Adolescent family violence in Australia:

A national study of prevalence, history of childhood victimisation and impacts

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ANROWS research contributes to the six National Outcomes of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022*. This research addresses National Plan Outcome 1 – Communities are safe and free from violence.

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This report was led by Associate Professor Kate Fitz-Gibbon. The findings and implications contained within this report arise entirely from the work of Kate Fitz-Gibbon in her capacity as Director of the Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre and are wholly independent of Kate Fitz-Gibbon's role as Chair of Respect Victoria.

ANROWS Research reports are in-depth reports on empirical research produced under ANROWS's Research Program.

Acknowledgement of lived experiences of violence
ANROWS acknowledges the lives and experiences of the women and children affected by domestic, family and sexual violence who are represented in this report. We recognise the individual stories of courage, hope and resilience that form the basis of ANROWS research.

ANROWS acknowledges that children and young people living in homes where domestic and family violence (DFV) is present are not simply "exposed" to DFV – they are experiencing it. There are no circumstances in which children and young people are exposed to DFV and are not also being impacted by this violence. Therefore, ANROWS will always default to using "experienced DFV" instead of "were exposed to DFV" or "witnessed DFV". This language aligns with the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children* (due for finalisation in 2022), which recognises that children experience DFV as victims in their own right, and also seeks to honour the voices of victims and survivors who have felt minimised, erased or unacknowledged as childhood survivors.

Please note that in this report, the authors have chosen to use the terms "exposed to" and "witnessing" violence, and have provided a rationale for this choice in the "Definitions" section (see "Child abuse" definition in particular).

Caution: Some people may find parts of this content confronting or distressing. Recommended support services include 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732), Lifeline (13 11 14) and, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, 13YARN (13 92 76).

Contents

Acronyms

AFV	Adolescent family violence
AVITH	Adolescent violence in the home
DFV	Domestic and family violence
IPV	Intimate partner violence
NESB	Non-English-speaking background
ORU	Open Research Unit
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RCFV	Royal Commission into Family Violence

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Definitions

Adolescent family violence

In this study, adolescent family violence is defined as violence used by an adolescent, including the following behaviours:

- physical violence towards another family member (e.g. hitting, slapping, pushing, punching, kicking)
- damaging the property of another family member (e.g. destroying someone's property or belongings as an intimidation or punishment tactic)
- verbally abusing another family member (including yelling, swearing)
- emotionally/psychologically abusing another family member (e.g. putting someone down, telling them they're useless/stupid/ugly)
- threatening to harm/hurt another family member, and/or threatening to harm/hurt someone close to another family member (including a pet or friend)
- threatening to kill another family member
- sexually abusing another family member (including touching another family member's private parts and/or forcing a family member to have sex)
- strangling another family member (including choking or suffocating someone, grabbing someone by their throat, pinning someone down or against the wall by their throat)
- perpetrating any other form of abuse against another family member (including sexual identity-based abuse and/or gender identity-based abuse, discrimination and prejudice).

Adolescent violence in the home

See "adolescent family violence", above.

Bisexual

A person who is sexually and emotionally attracted to people of both sexes.

Child abuse

In this study, child abuse is defined as a person being exposed to violence between other family members, including all forms of violence between underaged siblings, and/or being subjected to targeted abuse perpetrated by other family members prior to the age of 18 years. Violence/abuse is in turn defined as witnessing and/or being subjected to the following behaviours: physical, verbal and emotional abuse; sexual abuse; threats to harm or kill made towards a family member; sexual abuse; and property damage. We acknowledge that "witnessing" domestic and family violence (DFV) between family members constitutes experiencing abuse. However, we refer to the two overarching forms of child abuse as witnessing DFV and experiencing child abuse in the form of being a direct target of DFV to allow for a distinction in the overarching analyses.

Disability

Disability is defined as any condition of the body or mind that affects a person's ability to do or engage in certain activities (including physical and cognitive activities). For this study, the following types of disability are captured: a physical condition; a visual or hearing condition; an intellectual disability; a specific learning disability (such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia and other learning conditions); autism spectrum disorder; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; an acquired brain injury; poor mental health affecting day-to-day functioning; or another disability.

Domestic and family violence

As defined in the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (COAG, 2010, p. 2), "domestic violence" refers to

> acts of violence that occur between people who have, or have had, an intimate relationship. While there is no single definition, the central element of domestic violence is an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling a partner through fear, for example by using behaviour which is violent and threatening. In most cases, the violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics to exercise power and control and can be both criminal and non-criminal.

"Family violence" is a broader term

> that refers to violence between family members, as well as violence between intimate partners. It involves the same sorts of behaviours as described for domestic violence. The term family violence is the most widely used term to identify the experiences of Indigenous people, because it includes the broad range of marital and kinship relationships in which violence may occur. (COAG, 2010, p. 2)

Family member

Family member was defined broadly to include biological parents, adoptive parents, step-parents and foster carers, siblings, grandparents, extended family members (e.g. aunts, uncles and cousins), chosen family members and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship relationships. The term "family member" includes extended family members and is not limited to the family members with whom the adolescent lives all or part of the time.

LGBTIQA+

An acronym used to describe people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer, asexual or questioning.

Non-English-speaking background

Non-English-speaking background (NESB) is defined broadly as someone living in an English-speaking country whose primary language is a language other than English. For the purpose of this report, this includes Australian-born young people who speak a language other than English at home. This may include First Nations young people.

Pansexual

Pansexual refers to "someone who is attracted to any sex/gender" (Pride in Diversity, 2018, p. 69).

Perpetrator

Perpetrator refers to "a person who commits an illegal, criminal or harmful act, including domestic, family or sexual violence" (Department of Social Services [DSS], 2022, p. 65). This study does not use the term "perpetrator" to refer to use of violence by children and young people.

Queer We acknowledge that the term "queer" does not have a fixed definition, and that it can be a "polarising" term (Pride in Diversity, 2018, p. 71). In this study, queer describes "someone who does not conform to social norms regarding gender and sexuality" (Pride in Diversity, 2018, p. 71).

Sexual identity This term is used throughout this report to capture diverse sexual identities. Sexual identity is used to refer to the "component of identity that includes a person's sexual and emotional attraction to another person. A person may be attracted to men, women, both, neither, or to people who are genderqueer, androgynous, or have other gender identities" (DSS, 2022, p. 66).

Sexual violence Sexual violence is defined as any form of unwanted sexual behaviour, including sexual assault, rape and sexual abuse. For the purpose of this report, this includes rape (any penetration of the victim's body), attempted rape, fondling or unwanted sexual touching, forcing a victim to perform sexual acts (such as oral sex) or penetrating the victim's body. In this study we only capture sexual violence perpetrated within a family context.

Trauma As defined in the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (COAG, 2010), trauma occurs when a person's ability to respond to a distressing event and/or to cope is overwhelmed. Trauma can have a significant effect on a person's emotional, psychological and/or physical wellbeing. Symptoms and indicators of trauma may look different for different people.

Victim-survivor A victim-survivor is a person who has experienced DFV, including sexual violence and/or child abuse and neglect. This term is

> understood to acknowledge the strength and resilience shown by people who have experienced or are currently living with violence. People who have experienced violence have different preferences about how they would like to be identified and may prefer survivor or victim separately, or another term altogether. (DSS, 2022, p. 67)

While we note that the ANROWS preferred terminology is "victim and survivor", we have adopted "victim-survivor" on this occasion as it has been used throughout the data collection process and aligns with preferred national terminology.

Violence against women In this study, we use the United Nations (1993) definition of VAW, defining it as

> any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Young people Definitions of young people may vary age-wise, depending on the legal or social context. This study defines young people as those aged between 16 and 20, as this represents the ages of the young people in the study sample employed for this project.

Executive summary

There is increasing recognition across Australia and internationally of the significant harms and impacts of adolescent family violence (AFV), also known as adolescent violence in the home (AVITH). AFV refers to the use of family violence (including physical, emotional, psychological, verbal, financial and/or sexual abuse) by a young person against their parent, carer, sibling or other family member within the home (Royal Commission into Family Violence, 2016). While research in this area has developed in recent years, there remain significant gaps in current understanding of this form of family violence. Specifically, there is no research within Australia or internationally that examines the prevalence of, nature of and responses to AFV from the perspective of young people.

Research aims

This project aims to:

1. create a database on the use of family violence by young people within the home, including among marginalised community groups
2. understand the nature of family violence used by young people within the home
3. examine the degree to which young people who use violence within the home have been exposed to different forms of family violence throughout childhood
4. generate new insights and recommendations into the support needs for young people using family violence.

This report represents the first of two reports presenting the findings of this project. Project findings related to research aims 1 to 3 are examined in this report. Findings relating to research aim 4 are examined in the second project report (see Fitz-Gibbon, Meyer et al., 2022).

Methods

This project involved the administration of a survey to young people living in Australia who were 16 to 20 years old at time of completing the survey. Survey respondents were recruited through online research panels managed by Open Research Unit (ORU). Because the sample was recruited using non-probability protocols, it is not representative of the broader Australian population (16 to 20 years old). Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about their sociodemographic characteristics, their current living arrangements, and their experiences of:

- witnessing violence between other family members
- being subjected to direct forms of abuse perpetrated by other family members
- their use of violence against other family members.

"Family member" was defined broadly to include biological parents, adoptive parents, step-parents and foster carers, siblings, grandparents, extended family members (e.g. aunts, uncles and cousins), chosen family members and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship relationships. Violence included physical violence, property damage, verbal and emotional/psychological abuse, sexual abuse and threatening behaviours.

Young people who completed the survey were also asked to provide detailed information about the nature of their experiences and use of violence, including age of onset, frequency of behaviours and their relationship with the perpetrator/victim (e.g. mother). Respondents were also asked about the impacts of their experiences and use of violence in a range of domains, including their mental and physical health, their connections to culture and their engagement in education.

The survey included both close-ended and free-text questions, yielding both qualitative and quantitative data. The analysis of the quantitative data involved bivariate tests of association (chi-square) and the estimation of multiple logistic regression models to examine factors associated with young people's use of violence in the home. The qualitative data was analysed in NVivo to identify key themes across the dataset, by gender and by priority cohorts.

Overall, 5,021 young people completed the survey. Two thirds of the sample identified that they were assigned female at birth (n=3,348), and one third said they had been assigned male at birth (n=1,623).

Findings

Section 1: Violence used by young people in the home

One in five young people who participated in the survey self-reported that they had ever used violence against a family member (20%, *n*=1,006). When disaggregated by sex assigned at birth, we found that a larger proportion of respondents assigned female at birth than respondents assigned male at birth reported using violence in the home. Specifically, 23 per cent (*n*=762) of those assigned female at birth had used violence, compared to 14 per cent (*n*=234) of those assigned male at birth (*n*=10 respondents did not provide their sex assigned at birth). This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2(1)=47.48$, $p<0.001$).

The most common form of violence used by young people was verbal abuse (15%, *n*=734), followed by physical violence (10%, *n*=490) and emotional/psychological abuse (5%, *n*=245). Only a small proportion of young people reported that they had threatened to harm or hurt a family member or someone close to the family member (2%, *n*=96); threatened to kill a family member (1%, *n*=32); strangled or choked a family member (<1%, *n*=14); or sexually abused a family member (<1%, *n*=9). While it is not possible to rule out whether the low prevalence rate of the severe forms of abuse may be associated with stigma and underreporting among the sample, the forms of abuse reported are not unexpectedly low compared to other forms of DFV reported in the study – for example, 10 per cent of young people in the sample had used physical violence and 5 per cent had used psychological abuse. The project findings show a consistent pattern, with AFV most commonly involving verbal abuse, followed by physical and psychological abuse, with a small proportion of young people reporting the more severe types of abuse that are more commonly associated with IPV than DFV between other family members.

The co-occurrence of both physical and non-physical forms of violence was common among young people, being reported by one in three survey respondents who said they had ever used violence in the home (36%, *n*=359). In other words, many young people who used physical and sexual violence were also likely to engage in non-physically abusive behaviours.

Meanwhile, one in two young people had used non-physical forms of abuse against family members in isolation (51%, *n*=513), and 13 per cent said they had used physical forms of violence in isolation of using any other forms of violence in the home.

Frequency of using violence in the home

Family violence, like other forms of familial violence (e.g. IPV), is often re-occurring. For the purpose of the current analysis, the frequency of young people's use of violence in the home was collapsed into two broad categories:

- frequent AFV: the young person was abusive towards family members on at least a monthly basis
- episodic AFV: the young person was abusive towards family members less than monthly.

Overall, among young people who had used violence in the home, 45 per cent (*n*=453) said they had used at least one form of AFV against a family member on at least a monthly basis. This means that 55 per cent (*n*=553) had been abusive on an episodic basis.

However, the frequency of the violence used by the young person differed across the forms of AFV included in the analysis. In particular, relative to young people who had been frequently verbally (48%, *n*=352) or emotionally/psychologically abusive (40%, *n*=97), it was less common that young people were frequently threatening (25%, *n*=26) or physically violent (28%, *n*=136) towards their family members.

Age young person started using violence in the home

Moving beyond the prevalence and nature of violence used by young people in the home as reported at one point in time, we asked young people when they had started to use violence against family members. This is referred to as "onset" within the criminal careers literature (Piquero et al., 2014).

Among young people who were able to provide their age of onset (60%; *n*=598):

- 42 per cent were 10 years old or younger (*n*=251)
- 24 per cent were 11 to 13 years old (*n*=143)

- 29 per cent were 14 to 16 years old (*n*=176)
- 5 per cent were 17 to 20 years old (*n*=28).

The average age of onset was 11 years old (SD=3.9).

Interestingly, a larger proportion of young people reported using physical violence in the home (55%, *n*=144) when they were 10 years or younger compared to other forms of non-physical abuse (e.g. verbal abuse; 32%, *n*=129). This finding is inconsistent with some "escalation" models of DFV which suggest that non-physical forms of abuse initially used by perpetrators transition to increasingly frequent and severe physical forms of violence (Boxall & Lawler, 2021). This finding is perhaps explainable by the potential differences in the motivations for using violence against family members for young people and adults (Brezina, 1999; Calvete et al., 2012).

Family members who were subjected to violence used by young people

Across all forms of AFV included in the analysis, a larger proportion of young people reported using violence against their immediate family members – their mothers, fathers and siblings – than other family members. Specifically, two in three young people who reported using violence said they had used violence against a sibling, including step-siblings (68%, *n*=679); half said they had used violence against their mother (including adopted mothers; 51%, *n*=513); and 37 per cent had used violence against their father (including adopted fathers; *n*=376). In comparison, violence towards step-parents and foster carers (8%, *n*=80), grandparents (3%, *n*=31) and extended family members (e.g. uncles and aunts; 1%, *n*=80) was less common. These findings are likely reflective of the increased opportunities young people have to use violence against parents and siblings as they are typically cohabiting with them (Boxall & Sabol, 2021; Contreras & Cano, 2014).

Co-occurrence of child abuse and perpetration of adolescent family violence

Consistent with other research, there appeared to be a high level of overlap between experiences of child abuse and use of violence against family members among young people (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015). Overall, 46 per cent (*n*=703) of young people who had experienced child abuse self-reported that they had used violence in the home as well. Meanwhile, a staggering 89 per cent (*n*=896) of young people who had used violence in the home reported that they had experienced child abuse. Ninety percent of respondents who were assigned female at birth (*n*=685) and 86 per cent of respondents assigned male at birth (*n*=201) who had used violence in the home also self-reported that they had experienced child abuse (*n*=10 respondents did not provide information about their sex assigned at birth).

After controlling for a range of other confounding factors, (e.g. sex and gender identity), the probability of using violence in the home was highest among young people who had both witnessed violence between other family members and been subjected to targeted abuse (46%). Young people who had experienced both forms of child abuse were:

- 9.2 times more likely to use violence in the home than respondents who had not experienced any child abuse
- 2.7 times more likely to use violence in the home than respondents who had witnessed abuse between other family members (but not been subjected to targeted abuse)
- 2.3 times more likely to use violence in the home than respondents who had been subjected to targeted abuse perpetrated by family members (but not witnessed violence).

Retaliatory violence

The high level of overlap between young people's experiences of child abuse and their use of violence in the home appeared to be partially attributable to respondents' use of "retaliatory" violence. For example, when asked to attribute reasons to their use of violence, many young people referred to wanting to punish family members who had abused them, and to defend themselves from actual or anticipated violence. This was supported by the analysis of the quantitative data which found that 93 per cent of young people whose siblings had been violent towards them (*n*=283), and 68 per cent of respondents whose mothers had been violent towards them (*n*=302), had used violence against these family members in turn. However, rates of reciprocal violence decreased for fathers (54%, *n*=232), step-parents/foster carers (29%, *n*=47), grandparents (26%, *n*=26) and extended family members (16%, *n*=3). This may, again, be a function of opportunity, or may reflect who is seen as the weakest or "safest" target

of aggression in the home by young people using violence, with siblings and mothers possibly being seen as safer to retaliate against than fathers who are known to be violent.

Section 2: Priority adolescent cohorts' use of violence in the home

The logistic regression analyses identified that other than experiences of child abuse, very few factors were independently associated with use of violence in the home. After controlling for other confounding variables, young people from non-English-speaking backgrounds (NESBs), gender-diverse young people and young people with diverse sexual identities were no more or less likely to use violence in the home compared to other survey respondents. Further, First Nations young people were no more likely to use violence in the home than non-Indigenous respondents, although they were statistically more likely to use frequent violence.

However, after controlling for other confounding factors, we found that young people with disability were more likely to use violence in the home when compared to respondents without disability. More specifically, based on the self-reported data, young people with disability were:

- 1.3 times more likely to use violence in the home than respondents who did not have disability
- 2.8 times more likely to use severe forms of AFV in the home than respondents who did not have disability
- 1.4 times more likely to use frequent violence in the home than respondents who did not have disability.

While Australian AFV-related research has previously noted the high presentation of families living with disability among those who experience violence (see, inter alia, Campbell, 2021; Campbell et al., 2020; Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2021), this research provides critical quantification of this practitioner viewpoint. However, because the data is cross-sectional in nature, it cannot tell us anything about the direction of the relationship between disability and adolescent use of violence in the home.

Section 3: The impacts of adolescent family violence

Young people who had experienced and used violence in the home identified a range of impacts associated with these traumatic events. Due to the design of the survey instrument, we were not able to disaggregate the impacts of *use of violence* from experiences of family violence and child abuse: as both were experienced for many young people during childhood, the impacts were compounding. Emotional and social impacts included poor mental health and symptoms associated with mental illness (including hyper-arousal, shaking, suicidal ideation and emotional dysregulation), as well as diagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression. Several respondents also said that the violence had negatively impacted their relationships with family members and their ability to form healthy and functional attachments outside of the family unit.

As a result of the violence they had been subjected to, some respondents reported that they had experienced short-term and chronic physical issues. These ranged from bruises and cuts through to spinal issues, dislocated bones and permanent scars. Several female respondents reflected on the impact of the violence on their body image, weight and relationships with food. This observation is in line with wider research that has linked childhood experiences of abuse to eating disorders and a distorted body image (see, for example, Caslini et al., 2016; Guillaume et al., 2016; Hemmingsson, 2018), particularly for female survivors of childhood (sexual) abuse. Some young people's experiences of violence had also negatively impacted their connection to their culture and faith. This appeared to occur in cases where they in part attributed their experiences to religious beliefs within the family.

Finally, respondents reflected on being unfocused on their education and performing poorly because of the stress in their home life. Further, some young people did not attend school because of concerns about the abuse being detected, or because they had run away or been kicked out of home. These factors made attendance at school more difficult.

Study strengths and limitations

One of the key strengths of this research is that it centres the voices of young people to better understand their experiences and use of violence. This allows the identification of the nature and prevalence of young people's childhood experiences of abuse, its intersection with use of violence in the home and its impact on young people's social, emotional and physical wellbeing. The study provides insight into how young people make sense of their own use of violence in the home.

There are several limitations associated with this study. Respondents were recruited into the study using non-probability protocols. This means that although the sample was large, not everyone had an equal likelihood of being selected to participate in the research and as such the findings are not necessarily generalisable to the wider Australian population. For example, female respondents are overrepresented within the sample, as are those residing in major cities. While this study represents the most comprehensive national prevalence study of adolescent family violence conducted in Australia to date, future research could build upon this baseline by undertaking a survey using a nationally representative sample.

As this study is based on cross-sectional data, a causal relationship between the main variables of interest – experiences of child abuse and use of violence in the home – cannot be established. Relatedly, there may be unmeasured confounding factors that are relevant to young people's experiences of violence, such as alcohol use and psychological distress, which are not included in this study. This in part reflects the inability within one survey to capture all areas of interest and relationships.

The finding that disability status was positively associated with use of violence in the home is difficult to unpack, primarily because the definition of disability used in the survey was broad, including mental illness, chronic physical illnesses and other conditions, autism, learning difficulties and intellectual disabilities. Using an aggregate measure such as this likely obscures variation in the links between specific forms of disability and use of violence in the home. The links between disability and use of violence by young people requires further research.

Implications for policy and practice

The findings from this study raise a number of implications for policy and practice. The findings highlight the critical need for greater trauma-informed practice when responding to families affected by DFV, including child abuse and AFV. Supporting a young person's recovery from DFV is an essential strategy to reduce the risk of intergenerational violence, and other short- and long-term impacts of violence on children's and young people's lives. Access to specialist recovery and support services for children and young people must be timely and trauma informed. The high rate of experiences of poly-victimisation during childhood for young people residing in Australia also illuminates the need for child-centred risk and needs assessment in relation to experiences of DFV and other forms of child abuse. Careful attention must also be paid in policy and practice to ensure the specialist recovery needs of young people with disability who have experienced and used violence are met.

Introduction

There is increasing recognition across Australia and internationally of the significant harms and impacts of adolescent family violence (AFV), also referred to as adolescent violence in the home (AVITH). AFV refers to the use of family violence (including physical, emotional, psychological, verbal, financial and/or sexual abuse and property damage) by a young person against their parent, carer, sibling or other family member within the home (Royal Commission into Family Violence [RCFV], 2016). While research in this area has developed in recent years (see, for example, Campbell et al., 2020; Condry & Miles, 2014; Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2018; Holt, 2012; Meyer et al., 2020), there remain significant gaps in current understandings of this form of family violence. Compared to other forms of domestic and family violence (DFV), such as intimate partner violence (IPV), AFV remains an under-researched issue. Specifically, there is no research within Australia or internationally that examines the prevalence of, nature of and responses to AFV through the voices of young people with lived experience.

While the past five years have seen unprecedented attention nationally on DFV, as yet there has been minimal policy, practice and research attention paid to AFV specifically. Recent findings of Australian state-based inquiries and academic research have revealed a lack of suitable and integrated service and justice system responses to adolescent family violence (Campbell et al., 2020; Douglas & Walsh, 2018; Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2018; RCFV, 2016). Consequently, for young people experiencing AFV and their families, there remain no clear avenues for accessing effective support or responses. While much has been achieved in the area of DFV in Australia over the past decade, improving understandings of and responses to AFV requires urgent national attention.

In 2016, the RCFV highlighted the need to build improved understandings of the use of family violence by young people in the home. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions highlighted this form of violence as an issue of growing concern that requires increased community, government and service system attention (see, for example, Campbell, 2020; Condry et al., 2020).

Research aims

Recent DFV reviews in Australia have recognised that evidence on the nature and prevalence of AFV remains limited and support needs of young people are not well understood (RCFV 2016; Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, 2015). This project addresses this national knowledge research gap by exploring the experiences of young people using violence in the home in greater depth.

To generate a holistic picture of young people's use of violence in the home, this project aims to:

1. create a robust prevalence database on the use of family violence by young people within the home, including among marginalised community groups
2. understand the nature of family violence used by young people within the home
3. examine the degree to which young people who use violence within the home have been exposed to different forms of family violence throughout childhood
4. generate new insights and recommendations into the support needs for young people using family violence.

In our examination of young people's experiences of violence in the home, we focus on two primary forms of child abuse: experiences of *witnessing* abuse perpetrated between other family members, and experiences of being subjected to targeted abuse perpetrated by other family members. Experiences of either or both of these forms of abuse are referred to collectively throughout this report as "child abuse".

By taking a holistic approach to understanding young people's use of violence in the home, service systems will be better equipped to address diverse and underlying needs of families affected by AFV, including early interventions to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of DFV and ongoing recovery support for young people with adverse childhood experiences. Drawing on a large-scale national survey comprising both quantitative and qualitative components, this project propels current understandings of this form of family violence toward the key objectives to improve community awareness and enhance relevant response and prevention initiatives. The project findings are relevant to all Australian state and territory jurisdictions.

Study rationale

The prevalence and full impacts of AFV on adolescents and families are not yet known in Australia or internationally. The RCFV (2016) drew primarily on police data to conclude that AFV represents in total around one in 10 family violence incidents reported to police. The RCFV also found that the severity of the violence experienced was dependant on the age and gender of the adolescent involved, with the severity of abuse by sons increasing incrementally between the ages of 10 and 17, while parental abuse by daughters increases between the ages of 10 and 13 years, and declines after that age (RCFV, 2016). More recently, Victorian-based research by Moulds et al. (2018) estimated that nationally between one and seven per cent of DFV reported to police involves AFV. Police reports are likely to represent a significant underestimation given the significant barriers to reporting for affected family members and for young people using violence (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2018).

Beyond prevalence, AFV is recognised as a distinct form of DFV that has detrimental impacts on the health and wellbeing of families. Impacts include long-term health and wellbeing implications for those affected, negative educational outcomes for the adolescent and affected siblings, affected parental work patterns, relationship breakdown and family estrangement, as well as the well documented economic, physical and emotional impacts for families and individuals who experience violence within the home (Elliott et al., 2020; Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2018).

Further, while adolescent family violence is often thought to be less gendered than adult IPV, existing research and prevalence data demonstrates that the majority of victim-survivors are women, and that the majority of adolescents whose violence in the home is reported to police are male (see, for example, Condry & Miles, 2014; RCFV, 2016). Australian research has found that around 65 per cent of those aged 17 years or younger who are violent towards their parents are male (McKenna et al., 2010; RCFV, 2016). It has been reported that young males are more likely to use physical aggression than young females, and mothers are the most likely targets of the violence (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2018; McKenna et al., 2010). This is not to suggest that AFV is not perpetrated by female adolescents. Research has found that when female adolescents do use violence in the home, they are more likely to direct that violence towards their mothers (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2018; Routt & Anderson, 2015; on female use of AFV see also Campbell et al., 2020). Gendered patterns and social structures therefore drive prevalence in AFV as they do in other forms of DFV.

While not every young person displaying aggressive or violent behaviours towards parents, carers or other family members has a childhood history of trauma, research strongly suggests that young people engaging in AFV often have complex needs (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2018; Meyer et al., 2021), and frequently share past or ongoing experiences of DFV (Phillips & McGuiness, 2020). Often compared to adult perpetrators of DFV (Howard, 2015), young people engaging in AFV currently attract police (Ford, 2020), mental health and/or youth justice interventions in the absence of child-centred, therapeutic and trauma-informed responses to young people using violence in the home (see, for example, Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2018; RCFV, 2016).

