

ABSTRACT

This poster presents an overview of the results from a national survey that examined risk assessment (RA), risk management (RM), and safety planning (SP) practices of various professionals working with four populations identified as experiencing increased vulnerability for domestic homicide: Indigenous populations; immigrants and refugees; rural, remote, and northern populations; and children exposed to domestic violence. A total of 1,405 professionals responded to the survey providing information about their approaches to RA, RM, and SP in the context of domestic violence. Overall, the results of the survey provided information on the types of RA, RM, and SP available to vulnerable populations.

Risk Assessment, Risk Management, and Safety Planning with Vulnerable Populations: A Survey of Canadian Professionals

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Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative



INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative for Vulnerable Populations (CDHPVIP) is a five year project funded by SSHRC to conduct research on domestic homicides in Canada; to identify protocols and strategies that will reduce risk; and to share this knowledge with the wider community. It is a national network of over 40 partners and collaborators representing all provinces and territories in Canada.

The CDHPVIP focuses on four populations that experience increased vulnerability to domestic homicide:

- **Indigenous populations** – the rate of domestic homicide is eight times higher for Aboriginal women compared to non-Aboriginal women in Canada.
- **Rural, remote and northern populations** – the rate of domestic homicide in rural Canada is significantly higher than in urban areas.
- **Immigrant and refugee populations** – their experiences with language, cultural and other barriers make it more difficult to report domestic violence and to access services.
- **Children exposed to domestic violence** – children and youth who were victims of family-related violence represent 29% of all children and youth victims of violent crime.

The intent of the current project is to answer the following question:

- What are the barriers for RA, RM, and SP for the four identified vulnerable populations, and what unique strategies are currently being used with these vulnerable groups?

METHODS

Recruitment

A national, bilingual online survey was open from January to May, 2017. The survey was distributed through the CDHPVIP website, and through our partners' and collaborators' networks and websites.

Survey Instrument

The survey consisted of 11 questions that focused on domestic violence/homicide RA, RM, and SP practices, particularly among the four vulnerable populations identified in this project.

Participant characteristics. Participants responded to various questions including: province/territory which they live, and the sector in which they work.

Professional experiences. Participants responded to closed-ended questions about their work experiences with the four vulnerable populations, along with their use of RA, RM, and SP strategies.

Structured tools. Participants responded to an open-ended question about the types of structured tools utilized in RA, RM and/or SP. Open-ended responses were analyzed using an inductive thematic analysis at the semantic level.

CDHPVIP Definitions

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment involves evaluating the level of risk a victim of domestic violence may be facing, including the likelihood of repeated or lethal violence. It may be based on a professional's judgment based on their experience in the field and/or a structured interview and/or an assessment tool/instrument that may include a checklist of risk factors.

