

National Survey Results on the Impact of Domestic Violence on Work, Workers and Workplaces in Taiwan – Joint CFL and ITUC-AP Report

This survey was developed by researchers with the DV@WorkNet and the International Trade Union Confederation – Asia-Pacific (ITUC-AP)¹, in collaboration with Taiwanese affiliates at the Chinese Federation of Labour (CFL). DV@WorkNet is an international network of researchers, domestic violence experts, social and labour organizations, and employers who conduct research and mobilize knowledge about the impact of domestic violence in the workplace. Gathering data on this important issue provides stronger evidence to help shape legislation and workplace policies that support violence prevention and safety in workplace.

SURVEY METHODS

Between September 2016 and May 2017, researchers at Western University and the ITUC- Asia-Pacific, in cooperation with Taiwanese affiliates at the CFL, conducted a national online survey on the impact of domestic violence on work, workers and in workplaces. The survey was available in Taiwanese and English, and was open to men and women aged 15 years and older, whether they had directly experienced domestic violence or not.

The survey consisted of over 55 questions that focused on workers' experiences with domestic violence and the workplace, including questions regarding whether they were personally experiencing, or had ever experienced domestic violence, and if they were aware of co-workers who were experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence. Those with personal domestic violence experience were asked additional questions, such as how the violence affected their work and their co-workers, whether they discussed the violence with anyone at work, and what types of support they received. Additionally, migrant domestic workers were asked a series of questions about their experiences with violence, both from members of their family and/or their employer. The survey was reviewed and approved by the Western University's Research Ethics Board. This report outlines the main findings from the survey.

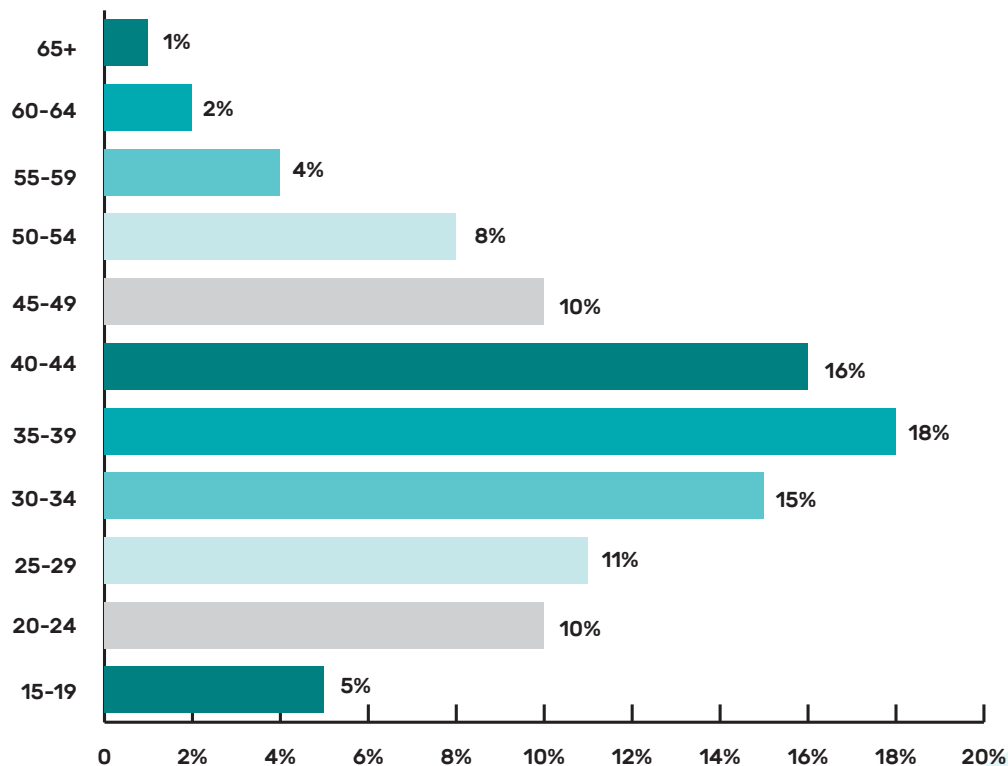
¹ ITUC-AP is a regional organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) representing 59 national centers in 34 countries, with a total membership of more than 23 million workers (www.ituc-ap.org).

SURVEY RESULTS

WHO PARTICIPATED?

A total of 1,816 people completed the survey. There was a fairly even split of females (53%) and males (47%) who completed the survey, with the remaining identifying as 'other' (0.3%). Across all respondents, most respondents fell between the ages of 25-44 (see Figure 1). Many respondents indicated being single (39%), followed by being married (38%). Majority (48%) of respondents indicated they did not have any dependents or children. 45% reported having dependents, either their own children or other dependents.

Figure 1. Age Categories



The three highest response rates came from Taichung City (16%), Taipei City (11%), and New Taipei City (8%). Respondents from the remaining provinces made up less than five percent each.

"The impact of domestic violence on work is enormous. There is a need to regularly collect information on domestic violence and its impact on workers."



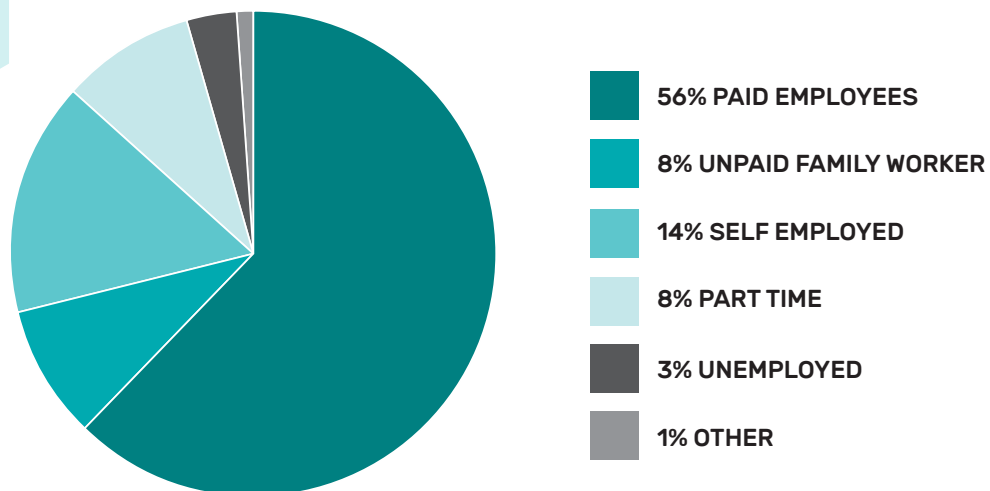
Table 1. Work Sectors

WORK SECTOR	%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	5%
Information and Communication	7%
Mining and quarrying	2%
Financial and Insurance Activities	9%
Manufacturing	6%
Real Estate Activities	6%
Electricity and Gas Supply	5%
Support Service Activities	5%
Water Supply & Remediation Activities	3%
Education	7%
Construction	2%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	5%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	5%
Human Health and Social Work Activities	3%
Transportation and Storage	4%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Activities	4%
Accommodation & Food Service Activities	7%
Public Administration & Defence; Compulsory Social Security	5%
Other Service Activities	10%

EMPLOYMENT

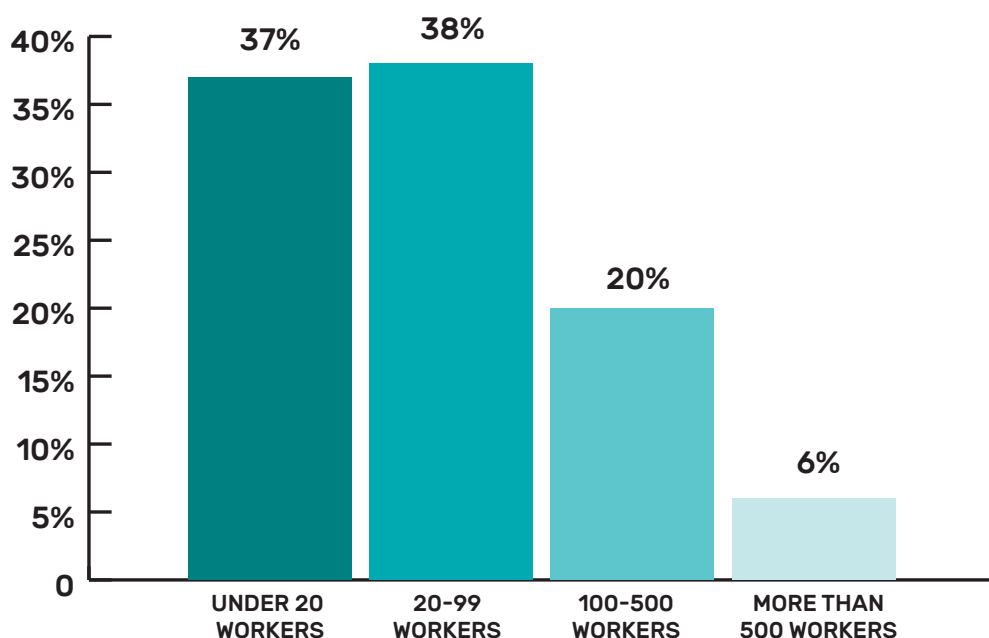
The majority (56%) of the sample were paid employees (see Figure 2). The remaining respondents were self-employed, unpaid family workers, part-time, unemployed, or indicated "other" (e.g., students). 76% reported they were working full time at the time of the survey. Domestic workers represented 25% of the respondents.

