



Advocacy

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Advocacy

One in Four is a needs responsive agency; we are here to help our clients in whatever way might be necessary. In responding to individual needs psychotherapy is obviously a core response, however, in the majority of cases there are wider health, social care and justice needs. In order to respond to these needs, One in Four has established a dynamic advocacy service that works with both women or men seeking support to address their individual needs.

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As a core service at One in Four, advocacy has experienced heavy demand since its inception. Indeed, the level of demand has been such that the service has found itself seriously under-resourced. One in Four's current funding only provides one member of staff for the programme – the Advocacy Co-ordinator – who, with support from the Director, has undertaken all the work involved in this programme. This lack of resources has meant that the service has neither been able to respond fully to demand nor develop the programme further.

The advocacy programme can be broken into two work streams – direct client work and in-direct client work, though both categories are obviously closely inter-linked.

Direct client work:

Between February and December 2003 the Advocacy Programme undertook in-depth, one-to-one work with 113 individuals. Forty eight percent of them were male. This direct work did not include additional advocacy and support work done with many more women and men via email, telephone or letter.

In depth case work:

- Arranging and facilitating meetings with individuals to discuss their needs and explore all available options.
- Facilitating meetings between individuals and the Gardaí and supporting them through any resulting criminal justice process, including court accompaniment where appropriate.
- Supporting individuals and providing appropriate advice on the civil judicial process and referral to appropriate legal advice, including court accompaniment where appropriate.
- Informing individuals of their legal, health and social care entitlements.
- Supporting individuals by providing them with advice on the application procedures and hearing process of the Residential Institution Redress Board and by referring them to appropriate legal advice.
- Assisting individuals in their application for records under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Supporting individual witnesses and providing appropriate advice as they gave evidence to the Ferns Inquiry.
- On-referral to appropriate agencies in order to meet individual needs.

The Ferns Inquiry

Between April 2002 and December 2003, One in Four supported twenty individuals who wished to give evidence to the Ferns Inquiry. The primary focus of this work was to support individuals in an appropriate manner while also remaining independent of the work of the Inquiry itself. The support provided to individuals seeking to give evidence to the Inquiry involved:

- Working closely with individuals in order to empower them by providing safe and clear contact with the Ferns Inquiry.
- Arranging travel and accommodation for individuals giving evidence to the Inquiry, when necessary.
- Arranging legal advice for individuals, when required.
- Providing a supportive space for individuals at our offices before and after their visit to the Inquiry.
- Accompanying individuals to the offices of the Ferns Inquiry, if they so wished.
- Ensuring that the process of making a submission to the Inquiry was as painless as possible for the individual.



ADVOCACY CLIENT WORK February – December 2003

Table 2.0: Categories of work

The following table illustrates the type of work undertaken through the Advocacy Programmes with clients. It must be noted that many individuals required assistance in relation to different processes, for example, some individuals required support and information on the criminal justice and civil processes simultaneously.

Type of Work	Numbers	Action
Criminal Justice Support	39 cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information on the criminal justice process. ● Referral to the Gardaí & facilitating meetings. ● General Support. ● Information on the criminal court process. ● Support through court cases. ● Support individuals upset with the criminal justice process and length of case. ● Information and support on the public prosecution process and the refusal of cases by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).
Civil Cases	23 cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information provision on the civil process. ● Explanation of issues in the civil process. ● Referral to solicitors. ● Arranging meetings, where appropriate, with solicitors. ● Court support.
Miscellaneous	29 cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Referral to health board. ● Letter writing. ● Referral to book publishers. ● Third level college support. ● General information on services of One in Four.
Ferns Inquiry	20 cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide up-date information and a point of contact for individuals seeking to participate in the Inquiry. ● Working closely with individuals in order to empower them by providing safe and clear contact with the Ferns Inquiry. ● Arrange travel and accomodation for individuals giving evidence to the Inquiry, when necessary. ● Arrange legal advice and representation for individuals when required. ● Provide a supportive space for individuals at our offices before and after their visit to the Inquiry. ● Accompany people to the offices of the Ferns Inquiry, if they so wished.
Redress	18 cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sourcing Support. ● Explaining the application form. ● Transcribing personal information. ● Referral to solicitors.
Freedom of Infomation	3 cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Completion of Freedom of information applications
Housing	1 case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arranging housing ● Writing letters to Housing Welfare Officer

