Quality of Care NL

Policing Transformation Working Group Public Survey on Policing Services – Results

May 14, 2025

Quality of Care NL is proud to partner with **Choosing Wisely Canada**

Choosing Wisely NL

Survey Administration

This survey was administered, and the results analyzed, by **Quality of Care NL**, an applied health and social systems research and evaluation program aimed at improving social and health outcomes in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The survey was open for response from December 16, 2024 to January 22, 2025.

Quality of Care NL operates on the principles of a learning health and social system. One that continuously improves through a culture of best practice, evaluation, equity, openness and collaboration – the system learns and gets better, resulting in better care and health for all.

Its partnership with **Choosing Wisely Canada** enables the promotion of established national guidelines and recommendations that cross all disciplines to support the reduction of low-value health care, including unnecessary tests and treatments, particularly where harms outweigh benefits.

Quality of Care NL

Proud partner of Choosing Wisely Canada Choosing Wisely NL

Demographic Overview

Community

Community	Proportion (%)
St. John's	31.5
Mount Pearl	7.3
Conception Bay South	5.1
Paradise	4.7
Gander	4.2
Happy Valley-Goose Bay	3.3
Grand Bank	2.5
Grand Falls-Windsor	2.2
Torbay	1.9
Portugal Cove-St. Philip's	1.9

Table 1. Top 10 communities with highest proportion of survey participants (N = 2,693)

- **2,693** (out of 4,485) participants answered this question.
- Participants were from **240** communities ranging from **1 to 848 individuals per location**.
- Only **60%** of participants disclosed their community.
  - **1,125** participants from RCMP regions
  - **1,568** participants from RNC regions

NL population in January 2025 = 545,579

Source: Statistics Canada

Community

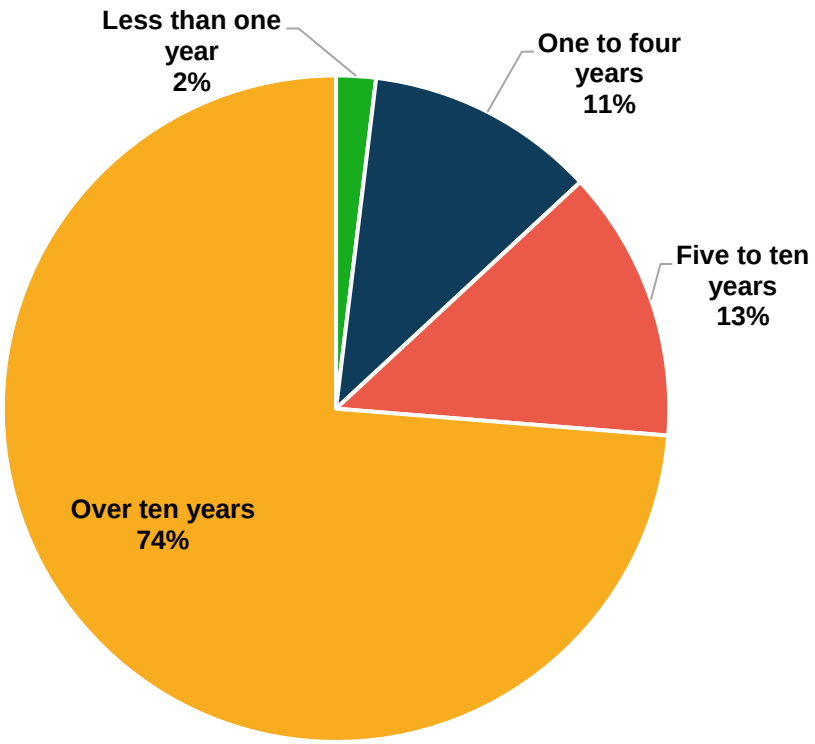

Figure 1. Distribution of participants based on length of residence in their community (N = 3,169)

- **3,169** (out of 4,485) participants answered this question.
- Majority of participants (**74%**) have lived in their communities for over 10 years.

Household Income

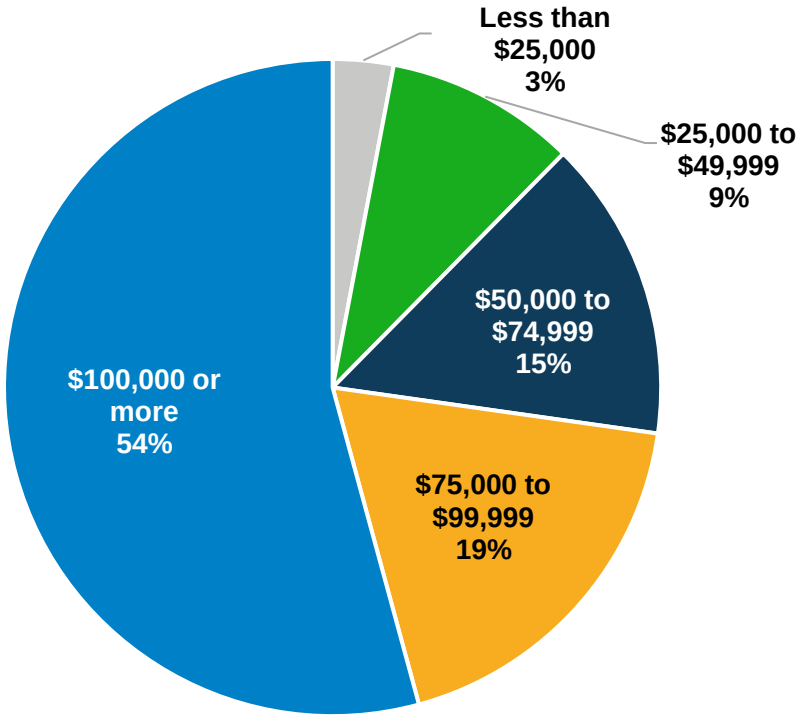

Figure 2. Distribution of participants based on total annual household income (N = 2,445)

Note: 695 participants chose not to disclose this information; 24 participants did not know their income

- **3,164** (out of 4,485) participants answered this question.
- 54% (**1,326**) of participants reported income of $100,000 or more.

Median annual household income in NL (2021) = $71,500

Table 2. Comparison of household income: survey results vs provincial data

Household Income	Survey Participants	NL Population (Census 2021)
<$25,000	3%	11.1%
$25,000-$49,999	9.4%	22.9%
$50,000-$99,999	33.4%	32.8%
≥$100,000	54.2%	33.1%

Housing

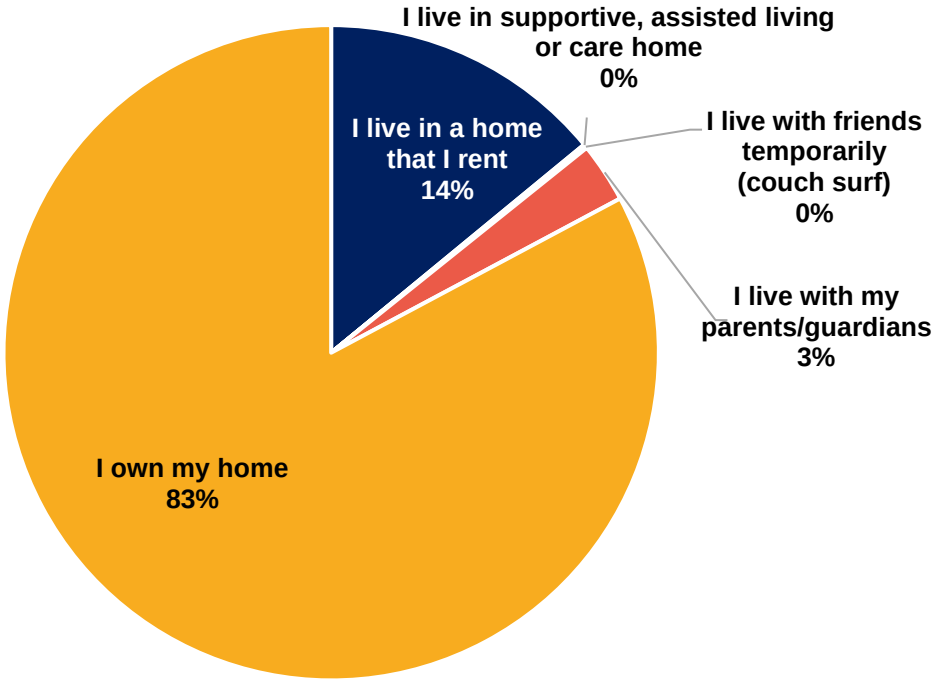

Figure 3. Distribution of participants based on housing status (N = 2,977)

- **3,166** (out of 4,485) participants answered this question.
- Most participants, 83% (**2,465**), own a home.
- No participants identified as being precariously housed or unhoused or living in institutional care, including in criminal justice institutions

Note: 153 participants chose not to disclose this information; 36 participants chose “other”.

The 0% indicates less than one percent. Options: “I live in supportive, assisted living or care home” (2) and “I live with friends temporarily (couch surf)” (4).

Race, Ethnicity & Indigeneity

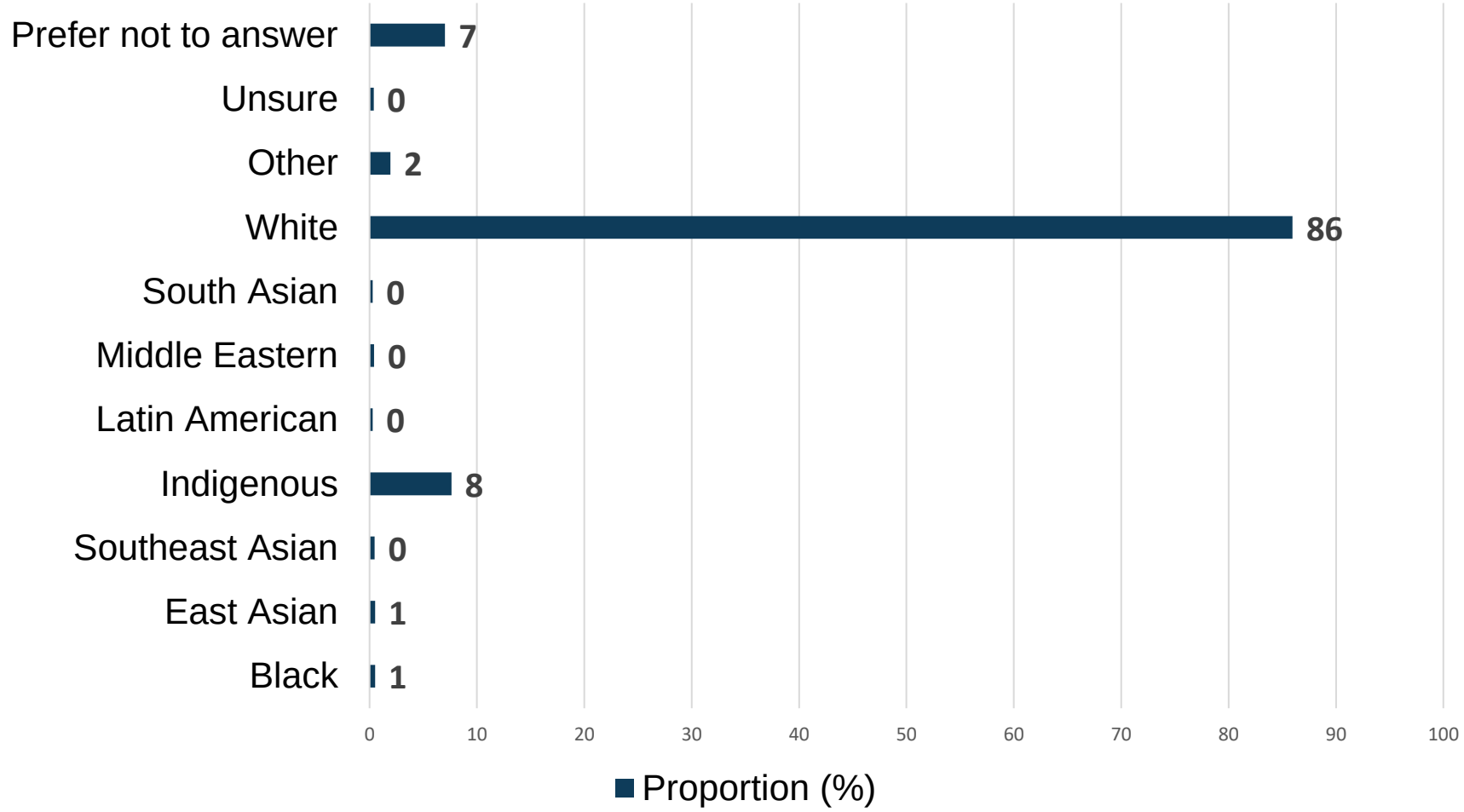

Figure 4. Distribution of participants based on racial and ethnic groups (N = 3,162)

Indigenous Groups

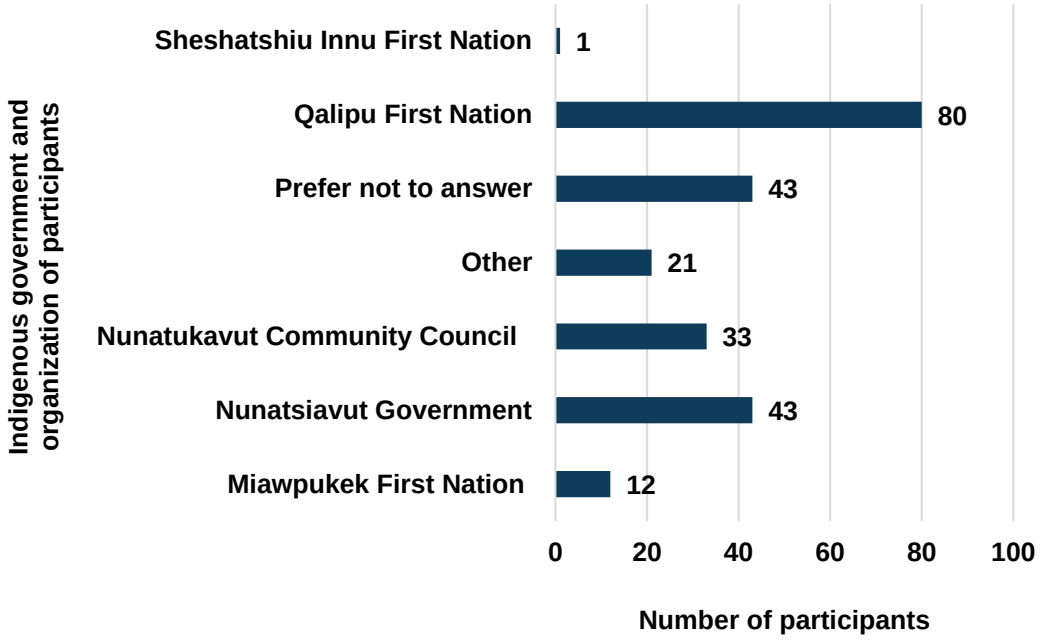

Figure 5. Distribution of participants based on Indigenous government and organizations (N = 233)

- Only individuals who identified as Indigenous received this question.
- Most participants, **34.3%**, were from the Qalipu First Nation.

