

Victim Interviews

Characteristics of Diverse Victim Groups

This is a summary of the characteristics of the diverse victim callers to the Help Line who were interviewed. Victims of various racial and ethnic backgrounds as well as a small, but sufficient number (24) of male victims were interviewed to be able to ascertain some distinct needs and differences. Service needed, demographic characteristics, employment status, living arrangements, type of abuse, help-seeking behaviors, and their relationship to their abusers for each group interviewed are described.

The Study

In 2004 and 2005, 399 victim callers to the City of Chicago Domestic Violence Help Line participated in a telephone interview with a CURL researcher.

9% of the interviews were conducted in another language, predominately Spanish.

Types of Services Victims Interviewed Needed

There were differences between groups in the type of services they were seeking:

- Black victims were more likely to be seeking shelter than other racial/ethnic groups.
- White and Latino victims interviewed were more likely to be seeking counseling than Black victims (although not statistically significant).
- Latino victims were more likely to be seeking legal services, Orders of Protection and general information than other groups.

Demographics of Victims Interviewed

Demographics of Victim callers to the Help Line who were interviewed

	Black	Latino	White
Interviewed	60%	19%*	18%
Age Range	18-61	18-69	18-55
Average Age	31.7	31.6	36**
Women	94%	92%	94%

Victim Callers to the Help Line

56% Black
20% Latino
15% White

6% Men

* Nearly half of the Latino victims (43%) were interviewed in Spanish. All men were interviewed in English

**The mean age of White victims who were interviewed was significantly older than Black or Latino callers who were interviewed.

Male Victims Interviewed

- The male victims who were interviewed were significantly older than the women interviewed. Men ranged in age from 24 to 61, with a mean age of 37.

Employment Status of Victims Interviewed

- Black victims had significantly lower rates of employment (43%) compared to Latino (53%) and White (61%) interviewed victims.
- 66% of the male interviewed victims were employed, which was higher than the employment rate of women (49%), but this was not a statistically significant difference.

Disability Status of Victims Interviewed

- White interviewed victims were the most likely to report being disabled (7%) compared to 3% of Blacks and 1% of Latinos.
- Only one man reported being disabled.

Housing Stability of Victims Interviewed

- Black victims were significantly less likely to be permanently housed (14%) compared to Latino (5%) and White (8%) interviewed victims.
- Of the victims not permanently housed, circumstances included living in shelter, living in an institution, and doubling up with family or friends.
- All of the men interviewed lived in stable housing, while 11% of the women reported that they did not have permanent housing. This difference is marginally significant.

Living Arrangements of Victims Interviewed

- White interviewed victims were significantly more likely to live alone (26%) than Latino (10%) or Black (13%) victims.
- Of those living with others, there were differences in the average number of people in the household, ranging from 3.13 for Latinos, to 2.56 for Blacks and 2.43 for Whites.
- Men (67%) were less likely than women (87%) to be living with someone.

Children in the Household of Victims Interviewed

- Latinos were the most likely to have minor children in the household (82%) than Blacks (66%) or Whites (51%).
 - Of these victims with children, Latinos averaged more children in the household (2.42) than Black (2.25) or White (1.77) victims.
- White victims (11%) were significantly less likely to have older boys (age 12 –17), than Black (22%) or Latino (18%) victims.
- Only 25% of men had children, and in those households there was only one child.

Type of Abuse of Victims Interviewed

- 95% of all victims experienced emotional abuse.
- Latinos (17%) indicated sexual abuse significantly more than Blacks (9%) or Whites (4%).
- 71% of males experienced physical abuse and 4% reported experiencing sexual abuse.

Whom Interviewed Victims Talked to About Abuse

- Interviewed victims across groups commonly reported talking to family (82%), friends (80%) and police (77%).
 - White victims reported talking to a counselor more (57%) than Black (33%) or Latino (41%) victims.
 - White victims reported talking to an attorney (46%) more than Black (27%) or Latino (36%) victims.
 - Non-English speakers reported talking to friends less (67%) than English-speakers (81%).
 - Non-English speakers reported speaking to their doctors less (19%) than English-speakers (36%).
 - Non-English speakers reported talking to a court advocate less (13%) than English-speakers (41%).
 - Non-English speakers reported speaking to clergy more (33%) than English-speakers (19%).

Relationship of Interviewed Victim to Abuser

- In most cases, the victims were in heterosexual relationships, but there were some in same sex relationships.
 - Males (25%) were more likely to be in same sex relationships than females (2%).
- There was not one predominate type of relationship between the victim and abuser.
- Latinos (47%) and Whites (43%) were more likely to be married to their abuser than Blacks (23%).
- Whites (22%) and Blacks (23%) were more likely to be abused by an ex-spouse or partner than Latinos (15%).