Figure 2. Employment Category



There was a range in the size of the workplaces that respondents were employed, with most workers employed in workplaces with 20-99 workers (see Figure 3). There was fairly equal representation from various sectors. The three largest sectors represented were the **Other Service Activities** (10%), the **Financial and Insurance** (9%) and the **Education** (7%). Table 1 provides an overview of the work sectors in which respondents were employed.

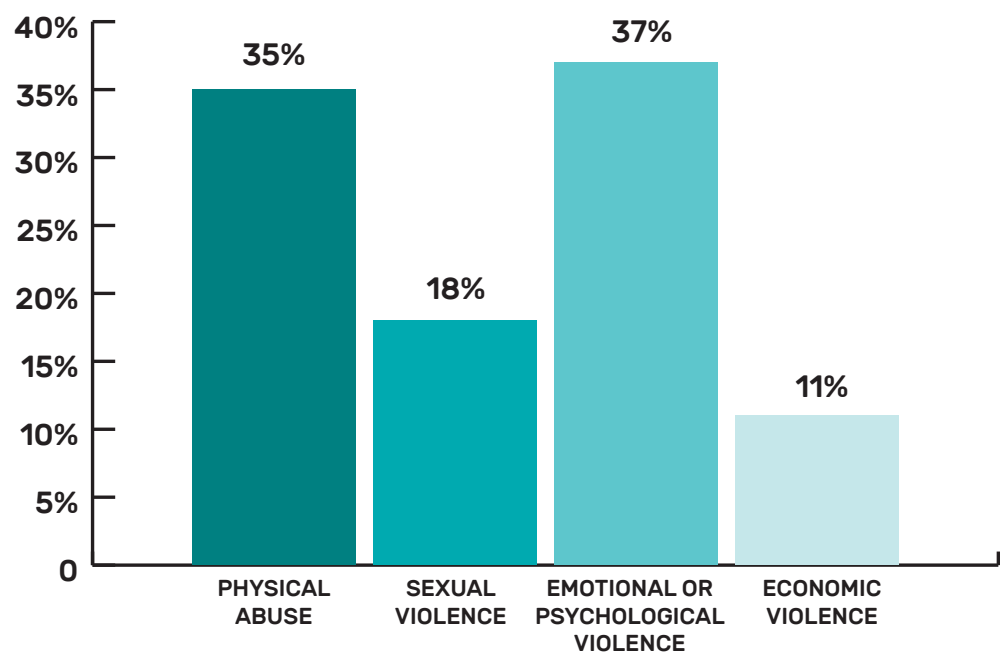
Figure 3. Workplace Size



EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

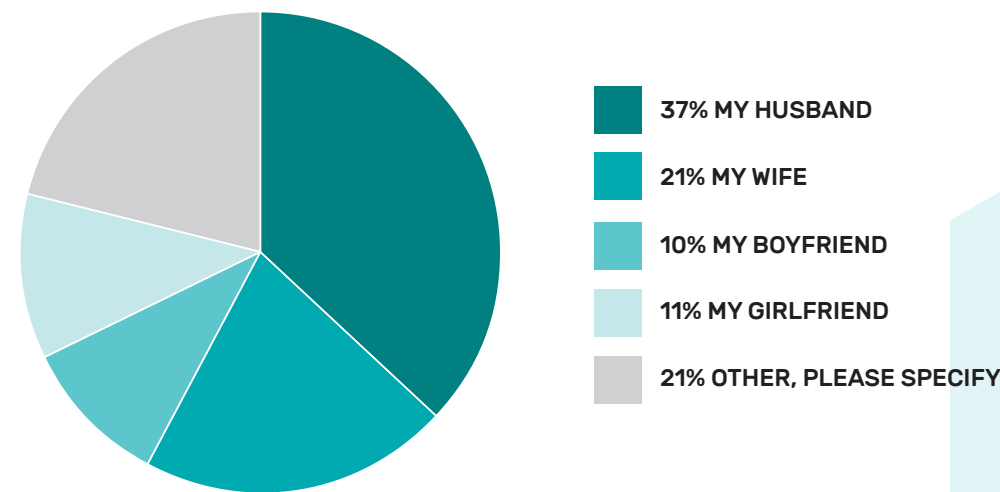
Approximately 13% of respondents reported having experienced domestic violence (DV) from an intimate partner in their lifetime; with 6% indicating they experienced DV within the last year of completing the survey and 7% indicating their experience with DV occurred more than a year ago. The most frequent form of abuse report was emotional/psychological abuse (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Type of Abuse Experiences



Some 37% of respondents reported being abused by their husband followed by other family member (21%), wife (20%), girlfriend (11%), and boyfriend (10%). See Figure 5.

Figure 5. Perpetrators of DV



"I am suffering verbal abuse at home."

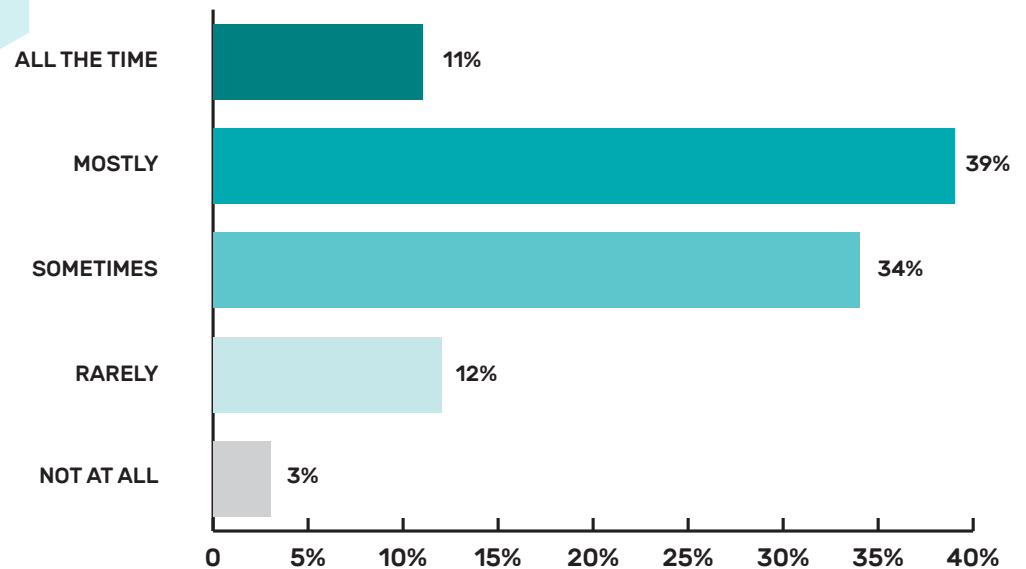
"Domestic violence, mostly in the form of verbal violence, also affects men".

"The impact of domestic violence on work is enormous. There is a need to regularly collect information on domestic violence and its impact on workers."

