



National Anglican Family Violence Project

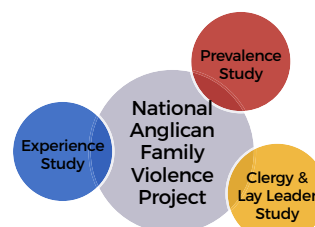
NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study Report

Clergy & Lay Leader Study

April 2021

NCLS Research

One of three study reports from the National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP)



Commissioned by the
Anglican Church of
Australia



NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study Report: Anglican clergy and lay leader attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and practices regarding intimate partner violence

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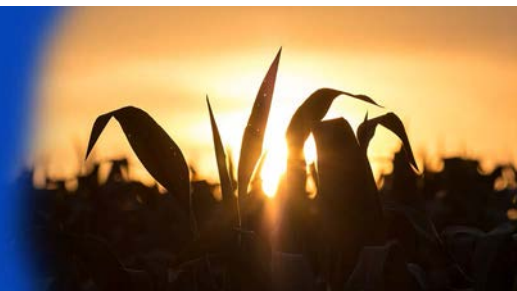
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1 Executive Summary



Clergy & Lay Leader Study

The Clergy and Lay Leader Study is one of three studies that make up the National Anglican Family Violence Project, commissioned by the Anglican General Synod.

(The other two studies are the Prevalence Study and Experience Study). The aim of the project is to help the Anglican Church of Australia to understand the nature and prevalence of intimate partner violence among those with a connection to the Anglican Church.

In this report, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What attitudes and knowledge do Anglican clergy and lay local church leaders have regarding domestic violence?
2. What practices are clergy and lay leaders engaging with in their local church contexts?
3. How equipped are clergy and lay leaders to respond?

1.1 Definitions and study method

Intimate partner violence is defined by the World Health Organisation as behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours (WHO 2010, p.10). Physical violence is only one type of intimate partner violence. It can also be expressed as sexual, psychological, social, emotional, financial, and spiritual violence or abuse. Intimate partner violence involves patterns of sustained intimidation or control as well as individual acts of violence. The terms “violence” and “abuse” are used interchangeably in this report.

The Clergy and Lay Leader Study used a mixed methods approach with two phases. Phase 1 involved focus groups in two dioceses (Southern Queensland and Sydney). These groups helped to inform the development of an online, opt-in survey which was distributed to around 1,400 parishes across Australia. The final number of survey respondents was 827, from 358 parishes, consisting of 383 clergy respondents and 444 lay respondents. These respondents are likely to have been more aware and active in relation to domestic violence issues than clergy and lay leaders across the Anglican Church as a whole.

1.2 Attitudes and knowledge regarding domestic violence

Research Question 1. What attitudes and knowledge do Anglican clergy and lay local church leaders have regarding domestic violence?

Anglican clergy and lay leaders had high levels of awareness of what constitutes domestic violence and of the gendered pattern of domestic violence perpetration. There was sensitivity to a wide array of factors that might contribute to the use of domestic violence against a partner.

Clergy and lay leaders were well informed about breadth of domestic violence.

Clergy and lay leaders who responded to the survey were well informed about domestic violence. Almost all understood not only physical and sexual violence but also controlling behaviours and psychological abuse to constitute domestic violence. While clergy were more likely to indicate this awareness than an earlier survey of the Australian population (NCAS, 2017), it is possible that the increasingly high profile of domestic violence in the Australian media may have improved general knowledge and understanding.

Clergy and lay leaders understood the gendered pattern of domestic violence.

The large majority of clergy and lay leaders thought that it is more often men than women who commit domestic violence. This view aligns with wider evidence from various sources that it is mainly men, or men more often, who commit acts of domestic violence (ABS, 2017; Cox, 2015; Webster, et al. 2018).

Clergy and lay leaders were sensitive to the wide array of factors that may contribute to domestic violence.

Factors considered by a majority of church leaders to be present a lot of the time were one partner wanting to dominate or control the other, having an alcohol problem, and having a narcissistic personality. Further, at least three quarters of clergy thought that an array of factors may lead people to use domestic violence towards their partner at least some of the time: one partner wanting to control or dominate the other, having an alcohol problem, having a narcissistic personality, impact of family dynamics from childhood, feeling insecure, lack of control in other parts of life, a cultural view that men should take control in relationships, the way violence is shown in the media, pressure on men to be tough, social isolation, having anxiety or depression, lack of employment opportunities in the community.

Clergy and lay leaders were aware of the widespread nature of the problem of domestic violence in Australia, but less aware of its prevalence in church communities.

Nine in ten clergy and lay leaders agreed that domestic violence is common in Australia – indicating an awareness of the widespread nature of the problem. However, around six in ten clergy and lay leaders agreed that domestic violence is just as common in churches as it is in the wider community. A view that domestic violence is less common in the churches is challenged by evidence from the NAFVP Prevalence Study which found that people who experience domestic violence are part of Anglican Church communities in similar or higher proportions than the wider community.

Views on gender roles within marriage and the family varied strongly by tradition.

Questions about attitudes towards marriage and gender roles were included in the survey because they are important for understanding the dynamics of domestic violence in a Christian context. Church and the institution of marriage are deeply interwoven, particularly for churchgoers. Most clergy, across church traditions, agreed with the statement that “marriage is a sacred covenant which is important to preserve”. However, church tradition plays a strong role with regard to views on gender roles within marriage and the family. The large majority of Anglo-Catholic clergy agreed that “there should be no gender restrictions on the roles men and women can fulfill in the church, home, and society” and disagreed with statements that dualised the roles of men and women in marriage. In contrast, the large majority of clergy from evangelical and reformed traditions agreed that “the husband is the head of the wife (as Christ is the head of the church), and the wife should submit to the husband”. However, endorsement of headship tended not to extend to “control” by the husband; around a third of evangelical and reformed clergy agreed that “men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household”, while a third were neutral and unsure and a third disagreed.

Nine in ten clergy felt that misuse of Scripture by the abuser is a factor in domestic violence in Christian families a lot of the time or some of the time.

Misuse of Scripture by the abuser was viewed to be implicated at least some of the time by nine in ten clergy, while the theology of male headship was a factor at least some of the time for eight in ten clergy (seven in ten evangelicals, nine in ten Anglo-Catholics). Yet, just 10% of evangelical clergy viewed headship as a factor a lot of the time, compared with 39% who viewed misuse of Scripture as a factor a lot of the time.

The survey was not intended to assert or assess matters of doctrinal correctness. What is more at issue is how Scripture is misused by those who perpetrate abuse. For example, however unintended it may be, teachings related to marriage, gender and forgiveness may be propagated by church leaders in ways that extend the cycle of domestic violence. Just as some teachings may be implicated in the cycle of violence, others can help victims to break out of that cycle. (See Experience Study report for more detail).

1.3 Practices in local church contexts

Research question 2: What practices are clergy and lay leaders engaging with in their local church contexts?

The survey explored practices undertaken both by individual leaders and by their churches more generally. Actions may be undertaken to build a proactive culture around domestic violence prevention and response, or in relation to specific domestic violence situations.

There was widespread agreement among clergy that domestic violence is an issue that should be discussed in church and that local churches should do more to raise awareness of domestic violence.

Around seven in ten clergy reported that their church prayed for victims of domestic violence in the previous 12 months. A minority of clergy (20% to 45%) reported often or sometimes talking about domestic violence in public settings, including preaching. According to clergy, other actions by churches, such as display of posters and leaflets, donations of money or goods or working with local organisations, occurred in around a third to half of churches. Fewer lay leaders reported these actions in their churches.

Most Anglican clergy had been aware of victims of abuse in their churches. The most common action by clergy was to provide pastoral and spiritual care to the victim, followed by referring the victim to support services.

Three quarters of clergy had been aware of people in their churches who were victims of domestic violence, compared with approximately half who were aware of perpetrators. Most clergy felt that having women on the pastoral team equips a church to better respond to domestic violence. Most clergy surveyed had dealt with specific domestic violence situations as part of their ministry. The most common action, used by almost all clergy, was to provide pastoral and spiritual care to the victim, followed by referring the victim to support services. Around half of clergy offered counselling to the victim, talked to the perpetrator and assisted with a safety plan. More interventionist actions such as contacting the police, providing the rectory as a refuge, or intervening to keep children safe were undertaken by a quarter of clergy.

When asked about clergy responsibilities when ministering to someone who has been abused by their partner, three in ten clergy agreed that clergy should provide couples counselling.

Although not typical, these actions and views are concerning as victims of domestic violence, and services that support them, maintain that couples counselling is ineffective and unsafe as it fails to address the unequal power in an abusive relationship and can place the victim at increased risk.

Among those who have dealt with domestic violence situations in ministry, the majority of church leaders identified a negative personal impact, such as fatigue and manipulation.

Dealing with domestic violence situations resulted in some negative impacts for most clergy, with fatigue being particularly common. Four in ten said they had experienced manipulation from a perpetrator of domestic violence. Domestic violence situations may be protracted and complex, and especially if both perpetrator and victim are a part of the same church. The impacts on clergy may be considerable.

Two thirds of clergy had not collaborated with clergy/leaders from other churches in relation to domestic violence

Collaboration with clergy and leaders from other churches in relation to domestic violence was atypical. This survey question was non-specific and it is unclear what clergy were reporting on here. It could be as diverse as collaboration on educational programs, seeking information and advice from others, and perhaps even passing on information about particular domestic violence situations – although the latter may be restricted due to confidentiality requirements and considerations. Three in ten had made contact with the diocese (informed or sought help) in relation to a specific domestic violence situation.

1.4 How equipped are clergy and lay leaders to respond?

Research Question 3: How equipped are clergy and lay leaders to respond?

Although, on the whole, clergy were knowledgeable, experienced and trained in domestic violence situations, their confidence in their personal capacity to respond to domestic violence was low to moderate.

Our respondents were, on the whole, knowledgeable about domestic violence in general terms, and most of the clergy had responded to specific domestic violence situations. A majority of clergy had received specific training. However, confidence in their personal capacity to respond to domestic violence was low to moderate. Confidence was only a little higher among clergy who had been trained. This survey did not ask clergy to specify the content of the training that they had received nor to evaluate that training, but the present results suggest that in general, the training might not have improved the practical skills of the clergy.

Although few leadership teams had been trained, there was moderate confidence in the churches' readiness to respond.

Few leadership teams had received training and a minority of lay respondents had been trained and their confidence was relatively low. However, clergy respondents were a little more likely to agree that their team knew how to respond to domestic violence situations than they themselves did personally. This might reflect an increased confidence in a group of people rather than relying on a single person.

Clergy and lay leaders had moderate levels of confidence to refer victims and perpetrators to support services

Almost all clergy felt that it was their responsibility when ministering to a victim of domestic violence to help them to access support services, and most who had dealt with domestic violence situations had done so. Only four in ten clergy felt very confident to refer victims, with a further 48% feeling somewhat confident. Levels of confidence were lower among lay leaders.

Around four in ten clergy were positive about the support received from the diocese, whereas three in ten were less positive.

Familiarity with resources (e.g. documents, training, support) from the diocese was moderate. Ratings of diocesan support for churches to respond to domestic violence was fairly evenly spread from excellent support to very poor support. Familiarity with resources from other parts of the Anglican church or from other Christian groups was lower.

Views most commonly expressed about the role of the bishop when a clergyperson is a victim was to provide pastoral support, and when a clergyperson is a perpetrator, to carry out discipline accordance with church procedures. In both cases, the second most common response was that the bishop should seek the involvement of organisations and services outside of the church. These responses were taken from an open text format and represent what came first to mind.

Views on the bishop's role in responding to domestic violence situations involving clergy were sought in this survey through open text questions. This format of question can be used to gauge what is top of

mind for people on a given topic. When a clergyperson is a victim of domestic violence, the most views most commonly expressed were first, that the bishop should provide pastoral support, and second, that they should seek the involvement of organisations and services specifically designed to deal with such situations. In cases where a clergyperson is a perpetrator of domestic violence, the views most commonly expressed were that, first, the bishop should carry out discipline in accordance with church procedures, and second, that they should seek the involvement of organisations and services outside of the church.

1.5 Conclusion

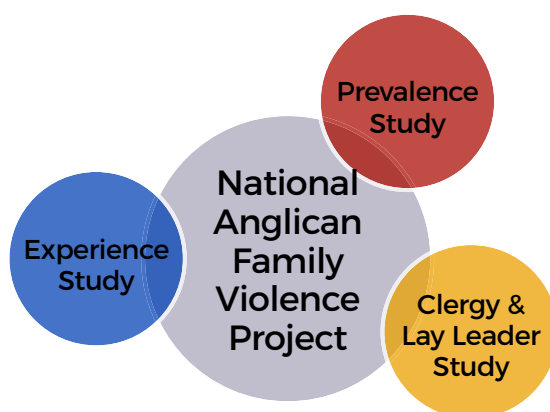
In conclusion, levels of awareness and knowledge about domestic violence were high among the respondents to this survey. A greater awareness of the ways in which church teachings around marriage, gender and forgiveness may contribute to the dynamics of domestic violence in a Christian context would be helpful. Less than half of participating churches had taken proactive action through measures such as preaching and working with domestic violence organisations. Most clergy, but few lay leaders, had dealt with specific domestic violence situations. Yet, levels of confidence in dealing with such situations were low or moderate, including among those who had received training about domestic violence. On the whole, these results indicate that more could be done to support churches to take a proactive role on domestic violence as well as to train and support clergy and people in leadership, with a focus especially on concrete ways to respond to domestic violence situations.

2 Introduction



The Anglican Church of Australia (ACA) commissioned NCLS Research to undertake the National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP) to help the church to understand the nature and prevalence of IPV (recognising it as a significant part of family violence) among those with a connection to the Anglican Church. This was done through the Standing Committee of the Anglican Church of Australia and its Family Violence Working Group

Defining intimate partner violence (IPV): In this project, IPV is defined as violence between partners who are or were in a married or de facto relationship or a dating relationship. Violence may be of various kinds – including physical, sexual, psychological, spiritual, emotional. It is not only individual violent acts, but also patterns of sustained violence wherein a person tries to intimidate and control their partner or former partner.



The National Anglican Family Violence Project comprises three studies:

- Prevalence Study: Prevalence of intimate partner violence among Australians who identify as Anglican.
- Clergy and Lay Leader Study: Attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and practices regarding domestic and family violence among Anglican clergy
- Experience Study: The nature of experiences of intimate partner violence for those with a connection with Anglican churches.

This report is focussed on one of the three studies: the Clergy and Lay Leader Study. This Study focuses on the attitudes and practices regarding domestic violence among Anglican clergy and local church leaders. It used a mixed methods approach with two phases: focus groups followed by an online survey.

NAFVP Prevalence Study

Prevalence Study

The Prevalence Study assessed the prevalence of IPV among Anglicans and among regular church-attending Anglicans (people who identify as Anglican and who attend services of worship at least monthly) by means of an online survey of over 2,000 men and women aged 18+, conducted in November-December 2019.

See NAFVP Prevalence Study Report.

NAFVP Experience Study

Experience Study

The Experience Study focuses on the nature of experiences of those who have been personally impacted by IPV and who have, or previously had, a connection with the Anglican Church. It uses a mixed methods approach with two phases. First, an initial online scoping survey, (Sep 2020 to Jan 2021) was completed by 305 people who fitted the criteria. This was followed by 20 individual in-depth qualitative face to face interviews.

See NAFVP Experience Study Report.

2.1 Rationale for the Clergy and Lay Leader Study

Unpublished results from the 2016 National Church Life Survey (a survey of 20 denominations conducted by NCLS Research) suggest that most Australian clergy have been called upon to respond to domestic and family violence situations. However, there is little research on what these responses have entailed. The testimonies given by women to Baird and Gleeson (2017a, 2017b, 2018) indicate that clergy have not always acted in ways that protect the safety of those who have experienced domestic and family violence.

In studies conducted internationally, people who have experienced domestic violence have reported mixed responses from churches; some indicating that the church has helped them, but others reporting negative experiences (e.g. Popescu et al 2009). In some Christian contexts, particular beliefs about gender roles and families promulgated by clergy present risks to the safety of women: the principle of forgiveness of wrongdoing, a mandate for submission of wives to husbands, and the sanctity of marriage (Drumm et al. 2018). In various studies, clergy have themselves reported feeling poorly equipped to deal with domestic and family violence (e.g. Skiff et al. 2008). Forming bridges between churches and secular support services is emphasised in the literature as an important way to equip clergy to better assist both those who have experienced violence and those who have perpetrated it (e.g. Nason-Clark 2009).

An informed understanding of current attitudes and practices of Australian Anglican clergy is key to developing policies, training, communications and other interventions that support clergy and churches to effectively respond to, and help prevent, domestic violence in their contexts.

2.2 Research questions

1. What attitudes and knowledge do Anglican clergy and lay local church leaders have regarding domestic violence?
2. What practices are clergy and lay leaders engaging with in their local church contexts?
3. How equipped are clergy and lay leaders to respond?

2.3 Expected outcomes

The target outcome for this study is to understand how Anglican clergy and local church leaders currently engage with issues of domestic and family violence in the context of their local church, and thereby help to guide church policy and practice in relation to equipping clergy and lay leaders to respond to these issues.

2.4 Definitions

There are no generally agreed or accepted standards for defining what constitutes violence. Terms related to violence within families include domestic abuse, domestic violence, family violence and intimate partner violence. The term 'domestic violence' has been commonly used in the community and is typically used in surveys of social attitudes. The terms family violence and intimate partner violence are now commonly used in policy and research. The term 'domestic abuse' is becoming more widespread as it may be more effective in highlighting that violence is not limited only to acts of physical violence.

Defining intimate partner violence: In this project, IPV is defined as violence between intimate partners – those who are or were in a married or de facto relationship or a dating relationship. IPV is a subset of family violence, which refers to violence between family members, such as intimate partners, parents and children, siblings and extended family members (AIHW, 2018). IPV is defined by the World Health Organisation as: “behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours” (WHO 2010, p.10) and similarly the Australian National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey as: “any behaviour by a man or a woman within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm to those in the relationship” (ABS 2018). Typically, one partner tries to exert power and control over the other, usually through fear (AIHW 2018).

Behaviour toward the victim can include the following (AIHW 2018):

- Physical violence: slaps, hits, punches, being pushed down stairs or across a room, choking and burns, as well as the use of knives, firearms and other weapons.
- Sexual violence: rape, sexual abuse, unwanted sexual advances or harassment, being forced to watch or engage in pornography, sexual coercion, having sexual intercourse out of fear of what a partner might do
- Psychological and emotional abuse: intimidation, belittling, humiliation, and the effects of financial, social and other non-physical forms of abuse. This may also include “gaslighting”, where the abuser attempts to make the victim doubt their perceptions, thoughts and sanity (Gleeson, 2018). Spiritual abuse is a form of psychological and emotional abuse that is specific to religious/spiritual contexts (Oakley et al, 2018).
- Coercive control: isolating victims from family and friends, controlling access to finances, monitoring their movements, restricting access to information and assistance.
- Threats of violence: against the victim, children and others who are important to the victim.

This is not an exhaustive list of all possible behaviours that may constitute IPV.

In summary, IPV:

- Is a subset of a broader concept known as “family violence”, which concerns violence between family members.
- Is between intimate partners: those who are or were in a married or de facto relationship or a dating relationship.
- Is multi-faceted: Physical violence is only one type of violence. Violence can be expressed in various ways – including physical, sexual, psychological, social, emotional, financial, and spiritual.
- Is about individual acts and sustained patterns: It is not only individual violent acts, but also patterns of sustained violence wherein a person tries to intimidate and control their partner or former partner.
- Is used synonymously in this project with the terms “domestic violence” and “domestic abuse”.

Limits of project scope: This project had to have some limits in its scope in order to conduct meaningful and effective research. So, the project does not address:

- Violence between people who are not intimate partners
- The abuse of children (anyone under 18 years of age)
- The abuse of elders
- Violence within specific minority groups such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

This project **DOES** cover:

- Violence within the context of an intimate partnership. i.e. marriage, de facto, or a dating relationship
- Men and women
- People 18 years and over
- People who have a current or historic link to the Anglican Church

This project **DOES NOT** cover:

- Any violence beyond intimate partner violence
- Child abuse
- Elder abuse
- People who do not have a current or historic link to the Anglican Church

3 Methodology



The Clergy and Lay Leader Study used a mixed methods approach with two phases: focus groups followed by an online survey.

3.1 Ethical conduct and trauma-informed research practices

The research has been undertaken in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC, ARC, & Universities Australia, 2018) and with the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee of Charles Sturt University. Measures undertaken to ensure the ethical conduct of the research included peer review of study design and instruments, fully informing all potential participants about the studies, and recruiting them independent of the Anglican Church. Only participants who had given their full and informed consent to take part were included in the study.

Further, researchers were trained in trauma-informed approaches to research. This involved being aware of the widespread and lasting impacts of trauma and recognizing the signs and symptoms of trauma in all of those involved in the research study (both participants and researchers). Giving a sense of agency to participants at all points of the process was critical. Measures were put in place to protect the safety of participants and researchers and to encourage self-care.

3.2 Phase 1: Focus groups

The purpose of the focus groups was to assist with framing and design of the survey. A variety of survey questions on knowledge about and attitudes towards domestic violence already existed prior to this project (e.g. National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey). Therefore, the focus groups discussion concentrated primarily on ministry practices and approaches in relation to domestic violence.

3.2.1 Participants

Two focus groups were held in different dioceses. Participants were Anglican clergy in local congregations/parishes. The dioceses were selected to cover different contexts, in terms of theological approaches of clergy and churches, diocesan-level policy responses to domestic violence, and locality (regional and city):

- Diocese of Sydney, NSW (metropolitan), conducted in December 2019
- Diocese of Southern Queensland (metropolitan and regional), conducted in February 2020.

A third group was planned for the Diocese of Gippsland, Victoria (small regional), but was cancelled due to limited numbers in the diocese.

To recruit focus group participants, the chair of the Anglican Family Violence Working Group wrote to the bishop or archbishop in each of the three dioceses to request their assistance. Using invitational material provided by researchers, diocesan contacts invited clergy within the diocese to provide an expression of interest in being involved via an online form hosted on the NCLS Research project website where people could provide their name, church name, role at church, age bracket, gender and a brief statement about why they wish to be involved. NCLS Research then recruited participants independently of the diocese.

Appendices A and B contain samples of the text in letters and on websites used to invite people to take part in focus groups. A participant information sheet is contained in Appendix C. The short online survey to express interest is in Appendix D and the consent form is in Appendix E.

3.2.2 Conduct of focus groups

The topics for discussion were as follows:

- The seriousness and causes of domestic violence
- The role of clergy and other church leaders in addressing domestic violence
- Actions taken by clergy and other leaders to address domestic violence
- Resources to assist clergy and leaders to respond to domestic violence (policies, frameworks, training, local services)

The duration of each focus group was two hours. The focus group guide is provided in Appendix F. Care for participants' wellbeing was upheld at all times and participant distress protocols were developed for the research (Appendix G). A trained counsellor was present at the group discussion whose dedicated role was to observe the group interactions for signs of distress and to intervene if necessary. Transcripts of focus groups discussions were transcribed and data made anonymous or de-identified in all outputs to ensure confidentiality (Appendix H).

3.2.3 Data analysis

The focus group recordings were analysed to identify attitudinal themes and specific examples of ministry practices and approaches within Anglican clergy and lay leaders. This data assisted with framing and design of the online survey. Selected quotes are also provided in this report to illustrate and provide colour to the results from the online survey.

3.3 Phase 2: Online survey

An online survey of approximately 30 minutes duration was the main component of the study. The survey enabled an assessment of knowledge, opinions and practices of clergy and other lay leaders in relation to domestic violence, and how these vary across the Anglican churches.

To reduce biases associated with an online-only survey, a paper survey option was also available for participants on request. A request for a paper survey was received from one parish, but no paper forms were returned.

3.3.1 Participants

The participants in the survey were:

- Anglican clergy in local congregations/parishes, and
- Lay people in identified leadership positions within the local congregation who have a particular interest in issues concerning domestic violence.

The recruitment process was as follows. Over the period from May to August 2020, a series of letters and emails were sent to around 1,400 Anglican parishes using contact details for a 'location' (congregation or worship centre) in each parish, as held in the NCLS Research churches database. Where possible, missing email addresses were found and incorrect postal addresses were amended. A sample of the letter signed by the Primate and Chair of the Family Violence Working Group is contained in Appendix I and the participant information statement in Appendix J.

