

Title:

The Silent Scream: Domestic Violence in Malta

Category:

11-14 years

Group members:

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The Silent Scream: Domestic Violence in Malta

By: Michela Buttigieg and Jade Mifsud

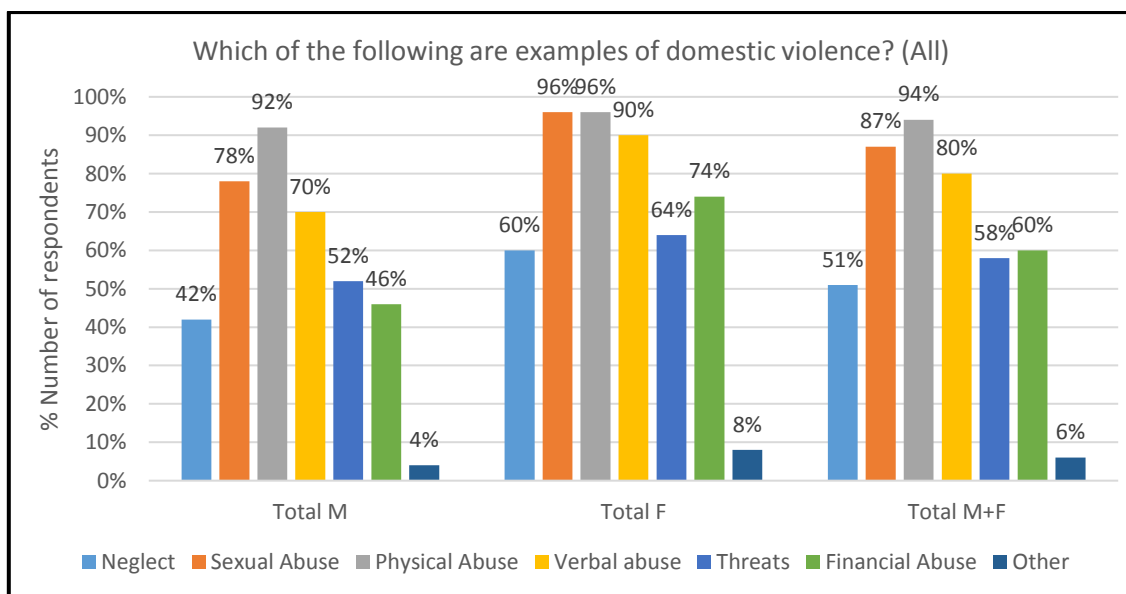


Historically, domestic violence has been considered a hidden crime, a private family matter. However, finally, developed societies are becoming increasingly aware of this problem. Our research investigates the attitudes of Maltese people towards domestic violence in Malta. It is based on 100 questionnaires we gave out to males and females from different age groups.

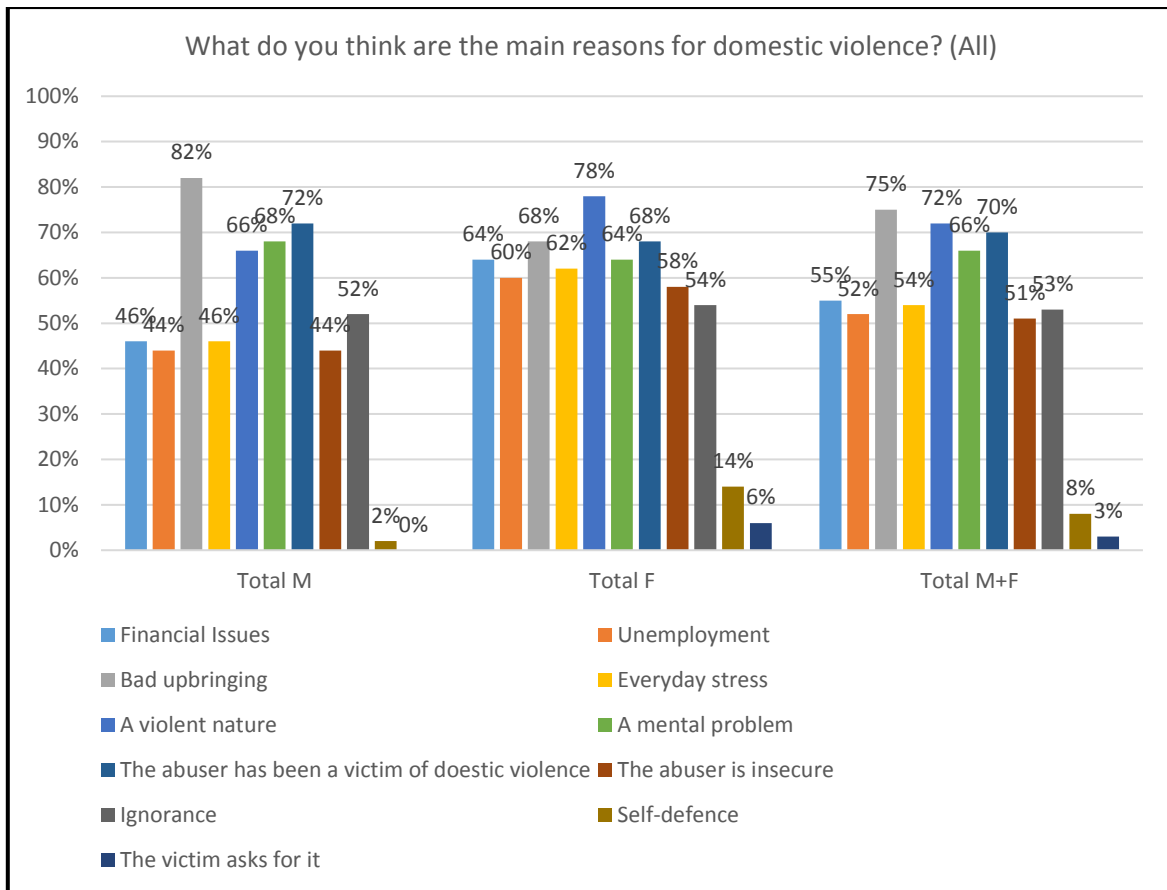
The first question we asked was whether women are taken for granted. 64% of female and 30% of male respondents said yes. Another question we asked was how important women's rights are. 82% of females but only 52% of males said that they are very important. The fact that there is a 30% difference between the male and female respondents who said that women's rights are very important, though not unexpected, is worrying in that it suggests that we are still far from

achieving equality. It may also indicate one of the reasons why males abuse females- a sense of superiority and dominance.

Most respondents think that domestic violence is very common (42% of females, 34% of males said that it is very common; 42% of females, 38% of males said that it is common). They are also aware that anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, which is very positive, though they think victims are more likely to be children (90% of females, 84% of males), teenage girls (78% of females, 92% of males) and adult women (92% of females, 76% of males). When asked to identify different forms of domestic violence, our respondents' answers were as follows:



Once more we think this is a positive outcome, though we wish more people were aware that neglect is a very common form of abuse. It is also a pity that, except in the case of physical abuse, males are less aware than females of what constitutes abuse. When asked to identify the main causes of domestic violence, our respondents said:



This tallies well with the professional point of view.

'Abusers may feel this need to control their partner because of low self-esteem, extreme jealousy, difficulties in regulating anger and other strong emotions, or when they feel inferior to the other partner in education and socioeconomic background. Some people with very traditional beliefs may think they have the right to control their partner, and that women aren't equal to men. Others may have an undiagnosed personality disorder or psychological disorder. Still others may have learned this behaviour from growing up in a household where domestic violence was accepted as a normal part of being raised in their family.'

(Toby D. Goldsmith, MD, 2016)

Therefore, we are pleased to note that there is a level of awareness about domestic violence among our respondents. However, this awareness, unfortunately, does not apply to seeking help. In fact, 30% of respondents were unable to mention 2 agencies which help victims of domestic violence and 29% were unable to mention 1 helpline. In both cases, males are more helpless than females.

We also included questions about what our respondents think the abusers need most, help or severe punishment. 93% think abusers need more help whilst 17% think they need severe punishment. 88% of respondents also think both victims and abusers need help.

Finally, 81% of our respondents think it is very important to raise awareness about domestic violence nationally. However, there's a gap between 68% of males and 94% of females who gave this answer. 72% of males and 90% of females think it is important to raise awareness in girls' schools and 68% of males and 88% of females think it is important to raise awareness in boys' schools.

A sustainable society is a society which does not condone or tolerate violence and the most important tool against violence is education. Therefore, we encourage schools and the media to raise awareness about domestic violence and its



effects, as well as where and how to seek help. In the meantime, we would like to list a number of services available for victims of domestic abuse in Malta:

- 179
- 112 (police)
- 229590000
- Kellimni.com
- Appogg
- Soar
- Commission on Domestic Violence
- Dar Merħba Bik
- Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu'
- Dar Tereza Spinelli
- Women's Rights Foundation
- Sedqa
- Għabex Emergency Shelter

We would like to emphasise the fact that victims shouldn't be afraid to call and ask for help because this isn't something to be ashamed of.

"An abuser can seem emotionally needy. You can get caught in a trap of catering to him, trying to fill a bottomless pit. But he's not so much needy as entitled, so no matter how much you give him, it will never be enough. He will just keep coming up with more demands because he believes his needs are your responsibility, until you feel drained down to nothing."

(Lundy Bancroft)

What Bancroft, an author, workshop leader and consultant on domestic abuse and child maltreatment, is trying to say is that the abuser has a problem which

the victim can't solve, and which is not caused by the victim. Bancroft also means that no matter how much the victim tries to satisfy or help the abuser it is never enough and the only way victims can help themselves and their abusers is by seeking outside professional help. That is the only way they can be safe.

References and Acknowledgements:

References:

Bancroft, Lundy, (2003) *Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men*

<http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/abuser>

Goldsmith, T. (2016). *What causes Domestic violence?* Psych central

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/what-causes-domestic-violence/>

Picture of children:

https://www.google.com.mt/search?q=domestic+violence+quotes&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&sqi=2&ved=0ahUKEwjz9GMqejSAhXBiSwKHaxOBIEQ_AUIBigB&biw=1821&bih=850#tbm=isch&q=domestic+violence+pics*&imgdii=8uPYVsrJnod_-M:&imgsrc=uGyDnJaMN4Gb_M

Picture of statistics:

https://www.google.com.mt/search?q=domestic+violence+quotes&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&sqi=2&ved=0ahUKEwjz9GMqejSAhXBiSwKHaxOBIEQ_AUIBigB&biw=1821&bih=850#tbm=isch&q=domestic+violence+pics*&imgrc=tTMmoHeIHvn74M

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank all the respondents who took the time to complete the questionnaires.

Proof of Dissemination:

As required, our project is exhibited on the school premises and it is also accessible on the school website (www.saintfrancissecondary.com). We have also sent our report to *The Sunday Times* and *The Malta Independent on Sunday*, though we have no guarantee that it will be published.

Appendix 1: Sample of respondents

100 Respondents									
50 Males					50 Females				
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
16-25	26-35	36-45	46-60	61+	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-60	61+
Yrs.	Yrs.	Yrs.	Yrs.	Yrs.	Yrs.	Yrs.	Yrs.	Yrs.	Yrs.

Appendix 2: Template for questionnaires

Please complete the following questionnaire

Sex:	
Male	
Female	

Age:	
16-25	
26-35	
36-45	
46-60	
61+	

Status:	
Married	
Single	
Widowed	
Separated	
Divorced	

1 Do you think women are taken for granted?

Yes	
No	
I don't know	

2 Do you think that domestic violence exists in Malta?

Yes	
No	
I don't know	

3 How common do you think domestic violence is in Malta?

Very common	Common	Not common	Rare	I don't know

4a. Are there any places where abused people can go for help?

Yes	
No	
I don't know	

4b. If yes, can you mention two?

1)
2)

4c. If yes, can you mention one helpline abused people can call for help?

5a. Who do you think suffers from domestic violence?

Children	
Teenage boys	
Teenage girls	
Adult men	
Adult women	
The elderly	

5b. Which of the following are examples of domestic violence?

Neglect	
Sexual abuse (eg. rape)	
Physical abuse (eg. beating)	
Verbal abuse (eg. insults)	
Threats	
Financial abuse	
Other	

6 Do you think that people are given an appropriate punishment when they are caught being abusive?

Yes	
No	
I don't know	

7 Should the abuser be moved out of the family until the court case starts being heard?

Yes	
No	
I don't know	

8 Are you aware that domestic violence is on the rise?

Yes	
No	
I don't know	

9 Do you believe that alcohol or drugs play a part in domestic violence?

Yes	
No	
I don't know	

10 Do you know someone who is passing or passed through domestic violence?

Yes	
No	
I don't know	

11 Do you think that the reason why abusers act violently is because they have experienced something similar in the past?

Yes	
No	
I don't know	

12 How important do you think women's rights are?

Very important	Important	Not important	I don't know

13a. How important do you think it is to take a stand against domestic violence?

Very important	Important	Not important	I don't know

13b. How important do you think it is that there are effective laws against domestic violence?

Very important	Important	Not important	I don't know

13c. What do you think abusers need most?

Help	
Severe punishment	

14 What do you think are the main reasons for domestic violence?

Financial issues	
Unemployment	

Bad upbringing	
Every day stress	
A violent nature	
A mental problem	
The abuser has been a victim of domestic violence	
The abuser is insecure	
Ignorance	
Self-defence	
The victim asks for it	

15 Should assistance by social workers be offered to:

Victims	
Abusers	
Both	

16a. How important do you think it is to raise awareness about domestic violence nationally?

Very important	Important	Not Important	I don't know

16b. How important do you think it is to raise awareness about domestic violence in girls' schools?

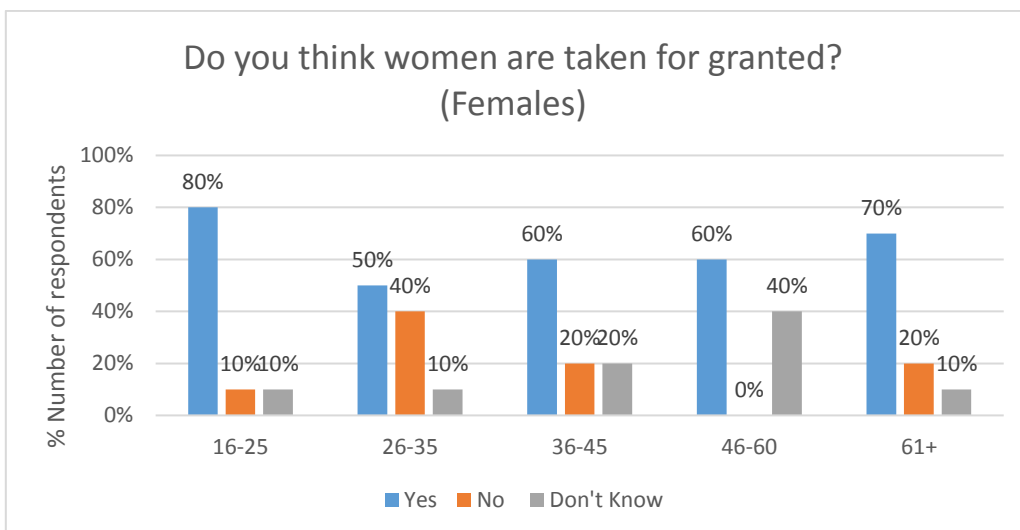
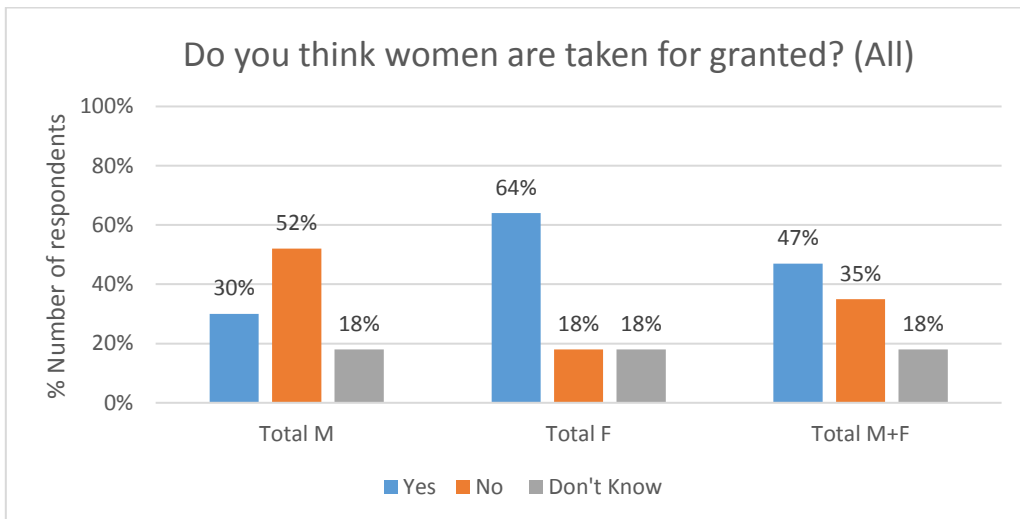
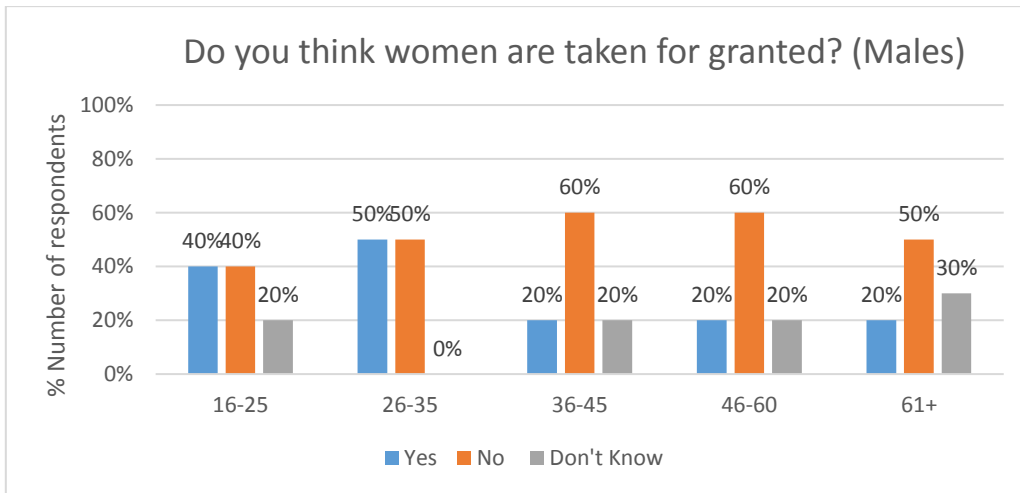
Very important	Important	Not important	I don't know