Indirect client work:

Indirect client work is informed by the experiences and issues highlighted through the direct client work. During the period of this report, this work included:

- Research on issues applicable to the Advocacy Programme.
- Report writing on issues that are applicable to the Advocacy Programme and wider organisation.
- Policy analysis and policy writing for internal and external purposes.
- Assisting in the development of national inquiries into child abuse.
- Developing and maintaining effective links with outside agencies.
- Co-operating with and participating in the media on issues that are applicable to the Advocacy Programme.

The following are issues that the Advocacy Programme has worked on between February – December 2003:

- Successfully lobbying Government to ensure that amendments to the Freedom of Information Act passed into legislation in 2003 did not negatively impact upon women and men abused in institutions and other settings and seeking access to records in that regard.
- Research and preparation of a detailed submission on the sexual exploitation and forced labour of children in Ireland to the United Nations Committee on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.
- Establishment of and participation in a working group to lobby and prepare for a statutory inquiry into clerical sexual abuse in the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin.
- Research for and preparation of a detailed submission to the Ferns Inquiry

Main Issues in the first year of the programme

Looking back over the work of the Advocacy Programme at One in Four over this period and listening to the expressed needs of our clients, there were two words we heard most often: information and justice.

The experience of sexual abuse and/or sexual violence is a crime, which in the moment of its perpetration, renders the victim powerless. In the case of child abuse, this powerlessness may be a result of the child's inability to comprehend what has happened, to make sense of that experience and respond in any healthy way. For those who have experienced sexual violence as adults, the taboo of sexual victimisation and the shame projected onto the experience may not allow them to disclose their assault and seek support. For many re-visiting these experiences information is key.

Through our work in advocacy over the past year, we believe that information, an understanding of the experience of sexual abuse and/or sexual violence and the systems that work to respond, can allow the person to reclaim their power. This is a lesson we learn each and every day as we undertake the work of advocacy in One in Four. The need for clear access to and an understanding of information is essential. Too often individuals can be overwhelmed with information, and it therefore must be communicated in a clear and objective manner.

Many women and men who have experienced sexual abuse and/or sexual violence turn to our systems of justice, both criminal and civil, in an effort to seek a response to the crimes they have been subject to. There is often a huge need for justice, for validation and to ensure that the responsibility for the crime no longer rests on their shoulder. Many seek such justice through our criminal and civil justice system, through systems of redress or investigation. Many have spent years waiting for such justice to prevail only to find they have been completely failed by these systems of justice. The impacts of this failure can be devastating. For many it can represent another level of not being heard, of not being believed; a further and devastating abuse.

The Irish justice system, in common with those in other mature, republican democracies, is supposed to respond to crimes against the vulnerable in particular. We are conditioned to expect that when we are violently assaulted and injured, our systems of justice can and will respond; the reality is that often they cannot. It is a core function of the Advocacy Programme to inform, assist and guide our clients through the varied justice systems that seek to respond to sexual crime. In doing so we have a duty to be candid and objective as to the possible outcome of any such engagement. This can mean that we find ourselves supporting and working with the devastating disappointment and terrible despair that a client feels when all possible options are exhausted. It beholds us to fundamentally examine the reasons for such failures of justice and to work to change flawed systems in the years ahead.

Deirdre Fitzpatrick
Advocacy Co-ordinator



Advocacy: Data & Analysis

Figure 2.0. Number of Enquiries to Advocacy.

