

# Louisiana Violence Experiences Survey (LaVEX) 2023



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**Content Warning:** *This work includes sensitive information on various types of violence, including, but not limited to physical, emotional, domestic, and sexual. If you need support for any of these concerns, please contact:*

- *Louisiana Mental Health, Suicide, and Crisis 24-hour Hotline: 988*
- *Louisiana Statewide 24-hour Hotline for Domestic Violence Survivors: 1.888.411.1333*
- *Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault crisis phone line at 888.372.8995 (24/7) English/Spanish. Text at 225.351.7233 or Chat online at lafasa.org.*



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Louisiana Violence Experiences Survey (LaVEX) survey offers first-time insight into the existing reality of violence experienced by adults in the state. LaVEX is unique in its ability to provide population-level estimates on physical violence (inclusive of gun violence), a range of sexual violence experiences (inclusive of sexual harassment and assault), and intimate partner violence (IPV) experiences among adult residents of LA. It is the only survey providing these recent data at the state level. This report examines lifetime and past-year experiences of violence among Louisianans using LaVEX 2023 data from 1,081 adult (age 18+) state resident respondents surveyed from May to June 2023. (See *Definitions for Report* section for clarity on definitions for violence indicators.)

### Physical Violence

- Half of all adults in LA (53%) have experienced physical violence in their lifetime
- One in 14 LA adults (7%) experienced physical violence in the past year
  - Men were more likely than women to report past-year physical violence (9% vs 5%)
  - Most past-year physical violence (84%) was committed by someone known to the victim
  - Women most often report a spouse/romantic partner was the perpetrator of past-year physical violence (61%), while men most frequently report that the perpetrator was a stranger (44%)
- One in five adults in LA (21%) have been threatened or harmed with a gun – with 15% of women and 29% of men report experiencing gun violence in their lifetime. One in 50 adults (2%) were threatened or harmed with a gun in the past year
- For those reporting past-year physical violence, most reported negative health or social consequences
  - The most common negative consequences reported were feelings of anxiety or depression (66% of women, 31% of men), suicidality (22% of women, 7% of men), and missing work or school (50% of women, 32% of men)
  - Most people who experienced physical violence did not report it (89% of women, 83% of men)

### Sexual Violence (inclusive of five forms of sexual harassment and sexual assault)

- Two-fifths of adults in LA - 41% - have experienced sexual harassment or assault in their lifetime
- 39% have experienced sexual harassment, most often in the form of verbal sexual harassment
  - One in nine (11%) have experienced sexual assault
  - All forms of sexual harassment and assault were reported more frequently by women than by men, with the exception of trans- or homophobic sexual harassment
- One in 10 LA adults (10%) experienced sexual harassment or assault in the past year
  - Women and men were similarly likely to report past-year sexual harassment or assault (12% of women, 9% of men)
  - Verbal and cyber sexual harassment were most commonly reported (6% and 4%, respectively)
- For those reporting past-year sexual violence, most reported negative health or social consequences

- The most commonly reported negative consequences were feelings of anxiety or depression (42% of women, 37% of men), suicidality (10% of women, 8% of men), and changing a route or routine (18% of women, 38% of men)
- Most who experienced past-year sexual violence did not report it (84%)
- Physical and sexual violence victimization often are co-occurring. Those who experienced past-year physical violence were five times more likely to have experienced past-year sexual violence (43% vs. 8%)

**Intimate Partner Violence (IPV):** Inclusive of physical, sexual, economic, and emotionally controlling IPV, as well as threats of violence against self or a pet, from a current or former romantic or sexual partner.

- Half (51%) of respondents reported experiencing IPV ever, including 55% of women and 47% of men
- Over one-third (36%) of Louisianans report enduring physical and/or sexual IPV in their lifetime
  - Women are more likely than men to report a history of physical and/or sexual IPV (42% vs. 29%)
- One in 25 LA adults (4%) experienced physical and/or sexual IPV in the past year.

**Discrimination and Violence:** Nearly one-third of LA adults (29%) regularly experience discrimination.

- Discrimination based on race/ethnicity is the most common form of discrimination reported
- Those who report discrimination experiences are six times more likely to report past-year physical violence (17% vs 3%) and three times more likely to report past-year sexual harassment or assault (21% vs 7%)

### **Violence and Health**

- Those reporting past year violence were 2x-3x more likely to report severe depression and/or anxiety symptoms (15% vs 9% for physical violence, 20% vs 8% for sexual harassment or assault), compared to those who did not experience violence in the past year
- Those reporting past year violence were 5x more likely to report serious consideration of suicide in the past year (37% vs 7% for physical violence, 33% vs 6% for sexual harassment or assault), compared to those who did not experience violence in the past year
- Those reporting past year violence were 2x more likely to report recent substance misuse (65% vs 30% for physical violence, 58% vs 30% for sexual harassment or assault), compared to those who did not experience violence in the past year

**Socially and Economically Marginalized People Face More Violence:** Past-year physical violence, sexual harassment or assault, and physical or sexual IPV were reported more frequently by lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other self-described sexual identity respondents, people with disabilities, people with a history of homelessness or incarceration, and those who faced prior year eviction or financial distress

- Those who reported past-year eviction, food insecurity, or housing insecurity were two to nine times more likely to have experienced physical or sexual violence in the past year

### **Reports of Violence Perpetration**

- 3-4% of adults report past-year perpetration of physical or sexual assault or sexual harassment
- Men were twice as likely as women to report this perpetration
- Perpetration of violence was more likely among those who were also victims of violence

Findings from this state-wide survey confirm that Louisianans regularly experience physical and sexual violence and discrimination. Groups facing economic vulnerability and social discrimination bear a greater burden of violence, and multiple forms of violence typically intersect to compound this burden. Most victims never formally report the abuse, suggesting that criminal justice responses to perpetration may not be useful as a means of addressing violence. Health and social welfare services such as conflict-resolution training and support services for families and youth may be a better means of serving victims and preventing perpetration, given the vulnerabilities faced by victims and that most perpetrators are victims as well. Findings have important implications for state programs and policies.

## DEFINITIONS FOR THE REPORT

In this report we assess both experiences with victimization from violence, as well as committing violence against others, using the following definitions.

Definitions of Violence in the LaVEX 2023 Survey	
<b>Physical violence</b>	Physical violence includes physical abuse and threat of use of a weapon. Physical abuse can include being hit, slapped, punched, shoved, choked, kicked, shaken, or otherwise physically hurt. Weapon use was specific to knife or gun.
<b>Verbal sexual harassment</b>	This can include someone whistling, leering or staring at you, or calling out to you in ways that make you feel disrespected or unsafe; someone talking about your body parts (such as your butt or breasts) inappropriately or offensively or saying sexually explicit comments or questions (“I want to do BLANK to you”); and someone repeatedly asking you for a date or your phone number when you’ve said no. In some cultures, this is also known as ‘eve teasing’.
<b>Homophobic or transphobic comments</b>	This can include someone misgendering you or calling you a homophobic or transphobic slur, like “Fag,” “Dyke,” or “Tranny.”
<b>Cyber sexual harassment</b>	This can include someone electronically sending you or showing you sexual content without your permission, such as over e-mail, snapchat or Facebook or on their phone or computer. This can also include someone taking and/or sharing sexual pictures or videos of you without your permission.
<b>Physically aggressive sexual harassment</b>	This can include someone flashing or exposing their genitals to you without your permission. This can also include someone purposely touching you or brushing up against you in an unwelcome, sexual way.
<b>Quid pro quo sexual harassment or coercion</b>	This can include someone forcing or pressuring you to do a sexual act in exchange for something (such as a good grade, a promotion, a job, drugs, food, money, or something similar) or instead of something (like paying rent or a citation, etc.)
<b>Forced sex</b>	This can include someone forcing you to do a sexual act without your permission or explicit agreement (including while you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs).
<b>Sexual violence</b>	Sexual violence includes any of the above six forms of violence: verbal sexual harassment, homophobic or transphobic comments, cyber sexual harassment, physically aggressive sexual harassment, quid pro quo sexual harassment or coercion, or forced sex.
<b>Intimate partner violence</b>	Inclusive of physical, sexual, economic, and emotionally controlling IPV, as well as threats of violence against self or a pet, from a current or former romantic or sexual partner.



## INTRODUCTION

Violence is a major health and security concern that is increasing in the U.S. and Louisiana. In this report on the LaVEX [Louisiana Violence Experiences] Survey, we present data on experiences of violence from a statewide study with residents of Louisiana, delving into alarming statistics and shedding light on the state's escalating violence problem and its far-reaching consequences. We also explore the relationships across violence, discrimination, and mental health in our state, considering the role of gender inequities and racial/ethnic disparities in our examination. Findings offer a benchmark from which to improve.

Crime data in the United States document a concerning surge in violent crime across the nation over the past few years, and the rate of increase in violent crime is higher in Louisiana than that seen for the U.S. as a whole (1). Firearm-related homicides disproportionately affect men more than women and Black people more than white people. The prevalence of firearm-related homicides increased by 35% in just the period from 2019 to 2020 (2), and Louisiana ranks second in the nation for firearm deaths, with a rate of 29.1 deaths from guns per 100,000 residents in 2021 (3). Homicide, most often from a male partner, is now the leading cause of maternal mortality in the U.S., and this is a major contributor to escalating rates of maternal morbidity in the U.S. and in Louisiana (7). For women, violent crime, gun violence, and homicide are most often occurring at the hands of an intimate partner, and again, we see that Black women are disproportionately affected (4-6). Clearly, violence is a major concern. However, crime and homicide data are only the tip of the iceberg on this issue, as most victims of violence are harmed but not killed and never report their experiences to the police. Research on violence in the general population is needed but remains lacking at the state level.

Violence in Louisiana harms not only those who are directly victimized, it also affects the stability and security of children, families, and communities. Louisiana has, for more than a decade, ranked as one of the worst states for children, based on several widely accepted indicators including health, education, and socio-economic status (8-9). These findings correspond with data documenting that the state is the worst in the nation on gender equality indicators (10), despite being a majority female state (11), and among the worst states for health outcomes among Black residents (12), despite having a higher proportion of Black residents compared to the US as a whole (13). Louisiana is also among the lowest-ranking states in the nation in terms of overall health (12).

Insight into the prevalence and role of violence in this context is needed. In May and June 2023, we undertook a population-based survey research study to examine experiences of violence with a state-representative sample of adults in Louisiana. Our examination of violence experiences considers gender, given the notable differences in experiences of violence based on gender as well as sexual identity. We also examine differences in experiences of violence by race/ethnicity as well as various forms of social and economic marginalization, such as food insecurity and housing instability.

This work is designed to offer crucial insights into the complex interplay of factors contributing to the crisis of violence in Louisiana and seeks to equip organizations and government entities with the necessary knowledge to implement targeted solutions. By highlighting the violence and mental health crises in our state, acknowledging the disparities faced by marginalized communities, and recognizing the gendered nature of violence, we can support evidence-based policy and programmatic solutions at scale to pave the way for a safer and more equitable future for all Louisianans.

## METHODOLOGY

In 2023, the Newcomb Institute at Tulane University led the development and implementation of the LaVEX survey, with our commissioned partner, the independent research institution NORC, with support from the Center on Gender Equity and Health at the University of California San Diego. NORC conducted the LaVEX survey online in May/June 2023 with approximately 1000 Louisiana residents aged 18 and older; further details are provided below. Since 2020, the Center on Gender Equity and Health (GEH) at the University of California San Diego has led the California Study on Violence Experiences across the Lifespan (CalVEX) survey, which has been conducted annually and assesses experiences of physical violence (including threats with or use of a weapon), sexual violence (including sexual harassment, coercion, and rape), discrimination, and experiences of physical and mental health. LaVEX was developed as a parallel survey to capture these same issues in Louisiana to provide a statewide understanding of these concerns.

### Survey Tool Development

The LaVEX 2023 survey builds upon the CalVEX 2020, 2021, and 2022 surveys, which used validated measures described previously (14). In 2023, we included new measures, using previously validated and published measures, on experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV) (15,16), witnessing IPV as a child (17), IPV bystander behavior (18), perceived motivations for violence (19), and childcare (20). Survey content was reviewed and revised by partner stakeholders to ensure relevance and appropriateness of items, and by the NORC team to ensure clarity and flow of items as well as variable construction.

In early May 2023, NORC pretested the survey with n=33 participants to ensure it was easily understood and implemented with the online panel sample and kept to the 15-minute timeframe. Pretest findings shared by NORC indicated there were no issues identified in the items as far as difficulty in comprehension of items by panel respondents. Thus, the same survey was implemented in the field.