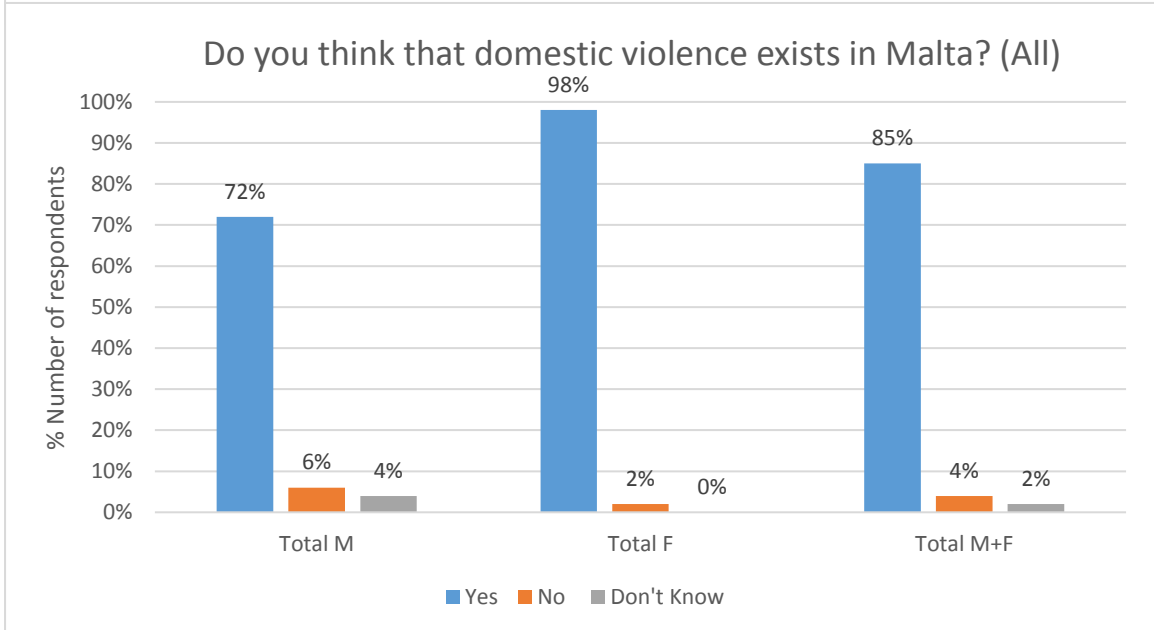
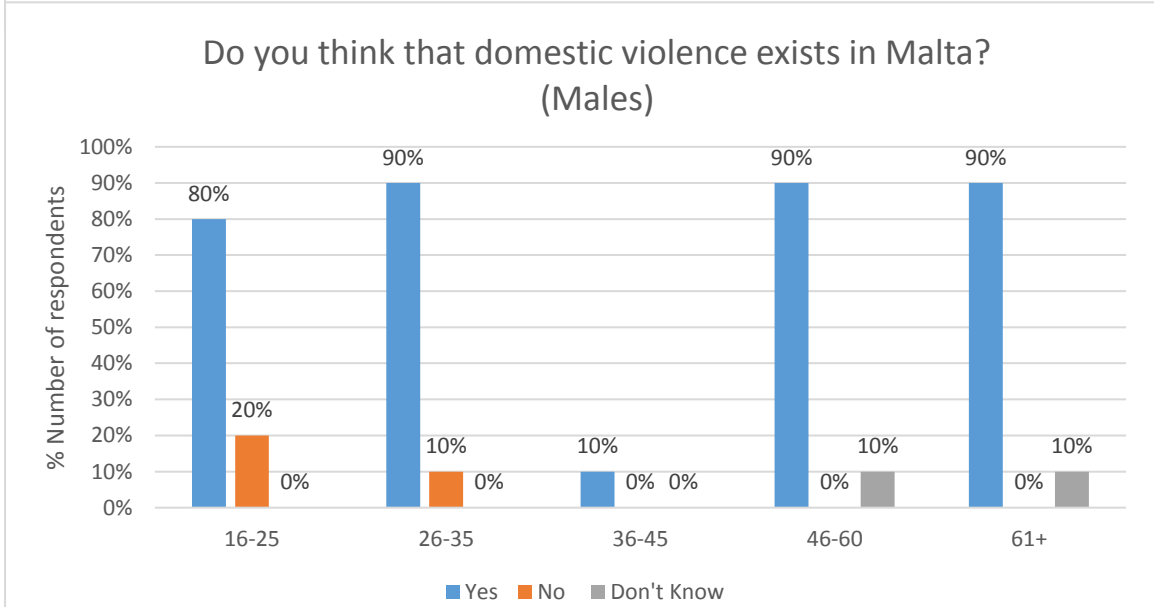
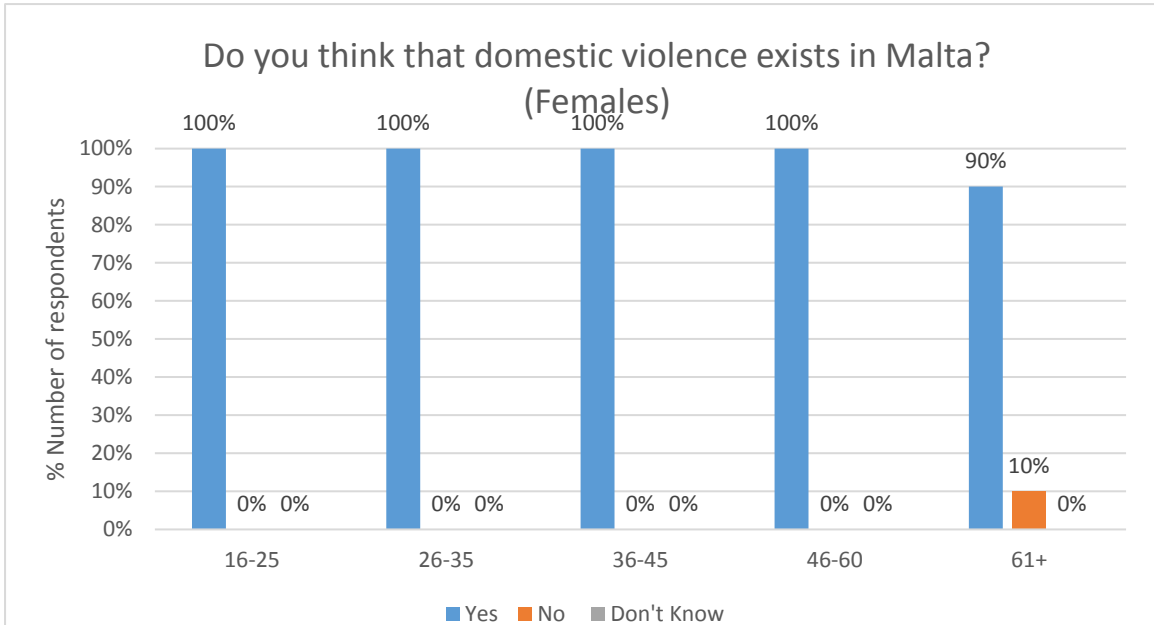
16c. How important do you think it is to raise awareness about domestic violence in boys' schools?

Very important	Important	Not important	I don't know

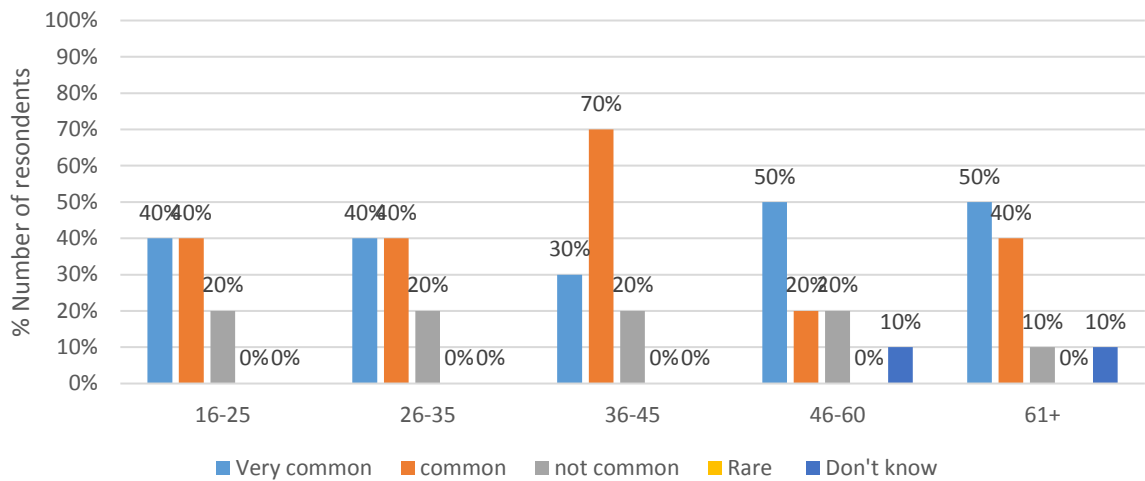
Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix 3: Data Gathered from our Research

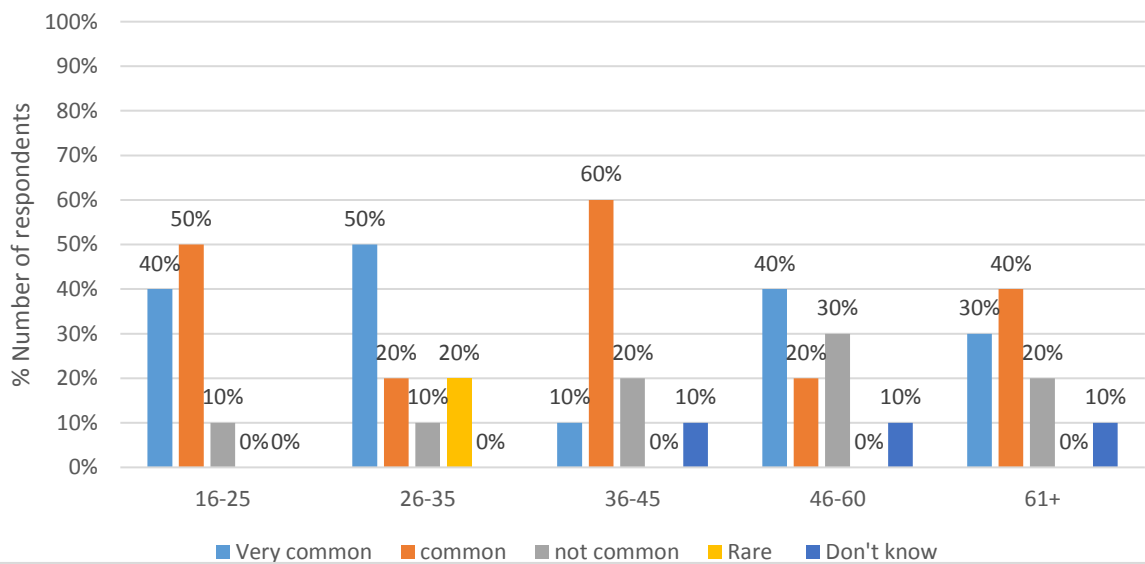




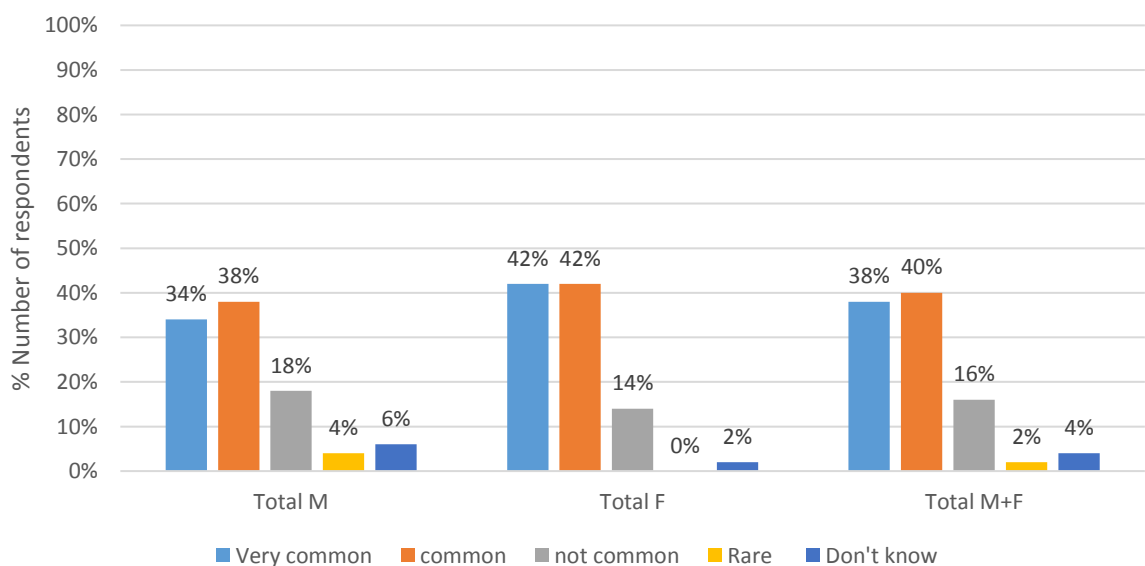
How common do you think domestic violence is in Malta? (Females)



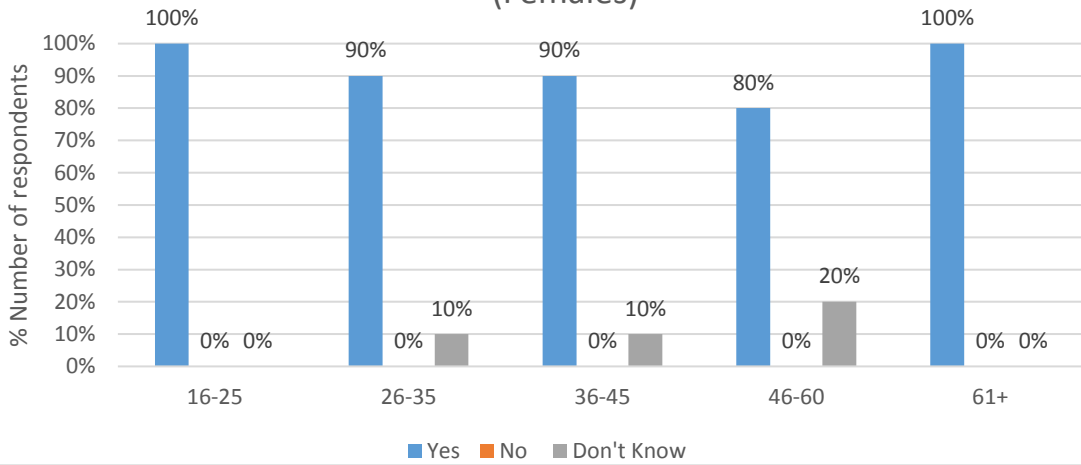
How common do you think domestic violence is in Malta? (Males)



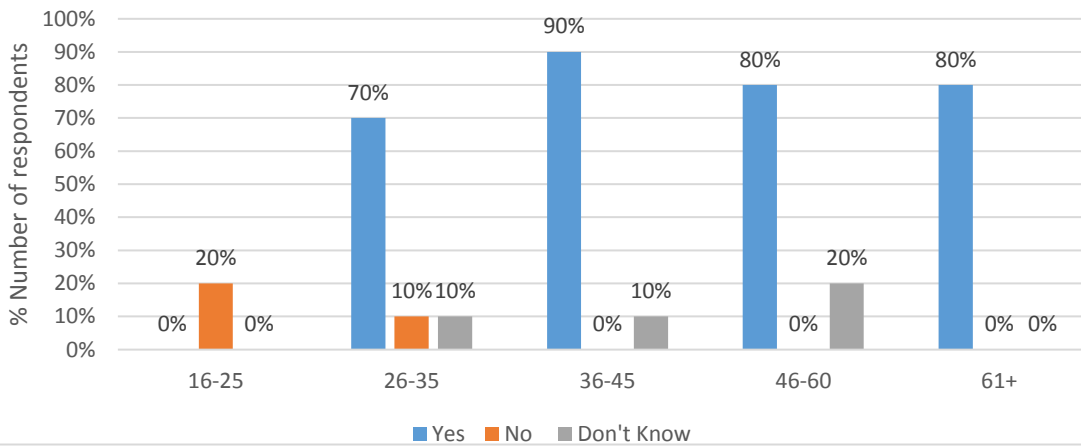
How common do you think domestic violence is in Malta? (All)



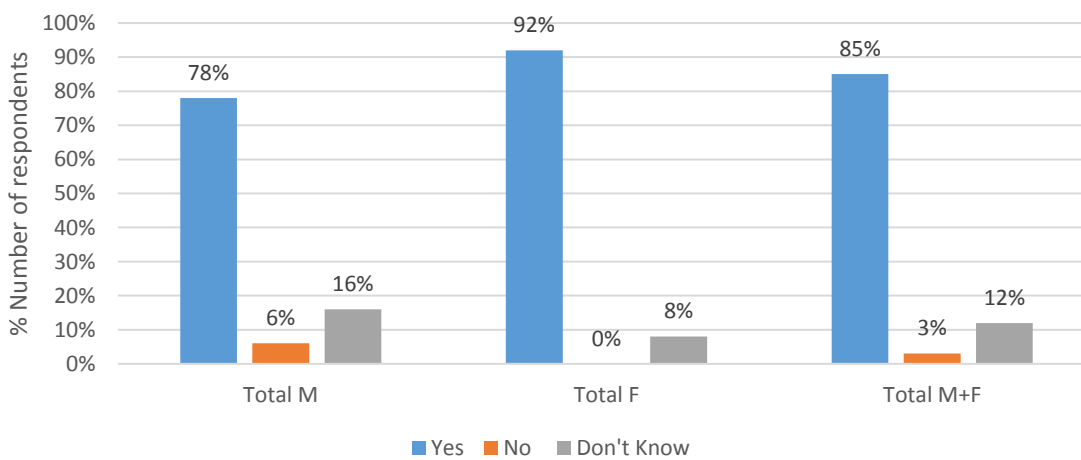
Are there any places where abused people can go for help? (Females)



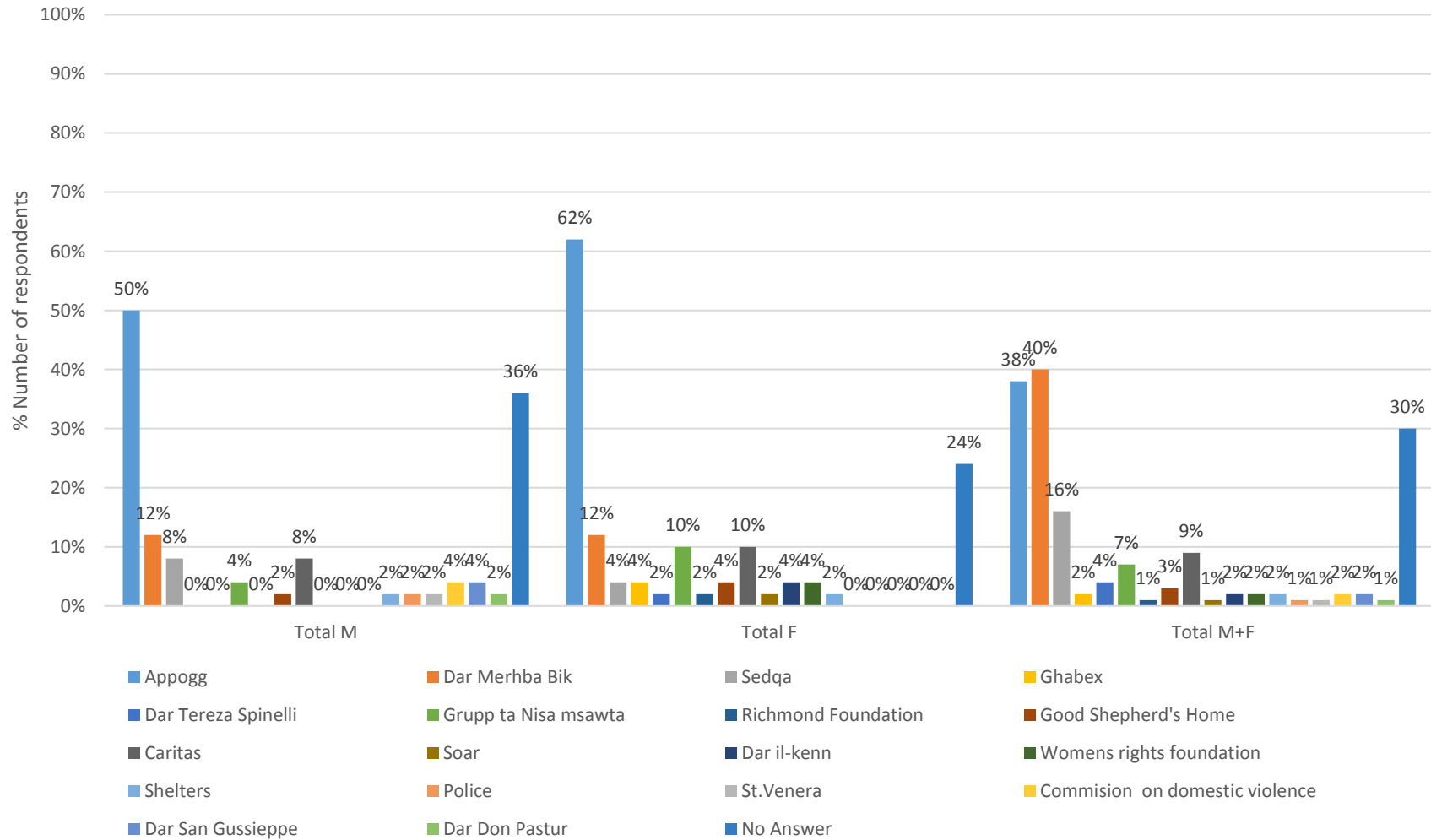
Are there any places where abused people can go for help? (Males)

