



**Domestic Violence and Gender Equality
Public Perception Study**
(Quantitative Research)
Summary Report

March 2019

Prepared by:



To better understand public awareness, attitudes and perceptions regarding **domestic violence** and **gender equality** in Nova Scotia, Corporate Research Associates (CRA) was commissioned to conduct a telephone survey of the general public. Key objectives of the research included:

Domestic Violence

- Measure and track the public's perceptions regarding the extent and understanding of domestic violence in the province; and
- Assess knowledge and behaviours regarding seeking help in domestic violence situations.

Gender Equality

- Assess perceptions regarding the importance and current state of gender equality in the province; and
- Assess attitudes towards gender equality.

The following report presents results from the survey and provides tracking for previous results, where appropriate. This report includes: methodological details, an executive summary of results, and an analysis of results. Appended to this report are copies of the final survey and detailed data tables.

Research Methodology

Method

- Probability telephone survey

Number of Interviews

- 400 interviews in Nova Scotia

Sampling

- Random sample of adults aged 18+ years

Data Collection Dates

- March 8 to March 24, 2019

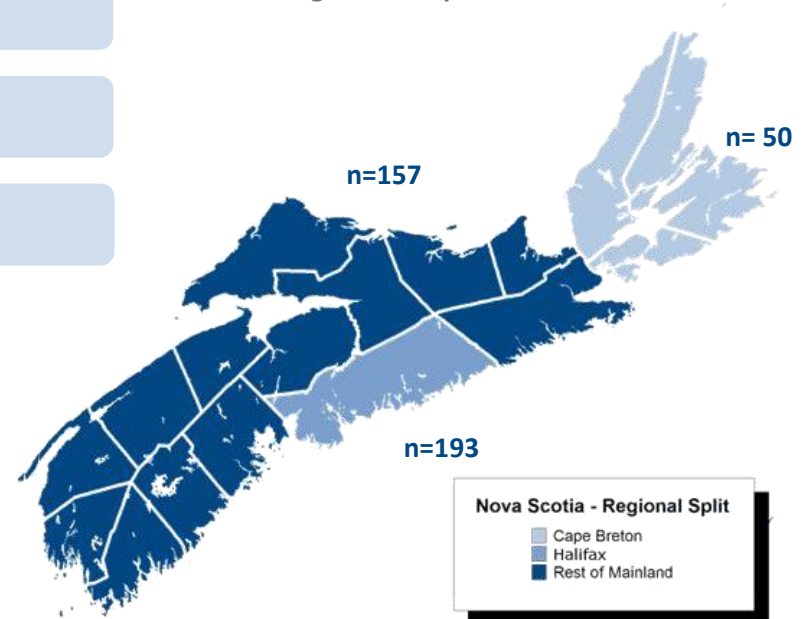
Margin of Error

- Overall results accurate to within ± 4.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20

Reporting

- Results may not equal 100 percent due to rounding

Regional Sample Distribution



The following provides an overview of key findings from the **2019 Domestic Violence and Gender Equality Public Perception Study**:

Domestic Violence

- Results suggest that recognition of domestic violence as a crime and a societal issue is fairly robust among Nova Scotians. However, there is opportunity to enhance citizens' ability to help address domestic violence, from the perspective of recognition of the extent of the issue within the province, awareness of sources of assistance, and comprehension of the complexity of violent relationships.
- Nova Scotians consider domestic violence, sexual violence, and violence against women as being moderately serious problems in the province. A notable minority – three in ten – believe domestic violence has increased in the province relative to five years ago, and others primarily believe it has stayed the same. Very few perceive it to have decreased. Nova Scotians are broadly aware that various situations constitute domestic violence. That said, there is an opportunity to enhance the robustness of perceptions by shifting agreement to the highest level, i.e., 'complete' agreement.
- There is an opportunity for a broader understanding of violent domestic situations, albeit there has been some improvement in this regard. A majority of residents still agree that domestic violence can be provoked and find it hard to understand why victims of abuse stay in relationships, albeit there has been a decrease in agreement on both measures compared with six years ago. A large majority believe most victims of domestic abuse could leave the relationship if they wanted to do so. There is a moderately held view that domestic violence can be prevented. At the same time, Nova Scotians widely hold the view that most victims of domestic violence in the province do not contact the police.
- There appears to be enhanced openness as residents perceive a greater willingness to talk about domestic violence over the past five years. That said, there is a slightly less optimism regarding whether people are more likely to intervene in domestic violence situations.
- Most agree that it is the responsibility of individuals to report suspicions of domestic violence. In this regard, most would seek help for a family member or friend, but are less inclined to do so for neighbors or co-workers, and especially strangers.
- A majority of Nova Scotians view men as the primary perpetrators of domestic violence. That said, a notably minority believes that men and women are equally likely to commit acts of domestic violence. In terms of victims, women are considered most likely to be victims, while children and youth and those with lower income are also identified as risk groups.
- While a solid majority know where to get help for domestic violence situations, one in four do not. Police are by far the most top-of-mind source of assistance. When prompted with specific options, however, residents would also utilize victim support services and help lines. This suggests that ensuring awareness of the various supports available should be a focus.

Gender Equality

- Results suggest that gender equality is important to Nova Scotians, and there is recognition that gender equality has not yet been achieved.
- With an average rating of 9.3 out of 10 in terms of the importance of achieving gender equality in the province, it is clearly evident that Nova Scotians place a great deal of value on gender equality.
- This is further illustrated by their views affirming that women and men should have equal rights in an array of areas including education, employment access, workplace, relationships, and home.
- In terms of the current state of gender equality in the province, ratings are moderate on average, indicating that Nova Scotians do not view gender equality as having been fully achieved. Indeed, residents believe there are not enough women in leadership roles (despite widespread agreement that men and women are equally likely to be good leaders), and that discrimination against women is still a problem in the workplace.

Domestic Violence

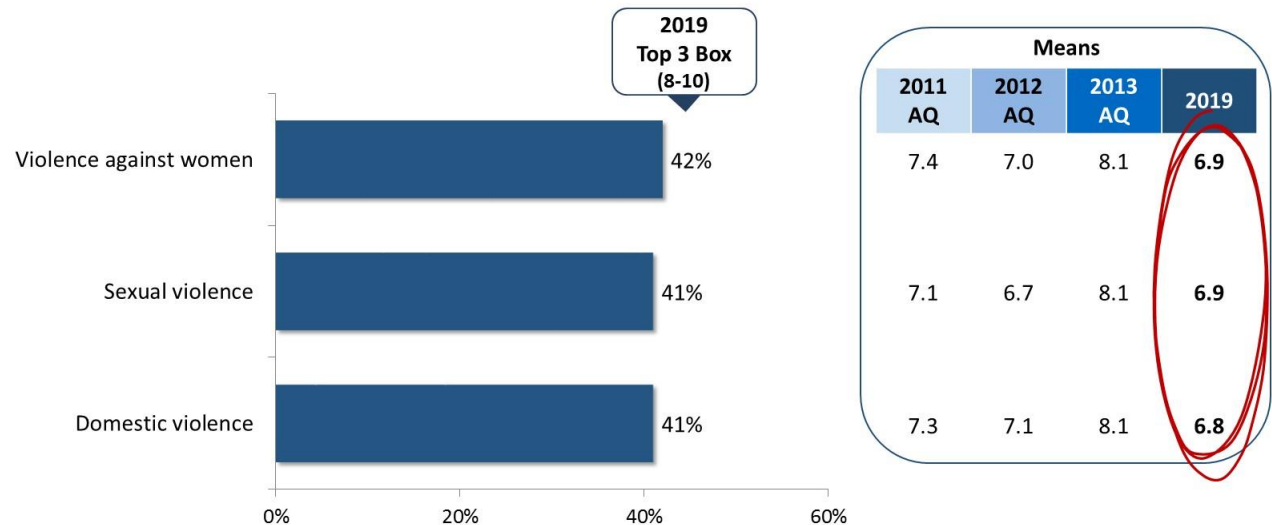
Seriousness of Domestic Violence in NS

7

Nova Scotians consider domestic violence, sexual violence, and violence against women as being moderately serious problems in the province.

