

HEARING MEN'S STORIES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MEN
WHO PERPETRATE VIOLENCE ON THEIR INTIMATE PARTNERS

By

STEPHEN ANDREW WARD

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2008

© 2008 Stephen Andrew Ward

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

What is contained in these pages is the result of the efforts of many persons. I will begin with Dr. Diane Yendol-Hoppey who helped me immensely with the process of doing qualitative research. Her teaching style, encouragement as a teacher and person, and her expertise in this area allowed me to take my first steps in accomplishing this goal of writing a qualitative dissertation.

I want to thank Dr. James Archer for being a support, teacher, and supervisor. His keen insight prompted me to look at other perspectives in this study and to follow some needed guidance in terms of my interviewing. His pleasant smile was a constant encouragement to me as a student and researcher.

Dr. Susan Smith came to teach at the University shortly after I started my course work. Her humble approach to teaching was a powerful model for me personally. She invited her students, including me, to learn as she learned. That was refreshing. She was patient and challenging, qualities that she has brought to my project and dissertation. I appreciate her willingness to help me when I have most needed her help.

I would like to thank Dr. James Pitts for his role in my committee process. Dr. Pitts reached out to me and spent time with me, just talking, cajoling, and taking me under his wing. I am grateful for his presence in my school-life.

Finally, words are truly inadequate to express the admiration and gratitude I have for Dr. Silvia Echevarria Doan. In my opinion she has gone beyond any expectations a student could have for a supervisory chair. She gave me my first initiation to qualitative research and introduced me to domestic violence through her course on that subject. The several courses I had under her taught me to understand systems theory, dynamics of the family, and then she guided me through the counseling process with her wise and compassionate supervision. She

has meticulously read and reread my manuscripts offering needed insight, and then she carefully guided me to work for excellence in finishing my research and dissertation. It has been a long and tedious venture, but her encouragement and counsel have continually been present through the journey. I am thankful for her.

I would like to thank my wife Linda for her constant encouragement and patience. She has never complained about time at the library, time researching, time interviewing, time typing, or time writing. She is part of a great team that I was able to surround myself with and for which I will be forever grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	3
ABSTRACT.....	7
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	9
Statement of the Problem.....	10
Significance of the Study.....	12
Research Questions.....	18
Definitions	19
Methodological Framework.....	19
2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	23
Evolution of Public and Professional Awareness and Response.....	24
Wife Abuse	25
Dimensions of Wife Abuse.....	26
Wife Abuse is Multifaceted.....	26
The Dynamic Nature of Wife Abuse.....	27
The Abusive Partner	28
Who They Are	28
Why They Do It.....	32
Treatment Models.....	36
Cycles of Violence.....	38
3 METHODOLOGY	41
Selection of Site and Participants	46
Data Collection	47
Data Analysis.....	49
Reliability and Validity.....	51
4 RESULTS	55
Introductory Remarks	55
Program Attended by Participants	57
The Men in the Study	57
Chaotic Homes.....	63
Beliefs about Women and Their Roles.....	64
Woman as Challenger.....	65
Man as Champion.....	66
The Metaphor of Defense	67

	The Lethal Triangle	68
	The Elusive <i>Meaning</i> of Violence	70
	The Dynamics of Abuse	74
	The Regulating Mechanism.....	75
5	DISCUSSION.....	77
	The Vulnerable Self.....	79
	The <i>Meaning</i> of Violence	83
	Final Thoughts.....	85
	Future Implications.....	91
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	93
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	102

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

HEARING MEN'S STORIES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF MEN
WHO PERPETRATE VIOLENCE ON THEIR INTIMATE PARTNERS

By

Stephen Andrew Ward

May 2008

Chair: Silvia Echevarria Doan
Major: Marriage and Family Counseling

Multiple in-depth interviews were conducted with five men to discover the *meaning* that they gave to their domestic violence. The study followed a phenomenological framework for looking at the behavior of men who were attending a batterer's intervention program.

Many aspects of domestic violence, which had been researched previously, were found to be consistent with this research. These issues would include: The cycle of violence; types of men who abuse; tendencies to minimize, rationalize, and deny behaviors; male entitlement, and vies in regard to women and their roles.

Multiple interviews were conducted with five men following a regimen suggested by the literature in which men were asked to look at their history of violence; their contemporary experience with violence, and especially as that violence relates to female intimate partners; and the *meaning* that men give to their violent behavior. While the results are tentative, there does appear to be some evidence that men need to protect their sense of self which is closely associated with their sense of worth. This sense of worth was expressed as "respect." A triad of experiences was found in the men in this study: They were all bullied as younger adolescents, they had emotionally absent fathers, and they all expressed low self-esteem. One explanation

coming out of this research is that abusive behavior is an attempt, on the part of the perpetrator, to protect this vulnerable sense of self rather than an effort or need to control or exert power over their intimate partner. Further research is required to confirm these findings.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

It was September 11, 2001, a day that brought to America a new awareness. We realized for the first time that we were a vulnerable nation, a nation that was no longer exempt from assault and terrorism. This realization transformed our nation. We developed new strategies and new policies for dealing with a new world that was filled with violence. The safety of Americans had become our preeminent objective. The cost of that project became secondary to a “higher principle,” the welfare of a nation.

There is a different kind of terrorism in America—one that receives far less attention and even less funding to combat, and in the process fails to protect the welfare of people, especially women. This terrorism is known as domestic violence. The purpose of this study was to explore the inner world of a perpetrator in domestic violence situations. Utilizing a phenomenological perspective, semi-structured interviews of men who perpetrate violence on their female partners were conducted to better understand the phenomenon of domestic violence. Men were given an opportunity to explain or tell the story of their abusive behavior and the *meaning* they gave to such behavior. Presser (2004) maintains that personal identities are embedded in stories of self, and that these identities take shape when perpetrators give account for their behavior. As Marton (1997) contends in phenomenology, “An effort is made to uncover all the understandings people have of specific phenomena (battering) and to sort them into conceptual categories” (p. 145). Marton (1997) goes on to emphasize phenomenology’s focus on the essence of the experience, and means by this term, that which is common to different forms of the experience. The need for this study was based on the rising number of women who are assaulted, displaced from their homes, and killed each year (Crowell and Burgess, 1996; Jones, 2001; Jukes, 1999; Kruttschnitt, McLaughlin, and Petrie, 2004; McKenzie, 1995; Wilson, 1997). To recognize the importance of

this study, an ecosystemic perspective depicts how the tsunami or shock waves of domestic violence move out from an intimate partner to children, families, friends, schools, law-enforcement personnel, the medical community, the faith-based community, and finally to the larger community in general. The design of the study included interviews with five men who were attending or had attended a psychoeducational group for batterers. Interviews involved a series of open-ended questions that seeks to understand the phenomenon of domestic violence by probing the *meaning* these men gave to these behaviors.

Statement of the Problem

There exists a broad range of theories concerning the origin and development of violence in men toward their intimate partners (Carden, 1994; Elbow, 1977; Goldner, 1999; Gondolf, 1988). According to the U. S. Department of Justice (1984) “A large proportion of family violence is committed by people who do not see their acts as crimes against victims who do not know they are victims” (p.5, as quoted in Carden, 1994). Empirical data as well as clinical impressions suggest that domestic violence is a phenomenon that is multidimensional (Gelles and Maynard, 1987), and where research in the field has begun to generate complex models for interpersonal violence (Schafer, Caetano, and Cunradi, 2004). Within a given family, its occurrence in one form frequently predicts its occurrence in another—spouse, child, elder, and sibling violence tends to coexist (Carden, 1994). The prevalence of domestic violence in the United States is staggering. The incidence of domestic violence varies, but is estimated to be between two million cases (Toews, McKenry, and Catlett, 2003), and four million cases annually, or one assault every fifteen seconds (Browne, 1993; Crowell and Burgess, 1996; Nelson, 1997). It is important to note that attacks on women that result in injury by male partners occurs 52 per cent of the time compared to 20 per cent of those victimized by strangers (Bachman and Saltzman, 1995). A woman is murdered every six hours in a “crime of passion”

precipitated by some intense emotion such as love, jealousy, fear, or in a state of rage or hate (McKenzie, 1995). Spousal battery killings occur more frequently than rapes, muggings, and automobile accidents combined (Governor's Task Force on Domestic Violence, 1994, State of Florida). Former U. S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop revealed that domestic violence in America is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of fifteen and forty-four (McKenzie, 1995). Almost two million women will be severely assaulted (i.e., punched, kicked, choked, beaten, threatened with a knife or gun) annually (Browne, 1993). Medical expenditures for domestic violence-related incidents cost the United States three to five billion dollars annually, and American business debits another one hundred billion dollars in lost wages, absenteeism, sick leave utilization, and non-productivity (Colorado Domestic Violence Coalition, 1991). Battered women exhibit psychological disorders requiring psychiatric treatment at a rate four to five times greater than non-battered women; and twenty-two to thirty-five percent of those women who seek emergency room treatment have identifiable symptoms traceable to domestic violence (McKenzie, 1995). Is it any wonder that Rynerson and Fishel (1993) conclude, "Domestic violence is a widespread problem affecting families of all races and socioeconomic levels" (p. 253).

Though much research has been completed there is still room for more. The National Research Council (NRC), in their work *Advancing the Federal Research Agenda on Violence Against Women (2004)* contends that though much research has been done in the area of domestic violence, important gaps still remain. Crowell and Burgess (1996) in their preface purport, "Since the mid 1970's the body of research on violence against women has grown, yet misinformation abounds, and we seem little closer to ending violence against women now than 20 years ago" (p. v). This study hopes to add to the field by investigating the phenomenon of

domestic violence to gain understanding of the perpetrators' experience of violence. This "experience of violence" refers to the behavior and *meaning* these men give to their actions as perpetrators.

Significance of the Study

Congress acknowledged violence against women as a national problem in 1994 with its passage of the Violence Against Women Act, which was part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. President Bill Clinton had established an Office on Violence Against Women in the United States Department of Justice by this time. The NRC in 1995 then established The Panel on Research on Violence Against Women to fulfill a congressional request to develop a research agenda to increase the understanding and control of violence against women. The NRC (Crowell and Burgess, 1996) came to this conclusion,

After reviewing the literature on battering, rape, and sexual assault, the panel concludes that significant gaps exist in understanding of the extent and causes of violence against women and the impact and effectiveness of preventive and treatment interventions. In order to begin filling those gaps, the panel recommends a research agenda to facilitate development in four major areas: preventing violence against women, improving research methods, building knowledge about violence against women, and developing the research infrastructure (p. 2).

The NRC also makes specific recommendations about future research, but all of them focus on victims. Though one recommendation seeks further study of the criminal and civil justice system, there is not one recommendation to study the perspective of the perpetrator.

In her qualitative research with men who committed violent crimes, Lois Presser (2004) took the position that narratives offer the respondent an opportunity to develop frames for identity. She further states, "Story making is a dynamic and collaborative process, one that occurs during research encounters as during any other social encounter" (p. 82). Walter and Peller (2000) describe the same process, "Postmodern thinking shifts the location of meaning or knowledge from the individual observer, as seen through the frames and intentions of that

observer, to the domain of the social, that is, to language and conversation” (p. 26). It is in this design that this study will give “voice” to perpetrators in a new way, with the hope that such a procedure will elicit information or data that can enhance the overall study of violent behavior, but in particular the attributions or meanings that men give to their abusive behavior. Alasdair MacIntyre (as quoted in Parry and Doan, 1994) suggests that “conversation, understood widely enough, is the form of human transactions in general” (p. 3). He pursues this by stating that conversations in particular and human actions in general are *enacted narratives* (his emphasis). MacIntyre believes life is narrative—we remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, learn, hate and love by narrative. This makes the story, and voice, of the perpetrator important to the discovery of new insights into violence. While Walker (1995) addresses the ethics of research in the area of domestic violence, more importantly, she states emphatically, “. . . it is important for researchers not to redefine battering behavior for operational convenience so that it becomes so individualistic that it loses comparability with other studies” (p. 264).

This approach to the study of domestic violence is not without its limitations. Violent men tend to minimize and deny the abusive nature of their behavior (Edleson & Berger, 1986; Heckert & Gondolf, 2000; Presser, 2004; Ptacek, 1988; Toews, McKenry, and Catlett, 2003), and to use rationalization and justification (Ptacek, 1988). Another reason men may be reluctant to talk about or deal with violent behavior is shame and shame-based behavior (Balcom, 1991; Fossum and Mason, 1986; Kaufman, 1974; Nathanson, 1987; Potter-Efron and Potter-Efron, 1989). Walker (1995) believes women are more accurate reporters of the entire context of family violence while men are more likely to report only violent acts they commit when they have an intent to harm. She goes on to say that it is difficult for researchers to move from their

previously held positions regarding abuse, but that it is time to come to an understanding that batterers and battering relationships are multidimensional. Studies in domestic violence rely primarily on the respondents' self-reports, which are inevitably subject to recall and a willingness to disclose their personal experience (Hilton, Harris, and Rice, 2003; Yoshihama, Clum, Crampton, and Gillespie, 2000). Another salient issue in reporting is the fear of reprisal as it relates to the criminal justice system (Schafer, Caetano, and Clark, 2002). In this study, two of the men had cases pending in court, and one was completing a five-year probation period.

In an effort to add to the field of research, the purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe and understand the *meaning* that men who perpetrate violence on their intimate partners give to this behavior. Phenomenology offers a fresh approach at looking at the phenomenon of violence in domestic relationships (Giorgi, 1985; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Moustakas, 1994; and Sokolowski, 2000). It is a means by which men can give 'an account' of abusive behavior, and recognizes the reality and truth of phenomena—the things that appear (Sokolowski, 2000). Moustakas (1994) summarizes this approach succinctly by stating that phenomenology “involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience” (p. 13). The aim is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss the phenomenological process, and contend that it is an approach that leads to a practical understanding of meanings and actions.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) believe that the phenomenological point of view requires “a set of assumptions that are different from those used when human behavior is approached with the purpose of finding ‘facts’ and ‘causes’” (p. 34). Coming from this perspective, an attempt is

made to understand the meaning of the event. Bogdan and Biklen further state, “Phenomenologists do not assume they know what things mean to the people they are studying. Phenomenological inquiry begins with silence. This “silence” is an attempt to grasp what it is they are studying. What phenomenologists emphasize, then, are the subjective aspects of people’s behavior. They attempt to gain entry into the conceptual world of their subjects in order to understand how and what meaning they construct around events in their daily lives” (p. 34). They believe that to understand the point of view of the batterer, while not a perfect process, “distorts the subjects’ experience the least” (p. 35).

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1984), “The phenomenologist views human behavior, what people say and do, as a product of how people define their world. The task of the phenomenologist and, for us, the qualitative methodologist, is to capture this process of interpretation. As has been emphasized, the phenomenologist attempts to see things from other people’s point of view” (pp. 8-9). Taylor and Bogdan (1984) continue by discussing a school of thought subsumed under phenomenology called *symbolic interactionism*. There are three basic premises in symbolic interactionism:

- People act toward things, including other people, on the basis of the meanings these things have for them. Thus people do not simply respond to stimuli or act out cultural scripts. It is the meaning that determines action.
- Meanings are social products that arise during interaction. In other words, the meaning grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing (battering).
- Social actors attach meanings to situations, others, things, and themselves through a process of interpretation. The actor selects, checks, suspends, regroups, and transforms the meanings in light of the situation in which he is placed and the direction of his action (pp. 9-10).

In this context, the researcher brackets or suspends his own belief in reality to study the reality of everyday life for the abusive man. The task is to determine how these men see, describe, and explain order in their world.

Little research with perpetrators has been carried-out in a way as proposed in this study. Ptacek (1988) did conduct a qualitative study of men who had perpetrated violence on their intimate partners. One of the key questions in that study was to explain what they were thinking and feeling during all of the episodes. He concluded his comments with these words, “This study of what batterers have to say about wife beating suggests a context in which to pursue further research on this issue” (p. 155). Holtzworth-Munroe and Anglin (1991) studied the responses of maritally violent men to examine their social skills development, but did not “listen” in a qualitative fashion for the meaning men give to their behavior. Eisikovits and Buchbinder (2000) conducted qualitative research that involved interviews with men and women caught in violent episodes and hypothesized why some couples stay together and some don’t. The study also takes a phenomenological perspective. Winstok, Eisikovits, and Gelles (2002) looked at the escalating emotion tied to domestic violence, but were not focusing on the *meaning(s)* that men give to their behavior. Presser (2004) did a qualitative study of criminally violent offenders, but this study was not specifically oriented toward domestic violence.

As a society we are still struggling to adequately respond to the problem of domestic violence. Often, federal funding goes for other issues like drug enforcement rather than research in domestic violence (Kruttschnitt, McLaughlin, and Petrie, 2004; Wilson, 1997). Wyatt (1996) suggests that our country was born in violence and has acted in violence since, and that in many ways we have come to accept a culture of violence. It is her contention that it is no wonder that our society and communities have been slow to react to violence in domestic relationships.

Gelles, in his introduction to the book, *Locked in a Violent Embrace* (Eisikovits and Buchbinder, 2000) discusses an apathetic public that needs to be convinced that violence in the home is a serious social problem. Our society has tended to sweep the problem of domestic violence under the carpet (Kroeger & Clark, 2001).

Historically, sanctions against wife abuse have existed for a number of years in state criminal codes, but criminal justice institutions have reacted toward violence against women with ambivalence until recently (Kruttschnitt, McLaughlin, and Petrie, 2004; Miller, 2003). Davis (1998) goes even further when he emphatically states, “This book demonstrates that a traditional criminal justice approach using mandatory arrest policies and civil restraining orders as currently promulgated had not been effective in *preventing* (emphasis his) domestic violence” (p. 105). Davis also contends that the courts will only take domestic violence seriously when it is made a felony. One of the problems facing police agencies and the criminal justice system is that only about fifty per cent of assaults are ever reported (Fleury, Sullivan, Bybee, and Davidson, 1998). Another problem with the courts is that they tend to take a “one size fits all” approach without understanding the unique needs and characteristics of the victim and the offender (Miller, 2003).