Research on the intergenerational transmission of violence has found correlations between parent-to-child abuse (including where a child experiences parental IPV) and subsequent adolescent family violence (see, for example, Holt, 2012; Miles & Condry, 2015). While a direct or causal link has not been evidenced, research has examined the co-occurrence of both from a psychoanalytic perspective (Cottrell & Monk, 2004) and a cognitive development perspective (Carlson, 2000), and by drawing on attachment theory and structural perspectives (Holt, 2012).

Recent research by Meyer et al. (2021) examines the intergenerational transmission of DFV in a small sample of Australian mothers. The research documented the childhood trauma that often sits behind the use of AFV and the dual victimisation experiences it creates for mothers of adolescents who use violence in the home (Meyer et al., 2021).

Report overview

The following section of the report sets out the research methods for this study, including a detailed overview of the approach taken to the national prevalence survey, including sampling and data analysis. Ethical considerations and our approach to intersectionality are reflected upon. This section also provides details of the characteristics of our survey sample.

Our presentation of findings is organised into four key sections. Section 1 presents the prevalence study by drawing on the quantitative findings on violence used by young people in the home as well as the co-occurrence of experiencing family violence, being a direct target of family violence, and the perpetration of AFV. In Section 2 we present the study findings specific to five priority adolescent cohorts: First Nations young people, young people from NESBs, young people with disability, gender-diverse young people, and young people with diverse sexual identities. The second half of the findings draws on the qualitative study components to examine young people's rationale for using family violence in the home (Section 3), and the impacts of AFV (Section 4).

The discussion and conclusion set out the strengths and limitations of the current study as well as potential directions for future research. The implications and recommendations for policy and practice are explored alongside the significance of the study's findings.

Methods

This project places the voices and experiences of young people at the centre of advancing Australia's evidence base around AFV. To do so, it presents the findings of a national prevalence study designed to examine young people's experiences and use of family violence within the home.

National survey of young people in Australia

This project utilised an online survey of over 5,000 young people living in Australia aged 16 to 20 as the primary research method for examining AFV. The survey instrument was designed to meet two principal objectives:

- to facilitate better understandings of the use of DFV by adolescents alongside an understanding of DFV exposure during childhood
- to generate new knowledge on current service options and support needs among this cohort.

The survey consisted of a series of demographic, quantitative and qualitative questions. This schedule of questions allowed the project to collect the breadth of data needed to quantitatively examine the prevalence, use of and exposure to DFV among young Australians who participated in the survey, but also the depth of data needed to better understand experiences of violence among young people. This approach sought to deliver new knowledge on the support needs for this cohort.

In addition to establishing the first Australian community-based data regarding AFV, the survey questions were structured to gather new knowledge on three key areas: the use of DFV by adolescents, DFV exposure during childhood, and service options and support needs. For each of these areas, the national panel survey approach allowed the research to specifically consider the experience of young people from priority cohorts.

Sampling

The survey was conducted by the Open Research Unit (ORU) using Qualtrics Software during the period September to October 2021. The survey was sent to members of the ORU's online research panels who were aged 16 to 20. Although the ORU panels are representative of the broader Australian population by state and territory (i.e. panellists are recruited using proportional quota-based protocols to ensure they represent the spread of people living in Australia), because participation in the survey was limited to members of the ORU's online panels, not every person living in Australia (16 to 20 years old) had the same odds of completing the survey. Further, the sample was not recruited to reflect the spread of young people in Australia (e.g. using proportional quota-based sampling protocols). Finally, the survey was only provided in English, which we note may have also impacted involvement in the research for some young people. These three factors taken together mean that the current sample is not a probability sample, and as such the results are not generalisable to the wider Australian population (i.e. these findings may not be replicated if the survey was administered again using a probability sample). While post-stratification weights may have been used to adjust for the differences between the current sample and the broader Australian population, this was determined to not be appropriate considering the initial recruitment strategies did not involve proportional quota-based sampling protocols.

Respondents who consented to participate in the survey were asked about their sociodemographic characteristics, their living arrangements (at time of the survey), their experiences of child abuse and violence prior to 18 years old, and use of violence in the home at any age. Respondents who reported they had either experienced violence or used violence were also asked a number of detailed questions about the nature of these experiences, including type of abuse experienced, the age of first experiencing/using violence, the relationship between the respondent and the perpetrator of violence and/or victim-survivor of the violence, and the frequency of the abuse. The survey included both closed and open-ended questions (see Appendix B for a copy of the full survey instrument) and was co-designed by the project team with the project advisory board which included leading policy and practice stakeholders and experts. Respondents who were 16 or 17 years old required the consent of their primary guardian to be included in the ORU panels.

The completion rate for the survey – the proportion of total invitations sent to panel members that resulted in completed surveys – was 6.7 per cent. However, 80 per cent of young

people who opened the invitation and passed the screening process went on to complete the survey. The final sample size for the study was 5,021 respondents. All respondents were provided with a small reward for completing the survey.

Data analysis

The survey data was subjected to both quantitative and qualitative modes of analysis. The analytic processes involved in the study are described below.

Analysis of quantitative data

The analysis was undertaken in two stages. First, the use of violence in the home by young people was explored at a univariate (descriptive) level, and a bivariate level (using chi-square tests of association). The second stage of the analysis involved the estimation of multivariate regression models to measure the independent effect of different variables, including experiences of child abuse, on the likelihood of using violence in the home. Regression analysis allowed us to measure the relationship between our outcomes of interest (dependent variables) and multiple explanatory factors (independent variables).

Given most of the dependent variables were dichotomous variables (yes/no to whether or not a respondent had used violence in the home), logistic regression models were used to estimate the likelihood of experiencing violence. Model fit was assessed using Pearson's goodness-of-fit tests, and Area Under the Receiver Operating Characteristic curve (AUROC). The AUROC (measured on a scale of 0.5 to 1) is a useful statistic because it helps assess the predictive accuracy of a model (i.e. the ability to correctly discriminate between cases). An AUROC of 0.7 and above is considered to have an acceptable level of discrimination, while an AUROC of 0.8 or higher is regarded as having excellent discrimination. Odds ratios (ORs) are reported for each of the logistic regression models, and are a measure of association between an independent variable and the outcome. They are interpreted as the odds that an outcome will occur when the variable is present, relative to the odds of the outcome occurring when that variable is not present.

Dependent variables

Any use of violence in the home

Respondents were classified as using violence in the home if they said they had ever:

- been physically violent towards another family member (e.g. hitting, slapping, pushing, punching, kicking)
- damaged the property of another family member (e.g. destroying someone's property or belongings as an intimidation or punishment tactic)
- verbally abused another family member (including yelling, swearing)
- emotionally/psychologically abused another family member (e.g. putting someone down, telling them they're useless/stupid/ugly)
- threatened to harm/hurt another family member, and/or threatened to harm/hurt someone close to another family member (including a pet or friend)
- threatened to kill another family member
- sexually abused another family member (including touching another family member's private parts and/or forcing a family member to have sex)
- strangled another family member (including choking or suffocating someone, grabbing someone by their throat, pinning someone down or against the wall by their throat)
- perpetrated any other form of abuse against another family member (including gender identity- and sexuality-based abuse, discrimination and prejudice; see Appendix B).

"Family member" was defined broadly to include biological parents, adoptive parents, step-parents and foster carers, siblings, grandparents, extended family members (e.g. aunts, uncles and cousins) and chosen family members. However, for the purpose of the analysis, chosen family members were combined with extended family members.

Use of severe violence

All forms of family violence can be harmful and have a significant impact on victim-survivors and their families. Further, impacts of family violence include non-physical forms of harm, including reduced employment, reduced self-esteem and social isolation (Fitz-Gibbon et al., 2018).

However, research has shown that specific forms of abuse are linked with subsequent use of severe forms of violence, including homicide (Glass et al., 2008; Monckton Smith, 2020).

Respondents were classified as using severe violence in the home if they reported that they had ever sexually abused another family member, strangled another family member and/or threatened to kill another family member. Young people who had used other forms of violence (e.g. physical violence and property damage) were defined as using "minor" forms of violence.

Frequent use of violence

Young people who self-reported using violence in the home were asked how often they were abusive towards family members. For the purpose of the current analysis, responses were collapsed into two broad categories:

- frequent AFV: the young person was abusive towards family members on at least a monthly basis
- episodic AFV: the young person was abusive towards family members less than monthly (see Appendix A).

Independent variables

Sociodemographic characteristics

Respondents were asked to provide basic demographic information about themselves, including:

- Indigenous status
- language spoken most of the time at home
- sex assigned at birth
- gender identity
- sexual identity.

Survey respondents were also asked whether, at time of completing the survey, they were living with a physical impairment; a visual impairment; an intellectual disability; a specific learning disability (such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia and other learning impairments); autism spectrum disorder; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; an acquired brain injury; poor mental health affecting day-to-day functioning; or another disability. Respondents who self-reported that they had at least one of these conditions were classified as having any disability (see Appendix A).

Experiences of child abuse

Survey respondents were asked about their experiences of child abuse prior to the age of 18. In particular, young people were asked about their experiences of witnessing violence between other family members, including seeing things happen directly, overhearing things that may have happened in a different room and/or seeing the aftermath of things having happened while they were not present. Further, respondents were asked whether they had been the direct target of abuse perpetrated by other family members.

Respondents were defined as experiencing any child abuse if they had either witnessed or been subjected to any of the following behaviours perpetrated by another family member:

- physical violence
- property damage
- verbal abuse
- emotional/psychological abuse
- threats to harm/hurt another family member, and/or threats to harm/hurt someone close to another family member (including a pet or friend)
- threats to kill
- sexual abuse (including touching another family member's private parts and/or forcing a family member to have sex)
- strangling another family member (including choking or suffocating someone, grabbing someone by their throat, pinning someone down or against the wall by their throat)
- any other form of abuse (including gender identity- and sexuality-based abuse, discrimination and prejudice; see Appendix B).

Qualitative data analysis

All responses provided in the open-text questions were coded and analysed thematically using NVivo 12. Responses to each open-text question were first analysed in their totality (noting that not all participants provided a response to each open-text question) to determine key themes and trends in the data, and then analysed by participant sex, and other priority cohort groups. This allowed the research team to be cognisant of general trends across the data as well as themes specific to, or absent within, specific priority cohorts.

For each of the open-text questions, the qualitative responses provided by female survey participants were significantly more detailed and longer than those provided by male and non-binary participants. While there was still enough qualitative data available to analyse key themes for all participants for each question, we note this difference by gender identity in the amount of open text provided as at times this report draws more heavily on the voices of the female participants.

Ethical considerations

Ethics approval for this project was secured through the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC; project ID: 27269). Administration of the survey was designed to minimise all risks to participants through the provision of a quick exit button, no IP address tracking and the provision of relevant support services' contact details at the beginning and conclusion of the survey. There were no risks identified beyond discomfort for those involved in the anonymous survey.

All survey participants were provided with a list of national and state-specific support services at the outset and on completion of the survey. Support service information provided to survey participants included face-to-face and remote service support options, including helplines and web chat information. This ensured access to supports for any participants who were under COVID-19-related restrictions.

Participants were able to skip over any survey questions that they did not feel comfortable completing and also had the option of exiting the survey at any time without further follow-up. These two strategies were employed to ensure that anyone who determined part way through the survey that they did not want to participate still had the support service information from the outset without being compelled to continue.

Approach to intersectionality

We understand intersectionality to be fundamental to our research approach. While originally developed to expose "race" and gender as interlocking systems of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989), contemporary intersectional theorising has further incorporated attention to other important dimensions of differences such as class, Indigeneity, disability, sexuality and/or gender identity. A central consideration of this research is how these might act as multiple and interacting sources of oppression that differently come to bear on both the use of AFV and exposure to DFV. Importantly, beyond understanding how forms of inequality, discrimination and disadvantage can or might underscore unique experiences of AFV, our approach to data analysis and the presentation of findings has sought to be sensitive to interlocking systems of advantage. Such an approach ensures that systems of power are central to the analysis of the use of violence, rather than sole (or disproportionate) attention being given to, for example, the ways that so-called "minority stress" or economic disadvantage act as the foundations for violence. In following an intersectional analysis, the project findings seek to avoid the rhetoric of "sameness", and instead point to beneficial, context-specific responses.

Sample characteristics

In the final sample, one in three respondents were from New South Wales (35%, *n*=1,754), 29 per cent were from Victoria (*n*=1,454), and 15 per cent were from Queensland (*n*=729). A smaller proportion of respondents said they resided in Western Australia (11%, *n*=556), South Australia (6%, *n*=315), the Australian Capital Territory (2%, *n*=102), Tasmania (2%, *n*=88), and the Northern Territory (<1%, *n*=20).

The sociodemographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1. One in three respondents said they were 16 (13%, *n*=657) or 17 years old (19%, *n*=976) at time of completing the survey. This means the majority of the sample were 18 to 20 years old (67%, n=3,388). Five per cent of respondents were First Nations (*n*=256), and 10 per cent (10%, *n*=525) said that they spoke a language other than English most of the time at home (i.e. were from NESBs). One in three respondents said they had at least one disability (36%, *n*=1,748).

Two in three respondents self-identified that they had been assigned female at birth (67%, *n*=3,348), and 33 per cent said they had been assigned male (*n*=1,623). The majority

of respondents said they were cisgender (i.e. their gender identity was the same as their sex assigned at birth; 96%, *n*=4,773), with four per cent (*n*=215) identifying as gender diverse or questioning. Further, 31 per cent of respondents self-identified as gay/lesbian, bisexual or other (e.g. asexual). Among sexuality-diverse respondents, the most commonly identified sexuality was bisexual (50%, *n*=736), followed by asexual (5%, *n*=71), lesbian (4%, *n*=63) and gay (4%, *n*=62).

Approximately one in two respondents had completed Year 12 or equivalent (51%, *n*=2,569). Finally, one in six (16%, *n*=787) respondents reported their usual place of residence was in a regional or remote area, while 83 per cent were living in a major city (*n*=3,923; as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS]).

Table 1: Characteristics of survey respondents (n=5,021)

	n	%
Age (in years)		
16	657	13
17	976	19
18	1,338	27
19	995	20
20	1,055	21
Sex assigned at birth[a]		
Male	1,623	33
Female	3,348	67
Gender diverse or questioning[b]	215	4
Diverse sexual identity[c]	1,468	31
First Nations[d]	256	5
Non-English-speaking background[e]	525	10
At least one disability[f]	1,748	36
Highest level of education completed[g]		
Primary school	166	3
Year 7–9	19	<1
Year 10–11	1,714	34
Year 12	2,569	51
TAFE, certificate or diploma	534	11
Undergraduate degree	14	<1
Usual place of residence[h]		
Major city	3,923	83
Regional	709	15
Remote	78	2

Notes:

[a] Excludes 50 respondents who did not provide this information.

[b] Excludes 33 respondents who did not provide this information.

[c] Excludes 278 respondents who did not provide this information.

[d] Excludes 42 respondents who did not provide this information.

[e] Excludes six respondents who did not provide this information. "Non-English-speaking background" defined as a respondent who said they spoke a language other than English most of the time at home.

[f] Excludes 225 respondents who did not provide this information.

[g] Excludes five respondents who did not provide this information.

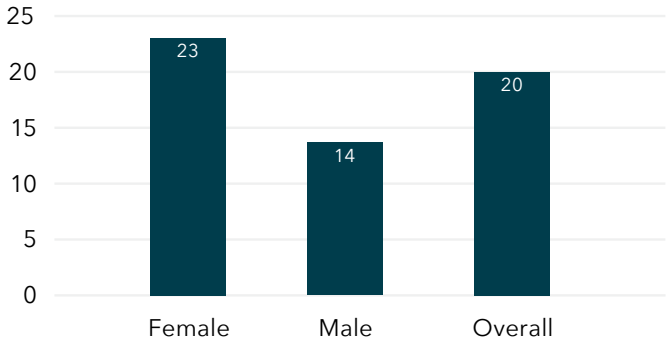
[h] Excludes 311 respondents who did not provide their postcode. Regional classification calculated using the respondent's postcode and concordance with the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Findings

The study findings are presented in four key sections. The first section presents the prevalence study. To do so, it draws on the quantitative findings on violence used by young people in the home as well as the co-occurrence of experiencing family violence, being a direct target of family violence, and perpetration of AFV. In the following section the study presents findings for five priority adolescent cohorts: First Nations young people, young people from NESBs, young people with disability, gender-diverse young people, and young people with diverse sexual identities. The second half of the findings draws from the qualitative study components to examine young people's rationale for using family violence in the home (Section 3), and the impacts of AFV (Section 4). Our impacts analysis focuses specifically on emotional and social impacts, physical impacts, cultural impacts, and education and school engagement impacts.

Figure 1.1: Prevalence of self-reported use of violence among survey respondents, by sex assigned at birth (%)



Note: Sample excludes 50 respondents who did not provide information about their sex assigned at birth.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Section 1: Prevalence study

Violence used by young people in the home

As shown in Figure 1.1, overall one in five young people who participated in the survey self-reported that they had ever used violence against a family member (20%, *n*=1,006). When disaggregated by sex, we found that a larger proportion of females than males reported using violence in the home. Specifically, 23 per cent (*n*=762) of those assigned female at birth had used violence, compared to 14 per cent (*n*=234) of those assigned male at birth. This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2(1)=47.48$, $p<0.001$). This finding is inconsistent with previous research, which has suggested that AFV is a gendered phenomenon, being primarily perpetrated by males. Explanations for this finding will be explored in later sections of this report.

The most common form of violence that young people reported using was verbal abuse (15%, *n*=734), followed by physical violence (10%, *n*=490) and emotional/psychological abuse (5%, *n*=245). Only a small proportion of young people reported that they had threatened to harm or hurt a family member or someone close to the family member (2%, *n*=96), threatened to kill a family member (1%, *n*=32), strangled or choked a family member (<1%, *n*=14), or sexually abused a family member (<1%, *n*=9; see Table 2). However, it is important to note that while less commonly reported, some of these behaviours – specifically sexual abuse, non-fatal strangulation and threats to kill – have been linked with lethal outcomes for adult victim-survivors in the broader DFV literature (see for example Glass et al., 2008; Monckton Smith, 2020). After combining these three measures into a prevalence indicator of high-risk categories of DFV/AFV, 1 per cent (*n*=47) of young people reported that they had sexually abused a family member, strangled/choked a family member or threatened to kill a family member.

As shown in Table 2, these overall patterns of abuse remained consistent once the sample was disaggregated by the respondent's sex assigned at birth. For both males and females, the most common forms of family violence were verbal abuse (17% vs. 9%; $\chi^2(1)=54.05$, $p<0.001$), physical

Table 2: Prevalence of violence and abuse used by young people in the home, by type of abuse and sex assigned at birth

	Females		Males		Overall	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Verbal abuse***	574	17	151	9	734	15
Physical violence***	373	11	111	7	490	10
Emotional/psychological abuse***	204	6	39	2	245	5
Property damage	72	2	27	2	101	2
Threats to harm/hurt	27	2	68	2	96	2
Threats to kill	21	1	10	1	32	1
Non-fatal strangulation	9	<1	5	<1	14	<1
Sexual violence	7	<1	2	<1	9	<1
Other	11	<1	7	<1	18	<1

*$p<0.05$, **$p<0.01$, ***$p<0.001$.
Note: Estimates exclude 50 young people who did not identify their sex assigned at birth.
Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

violence (11% vs. 7%; $\chi^2(1)=23.03$, $p<0.001$) and emotional/psychological abuse (6% vs. 2%; $\chi^2(1)=32.11$, $p<0.001$). This said, females were statistically more likely than males to self-report perpetration of these forms of abuse.

However, there was no difference between males and females regarding their perpetration of property damage (2% vs. 2%, $\chi^2(1)=1.33$, p=0.249), threats to harm/hurt (2% vs. 2%, $\chi^2(1)=0.79$, p=0.375), threats to kill (1% vs. 1%, $\chi^2(1)=0.00$, p=0.963), non-fatal strangulation (<1% vs. <1%, $\chi^2(1)=0.06$, p=0.807) or sexual violence against family members (<1% vs. <1%, $\chi^2(1)=0.45$, p=0.504). However, due to the small number of young people who self-reported that they had perpetrated specific forms of violence against their family members (e.g. sexual violence; see Table 2), these results should be interpreted with caution.

Co-occurrence of different forms of adolescent family violence used by young people

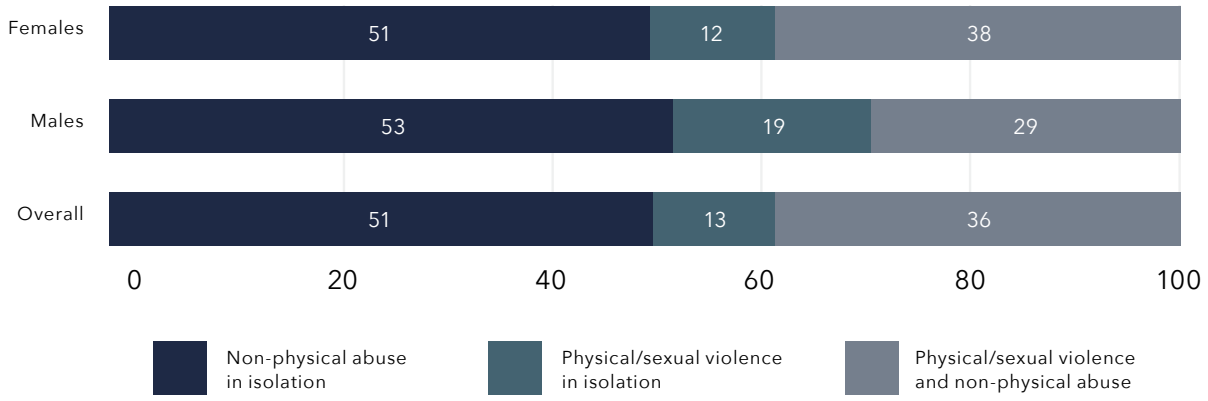
Among young people who had ever used violence in the home, approximately one in two reported that they had been physically or sexually abusive towards their family members (49%, *n*=493). In comparison, 87 per cent of young people who had ever used violence in the home had used at least one form of non-physical abuse (e.g. property damage, verbal abuse, threats, emotionally abusive behaviours; *n*=872).

As shown in Figure 1.2, the co-occurrence of physical and non-physical forms of violence was common among young people, being reported by one in three survey respondents who said they had ever used violence in the home (36%, *n*=359). In other words, many young people who used physical and sexual violence were also likely to engage in non-physically abusive behaviours. Meanwhile, one in two young people had perpetrated non-physical forms of abuse against family members in isolation (51%, *n*=513), and 13 per cent (*n*=134) said they had perpetrated physical forms of violence in isolation.

Young people whose sex assigned at birth was female were statistically more likely to report that they had perpetrated both physical/sexual violence and non-physical forms of abuse against their family members compared to males (38% vs. 29%, $\chi^2(2)=10.63$, $p<0.01$). However, young people whose sex assigned at birth was male were statistically more likely to perpetrate physical or sexual violence in isolation compared to females (19% vs. 12%). There were no differences between male and female young people regarding their use of non-physical forms of violence (53% vs. 51%).

The extent to which non-physical forms of AFV co-occurred with physical forms of AFV differed depending on the "type" of non-physical abuse being used by young people (see Figure 1.3). For example, among young people who had threatened to kill their family members, 81 per cent had been physically or sexually violent towards them as well (*n*=26). Meanwhile, approximately two in three young people who had damaged a family member's property (66%, *n*=67) and/or threatened to harm/hurt a family member (65%, *n*=62) also reported using physical or sexual violence in the home. In comparison,

Figure 1.2: Type of AFV used by survey respondents, by sex assigned at birth (%)



Note: Sample limited to young people who had used any form of AFV against family members. Sample excludes 10 survey respondents who did not provide their sex assigned at birth.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

rates of overlap between non-physical abuse and physical/sexual violence decreased to 58 per cent when the sample was limited to young people who had been emotionally or psychologically abusive (n=141), and then again to 44 per cent among young people who had been verbally abusive (n=322).

Frequency of using violence in the home

Family violence, like other forms of familial violence (e.g. IPV), is often recurring. For example, recent studies have shown that many young people who use violence against their family members and are reported to the police will come back into contact with law enforcement for similar offences in the future (Boxall & Morgan, 2020; Boxall et al., 2021; Phillips & McGuinness, 2020). As such, young people who self-reported using violence in the home were asked how often they were abusive towards family members. For the purpose of the current analysis, responses were collated into two broad categories:

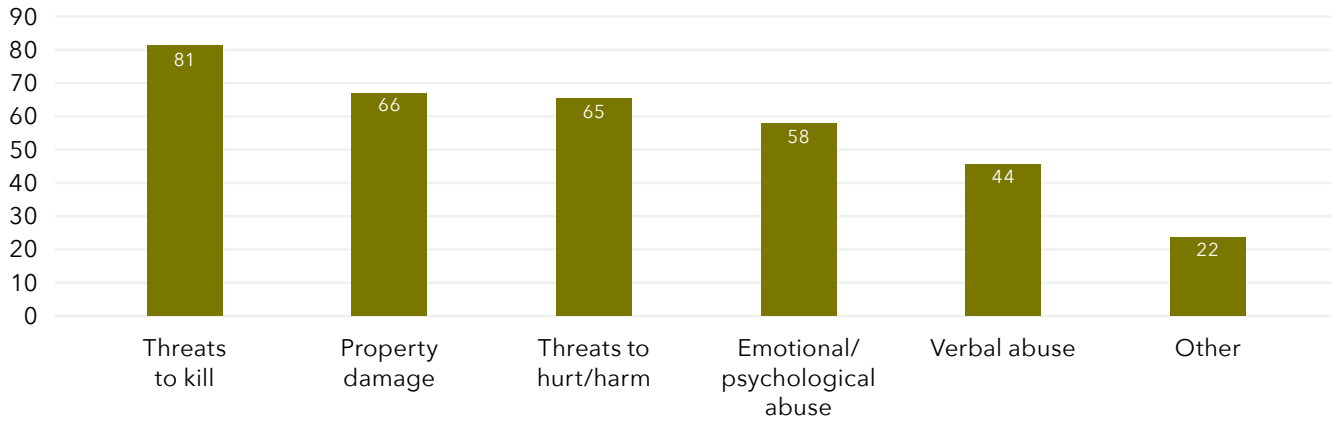
- frequent AFV: the young person was abusive towards family members on at least a monthly basis
- episodic AFV: the young person was abusive towards family members less than monthly.

We recognise that many respondents may have found it difficult to answer questions about the frequency of their use of violence in the home. This may be due to issues associated with recall, as well as the possibility that young people were violent towards multiple family members and so were likely to be aggregating estimates of frequency across more than one person. However, regardless of these issues, it is important to capture different dimensions of DFV-related behaviours, including frequency, so as to be able to differentiate between persistent offenders and those who may be violent episodically. The intervention and support needs of victim-survivors and young people who use violence in the home likely differ depending on both the nature and frequency of the abuse.

Overall, among young people who had used violence in the home, 45 per cent (n=453) said they had used at least one form of AFV against their family on a monthly basis. This means that 55 per cent (n=553) had been abusive on an episodic basis. As shown in Figure 1.4, the frequency of the violence used by the young person differed across the forms of AFV included in the analysis. For example, 48 per cent of young people who said they had been verbally abusive towards a family member, and 40 per cent of young people who had been emotionally/psychologically abusive, reported using these behaviours on a frequent basis (n=352 and n=97, respectively). In comparison, one in four young people who had threatened to harm/hurt the family member (or someone else close to them; 25%, n=26), threatened to kill a family member (21%, n=7), or been physically violent (28%, n=136) said they had done this on a frequent basis. This means that relative to young people who had been frequently verbally or emotionally abusive, it was less common that young people were frequently threatening or physically violent towards their family members.

