

**SERVING VALLEY DV VICTIMS:  
Challenges and Choices**

**Arizona Coalition  
To End Sexual and Domestic Violence,  
O'Connor House**

**January 2014**

# The Sponsors

- Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence
- O' Connor House
- Funded by the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust

# The Goals

- Survey DV Victims and advocates on victim needs
- Review operations of Valley shelters
- Prompt discussions among Valley survivors, practitioners, other stakeholders

# Methodology

- Victims' questionnaire (n=389)
- Advocates' questionnaire (n=138)
- Victims' interviews (n=25)
- Shelter directors' interviews (n=10)
- Charting of ADES data on shelter operations
- Literature review

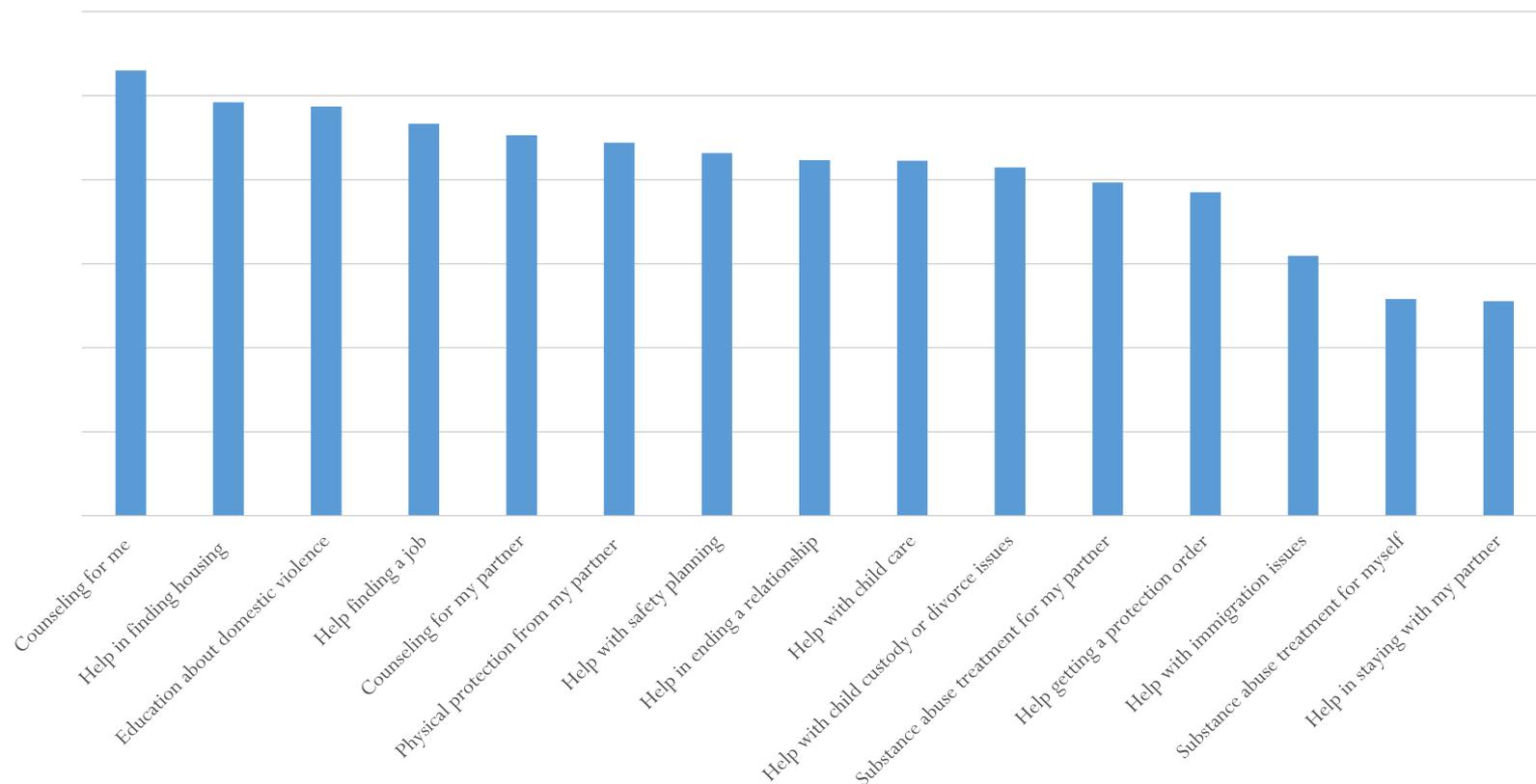
# Limitations

- Survey data self-reported
- Survey samples not randomly selected
- Two-thirds of victim respondents were or had been in shelter
- Questions remain on shelter data

