	2	3	
1=male	% within GENDER	84.7%	7.1%	8.2%	100.0%
	% within SEX	12.2%	26.2%	21.7%	13.1%
	% of Total	11.1%	.9%	1.1%	13.1%
2=female	% within GENDER	92.5%	3.0%	4.5%	100.0%
	% within SEX	87.8%	73.8%	78.3%	86.9%
	% of Total	80.3%	2.6%	3.9%	86.9%
Total	Count	91.5%	3.6%	5.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within SEX	91.5%	3.6%	5.0%	100.0%

Following on from the above results is another important finding for gender differences in that young females are more likely to state they are unsure about whether a behaviour is abusive or not, where as young males are more likely to state that it is not abusive rather than declare confusion. This is highlighted in the table below on using mobile phones (ie: text messages monitoring etc).

**Table 11: Mobile phones (under 18)**

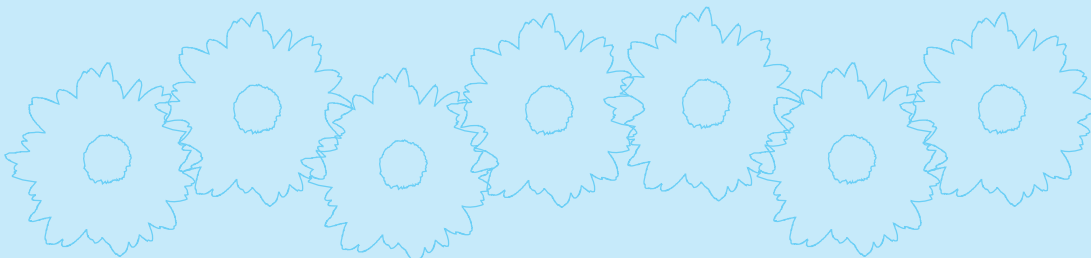
		MOBILE 1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure			Total
GENDER		1	2	3	
1=male	% within GENDER	59.4%	25.1%	15.6%	100.0%
	% within MOBILE	7.8%	12.5%	6.3%	8.3%
	% of Total	4.9%	2.1%	1.3%	8.3%
2=female	% within GENDER	63.2%	15.8%	20.9%	100.0%
	% within MOBILE	92.2%	87.5%	93.7%	91.7%
	% of Total	58.0%	14.5%	19.2%	91.7%
Total	Count	62.9%	16.6%	20.5%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within MOBILE	62.9%	16.6%	20.5%	100.0%

## THE GENDER OF THE PERPETRATOR AND VICTIM OF RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

It was evident that a small percentage of males believe that males are the main victims of violence in relationships, and a larger percentage of males attribute male and females equally as victims. These results are also replicated in the results for beliefs concerning who is more likely to be the abuser.

Older participants both male and female were more likely to correctly acknowledge that the majority of abusers are male and the majority of victims are female, yet they are also more likely to equally attribute responsibility to male and females than participants under the age of 21.

Across all age groups males are more likely to attribute equal status to males and females as abusers and victims respectively. This attribution of equal responsibility peaks at age 22 to 35. Thus it can be concluded that younger people and especially young men are more likely to claim that males are victims and vice versa for females, but older young people in the age group 22 to 35 are more likely to attribute equal blame to both males and females. These results are accentuated for younger males. The tables overleaf detail this for abusers and victims.



**Table 12: Who is the abuser and who is the victim?**

		ABUSER 1= male, 2=female 3=both male and female			Total
GENDER		1	2	3	
1=male	% within GENDER	56.3%	4.5%	39.2%	100.0%
	% within ABUSER	11.2%	27.6%	14.4%	12.7%
	% of Total	7.1%	.6%	5.0%	12.7%
2=female	% within GENDER	64.5%	1.7%	33.8%	100.0%
	% within ABUSER	88.8%	72.4%	85.6%	87.3%
	% of Total	56.4%	1.5%	29.5%	87.3%
Total		63.5%	2.1%	34.5%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within ABUSER	63.5%	2.1%	34.5%	100.0%
		VICTIM 1= male, 2=female, 3=both male and female			Total
GENDER		1	2	3	
1=male	% within GENDER	6.6%	57.4%	36.0%	100.0%
	% within VICTIM	24.7%	11.1%	14.8%	12.7%
	% of Total	.8%	7.3%	4.6%	12.7%
2=female	% within GENDER	3.0%	66.8%	30.3%	100.0%
	% within VICTIM	75.3%	88.9%	85.2%	87.3%
	% of Total	2.6%	58.3%	26.4%	87.3%
Total		3.4%	65.6%	31.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within VICTIM	3.4%	65.6%	31.0%	100.0%

### HOW COMMON IS RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

The results indicate that younger males and females are more likely to see violence and abuse as less common than their older counterparts and this increases with age. Males are more likely to see it as less common across all age groups.