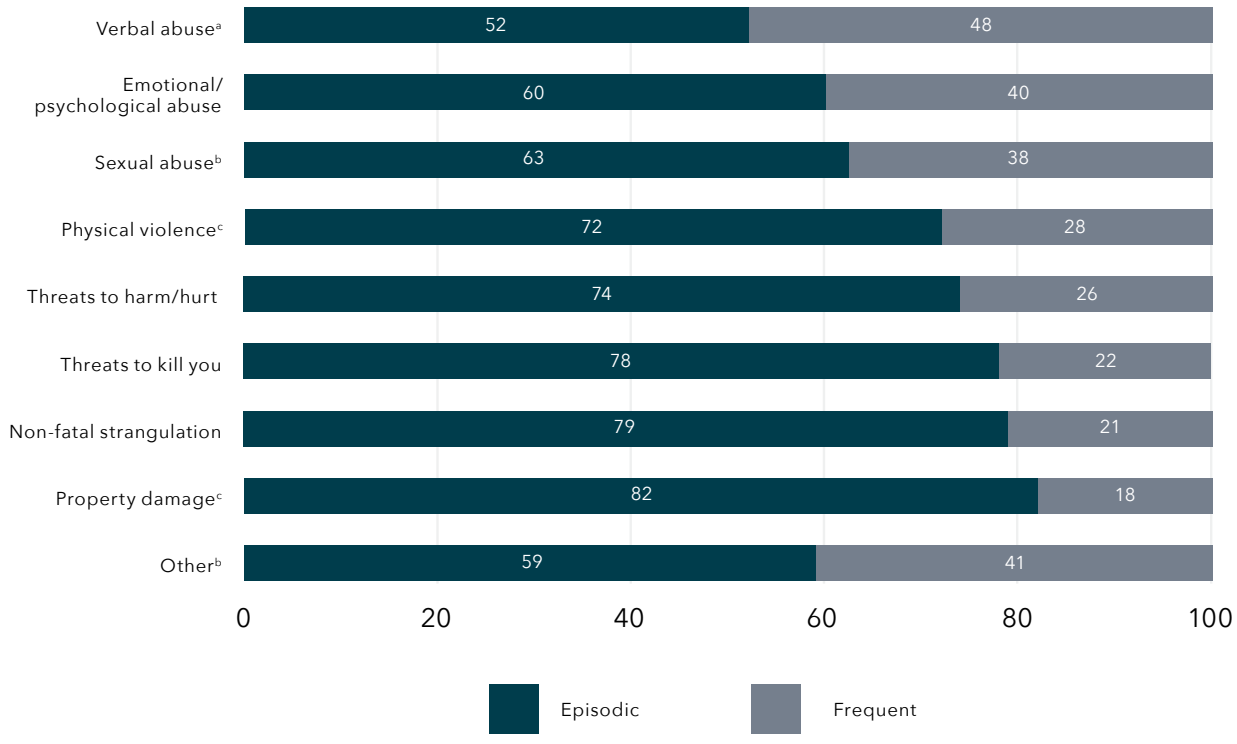
Although young people who were assigned female at birth were more likely to self-report using *any* form of violence in the home compared to those assigned male at birth (see Table 2), there were no observed differences between these two cohorts regarding their likelihood of using *frequent* violence against family members (43% vs. 46%; $\chi^2(1)=0.57$, p=0.451). These findings remained consistent when the analysis focused on different forms of AFV, including physical violence ($\chi^2(1)=0.70$, p=0.402), property damage ($\chi^2(1)=0.02$, p=0.897), verbal abuse ($\chi^2(1)=0.51$, p=0.476), emotional/psychological abuse ($\chi^2(1)=0.74$, p=0.389) and threats to harm/hurt ($\chi^2(1)=0.22$, p=0.644). The sample was too small to examine the other forms of AFV (i.e. sexual abuse and threats to kill).

Figure 1.3: Prevalence of physical and sexual violence use by survey respondents who had also used non-physical forms of abuse against family members (by AFV type; %)



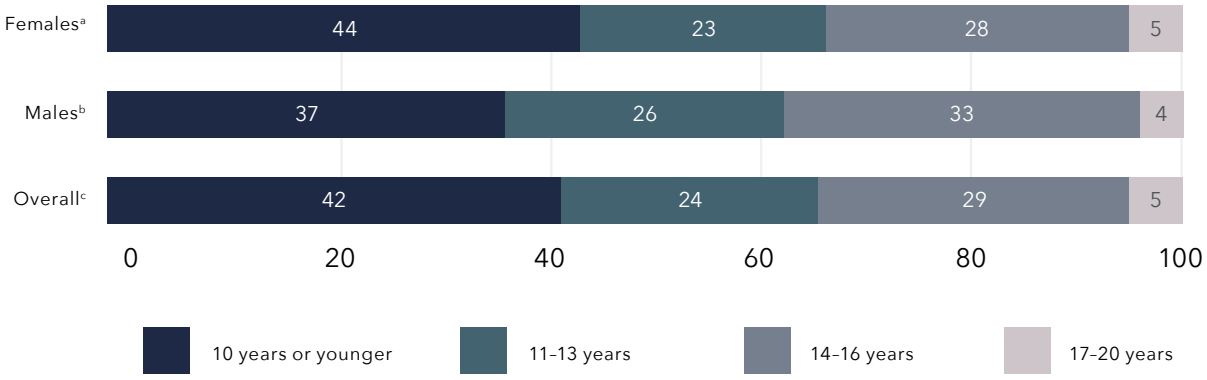
Note: Sample limited to young people who had used any form of AFV against family members.
Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Figure 1.4: Frequency of violence used by young people in the home, by AFV type (%)



Notes:
[a] Excludes two young people who did not provide this information.
[b] Excludes one young person who did not provide this information.
[c] Excludes three young people who did not provide this information.
Percentage totals may not equal 100 due to rounding. Sample limited to young people who had used any form of AFV against family members.
Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Figure 1.5: Age of onset of use of violence and abuse, by sex assigned at birth (%)



Notes:

[a] Excludes 326 young people who did not provide this information.

[b] Excludes 74 young people who did not provide this information.

[c] Excludes 408 young people who did not provide this information.

Sample excludes 10 young people who did not provide information about their sex assigned at birth. Sample limited to young people who had used any form of AFV against family members.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Age young person started using violence in the home

Moving beyond the prevalence and nature of violence used by young people in the home as reported at one point in time, we asked young people when they had started to use violence against family members. This is referred to as "onset" within the criminal careers literature (Piquero et al., 2014).

Unsurprisingly, many young people could not remember their age at time of first using any violence in the home; only 60 per cent (*n*=598) of young people in the sample provided this information. Among young people who were able to provide their age of onset, 42 per cent were 10 years old or younger (*n*=251), 24 per cent were 11 to 13 years old (*n*=143), 29 per cent were 14 to 16 years old (*n*=176) and five per cent were 17 to 20 years old (*n*=28; see Figure 1.5). The average age of onset was 11 years old (SD=3.9). Although a larger proportion of female respondents than males self-reported that they had started using violence when they were 10 years old or younger (44% vs. 37%), this difference was not statistically significant ($\chi^2(3)=2.59$, $p=0.460$; see Figure 1.5).

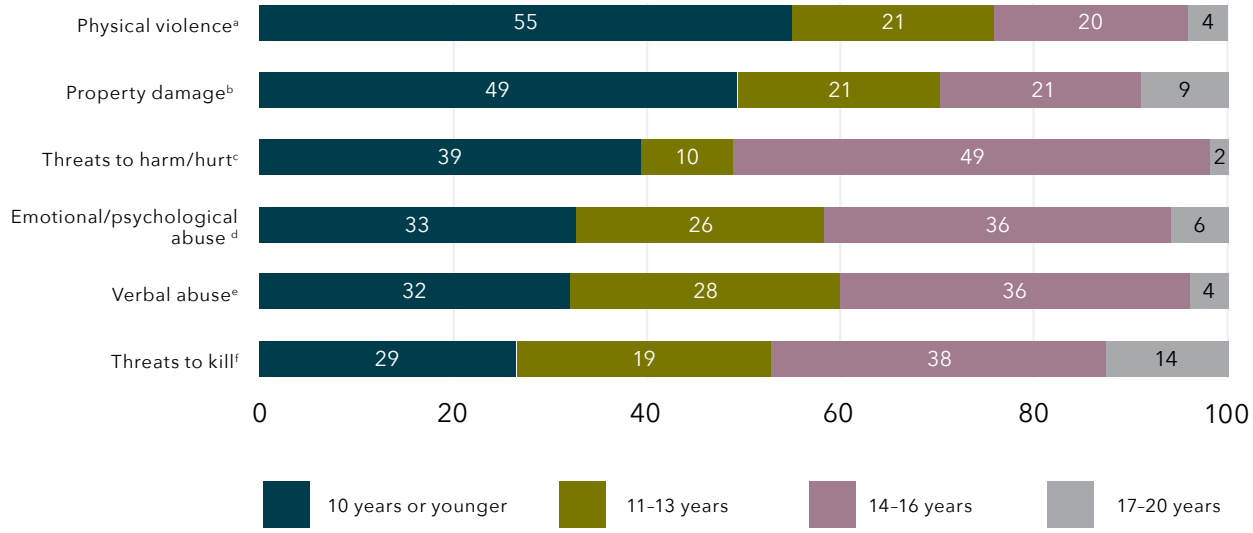
The findings described in Figure 1.5 appear to contradict other literature which suggests that young people's use of violence and abuse against family members typically starts and "peaks" around 13 to 15 years old (Gebo, 2007). However, previous estimates have primarily been based on the analysis of data provided by law enforcement agencies and/or limited to physical forms of AFV. In comparison, these data are self-reported and include non-physical forms of abuse (e.g. verbal abuse). As such, these findings are not easily comparable with estimates reported in other studies.

Self-reported patterns of violence used by young people in the home appeared to differ depending on the type of AFV being analysed. Of note in Figure 1.6 is that a larger proportion of young people reported using physical violence in the home when they were 10 years old or younger compared to other forms of non-physical abuse. In particular, over half of young people who provided an age of onset and reported using physical violence in the home said they started using violence when they were 10 years old or younger (55%, *n*=144). A smaller proportion of young people started verbally abusing family members (32%, *n*=129) and being emotionally/psychologically abusive (33%, *n*=36) during this age range.

These findings remained consistent when the sample was limited to young people who said they had used both physical and non-physical forms of violence in the home during their lifetime. Among young people who had used physical and non-physical forms of violence in the home, one in two young people started using physical violence against (51%, *n*=97) and/or damaging the property of family members (53%, *n*=20) when they were 10 years old or younger. In comparison, one in three young people in this cohort threatened to hurt/harm a family member (35%, *n*=11), emotionally/psychologically abused a family member (*n*=21, 38%) and threatened to kill a family member for the first time (35%, *n*=6) during this period. However, 44 per cent of young people (*n*=69) said they had been verbally abusive towards family members when they were 10 years old or younger, which was higher than within the overall sample.

Further, as shown in Figure 1.7, 25 per cent of young people who used both physical and non-physical forms of violence

Figure 1.6: Age of onset of use of violence and abuse, by type of AFV (%)



Notes:

[a] Excludes 229 young people who did not provide this information.

[b] Excludes 44 young people who did not provide this information.

[c] Excludes 45 young people who did not provide this information.

[d] Excludes 136 young people who did not provide this information.

[e] Excludes 327 young people who did not provide this information.

[f] Excludes 11 young people who did not provide this information.

Percentage totals may not equal 100 due to rounding. Sample limited to young people who had used any form of AFV against family members. Data relating to respondent's perpetration of sexual violence against family members was not included in the analysis due to small sample sizes.

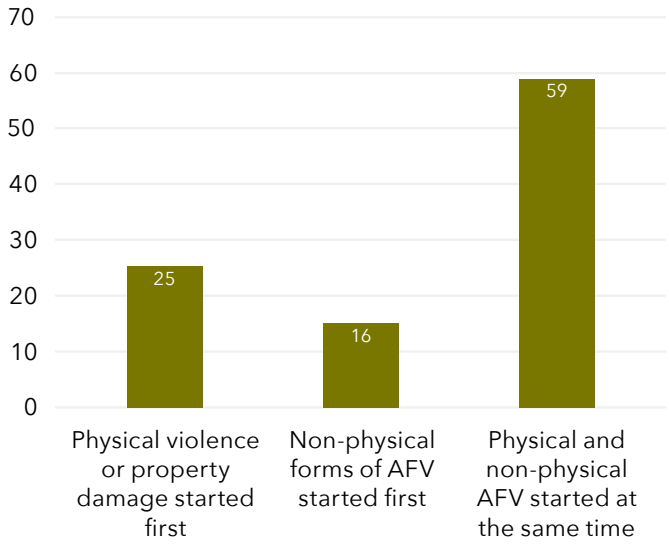
Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

in the home (*n*=90) said they had started using physical violence against their family members or damaging their property prior to the use of non-physical forms of abuse (e.g. verbal abuse). Sixteen per cent of young people (*n*=59) started using non-physical forms of abuse prior to the onset of physical forms of violence, and 60 per cent (*n*=210) said they had used both forms of AFV at the same age.

These are interesting findings considering the assumption within the IPV and DFV literature that patterns of violence and abuse follow an "escalation model", with non-physical forms of abuse initially being used by perpetrators and then transitioning to increasingly frequent and severe physical forms of violence (Boxall & Lawler, 2021). However, it appears that for some young people the onset of physical violence and property damage precedes other forms of non-physical violence, or they may even start at around the same time.

This finding is perhaps explainable by the potential differences in the motivations for using violence against family members for young people and adults. While both young people and adults may use violence as a means of gaining what they want, in particular control over family members, young people's use of violence may be driven by dysregulated emotional states and as a means of managing conflict within their families (Brezina, 1999; Calvete et al., 2012). Seen through this lens, it has been argued that young people's use of violence is more impulsive and reactive, whereas its use by adults may be more controlled (Routt & Anderson, 2011; Williams et al., 2017). This analysis is consistent with developmental models of understanding AFV, as well as family strain theory more generally (Brezina, 1999). These findings resonate with the qualitative responses provided in the open-text questions inviting young people to discuss what factors led to, and influenced, their use of violence in the home. As further explored in the section below on "retaliatory" violence, a significant number of young females and males described using violence in self-defence and in retaliation for child abuse they experienced.

Figure 1.7: Timing of onset of physical and non-physical forms of AFV, among young people who self-reported using both against family members (%)



Note: Sample limited to young people who had used any form of AFV against family members.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Family members who were subjected to violence used by young people

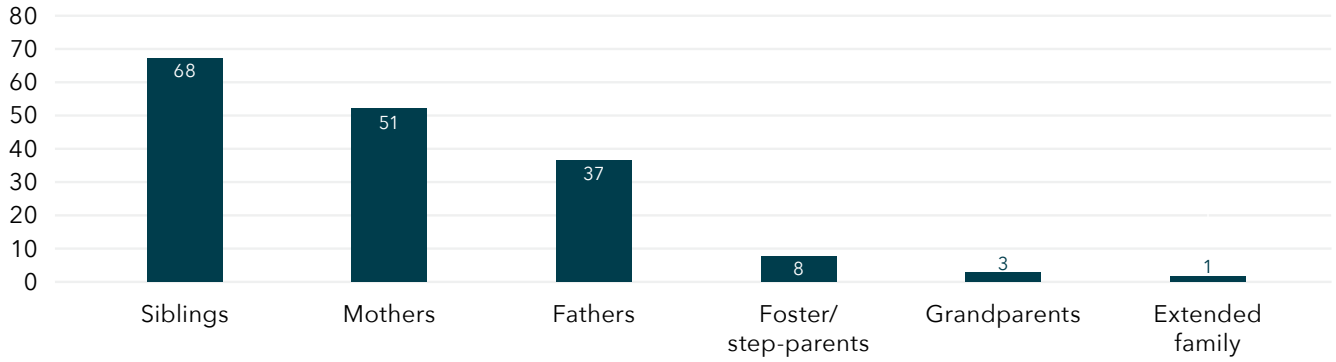
Overall, across all forms of AFV included in the analysis, a larger proportion of young people reported using violence against their immediate family members – their mothers, fathers and siblings – than against other family members. Specifically, two in three young people said they had used violence against a sibling, including step-siblings (68%, *n*=679); half said they had used violence against their mother (including adoptive mothers; 51%, *n*=513); and 37 per cent had used violence against their father (including adoptive fathers; *n*=376). In comparison, violence towards step-parents and foster carers (8%, *n*=80), grandparents (3%, *n*=31) and extended family members (e.g. uncles and aunts; 1%, *n*=80) was less common. These findings are likely reflective of the increased opportunities young people have to use violence against parents and siblings as they are typically cohabiting with them (Boxall & Sabol, 2021; Contreras & Cano, 2014). Alternatively, it has been suggested that mothers, particularly single mothers, are at high risk of being subjected to young people's use of violence in the home because they are primarily responsible for their care and establishing boundaries, which can in turn lead to conflict (Meyer et al., 2021; Routt & Anderson, 2011; Williams et al., 2017).

There were very few differences between male and female respondents regarding their use of violence against different family members. Female young people were no more likely than males to use violence against mothers (52% vs. 49%; $\chi^2(1)=0.76$, p=0.384), fathers (38% vs. 37%; $\chi^2(1)=0.03$, p=0.865), foster carers/step-parents (7% vs. 9%; $\chi^2(1)=0.55$, p=0.457), grandparents (3% vs. 3%; $\chi^2(1)=0.17$, p=0.677) or extended family members (1% vs. 1%; $\chi^2(1)=0.02$, p=0.901). However, females were statistically more likely to use violence against siblings when compared to males (70% v 62%; $\chi^2(1)=5.26$, $p<0.05$).

Closer examination of the nature of violence used by young people against different family members identified broadly comparable patterns across the different types of AFV. For example, as shown in Figure 1.9, approximately two in five young people who said they had used violence against extended family members (46%, *n*=297), siblings (44%, *n*=297), fathers (43%, *n*=161), foster carers/step-parents (41%, *n*=33) and mothers (39%, *n*=200) said they had used both physical/sexual and non-physical forms of AFV against them. However, 68 per cent of young people (*n*=21) who had been abusive towards a grandparent said they had used both physical and non-physical forms of violence. This is highly concerning considering the vulnerability of elderly individuals to experiencing a range of negative consequences associated with DFV, including serious injury and death, social isolation and financial hardship (Boxall & Sabol, 2021; Bullock & Thomas, 2007; Kosberg & MacNeil, 2003). Taken together, these findings indicate that although grandparents were less commonly identified by young people as being subjected to their use of violence in the home, where it did occur it was likely to involve multiple and co-occurring forms of violence.

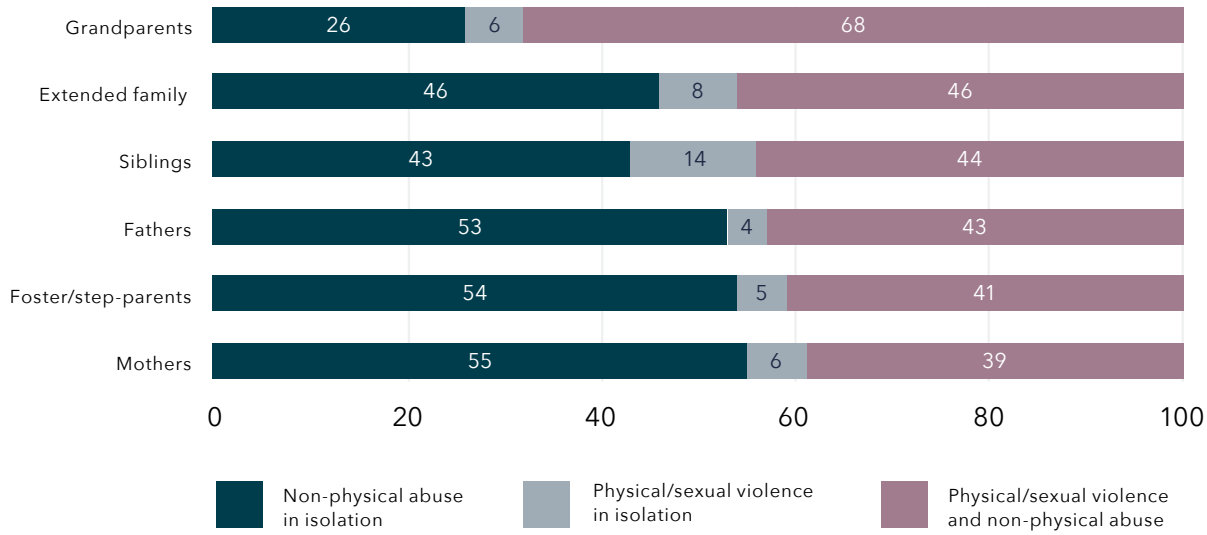
Over half of young people who used violence said they had only used it against one family member (56%, *n*=559). This means that two in five respondents who had ever used violence in the home had abused multiple family members (44%, *n*=443). Female young people were statistically more

Figure 1.8: Relationship between young person and family member they used violence against (%)



Note: Sample limited to young people who had used any form of AFV against family members.
Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Figure 1.9: Co-occurrence of physical and non-physical forms of AFV, by victim-survivor of the violence (%)



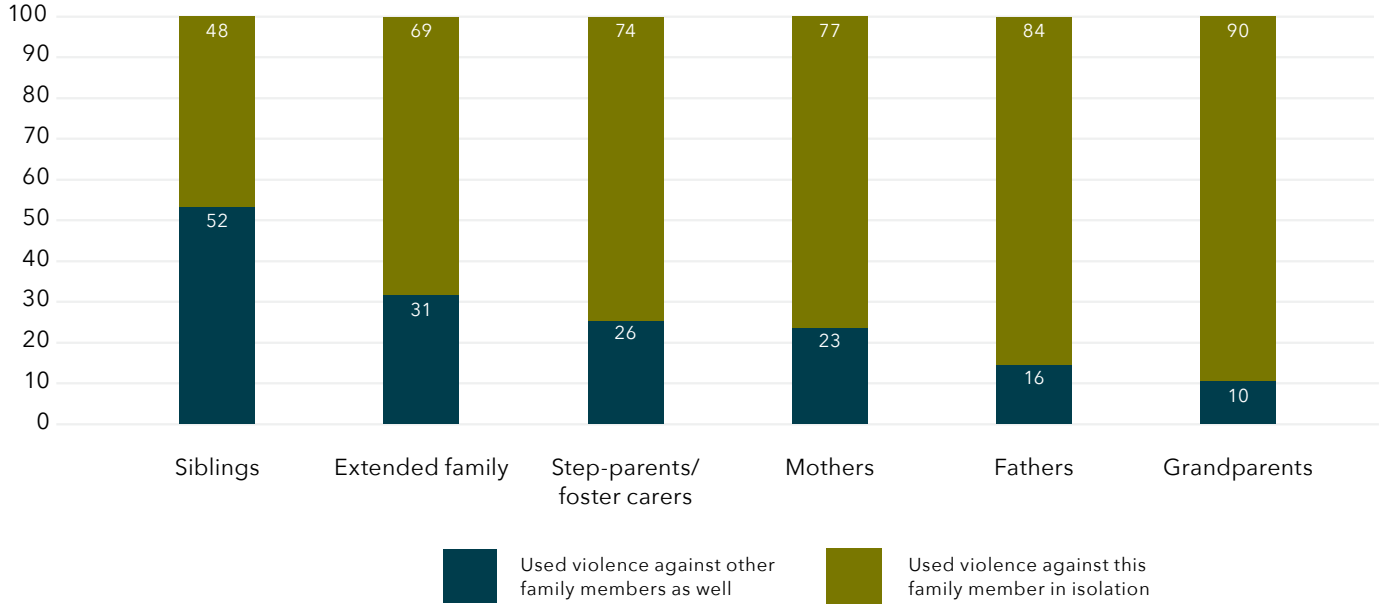
Note: Sample limited to young people who had used any form of AFV against family members. Percentage totals may not equal 100 due to rounding. Excludes four young people who did not provide information about their relationship with the victim.
Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

likely to use violence against multiple family members than males (46% vs. 38%, $\chi 2(1)=4.31$, $p<0.05$).

Among young people who said they had only been violent towards a sibling, 52 per cent (n=353) said they had not been violent towards any other family member (see Figure 1.10). In other words, when a young person was violent towards their sibling, it was likely that they were only directing their violence to that sibling. In comparison, the majority of young people who had been violent towards their mothers (77%, n=397), fathers (84%, n=314), grandparents (90%, n=28) and extended family members (69%, n=9) said they had also used violence against other family members.

Taken together, the findings from the analysis so far demonstrate that there is significant variation within the sample of young people who self-reported that they had used violence in the home at any point in their lifetime. For example, although one in two young people said they had only ever used non-physical forms of abuse against family members, one in three said they had used both physical and non-physical forms of AFV, indicating a high level of overlap between the two categories of behaviours. Further, half of young people in the sample said they had only used violence against one family member, primarily a sibling. However, the other half of the sample had used violence against multiple family members, which is characteristic of a more

Figure 1.10: Young people's use of violence against multiple family members, by victim-survivor of violence (%)



Note: Sample limited to young people who had used any form of AFV against family members. Sample excludes four young people who did not provide information about their relationship with the victim.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

indiscriminate or impulsive use of violence, potentially as a means of dealing with conflict or in response to situational stressors and/or emotional distress. Further, 45 per cent of young people self-identified as "frequent offenders", using violence on at least a monthly basis, and/or using violence against multiple family members. This means that half of young people were more episodic in their use of violence.

However, underneath this heterogeneity, it is important to note that many young people who were using violence against their family members were engaging in severe and persistent forms of abuse that are likely to cause significant and negative consequences for family members. The impact of young people's use of violence on family members and the young people themselves is the focus of section three of this report.

Co-occurrence of experiencing family violence, being a direct target of family violence, and perpetration of adolescent family violence

This section of the analysis looks at the intersection between experiences of child abuse among survey respondents, and their use of violence in the home. For the purpose of this analysis, two primary forms of child abuse were analysed: experiences of *witnessing* abuse perpetrated between other family members, and experiences of being subjected to targeted abuse perpetrated by other family members. Experiences of either or both of these forms of abuse are referred to collectively as "child abuse".

The decision to differentiate between witnessing and being subjected to violence was informed by previous literature which has noted that the link between people's experiences of abuse and subsequent use of violence may vary depending on the nature of the abuse experienced. For example, there is some research which indicates that young people are more likely to use violence against family members who have also been abusive towards them. This pattern is referred to in the literature as "retaliatory" or "instrumental'" violence (Brezina, 1999; Routt & Anderson, 2011). However, in distinguishing between these two forms of abuse, we are not in any way making an assessment as to the relative severity or impact of these behaviours on survey respondents.

As noted in the Methods section of this report, a large proportion of young people who participated in the survey said that they had experienced child abuse. More specifically, 51 per cent of respondents (n=2,547) said they had witnessed family violence between other family members, and 30 per cent (n=1,514) had been subjected to violence perpetrated against them by other family members. Considering that these rates are much higher than those observed within the general population (Moore et al., 2015), it is important to again be mindful that the sample for this survey was recruited using non-probability protocols and so may not be generalisable to the wider Australian population.

