

Domestic Violence

RESEARCH SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

During the fall of 2023, Utah Women & Leadership Project (UWLP) researchers conducted a statewide study to establish a baseline for public perceptions related to the awareness, understanding, and attitudes about challenges that Utah women and girls face (see [Background & Methods](#) for details). The study was created to support the work of 18 areas of focus (spokes) within the movement called A Bolder Way Forward, which is dedicated to helping more Utah girls and women thrive. One of the 18 areas of focus is domestic violence, and this summary shares findings that illuminate present perspectives and establishes a baseline to track progress in a few key areas.

BACKGROUND

On March 1, 2023, the UWLP released a research snapshot titled "[Domestic Violence Among Utah Women: A 2023 Update](#)." This report captured the limited available data on domestic violence from various sources. We know that one in three Utah women will experience some form of contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in her lifetime. However, it has been difficult to track the status and progress in Utah with the available data. The four domestic violence survey items asked in this new study provide additional insight that can guide changes to improve support and safety for more Utah women, children, and families.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Participants responded to each survey item using a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat disagree, 4=neither disagree nor agree, 5=somewhat agree, 6=agree, 7=strongly agree). For Sample 1 (non-probability), 2,529 Utahns responded to these four questions, and for Sample 2 (representative), there were 650 participants (Total=3,179).

1. Problem: The first survey item was "Domestic violence is a problem in my community." The statistical mean was 5.10 (SD 1.49) for the non-probability sample and 4.36 (SD 1.59) for the representative sample. In the representative sample, 25.5% of respondents disagreed that this is a problem, while another 26.2% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 22.8% somewhat agreed. Only 25.6% of participants firmly agreed domestic violence is a problem in Utah. Since it is indeed a critical problem, there is much work to do to raise awareness. See the demographic findings below.

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

**Gender:* Women's agreement levels were significantly higher than men's (5.05 and 4.45, resp.).

**Age:* The strongest agreement came from age ranges 40 through 64.

**Education:* The more education, the stronger the agreement.

**Marital Status:* Respondents who selected "married but separated" and "divorced" had stronger agreement.

Income: There were no significant differences among income ranges.

**Children:* Participants with children more strongly agreed, and those with older children agreed even more.

**Race & Ethnicity:* The lowest agreement came in the Asian and Pacific Islander categories.

**Religion:* Those who identified as Protestant or agnostic had the highest awareness.

**Employment:* Full-time homemakers had the lowest agreement levels.

**Residency:* Those who had lived in Utah 5 years or fewer had lower agreement.

Counties: There were no significant differences among counties.

2. Emotional Abuse: The second survey item was "When considering domestic violence, emotional abuse is just as serious as physical abuse." The statistical mean was 6.33 (SD 0.95) for the non-probability sample; and 5.95 (SD 1.27) for the representative sample. In combining the results of both samples, 1,983 Utahns (62.4%) responded that they agreed with this statement at some level. Yet, in Sample 2, 51.7% of respondents either disagreed or selected neutral, which indicates that expanding awareness and education on this topic is critically important. See the combined demographic findings below.

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

**Gender:* Women's agreement levels were significantly higher than men's (6.30 and 5.74, resp.).

**Age:* Although the statistical mean was above 6.00 in all ranges, 50–69-year-olds had the strongest agreement.

**Education:* The more education, the stronger the agreement.

**Marital Status:* Married but separated respondents had the lowest mean, but it was still near agreement.

Income: All income categories were similar in agreement levels.

Children: There were no significant differences between those who had children or not and among parents with children in various age categories.

Race & Ethnicity: There were no significant differences among race and ethnic categories.

Religion: There were no significant differences among religious affiliations or activity level selections.

Employment: There were no significant differences in agreement among employment categories.

Residency: There were no agreement differences in years of residency.

**Denotes statistically significant differences within the demographic categories.*

Counties: There were no statistically significant differences among the counties.