- **9.3%** of the NL population identifies as Indigenous (2021 Census)
- **8.2%** of survey participants who responded to the question about race, ethnicity and Indigeneity identified as Indigenous

Age

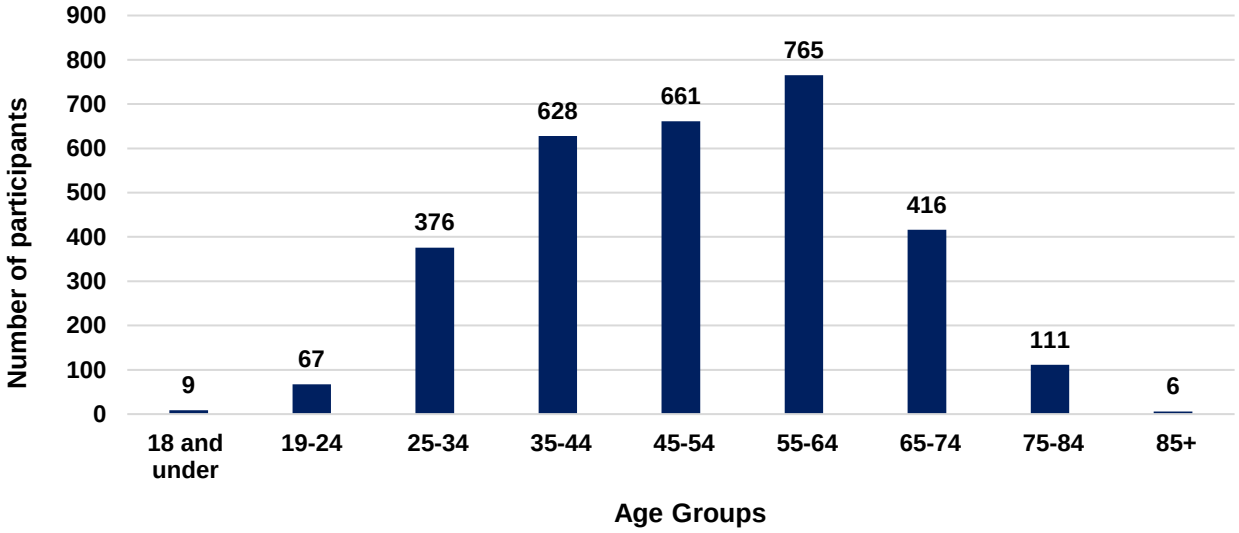

Figure 6. Age distribution of participants (N = 3,039)

Note: 120 participants chose not to disclose their age

- **3,159** (out of 4,485) participants answered this question.
- Most participants were from the age groups:
  - 35 – 44 (**20.7%**)
  - 45 – 54 (**21.8%**)
  - and 55 – 64 (**25.2%**)

Table 3. Comparison of Age: Survey Results vs Provincial Data (Statistics Canada 2024)

Age	Survey Participants	NL Population (as of July 1, 2024)
<18 yrs*	0.3%	17.6%
19-34 yrs*	14.6%	16.8%
35-54 yrs	42.5%	25.3%
55-74 yrs	38.9%	30.2%
75+ yrs	3.8%	10.1%

* Provincial age categories are ≤ 19 yrs and 20-34 yrs

Gender

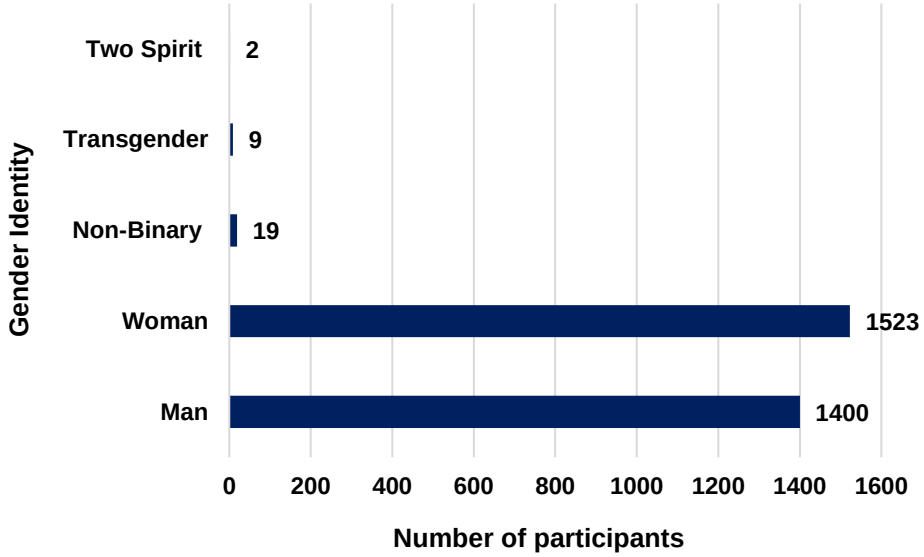

Figure 7. Distribution of participants based on gender identity (N = 2,953)

Note: 35 participants chose to self-describe; 164 participants chose not to disclose their gender identity

- **3,152** (out of 4,485) participants answered this question.
- Most participants identified as women (**51.6%**) or men (**47.4%**) with similar representation of both genders

Table 4. Comparison of gender: Survey Results vs Provincial Data

Gender	Survey Participants	NL population (Census 2021)
Female	51.6%	51.2%
Male	47.4%	48.5%
Two Spirit, Transgender and non-binary	1.0%	0.3%

2SLGBTQQIA+ community

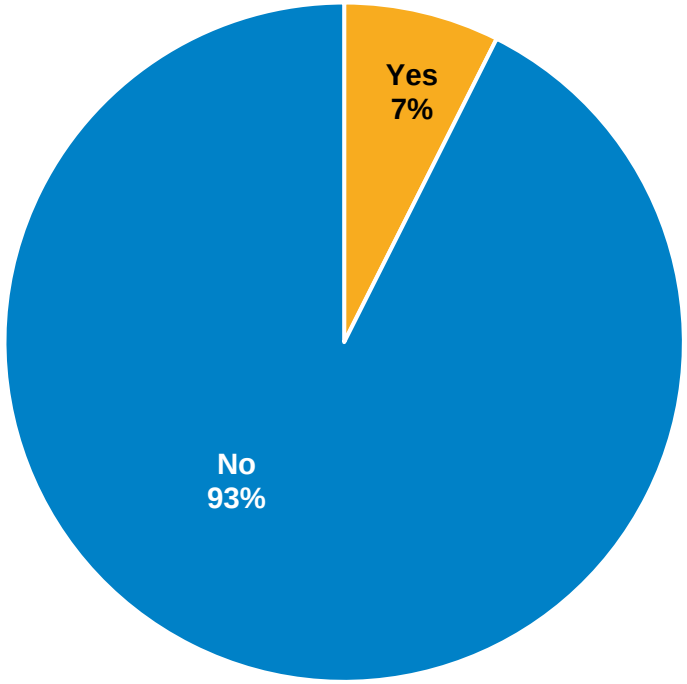

Figure 8. Distribution of participants based on whether they identify as a part of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ (N = 2,928)

- **3,136** (out of 4,485) participants answered this question.
- **7%** of participants reported being a member of 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.

- **4.7%** of Atlantic Canada population identifies as 2SLGBTQQIA+ (2019-2021 CCHS)
- **7%** of participants who responded to this question identified as 2SLGBTQQIA+

Note: 170 participants chose not to disclose; 38 participants were unsure
2SLGBTQQIA+ = Two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and additional terminologies

Demographic Comparison Summary

- 54% of those surveyed reported a household income of ≥ $100,000 (compared to 33.1% provincially) and 12% reported a household income of < $50,000 (compared to 34% provincially).
- 8% of those surveyed identified as Indigenous compared to provincial estimates of 9.3%.
- 81% of participants were between the ages of 35-74 years. This age bracket makes up only 55% of NL's population.
- The gender breakdown of participants was similar to provincial estimates.
- Subgroup analysis – All questions were analyzed based on the following groupings:
  - **Household income under $50,000**
  - **Household income $50,000 and over**
  - **Indigenous individuals**
  - **Age 65 and over**
  - **Men**
  - **Women**

Response Summary

Q1. Where do you get your information about safety and crime in your community?

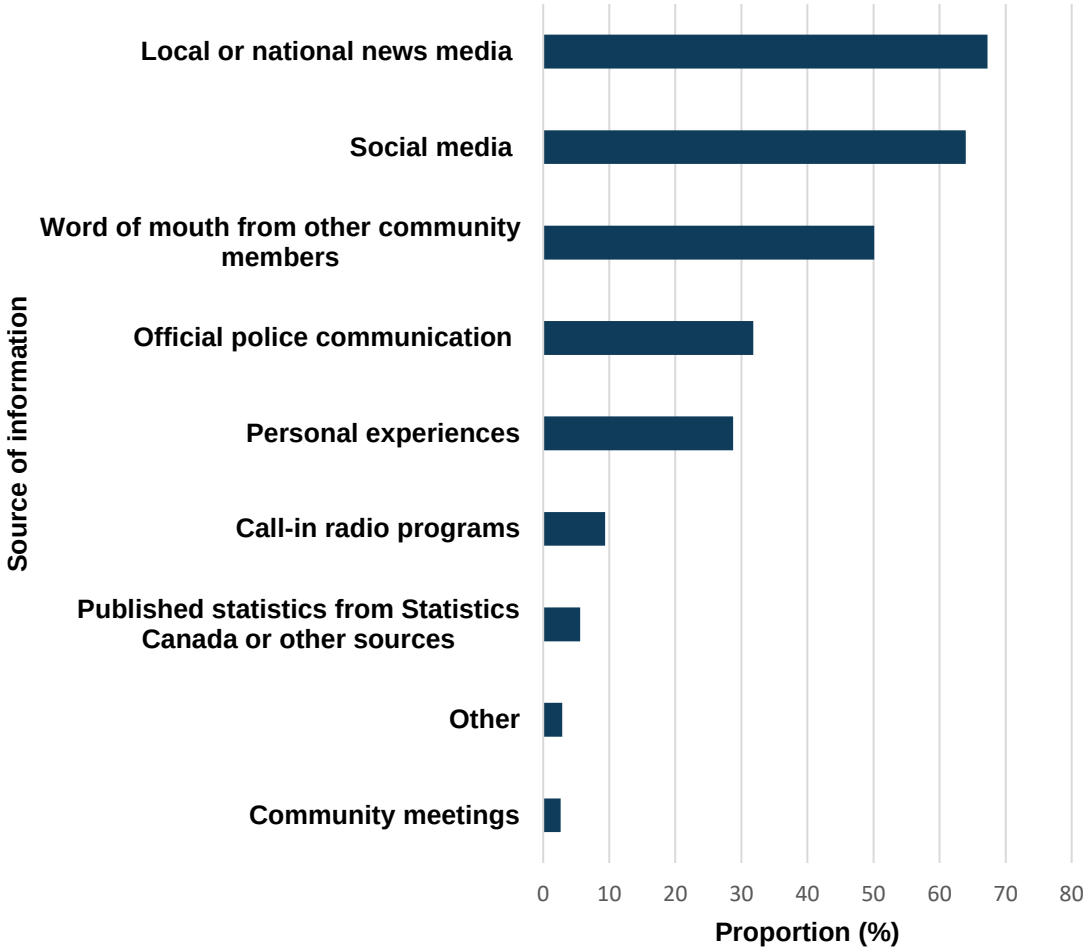

Figure 9. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,810)

- **Top responses:**
  1. Local or national news media **(67%)**
  2. Social media **(64%)**
  3. Word of mouth **(50%)**

- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - No notable differences in top responses among the groupings

Q2. How safe do you currently feel in your community?

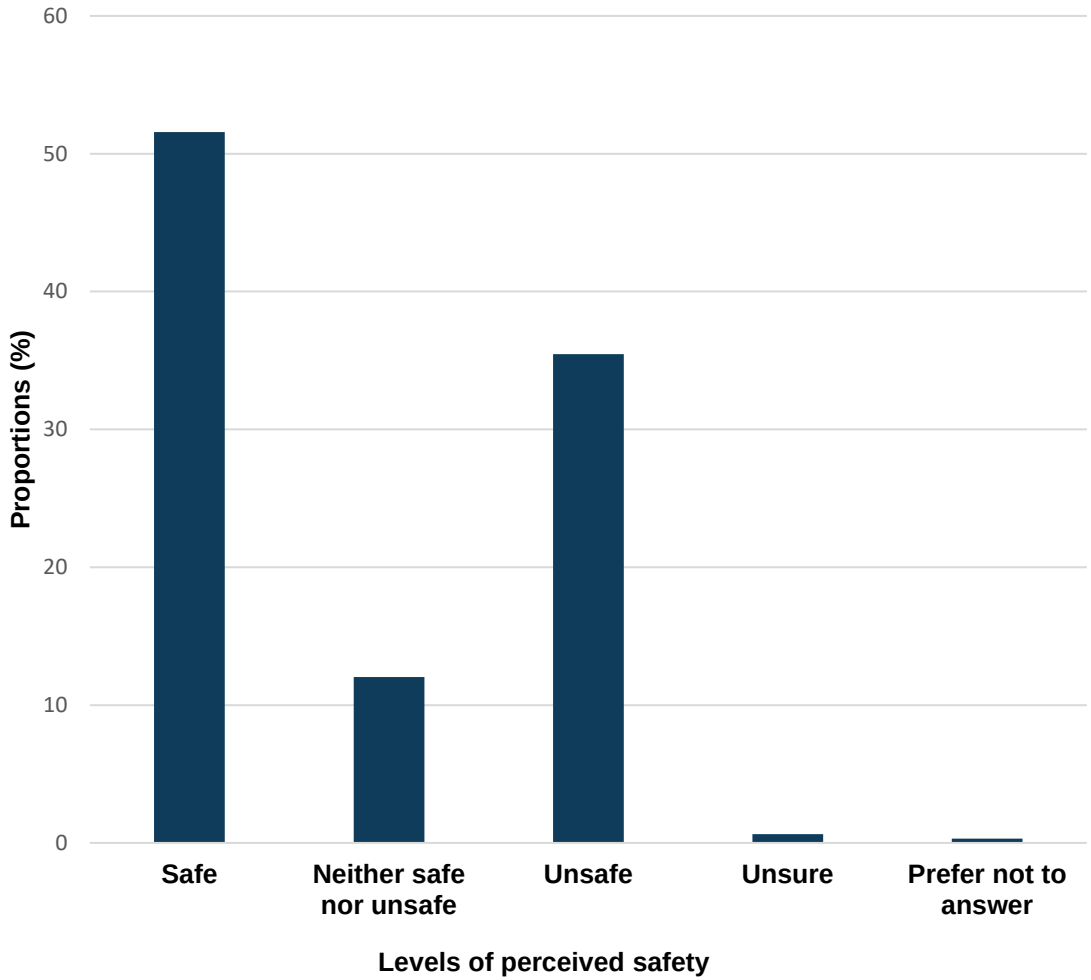

Figure 10. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,807)

- **Top response:**
  - Safe **(52%)**
- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - See next slide for comparison

Q2. How safe do you currently feel in your community?

Table 5. Top responses by group

	Top response
Men	Safe
Women	Safe
Indigenous individuals	Safe*
65 and over	Safe
Under $50,000	Safe**
$50,000 and over	Safe

*** Indigenous – 43% safe and 41% unsafe**
**** Under $50,000 – 46% safe and 42% unsafe**

= top response similar to other responses

Q3. How would you compare your current sense of safety to how you felt five years ago?

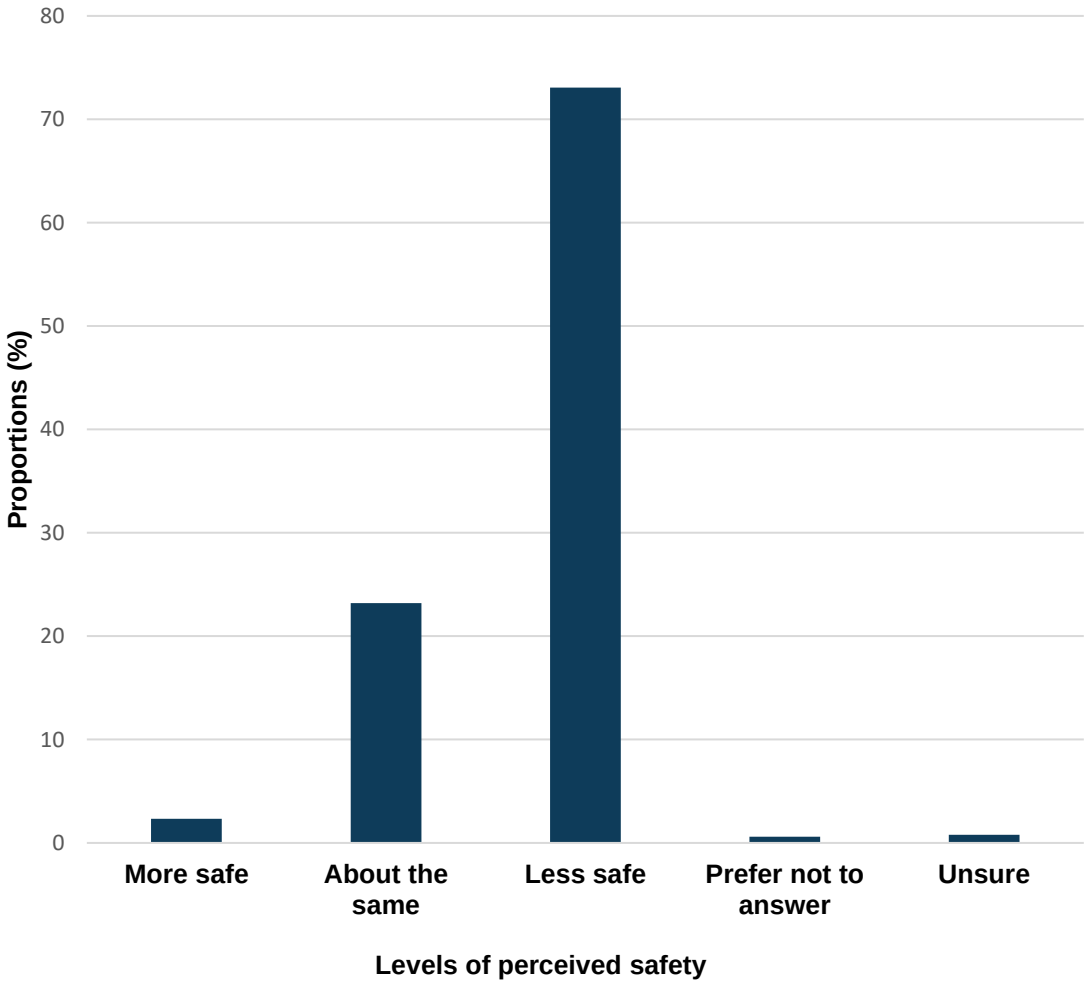

Figure 11. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,807)

- **Top response:**
  - Less safe **(73%)**
- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - No notable differences in top responses among the groupings

Q4. What types of crime do you think happen in your community?