Female ●
Male ●

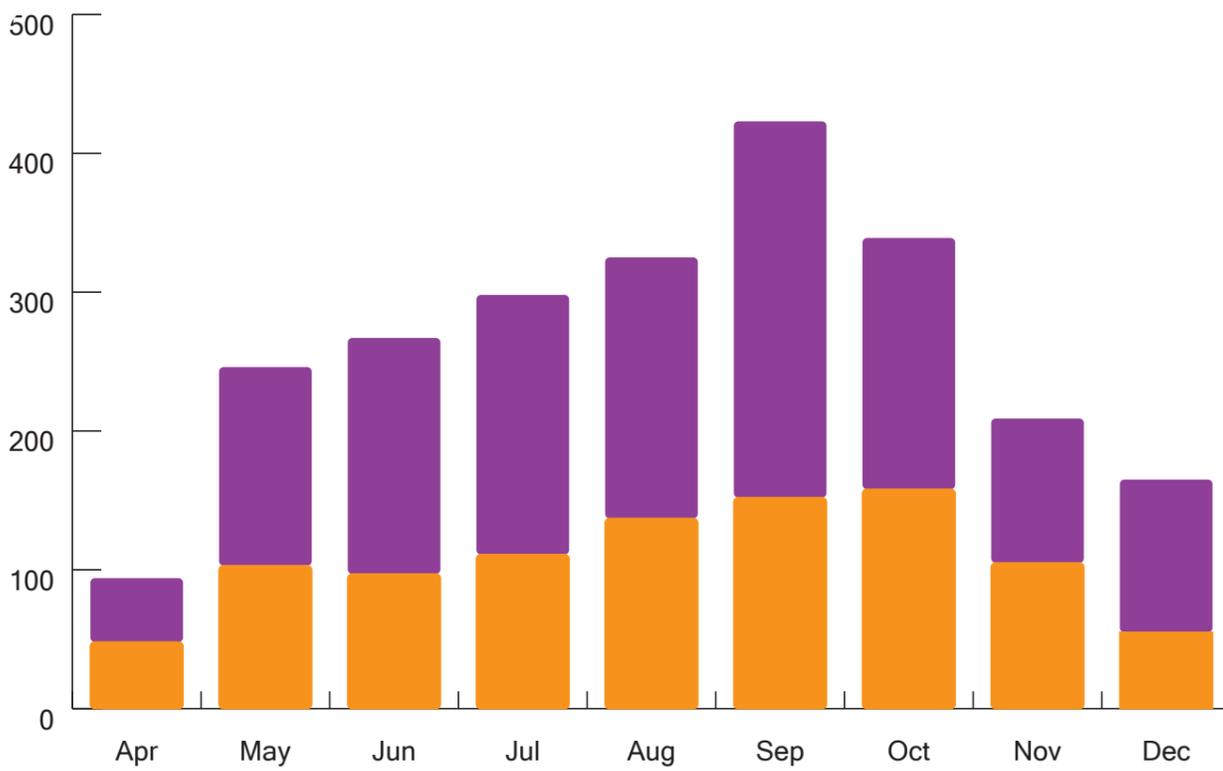


Figure 2.0 shows the breakdown of Enquiries to Advocacy in the period April 2003 to December 2003.

Fig 2.1 shows a breakdown by gender of the number of females (58) and males (55) who attended one-to-one advocacy meetings.

Figure 2.1. Breakdown by gender.