- The average ratings are very similar for all three issues (6.8-6.9 out of 10 where '1' is not at all a problem, and '10' is a very serious problem). From another perspective, four in ten residents assign a top rating of 8 to 10 for each of these issues.
- Women are notably more likely than men to assign a higher level of seriousness to these issues.
- Regionally, Cape Breton residents are more likely than residents elsewhere to view such violence as serious problems.
- Compared with previous results, average scores are lower than the peak evident in 2013, but on par with 2011 and 2012 results. (Tables 1a-c)

Seriousness of Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence and Violence Against Women Problems in Nova Scotia
Top 3 Box (8-10) & Mean Ratings on 10-pt Scale: 1=Not a serious problem, 10=A very serious problem



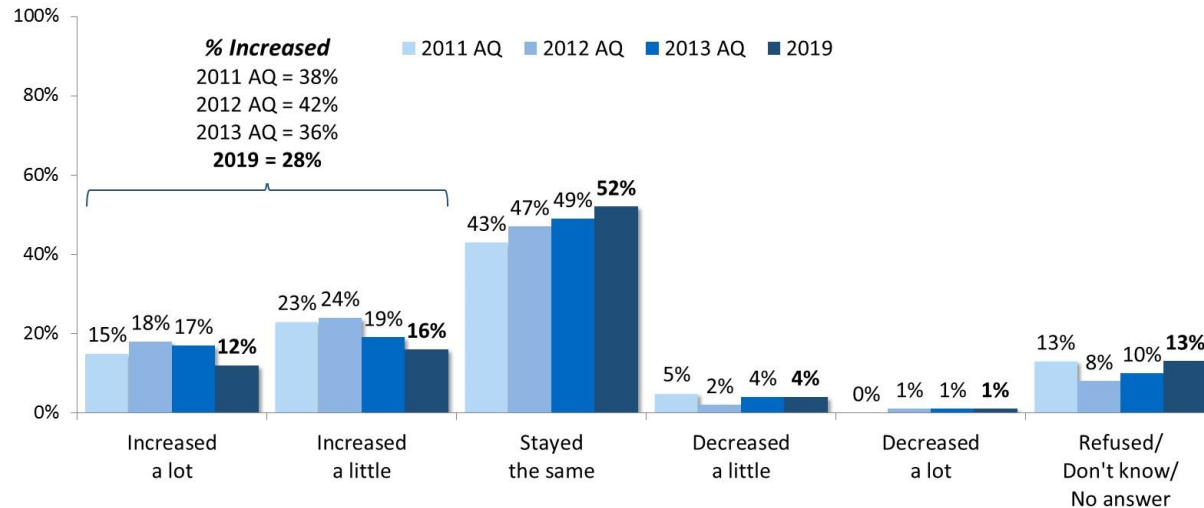
Q.1a-c: (AQ 13-3 – J1-Revised) How serious a problem do you think [READ AND ROTATE OPTIONS] is in Nova Scotia? Please use a scale from '1' to '10,' where '1' means 'not at all a serious problem,' and '10' means 'a very serious problem.' (2011 AQ: n=400; 2012 AQ: n=407; 2013 AQ: n=401; 2019: n=400)
Note: Responses of 'Don't know/No answer' are excluded from Mean score calculations.

Change in Amount of Domestic Violence

Residents are more likely to perceive an increase than a decrease in the amount of domestic violence in the last five years.

- Three in ten residents believe the amount of domestic violence in Nova Scotia has **increased** in the last five years. This is a somewhat lower proportion than was evident earlier in the decade. The largest segment – half – believe the amount of domestic violence has **stayed the same**, with this proportion increasing over time. Very few see it as **decreasing**.
- Residents in Cape Breton are most likely and those in Halifax least likely to believe there has been an increase in domestic violence in the province.
- Older residents are more likely to believe domestic violence has increased. (Table 7)

Change in Amount of Domestic Violence in Nova Scotia in the Last Five Years



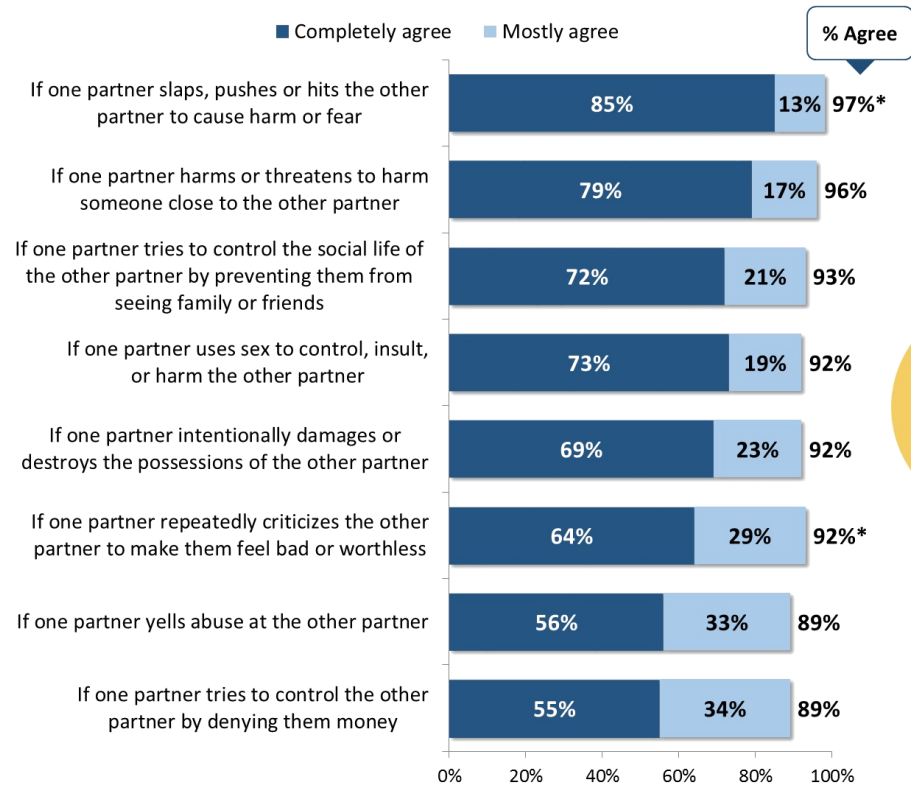
Q.7: (13-3) And still thinking about the last five years, would you say the amount of domestic violence in Nova Scotia has increased, decreased or stayed the same?
 [IF INCREASED OR DECREASED]: Would you say domestic violence has [increased/decreased] a lot or [increased/decreased] a little?
 (2011 AQ: n=400; 2012 AQ: n=407; 2013 AQ: n=401; 2019: n=384)

Perceptions of Certain Situations as Domestic Violence

Agreement is widespread that the situations presented constitute domestic violence.

- At least nine in ten view each of the situations as examples of domestic violence. In fact, three in four residents agree **all eight items** are examples of domestic violence.
- Women are more likely than men to view all eight items as examples of domestic violence.
- The likelihood of viewing all eight items as examples of domestic violence is also higher among those with higher annual household incomes and education.
- Examination of results by age reveals an interesting dichotomy. On the one hand, those aged 35 or older are more likely to agree, in general, with a higher number of statements. However, residents under 55 years of age are more likely to 'completely' agree with a higher average number of statements. (Tables 3a-h)

Agreement That Situations Are Examples of Domestic Violence



77%
agreed all 8
items were
examples of
domestic
violence

Q.3a-h: (13-3-J3-Revised) Do you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree that the following situations are examples of domestic violence? (2019: n=391-395) *Due to rounding.

