



THERE'S NO SAFE PLACE AT HOME:

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AFFECTING
LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE



CONTENTS

About the authors of this report	3
Executive summary	4
1. Methodology	6
1.1 Survey recruitment	6
1.2 Survey respondents	6
1.3 Questions about domestic and family violence	7
1.4 Data analysis	8
(a) Identifying the risk of violence and associated risk factors	8
(b) Identifying the likely source of violence	8
(c) Identifying types of disability	9
2. Summary of literature on domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people	10
2.1 Prevalence of domestic and family violence	10
2.2 Ways in which violence manifests	12
2.3 LGBTIQ+ populations at particular risk	13
2.4 Reporting rates and difficulties in accessing support services	13
2.5 Previous recommendations	14
3. Rates of domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people	16
3.1 Recent experiences of domestic violence	16
(a) Living with someone who was recently violent	16
(b) Who were the likely perpetrators of that violence?	16
3.2 Fear of domestic violence	17
(a) Living with someone you fear may be violent	17
(b) Who was the source of that fear?	18
4. The risk of domestic and family violence for LGBTIQ+ people	20
4.1 How many LGBTIQ+ people are at risk of domestic and family violence?	20
4.2 Who are LGBTIQ+ people at risk from?	20
4.3 Factors increasing the risk of domestic and family violence	21
(a) Young people under 25 years	22
(b) Openness at home regarding sexuality	23
(c) Trans and gender diverse people	24
(d) Unemployment and financial stress	25
(e) Disabilities and chronic health conditions	27

There's no safe place at home: Domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people

(f)	Multi-gender attraction	30
(g)	Cultural background	30
5.	Implications for policy makers	32
5.1	National data that captures LGBTIQ+ people.....	32
5.2	An inclusive national plan to reduce violence	32
5.3	Families of origin remain unsafe places for many LGBTIQ+ people.....	32
5.4	Young LGBTIQ+ people are most at risk.....	33

ABOUT THE AUTHORS OF THIS REPORT

This report may be cited as: Madeline Gibson, Ghassan Kassisieh, Alice Lloyd and Beth McCann (2020) *There's No Safe Place At Home: Domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people*, Equality Australia: Sydney and Melbourne, and the Centre for Family Research and Evaluation, Drummond Street Services: Melbourne.

EQUALITY AUSTRALIA

Equality Australia is a national LGBTIQ+ organisation dedicated to achieving equality for LGBTIQ+ people.

Equality Australia has been built from the Equality Campaign, which ran the successful campaign for marriage equality, and was established with support from the Human Rights Law Centre.

Sydney office: 414 Elizabeth Street Surry Hills NSW 2010

Melbourne office: Level 17, 461 Bourke St Melbourne VIC 3000

Telephone: +61 03 9999 4527

Email: info@equalityaustralia.org.au

www.equalityaustralia.org.au

CENTRE FOR FAMILY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION, DRUMMOND STREET SERVICES

The Centre for Family Research and Evaluation (CFRE) is a division of Drummond Street Services. CFRE delivers community based research and evaluation, as well as nation-wide capacity building projects. CFRE's services and advocacy aim to respond to high rates of social inequality and marginalisation at a community, service and policy level, in the pursuit of real and lasting social change.

Telephone: +61 03 9663 6733

Email: cfre@ds.org.au

www.cfre.org.au

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge that our offices are on the land of the Kulin Nation and the land of the Eora Nation and we pay our respects to their traditional owners.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Everyone deserves to feel safe at home.

From previous research, we know that LGBTIQ+ people experience significant rates of intimate partner and family violence that, on the data available, appears to be at least comparable, if not greater, than rates among the general population. Sexuality, gender identity and variations of sex characteristics, as well as actual or perceived attitudes towards these important personal characteristics, can impact the way LGBTIQ+ people experience and respond to domestic and family violence. For example, LGBTIQ+ people's experiences of abuse can include threats of being outed, having an HIV status disclosed, and the withholding of medication or hormones. Further, even when LGBTIQ+ people recognise their experiences as constituting domestic or family violence, they are not very likely to report these instances of violence nor do they always receive a supportive response when they do.

The rates and risk of domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people

Between 24 April and 18 May 2020, Equality Australia surveyed 2,631 LGBTIQ+ people across Australia regarding violence, abuse, harassment or controlling behaviour they had experienced in the last 12 months, or feared they may experience, from someone they currently lived with.

Our survey showed that:

- 8%, or almost 1 in 10 LGBTIQ+ respondents, lived with someone who had been violent, abusive, harassing or controlling towards them in the last 12 months;
- 5%, or 1 in 20 LGBTIQ+ respondents, currently lived with someone who they feared may be violent, abusive or controlling towards them; and
- families of origin were a significant source of the violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ respondents, in addition to intimate partners and housemates.

Taken together, 12.2%, or over 1 in 10 LGBTIQ+ respondents, were at risk of domestic or family violence. Further, the risk of domestic and family violence was magnified for certain LGBTIQ+ population groups, such as those who were under 25 years, who were not 'out' about their sexuality, and/or who were trans or gender diverse (see 'Factors magnifying the risk of domestic and family violence for LGBTIQ+ people' below).

Implications for policy makers

Our findings have significant implications for policy makers seeking to respond to domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people.

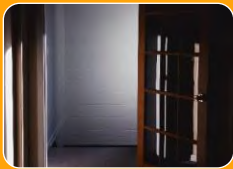
Among those implications include the need for:

- national domestic and family violence data that properly captures LGBTIQ+ people and their experiences of domestic and family violence;
- a national plan to reduce domestic and family violence that includes LGBTIQ+ people; and
- a response to domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people that is attentive and responsive to the variety of circumstances in which this violence occurs, especially for young LGBTIQ+ people living with families of origin who do not accept them, and for people who are trans and/or gender diverse. Further, attention to disparities based on employment status, disability, multi-gender attraction, and cultural background must factor into these responses if they are going to be meaningful and effective.

Factors magnifying the risk of domestic and family violence for LGBTIQ+ people



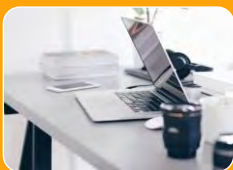
Being under 25 years (4.5x)



Living with others who do not know about your sexuality (3.5x)



Being trans and/or gender diverse (2.7x)



Being unemployed and/or looking for work (2.2x)



Having a disability or chronic health condition (1.9x)

- Having an intellectual disability or condition (2.6x compared with having any disability/condition and 3x compared with having no disability/condition)
- Having a mental health condition (2.1x compared with having any disability/condition and 2.2x compared with having no disability/condition)



Being multi-gender attracted (1.6x)



First Nations, Asian, and Middle Eastern and African LGBTIQ+ people may be more at risk*

* The data on ethnic and cultural background was limited and these conclusions are provisional.

1. METHODOLOGY

Through an online survey conducted between 24 April and 18 May 2020, Equality Australia surveyed 2,631 LGBTIQ+ people across Australia regarding violence, abuse, harassment or controlling behaviour they had experienced in the last 12 months, or feared they may experience, from someone they currently lived with.

1.1 SURVEY RECRUITMENT

Between 24 April and 18 May 2020, Equality Australia conducted an online survey regarding the impacts of COVID-19 and its associated restrictions on LGBTIQ+ people. The survey sought answers to several questions, including two questions regarding domestic and family violence (see further section 1.3 below).

Equality Australia recruited respondents by inviting subscribers to its mailing list and social media platforms to complete the survey, and by distributing promotional text and material allowing LGBTIQ+ organisations to share information about the survey with their members and subscribers.

Responses were received throughout the approximately 4 weeks in which the survey was open. An email to Equality Australia's subscribers on 24 April 2020 and 15 May 2020, and an email from Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras to its subscribers on 8 May 2020, attracted particularly strong responses.

A concerted effort was made after the second week of the survey to focus the recruitment on groups that were, at that time, underrepresented in the survey population when compared with approximate national population estimates. Among the groups specifically targeted at this time included LGBTIQ+ people who were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, identified with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, born with intersex variations, parents, aged over 65 years, and from Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

1.2 SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The survey received 3,391 responses, with 3,264 respondents indicating an Australian postcode. Of the 3,264 responses with an Australian postcode, 2,631 people identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or another sexual orientation other than straight/heterosexual, and/or indicated they were trans, gender diverse and/or born with an intersex variation. This report details the findings regarding these 2,631 LGBTIQ+ survey respondents.

Of the 2,631 LGBTIQ+ respondents:

- **By sexuality:** 39.5% were gay, 22.2% were lesbian, 16.7% were bisexual, 13.1% were queer, 2.5% were asexual, 1.1% were heterosexual, 4.6% had another identity, and 0.3% preferred not to disclose their sexuality.
- **By gender:** 45.2% were men, 42.2% were women, 7.9% were non-binary, 2.5% were genderqueer, 1.6% had another gender identity, and 0.5% did not disclose their gender identity. Of these people, 15.4% were assigned a different gender at birth, 81.1% were cisgender, while 2.1% preferred not to disclose and 1.4% did not know whether they were assigned a different gender at birth. A total of 504 people (16.7%) were trans and/or gender diverse.
- **By intersex variations:** 47 (1.8%) respondents were born with variations to their sex characteristics (also known as intersex variations), while 92.9% were not born with such variations, 4.6% did not know and 0.8% preferred not to say whether they were born with such variations.

- **By age:** 2.8% were aged under 18 years, 10.9% were aged 18-24 years, 22.7% were aged 25-34 years, 19.5% were aged 35-44 years, 18.8% were aged 45-54 years, 15.7% were aged 55-64 years, and 9.6% were aged 65 years or more.
- **By location:** 39.2% provided postcodes in New South Wales, 29.2% in Victoria, 11.9% in Queensland, 6.8% in Western Australia, 6.7% in South Australia, 3.3% in the Australian Capital Territory, 1.9% in Tasmania and 1.1% in the Northern Territory. 79.3% provided postcodes in capital cities or the Australian Capital Territory, with the remainder providing postcodes based elsewhere in their respective state or territory.
- **By parental status:** 18.4% were parents (meaning they had or cared for a child as their own, including step-parents and parents in rainbow families, regardless of legal status).
- **By ethnic or cultural identity:** Respondents were given the option of describing their ethnic or cultural identity in an open response. 1.5% of people indicated an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (First Nations') identity. A further 16% of respondents indicated ethnic or cultural identities that were *not* framed as being exclusively English-speaking 'white' or majority-'white' ethno-cultural identities in Australia (such as 'Caucasian', 'Anglo Saxon', 'British', 'Irish', 'Scottish' or (only) 'Australian'). These people included those who indicated ethnic or cultural identities which included, whether exclusively or with other identities: African, Arab, Asian, Austrian, Balkan, Bangladeshi, Bengali, Brazilian, Burmese, Caribbean, Chilean, Chinese, Croatian, Cypriot, Danish, Dutch, Egyptian, European, Fijian, Filipino, French, German, Greek, Hispanic, Hong Kongese, Hungarian, Indian, Italian, Japanese, Jewish, Korean, Latino, Latvian, Lebanese, Macedonian, Malaysian, Maltese, Maori, Mauritanian, Middle Eastern, Native American, Nigerian, Norwegian, Pacific Islander, Pakistani, Persian, Polish, Roma, Samoan, Saudi Arabian, Singaporean, Spanish, Sri Lankan, Swedish, Syrian, Taiwanese, Thai, Tongan, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese, among others.

