

How PTSD Affects an Officer's Home and Work Life

By: Shauntay Thurston, Kara Mueller, Rebekah
Clark

Literature Review

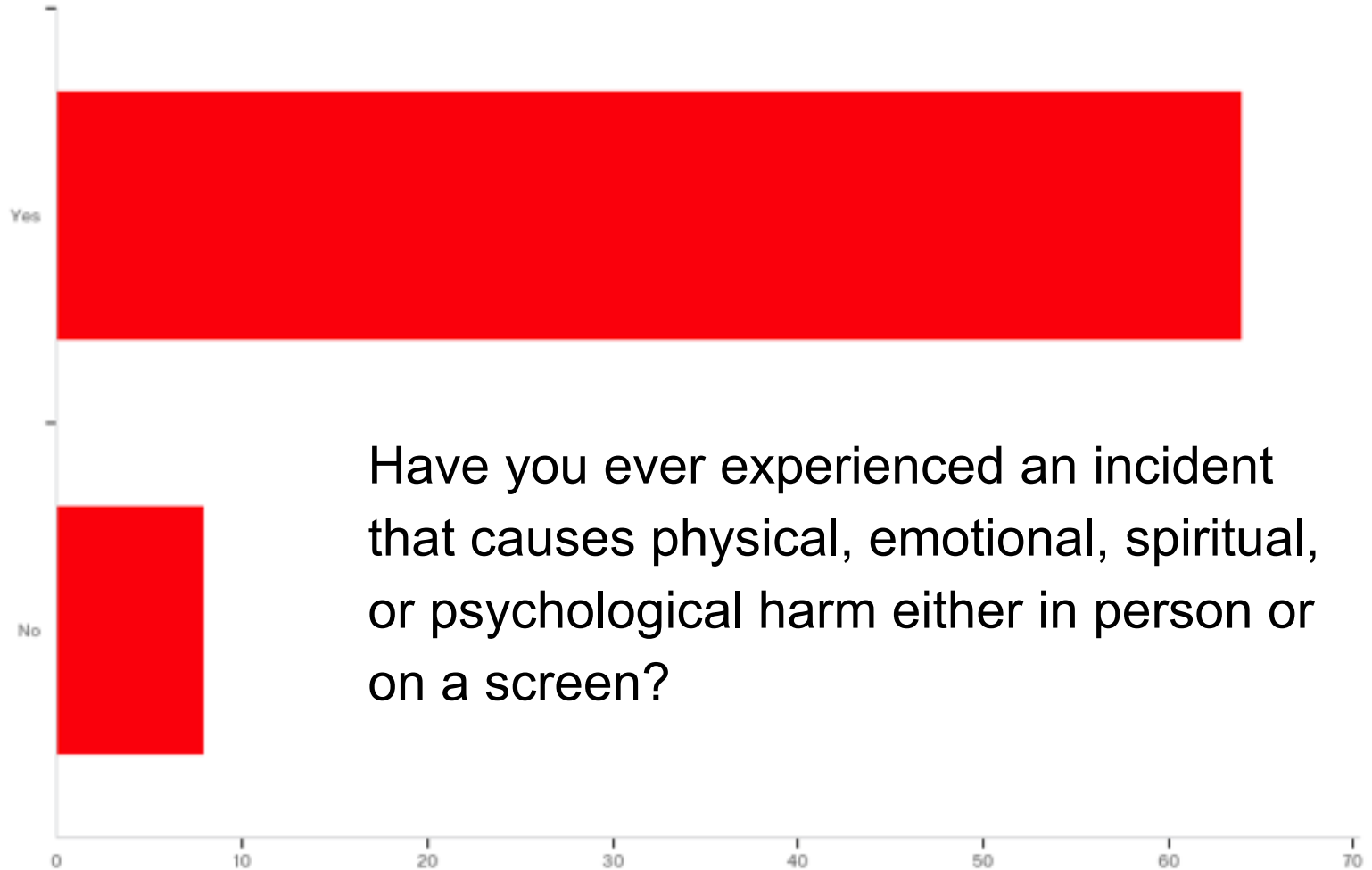
- “According to studies cited by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), between seven percent and 19 percent of police officers experience symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, compared to 3.5 percent of the general population” (Thomas, Tiffany. S.).
- “Those who have difficulties in expressing their emotions are more likely to develop posttraumatic reactions. The tendency to fear anxiety-related symptoms is also a risk factor for PTSD, and hypersensitivity to threat and a slower habituation process were found to prospectively predict PTSD symptom severity in police recruits” (Marchand A.).
- PTSD is a hard thing to carry on all by yourself, that is why many people have such a hard time daily. It can control people's lives and they can go from having a normal life to always being scared of what may happen in the next instant.
- This takes a toll on the mental and physical state of anybody. Some learn to find ways to help with the PTSD, but most don't exactly know that they have it until it is too late.
- This study will help the officers and their families as they are going through this tough time. In the end they can even find ways to help the community more by helping their officers where they need it most. The officers put so much on the line to help others, but most don't really know what it does to them. Just like each officer is unique in Utah officers are as well.
- That is why this study is so important. It will not just help get information but also help the officers who really need it.

