

**Investigation into Domestic Violence
Exposure, Disclosure Rates, and Mental Health
Sequelae**

Statement of Purpose:

To investigate the prevalence of domestic violence exposure (DVE) in the Central Detroit Christian Community Development Corporation's summer employees and its association with depression rates, substance use rates, and disclosure patterns.

Methods:

Utilized questions from the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ), Second Revision to investigate DVE rates. Additional questions were added to explore rates of disclosure from previous experiences, as well as hypothetical disclosure rates. The CRAFFT substance use screening tool was used to screen for substance use. The PHQ-A was used to screen for depression among the participants. All survey questions were combined into a comprehensive, anonymous survey (Appendix A).

Questions from the JVQ were divided into Child Maltreatment, Family Violence Exposure, Sexual Violence Exposure, and Indirect Victimization/Witness. Percentages of exposure were determined for each category, as well as for any exposure to domestic violence.

PHQ-A scores were categorized into not, mildly, moderately, or severely depressed based on the score totals. Responses were grouped based on their answers to the CRAFFT or PHQ-A results and two sample t-tests were used to determine any significant association of these variables with DVE.

To analyze the disclosure rates of DVE, questions related to disclosure were divided into categories of "friends", "family", and "other adult authority". Percentages of exposure in each category were determined as well as likelihood of disclosing to one category given disclosure to another category.

Results:

The percentages of DVE found from the survey are in Appendix B. Response rates for the PHQ-A and CRAFFT questionnaire are given in Appendix E and F, respectively. No significant association was found between depression score and degree of DVE. Findings suggest a possible association ($p = 0.09$) between recent substance use and DVE but this requires further study due to high variance within the sample population. Having ridden in a car with a driver who was intoxicated at the time was associated with a 1.4 point increase in DVE ($p = 0.018$). These findings are summarized in Appendix C.

For disclosure rates, of those exposed to DV, 63.6% disclosed to family members, 58.1% disclosed to friends, and 51.5% disclosed to other adult authority figures. While our sample size may limit significance, it can be noted that the vast majority of those who reported to friends and authority figures also reported to a family member. Disclosure rates to each category are presented in Appendix D.

Discussion:

Exposure and Disclosure Data Discussion

These results indicate a high prevalence of DVE in the community served by the CDC-CDC. The high prevalence of domestic violence (DV) exposure among urban youths presents a significant opportunity for professionals in these communities. Overall, reporting behavior implies the *strong importance of family*. Adolescents in the CDC-CDC community tend to disclose to family members first, so the home may be the enabling environment providing the necessary structure to promote disclosure. Perhaps the best screening lies in investigating the family and promoting a supportive family environment in which adolescents feel they can disclose their experiences. Instead of first asking if a patient is a victim of domestic violence, health professionals or adult authority confidantes in general might elicit more useful responses if they ask if the adolescent has a trusted family member to go to if they felt unsafe in their home. Education for family members around eliciting exposure information may also serve as effective primary interventions in communities with strong rates of DV exposure. Future studies regarding the specifics of disclosure within urban families and the efficacy of education-based intervention would shed additional light on how to both increase disclosure rates and encourage appropriate actions to be taken post-disclosure.

Correlation with Depression/Substance Use Data Discussion

The association of having ridden in a car with an intoxicated driver with increased DVE indicates increased utility of the CRAFFT questionnaire as a screening tool for DVE. If, for instance, an individual screens positive for having driven in a car with an intoxicated driver, these findings indicate that further investigation into the person's safety at home should be performed. Finally, the lack of significant association between DVE, depression scores, and recent substance use are difficult to fully explain, but may indicate the resilience present in this population. Future work in this area should include further investigation of the CRAFFT as an indirect screening tool for DVE and of associations between substance use and DVE with different and larger sample populations.

Appendix

A)

INSTRUCTIONS

We are going to ask about some things you may have experienced in your lifetime. Before we begin, we want to remind you that your answers will be kept completely private. This survey is completely anonymous--there is no possible way for anybody to match a survey to the person who filled it out.