Perceptions of Certain Situations as Domestic Violence

Widespread agreement regarding situations of domestic violence is consistent with historical results.

- One aspect has increased agreement relative to 2011 – *if one partner tries to control the other partner by denying them money.* (Tables 3a-h)

Agreement That Situations Are Examples of Domestic Violence	% Completely/Mostly Agree			
	2011 AQ	2012 AQ	2013 AQ	2019
If one partner slaps, pushes or hits the other partner to cause harm or fear	96%	97%	96%	97%
If one partner harms or threatens to harm someone close to the other partner	94%	96%	95%	96%
If one partner tries to control the social life of the other partner by preventing them from seeing family or friends	90%	93%	93%	93%
If one partner uses sex to control, insult, or harm the other partner	90%	95%	93%	92%
If one partner intentionally damages or destroys the possessions of the other partner	92%	94%	93%	92%
If one partner repeatedly criticizes the other partner to make them feel bad or worthless	92%	93%	92%	92%
If one partner yells abuse at the other partner	86%	86%	90%	89%
If one partner tries to control the other partner by denying them money	82%	86%	86%	89%

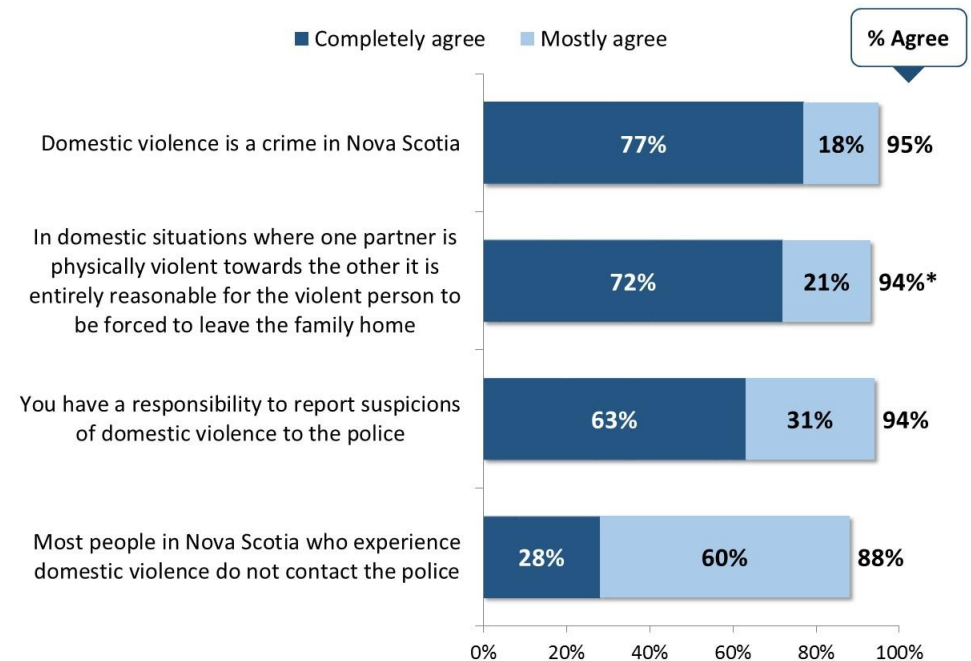
Q.3a-h: (13-3-J3-Revised) Do you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree that the following situations are examples of domestic violence? (2011 AQ: n=400; 2012 AQ: n=407; 2013 AQ: n=401; 2019: n=391-395)

Domestic Violence as a Crime

Nova Scotians recognize both that domestic violence is a crime and that they have a responsibility to report domestic violence.

- There is almost universal recognition that **domestic violence is a crime in Nova Scotia**, that **individuals have a responsibility to report suspicions of domestic violence to the police**, and in **domestic situations where one partner is physically violent towards the other it is entirely reasonable for the violent person to be forced to leave the family home**. There is also a general consensus that **most victims of domestic violence in the province do not contact police**.
- Results are generally consistent across the population although women are more likely than men to 'completely' agree that most people in the province who experience domestic violence do not contact the police. (Tables 4a, 4b, 4f, 4g)

Agreement with Statements Regarding Domestic Violence



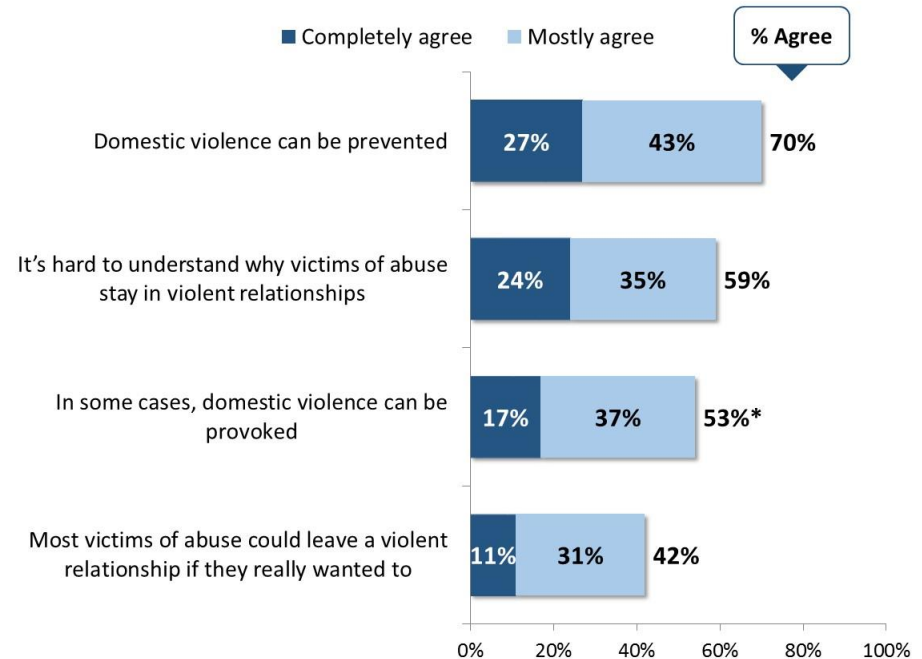
Q.4a,b,f,g: (13-3-J4-Revised) Please indicate whether you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with the following statements. (2019: n=385-388) *Due to rounding.

Perceptions of Domestic Violence

Nova Scotians, for the most part, view domestic violence as preventable.

- Seven in ten Nova Scotians believe **domestic violence can be prevented**, while six in ten concur that it is **hard to understand why victims of abuse of domestic violence stay in relationships**.
- A majority of Nova Scotians agree that in some cases **domestic violence can be provoked**, while four in ten believe **most victims of domestic violence could leave the relationship if they wanted to do so**.
- Men are more likely than women to agree on all four aspects.
- Age-wise, younger residents are more inclined to believe domestic violence can be prevented, while those 55 yrs. or older find it harder to understand why victims of abuse stay in violent relationships. As well those aged 35 to 54 are more inclined to disagree domestic violence can be provoked.
- Those with lower education levels find it harder to understand why victims of abuse stay in violent relationships, while those with higher household income are more inclined to disagree domestic violence can be provoked. (Tables 4c, 4d, 4e, 4h)

Agreement with Statements Regarding Domestic Violence



Q.4c,d,e,h: (13-3-J4-Revised) Please indicate whether you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with the following statements. (2019: n=385-388) *Due to rounding.

Perceptions of Domestic Violence

Compared with six years ago, residents are somewhat more understanding of the complexities of domestic violence situations.

- Compared with six years ago, fewer residents find it hard to understand why victims of abuse stay in violent relationships, and fewer agree that most victims of abuse could leave a violent relationship if they really wanted to.

