



香港婦女遭受暴力經驗調查2021

Hong Kong Women's Experiences of Violence 2021: A Research Report





香港婦女遭受暴力經驗調查2021 **Hong Kong Women's Experiences of Violence 2021: A Research Report**

About the research team

The Chief Investigator of this study is Professor Annie Chan Hau Nung, Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology and Social Policy at Lingnan University, Hong Kong. She has conducted commissioned research for the Equal Opportunities Commission on sexual harassment and also helped with the WCEO's 2013 study on Hong Kong women's experiences of violence. The research team for the present study include Veleda Tam, Catherine Chan Sze Hang and Dr Moses Adjei, who provided assistance with the data collection and preliminary data analyses of the present study.

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Foreword

Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities

Violence against women is defined as, in the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”. In 1992, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in its General Recommendation No. 19, asserted that gender-based violence is “a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men”.

Framing gender-based violence against women as a human rights violation implies that the issue is no longer a private matter that happens at home. Governments are responsible for private acts if they fail to address the structural and deep-rooted discrimination against women. Preventing gender-based violence requires legislative, administrative, judicial, institutional and educational measures and reforms.

Despite the high prevalence of gender-based violence against women in the globe and in Hong Kong, recent data and research on Hong Kong women's experiences of violence is lacking. The taboos of sexual violence and intimate partner violence in Hong Kong have made us believe that many survivors have not reported the violence they have experienced nor have they sought assistance from family members, friends or social service organizations.

In 2013, Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities (WCEO) conducted a survey on sexual violence and intimate partner violence of women in Hong Kong. The Survey showed

that more than one quarter of women responded to the Survey had suffered intimate partner violence, close to half valid responses had experienced sexual harassment, and more than 15% had undergone other forms of sexual violence apart from sexual harassment.

The idea of updating the 2013 Survey surfaced because of two recent developments in Hong Kong. First, new forms of gender-based violence against women, such as image-based sexual violence, have emerged. Second, the social unrest in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic have disproportionately impacted the lives of women. Reports revealed an increase in gender-based violence against women around the world and in Hong Kong.

We are grateful to the sponsorship by Zonta Club of Kowloon and Lingnan University, and Professor Annie Chan and her research team for their passion and professionalism in this research project. I look forward to working with them in advocating the findings and recommendations to relevant stakeholders for changing the situation and improving the well-being of women in Hong Kong.

Si-si Liu

Director, Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres

Secretariat (2021/22), Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities

About Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities

Hong Kong Women Coalition on Equal Opportunities (WCEO) was set up in 1995. It is formed by a group of grassroots women's organizations which have participated in the Forth International Women's Conference in Beijing. The aim of the WCEO is to facilitate the collaboration of local grassroots women's groups in addressing various issues faced by women and to advance our society with respects on gender equality. It pushes for the implementation of Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in Hong Kong, monitors the Government in the elimination of discrimination against women, and makes recommendations to the legislators and government agencies for policy changes on women issues.

Member Organisations

Action for REACH OUT

Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres

Hong Kong Women Christian Council

Hong Kong Women Workers' Association

The Association for the Advancement of Feminism

Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women

Affiliated Member Organisations

New Arrival Women League

HKYWCA Women Affairs Team

Foreword

Zonta Club of Kowloon

Family is an important pillar of society. As a Chinese saying goes: “Harmony will make a family rich; unity will make a country affluent”. This saying reflects the importance of family harmony to the development of society. Unfortunately, in reality, the situation in Hong Kong & the world at large runs contrary to this saying. Violence against women is one of the most pervasive human rights violations. It also knows no barriers and may take place from the home to schools, to the workplace & even on transportation vehicles.

‘To end violence against women’ should be an important priority of our society. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals No. 5 seeks to ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women’. This goal should also be the basis of planning strategies for any society.

The history of women has been a perpetual story of ‘suffering in silence’. In this way, violence against women has continued for a long time. Just too long. Now is the time for action. Now is the time to take bold steps to address issues of sexual violence & intimate partner violence. Now is the time to stop abuse against women to enable them to enjoy safe and decent lives. In bettering the lives of women, we also better the lives of children and their families. With cohesion in the family, Hong Kong will be a healthier, stronger, and more prosperous society.

‘Zonta Says No to Violence Against Women’ campaign has been launched by Zonta International since 2012. In the past, Zonta Club of Kowloon supported this campaign yearly with photo sessions, briefings to our seven Z Clubs in secondary schools & three Golden Z Clubs in university & tertiary education institutes. We also participated in the advocacy

tram ride along HK island (2013), supported a documentary film (身訴) focusing on gender violence (2014), & launched the first Chinese speaking Apps for prevention of domestic violence (2016).

Because there is a scarcity of research data in this area, the Zonta Club of Kowloon has decided to sponsor this survey 'Hong Kong Women's Experiences of Violence 2021.' The scarcity of material applies not only to Hong Kong, but also on a global basis as well.

We hope that the findings of this research will be useful to the Hong Kong Government and its various departments, civil society organizations, and NGOs in planning their policies & servicing models in the coming years. By establishing a pool of data, we hope these will help to prevent women violence in Hong Kong and give various organizations some empirical material to formulate forthcoming policies & servicing plans.

In Zonta we serve,

Miriam Lau

Honorary Member

Zonta Club of Kowloon

Winnie Teoh

Chair, Advocacy Committee

Zonta Club of Kowloon

Cecilia Kuk

President, 2020–2022

Zonta Club of Kowloon

About Zonta Club of Kowloon

Founded in 1977, Zonta Club of Kowloon was the second club chartered in Hong Kong. The club is a member of Zonta International, a global organization of executives and professionals working together to advance the status of women worldwide through service and advocacy. Altogether, Zonta International has more than 1100 clubs in 64 countries worldwide. Zonta Club of Kowloon is grouped under District 17 that includes clubs from Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore & Thailand.

Since its establishment, Zonta Club of Kowloon has worked to achieve the objectives of Zonta International. We have supported a variety of community projects through partnership with service organizations that will benefit women in distress, abuse victims, the elderly, handicapped and underprivileged. We are committed to helping our communities and to improving the legal, political, economic, educational, health and professional status of women worldwide. As of February 2022, we have 54 members and 2 Honorary members. Our club initiated the formation of Zonta Club of Macau. We are also sponsoring the activities of 7 Z Clubs in secondary schools, & 3 Golden Z Clubs in tertiary educational institutes.

Our sponsorship for this research is part of our 'Zonta Says No to Violence Against Women' campaign, a worldwide campaign of saying NO to violence, launched by all Zonta Clubs since 2012.

Acknowledgement

Many thanks to members of the Advocacy Committee of Zonta Club of Kowloon for working so hard to bring this project into fruition.

Chair: Winnie Teoh, Members: Julianne Doe, Doreen Kong, Lolita Ng, Fannia Woo, Cecilia Yao, Selina Cheng, YC Choy, Eva Kwong, Claire Liu, Christine Yip. Ex-officio: Cecilia Kuk. Also, thanks to members of the Zonta Club of Kowloon for supporting the sponsorship of this project.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Overview of sexual violence (SV) and intimate partner violence (IPV) in Hong Kong

Globally, women suffer disproportionately from sexual violence and intimate partner violence. In Hong Kong, there is evidence of a rising trend in both forms of violence against women. Findings from a telephone survey as part of the International Violence Against Women Survey in 2006 found that 25% of respondents had experienced some kind of violence (Bouhours and Broadhurst, 2015). According to statistics from the Hong Kong Police ¹, domestic violence cases increased by around 5% from 1,139 in 2020 to 1,196 in 2021. Sex crimes have also increased during the same period, with rape cases by 23.4% (from 64 to 79) and indecent assault by 49.3% (682 to 1,018). According to a media report ², of the 64 cases of rape reported to the police in 2020, nearly all perpetrators were known to the victims. According to Rainlily ³, a local Non-Government Organization providing support to women who are victims of sexual violence, between April 2020 and March 2021, they received 2,665 calls for help through their hotline and online 'Safechat' platform, an increase of 24% from the previous year. Data from the Social Welfare Department ⁴ shows nearly 2,715 cases of spouse/co-habiting partner abuse, where 85% of victims were female and 58.3% of the perpetrators were husbands of the victims.

1.2. The 2013 Hong Kong Women's Experiences of Violence Study

In 2013, the Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities (WCEO) conducted a study on Hong Kong women's experiences of violence ⁵ where 885 women responded to a questionnaire survey and six in-depth interviews were conducted. This 2013 survey collected respondents' experiences of three kinds of violence – domestic violence, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. The sample of the 2013 survey was skewed towards younger and single women. This survey found that over 25% of the respondents have experienced domestic violence, 43% have experienced sexual harassment, and 15.4% have experienced sexual violence.

1 https://www.police.gov.hk/ppp_tc/09_statistics/csc.html

2 <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3138866/sexual-violence-exhibition-gives-voice-hong-kong-victims-who>

3 <https://rainlily.org.hk/eng/news/2021/11/25/idevaw>

4 https://www.swd.gov.hk/vs/index_c.html

5 <https://rainlily.org.hk/publication/wesv13>

The classification of women's experiences of violence into domestic violence, sexual harassment, and sexual violence in the 2013 survey reflects the context and understanding of these three terms in Hong Kong at the time. Since then, it has become much clearer that sexual harassment is a form of sexual violence and domestic violence can also include sexual violence. However, it was (and is to a lesser extent still) often believed that sexual violence only refers to incidents that involve physical contact, whereas sexual harassment does not. Confusion and conflation of concepts surrounding women's experiences of these different types of violence is something that we aim to rectify in the design of this present study.

1.3. Research Objectives of the present study

The aim of this research is to provide an up-to-date picture of Hong Kong women's experiences of violence. An improvement upon the 2013 survey is to have two categories of violence experiences – sexual violence (SV) and intimate partner violence (IPV) – instead of three – domestic violence, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Taking reference from the relevant literature, in the survey we included a list of 11 types of sexual violence behaviours and eight types of intimate partner violence behaviours for respondents.

The research objectives are:

- To examine the life-time prevalence of different types of intimate partner violence and sexual violence experiences amongst Hong Kong women,
- To examine the characteristics of Hong Kong women's self-reported most serious intimate partner violence and sexual violence experiences in terms of the location, perpetrators' identity, their reactions and responses, and
- To provide recommendations for policy makers and the general public based on findings of the study.

Chapter 2. Methodology

The research consists of a questionnaire survey and individual as well as focus group in-depth interviews (see appendix A for the questionnaire and appendix B for the guiding questions for interviews).

2.1. Mixed-methods Research Design

The questionnaire survey aims to measure the prevalence and frequencies of the different types of sexual and intimate partner violence experienced by Hong Kong women, and to identify the characteristics of the most serious incidents they ever experienced, e.g. how they responded to these incidents, and how these incidents have affected them, etc.

We used in-depth interviews to collect qualitative data on how violence is experienced subjectively by women and to gain more insights on the contexts of violence. Data collected through in-depth interviews can allow us to better understand the extent of harm caused by violence.

2.2. The Survey

2.2.1. Description of the survey questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 30 questions. Questions 1–9 concern respondents' basic demographic and socio-economic background. Questions 10–19 are about their experiences of sexual violence, and questions 20–28 are on their experiences of intimate partner violence. Questions 29 and 30 ask if they need any support at the time of the survey and whether they are aware of agencies or organisations that can provide support.

2.2.2. Sampling methods for the survey

The target sample consists of females aged 15–64 who were living in Hong Kong at the time of data collection. We used purposive stratified sampling to maximize the representativeness of our sample. We tried to match the survey sample with the socio-demographics of women aged 15–64 based on data from the 2016 Population By-Census as much as possible.

2.2.3. Data collection

Data collection took place between May and December of 2021. Member organizations of the WCEO disseminated the online and paper versions of the questionnaire through their networks, including members of their

organizations and participants of their organizations' activities. We invited The Women's Foundation to distribute the online questionnaire via their weekly newsletters, and the questionnaire was also distributed to migrant workers' groups in Hong Kong. A team of research assistants from three local universities were employed to recruit respondents based on the socio-demographic characteristics of the target sample. Paper questionnaires were also administered by research assistants at WCEO member organizations' activities.

The final sample (N=1,044) falls short of the target (1,200). This is attributed to the much-reduced face-to-face activities held by WCEO organizations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This means we relied more heavily on the online questionnaire to reach our sample. The 45+ population are less likely to be conversant with technology and may be less able or motivated to complete the online questionnaire. This explains the sample's skewness towards younger respondents.

For face-to-face administered questionnaires, the research assistants would first explain to the respondents the definitions and types of behaviours that fall under 'sexual violence' and 'intimate partner violence' means. In the online version these descriptions are presented before the main questionnaire. Informed consent from the respondents is obtained for both.

2.2.4. Data analysis

We performed bi-variate analyses on the survey data, and the chi-squared test was used to test for significance in differences in the socio-demographic backgrounds of respondents who have and have not experienced sexual violence and intimate partner violence, as well as those who have and have not responded to these incidents. Additional multivariate analyses (binary logistic regression) were conducted on two dependent variables – experience of SV and experience of IPV.

2.3. Description of the focus groups and individual interviews

2.3.1. Description of the interview schedule

The interviews are based on an interview schedule that roughly covers the various parts of the survey questionnaire. The format is semi-structured and open-ended, with the interviewer inviting the interviewees to describe their experiences of violence, including narration of the incidents, how they have been affected, their help seeking process and their reflections.

2.3.2. Sampling method

The sample used in the qualitative part of the study was selected purposely. We invited member organisations of the WCEO that offer supporting services to victims of violence to refer suitable users to us. A total of 14 women who have experienced various forms of sexual and intimate partner violence participated in individual interviews. Three focus groups with a total of 14 participants were conducted. Two case workers were also interviewed. The total number of interviewees is therefore 30.

2.3.3. Data collection

The data collection period was between June and September 2021. We conducted in depth, semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions with the sample. The original plan to conduct only focus interviews was changed because upon consultation with case workers, this format was deemed unsuitable for some service users who may feel uncomfortable discussing personal experiences in a group setting. Some individual interviews were accompanied by a case worker out of concern for the emotional well-being of the interviewees. For some service users who were either too emotionally distressed or were in shelters (the address of which need to be kept secret), we interviewed their case workers who relayed their situations to us. Interviewees (apart from the case workers) were given a \$100 supermarket cash coupon as a token of appreciation for their time. All interviews took place in member organisations of the WCEO apart from one. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

2.3.4. Data analysis

The transcripts were analysed thematically. We organized the data based on themes that correspond to data collected in the survey questionnaire and also themes that emerged organically from the data itself. We focused on the subjective experiences of the women and the contexts of these experiences.

Chapter 3. Survey Findings

3.1. Socio-demographic background of the sample

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic background of respondents to the survey compared with that of the general population based on Hong Kong's 2016 population by-census.

Table 1 Socio-demographic background of survey sample compared to the general population

		Sample Survey		Population*	
		N	(%)	N	(%)
Age	15-24	474	47.59	389211	13.24
	25-34	207	20.78	626726	21.32
	35-44	158	15.86	678528	23.09
	45-54	85	8.53	677082	23.04
	55-64	42	4.22	567383	19.31
	65+	30	3.01	-	-
	Total	996	100.00	2938930	100.00
Marital Status	Never married	652	62.87	982523	33.43
	Married	263	25.36	1678247	57.10
	Widowed	13	1.25	81863	2.79
	Divorced	46	4.44	180039	6.13
	Separated	16	1.54	16258	0.55
	Co-habiting	37	3.57	-	-
	Others	10	0.96	-	-
Total	1037	100.00	2938930	100.00	
Educational Attainment (Highest Level Completed)	No schooling/ Pre-primary	2	0.2	180019	6.13
	Primary	13	1.27	349531	11.89
	Lower secondary	71	6.93	539571	18.36
	Upper secondary	219	21.39	884507	30.10
	Post-secondary: Diploma/ Certificate	83	8.11	196100	6.67
	Post-secondary: Sub-degree	70	6.84	128491	4.37
	Post-secondary: Degree	560	54.69	660711	22.48
	Others	6	0.54	-	-
Total	1024	100.00	2938930	100.00	
Economic Activity Status	Employees	408	39.34	1713313	58.30
	Employers	9	0.87	32160	1.09
	Self-employed	50	4.82	69590	2.37
	Unpaid family workers	21	2.03	8241	0.28
	Homemakers	80	7.71	479979	16.33
	Students	391	37.7	214228	7.29
	Retired	50	4.82	166885	5.68
	Others	28	2.7	254534	8.66
	Total	1037	100.00	2938930	100.00
	Manufacturing	12	2.47	53428	2.93
	Construction	8	1.65	33982	1.86

Industry	Import/export, wholesale and retail trades	39	8.02	361982	19.85
	Transportation, storage, postal and courier services	10	2.06	74532	4.09
	Accommodation and food services	18	3.7	150683	8.26
	Information and communications	24	4.94	39624	2.17
	Financing and insurance	40	8.23	123616	6.78
	Real estate, professional and business services	34	7	263724	14.46
	Public administration, education, human health and social work activities	209	43	337977	18.54
	Miscellaneous social and personal services	38	7.82	378348	20.75
	Others	54	11.11	5408	0.30
	Total	486	100.00	1823304	100.00
Occupation	Managers and administrators	58	12.83	127833	7.01
	Professionals	157	34.73	111694	6.13
	Associate professionals	39	8.63	332950	18.26
	Clerical support workers	74	16.37	362731	19.89
	Service and sales workers	87	19.25	352689	19.34
	Craft and related workers	11	2.43	17002	0.93
	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	1	0.22	7380	0.40
	Elementary occupations	16	3.54	509518	27.94
	Skilled agricultural and fishery workers; and occupations not classifiable	9	1.99	1507	0.08
	Total	452	100.00	1823304	100.00

* Based on data from Hong Kong's 2016 population by-census

The sample is skewed towards younger women. In terms of occupation, the sample is over-represented in managers and administrators and professionals, and underrepresented in elementary occupations. Overall, our sample consists of younger, better-educated women than the general population. There is an over-representation of 14 to 24-year-olds compared to the population (47.59% vs. 13.25%), and

under-representation in the 35+ age groups. This is similar to the 2013 study's sample where 48.1% of the sample aged 19–29 years old ⁶.

