



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

**CENTRE FOR
CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS**



**FACULTATEA DE SOCIOLOGIE ȘI
ASISTENȚĂ SOCIALĂ**
Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai

Ludwig Boltzmann Institute
of Human Rights
Research Association



Hochschule RheinMain



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



NUI Galway
OE Gaillimh

- UNESCO Chair in
- Children, Youth and Civic Engagement
- Ireland
- CHILD AND FAMILY RESEARCH CENTRE



P4P Consultation with children across six countries: Austria; Belgium; Germany; Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Romania

The questions on the survey asked what children and young people know about violence and whether they know who to go to if they need help. There were also some questions asking what children and young people think would be most useful if they did ask for help.

The definition provided on the information sheet was as follows:

'Violence means: physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, not caring for children, bad treatment, using children to make money, and sexual abuse.'

Summary of key findings

Characteristics of respondents

1,274 children and young people aged between 8 and 18 years completed the questionnaire (46% were 8-12, 52% were 13-18 and 2% did not answer). Just over half of the respondents were female (51%), 44 percent were male, 2 percent said they were neither male nor female and the remainder either did not want to say (2%) or did not answer (1%).

Defining violence

Respondents were most likely to say that physical abuse was an example of violence (79%), followed by sexual abuse (69%). Conversely, only around one third (36%) thought child neglect was an example of violence (Table 1). More girls than boys defined all the examples provided as violence/abuse; this was particularly the case with sexual abuse (78% and 60% respectively). More young people (those aged 13-18) than children (those aged 8-12) defined the examples provided as violence. Once again, the difference was most notable for sexual abuse with 78 percent of the former compared with 60 percent of the latter saying this was an example of violence. When asked which type of violence children were likely to experience, 71 percent of respondents selected physical violence, followed by emotional violence (63%). Least likely to be selected was exploitation (35%).

Table 1: Examples of violence

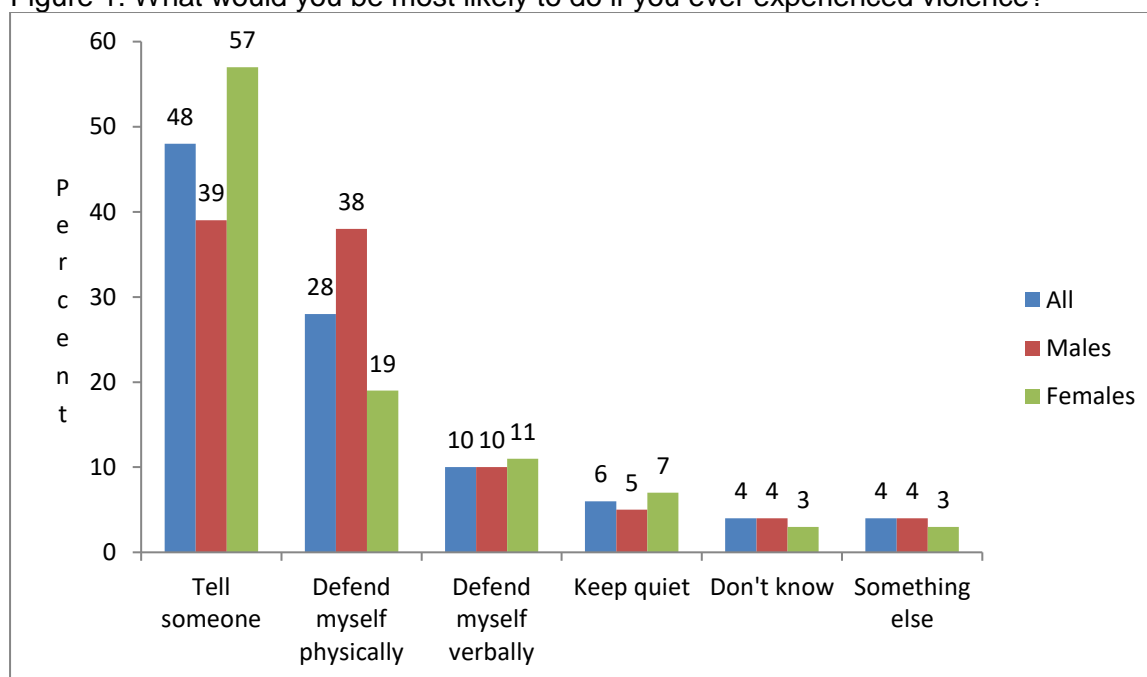
Which of the following do you think are examples of violence?	Yes %	No %	Don't know %	Total %
A child being physically hit or punished (physical abuse)	79	13	8	100
A child being touched somewhere that makes them feel uncomfortable (sexual abuse)	69	19	12	100
A child being used (or forced) to make money (exploitation)	62	25	13	100
A child being called names or made fun of (emotional)	49	37	14	100
A child not being looked after properly (neglect)	36	44	20	100

*Missing values ranged from 15-26 cases and are excluded from percentages in table

Most likely to do if ever experienced violence

When asked what they would do if they ever experienced violence, just under half of all respondents (48%) said they would tell someone. This was followed by defending themselves physically (28%). Only a small number of children said they would not tell anyone (6%)¹. As can be seen in Figure 1, there were marked differences between females and males with 57 percent of the former compared with 39 percent of the latter saying they would tell someone. In contrast, more males (38%) than females (19%) said they would defend themselves physically.

Figure 1: What would you be most likely to do if you ever experienced violence?