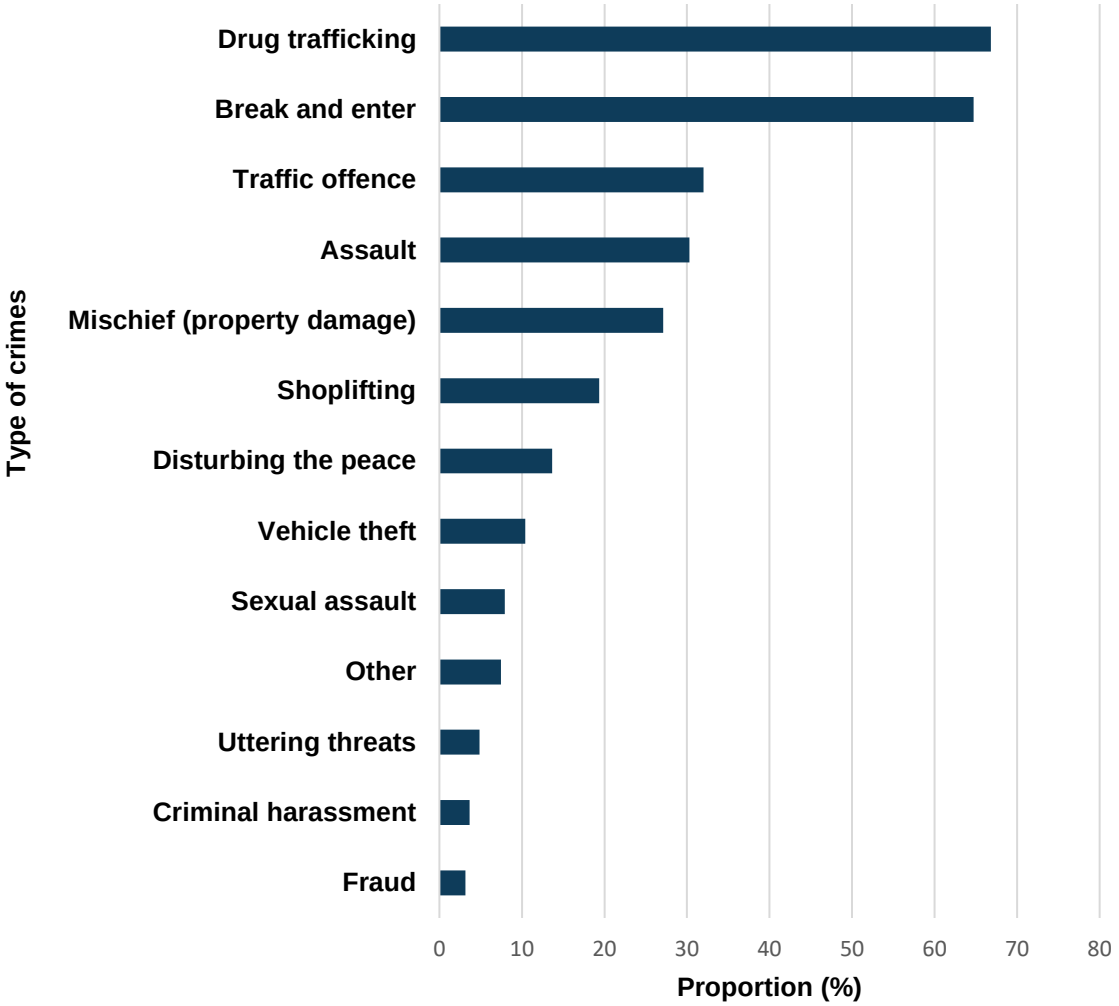

Figure 12. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3598)

- **Top responses:**
  1. Drug trafficking **(67%)**
  2. Break and enter **(65%)**
  3. Traffic offence **(32%)**
  4. Assault (**30%)**

- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - No notable differences in top responses among the groupings

Q5. Which of the following police activities should be the top five priorities for police officers in your community?

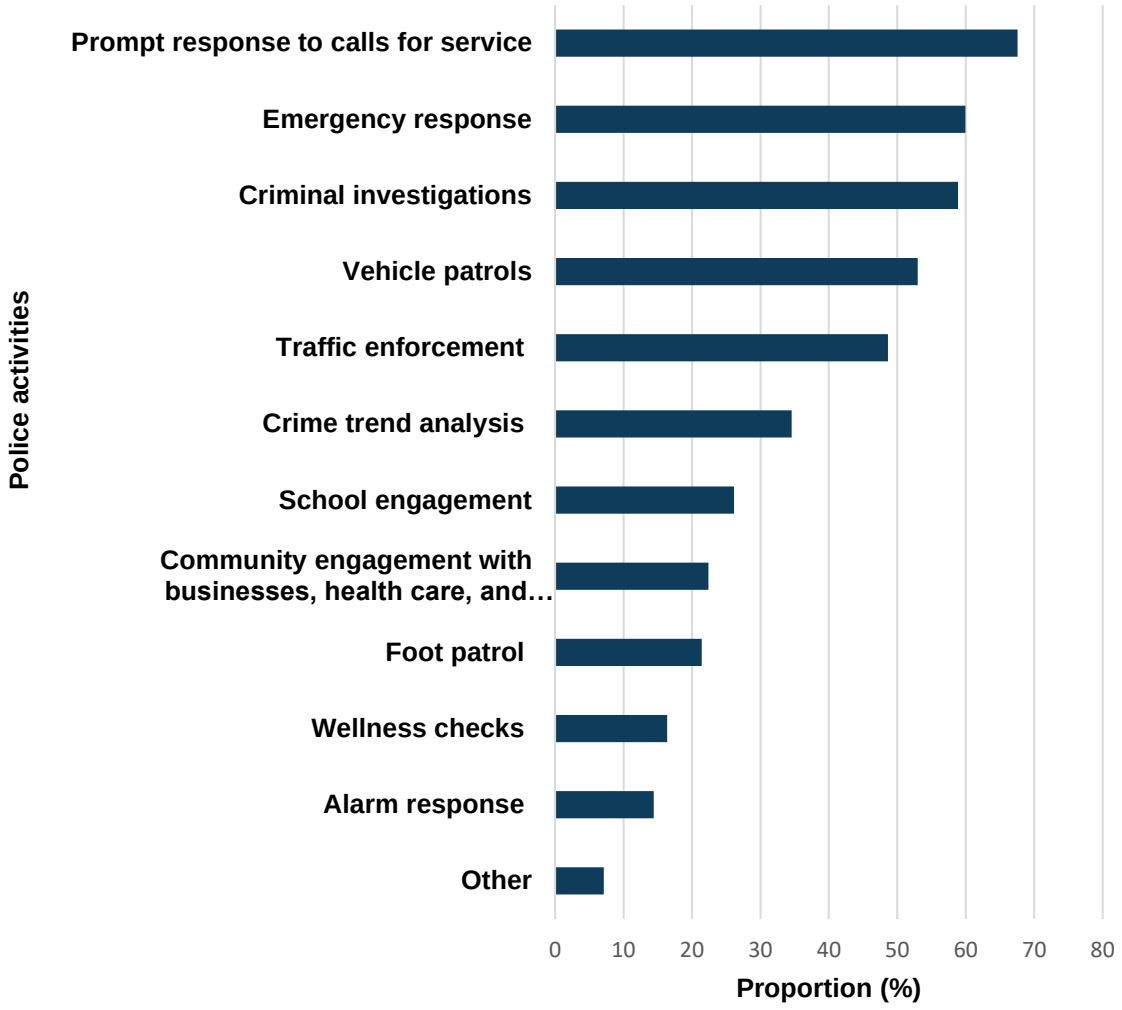

Figure 13. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3596)

- **Top responses:**
  1. Prompt response to calls for service **(68%)**
  2. Emergency response **(60%)**
  3. Criminal investigations **(59%)**
  4. Vehicle patrols **(55%)**
  5. Traffic enforcement **(49%)**

- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - No notable differences in top responses among the groupings

Q6. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of police in keeping your community safe?

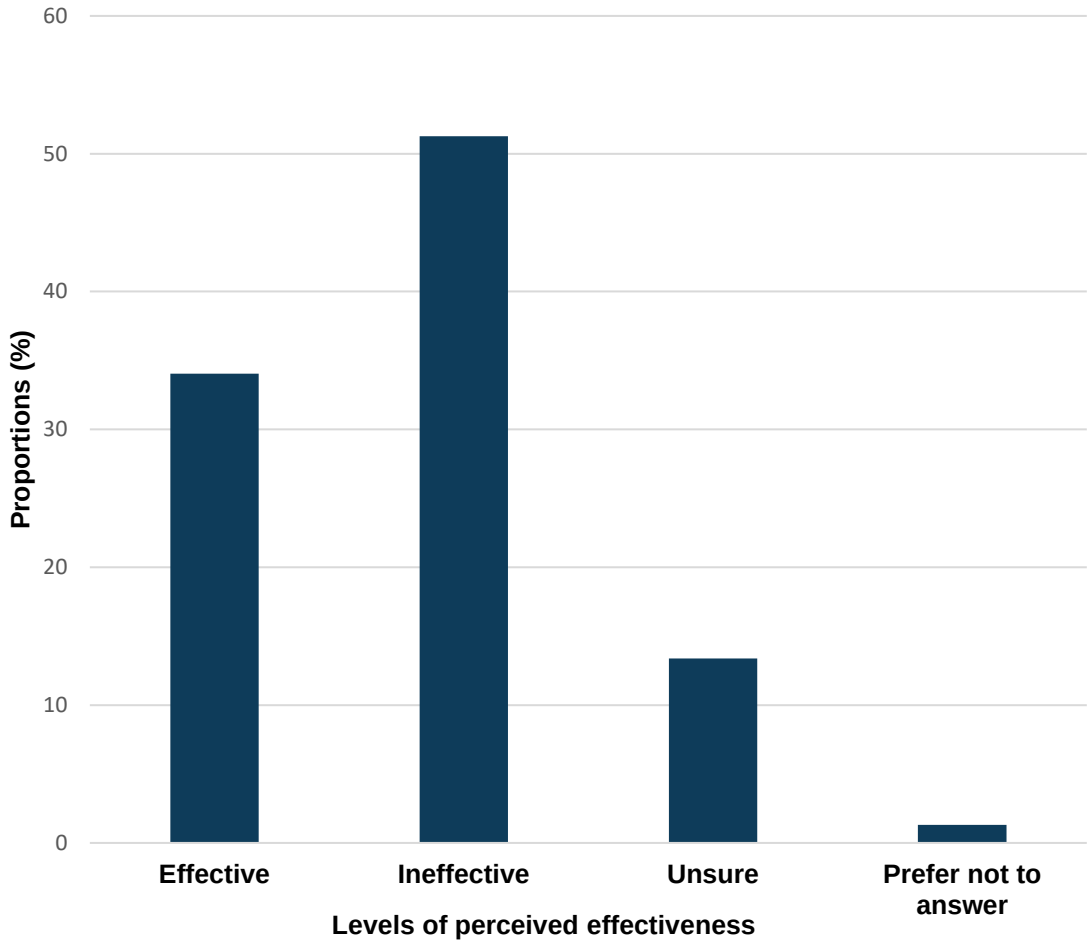

Figure 14. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,595)

- **Top response:**
  - Ineffective **(51%)**
- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - See next slide for comparison

Q6. How would you rate the overall effectiveness of police in keeping your community safe?

Table 6. Top responses by group

	Perceived effectiveness
Men	Ineffective
Women	Ineffective
Indigenous individuals	Ineffective
65 and over	Effective
Under $50,000	Ineffective
$50,000 and over	Ineffective

= top response differs from other subgroups

Q7. In your opinion, what can the police do to improve how safe you feel in your community?

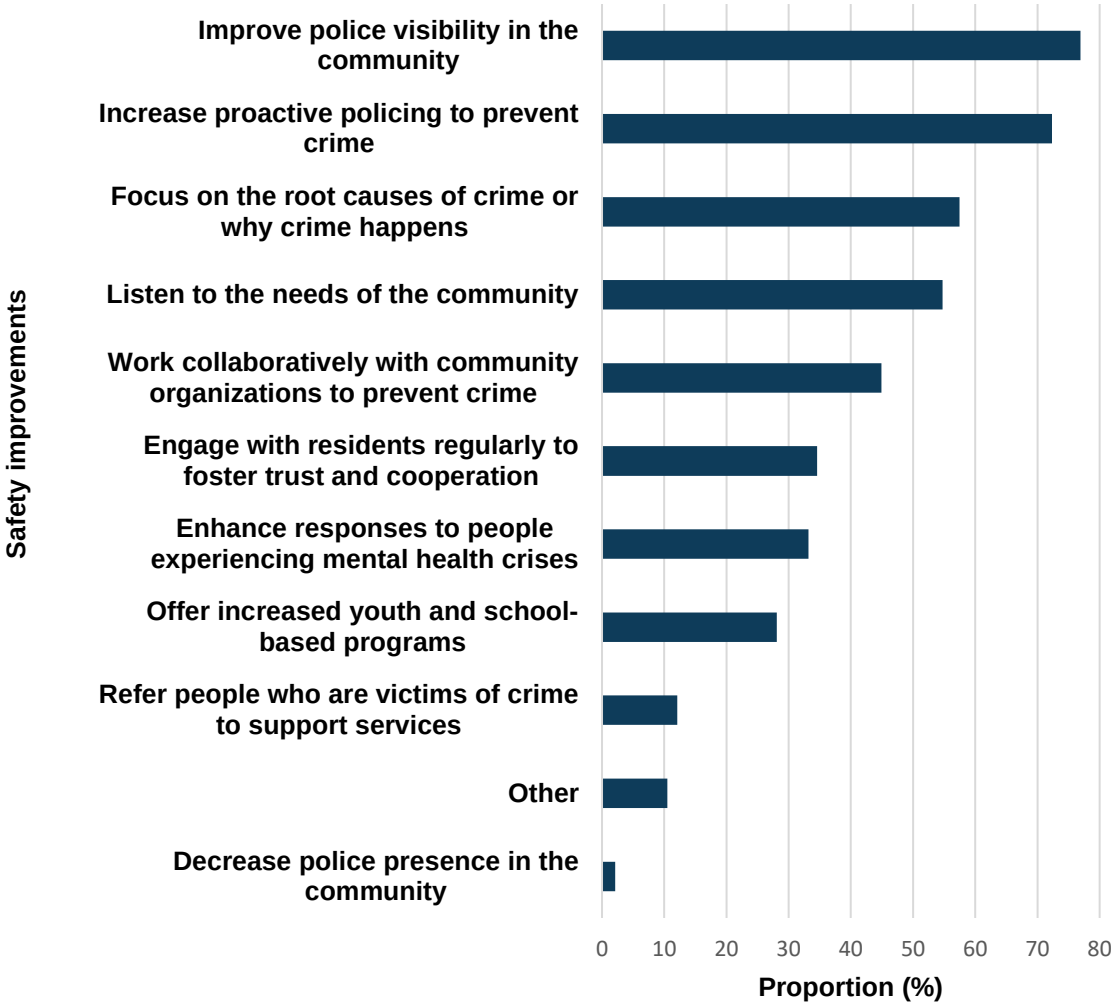

Figure 15. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,488)

- **Top responses:**
  1. Improve police visibility in the community **(77%)**
  2. Increase proactive policing to prevent crime **(72%)**
  3. Focus on the root causes of crime or why crime happens **(57%)**
  4. Listen to the needs of the community **(55%)**

- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - No notable differences in top responses among the groupings

Q8. Approximately how often do you see police in your community?