Coordinated community responses are increasingly being emphasized as necessary for addressing domestic violence (Pence & Paymar, 1993; Shepard, Falk, and Elliott, 2002). This coordination typically involves police, prosecutors, probation officers, advocates, counselors, and judges in developing policies and procedures that improve the effects of the coordination and lead to more uniform responses to domestic violence. An activist approach would include: pro-arrest or mandatory arrest policies, follow-up for victims, aggressive and prompt prosecution, monitoring of offender compliance with probation conditions, and court-mandated participation

in batterer intervention programs (Shepard, Falk, and Elliott, 2002). In the last 20 years awareness of domestic violence as a social issue has increased and the number of shelters and hotlines has risen dramatically (Crowell and Burgess, 1996; Kruttschnitt, McLaughlin, and Petrie, 2004).

Research Questions

According to Guba (1990) inquiry or research questions are never value free. He goes on to say that the results of research are shaped by the interaction of the inquirer and inquired into, and that complete “objectivity” is not possible. In other words, research is influenced, not only by the *constructions/meanings* of the participants; but also by the interaction that takes place between the researcher and that which is being researched, or inquired into. Guba maintains that knowledge is a human construction that offers its own set of problems and is constantly changing. Finally, it is Guba’s contention that “realities are multiple, and they exist in people’s minds” (p. 26). These thoughts directly apply to this study because the central question of this research pertains to the *meaning* that males who perpetrate violence toward their intimate partners give to their abusive behavior. The assumptions that have guided me throughout this research have been influenced by the work of Clark Moustakas (1994). He believes that the researcher understands that in a phenomenological study there is not a single inroad to truth, but that any number of possibilities emerge that are connected with the essences and meaning of an experience. Moustakas believes that there are certain general questions that guide the researcher:

1. The researcher looks for possible structural meanings that underlie the textural meanings.
2. The researcher recognizes the underlying themes or contexts that account for the emergence of the phenomena.
3. The researcher considers the universal structures that precipitate feelings and thoughts with reference to the phenomena.
4. The researcher searches for those examples that vividly illustrate the invariant structural themes and facilitate the development of a structural description of the phenomena.

The assumptions that I bring as a researcher include:

1. The belief that the male perpetrator of abuse does inherently give *meaning* to his behavior though he might not consciously acknowledge or understand it.
2. The belief that while the perpetrator has a repertoire of behaviors, he chooses these because they best fit his life experiences.
3. The belief that perpetrators have the capacity to learn new skills and behaviors that are more productive for them, their partners, and all others included in their larger eco-system.
4. The belief that this behavior is indicative of a lack of respect for a partner and needs to be addressed on this level.
5. The belief that this behavior is undesirable for people in general and intimate partners in particular.
6. The belief that behavior can be differentiated from the person; that behaviors can be undesirable, perhaps even detestable, but all people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

Definitions

In the field of partner violence or battering, abuse or violence against women is generally characteristic of coercive control, and is maintained by such strategies as physical violence, psychological abuse, sexual violence, and denial of resources. There are any number of behaviors that are used to dominate women, physical violence being only one. Psychological or emotional abuse that erodes the partner's self-esteem and often causes her to be dependent can be far more productive than physical violence. For use in this study, *abuse* and *violence* are used interchangeably and are defined as: "acts that are physically and emotionally harmful or that carry the potential to cause physical harm. . . (and) may also include sexual coercion or assaults, physical intimidation, threats to kill or to harm, restraint of normal activities or freedom, and denial of access to resources" (Crowell and Burgess, 1996, p. 10).

Methodological Framework

According to Michael Hoyt (1996), "Whatever the source, organizing our world through the telling of stories is fundamental" (p. 1). This is the intention of this research. Embedded in this study is the belief that these men have a story to tell and that within these stories are clues that guide the researcher in his quest to find unearthed treasures about the phenomena of

domestic violence/abuse. Hoyt (1996) continues by stating, “the doors of therapeutic perception and possibility have been opened wide by the recognition that we are actively constructing our mental realities rather than simply uncovering or coping with an objective ‘truth’” (p. 1).

Lincoln (Nylund, Thomas, and Permante, 1997), who writes extensively about qualitative research says,

Methodologically, constructivism demands that inquiry be moved out of the laboratory and into natural contexts, where organizational processes create naturally occurring experiments, dictates that methods designed to capture realities holistically, to discern meaning implicit in human activity, and to be congenial to the human-as-instrument be employed; that such methods are typically, although not exclusively, qualitative rather than quantitative; that design for such inquiries can never be fully articulated until after the inquiry has been declared completed, because the design must emerge as salient issues emerge from research respondents and co-participants; that theory must arise from the data rather than preceding them; and the method must be hermeneutic and dialectic, focusing on the social processes of construction, reconstruction, and must be concerned with conflict as consensus (p. 215).

Methodologically, this research study is based on empirical phenomenological research. According to Giorgi (1985), the methodology of phenomenology is the analysis of a phenomena (domestic violence) in a qualitative, systematic, and rigorous fashion. Giorgi quotes Husserl’s (1970/1900) own words, “it is to go back to the ‘things themselves’” (p. 8). This methodology involves a return to experience in order to gain comprehensive descriptions that will provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that represents the essence of the experience or phenomenon, and it attempts to do this in their lived-out situations. As Moustakas (1994) states, “The aim is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions general or universal meanings are derived, in other words the essences or structures of the experience” (p. 13). He goes to emphasize, “The understanding of meaningful concrete relations implicit in the original description of experience *in the context of a particular situation* is the

primary target of phenomenological knowledge” (p. 14). Giorgi (1985) outlines four parts to the phenomenological approach: description, reduction, the search for essences, and the recognition of operative intentionality. It is obvious that the researcher has an integral part in the interviewing, reading of transcripts, reflecting and rereading, coding, and analyzing of data to reach this “phenomenological knowledge.”

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) state, “In its broadest sense, the term *phenomenology* refers to a person’s perception of the meaning of an event, as opposed to the event as it exists external to the person” (p. 139). It is an attempt to understand the person’s perceptions, perspectives, and understanding of a given situation or behavior. Leedy and Ormrod continue by explaining that “the researcher listens closely as participants describe their everyday experiences related to the phenomenon and must be alert for subtle yet meaningful cues in participants’ expressions, questions, and occasional sidetracks” (p. 139). The typical interview looks more like an informal conversation with the interviewee doing most of the talking and the interviewer listening. As Marshall and Rossman say, “It (phenomenology) rests on an assumption that there is a structure and essence to shared experiences that can be narrated. The purpose of this type of interviewing is to describe the meaning of a concept or phenomenon that several individuals share” (p. 112).

Patton (1990) confirms the preceding thoughts. He states, “Put simply and directly, phenomenological inquiry focuses on the question: “What is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?” The phenomenon being experienced may be an emotion—loneliness, jealousy, anger. The phenomenon may be a relationship, a marriage, or a job. The phenomenon may be a program, an organization, or a culture” (p. 69). Patton continues to say that the importance for the researcher is to attend to the perceptions and meanings a participant gives to his behavior. Patton contends that phenomenologists assume a

commonality in human experiences and must use rigorous methods to search for those commonalities, including bracketing. Bracketing is a process where the researcher takes the behavior out of the world where it occurs and dissects it to find its elements and essential structure. The researcher also suspends his own beliefs, values, ideas, and preconceptions, to better understand the world and meaning that the participant gives to his behavior or phenomenon—domestic violence. This is known as *Epoche`*.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of the study is to explore the meanings that men give to their violent or abusive behavior in intimate partner relationships. The importance of this project lies in the belief that most research has failed to *listen* to men (Ambert, Adler, Adler, Detzner, 1995; Eisikovits and Buchbinder, 2000; Eisikovits, Winstok, and Gelles, 2002; Winstok, Eisikovits, and Gelles, 2002), but instead has studied the pathology of the perpetrator, has looked for causes of abuse, typologies of abusers, results of abuse on the family and the community; but little research has been performed with the intention of giving *voice* to the male perpetrator (DeMaris, Benson, Fox, Hill, Van Wyk, 2003, Kruttschnitt, McLaughlin, and Petrie, 2004). Certainly the work of Presser (2004) is designed along the same path, but with a slightly different client. Like her study, both deal with a highly stigmatized group, and deal with men who may perceive themselves as part of a deviant group by our present culture. The interview process was intended to give men the opportunity to tell their stories and the *meaning* that they give to their behavior. In her conclusion, Presser (2004) believes that participants “do work on social problems designations during the research encounter” (p. 98). It was the intention that this research project would have the same outcome.

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the study by explaining the statement and significance of the problems addressed by this research, the research questions which will guide the study, pertinent definitions, and the research paradigm and methodological frameworks that are being utilized. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature that provides a substantive framework for this research study.

Evolution of Public and Professional Awareness and Response

Family violence research is still a relatively young field. Lipchik (1991) finds the roots for the study of domestic violence back to the feminist movement of the 60's. The goal of this movement was to make the public aware of the thousands of women being criminally assaulted by their intimate partners. Feminist therapists tended to give more value to the woman's point of view, which was a balance to the way society, and many mental health professionals were approaching this social problem. It was generally assumed that the woman had provoked the abuse and was somehow to blame for it in the first place.

Two other social movements contributed to the public awareness of this problem, the civil rights movement and the child advocacy movement. Prior to the 70's social scientists and average citizens alike treated domestic abuse in American families with what Gelles called "selective inattention" (Carden, 1994).

Domestic violence, though, is as old as recorded history. It has been reported in virtually all societies, and in most countries it has been both legal and socially accepted until recently. The concept of the "Rule of thumb" finds its source in domestic relationships and English law (Berry, 1998; Davis, 1998; Pleck, 1987). It was included in Blackstone's codification of the law published in the eighteenth century. Prior to the rule of thumb a husband could chastise his wife with "any reasonable instrument." The rule of thumb actually represented some progress toward limiting the amount of force a man could use. This law allowed a man to beat his wife with any stick he desired—as long as it was no thicker than his own thumb. American courts approved this rule in 1824, when a Mississippi court held that husbands could "beat" their wives as long as they didn't exceed this limit. It wasn't until 1871 that Alabama and Massachusetts courts handed down rulings against wife abuse. Yet few people actually saw violence in the home as a problem. Even as late as 1962, the California Supreme Court threw out a woman's assault

charges against her husband on the premise that to allow the case to proceed would destroy the peace and harmony of the home and thus be contrary to the policy of the law (Berry, 1998; Paymar, 2000). By the mid-70s women's shelters were being established as a first step out of violent relationships, and then in 1980 the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) was created in Duluth, Minnesota. This educational program was established in response to severe domestic abuse in the Duluth area, and was a launching pad for other group methods to confront the issue of domestic violence. It recognized the need men had for power and control, and began to reeducate men and women to this understanding and to equip them with new skills and choices.

Further awareness and consciousness-raising efforts were taking place through the American Medical Association, the National Research Council, colleges and universities, and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence in Denver, Colorado (Carden, 1994; Crowell and Burgess, 1996).

Wife Abuse

National surveys estimate that at least 2 million women each year are battered by an intimate partner, and crime data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) record about 1,500 murders of women by husband or boyfriends each year. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that 75 percent of violent acts (assaults and rapes) are committed by an intimate—a husband, ex-husband, boyfriend, or ex-boyfriend (Crowell and Burgess, 1996). It is generally accepted that incidents of this nature are underreported, the true numbers could be staggering (Browne, 1993; Jacobson and Gottman, 1998; Paymar, 2000; Szinovacz and Egley, 1995). Kilgore (1992) gives the following statistics regarding women and domestic violence: Four million women are severely assaulted per year; over one-third of assaults to women involve severe aggression such as punching, kicking, choking, beating up, or using a knife or a gun; from

one-fifth to one-third of all women will be physically assaulted by a partner in their lifetime; the rate of injury to women from battering surpasses that of car accidents and muggings combined; and twenty-one percent of all women who use the hospital emergency surgical service are battered.

Aggressive acts reported by women range from being slapped, punched, kicked, or thrown to being scalded, cut, choked, smothered, or bitten. Other acts would include threats, verbal assaults, and sexual aggression (Browne, 1993; Kilgore, 1992). Browne (1993) also states that women are more likely to be killed by their male partners than by all others categories of persons combined. Murphy (2003) contends that gender norms (societal expectations for male and female behavior and roles) create an inequality between the sexes in power, autonomy, and well being, typically to the disadvantage of females—whether this be done intentionally or unintentionally. She goes on to say that violence has other profound mental and physical health consequences including chronic pain, STIs, substance abuse and depression (see also Carden, 1994).

Dimensions of Wife Abuse

Wife Abuse is Multifaceted

There are at least four types of abuse that males use with their female partners: Physical violence, sexual abuse, property violence, and psychological or emotional abuse (Browne, 1993; Carden, 1994; Paymar, 2000). Each type is intended to give the male partner dominance or control in the relationship. Physical violence would include pushing, shoving, grabbing, slapping, biting, punching, and assault with a weapon. Sexual abuse would involve forcing a female partner, through the use of verbal or physical threats or intimidation, to participate in activities against her will. Property violence would include throwing things, to threaten to actually break some symbolically meaningful object, punching holes in walls, breaking down

doors, or other activities of a similar nature. Psychological or emotional abuse would consist of verbal or nonverbal behaviors intended to isolate, humiliate, demean, intimidate, or control a female partner.

The Dynamic Nature of Wife Abuse

The dynamic nature of wife abuse refers to the fact that abuse generally follows a predictable cycle. The seminal work on this cycle of abuse has been done by Lenore Walker (1979). According to her research, there are three segments to the cycle. The first is called the tension-building phase. During this phase the abuser is often edgy, explosive, angry, jealous, inflamed, or enraged; the victim is often characterized by a compliant, caring, and respectful attitude. She may be feeling guilty or self-blaming as though something she did brought on the tension. She may also deny the tension exists or excuse it as resulting from outside stress or work. He denies responsibility for his actions by blaming the tension on his partner (work, traffic, drinking, etc.). Phase two is the “act of violence” stage. For the man there is loss of control, and phase two often involves emotional, verbal, and physical violence. The woman at this stage often feels fear, a sense of powerlessness, anger, and pain. Injuries are often minimized as only minor; they did not require medical attention. The abuser often blames the partner by stating that “she had it coming.” The third phase is the honeymoon or remorse stage. During this phase the man will make new promises; be apologetic; and feel guilt, sorrow, and shame for the event. The man may blame the woman, saying it would not have happened if she had not done or said “something.” The woman often forgives, and experiences love, renewed hope, and trust. Both the man and the woman may believe the behavior will not happen again. Denial serves all three phases (see also Wexler, 2000).

The Abusive Partner

Who They Are

This particular research focuses on the male perpetrator in intimate partner violence. Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) strongly recommend that researchers focus their attention on violent husbands. They also realized that early research tried to treat batterers as a homogeneous group, but came to the conclusion that batterers vary across a number of variables. Continuing the study of typologies and its importance to understanding the field of domestic violence, Holtzworth-Munroe Stuart (1994) stated, “Comparing the various subtypes of violent husbands with each other, and pinpointing how each type of violent man differs from nonviolent men, could increase the understanding of marital violence and help in identifying different underlying processes resulting in violence. Developing a typology of violent men would allow a systematic examination of how and why different men use violence against their wives” (p. 476).

Consequently, researchers have made their best efforts to classify male perpetrators into certain types or typologies. Finding these variables and recognizing typologies could help refine strategies for intervention.

One of the first to do this was Margaret Elbow (1977) when she came to the conclusion that there were four types of abusers based on the emotional need central to each syndrome: Man as Controller; Man as Defender; Man as Approval Seeker; and Man as the Incorporator. The Controller has a history of getting his way. He is persuasive, confident, and in control of his emotions and situations confronting him. He is never to blame, and carries a sense of entitlement. People are seen as objects or means to get what he wants. He needs others to admire and respect him. Relationships lack reciprocity. He lives on the edge, if not involved in, illegal activities, which include their use of time, and how money is spent. Wives are often given an allowance. Another form is to discount the needs, desires, and feelings of their mates.

Violence often occurs when the Controller feels he can no longer dominate, or when his authority is questioned. He can easily justify his abuse. The Defender tends to be self-righteous and is attracted to a woman whom he perceives to be less powerful than he. The Defender needs his partner to depend on him so he can feel that he is strong. His main interests are to rescue and protect. He is often a 'giver' in a relationship. A woman in this relationship dare not gain personal strength or become more independent for these would be perceived as threats to his need to protect or feel that she must depend on him. The Approval Seeker is often viewed as an achiever, but seldom feels satisfaction with his accomplishments. He often experiences depression and is vulnerable to criticism. He can be caring and sensitive to the needs of others and his self-esteem must be constantly reinforced. Feeling that he is adequate or competent would be motivating forces in his life, and anything that would threaten these, and his self-worth would lead to a defensive stance or abusive behavior. The Incorporator, in Elbow's (1977) mind, is the most dangerous or lethal style. Desperation is the dominant feeling. Suicidal thoughts, threats to kill, heavy use of alcohol and drugs are just some of the manifestations of this person. The more the love object withdraws, the greater his need to incorporate. On the surface it appears that he wants a close relationship, but it is not balanced or healthy. He cannot feel validated without his mate and so any response on her part that would appear to move her away from him will be viewed as a threat to his own ego-needs.

Gondolf (1988) developed a typology of batterers using data obtained during intake interviews with 6,000 women seeking help at shelters. Three main clusters were consistently derived. The first cluster he called "typical batterers" (approximately 50 % of the samples, was substantially less abusive than the other subtypes. The second cluster he labeled "antisocial" (30-42% of the samples). They were characterized by severely abusive actions, including sexual

abuse and child abuse, and antisocial behavior. The third cluster was called “sociopathic” (5-8% of the samples). The latter two groups were the most likely to use weapons and tended to inflict injuries on their wives. The sociopathic group had higher levels of substance abuse and more previous arrests for violence against nonfamily members than the antisocial group.