Table 3: Co-occurrence of child abuse and use of violence in the home, by AFV type (%)

Type of AFV used	Experiences of child abuse		No experiences of child abuse	
	n	%	*n*	%
Non-fatal strangulation[a]	14	100	0	0
Sexual abuse[b]	9	100	0	0
Property damage[c]	97	96	4	4
Threats to kill[d]	30	94	2	6
Threats to harm/hurt[e]	89	93	7	7
Emotional/psychological abuse[f]	226	92	19	8
Physical violence[g]	444	91	46	9
Verbal abuse[h]	663	90	71	10
Other[i]	15	83	3	17

*$p<0.05$, **$p<0.01$, ***$p<0.001$.

Notes:
[a] $\chi^2(1)=12.61$, $p<0.001$.
[b] $\chi^2(1)=8.10$, $p<0.01$.
[c] $\chi^2(1)=77.74$, $p<0.001$.
[d] $\chi^2(1)=21.79$, $p<0.001$.
[e] $\chi^2(1)=62.91$, $p<0.001$.
[f] $\chi^2(1)=161.75$, $p<0.001$.
[g] $\chi^2(1)=313.43$, $p<0.001$.
[h] $\chi^2(1)=488.80$, $p<0.001$.
[i] $\chi^2(1)=6.81$, $p<0.01$.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

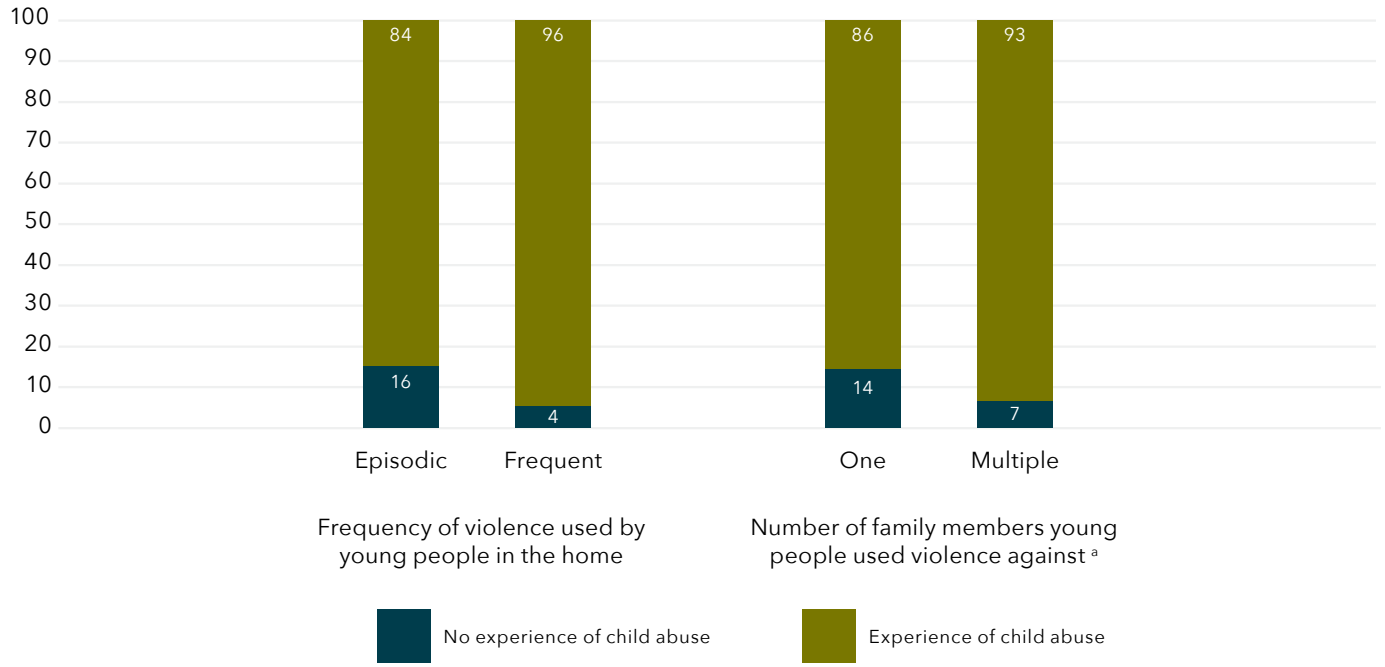
Consistent with other research, there appeared to be a high level of overlap between experiences of child abuse and use of violence against family members among young people (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015). Overall, 46 per cent of young people (*n*=703) who had experienced child abuse self-reported that they had used violence in the home. Meanwhile, a staggering 89 per cent of young people (*n*=896) who had used violence in the home reported that they had experienced child abuse. Ninety percent of respondents who were assigned female at birth (*n*=685) and 86 per cent of respondents assigned male at birth (*n*=201) who had used violence in the home also self-reported that they had experienced child abuse (*n*=10 respondents did not provide information about their sex assigned at birth).

The relationship between child abuse and use of violence among young people remained consistent across the different forms of AFV included in the analysis. As shown in Table 3, young people who experienced child abuse were statistically more likely to perpetrate all forms of violence in the home. Importantly, although only a small number of young people reported that they had used severe forms of violence – that is, sexual abuse, non-fatal strangulation and threats to kill – almost all of these young people also self-reported experiences of child abuse.

Further analysis identified that young people who experienced child abuse were statistically more likely to use violence in the home on a frequent basis ($\chi^2(1)=35.96$, $p<0.001$). Among young people who had used violence on at least a monthly basis in the home, 96 per cent (*n*=433) said they had experienced child abuse (see Figure 1.11). In comparison, 84 per cent (*n*=463) of young people who used violence episodically reported experiences of child abuse. Also, young people who experienced child abuse were statistically more likely to use violence in the home against multiple family members ($\chi^2(1)=12.87$, $p<0.001$). Eighty-six per cent of young people (*n*=480) who had used violence against one family member in isolation had experienced child abuse, which increased to 96 per cent of young people who had been violent towards multiple family members (*n*=412).

Taken together, these findings indicate that young people who experienced child abuse were more likely to use frequent violence against multiple family members than young people who did not experience child abuse.

Figure 1.11: Characteristics of violence used by survey respondents against family members, by experience of child abuse (%)



Notes: Sample limited to young people who had used any form of AFV against family members.
[a] Excludes four young people who did not provide information about their relationship with the victim.
Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Nature of child abuse experiences and their impact on young people's use of violence

The relationship between child abuse and use of violence in the home among young people appeared to differ depending on the nature of the abuse they experienced. For example, respondents who said they had both witnessed and been subjected to violence prior to the age of 18 were statistically more likely to say they had also used violence in the home when compared to respondents who had experienced either form of child abuse in isolation ($\chi^2(3)=1.1e+03$, $p<0.001$; see Figure 1.12). Approximately one in five young people who had witnessed violence between other family members (but not been subjected to abuse; 17%, $n=193$) or been subjected to targeted abuse (but not witnessed violence between other family members; 20%, $n=20$) said they had used violence in the home themselves. This increased to 48 per cent ($n=683$) among young people who had experienced both forms of child abuse. This suggests that the co-occurrence of witnessing abuse and being subjected to targeted abuse was a stronger predictor of subsequent use of violence by young people than either of these experiences in isolation.

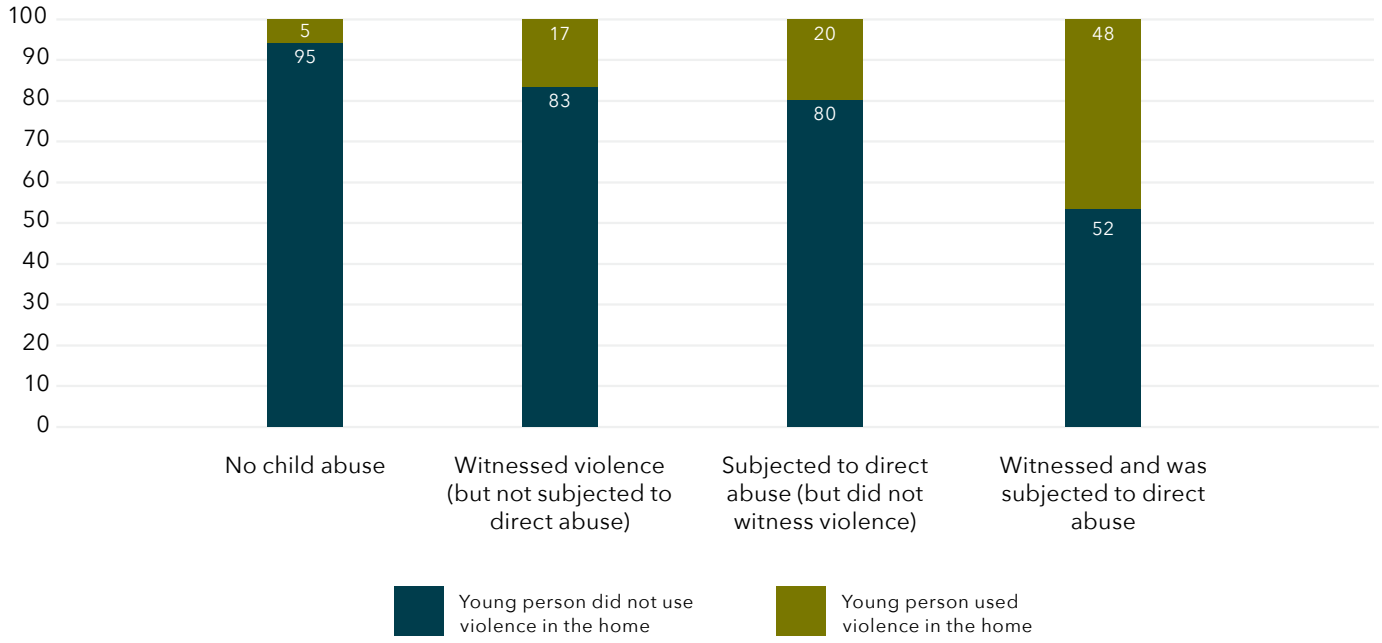
This finding remained consistent when the sample was disaggregated by sex of the young person assigned at birth. Forty-eight per cent ($n=538$) of females and 49 per cent ($n=137$) of males who had both witnessed abuse between other family members and been subjected to targeted abuse perpetrated by family members reported that they themselves had used violence in the home.

Young people who had experienced frequent child abuse were more likely to use violence against their family members on a frequent basis, compared to respondents who had experienced episodic child abuse. Five per cent of young people ($n=51$) who had witnessed violence between other family members on an episodic basis self-reported using violence themselves on a frequent basis. This increased to 23 per cent among young people ($n=372$) who had witnessed frequent violence between family members. This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2(2)=139.30$, $p<0.001$).

Similar results were identified in relation to young people's experiences of being subjected to targeted abuse perpetrated by other family members. Nine per cent of respondents ($n=44$) who experienced episodic violence reported that they used violence on a frequent basis, which increased to 31 per cent among young people ($n=325$) who had experienced frequent targeted abuse ($\chi^2(2)=91.67$, $p<0.001$).

However, frequent use of violence against family members was highest among young people who had experienced both

Figure 1.12: Co-occurrence of child abuse and use of violence in the home by young people, by type of child abuse (%)



Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

forms of child abuse on a frequent basis. As described in Figure 1.13, 32 per cent of young people (*n*=305) who had experienced both forms of child abuse on a frequent basis were themselves frequently violent towards family members. This decreased to:

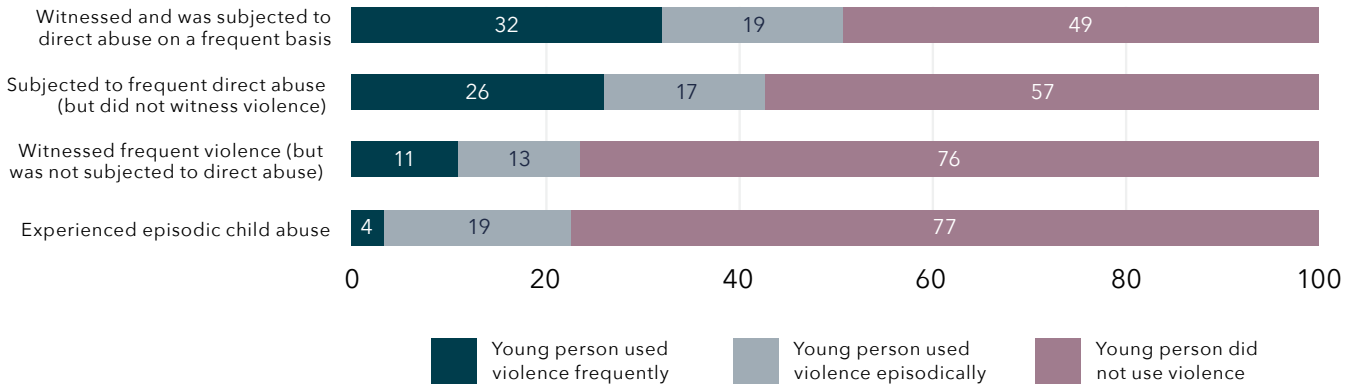
- 26 per cent (*n*=23) among young people who had been subjected to frequent targeted abuse perpetrated by family members (but not witnessed frequent abuse)
- 11 per cent (*n*=70) among young people who had witnessed frequent violence between family members (but not been subjected to frequent targeted abuse)
- 4 per cent (*n*=38) among young people who experienced either form of child abuse episodically (χ^2 (6)=324.51, p<0.001).

This suggests that young people who were subjected to frequent child abuse were more likely to use violence themselves, and to use violence on a frequent basis.

Young people who had experienced severe forms of child abuse were more likely, in turn, to use severe violence against their family members, compared to respondents who had experienced less severe forms of child abuse. This finding was consistent across both types of child abuse included in the analysis. Four per cent of respondents (*n*=17) who had witnessed severe forms of violence self-reported using similar forms of violence in the home. In comparison, only one per cent of young people (*n*=25) who had witnessed less severe forms of violence reported using severe violence ($\chi^2(2)=43.16$, p<0.001). Meanwhile, eight per cent of respondents who had been subjected to severe forms of violence perpetrated by other family members also used severe forms of AFV against other family members, which decreased to one per cent (*n*=16) among young people who had been subjected to less severe forms of violence ($\chi^2(2)=47.87$, p<0.001).

Again, severe use of violence against family members was higher among young people who had both witnessed and been subjected to direct forms of severe abuse compared to other respondent cohorts. These differences were statistically significant ($\chi^2(2)=6126.04$, p<0.001). As shown in Figure 1.14, eight per cent of respondents (*n*=14) who had witnessed and been subjected to severe forms of violence also used these types of AFV against other family members, compared to one per cent of young people (*n*=21) who had experienced less severe forms of child abuse or had witnessed severe forms of violence between other family members (but not been subjected to severe targeted abuse themselves; *n*=3). However, there was no difference between young people who had experienced both forms of severe child abuse and respondents who had been subjected to severe forms of violence (but not witnessed them; 8% vs. 9%).

Figure 1.13: Frequency of violence used by survey respondents in the home, by type of child abuse (%)



Note: Sample limited to young people who had experienced child abuse prior to age 18.
Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

"Retaliatory" violence

Finally, the relationship between the young person and their abuser and its subsequent impact on their use of violence was examined. Reflecting on past research which has suggested that AFV may be attributable to "retribution", including, for example, self-defensive violence or violence used to punish or deter abusers from harming the young person (see for example Brezina, 1999), the survey data allowed an exploration of the extent to which young people who used violence against a family member that had also been violent towards them.

Explanations referring to "retaliatory" violence featured often in the qualitative comments made by young men and women who had experienced and used violence in the home. As captured in the comments of two participants:

> I am a pretty peaceful person, but I learnt to defend myself against abuse by retaliating. (Survey participant, male, 20, heterosexual)

> It allowed me to use it as a defence mechanism and a "you did this to me so I'll do it to you" only 10x worse, as a way to intimidate my family and make me feel in control. (Survey participant, female, 20, bisexual)

This was particularly apparent among those young people who had used physical violence, non-fatal strangulation and threats to kill. Numerous survey respondents referred to retaliation, acting in self-defence and punishing a familial abuser in explaining the factors that led to their use of violence. As captured in the explanations of female as well as male participants:

> Self defense, anger, trying to protect my younger siblings, increasing my self-esteem by feeling more powerful. (Survey participant, male, 20, heterosexual)

> Anger and resentment towards my parents and their methods. (Survey participant, male, 17, heterosexual)

> Needed to defend myself or was not being listened to for years on end until I cracked. (Survey participant, female, 17, bisexual)

> The use of violence towards me and got too much to handle, I had to defend myself. (Survey participant, female, 16, heterosexual)

Likewise, when asked to describe the relationship between their experiences of violence in the home and their own behaviours, several young people made sense of their behaviours in the context of their own experiences and described motives of retaliation and self-defence:

> Someone does something, you do it back to them, they do it back. It's a terrible cycle. (Survey participant, male, 17, heterosexual)

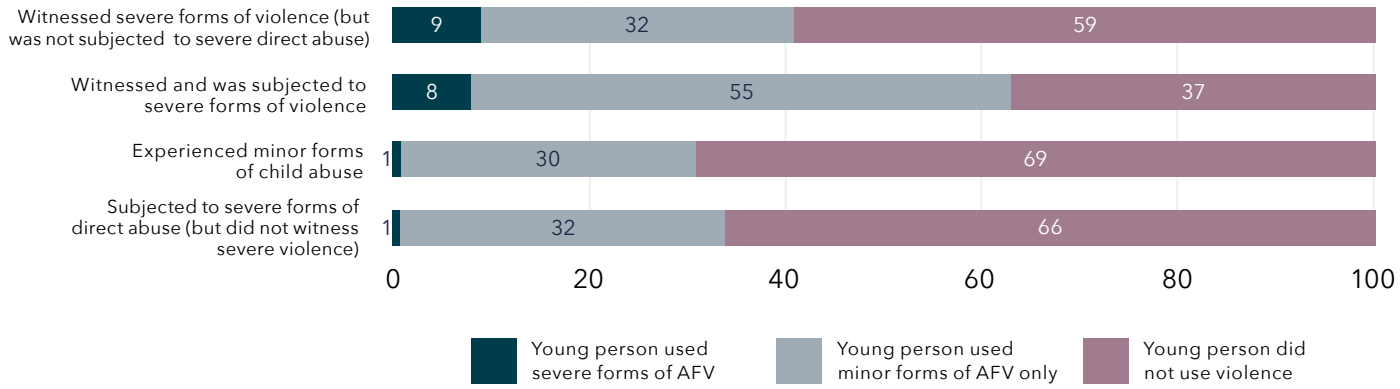
> To protect myself against my abusers I had to abuse them in return. (Survey participant, male, 17, heterosexual)

> I retaliated to my dad trying to restrain me. (Survey participant, female, 16, heterosexual)

> I react a lot to violence. If a family member gets angry with me I don't take long to also get angry and sad. (Survey participant, female, 18, heterosexual)

The qualitative feedback provided by a number of survey participants highlights that young people reflected on retaliatory or protective use of violence in the home both in relation to their experiences of abuse more broadly, as well as in response to specific situations involving violence directed at them. These findings are supported by the analysis of the

Figure 1.14: Severity of violence used by young people in the home, by history of child abuse (%)



Note: Sample limited to young people who had experienced child abuse prior to age 18. Percentage totals may not equal 100 due to rounding. "Severe" defined as non-fatal strangulation, threats to kill and sexual abuse.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

quantitative survey data, which identified that many young people reported that they had used violence against family members who had perpetrated targeted abuse against them.

As shown in Figure 1.15, 93 per cent of young people who had been abused by a sibling reported that they had also used violence against a sibling (*n*=284). This suggests a high level of mutual or retaliatory violence among siblings, which was also evident in the qualitative analysis whereby siblings featured heavily in the rationales provided by young people as to the relationship between their experiences of violence in the home and their own violent behaviours. Explanations provided by young men included:

> I would always get teased, more at home by my siblings than anywhere, I guess I just had enough after a while and started giving it back. (Survey participant, male, 19, heterosexual)

> My sister often wanted to push me to a point where I would react. (Survey participant, male, 19, heterosexual)

Other young men in the survey referred to "annoying siblings", "sibling fighting", "brothers being idiots", and "stupid, wreck less, idiotic brothers" in their explanations for why they used violence in the home.

Similar sentiments were expressed by several of the young women in the study who had both experienced and used violence in the home, with female participants referring to "annoying siblings", "sibling fights", and "just my sibling being annoying". The theme of retaliation was present here, as one female participant explained:

> I can't adequately express my thoughts without using the methods my family members use, so if my brother got violent with me I had to reciprocate to show him my seriousness. (Survey participant, female, 17, queer)

In explaining the factors that influenced their use of violence other young women described:

> Agitation and constant aggression from siblings. (Survey participant, female, 17, heterosexual)

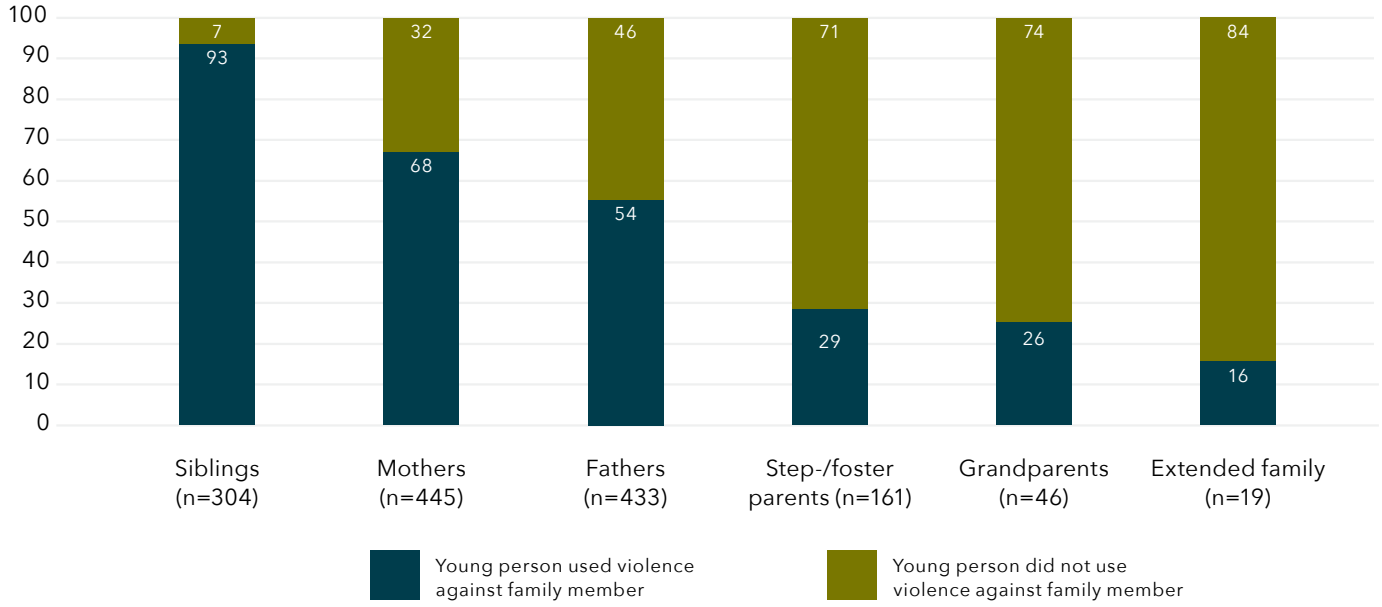
> My siblings making me angry and hitting me. (Survey participant, female, 18, heterosexual)

Noticeably, in their reflections on the factors that contributed to their use of violence, several of the female participants described their use of violence as akin to "normal" sibling behaviours. This viewpoint is well captured in comments from two female survey participants:

> I think I acted just as every kid who has a sibling acts. At an early age, we don't know how to control our emotions and our siblings push our buttons and we fight. But that's completely normal and calling it "use of violence" seems extreme. (Survey participant, female, 19, heterosexual)

> Partly just being a kid with siblings when I was younger I think its normal to fight with your brothers and sisters physically but as I got older, from being in a constant state of high stress and feeling like I was never going to get out of it, and feeling like I was trying as hard as I could all the time but not able to realise my full potential for my parents to just imply I wasn't doing enough and then my siblings to aggravate me. (Survey participant, female, 20, heterosexual)

Figure 1.15: Use of violence by young people against family members who had been violent towards them, by family member who had been violent towards them (%)



Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Beyond siblings, two thirds of young people who had been abused by their mother (68%, *n*=302) reported that they had also been violent towards them (see Figure 1.15). In comparison, the prevalence of "retaliatory" violence among young people abused by their fathers (54%, *n*=232), step-parents or foster carers (29%, *n*=47), grandparents (26%, *n*=12) and extended family members (16%, *n*=3) was lower. This was a particularly interesting finding given the number of young men, in particular, who referred to their father's use of violence in their explanations of what they believe led to their own use of violence – particularly in relation to learned behaviour (as explored in Section 3). However, this pattern may be a reflection of who is seen as the weakest or "safest" target of aggression in the home by young people using violence, with siblings and mothers possibly being seen as safer to retaliate against than fathers who are known to be violent. Equally, the degree to which constructed conceptions of women and other children in the home as "legitimate" victim-survivors of violence is relevant to understanding the gendered impacts of learned behaviours and patterns of AFV.

Abusive behaviours of fathers featured heavily in the reflections provided by young men on the relationship between their own experiences of violence and their use of violent behaviour. As one young man explained:

> I used to be quite a rebel when I was a kid. Thought you could solve most arguments with yelling and violence, as per fatherly influence. As I got older I began to realise I was becoming like my Father, a topic I often swore to stay away from when crying to sleep. (Survey participant, male, 19, heterosexual)

Other explanations provided by male participants which specifically referred to the influential role of their father's abusive behaviour included:

> Growing up surrounded by my father's violence and stress. (Survey participant, male, 20, heterosexual, First Nations)

> Dad did it so I thought I could do it. (Survey participant, male, 19, heterosexual)

Other young men cited "fatherly influence" and "my father" as factors influencing their use of violence in the home, while young women similarly referred to retaliatory and defensive violence against their abusive fathers:

> Taking in behaviour from my father and unwillingly becoming like him. (Survey participant, female, 17, bisexual)

> I'm think I may sometimes be violent with my father when we get in a bad fight because when I was younger, he'd use violence on me when we were in a fight or to punish me and I want to show him that he can't just push me around. (Survey participant, female, 17, heterosexual)

> I mimicked the behaviours my dad treated me with. (Survey participant, female, 18, bisexual)

These findings suggest that there is a consistent relationship between experiences of child abuse and use of violence in the home by young people. As two female respondents explained in commenting on the relationship between their experience and use of violent behaviours in the home:

> My own behaviour felt like a mirror of the behaviour i experienced which i hated but I didn't know how to break the cycle because regardless of how i changed my behaviour, i still experienced the same abuse. (Survey participant, female, 18, unknown sexual identity)

> Whenever I did something wrong as a child I was always given a slap so I believed that it was the right way to discipline my younger sibling. (Survey participant, female, 17, heterosexual)

This relationship was also evident in the comments made by male participants, one of whom commented:

> I seem to repeat what was done to me, even though I know its not okay to do so. (Survey participant, male, 19, bisexual)

The independent effect of experiences of child abuse on use of violence in the home among survey respondents

So far, the quantitative analysis presented here has been limited to bivariate analysis, meaning that the relationships between these two life events could be confounded by other variables. Certainly, research has shown a high level of overlap between risk factors for both experiences of child abuse and use of violence towards others (Gay et al., 2013; Roberts et al., 2011), and the qualitative analysis supports this overlap whereby numerous young people listed a number of factors that they viewed as relevant to understanding their experience and use of violence in the home.

