

Battered Women's Help-seeking: A Turning Point from Victimization to Readiness

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother,
Jeongsoon Kim.

Abstract

This exploratory qualitative study investigates battered women's help-seeking on the continuum of their victimization and readiness. This study starts with a conceptualization of battered women's help-seeking strategies and identifies positive and negative help based on twelve women's perceptions of those services. Finally, this study suggests a conceptual model for battered women's help-seeking from formal social services.

In-depth interviews with twelve survivors of domestic violence revealed that these battered women sought help from formal social services toward the end of their abusive relationships, and utilized diverse help-seeking strategies from various help sources including but not limited to seeking protection from the criminal justice system. They especially perceived formal social service agencies and personnel as positive if the personnel valued self-determination, validated that the abuse was not the women's fault, and provided resources to (re)build their self-sufficiency. In addition, formal social services were often able to protect them from the abuse. In this regard, positive help from formal social services influenced the women's readiness to change by affecting the construction of a turning point. Negative help from formal social services kept battered women in the status quo only before they approached their turning point.

Not wanting to minimize the importance of the criminal justice system's response in fostering the batterer's accountability, this research found that it is also essential to focus on battered women's varied and self-identified needs and to increase their accessibility to these resources. This study suggests that formal social services

help women end the abuse by respecting women's self-determination and promoting women's readiness to reach a turning point.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT-----	iii
LIST OF TABLES-----	vii
LIST OF FIGURES-----	viii
LIST OF APPENDICES-----	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION-----	1
Background and Significance-----	1
Specific Aims-----	5
Overview of Dissertation-----	5
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW-----	7
Reasons for not Seeking Help-----	7
Levels and Kinds of Involvement with Formal Social Services-----	8
Effectiveness of Formal Social Services-----	10
Battered Women’s Needs-----	14
Factors Influencing Battered Women’s Help-seeking from Formal Social Services-----	16
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK-----	26
Overview of Theories on Battered Women’s Response to Domestic Violence-----	26
Theoretical Framework for This Study-----	41
A Conceptual Model for This Study-----	42
Research Questions-----	45
CHAPTER 4: METHODS-----	47
Data Description-----	47

	vi
Data Collection Methods-----	51
Data Analysis-----	53
Study Limitations-----	59
CHAPTER 5: EXPERIENCE OF ABUSE-----	60
Abuse Directed to Women-----	60
Abuse Directed to Children-----	64
Children’s Exposure to the Abuse on their Mothers-----	69
Experience of Abuse from the Family of Origin-----	74
CHAPTER 6: HELP-SEEKING-----	76
Battered Women’s Help-seeking Strategies-----	79
Help from Informal Social Networks and Formal Social Services-----	86
Negative Help from Informal Social Networks and Formal Social Services--	108
Reasons for Not Seeking Help-----	121
CHAPTER 7: READINESS: TURNING POINT-----	126
CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION-----	137
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION-----	150
REFERENCES-----	157

List of Tables

Table 1: Participant demographics -----	50
Table 2: Battered women's help-seeking and their readiness-----	57
Table 3: Experience of abuse-----	67
Table 4: Children's exposure to women's abuse-----	70
Table 5: Types of informal and formal help sources contacted by women-----	77
Table 6: Battered women's help-seeking strategies-----	81
Table 7: Positive help from informal social networks and formal social services-----	87
Table 8: Negative help from informal social networks and formal social services----	109
Table 9: Reasons for not seeking help-----	121
Table 10: Turing point on victimization and readiness continuum-----	136

List of Figures

Figure 1: A conceptual model for battered women's help-seeking -----44

Figure 2: A modified conceptual model for battered women's help-seeking -----138

List of Appendices

Appendix A. Summary of Link face-to-face interview guide-----	171
Appendix B: Types of abuse on women by the abuser-----	177
Appendix C: Types of abuse on children-----	181
Appendix D: Family of origin-----	184
Appendix F: Incidents of abuse-----	187

Chapter 1. Introduction

Background and Significance

Research on battered women's help-seeking from formal social services has increased during the last decade. To date, research has mainly focused on the level of battered women's involvement in certain formal social services and the factors or barriers that influence such involvement. Studies on the effectiveness of formal social services or women's satisfaction with responses from formal social services are relatively limited. These studies rarely examine what battered women characterize as helpful responses from formal social services. Moreover, the effectiveness of services has usually been measured by one criterion: if the abuse ended. Current studies on battered women's help-seeking tend to make invisible the complexity of women's help-seeking in their victimization, or their survival process, and thus tend to fail to develop a theoretical model which explains battered women's help-seeking from formal social services. Battered women's victimization may increase in the process of help-seeking from outside help sources even while they are seen as "survivors." The increased victimization, in turn, can be a source of their survival.

The early battered women's movement constructed "pure and innocent victims" who "cannot play any part in their own victimization." This image of battered women was considered problematic because it "violates the normative expectations that people ordinarily act in their own best interest" (Dunn, 2005) and "this identity denies women their agency" (Barry, 1979). As the tendency to characterize battered women as survivors increased, battered women's help-seeking from formal social services became one of the main areas of research on domestic violence in order to emphasize their

agency as well as their victimization. Compared to research emphasizing women's apparent passivity, studies started to frame women's responses to abuse, including their staying as a "survival strategy" (Campbell, Miller, Cardwell, and Belknap, 1994).

Women's survival is now considered a function of their agency. They continue to stay, but they do so "as actors making strategic and rational choices rather than as people conditioned, through fear, guilt, or love, into immobility" (Dunn, 2005).

Formal social services that are available and designed for battered women have expanded since the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) passed in 1994. Legal and legislative reforms in the United States under VAWA have laid out the development and implementation of specialized, coordinated programs across criminal justice, child welfare, and social welfare systems (Grauwiler, 2008). Since the late 1960s and early 1970s when feminists brought it into the public eye, domestic violence has been viewed as one of the major social problems by policy makers, practitioners, and researchers. The battered women's movement brought about the social consensus that the cause of domestic violence is not individual pathology.

The systemic response to domestic violence has changed and increased during the last three decades with a main goal of ending domestic violence. Legal and legislative reforms have emphasized ending the violence by leaving the abuser, which has limited battered women's options (Grauwiler, 2008). Some researchers have found that battered women's help-seeking from formal social services has positive implications for women's health and mental health outcomes (Fugate, Landis, Riordan, Naureckas, & Engel, 2005). Others suggest that since most domestic violence intervention programs aim to reduce or end the violence, and since their success is evaluated based on whether

women choose to leave the abuser, such programs tend to inhibit women from help-seeking (Grauwiler, 2008).

Research on battered women's help-seeking from formal social services has found that battered women have actively sought help while still staying in the abusive relationship (Bowker, 1983; Gondolf & Fisher, 1988; Hoff, 1990; Cavanagh, 2003; Campbel & Soeken, 1999). Thus, researchers have examined the barriers that battered women confront when they seek help (Bui, 2003; Zweig, Schlichter, & Burt, 2002; Fugate et al., 2005). Findings of previous studies on battered women's help-seeking have been limited to three aspects: 1) battered women who are involved with informal social networks or formal social services, 2) individual characteristics of battered women who are involved with those services, and 3) barriers to battered women seeking help from social services. Few studies have examined the kinds of responses to formal social services that make battered women satisfied or dissatisfied, or that measure the effectiveness of those services. Almost no studies have identified or conceptualized the type of "help" that battered women seek and "help-seeking strategies" that battered women utilize. Moreover, a theory of help-seeking that provides a framework for the findings of existing studies has yet to be developed (Liang, Goodman, Tummala-Narra, & Weintraub, 2005).