# **VICTIMS' RANK THEIR NEEDS**

# Victims' ranking of needs

## Victims' Needs

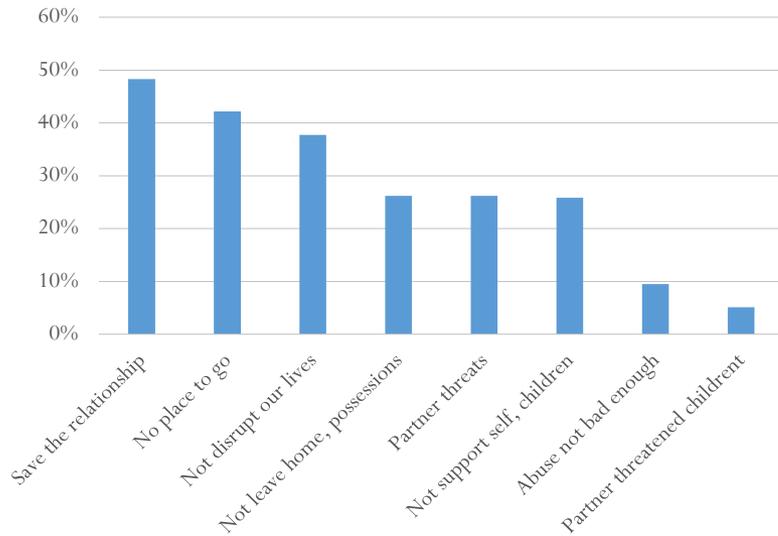


# Shelters play a key role

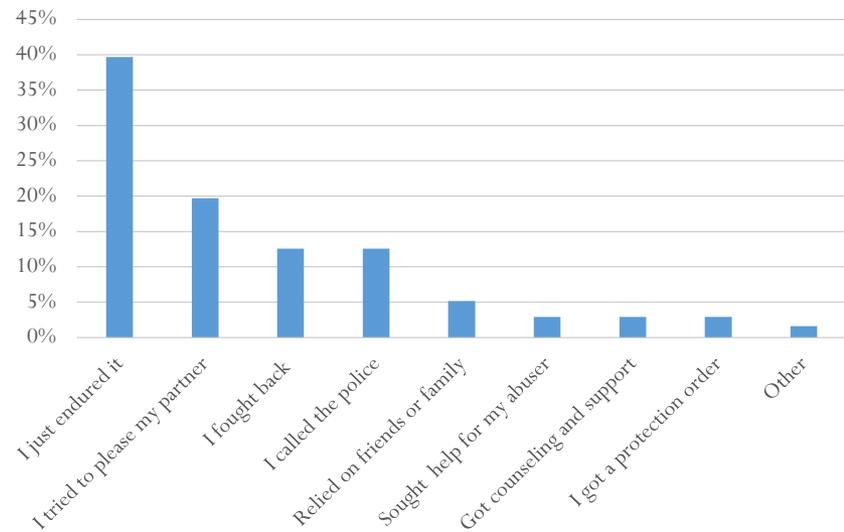
- Most victims (54%) get services at shelters
- Most fleeing victims (55%) go to shelters
- Most (81%) would enter shelter in future
- BUT...38% went elsewhere than shelter because they could, and another 22% avoided shelters due to shelters' bad reputations or the victim's own past negative experiences

