



SB 6570: LAW ENFORCEMENT
MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE
LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL
WORKFORCE SURVEY RESULTS

Some of the information we'll cover today may feel overwhelming or remind you of a loss you have experienced. Please take care of yourselves first and feel free to step away if needed.



Text 741741

Purpose of Law Enforcement Mental Health Workforce Feedback

- SB 6570 (2020): Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Task Force
 - Report to the legislature due December 2021
 - Law enforcement mental health workforce survey established to learn from law enforcement personnel about their mental health, emotional wellness, and associated needs
- Online survey – 1192 respondents, law enforcement workforce in Washington State
 - High level of engagement from law enforcement personnel; indicates interest in improving the emotional wellness of the workforce
- Important definitions:
 - Risk Factors:
 - *Characteristics present in an individual's life that might make them more vulnerable to suicide or otherwise negatively impact emotional wellbeing in a significant manner*
 - Protective Factors:
 - *Characteristics present in an individual's life which aid in defending against suicidal thoughts and/or a negative impact on emotional wellbeing*

Survey Methodology and Limitations

- **Methodology**
 - Anonymous online survey open to any individual working within the law enforcement workforce, including sworn and nonsworn staff
 - Survey questions designed based off feedback and guidance from Law Enforcement Mental Health Task Force members and national publications*
 - Data collected August 4, 2021 – September 1, 2021; total of 1192 responses.
- **Limitations**
 - Nonprobability sampling (exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling)
 - Little control over the sampling method
 - Representativeness of the survey data not guaranteed to be generalizable
 - Sampling bias possible; respondents may have shared traits and characteristics different than non-respondents
 - This data reflects feedback from respondents, not the entire WA Law Enforcement Workforce

* National Officer Safety Initiatives (NOSI) – [Preventing Suicide Among Law Enforcement Officers: An Issue Brief](#)
U.S. Department of Justice – [Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act: Report to Congress](#)

Law Enforcement Mental Health Task Force Feedback Findings

DEMOGRAPHICS

Law Enforcement Personnel Suicide Risk: Survey Demographics (n=1192)

Race (n=918; number, % respondents)		
Asian	12	1%
Black or African American	16	2%
Latino or Hispanic	44	5%
Native American	*	*
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	*	*
White	692	75%
Two or more	35	4%
Prefer not to say	107	12%

Age (n=916; number, % respondents)		
18 – 24 years old	34	4%
25 – 34 years old	176	19%
35 – 44 years old	269	29%
45 – 54 years old	311	34%
55 – 64 years old	112	12%
65 years old or older	14	2%

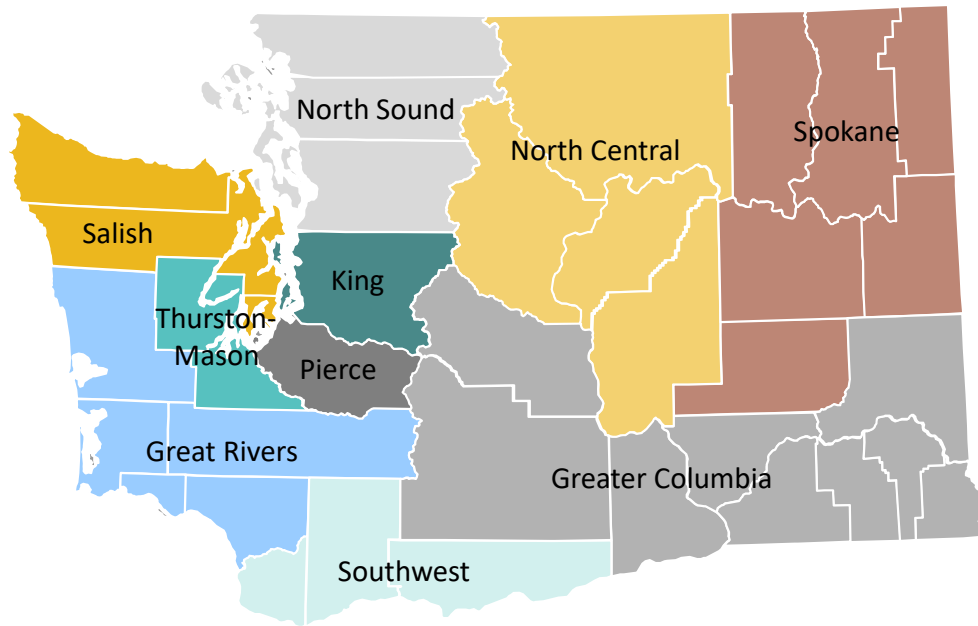
Years of service (n=944; number, % respondents)		
Less than 3	99	10%
4 years – 5 years	53	6%
5 years – 9 years	128	14%
10 years – 14 years	121	13%
15 years – 19 years	150	16%
20 years or longer	393	42%

Veteran (n=928; number, % respondents)		
Yes	268	29%
No	660	71%

LGBTQ+ (n=917; number, % respondents)		
Yes	39	4%
No	878	96%

Gender Identity (n=932; number, % respondents)		
Female	189	20%
Male	687	73%
Other	*	*
Prefer not to say	52	6%

Survey Demographics: Responses by Region



Total variable survey responses: n=1190
 Total known geographic region of respondents: n=917

