Commonwealth Government Initiative

Young people and domestic violence

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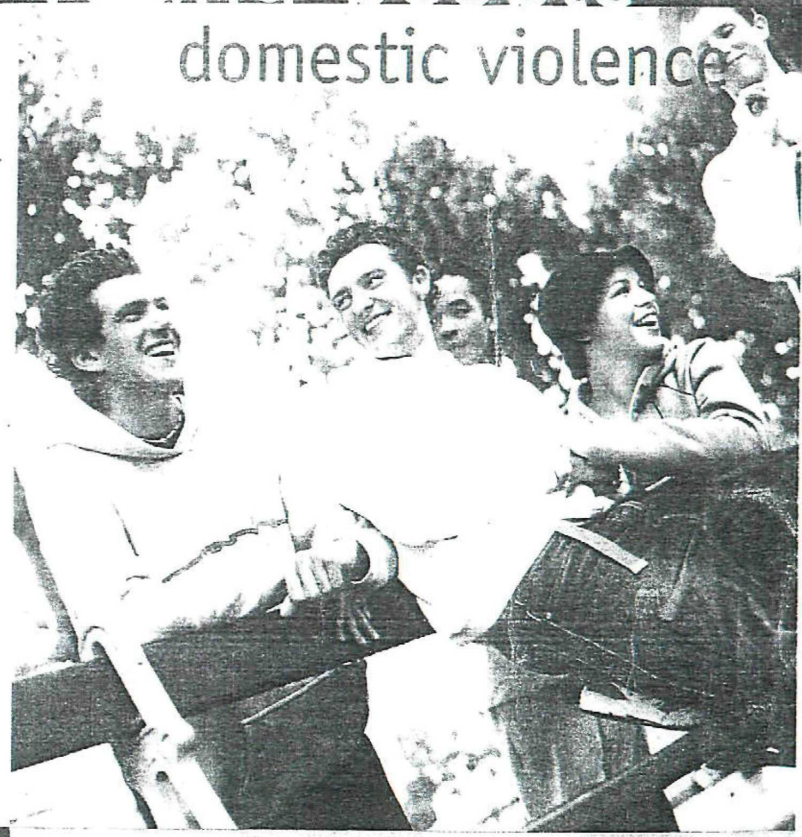
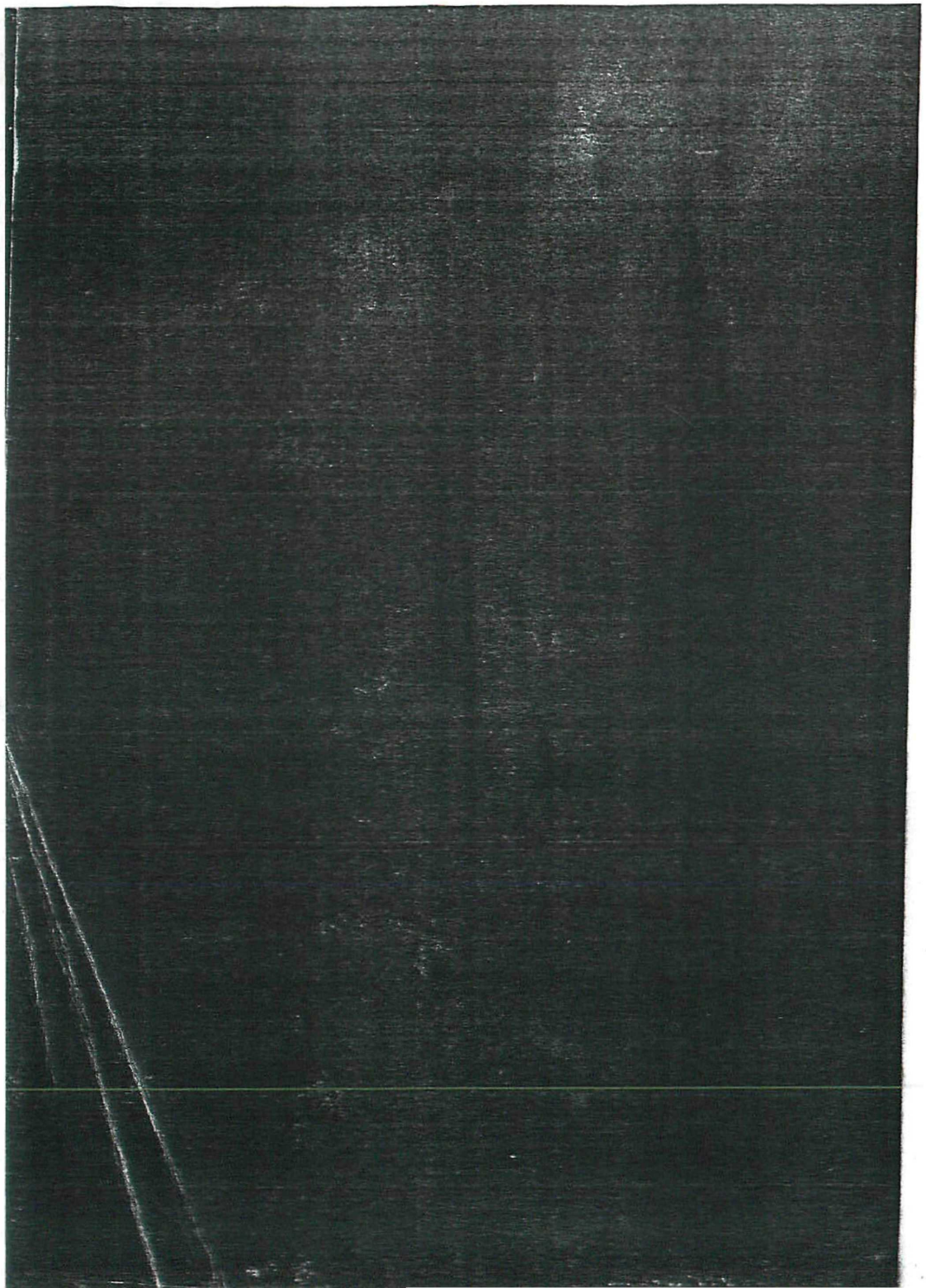


Department of Education

Partnerships Against Domestic Violence

NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION
TOWARDS A SAFER AUSTRALIA



Young people and domestic violence

NATIONAL RESEARCH ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TO AND EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

FULL REPORT

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Foreword

Domestic violence is a serious social issue which affects the health and well being of thousands of Australians and has far-reaching effects on the Australian community as a whole. The Commonwealth Government is strongly committed to finding new ways of preventing domestic violence. In particular, the Government is concerned with the effects of domestic violence on young Australians, who are vulnerable victims, least able to reach out for help.

At the National Domestic Violence Summit convened by the Prime Minister in November 1997, the Commonwealth, the States and Territories launched *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence*. In recognition of the extent of the domestic violence problem in our community, and the specialised support needed to assist both the victims and the perpetrators to break the cycle, the *Partnerships* initiative is a collaborative approach.

One of the priority areas identified in *Partnerships* is to provide intervention and assistance to children affected by domestic violence. To best design strategies to help young people, it was important to learn about their experience of, and attitudes towards domestic violence, through a comprehensive benchmarking study. In February 1998, the Government undertook to examine young people's attitudes towards domestic violence, surveying 5,000 young people. This is the largest research project of its kind in Australia.

A number of important findings have been identified through this research. The extent of the exposure of young people to domestic violence, the disparity between the attitudes between boys and girls and depending on age, the broad range of behaviour young people classify as 'domestic violence' and the identification of specific at risk groups were highlighted in the report. The research also confirms that young people who perpetrate domestic violence are most likely to have experienced or witnessed domestic violence while growing up. Thus, preventative measures must aim to break the cycle.

These findings enable the Government to tailor programs to target young Australians most at risk — at risk of physical harm due to domestic violence and at risk from the cyclical effects of a history of exposure to domestic violence.

I reiterate the Commonwealth Government's commitment to the prevention of domestic violence, and commend the report to policy makers and those who seek to combat the serious impact of domestic violence on young people.

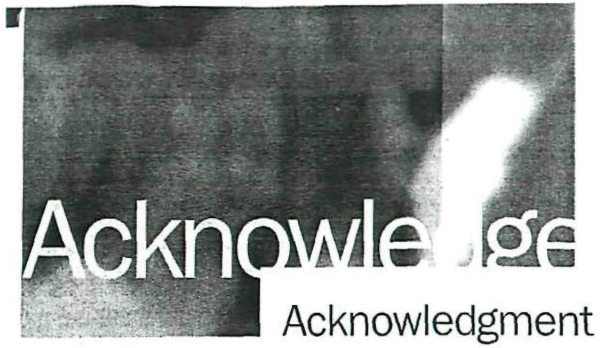
Hon. Trish Worth MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER
FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

Contents

Figures and Tables

Tables

Figures



Acknowledgment

The research for this important project was funded by Partnerships Against Domestic Violence, a Commonwealth Government initiative.

Many people contributed to the research and writing of this report. These include the staff of the Crime Research Centre (University of Western Australia) - Richard Harding, David Indermaur, Frank Morgan, Lynn Atkinson, and Harry Blagg; and staff of Donovan Research - Mark Francas, Rhonda Zapelli, Penny Coase, and Rodney Vlais. Staff of Manguri Corporation and NCS Australasia also contributed to the research process.

Representatives from State, Territory and Commonwealth government departments, including the Technical and Further Education sector, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Youth South Australia, Women Tasmania, and the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, contributed significantly to the progress of the report as members of the project management group.

Many Australian high schools participated in this national research, as did young people who were no longer at school. The contribution of school staff, and the multitude of young people who took the time to fill out questionnaires or to be interviewed in depth, is gratefully acknowledged.

Preface

This report on the national research into young people's attitudes towards, and experiences of, domestic violence, presents the main findings from a survey of 5,000 young people and qualitative research with various groups of young people.

A fact sheet is available which summarises the key findings.

Copies of this report and the fact sheet are available free of charge from:
Crime Prevention Branch
Attorney-General's Department
Robert Garran Offices
National Circuit
BARTON ACT 2600

The report and fact sheet can also be down-loaded from the following website – www.ncp.gov.au. Additional information on the conduct of the research and background material that informed the report, such as a full literature review, is also available on the website.

Executive summary

This research project surveyed young people's experience of, and attitudes towards, domestic violence. It is the largest piece of research of its kind ever conducted in Australia. Given the subjective, personal and sensitive nature of this topic the investigation involved gathering quantitative and qualitative data. The research was designed to allow these two forms of data to be used in developing a comprehensive picture of young people's experience. The chief research aim was to provide national data on young people's attitudes to, and experience of, domestic violence. The final report constitutes a synthesis and summary of the research findings. This report contains an introduction, a literature review, details of the qualitative research, the findings from the quantitative research and a section on interpretation of the results and implications for policy and communication.

Main Findings

The qualitative and quantitative research showed that young people are willing to classify a broad range of behaviours as 'domestic violence'. The quantitative research revealed that there were important differences among young people in terms of their attitudes to violence. For example, boys, younger age groups, and disadvantaged young people, more than other groups, expressed attitudes supportive of violence. A small proportion of young people still do not classify extremely violent behaviours as domestic violence. Young males and Indigenous youth are over represented in this group. The concept of domestic violence was more commonly recognised by witnesses to parental domestic violence, Indigenous young people, girls and older teens, than other young people surveyed. The most common source of information about domestic violence was the media, but for high risk groups it was more likely that the main source of information was family and friends.

The most common causes of domestic violence selected by young people (from a list of 13 alternatives) were 'having grown up in a violent household' and 'being drunk'. Thus young people's attitudes in general endorse the 'cycle of violence' theory and the triggering effects of alcohol. There was no evidence of large differences between attitudes held by young Australians and those of a sample of young people in the United States. However, the results reported here suggest that young people are less supportive of violence than shown in some earlier Australian surveys. There are a number of limitations on any comparison with previous studies and, therefore, comparisons need to be made with considerable caution.

Using a broad definition of 'violence' about one in three young people have witnessed incidents in the home that may be classified as physical domestic violence; and about one in three young people (both males and females) have experienced incidents in their personal relationships that could be defined as 'physical violence'. Although a third of young people have 'ever' witnessed physical domestic violence (between parents or carers), if we consider those currently

witnessing some form of parental domestic violence the figure is half that (16per cent) — but this is again taking a very broad definition of domestic violence (eg it includes 'yelling'). About half of the young people who have 'ever' witnessed parental domestic violence witnessed it only 'once or twice'.

To understand the phenomenon of violent victimisation, including the patterns described here, it is necessary to conceptualise a continuum of violence from least severe to most severe. Severity may be seen as a function of the degree of physicality and terror associated with a particular act and the frequency and context of the act. The prevalence, incidence and pattern of violence described will be determined by which point on the continuum is taken as 'domestic violence'. As more restrictive definitions of behaviour are used, the prevalence of incidents decreases. Although the prevalence of violence appears similar between males and females, when examined in more detail (particularly the effects of actions on the victim), it emerges that the effect of violence is greater for females than males.

The most common pattern of domestic violence witnessed by young people was where each of the partners was victimised by the other partner ('couple' violence). The seriousness of effects appears to be greater in the couple violence pattern and least in the female to male violence group. About a quarter of young people witnessed physical domestic violence against a female parent. In more serious forms of domestic violence, female victimisation is more prevalent than male victimisation. In less serious forms, male victimisation and female victimisation appear equal. The report explores the issue of 'gender symmetry' (that male and female violence are equal) and explains, using the results and exploring the experience of females, how this view has developed on the basis of a superficial understanding and measurement of violence. For example, the relative seriousness of male to female violence (compared to female to male violence) is reflected in the effects of the two types of violence/aggression. The effects of male to female violence are twice as severe measured by: the rate of relationship break up; hospitalisation; children missing school; children receiving counselling; and the rate at which the young person who has witnessed domestic violence has told another person about the incident(s).

The present research has raised issues regarding the appropriate age focus for a study of young people and violence. There are important differences in the attitudes to violence depending on age. These differences are reflected strongly in the results of the quantitative analysis. Hence, it would be productive to think in terms of at least two age bands — young adolescents and older adolescents. This study also reinforces the large number of studies discussed in the literature review that show the primary relevance of socioeconomic status in both experience of, and attitudes towards, violence. For example, rates of victimisation in personal relationships are higher in disadvantaged groups. In considering the experience of young people in regard to violence, it is useful to conceptualise three categories: 'advantaged', 'disadvantaged' and 'marginalised' groups.

This research revealed high levels of violence experienced by Indigenous young people. The levels of violence revealed in the qualitative and the quantitative research reinforce the finding consistently emerging from studies of domestic (or 'family') violence in Indigenous communities. Such levels are much higher than that experienced in any other sector of Australian society, and they affect every aspect of family relations. Given the high levels and

seemingly endemic pattern of this violence, intervention with Indigenous families needs to be a matter of highest priority.

The findings in relation to the effect of witnessing domestic violence on attitudes, but more particularly on experience, support the cycle of violence thesis. Having witnessed parental domestic violence emerged as the strongest predictor of perpetration of violence in young people's own intimate relationships. Preventative efforts should focus on stemming current domestic violence and helping children from homes where domestic violence is occurring. Considerable priority should be given to homes (particularly with children) where there is evidence of a serious and sustained history of domestic violence.

Almost half of 19–20 year olds who have been in an intimate relationship have experienced at least one act that can broadly be classified as 'dating violence' (using a very broad definition of violence). Using a composite measure of physical dating violence, just over a third of males and females could be classified as victims of physical violence in dating relationships. The rates of victimisation and perpetration based on a general counting of actions are roughly the same for males and females; however, the term 'violence' is generally used to refer to acts that frighten the victim. Adjusting for this essential experiential component of violence, we find that about 22 per cent of female young people could be classified as dating violence victims, whereas only five per cent of young males could. For those who have experienced threats or actual physical violence (technical victims of violence), half of the female victims experienced fear; this applied to only 11 per cent of males. Thus the gender disparity commonly recognised in domestic violence, and reflected in criminal statistics, is revealed by the subjective experience of the aggression, with girls at least four times more likely than boys to have been frightened by an episode of intimate aggression.

Fourteen per cent of females (and three per cent of males) indicated that they had been sexually assaulted. The figure is higher (20 per cent for females) among 19–20 year olds. With respect to sexual violence in dating relationships, 14 per cent of females and seven per cent of males indicated that a boyfriend/girlfriend had tried to force them to have sex.

In terms of young people's attitudes to sexual violence, 12 per cent of males agreed with the statement: 'it's okay for a boy to make a girl have sex if she has led him on'. Three-quarters expressly disagreed with the statement. Fifteen per cent of males agreed with the statement 'it's okay for a guy to put pressure on a girl to have sex but not to physically force her'. Seventy per cent expressly disagreed with the statement.

This research highlighted problems associated with relationship violence as experienced by young Australians. Much of this relates to their experiences as witnesses to parental domestic violence, but a substantial problem is the relatively large number of young people experiencing physical and sexual violence in their own intimate relationships. The most important implications concern how to direct help to where it is most needed — young people from disadvantaged areas — particularly where no other form of social support (including information and assistance) is effective or available. Education aimed at understanding the way violence is used to intimidate and coerce will be useful to all young people venturing into early intimate relationships.

Policy Implications

The most important policy implication of this research is the reinforcement that it provides for a policy towards domestic violence prevention that recognises the differences that exist in the community. Certain sectors of the Australian community experience high levels of domestic violence, and the 'cycle of violence' process can concentrate violence in these areas. Strategies to prevent domestic violence must have relevance to disadvantaged communities, and their effectiveness must be evaluated in terms of the differences that the strategies make to those communities suffering the most violence.

Other policy implications concern recognising the different levels and forms of violence. The gender disparity debate has highlighted the need for more rigorous and critical thinking in this area. Recognition that 'violence' is not a singular phenomenon, but a descriptor used in a variety of contexts, shows the need to make meaningful distinctions and to apply a triage strategy to give high priority to addressing the most serious forms of violence.

Intervention Implications

An integrated approach is necessary among service delivery agencies to identify pockets in the community where risk factors exist and to implement intensive intervention strategies, such as:

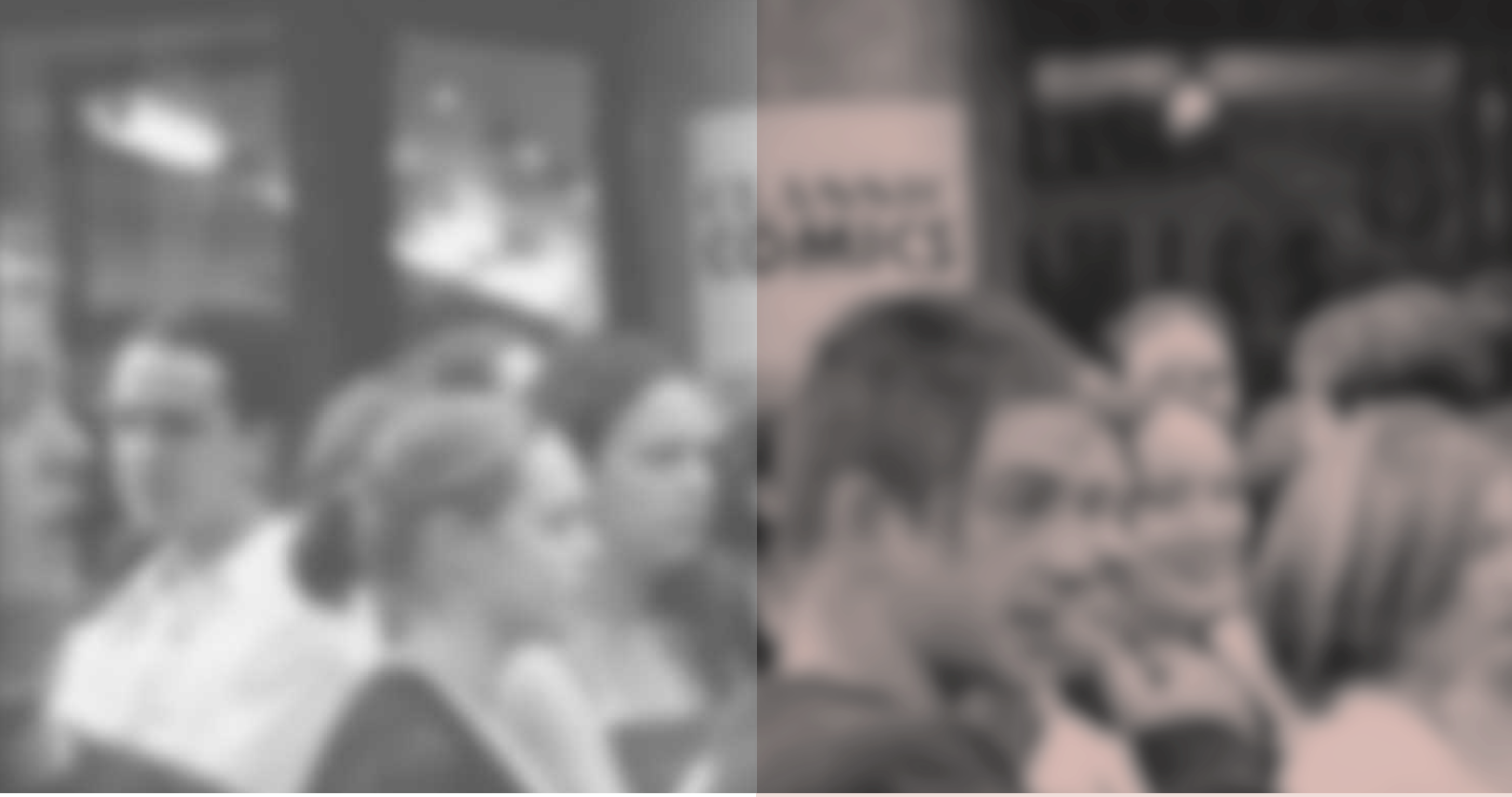
- targeted case work for the most highly disadvantaged families
- delivery of meaningful relationship and parenting information, including information on the nature of domestic violence and the effect on children for the most highly disadvantaged families
- development of culturally-sensitive programs as applicable to young people and families in specific ethnic groups
- support for community development initiatives for the most disadvantaged communities.

Attitudes are relevant but should not become the focus to the exclusion of real changes in experience. The evidence of the link between attitude and behaviour is tenuous, and resources devoted to attitude changes may be better deployed in providing direct assistance and education to high risk groups.

Implications for Further Research

- Further research should focus specifically on middle to late adolescence as this is the group with the most experience in the area of relationship violence.
- Sexual violence is arguably violence that is the most disturbing and relevant to young people. Given the prevalence of this serious form of violence, more research should be undertaken into the nature and distribution of sexual violence among young people, to formulate possible preventative strategies. Such research should focus on older teens to capture the experience of the most active group.

SECTION 1



SECTION 1

Project background and objectives

Background

1 Project background and objectives

Background to the Research Project

In November 1997, the Prime Minister announced the initiative *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence*, to develop early intervention and prevention strategies that reduce the prevalence of domestic violence in the Australian community. As adolescence is the time in life when most people start to form intimate relationships with peers, this should be an appropriate point for the implementation of strategies to reduce the extent to which young people later become involved in violent intimate relationships.

To develop these strategies, it is necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and attitudes of young people in regard to violence in general and domestic violence in particular. We need to identify and understand the risk and/or protective factors that make it more or less likely that a young person will become involved in violent intimate relationships.

Very little research had been undertaken in Australia on young people's experiences and attitudes to violence. Statistics regarding the nature and extent of violence by and against young people provide only a partial picture, and there are no national data regarding young people's experience of domestic violence or relationship violence between young people ('dating violence').

This research project, *Young People's Attitudes to, and Experiences of Domestic Violence*, was commissioned jointly by the Crime Prevention Branch in the Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs to provide national data on young people's attitudes to domestic violence and the experiences (as victims, witnesses or perpetrators) that may influence these attitudes.

Most survey data is presented in tables or figures. However, it should be noted that not all data referred to appears in tables and figures.

Purpose of the Project

The overall purpose of the project was to provide national data on young people's attitudes towards domestic violence and the experiences and beliefs that helped shape those attitudes. This will enable users of the data to:

- develop policies and strategies to address domestic violence prevention through work with adolescents

- develop messages for communication strategies for domestic violence and violence in general that are directed towards young people
- provide national baseline data against which future changes in attitude and experience can be monitored
- provide measures that can be used in the evaluation of programs generated as part of the *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence* initiative.

It is important to define 'domestic violence' and thereby set the domain of that which was to be covered by the research. The core definition of domestic violence is:

> *the unacceptable use of physical (including sexual) force to control or coerce.*

In terms of criminological analysis and crime prevention strategies, this definition focuses on tangible behaviour that is recognisable in the criminal law and familiar to law enforcement agencies. However, this core definition needs to be placed within the context of a broader definition:

> *violence (physical, sexual, psychological, financial) where a 'domestic' relationship exists between the victim and the perpetrator.*

Young people perceive a range of behaviours (from not talking to one's partner for a long time to regular slapping or hitting) on a scale from normal conflict to domestic violence, with physical violence scenarios existing at the most serious end of the continuum.

Physical violence, including sexual violence is explored. This enables our examination of the topic to be focused, and functionally appropriate in terms of harm caused, in the context of witnessing parental violence. Its possible effect on the potentially violence-prone young adult and older adolescent age groups, the major focus of this research, is also examined.

Any examination of physical acts of domestic violence is not at the exclusion of other forms of domestic violence such as psychological and financial violence and should not be taken to infer that these other forms of violence are not deemed to be serious. However, in addition to the rationale provided above, a focus on psychological and financial factors also applies to situations and conduct which are not susceptible to any accepted notion of 'crime prevention'. Further, issues of definition and measurement arise more acutely in relation to these less tangible forms of violence than for physical violence, particularly given that in the case of domestic violence it is neither the perpetrator nor the victim who is providing the data, but a 'witness' — the young person.

Young people's experiences of and attitudes towards domestic violence primarily relates to domestic violence occurring between their parents or, in the case of extended family arrangements, other adult family members. Violence between teenage couples who are in a domestic situation (married or *de facto*) is also relevant. Experience of and attitudes to dating violence also require exploration, not least as part of the identification of potential risk and protective factors which include exposure to all forms of violence.

Our definition of domestic violence does not strictly speaking cover other forms of family violence such as child abuse, sibling abuse or elder abuse. However, as prior research has

shown that other forms of violence, particularly child abuse, are intertwined with domestic violence, experience of child and sibling abuse was covered to some degree.

Research Objectives

Within the overall objective of providing data on attitudes to and experiences of domestic violence, specific research objectives were identified as below:

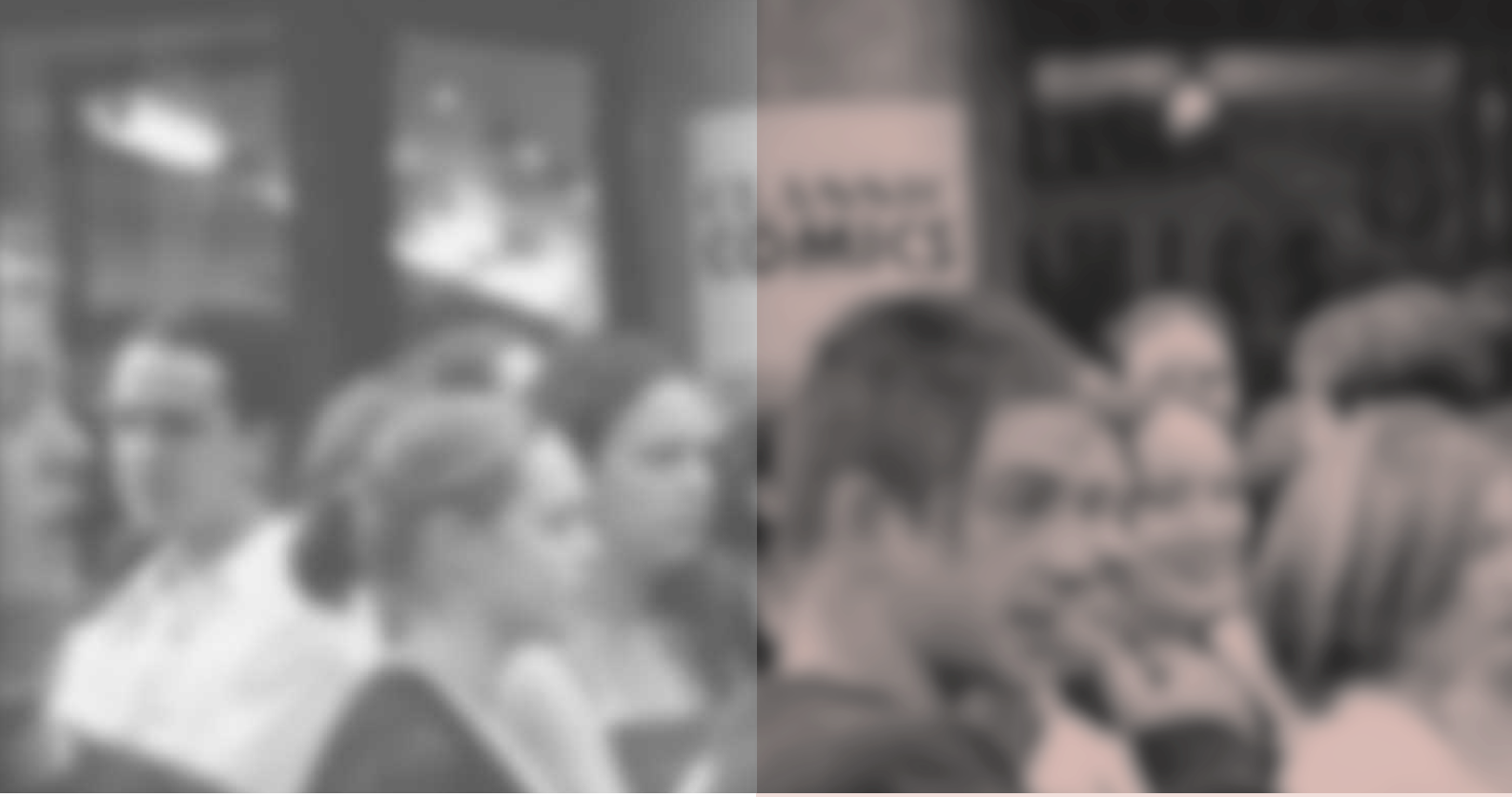
- to identify what young people understand as 'domestic violence' — what behaviours they include under that broad umbrella
- to provide an indication of the extent of domestic violence among young people, by measuring the experience of domestic violence — as witnesses; as victims (primarily of dating violence); as perpetrators (primarily of dating violence)
- to provide an indication of the extent and distribution patterns of attitudes about domestic violence, specifically the acceptability of domestic violence (under what, if any, circumstances, is some form of violence considered permissible)
- to explore and understand the influences on attitudes to domestic violence
- to ascertain if these attitudes derived from direct experience, vicarious experience or media information
- to determine the link between experience and attitude
- to examine the influence of other factors such as experience of violence in general; the holding of attitudes regarding traditional gender roles; and demographic variables such as socioeconomic status, age and gender
- to explore if, how and why attitudes to domestic violence differ from those held about violence in general
- to identify protective factors which provide resistance to pro-violence attitudes
- to provide preliminary data as to the main areas in which beliefs and attitudes to domestic violence are least fixed and/or amenable to influence
- to develop an understanding of how young people experiencing domestic violence deal with the situation
- to ascertain young people's reactions and coping mechanisms
- to find out whom young people turn to for help
- to determine what services are available for young victims of domestic violence and to what extent they wish to access those services
- to find out how young people assist/advise a friend in a domestic violence situation
- to spell out the optimum points and modes of prevention so that young people's beliefs and attitudes towards domestic violence would not develop to the point where they were tolerant or where, at any rate, they did not translate into perpetration of such violence themselves.

Project Outline

The research comprised two stages. In Stage One qualitative research encompassing group discussions, affinity groups and paired depth interviews was undertaken with:

- 'mainstream' youth aged 12–20 years
- homeless youth
- youth from different ethnic backgrounds, particularly non-English-speaking (NESB).

Stage Two research primarily involved quantitative research among a national sample of 5,000 young people aged between 12 and 20 years. This is the largest sample of young people ever surveyed on attitudes towards domestic violence in Australia or, most likely, the world. The findings are unique.



SECTION 2

Summary of the literature review

2 Summary of the literature review

The review of the literature was undertaken to:

- inform the research
- set the focus, trajectories and boundaries of the research
- establish functional definitions of key terms and concepts, and a theoretical framework
- provide background information on the nature and extent of relationship violence, and theories associated with perpetration and prevention
- explore the links between attitudes and behaviour, so that future preventative efforts arising from this project can be effectively focused
- explore issues associated with dating violence, the form of domestic violence most relevant to young people's direct experiences of victimisation.

Focus and Definitions

Research in the area of domestic violence is plagued by conflicting evidence — a situation often brought about by inappropriate, inadequate or conflicting functional definitions of domestic violence.

While the research flowing from the literature review was mindful and, where appropriate, inclusive of the full range of behaviours comprising domestic violence, the literature review and the project itself focused on a definition which underlined the importance, prevalence and seriousness of physical (including sexual) violence. However, the broader definition of *physical, sexual, psychological and financial 'violence' where a 'domestic' relationship exists between the victim and the perpetrator* was simultaneously used in this project to contextualise the issues and provide some insight and perspective into behaviours which are in themselves a matter of social concern. In addition, it was important to acknowledge the links between (physical) violence in the community and domestic violence (violence in one sphere of life spills over to other spheres), and to recognise that sociocultural factors help reinforce the views and behaviours of perpetrators, and must be addressed in preventative efforts. Conversely, it could be said that violence within intimate relationships, because it is so common, is an archetype of all violence — violence, which at the level of public awareness, is equated with physicality (assault).

An important distinction is made in both the literature review and the qualitative and quantitative research, between *aggression* and *violence*. Our definition builds in the pejorative connotations of the term 'violence' (as opposed to those associated with the less censorious 'aggression'). 'Violence' is a term used by those who disapprove of the behaviour, rather than

by perpetrators, who generally seek to rationalise and justify their behaviour in part by avoiding pejorative labels.

Following Gelles (1997) this study defined *domestic violence as the unacceptable use of physical (including sexual) force to control or coerce*. As is widely accepted in contemporary explanations of domestic violence, power and control represent the key motivating forces behind the use of domestic violence, and link physical and sexual violence with other forms of familial violence, including psychological, emotional and financial. A current or past 'domestic' (marriage or *de facto*) relationship is the context for this type of violence. International and Australian research has shown that recently divorced or separated women are proportionately at greater risk of major violence from their former partners than couples currently in a domestic living arrangement.

The findings of some studies, particularly in the United States (US), show '*gender symmetry*'[1] in domestic and dating violence, ie that men and women perpetrate equal amounts of (physical, non sexual) violence in relationships. Our observations suggest that the behaviours measured in these studies are not of primary concern from a criminological perspective; in other words, that they are not at the serious end of the spectrum in terms of harm caused to and fear generated in the victim. In keeping with the study's focus on 'violence' rather than 'aggression' (the former being a more pejorative label and representing a greater level of seriousness) it is also suggested that many of the behaviours measured in these studies might be better described as 'aggressive'. However measured — whether by reports to the police, injuries showing up in hospitals, or levels of homicides — the picture of *serious domestic violence* is characterised by the use of physical force by a *male to a female*. Accordingly, this is where the focus of this project lies. This view of the appropriate focus being on male violence against female partners is compatible with the wider concern with male violence in non intimate contexts.

Dating violence is violence that occurs in teenage dating or less permanent teenage *de facto* relationships. The contexts of dating and domestic violence, as the study has defined these, can be very different, even though motivations for the behaviours associated with both dating and domestic violence are similar. Dating violence has its own unique exploitative context, grounded in the romanticised nature of courtship. Notions associated with romantic love — love at first sight; love conquers all; 'it'll be alright when we're married' — support the downplaying of violence and a minimisation of its impacts (Lloyd 1991: 16). Teenage relationships among young Indigenous people do not readily fit within the westernised concept of 'dating violence', but nevertheless raise profound questions of male/female behaviours.

1 The many studies which produce findings of gender symmetry in physical violence have generally made use of the popular instrument, the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS), developed by Straus (1979).

Because of its wide use over time as an instrument to measure conflict within couples (including physical violence) the CTS has become an industry standard. Even researchers critical of the instrument will use it in a modified form, and, preferably, in conjunction with other instruments and methodologies which are more sensitive to measuring and explaining the real levels of harm associated with relationship violence. As one researcher has put it:

> *The CTS is not flawed simply because it is unidimensional; rather studies employing the CTS are flawed if they used the CTS as the sole measure of violence, without any attempt to explore the multidimensionality of violence through other measures (Smith 1993, cited in DeKeseredy and Kelly 1993).*

Ultimately, this project took the same line. Using the (modified) CTS allowed us to compare our findings with other studies undertaken in the area, but an insight into the limitations of the CTS allowed us to develop further questions and include some qualitative research to give a more meaningful and accurate picture of violence in intimate relationships.

Relationship violence encompasses domestic violence and dating violence. Since the literature often refers to models, theories, attitudes and beliefs that are relevant to either or both settings, frequent reference is made to relationship violence.

Young People as a Focus for Prevention

Adolescence and young adulthood are important stages in relation to domestic violence prevention. Mid-adolescence and young adulthood are stages when young people are primed, physically and emotionally, for experiences of sexuality and intimacy. At risk young people can also be primed towards violence in such settings. Researchers point out that adolescence can represent a unique window on possible linkages between experiences as victims of, or witnesses to, family violence in childhood and, later, more entrenched perpetration of relationship violence (Follette and Alexander 1992; Tontodonato and Crew 1992; Foo and Margolin 1995).

By considering early manifestations of relationship violence, it is hoped that interventions can be made successfully, before violent behaviour in intimate relationships becomes habitual. Young people tend not to disclose their experiences (as witnesses or direct victims) of relationship violence — except perhaps to peers — and hence generally fail to access services and information about such violence. These young people might grow up with the view that violent behaviour in relationships is normal and governed by sex-role stereotypes that support female submissiveness and male aggression. Intervention with this age group is pivotal in the overall task of domestic violence prevention, to challenge traditional stereotypes of gender roles and prevent violent behaviours from becoming normalised.

Because of the unique context of dating violence and the psychological and developmental issues relating to adolescence, much of the literature reviewed on attitudes to and prevention of relationship violence relates specifically to young people.

The Extent and Distribution of Relationship Violence

Despite that estimates of the prevalence of domestic violence and dating violence are highly variable (for reasons often related to definitions, methodologies and samples), it is clear from the abundance of relevant studies (mainly international but also Australian), that both are widespread. The *Australian Women's Safety Survey* (ABS 1996) found that 42 per cent of women in Australia who had ever been in a relationship reported an incident of violence by a previous partner. Young women aged 18 to 24 years were found to be at more risk of domestic violence than women from any other age group. They reported more non sexual physical violence than sexual violence. Since the age of 15 years, 30 per cent of women had experienced physical violence and 18 per cent had experienced sexual violence from a male.

Lifetime prevalence rates are not fully informative of current social problems; studies which focus on recent events (typically those occurring within the previous 12 months) offer an alternative perspective. A recent model study (Ferrante *et al* 1996) conducted in Western

Australia indicated annual male to female domestic violence prevalence rates of 2.1 per cent, which is reconcilable with other methodologically robust studies. That study's findings supported the *Women's Safety Survey* (1996) conclusions regarding the vulnerability of young women. They also found that Indigenous women and rural women were at high risk, as were separated/divorced women. There is clearly a link with another key finding, that women with low socioeconomic status are more likely than women from other groups to be victims of domestic violence. Similarly, perpetrators are also more likely to have a low socioeconomic status.

In relation to dating violence, reports of young women's victimisation range between 20 and 50 per cent (Riggs and O'Leary 1996). Sexual coercion, a form of violence not often measured in studies of dating violence, was found in one study to have been experienced by over 45 per cent of women before they left high school, with 19.5 per cent of men admitting to perpetrating this sort of behaviour (DeKeseredy and Kelly 1993, in Poitras and Lavoie 1995). A national survey in the US in the late 1980s found that 15 per cent of college women had been raped. These studies each possessed some methodological question marks, but nevertheless it can be said with confidence that dating violence probably begins, at least in the US where the majority of studies have been undertaken, as early as 15 or 16 years of age (Bethke and Dejoy 1993). This is at an age which precedes, often by many years, a major investment in the relationship in the form of marriage, home and family.

THE AUSTRALIAN PROFILE

There is a growing body of Australian work in the area of domestic violence, which includes the work by Ferrante *et al* mentioned above, and work by others on criminal justice system responses (see Tarrant 1990; Stubbs and Tolmie 1994), and adult attitudes to and perceptions of violence against women (Easteal 1993; Office of the Status of Women 1995). There is scant literature on young people and relationship violence. What is interesting about the small body of Australian literature in the area of dating violence is that, in contrast to the majority of Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS)-based North American studies, the Australian literature concentrates on a serious and neglected dimension of violence — sexual violence. The themes from these Australian studies can be summarised as follows:

- from the Northern Territory domestic violence data base: young people experiencing relationship violence are not accessing services. Their attitudes and experiences need to be recorded and services made more relevant (Thompson and Hunter 1998)
- a study in Queensland of Year 9 boys found there was a common belief that girls often meant 'yes' when they said 'no'. Most boys felt that they could discern when 'no' meant 'yes'. The report concluded that work was needed in schools to encourage gender equity and good communication about issues of consent (O'Connor 1992)
- a South Australian survey of young men found that 18.6 per cent of those surveyed believed it was alright to coerce women to have sex in four out of the 11 scenarios presented to respondents (ie a sizeable minority of young men hold allegiance to 'beliefs of men's sexual entitlement to women's sexuality and bodies' (Friedman and Golding 1997: 21)
- from a national study on young people's perceptions of and attitudes to sexual violence, the authors concluded that there was confusion around the idea of consent, with a 'disturbing percentage' of boys believing that in certain circumstances coerced sex was justified

(Daws *et al* 1995: ix). The researchers found that young Aboriginal people's knowledge of and access to support services was either 'limited or non existent' (p. x). The determining influences on young people's attitudes to sexual violence were found to be multifaceted, with schools, the media, the family and peers playing the largest roles

- in Victoria, a study of university and secondary school students (Xenos and Smith 1998) noted the callousness of attitudes about rape held by a significant proportion of the student population. Younger secondary school students were found to be more callous than tertiary students in their attitudes to rape victims, reinforcing the idea that families and schools, along with peers and the media, play a critical part in determining and reinforcing attitudes to sexual violence and to women
- a Queensland study (Patton and Mannison 1995), where university students were given the Sexual Experiences Survey, found that the level of reporting by males of sexually coercive acts was lower than the levels of victimisation reported by women (indirectly providing some evidence with which to question the findings of studies reporting gender symmetry in relationship violence). Victimisation levels reported were consistent with those in other similar studies (from the US and New Zealand). Unwanted sex tended not to be labelled 'rape' by women who had experienced it; even so, reports of rape (11 per cent of female respondents) were higher than in the comparison studies. Twenty-five per cent reported 'unwanted sexual intercourse'. Miscommunication between partners was a feature of relationships as experienced by these undergraduates. This research noted the need for research that is more inclusive of people with different ethnic/racial, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds
- a New Zealand study (Magdol *et al* 1997) which used the CTS to measure differences in partner violence between 21 year old males and females found higher rates of violence perpetration for females than males. Although they did not do this themselves, the authors acknowledge the importance of informing assessments of dating violence with knowledge about 'the consequences of violence, the context in which it occurred, the motives of perpetrators, and their personal characteristics' (p. 75). The inclusion of items which give accurate and meaningful measures of levels of sexual violence would produce a more useful and informative picture.