THE IMPACT OF DV ON THE WORKPLACE

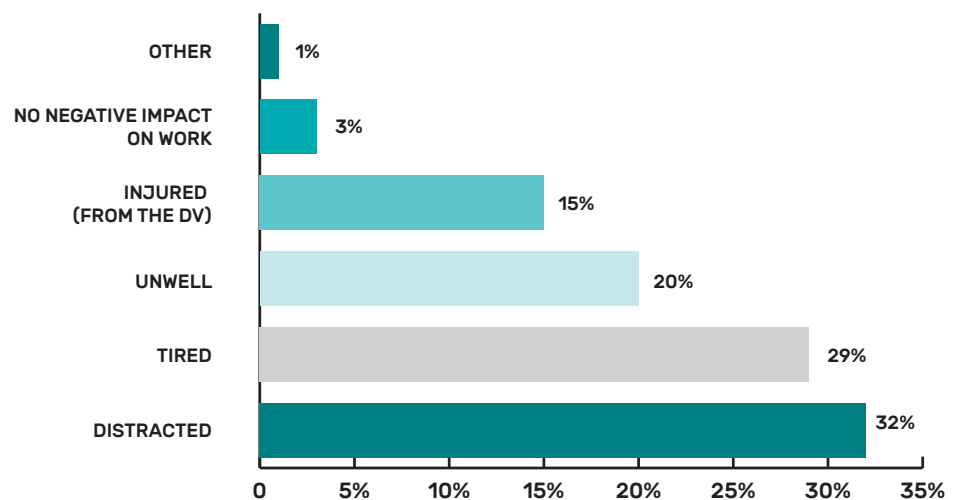
Of those who reported DV experience, 67% indicated it affected their ability to work. Half of those who reported DV affected their work also reported that their work was affected 'mostly' or 'all the time'. Over one-third reported that DV affected their ability to work 'sometimes' (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Extent of DV Impact on Ability to Work



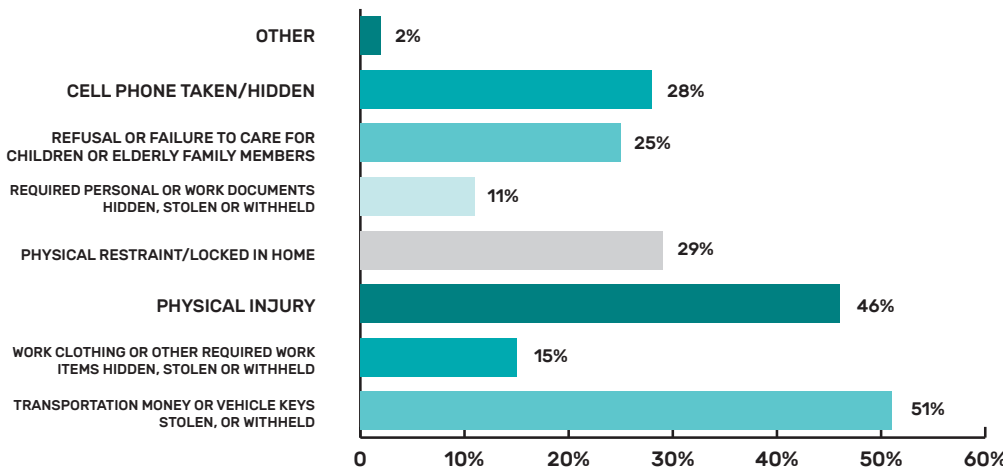
In regard to the type of impact DV had on work performance, almost one-third indicated that they were distracted (32%), or tired (29%) while working (see Figure 7). A further 15% indicated that an injury from the DV impacted their work performance.

Figure 7. Ways that DV Affected Work Performance



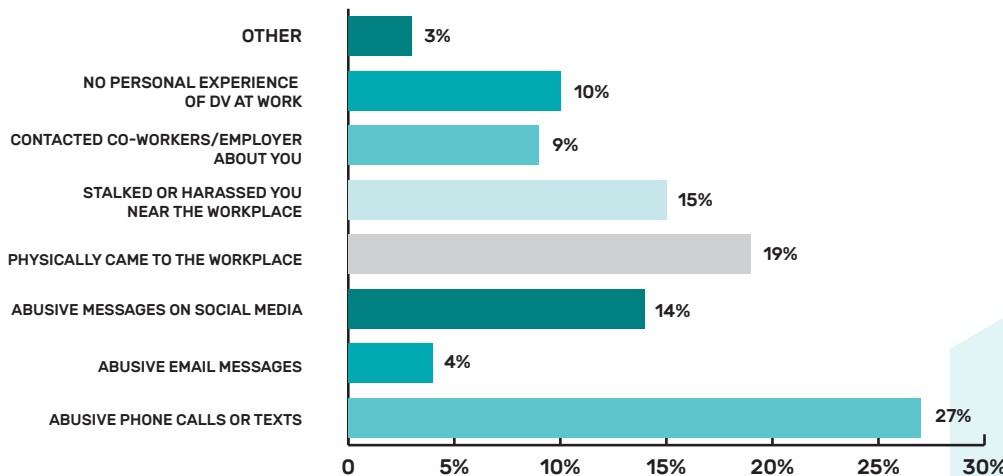
Some 44% reported that DV made them late for work. The most common causes of being late/missing work was due to transportation money or vehicle keys being stolen or withheld (51%), physical injury (46%), being physically restrained or locked in home (29%), having their cell phone taken or hidden (28%), having their work clothing or required work documents hidden, stolen or withheld (26%) and the perpetrator refusing or failing to provide care for children or elderly family members (25%). See Figure 8.

Figure 8. DV-Related Reasons for Lateness or Absence From Work



A closer examination of the impact of DV had on victims revealed a number of negative experiences of DV occurred at or near the workplace. Of the abusive acts at the workplace, the most common was abusive phone calls or text messages (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. DV Tactics Experienced at the Workplace



“Victims of domestic violence are often distracted and cannot concentrate at work.”

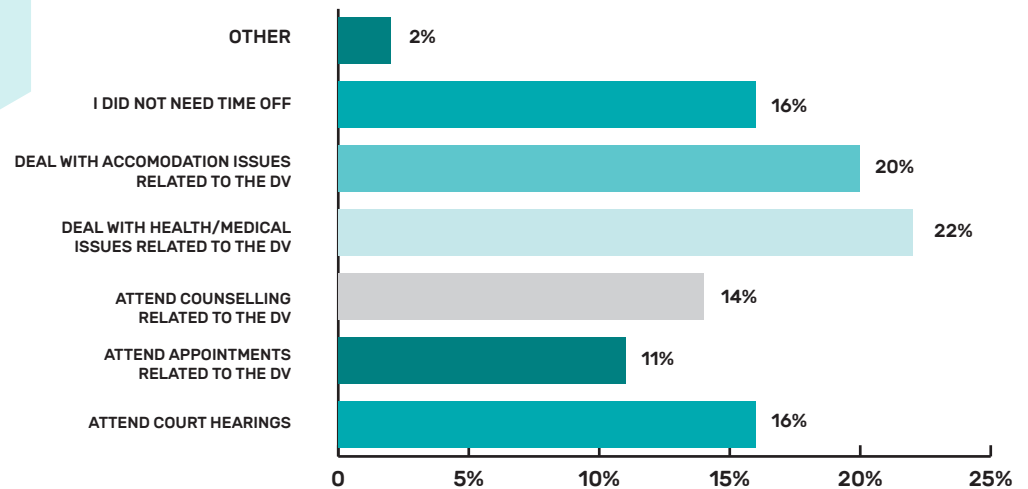
“I had to undergo psychological treatment due to depression as a result of my domestic violence experiences.”

"The company does not care whether employees suffer domestic violence. It only cares about whether you would go to work."

"I am a victim of DV. I want to escape."

