

# Measuring Perceived Neighborhood Safety among Participants Enrolled in the Florida Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program

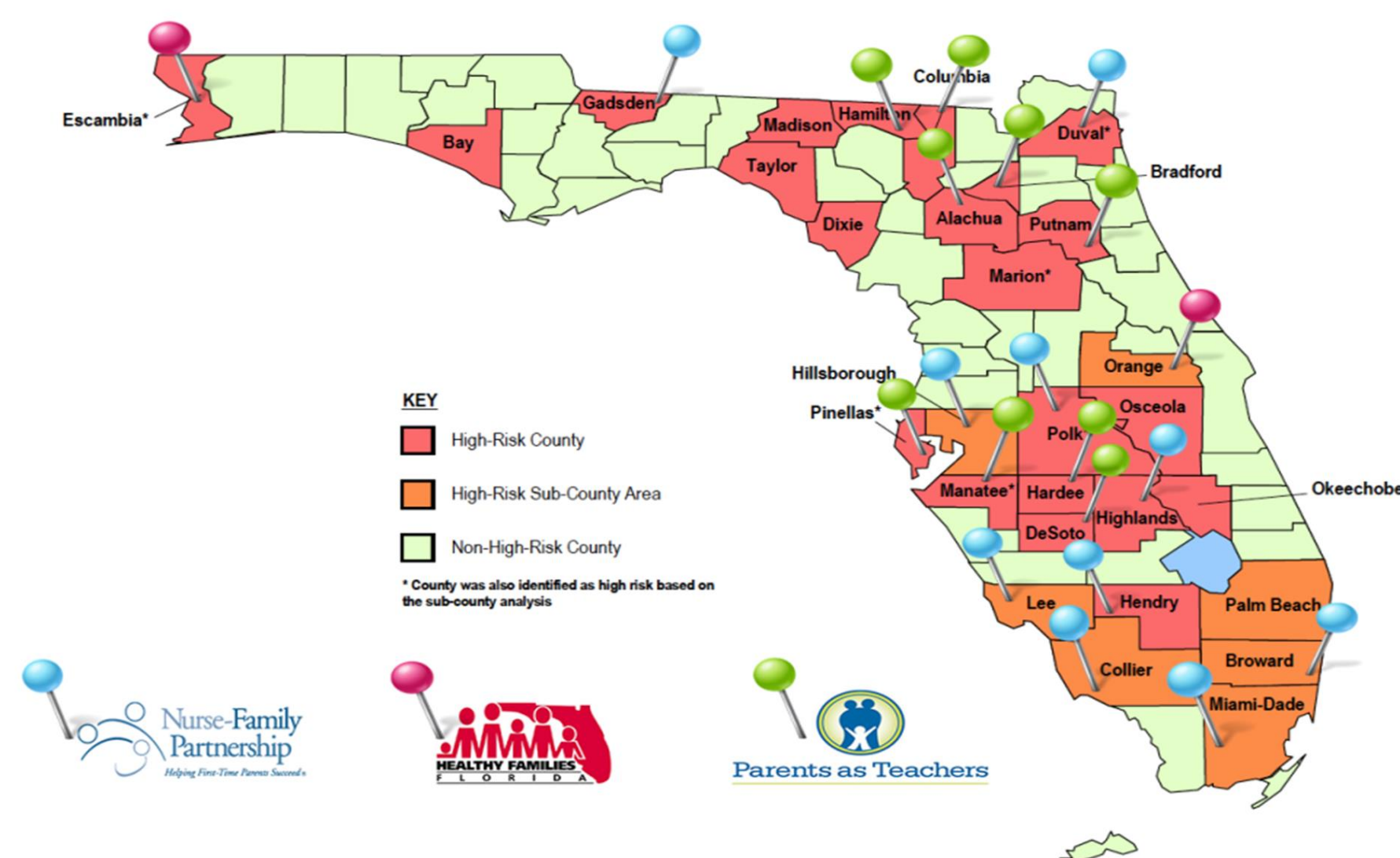


Birriel, P.,<sup>1</sup> Shukla, R.,<sup>2</sup> Hailey, K.,<sup>1</sup> Sanon, R.,<sup>3</sup> Jean- Baptiste, E.,<sup>1</sup> Michael-Asalu, A.,<sup>2</sup> Warren, A.,<sup>1</sup> & Marshall, J.<sup>1</sup>

University of South Florida, College of Public Health, <sup>1</sup>Department of Community & Family Health, <sup>2</sup>Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, <sup>3</sup>Department of Global Health

## Background

- Perceptions of neighborhood safety have been linked to:
  - Social & asocial behaviors (connectedness, cohesion and support)
  - Future behaviors (educational attainment)
  - Physical & mental health outcomes (anxiety)
- Statistics suggest that 60% of children have experienced some form of violence in their neighborhood, home, or school (De Jesus, Puleo, Shelton & Emmons, 2010; Santiago & Galster, 2014).
- A priority of the Florida Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) is to support pregnant women and families in at-risk communities.
- This study aims to collect data on families' perceptions of neighborhood and home safety.