# Victims remain trapped

## Why Not Leave



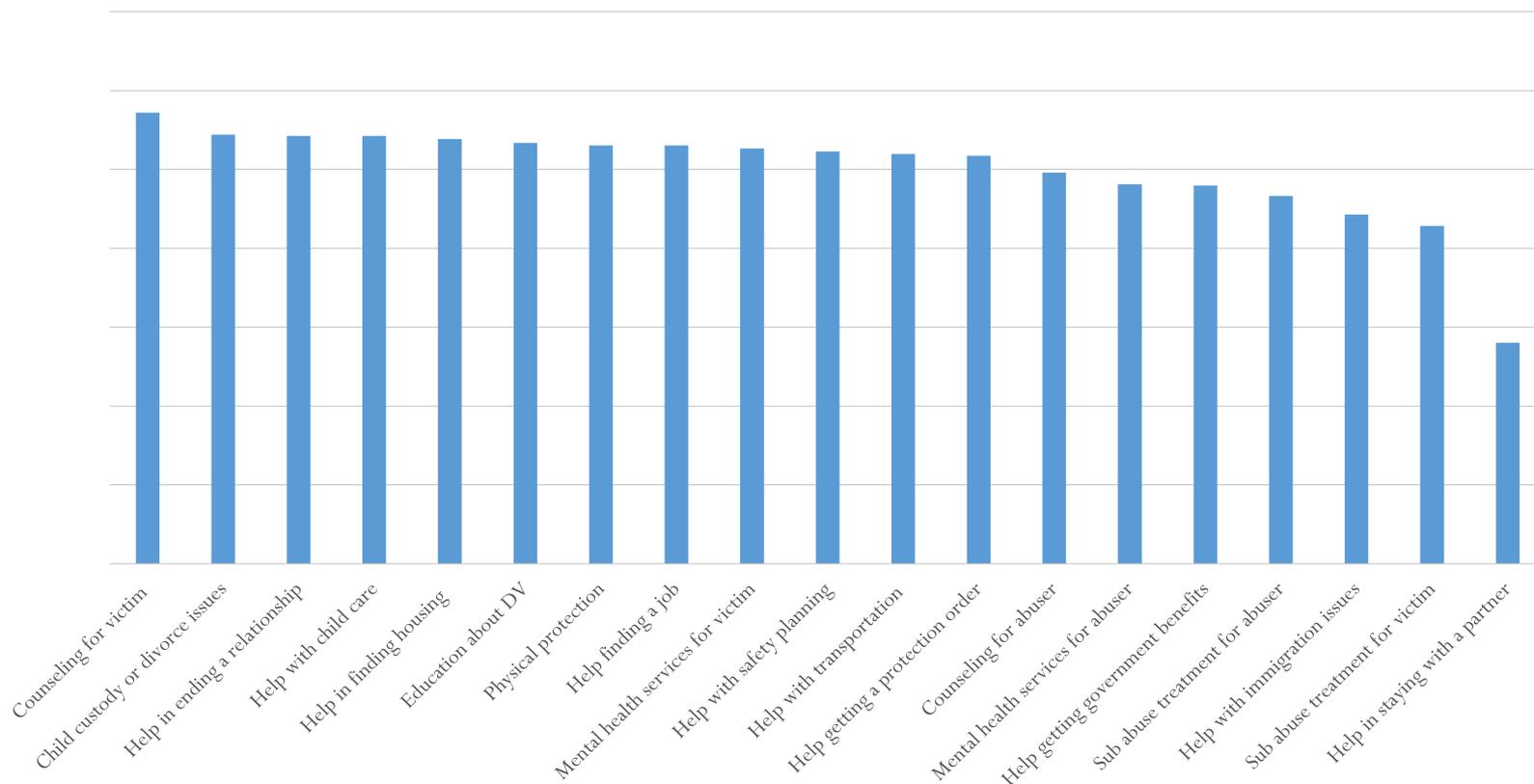
## How Handled Abuse



**ADVOCATES RANK NEEDS**

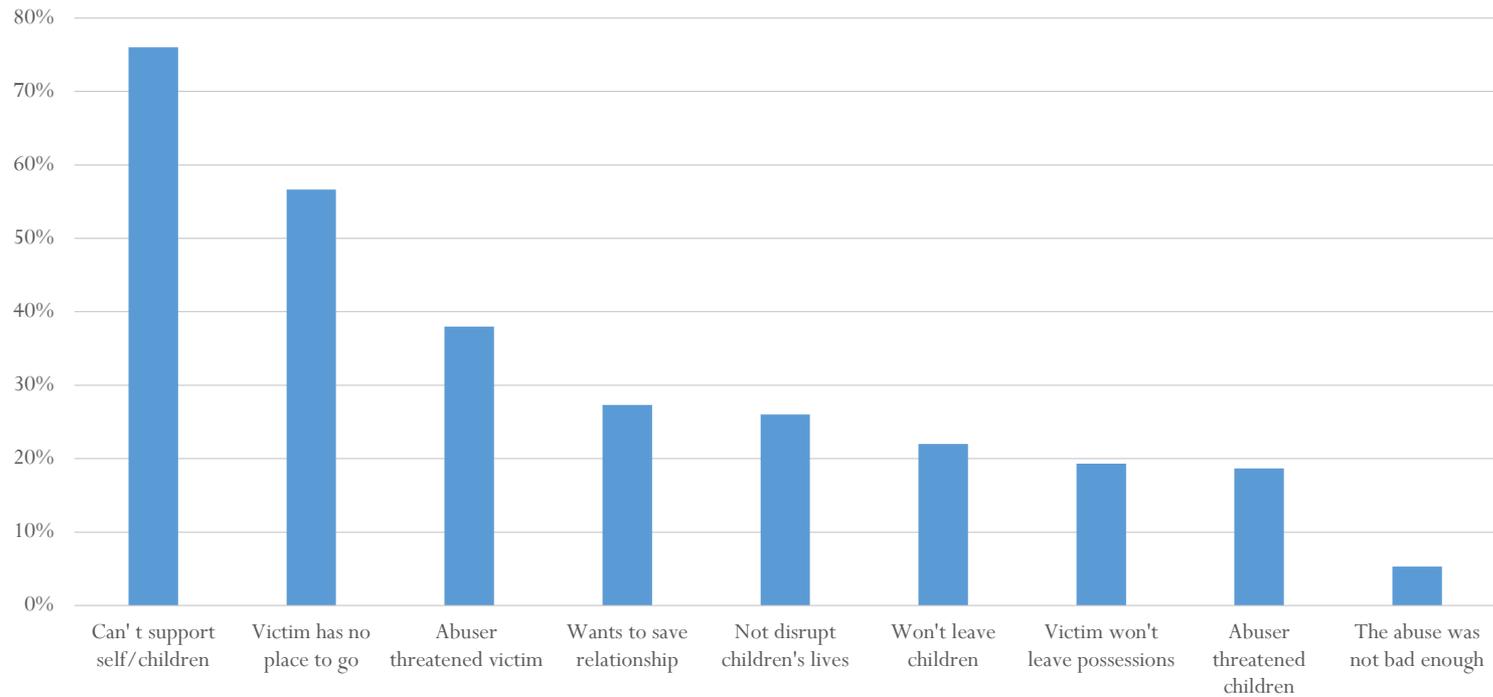
# Advocates' views of victims' needs

## Victims' Needs (a)



# Practical needs form barriers

## Why Not Leave (a)

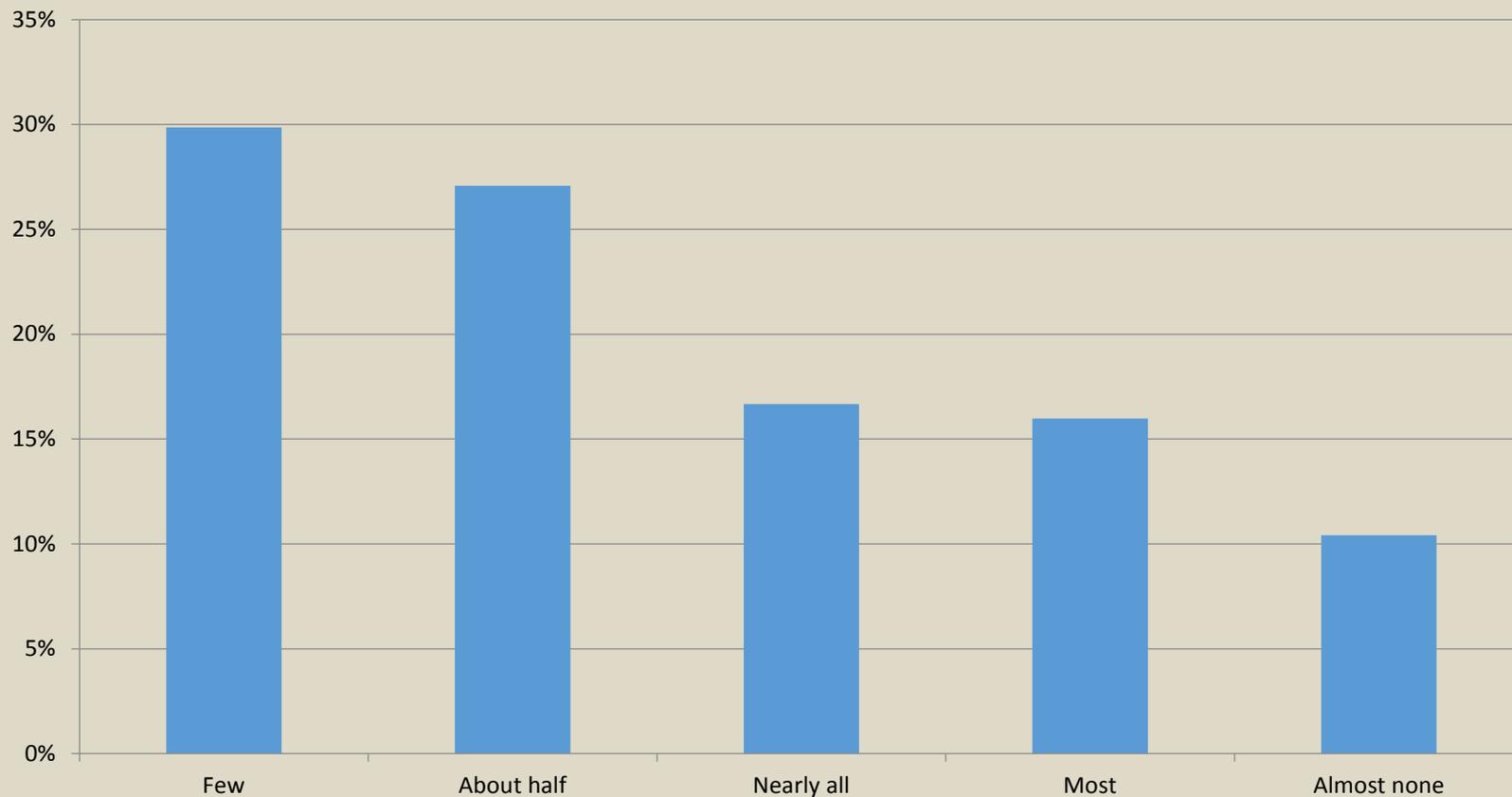


# Family, friends play key roles

- Unlike the victims, most advocates (55%) say most victims seek help with family before shelters, with shelters in 2<sup>nd</sup> place