Survey Questions

- We first looked at research on PTSD to find some direction that we could go for the questions to put into the survey.
 - PTSD Symptoms Among Police Officers: Associations With Frequency, Recency, And Types Of Traumatic Events, Relationships among traumatic experiences, PTSD, and posttraumatic growth for police officers: A path analysis, and Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms in Police Officers Following Violent Assaults: A Study on General and Police-Specific Risk and Protective Factors.
- We mainly focused on the work life and family life of the officers. We did this to get better questions that would give clearer answers that we needed for the survey to work.
- We then looked at some quizzes online that could give us some examples of questions we could use.
 - Psy.com, Anxiety and Depression Association of America, and Ploiceone.com

Sensus.

Since we do not have a sample size or confidence interval we have a sensus. We reached out to Orem PD, Brigham City PD and American Fork PD and received their consent to distribute the survey among officers. We didn't know who was going to participate in the survey and how many so therefore, we do not have a sample size. We had 75 responses in total.



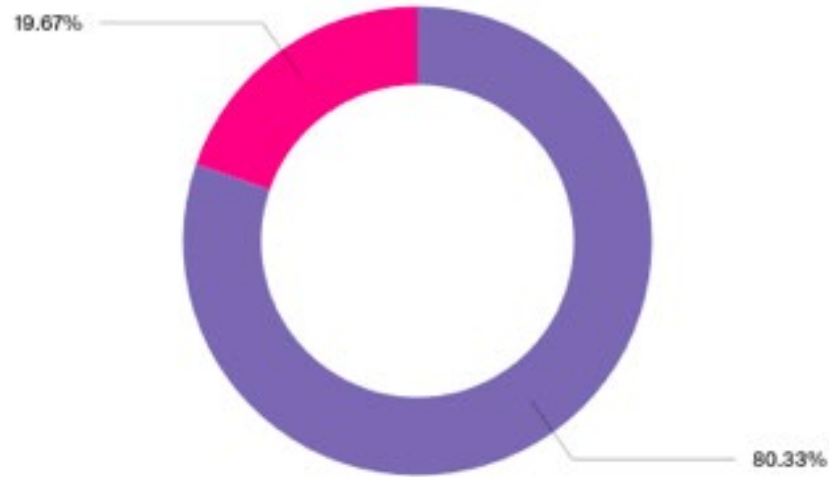
Have you ever received professional treatment related to a traumatic event?

39%
Yes

61%
No

Yes No

Have you ever had reoccurring memories of the traumatic event?



■ Yes ■ No

Do you have problems sleeping?