The researchers found that cohabiting couples experienced greater levels of violence than dating couples. After excluding other explanations they concluded that 'there is something about cohabitation itself that generates risk for violence' (p. 53).

While the Australian studies scarcely comprise a cohesive body of work, where replication and comparisons occur or are even possible, the clear message is that dating violence, including the more serious forms of sexual violence, is not uncommon among young people in Australia. Self report studies provide valuable information about attitudes and behaviours, and form the basis of research in this area, but greater confidence is needed that the information is meaningful and reliable.

Community and Cultural Context of Relationship Violence

As suggested above, ambient violence in the community has an impact on the prevalence of domestic (and indeed any form of) violence. The more violence is routinely used and witnessed in daily (public) life, and the more accepted and unchallenged its use, the more this provides a fertile ground for the use and acceptance of relationship violence. O'Keefe (1997b) noted that the most powerful predictors of inflicting violence were likely to be acceptability of violence and being the recipient of violence. Other studies have found that students 'who have inflicted or sustained violence tend to hold more favourable attitudes about it' (Carlson 1996: 4).

Higher rates of community violence are more often associated with marginalised neighbourhoods. Socioeconomic stress impacts on rates of domestic violence, making groups such as Indigenous people particularly vulnerable. Studies of dating violence, most of them coming from North America and focusing on college students, have tended to ignore variables dealing with race and class (largely because of the selection and size of the samples). Those few that have taken account of these factors have produced inconsistent findings. Despite the implications for preventative work with groups from different cultural backgrounds, very little is understood about how marginalised and other non mainstream groups experience relationship violence.

Theories on the Causes and Maintenance of Relationship Violence

A large field of research has evolved regarding theories of, and models for, adult domestic violence. A range of explanations for violence has been developed, from the bio-genetic to the cultural. The question that is the focus of most exploration is how an individual comes to see the use of physical force as an acceptable means of gaining control in a relationship. Table 2.1 lists some of the major theories or approaches, with the theories at the top explaining the use of violence in terms of broad level societal processes and factors, while those towards the bottom are more concerned with the processes occurring in and between individuals.

In seeking explanations for (or meanings of) violence, the focus is on theories which deal with beliefs in the need for control or the assertion of power within a relationship and how these are formed, including how attitudes are formed, and their links with beliefs and behaviour. Importantly, given the capacity (and propensity) of males to use force to intimidate and coerce, the meaning of male violence will be interpreted differently by males and females.

A comprehensive explanation of relationship violence must consider the role and influence of both macro- and micro-level processes. Rather than seeing these levels of influence (and explanation) as being contradictory, an understanding of relationship violence becomes much more powerful if it can show how processes at these various levels reinforce and interact with each other. Individual factors are important to understanding how and why certain individuals in certain circumstances engage in relationship violence, but explanations of the prevalence of relationship violence and its prevention typically turn to theories that explicate violence as a learned response. The social environment is reproduced by the actions of individuals who are, in turn,

socialised by the social environment (see Weber and Parsons, cited in Alexander and Giesen 1987). In other words, there is a continual interaction between micro and macro phenomena.

In an integrated theory of relationship violence we need a variable that can be labelled 'cultural construction of violence'. This is made up of three components: attitudes to the use of physical coercion; the degree of acceptance of physical coercion; and the circumstances in which physical coercion is seen as necessary and appropriate. Individuals' theories or attitudes will develop within the general societal position, but will vary according to those individuals' experiences. Individuals will differ in how they 'read' or 'translate' societal attitudes; however, it is the belief regarding the use of physical coercion that is the point of linkage.

Table 2.1: Major current theoretical approaches to understanding relationship violence (not mutually exclusive)

THEORY/APPROACH	EXAMPLES OF PROPONENTS
Cultural spill-over	Baron and Straus (1989)
Ecological	Silverman and Williamson (1997)
Patriarchal structures and attitudes	Yllo (1993)
Sub-culture of violence approach	Bowker (1998)
Beliefs about relationships and control	Stets (1990) Stets (1995)
Social exchange theory	Gelles (1997)
Social learning	Tontodonato and Crew (1992)
Cycle of violence	Widom (1989)
Conflict problems — social skills	Jouriles *et al* (1998)
Power/entitlement	Pence (1989)
Personality/pathology of the abuser	Dutton (1994)
Communication problems	Bird *et al* (1991)
Socio-biological	Smuts (1992)

Perpetrators who do not experience affirmation and reinforcement for their pro-violence beliefs (and practices) are less likely to repeat their violent behaviours, because they cannot convince others (and therefore are less likely to believe) that such behaviour is legitimate. Thus, reference groups and, importantly for adolescents, peer groups are crucially important. If, on the other hand, the individual does find support for his rendering of events, he is guided and reinforced in his construction of the circumstances surrounding the use of physical coercion.

A THUMBNAIL SKETCH OF RELEVANT THEORIES

As well as theory about the acquisition of beliefs that justify control and violence, it is necessary to situate the consideration of relationship violence into the theoretical basis of violent actions generally. One of the most comprehensive theories of violence that seems particularly suited to an understanding of relationship violence is Tedeschi and Felson's (1994) *theory of coercive action*. In this theory the authors argue that violence belongs to a family of actions undertaken in social interactions to achieve coercion. Relationship violence can be viewed then *as the assertion of power by one party in a relationship over another (coercion through the use of force)*. The theory is consistent with more general theories of violence.

Although the literature produces a range of causation models, most rest heavily on a developmental approach. These recognise that exposure to domestic violence in the family of origin leads to a number of outcomes that make it more likely that violence will be re-perpetrated by male children as they enter intimate relationships of their own (*cycle of violence theories*). Within these theories it is recognised that, despite exposure to domestic violence, most of these 'witnesses' will *not* go on to perpetrate relationship violence themselves. As Kaufman and Zigler (1993) have noted with regard to child maltreatment, the figure for those who go on to perpetrate domestic violence themselves is probably closer to 30 per cent than the 90 per cent sometimes suggested. Exposure to domestic violence is but one risk factor, albeit a very important one. The effects of witnessing domestic violence are not simple or linear. It appears that the effects of witnessing domestic violence in the home interact with gender and peer group attitudes. In other words, exposure is not isomorphically related to any particular outcome.

Apart from the effects on attitudes, there are traumatising effects of witnessing family violence that are important. Margolin and John (1997) found that:

- marital aggression directly influences parenting
- marital aggression affects children's adjustment but these effects are mainly mediated through parenting
- marital aggression has more effect on boys' adjustment than girls' adjustment.

These associations help explain the processes involved in the intergenerational transmission of domestic violence. Parenting style, particularly power assertion, has pernicious effects on the ability of parents to provide the necessary support and equip children with the skills needed to forge their own relationships.

The effects of witnessing domestic violence can be explained in three ways. According to the learning paradigm, children learn that violence and coercion are either normal, acceptable or an effective way to conduct intimate relations. Alternatively, the effects could also be seen as part of a traumatising process, with children who witness domestic violence experiencing effects akin to post traumatic stress disorder. As Margolin and John (1997) above and others point out, the main effect can be seen as a disruption or distortion of the affectional bonds between parents and children. These three approaches should not be seen as mutually exclusive. Indeed each has much to offer our understanding of witnessing effects, and they should be seen as complementary orientations.

Social learning theory provides the base for one of the most widely held views and well researched models of the development of relationship violence within the 'cycle of violence' category. Social learning theory explains the mechanisms thought to be associated with re-perpetration by former child witnesses of domestic violence. The series of works by Riggs and O'Leary (1996) and Tontodanato and Crew (1992) present one of the most recent and relevant examples of the application of social learning theory to the explanation of dating violence.

There is some evidence to suggest that the link between boys' witnessing of domestic violence and an increased likelihood of their own use of violence is associated with beliefs supporting aggression and the tendency to cope through aggressive control seeking. Spaccarelli *et al* (1995) focused on the intervening variables that may help explain the coping mechanisms of boys exposed to family violence. These were:

- developmental deficits in social and intellectual functioning
- specific cognitions that justify aggression
- maladaptive patterns of coping with stress.

Spaccarelli *et al* (1995) found evidence to support the view that exposure to family violence was associated with coping by trying to provoke or control others. Like other authors, they see exposure to family violence as a major risk factor that has its effects through disrupting developmental processes and coping mechanisms.

What is learnt through witnessing relationship violence between parents is also unclear. It may be one or more of the following:

- that control is necessary
- that the use of force is acceptable, expected or an expression of need
- that the use of force will be effective.

All of these factors are relevant to understanding the effects of witnessing domestic violence, and point to areas where preventative efforts should be focused. Indeed Jaffe *et al* (1986) provide evidence for the view that children who receive educational and supportive assistance will be helped in their long term adjustment.

The work on the influence of early exposure to later behaviour continues. Recent research has shown that males and females may well experience different things in observing inter-parental violence, and the effects of witnessing parental violence can be quite different, perhaps even contradictory, for each gender.

BELIEFS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS: CONTROL AND ENTITLEMENT

Critical to understanding acts and threats of violence is the role of the perpetrator's beliefs and perceptions of control: that it is necessary or excusable. Fitting in with more general theories of violence, this desire for control or power is most likely to be found among those who feel a lack of power in either the relationship or in society generally. Some authors have also made the point that it is not necessarily a function of low self esteem; no less plausibly, beliefs in entitlement may be at the core of this drive for power.

Some US studies have shown that patriarchal beliefs (gender inequality) which are held at a community level actually have a predictive association with the serious violent crimes of rape (Baron and Straus 1989, cultural spill-over theory) and homicide (Lester (1992). It needs to be considered then, in light of the aims of this project, what impact can be made within a certain culture to deflect or minimise the influence of cultural beliefs about gender inequality.

A study by Smith (1990: 268) found that 'lower income husbands, less educated husbands and husbands in relatively low status jobs were significantly more likely than more advantaged husbands to subscribe to an ideology of family patriarchy'. This finding supports Gelles' *exchange theory* (1997) which attempts to link structural variables, in particular poverty and marginalisation, to our understanding of relationship violence and to the greater prevalence in disadvantaged groups (as evidenced in Australia by Ferrante *et al* 1996, and Devery 1991). It is important to understand the intersection of class, gender, attitude and violence to ensure that interventions are not counterproductive.

A number of authors have explored the role of power in relationship violence, including dating relationships. Stets (1993), for example, has argued that control is attempted when the relationship is under threat, thus supporting the thesis that violence is used to compensate for an experience of humiliation or a lack of power. Another disturbing component of patriarchal beliefs and views of relationships as sites for possession and control is the view held by many young victims of partner violence who interpret the violence as a sign of love (Henton *et al* 1983, in Gelles 1997).

Bird *et al* (1991) found that a number of aspects of communication predicted which dating couples would be violent. These included: coercive negotiation style; confrontational coping; and limited social support coping. It is not only attitudes to the use of violence, but the way conflict is conceptualised and dealt with, that is important. However, it would be a mistake to think that relationship violence is only about conflict resolution skills. There are important status concerns that are addressed by the use of violence, particularly in men and boys living in disadvantaged locations.

THE ROLE OF PEER GROUPS IN DATING VIOLENCE

Attitudes, beliefs and values may be formed initially in the family of origin, but they are essentially maintained, forged and developed into an instrument justifying the use of violence through interaction with like-minded peers in adolescence. A number of studies have found that, in adolescence, peer groups comprise the most relevant factor reinforcing the development and establishment of attitudes supporting the use of violence. In other words, peer groups can provide a cultural environment of societal acceptability of violence. This can serve to reinforce individual beliefs about the acceptability of violence.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE ACCEPTABILITY OF VIOLENCE

From the data in their meta-analytic review, Sugarman and Frankel (1996) drew the conclusion that 'essentially, the only component of patriarchal ideology that consistently predicts wife assault is the man's attitude toward violence' (p. 31). This is to say that, if cultural beliefs about women and the need for control are to manifest as physical violence, there must also be a willingness to use physical force. Although many men in a patriarchal culture may endorse beliefs regarding the dominance of men and the merits of control in relationships, it is the attitude to the actual use of force (beliefs about the acceptability of violence) that can discriminate among those who actually use force in relationship context. This may help explain why violence is observed more in disadvantaged groups when patriarchal beliefs and structures

are actually spread throughout society. As Gelles (1997) explains in his 'exchange' theory, males with access to more resources can exercise control without resort to violence. Familiarity with, and desensitisation to, violence is therefore critical in predicting the use of violence.

The Role of Attitudes in Relationship Violence

Given the focus on prevention of this research, it is important to explore and understand the attitudinal basis of relationship violence. The notion of altering attitudes to change behaviour lies behind many interventions, including media campaigns. However, the relationship between attitudes and behaviour is complex, and valid links between the two need to be ascertained. In terms of measures of attitudes relevant to relationship violence and its prevention, the two key measures indicated are: beliefs regarding the acceptability of violence; and the need for control in relationships.

It is often assumed that attitude provides the vehicle for the intergenerational transmission of violence. Central to this assumption is the notion that perpetrators of domestic violence will see their actions as being justified or valid, and this is based on a world view where physical force against an intimate partner is considered justified or even necessary in the circumstances in which it occurs.

Theories of *reasoned action and rational choice* underlie much of the work associated with the attitude-behaviour link. The models developed by the proponents of these theories are compatible with social interactionist theories of violence and feminist perspectives. They focus attention on the meaning and functionality of violence and what the perpetrator intends when committing acts of violence.

The focus in the theory of reasoned action is 'attitudes towards behaviours' rather than 'attitudes towards targets'. This approach helps explain why attitude to violence itself emerges as such a strong predictor of relationship violence. Thus, attitude is seen as only one of two components shaping intention – the other (the subjective norm) is the person's belief about the acceptability of the behaviour. If a man who believes hitting his wife will result in more compliance and a greater feeling of power also judges that the behaviour is acceptable under certain conditions, violence may be viewed as permissible. It is also important to note that 'people are influenced by and act on the basis of their perceptions of others' attitudes' (Alexander *et al* 1991: 666). If a male uses violence believing that it will be accepted as a valid control device by his partner, and it apparently is accepted that way, there is not much point (indeed it would be counter productive) to try to convince him that he is wrong in this belief. Prevention efforts to change the acceptability of violence must target *both* partners in the relationship where violence is being tolerated.

The theory of reasoned action remains a reasonable and useful model for volitional behaviour. However, the theory has been subject to a number of criticisms, partly because it is the dominant model in this intensely researched field. To accommodate some of the criticisms Ajzen (1991) proposed the *theory of planned behaviour* which addressed the influence of experience on subsequent behaviour and expectations associated with it. Someone who has experience in using violence as a means of gaining control presents a much greater risk, as

they perceive both that they can affect the behaviour and have had experience in doing so. It is not surprising then, that *preventing the first instance of controlling violence* may be more powerful than efforts made with adolescents who have established the attitude-behaviour link in this way.

THE ROLE OF BELIEFS ABOUT THE ACCEPTABILITY OF VIOLENCE

For both a domestic situation and a dating relationship, the degree to which violent behaviours are considered acceptable will determine the shaping of intention. This should, according to the theory of reasoned action, be reflected ultimately in the prevalence of that behaviour. In other words, as the acceptability of relationship violence declines (at community and individual levels) so should the overall prevalence of relationship violence. Indeed, this is what has been observed in the US between the years of 1975 and 1992, during which period three victimisation surveys on marital assault by partners were carried out (Straus *et al* 1997). The authors argue that these significant improvements have been the result of changes in social norms regarding the acceptability of domestic violence that have come about through a number of forces, particularly the contribution of feminism and women's advocacy groups.

Some authors (eg Riggs and O'Leary 1989) have argued that attitudes are more important in dating violence because it is this attitude alone that justifies the use of violence, whereas in marriage there may also be the result of a further or firmer belief in entitlement to use force to exert power and control.

THE ROLE OF BELIEFS ABOUT MALE ENTITLEMENT

One belief that is variously measured by those seeking to probe the relevant components of patriarchal ideology is the view among males that they are entitled to have control over their partners. This belief can be interpreted as one which underlies expectations of control and associated issues of male identity. This belief may support and result from a defensive view of the social world. The tendency for the hyper-masculine self image to become fragile and subject to slights and attacks has been noted in many studies examining the relationship between masculinity and violence.

Foo and Margolin (1995) articulated this concern. The authors found that 'humiliation' as a justification for dating aggression contributes to the prediction of dating aggression by both males and females. Exposure and inter-parental aggression were found to be useful predictors of male, but not female, dating aggression. The authors conclude that their study is important in pointing out which attitudinal components are related to dating violence. They argue that it is the justification of violence on the basis of humiliation (ie as a response to an experience of humiliation) that is crucial. In other words, the provoking action is seen as so damaging that the violent action is considered justified.

DO BELIEFS REALLY INFLUENCE BEHAVIOUR?

Hertzberger and Rueckert (1997) stress the need to consider how attitudes interact with other factors such as socioeconomic stress. This conforms with Gelles' views (1997) expressed in his exchange theory of domestic violence. The implication here is that *attitudes cannot be simplistically divorced from their sociocultural context*. Theories in this area consistently seek to understand how violence 'makes sense' in the mind of the perpetrator. One study of 'serious end' youths (Astor and Behre 1997) found that, for this group, concern with the perceived injustice that provoked their violence was seen as more relevant than any proscription against the use of violence itself.

This focus on injustice resonates with many other descriptions of relationship violence. If perceived injustice is a common feature of relationship violence then issues of justice and the desire for power and control actively need to be considered. Despite the problems in making a simple cause and effect link between attitude and behaviour, there is little doubt that attitudinal components are central to any preventative effort.

But if knowledge of attitude formation and its associations with violent behaviour is to be used for preventative work, the complexities associated with the link between attitudes and behaviour must be addressed. Work in this area still leaves us without definitive answers to questions such as the following:

- does attitude or perception provide a guidance and justification before the use of violence, or are they merely used after the event as an account or justification?
- is it possible that attitude merely reflects a byproduct of some more active causative dynamic, such as gender, social class or the behaviour of others?
- if attitudes and intimate violence are linked, is it possible that the link reflects no more than two byproducts, such that changing attitude will have no direct effect on the behaviour in question?
- is there a critical role for 'attitude'?
- which component is most relevant: is it, for example, perceptions of outcomes, peer group evaluations or a sense of humiliation?

The component most relevant to behaviour clearly should provide the focus of an intervention strategy.

Attitude Change and Prevention

Although it is widely accepted that 'attitude' is a key component in the chain of events leading to violence, it does not itself constitute a 'cause' or explanation. Without understanding this one may do little better than attributing violence to even more proximal factors, such as drug and alcohol use. In other words, one cannot say that violence is 'caused' or even explained by attitude any more than one can say it is caused or explained by the intoxication often associated with the use of violence.

Although attitude is an important component in explanations of violence, these attitudes also reflect individual experience and are developed by individuals as useful guides in what, for many adolescents, is a hostile world. Sanctioning the attitude without addressing the experience it makes sense of is to deny the reality of the individual. In terms of intervening in the cycle of violence, this understanding reinforces the knowledge that attitudes, beliefs and behaviours do not occur in a vacuum; they are the product of family and other environments where violence is used in functional ways.

Work on social structure and its relationship to violence shows the structural dimension of culture that is highly relevant to understanding attitudes towards violence. For example, consider two middle class assumptions that are likely to mask the true meaning of violence in marginalised boys. First, it is often assumed that violent behaviour reflects a failure of effective conflict resolution skills. Webster (1993) notes that, rather than being about conflict, violence is usually more about power and/or status. For these reasons interventions need to go a lot further and deeper than classroom instruction. Although conflict resolution skills can be taught, attitudes towards violence often remain untouched.

Second, it is often assumed that violent behaviour reflects a lack of self esteem. However, numerous studies point out that bullies and other violent offenders are actually more likely to have a pervading sense of 'entitlement'.

The literature on the development of aggression consistently points to the early years as critical in the establishment of aggressive and violent response styles. A series of studies links the development of attitudes to violence to the type of socialisation a child receives in the home. In line with what we know about the associations between socioeconomic stresses and violence, it has been reported that mothers categorised as 'working class' were more likely than mothers categorised as 'middle class' to use physical punishment (Kohn 1969). Economic and social marginalisation, in dynamic interaction with dysfunctional parenting, provides a toxic mix and a fertile base for attitudes/views/beliefs that typically underpin violence.

As already stated, the re-perpetration of violence down the generations is not inevitable. Resilience to early conditioning can be supported where the disadvantages of violence as a means of control can be clearly illustrated and alternative means of communication are taught and promoted. However, important identity and status issues are also involved. A number of protective factors against becoming a next generation perpetrator have been identified. For example, Powell (1997) in a study of resilience found that non violence was predicted if adult social supports were present. The presence of important male role models — teachers, adult friends etc — were found to mitigate against the use of violence. Early intervention strategies which have the aim or effect of developing a more secure and less

threatened child obviously will have the benefit of reducing levels of hostility and the brittle defensiveness so often associated with violent men.

Given the significance of schools in adolescents' daily lives, these institutions clearly have the potential to make major contributions in violence prevention work for school aged young people. Avery-Leaf *et al* (1997) found a significant change for the better in their measures of attitudes justifying the use of violence in dating relationships, following their brief course with high school students. However, the whole timeline, including pre-assessment, delivery of the curriculum and post assessment, took place within a brief four-week period. The overall effectiveness of such an intervention is therefore hard to assess. Perhaps the post-test operated only as a 'test' to see if students had learned the appropriate answers to the questions posed. Possibly a large number of those taking the tests are not those who are of interest in preventing dating violence or later domestic violence.

The authors also reported a substantial 'floor' effect; that is, despite the substantial rates of self reported aggression, the majority of students held attitudes (as measured by the instrument) which found the use of such violence unacceptable. This not only gives the program nowhere to go in terms of changing attitudes (preaching to the converted), but it also exposes perhaps, the irrelevance of *attitude measures* as a reflection of attitudes, or indeed the irrelevance of attitude itself as a site for preventing relationship violence. An over focus on attitudes might be seen to reflect a form of psychological determinism — attributing the main causal dynamic of violence to individual 'pathology' instead of perceiving and decoding its social meaning.

In an attempt to address youth violence, thousands of school based conflict resolution programs have been developed in the US. However, there is little evidence that such programs produce long term or dramatic changes in violent behaviour. This suggests that programs based *solely* on information and education are limited. It could be argued that attempts to alter attitudes without attempting to intervene in the formative environment deny the reality experienced by the individual. A strategy outlining options, explaining how and why choices to use violence are made, may be a more productive pathway as it seeks to illuminate the individual's experience rather than deny it. The more multifaceted, theoretically underpinned violence prevention programs attend to these levels of meaning.

Attempts to change attitude as a way of reducing violence must proceed cautiously. As many have argued, the critical site for the checking and development of male attitudes in regard to the use of violence is the male peer group. Efforts to influence attitude need therefore to ensure that attitudes inconsistent with violence and coercion are picked up and endorsed by these groups.

Media, Institutional and Sports-Related Influences and Preventative Potential

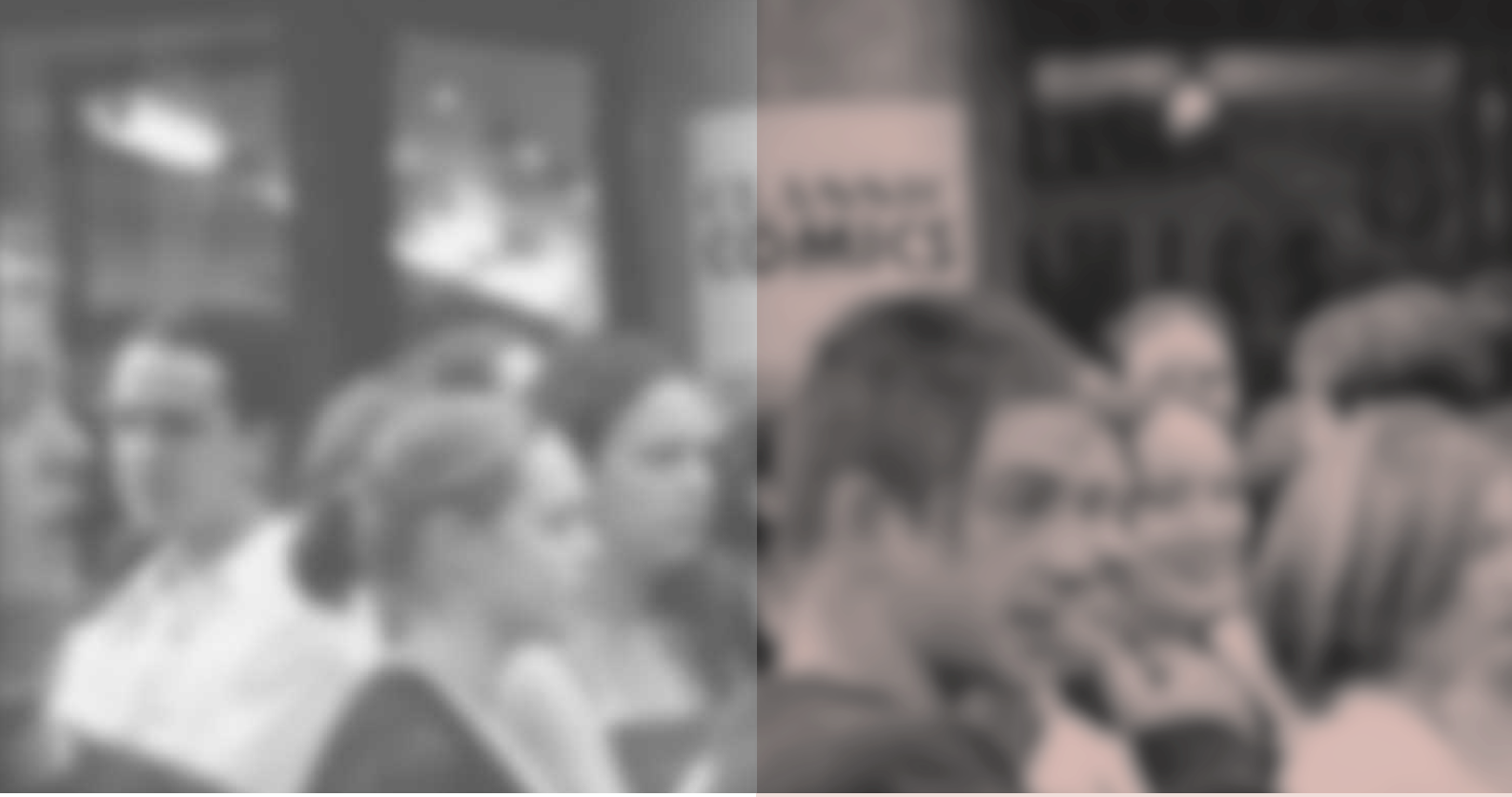
There is a huge body of work on the media's influences on children and the use of violence. While this area was not pursued in the current project, the mass media can have a powerful influence on young people in guiding their thoughts as to what is and is not acceptable in relations between people. Programs which show acts of violence as inappropriate and resulting in social costs (such as rejection) for the user, could reduce the currency of violence, especially in young people who look to the media for clues as to what is acceptable.

Findings of Australian research (Tulloch and Tulloch 1992) suggest that boys consider 'violence' used by authorities or in sport to be more acceptable than do girls. Given the 'cross-over' between community violence and intimate violence, it may be relatively important in influencing male peer groups, to reduce the use of violence by authorities and in sporting contexts, to reinforce the unacceptability of violence as a means of asserting power-control.

Summary of Findings with Preventative Significance

- Given the interactive nature of macro- and micro-level influences, and the role of socioeconomic marginalisation in the use of and support for violence, educative programs that include positive parenting have prevention value. Children who receive educational and supportive assistance will also be helped in their long term adjustment.
- Early intervention for at risk children and adolescents (before the onset of violent behaviours), has more potential for prevention than addressing prevention in a rearguard action.
- In adolescence, peers are influential in reinforcing beliefs about violence. Prevention programs, whether in schools or in the community, need to make positive use of peer involvement.
- Preventative programs should be underpinned by theory and be multifaceted, to reflect the roles and intersections of macro- and micro-level factors: class, gender, community culture, family/individual circumstances. They should also reflect an understanding of both the role and limitations of attitudes and their influence on behaviour.
- The understandings, beliefs and attitudes of young men and young women, and indeed, of both partners in a violent relationship, need to be addressed; and, ultimately, more open and direct forms of communication taught and encouraged.
- Prevention strategies need to be specifically targeted to the client group. This applies as much across age and gender groups as it does across cultural groups. For particular cultural groups, the issue needs to be problematised by the broader membership of the community with, ideally, their intensive involvement in planning and delivering programs.

- Relationship violence prevention programs should not be subsumed by a focus on conflict resolution skills, an outcome lent support by many CTS-based findings of 'gender symmetry' which tend not to measure or explain serious violence and how and why it is used.
- Programs in the mass media which convincingly show the negative outcomes of violence (eg rejection) and positive ways of communicating could be useful in guiding young people's beliefs about violence.
- Institutions and sporting organisations need to discourage violence.



SECTION 3

The qualitative research

Qualitative

3 The qualitative research

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the qualitative research undertaken as part of this project. The qualitative research had two purposes. The first was use as a tool to test and finalise information for the survey in Stage Two, and to provide information that would assist the development of a media campaign — one of the required outcomes of the project. This task of the qualitative research was principally associated with so-called 'mainstream' youth. In other words, the sample reflected the cultural majority (white Australian, English-speaking background). The review of the literature provided a guide as to the range and content of the discussion issues and questions for the qualitative component.

Issues of appropriate language and content for the Stage Two survey were explored during the qualitative phase. For the benefit of the media campaign, there was also a focus on respondents' understanding of attitudes and behaviours associated with relationship violence. It was also an aim to fine tune the approach to counter the 'floor effect' in research about attitudes to domestic violence. What kinds of questions would show meaningful differences in attitudes to relationship violence, when at some level the idea of domestic violence is almost universally deplored?

The second purpose of the qualitative research was to gain an understanding of minority groups' attitudes and experiences of relationship violence. Recognising that the particular views of marginalised and other non mainstream youth could not be well represented *via* the survey, interviews were sought with the following 'special groups':

- homeless young people
- non-English-speaking background (NESB) young people
- Indigenous young people
- young victims of domestic violence

The findings from the qualitative research are discussed below.

Mainstream Youth

SETTING UP THE RESEARCH

The target group for this, as for the Stage Two survey, was young people aged 12 to 20 years. Respondents were interviewed in city and country town locations in four States; they were secondary school students, TAFE or university students, or young people working in either 'blue collar' or 'white collar' areas. The interview process used one of four techniques, depending on the age of the young people. The (same sex) groups were structured and the particular technique was chosen so as to enhance synergy and communication among respondents. Gender, age, socioeconomic status, and student/employment status were considered.

'Standard' focus groups were used for older youth who had left school, and *'friendship pair' focus groups* for the older school age children. Younger children were also initially interviewed in friendship pairs; however, these younger participants often had very little to say on the subject of violence in general and domestic violence in particular. Their direct experiences of either violence or intimate partnerships were minimal and their views on relationship violence were unformed, unless they lived in a home with considerable discord or (occasional) violence (a situation which applied to only one pair). The technique was therefore modified and *'affinity groups'*, comprising three to five friends, used instead. This increased the likelihood that someone in the group would have something to say on the subject, and better facilitated a wide ranging general discussion of violence.

The issues of particular interest were experiences of, and attitudes towards, domestic violence (mainly as witnesses) and dating violence. Since part of the purpose of the qualitative research was to test concepts, language and the range of respondents' attitudes and experiences for the Stage Two work, a broad framework was established within which the discussions of violence took place. It was decided to use less censorious terms than 'violence' ('aggression', say, or 'conflict') where possible. This decision was based on past experience and the findings of the literature review. The use of the word 'violence' in the definitions has something of an ideological and reformist connotation. The purpose of the qualitative research was to elicit information, rather than to take an ideological standpoint. By not referring to 'violence' the aim was to discourage defensiveness and encourage openness in communication.

THE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH — VIOLENCE

The initial discussion centred on general violence in the community. This served both as a means of introducing the topic and a way of setting attitudes about domestic violence in context.

Most salient experiences of violence

From a written task conducted at the start of each group, it was clear that 'bashings' (street, pub and school fights) were the most significant (salient) forms of violence known to the participants. Such violence was mostly perceived as involving only males, although some mention was made (by older females) of girls fighting when drunk, over a boy. Verbal aggression (between people known to each other, including friends) was cited as a form of violence, particularly by

younger females. This involved name calling, bullying, 'bitching' and back-stabbing, and was seen by both sexes to be very much the domain of females.

After 'bashings', the respondents nominated family conflict, between parent and child, and between parents as the next most salient form of violence of which they were aware. *Parental conflict was considered by far the most serious form of violence*. Other types of violence cited, but not to any great extent, included some mention by older girls of rape — by strangers. This would tend to indicate fear of that type of violence rather than direct experience (which would be more likely to involve someone known to them).

Factors influencing the use of violence

Participants' perceptions of why people used violence were seemingly quite astute, although responses to later questions sometimes produced inconsistencies. The reasons given for the use of violence related predominantly to why *males* used violence. They included:

- they have grown up in a household where violence was used. This effectively normalises and renders acceptable the use of violence within relationships; and it teaches the young person that violence works — it gets you what you want
- they come from low socioeconomic backgrounds
- they are looking to control and have power over other people
- they are seeking to build an image or status as a 'tough' person at school; wanting to impress other people (particularly females or rival males); and responding to perceived societal and media influences equating masculinity, success and toughness
- they lack social and communication skills and hence are unable to deal with difficult situations.

Alcohol does not feature as an explanation for the use of violence, despite its appearance in the next section as a factor determining the perceived increase in the use of violence, and its perceived association with sexual coercion in dating. The mass media were rarely cited as being associated with the use of violence (except, perhaps, for the 'under 12s').[2] Males made some mention of support for and encouragement of violence in organised sport, but they categorised the sporting arena as a more acceptable forum for settling scores, than the streets and other public places.

Attitudes towards violence and aggression

Although the use of violence was not condoned by the respondents, there was a general degree of acceptance that 'these things happen', particularly in relation to the more commonly occurring verbal and physical fights. Not surprisingly, attitudes towards different types of violence and its perpetrators varied significantly. Most respondents thought the use of violence was generally on the increase. Increased consumption of drugs and alcohol were seen to be factors here, along with a decrease of discipline (often meaning physical discipline) in the home (the inconsistent idea — see next section — that more violence in one quarter brings about less violence in another). In all of the older female groups, associations were made between

2 Compare this with research findings that indicate that the media are enormously influential in guiding viewers' ideas of what is socially acceptable — see Chapter 2. In fact, the respondents implicitly, if selectively, recognised this by noting the influence of media images of 'tough' (but not violent) masculinity.

perceived lenient penalties for some crimes, particularly rape, and a rise in violent crime. This suggests that violence against women is perceived as something the authorities either fail to discourage, or condone through a lack of responsiveness.

Acceptability of types of violence

While the use of 'fair' physical violence by adults to children for the purposes of discipline within the family unit was seen as acceptable (especially by 'blue collar' participants, and especially for younger children), domestic violence was seen as a far less acceptable form of violence.

Attitudes to 'male' and 'female' violence

Females were regarded as being more controlled in their use of violence — unlikely to strike out or react hastily. Implied here is the sense that, as Campbell (1993) asserts, when females do use violence it is about loss of control rather than a deliberate ploy to gain control. In fact, as the research progressed, this view was made more explicit. There were somewhat ambiguous responses as to the efficacy of females' reserve. It was often deemed 'more mature' by the males, but also as 'calculating' (thus reinforcing gender stereotypes which serve to bolster the association between physicality and masculinity).

Younger girls (whose social worlds no doubt revolved primarily around same sex friends) felt that verbal abuse was more harmful than physical abuse — clearly a reflection of their own needs and experiences. On the other hand, in relation to violence observed 'out there' (the school yard, for example) they felt 'punch-ups' were worse than females' 'bitch-fighting' because of the potential for serious injury. By contrast, those who had been exposed to violence within the family (citing abuse by the father or by older brothers), were adamant that physical violence was 'always worse' than verbal aggression.

There was also an implied link between 'anger' and 'violence', one that was not present in the above stated explanations for the use of violence. Males were seen as less able to control their anger (and, by implication, their violence). Among all but the older females (ie Year 11 or under), this perceived inability of males to control their anger was discussed virtually as a 'given' — a fact of life that had to be accommodated rather than questioned. (By implication, of course, a certain level of associated violence must also be accepted.) There was a sense among the older females that, if physical conflict took place between 'equals' (same age/sex/stature) then 'having it out' was better than the verbal warfare that went on among females.

Older females, and indeed males, did start to question males' use of physical violence. However, in situations where 'equal' males fought it out, though it may have been seen as foolish and possibly dangerous, no moral opprobrium appeared to be attached to it.

Attitudes to cross-gender violence

Males hitting females was seen, virtually by everyone, to be unacceptable (an example of the 'floor effect'); however, it appeared to be quite acceptable for a girl to hit a boy, because such an attack was bound to be harmless in terms of physical outcomes.

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS ON RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE

The focus of the qualitative research was to explore experiences of, and attitudes towards, primarily domestic violence, but also dating violence.

There were methodological issues associated with this part of the qualitative research. First, the extent to which participants aged 12 to 20 years were able (and comfortable) to comment on both domestic violence and dating violence varied dramatically by age. Younger respondents (in Years 8 and 9) appeared ill at ease with the subject matter and had limited perception, attitudes or opinions. Clearly, their inexperience in dating largely explains the discomfort in discussing girl/boyfriends, but their reluctance to comment extended to analysis of adult relationships (including that of their parents). Comments by older participants that *you don't really think about your parents' relationship until you have relationships yourself* may throw some light on this.

Second, labels such as 'domestic violence' do not correspond in a young person's mind to the situation at home. 'Domestic violence' is what occurs elsewhere, in other households. Parents 'fighting', 'slapping' or 'hitting' is what happens at home. Similarly, 'dating violence' is 'date rape' if it is sexual, or 'slapping' or 'hitting'. As with all research, definitions are crucial to a shared understanding of what is being researched.

The next section looks at the salience and experiences of domestic violence and dating violence, before considering perceived causes and triggers and, finally, attitudes.

Salience and experience: domestic violence

Knowledge of the seriousness and widespread prevalence of domestic violence was well understood. In their initial identifications of domestic violence, most respondents categorised it as males physically assaulting female partners. Females also recognised the emotional dimension of domestic violence. There was awareness that the perpetrator could be female, but this was considered to be neither prevalent nor serious.

Issues relating to witnessing domestic violence started with discussion about parental disagreement and when such conflict becomes problematic. Males reported less experience as witnesses of domestic violence, and those who did, reported mothers throwing kitchen items. Four female participants reported witnessing physical violence between their parents. In each instance the father had hit the mother; repeatedly in three of the four cases. In one case the mother retaliated. The three marriages where violence had been repeatedly inflicted had since broken down.

A substantial number of other participants reported either frequent and/or highly charged verbal conflict between their parents. This was universally described as frightening, particularly by the younger participants. The fears were inherently personal (What will happen to me? Where do I fit in?) and they inevitably reflected responses to (and were limited by) the events as they witnessed and interpreted them. This lends weight to the argument that developmental 'readiness' is central to well targeted interventions. The fears can be categorised as:

- the fear of what might happen; that is, a parent might walk away from the family, or physical violence might ensue. The latter fear was heightened in instances where the participant could empathise with the father (eg if they also felt their mother was 'a nag' or 'a bitch')

- fears associated with feelings of helplessness; that is, the young person has no power to stop the fighting or influence any potential outcome
- the fear that it is the young person's fault — that the child's behaviour or very existence has led to the conflict or stressful situation
- the fear of becoming involved, either by parents taking their anger out on the young person or asking the child to 'take sides'.

SALIENCE AND EXPERIENCE: DATING VIOLENCE

Unlike domestic violence, dating violence was not an issue of salience to most of the target group. Most did not mention it, and most felt they had no direct or indirect experience of violence in a dating relationship. *Only the older females aged 18 to 20 years saw dating violence, in the context of sexual coercion, as quite a common and serious matter*. The initial discussion of dating violence revealed an understanding of the term as suggesting male to female physical abuse (including sexual abuse) only. There was no spontaneous recognition that verbal abuse or a female hitting her boyfriend could also constitute dating violence. This is probably indicative of the lower level of seriousness attached to these acts. However, the experiences of participants within relationships indicated that these were among the prevalent forms of 'violence' occurring.

Year 11 and 12 girls spoke of males pressuring females to have sex, but did not actually consider this as belonging on a continuum of violence. They perceived that any violence (implying actual physical force) would happen amongst slightly older, more sexually confident males. The 18 to 20 year old females confirmed this, speaking more specifically of 'date rape'.

Anecdotal evidence from friends, suggested to the older respondents that dating violence occurs frequently, particularly when alcohol and other drugs are involved: *'You hear stories every day of things that happen to friends of friends'* (specific associations were made between the drug 'fantasy' and date rape). The fact that there are boundaries and divisions between understandings of 'violence', 'domestic violence', and 'dating violence' — despite the degree of commonality of behaviour and motivations associated with all three — is suggested by a range of inconsistent views, including those on the role of alcohol and other drugs, as mentioned earlier. There are implications here for education and other preventative strategies.

Further discussion suggested that acts by females of slapping, pushing or kicking their boyfriends were widespread. However, this was not described or seen as 'violence' by the majority of male or female participants.

None of the female participants reported having been hit by a boyfriend *'except in play fighting'* or on a couple of occasions *'being shook a bit, but I deserved it'*. None of the male participants reported having hit a girlfriend.

Two females reported what could be described as 'verbal abuse', that is, frequently being put down, criticised in public or berated for some shortcoming. In both instances this was linked to issues of weight control (and associations with girlfriends as 'trophies').

