

DOES IT HELP OR DOES IT HURT?

Canadians' opinions on Clare's law as a mechanism for reducing domestic violence

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WHAT IS CLARE'S LAW?

“Domestic Violence Disclosure Framework” - Right to Ask & Right to Know

Named after Clare Wood, who was murdered by her partner in England in 2009

Intention is to reduce domestic violence by providing individuals with information regarding risk

Implemented in UK during 2014; versions proposed in Australia in 2015; versions adopted in some Canadian provinces in 2020 (Alberta, NFLD, Saskatchewan)

PURPOSE & RATIONALE

Very little empirical evidence to support Clare's Law (Grace 2019; Wangman 2016)

70% of people in Canada who experience domestic violence (DV) do not report it to the police (Burczycka & Conroy, 2018)

Alberta: April 2021 to Jan. 2022: only 159 of 372 applicants received information (Alberta Community and Social Services, 2022)

Legislation may have unintended consequences:

Victim blaming post-disclosure (Fitz-Gibbon & Walklate, 2017)

Failure to report subsequent violence (Walklate et al., 2018)

False sense of security due to “insufficient information” (Hadjimatheou & Grace, 2020).

THE CURRENT STUDY

How do Canadians feel about Clare's Law?

What is their knowledge of this legislation?

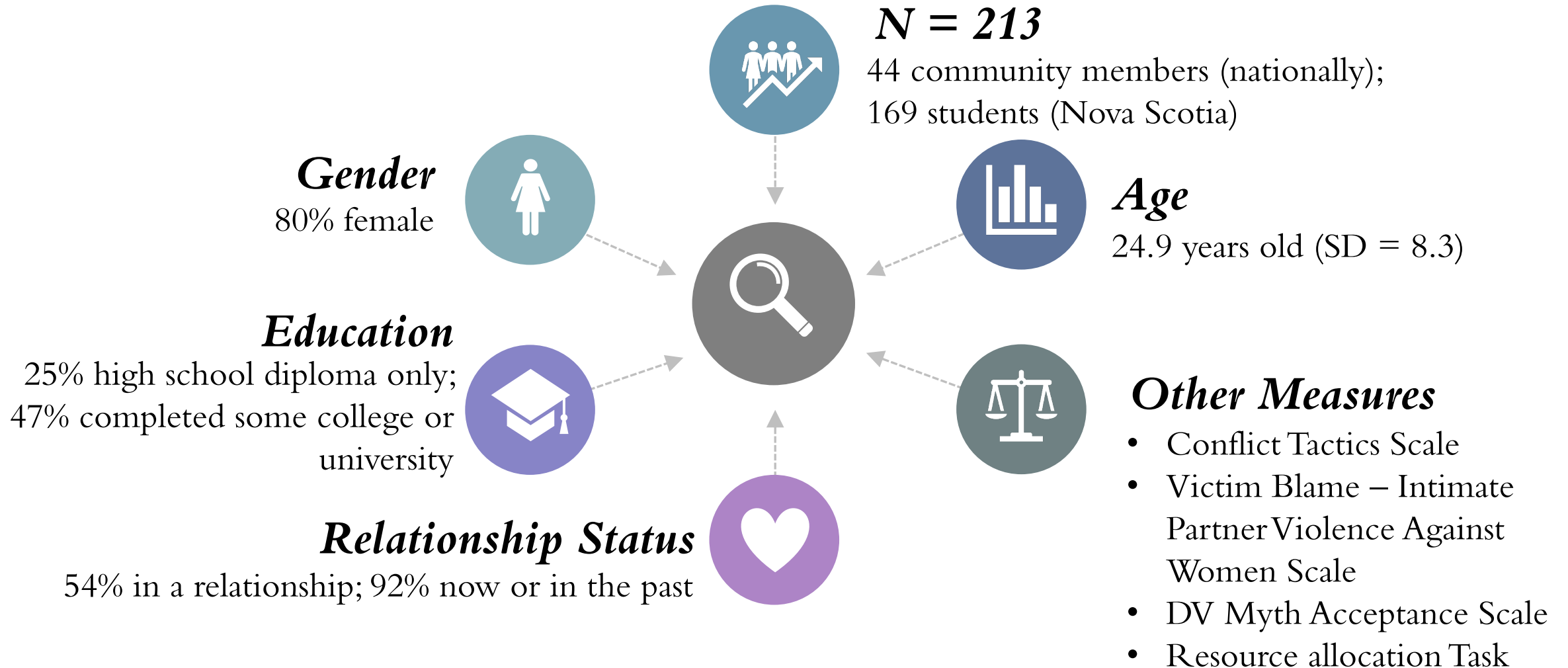
Would they use it?