## Methods

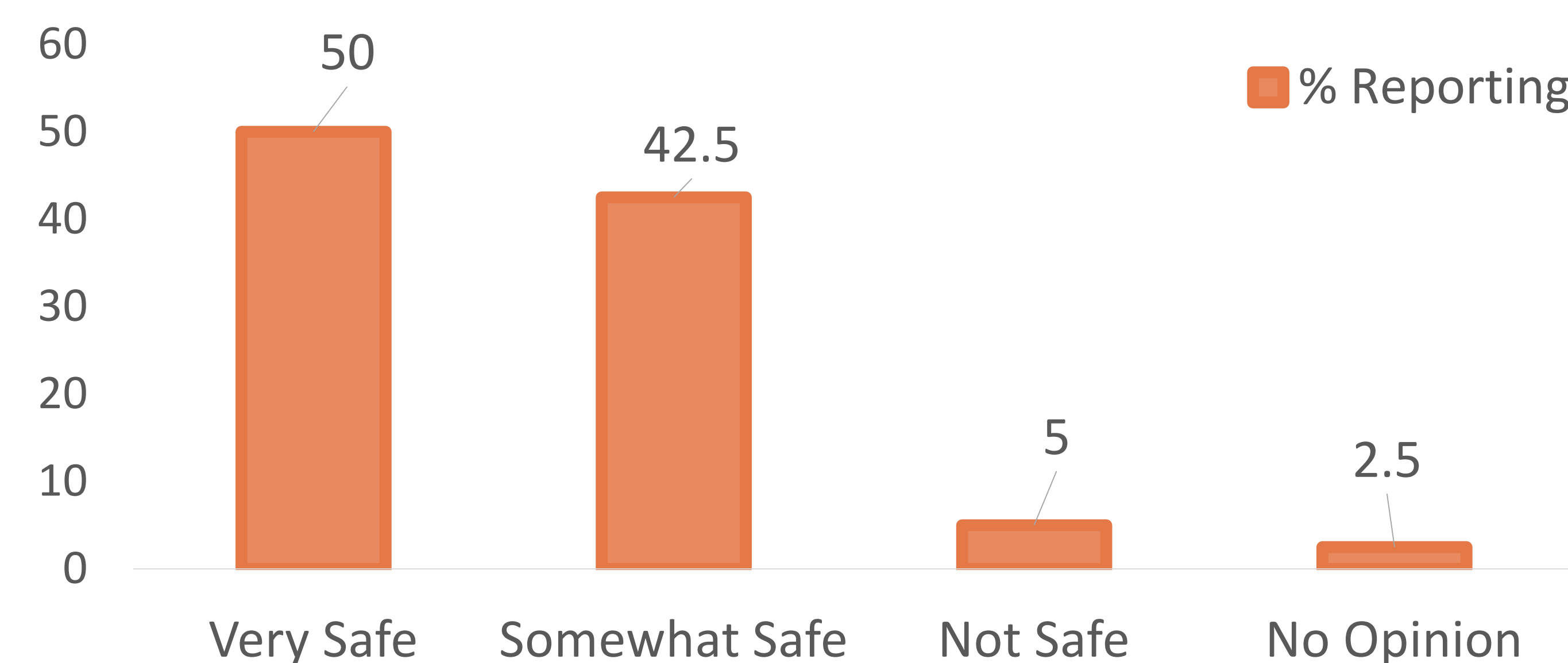
- During spring 2016, in-depth telephone interviews were conducted in English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole with Florida MIECHV participants regarding stressors and supports, including perceptions of safety in their neighborhoods.
- Safety was assessed via a brief survey that rated:
  - Safety at home
  - General feeling of safety in the neighborhood
  - Safety walking alone during the day and night
  - Open-ended responses were also reviewed.