Perceived causes of relationship violence

There were four main categories within which respondents' understanding of the causes of relationship violence could be framed (unlike the other categories, the third category (relationship explanations) only applied to domestic violence, rather than to both domestic violence and dating violence):

- those associated with the perpetrator: background, childhood and self image
- those relating to the perpetrator's attitudes: to women and gender roles
- those pertaining to the perceived inadequacy of the relationship
- those associated with communication problems.

Perpetrator-based explanations. There was some awareness, and a few examples given, of how violence in the family of origin can influence re-perpetration by the next generation. One of the rare reported instances of dating violence involved the use of violence to his girlfriend by the son (a friend of the respondent) of a violent patriarch. Low socioeconomic status (because of financial stress) was seen as a factor associated with the use of relationship violence. Some older participants proposed that, as with violence in general, men committing relationship violence were likely to have fairly poor self esteem and be looking for ways to reassure or prove to themselves (and others) that they are 'real men'.

Attitude-based explanations. These explanations were particularly favoured by females. They centred on males' attitudes in wishing to control/dominate the relationship, beliefs in male superiority (the right to dominate); and attitudes to women as 'possessions' rather than equals.

Female respondents believed that many males they knew (particularly blue collar males) believed that 'men are better than women' and were discomforted by any challenge to this belief:

> *They don't like it if you earn more than them or you've got a better job; they get really uncomfortable; they always have to be better than you. When are they going to wake up and realise that's not how it is anymore?*

This sense of superiority was recognised by both males and females as potentially resulting in a man feeling it is permissible to bring his partner 'back into line' to what he considers appropriate behaviour.

Females also believed that women were often viewed by men as trophies, possessions, or status symbols:

> *Guys see women as trophies, they go all out to win you, but once they've got you, they put you on a shelf and forget about you, and go after the next one…*

The female respondents did not see themselves as mere objects, or as being of inferior worth or status. They described themselves in ways that suggested that they did not 'need' men and would not *'put up with any rubbish from them'*. It is unclear how strongly these attitudes would hold in the context of one-to-one relationships.

Relationship explanations. All these explanations were associated with the constraints and inflexibility of a domestic, rather than a dating relationship. In these explanations, violence was seen to occur because of:

- loss of interest in the partner, resulting in boredom and frustration in the relationship (in a dating relationship if this occurred you would 'just leave')
- loss of freedom (exacerbated by the arrival of a child)
- underlying continuous stresses, such as having a baby, unemployment or other financial difficulties.

> *You're young and free and having a good time. Suddenly, there's all this stress and you're tied down.*
>
> *I reckon it happens after you've been together for a while: the excitement wears off and you starting fighting with each other.*
>
> *When you start living with someone, and they get on your nerves, you notice all their bad habits and so on.*

These factors were the most widely articulated, particularly by younger people, possibly because they provide relatively 'easy' explanations for what may be more deep-rooted problems. They were all perceived as relatively common reasons for the start of violence, and indeed the experiences of those who had witnessed domestic violence between their parents included such factors.

It is worth noting that implicit in these beliefs about domestic violence is a perception that physical violence occurs as the result of an escalating period of 'not getting on', rather than as a snap reaction to a particular situation. Those experiencing violence, however, focused as much, if not more, on specific 'triggers' that led to the violent incident.

Lack of communication skills. Finally, male and female respondents thought poor communication skills, and hence an inability to deal with difficult and particularly emotional situations, supported the use of violence. The hallmarks of poor communication strategies were an inability to listen, or a refusal to accept the other's point of view.

Triggers to domestic violence and dating violence

A number of specific situational 'triggers' for *domestic violence* were identified, the most common explanation given being associated with the male/father having a bad day or stressful time at work. The respondents did not see this as a justification for the ensuing abuse. Also

identified were ongoing domestic aggravation (children fighting), significant events (the arrival of a large bill), and unusual stresses (moving house); fathers were seen as less able to cope with these situations and hence more vulnerable to the stress. Nagging and partner put-downs (mostly by the female/mother) were seen as triggers to domestic violence. There was evidence of considerable sympathy for the 'victim' in this situation. 'Spousal incompetence' (housework not done or done badly, no meal ready, inability to cook, or spending too much money) was seen as another trigger.

Relatively few triggers were put forward for *dating violence*, again reflecting the very limited experience and indeed understanding of why violence would occur in a dating situation. The two mentioned were: sexual jealousy, resulting either from actual infidelity or from a belief that the girlfriend was flirting; and, the perceived need by some males to 'bring her back into line' (assertion of authority).

Alcohol was seen as a factor in both domestic and dating violence (and indeed violence in general) and at its most potent when combined with one of the above triggers.

Attitudes to relationship violence

The information on attitudes came predominantly from those who had left school or from those of a similar age (Year 10 or above) who were still at school. The limited extent to which younger participants had personally been involved in intimate relationships appeared to fundamentally affect their ability or desire to comment, particularly on dating violence, but also on domestic violence. Unless they were exposed to violence or a lot of discord at home, this was a topic about which they simply had not formed attitudes. It was seldom possible to identify significant differences in attitudes towards domestic violence and dating violence (except in relation to seriousness), because each of these forms of relationships inherently reflects beliefs and attitudes about the acceptability of violence, gender roles, power and the desire of one party to control the other.

As mentioned, domestic violence was perceived to be far more serious than dating violence, not only because of the perceived greater prevalence and frequency, but also because of the different nature of the relationship in which the violence occurred. Hence, with regard to domestic violence:

- the betrayal/loss of trust was perceived to be more serious than in a dating relationship
- children (witnessing) might be involved
- the factors militating against ending the relationship were seen to be complex, involving issues around children and shared property
- the victim might be highly disadvantaged by separation, and might lack adequate resources for daily living
- there is greater potential for injury and ongoing abuse than with more public violence. Despite this, females thought they would know if a friend were being abused; males did not think their peers would disclose perpetration or victimisation.

Violence by men towards women

This was believed to be much more serious — indeed unacceptable — than females hitting males. Female participants felt that, except in extreme life threatening cases, the use of sexual violence was worse than 'straight' physical violence (this compares with the downplaying of sexual violence) — 'not rape'. The use of verbal violence by men was almost always seen as less serious than their use of physical violence.

Attitudes supporting non violence appeared to be associated with the following:

- contemporary cultural norms
- peer groups which maintain that actual violence against women is 'uncool', even 'unmanly'
- an awareness of young women's perceptions of themselves as equal (to males), allied with a perception that females might leave a relationship if their sense/status of equality is violated. These sets of beliefs undermine the potential effectiveness of violence as a strategy for control.

Situations in which violence might be understood

While some males could 'understand' situations where relationship violence might be used, this was not held to justify its use. Possible exceptions to this came from blue collar workers who, while agreeing in principle that relationship violence could not be justified, were caught between the traditional values of male dominance and contemporary social values and relationship patterns.

There was a measure of sympathy, if not justification, by males towards male violence for some 'one off' or infrequent acts. These situations involved women 'nagging', a partner's sexual unfaithfulness, and stresses associated with supporting a family. The only circumstance when physical force was thought to be justified was to restrain a female intent on hitting you.

Females' attitudes to the acceptability of male violence

While most females shared the male attitude that hitting girls and women was never right, some believed there were extreme circumstances where a physical response by the male partner might be in keeping with the provocation itself (even though physical assault was not seen as the best way to deal with the problem). These situations included a female sleeping with a boyfriend's best friend, or getting pregnant to 'trap' a partner. There is clearly some support by these young women for traditional images and expressions of masculinity. Situations where violence was 'understood' but not justified closely approximated those of the male respondents (and also reflected the experiences of those who had experienced violence in the family of origin). These situations involved nagging, unfaithfulness or acts of self defence, and were viewed as being a last resort:

> *She's always yelling at him, he can never do anything right . . . I'm scared that one day Dad will turn around and hit her, and I reckon in some ways that he should.*

Ironically, in view of the above quote, those who had experienced domestic violence as victims believed violence did not solve anything.

Like males, most females felt that there was an unwritten code that forbade men from hitting women. They seemed unconcerned about the possibility of being physically abused by a boyfriend. Physical abuse was seen to be the preserve of unhappy, stressful marriages, not teenage relationships. However, one aspect of physical abuse, sexual violence, was seen to occur more in dating. This was because of the perceived importance of sex to young men (leading to a constant pressure to have sex) and difficulties associated with transmitting the right message about (lack of) consent. There was a sense that the young women themselves felt somewhat to 'blame' for the unwanted sex in some situations, and there was an associated feeling of guilt.

This tendency to accept responsibility for provoking male violence (in some ways a misguided way of acknowledging negative aspects of their own behaviour), can also be seen in the view of a number of females that, in some circumstances, a mild physical reprimand (such as shaking) may not be entirely out of place — *'if I'm being a real pain'*. Males were more likely to associate male and female behaviours with traditional gender stereotypes and social constructs, ie females were generally more reasonable, more patient, and less likely than males to do 'wrong' things — so being violent towards them was not justified.

While not generally accepting the view in some of the literature that violence can be construed by some as a sign of love, a couple of the younger girls indicated that violence resulting from jealousy could reflect deep feelings.

Attitudes towards female to male violence

Female to male violence was not seen to occur in domestic situations, probably because of the very low salience of that type of domestic violence. The view was also expressed that few wives would hit their husbands because of the later consequences: *'I don't think they're game enough'; 'He'll probably hit back twice as hard'.*

Even with dating violence, 'punching' or 'slapping' your boyfriend to 'get him in order' was not seen as constituting violence. The key factor behind the use of 'violence' by females towards males was, primarily, one of an expression of frustration or anger: hence, reacting to being 'out of control' and needing to 'get his attention', 'to make him listen' or 'to stop him behaving badly'. Neither males nor females indicated that males were likely to retaliate, suggesting that both groups viewed this kind of 'violence' as a bit of a joke. It was not something to be taken seriously, primarily because of the female's limited ability to inflict physical harm.

Acceptability of female to male violence

Female to male violence was not only viewed light-heartedly, it was also seen as (virtually) acceptable. On reflection, both genders agreed that this constituted a double standard, and that it was not acceptable — really. But there was no censure, and a good deal of hilarity generated by discussion of the topic in the female groups. In the male groups, acceptability was implied through their beliefs that there was no need to retaliate to female violence in any way. This acceptability appears to be associated with:

- the fact that female to male violence is not seen to cause any harm (although some felt that continuous hitting/kicking etc might eventually affect self esteem)

- *'Guys deserve it'*. Both sexes supported this point of view, which was based on the idea that *'guys stuff up', 'guys can be majorly stupid', 'guys don't listen so you have to get their attention'*. Males appeared to agree with the perceived wisdom of society (and certainly of females) that they are 'not as good at relationships' as the females. Indeed, the fact they are 'not listening' reinforces some typical male attributes/stereotypes, and in this context males were quite comfortable with the charge
- males see it as an expression of how much more involved females get in the relationship (ie as an expression of their frustration that the male is not equally involved). Again, this is a male stereotype that the young men were happy to have reinforced.

The males had very little understanding or concept of a women staying in an abusive relationship. The young women were aware that this happens and demonstrated fairly limited tolerance for it, particularly where it meant that a child also remains exposed to the violence. Despite this, there was an understanding of the complexities associated with leaving a domestic relationship (children, joint assets, lack of resources). Reasons for young women not leaving a violent dating relationship included:

- fear that he will come after her
- being still in love with him
- feeling guilt about what occurred in the relationship (not elaborated on in the groups, but possibly associated with issues around first sexual relationships).

CONCLUSION: MAINSTREAM YOUTH

The qualitative research addressing the mainstream youth population produced a number of findings, many of which supported those in the review of the literature. The research was thus of critical significance in developing the Stage Two methodology. It was confirmed that opinions, attitudes and behaviour (and hence targeted interventions) were strongly associated with developmental stages and personal experiences. Young people who were not witnesses, for example, had not formed opinions about domestic and dating violence (but they had about the verbal violence of their 'friends'). Ideas about sexual violence were the most well formed in the older females, who stood to be most affected by acts such as date rape.

Inconsistencies appeared in the young people's acceptance and explanations of the different types of violence under question, suggesting that there are gaps in the (age appropriate) frameworks for making sense of violence that are constructed by and available to young people. Where there are gaps in knowledge, the young people are vulnerable to relying on stereotypical explanations of and excuses for violence (eg 'he misinterpreted my non consent to sex, so it's really my fault') even if their understandings in other areas (eg 'girls are equal') are less stereotypical and more enlightened. There are significant implications here for cohesive, comprehensive, gender specific anti-violence strategies.

Finally, while it is important to focus violence prevention efforts where the most harm is done (male violence to women), it is important to identify and address, all forms of violence, including physical violence by females on males They all emerge from the same crucible of power and control, and they are all aberrant ways of addressing conflict, powerlessness and inequality.

Special Youth Groups

INTRODUCTION

As previously explained, it was considered that for this research to be comprehensive it should specifically target four special groups:

- the homeless
- those from a non-English-speaking background (NESB)
- Indigenous youths
- youths who had been victims of domestic violence.

We anticipated that there would be some overlap among these categories, particularly the combination of the homeless and any of the other categories. In Australia the position of Indigenous youth is of particular concern. However, to assist the flow of this report as a whole, this section summarises the qualitative research in its entirety, including that for Indigenous youth.

Although victims of domestic violence are drawn from diverse backgrounds, the risk is not evenly spread. The evidence unambiguously shows that some groups are considerably more at risk, than others. It is essential, therefore, that attention be paid to developing awareness strategies for high risk groups — both to act on the belief systems that legitimate violence and to develop protective strategies for those likely to be victims. The research with special groups suggests that there is a significant problem of domestic and family violence among these groups, and their lifestyles make them vulnerable to violence in both adolescent and future relationships. Groups of young people outside the mainstream remain difficult to reach through standard intervention strategies, such as advertising campaigns and school based intervention programs.

While all young people share some similar experiences based on age, they do not all enjoy similar life styles or travel along similar life paths; their experience is strongly influenced by differences in social class, gender, race, culture, disability and location. Adolescence is, to some extent, socially constructed. The meaning and significance attached to adolescence reflects social beliefs and values, and it is defined and managed in different ways according to cultural contexts. Differences of background and life experience may influence the meanings given to certain acts; and what may be considered unacceptable in one place and time may be condoned in another.

Given the tendency towards global cultural homogeneity in modern society, it is likely that there would be a degree of attitude convergence on some issues. While the Internet and global communications have been criticised for promulgating pornography and violence, these systems of communication have been a conduit for dispersing messages of individual and human rights. The groups of special youth contacted may have been more exposed to some images than others — predominantly of the violent variety — but nevertheless it was conceivable that many had received the message that violence is unacceptable. However, exposure to this message may not in itself be sufficient to prevent the instrumental use of violence to deal with situations where there is a strongly perceived threat — either physical or to status. Young people from

these groups are exposed to a diversity of often ambiguous messages about the acceptability of violence as a strategy in relationships.

Despite the dangers attached to being part of a 'high risk' group, becoming either a perpetrator or repeat victim of abusive relationships is not inevitable, although naturally the risks may be greatly accentuated. Becoming either an abuser or victim may be contingent on a range of mediating variables. For example, the availability of *consistent* role models offering a non violent message may be a key variable in the development of protective behaviours, whereas weak or inconsistent role models (no matter how sophisticated the message they deliver) may have only limited impact.

ADOLESCENCE AND CULTURE

Indigenous youth and young people from non-English-speaking backgrounds — particularly those newly arrived from non-western societies — may construct adolescence as a life stage and project in different ways from both mainstream youth and other 'special' groups. Adolescence, in post war western society, has been gradually extended in length as educational and other institutions have increased: it has come to represent a distinctive life phase of its own. Paradoxically, young people have become more economically dependent (on the state and family) for support while simultaneously becoming more independent (in terms of the right to a distinctive social life, culture and so on). Traditionally, adolescence marked a brief but important moment of transition (or rite of passage) between childhood and adulthood. Throughout the transition period adults tended to control and supervise relationships; within Indigenous cultures (and also a number of cultures from non-English-speaking backgrounds) this extended to close chaperoning of contact with the opposite sex and even to choice of marriage partners.

The imposition of western notions of adolescence on these groups has created a degree of tension between traditional and contemporary ideals and practices and in some cases has led to intergenerational conflict. Conflict has often taken place around young people's right to choose partners, go out in public unsupervised, live independently, and so on. There may also be a degree of confusion concerning appropriate forms of behaviour, as traditional values and beliefs cease to have 'relevance' in Australia. There was evidence in the research, in the case of some Indigenous and NESB youth, that conflict and tension between traditional cultures and modern values and practices played a role in violence towards partners.

METHODOLOGIES

A mix of methodologies was employed, varying between locations and contexts. An in-depth approach was adopted for homeless youth and youths who had been victims. In relation to Indigenous and NESB youth, the majority were either paired or conducted in groups, with only a small number of individual interviews.

Interviews were semi-structured and informal, to obtain respondents' views in an open-ended and relatively non directive fashion. In all cases, time was spent creating a relaxed atmosphere and establishing a rapport between the researchers and the research subjects. Background talk included questions about music, fashion and sport. Time was also spent describing the nature

and purposes of the research and what the research hoped to achieve. Due to the research's sensitivity and that many of the young people were subject to forms of post traumatic stress, care was taken not to adopt a confrontational approach, and interviewees were told that they did not have to talk about issues that they found too uncomfortable or threatening.

Due to the relatively open ended format of the interviews, there were some differences between groups in terms of the range of issues covered. Different topics took on importance for them depending on their life experiences.

In most cases the research process was instituted in partnership with key agencies. The agencies assisted in the selection of participants, provided some general background information and offered valuable feedback. In the case of NESB youth in Melbourne, project workers sat in on some interviews (providing support and translation).

The NESB group was the most heterogeneous of the groups. There were marked differences between the life experiences of newly arrived groups and their families — from Iran, Africa, Bosnia — and more established groups which included a majority of second generation migrants — Italian, Greek, Vietnamese. The majority of the young people in the special category (excluding settled migrants) had endured some form of violence or trauma; they had witnessed or been the direct victims of violence. A significant number of the young people from Africa, Iran and Bosnia had first hand experience of war, while others, such as the victims and homeless groups, had histories of neglect and abuse. A significant proportion of Indigenous young people had grown up in communities with high rates of violence, sexual abuse and alcoholism.

There were common histories of early initiation into sexual activity (including rape), child abuse and neglect, homelessness and abandonment, drug and alcohol abuse and mental illness. There were also histories of contact with both the care and control mechanisms of the state — many children and young people in the 'special' category had been state wards, had experienced failed placements in foster and adoptive families and had been involved in the criminal justice system. Many of these young people reported that they had never really been children, in the sense of having grown up in a loving and supportive environment, shielded from the harsh realities of life.

LANGUAGE

Any anti-violence campaign would need to focus carefully on the narrative structures and discourses that young people from diverse backgrounds used to describe and denote violence. Young people may not necessarily describe themselves as victims as such, or identify an aggressive act as being a manifestation of domestic violence, emotional abuse, neglect and so on. The extent to which a young person is able to identify him/herself as having been a victim or perpetrator may vary considerably, depending on a range of intervening factors. The research on victims noted that many of the young people were in a process of 'healing' and consequently, developing a self awareness that allowed them to 'name' certain life events as having been abusive, and to recognise themselves as being either victims or survivors of abuse.

A key variable in this process appeared to be the quality and availability of adult support. In the case of the victims group, counselling services provided this support. The extent to which young persons were able to articulate their experiences within a narrative structure that included

the 'naming' of violence depended on whether they were receiving appropriate messages from these supporters. The presence of consistent adult supporters appeared to be a factor in the development of resilience in projects working with victims, homeless, NESB and Indigenous youth.

As we have suggested, not all young people were able to name some of their experiences as having been violent. On the other hand, it was clear that many had been victims of abuse, either by family members, partners or others.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Less overt forms of violence, such as emotional and psychological abuse, were particularly difficult to 'name' as abusive for young people. While they may perceive neglect and verbal abuse by parents and others as 'wrong', they did not necessarily perceive it as violence (or themselves as victims); this construct was generally reserved for overtly physical acts.

This does not mean that young people were insensitive to this form of hurtful behaviour. Indeed, there was firm evidence to suggest that they were extremely susceptible to being wounded by insults, verbal bullying, put-downs, jibes, humiliation, malicious gossip, and so on. There was considerable awareness of the negative impact of 'name calling' and other forms of humiliation from adults, siblings and peers. Respondents suggested that fights, at school and in public places, were often a result of put-downs or public shaming. Many young people saw a physical response as being an acceptable, or at least understandable, means of responding to this kind of threat to personal integrity.

DATING AND DATING VIOLENCE

A number of the terms employed in the literature on violence between young people, particularly terms such as 'dating', did not form part of the narrative structures of these groups of young people and were not used by them to describe relationships. The notion of dating resonates with images of an ideal adolescence, free from the pressures of full adult responsibilities and their attendant stresses and anxieties. It also conveys images of pre-sexual, perhaps even almost platonic, relationships. Many young people in these groups tended instead to form intense, needy, 'adult' relationships with partners.

Correspondingly, the term 'dating violence' was not used spontaneously by these groups to describe sexual and other forms of violence in adolescent relationships.

NAMING VIOLENCE

Young people employed a range of colloquialisms to describe violent behaviours. They tended to distinguish between fair fights, or 'punch-ups', which may be played out according to some agreed upon rules (this was particularly so for Indigenous youth), and unprovoked attacks — 'bashings', 'floggings', etc. Violence was, perhaps, too abstract a concept to describe the contextual processes involved in an aggressive situation. 'Real' fighting was largely seen as part of a male sphere of action; the exception here was Indigenous women, many of whom were proud of their capacity to give or take punishment in a fight. Girl fighting was generally

denigrated by males: the gendered and heavily pejorative terms 'bitch fighting' and 'bitch slapping' signified that girls were stepping out of their natural 'feminine' roles, whereas males were just doing what came naturally to them.

In situations where they felt a sense of entitlement to be aggressive, respondents found it difficult to recognise, or acknowledge, that their own behaviour was violent; rather they would describe this as 'sorting someone (or some problem) out'. Aggressive behaviour by these young people was often enacted within contexts where they felt they had no choice but to defend themselves or their status from a perceived threat. Stories told by young males and by young Indigenous women, describing incidents where they had used physical force against others, tended to place themselves in a victim rather than perpetrator role. A typical scenario would be one where he/she was simply responding to an injustice or threat of such magnitude that the use of force became a form of self defence.

VIEWS ON VIOLENCE

Situations where men hit women and children were universally condemned as unmanly, unfair and cowardly. On the other hand, the young men had some unreconstructed attitudes about the responsibilities and duties of men to be heads of their household and be given the respect of women and children. When pressed on this issue, a considerable number of young men would confess that this may involve hitting, slapping, spanking children and slapping a female partner to 'bring her back into line'. Respondents had some sympathy for acts of violence that were the result of frustration or sudden anger. It was accepted that, on occasions, a person would 'lose it', 'crack a shit' or 'go ballistic'.

The kinds of justifiable rage included: situations where parents hit children who were 'out of control'; partners enraged by jealousy; and young males responding to an insult and threats to honour. There was a clear distinction drawn between this kind of *reactive* or spontaneous anger, and violence against a child or partner which was deliberate, continuous or protracted. Respondents had little sympathy for people who systematically abused children or hurt their partners. Young people could tolerate occasional violent outbursts or incidents but clearly delineated between these and protracted violence.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse remained the most difficult issue to discuss, particularly with young men, and was rarely raised by them spontaneously. A number of young women did raise the issue, both in terms of family experience and as a problem in relationships with young men. The issue was most often raised in relation to abusive relationships with past or present partners — where girls, for example, felt they were under duress to have sex. Here again, young people were clear about extreme cases — of rape, or child sexual abuse, for example — but were less certain about instances where they may have been manipulated, coerced, or blackmailed by a partner within the context of an asymmetric power relationship. This is an important issue in terms of strategies to develop protective factors, because sexually exploitative relationships often develop incrementally rather than out of the blue, and may require more sophisticated skills training to empower young people to deal with the complex dynamics involved in them.

GENDER STEREOTYPES

There was evidence that a traditional gender discourse still had wide currency. The narrative structures used by many young males distinguished between girls who were 'easy' ('dogs', 'sluts', 'bitches') and 'good girls'. On the other hand, there was evidence that girls themselves were rejecting this moral dichotomy and were celebrating aspects of being 'bad girls', which included involvement in fighting, binge drinking and minor crime.[3]

Young males also had a simplistic and generally unsympathetic view of the double bind sexual activity placed on girls. Girls were criticised for 'leading you on', then 'withdrawing consent'. On the other hand, there was some evidence to suggest that girls who were considered to be 'easy' and did not conform to the stereotype of a good girl were treated with less respect than other girls. While it was rarely made explicit, girls in this category may have been more vulnerable to forced sexual activity and physical violence.

The majority of males believed that men should be the 'masters' of the household. However, the majority maintained that violence was an inappropriate means of retaining this role.

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE BETWEEN GIRLS AND BOYS

In general, girls had more sophisticated views on relationship violence and were more forthcoming in discussing their own experiences of violence. They were capable of constructing a continuum of violent behaviours. There was a widespread belief among girls that boys tended to see them as their property (although, Indigenous girls were themselves also extremely possessive and territorial), and would attempt to control every facet of their lives. Girls were more likely to place control strategies — such as pushing, slapping, deprivation of liberty and verbal put-downs — on a continuum of aggressive and violent behaviour. A small number of girls interviewed believed that verbal abuse could be as harmful as physical violence; the majority view, however, was that physical violence occupied a higher place on the continuum. Boys had a more restricted view and tended to name as violent only those acts involving significant levels of force. Girls were also more likely to see the need to keep control of their aggressive urges, even under provocation; while boys believed that 'losing it' under provocation was a natural response.

JEALOUSY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Overt jealousy and possessiveness seemed to be a feature of many relationships and a primary cause of relationship violence. It may be that vulnerable groups invest more energy in relationships as compensation for emotional deficits and may gain some of the commitment that is otherwise lacking in their lives. This places enormous strain on relationships and they can become 'mutually parasitic' as each attempts to claim a degree of support from the partner that he/she is unable to provide.

3 It would be dangerous to universalise the experiences of middle class white women as being 'normal' femininity and to pathologise the behaviour of girls who describe themselves as 'bad girls' (see Messerschmidt 1997). Increasing rates of female offending in the western world, including violent offending, illustrates that traditional stereotypes of appropriate gender roles are in flux, although there may be some forms of violence (rape, sexual assaults etc) which may be more firmly fixed within traditional masculinity.

What from a western viewpoint may be considered early involvement in relationships, in Indigenous communities it may represent a point of continuity with elements of the traditional culture. Among Indigenous youth, the deliberate 'jealousing up' of partners was a form of game playing, testing out the power one had over a boyfriend or girlfriend. This kind of game playing may become embedded in relationships and set the pattern for violence.

SOURCES OF VIOLENCE

Young people in each of these groups tended to have been victims of violence in the home, usually at the hands of a father or stepfather or, to a lesser extent, their mothers. There was also significant evidence that many had been victims of emotional abuse and neglect. Abuse by older siblings also emerged as a problem for some young people. This pattern of abuse had carried on through life, perpetrated by a diversity of partners and authority figures. These young people had been subjected to a diversity of forms of violence by a range of perpetrators in a variety of contexts.

Young people from non-English-speaking backgrounds who had escaped from war zones or been in refugee camps often suffered from the effects of this trauma and social dislocation even though they tended to have had healthy family relationships. This may make them vulnerable to disorders involving traumatic re-enactment, aggressive acting out and emotional disassociation.

Care will need to be taken when developing campaigns and intervention strategies for these groups of young people. They may be beyond the reach of campaigns that employ mainstream structures and messages. The majority, by virtue of their life histories, know only too well that violence is 'wrong' and damaging. However, in the absence of alternative avenues of support they are unlikely to relinquish the use of violence as a survival strategy.

SUMMARY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RELATING TO 'SPECIAL' YOUTH GROUPS

- The availability of consistent, non judgmental adult support may be an important influence on the self-awareness and the creation of resilience. The degree of risk associated with becoming a victim, or perpetrator, of violence is intimately bound up with experiences in relationships; correspondingly, the capacity to change these patterns of behaviour seems also to be dependent on developing relationships which provide an alternative set of messages, attitudes and meanings.
- It has become part of accepted wisdom that peer groups can be the source of negative influences on young people. The research certainly found evidence that peers — and family groups in the case of Indigenous youth — were a source of some negative attitudes. There was also considerable evidence to suggest that friendships were crucial in providing emotional support for vulnerable groups.
- A key point of difference between the special and mainstream groups was that, whereas mainstream youth were occasionally the subject of violent incidents, those in the special category tended to have had protracted exposure to violence. This may be a significant risk factor in future vulnerability.

- There was considerable evidence suggesting that many young people in these groups had been victims of *repeated and multiple forms of victimisation* encompassing emotional abuse and neglect, profound trauma, physical violence and sexual abuse. Evidence also suggested that many had witnessed extreme forms of domestic, family and other violence — including murder, rape and serious assaults on family or intimates.
- Respondents tended to rate family experience, in particular, as a prime source of values and beliefs about violence. There was some evidence that life experience that had included violence and trauma may be a more telling indicator of future vulnerability (as either a victim or a perpetrator of violence) than 'attitudes' *per se*.
- There was also evidence to suggest that growing up in a violent home made young people vulnerable to repeating patterns of abusive behaviour as they mature. Hence, girls from abusive backgrounds appeared often to be in relationships where violence, threats and intimidation were commonplace.
- For at risk groups, any intervention and awareness strategy would need to be embedded in support systems that work on the social, emotional and psychological vulnerability of these groups of young people, rather than simply offering the message in a vacuum.
- Most members of these groups already possess significant awareness that violence in relationships is unacceptable. However, their life situations make them susceptible to violence as a means of gaining control when they feel under threat, and, to tolerating violence as the price for intimacy.

APPROACHES TO INTERVENTION

The groups chosen for this phase of the qualitative research were identified on the basis of their degree of marginalisation from mainstream institutions and agencies. For Indigenous youth and some groups of young people from non-English-speaking backgrounds, this marginalisation had a cultural as well as structural foundation. There was a lack of consistency between traditional and mainstream definitions of appropriate behaviour, gender roles and the significance of family life.

Campaigns to reduce levels of relationship violence in these groups (and head off future violence) must take account of their specific life paths, life situations and experiences. Particular emphasis will need to be placed on designing and developing communication strategies which place the message of non violence within frameworks of support designed to meet the specific needs of the particular group.

The bifurcated models of intervention developed during the action research project *Working with Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence* (Indermaur *et al* 1998) may have relevance to the development of such strategies. Here, a broad based program working with mainstream youth in schools has been complemented by specifically focused, intensive work with 'at risk' groups through a community outreach program. In the case of Indigenous youth the focus is being further refined by linking the prevention program to family violence and alcohol reduction strategies.

The language used to identify violence needs to be placed within narrative structures that have meaning for young people. The discourse of domestic violence may be too abstract for young

people in these groups and may need to be complemented by terminology that identifies some of the background dynamics in relationship violence in terms which accord with their own everyday life and concepts.

There may be a number of situationally specific issues and concerns that would need to be addressed when developing campaigns for the four special groups.

The homeless

Homeless youth may be difficult to reach because of extreme instability of lifestyle and lack of continuous contact with mainstream services. Life on the streets brings additional dangers associated with prostitution, drug abuse and other illegal activities (Strategic Partners 1999). Intervention strategies would need to link in with holistic outreach services and accommodation programs.

NESB youth

This was the most heterogeneous category, with extreme diversity of life experience. Priority would need to be given to developing strategies for young people traumatised by exposure to war and other forms of conflict in their countries of origin. A sensitive approach will be required to ensure that cultural difference is respected, particularly in relation to family and religious value systems.

Indigenous youth

Strategies focusing on Indigenous youth will need to be adapted to the specific dynamics of Indigenous family violence. In remote communities this may include prevention programs on alcohol abuse and other related problems. In urban areas, the problem of Indigenous marginalisation from mainstream structures remains a real obstacle to the development of appropriate programs. In all cases involving Indigenous youth, campaigns stressing non violence should be linked with other 'family healing' strategies.

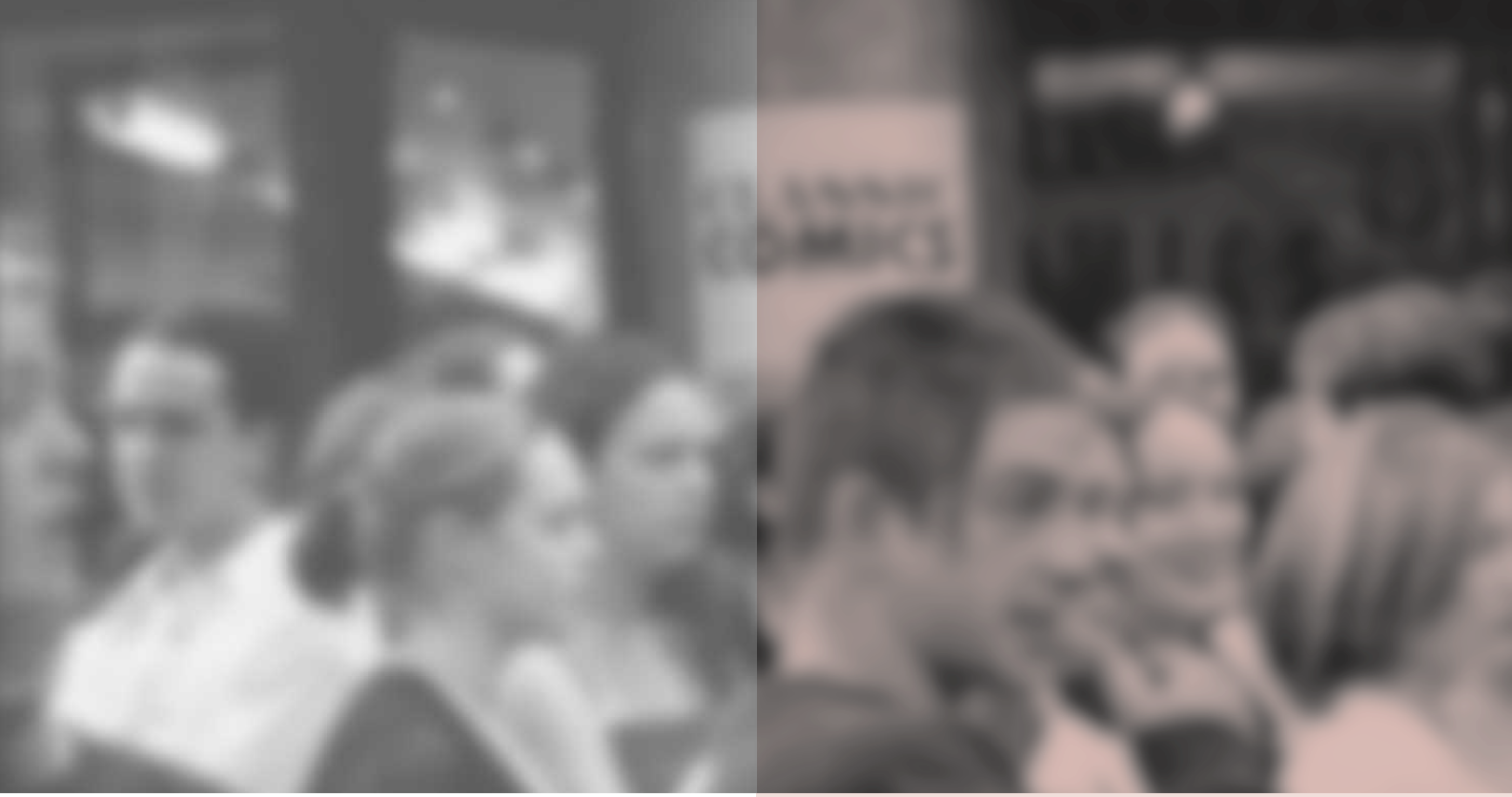
Victims of domestic violence

Young people who had survived domestic violence situations may need to be given messages about non violence within a therapeutic framework that also addresses their own lived experience of being a victim. Counselling services may provide an environment for working on issues related to appropriate and inappropriate forms of interpersonal behaviour and realigning negative attitudes that may have been a legacy of an abusive family. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that child victims are not simply targeted as potential abusers.

CONCLUSIONS

The quantitative research supported strongly our working hypothesis that these four special groups are the most vulnerable in every way — as direct victims of domestic or family violence; as victims and potential perpetrators of dating violence (though they themselves would seldom describe it by that term); and as damaged witnesses of domestic or family violence. Although the qualitative research would seek to sample and survey these groups as well as mainstream youth, it was apparent that the nature of their life experience was such that an instrument appropriate for mainstream youth would be unlikely to elicit the full story about the experience of the special groups.

Thus, while the qualitative research work was nominally carried out for the principal purpose of anchoring the quantitative work methodologically, in reality it constitutes the primary source material for an understanding of the impact of domestic (or family) violence upon these special categories of youth.



SECTION 4

The quantitative research

4 Quantitative research

Purpose of the Quantitative Research

The quantitative research was designed to provide a reliable and valid assessment of the extent of young people's exposure to domestic violence and risk factors associated with domestic violence. The quantitative research is fundamental to achieving most of the objectives of the project, specifically to:

- provide national data on young people's attitudes to domestic violence
- provide national data on young people's experience of domestic violence
- identify what young people understand as 'domestic violence'
- identify factors associated with different attitudes to domestic violence among young people
- examine factors that may influence attitudes to domestic violence and the risks associated with being a perpetrator or a victim of domestic violence
- develop an understanding of protective factors and reactions to domestic violence.

Methodology of the Quantitative Research

SAMPLE SIZE AND STRUCTURE

A total of 5,000 young people aged 12–20 years across all Australian States and Territories were interviewed.[4] Sampling was conducted *via* stratified random sampling, giving all participants an equal, random chance of being selected to take part within pre-defined groups. The groups selected ensured that a representative cross-section of the population in terms of geography (State/Territory, metropolitan/regional) was achieved and also that a representative spread of socioeconomic types and age/gender within the sample group was achieved. Variables taken into account were:

- attending/not attending school
- Australian State or Territory
- age
- socioeconomic status
- location.

4 Further technical information on the survey is available in the Appendices A–H on the website — www.ncp.gov.au. The demographic and social characteristics of the survey samples are summarised in Appendix E enabling the findings to be seen in the context of the Australian population of young people as a whole. The procedures and differences between the States and Territories as well as other aspects of the school-based surveying are detailed in Appendix D, field statistics are in Appendix F, data weighting, a fuller explanation of significance testing and the discriminant analysis technique are in Appendix G, and the clustering technique employed in the analysis is fully described in Appendix C.

Whether attending school/not attending school

Most of the sample (3,000) were young people attending school who were to be interviewed at school. The remainder (2,000) who had left school were reached by a 'street intercept'. The two sample sizes broadly reflect the population split (55 per cent in school, 45 per cent having left school) with a slight over-sampling of the school population to redress the more clustered nature of that sample.

State

States were sampled in line with their share of national population aged 12 to 20 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 1997). To facilitate analysis by each State individually, the sample sizes of the Northern Territory (NT), the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and Tasmania were boosted to provide minimum samples of 100 school students and 100 non school attendees.

Age

In designing the school-based surveys, age quotas had to be calculated by school year rather than absolute age (although that information was also collected). Also, as the survey was conducted only among high school students, effectively only half of all 12 year olds were included (the others still being at primary school). This meant that either the youngest year at school had to be over-sampled (by a factor of two) compared to all other years or that it was sampled in line with all other years, resulting in half the number of 12 year olds to each of the other years. The latter was clearly more appropriate, so the total population covered in the project is best described as high school students and other young people aged up to and including 20 years.

Socioeconomic status

School samples were analysed by postcode, using the SEIFA Index of Disadvantage (ABS 1996b). Where the ABS could not provide a SEIFA index number for a postcode in which the school was located, schools were classified in a similar manner to SEIFA categories (see below) based on the researcher's local knowledge of the area.

The average SEIFA index score of disadvantage for all Australia is 996. Schools where the postcode indicated an index of disadvantage number above 996 were classed broadly as being less disadvantaged, ie mid-upper socioeconomic status/white collar, and schools with index numbers below 996 were classed as more disadvantaged, ie mid-lower socioeconomic status/blue collar. Sixty-eight of 147 postcodes were classified as 'less disadvantaged' and 73 classified as 'more disadvantaged'. Six postcodes could not be allocated index numbers.

For the non school sample, interviewing was again conducted in a range of areas with different socioeconomic profiles. The occupation of the main income earner was collected, enabling the representative nature of the sample to be checked.

Location

Within each State, the sample was stratified in line with the State population[5] by:

- city (population of one million plus)
- large towns (50,000 to one million)
- small towns/rural.

Sample structure

Given the above parameters, the sample was structured as seen in Table 4.1. In the first column, the breakdown of the Australian population aged 12 to 20 years is given by each of the key variables. In the second column, the achieved sample prior to weighting is given, and in the third and fourth columns the weighted sample sizes and percentage breakdown (see notes regarding data weighting below).

DATA WEIGHTING

The raw data was weighted to ensure that it reflected the population of young people aged 12 to 20 years[6] in Australia. The data for each State was weighted to ensure the internal composition of the State data was correct. Weighting was conducted on three variables: age group[7] (12 to 14 years, 15 to 16 years, 17 to 18 years and 19 to 20 years); sex, and whether at school or not at school. The proportions to which the data was weighted derived from the 1996 census data.

The sample size of each State was then weighted to correctly reflect that State's proportion of all 12 to 20 year olds. Hence, the States that had been relatively over-sampled to provide robust sample sizes (ACT, NT and Tasmania) were weighted down. Those that had been under sampled to allow for that over sampling — New South Wales (NSW), Victoria and Queensland — were weighted back up.

5 This stratification was based on the 1986 census of population and housing (ABS 1986). More recent national data (ABS 1992) were used to update the split in each State to reflect the greater proportion living in cities.

6 Note '12 to 20 years' is more accurately described as '12 year olds at high school to 20 year olds'.

7 Individual ages were not weighted as in some of the smaller States the composition of classes meant that only one or two of that age were interviewed. This would have resulted in some extreme weightings.