If you are confused about what a question is asking please raise your hand and we will come help you understand the question. We will not ask what your answer is to the question, we will simply explain what the question means.

Please try to answer every question on the survey completely truthfully. This will help us get the best results! However, remember that you may stop taking the survey at any time.

When you are finished, place the survey face down in the box. Find your name on the list next to the box and put a checkmark in the box next to your name.

SECTION ONE: EXPOSURE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Please circle either “yes” or “no” for the following questions. If there is a particular question that you don't want to answer, that's O.K.

1. Not including spanking on your bottom, at any time in your life, did a grown-up in your life hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt you in any way?

- A) Yes
- B) No

2. At any time in your life, did you get scared or feel really bad because grown-ups in your life called you names, said mean things to you, or said they didn't want you?

- A) Yes
- B) No

3. When someone is “neglected”, it means that the grown-ups in their life didn't take care of them the way they should. They might not get them enough food, take them to the doctor when they are sick, or make sure they have a safe place to stay. At any time in your life, were you neglected?

- A) Yes
- B) No

4. Sometimes a family fights over where a child should live. At any time in your life, did a parent take, keep, or hide you to stop you from being with another parent?

A) Yes

B) No

5. At any time in your life, did one of your parents threaten to hurt another parent and it seemed they might really get hurt?

A) Yes

B) No

6. At any time in your life, did one of your parents, because of an argument, break or ruin anything belonging to another parent, punch the wall, or throw something?

A) Yes

B) No

7. At any time in your life, did one of your parents get pushed by another parent?

A) Yes

B) No

8. At any time in your life, did one of your parents get hit or slapped by another parent?

A) Yes

B) No

9. At any time in your life, did one of your parents get kicked, choked, or beat up by another parent?

A) Yes

B) No

10. Now we want to ask you about fights between any grown-ups and teens, not just between your parents. At any time in your life, did any grown-up or teen who lives with you push, hit, or beat up someone else who lives with you, like a parent, brother, grandparent, or other relative?

A) Yes

B) No

11. At any time in your life, did a grown-up you know touch your private parts when they shouldn't have or make you touch their private parts? Or did a grown-up you know force you to have sex?

A) Yes

B) No

12. At any time in your life, did you SEE a parent get pushed, slapped, hit, punched, or beat up by another parent, or their boyfriend or girlfriend?

A) Yes

B) No

13. At any time in your life, did you SEE a parent hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt your brothers or sisters, not including a spanking on the bottom?

A) Yes

B) No

SECTION TWO: DISCLOSURE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

COMPLETE ONLY IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO ANY QUESTIONS IN SECTION ONE

If you have answered "yes" to any of the above questions, please complete this section.

When you have seen or experienced any violence in your home, did you tell any of these people:

1. A parent (or ANOTHER parent if one parent did this)

A) Yes

B) No

2. A different family member

A) Yes (Who? _____)

B) No

3. A teacher, counselor, or other adult at your school

A) Yes

B) No

4. A police officer or some other law official

A) Yes

B) No

5. A friend or peer

A) Yes

B) No

6. Did you talk with someone other than friends or family about what happened?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Counselor, psychologist, social worker, therapist of any type
- Minister or clergy of any type
- Doctor/other health professional
- CDC-CDC staff
- Another adult: _____

***If you answered “yes” to any of the above questions:**

7. Was any action taken by the person you told? **(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

- Listening and Understanding
- Alerting another adult
- Talking to family members involved in the experience
- Alerting Child Protective Services or other social service
- Alerting the police, other legal action
- Other: _____
- No action was taken at all

COMPLETE ONLY IF YOU ANSWERED “NO” TO ALL QUESTIONS IN SECTION ONE

You may not have answered “yes” to any of the questions about violence in the home.