Initially, a random sample of parishes was approached for participation. However, response rates indicated the need to increase the sampling to achieve the target of approximately 350 clergy responses that was set for this survey. Ultimately, we attempted to contact all Australian Anglican parishes listed in the NCLS Research church database with an initial invitation and a follow-up. Recipients were asked to send the invitation to participate in the survey to clergy and lay leaders across the parish. The survey was intended for Anglican clergy in active ministry, and lay people in identified parish leadership positions who have a particular interest in issues concerning domestic violence.

We acknowledge that, due to shortcomings with available contact details, not all parishes or congregations received the invitation to take part. However, the purposes of the study were met with this extensive recruitment drive. Overall, at least one person from some 26% of parishes who were approached participated in the survey. This was an opt-in survey and the results cannot be assumed to be representative of the broader populations of Anglican clergy and lay leaders from which they were drawn. It is likely that the results for clergy as well as lay leaders are biased towards those who have an interest in the topic.

The final number of respondents was 827, from 358 parishes. This consisted of:

- 383 clergy respondents, two-thirds of whom were rectors, vicars or senior ministers, from 300 parishes, and accounting for approximately half of the clergy serving in these parishes.
- 444 lay respondents, a quarter of whom were wardens and a fifth of whom were other parish councillors, from 179 parishes. Parish councillor respondents account for approximately 7% of the parish councillors serving in the parishes that participated in the project.

Some 200 participants were the only respondent from their parish. However, in other parishes, a cluster of people took part in the survey. For example, in eight parishes, 10 or more people took part (see Table 1).

As shown in Table 2, there was participation from all dioceses except for the Diocese of Rockhampton. Parish participation was highest in the Diocese of Adelaide, where at least one person from 45% of parishes participated. The diocese with the highest number of respondents was the Diocese of Sydney, with 252 of the 827 respondents (30%).

Table 1: Clustering of respondents by parish

Number of respondents per parish	Parishes	Respondents %	% Respondents
1	200	200	24.2%
2-3	97	229	27.7%
4-5	31	134	16.2%
6-9	22	157	19.0%
10+	8	107	12.9%
Total	358	827	100.0%

Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (parishes n = 376, clergy and lay leaders n = 827).

Table 2: Parish participation rate and clustering of respondents by diocese

Diocese	Participating parishes	Total parishes in diocese	Parish participation rate	All respondents	Clergy respondents
Adelaide	27	60	45%	88	34
Armidale	8	33	24%	10	6
Ballarat	6	26	23%	6	4
Bathurst	2	32	6%	3	0
Bendigo	14	35	40%	39	19
Bunbury	11	36	31%	20	11
Canberra & Goulburn	19	64	30%	28	21
Gippsland	6	33	18%	7	6
Grafton	11	28	39%	14	9
Melbourne	42	210	20%	128	46
Newcastle	13	66	20%	18	13
North Queensland	3	53	6%	3	3
Northern Territory	1	16	6%	1	1
North West Australia	5	20	25%	9	7
Perth	16	107	15%	27	12
Riverina	3	25	12%	3	2
Rockhampton	0	22	0%	0	0
South Queensland	48	135	36%	109	43
Sydney	94	280	34%	252	112
Tasmania	13	49	27%	31	14
The Murray	5	22	23%	9	6
Wangaratta	7	27	26%	13	8
Willochra	3	18	17%	8	5
Grand Total	357	1397	26%	826	382

Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (parishes n = 358, clergy and lay leaders n = 826) and NCLS Research churches database.

3.3.2 Instrument

The survey included questions on:

- Perception of the prevalence and seriousness of domestic violence in the churches
- Views about what constitutes domestic violence and what causes it
- Views about the role of clergy and other church leaders in addressing domestic violence
- Actions currently taken by clergy and other leaders to respond to domestic violence
- Awareness of and familiarity with policies, frameworks, training, services and other resources to help churches to respond to domestic violence
- Evaluation of how equipped clergy and leaders feel to address domestic violence

Further items were included in order to assess sample characteristics and how views and practices vary across the Anglican churches:

- Demographic information of the clergy person/leader (e.g. age, gender, country of birth, education)
- Theological tradition of the clergy person/leader (e.g. liberal, evangelical, Anglo-Catholic)
- Beliefs of the clergy person/leader regarding gender roles in the family and the church
- Details of local church leadership (number and type of clergy and lay leaders).

See Appendix K for the survey instrument.

3.3.3 Data analysis

Data were extracted to SPSS statistical software for analysis, which included general frequencies and cross-tabulations. Some comparisons by church tradition – evangelical, reformed and Anglo-Catholic were conducted. Open text responses were coded using content analysis procedures.

4 Survey Sample Characteristics



4.1 Clergy characteristics

Around half of the clergy sample were aged between 50 to 69 years of age, 71% were male, 28% were female and 0.5% other gender. The majority had a postgraduate qualification (55%) with a further 35% having a bachelor degree. Nearly eight in ten (77%) were born in Australia.

Two thirds were in a ministry role as rector, vicar, senior minister and a further 19% were priests in a ministry team in the parish, but not the rector/vicar/senior minister. Some 7% were deacons/deaconesses and 4% were curates. There were 8% of respondents who held a clergy role other than rector, priest, curate, or deacon.

There was a spread with regard to the number of years ordained: 14% had been ordained five years or less; 18% has been ordained six to ten years; 34% had been ordained 11 to 20 years and 34% for more than 20 years.

All respondents were asked whether they identified with various approaches to matters of faith and could select up to two. Table 3 shows the selections of clergy respondents. Some six in 10 (59%) identified as evangelical and 28% as reformed. Almost all who identified as reformed also identified as evangelical. A quarter (26%) identified as Anglo-Catholic.

Other details about the clergy sample and the lay leader sample can be found in Appendix L.

Table 3: Clergy identification with approaches to matters of faith

Approach	%
Anglo-Catholic or Catholic	26.2%
Charismatic	6.8%
Evangelical	59.1%
Liberal	10.0%
Moderate	9.2%
Pentecostal	0.0%
Progressive	9.2%
Reformed	28.3%
Traditionalist	2.6%
Do not identify	8.1%

Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 381).

4.2 Parish characteristics

Participants in this study were from a diverse range of parishes. Some 20% of parishes comprised a single congregation, 44% were parishes at a single site with multiple congregations and 36% were parishes located in multiple sites with multiple congregations.

Leadership structures of the parishes were as follows: 51% were led by a team of ordained and lay leaders and 39% by a single ordained leader. Some 7% were led by a team of ordained leaders, 2% by a team of lay leaders and 0.6% by a single lay leader.

The size of parishes varied from very small, with fewer than 25 attenders, to very large, with more than 500 attenders (See Table 4).

Table 4: Size of parishes

Size of parish	%
Up to 24 attenders	10.9
25 to 49 attenders	21.6
50 to 99 attenders	33.9
100 to 199 attenders	18.7
200 to 499 attenders	10.6
500 to 999 attenders	4.3

Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (parishes n = 376).

5 Attitudes and knowledge



The first research question for this study was “What attitudes and knowledge do Anglican clergy and lay local church leaders have regarding domestic violence?”. In this part we review results on

- Attitudes to marriage and roles in the family
- Knowledge about what constitutes domestic violence
- Knowledge about who commits domestic violence
- Views about factors associated with domestic violence.

5.1 Marriage and roles in the family

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements (response options were strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree):

Marriage is a sacred covenant that is always important to preserve

The husband is the head of the wife (as Christ is the head of the church), and the wife should submit to the husband

There should be no gender restrictions on the roles men and women can fulfill in the church, home, and society

Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship

Men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household

Results are shown in Figure 1. The vast majority (87%) of clergy agreed that “marriage is a sacred covenant which is always important to preserve” (48% strongly agree, 39% agree). Lay leaders were similarly strong in their endorsement of the statement (89%).

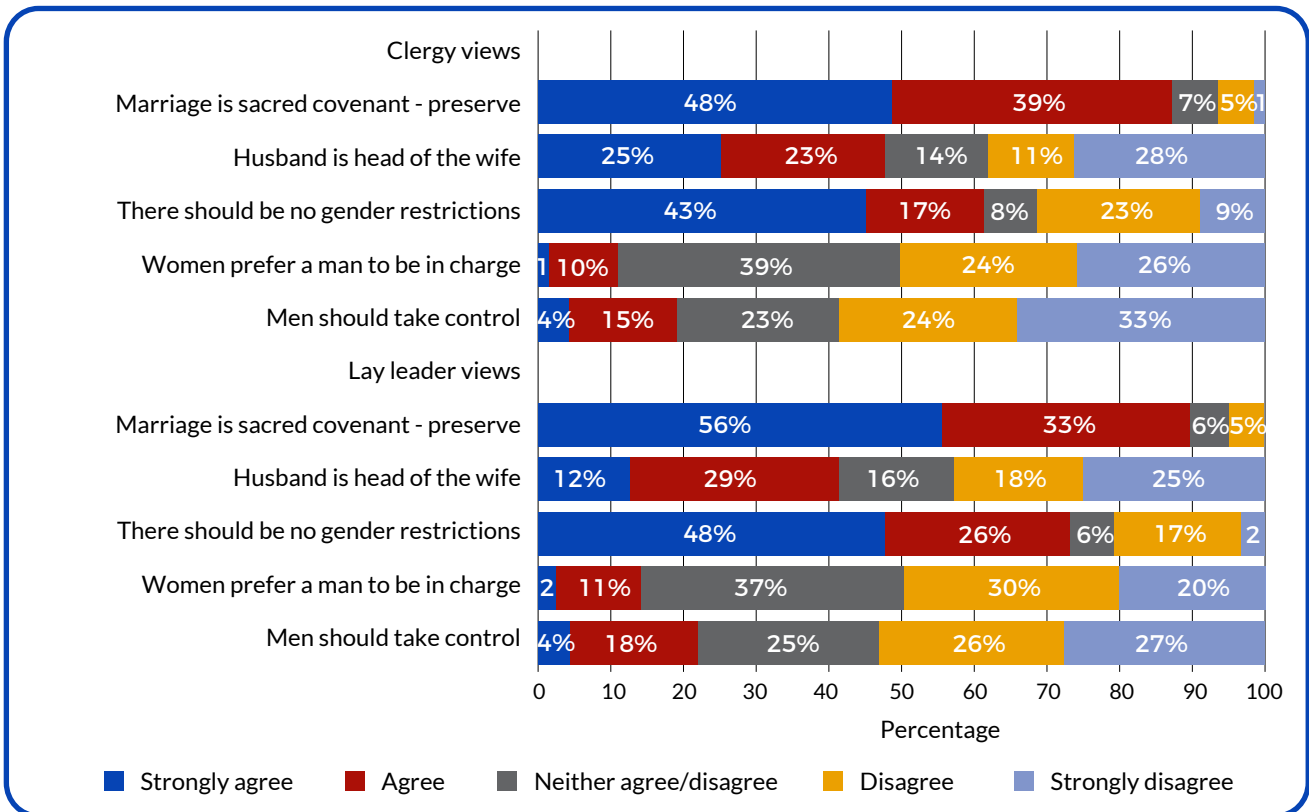
Just under half (47%) of clergy agreed that “the husband is the head of the wife (as Christ is the head of the church), and the wife should submit to the husband”, with slightly fewer lay leaders agreeing (41%).

The majority of leaders agreed that “There should be no gender restrictions on the roles men and women can fulfill in the church, home, and society” (60% of clergy, 74% of lay leaders).

A majority of leaders disagreed with the notion that “women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship” (51% of clergy, 50% of lay leaders).

A majority of leaders disagreed with the notion that “men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household” (57% of clergy, 53% of lay leaders).

Figure 1: Views re roles in marriage and family: Anglican clergy and lay leaders



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay leader n = 444)

5.1.1 Church tradition differences

When it came to church tradition, clergy who identified as Anglo-Catholic were slightly less likely to endorse the statement that “marriage is a sacred covenant which is always important to preserve” (78%) whereas those from evangelical and reformed traditions were more likely to do so (96%). The differences were stronger regarding matters of roles for men and women. Some 76% of evangelical and 91% of reformed clergy agreed with the statement concerning headship, compared with just 9% of Anglo-Catholic clergy. Six in 10 Anglo-Catholic clergy disagreed. Some 38% of evangelical clergy and 16% of reformed clergy thought there should be no gender restrictions on the roles that women could take in the church, home and society, compared with 93% of Anglo-Catholic clergy. The differences were not quite as marked for the statement “Men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household” (31% agreement among evangelicals, 36% reformed, and 6% Anglo-Catholic. Approximately a third of evangelical and reformed clergy disagreed with this latter statement, compared with 84% of Anglo-Catholics.

Key finding:

Most clergy and lay leaders agree that marriage is a sacred covenant which is important to preserve. Views on gender roles in relation to marriage and the family varied significantly in line with different church traditions.

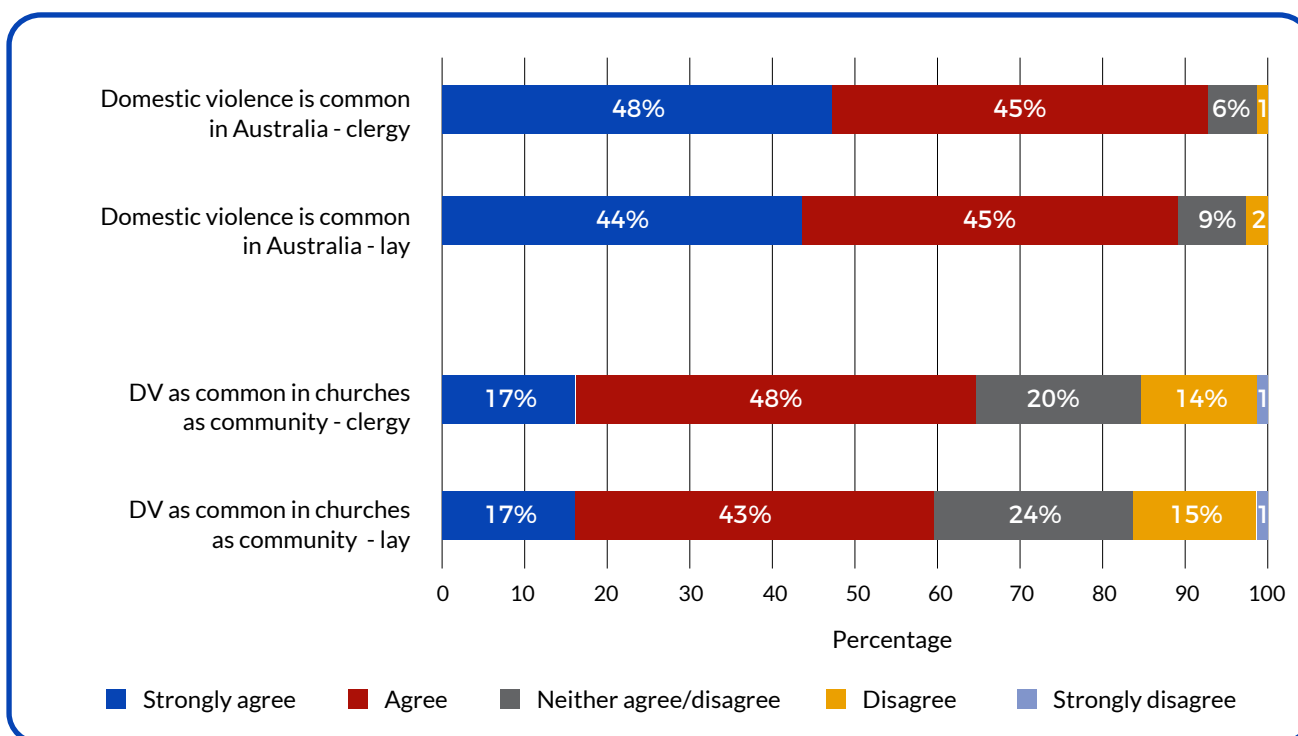
5.2 Attitudes regarding domestic violence and the churches

Clergy and lay leaders were asked whether or not they agreed with the following statements:

- Domestic violence is common in Australia
- Domestic violence is just as common in churches as it is in the wider community

While most Anglican clergy (93%) and lay leaders (89%) agreed that domestic violence is common in Australia, fewer respondents believed that it is as common in the churches as it is in the wider community although a majority still held this view (63% of clergy, 60% of lay leaders, Figure 2).

Figure 2: Views regarding factors in domestic violence: Anglican clergy and lay leaders



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay leader n = 444)

Key finding:

Nine in ten clergy and lay leaders agreed that domestic violence is common in Australia. However, around six in ten agreed that domestic violence is just as common in churches as it is in the wider community.

5.3 Knowledge about what constitutes domestic violence

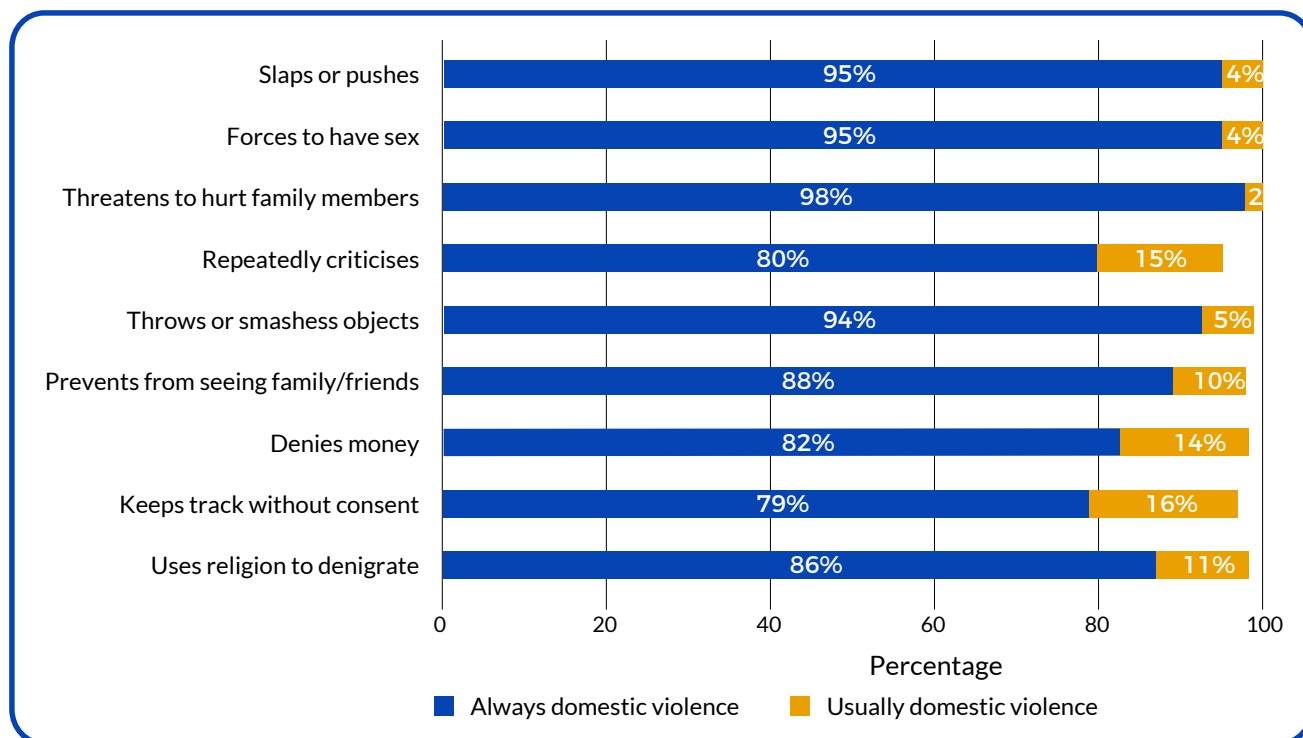
In the Clergy and Lay Leader Study, respondents were asked to indicate which of the listed behaviours they regarded as domestic violence. All these descriptions were drawn from the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS 2017), with the exception of the final item, which addresses spiritual abuse.

One partner in a domestic relationship:

- slaps or pushes the other partner to cause harm or fear
- forces the other partner to have sex
- tries to scare or control the other partner by threatening to hurt other family members
- repeatedly criticises the other one to make them feel bad or useless
- throws or smashes objects near the other partner to frighten or threaten them
- controls the social life of the other partner by preventing them from seeing family and friends
- tries to control the other partner by denying them money
- repeatedly keeps track of the other's location, calls or activities through their mobile phone or other electronic devices without their consent
- uses religion to denigrate, manipulate or control the other partner.

The large majority of clergy indicated that each of the listed behaviours was always domestic violence, and at least nine in 10 regarded each factor as always or usually domestic violence (Figure 3). Detailed responses for both clergy and lay leaders are found in Appendix M.

Figure 3: Clergy views on what is regarded as domestic violence



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383). Response options were 'Yes, always domestic violence', 'Yes, usually domestic violence', 'Yes, sometimes domestic violence', 'No, not domestic violence'. (See Appendix M for lay leader views).

5.3.1 A comparison with the views of all Australians

Most of the listed factors were drawn from survey questions in the NCAS (2017). There was a gap between the views of our respondents and NCAS respondents on behaviours related to psychological violence and coercive control, with NAFVP respondents more likely than NCAS respondents to think that they comprised domestic violence (See Table 5).

Table 5: Knowledge about what constitutes domestic violence: clergy and lay leaders vs all Australians

Behaviour regarded as domestic violence always, usually or some of the time.*	2020 NAFVP clergy	2020 NAFVP lay leaders	2017 NCAS
	%	%	%
Slaps or pushes	100	100	97
Forces to have sex	100	100	97
Threatens to hurt family members	100	100	98
Repeatedly criticises	99	99	92
Throws or smashes objects	100	100	96
Prevents from seeing family/friends	99	99	91
Denies money	99	99	81
Keeps track without consent	99	98	84
Uses religion to denigrate	99	98	NA

Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay leader n = 444) and 2017 NCAS (Webster et. al, 2018).

*Responses for 'not domestic violence' not shown

5.4 Knowledge about who commits domestic violence

Anglican clergy and lay leaders were asked: "Do you think that it is mainly men, mainly women or both men and women that commit acts of domestic violence?"

More than nine in ten clergy (93%) thought that it is more often men than women who commit domestic violence. Results for lay leaders are similar and are shown in Figure 4.

This view aligns with wider evidence from various sources that confirm that it is mainly men, or men more often, who commit acts of domestic violence (ABS, 2017; Cox, 2015; Webster, et al. 2018).

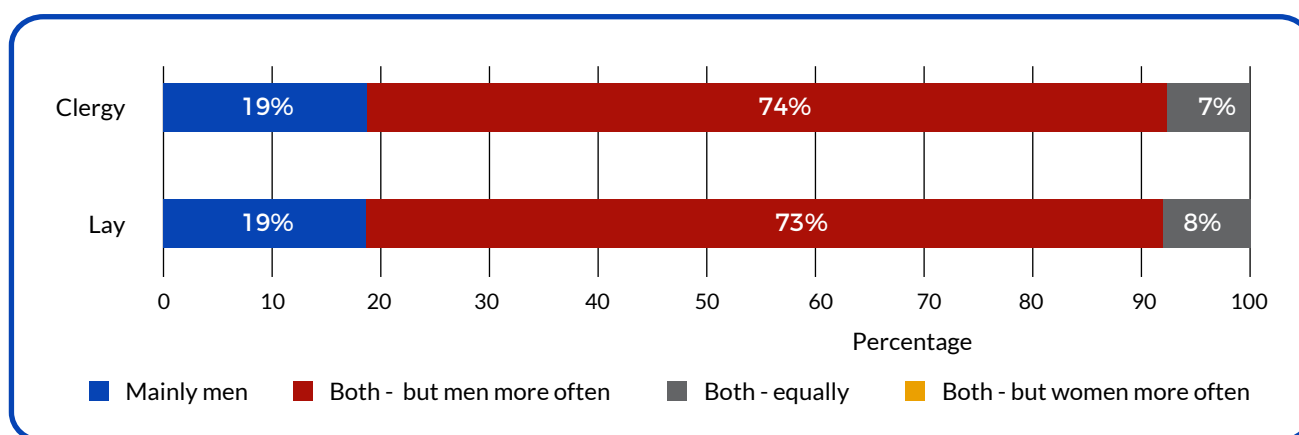
Key finding:

Clergy and lay leaders understood that it is more often men than women who commit domestic violence.