3.2. Prevalence of Sexual Violence

As seen in table 2 below, 37.54% of valid responses ⁷ reported having experienced some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. Amongst these respondents, the most commonly experienced forms of sexual violence are 'discussing sexual topics' (28.91%), 'non-penetrative sexual assault' (28.39%) followed by 'unwanted sexual attention' (17.97%).

Table 2. Sexual violence experience of respondents

Ever experienced SV	n	%
Yes	384	37.54
No	639	62.46
Valid total	1023	100.00

Table 3. Type(s) of sexual violence experienced by respondents

Prevalence Of Sexual violence	n	%
Penetrative sexual assault	38	9.90
Non-penetrative Sexual assault	109	28.39
Threatened	4	1.04
Exhibitionism	35	9.11
Discussing sexual topics	111	28.91
Unwanted sexual attention	69	17.97
Displaying sexual images	3	0.78
Voyeurism	5	1.30
Up-the-skirt photos	5	1.30
Blackmailing	1	0.26
Others	4	1.04
Valid total	384	100.00

Using the chi-squared test, we compared the socio-demographic backgrounds of those who have and have not experienced sexual violence, and found that younger, never married heterosexual respondents were significantly more likely to have experienced sexual violence. Employees, professionals, those in the middle- and higher-income brackets and those with post-secondary degree educational attainment were also significantly more likely to have experienced sexual violence.

⁶ The 2013 study did not include respondents under the age of 19.

⁷ Unless otherwise stated, all percentages thereafter reported refer to valid responses.

Table 4. Socio-demographic background of respondents who have and have not experienced sexual violence

		Ever experienced SV				p	Total
		Yes		No			
		n	%	n	%		
Gender	Female	369	98.66	610	99.19	0.63	979
	Transgender	5	1.34	5	0.81		10
	Total	374	100.00	615	100.00		989
Age	15-25	174	47.41	295	48.28	0.00	469
	26-35	108	29.43	92	15.06		200
	36-45	52	14.17	103	16.86		155
	46-55	19	5.18	63	10.31		82
	56-65	9	2.45	33	5.40		42
	65+	5	1.36	25	4.09		30
	Total	367	100.00	611	100.00		978
Sex Orientation	Heterosexual	268	70.90	556	87.84	0.00	824
	Homosexual	21	5.56	15	2.37		36
	Bisexual	69	18.25	54	8.53		123
	Others	20	5.29	8	1.26		28
	Total	378	100.00	633	100.00		1011
Marital Status	Never Married	259	68.52	382	59.87	0.00	641
	Married	69	18.25	189	29.62		258
	Cohabiting	25	6.61	10	1.57		35
	Separated	2	0.53	14	2.19		16
	Divorced	12	3.17	31	4.86		43
	Widowed	5	1.32	8	1.25		13
	Others	6	1.59	4	0.63		10
	Total	378	100.00	638	100.00		1016
Economic Activity Status	Employee	172	45.14	226	35.53	0.00	398
	Employer	7	1.84	2	0.31		9
	Self-employed	26	6.82	22	3.46		48
	Unpaid family worker	8	2.10	12	1.89		20
	Homemaker	17	4.46	60	9.43		77
	Student	133	34.91	256	40.25		389
	Retired	7	1.84	42	6.60		49
	Others	11	2.89	16	2.52		27
	Total	381	100.00	636	100.00		1017

Occupation	Managers and Admin	25	12.20	32	13.17	0.00	57
	Professionals	82	40.00	72	29.63		154
	Associate Professionals	22	10.73	17	7.00		39
	Clerical support workers	22	10.73	52	21.40		74
	Services and sales workers	36	17.56	51	20.99		87
	Crafted and related workers	8	3.90	3	1.23		11
	Plant and machine operators	0	0.00	1	0.41		1
	Elementary Occupations	5	2.44	11	4.53		16
	Skilled agric and fishery; occupa not classified	5	2.44	4	1.65		9
	Total	205	100.00	243	100.00		448
Monthly Salary/Income	No income	8	3.77	10	3.97	0.04	18
	Less than 5000	2	0.94	10	4.00		12
	5000-10000	16	7.55	19	7.54		35
	10001-15000	33	15.57	38	15.08		71
	15001-20000	41	19.34	46	18.25		87
	20001-25000	37	17.45	35	13.89		72
	25001-30000	15	7.08	24	9.52		39
	30001-35000	19	8.96	27	10.71		46
	35000+	41	19.34	43	17.06		84
	Total	212	100.00	252	100.00		464
Education Attainment	No schooling/preschool educ	1	0.26	1	0.16	0.00	2
	Elementary sch or pre-primary	1	0.26	12	1.89		13
	Lower secondary (1-3)	17	4.47	51	8.03		68
	Upper sec (4-7)	67	17.63	150	23.62		217
	Post-secondary (Diploma/cert)	26	6.84	56	8.82		82

Post-Secondary (Sub-degree/Assoc degree)	23	6.05	46	7.24	69
Post-secondary (degree)	160	42.11	283	44.57	443
Masters and above	83	21.84	32	5.04	115
Others	2	0.53	4	0.63	6
Total	380	100.00	635	100.00	1015

3.3. The most serious sexual violence incident experienced
 We asked respondents to indicate the most serious sexual violence incident they have experienced. Non-penetrative sexual assault is the most common (38.24%), followed by penetrative sexual assault (16.34%) and discussing sexual topics (11.76%).

Table 5. The most serious sexual violence incident respondents ever encountered

Incident type	n	%
Penetrative sexual assault	50	16.34
Non-penetrative sexual assault	117	38.24
Forcing or threatening	10	3.27
Exhibitionism	18	5.88
Discussing sexual topics	36	11.76
Unwanted sexual attention	32	10.46
Displaying sexual images	7	2.29
Voyeurism	7	2.29
Taking up-the-skirt photos	7	2.29
Spreading private images	8	2.61
Threatening or blackmailing	3	0.98
Others	11	3.59
Valid total	306	100.00

While discussing sexual topics' is most commonly experienced, 'non-penetrative sexual assault' is, for the largest proportion of respondents, the most serious type of sexual violence they ever encountered. Comparing this with the figures on prevalence, this suggests that 78 respondents may not have regarded any of the sexual violence they ever experienced as 'serious'.

Non-penetrative sexual assault refers to any form of unwanted bodily physical contact of a sexual nature, and can range from serious sexual assault that leads to physical injuries, to groping and sexual touching. The high percentage of respondents who have experienced non-penetrative sexual assault, shows how women's bodies are frequently and commonly violated.

In the following sections we will describe more findings regarding the most serious sexual violence incident respondents have ever experienced.

3.3.1. Where it happened

For the most serious sexual violence encounters respondents ever experienced, the most frequently reported location of their occurrence is the home of the respondent or the perpetrator(s) (29.73%), followed by public transport (15.54%) and schools (9.46%). It is worth noting that just over 5% of these incidents happened in virtual space (i.e. online forums, social media, communication software).

Table 6. The most frequently reported location of the occurrence of respondents' most serious sexual violence experience

Location	n	%
Home (own or offender's)	88	29.73
Dormitory	5	1.69
School	28	9.46
Public toilet	4	1.35
Breastfeeding room	1	0.34
Hotel/guest house	25	8.45
Public transport	46	15.54
Online forums	1	0.34
Shopping mall	13	4.39
Entertainment venues	5	1.69
Care sharing service	12	4.05
Social media	8	2.70
Workplace	16	5.41
Changing room	1	0.34
Private room	3	1.01
Fitting room	2	0.68
On the street	14	4.73
Communication software	6	2.03
Others	18	6.08
Valid total	296	100.00

The findings suggest that sexual violence is not only prevalent but could occur anywhere. The high percentage who reported ‘home’ suggests that there is likely to be a significant proportion of intimate partner violence or domestic violence that are of a sexual nature.

3.3.2. Number of perpetrators

Such incidents typically involved only one person (85.26%), but having nearly 15% of cases involving more than one perpetrator is alarming, because this suggests planning of and joining in of accomplices in sexual violence.

Table 7. The number of major offender(s) involved in respondents’ most serious sexual violence experience

Number of major offender(s)	n	%
Only one Person	266	85.26
More than one person	46	14.74
Valid total	312	100.00

3.3.3. Identity and gender of the perpetrators

Only a minority of the perpetrators are strangers even though as a single category it is the largest (30.62%), followed by former partners (11.11%), friends (9.38%), and family members or relatives (8.15%). The vast majority of perpetrators were male (92.49%), although a small percentage were not sure (1.80%), suggesting that these could have been fleeting encounters or on-line incidents where it was impossible to identify the perpetrator’s gender. It is just as noteworthy that 5.41% of the perpetrators were female, indicating that although it constitutes a small minority, sexual violence can clearly be performed by women to women.

Table 8. Identity of the offender(s) in respondents' most serious sexual violence experience

Identity of the offender(s)	n	%
Legal spouse	5	1.23
Former legal spouse	2	0.49
Partner	18	4.44
Former partner	45	11.11
Mother	3	0.74
Father	9	2.22
Family friends (e.g., friends of parents)	6	1.48
Other Relatives/family members	33	8.15
Neighbours	9	2.22
Guests/customers	8	1.98
Employers/bosses/co-workers	23	5.68
Friends	38	9.38
Teachers	9	2.22
Classmates	34	8.40
Online friend(s)	14	3.46
Stranger(s)	124	30.62
Others	18	4.44
Not Sure	7	1.73
Valid total	405	100.00

Table 9. Major offender's gender in respondents' most serious sexual violence experience

Major offender's gender	n	%
Male	308	92.49
Female	18	5.41
Other	1	0.30
Not sure	6	1.80
Valid total	333	100.00

3.3.4. Reaction at the time of the incident

Most respondents (75%) did not react to the sexual violence incident at the time. There is no statistically significant difference in the socio-demographic characteristics of those who did and did not react, meaning that it is generally hard for women to do anything at the time when sexual violence occurs. The majority of respondents did not react overtly, as they did not know how to react (29.07%), pretended nothing happened (21.09%) or felt like they had to accept the situation (18.21%). Respondents who gave an overt reaction did so by glaring at the perpetrator(s) (10.54%), trying to escape or run away (8.31%), trying to seek help from others (3.51%) and to calling out (2.56%).

Table 10. Whether respondents reacted to their most serious sexual violence experience at the time

Whether reacted to SV	n	%
No	288	75.00
Yes	96	25.00
Valid total	384	100.00

Table 11. Respondents' reaction to their most serious sexual violence experience

Reactions to SV	n	%
Call out	8	2.56
Struggle to escape/run away	26	8.31
Seek help from others	11	3.51
Glare at them	33	10.54
Fight back with force	5	1.60
Pretend nothing happened	66	21.09
Forced to accept it	57	18.21
Didn't know how to react	91	29.07
Others	16	5.11
Valid total	313	100.00

Given that perpetrators were mostly not strangers to the victims, it makes sense that they were unable to react when the incident occurred. It is well-known that victims of sexual violence tend to doubt themselves and have reservations about resisting or reacting, and this is particularly so when perpetrators are not strangers but friends, co-workers teachers, and even family members. Obstacles to women's ability to react to sexual violence remains a serious issue that educators and policy makers need to address.

Table 12. Socio-demographic backgrounds of respondents who have and have not reacted to their most serious sexual violence experience when it occurred

		Reacted to SV when it occurred					
		No		Yes		p	Total
		n	%	n	%		
Gender	Female	281	99.29	87	97.75	0.12	368
	Transgender	2	0.71	2	2.25		4
	Valid Total	283	100.00	89	100.00		372
	Missing	5	1.74	7	7.29		12
	Total	288	100.00	96	100.00		384
Age	15-25	129	46.24	41	45.56	0.52	170
	26-35	82	29.39	27	30.00		109
	36-45	40	14.34	15	16.67		55
	46-55	14	5.02	6	6.67		20
	56-65	9	3.23	1	1.11		10
	65+	5	1.79	0	0.00		5
	Valid Total	279	100.00	90	100.00		369
	Missing	9	3.13	6	6.25		15
	Total	288	100.00	96	100.00		384
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	200	69.93	69	74.19	0.33	269
	Homosexual	16	5.59	6	6.45		22
	Bisexual	54	18.88	15	16.13		69
	Others	16	5.59	3	3.23		19
	Valid Total	286	100.00	93	100.00		379
	Missing	2	0.69	3	3.13		5
	Total	288	100.00	96	100.00		384

Marital Status	Never Married	191	66.78	63	67.74	0.39	254
	Married	55	19.23	20	21.51		75
	Cohabiting	18	6.29	3	3.23		21
	Separated	4	1.40	1	1.08		5
	Divorced	9	3.15	5	5.38		14
	Widowed	5	1.75	0	0.00		5
	Others	4	1.40	1	1.08		5
	Valid Total	286	100.00	93	100.00		379
	Missing	2	0.69	3	3.13		5
	Total	288	100.00	96	100.00		384
Economic Activity	Employee	125	43.86	49	51.04	0.18	174
	Employer	1	0.35	3	3.13		4
	Self-employed	21	7.37	2	2.08		23
	Unpaid family worker	7	2.46	3	3.13		10
	Homemaker	17	5.96	6	6.25		23
	Student	98	34.39	28	29.17		126
	Retired	8	2.81	2	2.08		10
	Others	8	2.81	3	3.13		11
	Valid Total	285	100.00	96	100.00		381
	Missing	3	1.04	0	0.00		3
Total	288	100.00	96	100.00	384		
Occupation	Managers and Admin.	18	12.24	2	3.70	0.37	20
	Professionals	60	40.82	22	40.74		82
	Associate Professionals	14	9.52	8	14.81		22
	Clerical support workers	14	9.52	9	16.67		23
	Services and sales workers	28	19.05	7	12.96		35
	Crafted and related workers	4	2.72	3	5.56		7
	Elementary Occupations	5	3.40	2	3.70		7
	Skilled agric. and fishery; and unclassified	4	2.72	1	1.85		5
	Valid Total	147	100.00	54	100.00		204
	Missing	141	48.96	42	43.75		183
Total	288	100.00	96	100.00	384		
Monthly Income	No income	5	3.31	5	8.77	10	
	Less than 5000	3	1.99	1	1.75	4	
	5000-10000	14	9.27	3	5.26	17	
	10001-15000	21	13.91	8	14.04	29	
	15001-20000	29	19.21	8	14.04	37	
	20001-25000	22	14.57	11	19.30	33	

	25001-30000	11	7.28	7	12.28	0.25	18
	30001-35000	19	12.58	2	3.51		21
	35000+	27	17.88	12	21.05		39
	Valid Total	151	100.00	57	100.00		208
	Missing	137	47.57	39	40.63		176
	Total	288	100.00	96	100.00		384
Education Attainment	No schooling/preschool educ.	0	0.00	1	1.05	0.50	1
	Elementary sch. or pre-primary	1	0.35	0	0.00		1
	Lower secondary (1-3)	12	4.24	9	9.47		21
	Upper sec (4-7)	51	18.02	16	16.84		67
	Post-secondary (Diploma/cert)	23	8.13	7	7.37		30
	Post-Secondary (Sub-degree/Assoc degree)	16	5.65	5	5.26		21
	Post-secondary (degree)	123	43.46	37	38.95		160
	Masters and above	55	19.43	20	21.05		75
	Others	2	0.71	0	0.00		2
	Valid Total	283	100.00	95	100.00		378
	Missing	5	1.74	1	1.04		6
	Total	288	100.00	96	100.00		384

3.3.5. Feelings about the incident

Respondents' most commonly reported feelings towards their most serious sexual violence encounter is that of anger and dissatisfaction (26.02%), followed by fear of interacting with others (17.24%) and helplessness (16.30%). Many also felt sad/wronged (13.17%) and depressed/anxious (7.52%).

Table 13. Respondents' feeling(s) after their most serious sexual violence experience

Feelings towards SV	n	%
Insecure	18	5.64
Depressed/anxious	24	7.52
Sad/wronged	42	13.17
Angry/dissatisfied	83	26.02
Fear of interacting with others	55	17.24
Unable to focus on other things	13	4.08
Helpless	52	16.30
Unfair/Unjust	9	2.82
No strong reaction/emotion	11	3.45
Others	12	3.76
Valid total	319	100.00

3.3.6. Changes to daily life after the incident

Respondents also reported changes to their daily lives after the incident. These include becoming always vigilant or cautious (30.77%), trying to avoid the perpetrators (27.24%) and changing their appearances or way of dress (20.19%). The first two avoidant behaviours as well as changing the route to work (4.17%) and avoiding going out (3.21%) reduce their sense of security and limit their freedom of movement. Changing appearances suggests self-blame – the assumption being that it is their appearance that caused the perpetrator to have done what they did.