Table 4.1: Sample Structure

	AUSTRALIAN POPULATION OF 12–20 YEAR OLDS	UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE	WEIGHTED SAMPLE	% OF SAMPLE
	2 146 908	5019	5014	
State	%			%
New South Wales	33.01	1518	1655	33.01
Victoria	24.36	1072	1223	24.36
Queensland	19.13	900	960	19.13
Western Australia	10.08	511	506	10.08
South Australia	7.69	384	386	7.69
Tasmania	2.67	225	131	2.67
Northern Territory	1.11	188	56	1.11
ACT	1.94	220	98	1.94
Gender				
Male	51.16	2435	2567	51.17
Female	48.84	2583	2448	48.83
Age				
12 years (half of)	6.03	301	331	6.60
13 years	12.17	503	598	11.92
14 years	11.88	514	580	11.56
15 years	11.85	667	585	11.66
16 years	11.60	754	592	11.80
17 years	11.54	715	589	11.74
18 years	11.52	566	565	11.26
19 years	11.71	516	604	12.04
20 years	11.72	482	571	11.38
Student Status				
At school	55.00	2777	2758	54.95
Not at school	45.00	2242	2258	45.05
Location				
City dwellers				
(1 million plus)	43.00[8]	2468	2624	52.31
Large towns				
(50,000 to 1 million)	24.00	1276	1118	22.29
Small towns/rural				
(less than 50,000)	33.00	1266	1264	25.20

8 1986 figures. This breakdown is now unavailable; however, the 1996 census indicated 60 per cent of Australians lived in cities of one-million-plus inhabitants.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire items were developed from three sources:

- the literature review in terms of identifying relevant attitudes to explore (eg those about male superiority and control)
- previous surveys undertaken in the United States and published in the literature, and those undertaken by the consultants in the fields of domestic or family violence
- directly from the findings of the qualitative research, particularly in terms of salient issues, pertinent and discriminating attitude statements and in adopting appropriate language for the respondent age group.

Pilot testing

The initial questionnaire was pilot tested in a two-stage approach as follows:

1. Four focus groups were conducted (two comprising young males and two comprising young females). Participants were first asked to complete the questionnaire on their own. The nature of the questions, how clearly (and unambiguously) they were understood, and the ease of following the questionnaire instructions were then all discussed in depth.
2. Changes were implemented and the questionnaire and methodology (of self completion within a classroom setting) were then pilot-tested in two different classes, of different ages, at a high school in Western Australia.

Customising the questionnaire

In total, nine different versions of the questionnaire were required, as follows:

QUESTIONNAIRE VERSION	DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY	DESCRIPTION
Version 1 Version 2	In-school interviews	For Years 10 to 12.
Version 3 Version 4	In-school interviews	Years 8 and 9 (excluded 'dating violence' questions).
Version 5 Version 6	Intercept	All intercepts (15 - 20 year olds). Included additional demographic questions to allow for cases in which respondents may not be living at home (may be married, working etc).
Version 7	In-school interviews	Included few closed questions, collected 'open ended' descriptive responses to complement the 'closed' questions of the main questionnaire. Was used where more than 22 pupils in a class took part (see below).
Version 8 Version 9	In-school interviews	The Victorian versions of Version 1 and 2. Excluded the question of perpetration of dating violence by self.

The pilot testing identified layout and comprehension difficulties with certain questions and scales, and the changes were incorporated into the final questionnaire design. The pilot was also used to identify any potential problems with the proposed protocol or methodology.

The difference between versions 1 and 2 (or 3 and 4, or 5 and 6, or 8 and 9) was the order in which two questions pertaining to the *acceptability of male violence towards a female partner under certain circumstances and female violence towards a male partner* were presented. This was to counter balance the potential order effects of such questions.

Twenty-two completed questionnaires (20 plus two spare) were required from each class. In some instances, there were over 22 children in the class. Version 7 of the questionnaire was developed to keep the 'excess' students in each class occupied, while the main survey was conducted. Version 7 comprised three pages of open ended/text questions, which investigated certain attitudes and perceptions covered *via* closed questions in the main questionnaire and, as such, provided additional depth to the survey results if desired.[9]

The Appendix to this report contains copies of questionnaires (Version 3 and Version 5).

Data collection methodology

Two data collection methodologies were used:

- self completion of questionnaire within a class period for the proportion of the sample group at school
- self completion of questionnaire on street or within a public premise such as sports hall/coffee bar etc, for those who had left school.

The need for a split methodology reflected a number of methodological and ethical considerations, primarily:

- the need for parental or guardian permission before a child aged 14 years or under was interviewed
- the need to conduct the interview away from the home
- the need to adopt a methodology that encouraged honest reporting of sensitive subjects (hence had a high degree of confidentiality).

Most of the fieldwork was undertaken using this school/non school split methodology. However, at the end of the fieldwork, problems in achieving sufficient students through schools[10] within Victoria and to a lesser degree NSW and Queensland, meant that some older school students (aged 15 years or over) were contacted *via* the 'intercept' or 'non school' survey.

Questionnaire procedure — schools

At the pre-arranged time, the interviewer attended the school and conducted the interview during normal class time. In those States where active consent was mandatory, the interviewer was required to ensure that only students who had parental permission were included.

9 The additional data from Version 7 questionnaires have not been processed for the purposes of the present project.

10 This was due both to fewer students per class completing the survey, resulting from the need for active consent (which in itself raised issues of the desirability of continuing to use schools, given the potential for implicit bias in the results), and five schools which originally agreed, then declined, to participate.

As there were two versions of the quantitative questionnaire for each class (with two questions in different sequence to minimise any 'order effect'), the interviewer was instructed to disperse the two questionnaires at random, but in equal proportions among the students. Each class participant was given a blank C4 envelope for the questionnaire. The questionnaires were returned in the sealed envelopes direct to Donovan Research.

At the survey's completion, all students were given a brochure containing the contact numbers for support service providers, in case participation in the survey brought back or re-instigated some trauma from past personal experience.

Questionnaire procedure — non school contexts

Young people no longer at school were approached in public and asked to self complete questionnaires. Interviews were conducted by trained interviewers at selected metropolitan/regional locations across Australia.

In capital cities, city centres and a cross-section of suburban centres were used. In the regional or country areas, intercept interviewing was generally undertaken in the same general locations as school interviews, providing benefits both of fieldwork efficiency and a reassurance that a cross-section of socioeconomic backgrounds were covered.

The procedure was similar to that for school interviews; respondents were given a blank C4 envelope in which to seal completed questionnaires. All respondents were given the brochure detailing available support services in the State should they wish to discuss any issues that may have arisen. Questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes to Donovan Research.

The average duration for intercept interviews was 20 minutes.

Comment on completion of the questionnaire

Given the personal subject matter, self completion of the questionnaire was the optimal way to collect the data. However, data collected *via* self completion invariably contained 'quality' problems, through respondents accidentally or deliberately omitting questions, misreading or misunderstanding instructions, or, ticking multiple responses where only one was valid (eg multiple age categories) — making it impossible to discern the correct answer. Questionnaires with a high number of missing values were removed from the survey, as were all where either age or sex were missing, as this meant that the respondent could not be placed into a cell for weighting purposes.

Non response

The level of non response was generally very low, but tended to rise when the subject matter became more personal. Highest levels of non response are associated with the question pertaining to personal perpetration of dating violence where about one in six, to one in seven young people did not answer the question. Unless stated otherwise in the text, results have not been redistributed with those answering the question, hence in most instances the sum of responses will be slightly under 100 per cent.

Failure to assign social class

Fourteen per cent of the sample was not assigned to either higher socioeconomic or lower socioeconomic status. Three per cent of this figure comprised school students, but for whom a social class was not determined because they were recruited *via* street intercept, rather than at school. The remaining 11 per cent are young people no longer at school but who either provided no details, or insufficient details, to enable their social class to be coded. This represented almost one quarter of the non school sample and is an example of the difficulty associated with collecting socioeconomic status *via* self completion (hence the use of schools as a surrogate indicator for the younger group).

Mischief responses

Given the nature of the respondent group, the subject matter of a number of questions and the self completion methodology, it was likely that some respondents filled in the questionnaire 'mischievously' — ie reported high levels of violence, anti social attitudes, etc. The extent of this sort of response is always difficult to predict. Analysis can be run on certain questions for unusual or unlikely patterns, such as respondents answering 'yes' to all, in the case of types of violence perpetrated against each parent. In this instance, one per cent of all respondents answered 'yes' to all items. It is not possible to isolate mischievous responses beyond running analyses such as these and then considering whether such results appear reasonable. Accordingly, there remains a source of potential inaccuracy.

Significance testing

Throughout the report, reference is made to statistical significance tests undertaken. A result is statistically significant if the difference between it and another result is sufficiently large to make the possibility of sampling error or chance sample fluctuation low. In this survey, a test with a 95 per cent confidence level has been used, which means that in 95 out of 100 cases, the difference in results reflects a 'real' difference, rather than being a function of sampling error.[11]

In most instances, significant differences have been highlighted between sub groups by means of a star (*) against the higher of the two results that are statistically different to each other. In tables where multiple columns have been tested against each other, nomenclature ([a], [b], [c], [d], etc) is used to indicate where the significant differences lie between which columns.

In this survey often differences of only two or three percentage points are statistically significant because of the large sample sizes. Readers need to consider whether the difference is of any note; would lead to different approaches or policies among the sub groups between which it is seen; and simply whether or not it is statistically significant.

11 The test method used is a t-test on mean scores at a 0.95 confidence level. The overlap formula was used.

Attitudes to Domestic Violence

In this section, young people's attitudes towards domestic violence are examined. Attitudes relate to: attitudes about adult domestic violence; perceptions about the prevalence of domestic violence; definitions of domestic violence; sources of information about domestic violence; the relative seriousness of domestic, compared to other violence; attitudes towards gender roles; and, attitudes to violence, aggression and conflict in personal relationships.

DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The qualitative research showed a variation in young people's understanding of what constitutes domestic violence. When questioned directly, their definitions/descriptions were quite broad, with aspects of emotional and financial abuse often being included. However, in relation to his or her own situation, a young person rarely classified what was happening at home as 'domestic violence' but related the context and actions that actually occurred.

An early question (Q. 13) asked respondents what they thought would be 'domestic violence'. They were presented with a list of items and asked:

> *Which of the following would you think of as domestic violence and which do you think are not so much violence but just normal conflict between partners?*

In line with our sensitivity to non physical forms of abuse, a full range of actions covering emotional, psychological, financial, verbal and physical abuse, were listed. Table 4.2 shows the results for the total sample, with the percentage of respondents that defined each as 'domestic violence', 'normal conflict' or 'don't know'.

Only two of the 11 items were considered 'normal conflict' rather than 'domestic violence' by the majority of young people. These items were: *not talking to partner for long periods of time and not showing any love or affection*. Seventy-nine and 70 per cent respectively of young people considered these behaviours to be part of normal conflict in a relationship, with just seven per cent and 13 per cent respectively describing them as domestic violence. However, a fair proportion (12 per cent and 15 per cent) were unsure whether they constituted conflict or domestic violence.

Eighteen per cent of young people were also unsure how to describe *not allowing partner any money for own use*, but just over half (53 per cent) classified this as domestic violence. About two-thirds considered *not letting partner see family and friends* and *constant put-downs and humiliation of partner* to be types of domestic violence and 71 per cent described *constant yelling* similarly.

Between 80 and 90 per cent considered the remaining five items, which all involved threatened or actual physical violence, to be domestic violence. Of concern are the one in 20 young people who consider *forcing the partner to have sex, throwing things like plates at each other* and *regular slapping or punching* to be part of 'normal' conflict. Young males aged 17 to 20 years and young people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) descent were significantly more likely than the total population to characterise this as normal conflict.

For most of the items, males were significantly less likely to consider each behaviour to be domestic violence and significantly more likely to consider it normal conflict, than females. Often, males were more likely to say that they 'didn't know' whether to describe it as normal conflict or domestic violence. Younger people (those aged 12 to 14 years) and older people (those aged 18 to 20 years), were more likely to consider these items as violence; people aged 15 to 17 years were somewhat more likely to consider them to be normal conflict.

A notable sub group variation was between young people of ATSI descent and the rest of the population, with the former significantly more likely to classify behaviours as normal conflict and less likely to include them in domestic violence. This was true for all items except the first two (*not showing any love* and *not talking to partner for long periods*). The largest differences occurred for: *not letting partner see family or friends* (54 per cent of ATSI young people considered this to be domestic violence compared to 66 per cent reported by the rest of the sample); *threatening to hit partner* (71 per cent domestic violence compared to 84 per cent); *throwing things at each other* (78 per cent compared to 90 per cent); *slapping/punching each other regularly* (80 per cent compared to 92 per cent); and *forcing partner to have sex* (74 per cent compared to 88 per cent).

Table 4.2: Young people's definition of domestic violence

	NORMAL CONFLICT	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	DON'T KNOW
	%	%	% (*)
Not talking to partner for long periods of time	79	7	12
Not showing any love or affection	70	13	15
Not allowing partner any money for their own use	27	53	18
Not letting partner see their family/friends	19	65	14
Constant put-downs and humiliation of partner	20	66	11
Constant yelling at partner	19	71	8
Threatening to hit partner (even though don't actually intend to hit)	9	83	6
Slapping/punching partner but only on one or two occasions as a result of a big fight	8	85	5
Forcing the partner to have sex	5	87	7
Throwing things like plates, glasses at each other	5	89	4
Slapping/punching partner regularly	4	90	4

* rows may not add to 100 per cent due to nil responses

PERCEIVED SERIOUSNESS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE

To gauge the young people's views on a range of violent behaviours, they were asked to rate eight forms of violence, in the order: 'very serious', 'serious' or 'not that serious'. Nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) believed domestic violence to be 'very serious'; a further 20 per cent thought that it was 'quite serious', ranking it second only to rape/sexual assault in severity.

Females (79 per cent) were significantly more likely than males (66 per cent) to think that domestic violence was very serious. However, there were no differences in views, by age or past experience of domestic violence. Those who had been exposed to domestic violence did not see it as any more serious than did their peers with no such exposure. There was no indication that domestic violence had become 'normalised' and therefore appear less serious than its reality.

Table 4.3 shows respondents' views on the eight types of violence examined. Rape/sexual assault was deemed to be very serious by 94 per cent of young people (96 per cent of females, 91 per cent of males). Domestic violence ranked as the second most serious with just under three-quarters of respondents describing it as very serious while a further 20 per cent defined it as quite serious. Three per cent opined that it was not that serious.

Table 4.3: Young people's perception of the seriousness of violence

	VERY SERIOUS	QUITE SERIOUS	NOT THAT SERIOUS
	%	%	%
Rape/sexual assault	94	3	1
Domestic violence	72	20	3
Racial violence	63	28	5
Drunken fights in pubs/clubs	43	42	13
Punch ups between people in school	27	53	18
Bullying	25	56	17
Physical fights between brothers/sisters	8	32	57
Bitching	6	26	64

No differences were recorded by social class in thoughts about the perceived seriousness of domestic violence. Girls were more likely than boys to describe it as very serious (79 per cent compared to 66 per cent) — however, the difference was largely comprised of 'quite serious' scores, rather than boys not seeing it as serious at all. Five per cent of boys (compared to just two per cent of girls) said that domestic violence *wasn't that serious*. As with a number of the items, views on perceived seriousness increased with age; at age 12 years, 55 per cent considered domestic violence *very serious* and 38 per cent, *quite serious*; at age 20 years, the numbers are 86 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.[12]

12 There may be a number of reasons for this finding. Perhaps the most straightforward explanation is that 12 year olds are not yet used to thinking about social problems and their relative seriousness.

Racial violence was described as very serious by 63 per cent of respondents, with only five per cent describing it as not that serious. There was a drop to 43 per cent describing drunken fights in pubs/clubs as very serious. About a quarter considered the (largely) school related items of punch-ups between people at school and bullying, as very serious. Only a small percentage viewed physical fights between brothers and sisters and 'bitching' as serious, with over half considering both of these items not that serious at all.

ATTITUDES TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE

The questions around attitudes to 'violence'[13] were designed to capture maximum differences that might exist and, therefore, rather than stay with acts of severe physical force to which most people would have similar attitudes, questions focused on more minor areas of conflict, dispute and use of force.

To elicit free and frank expression, respondents were asked (Q.10) about a series of 12 statements concerning the use of violence, gender relationships and tactics used in conflict.[14] The question sought estimates on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements. As Table 4.4 indicates, the strongest agreement was found with the statement: *unless you are defending yourself, there is never a good reason to slap another*. Overall, 79 per cent agreed with this statement—with slightly higher agreement among females.

Just under half the sample agreed with the next two statements: ie a person is not *responsible for what they do when drunk* and *men are unable to control their temper*. However, the proportion definitely agreeing was quite low, indicating that most felt both statements might only apply in certain cases. The lowest agreement was found with statements that excused violence (or poor behaviour generally).

For all the statements which could be seen to be pro-violence, or condoning violence, males were more likely to agree than females. This was most marked for: *it's not always wrong to hit someone, sometimes they provoke it*.

13 Inverted commas are used to convey the broader definition of the word, violence, which encompasses a range of actions such as non physical abuse that are not commonly associated with the label violence.

14 These questions were taken from a range of questionnaires that appeared, on the basis of the qualitative research, to be relevant and on which there was a variety of opinion among young Australians. The rationale for the selection of questions was described in an unpublished report on Stage One of the research.

Table 4.4: Young people's attitudes regarding use of violence

	TOTAL SAMPLE	MALES	FEMALES
	5014	2567	2446
	%	%	%
Unless you are defending yourself, there is never a good reason to slap another			
Definitely agree	35	33	37
Generally agree	44	43	45
Generally disagree	10	10	9
Definitely disagree	6	8*	5
Raising your voice at people makes them take notice of you			
Definitely agree	14	19*	9
Generally agree	42	43*	40
Generally disagree	26	22	31*
Definitely disagree	13	11	14*
It's not always wrong to hit someone, sometimes they provoke it			
Definitely agree	16	23*	9
Generally agree	36	39*	33
Generally disagree	24	20	28*
Definitely disagree	17	12	23*
Guys who get the most respect are those who will fight when they need to			
Definitely agree	10	15*	6
Generally agree	24	29*	18
Generally disagree	26	26	26
Definitely disagree	32	22	42*
It may not be right but threatening to hit someone gets you what you want			
Definitely agree	6	8*	4
Generally agree	19	22*	15
Generally disagree	30	31	29
Definitely disagree	39	32	46*
A person is not responsible for what they do when they are high or drunk			
Definitely agree	8	10*	5
Generally agree	14	15	13
Generally disagree	26	24	28*
Definitely disagree	47	46	48
Men are unable to control their temper			
Definitely agree	5	5	5
Generally agree	16	14	18*
Generally disagree	35	35	36
Definitely disagree	36	39*	32

* significantly different to results for other gender at 95 per cent confidence level

As well as differences of opinion between genders, other patterns that emerged were:

- higher agreement with the 'pro-violence' statements among younger ages (especially those aged 12–14 years). However, this was not true for: *men are unable to control their temper*, about which there was little variation in agreement by age or gender (about 70 per cent disagreeing)
- on some statements, respondents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, particularly those who had left school, were more likely to be in agreement (with pro-violence statements) than those of an upper socioeconomic or 'white collar' background, who had left school.

In constructing questionnaires, it was important to achieve a format that would be useful for the stated purposes of current research, and in particular, to develop a set of questions appropriate to Australian conditions and relevant areas for future prevention campaigns. As the construction drew on questions developed in previous studies of young people's attitudes to domestic violence, where these questions were used they also allowed limited international comparison. For example, three questions were adapted from Macgowan (1997) who researched attitudes in a high school in the United States. Macgowan conducted the survey in Opa-Locka, a city in northwest Metropolitan Dade County (Miami), Florida. The student body was primarily African-American, and the survey was conducted with passive consent. The students were of high school age (grades 6-8, ages 12–15 years, hence the lower end of the range in this study). The wording of the questions differed slightly and the response options were also slightly different. Macgowan posed questions allowing for the following four responses: 1= strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = disagree; 4 = strongly disagree. In this study, the following four responses were: 1 = definitely agree; 2= generally agree; 3 = generally disagree or 4 = strongly disagree.

The following table compares pre-treatment scores from Macgowan with this study (the CRC-Donovan research). The four responses are coded 1 to 4 so that a higher score represented an attitude more opposed to excusing violence. Averages across the sample were then calculated. Mindful of differences in response options and questions, the following scores show that Donovan's results are about on a par with Macgowan's pre-treatment scores.

	MACGOWAN (1997) OPA-LOCKA	CRC-DONOVAN AUSTRALIA
It's 'OK' for a boy to force/make a girl have sex with him if she has flirted with him or led him on	3.58	3.38
Most physical violence occurs in a dating relationship because a partner provoked (asked for) it	3.09	2.68
A person is not responsible for what they do when drunk	3.19	3.02

A similar question to the first of these three ('it's OK for a boy…') was asked in the 1992 survey by the Brisbane-based Domestic Violence Resource Centre (O'Connor 1992). O'Connor (1992) reported that about 33 per cent of Year Nine boys responded in the affirmative to the question: 'Is it okay for a boy to hold down a girl and force her to have sexual intercourse, if she led him on?' A similar question was asked in the 1997 South Australian Family Planning Association study (Friedman and Golding 1997). The survey found that almost a third of young men agreed that it was permissible to force a woman to have sex in some circumstances. In a study (Daws *et al* 1995) of a mixed group of 250 young people in south eastern Queensland and northern NSW, the statement was put: 'It's okay for a man to pressure a woman to have sex if …'. A number of circumstances were listed, including 'she's led him on', to which 29.7 per cent of the male sub group agreed. These studies indicate that about a third of boys endorse strong pro-sexual violence statements. However, these studies were carried out with special and/or localised samples. The result from this study, therefore, cannot be compared directly with previous studies that were largely unrepresentative of the general population of young people, or limited to particular groups. Of the present sample, boys aged 12 to 20 years, of those who responded, only 14 per cent said 'yes' to: 'it's okay for a boy to make a girl have sex with him if she has flirted with him or led him on'. This study's results clearly suggest a lower endorsement of pro-sexual violence attitudes among young people than the special groups measured in the earlier studies.

On attitudes to violence in general and to domestic violence, all respondents were presented with six statements (Q. 29) pertaining to various aspects of relationship violence, and asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed with each. The results are shown in Table 4.5.

The statements with the highest level of agreement were: *most physical violence occurs because a partner provoked it* and *when a girl hits a guy it's not really a big deal*. For the latter, 25 per cent agreed but 64 per cent disagreed. Agreement was higher among (31 per cent) males than females (19 per cent), and higher among perpetrators and victims of physical dating violence (34 per cent and 30 per cent respectively). Agreement was also somewhat higher for males and females aged 15 to 16 years than other age groups.

There were high levels of disagreement with all other statements (with only around five to 10 per cent agreeing) and significant rejection of situations where violence was presented as justifiable (eg because she had made him look stupid in front of his mates or because he was jealous) or for those to whom sexual pressure was applied.

Table 4.5: Young people's attitudes regarding use of dating violence

	TOTAL SAMPLE 5014	MALES 2567	FEMALES 2446
	%	%	%
If a guy hits a girl he loves because he is jealous, it shows how much he feels for her			
Definitely agree	3	4*	2
Generally agree	8	10*	6
Generally disagree	23	23	23
Definitely disagree	53	46	60*
Don't know	7	9	5
It's okay for a boy to make a girl have sex, if she's flirted with him, or led him on			
Definitely agree	3	4*	1
Generally agree	5	8*	2
Generally disagree	16	22*	11
Definitely disagree	65	52	79*
Don't know	5	7	3
When girl hits a guy it's really not a big deal			
Definitely agree	4	6*	2
Generally agree	21	25*	17
Generally disagree	31	29	32*
Definitely disagree	33	26	40*
Don't know	5	6	4
Most physical violence occurs in dating because a partner provoked it			
Definitely agree	4	5*	4
Generally agree	25	28*	21
Generally disagree	26	24	27*
Definitely disagree	24	19	29*
Don't know	15	17	14
It's alright for a guy to hit his girlfriend if she makes him look stupid in front of his mates			
Definitely agree	2	3*	1
Generally agree	3	4*	1
Generally disagree	16	20*	11
Definitely disagree	69	60	80*
Don't know	4	6	3
It's okay for a guy to put pressure on a girl to have sex but not to physically force her			
Definitely agree	3	5*	1
Generally agree	7	10*	3
Generally disagree	19	23*	14
Definitely disagree	60	47	74*
Don't know	5	7	4

* significantly different to results for other gender at 95 per cent confidence level

For all statements, males were more likely than females to agree, particularly for those relating to sex. Fifteen per cent of males agreed that it was *okay to put pressure on a girl to have sex but not to physically force her*; only four per cent of females agreed and 74 per cent disagreed strongly. A similar result was seen for: *it's okay for a boy to make a girl have sex if she's flirted or led him on*.

Significantly, young people from households where couple violence occurred were also likely to agree to the statements. One of the highest levels of agreement to the statement: *when a girl hits a guy it's not really a big deal*, came from those people who had experienced female to male physical domestic violence (31 per cent). This response suggested that such behaviour is not considered to be as serious as the comparable male to female behaviour.

Attitudes towards other forms of domestic violence, namely financial abuse, emotional abuse, restricting contact with family/friends and threatening behaviour, were collected *via* statements in which people stated whether they definitely agreed, agreed, generally disagreed or definitely disagreed. Respondents were also given the opportunity to choose 'didn't know'. In addition, attitudes on the effect of domestic violence on children were collected. The results are in Table 4.6.

From the table below, the following can be noted:

- The majority of respondents considered physical domestic violence, threatening behaviour and emotional abuse (in terms of restricting contact with family/friends), to be unacceptable.

Table 4.6: Young people's attitudes towards domestic violence

	DEFINITELY AGREE	GENERALLY AGREE	GENERALLY DISAGREE	DEFINITELY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
	%	%	%	%	%
If he's earning the family money, it's alright for a man to decide what his wife can and can't spend it on	4	17	36	35	6
It's alright for a man to restrict contact between his wife and her friends/family if he thinks they have a bad influence on her	3	9	26	50	10
It's alright for a man to threaten his wife as long as he doesn't actually hit her	2	6	30	56	3
Domestic violence harms the children more than the adults	37	45	6	2	6
It's best for someone my age to leave home if there is domestic violence going on	20	32	23	11	11
Domestic violence doesn't affect the school work of the kids involved	5	5	19	64	5
Abuse within the family is a private matter that should be handled within the family	9	18	31	33	7

While most people disagreed with the statement pertaining to financial control, 21 per cent agreed to some extent (29 per cent of males; 12 per cent of females).

- Young people believe that domestic violence had a major impact on the children involved, with 82% considering children are harmed more than adults, and 83% that school work is affected.
- Just over half (52 per cent) thought that it would be better for a young person of their age to leave home if violence was occurring. This belief increases with age, from 40 per cent among those aged 12–13 years to 63 per cent among the 19–20 year olds.
- Just over one-quarter of respondents (27 per cent) believe that abuse in the family is a private matter best handled within the family. However, a substantial proportion (64 per cent) disagreed with this view.

PERCEIVED INCIDENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Respondents were asked how common they thought domestic violence was and responded with one of four options from it *happens in most households* through to *it happens in hardly any households*. Table 4.7 outlines the proportions of respondents selecting each response, by the total sample and key sub groups.

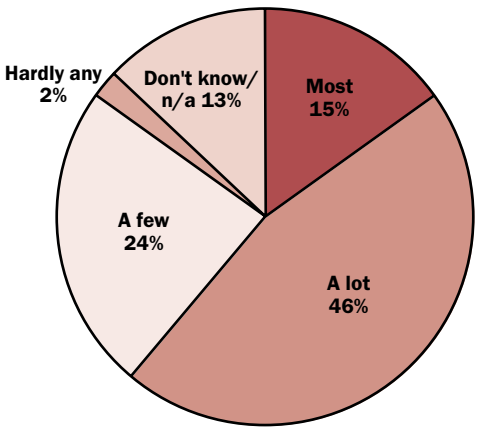
Table 4.7: Young people's perception of the incidence of domestic violence

	Happens in.....relationships				
	MOST	A LOT	A FEW	HARDLY ANY	DON'T KNOW
	%	%	%	%	%
Total Sample	**9**	**36**	**35**	**3**	**14**
Gender					
Male	9	30	38	5	15
Female	8	42	33	2	13
Age					
12 – 14 years	9	26	44	4	17
15 – 16 years	6	32	38	5	15
17 – 18 years	10	38	28	3	14
19 – 20 years	10	46	29	2	10
Socioeconomic status					
Upper/white collar	6	33	41	4	14
Lower/blue collar	10	38	34	3	13
ATSI Descent					
Yes	23	37	19	1	13
No	8	36	36	3	14
Awareness of parental domestic violence					
Male to female violence only	14	49	23	2	9
Female to male violence only	10	40	31	3	15
Couple violence	18	48	21	1	9

Nine per cent of young people consider that domestic violence happens in 'most' homes, with a further 36 per cent believing that it occurs in 'a lot' of homes. A similar proportion believe that it happens in 'a few' households with only three per cent saying 'hardly any'. One in seven people (higher among young teens), felt unable to respond. Even if we could quantify the terms 'a lot', 'most' and 'hardly any', it is difficult to gauge the accuracy of these perceptions because young people's views vary greatly about what constitutes domestic violence.

Some fairly predictable differences are apparent between groups. Girls, who appear to be generally more aware of domestic violence (both as an issue they have seen/heard about, and one which has directly affected them or their friends), believe that the incidence is higher, than do boys. Similarly, the perceived awareness of incidence of domestic violence increases with age. Those sub groups with higher levels of awareness of domestic violence at home were also more likely to say that domestic violence is more common generally (see Figure 4.1). This finding was most common among young people of ATSI descent, where 60 per cent believe that domestic violence happens in 'most' or 'a lot' of households.

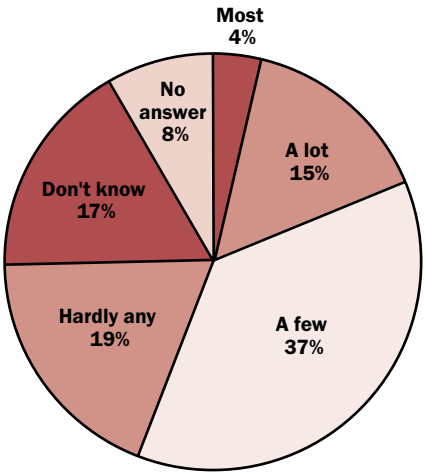
Figure 4.1: Perceived incidence of domestic violence among young people who have experienced domestic violence



When asked how common they thought dating violence was[15], four per cent of respondents said that they thought it occurred in 'most' relationships; 15 per cent in 'a lot' of relationships, 37 per cent in 'a few' and 19 per cent in 'hardly any'. Seventeen per cent said they 'didn't know' (See Figure 4.2). The perceived incidence of dating violence was considerably lower than the perceived rate of domestic violence, about which nine per cent believed it happened in 'most' households and 36 per cent in 'a lot'.

15 Question 28 was 'How common do you think violence is in dating relationships? Please tick the box to show how common you think physical violence is in relationships between people your age or a couple of years older than you'. Options were: 'it happens in most relationships', 'it happens in a lot of relationships', 'it happens in a few relationships', 'it happens in hardly any relationships', 'don't know'.

Figure 4.2: Perceived incidence of dating violence among young people.



By sub group, perceived incidence of dating violence followed the same patterns as perceived incidence of domestic violence, ie higher among females and older teens. Again those who have experienced some form of domestic violence perceive dating violence as more common (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Perceived incidence of dating violence among young people who have experienced domestic violence

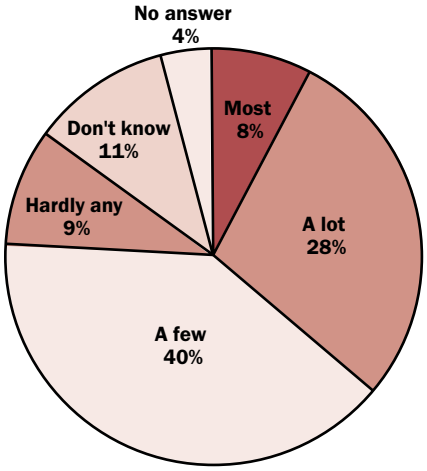


Table 4.8: Young people's perception of the incidence of dating violence

	Happens in.....relationships			
	MOST	A LOT	A FEW	HARDLY ANY
	%	%	%	%
Total sample	**4**	**15**	**37**	**19**
Male	4	11	35	21
Female	4	18	40	18
Aged 12–14 years	3	6	31	31
Aged 19–20 years	6	24	40	8
Perpetrator of dating violence	7	30	40	9
Victim of dating violence	8	28	40	9

Table 4.8 presents data on perceptions among various sub groups of the incidence of dating violence. Further analysis of the data revealed that 37 per cent of females aged 19–20 years believe dating violence occurs in most, or a lot of relationships, compared to 23 per cent of males of that age.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The media, particularly television, was cited most frequently by respondents as a source of information on domestic violence (Table 4.9). Over 70 per cent of people said that they had seen or heard about domestic violence in television shows, films/videos and the television news, with 71 per cent also mentioning newspaper stories. Books and magazines were mentioned by 56 per cent overall (females — 64 per cent; males — 48 per cent). These information sources were mentioned by a reasonably consistent proportion in various age groups, whereas mention of the other sources increased with age.

Forty-three per cent had heard of domestic violence from *friends talking about domestic violence* — higher among the girls (49 per cent) than boys (38 per cent). Other factors played a role: 44 per cent of respondents mentioned school lessons; 42 per cent cited advertising/information campaigns. While the other information sources had shown little variation by State, these two did, perhaps reflecting the difference in campaigns. Significantly, the effect of a Northern Territory public information campaign was apparent, with 63 per cent of young people in the Territory mentioning *advertising campaigns* and 58 per cent, *school lessons*. One or both of these appear to have successfully raised the salience of the issue among the target age group, as respondents there were also significantly more likely to say that they had heard friends talking about domestic violence (51 per cent).

Table 4.9: Sources of information about domestic violence for young people

	TOTAL SAMPLE 5014	MALE 2567	FEMALE 2446
	%	%	%
TV shows/dramas	79	77	82*
In films/videos	75	73	77
TV news	74	74	74
Stories in the newspaper	71	69	74*
In books/magazines	56	48	64*
From school lessons/social studies	44	43	45
In advertising/information campaigns	42	41	43
From friends talking about it	43	38	49*
From things that have happened in friends' families	36	31	41*
From discussions in your own family	26	22	29*
From things that have happened in your own family	17	14	20*

* significant difference between genders

In Western Australia where the domestic violence prevention campaign *Freedom From Fear* had been running for 12 months at the time of the survey, 56 per cent of respondents said they had seen/heard about domestic violence through an advertising campaign. Conversely, only 29 per cent of respondents in Victoria and Tasmania mentioned this information source.

More than one-third of respondents (36 per cent) mentioned 'things that have happened in friends' families' as being one way where they had seen/heard about domestic violence, with this finding significantly higher among females (Table 4.9). 'Discussions in their own family or home' and 'things that have happened in their own family or own home' were cited in 26 per cent and 17 per cent of cases respectively. Again, such responses were considerably more likely to be provided by females.

Respondents from homes of lower socioeconomic status were less likely to mention the various forms of media as sources of information but more likely to cite personal sources (friends' families, own family). Similarly, young people of ATSI descent were significantly less likely to mention media sources, but 30 per cent included events in their own home as a source. People who later said that they were aware of physical domestic violence being perpetrated against their mother/stepmother were more likely than other groups to mention that they had seen/heard about domestic violence at home. Of this group, 41 per cent said that they knew about domestic violence because of events at home and 36 per cent said there had been discussions in their own family.

PERCEIVED REASONS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Respondents were presented with a list of potential 'causes' of domestic violence, with the following question:

> *What do you think are the causes of domestic violence? Below are some reasons other people have given. For each, please tick whether you think this is a common cause of domestic violence, an occasional cause or something that doesn't really cause domestic violence. Please remember this is not a test, we are just interested in your opinion.*

The 13 items listed as potential causes were developed from the existing body of knowledge and the initial qualitative research regarding underlying causes of domestic violence and the 'triggers' of violent incidents. Table 4.10 shows the responses to each at a total sample level.

Table 4.10: Young people's perceptions of the causes of domestic violence

	COMMON CAUSE	OCCASIONAL CAUSE	NOT REALLY A CAUSE
	%	%	%
Having grown up in a violent household	63	27	7
Being drunk	63	28	6
One partner having sex with someone else	59	31	7
Using drugs	53	35	9
The man wanting to prove he's boss/in control	41	39	16
Not enough money/financial hardship	37	41	18
Gambling	36	45	15
Stresses at home (kids crying, dinner burnt etc)	32	46	19
Being under stress at work	30	46	21
One partner flirting with other people	25	53	18
The woman wanting to prove she's boss/ in control	25	46	25
Boredom/frustration in the relationship	18	42	35
Continuous nagging	15	45	36

The most common causes of domestic violence were *having grown up in a violent household* and *being drunk*, followed by *one partner having sex with someone else*. Each of these was nominated as a cause by at least 90 per cent of the sample, with 88 per cent nominating *using drugs*. Of these perceived most common reasons for domestic violence, one is an underlying factor inherent in the make up of the individual and three are situational factors, one of which is related to a response to another's 'wrong doing' with two linked to an individual's lack of control. Hence, young people may see the triggers for domestic violence as being similar to those for other types of violence.

Forty-one per cent identified *male desire for control* as a common cause, a further 39 per cent nominating it as an occasional cause. Exactly one-quarter (25 per cent) of respondents put forward: *woman wanting to prove she's boss/in control* as a reason for domestic violence; a further 25 per cent opined that this was not a cause.

Not enough money, gambling, and *stress* issues (both at home and work) all featured substantially. Fifty-nine per cent of young people considered, *one partner having sex with someone else* to be a common cause of domestic violence. And, while 25 per cent considered one partner *flirting with other people* to be a frequent cause, more than double that figure (53 per cent) saw this as an occasional cause of domestic violence. All of the items listed were more frequently considered to be an occasional cause of domestic violence than not really a cause.

Between the genders, there were more commonalities than differences in responses to this question, setting it apart from many of the attitudes concerning acceptability and prevalence.

ATTITUDES TO GENDER ROLES

The literature review clearly showed that attitudes that strongly 'support' domestic violence are closely associated with notions about supporting male dominance of females (patriarchy). An examination of Australian young people's attitudes regarding gender roles is crucial therefore in understanding the underlying sources of domestic violence. Such scrutiny would be vital for policy makers in the area of domestic violence prevention.

Table 4.11 details young people's attitudes on gender roles. Four of the five attitudes related to traditional male/female roles, with the last exploring perceptions of male views on gender equality.

Table 4.11: Young people's attitudes regarding gender roles

	TOTAL SAMPLE 5014	MALES 2567	FEMALES 2446
	%	%	%
Girls prefer a guy to be in charge of the relationship			
Definitely agree	5	7*	3
Generally agree	15	18*	11
Generally disagree	28	27	30*
Definitely disagree	34	20	48*
Don't know	18	28*	7
Overall, there are more things that men are better at than women			
Definitely agree	8	14*	3
Generally agree	17	24*	10
Generally disagree	25	25	25
Definitely disagree	40	23	58*
Don't know	8	12*	4
Women should be responsible for raising children and doing housework			
Definitely agree	5	8*	2
Generally agree	12	17*	8
Generally disagree	26	30*	22
Definitely disagree	53	40	66*
Don't know	3	4*	1
Men should take control in relationships and be head of the household			
Definitely agree	8	13*	3
Generally agree	17	24*	9
Generally disagree	27	28	27
Definitely disagree	40	25	56*
Don't know	7	9*	4
Nowadays, guys realise that girls are their equals			
Definitely agree	22	30*	14
Generally agree	48	46	50*
Generally disagree	16	11	21*
Definitely disagree	5	4	6*
Don't know	8	8	8

* significantly different to results for other gender at 95% confidence level

One in five people responded to each of the first four statements in a way that supported traditional gender roles. One in four agreed that *there are more things that men are better at than women* and nearly one in six considered that *women should be responsible for raising children and doing housework* — however, there was also strong disagreement on this statement, with 53 per cent definitely disagreeing.

For these four statements, males were significantly more likely to agree with (and support) a 'traditional' view of gender roles and male superiority. Across genders, the different agreement levels was notable for, *overall there are more things that men are better at than women* (agreement from 38 per cent of males and 13 per cent of females) and *men should take control in relationships* and *be head of the household* (males — 37 per cent; females — 12 per cent). In each case, more males disagreed than agreed.

The statement, *nowadays guys realise that girls are their equals* was supported by males, with 76 per cent agreeing (of whom 30 per cent definitely agreed). Females were not quite so sure that males regarded them as equals; 64 per cent agreed overall, but only 14 per cent definitely agreed. Only six per cent of males and four per cent of females definitely disagreed with this statement. The proportion saying they 'didn't know' was the same across genders.

Across social class, there was little difference in attitudes among the young people. However, when broken down by those **at school** (where the assignation of socioeconomic status is by school, not individual) and **not at school**, a clearer pattern emerged. Non school respondents of lower socioeconomic background were more likely to agree with *overall there are more things that men are better at* (25 per cent compared to 13 per cent of those who had left school and of a higher socioeconomic background), and, *men should take control and be head of the household* (27 per cent compared to 19 per cent). The latter statement was also significantly more likely to be agreed to by those attending private schools (29 per cent agree).

Location-wise — whether the young person lived in the city, a large town or small town or country area — no differences in attitudes were recorded. Where any notable differences appeared, they are identified in the text.

THE ACCEPTABILITY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Previous research in Australia revealed that a very high proportion of young people found domestic violence to be unacceptable behaviour. This study's initial qualitative research reinforced this belief, finding that there were very few situations, if any, where domestic violence was considered to be even slightly acceptable. However, while most young people felt that domestic violence under any circumstances or provocation was not acceptable, there were some instances when they considered that it might be justifiable. Hence, while they may disagree with the nature of the response to the situation, they could empathise with the desire to respond. The extent of their understanding or acceptance of domestic violence appears to vary, more significantly with its context than by the individual's beliefs regarding its general appropriateness.

Given the lack of sensitivity in measuring the acceptability or the justifiability of domestic violence, a measurement of this 'empathy', under different circumstances, was considered useful in getting beyond the 'floor' effect inherent in any question about the 'rights' and 'wrongs' of domestic violence. As no scale or objective measure was available which explores empathy as well as the justifiability or acceptability of domestic violence, the following questions were constructed based on the qualitative research.[16] Option A is read as indicating

16 The concept of the 'justifiability' of violence and why it is so important to the current project was discussed in the unpublished report for Stage One.

that the behaviour is 'acceptable or appropriate'; Option B is read as indicating that the behaviour is 'justifiable'; Option C is read as indicating that the behaviour is 'not justifiable but there is some empathy with the offender'; Option D is read as indicating that the behaviour is 'not justifiable and the behaviour of the offender is rejected':

> *The next questions are about conflicts or violence between men and women who are **married to each other** or **living together**.*
>
> *Here are some situations in which some **men** may hit their **female partner.** For each situation, please tell us whether you think:*
>
> *a) given how she has behaved, he is **right to hit her**; or*
>
> *b) he's got a **good reason** to hit her but it's not the best way of dealing with it; or*
>
> *c) he **shouldn't** hit her but you can understand why he might want to; or*
>
> *d) he just **shouldn't** hit her.*

Nine situations were then described and for each, the respondent selected their response from the four above (plus 'don't know').

