# MICHIGAN **SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION** SURVEY REPORT

Center for Healthy Communities- MPHI

December 2019

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and Amanda Barratt, Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence

The many experts who supported this effort along the way

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## RESEARCH SHOWS THAT SEXUAL ASSAULT, ABUSE, AND HARASSMENT CAN BE PREVENTED IF WE WORK TOGETHER.

In recent years, Michigan has begun to recognize the staggering realities of sexual assault, abuse, and harassment in our communities through high profile court cases and the #MeToo movement. Nevertheless, it can be hard to talk about this harm in our communities. It might be too uncomfortable, or feel hopeless. Often people worry they don't really know what to do to stop it. The good news is that more and more research is showing that preventing sexual violence is possible if we work together.

While we are still learning, Michigan is at the forefront on the work to stop sexual assault, abuse, and harassment. Leaders and organizations across the state are working diligently to change attitudes and create environments in which people who might commit abuse or assault do not believe they can get away with it. While we still don't know everything about how to prevent sexual violence, these evolving actions are steps on the path to protecting those who are most vulnerable.

We are pleased to share data from a survey conducted by MPHI in 2019 that aims to further catalyze these efforts. This survey builds on existing prevention efforts, and further elevates the conversation of prevention in Michigan using the same complex, nuanced, and nationally-recognized approach to prevention.

Research evidence stresses that the prevention of sexual violence must shift from efforts focusing on avoiding victimization to a framework of ending sexual assault, abuse, and harassment and enhancing community accountability. Preventing these actions begins by identifying the norms, behaviors, and attitudes that support sexual violence of all forms and our community response that fails to hold people who take these actions accountable.

**Those who choose to sexually assault, abuse, or harass others should always be held solely and fully accountable for their choices; however, communities also have a role to reduce the risk of making that choice.** To do that, we must challenge the social norms that condone or tolerate violence and the institutional policies that reflect or reinforce these norms. Specifically, survey results suggest a need to address community cohesion, economic justice, and sexist attitudes as key pivot points to preventing sexual violence. We can work to make every Michigander safer, but we need your help. The following summary provides a primary prevention framework from which the survey results should be used and understood, an overview of the survey methodology, key findings, and recommendations for how the data should be used.

## BACKGROUND

Primary prevention refers to efforts to stop sexual assault, abuse, and harassment from occurring by creating conditions within communities that will keep it from happening in the first place. It is focused on identifying and addressing the root causes of the choice to engage in violence and not on reducing individual risk or increasing individual safety as a means of prevention. In this way, communities play a major role in preventing violence. By acknowledging and then reducing or eliminating the factors that may support such a choice, we reduce the likelihood of individuals choosing to hurt others. Similarly, by identifying and increasing factors that support healthy choices, we increase the likelihood of individuals choosing not to hurt others. Finally, it is particularly important to focus on community and societal-level factors, rather than individual and relationship-level factors, to have the greatest impact on reducing sexual violence rates.

## METHODOLOGY

Over a thousand Michigan residents took part in this survey that will be used to help prevent sexual assault, abuse, and harassment in our state. This survey, executed by MPHI, is part of a statewide effort to use data to focus efforts to prevent sexual violence in our communities. A random selection of households across the state were invited to participate by mail, with 1,234 people responding via paper or web survey. Out of the initial survey respondents, 68.8% were women and 31.2% were men; 77.4% were white, 15.0% were African American, and 2.2% were Hispanic. However, the survey results presented in this report are weighted by population proportion to be representative of the actual demographics of adults in the state of Michigan. The survey was broken up into sections including connectedness, economic supports, harmful social norms, and support for survivors.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY RESULTS

Key findings are detailed below together with explanations of the areas that were surveyed to determine the findings:

1. Nearly 25% of Michigan residents surveyed do not think that getting consent is important when sexually touching a spouse or longtime partner.
2. Almost half of respondents think women get a kick out of teasing men sexually and then rejecting them.
3. More than a third of participants think women are too easily offended.
4. Research has shown that communities that are closely connected are more likely to hold people who sexually assault, abuse, or harass others accountable. Participants of this survey found a lack of connectedness and community in Michigan with just less than 50% of respondents stating that their neighborhood is close knit.
5. Similarly, economic supports for women is a key factor in risk reduction for sexual assault. Less than 40% of women report access to paid parental leave in Michigan.

## SOCIAL NORMS

Key findings 1-3 were focused on social norms that are linked to violence. Addressing social norms that tacitly approve of or even tolerate sexual assault, abuse, and harassment is a critical prevention effort, as communities that tolerate harmful social norms have increased rates of sexual violence.[1] This survey specifically addresses social norms around hostile sexism, consent, support for survivors, and rape myth acceptance. Communities in which individuals uphold prescriptive and strict gender norms (rigid ideas about behaviors that are appropriate and men and women), hostile attitudes toward women, and endorsement of rape myths, in particular, are at greater risk for committing assault, abuse, or harassment.

## COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS

Key finding #4 addressed connectedness in Michigan. Research has shown that individuals in communities with high levels of connectedness and cohesion have a lower risk of making the choice to sexually assault, abuse, or harass.[2] Cohesive communities are those where residents report that they support and trust each other and feel closely tied to one another. Cohesion can be found in many different types of communities, but this survey focused on connectedness in the workplace, place of worship, family, and neighborhood. Communities with high levels of cohesion tend to hold people who abuse others accountable for their choices, as well as provide more support for victims of violence.

## ECONOMIC SUPPORTS

Key finding #5 relates to economic and workplace supports. Economic justice has been identified as a protective factor against sexual violence. The CDC[1] reports that strengthening economic supports for women in the workplace decreases poverty, increases economic security, and improves conditions that promote family stability. Lack of these economic justice measures have been found to be risk factors for sexual violence perpetration. This survey specifically identified parental leave policies as a workplace support linked to economic justice. Paid family leave can make communities less vulnerable to financial, employment, and housing instability, decreasing their risk of sexual violence.[1] Paid leave also helps parents stay employed, which is also a protective factor against victimization.[2]

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## HOW TO USE THE DATA

The data in this report are intended to be used by preventionists, advocates, and other professionals working to end sexual assault, abuse, and harassment in Michigan, as well as by those working to address these risk and protective factors in other fields. All recommendations and conclusions around the survey results should be made within the framework briefly introduced in this executive summary. Local and statewide prevention efforts in Michigan should focus on reducing risk factors that make the choice to sexually assault, abuse, or harass more likely to occur and increasing protective factors that make this less likely to occur. In this way, individual communities will have the tools to hold people accountable for their choices and to reduce future incidents. Communities can use these survey results to address the factors in society that create environments that support sexual assault, abuse, and harassment.

The creating partners of this survey hope that the field finds this information useful in continuing to do the crucial work of social justice. It is our shared hope that we bring about an end to violence and oppression in all its many forms and we are proud to be doing this work alongside you.

## CONTACT

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## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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## SUGGESTED CITATION

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# SURVEY BACKGROUND & DEMOGRAPHICS

# **PRIMARY PREVENTION** IN COMMUNITIES

The following report details the results of a survey that was conducted to support sexual violence prevention efforts in Michigan. In order to appreciate the basis of this survey, it is important to understand the frameworks of primary prevention and the socio-ecological model.

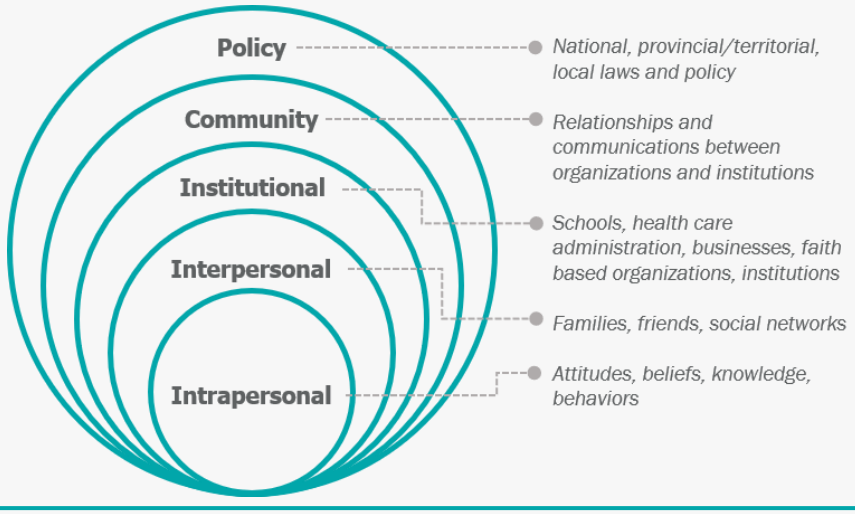
## WHAT IS PRIMARY PREVENTION?

Primary prevention refers to efforts to prevent sexual assault, abuse, and harassment from occurring by creating conditions within communities that will keep it from happening in the first place. It is focused on identifying and addressing the underlying root causes of the violence, and not on reducing individual risk or increasing individual safety, as a means of prevention. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified several factors that can increase or decrease the likelihood of experiencing multiple forms of violence, including sexual violence.[2] These are referred to as risk and protective factors, respectively. By addressing and then reducing or eliminating the risk factors that may support the choice to commit sexual violence, we reduce the likelihood of individuals choosing to hurt others. By identifying and increasing the protective factors that discourage that choice, we increase the likelihood of individuals choosing not to hurt others. For maximum effectiveness in stopping violence before it occurs we must focus on those factors that prevent perpetration, not victimization. Decreasing the choice to commit assault, abuse, and harassment is the only way to stop violence from occurring. The results of the survey are organized around four risk and protective factors for sexual violence: connectedness, economic supports, social norms, and support for survivors.