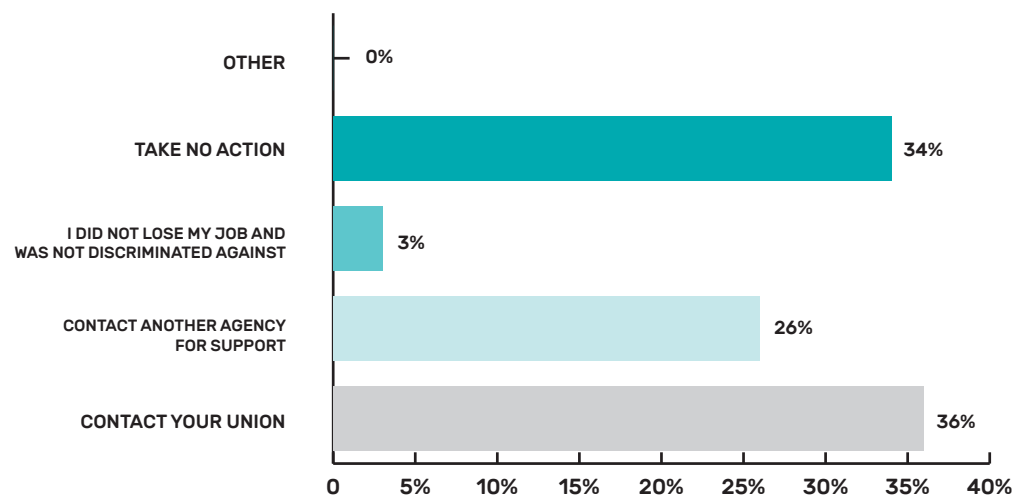
Overall, 61% of DV victims indicated they had to take time off from work because of the DV. Some 63% were granted a leave from work. For those who were not granted leave, most did not take any action (53%), while others indicated they went to other agencies (32%), or their union (18%) for support. Almost 40% of those who took time off to deal with a DV-related issue, indicated that it was due to medical or health concerns or accommodation/housing issues (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Reasons for Taking Time Off Work



Many respondents indicated difficulties developed from discussing their experience of DV at work. For instance, 48% reported experiencing discrimination, negative, or adverse actions from their employer as a result of discussing their experience of DV. Furthermore, 56% indicated that they had lost their job because of their experience of DV. Of those who lost their job or felt discriminated against as a result of DV, 36% contacted their union, 26% contacted another agency for support, while 34% did not take any further action (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Respondent Actions after Job Loss or Discrimination due to DV



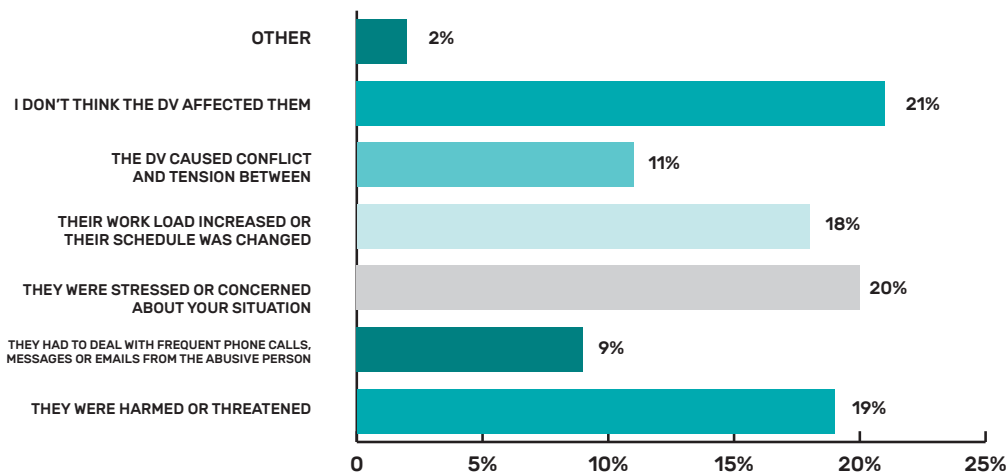
43% of workers experiencing abuse reported that they were working in the same workplace as their abuser (see Figure 12). This close proximity can make victims even more vulnerable to abuse and it poses a challenge for employers to ensure safety of both the survivor and co-workers who may be affected by the abusive behaviours.

IMPACT OF DV ON CO-WORKERS

All respondents were asked if they noticed that their co-workers’ ability to work was impacted when these co-workers were experiencing DV. 41% reported that it was, an additional 47% reported they were unsure, and 12% reported it did not affect their co-workers’ ability to work.

Respondents also reported that their co-workers experience of DV had an impact on their own ability to work. The most common impacts were being stressed or concerned about the victims’ safety (20%). Respondents also indicated that their co-workers were threatened or even harmed (19%) and almost one quarter reported that their co-workers’ workload increased or their schedule changed. Some reported that they did not think the DV affected them (21%; see Figure 13).

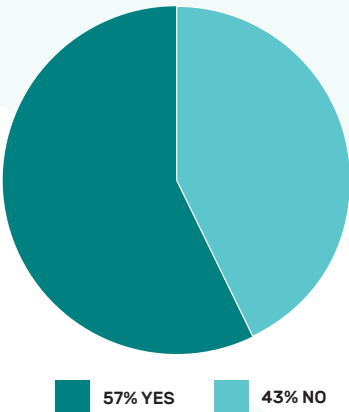
Figure 13. Types of Impact DV had on Co-Workers



DISCLOSURE OF DV IN THE WORKPLACE AND SUPPORT RECEIVED

Overall, 53% of those experiencing DV reported they discussed it with someone at work. Respondents were most likely to disclose to co-workers, followed by a designated person to handle DV situations. Of those who disclosed to someone at work, many reported that the people they disclosed their experience of DV to were helpful or sympathetic (92%). Many victims who discussed the DV with someone in the workplace were provided with information (84%). Fewer respondents indicated they discussed safety plans (32%). Some victims

Figure 12. Respondents with Abuser Working at the Same Workplace

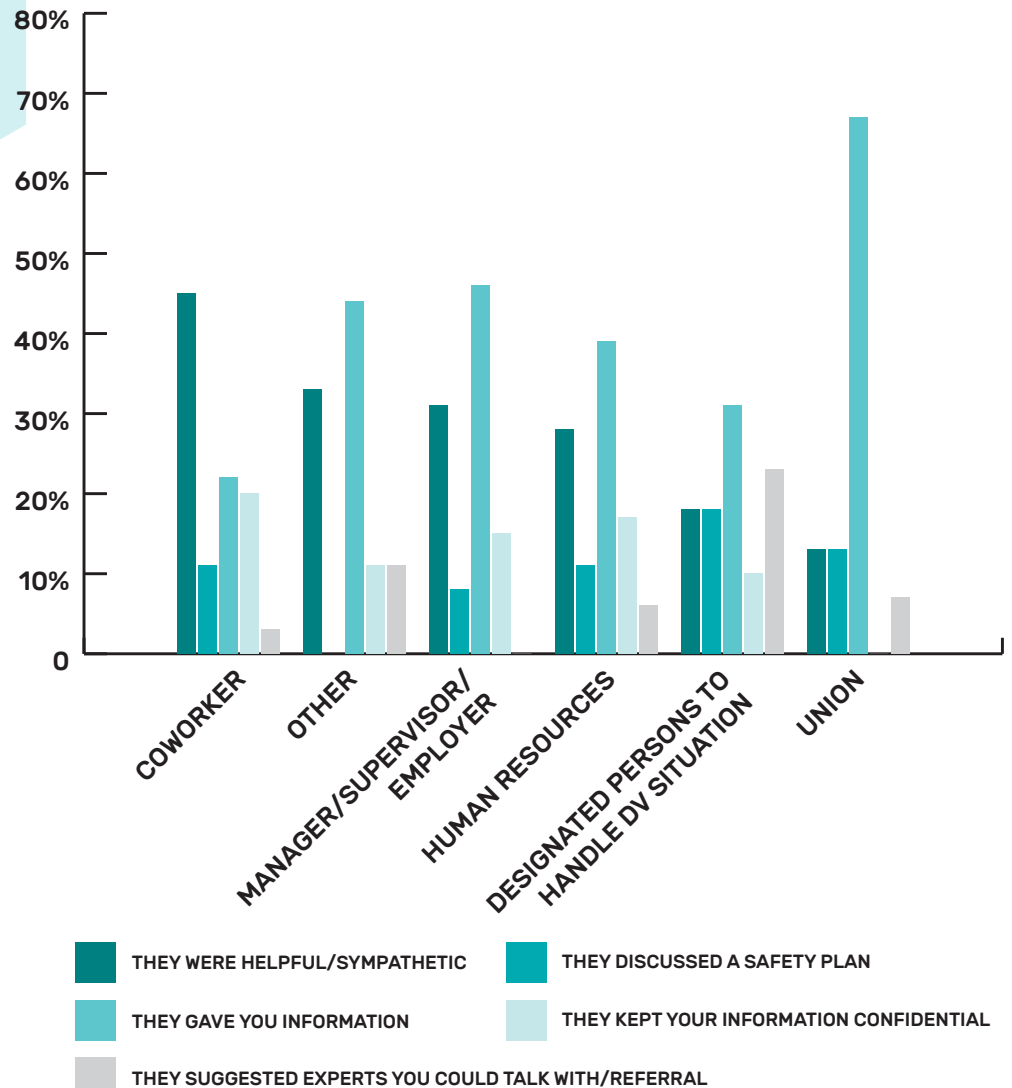


“My abuser works at the same workplace.”