Key finding:

There was a high level of understanding and knowledge about domestic violence. Nearly all Anglican clergy and lay leaders regarded that behaviours across a range of dimensions (physical, sexual, psychological, financial etc) constitute domestic violence.

Figure 4: Views on what is regarded as domestic violence: clergy and lay leaders



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay leader n = 444)

5.5 Views about factors associated with domestic violence

Clergy and lay leaders were asked their views on which factors may lead some people to use domestic violence towards their partners. Some of the listed factors were drawn from survey questions in the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS 2017) and are marked with an asterisk. Other themes emerged from the clergy focus groups and two questions were framed specifically to ask about religious factors in domestic violence in Christian families.

The following are a list of factors that may lead some people to use domestic violence towards their partner. In your view, are each of the following a factor in domestic violence a lot of the time, some of the time, rarely or not at all?

- Having an alcohol problem*
- Having anxiety or depression*
- Having a narcissistic personality
- Feeling insecure
- One partner wanting to control or dominate the other partner*¹
- Lack of control in other aspects of life
- Impact of family dynamics from childhood
- Lack of employment opportunities in the community*
- Social isolation
- The way violence is shown in the media*
- Pressure on men to be tough*
- A cultural view that men should take control in relationships
 - A lot of the time
 - Some of the time
 - Rarely
 - Not at all

Factors that more than half of all Anglican clergy and lay leaders associated with domestic violence a lot of the time are:

- One partner wanting to control or dominate the other partner (84% for clergy and 80% for lay)
- Having an alcohol problem (56% for clergy and 57% for lay), and
- Having a narcissistic personality (53% for clergy and 54% for lay).

Other factors are shown in Figure 5.

Views about factors in Christian families: Some 44% of clergy indicated that misuse of Scripture by the abuser is a factor within Christian families a lot of the time, and an additional 48% believed it is a factor some of the time. A lower proportion (34%) of lay leaders identified misuse of Scripture a lot of the time, and 53% saw it as an issue some of the time.

Around a quarter of clergy (24%) felt that the theology of male headship was a factor in domestic violence in Christian families a lot of the time (19% of lay) and a further 56% felt it was a factor some of the time (63% of lay).

When results were compared between evangelical, reformed and Anglo-Catholic clergy, there were differences. Some 39% of evangelical and reformed clergy viewed misuse of Scripture as a factor a lot of the time (compared with 54% of Anglo-Catholic clergy) and 52% of evangelical clergy and 51% of reformed clergy some of the time (compared with 38% of Anglo-Catholic clergy). There were also significant differences on the role of the theology of headship by church tradition: 70% of evangelical clergy and 64% of reformed clergy thought that it was a factor at least some of the time (10% a lot of the time, 59% some of the time among evangelical clergy; 6% a lot of the time, 59% some of the time among reformed clergy) compared with nine in ten Anglo-Catholic clergy (41% a lot of the time, 49% some of the time).

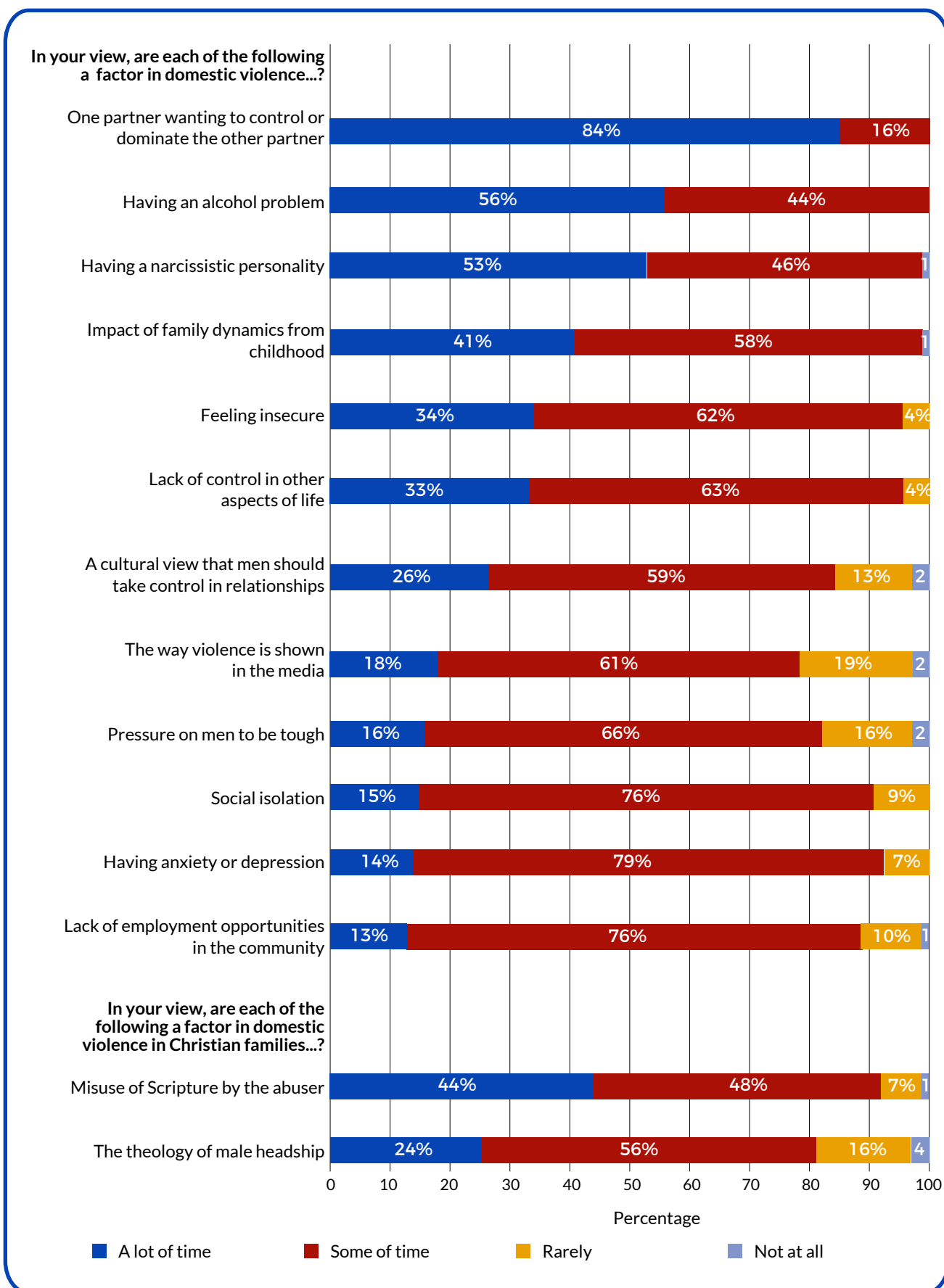
Key finding:

More than half of Anglican clergy associated the following factors with domestic violence a lot of the time: a) one partner wanting to control or dominate the other partner, b) having an alcohol problem, and c) having a narcissistic personality.

Key finding:

Nine in ten clergy felt that misuse of Scripture by the abuser is a factor in domestic violence in Christian families a lot of the time or some of the time.

Figure 5: Views regarding factors in domestic violence: clergy



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383).

A comparison with the views of all Australians: As a comparison, in the 2017 NCAS, a lower proportion of Australians understood alcohol (43%) as a factor in domestic violence a lot of the time (Webster et. al. 2018:59), as shown in Table 6. The NCAS sample of Australians were also less likely than church leaders to attribute violence in the media, pressure on men to be tough, anxiety or depression or lack of employment as factors a lot of the time or some of the time.

Table 6: Views regarding factors in domestic violence: Anglican clergy and lay leaders vs NCAS 2017

	2020 NAFVP Clergy		2020 NAFVP Lay leaders		2017 NCAS	
	A lot of the time	Some of the time	A lot of the time	Some of the time	A lot of the time	Some of the time
Having an alcohol problem	56%	44%	57%	42%	43%	48%
The way violence is shown in the media	18%	61%	21%	61%	15%	48%
Pressure on men to be tough	16%	66%	20%	63%	8%	48%
Having anxiety or depression	14%	79%	17%	74%	20%	62%
Lack of employment opportunities in the community	13%	76%	17%	77%	14%	60%

Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay leader n = 444) and 2017 NCAS (Webster et. al, 2018).

6 Practices in local churches to address domestic violence



The second research question in this study was “What practices are clergy and lay leaders engaging with in local church contexts to address domestic violence?”

Practices are both at the communal and individual level. In this section we present results for actions that are reportedly undertaken, as well as views on what actions should be undertaken. Results cover:

- General awareness raising in local churches about domestic violence,
- Views about clergy general and specific responsibilities with regard to addressing domestic violence,
- Whether and how often certain actions were taken in churches to create a culture of domestic violence prevention and response, and finally
- Awareness of and actions taken in response to specific cases of domestic violence in ministry contexts.

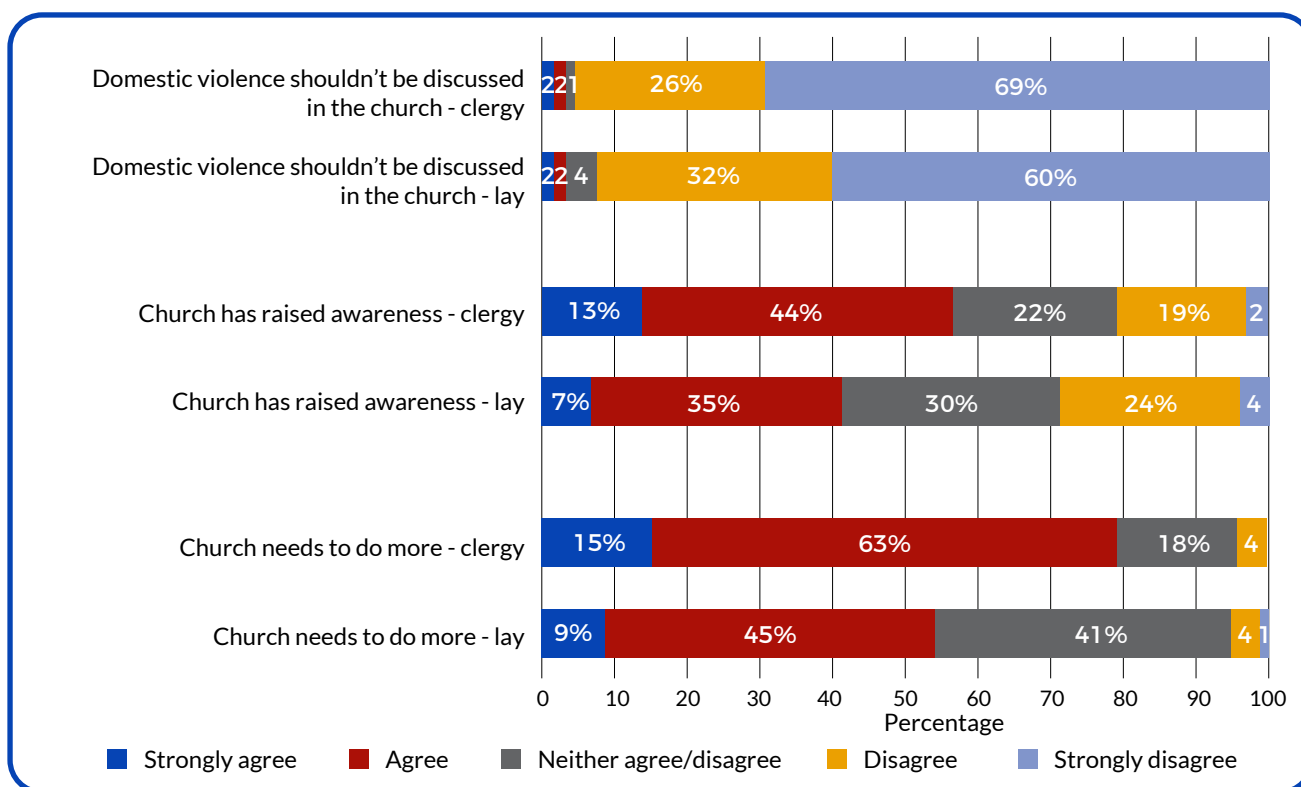
6.1 Raising awareness in local churches about domestic violence

Clergy and lay leaders were asked to consider matters of awareness raising by their local church. They were invited to agree or disagree with the following statements:

- My church has taken steps to raise awareness of domestic violence
- My church needs to do more to raise awareness of domestic violence
- Domestic violence is a topic that should not be discussed in church

Some 57% of clergy agreed that their church has taken steps to raise awareness (13% strongly agree, 44% agree), compared with 41% of lay leaders. There was strong support for further awareness raising efforts, with eight out of ten clergy (78%) agreeing that their church needs to do more to raise awareness of domestic violence (vs 54% of lay leaders). Lay leaders were much more likely than clergy to be non-committal, with 41% choosing ‘neither agree nor disagree’. Some 96% of clergy and lay leaders alike did not support the assertion that domestic violence should not be discussed at church (Figure 6)

Figure 6: Raising awareness of domestic violence: clergy and lay leaders



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383, lay n = 444).

Key finding:

There was widespread agreement among clergy that domestic violence is an issue that should be discussed in church and that churches should do more to raise awareness of domestic violence.

6.2 Clergy general responsibilities with regard to addressing domestic violence

The Clergy and Lay Leader survey explored attitudes about clergy responsibilities with regard to addressing domestic violence and attending to victims of abuse. Here we address general responsibilities of clergy; views about more specific responsibilities are presented later.

Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

It is reasonable to expect clergy to address domestic violence within their ministry

If clergy suspect someone is a victim of domestic violence, clergy should talk with them about it

When dealing with a specific domestic violence situation, clergy's top priority should be the victim's safety

When clergy have a relationship with both the victim and the perpetrator, they should focus more on supporting the victim than supporting the perpetrator

Having women on the pastoral team equips a church to better respond to domestic violence

Overall, clergy and lay leaders strongly supported these statements, as shown in Figure 7. The results are outlined below with sample quotes from clergy drawn from the focus group discussions and online survey responses.

Domestic violence should be addressed within ministry contexts: Very strong views were held by both clergy and lay leaders, with 95% of clergy and 90% of lay leader agreeing that it is reasonable to expect clergy to address domestic violence within their ministry.

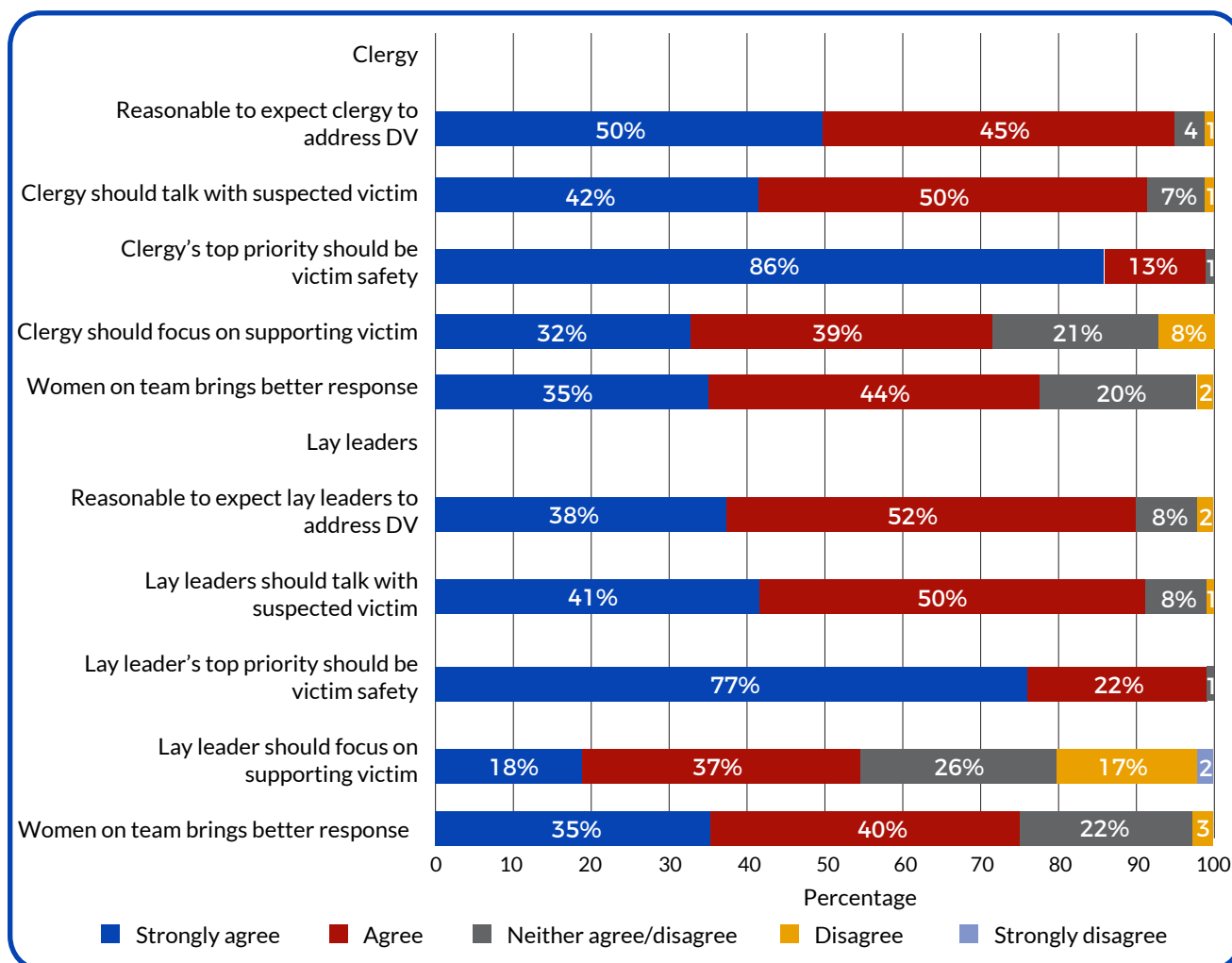
Initiate talks with potential victims: Around nine in ten clergy agreed that if they suspect someone is a victim of domestic violence, clergy should talk with them about it.

Safety first for the victim: Virtually all clergy agreed (99%), most of them strongly, that when dealing with a specific domestic violence situation, clergy's top priority should be the victim's safety.

Focus on supporting the victim, rather than the perpetrator: Around seven out of ten clergy and lay leaders agreed with the statement "When clergy have a relationship with both the victim and the perpetrator, they should focus more on supporting the victim than supporting the perpetrator". While 32% of clergy strongly agreed and 39% agreed, a further 21% took a neutral position.

Having women on the pastoral team brings a better response: Nearly eight in ten clergy agreed that having women on the pastoral team equips a church to better respond to domestic violence (35% strongly agree: 44% agree).

Figure 7: Roles of clergy re domestic violence: view of clergy and lay leaders



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay n = 444)

NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study Report: Anglican clergy and lay leader attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and practices regarding intimate partner violence.

Key finding:

Most clergy agreed that a) it is reasonable to expect clergy to address domestic violence within their ministry; b) that clergy should talk with suspected victims; c) safety is a top priority, d) clergy should focus more on supporting the victim than the perpetrator and e) having women on the pastoral team equips a church to better respond to domestic violence.

6.3 Clergy specific responsibilities when ministering to victims

After answering some general questions about clergy responsibilities with regards to domestic violence, respondents were presented with a series of statements about ministering to someone who has been abused by their partner, as follows:

- Do you agree or disagree that the following are part of clergy responsibilities when ministering to someone who has been abused by their partner?
- Talk with the victim about the abuse
- Talk with the abuser about their violent behaviour
- Suggest the victim seek support services for domestic violence
- Give the victim information on support services
- Contact the police
- Suggest that the victim seek mental health help
- Help the victim to understand the impact of abuse on their mental and spiritual wellbeing
- Help the victim to improve their social support and coping skills
- Provide couples counselling for the victim and their partner
- Suggest that the victim pray harder

Virtually all clergy agreed that clergy responsibilities include to:

- Give the victim information on support services (82% strongly agree; 17% agree)
- Suggest the victim seek support services for domestic violence (81% strongly agree; 18% agree)

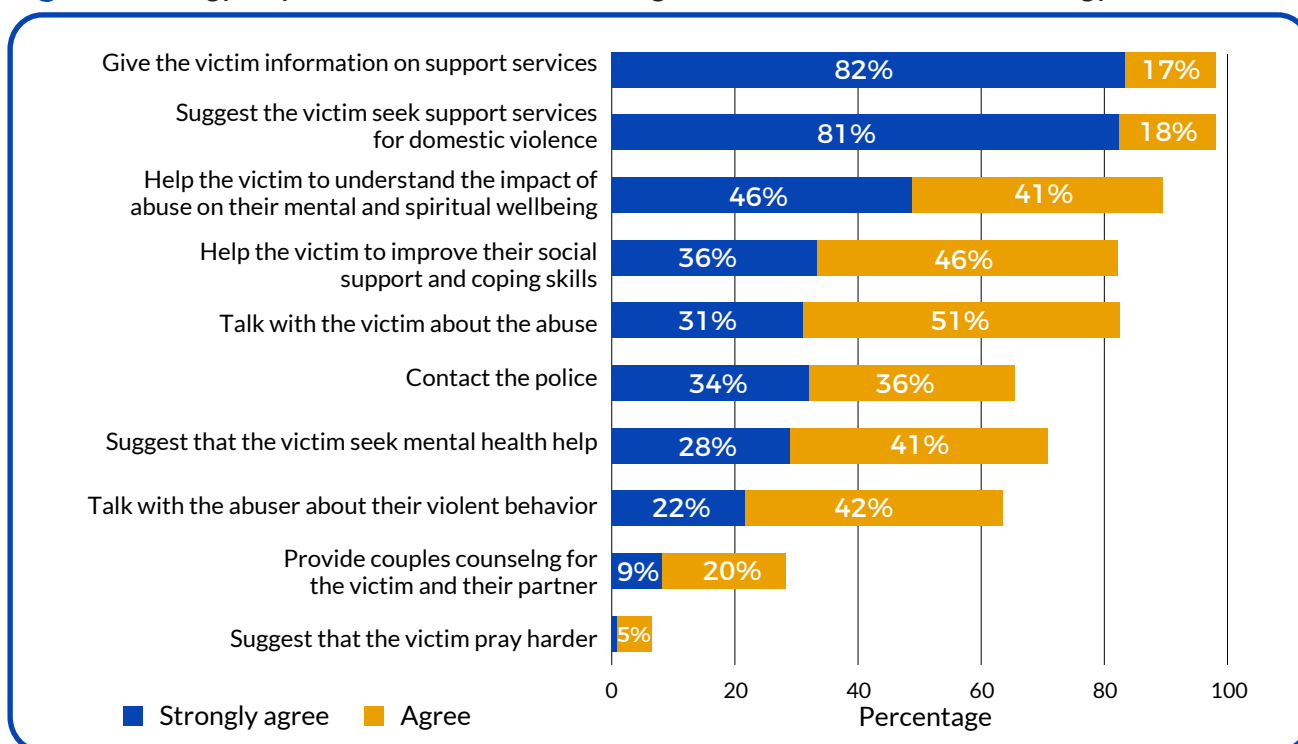
More than eight in ten agreed that clergy have a responsibility to support the victim of abuse in the following ways:

- Help the victim to understand the impact of abuse on their mental and spiritual wellbeing (46% strongly agree, 41% agree)
- Help the victim to improve their social support and coping skills (36% strongly agree, 46% agree)
- Talk with the victim about the abuse (31% strongly agree, 51% agree).

Some six in ten (63%) agreed that talking with the abuser about their violent behaviour was a clergy responsibility. Three in ten (29%) agreed with providing couples counselling, and a very small proportion (5%) agreed with suggesting that the victim pray harder.

More detail can be seen in Figure 8 for clergy responses. Lay leader responses were very similar (See Appendix M, Table A2).

Figure 8: Clergy responsibilities when ministering to victim of abuse: views of clergy



Source: 20s20 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383).

6.4 Creating a culture of domestic violence prevention and response

Having considered views about clergy responsibilities when addressing domestic violence, we now shift to a presentation of results for actions that may be taken to build a proactive culture around domestic violence prevention and response. Some actions or practices may be exercised by those in leadership positions (such as preaching), whereas other actions can be seen as a whole-of-church response (e.g. donations, posters). Results for how churches are creating a culture of prevention and response are grouped in terms of:

- Actions by leaders
- Actions by church.

6.4.1 Actions by leaders

Clergy and lay leaders were invited to indicate how often certain actions were taken by those in leadership. (Response options were: often, sometimes, occasionally, rarely, never.)