Agreement with Statements Regarding Domestic Violence	% Completely/Mostly Agree			
	2011 AQ	2012 AQ	2013 AQ	2019
Domestic violence is a crime in Nova Scotia	95%	95%	94%	95%
In domestic situations where one partner is physically violent towards the other it is entirely reasonable for the violent person to be forced to leave the family home	92%	90%	91%	94%
You have a responsibility to report suspicions of domestic violence to the police	n/a	n/a	n/a	94%
Most people in Nova Scotia who experience domestic violence do not contact the police	90%	90%	92%	88%
Domestic violence can be prevented	n/a	n/a	n/a	70%
It's hard to understand why victims of abuse stay in violent relationships	68%	65%	73%	59%
In some cases, domestic violence can be provoked	55%	56%	54%	53%
Most victims of abuse could leave a violent relationship if they really wanted to	55%	51%	49%	42%

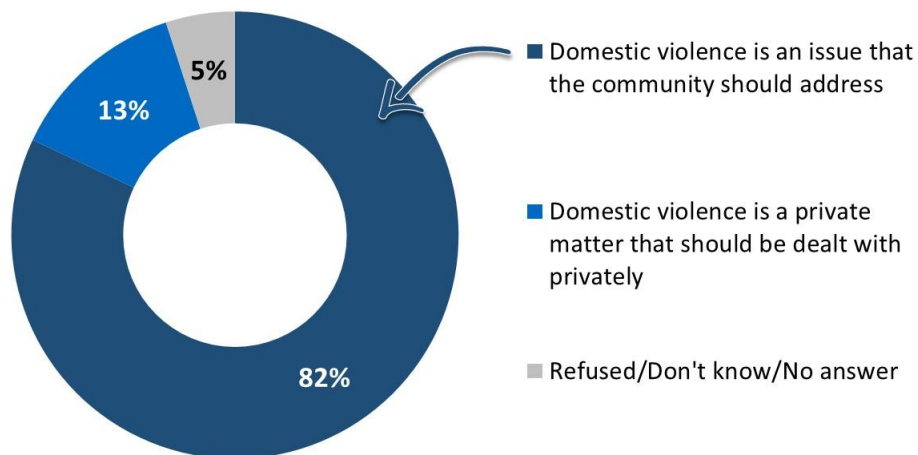
Q.4a-h: (13-3-J4-Revised) Please indicate whether you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with the following statements. (2011 AQ: n=400; 2012 AQ: n=407; 2013 AQ: n=401; 2019: n=385-388)

Private Versus Public Matter

Nova Scotians believe that domestic violence is an issue that the community should address.

- Eight in ten residents believe that domestic violence is a **community issue**, while 13% believe it is **private matter** that should be dealt with privately.
- Men, those under 55 years of age, and those with annual household incomes less than \$100,000 are more likely to view it as private issue. (Table 8)

Statement That Better Reflects Opinion of Domestic Violence



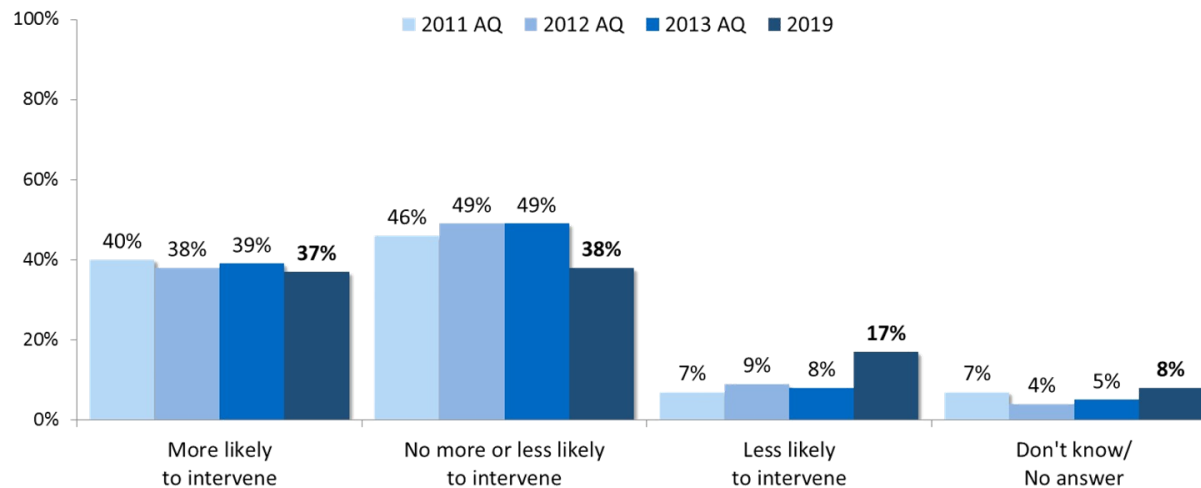
Q.8: Which of these two statements better reflects your opinion: (2019: n=383)

Likelihood of Intervening

Residents are generally divided between viewing Nova Scotians as more likely and similarly likely to intervene in domestic violence situations as compared with five years ago.

- Four in ten residents believe people in the province are **more likely** to intervene in domestic violence situations, while the same proportion perceive there to be the **same likelihood** as compared with five years ago.
- Of note, compared with results from six years ago, residents express decreased optimism – a higher proportion currently view people as less likely to intervene.
- Residents of Halifax are most likely and those in the rest of mainland Nova Scotia are least likely to perceive residents as more willing to intervene. (Table 5)

Likelihood of Intervening if Witness, Know of, or Suspect a Domestic Violence Situation Compared with Five Years Ago



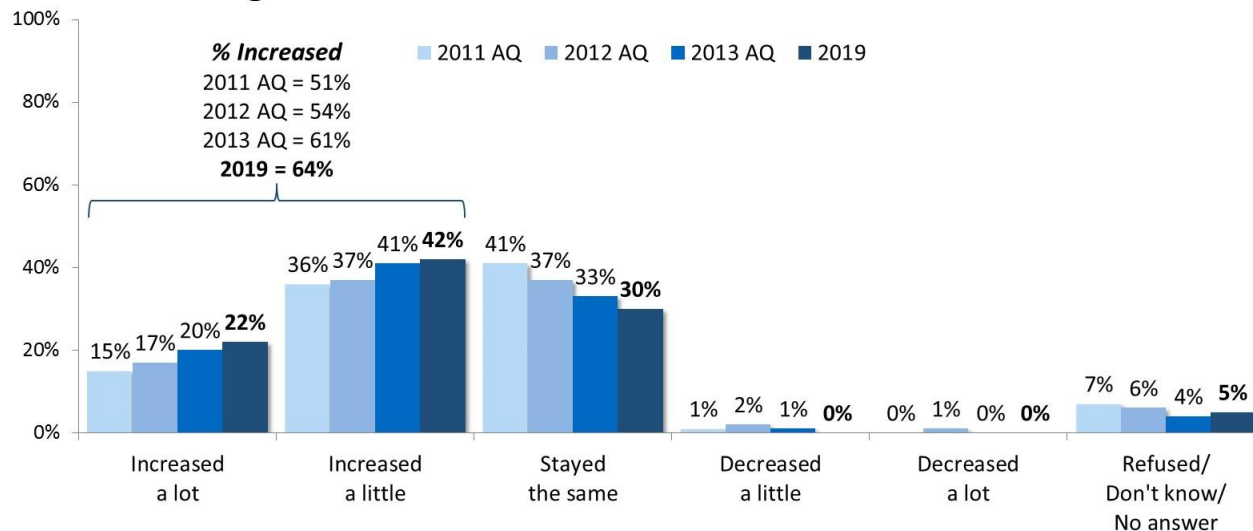
Q.5: (13-3-J5) Compared with five years ago, do you think people in Nova Scotia who witness, know of, or suspect a domestic violence situation are more likely to intervene, no more or less likely to intervene, or less likely to intervene? (2011 AQ: n=400; 2012 AQ: n=407; 2013 AQ: n=401; 2019: n=384)

Change in Willingness to Talk About Domestic Violence

Residents perceive there to be a greater willingness to talk about domestic violence over the past five years.