An identical question was asked in relation to *some women hitting their male partners*. There was clearly the potential for bias from the order of the questions (ie having said that it is 'acceptable' for women to behave in one way, a respondent is more likely to give a similar response in relation to a man's behaviour and vice versa — despite what he/she actually thinks). Therefore, two versions of the questionnaire were produced (explained in the methodology). In one, statements regarding male to female violence appeared first; in the other, those regarding female to male violence, to be distributed randomly among the respondent group.

This question, relating as it does to different acts of male to female and female to male violence, and the acceptability, justifiability, or otherwise, of each act, is one of the most important in the survey and the one on which the subsequent attitudinal clusters were developed.

The responses to the two questions for the total sample are in Tables 4.12 and 4.13. The tables are ordered such that the situation under which ***hitting*** is seen as least appropriate or justifiable are at the top (based on the proportion saying 'right to hit' and 'just shouldn't hit'), proceeding to those situations where hitting the partner is most widely seen to be appropriate or justifiable.

Table 4.12: The extent that young people accept or justify male to female domestic violence under different circumstances

	RIGHT TO HIT HER	HAS GOOD REASON TO HIT HER	SHOULDN'T HIT HER BUT UNDERSTAND	JUST SHOULDN'T HIT HER	DON'T KNOW
	%	%	%	%	%
Refuses to have sex with him	3	3	11	77	4
Argues with/refuses to obey him	2	3	16	75	3
Keeps nagging him	2	4	17	72	4
Calls him useless, good for nothing	3	10	33	47	4
Accuses him of having sex with another woman when he hasn't	5	10	26	51	5
Wastes a lot of money on gambling/drugs	6	15	36	37	4
Throws something at him	9	20	32	32	4
Admits to having sex with another man	12	18	34	30	5
She hits him	16	22	29	27	4

Table 4.13: The extent that young people accept or justify female to male domestic violence under different circumstances

	RIGHT TO HIT HIM	HAS GOOD REASON TO HIT HIM	SHOULDN'T HIT HIM BUT UNDERSTAND	JUST SHOULDN'T HIT HIM	DON'T KNOW
	%	%	%	%	%
Refuses to have sex with her	5	5	12	71	5
Argues with/refuses to obey her	2	4	20	67	4
Keeps nagging her	2	5	23	63	4
Calls her useless, good for nothing	8	18	35	33	4
Accuses her of having sex with another man when she hasn't	9	15	28	40	6
Wastes a lot of money on gambling/drugs	10	22	34	28	3
Throws something at her	22	21	29	22	4
Admits to having sex with another woman	22	26	26	20	4
He hits her	39	21	18	15	4

The situations where violence is deemed more or less appropriate, justifiable or understandable, are largely as would be expected. Actions which do not involve any physical violence, and indeed which would at times occur in most intimate relationships, are those where the idea of hitting the partner is the most widely rejected, occasionally being understandable but rarely justifiable or appropriate. Conversely, situations of physical violence (particularly where one has been hit), and sexual infidelity, are those where a physical response is often deemed appropriate, or at least justifiable (see Tables 4.12 and 4.13).

The pattern of responses on whether hitting one's partner is acceptable, justifiable, understandable or simply unacceptable, is very similar for male to female violence and female to male violence. Hence, the acceptability of domestic violence is situational but not gender situational — there is little variation between the relative acceptability of the situations[17] based on whom the violence is directed.

While the relative 'acceptability' of hitting in these situations may be similar for males and females, the absolute levels reported are quite different, with female to male violence being considered more appropriate or justifiable than male to female for each situation measured. The difference is very small for situations where violence is deemed to be inappropriate — hence five per cent think a man is right to or has good reason to hit his female partner if she *argues with him or refuses to obey him*, and six per cent consider the same for a woman under comparable circumstances.

For items where a greater proportion of the respondents think that the situation offers a right or good reason to hit, a much more substantial difference between the views of each gender was noted. A significantly larger proportion of respondents considered that a violent response by a woman either to be her right, or to constitute a good reason to do so, for all but the first three items. This apparent disparity in what is deemed to be appropriate behaviour by gender, is noted across all sub group analysis. Males, and females, are more likely to say a woman is *right to*, or has *good reason to*, respond to a situation by hitting, than a man in the same situation.

When the responses to the situations of female to male violence are cross-tabulated with those for male to female violence, only about one-third of those respondents who say a female is 'right' to hit a man under particular circumstances also say that a man is 'right' to hit the female under the same circumstances. Up to one-third say that he *just shouldn't hit her*, despite having said that she is 'right' to hit him for the same 'offence'. This apparent disparity is most marked for, *argues with/refuses to obey*, and *keeps nagging* and *refuses to have sex*. For the latter, 48 per cent of those who say she is right to hit him for refusing to have sex with her say that he *just shouldn't* hit her.

Conversely, this apparent inequality appears least for *admits to having sex with another* and *wastes money on gambling etc*; however, in both instances only 44 per cent of those saying she is right to hit him also say he is right to hit her.

17 Between the sexes, there is some variation in the relative acceptability of hitting in response to being hit, infidelity and having something thrown at one. It appears that relative to these others, and indeed to some of the less acceptable reasons for hitting, sexual infidelity appears to provide more 'justification' for a man to hit an unfaithful female than a female to hit an unfaithful male.

Overall, for situations where men might hit their female partners:

- thirty-five per cent of respondents said that the man 'just shouldn't hit her' to all nine situations presented
- twenty-three per cent of respondents said that the man would be 'right to hit her' in at least one of the situations presented
- forty-nine per cent said that he would be right to, or have a good reason to hit her, in at least one of the situations presented.

In situations where women might hit their male partners:

- twenty-five per cent of respondents said that the woman 'just shouldn't hit him' to all nine situations presented
- forty-five per cent of respondents said that the woman would be 'right to hit him' in at least one of the situations presented (almost double the corresponding figure for men hitting women)
- sixty-eight per cent said that she would be right to, or have a good reason to, hit him in at least one of the situations presented.

ATTITUDE CLUSTERS

To identify groups or segments of young people with similar attitudes towards domestic violence, a mathematical technique (clustering) was performed in relation to the responses to the nine questions discussed in the last section. A highly reliable cluster solution, with repeat validity amongst separate, random sub-samples of 600 young people was developed.

Three clusters emerged which could be described as follows:

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	SIZE
Cluster 1:		
Supportive of female to male violence	Attitudes to male to female violence average; stronger support for female to male violence	N=2069 41% of sample
Cluster 2:		
Negative to violence by both sexes	Attitudes to male to female violence female to male violence negative and (ie low support for any violence)	N= 1682 34% of sample
Cluster 3:		
More supportive of violence by both sexes	Attitudes to male to female violence and female to male violence positive (ie relatively high support for violence)	N= 1117 22% of sample

Acceptability of domestic violence situations, by cluster

Tables 4.14 and 4.15 show the proportion of respondents in each cluster who consider that firstly, a male, and secondly, a female is right to, or has good reason to, hit their partner in given situations. The items are displayed in the same order as considered in the previous section, ie of increasing acceptability of hitting among the whole sample.

Table 4.14: The extent to which young people accept or justify male to female domestic violence under varying circumstances, by attitudinal cluster — proportion saying right to/has good reason to hit

	CLUSTER 1: SUPPORTIVE OF MALE VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 2: AGAINST VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 3: SUPPORTIVE OF VIOLENCE
	%	%	%
Argues with/refuses to obey him	1	1	17
Keeps nagging him	1	1	23
Refuses to have sex with him	3	–	19
Calls him useless, good for nothing	4	1	53
Accuses him of having sex with another woman when he hasn't	5	1	56
Wastes a lot of money on gambling/drugs	12	2	67
Throws something at him	26	1	83
Admits to having sex with another man	25	4	81
Hits him	43	5	82

Table 4.15: The extent that young people accept or justify female to male domestic violence under different circumstances, by attitudinal cluster — proportion saying right to/has good reason to hit

	CLUSTER 1: SUPPORTIVE OF FEMALE VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 2: AGAINST VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 3: SUPPORTIVE OF VIOLENCE
	%	%	%
Argues with/refuses to obey her	5	1	19
Keeps nagging her	5	–	25
Refuses to have sex with her	8	2	25
Calls her useless, good for nothing	27	1	66
Accuses her of having sex with another man when she hasn't	22	1	65
Wastes a lot of money on gambling/drugs	33	2	74
Throws something at her	66	3	77
Admits to having sex with another woman	55	5	85
Hits her	85	16	87

Cluster 1 is more supportive of females using violence than males and is also the largest of the three clusters, comprising 41 per cent of the sample group. For each item, the majority of this cluster believes male to female violence to be unjustifiable. However, 43 per cent see it as a right or a justifiable response if the female has hit him, as do one-quarter in situations where she has been unfaithful or thrown something at him. For female violence directed at males, the vast majority of the cluster (85 per cent) think that she is *right to/has good reason to hit* him if he hits her while 66 per cent and 55 per cent respectively think that throwing something and infidelity would warrant a similar response. Only a small proportion think that a woman is *right to/has good reason to hit* in response to nagging, arguing, or a refusal to have sex.

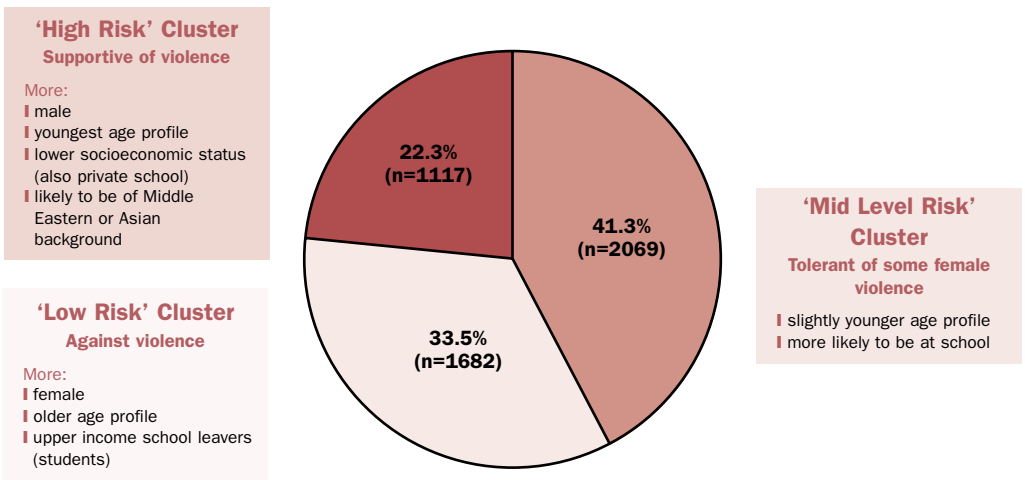
Members of Cluster 2 (who are against violence by both sexes) rarely consider that any situation deems hitting, appropriate or justifiable. The only instance where more than five per cent of this cluster considers hitting to be at least justifiable, is for a woman defending herself from a man who hit her — and only 16 per cent believe a physical retaliation is justified.

By contrast, even for the less concerning behaviours, a considerable proportion of Cluster 3 respondents (those in agreement with the use of violence), believe hitting to be an appropriate or justifiable response. Between one in six and one in four say the male is *right to/has good reason to hit* in response to arguing, nagging or refusing sex. This proportion increases if the man's worth is called into question, with 53 per cent saying he is *right to/has good reason to hit* her if she calls him useless. This increase is greater than that among the total sample, suggesting that this insult strikes members of this cluster as particularly offensive and deserving of reaction. A similar proportion (56 per cent) believe that he is *right to/has good reason to hit* if he is wrongly accused of infidelity. Over 80 per cent believe a physical response is justified, or even appropriate, if she is violent or has been unfaithful.

Demographic profile of clusters

The demographic profile of the clusters appears in Table 4.16 where they are compared to the total sample. These results are depicted in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Demographic Profile of Attitudinal Clusters



Cluster 1: Supportive of (some) female violence but against male violence. This group is not particularly distinguishable by any strong demographic factors. It is reasonably representative in sex and age (slightly younger than the overall population) and hence is slightly more likely to be at school.

Cluster 2: Opposed to violence by both sexes. This cluster, which given its negative attitude towards the use of violence in intimate relationships, is the one of least concern. It is most strongly characterised by an older age profile. Sixty-four per cent of this attitudinal cluster are aged 17 years or older, compared to 46 per cent of the whole population group. They are less likely to be at school (only 39 per cent are still at school, compared to 55 per cent overall) though a high proportion were students (32 per cent).

Table 4.16: Profile of young people's attitudinal clusters [18]

	TOTAL SAMPLE	CLUSTER 1: SUPPORTIVE OF FEMALE VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 2: AGAINST VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 3: SUPPORTIVE OF VIOLENCE
	5014	2069	1682	1117
	%	% [(a)]	% [(b)]	% [(c)]
Gender				
Male	51	50	46 [(a)]	60 [(ab)]
Female	49	50 [(c)]	54 [(ab)]	40
Age				
12 – 14 years	30	32 [(b)]	17	50 [(ab)]
15 – 16 years	23	26 [(b)]	21	23
17 – 18 years	23	23 [(a)]	28 [(ac)]	17
19 – 20 years	23	20 [(c)]	36 [(ac)]	11
Work/student status				
At school	55	61 [(b)]	39	72 [(ac)]
Working (full/part time)	14	13 [(b)]	20 [(ac)]	8
Student	22	18 [(b)]	32 [(ac)]	14
Unemployed	11	11	15 [(ac)]	9
Socioeconomic status-summary				
Upper income/white collar	32	35 [(bc)]	27	39 [(ab)]
Lower income/blue collar	53	53	54	52

continued over page

18 'Europe' indicates continental Europe (excludes United Kingdom and Ireland). 'Asia' indicates India/Sri Lanka, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam or other Asian country. 'Middle East' indicates a Middle East Country (eg Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt).

	TOTAL SAMPLE	CLUSTER 1: SUPPORTIVE OF FEMALE VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 2: AGAINST VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 3: SUPPORTIVE OF VIOLENCE
	5014	2069	1682	1117
	%	% [a]	% [b]	% [c]
School/socioeconomic classification				
Private school	18	20 [b]	12	25 [ab]
All schools — upper income area	25	28 [bc]	16	35 [ab]
All schools — lower income area	27	31 [b]	19	34 [b]
Left school, upper income/white collar	8	7 [c]	11 [ab]	4
Left school, lower income/blue collar	26	22 [c]	34 [ab]	18
Birthplace — Male Carer				
Australia	59	61 [c]	58	55
Europe	18	17	17	15
Asia	4	4	3	8 [ab]
Middle East	2	1	1	3 [ab]
Birthplace — Female Carer				
Australia	63	66 [c]	63	59
Europe	15	15 [c]	19 [ac]	12
Asia	6	4	4	10 [ab]
Middle East	2	1	1	3 [ab]

a/b/c signifies significantly different from the result in that column at 95% confidence level

Surprisingly, this cluster has the largest variance between the proportions of low socioeconomic and high socioeconomic respondents, with a somewhat smaller 'white collar' proportion, than the total sample.

Cluster 3: Supportive of violence by both sexes. Of very high concern and where intervention is most required, this cluster is characterised by its bias towards young males, with 50 per cent aged 12–14 years and 60 per cent male. Given this age profile, nearly three-quarters were still at school. The cluster had higher proportions than the others of young people at school, and fewer who have left school. This group also had higher proportions of young people with a female carer born in Asia and with a male carer born in Asia or the Middle East.

This group is also more likely to be aware that physical domestic violence had been perpetrated against their mother, or stepmother, or between both their parents, or between a parent and partner. A higher proportion of this cluster than in the total sample are from a white collar (ie upper socioeconomic) stratum (Table 4.17).

Experiential profile

Along with demographic characteristics, the attitudinal clusters were profiled against experience of domestic violence, and also the other parental 'risk' behaviours of hitting the children for *reasons other than bad behaviour* and *being drunk a lot* (see Table 4.17)

Table 4.17: Young people's experience of violence and other risk behaviours by attitudes

	TOTAL SAMPLE	CLUSTER 1: SUPPORTIVE OF FEMALE VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 2: AGAINST VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 3: SUPPORTIVE OF VIOLENCE
	5014	2069	1682	1117
	%	%	%	%
Experience of Domestic Violence				
Male to female violence only	9	8	10*	11*
Female to male violence only	8	8	8	7
Couple violence	14	15	13	16*
Male Carer Risk Behaviour				
Gets drunk of lot	10	10	8	14*
Hits you/sibling for reasons other than bad behaviour	7	7	6	11*
Female Carer Risk Behaviour				
Gets drunk of lot	5	5	4	6
Hits you/sibling for reasons other than bad behaviour	5	5	3	7*

* statistically significant at 0.05 level

There is some evidence that higher levels of violence occurred in homes where young people hold attitudes more supportive of violence (Cluster 3). The incidence of male to female and couple violence was higher in these homes, as was the incidence of a male or female parent or carer drinking to excess and hitting the children. However, while the incidence may be higher, there was only a small percentage of young people in the *positive to violence* cluster affirming such occurrences in their home. The vast majority of the cluster held these attitudes for reasons other than that of modelling what was seen at home.

ANALYSIS OF THE ATTITUDE CLUSTERS

It is considerably value to attempt to understand which multiple demographic and experiential variables most influence, or predict, into which cluster a young person is likely to fall. To this end, three discriminant analyses were undertaken on the attitudinal cluster solution. They attempted to identify:

1. demographic variables that could influence cluster membership
2. experiential variables and relevant attitudes (to issues other than domestic violence) that could influence cluster membership
3. a combination of 1 and 2.

The results of these analyses are given in a line graph and by description.

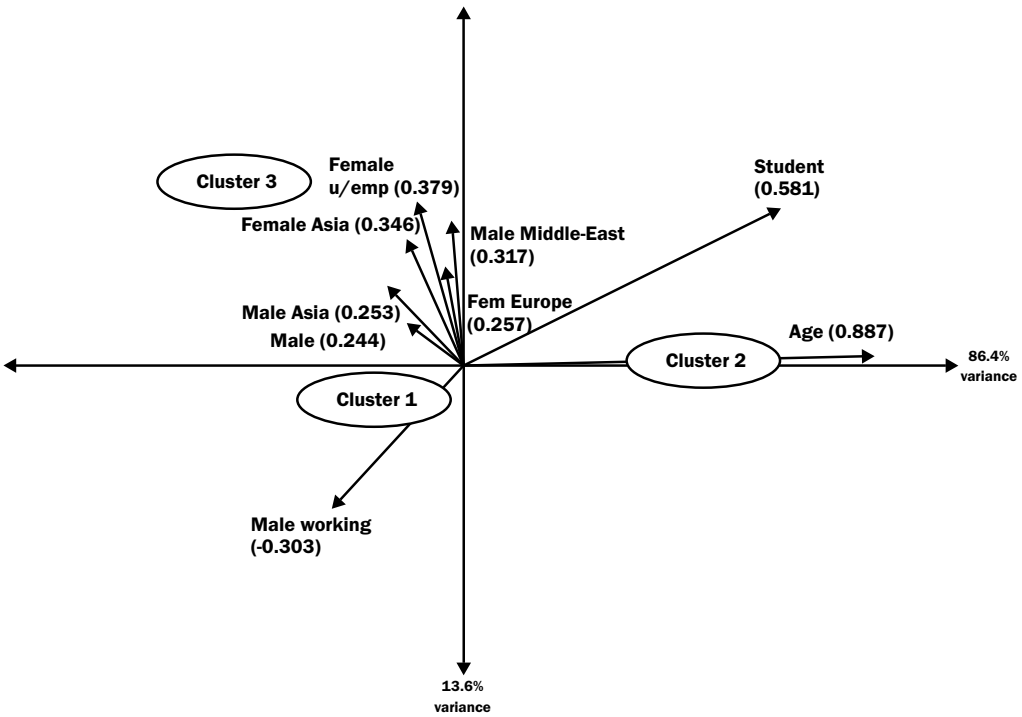
Reading the graphs

Each graph (Figures 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7) depicts one of the three analyses reduced to two dimensions. Each of the clusters is plotted, its position being determined by the two functions which form the x and y axes. The functions are most simply thought of as composite variables that provide the best explanation of why, based on the variables in the analysis, that one person would fall in one cluster and another into a different cluster.

The vectors are the individual demographic variables such as age, sex, etc. Their direction, position and length all indicate the extent to which they are correlated with the function to which they lie closest. Their discriminant loading, ie the extent to which they 'load on to' or are correlated with the function with which they are more closely associated, is given at the end of the vector. Only those variables that have a significant influence on the function are plotted.

To see where a cluster 'sits' on any one vector (eg a vector for age, whether the cluster is associated with a younger or older age group), a line is dropped from the cluster to hit the vector at right angles.

Figure 4.5: Analysis One — The influence of demographic variables



Analysis One: The influence of demographic variables

Two functions emerged, the first and dominant one explaining 86.4 per cent of the reason for cluster membership, the other explaining 13.6 per cent of cluster membership.

As can be seen in the graph, the dominant function was most highly correlated with age. Hence as seen in the cross tabulations, Cluster 2 is located close to the older end of the vector, Cluster 3 being at the younger end.

The second strongest loading was with being a student. Other working status variables were not significant, but the discriminant analysis identified being a student as predicting membership of Cluster 2 – the negative to violence cluster. One could hypothesise that those in tertiary education, as well as being more educated, are continuing to work alongside the opposite sex with greater equality than perhaps occurs in some workplaces.

Five demographic variables were associated with the second function, all relating to parental characteristics, rather than to those of the children. These were: father (or other male carer with whom the young person lived) being born in a Middle Eastern country; mother (or other female carer with whom the young person lived) and father being born in an Asian country; mother being from a European country other than the United Kingdom, and, mother being unemployed. The existence of any of these factors was more likely to result in membership of Cluster 3, the 'risk' cluster most positive to violence.

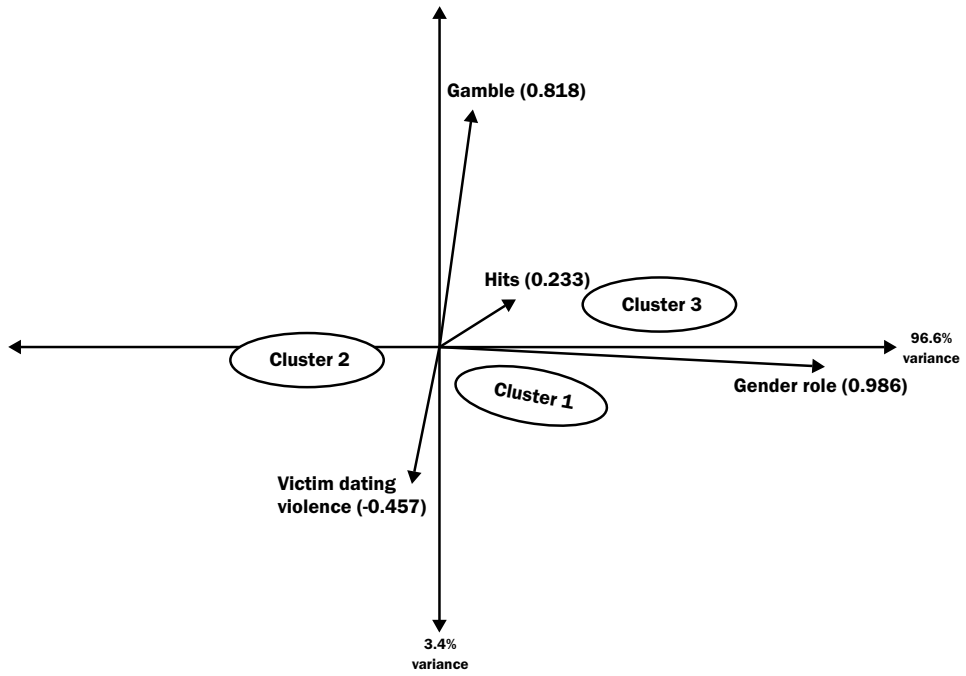
Analysis Two: The influence of experience/other attitudes

This analysis did not predict or explain cluster membership quite as well as the demographic analysis. The main function here was very dominant, explaining 96.6 per cent of cluster membership, with the secondary function just 3.4 per cent. One attitudinal variable that loaded very strongly on to the main function (0.986) was a composite variable that identified whether respondents agreed with traditional gender roles and attitudes. Those who held such traditional views were likely to be in the 'positive to violence' cluster.

The main correlate with the second function was whether the young person had grown up in a household where gambling was commonplace. A second risk factor (hitting children), was also significant. The risk of being a victim of dating violence was also significant, and most closely associated with Cluster 2 – the negative to violence cluster. Here, significant linkage between attitudes towards domestic violence and experiences in a dating relationship occurred.

Other significant attitudinal/experiential items related to experience of the male or female parent (carer) hitting the children, or gambling. Immoderate drinking and substance abuse also correlated with the second function, but insignificantly, and was not displayed. Being a victim of dating violence was also a significant correlate. However, witnessing parental domestic violence did not significantly correlate with cluster membership. This is consistent both with earlier, and with qualitative research, which found that exposure to domestic violence may make a young person **more accepting** of domestic violence (ie as an effective strategy to deal with conflict, get one's own way etc) or **highly intolerant** of such violence, having experienced its damaging effects.

Figure 4.6: Analysis Two – The influence of experience/other attitudes



Analysis Three: The influence of demographic variables and experience/attitudes

This third analysis in which all factors were placed provided the strongest explanation of cluster membership.

The main function (covering 89.2 per cent of the explanation given by the analysis) was significantly correlated to three of the four strong variables seen in individual analyses: age, holding traditional views of gender roles, and in tertiary education. In this combined analysis, being employed also emerged as significant. Attendance at a private school or government blue collar school were also correlated, but appeared to be insignificant.

Items significantly correlated to the second function were those seen in the other analyses, ie father from the Middle East or Asia, a mother from Europe (excluding the United Kingdom), parental gambling, mother unemployed, or being male. As well, own perpetration of dating violence emerged, but the correlation was weak.

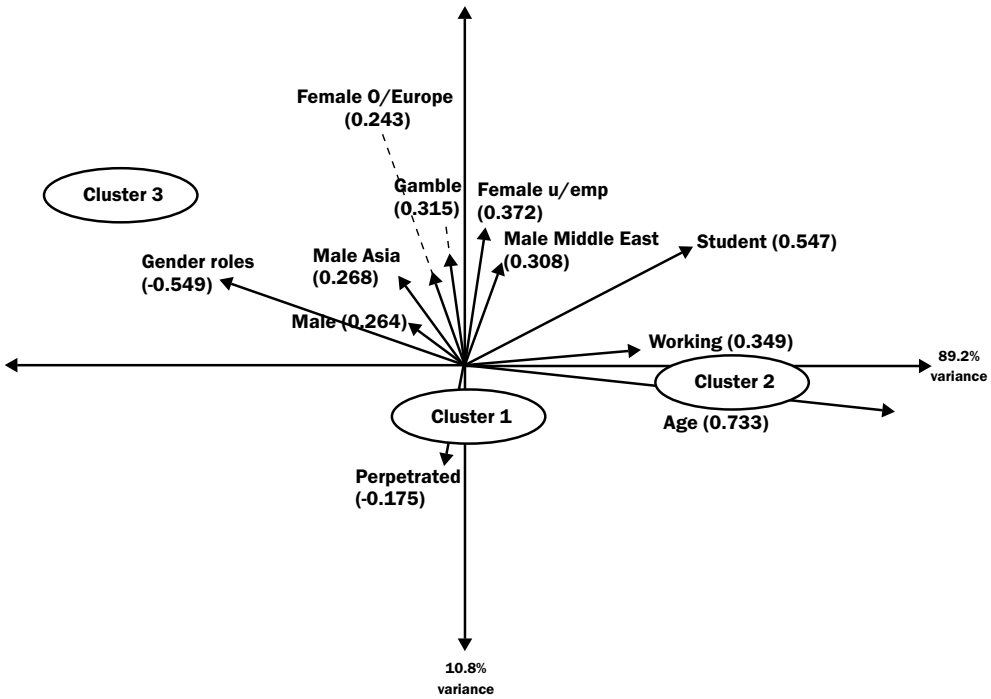
To provide an understanding of the relative role that all of these variables played in determining cluster membership, a potency index was calculated. This index provides the **total discriminatory effect** of each significant variable within the analysis by taking into account both the variable's discriminatory loading (the value shown on each line on the graphs) and the relative explanatory power of the two functions. The reader is reminded that the resultant index is useful for providing the **relative influence** of the variables. The numbers in themselves are of no meaning.

For the third analysis the results are presented in Table 4.18:

Table 4.18: Potency of demographic factors and experiential/attitudinal variables

VARIABLES	VALUE
Age	0.480
Student	0.283
Holds traditional gender roles	0.276
Self working	0.109
Attends school in lower socioeconomic area	0.104
Self unemployed	0.042
Gender	0.030
Mother/female carer from Asia	0.022
Father/male carer unemployed	0.014
Parent(s) gamble a lot	0.011
Father/male carer from Middle Eastern country	0.011

Figure 4.7: Analysis Three — The influence of demographic variables and experience/attitudes



This analysis emphasises the importance of age in determining cluster membership and also if the respondent has traditional or stereotypical views about gender roles. Continuation into tertiary education is also of significant influence.

Along with age, other factors affecting cluster membership (and would affect the second of these three items) also relate to the life stage (ie work or student status) of the young person and their home situation (parents' ethnicity and working status). These are of much lesser influence than the first three items as indicated by their relative potency scores. However, these secondary factors show that ethnicity, specifically Middle Eastern or Asian, has a significant effect on attitudes towards violence in intimate relationships, and the cluster profiles show such ethnicity predicates the young person towards attitudes which are supportive of such violence.

Although not shown in Table 4:18, the analysis also showed that one's mother being unemployed (and to a lesser extent being a full time homemaker) has some influence. Arguably, in both situations, the ability of the woman to establish equality with a male breadwinner is limited because of lesser financial independence and a greater likelihood of doing 'traditional' female tasks.

Finally, parental behaviours such as gambling, getting drunk a lot and taking drugs, appear either to be directly influencing the young person's attitude towards violence or, more likely, are associated with a lifestyle or set of values which is accepting of violence.

THE POSITIVE TO VIOLENCE OR 'HIGH RISK' CLUSTER

Of the three clusters identified, it is clearly within Cluster Three that prevention and intervention strategies will need to be concentrated.

Experience of Violence

There was a significant difference in the extent to which members of this cluster had personally experienced: *physical fights between siblings, punch-ups at school and racial violence*. The extent to which they may have experienced some of the other types of violence may have been negated (at the total cluster level) by their younger age profile. However, overall there is no evidence that their attitudes result from a greater exposure to violence in general.

Attitudes to Violence

In terms of the perceived seriousness of the types of violence discussed earlier, this high risk group was significantly less likely than the total sample (and hence the other clusters) to consider, as very serious, racial violence, rape/sexual assault and domestic violence. However, 91 per cent of the cluster still considered rape to be very serious. Sixty per cent considered domestic violence very serious, compared to 80 per cent of those in the negative to violence cluster and 75 per cent of those in the supportive of female violence cluster.

In response to the general violence statements posed, this cluster exhibited significantly higher agreement with all of the pro-violence or condoning violence statements, as seen below.[19]

19 This finding supports the literature on the 'cross-over' between general violence and domestic violence. Attitudes to one form of violence predict attitudes to the other, suggesting the factors that underlie violence in general, including the attitudes that support it, are common to both general and domestic violence (they are not separate 'species').

Table 4.19: Young people's agreement with violence statements by Cluster 3

	TOTAL SAMPLE % AGREEING	HIGH RISK CLUSTER % AGREEING
	5014	1117
	%	%
Men are unable to control their temper	21	32*
A person is not responsible for what they do when they are drunk or high	22	32*
Raising your voice at people makes them take notice of you	56	64*
It may not be right but threatening to hit someone gets you what you want	25	35*
It's not always wrong to hit someone sometimes they provoke it	52	70*
Guys who get the most respect are generally those who will fight when they need to	34	49*

* represents a significant difference in the proportion of each group agreeing with the statement.

Attitudes to Gender Roles

As seen within the discriminant analysis, this cluster was significantly more likely to hold traditional views about gender roles (see Table 4.20). Agreement with the statements espousing traditional gender roles are up to twice as high as for the other two clusters. There is no difference between the clusters for the last statement, which explores how well males have adapted to the changing role of women. These results are shown in Figures 4.8–4.10.

Table 4.20: Young people's attitudes regarding gender roles, by attitudinal cluster

	TOTAL SAMPLE	CLUSTER 1: SUPPORTIVE OF FEMALE VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 2: AGAINST VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 3: SUPPORTIVE OF VIOLENCE
	5014	2069	1682	1117
	%	% [a]	% [b]	% [c]
Girls prefer a guy to be in charge of the relationship				
Definitely agree	5	3	3	9 [ab]
Generally agree	15	14	13	19 [ab]
Generally disagree	28	31 [bc]	28	24
Definitely disagree	34	34 [c]	39 [bc]	26
Don't know	18	16	16	21
Overall, there are more things that men are better at than women				
Definitely agree	8	6	6	15 [ab]
Generally agree	17	17	13	23 [ab]
Generally disagree	25	27	24	24
Definitely disagree	40	41 [c]	48 [ac]	28
Don't know	8	8	8	10
Women should be responsible for raising children and doing housework				
Definitely agree	5	3	3	11 [ab]
Generally agree	12	11	11	17 [ab]
Generally disagree	26	27	24	28
Definitely disagree	53	57 [c]	58 [c]	40
Don't know	3	2	1	3
Men should take control in relationships and be head of the household				
Definitely agree	8	7	6	13 [ab]
Generally agree	17	15	14	22 [ab]
Generally disagree	27	29 [c]	24	29 [b]
Definitely disagree	40	41 [c]	50 [ab]	26
Don't know	7	7	5	8
Nowadays, guys realise that girls are their equals				
Definitely agree	22	21	21	25 [ab]
Generally agree	48	51 [c]	49 [c]	43
Generally disagree	16	17	17	15
Definitely disagree	5	5	5	7 [a]
Don't know	8	6	7	10

*a/b/c signifies significantly different from results in that column at 95 per cent confidence levels

Figure 4.8: Young people's attitudes to gender roles — responses to the statement 'girls prefer guys to be in charge of the relationship'

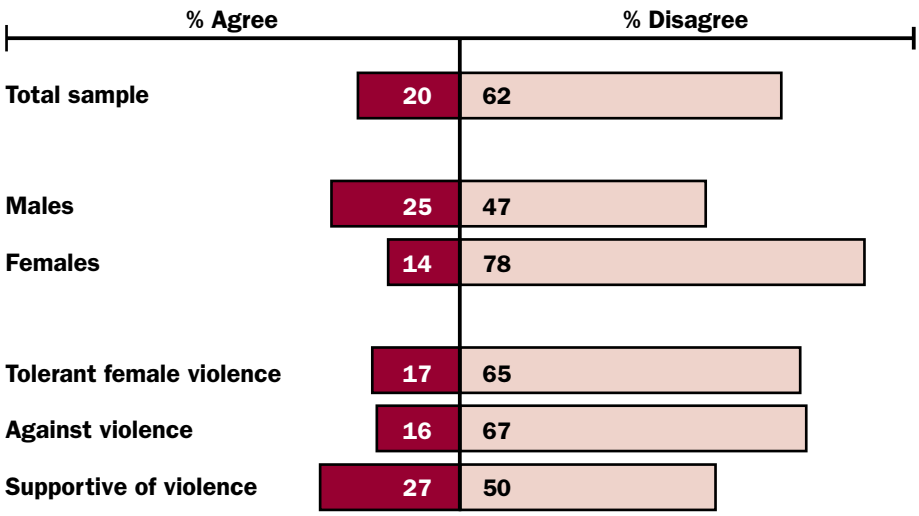


Figure 4.9: Young people's attitudes to gender roles — responses to the statement 'overall there are more things that men are better at than women'

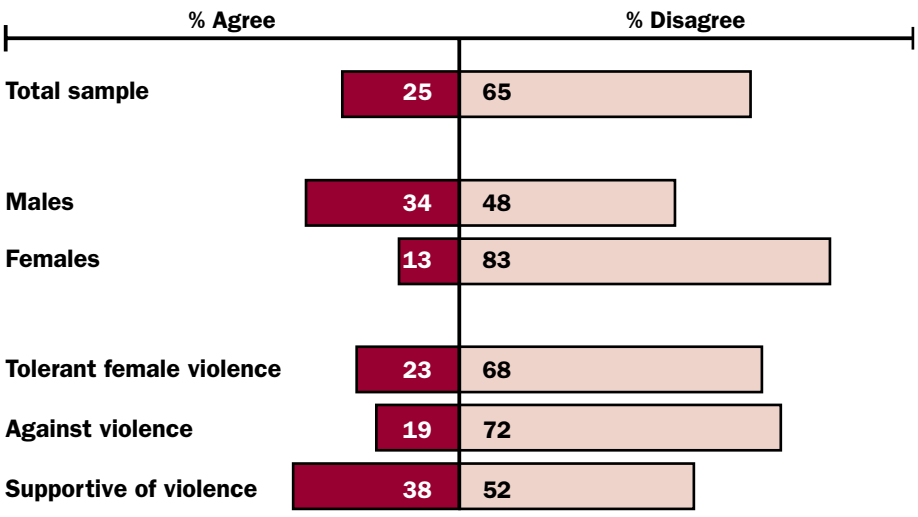
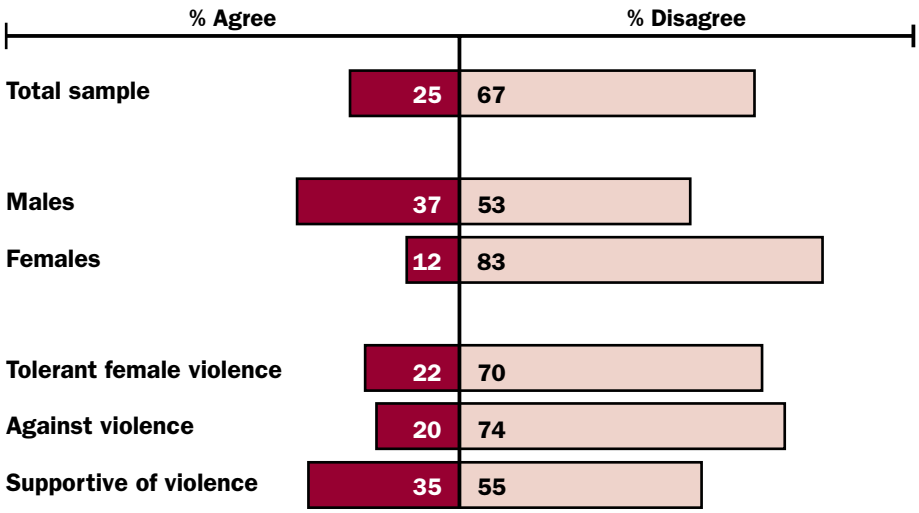


Figure 4.10: Young people's attitudes to gender roles — responses to the statement 'men should take control and be head of the household'



Demographics

This cluster is characterised by a large proportion of younger males from lower socioeconomic and white collar backgrounds. Of the males aged 12–14 years, 42 per cent are in this positive to violence cluster; yet by the age of 19–20 years, only 14 per cent of those youth are in the cluster. A similar pattern emerges among females, although the absolute numbers in the cluster are never as high — 31 per cent of 12–14 year old girls, decreasing to just seven per cent of 19–20 year old females.

Presumably for the majority of males and females, the extent to which they hold these pro-violence attitudes declined during their teenage years. Without a longitudinal study of the attitudes of one group over that period, it is impossible to say definitively if and how it occurs. It is possible that the 19 to 20 year olds may have held these anti-violence attitudes when they were 12–14 years.

This important observation is highly relevant to the development of intervention strategies. What is observed here is likely to be a natural maturation effect. By the time young people reach the ages where they present a more tangible risk in terms of perpetration or victimisation, those attitudes that permit, excuse or promote violence are less common. To plan an intervention strategy, it is useful to focus on those older teens who still maintain pro-violence attitudes. It would be constructive to ascertain which young people retain or lose these pro-violence attitudes, and whether they can be identified or characterised in any way based on their demographics, experiences or other attitudes. This project's data did not provide much insight into this; further longitudinal research would be valuable.

ATTITUDES TO PERSONAL/INTIMATE VIOLENCE BY CLUSTER GROUP

The differences between the attitudes of the three clusters were quite consistent. For each statement, the positive to violence cluster, Cluster Three, had appreciably higher levels of agreement than the other two clusters (see Table 4.21).

Table 4.21: Young people's attitudes regarding personal/intimate violence, by attitudinal cluster

	TOTAL SAMPLE 5014	C1.1: SUPPORT FEMALE	C1.2: NEGATIVE VIOLENCE	C1.3: POSITIVE VIOLENCE
	%	% [a]	% [b]	% [c]
If a guy hits a girl he loves because he is jealous it shows how much he feels for her				
Definitely agree	3	1	2	7 [ab]
Generally agree	8	7 [b]	5	15 [ab]
Generally disagree	23	26 [b]	18	29 [b]
Definitely disagree	53	56 [c]	65 [bc]	34
It's okay for a boy to make a girl have sex if she's flirted with him or led him on				
Definitely agree	3	2	1	7 [ab]
Generally agree	5	4 [b]	2	11 [ab]
Generally disagree	16	16 [b]	12	23
Definitely disagree	65	70 [c]	76 [ac]	46
When a girl hits a guy it's not really a big deal				
Definitely agree	4	3	3	9 [ab]
Generally agree	21	24 [b]	17	25 [ab]
Generally disagree	31	34 [b]	28	31
Definitely disagree	33	30 [c]	44 [ac]	24
Most physical violence occurs in dating because a partner provoked it				
Definitely agree	4	3	3	8 [ab]
Generally agree	25	27 [b]	18	32 [ab]
Generally disagree	26	29 [b]	25	24
Definitely disagree	24	21 [c]	35 [ac]	13

continued over page

	TOTAL SAMPLE 5014	C1.1: SUPPORT FEMALE	C1.2: NEGATIVE VIOLENCE	C1.3: POSITIVE VIOLENCE
	%	% (a)	% (b)	% (c)
It's alright for a guy to hit his girlfriend, if she makes him look stupid in front of his mates				
Definitely agree	2	1	1	6 (ab)
Generally agree	3	1	1	8 (ab)
Generally disagree	16	15 (b)	11	25 (ab)
Definitely disagree	69	76 (c)	80 (ac)	49
It's okay for a guy to put pressure on a girl to have sex, but not to physically force her				
Definitely agree	3	2	1	8 (ab)
Generally agree	7	7 (b)	4	12 (ab)
Generally disagree	19	22 (b)	14	22
Definitely disagree	60	62 (c)	71 (ac)	45

* a/b/c signifies significantly different from results in that column at 95 % confidence level

One-third of this cluster agreed that a girl hitting a guy was not a big deal, and one in five agreed that it was okay for a guy to apply pressure for sex. Hence, while the link between attitudes towards domestic violence and actual perpetration of dating violence may be fairly weak, it is apparent (and hardly surprising) that those who view domestic violence as acceptable will condone violent or coercive behaviour in their own peer group.