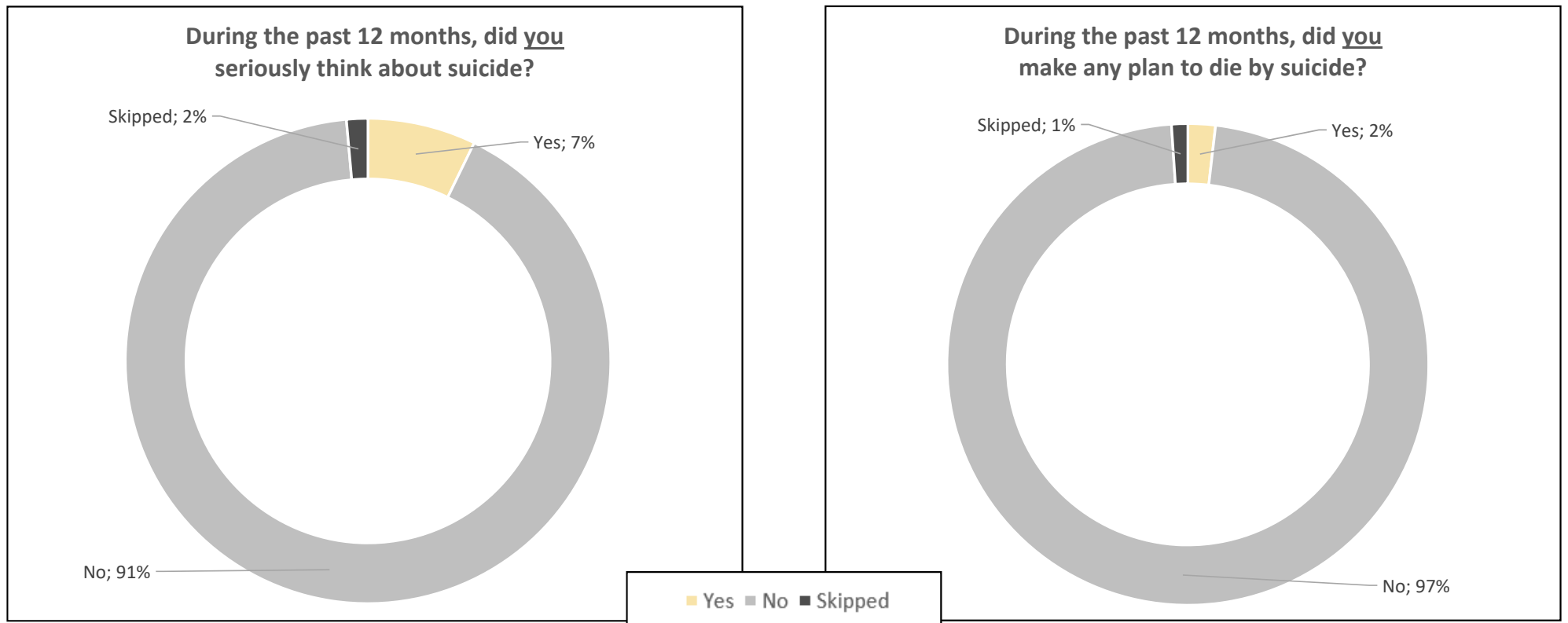
Number of respondents by region;
 % survey respondents known by region/
 reference % state population

<u>Great Rivers</u>	(n=51; 6%) (ref: 4%)
<u>Greater Columbia</u>	(n=102; 11%) (ref: 10%)
<u>King County</u>	(n=345; 38%) (ref: 30%)
<u>North Central</u>	(n=45; 5%) (ref: 3%)
<u>North Sound</u>	(n=126; 14%) (ref: 17%)
<u>Pierce County</u>	(n=43; 5%) (ref: 11%)
<u>Salish</u>	(n=53; 6%) (ref: 5%)
<u>Spokane</u>	(n=22; 2%) (ref: 8%)
<u>Southwest</u>	(n=54; 6%) (ref: 7%)
<u>Thurston-Mason</u>	(n=76; 8%) (ref: 5%)

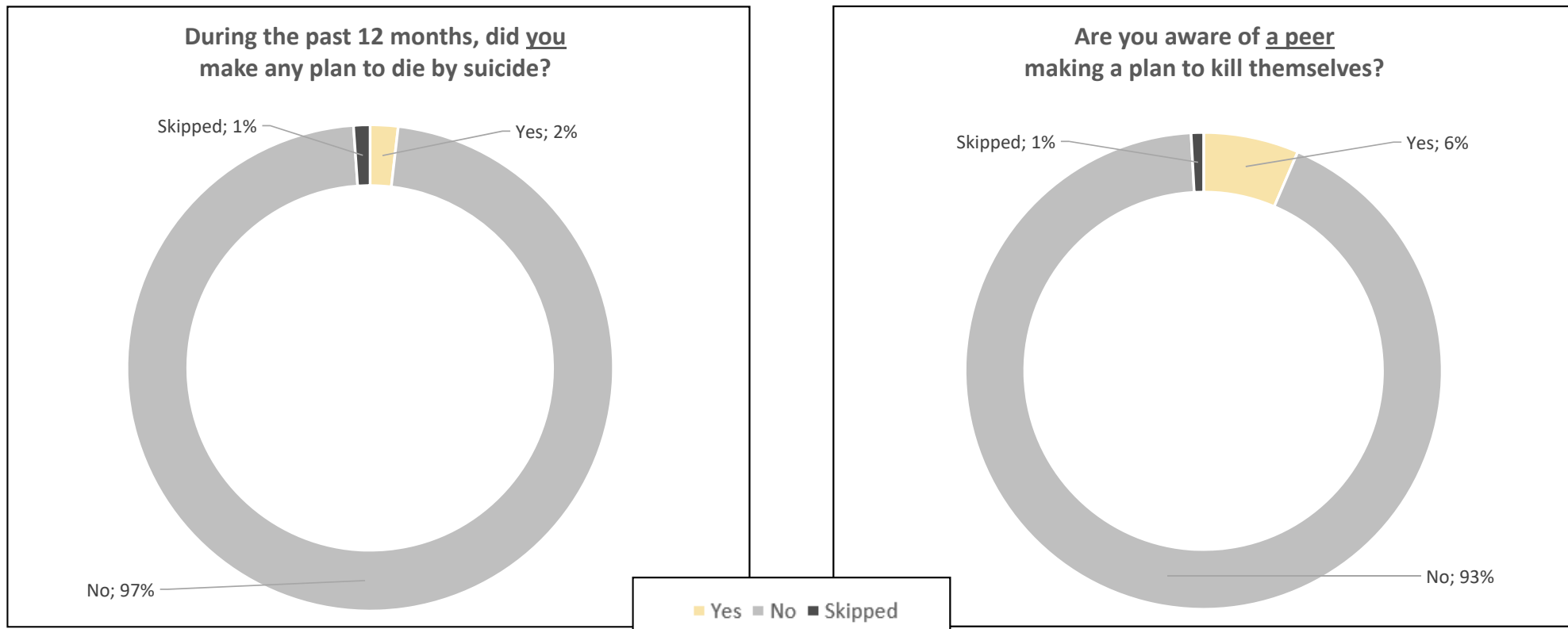
Law Enforcement Mental Health Task Force Feedback Findings