If you were to see or experience any violence in your home, WOULD you tell any of these people:

1. A parent (or ANOTHER parent if one parent did this)

- A) Yes
- B) No

2. A different family member

- A) Yes (Who? _____)
- B) No

3. A teacher, counselor, or other adult at your school

- A) Yes
- B) No

4. A police officer or some other law official

A) Yes

B) No

5. A friend or peer

A) Yes

B) No

6. WOULD you talk with someone other than friends or family about what had happened?

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Counselor, psychologist, social worker, therapist of any type
- Minister or clergy of any type
- Doctor/other health professional
- CDC-CDC staff
- Another adult: _____

SECTION THREE: MOOD CHANGES AND RECENT FEELINGS

How often have you been bothered by each of the following things during the past 7 days? For each item, put an "X" in the box beneath the answer that best describes how you have been feeling.

		(0) Not at all	(1) Several days	(2) More than half the days	(3) Nearly every day
1.	Feeling down, depressed, irritable, or hopeless?				
2.	Little interest or pleasure in doing things?				
3.	Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much?				
4.	Poor appetite, weight loss, or overeating?				
5.	Feeling tired, or having little energy?				
6.	Feeling bad about yourself—or feeling that you are a failure, or that you have let yourself or your family down?				
7.	Trouble concentrating on things like school work, reading, or watching TV?				
8.	Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or the opposite—being so fidgety or restless that you were moving around a lot more than usual?				
9.	Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way?				

1. Have you ever talked to a counselor or social worker about changes in your mood?

- A) Yes
- B) No

2. Have you ever considered talking to a counselor or social worker about changes in your mood?

- A) Yes
- B) No

3. With 1 being very uncomfortable and 10 being very comfortable, please circle the number that shows how comfortable you would be in talking with a counselor or social worker about changes in your mood:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Has a doctor ever told you that you were depressed, anxious, or had any other mental health concern?

- A) Yes
- B) No

SECTION FOUR: QUESTIONS ABOUT SUBSTANCE ABUSE

1. Have you ever ridden in a CAR driven by someone (including yourself) who was “high” or had been using alcohol or drugs?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please answer each of the following questions honestly, remember your answers will be kept completely confidential and anonymous. Ask us any questions if the directions are confusing to you.

2. Do you ever use alcohol or drugs to RELAX, feel better about yourself, or fit in?

- a. Yes
- b. No

3. Do you ever use alcohol or drugs while you are by yourself or alone?

- a. Yes
- b. No

4. Do you ever FORGET things that you did while using alcohol or drugs?

- a. Yes
- b. No

5. Do your FAMILY or FRIENDS ever tell you that you should cut down on your drinking or drug use?

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. Have you ever gotten into TROUBLE while you were using alcohol or drugs?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If you answered "YES" to any of the above questions,

During the PAST 12 MONTHS, did you:

7. Drink any alcohol (more than a few sips)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

8. Smoke any marijuana or hashish?

- a. Yes
- b. No

9. Use anything else to get high (illegal drugs, over the counter and prescription drugs, and things you sniff/huff)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

During the PAST 2 WEEKS, did you:

10. Drink any alcohol (more than a few sips)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

11. Smoke any marijuana or hashish?

- a. Yes
- b. No

12. Use anything else to get high (illegal drugs, over the counter and prescription drugs, and things you sniff/huff)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

B)

