

Central Valley Child Welfare Workers' Views on Physical Punishment of Children

Preliminary Results

Presented by Dr. Elizabeth Breshears to
Central California Area Social Services Consortium (CCASSC)
September 27-28, 2012

History

- CCASSC Connection (Jun 2011)
- Adapted Instrument from American Academy of Pediatrics
 - Edits/Input by CCASSC (Jul-Sep 2011)
 - IRB approval CSU Stanislaus/CCASSC (Dec 2011)
- Implemented Jan 2012 -- Qualtrics Software
- All counties agreed; work-arounds; two in process
- Preliminary data:
 - 947 completed responses ($\approx 65\%$)

Background

- Why – U.S.
- Other countries – Sweden 1979
- International shift to non-violent discipline methods
 - Philosophical
 - Legal
 - Developmental

Full Abolition - 33 Countries

Sweden 1979	Latvia 1998	Romania 2004	Portugal 2007	Republic of Moldova 2008	Congo, Republic of 2010
Finland 1983	Croatia 1999	Ukraine 2004	Uruguay 2007	Luxembourg 2008	Albania 2010
Norway 1987	Germany 2000	Hungary 2005	Venezuela 2007	Liechtenstein 2008	South Sudan 2011
Austria 1989	Israel 2000	Greece 2006	Spain 2007	Poland 2010	
Cyprus 1994	Bulgaria 2000	Netherlands 2007	Togo 2007	Tunisia 2010	
Denmark 1997	Iceland 2003	New Zealand 2007	Costa Rica 2008	Kenya 2010	Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, July, 2012

Philosophical

- "It is extraordinary that children, whose developmental state and small size is acknowledged to make them particularly vulnerable to physical and psychological injury, should be singled out for less protection from assaults on their fragile bodies, minds and dignity."
 - *Sweden's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Health and Social Affairs*
- “discipline” vs. “punishment”
- What does spanking model?

Legal

- Permitting physical punishment of children “when hitting adults is subject to criminal sanctions seems arbitrary and unjust”
 - Bitensky, 1998, p. 437
- Violation of physical integrity
- If legally it would be considered “assault of another person,” why would it be legal against a child who is weaker, smaller, and more dependent on the adult?

Child Development – Brain Research

- > 500 **trillion** connections between brain cells from
 - Ages 0-3
 - Physical changes in brain caused by sounds, sights, smells, touch,
- Repeated stimuli – networks
 - Bad experiences -- aberrant connection
 - Too rich in stressful experiences
 - Results in hyper-aroused children (Kotulak, 1996)
- Rather than “resilient,” better term “malleable” (Bruce Perry,)

Prevalence

- U.S. children: an almost universal experience
 - At least 85%
 - Gershoff, 2010
- Cultural myth: Spanking your child “sometimes necessary”
 - Straus, 2008

California Central Valley Child Welfare

- Children in Foster Care
 - U.S.: **400,540** @ Sep 30, 2011
 - State of CA: **56,138** @ July 1, 2011
 - Central Valley: **8,562**
 - AFCARS Report, KidsData.org
- Cost:
 - U.S. estimated **\$103.8** billion in federal and state dollars annually
 - Wang & Holton, 2007

Corporal punishment not permitted against:

- prison or jail inmates
- military personnel
- mental patients
- a spouse
- a neighbor
- a neighbor's dog

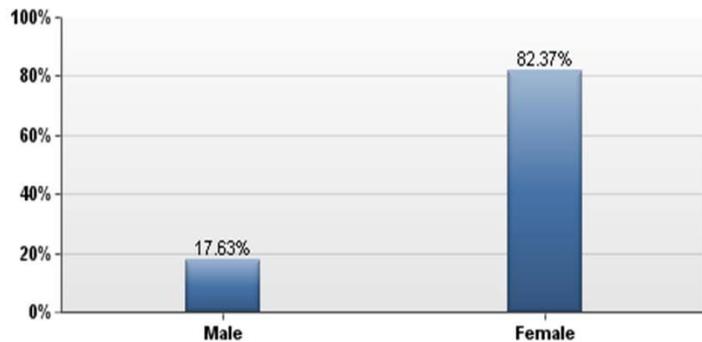
CP is legally preserved only for children

(Block, 2000)

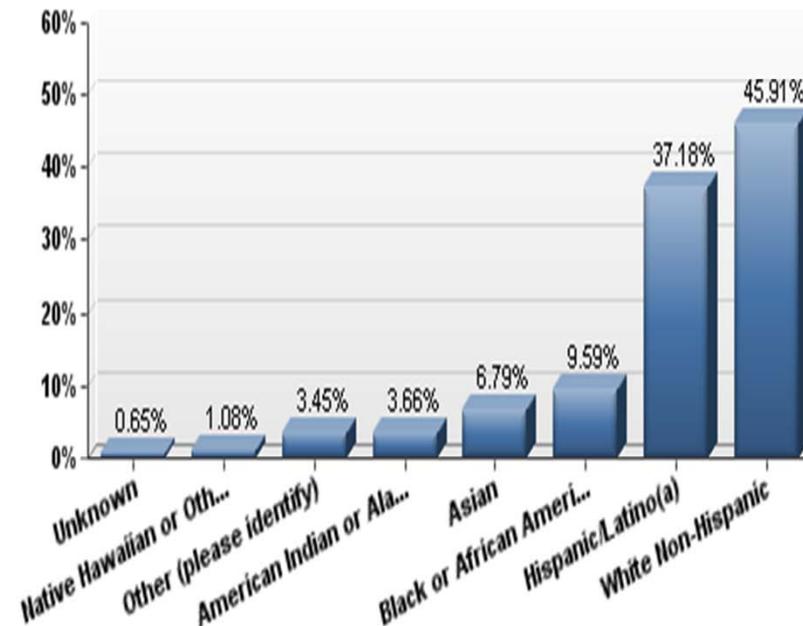
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Demographics

