

MEN AT RISK

Men's Social Health within Families and Intimate Relationships

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Social Health

- What is social health?
- Accounting/Tally of our indicators of social well-being
- Range of possible factors:
 - Poverty level
 - Child maltreatment/Family violence
 - Teen suicide
 - Alcohol and drug abuse
 - Housing conditions

Today's Talk: Men's Social Health in

DIVORCED FAMILIES



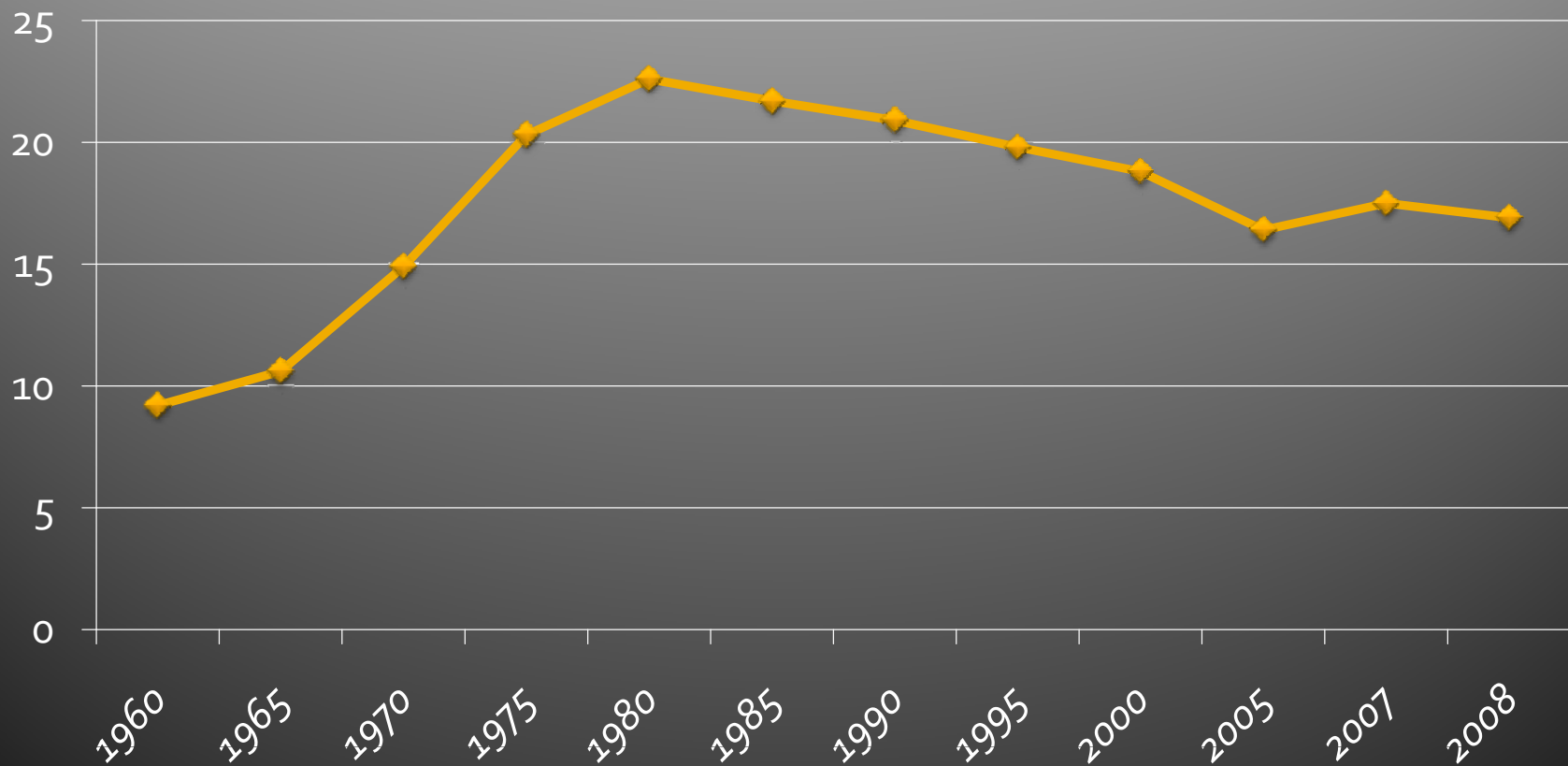
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS



Fathers in Divorced Families

Divorce in the U.S.