Experience of Parental Domestic Violence

In this section, the results regarding young people's experience of witnessing parental domestic violence are described. The principal aim here is to provide a baseline measure of the extent to which young people in Australia are directly exposed to domestic violence between carers.

MALE TO FEMALE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (PARENTS)

Table 4.22 depicts the responses for male to female (parent) domestic violence for each of the 11 items, for the total sample. The five most common forms of violence[20] or aggression perpetrated by males against females as reported by the young people in the household are:

- yelling loudly at her (58 per cent report)
- putting her down/humiliating her (30 per cent)[21]
- threatening to hit her (19 per cent)
- throwing something at her (17 per cent)
- trying to hit her (16 per cent).

20 Apart from 'throwing something at her' — an action with an uncertain outcome — none of these five actually constitutes physical violence, and few of the incidents would constitute a criminal offence.

21 Varies from sum of 'once/twice' and 'more often' shown in Table 4.22, due to rounding.

With the exception of yelling loudly, slightly under half of those reporting that the behaviour has happened say it has happened *only once or twice*, with slightly over half saying it has happened *more often*.

Eleven per cent of young people reported restrictions being placed on the female parent in terms of being able to see family/friends. The same proportion cited financial restrictions (not letting her have any money for her own use). In cross analysis, it was found that 62% of those citing one of these two forms of violence reported **both** to occur.

The items pertaining to physical violence, that is, *thrown something at, tried to hit, hit in defence, hit although not being hit, threatened with knife or gun*[22], and *used knife or gun* were analysed as one sub classification described as physical domestic violence. Using this definition, it was found that 23.4 per cent of respondents reported at least one act of physical domestic violence against their mothers/stepmothers. Very little of this was in self defence only; when *hit in defence* (ie *hit her because he was being hit* was removed), the proportion reporting physical domestic violence was 22.1 per cent.

If only those situations were counted where an actual act of violence was perpetrated, hence removing the *attempts* and *threats to hit* and just including *thrown something at her, hit her even though she didn't hit him* and *used a knife or fired a gun*, then 19.8 per cent of young people report one or more of these acts occurring at least once.

A more restrictive definition would eliminate *thrown something at her*, as this may capture many less serious expressive acts, presumably only a few of which involve the thrown item hitting the victim. If the definition is limited to those two items involving the direct use of force only six per cent of young people report ever witnessing one or more of these acts.

Table 4.22: Young people's awareness of parental violence — male to female parent

	Perpetrated against mother/stepmother by male partner			
	NO	NOT SURE	ONCE/TWICE	MORE OFTEN
	%	%	%	%
Yelled loudly at her	24	14	30	28
Put her down/humiliated her	46	19	14	16
Not let her see her family or friends	74	11	5	6
Not let her have any money for her own use	75	10	5	6
Thrown something at her	69	11	8	9
Threatened to hit her	66	11	9	10
Tried to hit her	70	10	7	9
Hit her because she was hitting him	77	10	4	4
Actually hit her (even though she didn't hit him)	74	8	5	9
Threatened her with a knife or gun	84	5	2	4
Used a knife or fired a gun	87	5	1	2

22 While this relates to threatening rather than actual behaviour, the seriousness of the threat is such that it was deemed illogical to leave it out of this grouping which relates to physical domestic violence.

FEMALE TO MALE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (PARENTS)

Table 4.23 outlines the responses for female to male domestic violence for each of the 11 items, for the total sample. The five most common forms of violence or aggression perpetrated by females against males as reported by the young people in the household are the same as those by males against females, although the order is somewhat different:

- yelling loudly at him (55 per cent report)
- putting him down/humiliating him (22 per cent)
- throwing something at him (17 per cent)
- trying to hit him (12 per cent)
- threatening to hit him (11 per cent).

Slightly over half (or in the case of *throwing something at him*, about two-thirds) of those reporting that this has happened say it has happened only *once or twice*. Therefore, for all categories but *throwing something* and *hitting because being hit* (ie in defence), perpetration is higher by males than females; as noted above, the apparent frequency is also higher.

For the more serious forms of violence that young people report witnessing, male violence towards women features very highly. For *unprovoked hitting*, 14 per cent of young people claim to have witnessed male to female violence, whereas only nine per cent claim to have witnessed female to male violence. With regard to *threatened to hit*, 19 per cent of young people had witnessed male to female violence; only 11 per cent claim to have witnessed female to male violence. And for *tried to hit*, 16 per cent of had witnessed male to female violence, whereas only 12 per cent claim to have witnessed female to male violence.

As with male to female violence, the items pertaining to physical violence were analysed as a 'physical domestic violence' sub classification. Compared to the 23.4 per cent of respondents who reported at least one act of physical domestic violence against their mothers/stepmothers, 22.1 per cent reported at least one act of physical domestic violence against their fathers/stepfathers (Table 4.27: page 102). As with male to female violence, very little was only in self defence; the percentage reporting physical domestic violence, excluding *hitting because being hit* was 21.2 per cent.

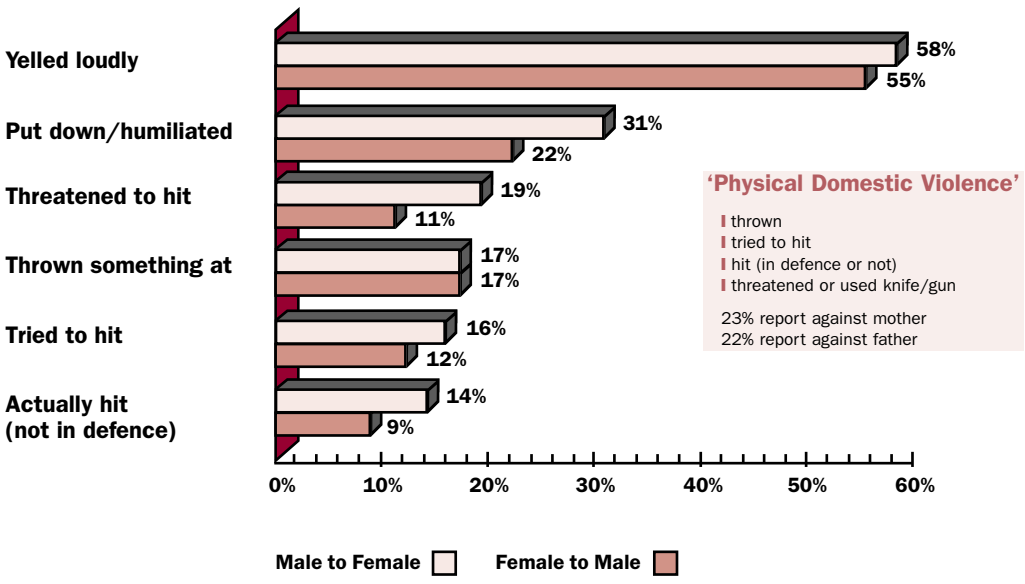
For only those situations where an actual act of violence was perpetrated, 19.4 per cent of young people report one or more of these acts against their fathers/stepfathers, almost identical to the 19.8 per cent reporting them experienced by their mothers/stepmothers. The results are summarised graphically in Figure 4.11.

Six per cent of young people reported restrictions on the male parent in being able to see family/friends, four per cent reported financial restrictions (not letting him have any money for his own use). These were lower levels than were reported for all forms of physical violence by females against males (except for threatening to, or using a knife/gun).

Table 4.23: Young people's awareness of parental violence — female to male parent

	Perpetrated against father/stepfather by female partner			
	NO	NOT SURE	ONCE/TWICE	MORE OFTEN
	%	%	%	%
Yelled loudly at him	28	12	30	25
Put him down/humiliated him	54	19	12	10
Not let him see his family or friends	81	8	3	3
Not let him have any money for his own use	83	7	2	2
Thrown something at him	69	9	11	6
Threatened to hit him	76	9	6	5
Tried to hit him	74	9	7	5
Hit him because he was hitting her	79	8	4	4
Actually hit him (even though he didn't hit her)	79	7	5	4
Threatened him with a knife or gun	86	5	2	2
Used a knife or fired a gun	88	4	1	2

Figure 4.11: Young people's awareness of parental violence - percentage of total sample aware of past occurrences



EXPERIENCE OF PARENTAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BY STATE

Tables 4.24 and 4.25 list the proportion of respondents reporting the behaviours perpetrated, with relatively few significant differences among States. For male to female violence, Queensland and Tasmania were the only States where significant differences were apparent. Higher levels of non physical violence (yelling and put-downs, threats and attempts to strike her), were reported in Queensland.

A lower incidence of yelling was reported in Tasmania, with a higher incidence of financial abuse (*not letting her have any money for her own use*). Higher levels of physical violence were also reported in *hitting her because she was hitting him*, and in *threatening to*, or *actually using a knife or gun*.

The proportions experiencing any male to female physical domestic violence varied from 20 per cent in the ACT to 28 per cent in Tasmania. Except for Tasmania's figure, the other jurisdictions' figures were close to the national average (23 per cent).

Similar patterns were recorded for female to male violence, including significant differences in Queensland and Tasmania. In Queensland, the same four items for which there were higher levels of male to female violence had higher levels of female to male violence. In Tasmania, *financial abuse* was again cited along with *threatening him, trying to hit him, hitting in self defence, threatening to*, or, *actually using a knife or gun*.

The proportions experiencing female to male physical domestic violence varied from 20 per cent in the ACT and South Australia to 28 per cent in Tasmania, with the latter significantly higher than the national figure of 22 per cent.

Table 4.24: Young people's experience of male to female parental violence by State — percentage stating violence had been perpetrated

	NAT	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	NT	ACT
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yelled loudly at her	**58**	59	56	62*	59	58	48*	52	58
Put her down/humiliated her	**31**	30	30	36*	27	28	34	30	29
Not let her see her family or friends	**11**	12	10	13	9	8	14	8	9
Not let her have any money for her own use	**11**	10	12	12	8	10	17*	11	11
Thrown something at her	**16**	17	16	18	13	14	20	15	15
Threatened to hit her	**19**	20	18	22*	16	18	20	19	15
Tried to hit her	**16**	17	15	19*	13	15	17	18	11
Hit her because she was hitting him	**8**	9	8	8	8	8	13*	8	8
Actually hit her (even though she didn't hit him)	**14**	14	12	15	12	12	15	16	13
Threatened her with a knife or gun	**6**	7	6	7	4	5	14*	7	6
Used a knife or fired a gun	**4**	5	4	3	2	3	8*	5	2
Total Any Physical Domestic Violence	**23**	**24**	**23**	**25**	**21**	**22**	**28**	**21**	20

* significantly different to national results at 95% confidence level

Table 4.25: Young people's experience of female to male parental violence by State — percentage stating violence had been perpetrated

	NAT	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	NT	ACT
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yelled loudly at him	**55**	56	51	59*	55	56	45	51	57
Put him down/humiliated him	**22**	22	20	26*	19	23	25	24	26
Not let him see his family or friends	**6**	6	5	5	5	7	9	7	8
Not let him have any money for his own use	**5**	5	5	3	4	5	9*	7	5
Thrown something at him	**17**	18	16	18	17	15	21	19	17
Threatened to hit him	**10**	10	10	12*	9	9	17*	9	8
Tried to hit him	**13**	12	11	15*	11	12	19*	14	8
Hit him because he was hitting her	**8**	9	8	9	7	7	13*	8	5
Actually hit him (even though he didn't hit her)	**9**	9	8	10	9	9	13	11	6
Threatened him with a knife or gun	**4**	4	4	4	5	3	10*	5	5
Used a knife or fired a gun	**3**	3	3	2	4	2	7*	4	3
Total Any Physical Domestic Violence	**22**	**23**	**20**	**24**	**22**	**20**	**28***	**26**	**20**

*significantly different to national results at 95 per cent confidence level

AWARENESS OF NON PHYSICAL PARENTAL VIOLENCE BY SUB GROUPS

This section considers the distribution of non physical abuse between parents/carers — yelling, humiliation, restrictions on personal freedom and having access to own money.

Females and older teens are more likely to be aware of these non physical forms of abuse. In addition, those from lower socioeconomic households are significantly more likely than other such groups to say that humiliation and restrictions on personal freedom and financial abuse have occurred for both the female parent and the male parent. Young people of ATSI descent are also more likely to say these three forms of abuse have occurred, again, both in relation to the female as well as the male parent/carer.

Young people living with both parents are less likely (than those in a different household composition), to say that any form of non physical abuse has occurred. Awareness of non physical abuse against the female parent is usually highest among those living with their mother and stepfather; the pattern of abuse against the male parent is less clear. These non physical forms of abuse are also more likely to have occurred in households where physical violence has happened (see Table 4.26).

Table 4.26: Young people's awareness of non physical abuse by awareness of physical violence — percentage indicating that the abuse had occurred at least once

	TOTAL SAMPLE	WITNESSED MALE TO FEMALE VIOLENCE ONLY	WITNESSED FEMALE TO MALE VIOLENCE ONLY	WITNESSED VIOLENCE BETWEEN BOTH PARTNERS
	5014	452	389	721
	%	% [a]	% [b]	% [c]
Perpetrated against female				
Yelled loudly at her	**58**	87 [b]	68	90 [b]
Put her down/humiliated her	**31**	68 [b]	37	74 [ab]
Not let her see family and friends	**11**	37 [b]	8	39 [b]
Not let her have any money for own use	**11**	34 [b]	8	39 [b]
Perpetrated against male				
Yelled loudly at him	**55**	50	88 [a]	84 [a]
Put him down/humiliated him	**22**	8	25 [a]	36 [ab]
Not let him see family and friends	**6**	4	16 [a]	24 [ab]
Not let him have any money for own use	**5**	3	11 [a]	20 [ab]

a/b/c signifies significantly different to response in that column at 95 per cent confidence level

AWARENESS OF PHYSICAL PARENTAL VIOLENCE BY SUB GROUPS

As stated earlier, females, older teens, youth of lower socioeconomic status and those living in household situations other than with both parents (also see Table 4.28), are more likely than other groups to be aware that violence has occurred.

Table 4.27 shows that females (26 per cent) are more likely than males (21 per cent), to be aware that physical violence has occurred between their parents or a parent and their partner, both in relation to violence towards their fathers, but particularly towards their mothers. This could indicate the existence of more violence in households with daughters than sons. It is more likely to reflect a greater awareness and sensitivity towards issues in the home on the part of daughters, possibly through spending more time at home, having a closer relationship with one or both parents, or developing a greater/earlier awareness of relationships between the sexes.

Table 4.27: Percentage of young people aware of physical domestic violence against female or male carer by their partner, by age

	MALE TO FEMALE VIOLENCE	FEMALE TO MALE VIOLENCE
	%	%
Awareness among total sample	**23.4**	**22.1**
Awareness among males	21.0	21.2
Awareness among females	25.9	23.2
12 years	16.6	13.0
13 years	15.9	14.5
14 years	18.3	16.0
15 years	20.2	21.0
16 years	24.8	23.0
17 years	28.7	25.8
18 years	27.2	27.1
19 years	25.8	25.7
20 years	30.3	29.4

Increased awareness of physical violence occurs with age, but this does not necessarily mean that there is more physical violence in the homes of older children. This finding could simply reflect the greater cumulative experience of a 20 year old than a 12 year old or the growing awareness or knowledge (that comes with age) of the nature of the relationship between parents (or parent/partners).

Variations exist in awareness levels of domestic violence according to household status. This will partly reflect the pattern of increasing awareness with age as household status changes with age. However, the patterns of greater or lesser experience of violence go beyond that explained by age.

Young people living with both parents are much less likely to be aware of physical violence between their parents than those in other household groupings. Conversely, those who live with their mothers, their mothers and her partner, or share a house with friends are most likely to be aware of such violence.

Table 4.28: Percentage of young people aware of physical domestic violence against female or male carer by their partner, by various demographic variables

	MALE TO FEMALE VIOLENCE	FEMALE TO MALE VIOLENCE
	%	%
Awareness among total sample	**23.4**	**22.1**
Live with both parents	13.9	14.8
Live with Mum	37.9	28.3
Live with Dad	31.1	35.8
Live with Mum and partner	40.9	33.0
Live with Dad and partner	26.5	20.5
Share a house with friends	37.7	38.6
Live with partner	35.9	34.8
Socioeconomic status		
Upper income/white collar	17.9	16.9
Lower income/blue collar	25.4	24.1
Of ATSI descent	42.0	33.0

Possibly, many young people live in sharing arrangements because violence at home has led them to leave. Analysis revealed that, while the majority of young people in such arrangements are 18 years or over, the proportion who have experienced parental domestic violence is significantly higher than that reported by the oldest age groups (37.7 per cent report male to female violence compared to 28.1 per cent of all 18 to 20 year olds). It is difficult to say if the high experience of violence among those living with one parent (particularly with 'mother alone' or 'mother with partner') reflects experience of violence between the parents before they parted, or of violence in subsequent relationship(s).

Young people in lower socioeconomic households are about one and a half times more likely to be aware of violence towards their mothers or fathers than those from upper socioeconomic households.[23]

Young people who identify themselves as being of ATSI descent are significantly more likely than other sub groups to have experienced physical domestic violence among their parents (or parent/partners), male to female violence (42 per cent compared to 23 per cent for all respondents) and female to male (33 per cent compared to 22 per cent).

23 Among those who have left school (and for whom socioeconomic classification is more precise), 20 per cent in white collar households report violence against their mother compared to 31 per cent in blue collar households. For violence against males, the comparable figures are 18 per cent and 30 per cent.

AWARENESS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN HOMES WITH SPECIFIC 'RISK' FACTORS

At the end of the questionnaire, a question referring to various non domestic violence behaviours was put. The purpose of the question was to explore the relationship between alcohol abuse and domestic violence. Respondents were asked whether their parents (or parent/partners) with whom they lived:

- *smoke* (included as a 'blind' only)
- *get drunk a lot*
- *take drugs*
- *gamble a lot*
- *hit you or your brothers/sisters for reasons other than bad behaviour*

This was asked in relation to the male and female adults they lived with. Table 4.29 shows the awareness of male to female and female to male violence in households where alcohol abuse is occurring, and where the children are hit for reasons other than bad behaviour. The figure in brackets represents the incidence of alcohol abuse/hitting the children in the total sample.

Fourteen per cent of young people living with a male adult, ie father, stepfather or mother's partner, said that he got drunk a lot. In over half of those households (55 per cent), the young person was aware of male to female violence occurring at some time (note, this is not necessarily in the current household). However the level of violence from the woman to the man is almost as high (49.6 per cent).

Ten per cent of young people living with a male adult said that he had hit them and/or their siblings for other than disciplinary reasons. In these households, 55 per cent of young people reported having been aware of male to female physical domestic violence and 43 per cent of female to male domestic violence, occurring at some time.

The pattern of female to male violence in households where the female gets drunk or hits the children is very similar. However, the female carer is less likely than male carers to exhibit the behaviours of drinking and hitting the children (about half the incidence of males). Additionally, the level of *male to female* violence in these households is as high as *female to male*.

Table 4.29: Young people in 'risk' households awareness of physical domestic violence

	MALE TO FEMALE VIOLENCE	FEMALE TO MALE VIOLENCE
	%	%
Awareness among total sample	**23.4**	**22.1**
Households where male carer:		
Gets drunk a lot (14 per cent)	55.0	49.6
Hits children (other than for bad behaviour) (10 per cent)	55.3	43.0
Households where female carer:		
Gets drunk a lot (6 per cent)	56.4	55.6
Hits children (other than for bad behaviour) (6 per cent)	50.4	50.4

PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE BETWEEN PARTNERS

As noted, the incidence of male to female and female to male violence based on the reported awareness by young people was very similar. There was also a very high overlap between the two; that is, many who reported physical domestic violence against their mothers also reported it against their fathers.

In total, 31.2 per cent of young people reported physical domestic violence between one or both of their parents or a parent and partner. Specifically:

- 14.4 per cent reported that violence was perpetrated both by the male against the female and the female against the male
- 9.0 per cent reported that violence was perpetrated against their mother by her male partner but that she was not violent towards him
- 7.8 per cent reported that violence was perpetrated against their father but that he was not violent towards her.

Hence, apparently in almost half of the households where physical domestic violence was reported, the violence was 'couple' violence.[24]

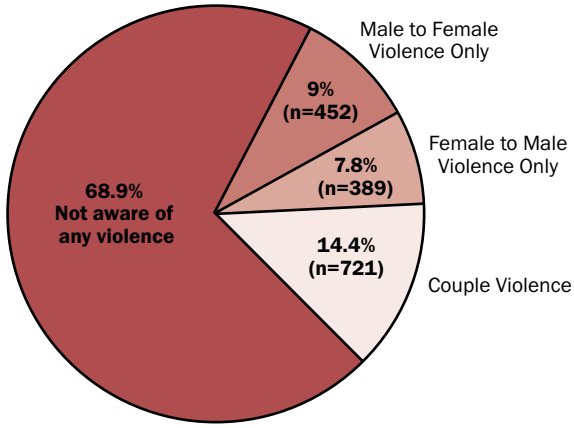
We conclude with four groups of young people based on their experience (ie their awareness) of physical domestic violence having occurred in their homes:

- never experienced physical domestic violence at home (68.9 per cent of young people)
- experienced violence against mother/female only (9.0 per cent)
- experienced violence against father/male only (7.8 per cent)
- experienced violence against both parents (14.4 per cent).

These results are displayed in Figure 4.12.

24 This assumption is not absolutely watertight. As the measure relates to 'ever been aware', it is possible that the mother has been abused in one relationship and the father in another, not that the violence has been directed at each other.

Figure 4.12: Young people's experiences of physical domestic violence



PROFILE OF HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCING DIFFERENT PATTERNS OF PHYSICAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Table 4.30 (page 108) profiles these four 'experiential' groups, against some pertinent demographic characteristics. The first group comprises those who are not aware of any violence having occurred between their parents. The second column represents those who are aware that physical violence had been perpetrated against their mothers by the father/male partner but are not aware of any physical violence towards the father. This group is characterised by:

- a high proportion living only with the mother (24 per cent) and just 36 per cent living with both parents
- a high proportion (30 per cent) living with step-siblings
- lower levels of full time employment of male and full/part time employment of female with correspondingly higher levels of unemployment
- higher proportion of lower socioeconomic households
- higher proportion of young people from ATSI descent
- higher proportion of homes where male carer gets drunk a lot and hits the children for reasons other than bad behaviour.

The third column lists young people who are aware that physical violence has been perpetrated against their fathers by the mother/female partner but are not aware of any physical violence towards their mothers. This group is characterised by:

- as with all three groups where there is awareness of violence, there is an older age profile than those who are not aware. However, given the similar age profile, within this group there is a higher proportion that still lives with both parents
- higher proportion of lower socioeconomic households (again, true for all the groups where violence has been experienced).

This group shows higher levels of *drinking a lot* and *hitting the children* than the no awareness of physical domestic violence cluster, with the exception of *female adult hitting the children*, not as high as in the other groups. This group is as similar to the 'no violence' cluster as it is to the other two groups where violence has occurred.

The fourth column represents those young people who are aware of violence being perpetrated against both their mothers and fathers. This group is characterised by:

- lowest proportion of young people living with both parents
- similar work/unemployment status as group two
- lowest proportion of upper income households
- similar proportion of ATSI descent as group two
- highest proportions of households where male adult gets drunk a lot and hits the children
- significantly higher levels of female adult drinking and hitting the children than in the other two clusters.

The group experiencing male to female violence only and that experiencing couple violence are those where significant risk factors occur. With the exception of the social class mix, there is less evidence of factors which predict domestic violence in the group where females are being violent towards men. One could hypothesise that there are some quite different stimuli or 'triggers' for this type of violence than for male to female violence. As well, there is some evidence that this violence is less disruptive than in the group where male to female violence occurs, because of less breakdowns in family units. Despite very similar age profiles, 48 per cent of young people in this group are still living with both parents, compared to just over one-third in the other two groups where violence has occurred.

The households with the greatest number of risk factors are those where both parties are being violent towards each other ('couple violence'). The level of violence against females in these households is greater than in those households where male to female violence (only) is occurring.

Table 4.31 (page 109) shows the incidence of the different forms of domestic violence in households where at least one type of physical domestic violence is being perpetrated against the female but none against the male, and compares it to the incidence of violence against the female in households where couple violence is occurring.

Table 4.30: Profile of young people's experiential clusters

	NOT AWARE OF ANY VIOLENCE	MALE TO FEMALE VIOLENCE ONLY	FEMALE TO MALE VIOLENCE ONLY	COUPLE VIOLENCE
	3450	452	389	721
	% [a]	% [b]	% [c]	% [d]
Age of child				
12 – 14 years	34 [bcd]	24	20	21
15 – 16 years	24	21	23	24
17 – 18 years	21	26 [a]	27 [a]	28 [a]
19 – 20 years	21	28 [a]	31 [a]	28 [a]
Live with				
Live with both parents	67 [bcd]	36 [c]	48	34 [c]
Live with Mum	10	24 [a]	12 [bd]	19 [ac]
Live with Dad	2	3	6 [bd]	4 [a]
Live with Mum and partner	4	9 [ac]	4	11 [ac]
Have step-siblings	13	30 [ac]	22 [a]	31 [ac]
Parental Work Status [25]				
Male – working full time	90 [bcd]	67	75 [c]	73 [c]
Female – working full/part time	77 [bcd]	63	72 [bd]	59
Male – unemployed/pension	10	18 [ac]	10	16 [ac]
Female-unemployed/pension	12	18 [ac]	11	19 [ac]
Socioeconomic status				
Upper income/white collar	35 [bcd]	29 [ad]	29 [ad]	22 [abc]
Lower income/blue collar	51 [bcd]	56 [a]	58 [a]	58 [a]
ATSI Descent				
Yes	3	8 [ac]	4	8 [ac]
No	89 [bd]	84	89 [b]	85
Male Carer Risk Behaviour				
Gets drunk a lot	5	18 [ac]	13 [a]	28 [abc]
Hits you/sibling for reasons other than bad behaviour	4	16 [ac]	7 [a]	18 [ac]
Female Carer Risk Behaviour				
Gets drunk a lot	2	5 [a]	6 [a]	15 [abc]
Hits you/sibling for reasons other than bad behaviour	3	8 [a]	9 [a]	12 [ab]

a/b/c/d signifies significantly different from the result in that column at 95% confidence level

25 Based on those living with a male parent or other adult/female parent or other adult.

Table 4.31: Young people witnessing perpetration of violent acts against mother/stepmother

	WHERE MALE TO FEMALE VIOLENCE ONLY IS OCCURRING	WHERE COUPLE VIOLENCE IS OCCURRING
	452	721
	%	%
Yelled loudly at her	87	90
Put her down/humiliated her	68	74*
Not let her see her family and friends	37	39
Not let her have any money for her own use	34	39
Thrown something at her	68	72
Threatened to hit her	49	73
Tried to hit her	65	72*
Hit her because she was hitting him	18	47*
Hit her even though she didn't hit him	54	61*
Threatened her with a knife or gun	23	31*
Used a knife or gun	12	18*

* statistically significant at 0.05 level

The first column outlines the extent of violence from a male towards a female (where a female does not perpetuate violence towards him). The incidence of each of the acts is higher in situations where there is violence between both parties (Column 2), with many of the differences between the more serious acts being statistically significant. Such differences are even more pronounced when acts of violence by the mother/another female partner towards the father are considered (Table 4.32).

Table 4.32: Young people witnessing perpetration of violent acts against father/stepfather

	WHERE MALE TO FEMALE VIOLENCE ONLY IS OCCURRING	WHERE COUPLE VIOLENCE IS OCCURRING
	389	721
	%	%
Yelled loudly at him	88	84
Put him down/humiliated him	48	60*
Not let him see his family and friends	16	24*
Not let him have any money for his own use	11	20*
Thrown something at him	79	76
Threatened to hit him	30	51*
Tried to hit him	42	65*
Hit him because he was hitting her	8	53*
Hit him even though he didn't hit her	35	45*
Threatened him with a knife or gun	11	22*
Used a knife or gun	8	16*

*statistically significant at 0.05 confidence level

For all items except *yelling* and *throwing something*, the incidence is significantly higher in situations where there is also violence being perpetrated towards the female.

Where a female is being violent towards a male (without him also perpetrating physical violence towards her — ie the first column in the table above) she is most likely to *throw something at him* (79 per cent; the next *trying to hit him* — a much lower 42 per cent). Where couple violence is occurring, *trying to hit, threatening to hit* and *hitting*, particularly in self defence, are done by at least half of all women.

Comparing this with the figures for male to female violence, in all instances except *throwing something* (identified as the form of violence most skewed towards use by women), a male is more likely to perpetrate that type of violence (ie throwing something) against a woman, both when there is no physical response to his violence and where both parties are being physically violent towards each other.

These higher levels of violence between couples and the effect on the attitudes of young people growing up in such environments and on the outcomes of the violence, indicate that couple violence is the most serious and entrenched of the three situations. These are considered in sections on attitude and responses to violence.

CURRENT EXPERIENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BETWEEN PARENTS/PARENT AND PARTNER

Respondents were asked whether any of 'these things' (items in Table 4.32) were happening between their parents and/or one of their parents and partner nowadays. A 'yes' response to this question is therefore not necessarily an indication of current domestic violence, as some of the items measured, such as *yelling loudly* would not generally be considered to be domestic violence.[26]

Fourteen per cent of all respondents said that one or more of these abuses were currently directed at their mother/stepmother by her male partner; 10 per cent said that one or more were currently suffered by their father/stepfather by his female partner. A high level of overlap between the two groups appeared, with a total of 16 per cent nominating current parental violence. Hence:

- in eight per cent of households, both partners are perpetrating one or more of these behaviours towards each other
- in six per cent of households, the male is perpetrating them towards the female only
- in two per cent of households the female is perpetrating them towards the male only.

A further 14 per cent were unsure if any of these behaviours currently occurred between their parents (or parent/partner). Hence, it could be surmised that current incidences of these behaviours was between 16 and 30 per cent.

Among respondents who had previously said that acts of physical violence had 'never' been perpetrated against one or both of their parents, about one-third said that one or more of any of these behaviours (not necessarily the physically violent ones) were currently occurring. A further

26 This question's shortcoming was apparent at the time of writing the questionnaire. A more accurate figure for current violence would have been achieved by repeating the previous 'ever experienced violence' question. However, this was deemed impractical as it would have meant the respondent filling in a similar question four times ('ever' and 'currently', both for male to female violence and female to male). 'Ever experienced' was deemed more valuable in examining attitude development. Restricting our interest to only certain items occurring 'nowadays' was to pre-suppose later analysis of the individual items (ie which items would have been considered domestic violence) and would have provided an indication to respondents as to what the research team considered domestic violence.

15-16 per cent were unsure. Hence, half of the young people who have been aware of their father or mother experiencing physical domestic violence in the past, say that they are currently living in an environment where neither physical domestic violence, nor any of these other lesser, but potentially upsetting behaviours, are occurring. For the other 50 per cent, the situation does not appear to have improved quite as much.

Females are again more likely to say that one or more of these actions is currently occurring, in respect of those perpetrated against their father but particularly, against their mothers. No difference was apparent by socioeconomic status.

Incidence of current violence against both parents (particularly mothers), was high where the young person was living with his/her mother. Here, 28 per cent said that one or more of such occurrences were perpetrated against their mothers, and a (relatively) much lower, 16 per cent, said — against male partners/fathers.

CONCLUSION

Two patterns emerge from the analysis of 'conflict tactics' that young people have witnessed. First, as these events of violence move from minor to more serious, their prevalence decreases substantially. This pattern has been discussed in detail in Ferrante *et al* (1996).

The second pattern, especially with the more minor events, relates to the so-called 'gender symmetry' — its appearance not surprising given the many studies where it is consistently raised. This does not mean, as is sometimes asserted, that women are 'really' as violent as men. Such a conclusion stems from misunderstanding of the nature of violence, essentially confusing the behaviours simply read from the conflict tactics scale with violence. 'Violence' typically refers to behaviours which are much more serious. As discussed in the literature review, central to the concept of violence is the degree and capacity to which the act invokes fear and is used to control the victim. Behaviours described in the conflict tactics scale were delivered in a minor, expressive or even defensive way. What needs to be examined in measuring violence is less the occurrence and more the meaning and effect of certain physical acts in the context of an interpersonal relationship. This is highly subjective and can only be measured by examining the experiences of those directly affected — this is done in the section on respondents' experiences of relationship violence.

Experience of Violence in Personal Relationships

In this section, young people's experiences of general incidents of violence, and violence in their own intimate relationships, are explored.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S GENERAL EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

Prior to any focus on domestic violence, respondents' experiences of violence in general and their attitudes towards different forms of violence (including their perceived seriousness) were measured. Respondents were asked (Q.1):

> *Which of the following types of violence do you have any personal experience of? By 'personal experience' we mean you, or someone you know well has been involved in, or experienced them.*

Table 4.33 (page 114) shows the extent to which the respondents indicated that they had experienced different forms of violence. Because this question was asked in a general way it was dependent upon respondents' own definitions of 'violence'. Similarly, responses were also dependent upon respondents' interpretations of the terms used (eg 'bitching' and 'bullying') as well as what they understood by, 'involvement' or 'experience'.

The most common form among females was bitching[27] (personal experience, 80 per cent) and among males' physical fights with brothers and sisters (59 per cent — the same level recorded by females). The qualitative research suggested that neither of these forms of violence were regarded as particularly serious, although bitching could cause considerable distress if it emanated from a supposed 'friend'.

Fifty-six per cent of males and 46 per cent of females said that they had been bullied. Roughly, 92 per cent of both genders said that they had either direct or indirect experience of bullying, making this the most prevalent form of violence experienced overall.

Fifty-one per cent of males and a substantially lower proportion of females (18 per cent), indicated an involvement in punch-ups at school/college. And a higher proportion of males than females said that they had also been involved in drunken fights in pubs/clubs. Further analysis revealed that the frequency fell with the age range of the respondent group; however, 47 per cent of males aged 19 or 20 said they had experienced this themselves and a further 33 per cent said they knew someone who had.

Fifteen per cent of respondents reported experiencing domestic violence themselves. This was one of only two types of violence where no significant difference was seen in the experience of the sexes, the other being *physical fights between siblings*. Thirty-two per cent said they knew of someone who had experienced domestic violence. This was significantly higher among females, a pattern that was seen for many of the items and may reflect the greater sharing of confidences and problems between female friends than male friends.

Racial violence was reported by 14 per cent, with 38 per cent of those of ATSI descent reporting direct experience. Rape/sexual assault was reported by nine per cent (males — three

27 'Bitching' is a term in common use among young people and refers to malicious gossip.

per cent; females — 14 per cent). Hence, the experience of rape/sexual assault among females was almost as high as domestic violence and higher than fights in pubs/clubs and racial violence. Further analysis revealed that the reported incidence of rape/sexual assault increased to 20 per cent among females aged 19 or 20 years, with a further 40 per cent knowing someone who had experienced this form of violence. Therefore, the salience of sexual assault among young women is likely to be quite high as over half of 19–20 year old female respondents claimed to have either experienced rape/sexual assault (as understood by them), or knew someone who had.

PREVALENCE OF INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Most (70 per cent) of the sample of 12–20 year olds stated that they had had a boyfriend or girlfriend. The likelihood of having been involved in a 'dating relationship' increases with age: Among 12–14 year olds, 54 per cent claim to have had a boyfriend or girlfriend, increasing to 83 per cent for the 19-20 year age group. Across the total sample, the incidence of 'dating relationship' experience is slightly higher for girls (72 per cent) than for boys (67 per cent).

CONFLICT/VIOLENCE IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

The 70 per cent of young people who said they had had a 'dating' relationship were asked to indicate the extent to which they had experienced (as perpetrator and/or victim) various examples of dating conflict/violence.

A modified Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus 1979) similar to that used to measure for parental aggressive and violent behaviours was used. This sought to collect experience of behaviours ranging from the verbally abusive (eg *yelling; putting down/humiliating*) to specific acts of physical and sexual violence.

Lifetime prevalence was estimated using a three-point scale of:

- *never*
- *once/twice*
- *more than twice*

Both victimisation and perpetration experience were measured. Respondents were asked firstly, the extent to which each of these acts has been done to them by a boyfriend/girlfriend, and then, whether they had ever perpetrated them on their boyfriend or girlfriend. If married, respondents were asked to also include their husband/wife.

The list of behaviours, and the incidence of each, are presented separately in relation to 'male to female' violence (Table 4.34: page 115) and 'female to male' violence (Table 4.35: page 116).

Table 4.33: Young people's experience of violence

	TOTAL SAMPLE	MALES	FEMALES
	%	%	%
Bitching			
I've experienced this	**61**	42	80*
Someone I know has experienced this	**33**	36*	30
No, not experienced	**15**	24*	6
Physical fights between brothers/sisters			
I've experienced this	**59**	59	59
Someone I know has experienced this	**27**	23	30*
No, not experienced	**21**	22	20
Bullying			
I've experienced this	**51**	56*	46
Someone I know has experienced this	**41**	36	47*
No, not experienced	**14**	14	14
Punch-ups between people at school/college			
I've experienced this	**35**	51*	18
Someone I know has experienced this	**49**	40	59*
No, not experienced	**18**	13	24*
Drunken fights in pubs/clubs			
I've experienced this	**16**	22*	10
Someone I know has experienced this	**38**	33	43*
No, not experienced	**44**	43	46*
Domestic violence			
I've experienced this	**15**	15	16
Someone I know has experienced this	**32**	29	36*
No, not experienced	**51**	53*	49
Racial violence			
I've experienced this	**14**	17*	10
Someone I know has experienced this	**34**	23	30*
No, not experienced	**51**	22	20
Rape/sexual assault			
I've experienced this	**9**	3	14*
Someone I know has experienced this	**26**	20	33*
No, not experienced	**63**	72*	54

*significantly different to results for other gender at 95 per cent confidence level

Table 4.34: Incidence of male to female conflict/violence in young people's relationships

	As stated by female (Victimisation)				As stated by male (Perpetration)			
	NO	YES	ONCE/ TWICE	MORE OFTEN	NO	YES	ONCE/ TWICE	MORE OFTEN
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yelled loudly at you	50	49	29	12	49	33	24	8
Put you down/ humiliated you	60	39	26	13	62	19	16	3
Threatened to hit you or throw something at you	80	19	10	8	74	7	6	2
Threw/smashed/hit/ kicked something	75	23	13	10	72	9	6	4
Threw something at you	86	12	7	5	77	4	3	1
Pushed, grabbed or shoved you	72	26	17	9	72	9	7	2
Slapped you	86	12	6	5	76	5	4	2
Kicked, bit or hit you	87	11	6	5	78	4	2	2
Hit or tried to hit you with something	89	10	6	4	79	3	2	1
Beat you up	93	5	2	3	80	2	1	1
Threatened you with a knife or gun	95	3	2	1	80	2	1	1
Used a knife or fired a gun	96	2	1	1	80	1	1	–
Tried to control you physically eg by holding etc	73	25	17	8	73	8	6	2
Tried to force you to have sex	85	14	10	4	78	3	2	1
Physically forced you to have sex	92	6	3	3	80	2	1	1

Table 4.35: Incidence of female to male conflict/violence in young people's relationships

	As stated by male (Victimisation)				As stated by female (Perpetration)			
	NO	YES	ONCE/ TWICE	MORE OFTEN	NO	YES	ONCE/ TWICE	MORE OFTEN
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yelled loudly at you	53	42	29	12	42	47	30	17
Put you down/ humiliated you	65	29	20	9	65	25	21	4
Threatened to hit you or throw something at you	78	16	10	5	78	12	9	3
Threw/smashed/hit/ kicked something	80	14	9	5	80	9	7	2
Threw something at you	81	13	8	4	82	7	6	1
Pushed, grabbed or shoved you	75	19	14	5	77	13	11	2
Slapped you	73	21	16	5	77	12	11	1
Kicked, bit or hit you	81	13	7	5	82	7	6	1
Hit or tried to hit you with something	83	10	6	4	85	4	4	1
Beat you up	90	4	2	2	89	1	1	–
Threatened you with a knife or gun	90	4	1	3	89	1	1	–
Used a knife or fired a gun	91	3	1	2	89	–	–	–
Tried to control you physically eg by holding etc	83	11	8	3	83	6	5	1
Tried to force you to have sex	86	7	4	4	88	1	1	–
Physically forced you to have sex	89	5	2	3	88	1	1	–

To measure young people's experience of co-habiting with a partner (either married or in a *de facto* relationship — in total, six per cent of the sample) an additional question was asked (whether they had hit their partner or their partner had hit them). This question attempts to give an overall measure of perpetration and victimisation in the young person's current domestic arrangement.

Three per cent of males living with their partner said that they had hit their partner and two per cent of females said they had hit theirs. These figures were twice as high when the questions were reversed, ie respondents asked if the other partner ever hit them. Four per cent of men said that their female partner hit them and six per cent of females said their male partner hit them. Due to the very small number of people admitting to perpetration (n=7) sub group analysis is not possible. It is notable that each of these seven respondents came from the 'couple violence' group; that is, from households where they were aware that both their parents had suffered physical domestic violence.

LEVEL OF NON RESPONSE

The analysis of young people's experiences of violence in intimate relationships must be interpreted in the context of a fairly high non response rate. These questions (Q. 26a and Q. 26b) were among the most sensitive in the survey; they asked respondents to describe their own behaviour in their personal relationship(s). Some respondents did not answer them; the level of non response was higher for questions about perpetration of violent behaviours than about experiencing these behaviours as a victim. The level of non response was consistently higher among male respondents than females, as shown below.

Level of Non Response Across All Items

	MALES	FEMALES
Perpetrating violent behaviours	18-19%	10-11%
Being a victim of violent behaviours	5-7%	1-2%

It cannot nevertheless be asserted with any confidence that the non response rate is indicative of a high level of affirmative answers and it would not be permissible to assign this category, or any particular proportion of it, to the perpetrator category.

MALE TO FEMALE VIOLENCE

Table 4.34 (page 115) shows the reported extent of each of these behaviours, firstly from the victims' (ie females aged 12–20 years) point of view and then from the perpetrators' (ie males) perspective.