- Advocates also say most victims who avoid shelter do so because they have other options or have heard bad things about shelters
- Family members/friends also main source of help for victims who don't go to shelter, advocates say
- In any case, most advocates (55%) say most victims stay with/return to their abusers, while 45% disagree

# How many victims use shelter?

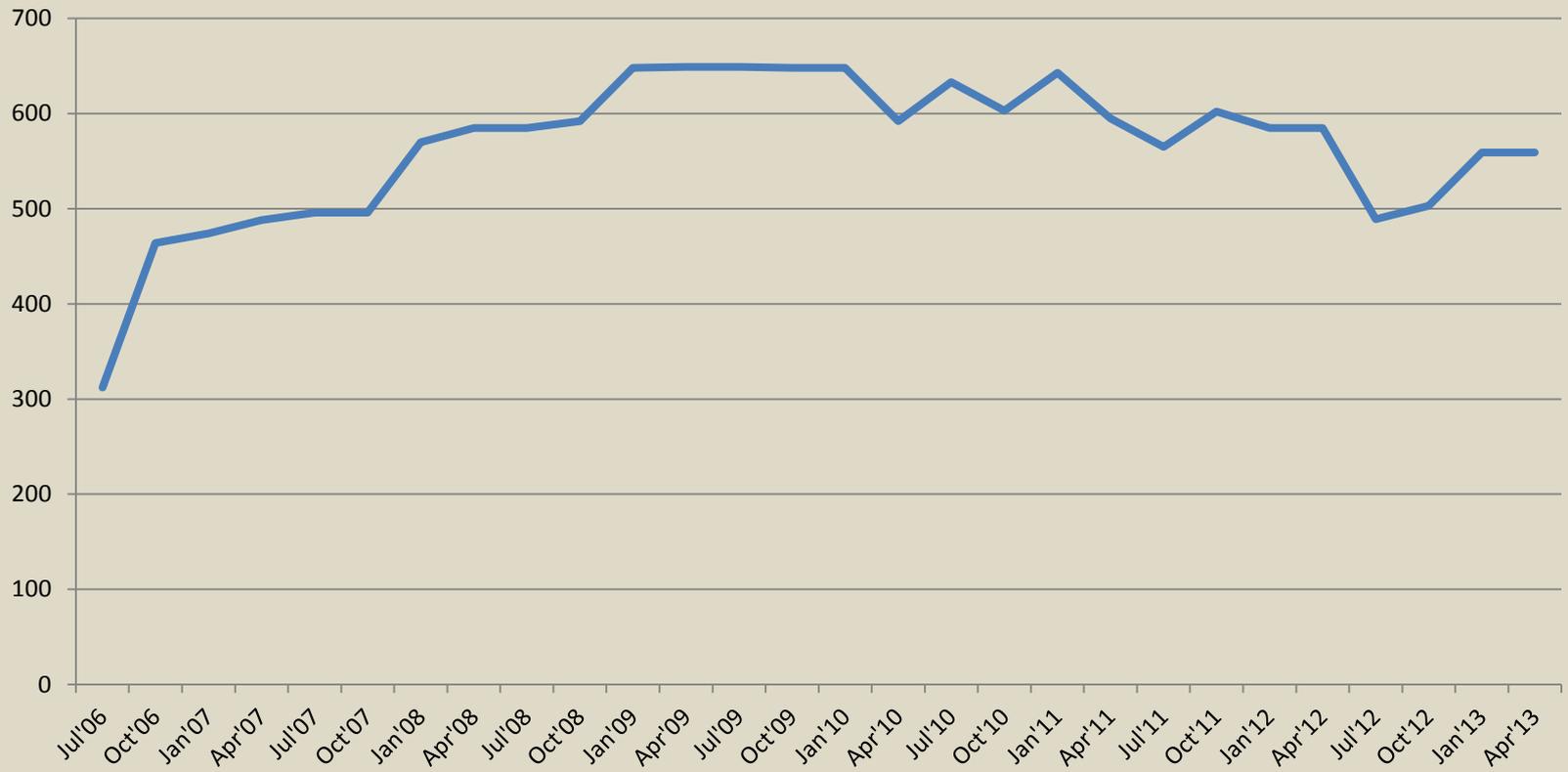
Have Been in Shelter (a)