Divorce Rates 1960-2008



Rate of divorce per 1,000 married women, aged 15 and older

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Statistical Abstract of the U.S., National Marriage Project

Men Don't Take Marriage Seriously



Divorced Fathers: Don't Care About Children



"Access to the kids?
No. I want access to the computer equipment."

Divorced Fathers: Don't Care About Children-Don't Want Life Disrupted

MCHUMOR.com by T. McCracken



"I'll relinquish most of my visitation rights if you'll just let Katie come over once in awhile to program my VCR."

©T. McCracken mchumor.com

What Happens After Divorce?

- Most men are not granted custody post-divorce
- ~ 25% of divorced fathers have shared living arrangement with former wife (physical or residential custody)
- More than 50% of divorced fathers have right to help make decisions about children (legal custody, parental rights and responsibilities, decision-making)
 - Medical, Education, Religion

Divorced Dads – A Spectacle



How do Men Respond to Divorce?

- Lower income than married men
- More likely abuse alcohol than married men
- Grieve loss of “father role”
- Often feel shut out of children’s lives
- May be uninformed about children’s lives (if have poor communication with mother)
- Struggle with how to remain involved in school/extracurricular activities
- Feel financial strain: conflict of paying child support, but making own residence “home”
- Difficult balance between parenting role and “Disneyland Dad”

What Many Divorced Fathers Experience



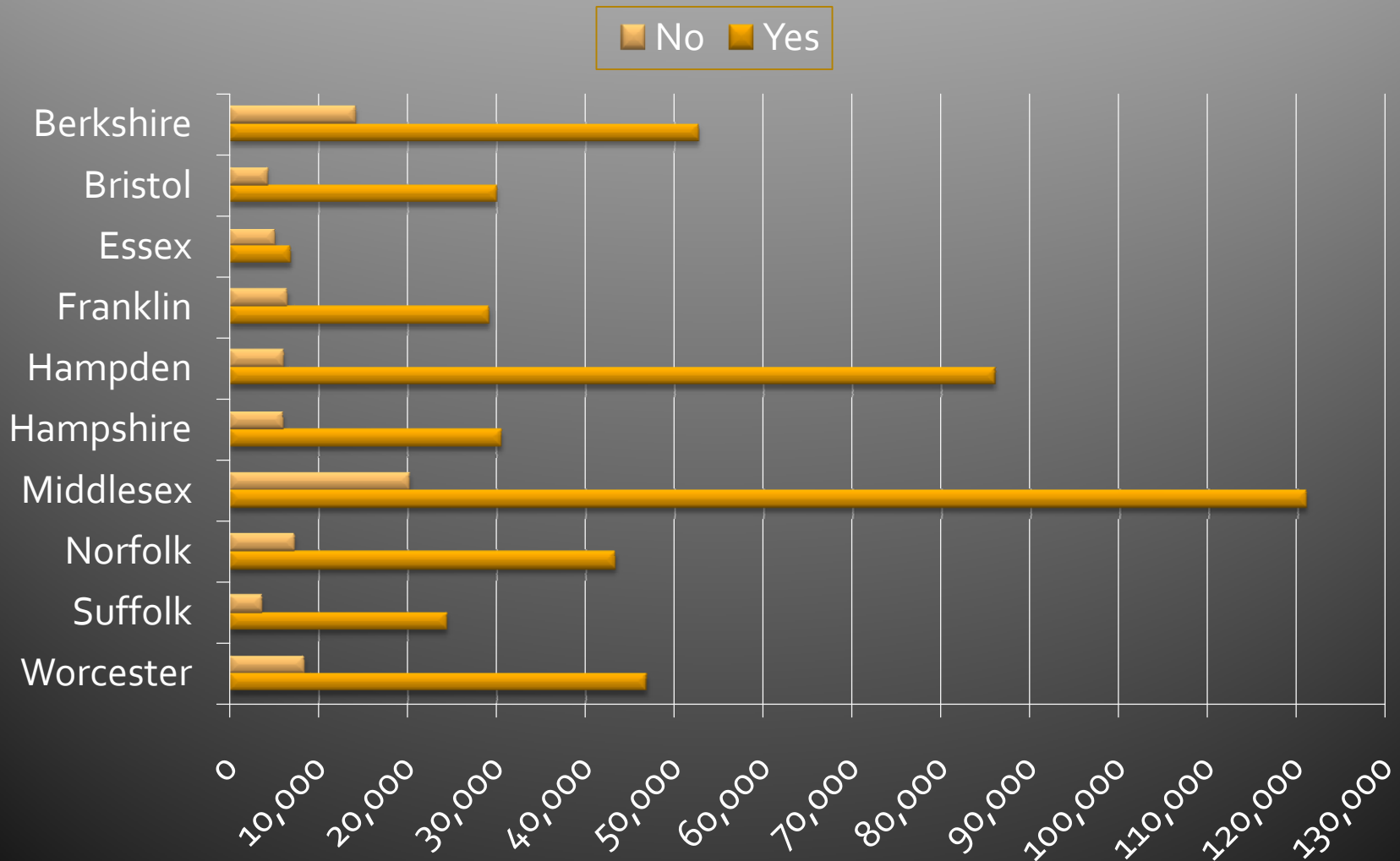
What Can States Do?