SUICIDE RISK

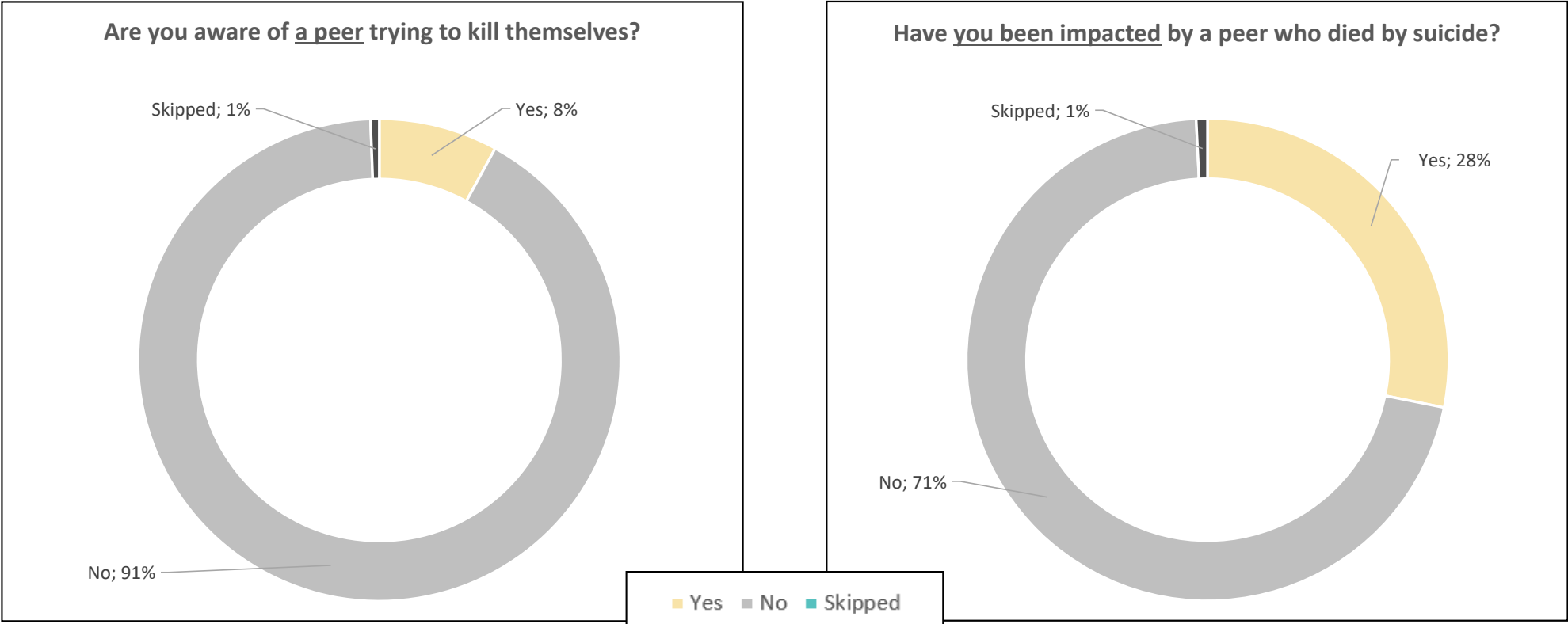
Law Enforcement Personnel Suicide Risk: Self-Reported Suicidal Ideation (n=1192)



Law Enforcement Personnel Suicide Risk: Self-Reported Suicide Planning vs. Peer Planning (n=1192)



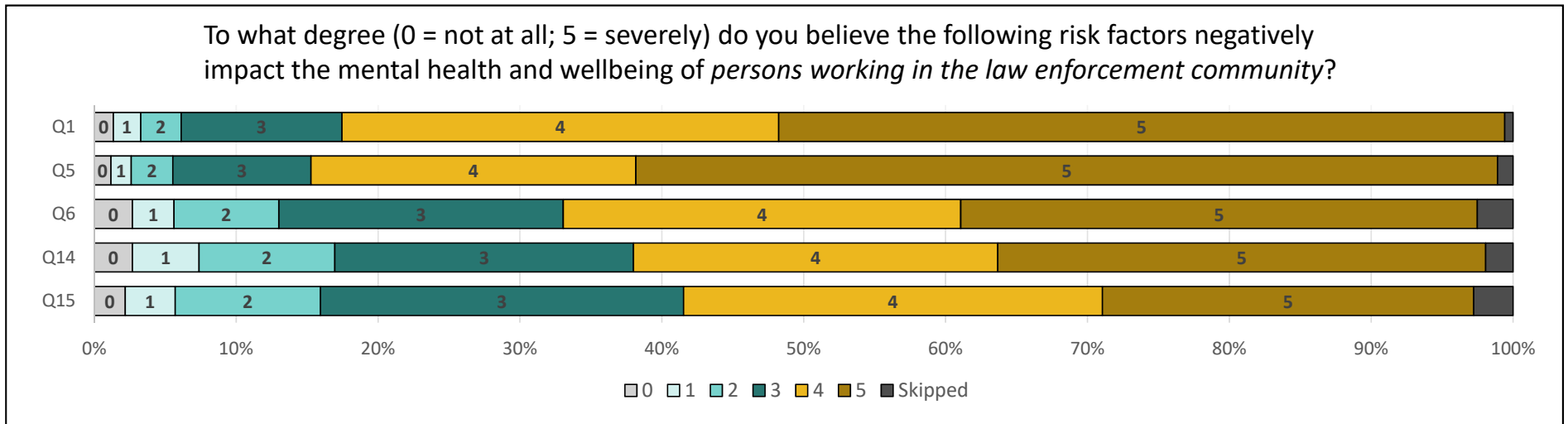
Law Enforcement Personnel Suicide Risk: Knowledge of Peer Suicidal Ideation or Death (n=1192)



Law Enforcement Mental Health Task Force Feedback Findings

RISK FACTORS

Law Enforcement Perceived Workforce Risk Factors (n=1192)



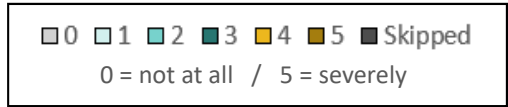
Q1: Exposure to traumatic events (e.g., domestic violence, death of a coworker, child abuse)