## **ABUSIVE BEHAVIOURS CONSIDERED AGAINST THE LAW**

Age did not account for any differences in knowledge as to whether or not the different types of violence were against the law.

## **THE TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS IN WHICH ABUSE OCCURS**

A very important finding was that young people under the age of 21 were significantly less likely ( $p=.0000$ ) to believe that violence / abuse could occur in dating relationships.

Males were also significantly more likely to agree with this than females in this age group ( $p=.0001$ ). Other relationship types did not differ significantly across age or gender.

## **HELP SEEKING AND RELATIONSHIP ABUSE**

Parents, domestic violence services and police are the most suggested source of help by young people and this did not differ for males and females. The only gender difference in this area was that females preferred to tell female friends at a significantly high rate than males.

The most suggested source of help that people suggested help was parents; 55% to 64% for the 12 to 35 age groups. This decreased with older participants, but was the most preferred source of help for younger respondents with no gender differences.

Younger female participants aged 13 to 35 preferred female friends as the next most preferred source of help, at about 45%. Other relatives, brothers and sisters were considered by 20% of respondents as a good source of help and this preference decreased with age.

Over 50% of young people suggested police as a source of assistance, whereas higher number of 22 to 35 age groups suggested a domestic violence service, which in some cases was as high as 75%. However, only about 30% of young people aged 13 to 21 suggested a youth service, but this same age group suggested police and domestic violence services at around 45% to 60%. In addition 47% of 13 to 16 year olds suggested a school counsellor, and 33% of 13 to 16 year olds suggested kids help lines. Other sources of help were suggested at a lower rate and were not significant.

These results indicate that young people have a preference to tell parents, school counsellors, police and domestic violence services. While females did have a preference to suggest friends or sisters, it accounted for a lower percentage than the formal services. Overall people would suggest the police or a domestic violence service.

## **REASONS FOR ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

Explanations such as anger, violent personality and stress delivered similar results across age and gender. This is highlighted in the table overleaf regarding drug and alcohol abuse.



**Table 13: Reason for abuse - drugs and alcohol**

		DRUGALCH 1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure			TOTAL
AGE		1	2	3	
0-12	Count	329	7	16	352
	% within age categories	93.5%	2.0%	4.5%	100.0%
	% within DRUGALCH	1.3%	2.6%	3.4%	1.4%
	% of Total	1.3%	.0%	.1%	1.4%
13-16	Count	2725	24	69	2818
	% within age categories	96.7%	.9%	2.4%	100.0%
	% within DRUGALCH	11.1%	8.9%	14.6%	11.1%
	% of Total	10.7%	.1%	.3%	11.1%
17-21	Count	5551	97	145	5793
	% within age categories	95.8%	1.7%	2.5%	100.0%
	% within DRUGALCH	22.5%	35.9%	30.6%	22.8%
	% of Total	21.9%	.4%	.6%	22.8%
22-26	Count	4075	43	60	4178
	% within age categories	97.5%	1.0%	1.4%	100.0%
	% within DRUGALCH	16.5%	15.9%	12.7%	16.4%
	% of Total	16.0%	.2%	.2%	16.4%
27-35	Count	4747	48	77	4872
	% within age categories	97.4%	1.0%	1.6%	100.0%
	% within DRUGALCH	19.3%	17.8%	16.2%	19.2%
	% of Total	18.7%	.2%	.3%	19.2%
36-50	Count	4921	34	79	5034
	% within age categories	97.8%	.7%	1.6%	100.0%
	% within DRUGALCH	20.0%	12.6%	16.7%	19.8%
	% of Total	19.4%	.1%	.3%	19.8%
51-65	Count	1982	15	18	2015
	% within age categories	98.4%	.7%	.9%	100.0%