- Common Responses:
- Mediation: For couples who cannot resolve differences
- Parent Education: Required educational-seminar about effects of divorce on children and family
- Parenting Plans: Lay-out post-divorce agreement; foster shared parenting

What Can States Do?

- Common Responses:
- Joint/Shared Custody: Encourage in statute
- Presumption Joint/Shared Custody: State presumes best arrangement for all families
- Mass House Bill Ho2684: *In making an order or judgment relative to the custody of any minor child there shall **be a rebuttable presumption that the parents shall have shared legal and physical custody of the minor child.** Such presumption may be rebutted by either party by a preponderance of the evidence that the other parent has engaged in a pattern or serious incident of abuse or neglect of the minor child... In making any order or judgment concerning the parenting schedule of each parent with any minor child, the rights of the parents shall be equal, absent emergency, abuse or neglect of the child by one of the parents. **The court shall maximize the amount of time the child spends with each parent, to the extent possible.***

2004 MA State Ballot--Presumption for Joint Custody



What Can States Do?

- Make commitment to collect information on child custody outcomes

Legislation for Divorced/Disrupted Families in the New England States

State	Mediation	Divorce Education Prgm	Parenting Plans	Joint/Shared Custody	Presumption for Joint Custody
CT	Yes, not mandatory	Yes, mandatory	Yes, mandatory in disputes	Permitted through statute	Yes, for joint decision-making, only when both parents agree
ME	Yes, mandatory in disputes	Yes, not mandatory	No	Permitted; encourages "frequent and continuing contact with both parents"	No
MA	No	Yes, mandatory	No	Permitted through statute	No
NH	Yes, not mandatory	Yes, mandatory	Yes, mandatory	Permitted through statute	Yes, for decision-making resp. only
RI	Yes, not mandatory	No	No	No provision	No
VT	No	Yes, not mandatory	Yes, mandatory	Permitted through statute	Yes—no specific guidelines

Men Who Sustain Violence in Intimate Relationships

Men Who Sustain Intimate Partner Violence

- We tend to think of domestic violence as a “woman’s issue”
 - Women-victims
 - Men-perpetrators
- Commonly true
- Overlook many, many victims – men
- Is IPV against men a serious issue?

Female-Male Partner Violence



Female-Male Partner Violence



Female-Male Partner Violence is Not Serious

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"Don't do it Alice! That Bordeaux's
from the great vintage year of 1982!"

Not Only in Cartoons...TV, Too



- 2006 episode called "Knee Jerk"
- Carrie becomes angry with Doug and pushes him down the stairs
- He sustains an injury and has to go to the ER
- This is never labeled as partner violence
- Seen as a source of humor, comedy