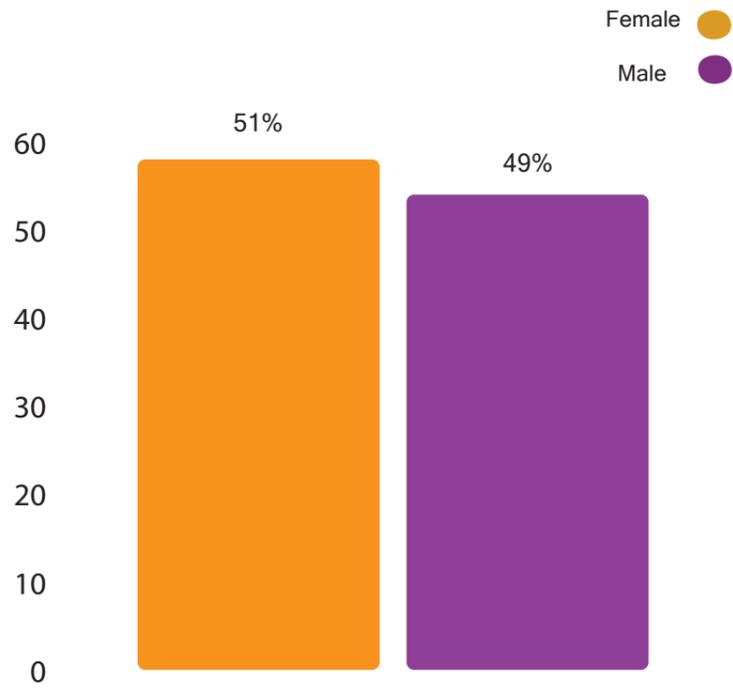
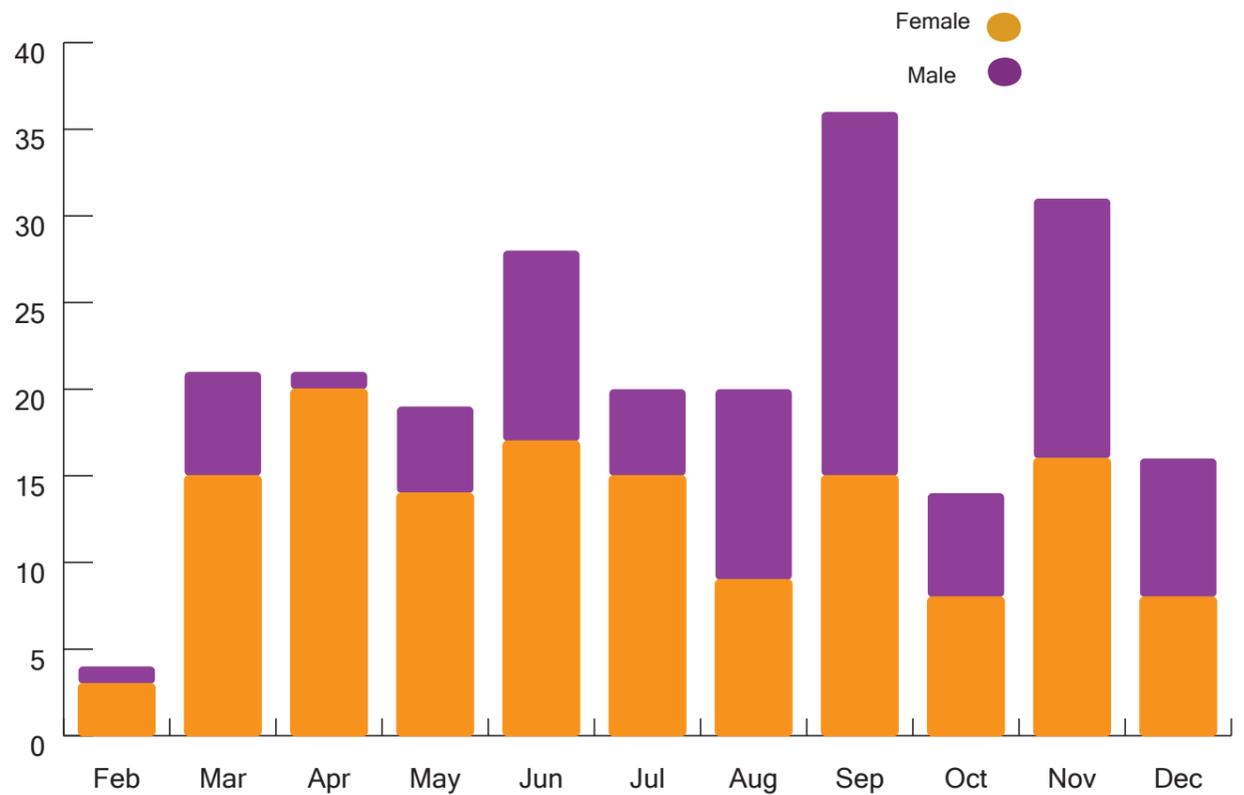


Fig 2.2 shows a breakdown by gender of one-to-one client meetings over the period February 2003 to December 2003.

Figure 2.2. Number of one-to-one meetings with individuals.



Advocacy: Context of Abuse

Figure 2.3. Overall percentage of female and male perpetrators .

