Attitudes, Values and Beliefs about Violence within Families

2008 Survey Findings

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Executive summary

Many risk factors have been identified that increase the likelihood of being a victim or perpetrator of violence within a family. With the number of risk factors identified, there is no one solution for preventing violence within families. Attitudes, values and beliefs that support or excuse violence towards family members are strongly linked with family violence.

Previous research suggests that the attitudes, values and beliefs held by individuals who engage in violence in intimate relationships are significantly different to those held by the general public (Gwartney-Gibbs & Stockard 1989). Those who hold attitudes accepting of violence are more at risk of engaging in violence (Nabors, Dietz & Jasinski 2006; Cercone, Beach & Arias 2005).

The Attitudes, Values and Beliefs Survey (the survey) was developed to measure the attitudes, values and beliefs held by New Zealanders with regard to violence within families as part of the Campaign for Action on Family Violence.

The Campaign for Action on Family Violence

The Campaign for Action on Family Violence (the Campaign) was developed with evidence supporting mass media as a successful tool to shape attitudes towards key social issues such as violence within families. The Campaign is a multilayered integrated strategy including national-level TV advertising, local community funding, media training, resources and tools and robust research and evaluation.

The Campaign goals are to reduce society's tolerance of family violence and change people's damaging behaviour within families. The outcomes the Campaign is seeking to achieve are that:
- people will be motivated and supported to seek help and/or change their violent behaviours
- influencers will be motivated and supported to encourage people to change their behaviours
- communities will provide an environment where family violence is not tolerated and where people feel safe in their homes
- society will no longer accept family violence
- in the long-term, the incidence of family violence is reduced.

Description of the survey

The objectives of the survey were to:
- gauge New Zealanders' definitions of family violence
- measure the awareness of family violence
- measure the attitudes in New Zealand about family violence
- gauge the propensity of New Zealanders to take action against family violence.

A range of attitudes and beliefs were identified from current literature that might contribute to the range of violent and abusive behaviours that other research on violence within families has now revealed. The terms attitudes, values and beliefs were defined in the following ways:

- attitudes - mental views or dispositions, indicating opinions or allegiances; what is favoured
- values - indicating moral principles or standards which have normative implications; how people "should" be
- beliefs - observations of reality; statements about how people are.

The questionnaire covered four main areas of violence within families:

- male-to-female violence and abuse
- inter-partner violence and abuse
- parent-to-child violence and abuse
- adult-to-elderly relative exploitation and abuse.

The face-to-face survey was conducted between May and August 2008 by Research International Ltd. The total weighted sample size for the survey was 2,444 people aged 18 years and above[1], with an overall weighted response rate of 57 per cent.

Key findings from the survey

Most people believe that violence is not OK but some people believe that violence can be excused

Respondents held strong social beliefs that violence is not OK and that there are alternatives to violence. However, a number of respondents who said violence was not OK also excused the use of violence in certain situations.

A focus on the attitudes and motivations behind seeing some violent situations as excusable will allow messages to be developed to highlight no violence is OK… ever, and provide skills and knowledge about other effective ways to respond to "excusable" situations.

Some people hold traditional beliefs about gender-roles and the family

Most respondents held attitudes that support women and men being equal in a relationship, however some respondents held more traditional attitudes towards gender-roles in the family. While attitudes supporting traditional views of gender-roles in the family do not directly lead to perpetrating violence, these attitudes have been linked to willingness to excuse violence within families, being less likely to take action if they know violence is occurring (Flood & Pease 2006).

People understand the effects of violence

Common myths about violence against children include that if the physical violence does not leave a mark it is OK, if children do not see the violence they will be OK, and putdowns are not harmful (Kury, Obergfell-Fuchs & Woessner 2004).

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[1] See Appendix two for a profile of survey respondents

Respondents agreed strongly that women, men, children and the elderly face many negative outcomes from violence and disagreed with myths that an act is violent only when there is physical injury.

One focus of public education is about safety for women leaving abusive relationships. When victims threaten to leave and/or actually leave an abusive relationship this is the time of most risk for intimate partner violence, including homicide by a partner (Adams 2007).

Educating New Zealanders about supporting victims to leave and making sure the victims are safe is essential. Such education may also help to strengthen attitudes that support victim safety, perpetrator accountability and personal relevance to take action.

Most people believe that everyone should take responsibility to protect each other but people also believe that what happens in the home is a private matter

Responses highlight a tension between the belief that it is the community's responsibility to help change violent behaviour but that what happens in the household is a private issue.

The reported tension between community responsibility and privacy in the home may indicate that beliefs about privacy could be a significant barrier to bystanders taking action where they suspect violence in the home.

People want to act but are not sure what appropriate action is, how to act and how to remain safe

Respondents were willing to act across all types of violence if they witnessed or heard about it. However, for those respondents who were unlikely to act, reasons included that it was not their business, they were not sure if there was actually violence happening, they did not believe the "victim" or they did not want to put themselves in danger.

Respondents who were willing to act were asked what action they would be likely to take. Responses were limited, with respondents usually mentioning the police, Child, Youth and Family or Women's Refuge. Respondents genuinely believe that they would help but they do not know what to do when the incident does not seem serious enough to warrant police or refuge help.

Findings suggest that people need to have a wider range of "actions" or intervention tools to help them take appropriate action to keep themselves safe, to act in "less serious" violence or to generally support families and friends before violence happens or before violence escalates.

People see the campaigns about family violence in their communities and feel that these messages are relevant

The Campaign for Action on Family Violence was officially launched in 2007. In this survey respondents reported seeing a family violence campaign in their community.

Respondents reported that they were happy to see that violence within families was being talked about and also felt the campaign had affirmed or changed their own beliefs about violence within families.

These survey findings demonstrate that mass media is an effective way to get messages out to a wide audience. Respondents are recalling the "It's not OK" catch phrase and are reporting the personal relevance of the mass media messages to them.

Survey findings

Violence is not OK but some people believe that violence can be excused and justified

Most people agree that violence against another human being is wrong and that offenders should be held accountable, but when people are asked whether they would excuse an offender in certain situations, agreement is often high (Chamberland, Fortin & Laporte 2007). Myths and social discourse about violence in families mean that sometimes victims are blamed for bringing the violence upon themselves (Flood & Pease 2006).

Social discourse describes the contrasting beliefs people hold between demonstrating self-restraint but seeing aggression as natural (Chamberland et al 2007). The beliefs that aggression is natural include that humans, especially men, must respond to the challenges of their power with violence to remain respected and in control. Often men's "loss of control" and their "naturally violent nature" are used to excuse, minimise and justify violence against their family (Chamberland et al 2007).

Showing self-restraint

Almost all survey respondents agreed that violence in family relationships is not OK. The majority of respondents agreed[2] that self-restraint should be exercised by adults in intimate relationships, that violence is not an option against women, children and the elderly and that relationships should be based around respect (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of respondents who agreed with statements addressing attitudes towards self-restraint.

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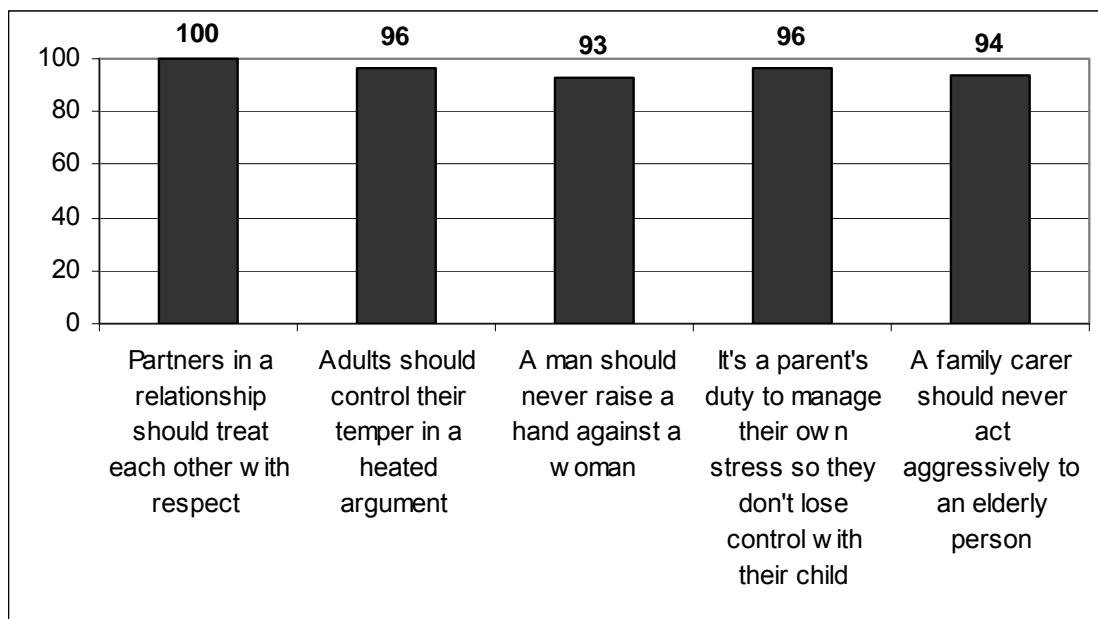
[2] Statements where respondents reportedly "*agreed*" includes participants who agreed and those who strongly agreed with the statement.