Gender

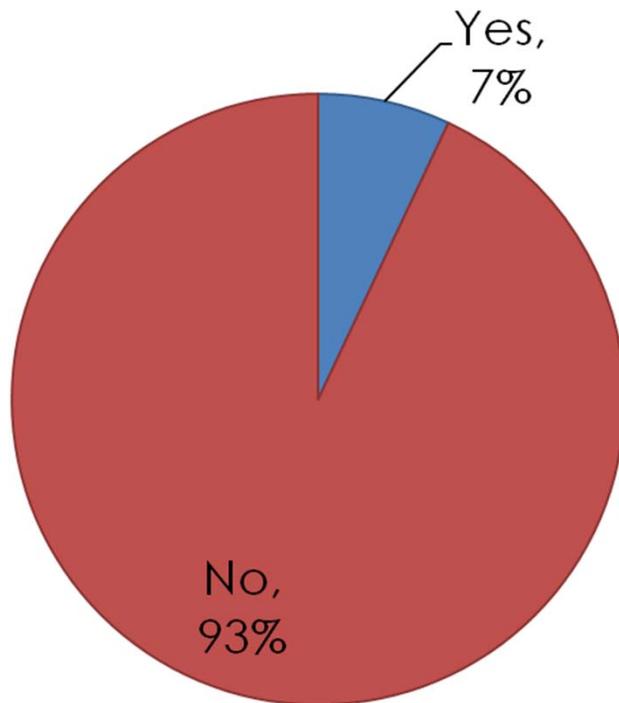


Racial/Ethnic Identification

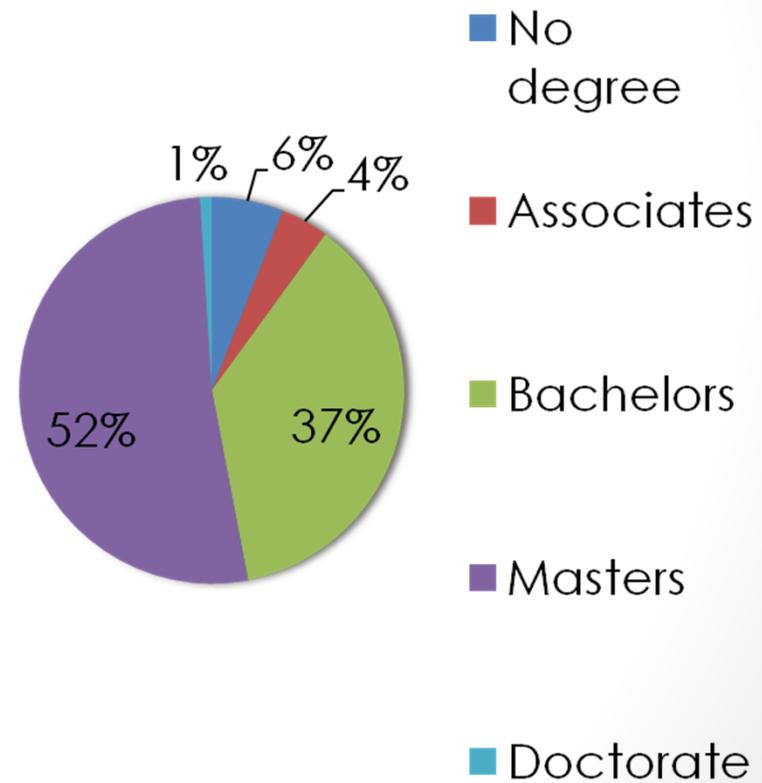


Demographics

Respondents with a Professional License

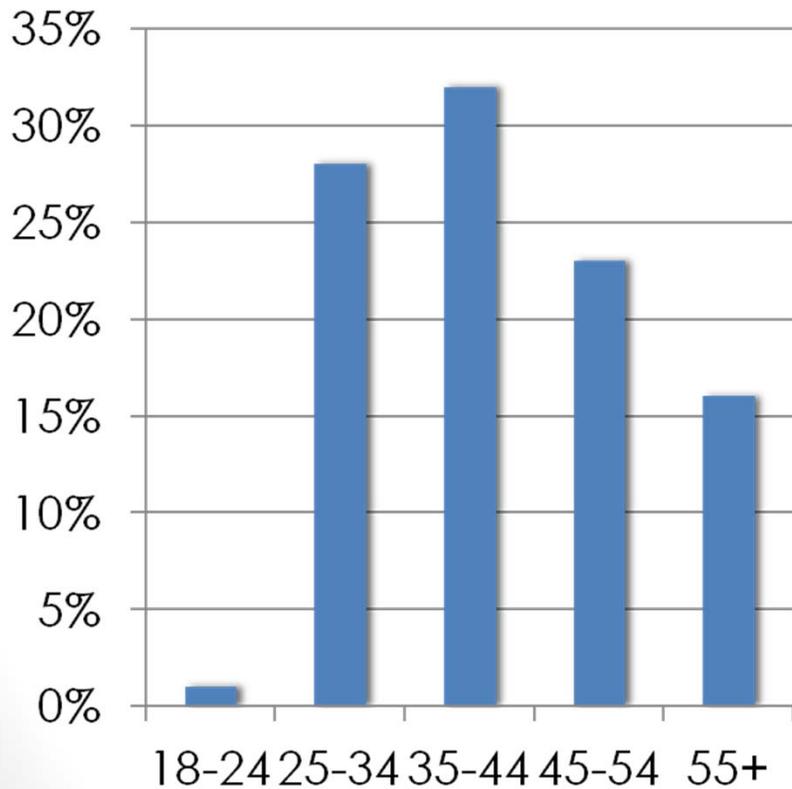


Highest Degree Earned