### Ethics Approval

Panelists were offered the cash equivalent of USD \$4 for completing this survey. Survey participation was completely voluntary. Respondents who did choose to voluntarily complete the survey were able to skip any question (except for required demographic information) or to stop the survey at any time. In addition, the following text was included in the footer of all survey pages: "If you are experiencing distress or discomfort, see these websites for services in the state <https://lcadv.org/programs-resources/> or <https://ldh.la.gov/page/98>". Respondents were also able to provide feedback (whether positive or negative, and available only to NORC staff) at the end of the survey. A review of these comments by NORC staff indicated no major identifiable concerns with the questions from the survey. All research procedures were approved by both NORC/University of Chicago and the University of California, San Diego Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Project #807374).

### Sampling

The sample was generated from a general population sample of Louisiana adults aged 18 and older selected from NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel, the most representative online probability panel available in the U.S. AmeriSpeak® is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population and is funded and operated by NORC at the University of Chicago (21). Randomly selected U.S. households are sampled using area probability and address-based sampling, with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame. These sampled households are then contacted by U.S. mail, telephone, and field interviewers (face to face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box-only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings. While most AmeriSpeak households participate in surveys by web, non-internet households can participate in AmeriSpeak surveys by telephone. Households without conventional internet access but having web access via smartphones are allowed to participate in AmeriSpeak surveys by web. AmeriSpeak panelists participate

in NORC studies or studies conducted by NORC on behalf of governmental agencies, academic researchers, and media and commercial organizations. For more information, email AmeriSpeak-BD@norc.org or visit AmeriSpeak.norc.org.

The AmeriSpeak panel sample was additionally supplemented with respondents from the Dynata and Lucid nonprobability online opt-in panels. TrueNorth statistical calibration was conducted by NORC to combine these probability and non-probability samples (more information on data processing, weighting, and TrueNorth Calibration is provided in Appendix A) (22). The study design effect was 2.14, with a study margin of error of +/- 4.36%.

### Data Collection

All data were collected online from May 22<sup>nd</sup> to June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. To encourage study participation, NORC sent email reminders to the panelists every four days throughout the fielding period. The response rate reporting for the AmeriSpeak sample was as follows:

- Weighted AAPOR RR3 Recruitment rate: 20.7%
- Weighted Household retention rate: 79.9%
- Survey completion rate: 20.6%
- Weighted AAPOR RR3 cumulative response rate: 3.4%

### Data Analysis

Analyses presented in this report were weighted using NORC-provided survey weights to provide state-representative prevalence estimates. Bivariate analyses were conducted to assess significant associations (at  $p < 0.05$ ) between violence experiences and key demographics when the sample size allowed. When an item was skipped, the observation was dropped from the corresponding analysis (e.g., treated as missing). The sample size for non-binary, genderqueer, gender fluid and other self-described gender identity respondents is  $n=13$ . As a result, we cannot accurately represent the experience of these populations. All findings are based on the responses of respondents identifying as men or women unless otherwise noted.

We also included a small number of open-ended questions on participants' experiences of physical and sexual violence. We include example quotes from these questions to offer insight into participants' experiences of violence that corresponded to quantitative findings.

### Sample Characteristics

The LaVEX study was designed to be representative of the Louisiana population ages 18 years and older. The final sample included 1,081 respondents (women,  $n=739$ ; men,  $n=329$ ; non-binary, genderqueer, gender fluid, or other self-described gender identity,  $n=13$ ). To confirm that this sample is representative of the Louisiana general population ages 18 years and older, we compared the *weighted* sample data against several key socio-demographic variables from Louisiana census data and projections. These are:

- Gender: The weighted sample was 55% women, 45% men, and 0.7% ( $n=12$ ) non-binary, genderqueer, gender fluid, or other self-described gender identity, using a single item on gender identity with these options. We asked a separate question on whether participants were ever trans; 20 individuals who identify as women and 18 individuals who identify as a man reported ever being trans. U.S. Census data indicate that adult Louisianans are 51% women (11). Please note that our gender-stratified analyses were limited to those identifying as a woman or man, regardless of transgender history.
- Race/Ethnicity: The weighted sample was mostly non-Hispanic white (62%) or non-Hispanic Black (29%); an additional 5% were Hispanic/Latinx, 1% were non-Hispanic Asian, and 3% were other or multiple races (collapsed category due to small cell sizes). Louisiana is 58% non-Hispanic white, 33% non-Hispanic Black, 6% Hispanic, and 2% non-Hispanic Asian (11).

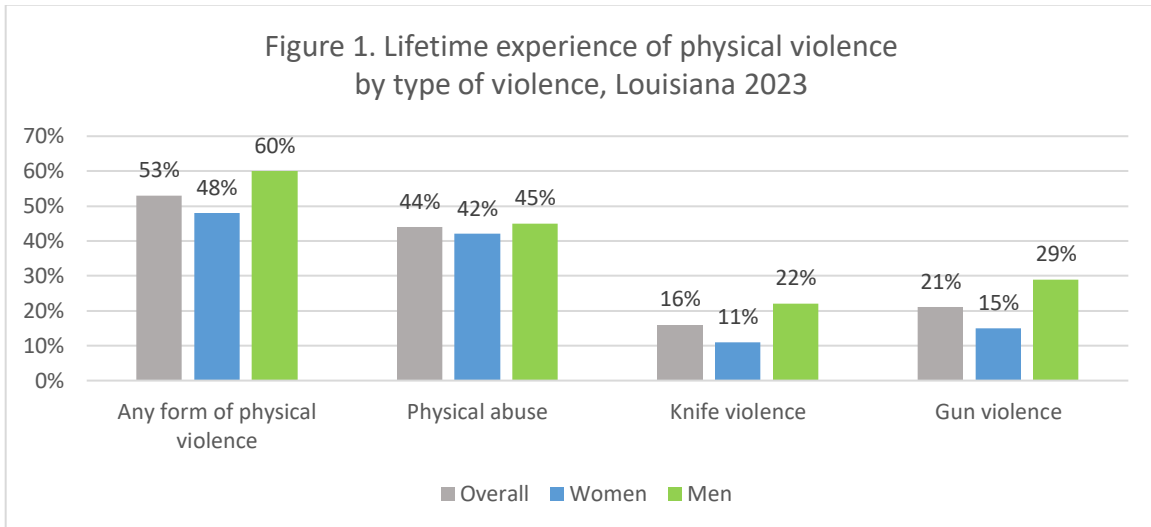
- Education: Most of the weighted sample had completed at least high school or a GED (90%), and one-third had a bachelor's degree or higher (30%). Among Louisianan adults as a whole, an estimated 86% hold at least a high school degree or GED, and 25% have a bachelor's degree or higher (11).
- Employment: Most of the weighted sample (58%) were employed full- or part-time; Louisiana census data similarly suggest 59% employment (11).
- Income: Average household income for the weighted sample was \$40,000-\$49,999 [income was assessed categorically]; this is slightly lower than Louisiana's 2021 median household income of \$53,571 (11).
- Age distribution: The age distribution among the weighted sample was as follows: 8% aged 18-24 years; 16% aged 25-34 years; 19% aged 35-44 years; 16% aged 45-54 years; 17% aged 55-64 years; and 24% aged 65 years and older. This age distribution of respondents approximately matches the Louisiana census age distribution (11).
- Sexual identity: 11% of the weighted sample identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other sexual identity. This is slightly higher than Census Pulse Survey estimates that suggest 6.5% of adult Louisianans identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (23).
- Foreign-born and citizenship: The majority of the weighted sample were born in the U.S. (97%). This is similar to the state-estimated 96% born in the U.S. (11). Similarly, almost all respondents were U.S. citizens (99%), which is similar to 2020 census estimates which suggest 98% of adult Louisianans were citizens (11).
- Disability: Over a third of the weighted sample (37%) reported some form of disability. This proportion matches CDC estimates that suggest 34% of adult Louisianans have a disability (24).

As seen above, the weighted study sample is generally representative of the adult Louisiana population with respect to race/ethnicity, employment status, age, citizenship, and disability status. Our weighted sample may slightly overrepresent women in the state, have slightly higher than state average education, and have somewhat lower than state average income; however, these differences from state-wide figures are not substantial.

We also included open-ended questions for participants who reported experiences of physical and sexual violence to briefly describe an incident of violence. We include these data as quotes within the sections on physical violence and sexual violence to offer more insight into these experiences for Louisianans. We also include "word clouds" developed from responses on physical violence and sexual violence, respectively, to highlight key words most often used by participants in their descriptions of physical and sexual violence. As experiences of violence differ by gender, we provide separate word clouds based on data from women and data from men. A word cloud is a computer-generated pictorial of words most often used in text output, with larger size and greater bolding of words most often used. Non-descriptive, highly utilized words such as "the", "an/a", or "in" are removed from inclusion in the word cloud so that the most meaningful words, often nouns and verbs, can be highlighted.

## SURVEY FINDINGS

### Lifetime Experiences of Physical Violence



#### ***The majority of adults in Louisiana have experienced physical violence in their lifetime***

The majority of adults in Louisiana – 53% - have experienced physical violence in their lifetime (**Figure 1**).

- One in six (16%) have been threatened or harmed with a knife
- One in five (21%) have been threatened or harmed with a gun
- Men are twice as likely as women to have experienced knife or gun violence in their lifetime

#### ***Participants described gun violence experiences in the context of robberies and carjackings***

*“Was maced and had a gun pulled on me in [city] while walking around looking at sights and they took our jewelry and wallets.” — 41-year-old woman*

*“I was robbed and hit in the head with a pistol.” — 58-year-old man*

*“A friend of mine... was walking home from a convenience store when 2 adult males attacked him to steal his store purchases and his money. Someone who was driving by at the time stopped and assisted my friend by pulling a pistol on the attacker.” — 65-year-old man*

Physical violence experiences were common across the lifespan (**Figure 2**).

- One in seven (15%) Louisianans experienced physical violence in childhood (age 0-12)
- One in five (20%) experienced physical violence in adolescence (age 13-17)
- One in four (24%) experienced physical violence in young adulthood (age 18-24)
- One in four (24%) experienced physical violence in adulthood (age 25+)

- Men were more likely than women to experience physical violence in childhood (age 0-12, 19% vs 12%) and adolescence (age 13-17, 29% vs 12%), but rates of violence in young adulthood and adulthood were similar for men and women.

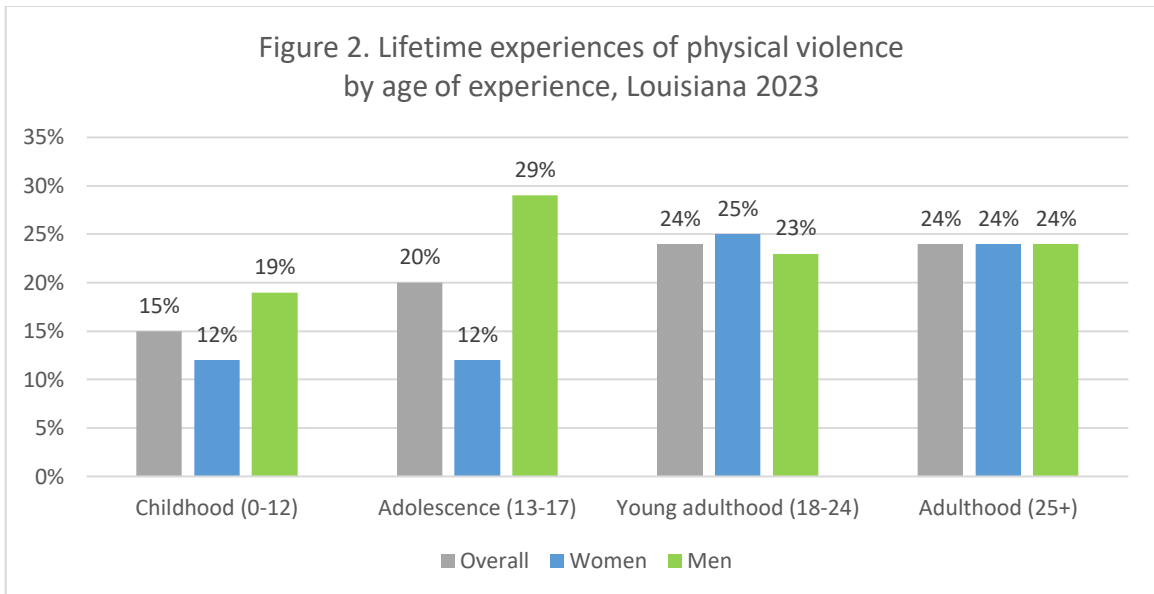
**Many Louisianans experienced physical violence in childhood from family members**

*“Being beaten for having bad grades on my report card” — 19-year-old woman*

*“My older uncle threatened to cut me with a knife” — 33-year-old man*

*“My father was upset with me because of the boy I wanted to go hangout with. I was probably 16 years old if I remember correctly. He squeezed my arms very tight and pointed in my face and got in my face*