Table 14. Respondents' change of lifestyle after their most serious sexual violence experience

Lifestyle changes after SV	n	%
Change route to work	13	4.17
Indulge yourself	16	5.13
Try to avoid going out	10	3.21
Try to avoid interaction with perpetrator(s)	85	27.24
Always stay vigilant/cautious	96	30.77
No change	14	4.49
Change style of clothing/appearance	63	20.19
Others	15	4.81
Valid total	312	100.00

3.3.7. Help seeking

Help seeking is different from reaction to the event, because reaction refers to response at the time of the incident, whereas help seeking may come a long time afterwards. Over half (60.3%) of respondents said they have sought help, and chi-squared tests did not show any statistically significant differences in the socio-demographic characteristics of those did and did not seek help. Women, regardless of their background, may find it difficult to ask for help.

Table 15. Whether respondents sought help after their most serious sexual violence experience

Whether sought help after SV	n	%
No	183	39.70
Yes	278	60.30
Valid total	461	100.00

For those who sought help of some kind, the most common means was by telling family or friends.

Table 16. Type of help sought after respondents' most serious sexual violence incident

Type of help sought after SV	n	%
Called the Police	24	5.21
Sought help from social service agencies/professionals	34	7.38
Told family/friends	160	34.71
Complained to work/unit/org. you worked at	15	3.25
Filed civil claim against perpetrator(s)	4	0.87
Reported perpetrator(s) to website/comm. software	10	2.17
Sought professional help from lawyer/legal personnel	2	0.43
Sought help from psychologist/psychiatrist	24	5.21
Retaliate/found someone to retaliate	5	1.08
Did not seek help	158	34.27
Others	25	5.42
Valid total	461	100.00

3.3.8. Reason for not telling or seeking help

The most common reason for not seeking help is not having time or energy to deal with it (16.40%), followed by feeling embarrassed or ashamed (15.08%) and not knowing how to seek help (10.05%). It is worth noting that some respondents were unsure of the severity of what had happened. For example, 9.52% said they were not sure if the behaviour in question violated the law. This indicates that many women are probably unaware of what kinds of behaviours are unlawful under the current legislation. This answer goes hand in hand with 'afraid

others may not believe/blame you for what happened’ (9.26%) and afraid of causing trouble or making a big deal out of the situation (8.73%). The overall picture indicates that there are many obstacles preventing women who suffer from sexual violence to seek help.

Table 17. Reasons for respondents not seeking help after their most serious sexual violence experience

Reasons for not seeking help after SV	n	%
Did not know how to ask/seek help	38	10.05
Felt embarrassed /ashamed	57	15.08
Afraid others may not believe/blame you for what happened	35	9.26
No time/Energy to deal with it	62	16.40
Not sure if perpetrator’s behaviour violates the law	36	9.52
Feel will be useless to ask for help/do not trust law enforcement	32	8.47
Worried seeking help would worsen relationship with offender	32	8.47
Afraid perpetrator will be negatively affected by seeking help	12	3.17
Felt that this type of incidents is common	28	7.41
Afraid of trouble/didn’t want to make a big deal out of it	33	8.73
Covid affected my help seeking/reporting	1	0.26
Other	12	3.17
Valid total	378	100.00

3.4. Prevalence of intimate partner violence

In the valid sample, 26.37% of the valid sample have experienced some form of intimate partner violence. As is the case with sexual violence, younger, never married women and those who fall around the median monthly income range and those with post-secondary education were more likely to have experienced intimate partner violence.

Table 18. Intimate partner violence experience of respondents

Ever experienced IPV	n	%
Yes	259	26.37
No	723	73.63
Valid total	982	100.00

Amongst the types of intimate partner violence experienced, sexual violence was the most common (35.52%), followed by verbal insults or threats (22.01%) and physical violence (14.29). Non-physical violence, including stalking (13.90%), restriction of social contacts (5.02%), and cutting off financial support (2.32%) were also reported.

Table 19. Type(s) of intimate partner violence experienced by respondents

Types of IPV experienced	n	%
Verbally insult or threaten you	57	22.01
Use physical violence	37	14.29
Stalking behaviour	36	13.90
Forbid you to contact friends/family	13	5.02
Sexually assault/forced sex	92	35.52
Cut off financial support	6	2.32
Threaten family under alcohol influence	10	3.86
Threaten/take private image to blackmail	3	1.16
Others	5	1.93
Valid total	259	100.00

When asked about the most serious intimate partner violence incident experienced, physical violence was most frequently reported (30.53%), followed by sexual violence (25.95%) and verbal insult or threats (22.14%).

Table 20. The most serious incident of intimate partner violence respondents experienced

Most serious IPV experienced	n	%
Verbally insult or threaten you	29	22.14
Use physical violence	40	30.53
Stalking behaviour	12	9.16
Forbid you to contact friends/family	3	2.29
Sexually assault/forced sex	34	25.95
Cut off financial support	2	1.53
Threaten family under alcohol influence	2	1.53
Threaten/take private image to blackmail	4	3.05
Others	5	3.82
Valid total	131	100.00

3.5. The most serious intimate partner violence incident experienced

3.5.1 Where it happened

The most common location of intimate partner violence is the victim's or the perpetrator's home (48.31%), but such incidents also occur in breastfeeding rooms (8.70%) and through communication software such (7.25%)

Table 21. The most frequently reported location of the occurrence of respondents' most serious intimate partner violence experience

Location	n	%
Home (own or offender's)	100	48.31
Dormitory	4	1.93
School	10	4.83
Public Toilet	2	0.97
Breastfeeding room	18	8.70
Hotel/Guest House/B&B	6	2.90
Public transport	5	2.42
Online forums/Pornographic websites	8	3.86
Shopping mall/Store	6	2.90
Entertainment venues	1	0.48
Car sharing service	7	3.38
Social media	2	0.97
Workplace	2	0.97
Private car	2	0.97
Email	1	0.48
Fitting Room	12	5.80
Communication software	15	7.25
Others	6	2.90
Valid total	207	100.00

3.5.2. Identity and gender of the abusers

Abusers were mostly former partners (63.77%), as well as current (12.32%) and former spouses (11.59%). As for their gender, 88.97% were male. With 10.29% of perpetrators being female, this again points to the fact that we need to be aware that intimate partner violence can certainly take place in same sex relationships.

Table 22. Identity of the abuser in respondents' most serious intimate partner violence experience

Identity of the Abuser	n	%
Current legal spouse	17	12.32
Former legal spouse	16	11.59
Current partner	9	6.52
Former partner	88	63.77
Others	8	5.80
Valid total	138	100.00

Table 23. Major abuser’s gender in respondents’ most serious intimate partner violence experience

Abuser’s gender	n	%
Male	121	88.97
Female	14	10.29
Not sure	1	0.74
Valid total	136	100.00

3.5.3. Reaction at the time of the incident

Similar to the findings for sexual violence, the majority of respondents with intimate partner violence experience said they did not react at the time (68.86%). Women in the 36–45 age group are more likely to have reacted to the violence. Apart from age, none of the other socio–demographic variables made a statistically significant difference. This finding is in line with that of sexual violence, i.e., background makes little difference to how difficult it is for women to react to violence.

Table 24. Whether respondents reacted to their most serious intimate partner violence experience at the time

Whether reacted to IPV	n	%
No	168	64.86
Yes	91	35.14
Valid total	259	100.00

Table 25. Socio-demographic backgrounds of respondents who have and have not reacted to their most serious intimate partner violence incident when it occurred

		Reacted to IPV when it occurred					
		No		Yes		p	Total
		n	%	n	%		
Gender	Female	158	99.37	86	98.85	0.86	244
	Transgender	1	0.63	1	1.15		2
	Valid Total	159	100.00	87	100.00		246
	Missing	9	5.36	4	4.40		13
	Total	168	100.00	91	100.00		259
Age	15-25	68	42.77	33	37.50	0.03	101
	26-35	43	27.04	23	26.14		66
	36-45	13	8.18	19	21.59		32
	46-55	17	10.69	5	5.68		22
	56-65	12	7.55	2	2.27		14
	65+	6	3.77	6	6.82		12

	Valid Total	159	100.00	88	100.00		247	
	Missing	9	5.36	3	3.30		12	
	Total	168	100.00	91	100.00		259	
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	125	74.85	68	75.56	0.79	193	
	Homosexual	8	4.79	7	7.78		15	
	Bisexual	27	16.17	11	12.22		38	
	Others	7	4.19	4	4.44		11	
	Valid Total	167	100.00	90	100.00			
	Missing	1	0.60	1	1.10		2	
	Total	168	100.00	91	100.00			259
Marital Status	Never Married	102	61.82	51	56.67	0.33	153	
	Married	39	23.64	18	20.00		57	
	Cohabiting	6	3.64	9	10.00		15	
	Separated	6	3.64	2	2.20		8	
	Divorced	6	3.64	7	7.78		13	
	Widowed	2	1.21	2	2.22		4	
	Others	4	2.42	1	1.13		5	
	Valid Total	165	100.00	90	100.00			255
	Missing	3	1.79	1	1.10		4	
	Total	168	100.00	91	100.00			259
Economic Activity status	Employee	72	42.86	36	40.00	0.26	108	
	Employer	2	1.19	3	3.33		5	
	Self-employed	8	4.76	8	8.89		16	
	Unpaid family worker	1	0.60	3	3.33		4	
	Homemaker	11	6.55	7	7.78		18	
	Student	53	31.55	26	28.89		79	
	Retired	14	8.33	6	6.67		20	
	Others	7	4.17	1	1.11		8	
	Valid Total	168	100.01	90	100.00			258
	Missing	0	0.00	1	1.10		1	
	Total	168	100.00	91	100.00			259
Occupation	Managers and Admin	11	13.10	4	9.09	0.77	15	
	Professionals	33	39.29	19	43.18		52	
	Associate Professionals	11	13.10	4	9.09		15	
	Clerical support workers	6	7.14	5	11.36		11	
	Services and sales workers	11	13.10	9	20.45		20	
	Crafted and related workers	4	4.76	0	0.00		4	
	Elementary Occupations	5	5.95	2	4.55		7	

	Skilled agric. and fishery; and unclassified	3	3.57	1	2.27		4
	Valid Total	84	100.00	44	100.00		128
	Missing	84	50.00	47	51.65		131
	Total	168	100.00	91	100.00		259
Monthly Salary/Income	No income	3	3.49	2	4.76	0.90	5
	Less than 5000	1	1.16	2	4.76		3
	5000-10000	8	9.30	5	11.90		13
	10001-15000	15	17.44	5	11.90		20
	15001-20000	16	18.60	7	16.67		23
	20001-25000	10	11.63	7	16.67		17
	25001-30000	6	6.98	3	7.14		9
	30001-35000	7	8.14	4	9.52		11
	35000+	20	23.26	7	16.67		27
	Valid Total	86	100.00	42	100.00		128
	Missing	82	48.81	49	53.85		131
	Total	168	100.00	91	100.00		259
Education Attainment	No schooling/preschool educ.	1	0.60	0	0.00	0.31	1
	Elementary sch or pre-primary	1	0.60	2	2.30		3
	Lower secondary (1-3)	8	4.79	9	10.34		17
	Upper sec (4-7)	31	18.56	14	16.09		45
	Post-secondary (Diploma/cert)	14	8.38	9	10.34		23
	Post-Secondary (Sub-degree/Assoc degree)	11	6.59	6	6.90		17
	Post-secondary (degree)	68	40.72	30	34.48		98
	Masters and above	32	19.16	17	19.54		49
	Others	1	0.60	0	0.00		1
	Valid Total	167	100.00	87	100.00		254
	Missing	1	0.60	4	4.40		5
	Total	168	100.00	91	100.00		259

Most women who were able to make an overt reaction (i.e. they did something to show their objection to the treatment) did so by trying to run away (11.20%) and by calling out or screaming for help (7.762%). For the vast majority, their reaction was of a passive kind, with 27.80% saying they were 'forced to accept it', 19.69% said they didn't know how to react, while 10.81% said they pretended nothing happened.

Table 26. Respondents' reaction to their most serious intimate partner violence experience

Reactions to IPV	n	%
Call out loudly/Scream	20	7.72
Struggle to escape/Run away	29	11.20
Seek help from others around you	8	3.09
Glare at them/look at them angrily	19	7.34
Fight back with force	15	5.79
Pretend nothing happened	28	10.81
Forced to accept it	72	27.80
Didn't know how to react	51	19.69
Others	17	6.56
Valid total	259	100.00

3.5.4. Feelings about the incident

Respondents reported a number of negative feelings after the incident, including feeling insecure (12.76%), depressed/anxious/worried (11.89%), wanting to escape from/sever the relationship (11.89%), and feelings of self-blame (11.54%). Many also felt angry/dissatisfied (10.31%), helpless (7.87%) and fearful (7.69%).

Table 27. Respondents' feeling(s) after the intimate partner violence experience

Feelings towards IPV	n	%
Insecure	73	12.76
Depressed/anxious/worried	68	11.89
Sad/Wronged	67	11.71
Angry/Dissatisfied	59	10.31
Fear of interacting with others/the abuser	44	7.69
Unable to focus on other things	42	7.34
Helpless	45	7.87
Unfair/unjust	26	4.55
No strong reaction/emotion	10	1.75
Regret/feel that you chose the wrong partner	66	11.54
Want to escape/sever the relationship	68	11.89
Others	4	0.70
Valid total	572	100.00

3.5.5. Changes to daily life after the experience

Similar to victims of sexual violence, victims of intimate partner violence also became avoidant or withdrawn (38.04%) and vigilant/cautious about their personal safety (31.52%). It is worth noting that nearly 18% said that there were no changes to their lifestyle. A possible interpretation of this is that they might have normalized and accepted the abuse as unavoidable and unchangeable.

Table 28. Respondents' change of lifestyle after the intimate partner violence experience

Lifestyle changes after IPV	n	%
Try to avoid going out/home	11	5.98
Try to avoid interacting with abuser/others	70	38.04
Always stay vigilant/cautious	58	31.52
No change	33	17.93
Others	12	6.52
Valid total	184	100.00

3.5.6. Help seeking

Just over half of the respondents said they sought help after having experienced the most serious intimate partner violence incident (51.35%), a higher figure than that for sexual violence.

Table 29. Whether respondents sought help after their most serious intimate partner violence experience

Whether sought help after IPV	n	%
No	126	48.65
Yes	133	51.35
Valid total	259	100.00

When asked how they dealt with the incident afterwards, going to family and friends for support is most commonly mentioned (27.73%), and 12.27% sought help from social service agencies or professionals, while 11.82% sought separation or divorce. A significant proportion (9.09%) sought help from mental health professionals. It is worth noting that over 20% said they did not seek help.

Table 30. Types of help sought after respondents' most serious intimate partner violence experience

Types of help sought after IPV	n	%
Called the police	11	5.00
Sought a separation/divorce	26	11.82
Told family and friends	61	27.73
Filed a civil claim against abuser	4	1.82
Sought help from social service agencies/professionals	27	12.27
Sought professional help from lawyer/legal personnel	1	0.45
Sought help from a psychologist/psychiatrist	20	9.09
Reported the abuser to website/comm. software	6	2.73
Retaliated/found someone to retaliate	3	1.36
Did not seek help	46	20.91
Others	15	6.82
Valid total	220	100.00

3.5.7. Reason for not telling or seeking help

Amongst the reasons given for not seeking help, feeling embarrassed or ashamed was most frequently mentioned (13.97%), followed by the fear that others would not believe them or would blame them (12.50%) and reluctance to cause trouble or making a big deal out of the situation (12.50%). Many also said they worry that seeking help would worsen the relationship with the abuser (11.76%) or would negatively affect the abuser (8.09%). Reasons for not seeking help are therefore similar to those of respondents who suffered from sexual violence.

Table 31. Reasons for respondents not seeking help after their most serious intimate partner violence experience

Reasons for not seeking help after IPV	n	%
Didn't know how to ask/seek help	12	8.82
Felt embarrassed/didn't want others to know	19	13.97
Afraid others may not believe/may blame you for what happened	17	12.50
Afraid of trouble/didn't want to make a big deal out of it	17	12.50
Not sure if the abuser's behaviour violated the law	13	9.56
Felt that it would be useless to ask for help/do not trust law enforcement	5	3.68
Worried that seeking help would worsen relationship with abuser	16	11.76
Afraid abuser will be negatively affected	11	8.09
Felt that this type of incidents is common	10	7.35
No time/energy to deal with it	13	9.56
Covid affected my help seeking	1	0.74
Others	2	1.47
Valid total	136	100.00

3.6. Whether respondents needed help at the time of the survey
 At the end of the questionnaire, we asked respondents whether they currently needed help, and 15.94% of the valid sample said yes.

Table 32. Whether respondents need help after sexual violence or intimate partner violence at the time of the survey

Whether need help	n	%
Yes	51	15.94
No	269	84.06
Valid total	320	100.00

Chapter 4. Focus groups and individual interviews findings

In this section we present findings from the qualitative data to provide detailed descriptions of women’s experiences of the two types of violence.

4.1. Qualitative findings on women’s experiences of sexual violence

4.1.1. Types of sexual violence

The types of sexual violence found amongst our interviewees include image-based sexual violence, workplace sexual harassment and assault, and intra-familial sexual abuse. Sexual abuse limited to intimate partner relationships was also found and will be discussed in detail in the section on intimate partner violence.