- Two in three residents believe the number of people in the province willing to talk about domestic violence has **increased** over the past five years. Conversely, virtually no one perceives there to be a **decrease**. This reflects an upward pattern since 2011.
- Perceptions are generally consistent across the population. (Table 6)

Change in Number of People in Nova Scotia Willing to Talk About Being Victims of Domestic Violence in the Last Five Years



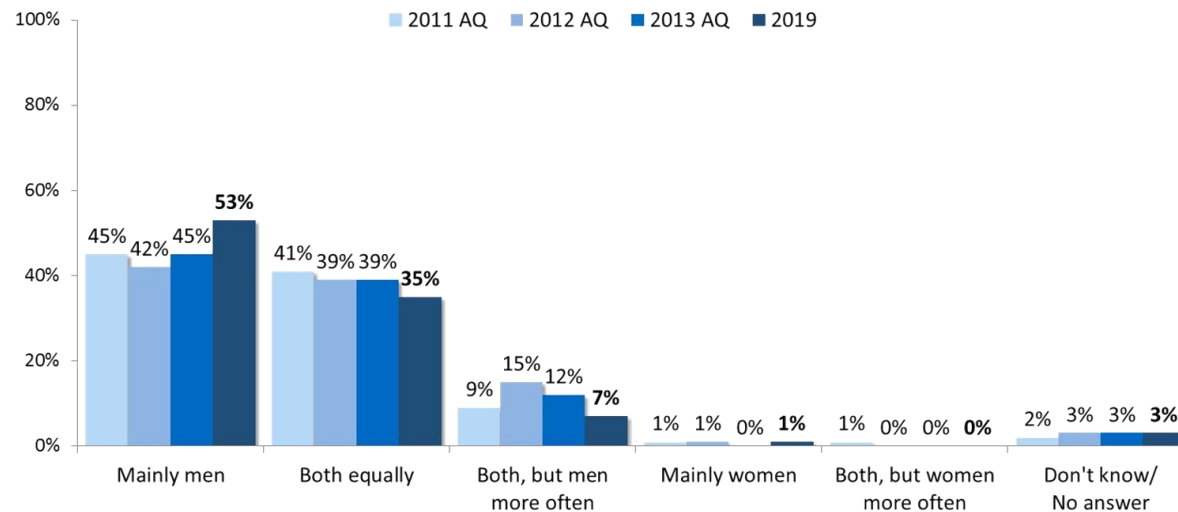
Q.6: (13-3-J6) Thinking about the last five years, would you say the number of people in Nova Scotia willing to talk about being victims of domestic violence has increased, decreased or stayed the same? [IF INCREASED OR DECREASED]: Would you say the number has [increased/decreased] a lot or [increased/decreased] a little?
 (2011 AQ: n=400; 2012 AQ: n=407; 2013 AQ: n=401; 2019: n=384)

Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

While a slight majority perceive it to be mainly men as committing acts of domestic violence in the province, a large minority believe it is both men and women equally.

- Just over half of Nova Scotians believe it is **mainly men** who commit acts of domestic violence, while a third believe it is **both men and women equally**. This is the pattern evident in previous results as well.
- Younger residents under 35 years of age are more likely to cite it is both men and women equally, while those older are more likely to believe it is mainly men.
- Those with annual household incomes of less than \$50,000 are more likely to perceive it to be both men and women equally, while those with higher household incomes are more likely to believe it is mainly men. (Table 2)

Commit Acts of Domestic Violence in Nova Scotia



Q.2: (13-3-J2-Revised) Do you think it's mainly men, mainly women, or both men and women equally, who commit acts of domestic violence in Nova Scotia?
(2011 AQ: n=400; 2012 AQ: n=407; 2013 AQ: n=401; 2019: n=399)

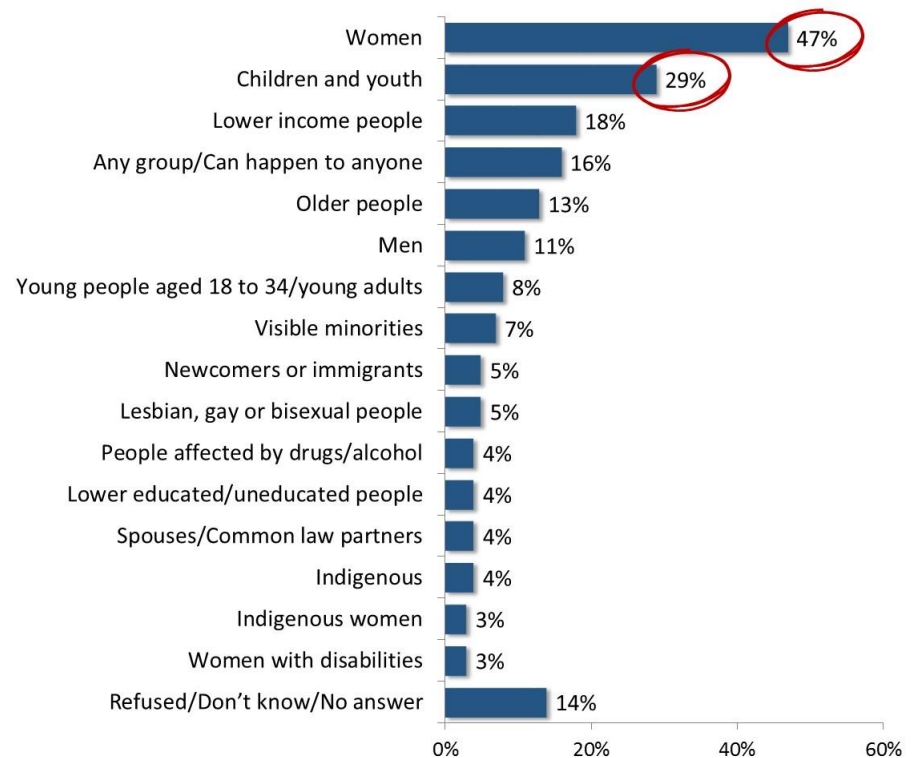
Groups Most Likely to Be Victims of Domestic Violence

Women are considered most likely to be victims of domestic violence.

- In terms of which groups are most likely to be victims of domestic violence, **women** are identified most often, followed by **children and youth**, those with **lower income**, and **older** people, while **it can happen to anyone** also ranks in the top mentions.
- Mention of visible minorities is elevated in Cape Breton (21%) versus the province overall (7%). (Table 9)

Groups Most Likely to be Victims of Domestic Violence

Unaided Key Mentions



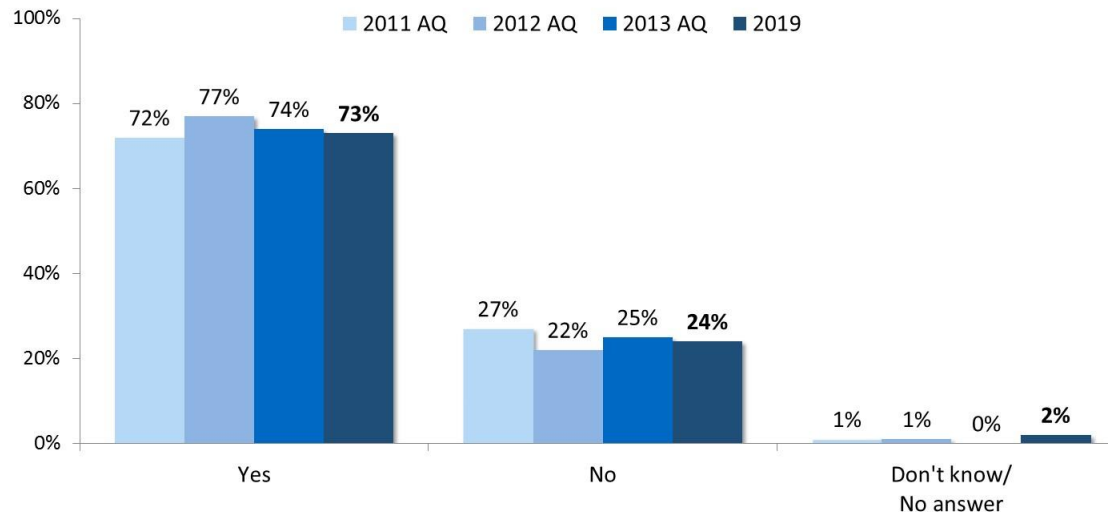
Q.9: a) Which groups do you think are most likely to be victims of domestic violence? b) PROBE: Any others likely to be victims of domestic violence? (2019: n=381)

Knowledge of Where to Get Help

One in four residents do not know where to get help for domestic violence.