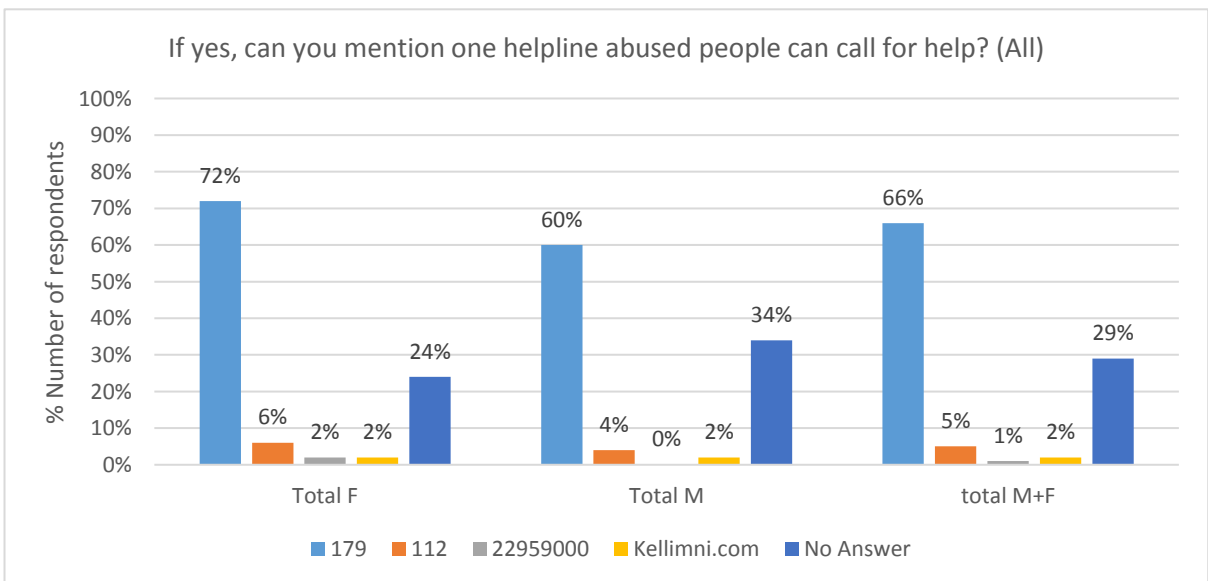
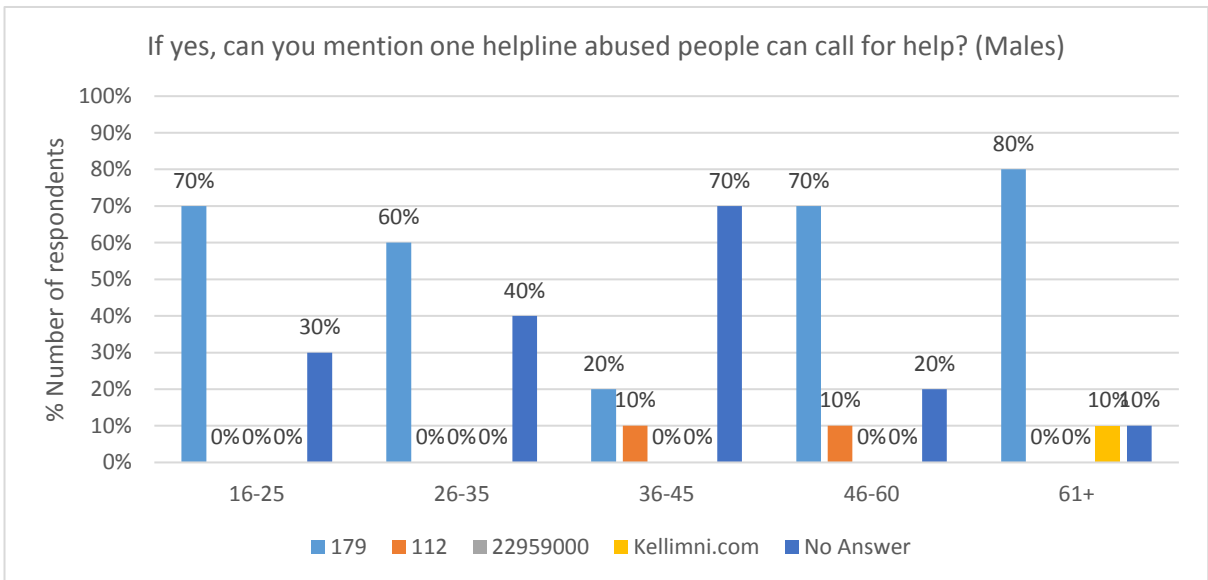
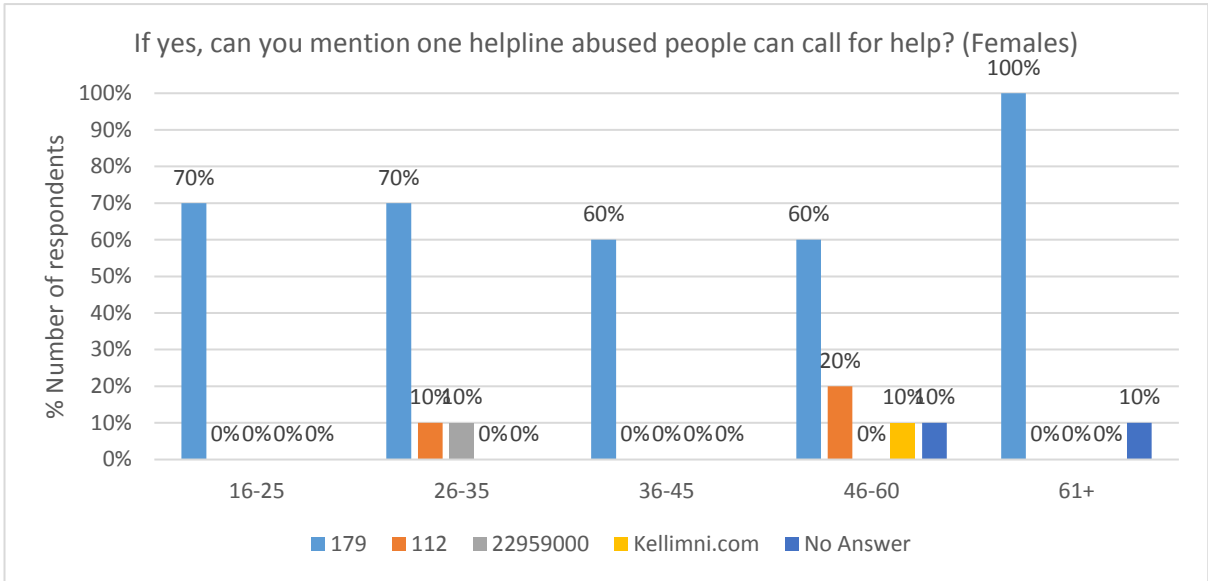


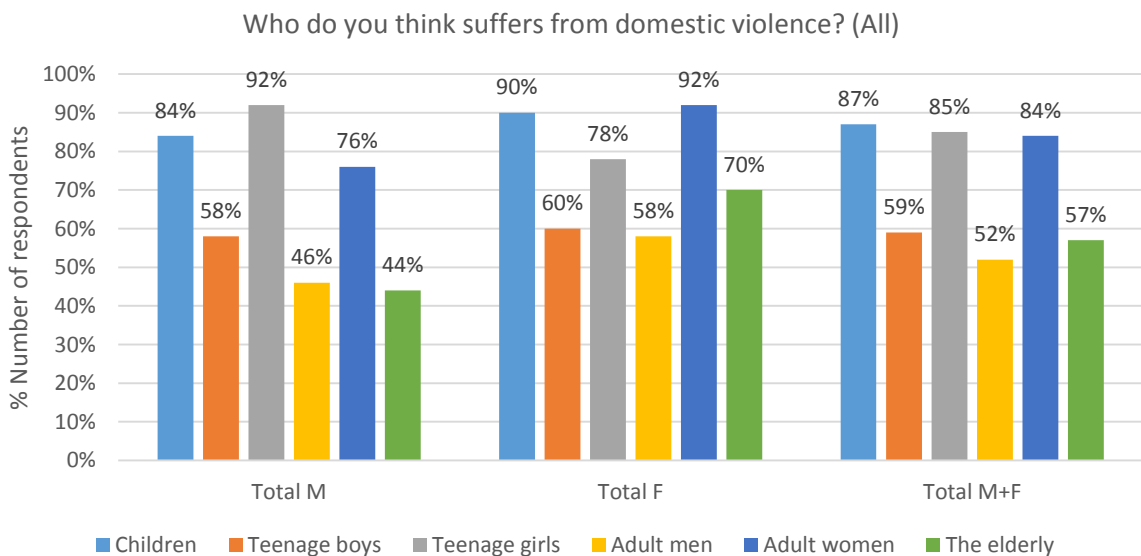
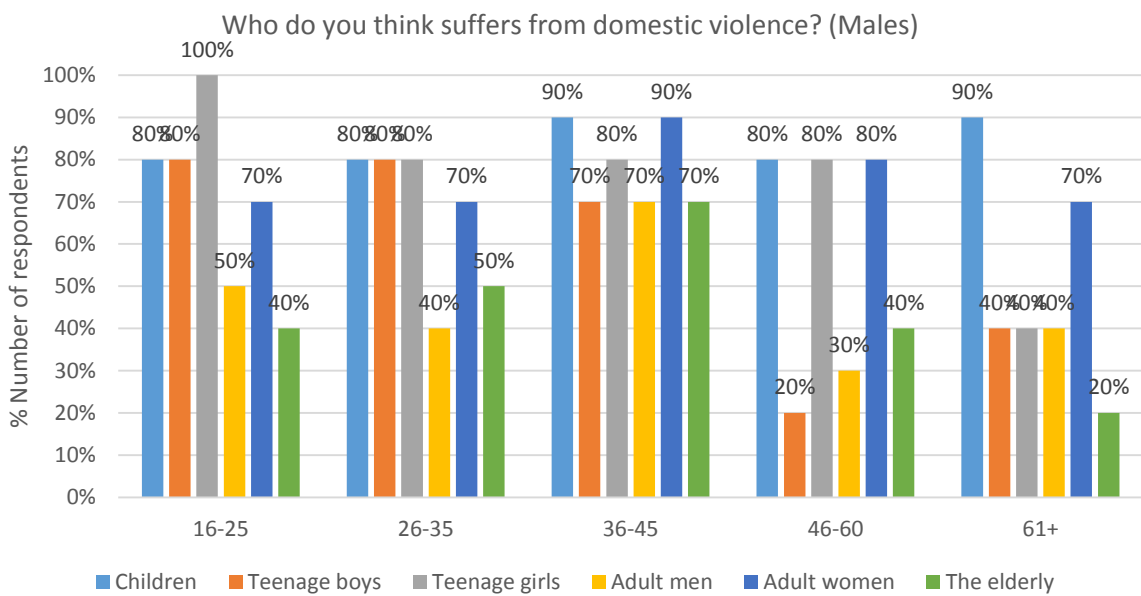
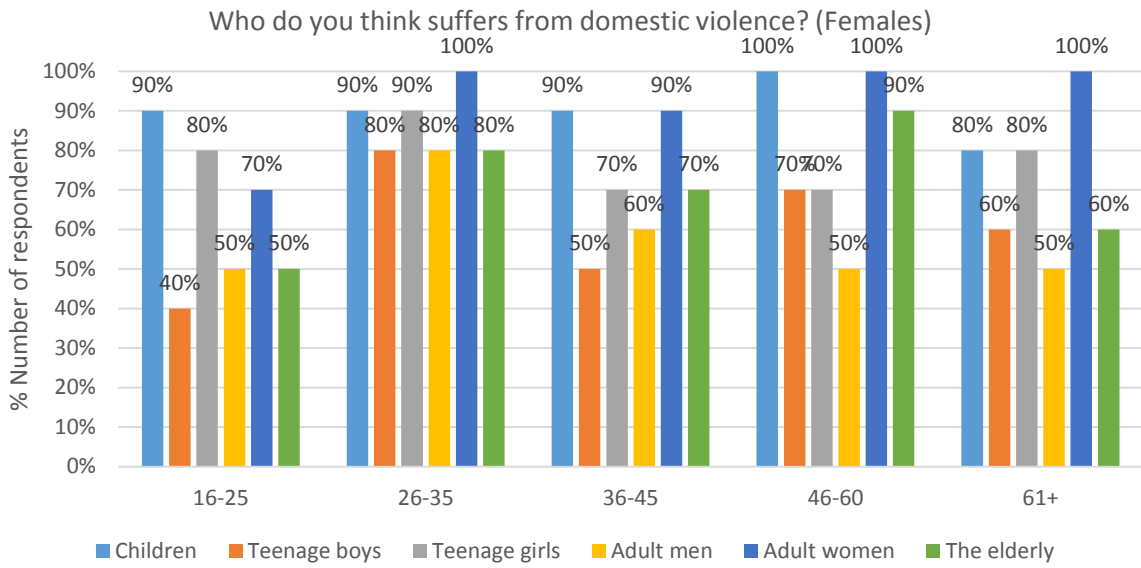
Are there any places where abused people can go for help? (All)

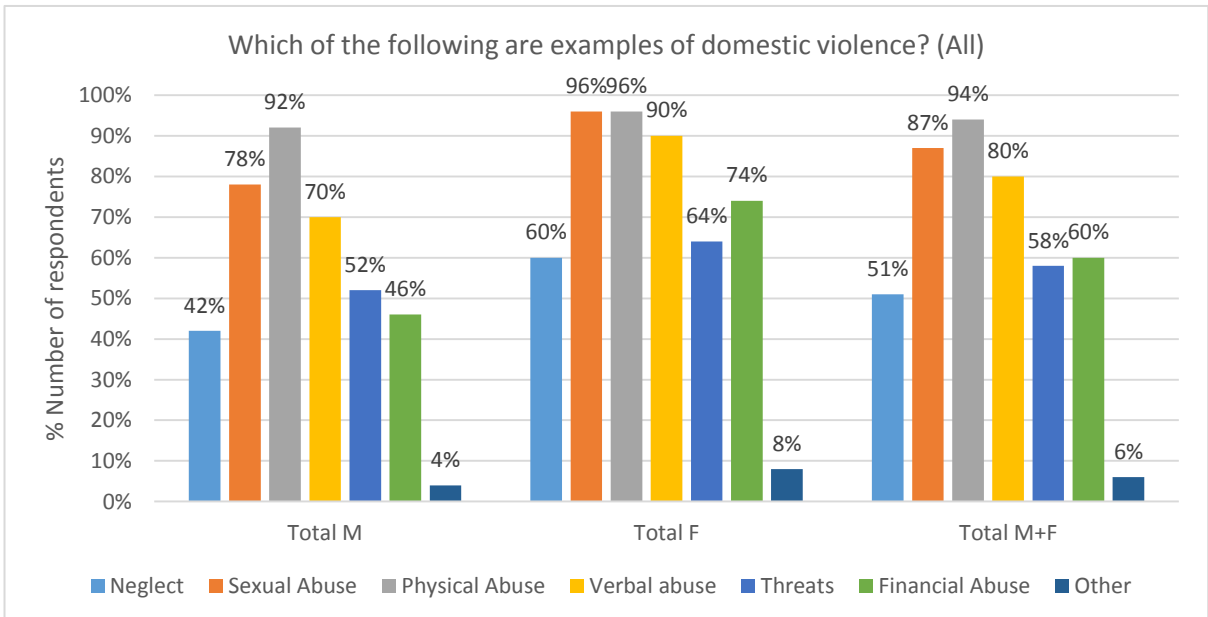
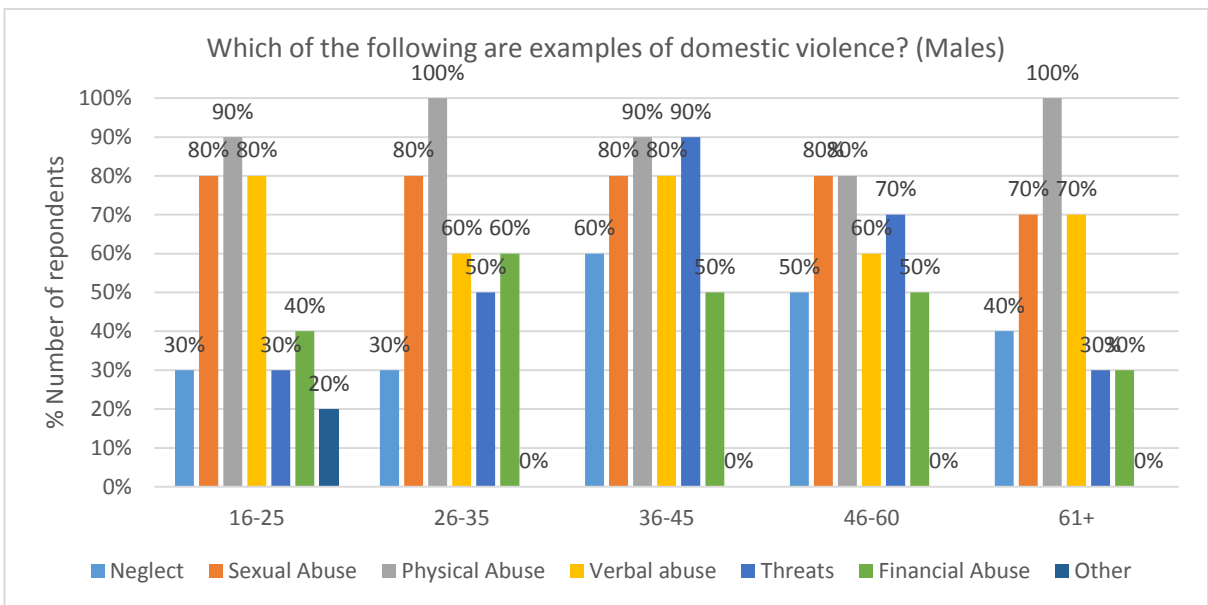
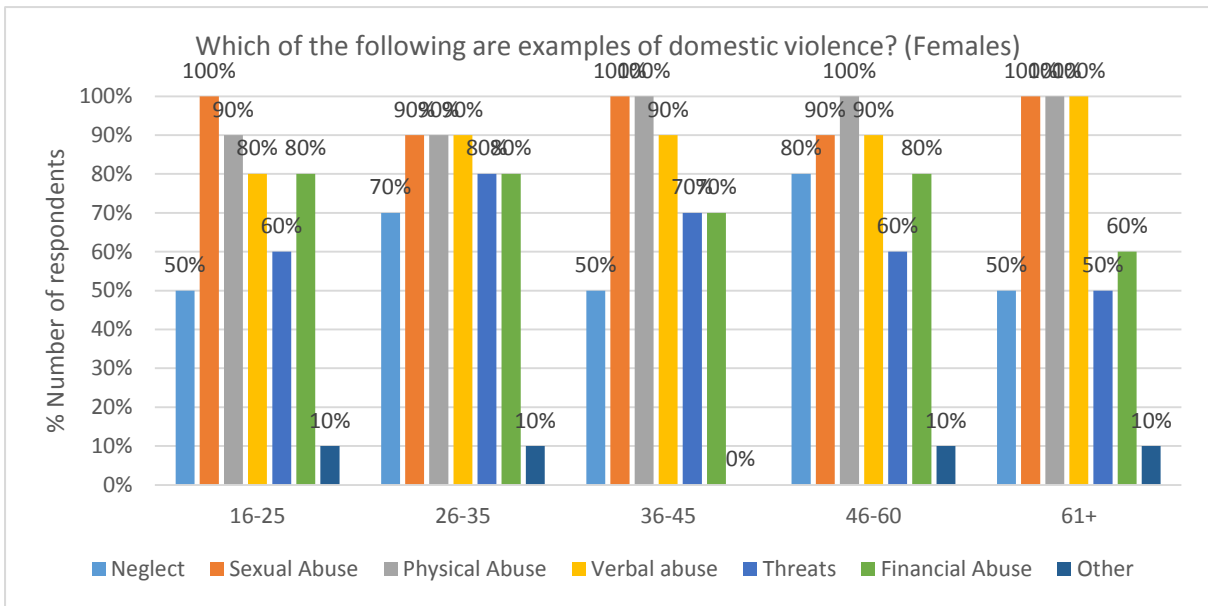