# **SHELTERS BY THE NUMBERS**

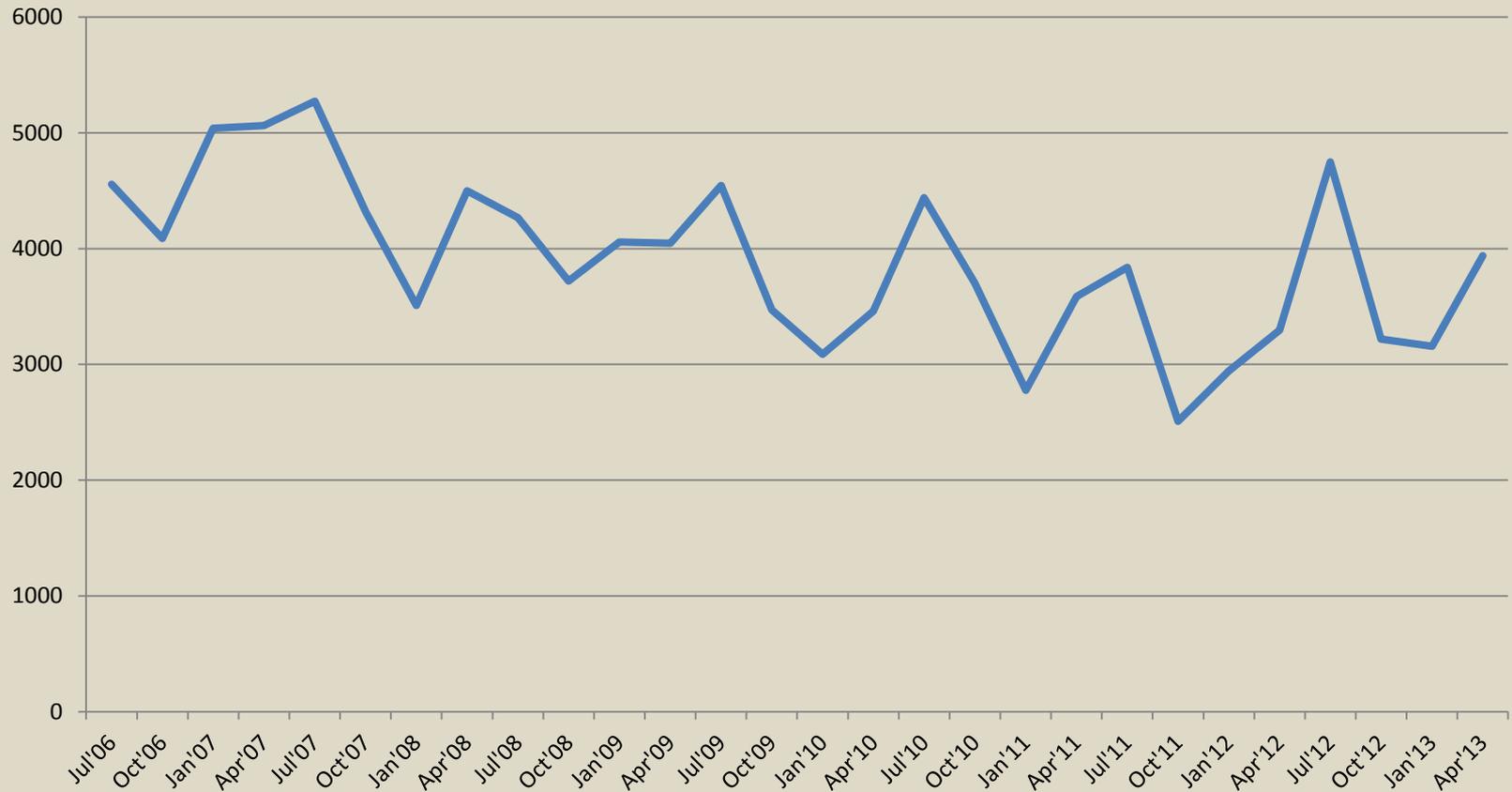
# Valley beds nearly double

Figure 16. Valley Bed Numbers



# Shelter requests decline

Figure 17. Requests for DV Shelter



# Clients served remains flat

Figure 18. Clients Beginning Services



# Turnaway numbers drop

Figure 19. Turnaways for Lack of Beds



# Average length of stay rises

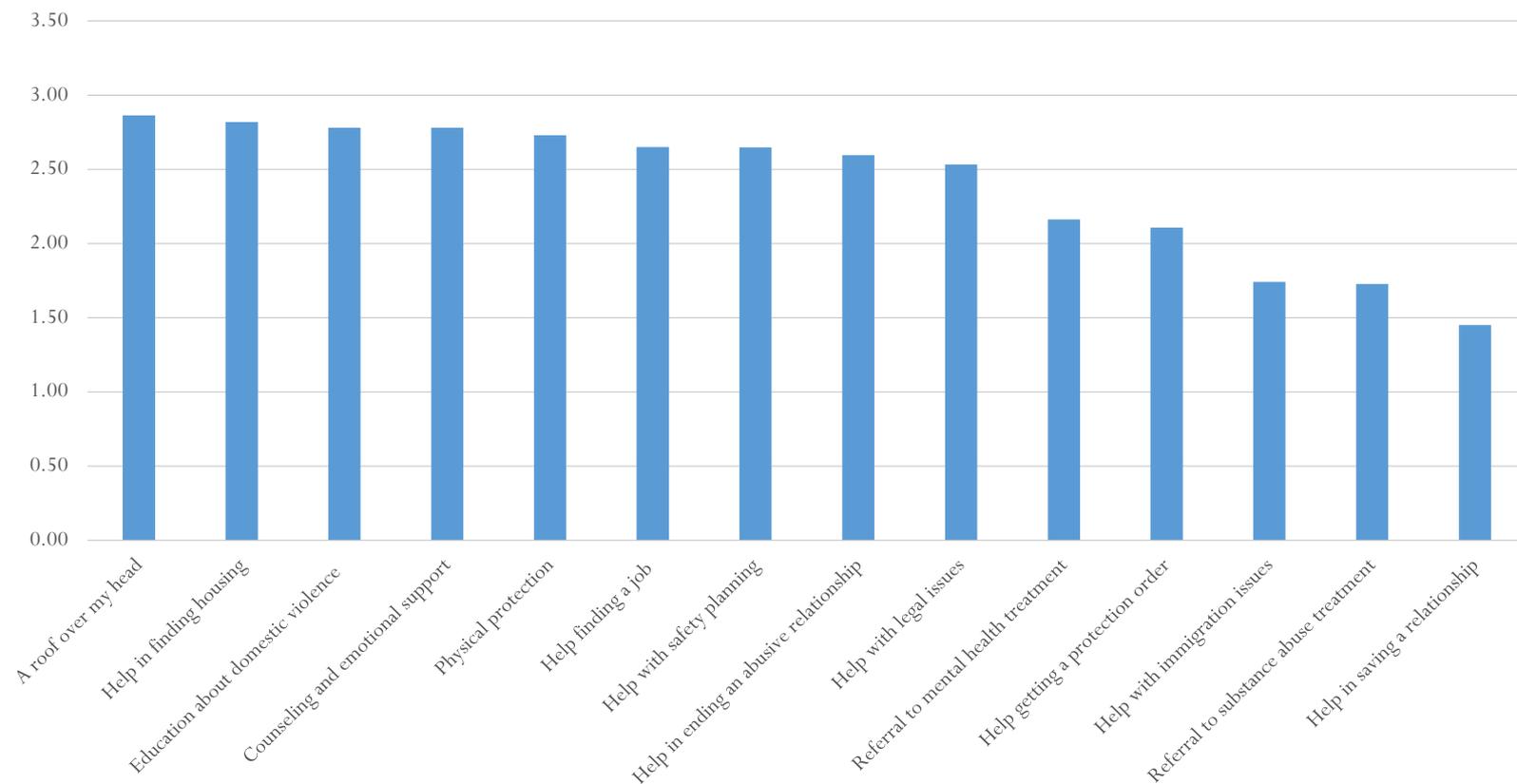
Figure 20. Length of Stay



# **SHELTERS: VICTIMS' VIEWS**

# Practical shelter aid is prized

## Key Shelter Services

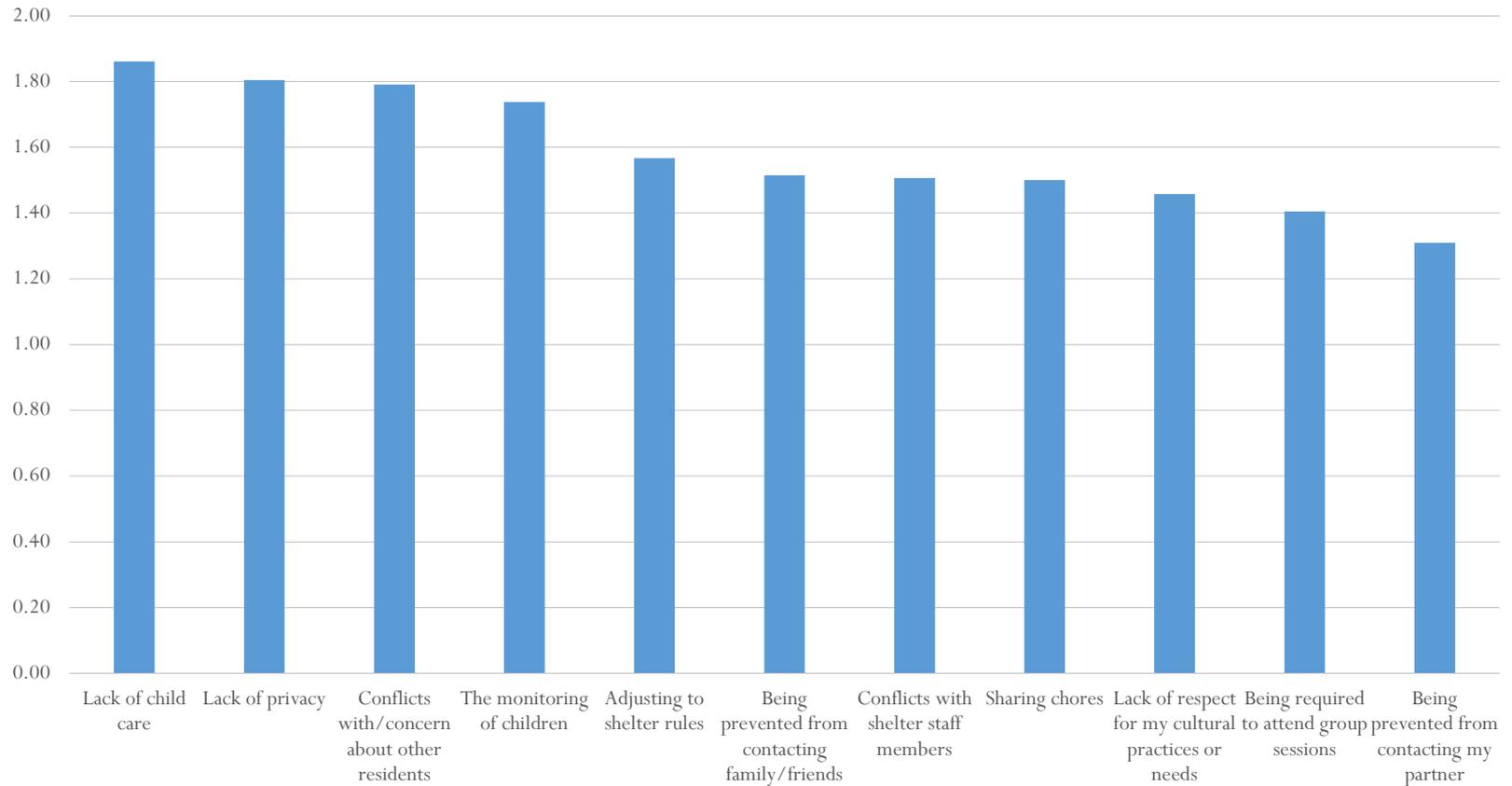


# Victims cite shelter flaws

- Child care and supervision of children
- Help with transportation
- Food, privacy, more computers, phones, other resources
- Closer supervision of residents, zero tolerance for violence, fewer substance-abuse problems
- More/more intensive counseling

# Some have bad experiences

## Negative Shelter Experiences



# Victims share criticisms...

- Some staff disrespectful and rude
- Staff not properly trained for their jobs
- Staff fail to supervise, deal with problem residents
- Shelter at times “almost feels like jail.”

