

Senior Psychopaths: Informant Reports of Deceit, Exploitation and Antisocial Behavior Beyond Age 50

The common wisdom among researchers and mental health clinicians is that psychopaths tend to “burn out” in middle age.

This impression is supported by research with criminals (e.g. Hare, McPherson & Forth, 1988, Arboleda-Florez & Holley, 1991).

An online survey sought informant reports of antisocial behavior in likely antisocial individuals in the community who were age 50 or older. A total of 2,120 romantic partners, family members, friends and associates of putative antisocial individuals responded.

Of the total survey respondents, 1,215 rated the individuals according to the nine criteria proposed in the first draft of the DSM-5 for ASPD/psychopathy. Symptoms were rated on a 0-3 scale, from “0 = Very little or not at all like that” to “3 = Extremely like that,” for a total possible score of 27. Responses indicated that participants understood the items. The mean total score for

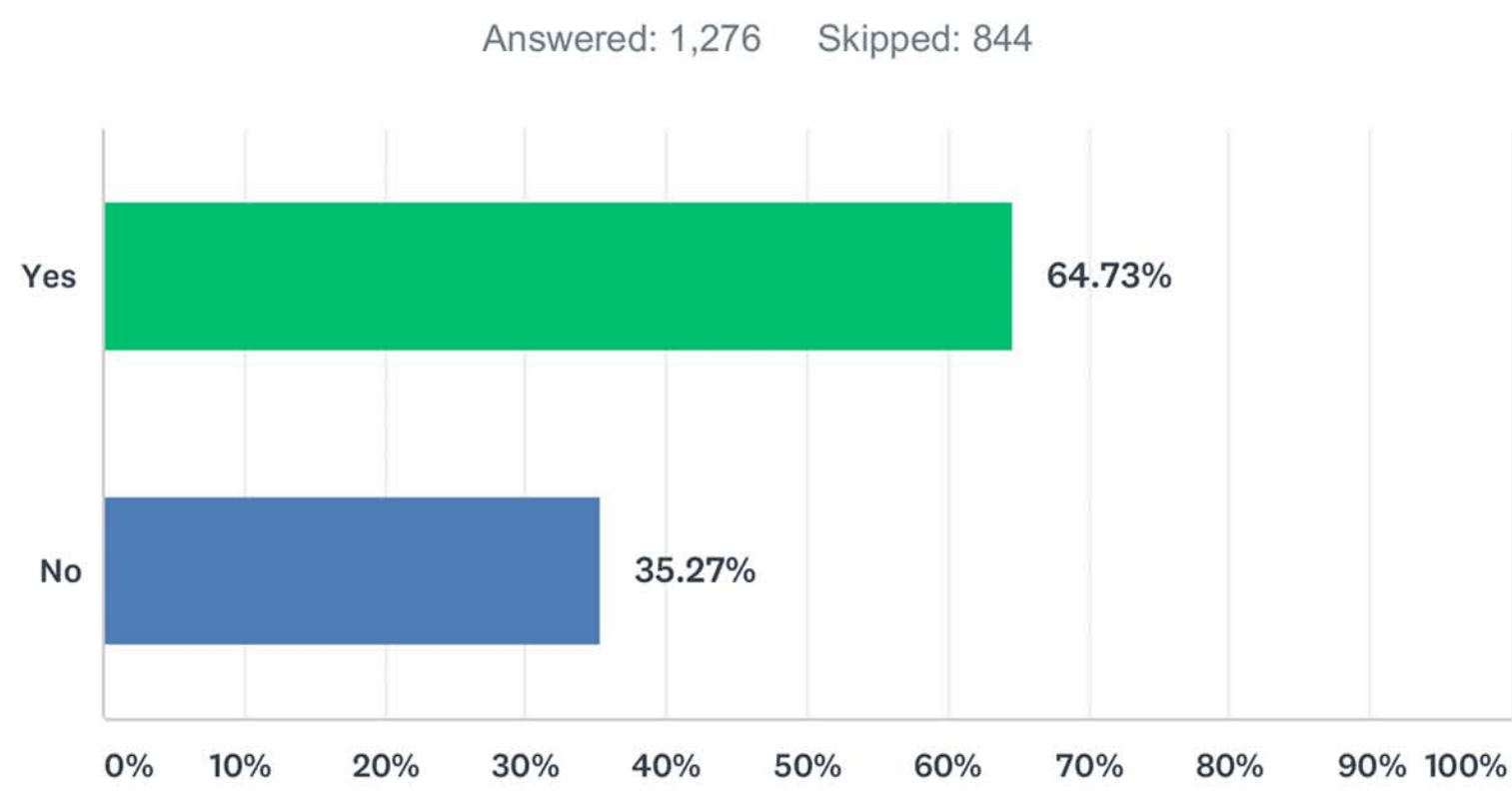
putative ASPD individuals was 21.19, SD 5.116, and Cronbach's α was 0.811 for the nine items.

Qualitative responses were collected to add validity to the numeric scores. Asked if the individual was manipulative while over age 50, 97.67% of respondents agreed.

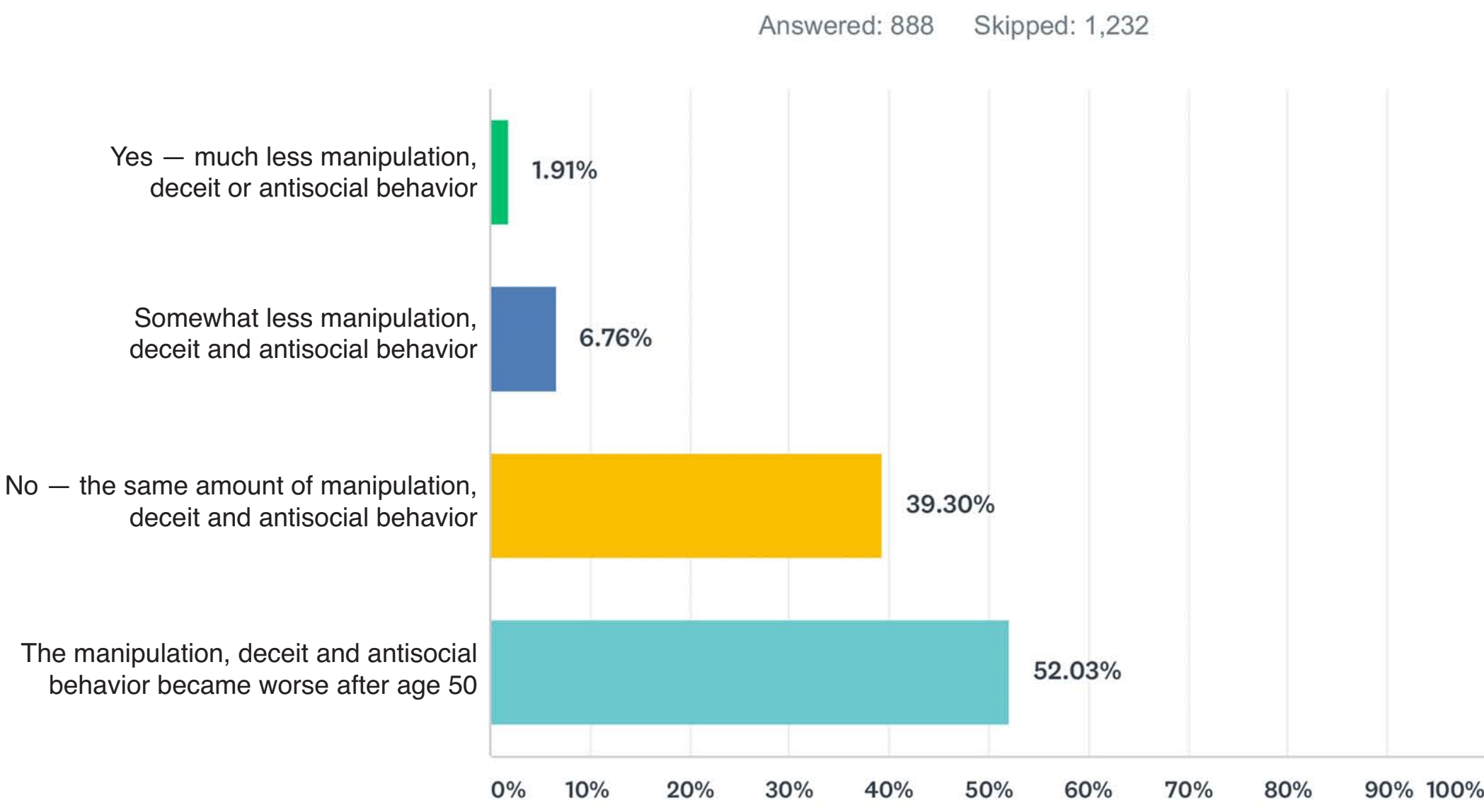
A total of 826 respondents said they knew the individual both before age 50 and after age 50. Asked if the individual “mellowed out” or “burned out” and engaged in less manipulation, deceit or antisocial behavior after age 50, 1.91% (17) said yes, much less; 6.76% (60) said somewhat less; 39.30% (349) said no, the same amount of manipulation; and 52.03% (462) said the manipulation, deceit and antisocial behavior became worse after age 50.