To better serve battered women, we need to understand the kinds of help that women perceive as helpful or unhelpful in their process of help-seeking from formal social services. Identifying women's evolving needs over time will broaden the formal services' responses (Fugate et al., 2005). Identifying the ways a battered woman's needs change throughout the relationship with her abusive partner will help us understand how

the needs are shaped and how they shift. Women-defined helpful services should focus on battered women's long-term social support needs, rather than merely crisis-oriented needs. Thus, the types of help provided by formal services should be timed appropriately to meet women's evolving needs over time (Liang, et al., 2005). Women-defined rather than service-defined helpful services will be more flexible and adaptive in both meeting women's real needs and expanding the range of choices for women seeking support (Davies, Lyons, & Monti-Catania, 1998; Liang, et al., 2005).

This study attempts to conceptualize "help" and "help-seeking strategies" and to construct a theoretical model for battered women's help-seeking from formal social services in order to understand how formal social services can be improved to meet women's evolving needs over time in the process of their help-seeking to end the violence. Conceptualizing help, along with the identification and categorization of helpful and unhelpful responses and other expectations, is to use it as a channel to understand battered women's needs in the process of help-seeking from formal social services and to understand who is providing the help. It will not be limited to their safety-related needs, but will also include their basic needs and others. By conceptualizing battered women's help-seeking strategies and constructing a theoretical model for their help-seeking from formal social services, we will be able to understand when battered women seek help and what kinds of help they need in the process of their help-seeking. In addition, the model will reveal ways that other individuals along with what interpersonal and contextual factors influence women's help-seeking strategies. Finally, the model will reveal the effectiveness of their help-seeking.

Specific Aims

To better serve battered women's diverse and specific needs, it is crucial to understand their evolving needs, the changes in patterns of their help-seeking over time, and the factors contributing to these changes. This study traces the help-seeking experiences of battered women from formal social services to achieve the following specific aims:

1. To conceptualize “battered women’s help-seeking strategies” from formal social services during their process of help-seeking while they are in abusive relationships.
2. To conceptualize “help” that battered women seek from informal social networks and formal social services in the process of help-seeking while they are in abusive relationships.
3. To construct a theoretical (conceptual) model for battered women’s help-seeking while they are in abusive relationships.

Overview of Dissertation

Chapter two reviews the previous studies on battered women’s help-seeking and summarizes the findings and limitations. Chapter three examines theoretical frameworks on battered women’s response to domestic violence and their help-seeking. Chapter four details the research methods used in this study, including sampling, data collection, and data analysis methods, and presents the limitations of this study. Chapter five reviews background information regarding each woman’s experience of abuse from her family of origin and abuser, and children’s experience of abuse. Chapter six describes findings from the data on women’s help-seeking from informal social

networks and formal social services from the data. Chapter seven describes findings from the data on women's readiness. Chapter eight discusses the contributions of formal social services on the continuum of women's victimization and readiness. Chapter nine discusses implications for practice, policy, and research as well as the limitations of this study.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

The literature on battered women's help-seeking from formal social services has grown during the last decade. Literature on battered women's help-seeking includes research on the levels and kinds of services used by battered women, effectiveness of the services, and factors that influence battered women's help-seeking. What is missing from the previous studies on battered women's help-seeking is a conceptualization of "help" and "help-seeking strategies." A theoretical model for battered women's help-seeking has not yet been developed.

Reasons for not Seeking Help

Although battered women appear to use various kinds of strategies while they stay in the abusive relationships, they often do not seek help from outside sources. Four hundred and ninety one women were screened as abused as a part of the Chicago Women's Health Risk Study which screened all women for abuse who entered one Chicago-area hospital and four community health centers in 1997. Face-to face interviews revealed that a majority of battered women did not seek help from an agency or counselor (82%), medical services (74%), or the police (62%), and 29% of battered women did not seek help from anyone else (Fugate et al., 2005).

Fugate et al. (2005) found four reasons for not seeking help. Many women believed that the service was "not needed" or "not useful" (38% gave these reasons for not contacting an agency or counselor, 74% of women gave these reasons for not seeking medical care, and 39% of the women gave these reasons for not calling the police after an incident). Others cited "barriers" (20% gave this reason for not contacting an agency or counselor, 25.6% for not seeking medical service, and 8% for

not calling the police), or they cited “protection of the partner and relationship preservation,” or “privacy and confidentiality” (Fugate et al., 2005).

Fugate et al. (2005) also found that a battered woman tends not to contact the police because of her concern about unexpected consequences both for her and the abuser. These consequences include her abuser being arrested or sent to jail, problems related to immigration status, child protective services’ involvement, and loss of housing. A study of 16 survivors of domestic abuse in British health visits reported difficulties in seeking help and concealing the truth from their health visitors reporting concerns about losing custody of their children (Peckover, 2003). Other reasons given for not talking to someone included fear that the abuser would find out (10%) or that they would “put others in the middle.” Peckover (2003) also found “fear” as a reason for not seeking help. All of the women reported difficulties in seeking help and concealing the truth from their health visitors out of fear for their own safety. When women in Fugate et al.’s (2005) sample perceived that formal social service agencies would require them to end the relationship, they tended not to seek outside help. A battered woman’s minimization of her situation was found to be the main reason for not seeking help (Fugate, et al., 2005).

Levels and Kinds of Involvement with Formal Social Services

Numerous studies have found that formal support may be provided by the police, actors within the criminal justice system, social service agency staff, medical services personnel, crisis hotline workers, mental health professionals, clergy members, domestic violence advocates, or staff at battered women’s shelters (Bowker, 1988; Goodman, Dutton, Weinfurt, & Cook, 2003; Donato & Bowker, 1984). Studies

reporting the percentage of women who contact the police also show a wide range from about 7% in some studies (Kantor & Straus, 1990; Schulman, 1979) to over 50% in other studies (Langan & Innes, 1986; Pagelow, 1981). There is also a wide range of other help sources. Women's visits to hospital emergency rooms because of domestic violence ranges from 6% to 30% (Hayden, et al., 1992). Fifty-three percent of abused women sought community based or professional services (Coker, Derrick, Lumpkin, Aldrich & Oldendick, 2000). More than 40% of women contacted legal agents, up to 42% of women contacted therapists, 14% to 39% of women contacted the clergy, and more than about 30% of women contacted shelter services (Bowker, 1983; Frieze, Knoble, Washburn, & Zomnir, 1980; Pagelow, 1981). A study of random sample battered women in Kentucky found that formal help sources such as clergy (14%) and therapists or agency workers (19%) were much less likely to be contacted than informal help sources (Schulman, 1979). Another study of clients from battered women's shelters in California found that 55% of women used the police, higher than utilization rates for lawyers and other legal agents (44%), psychiatrists and psychologists (28%), clergy (22%), and marriage counselors (15%) (Pagelow, 1981). Frieze et al. (1980) found that the use of help sources by violent families in their sample was 43% for social service agencies, 42% for therapists, and 39% for priests. However, the police were more likely to be approached than were any of these help sources, having been contacted by nearly two-thirds of battered women.

