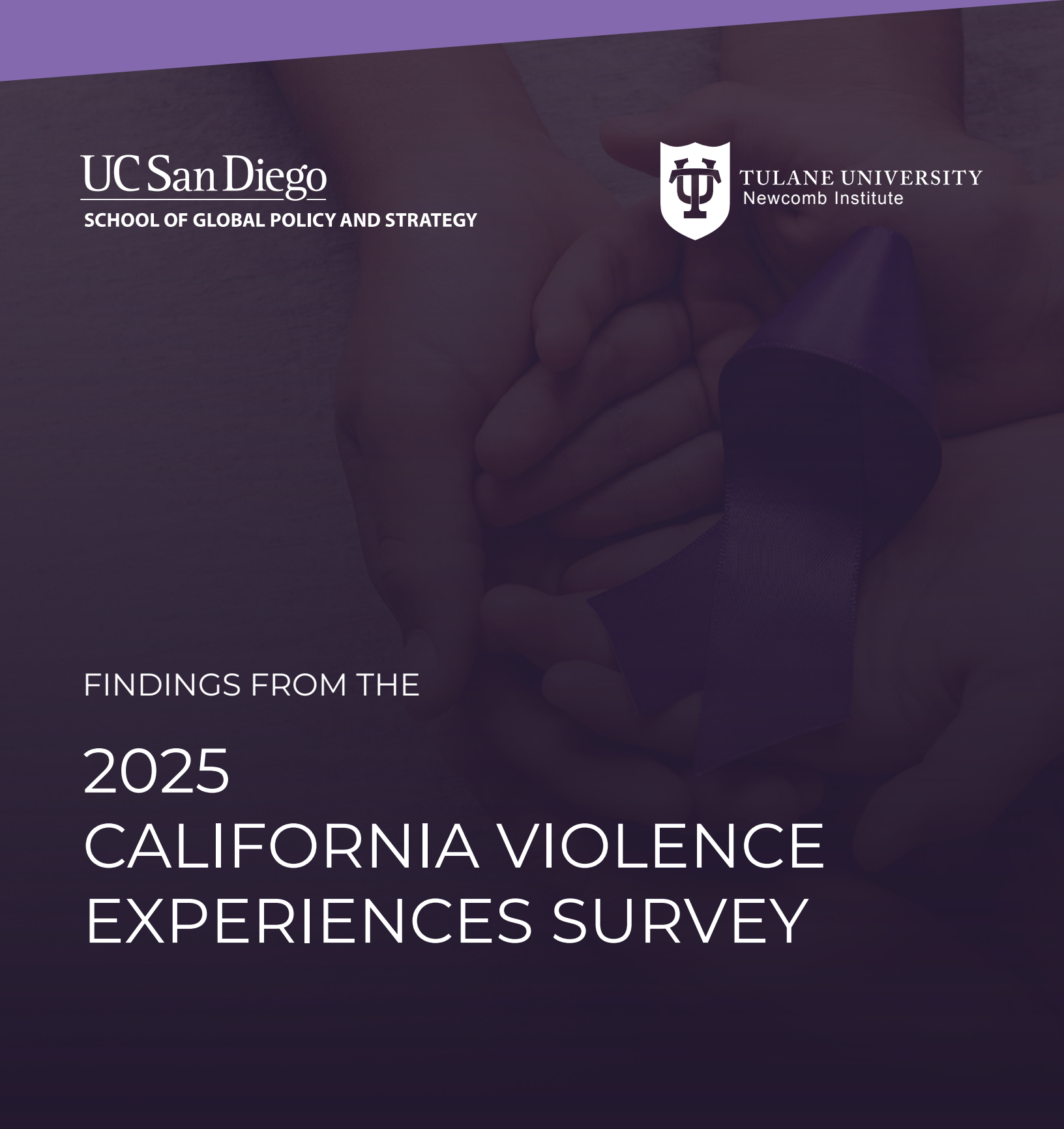


UC San Diego
SCHOOL OF GLOBAL POLICY AND STRATEGY

TULANE UNIVERSITY
Newcomb Institute

FINDINGS FROM THE

2025 CALIFORNIA VIOLENCE EXPERIENCES SURVEY

VEXData
VIOLENCE EXPERIENCES SURVEY

FEBRUARY 2026



CalVEX

CALIFORNIA VIOLENCE EXPERIENCES SURVEY

Violence remains at epidemic proportions in the U.S., including gender-based, community and policing, and firearm-related violence. We're partnering with key experts and stakeholders from the fields of safety, health and wellness across the state of California and nationally to undertake state-wide surveillance of violence across individuals' lifespans. We use this research and surveillance to guide prevention programming. Our representative, state-wide surveys provide data to better understand trends in violence, as well as risks and protective factors. Our de-identified data are available for public use so others can answer their own research questions.

Recently, our work has focused on the financial costs of intimate partner violence, Asian Californians' experiences with violence, foreign-born Californians' violence experiences, the effect of violence on mental health outcomes, the determinants of intimate partner violence perpetration, and the relationship between firearms and partner violence.

Learn more at vexdata.org

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Acknowledgements
We would like to thank the Blue Shield of California Foundation for their generous support of our project. We would also like to thank Valor, Raliance, and the California Department of Public Health for their guidance on this work.

We would also like to thank the participants of this study for graciously sharing their personal experiences.

Content Warning
This work includes sensitive information on various types of violence, including, but not limited to physical, emotional, domestic, and sexual. If you need support for any of these concerns, please contact:

Phone Number	Services Provided
Suicide and Mental Health Crisis Hotline: 988	Free, confidential, 24/7 line for suicide, mental health, or substance use crises
National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-SAFE (7233)	Free, confidential, 24/7 support, crisis intervention, safety planning, shelter referrals, chat/text
Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-HOPE (4673)	Free, confidential 24/7 support for survivors of sexual violence (and their loved ones); resources, referrals, chat/text
NAMI Mental Health Helpline: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)	Free, confidential line to link callers to local low-cost and free mental health resources
SAMHSA Substance Use and Mental Health Services Helpline: 1-800-622-HELP (4357)	Free, confidential line to link callers to local low-cost and free substance abuse treatment and mental health resources
A Call for Change Helpline: 877-898-3411 Help@ACallForChangeHelpline.org	Free, anonymous, confidential intimate partner abuse prevention helpline

California domestic violence organizations throughout the state

California sexual violence resources by county

Suggested Citation
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The California Violence Experiences Survey (CalVEX) 2025 provides population-based estimates of physical violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence (IPV), discrimination, economic shocks, firearm-related attitudes, and mental and behavioral health outcomes among adults aged 18 years and older in California. Fielded in May–June 2025 with 4,007 respondents, CalVEX 2025 offers a comprehensive picture of violence as it is experienced across the lifespan and across social contexts, extending beyond what is captured in crime or administrative data systems.

Key Findings

Physical Violence

Physical violence remains pervasive statewide and affects millions of Californians.

- An estimated 51% of California adults—approximately 16 million people— have experienced physical violence in their lifetime. Lifetime prevalence was highest among gender non-conforming adults (87%), followed by men (52%) and women (49%).
- In the past year, 7% of California adults—more than 2 million people— experienced physical violence, reflecting a return to elevated levels observed during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Past year prevalence was markedly higher among gender non-conforming adults (25%), followed by men (8%) and women (5%).
- Nearly one in four Californians (23%)—about 7 million adults— have experienced weapon-related physical violence involving a knife or gun in their lifetime. More than 5 million Californians report lifetime gun violence exposure, including over one in ten women, one in six men, and more than one in four gender non-conforming adults.
- Women most often experienced physical violence in the home and from intimate partners or family members, while men more frequently experienced violence in public spaces and from strangers.
- Survivors commonly reported depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and lost work or school time as consequences of physical violence.

Sexual Violence

Sexual harassment, coercion, exploitation, and assault are widespread across California and affect a substantial share of the adult population.

- An estimated 52% of California adults—approximately 16 million people— have experienced some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. Lifetime prevalence was reported by 67% of women, 85% of gender non-conforming adults, and 34% of men. Sexual harassment—both verbal and physically aggressive—was the most common form.
- Approximately 13% of Californians—about 4 million adults— have experienced forced sex in their lifetime, and 6% have experienced quid-pro-quo sexual harassment or exploitation.
- In the past year, 9% of California adults—roughly 2 million people— experienced sexual violence. Past year prevalence was 10% among women, 7% among men, and nearly half of gender non-conforming adults (49%). Despite the prevalence and severity of harm, only 4% of survivors reported incidents to any formal authority, highlighting the potential for substantial gaps between lived experiences and administrative data.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Intimate partner violence remains a common and inequitable experience among California adults.

- An estimated 52% of California adults—approximately 16 million people— report experiencing IPV in their lifetime. Lifetime IPV prevalence was highest among gender non-conforming adults (82%), followed by women (57%) and men (46%). IPV frequently involved multiple forms of abuse, including emotional abuse, economic control, physical violence, sexual violence, threats, and coercive behaviors.
- In the past year, 6% of California adults—about 2 million people— experienced IPV. Gender non-conforming adults faced the greatest burden, with more than one in five (22%) reporting past year IPV.
- Potentially lethal forms of IPV are not uncommon. Nearly 2 million Californians have experienced choking or suffocation by a partner in their lifetime, and approximately 500,000 adults report firearm-related IPV exposure.
- Past year IPV was strongly associated with anxiety, depression, substance use, housing instability, and disruptions to employment and relationships, underscoring its profound health and social consequences.

Violence Affecting Transgender People and Gender Non-Conforming People

CalVEX 2025 documents disproportionately high levels of violence affecting transgender and gender non-conforming adults across all violence types. These groups reported the highest lifetime and past year prevalence of physical and sexual violence, as well as elevated exposure to harassment, discrimination, and IPV. These findings point to profound inequities in safety and underscore the need for targeted, affirming prevention and response strategies.

Time Trends in Past Year Violence (2020–2025)

Analysis of trends over time indicates that past year experiences of physical and sexual violence in California have fluctuated since 2020, with elevated levels during the pandemic and a persistence of high prevalence through 2025. These patterns suggest that violence has not returned to pre-pandemic baselines.

Sociodemographics and Past Year Violence

Higher prevalence of past year violence was observed among younger adults, individuals with lower income or educational attainment, and those experiencing social and economic marginalization.

Economic Shocks and Past Year Violence

Adults experiencing food insecurity, difficulty paying bills, job loss, eviction risk, or homelessness reported substantially higher rates of past year physical violence, sexual violence, and IPV. These associations were consistent across violence type, highlighting economic precarity as a central driver of risk for violence.

Neighborhood Safety, Discrimination, and Past Year Violence

Perceived neighborhood safety and experiences of discrimination were strongly linked to violence exposure. Adults who felt unsafe in their neighborhoods or who reported discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or other identities experienced markedly higher levels of past year violence.

Past Year Violence, Mental Health, and Substance Use Outcomes

Recent exposure to violence was strongly associated with poor mental and behavioral health outcomes. Survivors reported significantly higher prevalence of anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, binge drinking, and illicit drug use compared with those who had not experienced violence.

Self-Reported Perpetration of Violence

CalVEX 2025 also assessed self-reported perpetration of violence. A subset of respondents reported engaging in violent behaviors in the past year, often overlapping with experiences of victimization. This overlap highlights the cyclical nature of violence and the importance of prevention strategies that address trauma, accountability, and pathways to interrupt harm.

Firearm Ownership and Attitudes

Firearm ownership and attitudes toward guns were examined in relation to violence exposure. Patterns of ownership and perceived safety varied across demographic groups and were associated with experiences of both victimization and perpetration, underscoring the need to address firearms in violence prevention.

Community Engagement and Activism

The survey assessed participation in community engagement and public activism related to safety, violence prevention, and social issues. Engagement varied across groups, with some evidence that individuals affected by violence were more likely to participate in advocacy and community-based efforts.

Conclusion

Findings from CalVEX 2025 demonstrate that violence remains widespread in California, affects people across the lifespan, and is deeply intertwined with economic instability, discrimination, neighborhood conditions, and health. The survey reveals levels and patterns of harm that may remain invisible in administrative data, particularly for sexual violence, harassment, IPV, and violence affecting transgender and gender non-conforming adults. By providing timely, population-based evidence across multiple domains, CalVEX 2025 offers critical guidance for prevention, policy, and practice aimed at reducing violence and advancing safety, health, and equity across California.

DEFINITIONS FOR THE REPORT

In this report we assess both experiences with victimization from violence and committing violence against others using the following definitions.

Definitions of violence in the CalVEX 2025 survey	
Physical violence	This can include being hit, slapped, punched, shoved, choked, kicked, shaken, or otherwise physically hurt, including being threatened with a weapon such as a knife or gun.
Verbal sexual harassment	This can include someone whistling, leering or staring at you, or calling out to you in ways that make you feel disrespected or unsafe; someone talking about your body parts (such as your butt or breasts) inappropriately or offensively or saying sexually explicit comments or questions ("I want to do BLANK to you"). It can also include and someone repeatedly asking you for a date or your phone number when you've said no. In some cultures, this is also known as 'eve teasing'.
Homophobic or transphobic comments	This can include someone misgendering you or calling you a homophobic or transphobic slur, like "Fag," "Dyke," or "Tranny."
Cyber sexual harassment	This can include someone sending you sexual content without your permission, sexualizing you inappropriately, or threatening you with sex acts, in private online spaces, such as over e-mail or text, or in public online space, such as on social media. This can also include someone taking and/or sharing sexual pictures or videos of you without your permission.
Physically aggressive sexual harassment	This can include someone flashing or exposing their genitals to you without your permission. This can also include someone purposely touching you or brushing up against you in an unwelcome, sexual way.
Quid pro quo sexual harassment or coercion	This can include someone forcing or pressuring you to do a sexual act in exchange for something (such as a good grade, a promotion, a job, drugs, food, money, or something similar) or instead of something (like paying rent or a citation, etc.).
Forced sex	This can include someone forcing you to do a sexual act without your permission or explicit agreement (including while you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs).
Sexual violence	This can include any of the above six forms of violence: verbal sexual harassment, homophobic or transphobic comments, cyber sexual harassment, physically aggressive sexual harassment, quid pro quo sexual harassment or coercion, or forced sex.
Intimate partner violence	This can include physical, sexual, reproductive, economic, and emotionally controlling behavior as well as threats of violence against self or a pet, from a current or former romantic or sexual partner.

INTRODUCTION

The California Violence Experiences Survey (CalVEX) offers its fifth report since 2019 on Californians' experiences with violence recently and across the lifespan. Violence affects individuals, families, and communities across California, shaping not only personal safety but also the state's health, stability, and economic vitality. It threatens the state's ability to ensure healthy communities and provide opportunity and security for future generations. When violence occurs—whether in homes, workplaces, or public spaces—it reverberates through every system, increasing health-care costs, disrupting education, and deepening poverty. Yet most experiences of violence never appear in official records or crime statistics. Understanding the true scope and nature of violence in our state requires data that reflect the lived experiences of its residents, which the CalVEX survey offers.

Conducted with a representative sample of adults across the state, CalVEX provides population-based data on violence as it is actually experienced in daily life. It captures physical, sexual, and intimate partner violence (IPV) as well as related conditions—economic stress, discrimination, policing experiences, political engagement, firearm beliefs and availability, and community context—that influence both risk and resilience. This approach allows California to move beyond crime rates to a more comprehensive understanding of how violence affects health, safety, and economic security in our state.