*while yelling at me very aggressively.” — 19-year-old woman*

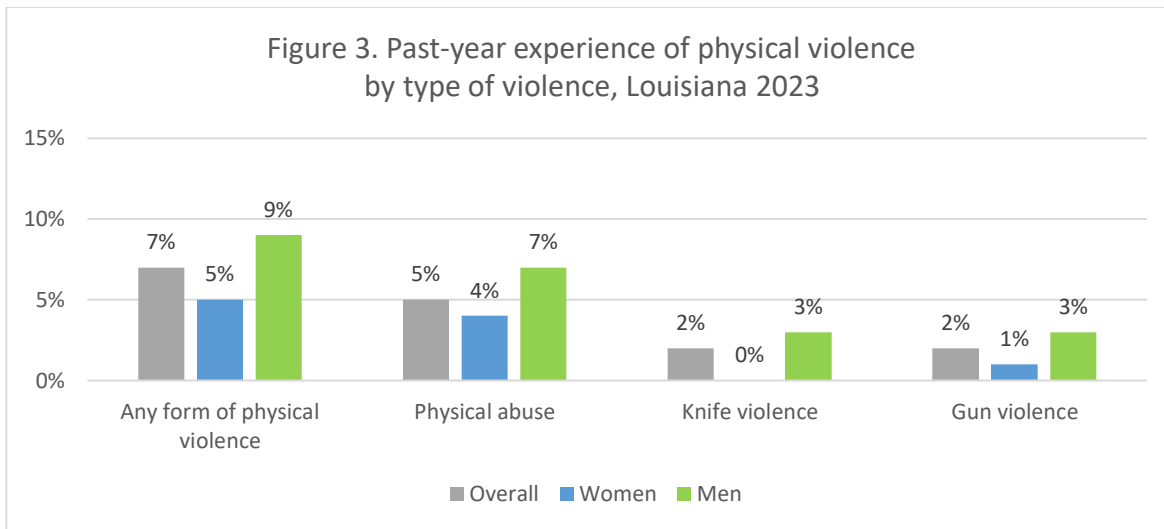


### PAST-YEAR EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

#### Prevalence of Physical Violence Experiences in the Past Year

One in 14 adults (7%) have experienced physical violence within the past year (**Figure 3**).

- One in 50 (2%) were threatened or harmed with a knife in the past year
- One in 50 (2%) were threatened or harmed with a gun in the past year
- Men were more likely than women to have experienced physical violence in the past year (9% vs 5%)



***In 2023, >90,000 women and >160,000 men in Louisiana were victims of physical violence***

#### Relationship to Person(s) Causing Physical Violence in the Past Year

Respondents most often reported that the physical violence they experienced in the past year was perpetrated by someone they knew (84%), including family, friends, partners, known authority figures, and acquaintances. This held true for both women and men (91% and 79%, respectively; **Table 1**).

- For women, a spouse or romantic partner was the most commonly reported perpetrator of past-year physical violence (61%). Women were 3x more likely than men to report that a partner was the perpetrator of physical violence (61% for women vs. 24% for men).

#### ***Women often described experiences of physical violence as occurring at the hands of partner***

*“My husband physically abused me and verbally abused me often when we were married. He brought me to the river where he was going to kill me. I had to beg for my life. He finally brought me to my sister’s house and left.” — 52-year-old woman*

*“My second husband dragged me threw the yard and broke my back” — 39-year-old woman*

*“It was my ex-boyfriend we got into a argument about cloths [sic] not being washed and he put his hands on me” — 21-year-old woman*

- For men, a stranger was the most commonly reported perpetrator of past-year physical violence (44%), and men were 4x more likely than women to report that a stranger was the perpetrator of physical violence (44% for men vs. 10% for women).

***Men described experiences of physical violence perpetrated by strangers in public spaces***

*"A guy was drunk and thought I was talking to his girlfriend and ended pulling a knife out on me and tried to stab me." — 26-year-old man*

*"I had a stranger threatened me because they thought I skip in front of them in the grocery line"*  
— 36-year-old man

*"Victim of the knockout game... hit me in the back of the head as I passed him on the street and then ran off." — 70-year-old man*

**Table 1. Relationship to the Person(s) Causing Past-year Physical Violence**

	Any form of physical violence		Physical abuse		Threat with knife		Threat with gun	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women*	Men	Women	Men
Family Member 18+	31%	39%	29%	41%	--	26%	24%	25%
Family Member < 18	13%	13%	12%	10%	--	19%	13%	17%
Spouse/Partner	61%	24%	66%	24%	--	44%	31%	15%
Known Non-Family	17%	24%	17%	24%	--	13%	13%	29%
Acquaintance or Community Member	13%	17%	10%	19%	--	18%	27%	24%
Stranger	10%	44%	8%	36%	--	42%	17%	39%
Teacher/Coach/ Adult Authority	2%	7%	1%	10%	--	3%	0%	0%
Police	4%	8%	2%	7%	--	9%	0%	12%
Boss/Employer	1%	7%	1%	10%	--	0%	0%	0%
Other	1%	0%	2%	0%	--	0%	0%	0%

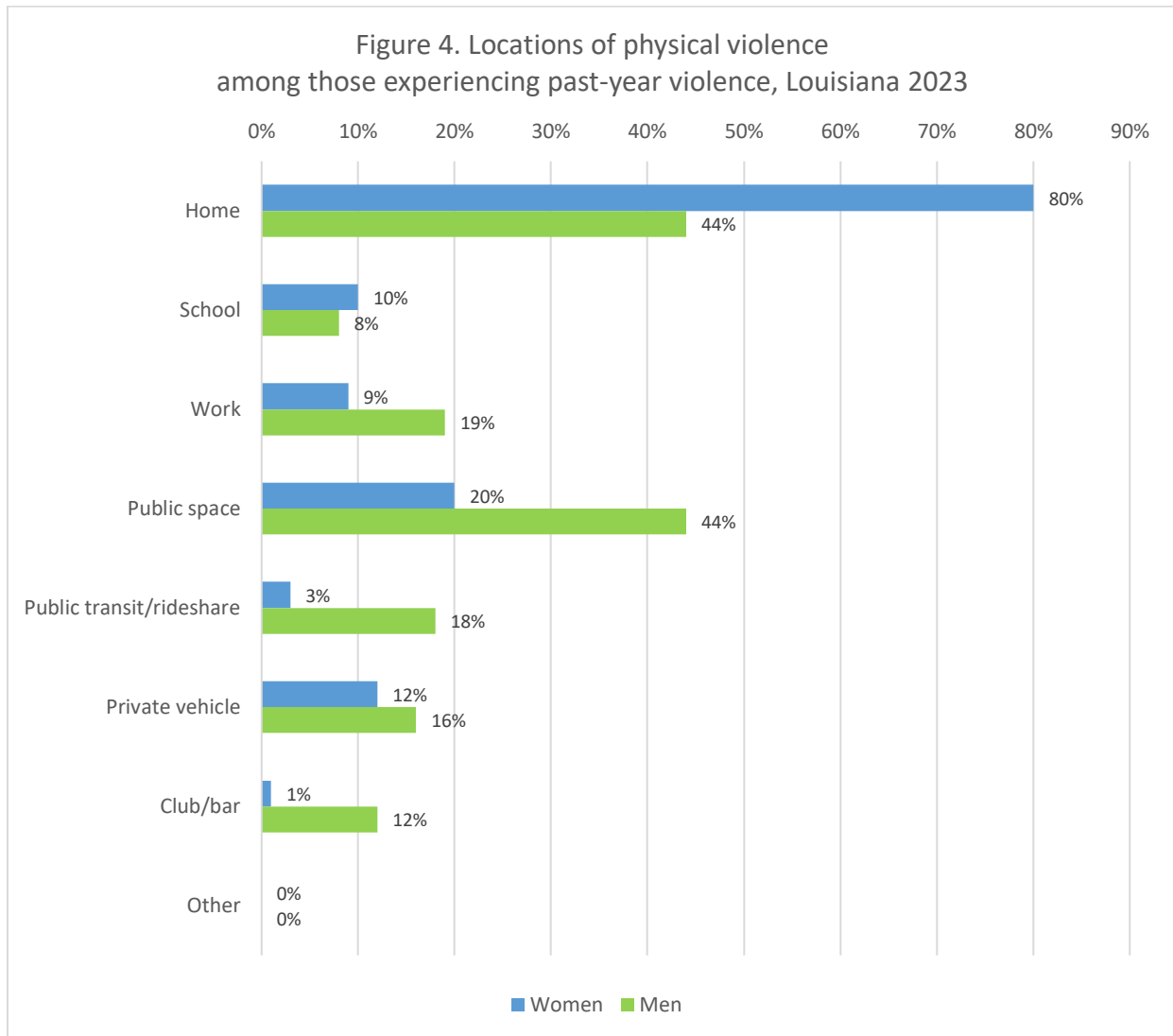
\* Suppressed due to a small number of past-year knife violence reports by women.



### Locations of Physical Violence Experiences in the Past Year

Respondents most often reported that physical violence in the past year occurred at home (their own home or the home of someone known to them) or in a public space such as a neighborhood, park, or on the street (Figure 4).

- Women were more likely than men to report a home as the location of past-year physical violence (80% vs 44%)
- Men were more likely than women to report a public space as the location of past-year physical violence (44% vs 20%)



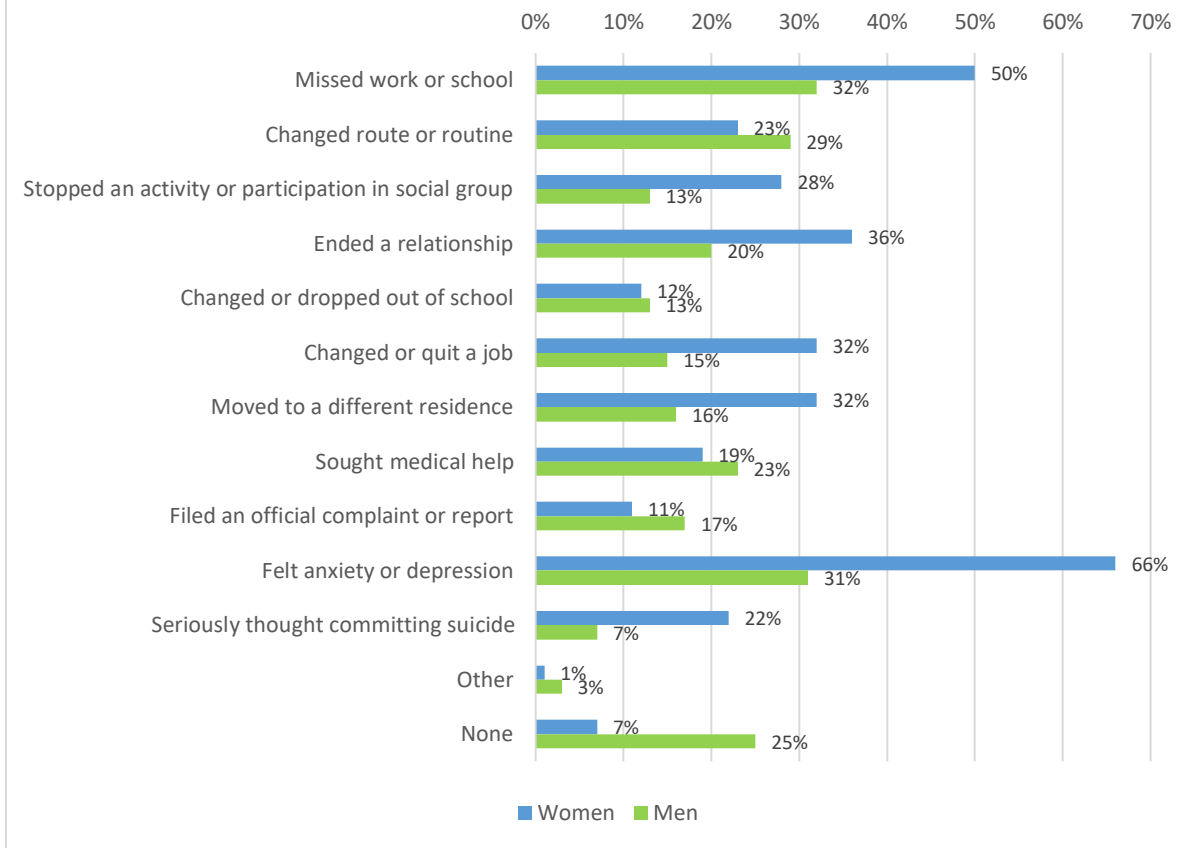
### **Consequences of Physical Violence Experiences in the Past Year**

Most respondents reported negative consequences resulting from past-year experiences of physical violence, including mental health effects and life changes to manage their risk (**Figure 5**).