Turning to family for help may also vary according to race. Caucasian women were significantly more likely to turn to family (Van Hook, 2000) while some studies found that African American women were more likely to contact the police (Bachman

& Coker, 1995; Gondolf et al., 1990; Hutchison, 2003; Jasinski, 2003), although others found no association between a woman's race and police contact (Johnson, 1990; Kantor & Straus, 1990; Conaway & Lohr, 1994; Bowker, 1984; Berk et al., 1984).

Effectiveness of Formal Social Services

The use of formal support has been shown to influence the physical safety of battered women. Studies have found that formal social support tends to enhance women's physical safety (Liang, et al, 2005; Sullivan & Bybee, 1999; Bell & Goodman, 2001). Others, however, still argue that responses of formal social services can have a negative impact on battered women (Fugate, et al, 2005; Moe, 2007; Liang, et al., 2005; Lempert, 1997; Grauwiler, 2008).

Police involvement produces an ambiguous impact on women. For example, Schulman's (1979) study of random samples of battered women in Kentucky found that these victimized women expressed a much higher level of satisfaction with police services, compared to Pagelow's (1981) study of one shelter's sample of battered women. The police were heavily criticized for their inadequate service delivery to the battered women (Pagelow, 1981). The police received significantly lower ratings than did other help sources, and the women reported that the police were as likely to make things worse as to help compared to other help sources (Frieze et al, 1980). According to the findings in Bowker's (1988) study of 1,000 battered wives in southeastern Wisconsin, 39% of the women found the police to be very helpful in reducing or stopping their abuse. However, 19% of participants in her sample still reported an increase in violence due to police intervention (Bowker, 1988).

Women's negative experience of police response, defined as failure of the police to intercede after receiving a call for help, was one of the reasons that women did not want to seek help from the police again (Fugate, et al., 2005). Mistrust of the police among some communities may also contribute to women's hesitation to call the police (Sorenson, 1996; Stephens & Sinden, 2000; Weis, 2001).

Negative experiences in the prosecution process, such as the general confusion presented by the system, frustration, fear, feelings of guilt about sending their partner to jail, and loss of control over the process, have all been identified as obstacles when battered women seek help from the police (Bennett, Goodman, & Dutton, 1999; Fugate et al., 2005; Stephens & Sinden, 2000). Lawyers were found to be more helpful than psychologists, psychiatrists, and the clergy (Pagelow, 1981). The proportion of women using a formal help source who rated it as very or somewhat effective in reducing or ending the violence were from lawyers (50%) and district attorneys (38%). However, these formal sources of help caused increased violence when using district attorneys (17%) and lawyers (11%) for the women (Bowker, 1988).

Moe (2007) found that battered women's involvement with child protection services (CPS) often places them in a precarious position on behalf of their children. CPS often became involved with battered women as a result of the abuse toward women (Jones, Gross, & Becker, 2002). In a literature review of CPS involvement in domestic violence cases, Moe (2007) reported that court hearings, mediations, mandated counseling, and home visits can be risky for all battered women, not only for women whose abuse has been publicly disclosed. She notes that the batterer may retaliate against a woman or manipulate her into lying to authorities. Other studies report that

battered women may hesitate to seek help from CPS, and may appear to be uncooperative, subversive, and resistant to intervention (Jacobs, 1998; Jones, Gross, & Becker, 2002).

Moe (2007) found that battered women may look on other social service agencies with ambivalence. Her study of 19 abused women in a battered women's shelter found that social service agencies tend to be powerful extensions of the state's social control mechanisms, although they are potentially helpful for those who lack resources. Women's experience with these social service agencies may influence their future help-seeking. She noted that social service agencies may provide many benefits (e.g. counseling, financial support) for women, but revictimization is also possible (e.g., having their children removed for failing to protect them from abuse).

Medical and mental health professionals are well positioned to intervene in domestic violence situations (Kernic, Wolf, & Holt, 2000), but this intervention has sometimes been problematic (Gerbert, Johnston, Caspers, & Bleecker, 1996; Warshaw, 1993; Lamberg, 2000). Battered women report concealing their abuse after they encountered health care providers who were not interested in or sympathetic toward their needs or because they felt that the health care system did not allow doctors and nurses sufficient time to deal with issues beyond the treatment of immediate injuries (Gerbert, Johnston, et al., 1996; Halthaway, Willis, & Zimmer, 2002). A study of 25 survivors of domestic violence in the San Francisco Bay area found that women who had sought medical care by providers trained in domestic violence report feelings of validation, relief, and comfort (Gerbert, Abercrombie, Caspers, Love, & Bronstone, 1999) Gerbert et al. (1999) explained the concept of validation that the provider had

recognized and acknowledged that the abuse occurred, that the batterer's behavior was wrong, and that the participant was an individual unworthy of battered treatment.

Support groups and battered women's shelters are rated by abused women as the most helpful and effective means of receiving assistance (Bowker, 1988; Gondolf & Fisher, 1988). Bowker (1988) found that the proportion of women using a formal help source who rated it as very or somewhat effective in reducing or ending the violence were 60% for women's groups and 56% for battered women's shelters. Women's groups (5%) and battered women's shelters (7%) were the safest of the formal help sources in terms of the increase of violence after they contact those services (Bowker, 1988). However, they are often the least contacted (Gordon, 1996). In a review of 12 studies, Gordon (1996) concluded that they are often not used because of the lack of availability in certain geographic areas or the stigma that women might experience when revealing their abusive histories. Gordon reported that women's groups were helpful most of the time for all types of abuse.

Some women found battered women's shelters helpful in providing a sanctuary for women and included a variety of services such as legal advocacy, counseling, women's groups, and transitional living arrangements (Krishnan, Hilbert, & VanLeeuwen, 1993). Other women found such shelters to be less helpful because of the move of some shelters toward a more traditional, social services agency model that adhered to increasingly rigid bureaucratic expectations of self-sufficiency (Chang, 1992; Schillinger, 1988).

Battered women's support groups are helpful in raising self-esteem and assisting women to become more independent of their abusers. Such groups have been shown to

be an effective means of stabilizing a battered women's life while she goes through the process of separating from her abuser (Gordon, 1996). A study of 76 women from 12 support groups for women victims of domestic violence revealed that women who participated in support groups showed significant improvements in self-esteem and decreased stress, depression, and anxiety (Tutty, Bidgood, & Rothery, 1993).

Battered women report that lawyers are more helpful than psychologists, psychiatrists or clergy in ending the abuse (Hotaling, Finkelhor, Kirkpatrick, & Straus, 1988). Legal advocates provide battered women with information on judicial processes and available community services. An experimental study of 278 battered women in a Midwest shelter program for women with abusive partners found that women who received advocacy services reported less physical violence, increased quality of life, fewer depressive symptoms, and an increased ability to obtain resources when compared to women who had not received such services (Sullivan and Bybee, 1999). Legal advocacy can assist in obtaining restraining orders, which are protective barriers to eliminate further violence or contact between a women and an abuser. However, restraining orders often give battered women a false sense of security (Gondolf, McWilliams, Hart, & Stuehling, 1994; Holmes, 1993; Simon, 1995).

Battered Women's Needs

Battered women seek help from a variety of sources to mobilize the necessary resources (Allen, Bybee, & Sullivan, 2004). Women have a multitude of safety related and basic needs. Identification of these needs is closely related to the type of "help" they seek.