1.3 QUESTIONS ABOUT DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Respondents were asked two questions about their experience of domestic and family violence:

- In the last 12 months, have you experienced any violence, abuse, harassment or controlling behaviour from someone you currently live with?
- Do you currently live with someone you fear may be violent, abusive or controlling towards you?

These questions were asked after first providing respondents with the following description of domestic and family violence (alongside contacts for support services):

'Domestic and family violence involves one person exerting their power and control over another person, such as an intimate partner or family member, and can take a number of forms, including:

- *physical violence*
- *emotional or psychological abuse, such as putting someone down or monitoring their behaviour and movements*
- *social abuse, such as stopping someone contacting family or friends*
- *online abuse, such as sending threatening messages or stalking them online*
- *sexual assault and pressure to have sex*

- *financial abuse, such as controlling access to money.'*

Given the survey focussed on the impact of COVID-19 and its associated restrictions (which included stay-at-home orders), the questions only sought responses regarding recent experiences or fears of violence from someone who *currently* lived with the survey respondent. These questions did not capture experiences of domestic and family violence where the perpetrator of that violence did not live, or no longer lived, with the person who experienced the violence. This means that the risk of domestic and family violence reported in this survey may be understated, given domestic and family violence may originate from someone who does not live with a person.

Whenever the phrase 'domestic and family violence' is used in this report, it should be assumed to capture violence involving people currently living with the respondent at the time the respondent completed the survey.

1.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Equality Australia and CFRE worked together to analyse responses from LGBTIQ+ survey respondents to the two questions regarding domestic and family violence. This analysis also drew upon the responses provided by these respondents to other questions, such as those regarding their gender (including gender assigned at birth), sexual orientation, age, ethnic and cultural identity, employment status, who they lived with, and whether the people they lived with knew about their sexuality.

From this data, we were able to identify:

- the number of LGBTIQ+ respondents with either a recent experience or current fear of violence from someone they currently lived with (including the people likely responsible for those experiences or fears); and
- the total number of LGBTIQ+ respondents at risk of domestic and family violence overall, including the risk factors which statistically magnified this risk.

(a) Identifying the risk of violence and associated risk factors

To identify those at risk of domestic and family violence, we included LGBTIQ+ survey respondents who answered 'yes' to either of the two survey questions on domestic violence, along with those who responded that they were unsure or preferred not to say. The rationale for this approach is further explained in section 4.1 below.

In respect to identifying the factors which magnified the risk of domestic and family violence, we used chi-square analysis to identify statistically significant differences in the rates of risk among different population segments within the LGBTIQ+ survey population. Because the survey was predominantly aimed at LGBTIQ+ people in Australia, we were unable to compare relative rates of risk as between LGBTIQ+ survey respondents and cisgendered-heterosexual survey respondents who were not born with intersex variations.

We used chi-square analysis to help answer the question of who within the LGBTIQ+ population was more likely to experience domestic and family violence? In chi-square analysis (the results of which are reported below), a p-value below .05 indicates a greater than 95% likelihood that the differences are not due to random chance but are meaningful, statistically significant differences. Chi-square analysis allows us to determine whether there is a relationship (though not necessarily a causal relationship) between the risk of domestic and family violence, on the one hand, and characteristics such as gender identity, age or employment status, on the other.

(b) Identifying the likely source of violence

To identify the likely source (or perpetrators) of violence, we analysed two sets of questions together.

First, the two violence-related questions each asked whether the survey respondent *currently* lived with someone who had been violent, abusive, harassing or controlling towards them in the last 12 months, or whom they feared would be violent, abusive or controlling.

Secondly, elsewhere in the survey, we asked respondents to identify with whom they lived from a range of options, being: 'on my own', spouse/partner(s), child/children, housemate(s)/flatmate(s), parent(s), sibling(s), grandparent(s), extended family (e.g. cousins, aunts, uncles etc.), carer(s), assistance/companion animal(s), other pets, other (please specify). Multiple choices were allowed for this question.

Excluding assistance/companion animal(s) and other pets, we identified the household compositions of each respondent. Most respondents lived exclusively with either their 'families of origin', spouses/partners or housemates/flatmates, while some others had different household compositions.

By identifying the current household composition of each respondent who indicated that they were currently living with someone who was recently violent or they feared would be violent, we were able to identify the most likely source of that violence or fear of violence.

In this report, wherever we refer to a 'family of origin', we mean households comprised of any combination of parents, siblings, grandparents, extended family members or other relatives, but not including those respondents who indicated living (whether exclusively or not) with partners, children or housemates/flatmates.

(c) Identifying types of disability

The survey asked respondents to identify whether they had a disability or chronic health condition and were also given the option to provide details of those disabilities or conditions. Out of 2,631 LGBTIQ+ respondents, 34% (875) answered 'yes' to having a disability or chronic health condition and/or provided details of a disability or chronic health condition.

Of the 875 LGBTIQ+ respondents with disabilities or chronic health conditions, 704 (80%) provided details of their disability(ies) and/or condition(s) which could be categorised into at least one of these four categories:

- **mental health (11.6% of 2,631 respondents)** including anxiety disorders (including obsessive compulsive disorder, phobias, chronic anxiety and generalised anxiety disorder), depression, bipolar, post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic stress, eating disorders, schizophrenia, and borderline personality disorder. This also included anyone who referred to generally having a mental health disorder;
- **intellectual (3.6% of 2,631 respondents)** including problems with mental abilities in learning, judgement, and adaptive functioning. This cohort included attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorders, and other learning and comprehension disorders;
- **physical (19.7% of 2,631 respondents)** including a physical disability, a neurological disorder or a chronic disease. This cohort included conditions such as fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, chronic pain, epilepsy, neuropathy, Parkinson's disease, asthma, arthritis, physical injury, acquired brain injury, quadriplegia, autoimmune disorders, cancers, stroke, Tourette's syndrome, chronic migraines, and other similar conditions; and/or
- **sensory (1.2% of 2,631 respondents)** including those impacted by impairments of the senses (such as people who were Deaf, Deafblind or blind).

28.6% (201) of the 704 LGBTIQ+ survey respondents with a known disability or chronic health condition had multiple disabilities or chronic health conditions.

2. SUMMARY OF LITERATURE ON DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AFFECTING LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE

Past research has shown that LGBTIQ+ people experience significant rates of intimate partner and family violence that, on the data available, appears to be at least comparable, if not greater, than rates among the general population. Further, while LGBTIQ+ people experience many similar types of domestic and family violence (such as physical and emotional abuse) as the general population, they also experience forms of violence which are specifically informed by their sexuality, gender identity, expression or bodily diversity. Significantly, anti-LGBTIQ+ prejudice and attitudes towards LGBTIQ+ people can themselves become a tool for exerting control and dominance against LGBTIQ+ people. This can affect the way that violence is experienced as well as the response to it. For example, LGBTIQ+ people do not always see their experiences as constituting domestic and family violence, and can experience barriers in reporting violence and accessing support services.

2.1 PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

The 2016 Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence concluded that domestic and family violence may be as prevalent in LGBTI communities as it is in the general population, and that the level of violence against trans and intersex people, including from parents and other family members, appeared to be particularly high.¹

In respect of the general population, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) suggests that approximately 1 in 6 women (17%) have experienced violence,² and 1 in 4 women (23%) have experienced emotional abuse, from a partner that they currently or had previously lived with.³ By comparison, approximately 1 in 16 men (6.1%) have experienced violence, and just over 1 in 6 men (16%) have experienced emotional abuse, from a partner that they currently or had previously lived with.⁴ However, the ABS does not report on whether this violence or abuse is experienced in partner relationships between people of the same or different genders, nor does it report on the experiences of gender diverse people who identify as neither men nor women. The experiences of trans men and women are also not delineated from the overall data on men and women. This renders LGBTIQ+ people invisible in important national data sets on domestic and family violence.

In respect of the LGBTIQ+ population, the most recent and largest national survey of LGBTIQ+ people in Australia has found that more than 4 in 10 (or 41.7% of the 6,820 LGBTIQ+ respondents) report ever being in an intimate relationship where they felt they were abused in some way by their partner/s.⁵ Over one quarter (27.3%) of these

¹ Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016) [Royal Commission into Family Violence: Summary and Recommendations](#), p. 35.

² Defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) as 'any incident involving the occurrence, attempt or threat of either physical or sexual assault experienced by a person since the age of 15. 'Physical violence' includes physical assault and/or physical threat. 'Sexual violence' includes sexual assault and/or sexual threat.' See Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) [Personal Safety Survey - Key Findings](#).

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), n2 above; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019), [Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story](#), Canberra: Australian Government, p. 4.

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), n2 above.

⁵ Hill et al (2020) [Private Lives 3: The health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ people in Australia](#), Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University, p. 70.

respondents reported being in one intimate relationship where they felt abused by their partner/s, while 14.4% reported being in more than one intimate relationship where they felt abused by their partner/s.⁶

However, when these LGBTIQ+ respondents were asked whether they had experienced specific types of abuse from intimate partners or family members, the rates of violence reported were significantly higher, reinforcing a previous research finding that LGBTIQ+ people do not always see their experiences as constituting intimate partner or family violence.⁷ Among experiences of intimate partner violence, 48.1% of the 6,121 LGBTIQ+ respondents reported having experienced emotional abuse, 42.4% reported having experienced verbal abuse, 25% reported having experienced physical violence and 21.8% reported having experienced sexual assault, among other types of violence. A total of 6 in 10 LGBTIQ+ respondents reported having experienced intimate partner violence at some point.⁸ These statistics are broadly similar to earlier NSW-based research, which similarly suggested very high rates of intimate partner abuse affecting LGBTIQ+ people.⁹

While differences in methodology make it difficult to make exact comparisons, these studies suggest that rates of domestic violence in relationships involving LGBTIQ+ people are comparable, if not greater, than the rates of violence in relationships which are presumed to be largely between cisgendered-heterosexual people who are not born with intersex variations. Rates of 17% for women and 6% for men (who have experienced actual or threatened physical or sexual assault from a current or former partner) compares with rates of 25% and 21.8% respectively among LGBTIQ+ people in intimate relationships.

In addition to intimate partner violence, LGBTIQ+ people are also at risk of abuse from their families, especially families of origin. A 2010 national survey of same-sex attracted and gender questioning young people found that 24% of respondents who reported abuse, suffered abuse at home, often from their parents.¹⁰ The risk of abuse at home is even greater for trans or gender diverse people: the same survey found that for gender questioning individuals who had experienced abuse, the prevalence of abuse at home rose to 40%.¹¹ Another 2017 Australian survey of trans young people found that 24.8% of respondents had experienced physical abuse from their family, 7.5% had experienced sexual abuse from someone in their family and 57.9% had experienced other abuse (not sexual or physical) from their family.¹² Beyond families of origin, the 2020 *Private Lives 3* study found that almost 4 in 10 (or 38.5% of 6,815 LGBTIQ+ respondents) report having felt abused by a family member (defined as including both birth and chosen families).¹³ However, that figure increased to more than 6 in 10 when LGBTIQ+ respondents were asked whether they had experienced specific forms of violence from their family members, including verbal abuse, LGBTIQ+ related abuse, emotional abuse and physical violence.¹⁴ Furthermore, parents were by far,

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Id, pp. 71-2.