Therefore, 91.33% of respondents said the putative antisocial individual's behavior was just as bad or worse after age 50.

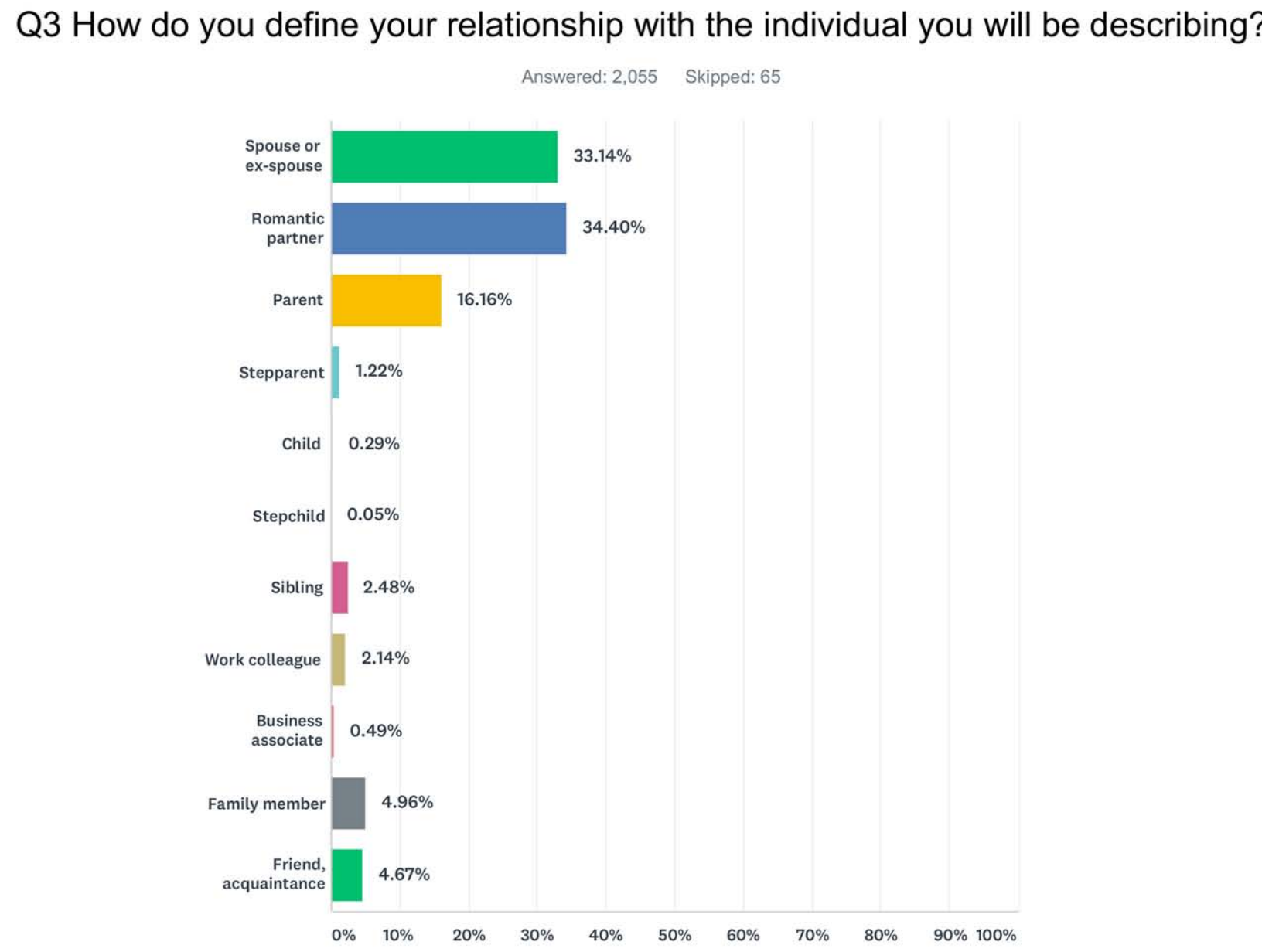