**Table 13: Reason for abuse – drugs and alcohol (continued)**

		DRUGALCH 1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure			TOTAL
AGE		1	2	3	
51-65 (cont.)	% within DRUGALCH	8.0%	5.6%	3.8%	7.9%
	% of Total	7.8%	.1%	.1%	7.9%
66 +	Count	327	2	10	339
	% within age categories	96.5%	.6%	2.9%	100.0%
	% within DRUGALCH	1.3%	.7%	2.1%	1.3%
	% of Total	1.3%	.0%	.0%	1.3%
Total	Count	24657	270	474	25401
	% within age categories	97.1%	1.1%	1.9%	100.0%
	% within DRUGALCH	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	97.1%	1.1%	1.9%	100.0%

However, respondents were not as certain whether not getting sex in a relationship could be a cause of abuse or violence. The trend showed that older respondents were significantly less likely to see this as a cause. Males across all age groups were more likely to see it as a cause, while younger women were more unsure as to whether or not it was a cause this was significant ( $p = .001$ ). See table below.

**Table 14: Reason for abuse – no sex in relationship**

		NO SEX 1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure			TOTAL
AGE		1	2	3	
0-12	Count	201	37	70	308
	% within age categories	65.3%	12.0%	22.7%	100.0%
	% within NOSEX	1.3%	.8%	1.4%	1.2%
	% of Total	.8%	.1%	.3%	1.2%
13-16	Count	1822	366	589	2777
	% within age categories	65.6%	13.2%	21.2%	100.0%
	% within NOSEX	12.2%	7.5%	11.9%	11.2%
	% of Total	7.4%	1.5%	2.4%	11.2%
17-21	Count	3346	1038	1156	5540

**Table 14: Reason for abuse – no sex in relationship (continued)**

		NO SEX 1= yes 2= no 3=unsure			TOTAL
AGE		1	2	3	
	% within age categories	60.4%	18.7%	20.9%	100.0%
	% within NOSEX	22.4%	21.3%	23.4%	22.4%
	% of Total	13.5%	4.2%	4.7%	22.4%
22-26	Count	2295	956	890	4141
	% within age categories	55.4%	23.1%	21.5%	100.0%
	% within NOSEX	15.4%	19.6%	18.0%	16.7%
	% of Total	9.3%	3.9%	3.6%	16.7%
27-35	Count	2754	1185	869	4808
	% within age categories	57.3%	24.6%	18.1%	100.0%
	% within NOSEX	18.4%	24.3%	17.6%	19.4%
	% of Total	11.1%	4.8%	3.5%	19.4%
36-50	Count	3044	975	909	4928
	% within age categories	61.8%	19.8%	18.4%	100.0%
	% within NOSEX	20.4%	20.0%	18.4%	19.9%
	% of Total	12.3%	3.9%	3.7%	19.9%
51-65	Count	1274	293	371	1938
	% within age categories	65.7%	15.1%	19.1%	100.0%
	% within NOSEX	8.5%	6.0%	7.5%	7.8%
	% of Total	5.1%	1.2%	1.5%	7.8%
66 +	Count	198	25	91	314
	% within age categories	63.1%	8.0%	29.0%	100.0%
	% within NOSEX	1.3%	.5%	1.8%	1.3%
	% of Total	.8%	.1%	.4%	1.3%
Total	Count	14934	4875	4945	24754
	% within age categories	60.3%	19.7%	20.0%	100.0%
	% within NOSEX	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	60.3%	19.7%	20.0%	100.0%

The most important of these findings is the gender differences amongst young people with regard to whether they saw a male or female partner 'being the boss' as a cause for abuse.

Generally, younger people were likely to see the male attempting to be the boss as more likely to be a cause of violence, but males were significantly less likely to hold this view and more likely to see the female as being the boss as legitimate cause ( $p=.005$ ). This is shown in the following two tables, showing age and then gender amongst the below 25 year old cohort.