“Workplaces should actively advocate against domestic violence and direct affected workers to resources or help they need.”

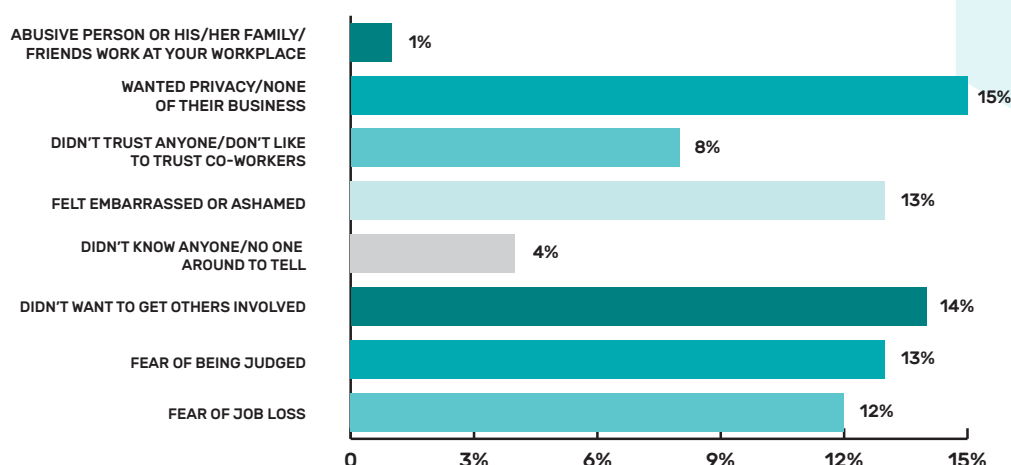
reported that their information was kept confidential following a disclosure (41.0%). Lastly, a small number of victims were given referrals (21%). Figure 14 provides an overview of the types of experiences each respondent had with people that they disclosed to.

Figure 14. Experiences with Disclosing to Someone at the Workplace



Respondents provided a number of reasons why they chose not to discuss DV with anyone at work (see Figure 15). The most common being the desire to maintain privacy (15%).

Figure 15. Reasons for Not Disclosing DV at the Workplace



“Employers, through the human resources department, should be prepared to handle domestic violence so employees will not be afraid or embarrassed to disclose their experiences.”

MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS' EXPERIENCE WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

There were a total of 450 (25% of the total sample) domestic workers who completed the survey. The majority (60%) of domestic workers reported that they stayed in the employer's house and the rest reported that they lived outside of their employer's house (40%).

Out of those who lived outside the employer's house, approximately 20% domestic workers experienced DV from members of their own family, with 35% indicating they experienced DV within the last year and 65% indicating their experience with DV occurred more than a year ago.

Sadly, 58% of domestic workers reported that they were abused by their employer or another member of their household. The most common type of abuse experienced from both past and current employers was psychological or emotional abuse (e.g., calling them names, not giving adequate food). The most common type of abuse threatened by both past and current employers was deprivation of liberty (e.g., forbidding contact with family or friends, no day off). Harassment and coercion (e.g., charging for food, lodging and medical expenses) was reported to be threatened more frequently for past employers than current employers. A more detailed account of the types of abuse experienced at the hands of past and current employers is displayed in Figures 16 and 17.

"The Government should provide advice to employers on how to handle domestic violence."

"I experienced domestic violence, mostly in the form of verbal abuse."

Figure 16. Types of Abuse Experienced from and Threatened by Current Employers

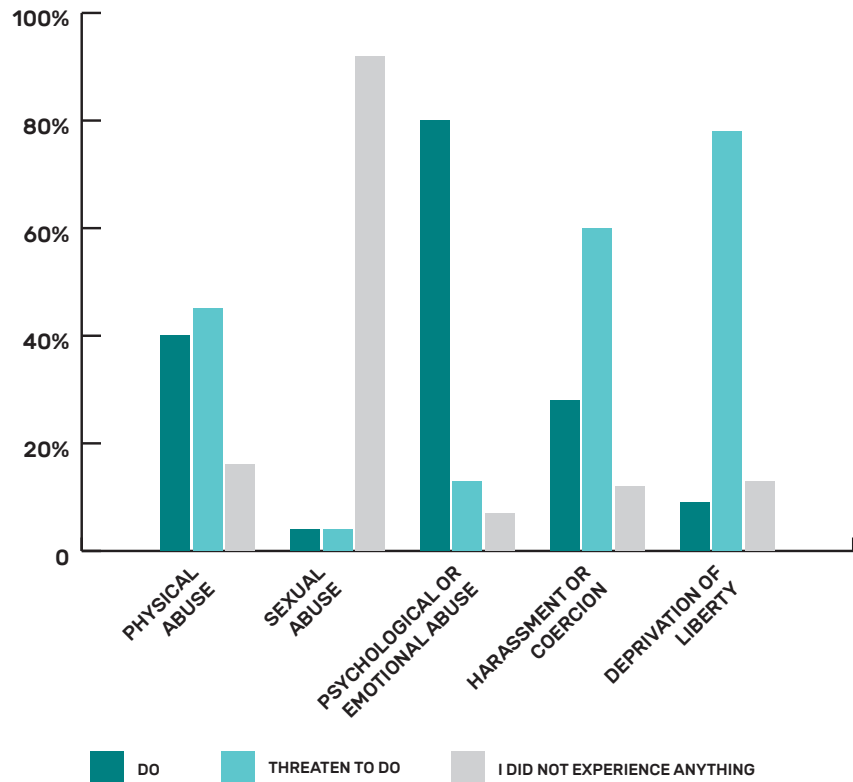
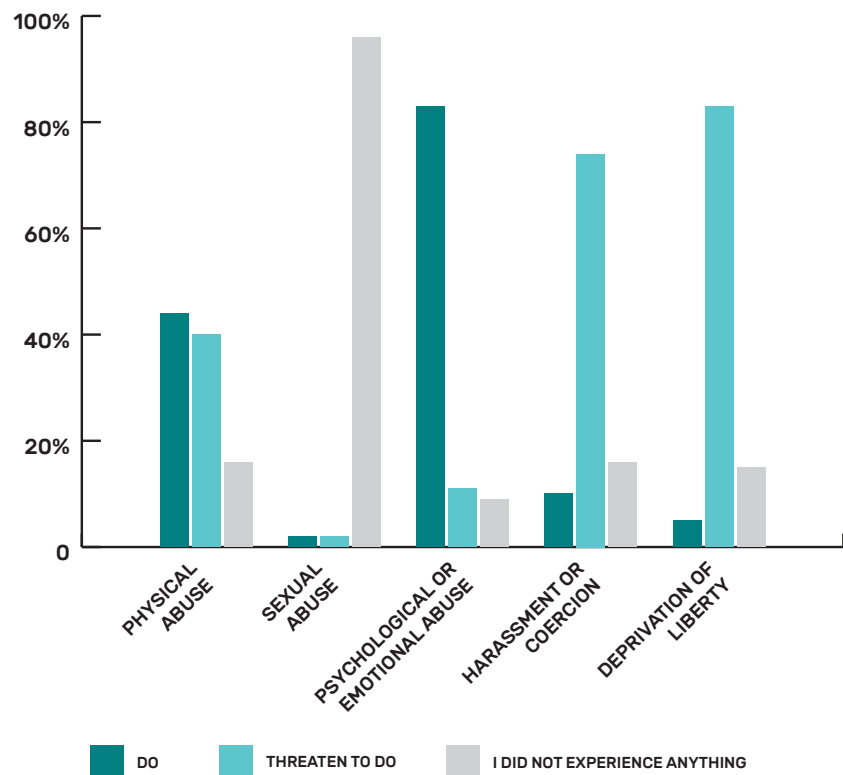
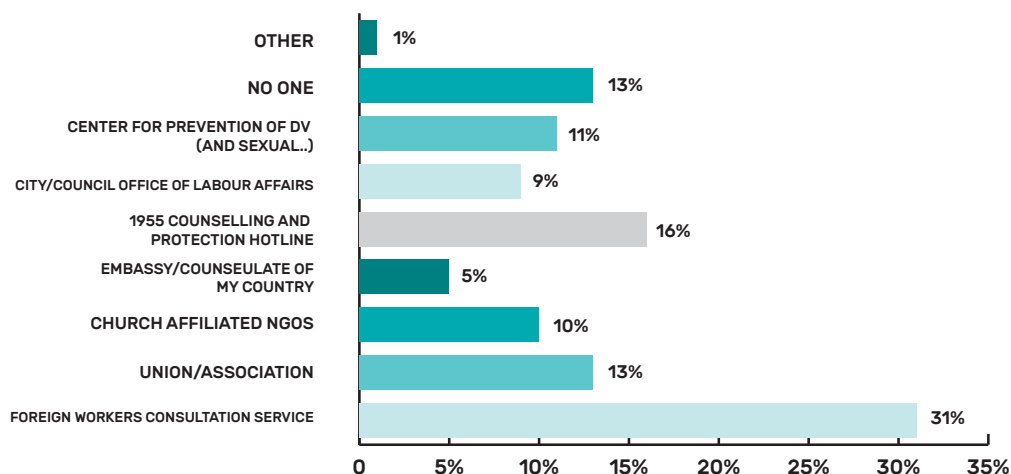