## ...but also offer praise

- Shelters provide support and service
- Shelters offer safety and counseling
- Staff are caring and sympathetic
- “This place has changed my life.”
- 89% said they would enter shelter again

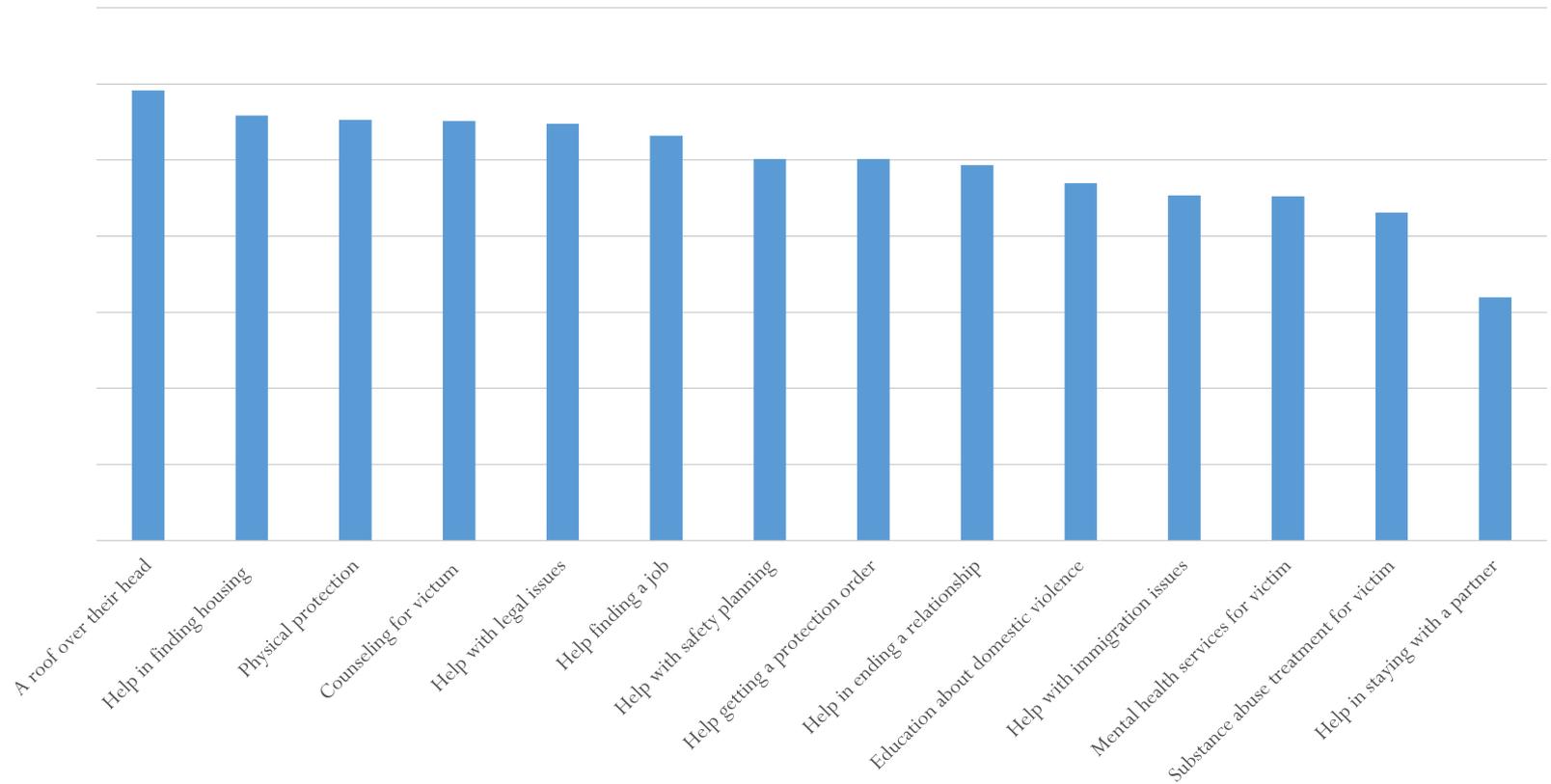
# **SHELTERS: ADVOCATES' VIEW**

# Advocates: Victims value shelters

- Nearly half of advocates (46%) say victims sought shelter out of fear
- 87% of advocates said victims find shelter services “helpful” or “very helpful”
- 89% of advocates said victims would enter shelter again if needed

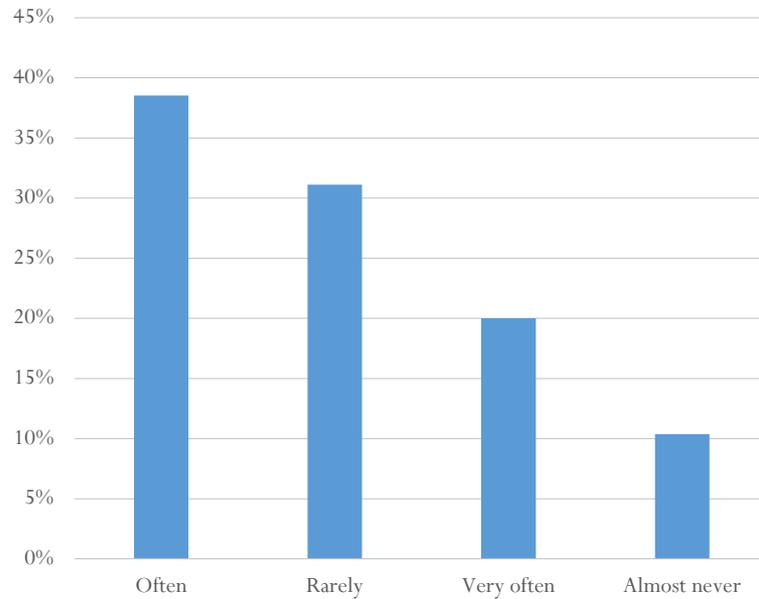
# Advocates stress practical needs

Shelter Victims' Needs (a)