It is important to note that people are making a choice when they sexually assault, abuse, or harass others. Risk factors for perpetration do not identify individual people who will choose to abuse. Rather, they identify communities in which individuals may be more likely to make this choice. Similarly, protective factors do not identify individuals who will not hurt others, but rather communities in which individuals are less likely to make that choice.

## WHAT IS THE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL MODEL?

The Socio-Ecological Model (SEM)[3] shows the complex interplay between individual, relationship, community, institutional, and societal factors in preventing sexual violence. It is a framework that helps us to understand the range of factors that put people at risk for violence or protect them from experiencing or committing violence. The overlapping rings in the model show how factors at one level influence factors at another level. To prevent sexual assault, abuse, and harassment before they happen, it is necessary to target risk and protective factors at multiple levels of the model at the same time.[1] To sustain prevention efforts over time and have a measurable impact on sexual violence, it is particularly important to focus on the outer-layer levels of the SEM, which include the community, institutional, and societal approaches, and to focus on the behaviors of people who commit sexual assault, abuse, and harassment.



# **ABOUT** THE SURVEY

Because state-level data on sexual violence risk and protective factors for adults in Michigan is scarce, MPHI conducted a statewide survey to better understand perceptions of sexual violence and particular risk and protective factors. The survey was supported with funding from CDC Award 5NUF2CE002424-05. This data is intended to offer unique opportunities for Michigan communities and state-level agencies to:

Make data-driven decisions for improved program development and adaptation

Garner support for collaborative efforts on shared risk & protective factors

**MPHI COLLABORATED** with a network of experts (survey researchers, social norms experts, sexual/domestic violence experts, professionals in nonprofit and governmental sectors, and academics) on the survey from construct development through data collection and analysis to answer these questions:

- **How connected are people to their communities?**
- **To what extent do Michiganders perceive their peers to be supportive of victims/survivors of sexual violence?**
- **To what extent do Michiganders perceive the general community to be supportive of victims/survivors of sexual violence?**
- **To what extent do Michiganders perceive police/prosecutors to be supportive of victims/survivors of sexual violence?**
- **To what extent do people intend to support survivors?**
- **To what extent do people endorse sexual violence (SV)/harassment/intimate partner violence (IPV) behaviors as appropriate?**
- **To what extent do people accept rape myths?**
- **To what extent do participants have access to family economic supports?**

**THE SURVEY** was distributed by mail, with an option to complete via the Internet. Adults between the ages of 18 and 64 were targeted, and African American residents were oversampled in an effort to achieve population representation. The survey's final response rate was 8.6%.

**DATA PRESENTED** in this report were weighted by population proportion and "raking" based on a series of demographic marginals. For further details about survey data collection and the process used, please see the end of this document for the page titled *Additional Details on Data Collection & Weighting*. For more information about the survey or to request access to the dataset, please contact Dr. Sara McGirr at MPHI at smcgirr@mphi.org or (517) 324-7389.

The survey creators hope this report and its data help strengthen the important sexual assault, abuse, and harassment prevention work happening every day in communities in Michigan and around the world.

# **WHO** DOES THE SURVEY REPRESENT?

1,234 surveys were completed. Demographics and all survey results presented are **weighted** by population proportion. This means that responses were adjusted to more accurately represent the adult population of the state (using US Census data). To learn more about how this was done, see page 33.

## AGE

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| 18-24 | 15.7 |
| 25-34 | 19.7 |
| 35-44 | 19.4 |
| 45-54 | 22.9 |
| 55-64 | 22.3 |

## GENDER

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Woman | 50.2 |
| Man | 49.8 |

1.7% of the respondents identified as transgender.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Less than $35,000 | 29.2 |
| $35,000 to $49,999 | 17.5 |
| $50,000 to $74,999 | 19.7 |
| $75,000 or more | 33.6 |

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Employed for wages | 62.8 |
| Self-employed | 8.5 |
| Student | 8.3 |
| Retired | 6.1 |
| Unable to work | 6.1 |
| Homemaker | 4.7 |
| Out of work for less than 1 year | 2.4 |
| Out of work for 1 year or more | 1.2 |

## RACE/ETHNICITY

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| White, non-Hispanic | 76.3 |
| Black/African American, non-Hispanic | 12.7 |
| Hispanic | 4.6 |
| Other, non-Hispanic | 4.4 |
| Multiracial, non-Hispanic | 2.0 |

## RELATIONSHIP STATUS

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Married | 46.8 |
| Never married | 24.4 |
| Divorced | 12.5 |
| Member of an unmarried couple | 12.0 |
| Separated | 2.3 |
| Widowed | 1.3 |
| Legal domestic partnership | 0.6 |

## EDUCATION

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Less than 9th grade | 0.9 |
| 9th-12th grade | 8.4 |
| High School graduate | 27.2 |
| Some College | 27.3 |
| Associates Degree | 9.4 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 17.2 |
| Graduate/Professional Degree | 9.6 |

# **WHO TOOK** THE SURVEY? (UNWEIGHTED)

1,234 surveys were completed. Demographics presented on this page are unweighted. These represent the characteristics of the individuals who completed the survey. To learn more about the survey sampling, see page 33.

## AGE

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| 18-24 | 9.2 |
| 25-34 | 29.9 |
| 35-44 | 26.6 |
| 45-54 | 21.4 |
| 55-64 | 13.0 |

## GENDER

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Woman | 68.8 |
| Man | 31.2 |

1.2% of the respondents identified as transgender.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Less than $35,000 | 22.2 |
| $35,000 to $49,999 | 14.4 |
| $50,000 to $74,999 | 20.5 |
| $75,000 or more | 43.0 |

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Employed for wages | 69.4 |
| Self-employed | 6.8 |
| Student | 4.0 |
| Retired | 6.6 |
| Unable to work | 5.3 |
| Homemaker | 5.5 |
| Out of work for less than 1 year | 1.7 |
| Out of work for 1 year or more | 0.8 |

## RACE/ETHNICITY

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| White, non-Hispanic | 77.4 |
| Black/African American, non-Hispanic | 15.0 |
| Hispanic | 2.2 |
| Other, non-Hispanic | 4.5 |
| Multiracial, non-Hispanic | 1.0 |

## RELATIONSHIP STATUS

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Married | 54.8 |
| Never married | 18.5 |
| Divorced | 12.9 |
| Member of an unmarried couple | 9.6 |
| Separated | 1.8 |
| Widowed | 1.8 |
| Legal domestic partnership | 0.6 |

## EDUCATION

| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| Less than 9th grade | 0.4 |
| 9th-12th grade | 2.6 |
| High School graduate | 13.3 |
| Some College | 19.5 |
| Associates Degree | 14.9 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 28.0 |
| Graduate/Professional Degree | 21.3 |

# CONNECTEDNESS

Research has shown that connectedness, cohesion, and social support lessen the likelihood that one will choose to sexually assault, abuse, or harass others.[2] Cohesive communities are those where residents report that they support and trust each other and feel closely tied to one another. Connectedness can be found in many different types of communities—including in the workplace, place of worship, family, and neighborhood—as is reflected in the following survey results. Communities with high levels of cohesion are more likely to hold people accountable for their choices to hurt others, as well as to provide more support for victims of violence.

## KEY FINDINGS

**Neighborhood connectedness is low.**
Neighborhood connectedness was lowest of the communities measured. Nearly half of respondents stated that their neighborhood was not close-knit.

**Shared values may not be necessary to feel connected.**
Many respondents indicated feeling connected to their community members in other ways, even though they did not share their values.

## WHAT CAN YOU, YOUR ORGANIZATION, AND YOUR COMMUNITY DO?

**Engage** neighbors, staff, or members of your faith community in a process to develop a shared vision and plan for building connectedness.