Saunders (1992) did a cluster analysis that led him to believe there were three types of batterers. Type I, he characterizes as “family-only” aggressors. Generally reported low levels of anger, depression, and jealousy. Some alcohol use was reported (about half the time). Type II was labeled “generally violent” aggressors. They were the most severely abused group as children and reported the most frequent use of severe violence, and had relatively high use of alcohol. Type III was characterized as “emotionally volatile” aggressors. They reported infrequent use of alcohol, but the highest levels of anger, depression, and jealousy.

Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) believe there are three subtypes of batterers: family only, dysphoric/borderline, and generally violent/antisocial. The “family only” group engage in the least severe partner violence, and the least likely to engage in psychological and sexual abuse. This group could constitute up to 50% of the batterers. The “dysphoric/borderline” batterers generally engage in moderate to severe wife abuse, including psychological and sexual abuse. Their violence is primarily confined to the family, and are the most dysphoric, psychologically distressed, and emotionally volatile. They may have problems with alcohol and drug abuse, and are about 25% of subtype population. The third cluster is known as “generally violent/ antisocial batterers.” They engage in moderate to severe marital violence, including psychological and sexual abuse. Of the three types, this last group has the most extrafamilial aggression, and has the most extensive history of related criminal behavior and legal involvement. They are likely to have problems with alcohol and drug abuse, and they

are the most likely to have antisocial personality disorder. They too represent about 25% of the batterer population.

Gottman, Jacobson, Rushe, Shortt, Babcock, LaTaillade, and Waltz (1995) studied couples during conflict and measured the heart-rate reactivity of the men. They found two types of batterers. Type I men actually saw their heart rates go below the baseline levels during heated conflict. They were more verbally aggressive toward their partners than Type II men, were more violent toward others (friends, strangers, coworkers, and bosses), had more elevated scales reflecting antisocial behavior and sadistic aggression, and were lower on dependency than their Type II counterparts. These men were more likely to have used or threatened to use a knife or a gun on their partners. In their study Gottman and his team found that only 3% of Type II men had a history of extramarital violence, while 44% of Type I men did. And while 33% of Type II men qualified for a diagnosis of “antisocial personality disorder,” fully 90% of the Type I men met this criteria. Type I men were more likely to be dependent on illegal drugs, and were much less emotionally attached to their partners. Type II men tend to do a slow burn in their anger until they finally erupt. The slow burn is part of what distinguishes them from the Type I men who strike quickly. The team came to refer to Type I men as “Cobras,” and the Type II men as “Pit Bulls.” They also believe that approximately 80 percent of batterers are Type II—“Pit Bulls.” This group is often characterized as controlling yet being dependent on their partners, and they often demand and withdraw from their partners—they believe that ultimately their partner will abandon them.

Johnson (1995) contends there are two streams of violence in couples. One he refers to as the *family violence perspective*, and the other he called the *feminist perspective* (emphasis his). Johnson attempts to take the two literatures to reach his own conclusions about violence between

partners. The first form of couple violence is called *common couple violence*. The dynamic of this form is one in which conflict occasionally gets “out of hand,” leading usually to minor forms of violence, and more rarely escalates into serious, sometimes even life-threatening forms of violence. This form of violence results from the complexities of life that produce relational conflicts that does get “out of hand.” These violent incidents are as likely to be initiated by women as by men. Control does not seem to be the goal, and escalation of the level of violence seldom occurs. The second form of violence is a product of patriarchal traditions of men’s right to control women. It involves the systematic use violence, and also other forms of abuse such as economic subordination, threats, isolation, and other control tactics. Patriarchal terrorism is characterized by the use of multiple control tactics. Beatings occur on the average of more than once a week, and escalate in severity over time. Violence is almost exclusively initiated by the male, and the woman usually does not fight back or retaliate. General control seems to be the objective. Johnson’s summary indicates that these distinctions are not ironclad at the present time. What he does suggest for future research is “in-depth interviewing of couples who are involved in violence, eliciting interpretations of the psychological and interpersonal causes of specific incidents or patterns of control. The goal is to go beyond the behavioral description of particular acts to develop a narrative of each incident’s development, as presented and interpreted by perpetrators and targets of violence” (p. 291).

Why They Do It

One of the most difficult and perplexing questions in the study of domestic violence is the “cause.” Various theories have been promulgated, but none seem to satisfy researchers. Research that focused on typologies has been one approach to understanding the etiology of violence. Unfortunately, many questions remain.

DeMaris, Benson, Fox, Hill, and Van Wyk (2003) conducted research on more than 4,000 couples to look at the impact of distal and proximal factors in domestic violence. Their model incorporates many factors into a comprehensive approach to violence. They recognized that violence is the product of forces operating at several different levels of social life. Distal influences, while not immediate risk factors, are associated with more intense and closely associated factors. These factors would include forming partnerships at an early age, couples together for only a short time, early pregnancy in the relationship, larger number of children, employment instability, financial instability, high stress, less commitment in the relationship, couples who lack social networks, children of divorced parents, contextual factors that include population density, crowding, and social disorganization. Proximal influences include anything that promotes ongoing tension between the partners. They are proximal because they provide the context and motivation for relationship altercations. Examples of proximal influences would include the potential stresses related to children—number of children, levels of discipline, supervision, and demands of children on the relationship. Other stresses would include anxiety, depression, hostility, alcohol and drug abuse, and male entitlement.

Delsol, Margolin, and John (2003) also looked at distal and proximal factors. While not fully confirmed by research there appears to be some correlation between childhood exposure to family-of-origin violence and male battering, this is considered a distal factor. Proximal correlates include attitudes condoning violence against a spouse, marital dissatisfaction, and life stress. Economic subordination, threats, humiliation—insulting, shaming, and ridiculing, and isolation are other proximal factors that help the man maintain control over the woman.

Research by Edwards, Scott, Yarvis, Paizis, and Panizzon (2003) found that impulsiveness, and impulsive aggression has a strong correlation with physical violence. Their

research found that there are sub-groups of violent men. One they classified as low-violence and the other as high-violence. The high-violence group had higher pathology as measured using the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory II and correlated highly with Borderline Personality Disorder and Antisocial Personality Disorder.

Wallace (1996) offers twelve different theories as to the ‘cause’ of domestic violence. He subsumes these under three major models: The Psychiatric Model of Family Violence (Psychopathology and Substance Abuse); The Social-Psychological Model of Family Violence (Social Learning Theory, Exchange Theory, Frustration-Aggression Theory, Ecological Theory, and Sociobiology or Evolutionary Theory); and the Sociocultural Model of Family Violence (Culture of Violence Theory, Patriarchy Theory, General Systems Theory, Social Conflict Theory, and Resource Theory). Similar to Wallace, Crowell and Burgess (1996) also suggest a multi-faceted approach to understanding the cause or causes of violence. Individual determinants would include: Evolution; Physiology and Neurophysiology; Alcohol; Psychopathology and Personality Traits; Attitudes and Gender Schemas; Sex and Power Motives; Social Learning; and Dyadic Contexts. Institutional influences would include: Family, Schools, and Religion; Media (pornography); Societal Influences; Sexual Scripts; and Cultural Mores. They conclude that there is no “single set of causes that accurately classifies types of offenders” (p. 68).

Peters, Shackelford, and Buss (2002) suggest that if one looks at partner violence over the past 30 years, that at least four approaches have generated hypotheses concerning the occurrence of male-perpetrated abuse. Psychoanalytic theorists propose deficits in the ego structure, causing the man to lose control of anger that is unconsciously linked with maternal figures. Many family systems theorists argue that a man’s loss of control over angry feelings is the cause of domestic

violence. A third explanation of domestic violence proposes that dysfunctional interactional patterns between partners and maladaptive cognitive processes in the individuals result in escalating conflict and eventual violence. These first three address specific deficits: Deficits in ego skills; coping mechanisms; deficits in anger control and in communication and cognitive skills. A fourth approach, derived from feminist theory, states that the violence inflicted on the victim is not a byproduct of underlying deficits, but instead is inflicted strategically and intentionally to exert power and control over their female partners.

In a provocative study by Umberson, Anderson, Williams, and Chen (2003) looked at the masculinities literature to develop a framework for understanding how emotional reactions to stress may be associated with domestic violence. They found that violence is more likely among men who experience a disconnect between their personal circumstances and their emotions. A major limitation of the study is why some men and not others come to repress and deny their emotions and to engage in domestic violence; but it offers a promising framework for understanding the social psychological processes, especially the stress, appraisal, and coping patterns that underlie abusive behavior.

Another factor of interest has to do with attachment theory and violence. Roberts and Noller (1998) discuss the association between attachment and couple violence (Akister, 1998; Dutton and Painter, 1993). Their belief is that adult attachment can be measured on two dimensions. The first reflects the degree to which an individual feels uncomfortable in close romantic relationships (labeled Discomfort and Closeness) and the degree to which he fears abandonment from a romantic partner (Anxiety over Abandonment). A third factor that is often found in men who fear intimacy and fear abandonment is the inability to communicate

effectively. This triangle of factors has been linked in some research with violence and abuse and might deserve further consideration.

It is apparent by now that the factors that motivate men to be relationally violent, to intimidate, control, and manipulate are quite complex and multi-faceted. The literature is filled with research on the etiology of abuse and yet no conclusive answers have been discovered.

Treatment Models

Founded in 1980 following a brutal domestic homicide in Minnesota, the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) was developed to work with men who perpetrate violence on their intimate partner (Pence and Paymar, 1993). It is a psychoeducational process informed by the feminist perspective that men have been enculturated to control. The goal of DAIP is to move men from the eight tactics of the Power and Control Wheel to the eight tactics of the Equality Wheel. It is a 26-week program that was developed around eight themes: Nonviolence; Nonthreatening Behavior; Respect; Support and Trust; Accountability and Honesty; Sexual Respect; Partnership; and Negotiation and Fairness. Participation in the DAIP program is on a voluntary basis though nationally many courts mandate batterers to this program or one that would be similar; depending on what is available in those communities.

Having worked for over fifteen years with domestic violence in a community mental health center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, David Decker (1999) developed an open-ended program for male batterers. It too is a psychoeducational approach that addresses power and control. Incorporated in the program are cognitive-behavioral principles and the development of new interpersonal skills. There are twelve units of study that include: Abuse and its Effects; Stress; Anger; Shame and Empowerment; Culture of Origin; Self-Esteem and Healthy Relationships; and Women's Perspectives on Abuse and Violence. The program emphasizes how men can relate to their partners, children, and others with equality and respect.

Now in its third edition, the “*Learning To Live Without Violence*” program was developed by Daniel Sonkin and Michael Durphy (1997). It is a psychoeducational approach that is designed in such a way that it can be tailored to a short-term (12 weeks), or long-term (as long as two years) program. It is designed to be used by groups or individuals. Some of the topics it covers are: Anger; Substance Abuse; Listening and Communication; Feelings; Stress; Jealousy; and Becoming an Assertive Man. This program is a cognitive-behavioral model with skill development as the focus.

David Wexler (2000) in cooperation with the Department of the Navy developed a program for domestic violence out of his research with Navy families experiencing abuse. The program is called “Domestic Violence 2000.” It has attempted to integrate elements from profeminist, cognitive-behavioral, and self-psychological models for treating domestic violence. It insists that men examine the dominance and control aspects of domestic violence and especially issues of male entitlement and privilege. Built in is a skills approach to self-management, communication, problem solving, and empathy for others. It places an emphasis on respect for the man’s experience—in personal history and present relationships—and works to develop an empathic understanding of why men choose to act the way that they do. It is designed to be a thirty-two week psychoeducational group experience, but can be expanded to fifty-two weeks, or it can be reduced to twenty-six weeks. The program is divided into four sections: Brief Interventions—house of abuse, time-out, anger, aggression, red flags, and cycles of abuse; Self-Management—alcohol and other substance abuse, self-talk, and bad rap, using self-talk for anger-management, self-esteem, feelings, masculinity, jealousy, put downs, and accountability; Relationship Skills—assertiveness, expressing feelings and asking for change, handling criticism, active listening, empathy training, the four horsemen of the apocalypse,

compliments, conflict, marriage expectations, sex, kids, and parents; Relapse Prevention- most violent and/or most frightening incident, and prevention plans.

Donald Dutton (1998) has worked in the field of domestic violence for over 20 years and is a professor at the University of British Columbia. He has served as an expert witness in several prominent legal cases involving domestic abuse and spousal homicide, including the O. J. Simpson case. Dutton has focused his attention on issues of shame and attachment, and how these variables have contributed to domestic violence. Dutton adapted the work of Anne Ganley, a psychologist working at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Tacoma, Washington in the late 70's. The work is based on a social-learning model, and is cognitive-behavioral in its orientation. It is a psychoeducational group approach that is sixteen weeks in duration. Heavy emphasis is placed on traumatic bonding experiences and shame. Topics included in his program would be: The Power and Control Wheel; Anger; Abuse; Family of Origin Issues; Resentment; Guilt; Shame; Communication Skills; and Relapse Prevention.

Pressman and Sheps (1994) developed what they classify as an "integrated model." Aspects of this model would include cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic (trauma and shame), a feminist perspective, and development of social skills and emotional learning. It also emphasizes the issues of power and control.

Cycles of Violence

Domestic violence is dynamic in the sense that there is a predictable course that the violence takes. Lenore Walker (1979) was one of the first to study this phenomena, and she believes that violence goes through three predictable cycles. Phase 1 is called "Tension Building." In this stage the tension begins to mount as the abuser increased his threats. The abused partner often will make increasing efforts to please the man to calm him down, but the efforts are almost always fruitless and only serve to postpone the violence. Phase 2 is called

“Act of Violence.” At some point the tension and threats will erupt in one of the forms previously discussed. Often the woman will deny any responsibility for the blame the perpetrator may place on her. Phase 3 is called “The Honeymoon.” At this final stage the abuser will apologize, often excessively, express guilt and shame, and often bring gifts to reconcile the relationship. The man often minimizes the violence and may continue to place blame on the woman. The woman often denies the severity of the abuse and the reality of future abuse.

McKenzie (1995) believes there are six dynamic phases to the cycle of abuse. Stage 1 is “Initiation.” The formerly sensitive, gentle, considerate, and even unperturbable man now gives signs that he is upset and often at some negative personality characteristic in the woman that had previously been concealed. Stage 2 is called “Intimidation.” The batterer intensifies the woman’s fear by displaying threatening looks, gestures, or an assortment of behaviors intended to intimidate her. Stage 3 is called “Venting.” This stage is often characterized by intense emotional abuse and the beginning of physical violence. Venting also includes name-calling, finding fault, attacking and belittling, or forcing the woman to behave in sub-human fashion that depersonalizes and humiliates her. Stage 4 is called the “Latency Period.” At this point, a sense of normality returns. There is a cessation of physical hostilities, verbal and emotional abuse often subsides. A shift in interpersonal climate back to one of cordiality and peaceful co-existence, may return. Stage 5 is called “Loss of Control.” The lull of Stage 4 is now replaced with this explosive stage. It is characterized by rage, a compulsive need to dominate and control, and can lead to intensively cruel battery. Stage 6 is called “Intervention.” Generally, in this phase, some third force or person intervenes to bring some form of peace. This might involve law enforcement, emergency services, a friend or relative who is called into the situation and attempts to bring some form of resolution.

Violence does proceed through predictable cycles, and though there is some variation in each couple's specific style, there is an entrance and an exit that roughly approximates the work of both Walker (1979) and McKenzie (1995).

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The central question of this research pertains to the *meaning* that males who perpetrate violence toward their intimate partners attribute to their abusive behavior. Chapter One provided an introduction to the questions the study addressed and the theoretical frameworks, which guided the method and design of this study. Chapter Two presented a review of the literature that provided a substantive body of knowledge from which to pursue the research. Chapter Three presents the methodology employed in the study.

Silverman (2005) states, “A *methodology* (emphasis his) refers to the choices we make about cases to study, methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis, etc., in planning and executing a research study. So our methodology defines how one will go about studying any phenomenon. In social research, methodologies may be defined very broadly (e.g. qualitative or quantitative) or more narrowly (e.g. grounded theory or conversation analysis). Like theories, methodologies cannot be true or false, only more or less useful (p. 99).”

Taylor and Bogdan (1984) believe that qualitative methodology refers in the widest sense “to research that produces descriptive data: people’s own written or spoken words and observable behavior” (p. 5). They proceed to give eight characteristics of qualitative research (pp. 5-7):

- Qualitative research is inductive. Concepts, insights, and understanding are developed from the patterns in the data. Research questions are only vaguely formulated.
- The researcher looks at people holistically. Participants are studied in the context of their past and the situations in which they find themselves.
- The researcher is sensitive to the effect he has on the participant. In-depth interviewing is modeled after a normal conversation, and researcher effects are minimized to the greatest extent possible under the conditions.

- The researcher does his best to understand the participant from his frame of reference. The goal is to experience reality as the participant experiences it.
- The researcher suspends, or sets aside, his personal beliefs, perspectives, and predispositions. Behavior is viewed as though it were happening for the first time. Nothing is taken for granted. Everything is subject matter of inquiry.
- For the researcher, all perspectives are valuable. The researcher seeks an understanding of the other persons' perspective. The participant is viewed as an equal. An attempt is made to give a voice to people who are rarely heard.
- Qualitative methods are humanistic. An intentional effort is made to understand the struggles, pains, failures—the inner life of the participant.
- Qualitative researchers emphasize validity in their research. “A qualitative study is not an impressionistic, off-the-cuff analysis based on a superficial look at a setting or people. It is a piece of systematic research conducted with demanding, though not necessarily standardized, procedures” (p. 7).

Steiner Kvale (1996) uses a traveler metaphor in discussing qualitative research and reminds the reader that the Greek meaning of the word method is “a route that leads to a goal” (p. 4). He adds, “The interviewer wanders along with the local inhabitants, asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world, and converses with them in the original Latin meaning of *conversation* as ‘wandering together with’” (p. 4). This process leads to new understanding and insight as the participants tell their own story. Kvale proceeds to discuss one form of research interview as a semistructured life world interview, and defines this as “*an interview whose purpose is to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena* (emphasis his)” (pp. 5-6).