## Results

Of the 40 women who participated in the interviews: 70% were Black and 28% White, while 25% reported Hispanic for ethnicity. 44% of the women were between the ages of 25-29 and 82.5% obtained a high school diploma or greater.

### How safe do you consider your neighborhood?

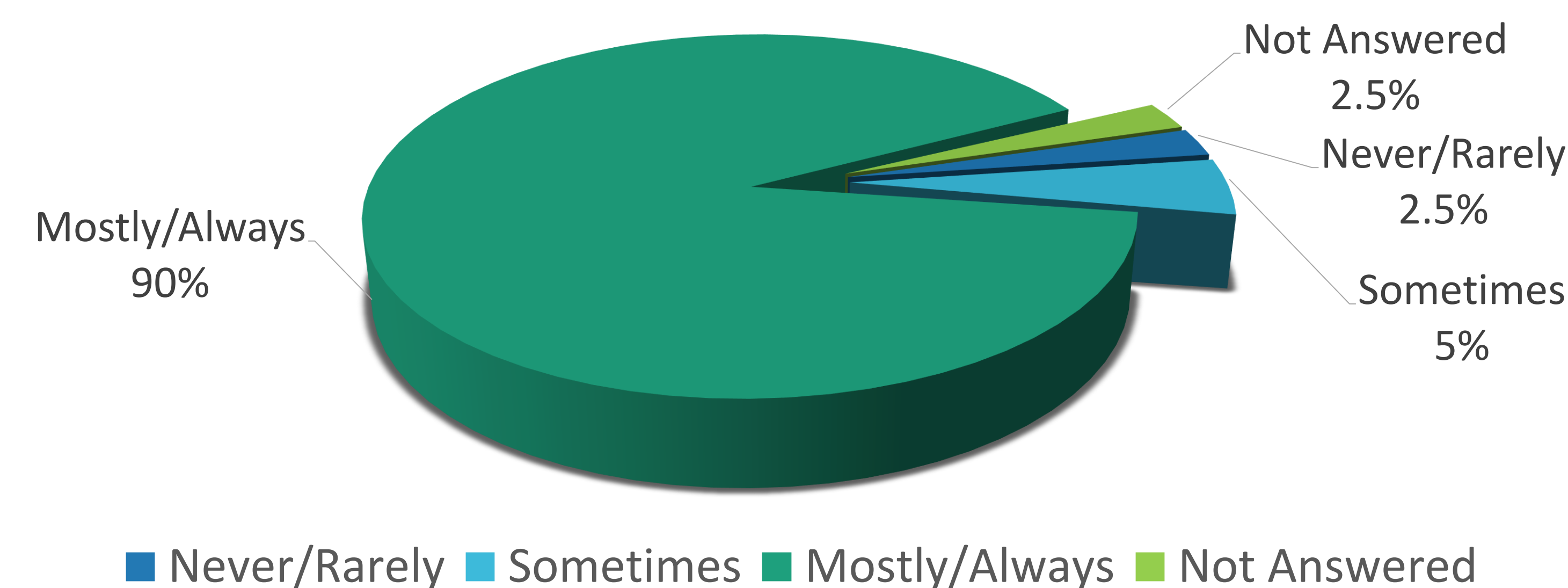
Half of participants perceived their neighborhood as *very safe*, which was followed closely by 42% feeling *somewhat safe*.



*"[At] New Year's, maybe a couple blocks away, two people were murdered here. I don't know. You just got to be careful and watch who you open your door for and all that types of stuff." -Manatee County*

### Do you feel safe in your home?

Most of the women (90%) felt safe in the protection of their homes.