Do they trust the police?

Do they foresee any barriers?

Methods

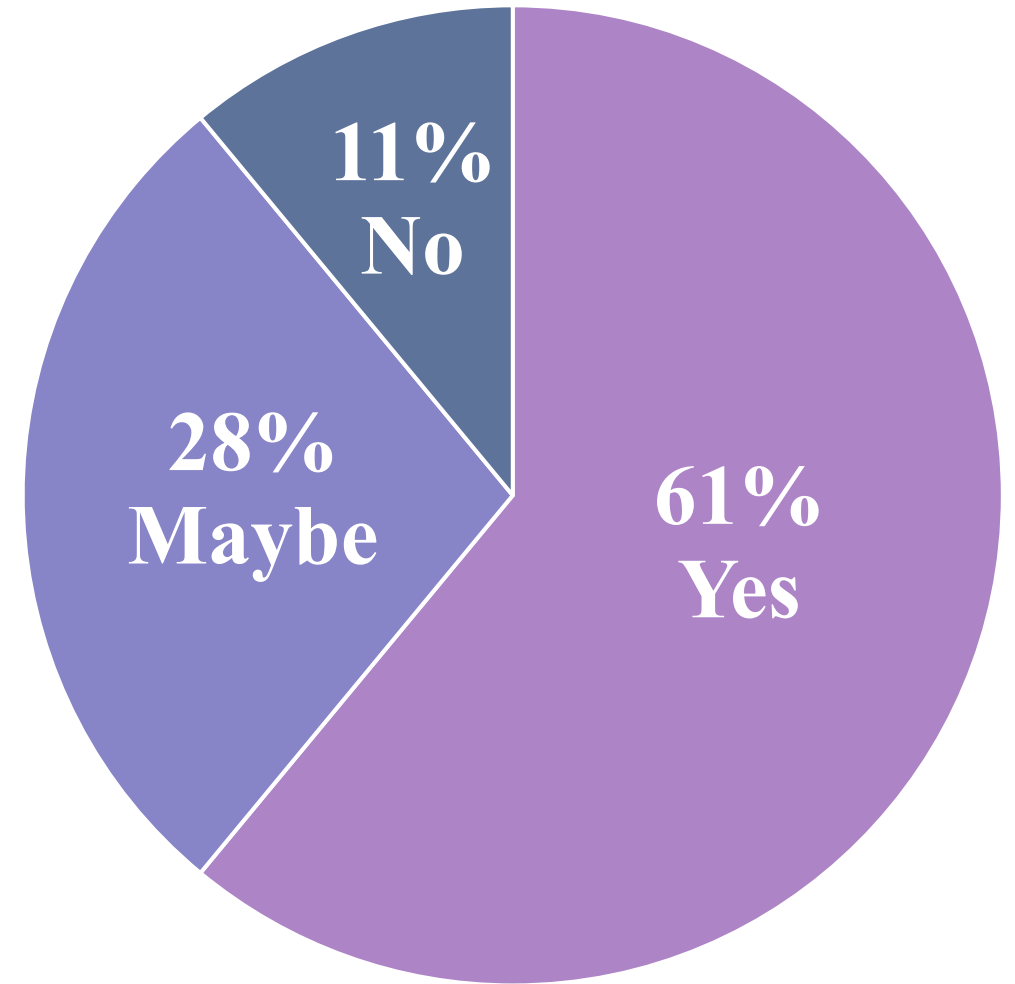
Public Opinion Survey (Qualtrics) of people's perceptions of DV & Clare's Law



RESULTS:

93% OF PARTICIPANTS
HAD NEVER HEARD
ABOUT CLARE'S LAW

We asked: If you were a victim of DV, would you consider seeking disclosure? In other words, asking police for information about your partner's history with DV?



RESULTS:

Are there any barriers that may prevent you from seeking disclosure?