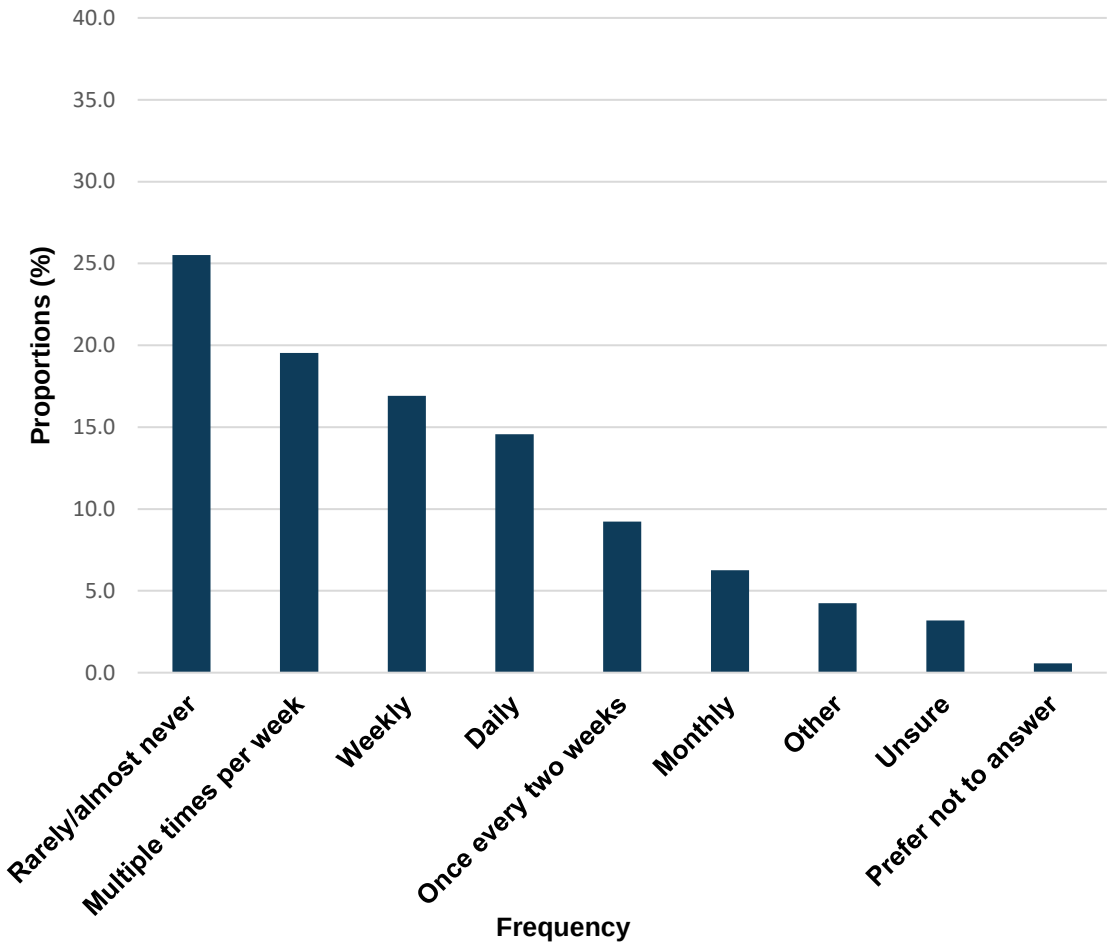

Figure 16. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,488)

- **Top responses:**
  - Rarely/almost never **(26%)**
  - Multiple times per week **(19%)**
- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - No notable differences in top responses among the groupings

Q9. How confident are you that police officers respond to and investigate reports of crime?

Table 7. Top responses by group

	Confidence level
Men	Confident
Women	Confident
Indigenous individuals	Unconfident
65 and over	Confident
Under $50,000	Confident
$50,000 and over	Confident

	= top response differs from other subgroups
	= top response represents over 50% of responses from that subgroup

Q9. How confident are you that police officers respond to and investigate reports of crime?

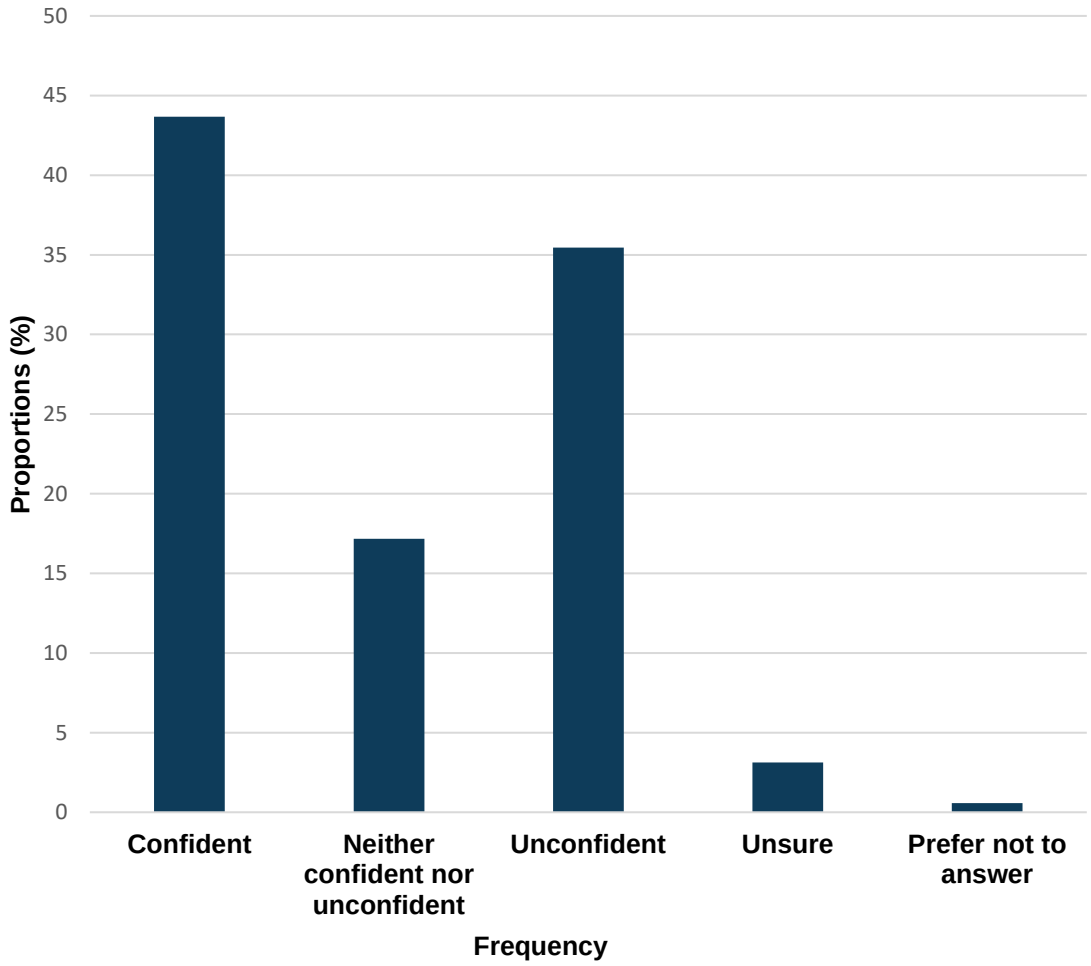

Figure 17. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,489)

- **Top response:**
  - Confident **(44%)**
- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - See next slide for comparison

Q10. If you ever experience a crime in the future, how likely are you to report this to police?

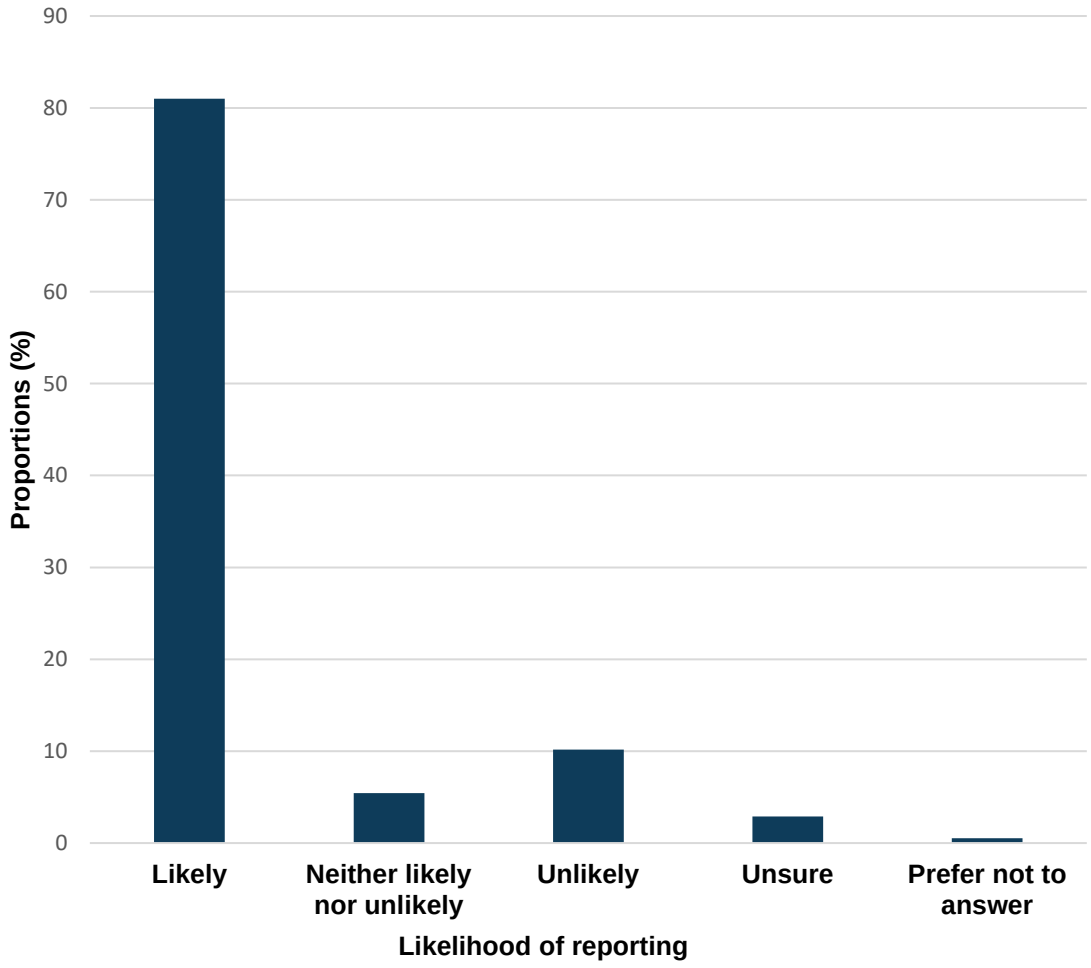

Figure 18. Distribution of options based on participants (N = 3,407)

- **Top response:**
  - Likely **(81%)**
- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - No notable differences in top responses among the groupings

Q11. What factors would keep you from reporting a crime to police?

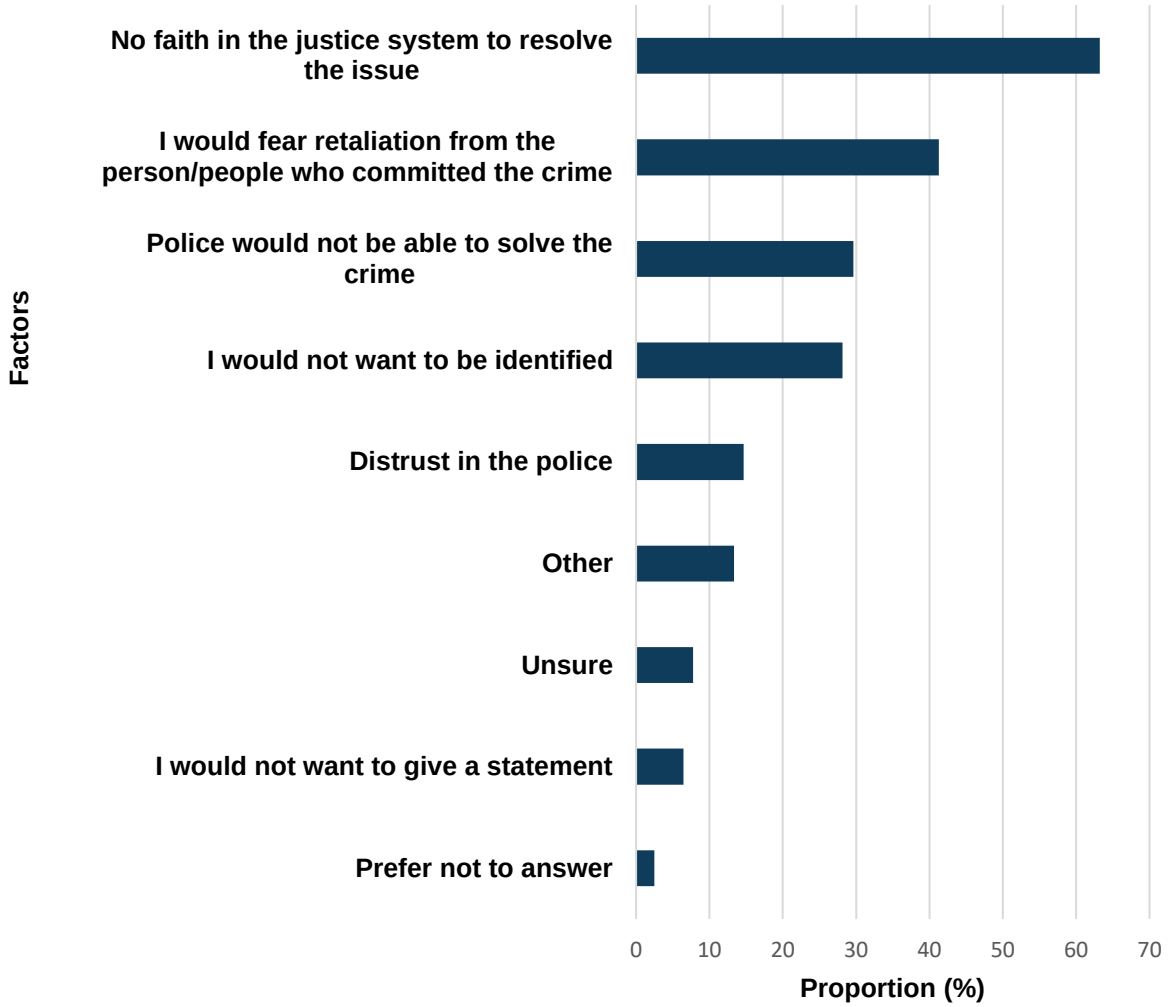

Figure 19. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,391)

- **Top responses:**
  1. No faith in the justice system to resolve the issue **(63%)**
  2. I would fear retaliation from the person/people who committed the crime **(41%)**
  3. Police would not be able to solve the crime **(30%)**
  4. I would not want to be identified **(28%)**

- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - No notable differences in top responses among the groupings

Q12. Do you feel that you have an opportunity to provide input on policing priorities in your community?

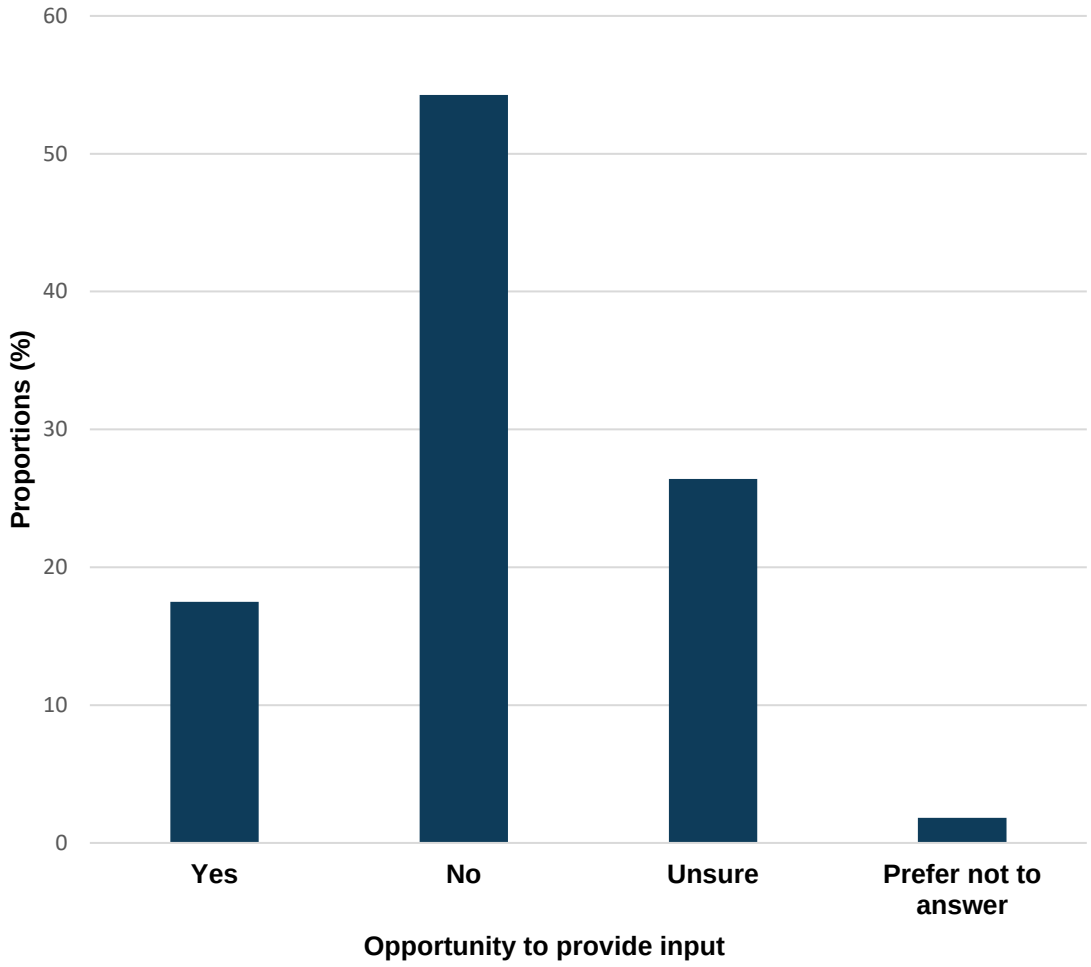

Figure 20. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,437)

- **Top response:**
  - No **(54%)**
- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - No notable differences in top responses among the groupings

Q13. If you had a concern about a police officer, would you know how to make a complaint?