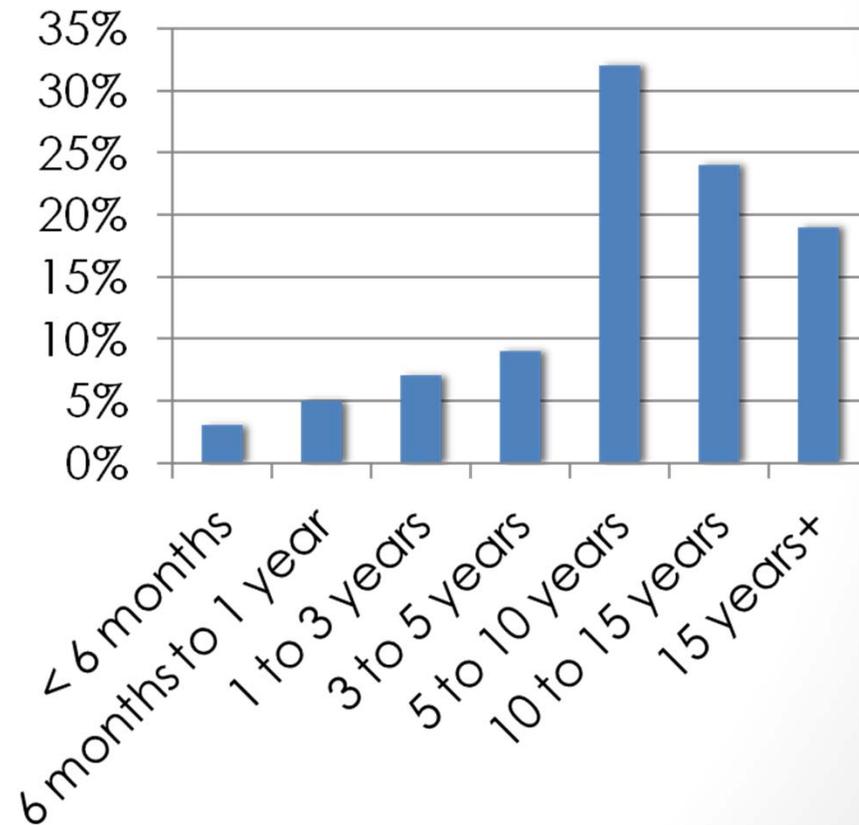


Demographics

Age

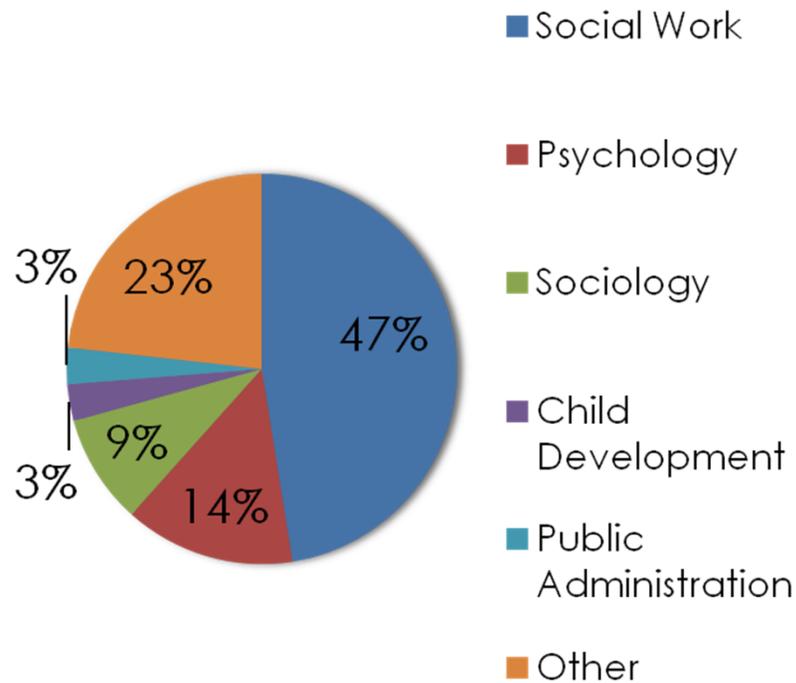


Years of Experience

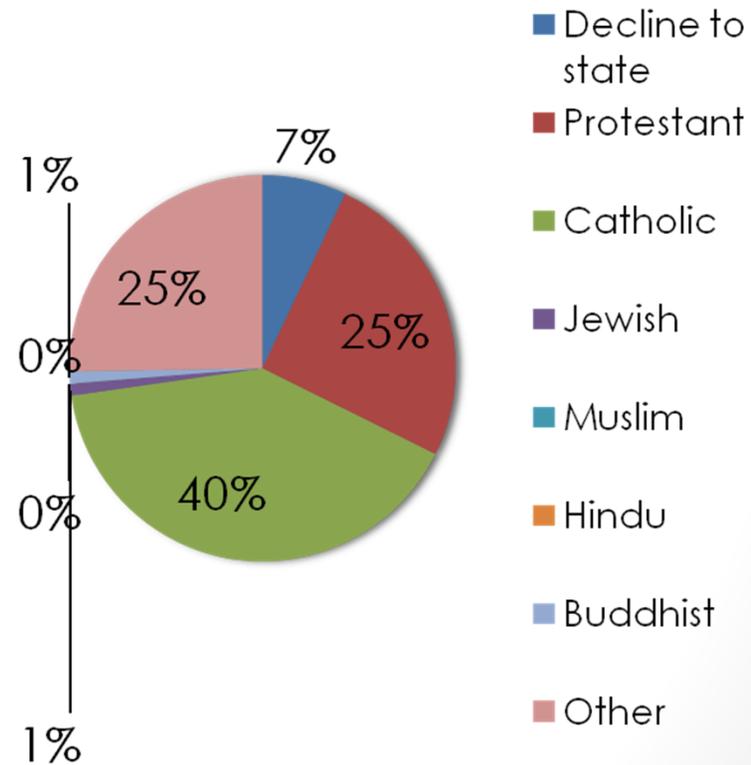


Demographics

Discipline Area of Highest Degree