But is violence just human nature?

While a large number of respondents agreed that adults should demonstrate self-restraint and control in family relationships, some respondents nevertheless agree with statements which justify, excuse or explain violence against family members.

Figure 2 shows the small proportion of respondents who agree that violence is human nature, and that using violence to correct/stop violence is OK if the other person is "in the wrong". Figure 2 also illustrates that using violence (hit or smack) is justified where the woman is being aggressive or that "it is OK to hit if you've been hit first".

Figure 2. Percentage of respondents that agreed with the statements addressing attitudes towards aggression as natural.
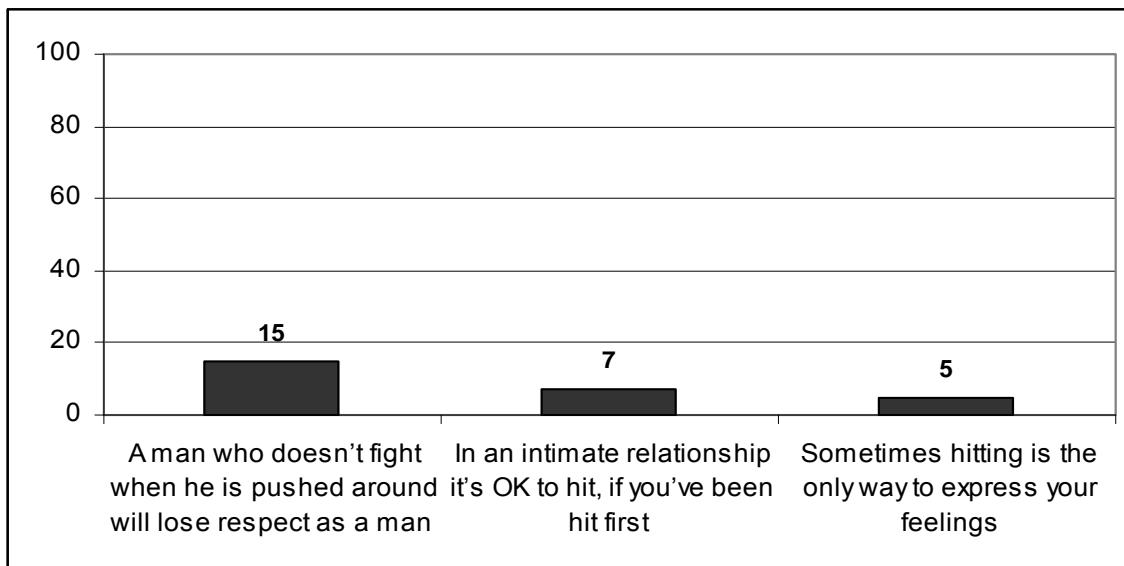
Those who were most likely to agree that "a man who doesn't fight when he is pushed around will lose respect as a man" were:
- men
- Pacific peoples, Māori and "other" ethnic groups
- low or no income, 65 years and over
- single or in a partner/de facto/dating relationship.

Those more likely to agree that "in an intimate relationship it is OK to hit if you've been hit first" were:
- Pacific peoples, Māori and "other" ethnic groups
- zero income earners
- those earning $40,001-$50,000.

Respondents whose highest qualification was school or technical/trade qualifications were more likely to agree that "sometimes hitting is the only way to express your feelings".

Respondents were also asked if they agreed that "it's natural for a male to act aggressively, especially if another male might take his woman". Almost half the sample (47%) agreed with this belief. Those most likely to agree were:

- Pacific peoples, Māori and New Zealand European
- males, 65 years and over
- zero income earners.

Intimate partner violence

A small proportion of respondents also agreed with further justifications for violence against women, children and elderly people. Additional questions were designed to gain a better understanding of when New Zealanders felt violence towards a family member was justified.

Table 1. Percentage of agreement to defences and excuses for male violence towards their female intimate partner.

Question	Total percentage of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed with the statement (%)
He's had a few drinks too many	1
She makes him look stupid in front of his family and friends	2
She comes home drunk	2
She has spent too much money	2
He finds out she's been lying to him	2
She offends his family or friends	2
She won't stop nagging him	3
He's really sorry afterwards	4
In an argument, she hits him first	8
She has physically abused their child	11
He catches her in bed with another man	14

Table 1 shows there was higher agreement for violence when the women was described as being physically violent towards her intimate partner (8%) or their child (11%), and the highest agreement in justification for violence was when the women was found in bed with another man (14%). These statements were most likely to be agreed with by Pacific peoples, Māori and "other" ethnic groups, men, 55-year-olds and over and zero income earners.

Smacking children

Figure 3 shows the proportion of respondents agreeing with justifications for a parent smacking their child/children. The item with the highest level of agreement is the justification of smacking a child in danger (the child is about to run across a busy road 51%). Those aged 65 and over and Māori, Pacific peoples and "other" ethnic groups were most likely to agree with this statement. A sizeable number of respondents also

agreed that misbehaving in public (28%) and tantrums (30%) were justifications for smacking children.

Most respondents agreed that smacking is not OK for "developmental accidents" (eg. wets the bed or poos their pants 2%). However, more respondents justified a parent's use of smacking in circumstances where the child was displaying aggressive behaviour:

- the child hits an adult (29%)
- the child hits another child (39%).

Justifications for smacking children were more likely to be agreed with by men than women.

Figure 3. Percentage of respondents who agreed with justification towards smacking children.
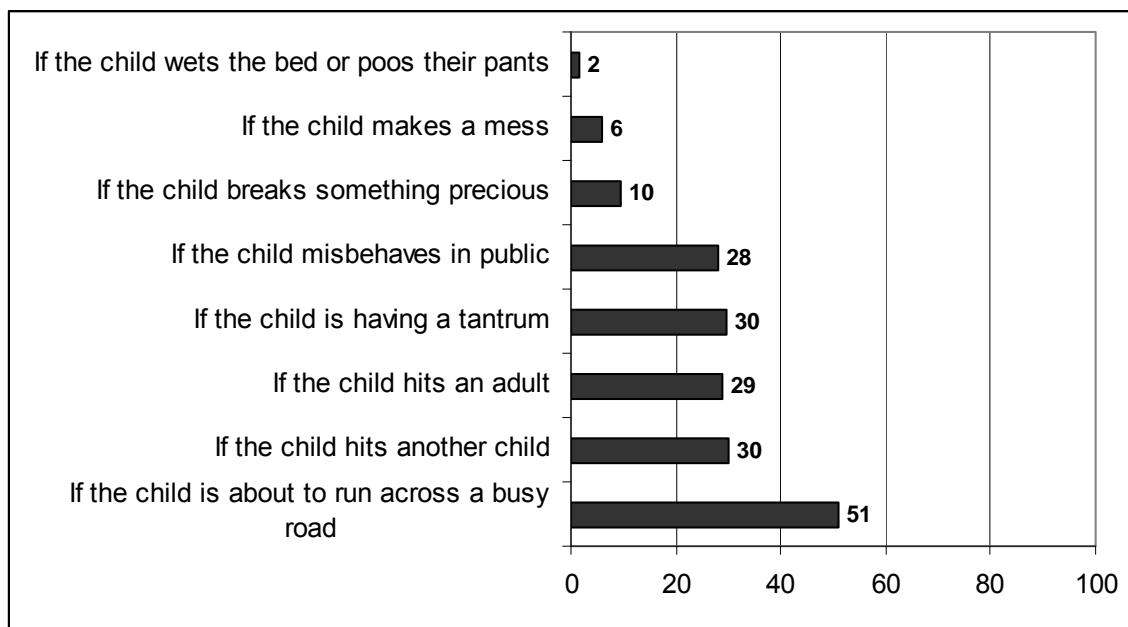
Some respondents also agreed that violence against an elderly parent could be justified as "looking after an elderly person can be frustrating, so it's excusable if a family member loses control at them" (11%).

Attitudes to family structure and gender-roles

Over the last few decades there has been a shift away from traditional gender-role attitudes to more egalitarian attitudes within the family (Brewster & Padavic 2000). This shift away from more traditional views supports greater agreement for an egalitarian relationship where both partners have equal power in the relationship and children are viewed as respected humans.

However, traditional views towards gender-roles in the family still exist which can have negative consequences on family wellbeing. Flood & Pease (2006) suggest that greater levels of agreement with traditional gender-roles can lead to greater acceptance of violence (particularly violence towards women).