To examine the independent effect of child abuse on use of violence in the home among young people, we estimated a series of logistic regression models. The models included a number of variables relating to the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents that the previous analysis and the literature have shown to be associated with AFV (see above section on methodology). Each model included a different "outcome" of interest:

- Model 1: any use of violence in the home (vs. no use of violence)
- Model 2: any use of severe forms of violence in the home (vs. no use of violence or less severe forms of AFV only)
- Model 3: frequent use of violence in the home (vs. no use of violence or episodic violence only).

First, the findings from the regression analyses show that after controlling for the variables included in Table 4 (sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual identity, health status, First Nations status and language spoken at home), young people who had experienced child abuse were more likely to report that they had used violence against their family members. Compared to respondents who had not experienced child abuse:

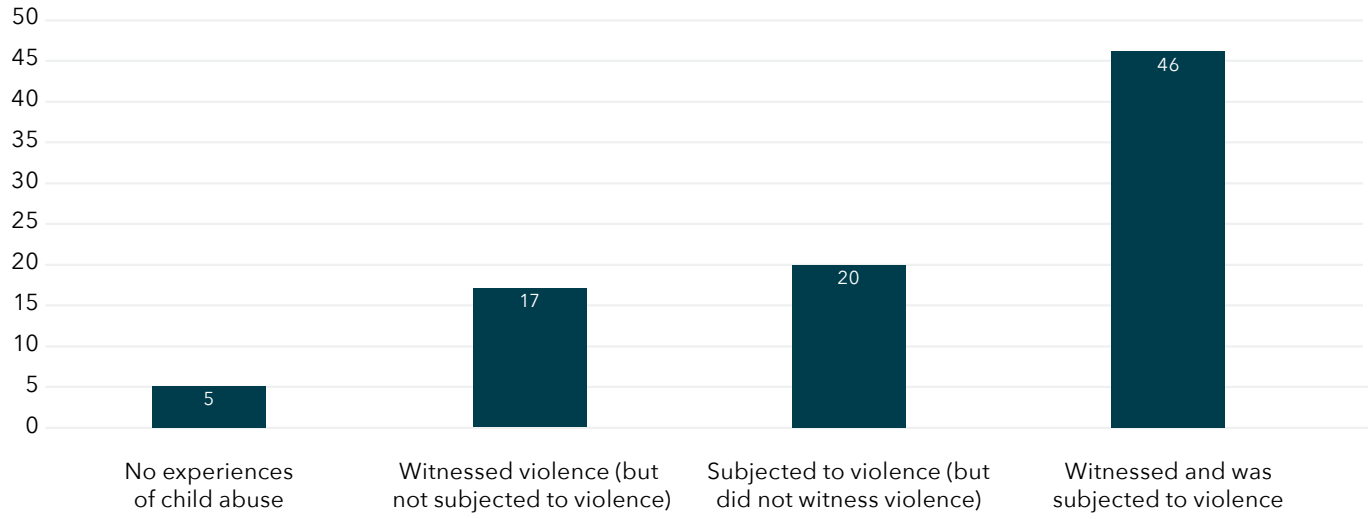
- young people who had witnessed violence between other family members (but not been subjected to targeted abuse) had four times the odds of using violence in the home (OR=4.0, $p<0.001$)
- young people who had been subjected to targeted abuse perpetrated by other family members (but had not witnessed violence) had five times the odds of using violence in the home (OR=4.8, $p<0.001$)
- young people who had experienced both forms of child abuse had 17 times the odds of using violence in the home (OR=17.1, $p<0.001$).

Because odds ratios can be difficult to understand and interpret, we also estimated predictive margins. Predictive margins indicate the predicted probability of the outcome of interest being observed – in this case, the use of violence in the home among respondents – when certain characteristics are present, controlling for the other variables in the regression model (in other words, the likelihood that an individual would experience an outcome if a variable is present or not). Importantly, predictive margins are *estimated* probabilities of the outcome, not a true measure of its prevalence in the sample.

As shown in Figure 1.6, after controlling for the variables in Table 4 (e.g. sex and gender identity), the probability of using violence in the home was highest among young people who had both witnessed violence between other family members and been subjected to violence (46%). Young people who had experienced both forms of child abuse were:

- 9.2 times more likely to use violence in the home than respondents who had not experienced any child abuse

Figure 1.16: Predicted probability of survey respondents using any violence in the home, by experiences of child abuse (%)



Note: Controls=sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual identity, First Nations status, health status and language spoken most of the time at home.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

- 2.7 times more likely to use violence in the home than respondents who had witnessed abuse between other family members (but not been subjected to targeted abuse)
- 2.3 times more likely to use violence in the home than respondents who had been subjected to targeted abuse perpetrated by family members (but not witnessed violence).

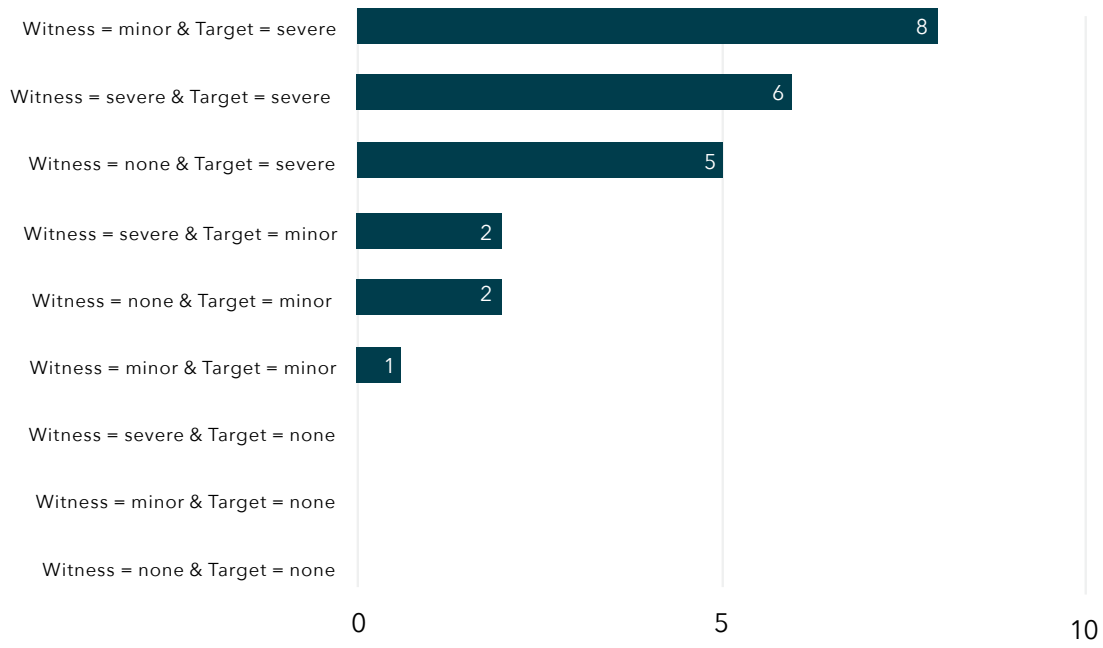
Pairwise comparisons identified that young people who had experienced child abuse were statistically more likely to use violence in the home than respondents who had not experienced child abuse. Respondents who had witnessed abuse and been directly subjected to abuse were statistically more likely to use violence against their family members compared to those who had experienced either form in isolation. However, there was little difference in perpetration of family violence between the two groups who had only experienced one form of child abuse.

Broadly, this finding remained consistent when we looked at the independent effect of child abuse on respondents' use of severe violence in the home. After controlling for the other factors listed in Table 4, respondents who had witnessed or been subjected to severe forms of child abuse were more likely to use these forms of violence in the home, compared to young people who did not experience child abuse (see Table 4). However, as shown in Figure 1.17, the probability of respondents using severe forms of violence in the home was highest when they had been subjected to severe forms of child abuse and had witnessed some form of violence between their family members (minor or severe). For example, young people who had been subjected to severe forms of violence and witnessed any minor violence were eight times more likely to use severe forms of violence in the home compared to young people who had witnessed severe forms of violence but not been subjected to any violence (8% vs. <1%).

Further, the probability of young people using frequent violence in the home was highest for young people who had been subjected to frequent violence, and also witnessed abuse on an episodic (36%) or frequent basis (30%). The probability of using frequent violence decreased to 15 per cent when young people had been subjected to frequent targeted abuse but had not witnessed any abuse, and then again to 14 per cent for young people who had been subjected to and witnessed episodic violence. These findings are complex and difficult to unpack, but the key message to take from Figure 1.18 is that the probability of young people using violence on a frequent basis was highest among respondents who had been subjected to frequent targeted abuse *and* witnessed some form of abuse between other family members.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that independent of the individual characteristics of young people, including gender and sexual identities, Indigenous status and history of disability, there was a strong and consistent relationship between experiences of child abuse and use of violence in the home by young people. In particular, it appears that the co-occurrence of witnessing abuse between other family members and being subjected to targeted abuse are stronger predictors of use of violence in the home than either form of child abuse alone. This said, when examining the nature of child abuse experiences and their subsequent impact on use

Figure 1.17: Predicted probability of respondents using severe forms of violence in the home, by experiences of child abuse (%)



Note: Controls=sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual identity, First Nations status, health status and language spoken most of the time at home. Witness=witnessed violence between other family members prior to age 18. Target=subjected to violence perpetrated by other family members prior to age 18. Minor violence=physical violence (not including non-fatal strangulation), verbal abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, threats to harm/hurt and other forms of AFV. Severe violence=non-fatal strangulation, sexual abuse and threats to kill.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

of violence among young people, being *subjected* to targeted abuse appeared to be strongly associated with the use of severe forms of violence, as well as frequent use of violence.

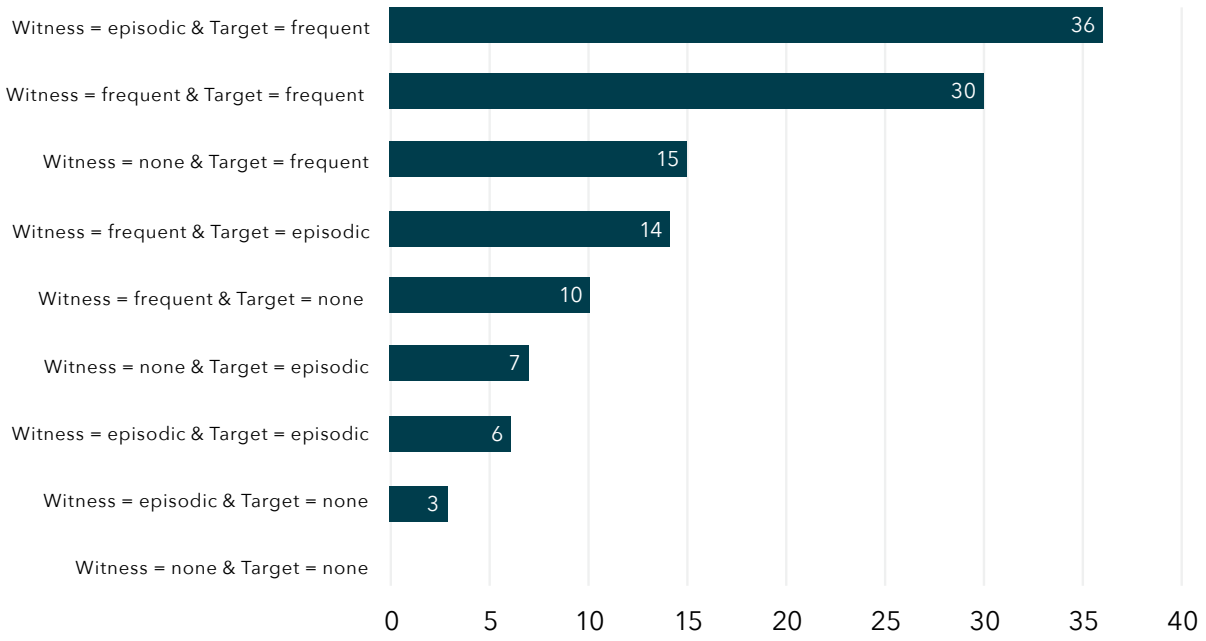
Although the focus of this stage of the analysis is on the relationship between experiences of child abuse and use of violence in the home, it is also important to note which of the other factors included in the models were and were not associated with the outcomes of interest. These variables, including the Indigenous status of respondents and their gender identity, are described in later sections of this report. The sex of the young person was also not independently associated with use of violence after controlling for confounding factors. In other words, male and female respondents were as likely as each other to use violence in the home after controlling for other factors.

This is inconsistent with findings from other research which has found that males are more likely to use violence in the home, as measured using reports made to law enforcement (see, for example, Boxall & Sabol, 2021; Hong et al., 2012; Phillips & McGuinness, 2020). The inconsistency between the findings from the current study and those of others that have involved the analysis of law enforcement datasets could be attributable to a reporting effect: incidents of violence involving young males may be more likely to be reported to the police than those involving young females. The role of sex assignment at birth and barriers to reporting for family members experiencing violence perpetrated by female family members is an under-researched area requiring future investigation.

Section 2: Priority adolescent cohorts' experiences of using domestic and family violence

Within the AFV literature, there has been very little exploration of the involvement of different cohorts of young people using violence against family members. As a general observation, there has been far more focus within the domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) space regarding the characteristics of *victim-survivors* of these behaviours, rather than perpetrators. This is despite consistent research which has identified a high level of overlap between DFSV victimisation and perpetration behaviours (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015; Lisak et al., 1996), which have been supported by the findings described in the current report.

Figure 1.18: Predicted probability of respondents using frequent violence in the home, by experiences of child abuse (%)



Note: Controls=sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual identity, First Nations status, health status and language spoken most of the time at home. Witness=witnessed violence between other family members prior to age 18. Target=subjected to violence perpetrated by other family members prior to age 18. Episodic violence=any form of violence experienced less than monthly. Frequent violence=any form of violence experienced monthly or more.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Numerous studies have identified that risk of being subjected to DFSV is not evenly distributed across the community, but is more likely to be experienced by:

- First Nations peoples (AIHW, 2021)
- women and girls from NESBs (Segrave et al., 2021)
- people with disability (AIHW, 2019; Boxall & Morgan, 2021)
- individuals with diverse gender identity (Dank et al., 2014; Newcomb et al., 2020; University of New South Wales, 2014)
- individuals with diverse sexual identity (Hart, 2019).

The next section of the analysis focuses on the experiences of respondents who self-identified as being part of these communities. The prevalence of use of violence in the home by young people in these communities is described, as well as the links between child abuse and use of violence by these young people.

2.1 Experiences of First Nations young people

Overall, 23 per cent of First Nations respondents (n=60) reported that they had used violence in the home (vs. 20%, n=935 of non-Indigenous young people). Further, less than one per cent (n=1) of First Nations young people said they had used severe forms of violence (vs. 1%, n=44). Neither of these relationships were statistically significant at the bivariate level ($\chi^2(1)=2.01$, $p=0.156$; $\chi^2(2)=3.41$, $p=0.181$ respectively).

However, 15 per cent (n=39) of First Nations respondents said they had used violence on a frequent basis, compared to nine per cent of non-Indigenous young people (n=409). This difference was statistically significant; although First Nations respondents were not more likely to use any violence in the home than non-Indigenous young people, they self-reported an increased likelihood of using violence on a frequent basis ($\chi^2(2)=13.87$, $p<0.01$).

These findings remained consistent after controlling for a number of other factors, such as sex and gender identity of respondents (see Table 4). First Nations young people were no more likely to use violence in the home (OR=1.1, $p=0.644$) or to use severe forms of AFV (OR=0.22, $p=0.141$) than non-Indigenous young people. However, Indigenous status remained independently associated with frequent use of violence by respondents (OR=1.8, $p<0.01$). Analysis of the predictive margins found that First Nations young people were 1.6 times more likely to use frequent violence in the home compared to non-Indigenous respondents (9% vs. 13%).

The role of child abuse and First Nations peoples' use of violence in the home

Approximately one in two First Nations young people (55%, n=142) reported that they had experienced child abuse before the age of 18 (vs. 53%, n=2,480 of non-Indigenous young people; $\chi^2(2)=0.85$, p=0.356). More specifically:

Table 4: Logistic regression models predicting young people's use of violence in the home, by nature of violence (ORs, 95% CIs)

	Any use of violence in the home[a]	Use of severe forms of violence in the home[b]	Frequent use of violence in the home[c]
	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)
Sex (vs. male)			
Female	1.0 (0.85–1.23)	0.6 (0.28–1.11)	0.8 (0.59–1.00)
Prefer not to say	1.0 (0.39–2.38)	1.0 (0.08–11.78)	0.7 (0.23–2.17)
Gender (vs. gender normative)			
Gender diverse	0.9 (0.61–1.29)	0.7 (0.23–2.31)	0.9 (0.60–1.48)
Prefer not to say	0.5 (0.13–2.21)	–	1.11 (0.21–5.87)
Sexuality (vs. heterosexual)			
Diverse sexual identity or unknown	1.0 (0.81–1.16)	1.4 (0.70–2.72)	1.0 (0.78–1.27)
Prefer not to say	0.8 (0.48–1.17)	0.8 (0.10–6.04)	0.88 (0.46–1.65)
Indigenous status (vs. non-Indigenous)			
First Nations	1.1 (0.77–1.52)	0.2 (0.03–1.65)	1.8 (1.2–2.78)**
Prefer not to say	1.7 (0.74–3.99)	4.0 (0.71–22.56)	1.2 (0.39–3.39)
Language spoken at home (vs. English)			
Language other than English	0.9 (0.65–1.14)	0.9 (0.27–2.96)	1.0 (0.69–1.54)
Disability status (vs. no disability)			
Any disability	1.4 (1.18–1.66)***	2.9 (1.41–6.16)**	1.5 (1.15–1.85)**
Prefer not to say	1.0 (0.64–1.54)	–	1.4 (0.77–2.60)
Experiences of child abuse (vs. no history of child abuse)			
Witnessed violence in isolation	4.0 (3.11–5.12)***	–	–
Subjected to violence in isolation	4.8 (2.83–8.19)***	–	–
Witnessed and was subjected to violence	17.1 (13.64–21.45)***	–	–
Witness = none x Target = minor	–	22.3 (3.04–163.5)**	–
Witness = none & Target = severe	–	54.08 (4.32–677.10)**	–
Witness = minor x Target = none	–	7.1 (1.46–34.55)*	–
Witness = minor & Target = minor	–	10.1(2.20–46.30)**	–
Witness = minor x Target = severe	–	93.0 (17.79–486.53)***	–
Witness = severe & Target = none	–	8.8 (0.77–99.42)	–
Witness = severe x Target = minor	–	14.5 (1.96–107.73)**	–
Witness = severe & Target = severe	–	65.9 (13.91–312.18)***	–
Witness = none x Target = episodic	–	–	8.0 (2.65–24.41)***
Witness = none & Target = frequent	–	–	20.7 (7.72–55.64)***

	Any use of violence in the home[a]	Use of severe forms of violence in the home[b]	Frequent use of violence in the home[c]
	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)
Witness = episodic x Target = none	-	-	3.3 (1.74–6.32)***
Witness = episodic & Target = minor	-	-	7.4 (3.79–14.60)***
Witness = episodic x Target = frequent	-	-	65.1 (31.03–136.65)***
Witness = frequent & Target = none	-	-	12.3 (7.18–21.18)***
Witness = frequent x Target = minor	-	-	18.3 (9.81–34.18)***
Witness = frequent & Target = severe	-	-	50.7 (31.53–81.60)***

*$p<0.05$, **$p<0.01$, ***$p<0.001$.

Notes: a: $n=4,986$; χ^2 (14)=1056.96, $p<0.001$, R2=0.2114, AUC=0.81.
[b] $n=4,746$; χ^2 (17)=104.30, $p<0.001$, R2=0.2013, AUC=0.88.
[c] $n=4,982$; χ^2 (19)=780.72, $p<0.001$, R2=0.2587, AUC=0.86.

- 21 per cent of First Nations respondents (n=54) had witnessed violence between other family members (but not been subjected to targeted violence; vs. 23%, n=1,070 of non-Indigenous respondents)
- 2 per cent of First Nations respondents (n=4) had been subjected to violence (but not witnessed violence; vs. 2%, n=91)
- 33 per cent of First Nations respondents (n=84) had witnessed and been subjected to violence (vs. 28%, n=1,319 of non-Indigenous young people; $\chi^2(3)=2.94$, p=0.401).

Crucially, there were no statistically significant differences in the prevalence of child abuse reported by First Nations and non-Indigenous young people. It is again important to note that young people who completed the survey were recruited using non-probability protocols and so the findings are not generalisable to the rest of the Australian population.

Two thirds of First Nations young people (67%, n=256) and non-Indigenous respondents (68%, n=635) who said they had used violence in the home also reported that they had witnessed and been subjected to violence in the home. This difference was not statistically significant at the bivariate level ($\chi^2(3)=5.63$, p=0.131), and remained non-significant after controlling for other potential confounding factors. As shown in Figure 2.2, First Nations young people who had experienced child abuse had the same probability of using violence in the home as non-Indigenous respondents who also had a history of child abuse.

2.2 Experiences of young people from non-English-speaking backgrounds

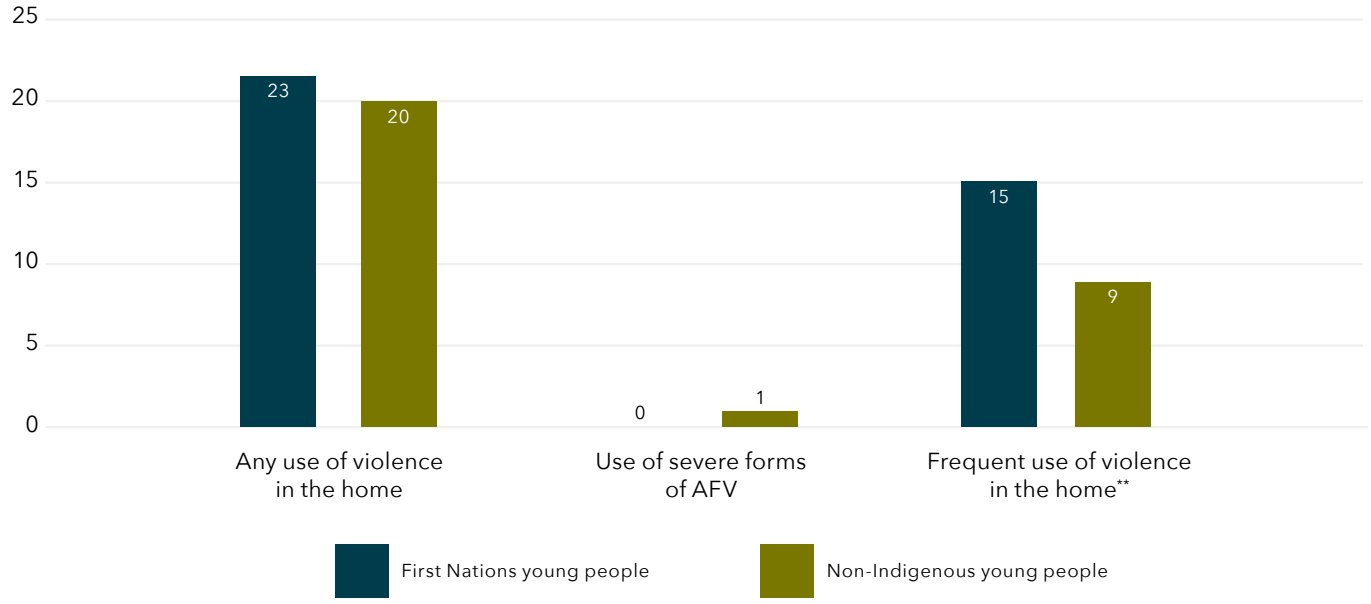
Approximately one in seven respondents (15%, n=78) from NESBs reported that they had used any form of violence in the home (vs. 21%, n=928 of young people from English-speaking backgrounds). Further, less than one per cent of this cohort of young people (n=3) said they had used severe forms of violence in the home (vs. 1%, n=44), and seven per cent (n=36) said they had used violence on a frequent basis (vs. 9%, n=417; see Figure 2.3). All of these differences were statistically significant; respondents from NESBs were statistically less likely to say they had used any violence ($\chi^2(1)=9.90$, $p<0.01$) or severe forms of AFV ($\chi^2(2)=10.00$, $p<0.01$), or used frequent violence in the home ($\chi^2(2)=9.70$, $p<0.01$) when compared to young people from English-speaking backgrounds.

However, after controlling for other factors like Indigenous status and disability, the observed differences between young people from non-English and English-speaking backgrounds regarding their use of violence in the home disappeared. The logistic regression analyses identified that respondents from NESBs were no more or less likely to use violence in the home (OR=0.8, p=0.246), to use severe forms of AFV (OR=0.9, p=0.845), or to use frequent violence (OR=1.0, p=0.873) than respondents from English-speaking backgrounds (see Table 4).

The role of child abuse in the use of violence by young people from non-English-speaking backgrounds

Approximately two in five young people from NESBs (42%, n=218) reported that they had experienced child abuse before the age of 18(vs. 54%, n=2,423 of young people from English-speaking backgrounds). More specifically:

Figure 2.1: Use of violence in the home, by Indigenous status of respondents and type of violence

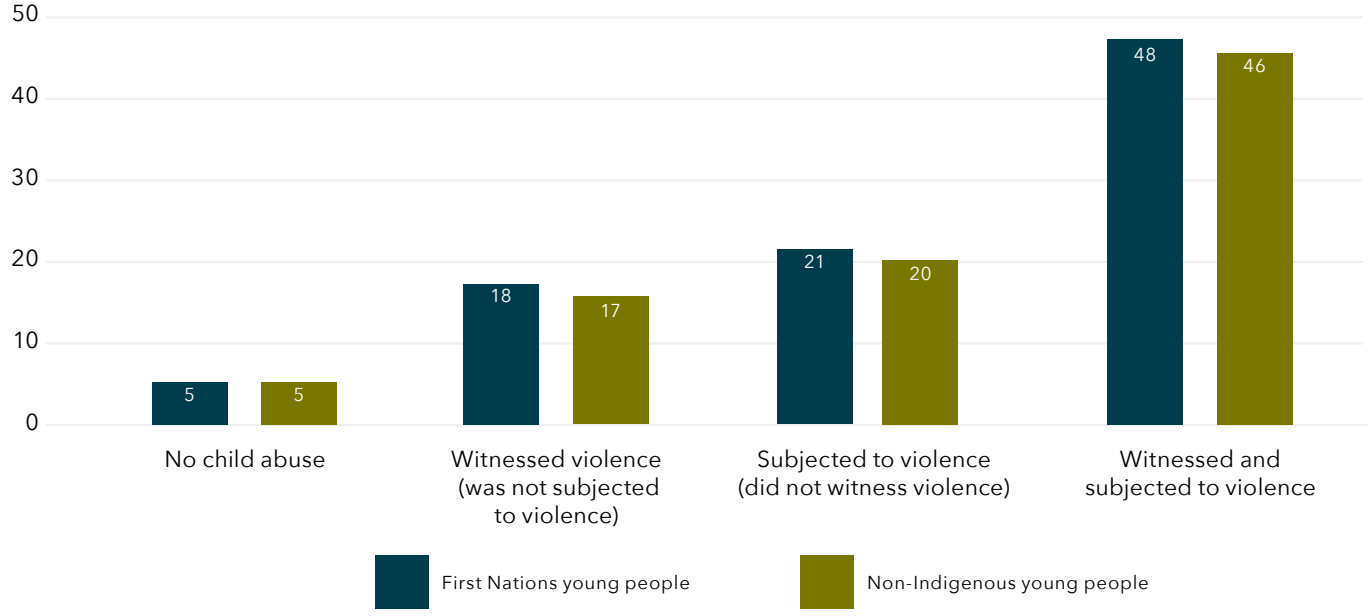


*$p<0.05$, **$p<0.01$, ***$p<0.001$.