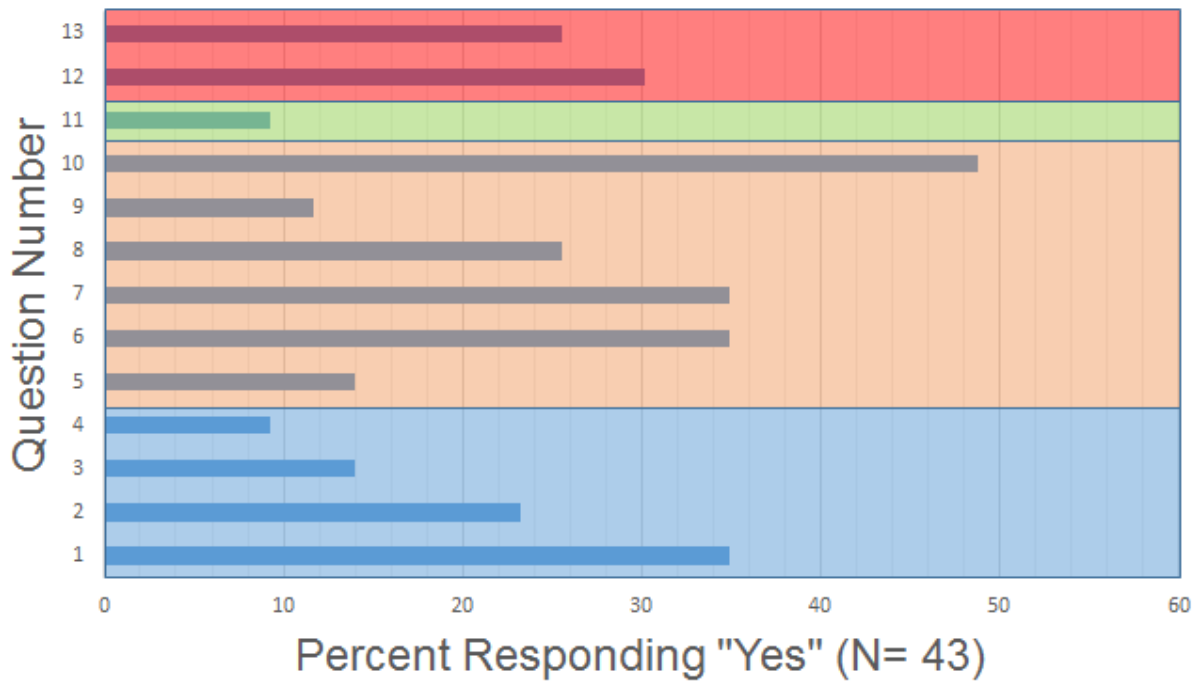


Figure 1. Responses to the JVQ-A questionnaire. (A) Illustrates the positive response rate in each category of DVE. (B) Provides example questioning from each section. 76.7% of participants reported some kind of DVE in their lifetime.

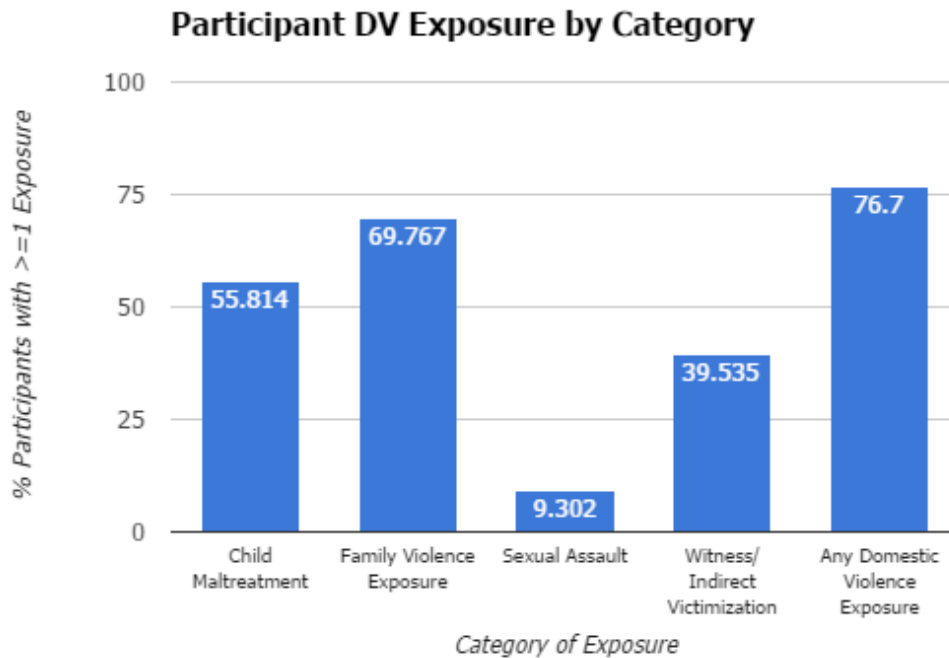


Figure 2. Percentages of exposure in each category consistent with the JVQ-A.