In this survey respondents strongly agreed with questions addressing egalitarian attitudes, with high agreement across these four statements:
- mother and father should share the responsibility for raising children (99%)
- man and woman should have equal say in a close relationship (99%)
- either partner has the right to say no to sex (98%)
- couples should share responsibility for running the household (99%)
- children should be respected as human beings (99%).

Despite high agreement for these statements, Figure 4 shows that some respondents also held attitudes that support traditional gender-roles. More than one third of respondents agreed that the "man as the leader in the family should be honoured" (35%), 19 per cent agreed that "it's the woman's duty to meet her man's sexual needs" and 7 per cent agreed that the "man should make decisions about any money coming in the household".

Figure 4. Percentage of the sample that agreed with the statements expressing traditional gender-role attitudes.
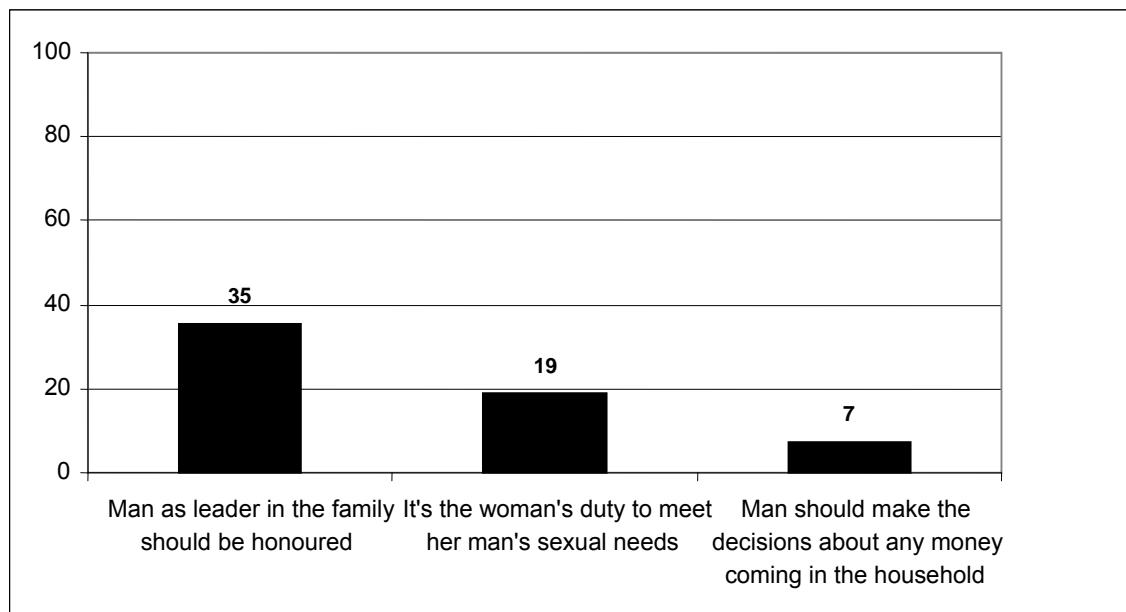
Respondents who agreed with these "traditional" statements were more likely to be Pacific peoples, Māori and "other" ethnic groups, males, people aged 65 and over, married or in a civil union and zero income earners.

More than one third of respondents also held traditional gender-role attitudes towards children with 34 per cent agreeing that "children should learn to obey without question". Men aged 65 and over, Pacific peoples, Māori and "other" ethnic groups, and those earning up to $70,000 were most likely to agree with this statement.

Understanding the effects of violence

Violence by a family member has a huge impact on partners and children who are physically, psychologically, verbally or sexually assaulted by a family member and children who witness violence in the home (Fanslow 2005).

There are many studies reporting risk factors for perpetration and victimisation of violence within families. For women who experience violence by a partner there are many negative health outcomes, including physical injury or death, severe mental health issues and less general good health (Fanslow 2005). Other outcomes for women experiencing violence include lack of employment, limited resources (eg. money, access to family and friends) and high levels of fear caused by the trauma of violence.

Beliefs about intimate partner violence

Four questions were included in the survey to test beliefs about intimate partner violence and beliefs that support or prevent victims seeking help. Evidence suggests that beliefs held by family, friends and the wider society about violence and victimisation make it harder for victims to seek help and leave violent relationships - less than half of women in violent relationships will leave the relationship and up to 70 per cent of women that do leave return to the same relationship (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano 2002; Martin, Green & Carlson Gielen 2007).

> I think they are an adult, they should be able to sort it out.

Figure 5 shows that there was strong agreement about the effects of violence on women but respondents were relatively more conservative in agreeing that women should leave an abusive relationship to be safe (67%).

Figure 5. Percentage of respondents who agreed with beliefs around intimate partner violence.
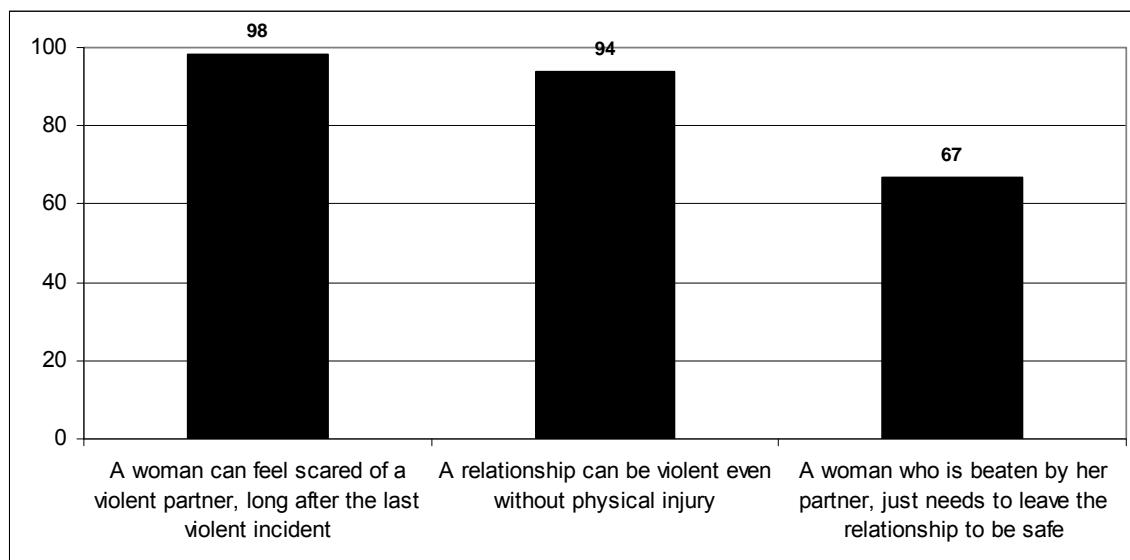
The belief about women leaving to be safe and free from violence needs to be addressed from the point that while leaving is ideal for most victims, there is also increased risk to women and children who do leave a violent relationships as the (ex-) partner's violence often continues after separation and can intensify, increasing the risk of harm to the victim/victims, including death (Wuest & Merritt-Gray 2008).

Educating New Zealanders on how to support victims in violent relationships to keep safe is important. It is also important that people understand the potential risks to victims who are thinking of leaving a violent relationship and for appropriate safety plans to be in place. If people have more knowledge about the barriers to victims leaving abusive relationships then more can be done to support these victims to move safely to a life with no violence.

Beliefs about child abuse and children who witness violence

Common myths about violence against children include that if the physical violence does not leave a mark it is OK, if children do not see the violence they will be OK and putdowns are not harmful (Kury, Obergfell-Fuchs & Woessner 2004).

For children who witness violence in the home or who are physically, psychologically, verbally or sexually targeted by a family member, negative outcomes include poor mental health and chronic heath problems, emotional damage, learning difficulties and poor relationships with peers and other adults, including future deviant and violent acts (Pritchard 2008; Fanslow 2005).

Figure 6 shows high agreement with beliefs that children are affected by violence in the home environment whether the child is a direct victim (being yelled at, put down or hit) or is an indirect victim (violence not directed at the child or that the child does not see violence).