⁸ Id, p. 72.

⁹ A 2014 NSW-based survey of LGBTIQ+ people found that 54.7% of respondents reported that they had been in at least one emotionally abusive relationship, while 34.8% reported that they had been abused sexually or physically by a previous partner: see LGBTIQ Domestic and Family Violence Interagency and the Centre of Social Research in Health (2014) [Calling it what is really is: A report into Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Gender Diverse, Intersex and Queer Experiences](#), Sydney: University of New South Wales, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰ Hillier et al (2010) [Writing Themselves In 3: The third national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people](#), Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University, p. 46.

¹¹ Id, p. 47.

¹² Strauss et al (2017) [Trans Pathways: the mental health experiences and care pathways of trans young people](#), Perth: Telethon Kids Institute, p. 45.

¹³ Hill et al (2020), n5 above, p. 70.

¹⁴ Id, p. 71. Specifically, 41.5% of 6,195 LGBTIQ+ respondents reported having experienced verbal abuse from a family member, 40.8% reported having experienced LGBTIQ+ related abuse, 39.3% reported having experienced emotional abuse and 24.2% having experienced physical violence.

There's no safe place at home: Domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people

followed by some distance by siblings and extended family members, the most likely perpetrators of the most recent family violence experienced by these LGBTIQ+ respondents.¹⁵

2.2 WAYS IN WHICH VIOLENCE MANIFESTS

LGBTIQ+ people experience many similar types of domestic and family violence as those experienced by the general population and this includes physical assault and injury, sexual violence, insults, isolation from friends and family, and the deprivation of financial independence.¹⁶ In *Private Lives* 3, 1 in 4 LGBTIQ+ respondents had experienced physical violence, and 1 in 5 had experienced sexual violence, from an intimate partner. The proportion of people who had experienced verbal or emotional abuse from an intimate partner was even higher (42.4% for verbal abuse; 48.1% for emotional abuse respectively). Meanwhile, almost 1 in 4 LGBTIQ+ respondents had experienced physical violence, and more than 4 in 10 had experienced verbal abuse, from family members.¹⁷

Existing literature also indicates that the domestic and family violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ people may manifest in specific and unique ways. In particular, homophobia, biphobia or transphobia may be used by an abusive partner or family member to exercise power or control and limit a victim's access to informal and formal sources of support, for example, by:

- threatening to 'out' a partner or family member, or to disclose their HIV status;
- pressuring a person to conform to gender norms or undergo surgery;
- deliberately misgendering a trans partner or family member, and ridiculing their body or gender identity;
- controlling a partner's or family member's medication (such as hormones) or access to services; or
- suggesting that a partner's or family member's gender identity will not be believed.¹⁸

Significantly, in *Private Lives* 3, more than 4 in 10 (or 40.8% of 6,195 LGBTIQ+ respondents) had experienced LGBTIQ+ related abuse from a family member, while 1 in 10 (or 10% of 6,121 LGBTIQ+ respondents) had experienced LGBTIQ+ related abuse from an intimate partner. LGBTIQ+ related abuse was defined to include being shamed about being LGBTIQ, threatened with being outed, having an HIV status disclosed, or the withholding of medication or hormones.¹⁹

¹⁵ Id, p. 74.

¹⁶ Hill et al (2020), n5 above, p. 71; see also Pitts et al (2006) *Private Lives: A report on the health and wellbeing of GLBTI Australians*, Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University, p. 51; Leonard et al (2008) *Coming forward: the underreporting of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse in Victoria*, Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University, p. 45.

¹⁷ Hill et al (2020), n5 above, p. 71.

¹⁸ See e.g. Hill et al (2020), n5 above, p. 71; M Campo and S Tayton (2015) *Intimate partner violence in lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer communities – key issues*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, p. 4; Victorian Government (2018) *Data collection standards - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities* (accessed 24 July 2020); Department of Social Services, Australian Government *Domestic and Family Violence within LGBTIQ Communities*, p. 1; Y Lay (2017) *Primary prevention of family violence against people from LGBTI communities*, Our Watch, p. 49; ACON (2020) *Submission to Senate Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence*, Submission 78, p. 18.

¹⁹ Hill et al (2020), n5 above, p. 71.

2.3 LGBTIQ+ POPULATIONS AT PARTICULAR RISK

There is limited data available on the factors that may increase the risk, or magnify the effects, of domestic and family violence for LGBTIQ+ people. Existing research suggests that gender, age, disability, race, cultural and linguistic diversity and trans or gender diverse status are all potentially relevant factors.²⁰ *Private Lives 3* concludes that, among LGBTIQ+ populations, cisgender men reported generally lower rates of intimate partner or family violence compared to cisgender women, trans men, trans women and non-binary participants, and that rates of sexual assault were highest among cisgender women, trans men and non-binary people.²¹

Further, research chiefly concerned with heterosexual cisgendered relationships also indicates that First Nations' people and women with disabilities are at greater risk of family violence generally,²² and that the effects of domestic and family violence can be magnified by the disadvantages a person faces because of factors including cultural and linguistic background, disability, age or socio-economic status, as well as sexuality or gender identity.²³ Where more than one of these factors intersects, a person may be at greater risk of violence, or the effects of the violence that they experience may be magnified.²⁴

Our research has been able to go further in identifying and calculating the degree of risk associated with intersectional factors, as it relates to LGBTIQ+ people (see section 4.3 below).

2.4 REPORTING RATES AND DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESSING SUPPORT SERVICES

It is well established that predominantly heteronormative understandings of intimate partner violence can make it more difficult for LGBTIQ+ people to recognise their experience as intimate partner or family violence and to seek help.²⁵ Assumptions about gender roles can conceal the existence of intimate partner violence in LGBTIQ+ relationships (e.g. societal assumptions that a woman is incapable of exerting physical power over another woman, or gay men are not 'masculine' enough to be capable of violence).²⁶ Consultations with LGBTIQ+ communities have revealed that some LGBTIQ+ people lack confidence in asserting their boundaries or rights within a relationship because of an inability to recognise their treatment as abuse – often a product of the predominantly heteronormative framing of domestic or family violence, coupled with the general lack of LGBTIQ+ role models or LGBTIQ+ education in schools.²⁷

The lack of recognition of intimate partner violence in LGBTIQ+ relationships and the distinct forms it takes, can in turn also make it harder for victims to seek help from service providers and the police, who may be unaware of the

²⁰ Hill et al (2020), n5 above, p. 77; Leonard et al (2008), n16 above, p. 27; Leonard et al (2012) [*Private Lives 2: The second national survey of the health and wellbeing of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender \(GLBT\) Australians*](#), Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University, p. 46; Ussher et al (2020) [*Crossing the line: Lived experience of sexual violence among trans women of colour from culturally and linguistically diverse \(CALD\) backgrounds in Australia – Key findings and future directions*](#), Sydney: Anrows.

²¹ Hill et al (2020), n5 above, pp. 72-74, 77.

²² Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016), n1 above, p. 18.

²³ *Id.*, p. 33.

²⁴ Our Watch (2020) [*Submission to Senate Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence*](#), Submission 48, p. 23.

²⁵ M Campo and S Tayton (2015), n18 above, p. 4; Pitts et al (2006), n16 above, pp. 12, 51; ACON (2020), n18 above, p. 12; Hill et al (2020), n5 above, p. 77.

²⁶ M Campo and S Tayton (2015), n18 above, p. 4.

²⁷ ACON (2020), n18 above, p. 12.

There's no safe place at home: Domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people

particular strategies used by abusers in these relationships.²⁸ With the level of awareness of LGBTIQ+ experiences and needs limited among police, in the courts, among service providers and in the community generally, LGBTIQ+ people can feel invisible in the family violence system.²⁹ Even where domestic and family violence service providers have engaged in inclusivity training, they tend to only be available to women and their children, excluding many LGBTIQ+ people.³⁰ Likewise, almost all perpetrator intervention programs target cisgender men, thereby excluding cis and trans women or non-binary people in need of support to change abusive behaviour.³¹

LGBTIQ+ domestic and family violence often goes unreported.³² Previous studies had indicated that approximately 10-14% of LGBTIQ+ people who experienced abuse reported this abuse to the police,³³ but *Private Lives 3* suggests that the reporting rate to police may be as low as 5.9%.³⁴ The rates of reporting physical abuse appear to be slightly higher: in one survey, 18.7% of respondents who had been hit, 17.9% of respondents who had been forced to have sex, and 20.4% of participants who had been physically injured by their abuser had reported this to the police.³⁵ When LGBTIQ+ victims do go to the police to report domestic and family violence, satisfaction with the police response is mixed. In one study, out of those respondents who did go to the police, just over half agreed that they had been treated with courtesy and respect, and a similar proportion of respondents agreed that the police had taken appropriate action.³⁶ However, another study indicated that trans women, and in particular trans women of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, are most likely to report receiving no support in the wake of sexual harassment or assault.³⁷ Similarly, in *Private Lives 3*, out of the 279 LGBTIQ+ respondents who had reported their most recent experience of intimate partner or family violence to the police (including to LGBTIQ liaison officers), only 45% felt supported. This was the lowest score among all the services and organisations listed as potential reporting points, including counselling services, health services, legal services (including the court system), domestic or family violence services, employers, LGBTIQ organisations and religious or spiritual community leaders or elders.³⁸

2.5 PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognising the particular challenges facing LGBTIQ+ people affected by domestic and family violence, a number of reports have made recommendations to address these issues. These recommendations include:

- further research and investigation into the high rates of family violence observed in LGBTIQ+ communities, particularly in relation to the experiences of trans and gender diverse people and

²⁸ M Campo and S Tayton (2015), n18 above, p. 5.

²⁹ Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016), n1 above, p. 35.

³⁰ ACON (2020), n18 above, p. 13.

³¹ *Id.*, p. 22.

³² See e.g. Pitts et al (2006), n16 above, pp. 12, 51; Hill et al (2020), n5 above, p. 75.

³³ Pitts et al (2006), n16 above, pp. 12, 52; Leonard et al (2008), n16 above, p. 47.

³⁴ Hill et al (2020), n5 above, p. 75.

³⁵ Pitts et al (2006), n16 above, pp. 12, 52.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Ussher et al (2020), n20 above, p. 135.

³⁸ Hill et al (2020), n5 above, p. 75.

people born with intersex variations, as well as an examination of other intersecting risk factors;³⁹

- better service planning, training of service providers and the promotion and resourcing of specialist LGBTIQ+ support services for family violence;⁴⁰
- education and increased community awareness of domestic violence in LGBTIQ+ communities;⁴¹ and
- specific reference in family violence legislation to the particular impact of family violence on LGBTIQ+ people.⁴²

Following the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, the Commission recommended:

- the development of LGBTI-specific resources;
- programs and targeted community education campaigns;
- identification of research priorities and effective prevention strategies;
- measures to encourage service providers to adopt inclusive practices through a review of the standards for family service providers; and
- that in reviewing equal opportunity laws, the Victorian Government should take into account concerns for discrimination against LGBTI people seeking assistance for family violence.⁴³

³⁹ See e.g. Pitts et al (2006), n16 above, p. 12, p. 65; LGBTIQ Domestic and Family Violence Interagency and the Centre of Social Research in Health (2014), n9 above, pp. 22, 41; Our Watch (2020), n18 above, p. 49.