Robert Weiss (1994) states that, “Interviewing gives us access to the observations of others. Through interviewing we can learn about places we have not been and could not go and about settings in which we have not lived. Interviewing gives us a window on the past. We can also, by interviewing, learn about setting that would otherwise be closed to us” (p. 1). Weiss continues by giving several reasons to conduct a qualitative interview study, and in that

discussion states that one of the reasons is to “*learn how events are interpreted*” (p. 10). In that brief discussion he says, “Qualitative interviewing enables us to learn about perceptions and reactions known only to those to whom they occurred” (p. 10). Weiss believes that there is tremendous value in qualitative interviewing as a contribution to our understanding and knowledge of phenomena. As he adds, “Much of the important work in the social sciences, work that has contributed in fundamental ways to our understanding of our society and ourselves, has been based on qualitative interview studies. Qualitative interview studies have provided descriptions of phenomena that could have been learned about in no other way. . .” (p. 12).

Warren (2001) states that “Qualitative interviewing is a kind of guided conversation in which the researcher carefully listens “so as to *hear the meaning*” of what is being conveyed” (p. 84). She adds, “(t)he epistemology of the qualitative interview tends to be more constructionist than positivist. Interview participants are more likely to be viewed as meaning makers, not passive conduits for retrieving information from an existing vessel of answers” (p. 83).

John Johnson (2001) in a discussion of in-depth interviewing hopes that this one-on-one, face-to-face interaction can “build the kind of intimacy that is common for mutual self-disclosure” (p. 103). He goes on to talk about the importance of the researcher's goals and purposes; moral commitment to seek out what is true; the ethical imperatives to examine his own personal ideas, assumptions, and emotions as important resources for what the researcher gleans from the research interview and project. The participant becomes a kind of teacher and the interviewer a student, one interested in gaining knowledge from a veteran informant. My experience in this research process is that this is precisely what happened, and I believe enabled men to share more deeply and intimately their experience with me. This “not knowing,” non-judgmental posture was readily accepted by the participants in this study. One man in particular

reported several negative experiences with therapists and with his own pastor whom he characterized as insensitive and uncaring for him as a “batterer,” stigmatized and labeled him and gave little hope for him to change. Interviewing him and asking questions about his behavior as a student led him to be open and quite responsive to the questions and the process.

This research study employed a qualitative design to explore and describe the phenomena of domestic violence. The study made use of multiple in-depth interviews with men who are perpetrators of violence. Methods were selected with the purpose of obtaining accurate and reliable data. The research was intended to hear the “voices” of an often-neglected group, the male perpetrators, to better understand what abusive behavior *means* to them; and to generalize the findings for the field at large. Another potential result is to better inform treatment approaches that are currently being used with abusive males.

Multiple interviews were conducted with the participants to help establish context. Context guides the exploration of meaning of an experience (Seidman, 2006). A series of three interviews was first implemented to better understand the experience and place it in a context. In the first interview we talked about the event that brought the participant to the “Hit No More” program (batterer’s intervention program for men). This question seemed to be unobtrusive to the participants, and served as an adequate icebreaker for the interview process. This question was followed by a discussion of the participant’s history of violence, including some sense of his life story, especially as it related to fighting and violence. During the second interview the conversation was about their contemporary experience with violence. This interview gave the participant an opportunity to tie up any loose ends or ask any questions that might have resulted from the first interview, and then to speak to the way that violence was still part of their lived experience. Interview three then led us to a discussion about the *meaning* that the participant

gave to his violent behavior. This approach followed closely a model designed by Dolbeare and Schuman and discussed in Seidman (2006). The goal was to discover the history of violence as experienced by each man, then to move to details of their lived experience with violence, and to conclude by talking about the *meaning* that men gave to their violence. The third part of the interview process can only be productive if the foundation has been established in the first two parts. The attempt at this stage is to ask the participant to answer the question, “What sense does your behavior make to you?” As Seidman (2006) states, “The very process of putting experience into language is a meaning-making process” (p. 19). Harlene Anderson (1993) talks about meaning as “an intersubjective phenomenon, created and experienced by individuals in conversation and action with others and with themselves” (p. 324). She believes that human systems are language-and-meaning-generating systems. Anderson (1993) states, “Change, whether in the cognitive or behavioral domain, is a natural consequence of dialogue” (p. 325). According to her the therapist/researcher works from a tentative attitude, “one that does not imply judgment, blame, or have a fixed hypothesis” (p. 325).

A decision was made to do multiple interviews with a smaller number of men. The difficulty is in knowing how many men are enough for the study. Seidman (2006) suggests that there are two criteria that must be met. The first is sufficiency. Are there a sufficient number of men to reflect the population “so that others outside the sample might have a chance to connect to the experiences of those in it” (p. 55)? A second criterion is saturation of information. There is a point at which the interviewer begins to hear the same information reported. In regard to this approach Seidman (2006) states, “The method of in-depth, phenomenological interviewing applied to a sample of participants who all experience similar structural and social conditions gives enormous power to the stories of a relatively few participants” (p. 55). The design of the

interviews is to provide for richer, thicker descriptions; and to provide more clarity (Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Moustakas, 1994).

Selection of Site and Participants

Data was collected in conjunction with a batterer's intervention program for domestic offenders in Springfield, Missouri. Selection was based on a group of participants currently attending a batterer's intervention program called "Hit No More." The facilitator has been involved in helping batterers since 1988. He originally attended classes himself in a program called "The Domestic Violence Project Learning Center (DVP)." DVP was the first program of its kind to be initiated in Springfield and began in the mid-1980s. This person became a co-facilitator in the DVP program and in the mid-1990s was given full control and direction of the program. At that time he reworked the material, changed the name to "Hit No More," and had the organization incorporated as a 501C3 (not-for profit) in May of 1997. Approximately 1700 men have attended the program since that time. Ninety per cent of the men are court-ordered. "Hit No More" offers two options for its participants: One may attend for twelve three-hour classes that cover such topics as anger management; communication skills; the power and control wheel; the equality wheel; child abuse/child nurturing; and problems associated with blending families. The other option is a twenty-six week program that meets for two hours, and is an expanded version of the twelve-week program. The twenty-six week program uses much of the material of the Duluth program, a program the facilitator has attended and received certification to teach. A fee is charged all male participants. Female partners who are victims may attend separate classes that study the same topics, and with a female facilitator. The key components of the program include: Teaching men how to recognize abuse; how to enhance a relationship in positive ways; develop emotional maturity, especially as this relates to the ways men typically react to situations that could lead to volatility; and teaching men about the myth of

male privilege and entitlement. The “Hit No More” program does not screen for severity of violence.

In this design, interviews were done with men who were just beginning the program, men who were ending the program, and men who had finished the program and were living without violence in their relationships. As stated earlier, using the three interview approach (Seidman, 2006), “The first interview establishes the context of the participants’ experience. The second allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs. And the third encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them” (p. 17). The men in this study accepted and worked with this approach in a cooperative fashion.

Data Collection

Interviews were designed to take place in the same building where their classes were held, in Springfield, Missouri. Most of the men met with me as their personal schedules allowed, and were held at a place that was comfortable to the participant. Each interview was intended to be 60-90 minutes in length. A detailed proposal was submitted to the Institutional Review Board of the University of Florida for approval, and was granted. I approached the group on the night of their scheduled meetings and explained that I was a graduate student at the University of Florida and doing research on domestic violence. I emphasized that participation was voluntary, as was tape-recording; that one could terminate an interview at any time without any repercussions, and that confidentiality would be guarded to the greatest extent possible. Four men volunteered and prior to their first interview I went over the consent form. They were told that some of the statements made during interviews would most likely be woven into the fabric of the report, but that no personal names would be used. I explained that we would be discussing the event(s) that brought them to the Hit No More program, their history of violence, and that

they would be asked to talk about their life story, especially as it related to violence and abuse. They were given an opportunity to ask any questions or voice any concerns they might have about the interview process. They were then asked to sign the consent form. The University of Florida Institutional Review Board wanted to make a point that if any child abuse or unreported violence was discussed that I was mandated to report this behavior to proper law enforcement personnel. This was made clear to all participants. The framework of this study demanded relatively unstructured interviewing. A number of interview questions were prepared to stimulate narratives, and were intended to give the participants an opportunity to share their own stories.

Through these stories men were able to give a “voice” as it concerns their own violence and the *meaning* or *meanings* they attribute to their behaviors--including psychological/emotional, physical, financial, and so on. The inquiry moved from factual information to a more meaning-based perspective. Since these men were in a program for domestic abuse it seemed that a natural question to launch our conversation had to do with the specific event that prompted them to enter the program. Three of the men in this study went voluntarily, but two of these three had pending court dates. One of these men knew that he needed help in order to keep his marriage intact in light of his experience with abuse. One of the four men was court-mandated to attend. The director had a pattern of abusive behaviors in his relationship history, and found the Domestic Violence Project Learning Center several years earlier as a venue to change destructive attitudes and patterns. He was not court-mandated. This decision, along with his faith orientation, has transformed his life and is the major contributing factor to his work with men for the last twenty years.

The guiding question of this research has to do with the *meaning* that men give to their own violent behavior. This project believes that men, when given an opportunity to share their

own *voice* will add a dimension often left out or avoided in the research of domestic violence (Anderson, 1993; Bogdan and Taylor, 1984). This is a semi-structured interview process and is guided by, but not limited to, a number of specific questions constructed by the advisor of this study (Rafuls, 1998):

1. What is your first memory of violent behavior?
2. Talk about what it was like to grow up in your family? Did you observe abuse or violence in that home.
3. Were shaming or blaming behaviors part of your family experience? Talk about what this was like for you.
4. Talk about your first experience as a ‘violent’ person.
5. When you think of the words ‘abuse’ and ‘violence’ what do they mean to you?
6. How are these meanings related and how are they different?
7. What experiences brought you into this program?
8. How did you feel before, during, and after the incident(s)?
9. To the best of your understanding, what was this experience like for your partner?

Data Analysis

Creswell (1998) describes an approach to data analysis built on Moustakas (1994). This process goes through the following steps: One, the researcher begins with a full description of his/her own experience of the phenomenon. Two, the researcher finds statements in the interviews that describe how the participants experience the topic and then lists out these significant statements (horizontalization). Third, the statements are then grouped into “meaning units.” These units become the foundation for textual description (textures)—of what happened, including verbatim examples. Fourth, the researcher reflects on these textual descriptions, seeking all possible meanings and divergent perspectives, eventually constructing a description of how the phenomenon was experienced. Fifth, the researcher then constructs an overall description of the meaning and the essence of the experience. Last, the researcher and the participant’s accounts are both followed and a composite description is written. Moustakas (1994) states, “In accordance with phenomenological principles, scientific investigation is valid when the knowledge sought is arrived at through descriptions that make possible an

understanding of the meanings and essences of experience” (p. 84). Moustakas (1994) proceeds to describe four steps in this process: The first step, called the Epoche process, has the observer set aside his or her prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things. The world has become bracketed, “cleared of ordinary thought and is present before us as a phenomenon to be gazed upon, to be known naively and freshly through a ‘purified’ consciousness” (p. 85). The second step is called Phenomenological Reduction. The outcome of this step is to give an explanation of the essential nature of the phenomenon. The third step of the process is Imaginative Variation. Moustakas (1994) includes four stages in the Imaginative Variation process: First, the systematic varying of the possible structural meanings that underlie the textural meanings; second, recognizing the underlying themes or contexts that account for the emergence of the phenomenon; third, considering the universal structures that precipitate feelings and thoughts with reference to the phenomenon, such as the structure of time, space, bodily concerns, materiality, causality, relation to self, or relation to others; and fourth, searching for exemplifications that vividly illustrate the invariant structural themes and facilitate the development of a structural description of the phenomenon. The final step Moustakas (1994) calls the Synthesis of Meanings and Essences. It is “the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole” (p. 100).

Miles and Huberman (1994) building on the work of Carney, show a three-level ladder for analyzing data. The first level is to “summarize and package” the data. The researcher does this by creating a text to work on through interview tapes which are then transformed into written transcripts. Then the researcher begins to code to find categories within the domain of study. Besides the coding process, analytical notes are being formed to find linkages within the

framework of interpretation. The second level repackages and aggregates the data. In this step themes and trends are identified in overall data. This step is accomplished by searching for relationships in the data, discovering what is being emphasized and where the gaps are in the data. The third level develops and tests propositions to construct an explanatory framework. At this stage hypotheses are being tested and trends in the data are sought. Major themes should be emerging from the data. Finally, the researcher is attempting to delineate the deep structure of the data. This is accomplished through a process of synthesis, integrating the data into one explanatory framework.

Reliability and Validity

Doing qualitative research, Muriel Singer (2005) contends, “The research is considered trustworthy and reliable if the findings are faithful to the data, and rigor is rooted in the systematic observation of self and others” (p. 273).

Rafuls (1994) states, “The reliability and validity of a research study determines its credibility and trustworthiness. Reliability is concerned with the replicability of findings and validity is concerned with the accuracy of findings” (p. 46). Kirk and Miller (1986) maintain that objectivity is the goal, whether the research is qualitative or quantitative. This goal is achieved in two ways: Experience is reported in such a way that it is accessible to others, so that replication can be accomplished; and second, the results are reported in terms of theoretically meaningful variables so that the conclusions are justifiable in terms of relevant theories.

Creswell (1998) quotes Polkinghorne concerning validity by stating, “To him, validity refers to the notion that an idea is well grounded and well supported” (p. 208). Creswell continues to quote Polkinghorne by asking, “Does the general structural description provide an accurate portrait of the common features and structural connections that are manifest in the

examples collected” (p. 208)? If this is true, then the conclusions are considered valid. Creswell does point to five crucial questions that the researcher might ask in the consideration of validity:

- Was there undue influence by the researcher on the participant’s responses and descriptions?
- Does the transcription convey the meaning of the oral presentation?
- In analysis of the transcriptions, were all the alternatives to conclusions considered?
- Can one go from the general structural descriptions in the transcriptions to account for the specific contents and connections in the original examples of the experience?
- Is the structural description situation specific or can these descriptions be generalized?

Miles and Huberman (1994) give an extensive discussion about reliability and validity in research. Data quality, according to them, can be assessed through 13 “tactics.” One, are your findings truly representative? Second, check for researcher effects on participants. Third, is *triangulation* possible—can we substantiate our findings through other data sources (persons, times, places, etc.); methods (observation, interview documents); by researcher (investigator A, B, etc.); and by theory. Fourth, weighting the evidence, some evidence is better than others are. Fifth, checking the meaning of outliers. Any findings can have exceptions. Outliers can be your friends. Sixth, the use of extreme cases can help verify and confirm conclusions. Seventh, researchers need to follow-up surprises. Eighth, look for negative evidence. This can inform rival explanations. Ninth, make if-then tests. This is a statement of expected relationship. Tenth, rule out spurious relations. Eleventh, replicate a finding. Data are buttressed when confirmed by independent sources. Twelfth, rival explanations need to be checked out. Thirteenth, is the importance of getting feedback from participants/informants.

Reliability and dependability can be enhanced if the process of the study is consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods. Have things been done with reasonable care? Some other important questions to consider would include: Were the research

questions clear; was the researcher's role and status explicitly described; are basic paradigms and analytic constructs clearly specified; how representative is the sample; were coding checks made; were checks made for bias, deceit, etc.; was any form of peer or colleague review in place?

According to Kvale (1996) reliability pertains to the consistency of the findings, and extends to reliability during interviewing, transcribing, and analyzing of research data. Validity has to do with the truthfulness and correctness of the research. Kvale (1996) reports that validation takes place at seven stages—thematizing; designing; interviewing; transcribing; analyzing; validating; and reporting. Consequently, reliability and validity are twin processes that occur from the beginning of the research event. In regard to qualitative research, Kvale (1996) concludes with this statement:

Interview inquiry leads neither to a subjective relativity of interpretations, nor to an absolute objective knowledge, but to knowledge produced and tested intersubjectively through conversations. The question of the objectivity of the knowledge produced involves the issue of the nature of the social world studied. One meaning of *objectivity* is that an objective investigation reflects the nature of the object investigated, it 'lets the object speak.' This is literally the case in an interview inquiry where intersubjective knowledge is constructed in a conversation between the researcher and the "objects" investigated. With the "objects"—the interview subjects—giving voice to their understanding of an interpersonally negotiated social world, the qualitative research interview obtains a privileged position for creating objective knowledge of a conversation world (pp. 297-298).

Ambert, Adler, Adler, and Detzner, (1995) contend that issues of reliability and validity in qualitative research often rely "on the informants" own formulations and constructions of reality checked against those of other similarly situated informants or the observations of an informed observer" (p. 885). The authors go on to say, "At the same time, it should be appreciated that qualitative research strategies do not have to be complicated to be reliable and valid, nor does the process have to be laden with justifying references" (p. 885).

Singer (2005) believes that participants can be reliable guides to their own lived experiences. In his own phenomenological study he states, “I wanted to respect the lived validity of the client’s account and to narrow the gap between the theory and practice of therapy. It is grounded in the assumption that clients should be acknowledged as reliable on matters that relate to their own needs and preferences, and that it is important for us to listen to clients and examine our practices in light of the client’s experience of them” (p. 269). He also believes that a total objective reality, can never be fully apprehended, but multiple realities are articulated through the lived experiences of individuals. Nonetheless, qualitative research, with guards in place, is both a reliable and valid approach to findings that can inform the field of domestic violence.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Introductory Remarks

My request for interviews with men in a batterer's intervention group was met by some with enthusiasm and by others with skepticism. Most of the men were silent; they asked no questions about the study, and gave no outward interest in talking about violence or anything that brought them into this program. Others, though in the minority, asked some basic questions about the research, and agreed to be interviewed. The differences between those two groups of men are significant.