Figure 17. Types of Abuse Experienced from and Threatened by Past Employers



Some domestic workers who experienced DV reported the abuse to formal services/agencies. The most common service/agency was Foreign Workers Consultation Service Center, followed by their union/association, church-affiliated NGOs, etc. 13% of these domestic workers did not contact any formal services. Figure 18 outlines all of the services contacted.

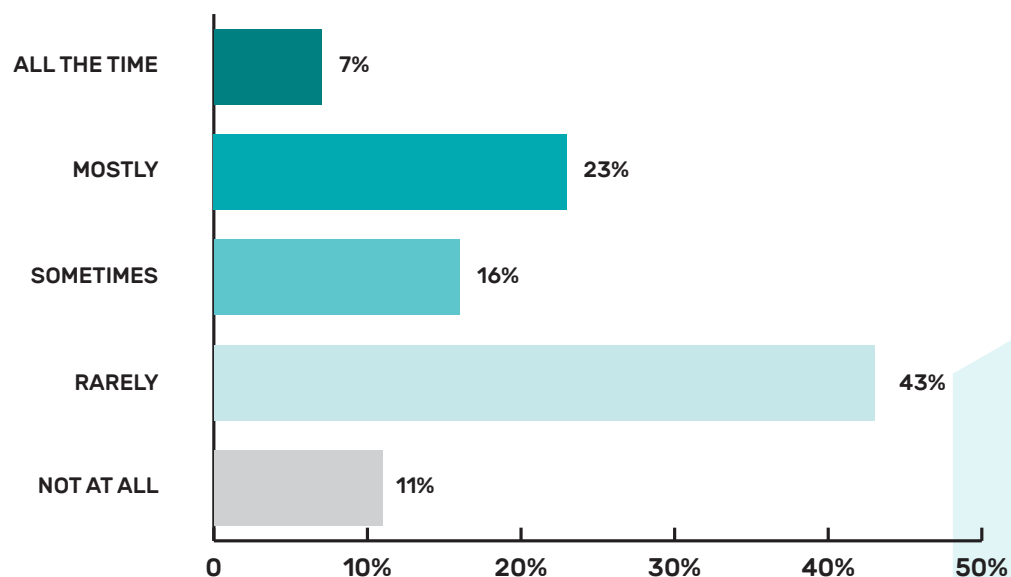
Figure 18. Formal Services Contacted by Domestic Workers Who Experienced Abuse



"I am a victim of domestic violence but I never reported it to authorities."

More than half (54%) of the domestic workers indicated that reporting their experience of abuse was "rarely" or "not at all" helpful. Though about a third found reporting to these services to be helpful 'mostly' or 'all the time' (see Figure 19).

Figure 19. Helpfulness of Formal Services Contacted by Domestic Workers



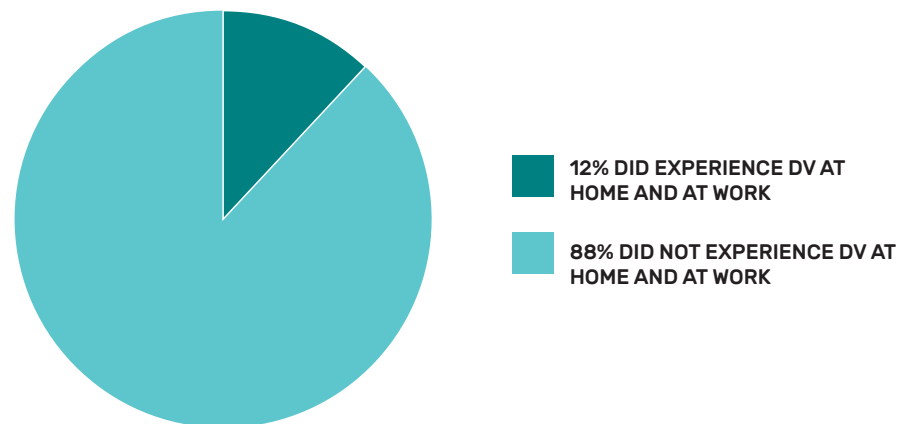
Most of the domestic workers (76%) were aware of the services (e.g., temporary shelters, free consultation) available for abused domestic workers.

"There is a need to intensify people's understanding and awareness about the seriousness of domestic violence."

ADDITIONAL ANALYSES ON DOMESTIC WORKERS

Of the total (n=450) respondents who identified as Domestic Workers, 12% indicated that they had experience domestic violence from both their employer and a family member (See Chart A)

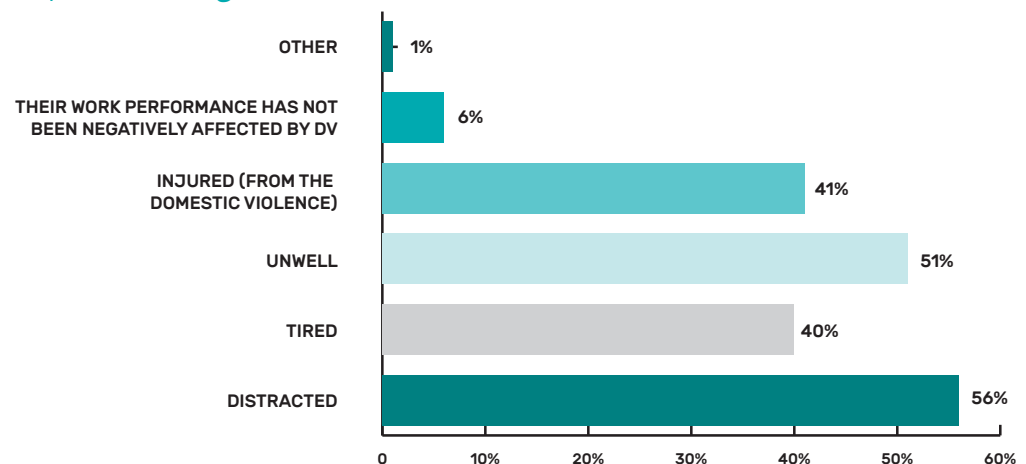
Chart A. Percentage of Domestic Workers who Experienced DV from Both Family Members and Employers



CO-WORKERS EXPERIENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Respondents were asked if they knew of a co-worker who was experiencing DV. 41% indicated they did. Only 12% indicated a definite 'no' in regard to knowing/being aware of a co-worker who was affected by DV. Of those who knew a co-worker who was affected by DV, 94% of respondents indicated a number of ways the victim was affected at work (see Figure 20). Over half (56%) reported that their co-worker appeared to be distracted (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Perception of Impact on Co-Workers Experiencing DV



While most respondents indicated that they were not affected by their co-workers' experience of DV (35%), there still remained a number who reported they had been impacted. For instance, 23% of respondents indicated that their work was affected (e.g. increased workload) and a further 20% reported that they were stressed or concerned about a co-worker (see Figure 21).