A study of random assignments of 278 women who left a Midwest shelter

program for women with abusive partners revealed that battered women's needs include housing, education, employment, transportation, legal assistance, health care, social support, financial assistance, material goods and services (e.g., furniture), child care, and issues related to their children (Allen, et al., 2004). They found that the majority of battered women wanted to work on obtaining material goods and services (86%), increasing their level of social support (77%), and finding solutions for health-related issues (77%) and school-related issues (e.g., obtaining a GED, attending college or trade school). In addition, a majority indicated that they wanted to address financial needs (68%), transportation needs (66%), legal issues (59%), and employment (60%). For women who had children, 67% indicated they needed to address child care issues, and 68% indicated that they wanted to address other issues related to their children.

Allen et al. (2004) suggest that some women who have extremely pressing needs in one domain of their lives (e.g., legal or housing) may still be dealing with needs in other domains. They also suggest that not all women (only 59%) focused on legal services or criminal justice intervention, and among those who were dealing with legal problems, this was not directly related to the prosecution of the assailant or to obtaining a protection order. Rather, women were fighting landlords, getting divorced, working out custody and visitation, or dealing with other legal concerns.

Although the criminal justice response may be a critical component of fostering batterer accountability, it is essential to focus on the varied needs that women present and increase access to those resources that meet women's self-identified needs (Allen, et al., 2004). Connecting women to the resources they identify as important may play a greater role in fostering their safety than focusing only on pursuing criminal action

against the batterer (Goodman, Bennett, & Dutton, 1999; Allen et al., 2004).

A significant portion of women was addressing issues beyond meeting basic needs such as housing and material goods and services. Many women were focused primarily on continuing their educations and obtaining employment. A focus on meeting only women's safety related needs and basic needs may be insufficient for many women even though meeting their basic needs is important to increase their safety (Davies, 2001; Dutton, 1992; Gondolf, 1988).

Factors Influencing Battered Women's Help-seeking from Formal Social Services

Women's individual factors

Women's assessment of their situations is a major factor influencing their help-seeking. In the tradition of the domestic violence movement, battered women generally know the dangers they may face from the abuser better than other people. In addition, women's assessments that certain informal and formal help will not be useful may be accurate and should be respected. Fugate et al. (2005) also found that women make the most of the help that is available and may try different strategies over time as their situations change. Thus, battered women's recognition of the problem needs to be explored and valued. We need to explore the process through which battered women appraise and arrive at definitions for their abusive situations. Women's experience of domestic violence is not a unitary construct, but a complex phenomenon that is subjectively experienced by each woman and thus affected by distinct histories and values (Liang, et al., 2005). Understanding the process of problem recognition from battered women's perspectives may lead us to a broad range of help-seeking behaviors (Liang, et al., 2003). Battered women's acknowledgement of the problem may shift

over time depending on how ready they are to make changes in their lives and vice versa. In addition, these attitudes may also be shaped by a battered woman's race, class, and geographical location.

Battered women's relationships to their abusers and the number of separations from their abusers were associated with their contact with informal social networks (Goodkind et al., 2003). Some researchers found that women's marital status was not associated with police contact (Johnson, 1990; Bachman & Coker, 1995; Hutchison, 2003; Jasinski, 2003), but Coker (1995) found that unmarried women were more likely to call the police than married women. Johnson (1990) found from a sample of 426 women in a Florida shelter that the length of time the victim had been in the abusive relationship was significantly related with police contact. Battered women who had been in their current marital relationship for less than ten years were significantly more likely to call the police than battered women who had been in the relationship for more than ten years. However, a battered woman's household income (Johnson, 1990; Bachman & Coker, 1995), employment status (Johnson, 1990; Abel & Suh, 1987), level of education (Johnson, 1990; Bowker, 1984), and private residence (Bachman & Coker, 1995) were not associated with their level of police contact.

Severity of abuse on women

Some research has found that the more severely and frequently a battered woman experiences violence, the more likely she is to seek formal services (Coker, Derrick, Lumpkin, Aldrich, & Oldendick, 2000; Johnson, 1990; Kantor & Straus, 1995; Bowker, 1982; 1984; Hutchison, 2003). Johnson (1990) found that among 426 battered women who sought help from a Florida shelter, women who called the police were significantly

more likely to have experienced severe physical abuse than minor abuse. Women who called the police were significantly more likely to have been abused often than occasionally. However, other research has not found an association between severity of abuse and women's contact with the police (Berk et al., 1984) or medical services (Ulrich, Cain, Sugg, Rivara, Rubanowice & Thompson, 2003). In one study, 70% of a total of 289 abused women who sought assistance in several battered women's agencies in three metropolitan areas (the Midwest, the West Coast, and the Pacific Northwest) reported their help-seeking from an agency was delayed more than a year, even though they reported having experienced severe or life threatening abuse. (Reidy & Von Korff, 1991). Thus, these researchers found no association between the severity of abuse and the time lapsed in help-seeking from an agency. They suggest that social isolation due to the abuse and an increased feeling of helplessness reinforce the reluctance to seek help (Reidy & Von Korff, 1991).

These incongruent results suggest a threshold for abuse implying that after a certain point, either the injuries are serious enough or the situations become frightening enough (such as threatening to harm her children) to seek formal intervention (Fugate et al., 2005). Prior to reaching this threshold, battered women may not consider the abuse to be serious enough to seek help from formal services, or they may have been influenced by others' perceptions to think that it is inappropriate to seek help.

Informal social networks

The studies generally agree that the first contact a battered woman has tends to be with her informal social network, especially her mother or sisters (Kelly, 1996; Bowker, 1984; Tan, Basta, Sullivan & Davison, 1995; Goodkind, Gillum, Bybee, &

Sullivan, 2003; Gordon, 1997; Lockhart & White, 1989), or other relatives or friends (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988; Horton & Johnson, 1993; Rose, Campbell, & Kub, 2000). The level of involvement with informal social networks ranges from 23% (Gelles & Straus, 1988) to 91% (Goodkind, et al., 2003) across the studies. A study of a random sample of battered wives in Kentucky found that the battered women were most likely to have discussed the battering with family members (61%) or friends (49%) (Schulman, 1979). Another study found that members of the wife's family were more likely to be sought out for help to end the battering than was any other informal help source (Frieze, Knoble, Washburn, & Zomnir, 1980). Frieze et al. (1980) found that violent families in their sample used help sources from family members (55%), and friends (52%). Goodkind et al.'s (2003) study of 137 women in a domestic violence shelter program located in a midsized Midwestern city found that 91% of women reported having talked with family or friends about the violence. Among these women, 72% told at least one friend, and 70% told at least one relative, and more than half (56%) sought help from both family and friends.

Friends and relatives often provide women with informal support through both emotional sustenance, including advice, encouragement, or affirmation, and material assistance, such as financial help, babysitting, or a place to stay (Goodkind, et al., 2003). Responses of informal networks affected battered women when these responses were negative in nature or included offers of tangible support. A study of 146 women from southeastern Wisconsin found that family members and friends were found to be more helpful to the once-battered wives than were neighbors and in-laws (Bowker, 1983). Bowker's (1988) study of 1,000 battered women in southeastern Wisconsin

found that help from the wife's own family was rated as very or somewhat effective by 38% of the women who received family help, and help from friends was right behind the family at 37%. Help from in-laws (24%) and neighbors (30%) was less likely to be effective than was help from family and friends. Increased violence as a result of using help sources occurred for 11% of the women who used family help, 13% who received help from friends, 14% for help from neighbors, and 18% for help from in-laws. A study of semi-structured interviews with 31 women who were part of a larger study of women in abusive relationships found that the emotional support offered by trusted friends was identified as critical in enabling battered women to seek more formal sources of support (Rose, Campbell, & Kub, 2000).

