

Dear Editors,

We would like to thank the reviewers enormously for taking the time to review this manuscript and provide such helpful and critical feedback. Below we have provided detailed responses to each of their comments, and we have also flagged the corresponding revisions/corrections in track changes in the re-submitted file. There are significant changes to the manuscript, as were suggested, so please do understand that track-changes may mean minor errors in expression or grammar may have occurred as part of re-writing and moving of text. We apologise in advance if this has occurred as we have proof-read the document repeatedly before resubmission.

Thank you again.

Reviewer 1 comments:

2. Questions for General Evaluation	Reviewer's Evaluation	Response and Revisions
Is the content succinctly described and contextualized with respect to previous and present theoretical background and empirical research (if applicable) on the topic?	Must be improved	Addressed and see below for specific comments
Are the research design, questions, hypotheses and methods clearly stated?	Must be improved	Amended
Are the arguments and discussion of findings coherent, balanced and compelling?	Must be improved	Amended
For empirical research, are the results clearly presented?	Must be improved	Amended
Is the article adequately referenced?	yes	Thank you
Are the conclusions thoroughly supported by the results presented in the article or referenced in secondary literature?	Must be improved	Amended

Reviewer 1. Point-by-point response to Comments and Suggestions for Authors**Comments 1:**

We commend the authors for addressing such an important topic and for approaching it with a focus on social impact and improving people's lives. Their work helps identify key practices that can be applied to enhance future interventions and drive meaningful change.

We appreciate these comments, thank you.

Below, we outline some areas for improvement in the article:

1. Justification of Study Focus

- It is essential to better justify why these specific groups, which are highly diverse,

were chosen for the study. While the author identifies prevalence percentages of violence within these groups using various surveys, these percentages are not compared with more mainstream groups. This raises the possibility that the identified prevalence could be attributed to their vulnerability as opposed to direct experiences of violence. The intersectionality of these groups makes them important to study, but further justification for their selection is needed.

- Thank you for your comments, we have sought to further justify the need for this study. We have explained the research was specifically commissioned to consider these groups – insertion of lines 52-56. We have evidenced why women from minority groups experience more challenges with seeking help also (para 1.1.2).

2. Broader Scope of Violence

- Consider including information highlighting that violence against women is not limited to cohabiting partners. In fact, a significant amount of gender-based or sexual violence occurs in dating contexts or casual relationships.
- We have added section explaining the various contexts of gender-based or sexual violence – insertion of lines and re-writing in section 1.1, lines 30-42.

3. Relevance of Barriers to Support

- Some barriers mentioned, such as the fear of losing custody of children, are shared with other groups. The relevance of these barriers to the studied groups specifically should be better justified to strengthen the argument.
- Thank you for your comment, we agree that some barriers are common to many different groups and have made that point, lines 417-424, repeated in summary in 514-515.

4. Theoretical Framework

- The theoretical framework should clarify that the arguments presented are based on prior studies or theories but are not exhaustive. This distinction would help readers understand the context of the claims made.
- Thank you. We have clarified the theory used in prior studies but also added participant perspectives – see section 1.5, lines 260-266.

5. Research Questions

- The research questions lack scientific orientation. For example, terms like "doing well" are subjective and not suitable for scientific inquiry. Instead, the questions could focus on identifying factors that foster inclusion within these groups or help overcome specific challenges, as well as those that hinder such progress.
- Given the phenomenological approach of the paper, and the involvement of the funders, the goal was to focus on the lived experiences of victim-survivors. Hence there is a degree of subjectivity inherent in the responses. We have tried to clarify this and added 'an exploration of' (exploratory, process oriented qualitative research considers subjective views regarding how things work) and we have revised how the research questions are posed, to retain the fundamental focus yet replacing 'doing well' with 'what people think is good' and adding 'fostering inclusion' and 'challenges' – Section 1.3. We would emphasise that this is a qualitative study designed to seek to understand the barriers and also their perceptions and therefore will always have a level of subjectivity.

