

SAFER HOW, SAFER WHEN

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WOMEN'S
REFUGE

Executive Summary

NCIWR's Research Unit is carrying out a multi-phase research project on the risks that wāhine and tamariki face because of family violence, and what really makes a difference when building genuine, sustained safety for wāhine and tamariki after family violence. Phase one involved a mapping of risk and the implications for safety across the life-span, including through analysis of data recorded on risk assessments at the time that women seek help. These percentages are based on a sample of 3,500 client risk assessments entered into Women's Refuge's client database between November 2022 and November 2023.

Phases two and three will involve surveying and interviewing wāhine, along with the use of supplementary data-sets, to explore the nature and resolution of specific types of risk and the roles that different people, organisations, and systems can play (more of) in making safe options possible.

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Sample size – 3500

Research undertaken – November 2022 – 23

Research outputs will be in either a three-part or four-part sequence to ensure these can demonstrate progress throughout the broader project. The topics include 'rethinking family violence risk', 'seeking safety – the essential ingredients', 'family violence and health' (which may be separate to or a component of the former), and 'making safety last: the who, how, and when of changing what's possible for victims.

The proposed dates for outputs within this sequence (subject to the timing of the availability of research funds) are:

Phase 1: Rethinking family violence risk - completed.

Phase 2: 27 March 2024

Phase 3: 27 June 2024

Phase 4: (If confirmed fourth phase)
September 2024

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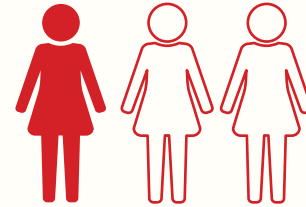
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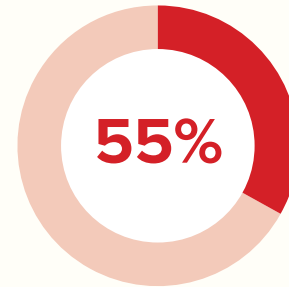
What Refuge risk data tells us about the spread of family violence in clients' lives

Many clients may be at risk of suicide



1/3

Were encouraged by the perpetrator to hurt or kill themselves



Were prevented from accessing health, counseling, or addiction services

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What Refuge risk data tells us about the spread of family violence in clients' lives

They experience high rates of severe and obsessive violence, such as:



46%
Strangulation/
suffocation



51%
Threats
to kill



58%
Stalking



63%
Destroying their
belongings



55%
Holding them
hostage

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What Refuge risk data tells us about the spread of family violence in clients' lives

The majority of clients are at critical risk when they come to Refuge



55%

Believe their perpetrators could kill them

57%

Experience more severe violence from their perpetrators when they tried to seek safety

46%

Experience an escalation of physical violence in the four weeks before coming to Refuge

60%

Experience an escalation of intimidating behaviour in the four weeks before coming to Refuge

58%

Are aware that their perpetrators had histories of violence towards others

44%

Of those with a protection order say this has already been breached

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2023



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What Refuge risk data tells us about the spread of family violence in clients' lives



The violence extends to women's children, and perpetrators use kids as weapons

Of clients who were mothers, the abuse also involved:



79%
Of victims' children were made to feel afraid



Assaulting them while they were pregnant



Harming them in front of their children



Taking or threatening to take their children

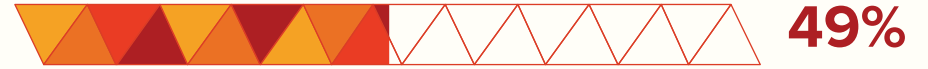
What Refuge risk data tells us about the spread of family violence in clients' lives

Abuse can be perpetrated anytime, even from a distance

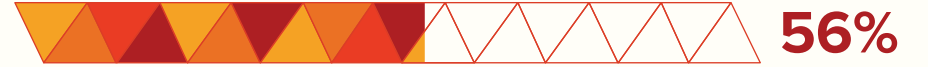


Many victims experienced constant:

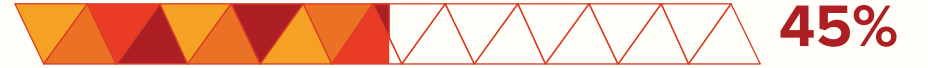
Unwanted contact



Tracking and monitoring of their whereabouts



Going through their private messages



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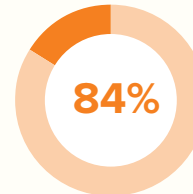
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What Refuge risk data tells us about the spread of family violence in clients' lives

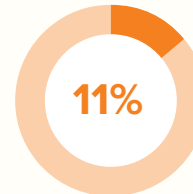
The impacts of non-physical abuse tactics threaten women's wellbeing and opportunities far into the future



Were stopped from seeing or having relationships with whānau and friends



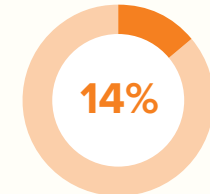
Were constantly accused of things



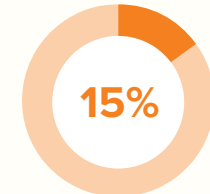
Were forced to use substances



Were made to take out debt they didn't want



Were forced to get pregnant or continue/end a pregnancy



Forced to stop using contraception