4.1.1.1. Image-based sexual violence

In today’s world where smartphones are ubiquitous, capturing images has never been easier. This has also contributed to the rise of image-based sexual violence, e.g., when intimate pictures are taken and/or shared without one’s consent. One respondent has had private videos of hers uploaded to pornography sites, another whose intimate photos were distributed on websites, and one who experienced ‘upskirt’ photo taking by a stranger.

Samantha had an intimate video of hers leaked and posted onto several pornography websites:

[My friend] said he saw a video of mine was posted online and sent me the link. About the video... it was made two years ago, that’s why I found it really weird that it was only just posted ... At the time, I just stayed at home and cried... because this thing is basically... the biggest or the most devastating thing in my life so

far.

Sarah works as a boudoir model. Five photo series taken by her clients for private use have been leaked and shared on a website, violating the terms of her professional service. These photos were also sent to her and her friends, followed by harassment:

I am very angered by this, because if you are not only harassing me. I wouldn't care too much. But if you even harass my friends, this is absolutely not okay.

'Upskirting' is the illicit recording of images under women's skirts and is a serious social problem. This occurred to Sophie one day when she was in an MTR station:

At the time of the incident, I was wearing a [regular, knee-length skirt]. I was taking the escalator when I felt someone moved my skirt from behind. It wasn't caused by the wind or by bumping into something, because the movement originated from the inside of my skirt, like someone had briefly lifted it.

The man tried to run away as she confronted him. Luckily, two passers-by helped to catch the man, who was later reported to the police.

4.1.1.2. Workplace sexual harassment

Workplace sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours, or other sexually suggestive or demeaning behaviour that happens in a work environment. It is a prevalent yet rarely reported form of sexual violence. Having endured workplace sexual harassment for over half a year, Scarlett described her predicament as 'fighting a war' and blamed herself:

I was at war with myself. I tolerated it for half a year and felt like I was too weak-minded [to speak up].

On regular days at the office, a female colleague would verbally harass Scarlett when no one else was present, saying things such as: 'You are dressed so nicely tonight, are you going to work as a prostitute?' Comments like these frightened her to the point of having 'wobbly legs' and 'dared not to move'. The harassment also took the form of texting:

Actually, every time she sent me a text, I would have a nightmare (that night). The settings of my dreams would look exactly like my office, and (that colleague) would say something very hurtful and humiliating to me before stabbing me with a knife.

Workplace sexual harassment was also experienced by Mrs Siu. The incident happened during a work meeting at a restaurant, with Mrs Siu, her supervisor, and another colleague. During the meeting, the supervisor suddenly kissed Mrs Siu and the other colleague on the back of their hands and kissed her on the cheek twice before announcing: 'The guy behind us just fxxking saw me kissed two women,' and 'I will look after you two at work, just like how I looked after you just now [by kissing you].' He also disclosed details about his personal life; he mentioned visiting sex workers and boasted: 'I can [have sex] five times a day.' Throughout this meeting, Mrs Siu felt extremely uncomfortable and violated. The supervisor also proceeded to ask inappropriate questions about her sex life. Because she did not want to engage in conversation with him, she told him she is sexually frigid. Still, the perpetrator persisted, asking her questions such as: 'Don't you have sensitive intimate parts?', 'Do you swallow your husband's semen?', and 'Do I need to tell your husband that I just kissed you?'

Sonia also experienced sexual harassment at her workplace:

One day, a security guard came to check our alarm system, but in all my time working there, there has never been a time when they had to come check [...] The guard came over and proceeded to open the cabinet to check for security equipment. But after he was done checking, he placed his hand on my leg without saying anything and kept it there for one or two seconds. At that time I was on the phone with a customer, so I wasn't able to react immediately.

Apart from having photos leaked and harassed, Sarah has also encountered various forms of sexual violence in her work as a Boudoir model. These include verbal harassment, unwelcome sexual requests and advances, sexually humiliating behaviour, unconsented touching and kissing, and a serious incident of attempted drugging:

The most serious incident I've encountered was drink spiking [...] He wanted to make me feel more comfortable about the shoot and

told me to drink Lucozade [...] But when I took a sip of the Lucozade, it had a really weird, bitter taste – it's supposed to be a sweet drink. Then, when he hurried me to finish the drink, I realized something was off. As we continued the shoot, I started feeling drowsy and knew something was definitely wrong. He put down the camera and started touching me.

4.1.1.3. Intrafamilial sexual abuse

Intrafamilial sexual abuse amongst our interviewees typically began when they were very young and lasted for a considerable period. The following interviewees were all abused by family members from as early as three years old:

From age 3 to 12, it was my stepfather. He would French kiss me forcefully. He would have a sexual reaction. His son, whom I'm not related to by blood, would come visit his dad sometimes. When he did, he would hold me between his thighs. (Siu Ling)

When I was around 5 to 8, my father molested me and forced me to perform oral sex. My parents divorced when I was 8. Then, it was my brother when I was 14 to 15. He molested me. (Sum Yee)

From age 3 to 9, it was my brother. It ranged from molesting to forceful kissing to oral sex. Basically, there would always be sexual activities with him after school. For example, we would take off our clothes and touch our private parts as we played cards. It happened more than a hundred times. (Suet)

I was sexually assaulted by my brother and cousin from primary school up until I was 17. My cousin said he wanted to have sex, so my brother encouraged him to play games and use role-play to violate me. I didn't know what was happening, and I wasn't rebellious as a child. He said the game was rape; my cousin was acting as a rapist, and my brother was acting as a cop who would arrest him [...] I remember there was oral sex, molestation, and physical violence. My brother kept doing this to me even after my cousin stopped. It was only when he met my now sister-in-law that he stopped. (Serena)

At such young ages, it is impossible for victims to understand what was happening, let alone speak up and fight back. Their naivety and trust was exploited by the abusers, enabling the violations to

continue:

My impression was, we were playing a game. My brother said, 'If you tell mom, we will not play anymore'. (Sum Yee)

I didn't know what it was, for instance he forced me to do oral sex, I didn't understand why you would put the thing you urinate with in my mouth. I didn't understand. I dared not say anything. (Siu Ling)

They kept hurting me, but I could not say anything, they were older. I felt helpless. Sometimes they would trap me in the room, like they're getting ready for them to do stuff to me. Sometimes I just hoped time would pass quickly. (Serena)

However, as the interviewees grew older and began to realise what was happening was wrong and spoke up, their calls for help were not answered either, as we will see in the following section.

4.1.2. Response to Sexual Violence and Help-seeking

4.1.2.1. Seeking help from friends and family, and law enforcement agencies

When faced with sexual violence, friends and family were often the first port for help. But they were not always able to understand victims' situations and may even trivialize their ordeals:

My friends told me to ignore [the perpetrator], that I wouldn't be affected by her messages if I just ignored them. The thing is, just because I stop reading these harassing messages wouldn't mean that she has magically stopped harassing me. It actually hurt me more to hear them say this, because I am not telling you all this to get this kind of response from you! I'm telling you so that you can help me analyze whether this constitutes sexual harassment, or we could search together for organizations I could reach out to for help. (Scarlett)

My friends think getting upskirted is not a big deal. They don't think I was really taken advantage of, because there was no physical touching involved. They think there's no reason to get upset over such a small thing, since I already did what I could by reporting it to the police. Actually, I am quite surprised that even

Sophie's quote reflects the public's lack of awareness, as many people believe only acts involving physical contact would constitute sexual violence. What's worse, some of her male friends made mean, hurtful jokes about it – completely downplaying the incident and causing further trauma by fat-shaming her by saying: 'Forget it! A fatty like you got upskirted!', as if to tell her to look on the bright side.

The situation is even worse for victims of intrafamilial sexual abuse. Serena and Siu Ling below describe how their mothers chose to ignore the abuse:

Basically, what my stepdad did, my mom has seen it, many people knew, but no one ask me to say something. I told my mom, and she said this is normal between father and daughter. She thinks it's okay. (Serena)

When I was in high school, mom saw my brother touch me, and scolded me, saying I cannot touch my brother like that. I don't know if she scolded him, but she definitely scolded me. My brother continued to do what he did after that. (Siu Ling)

And when Serena was older and told her first boyfriend what her stepfather has done to her, he treated her harshly:

I told my ex. After he heard, he was disgusted and cut me off.... Afterwards I told my mom too, when I felt it was not right...When I said to my mom, 'your husband phoned me', she said I have schizophrenia.

It takes much courage for victims of sexual violence to speak up about their ordeals. As seen from the survey findings, only a very small percentage of victims would turn to the police. Our interviewees have tried to turn to the police, but their experiences were disappointing.

Samantha consented to taping a private intimate video with her then-boyfriend a few years ago. But when she discovered that it had been uploaded to a pornography website, she found herself in a state of 'total collapse'. Despite this devastating news, she managed to immediately go to the police. However, there was nothing they could do:

When the person who made the video and I went to the police, they asked me: 'Are you being blackmailed? If not, it would be really difficult to open a case file.' You will come to realize, the police can't help you.

Sophie, who had been 'upskirted', had a similar experience. Given that the suspect was caught red-handed and there were witnesses, she had high hopes for justice to be served. She did her best to prepare for the judicial process:

For two months, I was extremely stressed about going to court, because I didn't know what evidence the judge would look at on the day, which made me worry what type of questions I'd get asked. I kept thinking, if I gave a wrong answer to even one question, or if there was any information I couldn't provide, would it then mean the case would not get a fair ruling? [...] I felt like everything I said could have a huge impact on the results. If the perpetrator is not convicted, would it then be my fault or my responsibility? I couldn't stop asking these questions. I even kept a copy of the police statement and kept memorizing every word like I was studying for an exam.

Despite doing her best, the results of the trial were disappointing:

During cross-examination, they asked me questions like whether I turned left or right, and how many centimeters of distance he was standing behind me. Because I couldn't recall if I turned left or right, the judge thought my account was not credible... and they also argued that the CCTV cameras did not capture the incident. The judge also said that it is doubtful I saw how the perpetrator was holding his phone, since I only turned around to look at him for a brief second. That's why the perpetrator was found not guilty.

The experience has been deeply distressing. She felt that the onus was on the victim, leaving her with a great sense of injustice and self-blame:

I cried for a whole hour, I felt deeply wronged, because I already did all I could! While everything – all the policies seemed too harsh on the victim. So, I am required to chase after and catch [the perpetrator] at the time of the incident, then I needed to call the police, and then I needed to remember every single detail of the

incident... and after all that, it still wasn't enough to get him convicted in court.

Mrs Siu's experience in seeking justice is similar. She approached the Department of Education and the Labour Department respectively to no avail:

In seeking work injury compensation, the school and Education Bureau said the incident happened outside of working hours despite the meeting being work-related. While the Department of Labour said they could launch an investigation into the matter, the decision as to whether work injury would be established lies in the hands of the District Court.

4.1.2.2 Barriers to help-seeking

Interviewees' accounts suggest that awareness of sexual violence in Hong Kong is low. Interviewees reported being unsure about what constitutes sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence:

*When I was wondering whether [my colleague's behaviour was a form of sexual harassment], my mind went blank. I didn't know. I tried to search on Google, but everything I came across was so ambiguous, none giving me a clear answer to tell me I was being sexually harassed and that I needed to seek help, nor did any of them clearly confirm my suspicions. That's why I kept silent.
(Scarlett)*

The lack of awareness and unavailability of clear information about sexual violence creates barriers to help-seeking. Without the means to clarify their situations, interviewees began doubting themselves:

I wondered if it was my problem and started doubting myself. Maybe I'm too sensitive. Maybe it's just a misunderstanding [...] What's worse is I overthink [...] (Scarlett)

*There were times when I doubted myself. I knew that it wasn't right [for someone to touch your leg without your consent], but I still hesitated. I didn't know this would constitute sexual violence. I thought, Hmm! Maybe it's my problem? Maybe I'm overthinking it?
(Sonia)*

Even when they became sure that they were victimized, they did not

know where to find specialised help for victims of sexual violence either:

I didn't have any answers. I didn't know about Rainlily at the time; I didn't know they could help me. That's why it took me so long to seek help. (Scarlett)

When I went to the police station, I didn't know the procedures, because I never had such experiences before. I also didn't know where else to seek help; I hadn't heard of Rainlily at the time and didn't know about the services they offer, nor did I know where to go for legal advice. (Samantha)

Psychological barriers to interviewees taking action or seeking help are the worry that no one would believe them and the fear of retaliation. Those who encountered workplace sexual harassment worried about potential negative impact on their work. Mrs Siu panicked at the time of the harassment incident. As the perpetrator was her superior, she worried that confronting his unwelcome physical contact would affect her job. Feeling ashamed and humiliated, she kept the incident to herself until three months later, when she finally decided to tell her husband. She also went to file a report with the police without the other apparent victim in the incident, who had acted friendly with the perpetrator at the time. Mrs Siu worried that the two of them might instead twist the narrative and accuse her of inappropriate behaviour. Scarlett also chose not to 'fight back' when the sexual harassment from her colleague first started:

I didn't dare to block her. I only kept her messages on 'hidden mode' because I worried she might send even more messages and treat it as an emotional outlet. I was also scared of triggering her, worried what she might do if she found out I blocked her, or if she was suddenly unable to send me messages.

Apart from taking a 'keep silent' approach, Scarlett also refrained from turning to other colleagues for help and support initially:

I was afraid no one would believe me even if I called her [the perpetrator] out, because she is normally very friendly and helpful towards other colleagues [...] Also, she mostly harassed me through text messages. What if she denies sending those texts, then what can I do? Yes, she used her personal phone number to

send those messages, meaning she sent them herself, but maybe she could say she was only forwarding messages she received from someone else to me. (Scarlett)

Reluctance to confide in others was a common theme identified among other interviews as well. This is likely because most interviewees did not have strong support networks. In the previous section we described how friends, family and even the police were unhelpful. Yet some victims even suffered direct blaming, such as Scarlett's case, where her family made it her fault to have been harassed:

My family also made comments about how I might've been too sensitive, that maybe I didn't have the social skills to get along well with my colleague. They also said that if I was so unhappy with work, I could just quit my job, then everything will be fine. (Scarlett)

When Samantha told her then boyfriend about the video leak, he also blamed her:

He responded, 'It's your responsibility, too. You agreed to be filmed. If you hadn't, there wouldn't have been anything to leak.' So, I thought, you don't understand. You don't understand what I'm thinking, how I'm feeling, and what I need. (Samantha)

4.1.2.3. Employers who do not take it seriously

For workplace sexual harassment cases, company policies seem the obvious place to turn to for help. But our interviewees' experiences show that employers downplay these incidences:

A day or two after the incident, my superior at work gave me a call. He told me the security guard [who harassed me] was implicated in another incident also related to sexual violence; it was an upskirting incident involving a female colleague from another team and was arrested. So, my boss said I could go give a statement to the police if I felt that was necessary. But a long time passed, still no one asked me to go to the police. I also discussed the incident with [the company], but they told me not to mention it to other colleagues, because they didn't want the issue to be publicized. That's why only a few people knew about the upskirting incident and mine. It was only after I quit that job that I found out from another former colleague that she also encountered a similar

incident in our workplace. None of us knew about these incidences, because the company told us not to tell anyone. (Sonia)

Sonia's account is an example of how some employers view sexual harassment complaints. They know such incidents happen but want to keep them concealed. Although employers may not have the intention to create secondary trauma to victims, they are doing exactly that by prioritizing protection of company reputation ahead of employees' safety and wellbeing.

Scarlett finally decided to file a complaint with the company about her colleague's persistent harassment after staying silent for half a year, but the initial response she received from the organization was very discouraging. She explained:

The company tried to silence me at every level. Their first reaction was to ask me if I could [make peace with it] and simply let what happened settle [...] My boss proposed to issue [the perpetrator] a warning instead of taking the issue to HR, but I told him I would prefer to go to HR directly, since she had already harassed me for half a year. Yet, he kept trying to subdue me; he told me not to make any rash decisions but to think it through and discuss it with my family first.

The company Scarlett was working at adopted a 'let sleeping dogs lie' approach in dealing with it. Half a year after the complaint was submitted, the company still failed to take action and even blamed her for not immediately blocking and cutting off contact with the colleague at the time of harassment and 'being a troublemaker':

A manager told me: 'We have pulled all the strings we could and used all our brain power to figure out how to let you stay in this department.' His attitude was very poor, implying that I am a troublemaker. Basically, he thinks that I caused him a lot of trouble by telling the director about the incident. (Scarlett)

The matter was only resolved after Scarlett wrote a formal letter to the company's top management, determined to seek justice for herself. After a lengthy mediation process, her complaints were finally acknowledged by the company and an apology was given by the colleague. After the incident was investigated, the colleague was

transferred and later asked to resign. However, Scarlett was not fully satisfied with the resolution, as she wanted the perpetrator to truly realize and admit her wrongdoing and apologize, which she did not get:

In the end, she didn't really admit to sexually harassing me. She gave me a perfunctory apology in front of two managers [only because she was asked to by the company]. I remember her saying: 'If you'd told me from the start that you didn't want to receive those texts from me, then I would've stopped. How was I supposed to know that you felt uneasy? If you were bothered by them, then I'm sorry.'

Like the previous case, after seeking help and taking leave from work, Mrs Siu was troubled by comments and complaints from some colleagues who told her: 'You're the reason I have so much work to do, because you haven't been coming to work', and: 'Actually, you didn't have to make such a huge deal out of [the incident].'