Figure 21. Impact of Co-Workers' DV on Respondent

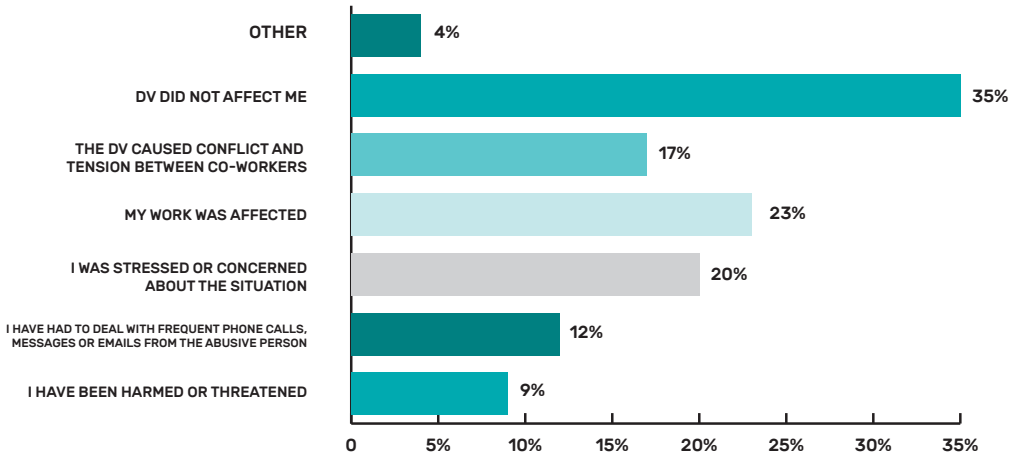
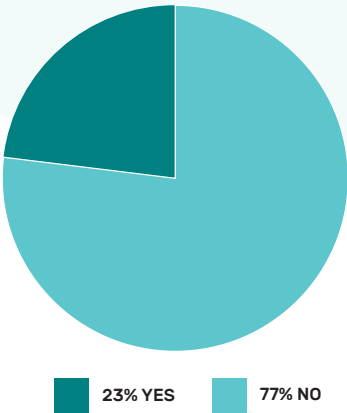


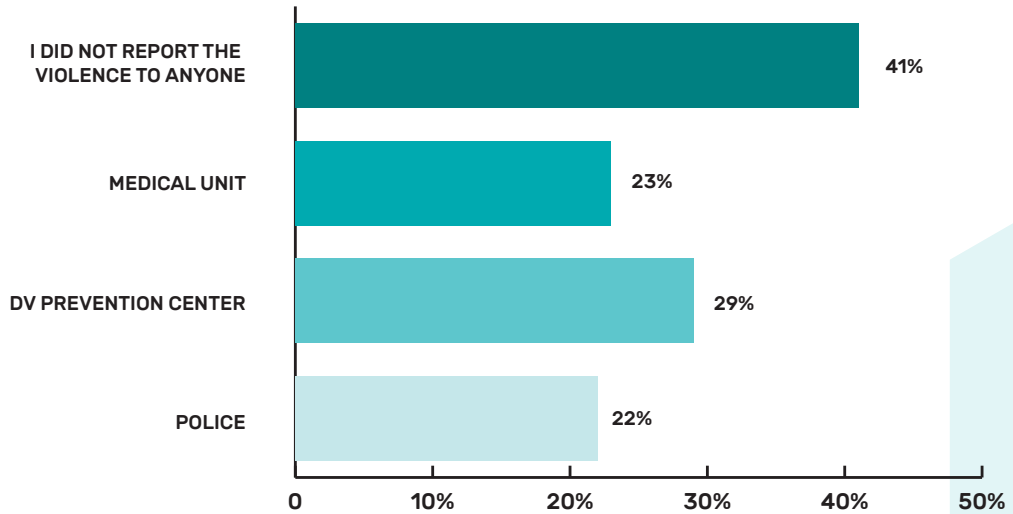
Figure 23. Respondents who Received Protection Order



SOCIAL SERVICE AND LEGAL RESPONSE TO DV

Of the respondents who experienced DV, over half indicated they reported the violence to formal sources of support (i.e., police, medical units, or DV prevention centers). Of those who did report, the most frequent service utilized was DV prevention centers (see Figure 22). Additionally, only a portion of DV victims (23%) obtained a protection order (see Figure 23).

Figure 22. Disclosure to Formal Sources of Support



“A quick assistance settlement mechanism should be set up, including restraining order prohibiting contact by abusers with victims.”

“Counselling, related programs and government advocacy against domestic violence can be further improved.”

Many victims (70%) reported receiving assistance from a variety of formal services. About one-third (30%) who reported to a formal resource did not receive any assistance for DV. Of the respondents that did receive assistance, it was most likely to come from a DV prevention center (see Figure 23). Over half (56%) of those who did receive assistance indicated that they became aware of the service through friends or family (see Figure 25).

Figure 24. Sources of Formal Services Received by DV Victims

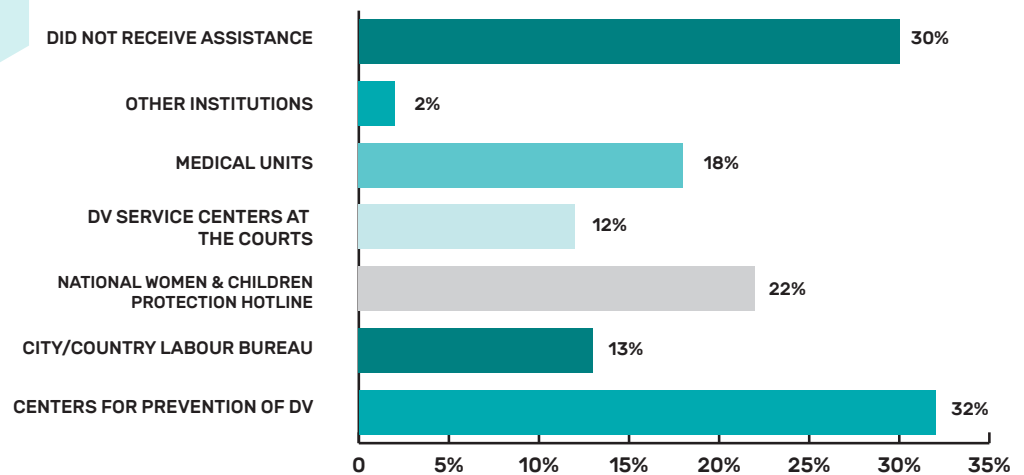
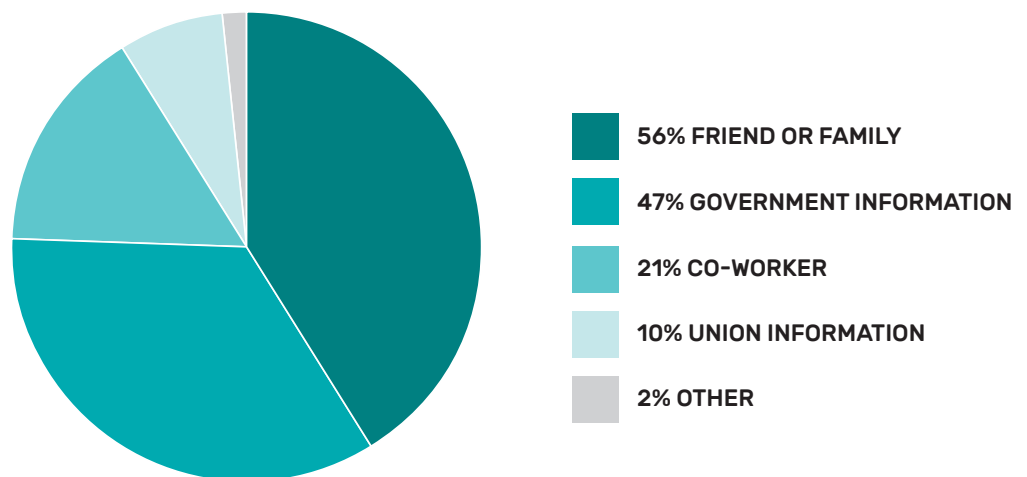
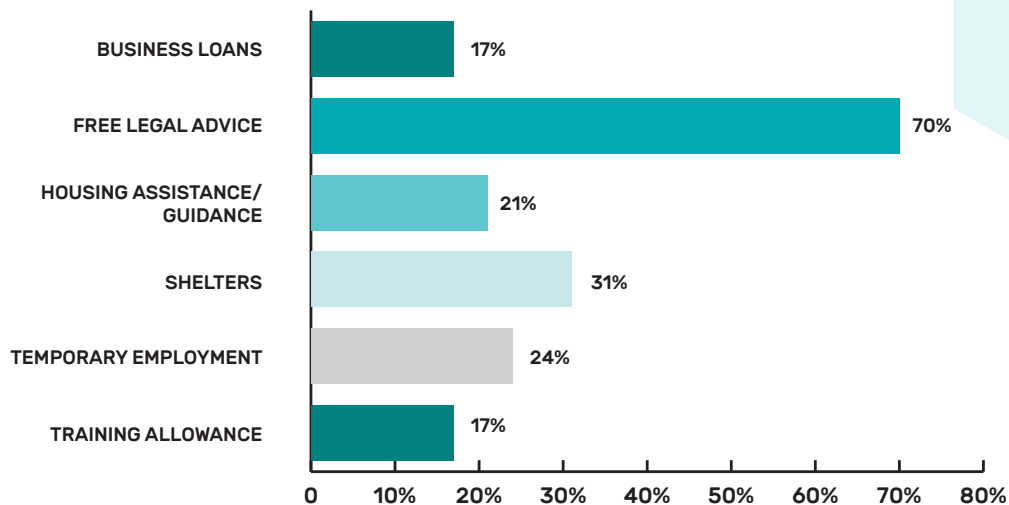


