

November 1, 2012

To: Interested Parties

From: Ben Tulchin and Corey O'Neil, Tulchin Research

Re: Groundbreaking New Poll Finds Adults In California Believe Domestic Violence Can Happen to Anyone; Educating Youth on Domestic Violence is Key to Preventing and Reducing it

Tulchin Research recently conducted a groundbreaking statewide survey among adults in California to better understand public opinion toward domestic violence. Conducted during Domestic Violence Awareness Month, this survey is the first of its kind in the state to measure public attitudes and awareness towards domestic violence in an in-depth manner.

The survey finds that an overwhelming number of adults in the state believe domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of specific demographic characteristics, including people like the respondents themselves. Furthermore, Californians express a particular concern about the impact of domestic violence on children and believe one of the most effective means to prevent and reduce this social problem is to educate young people about it. We provide below a summary of key findings followed by a more in-depth analysis of the survey.

- A nearly unanimous number of California adults (98 percent) believe domestic violence can happen to anyone.
- Taking it one step further, an overwhelming majority (70 percent) believes “domestic violence can affect people like me.”
 - This finding is nearly a perfect match to the percentage of the California adult population that have a friend or family member who has been a victim of domestic violence (66 percent).
- In a similarly unanimous result, more than nine out of 10 adults (97 percent) believe children who are exposed to domestic violence are more likely to have mental health and anger management problems.
- Adults in the state also agree (95 percent) that educating young people so they have the skills to support safe and healthy relationships when they grow up is an effective way to reduce domestic violence.
 - Furthermore, an overwhelming number of adults (89 percent) think it is appropriate to teach high school students about relationship violence or dating abuse while 82 percent say the same about middle school students.
- Despite this high level of concern for domestic violence, less than a quarter of Californians (23 percent) know October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

We highlight the key findings from the survey below.

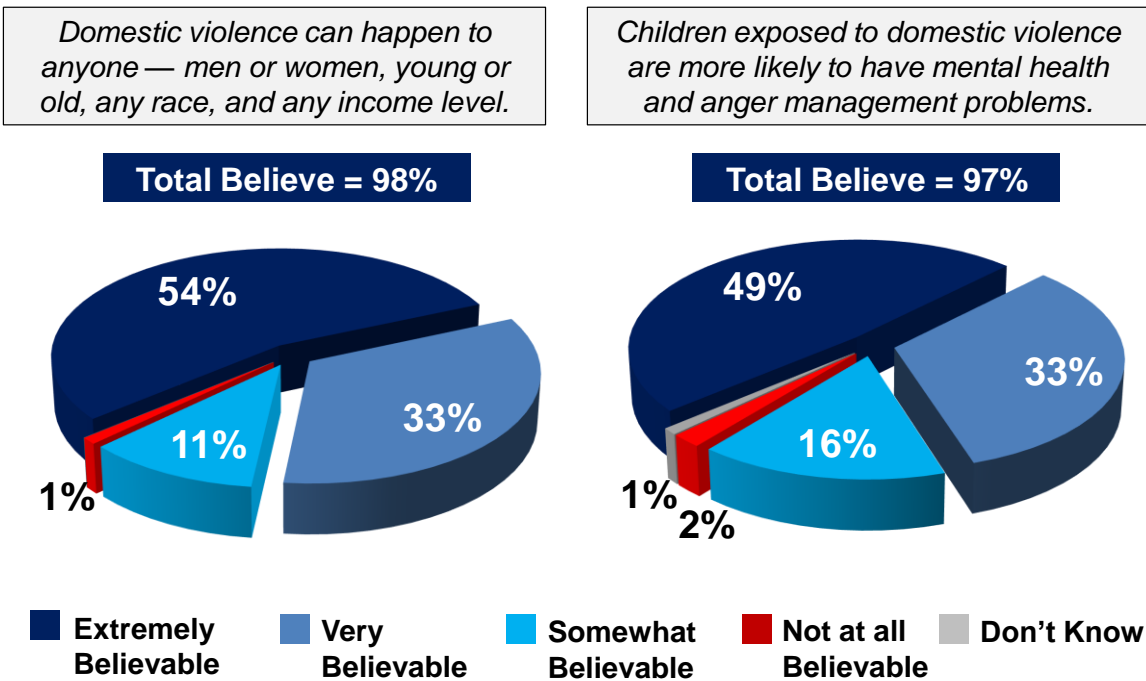
Perceptions of Domestic Violence

There are an overwhelming and nearly unanimous number of adults in California (98 percent) who believe domestic violence can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, age, race or income level. This includes a majority (54 percent) who say that is *extremely believable* and a third of adults (33 percent) who say it is *very believable*.

Similarly, it is nearly unanimous (97 percent) that adults in the state believe that children who are exposed to domestic violence are more likely to have mental health and anger management problems, including close to a majority (49 percent) who say that is *extremely believable* and a third of adults (33 percent) who say it is *very believable*. The graph below illustrates these beliefs about domestic violence more clearly:

Domestic Violence Beliefs

Now, I'm going to read you some statements about domestic violence. Please tell me how believable you find each statement – extremely believable, very believable, somewhat believable or not at all believable.



To dig a little deeper, we asked respondents a more direct question about who is affected by domestic violence. **An overwhelming majority of adults (70 percent) say domestic violence “can affect people like me and people I know well.”** Conversely, just a quarter of adults (26 percent) say domestic violence “doesn’t affect people like me and people I know well.”