- Fear of perpetrator finding out
- Accessibility issues
- Distrust in police
- Shame, embarrassment, guilt
- Systemic Prejudice
- Financial dependence
- Children

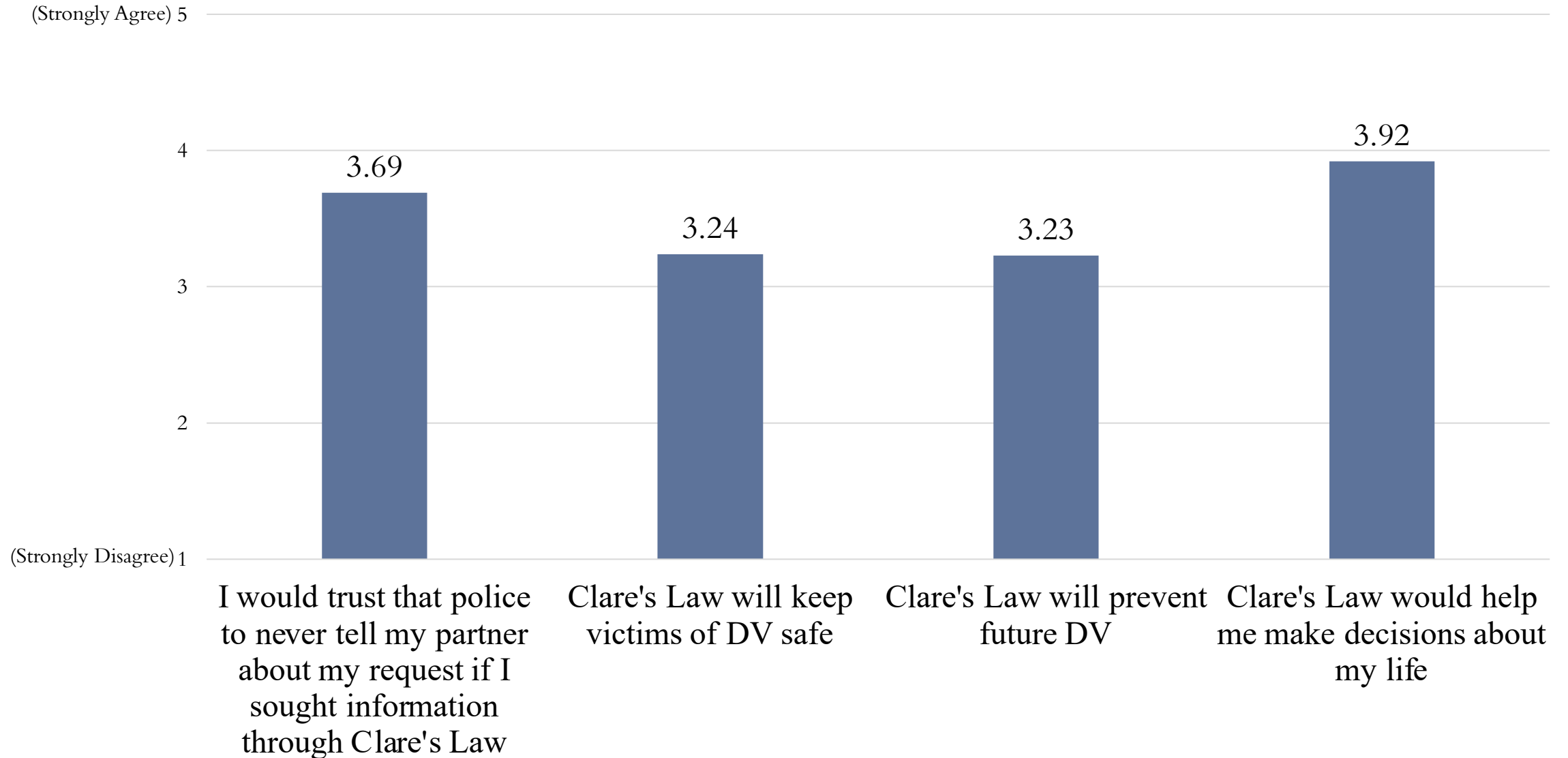
RESULTS: WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF...?

(N = 213)

	<i>Partner is considered “Low Risk”</i>	<i>Partner is considered “Medium Risk”</i>	<i>Partner is considered “High Risk”</i>	<i>Not enough information to make an assessment</i>	<i>Police contacted you via “Right to Know”</i>
Stay in the relationship	42%	5%	2%	32%	3%
Leave/End the Relationship	12%	59%	86%	8%	56%
Not sure	46%	36%	12%	60%	41%

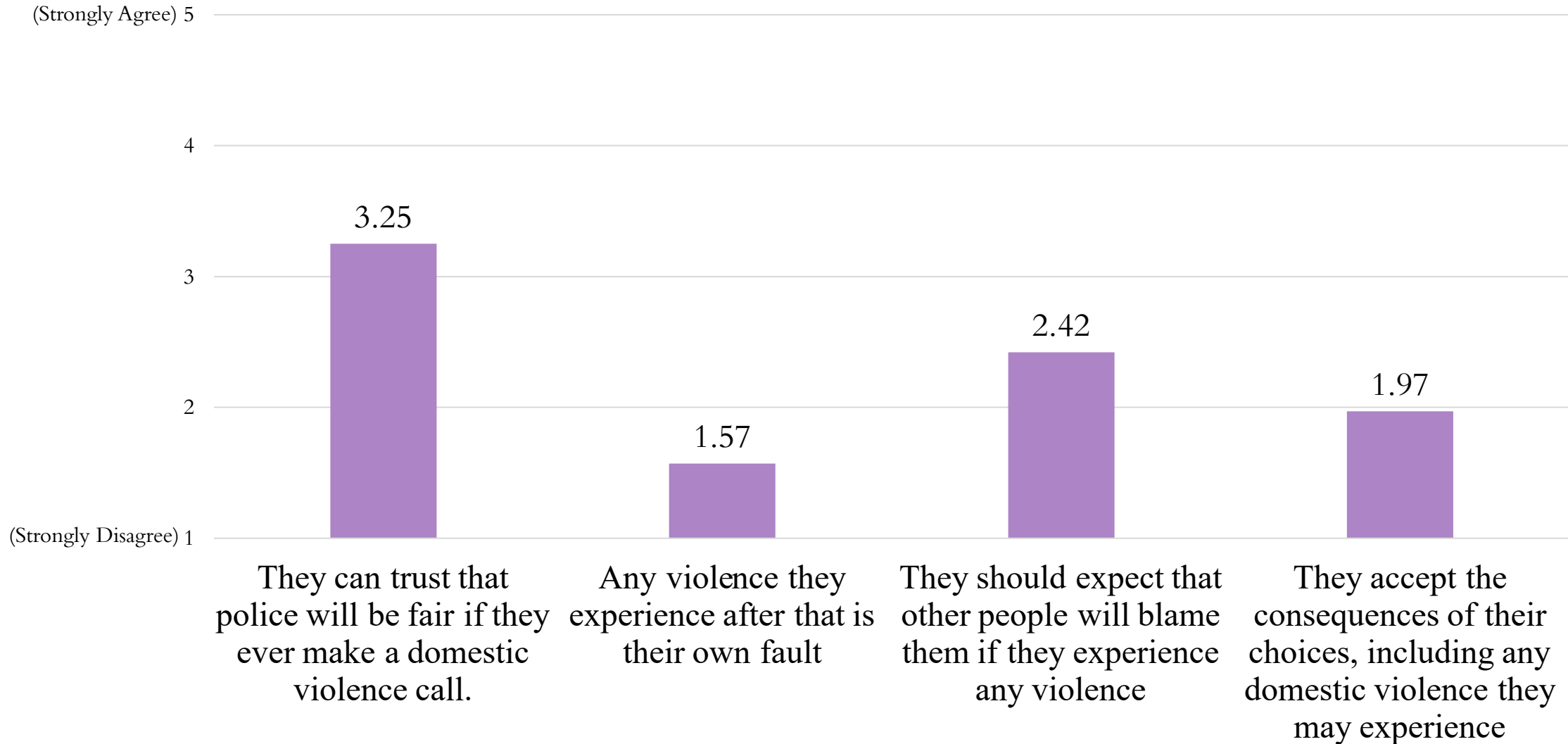
RESULTS:

MEAN LEVEL OF AGREEMENT (1 - 5)



RESULTS: MEAN LEVEL OF AGREEMENT (1-5)

If a person uses Clare's Law to learn about their intimate partner's criminal history and they choose to stay in the relationship...



DISCUSSION

Canadians are generally unaware of Clare's Law and have mixed opinions about its efficacy.

While Canadians believe that Clare's Law can provide them useful information relevant to making decisions in their lives, only about half of the participants in this study believe that Clare's Law can prevent future violence.

DV is already underreported, so it is possible those seeking a disclosure would find themselves with either an inconclusive or low risk results

More research is needed!

Frequency of those who request information and actually receive a disclosure

Voices of victims and survivors, beyond convenience sampling

THANK YOU

Questions?

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RESULTS

93% of participants had never heard about Clare's Law

<i>Province (Whether Clare's Law is passed there)</i>	<i>% of participants who had heard about Clare's Law</i>
British Columbia (No)	20%
Alberta (Yes)	0%
Saskatchewan (Yes)	N/A
Manitoba (Being considered)	0%
Ontario (Being considered)	13%
Quebec (No)	0%
Nova Scotia (No)	
New Brunswick (No)	
Newfoundland and Labrador (Being Considered)	
Prince Edward Island	
Territories (No)	N/A