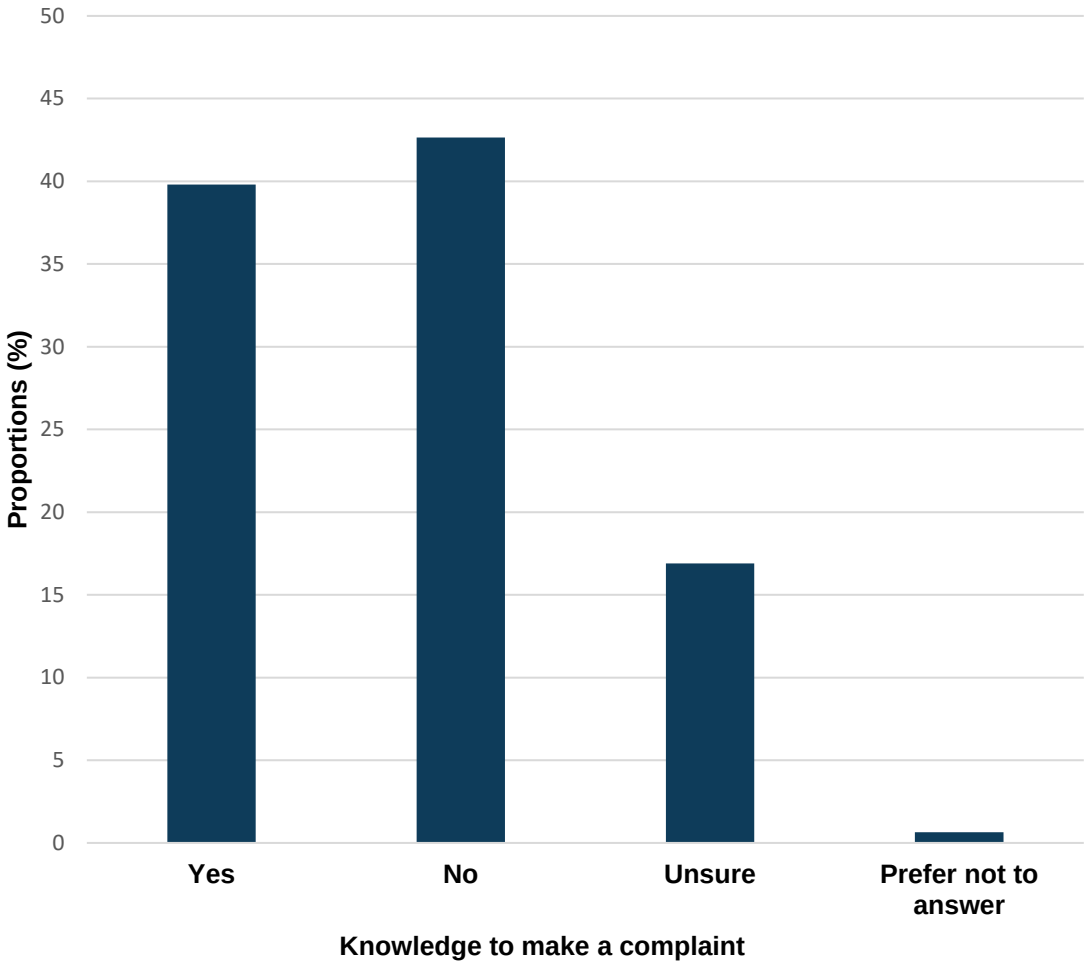

Figure 21. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,372)

- **Top responses:**
  - No **(43%)**
  - Yes **(40%)**

- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - See next slide for comparison

Q13. If you had a concern about a police officer, would you know how to make a complaint?

Table 8. Top responses by group

	Answer
Men	Yes
Women	No
Indigenous individuals	No
65 and over	Yes
Under $50,000	No
$50,000 and over	Yes

= top response differs from other subgroups

Q14. How confident are you that a complaint about a police officer would be addressed fairly?

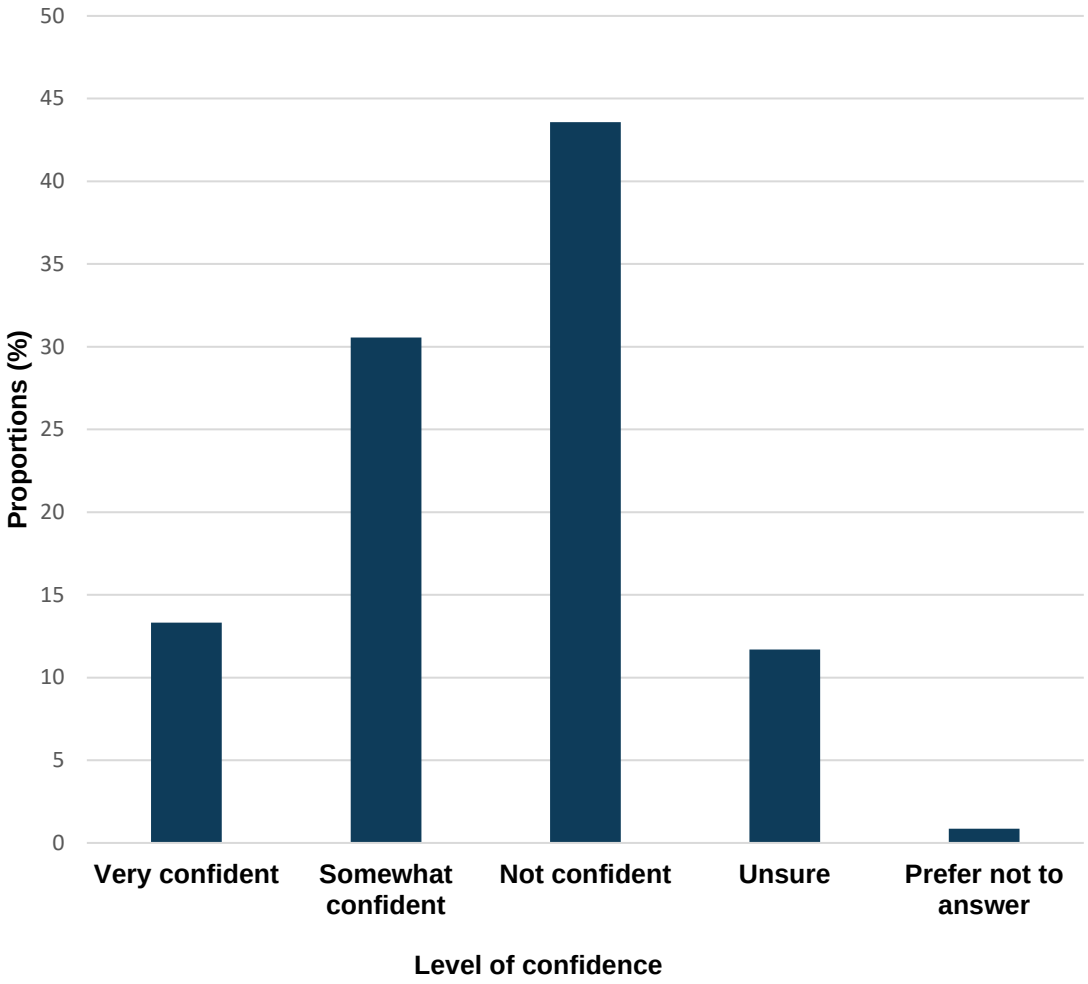

Figure 22. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,401)

- **Top responses:**
  - Not confident **(44%)**
  - Confident (very and somewhat) **(44%)**

- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - See next slide for comparison

Q14. How confident are you that a complaint about a police officer would be addressed fairly?

Table 9. Top responses by group

	Confidence
Men	Not confident
Women	Not confident
Indigenous individuals	Not confident
65 and over	Somewhat confident
Under $50,000	Not confident
$50,000 and over	Not confident

= top response differs from other subgroups

Q15. Do you believe police officers are held accountable for their misconduct?

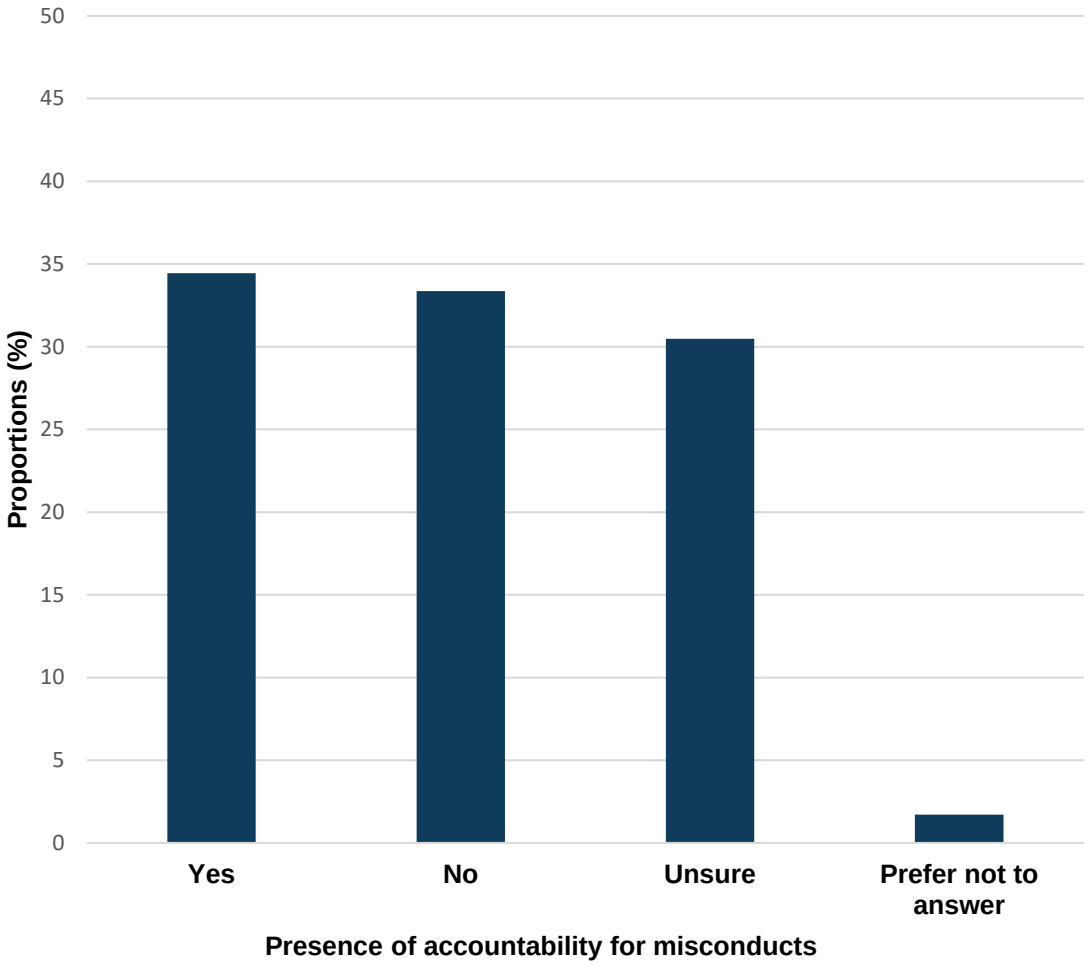

Figure 23. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,402)

- **Top responses:**
  - Yes **(34%)**
  - No **(33%)**
  - Unsure **(30%)**

- **Sub-group analysis:**
  - See next slide for comparison

Q15. Do you believe police officers are held accountable for their misconduct?

Table 10. Top responses by group

	Answer
Men	Yes
Women	Unsure*
Indigenous individuals	No
65 and over	Yes
Under $50,000	No
$50,000 and over	Yes

*** Women – 36% unsure, 34% no, and 29% yes**

	= top response differs from other subgroups
	= top response similar to other responses

Q17A. Police engage respectfully with people from diverse cultures or ethnic backgrounds

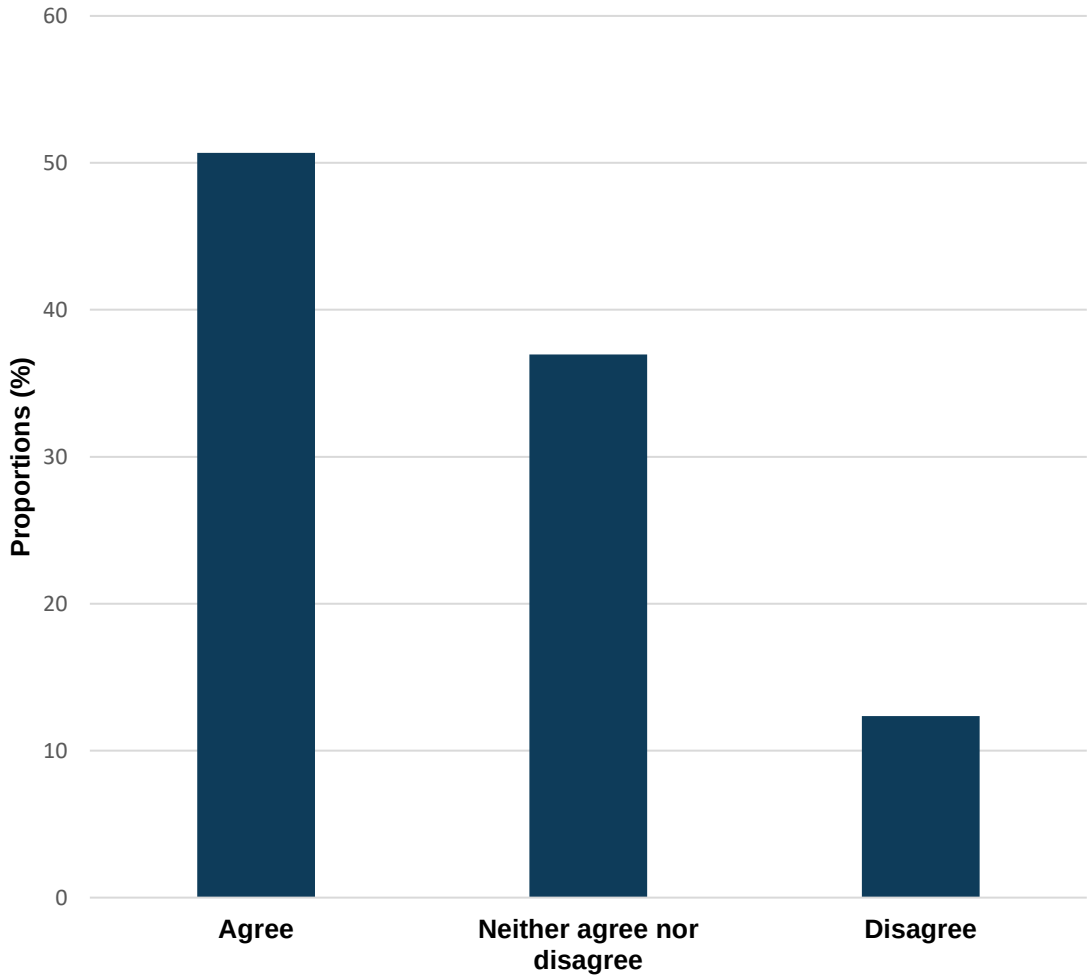

Figure 24. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,179)