- Almost half of those who experienced physical violence in the past year (45%) reported feeling anxiety or depression as a result of the violence. This was the most common consequence reported by women (66%) and the second most common consequence reported by men (31%). One in eight respondents (13%) reported considering suicide due to their experiences of past-year physical violence (22% of women and 7% of men).
- For both women and men, missing work or school was a commonly reported response to past-year physical violence (50% of women and 32% of men).
- Women and men reported other life disruptions due to past-year physical violence: changing their route or routine (23% of women, 29% of men), stopping an activity or participation in a social group (28% of women, 13% of men), changing or dropping out of school (12% of women, 13% of men), changing or quitting a job (32% of women, 15% of men), and relocating (32% of women, 16% of men).
- Few who experienced past-year physical violence filed a formal report (11% of women, 17% of men); about one-third (35% of women and 29% of men) told no one about the experience.

***One in eight people who experienced physical violence report that it resulted in feelings of suicidality. One in three told no one about these experiences.***

Figure 5. Consequences of physical violence among those experiencing past-year violence, Louisiana 2023



We asked respondents to describe an incident of physical violence that had happened to them or to someone they knew. **Figures 6 a and b** summarize commonly mentioned words in these open-ended responses, based on the gender of the respondent. Corresponding with the quantitative data, women were more likely to speak of violence from a partner and in the home, whereas men are more likely to speak of violence in public spaces and involving a weapon.

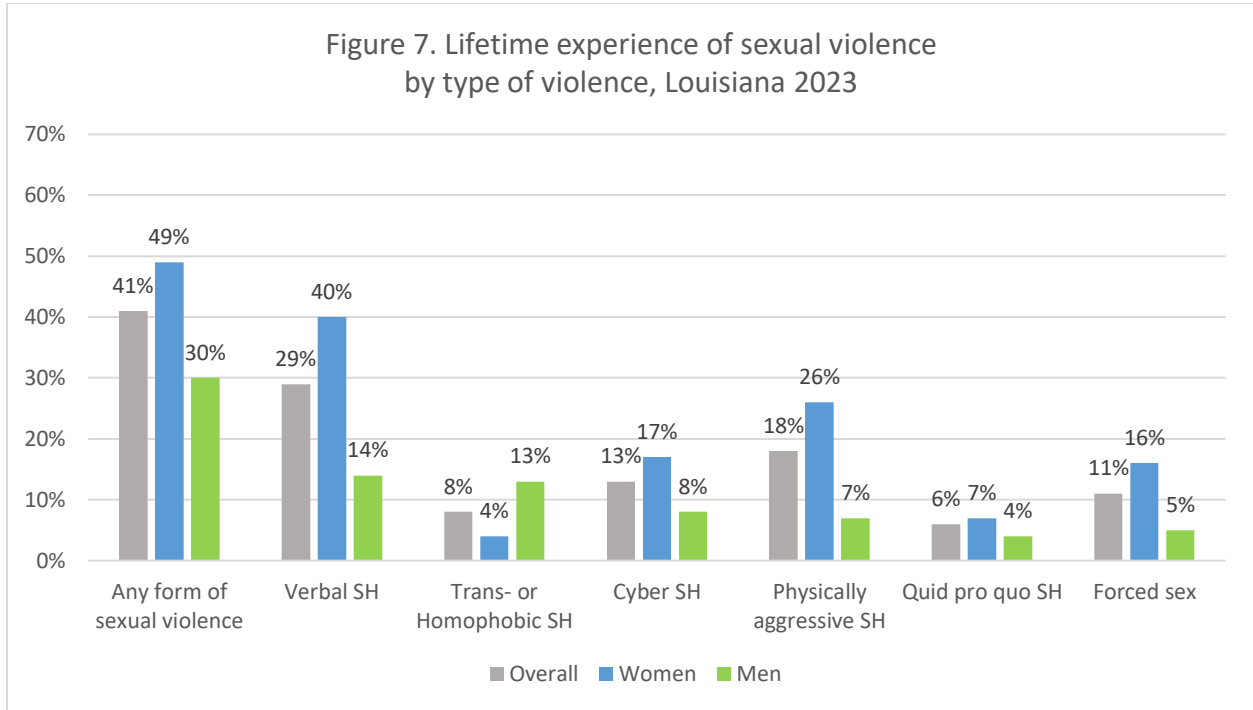


Figure 6a Word Cloud on Physical Violence Experiences Described by Women



Figure 6b Word Cloud on Physical Violence Experiences Described by Men

**LIFETIME EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE**



**41% of adults in Louisiana have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime**

Two-fifths of adults in Louisiana – 41% - have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime (**Figure 7**).

- One in three (29%) have been verbally sexually harassed

**Verbal sexual harassment experiences were often reported as occurring in public spaces**

*“Men or boys whether I knew them or not whistling, staring or making comments about my body.”*  
 — 33-year-old woman

*“Catcalling while at Walmart by a stranger”* — 34-year-old man

*“They were building a new store around my neighborhood and the guy wouldn’t stop calling for me and making hand gestures at me.”* — 36-year-old woman

- One in nine (11%) have experienced sexual assault
- All forms of sexual violence were reported more frequently by women than by men, with the exception of trans- or homophobic sexual harassment

**Transphobic and homophobic sexual harassment of young men was described**

*“Growing up many kids would joke and call me faggot or queer, just to be mean to me.”*

— 29-year-old man

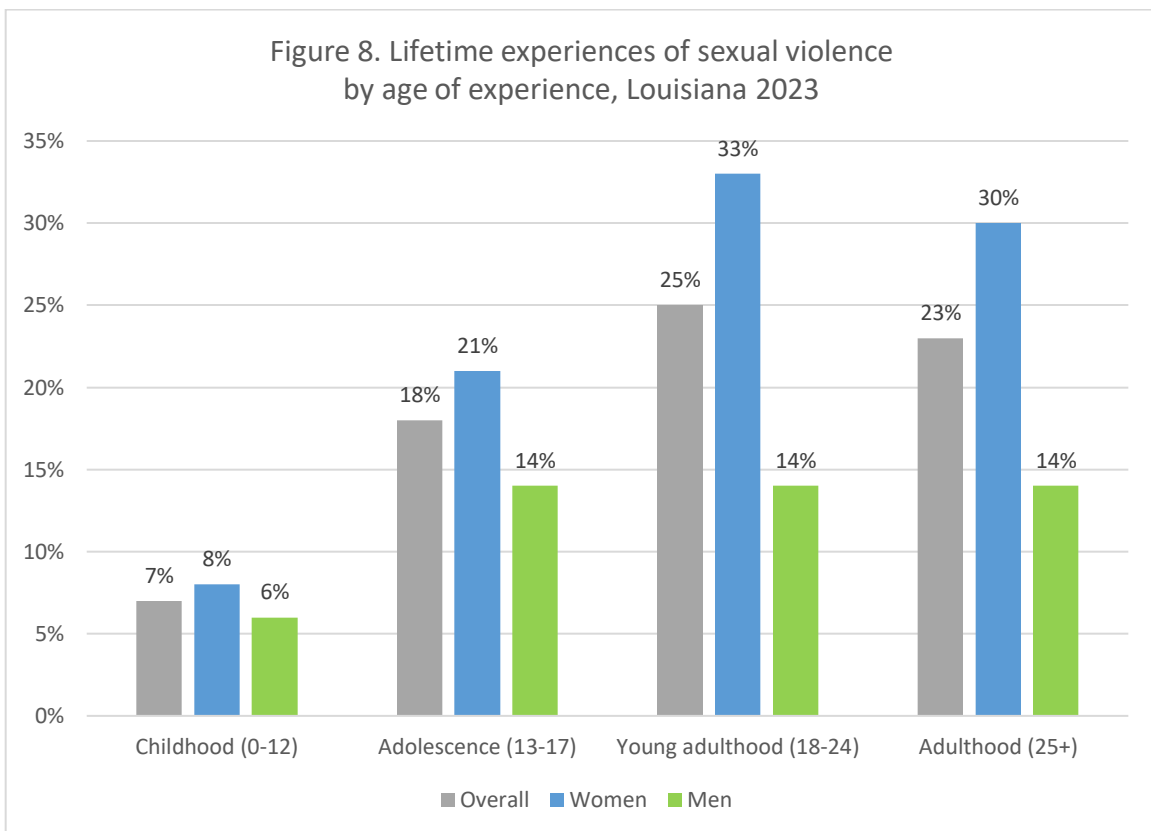
*“Within recent years most homophobia I’ve experienced directly has been online, but it has happened in the past at school before.”* —23-year-old man

*“Sometimes a stranger will see me and just call me a fag and tell me I’m going to hell.”*

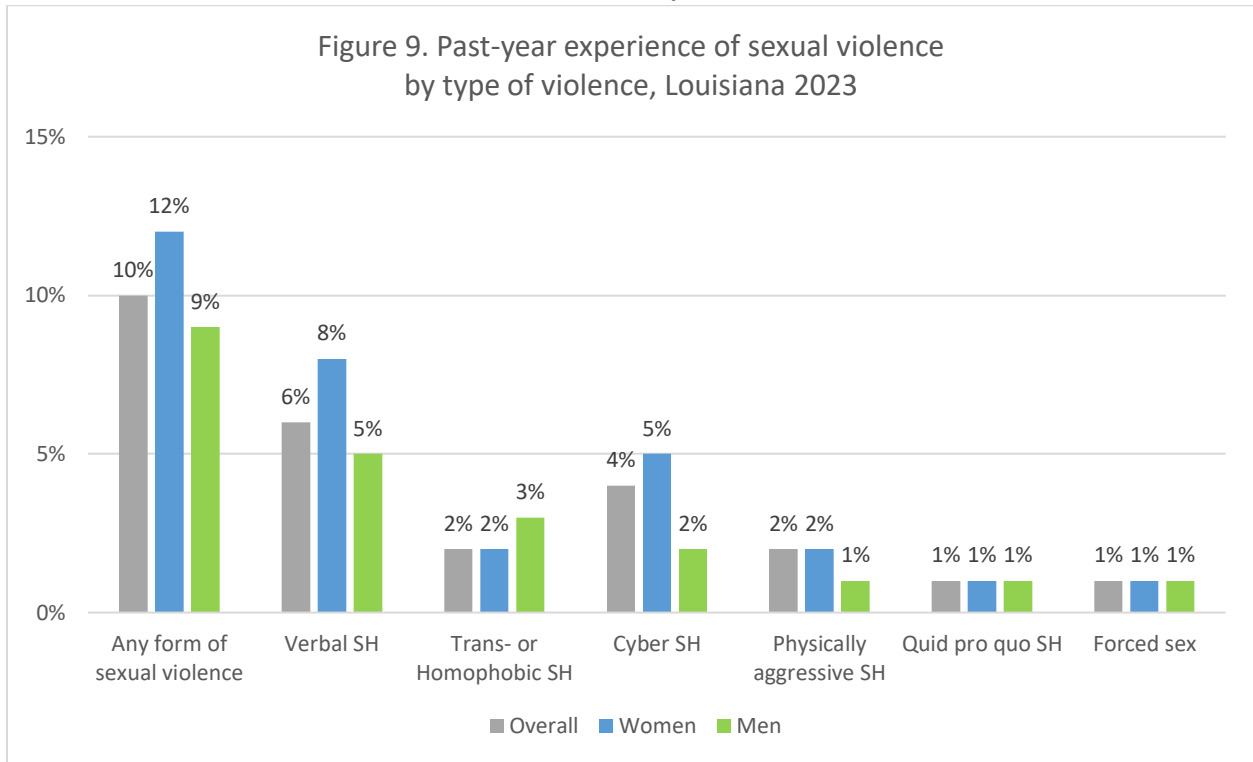
—26-year-old non-binary individual

Sexual violence experiences were most common in adolescence and adulthood (**Figure 8**).

- One in 14 (7%) Louisianans experienced sexual violence in childhood (age 0-12)
- One in five (18%) experienced sexual violence in adolescence (age 13-17)
- One in four (25%) experienced sexual violence in young adulthood (age 18-24)
- One in five (23%) experienced sexual violence in adulthood (age 25+)
- Women and men experienced similar rates of sexual violence in childhood (age 0-12), but women were more likely than men to experience sexual violence at all older ages.



**PAST-YEAR EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE**  
**Prevalence of Sexual Violence Experiences in the Past Year**



One in 10 adults in Louisiana (10%) experienced past-year sexual violence; these reports were similar for women (12%) and men (9%) (Figure 9)

- Most of this past-year sexual violence took the form of verbal and cyber sexual harassment (6% and 4%, respectively).

***Cyber sexual harassment experiences were often reported by young adults in our sample***

*“I am constantly receiving images of genitals not asked for with disturbing messages attached.”*  
 — 31-year-old woman

*“An ex-boyfriend threatened to post sensitive pictures of me online”* — 29-year-old woman

- Physically aggressive sexual harassment, quid pro quo/coercive sexual harassment, or forced sex (i.e., more physical contact-focused sexual violence) in the past year was reported by 3% of participants.