**Provide** opportunities and support to allow families to be actively involved in each others' lives.

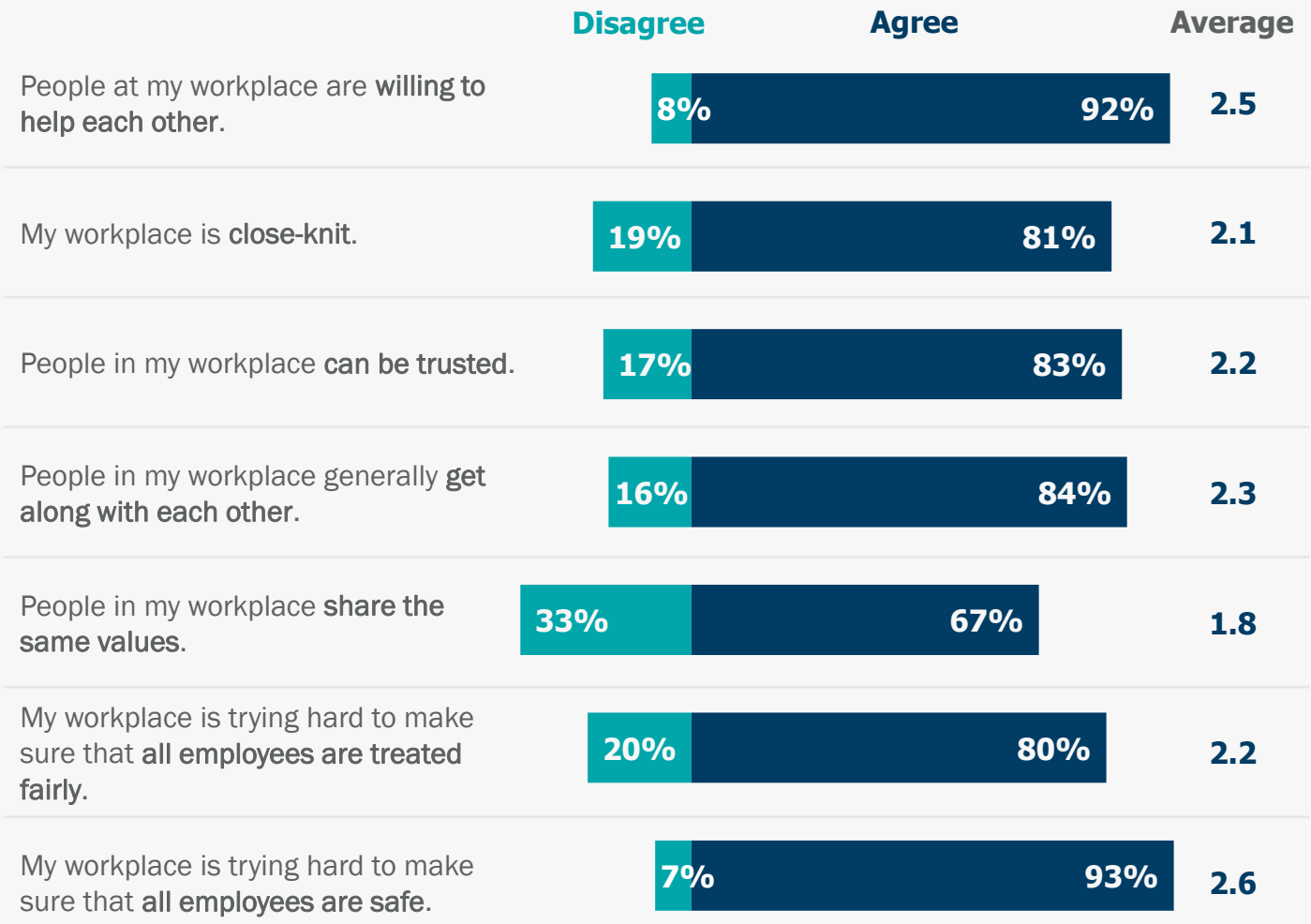
**Provide** professional development and support for leaders to enable them to meet the diverse needs of the people in their setting.

**Prioritize** the creation of trusting and caring relationships that promote open communication.

# **WORKPLACE** CONNECTEDNESS

Survey respondents were asked how connected they feel to their workplace where they spend the most time. Only those who were employed for wages (n=967) answered this set of questions.

The responses of those that **Disagree** or **Agree** with each statement are displayed in the bar chart. **Average** scores (scale of 0 – Strongly Disagree to 3 – Strongly Agree) are displayed in the column on the right.



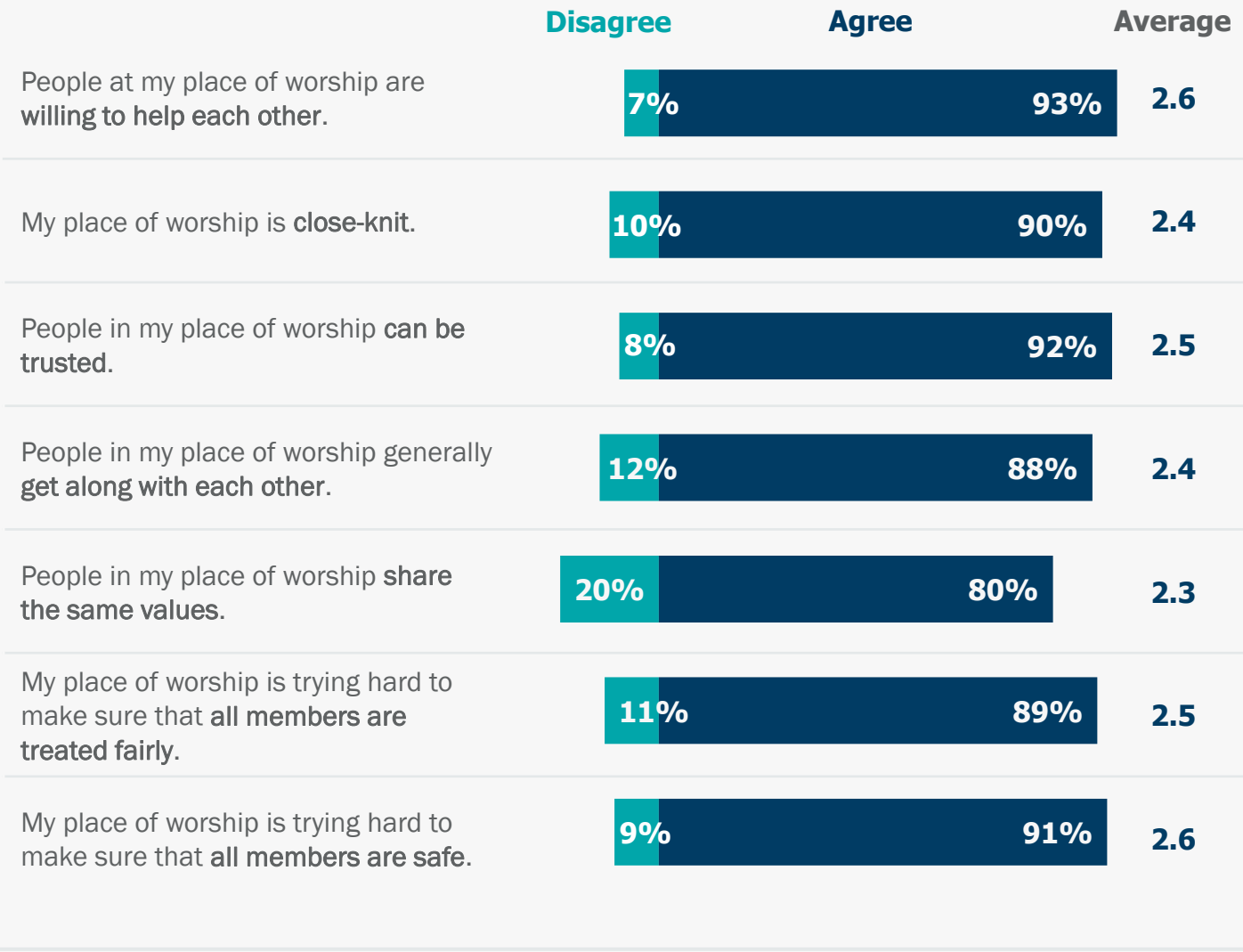

OVERALL AVERAGE: **2.3**

*Note: Items were modified from existing scales.*[4,5]

# **PLACE OF WORSHIP** CONNECTEDNESS

Survey respondents were asked how connected they feel to their place of worship (church, mosque, temple, synagogue, etc.). Only survey respondents with a place of worship (n=580) answered this set of questions.

The responses of those that **Disagree** or **Agree** with each statement are displayed in the bar chart. **Average** scores (scale of 0 – Strongly Disagree to 3 – Strongly Agree) are displayed in the column on the right.



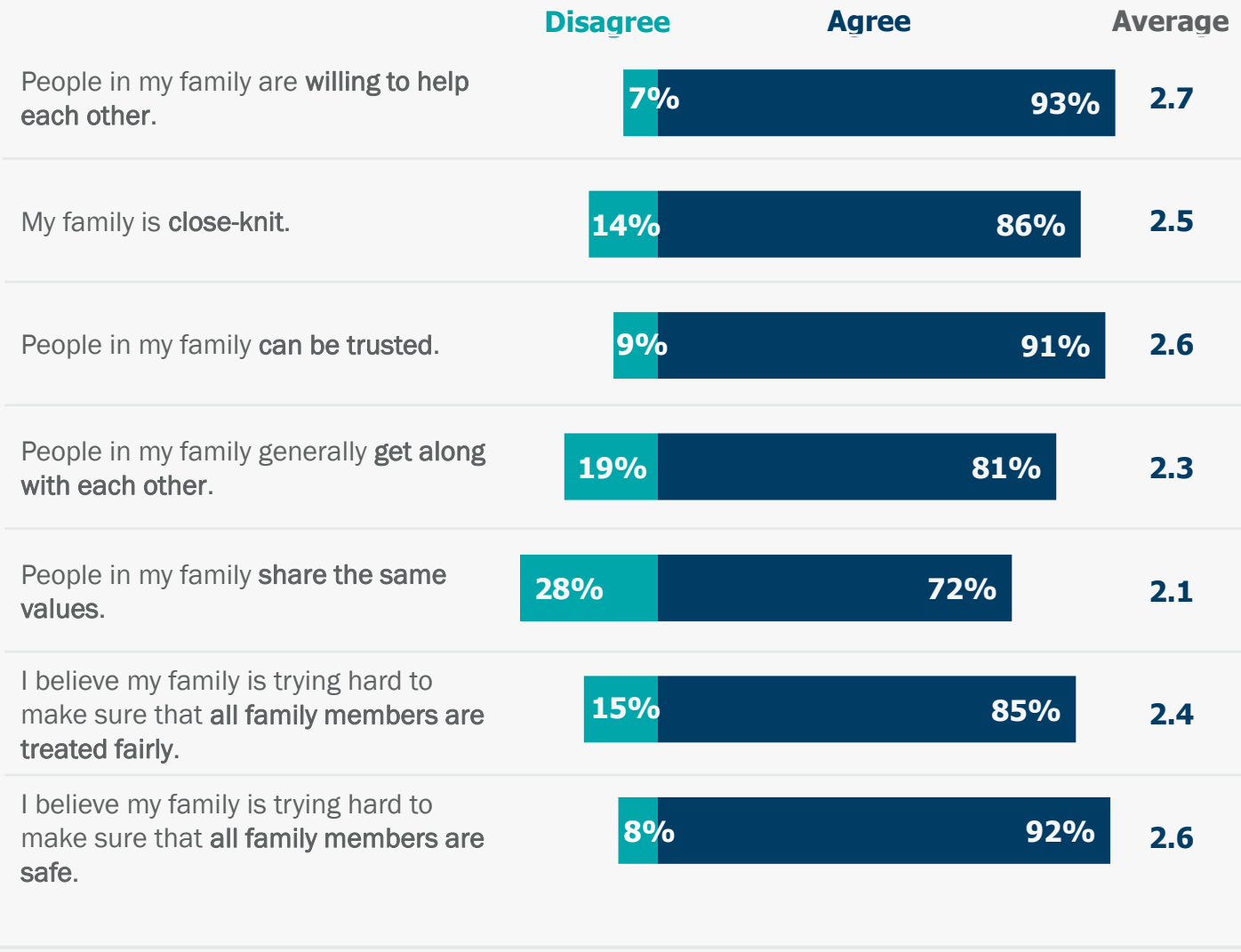

OVERALL AVERAGE: **2.5**

*Note: Items were modified from existing scales.*[4,5]