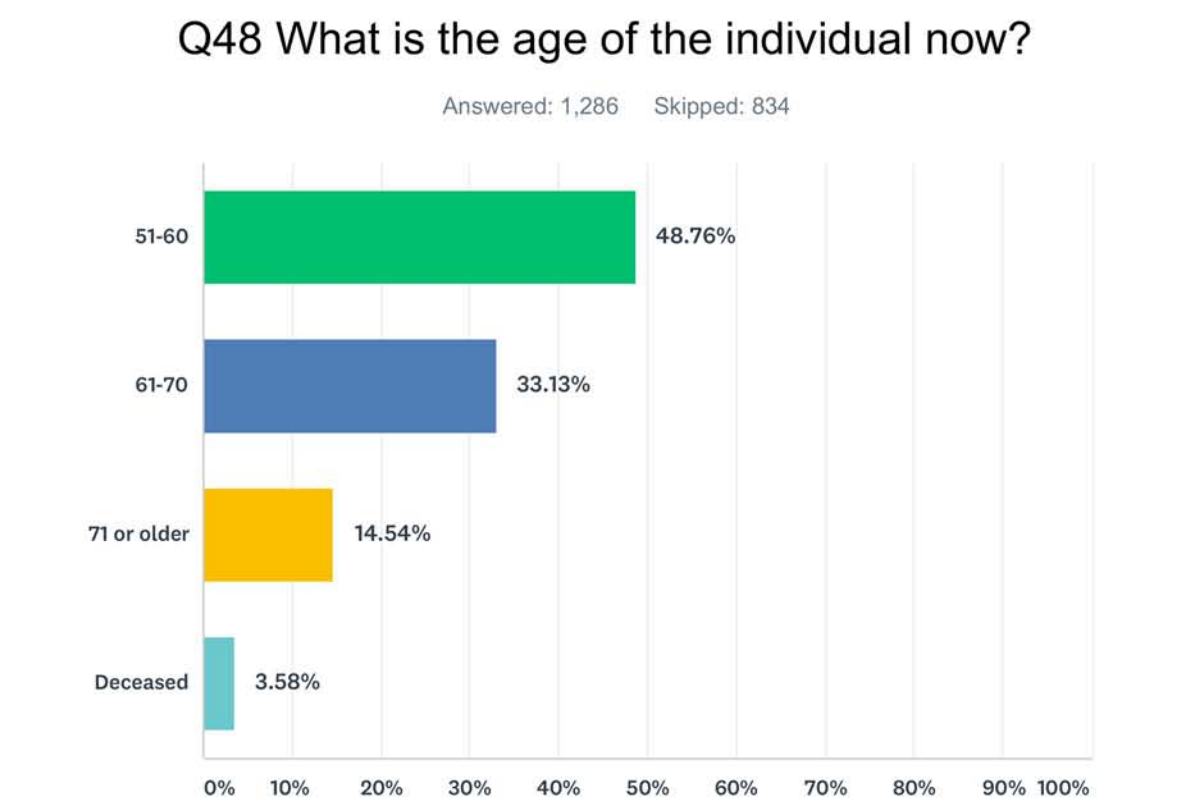
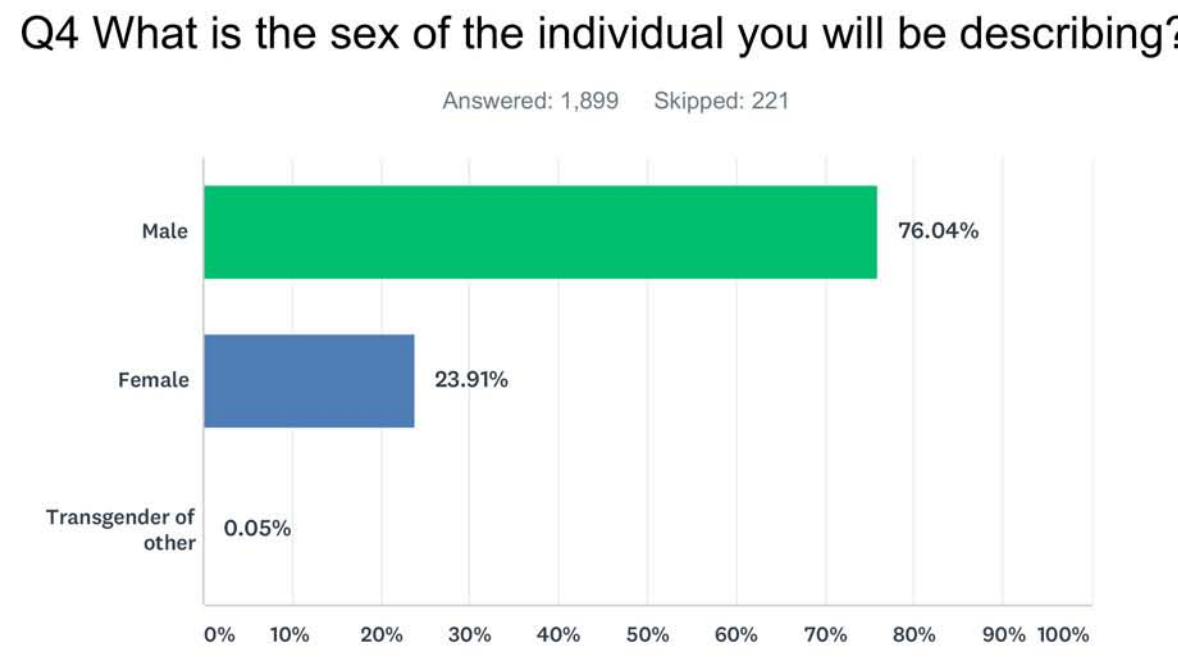
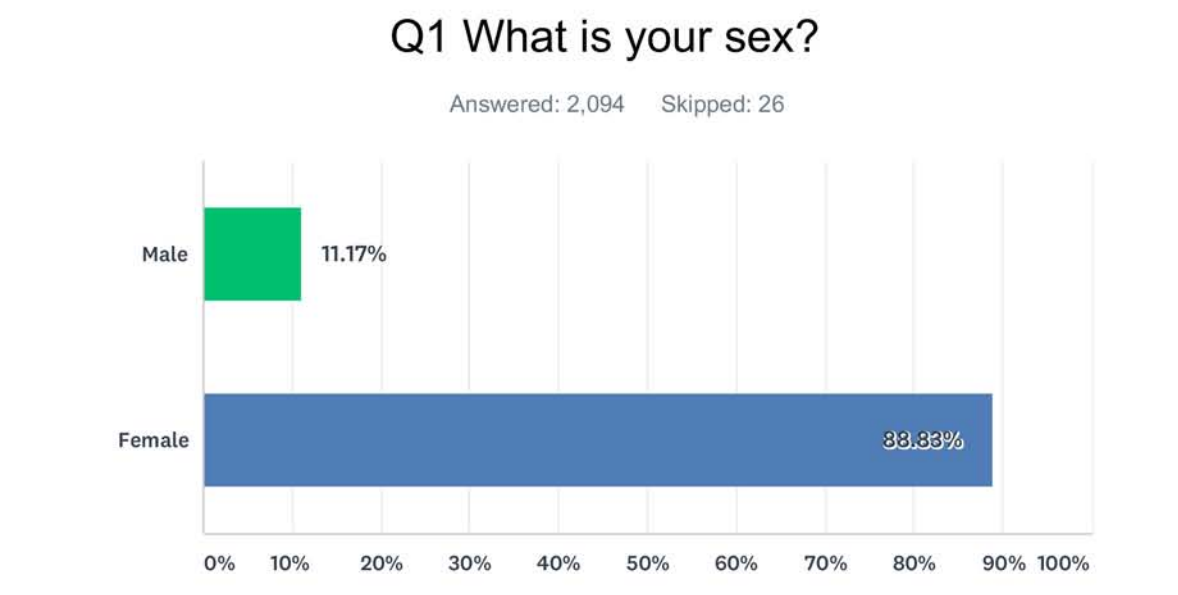
Q59 Did you know the individual both before age 50 and after age 50?