- **Top response:**
  - Agree **(51%)**

Q17B. Police engage respectfully with Indigenous people

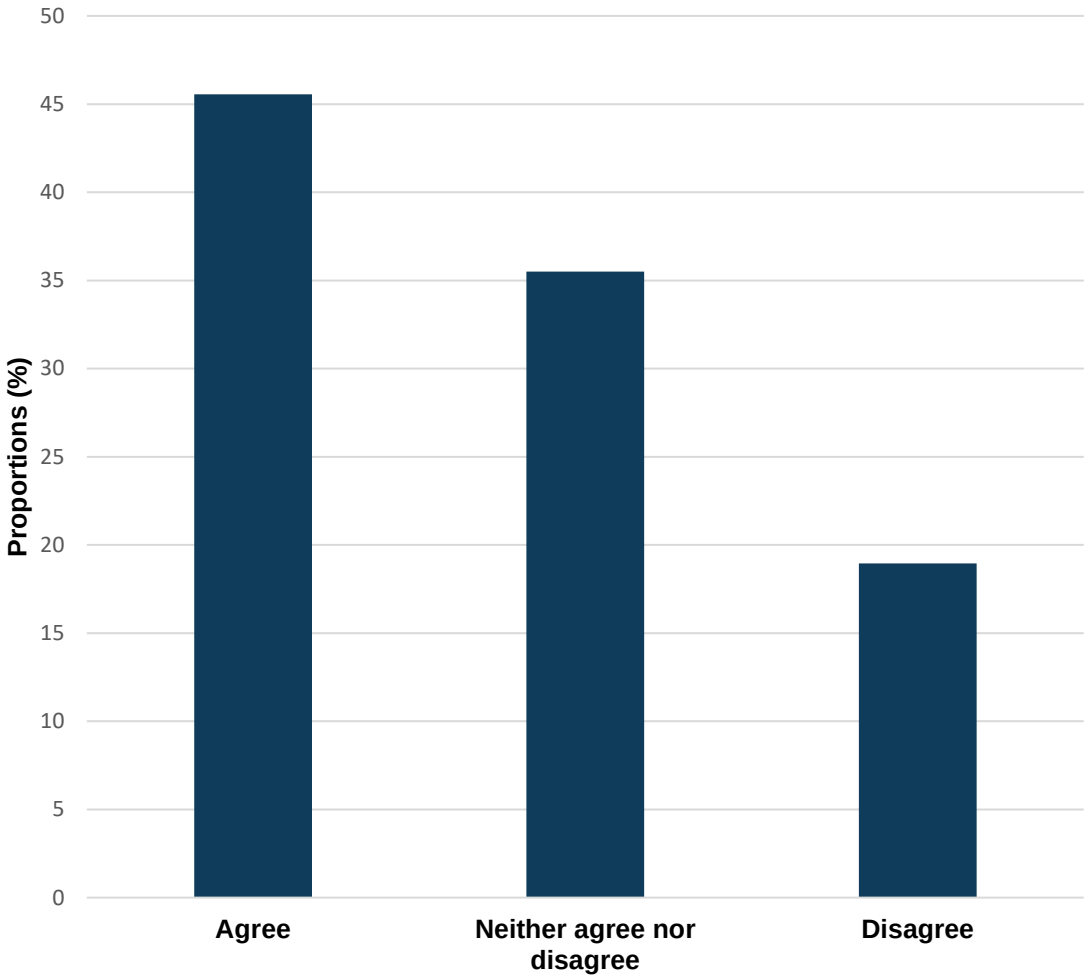

Figure 25. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,130)

- **Top response:**
  - Agree **(46%)**

Q17B. Police engage respectfully with Indigenous people

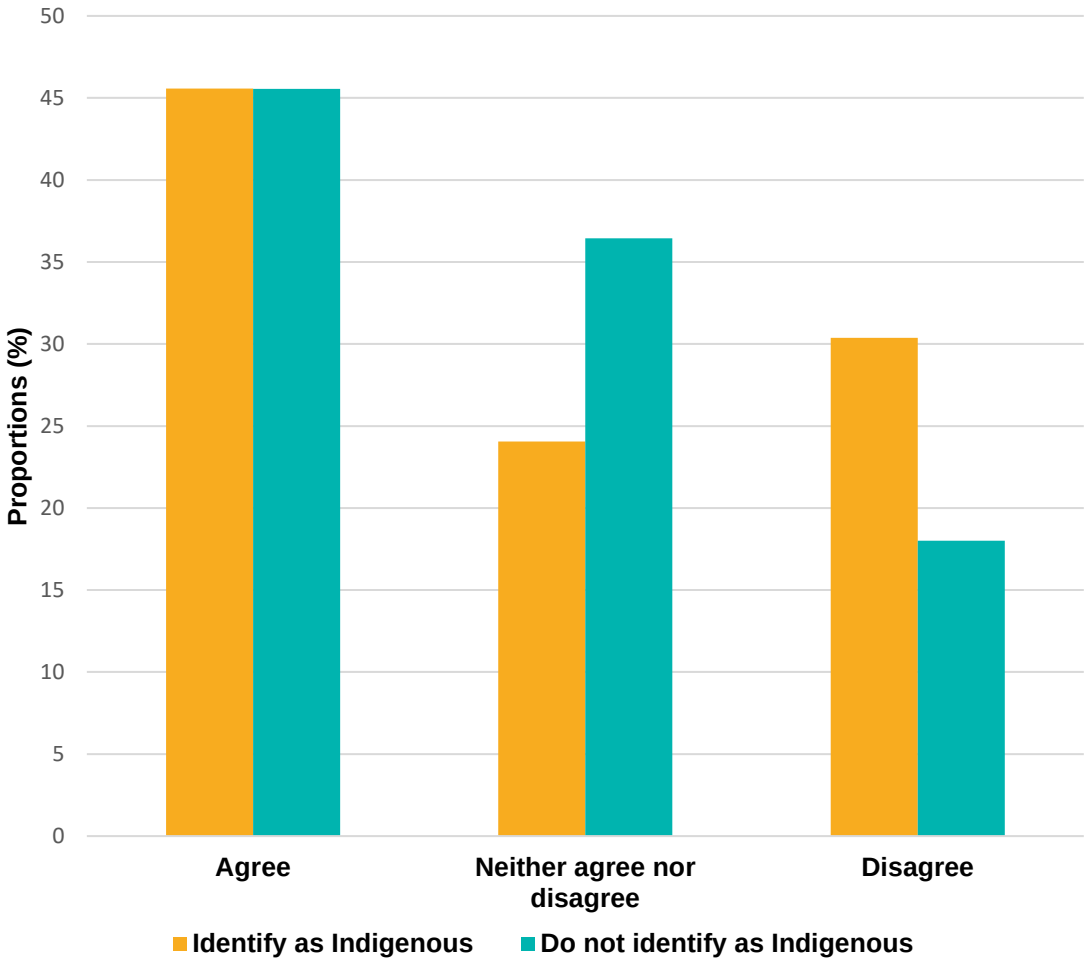

Figure 26. Distribution of options based on whether participants identify as Indigenous

- **Top response:**
  - **Identify as Indigenous:** Agree **(46%)**
  - **Do not identify as Indigenous:** Agree **(46%)**

- Individuals who identified as Indigenous were more likely to *disagree* with the statement than those who did not identify as Indigenous.

- Reminder: Most participants who self-identified as Indigenous were from the Qalipu First Nation **(34.3%)**.

Q17C. Police engage respectfully with people with disabilities

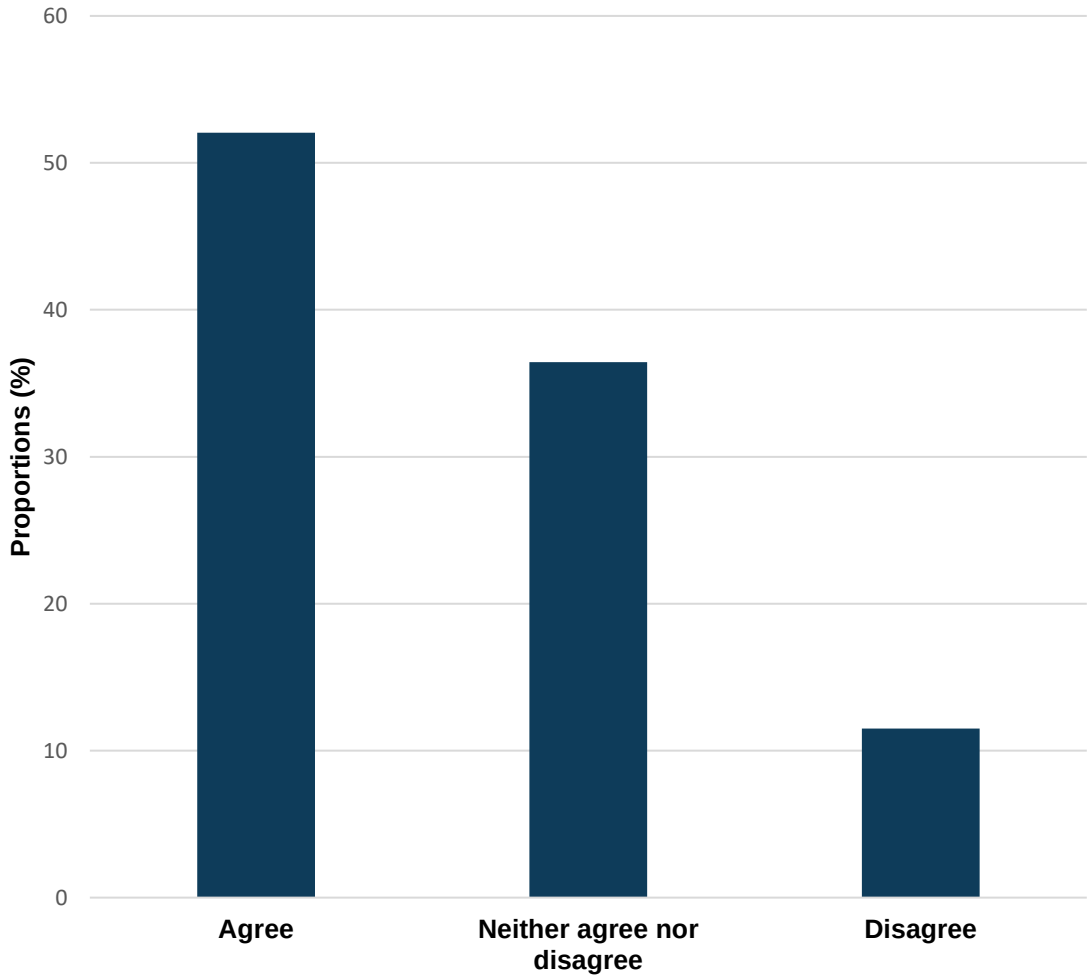

Figure 27. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,154)

- **Top response:**
  - Agree **(52%)**

Q17D. Police engage respectfully with people who identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+

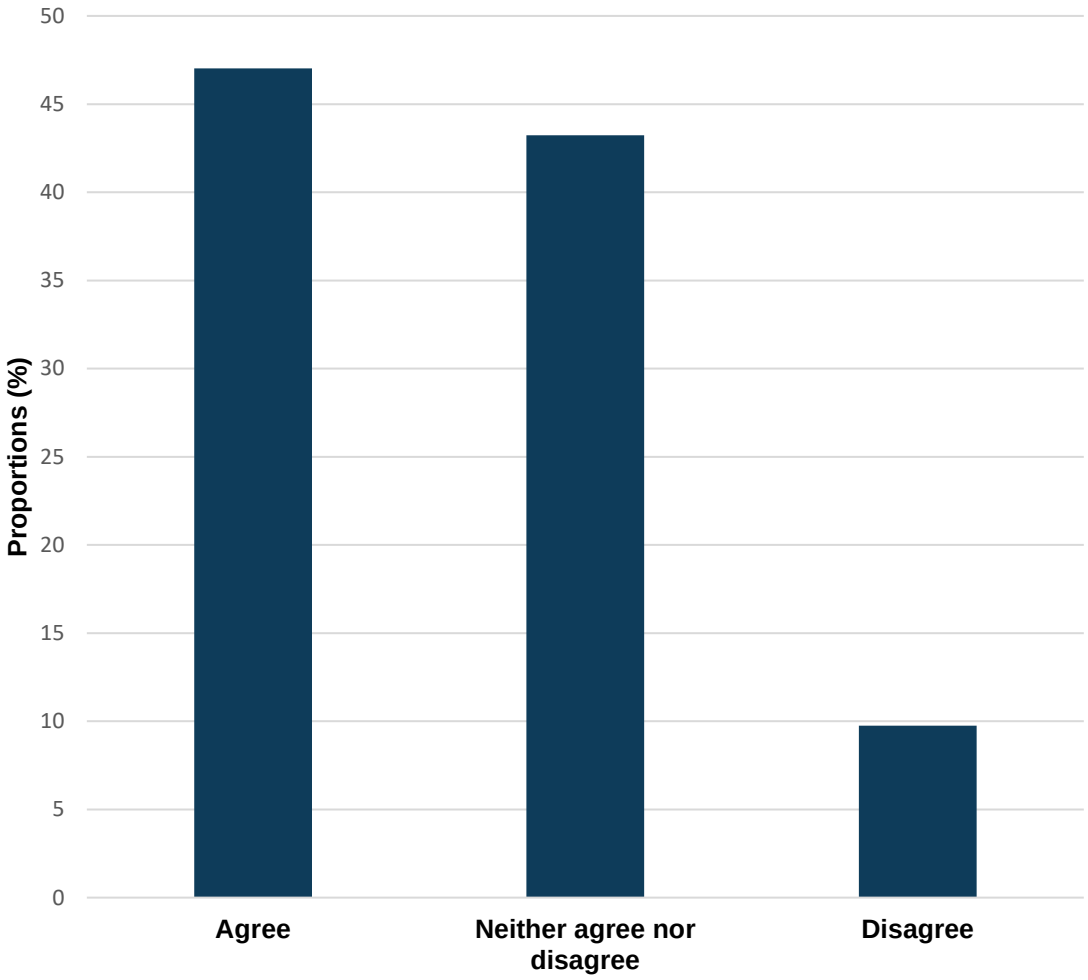

Figure 28. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,130)

- **Top responses:**
  - Agree **(47%)**
  - Neither agree nor disagree **(43%)**

Q17D. Police engage respectfully with people who identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+

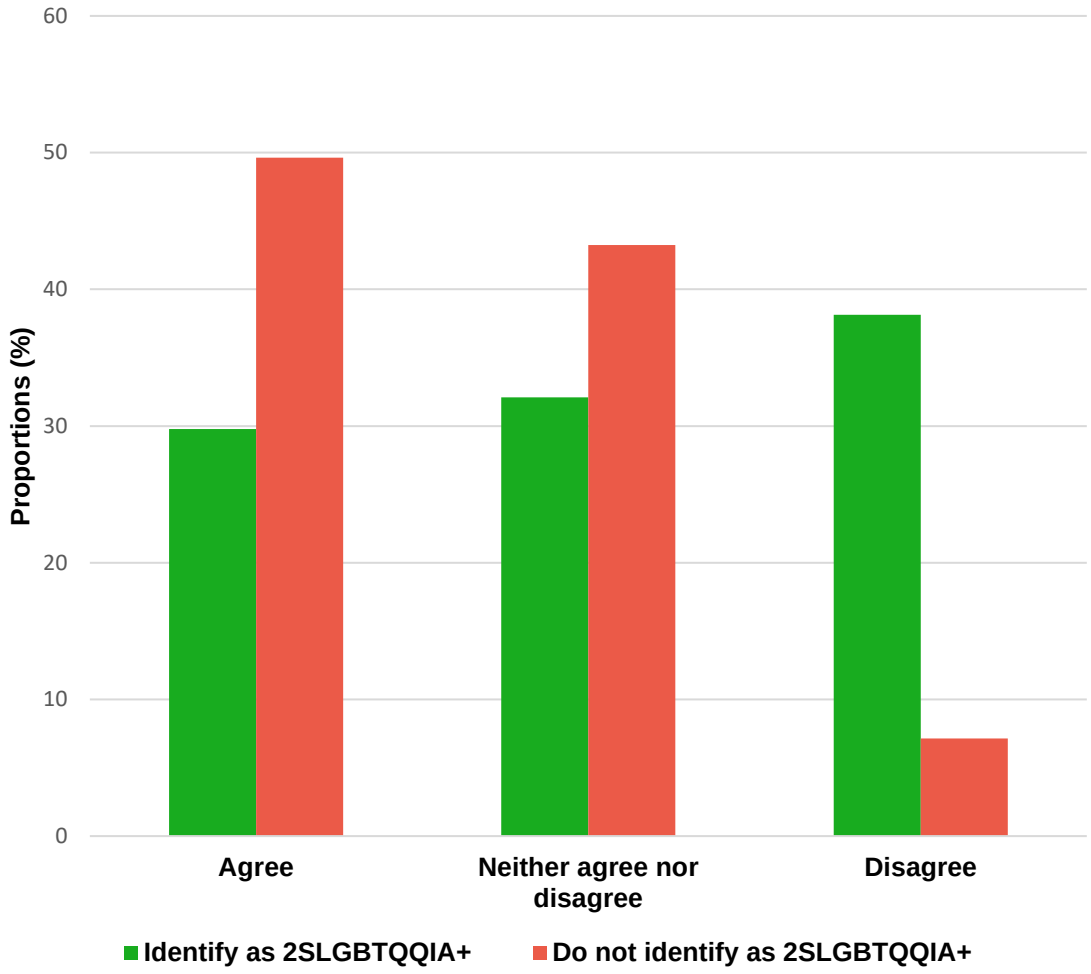

Figure 29. Distribution of options based on whether participants identify as a member of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community

- **Top responses:**
  - **Identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+:** Disagree **(38%)**
  - **Do not identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+:** Agree **(50%)**
- Those who identified as 2SLGBTQQIA+ were less likely to *agree* and less likely to *neither agree nor disagree* with the statement than those who did not identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+.