**Table 15: Reason for abuse in relationship – male being the boss**

		MALEBOSS 1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure			TOTAL
AGE		1	2	3	
0-12	% within age categories	87.7%	4.3%	8.0%	100.0%
	% within MALEBOSS	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.4%
	% of Total	1.2%	.1%	.1%	1.4%
13-16	% within age categories	87.5%	4.8%	7.7%	100.0%
	% within MALEBOSS	10.9%	13.2%	12.3%	11.1%
	% of Total	9.7%	.5%	.9%	11.1%
17-21	% within age categories	88.1%	4.2%	7.6%	100.0%
	% within MALEBOSS	22.6%	23.9%	25.3%	22.9%
	% of Total	20.1%	1.0%	1.7%	22.9%
22-26	% within age categories	87.7%	5.0%	7.3%	100.0%
	% within MALEBOSS	16.3%	20.4%	17.5%	16.5%
	% of Total	14.5%	.8%	1.2%	16.5%
27-35	% within age categories	89.1%	4.1%	6.7%	100.0%
	% within MALEBOSS	19.3%	19.5%	18.8%	19.2%
	% of Total	17.1%	.8%	1.3%	19.2%
36-50	% within age categories	91.0%	3.2%	5.9%	100.0%
	% within MALEBOSS	20.2%	15.5%	16.8%	19.8%
	% of Total	18.0%	.6%	1.2%	19.8%
51-65	% within age categories	91.9%	2.6%	5.5%	100.0%
	Count	4525	158	292	4975

**Table 15: Reason for abuse in relationship – male being the boss (continued)**

		MALEBOSS 1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure			TOTAL
AGE		1	2	3	
51-65 (cont.)	% within MALEBOSS	8.1%	5.0%	6.3%	7.8%
	% of Total	7.2%	.2%	.4%	7.8%
	Count	291	10	25	326
66 & above	% within age categories	89.3%	3.1%	7.7%	100.0%
	% within MALEBOSS	1.3%	1.0%	1.4%	1.3%
	% of Total	1.2%	.0%	.1%	1.3%
Total	Count	89.0%	4.1%	6.9%	100.0%
	% within age categories	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within MALEBOSS	89.0%	4.1%	6.9%	100.0%

**Table 16: Gender differences in young people by reason for abuse in relationships – male being the boss**

		MALEBOSS 1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure			TOTAL
GENDER		1	2	3	
1	Count	1138	138	133	1409
	% within GENDER	80.8%	9.8%	9.4%	100.0%
	% within MALEBOSS	11.7%	27.4%	15.7%	12.7%
	% of Total	10.3%	1.2%	1.2%	12.7%
2	Count	8592	366	715	9673
	% within GENDER	88.8%	3.8%	7.4%	100.0%
	% within MALEBOSS	88.3%	72.6%	84.3%	87.3%
	% of Total	77.5%	3.3%	6.5%	87.3%
Total	Count	9730	504	848	11082
	% within GENDER	87.8%	4.5%	7.7%	100.0%
	% within MALEBOSS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	87.8%	4.5%	7.7%	100.0%

**Table 17: Reason for abuse in relationship – female being the boss**

		FEMALE BOSS 1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure			TOTAL
AGE		1	2	3	
0-12	Count	205	58	81	344
	% within age categories	59.6%	16.9%	23.5%	100.0%
	% within FEMALEBO	1.1%	2.4%	2.4%	1.4%
	% of Total	.8%	.2%	.3%	1.4%
13-16	Count	1842	425	503	2770
	% within age categories	66.5%	15.3%	18.2%	100.0%
	% within FEMALEBO	9.6%	17.4%	15.0%	11.1%
	% of Total	7.4%	1.7%	2.0%	11.1%
17-21	Count	4268	600	861	5729
	% within age categories	74.5%	10.5%	15.0%	100.0%
	% within FEMALEBO	22.2%	24.5%	25.7%	22.9%
	% of Total	17.1%	2.4%	3.4%	22.9%
22-26	Count	3284	363	494	4141
	% within age categories	79.3%	8.8%	11.9%	100.0%
	% within FEMALEBO	17.1%	14.9%	14.7%	16.6%
	% of Total	13.1%	1.5%	2.0%	16.6%
27-35	Count	3907	375	534	4816
	% within age categories	81.1%	7.8%	11.1%	100.0%
	% within FEMALEBO	20.4%	15.3%	15.9%	19.3%
	% of Total	15.6%	1.5%	2.1%	19.3%
36-50	Count	3948	439	558	4945
	% within age categories	79.8%	8.9%	11.3%	100.0%
	% within FEMALEBO	20.6%	18.0%	16.7%	19.8%
	% of Total	15.8%	1.8%	2.2%	19.8%
51-65	Count	1495	163	266	1924