I was given permission to introduce to the group at "Hit No More" (HNM) the purpose of this study, and to see if any of the men would be interested in doing interviews with me at one of their weekly meetings. The only criteria they had to meet to be in the study was that they had been involved in at least one violent incident with their female partner, were attending a batterer's program, and that they would voluntarily meet with me. It was explained that multiple interviews would be involved, the interviews would be one-to-one, all interviews were confidential, they would be taped and transcripts typed, they would need to sign a consent form, anytime they wanted to get out of the study they would be permitted to do so, and all interviews would take place outside of their group meetings. Four men volunteered for the project. I felt that the director of the HNM program, a former batterer, could give valuable insight and so he was invited to do interviews also. He agreed. None of the men knew the identities of the others who volunteered, including the director.

Though the number of men interviewed was small (n=5), some basic patterns emerged in all five of the men. While differences or distinctions existed among the men regarding their specific forms of abuse, more similarities among the men were evident in their patterns. The men who

were interviewed seemed to be relaxed with the process, and adapted well to our interviews being taped. It felt like they found satisfaction in the thought that someone was interested in their views on violence, without judging or condemning. The idea that I was there to gather information, insight, and knowledge about violence enabled them to open up regarding a subject that few people want to talk about from a “positive” position. The fact that it was based around questions and inquiry, and that I had an interest in them and their perspective led to productive interviews (Ptacek, 1988).

Coming from a “not-knowing” posture, and study based research seemed to take away the fear that there might be some ulterior motive on my part, or that I might use this information to further punish them. The men came to understand that I was not there to condemn or judge them, bracketing my personal beliefs in regard to this phenomenon, but to give them a “voice” in a world that censors violence and violent offenders. The emphasis on confidentiality also aided the process. One man did an initial interview but failed to come to any other interviews, so his data were not used in the study. Five other men completed multiple interviews. The interviews followed a pattern suggested by Dolbeare and Schuman (Seidman, 2006). The first interview focused on their life history, including their history of violence; the second interview focused on their contemporary experience of violence and the details of the event that brought them into the HNM program; the third interview asked the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience. It became evident that to talk about meaning was a more sophisticated concept than they had asked to consider in their experience with violence. It was difficult for the men to think in terms of meaning, and as one man said, “It (his violent behavior) was meaningless; there couldn’t be any meaning in it; it was meaningless.”

Program Attended by Participants

Hit No More (HNM) offers a twelve week program, and an expanded twenty-six week format. The programs meet on separate nights, and offer parallel programs for females that utilize a corresponding curriculum as the males. The objective of the women's program is to help the female partner understand the dynamics of abuse, and is not a program for female abusers. The Director of the program went through a similar program called the Domestic Violence Project Learning Center (DVP). He then became a facilitator for DVP for ten years. The director of DVP then decided to step down and the director of HNM asked if he could take the program and continue to work with offenders on his own. That transition became a reality. The current director kept much of the same curriculum, but has added some of his own material. The core of the program is built around the Duluth Model (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The physical location of the program moved and in the transition the name was changed from Domestic Violence Project Learning Center to Hit No More. The new director has been conducting classes at the new location for approximately ten years. The director indicated that probably 90% of the men in the program have been ordered their by the judicial system, and the other 10% are there because their partner has made it part of the agreement to keep the relationship intact. A fee is charged to all participants.

The Men in the Study

Two of the five men have graduated from college, one was in college at the time of the interviews, one has a high school degree, and one an equivalency degree. Four of the five men were Caucasian and one was African-American. The men in this study ranged in age from 27 years of age to the oldest who was 63 years of age. Three of the men had been in multiple relationships. Three of the men were now separated from their partner as a result of their violent behavior.

The director of HNM was willing to participate in this study, and none of the other men knew he had cooperated in the research. He was not aware of the men who had volunteered either. He is in his third marriage and this is his current wife's fifth marriage. Working on relationships and ending his own history of abuse were priorities when he attended the DVP program. He believes that a change in his personal faith-orientation and DVP brought a new and permanent direction to his life. He describes himself as abuse-free and successfully married for twenty-four years. He believes he is making a positive contribution to the lives of the men attending the HNM program and thoroughly enjoys his work with them. The fact that he has a history of violence and failed relationships, and yet is a successful male seems to resonate with the men who attend the HNM program. The strong impression he leaves appears to be two-fold: One, he understands from first-hand experience what these men are going through and what they feel; second, he says to them, "I've been there, done that so don't try to get one over on me. Don't try to snow me. I know all the 'ends-and-outs' of this lifestyle, but if you will listen for the next twelve weeks your life can change, your life can be different." He seems to symbolize hope. All the men interviewed were able to identify with the director, and this seems to be a powerful part of the HNM program.

Bart (names are changed) is 45 years old, Caucasian, has a twenty-year marriage, but separated since the incident that brought him to HNM. He and his wife have a 16-year old daughter, and two grown stepsons from his wife's previous marriage. He was in a professional occupation and his wife owned her own business with a small number of employees. By his own words they had it all, ". . . the two-story house in the country with the Escalades." They have lost everything. He claims she became an alcoholic three years ago; he had an affair with a close friend and that these events eventually culminated in an abusive circumstance in which he was

arrested but not charged with any criminal conduct at this point. His arrest was basically a “cool-down” time. Bart says he grew up in a “good home,” but later admits that his parents’ marriage was not “. . . the best, there were fights and arguments, and on one occasion a pot handle got broken.” In retrospect he wonders why his mother and father “wasted their time with all this arguing and discontentedness and not loving each other and not having a good marriage.” In regard to what he observed in the home, Bart says, “I learned how to unsuccessfully handle conflict. I learned a bad example.” He later learned that his mother had diabetes and his dad had made a commitment to his father-in-law that he would care for his wife all her life, even if they were unhappy. The net effect of this on Bart was that he was discouraged in watching this kind of relationship, he felt “disconnected—doing his own thing,” and feeling the marriage was “toxic, it wasn’t loving, it wasn’t a place you wanted to hang around as a child and as a son.” Bart talked about his dad, who had passed away three years ago, who “. . . could be an unmitigated jerk,” but was also his “biggest cheerleader.” He would go to his dad with all the “big stuff.” Bart believes he was his mother’s favorite. She “takes care of him.” All this said, Bart wanted his marriage to be better. Bart went out of his way to be helpful to me in the interviews. Bart had a past history with alcohol but wanted to leave the impression that this was years ago, and that alcohol had no impact on his present circumstances. In one interview Bart intimated that there had been an “incident” about five years into their marriage but that there had been no other abuse issues in their marriage till the one that brought him to HNM. Further discussion revealed that his wife had hit him so he had slapped her face in retaliation. Like all of the men interviewed, Bart had a way of minimizing, blaming, excusing, denying, and justifying attitudes and behavior.

Warren is a 23 year-old Caucasian man who was in a co-habiting relationship when the interviews began but has since separated from his partner. He is a student at a local university. Warren believes that HNM is the best thing that has happened for him. He talks at great length about being picked-on and bullied since kindergarten, and in particular he speaks of the bullying he received from his older brother. He comes from an intact home, but his father worked so many hours that he was basically an absent father. By listening to the tone of Warren's voice, by the content of his responses, he emanated an air of "superiority." Warren spoke with intensity about the rude treatment he had received from counselors that he and his partner had gone to before HNM. He claims the counselors were ". . . judgmental, point the finger at me, say things like you're 'no good, you're worthless, you're beyond . . . you just screwed up . . .you just have to live with it so let's help your partner,' shoo me away" attitude. According to Warren, even his pastor was guilty of the same attitude. Warren was actually attending an anger management class at the time of the incident that got him arrested and court-ordered to attend HNM. Warren talks about his past in terms like, ". . . from the beginning of my life the world has been against me because there is evil, there is Satan . . . there is obviously something about me or in and of me that Satan finds enough of a threat to pay attention to, to bring things into my life that constantly either keep me off balance, out of church, away from God or something which is no different than any other human being but it just seems like with me things have . . . the bad has far outweighed the good." Warren also talked about the abuse his partner had experienced in her life. She had an abusive stepfather, and had been in two abusive relationships with men prior to her eighteenth birthday. She then met Warren, they started dating, moved in together and had a child.

Chet is a 45 year old African-American male who has never been married, but has been in several relationships. He has two children by different partners, but was not living with anyone at the time of our interviews. Chet has been in prison, having served five years for drug trafficking. Chet claims he has never been physically abusive toward a woman, and the incident that brought him to HNM was a contrived circumstance. He grew up in the streets of a large mid-western city. He has older brothers who were involved in drugs and two of them are currently in prison. Chet grew up without a father in the home, was reared by his mother, his brothers and the street. He experienced bullying in the neighborhood, and says all these circumstances caused him to be tough and learn how to fight. He claims to have been a neighborhood "lord." He says that he realized that if he went back to that city after prison that he would probably end up in prison for the rest of his life. He believes he has turned his life around in regard to drugs, but by his own admission told me he could be a "very bad dude," and that he could be very "mean," but just not toward women. He reports that a policeman told one of his partners "Chet is a dangerous man . . . if he calm let him stay calm, you tryin to push this man into something you don't want to see." Chet says he has had an angry disposition, but he has never been physically violent toward a woman. Without interviewing his partners I have no way to verify his statements. As a result of the HNM program, Chet says he does not want to be in a relationship with a woman and believes he still has lots of work to do on himself, but praises the director of the HNM program for giving him skills he has never possessed.

Darren is a 33 year old male who is in a second marriage of six years. He has a daughter by his first marriage but has little contact with her. He has three children in this marriage. Darren grew up in a home with both parents but his dad worked so much that he too was an absentee father. His mother's health radically changed when he was about eight years old. Suddenly,

Muscular Dystrophy left her paralyzed from the neck down. His mother lived another twenty years, but life, as he had known it would never be the same. They moved and the family lived with his grandparents for a number of years. Darren claims that because of his mother's condition she was no longer able to be a disciplinarian, his father worked all the time, his brother and his friend bullied him continually; and so he became a rebellious person who did what he pleased. He too became a bully at school treating younger boys the same way he had been treated by his brother. For Darren, bullying was a way to get respect.

Leon was a 63 year old male who had been in multiple relationships. He reports that primarily his mother abused him as a child. His father was verbally and physically abusive toward him. He says neither of his parents was emotionally available to him. He reported being bullied and like the other men in this study indicated that he had low self-esteem. He indicated that there had been an incident of abuse in his first two marriages, but that neither wife had been hurt. In his own words, "With my first wife I sat on top of her and fed her a cigarette until she blew smoke in my face, and with my second wife I threw a beer can at her and missed. Those are incidents of violence but those don't make me an abusive person, okay?" He went on to say that most of his abuse was verbal and psychological, that he was into "playing mind games." He did admit to having an angry disposition.

While coincidental, each man in this study was the youngest child in his family. With the exception of Bart, all the men reported being bullied and becoming bullies. All of the men came from conflicted families. Another observation was that it seemed that the men had adopted the language of the HNM program especially as it pertained to "power and control."

After studying the interviews several themes emerged that need further elaboration.

Chaotic Homes

All the men in this research reported growing up in homes that were chaotic. With the exception of Chet, who had no father in his home, the others reported witnessing anger and conflict between their parents. All of the men said that their behavior outside the home was not closely monitored. With the possible exception of Bart, none of the homes exhibited a stable rule system that was consistently enforced, nurturing behaviors were absent, and there was a lack of a legitimate source of authority in their lives, so the men were left to raise themselves (Becvar & Becvar, 1996).

Bart said his home was “toxic,” and that the marriage between his mother and father was “. . . wasteful, they were unhappy, stuck. It was not a loving home.” Warren said that when there was conflict between his mother and dad that his dad would go “silent, and not talk for days, maybe even weeks.” His dad would become grumpy, shut down, and not talk. By observation he learned that if a problem was ignored then the situation ended and “then eventually you will leave me alone.” Darren said that there was “a lot of yelling and screaming between his mother and father,” until his mother became ill. Then he reported that he had to “grow up fast, there was a lack of discipline and a lack of affection.” Chet grew up without a father, he talks about his mother with fondness; but it appears his older brothers, who were into drug trafficking, and the streets, raised him. He lacked a clear role model for appropriate behavior, lacked supervision and discipline, and grew up believing that he was his own authority and boss.

Leon claims to have been “kept in a box” until he was seventeen years of age and then his parents said, “Go become a man.” He says his dad was crippled and worked but couldn’t make much money so his mother assumed the dominant role in the home and brought in the majority income. Leon then responded by stating, “Mom ran everything.” He said that his parents were

abusive toward him, but gave no indication that they monitored his life outside the home. He described his relationship with his mother as one of love/hate. She sent messages to him that he would never amount to anything, that he was stupid, and that he would end up in the penitentiary. Leon talked about being confused about the meaning of love, his mother would tell him she loved him and the next moment would beat him.

Beliefs about Women and Their Roles

Based on his experience Leon came to believe that “women run things, they are the ones in charge.” He went on to say that men “grow up in a society run by women.” He believed that women are “domineering and overbearing.” Bart claimed to see women as “human beings, people, individuals;” but he saw his mother as “hateful, detrimental, opinionated, a know-it-all who had a chip on her shoulder.” He believed in a traditional view of roles with the wife as a “homemaker,” and the husband as the “breadwinner.” He further elaborated that he saw the husband and wife as a “partnership where each complimented the other in terms of strengths and weaknesses.” He said that he looked at the marriage through the lens of the church and the Bible and believed it was his responsibility to “protect the woman and to sacrifice for the family.” Darren based his views of the roles of men and women on his grandparents. This was a traditional model where the woman would take care of the responsibilities “in the home,” and the husband would be the primary provider and took care of responsibilities “outside the home.” When he observed other relatives and the parents of friends he believed women would “take advantage of the man,” and that women were “bossy, dominating and to be resisted.” Warren also had a traditional approach to roles though his mother worked outside the home like all the other mothers of the men in this study. Warren believed the man was the “authority figure,” and the woman shouldn’t “stand up to a man.” He came to these conclusions based on his understanding of the Bible and what he had witnessed in his home where he believed his mother

undermined his father's authority. Like Leon, he saw his mother as "overbearing and disrespectful." Warren felt strongly about the idea of women as "manipulating." He said, "Women are deceptive creatures that will manipulate until they get what they want. I came to see women as shifty, shady. When I see a woman playing a man it just eats me up. Women are dishonest; this is the picture I grew up with. Girls use you for what they can get."

The men in this study came to believe that women were not to be trusted, they would undermine your position as "the man, the one in authority." They learned to guard themselves and had an underlying belief that given enough time, women would want to dominate the man and would want to be in charge of the relationship.

Woman as Challenger

Since these men believed women could not be trusted and wanted to be in charge, they viewed women's comments, attitudes, and behavior as "challenges" to them. Bart talked about how his wife would criticize his driving and added, "B. (his wife) was such a challenger." Chet said his partner "refused to cooperate, she followed me in a car, cussing at me . . . she was grinding and twisting me." He further elaborated, "This partner would always be right, she's the most intelligent, she was in college, not me." Darren commented, "My wife dogged me." He went on to say, "Women challenge you, women challenge your manhood." Warren talked about this concept in this way, "Women have fought for equality, but they didn't stop at equality." He was saying that they want to be in charge. He then talked about his partner while they were having an argument, ". . . who is she to tell me what to do? She had no respect for my word." To him that lack of respect was ". . . a real slap in my face." As he said, "Sometimes she would stand in my way and refuse to let me out of the situation, or followed me continuing to bark out her junk, getting into my head." He concluded, "Women who nag (challenge) need to be put in their place." Bart reported a similar incident the night he was taken to jail, that his wife was

standing in his way and would not move, yelling and screaming at him. Leon talked about the woman as challenger in this manner, “When my wife exerted ‘control’ in our relationship I reverted back in my mind and feelings and it felt like I was being scolded by my mother. I would either react like an attack dog or strike out like a child having a tantrum. But as an adult you are more volatile, more aggressive.” In this context he said, “I just didn’t want to be dominated by my mother.” Then Leon added, “You can’t let her get the upper hand. In my mind she wants to tell me what to do, and if she takes charge over me I am reverted back to the little child, I’m destroyed.”

While the men struggled with the idea of “challenge” from women, all of them were attracted to women who were intelligent, strong, independent, and confrontational. This appears to be part of the pattern that is conducive to volatile relationships. This in no way is to place blame or fault on the female partner, but is another unique observation about men who keep seeking satisfaction in a relationship with a woman.

Man as Champion

The men in the study talked about being influenced by television, movies, books, the model of their own home, observing friends and relatives, and even pornography concerning the role of the man. They came to believe the man is the “decision-maker.” Other terms they used included “ruler,” “king of the castle,” “head of the house,” “the one in authority.” Chet told one of his partners, “. . . this is my house and you got to do what I tell you to do in my house (they weren’t living together at that time).” This attitude is reflective of the idea of ownership. Warren believed that when he and his partner couldn’t find a way to compromise then she was to “submit.” Warren’s attitude represents the entitlement that he believes is his as a result of the position he has as a man in “authority.”

The Metaphor of Defense

Certainly “Woman as Challenger” and “Man as Champion” are metaphors that men use in their languaging about the phenomena of abuse, but there is another metaphor men use that is intrinsic to this study. It has to do with men seeing themselves under attack by their female partners. Men may use terminology like “warfare,” or they felt “cornered” and had to defend themselves. An important element of this discussion goes back to the perception or feeling men have that their position in the relationship is being challenged so that they have no choice but to defend. The greater question may be, “What is being defended?” I don’t believe the men I interviewed had the skills or permission to intellectually reason their way through this issue. Men understand that they feel challenged, they feel attacked, but they were unclear as to what was being attacked. As the questions and discussion continued the men began to rethink this important issue.

When Warren was asked what was being protected he replied, “Most people would view that as trying to protect themselves physically, but this is an emotional war. This is a war that plays on a man’s mentality. She challenges his perception of masculinity and what it means to be a man, and his identity, his very own identity.”

Darren said, “I would rather hurt myself or someone else than to let my feelings get hurt.” He continued, “whenever I felt I was being attacked, I went on the attack against them, even stronger than what they were.” To the question “What is being challenged?” he responded, “the challenge was about my manhood. I just wanted to know if I am adequate enough? I just don’t know these things anymore so I just put up these walls (to protect/defend).”