Figure 25. Source of Awareness of Services



Majority of respondents reported that they were aware of the types of services available for victims of DV. A substantial number of DV victims (70%) reported that they were aware that they were entitled to free legal advice. Far less respondents were aware they were able to obtain business loans (17%) as well as training allowances (17%). Figure 26 further shows the types of services for DV that respondents were aware of.

Figure 26. Awareness of Types of Services for DV



“The Social Affairs Bureau should be more concerned about cases of domestic violence, respond to and handle problems actively”.

BELIEFS ABOUT DV IN THE WORKPLACE

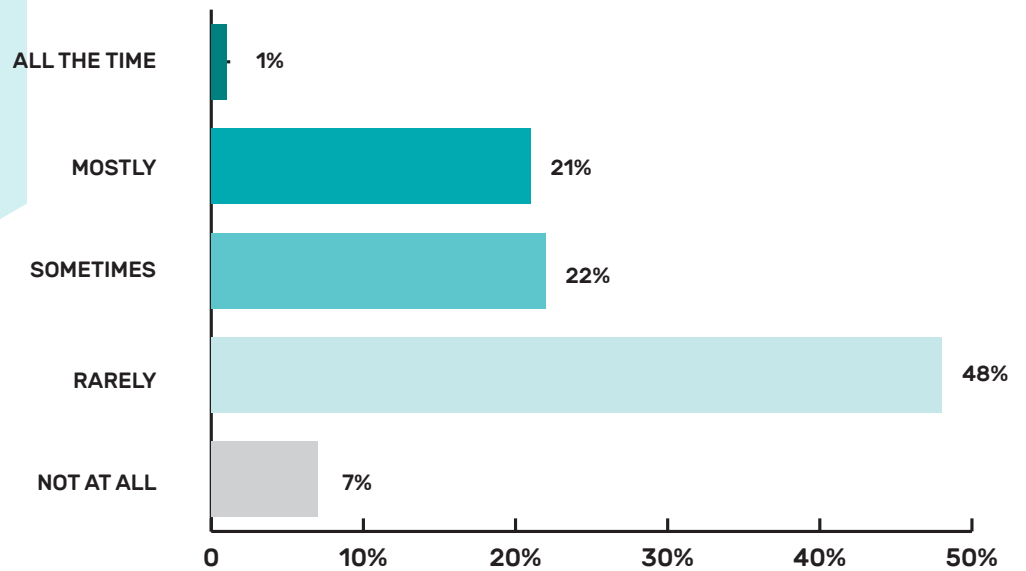
Most workers understood that DV has a significant impact on victims, perpetrators, their co-workers, and the workplace as a whole. In fact, 94% of respondents indicated that DV affects the work-lives of workers exposed to violence in some way. Similarly, 87% of respondents believed that workplace support for DV (i.e., paid leave, education and training, and safety policies, etc.) could reduce the impact of DV on the work-lives of workers. Of the respondents who believed that workplace support can reduce the impact of DV, 65% estimated that workplace support/strategies have successfully reduced the effects of DV on the work lives of workers ‘sometimes’, ‘mostly’, or ‘all the time’. Unfortunately, around half of respondents (47%) did not believe that employers were aware when DV was affecting one of their workers. Furthermore, around a third of workers (31%) were not aware of how employers responded when workers reported DV, and 37% believed that employers did not respond positively.

In terms of union responses to DV, around a third (31%) indicated that they did not know if union officials were informed when DV was affecting their members. A further 48% indicated that they believed that union officials rarely act in a positive way to help members when union officials became aware of the experience of DV (see Figure 27).

"Hope that the trade union can help workers experiencing domestic violence."

"When I reported the abuse to the Social Bureau, the Bureau sent staff to our house to check the situation."

Figure 27. Extent of Union Taking Positive Action



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Some 13% of respondents reported personal experience with domestic violence at some point in their lives, lower than other similar surveys conducted to study the impact of domestic violence at the workplace. The reason for this lower reporting rate is not clear; other reports put the prevalence rate much higher in Taiwan. In 2016 alone, 117,550 domestic violence cases were reported to officials (or 322 each day or one every five minutes)². Data from the Ministry of Health and Welfare's Department of Protective Services shows that the annual number of reported cases of domestic violence in Taiwan has been higher than 100,000 for the past five years³. The lower reporting rate could be that respondents are still uncomfortable reporting or disclosing their experiences of domestic violence. Respondents saying that they know of other incidents of domestic violence are at high 41%, indicating that some respondents might have said 'others' instead of admitting personal experience.

Of those who reported DV experience, 67% indicated it affected their ability to work, and a further half indicated that DV affected their workplace 'most' of the time or 'all the' time. Similarly, almost one third of the respondents reported that DV impacted their work performance frequently due to being distracted or tired. They reported that DV continued at the workplace in some way, the most frequent being through abusive phone calls or texts, or the abuser physically coming to the workplace. Around half indicated that DV made them late for work. The figures for respondents experiencing discrimination (close to half) and those losing their jobs (more than half) as a result of discussing their experience of DV at work are rather high.

Over half of those who had experienced DV discussed the violence with somebody at work, overwhelmingly with co-workers. Far less respondents were disclosing to unions, managers, supervisors or human resources. In terms of reporting to and accessing formal sources of support, many victims reported receiving assistance, mostly from a DV prevention center. Awareness of the types of services available for victims of DV, particularly of free legal advice, is high.

Migrant domestic workers respondents similarly reported experience of DV both from members of their family (20%), and/or their employer (58%). Majority of respondents indicated that reporting their experience of abuse was rarely helpful. However, awareness of available services was high at 76%.

The majority of respondents indicated that they believed DV affected the work-lives of workers exposed to violence in some way. Similarly, most respondents believed that workplace support for DV (i.e., paid leave, education and training, and safety policies, etc.) could reduce the impact of DV on the

"The partner's verbal violence not only harms the body but also causes great psychological pressure. Society should also be concerned about this problem."

² <https://international.thenewslens.com/article/71187>

³ Ibid.

work-lives of workers. However, and unfortunately, around half did not believe that employers were aware when DV was affecting their workers, and, 37% believed that employers did not respond positively to employed victims of DV. Around half of the respondents also indicated they believed that union officials did not act in a positive way to help members when union officials became aware of the experience of DV.

Unions are in unique position to assist DV victims say respondents. The problems are huge for unions on their own. Government, employers, unions, service providers, partners, etc. need to work together to deliver more, bigger results and speed up progress.

Please cite this document as:

Olszowy, L., Saxton, M.D., & MacQuarrie, B.J. (2017). National Survey Results on the Impact of Domestic Violence on Work, Workers and Workplaces in Taiwan: Joint CFL and ITUC-AP Report. London, ON: Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women and Children