



# Results of 2024 North Battleford Community Safety Survey

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## Table of Contents

Tables and Figures.....	4
Executive Summary .....	5
Overview .....	5
Key Objectives .....	5
Key Findings .....	5
Demographics .....	5
Perceptions of Crime and Safety in North Battleford.....	6
Experiences of Victimization in North Battleford .....	6
Perceptions of the Police.....	6
Introduction.....	7
The Community of North Battleford.....	7
Background .....	7
Research literature.....	8
Methodology .....	10
Introduction .....	10
Sampling Method .....	10
Data Standardization and Analysis.....	10
The Survey .....	11
Demographics.....	11
Community Involvement.....	12
Neighbourhood Integration.....	12
Time Spent Interacting with Neighbours.....	12
Neighbourhood Involvement.....	12
Willingness to Intervene .....	13
Experiences of Victimization .....	13
Perceptions of Police and Procedural Justice .....	14
Perceptions of Procedural Justice .....	14
Perceptions of Police .....	15
Feelings of Safety.....	15
Perceptions of Neighbourhood Disorder .....	16
Social Disorder.....	16

Physical Disorder .....	16
Health .....	16
Personal Health.....	16
Mental Health .....	17
Sleep .....	17
Results.....	18
Demographics.....	18
Community Involvement.....	20
Neighbourhood Involvement.....	20
Neighbourhood Integration.....	20
Relationships with Neighbours.....	22
Willingness to Intervene .....	23
Experiences of Victimization .....	25
Perceptions of Police and Procedural Justice.....	27
Perceptions of Police .....	27
Respondents who believe the police do a good job – Example quotations .....	29
Respondents who believe the police do NOT do a good job – Example quotations .....	30
Perceptions of Procedural Justice .....	31
Perceptions of Safety.....	32
Social Disorder .....	33
Physical Disorder.....	34
Health .....	35
Personal Health.....	35
Mental Health .....	36
Sleep .....	37
Key Findings and Implications .....	38
Demographics.....	38
Community Involvement.....	38
Feelings of Safety.....	39
Perceptions of Neighbourhood Disorder.....	40
Perceptions of Police and Procedural Justice.....	40
Health and Well-being.....	41

Limitations and Future Directions .....	42
Conclusion .....	43
References.....	44

## Tables and Figures

Table 1.0 - Annual income .....	19
Table 2.0 - Highest level of educational attainment.....	19
Figure 1.0 - Neighbourhood involvement.....	20
Figure 2.0 - Neighbourhood integration .....	21
Figure 3.0 - Knowing neighbours by name .....	22
Figure 4.0 - Time spent interacting with neighbours .....	22
Figure 5.0 - Willingness to intervene .....	23
Figure 6.0 - Overall victimization.....	25
Figure 7.0 - Types of victimization.....	25
Figure 8.0 - Perceptions of police .....	27
Figure 9.0 - Filed a complaint about police .....	28
Figure 10.0 - Police efficacy .....	28
Figure 11.0 - Perceptions of procedural justice .....	31
Figure 12.0 - Perceptions of safety .....	32
Figure 13.0 - Perceptions of social disorder .....	33
Figure 14.0 - Perceptions of physical disorder .....	34
Figure 15.0 - Personal health .....	35
Figure 16.0 - Mental health.....	36
Figure 17.0 - Hours slept .....	37

# Executive Summary

## Overview

This study replicates and updates a study of perceptions of crime and experiences of victimization in North Battleford conducted in 2018. While perceptions of crime and safety may not reflect the realities of risk, these perceptions play an important role in a community's overall well-being. Criminological research indicates that fear of crime can result in people retreating into their homes, and out of the public sphere, resulting in less informal social control, creating more opportunities for crime, and generating more fear (Wickes et al. 2013; Gearhart 2023). Furthermore, police-reported crime data can be unreliable for certain crime types, like violence, because these crime types often go under- or unreported (Wickes et al. 2013). Identifying experiences of victimization will contribute to a more fulsome picture of community safety in North Battleford.

The research team from Wilfrid Laurier University, with support from researchers at the University of Saskatchewan, set out to ask North Battleford residents about their perceptions of, and experiences with, crime and safety in North Battleford. The survey was conducted between January and May of 2024 across North Battleford and resulted in 405 total respondents. Findings from this report are descriptive and intended to provide an aggregate understanding of perceptions of safety and victimization in North Battleford that can act as a resource for improved strategic planning for community safety.

## Key Objectives

The primary objectives of this survey were to:

- Gain a better understanding of perceptions of crime and safety in North Battleford,
- identify experiences of victimization, including reporting of these incidents to the police,
- identify perceptions of the police performance and legitimacy,
- and replicate a 2018 community safety survey and compare findings.

In the short term, results from this survey should be used to inform the development of a community safety plan by providing descriptive statistics to inform the preventative community safety strategies in North Battleford. In the long term, this survey should be replicated to allow for comparison and evaluation of community safety initiatives across North Battleford.

## Key Findings

### *Demographics*

The median age of respondents was 45 years old, slightly above the 2021 census of 39.6. This higher age is expected given the minimum age requirement for the survey was 18. Female respondents were overrepresented in the survey (66.4%) and 33.6% were men, compared to 54% and 48% in the 2021 census, respectively. In the survey, Caucasian respondents accounted for 71.11% of the sample, while Indigenous respondents accounted for 11.85%, and visible

minorities accounted for 17.04% of the sample. However, the census reports 70.69% of the population as Caucasian, 16.69% of the population is reported as being of Indigenous ancestry, and 12.62% of the population is a visible minority.

### *Perceptions of Crime and Safety in North Battleford*

Residents of North Battleford expressed mixed feelings regarding their safety, with 91.1% of residents feeling safe going outside alone during the daytime. However, this number dropped to 44.9% at nighttime. Most (65.2%) of the survey sample believe it is safe for children to play outside. When asked about specific community safety concerns, 75.3% of participants worried about vandalism, 59.0% worried about illegal drugs, and 51.4% worried about home break-ins. 44.0% of respondents reported being afraid of being attacked, 40.7% believed their neighbourhood is becoming more dangerous, which is similar to the 41.6% reported in the 2018 survey report. The survey also demonstrates that 20.0% of respondents are worried about being the victim of sexual assault.

Residents' perceptions of safety were largely consistent across both years, with daytime safety remaining very high in 2018 (91.1%) and 2024 (91.8%). Confidence in child safety increased from 65.2% in 2018 to 73.8% in 2024, while perceptions of nighttime safety also improved slightly, rising from 44.9% to 51.4%. Concerns about break-ins increased substantially, from 51.4% in 2018 to 64.1% in 2024, indicating heightened worry about property crime. At the same time, worry about drugs in the neighbourhood decreased from 59.0% to 49.1%, and fear of being attacked declined slightly from 44.0% to 39.7%. Beliefs that the neighbourhood was becoming more dangerous remained stable, shifting only marginally from 40.7% in 2018 to 41.6% in 2024, reflecting little overall change in broader perceptions of neighbourhood risk.

### *Experiences of Victimization in North Battleford*

34.3% of respondents indicated they had been victims of crime in the past two years. The most common form of victimization was theft from property (49.9%), followed by home break-ins (7.9%) and violent incidents such as assault, fights, or muggings (7.2%). Comparatively, data from the General Social Survey (GSS) show that theft of personal property made up 37% of all reported incidents, while violent victimization (sexual assault, robbery, and physical assault) accounted for 8.3%, and home break-ins represented 8% (Cotter, 2021). Among those who experienced violence, 34.5% reported being injured. Most of these violent incidents involved strangers (75.9%), with smaller proportions involving acquaintances, intimate partners, or spouses. Compared to the 2018 findings, the 2024 results show a similar pattern where theft remains the most common form of victimization, followed by break-and-enter and violent incidents.

### *Perceptions of the Police*

In general, perceptions of police in North Battleford were mixed. A large majority of participants agreed that officers treat people respectfully (84.9%) and fairly (75.8%). Confidence in enforcement was strongest for traffic laws, with 77.0% of residents believing the police do a good job enforcing traffic laws. However, fewer participants felt the police are effective at preventing crime (59.8%), caring about neighbourhood problems (67.2%), or addressing drug activity (39.8%). Similarly, only 58.8% of respondents believed the police are doing a good job at keeping the community safe.

# Introduction

## The Community of North Battleford

The community of North Battleford is located in Central Saskatchewan and has a population of 19,374 as of 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2021). It is known for its prairie landscape and has Saskatchewan's premiere Ski Hill Table (City of North Battleford, 2025). Demographically, the community is slightly older than the provincial average, with a median age of 39.6 years in the 2021 census. North Battleford is also home to a diverse population, with 16.69% of the population identifying as Indigenous, and 12.62% as visible minorities (Statistics Canada 2021).

North Battleford has been the focus of significant media attention due to concerns about crime rates and safety, frequently topping the Maclean's list of most dangerous cities in Canada. While police-reported data can provide perspective, underreporting remains a challenge. Understanding community perceptions of crime, safety, and policing is therefore essential for developing effective prevention strategies.

This community survey aims to capture these perceptions by asking residents about their experiences of victimization, neighbourhood safety, and their views of the police. These descriptive findings provide a foundation for understanding perceptions and experiences of safety and victimization in North Battleford and creates a baseline for evaluating future interventions. Importantly, residents' levels of social cohesion, neighbourhood trust, and collective efficacy, play a critical role in shaping these perceptions of safety and in determining the community's resilience to crime.

## Background

The study of community safety and perceptions of crime in North Battleford seeks to build on an extensive body of criminological literature to understand how perceptions of crime and safety (also referred to as "fear of crime") operate in the City of North Battleford. Research on fear of crime in the academic literature has demonstrated a relationship between perceptions and experiences of crime and safety, with individual-level predictors, such as age (older people are often more afraid) and gender (women are often more afraid than men), and societal level factors, such as social cohesiveness (cohesive neighbourhoods are often less fearful). For example, social cohesion (people's connection to each other in a neighbourhood) and collective efficacy (people's willingness to act on behalf of each other and their shared values and interests) have long been shown to reduce concerns about crime and safety while acting as a protective factor against crime and victimization (O'Brien et al., 2019; Hodgkinson & Lunney, 2021; Sabine & Hodgkinson, 2023). Furthermore, indicators of social and physical disorder, such as visible homelessness and graffiti/litter (respectively), tend to be correlated with more fear of crime.

These descriptive findings provide an important understanding of the factors related to perceptions of crime and safety in the City of North Battleford. We briefly outline the academic research related to perceptions of safety below, to highlight the importance of collecting this information.

## Research literature

Researchers and practitioners alike have used the concept of “broken windows” to support the early intervention in social and physical signs of disorder. The broken windows theory suggests that visible signs of neglect, like graffiti or broken windows, are indicators that “no one cares” about the area or neighbourhood, and that illegitimate behaviour is acceptable because no one will intervene (Wilson & Kelling 1982). In turn, small infractions like broken windows that are not fixed could result in more serious, illegal behaviour by indicating to potential offenders that this is a place that tolerates crime and illegitimate behaviour.

While the relationship between physical indicators of disorder (like broken windows) and illegitimate behaviour is generally accepted in the literature, this concept has been misappropriated in several ways across Canada and internationally to justify punitive policies and zero-tolerance policing. This is concerning for two reasons. One, police services around the world have conflated improving informal social controls (residents caring for spaces and places) with increasing formal social controls by policing low-level crimes to prevent more serious criminal behaviour. However, this relationship is not consistently supported in the literature (Braga et al. 2015). Indeed, much of the policing efforts to address low level social and physical disorder contribute to increases in fear of crime (Hinkle & Weisburd, 2008). Two, much of the “zero-tolerance” approaches have led to the over-policing of marginalized and impoverished communities, acting to further criminalize these communities rather than prevent real harms (Howell, 2015).

Recent studies have critiqued this conflation and associated policing approaches, arguing that crime and fear of crime are more complex and are influenced more by social factors within a community than by physical disorder alone. One of the main criticisms of this approach is the lack of emphasis on social relationships and informal social control within a community. O’Brien and colleagues (2019) challenge the assumption that perceived disorder automatically leads to increased fear or aggressive behaviour. Instead, they introduce the social escalation model, which emphasizes how private forms of disorder, combined with weakened informal social control, can escalate into crime. Crucially, this underscores that it is not only about what residents observe in their neighbourhood, but how they collectively respond to one another. In this context, the shared expectations and mutual trust among community members plays a pivotal role in shaping those responses and maintaining a safe community.

A key concept that supports this view is collective efficacy, which refers to the shared belief among residents in their ability to come together and act in support of common goals, such as maintaining safety and order in their community (Sampson et al., 1997). While often linked, collective efficacy is distinct from social cohesion, which describes the strength of social bonds, trust, and connectedness among neighbours. Socially cohesive communities (where residents feel emotionally connected and trust each other) are more likely to foster collective efficacy, a key protective factor against crime (Gearhart, 2023; Wickes et al. 2013).

For example, communities with strong shared values on illegal drug activity in their neighbourhood may mobilize differently to stop drug activity than to advocate against vacant lots

in their neighbourhoods. The community may organize watch groups, increase communication with each other, and work closely with local law enforcement to increase guardianship in the area. Residents could also advocate for community resources such as harm reduction services and safe spaces or collaborate with the city to improve lighting in areas and to repurpose abandoned properties. By combining informal social control, strategic partnerships, and supportive services, the community can tackle the problem from multiple angles, strengthening both safety and social cohesion. Lanfear (2022) also shows that communities with strong collective efficacy can make changes to their surroundings to reduce crime. However, not all communities are adequately equipped to mobilize on these issues (Wickes et al. 2013). This means that local solutions need to consider the specific needs and strengths of each community. As Tilley (2001) suggests, mitigating crime is a matter of understanding “what works for whom, in what circumstances, and how?” These frameworks are integrated in the questions for the survey so that North Battleford to provide insight into opportunities to build collective responses for pressing problems in the community.

Perceptions of police and procedural justice also contribute to the fear of crime experienced by a community. As perceptions of the police and of procedural justice improve, fear of crime declines (Bolger & Bolger, 2019). As such, to address fear of crime, an important step is ensuring the police operate fairly and justly, so that they are perceived positively (Carter & Wolfe 2021). This survey provides an opportunity to gain insight into how the public perceives the police, their operation, their values, the alignment of the values with that of the public, and perceptions of associated processes. By understanding these perceptions, a more comprehensive picture of crime and safety can be established.

# Methodology

## Introduction

This study involved conducting a representative survey of North Battleford residents to better understand perceptions of safety and experiences of victimization in North Battleford. The first version of the survey was developed in 2018 in partnership with community health and crime researchers in the United States (Weisburd et al., 2011). The survey has been validated in other communities including North Battleford, Saskatchewan (2018), Hamilton and Brantford, Ontario in Canada, and Narrabri, New South Wales and Roma, Queensland in Australia (Hodgkinson & Lunney, 2021; Sabine & Hodgkinson, 2022; Mulrooney et al., 2024). The survey covers several themes including perceptions of safety (including place-based perceptions), experiences of victimization, community involvement/engagement, social cohesion/collective efficacy, community health, demographics, and neighbourhood location.

## Sampling Method

Recruitment occurred using a triangulation of methods. Primarily, recruitment involved randomly selecting households using a stratified sampling technique for each of the neighbourhoods of North Battleford. Recruitment volunteers (students from a North West College business class) were assigned neighborhoods to which they delivered postcard invitations for participation. Upon request, residents could interview in person or opt to complete a paper version of the survey (retrieved at a later date). Other recruitment methods include an information article in the local newspaper, online advertisements on the City of North Battleford website, survey invitations distributed at downtown businesses, and pop-up recruitment activities at the North Battleford Library, Co-Op Mall, and Battleford's Friendship Centre. Near the end of recruitment, the research coordinator purposively distributed survey invitations to neighborhoods with low survey response rates.

## Data Standardization and Analysis

Once the survey data were collected (May 2024), they were standardized to remove any non- or incomplete responses. This resulted in approximately 14 responses being removed. Data were then standardized by addressing missing values. Less than 5% of the data were considered missing and were determined missing at random. All missing values were addressed using mean imputation. The completed dataset was analysed using SPSS v.30.

# The Survey

For relevant data collection, the survey was split into six sections: demographics, community involvement, perceptions of safety, victimization, police and procedural justice, and health.

## Demographics

Participants were asked to identify in which area of North Battleford they reside. Participants were also asked to identify their age, gender, ethnicity, homeownership, marital status, education, work locale, income, time at current residence, and plans of residency in North Battleford.

- For **age**, the participants were prompted to provide their year of birth.
- The response categories for **gender** included female, male, non-binary, transgender, other (with a fill-in textbox), and prefer not to say.
- For **ethnicity**, the participants were prompted to select between Caucasian (White), Indigenous (Including First Nations, Inuit, and Metis), African, Asian (including South Asian), Middle Eastern, and other (with a fill-in textbox).
- Participants were asked about their **home ownership** and could select from the following options: own, rent, or other (with a fill-in textbox).
- Participants were prompted to select their **marital status** from the following options: married, de facto or common law (living with a romantic partner), divorced or separated, widowed, single (never married), or other (with a fill-in textbox).
- The participants were asked to report their **highest level of education** attained by choosing from the following: no schooling, less than a high school diploma, high school diploma or equivalent, some trade, technical, or vocational school, business or community college, some university, bachelor's degree, or graduate or professional degree (e.g., law or medicine).
- For **location of work** the participants were asked whether they were employed in North Battleford and could respond with yes or no.
- Participants were asked to indicate their **annual household income** by selecting from the following categories: no income, less than \$20,000, \$20,001 to \$50,000, \$50,001 to \$80,000, \$80,001 to \$100,000, \$100,001 to \$120,000, \$120,001 to \$140,000, \$140,001 to \$160,000, or over \$160,000.
- Participants were asked to indicate how **long they had lived at their current residence** by selecting from the following categories: less than 6 months, 6 months to less than 1 year, 1 year to less than 3 years, 3 years to less than 5 years, 5 years to less than 10 years, or 10 or more years.
- Participants were also asked how **long they planned to stay at their current residence**, with options including less than 6 months, 6 months to less than 1 year, 1 year to less than 3 years, 3 years to less than 5 years, 5 years to less than 10 years, or 10 or more years.

## Community Involvement

The neighbourhood was defined as a 15-minute walk in any direction from the respondent's home. The participants were then asked about their neighbourhood integration, the willingness of neighbours to intervene in illicit activities, and about their relationship with their neighbours.

### Neighbourhood Integration

The participants were asked given several statements regarding how well people get along in the neighbourhood. The participants were instructed to respond with either "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree" to the following statements:

- a. People in your neighborhood are willing to help their neighbours.
- b. Neighbors DO NOT usually talk to each other.
- c. In general, people in your neighborhood can be trusted.
- d. People in your neighborhood DO NOT share the same values.
- e. Neighbors watch out for each other in your neighborhood.
- f. This area is a good area to raise children.
- g. People in my neighborhood are generally friendly.
- h. I am happy I live in this neighborhood.
- i. People around here take care of each other.
- j. This is a close-knit neighborhood.
- k. I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighborhood.
- l. I know the names of people in my neighbourhood.

For interpretive ease and cohesion, responses to "People in your neighborhood DO NOT usually talk to each other" were reverse coded to "People in your neighbourhood usually talk to each other" and responses to "People in your neighborhood DO NOT share the same values" were reverse coded to "People in your neighbourhood share the same values."

### Time Spent Interacting with Neighbours

Participants were asked if they know their neighbours by name, and they were instructed to respond with a "yes" or a "no." The participants were instructed to respond with "never", "rarely", "sometimes", and "often" as they were asked the following questions about time spent with their neighbours:

- a. How often do you chat with your neighbours?
- b. How often do you visit with your neighbours?
- c. How often do you and your neighbours help each other?

### Neighbourhood Involvement

The participants were asked about the ways in which they are involved in their neighbourhood and/or community. The participants were instructed to answer with a "yes" or a "no" and were

asked if a member of their household was involved in any of the following activities in the past year:

- a. Spoken to a person or group that was causing problems in your neighborhood.
- b. Attended a neighbourhood or community meeting.
- c. Spoken to a local religious or community leader about doing something to improve your neighbourhood.
- d. Worked with neighbors to address a problem or improve the neighborhood.
- e. Spoken with an elected official about a specific problem in your neighbourhood.

## Willingness to Intervene

Participants were asked about the likelihood that one of their neighbours would intervene given a particular situation. They were instructed to answer with “very unlikely”, “unlikely”, “likely”, or “very likely” to the following statements:

- a. If some kids were skipping school and hanging out on your block.
- b. If a group of kids were spraying graffiti on a building.
- c. If a teenager was showing disrespect to an adult.
- d. If a group of kids were climbing on a parked car.
- e. If a group of kids were “car shopping” (trying to open car door handles).
- f. If someone was trying to break into a house.
- g. If someone was illegally parking on the street.
- h. If suspicious people were hanging around the neighbourhood.
- i. If people were having a loud argument in the street.
- j. If a group of underage kids were drinking in public.
- k. If someone on your street was playing loud music.
- l. If someone on your street was firing a gun.
- m. If drugs were being sold in your neighbourhood.
- n. If a local fire station was going to be closed down because of budget cuts.
- o. If there was a serious pothole on your street that needed repairs.
- p. If a vacant house in the neighbourhood was being used for drug dealing.
- q. If the town was planning to cut funding for a local community centre.
- r. If sex workers (prostitutes) were soliciting clients in your neighbourhood.

## Experiences of Victimization

In this section, the participants were asked about their experience(s) of victimization over the past 2 years. They were asked to respond with a “yes” or a “no” to the following questions:

- a. Have you been a victim of crime in the last two years?
  - a. If yes, how many times?
  - b. If yes, did you report this incident to the police?
  - c. If you did not report this incident to the police, why not?
- b. In the past two years, has anyone broken into your home?
  - a. If yes, how many times has this happened in the past two years?

- b. If yes, the last time someone broke into your home, did you report it to the police?
- c. If you did not report this incident to the police, why not?
- c. In the past two years, has anyone used violence against you? For example, hit you, shoved you, started a fight with you, or mugged you?
  - a. If yes, how many times did this happen in the past two years?
  - b. If yes, the last time this occurred, were you injured?
  - c. The last time this happened to you, was the person who used violence against you a: Stranger, Acquaintance, Boyfriend or girlfriend, Spouse, Another relative?
  - d. The last time this happened to you, where did this incident take place?
  - e. The last time someone used violence against you (hit, shoved, started a fight, or mugged you), did you call the police?
  - f. If you did not report this incident to the police, why not?
- d. In the past two years, has anyone stolen something from your porch, yard, driveway, or somewhere else on your property, but outside your home?
  - a. If yes, how many times has this happened in the last two years?
  - b. If yes, the last time it happened, did you report it to the police?
  - c. If you did not report this incident to the police, why not?

## Perceptions of Police and Procedural Justice

In this section, the participants were asked about their perceptions of police in North Battleford and how they feel about the law. They were asked about “how often do you see police officers walking around your neighbourhood?” and they were instructed to respond with “never”, “less than once a month”, “a few times a month”, “a few days a week”, or “every day.” They were also asked “on an average day, how many police cars do you see driving in your neighbourhood?” and they were presented with a text box for an open-ended (numerical) response.

### Perceptions of Procedural Justice

The participants were asked to respond with “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “agree”, or “strongly agree” to the following statements regarding procedural justice:

- a. People should obey the law even if it goes against what they think is right.
- b. I always try to follow the law even if I know it is wrong.
- c. Disobeying the law is rarely justified.
- d. It is difficult to break the law and keep your self-respect.
- e. There is little reason for someone like me to obey the law.
- f. You can’t blame a person for breaking the law if they can get away with it.
- g. If a person is doing something and a police officer tells them to stop, they should stop, even if what they are doing is legal.

For ease of interpretation and cohesion, responses to “There is little reason for someone like me to obey the law” were reverse coded to be interpreted as “There is reason for someone like me to obey the law” and responses to “You can’t blame a person for breaking the law if they can get

away with it” were reverse coded to be interpreted as “you can blame a person for breaking the law if they can get away with it.”

## Perceptions of Police

The participants were asked to respond with “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “agree”, or “strongly agree” to the following statements regarding their perceptions of the police:

- a. In general, the police do a good job preventing crime.
- b. Police officers treat people fairly.
- c. The police do a good job controlling drug activity.
- d. In general, police care about problems in my neighbourhood.
- e. The police do a good job enforcing traffic laws.
- f. In general, police officers treat people with respect.

The participants were asked a few additional questions about the police including:

- a. Have you ever filed a complaint about the police? (Yes or no)
- b. If yes, were you living in the same neighbourhood you are now when you filed your last complaint? (Yes or no)
- c. Do you believe the police do a good job of keeping the community safe? (Yes or no)
- d. Why or why not?

## Feelings of Safety

The questions in this section seek to understand the respondents’ perceptions of safety. In this section they were asked to respond with “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “agree”, or “strongly agree” to the following statements regarding their perceptions of safety:

- a. It is safe for children to play outside in your neighbourhood.
- b. In general, it is safe to walk in your neighbourhood at night.
- c. You are afraid of being attacked in your neighbourhood.
- d. You are worried that someone will break into your home.
- e. It is safe to go outside alone during the day.
- f. You are worried about illegal drugs in your neighbourhood.
- g. Most people think your neighbourhood is becoming more dangerous.
- h. If someone tried to attack you in your neighbourhood, you could easily defend yourself.
- i. You are worried that someone will damage or vandalize your property.

For better alignment with worry of victimization, some responses were reverse coded. Responses to “It is safe for children to play outside in your neighbourhood” were reverse coded to be interpreted as “It is not safe for children to play outside in your neighbourhood.” Responses to “In general, it is safe to walk in your neighbourhood at night” were reverse coded to be interpreted as “In general, it is not safe to walk in your neighbourhood at night.” Responses to “It is safe to go outside alone during the day” were reverse coded to be interpreted as “It is not safe to go outside alone during the day.” Finally, responses to “If someone tried to attack you in your

neighbourhood, you could easily defend yourself" were reverse coded to be interpreted as "If someone tried to attack you in your neighbourhood, you could not easily defend yourself."

## Perceptions of Neighbourhood Disorder

This section of the survey seeks to understand how much social and physical disorder the participants perceive in their neighbourhoods.

### *Social Disorder*

The participants were asked to respond with "never", "less than once a month", "a few times a month", "a few times a week", or "every day" to the following statements regarding their perceptions of social disorder:

- a. People arguing or fighting in public.
- b. Groups of kids hanging out and causing problems.
- c. People drinking alcohol in public.
- d. People acting drunk or high.
- e. Beggars or panhandlers asking for money.
- f. People making too much noise late at night.
- g. People selling drugs outside.
- h. Prostitutes (sex workers) working in public.
- i. Dogs out of control/creating a mess.
- j. People driving erratically in the area.
- k. Drug-taking out in the open.

### *Physical Disorder*

The participants were asked to respond with "none", "one or two", or "many" to the following statements regarding their perceptions of physical disorder:

- a. Buildings with broken windows in your neighbourhood.
- b. Places in your neighbourhood where graffiti is a problem.
- c. Vacant lots in your neighbourhood.
- d. Abandoned or boarded up buildings in your neighbourhood.
- e. Places in your neighbourhood where litter and broken glass are a problem.
- f. Places in your neighbourhood that need better lighting.

## Health

### Personal Health

Personal health is also often related to perceptions of crime and experiences of victimization. Participants were asked about their health and prompted with the following statement: "The final questions are about your health. We are asking these questions to see if mental health and sleep are linked to safety." The participants were then asked to respond with "every day", "more than

half the days”, “several days”, “none at all” to the following statements regarding their personal health:

- a. Little interest or pleasure in doing things.
- b. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless.
- c. Trouble falling or staying asleep or sleeping too much.
- d. Feeling tired or having little energy.
- e. Poor appetite or overeating.
- f. Feeling bad about yourself – or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down.
- g. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television.
- h. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or the opposite – being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual.
- i. Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way.

## Mental Health

The participants were also asked to respond with “every day”, “more than half the days”, “several days”, “none at all” to the following statements regarding their mental health:

- a. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge.
- b. Not being able to stop or control worrying.
- c. Worrying too much about different things.
- d. Trouble relaxing.
- e. Being so restless that it's hard to sit still.
- f. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable.
- g. Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen.

## Sleep

The participants were asked “how long do you sleep at night?” They could respond with “Under 2 hours”, “2 hours to less than 3 hours”, “3 hours to less than 4 hours”, “4 hours to less than 5 hours”, “5 hours to less than 6 hours”, “6 hours to less than 7 hours”, “7 hours to less than 8 hours”, “8 hours to less than 9 hours”, “9 hours to less than 10 hours”, “10 hours to less than 11 hours”, “11 hours to less than 12 hours”, or “12 hours or more” to the following statement regarding their sleep:

# Results

## Demographics

**Age:** The age of the respondents ranged between 19 and 87 years old. The average age was 46.7 years old (standard deviation is 16.0), and the median age was 45 years old.

**Gender:** Among the respondents, 64.0% (259) identified as female, 33.6% (136) identified as male, 2.2% (9) preferred not to say, and 0.3% (1) of the respondents identified as other.

**Ethnicity:** 71.1% (288) identified as Caucasian, 13.1% (53) identified as Asian, and 11.9% (48) identified as being Indigenous. A further 0.7% (3) identified as African, and 3.2% (13) identified as other. In other, 1 participant identified as Latin, 1 identified as Hispanic, and 1 chose not to answer.

**Marital Status:** 55.1% (223) of the respondents indicated they were married, followed by 19.0% (77) who were single and had never been married. Additionally, 11.6% (47) were in a de facto or common law relationship, 8.2% (33) were divorced or separated, 4.4% (18) were widowed, and 1.7% (7) identified their marital status as “other.”

**Employment location:** 80.5% (326) of respondents were employed in the North Battleford area, while 19.5% (79) were not employed in the North Battleford area.

**Homeownership:** Among the respondents, 65.9% (267) reported that they owned their homes, while 26.9% (109) rented. An additional 7.2% (29) indicated other housing arrangements.

**Time at Residence:** 41.7% (169) of respondents reported having lived at their current address for 10 or more years, followed by 18.5% (75) who had lived there between 5 years to less than 10 years. Additionally, 14.1% (57) had lived there between 1 year to less than 3 years, 11.9% (48) between 3 years to less than 5 years, 10.1% (41) between 6 months to less than 1 year, and 3.7% (15) for less than 6 months.

**Future Plans of Residence:** 61.2% (248) of respondents reported wanting to remain in North Battleford 10 or more years, followed by 15.6% (63) who want to live there between 5 years to less than 10 years. Additionally, 12.4% (50) want to live in North Battleford between 3 years to less than 5 years, 5.9% (24) want to live there between 1 year to less than 3 years, 2.7% (11) for less than 6 months, and 2.2% (9) between 6 months to less than 1 year.

Table 1.0 - Annual income

Income (per year)	Count	Percentage (%)
No income	13	3.2
Less than \$20,000	44	10.9
\$20,001 to \$50,000	101	24.9
\$50,001 to \$80,000	127	31.4
\$80,001 to \$100,000	58	14.3
\$100,001 to \$120,000	29	7.2
\$120,001 to \$140,000	13	3.2
\$140,001 to \$160,000	7	1.7
Over \$160,000	13	3.2
Total		100.00

Table 1.0 demonstrates the largest proportion of respondents reported earning between \$50,001 and \$80,000, with 127 participants (31.4%). This was followed by 101 participants (24.9%) earning between \$20,001 and \$50,000, and 58 participants (14.3%) earning between \$80,001 and \$100,000. A total of 44 respondents (10.9%) fell into the less than \$20,000 category, while 29 respondents (7.2%) reported incomes between \$100,001 and \$120,000. Three categories each had 13 respondents (3.2%): those with no income, those earning between \$120,001 and \$140,000, and those earning over \$160,000. 7 respondents (1.7%) reported annual incomes between \$140,001 and \$160,000.

Table 2.0 - Highest level of educational attainment

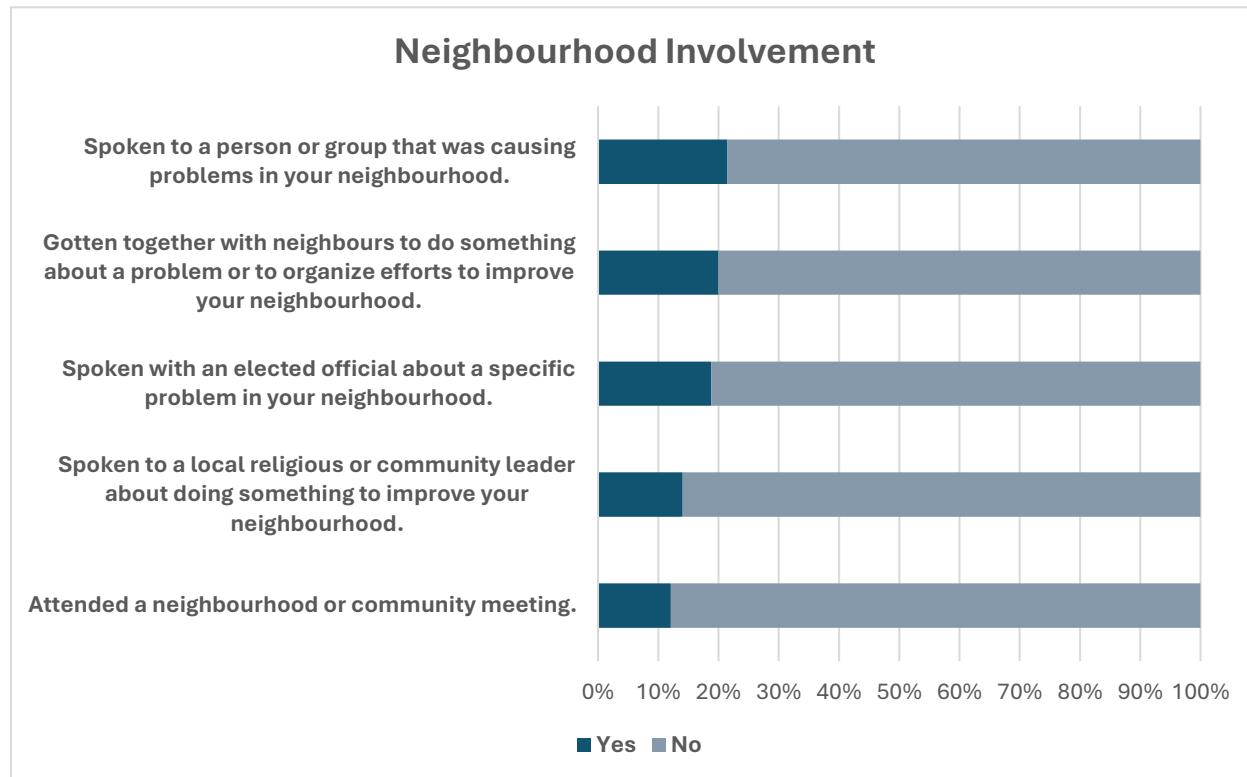
Education Attained	Count	Percentage (%)
No schooling	2	0.5
Less than high school diploma	12	3.0
High school diploma or equivalent	57	14.1
Some trade, technical, or vocational school	70	17.3
Business or community college	73	18.0
Some university	47	11.6
Bachelor's degree	108	26.7
Graduate or professional degree (ex. law or medicine)	36	8.9
Total		100.00

Table 2.0 demonstrates the largest proportion of respondents reported holding a bachelor's degree, with 108 participants (26.7%). This was followed by 73 participants (18.0%) who had completed business or community college, and 70 participants (17.3%) who had attended some trade, technical, or vocational school. A total of 57 respondents (14.1%) reported having a high school diploma or equivalent, while 47 respondents (11.6%) indicated they had completed some university education. Thirty-six respondents (8.9%) reported holding a graduate or professional degree such as law or medicine. Twelve participants (3.0%) had less than a high school diploma, and the smallest group consisted of 2 respondents (0.5%) who reported having no schooling.

## Community Involvement

### Neighbourhood Involvement

Figure 1.0 - Neighbourhood involvement

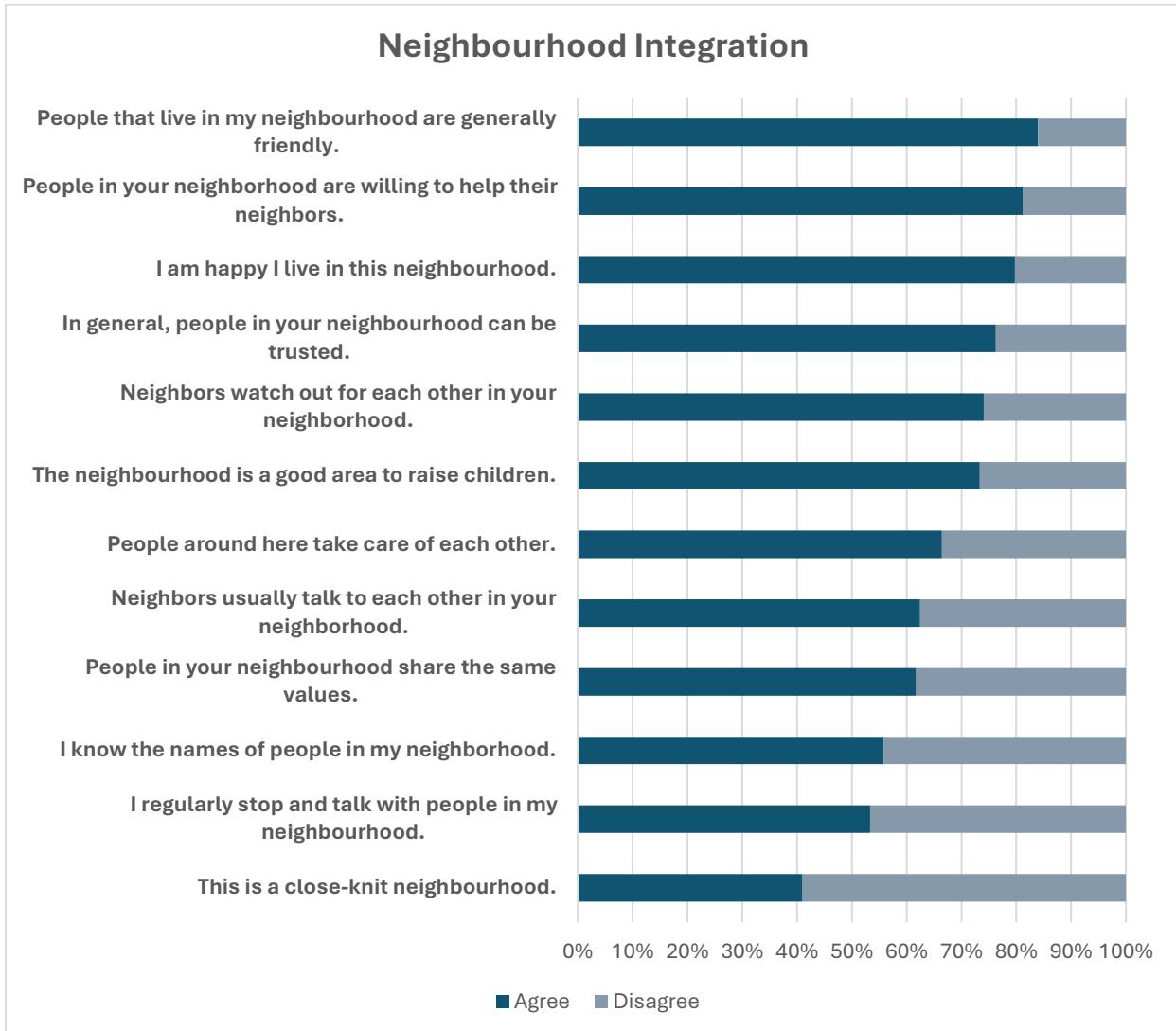


The participants were asked about the ways they are involved in their neighbourhood and/or community. Figure 1.0 demonstrates that a significant proportion of respondents had not been involved in neighbourhood activities. Out of 405 participants, 21.5% (87) reported speaking to a person or group causing problems in the neighbourhood, 20.0% (81) said they had gotten together with neighbours to address or organize efforts to improve a neighbourhood problem, and 18.8% (76) reported speaking with an elected official about a specific neighbourhood problem. Additionally, 14.1% (57) said they had spoken to a local religious or community leader about improving their neighbourhood, and only 12.1% (49) reported attending a neighbourhood or community meeting.

### Neighbourhood Integration

Figure 2.0 shows participants' perceptions of neighbourhood integration. For ease of interpretation, "strongly agree" and "agree" have been combined into "agree" and "strongly disagree" and "disagree" have been combined into "disagree".

Figure 2.0 - Neighbourhood integration



Out of 405 participants, 84.0% (340) agreed that people in their neighbourhood are generally friendly, 81.2% (329) said neighbours usually talk to each other, and 79.8% (323) reported they are happy living in their neighbourhood. Additionally, 76.3% (309) agreed that people in their neighbourhood can be trusted, while 74.1% (300) agreed that neighbours watch out for each other. Further, 73.3% (297) believed the neighbourhood is a good area to raise children, 66.4% (269) felt people take care of each other, 62.5% (253) said neighbours talk to each other, and 61.7% (250) agreed their neighbours share the same values. Meanwhile, 55.8% (226) reported knowing the names of people in their neighbourhood, 53.3% (216) said they regularly stop and talk with neighbours, and only 41.0% (166) described their neighbourhood as being close-knit.

## Relationships with Neighbours

Figure 3.0 - Knowing neighbours by name

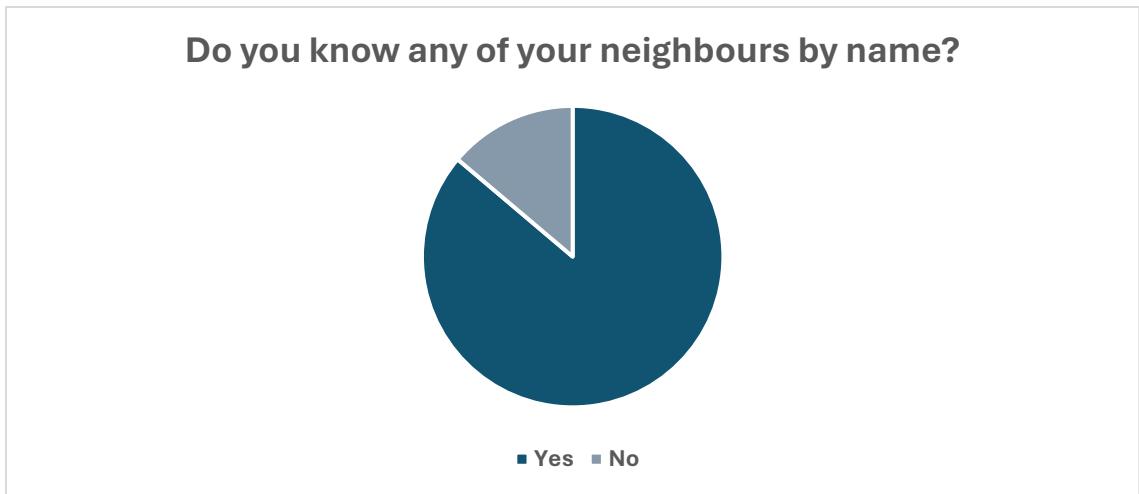


Figure 3.0 demonstrates that 86.2% (349) of respondents know their neighbours by name while 13.8% (56) of respondents do not know their neighbours by name. From the respondents who said yes, 50.6% (205) reported knowing the names of between 1 and 5 of their neighbours, 17.0% (69) reported knowing the names of under 10 of their neighbours, and 5.4% (22) reported knowing the names of more than 10 of their neighbours.

Figure 4.0 - Time spent interacting with neighbours

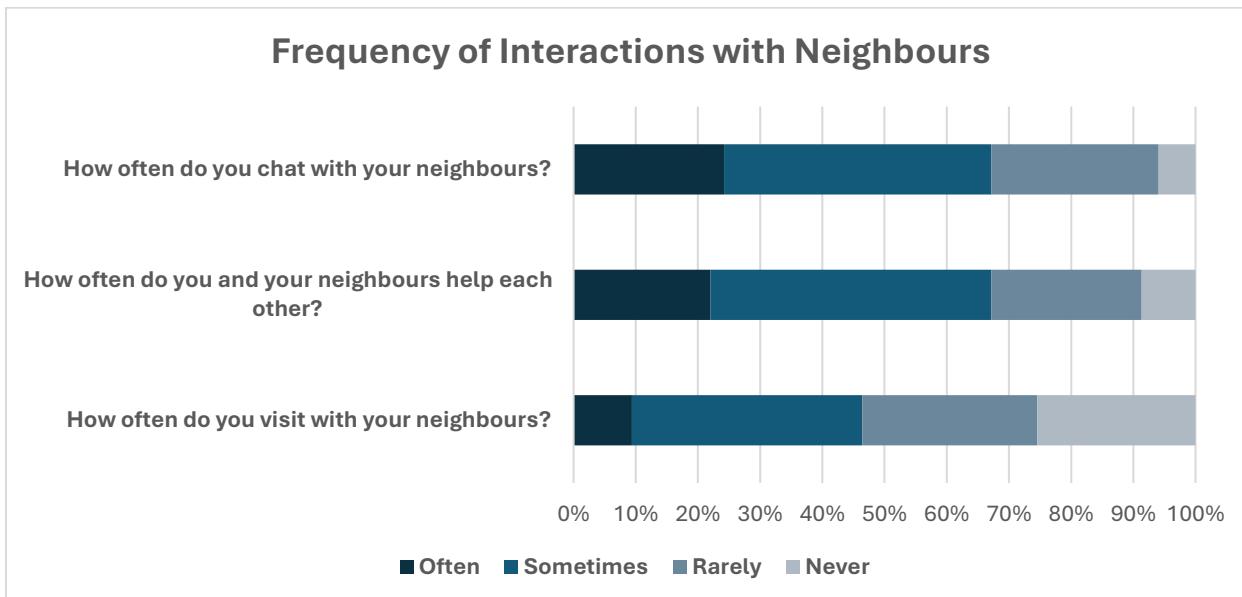


Figure 4.0 illustrates how frequently individuals interact with their neighbours. 67.2% (272) respondents either sometimes or often chat with their neighbours, and 67.0% (272) sometimes or often help their neighbours. However, 53.6% (217) of respondents either never or rarely visit with their neighbours.

## Willingness to Intervene

Figure 5.0 - Willingness to intervene

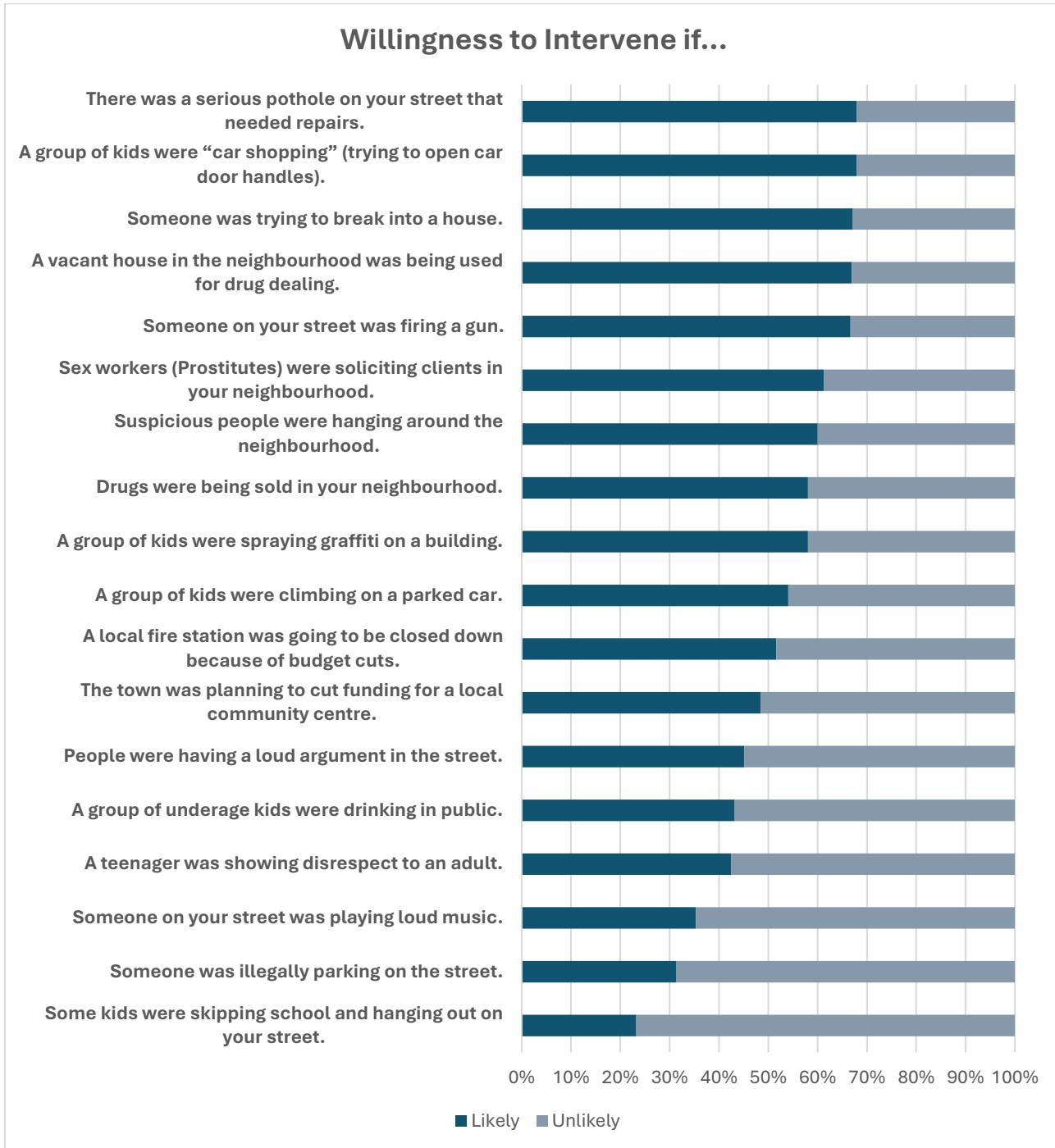


Figure 5.0 reflects participants willingness to intervene in neighbourhood issues. Response categories “very unlikely” and “unlikely” were combined to “unlikely” and “likely”, and “very likely” were combined to “likely” for ease of interpretation. Respondents showed the highest likelihood of intervention if kids were trying to open car door handles (i.e. “car shopping”), with

67.9% (275) saying they would be likely to intervene. This was closely followed by 67.2% (272) who said they would intervene if someone was trying to break into a house, 66.7% (270) if someone on their street was firing a gun, and 66.9% (271) if a vacant house was being used for drug dealing. 67.9% of respondents also believed their neighbourhood would intervene if there was a serious pothole on their street needing repairs. 61.2% (248) of respondents believed their neighbourhood would intervene if sex workers were soliciting clients, and 60.0% (243) who said they would act if suspicious people were hanging around the neighbourhood. 58.0% (235) would intervene if kids were spraying graffiti on buildings or if drugs were being sold in the neighbourhood, followed by 54.1% (219) who would intervene if kids were climbing on a parked car. 51.6% (209) of respondents said their neighbourhood would act if a local fire station was facing closure due to budget cuts. 48.4% (196) believed action would be taken if the town planned to cut funding for a local community centre. 45.2% (183) said they would intervene in loud street arguments, followed by 43.2% (175) who would step in if underage kids were drinking in public. 42.5% (172) of participants reported they would intervene if a teenager showed disrespect to an adult. Fewer still, 35.3% (143) would intervene if someone was playing loud music, 31.4% (127) for illegal parking, and 23.2% (94) if kids were skipping school and hanging out.

## Experiences of Victimization

Figure 6.0 - Overall victimization

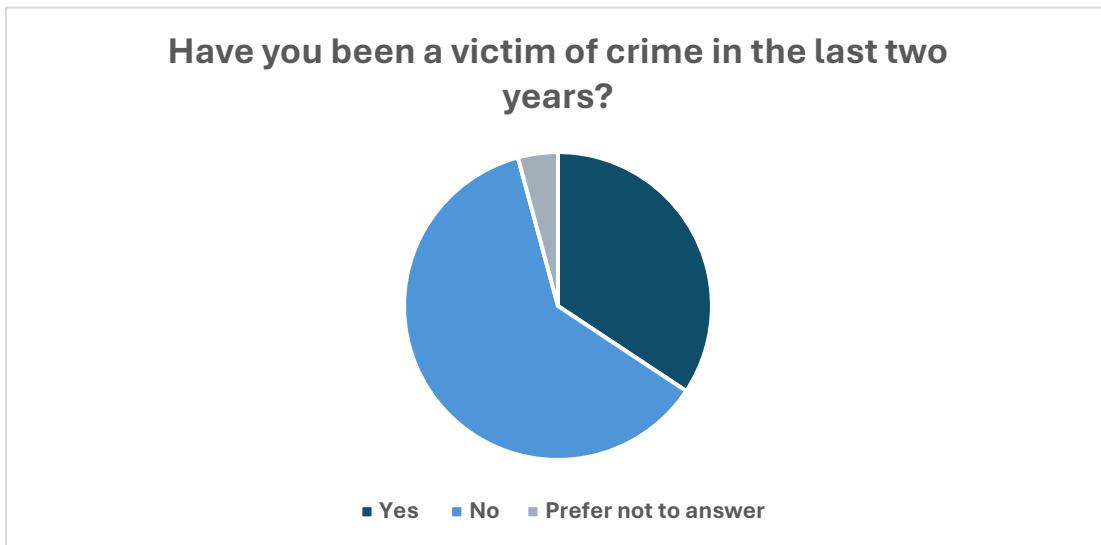


Figure 6.0 demonstrates the respondents' answers when asked if they have been a victim of a crime in the past two years. Of all participants, 34.3% (139) reported having been the victim of a crime, while 61.5% (249) said they had not. An additional 4.2% (17) of respondents indicated they preferred not to answer. Out of those who reported having been a victim of a crime, 64.8% (90) stated they had reported this instance of victimization to the police, and 33.1% (46) said they did not report to the police. 2.2% (3) of respondents did not state and answer in this category.

Figure 7.0 - Types of victimization

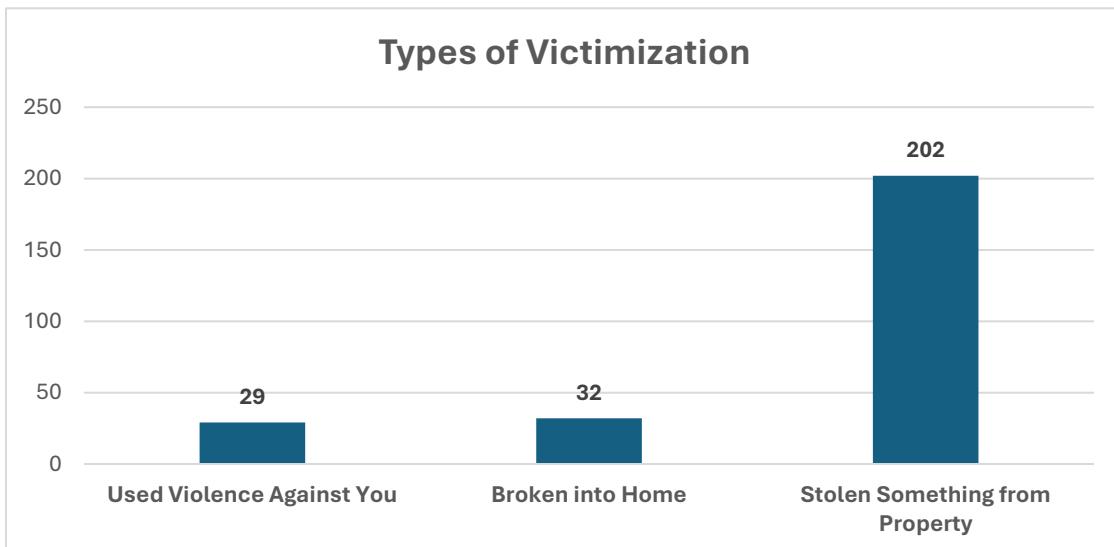


Figure 7.0 shows the types of victimization participants have experienced in the past two years. 202 participants reported thefts from their property and 43.5% (87) of the respondents reported the theft to the police. 32 respondents reported their homes being broken into, and 24 (75%) of those participants reported their homes being broken into to the police. 29 participants reported the use of violence against them, and of those, 34.5% (10) of respondents reported being injured as a result, and 65.5% (19) reported the use of violence to the police. In cases where violence was used against the participant, 75.9% (22) of respondents said their perpetrator was a stranger, 6.9% (2) said an acquaintance, 6.9% (2) participants said their abuser was a boyfriend or a girlfriend, 6.9% (2) of participants said it was a spouse, and 3.4% (1) of respondents said it was someone else.

About one-third of respondents (34.3%) reported being a victim of crime in the past two years, and among them, roughly two-thirds chose to report the incident to police. Theft was the most common form of victimization, followed by break-ins and acts of violence, with reporting rates varying across each type. Most victims identified their perpetrator as a stranger, with far fewer indicating someone they knew.

## Perceptions of Police and Procedural Justice

Participants were asked several questions regarding their perceptions of police and police behaviours.

### Perceptions of Police

Figure 8.0 - Perceptions of police

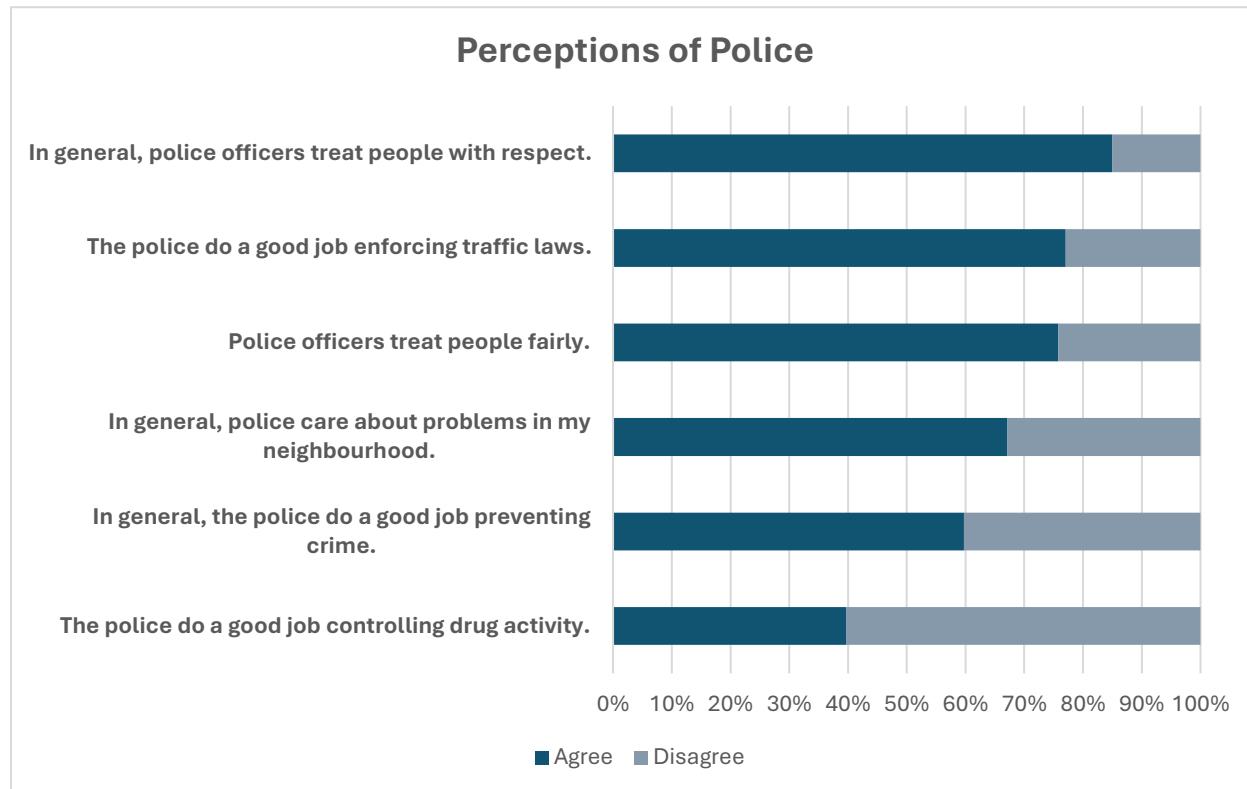
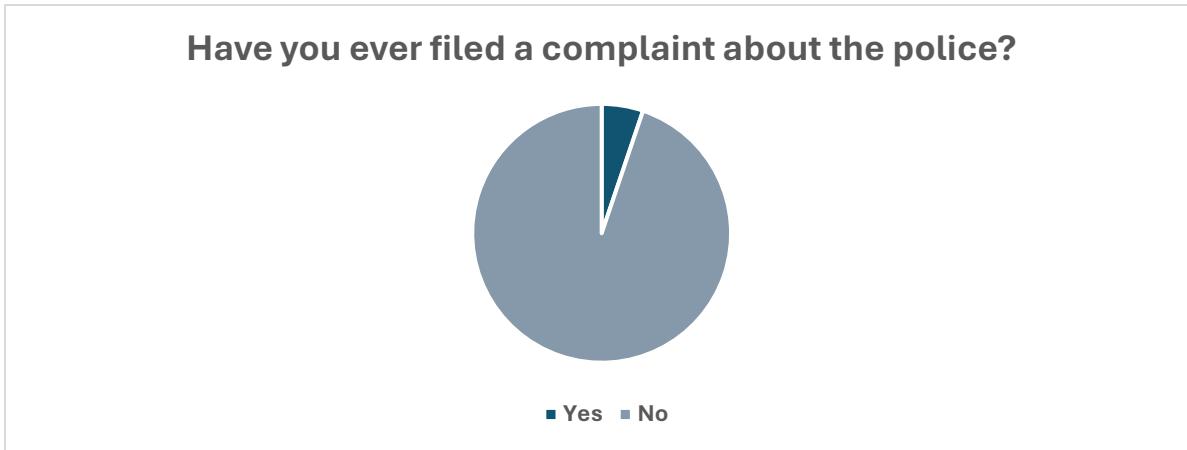


Figure 8.0 demonstrates the questions asked, and the responses provided regarding perceptions of police. For ease of interpretation, “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” have been combined into “Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” have been combined into “Disagree”. 84.9% (344) of participants feel that generally police officers treat people with respect, 77.0% (312) feel the police do a good job enforcing traffic laws, and 75.8% (307) of participants felt that police officers treat people fairly. Furthermore, 67.2% (272) of participants felt as though the police care about problems in their neighbourhood and 59.8% (242) felt the police do a good job at preventing crime. Alternatively, 39.8% (161) of respondents felt that the police do a good job at controlling drug activity.

Figure 9.0 - Filed a complaint about police



When asked if the respondents have ever filed a complaint against the police, Figure 9.0 demonstrates that 5.2% (21) of the respondents said yes. Of those 21 respondents, 11 (52.4%) were living in their current neighbourhood at the time of complaint.

Figure 10.0 - Police efficacy

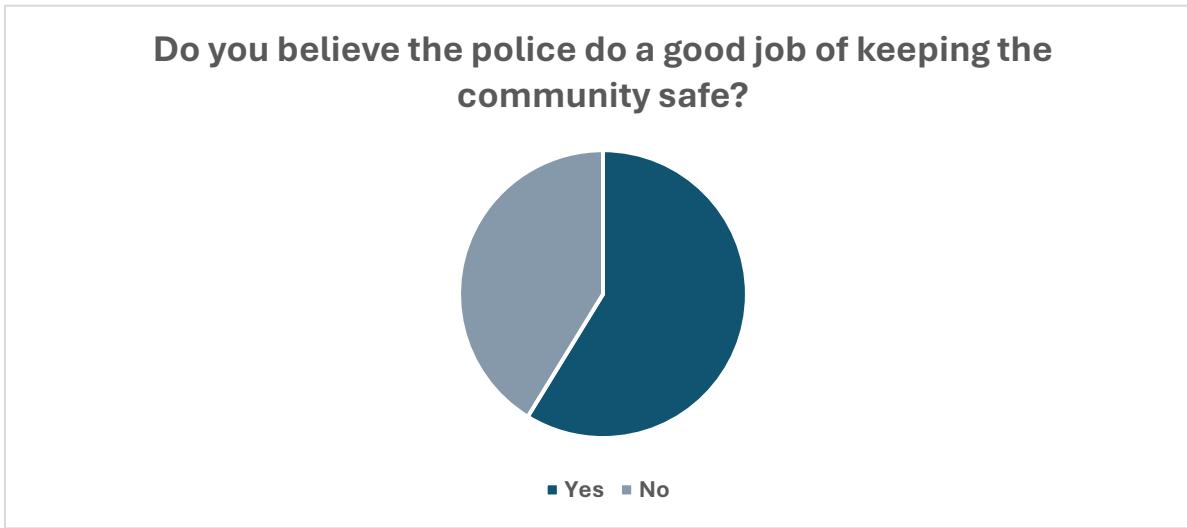


Figure 10.0 demonstrates that 58.8% (238) of respondents feel the police do a good job of keeping the community safe, while 41.2% (167) of respondents feel the police do not do a good job of keeping the community safe.

*Respondents who believe the police do a good job – Example quotations*

The participants acknowledge the challenging conditions under which police operate, including limited staffing and high levels of crime, yet many still believe officers are doing all they can within these constraints. Respondents commonly point to visible police patrols, timely responses to calls, and respectful treatment during interactions as positive aspects of local policing. At the same time, several residents suggest that policing appears ineffective not because of officer performance, but due to broader systemic issues. One such issue that is highlighted is the repeated release of offenders and what they perceive as minimal consequences, which undermines the impact of police efforts.

- Police try their best despite limited resources and high crime
- Positive presence, responsiveness, and interactions
- Courts and justice system are to blame

*“Their hands are tied by a lenient judicial system.”*

*“They are overwhelmed but do well with those things considered.”*

*“Police have been active on our street.”*

*“Any time I dealt with the police, they were helpful.”*

*“It’s a difficult job... they try hard.”*

*“The police do their best, but the courts fail to punish offenders.”*

*“They seem to respond fast.”*

*“It’s the justice system that is broken.”*

*“They catch them, but the courts let them out again.”*

*“I’ve seen them responding to problems in my neighbourhood.”*

*“They do the best they can with the resources they have.”*

*Respondents who believe the police do NOT do a good job – Example quotations*

The most common concern raised by the participants is the lack of sufficient police officers, which they associate with long response times and a general sense that police cannot keep up with the volume of crime. Many respondents feel that policing is largely reactive, with officers responding after incidents occur rather than preventing them, and some believe police focus too heavily on minor or easily enforced offences instead of more serious issues. Ongoing gang activity, visible drug use, violence, and persistently unsafe areas are frequently cited as evidence that police are not having a sufficient impact on community safety.

- Understaffed, overwhelmed, and slow or absent response
- Police are reactive, not preventative, and focus on the wrong issues
- High crime and unsafe conditions show policing is ineffective

***“They choose the easier cases.”***

***“Gangs have taken over the community.”***

***“They don’t show up when people call or are too late.”***

***“Drugs and crime are rampant.”***

***“Police are completely understaffed.”***

***“Crime is still rampant; they need to be more active.”***

***“They focus too much on little things like traffic tickets.”***

***“Police do not prevent crime. They only investigate after it happens.”***

***“Not enough officers to deal with the problems.”***

***“Downtown is wild. I feel very unsafe 24/7.”***

***“The criminals outnumber the police.”***

***“They are often only reactive, not proactive.”***

## Perceptions of Procedural Justice

Figure 11.0 - Perceptions of procedural justice

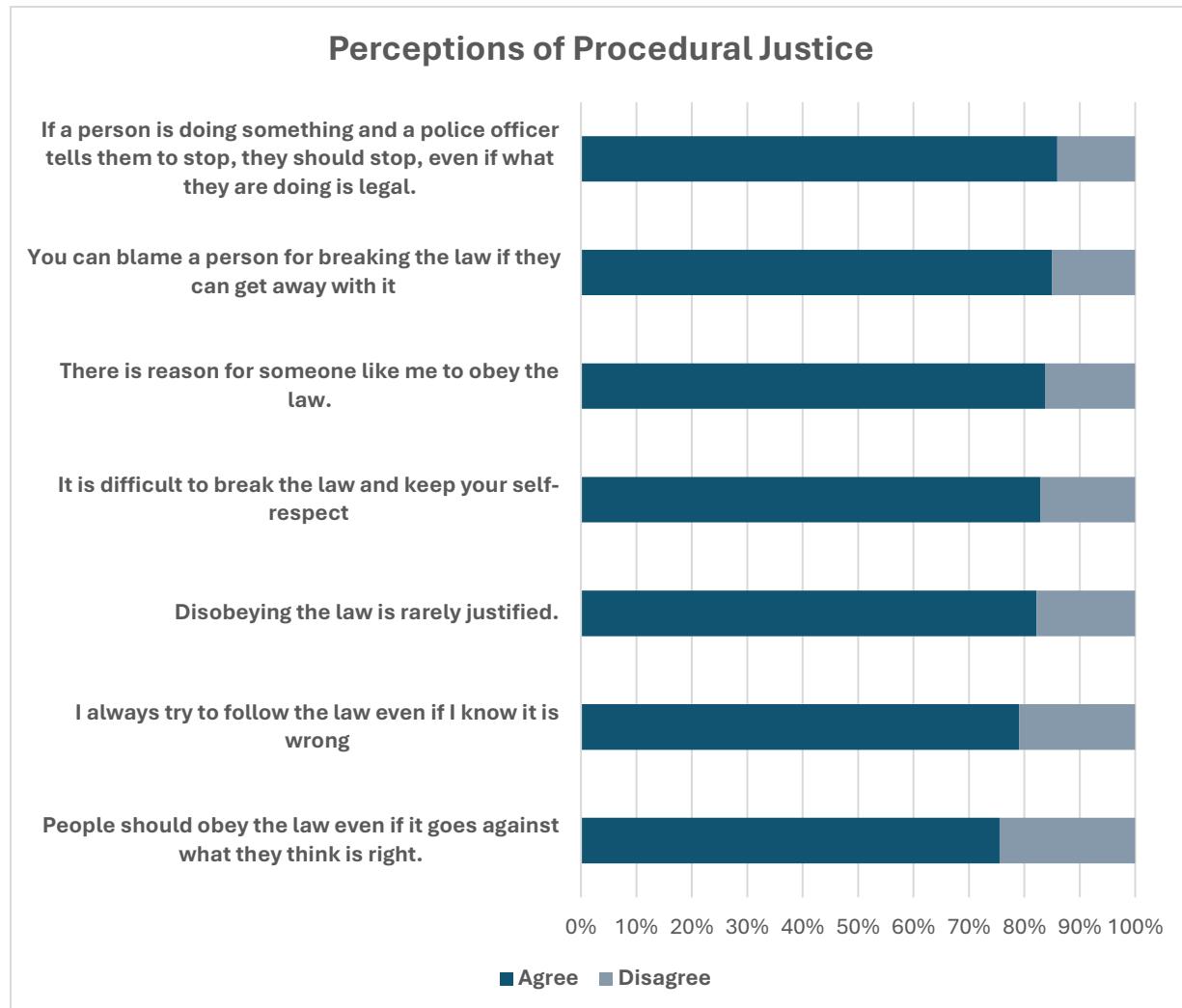


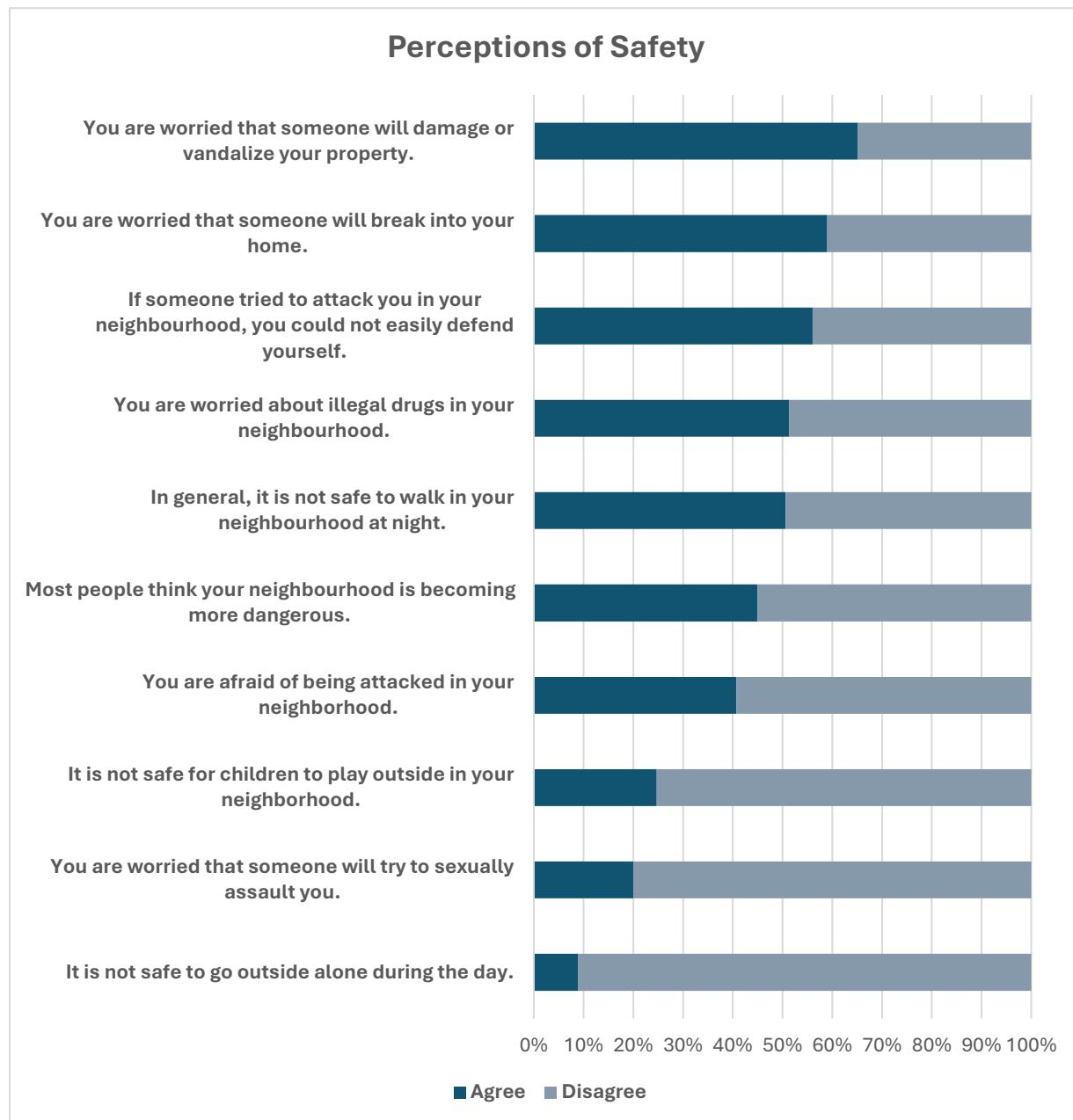
Figure 11.0 displays participants' perceptions on procedural justice in North Battleford. For ease of interpretation, "strongly agree" and "agree" responses have been combined into "agree," and "strongly disagree" and "disagree" responses have been combined into "disagree." 85.9% (348) of participants agreed that if a police officer tells someone to stop, they should stop, even if what they are doing is legal. This was followed by 85.1% (344) who agreed a person can be blamed for breaking the law even if they can get away with it, and 83.7% (339) who agreed there is reason for them to obey the law. Additionally, 82.9% (336) said it is difficult to break the law and keep self-respect, 82.2% (333) agreed disobeying the law is rarely justified, 78.5% (318) said they try to follow the law even if they know it is wrong, and 75.6% (306) agreed people should obey the law even if it goes against what they think is right.

## Perceptions of Safety

Figure 12.0 demonstrates the response of the participants on matters of safety. For ease of interpretation, “strongly agree” and “agree” responses have been combined into “agree” and “strongly disagree” and “disagree” responses have been combined into “disagree.”

Understanding fears and perceptions of crime helps identify specific safety concerns, inform community policing priorities, and guide local crime prevention and neighbourhood improvement efforts.

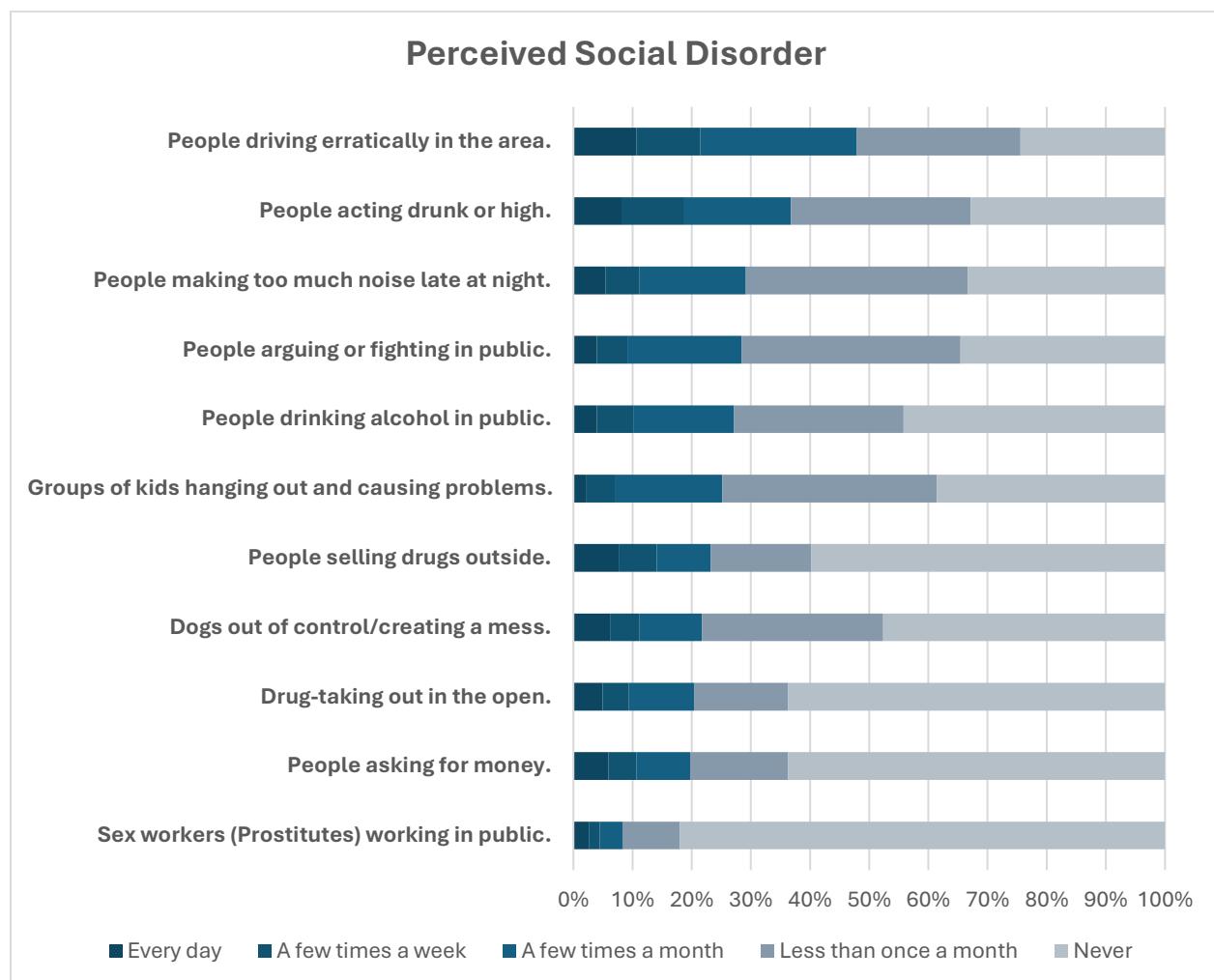
Figure 12.0 - Perceptions of safety



When asked about their perceptions of safety, 91.1 % (369) of participants agreed that it is safe to go outside alone during the day, while 65.2 % (264) felt it is safe for children to play outside in their neighbourhood. Conversely, 75.3 % (305) agreed that they are worried someone will damage or vandalize their property, and 51.4 % (208) said they are worried someone will break into their home. Concerns about illegal drugs were shared by 59.0 % (239) of respondents. Only 44.9 % (182) believed it is safe to walk in their neighbourhood at night, and 40.7 % (165) thought their neighbourhood is becoming more dangerous. Roughly half (49.4 % / 200) felt they could easily defend themselves if attacked; nevertheless, 44.0 % (178) said they are afraid of being attacked in their neighbourhood. Finally, 20.0 % (81) of respondents worried that someone would try to sexually assault them.

## Social Disorder

Figure 13.0 - Perceptions of social disorder



As Figure 13.0 illustrates, the most frequently observed issue, on a daily basis, was people driving erratically in the area, reported by 43 respondents (9.5%). This was followed by people acting drunk or high, seen daily by 33 respondents (7.3%), and people selling drugs outside, reported by 31 respondents (6.8%). Dogs out of control or creating a mess were observed daily

by 25 respondents (5.5%), while drug-taking in the open was witnessed daily by 20 respondents (4.4%). People asking for money were seen daily by 24 respondents (5.3%), and people making too much noise late at night were reported daily by 22 respondents (4.9%). People drinking alcohol in public and people arguing or fighting in public were each observed daily by 16 respondents (3.5%). Lower daily reports included groups of kids hanging out and causing problems, noted by 9 respondents (2.0%), and sex workers working in public, seen daily by 11 respondents (2.4%).

## Physical Disorder

Figure 14.0 - Perceptions of physical disorder

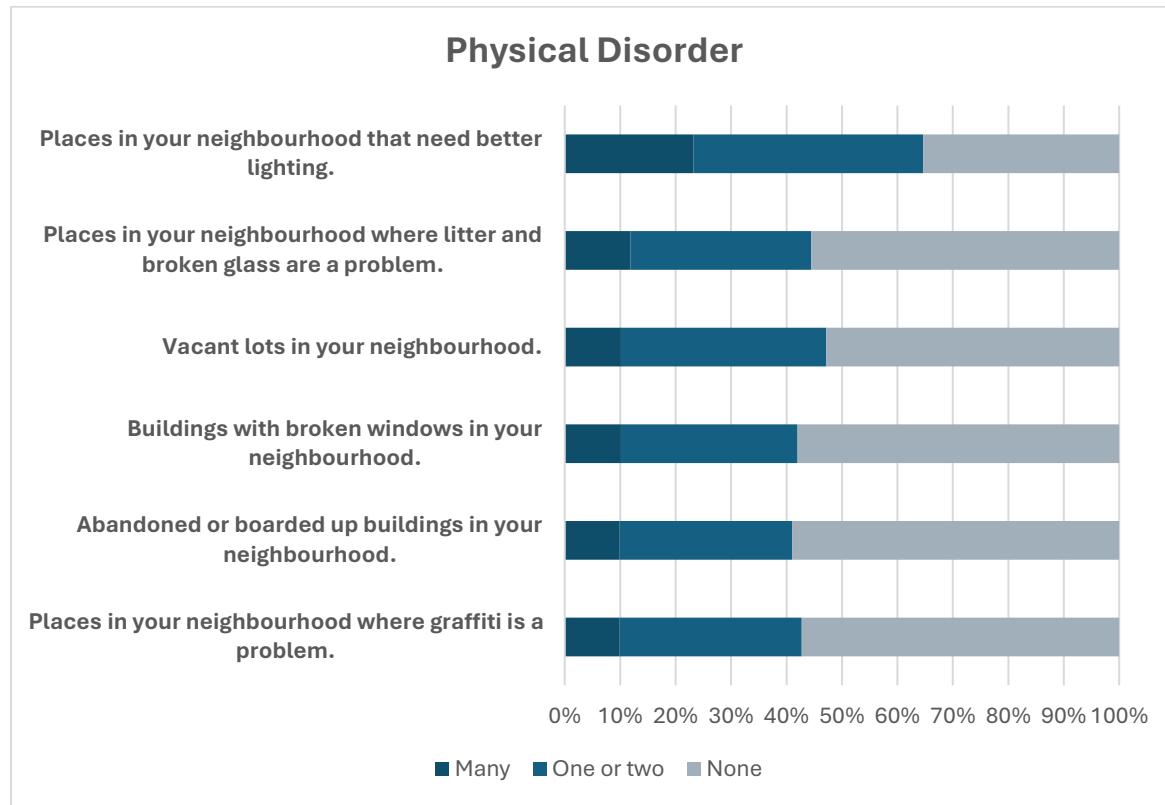


Figure 14.0 demonstrates participants' perceptions of physical disorder in their neighbourhoods. The most frequently reported issue was the need for better lighting, with 94 respondents stating there are many such places in their area, and 69.4% (864) noting at least one location needing improved lighting. Next, 48 respondents indicated there are many places with litter and broken glass, while 55.0% (684) reported at least one such area. Reports of vacant lots followed, with 41 respondents identifying many, and 44.6% (556) acknowledging at least one vacant lot in their neighbourhood. Graffiti was reported as a common concern by 40 respondents, with 48.3% (601) indicating at least one location where graffiti is a problem. Similarly, 40 respondents said there were many abandoned or boarded-up buildings, with 43.5% (542) reporting at least one such location. The least reported issue was buildings with broken windows, with 41 respondents stating there were many, but only 34.7% (432) indicating the presence of at least one such building, the lowest among all categories.

# Health

## Personal Health

Figure 15.0 - Personal health

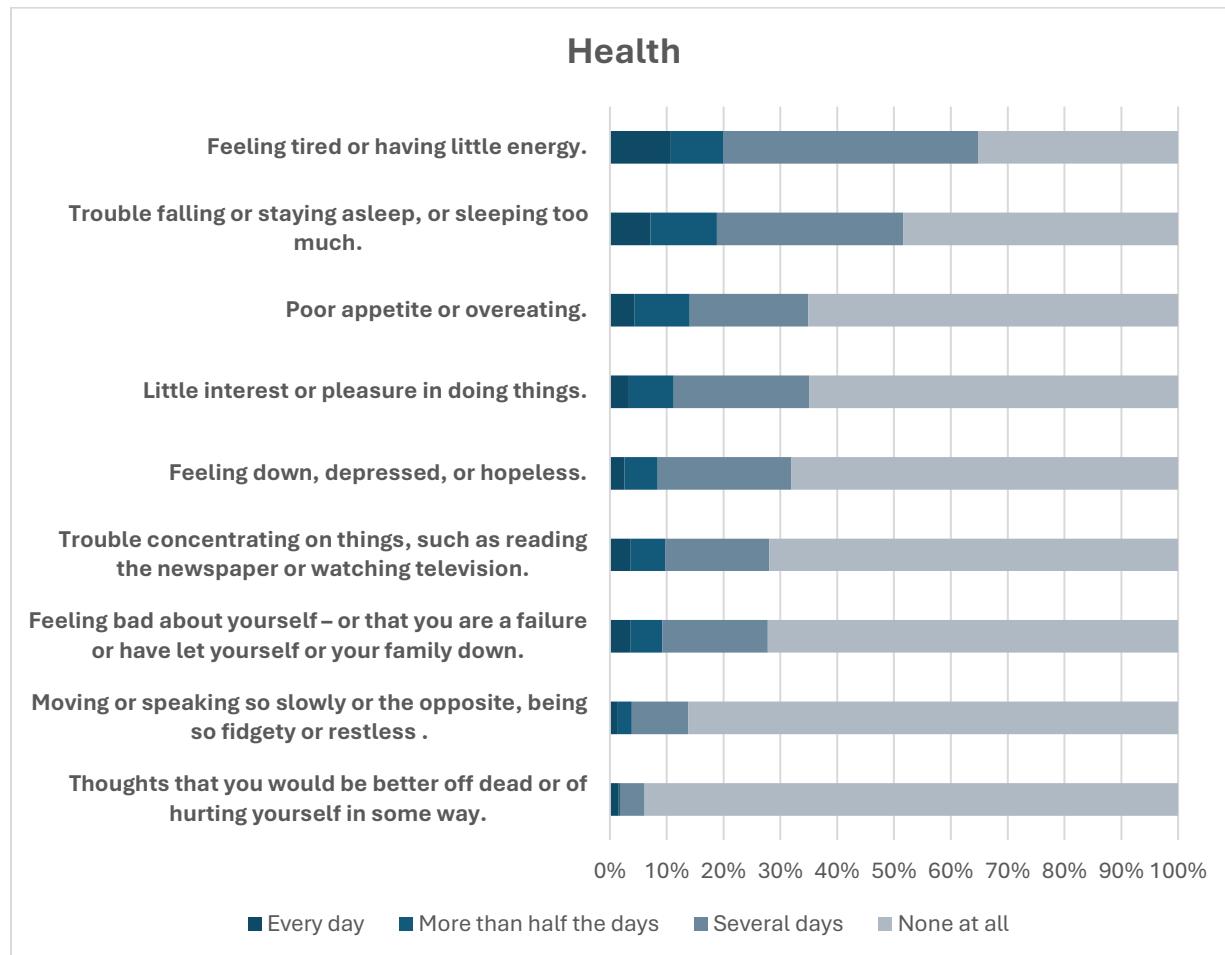


Figure 15.0 demonstrates the most commonly reported mental health concern experienced for at least several days in the past two weeks was feeling tired or having little energy, noted by 254 respondents (64.8%). This was followed by trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much, reported daily by 203 respondents (51.7%). Little interest or pleasure in doing things and poor appetite or overeating were each experienced daily by 137 respondents (35%). Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless was reported daily by 125 respondents (32%), and trouble concentrating on things, such as reading or watching television, by 110 respondents (28.1%). Feeling bad about yourself – or that you are a failure or have let your family down was reported daily by 109 respondents (27.8%), and moving or speaking very slowly, or being overly fidgety or restless by 54 respondents (13.8%). The least frequently reported, but most serious, concern was thoughts that one would be better off dead or of hurting themselves, experienced for at least several days in the past 2 weeks by 24 respondents (6.1%).

## Mental Health

Figure 16.0 - Mental health

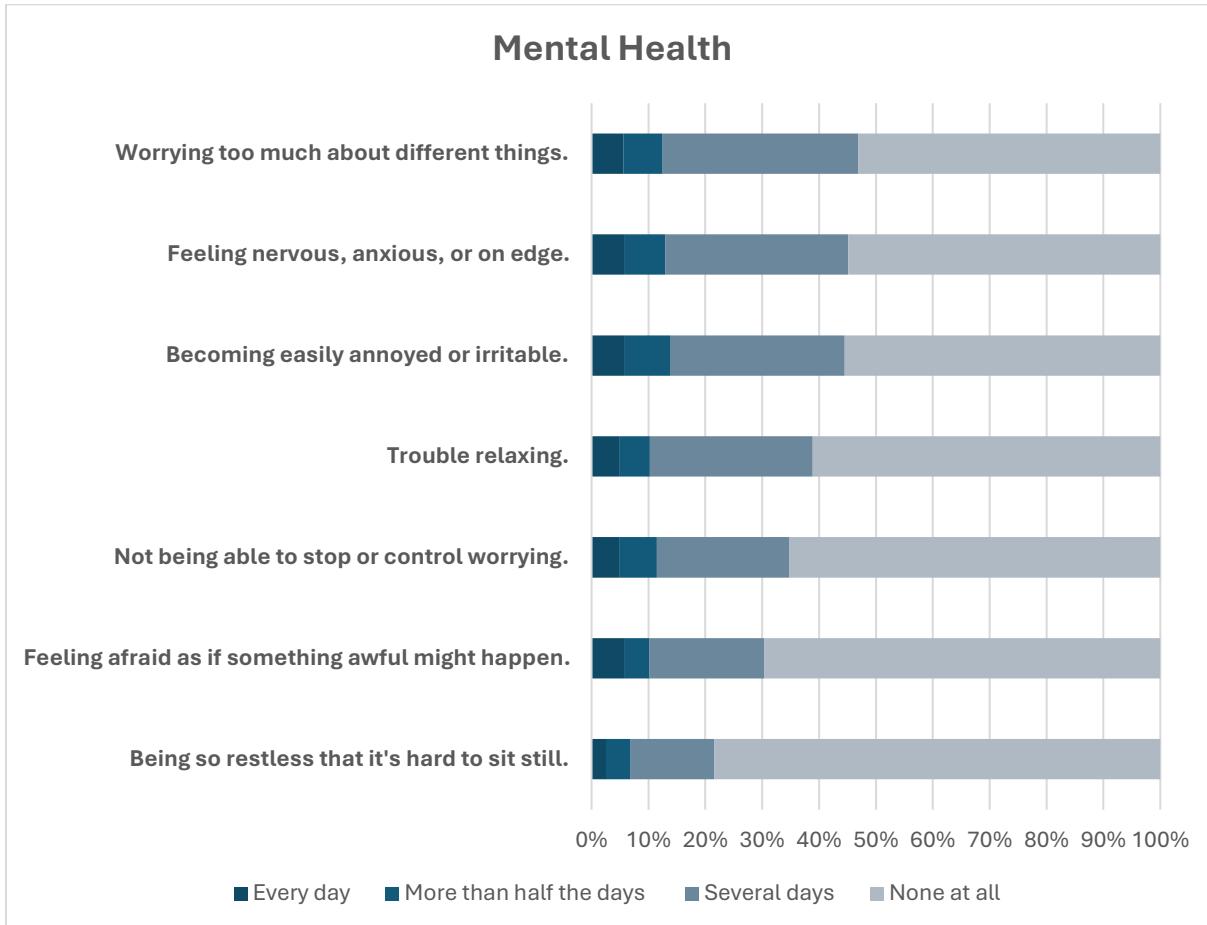


Figure 16.0 demonstrates that among anxiety-related symptoms, the most frequently experienced on a daily basis were feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge, becoming easily annoyed or irritable, and feeling afraid as if something awful might happen, each reported by 23 respondents (5.9%). Close behind was worrying too much about different things, experienced daily by 22 respondents (5.6%). Both not being able to stop or control worrying and trouble relaxing were reported by 19 respondents (4.9%). The least frequently reported daily symptom was being so restless that it's hard to sit still, noted by 10 respondents (2.5%). While daily anxiety symptoms were not widespread across the sample, a consistent portion of participants reported experiencing ongoing restlessness, fear, and excessive worry, suggesting a need for accessible mental health support and early intervention programs.

## Sleep

Figure 17.0 - Hours slept

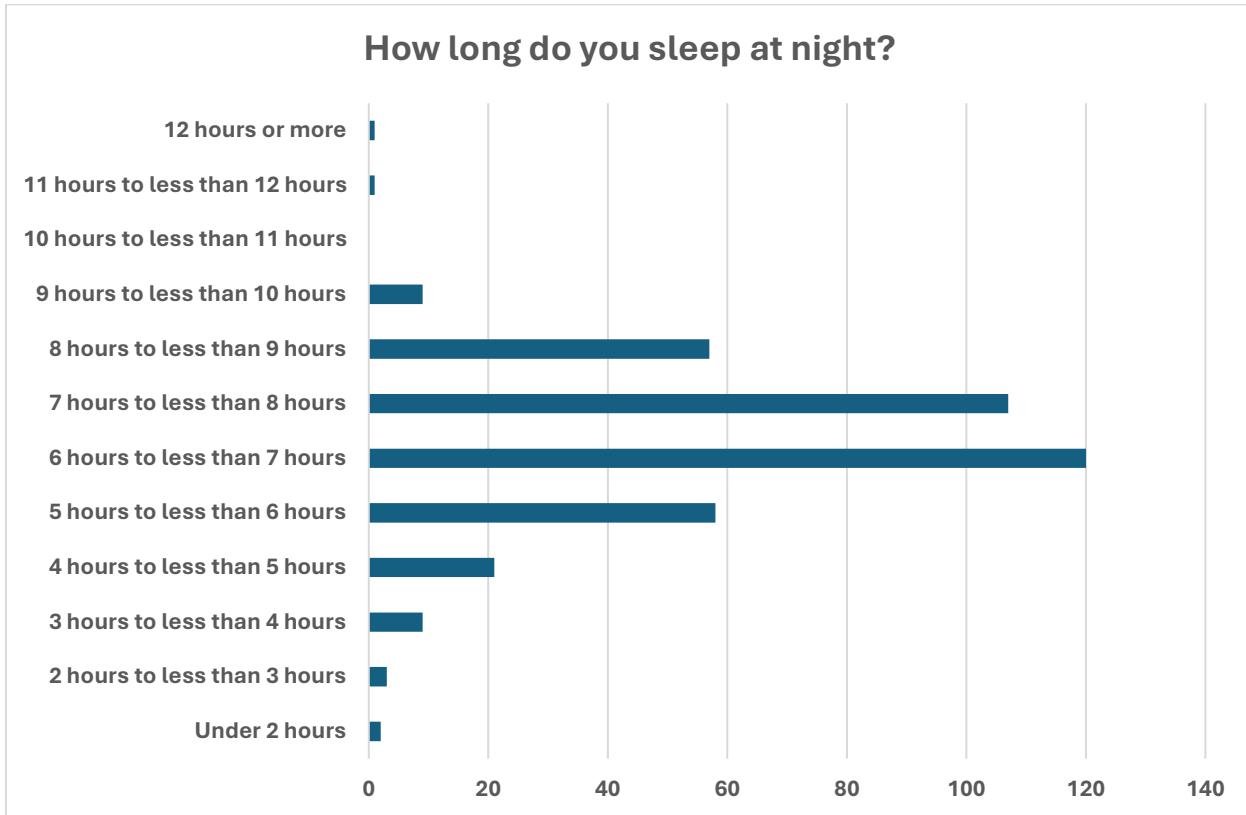


Figure 17.0 reflects respondents sleep patterns. 120 participants (26.7%) reported getting 6 to less than 7 hours, while 107 (23.8%) sleep 7 to less than 8 hours. An additional 57 respondents (12.7%) reported getting 8 to less than 9 hours, and 58 (12.9%) sleep 5 to less than 6 hours. Shorter sleep durations were less common: 21 respondents (4.7%) reported sleeping 4 to less than 5 hours, 9 (2.0%) sleep 3 to less than 4 hours, 3 (0.7%) sleep 2 to less than 3 hours, and 2 (0.4%) sleep under 2 hours. Longer sleep durations were also rare: 9 respondents (2.0%) reported sleeping 9 to less than 10 hours, 1 (0.2%) slept 11 to less than 12 hours, and 1 (0.2%) reported sleeping 12 hours or more. No participants reported sleeping 10 to less than 11 hours. Overall, approximately 63.2% of participants reported getting between 6 and 8 hours of sleep per night, suggesting that most respondents fall within the recommended sleep range.

