

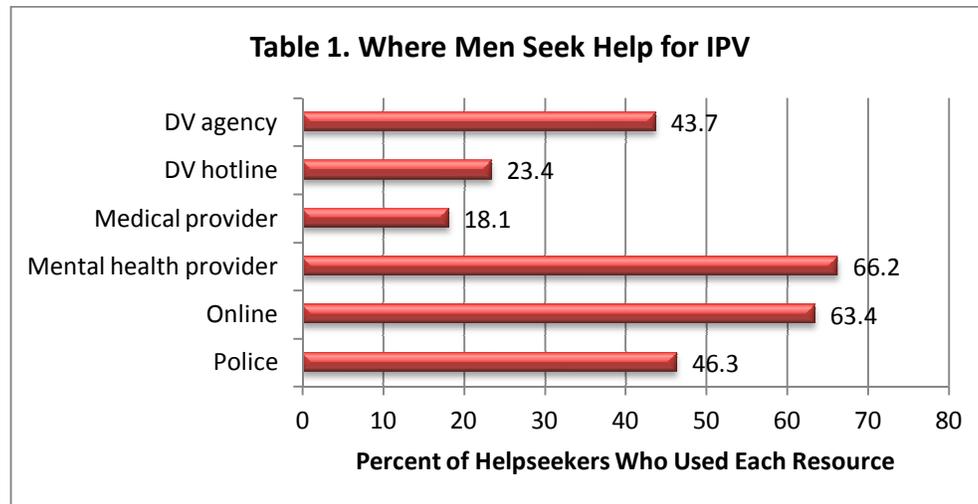
THE MEN'S EXPERIENCES WITH PARTNER AGGRESSION PROJECT

Where Do Men Seek Help and How Helpful Are Those Resources?

This fact sheet and the others in this series summarize the results of a study that Drs. Denise A. Hines and Emily M. Douglas conducted in 2008 about men who sustained intimate partner violence (IPV) from their female partners and sought help. In this study, which was funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, 302 men participated in an online survey; we recruited them through advertising on websites that dealt primarily with men's issues and through the Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men and Women. Men reported about the level of IPV (psychological, sexual, and physical) that they both sustained from and perpetrated against their female partners, their mental health status (post traumatic stress, alcohol and substance use), and their experiences with seeking help. The experiences of these helpseekers were compared to a population-based or community sample of 520 men who were recruited to participate either through a random digit dial telephone or Internet survey. For more information, results, and media mentions about this study, please visit our study [website](#).

WHERE DO MEN SEEK HELP FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE VICTIMIZATION?

Our research indicates that the majority of men who have sustained IPV seek help from informal resources, but that formal resources are routinely used as well; see Table 1.



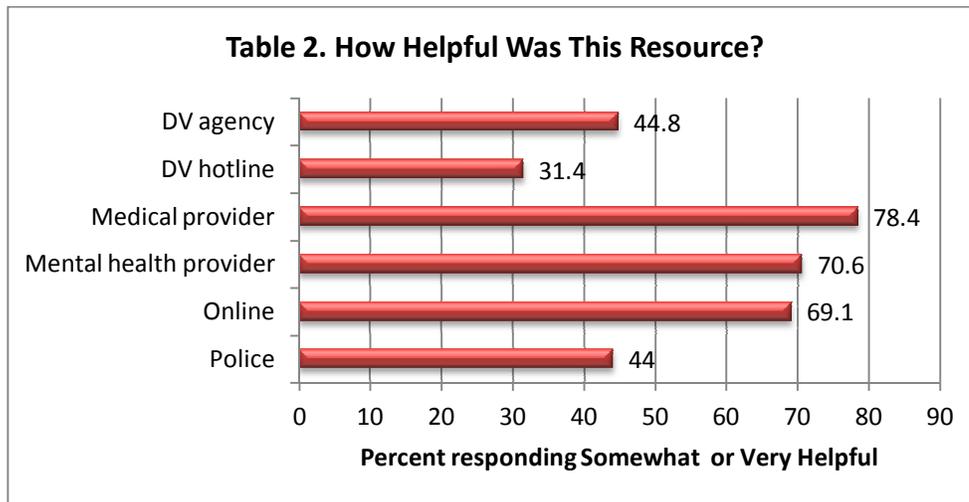
In addition, men also sought help from:

- Male friends/neighbors (77%)
- Female family relatives/parents (69%)
- Male relatives/parents (61%)
- Female friends/ neighbors (60%)
- Male lawyer (43%)
- Female lawyer (32%)
- Male minister (30%)
- Female minister (7%)



HOW HELPFUL ARE THOSE RESOURCES?

Men who seek help for IPV indicate that they are most satisfied with the help that they receive from family and friends, as well as medical and mental health professionals. Between one-half to two-thirds of men report being least satisfied with help that they receive from the police, DV agencies, and/or DV hotline. Table 2 displays the percent of men who reported that a resource was very or somewhat helpful:



In addition, men who sought help for IPV indicated that they found friends, family members, attorneys, and clergy members to be very or somewhat helpful (90%).¹

OTHER EXPERIENCES WITH HELPSEEKING

Men had mixed experiences when they sought help for IPV. In some instances men felt supported and received the assistance that they needed. In other instances, however, men were often turned away from help, accused of being the “real” abusers, or told that services are not available for men. Of the 83 participants who attempted to seek help from a DV agency, over three-quarters were told “we only help women” and almost two-thirds were referred to a batter’s program.

In the 55% of cases where the partner was determined to be the aggressor by the police, less than half of the time (42%) were the men asked if they wanted their partners arrested; about a fifth (21%) reported that the police refused to arrest the partner, and over one-third (39%) reported that the police stated that there was nothing that they could do and that they left the scene.

¹ The helpfulness of these individuals was combined into a single question: “Where *any* of these [people] helpful?”

MENTAL HEALTH STATUS AS IT RELATES TO HELPSEEKING

Men's experiences with seeking help for IPV may have an impact on their mental health. Our research indicates:

- For each positive helpseeking experience, men were 40% less likely to have abused alcohol in the previous year. *In other words, more positive helpseeking experiences appears to be related to less alcohol abuse.*
- For each negative experience, men were 1.37 times more likely to meet a clinical cutoff for post-traumatic stress disorder. *In other words, more negative helpseeking experiences appears to be related to higher levels of post-traumatic stress symptoms.*

CONCLUSION

When men seek help for IPV victimization, they do not always have positive experiences. Furthermore, when they do have positive experiences they appear to act as a protective factor against mental health problems. The findings of this study have important implications for social service and medical providers, and for first responders, and have the potential to shape institutional and agency policy.

Source: Douglas, E.M. & Hines, D.A. (2011). The helpseeking experiences of men who sustain partner violence: An overlooked population and implications for practice. *Journal of Family Violence*, 26(6), 473-485.