Figure 6. Percentage of respondents who agreed with beliefs around raising children.
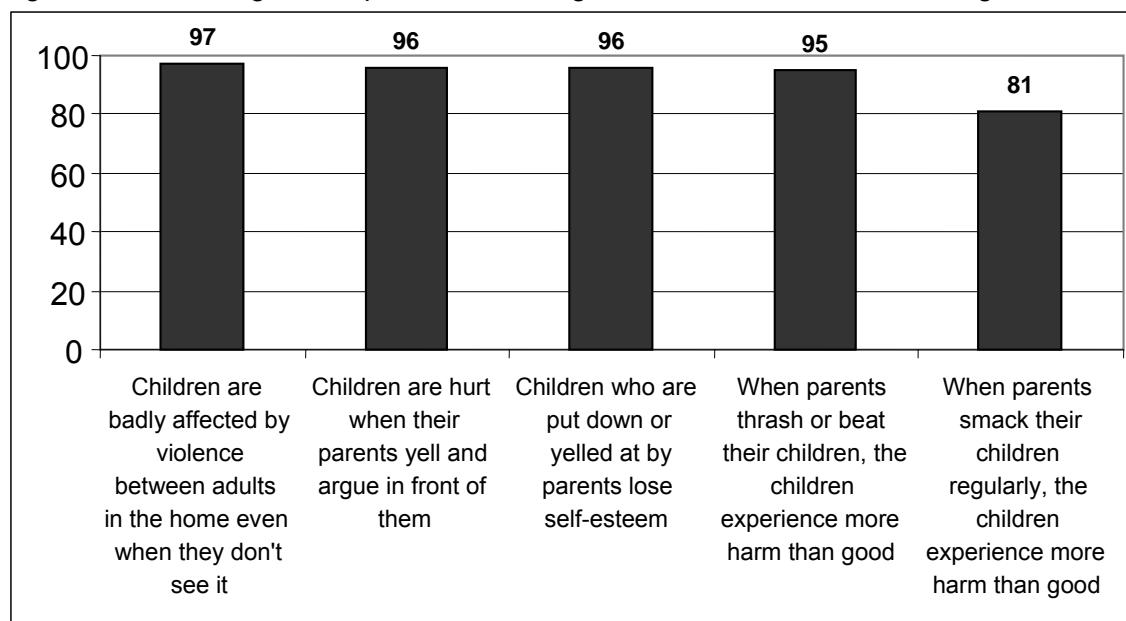
Beliefs about children learning behaviour through what they see and experience were strongly supported, with 95 per cent of respondents agreeing that children learn better by examples than by punishment, and 91 per cent agreeing that children who live with violent adults are likely to be violent themselves. Nearly one third of respondents believe that too much praise can spoil a child (29%).

Tension between social responsibility and privacy

A large majority of violence against family members happens behind closed doors in the privacy of ones own home. However, this violence is not a "hidden" crime as more than three-quarters of victims tell someone of the violence (Fanslow & Robinson 2009). However, communities that hold social norms that support traditional gender-roles and the privacy of the family strongly contribute to people feeling it is not their place, or their right, to take action (VicHealth 2006).

Respondents were asked about their attitudes towards the community and its responsibility to intervene and influence intimate relationships, and their attitudes about the privacy/sanctity of the family. Most respondents hold strong beliefs that all of the community has the responsibility to protect adults, children and the elderly.

> It [family violence] should not be hidden anymore, and everyone in
> the community is responsible to support a violence free community.

Figure 7 shows that there is high agreement with the statement that "everyone should try to help female victims of violence", that "everyone should encourage a man who is violent to his partner to change his behaviour" and that "everyone should try to do something if they know a couple are being violent to each other". Most respondents also agreed that it is the community's responsibility to protect children.

Figure 7. Percentage of respondents who agreed with the statements addressing attitudes toward community involvement in dealing with violence.
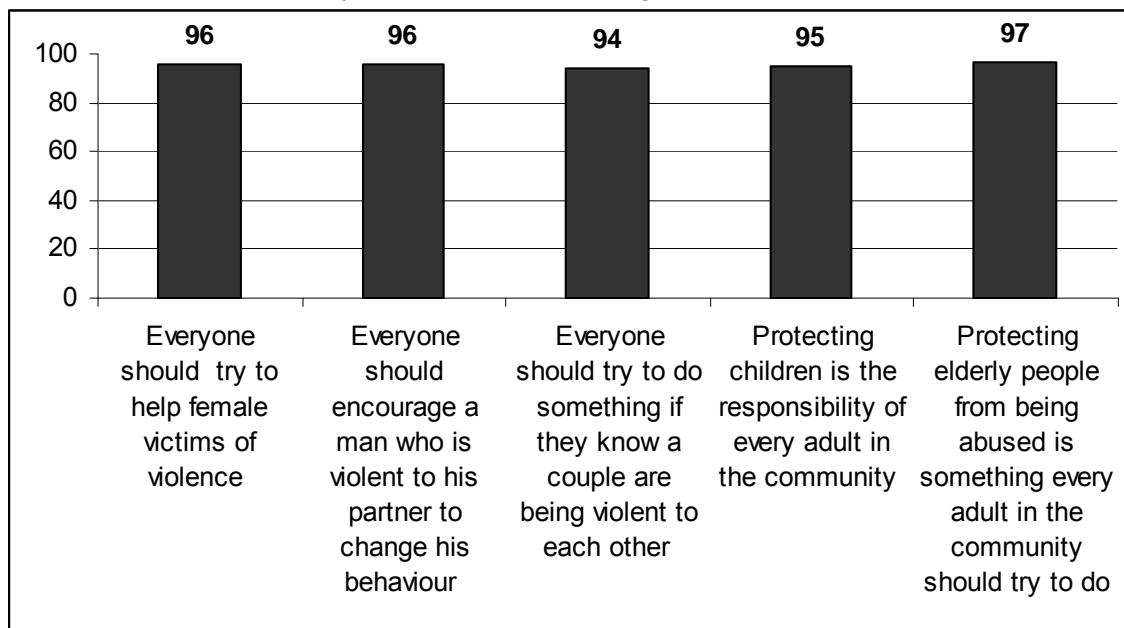
However, more than 70 per cent of respondents also held attitudes that it is the parents' business as to how they treat their children, adults' business how they treat their partner and children's business how they treat their elderly parent - and no one else's business.

Almost one in five respondents (17%) agreed that how a man treats his partner in the privacy of his own home is his own business (see Figure 8) and almost one in three respondents also agreed that it's "parents' own business how they treat their children".

It's the parents' own business what they want to do in their own house.

People maybe don't want other people to manage their family business.

The family should deal with the matter.

The other parents most likely wouldn't want to be told how to raise their children.

Respondents were also asked about attitudes towards community involvement in caring for elderly parents. Ninety-seven per cent of participants agreed that protecting elderly people from being abused is something every adult in the community should try to do but 19 per cent of respondents also agreed that "how people treat their elderly relatives is entirely their own business" (19%).

Figure 8. Percentage of respondents who agreed with the statements addressing attitudes toward violence as a private issue.
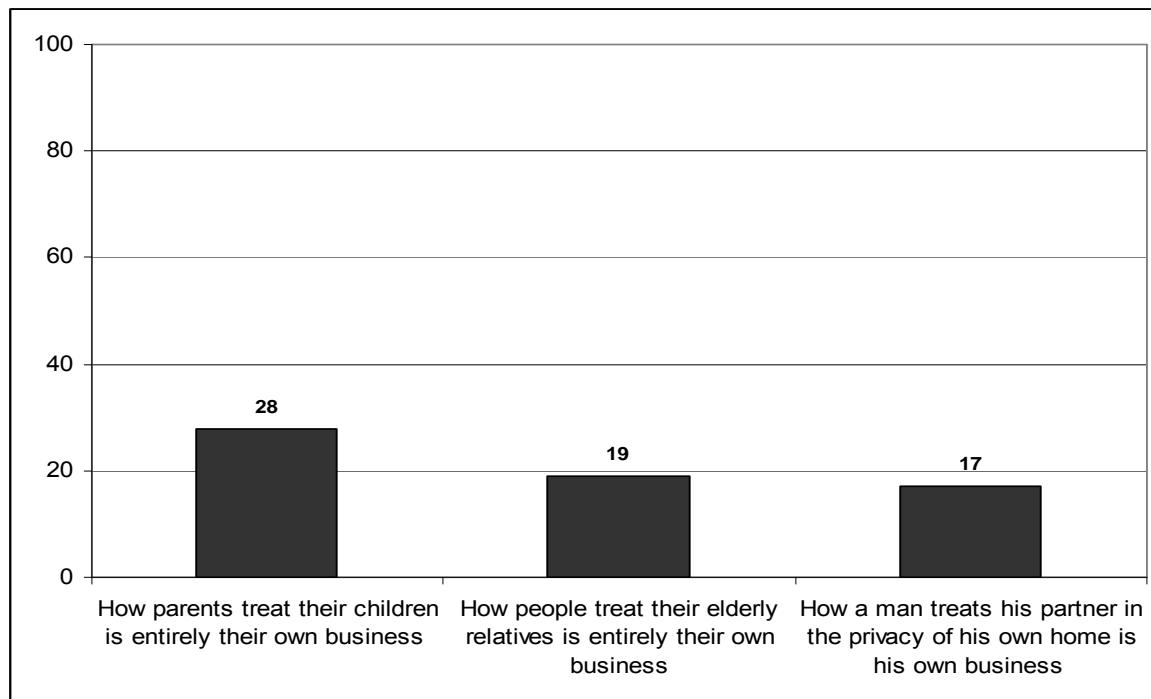
I want to act, but is it really family violence and what can I do?

> If anything it's [the campaign that] made me feel like wanting to get
> out there to help those people in need.