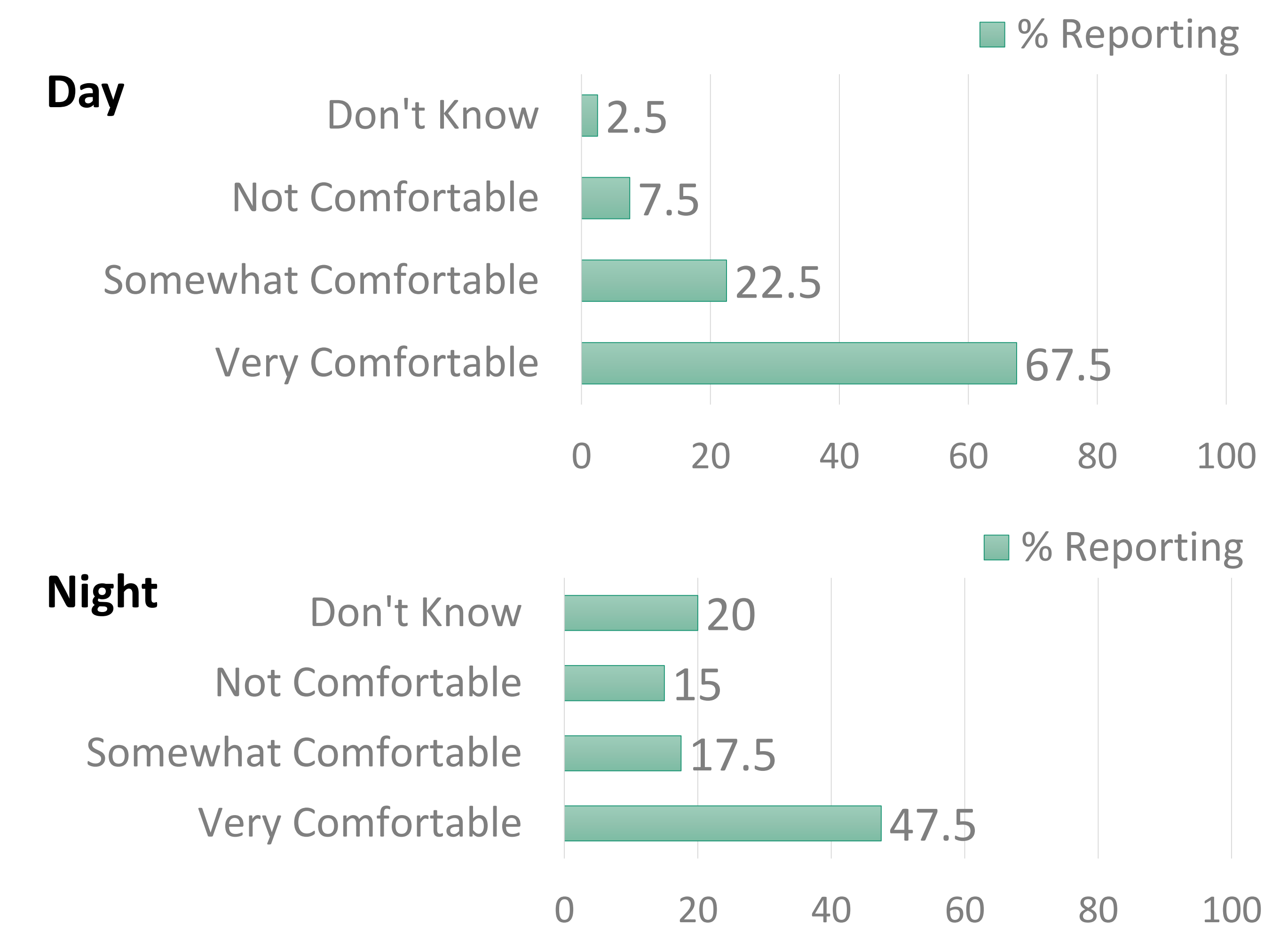


*"[I feel safe] because anything will be turned into a weapon if you go and break into my house, even a pencil." - Escambia County*

## Results

### How comfortable do you feel walking alone in your neighborhood?

Most women reported feeling *very comfortable* walking alone in their neighborhood during the day (67%), versus only 47% feeling *very comfortable* at night.



*"Because I can't see what people are doing and if they're doing stupid things during the daytime, [Laughter] they're more than likely to be doing stupid things at night too, and there are more people out at night wandering around when they should not be." - Escambia*

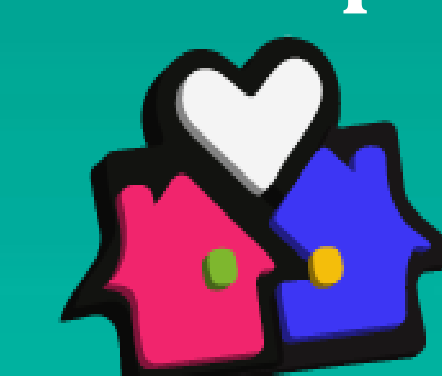
## Discussion

Survey results and interview narratives improved our understanding of factors that participants associate with the perception of safety.

- Increased perceived safety:** Relationship with neighbors, access to community centers, vicinity to playgrounds
- Decreased perceived safety:** Past experiences of crime, violence, or racism

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