Q5: Impacts of community tension and policing social dynamics

Q6: Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosis or symptoms

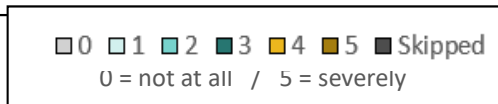
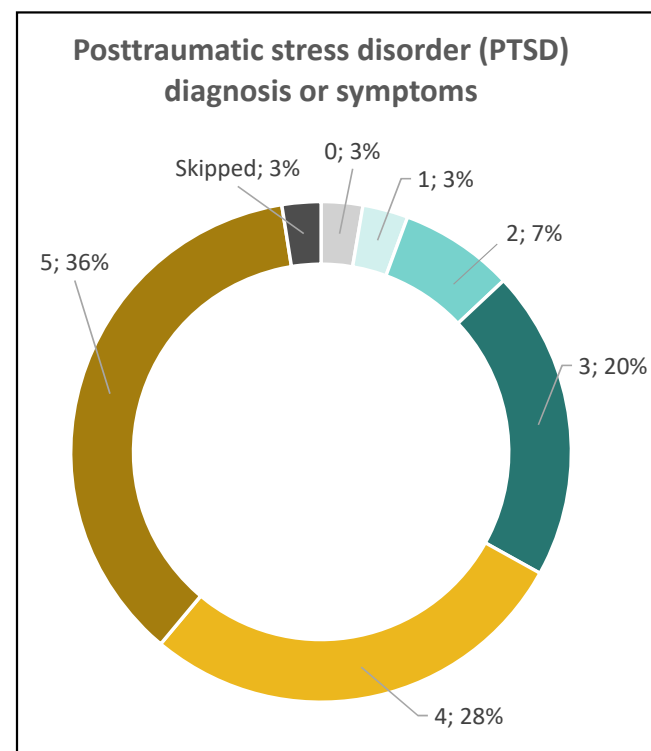
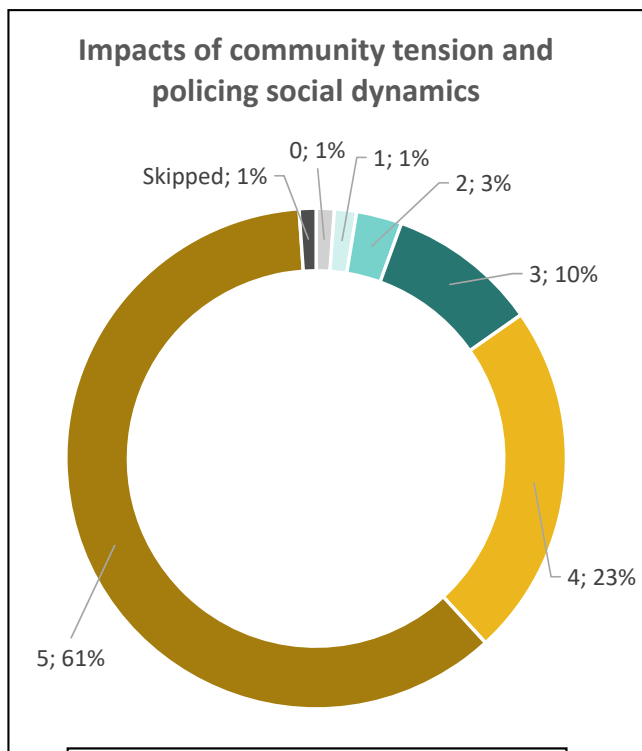
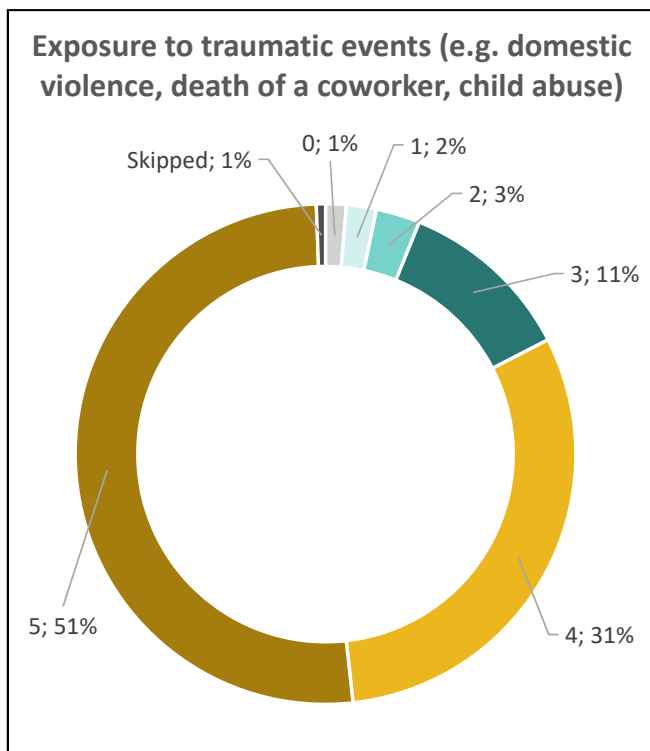
Q14: Challenges associated with department and organizational leadership (i.e., lack of leadership support, poor working conditions, limited opportunities for growth, poor leadership practices, arbitrary policies, lack of communication)

Q15: Challenges associated with job-associated cumulative stress and expectations (i.e., required paperwork and/or court appearances, threats to personal safety, needing to work an additional job for necessary income)



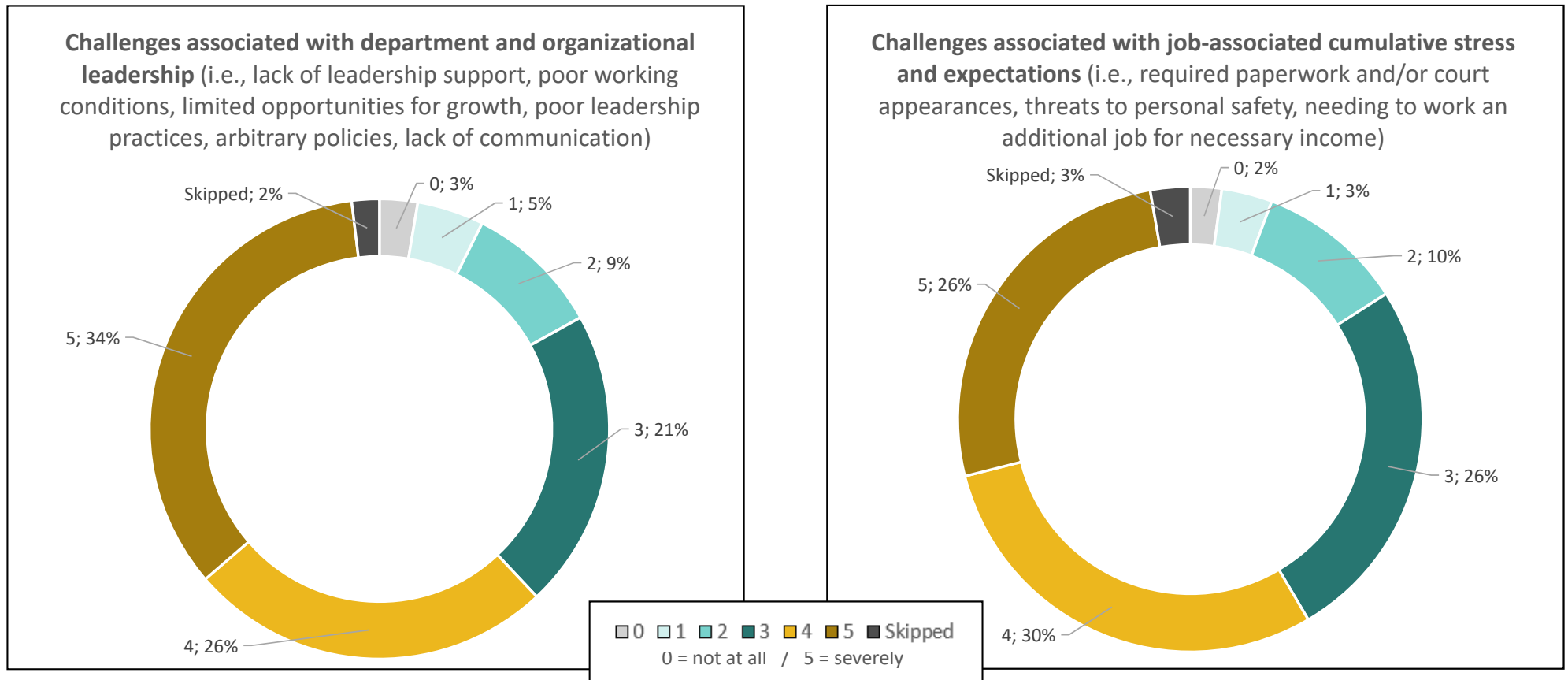
Law Enforcement Perceived Workforce Risk Factors (n=1192)