# **FAMILY** CONNECTEDNESS

Survey respondents were asked how connected they feel to their family, as they define it.

The responses of those that **Disagree** or **Agree** with each statement are displayed in the bar chart. **Average** scores (scale of 0 – Strongly Disagree to 3 – Strongly Agree) are displayed in the column on the right.



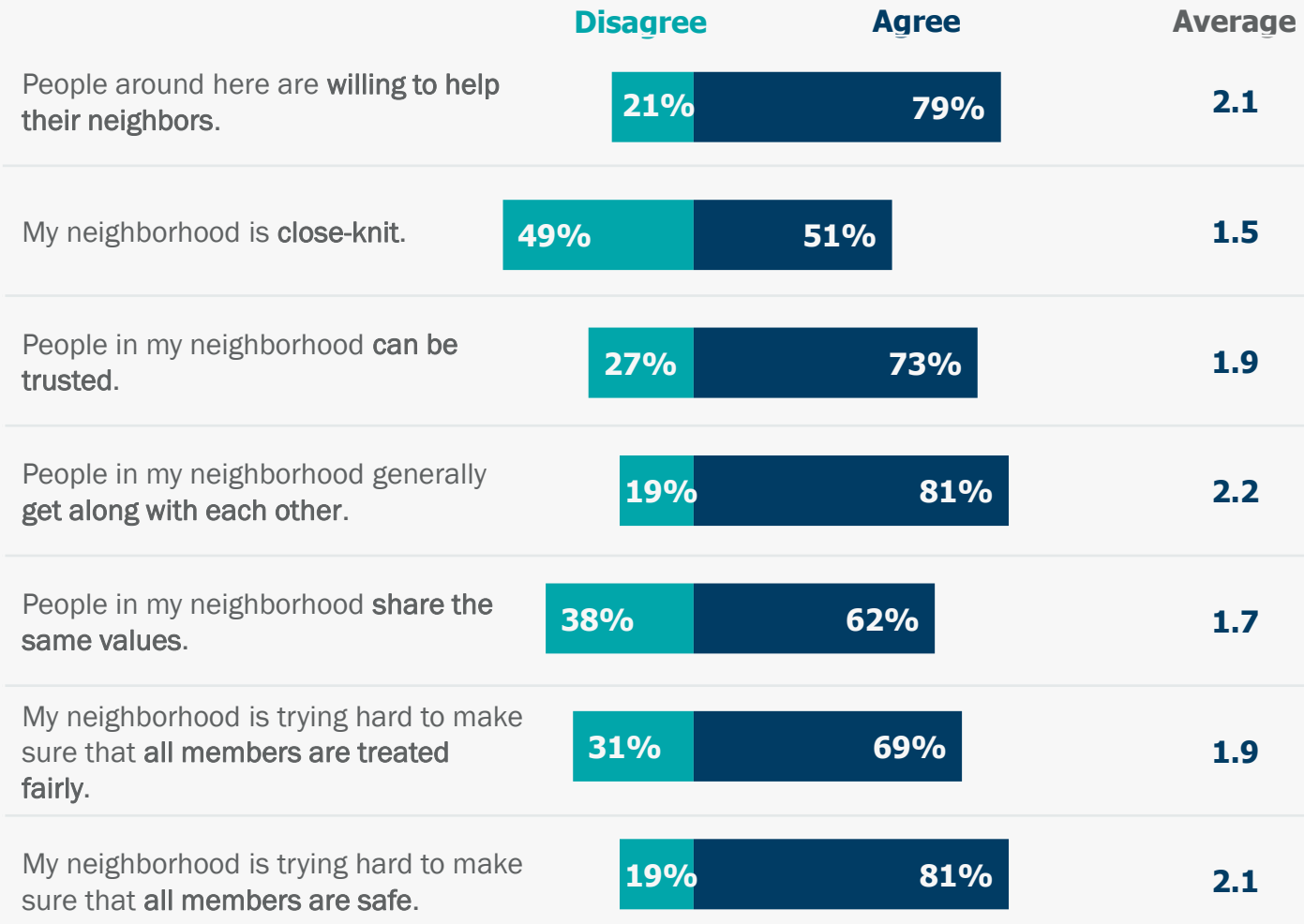

OVERALL AVERAGE: **2.5**

*Note: Items were modified from existing scales.*[4,5]

# **NEIGHBORHOOD** CONNECTEDNESS

Survey respondents were asked how connected they feel to their neighborhood where they primarily live. This includes the people who live near them and the area around their home.

The responses of those that **Disagree** or **Agree** with each statement are displayed in the bar chart. **Average** scores (scale of 0 – Strongly Disagree to 3 – Strongly Agree) are displayed in the column on the right.




OVERALL AVERAGE: **1.9**

*Note: Items were modified from existing scales.*[4,5]

# ECONOMIC SUPPORTS

Strengthening economic supports for women and families "addresses economic security and power imbalances between women and men"[2]– both of which are linked to sexual violence. People who commit sexual violence or abuse often look for victims who have less power in society. Therefore, people with less economic security and fewer job supports can be more likely to experience sexual violence in their lives than other groups. So if we want to prevent sexual assault, abuse, and harassment, we have to also address the ways that economic- and gender-based power differences contribute to a culture where it occurs.

## KEY FINDINGS

**Quality childcare is needed.**
Almost 2 out of 5 respondents have children under the age of 5 that receive childcare outside the family for at least 10 hours a week.

**Childcare problems impact employment.**
About 1 in 8 respondents reported problems with childcare in the last year that required changes to their family's jobs.

**Paid parental leave is lacking.**
Less than 40% of women in jobs reported access to paid parental leave.

## WHAT CAN YOU, YOUR ORGANIZATION, AND YOUR COMMUNITY DO?

**Find out** more about your own workplace policies.

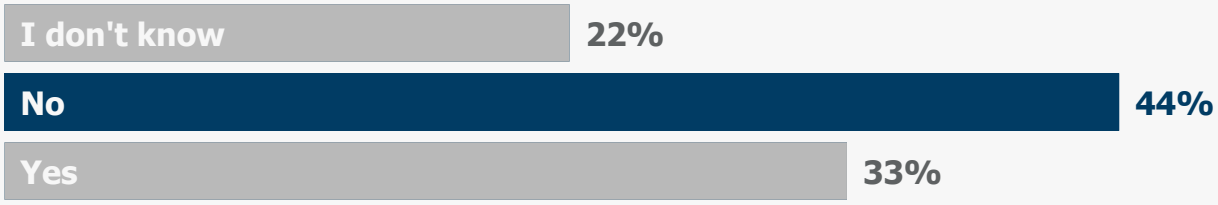
**Do** a salary study to explore gender pay or benefits disparities.

**Encourage** your organization to implement policies such as paid family and medical leave, flexible work hours, or onsite childcare.

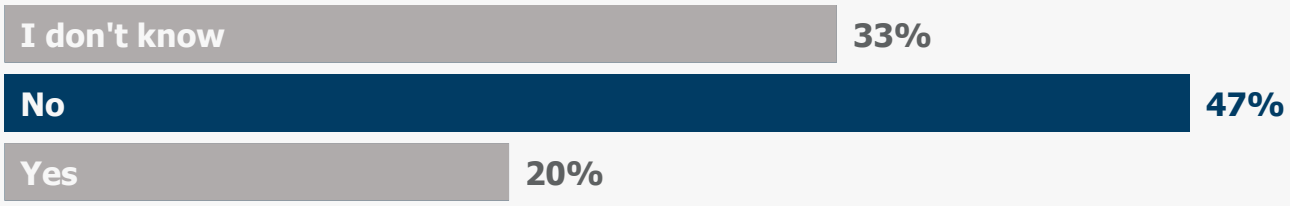
# **ECONOMIC** SUPPORTS

Survey respondents who were currently employed for wages were asked about parental leave policies at their place of employment. Respondents with children were asked about child care concerns.