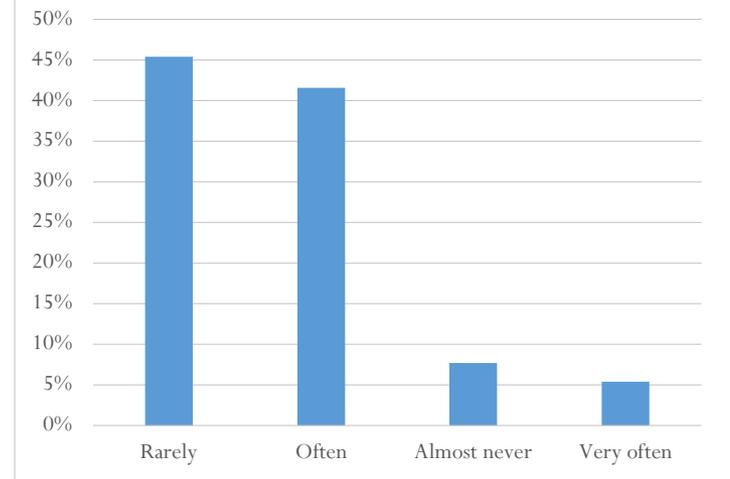


# Beds and Screening

## No Beds Open

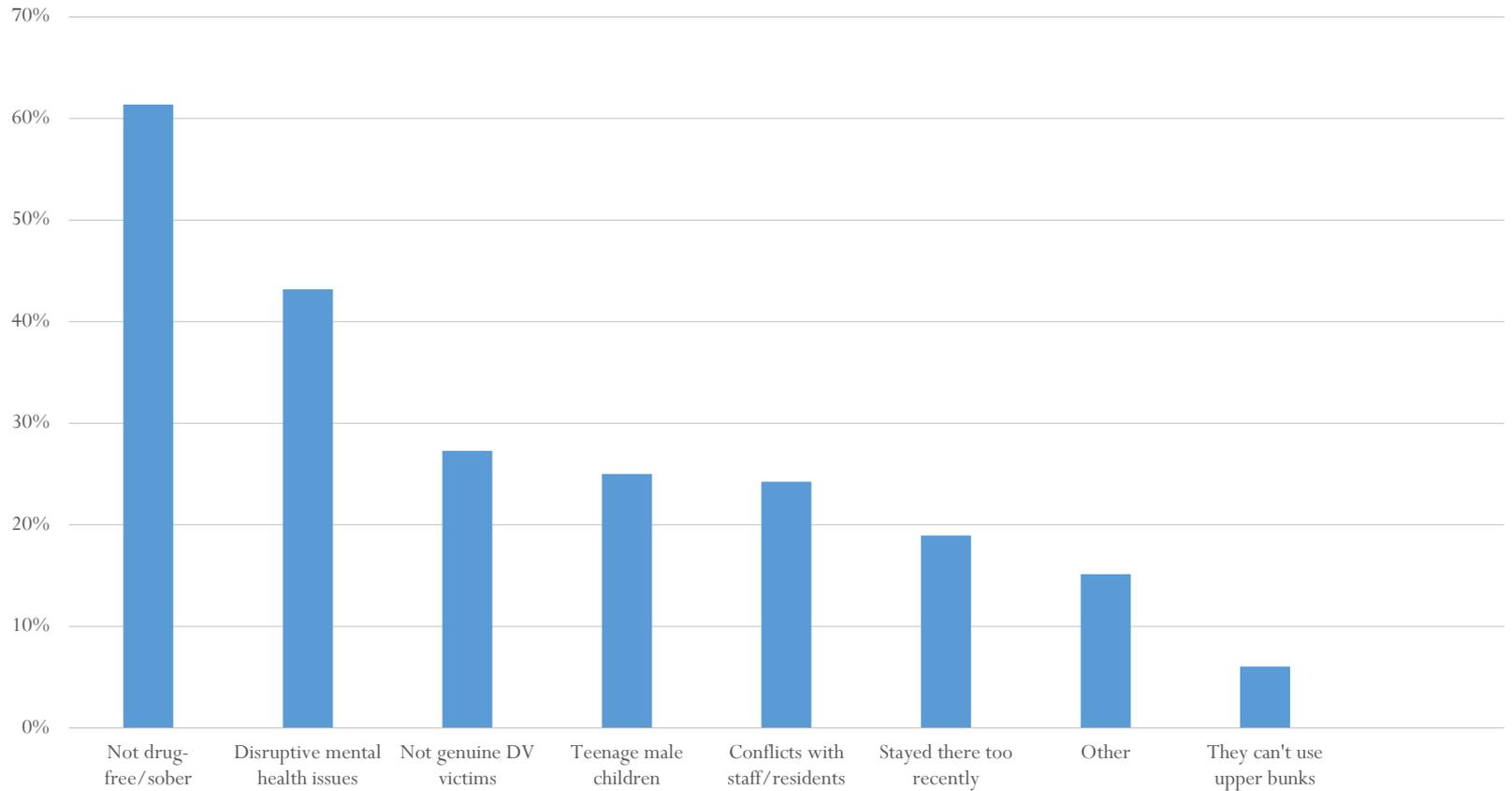


## Screened Out Often



# Drugs/alcohol remain issues

## Why Screened Out



# EDs offer mix of views

- DV Shelters much needed, always full
- Practical needs predominate, though group support also key
- Many rules relaxed or abandoned; “screening in”
- Half or fewer residents in immediate danger
- Most shelters not truly secret
- Today’s resident populations more challenging; mental health/substance abuse major problems
- Motivating some residents is difficult
- Mixed views on integration with homeless populations, on “housing first”

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