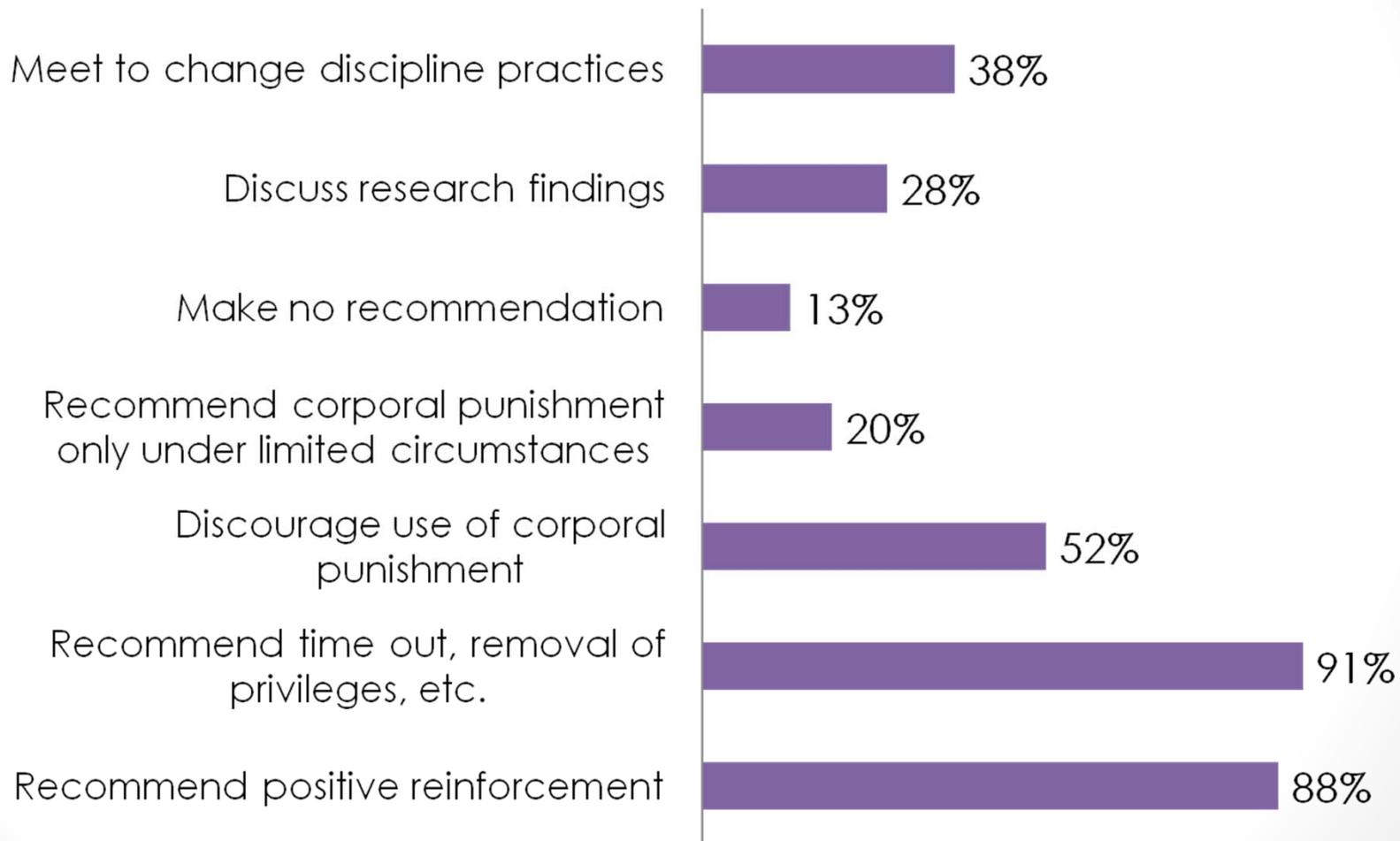


Religious Affiliation

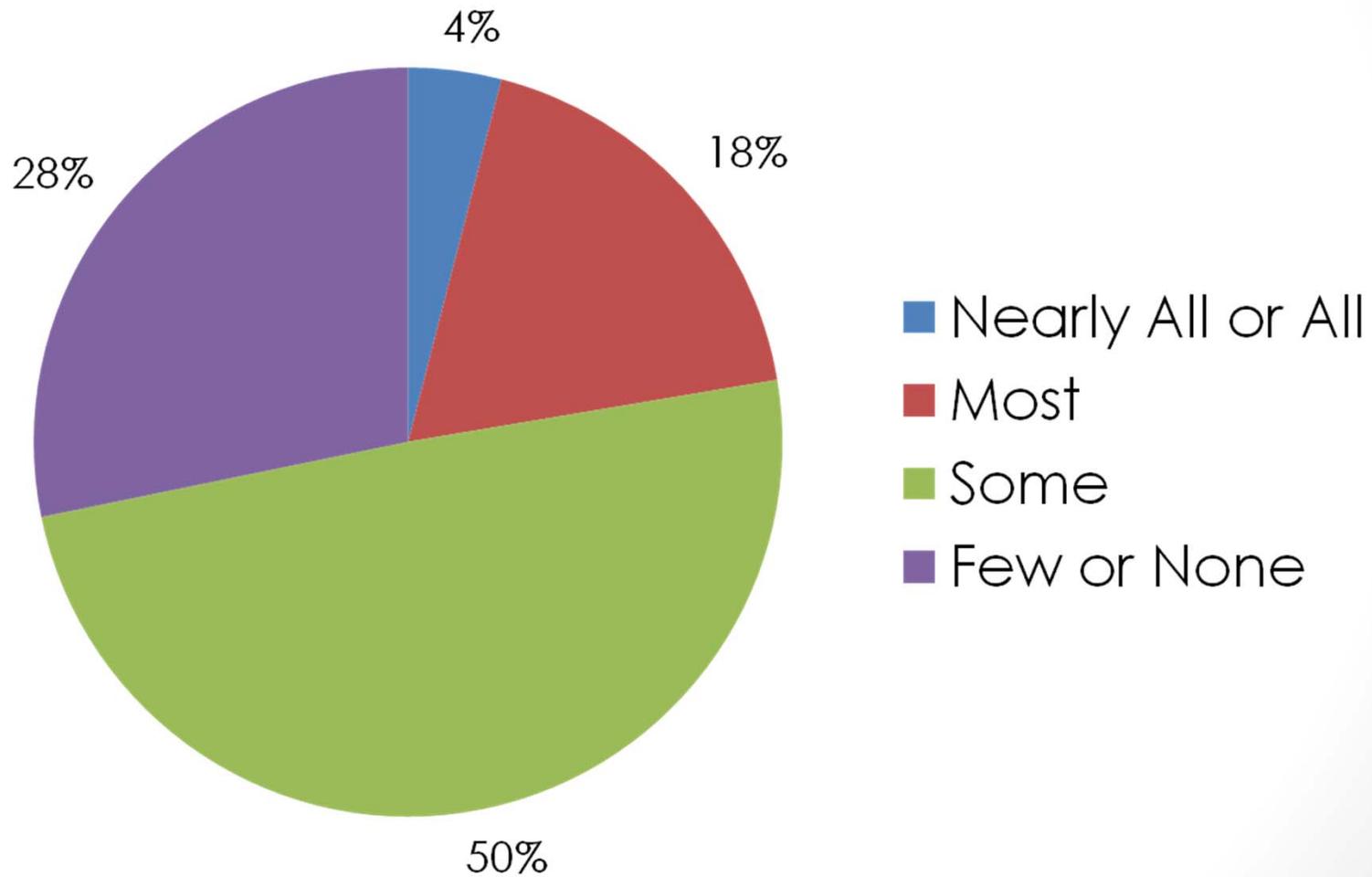


PRELIMINARY SURVEY RESULTS

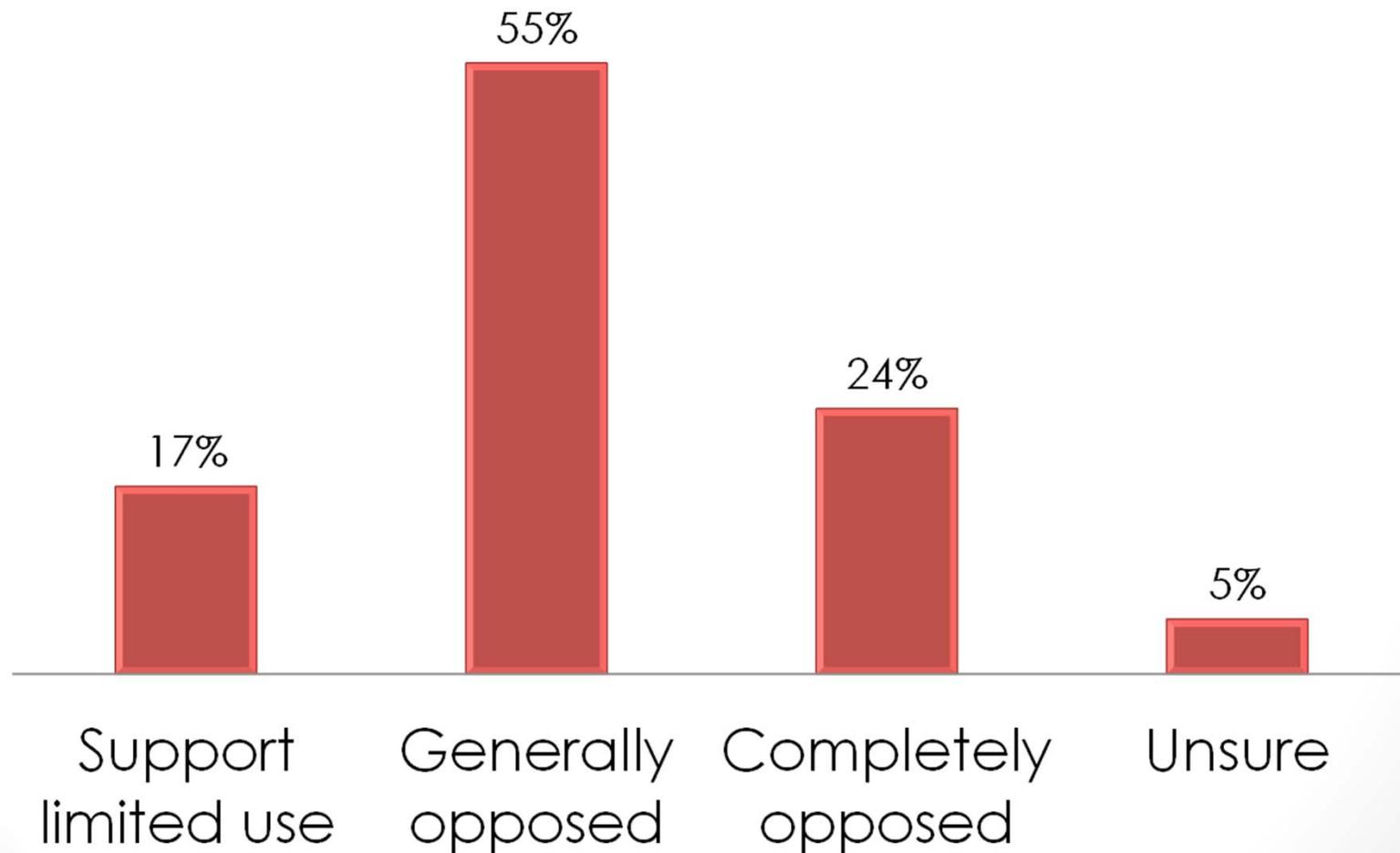
Current practices regarding counseling parents on disciplining their children