⁴⁰ Pitts et al (2006), n16 above, p. 12, p. 65; LGBTIQ Domestic and Family Violence Interagency and the Centre of Social Research in Health (2014), n9 above, p. 40; National LGBTI Health Alliance (2020) [Submission to Senate Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence](#), Submission 67, p. 2.

⁴¹ Pitts et al (2006), n16 above, pp. 12, 65; LGBTIQ Domestic and Family Violence Interagency and the Centre of Social Research in Health (2014), n9 above, p. 40; ACON (2020), n18 above, p. 11; National LGBTI Health Alliance (2020), n40 above, p. 4.

⁴² Australian Law Reform Commission (2010) [Family Violence - A National Legal Response](#), Volume 1, p. 56.

⁴³ Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016), n1 above, p. 35.

3. RATES OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE AFFECTING LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE

Almost 1 in 10 LGBTIQ+ respondents currently live with someone who has been violent, abusive, harassing or controlling towards them in the last 12 months, and almost 1 in 20 LGBTIQ+ respondents currently live with someone who they fear may be violent, abusive, harassing or controlling towards them. Families of origin are a significant source of the violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ respondents, in addition to intimate partners and housemates.

3.1 RECENT EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(a) Living with someone who was recently violent

Survey respondents were asked whether, in the last 12 months, they had experienced any violence, abuse, harassment or controlling behaviour from someone they currently lived with.

Out of 2,427 responses from LGBTIQ+ people to this question, 8% (195) said 'yes', while a further 2.8% (68) said they did not know or were unsure, and 0.5% (13) preferred not to say. 88.6% (2,151) responded 'no' to this question.

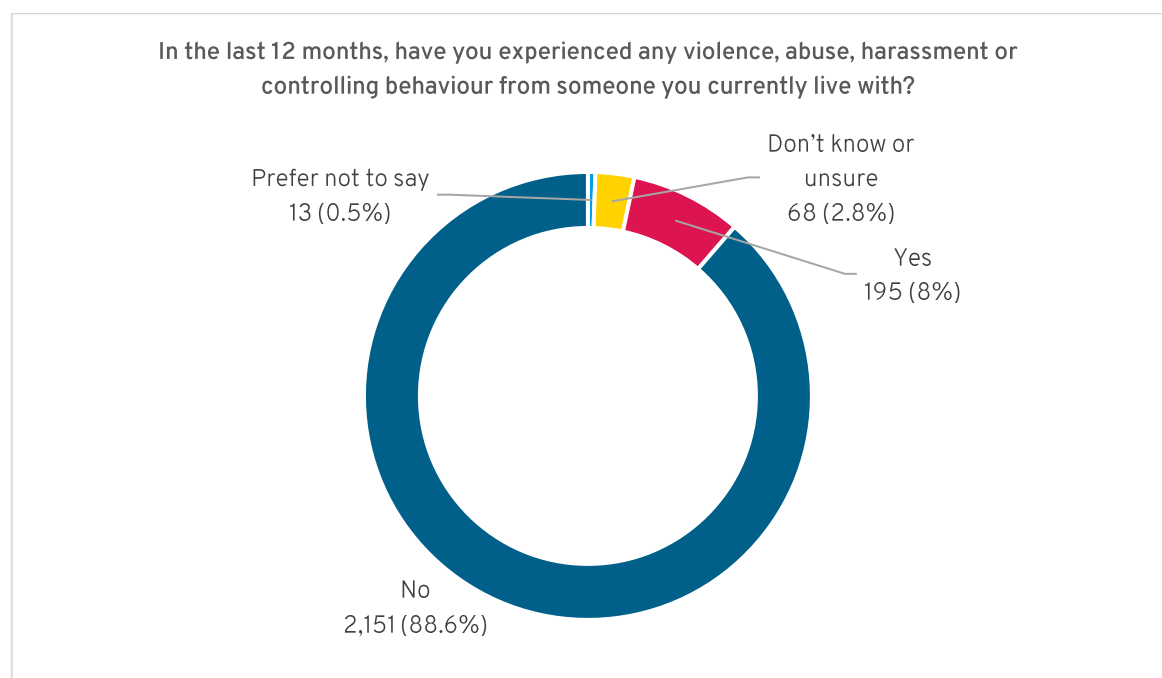


Figure 1: Experiences of domestic violence in the last 12 months (Total answered = 2,427)

(b) Who were the likely perpetrators of that violence?

Of the 195 respondents who responded 'yes' to currently living with someone who had been violent, abusive, harassing or controlling towards them in the last 12 months:

- 36.9% (72) were living exclusively with families of origin;
- 21% (41) were living exclusively with partners; and
- 14.4% (28) were living exclusively with housemates.

Accordingly, families of origin were the most likely source of the violence for, at least, 1 in 3 experiences of domestic violence in the last 12 months. Intimate partners accounted for, at least, 1 in 5 experiences of domestic violence in the last 12 months.

The remaining respondents included the following:

- 6.7% (13) who were living exclusively with partners and children;
- 4.1% (8) who were living exclusively with partners and housemates;
- 3.6% (7) who were living exclusively with children;
- 2.1% (4) who were living exclusively with partners and their partners' families;
- 2.1% (4) who were living exclusively with parents and partners; and
- 1% (2) who were living exclusively with carers.

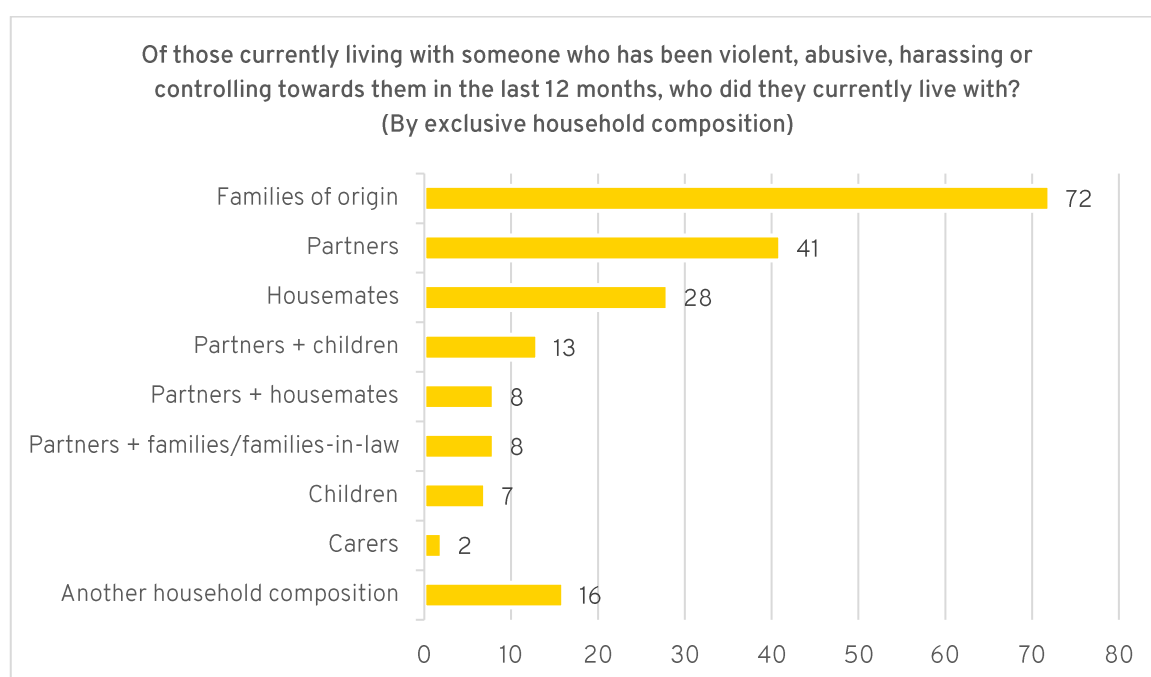


Figure 2: Likely sources of domestic violence experienced in the last 12 months (Total answered = 195)

3.2 FEAR OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(a) Living with someone you fear may be violent

Survey respondents were asked whether they currently lived with someone who they feared may be violent, abusive or controlling towards them.

Out of 2,429 responses from LGBTIQ+ people to this question, 5.4% (132) said 'yes', while a further 2.9% (71) said they did not know or were unsure, and 0.5% (12) preferred not to say. 91.1% (2,214) responded 'no' to this question.

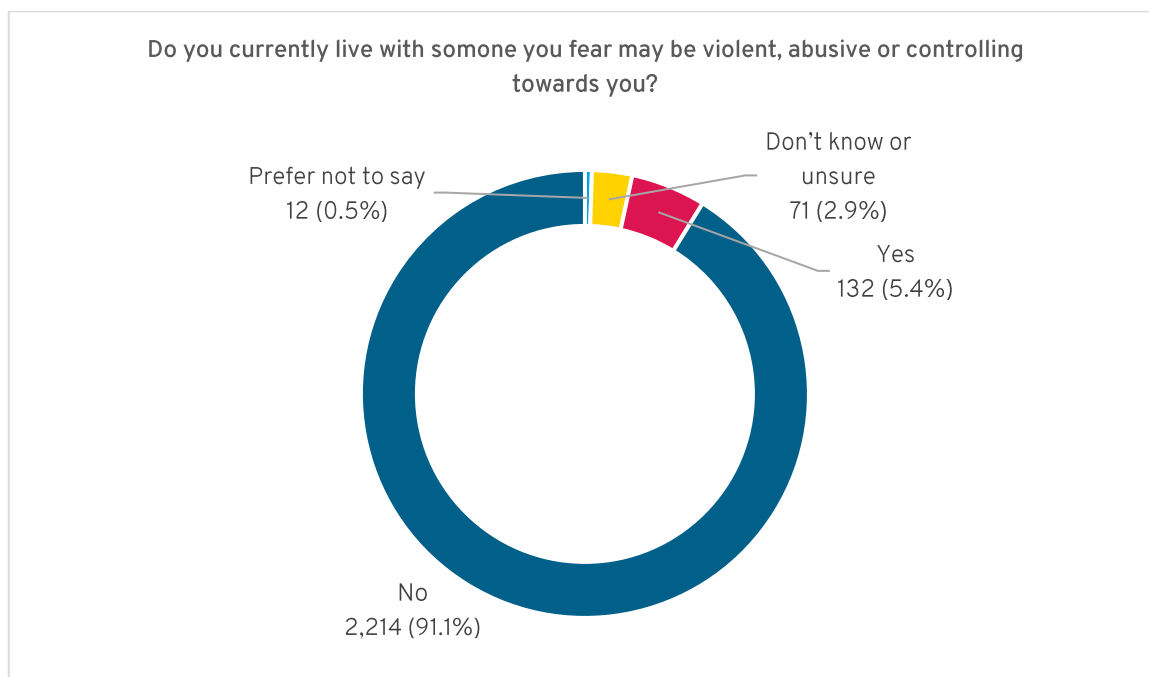


Figure 3: Living in fear of domestic violence (Total answered = 2,429)

(b) Who was the source of that fear?