Note: Sample excludes 42 young people who did not provide their Indigenous status. Controls=sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual identity, health status and language spoken most of the time at home.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

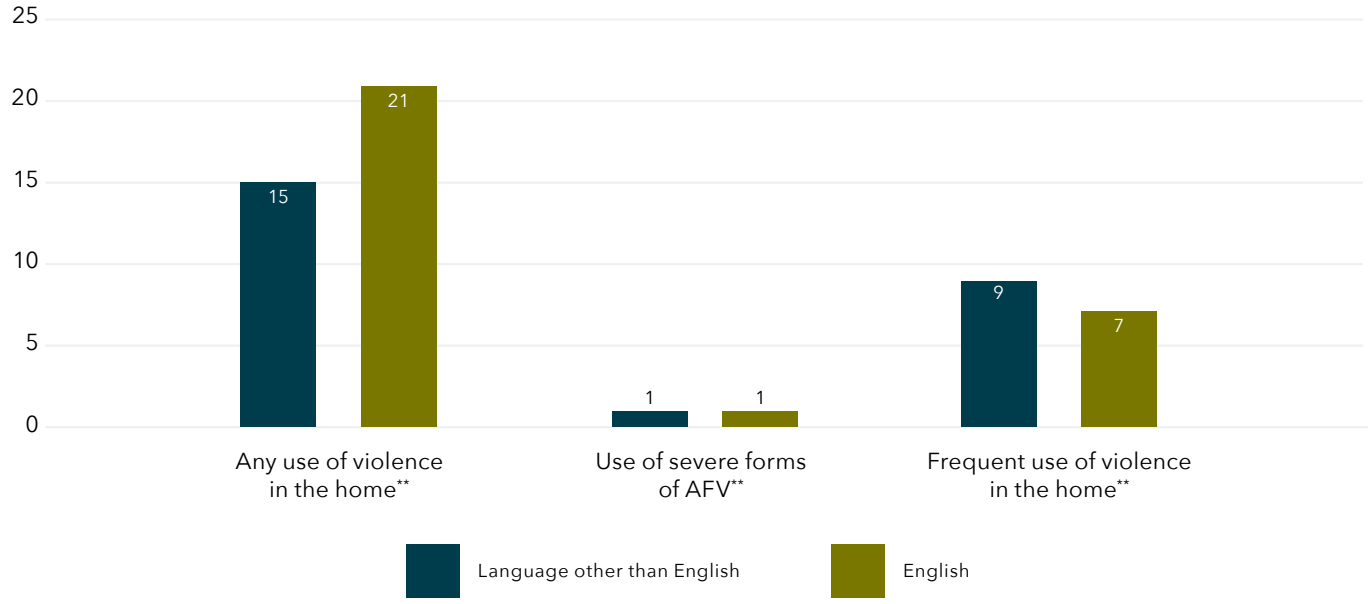
Figure 2.2: Predicted probability of using any violence in the home, by Indigenous status and history of child abuse (%)



Note: Controls=sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual identity, First Nations status, health status and language spoken most of the time at home.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Figure 2.3: Use of violence in the home, by language spoken most of the time at home and type of violence (%)



*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Note: Sample excludes six young people who did not provide this information. Controls=sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual identity, First Nations status and health status.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

- 18 per cent of respondents from NESBs (n=93) had witnessed violence between other family members (but not been subjected to targeted abuse; vs. 23%, n=1,036)
- 2 per cent of respondents from NESBs (n=9) had been subjected to targeted abuse (but not witnessed violence; 2%, n=89)
- 22 per cent of respondents from NESBs (n=116) had witnessed and been subjected to targeted abuse (vs. 29%, n=1,298).

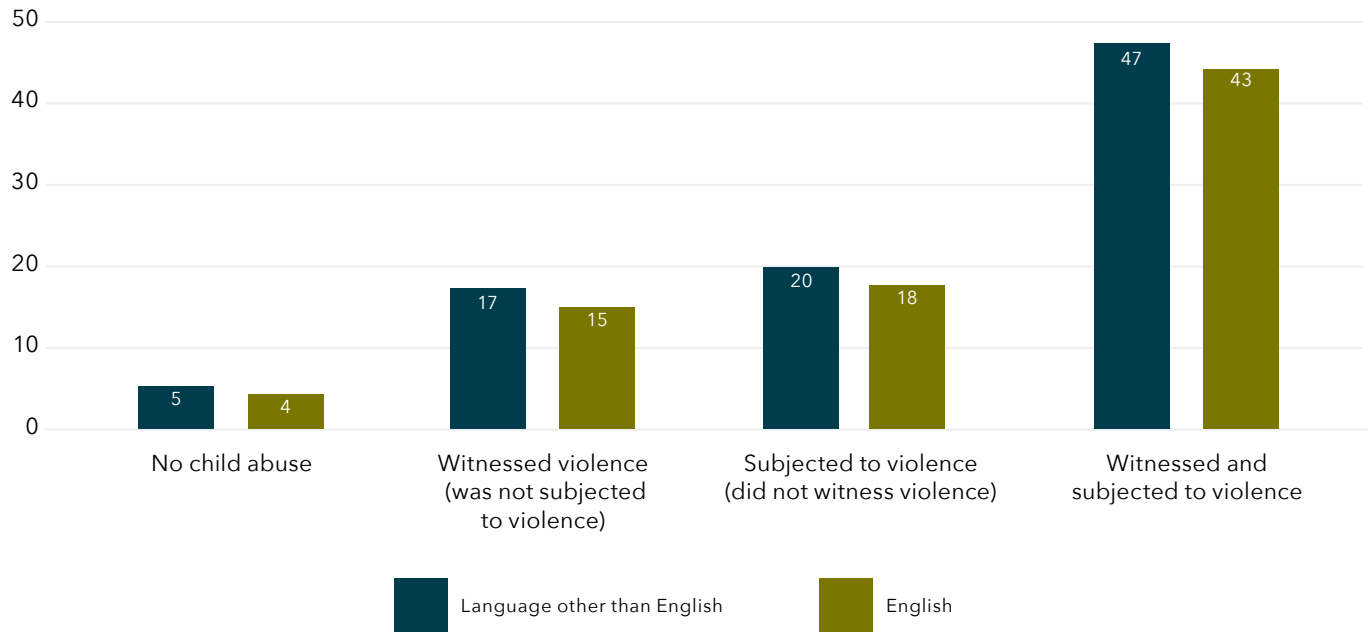
Again, at a bivariate level, young people from NESBs were less likely to report they had experienced any child abuse ($\chi^2(1)=29.18$, $p<0.001$), or that they had both witnessed and been subjected to violence in the home ($\chi^2(3)=29.28$, $p<0.001$), when compared to respondents from English-speaking backgrounds.

Consistent with the previously described results, there was a high level of overlap between experiences of child abuse and use of violence in the home. Approximately three quarters of respondents from NESBs (73%, n=57) who said they had used violence in the home also reported that they had witnessed and been subjected to violence in the home. This decreased to 67 per cent (n=626) among respondents from English-speaking backgrounds. However this difference was not statistically significant ($\chi^2(3)=2.83$, $p=0.419$), and remained non-significant after controlling for other potential confounding factors. As shown in Figure 2.4, although young people from NESBs who had experienced child abuse had a slightly higher probability of using violence in the home compared to respondents from English-speaking backgrounds who also had a history of child abuse, these differences were not statistically significant.

2.3 Experiences of young people with disability

Thirty per cent of young people with disability (n=66) reported that they had used violence in the home. Meanwhile, 15 per cent of respondents who did not report having disability reported the same (n=934). Further, two per cent of young people with disability (n=36) said they had used severe forms of AFV (vs. <1%, n=11), and 15 per cent (n=269) said they had used violence on a frequent basis (vs. 6%, n=169). All of these differences were statistically significant; young people with disability were more likely to say they had used any violence ($\chi^2(1)=161.02$, $p<0.001$) or severe forms of AFV ($\chi^2(2)=172.01$, $p<0.001$) or used frequent violence in the home ($\chi^2(2)=178.31$, $p<0.001$) when compared to other respondents.

Figure 2.4: Predicted probability of using any violence in the home, by language spoken most of the time at home and history of child abuse (%)



Note: Controls=sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual identity, First Nations status and health status.
Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

The findings described in Figure 2.5 remained consistent after controlling for other confounding factors. Analysis of the predictive margins found that:

- young people with disability were 1.3 times more likely to use violence in the home than respondents who did not report having disability
- young people with disability were 2.8 times more likely to use severe forms of AFV in the home than respondents who did not report having disability
- young people with disability were 1.4 times more likely to use frequent violence in the home than respondents who did not report having disability.

Analysis of the free-text responses provided by respondents found that several young women believed that their disability had contributed to their use of violence, while it was not featured among the factors listed by young males.

While Australian AFV-related research has previously noted the high presentation of families living with disability among those who experience violence, this research provides critical quantification of this practitioner viewpoint from the perspective of young people.

The role of child abuse in the use of violence by young people with disability

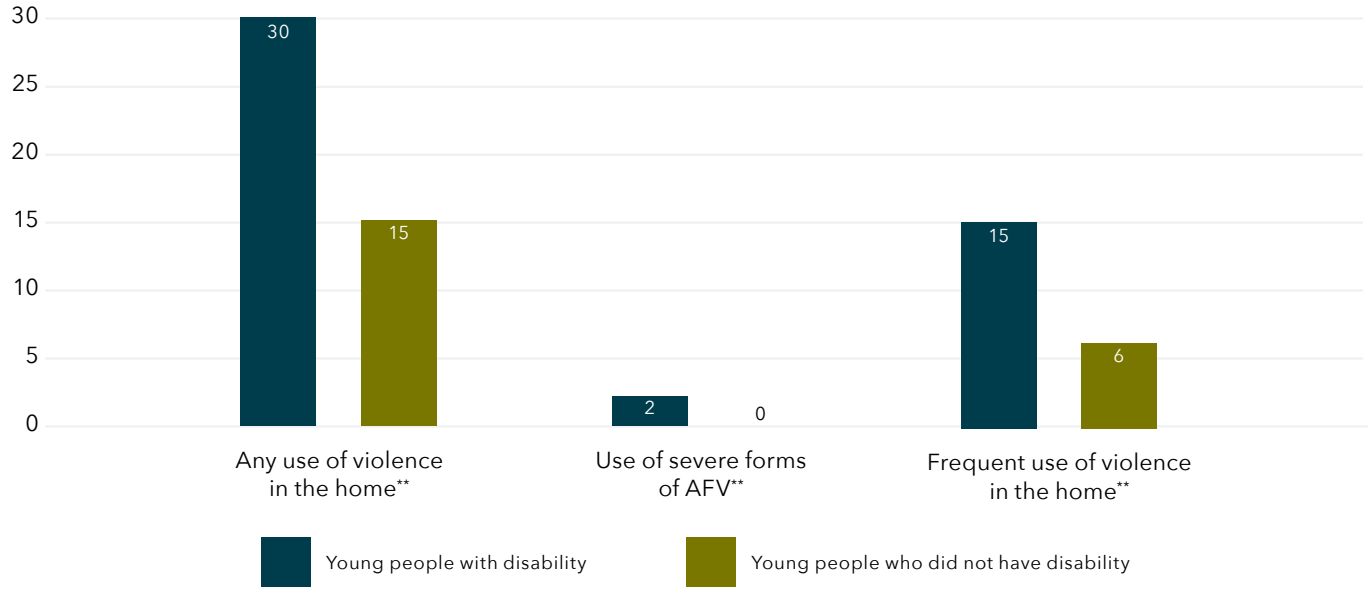
Overall, 70 per cent of young people with disability (*n*=1,235) reported that they had experienced child abuse before the age of 18. This contracts to 43 per cent (*n*=1,310) among respondents who did not have disability. More specifically:

- 24 per cent of young people with disability (*n*=427) had witnessed violence between other family members (but not been subjected to targeted abuse; vs. 21%, *n*=645)
- 2 per cent of young people with disability (*n*=41) had been subjected to targeted abuse (but not witnessed violence; 2%, *n*=51)
- 44 per cent of young people with disability (*n*=767) had witnessed and been subjected to violence (vs. 20%, *n*=614).

At a bivariate level, these differences were statistically significant; young people with disability were more likely to report they had experienced any child abuse ($\chi^2(1)=341.58$, $p<0.001$), and that they had both witnessed and been subjected to violence in the home ($\chi^2(3)=406.51$, $p<0.001$), compared to respondents who did not have disability.

Three quarters of young people with disability (76%, *n*=399) who said they had used violence in the home also reported that they had witnessed and been subjected to violence in the home. Meanwhile, 60 per cent (*n*=268) of respondents

Figure 2.5: Use of violence in the home, by health status and type of violence (%)



*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Note: Sample excludes 225 young people who did not provide this information. Controls=sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual identity, First Nations status and language spoken most of the time at home.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

who did not have disability and who had used violence in the home reported the same. This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2(3)=37.01$, $p<0.001$) and remained significant after controlling for other potential confounding factors. As shown in Figure 2.6, young people with disability who witnessed and were subjected to violence were 1.2 times more likely to use violence in the home compared to other respondents who had also experienced both forms of child abuse.

2.4 Experiences of gender-diverse young people

Approximately one in three gender-diverse respondents (31%, *n*=66) reported that they had used any form of violence in the home (vs. 20%, *n*=934 of cisgender young people). Further, two per cent of gender-diverse young people (*n*=5) said they had used severe forms of violence in the home (vs. 1%, *n*=41), and 18 per cent (*n*=38) said they had used violence on a frequent basis (vs. 9%, *n*=410). All of these differences were statistically significant; gender-diverse respondents were statistically more likely to say they had used any violence ($\chi^2(1)=15.90$, $p<0.001$) or severe forms of AFV ($\chi^2(2)=18.03$, $p<0.001$) or used frequent violence in the home ($\chi^2(2)=22.92$, $p<0.001$) when compared to cisgender young people.

However, after controlling for other factors such as Indigenous status and history of disability, the observed differences between gender-diverse and cisgender respondents regarding their use of violence in the home disappeared. The logistic regression analyses identified that gender-diverse young people were no more or less likely to use violence in the home (OR=0.9, $p=0.530$), to use severe forms of AFV (OR=0.7, $p=0.589$), or to use frequent violence (OR=0.9, $p=0.809$) than cisgender respondents (see Table 4).

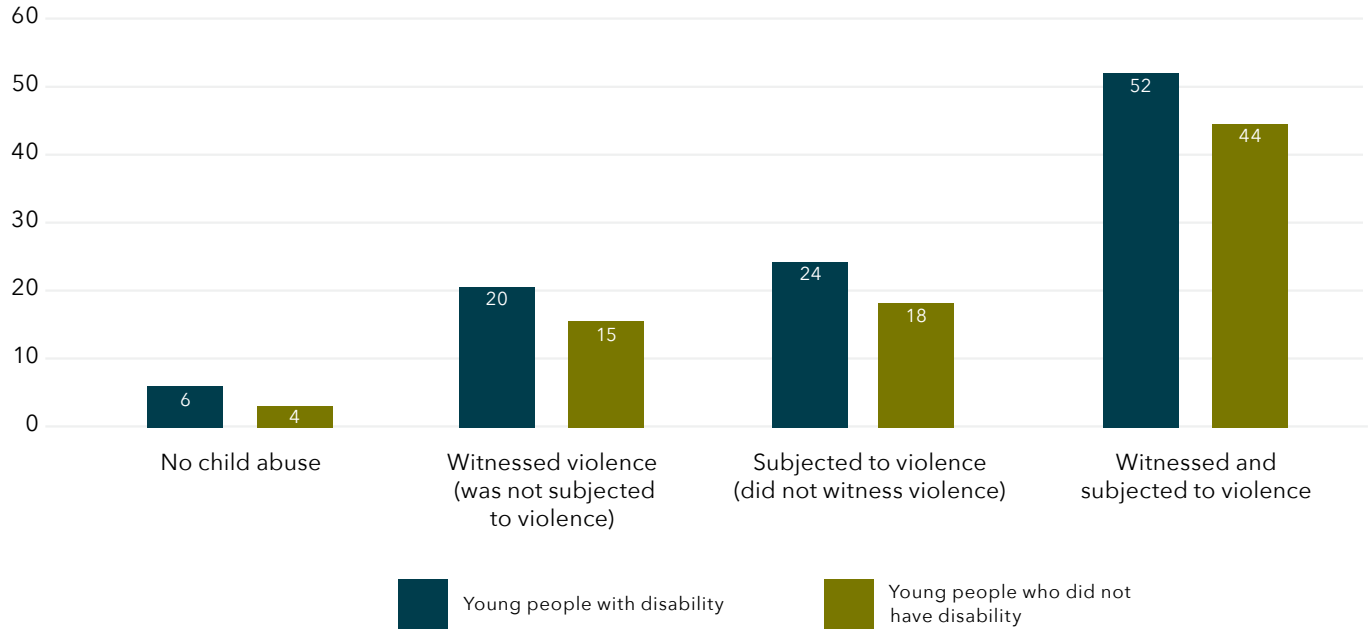
The role of child abuse in the use of violence by gender-diverse young people

Overall, 79 per cent of gender-diverse young people (*n*=170) reported that they had experienced child abuse before the age of 18. This contrasts to 52 per cent (*n*=2,459) of cisgender respondents ($\chi^2(1)=62.65$, $p<0.001$). More specifically:

- 24 per cent of gender-diverse respondents (*n*=52) had witnessed violence between other family members (but not been subjected to targeted abuse; vs. 23%, *n*=1,077)
- 3 per cent of gender-diverse respondents (*n*=6) had been subjected to targeted abuse (but not witnessed it; 2%, *n*=91)
- 52 per cent of gender-diverse respondents (*n*=112) had witnessed and been subjected to violence (vs. 27%, *n*=1,291; $\chi^2(3)=79.96$, $p<0.001$).

At a bivariate level, these differences were statistically significant; gender-diverse young people were more likely to report they had experienced any child abuse, and that they had both witnessed and been subjected to violence in the home compared to cisgender respondents.

Figure 2.6: Predicted probability of using any violence in the home, by disability status and history of child abuse (%)



Note: Controls=sex assigned at birth, gender identity, sexual identity, First Nations status and language spoken most of the time at home.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Four out of five gender-diverse respondents (82%, *n*=54) who said they had used violence in the home also reported that they had witnessed and been subjected to violence in the home. Meanwhile 67 per cent (*n*=623) of cisgender respondents who had used violence in the home reported the same. However, this difference was not statistically significant ($\chi^2(3)=6.50$, $p=0.090$), and remained non-significant after controlling for other potential confounding factors. As shown in Figure 2.8, gender-diverse young people who had experienced child abuse had the same probability of using violence in the home as respondents who identified as either male or female and who had also experienced child abuse.

2.5 Experiences of young people with diverse sexual identities

Approximately a quarter of respondents with diverse sexual identities (26%, *n*=384) reported that they had used any form of violence in the home, and 18 per cent (*n*=592) of heterosexual young people said the same. Further, two per cent of this cohort of young people (*n*=26) said they had used severe forms of violence in the home (vs. 1%, *n*=20), and 13 per cent (*n*=192) said they had used violence on a frequent basis (vs. 8%, *n*=248). All of these differences were statistically significant; respondents with diverse sexual identities were statistically more likely to self-report using any violence ($\chi^2(1)=40.51$, $p<0.001$) or severe forms of AFV ($\chi^2(2)=47.17$, $p<0.001$) or using frequent violence in the home ($\chi^2(2)=47.13$, $p<0.001$) when compared to heterosexual young people.

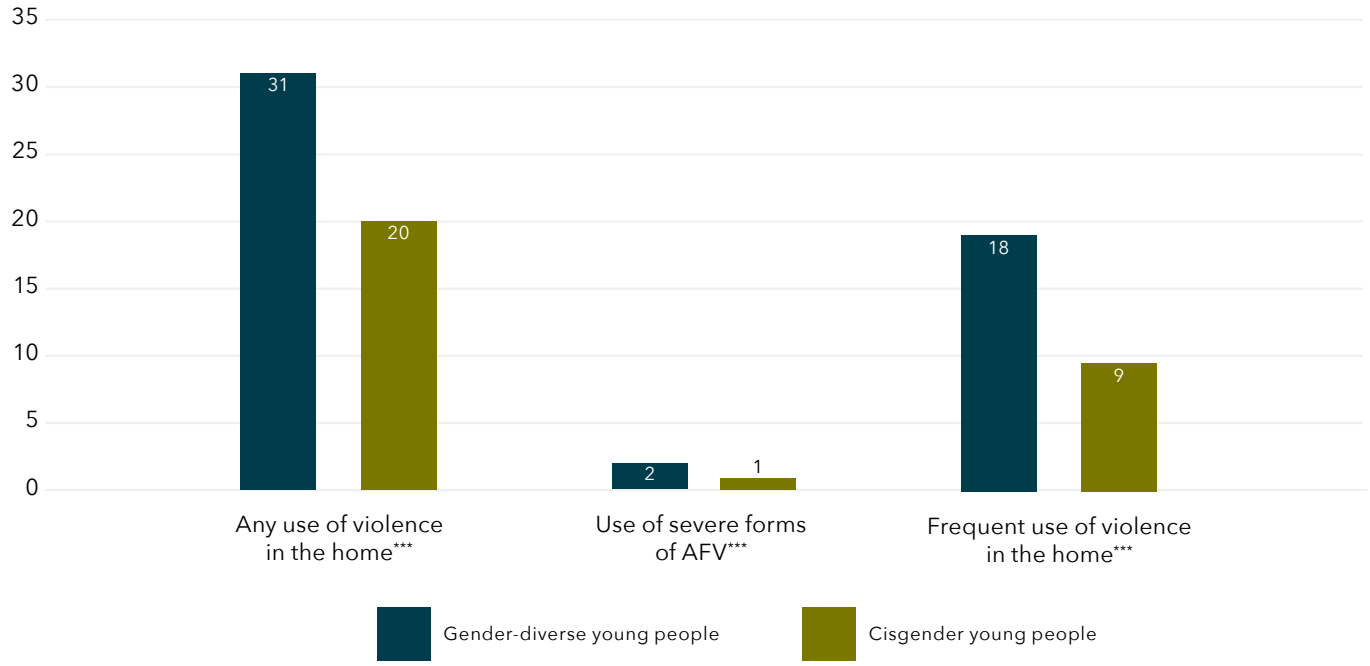
However, after controlling for other factors like sex assigned at birth and gender identity, the observed differences between individuals with diverse sexual identities and heterosexual young people regarding their use of violence in the home disappeared. The logistic regression analyses identified that young people with diverse sexual identities were no more or less likely to use violence in the home (OR=1.0, $p=0.764$), to use severe forms of AFV (OR=1.4, $p=0.351$), or to use frequent violence (OR=1.0, $p=0.981$) than heterosexual respondents.

The role of child abuse in the use of violence by young people with diverse sexual identities

Overall, two thirds of young people with diverse sexual identities (67%, *n*=980) reported that they had experienced child abuse before the age of 18. This contrasts to 48 per cent (*n*=1,569) of heterosexual respondents. More specifically:

- 24 per cent of young people with diverse sexual identities (*n*=349) had witnessed violence between other family members (but not been subjected to violence; vs. 22%, *n*=727)
- 2 per cent of young people with diverse sexual identities (*n*=36) had been subjected to violence (but not witnessed violence; 2%, *n*=59)
- 41 per cent of young people with diverse sexual identities (*n*=595) had witnessed and been subjected to violence (vs. 24%, *n*=783).

Figure 2.7: Use of violence in the home, by gender identity and type of violence (%)



*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Note: Sample excludes 33 young people who did not provide their gender identity. Controls=sex assigned at birth, sexual identity, First Nations status, health status and language spoken most of the time at home.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

Again, at a bivariate level, young people with diverse sexual identities were more likely to report they had experienced any child abuse ($\chi^2(1)=144.87$, $p<0.001$), or that they had both witnessed and been subjected to violence in the home ($\chi^2(3)=177.51$, $p<0.001$), when compared to heterosexual respondents.

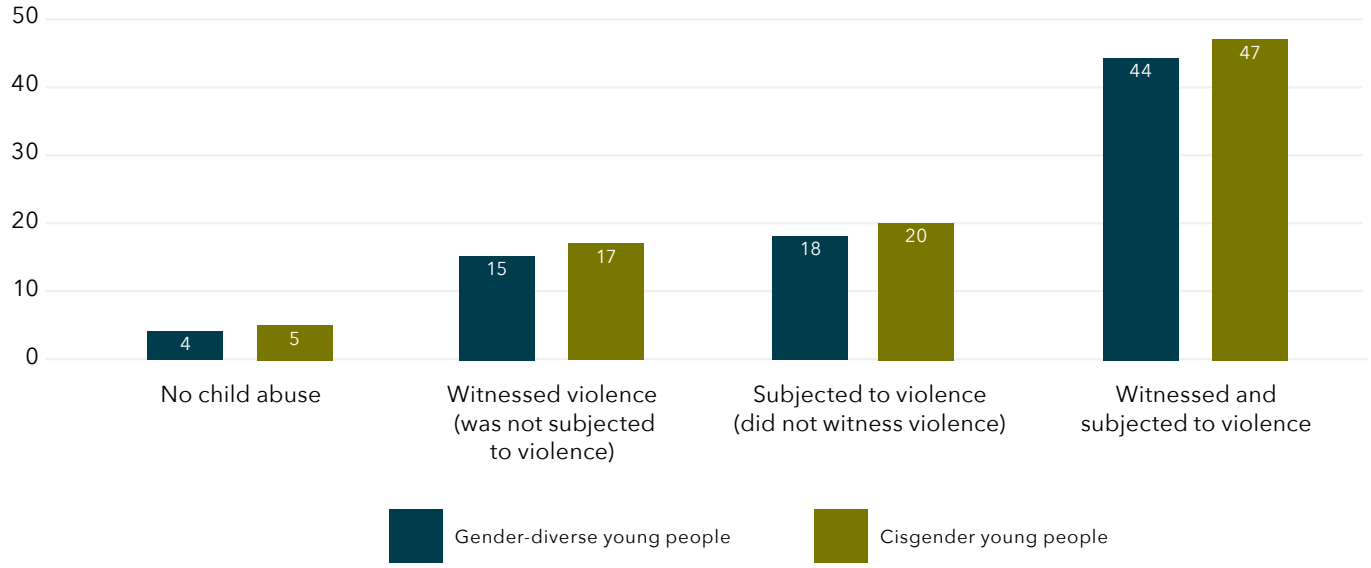
Consistent with the previously described results, there was a high level of overlap between experiences of child abuse and use of violence in the home. Three quarters of young people with diverse sexual identities (76%, $n=290$) who said they had used violence in the home also reported that they had witnessed and been subjected to violence in the home. In comparison, only 64 per cent of heterosexual respondents ($n=376$) who had used violence reported they had witnessed and been subjected to violence. This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2(3)=18.96$, $p<0.001$). However, once other factors had been controlled for, the analysis found that young people with diverse sexual identities who had experienced child abuse had the same probability as heterosexual respondents who had also experienced child abuse of using violence in the home.