Number of clients seeking recommendations regarding discipline



Personal opinions regarding the use of corporal punishment



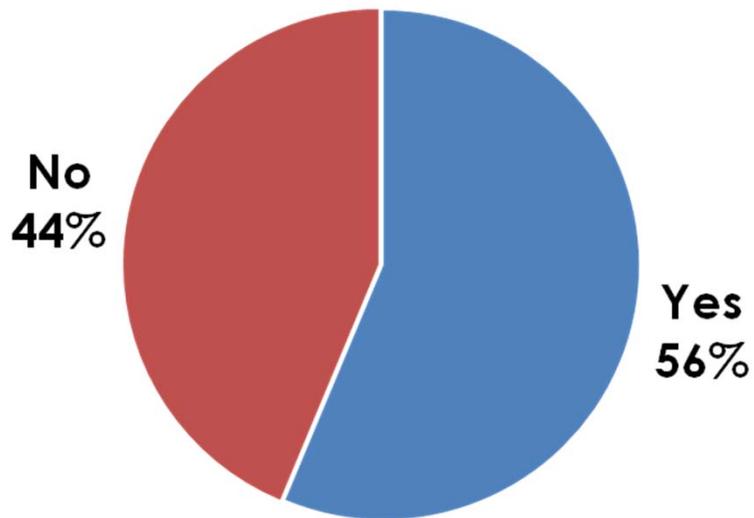
	Agree	Neither	Disagree
Social workers must try to eliminate the practice of spanking	35%	33%	32%
I have adequate knowledge of different child discipline methods	87%	10%	3%
I am familiar with the research findings	61%	25%	14%
I have adequate skills to counsel families on different methods	79%	15%	6%
I am comfortable discussing corporal punishment with parents	85%	10%	5%
There is a link between corporal punishment and child abuse	56%	33%	11%
My agency provides information to families on the effects	39%	32%	29%

What is your agency's policy on corporal punishment of children?

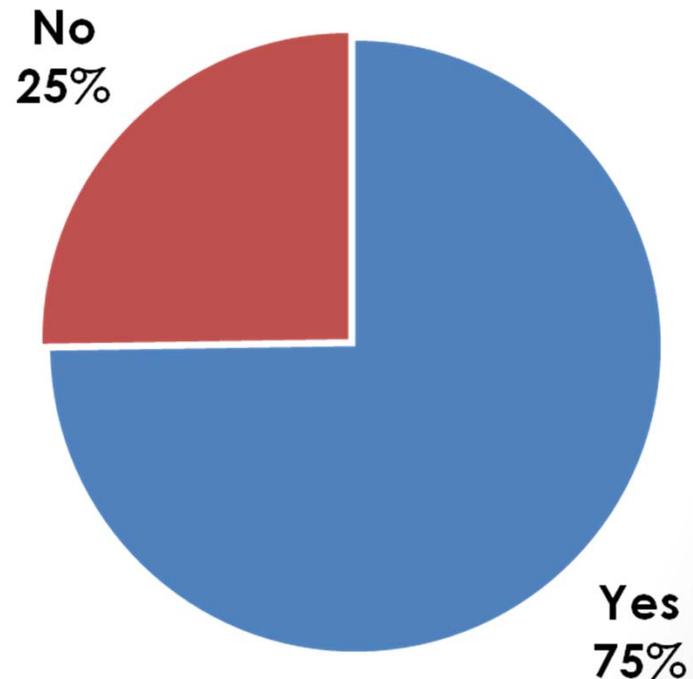
	All Counties	%
Opposes corporal punishment of children	235	32%
Supports parents' right to spank children	144	20%
Has no policy on legal child discipline methods	175	24%
Do not know agency position or policy	172	24%

Trainings on non-violent discipline

Does your agency provide training on non-violent discipline?



Would you like additional training?



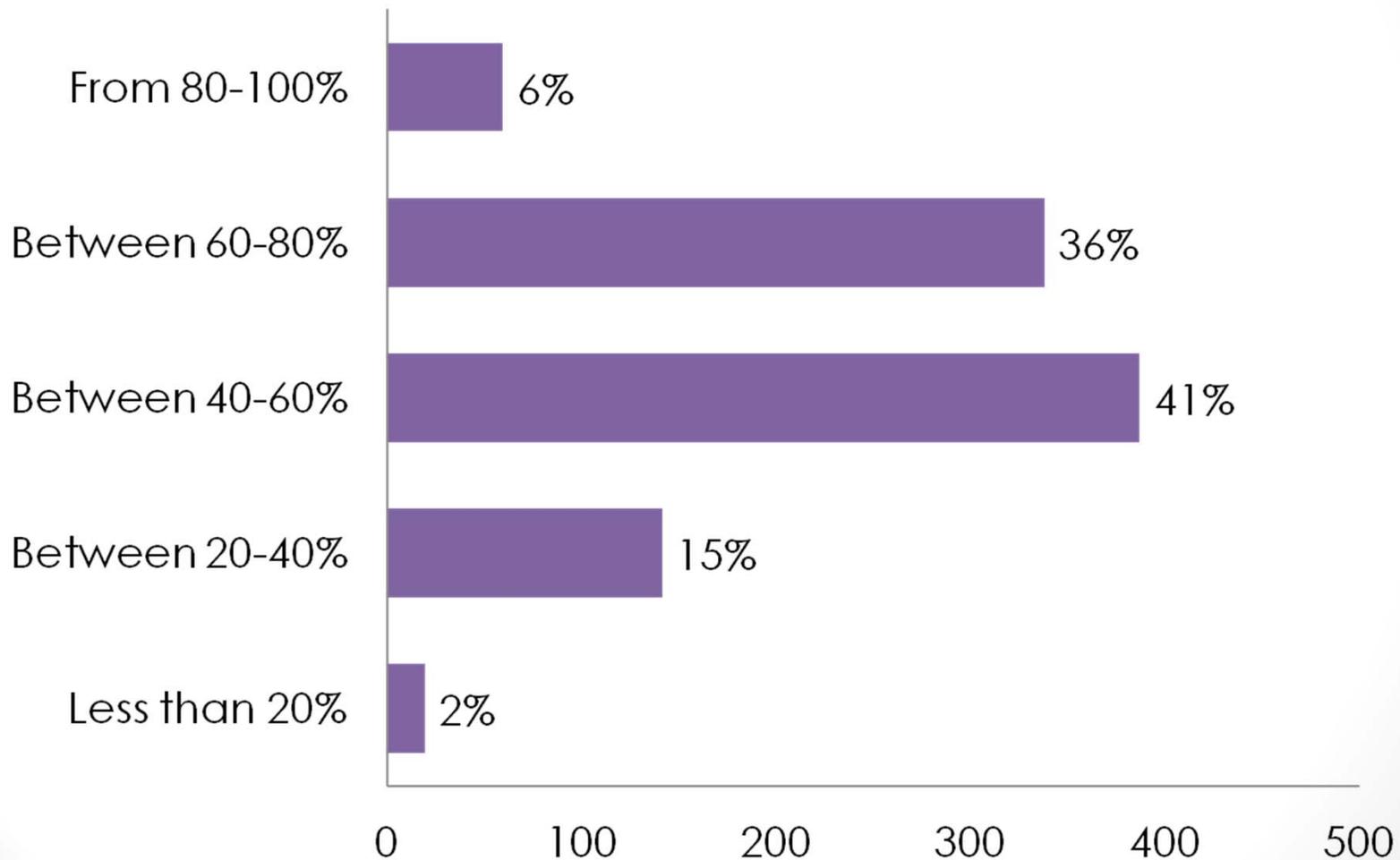
Personal experience with discipline methods as children