Attitudes towards violence exist at both a community level and an individual level. Even if individuals personally believe that violence is not OK, and that taking action to stop violence is necessary, "whether a person acts on their attitude in any given situation depends on their assessment of what others think and the presence of other factors in the broader social environment that either censures or permits violence behaviour" (VicHealth 2006).

> I think I would be more concerned about making a scene by
> intervening as the person could just say to me to mind my own
> business.

Respondents were presented with scenarios describing various family violence scenarios and were asked how likely they would be to intervene in that situation. They were also asked what the barriers would be if they decided not to act. The desire to act was high across all situations described, especially when there was physical evidence of abuse among children and family members (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Respondents who want to act.
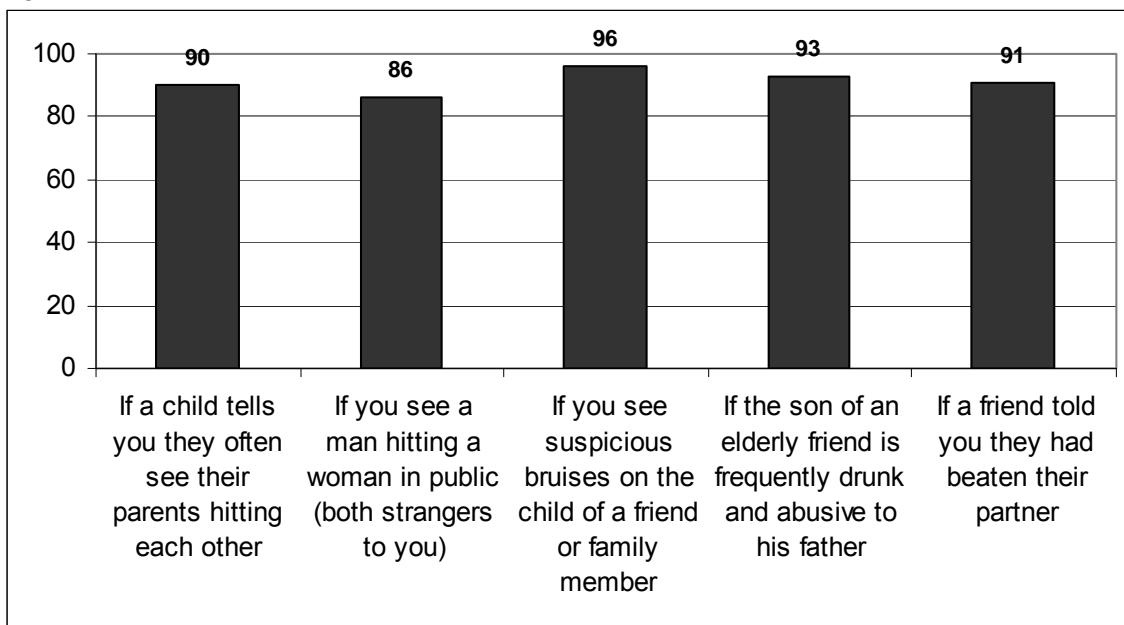
For those respondents who said they would want to act in a particular situation, they were then asked how likely they would actually be to act (See Figure 10). This question was developed to identify where people felt they would want to act (community level belief to take action and get involved) but whether they actually would be likely to act (individual level belief accounting for circumstances and personal safety).

While most respondents reported that they would be likely to act, a small number felt that though they would want to act, they would actually be unlikely to act. This response was

most likely for situations when a child reported their parents hitting each other, or when respondents actually saw a man hitting a woman (see Figure 10).

Not sure what to do really, is it my place?

Figure 10. The likelihood that respondents would actually act.[3]
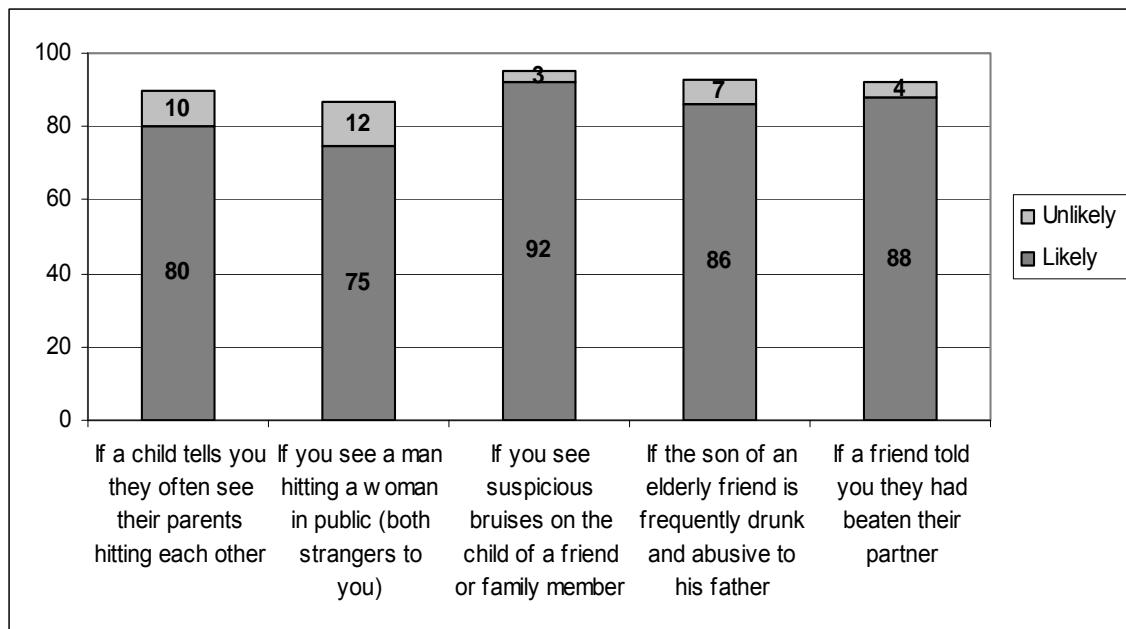
Respondents who said they were unlikely to act were asked for their reasons. These reasons included the potential harm to themselves, that it was up to the victim to seek help, that they might make the matter worse or they did not believe the victim. The reason for not being likely to take action across all five scenarios was that the scenario was a family matter and/or not my business.

Wouldn't want to get involved, that's their business.

It's none of my business because it's a family affair.

Respondents also reported high rates of being unlikely to act due to the potential harm to themselves if they were to intervene (12%). This response was highest for the scenario where they see a man hitting a woman in public. This scenario was also reported to be where respondents would not want to act at all (15%).

Well these days you're more likely to get a knife pulled on you for interfering. I wouldn't agree but it depends on the situation.

Because you never know what they would do to you if you intervened.

Being a female I would be afraid of getting hurt myself.

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[3] Totals differ between Figure 9 and Figure 10 due to rounding.

Another barrier for not being likely to act was a lack of trust of the victim or other possible explanation for the violence claims.

No proof of the child's accusations.

Where do we get help and what else can we do?

Another reason respondents gave for not being likely to take action was that they did not know where to go for help.

Respondents were asked if "for any of the situations we've just discussed are there any organisations, or agencies or services you know about that you think would be able to help?" The most commonly reported services were the police (59%) and Social Welfare (Child, Youth and Family) (50%), followed by Women's Refuge (23%) (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Services respondents believe could help.
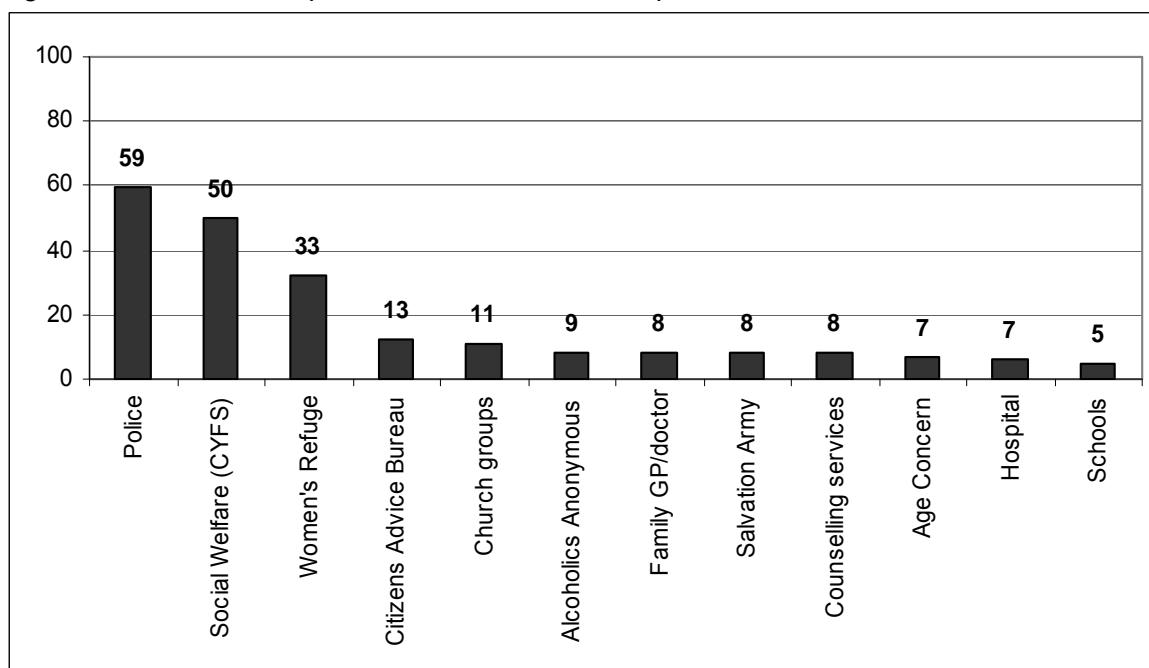
People are noticing family violence campaigns in their communities and they see the messages as relevant to them

Mass media is a significant tool in shaping attitudes towards key social issues. In 2006 the Campaign for Action against Family Violence was launched throughout New Zealand. The campaign is guided by best-practice in social marketing (Krug et al 2007). This is evident in the multilayered integrated design of the campaign, including national-level TV advertising, local community funding, media training, resources and tools and robust research and evaluation.