- While it is positive to note that most – three in four – know where to get help for themselves or someone else for a domestic violence issue, it is of concern that one-quarter of residents do not.
- Results are consistent across the population. (Table 10)

Know Where to Go to Get Outside Help, Advice, Resources or Support About a Domestic Violence Issue



Q.10: (13-3-J8-Revised) Would you know where to go if you needed to get outside help, advice, resources or support for yourself or someone else about a domestic violence issue? (2011 AQ n=400; 2012 AQ n=407; 2013 AQ n=401; 2019 n=380)

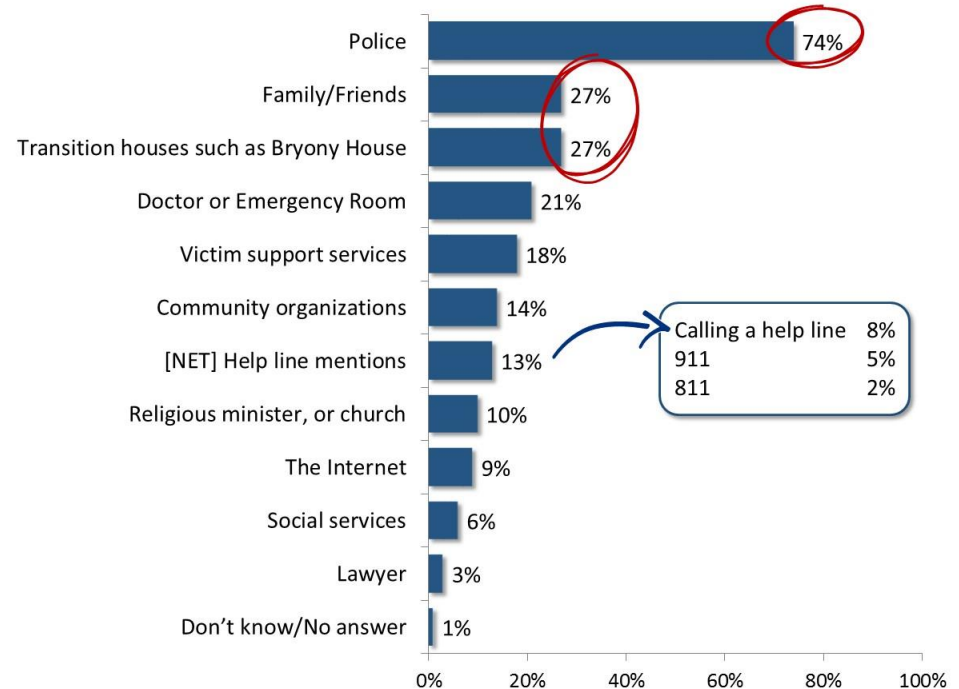
Sources of Assistance

Police is the primary source of assistance identified for a domestic violence issue.

- Three-quarters of residents (who confirm they know where to get help for domestic violence) would seek help from **police**. It is the top source of support across all demographics.
- Other sources of support include **family/friends** and **transition houses such as the Bryony House**, each identified by one in four.
- **Doctors/Emergency rooms** and **victim support services** are each identified by one in five. (Table 11)

Source Most Likely to Seek Help or Support From For a Domestic Violence Issue

Unaided Key Mentions
Among Those Who Know Where to Go for Help, Advice, Resources or Support



Q.11: [IF 'YES' IN Q.10] a) Where would you be **most** likely to seek help or support for yourself or someone else about a domestic violence issue? b) PROBE: Anywhere else? (2019: n=277)

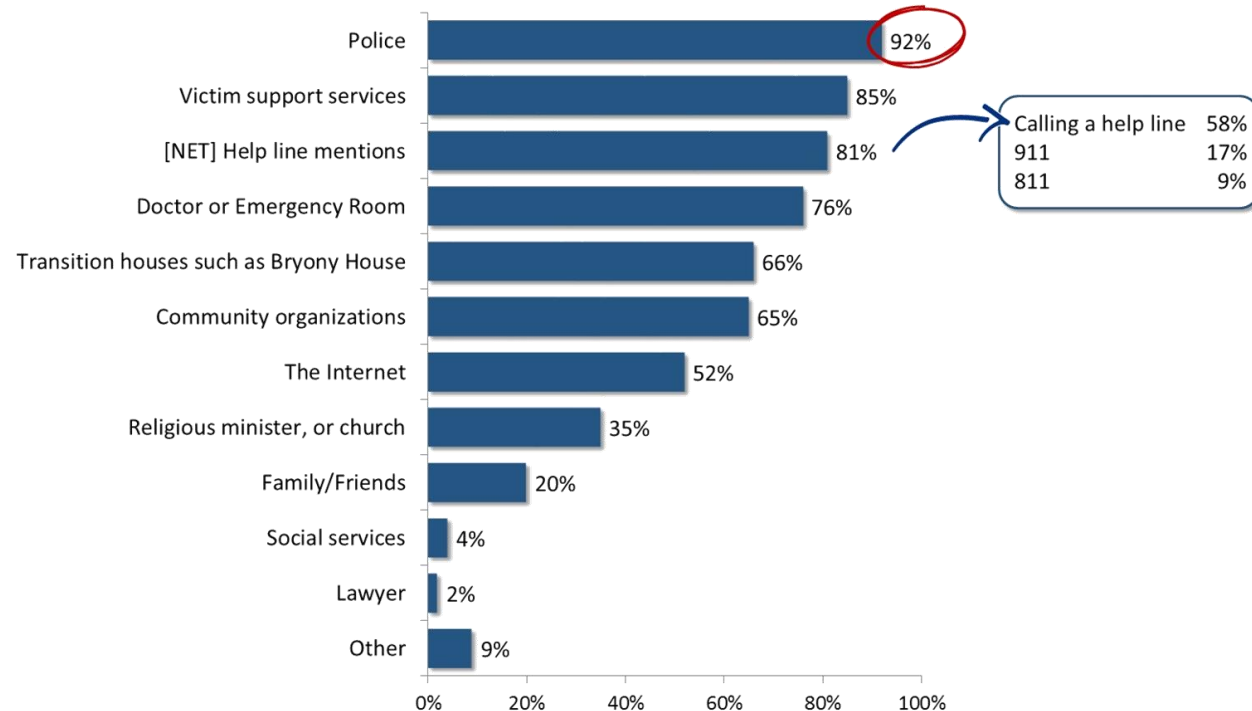
Sources of Assistance

In addition to police, residents would use victim support services and help lines for help, although these resources are not necessarily top-of-mind.