Nearly half of the fear of domestic violence captured in this survey also originated from LGBTIQ+ respondents' families of origin.

Of the 132 respondents who were living with someone they feared may be violent, abusive or controlling:

- 47.7% (63) were living exclusively with families of origin;
- 19.7% (26) were living exclusively with partners; and
- 11.4% (15) were living exclusively with housemates.

The remaining respondents included the following:

- 10.6% (14) who were living exclusively with partners and children;
- 3.8% (5) who were living exclusively with partners and housemates;
- 2.3% (3) who were living exclusively with parents and partners;
- 2.3% (3) who were living exclusively with partners and their partner's family;
- 1.5% (2) who were living exclusively with children; and
- 0.8% (1) who was living exclusively with a carer or carers.

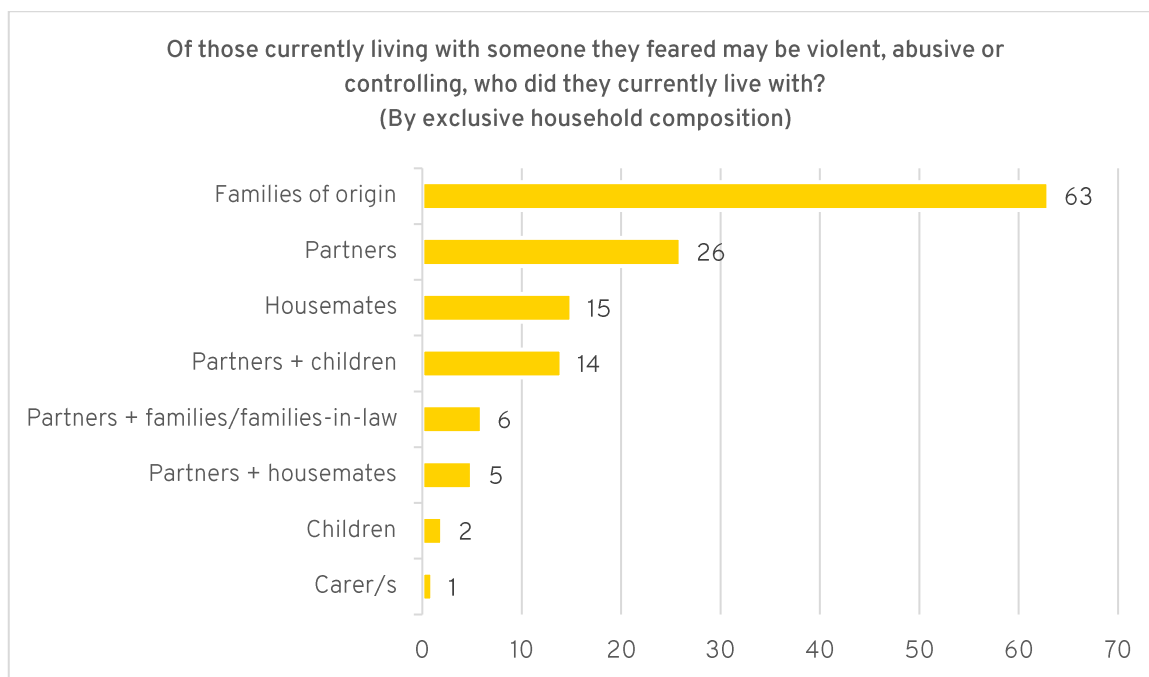


Figure 4: Likely origin of fear of domestic violence (Total answered = 132)

4. THE RISK OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE FOR LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE

Based on our survey results, 12.2% of, or over 1 in 10, LGBTIQ+ respondents were found to be at risk of domestic or family violence. Families of origin were a significant source of the risk of violence to LGBTIQ+ respondents, in addition to intimate partners and housemates. Further, the risk of domestic and family violence was magnified for certain LGBTIQ+ population groups, including those aged under 24 years old and/or who were trans and/or gender diverse.

4.1 HOW MANY LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE ARE AT RISK OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Out of 2,413 LGBTIQ+ survey respondents, 12.2% (295) were at risk of domestic and family violence.

To identify those 'at risk' of domestic and family violence, we included 213 LGBTIQ+ respondents who answered 'yes' to either having experienced violence in the past 12 months (see question 1 in section 3.1 above) or who feared experiencing violence in the future (see question 2 in section 3.2 above). We also included 82 LGBTIQ+ respondents who said they were unsure, or who did not wish to disclose, whether they had experienced or feared violence. We did this, as we know from previous literature, that LGBTIQ+ people do not always see their experiences as being an experience of domestic or family violence, and people who experience domestic and family violence may be reluctant to report it.⁴⁴

Given the survey was concerned with the impact of COVID-19 restrictions such as lockdowns, the survey questions only sought information from respondents regarding violence they had experienced or feared from the people they currently lived with. Accordingly, those identified as being 'at risk' of domestic and family violence do not include people experiencing violence from those who do not currently live with them (e.g. ex-partners). However, many respondents spoke of having to move back home with abusive family members or being unable to leave abusive partners due to the lockdown restrictions and financial insecurity connected to COVID-19.

As set out in section 4.3 below, certain population groups within the LGBTIQ+ cohort were more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence. Within the LGBTIQ+ population, trans and/or gender diverse people and those who are multi-gender attracted (as opposed to those who were gay or lesbian) were more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence. People born with intersex variations were not significantly more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence when compared with LGBTQ people who were not born with intersex variations; $\chi^2(1, N = 2,287) = 3.42, p = .07$. However, out of 43 respondents born with intersex variations, 20.9% (9) were at risk of domestic and family violence.

4.2 WHO ARE LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE AT RISK FROM?

Of the 295 LGBTIQ+ respondents who were at risk of domestic and family violence:

- 41% (121) were living exclusively with families of origin;
- 21.7% (64) were living exclusively with partners; and

⁴⁴ See e.g. M Campo and S Tayton (2015), n18 above, p. 4; ACON (2020), n18 above, p. 12; Pitts et al (2006), n16 above, pp. 12, 51-52; Leonard et al (2008), n16 above, p. 47; Hill et al (2020), n5 above, pp. 72, 75.

- 13.9% (41) were living exclusively with housemates.

The remaining respondents included the following:

- 6.1% (18) who were living exclusively with partners and children;
- 3.7% (11) who were living exclusively with partners and housemates;
- 3.1% (9) who were living exclusively with children;
- 2.4% (7) who were living exclusively with parents and partners;
- 1.4% (4) who were living exclusively with partners and partners' family; and
- 1% (3) who were living exclusively with carers.

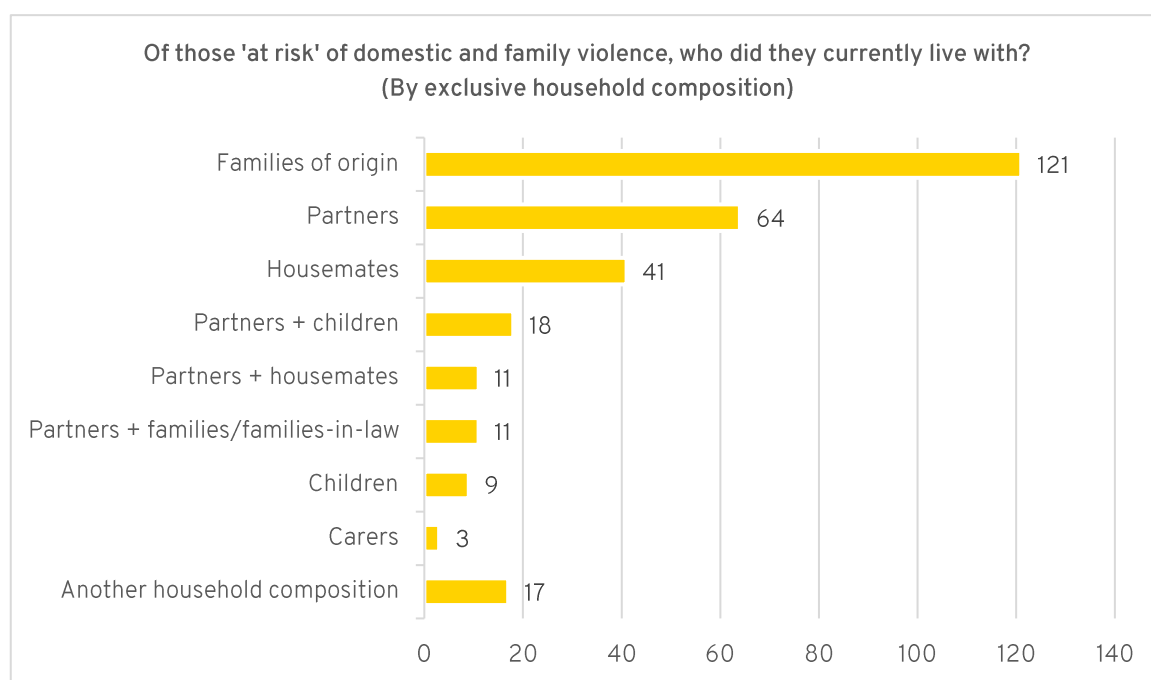


Figure 5: Likely source of risk of domestic and family violence (Total answered = 295)

4.3 FACTORS INCREASING THE RISK OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Certain LGBTIQ+ population segments are at significantly greater risk of domestic and family violence when compared with the LGBTIQ+ population as a whole. Based on our identification of those at risk of domestic and family violence (see section 4.1 above), we identified that the LGBTIQ+ respondents in the following table were statistically more likely to be at risk than their relevant counterparts.

RISK FACTORS	ODDS RATIO FOR RISK OF FAMILY VIOLENCE ⁴⁵
Being under 25 years	4.5 times more likely than those over 25 years.

⁴⁵ I.e. How many times more likely is this cohort to be at risk of family violence when compared to their relevant counterpart.

RISK FACTORS	ODDS RATIO FOR RISK OF FAMILY VIOLENCE ⁴⁵
Living with others who did not know about your sexuality	3.5 times more likely than those who lived with others who knew about their sexuality, or lived alone.
Being trans and/or gender diverse	2.7 times more likely than those who were cisgendered men or women.
Being unemployed and/or looking for work	2.2 times more likely than those who were employed (i.e. in a paid position, including part-time and casual workers).
Having a disability or chronic health condition	1.9 times more likely than those who did not have a disability or chronic health condition.
<i>Having an intellectual disability or condition</i>	2.6 times more likely than those with a different kind of disability or condition. 3 times more likely than those without any disability or chronic health condition.
<i>Having a mental health condition</i>	2.1 times more likely than those with a different kind of disability or condition. 2.2 times more likely than those without any disability or chronic health condition
Being multi-gender attracted	1.6 times more likely than those who were lesbian or gay

The data also suggested that some other LGBTIQ+ cohorts, such as those from particular cultural and linguistic groups, may also be more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence when compared to LGBTIQ+ people generally.

These risk factors are discussed further below.

(a) Young people under 25 years

LGBTIQ+ survey respondents aged under 25 were 4.5 times more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence than those over 25 years; $\chi^2(6, N = 2,413) = 153.26, p < .001$.