3. Resources: The third survey item was “I know where to find domestic violence resources and support in my community.” The statistical mean was 5.23 (SD 1.66) for Sample 1 and 4.92 (SD 1.63) for Sample 2; these hover around “somewhat agree.” For this question, about one-third (34.2%) of Utahns in Sample 2 (representative) were either neutral or disagreed at some level, while about two-thirds (64.8%) agreed. The agreement was slightly higher in Sample 1. See the combined demographic findings below.

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

**Gender:* Women’s agreement levels were significantly higher than men’s (5.17 and 4.82, resp.).

**Age:* Those who selected age ranges between 50 and 69 agreed the most strongly, and those between 18 and 29 the least.

**Education:* The strongest agreement came from “less than high school” and “graduate degree” categories.

Marital Status: There were no significant differences among marital status categories.

**Income:* Respondents who selected household incomes at or above \$150,000, had the strongest agreement.

**Children:* Parents were more likely to agree than nonparents, particularly those who had teens in the home.

**Race & Ethnicity:* The Asian and Pacific Islander respondents had the lowest agreement levels.

**Religion:* Protestants had much higher awareness than other religious affiliation categories. There were no differences among activity levels.

Employment: There were no significant differences by category.

**Residency:* The more years a respondent had lived in Utah, the stronger the agreement with the statement.

**Counties:* The counties with the strongest agreement levels (highest first) included Iron, 10 eastern counties combined (i.e., Grand, Carbon, Sanpete, San Juan, Uintah, Emery, Duchesne, Garfield, Kane, and Wayne), Weber, and Cache.

4. Concrete Steps: The final survey item was “I know how to take concrete steps to help address domestic violence in my community.” The statistical mean was 4.27 (SD 1.72) for Sample 1 and 4.48 (SD 1.64) for Sample 2. This is the only question where the representative sample had higher agreement, although it was still closer to “neither agree nor disagree.” About half (48.9%) of this sample chose neutral or disagree. For either sample, about half of the respondents selected “agree” at some level. See the combined demographic findings below.

DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Gender: Women’s agreement levels were similar to men’s (4.29 and 4.37, resp.).

**Age:* The older the respondent, the more the agreement.

Education: There were no significant differences among categories, but “less than high school” had the highest agreement.

Marital Status: There were no significant differences among the categories.

Income: There were no significant differences by income level.

**Children:* Parents were significantly more likely to agree than were nonparents, and those with multiple children in the 0–5 category were more likely to agree than others.

Race & Ethnicity: There were no significant differences among categories.

**Religion:* The statistical means included (highest to lowest): All Others, Protestants, Catholics, spiritual but no affiliation, Latter-day Saints, agnostics, and atheists. The means ranged from 3.97 to 4.73, so there is a lot of room to help residents know how to make positive change in their own communities.

Employment: There were no significant differences among employment categories.

Residency: There were no significant differences among categories.

**Counties:* Using the representative sample, the only counties with agreement levels at 5.00 and higher included Iron, Summit, and Cache. For the non-probability sample, Grand, San Juan, and Sevier were at 5.00 or higher, with Utah County being particularly low (3.83).

CONCLUSION

This summary highlights key findings related to the four domestic violence questions. Respondents from across the state participated in the study (see [Background & Methods](#) for the demographic details on both samples). This research is useful in understanding the perceptions and attitudes of Utahns on domestic violence.

Through the decades, Utahn’s challenges with domestic violence have not been discussed openly. Yet, the tireless work of hundreds around the state helping survivors of domestic violence and their children has been happening, although many individuals and families seeking shelter have been turned away because of limits to resources and capacity. In the past few years, these serious concerns have surfaced more publicly, particularly with recent, highly visible tragedies. However, this study has found persistent lack of awareness of the problems, resources, and solutions. To keep more Utah women and girls safe, the work around awareness and prevention is just beginning.

Learn more by connecting with the [Utah Domestic Violence Coalition](#).

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