If yes, can you mention two? (All)

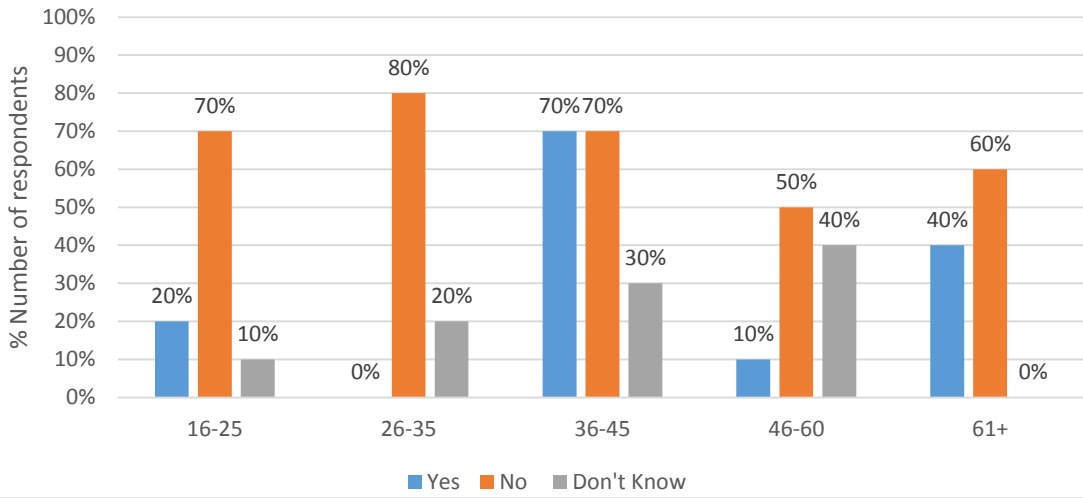




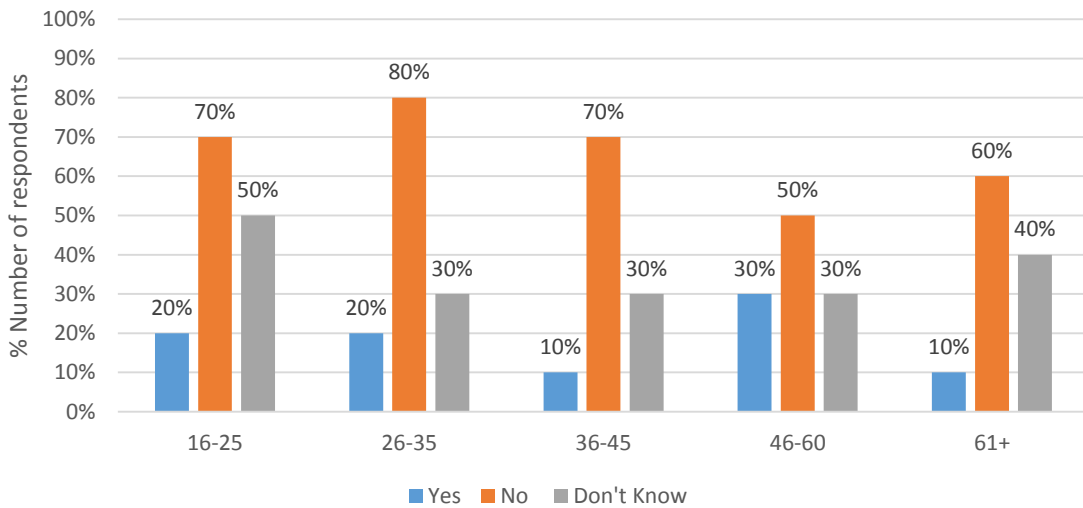




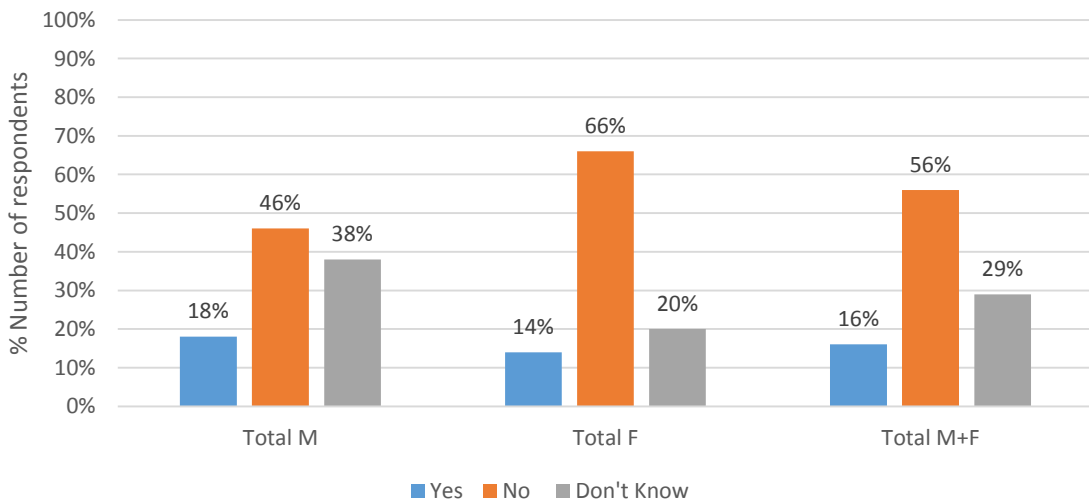
Do you think that people are given the appropriate punishment when they are caught being abusive? (Females)

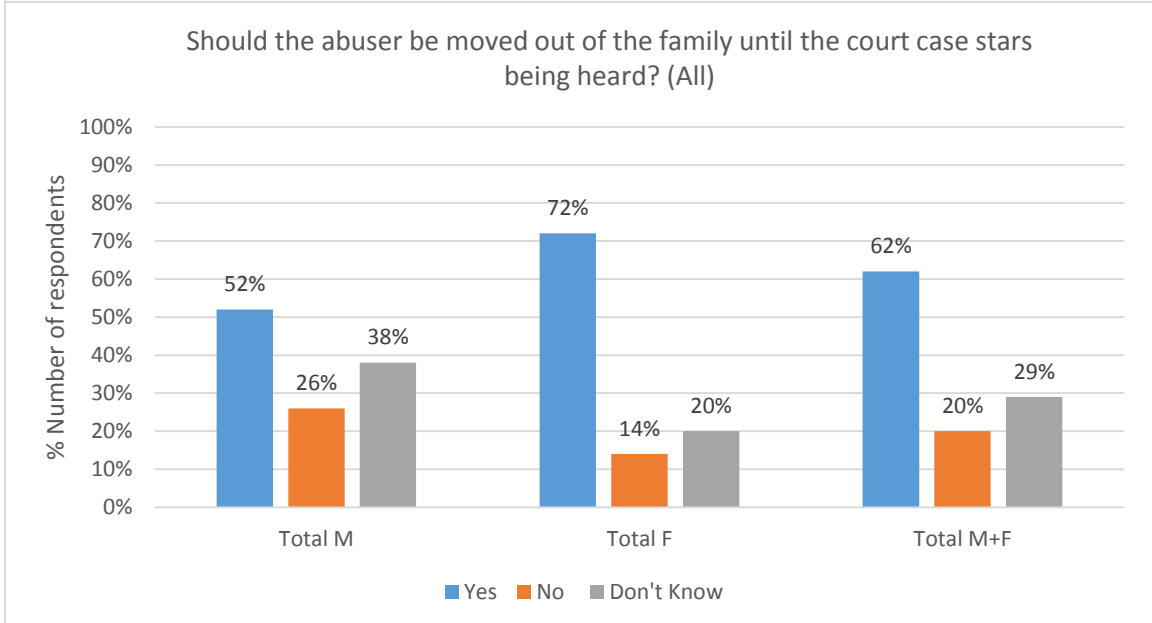
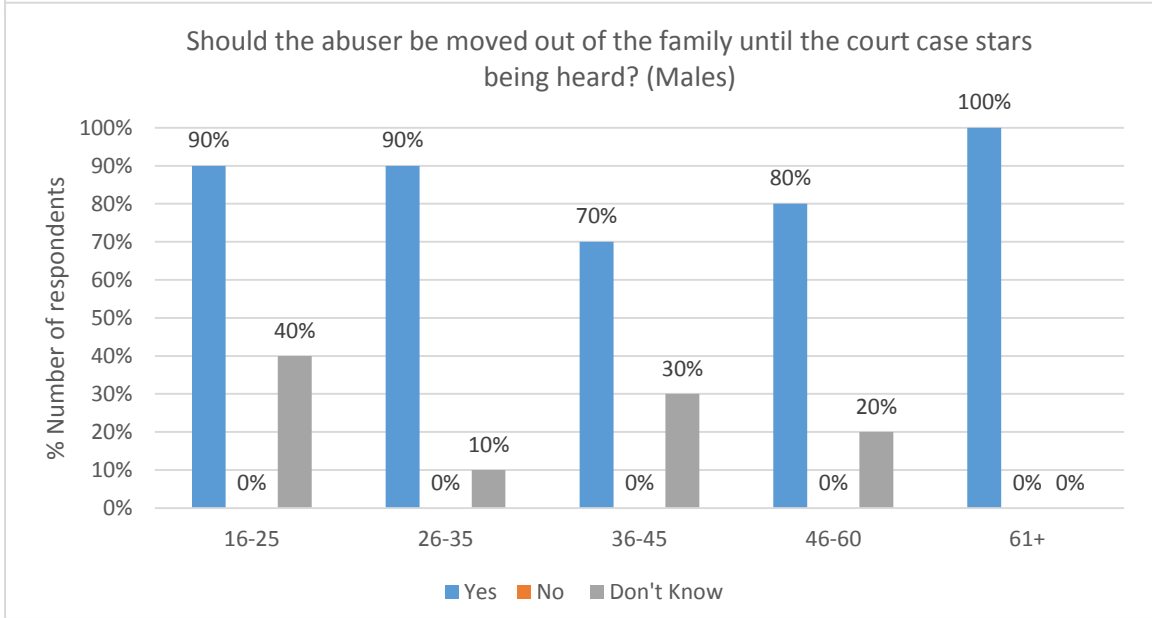
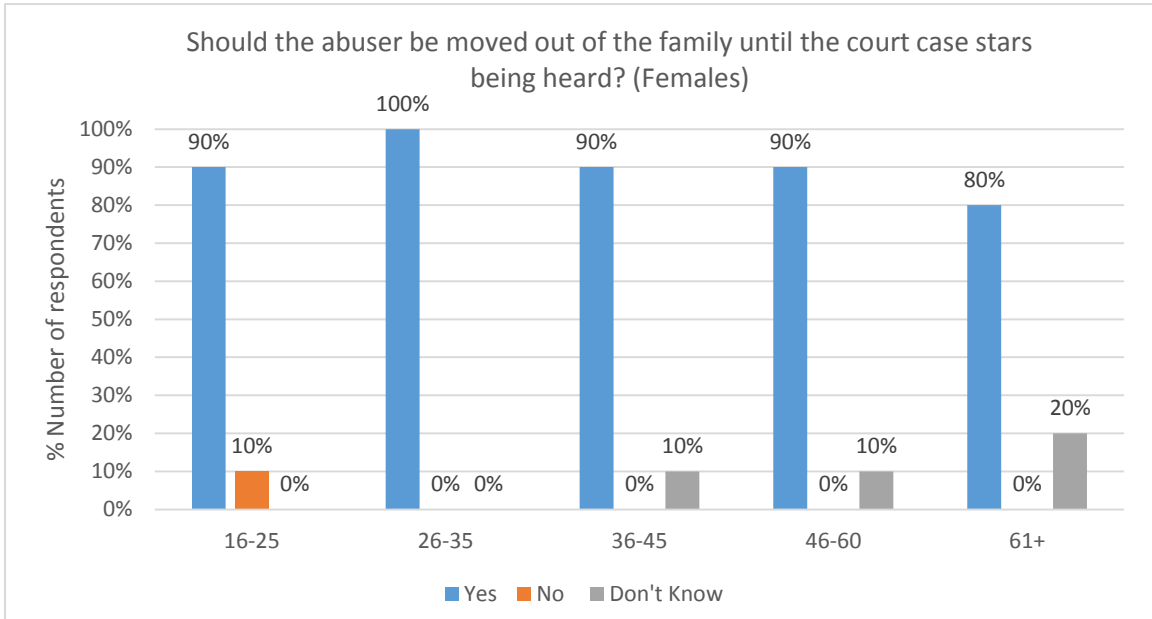


Do you think that people are given the appropriate punishment when they are caught being abusive? (Males)

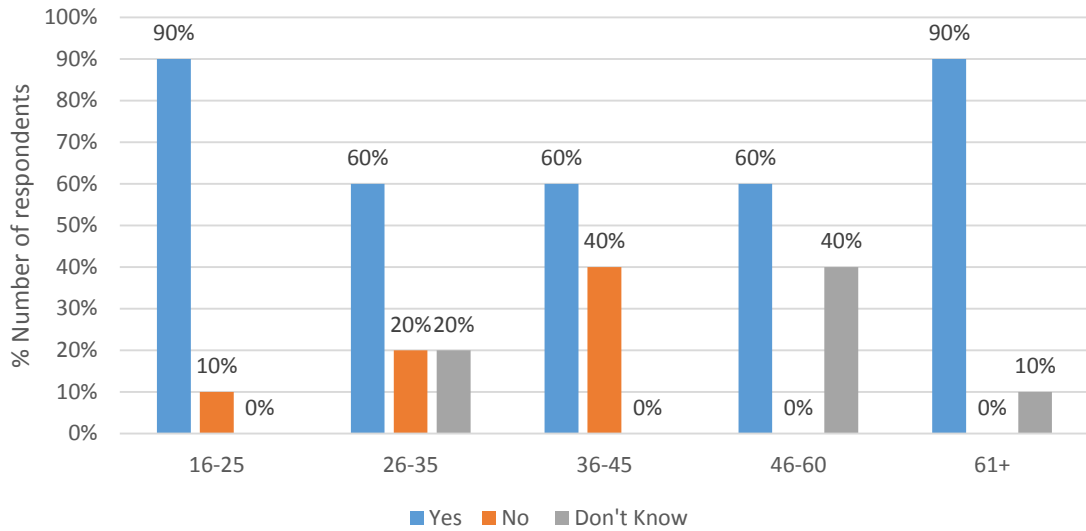


Do you think that people are given the appropriate punishment when they are caught being abusive? (All)

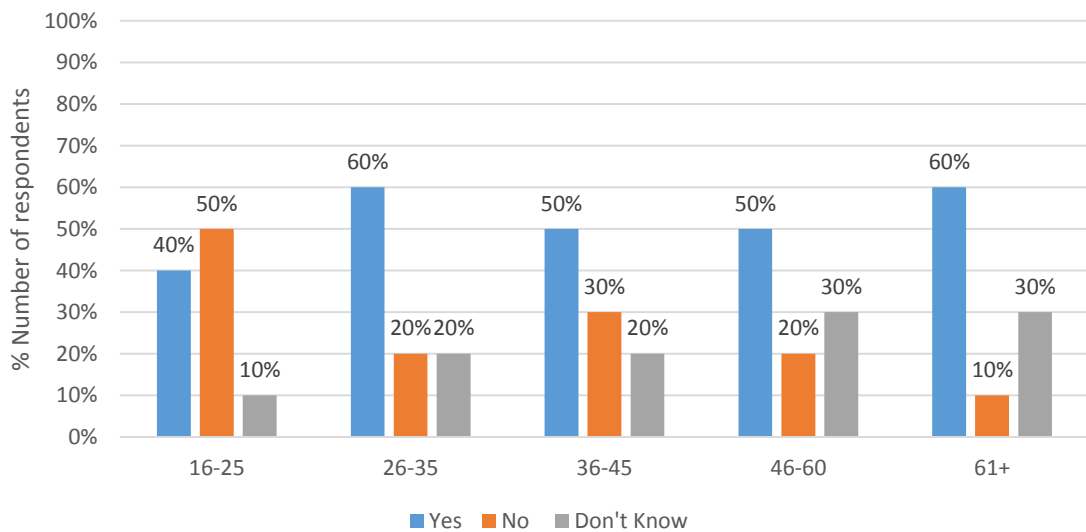




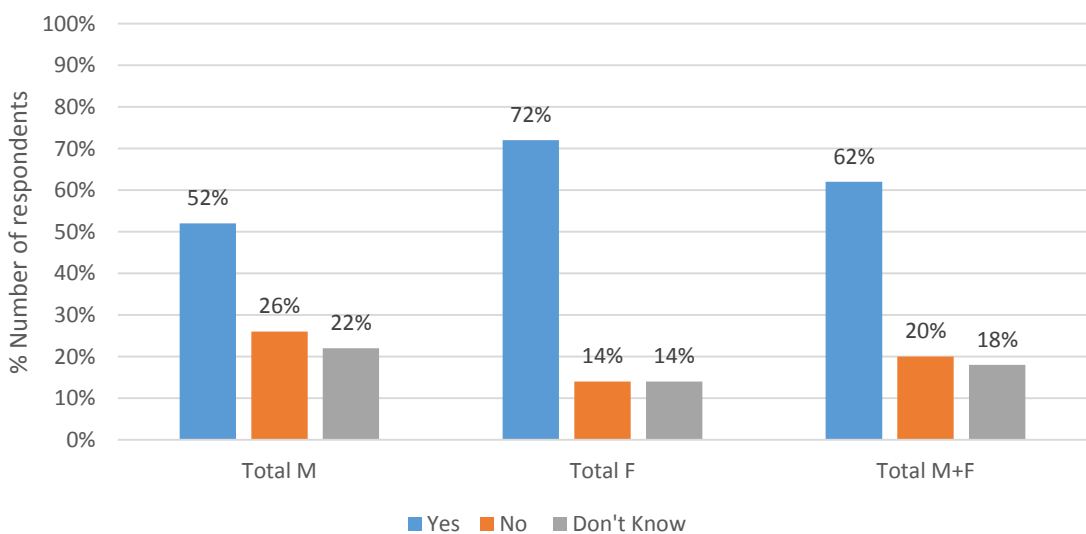
Are you aware that domestic violence is on the rise? (Females)