In response to this discussion Leon replied, “They say the best defense is a good offense so to defend myself I have to attack. And if I attack with my egotistical attitude then I don’t

have to show you this fragile sense of self because I have this low self-esteem and I'm afraid of being bullied so I will attack you so you won't attack me."

From the interviews it became evident that men question their own sense of manhood, of competence, and adequacy. As the discussions began to unfold they were able to talk about this more clearly and to identify for themselves that what they felt they were protecting or defending was their sense of self, or manhood.

The Lethal Triangle

Analysis of the interviews kept revealing three critical characteristics of the men in this study. All of the men were bullied when they were younger, all the men had emotionally absent fathers, and all the men had low self-esteem. While Bart appears to be an exception in some ways, it is difficult to know for certain that these characteristics are not true and that he has dismissed them. Bart believed that he had high self-esteem, not low self-esteem, but as our last interview progressed and discussion deepened he did admit that he saw himself as a failure as a husband, dad, and man. He also admitted to being deeply depressed.

As discussion continued around the concept of low self-esteem the men in this study began to talk about their own sense of worth. Warren talked about the precipitating event to his eventual explosion in which he choked his partner to the point she had stopped breathing. Fortunately he caught himself in time and she lived and continued the relationship with him. A few weeks previous to the events that unfolded in that fateful evening Warren's partner had called him "an ignorant hick." As he would say, "this statement cut to the identity of who I was." He talked about growing up poor and being bullied by his older brother and that he just lived on the edge in terms of his anger. He was labeled a 'troublemaker' at school, and all these things "played negatively on my self-esteem. So that in turn affected how I behaved in relationships. It was almost this smothering effect and I lived with this fear that she would leave me. It was easy

to say, 'whatever, hit the door, it doesn't matter to me;' but when everyone else was gone and nobody else was around and it was just me and the good Lord to talk to, I just bawled. And all of this was just boiling underneath the surface." Warren admitted that behind this was a feeling of insecurity and of feeling unworthy. As he said, "Just being worthy of someone's affection, someone's attention, someone's love. Being worthy of an emotionally healthy person as a partner, being worthy of respect and honor." And when it isn't there? "Just give up and go to jail, you're not worthy of their respect."

The director of the HNM program believed that the men in that program do everything they can to prove to their partners that they are not flawed. He continued by stating that performance is tied to self worth or value and the men going through this program have been told that they are failures, either by their female partners or by the judicial system or by someone else.

Leon said that his first marriage was to a woman who was "capable, independent, highly intelligent, and just like my mother. I needed her but I hated my need for her. And I was struggling with, 'Who am I? What is a real man?' I put up this façade, this egotistical attitude that, 'Hey, I've got it all together, but inside I was absolutely terrified.'" He said that he covered his insecure basis his feelings of inferiority with a superiority attitude. He concluded by stating, "I didn't have a sense of self. My sense of self was gone."

Darren talked about the messages he heard growing up, that he was dumb, stupid, and that he wouldn't amount to anything. As he stated in his own words, "... that I wouldn't amount to nothin, I was stupid, I was in special education. It made me feel like I wasn't worth that much." He admitted that his confidence and his competence had been eroded from "all the put-downs I have had in my life about being good enough and being a man." When questioned

further he admitted, “I got cut down so much that I wouldn’t amount to anything that I wondered whether I was worth anything?”

It appears that the convergence of negative messages and negative life experiences, being bullied, and not having an appropriate role model in an available father led these men to question their sense of worth, value, and competence. Their sense of self—that part of a man that needs to feel secure and safe is vulnerable, and when a partner appears to reinforce their self-doubts through language (what they say), or actions (what they do) then conflict and abuse seems inevitable.

The Elusive *Meaning* of Violence

The purpose of this study was to give ‘voice’ to men, and to believe that if they had an opportunity to talk about the *meaning* of violence for them that insight could be gained for future research and to improve the work of psycho-educational groups. This task became more difficult than previously anticipated. The men involved in this study had developed a certain understanding of abuse based on their classes at HNM. They adopted the language and explanations of the classes without the dialogue of differing positions on the complex nature of abuse. When asked to respond to a question regarding the *meaning* they gave to their violent event that brought them to HNM, they struggled to answer. It’s a question they have never been asked to address. They spoke from an educated, HNM perspective rather than from an “in-the-moment,” “feel it,” “describe it” perspective. It felt like the question required a more sophisticated response process than the men were prepared to give.

Bart’s initial response was, “Well, violence is meaningless. When I’m in a state where my behavior has broken down and failed, and I’m being physical with B., that behavior is meaningless.”

Chet's response was that violence represented power and control. Darren said he thought the *meaning* was, ". . . in the past I think my anger or violence would maybe give me some control over what they (women) wanted to do or control over them, more of a power over them...but to me it seems like, now that I went through the program . . . it's a lot of hurt (that I'm hurting someone else and I'm hurting)."

Warren said, "It's getting so frustrated and aggravated with the circumstances that surround you that you can't function, you can't see clearly, you can't discern information, you don't hear people correctly. It's consuming in your mind, your body, and in your spirit. It just overwhelms you. That is what the anger really is." He continued to say that there was a 'breaking point' at which the feelings of being overwhelmed move to behavior. In pursuing this sense of being overwhelmed with Warren, he further elaborated, ". . . you come to this point where some situation is beyond your capacity, physically or mentally and you're not able to control it's flow, and its direction you begin to panic. You can't control the circumstances for direction then you're in this . . . fear of the unknown . . . circumstance. And you begin to panic because you don't want to be where you're not comfortable." For Warren, one of the *meanings* of violence is to regain some control of the circumstances and regain some stability for himself so that he could be "comfortable."

When talking to the director of HNM about *meaning* he answered by talking about the reason men abuse or the purpose of abuse. An observation was that men needed to make a shift in their thinking about abuse and its *meaning*, and this was difficult. They typically relied on what they had learned in HNM rather than to think about abuse in the moments it was occurring. Bart could not bring himself to think of abusive behavior in meaningful or instrumental terms. For him, violence was "meaningless." Leon said that abuse and violence was 'his training.' It

was retaliation, “I was abused so I will abuse.” He didn’t receive appropriate skills to form a relationship, and he didn’t know how an adult man was to function. He said that what he wanted and needed in a relationship was respect. This was a need echoed by every man with the exception of Bart. These men also confused fear and intimidation with respect, thinking they were the same. Leon said the payoff for violence was payback, and that he received some sort of “release.” As he said, “There was a release every time there was a fight or an argument where I believe that I had won. I could never win with my parents. When I won because of my ability to have power and control over my wife then there was a release—I accomplished something, I’ve done something—something I’ve always wanted to do but couldn’t do as a child.” He also commented that he “would start arguments and fights in order to get out of the house and go do my thing.”

When *meaning* was approached from an instrumental or utilitarian viewpoint it yielded some further insight. Actual events of violence were discussed to observe *what* the violence actually accomplished for the man.

Bart talked about his need for the pain of the attack to end. He would say, “All my mind wants is for the pain to stop, to want out, wants anything but that situation.” He went on to state, “I don’t perceive that I have any control over this pain and I am desperate for it to stop, or at least simmer to a point that I might be able to breathe and handle it.” He further elaborated that in a situation where he feels overwhelmed (the same language as Warren), his mind says, “Stop, let me out of here.” His violence at the point that he was in the bedroom with his wife and didn’t see a way to escape that moment, was a method of “stopping the pain,” and ending this specific confrontation. Violence ends every confrontation. Violence, in its own perverted and twisted manner, brings ‘peace’ in overwhelming circumstances for the man.

Warren's discussion of *meaning* closely paralleled Bart's. Warren used his anger as a warning device without necessarily taking responsibility for his actions. He would say, "Please leave me alone, please don't bother me and that request has gone unanswered." He further elaborated, "You're thinking processes become more and more panicked, your heart begins to speedup and you know . . . your logic becomes cloudier and cloudier and all these things begin to start taking place all at once and increasing at an accelerated rate until you come to a point, where you just sort of, to me, the way it's occurred anyway you lose your full consciousness in the situation of what's going on. So you're not completely present, you know, in what you're thinking and doing." Warren, and others, who were interviewed, disassociated themselves from their behavior, as though this would free them from the responsibility of the behavior. Violence appears to be a method of responding to a female partner without having to be responsible for the behavior. Warren's flawed thinking doesn't end there, he believed his violence was a "cry for help." He defended this by stating, "Anger is a means or a tactic to regain a sense of hope or worth because it's the last chance, the last straw. In other words, when everything else has failed the last thing on the list to try is anger. If that fails (his use of anger and violence), then all hope is gone."

Chet claimed he doesn't hit or hurt women. There are no reports of violence in his first relationship but there are in his second. Chet said this partner would attack him by calling him names, specifically "stupid." She continually challenged his intelligence, and in particular would challenge his authority. She wouldn't listen to him or his requests. She showed no respect for him or the boundaries that he tried to establish with her. She was in college, Chet wasn't. It appears that Chet reverted to his street behavior—fight it out. At some point this woman ceased to be a woman in Chet's eyes and became a person, and he was able to see her as he would any

other man. He claims that she fell on some water in the kitchen, she says he slammed her head into the floor and told her he would kill her if she didn't get out of his house. According to Chet the police report reflects this latter explanation, though he says she is lying. Chet was arrested but the woman refused to press charges against him. In the state of Missouri the Prosecuting Attorney makes the final decision and he can still be charged if there is sufficient evidence. The *meaning* of his violence appears to be like that of the others in this study, his sense of self was diminished to the place that all he knows to do to regain some sense of respect for himself is to be violent.

Darren spoke to the *meaning* of violence by talking about his need for respect, and how he used intimidation and an angry disposition to create fear and produce what he thought was respect. Violence is confused with respect. Darren talked about the importance of his view being heard and if a partner would walk away from him it was the same as saying he wasn't important, that he had no value or worth and this message would infuriate him to the point of abusive behaviors toward his partner. It is a convoluted way of thinking about importance and value, but his violence brought him her attention, which to him represented the *meaning* of value or worth.

The Dynamics of Abuse

As interviews with the men began to unfold, a predictable pattern emerged. As I listened to the accounts of violence and abuse as given by the men, a distinct and similar pattern began to emerge. The dynamics of the abuse process can be condensed to these major points:

- An initial conversation begins between the man and the woman. These conversations often begin stress-free
- Either is capable of escalating the intensity of the conversation. Frustration or other stress factors (finances, daily life decisions, discipline of children, in-laws) contribute

- An argument or disagreement erupts
- Blame is the fuel of the process leading the disagreement/conflict into a “cycle of antagonism” (my term)
- This “cycle of antagonism” intensifies with both parties as major contributors and feeding off of the other. Typically, there is no end in this cycle, the couple lacks the skills to communicate effectively or to change the direction of the intensity
- The “cycle of antagonism” now begins to spiral out of control and becomes an escalating spiral of anger and frustration, and continues to be fueled by blame
- Men are soon approaching a “point-of-no-return,” and lacking a Regulating Mechanism or the skills to stop the spiral, explode
- At this point men are able to find a sense of calm or peace—all is fine with them. Women are left with the aftermath of the explosion, feeling a tremendous sense of hurt, confusion, anger, and perhaps physical injury

These steps or phases can occur quite rapidly or can occur over a longer period of time.

The men in this study report that they live at a higher level of anger than most other men. If there was a ten-point scale for anger, these men report living at six to eight on a daily basis so that any provocation puts them over the edge.

The Regulating Mechanism

Another insight that became evident as the interviews were conducted is that men lack a technique to stop the escalation of their anger. I have come to call this a Regulating Mechanism. This mechanism or techniques would allow them to stop the spiral of anger that is out of control. It is a braking technique. While “time-outs” are often taught and employed as a means to stop the spiral, unless men come to understand what is “pushing their buttons,” they are only employing a temporary technique rather than a permanent mechanism that will work on most, if not every occasion. The technique must be connected to their understanding about their sense of worth. That what is being pushed is their doubts about value and worth and there is a method to soothe this “out-of-control” feeling. Men must come to understand that regardless of what their

female partners say or do these behaviors do not determine their value or worth. Men need to learn this concept and come to this settled position prior to arguments. Women do not determine their worth or identity. Once men have learned this valuable lesson this becomes the Regulating Mechanism that will empower them to end the spiral of violence without exploding or hurting their partners.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Listening to men's stories of violence was difficult and sad. I am reminded again of the complexity of this social phenomenon and problem. In this study, all five men were quite similar, Bart appears to be different in some of his responses and his story. The differences between Bart and the others may be real or may be a result of the limitations created by the depth and dimensions of the story he was willing to share. All of the men had been part of the Hit No More (HNM) program. Bart was in his fourth week when we began our interviews. The other three had completed the program, and Warren and Chet were continuing to attend for further personal growth.

All of the men realized and admitted they had problems with their temper and with their anger; and were able to take some responsibility for the behavior that originally brought them to HNM. The men were able to talk about their anger getting out of control, and to talk about behaviors that were abusive and violent. As a result of HNM, they were able to talk about personal ownership of behavior, and to realize that they couldn't control the behavior or attitudes of their female partners. They could acknowledge that their behavior had damaging effects on their partners and others. They could talk about their behavior in moral terms—violence and abuse is wrong. Through HNM they understood the language of “power and control,” and each of them talked about the ways in which they had tried to control and use power in their intimate relationships. Each of them talked about the dynamics of the abuse cycle in similar ways—that arguments escalated into more intense disagreements; frustration would increase; that they realized they were increasing in the intensity of their anger (“she was pushing my buttons”); and that they were approaching a “point-of-no-return.” They also understood that they lose control of themselves and move to more abusive behaviors. Two of the men used more violent

techniques (holding down, choking, slapping, and hitting with the fist); one used intimidation as a major approach; and the other two were less physical but just as abusive—they would use emotional or psychological abuse (name calling, cussing, and other threats) to achieve the same results. Chet may have been an exception, but it was difficult to know whether he was telling the truth, in denial, or minimizing his abuse.

All of the men, with the possible exception of Bart, had fathers who were emotionally absent. All of the men had been bullied as young adolescents. All of them admitted to having low self-esteem or low self-worth. All the men expressed fears that their partners would leave them. Three of the men talked about conflicted relationships with their mother. None of the men possessed, in my language, a “regulating mechanism” that would provide them with an avenue of escape once the “spiral of anger” began. The skills or understanding that men require to make those kinds of choices was missing. Holtzworth-Munroe and Anglin (1991), conducted qualitative research on maritally violent men to examine their social skills. They state, “In summary, the findings of this study suggest that violent men have social skills deficits, being unable to generate and choose competent behavioral responses in problematic marital situations” (p. 266).

Another realization was that men who volunteered to do interviews were different from men who refused to do interviews. I began to probe this difference with the men I interviewed and asked them if they noted any differences. Their observations were that some of the men in the program, who resented being there didn’t believe they belonged there, only wanted to “put in their time,” and then get out. They would come to class and be distracting, were often disrespectful toward the director of HNM, and gave off an air of superiority. In interviews with the director, I asked him about these observations and he confirmed that this had been his

experience. He also believed that these men were gaining more from the program than what could be observed, and told about a man who had just called and wanted to repeat the program because he realized he had not given his full effort previously.

In particular, Warren talked about his pre-HNM experiences and his refusal at that point in his life to accept that his violence was as serious as some of the counselors were telling him. He talked about “being ready to hear,” and “being ready to change,” and we continued this discussion from a “readiness-to-change” viewpoint. He believed that “timing” was important for men to be able to hear what this program had to say about their violence. In a declarative fashion he said, “I wasn’t ready to believe it,” and continued by saying, “they’re (other men in the program) not going to change because they’re not going to see past what they already think and believe. It’s within our nature to ignore new information if it contradicts what we already think or feel.” Timing appears to be a critical issue worthy of more research. Perhaps the concepts and ideas presented by Prochaska, Norcross, and Diclemente (1994) in their transtheoretical approach, “readiness for change” could offer some important insight and application at this juncture.

The Vulnerable Self

As the men in this study told their stories it became apparent that all of them struggled with what they called, “low self-esteem” or “low” or “no” sense of worth. They talked about wanting “respect,” and it was obvious that they used intimidation and bullying behaviors to gain the “respect” they desired. They confused fear with respect, believing that if someone showed the deference because of fear that they then had that person’s respect. It was my observation that languaging around ideas such as “low self-esteem,” and a “low sense of worth and value” as a person was the only way these men knew to talk about this sense of self. Ragg (1999) states, “Batterers are bound to have negative self concepts and low self esteem. Batterers are also found

to maintain unrealistically high expectations of themselves, which they are often unable to achieve. Such speculation is supported by authors who know that batterers have a tendency to control others to decrease feelings of insecurity” (pp. 315-316). Batterers are filled with doubts and fears about their competence and adequacy as “males.” Consequently, arguments with their intimate partners are interpreted as criticisms of them personally and attack on their sense of personhood (Markus, Cross, and Wurf, 1990). Batterers lack the ability to differentiate between behavior, what they do, and who they are as persons (Hultzworth-Munroe and Anglin, 1991). It is for this reason, the inability to differentiate between behavior and personhood, that shame has such a powerful impact on batterers (Ragg, 1999).

A growing observation and hypothesis of this research is that men have an internal need to protect this “sense of self.” I had originally thought of this in terms such as men’s “weak sense of self,” or men’s “fragile sense of ego,” but these terms are power-laden in themselves and so I have chosen to use the term “vulnerable self” or “protected self” instead. This language seems to fit well the metaphor of “warfare” or “defense.” On a much deeper and unconscious level these men question their masculinity and are filled with doubts about themselves. They have learned how to cover these doubts and fears with this “air of superiority.” They cannot appear weak, especially to their partner. They perceive criticism and arguments as attacks on them personally, in fact, most events of life are “personal.” Men resort to the “skills” they have learned early and best; to bully and intimidate until they get what they perceive is in their best interests. All of the men talked about what it means to appear weak, which is an untenable position. They use language like, “I felt cornered,” “I felt a sense of panic, and wasn’t sure what to do.” “You get to this place where you feel like an animal that has been cornered and it’s either fight or flight, and I generally fight.”