Risk Management

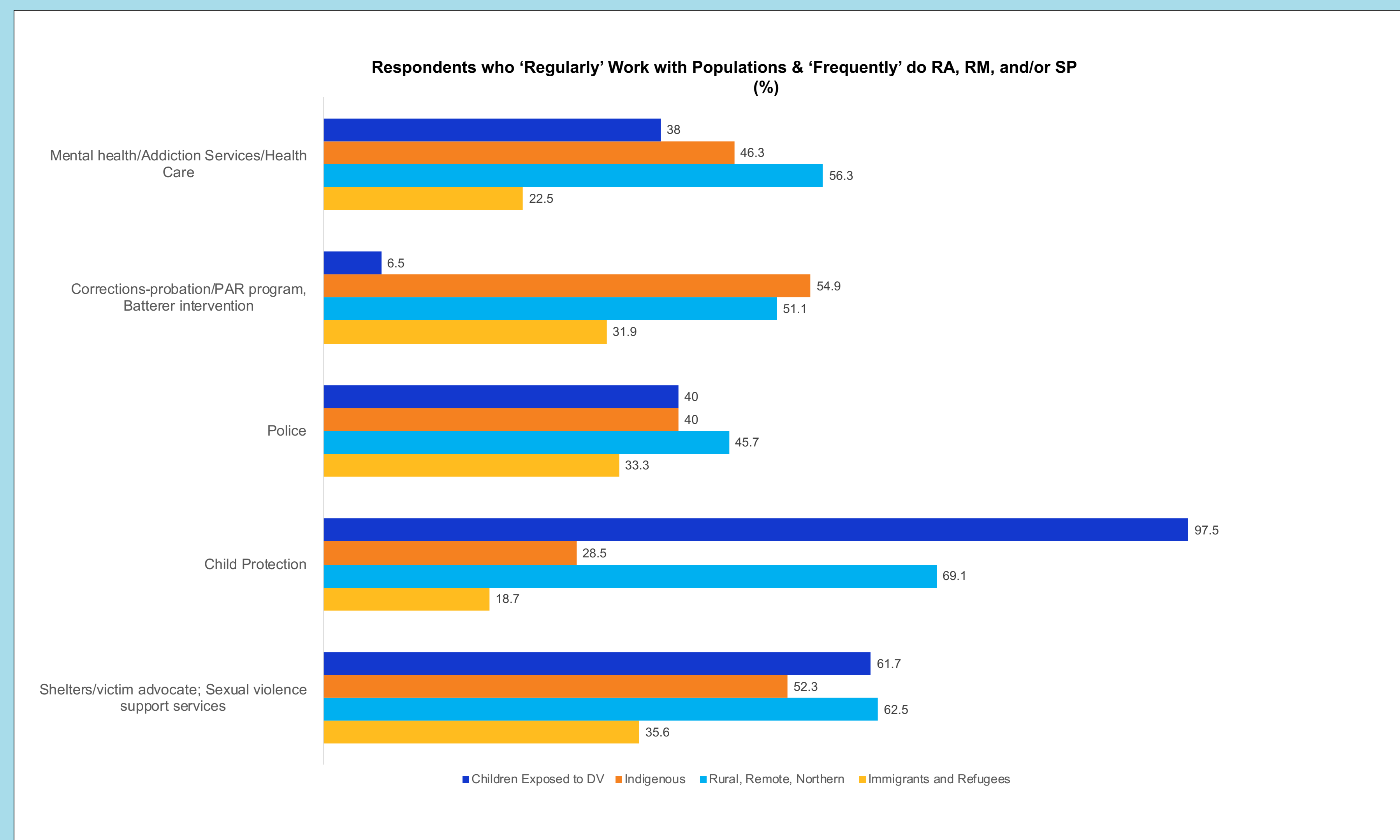
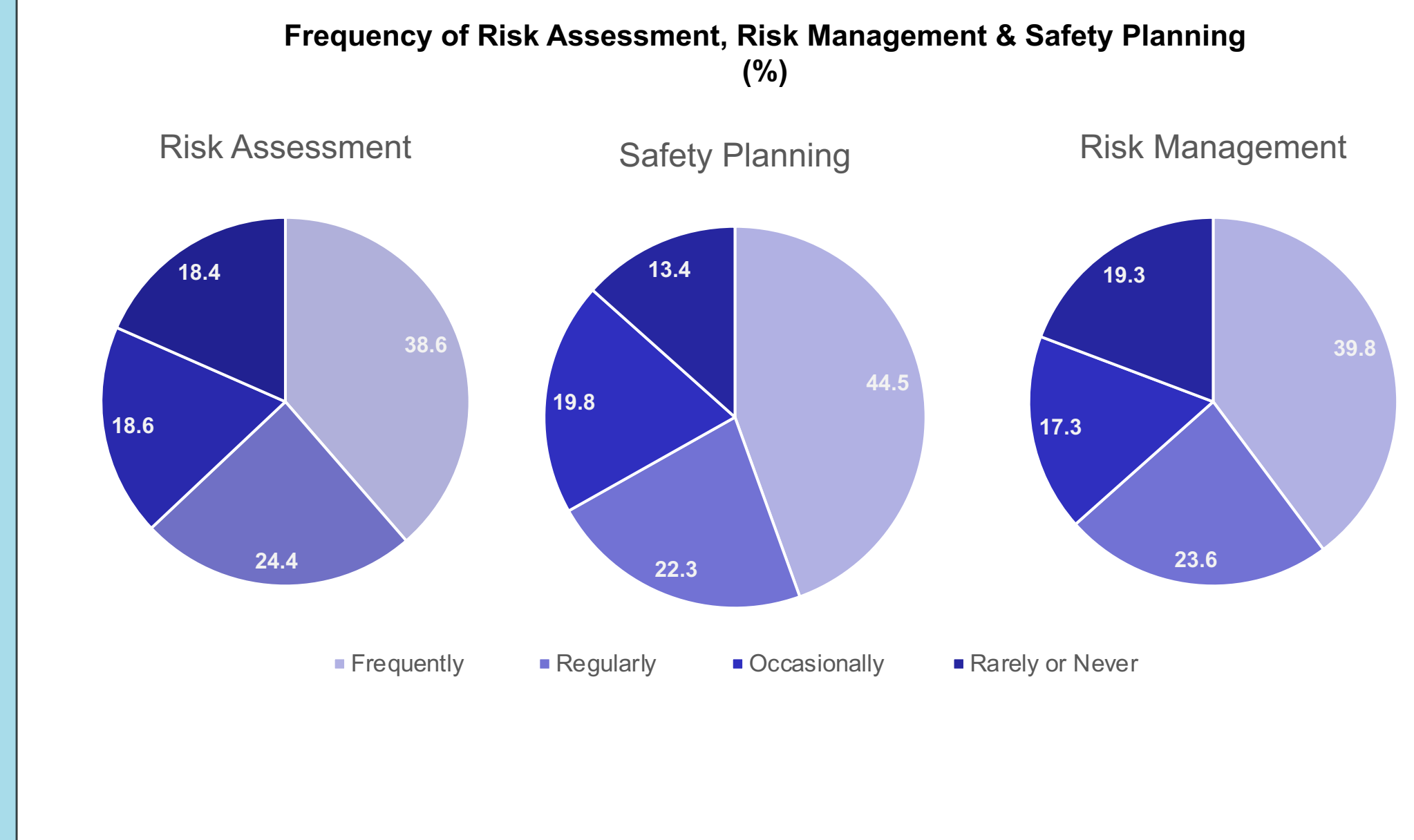