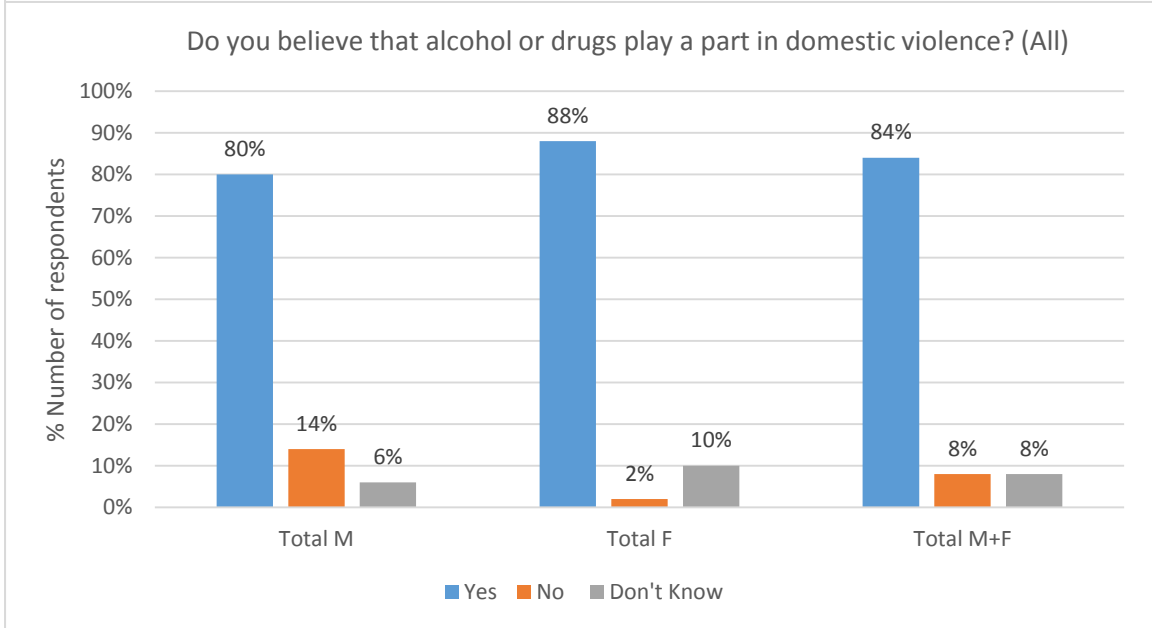
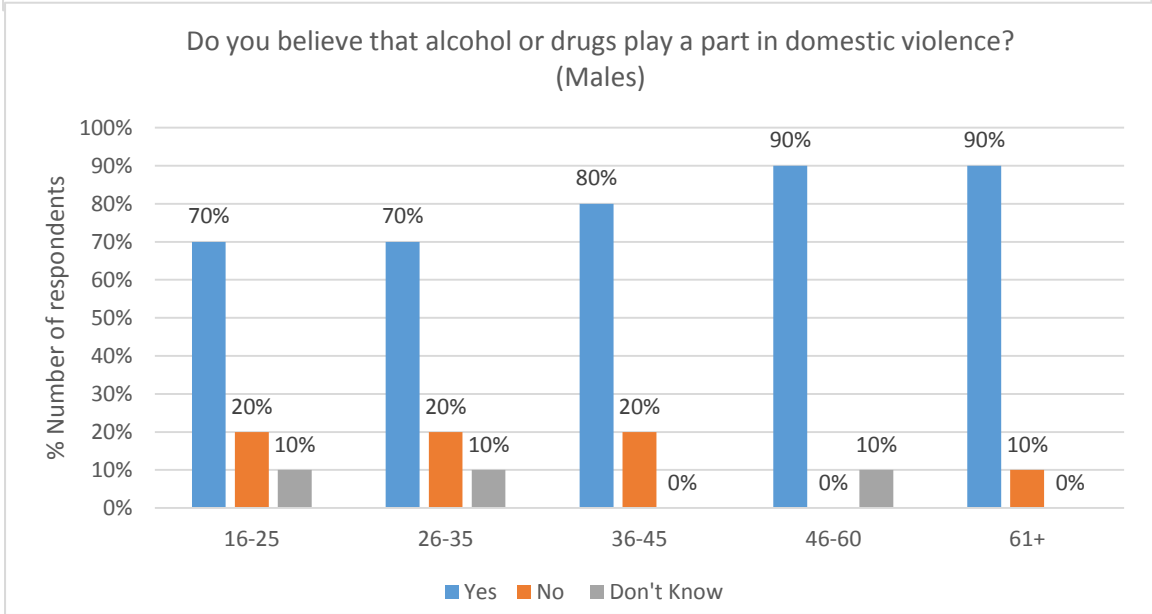
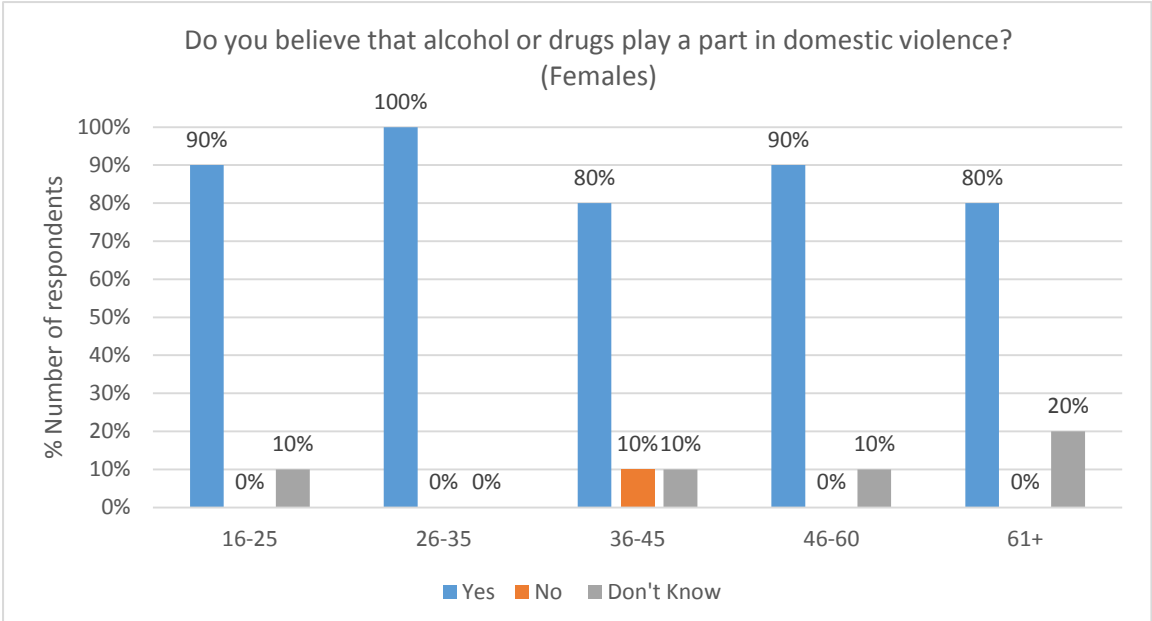


Are you aware that domestic violence is on the rise? (Males)

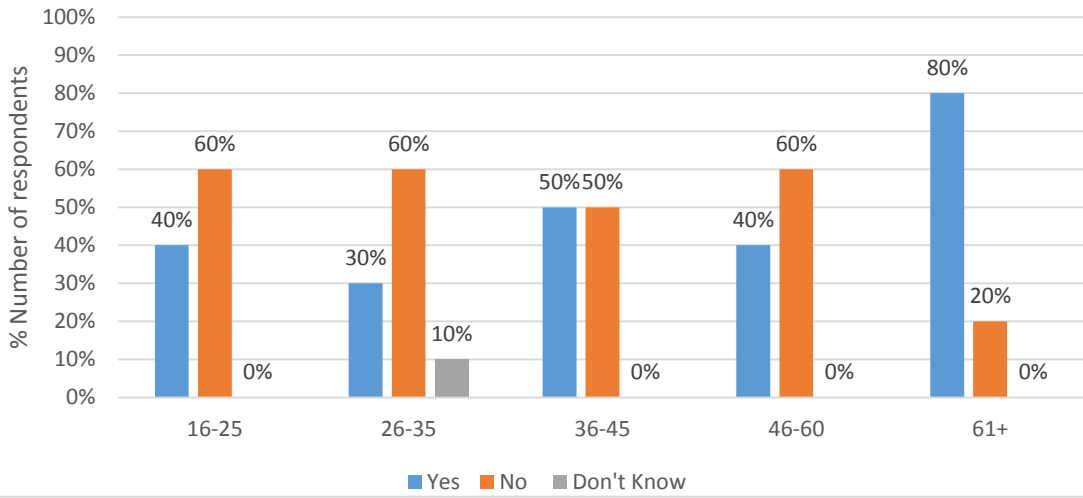


Are you aware that domestic violence is on the rise? (All)

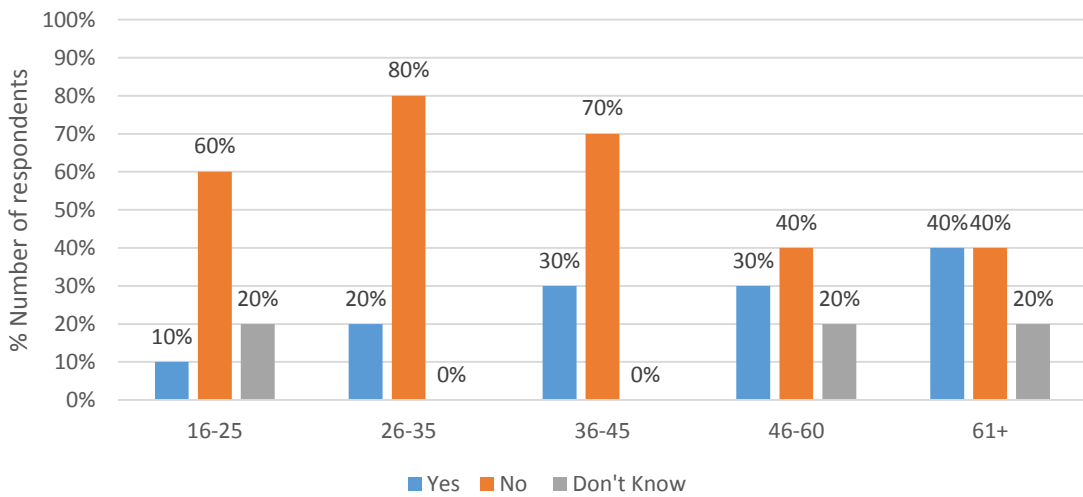




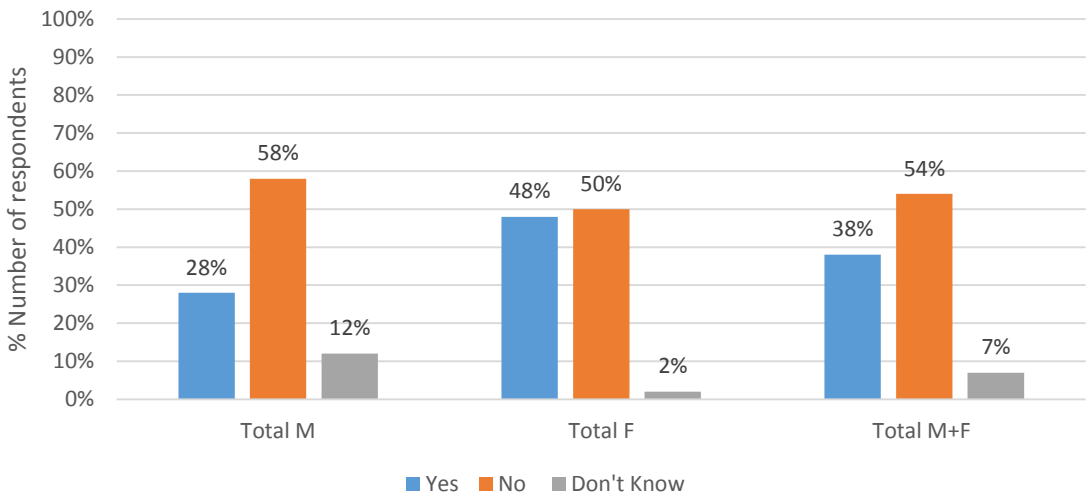
Do you know someone who is passing or passed through domestic violence? (Females)



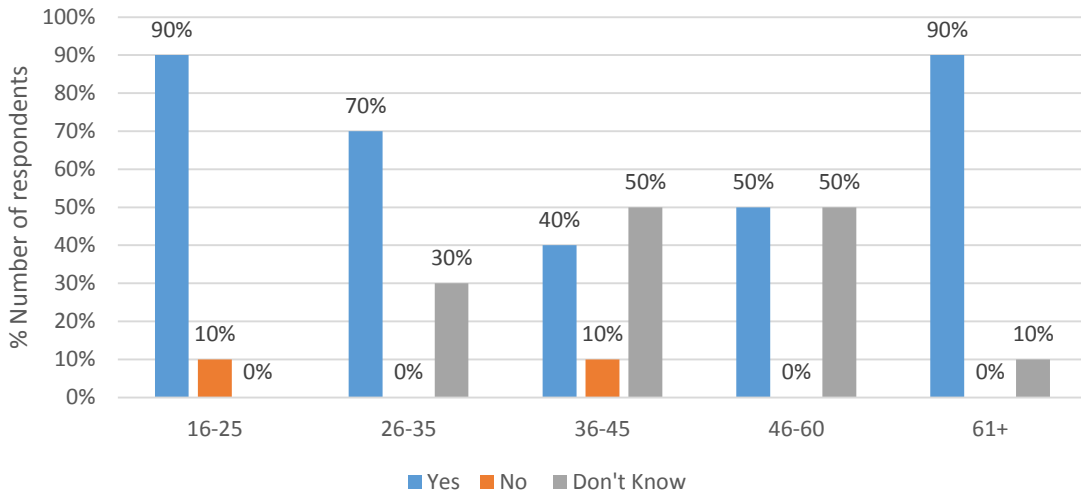
Do you know someone who is passing or passed through domestic violence? (Males)



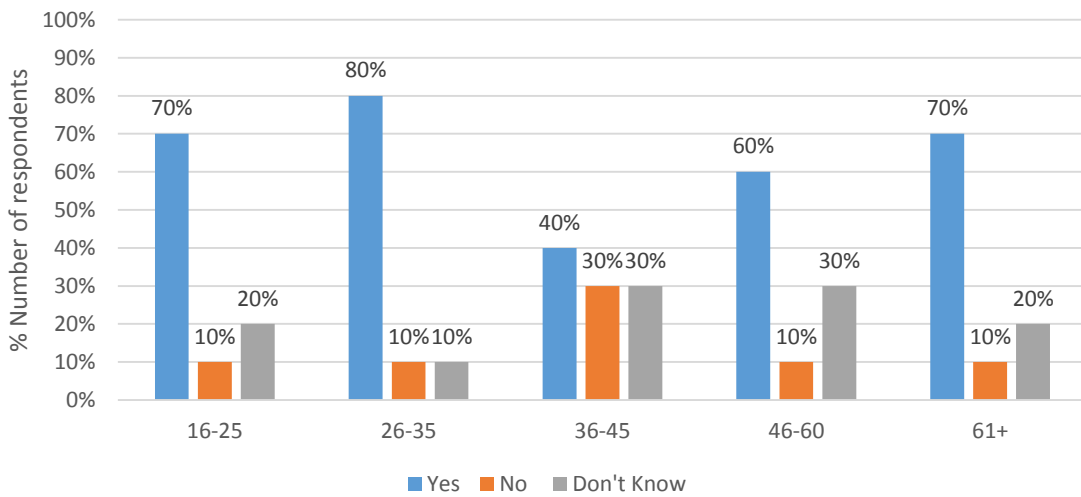
Do you know someone who is passing or passed through domestic violence? (All)



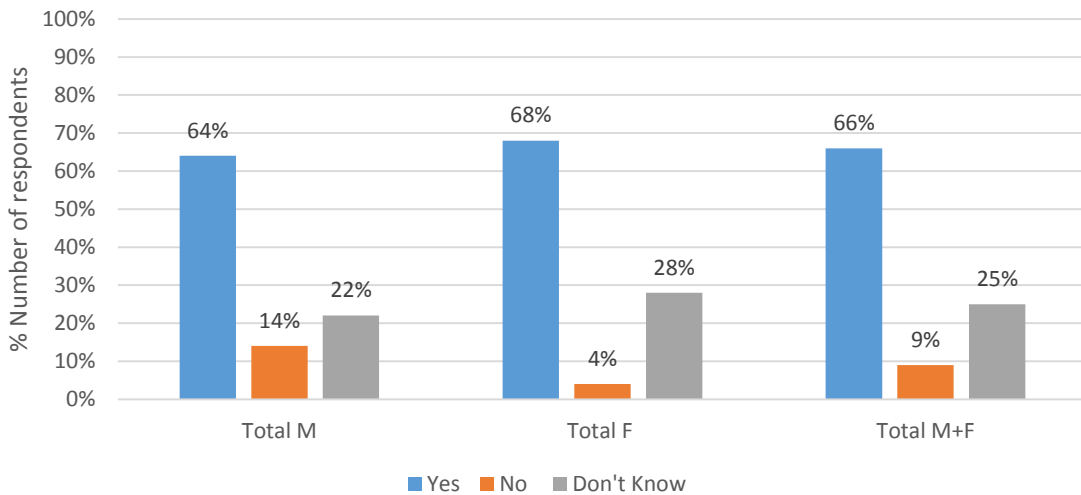
Do you think that the reason why abusers act violently is because they have experienced something similar in the past? (Females)

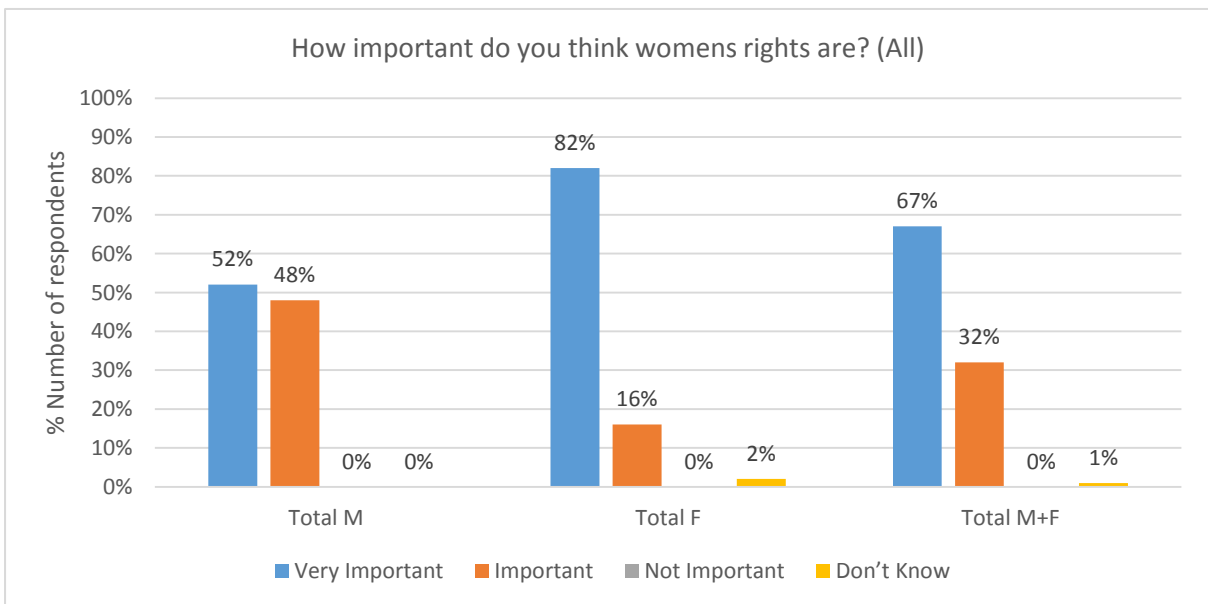
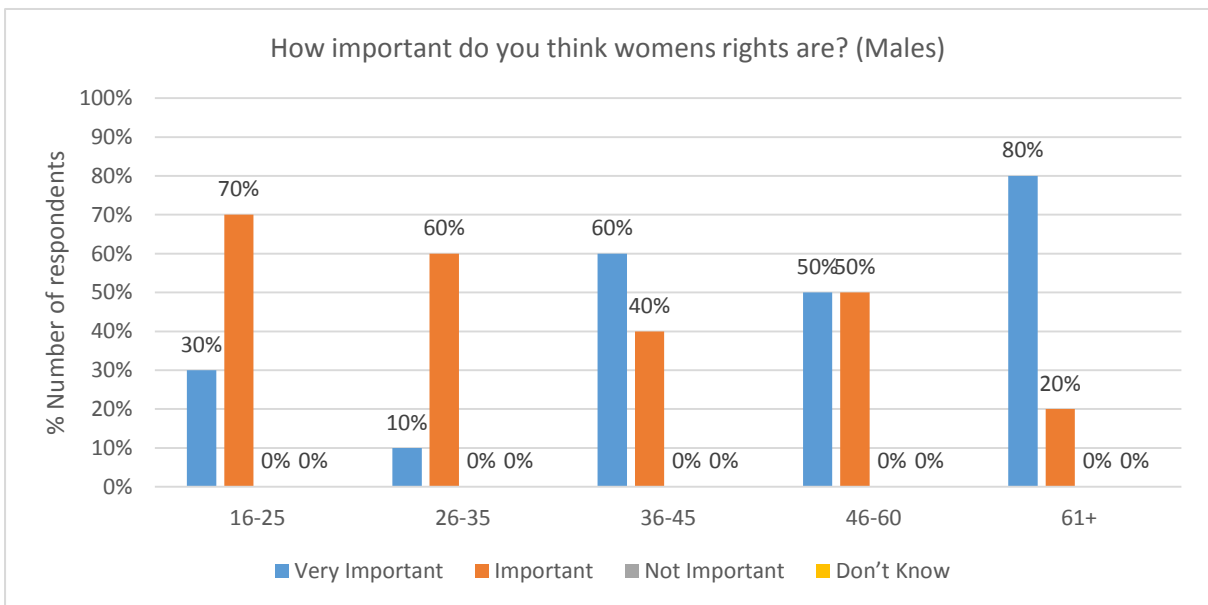
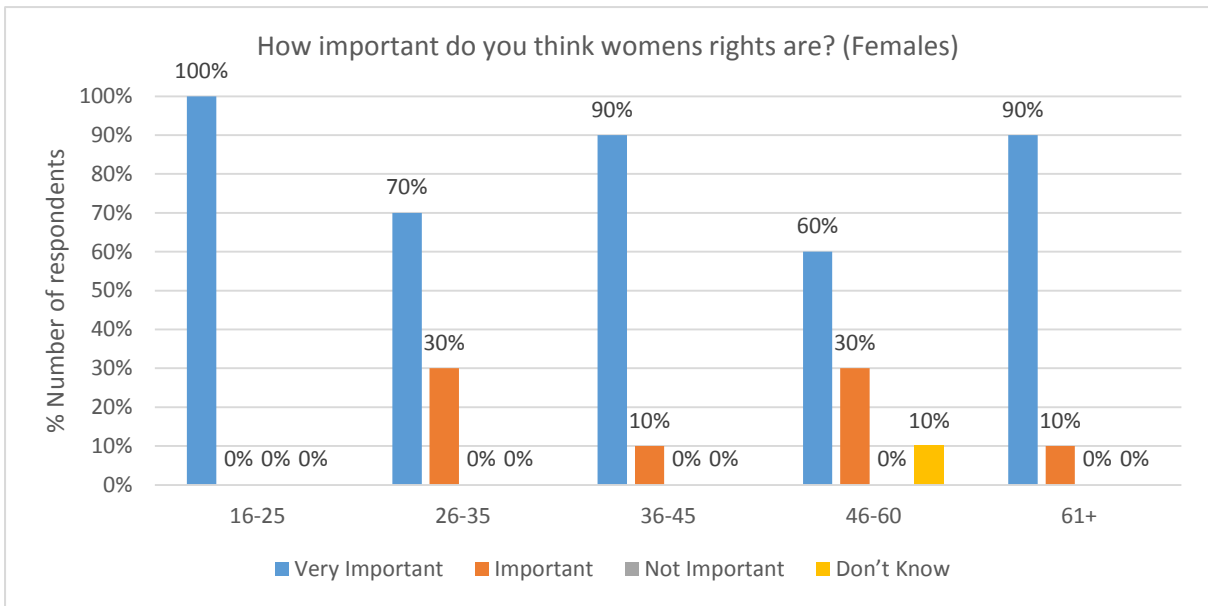