The men in this study lacked the conscious ability to cognitively connect the internal dynamics concerning worth and competence and the internal tension that exists about their doubts. They believe that on some level they must measure up to some perceived standard their partner holds over them, and the fear of failure that exists just below the surface of conscious thought. On some level they believe that they must defend themselves. They talked about this in these terms, “She attacked me, and I had to defend myself.” “She was in my face, and I needed space so I pushed her.” “I need her to hear what I have to say so I wouldn’t let her leave the room.” “I told her there was a storm just under the calm.”

If, in fact, men struggle with this “vulnerable self,” then batterer’s intervention programs need to construct their curriculum to address this issue in a more salient manner. Steven Stosny (2003a, 2003b, 2006) has developed such a program. It appears that Stosny has identified some of the key areas that I have come to identify. Stosny (2003b) speaks to a “diminished sense of self” (p. 15), and continues to talk about “modalities or modes of self as styles of thinking, feeling, and behaving. They (abusive men) make the world at any given moment mean something specific, requiring specific thoughts, emotions, and behavior . . . whether he encounters it in a **Competent** (emphasis his) mode of self or a **helpless** mode of self” (p. 16). Stosny (2003a) teaches men to redirect their thinking to understand and accept, what he calls, their Core Value. He describes this Core Value in these terms:

I am worthy of respect, value, and compassion, whether or not I get them from others. If I don’t get them from others, it is necessary to feel more worthy, not less. It is necessary to affirm my own deep value as a unique person (a child of God). I respect and value myself. I have compassion for my hurt. I have compassion for the hurt of others. I trust myself to act in my best interests and in the interests of loved ones (p. 14).

To make this intervention work, Stosny has men repeat this statement on twelve different occasions during a day. While Stosny doesn’t refer to this procedure as a “regulating

mechanism,” it essentially serves this purpose for men. Rather than reacting in anger in any given situation, men are to repeat to themselves this “mantra-like” intervention. In my understanding of this intervention it serves to help men understand that nothing that happens to them can change the fact that they have “core value.”

Stosny’s research and work with batterers seems to confirm my findings. In particular, that a man’s background, family of origin, and early life experiences have left him with a wounded and vulnerable sense of self. Men learned to protect this sense of self with anger, intimidation, threats, and the use of more physical behaviors such as pushing, shoving, hitting walls, throwing things, and anything that would get the attention of their partner. Kroeger and Nason-Clark (2001) state the case in this manner, “Abusive husbands are more likely to perceive their wives’ behavior as threatening their sense of self, so men who have low self-esteem to begin with have a greater tendency to use force when they perceive their power challenged” (pp. 32-33). Yet, men can learn new ways of understanding themselves, their identity, and can find more productive ways to experience situations that in the past produced frustration, anger, and more volatile behaviors. In no way is this to be interpreted to mean that the man has “power over” his intimate partner. In fact, it implies the opposite, that a man is to take personal responsibility over his attitude and his actions. This research and this discussion means that a man must take the necessary steps to insure the safety and welfare of his intimate partner while learning more functional skills in relating. It would be to move from a “vulnerable self” to a “powerful self,” who relates to his partner in empathy (Erskine, Moursund, and Trautmann, 1999) and compassion (Kroeger and Nason-Clark, 2001; Stosny, 2006).

Further research is required to substantiate these claims. The small number of men in the study is another limitation. Constructively, if there is validity to these insights then programs

should, at a minimum, include materials that give men the tools to understand and change their own views of “self.” Talk-therapy can also aid this objective.

The *Meaning* of Violence

The purpose of this study was to give men a “voice” as they shared their personal stories of violence and abuse, and then to give *meaning* to their experience of violence. The men talked differently about their experience with abuse and violence when they weren’t actively involved in a violent episode. It appeared that the HNM program had taught them that violence was a means of exercising “power and control” in a relationship, and so they spoke in those terms. In other words, it was as though the HNM program had taught them to give a conditioned response to the question as to why they were abusive. When each man talked his way through the specific event that ultimately brought him to the HNM program, the outcome—what each man needed at the moment of his violence (physical space or distance from his partner; peace, or a way to end the conflict/argument; retaliation for a perceived attack, etc.)—was then discussed in terms of the inherent *meaning* in that event.

When Bart says his abuse was “meaningless” he is speaking from a distance, from a moment when he is under no stress or conflict; and in looking back on that moment and that behavior it can appear to him as “meaningless.” When that event was viewed as a slide show, moment-by-moment Bart needed relief, he needed space, he needed “breathing room.” His violent act (pushing) brought him “peace,” it brought the end of that moment of conflict, which he viewed as uncomfortable, perhaps even unbearable. It could be that he is saying that his behavior had no value, especially when he thinks about it from a distance and when he is not in the midst of the conflict.

Conflict is personal to the male. Conflict is painful. He sees conflict as an attack and the woman as the “challenger,” the “attacker.” He must defend himself. He feels overwhelmed in

the conflict. The man understands these feelings of frustration, and knows that his anger will intensify as a next step for him. He hasn't learned how to deal with these feelings, they begin to escalate out of control and before he realizes what has happened, he has exploded. For him, the conflict has ended, and peace and stability has returned. For the woman, it is now a state of confusion and fear. To the man, conflict sends a message that he is doing something wrong (perceived or real), and the next connection for the man is to believe that he is wrong or that he might be flawed. It is this underlying doubt or fear about his manhood, of needing to be competent which is being questioned, or even challenged. This is what the feelings of "overwhelmed" seem to connect to as a result of hearing men's stories. Violence 'silences' the female partner.

Leon connected the *meaning* of violence to outcome. Men learn that violence leads to a desired result. Leon said that he needed to "win" in conflicts with his wife. He explained that he wore his partner down with he psychological abuse—his criticisms of her, his constant put-downs of her—until she gave in and he had "won." He says that he practically destroyed this woman's own self-esteem by the end of their marriage.

While more research is needed, it appears that violence is a method men employ to protect their "vulnerable" self. I don't believe men understand this concept; they might even disagree with this conclusion. At least part of this would be attributed to the fact that men can't allow themselves to think in terms of weakness—real or perceived. This is the conundrum they face. Repeatedly men talked about their low self-esteem. They talked about their lack of worth. They talked about the negative messages they heard about themselves and how they had internalized these messages. The messages created doubts and insecurity that they had never been able to discuss or question. The result of this is that men feel this tremendous sense of

“vulnerability,” and yet they have never identified these feelings or talked about them. Instead, they talk about feeling “cornered,” they feel a sense of “panic,” they feel “attacked,” they feel “overwhelmed.”

Violence is filled with *meaning*. That doesn’t imply that this *meaning* makes sense to you or me or even the perpetrator. When violence is viewed in the contexts as discussed—as desired outcomes or a method to protect—then a different lens is provided for looking at this difficult and complex phenomenon.

Final Thoughts

The dimensions of wife abuse, as discussed in Chapter 2 were commonly reported among the men of this study. Physical violence and emotional abuse were the most common. Specific abuse included grabbing and tearing of clothes, holding their partner down on the ground or floor, pushing and shoving, yelling, screaming, cussing, and other forms of criticisms and put-downs intended to diminish or oppress their partner. For one man the violence was to choke his partner until she had stopped breathing. Fortunately he let go in time.

Interviews indicated a predictable cycle of violence similar to that reported by Walker (1979). While the current research doesn’t reveal a new discovery, it does reinforce that this research is consistent with other work. My only addition has to do with the lack of or establishment of a regulating mechanism that would function to stop the escalating cycle of anger and violence before reaching the point of “no return” where a violent act is imminent, and actually a soon-to-be reality.

The men in this study did talk about a sense of entitlement or male privilege, and they talked about prescribed roles that women should play (Dutton, 1995). These beliefs were based on the models they observed; some based their beliefs on a mistaken understanding of biblical roles. Others suggested that television, media, and watching the relationships of family and the

parents of friends had influenced their views of women. These reports seem to substantiate Johnson's (1995) claims of patriarchal *terrorism*, but not to the degree he suggests. Most of the men in this study would fall under his language of *common couple violence*. The issue of male privilege still needs to be addressed in batterer's programs. Johnson (1995) did suggest further research with in-depth interviewing of couples who are involved in violence that I would fully endorse.

Two other areas deserve further attention and research. One is shame, and the other is borderline personality disorder. Nichols (1995) believes that love and worth are the foundations of self-respect, not intimidation and fear. In the context of shame, he says, "Unresponded-to children lack a firm sense of self and remain burdened by grandiose ambitions. They feel empty and worthless, subject to the shame of repeated failure to live up to aggrandized, wishful self-images" (pp. 120-121). Stosny (2003b) also talks about the power of shame. He contends that shame breaks the interpersonal bridge that connects one to another. Stosny believes that emotional attachment leads to love, but the bad news is that the failure of attachment leads to shame. His ideas about the ways that "interest" (how one pays attention to their children) is connected to shame are similar to Nichols' ideas about "unresponded-to children."

In his work with batterers, Dutton (1995) began to read about borderline personality disorder and discovered that their traits matched the traits of abusive men with whom he had been working. He came to the following conclusion,

The essential defining criteria for borderline personality, in order of importance, are: a proclivity for intense, unstable interpersonal relationships characterized by intermittent undermining of the significant other, manipulation, and masked dependency; an unstable sense of self with intolerance of being alone and abandonment anxiety; and intense anger, demandingness, and impulsivity, usually tied to substance abuse or promiscuity (p. 142).

It appeared that most, if not all, of these traits were connected to the men in this study. This adds weight to the need to continue to study borderline personality and its relationship to domestic violence. Dutton believes that much of the work had focused on women with borderline personalities because the majority of clients were female. Men tend to act out and get into trouble, but don't necessarily seek help. Dutton (1995) went on to state,

Borderlines have considerable difficulty maintaining a stable sense of who they are and therefore lack purpose or direction in their lives. Their self-definition depends strongly on their surrounding social group. Other consequences of their unstable identities are a tendency to become exceedingly dependent on others and a need for protection and reassurance. Borderlines are inordinately vulnerable to separation from their external sources of support. They suffer from intense abandonment anxiety, dreading potential loss while chronically anticipating it, "seeing it happening, when in fact it is not" (p. 145).

In further regard to borderline personality, Masterson (1976) speaks to the role of the mother in fostering and encouraging dependency to maintain her own emotional equilibrium, but he also speaks to the importance of the father in the separation-individuation process. The father serves to draw the child into the real world of things and people; he helps the child to pull away from the mother's needs; and the father enables the child to properly relate to both mother and father. The son needs his mother's approval to develop ego structure, and when this approval is withdrawn then the first seeds of depression, rage, panic, guilt, passivity and helplessness, emptiness and void are planted. Masterson refers to these as abandonment feelings, and continues to state that the intensity of these component feelings will vary with the unique traumas of each individual.

Coming out of the work of the Multiple Impact Therapy Research Project (Efron, 1986), which began in Galveston, Texas in 1955 was Multiple Impact Therapy (MIT). One theoretical assumption that evolved from their work was that "recognizable patterns of parental interaction are apt to produce and maintain in dynamic equilibrium specific forms of developmental arrest in

offspring which issues in various types of behavioral maladjustment in adolescence” (p. 101). They further stated, “. . . the research team concluded that a child was at risk for developmental arrest and later symptom dysfunction if, at any time in the child’s development, one or another of the parents related to the child in a fashion more appropriate to the adult relationship” (p. 103). Developmental issues are strategic to the continued research of the violent male.

It has been a contention of this research that the role of the father was integral to the study of male batterers. Sommers (2000) in her thirty years of research of aggressive and violent males suggests the following, “. . . it is the absence of the male parent that is more often the problem. As the phenomenon of fatherlessness has increased, so has the violence” (p. 129). I would define “fatherlessness” as homes without a father or homes where fathers are emotionally unavailable to their sons. Barnard and Corrales (1979) state the problem this way,

If an individual emanates from a family where a sense of separateness was promoted and belongingness ignored, that person may be prone to developing enmeshed boundaries in his or her future nuclear family to satisfy the felt deficiency. In doing this the individual is attempting to complete self...(p. 35).

They continue this line of thought by saying that if a full sense of self-identity can’t be developed in the family of origin, that the chances of this person implementing a growth-producing process in the future is greatly diminished. While these men do exhibit many of the characteristics of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), it is difficult for this researcher to say with certainty that this is the diagnosis that should be given to abusive men. There are many limitations in this study. While Seidman (2006) says that depth rather than breadth is more important in qualitative studies and multiple interviews were conducted; more men need to be interviewed to substantiate the claims of this research. I believe it would be helpful to interview the intimate partners too. Their perspective would be invaluable for insight and accountability.

Remember that the data are subject to the interpretation of the investigator, but holding to the rigors of methodology should render findings that are both valid and reliable. I understand that I have taken a position about the *meaning* of violence that varies from the accepted position that men need power and control. The position of this study is that men need to protect a “vulnerable” self. They use their violent acts as ways to defend against the perceived attacks of their female partner. This is a way of viewing their behavior, but not a way of justifying, minimizing, or rationalizing their behavior.

The men who were interviewed spoke consistently about the effectiveness of the director of the Hit No More program, and his ability to instantly connect with the men. They spoke of the director’s compassion and knowledge, and that he treated them with dignity and respect. They reported that his personal experience as a batterer gave him credibility as one who understood what these men were experiencing. They could identify with him and he with them. The fact that he had made such obvious changes in his life and marriage offered hope to them.

Harlene Anderson (1993) talks about meaning as “an intersubjective phenomenon, created and experienced by individuals in conversation and action with others and with themselves” (p. 324). It is understood that Anderson is talking about the context of therapy and not research. She believes that human systems are language-and-meaning-generating systems. I believe this happens in the interviewing process as a researcher as I believe it happens in the therapist’s office. Not because the researcher is doing therapy, but because the researcher is listening and giving the other person spacious room to talk about their particular phenomenon and the *meaning* that they give to it. This is particularly true when it seems that no one else has been interested in their “story.” According to Anderson (1993) the therapist works from a tentative attitude, “one that does not imply judgment, blame, or have a fixed hypothesis” (p.

325). This sounds like qualitative research, especially the phenomenological approach in which the researcher brackets his own beliefs or attitudes about a particular phenomenon (violence) in order to hear or give “voice” to the speaker (batterer). In no way was I doing therapy with these men, I was listening, non-judgmentally and found that the process worked. These men opened up, trusted that I did have their best interests in mind, and wanted only to learn from them. The process of doing research and not therapy; of asking question and wondering together in regard to their experience of abuse led to a collegiality that was productive. By the end of our fourth interview I am convinced that these men would have allowed me to ask any question that I thought would be helpful to the process of learning about domestic violence, and their personal involvement. Anderson (1993) contends that change is a natural consequence of dialogue. In the purest sense dialogue did occur, those who were interviewed can only answer whether or not change took place.

Three major questions emerge from a study of abusive men: Who are these guys, why do they do what they do, and what can be done to help them? The answers are still complex and multidimensional. One-size-fits-all is not adequate to describe the problem of domestic violence. Continuing to look for the common traits is important and necessary to make advances in this field. What motivates these men is even more difficult to unravel. I would like to see what could happen if a program would put more emphasis on developing the "vulnerable" self and helping men to find more productive ways to understand the foundations of self-worth.

Lundy Bancroft (2002) believes, based on his years of experience working in this field, that there is no shortcut to change for these men. The work is difficult, complex, and painstaking. The key is that the man must be willing to make changes. He must be willing to address his personal value system, and he must be willing to give up his privilege and

entitlements. Bancroft believes there are at least nine steps a man must take to accept responsibility for his actions:

He has to own and admit his behavior; his actions were his choice; he has to acknowledge that what he did was wrong (no blaming); he has to be willing to truly acknowledge the effects of his actions on his partner; he has to accept the consequences of his behavior; he has to devote long-term and serious effort to setting right what he has done; he has to lay aside demands for forgiveness; he has to treat his partner consistently well from that point forward; and he has to relinquish his negative view of women in general and of his partner specifically (pp. 337-338).

Future Implications

What needs to be done next? What are the criteria for further study and research? One area that deserves a much stronger look has to do with self-theories (Dweck, 2000; Dweck and Molden, 2005). As Dweck and Molden (2005) state, “. . . self-theories for the core of meaning systems, attracting goals and beliefs that work in concert to produce patterns of behavior . . .” (p. 136). As they have found, these studies hold promise of giving insight into emotion and emotion regulation. Closely associated with the study of self-theories is the study of competence (Elliot and Dweck, 2005; Sternberg and Kolligan, 1990). Rhodewalt and Vohs (2005) in their research on competence describe people put in ambiguous situations where their competence is being tested with the possibility of disconfirmation, disrespect, or rejection state the following, “The stakes are high for these people. In addition to issues of competency, their self-esteem, because it is linked to competency, is also under siege” (p. 549).

Continued research in the study of Borderline Personality Disorder might offer better insight. How does the profile of borderline personality fit that of the abusive male? Studying borderline personality also revisits the role of the mother and father in the development of the son. The study of masculinity as a global concept in general might open new directions for study.

Is there a continuum that exists between a “defended” or “vulnerable” self and a “powerful” self, and how is that reflected in the etiology of violence?

Another lens of possibility is that which comes from a Metaframeworks (Breunlin, Schwartz, and Mac Kune-Karrer, 1992) perspective. This perspective looks at any phenomenon of the human condition by means of three building blocks: First, systems theory is used to describe human systems as complex, multilevel entities. Second, presuppositions are set forth concerning the human condition and are held constant throughout the work of the metaframeworks’ perspective. Third, to understand the specifics of the human condition as it is related to therapy, six core domains are used: internal process, sequences, organization, development, culture, and gender. In the domain of development, for example, one would expect to find ideas about biological, individual, relational, and family development. In looking at the field of domestic violence this approach offers some novel ideas.

