

## MESSAGE TESTING

# Shaping powerful messages that cut through the clutter to drive change.

Effectively communicating that preventing domestic violence is possible through anti-oppression work – that is, addressing gender, racial, economic, health and other systemic inequities – is almost as important as the anti-oppression work itself. To ensure external communication would be meaningful, digestible and clear among the general public, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence deployed a survey to test domestic violence prevention messages.

Here are the important takeaways to inform prevention-based messaging.

## Key Takeaways

*Just because behavior isn't physically violent or sexually abusive doesn't mean it's not a form of domestic violence. Know the behaviors, patterns and warning signs that make domestic violence, domestic violence.*

**37%** of respondents viewed it as important

**31%** of respondents believed it had an impact on prevention

**Educational messages shedding light on domestic violence behaviors and effects are viewed as highly important and as having an impact on prevention.**

*Domestic violence impacts 1 in 3 women, 1 in 5 men and over half of LGBTQIA individuals. Shocking as they are, the numbers don't give us the full picture because nearly half of domestic violence goes unreported.*

**38%** of respondents believed it was effective at raising awareness

**Taking steps to set the foundation for domestic violence as a priority and raise the needed awareness to understand the problem creates more impactful and effective communication of prevention-based messages.**

*Domestic violence is underreported, misunderstood and often overshadowed by a myriad of societal issues. It's time to sound the alarm on this stealth epidemic and recognize its impact on our communities. We have a collective responsibility to create safe and healthy communities that our future generations will inherit.*

**42%** of respondents viewed it as important

**40%** of respondents believed it had an impact on raising awareness

**36%** of respondents believed it had an impact on prevention

**Shedding a light on the prevalence of domestic violence is attention-grabbing and adds much-needed context for prevention messaging. Words like underreported, misunderstood and overshadowed draw an audience's attention.**

## What learnings from the research can be applied to deliver messages that resonate?

### Messages should build up to prevention.

Structure messages so there is a logical progression from awareness of domestic violence to prevention. Prevention messaging must first be grounded in an understanding of what domestic violence is and its impacts. With many misconceptions and a general lack of understanding about domestic violence, it's imperative to level set the national conversation.

### Messages should make prevention something more tangible, making it possible for everyone to take action.

Statements that message directly to domestic violence prevention, made possible through anti-oppression actions, can feel overwhelming for the average person. Messages should start small, communicating to audiences that every action no matter how little is impactful.

### Messages should educate, captivate and inspire through common language that is easy to understand, relatable and meaningful.

Based on the survey's tested messages, messages that activated empathy by featuring people instead of policy performed better on key metrics. Therefore, give audiences someone to connect to and use powerful words to grab their attention.

The study surveyed **1,536 Pennsylvanians** ages 18 and over with quotas set to match the Pennsylvania census distribution on gender, age and ethnicity.

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