

# Seeking Safety, Equity, and Justice

Experiences of Black/African American and Women of Color

## Summary

ODVN completed a statewide survey with 588 domestic violence survivors to deepen our understanding of the experiences of survivors when seeking safety and services from law enforcement, courts, and social services agencies. Here are some significant findings from the Black/African American women who responded to this survey.

## Significant Findings

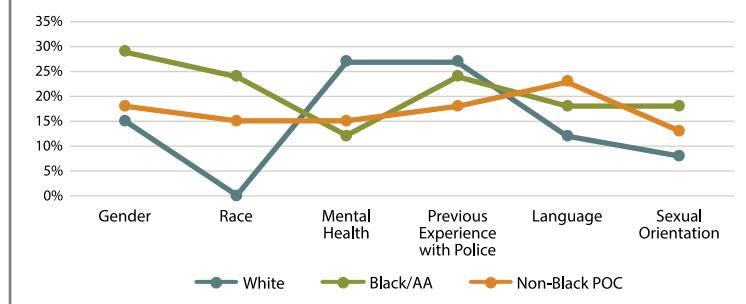
**62%** of Black/African American women with children believed that the **racial and gender identities of the first responders were very important** or somewhat important to their children's feeling of safety.

- Of the female respondents, 153, or 31% were Black/African American.
- Black/African American women were more likely to call the police in a domestic violence situation than white women.
- Black respondents said that fear of further violence from their abuser (59%) and fear of violence from the police (47%) kept them from calling the police.

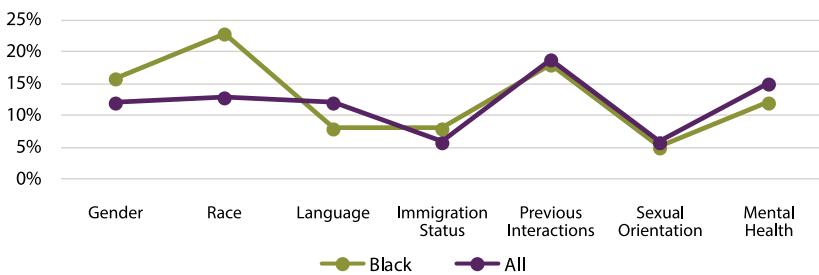
**76%** of Black/African American and other women of color **felt safe in the court system.**

- The biggest barrier that would prevent Black/African American survivors from calling the police in the future is further harm from their abuser (58%), followed by their fear of their children being taken and fear of violence from the police (33% each).
- Women of color, including Black/African American women with children, reported higher amounts of discrimination towards their children based on gender, race, language, and immigration status than white women with children.

Black/African American female members of the LGBTQ+ Community reported they were more likely to face discrimination from the police based on **race, gender, and sexual orientation** than any other racial group.



**Black/African American women** reported experiencing negative treatment from the police based on **race** and **gender** at an above average rate.



- Black/African American respondents' secondary fear in accessing aid was fear no one could/would help them, or they would be discriminated against by different agencies.

## Recommendations

- **Advocacy and Police Partnerships**—19% of respondents said they would not have called the police had they known their partner could be arrested. Survivors also called for increased access to advocacy, highlighting the need for law enforcement to work in partnership with advocates to provide survivor-centered responses and increase safety.
- **Ongoing Anti-Bias Training**—Implementing training for every system that responds to domestic violence as a core and ongoing resource could help ensure that Ohio victims perceive our justice system and social services as fair and free from bias.
- **Outreach Strategies**—Reaching and engaging with survivors of color requires staff diversity, building trust, thinking outside the box, building partnerships with their key community leaders, and an internal commitment to continuously address bias.
- **Addressing Police Brutality**—Survivors named reduction of police violence and more use and training of de-escalation strategies as recommendations.
- **Child Welfare Reform**—Reform is needed so that marginalized communities are not over-represented in the child welfare system. Ohio has invested impactful training resources in the Safe and Together CPS model for these cases; however, this model needs to be institutionalized throughout the CPS system.