Bringing this study to a completion and understanding that there are many more questions to be asked I want to move forward with determination and passion to continue my study of this social phenomenon.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- AIDV (American Institute on Domestic Violence). (2007). Domestic violence statistics. www.aidv-usa.com.
- Akister, J. (1998). Attachment theory and systemic practice: research update. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 20, 353-366.
- Ambert, A-M, Adler, P.A., Adler, P., and Detzner, D. F. (1995). Understanding and Evaluating qualitative research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57, 879-893.
- American Bar Association. (2007). Commission on domestic violence: key statistics. www.abanet.org.
- Anderson, H. (1993). On a roller coaster: A collaborative language systems approach to therapy. In S. Friedman, *The New Language of Change* (pp. 323-344). New York: Guilford Press.
- Anderson, H., Goolishian, H., Pulliam, G., and Winderman, L. (1986). The Galveston Family Institute: Some personal and historical perspectives. In Donald E. Efron (Ed.), *Journeys: Expansion of the Strategic-Systemic Therapies* (pp. 97-122). New York: Bruner/Mazel Inc.
- Bachman, R. & Saltzman, L. E. (1995). *Violence Against Women: A National Crime Victimization Survey Report*. Washington, D. C. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U. S. Department of Justice.
- Balcom, D. (1991). Shame and violence: Considerations in couples' treatment. *Journal of Independent Social Work*, 5, 165-181.
- Bancroft, Lundy (2002). *Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men*. New York: Berkley Publishing Group.
- Barnard, C. P. and Corrales, R. G. (1979). *The Theory and Technique of Family Therapy*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher.
- Becvar, D. S. & Becvar, R. J. (1996). *Family Therapy: A Systemic Integration (3rd Ed.)*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Berry, D. B. (1998). *The Domestic Violence Sourcebook*. Los Angeles: Lowell House Publishers.
- Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bograd, M. (1992). Values in conflict: Challenges to family therapists' thinking. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 18, 243-253.

- Breunlin, D. C., Schwartz, R. C., and Mac Kune-Karrer, B. (1992). *Metaframeworks: Transcending the Models of Family Therapy*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Browne, A. (1993). Violence against women by male partners: prevalence, outcomes, and policy implications. *American Psychologist*, 48 (10), 1077-1087.
- Carden, A. D. (1994). Wife abuse and the wife abuser: Review and recommendation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 22 (4), 539-582.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Crowell, N. A. & Burgess, A. W. (1996). *Understanding Violence Against Women*. Washington, D. C.: National Academy Press.
- Davis, R. L. (1998). *Domestic Violence: Facts and Fallacies*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Decker, D. J. (1999). *Stopping the Violence: A Group Model to Change Men's Abusive Attitudes and Behaviors (The Client Workbook)*. New York: The Haworth Maltreatment and Trauma Press.
- Delsol, C., Margolin, G. and John, R. S. (2003). A typology of martially violent men and correlates of violence in a community sample. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 65, 635-651.
- DeMaris, A., Benson, M. L., Fox, G. L., Hill, T., & Van Wyk, J. (2003). Distal and proximal factors in domestic violence: A test of an integrated model. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 65, 652-667.
- Dutton, D. G. (1998). *The Abusive Personality: Violence and Control in Intimate Relationships*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Dutton, D. G. & Painter, S. (1993). Emotional attachments in abusive relationships: A test of traumatic bonding theory. *Violence and Victims*, 8 (2), 105-120.
- Dweck, C. S. and Molden, D. C. (2005). Self-Theories: Their impact on competence, motivation and acquisition. In Andrew Elliot and Carol Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of Competence and Motivation* (pp. 122-140). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Edelson, J. L. & Brygger, M. P. (1986). Gender differences in reporting of battering incidences. *Family Relations*, 35, 377-382.
- Edwards, D. W., Scott, C. L., Yarvis, R. M., Paizis, C. L., & Panizzon, M. S. (2003). Impulsiveness, impulsive aggression, personality disorder, and spousal violence. *Violence and Victims*, 18 (1), 3-14.

- Eisikovits, Z. & Buchbinder, E. (2000). *Locked in a Violent Embrace*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Eisikovits, Z., Winstok, Z. and Gelles, R. (2002). Structure and dynamics of escalation from the victim's perspective. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 83 (2), 142-152.
- Elbow, M. (1977). Theoretical considerations of violent marriages. *Social Casework*, 58, 515-526.
- Erskine, R. G., Moursund, J. P., & Trautman, R. L. (1999). *Beyond Empathy: A Therapy of Contact-in-Relationship*. Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel.
- Family Violence Prevention Fund (2007). Domestic violence is a serious, widespread social problem in America: The facts. www.endabuse.org.
- Fleury, R., Sullivan, C., Bybee, D., & Davidson, W. (1998). "Why don't they just call the cops?": Reasons for differential police contact among women with abusive partners. *Violence and Victims*, 13 (4), 333-346.
- Fossum, M. A. & Mason, M. J. (1986). *Facing Shame: Families in Recovery*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Gelles, R. J. & Maynard, (1987). A structural family systems approach to intervention in cases of family violence. *Family Relations*, 36, 270-275.
- Giorgi, A. (1985). *Phenomenology and Psychological Research*. Pittsburg, PA: Duquesne University Press.
- Goldner, V. (1999). Morality and multiplicity: Perspectives on the treatment of violence in intimate life. *The Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 25 (3), 325-336.
- Gondolf, E. W. (1988). Who are those guys? Toward a behavioral typology of batterers. *Violence and Victims*, 3 (3), 187-203.
- Gottman, J. M., Jacobson, N. S., Rushe, R. H., Shortt, J. W., Babcock, J., LaTaillade, J. J., & Waltz, J. (1995). The relationship between heart rate reactivity, emotionally aggressive behavior, and general violence in batterers. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 9 (3), 227-248.
- Guba, E. (1990). *The Paradigm Dialog*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Heckert, D. A. & Gondolf, E. W. (2000). Assessing assault self-reports by batterer program participants and their partners. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15, 181-197.
- Hilton, N. Z., Harris, G. T., & Rice, M. E. (2003). Correspondence between self-report measures of interpersonal aggression. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18 (3), 223-239.

- Holtzworth-Munroe, A. & Anglin, K. (1991). The competency of responses given by maritally violent versus nonviolent men to problematic marital situations. *Violence and Victims, 6* (4), 257-269.
- Holtzworth-Munroe, A. & Stuart, G. (1994). Typologies of male batterers: Three subtypes and the differences among them. *Psychological Bulletin, 116* (3), 476-497.
- Hotaling, G. T. & Sugarman, D. B. (1986). An analysis of risk markers in husband to wife violence: The current state of knowledge. *Violence and Victims, 1*, 101-124.
- Hoyt, M. (1996). Introduction: Some stories are better than others. In M. Hoyt, *Constructive Therapies, Vol. 2*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Husserl, E. (1970/1900). *Logical Investigations. (Vol. 1)*. (J. N. Finley, Trans.) New York: Humanities Press (German original, 1900).
- Jacobson, N. S. & Gottman, J. M. (1998). Anatomy of a violent relationship. *Psychology Today, March-April*, 61-84.
- Johnson, J. M. (2001). In-depth interviewing. In J. Gubrium and J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method* (pp. 103-119). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Johnson, M. P. (1995). Patriarchal terrorism and common couple violence: Two forms of violence against women. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 57*, 283-294.
- Jones, A. (2001). Women are victims of family violence. In J. D. Lloyd (Ed.), *Family Violence* (pp. 15-21). San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press.
- Jukes, A. E. (1999). *Men Who Batter Women*. New York: Routledge.
- Kaufman, G. (1974). The meaning of shame: Toward a self-affirming identity. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 21* (6), 568-574.
- Kilgor, N. (1992). *Every Eighteen Seconds: A Journey Through Domestic Violence*. Volcano, CA: Volcano Press.
- Kirk, J. & Miller, M. L. (1986). *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kroeger, C.C. & Nason-Clark, N. (2001). *No Place for Abuse: Biblical & Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Kruttschnitt, C., McLaughlin, B., & Petrie, C. (2004). *Advancing the Federal Research Agenda on Violence Against Women*. Washington, D. C.: The National Academies Press.

- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lee, M. Y., Uken, A., & Sebold, J. (2004). Accountability for change: Solution-focused treatment with domestic violence offenders. *The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 85 (4), 463-476.
- Leedy, P. D. & Ormrod, J. E. (2005). *Practical Research: Planning and Design (8th Ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Lipchik, E. (1991). Spouse abuse: Challenging the party line. *Family Therapy Networker*, 15, 59-63.
- McKenzie, V. M. (1995). *Domestic Violence in America*. Lawrenceville, VA: Brunswick Publishing Co.
- Markus, H., Cross, S. and Wurf, E. (1990). The role of the self-system in competence. In Robert Sternberg and John Kolligian, Jr. (Eds.), *Competence Considered* (pp. 205-225). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (1999). *Designing Qualitative Research (3rd Ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Martin, F. (1997). Phenomenography: A research approach to investigating different understandings of reality. In Robert R. Sherman & Rodman B. Webb (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods* (pp. 141-161). Philadelphia: Falmer Press, Taylor & Francis Inc.
- Masterson, J. F. (1976). *Psychotherapy of the Borderline Adult: A Developmental Approach*. New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers.
- Matthews, S. H. (2005). Crafting qualitative research articles on marriages and families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67, 799-808.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Miller, J. (2003). An arresting experiment: Domestic violence victim experiences and perceptions. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18 (7), 695-716.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Murphy, E. (2003). Being born female is dangerous for your health. *American Psychologist*, 58 (3), 205-210.

- Nathanson, D. L. (1987). *The Many Faces of Shame*. New York: Guilford Press.
- National Research Council (2004). *Advancing the Federal Research Agenda on Violence Against Women*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press.
- Nelson, N. (1997). *Dangerous Relationships: How to Stop Domestic Violence Before it Stops You*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Nylund, D., Thomas, J., & Permante, K. (1977). Situating therapist's questions in the presence of the family: A qualitative inquiry. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 16 (3), 211-228.
- Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (2007). Domestic violence/sexual assault fact sheet. www.odmhsas.org
- Parry, A. & Doan, R. E. (1994). *Story Re-Visions: Narrative Therapy in the Postmodern World*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, 2ed*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publication.
- Paymar, M. (2000). *Violent No More: Helping Men End Domestic Violence*. Berkeley, CA: Hunter House Books.
- Pence, E. & Paymar, M. (1993). *Education Groups for Men Who Batter: The Duluth Model*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Peters, J., Shackelford, T. K., & Bush, D. M. (2002). Understanding domestic violence against women: Using evolutionary psychology to extend the feminist functional analysis. *Violence and Victims*, 17 (2), 255-264.
- Pleck, E. (1987). *Domestic Tyranny: The Making of Social Policy Against Family Violence from Colonial Times to the Present*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Potter-Efron, R. & Potter-Efron, P. (1989). *Letting Go of Shame: Understanding How Shame Affects Your Life*. Center City, MN: Hazelden.
- Presser, Lois (2004). Violent offenders, moral selves: Constructing identities and accounts in the research interview. *Social Problems*, 51 (1), 82-101.
- Pressman, B. & Sheps, A. (1994). Treating wife abuse: An integrated model. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 44 (4), 477-499.
- Prochaska, J., Norcross, J., and Diclemente, C. (1994). *Changing for Good: A Revolutionary Six-Stage Program for Overcoming Bad Habits and Moving Your Life Positively Forward*. New York: Avon Books.

- Ptacek, J. (1988). Why do men batter their wives? In K. Yllo & M. Bograd (Eds.), *Feminist Perspectives on Wife Abuse* (pp. 133-157). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rafuls, S. E. (1994). Qualitative resource-based consultation: Resource-generative inquiry and reflective dialogue with four Latin American families and their therapists. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Purdue University.
- Rafuls, S. E. (1998). Taken from course notes in *Family Violence*—SDS 6938. Fall 1998. University of Florida
- Ragg, D. M. (1999). Dimensions of self-concept as predictors of men who assault their female partners. *Journal of Family Violence, 14* (3), 315-329.
- Roberts, N. & Noller, P. (1988). The association between adult attachment and couple violence: The role of communication patterns. In J. Simpson & W. Rholes (Eds.), *Attachment Theory and Close Relationships*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Rhodewalt, F. and Vohs, K. D. (2005). Defensive strategies, motivation, and the self: A self-regulating process view. In Andrew Elliot and Carol Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of Competence and Motivation* (pp. 548-565). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Rynerson, B. C. and Fishel, A. H. (1993). Domestic violence prevention training: Participant characteristics and treatment outcomes. *Journal of Family Violence, 8* (3), 253-266.
- Saunders, D. G. (1992). A typology of men who batter: Three types derived from cluster analysis. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 62* (2), 264-275.
- Saunders, D. G. (1995). Prediction of wife assault. In J. C. Campbell (Ed.), *Assessing Dangerousness: Violence by Sexual Offender, Batters, and Child Abusers* (pp. 68-95). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schafer, J., Caetano, R., & Clark, C. L. (2002). Agreement about violence in U. S. couples. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17* (4), 457-470.
- Schafer, J., Caetano, R., & Cunradi, C. B. (2004). A path model of risk factors for intimate partner violence among couples in the United States. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 19* (2), 127-142.
- Shannon, L., Logan, T. K., & Cole, J. (2007). Intimate partner violence, relationship status, and protective orders: Does “living in sin” entail a different experience? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 22* (9), 1114-1130.
- Shepard, M. F., Falk, D. R. & Elliott, B. A. (2002). Enhancing coordinated community responses to reduce recidivism in cases of domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17* (5), 551-569.

- Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook, 2nd Ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Singer, M. (2005). A twice-told tale: A phenomenological inquiry into clients perceptions of therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 31 (3)*, 269-281.
- Sokolowski, R. (2000). *Introduction to Phenomenology.* Cambridge, United Kingdom: University Press.
- Sommers, C. H. (2000). *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming Our Young Men.* New York: Simon & Shuster.
- Sonkin, D.J. & Durphy, M. (1997). *Learning to Live Without Violence: A Handbook for Men, Updated.* Volcano, CA: Volcano Press.
- Stosny, S. (2003a). *Manual of the Core Value Workshop.* North Charleston, SC: BookSurge, LLC.
- Stosny, S. (2003b). *The Powerful Self: A Workbook of Therapeutic Self-Empowerment.* North Charleston, SC: BookSurge, LLC.
- Stosny, S. (2006). *You Don't Have to Take it Anymore: Turn Your Resentful, Angry, or Emotionally Abusive Relationship Into a Compassionate, Loving One.* New York: Free Press.
- Straus, M. A. (1996). Identifying offender in criminal justice research on domestic assault. In E. S. Buzawa & C. G. Buzawa (Eds.), *Do Arrests and Restraining Orders Work?* (pp. 14-29). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Szinovacz, M. E. & Egley, L. C. (1995). Comparing one-partner and couple data on sensitive marital behaviors: The case of marital violence. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 57*, 995-1010.
- Taylor, S. J. & Bogdan, R. (1984). *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: The Search for Meanings.* New York: Wiley and Sons
- Toews, M. L., McKenry, P. C., & Catlett, B. S. (2003). Male-initiated partner abuse during marital separation prior to divorce. *Violence and Victims, 18 (4)*, 387-402.
- Umberson, D., Anderson, K. L., Williams, K., & Chen, M. D. (2003). Relationship dynamics, emotion state, and domestic violence: A stress and masculinities perspective. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 65*, 233-247.
- Walker, L. E. (1979). *The Battered Woman.* New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

- Walker, L. E. (1995). Current perspectives on men who batter women—implications for intervention and treatment to stop violence against women: Comment on Gottman, et al. (1995), *Journal of Family Psychology*, 9 (3), 264-271
- Wallace, H. (1996). *Family Violence: Legal, Medical, and Social Perspectives*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Walter, J. L. & Peller, J. E. (2000). *Recreating Brief Therapy*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Warren, C. A. B. (2001). Qualitative interviewing. Pp. 83-101. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Weiss, R. S. (1994). *Learning From Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press.
- Wertz, F. J. (2005). Phenomenological research methods for counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52 (2), 167-177.
- Wexler, D. B. (2000). *Domestic Violence 2000: An Integrated Program for Men*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Wilson, K. J. (1997). *When Violence Begins at Home: A Comprehensive Guide to Understanding and Ending Domestic Violence*. Alameda, CA: Hunter House Inc.
- Winstok, Z., Eisikovits, Z., & Gelles, R. (2002). Structure and dynamics of escalation from the batterer's perspective. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 83 (2), 129-141.
- Wyatt, G. E. (1996). Sociocultural and epidemiological issues in the assessment of domestic violence. In R. A. Javier, W. G. Herron, & A. J. Bergman (Eds.), *Domestic Violence: Assessment and Treatment* (pp. 3-17). Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc.
- Yoshihama, M., Clum, K., Crampton, A., & Gillespie, B. (2002). Measuring the lifetime experience of domestic violence: Application of the life history calendar method. *Violence and Victims*, 17 (3), 297-316).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Stephen Andrew Ward was born in 1948 in Springfield, Missouri. The younger of two brothers, he grew up in Springfield, graduating from Central High School in 1966. He received a Graduate of Theology degree from Baptist Bible College (Springfield, Missouri) in 1969.

Following his graduation from Baptist Bible College he was drafted into the United States Army, and spent the next two years in the ministry. Serving as a Chaplain's Assistant, Stephen was in Vietnam with the First Air Cavalry Division for a year, and then returned to finish his military duty at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Stephen later received his B. S. in Psychology from the University of Texas Permian Basin in 1977 and his M. S. in Guidance and Counseling from Missouri State University (formerly Southwest Missouri State University) in 1981. Stephen has been in the ministry since he left the military in 1971. He currently pastors a church in Republic, Missouri; serves as a pastoral counselor in his community, and is the Police Chaplain for the Republic, Missouri police department.

Upon completion of his Ph.D. program, Stephen plans to continue his research in the area of domestic violence. His goals are to continue working with batterer's intervention groups and to further his studies in the field of domestic violence. Stephen has been married to Linda for 39 years. They have two grown daughters, their husbands and children: Wendy and Lance Renfrow, and daughters Ryley and Reese; and Allison and Bryan Smith, and their daughter, Mavree.