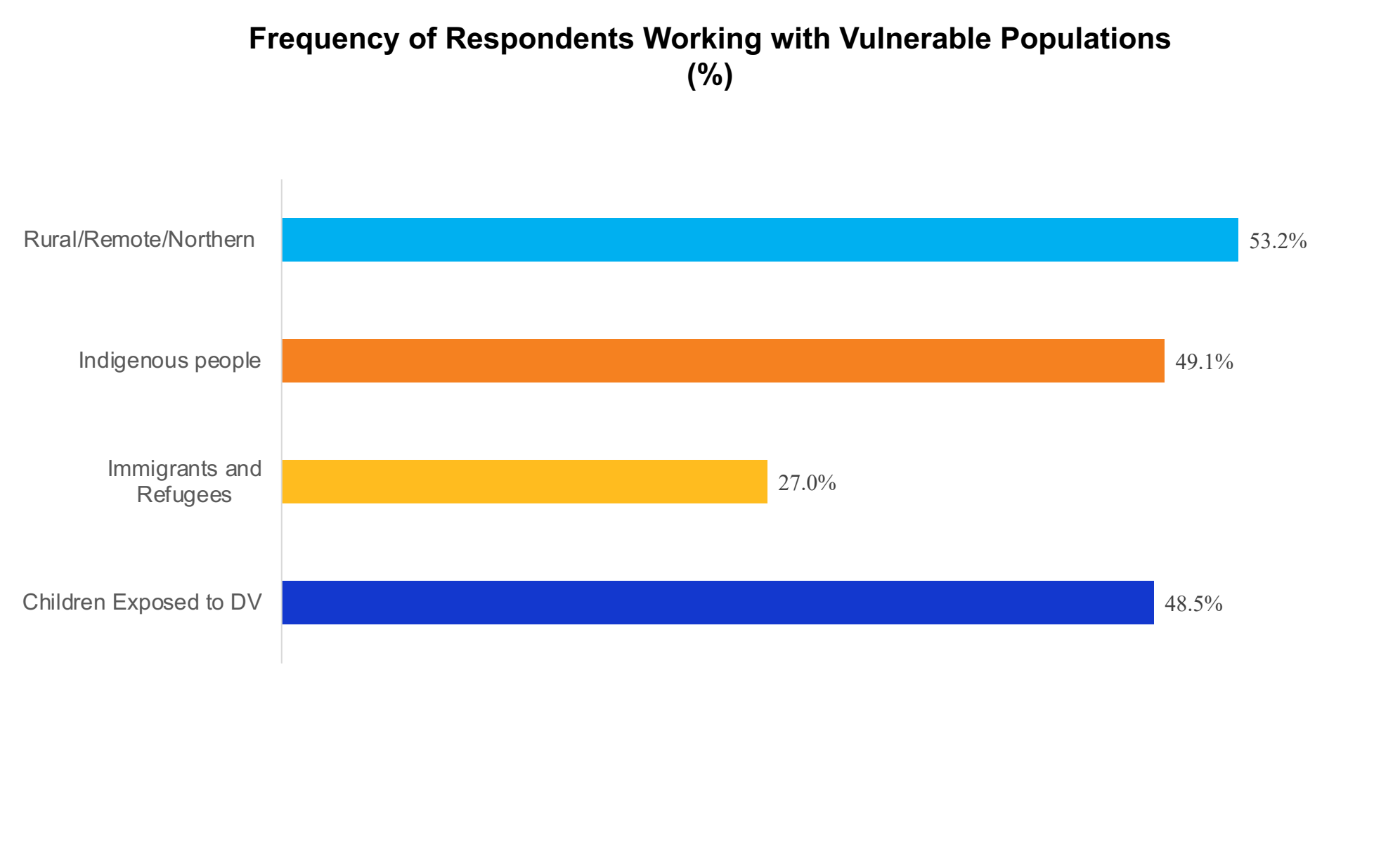
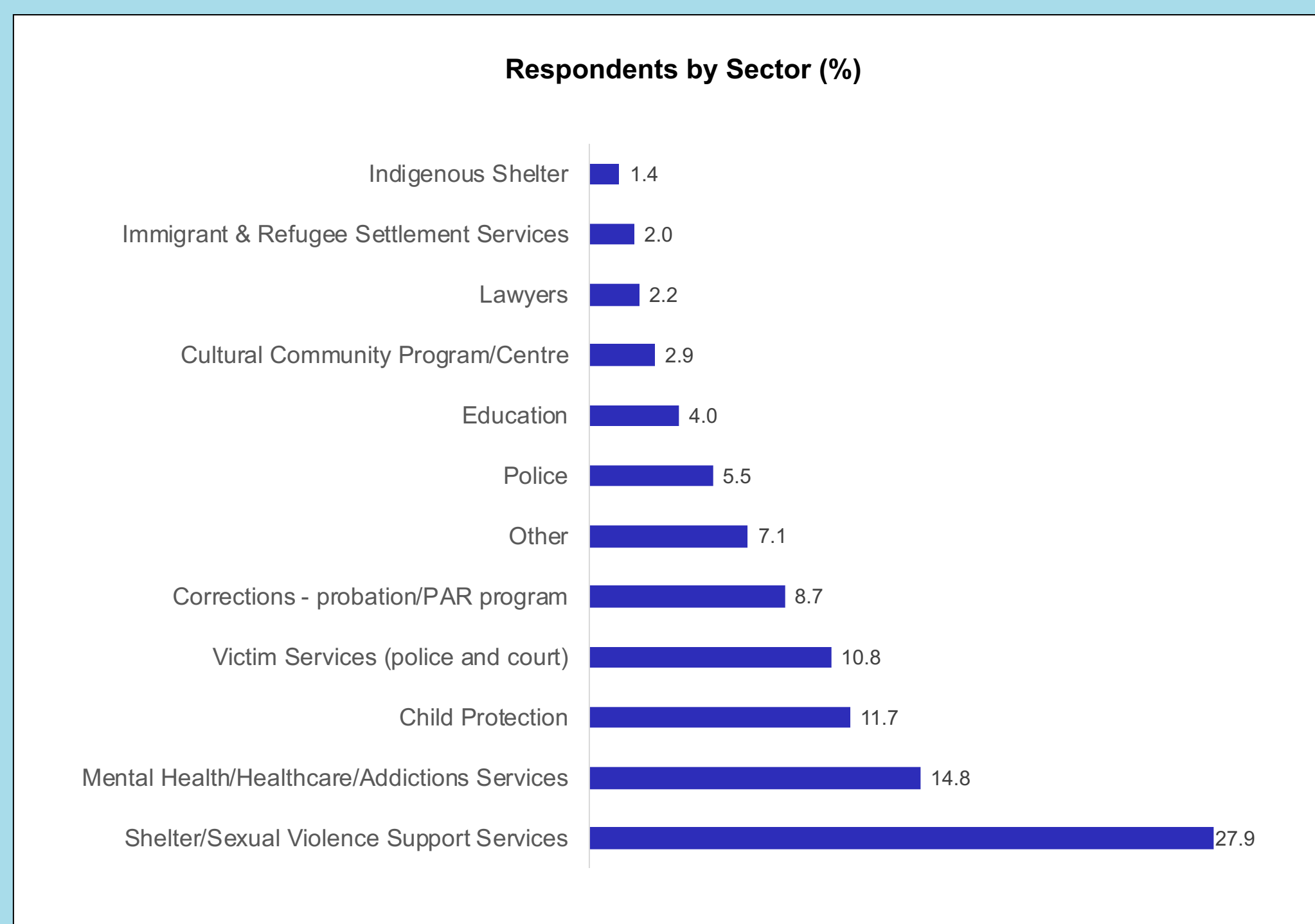