Young LGBTIQ+ people at risk of domestic and family violence were likely to have a combination of risk factors:

- 54% were also trans or gender diverse. (Under 25s who were at risk of domestic and family violence were 2.8 times more likely to be trans or gender diverse than to be cisgendered men or women; $\chi^2(1, N = 317) = 17.23, p < .001$);
- Over half (55.4%) lived with others who did not know about their sexuality. (Those living with others who did not know about their sexuality were twice as likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence than those living with others who did know about their sexuality; $\chi^2(1, N = 323) = 8.16, p < .01$);
- 39.6% were unemployed and/or looking for work; and
- 4% were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

72% of people aged under 25 years who were at risk of domestic and family violence lived exclusively with their families of origin and 66.3% of them were not currently in a relationship or dating. This suggests that families of

origin, and not intimate partners, remain the most likely source of risk for LGBTIQ+ young people who are at risk of domestic and family violence.

Many of these young LGBTIQ+ people were also studying or were living in financially insecure positions. In our survey, 59.4% of LGBTIQ+ respondents under 25 were studying (including 64.4% of those at risk of domestic and family violence) and 29.7% were unemployed (including 39.6% of those at risk of domestic and family violence). Overall, LGBTIQ+ respondents under 25 were 4.17 times more likely to be unemployed than LGBTIQ+ respondents over 25 (9.2%); $\chi^2(1, N = 2,630) = 123.70, p < .001$).

Accordingly, a confluence of economic and social impacts caused by COVID-19 and its associated restrictions, coupled with underlying prejudice towards, and a lack of understanding or acceptance of, sexual and gender diversity, has meant that a significant number of young LGBTIQ+ people are today living in homes, or forced to return to homes, which are unsafe for them.

Here is Jana's* story.

JANA: LOCKDOWN WITH A HOMOPHOBIC FAMILY

Jana is a bisexual woman aged 18 – 24 who is living with homophobic family members who do not accept her identity. Jana spoke about how living at home has negatively impacted her mental health.

COVID-19 and the subsequent restrictions have affected Jana's job security. Although she is currently working from home, she is highly concerned about losing her job, being unable to find alternative employment and not being eligible for JobSeeker/JobKeeper. Her financial insecurity has prevented her from moving out.

In the past 12 months, Jana has experienced abuse from her parents, who she is living with, and is fearful of experiencing further abuse from them. Jana feels highly unsafe at home. In the past, Jana has managed by having social support from the LGBTIQ+ community, however social distancing measures now prevent this.

Jana used to see counsellors or use phone counselling but is scared to speak on the phone in case her family hears her. She has tried using a counselling service through written 'chat' so her family will not hear her. Although Jana found this a bit helpful, she also found it hard to have any in-depth counselling because each session is with a different counsellor.

(b) Openness at home regarding sexuality

LGBTIQ+ survey respondents who lived with others that did not know about their sexuality were 3.5 times more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence than those who lived with others who did know, or lived alone; $\chi^2(1, N = 2,444) = 71.94, p < .001$).

Specifically, 10.3% (223) out of the 2,126 LGBTIQ+ respondents who lived with people that knew about their sexuality were at risk of domestic and family violence, as compared to 28.9% (72) of the 249 LGBTIQ+ respondents who lived with people who did not know about their sexuality or lived alone.

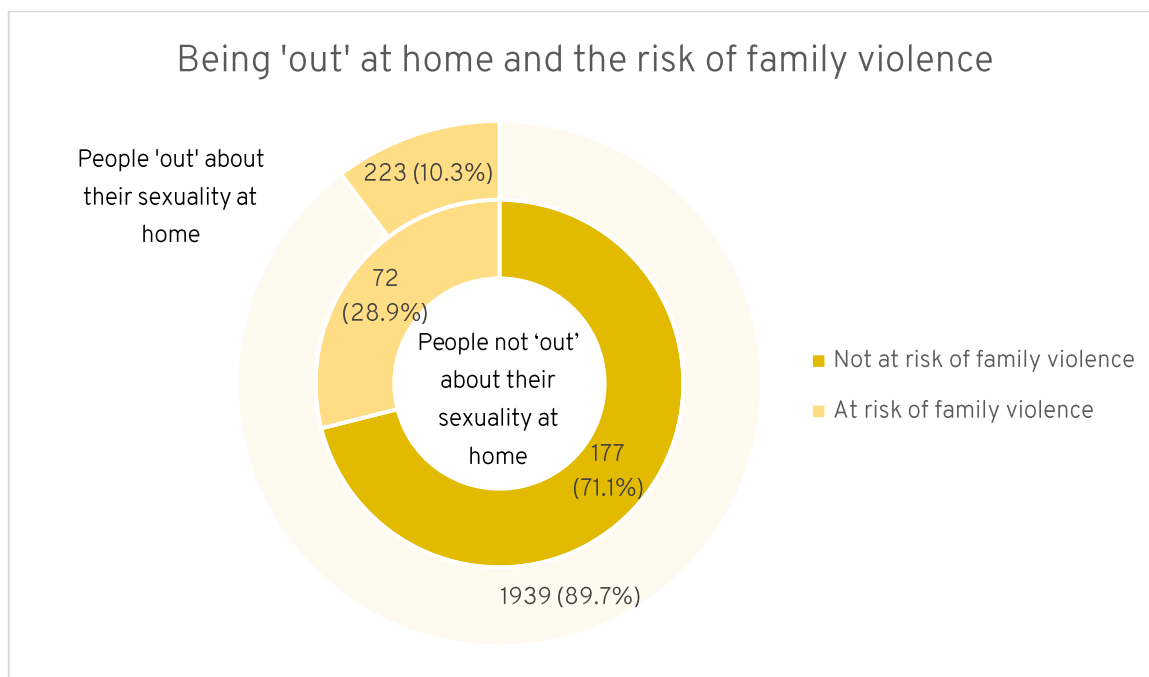


Figure 6: Openness at home regarding sexuality and risk of family violence

(c) Trans and gender diverse people

Within the broader LGBTIQ+ survey population, trans and/or gender diverse respondents were 2.7 times more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence than respondents who were cisgendered men or women; $\chi^2(1, N = 2,383) = 57.72, p < .001$. The trans and/or gender diverse survey population includes men or women who indicated having a different gender assigned to them at birth, and people with genders other than male or female.

Specifically, 9.5% (183) out of the 1,917 cisgender respondents (who were otherwise within the broader LGBTIQ+ survey respondents) were at risk of domestic and family violence, as compared to 22.3% (104) of the 466 respondents who were trans and/or gender diverse. There was otherwise no statistically significant difference between the risk of domestic and family violence as between cisgender men and women, or as between trans men and women.

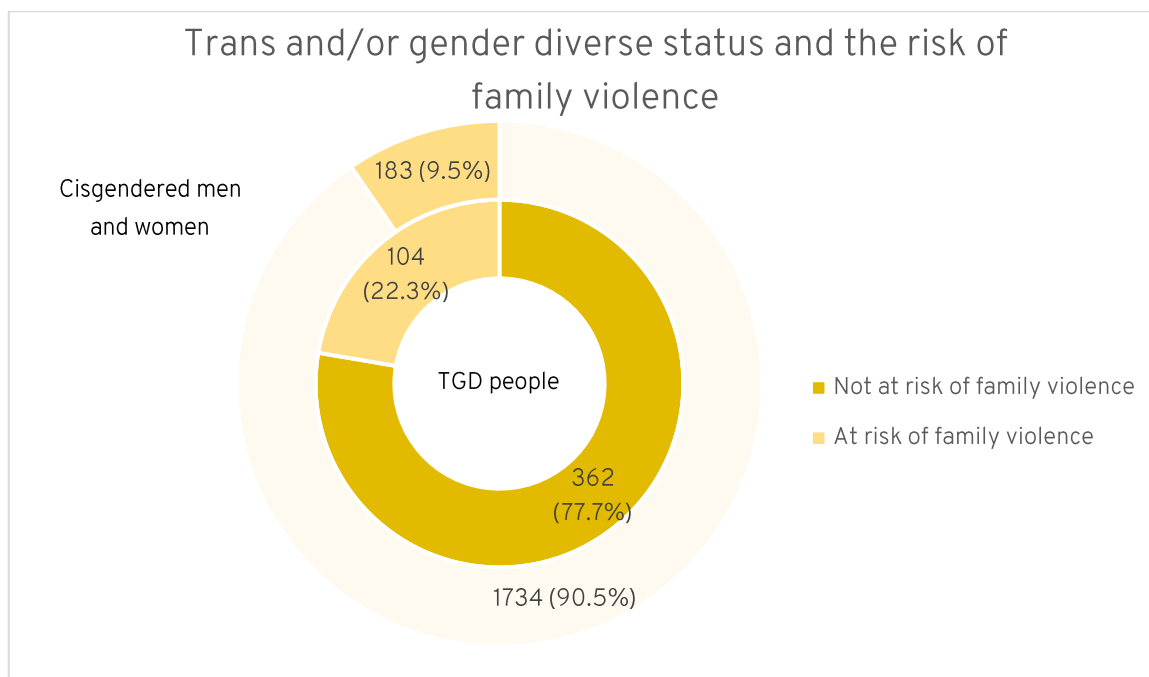


Figure 7: Trans and/or gender diverse status and the risk of family violence

Those who did not provide a gender at all were also at high risk of domestic and family violence. Of the 30 respondents who 'didn't know' or 'preferred not to say' what their gender was or whether they were assigned a different gender at birth, 26.7% (8) were at risk of domestic and family violence.

Here is Charlie's* story.

CHARLIE: TRANSPHOBIA FROM FAMILY OF ORIGIN

Charlie is an 18 – 24 year old queer, transgender man. Charlie isn't in a relationship. Prior to COVID-19 Charlie was working in a casual role and studying and has now lost his job. He has been unable to qualify for Centrelink assistance and could no longer afford the rent on his apartment. This has forced Charlie to move back in with his family of origin.

Charlie's family do not accept his queer identity and are emotionally, verbally and at times physically abusive. Charlie feels unsafe at home and has to put his gender transition on hold. He is looking for employment and has reached out to online counselling to help with suicidal feelings.

(d) Unemployment and financial stress

LGBTIQ+ survey respondents who were unemployed and/or looking for work were 2.2 times more likely than those who were employed to be at risk of domestic and family violence; $\chi^2(1, N = 2,413) = 25.23, p < .001$.

Specifically, 11% (231) of the 2,109 LGBTIQ+ respondents in full time, part time or casual employment at the time of completing the survey were at risk of domestic and family violence, as compared with 21.1% (64) of the 304 LGBTIQ+ respondents who indicated they were unemployed or looking for work.