- In addition to being asked in an open-ended manner, residents were queried as to the likelihood of them seeking help from specific sources if they had not identified that source unaided. The graphic on this page presents a summary of those who identified a source unaided or indicated they would definitely or probably seek help from that source when asked.
- **Police, victim support services and help lines** are the sources most likely to be used, with most residents indicating they are likely to turn to these sources.
- **Doctors/Emergency rooms, transition houses, and community organizations** would also be used by a moderate majority.
- About half would turn to the **Internet**, whereas a **religious minister/church** or **family and friends** would be less widely used. (Tables 11/12a-h)

Sources Likely to Use for Help or Support for a Domestic Violence Issue

% Who Identified a Source Unaided or Indicated They Would Definitely or Probably Seek Help from That Source When Asked



Q.11 / Q.12 TOTAL MENTIONS: (n=379)

Q.11: [IF 'YES' IN Q.10] a) Where would you be **most** likely to seek help or support for yourself or someone else about a domestic violence issue?

b) PROBE: Anywhere else?

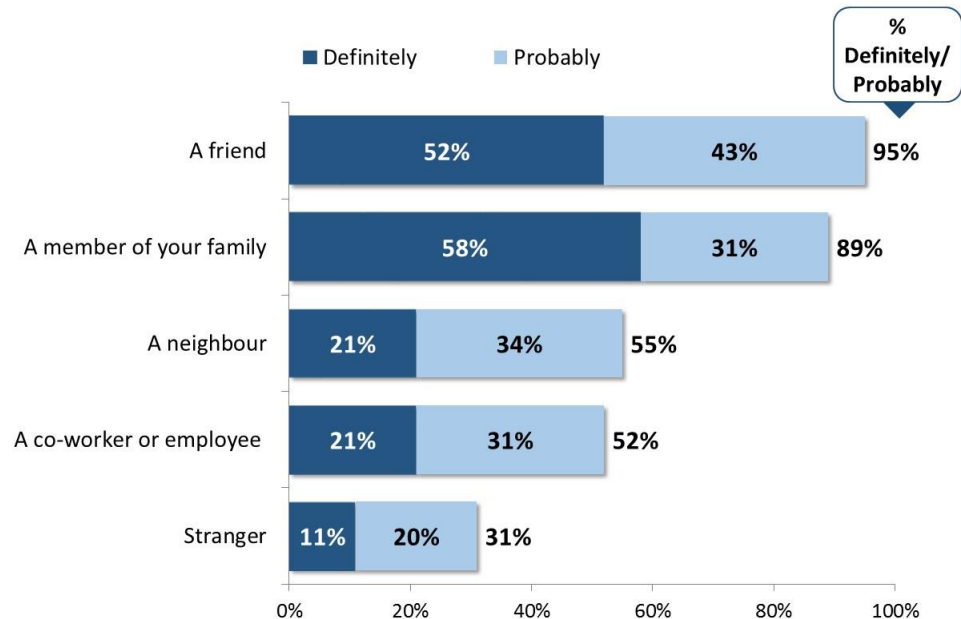
Q.12a-h: [NOT IF CORRESPONDING INDIVIDUAL ITEMS SELECTED IN Q.11] If you were to seek help or support for yourself or someone else about a domestic violence issue, would you definitely, probably, probably not, or definitely not use the following?

Likelihood of Seeking Help

Nova Scotians are more likely to seek help for family and friends in domestic violence situations rather than neighbors, co-workers, and, especially, strangers.

- Most residents would *definitely* or *probably* seek help if they knew or suspected a **family member** or a **friend** was experiencing domestic violence. That said, a small majority affirm they would *definitely* do so.
- A slight majority would definitely or probably help a **neighbor** or **co-worker**, while three in ten would definitely or probably help a **stranger**. Again, the proportion indicating they would definitely do so is more modest.
- Younger residents aged 18 to 34 are more likely to report they definitely would seek help for family or friends.
- Women are more likely than men to seek help for a friend.
- Regionally, those in Halifax are most likely and those in Cape Breton least likely to seek help for a friend. (Tables 14a-e)

Likelihood of Seeking Help or Support if Knew or Suspected Someone Was Experiencing Domestic Violence



Q.14a-e: Would you definitely, probably, probably not, or definitely not seek help or support if you knew or suspected one of the following was experiencing domestic violence: ...? (2019: n=377)

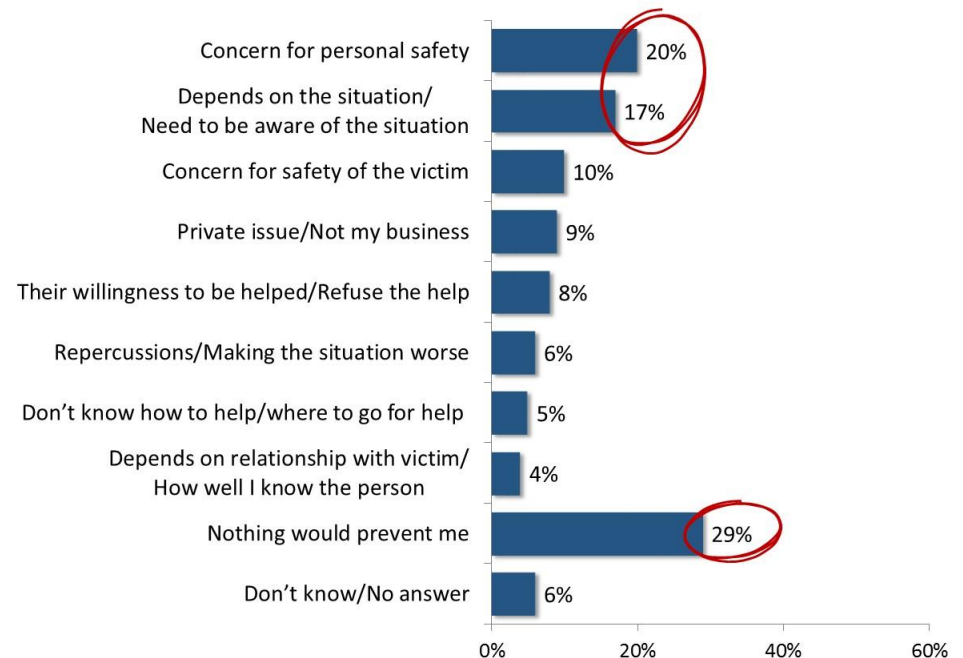
Barriers to Providing Assistance

Concern for personal safety is the top barrier to providing assistance.

- When asked what would keep them from providing help to someone who was experiencing a domestic violence situation, three in ten residents affirm **nothing would prevent them**. Two in ten mention personal safety, while close to the same proportion mention that it **depends on the situation/need to be aware of the situation**.
- One in ten mention **concern for safety of the victim** and it being a **private issue**. (Table 15)

Barriers to Providing Help to Someone Experiencing Domestic Violence

Unaided Key Mentions



Q.15: a) What might keep you from providing help to someone who was experiencing domestic violence?
b) PROBE: Any other reasons? (2019: n=376)

Gender Equality

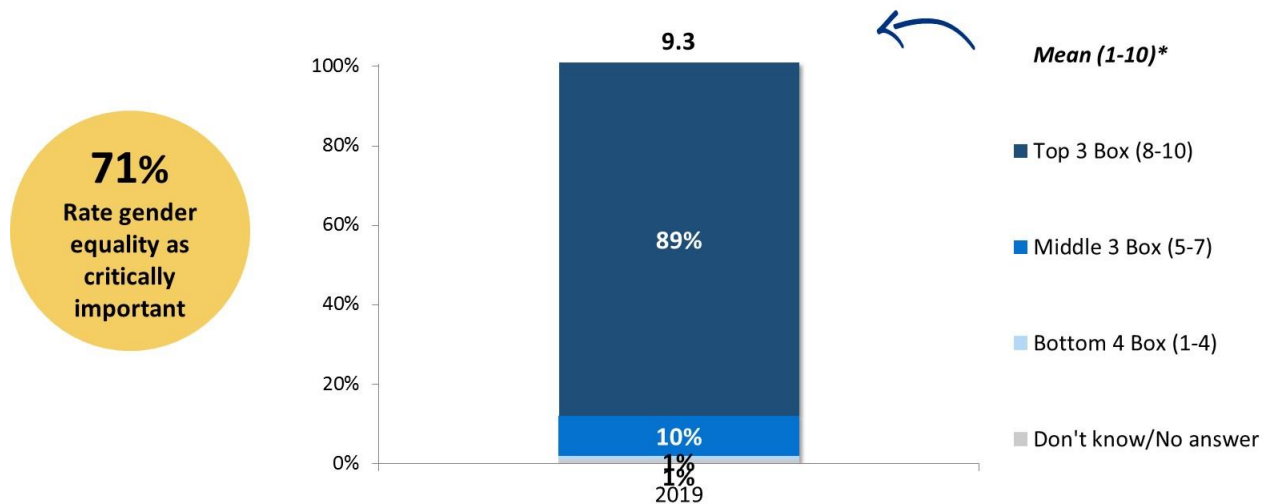
Important of Gender Equality

Nova Scotians view gender equality as highly important.