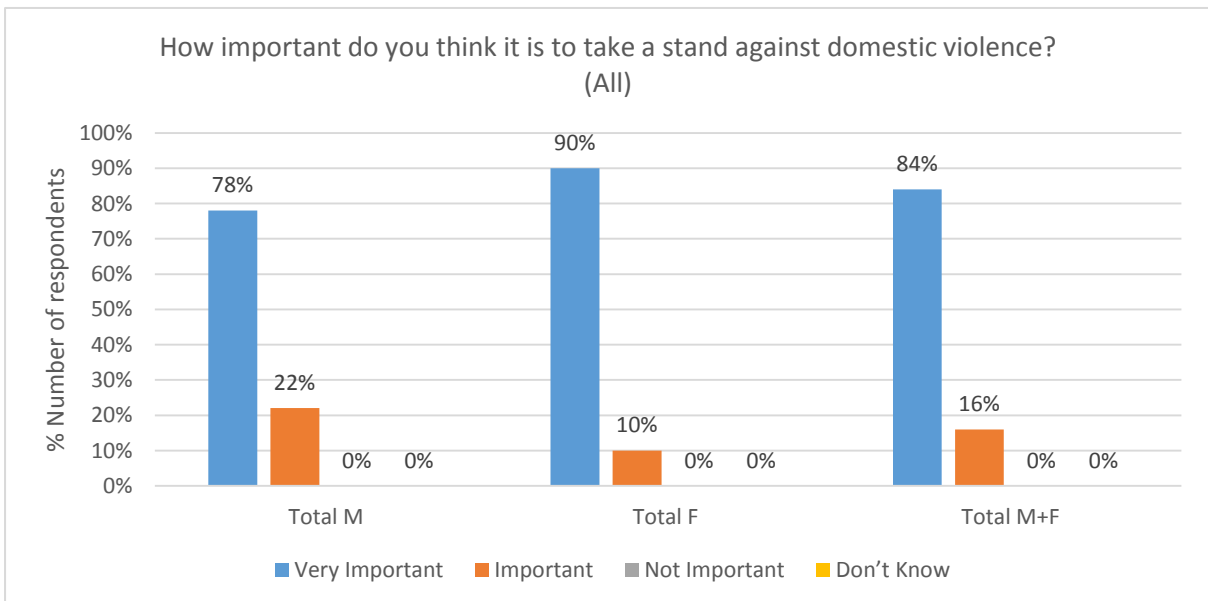
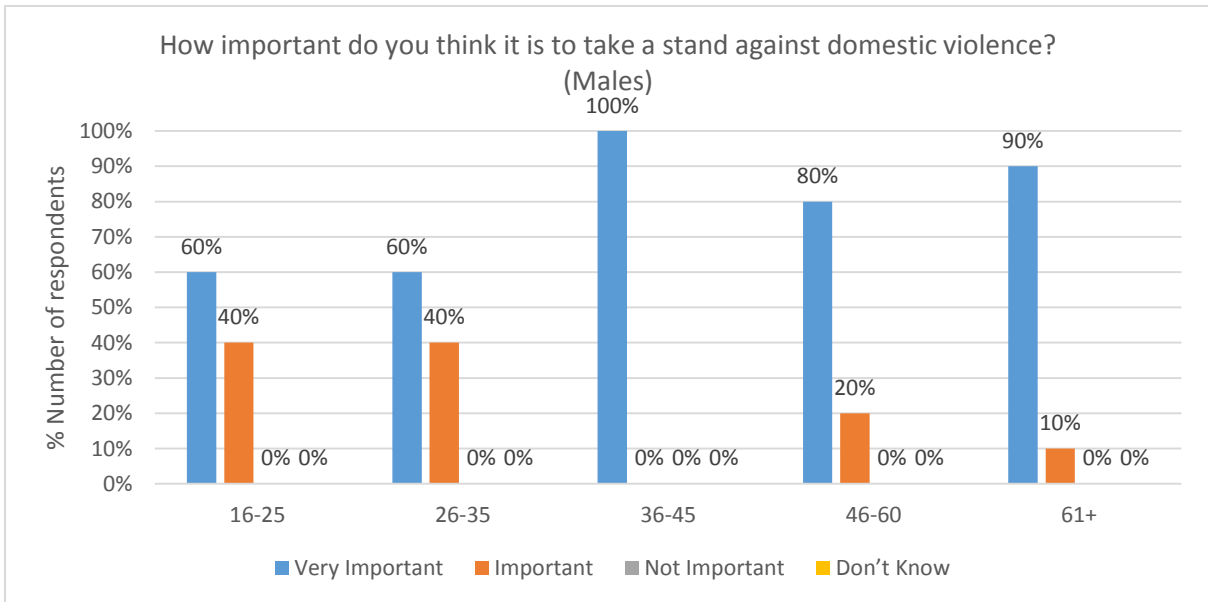
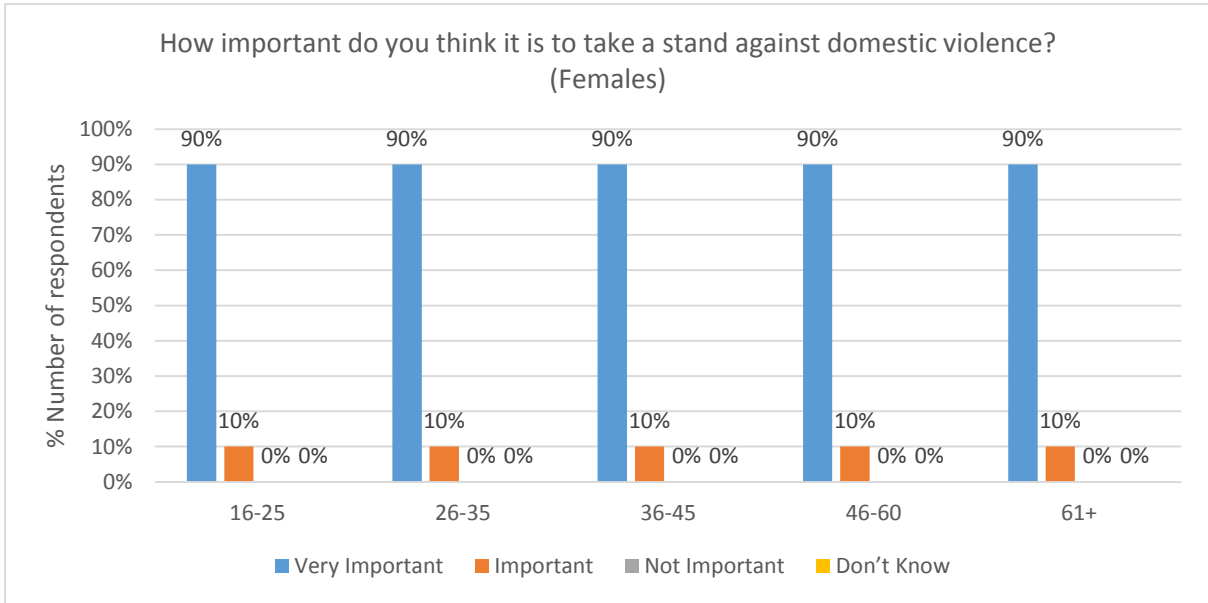
Do you think that the reason why abusers act violently is because they have experienced something similar in the past? (Males)

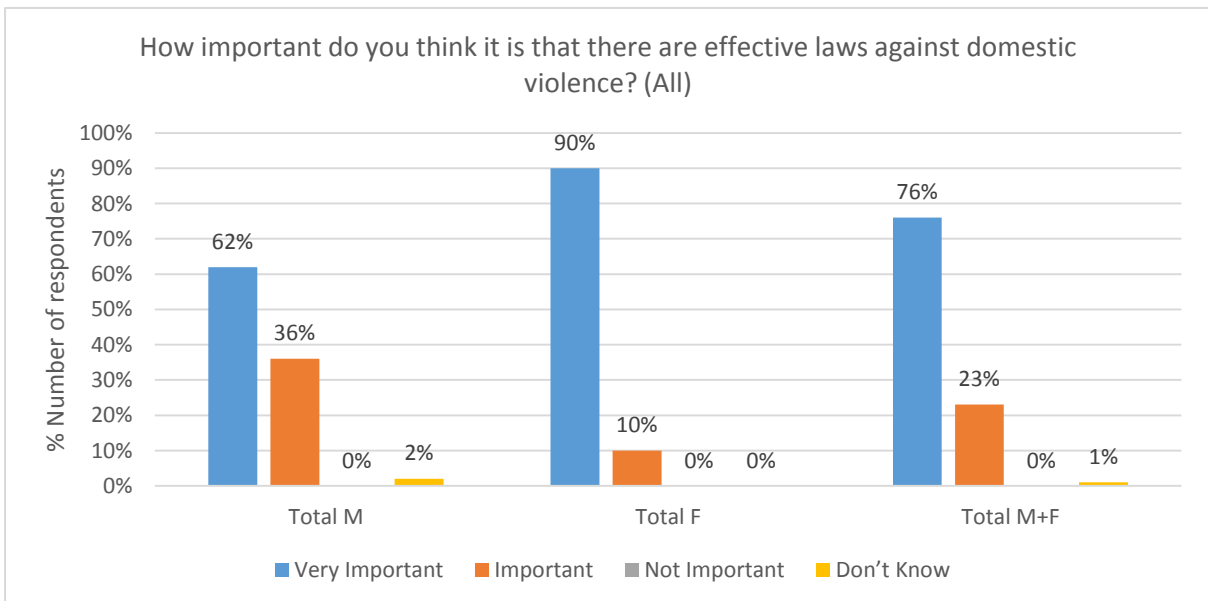
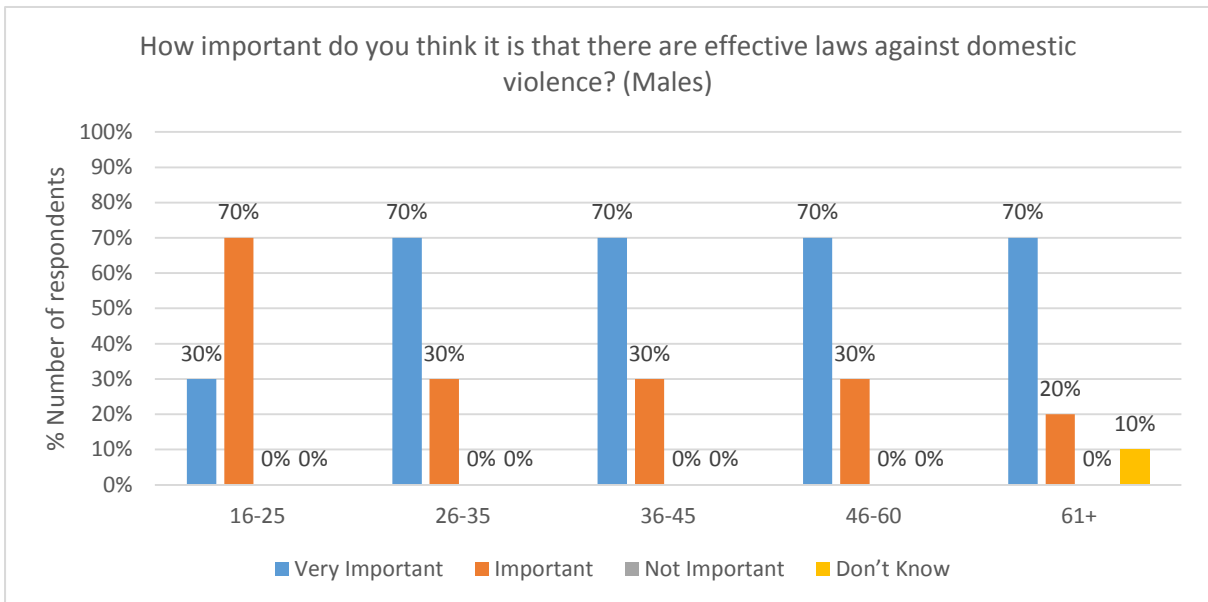
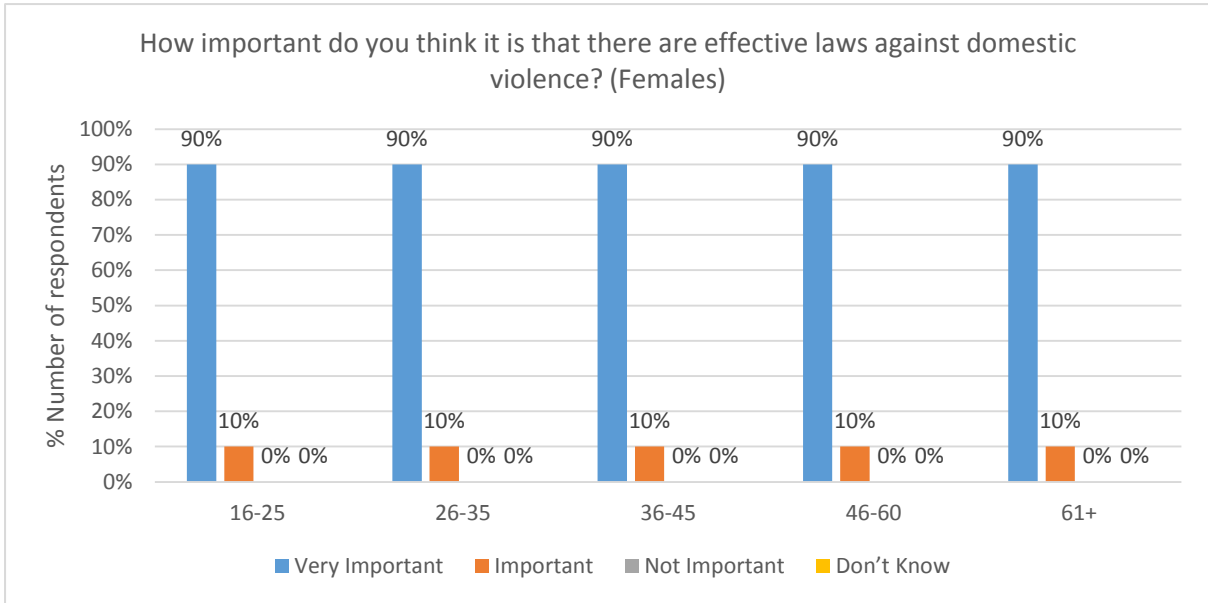