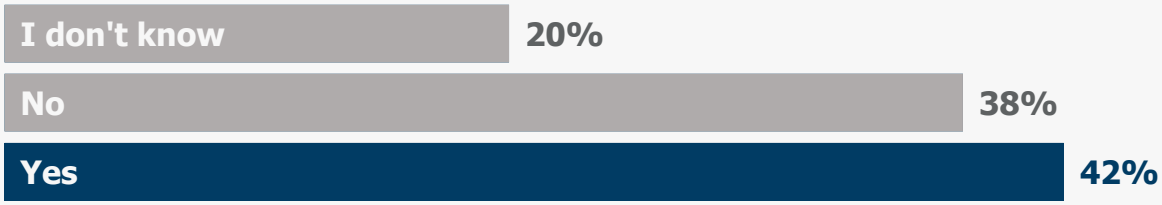
If you or your partner were **going to have a baby**, would you be able to get **paid parental leave** through your employer?

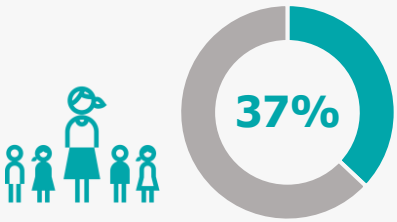



If you or your partner were **going to adopt a child**, would you be able to get **paid parental leave** through your employer?

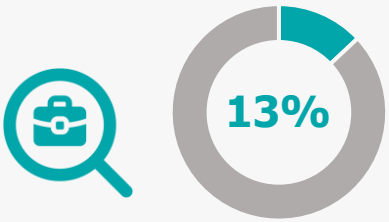



Would you be able to get **other (non-parental) paid family and medical leave** through your employer?




of families with a child 0-5 years old say the child **receives care** for at least 10 hours a week **from someone other than their parent or guardian**




personally had to or someone in their family had to **quit a job, not take a job, or greatly change their job because of problems with child care** in the last 12 months

# **ECONOMIC** SUPPORTS

Survey respondents who are currently employed for wages were asked about parental leave policies at their place of employment. This section compares the responses of men and women.

If you or your partner were **going to have a baby**, would you be able to get **paid parental leave** through your employer?

*"Yes, I would be able to get paid parental leave"*


If you or your partner were **going to adopt a child**, would you be able to get **paid parental leave** through your employer?

*"Yes, I would be able to get paid parental leave"*


Would you be able to get **other (non-parental) paid family and medical leave** through your employer?

*"Yes, I would be able to get paid family and medical leave"*


*Note: For the purposes of this survey, "paid parental leave" is defined as: Paid leave for use by new-mother or father employees to recover from the birth of a child and/or to care for or bond with a new child; Paid parental leave that is distinct from other paid leave programs. While using this type of paid leave, a new-parent employee does not need to use or exhaust other paid time off earnings or accruals such as vacation, sick time, personal leave, or paid time off (PTO).*

*"Paid family and medical leave" is defined as: Paid leave for an extended period of time so you can recover from a serious health issue, or take care of a seriously ill family member; Paid leave that is distinct from other paid leave programs. While using this type of paid leave, an employee does not need to use or exhaust other paid time off earnings or accruals such as vacation, personal leave, or PTO.*

# SOCIAL NORMS

Social norms refer to how people perceive what behaviors are expected from them by other people, whether that be with other individuals, groups, or society at large. People generally assimilate to social norms, even unknowingly, as a way to avoid humiliation and possible ostracization. Addressing harmful social norms that tacitly approve of or even tolerate sexual violence is a critical prevention effort, as communities that tolerate harmful social norms have increased rates of sexual violence perpetration.[1]

The first set of norms measured in this section relate to **gender**[6], specifically sexist ideas about women. In our society, some of what we've been taught about what it means to be a man or a woman is unhealthy. Men are often taught they need to be in control, show no emotion, be the ones to initiate sex, and pursue sex even when someone is playing "hard to get." These ideas of manhood suggest that aggression or abuse is a core part of being a man, and that's wrong. These myths hurt women and men, and contribute to beliefs and behaviors that directly or subtly encourage, excuse, or minimize sexual assault, abuse, and harassment.

It is important to note that while much of the work to shift gender norms is currently targeted at people who identify as men or women, the field must recognize and be responsive to identities that exist outside of these binary categories.

Relatedly, **consent** norms are the behaviors that society generally deems necessary and appropriate when it comes to individuals agreeing to engage in specific sexual activities. Research has shown that men who perceive consent before sexual activity to be a strong norm for both females and males are more likely to report that consent is personally necessary.[7]

## KEY FINDINGS

**Sexist attitudes persist.**
Almost half of Michiganders believe that women get a kick out of teasing men sexually and then rejecting them. More than a third of participants think women are too easily offended.

**Consent in long-term relationships is misunderstood.**
Nearly 25% of respondents do not think that getting consent is important when sexually touching a spouse or longtime partner.

# SOCIAL NORMS

## WHAT CAN YOU, YOUR ORGANIZATION, AND YOUR COMMUNITY DO?

**Take a look** at your own beliefs. Even those of us who want to stop sexual violence might have some outdated ideas.

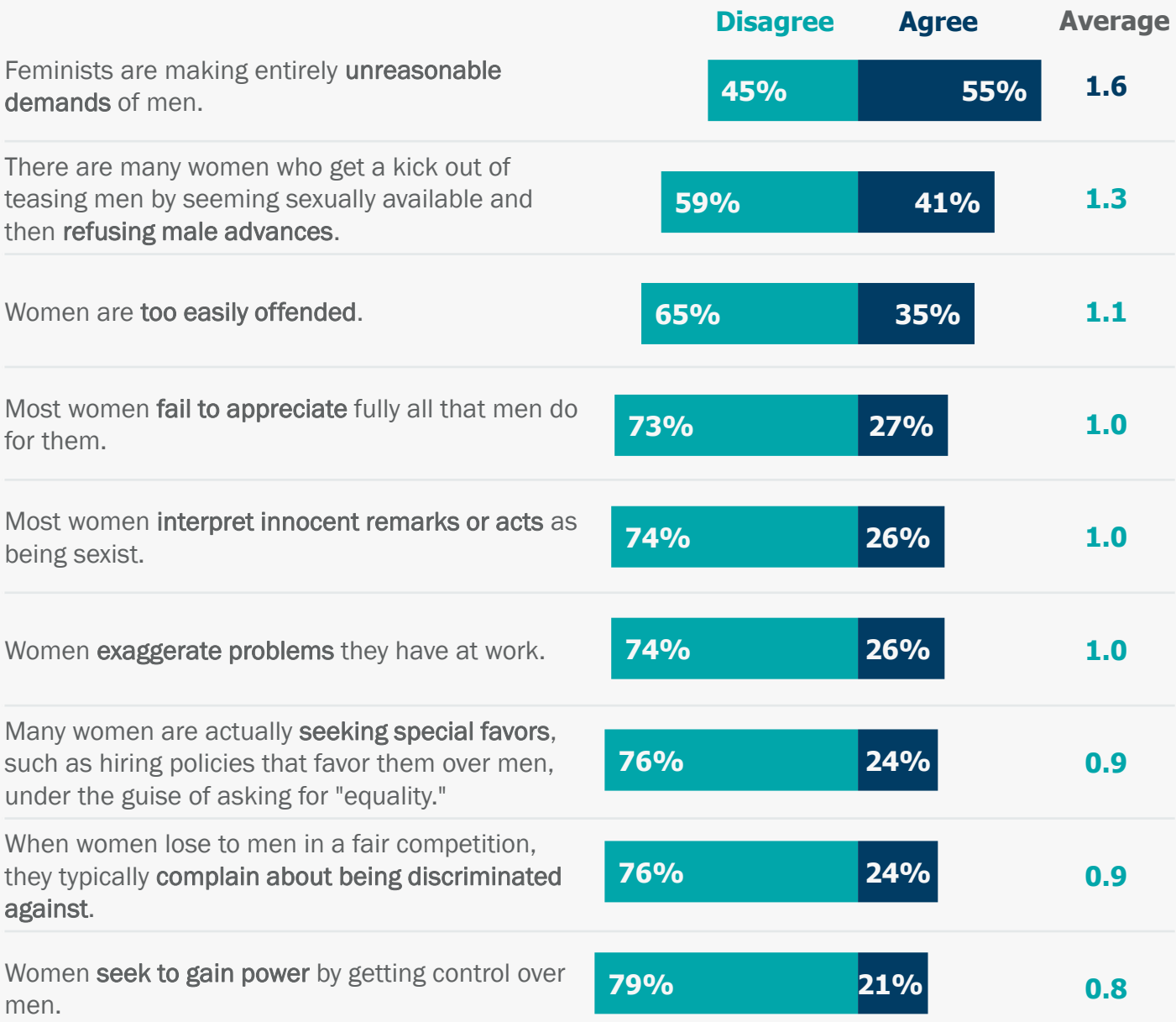
**Practice responses** to explain why a sexist attitude isn't true, or why a rape joke isn't funny.

**Work to get consent education** included in health or sex ed curricula. In the mean time, make sure you're talking about consent with your child(ren) and partner(s).

# **SEXIST** SOCIAL NORMS

Survey respondents were asked about their feelings on how women and men act, and how they interact with one another.