S.8 Ep.16 Knee Jerk Part 2

HaydenC27

578 videos

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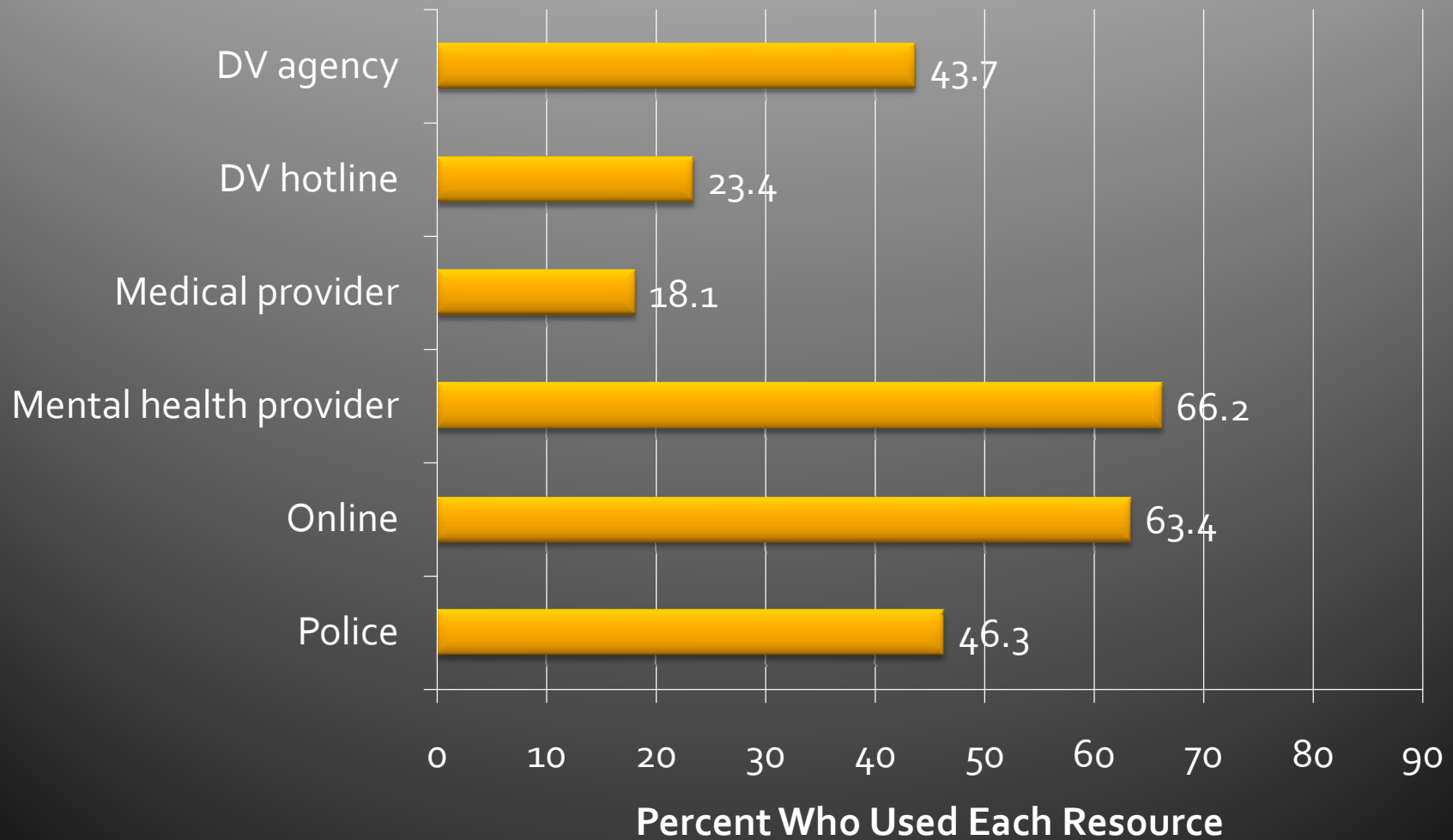
Men Who Sustain Partner Violence

- DOJ in 2009, 117,210 men were physically assaulted by an intimate partner, most of whom were women
 - Men were 18% of all IPV victims that year
- National Violence Against Women Survey found that 40% of all IPV victims during a 1-year time period were men
 - About 1.3 per 1,000 men are physically assaulted by a partner each year
- Men are often injured, too
 - 1%-20% of men who were assaulted by partner were injured
 - This is 12%-40% of all intimate partner injuries, and 27% of all injuries requiring medical attention

Why Do Men Stay?