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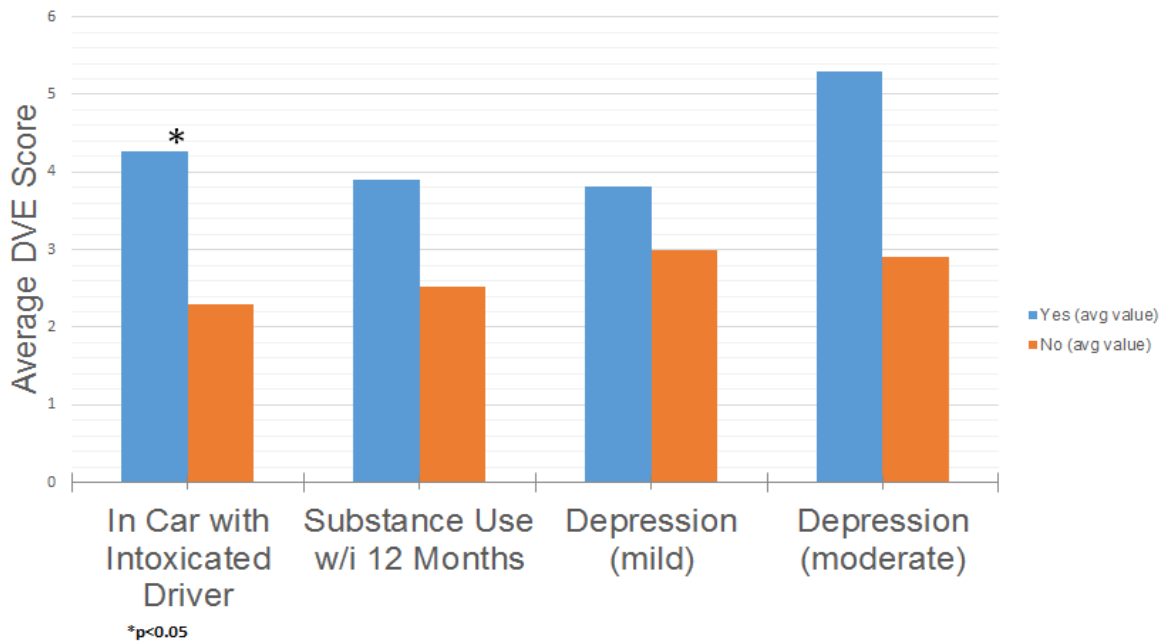


Figure 3. Mean DVE scores of participants in various groupings. Responses were grouped based on whether they claimed to have ridden in a car with a driver who was intoxicated, had used illicit substances within the last 12 months, and on their depression symptomatology as determined by the PHQ-A. Two sample t-tests were used to determine statistical significance of the differences found between each of the means.

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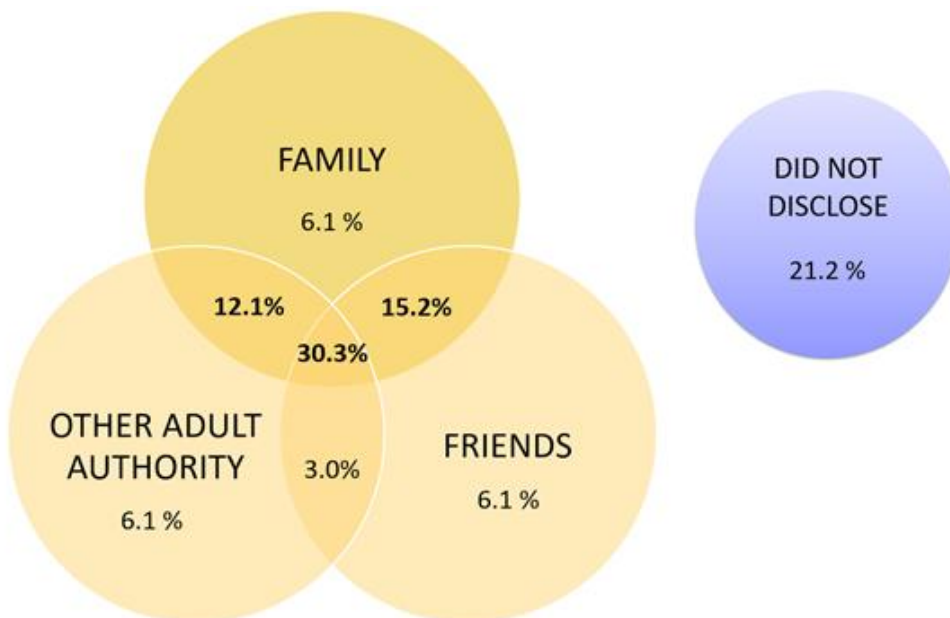