Various actions may be taken in churches to create a culture of domestic violence prevention and response. Please indicate the frequency of each of the following at your church, over the course of a year.

- I have preached about domestic violence
- I have preached about healthy marital relationships
- I have talked about domestic violence during worship services or other public gatherings

I have said publicly that I am available to support people who are experiencing domestic violence

Bullying and other inappropriate behaviours at church are addressed and corrected

The leaders of this church do not tolerate sexist remarks about women.

When questioned about the frequency of their personal actions and practices (Figure 9), clergy reports were as follows:

- 19% often or sometimes preached about domestic violence (32% occasionally)
- 44% often or sometimes preached about healthy marriage (34% occasionally)
- 30% often or sometimes talked about domestic violence at public gatherings (32% occasionally)
- 34% often or sometimes said publicly they were available to support people who were experiencing domestic violence (26% occasionally).

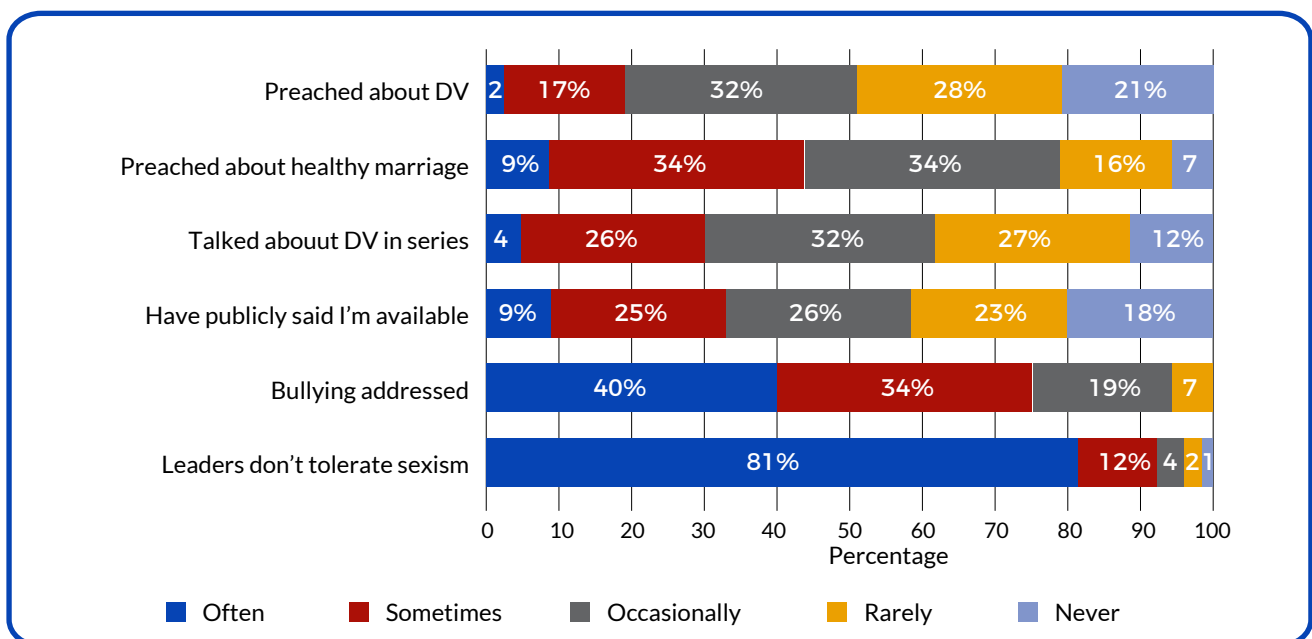
Three quarters of clergy (74%) indicated that bullying and other inappropriate behaviours at church were addressed and corrected often or sometimes (59% of lay leaders). Sexist remarks about women were not tolerated by leaders according to 93% of clergy and 84% of lay leaders often or sometimes.

When results were compared between evangelical, reformed and Anglo-Catholic clergy, the greatest difference was for preaching about marriage. Some 54% of evangelical clergy and 61% of reformed clergy indicated that they often or sometimes preached about healthy marriage, compared with 28% of Anglo-Catholic clergy.

Key finding:

A minority of clergy often or sometimes have talked about domestic violence in public settings.

Figure 9: Actions and practices by clergy



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383)

6.4.2 Actions by churches

A second suite of questions explored the types of actions that a whole church community can be involved in. Response options were: yes, no and unsure.

In the past 12 months have any of the following happened at this church?

Prayers have been said at church for people experiencing domestic violence

The church has donated money or goods to a domestic violence organisation

The church has worked with a local refuge, safe house or domestic violence organisation

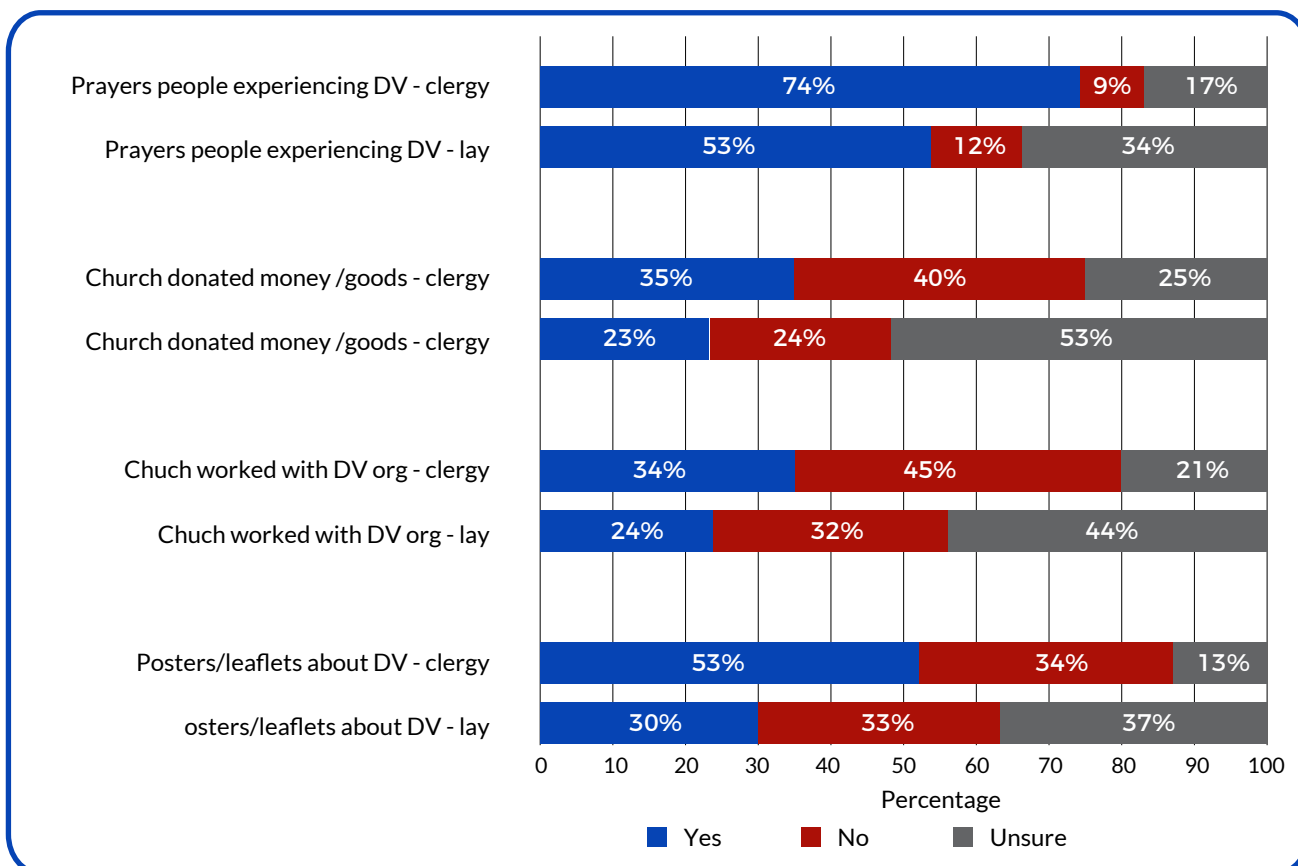
There are posters or leaflets in the church about domestic violence.

Around three quarters of all clergy reported that, in the previous 12 months, prayers were said at church for people experiencing domestic violence. Around a third reported that the church donated money or goods (35%), or worked with a local organisation (34%). More than half (53%) indicated that there were posters or leaflets in the church about domestic violence.

Clergy are more likely to say that these actions had taken place in the previous 12 months, whereas lay leaders were around twice as likely to be unsure. (See Figure 10).

There were differences by church tradition. Anglo-Catholic clergy were more likely to report that their churches had donated money or goods to a domestic violence organisation (51%, versus 27% of evangelical and 28% of reformed clergy), and had worked with a local refuge, safe house or domestic violence organisation (49%, versus 26% of evangelical and 25% of reformed clergy). They were a little less likely to indicate that their churches had posters or leaflets about domestic violence (44%, versus 57% of evangelical and 58% of reformed clergy).

Figure 10: Actions and practices within churches: clergy and lay leaders



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay n = 444)

Key finding:

Seven in ten clergy reported that their church prayed for victims in the previous 12 months. According to clergy, other actions by churches, such as display of posters and leaflets, donations of money or goods or working with local organisations occurred in around a third to half of churches. Fewer lay leaders reported these actions in their churches.

6.5 Direct experience with domestic violence situations at church

Having reviewed what churches and church leaders have done to invest in creating a culture of domestic violence prevention, we now turn to direct experience with domestic violence situations in churches. Clergy and lay leaders were asked about their awareness of both victims/survivors and perpetrators within their church communities, as well as whether they had dealt with individuals themselves. They were able to respond with 'yes' or 'no' to the following questions:

Have you ever been aware of any members, former members or regular visitors of your church who have been the victim of abuse by an intimate partner?

Have you ever been aware of any members, former members or regular visitors of your church who have abused an intimate partner?

Have you, as part of your ministry, ever dealt with individuals in specific domestic violence situations?

Clergy: When asked whether they had ever been aware of any members, former members or regular visitors of their church who have been the victim of abuse by an intimate partner, seven in ten (73%) of clergy indicated that they had. Around half (55%) had been aware of those who had perpetrated abuse. Some two-thirds (68%) had dealt with individuals in specific domestic violence situations as part of their ministry.

An analysis of church tradition with regard to awareness of victims found that 76% of evangelical, 82% of reformed, and 70% of Anglo-Catholic clergy reported this. There was a difference in awareness of perpetrators among Anglo-Catholic clergy. Some 44% had been aware of perpetrators, compared with 61% of evangelical and 67% of reformed clergy. Similar proportions across traditions had dealt with specific domestic violence situations: 69% evangelical, 74% reformed and 64% of Anglo-Catholic clergy.

Lay leaders: Lay leaders had lower levels of awareness and engagement. Four in ten (41%) were aware of victims/survivors within their church and nearly three in ten (27%) were aware of perpetrators. Two in ten (19%) had dealt with individuals in specific domestic violence situations as part of their ministry.

Key finding:

Around three quarters of Anglican clergy had been aware of victims of abuse in their churches. Two-thirds had dealt with individuals in specific domestic violence situations as part of their ministry.

6.6 Actions taken when dealing with specific domestic violence situations

Survey participants who indicated that they had direct experience of individuals in specific domestic violence situations as part of their ministry were invited to nominate whether they had offered pastoral or spiritual care and counselling as part of their response. A second list of actions focussed on seeking wider help, such as referrals to service agencies, contacting the diocese or other church leaders. A third list of potential actions focussed on advocating for safety, such as connecting with police, legal and government services. A fourth question invited respondents to add any further actions that they had taken, which had not already been covered. The wording of this suite of questions is shown below.

Of the following actions, which have you used when dealing with specific domestic violence situations? (Mark ALL that apply)

- ☐ Provided pastoral or spiritual care to the victim
- ☐ Provided counselling to the victim
- ☐ Talked with the perpetrator about the violence
- ☐ Provided pastoral or spiritual care to the perpetrator
- ☐ Provided counselling to the perpetrator
- ☐ Provided marriage or couples counselling
- ☐ None of the above

Have you taken any of the following steps to deal with specific domestic violence situations? (Mark ALL that apply)

- ☐ Referred the victim to a service agency (e.g. crisis support, counselling, legal support, financial support)
- ☐ Referred the perpetrator to a service agency (e.g. counselling, behaviour change program)
- ☐ Informed or sought help from the diocese
- ☐ Contacted church leaders in another church in relation to the perpetrator
- ☐ None of the above

And which of the following have you used when dealing with specific domestic violence situations? (Mark ALL that apply)

- ☐ Assisted the victim with a safety assessment or safety plan
- ☐ Assisted the victim with paperwork or statements (e.g. police report, Apprehended Violence Order)
- ☐ Made an intervention to keep children safe
- ☐ Made a child protection report to government authorities
- ☐ Contacted the police
- ☐ Provided rectory or church property as a refuge
- ☐ None of the above

Are there any further actions, not listed above, that you have taken to deal with specific domestic violence situations?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes (please specify): _____

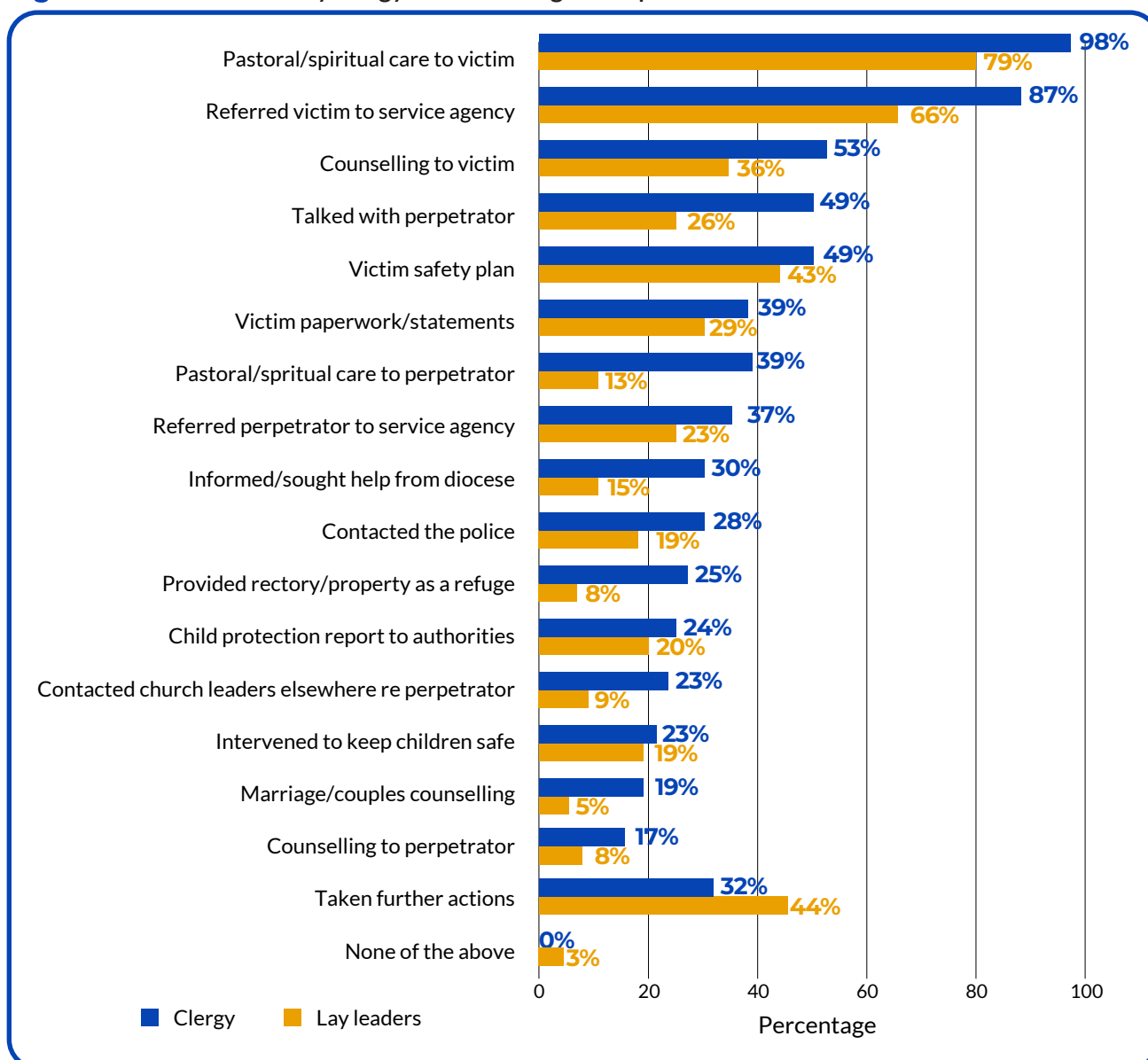
Many more clergy than lay leaders had taken direct action in response to specific situations. When asked what types of actions they took, the most common actions by both clergy and lay leaders were to offer pastoral and spiritual care to the victim/survivor and to refer the person to a service agency.

Clergy: Virtually all clergy offered pastoral and spiritual care to the victim/survivor and around nine in ten referred the person to a service agency. Around half of all clergy reported that they offered counselling to the victim, talked to the perpetrator and assisted with a safety plan. Less than half undertook a range of other actions, which are shown in Figure 11.

Lay leaders: Eight out of ten lay leaders offered pastoral and spiritual care to the victim/survivor and two thirds referred the person to a service agency. The other most common responses from lay leaders included helping with victim safety plans and counselling the victim. Lay leaders were also more likely to indicate that they had taken actions other than what was listed. (See Figure 11).

There were some differences by church tradition with regard to actions taken. Anglo-Catholic clergy were more likely to have referred a victim to a service agency than evangelical and reformed clergy (97% Anglo-Catholic, 80% evangelical and reformed). Anglo-Catholic clergy were less likely to have talked with the perpetrator about the abuse (36% Anglo-Catholic, 56% evangelical and 57% reformed), but more likely to have taken a variety of safety-related actions (contacted the police: 40% Anglo-Catholic, 24% evangelical, 18% reformed; made a child protection report to authorities: 34% Anglo-Catholic, 20% evangelical, 23% reformed; intervened to keep children safe: 33% Anglo-Catholic, 19% evangelical, 15% reformed). Anglo-Catholic clergy were less likely to have informed or sought help from the diocese (23% Anglo-Catholic, 39% evangelical, 34% reformed). Note that these results are based on small numbers of Anglo-Catholic clergy (n=61) and reformed clergy (n=74) and should be treated with some caution.

Figure 11: Actions taken by clergy when dealing with specific domestic violence situations



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 249; lay n = 80).

6.6.1 Examples of further actions taken

Respondents were asked to specify any further actions, not listed above, that they had taken to deal with specific domestic violence situations. Some 32% of clergy and 44% of lay leaders indicated that they had taken further actions. Some of these respondents simply provided extra information about the responses that they had already given. Other than that, the most common responses were that they had:

- assisted the victim(s) to access emergency or alternative accommodation,
- gone with the victim to a legal service (e.g. court, police station), and
- provided financial or material assistance such as food.

Other less common responses included:

- pastoral support for other family members,
- arranging for other people from the church to support the victim, and
- asking the perpetrator not to attend church activities.

Table 7 contains some examples of the variety of actions taken by clergy and lay leaders. These quotes are taken from the open text responses in the Clergy and Lay Leader Survey.

Table 7: Examples of clergy and lay leader actions

Type of action	Quotes from open text responses in Clergy and Lay Leader Survey
Pastoral and general support	<p><i>"Acted more as a support by listening to the victim and supporting their decision to report to police and professional assistance."</i></p> <p><i>"Acted normally with the perpetrator. The victimised person often doesn't leave (due to shame & dissolution of marriage), therefore I keep the door open by saying that there is no judgement and that I'm always there to support if she would like to try again. Involved one other person on the pastoral care team to offer support."</i></p> <p><i>"My wife and I have mentored other church leaders involved in other situations. In those cases we have prepped a victim on having a plan should they decide to leave."</i></p>
Intervened or supported an intervention against perpetrator	<p><i>"Asked the male perpetrator to leave the house so that the wife (victim) and children could be safe. This was done with the victim's permission and was successfully carried out."</i></p> <p><i>"Arranged an ongoing support relationship for a female victim with a mature couple at church. Arranged for victim to be taken to police station and supported as she spoke with police. Arranged for the victim to stay with a church family as needed. Made it clear to perpetrator that domestic violence not tolerated at our church, at which point he become abusive of me too."</i></p> <p><i>"Have been present to intervene as a wife tells her husband he's not welcome home, sought and funded accommodation for him at that time, engaged in multiple steps to seek repentance of the perpetrator (without success)."</i></p>
Referral to support services	<p><i>"I have driven a family to the police station to report. I beg people to talk to their GP and police every time."</i></p> <p><i>"The Rectory was a kind of 'safe house' and I would phone a Women's Refuge and they would call to collect the person"</i></p>
Provided refuge in home or housed victim	<p><i>"Provided my residence as a safe refuge, provided financial assistance and helped obtain accommodation, helped them shift their furniture etc"</i></p>

Offered financial or material assistance	<p><i>"Provided practical assistance for the victim (e.g. meals, help with looking after kids etc)"</i></p> <p><i>"Provided food bank supplies. Provided transport to church services. Helped arrange temporary accommodation."</i></p> <p><i>"Offered financial support from church community fund for housing if necessary (offer was not taken up)."</i></p>
Supported engagement with police and legal services	<p><i>"Help write victim impact statements and help write compensation claims."</i></p> <p><i>"Instituted a Restraining Order".</i></p> <p><i>"Writing reports/character references for court appearances."</i></p> <p><i>"Attended family law court with victims"</i></p> <p><i>"Accompanied the victim to court. Assisted the perpetrator with Centrelink forms to sort out their separated status."</i></p> <p><i>Acted as "cultural interpreter" between the DV legal service and the victim (ensuring understanding, rephrasing, checking for understanding, etc)."</i></p>
Raised matter with church structures, senior ministers, or designated safety structures within the diocese	<p><i>"Notified diocese of a perpetrator in ministry role."</i></p> <p><i>"Organised safe housing, counselled through removal of the situation, informed and sought advice from Senior Minister."</i></p> <p><i>"Engaged the Diocesan Safe Ministry Unit."</i></p>
Set up a support options for victim or family members	<p><i>"Involved an appropriate parishioner to support the victim until external support was available."</i></p> <p><i>"Had accountability people and support people in our church family."</i></p>

Source: Clergy and Lay Leader Survey – samples from open text responses

Key finding:

The most common actions taken by clergy and lay leaders in response to domestic violence situations were to offer pastoral and spiritual care and refer people to support services. Around half of clergy offered counselling to the victim, talked to the perpetrator and assisted with a safety plan.

6.6.2 The negative personal impact on church leaders

Most clergy and lay leaders experienced some negative personal impact of dealing with dealing violence situations. In the preliminary phase of this study which involved listening to clergy in focus groups, it was evident that there was a substantial personal impact on leaders who had experience in dealing with domestic violence. Some had been supporting victims over years and had their own experiences of being groomed, of abuse and threat. As a result, we included a question that asked about the personal impact.