	ALL that apply	Primary method
Verbal reprimand	769	450
Use of time-out	279	39
Removal of privileges	678	252
Discussion	515	162
Positive reinforcement	368	66
Spanking	670	263

Personal use of discipline methods by respondents with own children

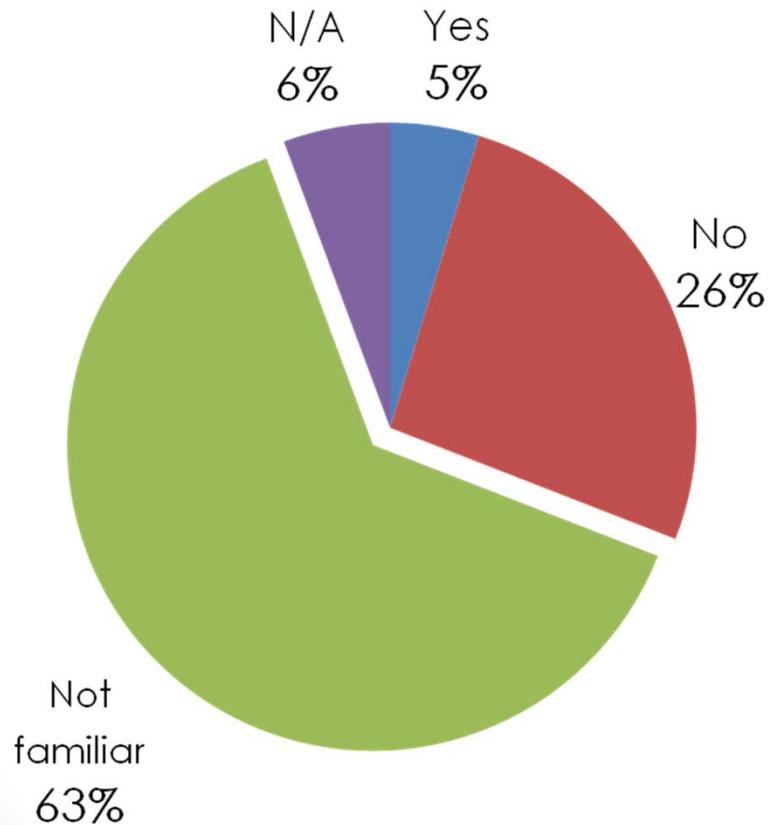
	ALL that apply	Primary method
Verbal reprimand	548	233
Use of time-out	472	146
Removal of privileges	571	284
Discussion	551	249
Positive reinforcement	543	161
Spanking	287	32

Respondent estimates of the number of U.S. children receiving corporal punishment

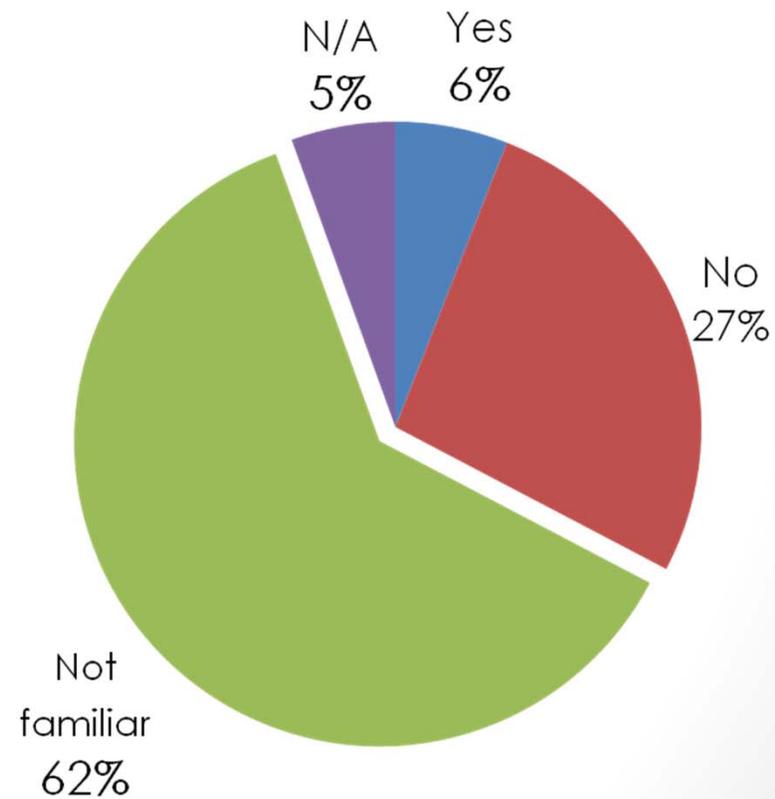


Use of documents to guide counseling

**NASW Policy Statement,
“Physical Punishment of
Children”**



**UN “Convention on the
Rights of the Child”**



U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child

- Affirms that children are people and deserving of human rights
- Article 19 of the Convention states that children should be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence...”