Figure 4. 57% of respondents disclosed DV exposure to Family AND at least one other category.

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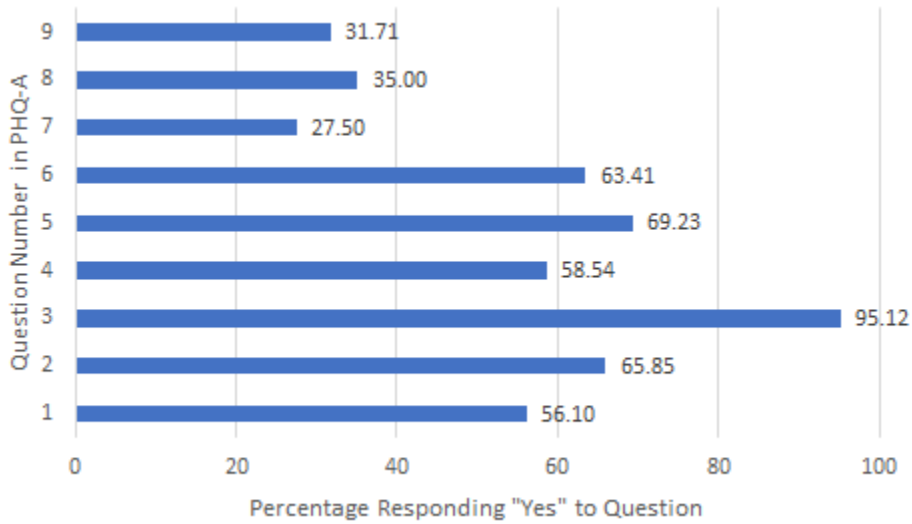


Figure 5. Responses to PHQ-A questions given in section 3 of the survey.

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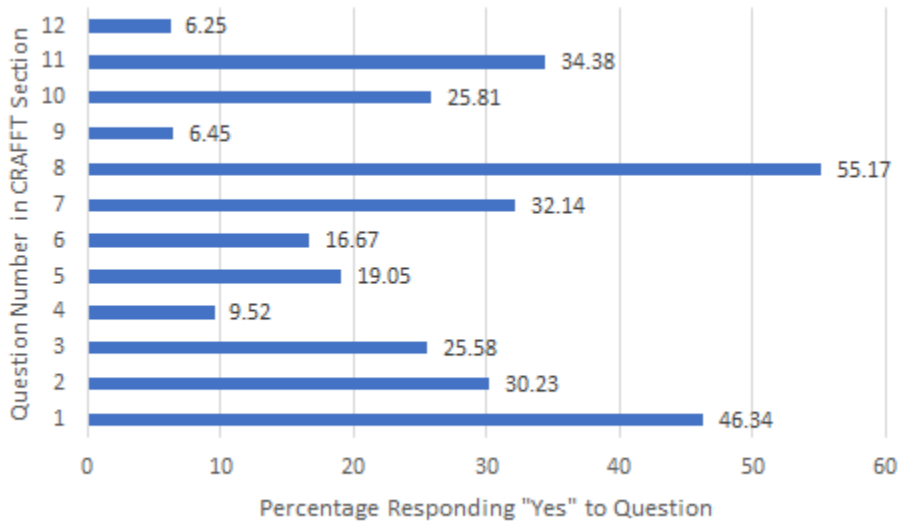


Figure 6. Responses to CRAFFT questions given in section 4 of the survey.