Q17E. Police engage respectfully with seniors

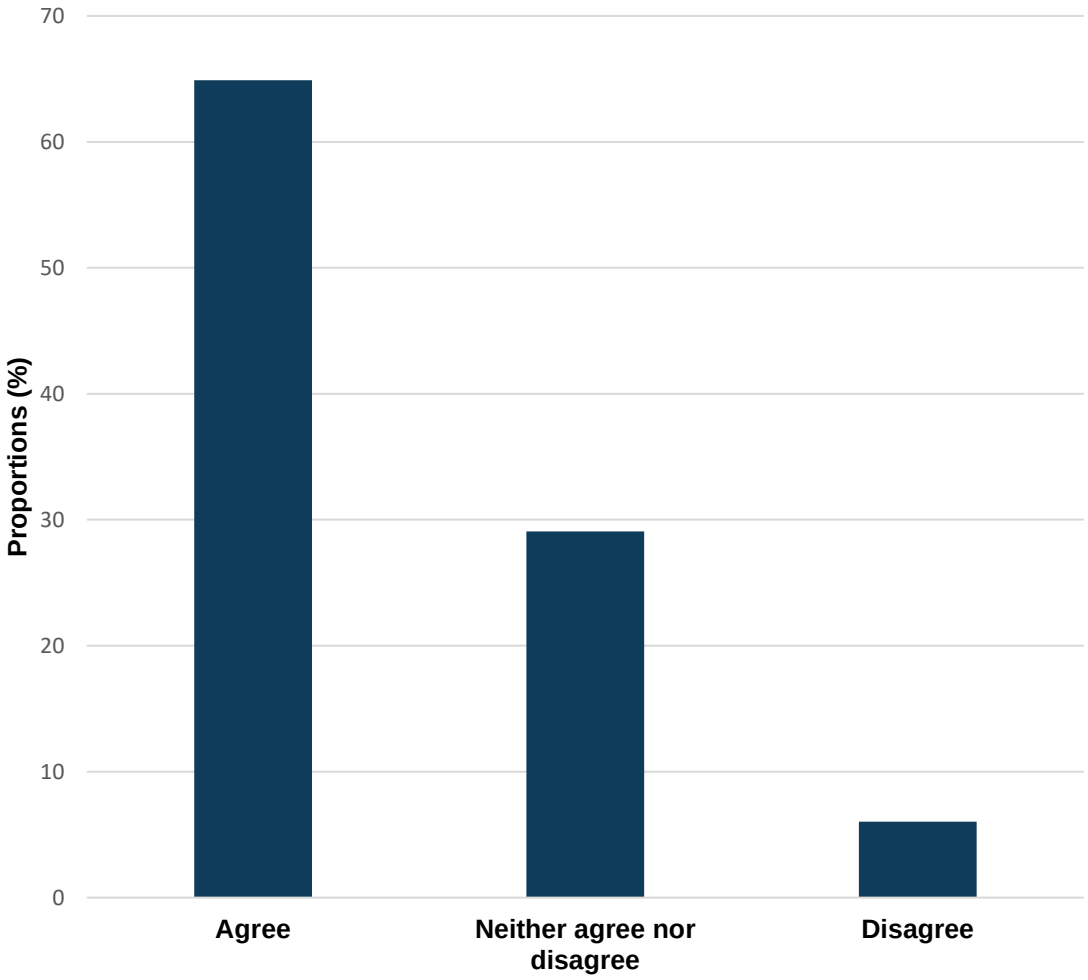

Figure 30. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,153)

- **Top response:**
  - Agree **(65%)**

Q17E. Police engage respectfully with seniors

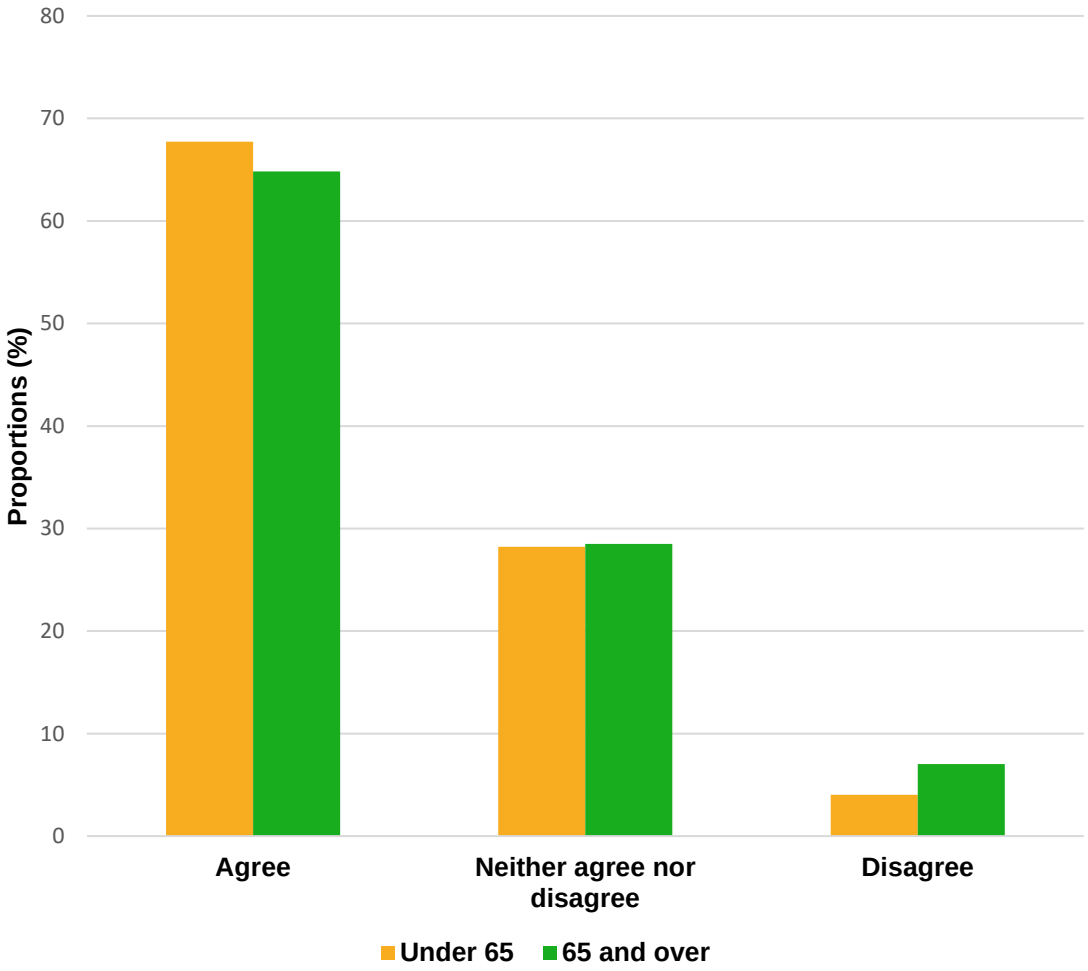

Figure 31. Distribution of options based on age of participants

- **Top responses:**
  - **Under 65:** Agree **(68%)**
  - **65 and over:** Agree **(65%)**

- Those who identified as age 65 and over were slightly more likely to *disagree* with the statement than those under the age of 65.

Q17F. Police engage respectfully with women

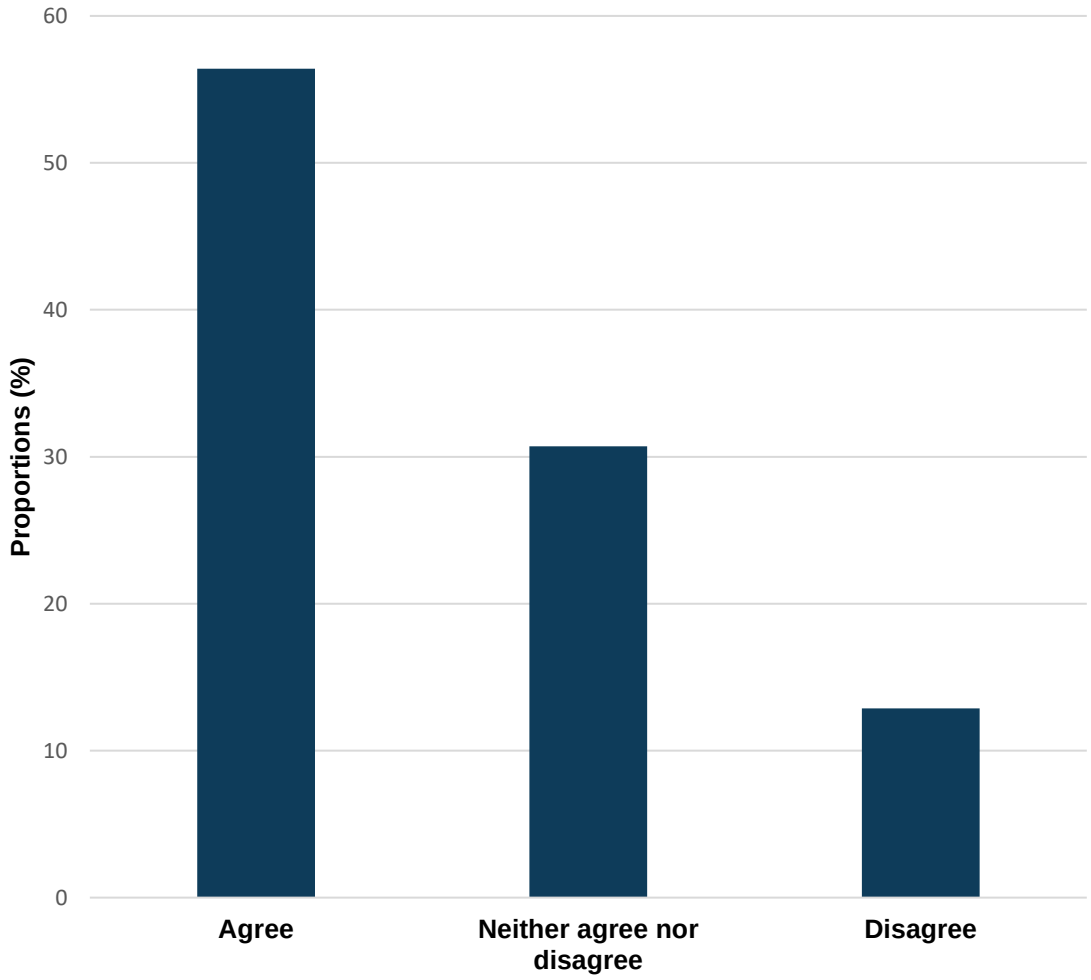

Figure 32. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,136)

- **Top response:**
  - Agree **(56%)**

Q17F. Police engage respectfully with women

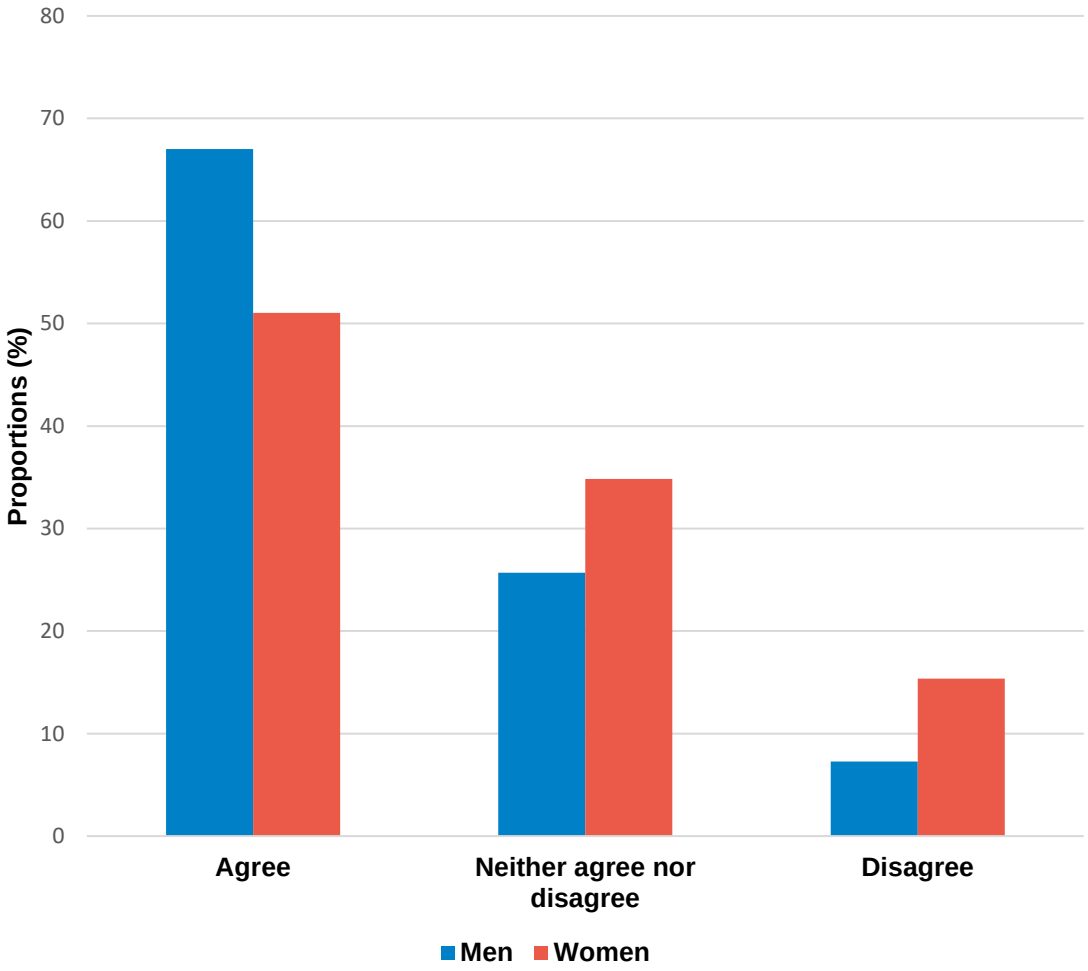

Figure 33. Distribution of options based on gender of participants

- **Top responses:**
  - **Men:** Agree **(67%)**
  - **Women:** Agree **(51%)**

- Those who identified as women were more likely to *neither agree nor disagree* and more likely to *disagree* with the statement than those who identified as men.

Q17G. Police engage respectfully with people who are gender diverse

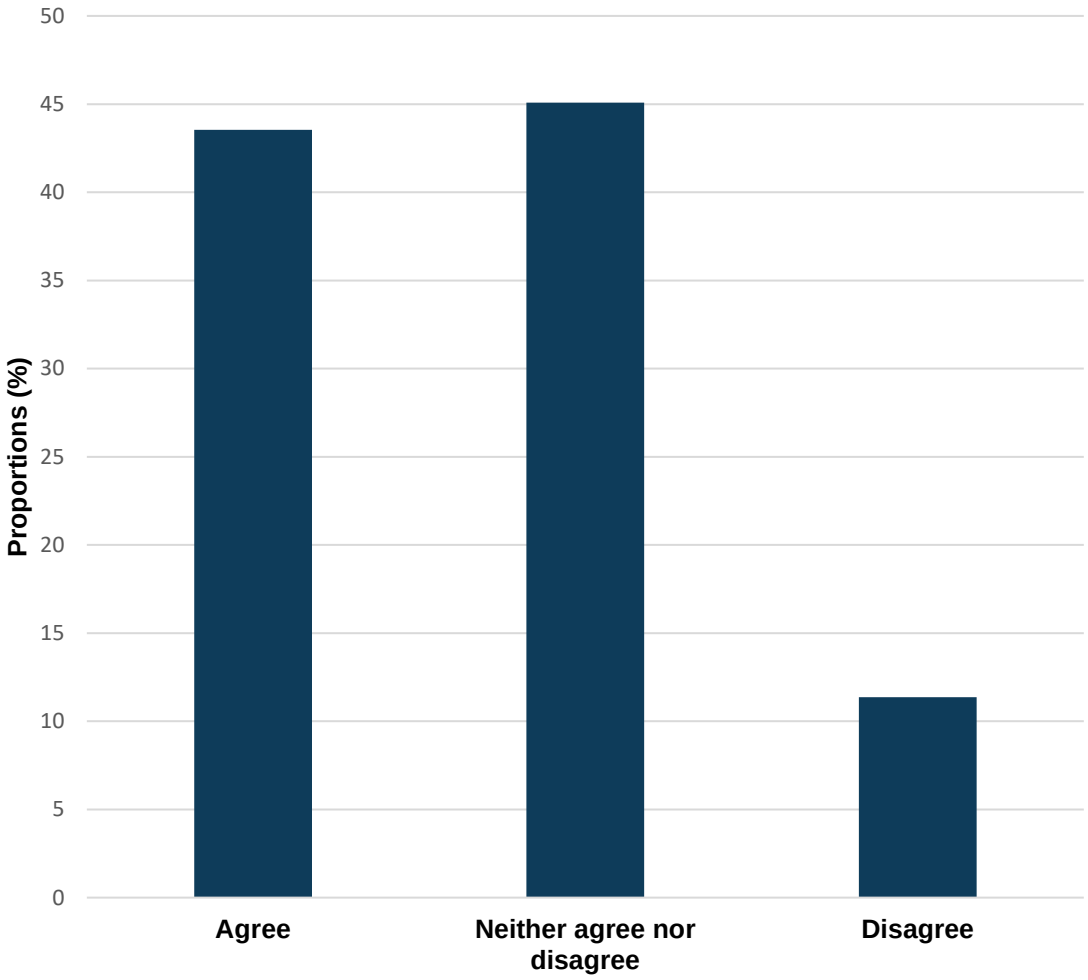

Figure 34. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N 3,139)