From the two above cases, it is no surprise that some victims may choose to keep silent about their experience of sexual violence—because many people around them are unsympathetic and unsupportive.

4.1.3. Impact of Sexual Violence

From our interviews, it was evident that sexual violence gravely affected the interviewees' mental and emotional well-being, behaviour, social relationships, and work life.

4.1.3.1. Impact on psychological and mental health

Given the traumatizing experiences and barriers to help-seeking described earlier, it comes as no surprise that sexual violence of all kinds greatly affects victim's psychological and mental well-being:

My mental health was very unstable, it fluctuated according to how the situation evolves. (Scarlett)

I think this was the most traumatizing thing that's ever happened to me in my life. (Samantha)

I only started feeling frightened and sad the day after the incident. I was also outraged and angry at the perpetrator. I kept wondering why this happened to me. (Sophie)

Apart from emotional turmoil, depressive mood and anxiety, Samantha also became fearful:

Sometimes, when I'm out walking on the streets and strangers are looking at me, I would overthink and start wondering if they've seen my video. I also deleted my old Facebook account after the incident and opened a new one, and I started to pay a lot of attention to the privacy settings. I would be really cautious to adjust the settings to make sure only some people can view my photos.

Even after Rainlily helped her to remove the video from webpages, the damage has already been done; there is no way to know whether the video still exists somewhere on the Internet :

Using RainLily's 'Take-Down Assistance' service to remove the video from the webpages was just something I did to make myself feel a little better, because it's better than nothing. But it's not a solution to the problem, because it can't erase what's already happened. (Samantha)

Even for victims who received counselling, this may not be adequate unless their practical needs are addressed:

I think going to counselling seems useless, it's like I talk about the same things over and over. They always ask how I'm feeling—of course I'm not feeling great. It's pointless to keep asking and replaying what happened repeatedly as if I'm so pitiful... I want to be able to go to work and earn! (Mrs Siu)

Mrs Siu spent a lot of time reading all sexual violence cases she could find online, which added to her worries, as not all cases found the defendant guilty. There was no clear way to tell what was needed to get a conviction: 'No one can tell you very practically that one plus one equals two.' This state of uncertainty makes her believe that the judiciary may not be able to help her:

The only reason I spoke about the incident in the first place was to

prevent any potential misunderstanding that something was going on between me and him (the perpetrator), because I didn't know if he was gonna be a big mouth and start spreading rumours everywhere. That's it—I never wanted to sue him in the first place... because it's all he-said/she-said, and you can't rely on the law sometimes. So, what's the point of doing all this! It has stirred up so much trouble. (Mrs Siu)

The lack of clarity created a sense of helplessness, making it hard for her to heal from her to make progress with her post-traumatic stress disorder.

4.1.3.2. Impact on lifestyle and behaviour

Interviewees mentioned lifestyle and behavioural changes after experiencing sexual violence, including changing the way they dress to avoid unwanted sexual attention:

I never wore that skirt again [that I was wearing on the day of the incident]. I have also refrained from wearing similar, knee-length skirts. From then on, I would only wear long skirts, and if I ever were to wear one that was even slightly shorter, I would wear leggings underneath and hold my skirt down, because I still get very anxious that someone might still see what's underneath. (Sophie)

I can't wear anything revealing. Ever since the incident, I haven't worn a tank top; I only started wearing shorts again recently. Before that, I only wore long skirts and short-sleeves shirts. Even in the summer, I wouldn't wear tank tops and shorts, because I'm worried I might get stares on public transport – a leering kind of stare. (Sonia)

These impacts in effect reduced the victims' freedoms to a certain extent and illustrate how they subconsciously attribute responsibility to themselves. Sonia spoke about her fear of the opposite gender and anxiety of going out alone. She could no longer feel secure in public alone:

I've developed a fear of men and even avoid male friends and family. I've become so sensitive and anxious. I can't go outside alone, and when I get really anxious when I am taking public transportation alone. That's why I always need a friend to

accompany me and hold my hand everywhere I go.

4.1.3.3. Impact on social and intimate relationships

To a large extent, trauma from their experience of sexual violence also pervaded the interviewee's relationships. Samantha discussed how the leak of her intimate video affected intimacy in her next relationship:

To some degree, I would still think about the leaked video. So, I think I was a bit traumatized, and this led me to hold back a bit in terms of intimacy in my next relationship.

Sophie's friends and family made slight of her experience of upskirting, making her feel alone:

From the things they said, I realized that even the people closest to you may not be able to understand what you're going through. Compared to other forms of sexual violence, upskirting is relatively mild, and that's why they wouldn't think that such an incident would have an emotional impact, nor do they think it is something to get upset over. That's why I mostly kept to myself and cried in my room

Sophie was not the only one who felt isolated and alone in coping with her experience of sexual violence. Scarlett also found herself crying alone and feeling disconsolate after the incident:

Even in everyday life, I didn't want to see anyone. I stayed at home, cut all social connections, and didn't even feel like going to yoga classes. I didn't want to meet any of my friends no matter how hard they tried to reach out, because my mental health hit such a low point that I couldn't even support my own livelihood. All I wanted to do was to be home, alone, and I even had to pretend everything was okay in front of my family... but when they all went to bed, I would stay in the living room and start crying all of a sudden. I was on medication at that time, as well and needed alcohol to help me sleep. [The incident] really affected my life and made me feel like a zombie.

Like Scarlett above, Mrs Siu also had to pretend as if everything was normal, which added to her mental stress. Because her family comes over to her home for dinner once a week, before dinner time, she

would have to act as though she was returning home from work. No one in her family had any idea she had stopped going to work. Stigma against mental health problems and consulting a psychiatrist was also observed in her statement:

When my family heard that I was seeing a psychiatrist, they already thought it was a big deal. Maybe in their generation, when they hear the word 'psychiatry', they would think of those who suddenly become psychotic and go on the streets stabbing people... They think that seeing a psychiatrist would also hamper my chances of getting an immigrant visa approved and taking leave from work would affect my students... So, whereas they know that I reported the incident to the police, they are against me filing a lawsuit. They told me to just let it go and leave things be.

Victims of intrafamilial childhood sexual violence find it difficult to develop normal intimacy with romantic and sexual partners, as they have grown used to not having control over their bodies and sexual agency:

[My boyfriend] forced me to watch porn, even I was sleeping, he would force me to imitate [the porn actors], the weird stuff. Perhaps I lacked love, so I needed it. I feared being abandoned. So [with these requests], never mind, just closed my eyes and hope it will pass.... it lasted for a long time like that (Siu Ling)

4.1.3.4 Impact on work and career

Apart from taking leave, experiences of sexual violence affected victims' work life in different ways. Sonia, for example, was traumatized by being touched on the leg by a security guard. After the incident, she felt extremely uneasy seeing other security personnel at work, making her unable to carry on with this job and leading her to quit the company at a later time:

When I finally went back to work, I would be frightened whenever other security personnel came to our counter. When they smiled at me, I would be reminded of the expression of the guard who hurt me. There was too large of a discrepancy between (the guard involved in) the incident and my normal perception of security personnel, because we have a great relationship with the

company's security team, and they're very nice. It led me to have hand tremors and emotional problems.

In the case of Samantha, after many of her colleagues and even superiors found out about her video leak, she saw a decrease in work responsibilities and opportunities, even canceling business trips she was assigned to go on:

My job requires travel [...] there was once when I had to fly out the next day, but the company suddenly told me I didn't need to go anymore. I believe they were worried about how the incident would affect their corporate image.

She felt very disheartened by the incident and the impact it had on her career, because she felt that all the time and effort she had devoted to work had all 'evaporated' after the incident, putting a permanent stain on her name and affecting her career:

I've worked in the same company for quite a few years, and I realized that all the time I'd spent and everything I'd built is all gone. I also won't be returning to this industry again in the future, because even if I were to go back after how many years, people would still remember [the leaked video] if they saw me. (HMT 430 29 June)

4.1.4. Interviewee's reflections on sexual violence

The lack of awareness about sexual violence and concern for victims is a significant underlying cause of the obstacles victims face in help-seeking. Interviewees expressed their wishes for people to not take sexual violence – even its 'mildest' forms – lightly and underestimate its impact on victims:

If the victim of sexual violence was your partner, your girlfriend, or a female friend of yours, then would you perceive and react to the incident in the same way? (Samantha)

Men will say: 'You women dress like this just to show off certain body parts.' But is that really it? Have they considered that their words can be very hurtful for women to hear? (Sonia)

I wish people would realize that sexual harassment can be a very

traumatic experience for victims. Maybe you think verbal harassment is no big deal, but actually even the smallest things like this deserve attention and awareness. (Scarlett)

Through their personal experience of sexual violence, some interviewees have also become more active and involved in awareness-raising:

I like to remind other girls that when they are being harassed, they might feel indifferent, or think that it's not a problem, that it's okay – but they might not actually be okay with such behaviours, just that they haven't had the time and space to gather their thoughts and react to what's happening. (Sarah)

This incident has somewhat motivated me to do more to raise awareness of sexual violence, and doing so would also help me handle my emotions. Joining small-group meetings hosted by Rainlily, participating in studies like this one are ways that I could at least try to help push for change in society, because Hong Kong has always lagged behind on issues related to sex—so many people are unaware of victims' experience. (Sophie)

Some also discussed the lack of protection against sexual violence in Hong Kong. Particularly, Sophie discussed the lack of legal consequences for perpetrators of sexual violence:

Women are not well-protected by the law. I only found out after doing additional research that convictions on cases like these require solid evidence, or if there are witnesses who really saw the act of 'upskirting'. That's when I realized why such crimes are so rampant – it's because there are so many ways to commit these crimes without consequences.

She also reflected on the role of online media and social media in normalizing sexual violence and perpetuating rape culture:

Our society and the overall environment lead [the perpetrators] to believe that doing such things [taking upskirt photos] is permissible—for instance, there are a lot of related themes in the porn industry and related equipment available for purchase, and there are also various groups [forums, social networking groups] of people who might have the same fetish as them. So, when

perpetrators find others who also do similar things, this ‘hobby’ is normalized and justified, because they might think: ‘Since everybody is doing it, why can’t I?’ Then, the encouragement they get for this kind of behaviour clouds their judgement and prevents them from seeing the impact of such actions on their victims.
(Sophie)

4.1.5. Summary of findings on women’s experiences of sexual violence

Our qualitative findings provide contextual and in-depth details about women’s experiences of different kinds of sexual violence in Hong Kong. The variety of sexual violence documented above – regardless of whether there is physical contact – all seriously impacted women’s lives in numerous ways. The trauma and suffering continues years after the time that the incidents took place. The barriers to their help-seeking are multi-dimensional and complex, while knowledge about help available is limited. A culture of trivializing sexual violence and victim blaming can be found in families, in the workplace, and in societal culture more generally.

4.2. Qualitative data findings on experiences of intimate partner violence

4.2.1. Types of intimate partner violence

From our individual interviews and focus group discussions, we were able to identify various forms of intimate partner violence experienced by our interviewees. Similar to the findings of the survey, these include psychological abuse, acts of physical violence, sexual violence, and controlling behaviours. In most cases, our interviewees suffered multiple forms of abuse by a current or former intimate partner.

4.2.1.1. Psychological abuse

Among the different types of intimate partner violence, psychological abuse was found to be the most pervasive. All interviewees have been subjected to some form of persistent verbal and emotional abuse. Verbal abuse often involved criticizing, swearing, and insulting:

He would tell me to go to hell, to drop dead, and so on. He would say to [me and my daughter]: “You guys can go to hell, you can fxxk off to wherever you want.” He would be cursing and cursing endlessly, telling me to go to hell. (CSW 2:15pm 21st June)

Another interviewee elaborated on her husband's extreme mood swings and the way he blows hot and cold in their relationship, which often manifested in his belittling and threatening speech:

So, he would be swearing at me, saying, 'I really fxxking hate you right now, so how can I stand you and look at you, stupid?' Then, in the blink of an eye, when he comes home, he will text me, saying: 'Actually, I really love you, I would do anything for us to be together again.' (Paris)

Some interviewee also discussed how verbal abuse through threats and blaming were used by the abuser to manipulate. For example, Iris and her former partner are separated, and their daughter resides with her. She wanted to allow her former partner to have some father–daughter time during the holidays. Instead of responding positively to her goodwill, her ex–partner guilt–tripped her for taking their daughter away from him:

I sent [my former partner] a message on WhatsApp asking if maybe he would like to spend some time with our daughter during her Christmas break. He responded: 'I thought you didn't allow me to see her' [...] He always creates the narrative that I have done everything wrong, made all the wrong decisions, that taking her away was wrong, scolding me through text, saying: 'Wow, you bitch, our daughter will never forgive you, ever! You've ruined her whole life.' He would also accuse me of disorderly conduct, infidelity, this and that, and basically say I kidnapped our daughter. (Iris)

Experience of emotional abuse in the form of manipulation and gaslighting was also common, especially among women with cheating partners. Isabella detailed her ex–husband's continuous deception and denial of infidelity:

[My husband] told me that he and his colleague were never romantically involved. But even their other colleagues said that they were so close that it seemed like they were dating, so why would he say they were never together? His repeated denial and saying that I am paranoid and overthinking made me wonder if I had mental health issues and whether I may be imagining things. (Isabella)

Besides making her question her own sanity and reality, her ex-husband would at the same time get defensive and downplay his wrongdoing without admitting guilt when questioned about his extramarital affairs:

He would say: 'Actually, I'm not that bad of a person. I always do my best to satisfy you and give you whatever you want. I could be way worse. Nowadays, a lot of people can have a mistress without even getting a divorce. They could also just not come home... I'm not like that, I always come home, so I'm not that bad. I don't scold you, nor do I beat you, and when you scold me, I just let you and don't talk really talk back. So, overall, I'm a really good person.' (Isabella)

Meanwhile, some women suffered psychological abuse in the form of complete negligence, especially among married women whose partners fail to fulfil even the minimal duties of a spouse and father:

Even when my son and I were both extremely ill, [my ex-husband] still went out with his friends. My son had caught a really bad flu with a 40°C fever, so I was phoning him all night but could not reach him at all. It turned out he was out drinking with his friends... He even drank until he blacked out. (Priscilla)

4.2.1.2. Physical violence

Intimate-partner violence in the form of physical abuse was also very apparent in the interviews, with most interviewees having been victims of mild to severe physical violence. One interviewee talked about frequent quarrels with her ex-husband in their two months of cohabitation that led to abuse and threats of violence. Besides pushing and shoving, he also used the threat of force to intimidate her. He said:

'Even if I shoved you, you wouldn't have any evidence of it. Even if I were to beat you right now, there's nothing you can do about it.' (Patte, social worker's case)

Evidently, both physical and psychological abuse are seen in this case. The perpetrator not only used physical violence, but also intimidation to unsettle and assert dominance and control over the victim, evoking a sense of helplessness. Phyllis had a similar experience, where she suffered psychological abuse at the beginning,

that gradually turned physical:

There was a period of time when I would always catch him (cheating). At first, he would (turned it around and) say I had mental illness and told me to go see a doctor. He was violent and would throw things at home. There was a time with physical abuse, but it wasn't that serious. There was a lot of psychological abuse [...] He always used threats of violence to intimate me. He threw his keys and broke a few mobile phones. (Phyllis)

Phyllis also discussed her experience with intimidation and the abuser's use of avoidance and forgetting after the fact:

[My husband] pulled a knife on me twice. I know he did it just to threaten and not to harm me, but of course I was frightened regardless... but after drawing out the knife to scare me on purpose, he went to bed and woke up the next morning acting like nothing happened – that's what scared me the most. (Phyllis)

In a similar way, another woman was slapped by her former partner, who then immediately discredited her memory through denial:

The moment I opened my mouth, I would get slapped... There was once or twice when after he slapped me, he said he did no such thing. I said, 'What? But you just slapped me,' and he replied: 'No, I never slapped you'. He said I was making false accusations. (Iris)

Although the use of force is seen in the above examples, in these cases physical harm was relatively limited and contained. Destruction of items like cellphones and household objects like tableware accounts for the most common acts of physical violence experienced by our interviewees. Meanwhile, several interviewees experienced more severe physical abuse, including pushing and shoving, kicking and dragging, getting objects thrown at them, and other acts by that caused significant physical harm. Some of these even led to long-lasting injuries. In most situations, such violent behaviour was either instigated by trivial matters or did not have a specific trigger:

One day, he was yelling at us when he came home. When I talked back, he shoved me – I didn't know what to do. He grabbed my arm and started biting down on it, hard. (Pointing at her scar) You

can still see the two teeth marks here. (Paula)

Another woman's ex-husband adopted various methods to inflict bodily injury, including slamming a door on her foot, causing a dislocation of her spine, and the most grievous being choking and threatening her with a knife to her neck in response to her discovery that he was using online dating apps and sending gifts to a livestream hostess. (Social worker's case)

In cases with domestic violence in the household, not only the women themselves, but also their children, were affected:

[My ex-husband] was hitting me and biting my son on his shoulder... Then he started biting his toes afterwards, and my son said: 'Okay, okay, stop hitting [us], dad!' He really abused my poor son so badly... (Paula)

My ex-husband beat me and my son at the same time, and I was sent to the hospital. I didn't press charges even though I was injured around the waist. My son also sustained a head injury, but I didn't know at the time. It was only two weeks later when he started getting spasms that we took him back to the hospital [...] After doing some brain scans, the doctor asked: "Did you son get beaten or take a fall?" [...] He said my son had brain scarring... He will be living with these twitches for the rest of his life. (Penny)

4.2.1.3. Sexual abuse within marriage

Intimate-partner sexual abuse was another type of violence observed in multiple interviews with a variety of experiences described. These ranged from forcible touching and verbal abuse during sexual intercourse, to being forced to perform humiliating sexual acts. For instance, one interviewee's ex-husband would always demand her to do household chores after she returned home from work exhausted. He would also require her to perform weekly cleaning of a 1.6m-long carpet, because he found it sexually arousing and stimulating. For Paris, sexual abuse was enacted in the form of forceful kissing, relentless pestering, and intimidation:

I already made it clear to him that he cannot (force me to have sexual intercourse with him). I would feel very uneasy whenever he came home [...] I certainly did not want him to touch me, but then he would say: "But you're my wife." Oh, one time he even said, out

of the blue: “I finally understand why some people would rape their wives.” Are your sexual needs so intense that you feel like you need to rape your wife? I was outraged. (Paris)

In another case, sexual abuse involved sexual coercion and aggression within marriage as well as refusal to use protection by the spouse. Penny recounted an incident that took place when she was in her 40s. Because she was already at an advanced maternal age and had a job, she did not want to get pregnant, and requested her ex-husband to use a condom. However, he refused and suggested using the withdrawal method or emergency contraception instead. But when she asked him to pull out during sexual intercourse, he held her down, forcibly ejaculated inside her, and got her pregnant. With the help of her friend, Penny found a private hospital to have an abortion. She explained that her then-husband neglected her and didn't show any care towards her after that, since he was already having an affair with another woman by then. Besides this incident, she often found her ex-husband's sexual demands humiliating:

He would ejaculate on my face and tell me to open my mouth... If I refused, he would become violent in bed. (Penny)

Her ex-husband also sexually harassed their elder daughter at home by touching her bottom on several occasions when no one was present or when no one was looking.