6. Positive Acknowledgment of Practical Orientation

- The article's orientation toward analyzing activities and tools that promote inclusion and social impact is commendable. The authors are to be congratulated for going beyond mere analysis to propose actionable solutions to improve these situations scientifically.

- Thank you for your support.

7. Methodology

- The questionnaire section would benefit from more detail to enhance replicability. For instance, specify the questions asked and the type of data sought.
- Similarly, the focus group methodology needs to be expanded. Currently, it only mentions difficulties in engaging organizations but does not elaborate on the reasons or the types of focus groups conducted.
- Including a summary table of participants across methodologies (e.g., sociodemographic variables for survey respondents, and profiles of focus group and interview participants) would add clarity.
- It would also be helpful to provide the coding framework or key questions used in interviews to improve transparency and replicability.
- Some sociodemographic information currently presented in the results section belongs in the methodology, as it describes the sample.
- Thank you for your suggestions re: replicability we have added some example questions of different types (tick box and free text) have been provided – added lines 164-167. We would also be happy for scholars to contact us and we will share a copy of the questionnaire. *If the editors would like we can provide a copy of the questionnaire as supplementary material.*
- We have included more detail as to the rationale for focussing on the use of qualitative data (section 2, and 2.5)
- In regard to the coding framework we have added a summary of example questions for both focus group and interviews have been provided – Section 2.5.3
- The sociodemographic data has been moved to the methods. We have added a table summary under results to show the breakdown.

8. Regional Context

- The region where the study was conducted should be explicitly stated to provide contextual relevance.
- We agree with the reviewer and have added census and comparative statistics included where available – Section 2.5.1

9. Organization of Results

- The integration of focus group and interview discourse with survey data makes the analysis challenging to follow. At times, themes are blended, and the depth of analysis is compromised. Despite this, the quotations are valuable and rich in information, identifying practices that could improve lives. However, there is an over-reliance on quotations with insufficient accompanying analysis, leaving the reader to draw conclusions independently.
- The results would benefit from clearer organization, deeper analysis, and less reliance on raw quotations.
- We have rewritten elements of the findings to include conclusions from the analysis and reduced the number of quotations used to illustrate key points (Section 3.1).
- We have added tables (2 and 3) to summarize the data relevant to each theme, help add a logical flow and give a clearer picture. This is a qualitative research study and as such keeping the voice of the participants is paramount, and this is so often silenced in studies, a barrier in itself to accessing support. The researchers are not claiming this study is generalisable to the whole population. Rather, they are arguing that it will generate an authentic understanding amongst practitioners and scholars. This has been emphasized throughout the text and in the new 'limitations' section (4.1).

10. Writing Style

- The writing style would improve with a more natural and coherent flow. Currently, the article reads like a list of bullet points with abrupt topic transitions. Guiding the reader more effectively through the themes would enhance the overall readability.
- We have added linking sentences to enhance cohesion between the sections and proof-read throughout though please see our note above about track-changes.

11. Conclusions and Discussion

- The conclusions and discussion sections are scattered, lacking focus on the main objectives of the article. Reiterating the research questions and linking them to the findings would provide more cohesion. This would help clarify the key messages and contributions of the article.
- We have included additional wording to explicitly re-reference the research questions, section 4, and added a separate Concluding remarks (4.2).

12. Proofreading

- A thorough proofreading is necessary to address errors such as “Mminority groups” on line 557.
- We apologise for the typographical errors. Spelling and grammar check has been re-done and there are amendments to words, spellings, flow and other elements throughout the document.

Overall Recommendation The article demonstrates a solid fieldwork foundation and addresses an important topic, making it publishable with revisions. However, the writing needs refinement to achieve the scientific rigor required by the journal. Enhancing the methodology, improving the depth of analysis, and refining the presentation of results and writing style would significantly elevate the article.

We thank the reviewer for these detailed and supportive comments and have made amendments, as outlined above, to methodology, analysis and presentation of results as well as proof-reading and refining writing.