Respondents were asked about their views of family violence in the period since the campaign was launched. One quarter (24%) reported their views on family violence had changed over the last year.

> It's made me more aware how common it is in New Zealand, and we all need to be prepared to step in and help where we can.[4]

> Has given me a greater awareness of this problem in my community, as a result I have a clearer understanding of what I should do if confronted with the situation. It's not OK to turn a blind eye, it's not OK to beat partners and children.

Respondents were then asked if they had seen or heard of a[5] campaign about family violence. Eighty-five percent reported having seen or heard of a family violence campaign.

> Delighted that it's [the ads are] so out in the open and thoroughly against violence and so broad in scope.

Those most likely to have seen a campaign about family violence were:
- 45-64-year-olds followed by 25-44-year–olds
- Māori and New Zealand European.

Those least likely to have seen a campaign about family violence were:
- 18-24-year–olds
- Pacific peoples and "other" ethnic groups.

Of those respondents (85%) who reported having seen or heard of a family violence campaign, they were asked to tell the interviewer about it[6]. The most common response was to mention a television advertisement (83%) with highest recall for:
- the "It's not OK" advertisements at 38 per cent (unprompted). This was mentioned significantly more by females, those aged 18-54 and New Zealand European and Māori, while those aged 55-64 were significantly less likely to mention "It's not OK".

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[4] Note that quotes in this section came from the 35% of respondents who specifically mentioned the 'It's not OK" campaign and the impacts of the "It's not OK" campaign on them.
[5] 'a' campaign could be **any** campaign that the respondent recalled.
[6] Respondents were asked to explain the campaign they recalled. The responses to this question were used to identify those that recalled the "It's not OK" campaign or another campaign (unprompted).

> The phrase "It's not OK" is used in our house when our children start to get a bit rough.
>
> … I think the "It's not OK" campaign has made an impact on people because it targets all different scenarios that are real.

Comments on other campaigns included:
- 34 per cent who mentioned a "television advertisement" but did not specify any detail
- 11 per cent who referred specifically to another advertisement (including alcohol and family violence, and Repeal of Section 59: Crimes Amendment Act).

Respondents were then asked "how has this[7] impacted on you, or influenced your attitude (if at all)?" Of the 85 per cent who recalled a family violence campaign, 37 per cent reported being impacted by what they saw or heard.

> It's [the campaign] helped me to talk with my partner about how to be with our kids. We talk about how to handle the kids. We used to get stressed out with the kids, they weren't listening to us. We didn't want to be smacking our kids.
>
> It [the campaign] makes me feel that it's my responsibility to protect and look after my children, and teach my children to do things that are right, and to be a good example to the community, and help to build a better community.

In addition to the 37 per cent who reported being impacted by a campaign, 23 per cent of respondents reported that a campaign reinforced the views they already held.

> It [the campaign] has reinforced my beliefs that as a society we should act to protect those that need it, not sit back and let someone else do it or say it is not my problem.

Those more likely to report being impacted by the campaign they had seen were:
- females
- Pacific peoples, Māori and New Zealand European.

Those more likely to report their views were reinforced were:
- those younger in age
- New Zealand European.

One third (33%) of those who recalled a family violence campaign reported not being influenced at all.

Respondents also commented on the power of the use of "real" men telling their personal stories of positive change and how these men created a sense that change from violence is possible.

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[7] The previously mentioned campaign

I have great admiration for the men in the ad.

… I am impressed at the way the abusers have decided to show the rest of New Zealand that it is not cool and they are willing to change. Also, they recognise the damage they have caused to their families and friends.

… the ad where the guy says that he had love tattooed on his knuckles and that he used his fists out of love. I have never thought of it like that before and it gave me a bit more understanding of why someone might hit.

Respondents also reported that seeing the "It's not OK" ads made them want to help families experiencing violence:

I would now be more likely to take action.

… I would probably be more likely to act.

And some respondents mentioned that the "It's not OK" ads made them change their behaviour:

It [the campaign] made me get help.

Discussion of key findings from the survey and implications for family violence prevention work

The survey findings raise some more challenging issues for family violence prevention. Overall findings from the survey showed that:

- respondents held strong beliefs that violence is not OK and that there are alternatives to violence
- most respondents held attitudes that support women and men being equal in a relationship
- respondents agreed strongly with beliefs that women, men, children and the elderly face many negative outcomes from violence
- respondents disagreed with myths that violence only occurs when there is physical injury
- respondents agreed that it is the community's responsibility to support people to become violence-free and to support others in developing positive relationships both with intimate partners, children or elderly parents. However, there were competing beliefs held by the same respondents that what happens in the home is a private issue
- respondents are willing to act across all types of family violence unless they felt that it was not their business to act, they did not know what action to take or if they might put themselves in danger if they intervened.

Justifications for violence

While most respondents believed that violence is not OK, a small proportion of respondents supported attitudes that are associated with tolerating family violence. In particular, some respondents agreed that violence could be excused in certain situations.

Family violence tended to be justified when the victim was perceived to be "in the wrong", when the perpetrator "loses control" or when the victim had been violent themselves.

Findings also suggest an apparent mismatch between respondents' agreement with statements about respect and self-restraint, while also agreeing with excuses and justifications for violence between family members.

Education is needed to change beliefs about violence being the answer and to reinforce that there are no excuses for lack of control and violence. A focus on attitudes and motivations that excuse violence in some situations will allow messages to be developed that highlight no violence is OK… ever, and provide skills and knowledge about other effective ways to respond to "excusable" situations.

Traditional gender-roles

Overall, respondents agreed that partners should share roles and responsibilities and children should be treated respectfully as members of the family. However, more than one in three respondents agreed with statements supporting male authority in the family (traditional gender-role beliefs).

Those who have strong traditional gender-role beliefs and who accept violence against others are also more likely to excuse violence and believe that violence is a private issue (Flood & Pease 2006). It is also likely that these people will be less likely to intervene when violence comes to their attention.

Given the impact of traditional gender-role attitudes, we need to understand where these attitudes originate from, the implications of agreeing with these statements and how we may modify such imbedded attitudes.

The effects of violence

Most respondents agreed that women and children are harmed in violent relationships. Sixty-seven per cent agreed that women should leave an abusive relationship to be safe.

However, they may not understand the risk and support needed for victims to leave, that it might take victims a few attempts before they leave for good, and how to support child witnesses to lead healthy lives.

There may be a need to dispel myths around violence within families, such as why women stay, barriers to leaving, the cycle of violence, the negative effects of both witnessing and experiencing violence, the trauma caused by non-physical violence, and negative outcomes of violence.

Such education may help people understand the real truths to violence within families and may also help to strengthen attitudes that support victim safety, perpetrator accountability and personal relevance to take action.

Responses also highlight the possible need for education about safety for women leaving abusive relationships. While it is important that family, friends and communities support women to leave abusive relationships, safety at the time of separation is not assured.

Threatening to and/or leaving a partner increases the risk of violence beginning or escalating between a couple, even when violence has not occurred previously in their relationship.

When victims threaten to leave and/or actually leave an abusive relationship this is the time of most risk for intimate partner violence, including homicide by a partner (Adams 2007).

Educating New Zealanders about supporting victims to leave and making sure victims are safe is essential. Education on why women stay in violent relationships, and barriers to leaving, may help people understand the dynamics of living with violence and the level of support victims need before and during the leaving process.

Such education may also help to strengthen attitudes that support victim safety, perpetrator accountability and personal relevance to take action.

Social responsibility versus privacy

There was generally high agreement that violence within families is not OK and that there is a community responsibility to take action when violence is occurring. This finding is encouraging because it highlights that respondents may be less tolerant of violence in their community.

