

2024 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & FIREARM REPORT

Executive Summary

A survey to learn more about survivor experiences with firearms and abuse

Between March and April 2024, the National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline), in partnership with the Battered Women’s Justice Project (BWJP) conducted a survey to learn more about the experiences of survivors and victims of gender-based violence related to their abusers’ use of firearms as part of their violence and abuse.

The intersection of firearms and domestic violence has significant implications for the safety and well-being of survivors. The prevalence of domestic violence and gun violence—and the combination of the two—is a public health crisis. The presence of a firearm can increase lethality, reduce safety, and present additional complications in the legal system. Through this survey, we learned more about the ways firearms are used to threaten, control, and harm victims and survivors.

Threats and Violence with Firearms

Of respondents who were subjected to gender-based violence

68%

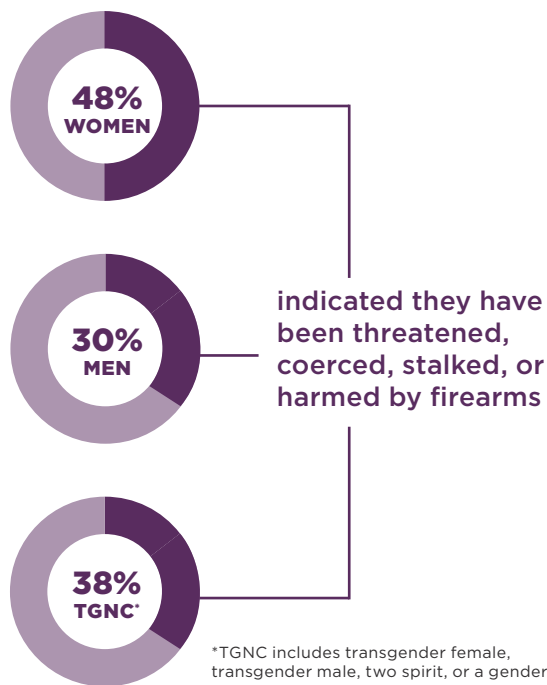
Female respondents had partners with access to firearms

51%

Male respondents had partners with access to firearms

48%

TGNC respondents had partners with access to firearms



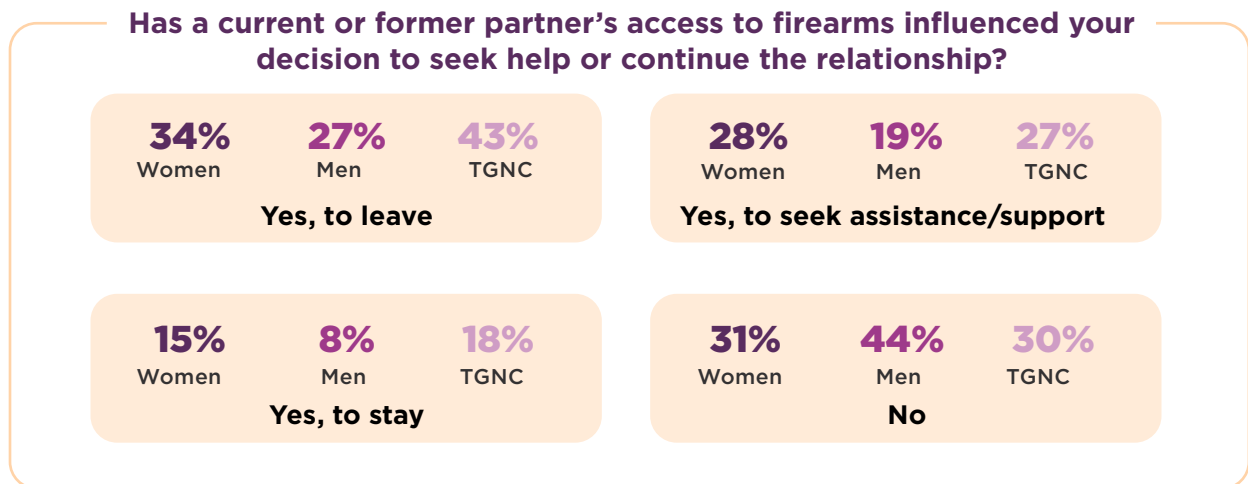
For all gender categories of survivors of this survey, the most common person an abuser threatened was the survivor and themselves (suicide).

Generally, abusers who used firearms did so in a multitude of ways. On average, female survivors were subjected to 3.3 forms of gun threats, male survivors were subjected to 2.6 forms, and TGNC survivors were subjected to 3.5 forms. Examples include: verbal threats to use a gun to harm, leaving a gun out to create a feeling of fear, pointing a gun at the victim or others, waving a gun around, shooting a gun at or near the victim or others, pointing a gun at themselves, or cleaning the gun to create a feeling of fear.