Trauma & Community Social Dynamics

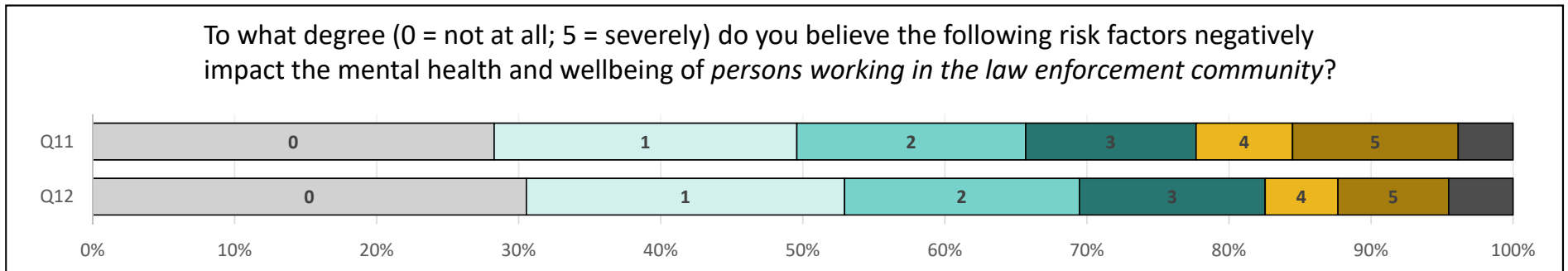


Law Enforcement Perceived Workforce Risk Factors (n=1192)

Job-related Stress & Organizational Challenges

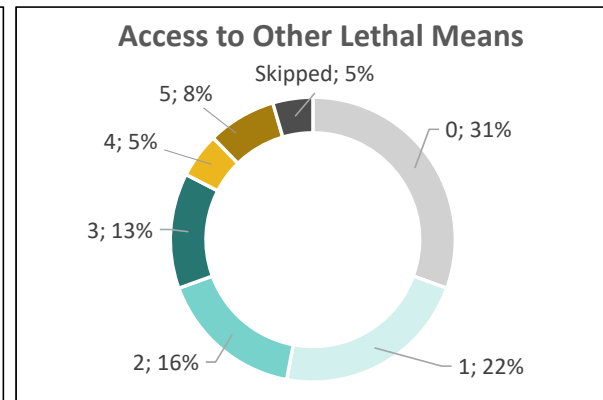
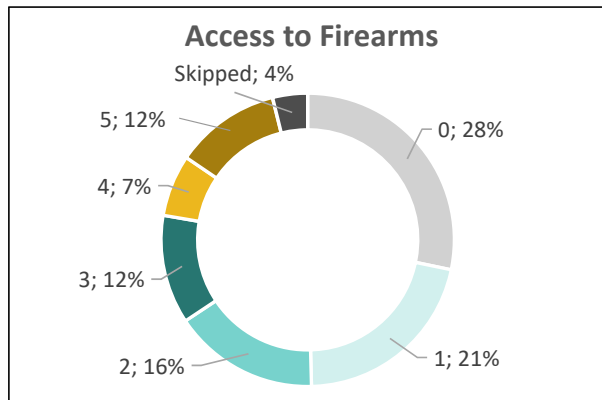


Law Enforcement Perceived Lethal Means Risk Factors (n=1192)



Q11: Access to firearms

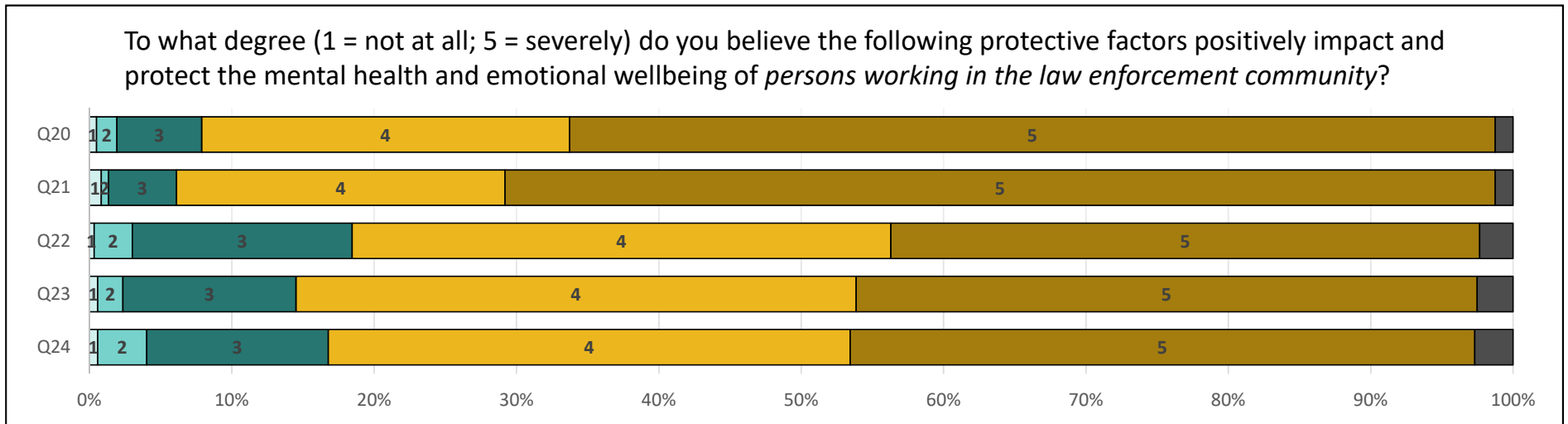
Q12: Access to other lethal means



Law Enforcement Mental Health Task Force Feedback Findings

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Law Enforcement Perceived Workforce Protective Factors (n=1192)