- **Top responses:**
  - Neither agree nor disagree **(45%)**
  - Agree **(44%)**

Q17H. Police engage respectfully with people experiencing challenges with mental health and substance use

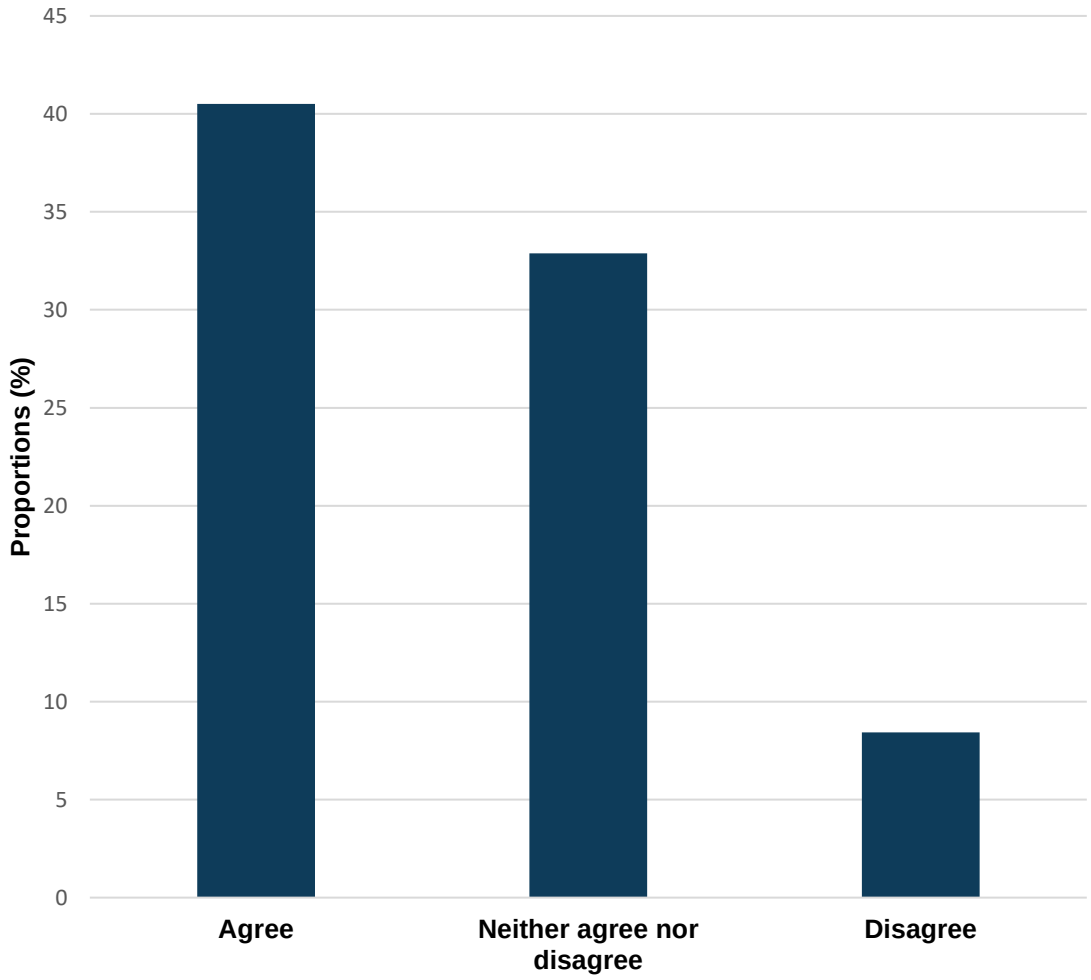

Figure 35. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N =3,142)

- **Top response:**
  - Agree **(41%)**

Q17I. Police engage respectfully with people who are victims of violent crime

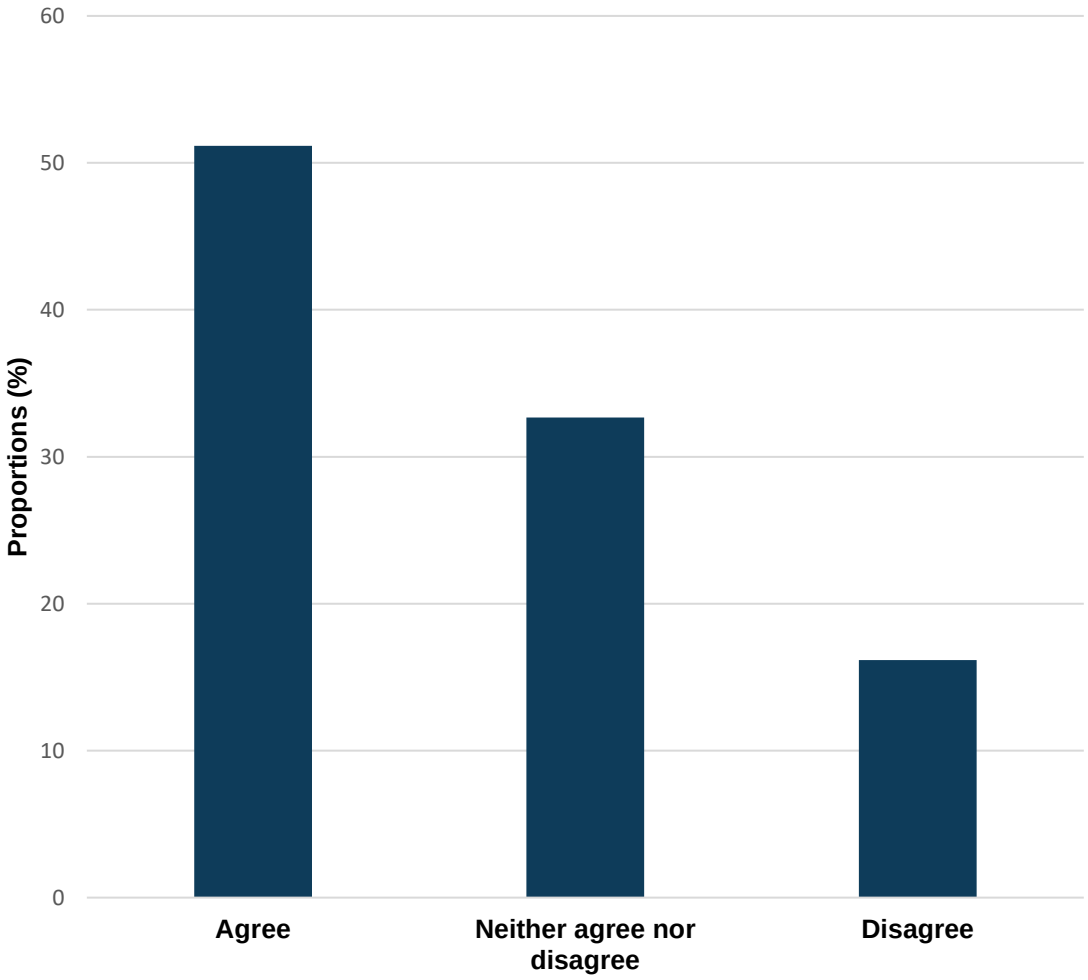

Figure 36. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,131)

- **Top response:**
  - Agree **(51%)**

Q17J. Police engage respectfully with youth

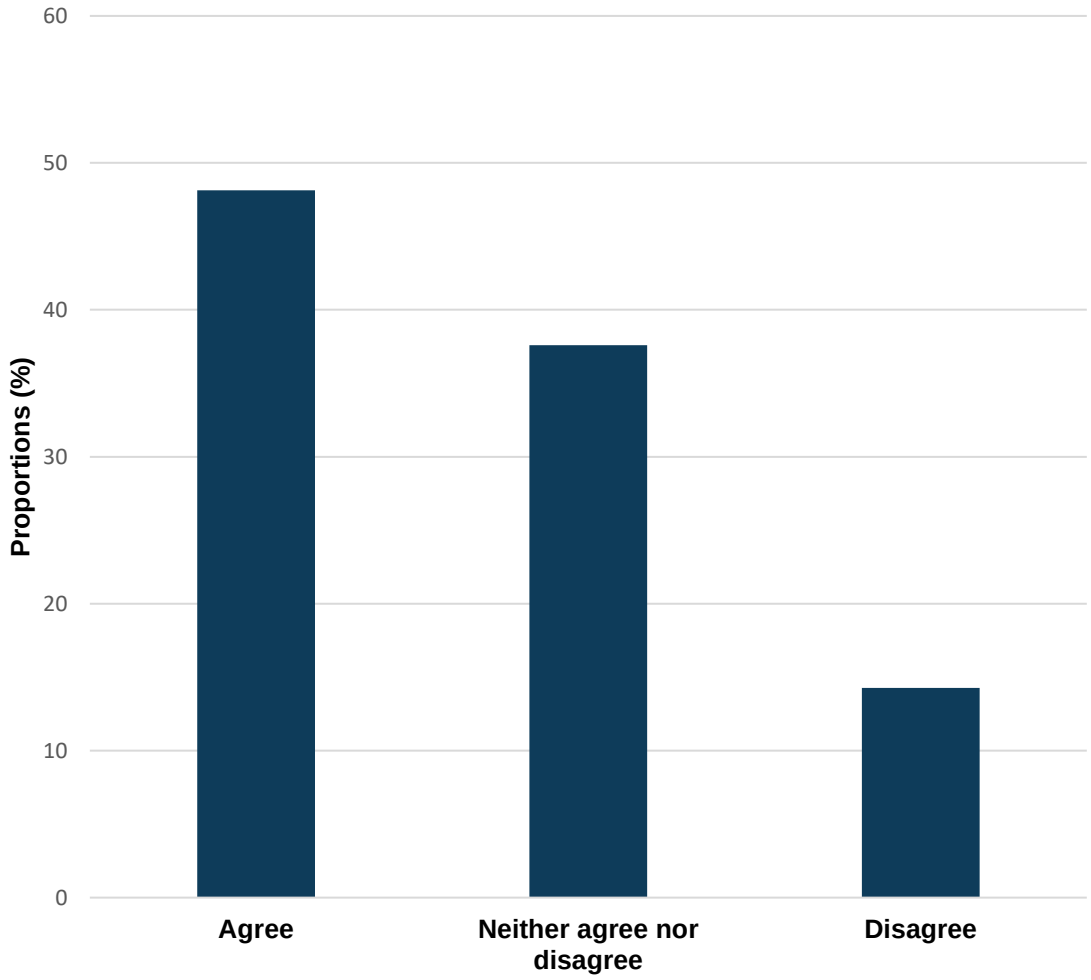

Figure 37. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,133)

- **Top response:**
  - Agree **(48%)**

Q17K. Police engage respectfully with people who are experiencing homelessness

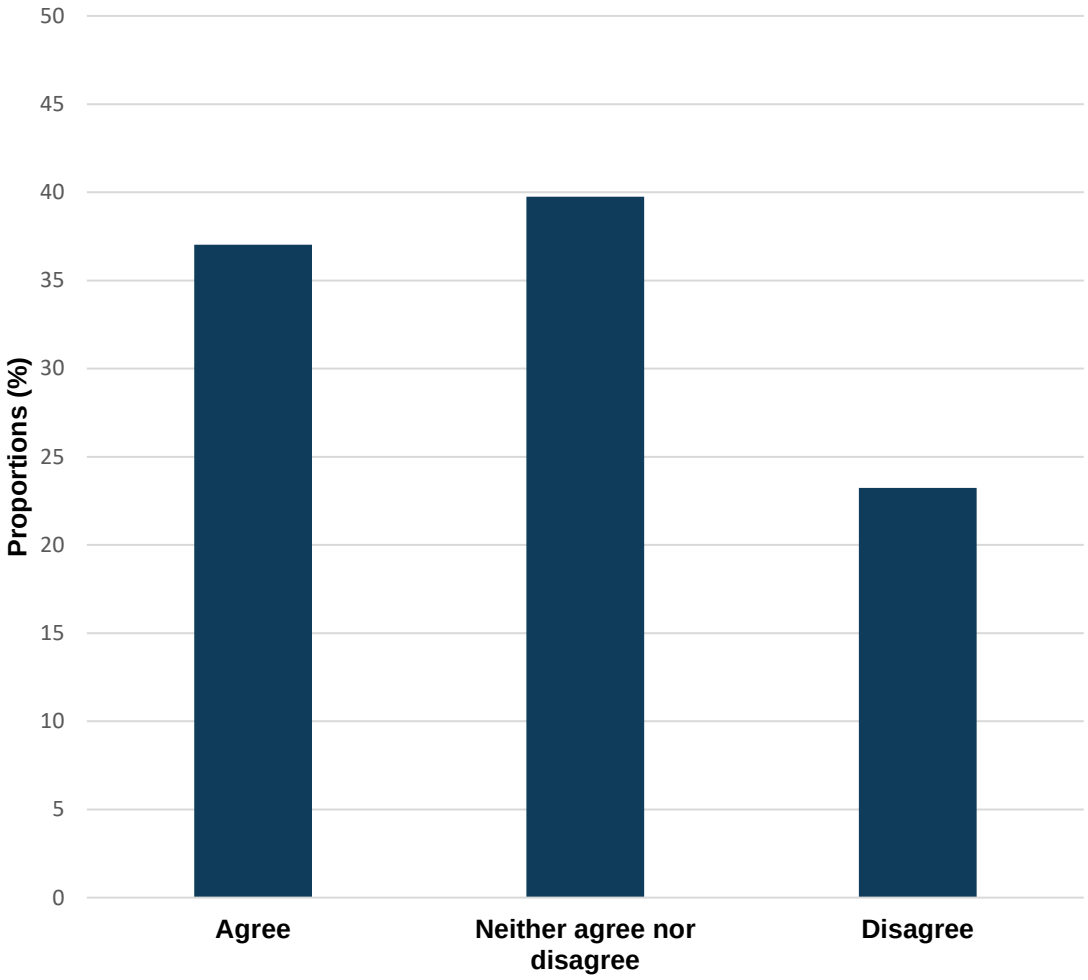

Figure 38. Distribution of options based on overall participants (N = 3,120)

- **Top response:**
  - Neither agree nor disagree **(40%)**
  - Agree **(37%)**

Qualitative Overview

Qualitative Analysis Overview

- **The survey included three open-ended questions where participants could write/type a response. Responses were analyzed to determine themes using qualitative analysis software.**

- Top themes that emerged across all/multiple open-ended questions:
  - Community Safety
  - Community Engagement
  - Accountability
  - Crime Prevention

Question 5

Which of the following police activities should be the top five priorities for police officers in your community?

Top 4 themes in open-ended responses:

1) Community Safety
2) Crime Prevention
3) Law Enforcement
4) Community Engagement

* Fifth spot tied between six themes: safety, accountability, drug dealers, emergency response, public safety, and wellness checks

Question 5 – General Sentiments

Which of the following police activities should be the top five priorities for police officers in your community?

- Need for greater police resources to effectively address issues.
- Need improved communication between police and community.
- Transparency needed around police actions and crime trends.

Question 16

What steps could the police take to improve public trust and accountability?

Top 5 themes in open-ended responses:

1) Tie: Accountability & Community Engagement
2) Transparency
3) Visibility
4) Public Trust
5) Communication

Question 16 – General Sentiments

What steps could the police take to improve public trust and accountability?

- Accountability needed within police forces – transparent processes around police conduct and handling of complaints are important.
- Police officers should receive ongoing training, particularly around cultural awareness, mental health, and de-escalation techniques.
- Community engagement key to building trust between police and communities – increase police visibility and involvement in community events to build better relationships.

Question 18

Please provide any additional thoughts, concerns, or suggestions regarding policing services that have not been addressed by this survey. Please do not share any personally identifiable information.

Top 5 themes in open-ended responses:

1) Community Engagement
2) Accountability
3) Community Safety
4) Tie: Concerns and Effectiveness
5) Crime Prevention

Question 18 – General Sentiments

Please provide any additional thoughts, concerns, or suggestions regarding policing services that have not been addressed by this survey. Please do not share any personally identifiable information.

- Effectiveness is challenged by response times, officer visibility, and lack of resources.
- Participants felt that police need to build greater trust with communities. Increased police presence and proactive community policing were suggested as key strategies.
- Participants referenced changes to the challenges facing police forces and that police need to modernize their training and recruitment to adequately address these challenges.

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