***In 2023, >210,000 women and >150,000 men in Louisiana were victims of sexual violence***

Most people reporting past-year sexual violence (75%) reported that (at least one of) the perpetrator(s) was someone known to the victim, including family, friends, romantic partners, known authority figures, or acquaintances; 74% of women and 76% of men who experienced some form of sexual violence in the past year knew (at least one of) the perpetrator(s) (**Table 2**).

- For women reporting past-year verbal, cyber, or trans/homophobic harassment, we find that strangers were the most common perpetrators (71%), but for those reporting more contact-focused physically aggressive, coercive, or forced sexual behavior, perpetrators were most often someone known to the woman – a partner (44%) or an acquaintance (36%).
- Men most frequently reported that a stranger was the perpetrator of verbal, cyber, or trans/homophobic harassment (43%), while a well-known non-family member was most frequently reported as the perpetrator of physically aggressive, coercive, or forced sexual behavior (62%).

**Table 2. Relationship to the Person(s) Causing Past-year Sexual Violence Against the Respondent**

	Any form of sexual violence		Verbal Harassment, Cyber Harassment, Trans- or Homophobic Harassment		Physically Aggressive, Coercive, or Forced Sexual Behavior	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Family Member 18+	12%	28%	10%	29%	12%	29%
Family Member < 18	4%	10%	3%	11%	9%	19%
Spouse/Partner	21%	26%	12%	24%	44%	30%
Known Non-Family	25%	27%	21%	26%	29%	62%
Acquaintance or Community Member	42%	43%	38%	40%	36%	33%
Stranger	69%	42%	71%	43%	23%	19%
Teacher/Coach/ Adult Authority	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	5%
Police	2%	7%	1%	5%	1%	9%
Boss/Employer	5%	5%	5%	5%	3%	9%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%



### Locations of Physical Violence Experiences in the Past Year

Respondents most often reported that sexual violence in the past year occurred at home (their own home or the home of someone known to them) or in a public space such as a neighborhood, park, or on the street (Figure 10).

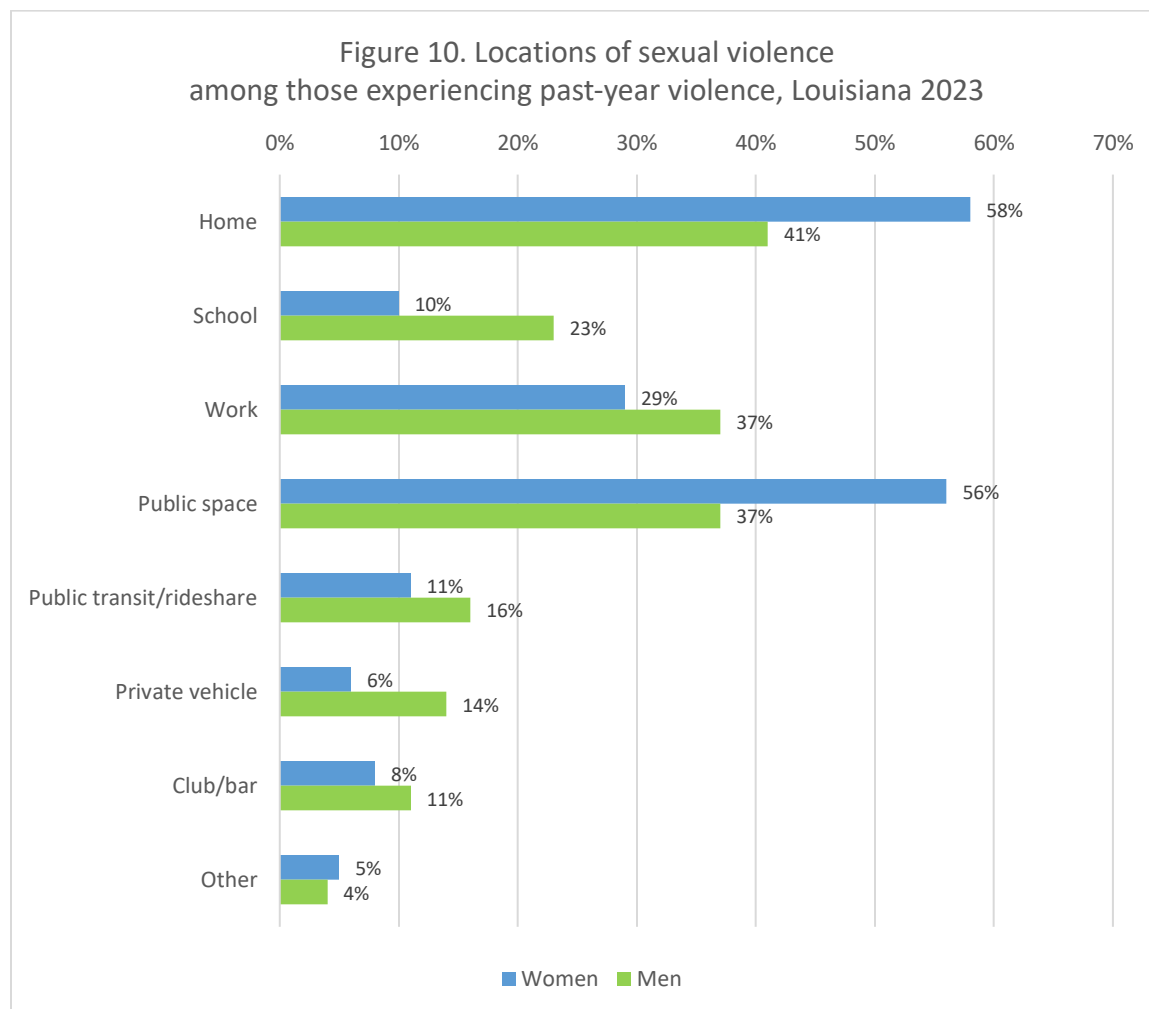
- Physically aggressive, coercive, or forced sexual behavior occurred most frequently in a home for women (68%), and in public spaces for men (65%) [results not shown].

#### **Many Louisianans Reported Sexual Harassment at their Workplace**

*“Sexual harassment is common in my work environment. I recently had a coworker quit due to sexual harassment from her supervisor.” — 30-year-old woman*

*“A boss would tell me disgusting things and expected me to perform sexual acts to keep my job” — a 41-year-old woman*

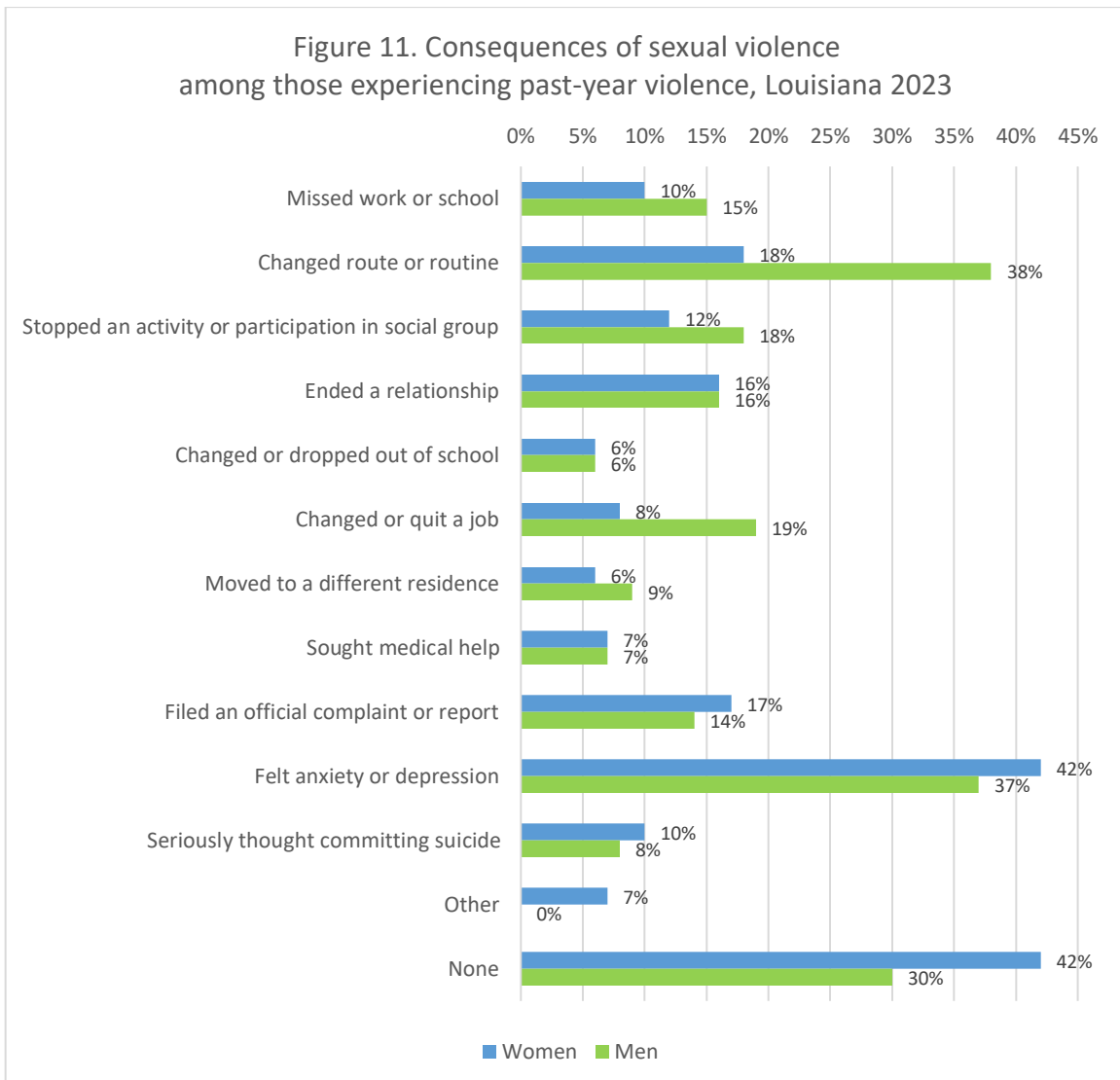
*“I was working as a cocktail waitress at a casino and plenty of gentlemen would verbally harass me” — a 37-year-old woman*



## Consequences of Sexual Violence Experiences in the Past Year

The most common consequence of sexual violence reported by those who experienced it in the past year was feelings of anxiety or depression (40%; 42% of women and 37% of men) (**Figure 11**).

- Additional common responses were changing a route/routine (26%), ending a friendship/relationship (16%), stopping a hobby/activity (14%), and missing work or school (12%)
- One in three (37%) of those reporting past-year sexual violence indicated no consequences of the abuse
- Few people who experienced sexual violence filed an official complaint or report (16%)
- Almost half of those with these experiences told no one (47% of women and 38% of men)





## LIFETIME EXPERIENCES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

We assessed lifetime experience of IPV, including physical, sexual, economic, and emotionally controlling IPV, as well as threats of violence against self or a pet, from a current or former romantic or sexual partner. Just over half (51%) of respondents reported experiencing at least one of these forms of violence, including 55% of women and 47% of men (Table 3). Over one-third (36%) of Louisianans have experienced physical or sexual IPV. Women are more likely to report a history of physical or sexual IPV than men (42% of women compared to 29% of men).