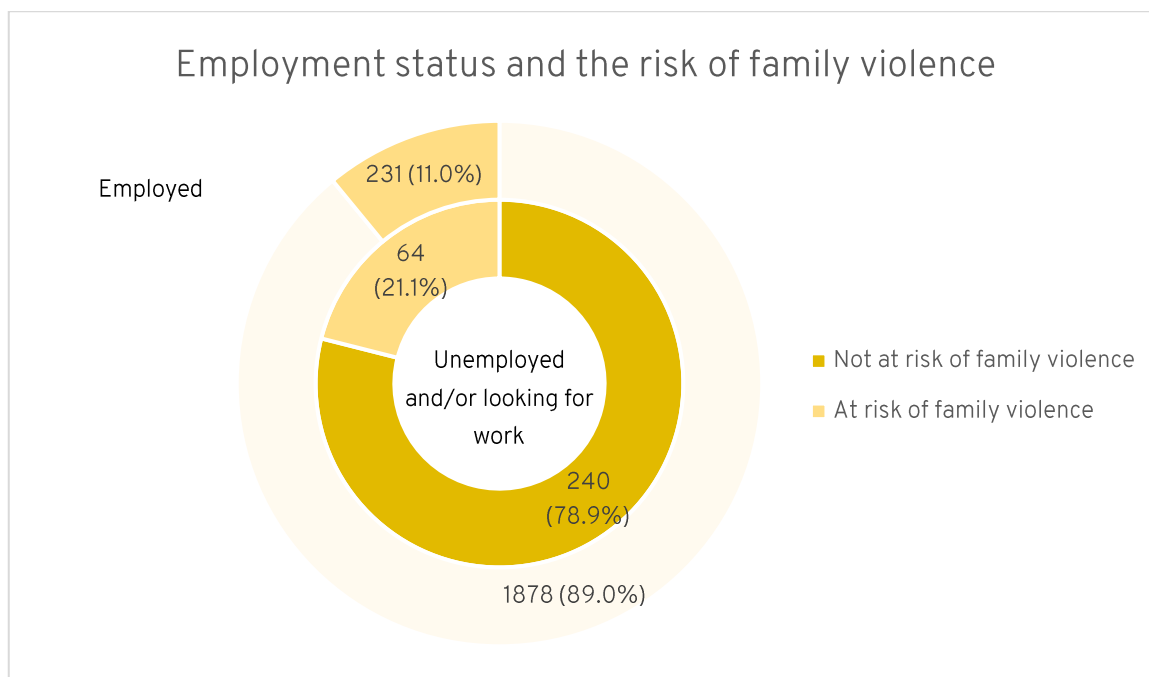


Figure 8: Employment status and the risk of family violence

Remaining unemployed or losing employment during COVID-19 restrictions

LGBTIQ+ survey respondents who remained unemployed or lost employment during COVID-19 restrictions were more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence, when compared to those who remained employed during COVID-19 restrictions.

Specifically, 27.3% (39) of the 143 LGBTIQ+ respondents who remained unemployed during COVID-19 restrictions, and 15.5% (25) of the 161 LGBTIQ+ respondents who lost employment during COVID-19 restrictions, were at risk of domestic and family violence. This compares with 10.7% (221) of the 2,072 LGBTIQ+ respondents who remained employed despite COVID-19 restrictions. Given a lack of financial independence and financial insecurity can contribute to situations where there is a greater degree of control by one person of another, this is not surprising.

Further, 22% of those who became unemployed during COVID-19 restrictions were trans and/or gender diverse, suggesting that there is also a strong correlation between unemployment and trans and/or gender diverse status. 7.1% of the trans and/or gender diverse respondents became unemployed during COVID-19, with 11.9% remaining unemployed (2.8% gained employment).

The small number of LGBTIQ+ respondents who *became* employed during COVID-19 restrictions were also more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence. Specifically, 27% (10) of the 37 LGBTIQ+ respondents who became employed during COVID-19 restrictions were at risk of domestic and family violence. Among these 10 respondents, a significant number were studying (5), had a disability or chronic health condition (4), and/or were gender diverse (4). A reason for the correlation between becoming employed during COVID-19 restrictions and the risk of domestic and family violence is not readily apparent.

Losing income during COVID-19 restrictions

Those who had a greater income loss due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions were more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence; (using a Mann-Whitney U test, the mean rank of income loss was greater for those at risk of domestic and family violence: $z = -2.14, p = .02$). However, those who lost *all* their income due to the impact

of COVID-19 restrictions ($n = 252$) were not more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence than those who had maintained some or all of their income; $\chi^2(1, N = 2,403) = .29, p = .59$).

Here are Janet* and David's* stories.

JANET: CO-PARENTING WITH AN ABUSIVE EX-PARTNER

Janet is a 45 – 54 year old lesbian woman. She lives alone and part-time with her children who live with her ex-partner the remainder of the time. COVID-19 and the subsequent restrictions have caused financial strain for Janet. As a casual employee she has had to work less hours to provide care to her children whilst they have been doing online classes. She has also had to take time off work to care for a sick child. As a result, Janet has lost over half of her income and is worried about the threat of homelessness.

Although Janet does not live with someone who she experiences abuse from, she remains in contact with her ex-partner, who has been and continues to be, abusive to her. She is highly concerned about the ongoing and escalating family violence from her ex-partner who she fears will exploit the uncertainties of the situation and reduce or restrict contact with her children. The ongoing risks and uncertainties have impacted her mental health.

DAVID: LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT AND PROVIDING CARE

David is a 65+ year old gay man. He provides care to a parent who he lives with and also lives with his partner. His main business has been forced to close down and he feels it is unlikely to ever recover. He has been stood down from other employment. As a result, he has lost all of his income. In the past 12 months, someone that David lives with has been abusive towards him. David does not disclose who this abuse is from, or in what form.

(e) Disabilities and chronic health conditions

LGBTIQ+ survey respondents who had a disability or chronic health condition were 1.9 times more likely than those who did not to be at risk of domestic and family violence; $\chi^2(1, N = 2,371) = 24.74, p < .001$).

Specifically, 16.5% (136) of the 826 LGBTIQ+ respondents with a disability or chronic health condition were at risk of domestic and family violence, compared with 9.5% (147) of the 1,545 LGBTIQ+ respondents without a disability or chronic health condition.

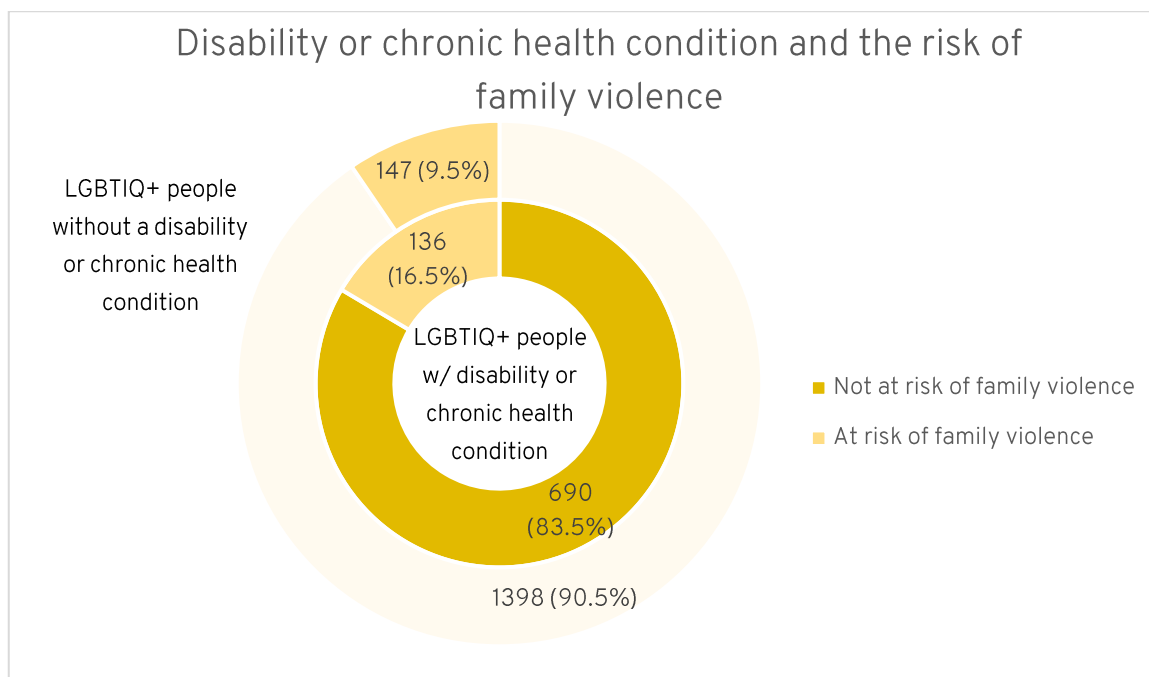


Figure 9: Disability or chronic health condition status and the risk of family violence

However, among LGBTQ+ respondents who were under 25 years, those with a disability or chronic health condition were not statistically more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence than those without a disability or chronic health condition: $\chi^2(1, N = 313) = 1.98, p = .159$. Nevertheless, both cohorts of under 25s were more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence (see section 4.3(a) above). Specifically, 36.5% (38) of the 104 LGBTQ+ respondents under 25 with a disability or chronic health condition were at risk of domestic and family violence, compared with 28.7% (60) of the 209 LGBTQ+ respondents under 25 without a disability or chronic health condition.

Risk by type of disability or chronic health condition

LGBTQ+ survey respondents with an intellectual or mental health disability or condition were more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence than those with other types of disabilities and chronic health conditions.

LGBTQ+ respondents with an intellectual disability or condition were 2.6 times more likely to be at risk of domestic or family violence than those with a different kind of disability or condition, and 3 times more likely to be at risk compared to those without any disability or chronic health condition. Specifically, 25% (22) of the 88 LGBTQ+ respondents with an intellectual disability or condition were at risk of domestic and family violence, compared with 14.9% (87) of the 582 LGBTQ+ respondents with a disability or chronic health condition, other than an intellectual disability or condition; $\chi^2(1, N = 670) = 5.67, p = .017$.

LGBTQ+ respondents with a mental health condition were 2.1 times more likely to be at risk of domestic or family violence than those with a different kind of disability or condition, and 2.2 times more likely to be at risk compared to those without any disability or chronic health condition. Specifically, 19.9% (57) of the 287 LGBTQ+ respondents with a mental health condition were at risk of domestic or family violence, compared with 13.5% (52) of the 384 LGBTQ+ respondents with a disability or chronic health condition, other than mental health; $\chi^2(1, N = 670) = 4.91, p = .027$.

Being trans and gender diverse with disability or chronic health condition

Trans and gender diverse people tended to be overrepresented among the LGBTIQ+ respondents with a disability or chronic health condition, and this cohort were also more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence. 28.8% (252) of the 875 LGBTIQ+ respondents with a disability or chronic health condition were trans and/or gender diverse, with 24.8% (60) of that 252 at risk of domestic and family violence.

In particular, trans and gender diverse people tended to be overrepresented among the LGBTIQ+ respondents with an intellectual disability or condition, and this cohort had the highest risk of domestic and family violence among all of the LGBTIQ+ respondents with disabilities or chronic health conditions. Specifically, 29.3% (17) of the 58 trans and/or gender diverse respondents with an intellectual disability or condition were at risk of domestic or family violence, compared with 19.6% (44) of the 224 trans and gender diverse respondents without any disability or chronic health condition and 22.7% (32) of the 141 trans and gender diverse respondents who had a different kind of disability or chronic health condition.

Unemployment and disability or chronic health condition

LGBTIQ+ survey respondents with a disability or chronic health condition tended to be overrepresented among the LGBTIQ+ respondents who were unemployed or looking for work,⁴⁶ and this cohort were also more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence. Almost one quarter (30.6%, 33) of those who were unemployed and/or looking for work and had a disability or chronic health condition, were also at risk of domestic or family violence.