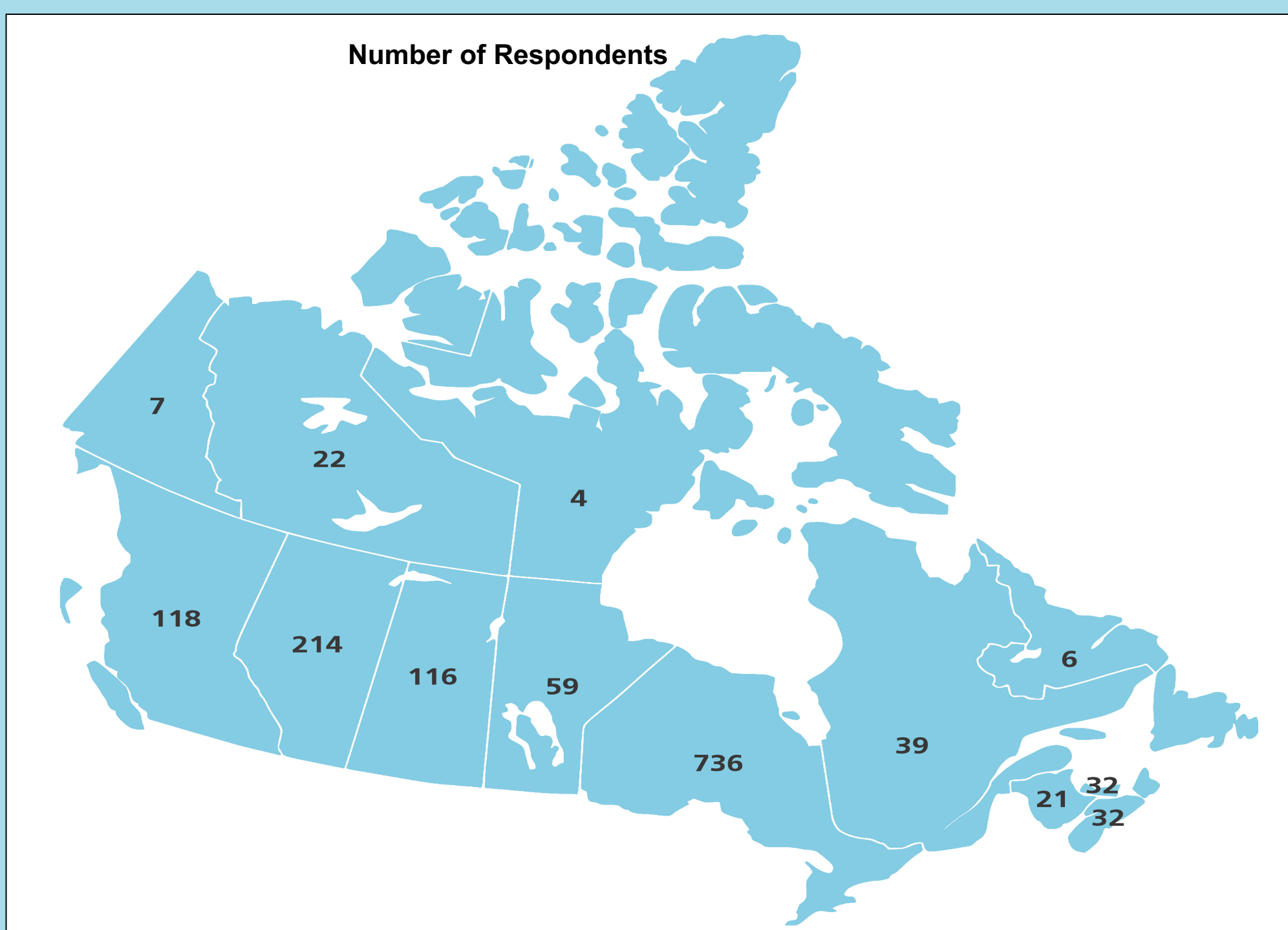
Risk management refers to strategies to reduce the risk presented by a perpetrator of domestic violence such as close monitoring or supervision and/or counselling to address the violence and/or related mental health or substance use problems.