**More than two in five women have experienced physical and/or sexual IPV from a current or former romantic or sexual partner in their lifetime.**

**Table 3. Experiences of Violence from a Romantic or Sexual Partner**

	Experienced ever		Experienced within the past year	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Any IPV (based on all 22 items)</b>	<b>55.0%</b>	<b>46.8%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>
<b>Emotional (any)</b>	41.9%	30.9%	4.1%	3.4%
Insulted, humiliated, or made fun of you in front of others	33.2%	21.8%	3.3%	2.4%
Destroyed something that was important to you	23.5%	17.7%	2.3%	2.4%
Harassed you by phone, text, email or using social media	24.8%	14.1%	2.2%	1.4%
<b>Control (any)</b>	35.7%	33.2%	4.3%	5.0%
Kept you from having your own money	14.6%	11.2%	2.6%	2.2%
Tried to keep you from seeing or talking to your family or friends	26.2%	15.4%	3.0%	1.7%
Kept track of you by demanding to know where you were and what you were doing	25.1%	18.6%	2.9%	2.6%
Made decisions for you that should have been yours to make	24.1%	15.9%	2.5%	1.6%
<b>Threats to harm self or others (any)</b>	20.9%	16.0%	3.0%	2.7%
Made threats to harm someone close to you	8.8%	3.0%	0.8%	0.9%
Threatened to hurt themselves or commit suicide because they were upset with you	13.9%	12.4%	1.9%	2.0%
Intentionally hurt or threatened to use violence against your pet(s)	8.8%	3.8%	1.1%	0.7%
<b>Physical (any)</b>	39.6%	28.4%	3.9%	4.1%
Made threats to physically harm you	24.4%	9.9%	2.7%	2.4%
Slapped you	25.3%	15.1%	2.2%	1.5%
Pushed or shoved you	31.2%	15.2%	2.4%	2.0%
Hit you with a fist or something hard	19.3%	10.2%	1.3%	2.2%
Hurt you by pulling your hair	15.5%	4.3%	0.9%	1.2%
Slammed you against something	22.4%	3.0%	1.7%	0.9%
Tried to hurt you by choking or suffocating you	16.3%	4.1%	0.9%	1.0%
Beaten you	12.1%	3.3%	0.7%	1.0%
Burned you on purpose	1.5%	1.9%	0.5%	0.6%
Used a knife on you	3.0%	1.9%	0.3%	0.5%
Used a gun on you	3.8%	1.2%	0.7%	0.3%
<b>Sexual (any)</b>	15.7%	2.0%	1.4%	0.5%
Forced or tried to force you to have sex, or made you perform sexual acts that you did not want to perform	15.7%	2.0%	1.4%	0.5%
<b>Physical and/or sexual (any)</b>	42.0%	28.7%	4.1%	4.1%

- Among those who have experienced any of the 22 assessed forms of IPV, one in five (19%) are still in a relationship with a partner who perpetrated this violence (12% of women experiencing IPV and 28% of men experiencing IPV)
  - This rate is similar for those who have experienced physical or sexual IPV – 11% of women and 22% of men who have experienced physical or sexual IPV report that they are still in a relationship with the person who committed these acts
- Half of the people who experienced any of the 22 assessed forms of IPV reported that it took place during young adulthood (age 18-24, 49%) or adulthood (age 25-54, 52%). One in six reports that they experienced IPV in adolescence (age 13-17, 17%), while one in five respondents over 55 reports that the IPV experience occurred as an older adult (age 55+, 19%).
  - Age of experience was similar for those experiencing physical or sexual IPV.
- We also asked respondents whether they witnessed IPV towards a parent or caregiver when they were children. 22% of Louisiana adults report having witnessed IPV as a child.

#### **PAST-YEAR EXPERIENCES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)**

One in 16 (6%) respondents reported that they experienced at least one of 22 forms of IPV in the past year. This number was similar for women (5%) and men (7%).

- Examining only physical and sexual forms of violence from an intimate partner, 4% of Louisianans report past-year physical or sexual IPV (4% of women and 4% of men)

***1 in 25 adults in Louisiana – more than 140,000 Louisianans – experienced physical or sexual violence from their intimate partner in the past year***

***This is a conservative estimate of IPV, given known under-reporting of the problem***

## SOCIOSTRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AND ITS INTERSECTIONS WITH PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

### Perceptions of Neighborhood Violence/Safety in the Past Year

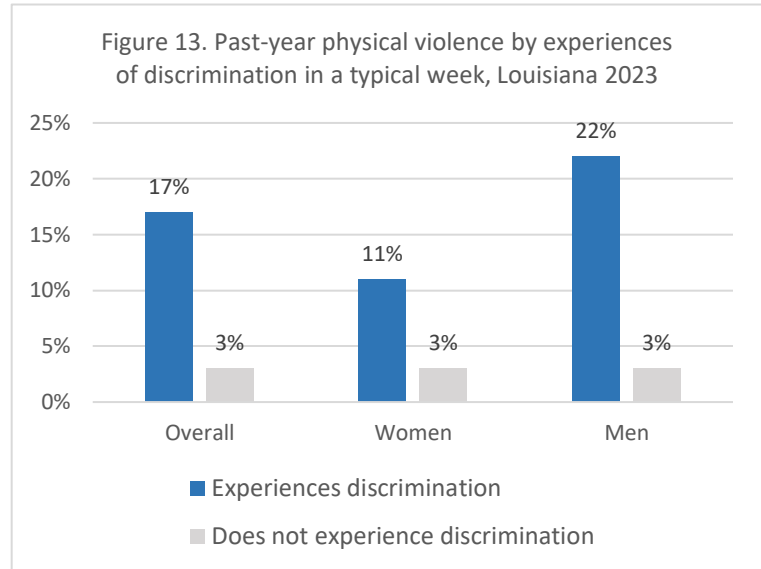
When asking about neighborhood safety, most respondents report that their neighborhood is 'extremely safe' (22%) or 'quite safe' (48%), while 23% think their neighborhood is only 'slightly safe' and 8% consider their neighborhood 'not at all safe'. These reports are comparable for men and women.

- There was no significant difference in experiences of physical or sexual violence by self-reported neighborhood safety

### Experiences of Discrimination

Nearly one-third of respondents (29%, 25% women and 34% men) report that they experience at least one of the following five assessed forms of 'everyday' discrimination (or 'microaggressions') in a typical week:

- "I receive poorer service in restaurants or stores compared to the service other people receive" (9%); "People treat me as if I am not intelligent" (11%); "People act afraid of me" (6%); "People treat me like am I dishonest" (10%); "People treat me like they are better than me" (16%).
- Respondents most often reported that race/ethnicity was the primary reason for this discrimination (34%), followed by their physical appearance (16%), and their income level or social class (16%). Women were more likely than men to report gender as the primary reason for their experiences of discrimination in a typical week (14% vs. 7%).
- Those reporting at least one of 5 assessed forms of discrimination in a typical week were 6x more likely to report past-year physical violence (17% vs 3%) and 3x more likely to report sexual violence (21% vs 7%), as compared with respondents who did not report these typical discrimination experiences. **(Figure 13)**.
- This relationship was present for both women (physical violence: 11% vs 3%; sexual violence: 22% vs 8%) and men (physical violence: 22% vs 3%; sexual violence: 19% vs 4%)



***Approximately one in three Louisianans experience discrimination in a typical week.***

***Those regularly experiencing discrimination are 6x more likely to have experienced physical violence and 3x more likely to have experienced sexual violence in the past year.***

We also assessed experiences of institutional discrimination over the lifetime. 40% of LA adults (36% of women and 45% of men) reported that they have experienced at least one of the following seven forms of discrimination in their lifetime:

- “I was unfairly fired or denied a promotion” (21%); “I was unfairly not hired for a job” (16%); I was unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police” (10%); “I was unfairly discouraged by a teacher or advisor from continuing my education” (5%); I was unfairly prevented from moving into a neighborhood because the landlord or a realtor refused to rent or sell me a house or apartment” (5%); “I moved into a neighborhood where neighbors made life difficult for me and my family” (6%); “I have had difficulty getting a mortgage or loan from a bank” (8%).
- Respondents most often reported that race/ethnicity was the primary reason for this discrimination (27%), followed by their income level or social class (16%) or their age (14%). Women were more likely than men to report gender as the primary reason for this discrimination (14% vs 3%).
- Those reporting experience of at least one of the seven assessed forms of institutional discrimination in their lifetime were more likely to report past-year physical violence (13% vs 3%) and more likely to report sexual violence (17% vs 7%) than those with no such discrimination experiences.

### **Abusive Policing**

Using the items on perpetrators of violence, we found that more than 1 in 150 Louisianans (0.7%) experienced physical and/or sexual policing violence in the past year. However, given that only 22% report contact with the police in the past year, this means that 1 in 30 people (3.3%) who have police contact experience policing violence.

Violence is not the only form of police mistreatment. We asked Louisianans about their most recent experience of being approached or stopped by the police. More than one in 10 (13%) were treated somewhat or very badly at their most recent incident with the police, 11% of women and 15% of men.

- Those reporting police mistreatment at their most recent incident with the police were more likely to report past-year physical violence (13% vs 6%) and more likely to report past-year sexual violence (18% vs 10%) than those who did not report this police mistreatment
- Given concerns regarding differential treatment by police based on demographic profile, we also looked to see if policing mistreatment differed by race/ethnicity or age and found that white women were more likely to report police mistreatment than Black women (12% vs 5%), and Black men were more likely to report police mistreatment than white men (22% vs 10%). Young people were most likely to report police mistreatment, with 25% of 18-24 years-olds approached by police reporting mistreatment at last interaction with police

Victims of violence may be less inclined to engage with police around victimization from violence if they are also victims of violence or mistreatment by the police.

## GUN VIOLENCE, GUN OWNERSHIP, AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS GUNS

### Prevalence of Gun Violence Experiences

One in five (21%) Louisianans have been threatened or hurt with a gun in their lifetime. One in three men (29%) and one in seven women (15%) have experienced gun violence.

- 2% of Louisianans (1% of women & 3% of men) have experienced gun violence in the past year

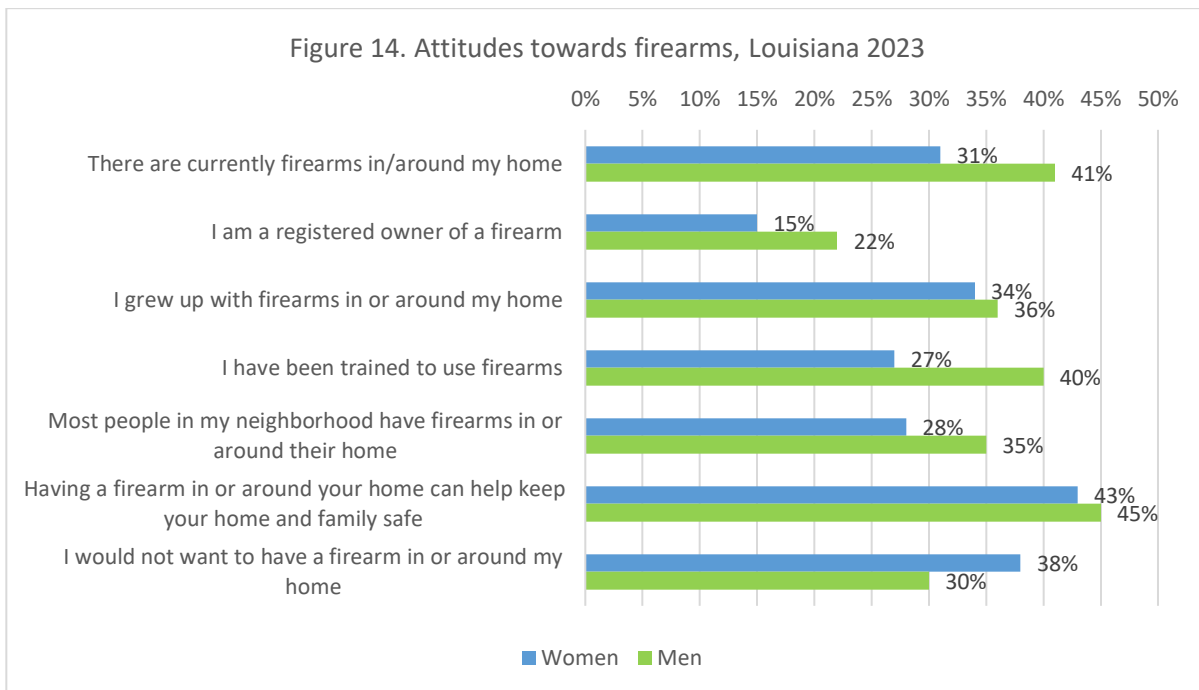
### Gun Ownership and Purchase

Gun ownership is common – 42% of adults in Louisiana own a gun. About half of men (51%) and a third of women (35%) report owning a gun.

- Louisianans who have experienced gun violence are more likely to own a gun – 51% of people who have experienced gun violence in their lifetime own a gun, compared to 39% who have never experienced gun violence
- One in ten Louisianans have purchased a gun in the past year – 13% of men and 8% of women
- Firearm purchases in the past year and experience of gun violence in the past year are strongly related – 44% of people who experienced gun violence in the past year purchased a firearm in the same time frame, compared to 9% among people who did not experience gun violence

### Attitudes Toward Gun Use and Ownership

We asked respondents a series of seven questions regarding gun use and attitudes toward gun (or firearm) ownership. The most frequently endorsed item (44%) was ‘Having a firearm in or around your home can help keep your home and family safe’ (Figure 14).





## PAST-YEAR FINANCIAL DISTRESS AND VIOLENT EXPERIENCES

We assessed associations between past-year physical violence, sexual violence, and IPV with past-year eviction, economic deprivation, and job loss. All noted differences are statistically significant.