Another study of in-depth interviews with 32 abused women from an outreach support group found that when the complexity of their situations was ignored, women perceived the responses negatively (Lempert, 1997). A study of 169 women who presented their case at the Domestic Violence Intake Center of the U.S. Attorney's Office in the District of Columbia Superior Court found that 71.9% of these women reported they were advised to leave the abuser and 23.5% received mixed advice (Kocot & Goodman, 2003). These authors concluded that when women received mixed advice or advice to stay with their partners, their coping mechanisms deteriorated and they experienced more PTSD and depression. These findings suggest that prevailing views that explicitly or implicitly encourage women to take direct action against violence must acknowledge that such action does not always empower them.

Women were more likely to receive emotional support than advice or tangible support from their involvement with informal social networks. For example, friends and

relatives were likely to offer women a place to stay, urge them to call the police or a lawyer, or urge them to see a counselor or therapist (Goodkind et al., 2003). The responses of family and friends depended on several factors. These factors included the nature of the woman's relationship with her abuser, the number of times she had tried to leave her partner, the number of children involved, and whether friends and family had also been threatened (Goodkind et al., 2003).

Children's safety

Although children's safety has not been addressed widely in the literature of battered women's help-seeking, children's exposure to domestic violence and co-occurrence of violence against women and children has received increased public attention. Studies on children's exposure to domestic violence have identified the levels and methods of exposure of children to adult domestic violence (Appel and Holden, 1998; Edleson, 1999; Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1999). A study of 2,143 American families from the 1975 National Family Violence Survey found that children in families in which their fathers abuse their mothers are also more likely to be directly abused by the abusive parent (Straus and Gelles, 1990). Reported co-occurrence of violence against women and children varies from as low as 6% to as high as 97%, with the majority of studies finding a 30-60% rate of co-occurrence (Edleson, 1999), and a median rate of 41% (Appel and Holden, 1998). A study using an anonymous telephone survey of 111 battered mothers in four metropolitan cities (Dallas, Minneapolis/St. Paul, San Jose, and Pittsburgh) across the United States found that proportions of women reported each type of co-occurrence that happened in their homes at least rarely (Mbilinyi, Edleson, Hagemester, & Beeman, 2007). Mbilinyi et al. reported the following findings: a child

was accidentally hurt during an incident of adult-to-adult violence (38%), a child was intentionally hurt by the abusive partner while trying to stop the violence (26.1%), the mother was intentionally hurt by the abuser while trying to stop violence directed to her child (48.6%), the abuser hurt the mother and child in separate incidents (38.7%), the abuser resulted in her having a hard time dealing with her children and using harsh punishment on them (57.7%), the mother was unable to care for the children the way she wanted to because of the abuse (88.3%), the abusive partner used the children as a tool or pawn against their mother as a way to indirectly harass her (79.3%), the abuser might hurt the mother as a result of her children's wrongdoing (71.2%), the abusers made the children watch him hit or sexually assault her (20.7%), and finally, the abuser blamed the mother for his excessive punishment of the children (55%) (Mbilinyi, et al., 2007).

Another study of the same sample found that mothers reported a range of interventions by their children (Edleson, Mbilinyi, Beeman, & Hagemeister, 2003). This study showed that 52% of the mothers reported that their children yelled at least occasionally from another room during abuse toward her, 53% reported that their children at least occasionally yelled while in the same room, and 21% reported that their children called someone else for help during the abuse at least occasionally, and 23% of the mothers reported that their children became physically involved during an abusive incident involving the mother at least occasionally. Predictors of children's physical involvement in their mother's abuse identified from the study included physical violence, physical effects, the children's living situation, the abuser's age at the onset of the abuse, and the children's relationship to the abuser. The greater the violence and its

effects on their mothers, or the older the abuser, the more likely the children were reported to intervene. Children living with neither the abuser nor the mother were less likely to report that they had intervened. Children not biologically related to the abuser were more likely to have intervened.

A study from the domestic violence database of a large county Police Department in the Northeast revealed that for 44% of domestic violence events children were present (Fantuzzo & Fuso, 2007). Fantuzzo & Fuso (2007) conducted a study in collaboration with the Family Service Unit of the Police Department and the research team with the purpose of conducting a population-based study of domestic violence events and children exposed to domestic violence. In their study police officers who identified all domestic violence events where children present in the household reported 92% of the children were exposed to violence perpetrated against their mother, and over 80% were directly exposed to the violence. Children under six years old were disproportionately exposed to domestic violence events (50%). Children were exposed to the most dangerous types of domestic violence events, such as use of the perpetrator's weapon (21% of domestic violence events with children present), mutual assault (22% of domestic violence events with children present), and substance use and arrest of the perpetrator (41% of domestic violence events with children present).

The number of children that a battered woman has is positively associated with her contact with her informal social network (Goodkind et al., 2003), but it has not been associated with a woman's contact with the police (Abel & Suh, 1987). However, some studies suggest that the presence of children is associated with battered women's increased contact with the police (Johnson, 1990; Jones & Belknap, 1996). Johnson's

(1990) study of 426 battered women in a shelter located in Florida found that battered women with dependent children living in an abusive relationship were significantly more likely to call the police than battered women with no dependent children. Another study based on in-depth interviews with 15 women in a large Midwestern urban area found that battered women's concern for their children affected the women's re-evaluation of the relationship which was a part of the leaving process (Syers-McNairy, 1990).

Other contextual factors

Women come from different backgrounds and may be under additional strain due to cultural practices and influences (Krishnan, Hilbert, VanLeeuwen, Kolia, 1997). European American women reported abuse incidents to law enforcement or sought medical attention more than did Hispanic women (Krishnan et al., 1997). African American women were found to have not sought assistance from mental health providers, but instead relied on informal support networks or sought no assistance at all (Neighbors & Jackson, 1984). Hollenshead, Dai, Ragsdale, Massey, and Scott (2006) studied 131 individuals who filed formal complaints of domestic violence with a law enforcement intervention unit and 259 clients of a regional family violence center. They concluded that African American victims more frequently sought protection from law enforcement sources than they did from family violence center services, and the reverse was true for European Americans.

Researchers identified other factors or barriers that may limit battered women's contact with help sources. These factors are more contextual and situational, including negative beliefs that our society hold about battered women (Gelles & Straus, 1988),

traditional values (Wetzel & Ross, 1983) that support family privacy and the sanctity of the marriage (Giles-Sims, 1998), lack of privacy and concerns about continuity of care in medical services (Bacchus, Mezey & Bewley, 2003; Van Hook, 2000), fear of being judged (Bacchus, Mezey & Bewley, 2003), lack of knowledge regarding appropriate sources of support and protection (Peckover, 2003), and the abuser's interference (Homer, Leonard, & Taylor, 1985; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983).