Q60 If you answered yes to the above question, did the individual "mellow out" or "burn out" after age 50? Did the individual engage in less manipulation, deceit or antisocial behavior?



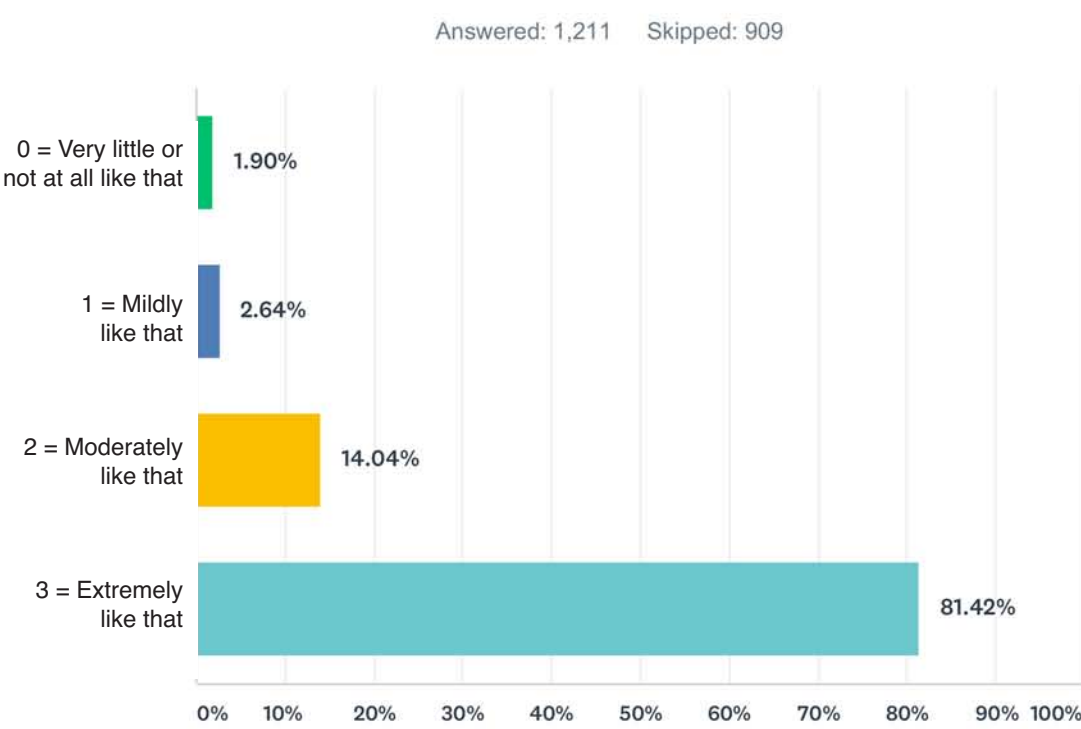
Demographics reported by respondents



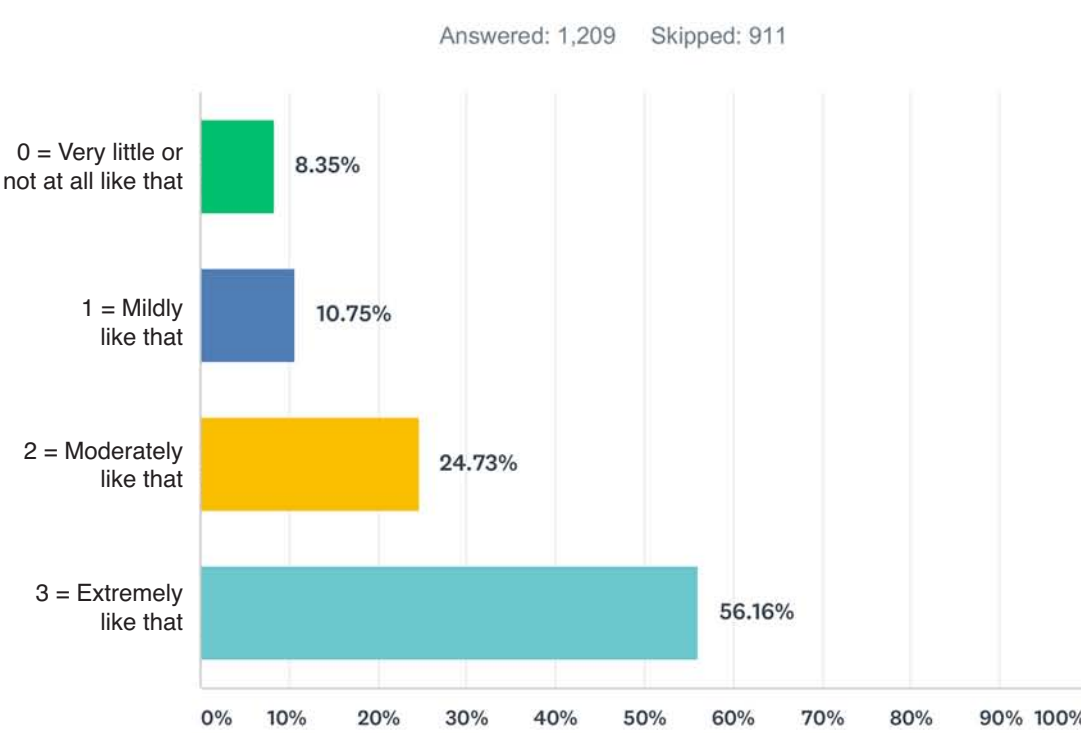
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Spouse or ex-spouse	33.14%
Romantic partner	34.40%
Parent	16.16%
Stepparent	1.22%
Child	0.29%
Stepchild	0.00%
Grandchild	0.44%
Work colleague	2.14%
Business associate	0.49%
Family member	4.96%
Friend, acquaintance	4.67%
TOTAL	100%

Scores on criteria for ASPD/psychopathy proposed in the first draft of the DSM-5

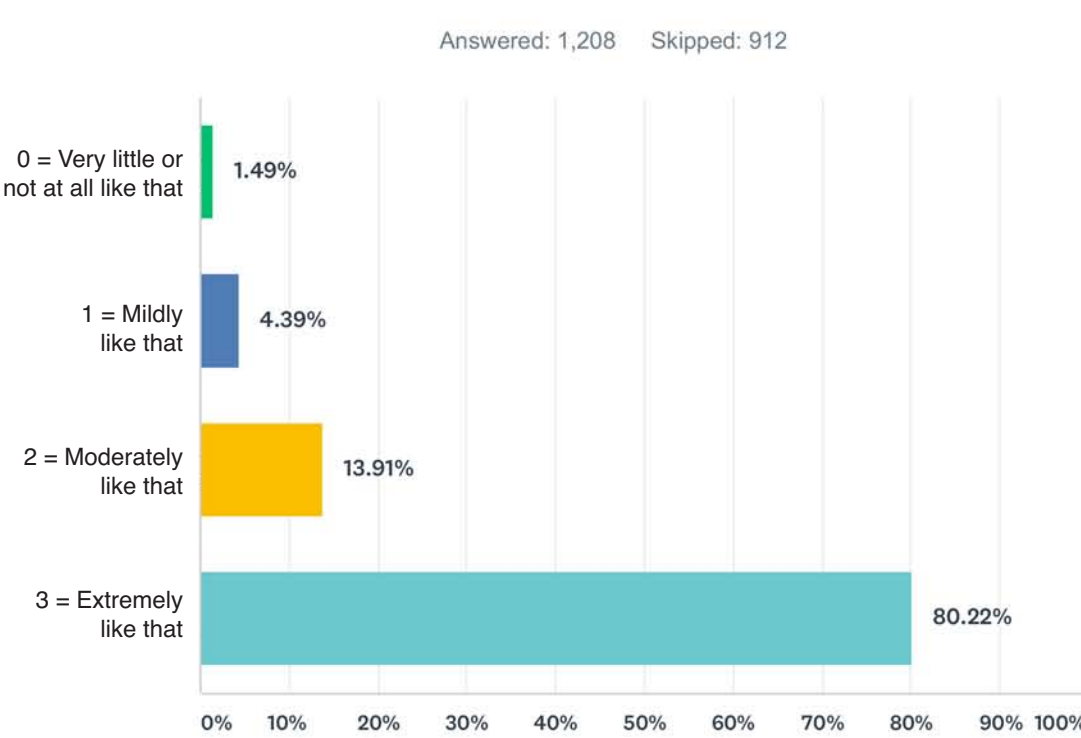
Q77 Antagonism: Callousness/Lack of empathy or concern for others' feelings or problems; lack of guilt or remorse about the negative or harmful effects of one's actions on others; exploitativeness



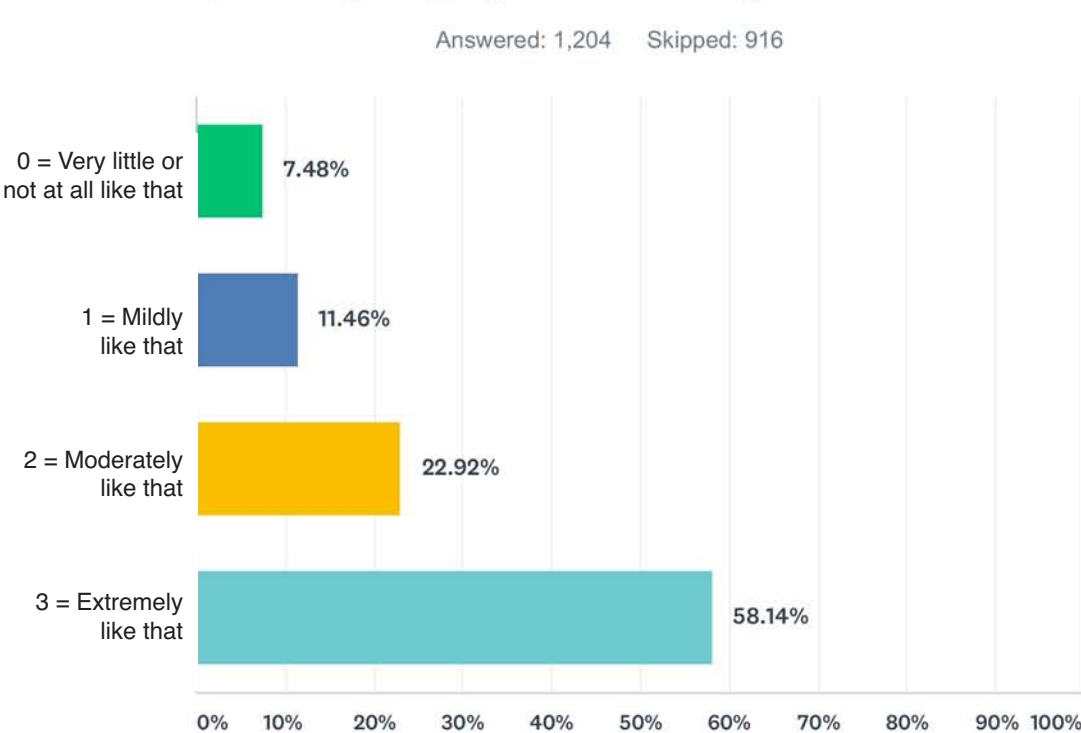
Q78 Antagonism: Aggression/Being mean, cruel, or cold-hearted; verbally, relationally, or physically abusive; humiliating and demeaning of others; willingly and willfully engaging in acts of violence against persons and objects; active and open belligerence or vengefulness; using dominance and intimidation to control others.