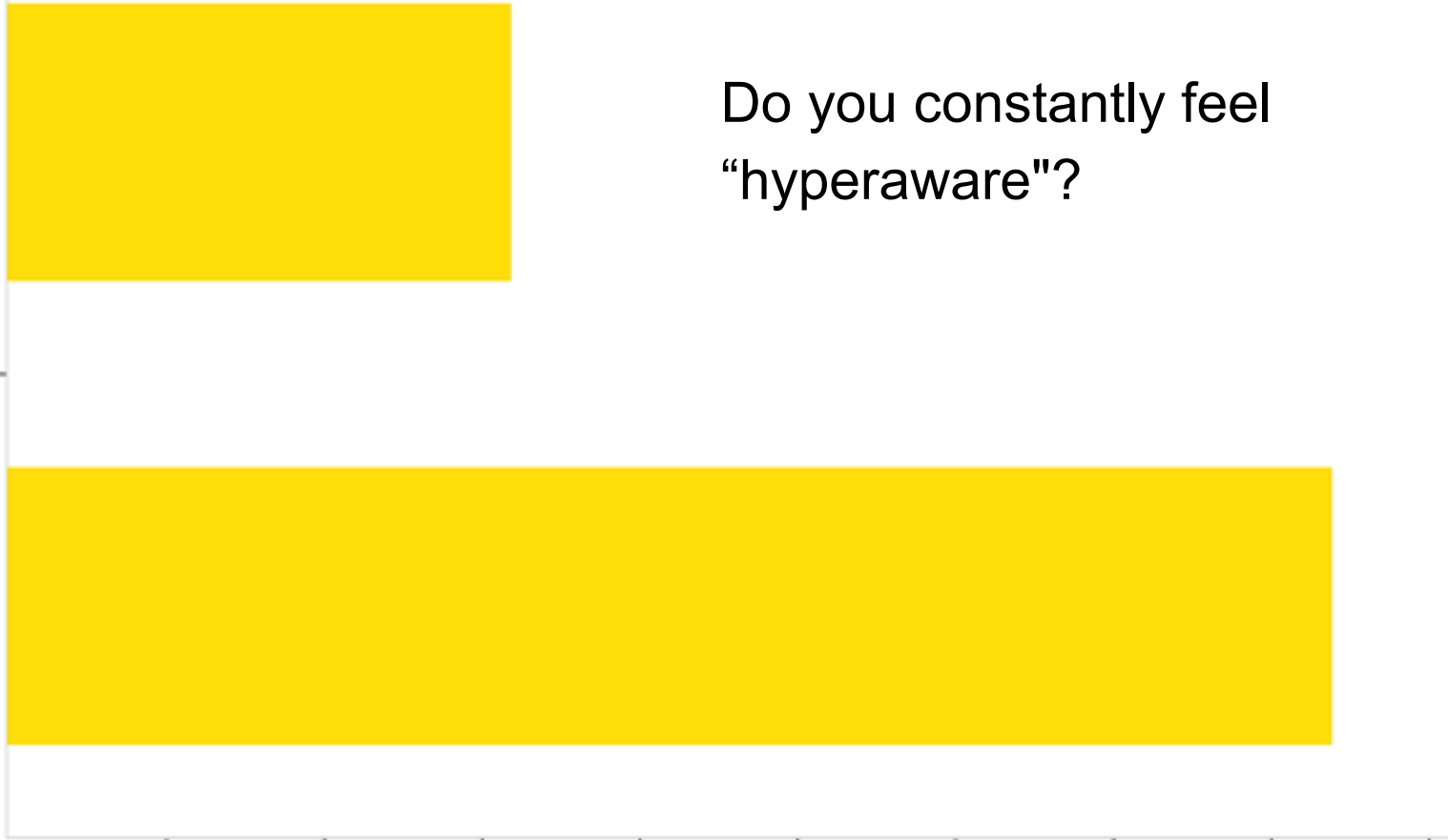
■ Yes ■ No

Do you constantly feel
“hyperaware”?