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

To date, two predominant theories, learned helplessness theory and survivor theory, have been developed to explain battered women's response to domestic violence (Dutton, 1996) with other theories or models including the barriers model, choice model, women's readiness models (stages of change and a turning point), theory of resistance and power, and ecological systems theory. Theories on battered women's responses to domestic violence have focused on the question: "Why do battered women stay?" The theory of learned helplessness, entrapment theory, and the barriers model focus on answering this question at either the individual level or the societal level. The choice model focuses more on women's decisions to stay or leave. The survivor theory and women's readiness model, whether focused on the stages of change (transtheoretical theory) or a turning point (psychological readiness), found evidence and methods of battered women's active help-seeking. In the following sections of this chapter, after reviewing these theories on battered women's response to domestic violence, I will outline the theoretical framework and explain a conceptual model for this study. Finally, I will list research questions for this study.

Overview of Theories on Battered Women's Responses to Domestic Violence

Theory of learned helplessness and entrapment theory

Lenore Walker (1979, 1984), based on her study of battered women in Colorado, adapted Seligman's (1975) learned helplessness theory of depression to explain battered women's apparently passive and helpless responses. The theory of battered women's learned helplessness has been used to explain why battered women do not leave the battering relationship. Battered women have been typically

characterized as helpless and passive victims who stay in violent relationships.

Walker (1979) theorized this characterization in her book, *The Battered Woman*, and noted that battered women become psychologically paralyzed as a result of learned helplessness. She explained that battered women are immobilized by the uncertainty of when violence will occur and how they can stop it. Battered women begin to feel that they have no control over their experience of violence. No matter what they do, they “get it.” In the process, the battered women begin to blame themselves for the violence.

On the extension of learned helplessness theory, some researchers regarded battered women’s staying as entrapment, which took several forms. Battered women are trapped in a relationship by an abuser who threatens to escalate the violence if the woman attempts to leave (Harlow, 1991; Pagelow, 1984). They are entrapped in the abusive relationships because of “traumatic attachment” (Barnett & LaViolette, 1993) or because of social values, policies, opportunity structures, and service provision (Bograd, 1984; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Yllo, 1993). Studies portray battered women as trapped by inner forces, interpersonal relationships, or social and economic factors. Women’s normative needs for love and commitment, concerns for the wellbeing of their children, and hope that things will change (Giles-Sims, 1983; Strube & Barbour, 1984), or pathological needs, including disturbed object relations, sadomasochistic tendencies, or self-punishment (Gillman, 1980; Koslof, 1984; Young & Gerson, 1991) make continuation of life in a abusive relationship understandable. Relationship factors, coupled with low self-esteem, fear, guilt, and shame lead to battered women’s further isolation by their abusers.

Although both the theory of learned helplessness and entrapment theory attempted to explain reasons that battered women stay in abusive relationships, they were criticized as a product of the historical shift to “the psychologizing of wife abuse.” Identified as a severe social and political problem that had to be redressed with social change during the battered women’s movement, wife abuse has been transformed into a psychological one as family service and mental health professionals gradually brought their clinical expertise to bear on the problem (Pleck, 1987; Dobash & Dobash, 1981). Such research has “psychologized wife abuse” (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988), and “individualized and decontextualized wife abuse” as well. It has also pathologized individual battered women and, again, has inevitably blamed battered women for prolonging their exposure to domestic violence. Feminist critics have strongly objected to the implication of such research (Schechter, 1982). This research has covered up the fact that wife abuse is a social problem constructed from a specific social context in which the patriarchy and sexist attitudes degrade and oppress women. As these studies individualize and decontextualize wife abuse, they also support the common belief that domestic violence is a private matter.

Survivor theory

The survivor theory suggests that battered women respond to abuse with help-seeking methods that are largely unsuccessful and that women increase their help seeking as the danger to themselves and their children increases (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988). Thus, the survivor theory emphasizes battered women’s active help-seeking behavior.

Gondolf and Fisher (1988) suggested that battered women remain in abusive relationships, not because they are passive, but because they have tried to escape to no avail. They offered a survivor model that contradicted the assumptions of the theory of learned helplessness by suggesting that battered women increase, rather than decrease, their help-seeking in the face of escalated violence. An empirical test of the model (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988) incorporated a number of dimensions to explain the range of types of battered women's help-seeking behavior. These included domestic violence (e.g., physical abuse, verbal abuse, injury), economic resources (e.g., victim's income), children (e.g., number of children), other types of violence in the family (e.g., child abuse), and batterers' other behaviors (e.g., substance abuse, general violence, arrests, batterer's response to violence).

The survivor model examined by a study of 6,612 battered women from shelter intake in Texas suggests that battered women respond to more severe abuse with increased help-seeking (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988). It does not appear that the help-seeking is a direct response to escalated abuse, but rather increases in the context of other batterer behavior. The model indicates that the range of help sources contacted by the women increases as the batterer's antisocial behavior escalates. The survivor model offers further insight into battered women's help-seeking pattern by showing that the majority of women make extremely assertive efforts to stop the violence. This model implies more of a "system failure" than a failure on the part of the battered women, since it appears that battered women, rather than staying passive in violent relationships, have contacted a variety of helping sources in response to the violence (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988).

A major contribution of this model is that it demonstrates the importance of contextual variables in addition to violence for understanding battered women's help-seeking behavior (Dutton, 1996). Despite its contributions, the survivor model still has some limitations (Hoff, 1990). First, because it measures battered women's help-seeking as the diversity of helping sources contacted by a woman and accounts for neither the kind of assistance received nor the effectiveness of the assistance, it seems that this model significantly reduces the possibility of showing the dynamics of help-seeking. Second, although its purpose was to show that battered women are active agents who seek help from various sources, its results were limited to identifying the number of help sources battered women contacted.

Barriers model

The barriers model tends to integrate the theory of learned helplessness and survivor theory while it still answers the question of "Why do battered women stay?" Whereas the theory of learned helplessness found the answer from the effects of abuse on women, the survivor theory found it from the failure of systems' responses to the violence. Although the barriers model focuses on women's psychological states and social roles, it considers environmental obstacles as one of the important barriers.

The barrier model describes a woman in the center as a psychological entity, surrounded by four concentric rings that represent layers of barriers (Grigsby & Hartman, 1997). In the outmost ring, barriers in the environment are the first obstacles encountered by the woman. When resources, such as money, a place to go, support from the police and legal system, or support from informal networks, are lacking, it is clear that escape is impossible. The next barrier encountered is that of family and social role

expectations. A woman's role as caretaker puts the blame on her for the failing relationship. Internalizing this blame makes it difficult to escape, as she is expected to rebuild the problematic relationship (Anderson, Gilling, Sitaker, McCloskey, Malloy, & Grigsby, 2003). The next barrier in the barriers model recognizes the psychological impact of the abusive relationship. Fear, hyper-vigilance, and lack of trust are the most frequent outcomes of abuse (Walker, 1994). Unless a safe, nonjudgmental, trust-building relationship is established outside of the abuse, the woman will adapt to her environment for survival (Anderson, et al., 2003).

Identified obstacles under the barriers model from other studies include numerous factors: economic dependence, social isolation, immigration law, race relations, the mismatch between social services and women's needs, the family traditions of minority communities (Bui, 2003), hassle, fear, confidentiality, and tangible loss (Fugate, et al., 2005).