- Most residents consider achieving gender equality in the province as highly important (i.e., *rating of 8 to 10 on a 10-point scale where 1 is not at all important and 10 is critically important*). In fact 71% assign it a rating of 10 'critically important.'
- While viewing gender equality as highly important is the case across demographic segments, women are more likely than men to assign a top rating of 10 (79% versus 62%). (Table 16)

Importance of Achieving Gender Equality in Nova Scotia

Rating on 10-pt Scale: 1=Not at all important, 10=Critically important



Q.16: Gender equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all important and 10 is critically important, how would you rate the importance of achieving gender equality in Nova Scotia? (2019: n=400)

Note: Responses of 'Don't know/No answer' are excluded from Mean score calculation.

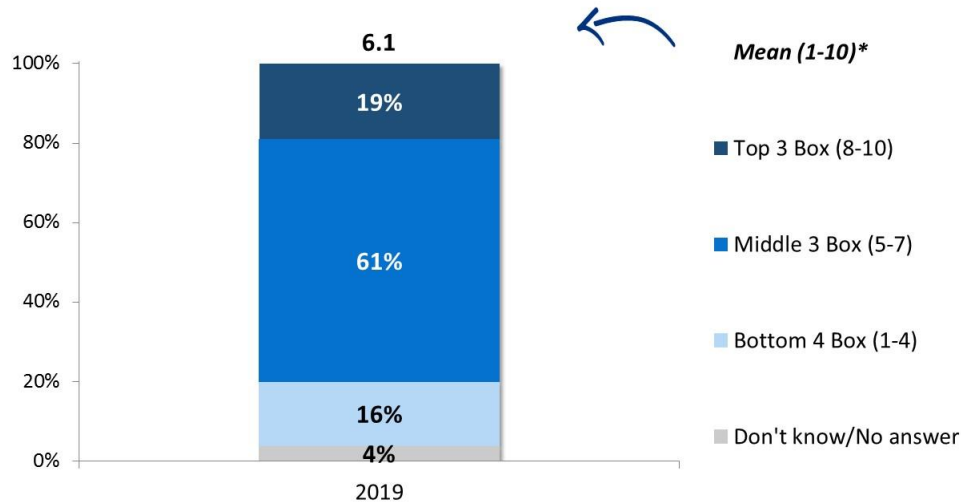
Current State of Gender Equality

Residents generally perceive there to be a moderate gap in gender equality in the province.

- Six in ten residents provide a moderate rating of five to seven when asked to rate the current status of gender equality in Nova Scotia (using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is no gap at all and 10 is a large gap). The average rating is 6.1 out of 10.
- Average ratings (with a higher score indicating a perceived larger gap) are somewhat higher among women and older residents. (Table 17)

Current Status of Gender Equality in Nova Scotia

Rating on 10-pt Scale: 1=No gap in gender equality, 10=Large gap in gender equality



Q.17: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is no gap in gender equality and 10 is a large gap in gender equality, how would you rate the current status of gender equality in Nova Scotia? (2019: n=400)

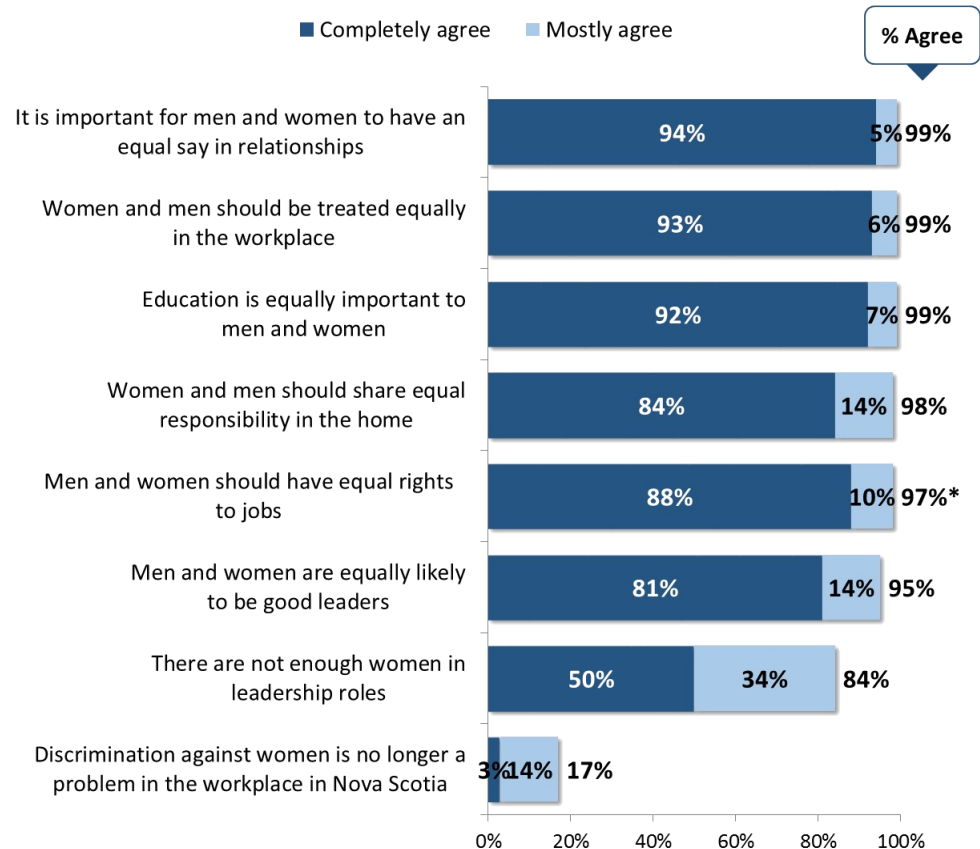
Note: Responses of 'Don't know/No answer' are excluded from Mean score calculation.

Views of Gender Equality

Nova Scotians believe there should be gender equality for men and women along various dimensions.

- The vast majority agrees that men and women should have **equal rights to jobs**, be **treated equally in the workplace**, have **equal say in relationships**, and have **equal responsibility in the home**, and that **education is equally important** to men and women. The vast majority also agrees that men and women are **equally likely to make good leaders**. In fact, 'complete' agreement is widespread on these measures.
- Most – eight in ten – agree that there are **not enough women in leadership roles**. At the same time, eight in ten disagrees that **discrimination against women is no longer a problem in Nova Scotia**.
- Women are more likely than men to believe there are not enough women in leadership roles. 'Complete' agreement in this regard is elevated among those 35 or older and those with annual household incomes above \$50,000. (Tables 18a-h)

Agreement with Statements Regarding Gender Equality



Q.18a-h: Please indicate whether you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with the following statements: (2019: n=400) *Due to rounding.

Demographics

The following outlines a breakdown of key demographics of respondents.

Profile of Respondents (n=400)