The reported incidence and extent of each of these target behaviours is higher among victims than perpetrators. For example, 19 per cent of girls say that their boyfriends have threatened to hit them or to throw something at them, whereas only seven per cent of boys admit to having done this to their girlfriend (Table 4.34). Eight per cent of females say this has happened 'more than twice', compared to only two per cent of male perpetrators. It is reasonable to assume that perpetrators would be more likely to under-report having engaged in these (generally socially unacceptable) behaviours than victims would be to over-report their incidence.

It is also likely that victims are more likely to perceive the abuse when it happens, classify certain acts as abusive and remember the abuse. While not suggesting that some victim over-reporting does not occur, 'the truth' probably lies closer to the victims' than the perpetrators' reports.

From Table 4.34 the more notable results in relation to male to female dating violence can be summarised, based on girls' reports, as follows:

- 26% of 12-20 year old girls who have been in a dating relationship have been *pushed, grabbed or shoved* by their boyfriend
- 25% of girls have experienced an attempt to be *physically controlled* (eg held)
- 19% of girls have been *physically threatened* by a boyfriend
- 14% of girls have had their boyfriends *try to force them to have sex.*

As with domestic violence, a composite measure of **physical dating violence** was developed. This measure comprised all items from the fifth (*threw something at him/her*) onwards. About one-third (36 per cent) of all girls who had been in a dating relationship had experienced some measure of physical violence in one or more of those relationships.

The reported incidence levels for most of these behaviours increased with age, reflecting, among other things, the greater 'opportunity' for older girls to have experienced such behaviour. Hence, 42 per cent of those who have had a boyfriend and are aged 19–20 years, have experienced physical dating violence, compared to 37 per cent of 17–18 year olds, 30 per cent of 15–16 year olds and 21 per cent of 12–14 year olds.

FEMALE TO MALE VIOLENCE

Table 4.35 (page 116) summarises the extent of female to male dating violence, again firstly from the victims' (ie boys') point of view and then from the perpetrators' (ie girls'), perspective. Again, the reported level of experience as a victim is greater than the reported level of perpetration, although the difference is not often as great as that seen for male to female violence. Taking the same item as in the previous example, 16 per cent of boys say that their girlfriends have threatened to hit them or to throw something at them and 12 per cent of girls admit to having done this to their boyfriend. However, the level of female to male dating violence is fairly similar to the male to female levels reported in the previous section.

In terms of two of the specific behaviours — slapping and kicking — the female to male incidence based on victimisation experience was higher than that of male to female.

	MALE TO FEMALE	FEMALE TO MALE
Slapped you	12%	21%
Kicked, bit or hit you	11%	13%

This is consistent with the indications from the initial qualitative research which suggested that among teenagers, many manifestations of female to male aggression (including physical violence) are at least as prevalent as those for male to female. This is also consistent with many North American studies that have collected data via similar Conflict Tactic Scales discussed in the literature review.

Conversely, behaviours less likely to be perpetrated by females than males were, based on girls' reports, as follows[28]:

	MALE TO FEMALE	FEMALE TO MALE
Put you down/humiliated you	39%	29%
Tried to control you physically, eg by holding	25%	11%
Threw/smashed/hit/kicked something	23%	14%

Some of the more notable findings in relation to female to male dating violence, based on boys' reports, are as follows:

- 21% of 12-20 year old boys who have been in a dating relationship have been *slapped* by a girlfriend
- 19% of boys have been *pushed, shoved or grabbed* by their girlfriend
- 16% of boys have been *physically threatened by their girlfriend*
- 13% of boys have been *bitten, hit or kicked* by their girlfriend.

When a composite measure of **physical dating violence** is developed, it was found that, as with girls, about one-third (37 per cent) of all boys who have been in a dating relationship have experienced some measure of physical violence in one or more of those relationships.

As with reports of male to female violence, age was an important factor. Hence, the following proportions have experienced physical violence in a dating relationship (either perpetration or victimisation): 19–20 year olds — 46 per cent; 17–8 year olds — 35 per cent; 15–16 year olds — 31 per cent; and, 12–14 year olds — 24 per cent.

The proportion claiming that some kind of physically violent act has been perpetrated against them is therefore very similar among males and females in all age groups. This is despite a lower reported incidence of virtually all individual acts by females against males (except for higher reporting of perpetration by girls against boys for slapping). This would suggest that there is a greater spread of incidents by males — ie it is more likely that a female perpetrates one or two of the actions against the male, whereas a male is more likely to perpetrate a higher number of actions against the female.

SUB GROUP DIFFERENCES

Significant differences in the reported incidence of dating violence were seen between different social class categories. The basis on which the school-based and non school samples were divided into 'white collar' and 'blue collar' social class categories has been described in the methodology.

An analysis of dating violence levels and social class revealed various differences. Young women classified as 'blue collar' were significantly more likely to have experienced most aspects of dating violence than 'white collar' young women (at least for the behaviours assessed in this survey). Fewer differences were evident for males by social class. Some notable differences in experience are summarised in Table 4.36.

Table 4.36: Young people's experience of dating violence

	Females		Males	
	WHITE COLLAR	BLUE COLLAR	WHITE COLLAR	BLUE COLLAR
Number that have been in dating relationship	**349**	**799**	**301**	**764**
	%	%	%	%
Your boyfriend/girlfriend has one or more times:				
Thrown something at you	6	12*	8	12*
Pushed, grabbed or shoved you	19	26*	15	20*
Yelled loudly at you	38	49*	36	38
Threatened to hit you	10	19*	13	15
Slapped you	6	11*	17	20
Kicked, bit or hit you	7	11*	9	12

* statistically significant at 95% confidence level

The only behaviours that did not show a difference by gender based on social class were tried to *force you to have sex, and tried to control you physically* — the reported incidence was almost identical for white collar and blue collar youth (both for males and females).

This apparent greater prevalence of dating violence in blue collar than white collar relationships is consistent with the preliminary qualitative indicators, as well as the results of other studies from the research literature.

CLUSTER DIFFERENCES

Attitudinal Clusters

Incidence of dating violence was compared across the three attitudinal clusters that emerged from the segmentation analysis. These results allow us to examine whether the underlying attitudes towards domestic violence expressed by young people (ie the basis for the cluster definitions) correlate with greater propensity to engage in (ie perpetrate) undesirable behaviours in their own relationships. The discriminant analysis has already indicated that perpetration of dating violence is a significant discriminant (albeit a very small one) of cluster membership.

Differences between the clusters in terms of perpetration of dating violence were not large, indicating that attitudes were not (at least yet) being translated into behaviour. Nevertheless, some statistically significant differences did emerge and these are summarised in Table 4.37.

Table 4.37: Difference in perpetration levels by attitudinal clusters of young people

	CLUSTER 1: SUPPORTIVE OF FEMALE VIOLENCE	CLUSTER 2: AGAINST VIOLENCE BY EITHER SEX	CLUSTER 3: SUPPORTIVE OF VIOLENCE BY EITHER SEX
Done the following to girlfriend/boyfriend:			
Threatened to hit them	11%	8%	12%
Pushed, grabbed or shoved them	11%	10%	14%
Slapped them	10%	7%	12%
Beat them up	1%	–	4%

The results above indicate that some young people who express attitudes supportive of violence by either sex (ie members of Cluster 3) are also engaging in undesirable behaviours in their own dating relationships. However, the absolute levels are not particularly high and, more importantly, the incidence of perpetration for this cluster is only slightly (albeit statistically significantly) above the average level for the overall sample. As with the discriminant analysis, it could be concluded that there is a link (perhaps tenuous) between attitudes and actual dating violence behaviours.

Experiential groups

Both perpetration and victimisation in dating relationships were also considered in terms of the young person's experience of households with parental domestic violence and whether that situation results in a greater likelihood of them being involved in similar intimate relationships, either as the victim or the perpetrator.

Young people from homes where couple violence occurs are significantly more likely to have been a victim of each of the behavioural measures, from being yelled at loudly (60 per cent compared to 45 per cent from the remainder of the sample), to being forced to have sex (11 per cent compared to five per cent) or having a knife or gun used against them (six per cent compared to two per cent).

A similar pattern is seen for perpetration of dating violence. Young people from households where couple violence has occurred are significantly more likely to have perpetrated each of the behaviours measured. Again, this varies from 52 per cent saying they have yelled loudly at a partner (compared to 40 per cent overall), to four per cent forcing them to have sex (compared to one per cent) and three per cent having used a knife or gun (compared to one per cent).

An investigative analysis (of all of the attitudinal, demographic or experiential variables as predictors of violence in intimate relationships), showed that the best predictor was having witnessed certain types of female to male violence. Similarly, the best predictor of victimisation in personal relationships was found to be having witnessed male to female violence.

Therefore, there is some support for the 'cycle of violence' thesis. However, as identified in previous research, it is important to recognise that the majority who have grown up in an environment of violence have not (as yet) adopted violent behaviours in their own relationships. Certainly, the particular factors that explain the observed linkage are numerous and a simple assertion that past exposure ''causes' present violence or victimisation should be rejected in favour of the more complex dynamic models discussed in the literature review.

DIFFERENTIAL IMPACT OF DATING CONFLICT/VIOLENCE ON GIRLS AND BOYS

Given the indications that female to male and male to female dating aggression were similar in prevalence (predicted on the basis of the initial qualitative work, and verified via the quantitative survey data), an examination of any differential impact on the respective victims was important. One would suspect that much of the female to male violence might have less serious consequences (fear invoked and the physical trauma suffered). This notion certainly appears to have been substantiated in relation to domestic violence (as shown in the next section). Thus, as a follow up to the specific behavioural measures discussed earlier, respondents were asked whether they had ever been really frightened and/or physically hurt by any of the arguments or fights they have had with a boyfriend/girlfriend. Responses were elicited using the following scale:

- *yes, I've been really frightened*
- *yes, I've been physically hurt*
- *yes, I've been both frightened **and** physically hurt*
- *no*

The results for all males and females who have been in a dating relationship are summarised in Table 4.38.

Table 4.38: The experience of aggression/violence from the victims' perspective

	MALES		FEMALES	
Number that had been in dating relationship	**1236**		**1483**	
	%		%	
Really frightened	3		13*	
Physically hurt	4	**9**	2	**24***
Both frightened and physically hurt	2		9*	
No	83		72*	
No response	9		4*	

* statistically significant difference at 95% confidence level

Thus, 24 per cent of **all** girls who have been in a dating relationship have been frightened and/or hurt by intimate violence that they had experienced, compared to boys in the same circumstances (nine per cent).

If taken as a proportion of the young people who have experienced threats of or actual physical violence (ie the relevant sub-set of behaviours described earlier), the data suggest that:

- 25 per cent of girls have been frightened by the physical aggression they suffered
- six per cent have been physically hurt
- 24 per cent have been both frightened and hurt
- in total, over half (55%) of those experiencing threats or actual violence have been frightened or hurt.

By contrast among males, the figures are much smaller:

- six per cent have been frightened by the physical aggression they suffered
- 11 per cent have been physically hurt
- five per cent have been frightened and hurt
- in total, 22% of those experiencing threats or actual violence have been frightened or hurt.

It seems therefore that girls have the ability to have some physical impact on their boyfriends, with 16 per cent of males saying that they have been physically hurt. However, based on the proportion who are frightened, the nature of these acts is not very serious, and the acts themselves do not tend to threaten males. Conversely, fear appears more common than physical hurt for girls, with 49 per cent saying that they had been frightened (compared to 11 per cent of boys).

Almost one in three (30 per cent) of 19–20 year old women reported being frightened and/or hurt by the dating violence they had experienced. The equivalent figure for 19-20 year old men was only 12 per cent.

There was a slight difference on the basis of ATSI descent. ATSI respondents were more likely to say they had experienced some trauma from dating violence than those of non-ATSI decent (23 per cent compared to 16 per cent). However, the other sub group analyses that were conducted revealed no substantial or systematic differences on this measure.

The male/female disparity is best revealed in the subjective experience of the behaviours canvassed by the questionnaire. Females were more than four times as likely to express fear regardless of whether the group of behaviours under consideration is ‘physical aggression’ or ‘all aggression’ (Table 4.39). This subjective dimension converts aggression into violence and reveals the gender imbalance so consistently observed in criminal statistics.

Table 4.39: Young people 'frightened' by any or all of the violence incidents they had experienced — percentage of females and males

	FEMALE	MALE
Physical aggression	49%	11%
All aggression	22%	5%

Responses to the Experience of Witnessing Parental Domestic Violence

INTRODUCTION

In this section, the reactions and responses of young people witnessing parental domestic violence are examined. Results are based on the responses of young people who indicated that they were aware of physical domestic violence being perpetrated against: both their mother and father (14.4 per cent of young people surveyed); only their mother (nine per cent); or only their father (7.8 per cent).

THE EFFECT OF HITTING

Respondents were asked:

> *What if anything happened as a result of one of your parents hitting or being hit by the other/their partner?*

For the results for the total sample and of the three 'experiential' clusters stating that physical domestic violence had occurred or been threatened, see Table 4.40. Overall, two-thirds said that their parents never hit each other. A further 10 per cent did not answer the question. A few, while saying their parents had not hit each other, went on to tick one of the 'outcomes', making the total percentage ticking an outcome 26 per cent. As mentioned earlier, 31.2 per cent stated that some physical domestic violence had occurred between their parents, including throwing items, threatening to use a knife or gun and hitting.

Fourteen per cent of respondents, or 61 per cent of those reporting outcomes as a result of violence, said that *nothing had happened* as a result of the violence. In just over two thirds of these cases (43 per cent of those reporting in total) the violence had ceased, while in the remaining 18 per cent, violence was apparently continuing, although it had not, to that point, led to any further outcome.

Effect of hitting on the relationship

Fifteen per cent of all respondents reported that their parents (or parent and partner, in an abusive relationship) separated, corresponding to 65 per cent of those reporting outcomes to the violence. Just over two-thirds of these have remained separated.

Effect of hitting on partners

Four per cent of all respondents (17 per cent of those reporting outcomes to violence) said that one or both their parents had attended counselling as a result of the hitting, marginally higher than the proportion of parents hospitalised or where one or both parents missed work (three per cent for each category).

Table 4.40: Young people's experience of witnessing domestic violence — outcomes

	TOTAL SAMPLE	WITNESSING MALE TO FEMALE VIOLENCE ONLY	WITNESSING FEMALE TO MALE VIOLENCE ONLY	WITNESSING VIOLENCE BETWEEN BOTH PARTNERS
	5014	452	389	721
	%	% [a]	% [b]	% [c]
Doesn't apply - my parents haven't hit each other/their partners	67	32 [c]	51 [ac]	24
Nothing, but no longer happens	10	23	22	25
Nothing, but still happens	4	8	6	13 [ab]
They split up and are still apart	11	30 [b]	16	34 [b]
They split up but are back together	4	6	8	16 [ab]
One/both has been to hospital	3	7 [b]	3	15 [ab]
One/both have missed work	3	5	4	15 [ab]
They've been to counselling	4	9	6	13 [b]
I missed school/work	5	12 [b]	7	21 [ab]
Siblings missed school/work	5	10 [b]	5	18 [ab]
I/siblings attended counselling	4	11 [b]	6	14 [ab]
No response	10	11	6	7

a/b/c signifies significantly different to response in that column at 95 per cent confidence level

Effect of hitting on the children

Five per cent of all respondents reported missing school, college or work through violence occurring between their parents/parents and partners. The same result was reported for siblings. Four per cent said that they or their siblings had been counselled.

These proportions did not vary by sex. The most marked difference by sex was non response; 12 per cent of boys did not respond to the question, compared to seven per cent of girls. There were few differences by social class or by age. One difference was an increase in the proportion saying *I/my brothers and sisters have been to counselling*, rising from two per cent at age 12 years, to six per cent at age 19 years. This may simply reflect the greater period of time during which counselling could have occurred, though it might also reflect a greater need for counselling amongst older teens who themselves are developing intimate relationships. The increase was almost entirely seen among girls.

THE DIFFERENTIAL EFFECT BY PATTERN OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Table 4.40 also shows the outcomes of domestic violence in situations where there has been only male to female violence, only female to male violence, and couple violence. Three very different patterns appear, and it is apparent that **effects or outcomes are least when only female to male violence occurs** and are greatest when both partners are violent towards each other. This is consistent with data suggesting that the level of violence was worst in situations of couple violence and least disruptive when perpetrated only by females against males.

Significantly, in households where only female to male physical domestic violence occurred, 51 per cent of this group responded *my parents haven't hit each other*. Six per cent did not respond; only 43 per cent reported outcomes to violence that, according to the earlier responses, had occurred. This is likely to tie in with the greater proportion of physical domestic violence situations in this cluster, such as the female throwing something at the male.

In contrast, a significantly lower 32 per cent of the group where there was only male to female violence (nine per cent of the total sample) said their parents had not hit each other. A comparison of the results for these two groups shows that:

- twice as many relationships involving male to female violence (30 per cent) ended, compared to those involving female to male violence (16 per cent)
- seven per cent of females struck by the male went to hospital, compared to three per cent of males hit by the female
- 12 per cent of young people in households where the male struck the female have missed school, as have 10 per cent of their siblings, compared to seven per cent and five per cent in households where the female struck the male
- nine per cent of young people in households where the male struck the female were counselled, compared to six per cent in households where the female struck the male.

Each of these findings shows the greater disruption and physical and emotional pain from situations where the violence has been directed towards the mother, rather than towards the father — at least for the measurable effects both on partners and children. This is consistent with other studies indicating that male to female domestic violence is one of most concern — even though many studies, including this one, suggest that the frequency of physical incidents is not very different between genders.

There is considerable specific evidence that the greatest disruption and trauma occurs in households where 'couple violence' is present. Survey data indicates that this is the current situation for eight per cent of young people, with a further 6.4 per cent previously experiencing similar situations:

- in 50 per cent of these cases the couple has separated, though 16 per cent of the couples have reconciled
- in 13 per cent of households, the violence is still going on and nothing has happened as a result of it
- in 15 per cent of these households, one or both of the parties have been to hospital. A similar proportion has missed work
- 20 per cent of the young people in these homes have missed school, work or college
- 13 per cent of the young people in these households say that their parents/parent and partner have been to counselling; 14 per cent say that they or their siblings have been to counselling.

SEEKING HELP

Young people who said that something was happening or had happened at home were asked if they told anyone outside the home. A series of possible responses were posed (see Table 4.41).

Over a third (36 per cent) of young people in households where their parents/parent and partner hit each other have not told anyone about it. This rate is higher among boys (42 per cent) than girls (30 per cent). Further analysis revealed that it is also higher among the 12 and 13 year olds than the mid — or older teens (48 per cent of 12 and 13 year olds have not told anybody, compared to 34 per cent of those aged 14 years or over).

Overall, friends are those most likely to be told, particularly among girls. This pattern is fairly uniform across age groups, as is: telling *other family members who don't live with us*. Those aged 18 years or over are more likely to tell an older adult friend, predictable, since they are more likely to have such friends. Overall, eight per cent of young people in such situations said that they told police, a reaction more common among females and older teens.

Five per cent of young people reported ringing a help line. While the small sample size makes any definitive comments unreliable, use of a help line appears to be more prevalent among the younger ages.

When examining the violence at home (ie male to female, female to male, or couple violence), it was found that those young people living in households where female to male violence only is occurring are significantly less likely to tell someone. Forty-five per cent of young people in this situation had not told anyone, compared to 26 per cent of those in households where there is male to female violence and 31 per cent of couple violence. This may be related to confusion as to whether incidents at home constitute violence (or indeed a problem at all). Certainly, young people in this situation are significantly less likely to inform the police of the situation than those in households where the female is being hit or where couple violence is occurring (four per cent compared to nine per cent and 12 per cent respectively, again indicative of the more serious and/or entrenched nature of the violence that is taking place).

Table 4.41: Where young people experienced parental domestic violence — percentages of respondents who told anyone outside the home

	TOTAL	MALES	FEMALES
	%	%	%
No, haven't told anyone	36	42*	30
Told my friends	41	31	51*
Told other family members who don't live with us	18	17	20
Told an older adult friend	16	14	19*
Told the police	8	7	9
Told another adult outside college/work	6	5	6
Told a lecturer/teacher	5	5	6
Told my boss/someone in charge at work	1	1	1
Rang a help line	5	3	6*
No response	12	16	9

* significantly different to results for other gender at 95 per cent confidence level

WHETHER TALKING ABOUT THE SITUATION HELPED

Youth who had told someone/rung a help line were asked if this had helped. This question had a significant non response rate (46 per cent of those eligible to answer the question did not do so); the results, consequently, are rather difficult to interpret.

Of those who replied, 51 per cent said that while talking had helped, nothing had happened as a result of the conversation(s). Twenty-nine per cent said that talking had not helped. Eleven per cent said that the person to whom they had spoken had contacted their mother, and a further 11 per cent said that they had been put in touch with services that could help. Nine per cent said that the person to whom they had spoken had contacted their father, and eight per cent said they had been given some information or leaflets.

Of those who rang a help line (n=55), 41 per cent responded that it had helped, but 31 per cent said that it had not; one-quarter of those calling a help line were put in touch with services that could help. Fourteen per cent said that the help line contacted their mothers; similarly, a further 14 per cent said that the help line contacted their fathers. Among those who contacted the police, 23 per cent said that they were put in touch with services and in 16 per cent and 12 per cent of cases respectively, the police contacted their mother/father.

ADVICE TO FRIENDS

Young people were asked: *'what would you do if one of your friends told you that one of their parents was being hit by the other/their partner'*.

Responses are in Table 4.42. Three-quarters of young people offered at least one piece of advice that they would give their friends in this situation. Twenty per cent said they were not sure, and nine per cent said that it was not really any of their business.

Approximately 40 per cent of respondents suggested: ring a help line (42 per cent); tell an older adult (42 per cent), and talk to parents (38 per cent). Each of these answers was significantly more likely to be nominated by females than males. It is likely that the proportion saying they would suggest the friend rings a help line could have been increased by the previous questions.

The next item related to the severity with which young people view a situation where partners strike each other, and the extent to which it is not seen as a private or family matter. Twenty-seven per cent said they would advise the friend to tell police, and a further nine per cent said they would tell the police themselves. The proportion suggesting that the police should be told increased with age — from 19 per cent and six per cent at age 12 years (for advising the friend to tell the police), to 32 per cent and 13 per cent at age 20 years (for telling the police directly).

Table 4.42: Advice that young people say they would give to a friend experiencing domestic violence

	TOTAL	MALES	FEMALES
	5014	2567	2446
	%	%	%
Advise them to ring a help line	42	35	50*
Advise them to tell an older adult (teacher/lecturer/work colleague)	42	34	50*
Advise them to talk to their parents	38	36	40*
Advise them to tell the police	27	25	29*
Tell own parents and get them to deal with it	12	12	12
Tell a lecturer/teacher/work colleague yourself	11	9	14*
Tell the police yourself	9	9	8
Wouldn't really do anything because none of your business	9	12*	7
Not sure	20	21*	18
No response	7	9*	5

* significantly different to results for other gender at 95 % confidence level

Summary

This section summarises the main findings from the survey.

ATTITUDES

- Different aspects of young people's attitude to domestic violence have been explored. First, young people are willing to classify a broad range of behaviours as 'domestic violence', although a small proportion of young people do not classify extremely violent behaviours as domestic violence. Young males and Indigenous youth are over represented in this group. These two demographic descriptors most consistently were linked to pro-violence attitudes throughout the attitude testing.
- Generally, boys were more likely to endorse pro-violence statements. Other demographic variables associated with pro-violence attitudes were: younger age group, more disadvantaged groups, being Indigenous.
- Those young people from groups who have witnessed domestic violence in the home are more likely to believe that it is more common. Generally, 45 per cent of young people believe that domestic violence occurs in most or a lot of homes, whereas this view is supported by 60 per cent of young people from ATSI descent. In general, girls and older teens rated more highly the prevalence of domestic violence.

29 This non response is particularly evident among those who answered that they told a friend or told a family member not living at home. It is hypothesised that a number of respondents read the instruction quickly and thought only those who had rung a help line needed to answer this question. All those who had rung a help line did answer the question.

- The media was cited most often as the major source of information about domestic violence, however, in higher risk groups, the main source of information was more likely to be personal sources.
- The most common attributions for domestic violence were 'having grown up in violent household' and 'being drunk'. Therefore, wide support exists for the 'cycle of violence' thesis as well as the more superficial explanation that 'intoxication' causes violence.
- The evidence presented here does not reveal any large differences between Australian attitudes and those found in the US.
- Cluster analysis (where young people were assigned to one of three groups on the basis of their attitudes to violence) suggests that the group most supportive of violence in relationships is characterised by demographic factors largely similar to those found in the first attitudinal analysis: younger age group; male; Asian or Middle Eastern background; having witnessed parental domestic violence.
- Of all the factors related to attitudes about the justifiability of violence, age featured as the strongest demographic variable. It appears that the analysis when conducted across all **age** ranges (12–20 years) may be distorted because of this large effect.

EXPERIENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Just over one-third (31.2 per cent) of young people had experienced one of the following: a male carer being physically violent to his female partner; a female carer being violent to her male partner; or, both carers being violent to each other. The most common pattern (experienced by almost half of all respondents) was two–way (couple) violence. The other two patterns (two different forms of one-way violence) accounted for about a quarter each of the remaining half (male to female violence — nine per cent; female to male violence — 7.8 per cent).
- In focusing on violence against women, almost one-quarter (23.4 per cent) of young people reported witnessing at least one act that could be described as 'physical domestic violence' perpetrated by their male carer towards a female carer.
- The severity of the violence and its effects appear to be greater in the couple violence pattern, and least, in the female to male violence group.
- Using a very broad definition of domestic violence (eg including *yelling*), it emerged that: eight per cent of young people were currently witnessing 'couple violence' — male to female violence — six per cent; female to male violence — two per cent.
- When more restrictive definitions are applied to behaviour patterns, the proportion of young people witnessing domestic violence diminishes. For example, the proportion ever having witnessed a male carer hitting a female carer — unprovoked — is 17 per cent.
- About half of the sample who claim to have witnessed violence indicated that they had only witnessed the violence once or twice (the remainder had witnessed it more often).
- For the more serious forms of violence, based on children's accounts, more violence was perpetrated by males on female partners, than vice versa. However, this disparity did not stand for less serious aggression/violence (where the distribution is more equal).

- As the events under consideration move from the less serious to the more serious, their reported prevalence diminishes rapidly.
- In terms of the distribution of witnessing experiences, there are few significant differences among Australian jurisdictions.
- Young people who reported witnessing domestic violence were more likely to be: female; older teen; of lower socioeconomic status; living in households other than with both parents; Indigenous.
- The chances of respondents witnessing domestic violence were much higher if a carer gets *drunk a lot* or *hits children (other than for bad behaviour).*

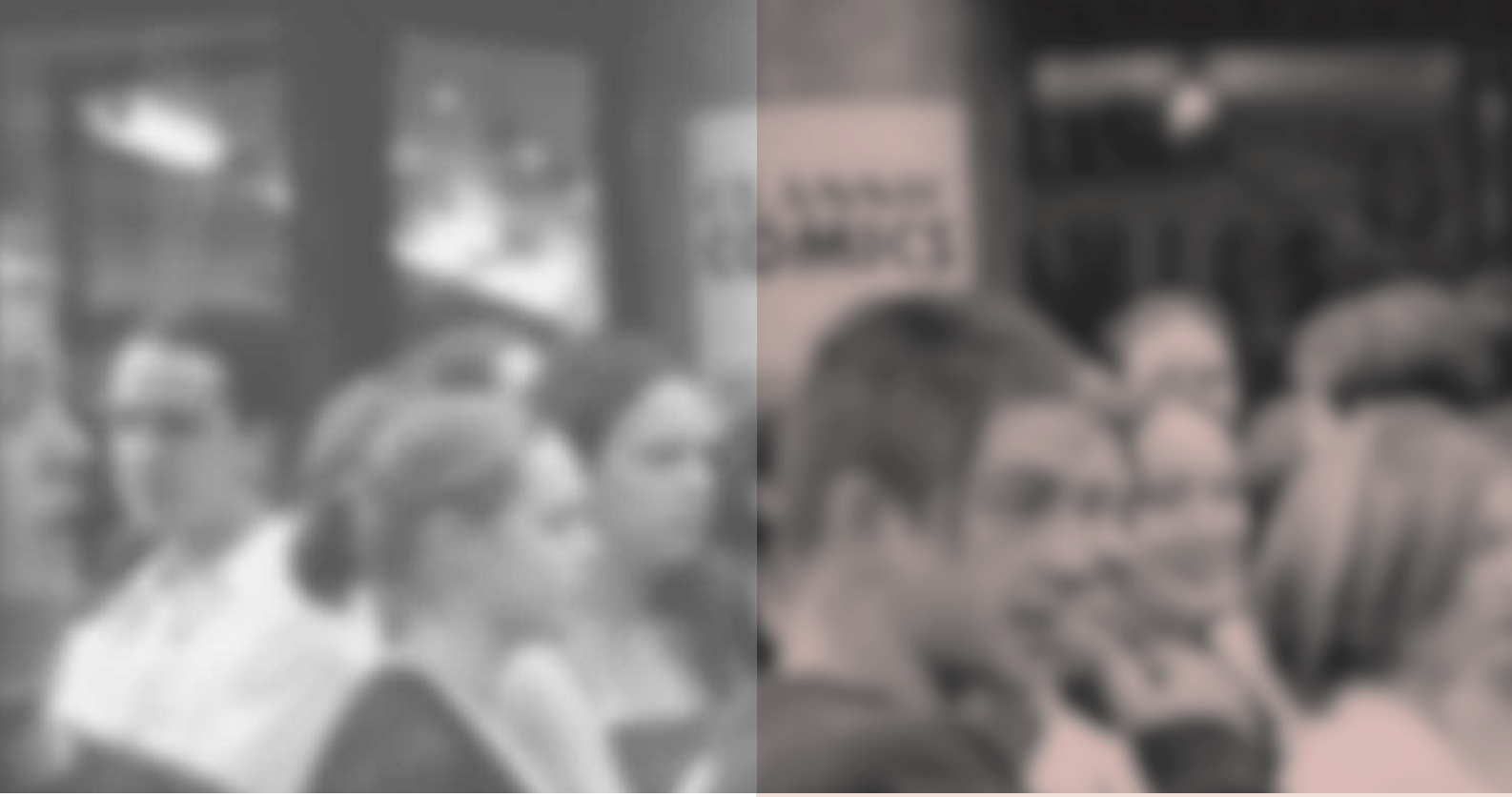
EXPERIENCE OF DATING VIOLENCE

- Almost half of the 19–20 year olds who have been in an intimate relationship have experienced at least one act that can broadly be classified as 'dating violence'.
- The rates of victimisation and perpetration are roughly the same for males and females.
- The term 'violence' is generally used to refer to acts that hurt, humiliate or injure. Adjusting for this experiential component of violence, it was found that about 22 per cent of females and five percent of males, could be classified as dating violence victims.
- There are substantial class differences in the rate at which young people experience dating violence — the rates are much higher for the more disadvantaged.
- There is little evidence for the predominance of 'attitude' as an effect which influences the rate of perpetration or victimisation.
- The effect of exposure to parental violence is the strongest predictor of perpetration of violence. The effect of serious domestic violence ('couple violence') in the family of origin is evident.
- The gender disparity commonly recognised in domestic violence and reflected in criminal statistics is revealed by the subjective experience of the aggression. Girls are four times more likely than boys to have been frightened by an episode of intimate aggression.

EFFECTS OF WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Most of the reported parental violence appeared to be minor in that no effects were reported by the majority of child witnesses.
- Where outcomes were reported — the most likely one was the parents' separation.
- The relative seriousness of male to female violence and female to male violence, was compared. The effects of male to female violence were twice as severe measured by: the rate of relationship break up; hospitalisation; children missing school; children receiving counselling; and the rate at which the young person/witness has told another about the incident(s).
- The most severe disruption on all available indicators occurred in households where couple violence was reported.

- Where young people had, or were experiencing parental domestic violence, one-third had not told anyone about it.
- Asked how they would advise friends experiencing parental domestic violence, 20 per cent of all young people were unsure; nine per cent said that it was not really any of their business.



SECTION 5

Interpretations of the results of the research

5 Interpretations of the results of the research and implications for policy and communication

Outline

This chapter draws together the major findings of the research before making some suggestions for policy and intervention strategies. These suggestions will be anchored on the research findings and fall within the general directive of preventing domestic violence through work with young people.

Summary of the Main Findings

One of the primary goals of the current research was to establish baseline data on the attitudes and experiences of young people in relation to domestic violence. The findings outlined in Chapter 4 provide such data.

ATTITUDES

Two strategies were employed to ascertain young people's attitudes to domestic violence. The first relied on a set of general attitude statements. This measurement found that, compared to girls, boys were more likely to endorse pro-violence statements. Other demographic variables associated with pro-violence attitudes were: belonging to younger age groups, being more disadvantaged, and being Indigenous. Although international comparisons must be considerably qualified, the evidence presented did not suggest that there was a large difference between Australian attitudes and those found in the US. Although the findings of the present study are not directly comparable with earlier (and more selective) Australian studies, the findings point to considerably less endorsement of pro-sexual violence sentiments among young Australian males.[30]

The second strategy, to overcome 'floor effects' found in earlier studies, involved developing a questionnaire on the justifiability of domestic violence to explore the deeper attitudinal roots of support for violence. From the results of this questionnaire, three attitudinal clusters were developed. The cluster analysis revealed that the problematic (pro-violence) group is

30 The present study is by far the most comprehensive and representative carried out to date. There are other important differences between the present study and the earlier studies that make direct comparisons tenuous. Our findings suggest, however, that over the last decade attitudes conducive to sexual violence have ameliorated somewhat.

characterised by demographic factors largely similar to those found in the first attitudinal analysis: belonging to younger age groups, being male, having an Asian or Middle Eastern background, and having witnessed parental domestic violence. Thus the findings from the cluster analysis reinforce the findings from the first attitudinal analysis.

Of all these factors the strongest demographic variable was age, suggesting that the younger age groups are qualitatively distinct from the older age groups, not only in terms of their experience but also with regard to their exhibited attitude. The degree to which these attitudes are meaningful reflections of a position regarding relationships and violence, rather than an undifferentiated response to a non salient issue, is discussed in the report. There were a number of indications that the younger age groups were not in a position to have developed views or awareness regarding their parents' relationship. Further, young people of this age did not have the experience and exposure to situations that would allow them to form considered views on their own personal relationships and the use of aggression in those relationships.

EXPERIENCE

It was found that about one in three young people have witnessed incidents in the home that may be classified as physical domestic violence, at least when we use a very broad definition of 'violence'. About one in three young people (both males and females) have experienced incidents in their personal relationships that could be defined as 'physical violence', again using a very broad definition of 'violence'. However, these figures should be used only as a starting point in understanding the distribution of conflict and violence in teenage relationships.

Another important finding from the investigation of young people's experience of violence in personal relationships was that sexual violence was a very important aspect. Sexual violence has considerable potential to be used for instrumental rather than expressive purposes, and thus identifies it as a form of physical aggression that is used to control or coerce the other person through force or fear. This way of using force makes sexual violence unambiguously 'violent'. Further, the effects of sexual violation mean that the consequences of this violence may be considerably greater than other forms of violence for many young people. As most young people are exploring their first array of sexual experiences, the potential for abuse and violence is probably greater than at any other time in their lives.[31] For these and other reasons, sexual violence should be of primary concern in discussions of young people's experience of violence in personal relationships.

MEASUREMENT, BASELINES AND DEFINITIONS

As the findings of this study indicate, the concept of 'violence' is central to the establishment of baselines. There is a common tendency to want to capture the full extent of interpersonal abuse and label it in the most pejorative way possible — ie as 'violence'. However, to view the physical acts that cause fear or even terror as equivalent to acts that the victim does not consider serious or think of as a crime or cause her to be fearful, is to do a disservice to victims and, for the current analysis, distorts the target for intervention. The relative

31 Young people aged between 10 and 19 years represent 40 per cent of all victims of sexual assault (known to the police) in Australia. Almost half (47 per cent) of all sexual assault victims known to the police are females under the age of 20 years (ABS 1999).

seriousness of one form of abuse compared to another is important and needs to be taken into account in designing preventative interventions. Effective programs and interventions are those that will be meaningful to the people involved.

There is no doubt that acts that are coercive, especially physically coercive acts, are disturbing to most. However, the majority of physical acts engaged in between couples appear to be only mildly coercive and not considered very serious (by the participants themselves). It seems to be a fundamental mistake to equate these acts with the terrifying, demeaning, hurtful and effectively controlling physical acts known as 'crimes of violence'. These are acts that result in considerable fear, injury and sometimes death. To reflect this important difference, the study recommended that a clear distinction be made between the broad penumbra of 'aggressive incidents', and the clear target of 'violence'. The concept 'violence' in common parlance connotes coercion by the use of unacceptable physical force that invokes fear on the part of the victim. It is crucially important in the treatment of this subject that the use of the word does not become attached to behaviours so dissimilar from this understanding that the meaning of the term is lost.

ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOUR LINK

Although there are ample baseline data on a range of attitudes pertinent to domestic violence, the research also revealed that the relationship between these attitudes and violent behaviour is not as strong as is often assumed. Indeed, attitude is only weakly linked to behaviour; the influence of attitude is swamped by the more relevant variables of maturation and social class (ie social structure). This finding is vitally important for conceptualising the nature of the problem and how to remedy it. The most relevant interventions will be those designed in realistic terms for the high risk groups and addressing the issues of most concern to them — these may have to do less with a direct approach focused on 'attitude' and more to do with an approach which addresses the personal and social needs of individuals in these circumstances. The implication of this finding is that the variable 'attitude' and its relationship to violence need to be considered critically, as does the desire to 'do' attitude change.[32] The most effective programs and interventions are those that will be meaningful to the people involved.

CONCEPTUALISING 'YOUNG PEOPLE'

The findings of the present research have raised issues regarding the appropriate age focus for a study of young people and violence. When we think of 'young people' we often have in our mind notions of a homogenous group of adolescents either at school or who have recently left school. There is a tendency to imagine that this group can be broadly characterised as engaging in light-hearted and experimental ways with intimate relationships. However, the results of both the qualitative and quantitative research raise some questions about such an uncomplicated view of young people.

32 The problems associated with a focus purely on attitude change are deep and important. The desire to convert social problems into personal ones underlies a number of tragic 'rescuing missions' in Australia and other countries, as discussed in the literature review.

First, there are important differences in the attitudes to violence depending on age. This means that it would be much more meaningful to think in terms of at least two age bands – young adolescents and older adolescents. Second, the findings of the present study reinforce the large number of studies discussed in the literature review that point to the primary role of social structure. Rather than thinking of a homogenous group of young people, we should see at least three categories: 'advantaged', 'disadvantaged' and 'marginalised' groups. These findings also reinforce the findings of the Dunedin study. As Moffitt and Caspi (1999) reported:

> *Among the results are that partner violence is strongly linked to cohabitation at a younger age; a variety of mental illnesses; a background of family adversity; dropping out of school; juvenile aggression; conviction for other types of crime, especially violent crime; drug abuse; long term unemployment; and parenthood at a young age.*

It needs to be emphasised that this research revealed yet again the much higher levels of violence experienced by Indigenous young people. The levels of violence revealed in both the qualitative and quantitative research reinforce the finding consistently emerging from studies of domestic (or 'family') violence in Indigenous communities. The levels of violence are much higher than those experienced in any other sector of Australian society and they affect every aspect of family relations. Given the high levels of violence and the seemingly entrenched and endemic pattern of this violence, intervention with Indigenous families needs to be a matter of highest priority, and such intervention needs to be targeted to acknowledge the deeply embedded nature of this violence.

The other group that experienced intense levels of domestic violence and provided the most disturbing and influential effects on young people were those households defined as experiencing 'couple violence'. These homes represent toxic sites for damage to young people and should be a focus for interventions.

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

The findings on the effect of witnessing on attitudes, but more particularly on experience, support the cycle of violence thesis and suggest that efforts should focus on preventing current domestic violence and helping children from homes where domestic violence is occurring — which indicated that witnessing was the strongest predictor of subsequent perpetration. Our investigation of young people's beliefs regarding the causes of domestic violence found wide support for the cycle of violence thesis; indeed this was the most common causative explanation chosen by young people.

Based on this research, the priority should lie with those homes where there is evidence of a serious and sustained history of domestic violence. As found in the United Kingdom, a focus on repeat domestic violence represents a rational use of limited criminal justice resources. As with the awareness of higher levels of violence in lower class and Indigenous communities, the awareness of the particular risks in 'couple violence' households represents an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of our interventions. Efforts are needed to map the distribution of such households on an ongoing basis, so that targeted, focused and appropriate interventions can be undertaken to protect the children growing up in dangerous environments.

A further challenge in working with victim households is that child witnesses of domestic violence are more likely than others to rate the prevalence of domestic violence as common. There is a tendency for child witnesses to extrapolate from their own experience and assume that domestic violence is 'normal.' It is important that work with these children helps them understand that, although these events may be common in some groups, it is not normal in wider society.

One of the findings that again points to risks to young people is the much higher rates of violence in those households where one or both carers engage in other problem behaviours (eg gets drunk a lot, gambles or hits the children). The effects on children in homes with couple violence are also considerably greater.

SUMMARY

Young people differ significantly in terms of their family backgrounds, including history of family violence. These differences seem to have a direct bearing on their attitudes to violence in relationships and their experience of violence in their own intimate relationships. Clearly, young people growing up in families experiencing marginalisation, and where domestic violence is common, face multiple disadvantages, and are at higher risk of becoming perpetrators or victims (or both) of domestic violence as they enter intimate relationships. It is clearly these multi-disadvantaged young people who should receive attention.

Implications for Policy Direction

The implications of these results are that social structure and not 'attitude' is a more powerful predictor of behaviour. This fits well with the considerable line of research discussed in the literature review that is critical of 'psychologising' the problem of violence, robbing it of its social dimensions by trying to render it as a problem principally (or even exclusively) of individual difference. These results yet again point to the overarching influence of social arrangements in understanding the genesis and maintenance of violence. As discussed previously, the importance or influence of 'attitude' may have been overstated, and a continual focus on 'attitude' as a site of influence may detract attention from more powerful influences. If the aim is truly to reduce the incidence of domestic violence, then it may be more productive to focus on the systemic causes of the problem rather than what appear to be only loosely connected symptoms.

Prevention efforts should be informed by the findings of this study in relation to age. The picture emerging from this research was that many of the issues of domestic violence, and particularly violence in personal relationships, only became relevant for young people in their later teenage years. The finding that younger age groups have attitudes that are more pro-violence may reflect less their thoughts about the issues and more their guesses about what answers may be appropriate, given that they may not have any experience of relationships.