Safety Planning

Safety planning identifies strategies to protect the victim. Strategies may include: educating victims about their level of risk; changing residence, an alarm for a higher priority police response, a different work arrangement and/or readily accessible items needed to leave the home in an emergency including contact information about local domestic violence resources.

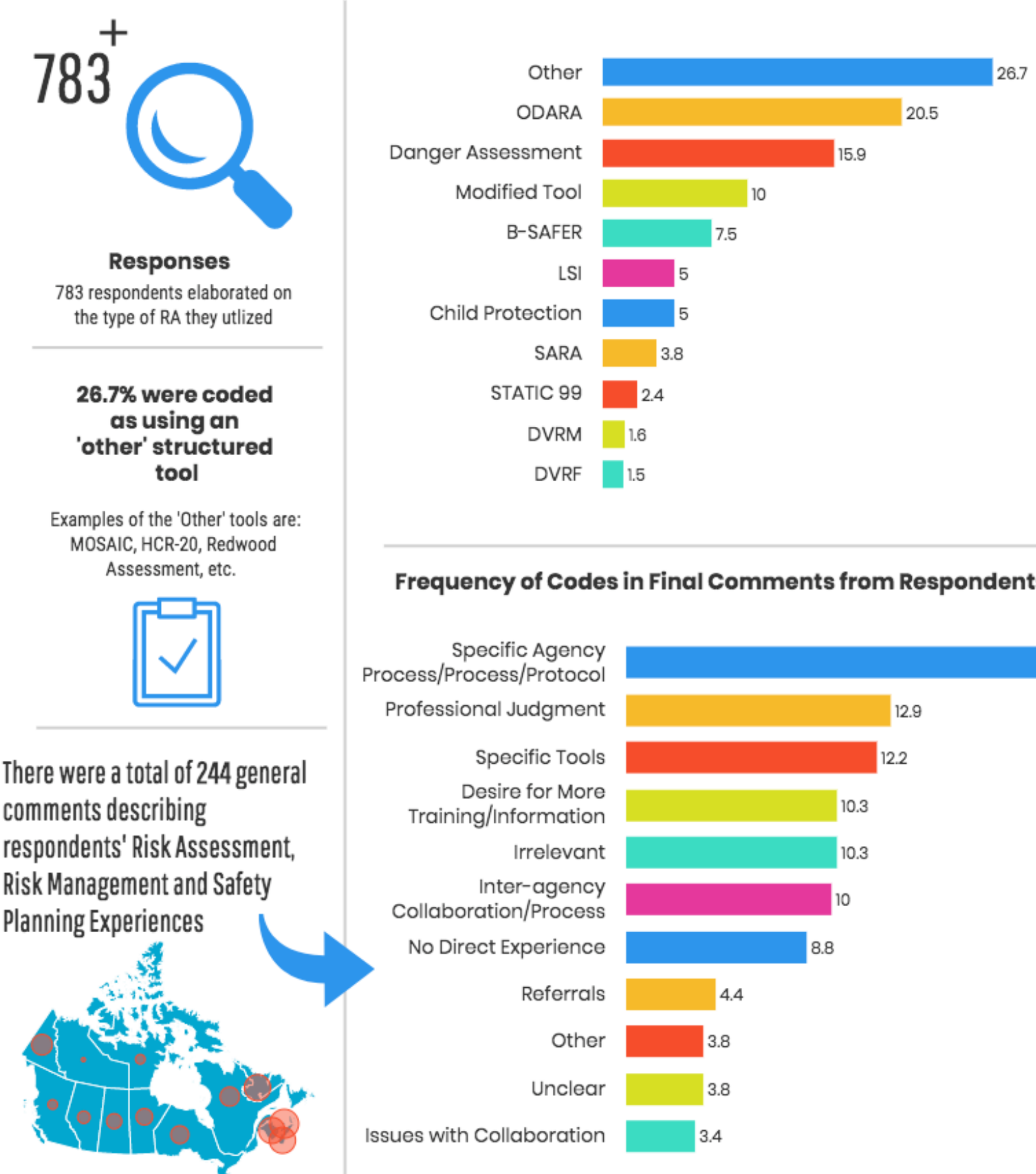
RESULTS

- **Participants**
- A total of 1,405 respondents from across Canada completed the survey (96.5% in English, 3.5% in French).
- 783 respondents elaborated on the type of structured tools utilized in their work.



RESULTS

Qualitative Analysis of the Types of Structured Tools



SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- Most respondents reported that they are completing risk assessment, risk management, **and** safety planning.
- Results indicated:
 - Lack of consistency in the use of tools.
 - Need for more empirically validated tools and the need to develop tools for specific populations.
 - Need to focus on children.
- Respondents emphasized the importance of, and challenges to, information sharing and inter-agency collaborations.
 - Many respondents elaborated on the specific processes/protocols utilized in their sector.
 - Respondents highlighted the complexity of RA, RM, and SP.
- A large majority volunteered to participate in follow-up interviews with the CDHPVIP team.

Limitations

- A non-random sample was utilized, which could mean that respondents were more likely to be engaging in these practices.
- Respondents may have conceptualized RA, RM, and SP more broadly even though definitions were provided in the survey.

For more information, please visit www.cdhipi.ca or scan:

