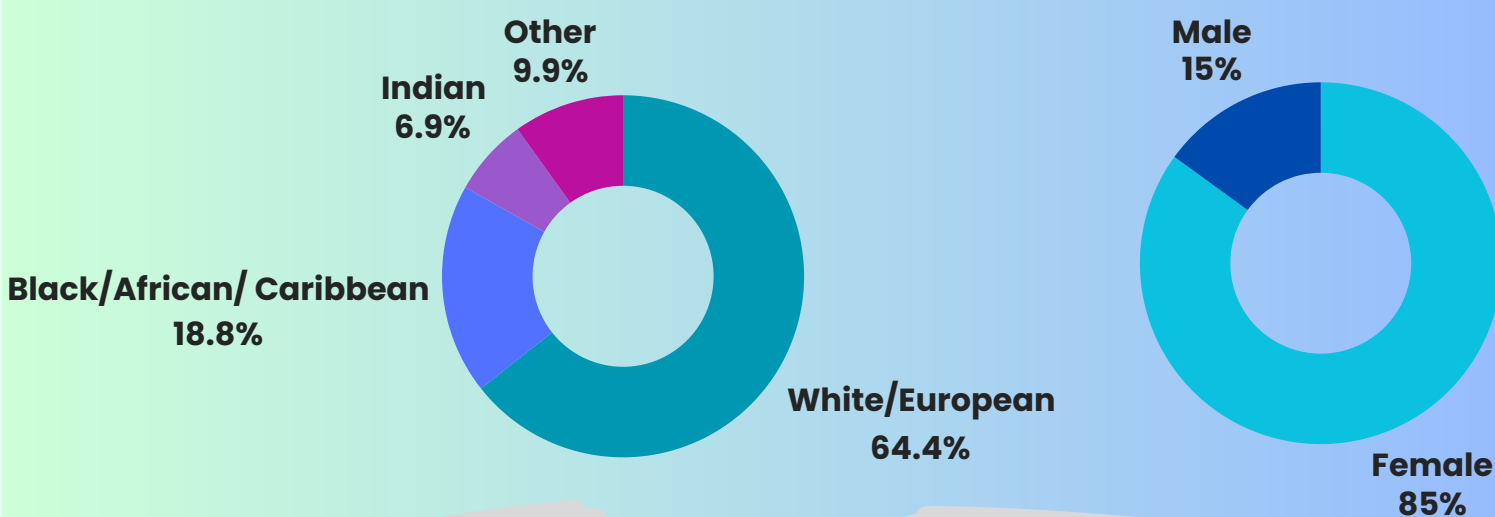


Domestic abuse screening in mental health settings: *Insights and challenges*

We reviewed 20 journal articles and this infographic summarises their key findings

Lack of diverse representation in service user samples



Different sexualities were not examined or reported

A wide range of mental health issues were represented

Two-thirds of the studies used specific tools to identify DA

Women Abuse Screening Tool (WAST) was the most validated method

Limitations of screening tools

- ✗ The majority do not assess all forms of DA, particularly non-violent abuse e.g., controlling and coercive behaviour
- ✗ Tools are not designed for use with diverse groups of survivors e.g., males, ethnic minorities, different sexual orientations
- ✗ Lack of proper testing means it is unclear if these work in mental health settings

What **prevents** service users telling someone about their experiences of domestic abuse?

- Shame and embarrassment
- Fear of not being believed
- Threats from partners
- Fear of re-traumatisation

What **helps** service users to tell someone about their experiences of domestic abuse?

- Trust and engagement with professionals
- Routine asking about domestic abuse as part of standard practice
- Therapeutic engagement

Practice

- **Holistic Framework:** Create a complete approach for asking about and responding to disclosures of DA, to support DA survivors in every way possible
- **Effective Screening:** Set up consistent, effective ways of asking about DA in mental health settings, so that survivors feel comfortable sharing their experiences of DA and seeking support
- **Comprehensive Training:** Provide in-depth training to professionals so that they can better understand the challenges, be prepared to ask about DA, and know how to support survivors when they open up about abuse
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Make sure any methods of asking about and responding to DA are sensitive to different cultures

Recommendations

Policy

Survivor Engagement: Involve DA survivors to ensure survivor-focused frameworks

Inclusion of Protocols: Advocate for the inclusion of DA screening protocols into policy

Research

- **Create** tools that ask about and respond to DA that work in mental health settings and for different cultures and diverse service users
- **Longitudinal studies** to understand whether these tools work over longer periods of time
- Examine and **identify what helps and hinders** service users disclosing their experiences of DA, particularly for people from different backgrounds to help reduce unfair differences in health outcomes