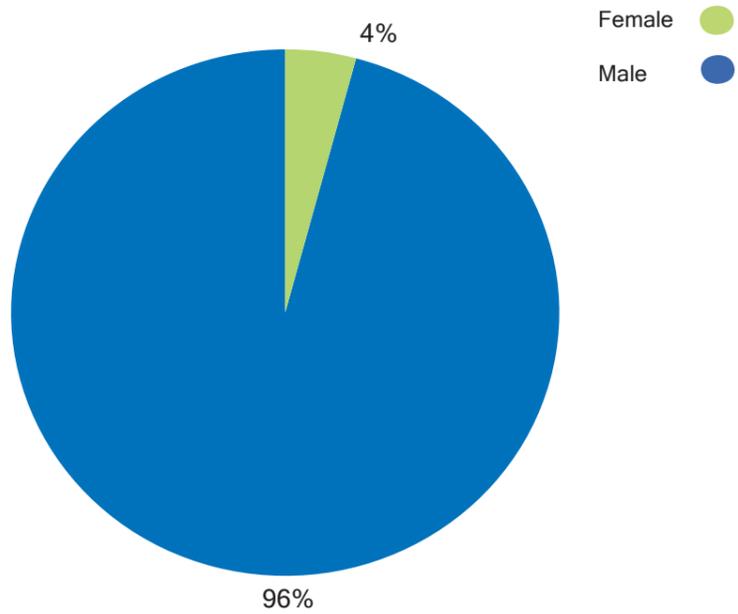


Fig 2.3 shows the overall percentage of female and male perpetrators as indicated through advocacy client disclosures.

Figure 2.4. Shows the context of sexual abuse and/or sexual violence.

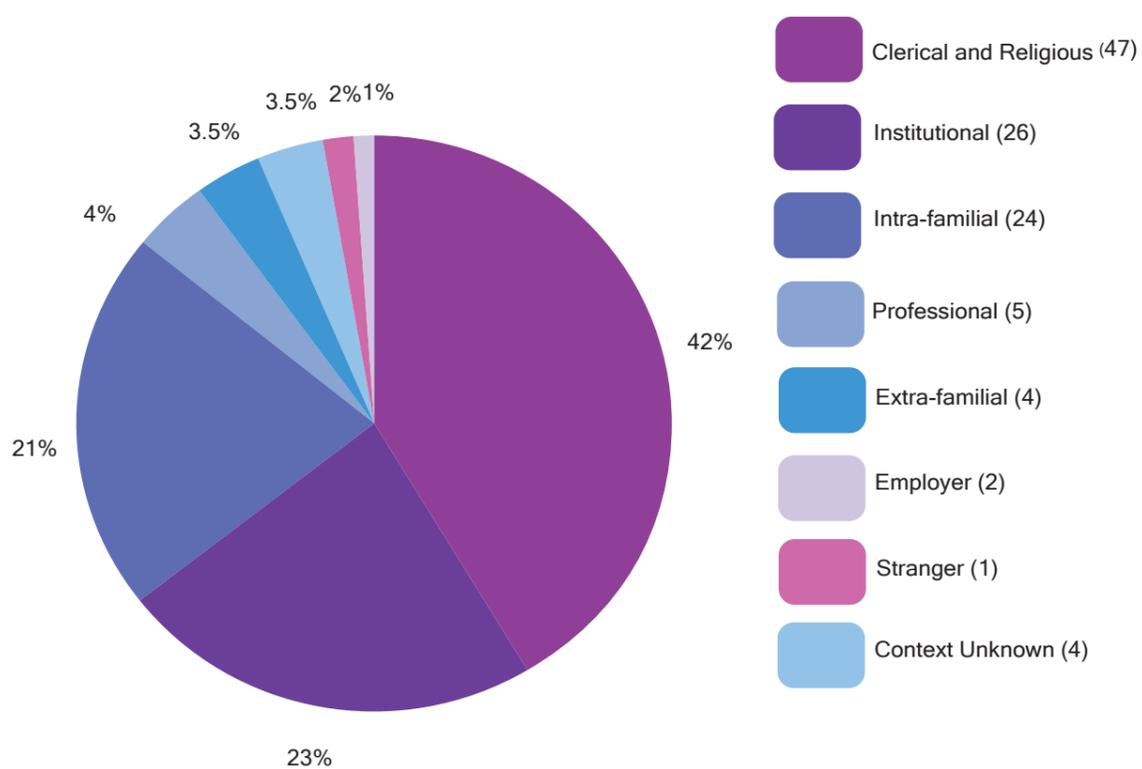


Fig 2.4 shows a breakdown of the context in which sexual abuse and/or sexual violence occurred.