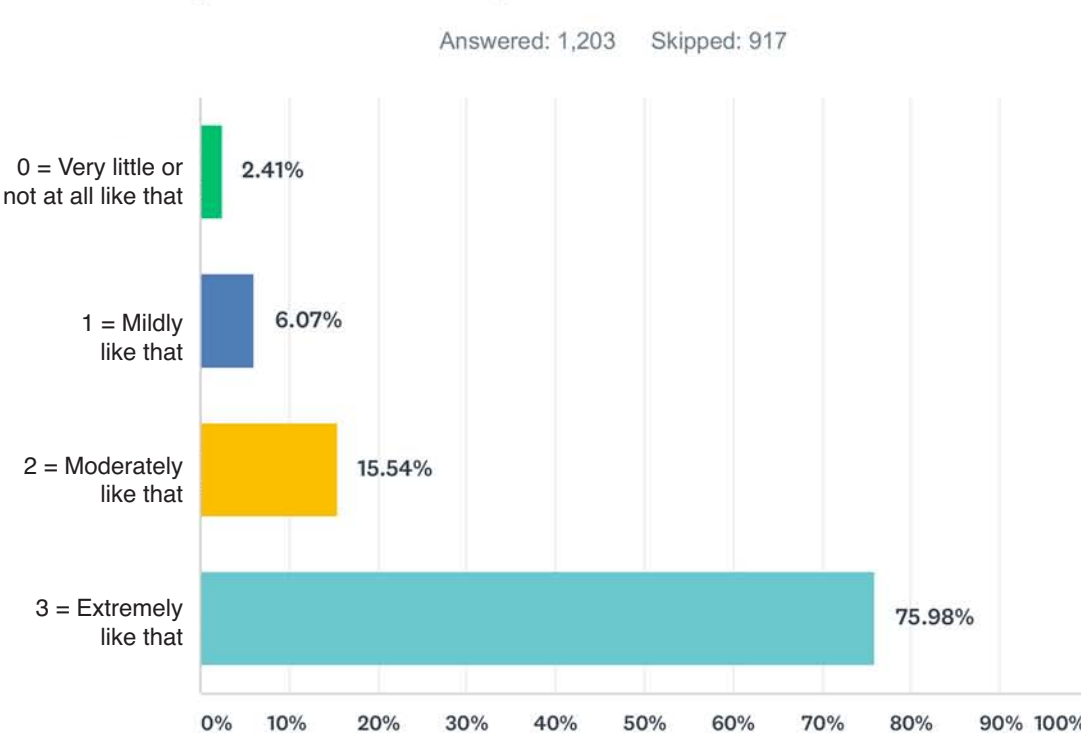
Q79 Antagonism: Manipulativeness/Use of cunning, craft, or subterfuge to influence or control others; casual use of others to one's own advantage; use of seduction, charm, glibness, or ingratiating to achieve one's own end.



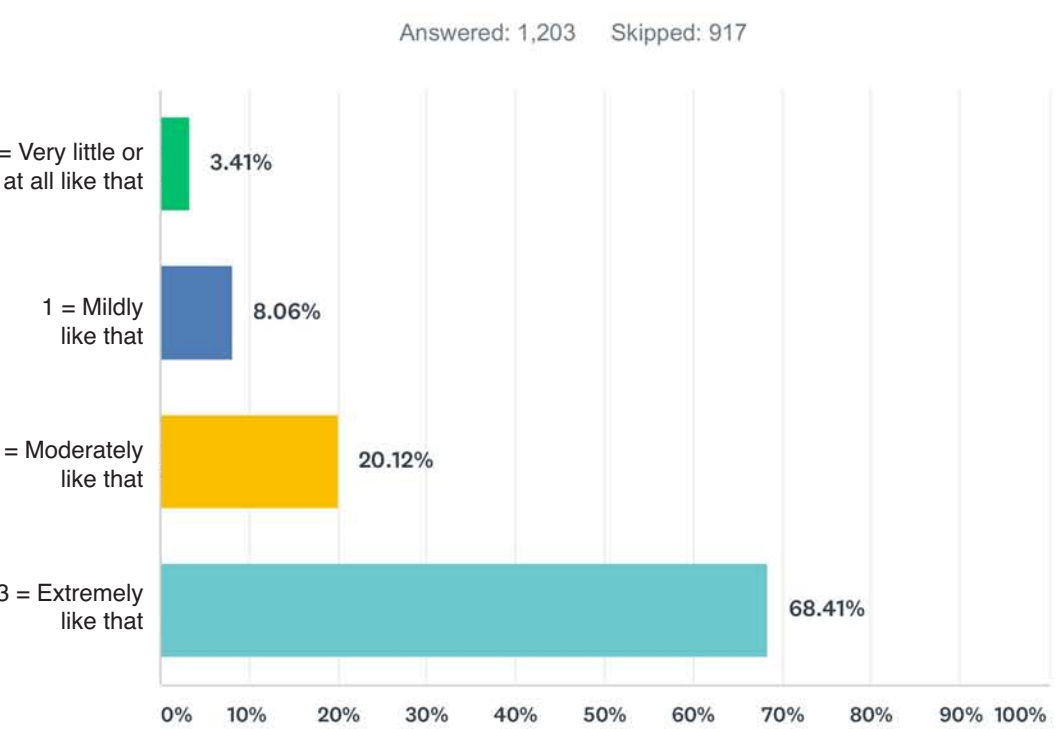
Q80 Antagonism: Hostility/irritability, hot temperedness; being unfriendly, rude, surly, or nasty; responding angrily to minor slights and insults



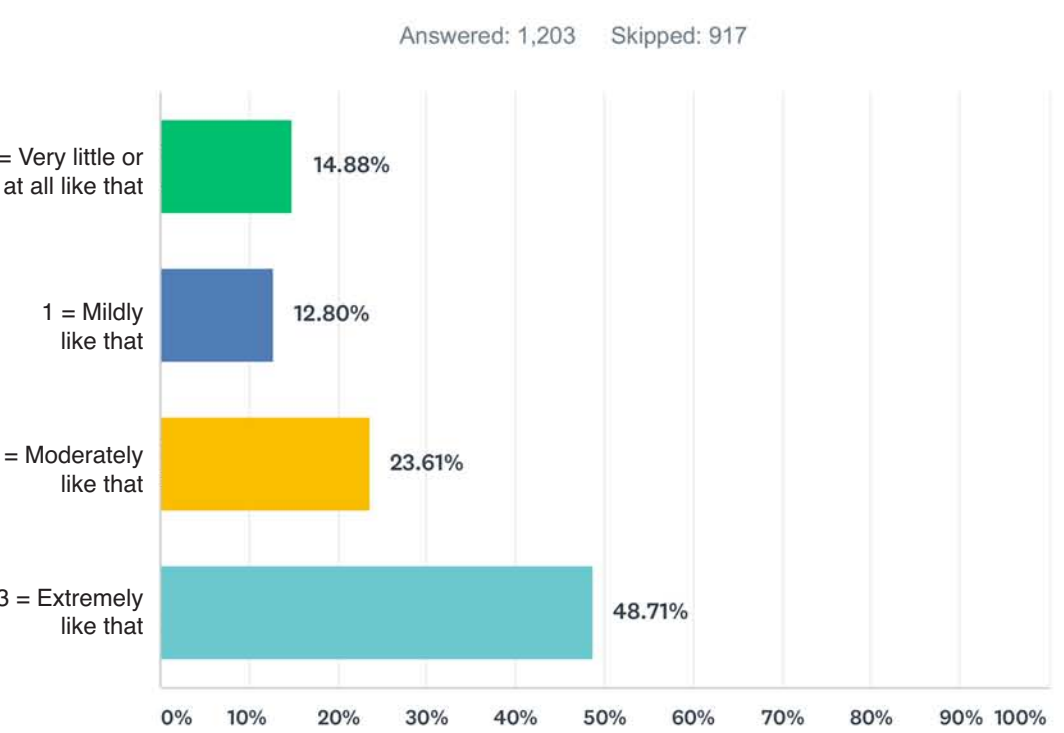
Q81 Antagonism: Deceitfulness/Dishonesty, untruthfulness; embellishment or fabrication when relating events; misrepresentation of self; fraudulence



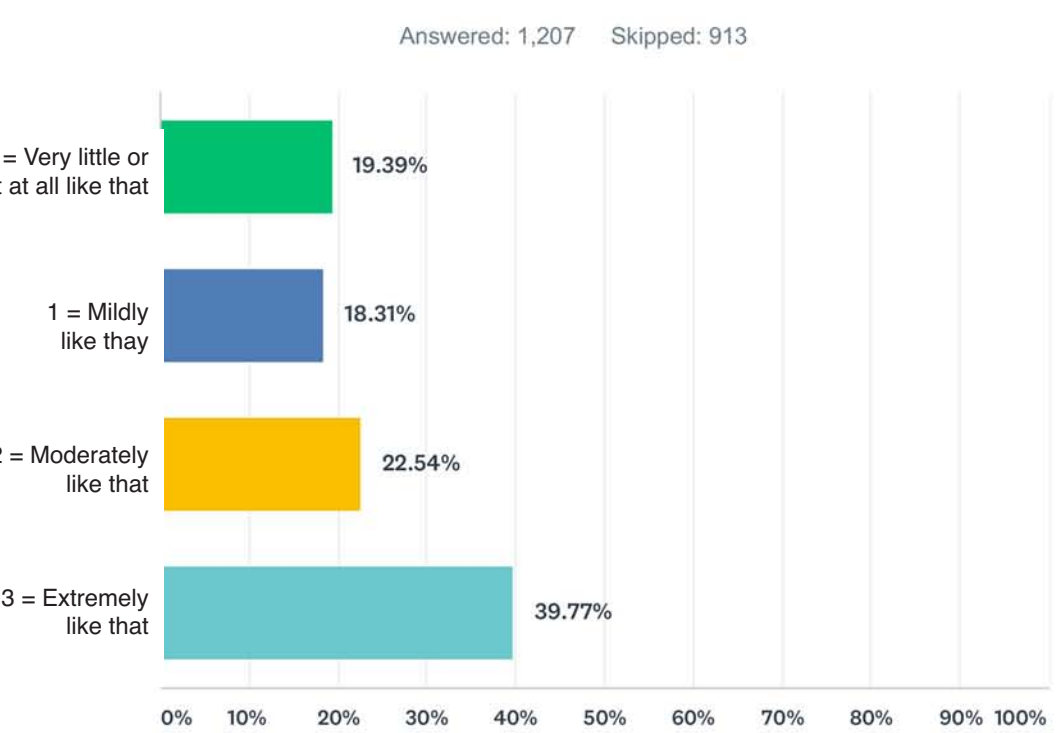
Q82 Antagonism: Narcissism/Vanity, boastfulness, exaggeration of one's achievements and abilities; self-centeredness; feeling and acting entitled, believing that one deserves only the best; preoccupation with having unlimited success, power, brilliance, and/or beauty.