However, the belief that the community should take action may not translate to an individual taking action if they feel that the wider social environment does not also support the view that violence is not OK.

The likelihood of taking action also hinges on the attitude that what happens in a home, including violence, is a private issue. This belief can potentially create a significant barrier to bystanders' willingness to take action where they suspect violence is occurring.

The survey findings show that some respondents felt that how parents treat their children, and how couples interact within the home, is their private business. The belief that what people do in their own homes is their own business is clearly in tension with the more community-focused belief about a collective responsibility to take action to keep people safe.

Further research about willingness, confidence and capacity to take action may contribute to disentangling this tension.

What action to take

Most respondents reported that they were willing to act across all types of violence if they witnessed or heard about it, though responses to what action people would take were limited and generally referred to contacting statutory agencies or Women's Refuge.

The survey responses highlight that people need to be educated on a wider range of "actions" that can be taken to support families to be free from violence. This education could allow people to gain a greater range of intervention tools, not just contacting police or Child, Youth and Family.

It is also important to educate New Zealanders about supporting people to leave, and making sure the victims are able to seek help and keep safe.

Respondents were also unlikely to act where there was some ambiguity about whether the violence was actually happening or if they were concerned for their own safety.

Providing people with the right tools will allow them take action before a situation becomes violent, or to take action in a situation where the incident does not seem serious enough for formal notifications.

Further research could focus on people's willingness, confidence and capacity to give help by providing a greater understanding of behaviours around help giving, identifying factors that support or inhibit current help giving behaviours, identifying barriers and enablers of help giving behaviour change, understanding readiness and motivations to give help.

These findings could be used to inform social change strategies to support people to move past the barriers of inaction and move to support those who are facing adverse family relationships.

For example, a public awareness campaign could focus on:
- highlighting a wider range of "actions" that could be taken, including how to act when severe violence is happening in front of you (and how to keep yourself safe)
- how to support the public's willingness, confidence and capacity to help when there are signs of less extreme violence
- how to support people to reduce stress so conflict and violence do not occur (know your neighbours, babysit for neighbour or friend, access to 0800 number and other resources).

Mass media

In this survey respondents were asked about their awareness of mass media around the topic of family violence. Participants reported seeing a family violence campaign in their community, they reported that they were happy to see that violence within families was being talked about and respondents also felt the campaign affirmed or changed their own beliefs about violence within families.

Respondents' high awareness of media campaigns in general, and the "It's not OK" campaign in particular, provides evidence to support the use of mass media for raising awareness of complex social issues such as violence within families.

Not only did respondents report seeing an advertisement, but many also reported changes to their views, or their willingness to act. Most respondents reported the "It's not OK" catch phrase and are reporting the personal relevance of the mass media messages to them.

However, there was significantly lower reported awareness of family violence campaigns among Pacific peoples and youth, suggesting that the media campaigns need to be supplemented or supported by advertisements in other media, or other community activities to reach these groups.

Despite the low awareness among Pacific peoples, of those who did recall the campaign they were more likely than other ethnic groups to report being impacted by the campaign.

These survey findings show the impact of mass media as a way to get messages out to a wide audience, while challenging social marketing to develop strategies to reach audiences that are not picked up through mass media.

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Appendix one - questionnaire structure

Section one – adult intimate relationships

Section one dealt with attitudes, values and beliefs that individuals held about intimate partner relationships and how the use of violence in intimate partner relationships can be excused and justified.

The questions measuring defensible reasons for use of violence against a woman were designed to get a better understanding of what New Zealanders felt could justify a man being violent towards his female partner.

Section two – parent-child relationships

Section two dealt with attitudes, values and beliefs that individuals held towards the parent-child relationship and attitudes about the excuses and justifications for smacking a child.

Section three – elder abuse

Section three dealt with attitudes, values and beliefs that individuals held towards elder abuse perpetrated by a family member.

Section four - taking action

Section four asked respondents whether they would take action if they heard about, or saw, a family violence incident. Respondents were first asked if they would want to act, then how likely they would be to act. Respondents were also asked about the barriers for not acting or what they would do if they were likely to take action.

Section five - influence and impact of the campaign

Section five asked respondents whether they had seen or heard of a campaign against family violence and what they recalled about it.

Section six – demographic information

Section six included a series of demographics collected from each survey participant. The demographic variables were identified through an extensive review of the family violence literature on risk factors and attitudes and beliefs towards violence within families.

Appendix two - profile of survey respondents

	Total
WTD BASE All respondents	2446 %
Males	48%
Females	52%
18-24 years	11%
25-34 years	18%
35-44 years	22%
45-54 years	17%
55-64 years	14%
65+	17%
School qualification	27%
Technical or trade qualification	25%
University or higher	46%
Māori	13%
Pacific	4%
NZ European	71%
Others	9%
$25,000 and below	17%
$25,001-$40,000	11%
$40,001-$70,000	22%
$70,001 and over	31%
Married/Civil union	50%
Partner/de facto/boyfriend/girlfriend	19%
Single	26%
Other	5%

	Total
WTD BASE All respondents	2446 %
Location	
Whangarei	4
Auckland	33
Waikato (Hamilton, Rotorua)	10
Tauranga	6
Napier/Hastings	4
New Plymouth	3
Palmerston North	5
Wellington	12
Christchurch	13
Dunedin	5
Invercargill	2
OTHER	4

Appendix three – survey conceptual framework

Matching the goals of the campaign with the research

Campaign goals	Research questions to be addressed by the national survey
Increase awareness and understanding of family violence	What is the level of awareness and understanding of family violence in New Zealand?
	What attitudes do New Zealanders have towards family violence
Increase the personal relevance of family violence	What is the perceived personal relevance of family violence to New Zealanders?
Promote a greater propensity to act on family violence	What proportion of New Zealanders want to act?
	What factors make people more likely (or not) to act?
Create a social climate that supports change	Has anything in the last year influenced New Zealanders' awareness of and attitudes to family violence, and what has been the impact of the media campaign?
	What do New Zealanders know about where to go for help/information?

Type of family relationships covered by the survey

- male-to-female violence and abuse
- inter-partner aggression (physical fighting between partners irrespective of gender)
- parent–to-child violence and abuse (including physical punishment)
- adult–to-elderly relative exploitation and abuse.

Coverage of the questionnaire

Relationships between men and women	Attitudes, values and beliefs related to gender-roles and men's violence towards women
	Attitudes to defences/excuses for male violence to women
Relationships between adult intimate partners	Attitudes, values and beliefs related to power sharing, roles and aggression between intimate partners (irrespective of gender)
Relationships between parents and children	Attitudes and values related to parental roles and rights, children's rights and needs
	Beliefs about raising children
	Attitudes to defences/excuses for smacking children
Relationships between adults and elderly family	Attitudes and values related to roles of carers, family members and rights of the elderly

members	
For all four types of family relations in scope	Awareness/understanding of the effects of violence on victims
	Propensity to act to intervene to protect people from violence or abuse in each of the four types of family relationships:
	- motivation to act
	- likelihood of acting
	- type of action chosen
	Knowledge of services and where to go for help
	Impact of campaign and other influences on attitudes to family violence
Other information	Demographic information

Appendix four - attitudes questionnaire

Questionnaire – attitudes to family relationships and family violence

Hi my name is… I'm from…

We are conducting a survey for the Ministry of Social Development about ideas and attitudes to family relationships - we won't be asking about your own experiences.

Please be assured that the information and opinions you provide will be kept fully confidential and will only be used on an aggregated basis.

We will need 40 minutes for this interview. Are you OK to talk to me about these issues now?

If YES – begin survey at question one.

If NO – can I arrange 40 minutes when we can talk in private.

Interviewer – record location

Location	
Auckland	01
Wellington	02
Christchurch	03
Hamilton	04
Dunedin	05
Hastings/Napier	06
Invercargill	07
Whangarei	08
Palmerston North	09
Rotorua	10
New Plymouth	11
Tauranga	12
Other regional	20

Relationships between adult intimate partners (do not read)

I am going to start by reading some statements about adult couple relationships. For each statement I read, please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. There are no right or wrong answers.

Please scroll down for more statements.

Attitudes and values (do not read)

1. The mother and the father should share the responsibility for raising their children
2. Partners in a relationship should treat each other with respect
3. How a man treats his partner in the privacy of his own home is his own business
4. The man and woman should have equal say in a close relationship

5. A man should never raise a hand against a woman
6. The tradition of the man as leader in the family should be honoured
7. The man should make the decisions about any money that comes into the household
8. Adults should control their temper in a heated argument
9. Each partner should be able to go out separately with their own friends
10. In an intimate relationship it's OK to hit, if you've been hit first
11. Everyone should try to help female victims of violence
12. Each partner in a relationship should be able to wear what they like
13. Either partner has the right to say no to sex
14. Everyone should encourage a man who is violent to his partner to change his behaviour
15. When a man and a woman become a couple, the woman becomes the man's property
16. It's the woman's duty to meet her man's sexual needs
17. A man who doesn't fight when he's pushed around will lose respect as a man
18. The man and woman should share the responsibility for running the household
19. Sometimes hitting is the only way to express your feelings
20. Everyone should try to do something if they know a couple are being violent to each other
21. It's a woman's duty to stay in a relationship to keep the family together even if it's violent.