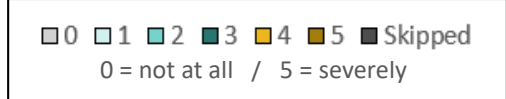
Q20: Family support and strong family relationships

Q21: Presence of supportive spouse or partner

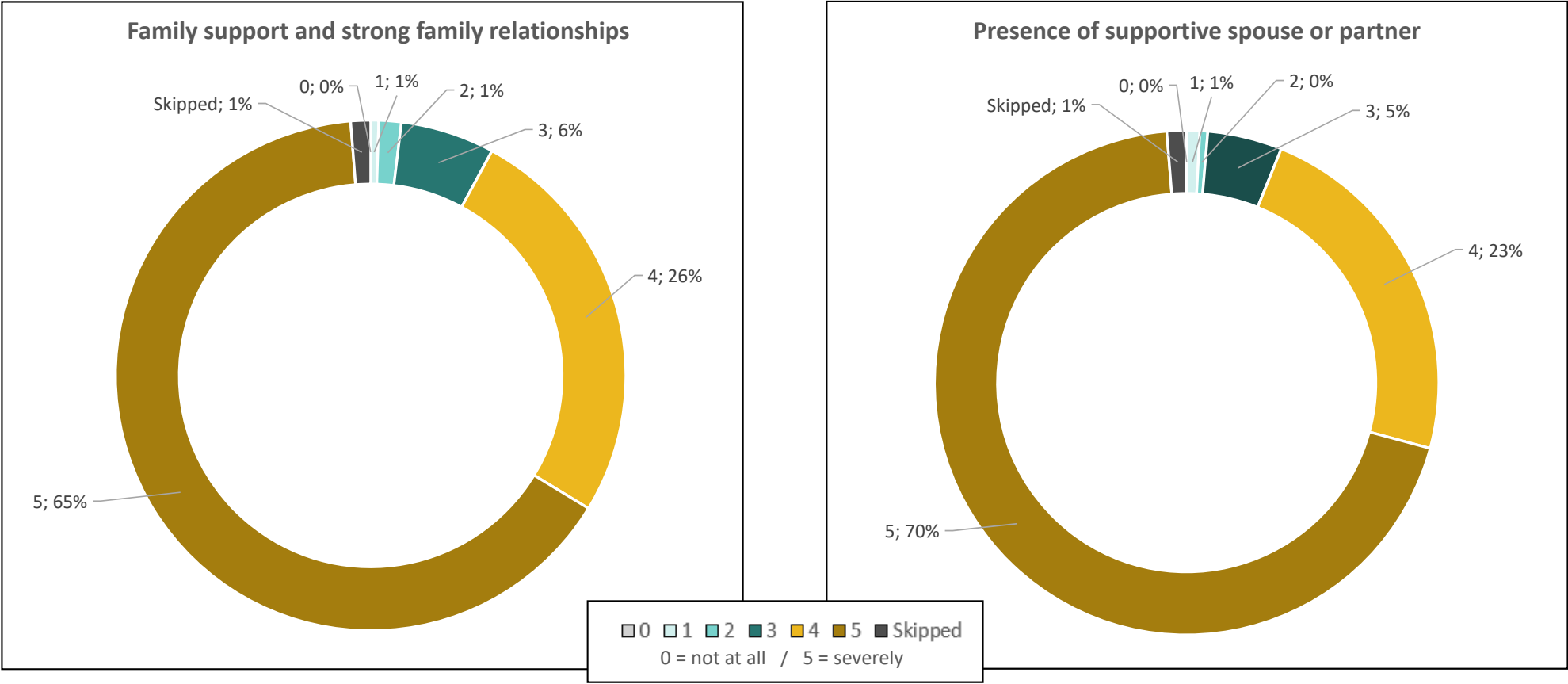
Q22: Resilient personality

Q23: Strong coping skills, particularly for stress and trauma exposure

Q24: Reasons for living (e.g., future goals, relationships, responsibility for children/parents)