# Key Findings and Implications

This section presents the key findings from each category and discusses them in relation to research literature and objectives of the survey, including understanding perceptions of crime and safety in North Battleford and in particular areas, identifying experiences of victimization and reporting to police, and identifying perceptions of police.

## Demographics

The survey sample for North Battleford, despite some over/under representation, is broadly reflective of the community profile according to the most recent census. The average age in North Battleford is 39.6 years (Statistics Canada, 2021). The median age of survey respondents was slightly higher at 45 years. This difference may be explained by the survey's requirement that participants be at least 18 years old. The gender split in the city is about 48% male and 54% female (Statistics Canada, 2021). Within the survey, female respondents were overrepresented (64.0%), compared to 33.6% male, 2.2% preferring not to say, and 0.3% identifying as "other." Over representation of female participants is common in survey research. In terms of ethnicity, the survey reported 71.1% Caucasian, 13.1% Asian, 11.9% Indigenous, 0.7% African, and 3.2% identifying as "other" (including Latin and Hispanic). Compared with census figures, Caucasians (70.69%) are represented proportionately, while Indigenous populations (16.69% in census vs. 11.9% in survey) were underrepresented, and visible minorities were slightly overrepresented (12.62% census vs. 17% survey). 41.7% (169) of sample population reported having lived in North Battleford for 10 years or more.

## Community Involvement

The survey respondents demonstrate good relationships with their neighbours. 86.3% of the respondents reported knowing the names of their neighbours, and most of the respondents talked with their neighbours, and helped their neighbours with some level of frequency (67.2%, 67% respectively). 61-84% of respondents agree with most of the statements about neighbourhood integration, demonstrating good integration within their communities. The generally positive response to integration reflects a key dimension of informal social control and social cohesion, both of which are strongly linked to neighbourhood safety and perceptions of crime (Hodgkinson & Lunney 2021).

When asked about their willingness to intervene in neighbourhood issues, respondents showed general willingness to intervene (58-67.9%) when laws were being broken except for underage drinking in public (43.2%), and illegal parking (31.4%). Generally, the respondents stated they would be unlikely to intervene when social norms were being violated (23.2-45.2%). In addition, a large number of respondents were likely to intervene if local community resources were at risk of being taken away (48.4-67.9%), if sex workers were soliciting in their neighbourhood (61.2%), and if there was a serious pothole on their street needing repairs (67.9%). Willingness to intervene offers valuable insight into the collective efficacy demonstrated by a community, reflecting residents shared confidence in their ability to address problems together and maintain social order. Collective efficacy is closely linked to the fear of crime, as communities with

stronger mutual trust and readiness to act tend to experience lower levels of fear and greater feelings of safety (Wickes et al., 2013). When people believe that their neighbours will step in during problematic situations, it reinforces a sense of safety and cohesion, which can deter crime and foster a more secure environment.

Residents in both 2018 and 2024 were most willing to intervene in serious or clearly illegal situations, such as fights, vandalism, or kids damaging property. In 2018, this was reflected in respondents indicating a high likeliness of intervening in fights, kids climbing on cars, and kids spraying graffiti, while the likeliness of intervention was much lower for kids skipping school or a community centre closing. The 2024 results show the same pattern: 58–67.9% were willing to intervene when laws were being broken, compared to just 23.2–45.2% when only social norms were violated. Like 2018, residents in 2024 showed stronger willingness to act when important community resources were at risk (48.4–67.9%) or safety issues were involved (67.9% for serious potholes). Overall, both years indicate that intervention is highest for serious, visible problems and lowest for everyday social norm violations.

In addition, 66.4% of respondents agreed that people in their neighbourhood take care of each other. When asked on formal steps taken to improve the neighbourhood, most respondents stated they had not taken any of the listed formal actions (12.1–21.5%). This is important because it reveals a gap between neighbourhood integration and the deeper bonds needed for strong social cohesion and collective efficacy. While many respondents feel connected to their neighbourhood generally, less than half believe that people actively care for one another. This weaker sense of mutual care can undermine trust and reduce the likelihood that residents will come together to address shared concerns. The low levels of formal community action further suggests that without strong interpersonal ties and a sense of collective responsibility, residents may be less motivated or empowered to take organized steps to improve their neighbourhood. Together, these factors can limit the community's capacity to exercise informal social control and collective efficacy, both of which are critical for preventing crime and fostering a safe, supportive environment.

## Feelings of Safety

In general, the respondents felt their neighbourhood was safe during the day, and safe from gun and drug violence (91.1%). However, 40.7% of respondents felt their neighbourhood was becoming more dangerous. Respondents were also worried about particular crimes, including being attacked and unable to protect themselves (50.6%), having their homes broken into (51.4%), and about damage or vandalism to their property (75.3%). Asking about perceptions of safety specifically within respondents' own neighbourhoods is important to capture accurate and meaningful insights. Focusing on a familiar area helps avoid bias that can arise when people judge the safety of unfamiliar places, ensuring that concerns reflect lived experiences rather than assumptions or stereotypes about other communities, such as downtown areas.

Residents' perceptions of safety were largely consistent across both years, with daytime safety remaining very high in 2018 (91.1%) and 2024 (91.8%). Confidence in child safety increased from 65.2% in 2018 to 73.8% in 2024, while perceptions of nighttime safety also improved

slightly, rising from 44.9% to 51.4%. However, concerns about break-ins increased as well, from 51.4% in 2018 to 64.1% in 2024, indicating heightened worry about property crime. At the same time, worry about drugs in the neighbourhood decreased from 59.0% to 49.1%, and fear of being attacked declined slightly from 44.0% to 39.7%. Beliefs that the neighbourhood was becoming more dangerous remained stable, shifting only marginally from 40.7% in 2018 to 41.6% in 2024, showing little overall change in broader perceptions of neighbourhood risk. (Hodgkinson, 2019).

## Perceptions of Neighbourhood Disorder

Most of the respondents felt there was not much social disorder in their neighbourhoods. The perceptions on most forms of social disorders were also low, and social disorder was not seen on a regular basis (8.4%-29.1% reported at least a few times a month). A large portion of respondents reported seeing people acting drunk or high, and people driving erratically with some frequency (36.8% and 47.9% reported at least a few times a month). Compared to the 2018 findings, the 2024 results show a similar pattern in which acting drunk or high, arguing or fighting, people selling drugs, and panhandlers asking for money continue to be among the most frequently observed forms of social disorder.

On physical disorder in the neighbourhood, most participants (64.7%) reported having at least one place in their neighbourhood that needs better lighting. In general, the perceptions of neighbourhood disorder were high as a large portion (42.7%-47.2%) of respondents reported having at least one form of physical disorder present in their neighbourhood. Comparison with the 2018 findings shows strong consistency across time. Physical disorder remains relatively limited in most neighbourhoods, with lighting issues continuing to be the most common concern.

## Perceptions of Police and Procedural Justice

Most of the respondents felt that the police believe and act in ways consistent with their moral values (59.8-84.9%). Generally, the respondents reflected favourably on the law and procedural justice. Most participants agreed that the police were courteous, treat people with respect, make decisions based on facts, take time to listen to people, and treat people fairly and with dignity. Fewer respondents agreed that the police care about problems in their neighbourhood, do a good job of preventing crime, and enforce laws effectively. In particular, respondents indicated that they did not agree that the police did a good job addressing drug activity.

Understanding whether community members believe that police share and act according to their moral values is crucial for building trust and legitimacy in law enforcement. When residents perceive the police as courteous, respectful, fair, and attentive, it strengthens the sense of procedural justice, encouraging cooperation and positive engagement. That said, the lower levels of agreement highlight important challenges in community trust and confidence in police effectiveness. When residents feel that police are not sufficiently attentive to local problems, are ineffective at preventing crimes, or fail to address specific issues like drug activity, it can undermine support for the police and reduce public willingness to cooperate with law enforcement. Addressing these concerns is vital for improving police-community relations and enhancing overall community safety.

Respondents were mixed in their views of police behaviour and effectiveness. Although 59.8% of participants reported that the police are doing a good job of preventing crime, many also raised concerns related to limited police visibility, long response times, and experiences or perceptions of discrimination based on race and class. These issues matter because confidence in police effectiveness is central to public safety and community cooperation. When only about half of participants feel the police are keeping the community safe, it signals potential gaps in trust that may discourage reporting and weaken police–community relationships. Addressing these concerns is therefore critical for strengthening legitimacy and fostering a safer, more inclusive environment.

Regarding procedural justice, most participants expressed strong support for obeying the law, emphasizing that following legal rules benefits the community and that lawbreaking is rarely justified. However, there was noticeably lower agreement with statements suggesting that bending or breaking the law could be acceptable in certain morally ambiguous situations. This pattern indicates a strong normative commitment to legal obedience while also revealing that some residents hold more nuanced views about the law's fairness and flexibility. These complexities highlight the need for ongoing dialogue about legal legitimacy and how residents evaluate the justice of the laws that govern them. Finally, compared to the 2018 survey, there are no major differences in the core perceptions of police and procedural justice. Residents in both versions generally view the police as fair and respectful but express concerns about crime prevention, visibility, and drug enforcement.

## Health and Well-being

Survey results highlight notable challenges in personal health issues experienced by the participants in the past two weeks at the time of data collection. The most frequently reported concern was feeling tired or having little energy, experienced at least several days by 64.8% of respondents. Sleep-related problems (trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or oversleeping) were also common, with 51.7% of participants reporting this. Around one-third of respondents reported low interest or pleasure in activities (35%) and poor appetite or overeating (35%), while feeling down or depressed was noted by 32%. Other issues included trouble concentrating (28.1%) and feelings of worthlessness or failure (27.8%). Less common, but highly concerning, were thoughts of being better off dead or self-harm, reported daily by 6.1% of participants.

Daily experiences of anxiety-related symptoms were less common but still present across the sample. About 5.9% reported feeling nervous or on edge, irritable, or afraid that something awful might happen. Excessive worrying was also notable, with 5.6% reporting worrying daily. Smaller proportions reported trouble relaxing (4.9%) or being unable to control worrying (4.9%). The least frequent but still concerning was restlessness so severe it made sitting still difficult, reported by 2.5% of respondents. Although daily prevalence was low, the persistence of these symptoms suggests a consistent need for accessible mental health supports and early intervention. According to the vulnerability perspective, individuals who feel physically weaker or less able to defend themselves perceive themselves to be at a higher risk of victimization (Ferraro, 1995; Hale, 1996). In addition, poor mental health may have a feedback loop with fear of crime (Lorenc et al., 2012).

The majority of participants reported getting sleep within the recommended range, but variability exists. Most respondents (63.2%) reported 6–8 hours of sleep per night. Specifically, 26.7% slept 6 to <7 hours, 23.8% slept 7 to <8 hours, and 12.7% slept 8 to <9 hours. Another 12.9% reported shorter sleep of 5 to <6 hours. A smaller group experienced insufficient sleep: 4.7% reported 4 to <5 hours, while fewer than 3% reported under 4 hours. Very long sleep durations (9 hours or more) were rare, at about 2.4%. Overall, while most respondents fall within the recommended range, a substantial minority report sleep durations below healthy thresholds, raising concerns about associated health impacts. Sleep is consistently linked to physical and mental health and these findings may prove helpful in creating a more nuanced understanding of community health and well-being.

## Limitations and Future Directions

As with any research, this study is limited in a few ways. The length of the survey may have discouraged some participation. The survey was comprehensive and required 15 to 20 minutes to complete. As such, some residents may be unwilling to commit the time to complete the survey. This length, however, allows for more meaningful analysis as it provides rich and detailed data for decision makers. Data standardization also required removing respondents who did not complete the majority of the survey. Doing so may have removed important information from certain participants. However, removing surveys that were largely incomplete was important as holistic analysis requires the majority of questions to have been answered.

While we are able to make many comparisons to the previous data collection conducted in 2018, due to the anonymity of the survey design, we were unable to contact the same participants in 2024. However, all efforts were made to ensure data collection was representative of the population in both years. Furthermore, the survey replicated many of the questions posed in the 2018 survey. However, some questions were removed, while others were added. As a result, some comparisons can not be made. Finally, the City of North Battleford commissioned the original survey in 2018, and participated heavily in recruiting efforts, including data collection support through students at North West College, radio advertisements, and community outreach events. Unfortunately, while the City was able to offer recreation centre coupons as incentives to participate in 2024, other recruitment efforts were not replicated. This likely impacted participation rates in 2024.

This study provides some important insight into opportunities for community safety and crime prevention. Community safety can be improved through neighbourhood initiatives, ongoing maintenance of public space, and partnerships that address root causes of crime, while police–community trust can be built through transparent communication, alternative response models, and restorative approaches. Fostering social cohesion through resident-led projects and regularly replicating the survey will ensure that progress is tracked and strategies remain responsive to evolving community needs. In addition, integrating health and safety strategies to strengthen community resilience. Expanding accessible mental health and wellness supports, alongside preventative programs addressing fatigue, sleep issues, and anxiety, is essential.

## Conclusion

The 2024 North Battleford Community Safety Survey, conducted by Wilfrid Laurier University with 405 residents, finds that perceptions of safety and crime have remained largely stable since 2018, with very high feelings of daytime safety but continued concern about nighttime safety and property crime. While most respondents feel well integrated into their neighbourhoods and report generally positive relationships with neighbours, formal community involvement and collective action remain relatively low. About one-third of respondents experienced victimization in the past two years. The most common form of victimization was theft from property. Perceptions of police were mixed: residents largely view officers as respectful and fair, but fewer believe police are effective at preventing crime, addressing drug activity, or keeping the community safe overall. Concerns about vandalism, break-ins, and neighbourhood disorder persist, particularly around lighting and visible social disorder, while health findings highlight widespread fatigue, sleep issues, and notable mental-health stressors. Overall, the findings point to the importance of strengthening informal social cohesion, addressing environmental disorder, improving police-community trust, and integrating health and safety strategies into future community safety planning.

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