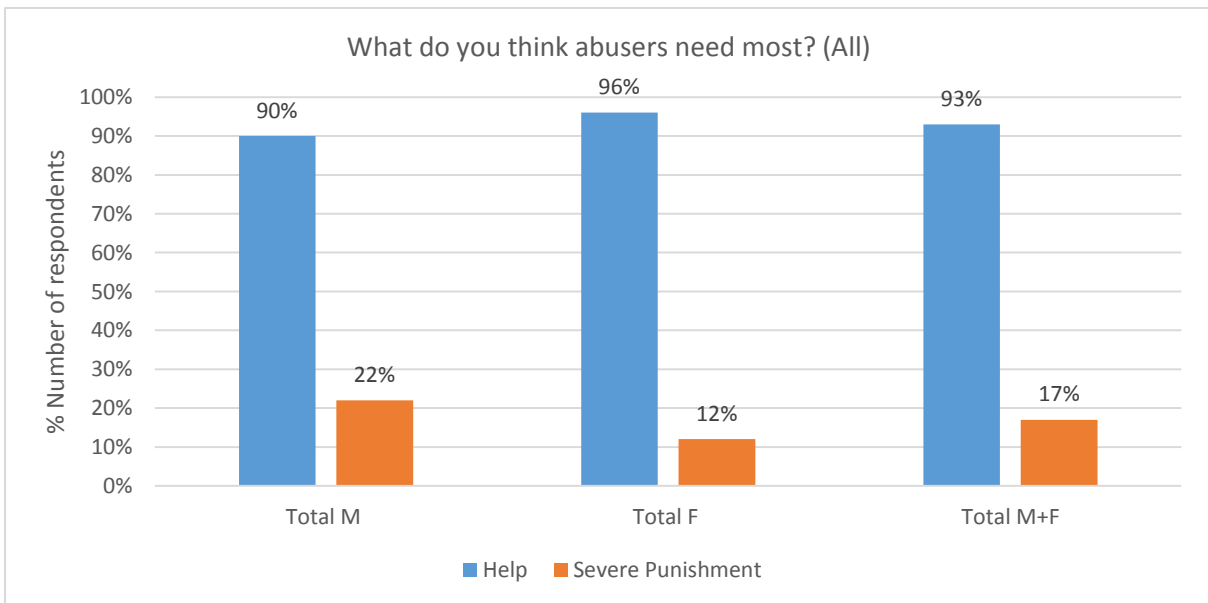
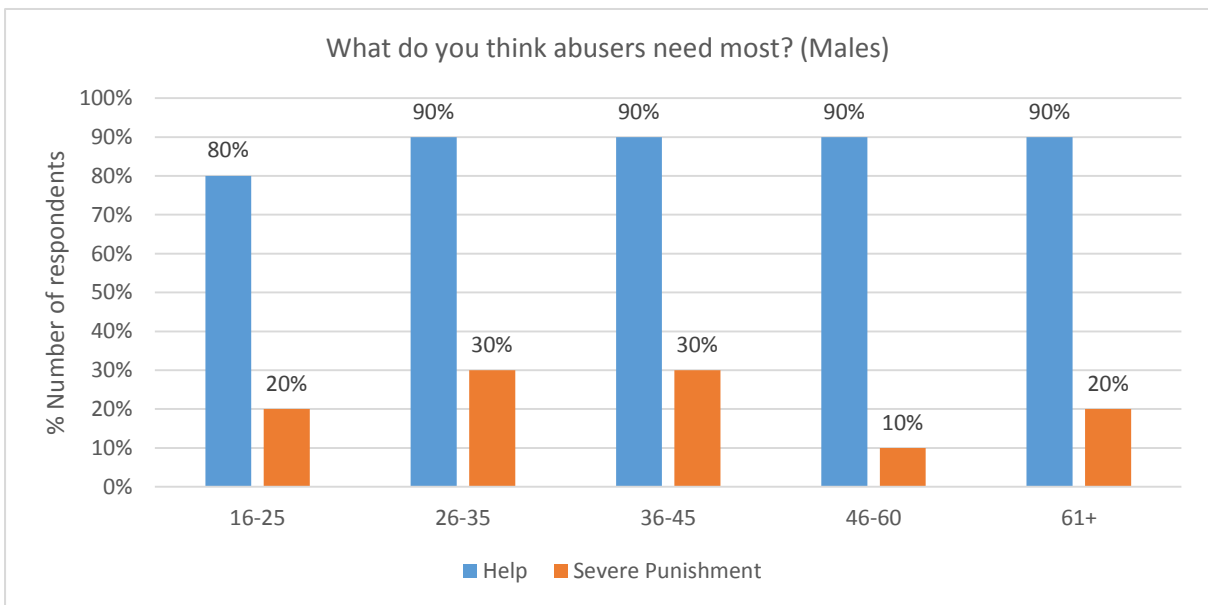
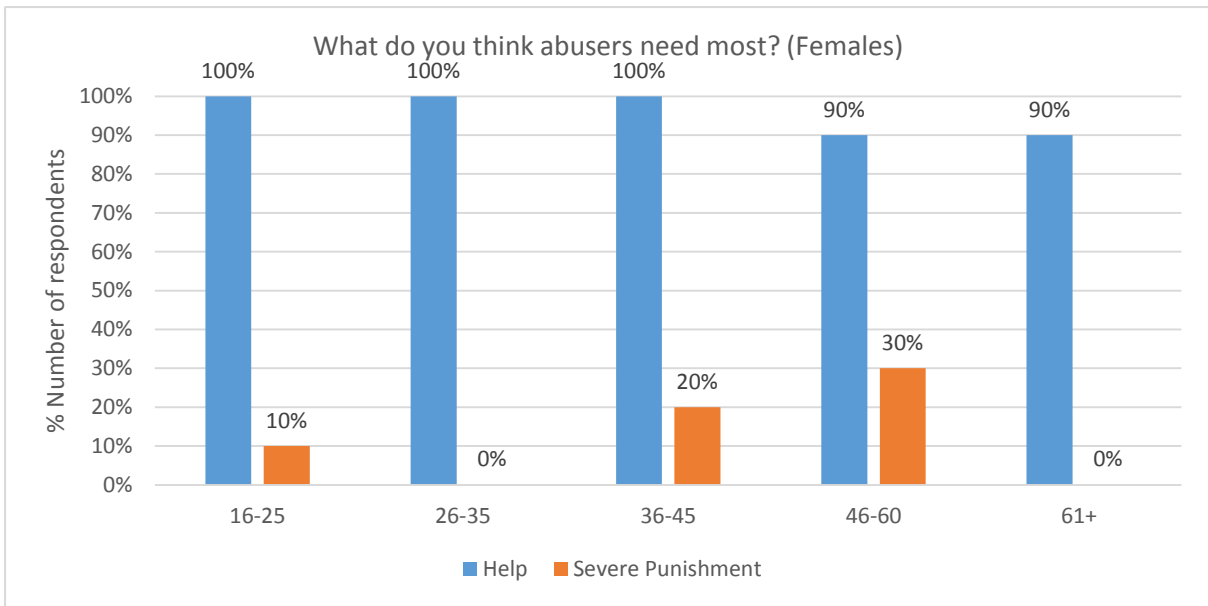
Do you think that the reason why abusers act violently is because they have experienced something similar in the past? (All)



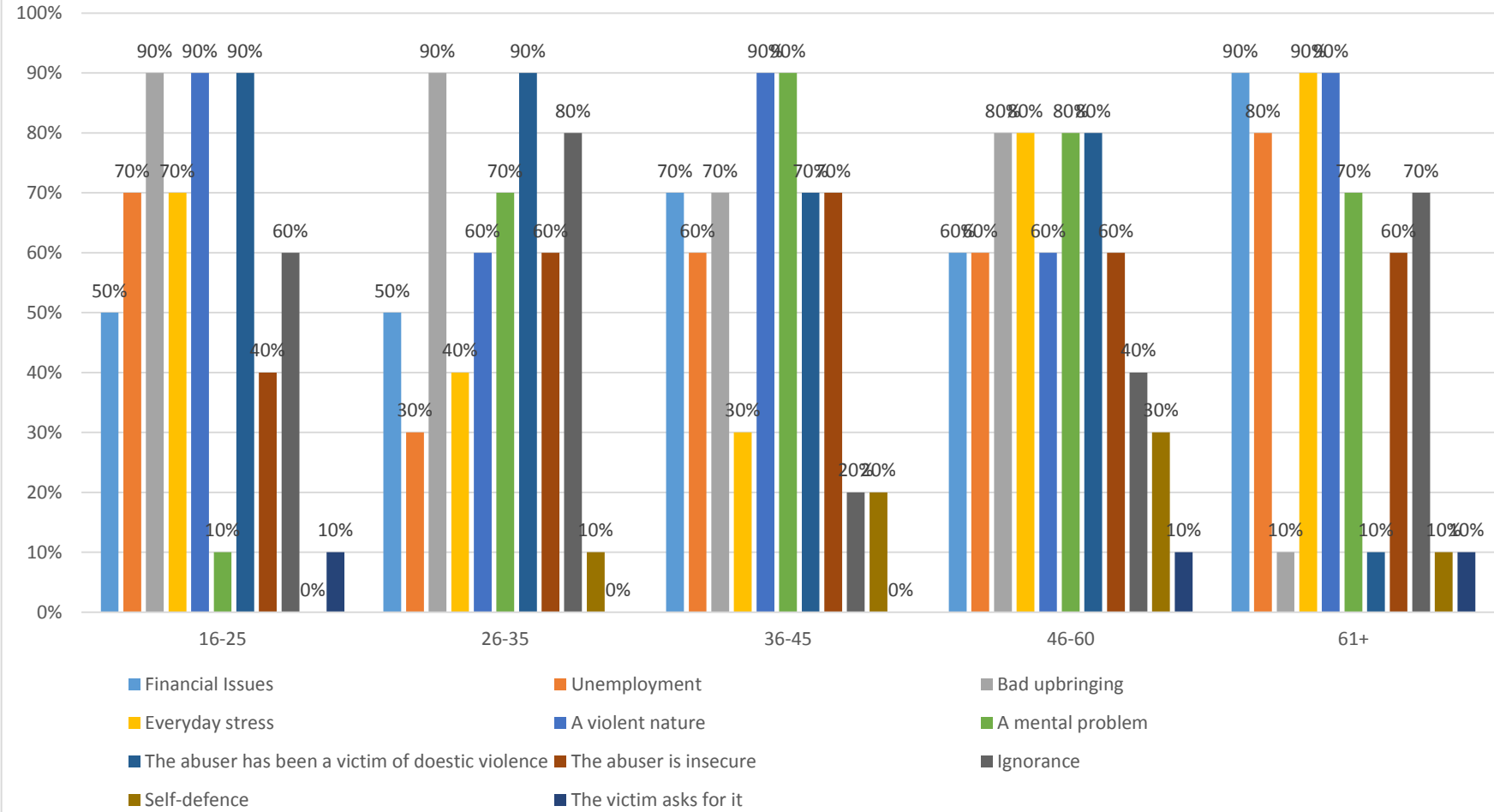




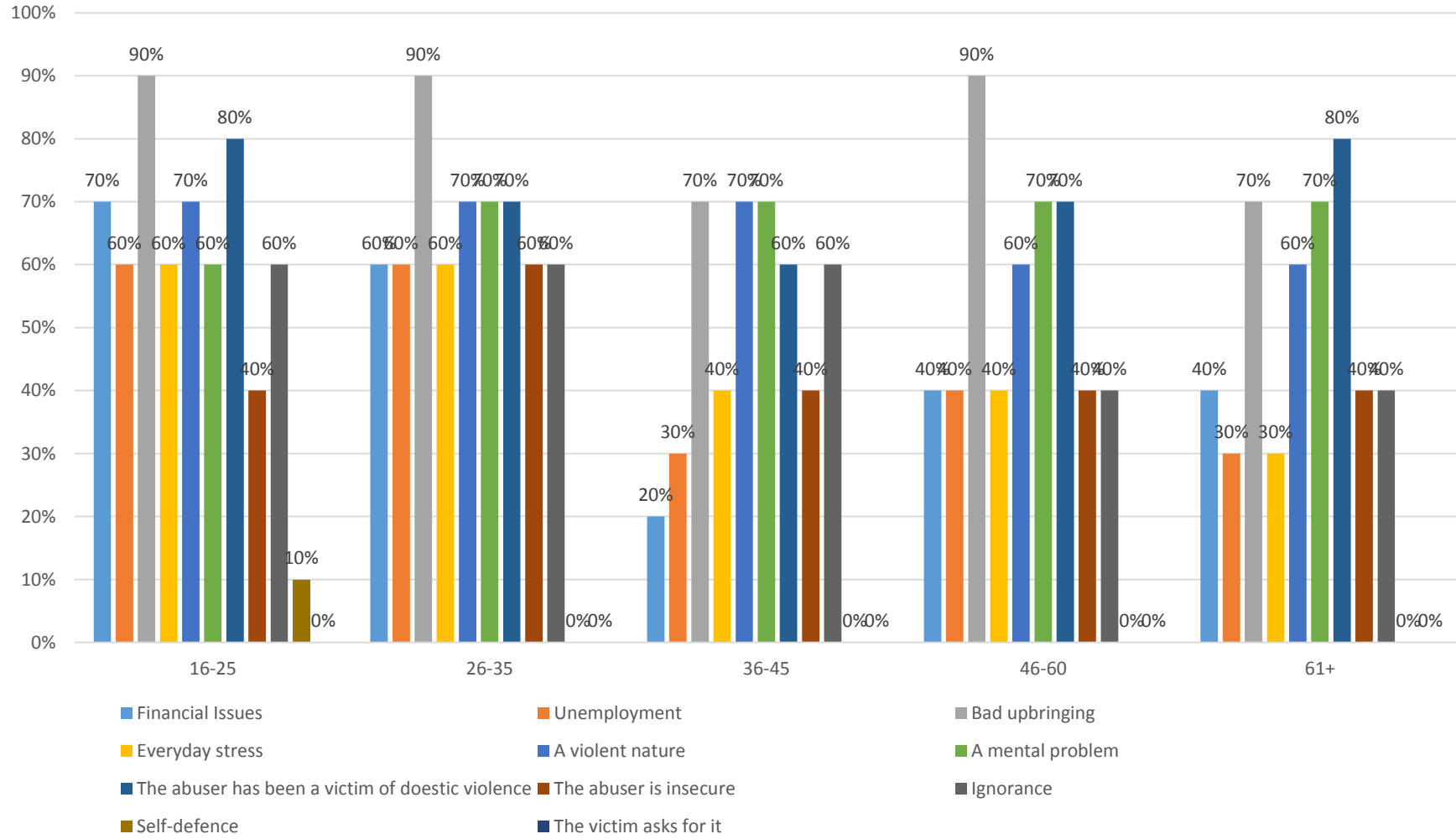




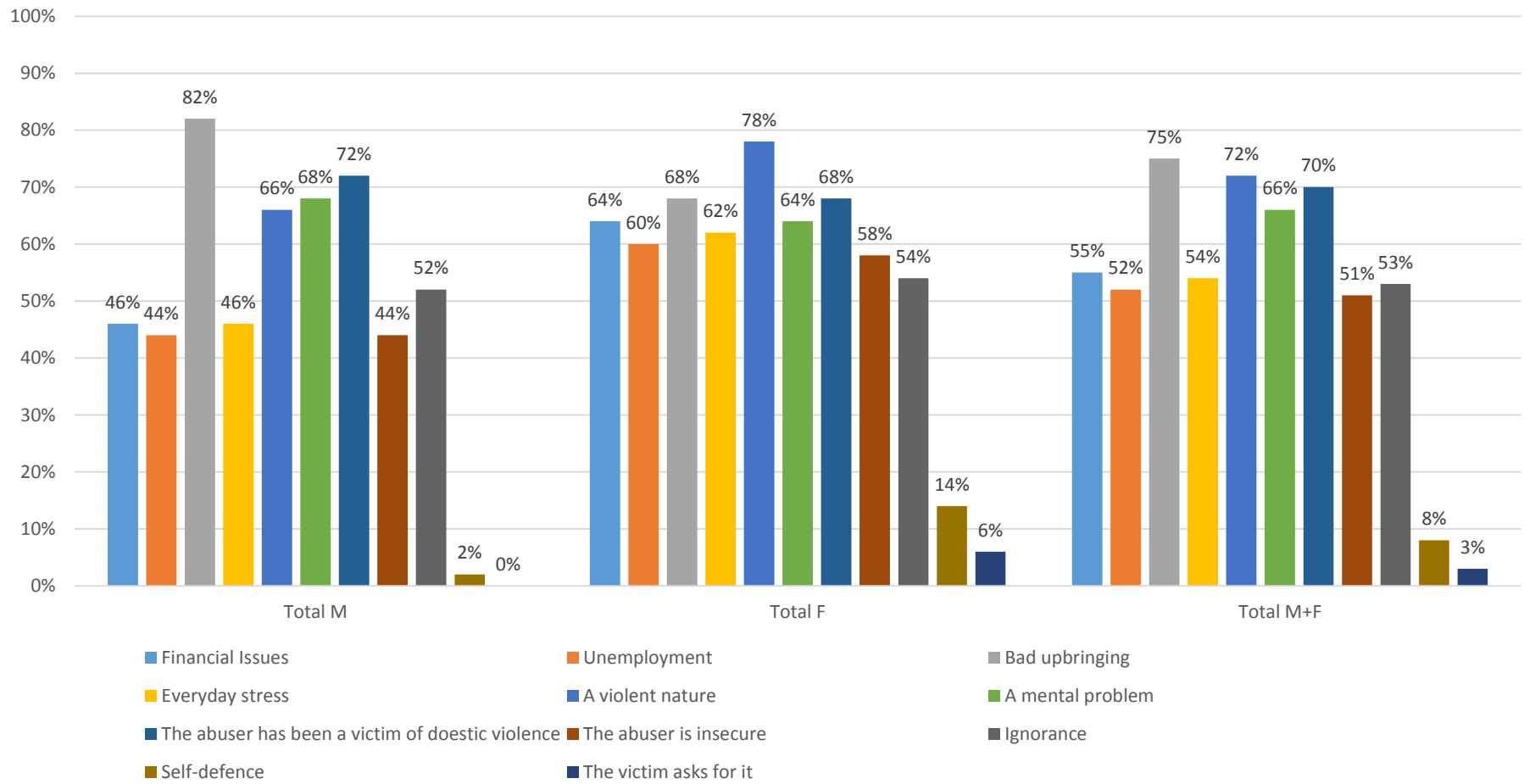
What do you think are the main reasons for domestic violence? (Females)

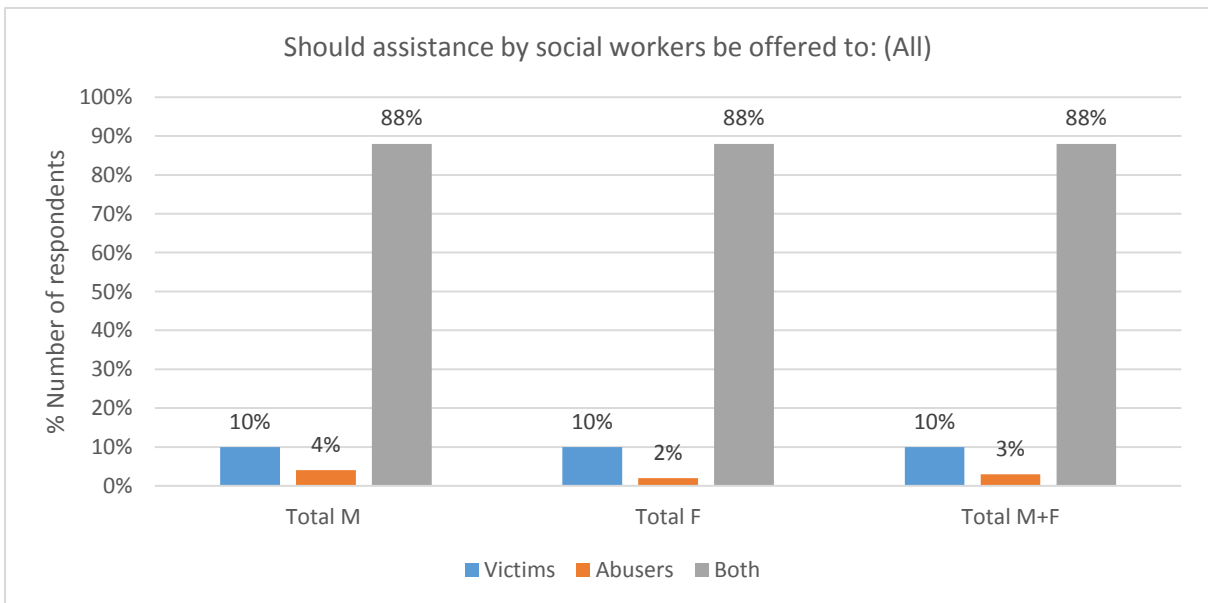
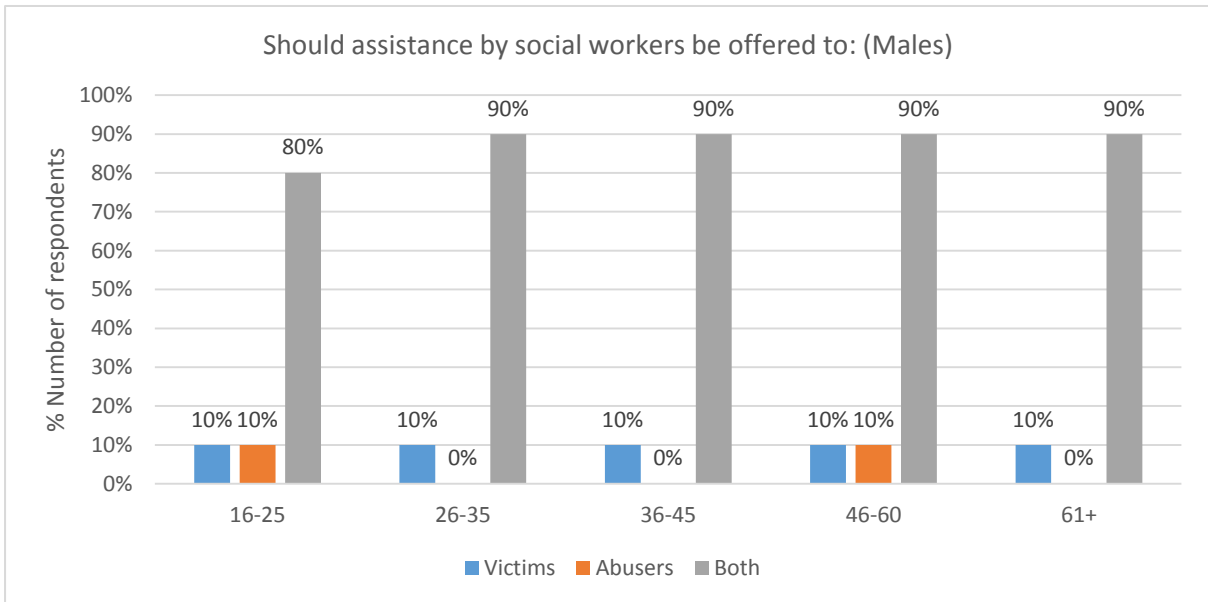
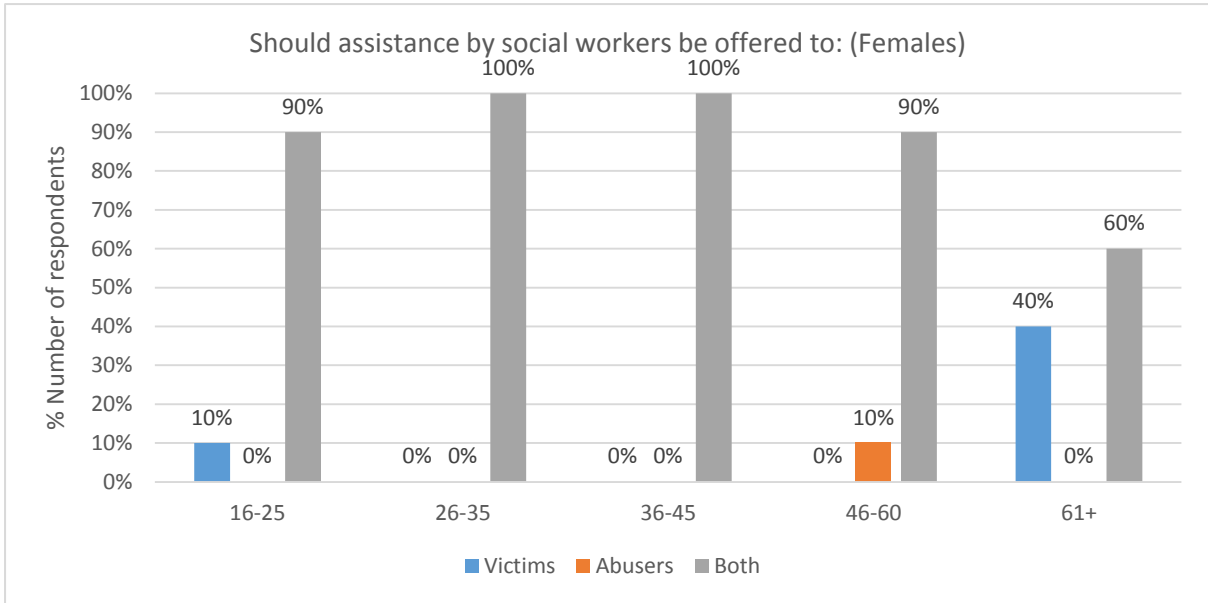