Reliable data of this kind are vital for strengthening public safety, improving health outcomes, and ensuring economic stability across the state. For policymakers, service providers, and advocates alike, these data offer a foundation for pragmatic, bipartisan solutions—those that prioritize prevention, reduce burdens on emergency and health systems, and foster environments where families and communities can thrive. In this way, reducing violence is not only a moral imperative but also an investment in the state's economic and civic future.

Insight into the prevalence and role of violence in this broader context is essential. In May and June 2025, we conducted a statewide, population-based survey of adults in California to examine experiences of violence across gender, race and ethnicity, and multiple forms of social and economic marginalization, including food insecurity, housing instability, and discrimination. We also consider key sociological and political contexts of this violence, including policing, firearms, and discrimination.

This work is designed to offer crucial understanding of the complex interplay of factors contributing to violence in California and to equip organizations and government entities with the knowledge to implement targeted and effective responses. By acknowledging the disparities faced by marginalized communities, recognizing the gendered and intersectional nature of violence, and connecting safety to health and well-being, *CalVEX 2025* supports evidence-based policy and programmatic action to build a safer, stronger, and more equitable California for all.

METHOD

The CalVEX 2025 survey was administered by NORC at the University of Chicago on behalf of the University of California San Diego and Tulane University. The survey was fielded between May and June 2025 and was completed by adults aged 18 years and older residing in California.

The California Violence Experiences Survey (CalVEX), which has been conducted semi-annually since 2020, assesses and tracks experiences of physical violence (including threats with or use of a gun or knife), sexual violence (including sexual harassment, coercion, and rape), discrimination, and physical and mental health.

Survey Tool Development

The CalVEX 2025 survey builds on earlier rounds, which relied on previously validated measures (Raj et al. 2020; Raj et al, 2022; Raj et al, 2023). This year's instrument incorporated new content on juvenile incarceration and civic engagement and activism, including firearm presence and protest-related violence, which we include in this report. The survey was refined with input from partner stakeholders to ensure item relevance and appropriateness, and reviewed by the NORC team to confirm clarity, flow, and variable construction.

NORC conducted a soft launch of the 2025 survey to ensure clarity, respondent comprehension, and alignment with the intended 15-minute length; no issues were identified. The survey was then administered between May 13 and June 18, 2025, to adults aged 18 and older in California with respondents completing it online in English or Spanish. Sensitive items, such as those on violence or sexual harassment, included additional privacy protections and the option to decline.

Ethics Approval

Participants were provided USD $4 for completing the survey, as specified in NORC's fieldwork guidelines. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could skip any question (except for required demographic items) or stop the survey at any time.

At the end of the survey, respondents were allowed to provide anonymous feedback. Whether positive or negative, it was accessible only to NORC staff. A review of these comments indicated no major concerns with survey items. All study procedures were reviewed and approved by the NORC/University of Chicago and the University of California San Diego and Tulane University Institutional Review Boards.

Sampling

The sample for the CalVEX survey was drawn from a general population of adults aged 18 and older residing in California. Respondents were recruited primarily from NORC's AmeriSpeak® Panel, the most representative online probability panel available in the U.S. AmeriSpeak is a probability-based panel designed to reflect the U.S. household population, funded and operated by NORC at the University of Chicago. Randomly selected U.S. households are sampled using area probability and address-based sampling, with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame. Households are contacted by U.S. mail, telephone, and in-person field interviewers. The panel provides coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household

population, excluding P.O. Box–only addresses, some unlisted addresses, and some newly constructed dwellings.

While most AmeriSpeak households participate in surveys via the web, non-internet households may complete surveys by telephone. Households without conventional internet access but with smartphone access are also able to participate online. AmeriSpeak panelists complete studies conducted by NORC on behalf of governmental agencies, academic researchers, media, and commercial organizations.

To increase sample size and representation, the AmeriSpeak sample was supplemented with respondents from the Dynata and Lucid non-probability online opt-in panels. TrueNorth statistical calibration was conducted by NORC to combine the probability and non-probability samples and reduce selection bias.

Data Collection. Data for the 2025 survey were collected online between May 13 and June 18, 2025. To encourage participation, NORC sent reminder emails to panelists at regular intervals throughout the fielding period.

The response rate reporting for the AmeriSpeak sample was as follows:

- Weighted AAPOR RR3 Recruitment rate: 26.1%
- Weighted Household retention rate: 77.8%
- Survey completion rate: 24.6%
- Weighted AAPOR RR3 cumulative response rate: 5.0%

The study design effect was 1.83, with a study margin of error of +/- 2.25%.

More information on data, processing, weighting, and NORC's TrueNorth Calibration please see the CalVEX 2025 Project Methods and Transparency Report (vexdata.org).

Assessing Gender Identity and Transgender Identity

We included two items to assess gender identity and transgender identity. First, respondents were asked 'What is your gender identity?' with options 'Woman, Man, Non-binary/Genderqueer/Gender fluid person, Prefer to self describe [open text]'. Using participant responses to this item, we define gender identity as woman, man, or gender non-conforming, with the latter based on our grouping together non-binary, genderqueer, gender fluid, and other self-described gender respondents (collectively termed 'gender non-conforming people' throughout the report). Separately, respondents were asked 'Do you have lived experience as a trans person?' with options 'Yes, No'. This measurement allows us to capture information about the violent experiences of transgender communities more comprehensively than other measures (e.g., by including transwoman, transman, etc., as response options or applying the two-step measure of asking about sex assigned at birth and one's current gender identity) because it allows us to capture lifetime or 'ever' experiences for people who identified as transgender historically but not currently. This approach was developed via inputs from diverse age groups of trans individuals.

Throughout the report, we separately report comparisons between women, men and gender non-conforming people, to indicate gender identity, and separately between transgender and cisgender individuals, to capture trans identity as unique from gender identity. We use

transgender to allow for instances where one's gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth. Cisgender is used to represent instances where the gender with which one identifies matches sex at birth.

Sample Characteristics

The CalVEX survey 2025 was designed to represent Californians aged 18 and older and included 4007 respondents. To assess representativeness, the weighted sample was compared with California census data (US Census) and demographic projections across several key socio-demographic characteristics. These include:

- Gender identity: In the weighted sample, 50% identified as women, 48% as men, and 2% as non-binary, genderqueer, gender fluid, or another self-described gender identity. Census data indicate that 50% of adult Californians are women; however, comparable census data on non-binary identities are not available.
- Transgender identity: The weighted sample included 3% transgender and 97% cisgender respondents.
- Race/ethnicity: The weighted sample included 36% non-Hispanic White, 38% Hispanic/Latine, 5% non-Hispanic Black, 17% non-Hispanic Asian, and 5% identifying as other or multiple races. These distributions are broadly consistent with California census estimates (35% non-Hispanic White, 40% Hispanic/Latine, 6% non-Hispanic Black, and 16% non-Hispanic Asian).
- Education: In the weighted sample, 86% completed at least high school or a GED, and 35% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Census estimates suggest that 84% of California adults hold at least a high school degree or GED, and 35% hold a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Employment: In the weighted sample, 61% were employed full- or part-time, closely aligning with California census estimates of 63% employment.
- Income: The median household income for the weighted sample fell between $60,000–$74,999 (income assessed categorically), which is somewhat lower than California's 2021 median household income of $84,097.
- Metro/Non-Metro Residence: The majority of respondents (98%) lived in metropolitan areas, while only 2% lived in non-metropolitan areas, aligning with U.S. Census data.
  - Note: We use metro/non-metro rather than rural/urban classifications for these analyses. The U.S. Census Bureau's rural definition is based on population density—identifying any areas outside densely settled places of 5,000 or more people—so it captures small rural pockets within metropolitan counties and therefore produces a larger "rural" population. In contrast, the Office of Management and Budget's non-metro classification is county-based and reflects economic ties, commuting patterns, infrastructure, and overall remoteness, making it a more appropriate measure for understanding regional differences relevant to this study.
- Age distribution: In the weighted sample, 11% were aged 18–24, 18% aged 25–34, 19% aged 35–44, 14% aged 45–54, 17% aged 55–64, and 21% aged 65 and older. This closely aligns with the California census age distribution. Age distributions were nearly identical for women and men, though gender non-conforming respondents trended younger; 43% of gender non-conforming participants were 18–24, compared with 9% of women and men.
- Sexual identity: 12% of respondents identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB), or another sexual identity, slightly higher than estimates from the 2021 Census Pulse Survey, which suggest 9.2% of California adults identify as LGB.

- Foreign-born: Most of the sample (85%) were U.S.-born, compared with 74% statewide; this is skewed more U.S. born than the Census data would suggest.
- Disability: 17% of respondents reported some form of disability, which is lower than CDC estimates indicating that 25% of California adults have a disability.

As shown above, the weighted study sample is broadly representative of California's adult population in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, education, employment status, and age. The sample somewhat underrepresents foreign-born Californians and people with disabilities and reflects a slightly lower median household income than the state as a whole. However, these deviations from statewide distributions are not substantial.

Data Analysis

Analyses for the 2025 survey were weighted using NORC-provided survey weights to produce state-representative prevalence estimates. Bivariate analyses were conducted to examine associations between experiences of violence and key demographic variables, with statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$ when sample size permitted. Observations with skipped items were treated as missing (excluded from the relevant analysis).

As in 2023, findings are reported separately for women, men, and gender non-conforming respondents (n = 57). Separately, we also make comparisons between transgender (n = 90) and cisgender respondents, as noted above, to allow for self-reported gender identity regardless of being cisgender. Results for subgroups are suppressed when the denominator is fewer than 50, to ensure representativeness and participant anonymity.

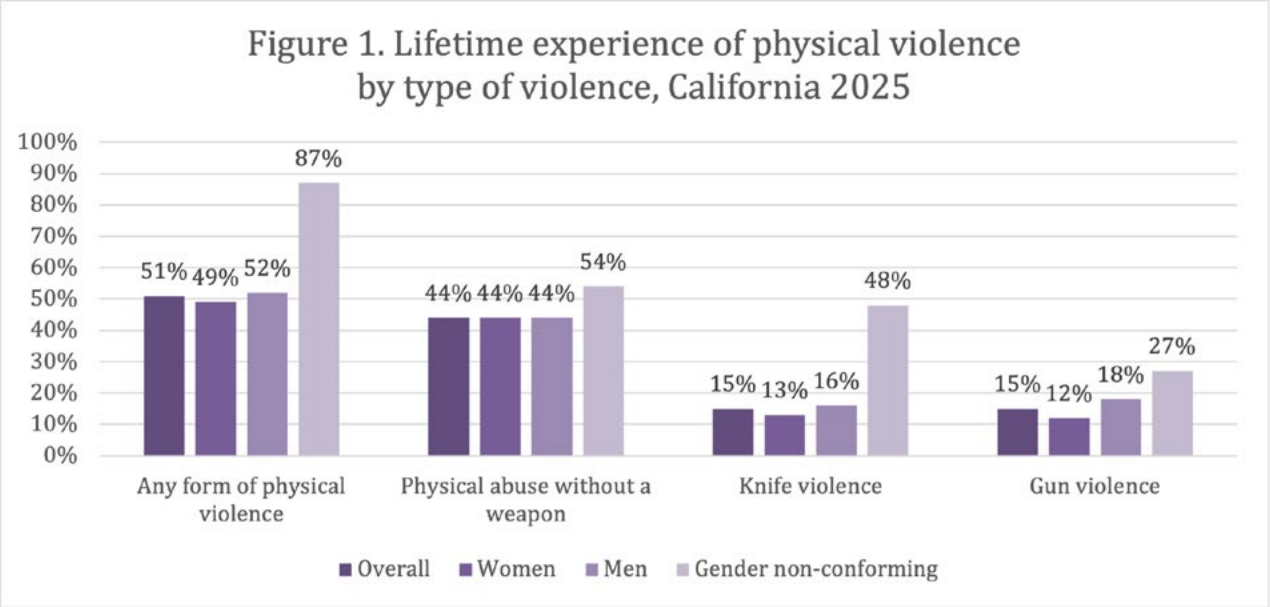
In addition to core measures of physical violence, sexual violence, discrimination, and health, the 2025 survey introduced new dimensions, including awareness and use of DVROs/GVROs, juvenile incarceration history, gender-role attitudes and women's advancement, civic engagement and activism (including firearm presence and violence at protests), and pregnancy.

As in prior rounds, two open-ended questions on experiences of physical and sexual violence were analyzed. Selected quotes are included in this report to contextualize and complement quantitative findings.

FINDINGS

Physical Violence

Lifetime Experiences of Physical Violence



Over half of adults in California (51%) have experienced some form of physical violence in their lifetime. (Fig. 1.)

- Non-weapon related physical abuse was experienced by 44% of Californians, with significantly higher prevalence seen for gender non-conforming people (54%) compared with women and men (44% respectively).
- Nearly one in four Californians has experienced weapon-related physical violence with a knife and/or a gun (23%). Men were significantly more likely than women to report this (25% of men vs. 20% of women). Gender non-conforming people reported the highest levels, with 58% experiencing weapon-related violence. Men were significantly more likely than women to have experienced weapon-related violence (knife: 16% men and 13% women; gun: 18% men and 12% women). And gender non-conforming people experienced even greater levels of weapon-related violence; half (48%) had experienced knife violence and more than one in four (27%) had experienced gun violence in their lifetime.

Physical Violence and Gun Violence Affect Many Californians.

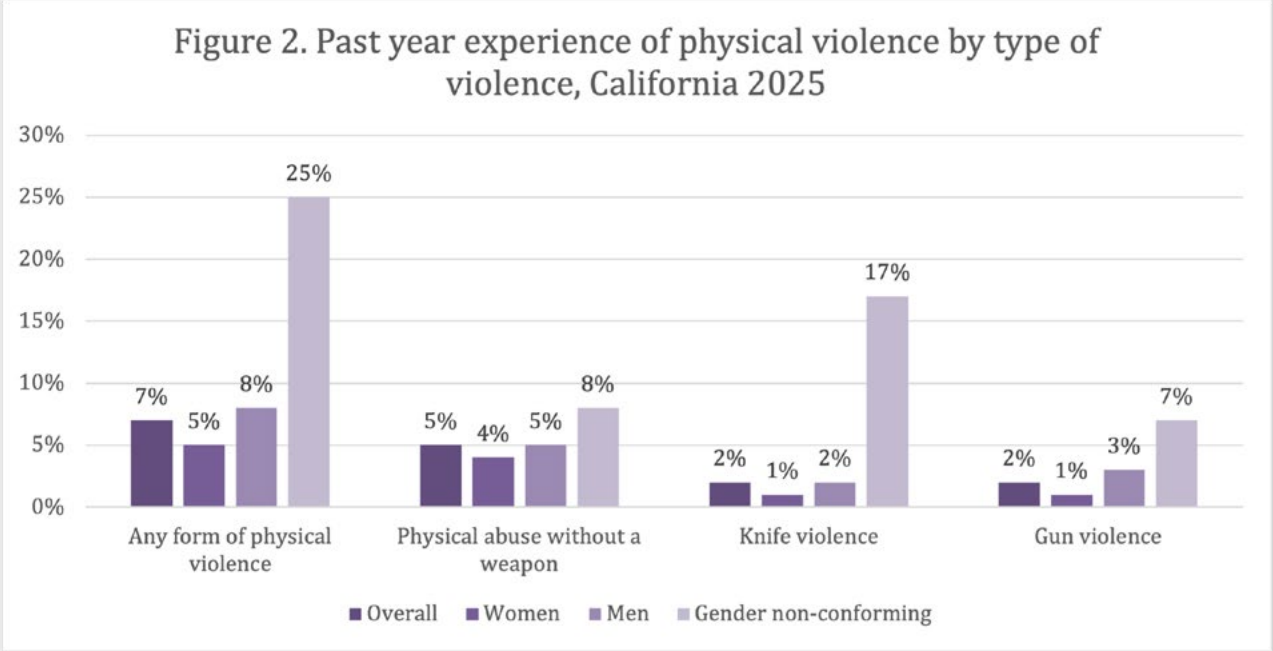
Approximately half of all men and women in California and almost 9 in 10 gender non-conforming people in the state – almost 16M Californians - have experienced physical violence in their lifetime.