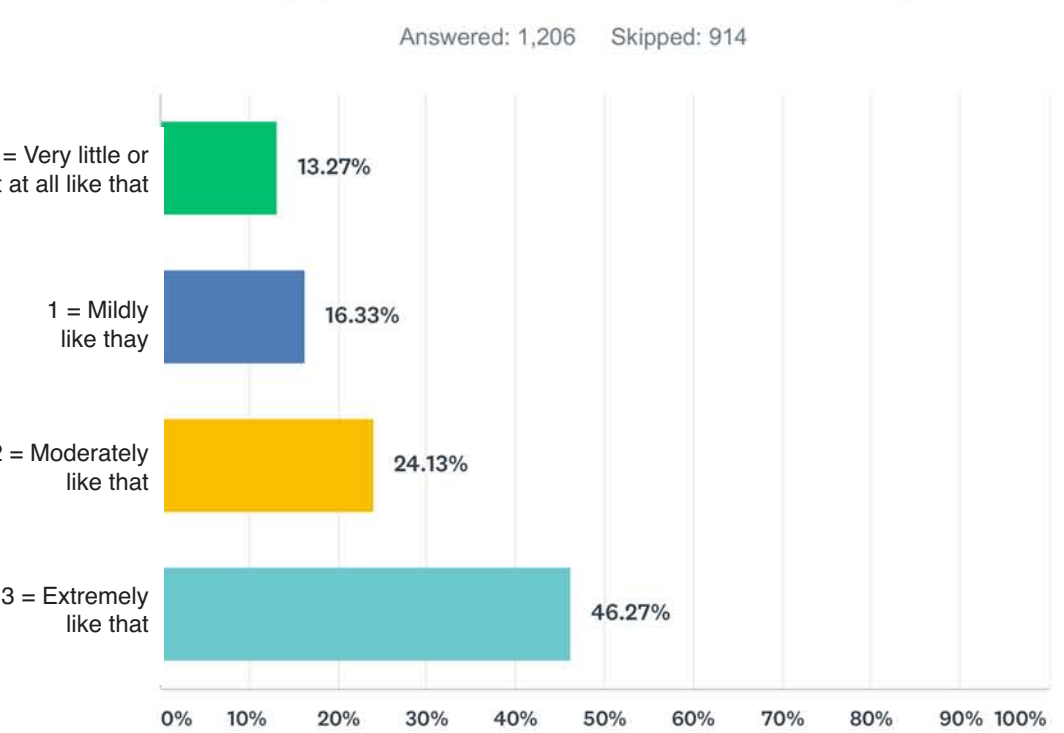
Q83 Disinhibition: Irresponsibility/Disregard for, or failure to honor, financial and other obligations or commitments; lack of respect and follow through on agreements and promises; unreliability; failure to keep appointments or to complete tasks or assignments; carelessness with own and/or others' possessions.



Q84 Disinhibition: Recklessness/Craving and pursuit of stimulation and variety without regard for consequences; boredom proneness and unplanned initiation of activities to counter boredom; unnecessary risk taking; lack of concern for one's limitations; denial of the reality of personal danger; high tolerance for uncertainty and unfamiliarity.

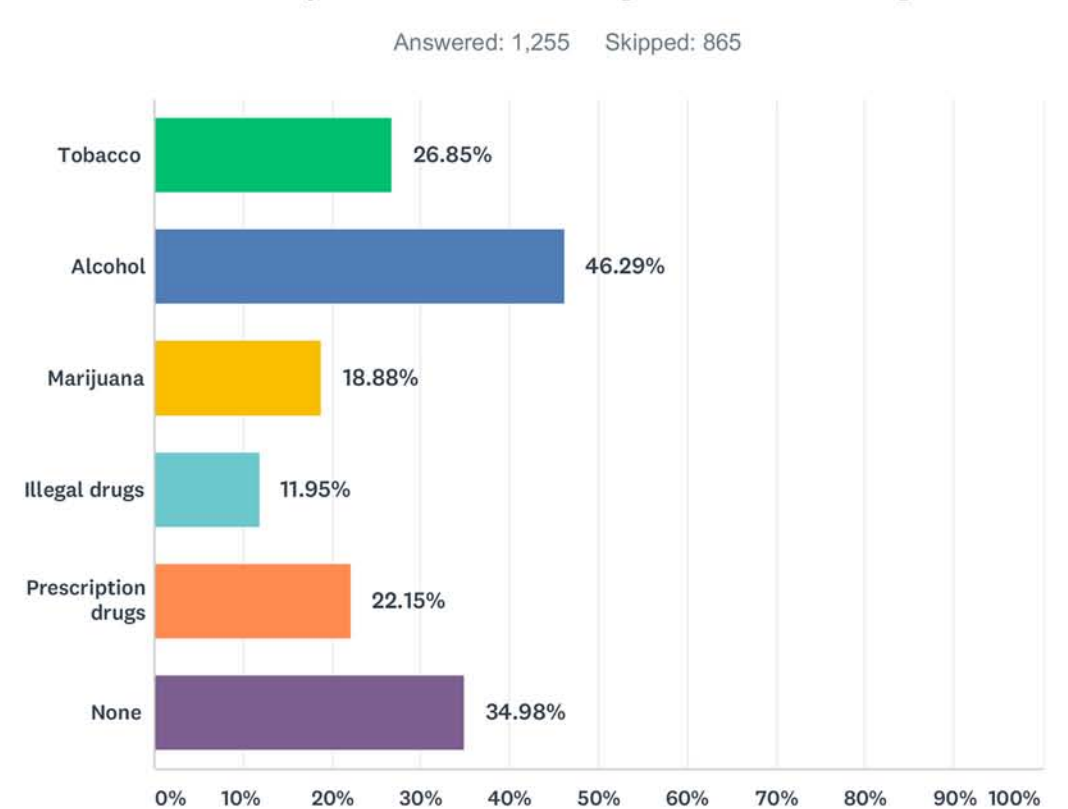


Q85 Disinhibition: Impulsivity/Acting on the spur of the moment in response to immediate stimuli; acting on a momentary basis without a plan or consideration of outcomes; difficulty establishing and following plans; failure to learn from experience.