As described above, very few factors included in the estimated regression models were independently associated with use of violence in the home. After controlling for other confounding factors, young people with disability were more likely to use violence in the home when compared to respondents without disability. Gender and sexual identity, Indigenous status and speaking a language other than English most of the time at home did not increase or decrease risk of using violence in the home.

Section 3: Young people's rationale for using family violence in the home

There were two open-text questions included in the survey to support an examination of young people's reasons for using family violence in the home (see Appendix B for a copy of the full survey instrument). A thematic analysis of all open-text responses received from young people who had used violence was undertaken to further explore key themes identified in the quantitative analysis. Thematic analysis provides a way to examine different and similar perspectives of participants and a way to generate further insights into participants' experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition to the motivations of retaliatory violence and aggression explored already, the most common theme to emerge was the importance placed on learned behaviour, as examined above. This was true across the sample but particularly apparent among young people who used physical violence

Figure 2.8: Predicted probability of using any violence in the home, by gender identity and history of child abuse (%)



Note: Controls=sex assigned at birth, sexual identity, First Nations status, health status and language spoken most of the time at home.
Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

in the home. As one survey respondent commented:

> My family's use of violence against me is the main one (led to me from a young age thinking violence; both emotional and physical, was the only way to express my feelings). (Survey participant, female, 18, unknown sexual identity)

This response was not uncommon. Participants referred to the perceived influence of growing up in violent households as explaining their later use of violence:

> Monkey see monkey do, i.e. observational learning. (Survey participant, male, 20, heterosexual)

> Seeing your parents, the people you look up to everyday be violent can cause a child to think it's ok to be violent as well and then grow up into that kind of environment. (Survey participant, female, 20, prefer not to say)

> Observational learning; from young I've seen abuse in front of me and i assumed that is how issues were dealt with. (Survey participant, female, 19, bisexual)

Numerous participants described violence as "normal" and "normalised" in their lives – both in terms of their experience and their use of violence:

> I think that because I experienced the violence between my parents at such a young age, I unconsciously thought that that was what love was and that it was normal and ok. (Survey participant, female, 17, bisexual)

> Felt like it was normal and needed. (Survey participant, male, 18, heterosexual)

> Every act of violence, I've seen from my parents so it has become normalised. (Survey participant, female, 17, bisexual)

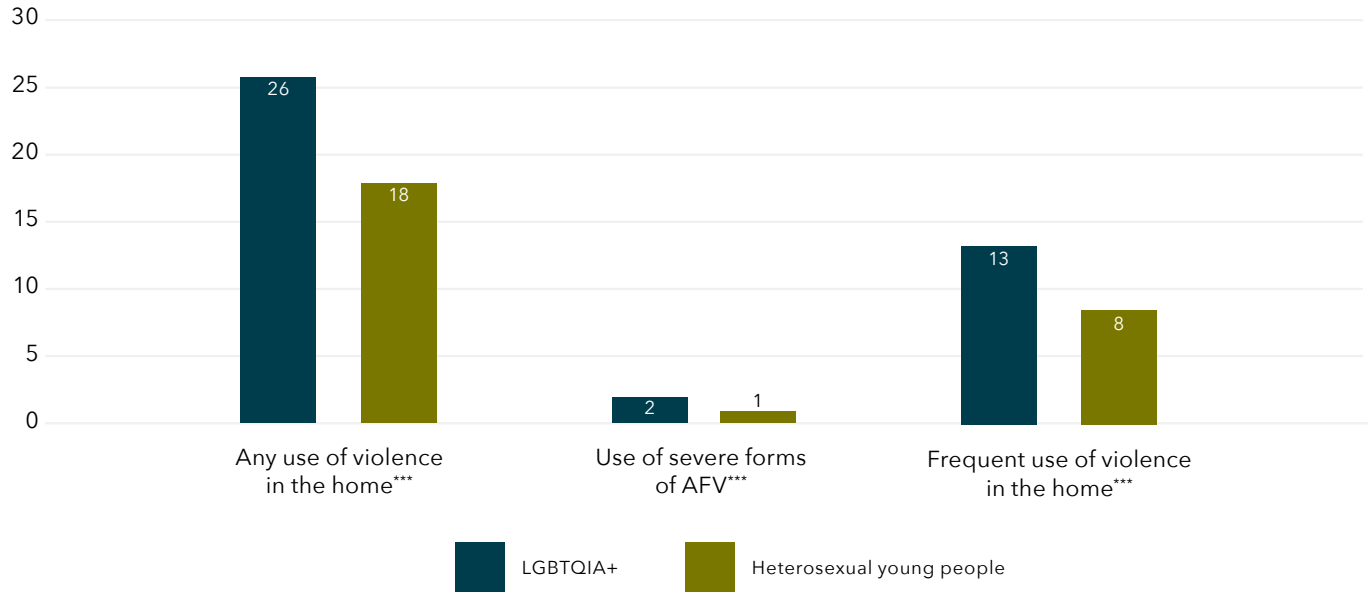
There were a small number of participants that attributed their use of violence in the home to experiences of childhood bullying and/or school-based arguments. In particular, several participants recognised the influence of school-based bullies, as one young male rationalised:

> used to get beat up badly and bullied by people at school from a young age and by my parents. (Survey participant, male, 18, heterosexual)

Other male participants listed "people from school", "high school experiences such as bullying", and "anger from school" as influential factors in their use of violence in the home. Female participants listed similar factors, including "stress and school/friendship problems", "stress from school/university, current situations" and "other people provoking me at an extremely young age including school bullies".

In attention to these factors, reflections on emotional wellbeing and their own experiences of mental illness were commonly offered as a way of understanding why they had come to use AFV. This viewpoint is evident in the comments of four survey participants:

Figure 2.9: Use of violence in the home, by sexual identity and type of violence (%)



*$p<0.05$, **$p<0.01$, ***$p<0.001$.

Note: Sample excludes 278 young people who did not provide their sexual identity. Controls=sex assigned at birth, gender identity, First Nations status, health status and language spoken most of the time at home.

Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

> Lack of mental and emotional control in intense or highly emotional situations. (Survey participant, male, 20, heterosexual)
>
> Poor anger management due to mental health. (Survey participant, male, 20, pansexual)
>
> Everyone in the house had mental health issues and some were trying to get diagnosed or trying to find the right medication. No one was in the best state of mind. (Survey participant, female, 19, bisexual)
>
> I was an anxious, sad person. Taking out my emotions. (Survey participant, female, 20, heterosexual)

Feelings of self-blame and -deprecation were cited by a small number of survey participants, who focused their response to this question on what factors had influenced their use of violence on self-perceived shortcomings of themselves. For example, one female survey participant listed "me being lazy mostly" while two male survey participants described themselves as "being a weak, garbage human" and "being deformed" in their listing of factors influential in their use of violence in the home.

Other factors that were listed as relevant (and in some cases implied as contributory) factors to the young person's use of violence in the home included "bad" parental marriages and divorce, stress, alcohol and other drugs, social media, short temper, jealousy, death of a family member, financial problems and money, parental work stress, and conflicting cultural beliefs.

It is important to note here also that there were a significant number of both male and female young people who responded to the questions on what factors had influenced their use of violence in the home, and the relationship between the childhood violence they had experienced and the violence they had used, with "I don't know" (commonly abbreviated in the surveys to "idk").

Section 4: The impacts of family violence on children and young people

> My life is ruined, and I'm confused … Nothing makes sense, I don't know what's going, I feel really bad, I hate everything. Sorry … my life is pointless. (Survey participant, male, 20, heterosexual)

A key focus of this study, and by reflection the survey instrument, was to build the national evidence base on the impacts of AFV among young Australians, and to do so by drawing on the voices and experiences of young people

Figure 2.10: Predicted probability of using any violence in the home, by sexual identity and history of child abuse (%)

Note: Controls=sex assigned at birth, gender identity, First Nations status, health status and language spoken most of the time at home.
Source: *Survey of adolescent family violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people, 2021* [Computer file]

themselves. The survey included a number of open-text questions inviting young people to detail the impacts of using violence in the home on their emotional, social and physical wellbeing as well as to consider any cultural and educational impacts. This section is focused upon presenting the findings from a thematic content analysis of the qualitative data from this portion of the study. From the survey data it was not always possible to discern whether a young person was reflecting on the impacts of using violence, the impacts of child abuse and/or the broader impacts of childhood violence. We have limited this section of the qualitative analysis to the experiences of only young people who used violence, however, given the extremely high prevalence of experiences of child abuse among this sample, at times the impacts of child abuse are captured also.

4.1 Emotional and social impacts

Young Australians who had experienced childhood violence and also used violence in the home described significant emotional and social wellbeing impacts experienced both during and following periods of violence. Across the sample, of those who described mental health impacts of AFV, there were frequent references to experiences of depression, anxiety and loss of confidence. The day-to-day impact of poor mental health experiences following experiences and use of violence are captured in the following participant comments:

> I'm emotionally unstable, I start to shake it [*sic*] the slightest arguments and get frightened easily. (Survey participant, female, 17, does not identify with any sexuality)

> Quite terrified of any change in someone's character and will jump at the slightest sound of raised tone of voice and get quite stressed. Plus, lots and lots of crying over whether or not what I had seen or heard was actually real. (Survey participant, female, 20, heterosexual)

> Left with crippling depression and anxiety with PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] and taking a lot of drugs to overcome it. (Survey participant, female, 20, heterosexual, First Nations)

As is evident in the final quotation here, a small number of participants also described experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of the violence experienced during their childhood, along with other implications on their wellbeing, such as self-medication (on this, see further Hemmingsson, 2018; Levenson & Grady, 2016; Stein et al., 2002; Zarse et al., 2019).

Participants who reported using violence spoke directly to the emotional impact of their own use of violence and the significant self-blame that they had experienced in the period following. This was particularly apparent in the comments made by female participants. One young female described:

> I didn't really trust myself after. I felt like everything was my fault and the things that happened were all mine. It is continuing to take a long time to really understand that it wasn't a dream and it really happened, but the blame isn't all on me and I should just learn from it and forget it. (Survey participant, female, 19, heterosexual)

Other female participants described similar feelings of self-blame and the ongoing impacts of that:

> Since I didn't do anything to provoke my stepmother's abuse I have trouble accepting myself and I always blame myself for things that aren't my fault. (Survey participant, female, 18, heterosexual)

> Having the aggressive behaviours come from myself, it made me feel very guilty and often I tried to isolate and avoid myself from fear of displaying those behaviours. (Survey participant, female, 20, heterosexual)

> Just sadness and shame at myself and my family members. Feeling bad for my part and sometimes feeling like a bad person overall because of it! (Survey participant, female, 18, heterosexual)

Other participants referred to the impact of self-doubt and low self-worth on their lives. As one female participant described, "I tend to believe that I am useless and view myself negatively and have low self-confidence." In particular, a small number of female survey respondents described the impact that these experiences of abuse had on their body image.

A number of participants who had used violence in the home referred to periods where they had contemplated suicide. Some referred to this in the past tense while for others suicidal ideations continued:

> My self-confidence plummeted, I hated who I was and constantly blamed myself for being abused. I'm so used to being punished that even if I didn't cause an accident, I blame myself. I also became severely depressed and suicidal. My anxiety grew worse. (Survey participant, female, 18, heterosexual)

> [I] was suicidal for a very long time, have overcome that since. (Survey participant, female, 19, heterosexual)

> As a child I had very poor self-esteem and was suicidal and still am suicidal. (Survey participant, female, 18, pansexual)

This was also apparent in the smaller number of comments received from other individuals with diverse gender identities. One trans male who had used physical violence, for example, listed the impacts of violence as: "depression anxiety suicidal ideation OSFED (other specified feeding or eating disorder)".

The effects of child abuse, including experiencing parental DFV, on young people's mental wellbeing are well established (see, for example, Badr et al., 2018; Gekker et al., 2018; Meltzer et al., 2009; Thoresen et al., 2015; Vertommen et al., 2018; Zarse et al., 2018). While the specific intersection of experiencing DFV and other types of abuse during childhood with suicidal behaviours in young people remains an under-researched area, some research has identified experiences of child abuse and related trauma as a key predictor of suicidal self-harming behaviours during adolescence (see, for example, Shepherd et al., 2018).

In addition to impacts on emotional and mental wellbeing, participants frequently referred to the impact that their experiences and use of violence had on their familial relationships and ability to develop safe bonds with family members. Participants frequently cited a lack of trust and ongoing feelings of being unloved, scared and fearful of reprisal as defining their familial relationships, particularly with any abusive parental figures. As one survey respondent described:

> Has taken a massive hit to my self-esteem and confidence, therefore not making me comfortable as myself which kind of translates into my social interactions – I don't have any permanent relationships in my life outside of my blood family, everyone else has kind of left. (Survey participant, female, 20, heterosexual)

Participants, especially among the female cohort who had used AFV, also described significant impacts on their social life and relationships outside of the home. One female survey participant described:

> I apologise for almost everything I do, I'm worried all my friends dislike it when I talk to them so most of the time I stay silent, there's so much stuff I don't really know how to put it all down sorry. (Survey participant, female, 16, still deciding)

The apologetic demeanour evident in this quoted response was apparent across a number of the responses provided to the open-ended questions, whereby a number of participants

apologised for how they completed an answer and whether they had sufficiently conveyed their experiences.

Other participants described similar difficulties of forming strong social relationships with friends, with participants referring to not letting people in, finding it hard to build relationships and trust people, and difficulties of opening up to people close to them. As four female participants explained:

> I find it hard building relationships and trusting people, yet I also crave validation and acceptance. I am only used to being treated badly so I see that mistreatment as normal. (Survey participant, female, 19, unknown sexual identity)

> I lost friends, didn't attend school and dropped out, I didn't know how to socialise with people my age, I skipped my teenage years and matured straight into adulthood. (Survey participant, female, 18, heterosexual)

> It made me extremely shy and socially anxious when I wasn't previously, and I struggled to make friends in high school. (Survey participant, female, 19, heterosexual)

> It is hard for me to make friends because I am scared of being yelled at or isolated. (Survey participant, female, 16, omnisexual)

As a coping strategy, numerous participants also described preferring to isolate and distance themselves as a result of challenges experienced in forming and maintaining social relationships. In severe cases this extended to a general fear of all people and severe social anxiety. Several participants described becoming shy and less talkative, extending in some cases to being mute:

> I was mute for a lot of my early life due to fear of saying something wrong and being punished for it. (Survey participant, female, 20, bisexual)

Other female participants described not believing in "real relationships" and struggling to "keep friendships". Similar feelings extended to intimate partner relationships with a number of young people describing a fear of beginning an intimate relationship or significant anxiety experienced within an intimate relationship.

4.2 Physical impacts

> [I] have to wear long socks, jackets etc to cover big marks sometimes lie and say I tripped or something. (Survey participant, female, 16, still deciding)

The physical impacts of violence experienced by young people in the home are significant and span from initial injuries – including bruising, muscular pain and other injuries – to long-term physical impacts and scarring. Some participants described physical injuries as "annoying", and numerous participants reflected on strategies used to cover up their injuries. For other participants, this question invited a listing of the physical injuries sustained from violence experienced during childhood. The range of descriptions provided by young people on the physical impacts of childhood violence are captured in these excerpts:

> My shoulder and jaw has been pushed out of their sockets. (Survey participant, female, 19, queer)

> I have permanent scars on my body. (Survey participant, female, 19, bi-curious)

> I have spinal issues and I also have facial spasms when I get angry. (Survey participant, male, 17, heterosexual)

As noted in the emotional and social impacts section (above), a number of young females described the impacts that experiences of violence had on their body image and weight. This had significant impacts on physical development and weight over time:

> I have gained a lot of weight since I was 12. I use food and eating to cope with stress and emotions, mainly caused from what I faced when I was younger. (Survey participant, female, 18, heterosexual)

> I had a very warped body image due to the emotional and verbal abuse surrounding my body weight and suffered from major weight problems. (Survey participant, female, 18, pansexual)

> [I] treated emotional issues by eating, leading me to gain weight. Also, self-harm leaving scars. (Survey participant, female, 20, bisexual)

> These things made me overeat. BAD. The violence starting from a young age eventually led me to an eating disorder. (Survey participant, female, 18, heterosexual)

As captured here, both weight gain and weight loss were cited as physical impacts of violence during childhood, as well as tendencies to use binge eating as a coping mechanism. There were no male survey respondents that specifically described impacts on their relationship with their body and with food. This observation is in line with wider research that has linked childhood experiences of abuse to eating disorders and a distorted body image, particularly for female survivors of childhood (sexual) abuse (see, for example, Caslini et al., 2016; Guillaume et al., 2016; Hemmingsson, 2018).

4.3 Cultural impacts

Young people were invited to describe whether the violence they experienced and the violence they used during their childhood had cultural impacts. There were no specific ethnic or cultural groups that featured more prominently than others in the open-text responses provided. For some young people their cultural references were closely interlinked with their religious upbringing or the religion of their parents or other family members.

The responses received demonstrated the challenges that young people experienced in understanding the extent to which their community and associated cultural values and practices were influential in the violence they experienced during their childhood. The difficulty that young people described in understanding how cultural or religious norms contributed to their experiences of violence is demonstrated in the following comments of two young women:

> The way I was treated made me hate the idea of Christianity (and all it's good values), because I saw none of that. This has made me question my sexuality (there's nothing wrong with being LGBT, but in this case I thought I liked girls because I was afraid of intimacy with men). It has also left me confused in my faith – whether or not I have one etc. (Survey participant, female, 17, heterosexual)

> Not knowing who I was and what my culture was. I didn't know how to distinguish my culture from trauma. (Survey participant, female, 18, heterosexual)

Several participants described withdrawing from their community as a result of the violence they experienced and a feeling that their families' cultural beliefs had in some way supported the use of violence in the home. As two participants described:

> I despise my family's culture as its tied to violence … families justify violence as normal. I don't follow any cultural practices or beliefs as a result. (Survey participant, female, 19, lesbian)

> My family is in a religious community that I now have a negative light on because of their actions towards me. (Survey participant, demi boy, 18, pansexual)

Other participants expressed similar views describing having a "negative light" on their culture, being "very judgemental" of their culture, and "hating" their culture as an impact of the violence they experienced within the family home. This view is captured in the following comment from one young woman:

> I hate how my culture views physical violence as necessary discipline. (Survey participant, female, 16, pansexual)

For some young people the disconnection with their culture was described as a consequence of the lost relationship with abusive family members. As one young woman commented:

> Less connected to my heritage and culture as of poor relationship with my father and his relationships with his family. (Survey participant, female, 19, unknown sexual identity)

These findings contribute new knowledge to an otherwise under-researched area of DFV, within which there is a need to better understand the ways in which culture intersects with experiences of and recovery from DFV.

4.4 Education and school engagement impacts

Experiencing and using DFV has significant impacts on education and school engagement for young Australians. This includes inability to attend school, poor performance at school, failure to form trusting relationships at school, and increased risk of exclusion from school. While some research suggests that school may be a safe place for young people experiencing DFV and other forms of child abuse that offers a form of respite during the day (Lloyd, 2018), our data predominantly highlights the adverse effects of traumatic childhood experiences on young people's ability to attend school and maintain adequate levels of school performance. On very rare occasions, respondents described how their experiences of family violence had led to them being even more engaged with school. For these young people education was viewed as a "way out" and as a safe place away from the violence. However, overwhelmingly the data painted a grim picture of the impact of experiencing family violence in the home upon school engagement and attainment.

Several participants described not wanting to attend school, or wanting to withdraw from school, due to fear of attending school with the visible marks of family violence. Young people described:

> I hardly went to school because of bruises or because I was too upset and anxious to attend. (Survey participant, female, 20, bisexual)

> There were times when my sister would injure my face and I didn't want to show that at school or I just didn't want to leave my room for fear they would destroy something while I'm gone. (Survey participant, female, 19, bi-curious)

> I skipped school after a bad fight left me with swollen eyes. (Survey participant, female, 20, pansexual)

The above experiences have been similarly documented for adult victim-survivors of DFV who may avoid attending work with visible injuries out of fear and shame associated with the stigma of being a victim of DFV, which in return may have adverse effects on their ability to maintain employment (see, for example, Slabbert, 2017; Swanberg & Logan, 2005).

A small number of young people also reflected that at times their parent had not let them attend school where they had visible injuries to avoid detection of their abusive behaviours. As one young woman described:

> One day I couldn't go to school because my mother didn't want people seeing the mark she left on my face. (Survey participant, female, 16, bisexual, First Nations)

Those young people who did attend school described a range of impacts that violence had on their ability to participate, engage and perform in school. The most common theme raised was the impact that experiences of violence had on the ability to focus and concentrate on school:

> Hard to concentrate, always thinking of old arguments/ fights which is distracting. (Survey participant, female, 20, bisexual)

> I stopped caring about my grades in school and was struggling with my mental state and but my mother kept putting me down for it, making it worse. (Survey participant, female, 19, heterosexual)

> Stopped caring about my grades as I was busy trying to pretend to be happy. (Survey participant, female, 17, heterosexual)

> I missed out on learning a lot because I was always so anxious and tense, I couldn't get information in or focus very well. (Survey participant, female, 16, bisexual)

By extension, a number of young people described the impact of not concentrating at school – commonly leading to disengagement, poor performance and in some cases being excluded from school, as captured in the following survey comments:

> I got kicked out of school because I couldn't talk and I could never focus at home. And even when I was at school I would just have huge breakdowns that last the whole day. And then when I got home it all happened over again, so I never got any time to learn anything. (Survey participant, female, 18, bisexual)

> I dropped out of school, my grades were horrible, my behaviour was atrocious. (Survey participant, female, 18, heterosexual)

> I got kicked out the end of grade 11 because I couldn't go one day without breaking down in the classroom or running off to a bathroom and crying for hours. (Survey participant, female, 18, bisexual)

Disengagement from school, including lack of attendance and school failure, has repeatedly been linked to childhood experiences of DFV and other forms of abuse (Byrne & Taylor, 2007; Houtepen et al., 2020).

There were a small number of young people who attributed their inability to attend school or exclusion from school to running away from home and, in some instances, experiences of homelessness as a result of violence in the home. As one young woman described:

> Yes, constantly getting yelled at hit emotionally abused has caused me to run away alone with none of my belongings so I have missed out on some school and also assignments. (Survey participant, female, 18, lesbian)

Experiences of homelessness and housing instabilities are a common factor in the lives of many young people with experiences of childhood trauma and may create further trauma in return (cf. Narendorf et al., 2018; Prock & Kennedy, 2020; Tyler & Schmitz, 2018). In 2018–19, over one third of people presenting to homelessness services were under the age of 18. Half of these people reported experiences of DFV (AIHW, 2019).

Discussion

The findings described throughout this report demonstrated that many survey respondents had used family violence in the home. In general, approximately one in five survey respondents said that they had used any form of family violence in the home, with the most common forms of abuse being verbal abuse and emotional/psychological abuse. However, a small but significant proportion of respondents also said they had threatened to kill family members, had strangled family members and/or had sexually abused them. Consistent with previous research, siblings and mothers were most at risk of being subjected to violence perpetrated by young people.

In our exploration of the factors that may have contributed to young people's use of violence, there was consistent and strong evidence of intergenerational transmission of violence in the home. This evidence was found through the analysis of the quantitative data; controlling for other factors, respondents who had been subjected to targeted abuse and witnessed violence between other family members were much more likely to use violence themselves, compared to respondents who did not experience child abuse. Crucially, evidence of the role of child abuse in the use of violence by young people was provided by the respondents themselves. This is a critical aspect, which raises implications for trauma-informed responses to AFV along with early intervention and primary prevention efforts around childhood experiences of DFV and other forms of childhood maltreatment. It also demonstrates the high level of insight that some young people may have into their own behaviours, and their ability to interrogate the factors that contribute to them. This emphasises the potential need for interventions targeted at young people who use violence in the home to be co-designed with this cohort to ensure that they target the factors which they believe contribute to their use of violence.

Evidence around the broader transmission of intergenerational violence is well established, suggesting that children growing up with parental DFV have an increased risk of experiencing and/or using DFV in their own adult intimate relationships (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015; Lisak et al., 1996). However, this study provides invaluable information to identify the relationship between childhood experiences of abuse, including experiences of DFV between other family members, and adolescents' use of violence against other family members in the home. Findings highlight the critical need for a trauma-informed lens in responses to young people using violence in the home, along with their family members.

Strengths and limitations

Drawing on a national sample of 5,000 young Australians, aged 16 to 20 years, this study provides important and new evidence around the nature, prevalence and context of Australian young people's use of violence in the home. One of its key strengths is the study centring the voices of young people to better understand their experiences and use of violence. This allows the identification of the nature and prevalence of young people's childhood experiences of abuse, their intersection with use of violence in the home and their impact on young people's social, emotional and physical wellbeing. Further, it provides insight into how young people make sense of their own use of violence in the home. In addition to adding new knowledge derived from the wider sample of young people, the data provides insight into the experiences of under-researched subpopulations of young people, including First Nations young people, young people from a NESB, young people living with disability, and young people identifying with diverse sexual and gender identities.

There are several limitations associated with this study that need to be acknowledged. The study used a non-probability sample, meaning although the sample was large, not everyone had an equal likelihood of being selected to participate in the research, and as such the findings may not be generalisable to the wider Australian population. For example, female respondents are overrepresented within the sample, as are those residing in major cities. While this study represents the most comprehensive national prevalence study of adolescent family violence conducted in Australia to date, future research could build upon this baseline by undertaking a nationally representative survey with an in-depth examination of the use and experiences of violence by diverse, under-researched populations, including First Nations young people, young people from a NESB, young people living with disability, and young people identifying with diverse sexual and gender identities. As these diverse subsamples of young people were small in the current study, all subcohort-specific findings must be interpreted with care. Further, the self-identified presence of disability needs to be regarded with care as

young people using AFV are frequently labelled, stigmatised and misdiagnosed with "disability" (Campbell et al., 2020).

Further, as this study is based on cross-sectional data, a causal relationship between the main variables of interest – experiences of child abuse and use of violence in the home – cannot be established. Relatedly, there may be unmeasured confounding factors that are relevant to young people's experiences of violence, such as alcohol use and psychological distress, which are not included in this study. This in part reflects the inability within one survey to capture all areas of interest and relationships, and also the desire by the research team and the advisory group to ensure the survey instrument was not too long for young participants. For this reason, decisions were made during the survey design phase to focus the survey questions directly on experiences and use of violence, rationale and impacts as well as help-seeking and support needs – the latter of which will be the focus of the second project report.