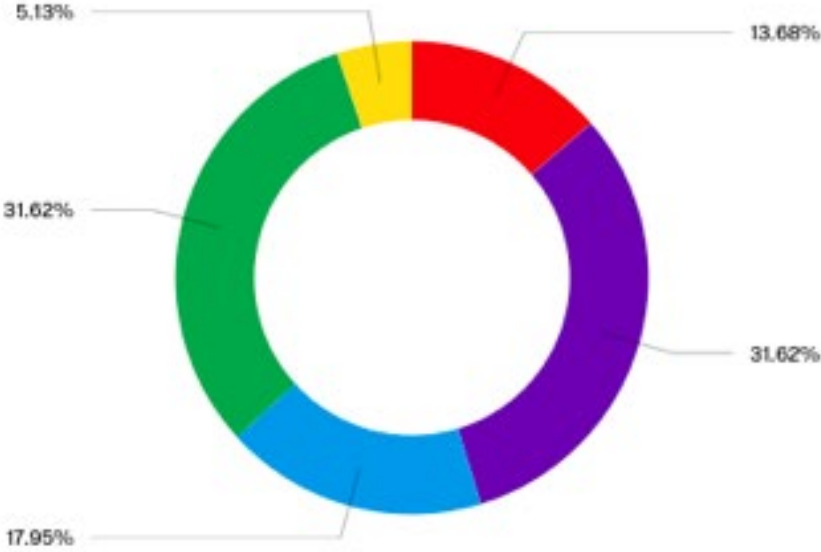
No

Yes

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

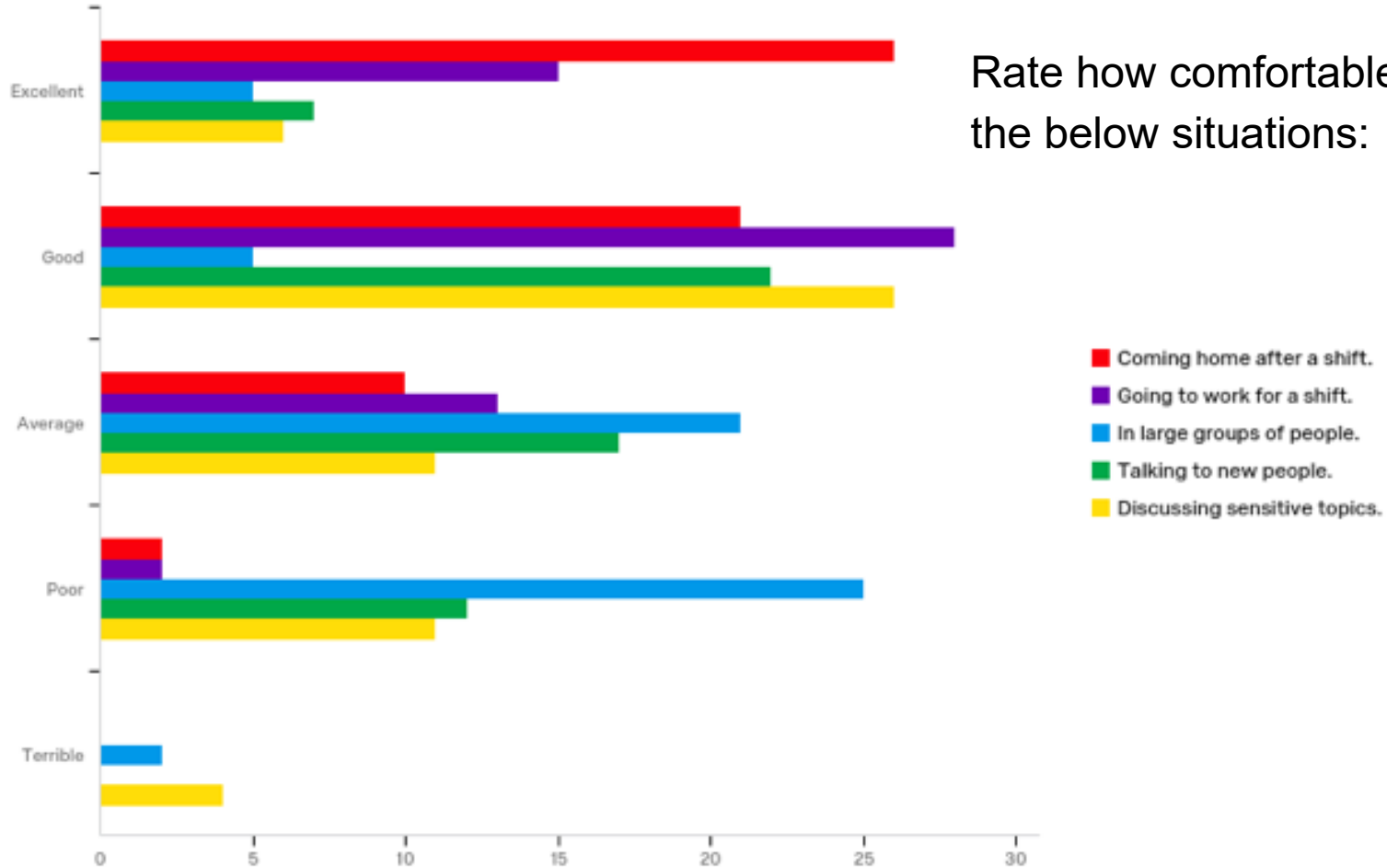


Do you get nervous in any of the below situations? Select all that apply:

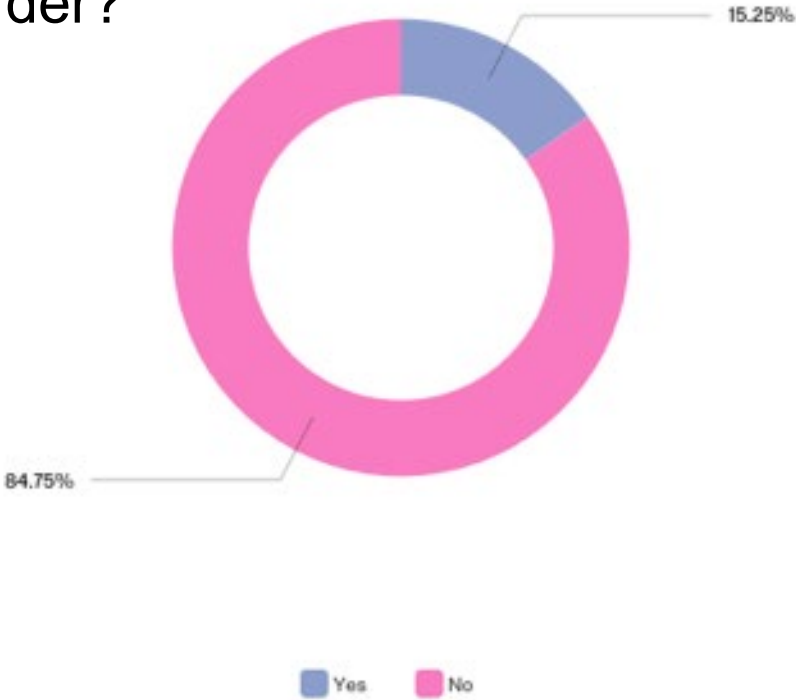


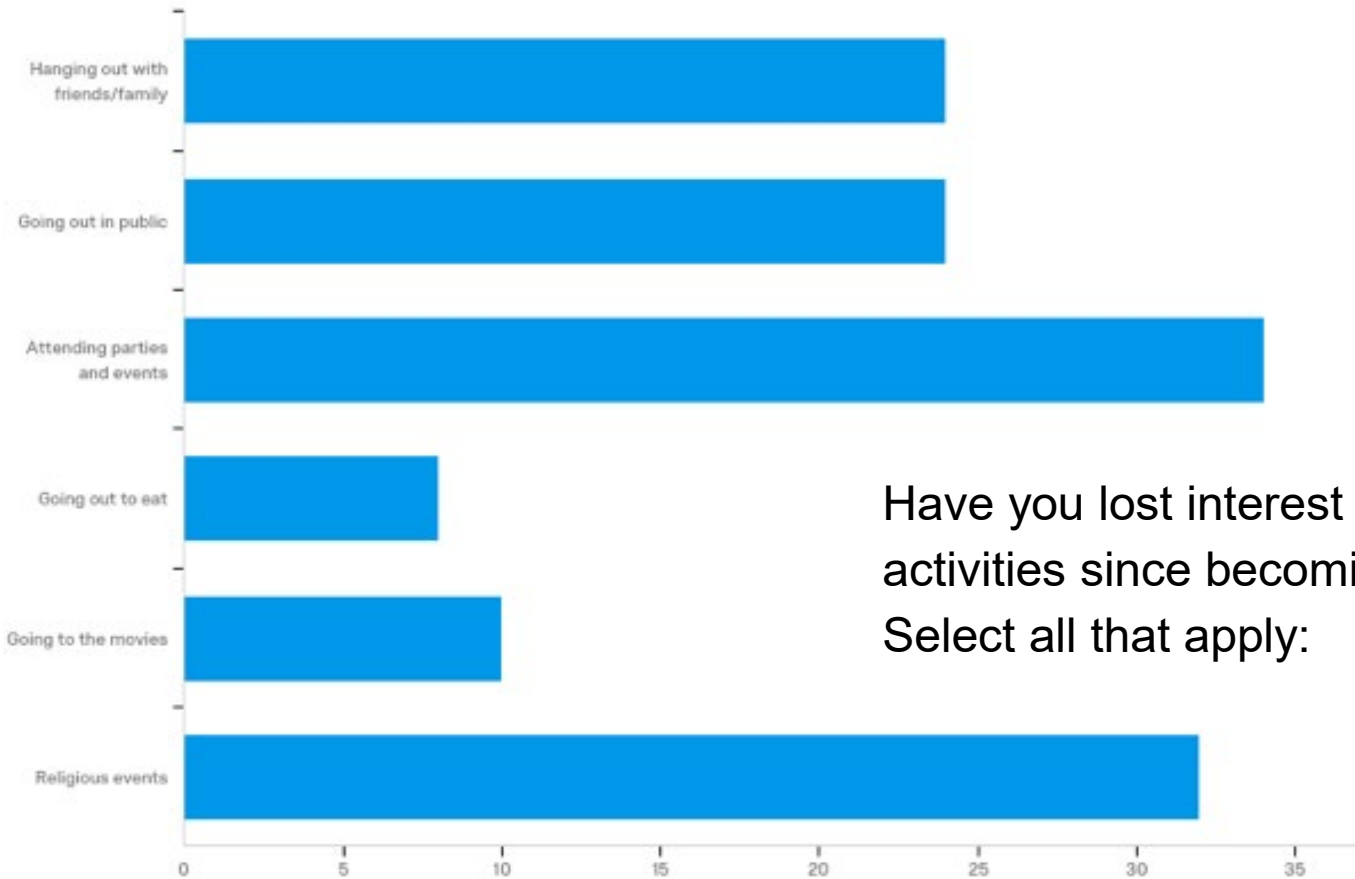
■ Not being able to find an exit ■ Being in large crowds of people ■ Loud noises ■ Not being in control ■ Other

Rate how comfortable you are with the below situations:



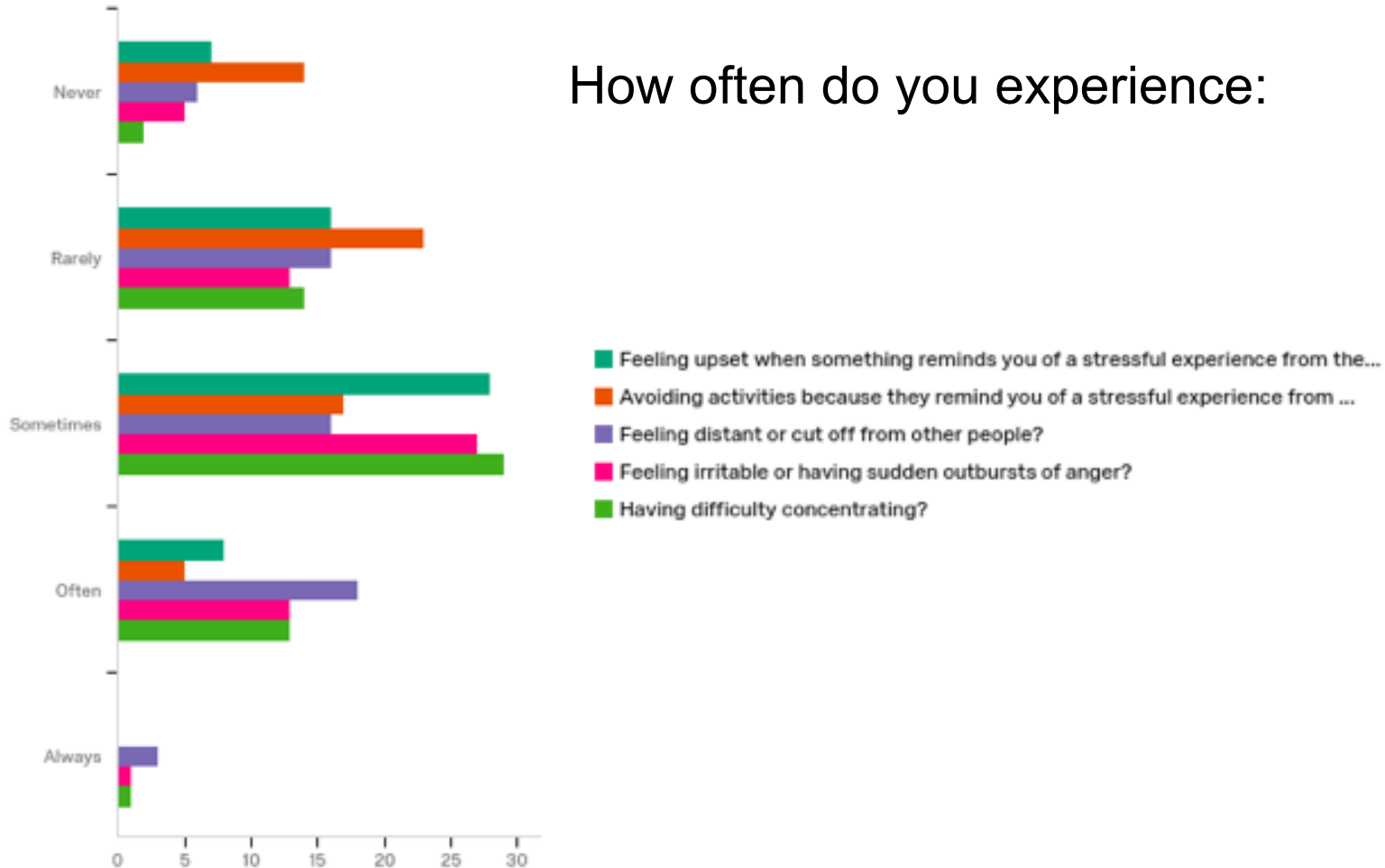
Have you been diagnosed with any mental or physical disorder?





Have you lost interest in any of the below activities since becoming an officer?
Select all that apply:

How often do you experience:



Conclusion

In our study we found that around 65% of police officers will have PTSD. Out of these individuals only 39% will receive treatment for their disorder. Police officer that have PTSD will stop doing the things they love, like hanging out with family or partaking in religious activities. Police officer that have PTSD will also always be on the guard and worried about what is going to happen, especially if they are in a huge crowd of people. Come to find out PTSD affects more officers then we know and not a lot of the officers affected will reach out for help. This can cause a lot of problems physically, emotionally, and mentally for the officers. In conclusion police officer need to be helped and they need to be provided with more resources so they can potentially overcome their disorder.

Resources

Thomas, Tiffany S. The Crime Report. PTSD: The Dirty Little Secret of Law Enforcement. Retrieved from <https://thecrimereport.org/2018/03/21/ptsd-the-dirty-little-secret-of-law-enforcement/>

Marchand, A., Nadeau, C., Beaulieu-Prévost, D., Boyer, R., & Martin, M. (2015). Predictors of posttraumatic stress disorder among police officers: A prospective study. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 7(3), 212–221. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038780.supp> (Supplemental)