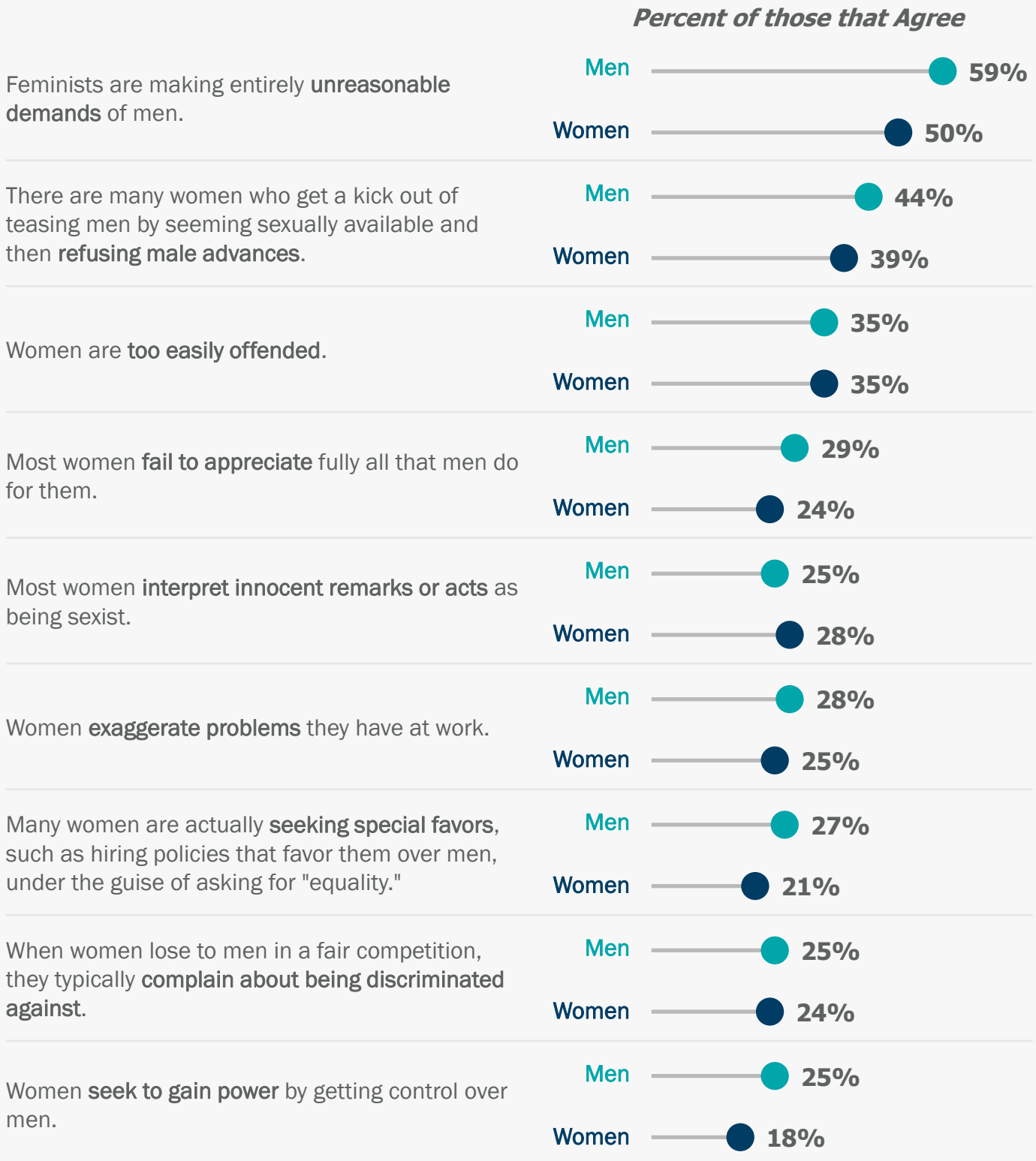
The responses of those that **Disagree** or **Agree** with each statement are displayed in the bar chart. **Average** scores (scale of 0 – Strongly Disagree to 3 – Strongly Agree) are displayed in the column on the right.




*Note: Items were selected from an existing scale.*[8]

# **SEXIST** SOCIAL NORMS

Survey respondents were asked about their feelings on how women and men act, and how they interact with one another. This section compares the responses of men and women for those that Agree' or 'Strongly Agree.'

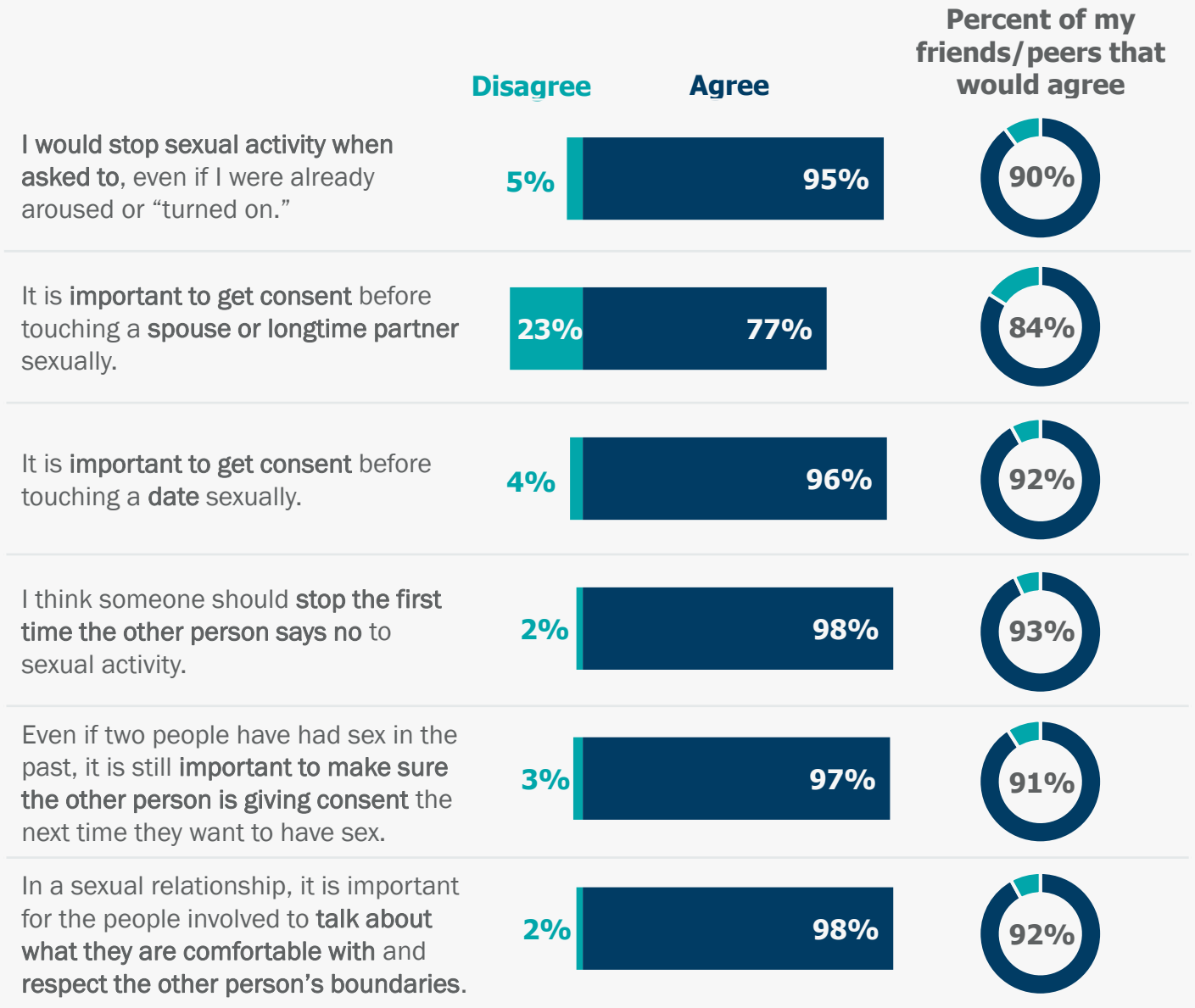



*Note: Items were selected from an existing scale.*[8]

# **CONSENT** SOCIAL NORMS

Survey respondents were asked statements on how they feel about sexual encounters and sexual consent between two adults. After each statement, respondents indicated what percentage of their friends/peers they thought would agree with this statement.

The responses of those that **Disagree** or **Agree** with each statement are displayed in the bar chart. The **average estimated percentage** of friends/peers who they thought would agree with the statement are displayed in the column on the right in the pie chart.