LGBTIQ+ people with COVID-19 risk profiles

LGBTIQ+ survey respondents with chronic health conditions considered to be risk factors for developing serious illness from COVID-19 (a “COVID-19 risk profile”)⁴⁷ were 1.4 times more likely to be at risk of family or domestic violence than those without COVID-19 risk profiles; $\chi^2(1, N = 2212) = 5.32, p = .021$.⁴⁸ Specifically, 15.4% (47) of the 305 LGBTIQ+ respondents with COVID-19 risk profiles were at risk of domestic and family violence, compared with 10.9% (209) of the 1,911 LGBTIQ+ respondents without a COVID-19 risk profile.⁴⁹

LGBTIQ+ respondents with COVID-19 risk profiles were also likely to be older. 95% (304) of the 320 LGBTIQ+ respondents with a COVID-19 risk profile were over the age of 25, with 18.4% (59) were over the age of 65.

Preferred not to disclose a disability or chronic health condition

Finally, the small number of LGBTIQ+ survey respondents who ‘preferred not to say’ whether they had a disability or chronic health condition were more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence. Specifically, 30.8% (12)

⁴⁶ LGBTIQ+ people with disabilities or chronic health conditions had high unemployment rates at the time of completing the survey (i.e. following COVID-19 restrictions):

- 22.6% (21) of the 93 LGBTIQ+ respondents with an intellectual disability or condition were unemployed and/or looking for work;
- 19.5% (58) of the 297 LGBTIQ+ respondents with a mental health disability or condition were unemployed and/or looking for work;
- 9.9% (50) of the 456 LGBTIQ+ respondents with a physical disability or condition were unemployed and/or looking for work; and
- 18.8% (6) of the 32 LGBTIQ+ respondents with a sensory disability or condition were unemployed and/or looking for work.

⁴⁷ A respondent’s COVID-19 risk profile was identified by reference to the list of conditions on the Australian Government’s Department of Health advice: see Australian Government Department of Health (2020) [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) advice for people with chronic health conditions](#), 16 October.

⁴⁸ This analysis excluded from the entire LGBTIQ+ survey population those who had not answered the question about having a disability or chronic health condition, and those who had answered ‘yes’ to having a disability or chronic health condition but did not provide details, as both of these cohorts were unable to be determined as either having or not having a COVID-19 risk condition.

⁴⁹ A further 15 LGBTIQ+ respondents with COVID-19 risk profiles did not answer the questions on domestic violence.

of the 39 LGBTIQ+ respondents who 'preferred not to say' whether they had a disability or chronic health condition were at risk of domestic and family violence.

(f) Multi-gender attraction

Multi-gender attracted survey respondents were 1.6 times more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence than those who were gay or lesbian; $\chi^2(1, N = 1,979) = 8.3, p < .01$.

Further, 62.4% of the multi-gender attracted individuals were women. Multi-gender attracted women were 1.9 times more likely to be at risk of domestic and family violence than lesbian or gay women; $\chi^2(1, N = 825) = 7.80, p < .01$. Specifically, 7.8% (41) out of the 523 lesbian or gay women who responded to the survey were at risk of domestic and family violence, as compared to 14.2% (43) of the 303 multi-gender attracted women who responded to the survey.

Finally, although the number of people identifying as queer and asexual was smaller, around 18-19% of those identifying as queer or asexual were also at risk of domestic and family violence.

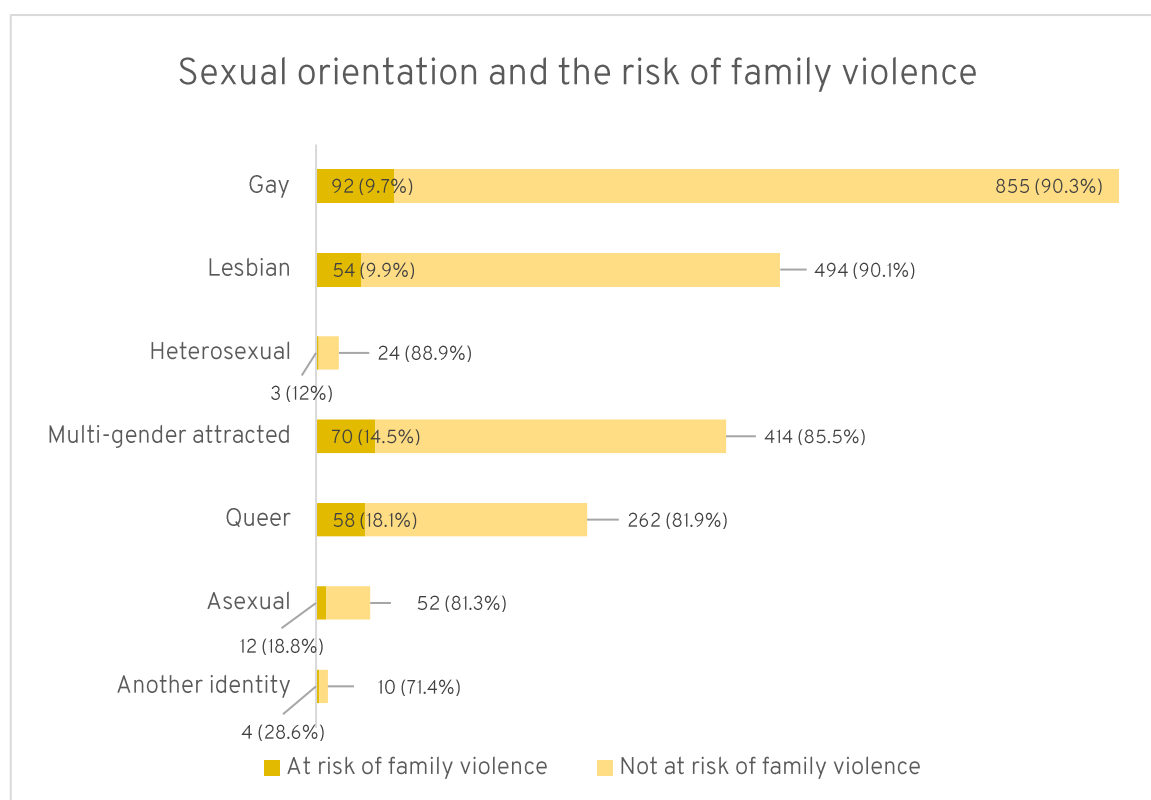


Figure 10: Sexual orientation and the risk of family violence

(g) Cultural background

The data suggested that ethnic and cultural differences may have an impact on the risk of domestic and family violence. However, the large variety of cultural and ethnic identities described by respondents meant that cohorts comprising of any one specific cultural or ethnic identity were too small to compare. Many respondents also responded to the open question regarding their ethnic and cultural identity with a variety of answers, including indicating information about their heritage, origin, nationality, and/or faith. Based on the responses, each respondent was ascribed a broad continent/region based on the identifies mentioned, in addition to First Nations' peoples. These regions included Asian, Middle Eastern and African, European, Central and South America, and New

Zealand and the Pacific. Respondents could be ascribed more than one continent/region if they indicated a mixture of ethnic and cultural identities or origins.

Grouping respondents by region revealed no significant differences for those who identified with European, New Zealand/Pacific or Central and South American ethnic and cultural identities. However, the smaller number of First Nations' LGBTIQ+ respondents (being, 11 out of 39), Asian LGBTIQ+ respondents (29 out of 134), and Middle Eastern and African LGBTIQ+ respondents (9 out of 28) did appear to live with a greater risk of domestic and family violence. Among this cohort, Asian and First Nations' LGBTIQ+ respondents were most likely to live with their families of origin, while Middle Eastern and African LGBTIQ+ respondents were most likely to live with housemates only, followed by families of origin.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

The data drawn from our survey has a range of implications for policy makers seeking to respond to domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people. Those implications include the need for national domestic and family violence data that captures LGBTIQ+ people, a national plan to reduce domestic and family violence that includes LGBTIQ+ people, and ensuring our response to domestic and family violence to be responsive to the needs of those who remain at greatest risk, such as young LGBTIQ+ people living with families of origin who do not accept them.

5.1 NATIONAL DATA THAT CAPTURES LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE

National datasets on domestic and family violence must include relevant questions on sexual orientation, gender identity and variations of sex characteristics. Without that data, it becomes difficult to ascertain the relative risk of domestic and family violence facing LGBTIQ+ people when compared with the cisgendered, heterosexual and endosexed (i.e. non-LGBTIQ+) population. Equally, it is important for national datasets to capture sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status in a manner which allows for disaggregation within the LGBTIQ+ population, given evidence that trans and gender diverse people and multi-gender attracted people are at elevated risk of domestic and family violence.

5.2 AN INCLUSIVE NATIONAL PLAN TO REDUCE VIOLENCE

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children* is limited by its focus only on violence against women and their children. This excludes the diversity of experiences of domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people, 12.2% of whom are at risk of domestic or family violence. The *National Plan* needs to be recast or supplemented with a plan which properly includes LGBTIQ+ people, and addresses particular cohorts with the LGBTIQ+ population at greater risk of domestic and family violence.

The absence of a national plan addressing domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people means there are very few family violence prevention, early intervention, tertiary response, perpetrator interventions or recovery programs developed to address or respond to domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people nationally. This limits the options for those in need of support. Further, while most domestic and family violence prevention is centred around gendered drivers of violence, prevention initiatives do not consider broader forms of discrimination which put LGBTIQ+ populations at further risk of violence such as homophobia, biphobia or transphobia.

5.3 FAMILIES OF ORIGIN REMAIN UNSAFE PLACES FOR MANY LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE

LGBTIQ+ people remain at significant risk of experiencing violence from within their families of origin, with LGBTIQ+ people living exclusively with their families of origin accounting for over 40% of those people at risk of domestic and family violence.

The risk of domestic and family violence originating from families of origin is even greater for LGBTIQ+ people aged under 25, who are already 4.5 times more likely to be at risk of violence than LGBTIQ+ people aged over 25 years. 72% of LGBTIQ+ respondents aged under 25 years who are at risk of domestic and family violence lived exclusively with their families of origin, and 66.3% were not currently in a relationship or dating. This highlights that for young people, families of origin, rather than intimate partners, remain the most likely source of risk for family violence.

There's no safe place at home: Domestic and family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ people

Recognising that families of origin remain among the least safe places for LGBTIQ+ people, requires us to redouble our efforts to address the drivers of that violence, including prejudice and adverse attitudes towards LGBTIQ+ people.

5.4 YOUNG LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE ARE MOST AT RISK

A significant number of young LGBTIQ+ people are today living in homes, or have been forced to return to homes, which are unsafe for them. Young LGBTIQ+ people under 25 years are the most at risk of domestic and family violence within the LGBTIQ+ population, with those who are not out about their sexuality, who are trans and/or gender diverse, and who are unemployed and/or looking for work facing additional and compounding risks.

COVID-19 restrictions have disproportionately impacted service industries within which a high proportion of young people work. Without financial independence, young LGBTIQ+ people will remain living in homes which are unsafe for them, putting them at serious risk.