Choice model

The choice model focuses more on women's agency making choices to stay or leave while not minimizing the negative effects of the abuse and societal constraints. The choice model regards remaining in or leaving an abusive relationship as a choice made by a woman who is consciously negotiating her reality and actively creating meaning within the constraints of her situational freedom (Peled, Eisikovits, Enosh, & Winstok, 2000; Choice & Lamke, 1997). Attempting to propose a model for the process of battered women's decision making to stay or leave, Choice and Lamke (1997) suggested that two separate questions were relevant: "Will I be better off?" and "Can I do it?" They considered that a woman may wish to leave her relationship but be

inhibited from leaving because of her limited control over the situation. Conversely, a woman might have necessary resources to leave but might wish to remain in the relationship because she “feels satisfied in her relationship,” “her significant others want her to maintain the relationship and she wishes to comply with their expectations,” or “she has invested heavily in the relationship” (Choice & Lamke, 1997).

Choice and Lamke (1997) mentioned that some studies supported their model as researchers portrayed staying as the result of a rational decision-making process based on weighing the perceived costs and benefits in the context of a multidimensional relationship (Bowker, 1983; Bograd, 1988; Campbell, Miller, Cardwell, & Belknap, 1994; Pfouts, 1978). This explanation acknowledges not only constraints preventing a battered woman from leaving, but also the positive feelings and perceptions that she may hold regarding her partner and the relationship. Positive aspects of the conjugal relationship mentioned by battered women include love for the abuser, hope that he will change, and the desire to maintain their children’s relationship with the abuser (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Giles-Sims, 1983; Saunders & Size, 1986; Stacey & Shupe, 1983). Women stop rationalizing the violence when there are changes in the severity and frequency of the violence or its visibility to others, when they believe that their children’s safety and welfare are threatened, or when their access to resources improves, and when there is outside intervention (Ferraro & Johnson, 1983).

Women’s readiness model: Transtheoretical model (stage of change)

The transtheoretical model provides a framework to explain battered women’s readiness with “stages of change.” Like the other readiness model, the turning point model, this model enables us to explain women’s responses to domestic violence with

the time frame from the beginning of the abusive relationship to the end of it. This model conceptualizes the behavior change process as five stages of readiness to change behaviors (Burke, Gielen, McDonnell, O'Campo, & Maman, 2001). The results of their study came from 78 women who were either currently in or had recently left abusive relationships recruited from a hospital based clinic, outpatient drug treatment center, homeless shelter for women, a community center, and these results supported the stages of change model (Burke, et al., 2001). The stages in the transtheoretical model are 1) precontemplation, 2) contemplation, 3) preparation, 4) action, and 5) maintenance.

In precontemplation, the woman does not recognize the abuse as a problem and is not interested in change. Contemplation is the stage in which the woman recognizes the abuse as a problem and has an increasing awareness of the pros and cons of change. When the abuse becomes more severe and she sees how controlling her abuser has been, she recognizes the abuse as a problem. Preparation, the third stage, is the period in which the woman recognizes the abuse as a problem, intends to change, and has developed a plan. For a woman who begins to consider her options, several factors, including concerns about personal safety and financial stability affect her decision about how to move forward. In the action stage, the woman is actively engaged in making changes related to ending the abuse. The woman may use different kinds of actions. The woman may call the police to report the abuse and then obtain an Order for Protection (OFP) to keep the abuser away from her. She may fight back by hitting her abuser. She may confide in her family, who then helps her end the abuse. Finally, in the maintenance stage, the abuse has ended and the woman is taking steps to prevent a relapse. The woman is living life day by day and working to take care of herself. This

process is often cyclical, with both progression and relapse before achieving success (Prochaska, 1994).

According to Prochaska and DiClemente (1982), ten processes of change facilitate movement from one stage to the next. Individuals in the early stages of behavior change (precontemplation, contemplation, and preparation) tend to use more cognitive processes (e.g., consciousness raising, self-reevaluation, dramatic relief, environmental reevaluation, and social liberation). By contrast, individuals in the action or maintenance stage use more behavioral processes, such as counter conditioning, stimulus control, reinforcement management, helping relationships, and self-liberation (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982, 1983).

In addition to the processes of change, two other variables contribute to an individual's movement through the stages of change. Decisional balance refers to the weighing of pros and cons regarding the behavior change (Prochaska, Velicer, et al., 1994). Self-efficacy, an individual's confidence in her ability to make the behavior change, is another variable found to affect behavior change (Bandura, 1982; DiClemente, 1981, 1986). These two variables, similar to the ten processes of change, are also associated in varying degrees with the five stages of change.

There are several problems with applying the stages of the change model to battered women's help-seeking. First, in domestic violence cases, the abuser is the one with the dysfunctional behavior, not the woman. Second, unlike its application to problems (e.g., smoking and substance use) in which there is a clear target behavior for change (e.g., nonuse of such chemicals), there is no agreed upon single desirable action for a battered woman (Chang, Dado, Ashton, Hawker, Cluss, Buranosky, & Scholle,

2006). This model seems to be more useful when it is applied to a batterer's behavior change (Eckhardt & Utshig, 2007). Finally, the woman often "leapfrogs" directly over one stage to a higher level one. The stages most commonly skipped are the preparation stage and contemplation stage (Chang, et al., 2006).

Women's readiness model: Turning point model

The other model for battered women's readiness is the turning point model. Based on their study of 20 battered women in a health care setting, Chang et al (2006) suggested the turning point model to explain battered women's readiness better than the stages of the change model. They found that most women in their study found it difficult to identify contemplation/preparation/action stages separately (Chang, et al., 2006).

While battered women choose to stay in abusive relationships, turning points take place (Eisikovits, Buchbinder, & Mor, 1998). A study of 20 battered Israeli women who sought help in a large municipal area in northern Israel revealed the process of reaching the turning point at which women refused to live with violence and took active steps to stop it even while they continued to live with the abuser (Eisikovits, et al., 1998). Battered women may choose to stay but reject the abuse and seek help to end the abuse. The turning point is an outcome of the collapse of a system of meaning that has kept a battered woman in the abusive relationship. The change in meaning is total, and comes after a series of losses that lead her to the conclusion that the situation in which she has been living cannot continue and that there is no way back (Eiskovits, et al., 1998). The turning point tends to reflect a significant change in a battered woman's thinking and attitude toward changing her situation. It does not necessarily lead to

immediate action but will often provide the impetus to move closer to change (Chang, et al., 2006). Chang et al. found that once the woman came to the point that she identified the turning point, she could never return to the precontemplation stage in the stages of the change model.

Readiness to change is a continuum, with maintenance of the status quo on one end of the continuum and movement toward change on the other (Cluss, Chang, Hawker, Scholle, Dado, Ruranosky, & Goldstrohm, 2006). Based on a study of 20 women in health care settings, Cluss et al. (2006) supports the psychological readiness model with an emphasis on the turning point model. The psychological readiness model builds on this thinking to describe the dynamics of internal and external factors that affect battered women's readiness for change. The model focuses on three internal factors, awareness, perceived support, and self-efficacy or perceived power, and external factors impeding or facilitating change. Readiness is regarded as a continuum along which women move toward or away from change.

One of the important strengths of women's readiness models is that they redirect the question of "Why do women stay?" to "How can women become ready to change the abusive situation?" or "How can women become ready to end the abuse?" Women's readiness models do not assume that battered women's leaving is the only way to end the violence. They tend to value battered women's various actions in the process of ending the violence. Therefore, a women's readiness model, the turning point model, seems more applicable for this study of battered women's help-seeking.