In a different case where children were also involved, the woman's spouse used sexual extortion to force himself onto her while their children were asleep at night. He threatened:

'If you push me off of you, I will wake the kids and tell the three of them exactly what their parents are doing.' (social worker's case)

4.2.1.4. Controlling behaviour

Our findings show that intimate-partner violence in the form of controlling behaviour consisted of monitoring and stalking, isolation, and financial abuse. Perpetrators of this type of violence were often described as irritable, controlling, domineering, and obsessive personalities. One of the interviewees spoke about the physical surveillance tactics her partner had used to keep her under his control. He would check her phone frequently, physically attack her and restrain her during arguments, and stalk her when she tried to

escape. For example, when the woman sought refuge at her parents' home, he would follow her there and knock on the door ceaselessly. He has also gone to her workplace to harass her, causing her extreme distress.

On top of constant physical surveillance by her husband, Paris was further troubled by his cyberstalking:

He keeps checking my 'online' status on WhatsApp. Let's say, if I'm offline for ten minutes, he will ask me: 'Hey, where did you go?' Then if I stay online – he must be online to know that I'm online. Yeah, I've already told him before that I am really bothered by this, so I suggested: 'How about we both turn off the "online" status, to avoid any feelings of unease, since keeping the 'last online' time activated was too stressful for us both. But he got upset. He said: 'Er, so you must be hiding something, because you would only suggest this if you're have something to hide.' Now, if I am not online at 11pm, he would ask: 'So, you are talking to people on another app now?' (Paris)

A second type of controlling behaviour observed in the interviews was isolation from family and friends. The following interviewee explained that she would have to deliberate over meeting her mother and keeping it a secret from her then-partner to avoid getting scolded for leaving her home even just for a short duration:

I don't know how to describe how I feel... It seems as if seeing my own [natal] family is an act of cheating... I don't know why it has come to this. So, it would be best if I went to Yum Cha [dine out] with my mum when he is off to work then came home before he comes back, so that I can pretend I never went out, that I never met with my mum. (Iris)

Along the same lines, another victim was isolated from her friends, because her husband deliberately removed all her mobile contacts to cut her off from her social network:

Ever since I met him, he totally 'this and that person' cut me off (from my friends). He told me not to (interact) with [...] Then, when we were together and I was pregnant, I was very disconnected with many of my friends. He purposely deleted all (their) phone numbers from my phone. I used to be really cheerful and had a lot

of friends, but maybe he didn't like it [...] (but in the later years,) I had absolutely no friends. (Ivy)

A third type of controlling behaviour identified was economic abuse, which involves using money to control or manipulate a partner. As evidenced in the interviews, concealing and withholding wealth were common techniques used by abusers to control their partners, particularly among cases with financially dependent wives. In Stephanie's case, her husband had lied about his finances throughout their marriage. She only found out from his friends and colleagues after his death what he had spent all his money on:

From the very beginning, I've always felt like we were a single-parent family. He always said he wasn't earning or receiving any salary. It was only recently after he passed away that I learned of his bad habits from his friends – smoking, yum cha, gambling... (Stephanie)

Priscilla had spent a significant sum of money on a complicated childbirth. Not having worked since then, she became reliant on her ex-partner for financial support. Although he gave her a small monthly amount of HK\$3,000 in the beginning, which slightly increased to \$5,000 later on, she did not complain. Yet, he used money as an excuse to manipulate and justify working odd hours to cover up his extramarital activities:

He always told me how stressed he felt. He said it was because I stopped working that he had to work harder, and that he would make more money doing night shifts. So, I believed him. Even when he didn't come home for three or four days, I still trusted him. I never imagined he would be out having fun. (Priscilla)

Penny had her money designated for buying groceries stolen repeatedly by her former spouse, causing her to stress over her wallet day and night:

I had to carry my wallet with me wherever I went. If I was going to take a shower, I would bring it into the bathroom with me, and the same when I had to poop or when I had to sleep – I would hold onto it 24/7. (Penny)

Eventually, she bought a safe to store her money upon her daughter's

suggestion. After her ex-husband moved out, he sent someone to their home demanding that she open the safe. His mistress was also present in one of these occasions. When she threatened to call the police, the mistress said: 'If you report this... I will destroy (murder) you.' (Penny)

4.2.2. Response to Abuse and Help-seeking

4.2.2.1. Seeking help from friends, family, and social service agencies or professionals

Aligned with our survey results, telling family and friends was the most common approach adopted by our interviewees in dealing with intimate partner violence. In some cases, they were able to find comfort and emotional support through confiding in friends and family:

I have a group of friends supporting me. I feel much better now, because these days I like doing water sports like going kayaking with my friends. I am better now than I was before when I was at a low point. (Iris)

I was in a really poor state of mind in those days. I was feeling really disappointed and dejected every day. I always vented to my friend, who I have known since I was little. Otherwise I would have been depressed. I will move in with her after I get a divorce. She has a child too, and my son gets along with her daughter quite well. [...] (My husband's siblings) are also amazed by how I can tolerate him all these years [...] They hate him and describe him as 'crazy'. (Isabella)

A few women also mentioned that their friends tried to intercede with their partners for them:

Even my ex-husband's female friend could not turn a blind eye to what was happening. She offered to reach out to him, so we tried all day to reach him until he finally showed up at 6pm. He even gave that friend a call before showing up, and she scolded him, saying: 'Are you crazy? Instead of calling wife yourself, you are asking me how your she is?' (Priscilla)

Aside from providing emotional support and intercession, friends and

family were frequently acknowledged by interviewees as a source of information in seeking external help. In fact, nearly all of them sought help from social service agencies through referral from a close friend or relative. Polly also recalled being directed to the Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres (HKFWC) by family members and dialling to the organization after coincidentally seeing its advertising poster:

My relatives recommended me to talk to a social worker (at HKFWC), then coincidentally, when I was taking the MTR, I saw an advertisement (from HKFWC). So, I thought maybe I really should call them, because it's the same hotline as the one my relatives gave me. What a coincidence. (Polly)

Social workers from HKFWC were credited for offering significant emotional support and legal help with intimate-partner violence to the interviewees through their counselling services and legal advice clinic. Penny elaborated on the extent of support she gained from her social worker and the agency:

I'm so happy I can confide in my social worker. She listens and helps me ease out my anxiety and helped me get out of this dark place. If not (for her), I wouldn't know what to do... I started to gradually feel more comfortable sharing (my troubles) in my counselling sessions with her. I don't have many friends, and didn't dare to tell anyone [...] Before I knew her, I always cried behind closed doors at home... Around that time, she signed me up for some hobby classes, and I feel quite happy [...] These days, I started being able to sleep at night, and my appetite is improving as well. I am very thankful for her. (Penny)

A number of interviewees also sought help from psychiatrists, but there was little mention of how they began seeking help from mental health professionals. However, few turned to the police for help. The following section launches a closer investigation into the range of barriers to help-seeking identified in our interviews.

4.2.2.2. Barriers to help-seeking

Based on the extent of abuse observed in the aforementioned cases, it should not come as a surprise that most of our interviewees were reluctant to speak up or seek help in dealing with intimate-partner violence, especially those who experienced physical violence. Yet it is

important to recognize that women are not merely 'silent victims'. It was apparent from the interviews that women often chose to respond in a way that would minimize potential danger and maximize security and stability for themselves and their children. They also encounter a myriad of psychological, sociocultural, structural, and situational obstacles in help-seeking:

When he comes home from (a night of drinking), he will make trouble out of nothing. He becomes very crazy and vexatious after drinking [...] I initially thought I would tolerate his drinking habits, and maybe he would change for the better when we had children. Yeah, I didn't know it would instead develop into this. (Ivy)

He has beaten me so many times, but I never called the police. I just don't like to cause trouble and all. So, I tolerated him. [...] (My brother only found out about everything a long while after) My brother told me I should have called the police immediately, because then my ex-husband would have been arrested. He said Hong Kong has child protection laws, which I was not aware of. I thought if I kept tolerating him, maybe he would change [...] Otherwise, I would have had to call the police every other day [...] I didn't dare to speak up. I was worried that if I called the police, he would get even meaner [...] My kids were also very young at the time. I didn't want to cause any trouble and make a big deal out of it, so all these years, I just put up with it. (Paula)

As elaborated by the above interviewees, most would choose to respond to abuse by searching for ways to de-escalate the situation out of fear of retaliation, concern for her children, hesitance to stir up trouble, and hope for the partner to change. Although it may seem a matter of course for victims of abuse to seek help from law enforcement, the interviews also demonstrated that a multitude of reasons and individual, complicated circumstances often prevent them from doing so. For instance, despite having called the police and undergone a medical examination after a physical attack from her abuser, one interviewee was 'swayed' by hope and love for her partner and decided to not to press charges. Women may also worry that reporting to the police would make things worse. For example, in several cases the abusers attempted to turn the narrative around to blame the victims. In another case, the interviewee had already encountered domestic abuse in her previous relationship, which ended in a bind over order. Feeling ashamed and fearing prosecution, she

did not dare to report her husband's abuse.

Oftentimes, psychological barriers are reinforced by social and relational factors to further impede help-seeking. Paula's relative encouraged her to remain silent in dealing with an abusive spouse:

I am not the 'bili-bala' type of person who talks about family matters, so not many people know (what happened). If you talk about it with others, they would look down on you. [...] (The godmother) of my kids also said, (my husband) is very ill-tempered and hard to deal with. She told me to never speak of (the abuse) to anyone, or else he would beat me, too. So, I didn't dare to speak up... No, no one ever taught me (to speak up or call the police). (Paula)

As they were living a continuous experience of abuse, many women felt isolated from family and social network in facing intimate-partner violence. As shown in the above statement, some refrained from confiding in their family and friends due to fear, shame and embarrassment, lack of care and support, and other factors:

All these years, I had no relatives. I never spoke up. I didn't dare to tell anyone, didn't dare to confide in others, not even my closest friends. (Penny)

In the following example, although Peggy has an intact core family, she still felt isolated and alone in dealing with abuse from her husband. In particular, she felt that her daughter, whom she saw as her only potential source of emotional comfort, never offered her the support she needed and remained close with her father despite having witnessed his abusive behaviour:

These 40 years, [my daughter] never cared for me. I've always loved her and taken good care of her, but she is a very selfish, self-centered person. She takes three vacations each year but has never invited me on any of them. She hasn't given me a cent since she was 16. She said it's because her father said she didn't need to provide for us... (Peggy)

Furthermore, victim blaming and lack of sympathy from family and friends were highly apparent in the following two cases, both involving unfaithful spouses, which exacerbated the impact of the abuse on the

victims and further discouraged them from seeking help:

I decided to file for divorce based on his cheating. It was a decision that I never really told anyone about. Maybe I've only told my mum, but my mum's reaction was: 'Is it because you're (not a) good (wife) to him? That's what caused him to have an affair.' Wow, my mum really sided with him, saying: 'Because you're quite ill-tempered at times, so this must've been a problem you caused.' This is the kind of feedback she gave me, so I didn't really talk to anyone else about this; I just kept all the sadness to myself all along. (Polly)

Polly also attempted to seek consolation from her other family members and friends. However, she often found herself feeling she was on her own, as her family would be dismissive and ask her to 'stop dwelling on it', 'forget it', 'let it go', saying 'you already divorced him' and that 'it's in the past'. Her friends were also unable to offer her the support she needed, as they would give similar responses when she tried opening up to them. Additionally, she was baffled by her mother-in-law's attitude and response towards her son's infidelity. She asked her: 'Did he find another (woman)? Does he have a mistress? Did you see it with your own eyes?' and when she replied: 'No, I haven't seen her with my own eyes, but I saw it all on WhatsApp,' her mother-in-law immediately said: 'Then has he admitted (to the affair)? Because if he hadn't, then it means he doesn't have (a mistress)!'

Priscilla tried to seek comfort from her mother-in-law regarding her husband's repeated disappearances and not coming home for days on end. She ended up being blamed instead: 'I already told you, [my son] has gotten a bit fatter. With his height and appearance, he is actually very attractive and would naturally attract many young women. That's why I told you before that you need to act clingy sometimes! Tell him to come home more and find a way to act needy—even if you must act sick. You've always given him too much freedom and that's why he won't come home.'

The victim blaming shown in these examples illustrates societal attitudes that women are expected to be responsible for the quality of a relationship – if a man cheats, it is because the wife is not doing enough to keep him. Oftentimes, these social norms and gender roles are also internalized by the victims. In some cases of sexual abuse

within a relationship or marriage, some women may not recognize that non-consensual sexual acts between intimate partners are unlawful. There was one interviewee who also expressed the belief that it is a wife's duty to comply with her husband's sexual demands regardless of her wishes. (social worker's case)

4.2.2.3. Ambivalence about divorce

The vast majority of our married interviewees either considered getting a divorce at some point or were in the process of doing so. However, most showed some hesitation. A common reason behind this was stigma associated with divorce and discouragement from family and friends, especially among women from more conservative families with traditional upbringing:

I am a traditional woman, so I chose to tolerate and not divorce [my then-husband]. But eventually, I told my sister that I really wanted to divorce him – my daughter told me to get a divorce, but my sister advised me not to. She reminded me that building this family took blood, sweat, and tears. So, I stayed and tolerated him. (Penny)

I have talked to my parents about what happened, but they both have the traditional mindset that divorce would ruin our family name and reputation. Still, they have always known that I've been aggrieved in this marriage, so I often go back to visit them in Mainland China. Whenever I tell them about how my husband treats me, they get really angry, but they've never told me to divorce him. (Isabella)

Another important theme identified was uncertainty and worry for the future. Particularly for women who are financially dependent on their spouses, the lack of economic support upon divorce was a serious concern. Priscilla talked about sacrificing her career for marriage and family and the anticipated difficulty of returning to work after getting a divorce:

I am really struggling with myself. How did things end up like this? I had a good-paying job and was able to take care of myself, but obviously I can't get this job back now. It's been so many years, and so much time has passed. Even if I used my past credentials to search for a new job, I still wouldn't be able to find one with equivalent pay.

Still, financial resources is only one of the many considerations in a divorce. A more overarching concern for our interviewees was the fear of an acrimonious separation, especially given that most of them have suffered abuse for a significant period of time. In fact, many of their husbands threatened a dissatisfying division of assets and an ugly divorce. Polly explained that her husband, who was unfaithful, refused to hire a divorce lawyer or mediator due to the high cost. He would also unnerve her by saying things like: 'In Hong Kong, it is legal to have a mistress. So even if there was a mistress in our case, it doesn't mean you will get a larger divide of our assets [...] You have made a smaller contribution to the mortgage than I, so of course you would get a smaller split of assets if we were to divorce.'

Paris was very distressed about whether or not to divorce, as her husband would pester her day and night about her decision. As he does not wish to separate, he would continuously intimidate and terrorize her, threatening that if she were to divorce him, he would sell their co-owned property, fight for child custody, and remarry someone he does not love to look after their children.