Social Work Speaks

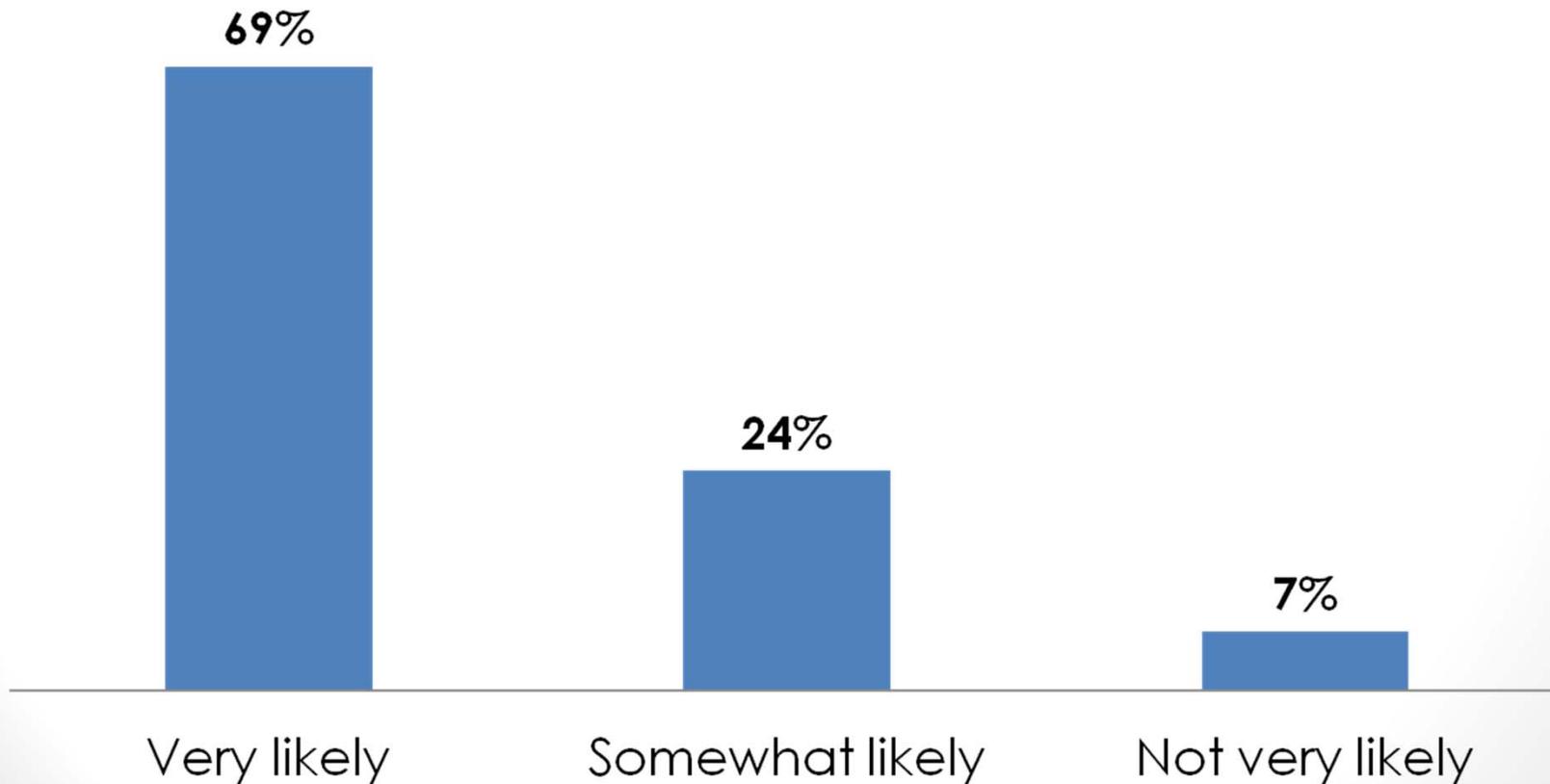
- *Physical Punishment of Children*
 - “NASW opposes the use of physical punishment in homes, schools, and all other institutions, both public and private, where children are cared for and educated”

Physical Punishment of Children (cont.)

- NASW supports:
 - Programs and practices that train/use nonviolent disciplinary techniques
 - A media-supported public and professional education campaign to abolish physical punishment
 - Programs that prepare professionals and parents to use nonviolent discipline
 - Legislation that prohibits use of physical punishment

Interest in additional materials

How likely would you be to use a pamphlet to assist in counseling parents on the risks of corporal punishment?



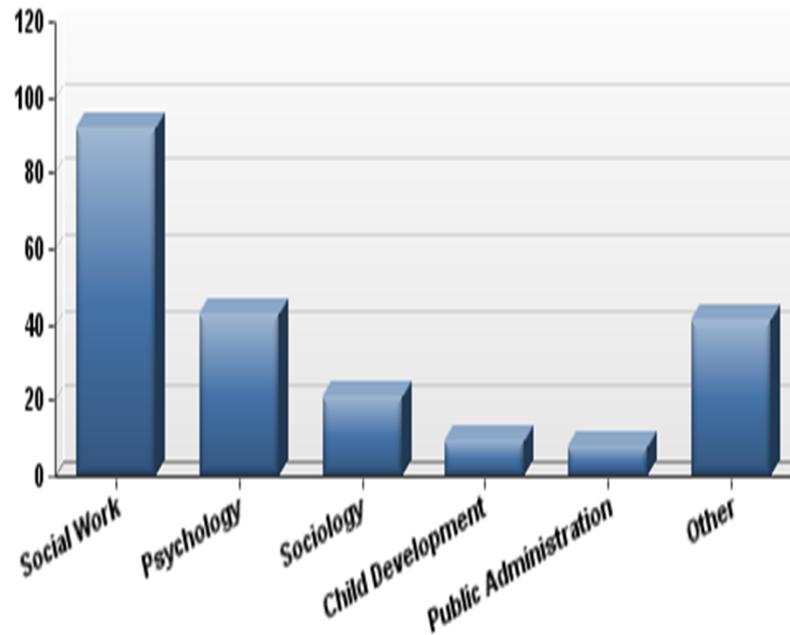
Agency policy v. counseling practices

	Opposes corporal punishment	Supports parents' right to spank	Has no policy	Do not know
Recommend positive reinforcement	92%	85%	85%	83%
Recommend time out, removal of privileges, etc.	91%	95%	95%	97%
Discourage corporal punishment	66%	44%	43%	40%
Recommend corporal punishment under limited circumstances	11%	32%	27%	24%
Make no recommendation	10%	8%	16%	22%
Discuss research findings	29%	28%	28%	26%
Meet with parents to change discipline practices	39%	41%	42%	31%

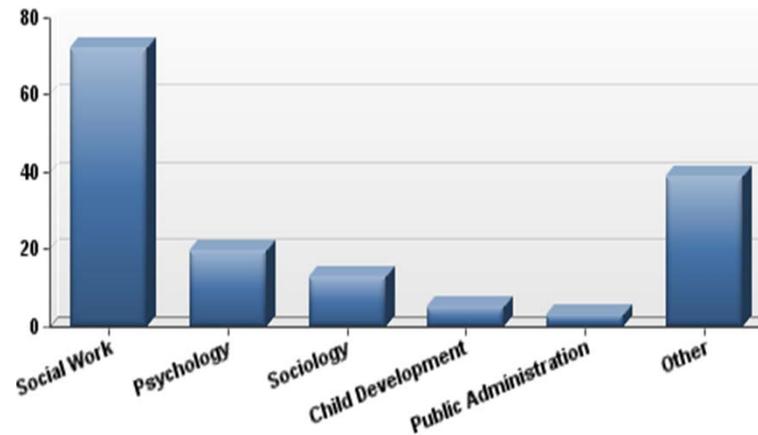
Which statement most closely reflects your opinion...

	I support, in principle, the limited use of corporal punishment by parents.	I am generally opposed to the use of corporal punishment by parents, but believe an occasional spanking under certain circumstances can be an effective form of discipline.	I am completely opposed to the use of corporal punishment by parents under any circumstances.	I am unsure regarding my stance on the use of corporal punishment by parents.
18-24	1 0.63%	6 1.19%	2 0.90%	0 0.00%
25-34	43 27.22%	149 29.56%	50 22.62%	14 31.11%
35-44	65 41.14%	158 31.35%	62 28.05%	13 28.89%
45-54	30 18.99%	110 21.83%	63 28.51%	10 22.22%
55 and older	19 12.03%	81 16.07%	44 19.91%	8 17.78%