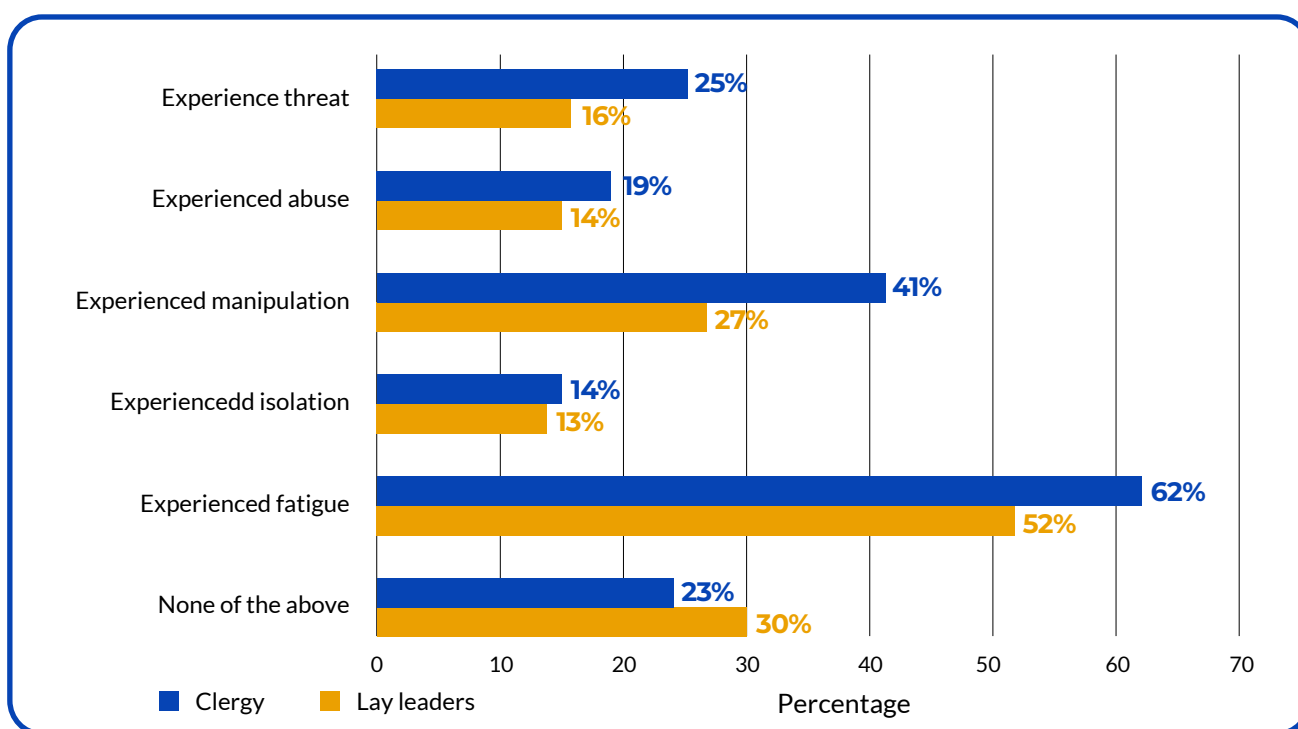
When you have dealt with specific domestic violence situations, have any of the following ever happened to you? (Mark ALL that apply)

- ☐ Been threatened by a perpetrator of domestic violence
- ☐ Been abused by a perpetrator of domestic violence
- ☐ Experienced being manipulated by a perpetrator of domestic violence
- ☐ Experienced a sense of isolation from others
- ☐ Experienced fatigue as a result of dealing with the situation
- ☐ None of the above

Figure 12 shows that the majority of clergy (77%) and lay leaders (70%) can identify some negative personal impact of having dealt with domestic violence situations in ministry, with higher proportions of clergy than lay leaders acknowledging the listed impacts in most cases. The most common impact was fatigue, which was experienced by six out of ten clergy and five out of ten lay respondents.

Four out of ten (41%) clergy who had engaged with domestic violence situations felt they had been manipulated by a perpetrator, a quarter (25%) had been threatened and two out of ten (19%) had been abused. (Responses from lay leaders can be seen in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Negative personal impact on clergy and lay leaders who have dealt with domestic violence situations



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 249; lay n = 80).

Key finding:

Among those who have dealt with domestic violence situations in ministry, the majority of church leaders identify a negative personal impact, such as fatigue and manipulation.

6.6.3 Collaboration with clergy/leaders from other churches

Do clergy and lay leaders collaborate with others in relation to domestic violence? Participants were asked:

Have you ever collaborated with clergy/leaders from other churches in relation to domestic violence? (*Mark ALL that apply*)

- ☐ Yes, with clergy/leaders from another Anglican parish
- ☐ Yes, with clergy/leaders from another Christian church
- ☐ No

Results showed that most clergy and lay leaders did not collaborate with other leaders in relation to domestic violence.

Clergy: Around two thirds of clergy have not collaborated with clergy/leaders from other churches in relation to domestic violence. A quarter (26%) had collaborated with other Anglican leaders and 17% with other Christian leaders.

Lay leaders: Most lay leaders (92%) had not collaborated more widely with leaders from other churches. Only 6% has collaborated with other Anglican leaders and 4% with other church leaders.

Key finding:

Two thirds of clergy had not collaborated with clergy/leaders from other churches in relation to domestic violence.

7 Training and equipping



The third key research question for this research study was “How equipped are Anglican clergy and lay leaders to respond to domestic violence situations?”

A final set of questions for clergy and lay leaders asked them to reflect on their own sense of readiness to respond. How equipped do they feel as individuals and how equipped is their church? Results in this section address:

- Levels of preparedness and confidence among leaders
- Familiarity with support services and resources
- Levels of confidence to refer people to support services
- Training for clergy and church leadership, and
- Views of the role of the bishop when the victim or perpetrator is a clergyperson.

7.1 Levels of preparedness and confidence among leaders

Low to moderate levels of personal confidence among church leaders: Clergy were asked about their preparedness and confidence to deal with domestic violence situations (see Figure 13). Some 5% strongly agreed and 36% agreed that they felt prepared in these situations. Only three in ten (28%) agreed that they were confident to identify victims; and only four in ten clergy (41%) felt well prepared to deal with domestic violence.

Six in ten (60%) agreed they were confident in their capacity to support victims.

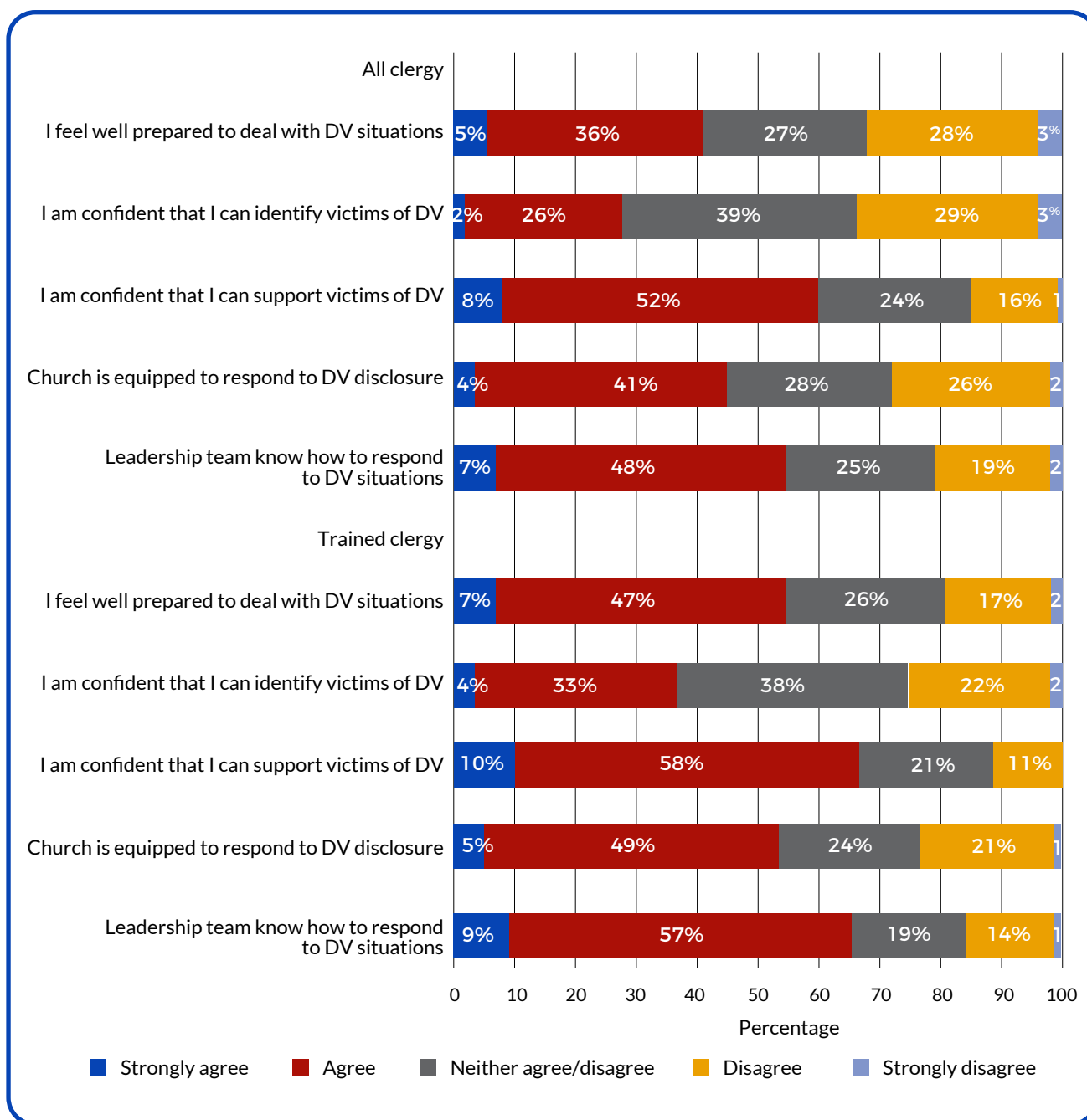
When the responses of those clergy who said they had been trained were examined, the results improved a little. Half (54%) agreed that they felt confident to deal with domestic violence situations, 37% were confident to identify victims, and 68% were confident to support victims.

Lay leaders had lower levels of preparedness and confidence than clergy.

Moderate levels of confidence in local church and leadership team: Just under half of all clergy assessed their church as adequately equipped to respond to disclosure of domestic violence (45%). A slightly higher proportion (55%) agreed that their leadership team knew how to respond to domestic violence situations that might arise. Levels of confidence among lay leaders was even lower.

Around three in ten clergy and half of lay leaders disagreed or strongly disagreed that they felt personally well prepared or confident to respond. A third of clergy and a quarter of lay leaders disagreed that the church was equipped to respond to disclosures of domestic violence. Full details for clergy and lay leader responses are in Appendix M, Table A3.

Figure 13: Levels of preparedness and confidence: views of clergy vs trained clergy



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383).

Key finding:

There were low to moderate levels of confidence among clergy of their personal capacity to deal with domestic violence situations and moderate confidence in the churches' readiness to respond.

7.2 Familiarity with support services and resources

This study also took the opportunity to evaluate the current levels of familiarity with local support services for either victims or perpetrators, and with legal options for victims.

How familiar are you with support services available in your local community to assist victims of domestic violence (e.g. crisis centre, shelter, hotline)?

How familiar are you with legal options for victims of domestic violence?

How familiar are you with support services available in your local community to assist perpetrators of domestic violence (e.g. crisis centre, behaviour change program, hotline)?

Resources (e.g. documents, training, support) may be available from a range of sources to assist churches to respond to domestic violence. How familiar are you with resources from each of the following?

Your diocese

Other parts of the Anglican church

Other Christian groups (e.g. other denominations, ecumenical groups or networks)

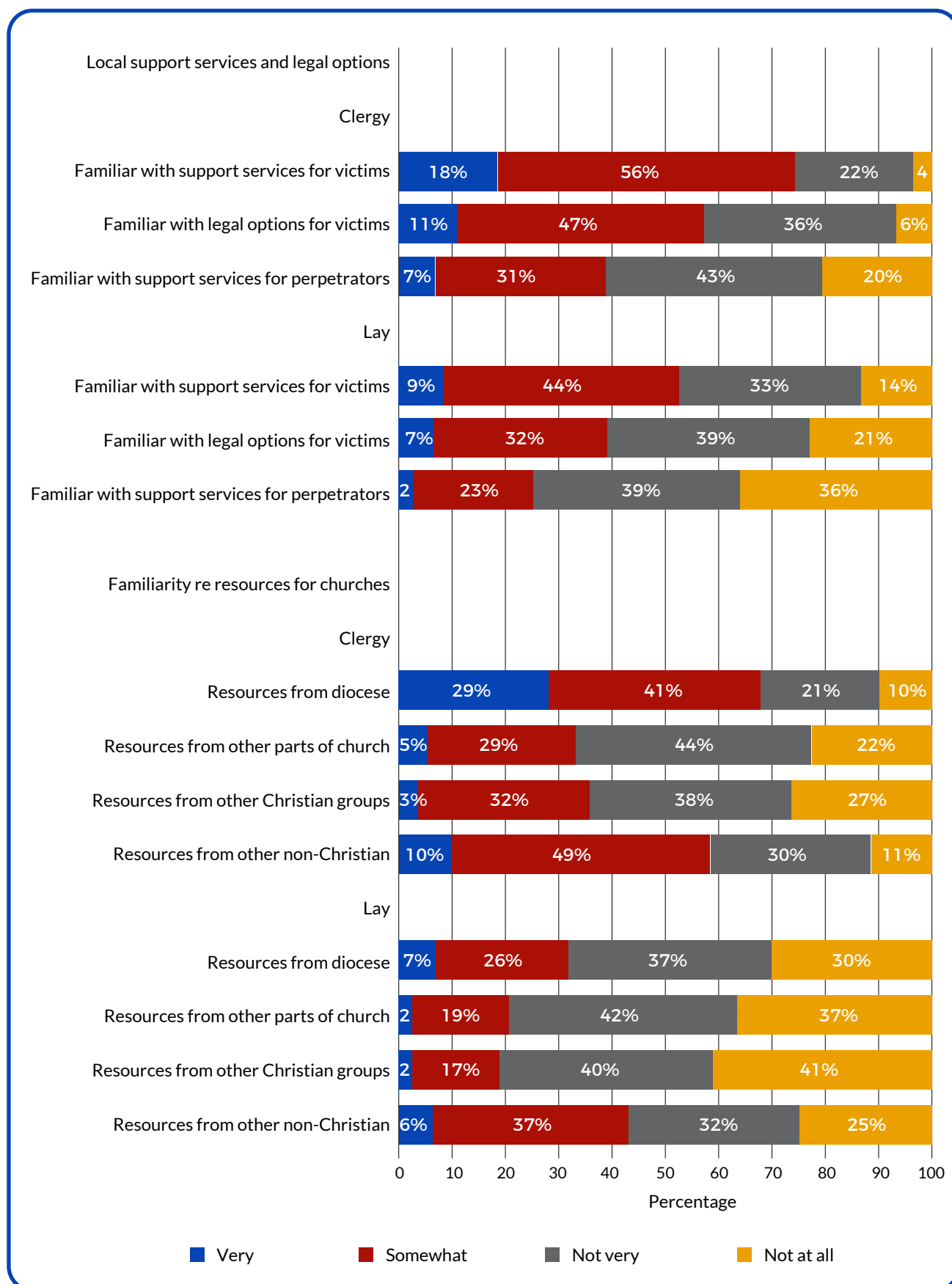
Other non-Christian organisations

Response options were Very familiar, Somewhat familiar, Not very familiar and Not at all familiar. Results are shown in Figure 14.

The majority of clergy were somewhat familiar with support services or legal options for either victims or perpetrators: Fewer than two in ten clergy claimed to be very familiar with support services or legal options for either victims or perpetrators. However, when considering those who claimed to be somewhat familiar, three-quarters were familiar with support services for victims (74%); six in ten (58%) with legal options and a smaller four in ten with services for perpetrators.

A third of clergy were very familiar with diocesan resources: Resources such as documents, training and support are available from a range of sources to assist churches to respond to domestic violence. Only a third (29%) of clergy were very familiar with resources from their diocese. A further four in ten (41%) were somewhat familiar and the remaining three in ten were not very or not at all familiar. There were even lower levels of familiarity with resources provided by other groups.

Figure 14: Clergy and lay leader familiarity with support services and resources for churches



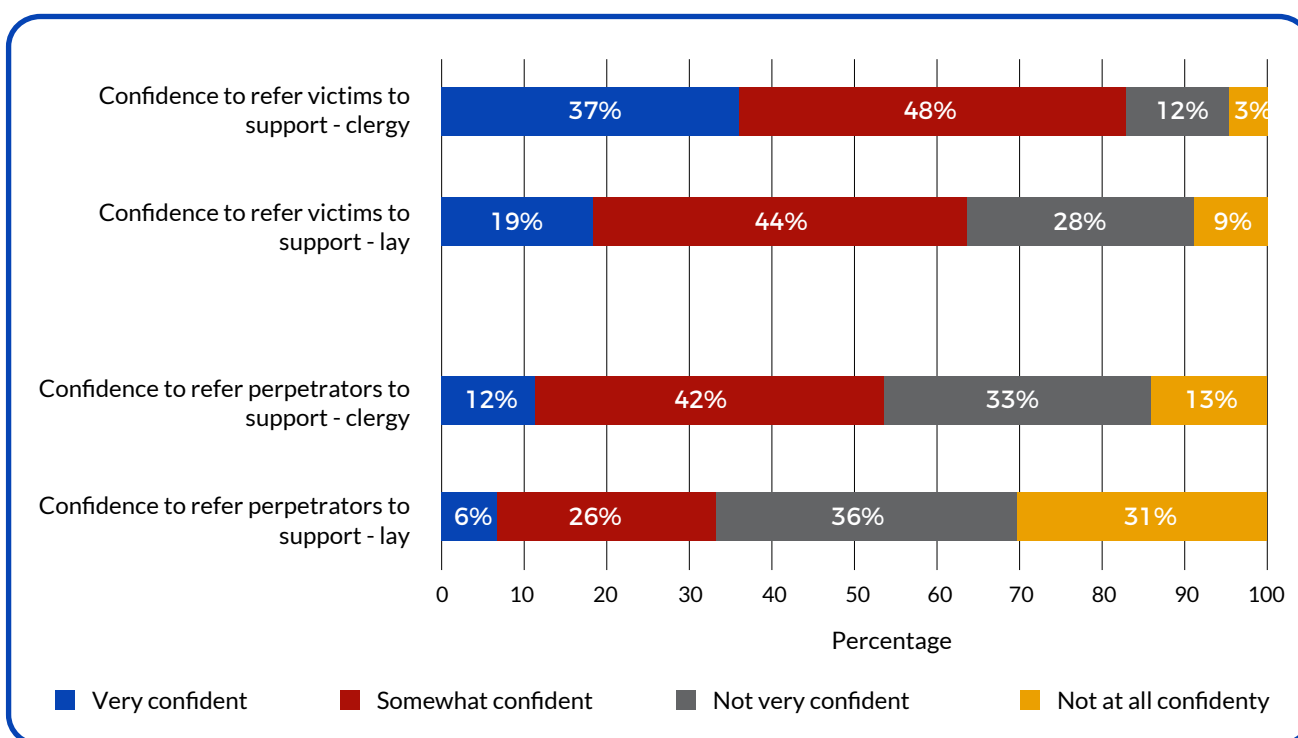
Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay n = 444).

7.3 Levels of confidence to refer people to support services

Respondents were asked to indicate how confident they felt to refer victims and perpetrators to support services. Results are shown in Figure 15.

Moderate levels of confidence to refer victims and perpetrators: Clergy and lay leaders were asked about their confidence to refer victims and perpetrators to support services (see Figure 5). Some 37% of clergy felt very confident to refer victims, with a further 48% feeling somewhat confident. When it came to referring perpetrators, 12% felt very confident and 42% somewhat confident. Levels of confidence were lower among lay leaders.

Figure 15: Levels of confidence to refer people to support services: clergy and lay



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay n = 444).

Key finding:

There were moderate levels of confidence to refer victims and perpetrators to support services.

7.4 Training for clergy and church leadership teams

The Clergy and Lay Leader Study provided an opportunity for the Anglican Church to evaluate the degree to which supportive training has been taken up. Survey questions asked about personal training as well as training for church leadership.

Have you received training specifically to help you to respond to domestic and family violence? (*Mark ALL that apply*)

- ☐ Yes, training from the Anglican Church
- ☐ Yes, training from another Christian group
- ☐ Yes, training from another non-Christian organisation
- ☐ No

Has your church's leadership team received training specifically to help your church to respond to domestic and family violence? (*Mark ALL that apply*)

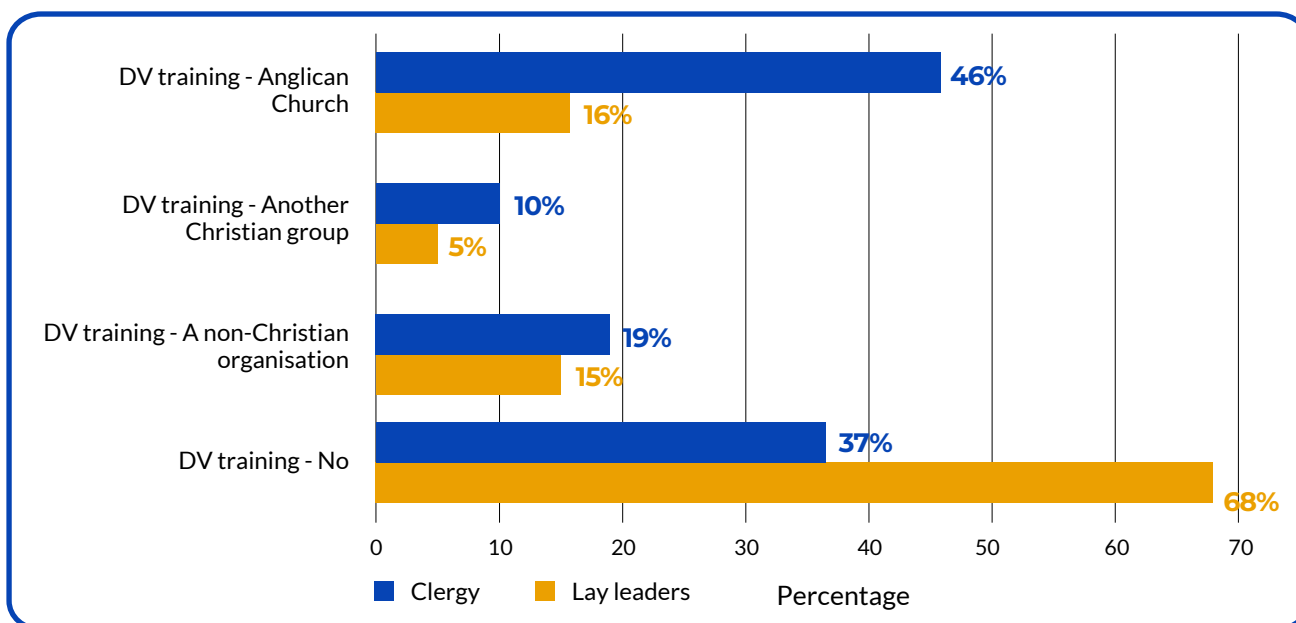
- ☐ Yes, training provided locally at church
- ☐ Yes, training offered elsewhere by the Anglican Church
- ☐ Yes, training from another Christian group
- ☐ Yes, training from another non-Christian organisation
- ☐ No

Around six in ten clergy and three in ten lay leaders had received training: When asked if they had received training specifically to help them to respond to domestic and family violence, around six in ten (63%) of clergy said they had. However, only three in ten lay leaders said they have received training.

Some 46% of clergy said they had received training from the Anglican Church, 10% of clergy had training from another Christian group, and 19% from a non-Christian organisation. The patterns for training of lay leaders are shown in Figure 16.

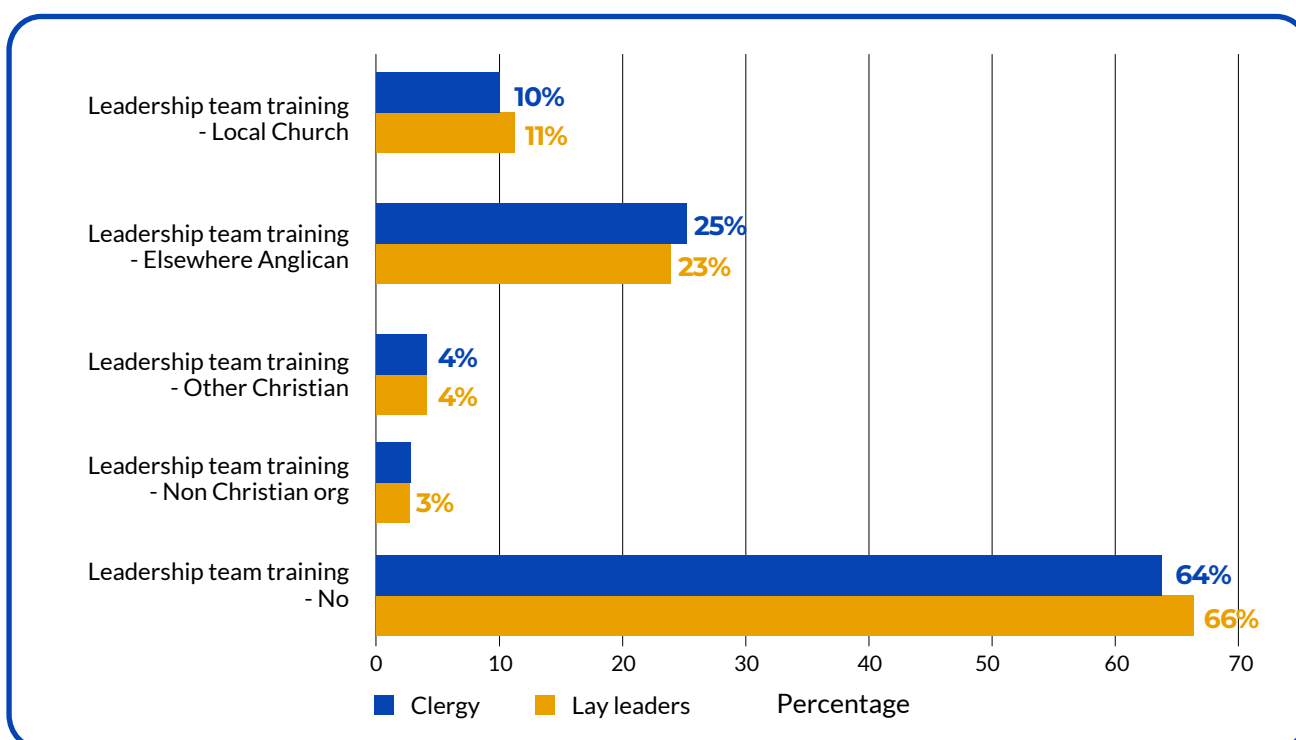
Two thirds reported that their leadership team had not received any training: The reports of clergy about the training of leadership teams were similar to the reports of lay leaders (Figure 17). Around two thirds reported that their church's leadership team had not received training specifically to help their church to respond to domestic and family violence. Some 10% had training in their local church and 23-25% accessed training offered elsewhere by the Anglican Church. Small proportions received training from other Christian organisations (4%) or non-Christian groups (3%)

Figure 16: Sources of domestic violence training for individuals: clergy and lay leaders



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay n = 444).

Figure 17: Sources of domestic violence training for leadership teams



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay n = 444).

Key finding:

Around six in ten clergy and three in ten lay leaders received training help them to respond to domestic and family violence. Two thirds reported that their church's leadership team have not received any training.

7.5 Evaluation of support received from diocese

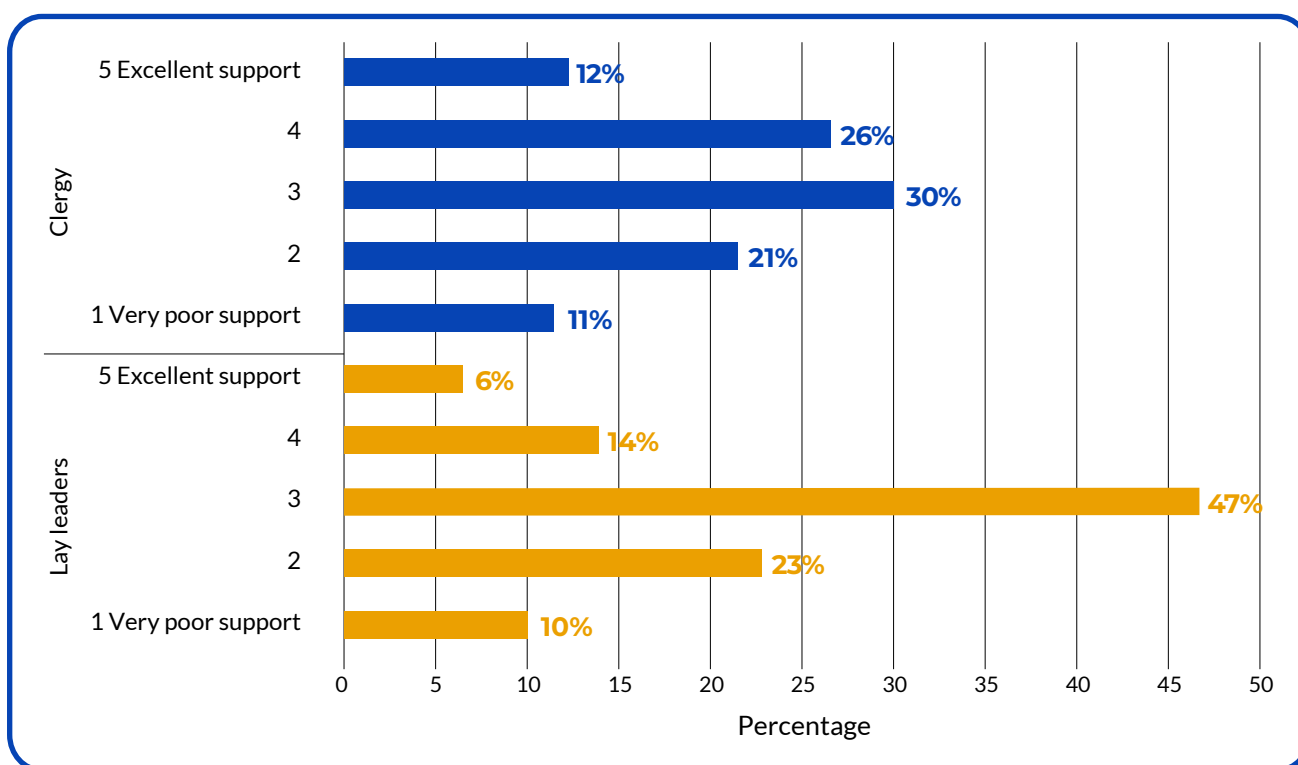
Clergy were asked to evaluate the support that their church receives from the diocese to help the church to respond to domestic violence. They were also asked to give their opinion, in their own words, about what the role of the bishop should be in two situations: where a clergy person is a victim of domestic violence, and where a clergy person is a perpetrator of domestic violence.

On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate the support your church receives from the diocese to help your church to respond to domestic violence?

- ☐ 1 Very poor support
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 Excellent support

Around four in ten clergy (38%) were positive about the support received from the diocese, three in ten positioned themselves in the middle of the scale and 32% were less positive in their rating. Details are shown in Figure 18, along with the results for lay leaders, who were less likely to express a clear opinion one way or the other.

Figure 18: Rating of diocesan support to church: clergy and lay leaders



Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay n = 444).

Key finding:

Around four in ten clergy were positive about the support received from the diocese, whereas three in ten were less positive.

7.6 Views of the role of the bishop

Respondents were asked to answer the following questions, using their own words:

- In your opinion, what should the role of the bishop be in situations where a clergy person in the diocese is a victim of domestic violence?
- In your opinion, what should the role of the bishop be in situations where a clergy person in the diocese perpetrates domestic violence?

Most respondents (approx. 9 in 10) gave responses to these questions. Responses were categorised using content analysis.

7.6.1 When a clergy person is a victim

The most common response, provided by 44% of clergy and 38% of lay leaders who answered the question, was that the bishop should provide pastoral support to the clergy person who is a victim of domestic violence. This included listening, counsel, advice, prayer and unspecified forms of pastoral care. Some 38% of clergy and 44% of lay leaders simply said that the bishop should provide support, with no further clarification. In total, 73% of clergy and 72% of leaders said that the bishop should provide pastoral or general support.

Some 42% of clergy and 49% of lay leaders said that the bishop should seek the involvement of organisations and services specifically designed to deal with such situations. This included:

- Referral to any professional support or services to assist the clergy person or their family (35% of clergy and 40% of lay leaders), including services particularly designed to handle cases of domestic/family violence and counselling services. This also included referring to services that may be provided by diocese.
- Reporting the matter to an authority with the power to take action, whether it is within the church structure, such as Professional Standards, or completely outside the church, such as police. This was mentioned by 12% of clergy and 14% of lay leaders.

Ensuring the safety of the clergy person and others involved in the situation was explicitly mentioned by 12% of clergy and 10% of lay leaders.

Some 11% of clergy and lay leaders mentioned that the bishop should consider provisions for the temporary running of the parish and leave arrangements for the clergy person.

Other specific roles, mentioned by less than 10% of respondents, that the bishop should provide included:

- Financial assistance,
- Accommodation alternatives/physically separating the victim from the abuser,
- Assisting the abuser to seek help, and
- General mentions of bishop intervention, without further detail provided.

7.6.2 When a clergy person is a perpetrator

In cases where a clergy person perpetrates domestic violence, some 71% of clergy and 50% of lay leaders made mention of discipline that the bishop should carry out in accordance with church procedures. This included standing down or suspending the clergy person from their duties (44% of clergy and 38% of lay leaders), referring to church practices and procedures for action (e.g.

Ordinances, Professional Standards, Code of Conduct; mentioned by 28% of clergy and 11% of lay leaders), discipline by the bishop (13% of clergy, 5% of lay leaders) and spiritual discipline such as repentance (a small number of respondents).

Some 43% of clergy and 53% of lay leaders said that the bishop should seek the involvement of organisations and services outside of the church to deal with such situations. This included:

- Directing the clergyperson to outside help (27% of clergy, 35% of lay leaders).
- Reporting to non-church authorities, including formal law enforcement such as police or courts of law (21% of clergy, 26% of lay leaders).

Some 27% of clergy and 30% of lay leaders mentioned that the bishop or diocese should provide personal support or help to the clergyperson, including any form of help not stated to be done through formal channels such as diocesan procedures or professional services related to domestic violence.

Support for the victim was explicitly mentioned by some 28% of clergy and lay leaders when responding to this question. This included such measures as pastoral care, organising accommodation, and referring to professional services such as legal support and professional counselling. The safety of the victim and/or family was explicitly mentioned by 8% of clergy and lay leaders.

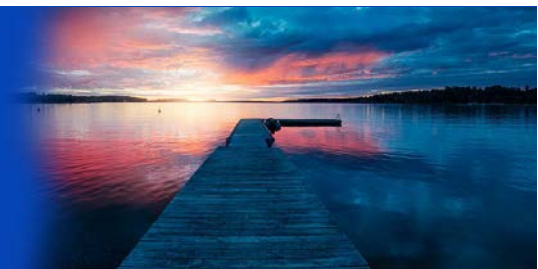
Other responses mentioned by small numbers of respondents included:

- The bishop remaining informed of the situation and providing general oversight, without further detail provided,
- Making arrangements for the affected parish,
- Prayer, and
- Mediation between the parties involved.

Key finding:

Using an open text format, around nine in ten respondents gave their views about the role of the bishop when a clergyperson is a victim or a perpetrator. Views most commonly expressed about the role of the bishop when a clergyperson is a victim was to provide pastoral support, and when a clergyperson is a perpetrator, to carry out discipline in accordance with church procedures. In both cases, the second most common response was that the bishop should seek the involvement of organisations and services outside of the church.

8 Discussion



This study sought to answer three questions:

1. What attitudes and knowledge do Anglican clergy and lay local church leaders have regarding domestic violence?
2. What practices are clergy and lay leaders engaging with in their local church contexts?
3. How equipped are clergy and lay leaders to respond?

We now discuss the findings for each of these questions in turn.

The results cannot be assumed to be representative of the wider population of Anglican clergy and lay leaders. Responses were received from approximately a quarter of Anglican parishes. All clergy were asked to participate, however, it is likely that the results are biased towards clergy with a stronger awareness of and interest in the topic. In terms of lay leader participation, the survey was communicated as being open to lay leaders in identified leadership positions within the local congregation who have a particular interest in issues concerning domestic violence. Therefore, the results only represent those who participated and paint a picture of stronger awareness, action and readiness to respond to domestic violence than is likely to be the case across Australian Anglican parishes as a whole.

8.1 Attitudes and knowledge regarding domestic violence

Concerning attitudes and knowledge, the respondents to this survey were well informed about domestic violence. Almost all of them understood not only physical and sexual violence but also controlling behaviours and psychological abuse to constitute domestic violence. In comparison to a survey of the Australian population undertaken three years earlier (NCAS, 2017), the clergy and lay leaders were more likely to indicate that psychological abuse and controlling behaviours comprised domestic violence. Over the last four years domestic violence has had an increasingly high profile in the Australian media, which may have improved general knowledge and understanding. Future waves of the NCAS may well indicate an increased awareness.

The large majority of clergy and lay leaders thought that it is more often men than women who commit domestic violence. This view aligns with wider evidence from various sources that it is mainly men, or men more often, who commit acts of domestic violence (ABS, 2017; Cox, 2015; Webster, et al. 2018).

When it came to factors that may lead people to use domestic violence towards their partner, overwhelming majorities (at least three quarters) of clergy thought that each of the factors listed in the survey were in play at least some of the time: one partner wanting to control or dominate the other, having an alcohol problem, having a narcissistic personality, impact of family dynamics from childhood, feeling insecure, lack of control in other parts of life, a cultural view that men should take

control in relationships, the way violence is shown in the media, pressure on men to be tough, social isolation, having anxiety or depression, lack of employment opportunities in the community. The factors considered by a majority to be present a lot of the time were one partner wanting to dominate or control the other, having an alcohol problem, and having a narcissistic personality. Narcissism was included in this survey because focus groups participants named it as an important factor.

It was possible to compare the results about factors implicated in abuse to the results for a general public sample, where the items were replicated (NCAS, 2017). Our survey respondents were more likely than the general public to view various factors as leading people to use domestic violence against their partner.

There is much that is positive news for the Anglican Church in these findings. Awareness of what constitutes domestic violence and of the gendered pattern of domestic violence perpetration was high and there was sensitivity to a wide array of factors that might contribute to the use of domestic violence against a partner. Moreover, nine in ten clergy and lay leaders agreed that domestic violence is common in Australia – indicating an awareness of the widespread nature of the problem. However, around six in ten clergy and lay leaders agreed that domestic violence is just as common in churches as it is in the wider community. A fifth to a quarter were neutral/unsure about this statement and the remainder disagreed. The wording of this question means that we are unable to gauge the extent to which those who didn't agree with the statement felt that domestic violence in the churches is more or less common than in the community. A view that domestic violence is less common in the churches is challenged by the available evidence from the NAFVP Prevalence Study which found that people who experience domestic violence are part of Anglican Church communities in similar or even higher proportions than the wider community. Domestic violence is a significant and widespread issue both for the Australian community and for Anglicans, among both frequent and non-frequent attenders. (See NAFVP Prevalence Study for details). These results suggest to those in leadership roles in churches that domestic violence is likely to be in their midst.

Questions about attitudes towards marriage and gender roles were included in the survey because they are important for understanding the dynamics of domestic violence in a Christian context. Church and the institution of marriage are deeply interwoven, particularly for churchgoers. Churches play an important role in socialising young people, marriage preparation, celebrations of marriage and more. However unintended it may be, teachings related to marriage, gender and forgiveness may be propagated by church leaders in ways that extend the cycle of domestic violence. In the Experience Study of people who had experienced domestic violence, it was common for interview participants to say that their sense of obligation to uphold their marriage vows was a contributing factor to them persisting in an abusive relationship. Likewise, some (female) participants spoke about how submission to their partner contributed to the dynamic of their abuse. In some cases, participants said that their abusive partners used obligations around the sanctity of marriage, the headship of the husband, and the imperative to forgive to control them. (See Experience Study for details.) Against this backdrop, we note that most clergy, across church traditions, agreed with the statement that “marriage is a sacred covenant which is important to preserve”.

Views on gender roles within marriage and the family varied strongly by tradition. The large majority of Anglo-Catholic clergy agreed with the statement that “there should be no gender restrictions on the roles men and women can fulfill in the church, home, and society” and disagreed with statements that dualised the roles of men and women in marriage. In contrast, the large majority of clergy from evangelical and reformed traditions agreed that “the husband is the head of the wife (as Christ is the head of the church), and the wife should submit to the husband”. However, endorsement of headship tended not to extend to “control” by the husband; around a third of evangelical and reformed clergy agreed that “men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household”, while a third were neutral and unsure and a third disagreed.

Clergy were aware of the potential for Christian teachings to be factors in abuse in Christian families. Misuse of Scripture by the abuser was viewed to be implicated at least some of the time by nine in ten clergy, while the theology of male headship was a factor at least some of the time for eight in ten clergy (seven in ten evangelicals, nine in ten Anglo-Catholics). Yet, just 10% of evangelical clergy viewed headship as a factor a lot of the time, compared with 39% who viewed misuse of Scripture as a factor a lot of the time.

The survey was not intended to assert or assess matters of doctrinal correctness. What this research project does highlight is that the reality of domestic violence needs to be taken into account with regard to how doctrines are taught lest they contribute to the vulnerability of those experiencing domestic violence. Insights from the Experience Study indicate that teachings related to marriage, gender and forgiveness may be propagated by church leaders in ways that extend the cycle of domestic violence, however unintentional this may be. Just as some teachings may be implicated in the cycle of violence, others can help those experiencing violence to break out of that cycle. (See Experience Study for more discussion).

8.2 Practices in local church contexts

The survey explored practices undertaken both by individual leaders and by their churches more generally. This discussion starts with actions that may be undertaken to build a proactive culture around domestic violence prevention and response, before moving to a discussion of actions undertaken by clergy in relation to specific domestic violence situations.

Churches can have a role in education about domestic violence. Among the participants in our Experience Study were people whose church had helped them to realise that they were experiencing domestic violence and that this wasn't acceptable. A sermon, or talking with their minister/pastor, helped provide a framework and language for their understanding. (See Experience Study.) In the present survey study, a slim majority of clergy and a large minority of lay leaders agreed that their church had taken steps to raise awareness of domestic violence. A range of ways of doing so were covered in the survey. Around seven in ten clergy and half of lay leaders reported that their church prayed for victims of domestic violence in the previous 12 months. A minority of clergy reported often or sometimes talking about domestic violence in public settings, including preaching.

According to clergy, other actions by churches, such as display of posters and leaflets, donations of money or goods or working with local organisations, occurred in around a third to half of churches. Fewer lay leaders reported these actions in their churches. The overall results, however, masked some considerable differences by church tradition. Around half of the churches of Anglo-Catholic clergy respondents had contributed to or collaborated with outside organisations, compared with around a quarter of the churches of evangelical and reformed clergy.

These results indicate a proactive stance on domestic violence in around half of churches whose clergy participated in the survey. There was widespread agreement among the clergy respondents that domestic violence is an issue that should be discussed in church and that local churches should do more to raise awareness of domestic violence. Almost all agreed that it is reasonable to expect clergy to address domestic violence within their ministry. Taken together, these results suggest a solid foundation on which to build and an openness to a more proactive stance in churches on domestic violence.

Three quarters of clergy had been aware of people in their churches who were victims of domestic violence, compared with approximately half who were aware of perpetrators. This may in part reflect

gendered patterns of church attendance. Six in ten church attenders in the Anglican Church are women (Powell et al, 2017). Given that domestic violence is more often perpetrated by men than women, and more often experienced by women than men, it is not surprising that clergy were less likely to encounter perpetrators than to encounter victims. Likewise, given the gendered experience of domestic violence, it is unsurprising that most clergy felt that having women on the pastoral team equips a church to better respond to domestic violence.

Most clergy surveyed had dealt with specific domestic violence situations as part of their ministry. The most common action, used by almost all clergy, was to provide pastoral and spiritual care to the victim, followed by referring the victim to support services. Similar actions that focused on the perpetrator were undertaken by a minority of clergy and half or the clergy had talked with the perpetrator about the violence. Half had counselled the victim and had assisted the victim with a safety assessment or safety plan. More interventionist actions such as contacting the police, providing the rectory as a refuge, or intervening to keep children safe were undertaken by a quarter of clergy.

Consistent with the greater propensity of Anglo-Catholic parishes who were represented in this study to contribute to or work with outside organisations was the greater use by their clergy, compared with their evangelical and reformed counterparts, of referral of victims to service agencies. This was a matter of degree – a large majority of evangelical and reformed clergy still did so. External organisations have specialist domestic violence experience and knowledge. Anglo-Catholic clergy were also more likely than evangelical and reformed clergy to take safety-related actions (contacting the police, making a child protection report, making an intervention to keep children safe), and less likely to talk with the perpetrator about the violence. On the other hand, evangelical and reformed clergy were more likely to approach the diocese for assistance. The lesser tendency for Anglo-Catholic clergy to talk with perpetrators is consistent with fewer clergy being aware of perpetrators at their church.

The actions undertaken by clergy in specific domestic violence situations broadly mirror clergy views on their responsibilities. There was very strong agreement that the victim's safety should be the clergy's top priority and that clergy should suggest that the victim seek support services. When a clergyperson has a relationship with both the victim and the perpetrator, most clergy thought they should focus more on supporting the victim than on supporting the perpetrator.

Two in ten clergy who had dealt with specific domestic violence situations provided marriage or couples counselling. When asked about clergy responsibilities when ministering to someone who has been abused by their partner, three in ten clergy agreed that clergy should provide couples counselling. Although not typical, these actions and views are concerning. Victims of domestic violence and services that support them maintain that couples counselling is ineffective and unsafe. It fails to address the unequal power in an abusive relationship and can place the victim at increased risk.

Dealing with domestic violence situations resulted in some negative impacts for most clergy, with fatigue being particularly common. Four in ten said they had experienced manipulation from a perpetrator of domestic violence. Domestic violence situations may be protracted and complex, and especially if both perpetrator and victim are a part of the same church. The impacts on clergy may be considerable. This survey question was a first foray into these matters.

Collaboration with clergy and leaders from other churches in relation to domestic violence was atypical. This survey question was non-specific and it is unclear what clergy were reporting on here. It could be as diverse as collaboration on educational programs, seeking information and advice from others, and perhaps even passing on information about particular domestic violence situations –

although the latter may be restricted due to confidentiality requirements and considerations. Three in ten had made contact with the diocese (informed or sought help) in relation to a specific domestic violence situation. Further investigations could look at other specific ways that clergy might have connected with other clergy and church leaders beyond their parish. Appropriate collaboration with colleagues may be a useful source of support in a difficult area of ministry.

8.3 How equipped are clergy and lay leaders to respond?

Survey respondents were, on the whole, knowledgeable about domestic violence in general terms, and most of the clergy had responded to specific domestic violence situations. A majority of clergy had received specific training. However, confidence in their personal capacity to respond to domestic violence was low to moderate. A majority felt confident to support domestic violence victims but a minority felt prepared to deal with domestic violence situations and to identify victims of domestic violence. Confidence was only a little higher among clergy who had been trained. This survey did not ask clergy to specify the content of the training that they had received nor to evaluate that training, but the present results suggest that in general, the training might not have improved the practical skills of the clergy.

Interview participants in our Experience study who felt they had been well-supported by their church often said that the pastoral support that they received from small groups in the church, such as Bible studies, was important to them, alongside other forms of help from clergy. (See Experience Study.) This indicates the value in a wider team-based approach in responding to domestic violence. Interestingly, although few leadership teams had received training in this area, clergy respondents were a little more likely to agree that their team knew how to respond to domestic violence situations than they themselves did personally. This might simply reflect an increased confidence in a group of people rather than relying on a lone individual. A minority of lay respondents to the survey had been trained and their confidence was relatively low. The Experience Study results point to the value of better equipping those with pastoral care and small group leadership responsibilities.

Almost all clergy felt that it was their responsibility when ministering to a victim of domestic violence to help them to access support services, and most who had dealt with domestic violence situations had done so. Yet, a minority felt very confident to make these referrals. They were more likely to feel “somewhat confident”. A small minority felt unconfident. Similarly, a minority were very familiar with support services for victims, with the bulk of clergy indicating that they were “somewhat familiar” with them. Levels of familiarity with support services for perpetrators and confidence to refer perpetrators to them were lower. A minority of clergy had referred a perpetrator to such services.

Familiarity with resources (e.g. documents, training, support) from the diocese was moderate. Ratings of diocesan support for churches to respond to domestic violence was fairly evenly spread from excellent support to very poor support. Familiarity with resources from other parts of the Anglican church or from other Christian groups was lower. On the whole these results indicate that more could be done to train and support clergy and people in leadership, with a focus especially on concrete ways to respond in domestic violence situations.

Views on the bishop’s role in responding to domestic violence situations involving clergy were sought in this survey through open text questions. This format of question was used to gauge what is top of mind for people on a given topic. When a clergyperson is a victim of domestic violence, the most views most commonly expressed were first, that the bishop should provide pastoral support, and second,

that they should seek the involvement of organisations and services specifically designed to deal with such situations. In cases where a clergyperson is a perpetrator of domestic violence, the views most commonly expressed were that, first, the bishop should carry out discipline accordance with church procedures, and second, that they should seek the involvement of organisations and services outside of the church. It is notable that specific mentions of the safety of the victim(s) were not more common in these responses. This is not to say that respondents did not think that the bishop should prioritise the victim's safety, but that it was not foremost in their thoughts when asking what the bishop should do. Upholding the victim's safety is an even greater imperative in situations where both partners are embedded in a church community and where the perpetrator has particular power because of their role.

8.4 Conclusion

This survey study explored the attitudes, knowledge, practices and training of clergy and lay leaders regarding intimate partner violence. Levels of awareness and knowledge were high among the respondents. A greater awareness of the ways in which church teachings around marriage, gender and forgiveness may contribute to the dynamics of domestic violence in a Christian context would be helpful. A strong minority of churches had taken proactive action through measures such as preaching and working with domestic violence organisations. Most clergy, but few lay leaders, had dealt with specific domestic violence situations. Yet, levels of confidence in dealing with such situations were low or moderate, including among those who had received training about domestic violence. On the whole, these results indicate that more could be done to support churches to take a proactive role on domestic violence as well as to train and support clergy and people in leadership, with a focus especially on concrete ways to respond to domestic violence situations.

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10 Appendices



10.1 Appendix A: Text for Diocesan Invitations for Expressions of Interest

Are you interested in contributing to a research project that explores Anglican clergy and lay leader responses to intimate partner violence? If so, please visit <https://surveys.ncls.org.au/NAFVP/EOIFocusGroup.aspx> to express your interest.

The Anglican General Synod has commissioned NCLS Research (with Charles Sturt University) to conduct the National Anglican Family Violence Project (<http://ncls.org.au/research/NAFVP>). The purpose of this study is to understand how Anglican clergy and local church leaders currently engage with issues of intimate partner violence (IPV) in the context of their local church, and thereby help to guide church policy and practice in relation to equipping clergy and lay leaders to respond to these issues.

NCLS Research is conducting focus groups with clergy in three dioceses (Gippsland, South Queensland and Sydney). You are being invited to offer your experience of and perspective on responding to IPV in the context of your local congregation. The researchers are interested in a wide diversity of experiences and views.

You will need to attend for around two hours. The focus group discussion will cover:

- The seriousness and causes of IPV
- The role of clergy and other church leaders in addressing IPV
- Actions taken by clergy and other leaders to address IPV
- Resources to assist clergy and leaders to respond

While findings will help guide church policy and practice, there is a risk of psychological or emotional distress for focus group participants. Your safety is paramount and a plan has been developed to minimise the risk of distress and to respond appropriately if it occurs.

If you are interested in finding out more, visit <https://surveys.ncls.org.au/NAFVP/EOIFocusGroup.aspx>. You can provide your name, church name, role at church and a brief statement about why you wish to be involved, via an online form on the website. This information will go directly to NCLS Research.

NCLS Research will approach a suitable number of participants with more detailed information, including time and location. Once you have reviewed this information, you will need to confirm your participation. If you are not needed for the study, NCLS Research will let you know.

Thank you for considering this invitation to be involved in this important project.

10.2 Appendix B: Text for Web Invitation to Join Focus Groups

Invitation to join focus groups for Clergy and Local Church Leader Study National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP)

You are invited to take part in important research commissioned by the Anglican General Synod that explores Anglican clergy and lay leader responses to intimate partner violence.

Will you join a focus group of 8 to 12 people in one of three dioceses (Gippsland, Sydney and Southern Queensland) for around 2 hours?

You will give your experience of and perspective on responding to intimate partner violence in the context of your local church. How equipped do you feel to deal with issues of intimate partner violence? What are your views and practices? These discussions will inform a survey for leaders in a national sample of Anglican parishes.

Please read the [Focus Group Participant Information Sheet](#) before giving an expression of interest. It is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the background information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

Expression of Interest
I am interested in being
considered as a focus group
participant

[\[https://surveys.ncls.org.au/NAFVP/EOI-focusgroup\]](https://surveys.ncls.org.au/NAFVP/EOI-focusgroup)

More information

- About the National Anglican Family Violence Project (NAFVP)
- Invitation from Anglican Church leadership
- Focus Group Participant Information Sheet

The NAFVP has been commissioned by the Anglican Church Family Violence Working Group

- About the Family Violence Working Group
- About the NCLS Research team

10.3 Appendix C: Focus Group Participant Information Statement

Focus Group Participant Information Statement National Anglican Family Violence Project Clergy and Local Church Leader Study

Invitation

You are invited to participate in a study of Anglican clergy and lay leader responses to intimate partner violence.

The study is being conducted by Dr Ruth Powell and Dr Miriam Pepper from NCLS Research and the Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre, Charles Sturt University.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in this study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to understand how Anglican clergy and local church leaders currently engage with issues of intimate partner violence (IPV) in the context of their local church, and thereby help to guide church policy and practice in relation to equipping clergy and lay leaders to respond to these issues. Violence between intimate partners – those who are or were in a married or de facto relationship or a dating relationship – is a serious and widespread problem in Australia. IPV may be of various kinds – including physical, sexual, psychological, spiritual, emotional. IPV is not only individual violent acts, but also patterns of sustained violence wherein a person tries to intimidate and control their partner or former partner.

The study will address the following questions:

1. What attitudes and knowledge do Anglican clergy and lay local church leaders have regarding IPV?
2. What practices are they engaging with in their local church contexts?
3. How equipped are they to respond?

It will use a mixed methods approach with two phases: focus groups followed by an online survey.

Why have I been invited to participate in this study?

NCLS Research is conducting focus groups with clergy in three dioceses (Gippsland, Brisbane and Southern Queensland) to assist with framing and design of the online survey. You are being invited to offer your experience of and perspective on responding to IPV in the context of your local church.

What does this study involve?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in a 120-minute focus group with other clergy from the churches in your diocese. The focus group will be conducted at the offices of your diocese.

The discussion will cover:

- The seriousness and causes of IPV
- The role of clergy and other church leaders in addressing IPV
- Actions taken by clergy and other leaders to address IPV
- Resources to assist clergy and leaders to respond

Focus groups will be facilitated by Dr Ruth Powell and will be audio recorded and transcribed.

At the conclusion of the group, you will also be asked to complete a brief questionnaire including demographic information (e.g. age), your role in your parish, and the church tradition with which you identify.

Are there risks and benefits to me in taking part in this study?

Findings from this study will help guide church policy and practice in relation to equipping clergy and lay leaders to respond to issues related to IPV.

There is a risk of psychological or emotional distress for focus group participants. The research process may trigger recall of participants' own experiences of violence or the experiences of people close to them. In the context of their roles as clergy, most focus group participants are likely to have interacted with those who have experienced IPV and/or those who have perpetrated it. Participants may also experience distress from listening to other focus group participants.

Your safety is paramount to the study. A plan has been developed to minimise the risk of distress and to respond appropriately if it occurs:

- The focus groups are not designed for detailed disclosures of personal experiences of IPV, and the facilitator will take actions to maintain a safe space for participants.
- An observer with counselling experience will be present, whose dedicated role is to observe the group interactions for signs of distress. The observer's presence will be explained to the participants at the beginning of the focus group.
- If a participant becomes distressed, the facilitator will pause the discussion. The observer will be available to provide immediate support to the participant if they wish to withdraw.
- Information about support services within and outside of the Anglican Church will be provided to all participants.

How is this study being paid for?

The project is commissioned and paid for by the Anglican General Synod as part of the National Anglican Family Violence Project. The project has been established as a result of a motion at the 2017 Synod: <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2017/09/australian-anglicans-sorry-for-complicity-in-domestic-violence.aspx>

Will taking part in this study (or travelling to) cost me anything, and will I be paid?
There will be no reimbursements or payments to participants in this study.

What if I don't want to take part in this study?

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who give their informed consent will be included in the project. Whether or not you decide to participate, is your decision and will not disadvantage you.

If you choose to participate in the study, you may choose not to answer specific questions that are put to you in the focus group.

What if I participate and want to withdraw later?

You may withdraw from the focus group at any time during the course of the discussion. However it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data due to the interactive nature of the discussion and the impact that withdrawal of your individual data could have on the discussion.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

Any information collected by the researchers which might identify you will be stored securely and only accessed by the researchers unless you consent otherwise, except as required by law. There are limits on assurances of confidentiality as law may subpoena research data/records.

The researchers will not identify you personally in the focus group transcript or any project outputs. The interview transcriber will have signed and be bound by a confidentiality agreement. Focus group participants will also be asked to protect the confidentiality of the discussion.

Data from focus groups will be retained for at least 5 years at the offices of NCLS Research. The primary purpose of the focus groups is to inform the design of an online survey to be distributed more widely.

What will happen to the information that I give you?

Focus group discussion data will be analysed to identify attitudinal themes and specific examples of ministry practices and approaches within Anglican clergy. This data will assist with framing and design of the online survey. This will include the choice and wording of questions to include in the survey. Quotes from the focus groups may also be used in outputs from the full study to illustrate online survey results. If necessary, some details will be changed to ensure that anonymity is retained.

Project outputs will include:

A full research report and a headline report will be provided to the Working Group. A public version of the report will be made available on the NCLS Research project website.

A verbal briefing will be made to the Anglican General Synod Family Violence Working Group or other identified groups.

It is likely that the researchers will also be asked to speak at clergy conferences, Synod meetings and in other settings.

Peer-review publications such as academic papers are also likely.

What should I do if I want to discuss this study further before I decide?

If you would like further information, contact Dr Ruth Powell, rpowell@ncls.org.au, phone 02 9139 2525, or visit <http://www.ncls.org.au/research/family-violence-project>.

Who should I contact if I have concerns about the conduct of this study?

Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee on (02) 6933 4213 or ethics@csu.edu.au, and quote reference H19306. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Conclusion

Thank you for considering this invitation. This information sheet is for you to keep.

Researchers

Information about NCLS Research can be found online: www.ncls.org.au

Chief Investigator: Ruth Powell, PhD, BA

Director, NCLS Research

Associate Professor, Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre

Co-investigator: Miriam Pepper, PhD, MScTech, BEng, BA

Researcher, NCLS Research

Research Fellow, Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre

Plus other project researchers and external expert consultants

Anglican Church Family Violence Working Group

This Working Group is chaired by Reverend Tracy Lauersen.

Contact Rev'd Lauersen at: fvwg@anglican.org.au

Information about the role of the Working Group can be found online:

<https://anglican.org.au/our-work/family-violence/>

10.4 Appendix D: Expression of Interest for Focus Group Participation

Expression of Interest for Focus Group Participation

[\[https://surveys.ncls.org.au/NAFVP/EOI-focusgroup\]](https://surveys.ncls.org.au/NAFVP/EOI-focusgroup)

I am interested in being considered as a focus group participant for the National Anglican Family Violence Project study titled "Clergy and Local Church Leader Study".

I understand that NCLS Research will make the final selection of focus group participants.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Church Name: _____

Church Address: _____

Role at church: _____

Age: 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70+ years _____

Gender: _____

☐ I have read the Focus Group Participant Information Sheet: [tick box]

Why I would like to be considered as a focus group participant: *(please provide a brief statement)*

**Submit Expression of
Interest**

10.5 Appendix E: Focus Group Consent Form

Focus Group Consent Form National Anglican Family Violence Project Clergy and Local Church Leader Study

Researchers:

Chief Investigator: Ruth Powell, PhD, BA

Director, NCLS Research, Associate Professor, Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre

Co-investigator: Miriam Pepper, PhD, MScTech, BEng, BA

Researcher, NCLS Research, Research Fellow, Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre

Consent:

I agree to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely.

I understand that the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have retained.

I consent to participating in a focus group and the discussion being recorded and transcribed.

I understand that I can withdraw from the focus group at any time, and that I do not need to give a reason for withdrawing, however I cannot withdraw my data.

I understand that I may experience emotional distress due to my participation in this research.

I understand that my personal information will remain confidential to researchers, except as required by law.

I understand that the researchers will not identify me personally in the transcript or any project outputs.

I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.

I wish to receive a summary of the research results when available (*please circle*): YES / NO

My preferred method of delivery is (*please circle*) EMAIL/ POSTAL.

Please provide further contact details (*email address/postal address*) if you want a copy of the results:

Your Name _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

NOTE: Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project.

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Ethics and Compliance Unit via the following contact details:

The Governance Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Ethics and Compliance Unit

Locked Bag 588, Wagga Wagga NSW 2678 Tel: (02) 6933 4628 Email: ethics@csu.edu.au

Please quote reference: H19306

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

10.6 Appendix F: Focus Group Guide

Focus Group Guide National Anglican Family Violence Project Clergy and Local Church Leader Study

5 mins	<p>BRIEFING</p> <p>In this discussion we will be talking about your understanding of intimate partner violence in your churches, and how you as clergy are responding. Our focus is violence between current or former intimate partners. As you've read in the participant information statement, this includes different kinds of violence. This session is not designed for detailed disclosure of having personally experienced violence from an intimate partner or having perpetrated it – it is about how you as clergy and leaders are responding to intimate partner violence in your local church context.</p> <p>We're interested in your perspectives. There are no wrong answers. Your contribution will help us to design a survey of clergy and local church leader views of and responses to intimate partner violence.</p> <p>Please be aware of confidentiality. Please protect the identities of people about whom you speak. And please protect the confidentiality of today's discussion once it is over.</p> <p>Your safety is paramount to the study. A plan has been developed to minimise the risk of distress and to respond appropriately if it occurs.</p> <p>Participation is voluntary and you may choose to leave the discussion at any time.</p> <p>[Name] is a trained counsellor and their role today is to observe the group for signs of distress.</p> <p>If a participant becomes distressed, I will pause the discussion so we can assist them. [Name] is available to provide immediate support to a participant if they wish to withdraw.</p> <p>Information about support services within and outside of the Anglican Church has been provided to you.</p>
5 mins	<p>INTRODUCTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What is your name, parish in which you are in ministry, what is your ministry role there?

20 mins	<p>ABOUT INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. We know that intimate partner violence is a problem in Australia. To what extent do you think intimate partner violence is a problem in your congregation? 3. What do you think are the causes of intimate partner violence?
40 mins	<p>ADDRESSING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. As a person in ministry in an Anglican parish, what do you think your role should be in relation to intimate partner violence? 5. And how about the role of the parish leadership team more broadly? 6. When you have been approached for help by somebody who has experienced intimate partner violence, what actions have you taken? And what about when the person has been an active part of the congregation, versus someone from the wider community? 7. What about when you have been approached by somebody who has perpetrated intimate partner violence? And what about when the person has been an active part of the congregation, versus someone from the wider community? 8. Are you taking any other actions to address intimate partner violence in your local ministry context? If yes, what actions?
20 mins	<p>EQUIPPING CLERGY AND LEADERS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What resources are you aware of, including from your diocese, that are available to you to help you to address intimate partner violence? 2. How equipped do you feel to address intimate partner violence in your congregation (parish)? 3. Have you received any training? What was the training? 4. What do you think would help you to become better equipped?
10 mins	<p>CLOSE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Are there any further comments you would like to make about intimate partner violence in the church?

10.7 Appendix G: Focus Group Participant Distress Protocol

Focus Group Participant Distress Protocol National Anglican Family Violence Project Clergy and Local Church Leader Study

Protocol outline

This protocol outlines the process for managing distress in the context of the clergy and local church leader focus groups that are being undertaken as a part of the National Anglican Family Violence Project. The focus groups explore clergy and local church leader responses to intimate partner violence in the context of their local churches.

All focus group participants will be provided information regarding support services should it be required, including diocesan contacts, professional counsellors from within the Anglican Church and support services outside of the Anglican Church. This information will be made available across all phases of participation, upon consent, and at the focus group.

A trained counsellor will be present at the group discussion whose dedicated role is to observe the group interactions for signs of distress and intervene if necessary. They will be introduced to the group and given permission to interrupt proceedings to check the wellbeing of a participant. The observer will also be available to provide immediate support to a participant if they wish to withdraw from the group.

Should a participant demonstrate emotional discomfort or distress while participating, the following actions will be taken:

- The observer will ask the facilitator to pause the discussion and will check if the person would like to continue their involvement.
- If the participant wishes to withdraw, the observer will accompany the participant and provide assistance, within the scope of the study and the observer's role and purpose, to discuss concerns and provide reassurance and immediate support.
- The participant will be provided with follow-up information about support services.
- With consent and agreement from the participant a follow-up phone call will be made by the observer the following day to ensure that the participant is alright. During this time, contact information regarding support services can (again) be provided if required.

Detailed description of steps to be taken

Distress

A participant indicates they are expressing distress, discomfort or emotional distress AND/OR the participant is displaying behaviours suggestive that the session is overwhelming and that they may not be coping i.e. restlessness, avoiding eye contact, withdrawn, standing up, pacing, fidgeting etc.

Stage 1: Response

- The observer will ask the facilitator to pause the discussion
- The observer will supportively assess wellbeing using prompts such as:
 - o It looks like you are not doing so well right now. Is there anything I can do?
 - o What can I/we do to help you feel safe?
 - o Do you feel you are able to continue to participate in the focus group today?
- If the participant is unable to carry on, observer to offer the participant to withdraw from the room and accompany them to safe, quiet area
- Facilitator to recommence interview

Stage 2: Response

- If the participant has withdrawn from the group, observer to encourage participant to discuss concerns with their support network (if appropriate – usual source of pastoral support, supervisor, family member, carer, friend, GP or mental health provider, or support service information provided to participants)
- Offer, with participant consent, for observer to contact the identified supports above on their behalf if they do not feel able

Follow up

- Encourage the participant to call their support networks identified above if he/she experiences increased distress in the hours/days following the interview AND/OR provide appropriate service and/or support details
- With consent and agreement from the participant a follow-up phone call will be made by the observer the following day to ensure that the participant is alright. During this time, contact information regarding support services in the community can (again) be provided if required

Acknowledgment:

This document has been prepared with reference to a Psychological Distress Protocol developed by Kathleen McPhillips, University of Newcastle, for her research.

10.8 Appendix H: Data Anonymity Protocol

Data Anonymity Protocol National Anglican Family Violence Project Clergy and Local Church Leader Study

Acknowledgement:

This document has been adapted from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health procedures

Anonymising procedures

The term 'anonymise' is used to describe the process whereby qualitative data (i.e. participant comments) are altered so that participants are unlikely to be identified.

1. *Responsibility:* Anonymising of all qualitative data will be the responsibility of the Chief Investigator (CI). While team members may deidentify the data, the responsibility for ethical procedures and compliance with these guidelines remains with the CI.
2. *General guidelines for anonymising qualitative data*
 - Dates are removed.
 - Names are replaced with {name}, and addresses with {address}.
 - Names can be replaced with the person's relationship to the participant or their title. For example: {son} {mother} {family member} {friend} {family doctor} {solicitor}
 - Location names can be replaced with: {capital city} {other metropolitan} {large rural} {small rural} {remote}
 - Place names to be replaced by a short descriptor in braces. e.g. {regional centre hospital} or {capital city courthouse}
 - Other less general potential identifiers have been noted, such as unique characteristics (eg. awards) and specific disabilities involving multiple family members. These types of identifiers can be anonymised by changing the characteristics involved, family make-up or other details that do not affect the nature of the analysis being conducted.
 - Where potential participant recognition occurs the CI must be consulted. The liaison will ensure that the participant's data are removed from the dataset.
 - Where a participant is very transparent and specific in their comments, in consultation with the CI, the analyst must decide if the data can be anonymised without losing meaning.
3. *Outputs:* All outputs will be vetted by the CI prior to publication in any form (presentation, journal paper etc).
4. *Data security:* All electronic copies of the data must be password protected. If any data are to be printed they must first be anonymised. Raw data are not to be printed. Any printed data must be held securely in keeping with NHMRC guidelines; in a locked cabinet on the premises of their institution.

Source:

<http://www.alsw.org.au/how-to-access-the-data/alsw-data>

Document G: Qualitative Processing Protocols Updated September 2014

http://www.alsw.org.au/images/content/pdf/Extra_Files_for_Website/Access_Data/Doc%20G%20Qualitative%20Processing%20Protocols%20sept2014.pdf

10.9 Appendix I: Invitation to take part in online survey

To clergy and lay leaders of the Anglican Church of Australia

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I write to ask you to take part in important research, via an online survey, that explores Anglican clergy and lay leader responses to intimate partner violence.

The Church has much to offer in terms of prevention and by helping victims but needs a better understanding of the nature of the violence in its own church communities. For this reason, the Anglican General Synod appointed the Family Violence Working Group in December 2017. One of their tasks was to establish a professionally designed, independent research study into the nature and prevalence of family violence within the Australian Anglican Church population.

The Church has engaged NCLS Research to undertake the research which is titled the National Anglican Family Violence Project. This study for clergy is one of three studies that make up the project.

Your parish has been randomly selected from all Anglican parishes to take part. I encourage you to help our Church by completing a confidential and anonymous online survey. Results will help to guide Church policy and practice in relation to equipping clergy and lay leaders to respond to these difficult issues. The survey is for:

- Anglican clergy in active ministry in selected parishes, and
- Lay people in identified leadership positions within these parishes who have a particular interest in issues concerning family violence.

Further information for participants has been provided by the NCLS Research team. Once you have reviewed this information, I encourage you to complete the survey.

Your parish survey code is: XXXXX
[Web link - <https://surveys.ncls.org.au/NAFVP/clergy>]

Grace and peace in Christ Jesus

*The Most Reverend Dr Philip L Freier Archbishop
of Melbourne & Primate of the Anglican Church of
Australia.*

Anglican Church of Australia
General Synod Office
www.anglican.org.au

*Reverend Tracy Lauersen,
Convenor: Family Violence Working Group,
Anglican Church of Australia*

T: 0414 971 043
E: tracy.lauersen@gmail.com;
fvwg@anglican.org.au About the Family
Violence Working Group:
<https://anglican.org.au/our-work/family-violence/>

About the Project:
<http://ncls.org.au/research/NAFVP>

10.10 Appendix J: Survey Participant Information Statement

Survey Participant Information Statement National Anglican Family Violence Project Clergy and Local Church Leader Survey

Invitation

You are invited to participate in a study of Anglican clergy and lay leader responses to intimate partner violence. The participants in this study will be:

- Anglican clergy in active ministry in local parishes, and
- Lay people in identified leadership positions within these parishes have a particular interest in issues concerning family violence.

<https://surveys.ncls.org.au/NAFVP/clergy>

The study is being conducted by Dr Ruth Powell and Dr Miriam Pepper from NCLS Research and the Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre, Charles Sturt University.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in this study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to understand how Anglican clergy and local church leaders currently engage with issues of intimate partner violence (IPV) in the context of their local church, and thereby help to guide church policy and practice in relation to equipping clergy and lay leaders to respond to these issues. Violence between intimate partners – those who are or were in a married or de facto relationship or a dating relationship – is a serious and widespread problem in Australia. IPV may be of various kinds – including physical, sexual, psychological, spiritual, emotional. IPV is not only individual violent acts, but also patterns of sustained violence wherein a person tries to intimidate and control their partner or former partner.

The study will address the following questions:

1. What attitudes and knowledge do Anglican clergy and lay leaders have regarding IPV?
2. What practices are they engaging with in their local church contexts?
3. How equipped are they to respond?

Why have I been invited to participate in this study?

Participants are from randomly selected parishes across dioceses and include:

- Anglican clergy in active ministry in parishes, and
- Lay people in identified leadership positions within these same parishes who have a particular interest in issues concerning family violence.

What does this study involve?

You will need to complete an online survey of approximately 30 minutes duration. If you wish to use a paper survey option, this will be made available on request. The survey will enable an assessment of knowledge, opinions and practices of clergy and other lay leaders in relation to IPV, and how these vary across the Anglican churches. It will include questions about:

- Perception of the seriousness of IPV, what IPV is and what causes it
- Views about the role of clergy and other church leaders in addressing IPV
- Actions currently taken to respond to IPV
- Awareness of policies, services and other resources to help churches to respond to IPV
- How equipped clergy and leaders feel to address IPV
- Gender roles in the family
- The leader's demographics and role in the church
- Basic characteristics of the local church

Are there risks and benefits to taking part in this study?

Findings from this study will help guide church policy and practice in relation to equipping clergy and lay leaders to respond to issues related to IPV. There is a risk of psychological or emotional distress for survey participants. The research process may trigger recall of participants' own experiences of violence or the experiences of people close to them. Most participants will be clergy who, in the context of their roles as religious professionals are likely to have interacted with those who have experienced IPV and/or those who have perpetrated it.

Information about support services within and outside of the Anglican Church is available on the project website [web link: <http://www.ncls.org.au/NAFVP/support-services>]

How is this study being paid for?

The project is commissioned and paid for by the Anglican General Synod as part of the National Anglican Family Violence Project. The project has been established as a result of a motion at the 2017 Synod.

Will taking part in this study (or travelling to) cost me anything, and will I be paid?

There will be no reimbursements or payments to participants in this study.

What if I don't want to take part in this study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are not under any obligation to participate. By completing the survey you are consenting to take part in the research. You can withdraw from the study at any time questions without adverse consequences.

What if I participate and want to withdraw later?

You cannot withdraw after you have completed the survey, as the survey is anonymous.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

This is an anonymous survey and no data will be collected which will identify you. Results will be reported on in aggregate. Data will be retained for at least 5 years at the offices of NCLS Research and survey data will also be suitably stored in a CSU data repository as an anonymised dataset with appropriate terms and conditions for access.

You will be asked to enter a code and to indicate your role in the parish. However, this information is stored separately from survey responses and will only be used to check that parishes have submitted responses.

What will happen to the information that I give you?

Project outputs will include:

- A project status report will be made to the 2020 Anglican General Synod
- A full research report and a headline report will be provided to the Working Group. A public version of the report will be made available on the NCLS Research project website.
- A verbal briefing will be made to the Anglican General Synod Family Violence Working Group or other identified groups.
- It is likely that the researchers will also be asked to speak at clergy conferences, Synod meetings and in other settings.
- Peer-review publications such as academic papers are also likely.

What should I do if I want to discuss this study further before I decide?

If you would like further information, contact Dr Ruth Powell, rpowell@ncls.org.au, phone 02 9139 2525, or visit <http://www.ncls.org.au/research/naftp>.

Who should I contact if I have concerns about the conduct of this study?

Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee on (02) 6933 4213 or ethics@csu.edu.au, and quote reference H19306. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Conclusion

Thank you for considering this invitation. This information sheet is for you to keep.

Researchers

Information about NCLS Research can be found online: www.ncls.org.au

Chief Investigator: Ruth Powell, PhD, BA
Director, NCLS Research
Associate Professor, Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre

Co-investigator: Miriam Pepper, PhD, MScTech, BEng, BA
Researcher, NCLS Research
Research Fellow, Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre

Plus other project researchers and external expert consultants



Anglican Church Family Violence Working Group

This Working Group is chaired by Reverend Tracy Lauersen
Contact Rev'd Lauersen at: fvwg@anglican.org.au

Information about the role of the Working Group can be found online:
<https://anglican.org.au/our-work/family-violence/>



10.11 Appendix K: Survey instrument

Some survey items were adapted from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (ABS 2018). These are identified with an asterisk. The format for response options were taken from the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (AuSSA, run by ANU). Other questions emerged as a result of a thematic analysis of clergy focus group discussions. A few items were adapted from wider literature on domestic violence in religious contexts (e.g. Aune & Barnes 2018). More general questions were taken from Attender Surveys in National Church Life Surveys (NCLS) and the Australian Community Surveys run by NCLS Research.

Text

About you

What is your age (in years)?

—

What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other

What is the highest educational qualification you have completed?

- ☐ No formal schooling
- ☐ Some primary school
- ☐ Completed primary school
- ☐ Some secondary school
- ☐ Completed secondary school
- ☐ Trade certificate
- ☐ Diploma or associate diploma
- ☐ Bachelor degree from a university or equivalent institution
- ☐ Postgraduate degree or diploma

What is the highest level of ministry qualification you have obtained?

- ☐ No formal qualification
- ☐ Ongoing training on the job
- ☐ A lay preacher's or other relevant certificate
- ☐ Bible college qualification
- ☐ Diploma in theology/ministry
- ☐ Degree in theology/ministry
- ☐ Postgraduate diploma or degree
- ☐ Doctorate

Where were you born?

- ☐ Australia
- ☐ New Zealand
- ☐ Pacific Islands
- ☐ Great Britain
- ☐ Ireland (incl. N. Ireland)
- ☐ Italy
- ☐ Malta
- ☐ Other Southern Europe
- ☐ Northern or Western Europe
- ☐ Eastern Europe/former USSR
- ☐ Middle East/North Africa
- ☐ Republic of South Africa
- ☐ Other Africa
- ☐ Mauritius
- ☐ North America
- ☐ Central or South America
- ☐ China/Hong Kong
- ☐ Korea
- ☐ Vietnam
- ☐ Philippines
- ☐ India/Sri Lanka
- ☐ Other Asia
- ☐ Don't know

About your ministry role

You have been approached to complete this survey as a clergy person or person in leadership at your church.

Which of the following best describes your ministry position at your church? (*Mark ALL that apply*)

- ☐ The rector, vicar or senior minister of the parish
- ☐ A priest in a ministry team in the parish, but not the rector/vicar/senior minister
- ☐ Curate
- ☐ Deacon or deaconness
- ☐ A lay person in a leadership role in the parish (please specify role):
- ☐ Other (please specify):

How many years have you been in this position?

___ Years

If you are a clergy person, how many years have you been in ordained ministry?

___ Years

I have not been ordained

Are you paid a salary/receive a stipend for your role here?

- ☐ Yes, full payment
- ☐ Yes, partial payment
- ☐ No, but some allowances for work
- ☐ No, nothing at all

Approximately how many hours in a typical week do you spend in congregational/parish ministry?

___ Hours

Do you preach at church services (services of worship)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How many times would you preach at a church service in a year?

___ Times per year

Do you identify with any of the following approaches to matters of faith? (*Mark up to TWO options*)

- ☐ Anglo-Catholic or Catholic
- ☐ Charismatic
- ☐ Evangelical
- ☐ Liberal
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Pentecostal
- ☐ Progressive
- ☐ Reformed
- ☐ Traditionalist
- ☐ I do not identify with such descriptions

Views on marriage and roles in the family

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Marriage is a sacred covenant that is always important to preserve

Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

The husband is the head of the wife (as Christ is the head of the church), and the wife should submit to the husband

Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

There should be no gender restrictions on the roles men and women can fulfill in the church, home, and society*

Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

Women prefer a man to be in charge of the relationship*

Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

Men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household*

Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

Views on domestic violence

By domestic violence we mean violence between intimate partners. That is, violence in a married or de-facto relationship or amongst couples who are dating.

Please indicate whether or not you regard the following sorts of behaviour as domestic violence.*

One partner in a domestic relationship slaps or pushes the other partner to cause harm or fear*

One partner in a domestic relationship forces the other partner to have sex*

No, not domestic violence

One partner in a domestic relationship tries to scare or control the other partner by threatening to hurt other family members*

One partner in a domestic relationship repeatedly criticises the other one to make them feel bad or useless*

One partner in a domestic relationship throws or smashes objects near the other partner to frighten or threaten them*

One partner in a domestic relationship controls the social life of the other partner by preventing them from seeing family and friends*

One partner in a domestic relationship tries to control the other partner by denying them money*

One partner in a domestic relationship repeatedly keeps track of the other's location, calls or activities through their mobile phone or other electronic devices without their consent*

One partner in a domestic relationship uses religion to denigrate, manipulate or control the other partner

☐ Yes, always domestic violence

☐ Yes, usually domestic violence

☐ Yes, sometimes domestic violence

☐ No, not domestic violence

Do you think that it is mainly men, mainly women or both men and women that commit acts of domestic violence?*

☐ Mainly men

☐ Both - but men more often

☐ Both - equally

☐ Both - but women more often

☐ Mainly women

How much do you agree or disagree with the following?

Domestic violence is common in Australia

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

The following are a list of factors that may lead some people to use domestic violence towards their partner. In your view, are each of the following a factor in domestic violence a lot of the time, some of the time, rarely or not at all?

Having an alcohol problem*

Having anxiety or depression*

Having a narcissistic personality

Feeling insecure

One partner wanting to control or dominate the other partner*

Lack of control in other aspects of life

Impact of family dynamics from childhood

Lack of employment opportunities in the community*

Social isolation

The way violence is shown in the media*

Pressure on men to be tough*

A cultural view that men should take control in relationships

- ☐ A lot of the time
- ☐ Some of the time
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Not at all

In your view, are each of the following a factor in domestic violence in Christian families a lot of the time, some of the time, rarely or not at all?

The theology of male headship

- ☐ A lot of the time
- ☐ Some of the time
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Not at all

Misuse of Scripture by the abuser

- ☐ A lot of the time
- ☐ Some of the time
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Not at all

Churches and domestic violence

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Domestic violence is just as common in churches as it is in the wider community

It is reasonable to expect clergy to address domestic violence within their ministry

If clergy suspect someone is a victim of domestic violence, clergy should talk with them about it

Domestic violence is a topic that should not be discussed in church

When dealing with a specific domestic violence situation, clergy's top priority should be the victim's safety

When clergy have a relationship with both the victim and the perpetrator, they should focus more on supporting the victim than supporting the perpetrator

Having women on the pastoral team equips a church to better respond to domestic violence

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Do you agree or disagree that the following are part of clergy responsibilities when ministering to someone who has been abused by their partner?

Talk with the victim about the abuse

Talk with the abuser about their violent behaviour

Suggest the victim seek support services for domestic violence

Give the victim information on support services

Contact the police

Suggest that the victim seek mental health help

Help the victim to understand the impact of abuse on their mental and spiritual wellbeing

Help the victim to improve their social support and coping skills

Provide couples counseling for the victim and their partner

Suggest that the victim pray harder

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Responses to domestic violence.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I feel well prepared to deal with domestic violence situations

I am confident that I can identify victims of domestic violence

I am confident that I can support victims of domestic violence

My church has taken steps to raise awareness of domestic violence

My church needs to do more to raise awareness of domestic violence

My church is adequately equipped to respond to disclosure of domestic violence

The leadership team of my church know how to respond to domestic violence situations that may arise in our church

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Various actions may be taken in churches to create a culture of domestic violence prevention and response. Please indicate the frequency of each of the following at your church, over the course of a year.

I have preached about domestic violence

I have preached about healthy marital relationships

I have talked about domestic violence during worship services or other public gatherings

I have said publicly that I am available to support people who are experiencing domestic violence

- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

The leaders of this church do not tolerate sexist remarks about women

- ☐ Often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

In the past 12 months have any of the following happened at this church?

Prayers have been said at church for people experiencing domestic violence

The church has donated money or goods to a domestic violence organisation

The church has worked with a local refuge, safe house or domestic violence organisation

There are posters or leaflets in the church about domestic violence

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Wider support and training

How familiar are you with support services available in your local community to assist victims of domestic violence (e.g. crisis centre, shelter, hotline)?

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Not very familiar
- ☐ Not at all familiar

How confident do you feel to refer victims to these support services?

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Not very confident
- ☐ Not at all confident

How familiar are you with legal options for victims of domestic violence?

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Not very familiar
- ☐ Not at all familiar

How familiar are you with support services available in your local community to assist perpetrators of domestic violence (e.g. crisis centre, behaviour change program, hotline)?

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Not very familiar
- ☐ Not at all familiar

How confident do you feel to refer perpetrators to these support services?

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Not very confident
- ☐ Not at all confident

Resources (e.g. documents, training, support) may be available from a range of sources to assist churches to respond to domestic violence. How familiar are you with resources from each of the following?

- ☐ Your diocese
- ☐ Other parts of the Anglican church
- ☐ Other Christian groups (e.g. other denominations, ecumenical groups or networks)
- ☐ Other non-Christian organisations
- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Not very familiar
- ☐ Not at all familiar

Have you received training specifically to help you to respond to domestic and family violence? *(Mark ALL that apply)*

- ☐ Yes, training from the Anglican Church
- ☐ Yes, training from another Christian group
- ☐ Yes, training from another non-Christian organisation
- ☐ No

Has your church's leadership team received training specifically to help your church to respond to domestic and family violence? *(Mark ALL that apply)*

- ☐ Yes, training provided locally at church
- ☐ Yes, training offered elsewhere by the Anglican Church
- ☐ Yes, training from another Christian group
- ☐ Yes, training from another non-Christian organisation
- ☐ No

On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate the support your church receives from the diocese to help your church to respond to domestic violence?

- ☐ 1 Very poor support
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 Excellent support

In your opinion, what should the role of the bishop be in situations where a clergy person in the diocese is a victim of domestic violence?

In your opinion, what should the role of the bishop be in situations where a clergy person in the diocese perpetrates domestic violence? (open text response)

Responses to cases of domestic violence

Have you ever been aware of any members, former members or regular visitors of your church who have been the victim of abuse by an intimate partner?

Have you ever been aware of any members, former members or regular visitors of your church who have abused an intimate partner?

Have you, as part of your ministry, ever dealt with individuals in specific domestic violence situations?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Of the following actions, which have you used when dealing with specific domestic violence situations? *(Mark ALL that apply)*

- ☐ Provided pastoral or spiritual care to the victim
- ☐ Provided counselling to the victim
- ☐ Talked with the perpetrator about the violence
- ☐ Provided pastoral or spiritual care to the perpetrator
- ☐ Provided counselling to the perpetrator
- ☐ Provided marriage or couples counselling
- ☐ None of the above

Have you taken any of the following steps to deal with specific domestic violence situations? *(Mark ALL that apply)*

- ☐ Referred the victim to a service agency (e.g. crisis support, counselling, legal support, financial support)
- ☐ Referred the perpetrator to a service agency (e.g. counselling, behaviour change program)
- ☐ Informed or sought help from the diocese
- ☐ Contacted church leaders in another church in relation to the perpetrator
- ☐ None of the above

And which of the following have you used when dealing with specific domestic violence situations? *(Mark ALL that apply)*

- ☐ Assisted the victim with a safety assessment or safety plan
- ☐ Assisted the victim with paperwork or statements (e.g. police report, Apprehended Violence Order)
- ☐ Made an intervention to keep children safe
- ☐ Made a child protection report to government authorities
- ☐ Contacted the police
- ☐ Provided rectory or church property as a refuge
- ☐ None of the above

Are there any further actions, not listed above, that you have taken to deal with specific domestic violence situations?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes (please specify): _____

Have you ever collaborated with clergy/leaders from other churches in relation to domestic violence? (*Mark ALL that apply*)

- ☐ Yes, with clergy/leaders from another Anglican parish
☐ Yes, with clergy/leaders from another Christian church
☐ No

When you have dealt with specific domestic violence situations, have any of the following ever happened to you? (*Mark ALL that apply*)

- ☐ Been threatened by a perpetrator of domestic violence
☐ Been abused by a perpetrator of domestic violence
☐ Experienced being manipulated by a perpetrator of domestic violence
☐ Experienced a sense of isolation from others
☐ Experienced fatigue as a result of dealing with the situation
☐ None of the above

About the characteristics of your parish

Which of the following best describes the structure of your parish? (*Mark ONE only*)

- ☐ A parish with a single congregation
☐ A parish with a single site but two or more congregations
☐ A parish with two or more congregations at two or more sites

Which of the following best describes the leadership of this parish?

- ☐ Single ordained leader (rector, vicar or senior minister)
☐ Single lay or non-ordained leader
☐ Team of ordained leaders
☐ Team including both ordained and lay leaders
☐ Team of lay leaders

(Churches use these terms in different ways. If none/not applicable, write '0')

- ☐ Current number
☐ Priests/ministers: __
☐ Deacons/deaconesses: __
☐ Pastoral staff: (e.g. Associate, Youth, etc - don't include clergy) __
☐ Parish council: __

Overall, about how many different people, adults and children, attend church services (services of worship) at this parish during an average week?

Count those who attend more than once a week once only.

- ☐ Up to 24
- ☐ 25 to 49
- ☐ 50 to 99
- ☐ 100-199
- ☐ 200-499
- ☐ 500-999
- ☐ 1,000 or more

Thank you for completing this survey. The results will assist the Anglican Church to strengthen understanding and improve responses.

Having engaged these difficult issues, if you need to debrief or get some support, please see the various support services available to you or call XXXXX.

10.12 Appendix L: Sample characteristics: clergy and lay leaders

Sample demographics		Clergy Table Valid N%	Lay
Gender	Female	28.2%	59.0%
	Male	71.3%	41.0%
	Other	0.5%	0.0%
Age Group	Under 30 years	1.1%	4.1%
	30 to 49 years	36.6%	22.4%
	50 to 69 years	50.0%	43.3%
	70+ years	12.3%	30.2%
Highest level of education achieved	Year 12 or below	3.4%	12.0%
	Diploma or certificate	7.1%	21.5%
	Bachelor degree	34.8%	29.4%
	Postgraduate	54.7%	37.1%
Theological education	No formal qualification	1.8%	69.8%
	Certificate/Bible college/Diploma	12.9%	21.0%
	Bachelor degree	44.9%	5.9%
	Postgraduate	40.4%	3.4%
Country of birth	Australia	77.0%	78.1%
	Other English-speaking	15.4%	13.8%
	Non English-speaking	7.6%	8.1%
	Don't know	0.0%	0.0%
Ministry role	Ministry role - Rector, vicar, senior minister	66.3%	
	Ministry role - Non-senior priest	19.1%	
	Ministry role - Curate	4.4%	
	Ministry role - Deacon or deaconess	6.5%	0.5%
	Ministry role - Lay person in leadership	1.6%	89.0%
	Ministry role - Other	6.0%	11.7%
	Role other than rector, priest, curate, deacon	7.6%	100.0%
	Laity* - Warden		25.0%
	Laity* - Other church councillor		21.4%
	Laity* - Apprentice, trainee, assistant minister (if not ordained)		1.1%
	Laity* - Children, youth and/or young adults ministry		8.3%
	Laity* - Bible study/small group leader		12.2%
	Laity* - Other activities outside usual service times e.g. Mainly		
	Music, nursing home		6.5%
	Laity* - Church service leader		2.9%
	Laity* - Music ministry		2.9%
	Laity* - Those who are licenced/include 'lay' in description		11.9%
	Laity* - Lay preacher, teacher		1.6%
	Laity* - Lay minister		2.7%

	Laity* – Liturgical assistant		4.1%
	Laity* – Lay assistant		1.4%
	Laity* – Lay reader		2.5%
	Laity* – Synod representative		2.5%
	Laity* – Administration		10.8%
	Laity* – Pastoral care		8.3%
Number of years in position - categorised	Up to 2 years	31.3%	31.9%
	3 to 5 years	27.4%	26.9%
	4 to 10 years	20.5%	19.2%
	More than 10 years	20.8%	22.0%
In ordained ministry	Has not been ordained	2.7%	
	Has been ordained	97.3%	
Number of years ordained - categorised	Up to 5 years	13.7%	
	6 to 10 years	18.4%	
	11 to 20 years	33.7%	
	More than 20 years	34.2%	
Receives salary/stipend	Yes, full payment	70.0%	6.7%
	Yes, partial payment	13.7%	5.3%
	No, but some allowances	3.9%	0.7%
	No, nothing at all	12.4%	87.3%
Hours per week in in ministry- categorised	Less than 10 hours	8.5%	45.2%
	10 to 39 hours	21.2%	20.4%
	40 to 49 hours	20.6%	10.6%
	50 to 59 hours	27.2%	13.0%
	60 hours or more	22.5%	10.8%
Preach at church services	Yes	96.1%	14.2%
	No	3.9%	85.8%
Times preach per year - categorised	Up to twice a month	20.4%	30.3%
	GT twice a month and LE weekly	38.8%	34.8%
	GT weekly and LE twice weekly	22.6%	19.3%
	More than twice weekly	18.2%	15.5%
	Anglo-Catholic or Catholic	26.2%	27.6%
Identify with approaches to matters of faith (could select up to two)	Charismatic	6.8%	4.5%
	Evangelical	59.1%	43.9%
	Liberal	10.0%	4.3%
	Moderate	9.2%	10.2%
	Pentecostal	0.0%	1.6%
	Progressive	9.2%	5.4%
	Reformed	28.3%	10.4%
	Traditionalist	2.6%	11.3%
	Do not identify	8.1%	17.6%

Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay n = 444).

*Categorised from open text descriptions of leadership roles.

10.13 Appendix M: Additional Results

Table A1: What constitutes domestic violence: clergy and lay leader views

	Clergy				Lay Leaders			
Is this domestic violence?	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Not	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Not
Slaps or pushes	95%	4%	0.5%	0.0%	92%	7%	1.1%	0.2%
Forces to have sex	95%	4%	1.1%	0.0%	90%	7%	2.3%	0.2%
Threatens to hurt family members	98%	2%	0.3%	0.0%	97%	2%	0.7%	0.2%
Repeatedly criticises	80%	15%	4.3%	1.3%	77%	19%	2.7%	1.1%
Throws or smashes objects	94%	5%	1.1%	0.0%	89%	9%	1.8%	0.2%
Prevents from seeing family/friends	88%	10%	1.3%	0.8%	84%	13%	1.8%	1.4%
Denies money	82%	14%	2.9%	1.0%	75%	19%	5.2%	1.4%
Keeps track without consent	79%	16%	4.5%	0.8%	79%	16%	3.4%	1.8%
Uses religion to denigrate	86%	11%	2.7%	0.8%	80%	15%	3.6%	1.8%

Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay leader n = 444)

Table A2: Clergy responsibilities when ministering to victim of abuse: views of clergy and lay leaders

	Clergy					Lay Leader				
	SA	A	Neither	D	SD	SA	A	Neither	D	SD
Talk with the victim about the abuse	30.7%	51.2%	15.4%	2.4%	0.3%	27.2%	51.0%	16.2%	5.5%	0.0%
Talk with the abuser about their violent behaviour	21.6%	41.5%	27.0%	8.9%	1.1%	22.9%	39.9%	26.4%	9.4%	1.4%
Suggest the victim seek support services for domestic violence	81.4%	18.1%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	76.3%	23.0%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%
Give the victim information on support services	82.1%	17.3%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	78.3%	20.3%	0.9%	0.5%	0.0%
Contact the police	33.7%	36.4%	27.5%	2.4%	0.0%	33.9%	33.6%	30.0%	2.3%	0.2%
Suggest that the victim seek mental health help	28.0%	40.8%	27.4%	2.7%	1.1%	22.6%	40.0%	29.7%	5.3%	2.5%
Help the victim to understand the impact of abuse on their mental and spiritual wellbeing	46.5%	41.4%	10.8%	1.4%	0.0%	41.3%	45.9%	10.0%	2.3%	0.5%
Help the victim to improve their social support and coping skills	35.6%	45.8%	15.4%	3.2%	0.0%	33.5%	42.0%	19.3%	4.6%	0.7%

Provide couples counselling for the victim and their partner	9.5%	20.1%	32.5%	25.5%	12.5%	16.9%	24.9%	34.8%	15.8%	7.6%
Suggest that the victim pray harder	0.5%	4.6%	22.6%	27.0%	45.3%	1.1%	5.5%	25.3%	26.2%	41.9%

Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay leader n = 444)

Table A3: Levels of preparedness and confidence: views of clergy: views of clergy and lay leaders

SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree; Neither = Neither agree/disagree; D = Disagree; SD= Strongly disagree

	Clergy					Lay Leader				
	SA	A	Neither	D	SD	SA	A	Neither	D	SD
I feel well prepared to deal with DV situations	5%	36%	27%	28%	3%	4%	22%	25%	39%	10%
I am confident that I can identify victims of DV	2%	26%	39%	29%	3%	2%	19%	31%	39%	9%
I am confident that I can support victims of DV	8%	52%	24%	16%	1%	4%	37%	30%	25%	5%
My church is adequately equipped to respond to disclosure of domestic violence	4%	41%	28%	26%	2%	5%	29%	40%	25%	2%
The leadership team of my church know how to respond to domestic violence situations that may arise in our church	7%	48%	25%	19%	2%	7%	37%	39%	15%	2%

Source: 2020 NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study (clergy n = 383; lay leader n = 444)



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The Clergy and Lay Leader Study is one of three studies that make up the National Anglican Family Violence Project, commissioned by the Anglican General Synod. The aim of the project is to help the Anglican Church of Australia to understand the nature and prevalence of intimate partner violence among those with a connection to the Anglican Church.

In this report, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What attitudes and knowledge do Anglican clergy and lay local church leaders have regarding domestic violence?
2. What practices are clergy and lay leaders engaging with in their local church contexts?
3. How equipped are clergy and lay leaders to respond?

Powell, R. & Pepper, M. (2021). NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study Report: Anglican clergy and lay leader attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and practices regarding intimate partner violence. NCLS Research Report for the Anglican Church of Australia. NCLS Research.



Clergy & Lay Leader Study

NAFVP Clergy and Lay Leader Study Report



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