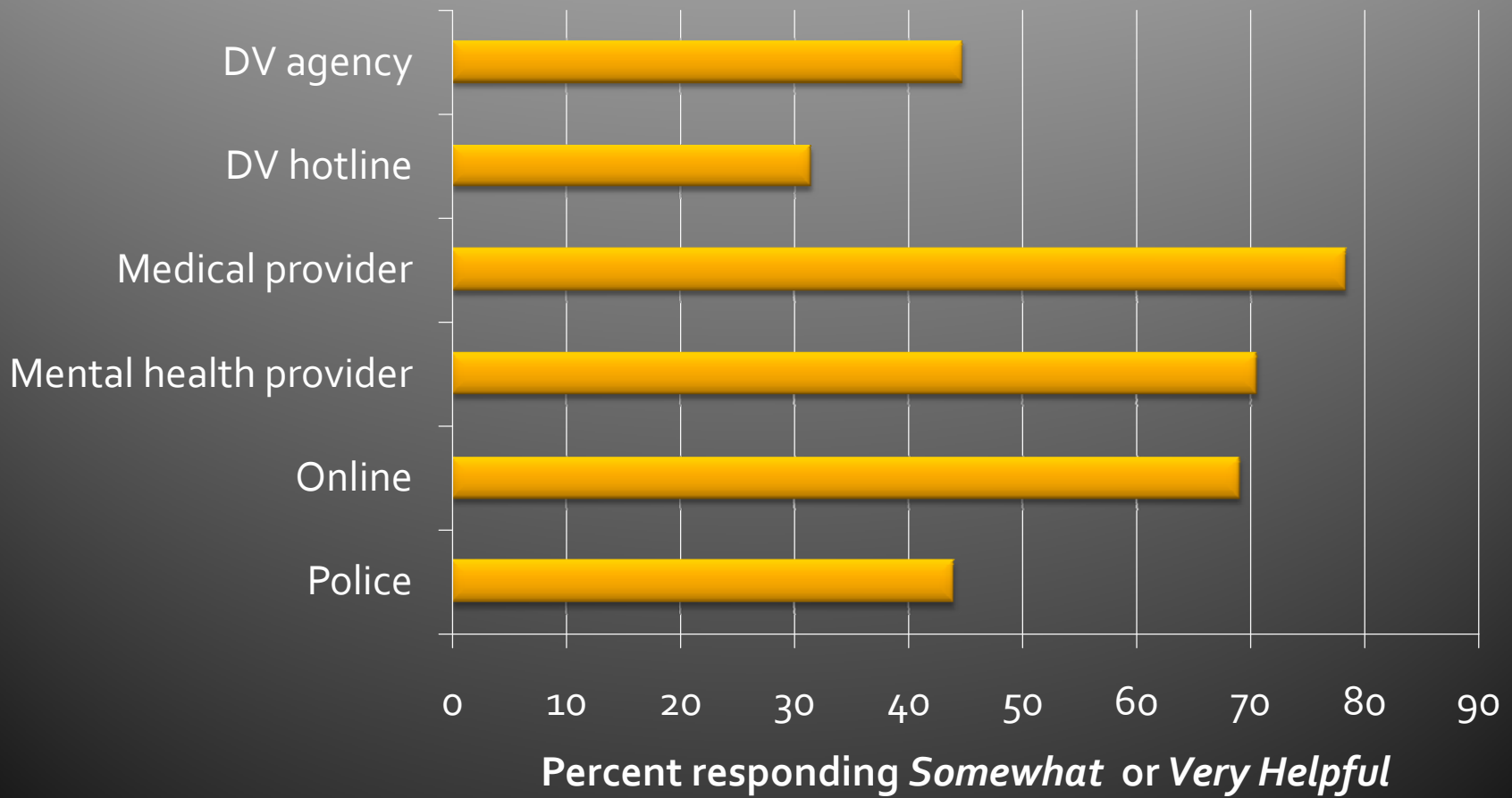
- Are concerned about their children.
- Have a commitment to marriage.
- Love their partners.
- Fear that they be separated from their children.
- Belief that their partners will change.
- Lack of financial resources to go any other place.
- Are embarrassed that friends and family will find out.
- Worry that their partners will kill themselves or members of their families.

Where Do Men Seek Help?



How Helpful?

How Helpful Was This Resource?



What Can States Do?

- Use gender-inclusive language
 - State statutes
 - Education-based programs
 - Training for service providers
- Maximize resources without straining DV agencies
- Treat male and female victims together
 - Valley Oasis Family Violence Shelter in CA
- Public education

For more information

For more information about social policy issues in Massachusetts, please go to website of **MGC Infolink**, which is a resource that provides information about social policy issues in Massachusetts



www.mgcinfolink.info

For more information

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