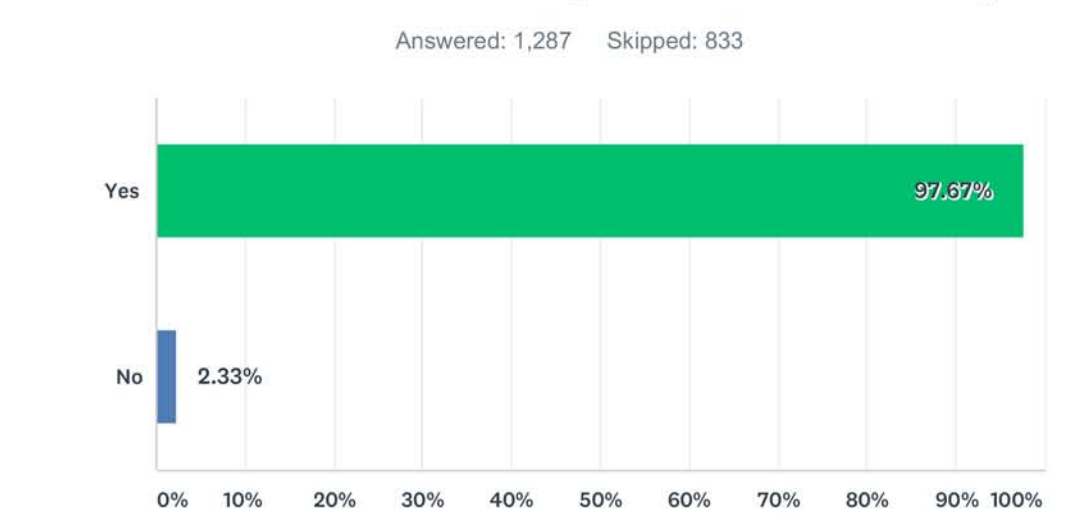


Behaviors of purported psychopaths

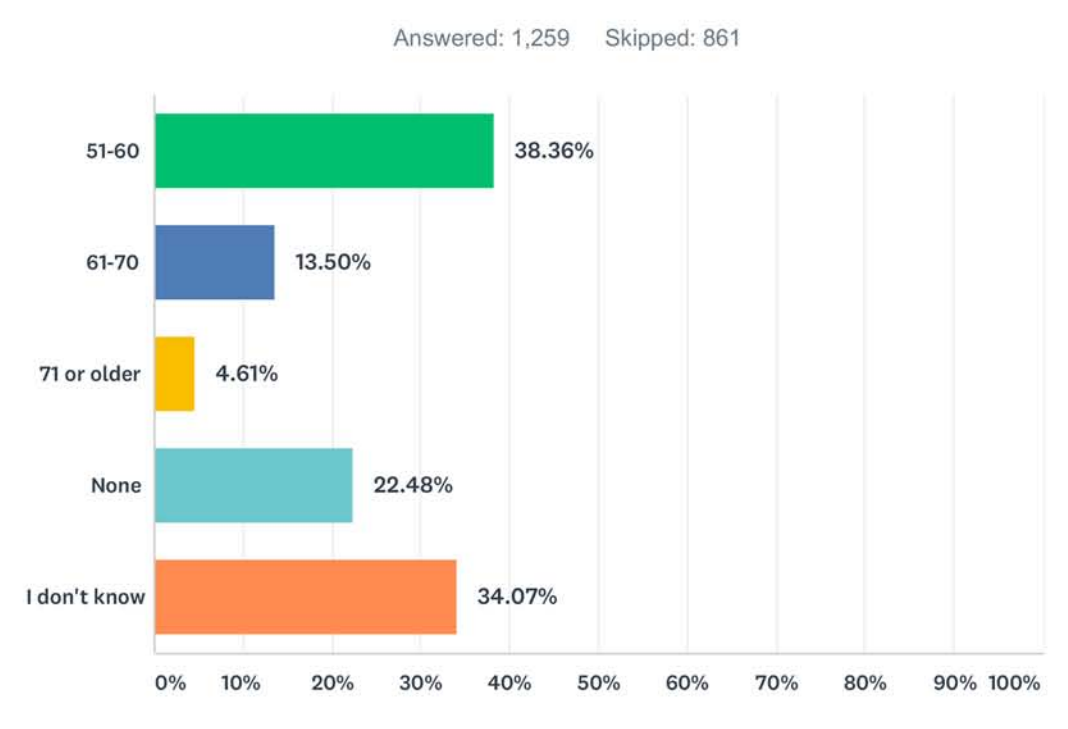
Q47 Did the individual abuse any of the following while over age 50? Select all that apply.



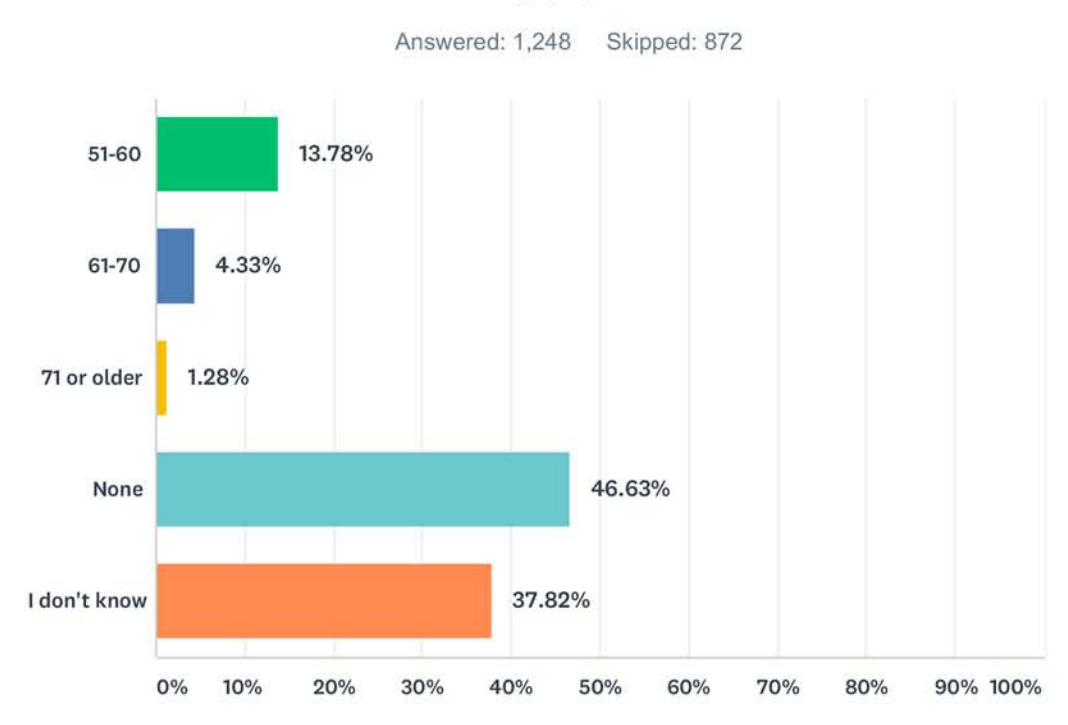
Q49 Was the individual manipulative while over age 50?



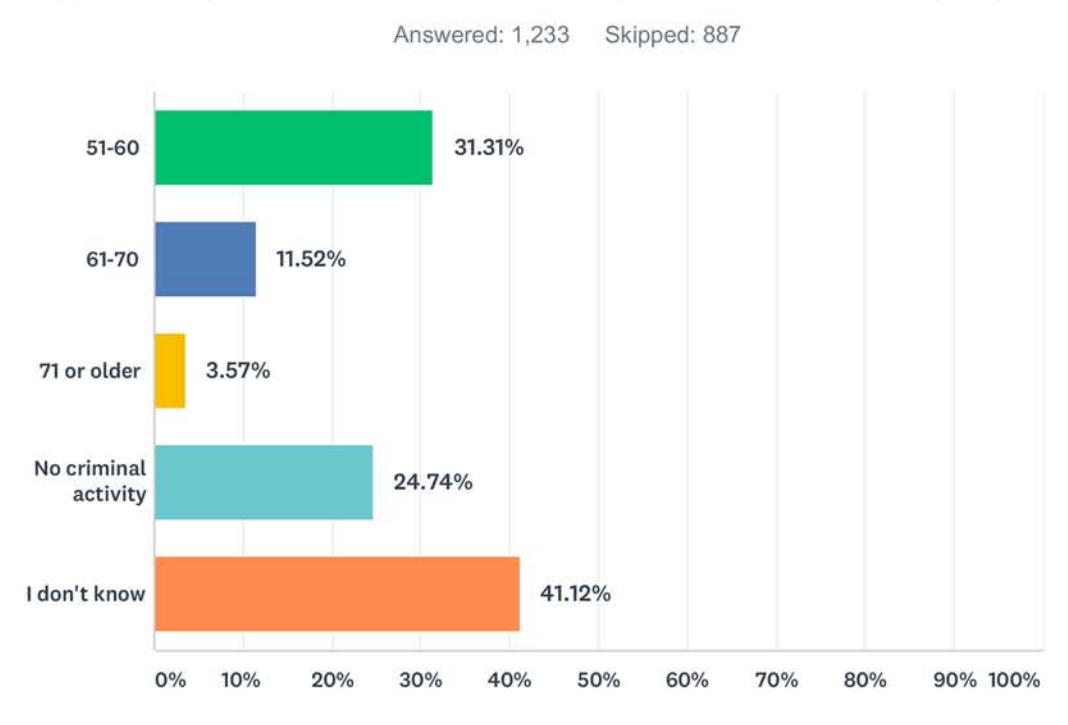
Q53 Did the individual engage in any violence at the following ages? Check all that apply.