For those evicted in the past year, compared to those not evicted:

- Past-year physical violence was 9x more likely (45% vs 5%), past-year sexual violence was 3x more likely (31% vs 10%), and past-year physical or sexual IPV was 3x more likely (16% vs 5%)
- For those who lacked money for food or other basic needs in the past year compared to those who did not report this deprivation:
  - Past-year physical violence was 3x more likely (13% vs 4%), past-year sexual violence was 2x more likely (15% vs 8%), and past-year physical or sexual IPV was 4x more likely (9% vs 2%)
- For those who lost a job in the past year, compared to those not reporting job loss
  - Past-year physical violence was 2x more likely (16% vs 7%); sexual violence and physical or sexual IPV experiences did not differ by job loss status.

***Experiences of financial distress in the past year – particularly eviction and food or housing insecurity – were associated with 2x to 9x greater risk for physical violence, sexual violence, and IPV***

### ***Many Louisianans report gun violence affecting their friends, family, and communities***

*“My brother was murdered last month, gun violence” — 31-year-old woman*

*“I have not experienced any violence personally. However, I live in an area where disputes are settled on a daily basis with gun violence and there are numerous fatalities.” — 63-year-old*

*“My friend just got shot this past week” — 54-year-old man*

*“There was a shooting right around the corner from my house about 2 weeks ago. It was an attempted car-jacking, and both the victim and one of the perpetrators were shot.” — 69-year-old woman*

## **SOCIODEMOGRAPHICS AND PAST-YEAR EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE**

We assessed the association between past-year physical violence, past-year sexual violence, and past-year IPV with a number of demographic factors including age, race/ethnicity, sexual identity, income, education, metropolitan/non-metropolitan area of residence, disability status, history of homelessness, and history of incarceration. Any differences noted below are statistically significant.

### **Sociodemographic Characteristics Associated with Past Year Physical Violence**

- Young adult Louisianans (aged 18-24 years) were most likely to report past-year physical violence (18%), followed by adults aged 25-34 (12%) and 35-44 (12%); <1% of those 65 and older reported past-year physical violence
- Latinx and Black Louisianans were more likely to report past-year physical violence (13% and 8%, respectively), while 6% of white Louisianans reported past-year physical violence
- Louisianans identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other self-described sexual identity were more likely to report past-year physical violence (11%), relative to straight respondents (7%)
- Physical violence rates were similar across household income – 7% among the lowest quintile (\$0-\$19,999), 10% among the second lowest (\$20,000-\$34,999), 8% among the middle (\$35,000-\$59,000), 4% among the second highest (\$60,000-\$99,000), and 6% among the highest quintile (\$100,000 or more)
- Physical violence rates were also similar across education levels – 8% among those with less than a high school diploma, 7% among those with a high school diploma or GED, 10% among those who attended college, and 3% among those with a graduate degree
- There was no difference in reported physical violence rates by metropolitan vs non-metropolitan area of residence (7% for both)
- Louisianans with a disability were 3x more likely to report past-year physical violence as those without a disability (12% vs. 4%)
- Louisianans with a history of homelessness were 5x more likely to report past-year physical violence compared to those with no such history (21% vs. 4%)
- Louisianans with an incarceration history were 5x more likely to report past-year physical violence as those with no history of incarceration (20% vs. 4%)

### **Sociodemographic Characteristics Associated with Past-Year Sexual Violence**

- Young adult Louisianans (aged 18-24 years) were most likely to report past-year sexual violence (28%); rates declined steadily with age, with 4% of those 65 years and older reporting sexual violence
- Past-year sexual violence was reported at similar rates by Black (9%), Latinx (12%), and white (11%) Louisianans
- Louisianans identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other self-described sexual identity were more than 3x more likely to report past-year sexual violence (27%), relative to straight respondents (8%)
- Sexual violence rates were similar across household income – 14% among the lowest quintile (\$0-\$19,999), 7% among the second lowest (\$20,000-\$34,999), 12% among the middle (\$35,000-\$59,000), 12% among the second highest (\$60,000-\$99,000), and 8% among the highest quintile (\$100,000 or more)
- Sexual violence rates were also similar across education levels – 13% among those with less than a high school diploma, 11% among those with a high school diploma or GED, 13% among those who attended college, and 6% among those with a graduate degree

- There was no difference in reported sexual violence rates by metropolitan vs non-metropolitan area of residence (11% metropolitan vs 10% non-metropolitan)
- Louisianans with a disability were 3x more likely than those without to report past-year sexual violence (18% vs 6%)
- Louisianans with a history of homelessness were 3x more likely than those without to report a history of past-year sexual violence (23% vs 8%)
- Louisianans with a history of incarceration were 2.5x more likely than those without this history to report past-year sexual violence (20% vs 8%)

#### **Sociodemographic Characteristics Associated with Past-Year Physical and/or Sexual IPV**

- Young adult Louisianans (aged 18-24 years) were most likely to report past-year IPV (8%); rates declined steadily with age, with 1% of those 65 years and older reporting IPV
- Past-year IPV was reported at similar rates by Black (5%), Latinx (3%), and white (4%) Louisianans
- Louisianans identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other self-described sexual identity were twice as likely to report past-year IPV (8%) relative to straight respondents (4%)
- IPV rates were similar across household income – 6% among the lowest quintile (\$0-\$19,999), 4% among the second lowest (\$20,000-\$34,999), 6% among the middle (\$35,000-\$59,000), 2% among the second highest (\$60,000-\$99,000), and 3% among the highest quintile (\$100,000 or more)
- IPV rates were also similar across education levels – 5% among those with less than a high school diploma, 5% among those with a high school diploma or GED, 3% among those who attended college, and 2% among those with a graduate degree
- There was no difference in reported IPV rates by metropolitan vs non-metropolitan area of residence (4% metropolitan vs 5% non-metropolitan)
- Louisianans with a disability were 3x more likely than those without to report past-year IPV (7% vs 2%)
- Louisianans with a history of homelessness were 6x more likely compared to those without this history to report a history of past-year IPV (13% vs 2%)
- Louisianans with a history of incarceration were 3x more likely than those without this history to report past-year IPV (10% vs 3%)

***Socially and economically vulnerable Louisianans – including LGBTQ+ communities, people with a history of homelessness or incarceration, and people living with a disability – face disproportionate levels of physical violence, sexual violence, and IPV***

### **ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE AND HEALTH OUTCOMES**

#### **Violence and Physical Health**

Those who reported past year physical or sexual violence were, surprisingly, significantly more likely to have ‘excellent’ self-reported physical health (28% vs 11% past year physical violence vs not; 21% vs 11% past year sexual violence vs not)

- This relationship between past-year violence and excellent physical health was present for both women and men

### Violence and Mental Health

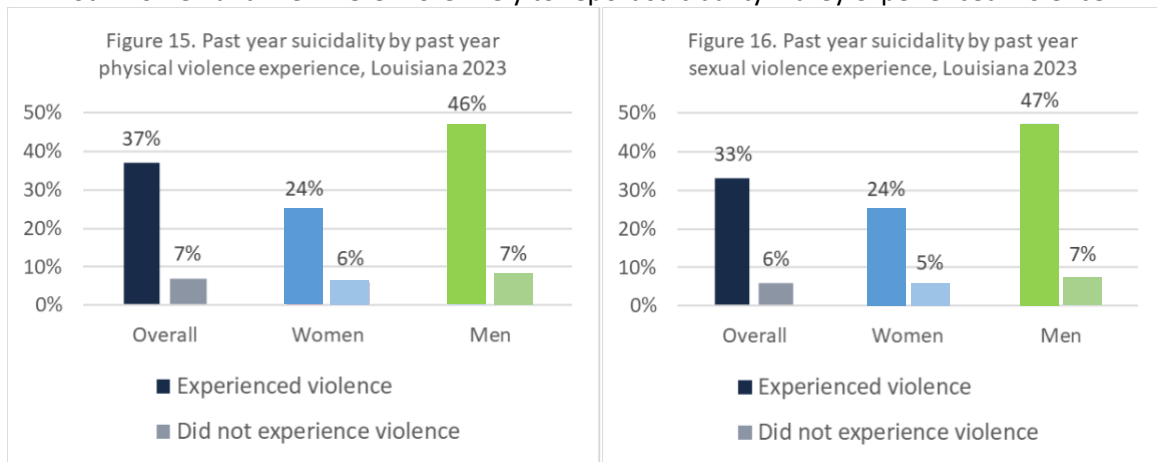
Those reporting past-year physical violence or past-year sexual violence were more likely to report anxiety and/or depression symptoms.

- Those reporting past-year physical violence were more likely to report severe symptoms: the distribution of symptoms was 25% normal, 34% mild, 25% moderate, and 15% severe among those who experienced violence, compared to 51% normal, 28% mild, 12% moderate, and 9% severe among those who did not
- Those reporting past-year sexual violence were also more likely to report severe symptoms: the distribution of symptoms was 23% normal, 32% mild, 25% moderate, and 20% severe among those who experienced violence, compared to 52% normal, 28% mild, 11% moderate, and 8% severe among those who did not
- Both women and men were more likely to report severe anxiety and/or depression symptoms if they experienced violence

### Violence and Suicidality

Those who reported past year violence were 5x more likely to report suicidality (serious consideration of suicide) in the past year. This was true for both past year physical violence (37% vs 7%) and past year sexual violence (33% vs 6%) (**Figure 15, Figure 16**)

- Both women and men were more likely to report suicidality if they experienced violence



### Violence and Substance Misuse

We defined substance misuse as binge alcohol use (5+ drinks in one sitting for men/4+ drinks in one sitting for women) or use of illicit drugs (including prescription drugs not prescribed to the respondent) within the past 30 days. We found that those reporting past year violence were twice as likely to report past 30-day substance misuse. This was true for both past year physical violence (65% vs 30%) and past year sexual violence (58% vs 30%)

- Both women and men were more likely to report substance misuse if they experienced violence

## **SELF-REPORTED PERPETRATION OF VIOLENCE**

In addition to experiences of violence victimization, the LaVEX survey asks respondents about whether they have committed any of the assessed forms of physical and sexual violence against someone else.

### **Prevalence and Consequences of Self-reported Perpetration of Physical Violence**

One in four adults in Louisiana (21%) have perpetrated some form of physical violence in their lifetime, with men more likely than women to report these behaviors (29% vs. 14%)

- In the past year, 3% of adults report physical violence perpetration, 4% of men and 2% of women
- Those who had experienced physical violence were more likely to perpetrate physical violence. 25% of those who had experienced physical violence in the past year reported perpetration in the past year, compared to 2% of those who had not experienced physical violence.
- Most people who reported perpetrating physical violence in the past year indicated that there were no consequences (55%)
- One quarter (24%) indicated that a formal complaint was filed, while 10% of women and 23% of men were arrested as a result of their past-year physical violence perpetration

### **Prevalence and Consequences of Self-reported Perpetration of Sexual Violence**

One in ten adults in Louisiana (10%) have perpetrated some form of sexual violence in their lifetime.

- Approximately one in 12 (8%) women and one in eight (13%) men report that they have perpetrated sexual violence. Only 1% of men and women reported forcing sex
- In the past year, 4% of adults report perpetration of sexual violence, including 6% of men and 3% of women.
- Those who had experienced sexual violence were much more likely to report perpetration of sexual violence. 23% of those who had experienced sexual violence in the past year reported perpetration in the past year, compared to only 2% who had not experienced sexual violence.
- Half of the respondents who reported perpetrating sexual violence indicated that there were no consequences (51%)
  - 33% of women and 43% of men reported that they were confronted by the person they committed violence against, but no formal complaint was filed. 25% of women and 19% of men indicated that a formal complaint was filed, and 17% of women and 24% of men were arrested as a result of the sexual violence

### **Prevalence of Self-reported Perpetration of Intimate Partner Violence**

One in 50 Louisiana adults reported perpetrating some form of physical or sexual IPV within the past year in 2023 (2%). Rates were similar for women (1%) and men (3%). Data were not collected on consequences specifically for IPV, but the data on physical and sexual violence perpetration indicate that many faced no consequences.

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

While findings from this work offer a first-time glimpse into the scope and scale of violence experiences in Louisiana at the population level and highlight the gender-specific risks of violence as well as the mental health consequences of it, findings should be considered in light of certain study limitations.

1. *Limited data availability of certain minority groups and marginalized populations:* Because of the relatively small sample size, some groups, like non-binary individuals and Indigenous people, were too small in number to allow for findings specific to these populations. Also, this survey excluded people without mailing addresses, such as currently homeless individuals and institutionalized populations (e.g., in prison or jail, residential treatment). We may have underrepresentation of foreign-born residents and certain racial/ethnic groups due to the availability of the survey only in English, and because those without documentation and those who are migratory are less likely to be available to panel studies. Finally, we could not include minor-aged participants, limiting our understanding of violence against children and adolescents, though we did include retrospective reporting on violence experiences in childhood and adolescence among this adult sample, offering some insight into this.