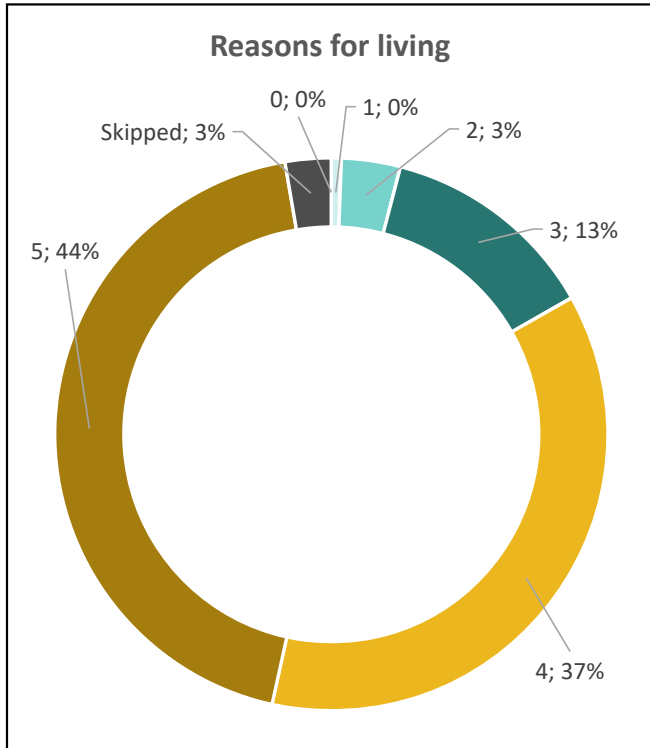
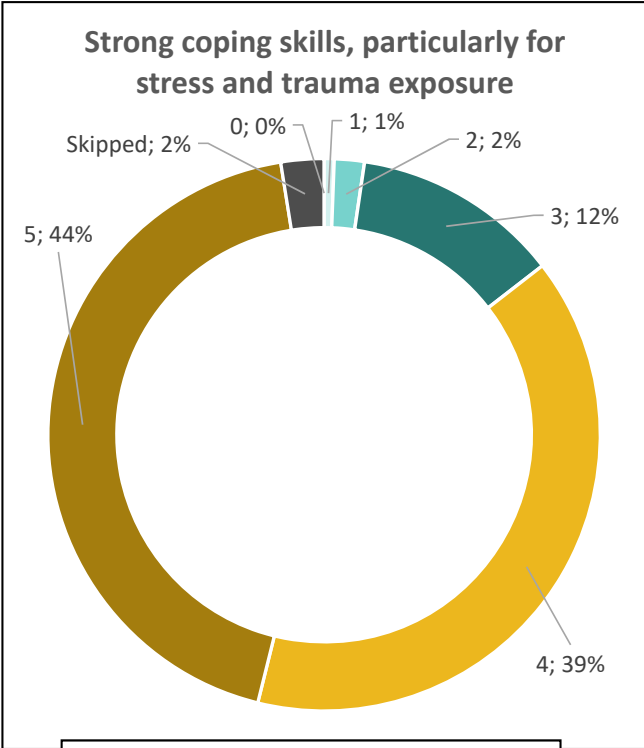
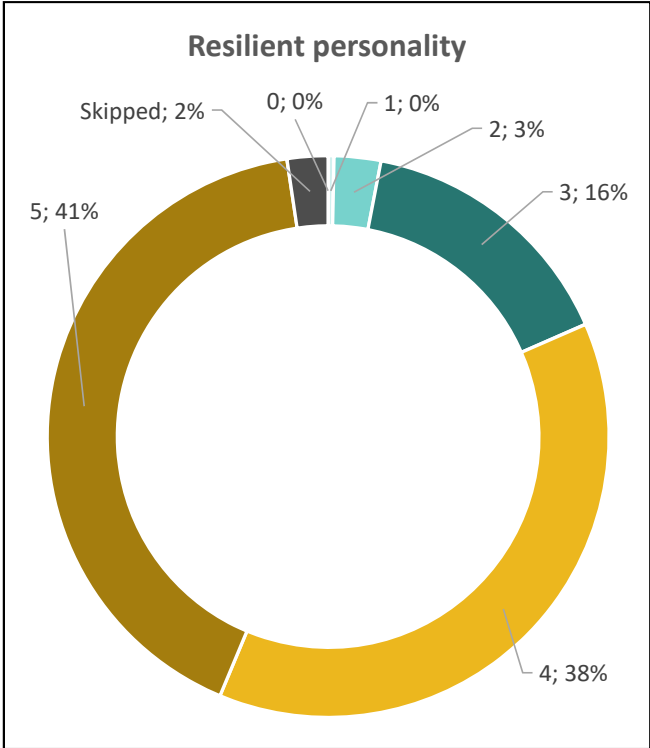


Law Enforcement Perceived Workforce Protective Factors (n=1192) Family, Spouse & Family Relationship Support Networks



Law Enforcement Perceived Workforce Protective Factors (n=1192)

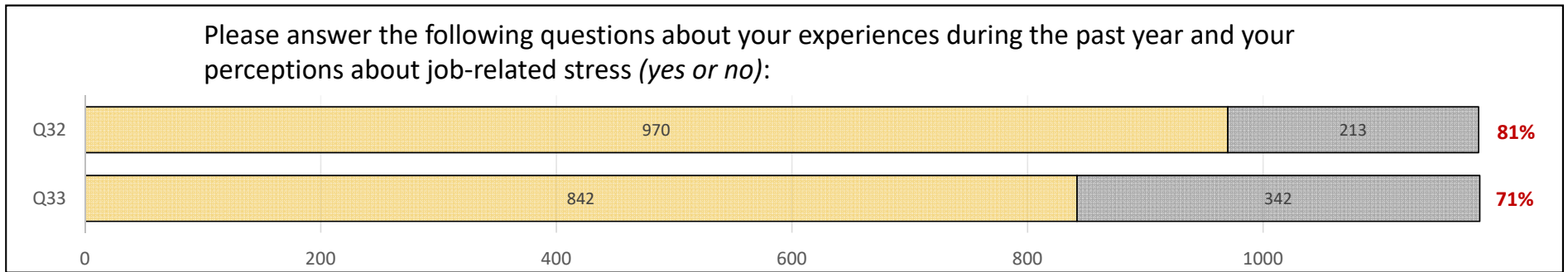
Personal Resiliency, Coping & Future Motivators



Law Enforcement Mental Health Task Force Feedback Findings

MENTAL HEALTH PERCEPTIONS

Impacts On Job-Related Stress in Law Enforcement



Q32 (n=1183*): During the past 12 months, has your position in law enforcement, regardless of job satisfaction, negatively impacted your emotional health? (81% reported 'yes')

Q33 (n=1184*): During the past 12 months, have you considered leaving the law enforcement occupation field to address stress or other emotional wellness concerns? (71% reported 'yes')



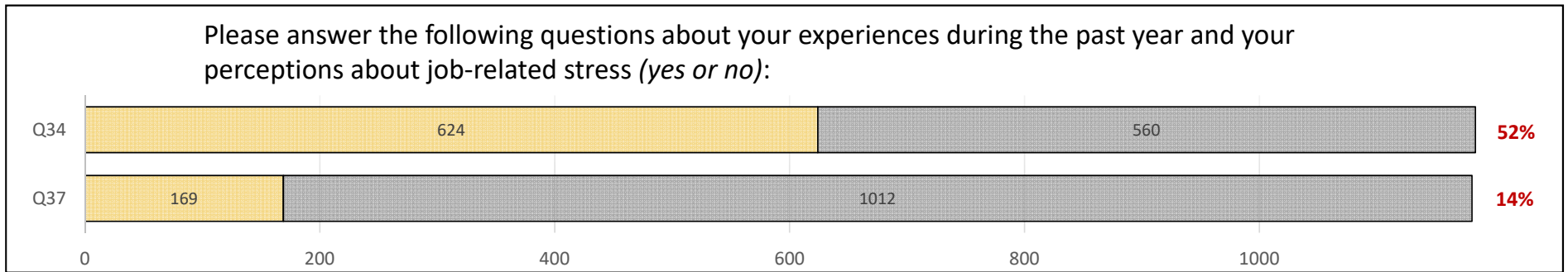
Q39: What additional feedback is important to consider in the context of law enforcement emotional wellness and associated concerns?