How we think about intimate relationships between young people often causes much confusion. As discussed, the term in common use in the literature ('dating violence') is problematic for use

in Australia because of the connotation of rather safe, casual, uncommitted, unburdened, experimental arrangements between young men and women living in stable family arrangements. Although this is the picture for some young Australians, for many others it is quite different. It certainly was different for the groups that were experiencing the highest level of 'intimate relationship' violence. Indeed, for young Indigenous people entering relationships the picture is totally misleading.

In these groups, often from poorer and marginalised backgrounds, early intimate relationships appeared similar to their parents' adult relationships, characterised by dependency, intensity, exclusivity and often cohabitation. The distinction, therefore, between young people's relationship violence (or 'dating' violence) and domestic violence is less relevant for the high risk groups than for the typically middle class group. The implication is that for the high risk groups we should see family violence and domestic violence as a continuous process flowing rather quickly from one generation to the next, with intimate violence among adult parents being replicated in a short time by the children pairing up in their teens. Understanding the relationship between social marginalisation and co-dependent violent relationships is clearly vital in the overarching goal of preventing violence.

Specific Suggestions for Prevention

A conceptual framework is outlined below that could be used to guide the development and implementation of a coordinated strategy to address the issue of 'domestic violence and young Australians'. The conclusion offers some broad direction in terms of intervention and communication strategies.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In a broad conceptual framework for the management of social issues, Rothschild (1999) develops an approach that can serve the development of policy for the prevention of domestic violence through work with adolescents. A modification of Rothschild's segmentation model focuses on motivation and ability as the two key dimensions in addressing domestic violence with youth. As suggested by the framework, different groups need to be addressed *via* different combinations of intervention strategies. The key issue lies in identifying different levels of involvement of young people with domestic violence and applying different strategies as appropriate. A key issue then concerns priorities.

PRIORITISATION

One of the initial steps in designing an overall intervention program is to decide whether all target groups can be addressed simultaneously (albeit *via* different strategies), or whether limited resources dictate some prioritising of the order in which different target groups (and sub groups) will be addressed. As discussed earlier, the most relevant interventions would be those that are targeted in a practical and realistic way towards the high risk groups. These groups will

need intensive interventions over a long period of time. The moderate and low risk groups could be addressed *via* more broad ranging communication and education campaigns.

A federally coordinated intervention/education program to address domestic violence and relationship issues among young people would be highly desirable. An integrated, comprehensive campaign is likely to attract strong professional support in the domestic violence sector. A nationally coordinated effort that provides educational resource material, expertise, training, and evaluation processes would help save resources by avoiding duplication.

STRATEGIES FOR HIGH RISK GROUPS

The present research found that the problematic 'pro-violence' segment is characterised by various demographic and environmental factors. The segment contained a higher proportion of:

- younger males
- young people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds
- young people from an Indigenous, Asian or Middle Eastern backgrounds
- young people from homes where both male and female carers were perpetrating violence on each other ('couple violence')
- young people from homes where one or both carers regularly engaged in other 'problem' behaviours (eg alcohol abuse, gambling).

Clearly, young people growing up in families experiencing marginalisation, and where domestic violence is common, face multiple disadvantages and are at higher risk of becoming either perpetrators or victims (or both) of domestic violence as they enter intimate relationships. These multi-disadvantaged children should be the focus of our preventive attention.

Many of these sub groups may not be particularly amenable to 'social marketing' messages, nor particularly accessible in terms of mainstream media channels. Thus, broad based communication/education strategies are not appropriate for many of these high risk groups. Further, the results of this study have supported other research findings indicating that 'attitudes' are not a particularly powerful predictor of behaviour. An integrated approach among service delivery agencies would be appropriate to identify pockets in the community where risk factors exist, and to implement intensive intervention strategies including:

- targeted case work for the most highly disadvantaged families
- delivery of meaningful relationship and parenting information for the most highly disadvantaged families
- development of culturally-sensitive programs as applicable to young people and families in specific ethnic groups
- support for community development initiatives for most disadvantaged communities.

Service delivery agencies that may be included in identification of households requiring intervention may include the police, Family and Children's Services (FCS), social workers and schools. In addition, many programs to assist such households are in existence, hence either the use of or coordination among these (such as, in Western Australia, the Education Department 'Students-at-risk' program, FCS Preventative programs, Ministry of Justice community-based programs) would be the most effective and efficient way to reach the high risk group.

Given the multiplicity of agencies which may be called on, a 'lead agency', ie one with responsibility for coordinating the implementation work of the others, should be identified in each State. This agency would also have considerable liaison with the Commonwealth agency coordinating the overall program to facilitate use of materials and training, and to ensure maximum cross-fertilisation of ideas and best practice from the different States and Territories.

The approach required within the family/household units will clearly depend upon the individual circumstance. Broadly, a three-pronged approach would appear appropriate:

- removal/reduction of current risks or risk situations
- identification of cause or causes of problems within the home (unemployment, gambling, drinking etc)
- a program to reduce/remove that cause and hence the effect of that cause (eg a training program for an unemployed male may reduce his need to exert control within the home, provide assistance with financial management or control of drinking, etc).

STRATEGIES FOR MODERATE AND LOW RISK GROUPS

By definition, these groups are less in need of intervention strategies. The low risk group in particular already exhibits desirable attitudes/behaviours, and the qualitative research indicates that issues of violence in personal relationships are not particularly relevant for them.

These segments of the population are accessible *via* broad based educational and social marketing campaigns, which can serve as a useful reinforcement/reminder function for these groups. So, although the need and the results may be dissipated, the effort required to effect these changes is also likely to be considerably smaller. It is also possible that a continuing intolerance for domestic violence in the middle/upper groups will help young people coming from groups on the margin to access information models that help them understand that domestic violence is not 'normal' and is not acceptable. Campaign messages could also address gender role and relationship issues from a broader perspective, for a variety of related objectives.

An integrated information campaign is suggested, based on appropriate research and using delivery mechanisms such as schools and community and main stream media.

The Commonwealth Role

Clearly national campaigns, for the expansion of the adult domestic violence campaigns and the development of a community education campaign for young people, will require management at the Commonwealth level. While the suggested strategies for the high risk groups are local in nature, we would nonetheless see the need for clear Commonwealth leadership in the following areas:

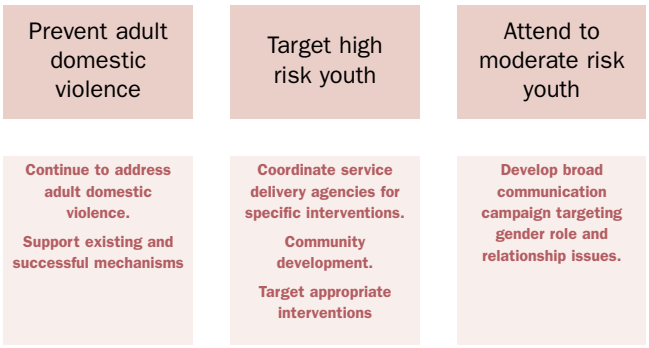
- commitment to a national program on a long term basis, in terms of provision of resources, leadership and integration of local and national activities
- provision of information
- coordination of training programs for service delivery agencies and schools
- evaluation.

The Role of Schools

One of the most important vehicles is the work under way in various places in Australia seeking to inform and discuss with young people the nature of relationship, sexuality conflict and expectations in romantic relationships. This work is further advanced in many parts of North America and there appears to be resistance in some areas for this kind of educational input. Based on the misperceptions and the relatively high rate of sexual violence revealed in the present study, an enhanced role for middle and upper school level relationship education is warranted. Clearly the school community has a significant role to play in the successful implementation of this program. Relevant aspects of school involvement could include:

- provision of information to schools, starting with the survey results
- development of a training and education program for schools regarding the best way to deal with a child in a domestic violence situation
- involvement of State Departments of Education in the development of an appropriate communication campaign, and materials for inclusion in social studies curricula, addressing gender equality and issues such as domestic and dating violence, taking cognisance of the extent to which girls and boys are treated differently in schools.

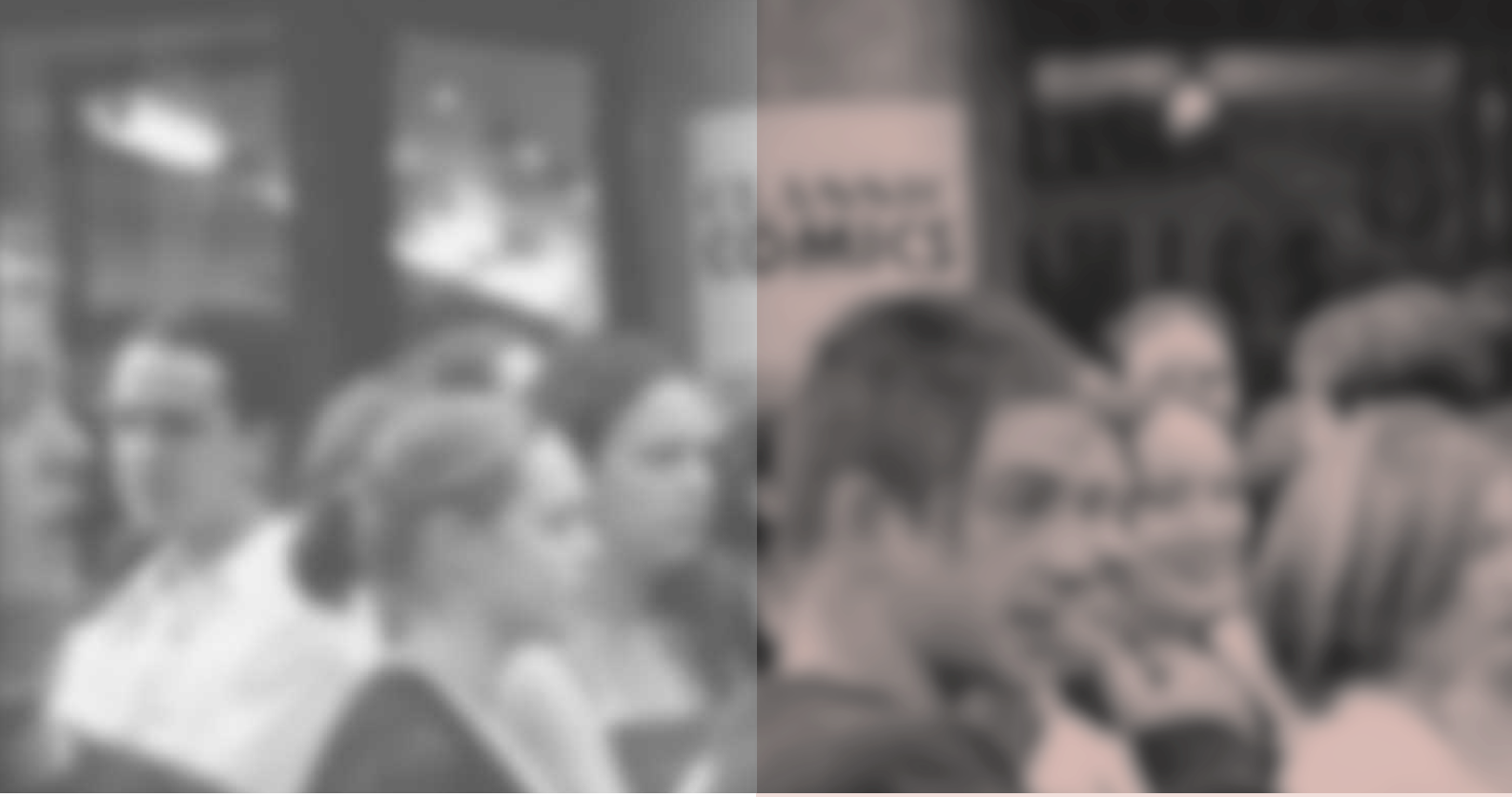
Figure 5.1: Preventative Strategies



Conclusion

The findings and implications of this research on crime prevention mirror those of Homel *et al* (1999: 193) who argued that '... prevention programs cannot be developed in isolation from their community context. Consultation should be bottom-up rather than top-down'. Homel and his colleagues went on to reiterate the recommendations of their work on Developmental Crime Prevention for National Crime Prevention, focusing on a 'whole of community approach', plus 'local involvement and ownership', aiming for an 'inclusive' and 'supportive' environment that promotes the 'pro social development of children'. These phrases convey the essential elements that must underlie any work that is to be effective in building a safer community. The recognition of domestic violence as a social problem with social causes necessarily drives us to seek remedies at the social level.

Planning interventions requires an awareness of these factors, to avoid wasting resources on groups of young people who are either not at risk or only mildly so. This research supports a large body of previous research which shows that the markers for violence are very clearly established: they have to do with social disadvantage, prior exposure and situation. The focus of any intervention should use this knowledge to direct efforts towards those sectors of the youth population where the problem is most pronounced. By adopting a focused approach, interventions can be tailored in meaningful ways that are much more likely to have an impact.



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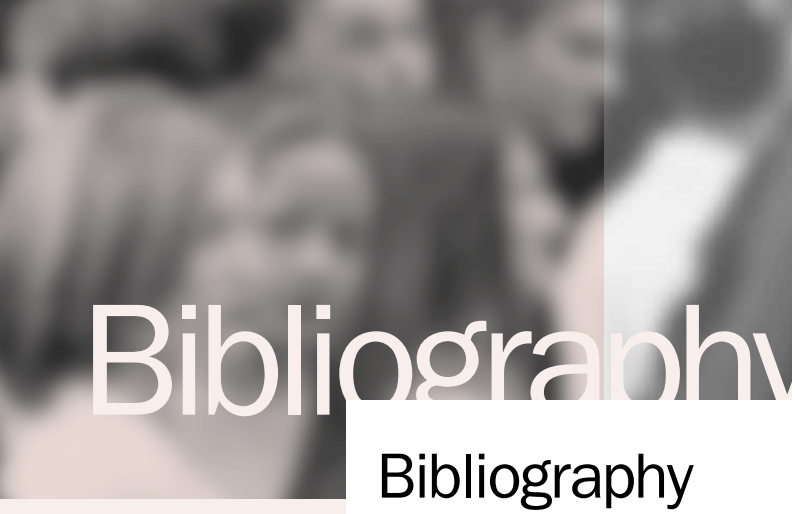

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Appendix

Appendix

Questionnaires

Examples of long and short versions

Questionnaire

Welcome to the young people's survey on violence

Thank you for helping us with this survey. You are one of 5000 young people aged 12 to 20 who are taking part in this survey across Australia about different types of violence. **Your opinion is very important.**

Your answers are confidential

You will notice that **we don't ask for your name**. Your answers are completely confidential and can't be traced back to you.

How do I answer the questions?

For most questions, all you need to do is tick the box which most applies to you.

Please read all the questions carefully and follow the instructions.
Please ignore the numbers in brackets on the right hand side of the page, they are for our use only. If you don't want to answer a question, leave it blank and go to the next one.

What if I need help?

The interviewer will be happy to explain any questions or instructions that aren't clear.

Please place your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided, seal the envelope and give it back to our interviewer

Thank you very much for your help with this important project

To start off with, please tell us some information about yourself.

Q1 Are you…

- Male ☐ 1
- Female ☐ 2

(12)

Q2a How old are you currently?

- 15 years old ☐ 4
- 16 years old ☐ 5
- 17 years old ☐ 6
- 18 years old ☐ 7
- 19 years old ☐ 8
- 20 years old ☐ 9

(13)

Q2b Which of the following best describes your working status?
You may need to tick more than one box.

Skip 14

- Working full time *(30 hours or more)* ☐ 1
- Working full time *(less than 30 hours per week)* ☐ 2
- Student — TAFE ☐ 3
- Student — University/College ☐ 4
- Student — Other vocational course ☐ 5
- Full time homemaker ☐ 6
- Unemployed ☐ 7
- On a pension *(eg a disability pension)* ☐ 8

(15–17)

Q2c If you are working, full or part time, please write your job in the space below.

(18–21)

Q3 Who do you live with? If your parents have split up and you spend part of the week with one parent and part with the other, please tick the parent you spend most time with.

I live with...

- ☐ 01 Mum and Dad (22–29)
- ☐ 02 Mum
- ☐ 03 Dad
- ☐ 04 Mum and her partner *(who may be your stepdad, but isn't your biological dad)*
- ☐ 05 Dad and his partner *(who may be your stepmum, but isn't your biological mum)*
- ☐ 06 Share a house with friends/workmates/other students
- ☐ 07 My boyfriend/girlfriend
- ☐ 08 My husband/wife
- ☐ 09 I live on my own
- ☐ 10 Foster parents
- ☐ 11 Grandparents
- ☐ 12 Other adult relatives
- ☐ 13 Other *(Write below)*

_____

If you live with one or both of your parents or another guardian, please answer Q4a, Q4b and Q4c.

If you live with your partner, please answer Q5a and Q5b.

If you live with friends or on your own, go to Q6.

Answer if you live with one or both of your parents or another guardian.

Q4a Which of the following best describes the working status of who you live with?
(You may need to tick more than one in each column).

	Male Carer (For example; your Dad or your Mum's partner)	Female Carer (For example; your Mum or your Dad's partner)	
Working full time *(30 hours per week or more)*	☐ 1	☐ 1	(30–31)
Working part time *(less than 30 hours per week)*	☐ 2	☐ 2	(32–33)
Student	☐ 3	☐ 3	
Full time homemaker	☐ 6	☐ 6	
Unemployed	☐ 7	☐ 7	
Retired/on a pension *(eg a disability pension)*	☐ 8	☐ 8	

Q4b And where were they born?
Please tick the countries/continents in which they were born

	Male Carer (For example; your Dad or your Mum's partner)	Female Carer (For example; your Mum or your Dad's partner)	
Australia	☐ 01	☐ 01	(34–35)
New Zealand	☐ 02	☐ 02	
United Kingdom *(England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales)*	☐ 03	☐ 03	
Italy	☐ 04	☐ 04	
Greece	☐ 05	☐ 05	(36–37)
Other European Country	☐ 06	☐ 06	
India/Sri Lanka	☐ 07	☐ 07	
China	☐ 08	☐ 08	
Hong Kong	☐ 09	☐ 09	
Malaysia	☐ 10	☐ 10	
Philippines	☐ 11	☐ 11	
Vietnam	☐ 12	☐ 12	
Other Asian Country	☐ 13	☐ 13	
Middle East Country *(eg Lebanon, Iran, Egypt)*	☐ 14	☐ 14	

Northern American Country (*USA/Canada*)	☐ 15	☐ 15
South American Country	☐ 16	☐ 16
African Country	☐ 17	☐ 17
Other *(write in)*	☐ 18	☐ 18
_____		
Don't know	☐ 99	☐ 99

Q4c Thinking about the main income earner in your household, what does he/she do? *(This could be you if you earn the most)*. Tick one box or write in

Main income earner's job *(Write below)*

No main income earner — full time homemaker	☐ 10	
No main income earner — student(s)	☐ 11	
No main income earner — unemployed	☐ 12	(38–39)
No main income earner — on a pension	☐ 13	

Now go to Q7

Answer Q5a and Q5b if you live with your partner

Q5a Which of the following best describes the working status of your partner? You may need to tick more than one box.

	Partner	
Working full time *(30 hours or more)*	☐ 1	(40–42)
Working full time *(30 hours or less per week)*	☐ 2	
Student — TAFE	☐ 3	
Student — University/College	☐ 4	
Student — Other vocational course	☐ 5	
Full time homemaker	☐ 6	
Unemployed	☐ 7	
On a pension *(eg a disability pension)*	☐ 8	

Q5b If your partner is working full or part time, please write in your partner's job in the space below.

_____ (43–46)

Answer Q6 if you live with your partner, with friends or alone

Q6 Thinking about the family unit you lived with before you moved away from home, please tick the countries/continents in which your parents *(or parent and their partner)* were born.

	Male Carer (For example; your Dad or your Mum's partner)	Female Carer (For example; your Mum or your Dad's partner)	
Australia	☐ 01	☐ 01	(47–48)
New Zealand	☐ 02	☐ 02	
United Kingdom *(England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales)*	☐ 03	☐ 03	
Italy	☐ 04	☐ 04	
Greece	☐ 05	☐ 05	(49–50)
Other European Country	☐ 06	☐ 06	
India/Sri Lanka	☐ 07	☐ 07	
China	☐ 08	☐ 08	
Hong Kong	☐ 09	☐ 09	
Malaysia	☐ 10	☐ 10	
Philippines	☐ 11	☐ 11	
Vietnam	☐ 12	☐ 12	
Other Asian Country	☐ 13	☐ 13	
Middle East Country *(eg Lebanon, Iran, Egypt)*	☐ 14	☐ 14	
Northern American Country *(USA/Canada)*	☐ 15	☐ 15	
South American Country	☐ 16	☐ 16	
African Country	☐ 17	☐ 17	
Other *(Write in)*	☐ 18	☐ 18	
Don't know	☐ 99	☐ 99	

All please answer Q7 onwards

Q7 Do you have any children?

Yes	☐ 1	(51)
No	☐ 2	

If yes: Does your child/children live: Please tick one box

With you and their other parent *(that is, you all live together)*	☐ 1	(52)
With you	☐ 2	
With their other parent	☐ 3	
With you some of the time and their other parent some of the time	☐ 4	
Other *(live with grandparents/foster parents etc.)*	☐ 8	

Q8 Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background?

Yes	☐ 1	(53)
No	☐ 2	

Q9a Do you have any brothers or sisters?

	Yes	☐ 1	(54)
	No	☐ 2	

If yes, tick all that apply below. Don't include stepbrothers/sisters. We will ask about them next.

I have...	Older brother(s)	☐ 1	(55–60)
	Older sister(s)	☐ 2	
	Younger brother(s)	☐ 3	
	Younger sister(s)	☐ 4	
	Twin brother	☐ 5	
	Twin sister	☐ 6	

Q9b Do you have any stepbrothers or stepsisters?

	Yes	☐ 1	(61)
	No	☐ 2	

If yes, tick all that apply below.

I have...	Older stepbrother(s)	☐ 1	(62–67)
	Older stepsister(s)	☐ 2	
	Younger stepbrother(s)	☐ 3	
	Younger stepsister(s)	☐ 4	
	Stepbrother my age	☐ 5	
	Stepsister my age	☐ 6	

Q9c How many people *(adults and children)* live in your household, including you?

If you spend part of the week with one parent and part with the other, please tell us the number of people in the household you spend most time with.

If you have a child/children, please include them if they spend most or all of their time with you.

Please tick one box

One	☐ 01	(68–69)
Two	☐ 02	
Three	☐ 03	
Four	☐ 04	
Five	☐ 05	
Six	☐ 06	
Seven	☐ 07	
Eight	☐ 08	
Nine	☐ 09	
Ten or more	☐ 10	

Q10 Now, we'd like to get your opinion on a number of different things.

Please read each of the following statements carefully and then tick the box that is most in line with your opinion. If you are not sure what you think, tick 'don't know'.

Please tick one box for each statement

	Definitely agree	Generally agree	Generally disagree	Definitely disagree	Don't know
a) Unless you are defending yourself, there is never a good reason to slap another person	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (70)
b) A person is not responsible for what they do when they are drunk or high	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (71)
c) Girls prefer a guy to be in charge of the relationship	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (72)
d) Men are unable to control their temper	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (73)
e) Overall, there are more things that men are better at than women	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (74)
f) Raising your voice at people makes them take notice of you	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (75)
g) Women should be responsible for raising children and doing the housework	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (76)
h) It might not be right, but threatening to hit someone gets you what you want	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (77)
i) It's not always wrong to hit someone, sometimes they provoke it	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (78)
j) Men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (79)
k) Guys who get the most respect are generally those who will fightwhen they need to	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (80)
l) Nowadays, guys realise that girls are their equals	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (81)

Q11 Here are some examples of different types of violence.
Please tell us how serious you think each of these are by ticking one box for each.

By 'serious' we mean how much they hurt or upset the people who experience them. Please try not to tick 'very serious' for all of them, but just select the most serious ones as 'very serious'.

Please tick one box for each item

	Very serious	Quite serious	Not that serious	Don't know	
Bitching	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(6)
Bullying	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(7)
Drunken fights in pubs/clubs	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(8)
Punch-ups between people at school/college	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(9)
Rape/sexual assault	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(10)
Domestic violence	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(11)
Physical fights between brothers/sisters	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(12)
Racial violence	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(13)

Q12 Which of these types of violence do you have any personal experience of?
By 'personal experience' we mean you or someone you know well has been involved in, or experienced, them.

Please tick one or more boxes for each one

	Yes, I've experienced this	Yes, someone I know has experienced this	No	
Bitching	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(14–15)
Bullying	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(16–17)
Drunken fights in pubs/clubs	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(18–19)
Punch-ups between people at school/college	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(20–21)
Rape/sexual assault	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(22–23)
Domestic violence	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(24–25)
Physical fights between brothers/sisters	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(26–27)
Racial violence	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(28–29)

Q13 One of the types of violence listed was 'domestic violence'. What things do you think would be counted as 'domestic violence'?

Even if you are not sure what domestic violence is, please tell us which of the following you would think of as domestic violence and which you think are not so much violence, but just normal conflict between partners.

Please tick normal conflict or domestic violence for each

	Normal conflict	Domestic violence	Don't know	
Not talking to partner for long periods of time	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 9	(30)
Not showing any love or affection	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 9	(31)
Constant yelling at partner	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 9	(32)
Constant put downs and humiliation of partner	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 9	(33)
Not letting partner see their family/friends	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 9	(34)
Not allowing partner any money for their own use	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 9	(35)
Threatening to hit partner *(even though don't actually intend to hit)*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 9	(36)
Throwing things like plates, glasses at each other	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 9	(37)
Slapping/punching partner but only on one or two occasions as a result of a big fight	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 9	(38)
Slapping/punching partner regularly	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 9	(39)
Forcing the partner to have sex	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 9	(40)

Q14a Where have you seen or heard about domestic violence? Please tick all that apply in the list below.

In TV shows/dramas	☐ 01	
In TV news	☐ 02	
In stories in the newspaper	☐ 03	
In films/videos	☐ 04	
In books/magazines	☐ 05	(41–60)
In advertising/information campaigns	☐ 06	
From school lessons/social studies	☐ 07	
From friends talking about it	☐ 08	

From things that have happened in friends' families ☐ 09

From discussions in your own family/home ☐ 10

From things that have happened in your own family/home ☐ 11

Q14b And how common do you think domestic violence is? Please tick one box to show how common you think domestic violence is.

It happens in most households ☐ 1

It happens in a lot of households ☐ 2 (61)

It happens in a few households ☐ 3

It happens in hardly any households ☐ 4

Don't know ☐ 9

The next questions are about conflicts or violence between men and women who are married to each other or living together.

Q15 Here are some situations in which some men may hit their female partner.
For each situation, please tell us whether you think:

A: given how she has behaved, he is right to hit her;

or B: he's got a good reason to hit her but it's not the best way of dealing with it;

or C: he shouldn't hit her but you can understand why he might want to;

or D: he just shouldn't hit her.

Please tick one answer for each situation.

What would you think about him hitting her if she…

	A: Right to hit her	B: Has good reason	C: Shouldn't but can understand	D: Shouldn't hit her	Don't know
Argues with or refuses to obey him	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (62)
Wastes a lot of money gambling/on alcohol/drugs	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (63)
Keeps nagging him	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (64)
Calls him useless, good for nothing	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (65)
Throws something at him	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (66)
Hits him	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (67)
Refuses to have sex with him	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (68)
Admits to having sex with another man	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (69)
Accuses him of having sex with another woman when he hasn't	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9 (70)

Q16 How about if a woman hit her male partner in these situations? Again, for each situation please tell us whether you think....

A: given how he's behaved, she is right to hit him;

or B: she's got a good reason to hit him but it's not the best way of dealing with it;

or C: she shouldn't hit him but you can understand why she might want to;

or D: she just shouldn't hit him.

Please tick one answer for each situation:

What would you think about her hitting him if he...

	A: Right to hit him	B: Has good reason	C: Shouldn't but can understand	D: Shouldn't hit him	Don't know	
Argues with or refuses to obey her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(71)
Wastes a lot of money gambling/on alcohol/drugs	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(72)
Keeps nagging her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(73)
Calls her useless, good for nothing	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(74)
Throws something at her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(75)
Hits her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(76)
Refuses to have sex with her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(77)
Admits to having sex with another woman	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(78)
Accuses her of having sex with another man when she hasn't	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(79)

Q17 Here are some things other people have said about domestic violence.

As before please read each one carefully and tick the box which describes what you think about that statement.

	Definitely agree	Generally agree	Generally disagree	Definitely disagree	Don't know	
a) Domestic violence harms the children more than the adults	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(6)
b) It's alright for a man to threaten his wife as long as he doesn't hit her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(7)
c) Abuse within the family is a private matter that should be handled within the family	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(8)
d) If he's earning the family money, its alright for a man to decide what his wife can and can't spend it on	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(9)
e) It's best for someone my age to leave home if there is domestic violence going on	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(10)
f) Domestic violence at home doesn't affect the school work of the kids involved	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(11)
g) It's alright for a man to restrict the contact between his wife and her friends or family if he thinks they have a bad influence on her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(12)

Q18 What do you think are the causes of domestic violence? Below are some reasons other people have given. For each please tick whether you think this is a common cause of domestic violence, an occasional cause, or something that doesn't really cause domestic violence.

Please remember this is not a test, we are just interested in your opinion.

	Common cause	Occasional cause	Not really a cause	
Having grown up in a violent household	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(13)
Being drunk	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(14)
One partner flirting with other people	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(15)
One partner having sex with someone else	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(16)
Gambling	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(17)
Continuous nagging	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(18)
Using drugs	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(19)
Not enough money/financial hardship	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(20)
Boredom/frustrated in relationship	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(21)
Being under stress at work	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(22)
Stresses at home *(kids crying, dinner burnt etc)*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(23)
The man wanting to prove he's boss/in control	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(24)
The woman wanting to prove she's boss/in control	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(25)

Q19 As far as you know, have any of the following ever been done to your mother/stepmother by a male partner (*ie your father, stepfather or her boyfriend*)? Please tick one answer for each.

	No	Not sure (but I don't think so)	Yes, but only once or twice	Yes, more than once or twice	
a) Yelled loudly at her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(26)
b) Put her down/humiliated her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(27)
c) Not let her see her family or friends	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(28)
d) Not let her have any money for her own use	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(29)
e) Thrown something at her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(30)
f) Threatened to hit her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(31)
g) Tried to hit her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(32)
h) Hit her because she was hitting him	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(33)
i) Actually hit her *(even though she didn't hit him)*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(34)
j) Threatened her with a knife or gun	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(35)
k) Used a knife or fired a gun	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(36)

Q20 And again, as far as you know, have any of the following ever been done to your father/stepfather by a female partner *(ie your mother, stepmother or his girlfriend)*? Please tick one answer for each.

	No	Not sure (but I don't think so)	Yes, but only once or twice	Yes, more than once or twice	
a) Yelled loudly at him	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(37)
b) Put him down/humiliated him	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(38)
c) Not let him see his family or friends	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(39)
d) Not let him have any money for his own use	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(40)
e) Thrown something at him	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(41)
f) Threatened to hit him	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(42)
g) Tried to hit him	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(43)
h) Hit him because he was hitting her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(44)
i) Actually hit him *(even though he didn't hit her)*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(45)
j) Threatened him with a knife or gun	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(46)
k) Used a knife or fired a gun	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(47)

Q21 Are any of the things listed in **Q19** and **Q20** happening between your parents and/or their partners nowadays? Please tick all that apply.

Yes, one/some of these things are being done to my mother/stepmother by her male partner ☐ 1 (48–49)

Yes, one/some of these things are being done to my father/stepfather by his female partner ☐ 2

I'm not sure ☐ 3

No, they are not happening ☐ 4

Q22a What, if anything, has happened as a result of one of your parents hitting or being hit by the other/their partner? Please tick all that apply.

Doesn't apply to me — my parents haven't hit each other/their partners	☐ 01	(50–69)
Nothing, but it doesn't happen anymore	☐ 02	
Nothing, but it's still happening	☐ 03	
They have split up and are still apart	☐ 04	
They split up but are back together now	☐ 05	
One/both of them has been to hospital	☐ 06	
One/both of them have missed work	☐ 07	
They've been to counselling	☐ 08	
I missed school/college/work	☐ 09	
My brothers/sisters have missed school/college/work	☐ 10	
I/my brothers and sisters have been to counselling	☐ 11	

If you only ticked the first box, please go straight to Q24.

Others please continue at 22b

Q22b Did you tell/have you told anyone outside your home what happened/is happening?

Please tick all that apply

No, haven't told anyone	☐ 1	(70–77)
Rang a helpline	☐ 2	
Told my friend(s)	☐ 3	
Told other family members who don't live with us	☐ 4	
Told an adult friend who is older than me	☐ 5	
Told a lecturer at college	☐ 6	
Told my boss/someone in charge at work	☐ 7	
Told another adult outside college/work	☐ 8	
Told the police	☐ 9	

If you told someone/rang a helpline,answer Q23 otherwise go to Q24

Q23 Did talking/ringing the helpline help? Please tick all that apply

Yes, I was put in touch with people and/or services that could help	☐ 1	(78–82)
Yes, I was given some information/leaflets	☐ 2	
Yes, they got in touch with my mother	☐ 3	
Yes, they got in touch with my father	☐ 4	
Yes, nothing happened but it helped to talk	☐ 5	
No, it didn't help	☐ 6	

Everybody please answer

Q24 What would you do if one of your friends told you that one of their parents was hitting or being hit by the other/their partner? Please tick all that apply

Advise him/her to talk to their parents	☐ 1	(6–12)
Advise him/her to tell older adult *(friend/lecturer/work colleague)*	☐ 2	
Advise him/her to tell the police	☐ 3	
Tell your parents and get them to deal with it	☐ 4	
Tell a lecturer/work colleague or another older adult yourself	☐ 5	
Tell the police yourself	☐ 6	
Advise them to ring a helpline	☐ 7	
Wouldn't really do anything because it's none of your business	☐ 8	
Not sure	☐ 9	

Your relationships

In this section we are interested in your relationships with the opposite sex.

Q25a Have you ever had a boyfriend or girlfriend?
(Please don't include any childhood boy or girlfriends, but only people you have gone out with as a teenager)

Yes	☐ 1	(13)
No	☐ 2	

If you ticked 'no' please go to **Q28**.

If 'yes' please continue at **Q25b**

Q25b What is your current marital status?
You may need to tick more than one box, eg if you are separated and now living with someone else:

Single (including dating)	☐ 1	(14–17)
Living with someone	☐ 2	
Married	☐ 3	
Separated/divorced from someone you were married to	☐ 4	
Separated from someone you were living with	☐ 5	
Widowed	☐ 6	

Q26 No matter how well two people get along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, or just have fights because they're in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason.
Below are listed some things that you and your boyfriend/girlfriend might do when you have an argument.
Please include your husband or wife if you are married.

a) In the first column, please tick one box against each thing to show whether or not a boy or girlfriend *(or husband/wife)* has ever done this to you.

b) In the second column, please tick one box against each thing to show whether or not you have ever done this to a boy or girlfriend *(or husband/wife)*.

	Your boyfriend/girlfriend did this to you			You did this to your boyfriend/girlfriend			
	Never	Once/ twice	Yes, more than twice	Never	Once/ twice	Yes, more than twice	
Yelled loudly at you	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(18–19)
Put you down/ humiliated you	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(20–21)
Threatened to hit you or throw something at you	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(22–23)
Threw or smashed or hit or kicked something	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(24–25)
Threw something at you	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(26–27)
Pushed, grabbed, or shoved you	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(28–29)
Slapped you	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(30–31)
Kicked, bit, or hit you	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(32–33)
Hit or tried to hit you with something	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(34–35)
Beat you up	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(36–37)
Threatened you with a knife or gun	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(38–39)
Used a knife or fired a gun	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(40–41)
Tried to control you physically *(by holding etc)*	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(42–43)
Tried to force you to have sex	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(44–45)
Physically forced you to have sex	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	(46–47)

Q27a Have you ever been really frightened and/or physically hurt by any of the arguments or fights you have ever had with a boyfriend or girlfriend *(or your husband/wife if applicable)*?

Please tick one box

Yes, I've been really frightened	☐ 1	(48)
Yes, I've been physically hurt	☐ 2	
Yes, I've been both frightened and physically hurt	☐ 3	
No	☐ 4	

Q27b Have you ever been really frightened and/or physically hurt by any of the arguments or fights you have had with your current boyfriend or girlfriend *(or husband/wife if applicable)*?

Please tick one box

Yes, I've been really frightened	☐ 1	(49)
Yes, I've been physically hurt	☐ 2	
Yes, I've been both frightened and physically hurt	☐ 3	
No	☐ 4	

Everyone please answer

Q28 How common do you think violence in dating relationships is?
Please tick the box to show how common you think physical violence is in relationships between people your age or a couple of years older than you.

It happens in most relationships	☐ 1	(50)
It happens in a lot of relationships	☐ 2	
It happens in a few relationships	☐ 3	
It happens in hardly any relationships	☐ 4	
Don't know	☐ 5	

Q29 Here are some more statements, this time about dating/going out with people. Again, please read each one carefully and tick the box which best describes your opinion.

	Definitely agree	Generally agree	Generally disagree	Definitely disagree	Don't know	
a) If a guy hits a girl he loves because he is jealous, it shows how much he feels for her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(51)
b) It's okay for a boy to make a girl have sex with him if she has flirted with him or led him on	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(52)
c) When a girl hits a guy it's not really a big deal	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(53)
d) Most physical violence occurs in a dating relationship because a partner provoked it	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(54)
e) It's alright for a guy to hit his girlfriend if she has made him look stupid in front of his mates	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(55)
f) It's okay for a guy to put pressure on a girl to have sex but not to physically force her	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 9	(56)

Q30a Finally, looking at the list below, please tick whether your parents/parent and their partner that you live with…

If you have moved out of home, please think about the family unit you used to live in.

Please tick those that apply or tick 'none apply'

	Yes, Male Carer (Dad/Mum's partner) does	Yes, Female Carer (Mum/Dad's partner does	
Smoke	☐ 1	☐ 1	(57–61)
Get drunk a lot	☐ 2	☐ 2	
Take drugs	☐ 3	☐ 3	(62–66)
Gamble a lot	☐ 4	☐ 4	
Hit you or your brother/sister for reasons other than bad behaviour	☐ 5	☐ 5	
None apply to my household	☐ 9		

Answer Q30b only if you live with your partner

Q30b Thinking about your own situation, do you, or does your partner...

Please tick all that apply or tick 'none apply'

	Me	My Partner	
Smoke	☐ 1	☐ 1	(67–71)
Get drunk a lot	☐ 2	☐ 2	
Take drugs	☐ 3	☐ 3	(72–76)
Gamble a lot	☐ 4	☐ 4	
Hit the other person	☐ 5	☐ 5	
None apply to my current situation	☐ 9		

Thank you for your help, we really appreciate it.

Please check that you have answered all questions, then put your questionnaire in the envelope and seal it

Questionnaire

Welcome to the young people's survey on violence [Short]

Thank you for helping us with this survey. You are one of 5000 young people aged 12 to 20 who are taking part in this survey across Australia about different types of violence. **Your opinion is very important.**

Your answers are confidential

You will notice that **we don't ask for your name**. Your answers are completely confidential and can't be traced back to you. The interviewer will take the questionnaires away in their sealed envelopes and send them back to us for processing.

How do I answer the questions?

For most questions, all you need to do is tick the box which most applies to you.

Please read all the questions carefully and follow the instructions. Please ignore the numbers in brackets on the right hand side of the page, they are for our use only. If you don't want to answer a question, leave it blank and go to the next one.

What if I need help?

Raise your hand — The interviewer will be happy to explain any questions or instructions that aren't clear.

Please place your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided, seal the envelope and wait for the interviewer to collect it

Thank you very much for your help with this important project

To start off with, please tell us some information about yourself.

Q1 Are you...

- Male ☐ 1
- Female ☐ 2

(12)

Q2a And, how old are you currently?

- 12 years old ☐ 1
- 13 years old ☐ 2
- 14 years old ☐ 3
- 15 years old ☐ 4
- 16 years old ☐ 5
- 17 years old ☐ 6
- 18 years old ☐ 7

(13)

Q2b Which school year are you in?

- Year 8 ☐ 1
- Year 9 ☐ 2
- Year 10 ☐ 3
- Year 11 ☐ 4
- Year 12 ☐ 5

(14)

Q3 Who do you live with? If your parents have split up and you spend part of the week with one parent and part with the other, please tick the parent you spend most time with.

I live with...

- Mum and Dad ☐ 01
- Mum ☐ 02
- Dad ☐ 03
- Mum and her partner *(who may be your stepdad, but isn't your biological dad)* ☐ 04
- Dad and his partner *(who may be your stepmum, but isn't your biological mum)* ☐ 05
- Foster parents ☐ 10
- Grandparents ☐ 11
- Other adult relatives ☐ 12
- Other *(Write below)* ☐ 13

(22-29)

Q4 Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background?

Yes ☐ 1 (53)

No ☐ 2

Q5 Please describe as many incidents as you can of violence that you have heard about that have taken place within your community or suburb.
Please give as much detail as you can.

For each example you give, please detail:

a) The sorts of people involved *(eg age, sex, whether they know each other)*

b) The reason for the violence/why it happened *(if you know)*

c) Where and when it happened

d) How frequently you think this type of violence occurs

e) How serious you think it is

1. _____ (53-62)

2. _____ (63-72)

3. _____ (73-82)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q5 Here are some examples of different types of violence. Please tell us how serious you think each of these are by ticking one box for each.

By 'serious' we mean how much they hurt or upset the people who experience them. Please try not to tick 'very serious' for all of them, but just select the most serious ones as 'very serious'.

Please tick one box for each item

	Very serious	Quite serious	Not that serious	Don't know	
Bitching	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(6)
Bullying	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(7)
Drunken fights in pubs/clubs	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(8)
Punch-ups between people at school/college	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(9)
Rape/sexual assault	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(10)
Domestic violence	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(11)
Physical fights between brothers/sisters	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(12)
Racial violence	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 9	(13)

Q6 One of the things on the list above was 'domestic violence'. Even if you don't know much or anything about domestic violence, we're interested in what kinds of things you think would be counted as domestic violence ?
Please write in below (14-23)

Q7 What do you think causes domestic violence? Why do you think it happens? Again, please write in your thoughts below. (24-33)

Q8 Do you think there are any circumstances in which it is understandable for one person to hit their partner? (34-43)

Q9 In your opinion, what sorts of things could be done to reduce domestic violence? What might stop it happening as much? Are there things that governments, the police and so forth could do or is it just up to the people involved? (44-53)

Thank you for your help, we really appreciate it.

Please check you have answered all questions, then put your questionnaire in the envelope and seal it