# Offending by family members and victims’ help-seeking behaviour – the NZCVS Cycle 3 in-depth module FAQs

**What data did you use for this report and who is included in the module?**

This report is based on the in-depth module from Cycle 1 (2018) and Cycle 3 (2019/20) of the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) conducted by the Ministry of Justice. The NZCVS annually interviews about 8000 New Zealanders over the age of 15 each year[[1]](#footnote-1). Respondents are asked about their experience of crime during the previous 12 months. The NZCVS consists of a core questionnaire repeated every year and an in-depth module that changes year-to-year. In Cycle 1 and Cycle 3, the in-depth module looked at help-seeking by those who experienced offending by family members, including intimate partners, or reported controlling behaviours by intimate partners.

**What offences are included when we refer to “offences by family members”?**

Several offence types are considered an offence by a family member when perpetrated by partners, ex-partners and other family members (such as parents, siblings, stepparents and other extended family). These include property damage (personal and household), robbery, sexual assault, other assault and harassment and threatening behaviour.

**What controlling behaviours are included in the questionnaire and why?**

Respondents who had partners in the previous 12 months were asked about controlling behaviours that their partner may have exhibited within this period. There were six behaviours selected and these included situations when a partner; “stopped you seeing or contacting friends or family/whānau”, “followed you or kept track of your whereabouts in a way you felt was controlling or frightening”, “stopped or controlled your access to things like your mobile phone, the Internet, or transport”, “stopped you from getting healthcare when you needed it”, “pressured you into paid work you did not want to do” and “stopped you from doing paid work that you wanted to do”. Controlling behaviours cannot be defined simply, so these behaviours, while not being exhaustive, were selected after consultations with several family violence subject matter experts.

**Why does the report refer to “offending by family members/intimate partners” and/or “controlling behaviours by intimate partners” and not “family violence”?**

Data collected by the NZCVS does not cover all aspects of coercive and controlling behaviours described by the Family Violence Act 2018. We therefore avoid using the term “Family violence” for behaviours analysed in this report as these behaviours form only a part of the overall family violence behaviours.

**Which demographics experienced patterns of violence?**

Across all the patterns looked at, females and Māori adults were significantly more likely to experience offending by family members and controlling behaviours by intimate partners. In terms of marital or partnership status, adults who were separated or non-partnered were significantly more likely to experience offending by family members and controlling behaviours by intimate partners. 15 – 29-year-olds were significantly more likely than 30 – 64-year-olds to experiencing offending and controlling behaviours by intimate partners controlling behaviours by intimate partners only. Adults in one or more children households were twice as likely to experience offending by family members than adults who have no children living in the household.

The NZCVS sample size did not allow us to look at descriptive statistics for diverse sexual orientations, however, modelling showed us that adults who identify as bisexual, gay, or lesbian are disproportionately impacted by offending by family members.

**What were the group breakdowns for help-seeking behaviours analysis and why did you look at these groups?**

The group breakdowns were based on if the respondents had a partner in the previous 12 months or not. This is because, only individuals with a partner in the previous 12 months were asked about controlling behaviours by intimate partners. The further breakdown of respondents who had a partner in the previous 12 months and experienced offending by family members or controlling behaviours by intimate partners was based on differences between patterns and perpetrators of violence. Therefore, we separately analysed controlling behaviours on their own (without offending present), controlling behaviours and offending by intimate partners and offending by all family members (including intimate partners). If respondents did not have a partner in the previous 12 months, we looked at if they had experienced any offending by all family members (including intimate partners). This group could then be compared to those who had partners in the previous 12 months and experienced any offending by all family members to see if there were any differences in help-seeking if a partner has been present in the past 12 months or not.

**What aspects of help-seeking behaviours does the in-depth module look at?**

The in-depth module asks respondents about their awareness of some select family violence services and if there are any other not mentioned that they know of. The module then asks if the respondent contacted or approached select services for help or advice with family/whānau incidents.

If contact was made, the respondent is asked about the type of help or advice received and how helpful they found it. If no help was sought, the respondent is asked for their reasons of why they did not ask for help.

Similarly, respondents were asked if they had asked or received help from family/whānau, friends or neighbours and the follow up questions about this. If family and friends did not help when asked, the respondent was asked why this may be the case.

Respondents were also asked if there was help, they would have liked but did not receive and who they would like to talk to about family/whānau incidents.

Finally, respondents were asked about feelings of safety with family/whānau and if they knew anyone else experiencing family/whānau incidents and if they had any further involvement in the matter.

**Why is it important to look at help-seeking for family/whānau incidents?**

This report will add to the growing knowledge base about victims of family violence. Understanding where the respondent’s needs were not met, the quality of responses from services or if they came up against any barriers could have important implications for policy makers and the design of family violence interventions. The module also gives insight into how often family/whānau and the wider support system of a victim is utilised and therefore we can determine if the community can be upskilled to recognise when someone is experiencing family violence and how they can support the person.

**Why haven’t you reported on the individual victim support services that you ask about?**

We only have two years’ worth of data so far for this module and sample sizes for offending by family members or controlling behaviours by intimate partners are small. We cannot provide estimates for individual services as the margin of error is too large and the estimate is too unreliable to use.

**How did numbers relating to offending by family members, controlling behaviours by intimate partners and help-seeking change from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3?**

The most significant changes from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3 involved the prevalence of offending by intimate partners and offending and controlling behaviours by intimate partners. Prevalence of offending by intimate partners saw a small increase from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3. However, the prevalence of offending and controlling behaviours by intimate partners doubled from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3.

The rate of those seeking help with controlling behaviours increased considerably from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3, however help-seeking for violence that included offending saw small decreases in the rate of help-seeking from Cycle 1 to Cycle 3.

**Do all respondents of the NZCVS answer the in-depth offending by family members module questions?**

No, only respondents who screen for offences by family members or controlling behaviours by intimate partners answer the in-depth module questions.

1. Fewer interviews in Cycles 3 and 4 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)