Nearly half of the survivors of gender-based violence who participated in the survey indicated that they had also been subjected to gun violence by someone other than an intimate partner.

Barriers to Seeking Help

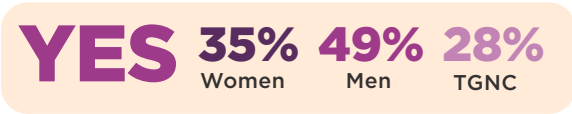
A current or former partner’s access to firearms influenced the majority of survivors’ decisions to seek help or continue the relationship.



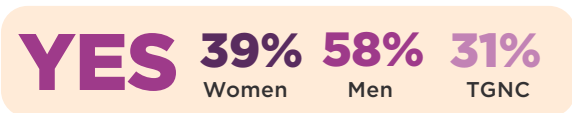
Survivors experienced a variety of barriers in using legal options to stop a partner from having or getting firearms. On average, all survivors whose partners had access to firearms experienced more than one barrier to using legal options to prohibit the abuser from accessing or obtaining firearms.

Men reported a higher likelihood of being aware of laws in their state that can prohibit an abusive partner from accessing firearms when compared to women and transgender and gender nonconforming survivors who responded to this survey.

Were/are you aware of any laws in your state that can prohibit an abusive partner from having firearms?



Of those who experienced gun threats, were you aware of any laws that can prohibit an abusive partner from having a firearm?

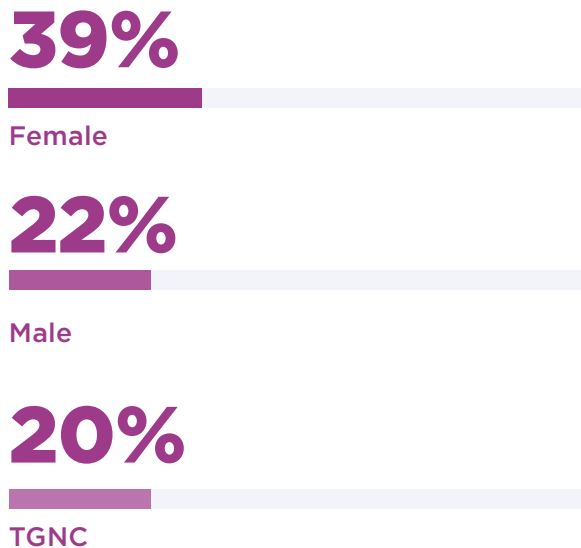


SOME SURVIVORS ARE VULNERABLE TO CRIMINALIZATION AS A RESULT OF THEIR ACTIONS TO MAINTAIN SAFETY OR THEIR PARTNER'S ABUSIVE CONDUCT.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTECTION ORDERS (DVPOS)

Of respondents who had filed for a protection order against their current or former partner



Of those who filed a protection order:
1/3 of all respondents said they did not know if the protection order prohibited their current or former partner from accessing firearms

31%
Women

40%
Men

28%
TGNC

respondents **received information and/or referrals** on the protection order process

On average, **survivors got assistance by more than one professional** before, during, and/or after obtaining a protection order. The most common professional assisting survivors were domestic violence advocates, law enforcement, therapists or mental health counselors, and attorneys.

EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDER (ERPO)

OF THE SURVIVORS WHOSE CURRENT OR FORMER PARTNER HAD ACCESS TO GUNS

8%
Women

13%
Men

15%
TGNC

respondents had filed for an **extreme risk protection order** against their current or former partner

SAFETY PLANNING

Among all the survivor respondents, **female survivors were more likely to have had no help safety planning before, during, or after obtaining a protection order.** Of those who did have help with safety planning, domestic violence advocates and friends and family were most common. Male and TGNC survivors were more likely to have had access to safety planning, with male survivors slightly more likely to use law enforcement and TGNC survivors more likely to use friends and family as a support.

Survivor respondents who reported having been **threatened by a partner with a firearm were even less likely to have had help safety planning** before, during, or after obtaining a protection order than survivors who did not report having been threatened by firearms.

Recommendations

- **Increased access to wraparound support services**, including safety planning specifically equipped to address firearm risk
- **Increased access to information and support** regarding legal options for protection against firearm risk
- **Consistent and effective implementation of laws** that disarm abusers including service of protection orders, relinquishment of firearm when prohibited from possessing, compliance with prohibition/relinquishment orders, ensuring background checks have complete information