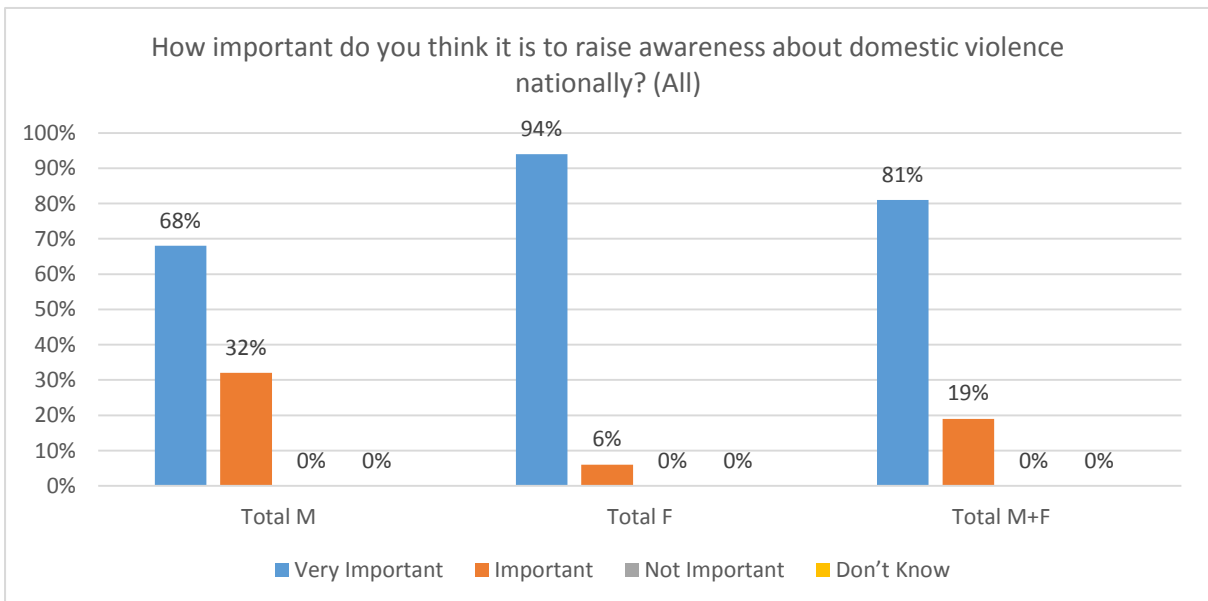
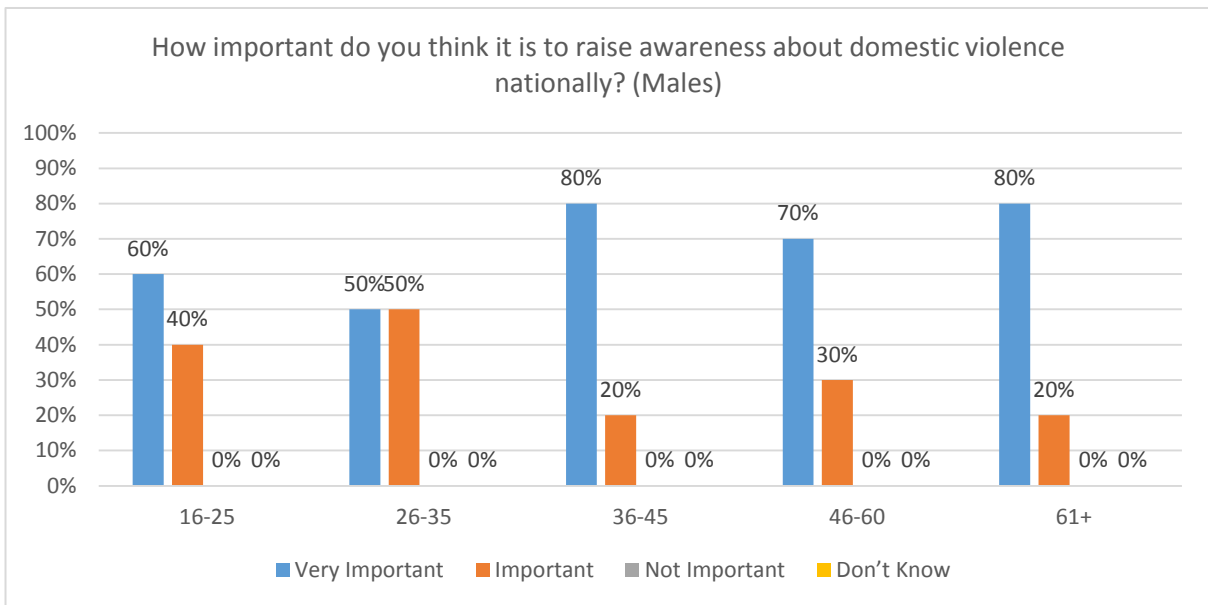
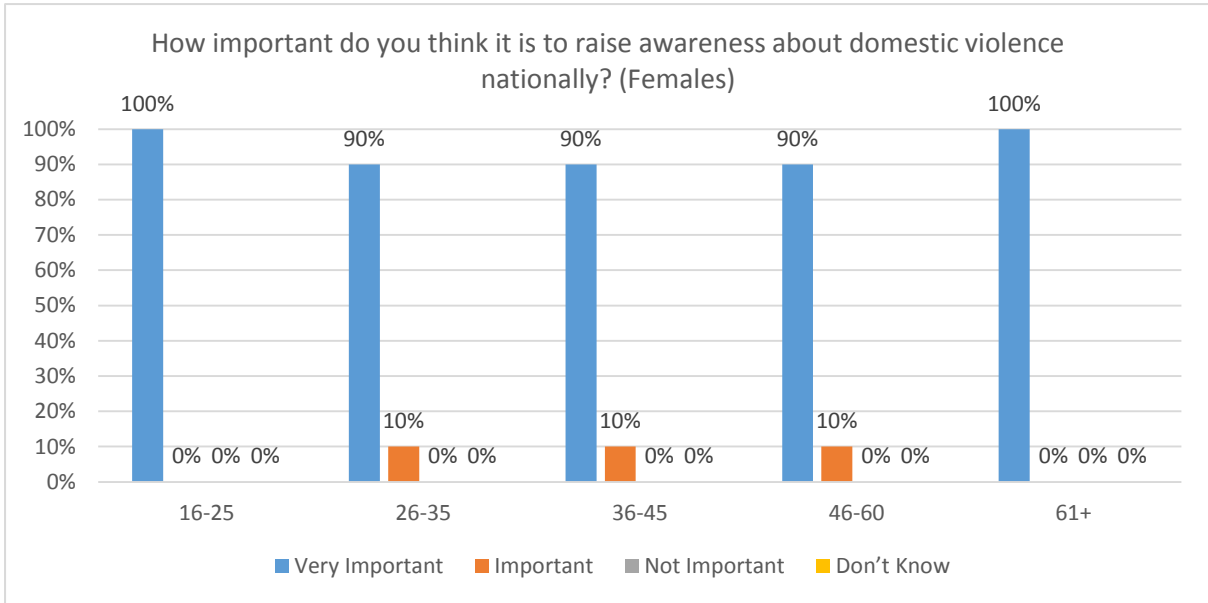
What do you think are the main reasons for domestic violence? (Males)

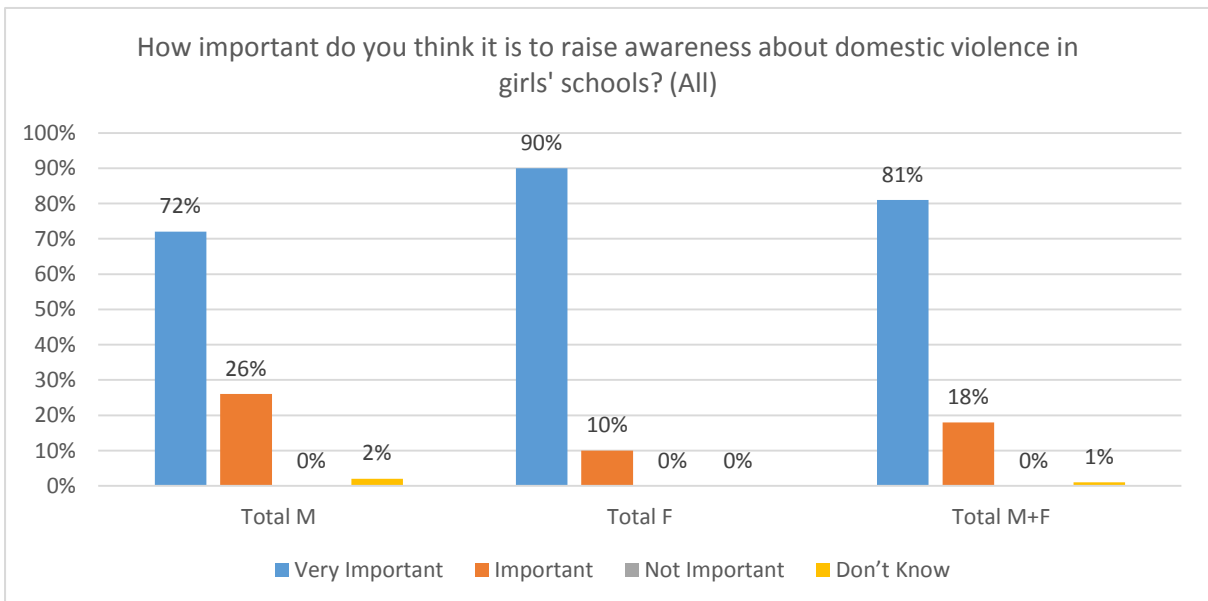
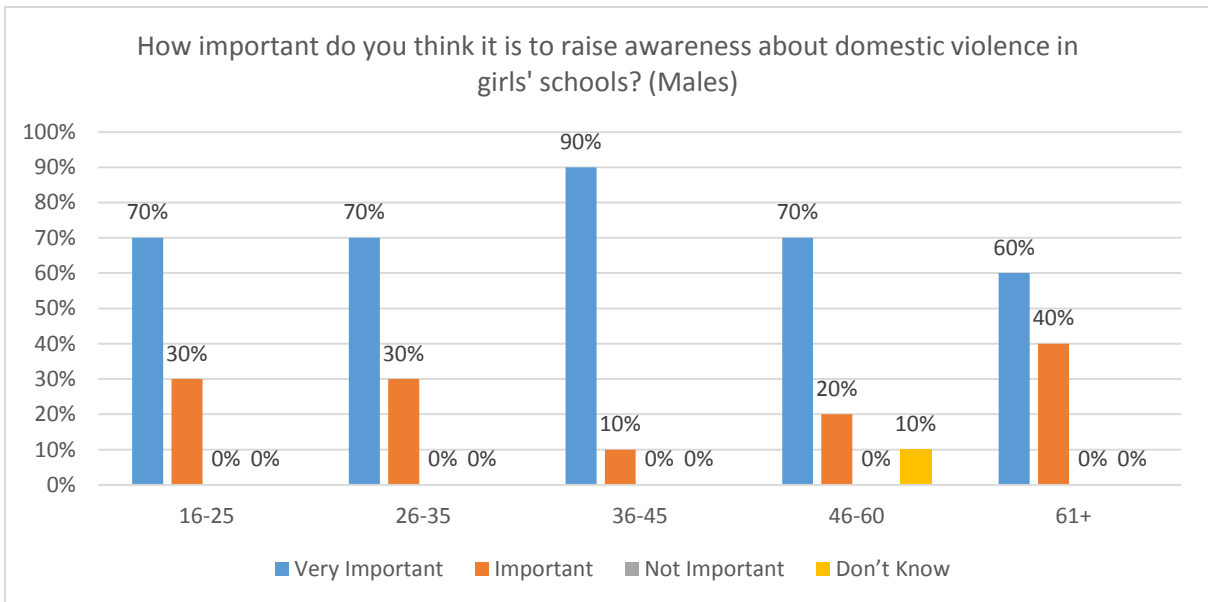
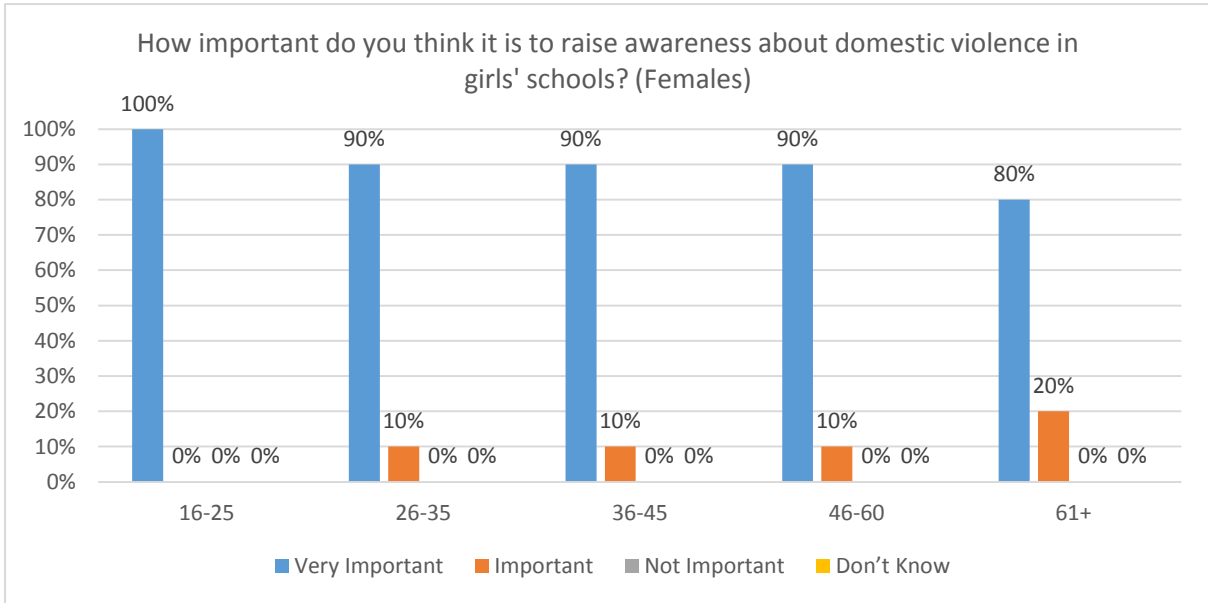


What do you think are the main reasons for domestic violence? (All)

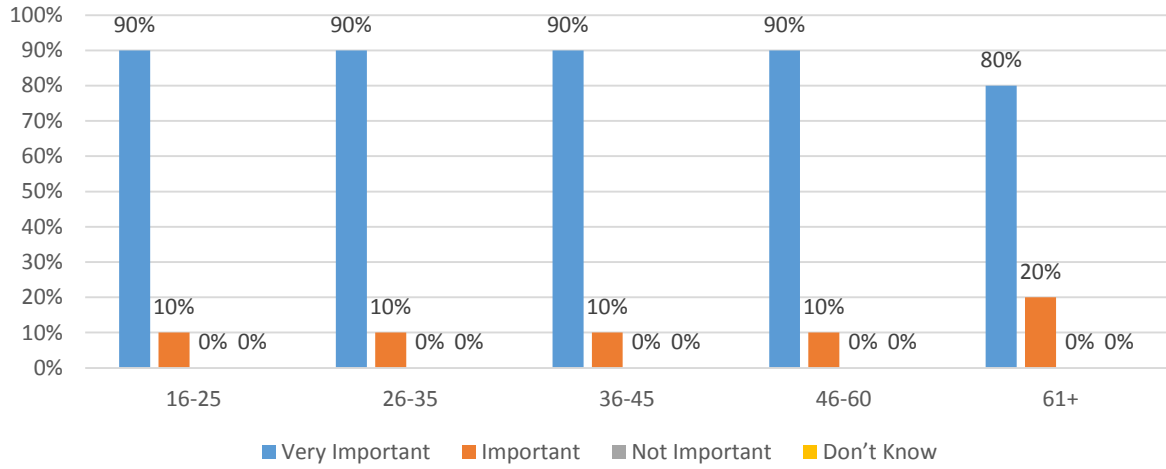




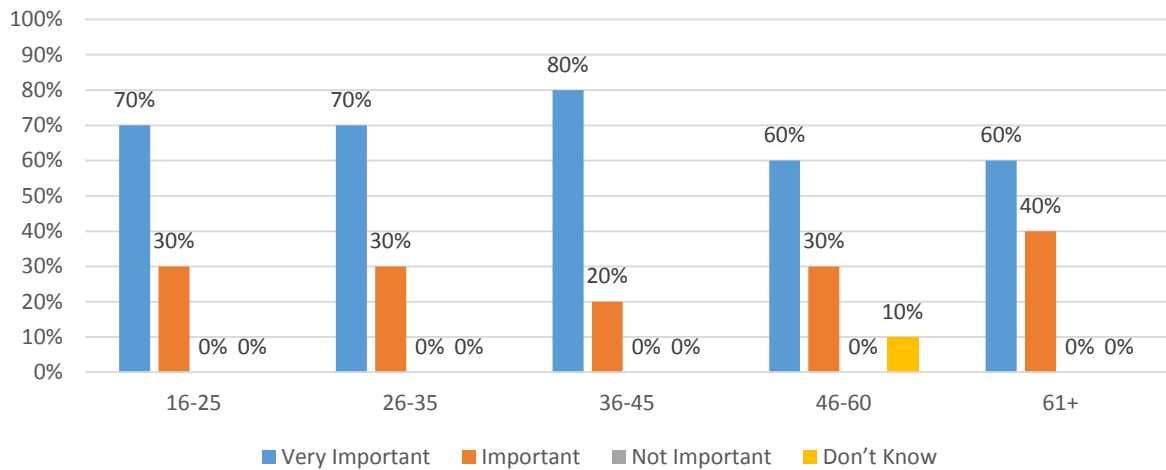




How important do you think it is to raise awareness about domestic violence in boys' schools? (females)



How important do you think it is to raise awareness about domestic violence in boys' schools? (Males)



How important do you think it is to raise awareness about domestic violence in boys' schools? (All)