I am worried about the financial pressure. There's a possibility that he won't give me any money [...] One time, he called me and said: 'Er... we split the apartment 50-50, but after deducting everything like the down payment and furnishing, then actually there's not much left for you. So, after I give you this money, we have nothing to do with each other.' So I said: 'Do you really need to do this... how about the children, you really don't care?' To which he only replied: 'Huh, but I am already giving you your division of assets' [...] I also asked him, if you sell our flat, where will the children and I live? He said: 'Then you can move back in with your mum in your 'shitty public housing' flat.' (Paris)

Paris's housing troubles and concern for children were echoed in two other cases:

A single mother with four kids, where would we move to? We don't have a place that we can move to, so how can I bring the four kids with me? If we had to move out now, we may even be homeless for a few nights... and housing is so expensive. It would cost at least HK\$10-20k to rent a flat. (Paula)

Until now, I've been very perturbed thinking how I can fight for

child custody. Worried that I may not be able to. Worried how to talk to him about this. Both my family and his are supportive (of us divorcing). It's just him (who isn't). I don't know how to talk to him about divorce. (Isabella)

4.2.3. Impact of Intimate Partner Violence

Our data shows that intimate-partner violence has deeply affected victims physically, socially, and psychologically. As previously mentioned, a few interviewees have even sustained permanent physical impairment. The victims' social lives were also heavily impacted, since many of them felt increasingly isolated from their family and social network.

4.2.3.1. Impact on psychological and mental health

Mental illness in the form of depression and anxiety disorder were commonly diagnosed among victims of abuse. Other issues like suicidal ideation, insomnia and prolonged appetite loss were also prevalent among our interviewees. Some also developed stress-related conditions like chronic pain syndrome, which often have somatic symptoms but no identifiable medical cause. It is likely that the aggregate of physical and psychological trauma would adversely impact long-term health outcomes of victims of intimate-partner violence:

[All these things that happened] really affected my mental health... all these years, it's been so rough. I need to visit the doctor a few times each month for check-up... The most recent time when I went for a lung scan, they found a tumour. (Penny)

Moreover, it was clear that those without specific or diagnosable disorders also suffered abuse-related mental health issues. Apart from victims of psychological and physical abuse, women with controlling partners also found themselves constantly distressed and on tenterhooks:

I would feel so stressed out in everything I do. It's like having my every move monitored. (Paris)

I get quite sad, wondering what I may possibly do wrong today to get another scolding again. For example, if I were to go buy bottled water, I would need to hide it so that no one would see it... or else I would get scolded. (Iris)

Interviewees' statements also largely reflected their anguish and inability to make sense of the circumstances and adverse events surrounding their partner's abuse:

Sometimes I wonder, why can't things just be good and normal? What in the world did I do that was so detestable (to deserve this)? This is something I always ask. (Iris)

[He dragged it on] for a few months. He kept claiming he would break up with (the mistress), but he never did. Then, he disappeared again. His phone was off and was nowhere to be found. At that moment, I broke down. I stared at the window and really wanted to jump. Why are you doing this to me? I've always been a sensible and rational person [...] I laid on my bed calling for help endlessly [...] I felt like I couldn't control my thoughts and feelings anymore. I could hear my heart beating very rapidly. I felt like my body and my soul separated [...] I trusted him. Why does he keep fooling me again and again? Why does he treat us like this? Why? Why? Why? (Priscilla)

4.2.3.2. Impact on attitudes, beliefs, and ideals

As evidenced in the above articulations, intimate-partner violence could promote self-doubt and negative self-concept among victims. Their disappointment, loss of confidence and trust in people, relationships, and marriage were even more evident:

I want to tell (my children) that the people closest to you may be ('big bad wolves') [...] they will hurt you. (Stephanie)

I've known him since we finished school. We dated for five or six years (before we got married). But back then, he was really good to me. When we went out to buy shoes, he would tie my laces; he was good with those things. That's why it was so horrifying to see him turn into this person. A person can really change this much. (Ivy)

I had a dream last night, it was like retelling everything that happened from the beginning. In the dream I was scolding my ex, saying: 'It's your fault [...] You made me want to build my own family and have kids, and feel the festive spirit during the holidays. Okay, now that I have children, I still need to spend the holidays alone, it's all your fault!' (Iris)

I only started my second relationship seven years after my first one, because I feel that it's very hard to trust (someone). Then after trusting someone (in my second relationship), it ended up like this. Now, I am really worried about what's next. When I was at my lowest, I didn't even want to live. I wanted to die. (Polly)

[My failed marriage] has affected my life significantly. I am very disappointed with my marriage. My mentality is in a state of decline. I feel like there is no purpose in life. But I am a mother--this is the only thing that keeps me going. (Isabella)

4.2.3.3. Impact on children

Based on our interviews, children also suffered grave consequences. In fact, it was not uncommon for interviewees' children to be direct victims of paternal abuse, observers of intimate-partner violence, or pawns used for parental alienation. While child victims of concurrent intimate-partner violence and child abuse suffered bodily injuries at the hands of physically violent fathers, witnesses of domestic violence were also negatively affected in their emotional well-being and sense of self:

He was throwing a tantrum and shoved the bicycle onto the ground in front of our daughter, which made her cry. When we got home, she asked me: 'Why did dad do that? Is it because he doesn't like me?' (Iris)

When I was at my lowest last year, (my son) felt like he didn't have a father anymore. He asked me if I could find him a father before he turns nine [...] One time, he was doing homework and there was a writing task, which was sentence formation by looking at a picture. That picture had a dad bringing his daughter to the park. He told me he didn't know how to complete that part, so I helped him [...] As he was writing, he suddenly looked at me, and I asked him why he was looking at me with tears in his eyes. He (pretended to be okay) and (was reluctant to talk about it) [...] He never had much of a sense of security to start with, but now it has gotten even worse. (Priscilla)

4.2.3.4. Impact of COVID-19

Since the present research was conducted amid the COVID-19 Pandemic, the question of how the global health crisis and local restrictions associated with the pandemic have affected

intimate-partner violence was a topic of interest in for us. Indeed, the effects were brought up by a few women during the interviews:

I lost my job during the pandemic and have been under a lot of pressure [...] My husband's job requires him to work until 11pm or 12am. So, by 6-7pm, I don't want the sun to set and start dreading his coming home. (Paris)

Like Paris above, a few women found themselves facing additional emotional and financial stress brought on by the pandemic. Furthermore, as face-to-face teaching has been repeatedly suspended in the last two years, many mothers have had to take on more childcare duties and family obligations. Shouldering all these on top of dealing with intimate-partner violence left many of them feeling exhausted and defeated. In one of our cases, the interviewee recalled herself crying as she stayed up at night to clean her home, as her husband is obsessed about cleanliness and could not stand even a strand of hair on the floor. Priscilla discussed how the fear of catching the virus caused her to become even more isolated from her sister, who was her only source of support in dealing with intimate-partner violence:

During COVID, my sister only helped me buy daily necessities, because at the peak of the pandemic, she didn't want to go outside unless it was a necessity. It's not that she didn't want to come over to accompany me, but because her kids still needed to go to school, and her family would come into contact with many others, so she was scared to catch the virus and pass it to us. She didn't step foot into our home; she would buy a week's worth of groceries and pass them to me (at the door), then leave. (Priscilla)

Moreover, local COVID-19 restrictions have added further obstacles to help-seeking for victims of violence. For instance, one interviewee had reached out to a social service agency for help but was unable to have her case file opened, since doing so would require her physical presence at the centre, and she was hesitant due to COVID. Another interviewee was seeking a divorce, but her filing was met with delays due to closure of the Family Court during the pandemic.

4.2.4. Interviewees' reflections on intimate partner violence

Some common descriptions of perpetrators of intimate-partner violence identified from our qualitative data pointed to men who are

irresponsible, ill-tempered, abusive, controlling, and engaging in extra-marital relationships. The current study also demonstrated that migrant wives and those with children with special educational needs, unsupportive natal family or in-laws, and those who are unable to work due to family and childcare obligations face even more difficulties in situations with intimate-partner violence. Nevertheless, reflections from the interviewees indicated some level of awareness that women should not tolerate abusive behaviour from their intimate partner:

It's crucial to speak up. It's like how people say, communication is important; maybe it's also important to speak your mind and say it out loud. Don't let others bully you too much, because if you let them, they will think you're an easy target. So, speak up – don't scold or yell at them or something – but find appropriate ways to express yourself. (Iris)

If (a woman) has a strong personality, then (an abusive man) would not dare to do anything to (harm) her. But if she has a weak personality and is an easy target, then it would actually encourage (a man to be abusive). (Phoenix)

4.2.5. Summary of findings on women's experiences of intimate partner violence

The findings of our qualitative data on intimate partner violence correspond well with our survey findings, adding rich details and contexts. Interviewees typically suffer from more than one type of IPV. The different forms of non-physical abuse are common. It is the relentless, belittling, controlling and manipulative nature of such abuse that greatly affect the well-being of victims. Many of them tolerated this and also physical and sexual forms of abuse for long periods of time before seeking help. The hurdles to help-seeking can be variously personal, cultural, institutional and circumstantial. The desire to keep the family intact and protect their children, lack of financial security, unsupportive friends and family, uncertainty about what might happen after reporting to the law enforcement, make them hesitate. Even after they have decided to take action, such as getting professional help or file for divorce, there are still many obstacles that need to be overcome before they can leave the abusive relationship. Nevertheless, they agree that speaking out and taking action empowers them, and at the end of the day, is necessary in order for change to happen.

Chapter 5 Recommendations

Based on our findings, we have the following recommendations:

5.1. Violence against women remains a serious social problem in Hong Kong. We urge all stakeholders, including the Women’s Commission, government departments, advisory boards and quasi-governmental bodies, to treat violence against women as a priority, and to take this into account when planning policies in connection with women, children and families.

5.2. Relevant government departments should provide adequate crisis support to women who are subjected to violence. These include:

5.2.1. Financial support

Many female victims of intimate partner violence are economically dependent on their partners and are often the main caregivers of children. We recommend that the government set up emergency funds to help them cope during crisis situations.

5.2.2. Housing support

Intimate partner violence and sexual violence often occur in homes, making it a priority that victims have suitable housing options to turn to. We urge the government to review the existing compassionate rehousing scheme, specifically to clarify and streamline the application process for women who share a home with violence perpetrators. A greater variety of shelter options apart from women’s refuge (e.g., hotels) should be available so that women can have timely, safe and suitable accommodation during crisis situations.

5.2.3. Sexual violence crisis support

Victims of sexual violence often need to visit different departments in order to receive medico-legal care (e.g. hospital, police station and forensic service) right after the assault happened, creating secondary trauma. In 2018, the Legislative Council endorsed the need to establish crisis support centres for victims of sexual violence. We urge that the government speed up the funding approval process for implementation, and ensure that these centres should follow the “Guidelines for Medico-Legal Care for Victims of Sexual Violence” according to the World Health Organization (WHO).¹

5.2.4. Improve flexibility in service provision during the pandemic

Service statistics from the HKFWC show that intimate partner violence related help seeking has increased by 10% between 2018–2020 during the COVID–19 pandemic. Governmental departments’ reduction of services during the pandemic as well as victims’ reservations to use crises services such as refuge homes out of health concerns have made it even more difficult for women to receive support. We urge relevant government departments and service providers take such difficulties into account and allow for greater flexibility in handling cases during the pandemic.

5.3. Increase funding to non–governmental organisations (NGOs) servicing female victims of violence

The government needs to increase funding to NGOs that provide services such as crisis support, temporary shelter, legal advice and counselling to female victims of violence. We also recommend that liaison and coordination amongst different service agencies be improved through, e.g., the integration and upgrading of helpline services of different NGOs, so that women do not have to search for separate agencies for the variety of support that they need.

5.4. Improve policy, legal and professional training provisions

5.4.1. Employers need to establish sexual harassment policies and provide training for staff

Workplace sexual harassment remains serious and prevalent. Presently, there are no consequences to employers who ignore the Equal Opportunities Commission’s (EOC) recommendation to establish sexual harassment policies and staff training, nor are there incentives for employers to do so. We recommend that the EOC and relevant government departments make it a requirement for employers to establish sexual harassment policies and sexual harassment training to their staff, and to monitor their execution.

5.4.2. Review existing guidelines for handling violence against women

‘Procedural Guidelines for Handling Sexual Violence Cases’, ‘Procedural Guide for Handling Intimate Partner Violence Cases’ and ‘Procedural guidelines on child abuse for relevant professionals’ are passive and remedial, unable to effectively protect women, children and family from violence. We recommend that the government revisit and revise these guidelines in consultation with the stakeholders.

5.4.3. Review how domestic violence is classified in police records

Presently the police divides ‘family conflict case’ into ‘domestic violence (crime)’, ‘domestic violence (miscellaneous)’ and ‘domestic incidents’ based on case severity. Under this classification, the number of cases classified as domestic violence will drastically decrease and may exacerbate the negative consequences for victims. We urge that a review of the classification system be undertaken in consultation with stakeholders.

5.4.4. Increase training for personnel who work with women subjected to violence

Women need to feel safe and supported in order to come forward, seek help and report sexual and intimate partner violence. More training needs to be provided to legal professionals, law enforcement personnel and frontline workers who work with women subjected to violence, in order to prevent victimization and secondary trauma.

Law enforcers are not always able to provide enough information to victims of violence to help them assess their situations and options. Despite the existence of guidelines on how to handle sexual and intimate partner violence cases, more training is needed for frontline workers and professionals to ensure their effective implementation. ²

5.4.5. Modernize the Family Court

We recognize that courts are limited in their ability to contain the issue of domestic violence, as they only come into the picture after the unfortunate incidents have occurred. However, the Family Court plays an important role in serving justice to women who suffer from intimate partner violence. More resources are needed to improve its efficiency and capacity to handle the variety and complexity of cases it receives.

One of the examples which deserves referencing is the Specialist Domestic Abuse Court (SDAC) in the UK, which is a special court set up to facilitate the process for persons who have unfortunately experienced domestic abuse. Features such as specially-trained court personnel and prosecutors, and the measures to protect the safety of victims, should be studied in order to encourage victims to come forward, push for positive outcomes and lessen the intimidating experience of victims.

5.4.6. Speed up reforms on sex crimes legislation

The Law Reform Commission (LRC) began its consultation on reforming laws on sex crimes in 2012 and has since produced several reports³. Many recommendations in the LRC’s 2019 report, including important changes to laws on sexual assault and definitions of consent have yet to be put on the agenda of the Legislative Council. We urge that the

government address the LRC's recommendations as soon as possible. In this connection, an increase in penalty for convicted offenders of sex crimes can produce a clear signalling effect and work as a deterrent. Associated rehabilitation services (e.g. counselling) are essential to combating sexual violence and must be included as part of a comprehensive review of sex crime legislation.

5.5. Public education by stakeholders through a variety of media and other means

5.5.1. Educate the public about sexual and intimate partner violence

Public education materials are needed in order to equip women with information about women's rights and relevant laws in Hong Kong and to encourage them to seek help. For example, the Police may wish to further publicize how sexual and intimate partner violence cases are handled.

Many people do not realize that the emotional and mental abuse are a form of violence against women and children with serious consequences. Public education should help the public understand the definitions and nature of sexual and intimate partner violence, when and how to seek help, so that they can provide support to family and friends should it occur.

5.5.2. Address sexual violence in public transport and schools

We recommend public transport operators increase their effort to alert passengers that sexual violence, including indecent assault and image based sexual violence are criminal offences. Similarly, schools need to incorporate sexual violence into their sex education curriculum. We urge that the government review its guidelines on sex education for schools (last updated in 1997) as soon as possible. At the same time, teachers shall be offered the knowledge and skills in identifying sexual violence in their training package

1 According to LegCo document in 2017, "Domestic Violence (Crime)" cases refer to criminal cases involving violence that occur between persons with the above relationships, including murder, manslaughter, wounding, serious assault, rape, indecent assault, criminal intimidation, criminal damage and possession of offensive weapons, etc.; "Domestic Violence (Miscellaneous)" cases refer to cases involving common assault and a breach of the peace that occur between persons with the above relationships; and "Domestic Incidents" refer to any family-related incidents not involving violence or a breach of the peace that occur between persons with the above relationships, such as disputes, nuisance,

annoyance or conflicts, etc.

2 According to the HKFWC, in some cases, the police charged both the victim and the perpetrator, or may try to persuade the victim to withdraw charges.

3 Including a consultation paper in 2012 on rape and other non-consensual sexual offences, one in 2016 on sexual offences involving children and persons with mental impairment, and one in 2018 on miscellaneous sexual offences. In December 2019, the Commission issued a review of substantive sexual offences. In November 2020, the Sub-committee on the review of sex crimes published a consultation paper on sentencing and related matters in the review of sexual offences.

Reference

Bouhours, B., & Broadhurst, R. (2015). Violence Against Women in Hong Kong: Results of the International Violence Against Women Survey. *Violence Against Women*, 21(11), 1311–1329. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801215593646>

Appendix A

Study on Hong Kong women's experiences of violence

Focus group/Individual interview

Aim of the interview is to understand:

The context of women who experience violence, such as:

- Power imbalances caused by work/economic context
- Factors relating to family context
- Factors relating to societal context (e.g., social movement or pandemic)

The difficulties faced by women who experience violence, such as:

- Difficulties in help-seeking
- Legal/institutional loop holes
- Societal/familial factors

Main guiding questions (actual questions and wordings will be adjusted, depending on interviewees' responses, emotional state and reactions; follow up questions will be asked as appropriate):

1. Have you ever experienced sexual violence#? If yes, please describe the situation, the perpetrator's identity, your reaction and handling method# and reasons for those#, and how the incident affected you#. What are your feelings about the incident?
2. Have you ever experienced intimate partner violence? If yes, please describe the situation, the perpetrator's identity, your reaction and handling method and reasons for those, and how the incident affected you #. What are your feelings about the incident?
3. Do you know of family and friends who have experienced these types of violence? If yes, what were their situations? How do you view their experiences? (e.g., Should they take some responsibility? What kinds of help did they receive?)
4. What do you think are the most important help/protection for women who face violence? What can women do to resist violence?
5. If you have sought help because of a violence incident, what was your experience?
6. If you have not experienced any violence, what are your views on sexual violence and intimate partner violence? E.g., do you think these are serious problems? What do you think are the causes for these types of violence ?