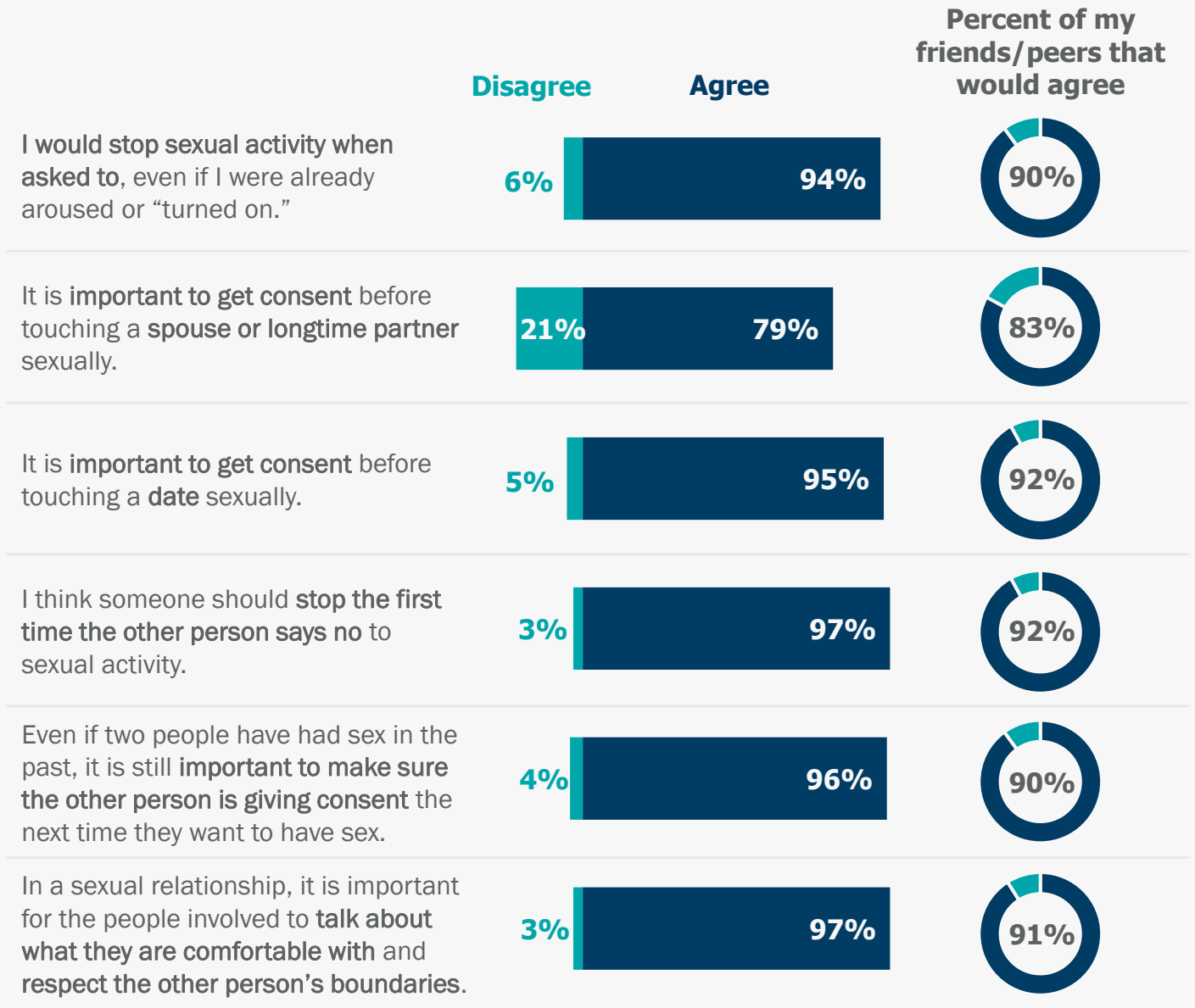



*Note: The term "consent" means the clear, freely-given agreement to engage in a specific sexual activity. Items were adopted from an existing survey.*[9]

# **CONSENT** SOCIAL NORMS AMONG **MEN**

Survey respondents were asked statements on how they feel about sexual encounters and sexual consent between two adults. After each statement, respondents indicated what percentage of their friends/peers they thought would agree with this statement.

The responses of those **men** that **Disagree** or **Agree** with each statement are displayed in the bar chart. The **average estimated percentage** of friends/peers who they thought would agree with the statement are displayed in the column on the right in the pie chart.




*Note: The term "consent" means the clear, freely-given agreement to engage in a specific sexual activity. Items were adopted from an existing survey.*[9]

# SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS

Survivors often hide their experiences of sexual assault from even those closest to them. The reasons behind this are complex, and each survivor has the right to share their story with whomever they wish, whenever they want, by whichever method they wish. Some of the more common reasons survivors don't share their stories include fear that their friends, community, and the criminal justice system may not believe them. They fear their experience may not be taken seriously, that they will be blamed for their assault or that they will be attacked for sharing their experience. Sadly, these fears are real. Survivors of sexual assault who do reach out to community members or systems have just these experiences, and worse. In fact, many people call the failings of our systems' responses a re-victimization.

The truth is simple: sexual assault is violence that happens because people choose to exert their power and control over others' right to consent. The survivor is never to blame. Whether we realize it or not, our culture often sends messages that encourage, excuse, or minimize sexual violence or abuse. Communities that hold victim blaming beliefs are, in effect, agreeing with the choice to assault and not holding the person who has hurt someone accountable for their actions. When people who might commit abuse or assault see that victim blaming is rampant, they may be less likely to fear retribution from the community or justice systems if survivors do choose to report or tell their stories.

For this reason, challenging rape myths and ensuring support for survivors, from individuals, communities, institutions, and systems, is important for preventing both initial and repeat sexual assault, abuse, and harassment.

## KEY FINDINGS

**Belief in myths about rape remains strong.**
Over 1 in 3 Michiganders agreed with the most popular myths, including those that blame survivors and excuse violent, abusive, and harassing behavior.

**There is a gap between what people hope will happen, and what often actually occurs.**
Unfortunately we know from survivors' reports that community and institutional support is not as common as it may seem from the aspirational results in this report, however we can be part of helping our communities and justice systems bridge the gap between what the public hopes would happen and what the realities are on the ground.

# SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS

## WHAT CAN YOU, YOUR ORGANIZATION, AND YOUR COMMUNITY DO?

**Believe** survivors, and publicly voice your support for those who choose to report their abuse or harassment.

**Take a critical look** at the messages around you in media and conversations. Where do they glorify violence or reinforce victim blaming ideas?

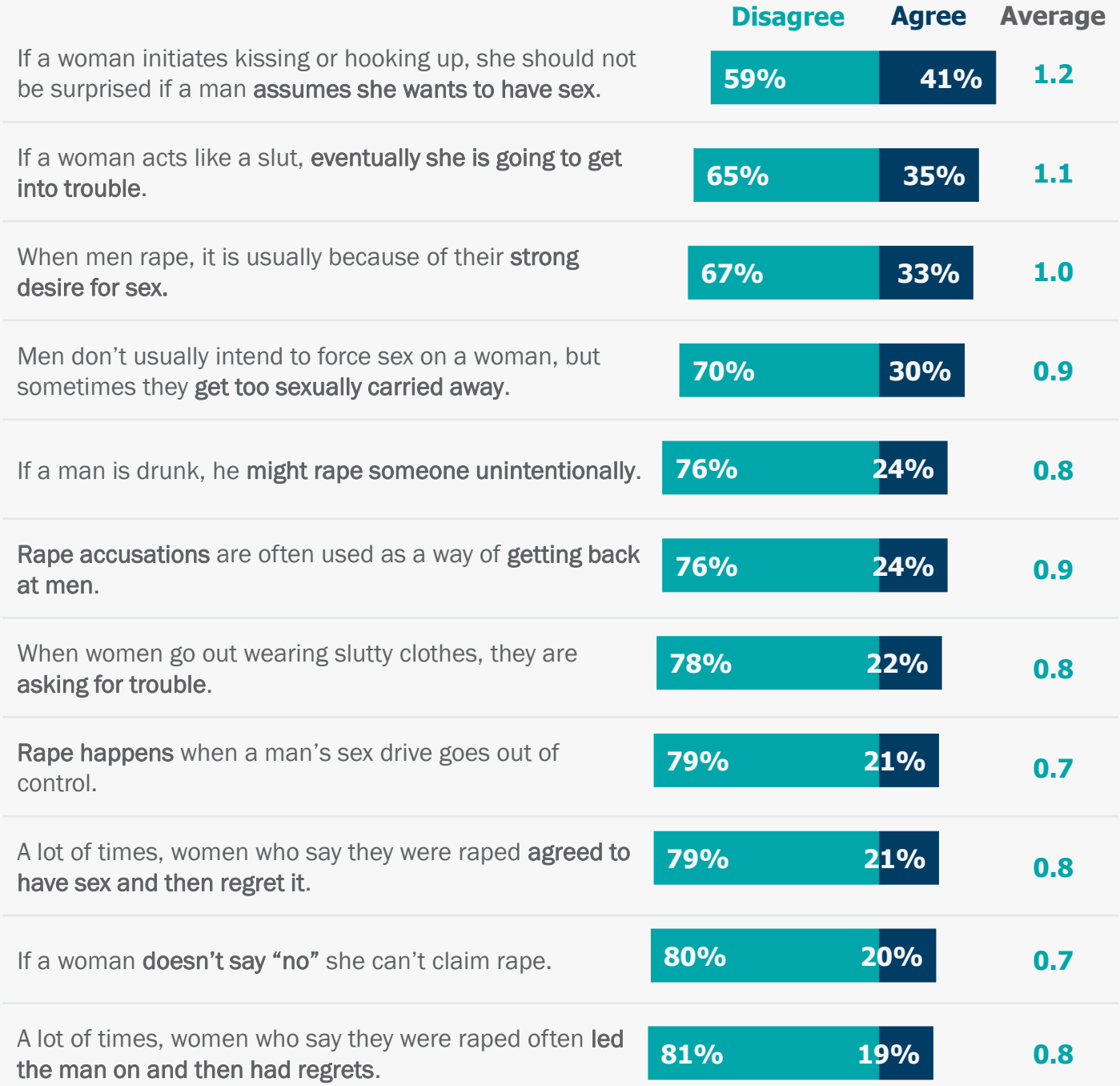
**Look out** for each other's safety. Plan ways to safely confront a person who is behaving inappropriately. Know how to report this behavior to authorities if desired.

**Work** to establish and consistently apply anti-sexism, abuse, and harassment policies in your workplace or community organizations.