Fig 2.5 shows a breakdown of the context of sexual abuse and/or sexual violence by perpetrator.

The size of each chart reflects the scale of the number of perpetrators within each of the categories.

It is broken down by percentages of female and male perpetrators.

Figure 2.5. Gender of perpetrator within each context

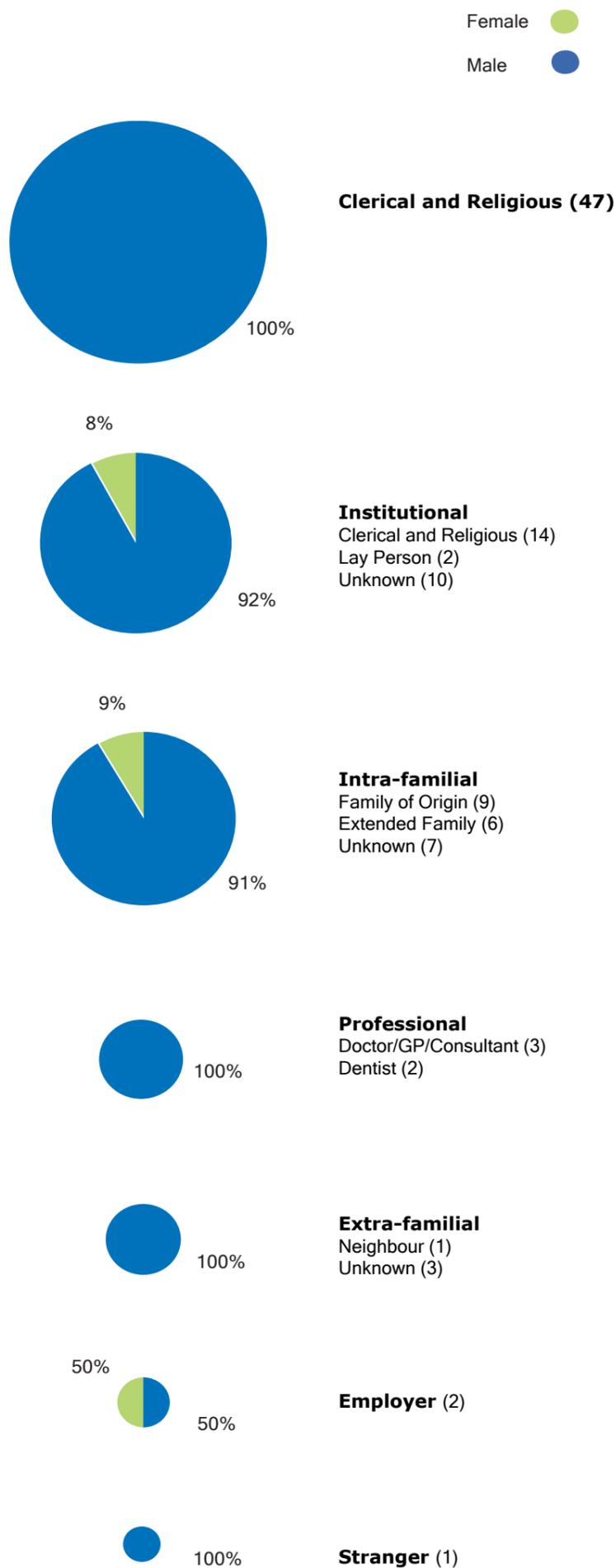


Figure 2.5. excludes the context unknown category featured in Figure 2.4. as neither the context of abuse nor gender of perpetrator has been disclosed.