#Refer to corresponding questions in the survey

Appendix B

Lingnan University
Department of Sociology and Social Policy
Questionnaire Consent Form

[Research Topic] Study on Hong Kong Women's Experience of Violence
2021

You are invited to participate in a research study funded by Zonta Club of Kowloon and Lingnan University and conducted by Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities and Department of Sociology and Social Policy at Lingnan University.

1. Purpose of the study

The study aims to investigate Hong Kong women's experience of sexual violence and intimate partner violence. Research findings will contribute to the prevention of such incidents and offer insight into the ways in which psychosocial support may be provided for victims of such types of violence.

2. Research procedure

The research will collect information on your personal experience(s) with sexual violence and intimate partner violence by means of a questionnaire. It is either filled in by self-administration or through a one-on-one mode of administration with research personnel. The questionnaire takes about 10 minutes to complete, and you will be asked to leave your contact number for verification purposes. We do not anticipate any risks to arise from your participation in this study. If you feel unwell during the process of filling in the questionnaire, please take a short break or notify the researcher.

3. Confidentiality

All personal information collected during this research will be kept strictly confidential, and your information and answers will only be used for research purposes. We will not include in any form of publication, public distribution or disclose to any person / organization of your profile.

4. Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. During the research process, you have the right to skip any questions they don't feel comfortable answering. If you decide to participate in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time.

If you have any questions about this study, you may raise it now. If you have any enquiries about this research in the future, please contact Professor

Chan Hau Nung Annie from the Department of Sociology and Social Policy at Lingnan University (Tel: 2616 7204).

I have read and understood the above information and am willing to participate in this research study.

Participant's name: _____ Phone number: _____

Participant's signature : _____ Date: _____year_____month_____day

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____year_____month_____day

Hong Kong Women's Experience of Violence Survey 2021

1. Gender

Female Transgender

2. Age : _____

3. Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual Homosexual Bisexual Other: _____ (please specify)

4. Marriage status

<input type="checkbox"/> Never married	<input type="checkbox"/> Married	<input type="checkbox"/> Cohabiting (living together with opposite or same sex)	<input type="checkbox"/> Separated	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/> Widowed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other : _____
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5. Economic Activity Status

<input type="checkbox"/> Employee	<input type="checkbox"/> Employer	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired
<input type="checkbox"/> Unpaid family worker	<input type="checkbox"/> Homemaker	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ (please specify)

6. Industry (if not applicable, please skip to question 9)

<input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing (food manufacturing , garment manufacturing , electronic product manufacturing, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Construction (civil engineering , building decoration, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Import and export, wholesale and retail trades (import and export trade, wholesale and retail trade, hawkers, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation, storage, postal, and courier services (land , water , air, warehouse, postal and express, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation and food services (hotels , restaurants, restaurants, bars and lounges , etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Information and communications (radio and television broadcasting, telecommunications, information technology, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance and insurance (banking, investment and holding companies, insurance, securities, fund management, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Real estate, professional and business services (real estate, lawyers, accountants, auditors, architects, surveyors, advertising and market research, travel agency, security and investigation, building and landscape care, cleaning services, office administration and Support, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Public administration, education, human health and social work activities (government, education, medical and health care, nursing homes, welfare institutions, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Miscellaneous and personal services (libraries and museums, theme parks, fitness centers, religious organizations, political organizations, maintenance of personal and household products, beauty and body care, domestic helpers, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ (please specify)	

7. Occupation

<input type="checkbox"/> Managers and administrators	<input type="checkbox"/> Professionals	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate professionals
<input type="checkbox"/> Clerical support workers	<input type="checkbox"/> Service and sales	<input type="checkbox"/> Craft and related workers

	workers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Plant and machine operators and assemblers	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary occupations (including domestic helpers)	<input type="checkbox"/> Skilled agricultural and fishery workers; and occupations not classifiable

8. Monthly personal salary income

<input type="checkbox"/> No income	<input type="checkbox"/> < \$5000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$5001 – 10000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10001 – 15000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15001 – 20000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 20001 - of 25,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25001 – 30000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30001 – 35000	<input type="checkbox"/> > \$35000	

9. Education Attainment (highest completion)

<input type="checkbox"/> No schooling /preschool education	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary school or pre-primary	<input type="checkbox"/> Lower Secondary (Secondary One to Secondary Three)
<input type="checkbox"/> Upper Secondary (Secondary 4 to 7)	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-secondary: Diploma/Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-secondary: Sub-degree/Associate Degree Courses
<input type="checkbox"/> Post-secondary education: degree course	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree or above	<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ (please specify)

Definition of Sexual Violence: Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women. These may include sexual provocation, sexual behavior, and other sexually connotative, physical or verbal behavior directed at the other party's gender in a hostile manner which can be interpreted as disgusting and demeaning to the gender and sexual aspects of an individual or group. Sexual harassment, verbal harassment, negative gender stereotypes, sexual teasing, displaying written or visual pornographic materials, and penetrating sexual assault are all examples of sexual violence.

10 . Have you ever encountered sexual violence? (Including any incidents that took place within and outside of Hong Kong)

- Yes (please fill in the number of occurrences in Part A of the table below. if the incident lasted for a period of time, each time is counted separately)
(Please in the table below in Part B to tick • **which incident you believe to be the most serious**)
- No (please skip to question 20)

Sexual violence	The behavior of the offender	Part A Number of Occurrences	Part B • The most serious incident
1	Penetrative sexual assault (insertion into the vagina or anus; penetration of the penis into the mouth)	___ times	
2	Non-penetrative sexual assault (touching the body, ejaculating body fluids, masturbating, etc.)	___ times	
3	Forcing or threatening you to engage in sexual activity with other people	___ times	
4	Exhibitionism; exposing their genitals to you	___ times	
5	Discussing sexual topics or making sexual comments whether about you or other people and making you feel uneasy/embarrassed	___ times	
6	Unwanted sexual attention in the form of stares and gestures (such as: looking at your body in a sexual way), making you feel scared/disgusted/unsafe/embarrassed	___ times	
7	Displaying sexual images or objects that make you feel	___ times	

	uneasy / embarrassed		
8	Voyeurism: spying on your private parts or private behavior (dressing, bathing, sex)	___ times	
9	Taking up-the-skirt photos, or taking pictures of your private activities (dressing, bathing, sex)	___ times	
10	Spreading to others or posting your private images without your consent	___ times	
11	Threatening or blackmailing you with your private images	___ times	
12	Other: _____ (please specify)	___ times	

Please answer the following **questions 11 to 19** based on the **most serious incident • of sexual violence** you selected in **Part B of the previous question**.

11. The location of the incidence: where did this incident take place? (if the event lasted for a period of time or occurred in more than one location, you may select multiple locations)

<input type="checkbox"/> At home (including your home or the perpetrator's home)	<input type="checkbox"/> Dormitory	<input type="checkbox"/> Shopping mall/store	<input type="checkbox"/> Workplace (please state your industry: _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel/Guesthouse/B&B	<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> On the street	<input type="checkbox"/> Public transportation (such as buses, minibuses, MTR)
<input type="checkbox"/> Online forums/pornographic websites	<input type="checkbox"/> Public toilet	<input type="checkbox"/> Changing Room	<input type="checkbox"/> Car sharing service (such as Uber)
<input type="checkbox"/> Social media (such as Facebook)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fitting room	<input type="checkbox"/> Private car	<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment places (such as karaoke, bars, theaters, cinemas)
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication software (such as WhatsApp, WeChat)	<input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding room	<input type="checkbox"/> Email	<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ (please specify)

12. How many major perpetrator(s)/offender(s) were involved in this incident?

<input type="checkbox"/> Only one person	<input type="checkbox"/> More than one person
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13. What was/were your relationship(s) with the main offender(s) at the time of the incident? (You may choose more than one option below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Legal spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Former legal spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Partner
<input type="checkbox"/> Former partner	<input type="checkbox"/> Mother	<input type="checkbox"/> Father
<input type="checkbox"/> family friend(s) (such as friends of your parents)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other relative(s) / family members	<input type="checkbox"/> Neighbor(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> guest(s) / customer(s) (Please state your Industry : _____)	<input type="checkbox"/> employer(s) / boss(es) / co-worker(s) / subordinate(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> friend(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Classmate(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Online friend(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Stranger(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure

14. What is the main perpetrator/offender's gender? (You may choose more than one if there was more than one perpetrator)

<input type="checkbox"/> male	<input type="checkbox"/> female	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
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15. How did you react when the incident occurred? (You can choose more than one below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Call out	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggle to escape or	<input type="checkbox"/> Seek help from others around you
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loudly/scream	run away	
<input type="checkbox"/> Glare at them or look at them angrily	<input type="checkbox"/> Fight back with force	<input type="checkbox"/> Pretend nothing happened
<input type="checkbox"/> forced to accept it	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know how to react	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ (please specify)

16. How did you feel after the incident (how did it affect you emotionally)? (You can choose more than one below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Insecure	<input type="checkbox"/> Depressed / anxious / worried	<input type="checkbox"/> Sad / wronged
<input type="checkbox"/> Angry / Dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Fear / fear of interacting with others / the perpetrator(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unable to focus on other things, such as work /study
<input type="checkbox"/> helpless	<input type="checkbox"/> Unfair / unjust / unequal	<input type="checkbox"/> No strong reaction /emotion
<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____(please specify)		

17. After the incident, did you make any lifestyle changes? (You can choose more than one below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Change your route to work / school / home	<input type="checkbox"/> Indulge yourself	<input type="checkbox"/> Try to avoid going out	<input type="checkbox"/> Try to avoid the interaction with the perpetrator/others
<input type="checkbox"/> Always stay vigilant / cautious about personal safety	<input type="checkbox"/> No change	<input type="checkbox"/> Change your style of clothing/appearance	<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ (please specify)

18. How did you deal with the incident or seek help? (You can choose more than one below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Called the police	<input type="checkbox"/> Sought help from social service agencies or professionals	<input type="checkbox"/> Told family or friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Complained to the work unit/company/organization you work at
<input type="checkbox"/> Complained to the Equal Opportunities Commission	<input type="checkbox"/> Filed a civil claim against perpetrator	<input type="checkbox"/> Reported the perpetrator to the website/communication software	<input type="checkbox"/> Sought professional help/assistance from a lawyer/legal personnel
<input type="checkbox"/> Sought help from a psychologist/psychiatrist	<input type="checkbox"/> Retaliated/Found someone to retaliate	<input type="checkbox"/> Did not seek help	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

19 . If you never sought help or told anyone about the incident, what was/were the reason(s)? (You can choose more than one below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know how to ask for help/where to seek help from	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt embarrassed or ashamed/did not want others to know about it	<input type="checkbox"/> Afraid others may not believe you/may blame you for what happened	<input type="checkbox"/> No time/energy to deal with it
<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure if the perpetrator's behavior was violating the law	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt that it would be useless to ask for help/You do not trust law enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/> Worried that seeking help would influence or worsen your relationship with the offender	<input type="checkbox"/> Afraid that the offender will be negatively affected as a result of your help-seeking/reporting
<input type="checkbox"/> Felt that this type of incidents are common	<input type="checkbox"/> Afraid of trouble/didn't want to make a big deal out of it	<input type="checkbox"/> COVID affected my help-seeking/reporting	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

The definition of intimate partner violence : Abusive behavior from a current or former partner, spouse, or dating partner, which may be emotional, physical, or sexual in nature. It includes abuse that has been committed or attempted. For example: physical violence (strangling or suffocating, hitting), harmful remarks (verbal humiliation), forceful violent/sexual behavior, controlling behavior (isolating you from your

friends and family), using power/relations or technology to humiliate or control you, and manipulative/threatening behaviors (intimidating with looks, gestures, and behaviors), etc.

20 . Have you ever encountered intimate partner violence?

Yes (please fill in the number of occurrences in Part A of the table below. if the incident lasted for a period of time, each time is counted separately)

(Please in the table below in Part B to tick • **which incident you believe to be the most serious**)

No (please skip to question 29)

Intimate partner violence	The behavior of the abuser	Part A Number of occurrences	Part B • • The most serious incident
1	Verbally Insult or intimidate/threaten you	___ times	
2	Use physical violence against you	___ times	
3	Stalking behavior such as surveillance or following	___ times	
4	Forbid you to contact friends or family	___ times	
5	Sexually assault you or forcing/threatening you to have sex against your will	___ times	
6	Cut off your financials/withdrawing financial support	___ times	
7	Threatening family members under the influence of alcohol or drugs	___ times	
8	Threaten you to take private photos/videos or use private images to blackmail you	___ times	
9	Other: _____ (please specify)	___ times	

Please answer the following questions 21 to 28 based on the **most serious incident • of intimate partner violence** you selected in Part B of the previous question.

21. The location of the incidence: where did this incident take place? (if the event lasted for a period of time or occurred in more than one location, you may select multiple locations)

<input type="checkbox"/> At home (including your home or the abuser’s home)	<input type="checkbox"/> Dormitory	<input type="checkbox"/> Shopping mall/store	<input type="checkbox"/> Workplace (please state your industry: _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Hotel/Guesthouse/B&B	<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> On the street	<input type="checkbox"/> Public transportation (such as buses, minibuses, MTR)
<input type="checkbox"/> Online forums/pornographic websites	<input type="checkbox"/> Public toilet	<input type="checkbox"/> Changing Room	<input type="checkbox"/> Car sharing service (such as Uber)
<input type="checkbox"/> Social media (such as Facebook)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fitting room	<input type="checkbox"/> Private car	<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment places (such as karaoke, bars, theaters, cinemas)
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication software (such as WhatsApp , WeChat)	<input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding room	<input type="checkbox"/> Email	<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ (please specify)

22. What was/were your relationship with the abuser at the time of the incident? (You may choose more than one option below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Current legal spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Former legal spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Current partner
<input type="checkbox"/> Former partner	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure

23. What is the main perpetrator/offender’s gender?

<input type="checkbox"/> male	<input type="checkbox"/> female	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
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24. How did you react when the incident occurred? (You can choose more than one below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Call out loudly/scream	<input type="checkbox"/> Struggle to escape or run away	<input type="checkbox"/> Seek help from others around you
<input type="checkbox"/> Glare at them or look at them angrily	<input type="checkbox"/> Fight back with force	<input type="checkbox"/> Pretend nothing happened
<input type="checkbox"/> forced to accept it	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know how to react	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ (please specify)

25. How did you feel after the incident (how did it affect you emotionally)? (You can choose more than one below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Insecure	<input type="checkbox"/> Depressed / anxious / worried	<input type="checkbox"/> Sad / wronged
<input type="checkbox"/> Angry / Dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Fear / fear of interacting with others / the abuser	<input type="checkbox"/> Unable to focus on other things, such as work /study
<input type="checkbox"/> helpless	<input type="checkbox"/> Unfair / unjust / unequal	<input type="checkbox"/> No strong reaction /emotion
<input type="checkbox"/> Regret/feel that you chose the wrong partner	<input type="checkbox"/> Want to escape / sever the relationship	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ (please specify)

26. After the incident, did you make any lifestyle changes? (You can choose more than one below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Change your route to work / school / home	<input type="checkbox"/> Indulge yourself	<input type="checkbox"/> Try to avoid going out/going home	<input type="checkbox"/> Try to avoid the interaction with the abuser/others
<input type="checkbox"/> Always stay vigilant / cautious about personal safety	<input type="checkbox"/> No change	<input type="checkbox"/> Change your style of clothing/appearance	<input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ (please specify)

27 . How did you deal with the incident or seek help? (You can choose more than one below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Called the police	<input type="checkbox"/> Sought help from social service agencies or professionals	<input type="checkbox"/> Told family or friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Sought professional help/assistance from a lawyer/legal personnel
<input type="checkbox"/> Sought a separation/divorce	<input type="checkbox"/> Filed a civil claim against abuser	<input type="checkbox"/> Reported the abuser to the website/communication software	<input type="checkbox"/> Sought help from a psychologist/psychiatrist
<input type="checkbox"/> Retaliated/Found someone to retaliate	<input type="checkbox"/> Did not seek help	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	

28. If you never sought help or told anyone about the incident, what was/were the reason(s)? (You can choose more than one below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know how to ask for help/where to seek help from	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt embarrassed or ashamed/did not want others to know about it	<input type="checkbox"/> Afraid others may not believe you/may blame you for what happened	<input type="checkbox"/> No time/energy to deal with it
<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure if the abuser's behavior was violating the law	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt that it would be useless to ask for help/You do not trust law enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/> Worried that seeking help would influence or worsen your relationship with the abuser	<input type="checkbox"/> Afraid that the abuser will be negatively affected as a result of your help-seeking/reporting
<input type="checkbox"/> Felt that this type of incidents are common	<input type="checkbox"/> Afraid of trouble/didn't want to make a big deal out of it	<input type="checkbox"/> COVID affected my help-seeking/reporting	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

29. If you have ever encountered sexual violence and/or intimate partner violence, do you need any help/emotional support service now?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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30. In the case of sexual violence or intimate partner violence, do you know of any agencies or organizations that could offer help or support? (If so, please list the names of the organizations)

****The End****