

Abuse Support Gap

TORONTO, March 7, 2022—The findings of a survey released today by Maru Public Opinion undertaken for the Canadian Women's Foundation finds a gap between the desire to end violence and the ability to support victims.

Further, while just one quarter (23%) of Canadians feel intimate partner violence is none of their business if it doesn't directly involve them, almost half (46%) say the issue feels too big for them to play a role in ending it.

The study also revealed significant groupings of the Canadian population who admit to having previously experienced some type of emotional abuse by a partner: emotional (44%), physical (24%) or sexual abuse (18%).

Key Findings

Just one quarter (23%) of Canadians feel intimate partner violence is "none of my business if it doesn't directly involve me." This response is echoed the most by men (30%) followed by women (17%), and particularly among younger Canadian adults (aged 18-34, 33%), compared to their older counterparts (aged 35-54, 22% and 55+, 17%). Those residing in Manitoba (29%) and Saskatchewan (29%) are most likely to harbour this view, followed by those living in Québec (25%), Ontario (23%), in both British Columbia (21%) and Alberta (21%), and Atlantic Canada (16%).

Almost half (46%) of Canadians indicate that the issue of gender-based violence "feels too big for them to play a role in ending it." This is equally to be the case for those who are male (47%) and female (46%), but higher among those who are the youngest Canadian adults (aged 18-34, 51%), followed by their older counterparts (aged 35-54, 44% and 55+, 45%). This view is also held the most by those living in Saskatchewan (55%) followed by those residing in Manitoba (51%), Ontario (47%), and both Alberta (46%), and Québec (46%), Atlantic Canada (45%), and British Columbia (43%).

Four-in-ten (44%) Canadians admit to having previously experienced some type of emotional abuse by a partner, followed by those who attest to having experienced physical (24%) or sexual abuse (18%). A sizable minority for each group did not tell anyone about or disclose their abuse experience – emotional (34%), sexual (34%), and physical (32%), and of those, the main reasons why they chose not to do so were that they:

- Just wanted to move on and try not to think about it (54%).
- Felt there was no one they could tell (35%).
- Felt they would be judged, blamed, or shamed (32%).
- Were still processing it and/or were not ready to talk about it (32%).
- Felt they would not be believed (27%).
- Felt they wouldn't be given the help they needed (18%).

- They were worried about reliving the trauma that could have a negative effect on their health and well-being (15%).
- Felt it would put them at risk of harm (15%).
- Afraid of their abuser finding out (12%).
- Afraid of having to report it to the authorities (9%).
- Something else (17%).

Of those who did disclose their abuse experience, a majority of each felt supported – emotional abuse (70%), physical abuse (66%), and sexual abuse (63%). In the alternative, those who did not feel supported after disclosure were highest in those having suffered sexual abuse (37%), followed by those who had experienced physical (34%) and emotional (30%) abuse.

Of the significant minority (44%) of Canadians who have had someone disclose or tell them about an abuse experience, more felt confident in their ability to make them feel supported: physical abuse (86%), emotional abuse (85%), and sexual abuse of (80%).

A gap analysis between these two groups revealed a deficit for each type of abuse victim: physical (66% of victims felt supported versus 86% who were confident they had ably offered support) **-20**; sexual abuse (63% of victims felt supported versus 80% who were confident they had ably offered support) **-17**; and emotional abuse (70% of victims felt supported versus 85% who were confident they had ably offered support) **-15**.

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Methodology

These are some of the findings from a study released by [Maru Public Opinion](#) undertaken by its sample and data collection experts at [Maru/Blue](#) February 7-11, 2022, among a random selection of 2,024 Canadian adults who are Maru Voice Canada panelists. The results were weighted by education, age, gender, and region (and in Quebec, language) to match the population, according to census data. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size has an estimated margin of error (which measures sampling variability) of +/- 2.2%, 19 times out of 20. Further details may be found at [Canadian Public Opinion Polls | Maru Group](#)

The results have been weighted by education, age, gender, and region (and in Quebec, language) to match the population according to Census data which ensures the sample is representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals when compared to the data tables are due to rounding.

Panel and data services provider [Maru Blue](#) is deeply rooted in the Maru/HUB technology platform and offers on-demand, high quality, highly scalable online community samples of deeply engaged, known respondents. Respondents could respond in either English or French.

Excerpts from this release of findings should be properly attributed, with interpretation subject to clarification or correction.

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