# **RAPE MYTH** ACCEPTANCE

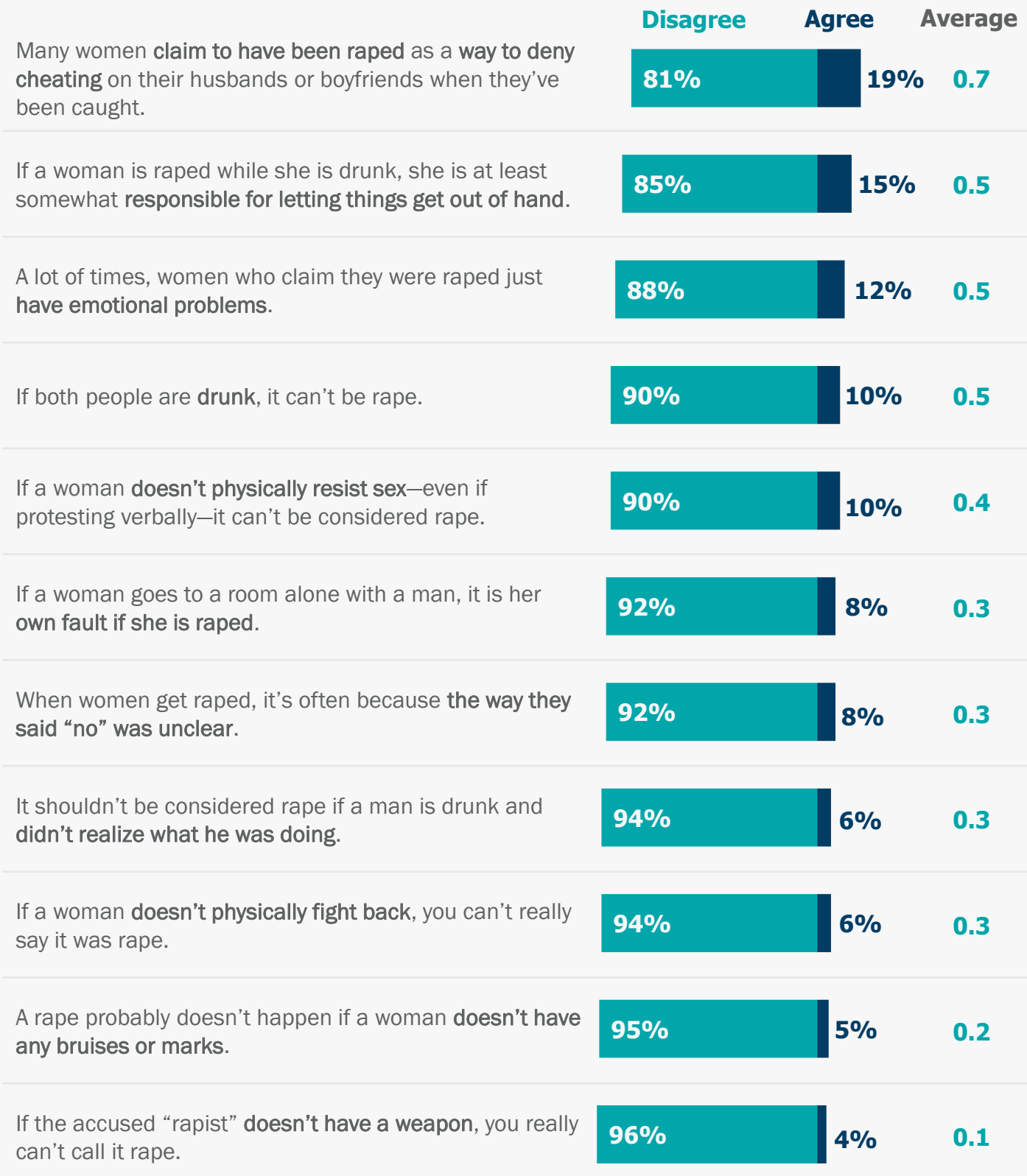
Survey respondents were asked about their feelings regarding rape.

The responses of those that **Disagree** or **Agree** with each statement are displayed in the bar chart. **Average** scores (scale of 0 – Strongly Disagree to 3 – Strongly Agree) are displayed in the column on the right.




*Note: The term "rape" refers to a specific kind of sexual assault, and is defined as sexual penetration of another person's body without that person's consent. Penetration can be of the mouth, vagina, or anus, and can be with a penis, tongue, finger, or foreign object. While rape can happen to anyone, no matter their gender, the following is a validated scale that specifically measures common gendered beliefs about rape.*
*Items were selected from an existing scale.*[10]

# **RAPE MYTH** ACCEPTANCE (CONTINUED)




*Note: The term "rape" refers to a specific kind of sexual assault, and is defined as sexual penetration of another person's body without that person's consent. Penetration can be of the mouth, vagina, or anus, and can be with a penis, tongue, finger, or foreign object. While rape can happen to anyone, no matter their gender, the following is a validated scale that specifically measures common gendered beliefs about rape.*
*Items were selected from an existing scale.*[10]

# **SUPPORT** FOR SURVIVORS

Survey respondents were asked about how they think people in their community would respond to someone who had been sexually assaulted.

Next to each question, the proportion of those that responded as **Not Likely** or **Likely** are displayed in the bar chart. **Average** scores (scale of 0 – Not at all likely to 3 – Extremely likely) are displayed in the column on the right.

| | Not Likely | Likely | Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Community members** would support the person making the report. | 13% | 87% | 2.3 |
| **The police** would take the report seriously. | 12% | 88% | 2.4 |
| **Prosecutors** would take action against the offender(s). | 16% | 84% | 2.3 |

If **you were sexually assaulted**, and you told your friends/peers, how likely is it that they would respond in the following ways:

| | Not Likely | Likely | Average |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tell you that you were **irresponsible or not cautious enough**. | 86% | 14% | 0.5 |
| **Treat you differently** than before you told them in a way that made you feel uncomfortable. | 83% | 17% | 0.7 |
| Tell you that you **could have done more to prevent the assault from occurring**. | 82% | 18% | 0.7 |
| **Avoid talking to you** or **spending time** with you. | 89% | 11% | 0.4 |
| Treat you as if you were a **child or somehow not capable**. | 89% | 11% | 0.5 |
| Make you feel like you **didn't know how to take care of yourself**. | 87% | 13% | 0.5 |

*Note: The term "sexual assault" refers to actual, attempted or threatened sexual contact with another person without that person's consent. Sexual assault includes a range of behaviors that are unwanted by the other person, including but not limited to unwanted sexual touching (for example, forced kissing or touching or grabbing of sexual body parts) and unwanted oral, anal, or vaginal penetration (for example, with a penis, finger, mouth, or object). These behaviors could be started by someone known or unknown to the other person, including someone they are in a relationship with.*

*Items were modified from existing scales.*[11, 12]

# **SUPPORT** FOR SURVIVORS

Survey respondents were asked about how they might act if you see or suspect sexual assault.

Next to each question, the proportion of those that responded as **Not Likely** or **Likely** are displayed in the bar chart. **Average** scores (scale of 0 – Not at all likely to 3 – Extremely likely) are displayed in the column on the right.

## How likely are you to engage in these behaviors?


## What extent do you feel **police** in your city/town **can be trusted**?


*Note: Items were modified from an existing scale.*[13]

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# **ADDITIONAL DETAILS** ON DATA COLLECTION AND WEIGHTING

Making data-driven decisions means using data to access, test, and improve program selection, implementation, and evaluation. Because there is very little data on sexual violence risk and protective factors at the state level for adults in Michigan, MPHI chose to do a statewide survey to better understand perceptions of sexual violence and particular risk and protective factors. Our intention was to guide prevention efforts, to inform program development and change, to support collaboration across shared risk and protective factors, and to provide raw data for use and analysis by other researchers and the state.

The content and procedures for the survey were developed collaboratively. MPHI sought guidance from survey researchers, social norms experts, sexual violence experts, professionals in nonprofit and governmental sectors, and academics. In each step from construct development through data collection and analysis, counsel was provided from this network of experts.

National and state level survey data were examined to prevent duplication with the intent to uncover new knowledge. A thorough literature review unearthed several existing and validated scales measuring constructs similar to those of interest. The final survey instrument was created by adapting existing items or carefully developing new items in consultation with experts to answer the following research questions:

1) How connected are people to their primary communities?
2) To what extent do Michiganders perceive the following groups / institutions to be supportive of victims / survivors:
    a) Peers
    b) General Community
    c) Police / Prosecutors
3) To what extent do people intend to support survivors?
4) To what extent do people endorse sexual assault / harassment / IPV behaviors as appropriate?
5) To what extent do people accept rape myths?
6) To what extent do participants have access to family economic supports?

Market Strategies, a professional survey research group out of Michigan, managed and completed the survey data collection. The survey was distributed by mail, with an option to complete via the internet. The sample was acquired through a service that draws potential participants from a USPS postal database. Residents received two mailings: a cover letter and the survey with the web link, and a survey reminder letter with web link. Adults between the ages of 18 and 64 were targeted, and African American residents were oversampled in an effort to achieve population representation. A $10 incentive was offered for survey completion.

A total of 14,988 surveys were mailed. Of those, 740 were returned as undeliverable or refused, and 1,234 were completed. The final response rate was 8.6%. Over 88% of submitted surveys were at least 90% completed, and 60% of submitted surveys were completed in their entirety.

Weighting data is an accepted research practice to adjust for the sampling error that results from oversampling some demographic groups (white population, men, etc.) and undersampling other, often underrepresented demographic groups (racial minorities, young adults, women, etc.). A survey research consultant weighted the data to ensure a high level of consistency between the demographic profile of the participants and the demographic profile of the Michigan population aged 18 to 64 years. The Michigan population profile was based on the American Community Survey (2017) from the U.S. Census Bureau. Data presented in this report were weighted by population proportion and “raking” based on a series of demographic marginals.

For more information about the survey or to request access to the dataset, please contact Dr. Sara McGirr at MPHI at smcgirr@mphi.org or (517) 324-7389.

Michigan Sexual Violence Prevention Survey Report
Center for Healthy Communities – MPHI
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