Another limitation arises from the open text responses of survey participants to questions around the perceived impact of violence on young people's lives. While the qualitative responses to the question on rationale specified "use of violence", the series of questions included in the survey asking young people to reflect on the impact of violence during their childhood at times does not allow for the analysis to discern whether these impacts stem from targeted experiences of abuse, their use of family violence, or a combination of the two. However, some of the qualitative responses provided by young people clearly articulate their perceived impact in relation to their experiences of violence and in other examples their use of violence.

Directions for future research

This study addresses a significant current knowledge gap and identifies opportunities for future research. Designed as Australia's first national prevalence study based on the voices of young people, it provides a more comprehensive picture than what has been identified previously through the analysis of administrative data (e.g. police). Future research should go beyond generating snapshot data on young people's use of violence and invest in longitudinal approaches to data collection with birth cohorts to establish patterns of child abuse and subsequent use of violence over time. Such an approach may benefit from incorporating primary carer data into the study design to capture adult and child voices, particularly around victimisation experiences (i.e. adult and child victim-survivors of DFV and their later use and experiences of other types of violence in the home). While capturing additional risk factors (e.g. substance use among young people) or administering psychometric measures identifying impact of child abuse (including experiences of DFV between other family members) on young people was outside the scope of this study, future research should consider expanding on this.

Further, the observations around young First Nations people's self-reported experiences of child maltreatment, experiences of adult DFV during childhood and use of AFV, including severe AFV but with the exception of frequent use of AFV, being similar to that reported by non-Indigenous young people is promising, given the well-documented overrepresentation of First Nations children and families in child protection statistics (AIHW, 2021). However, findings need to be interpreted with care given the small sample size of the First Nations subsample and future research should investigate self-reported experiences of child maltreatment, parental/carer DFV and use of AFV utilising a larger First Nations sample size to draw more conclusive comparisons.

Finally, we note that one of the findings observed in this study contradicts some of the wider research evidence regarding the gendered nature of DFV. Adult-focused DFV research has identified a clear gendered pattern of predominantly male-to-female perpetrated DFV (AIHW, 2019; Reeves et al., 2021). Further, administrative data on AFV suggests that young males are more likely to be identified as the "perpetrator" of AFV in police responses to affected families (Boxall & Morgan, 2020; Phillips & McGuiness, 2020). However, the latter may be the result of young males more commonly coming to the attention of police for their use of family violence than young females. Research examining patterns of adolescent dating violence, on the other hand, show gendered patterns that are more aligned with the findings presented here on young people's use of AFV. Kelley and colleagues (2015), for example, argue that abusive behaviours in adolescence are less gendered than in adult populations. Some research

further reveals that rates of self-reported use of dating violence among young females are higher than for young males (cf. Fedina et al., 2016; Manchikanti Gomez, 2011). Findings presented here show that after controlling for a range of other factors, including experiences of child abuse, young females in this sample were just as likely as young males to use family violence in the home. Patterns of AFV may therefore be more aligned with existing evidence around adolescents' use of dating violence than adults' use of IPV.

Further, the nature of AFV tends to differ from adult IPV, the latter being frequently utilised to control, intimidate and manipulate an intimate partner or ex-partner. Our findings suggest that young people's use of violence was reactive, retaliatory and/or what some participants described as expected sibling behaviour. It is therefore difficult to compare the gender symmetry observed here with the highly gendered patterns observed in adult intimate partner populations. In relation to the differences observed when compared to existing evidence derived from administrative data, these may be the result of self-reporting. Youth-focused research has previously identified discrepancies between self-reported offending behaviour (including violence) and information captured in administrative data, including in relation to onset of offending (see, inter alia, Payne & Piquero, 2017) and severity of offending, because only a small number of young offenders come to the attention of police and other criminal justice agencies. It is therefore possible that the nature and extent of AFV used by young females is less likely to attract the attention of formal interventions (e.g. police).

Future research should expand on gendered experiences and use of violence during childhood/adolescence to better understand gender patterns, including those beyond the heteronormative concept of gender, to examine the nature, extent, onset and context of young people's use of violence in the home along with the impacts perceived by those experiencing this violence.

Implications and recommendations for policy and practice

Findings presented here raise a number of implications for policy and practice. First and foremost, findings on the prevalence of child abuse observed in this study highlight the need for greater trauma-informed practice when responding to families affected by DFV, child abuse and neglect, and/or AFV. As observed in other research examining children's experiences of DFV (cf. Meyer et al., 2021; Meyer & Stambe, 2020), access to recovery support is critical to mitigate the risk of adverse short- and long-term outcomes for children (including later use of violence) but remains limited. The high rate of experiences of poly-victimisation during childhood in this sample along with young people's reflections on the impact of violence during childhood highlight the need for timely access to specialist recovery and support services for children and young peopled affected by DFV and other forms of child abuse. In addition, it highlights the need for child-centred risk and needs assessment in relation to experiences of DFV and other forms of child abuse that go beyond immediate risk of harm and extend to risk of adverse outcomes and related unique recovery support needs.

While limited to cross-sectional data, the significant overlap between childhood maltreatment and experiences of DFV with later use of AFV raises strong implications for prioritising primary prevention strategies to reduce the risk of adverse childhood experiences to start with. While recovery support is critical for young people with experiences of childhood trauma, investing in the prevention of DFV and other forms of childhood maltreatment constitutes an investment in improved short- and long-term outcomes for children, young people and families more broadly.

The strong correlation between childhood experiences of abuse and adolescents' later use of violence in the home further highlights the need for trauma-informed responses to young people using AFV to ensure meaningful responses that combine support as well recovery. Trauma-informed responses further need to be extended to family members affected by AFV. This should include recognition of the impact of experiencing AFV as well as recognition that parents/carers may have recovery needs in relation to past or

ongoing experiences of IPV given the high overlap between young people's experiences of DFV and their own use of AFV.

The finding that disability status was positively associated with use of violence in the home is difficult to unpack, primarily because the definition of disability was broad, including mental illness, chronic physical illnesses and other conditions, autism, learning difficulties and intellectual disabilities. While this approach is consistent with other comparable research (see for example Boxall & Morgan, 2021), using an aggregate measure such as this likely obscures variation in the links between specific forms of disability and use of violence in the home. The links between disability and use of violence by young people is an area for future research.

The role of intergenerational violence, and the complex needs of young people who use family violence in the home, must be reflected in the development and funding of specialist policy and practice responses. At present there are few services which provide tailored responses to AFV across Australian states and territories.

Conclusion

This study represents the first national prevalence study of AFV in Australia. Recent reviews conducted at the national and state level have found that evidence on the nature and prevalence of AFV remains limited and, as such, the support needs of young people using family violence are not well understood nor responded to (see, for example, RCFV, 2016; Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, 2015). The findings of this study directly address this identified gap in national knowledge by documenting the prevalence of AFV among a sample of over 5,000 young people residing in Australia.

This study offers new insights into the intersection between the use of violence in the home by young people, and their own experiences of child abuse. The findings are stark. Young people who had experienced child abuse were more likely to report that they had used violence against their family members. Indeed, the probability of using violence in the home was highest among young people who had both witnessed violence between other family members and been subjected to targeted violence during their childhood.

While it is essential that service system responses to children and young people are tailored to the complex needs of the family, it is notable that this study finds that, after controlling for other confounding factors, young people who had disability were more likely to use violence in the home when compared to respondents who did not have disability. Gender and sexual identity, Indigenous status and speaking a language other than English most of the time at home did not increase or decrease risk of using violence in the home. Notably, this study highlights the need for earlier interventions, finding children self-report having used physical forms of DFV by 10 years old. Service system interventions must be tailored to responding to this young cohort.

This study lends further weight to the critical call for Australian children and young people to be viewed and responded to as victims of domestic and family violence in their own right (see, inter alia, Fitz-Gibbon, Reeves et al., 2022). Recent national and state reviews have repeatedly found that children are often only responded to through the lens of a primary carer, most commonly the mother, with the Victorian RCFV (2016) describing children as the "silent victims" of family violence. By evidencing the confronting reality and high presence of violence in the lives of children and young people living in Australia, this study supports the timely development of trauma-informed and child-centric responses to all forms of domestic and family violence, including child abuse and AFV.

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APPENDIX A:

Participant explanatory statement

Explanatory statement Survey

Project ID: 27629

Project title: Survey of Adolescent Family Violence in Australia: Perspectives from young people

Chief Investigator's name:
Dr Kate Fitz-Gibbon
Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre
P: (03) 9905 2616
E: Kate.FitzGibbon@monash.edu

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before deciding whether or not to participate in this research. If you would like further information regarding any aspect of this project, you are encouraged to contact the Chief Investigator via the phone number or email address listed above.

What does the research involve?

The aim of this project is to investigate the prevalence of adolescent family violence (AFV) in Australia.

You will be asked to complete an online survey about your use of or exposure to domestic and family violence (DFV), and you experiences of services and support needs. The survey includes both closed and open ended questions that invite you to share your experiences. You will also be asked for some basic demographic information in the survey.

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes, although the length of responses is up to you.

Why were you chosen for this research?

You have been contacted as a panel member of the Online Research Unit (ORU), aged between 16-20 years old.

Source of funding

This research is funded by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety.

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing from the research

Once you have read this material, and if you are interested in participating in the research, you are invited to follow the web link provided to the online site to complete the survey. Before the commencement of the survey you will be ask to sign a consent form.

You can withdraw from the survey at any time prior to completing the survey or during your completion of the survey. Once you have completed the survey, your de-identified data will make withdrawal impossible. There are no consequences of your decision not to participate, or to withdraw at any time.

Possible benefits and risks to participants

Benefits

This project will address a national knowledge gap about the nature and prevalence of AFV, and support needs of young people in Australia. Findings will inform policy decisions on the number and type of support services needed and allocation of resources for responding to this form of DFV. The in-depth evidence to be gained on the nature of violence used by young people within the home as well as exposure to DFV during childhood will ensure, for the first time, that policy makers across Australia have the evidence required to design tailored, client-centred responses to different communities of young people using and exposed to DFV. This evidence will be contextualised with an understanding of young people's experiences accessing supports and their expressed service needs. Importantly, the survey sample will be representative of the diverse Australian community, ensuring the findings include insights into experiences and service needs of marginalised young people.

Risks

You may feel discomfort or distress while completing this survey. We have provided a list of support services you can contact if you experience any discomfort or distress from participating in the survey. You are able to skip any questions you do not wish to respond to, or withdraw from the survey at any time prior to completing the survey or during your completion of the survey.

Services on offer if adversely affected

1800 Respect

Confidential information, counselling and support service. 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Information & Referrals. 24/7 Counselling. 24/7 Web Chat.

P: 1800 737 732

www.1800respect.org.au

Kids Helpline

Anonymous, confidential telephone counselling service for children and young people

P: 1800 551 800
Hours: 24 hours, 7 days a week

www.kidshelp.com.au

Youth Support Service

P: 1800 458 685
Hours: 24 hours

www.ysas.org.au

Kildonan Uniting Care

P: (03) 8401 0100 or 1800 002 992 (toll free)

www.kildonan.org.au/programs-and-services/child-youth-and-family-support/family-violence/adolescent-violence/support-for-adolescents/

Culturally relevant services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Djirra

Djirra provides services across Victoria with offices in metropolitan and regional areas. Djirra will provide both telephone and face to face legal and non-legal support to Aboriginal people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence.

P: 1800 105 303

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

djirra.org.au/contact-us

Mudgin-Gal

Mudgin-Gal's DV worker provides general advice, support and guidance for anyone experiencing domestic or family violence.

P: (02) 9689 1173

www.mudgin-gal.org.au/core-services/domestic-violence-support

Yorgum Healing Services

Yorgum offers all Aboriginal people and their families autonomous, community-based healing, counselling, support and referral services that are culturally secure, trauma-informed and works within an Aboriginal Family Worldview.

Freecall: 1800 469 371 or P**:** (08) 9218 9477

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Payment

ORU may offer you an incentive to participate in this survey, based on your membership on its online panel. For further details, please contact ORU directly.

Confidentiality

Your participation in the survey is confidential. We do not ask for any identifying information. You will not be individually identified in any published material arising from this study. The survey is being conducted using ORU's survey software and all responses are completely anonymous.

There is a quick exit button in the survey if you need to exit the survey quickly while completing it. The survey software will not collect your IP address. If you want to use the save and continue function you will need to return to the survey on the same computer and internet browser (i.e. Chrome, Safari) to finish it. The save and continue function works by using a cookie on your computer and does not compromise you anonymity.

Storage of data

Survey responses will be collected by ORU and stored on secure network drives with password protection and 2 factor authentication requirements. All project records are retained by ORU for a minimum of 12 months before being backed up. Secure document destruction companies are used for destruction of project records and sensitive material (both hard copy and soft). Access is limited to personnel staff of The ORU.

After collecting the survey responses, ORU will transfer the data to the Monash research team via a password protected system, Kiteworks.

Survey responses and resulting data will be stored by the Monash research team in password protected electronic storage folder that can only be accessed by members of the research team. All data will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study.

Use of data for other purposes

Survey responses and resulting data may be used by the Monash research team in future research projects related to AFV. Data may also be shared with the funder (ANROWS) at their request. Only aggregate de-identified data may be used for other projects where ethics approval has been granted.

Results

Any publications will be made available via:

- the Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre website: https://www.monash.edu/arts/gender-and-family-violence/home
- Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety website: https://www.anrows.org.au/

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC):

Executive Officer

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Room 111, Chancellery Building D,
26 Sports Walk, Clayton Campus
Research Office
Monash University VIC 3800

P: +61 3 9905 2052
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APPENDIX B:

Survey instrument

Section A: About you

1. **How old are you?**

   [insert numerical entry] – note: If younger than 16 and/or older than 20, they are ineligible to complete the survey. Terminate survey and move straight to thank you note at end.

2. **What sex were you assigned at birth?**
   - Male
   - Female
   - Prefer not to say

3. **With which gender do you identify?**
   (select all that apply)
   - Male
   - Female
   - Trans Man
   - Trans Woman
   - Trans (unspecified)
   - Gender Questioning
   - Nonbinary
   - Brotherboy
   - Sistergirl
   - Genderqueer
   - Agender
   - Self describe: (free text box appears is generated)
   - Prefer not to say

4. **What is your sexuality?**
   - Bisexual
   - Gay
   - Lesbian
   - Heterosexual
   - Pansexual
   - Queer
   - Asexual
   - Aromantic
   - Unknown
   - Does not identify with any sexuality
   - Self describe: (free text box is generated)
   - Prefer not to say

5. **Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?**
   - Yes – Aboriginal
   - Yes – Torres Strait Islander
   - Yes – Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
   - No
   - Prefer not to say

6. **In what country were you born?**
   - Australia
   - England
   - China
   - India
   - New Zealand
   - Philippines
   - Vietnam
   - South Africa
   - Italy
   - Malaysia
   - Sri Lanka
   - other (please specify) - (open text box)

7. Do you usually speak English at home?

- Yes
- No

8. Apart from English, what other language/s do you speak at home?

[open text box]

9. What is your highest educational achievement?

- Completed primary school
- Completed year 10
- Completed year 11
- Completed year 12
- A trade, certificate or diploma
- Other (please specify) - [open text box]

10. Are you currently enrolled in a tertiary/university degree?

- Yes
- No

11. Do you live with? (please select all that apply)

- a physical impairment
- a visual impairment
- intellectual disability
- a specific learning disability (such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia and other learning impairments)
- autism spectrum disorder
- attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
- an acquired brain injury
- poor mental health affecting day to day functioning,
- other (please specify)
- None of the above

12. In what state/territory do you live? (please select)

- Victoria
- Tasmania
- Australian Capital Territory
- Western Australia
- New South Wales
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Northern Territory

Section B: About your family

13. What are your current living arrangements? (select all that apply)

- Living with family
- Living with chosen family
- Living with friends
- Living on my own
- Living in shared housing
- Living in out of home care
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Living in crisis accommodation
- Other (please specify)

14. Do you currently live with/ do any of the following currently live with you? (select all that apply)

- birth mother
- birth father
- birth parent
- step father/ parent's partner
- step mother/ parent's partner
- extended family/ kin
- adopted mother
- adopted father
- foster carer
- friend
- younger sibling(s)
- older sibling(s)
- grandparent(s)
- member of a chosen family (please specify): (open text box)
- other (please specify): (open text box)

15. Do you have any siblings?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many siblings do you have?

[numeric entry]

Please specify brother or sister and age for each sibling

[open text box]

Section D: Your experience of violence between other family members

16. During your childhood (up until and including 17 years of age), did you ever experience any of the following behaviours between other family members?

This may include seeing things happen, overhearing things that may have happened in a different room and/ or seeing the aftermath of things having happened while you were out. Please select all that apply.

a. Physical violence (e.g. hitting, slapping, pushing, punching, kicking)
b. Property damage (e,g. someone's property, belongings being destroyed as an intimidation or punishment tactic)
c. Verbal abuse (including yelling, swearing)
d. Emotional/psychological abuse (e.g. someone being put down, being told they're useless/stupid/ugly)
e. Threats to harm/hurt the other person
f. Threats to kill the other person
g. Threats to harm/hurt someone close to the other person, including a pet, family member or friend
h. Forcing another family member to have sex or doing something sexually to them against their will
i. Strangulation (e.g. someone being choked, suffocated or grabbed by their throat, being pinned down or against the wall by their throat)
j. LGBTQ/identity-/sexuality-based abuse, including family exile and exclusion
k. gender identity-based abuse, discrimination and prejudice
l. Other behaviours, please describe: (open text box)

Follow up questions under each form of violence in which the respondent reports an experience:

17. How often did this happen?

- once or twice
- less than monthly
- monthly
- weekly
- daily or almost daily.

18. How old were you when the behaviour started?

[numeric entry]

Unsure - *If the participant is unsure, the follow up question is* ' would you say you were a) in high school, b) in primary school, c) not in school yet, d) unsure

19. Is this behaviour still occurring between those family members?

- Yes
- No

If no - How old were you when this behaviour last happened?

[numeric entry]

Unsure - *If the participant is unsure, the follow up is* ' would you say you were a) in high school, b) in primary school, c) not in school yet, d) unsure

20. Which members of your family were/ are involved in this type of family violence? (please select as many as relevant)

- birth mother
- birth father
- birth parent
- step father/ parent's partner
- step mother/ parent's partner
- adopted mother
- adopted father
- foster carer
- younger sibling(s)

- older sibling(s)
- grandparent(s)
- member of a chosen family (specify): (open text box)
- other family member, please describe: (open text box)

21. Was the behaviour between other family members ever reported to the police?

- Yes – please describe by who and the outcome of that reporting [open text box]
- No

22. Did you tell any of the following about your experience of observing this behaviour between other family members? (please select as many as relevant)

- My brother
- My sister
- My mother
- My father
- My parent (including adopted and foster parent)
- Friend
- Grandparent
- Other family member
- School teacher
- School counsellor
- Other community member
- Youth support worker/counsellor
- Member of a LGBTQ+ organisation
- Specialist family violence support service or program
- Child and youth mental health worker
- Child protection
- cultural mentor (unrelated aunty/uncle)
- community elder
- sports coach
- Other person, please specify (open text box)
- I didn't tell anyone

If you did not tell anyone, what were your reasons for not telling anyone about your experience of this behaviour between other family members?

- I was afraid people would not believe me.
- I didn't think anyone could help me.
- I was afraid things might get worse if I told someone about the use of family violence between other family members.
- I didn't want to get the person(s) using family violence into trouble.
- Other – please specify:

If yes to Q29, of the people you told about your experience, who did you find <u>most helpful</u> and why?

[open text box]

If yes to Q29, of the people you told about your experience, who did you find <u>least helpful</u> and why?

[open text box]

Section E: Your experience of violence in the home

23. During your childhood (up until and including 17 years of age), did you ever experience any of the following from someone in your family/kin or in your home? Please select all that apply.

a. Physical violence (e.g. someone hitting, slapping, pushing, punching, kicking you)
b. Property damage (e.g. someone destroying your property, belongings as an intimidation or punishment tactic)
c. Verbal abuse (including someone yelling or swearing at you, or calling you names)
d. Emotional/psychological abuse (e.g. being put down, being told you're useless/stupid/ugly)
e. Threats to harm/hurt you
f Threats to kill you
g. Threats to harm/hurt someone close to you, including a pet, family member or friend
h. touched your private parts
i. made you touch their private parts
j. forced you to have sex
k. Strangulation (e.g. being choked, suffocated or grabbed by your throat, being pinned down or against the wall by your throat)
l. LGBTQ/identity-/sexuality-based abuse, including family exile and exclusion
m. gender identity-based abuse, discrimination and prejudice
n. other behaviours, please describe: (open text box)

Follow up questions under each form of violence in which the respondent reports an experience

24. How often did this happen?

- once or twice
- less than monthly
- monthly
- weekly
- daily or almost daily.

25. How old were you when the behaviour started?

[numeric entry]

Unsure - *If the participant is unsure, the follow up question is* ' would you say you were a) in high school, b) in primary school, c) not in school yet, d) finished school, e) unsure

26. Is this behaviour still occurring towards you?

- Yes
- No

If no - **How old were you when this behaviour last happened?**

[numeric entry]

Unsure - *If the participant is unsure, the follow up question is* ' would you say you were a) in high school, b) in primary school, c) not in school yet, d) finished school, e) unsure

27. Which members of your family did you experience this behaviour from? (please select as many as are relevant)

- birth mother
- birth father
- birth parent
- step father/ parent's partner
- step mother/ parent's partner
- adopted mother
- adopted father
- foster carer
- younger sibling(s)
- older sibling(s)
- grandparent(s)
- member of a chosen family (specify): (open text box)
- other family member, please describe: (open text box)

28. Was your experience of violence ever reported to the police?

- Yes – please describe by who and the outcome of that reporting [open text box]
- No

29. Did you tell any of the following people about your experience of violence? (select as many as relevant)

- My brother
- My sister
- My mother
- My father
- My parent (including adopted and foster parent)
- Friend
- Grandparent
- Other family member
- School teacher
- School counsellor
- Other community member
- Youth support worker/counsellor
- Member of a LGBTQ+ organisation
- specialist family violence support service or program
  Child and youth mental health worker
- Cultural mentor (unrelated aunty/uncle)
- Community elder
- Sports coach
- Other person, please specify (open text box)
- I didn't tell anyone

If you did not tell anyone, what were your reasons for not telling anyone?

- I was afraid people would not believe me.
- I didn't think anyone could help me.
- I didn't understand what was happening to me was wrong
- I didn't understand what was happening to me was not my fault
- I was afraid things might get worse if I told someone about my experiences
- I didn't want to get the person(s) using family violence into trouble.
- Other – please specify:

If yes to 38, of the people you told about your experience, which ones did you find <u>most helpful</u> and why?

[open text box]

If yes to 38, of the people you told about your experience, which ones did you find <u>least helpful</u> and why?

[open text box]

Section C: Experience of using family violence in the home

30. Have you ever used any of the following behaviours towards another family member (e.g. parents, carers, siblings)?

a. Physical violence (e.g. hitting, slapping, pushing, punching, kicking)
b. Property damage (e.g. destroying someone's property, belongings as an intimidation or punishment tactic)
c. Verbal abuse (including yelling, swearing)
d. Emotional/psychological abuse (e.g. putting someone down, telling them they're useless/ stupid/ugly)
e. Threated to harm/hurt another family member
f. Threated to kill another family member
g. Threated to harm/hurt someone close to your family member, including a pet or friend
h. touched family member's private parts
i. forced a family member to have sex
j. Strangulation (including choking or suffocating someone, grabbing someone by their throat, pinning someone down or against the wall by their throat)
k. LGBTQ/identity-/sexuality-based abuse, including family exile and exclusion
l. gender identity-based abuse, discrimination and prejudice
m) other behaviours, please describe: (open text box)

Follow up questions under each experience in which the respondent reports a behaviour:

31. How often did this happen?

- Once or twice
- Less than monthly
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily or almost daily

32. How old were you when the behaviour started?
[numeric entry]

Unsure - *If the participant is unsure, the follow up question is* ' would you say you were a) in high school, b) in primary school, c) not in school yet, d) finished school, e) unsure

33. Is this behaviour still occurring?

- Yes
- No

If no – then follow up question - **How old were you when this behaviour last happened?**

[numeric entry]

Unsure - If the participant is unsure, the follow up is ' would you say you were a) in high school, b) in primary school, c) not in school yet, d) unsure

34. Which members of your family have you used this behaviour towards? (please select as many as are relevant)

- birth mother
- birth father
- step father/ parent's partner
- step mother/ parent's partner
- adopted mother
- adopted father
- foster carer
- younger sibling(s)
- older sibling(s)
- grandparent(s)
- member of a chosen family (specify): (open text box)
- other family member, please describe: (open text box)

35. Were there particular factors or circumstances that occurred in the immediate lead up to those behaviours? (for example, an argument with a family member or between other family members, other current stress factors)

- Yes, please describe [open text box]
- No

36. Was your use of violence in the home ever reported to the police?

- Yes, please describe by who and the outcome of that reporting [open text box]
- No

If yes, did the report to the police result in you [please select all that apply]

a. Being listed on an intervention order
b. Being charged with a criminal offence
c. Being prosecuted for a criminal offence
d. Being convicted of a criminal offence

37. Did you tell anyone about your behaviour in the home? (please select as many as relevant)

- My brother
- My sister
- My mother
- My father
- Friend
- Grandparent
- Other family member
- School teacher
- School counsellor
- Youth support worker/counsellor
- Member of a LGBTQ+ organisation
- Specialist family violence support service, program or practitioner
- Child and youth mental health worker
- Child protection
- cultural mentor (unrelated aunty/uncle)
- community elder
- sports coach
- Other person, please specify (open text box)
- I didn't tell anyone

If any of the above options are selected at Q20, follow up with:
Of the people you told about your experience, which ones did you find <u>most</u> helpful and why?
[open ended text box]

If any of the options are selected at Q20, follow up with:
Of the people you told about your experience, which ones did you find <u>least</u> helpful and why?

Impact of the violence in the home [for participants who respond yes to Q15 and Q22 and/or Q29

38. What impact did your experience(s) of violence in the home have on you?

- Emotional impact/ consequences yes/ no (if yes, please describe – open text box)
- Physical impact/ consequences yes/ no (if yes, please describe – open text box)
- Social impact/ consequences yes/ no (if yes, please describe – open text box)
- Educational impact/ consequences yes/ no (if yes, please describe – open text box)
- Cultural impact/ consequences yes/ no (if yes, please describe – open text box)
- Other impact yes/no (if yes, please describe – open text box)

39. Did your experience of violence at home impact on your participation in school/ school attendance and/or university?

- Yes, please describe impact [open text box]
- No

40. What do you think could have helped you during your experience of violence in the home?

[open text response]

41. What do you believe are the factors, if any, that led to your use of violence?

[open text response]

42. Do you believe there is a relationship between the violence you experienced during your childhood and your use of violence within the home?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe the relationship between your experiences of violence in the home and your own behaviours.

[open text response]

43. What other factors do you think drove the violence you experienced/in your home?

[open text response]

Closing demographic questions

44. In what postcode do you live?

[numeric entry]

45. On a scale 1 – 7 how comfortable did you feel answering this questionnaire?

1 (very uncomfortable) – 7 (very comfortable)

46. On a scale 1 – 7 how difficult was this questionnaire to answer?

1 (very easy) – 7 (very difficult)

Thank you very much for participating in this survey. We are extremely grateful for your time and sharing your experiences.

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AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY

to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children