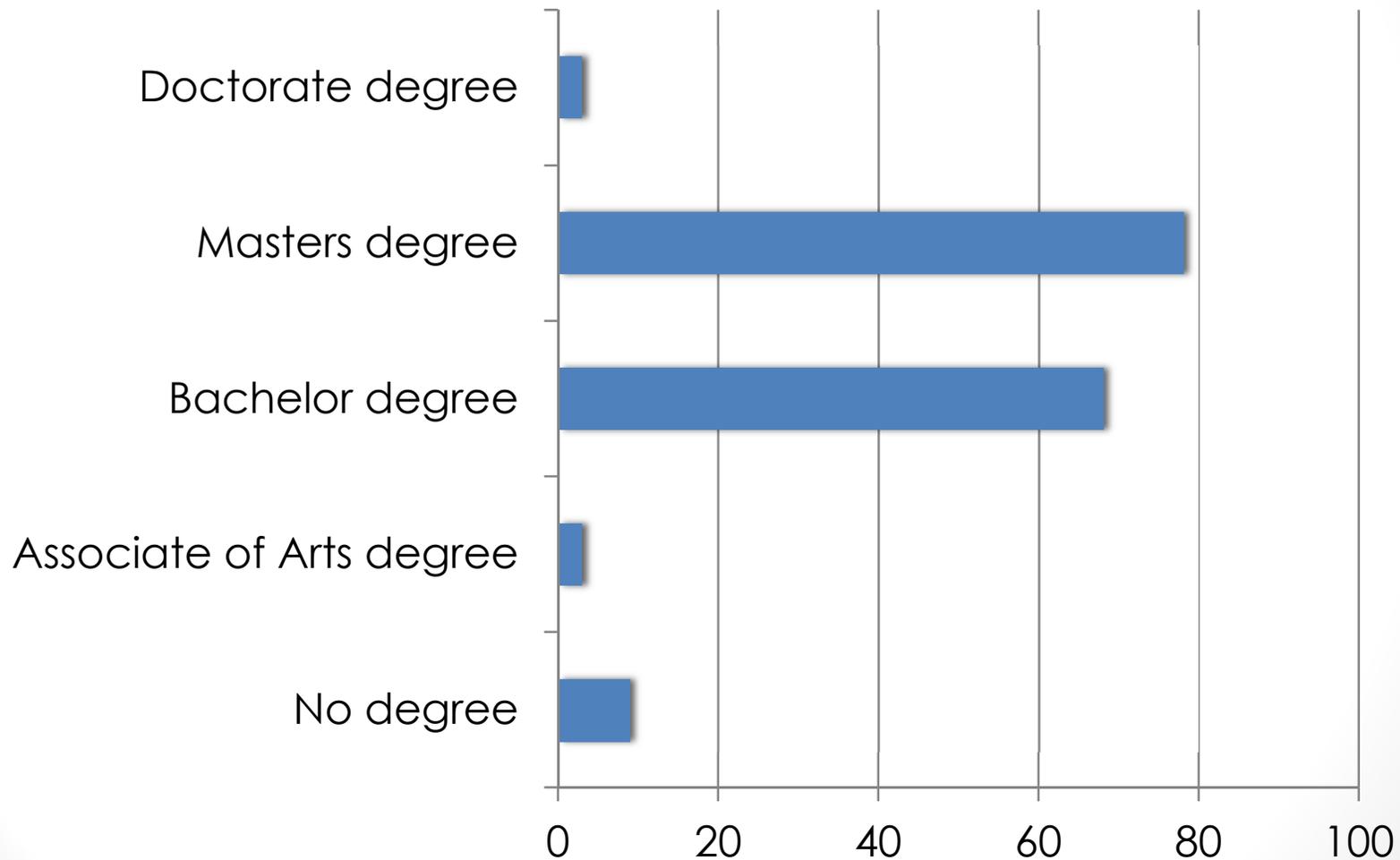
Highest Degree Discipline



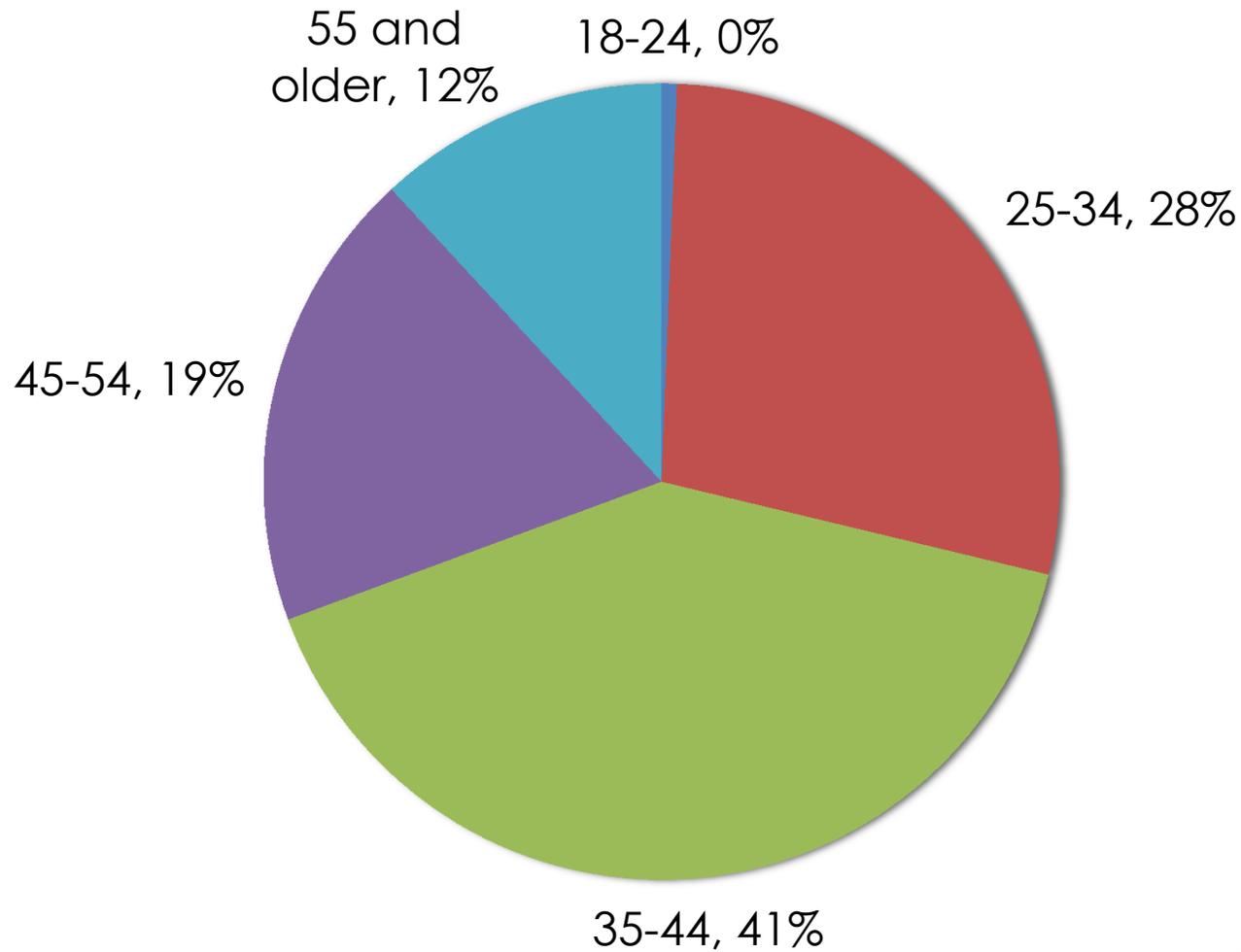
Oppose CP x Discipline



Support CP x Highest Degree Earned



Support CP x Age



Questions? Comments?

Where do we go from here?

Thank you