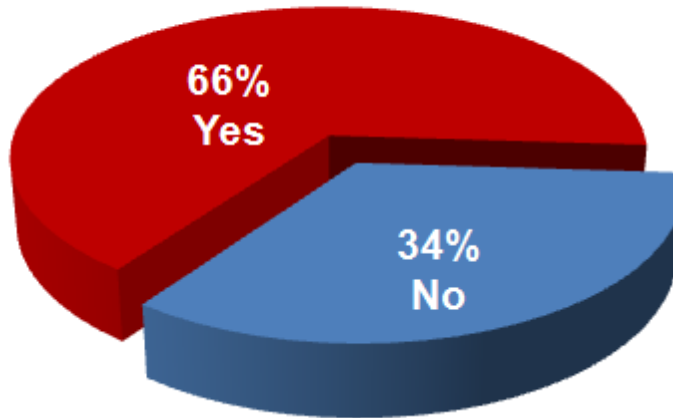
Domestic Violence: Who is affected?

<i>In thinking about domestic violence, would you say it is an issue that typically:</i>	
<i>Can affect people like me and people I know well</i>	<i>70%</i>
Probably doesn't affect people like me and people I know well	26%
Undecided	3%
<i>People like me - NOT people like me</i>	<i>+44</i>

Additionally, two-thirds of adults in California (66 percent) have a friend or family member who has been a victim of domestic violence. This level of reporting also holds true among solid majorities of demographic subgroups in the state, including gender, age, ethnicity and region, report having a personal connection with domestic violence.

Domestic Violence – Affects On Friends and Family

As far as you know, have any of the following ever been a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime?



Domestic Violence Solutions and Prevention

In an effort to understand what the public believes are the best ways to go about dealing with domestic violence, we asked respondents to weigh in on what they think are the most effective solutions to reducing this social problem.

An overwhelming and nearly unanimous number of adults (95 percent) think “educating young people so they have the skills to support safe and healthy relationships when they grow up” is an effective solution. This includes three quarters of adults (75 percent) who say this is a *very effective* solution and another 21 percent who say it’s a *somewhat effective* solution.

Other popular solutions include, “raising public awareness of domestic violence and speaking out against violence when we see it” as well as “ensuring that communities have the funding needed to support domestic violence shelters so people have a safe place to go”. Both options are supported by 93 percent of adults as effective solutions for reducing domestic violence.

Effective Domestic Violence Solutions

Now I am going to read you some proposed solutions for reducing domestic violence. Please tell me how effective you think each solution would be in reducing domestic violence – very effective, somewhat effective, not too effective, or not at all effective.

	<u>Very Effective</u>	<u>Total Effective</u>
<i>Educating young people so they have the skills to support safe and healthy relationships when they grow up.</i>	75%	95%
<i>Raising public awareness of domestic violence and speaking out against violence when we see it.</i>	63%	93%
<i>Ensuring that communities have the funding needed to support domestic violence shelters so people have a safe place to go if they are threatened by abuse.</i>	62%	93%

Furthermore, adults in the state overwhelmingly believe we should educate our kids in high school (89 percent) and middle school (82 percent) about healthy relationships in order to raise awareness about relationship violence or dating abuse as a way to prevent domestic violence in the future. Conversely, just eight percent of adults think teaching high school students about relationship violence and dating abuse should wait until they turn 18 while just slightly more (14 percent) think teaching middle school students about relationship violence and dating abuse should wait until they turn 18.

Student Education Preference

Some people have proposed teaching students in (high school/middle school) about healthy relationships to raise awareness of the issue of relationship violence or dating abuse to try to prevent it in the future. Do you think it is appropriate to teach (high school/middle school) students about domestic violence, or do you feel they are too young for this subject and that we should not expose them to it until they are at least 18?

	<u>High School Students</u>	<u>Middle School Students</u>
Appropriate to teach students	89%	82%
Wait until at least 18	8%	14%
Depends	1%	2%
Don't know	2%	3%
Teach students - Wait until 18	+81	+68

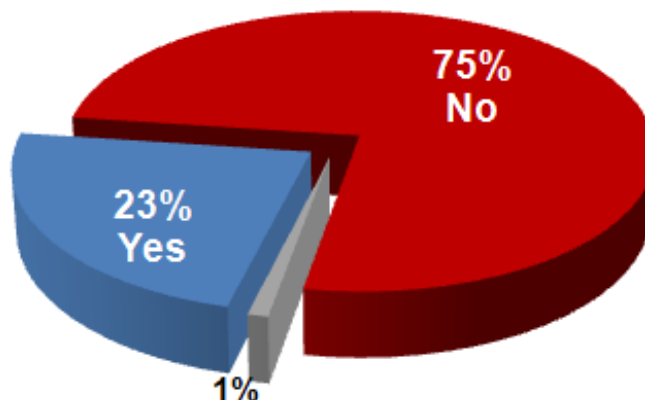
Domestic Violence Awareness

In an effort to better understand the extent of domestic violence cases in the general public, we asked respondents to weigh in on their personal history with domestic violence. Specifically, two out of three adults (66 percent) report having been personally affected by domestic violence as they know either a friend or family member who has been a victim.

Despite that high level of personal connection with domestic violence, fewer than one out of four adults in California (23 percent) are aware that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Conversely, three quarters (75 percent) admit they were not aware October had that significance while the remaining were not sure.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Before you took this survey, were you aware that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month? Please be as honest with me as possible.



Survey Methodology: *From October 24 – 28, 2012, Tulchin Research conducted a random-digit-dial telephone survey among 900 adults in California at least 18 years of age or older using live, professional interviewers and conducting surveys in both English and Spanish and calling both landlines and cell phones. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.27 percentage points.*