2. *Reliance on self-report measures and challenges in violence assessment:* Physical and sexual violence measures rely on retrospective self-reports by those who have experienced and committed violence. Self-reported data collection can generate underreporting if victims or perpetrators conceal victimization or perpetration, misunderstand questions, or forget about violent occurrences. We, therefore, are likely underestimating the actual rates of experiences of violence in the state.

Prior research, including our own, has identified that the inclusion of more items to assess experiences of violence elicits higher prevalence reports of violence experiences because disclosure is more likely. Given the brevity of our survey, we had to limit the number of items included to assess each form of violence, likely yielding underestimates. Underreporting is likely an even greater concern when assessing perpetration behaviors, given both the greater social stigma and criminality of these behaviors. Lower rates of reported experiences of violence as compared to rates of committing violence against others are thus expected, but this differential may also support the conclusion that people who commit violence against others may have multiple victims. In this survey, we include an open-ended measure for physical and sexual violence experiences, respectively, to help elucidate quantitative findings and offer more insight into experiences of violence faced in the state.

3. *Limited analysis of correlates of violence:* To ensure a response to the full survey and adherence to survey administration organization standards, the survey was limited to take approximately 15 minutes and is therefore rather short. Consequently, we are limited in the correlates of violence that can be explored, though we did include key demographics and health outcomes. We hope the information collected and presented here will be explored in greater detail in future surveys and research.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Findings from this first-time statewide study on violence in Louisiana highlight that physical violence, sexual violence including harassment and assault, and intimate partner violence are at epidemic proportions in the state. Our study, using population-based survey data collected from adult Louisianans in May and June 2023, documents that across the state's population of 3.5 million adults, approximately 250,000 were physically assaulted in the past year and approximately 365,000 were sexually harassed or assaulted in the past year. More than 145,000 adult Louisianans experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of their intimate partner. Women are more likely than men to experience intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual violence, with IPV and sexual assault often happening in the home and sexual harassment occurring on the street and in the workplace. Men are more likely than women to experience physical violence, including violence with a gun, and homophobic/transphobic harassment; this violence against men is more likely to occur from a stranger and in public spaces.

Our research further shows that this violence has important social and health consequences, the most severe of which relate to mental health and suicidality. Importantly, socio-economically marginalized groups see higher rates of physical and sexual violence, including those experiencing financial distress (e.g., food or housing insecurity), people living with a disability, those experiencing discrimination, and gay/lesbian/bisexual people. These findings suggest that violence is likely compounding risk for mental health concerns and economic instability for already vulnerable communities. Violence prevention efforts in Louisiana can serve not only to reduce violence but also to improve mental health and economic security across the state. The Louisiana state legislature is poised to discuss concerns related to violence, discrimination, mental health, and gender equity, and these LaVEX data offer important evidence to guide policy decision-making on these important issues.

While the issues presented in this report are dire, Louisiana also has many resources upon which to draw in facing these challenges. Our state has a unique culture that facilitates deep community ties and a long history of mutual aid. We also have a long history of citizens fighting for political equality and a deep awareness of how economic inequalities and racism have held us back as a society (25, 26). In addressing the overwhelming evidence reported here that so many of our residents are at risk of not only violence but also the long-term socio-economic and health impacts of those experiences, we must draw upon these resources to create a safer, healthier, and more equitable society. To that end, we see the following practical and policy recommendations emerging from our findings:

- 1. Violence prevention policies and programs must be prioritized to address the epidemic proportions of violence we see in the state, and these must be developed in ways that are gender-specific, and support safety and equity for socio-economically marginalized groups.**

Gender, race/ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, and economic stability all shape individuals' vulnerability to violence and their ability to escape and recover from it. Any successful program or policy will need to take these factors into consideration in its design. Policies which limit marginalized communities' (whether it be by gender, race/ethnicity, or sexual identity) access to health care and other human rights harm individuals' capacity to heal from violent encounters physically and mentally and such limitations are a risk factor for violence.

**2. Violence prevention and intervention efforts should be integrated within public health programs, particularly in the areas of mental health, adolescent health, and maternal-reproductive and child health.**

Violence prevention and intervention should be a charge of public health. Prevention efforts should be integrated into youth development and health promotion programs, ideally within schools to reach the broadest segments of young populations, as adolescence is the period of violence escalation in terms of both perpetration and victimization. Violence and trauma related to violence are also mental health concerns, and mental health services should screen for violence experiences and other adverse childhood experiences as these are key drivers of mental health concerns for people across the lifespan. Violence is also a concern for maternal, reproductive, and child health, given that women of reproductive age are disproportionately affected by these issues, and findings from this work suggest that approximately one in five children in the state may be witnessing IPV in their homes.

**3. Violence prevention must work hand-in-hand with economic justice, health equity, and racial justice movements, supporting inclusive community mobilization efforts to ensure economic security, freedom from discrimination, and equal protection from violence.**

Economic policies which place the larger burden on those with the least to contribute limit the state's ability to respond to violence and its aftermath, especially at the levels we see in Louisiana. Further, economic inequity leads to higher stress on families and limits victims' capacity to escape violence. In contrast, economic policies and investment in historically disinvested neighborhoods and communities can support violence prevention. Community mobilization efforts on issues of economic justice, health equity, systemic racism, reproductive rights, and LGBTQ+ rights benefit from violence prevention, and more so when community leaders guide solutions. Collectively, we can be a stronger voice for change.

**4. All levels of government must engage in redressing violence in our community, and they must allow for ways to redress violence that do not require criminal justice system involvement.**

Given the low rates of reporting on violence, and that those affected by violence are also more likely to have experienced mistreatment from police, criminal justice system responses as the mainstay of violence prevention and intervention are at best insufficient and at worst harmful. Opportunities to prevent and intervene in situations of violence will need to include non-carceral options, such as engagement of social workers rather than police for interventions with victims and health educator-driven prevention programming in schools. Policies that can affect gun ownership for those convicted of IPV or discriminatory crimes may also be helpful. We will need bipartisan support for these approaches. This is possible, as demonstrated by recent bipartisan criminal justice reform, investigations into Title IX violations in the higher education system, and commitments to early childhood education. Reducing violence will require innovative evidence-based approaches with support from legislators, judges, government agencies, and law enforcement from across the political spectrum.



**5. Gender equity – including efforts to increase women’s economic and political participation as well as efforts to ensure women are free from violence and harassment in public and private spaces – is key to addressing violence against women in Louisiana.**

Finally, our shared goal of a peaceful and equitable Louisiana must acknowledge how our long history of racism, sexism, and gender binarism perpetuate violence in our state. Women are more vulnerable to sexual harassment and sexual violence. We will not eliminate this kind of violence without larger scale changes to gender role expectations and a balancing of power between men and women – including economic and political power. This is particularly important for young women as young adulthood is a time where they are entering into these spheres and are at highest risk for violence.

We can reduce violence in our state, but these efforts will require coordination, collaboration, and collective action. Most importantly, though, it requires a recognition of the humanity of those affected.

**APPENDIX A. PAST-YEAR VIOLENCE RATES AND STATE ESTIMATES FOR LOUISIANA ADULTS AGE 18+**

	Total		Women		Men	
	%	n*	%	n*	%	n*
<b>Total</b>	100	3,542,044	100	1,832,081	100	1,709,923
<b>EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE</b>						
<b>Physical violence</b>	7.0%	247,943	5.0%	91,604	9.4%	160,733
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	5.4%	191,270	4.4%	80,612	6.6%	112,855
<b>Threat with or use of knife</b>	1.6%	56,673	0.4%	7,328	3.1%	53,008
<b>Threat with or use of gun</b>	1.8%	63,757	0.8%	14,657	2.9%	49,588
<b>Sexual Violence</b>	10.3%	364,831	11.6%	212,521	8.8%	150,473
<b>Verbal sexual harassment</b>	6.5%	230,233	7.5%	137,406	5.2%	88,916
<b>Homophobic or transphobic comments</b>	2.1%	74,383	1.7%	31,145	2.6%	44,458
<b>Cyber sexual harassment</b>	4.0%	141,682	5.4%	98,932	2.3%	39,328
<b>Physically aggressive sexual harassment</b>	1.9%	67,299	2.4%	43,970	1.4%	23,939
<b>Quid pro quo sexual harassment/coercion</b>	0.8%	28,336	0.9%	16,489	0.6%	10,260
<b>Forced sex</b>	1.0%	35,420	1.3%	23,817	0.5%	8,550
<b>Physical or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV)</b>	4.1%	145,224	4.1%	75,155	4.1%	70,107
<b>VIOLENCE PERPETRATION</b>						
<b>Physical violence</b>	3.2%	113,345	2.5%	45,802	4.1%	70,107
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	2.3%	81,467	1.5%	27,481	3.3%	56,427
<b>Threat with or use of Knife</b>	1.0%	35,420	0.8%	14,657	1.3%	22,229
<b>Threat with or use of Gun</b>	0.9%	31,878	0.7%	12,825	1.0%	17,099
<b>Sexual Violence</b>	4.2%	148,766	3.0%	54,962	5.7%	97,466
<b>Verbal sexual harassment</b>	2.6%	92,093	1.1%	20,153	4.4%	75,237
<b>Homophobic or transphobic comments</b>	1.0%	35,420	1.3%	23,817	0.7%	11,969
<b>Cyber sexual harassment</b>	0.5%	17,710	0.8%	14,657	0.1%	1,710
<b>Physically aggressive sexual harassment</b>	0.6%	21,252	0.7%	12,825	0.6%	10,260
<b>Quid pro quo sexual harassment or coercion</b>	0.3%	10,626	0.1%	1,832	0.5%	8,550
<b>Forced sex</b>	0.3%	10,626	0.1%	1,832	0.6%	10,260
<b>Physical or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV)</b>	2.0%	70,841	1.5%	27,481	2.6%	44,458

\* Population estimates from Census ACS 2021 estimates, table S0101: <https://data.census.gov/>

## APPENDIX B. DATA PROCESSING AND WEIGHTING PROCEDURES

### Data Processing

NORC prepared a fully labeled data file of respondent survey and demographic data. NORC applied the following cleaning rules to the survey data for quality control: respondents that finished the survey in less than a third of the median duration and/or skipped over fifty percent of the questions shown to them were removed from the data set.

### Weighting

NORC calculated panel weights for the completed AmeriSpeak Panel and nonprobability online interviews, as described below. First, we describe the calculation of the weights for the AmeriSpeak sample, and then describe the statistical corrections made to the non-probability sample via NORC's TrueNorth™ calibration weighting service.

### AmeriSpeak Sample

Generally speaking, the steps for calculating the weights for the AmeriSpeak Panel interviews involves the following sequential steps: incorporating the appropriate probability of selection, and then incorporating nonresponse and raking ratio adjustments (to population benchmarks). For the AmeriSpeak Panel interviews, study-specific base weights are derived from the final panel weight and the probability of selection from the panel under the study sample design. Since not all sampled panel members responded to the interview, an adjustment is needed to compensate for survey non-respondents. This adjustment decreases potential nonresponse bias associated with sampled panel members who did not respond to the interview for the study. A weighting class approach is used to adjust the weights for survey respondents to represent non-respondents. At this stage of weighting, any extreme weights were trimmed using a power transformation to minimize the mean squared error, and then, weights were re-raked to the same population totals.

### TrueNorth Calibration for Nonprobability Sample

In order to incorporate the nonprobability sample, NORC used TrueNorth calibration services, an innovative hybrid calibration approach developed at NORC based on small area estimation methods in order to explicitly account for potential bias associated with the nonprobability sample (27, 28). The purpose of TrueNorth calibration is to adjust the weights for the nonprobability sample so as to bring weighted distributions of the nonprobability sample in line with the population distribution for characteristics correlated with the survey variables. Such calibration adjustments help to reduce potential bias, yielding more accurate population estimates.

The weighted AmeriSpeak sample and the TrueNorth calibrated nonprobability sample were used to develop a small area model to support domain-level estimates, where the domains were defined by race/ethnicity, age, and gender. The dependent variables for the models were key survey variables. The model included covariates, domain-level random effects, and sampling errors. The covariates were external data available from other national surveys such as health insurance, internet access, voting behavior, and housing type from the American Community Survey (ACS) or the Current Population Survey (CPS). Finally, the combined AmeriSpeak and nonprobability sample weights were derived such that for

the combined sample, the weighted estimate reproduced the small domain estimates (derived using the small area model) for key survey variables.

The study design effect was 2.14, with a study margin of error of +/- 4.36%. Under TrueNorth, the margins of error were estimated from the root mean squared error associated with the small area model, along with other statistical adjustments. A TrueNorth estimate of margin of error is a measure of uncertainty that accounts for the variability associated with the probability sample as well as the potential bias associated with the nonprobability sample.

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## Media Inquiries

Are you with the media and want one of our gender equity experts to comment on this project? Contact the Tulane Public Relations office at [pr@tulane.edu](mailto:pr@tulane.edu) or **504.865.5210**.

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