More than 1 in 10 California women, more than 1 in 6 California men, and more than 1 in 4 Gender Non-Conforming People in the state – 5M Californians- have experienced gun violence in their lifetime.

Physical violence experiences were common across the lifespan

- One in six (18%) Californians experienced physical violence in childhood (age 0–12).
- Over one in five (22%) experienced physical violence in adolescence (age 13–17).
- Nearly one in four (23%) reported physical violence in young adulthood (age 18–24).
- About one in five (21%) experienced physical violence in adulthood (age 25+).
- Gender non-conforming people reported consistently higher prevalence across all age groups, with particularly high levels in adolescence (52%) and adulthood (37%).

Past Year Experiences of Physical Violence



One in 14 adults (7%) experienced physical violence in the past year. (Fig. 2.)

- One in 20 (5%) reported physical abuse without a weapon, with non-significant differences seen by gender (4% of women, 5% of men, and 8% of gender non-conforming people).
- One in 50 (2%) reported physical violence with a knife and gun, respectively. Gender non-conforming people were more likely than women and men to report this (knife: 17% compared with 1% and 2%, respectively; gun: 7% compared with 1% and 3%, respectively).

Many have Experienced Past Year Physical Violence.

1 in 20 California women, 1 in 12 California men, and 1 in 4 gender non-conforming people in the state – more than 2M Californians – experienced physical violence in the past year.

1 in 100 California women, 1 in 33 California men, and 1 in 14 gender non-conforming people in the state – 650,000 Californians – experienced gun violence in the past year.

Relationship to Person(s) Causing Past Year Physical Violence

Respondents often knew the person who physically harmed them in the past year. (Table 1.)

- We see some gender differences: Women were more likely than men to report a spouse/partner (48% and 18%) where men were more likely than women to report a stranger (14% and 43%) or acquaintance/community member (10% and 30%).
- For men and women, abuse also came from adult family members (25% of women and 24% of men) [excluding spouse] and known non-family members (24% of women and men, respectively).

Table 1. Relationship to the person(s) causing past year physical violence

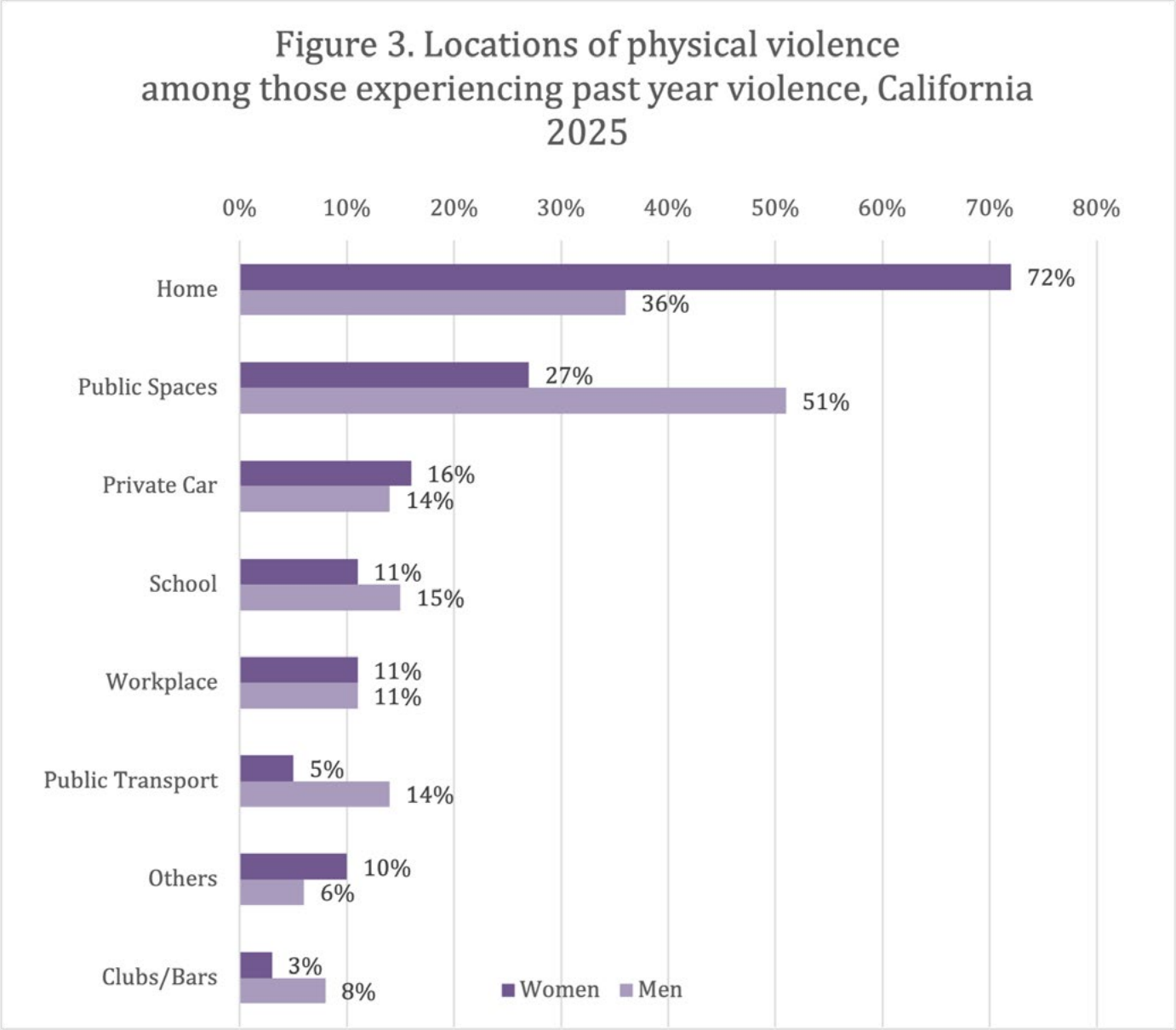
	Any form of physical violence		Physical abuse		Threat or use of knife or gun	
Relation	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Family Member 18+	25%	24%	30%	29%	10%	13%
Family Member < 18	9%	9%	11%	11%	5%	4%
Spouse/Partner	48%	18%	52%	21%	48%	9%
Known Non-Family	24%	24%	21%	25%	26%	21%
Acquaintance or Community Member	10%	30%	5%	23%	15%	39%
Stranger	14%	43%	11%	30%	24%	55%
Teacher/Coach/Adult/Authority	6%	6%	6%	9%	6%	1%
Police	4%	7%	6%	6%	4%	9%
Political/Religious/Community Leader	1%	2%	1%	3%	3%	0%
Boss/Employer	1%	3%	1%	5%	0%	1%

Cell sizes for gender non-conforming people were too small to yield reliable estimates.

Locations of Past Year Physical Violence

We see gender differences in the locations where past year physical violence occurred. (Fig. 3.)

- Women were significantly more likely to report their home as the location of past year physical violence (72%). Women report their home as the site of violence twice as often as men (72% vs 36%).
- Men were significantly more likely to report a public space as the location of past year physical violence (51%); this is twice as likely as what was seen for women (27%).



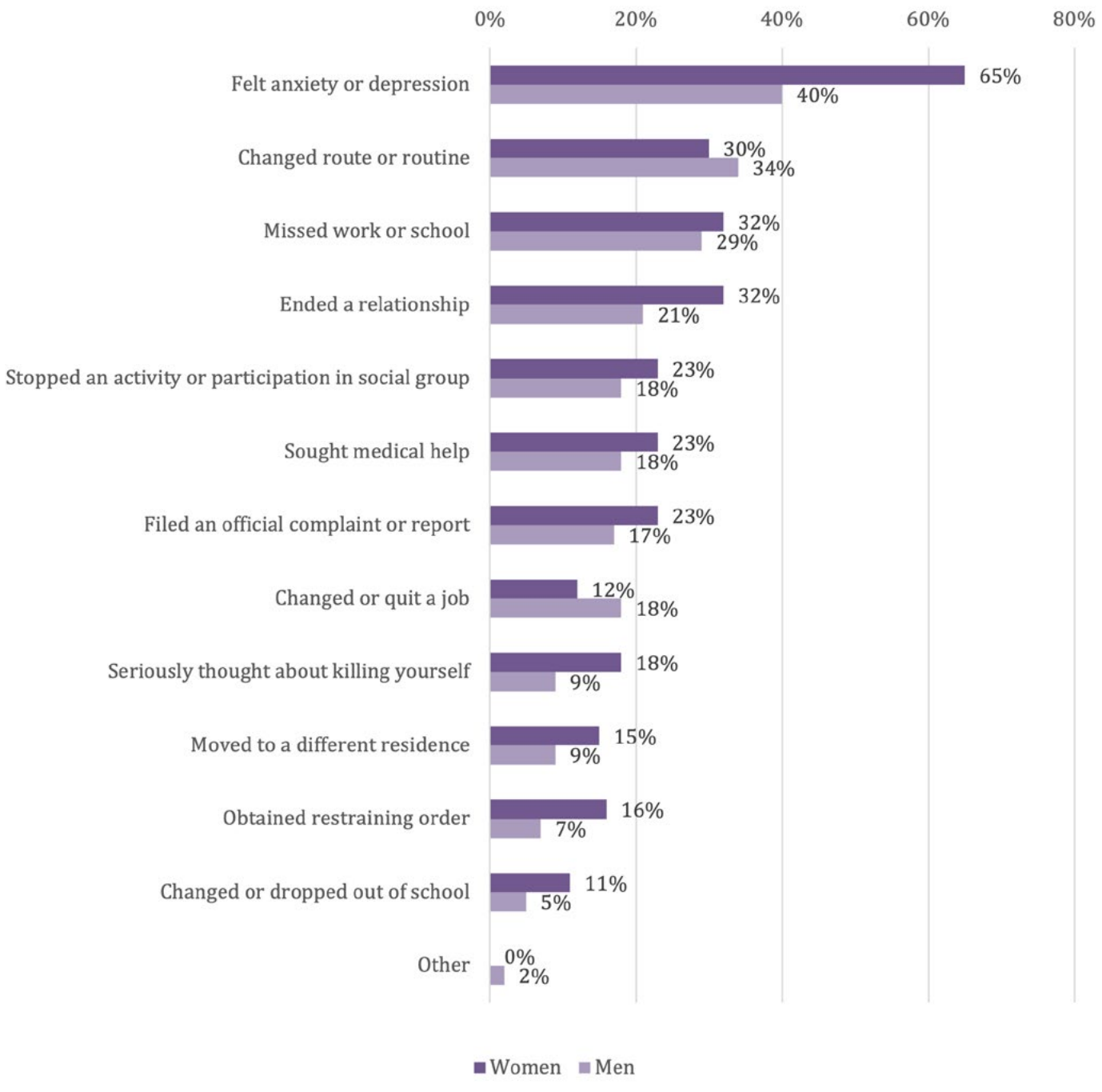
Cell sizes for gender non-conforming people were too small to yield reliable estimates.

Consequences of Past Year Physical Violence

Californians had mental health and lifestyle change consequences of this violence. (Fig. 4.)

- Of those who experienced past year violence, two in three women (65%) and two in five men (40%) were anxious or depressed due to the physical violence. Almost one in five women (18%) and one in eleven men (9%) seriously considered suicide due to their experience. These gender differences are statistically significant.
- About one in three women (32%) and men (29%) missed work or school due to violence.
- Other responses included: ending a relationship (32% of women and 21% of men), changing routines (30% women and 34% men), and seeking medical help (23% women and 18% men). None of these gender differences were statistically significant.
- Smaller proportions reported filing official complaints (23% women vs. 17% men).

Figure 4. Consequences of physical violence among those experiencing past year violence, California 2025



Cell sizes for gender non-conforming people were too small to yield reliable estimates.

Qualitative Data on Past Year Physical Violence

Word clouds from qualitative data on experiences of physical violence in the past year indicate that women's experiences of physical violence often occurred in the home and from a boyfriend or partner, with police involved. Men's experiences more often described gun violence and street violence from strangers and friends. (See Figs. 5 and 6).



Figure 5. Women: Word cloud summarizing past year physical violence experiences



Figure 6. Men: Word cloud summarizing past year physical violence experiences

Quotes taken from the data correspond with the word clouds, with women often describing their experiences of physical violence as involving IPV from former partners, with health effects.

> "An ex-partner beat and strangled me. I called the police, and my ex was arrested."

> "My ex was physically aggressive with me also bullied me, made me cry, curse, scream and plan my exit out of that toxic relationship."

> "Just recently he broke my ribs again. Always hitting me on the head. Now I think because of that I'm becoming very forgetful sometimes."

Women also described threats in the workplace, from patients, clients, or strangers.

> "Patient at work was angry and threatened to bring a gun and kill all of us. Filed internal documents and worked with employer to have the patient removed from services with us."

> "I was at work and a stranger from the public assaulted me because the department they were looking for was closed. I called the police they haven't found them yet and I doubt they will catch him."

Some women described longer term impacts of fear due to minimal action from police after reporting.

> "The circumstance was I was renting an apartment from him and one day he decided that he wanted to get with me. And I wasn't going to get with him, so he became aggressive and started causing problems for me and my boyfriend, which led to him pulling a gun and me taking the gun from him. He ended up going to jail for the weekend, and he got out on the Monday. I don't think there were any other consequences on that."

> "There we no consequences. The cops told the man to leave the beach, that is where it happened. The man pulled out a knife on me. The police did not care to do anything at all but tell the man to "go somewhere else." He came back to harass me some more after the incident with the knife."

Men reported more experiences of violence occurring among strangers or in public spaces.

> "I walked past the random stranger on my birthday twice, and on the second time he punched me."

> "I was thrown by my hair, on the ground from behind and landed on a step. I broke 6 ribs and punctured a lung. I was in a bar in [CITY], and it was my ex-boss. He got arrested but got off pretty easily, claiming mental illness."

Identity-based violence or hate crimes were also reported by men, due to their clothing, appearance and immigration status.