"The language we use. Culturally, law enforcement does see discussions of "mental health" as being positive. How questions and/or conversations are phrased is really important to buy-in from law enforcement."

"Law enforcement is getting hammered from all sides lately and it's taking it's toll. I would leave if I could."

"The new laws from the 2021 session are terrible and completely demoralize all cops statewide."

Impacts On Job-Related Stress in Law Enforcement



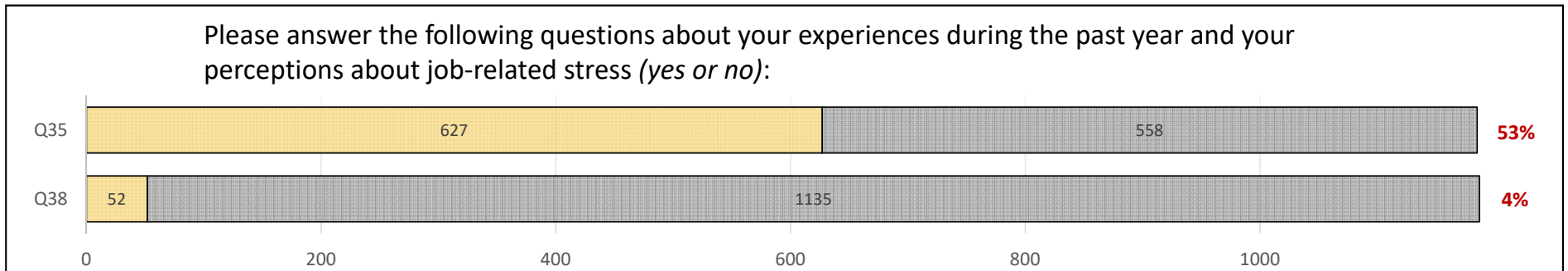
Q34 (n=1184*): If you were to seek support for job-related emotional stress, would you have concerns about possible professional consequences or repercussions? (52% reported 'yes')

Q37 (n=1181*): If a peer you work with were to seek support for job-related emotional stress, would you support possible professional consequences or repercussions as a result of their revealing these challenges? (14% reported 'yes')



*Respondents who skipped the question have not been included

Impacts On Job-Related Stress in Law Enforcement



Q35 (n=1185*): If you were to seek support for job-related emotional stress, would you have concerns about stigma and peer perceptions of weakness or leadership perceptions of being unfit for duty? (53% reported 'yes')



Q38 (n=1187*): If a peer you work with were to seek support for job-related emotional stress, would you judge or think of them as weak or unfit for duty as a result of revealing these challenges? (4% reported 'yes')

Q39: What additional feedback is important to consider in the context of law enforcement emotional wellness and associated concerns?

"I have been in this career field for almost 20 years. This job has no work life balance. It is a work - work balance. This creates no room for decompression especially for newer officers. Combine that with odd hours, mandatory overtime, internal and external pressure it is recipe for mistakes, mental trauma, and excessive use of force due to fatigue."

"I worry that many of our professionals are nearing a breaking point, emotionally."

"I was drinking heavily and suicidal. I had NO confidence in seeking support from within my organization. Instead, I sought help outside on my own and never told my employer or anyone at work. Cops don't trust that admin truly cares or will treat them with compassion and keep things confidential."

Reported Help-Seeking Behavior by Law Enforcement Personnel (n=1185*)



“quote 1”

“quote 2”

“quote 3”

Law Enforcement Mental Health Task Force Feedback Findings

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Survey Results: Recommended Opportunities for Action

General Program Recommendations:

1. Leadership and culture (leadership education; policy/procedure development; structural changes)
2. Law enforcement family support training and engagement
3. Peer support options and programming

Top Strategies Not Recommended:

1. Limiting access to lethal means through the availability of temporary storage options
2. Formal law enforcement personnel screening programs

Top recommended Strategies:

1. Physical fitness strategies (exercise while on duty, yoga, meals with peers)
2. Traumatic Incident Response
3. Sleep (sleep training, accommodations)
4. Diet (nutritional support, meals with peers, training to support nutritional wellness)
5. Scheduled time for sabbaticals and/or dedicated extended time away from work
6. Crisis line services (24/7/365) that are confidential and culturally informed about the unique experiences of law enforcement/first responders

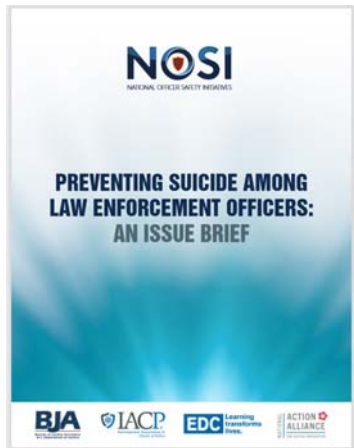
Firearms Safety & Safety Training

- About 90% of law enforcement deaths by suicide involved the use of a firearm
 - For individuals at risk of suicide, options to temporarily reduce access to lethal means can save lives
 - Education about when, why and how to secure and regain access to firearms is an important strategy to address suicide risk. It should be:
 - Included with programming and supports tailored for law enforcement personnel
 - Implemented in a culturally dignifying way that aligns with existing values of firearm safety
- Legislative report recommendation: Education about firearm safety, inclusive of lethal means safety, tailored for law enforcement personnel and their families
 - Continue dissemination of a [free online course](#) on firearms and lethal means safety. Expand course to specifically address suicide-related risk factors that characterize risk among law enforcement personnel
 - Disseminate a toolkit to federal firearms licensees (FFL) about their potential roles in suicide prevention and public education about lethal means safety
 - Expand [LEARN SAVES LIVES](#) across Washington State for law enforcement personnel and those who come in contact with the first responder community
 - Collaborate with the [Safer Homes, Suicide Aware program](#) to establish strategies and programming that will address the unique needs of law enforcement personnel and their families

Suicide Prevention Resources for Law Enforcement



[National Consortium on Preventing Law Enforcement Suicide Toolkit](#)



[National Officer Safety Initiatives – Preventing Suicide Among Law Enforcement Officers: An Issue Brief](#)



[Executive Order Saving Lives Through Increased Support for Mental and Behavioral Health Needs Report](#)

Conclusions & Next Steps

- Feedback from you all!
- Decisions about next steps



QUESTIONS?

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