Q55 Was the individual charged with criminal activity at any of the following ages? Check all that apply.

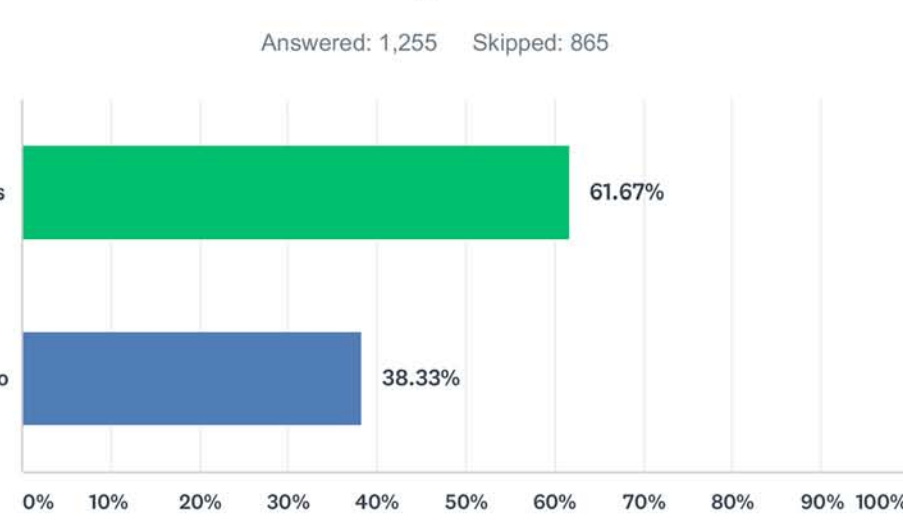


Q57 Did the individual get away with criminal activity at the following ages? Check all that apply.

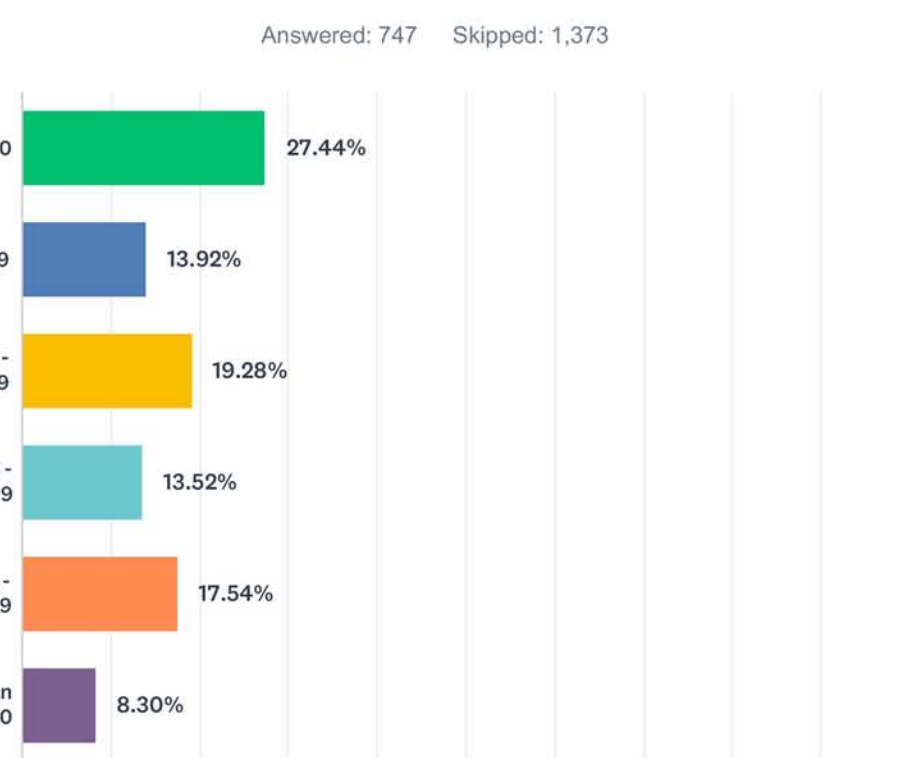


Harm suffered by survey respondents

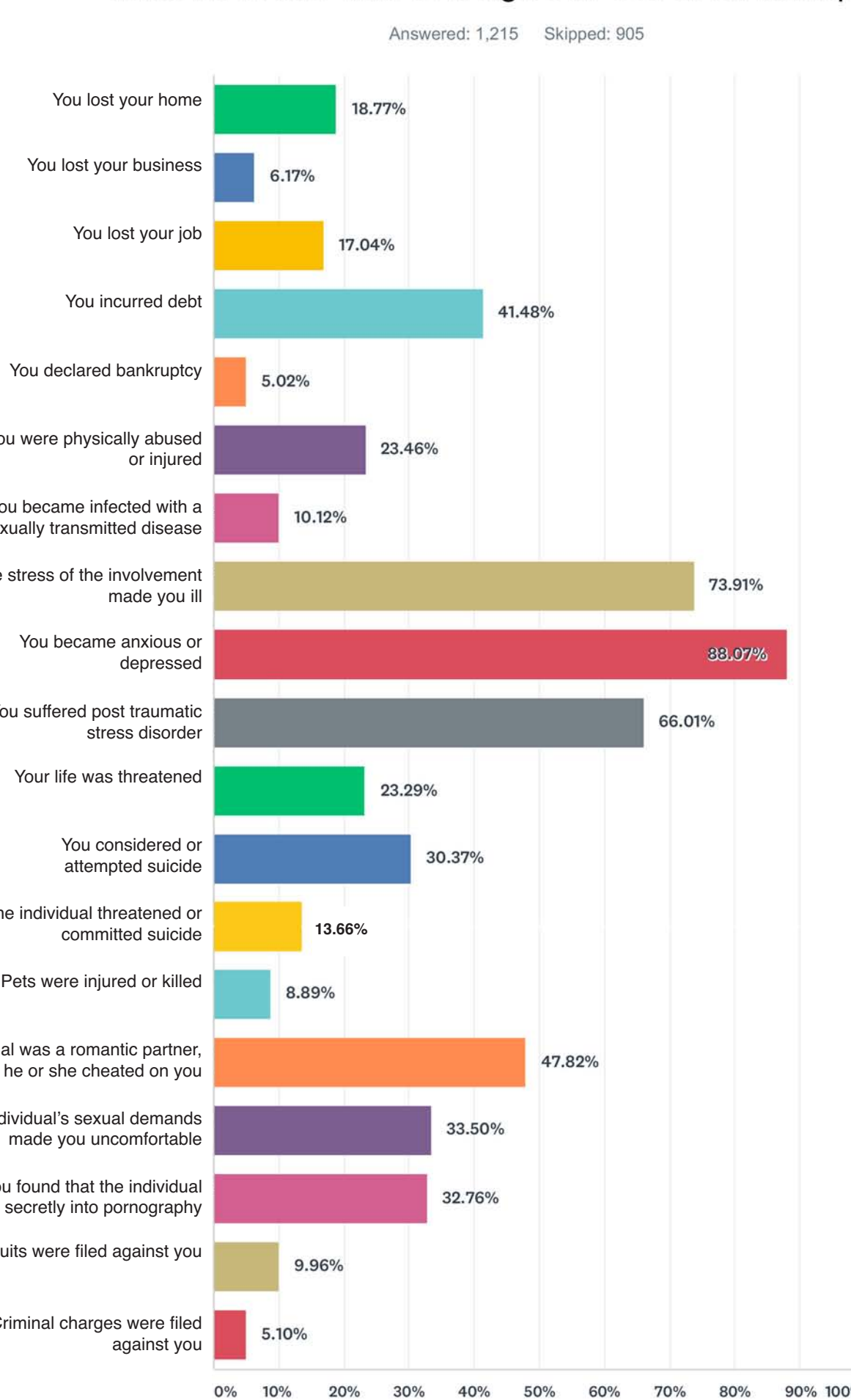
Q61 Did you lose money as a result of the involvement with this individual while he or she was over age 50?



Q62 If you lost money, how much?



Q63 Did you experience any of the following as a result of the involvement with this individual while he or she was over age 50? Check all that apply.



Q64 Was the individual, while over age 50, abusive towards you in any of the following ways? Select all that apply.