Sources of help and support if harmed by someone

The main sources respondents would seek help from if they were experiencing harm was someone in their family, their friends or a teacher. However, if they were harmed by someone in a public place their second source (next to parent/guardian/other family

¹ 115 respondents either did not answer or selected more than one response and their responses have been excluded from the analysis

member) was the police. Only around 4 percent of respondents said they would not seek help if they were being harmed by someone.

Why respondents think children and young people might not ask for help

Respondents were asked what they thought might stop children and young people seeking help if they were being harmed and the top five options chosen are presented in Table 2. As can be seen, the main reason selected was that they might think it would make things worse (66%), followed by concern that the person would find out (55%).

Table 2: Why respondents think children and young people might not ask for help

Reason	Top 5 selected %
They might be scared it would only make things worse or they would be harmed even more	66
They might think the person would find out	55
They might be embarrassed or self-conscious	40
They might not know where to go to get help	38
They might think no-one would believe them	33

Learning how to get help

Children and young people were asked about the best ways people their age could get information about advice and support if they were harmed (Table 3). They were provided with a range of sources and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each one. Almost three-quarters (73%) thought the best source was in school taught by teachers, followed by in school but not taught by teachers (60%). Least likely to be selected was social media sites (29%). There were very few gender differences with the exception that more girls (42%) than boys (32%) thought help should be available through magazines, leaflets or posters. However, there were some notable age differences. Many more young people (13-18 years) than children (8-12 years) strongly agreed/agreed that information or help should come from social media sites (39% and 19% respectively), from a website where you can look up information (61% and 41% respectively) at leisure time activity clubs (42% and 28% respectively) and through magazines/leaflets/posters (46% and 28% respectively).

Table 3: Best sources of information on where to get advice and support

What are the best ways children can learn how to get information or help if they are experiencing violence or harm?	% saying Strongly agree or agree
Taught in school by teachers	73
Taught in school but not by teachers	60
Website where you can put in your problem and get advice back	56
Website where you can look up information	52
Friends and peer groups	45
Magazines, leaflets, posters	37
Leisure time activity clubs like sports, music, arts, youth club	36
Social media sites like Facebook or Instagram	29

The best source of help

Out of all the possible ways to get help, children were asked to choose the one they felt was the best². Eight out of ten respondents thought the best way to get information was either to

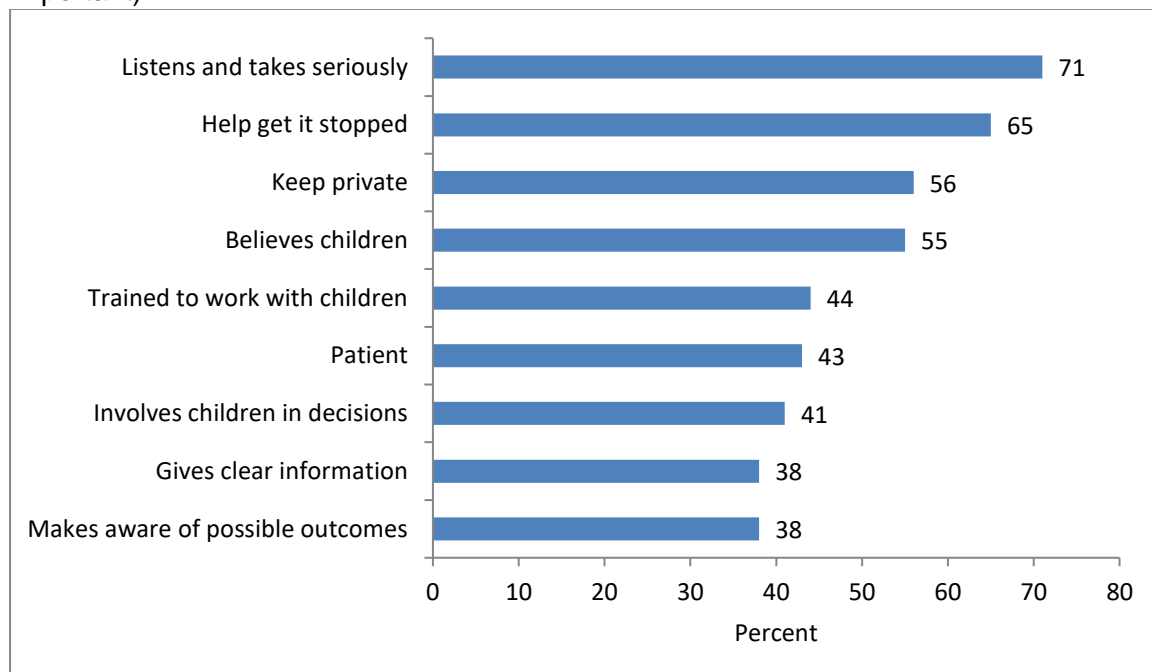
² 134 respondents either did not answer or selected more than one response and their responses have been excluded from the analysis

talk to someone personally (72%) or through telephone helplines (8%) and this was the case regardless of gender. However, among the older age group, speaking to someone personally was followed by websites (8%).

The best type of person to help children and young people

In addition to the best *sources* of help, respondents were also asked about the type of qualities they thought people who help children and young people experiencing violence should have. They were provided with a list of nine qualities and Figure 2 shows that the qualities respondents thought were the most important were someone who listens and takes children and young people seriously (71%), someone who can help get it stopped (65%) and someone who can keep it private if they can (56%).

Figure 2: The best type of person to help children and young people (Qualities that are very important)



Two things that would best help children and young people

The final question on the survey was open-ended and asked respondents what two things they thought would best help children and young people if they were harmed. As can be seen from the word cloud presented in Figure 3, the most common word included in the responses was 'talk'.

Figure 3: Word cloud of responses to open-ended question on two things that would help children and young people who are being harmed.