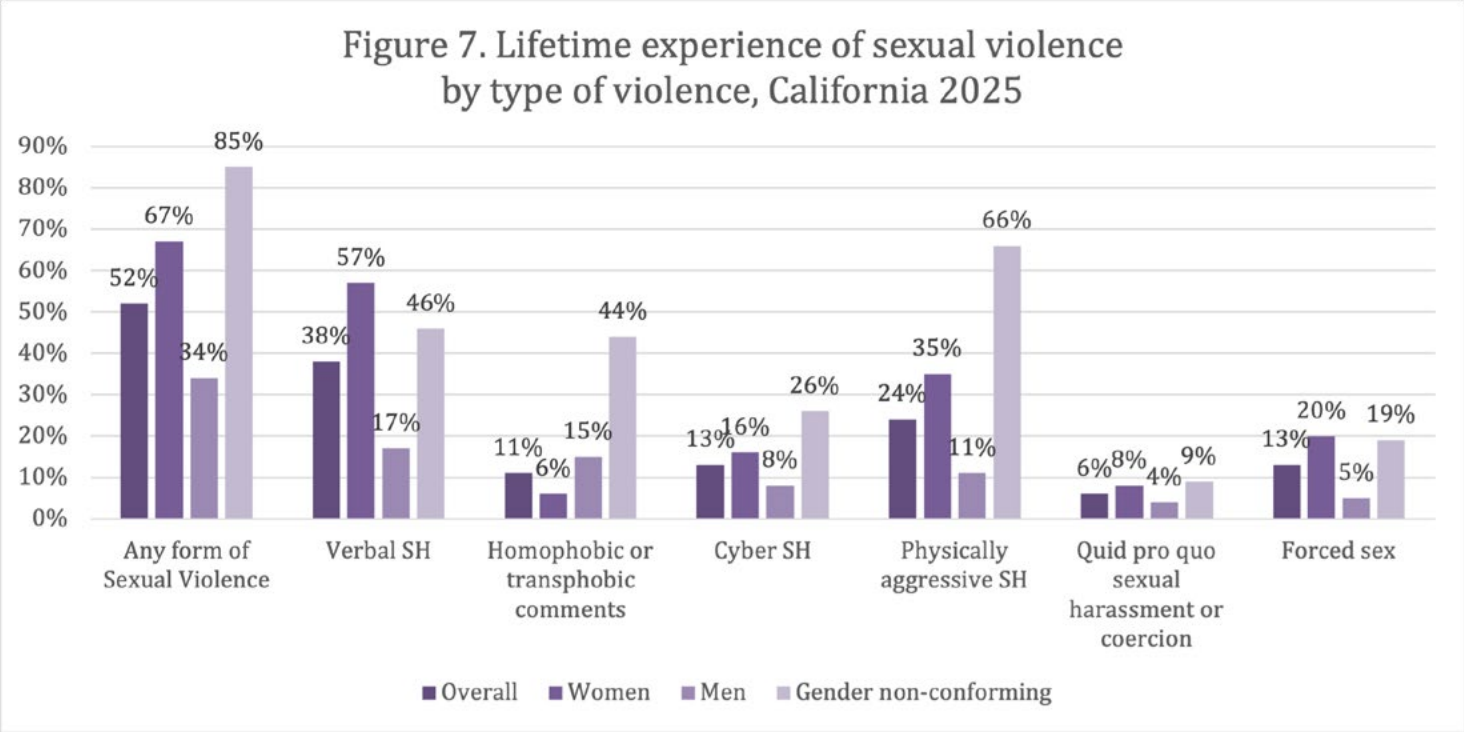
> "Was hit and mugged on the street for wearing a 'Make America Great Again' hat."

> "I got jumped by three guys outside of my home for no reason other than the color of my skin."

> "I had a physical altercation with a neighbor due to racial backgrounds. The other party was here in the USA illegally and thought I was belittling him. And words were exchanged from both sides and fists followed suit. Police were called; we both said it was over a female and let the matter go."

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Lifetime Experiences of Sexual Violence



Half of Californians (52%) have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. Women (67%) and gender non-conforming people (85%) are more likely than men (34%) to experience this. (Fig. 7.)

- The most common forms are verbal (38%) and physically aggressive (24%) sexual harassment, with women and gender non-conforming people at higher risk.
- About one in eight Californians (13%) have experienced forced sex, and more than one in 20 (6%) have experienced quid pro quo sexual harassment (indicative of sexual exploitation), again with women and gender non-conforming people at greater risk.
- Homophobic/transphobic sexual harassment is higher for men than women.

Sexual Violence is Pervasive.

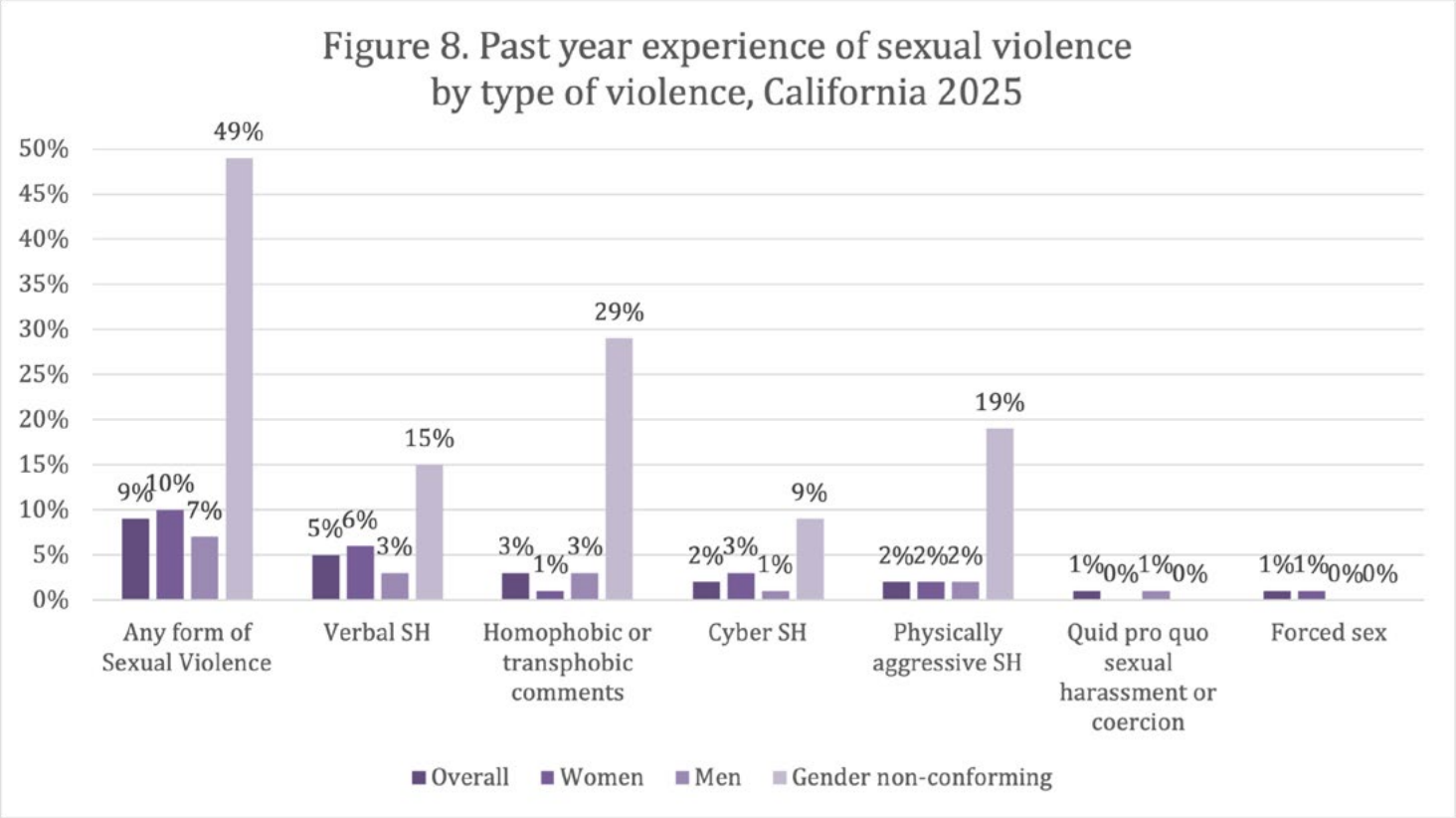
1 in 3 California men, 2 in 3 California women, and more than 4 in 5 gender non-conforming people in the state – 16M Californians – have experienced sexual harassment, coercion, exploitation, or forced sex in their lifetime.

1 in 20 California men, 1 in 5 California women and gender non-conforming people, respectively – 4M Californians – have experienced forced sex in their lifetime.

Sexual violence experiences were not uncommon across the lifespan

- One in eight (13%) Californians experienced sexual violence in childhood (age 0–12).
- Over one in four (28%) experienced sexual violence in adolescence (age 13–17).
- One in three (32%) reported sexual violence in young adulthood (age 18–24).
- One in four (25%) experienced sexual violence in adulthood (age 25+).
- Gender non-conforming people reported consistently higher prevalence across all age groups.

Past Year Experiences of Sexual Violence



One in eleven adults in California (9%) experienced sexual violence in the past year, with gender non-conforming people (49%) at greater risk than women (10%) and men (7%). (Fig. 8.)

- Verbal sexual harassment is the most common form, reported by 5% of adults, followed by homophobic or transphobic comments (3%), cyber sexual harassment and physically aggressive sexual harassment (2%, respectively), and quid pro quo sexual harassment (sexual exploitation) and forced sex (1%, respectively).

Past Year Sexual Violence is Not Uncommon.

1 in 14 California men, 1 in 10 California women, and more than 4 in 5 gender non-conforming people in the state – 2M Californians – have experienced sexual harassment, coercion, exploitation, or forced sex in the past year.

Relationship to Person(s) Causing Past Year Sexual Violence

- Of those who experienced sexual violence in the past year, many indicated the abuse was from a stranger (61% of women and 59% of men) or acquaintance (31% of women and 34% of men). Family members and others known to them were also indicated, and secondarily, partners. Among women with these experiences, one in sixteen indicated it was a boss. (Table 2.)

Table 2. Relationship to the person(s) causing past year sexual violence, California 2025

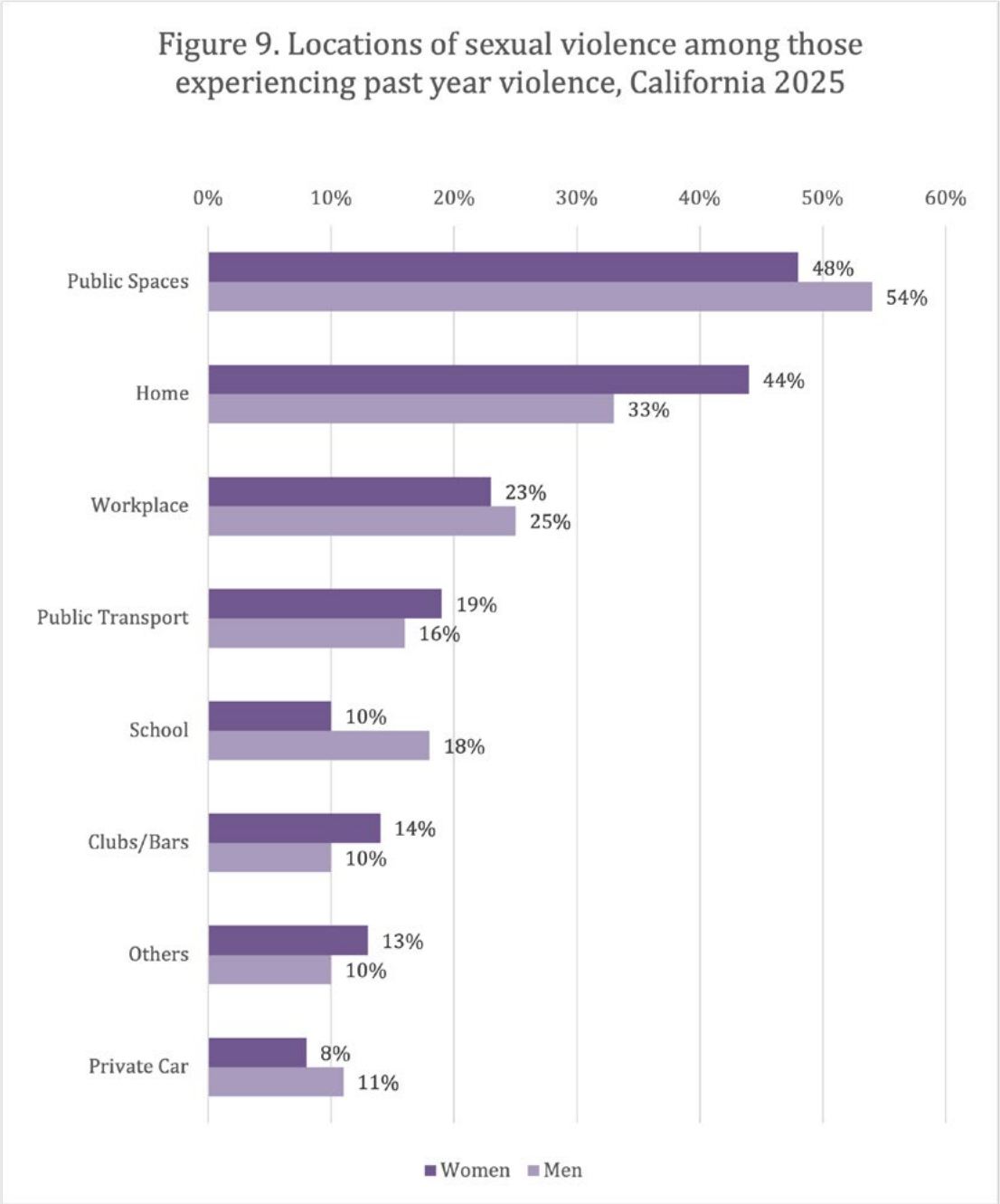
	Any form of physical violence	
Perpetrator	Women	Men
Family Member 18+	12%	18%
Family Member < 18	5%	16%
Spouse/Partner	22%	15%
Known Non-Family	30%	32%
Acquaintance or Community Member	31%	34%
Stranger	61%	59%
Teacher/Coach/Adult/Authority	6%	5%
Police	3%	7%
Political/Religious/Community Leader	3%	5%
Boss/Employer	6%	2%

Cell sizes by type of sexual violence and for gender non-conforming people were too small to yield reliable estimates.

Locations of Past Year Sexual Violence

Among those who experienced sexual violence in the past year, respondents most often report that past year sexual violence occurred in public spaces (48% of women and 54% of men) and at home (44% of women and 33% of men). (Fig. 9.)

- Other reported locations included the workplace (23% women vs 25% men), public transport (19% women and 16% men), schools (10% women and 18% men), private cars (8% women and 11% men), and clubs or bars (14% women and 10% men).

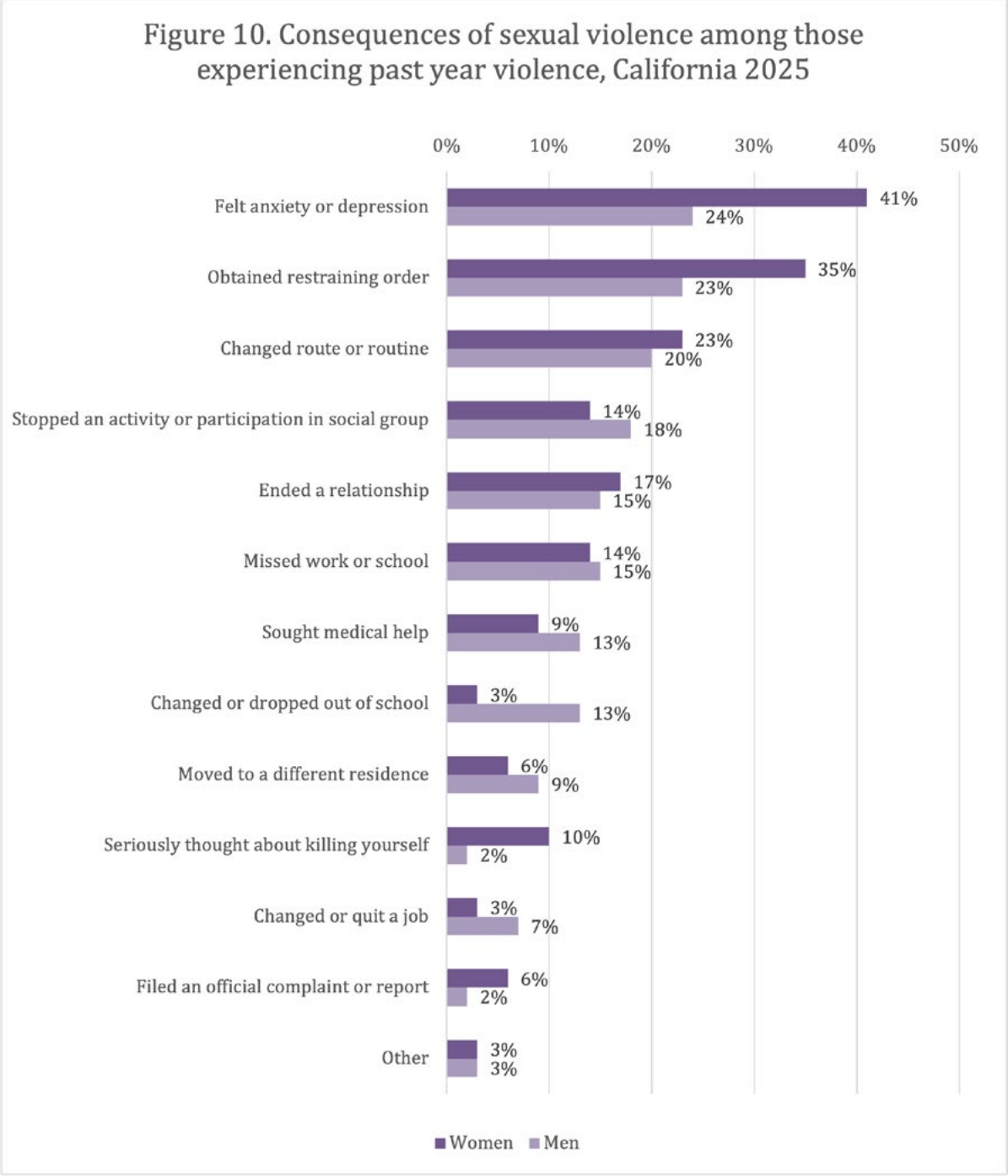


Cell sizes for gender non-conforming people were too small to yield reliable estimates.

Consequences of Past Year Sexual Violence

Mental health concerns were a major consequence of past year sexual violence (Fig. 10.)

- Of those who experienced past year violence, two in five women (41%) and one in four men (24%) were anxious or depressed due to the sexual violence.
- Over one-third of women (35%) and nearly one in four men (23%) report no consequence, positive or negative, of their violent experience, and only 4% formally reported the abuse.



Cell sizes for gender non-conforming people were too small to yield reliable estimates.

Qualitative Data on Past Year Sexual Violence

Word clouds from qualitative data on experiences of sexual violence in the past year indicate some differences and some similarities for women and men. For women, experiences were described as occurring in public spaces, private spaces, and digital spaces by partners and strangers alike. Women emphasized a normalization of some of these activities which allowed for minimal consequences. Men also described sexual harassment in public spaces and online, often mixed with homophobia. (Figs. 11 and 12.)



Figure 11. Women: Word cloud summarizing past year sexual violence experiences

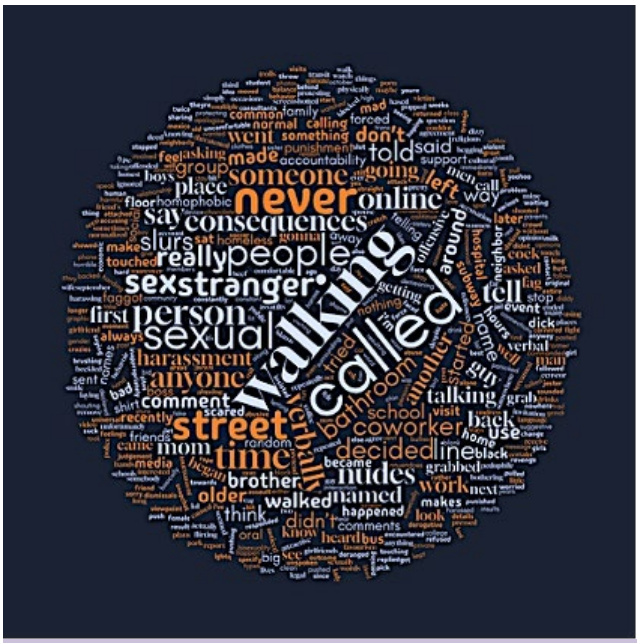


Figure 12. Men: Word cloud summarizing past year sexual violence experiences

Sexual harassment or assault on the streets is a fairly common experience for women, while commuting or carrying out daily activities.

> "A stranger inappropriately touched me on a sidewalk. There were no immediate consequences for them."

> "A homeless person said he was going to rape me while I was alone on a hiking trail... I got away by charging him with a weapon."

> "Cat calls, whistles, other comments; typically, from men who are driving past in cars while I am out running on public streets."

Many women even talked about men exposing themselves to them in public spaces.

> "The neighbor... pulled out his p**s outside in broad daylight... I called the cops. They came and did nothing. They said I should have taken a picture."

> "I was at work bending over... and some dude put out his d**k and put it right on my a**. They didn't believe me at work, and they fired me and he is still there."

Some women additionally discussed sexual IPV, particularly from former partners.

> "My ex-husband has a sexual obsession, and he knows that I am struggling to pay my bills... I can't get any cash from him unless I have sex with him first."

> "I used to be in a relationship with him but haven't been in over 13 years. And now he calls or texts, always bringing up sex and talking about my body and how bad he wants to have sex with me."

> "One incident happened at home when I wouldn't let my ex in my pants because I was on my period... He grabbed my throat and forced his way in."

Men most often described experiences of cyber sexual harassment. This could take many forms, from sharing sexual content without consent to bullying via gender harassment and sexual degradation.

> "Online trolls who didn't agree with my viewpoint immediately start using slurs like f*g and accusing people of being a pedophile."

> "Somebody tried to do revenge porn. They went on a fake Snapchat account and screenshotted nudes if mine and posted them on their story."

Homophobic comments in conjunction with hate crimes were also noted, sometimes without recourse for gay men who were afraid of being "outed."

> "I was at the park with my mom and older brother. I decided that I was going to go and use the bathroom which was a ways away from where we were. Along the way I heard some derogative comments from this group of men who looked to be 30 maybe. I decided to just look down and pretend that I didn't hear them, but that only seemed to make them mad... One of them began to follow me calling me homophobic insults and slurs, which then was followed by the rest (violence). I panicked and was too far from my mom and brother. I decided to run the to bathroom but they grabbed my shirt and pulled me back, surrounding me. I worried that telling my mom and brother would make them mad at me since I hadn't come out yet so I just tried to clean up myself as best as I could in the bathroom and never said anything. They never noticed."

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

Lifetime and Past Year Experiences of IPV

Table 3. Experiences of violence from a romantic or sexual partner, California 2025

	Experiences ever			Experienced in past year		
	Women	Men	Gender non-conforming	Women	Men	Gender non-conforming
ANY IPV	**57%**	**46%**	**82%**	**6%**	**6%**	**22%**
ANY EMOTIONAL IPV	42%	29%	35%	4%	4%	1%
Insulted, humiliated, or made fun of you in front of others	34%	23%	29%	4%	3%	1%
Destroyed something important to you	20%	12%	9%	2%	1%	1%
Harassed you by phone, text, email or using social media	20%	10%	17%	2%	1%	1%
ANY CONTROL IPV	38%	29%	64%	4%	5%	19%
Kept you from having your own money/ controlled your money	14%	7%	17%	2%	2%	3%
Keeps your documents, IDs/immigration/financial/ Certificates	5%	5%	3%	1%	1%	0%
Tried to keep you from seeing or talking to family or friends	22%	14%	35%	3%	2%	11%
Kept track of you / demanded to know where you were	25%	15%	27%	3%	2%	8%
Made decisions for you that should have been yours to make	17%	9%	15%	2%	1%	0%
ANY THREATS TO SELF OF OTHERS	21%	11%	22%	2%	2%	5%
Threatened to harm someone close	7%	3%	11%	1%	1%	4%
Threatened self/suicide	15%	9%	15%	1%	1%	2%
Hurt/threatened pet(s)	7%	2%	4%	1%	0%	0%
ANY PHYSICAL IPV	36%	24%	28%	3%	3%	7%
Made threats to physically harm you	18%	8%	11%	2%	1%	1%
Slapped you	16%	13%	18%	2%	1%	2%
Pushed or shoved you	28%	14%	16%	2%	1%	1%
Hit you with a fist or something hard	13%	9%	7%	1%	1%	1%
Hurt you by pulling your hair	11%	3%	6%	1%	1%	1%
Slammed you against something	16%	3%	11%	2%	0%	4%
Tried to hurt you by choking or suffocating	10%	2%	5%	1%	0%	2%
Beat you	8%	2%	6%	1%	0%	1%
Burned you on purpose	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Used a knife on you	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Used a gun on you	2%	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%
ANY SEXUAL IPV	17%	3%	14%	2%	0%	3%
Forced/tried to force sex or sexual acts	17%	3%	14%	2%	0%	3%
ANY REPRODUCTIVE COERCION	3%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Forced/pressured to continue pregnancy	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Forced/pressured to prevent/end pregnancy	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%

We assessed the lifetime experiences of 25 different forms of violence from a current or former romantic or sexual partner (hereafter referred to as intimate partner violence (IPV)). Nearly six in ten (57%) women, almost half of men (46%), and most (82%) gender non-conforming people reported experiencing IPV. (Table 3.)

- Two in five women (41%), one in four men (25%), and one in three gender non-conforming people (32%) experienced physical and/or sexual IPV. (Data not in table.)

Most Californians have experienced IPV.

Approximately half of all men and women in California and more than 4 in 5 gender non-conforming people in the state – 16M Californians - have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV), including psychological and economic control as well as physical and sexual abuse from a current or former partner, in their lifetime.

Lethal IPV is not uncommon.

1 in 100 California men and 1 in 50 California women and gender non-conforming people, respectively, - almost 500,000 Californians - have experienced gun-related IPV in their lifetime.

1 in 50 California men, 1 in 10 California women, and 1 in 20 gender non-conforming people in the state – 2M Californians – have been choked or suffocated by a partner in their lifetime.

One in 17 Californians (6%) reported experiencing IPV in the past year, with gender non-conforming people significantly more likely than women and men to report this experience (22% vs. 6%, respectively). (Table 3.)

- Similarly, gender non-conforming people were more likely to have experienced specifically physical and/or sexual IPV (7% vs. 4% and 3%, respectively. (Data not in table.)

IPV in the Past Year is Not Uncommon.

1 in 17 California women and men, respectively, and more than 1 in 5 gender non-conforming Californians – 2M Californians - experienced past year intimate partner violence (IPV), including psychological control, economic control, physical abuse, or sexual abuse from a current or former partner.

VIOLENCE AFFECTING TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

Recognizing that gender identity is not always consistent with sex at birth, and with understanding of the disproportionate risk for violence faced by transgender people, even among LGBTQ+ groups (Nath et al., 2024), we sought to assess the prevalence of violence for transgender people in California. To maximize representation of transgender adults, we included a single item asking if participants ever lived as a transgender person. This approach allows us to recognize that an individual's gender can be fluid and that a person might previously have been transgender but may not be currently. Ninety participants responded yes to this item, which is 3% of the sample (with and without weighting); transgender identity ever was significantly correlated but not exclusively overlapping with current gender non-conforming identification.

We looked at the association between transgender identity ever and lifetime experiences of violence and found significant associations for:

- Lifetime physical violence: experienced by 81% of transgender people and 51% of cisgender people.
- Lifetime sexual violence: experienced by 92% of transgender people and 50% of cisgender people.
- Lifetime IPV: experienced by 83% of transgender people and 51% of cisgender people
- Lifetime policing experience (positive or negative interactions): 90% of transgender people and 68% of cisgender people
    - Among the subsample of individuals with interaction(s) with police, policing mistreatment was higher for transgender people (23%) compared with cisgender people (13%). (Note: This finding was marginally significant [p=0.06]; significance was likely affected by small cell sizes.)

Note: We only assessed lifetime/ever violence experiences due to small cell sizes when using violence in the past year variables and because our transgender variable was not defined based on current gender identity.

PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE BY STATE REGION

With recognition of the substantial variation in populations by state region, we also analyzed prevalence of physical violence, sexual violence, and IPV by region and gender. Small cell size precluded analysis for gender non-conforming people. Regions are defined as follows:

- **Bay Region** includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma, and Santa Cruz;
- **Central Valley** includes Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Yolo;
- **Mountain Valley** covers counties like Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mariposa, Tuolumne;
- **Northern California** includes Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity, Del Norte, Humboldt, Lassen, Modoc (cell sizes are too small to yield estimates for some prevalence data);
- **Southern California** features Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, Imperial, and parts of Central Coast counties like San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura.

Physical Violence by State Region

Table 4. Prevalence of physical violence by state region, California 2025

	Physical Violence Lifetime		Gun Violence Lifetime		Past Year Physical Violence	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Bay Region	45%	54%	9%	16%	4%	6%
Central Valley	56%	56%	18%	17%	7%	9%
Mountain Valley	53%	53%	18%	22%	4%	7%
Northern	59%	61%	–	–	–	19%
Southern	48%	50%	11%	18%	5%	8%

We see higher prevalence of physical violence ever in Northern California and the Central Valley relative to that seen in Southern California. We see greater gender disparity in physical violence ever and in the gun violence ever in the Bay Region relative to other regions in the state, with men at greater risk than women..

Table 5. Prevalence of sexual violence by state region, California 2025

	Sexual Violence Lifetime		Forced Sex Lifetime		Past Year Sexual Violence	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Bay Region	68%	36%	18%	4%	7%	7%
Central Valley	64%	45%	23%	6%	14%	11%
Mountain Valley	70%	29%	21%	–	9%	5%
Northern	82%	39%	23%	–	–	–
Southern	66%	33%	20%	5%	11%	6%

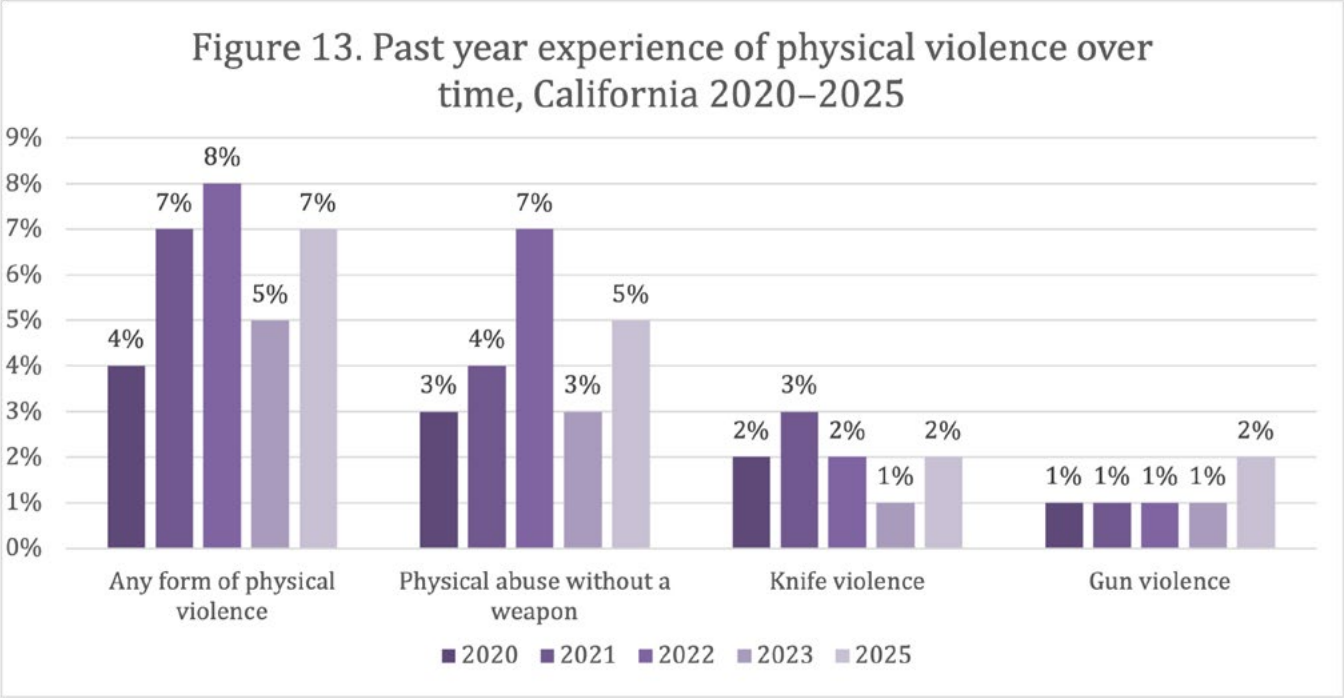
We see higher prevalence of lifetime sexual violence for women in Northern California relative to that seen in other state regions, with 82% reporting this experience, and lower prevalence of lifetime sexual violence for men in the mountain valley region compared to other regions, with 29% of men reporting this experience. Absent of data from Northern California, Central Valley has the highest prevalence of past year sexual violence.

Table 6. Prevalence of IPV by state region, California 2025

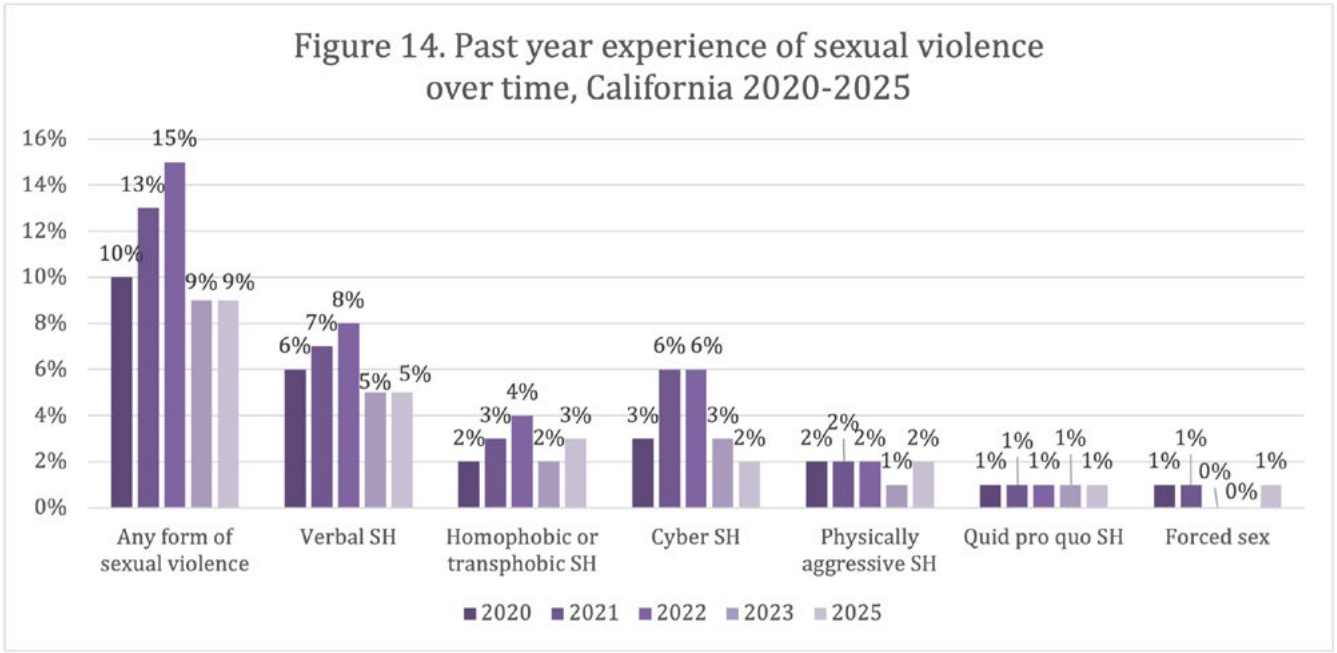
	IPV Lifetime		IPV Past Year		IPV Before Age 18	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Bay Region	55%	43%	8%	5%	10%	5%
Central Valley	61%	52%	4%	10%	12%	11%
Mountain Valley	60%	52%	6%	7%	10%	9%
Northern	63%	53%	–	–	–	–
Southern	57%	45%	7%	6%	10%	8%

The Bay Region sees lower prevalence of lifetime IPV overall compared with other regions, but not for IPV in the past year nor for IPV as a minor (i.e., before the age of 18 years).

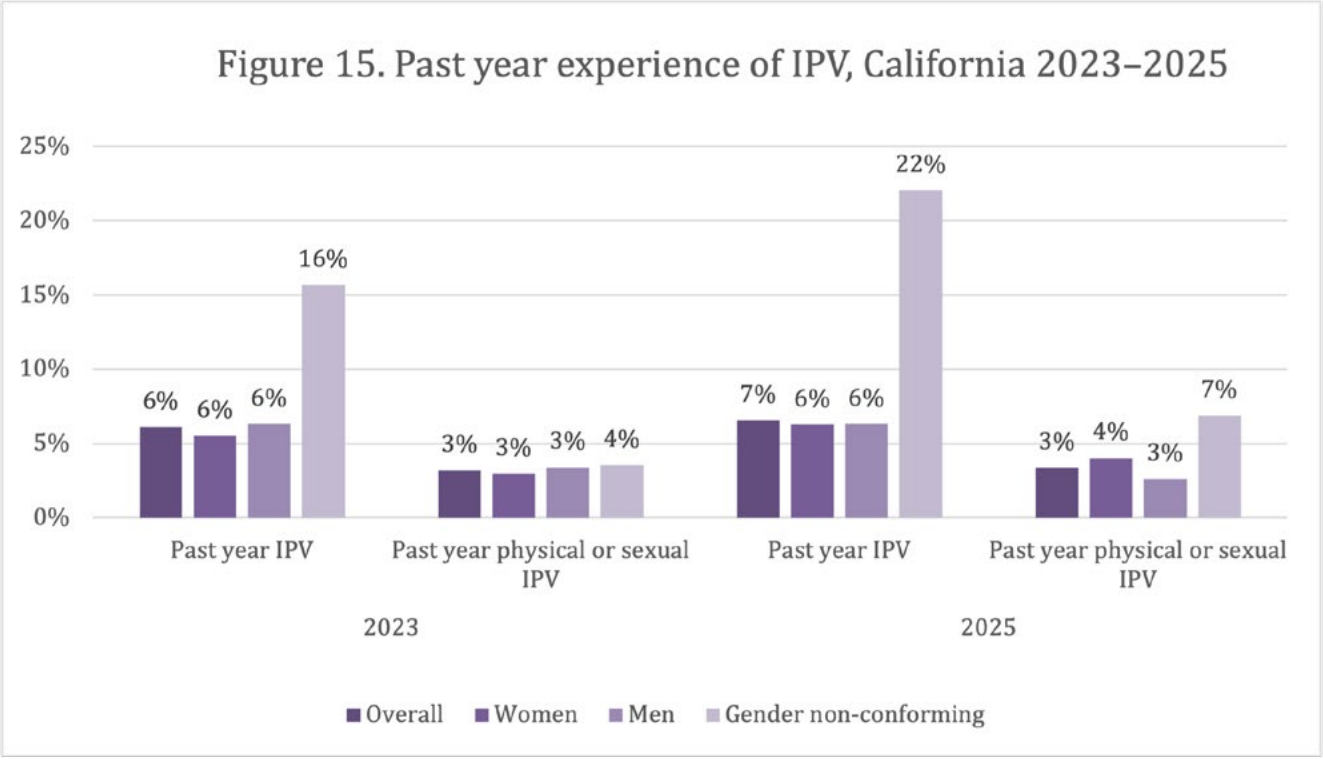
TIME TRENDS IN PAST YEAR VIOLENCE—2020 TO 2025



Significant changes in physical violence are seen from 2023 to 2025. (Fig. 13.)



Significant changes in sexual violence are not seen from 2023 to 2025, but there is some indication of a decline since the pandemic period, largely from cyber sexual harassment. (Fig. 14.)



Data for past year IPV are only available for 2023 and 2025. While limited change is seen, we do see a trend in the increase in past year IPV for gender non-conforming Californians. (Fig. 15.)

SOCIODEMOGRAPHICS AND PAST YEAR VIOLENCE

We assessed the associations between sociodemographic and economic risk factors and past year physical violence, sexual violence, and IPV. Differences noted below are statistically significant.

Sociodemographics Associated with Past Year Physical Violence

- Age: Young adult Californians (13% of those aged 25-34 years and 11% of those 18-24 years) were more likely to have experienced past year physical violence compared with those aged 35–44 years (8%), 45–54 years (8%), 55–64 years (1%), and those aged 65+ (2%).

- Race/Ethnicity: Hispanic (11%), Other/Multi-racial (11%) and Black (9%) Californians were more likely to have experienced past year physical violence than White (5%) and Asian (2%) Californians.

- Household Income: Risk for past year physical violence was greater for poorest compared with richest Californians. Physical violence was reported by 10% of adults in the lowest quintile ($0–$29,999) and the second lowest quintile ($30,000–$59,999), respectively, 7% of those in the middle quintile ($60,000–$99,999), 4% of those in the second highest quintile ($100,000–$149,999), and 1% in the highest quintile ($150,000 or more).

- Education: Physical violence in the past year was least likely for those with a college degree or higher (3%) compared with those with a high school diploma (10%), less than a high school diploma (9%), and those who with some college (8%).

- Sexual Orientation: Californians identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other self-described sexual identity were more likely to have experienced past year physical violence (14%), relative to heterosexual Californians (6%).

- Disability: Californians with a disability were twice as likely as those without a disability to have experienced past year physical violence (13% vs 6%).

- Metro/Non-Metro: Metro/non-metro area was not significantly associated with past year physical violence.

Sociodemographics Associated with Past Year Sexual Violence

- Age: Young adult Californians (16% of those aged 25-34 years and 22% of those 18-24 years) were more likely to have experienced past year sexual violence compared with those aged 35–44 years (11%), 45–54 years (7%), 55–64 years (5%), and those aged 65+ (2%).

- Race/Ethnicity: Hispanic (14%), Other/Multi-racial (18%) and Black (11%) Californians were more likely to have experienced past year sexual violence than White (6%) and Asian (4%) Californians.

- Household Income: Risk for past year sexual violence was greater for poorest compared with richest Californians. Sexual violence was reported by 11% of those in the lowest quintile ($0–$29,999), 12% of those in the second lowest quintile ($30,000–$59,999), 10% of those in

the middle quintile ($60,000–$99,999), 8% of those in the second highest quintile ($100,000–$149,999), and 5% in the highest quintile ($150,000 or more).

- Education: Sexual violence in the past year was least likely for those with a college degree or higher (4%) compared with those with less than a high school diploma (14%), those with a high school diploma (11%), and those with some college (11%).

- Sexual Orientation: Californians identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other self-described sexual identity were almost four times more likely to have experienced past year sexual violence relative to heterosexual Californians (27% vs 7%).

- Disability: Californians with a disability were more likely than those without a disability to have experienced past year sexual violence (13% vs 9%).

- Metro/Non-Metro: Metro/non-metro area was not significantly associated with past year sexual violence.

Sociodemographics Associated with Past Year IPV

- Age: Californians were more likely to have experienced past year IPV if they were under age 55. Prevalence of past year IPV was 9% for 18-24 year olds, 10% for 25-34 year olds, 8% for 35–44 year olds, 9% for 45–54 year olds, 4% for 55–64 year olds, and 1% for those aged 65+.

- Race/Ethnicity: Hispanic (9%) and Other/Multi-racial (11%) Californians were more likely to have experienced past year IPV than Black (6%), White (5%) and Asian (3%) Californians.

- Education: IPV in the past year was least likely for those with a college degree or higher (4%) and bachelor's degree (4%) compared with those with less than a high school diploma (10%), those with a high school diploma (8%), and those with some college (7%).

- Sexual Orientation: Californians identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other self-described sexual identity were twice as likely to have experienced past year IPV relative to heterosexual Californians (12% vs 6%).

- Disability: Californians with a disability were more likely than those without a disability to have experienced past year IPV (10% vs 6%).

- Household Income, Metro/Non-Metro: These demographics were not significantly associated with past year IPV.

ECONOMIC SHOCKS AND PAST YEAR VIOLENCE

We assessed past year experiences of economic shocks, which we defined as lacking sufficient money for food or other basic needs (deprivation), job loss, eviction, and homelessness in the past year. We evaluated the associations between these economic shocks and our past year violence outcomes- physical violence, sexual violence, and IPV.

Economic Deprivation, past year. One in four California women (27%) and men (26%), and two in three gender non-conforming people (65%) lacked sufficient money for food and other basic needs in the past year. Those who experienced this compared to those who did not were:

- almost 4x more likely to have experienced past year physical violence (15% vs 4%),
- more than 2x as likely to have experienced past year sexual violence (16% vs 7%), and
- almost 4x more likely to have experienced past year IPV (15% vs 4%).

Significant findings seen for the total sample also held true for all genders.

Job Loss, past year. More than one in 10 California women (11%), men (13%), and gender non-conforming people (14%) lost a job in the past year. Those who lost a job compared to those who had not were:

- significantly more likely to have experienced past year physical violence (10% vs 7%), and
- significantly more likely to have experienced past year sexual violence (13% vs 9%).
- We found no association between job loss and IPV in the past year.

Significant findings seen for the total sample also held true across all genders.

Eviction, past year. One in twenty-five California women (4%), one in thirty-three men (3%), and one in twenty- five gender non-conforming people (4%) had experienced eviction in the past year. Those who were evicted in the past year, compared to those who were not, were:

- more likely to have experienced past year physical violence (24% vs 6%),
- more likely to have experienced past year sexual violence (26% vs 9%), and
- more likely to have experienced past year IPV (30% vs 6%)

Significant findings seen for the total sample but not across all genders. Findings were specific to men.

Homelessness, past year. More than 1 in 16 women (6%), 1 in 14 men (7%), and 1 in 4 gender non-conforming (25%) people reported experiencing homelessness in the past year. Those reporting homelessness in the past year, compared to those without this past year history, were:

- Almost 5x more likely to have experienced past year physical violence (24% vs 5%),
- More than twice as likely to report past year sexual violence (23% vs 9%), and
- Almost 5x more likely to have experienced past year IPV (24% vs 5%).

Significant findings seen for the total sample also held true for all genders.

NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY, DISCRIMINATION, AND PAST YEAR VIOLENCE

Neighborhood Safety and Past Year Violence

Most Californians view their neighborhoods as safe – 18% extremely safe, 49% quite safe and 27% slightly safe; 6% of Californians view their neighborhoods as not at all safe. These perceptions were generally comparable among women (17% extremely safe, 49% quite safe, 29% slightly safe, and 5% not at all safe) and men (20%, 50%, 25%, and 6%, respectively), whereas gender non-conforming respondents were more likely to perceive their neighborhood as unsafe (4% extremely safe, 49% quite safe, 34% slightly safe, and 12% not at all safe).

Those who view their neighborhoods as not at all safe, compared to extremely/quite/slightly safe) were significantly more likely to have experienced:

- Past year physical violence (15% vs. 6%),
- Past year sexual violence (19% vs. 9%), and
- Past year IPV (11% vs. 6%)

Significant findings seen for the total sample also held true for all genders.

Discrimination and Past Year Violence

Everyday Discrimination and Past Year Violence

We asked participants about their experiences of Everyday Discrimination, using an eight-item validated scale that has been used previously in our CalVEX research (Raj et al., 2023; Williams et al., 1997, 2008) Around one in four respondents (26%) experience at least one of eight assessed forms of everyday discrimination in a typical week, with gender non-conforming people more likely than women and men reporting (71% of gender non-conforming people vs. 23% women and 27% men. These experiences included:

- being treated as if others are better than them (12%)
- being treated as unintelligent (9%)
- receiving poorer service in restaurants or stores (8%)
- being mocked or made fun of (6%)
- having others act afraid of them (6%)
- being treated as dishonest (6%)
- experiencing verbal abuse (4%)
- facing physical aggression such as being spat upon (1%)

Among those reporting everyday discrimination, perceived reasons for it were:

- race/ethnicity (32%)
- physical appearance (19%)
- income level/social class (10%)
- age (9%)
- gender (9%)
- sexual orientation (5%)
- religion (4%)
- disability (4%)
- immigration status (3%)
- political beliefs (2%)

**Participants could select more than one reason.*

Women and gender non-conforming people were more likely to indicate gender discrimination than were men.

Those reporting experiences of everyday discrimination, compared to those without these experiences, were:

- more than 5x as likely to report past year physical violence (17% vs. 3%),
- more than 4x as likely to report past year sexual violence (22% vs. 5%), and
- more than 3x as likely to have experienced past year IPV (14% vs 4%)

Significant findings seen for the total sample also held true for all genders.

Institutional Discrimination and Past Year Violence

We asked participants about their experiences using the Major Forms of Discrimination measure, a seven-item validated scale assessing various forms of institutional discrimination (Williams et al., 2008) that has been used previously in our CalVEX research(Raj, et al., 2023). More than one in three California adults (35%) have experienced institutional discrimination, with gender non-conforming people more likely than women and men to have had these experiences (79% of gender non-conforming people vs. 33% of women and 36% of men). These experiences included:

- being unfairly fired or denied a promotion (14%),
- being unfairly passed over for a job opportunity" (14%),
- being unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police (10%),
- being unfairly discouraged by a teacher or advisor from continuing my education (7%),
- being unfairly prevented from moving into a neighborhood because the landlord or a realtor refused to rent or sell me a house or apartment (4%),
- moved into a neighborhood where neighbors made life difficult for me and my family (6%), and
- had difficulty getting a mortgage or a loan from a bank (5%).

Among those reporting institutional discrimination, perceived reasons for it were most often race/ethnicity (25%), gender (13%), income level or social class (12%), and age (10%). Women and gender non-conforming people, as well as transgender people, were more likely to indicate gender discrimination than were men. **Participants could select more than one reason.*

Those reporting experiences of institutional discrimination, compared to those without this history, were:

- almost 3x more likely to report past year physical violence (11% vs. 4%),
- more than 3x as likely to report past year sexual violence (16% vs. 5%), and
- almost 3x more likely to have experienced past year IPV (11% vs 4%)

Significant findings seen for the total sample also held true for all genders.

Abusive Policing Experiences and Past Year Violence

Past Year Violence from Police

Examining reported perpetrators of past year physical and sexual violence, we found that one in 143 Californians (0.7%) experienced physical and/or sexual policing violence in the past year. Given that only 17% report contact with the police in the past year, at least one in 6 people who had police contact in the past year experienced policing violence.

Policing and Mistreatment from Police

We asked Californians if they had ever been approached or stopped by the police and, if yes, if the experience occurred within the past year. Gender non-conforming people experiencing more contact with police than did women and men. We found that:

- 69% had ever been stopped or approached by the police (65% of women, 73% of men and 81% of gender non-conforming people);
- 17% were stopped or approached by the police in the past year (14% of women, 19% of men, and 44% of gender non-conforming people).

We also asked about individuals' most recent experience of being approached or stopped by the police to assess treatment by police. Men were more likely than women to experience mistreatment from police. One in seven people (13%), were treated somewhat or very badly (mistreatment) at their most recent incident with the police- 11% of women, and 14% of men. Given concerns regarding differential treatment by police based on demographic profiles, we assessed whether policing mistreatment differed by race/ethnicity and found:

- Black and Latine Californians were more likely to have experienced mistreatment from police at last police interaction relative to White and Asian respondents (19% of Black and 18% of Hispanic/Latine people compared to 9% of White and 8% of Asian people, respectively).

Those reporting police mistreatment at most recent experience with police, compared to those reporting no mistreatment at most recent police interaction, were:

- 3x more likely to report past year physical violence (18% vs. 6%),
- 2x as likely to report past year sexual violence (19% vs. 9%).
- almost 2x likely to report past IPV (10% vs 6%).

These findings held true across gender as well.

Incarceration and Violence

Incarceration Ever

Almost 1 in 8 (13%) of California adults have been incarcerated for 48 hours or more in their lifetimes. Men are more than twice as likely as women to have been incarcerated, and gender non-conforming people were more than four times more likely than women to have been incarcerated (8% of women,18% of men, and 37% of gender non-conforming people).

Those with a history of incarceration compared to those without this history were:

- 5x more likely to have experienced past year physical violence (22% vs 4%),
- over 2x more likely to have experienced past year sexual violence (19% vs 8%), and
- 4x more likely to have experienced past year IPV (19% vs 5%).

These findings held true by gender as well.

One in 20 (5%) of California adults were incarcerated as minors (<18; 3% of women,7% of men and 26% of gender non-conforming people). Almost 1 in 33 (3%); were incarcerated before the age of 16 (1% of women, 4% of men, and 16% of gender non-conforming people).

Incarceration in the Past Year

About 3% of respondents had experienced past year incarceration, 4% of men (1 in 25 men) and 2% of women, documenting significantly higher past year incarceration by gender.

Those who experienced past year incarceration compared to those who had not were:

- almost 5x as likely to have experienced past year physical violence (29% vs 6%),
- almost 3x as likely to have experienced past year sexual violence (25% vs 9%), and
- almost 5x as likely to have experienced past year IPV (29% vs 6%).

These findings held true for each gender as well.

PAST YEAR VIOLENCE, MENTAL HEALTH, AND SUBSTANCE USE OUTCOMES

Past Year Violence and Depression/Anxiety

Those reporting past year physical violence, past year sexual violence, and past year IPV were significantly more likely to report anxiety and/or depression symptoms. Using the PHQ-4 mental health assessment of depression and anxiety (Kroenke, et al., 2009), we were able to categorize respondents as having either normal, mild, moderate, or severe symptoms of depression and/or anxiety in the past two weeks. Most Californians (54%) reported no mental health symptoms, 25% reported mild depression/anxiety, 13% reported moderate depression/anxiety, and 8% reported severe depression/anxiety.

These symptoms of depression and/or anxiety were generally similar among women (51% no mental health, 27% mild, 14% moderate, and 7% severe) and men (57%, 23%, 13%, and 8%, respectively), whereas gender non-conforming respondents more likely to report (16% no mental health, 31% mild, 35% moderate, and 18% severe).

Past year experiences of violence associated with depression/anxiety were as follows:

- Those who experienced past year physical violence were significantly more likely than those without these experiences have depression/anxiety.
  - *Past Year Physical Violence Yes:* 22% normal, 29% mild, 24% moderate, 24% severe.
  - *Past Year Physical Violence No:* 56% normal, 25% mild, 13% moderate, and 7% severe.
- Those who experienced past year sexual violence were significantly more likely than those without these experiences have depression/anxiety.
  - *Past Year Sexual Violence Yes:* 28% normal, 28% mild, 28% moderate, and 16% severe.
  - *Past Year Sexual Violence No:* 56% normal, 25% mild, 12% moderate, and 7% severe.
- Those who experienced past year IPV were significantly more likely than those without these experiences to experience depression/anxiety.
  - *Past Year IPV Yes:* 22% normal, 29% mild, 31% moderate, 19% severe.
  - *Past Year IPV No:* 56% normal, 25% mild, 12% moderate, and 7% severe.

Significant findings seen for the total sample also held true for each gender.

Past Year Violence and Suicidality

One in 14 of Californians (7%) seriously considered suicide in the past year, with a significant difference seen by gender (6% of women, 7% of men, and 40% of gender non-conforming).

- Those who experienced past year physical violence were 5x more likely than those without these experiences to be suicidal in the past year.
  - *Past Year Physical Violence Yes:* 29% suicidal in the past year.
  - *Past Year Physical Violence No:* 6% suicidal in the past year.

- Those who experienced past year sexual violence were over 4x more likely than those without these experiences to be suicidal in the past year.
  - *Past Year Sexual Violence Yes:* 23% suicidal in the past year.
  - *Past Year Sexual Violence No:* 6% suicidal in the past year.
- Those who experienced past year IPV were 6x more likely than those without these experiences to be suicidal in the past year.
  - *Past Year IPV Yes:* 33% suicidal in the past year.
  - *Past Year IPV No:* 5% suicidal in the past year.

Significant findings seen for the total sample also held true for each gender.

Past Year Violence and Binge Alcohol Use

More than 1 in 4 Californians (28%) reported binge alcohol use in the past 30 days (4 to 5 or more drinks in one sitting); 24% women, 32% men, and 57% gender non-conforming people.

- Those who experienced past year physical violence were 2x as likely as those without these experiences to have engaged in binge alcohol use in the past 30 days.
  - *Past Year Physical Violence Yes*: 53% engaged in binge alcohol use in the past 30 days.
  - *Past Year Physical Violence No:* 26% engaged in binge alcohol use in the past 30 days.
- Those who experienced past year sexual violence were 2x as likely as those without these experiences to have engaged in binge alcohol use in the past 30 days.
  - *Past Year Sexual Violence Yes:* 50% engaged in binge alcohol use in the past 30 days.
  - *Past Year Sexual Violence No:* 26% engaged in binge alcohol use in the past 30 days.
- Those who experienced past year IPV were more than 2x as likely than those without these experiences to have engaged in binge alcohol use in the past 30 days.
  - *Past Year IPV Yes:* 56% engaged in binge alcohol use in the past 30 days.
  - *Past Year IPV No:* 26% engaged in binge alcohol use in the past 30 days.

Significant findings seen for the total sample also held true for each gender.

Past Year Violence and Illicit Drug Use

More than 1 in 7 Californians (13%) reported illicit drug use (excluding marijuana) in the past 30 days, with significant differences by gender (women: 10%, men: 15%, gender non-conforming people: 55%).

- Those who experienced past year physical violence were more than 5x as likely as those without these experiences to have engaged in illicit drug use in the past 30 days.
  - *Past Year Physical Violence Yes:* 49% engaged in illicit drug use in the past 30 days.
  - *Past Year Physical Violence No:* 10% engaged in illicit drug use in the past 30 days.
- Those who experienced past year sexual violence were 3x more likely than those without these experiences to have engaged in illicit drug use in the past 30 days.
  - *Past Year Sexual Violence Yes:* 30% engaged in illicit drug use in the past 30 days.
  - *Past Year Sexual Violence No:* 11% engaged in illicit drug use in the past 30 days.
- Those who experienced past year IPV were 4x more likely than those without these experiences to have engaged in illicit drug use in the past 30 days.
  - *Past Year IPV Yes:* 43% engaged in illicit drug use in the past 30 days.
  - *Past Year IPV No:* 11% engaged in illicit drug use in the past 30 days.

Significant findings seen for the total sample also held true for each gender.

SELF-REPORTED PERPETRATION OF VIOLENCE

Self-Reported Perpetration of Physical Violence

One in five California adults (20%) indicated that they perpetrated some form of physical violence in their lifetime (hereafter referred to as ever); men and gender non-conforming people were more likely than women (24% and 49%, respectively vs. 15% of women) to have perpetrated physical violence ever.

- Those who had experienced physical violence ever were about 6x more likely to have perpetrated physical violence at some point during their lifetimes- 34% of those who had experienced physical violence ever compared to 6% of those who had not experienced physical violence.

One in 33 Californian adults (3%) perpetrated physical violence in the past year (2% of women, 4% of men, and 17% of gender non-conforming people).

- Those who experienced physical violence in the past year were 28 times more likely to report perpetrating physical violence in the past year compared with those who did not (28% vs. 1%).
- Most people who reported perpetrating physical violence in the past year indicated that there were no consequences for their committing violence (52%; 51% of women, and 53% of men). [Note: Cell size was too small to assess this specifically for gender non-conforming people.]
  - 18% of physical violence perpetrators indicated a formal complaint was filed against them due to the violence (18% of women, and 18% of men.)

One in 10 of those reporting this behavior (11%) were arrested due to the violence (5% of women, and 14% of men).

Self-Reported Perpetration of Sexual Violence

One in seven California adults (14%) indicated that they perpetrated some form of sexual violence (harassment or assault) in their lifetime; men and gender non-conforming people were more likely than women (18% and 47%, respectively vs. 9% of women) to have perpetrated sexual violence ever. Only 1% of Californians indicated perpetration of forced sex.

One in 25 Californian adults (4%) perpetrated sexual violence in the past year; gender non-conforming people were more likely than women and men (33% vs. 2% and 4%, respectively) to have perpetrated sexual violence in the past year.

- Those who had experienced sexual violence in the past year were 10x more likely to have perpetrated sexual violence in the past year – 21% of those who had experienced sexual violence in the past, compared to 2% of those who had not experienced sexual violence.
- Most people who reported perpetrating sexual violence in the past year indicated there were no consequences for their violence (46%; 48% of women, and 44% of men).
  - One in seven (14%) indicated a formal complaint was filed against them due to the violence (16% of women, and 13% of men).
  - One in 16 (6%) were arrested due to the violence (7% of women, and 5% of men).
  - One in 10 (10%) lost their jobs due to the violence (4% of women, 13% of men).

Self-Reported Perpetration of IPV in the Past Year

Using a single item, we asked participants if they had perpetrated physical and/or sexual IPV in the past year. One in 50 California adults (2%) indicated that they had engaged in this behavior (1% of women, 2% of men, and 18% of gender non-conforming people).

Those who had experienced IPV in the past year were 14x more likely to have perpetrated IPV in the past year–14% of those who had experienced IPV in the past year also perpetrated IPV in the past year, compared to 1% of those who had not experienced IPV in the past year.

FIREARM OWNERSHIP AND ATTITUDES

About one-fifth (22%) of adults in California own a firearm- 15% of women, 29% of men, and 46% of gender non-conforming people report owning a firearm.

- Fewer people reported being a registered owner (11%; 16% of men, 6% of women, and 4% of gender non-conforming people), indicating that many who own firearms do not register them.
- Nearly one in five California adults (19%) have received firearm training (12% of women, 26% of men, and 28% of gender non-conforming people), again indicating that more people own firearms than have received firearm training.
- Californians who have experienced gun violence are more likely to own a firearm: 28% of people who have experienced gun violence in their lifetime own a firearm, compared to 21% of those who have never experienced gun violence.

One in eight Californians (13%) keep a firearm for home safety (9% of women, 17% of men, and 2% of gender non-conforming people); 6% have a firearm for sport (9% of men, 3% of women, and 2% of gender non-conforming people).

About one in 17 Californians (6%) have purchased a firearm in the past year- 3% of women, 8% of men, and 18% of gender non-conforming people.

- Californians who have experienced gun violence in the past year are more likely to have purchased a gun in the past year- 27% of people who experienced gun violence in the past year purchased a firearm during the same time frame, compared to 6% of those who did not experience gun violence in the past year.

Firearm norms – i.e., growing up with firearms in the household, perceptions of firearm ownership in their community, and interest in owning firearms – are not common.

- Nearly one in five respondents (18%) grew up with firearms in their homes (16% of women, 20% of men, and 26% of gender non-conforming people).
- One in ten respondents (10%) believed that most people in their neighborhood had a firearm (9% of women, 11% of men, and 3% of gender non-conforming people).
- Most California adults (61%) say they “would not keep a firearm in/around my home” (68% of women, 56% of men, and 34% of gender non-conforming people).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVISM

Community Engagement and Problem Solving

About 1 in 6 respondents (18%) reported working with fellow citizens to solve a community problem in the past 12 months- 16% of women, 19% of men, and 46% of gender non-conforming people.

Participation in Public Activism

One in seven California adults (14%) indicated that they perpetrated some form of sexual violence We asked Californians if they participated in a public activism event (e.g., protest rally, demonstration, or march) in the past year. Gender non-conforming people were more likely than women and men to have attended this type of an event in the past year.

- One in five Californians (21%) participated in a public activism event in the past year- 20% of women, 20% of men, and 54% of gender non-conforming people.

We about whether individuals engaged in events for liberal, conservative, or non-partisan causes.

- One in seven California adults (14%) participated in a public activism event for a liberal cause (15% of women, 13% of men, and 40% of gender non-conforming people).
- One in twelve Californians (8%) participated in a public activism event for a conservative cause (6% of women, 9% of men, and 24% of gender non-conforming people).
- One in nine Californians (11%) attended a public activism event for a non-partisan or non-political cause (10% of women and men, respectively, and 32% of gender non-conforming people).

Safety and Security Experiences during Public Activism Events

We asked respondents about their experiences of violence while participating in public activism events. Among those participating in activism:

- One in five (20%) experienced violence or threats from others at activism events (15% of women, and 23% of men).
- One in eight (12%) experienced violence or threats from police or military at activism events (8% of women, and 14% of men).
- One in eight (12%) brought firearms to activism events (6% of women and 16% of men). While there was not a significant gender difference, lack of significance was likely due to small cell sizes.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

While findings from this work offer important insight into the scope and scale of violence experiences in California at the population level, findings should be considered in light of certain study limitations.

Limited data availability of certain minority groups and vulnerable populations: Because of the relatively small sample size, some groups, like indigenous people, were too small in number to allow for findings specific to these populations. Also, this survey excluded people without mailing addresses, such as currently homeless individuals and institutionalized populations (e.g., in prison or jail, residential treatment, and homeless shelters). We also have underrepresentation of foreign-born residents and some racial/ethnic groups due to the availability of the survey only in English and Spanish, and because those without documentation and those who are migratory are less likely to be available to panel studies. Finally, we could not include minor aged participants, limiting our understanding of violence against children and adolescents, though we did include retrospective reporting on violence experiences in childhood and adolescence among this adult sample, offering some insight into this.

Reliance on self-report measures and challenges in violence assessment: Physical, sexual, and intimate partner violence measures rely on retrospective self-reports by those who have experienced and committed violence. Self-reported data collection can generate underreporting if victims or perpetrators conceal victimization or perpetration, misunderstand questions, or forget about violent occurrences. We therefore are likely underestimating the actual rates of experiences of violence in the state.

Prior research, including our own, has identified that inclusion of more items to assess experiences of violence elicits higher prevalence of violence experiences, because disclosure is more likely. Given the brevity of our survey, we had to limit the number of items included to assess each form of violence, likely yielding underestimates. Survey underreporting is likely an even greater concern when assessing perpetration behaviors, given both the greater social stigma and criminality of these behaviors. Lower prevalence of experiences of violence as compared to prevalence of committing violence against others is thus expected, but this differential may also support the conclusion that people who commit violence against others may have multiple victims. In this survey, we include an open-ended measure for physical and sexual violence experiences, respectively, to help elucidate quantitative findings and offer more insight into experiences of violence faced in the state.

Limited analysis of correlates of violence: To ensure response to the full survey and adherence to survey administration organization standards, the survey was limited to take approximately 15 minutes and is therefore rather short. Consequently, we are limited in the correlates of violence that can be explored, though we did include key demographics and health outcomes. We hope the information collected and presented here will be explored in greater detail in future surveys and research.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings from the 2025 CalVEX survey show that violence remains a pervasive and deeply inequitable public health crisis in California. While past year prevalence of sexual violence did not change significantly from 2023 to 2025, past year physical violence increased significantly indicate a troubling return to pandemic-era levels of physical violence and persistent high levels of sexual violence. More than fifteen million California adults have experienced physical violence and sexual violence, respectively, in their lifetime. Approximately five million experienced this violence in the past year.

Violence continues to fall disproportionately on communities with fewer social and economic protections. Women and gender non-conforming adults face elevated risks of intimate partner violence and sexual harassment or assault, while men continue to experience higher prevalence of weapon-involved and public-space violence. Black, Hispanic/Latine, multiracial, and LGBTQ+ including gender non-conforming Californians, as well as individuals experiencing economic deprivation, disability, discrimination, housing instability, or incarceration, carry substantially higher burdens of harm and its consequences.

The study also documents the significant mental health and substance use impacts linked to recent violence. Adults experiencing past year violence had markedly higher rates of severe depression or anxiety, suicidality, and binge alcohol or illicit drug use. At the same time, most survivors never report incidents formally, underscoring the limited reach of criminal-legal responses and the importance of community-based and health-focused supports.

Structural conditions—economic insecurity, discriminatory policing, institutionalized bias, and rising firearm access—continue to shape both vulnerability and recovery. Yet the state's capacity to respond is threatened by ongoing federal funding cuts, particularly to Medicaid and the Crime Victims Fund. Sustained, evidence-based, and equity-focused state investment remains essential to protect communities, expand support for survivors, and prevent future violence.

California faces a critical moment. Data from CalVEX 2025 clearly indicate the need for comprehensive, long-term strategies that address the intersecting social and economic factors contributing to violence, while strengthening community resilience and ensuring access to services for those most affected

Despite uncertainty, doubling down on prevention investments is essential to stem violence. Addressing systemic issues such as poverty, inequity, and discrimination based on race, ability, sexual orientation, and gender identity remains critical.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Violence prevention and survivor support must be a sustained priority in the state budget. Ongoing threats to Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding continue to imperil survivor support. In 2025, more than $80 million in grants earmarked for violence prevention programs in California were terminated by the Trump administration (Mihalovich, 2025). These cuts affected innovative initiatives such as a novel hospital-based intervention program in Oakland, reentry programs, and women's shelters. Stable funding is necessary to combat what appears to be rising violence in the state. Public-private partnerships may also help reduce stress on the state budget and reliance on federal funding.

Our report highlights the ways that violence relates to discrimination, mental health, gender identity and sexual orientation, and economic well-being. Given resource constraints, which are further exacerbated by federal budget cuts, our data suggest prevention and support programs should focus on these priority areas.

2. Policies must work to reduce violence and discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community. Our results show LGBTQ+ communities experience some of the highest rates of violence in the state; LGBTQ+ including gender non-conforming individuals face outsized risk of hate crimes, physical abuse, street harassment, and state violence, and contend with the consequences of such violence. Suicidality among younger LGBTQ+ individuals is elevated. The Trevor Project reports that between 2023 and 2024, 39% of younger LGBTQ+ people seriously contemplated suicide (Nath et al., 2024). These rates were significantly higher among transgender and gender non-conforming people, and among Native/Indigenous American individuals. This elevated risk of suicidality is partially driven by marginalization and victimization, including anti-LGBTQ+ messaging, which can worsen mental health symptoms.

Recent challenges to inclusive curricula, bathroom and sports team access for transgender individuals, and attempts to limit or eradicate gender-affirming care for youth place a spotlight on LGBTQ+ youth. This negative attention heightens their vulnerability, increasing susceptibility to violence and exploitation. Violence prevention efforts—especially within schools—are crucial; evidence suggests school-based policies to address anti-LGBTQ+ bullying are effective at reducing both bullying and suicidality among school-aged LGBTQ+ students. LGBTQ+ youth who receive support from their homes or schools are more resilient and less likely to report depression, anxiety, or suicidality. Thus, programs fostering social support in the LGBTQ+ community are necessary.

Stable state funding and legislative support for preventive efforts should be prioritized, especially in light of the loss of support to life-saving crisis prevention programs, such as the LGBTQ+ youth crisis and suicide hotline. State-specific initiatives, including California's AB727 bill (signed October 2025), which mandates inclusion of LGBTQ+ crisis hotline information on older students' ID cards, may partially offset the negative effects of federal policy on Californians.

Policies should also consider cumulative and multi-dimensional disadvantage, as data suggest factors such as housing precarity can influence suicidality among LGBTQ+ people. This is consistent with our finding that the risk of violence for those with housing insecurity writ large is higher. Moreover, data suggests transgender and gender non-conforming Californians face heightened interactions with the carceral state, suggesting the importance of structural interventions that address these inequities.

3. Violence prevention efforts should prioritize financial stability and economic well-being.
We find that economic precarity increases the risk of violence. Rates of physical, sexual, and intimate partner violence are higher for those who struggle to meet their basic needs, were recently evicted, or faced a recent job loss. Additionally, past year physical IPV was significantly higher among adults in the lowest income quintile (4.3%) than in the highest (1.5%).

IPV also imposes economic consequences. More than one-third of women who experienced past year physical violence reported missing work or school, along with nearly 30% of men and 21% of gender non-conforming adults. Fourteen percent of women, 15% of men, and 8% of gender non-conforming adults reported missing work or school following sexual harassment or abuse. Productivity losses from missed work can have significant financial repercussions for survivors, perpetrators, and the state.

Prevention efforts should center economic independence for individuals at high risk of violence. Programs promoting economic stability and independence can help guard against IPV, as poverty and abuse are interdependent; economic vulnerability fosters dependence that allows abusers to maintain power. Policies must also address structural conditions that exacerbate financial instability and create individual financial crises. In California, this means addressing surging housing, food, energy, and childcare costs.

4. Discrimination and abusive policing practices must be tackled to further the effectiveness of violence prevention efforts.
More than a quarter of Californians (26%) report experiencing discrimination in a typical week, a three-point increase since 2023. Reports of physical and sexual violence are more common among adults who report everyday discrimination. One in three Californians reports experiencing institutional discrimination, and physical and sexual violence are more than three times higher among adults who face such discrimination.

A subset of Californians who had police contact reported violence from law enforcement, with Black and Hispanic/Latine Californians more likely to experience mistreatment. Adults reporting police mistreatment also report higher rates of physical and sexual violence. Perceptions of over-policing and police misconduct fuel underreporting of crimes and skepticism among victims, particularly LGBTQ+ community members and Black women. Excessive force erodes trust in law enforcement and limits the effectiveness of criminal justice-centered strategies. Non-carceral options—such as social-worker-led responses, health educator-driven prevention programming, and victim services—may produce better outcomes.

5. Policy efforts should continue to emphasize firearm prevention.
California has among the strongest gun control policies in the nation, yet gun violence remains common: one in seven Californians has experienced firearm-related threats or violence. More than one in five Californians owns a firearm. Six percent of California adults purchased a new firearm in the past year; 27% of these new owners had experienced firearm-involved incidents, raising concerns about retaliatory violence.

California already has strong firearm safety laws, but additional initiatives could further reduce harm. Violence prevention efforts could improve firearm safety practices among owners and increase public understanding of firearm-related risk-reduction policies.

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APPENDIX A: POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR VIOLENCE EVER, CALIFORNIA

APPENDIX A Table. Violence rates and state estimates for California Adults, 2025

	Women		Men		Gender non-Conforming	
	Wt. %	Population Number	Wt. %	Population Number	Wt. %	Population Number
TOTAL POPULATION 18+	**50%**	**15.50 Million (M)**	**48%**	**14.88 Million (M)**	**2%**	**.62 Million (M)**
Physical Violence	49%	7.60M	52%	7.74M	87%	0.54M
Gun Violence	12%	1.86M	18%	2.68M	27%	0.17M
Sexual Violence	67%	10.39M	34%	5.06M	85%	0.53M
Forced Sex	20%	3.10M	5%	0.74M	19%	0.12M
Any IPV	57%	8.84M	46%	6.84M	82%	0.51M
IPV Reproductive Coercion	3%	0.47M	1%	0.15M	2%	0.01M
IPV Forced Sex	17%	2.64M	3%	0.45M	14%	0.09M
IPV with a Gun	2%	0.31M	1%	0.15M	2%	0.01M
IPV Chocking / Suffocation	10%	1.55M	2%	0.30M	5%	0.03M

NOTE: Data are from the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Community Survey (ACS) for the period of 2019-2023 and July 1, 2024 estimates.

APPENDIX B: POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR PAST YEAR EVER, CALIFORNIA

APPENDIX B Table. Violence rates and state estimates for California Adults, 2025

	Women		Men		Gender non-Conforming	
	Wt. %	Population Number	Wt. %	Population Number	Wt. %	Population Number
TOTAL POPULATION 18+	**50%**	**15.50 Million (M)**	**48%**	**14.88 Million (M)**	**2%**	**.62 Million (M)**
Physical Violence	5%	0.78M	8%	1.19M	25%	0.16M
Gun Violence	1%	0.16M	3%	0.45M	7%	0.04M
Sexual Violence	10%	1.55M	7%	1.04M	49%	0.30M
Forced Sex	1%	0.16M	0%	_	0%	_
Any IPV	6%	0.93M	6%	0.89M	22%	0.14M
IPV Reproductive Coercion	0%	_	0%	_	0%	_
IPV Forced Sex	2%	0.31M	0%	_	3%	0.02M
IPV with a Gun	0%	_	0%	_	1%	0.01M
IPV Chocking / Suffocation	1%	0.16M	0%	_	2%	0.01M

NOTE: Data are from the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Community Survey (ACS) for the period of 2019-2023 and July 1, 2024 estimates.

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