Beliefs (do not read)

The following statements are beliefs that some people have about couple violence and aggression. For each one can you please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

1. A relationship can be called violent even when there is no physical injury
2. It's natural for a male to act aggressively, especially if another male might take his woman
3. A woman who is beaten by her partner just needs to leave the relationship to be safe
4. A woman can feel scared of a violent partner, long after the last violent incident.

Defences/excuses for male violence to women (do not read)

I am now going to read out some situations where a man hitting a woman is sometimes defended or excused. For each one can you please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

It is excusable if he hits her if:

a) She won't stop nagging him
b) She has spent too much money
c) He catches her in bed with another man
d) In an argument, she hits him first
e) She comes home drunk
f) He's had a few drinks too many
g) She has physically abused their child
h) He finds out she's been lying to him
i) He's really sorry afterwards

j) She makes him look stupid in front of his family and friends
k) She offends his family or friends.

Relationships between parents and children (do not read)

Attitudes and values (do not read)

Now I am going to read out some statements about parents and children. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. There are no right or wrong answers.

Please scroll down for more statements:

1. Protecting children is the responsibility of every adult in the community
2. A parent should never smack their child
3. Authorities should never take children away from their parents' care, no matter what
4. A parent should never hit their child
5. Children should be allowed to disagree with their parents
6. It's a parent's duty to manage their own stress so they don't lose control with their child
7. Children should learn to obey without question
8. Children should be respected as human beings
9. A stressed out parent can be excused for hitting their child
10. How parents treat their children is entirely their own business.

Beliefs about raising children (do not read)

The following statements are beliefs that some people have about parents and children. For each one can you please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

Please scroll down for more statements:

1. Too much praise spoils a child
2. Children are hurt when their parents yell and argue in front of them
3. Children who are put down or yelled at by parents lose self-esteem
4. Young children won't remember their parents fighting when they grow up so they're not affected
5. When parents thrash or beat their children the children experience more harm than good
6. Children learn better by example than by punishment
7. Children who live with violent adults are likely to be violent themselves
8. When parents smack their children regularly, the children experience more harm than good
9. Children are badly affected by violence between adults in the home even when they don't see it.

Defences/excuses for parents smacking a child (do not read)

I am now going to read out some times where a parent smacking a child is sometimes defended or excused. For each one can you please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

It is excusable for a parent to smack a child:

a) If the child is about to run across a busy road
b) If the child hits another child
c) If the child hits an adult
d) If the child breaks something precious
e) If the child makes a mess
f) If the child wets the bed or poos their pants
g) If the child is having a tantrum
h) If the child misbehaves in public.

Relationships between adults and their elders or elderly family members (do not read)

Attitudes and values (do not read)

Now I'm going to read you some statements about relationships between adults and their elders or elderly family members. For each thing I read, please say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. The elderly have the right to be treated with consideration and respect, whatever their state of mind and health
2. A family carer should never act aggressively to an elderly person
3. Looking after an elderly person can be frustrating. So it's excusable if a family member loses control at them
4. Protecting elderly people from being abused is something every adult in the community should try to do
5. How people treat their elderly relatives is entirely their own business.

Propensity to act (do not read)

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about your response to seeing or hearing about violent or abusive behaviour by other people.

If people see something happening they sometimes try to do something about it, and sometimes they don't. I am going to read out some situations and for each can you personally tell me if you would **want** to act.

Please answer yes or no:
a) Would you want to act in any way at all if a child tells you they often see their parents hitting each other?
   Yes
   If **yes:** How likely would you be to do something?

If **likely** then: What would you do or who would you contact?
If **unlikely** then: What is the reason that you would be unlikely to do something?

No
If **no:** What is your reason for not wanting to act?

Please answer yes or no:
b) Would you want to act if you see a man hitting a woman in public (both strangers to you)?
Yes
If **yes:** How likely would you be to do something?

If **likely** then: What would your do or who would you contact?
If **unlikely** then: What is the reason that you would be unlikely to do something?

No
If **no:** What is your reason for not wanting to act?

Please answer yes or no:
c) Would you want to act if you see suspicious bruises on the child of a friend or family member?
Yes
If **yes:** How likely would you be to do something?

If **likely** then: What would you do or who would you contact?
If **unlikely** then: What is the reason that you would be unlikely to do something?

No
If **no:** What is your reason for not wanting to act?

Please answer yes or no:
d) Would you want to act if the son of an elderly friend is frequently drunk and abusive to his father?
Yes
If **yes:** How likely would you be to do something?

If **likely** then: What would you do or who would you contact?
If **unlikely** then: What is the reason that you would be unlikely to do something?

No
If **no:** What is your reason for not wanting to act?

Please answer yes or no:
e) Would you want to act if a friend told you they had beaten their partner?
Yes
If **yes:** How likely would you be to do something?

If **likely** then: What would you do or who would you contact?
If **unlikely** then: What is the reason that you would be unlikely to do something?

No

If **no:** What is your reason for not wanting to act?

Awareness/knowledge of services (do not read)

For any of the situations we've just discussed are there any organisations, or agencies or services you know about that you think would be able to help?

(Interviewer: Do not prompt – list responses)

Impact of campaign and other influences on attitudes to family violence (do not read)

1. Have your views on family violence changed over the last year?
   If **yes:** What has influenced the change?

2. Have you seen or heard of a campaign against family violence?
   If **yes:** What can you tell me about it?

   How has this impacted on you, or influenced your attitude (if at all)?

Demographic information (do not read)

Closing (do not read)

We're just going to finish with a few questions about you.

1. Code gender (do not read)
   - 1 Male
   - 2 Female

2. Can you tell me which of these age groups you are in: **Read**

   - 18-24 years
   - 25-29
   - 30-34
   - 35-39
   - 40-44
   - 45-49
   - 50-54
   - 55-59
   - 60-64
   - 65-69
   - 70 years or older
   - (Refused)

3. Which ethnic group do you belong to?

(Interviewer: If no immediate response, start to read options. Select as many as apply):
   - New Zealand Māori
   - New Zealand European or Pakeha

- ○ Other European
- ○ Samoan
- ○ Cook Island Māori
- ○ Tongan
- ○ Chinese
- ○ Indian
- ○ Other ***DO NOT READ*** ⟶Please specify - Interviewer: Record response(s)
- ○ Refused ***DO NOT READ***

4. Do   you   have   any   school   or   other   qualifications?

- ○ Yes ⟶   go to 5
- ○ No⟶   go to 6
- ○ Refusal⟶ go to 6

5. Which of the following best describes your highest qualification? **Read**

- ○ A school qualification
- ○ A technical or trade qualification
- ○ University or other professional qualification
- ○ None of the above **do not read**
- ○ Don't know **do not read**
- ○ Refused **do not read**

6. And one question about income. Which group best describes your total household income earned in the last 12 months in total, from all sources, before anything was taken out of it?

   (Interviewer: **If asked why** - we are interested in how income relates to people's attitudes to violence)

- 1   Loss
- 2   Zero income
- 3 $1-$5,000
- 4 $5,001-$10,000
- 5 $10,001-$15,000
- 6 $15,001-$20,000
- 7 $20,001-$25,000
- 8 $25,001-$35,000
- 9 $35,001-$40,000
- 10 $40,001-$50,000
- 11 $50,001-$70,000
- 12 $70,001-$100,000
- 13 $100,001-or more
- 98 (Don't know)
- 98 (Refused)

7. Just to confirm, how many people 18 years and over live in your household, including yourself?

   Record number

8. And how many aged under 18?

    Record number

9. Could you tell me which of the following best describes your current situation?

    1   You are married or in a civil union partnership
    2   You have a partner, de facto, boyfriend or girlfriend that you live with
    3   You have a partner, de facto, boyfriend or girlfriend that you do not live with
    4   You are single
    5   Any other, **please state.**

10. Those are all the questions I have. Do you have any other comments you'd like to make about the subject of this interview?

    1   Comments (specify)
    2   No

End

Thank you very much for your help. My name is [XXX] from… If you have enquiries about this survey, or if this survey raised any concerns or questions, please feel free to ring Research International on 0800 473 732.

11. The Ministry of Social Development is going to send us some information packs on the campaign against family violence to pass on to anyone that is interested in receiving this type of information. I would be happy to pass this material on to you if you like?

    1   Yes
    2   No

As part of our quality control procedures, my supervisor may wish to contact you to confirm that this interview took place. Could I please have your name, address and phone number?

Name:
Address:
Phone number:

That's great, well, thank you again for your time. Have a great day.