**Table 17: Reason for abuse in relationship – female being the boss (continued)**

		FEMALE BOSS 1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure			TOTAL
AGE		1	2	3	
51-65 (cont.)	% within age categories	77.7%	8.5%	13.8%	100.0%
	% within FEMALEBO	7.8%	6.7%	7.9%	7.7%
	% of Total	6.0%	.7%	1.1%	7.7%
66 & above	Count	235	21	54	310
	% within age categories	75.8%	6.8%	17.4%	100.0%
	% within FEMALEBO	1.2%	.9%	1.6%	1.2%
	% of Total	.9%	.1%	.2%	1.2%
Total	Count	19184	2444	3351	24979
	% within age categories	76.8%	9.8%	13.4%	100.0%
	% within FEMALEBO	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	76.8%	9.8%	13.4%	100.0%

**Table 18: Gender differences in young people by reason for abuse – female being boss**

		FEMALE BOSS 1=yes, 2=no, 3=unsure			TOTAL
GENDER		1	2	3	
1	Count	1031	197	185	1413
	% within GENDER	73.0%	13.9%	13.1%	100.0%
	% within FEMALEBO	12.6%	15.9%	11.3%	12.8%
	% of Total	9.3%	1.8%	1.7%	12.8%
2	Count	7138	1042	1449	9629
	% within GENDER	74.1%	10.8%	15.0%	100.0%
	% within FEMALEBO	87.4%	84.1%	88.7%	87.2%
	% of Total	64.6%	9.4%	13.1%	87.2%
Total	Count	8169	1239	1634	11042
	% within GENDER	74.0%	11.2%	14.8%	100.0%
	% within FEMALEBO	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	74.0%	11.2%	14.8%	100.0%

## Conclusions

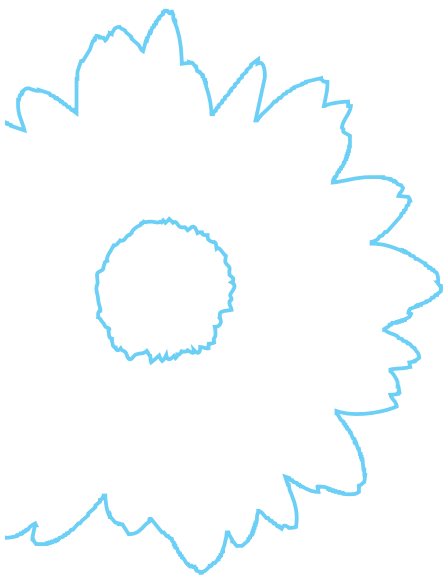
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The most obvious result from this analysis is that as both males and females age their knowledge of what constitutes abuse or violence becomes more sophisticated and consistent with research knowledge about this social problem. However, throughout all age groups gender differences remain fairly constant, with males demonstrating less awareness and a higher acceptance of violence. Younger women were also more likely than older women to be unsure about what was abusive and what was not, and males tended to answer either yes or no. Additionally, mid-age groups from 21 to 40 are more likely to attribute responsibility to men and women for abuse and violence, in regards to who they consider a victim and abuser.

Initial conclusions suggest that education on violence and abuse has had a positive impact on increasing greater awareness and opposition to violence and abuse in relationships. Younger people, however, are less able to define the more subtle forms of abuse, and attribute greater responsibility to both men and women.

In terms of population, the analysis suggests there may be a need for education to address a small but potentially harmful group of mainly young men that tend to be unaware or, in the worse case, justify violence and abusive behaviour. Similarly there is a small group of young women who are less likely to be aware of the many forms of violence and abuse.

Shaping community attitudes is a critical area to be addressed, in order to increase the quality of response that young women receive when reporting violence and abuse, given they are most likely to go to their parents or similar. Police and domestic violence services are the most preferred formal form of assistance, and these services are already widely recognised as being under resourced and, in the case of police, often not adequately trained to ensure a quality response.





## Summary

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This new large study of community knowledge about relationship abuse shows that people are well aware that it exists and that it is not uncommon in the community. Most people understand that relationship abuse includes forms of physical and psychological abuse. However, other forms of control and surveillance of partners are less likely to be considered relationship abuse.

There are some misconceptions in the community about:

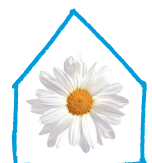
- The extent to which it is women who are largely victimised in relationship abuse and not men
- That drugs and alcohol are a major cause, rather than fuelling the situation

Importantly many people also knew relationship abuse was related to control and power over a partner.

It was good news that so many people knew about domestic violence services.

The police as a source of help indicates two things; that people know relationship abuse is a crime and, that it often involves physical violence.

The findings provide a new solid foundation on which to build future education and prevention activities.



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