Women's help-seeking as references of resistance and power

The Foucauldian feminist theory may open up space for an alternative way to overcome the dichotomous view of battered women as victims or survivors (Basu, 2000; Elizabeth, 2003). A subject, within the Foucauldian theory, constructed through discourse, is someone who is simultaneously enabled and constricted (Weedon, 1987). Becoming a subject limits the kind of actions we can take, and also enables us to carry out these actions (Foucault, 1980, 1982; Weedon, 1987; Davies, 1991, 1992). Foucauldian feminists understand the subject to be inherently in flux, constantly open to reconstitution in response to shifts in contexts or changes in power relations (Kondo, 1990; Weedon, 1987; Fraser, 1992). From this view of the subject, “survivor” and “victim” are identities that can co-exist within the same individual at the same time. This explanation provides a fuller exploration of the meaning of agency in the lives of battered women by rejecting the all-victim and all-agency approaches (Mahoney, 1994).

According to Foucauldian feminists, language systemically “forms the objects of which they speak” (Foucault, 1972, 49; Weedon, 1987; Scott, 1985; Fraser, 1992). Discourses operate to construct the social worlds in which we live while they form objects, including individual subjects, social relations, or practices (Foucault, 1980; Weedon, 1987), including gender and family relationships (Elizabeth, 2003).

Within the Foucauldian feminist framework, a certain discourse is likely to be dominant or hegemonic within any discursive world. Hegemonic discourses generally appear to be more commonsensical, normal, and natural than competing discourses. At the same time, the hegemonic discourse receives expression within social institutions and practices (Weedon, 1987), among other competing discourses (Weedon, 1987; Fraser, 1992). Despite its hegemonic status, a discourse is always susceptible to being

overturned and replaced by another discourse, which produces new subjectivities, a new relational order between subjectivities, or both in the process.

As Foucault (1980, [1978]1990) often argued, exercises of power are constantly met by acts of resistance. This does not mean that resistance is necessarily a conscious political act, or that it is necessarily successful (Gordon, 1994; Kondo, 1990; Elizabeth, 1992; Faith, 1994). Acts of resistance are understood as acts which may or may not be active negotiations of agents within shifting contexts of constraint (Butler, 1990, 1992; Davies, 1991; Kondo, 1990; Hekman, 1991, 1992; Moore, 1994; Elizabeth, 2003). The subject of this version of agency both acts and is acted upon, both exercises power and is subject to the exercise of power. This view of agency enables us to understand and explain the complexities of battered women's experiences of male partner violence.

In a Foucauldian framework, acts of resistance are not always effective in disrupting the exercise of power. It is also important to understand that resistance can simply be noncompliance. For example, the notion of resistance shows “the bind between the inability to leave the situation one is in and yet a strong reluctance to accept the norms of that position” (Basu, 2000, p.187). In this respect, Abu-Lughod (1990) suggested using the concept of resistance “as a diagnostic of power.” We respect everyday resistance, not to argue for the success of the resisters, but to understand the complex inter-workings of changing the structure of power (Abu-Lughod, 1990) because “where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault, 1978).

A Foucauldian framework of resistance and power not only enables us to overcome the dichotomous view of battered women as either victims or survivors, but

also provides us with a space for battered women's encounters with negative help from formal social services in the process of their help-seeking. Women as agents of their life may actively seek help from social service agencies to overcome the abuse, but they may feel further victimized by negative responses from those services. Women's further victimization from responses of formal social services in turn may reveal the ways in which battered women are inhibited from overcoming the abuse toward them by the abuser at a societal level.

Feminist standpoint theory

Epistemic privilege holds that members of marginalized groups are better positioned than members of dominant groups to recognize and describe the ways in which the world is organized due to the oppressions they experience (Collins, 1989; Hartsock, 1987; Smith, 1987). This study proceeds from the assumption that battered women serve as experts of their own lives. This view coincides with a feminist standpoint theory. A central tenet of the feminist standpoint theory supports privileging the experiences and voices of women who participate in this study over other available discourses (Harding, 1987; Hartsock, 1983; Smith, 1974, 1989).

The main focus of this study is on battered women's perspectives about their help-seeking efforts from formal social services. This study respects and emphasizes battered women's accounts over explanations offered by personnel from formal social services, including police officers, medical professionals, staff in social services agencies, legal professionals, staff in domestic violence programs, therapists, and clergy. The stories of battered women in this study challenge hegemonic discourses on battered women's help-seeking. This study supports the argument that the voices of

battered women are more legitimate sources of the realities they face than those of formal social service personnel, even if these women are not always completely aware of the ways in which various social structures affect their everyday experiences.

Ecological systems theory

All the theories of battered women's responses to domestic violence addressed in this chapter explain the responses across the individual, interpersonal, and societal levels. It seems that it is most helpful to conceptualize battered women's help-seeking as a phenomenon affected by multiple factors situated in multiple levels of the ecological system. It consists of an ecological dimension, which includes the socio-cultural domain, institutions and organizations, significant others surrounding battered women (the interpersonal level), and the women themselves (the individual level) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Edleson & Tolman, 1992).

The socio-cultural system is located within the ideological and institutional patterns of a culture. It guides perceptions, interpretations, and actions concerning social phenomena. Battered women's help-seeking should be examined within situational constraints rather than within a perspective held by members of the dominant culture.

The institutional-organizational system includes policies, procedures, programs, agencies, and professional groups designed or designated to study, control, and intervene in domestic violence. They directly or indirectly affect women's lives in a variety of ways. They have the social mandate to operationalize and influence cultural attitudes. As social organizations and agencies are increasingly involved in influencing the reality of women, the chances have also increased that they either reflect existing societal perceptions or shape them through direct interventions to help battered women.

If most of these organizations perceive the cessation of the relationship as the only way to end the violence, and battered women are not ready to leave, then women may not actively seek help from those agencies.

The interpersonal system relates to contexts and interactions in which women participate directly. It includes the abuser, the woman's children, and the significant others in her informal social network, including relatives, co-workers, and friends. The important element in this micro system is children's safety, including the abuse directed at the children and their exposure to the abuse of their mothers. Researchers have shown the effects of a woman's concern for her children's safety on her decision to stay or leave (Giles-Sims; 1983; Henderson, 1990). Significant others also interpret and react to a battered woman regarding her experience of domestic violence and her efforts at help-seeking. Reaching out to family members is one of most common ways, and often the first way, in which women seek help (Goodkind, Gillum, Bybee, & Sullivan, 2003; Gordon, 1998; Lockhart & White, 1989). The response of a woman's informal network is an important factor that leads her to seek help from formal social services.

The individual system is focused on women's perceptions, meanings, and actions regarding their help-seeking. A woman's problem recognition and her readiness to change are constructed through a shift from self-blame and a self-perception as victim to self-acceptance (Peled, et al., 2000). It requires a woman to assess her situation, including her safety, her children's safety, and available resources.

Theoretical Framework for This Study

Women's readiness model, especially the turning point model, is adopted as the main theoretical framework for this study, with the integration of ecological systems

theory, survivor theory, and feminist standpoint theory. The women's readiness model enables this study to explain battered women's help-seeking from formal social services in the process of change throughout their relationships with their abusers. The ecological systems theory helps to frame women's help-seeking from formal social services across the individual, interpersonal, and societal levels. The survivor theory enables this study to focus on women's active help-seeking in the midst of their continued victimization. The feminist standpoint theory allows this study to shift the focus from a unitary measurement of the effectiveness of formal social services to women's perceptions of the helpfulness of those services.

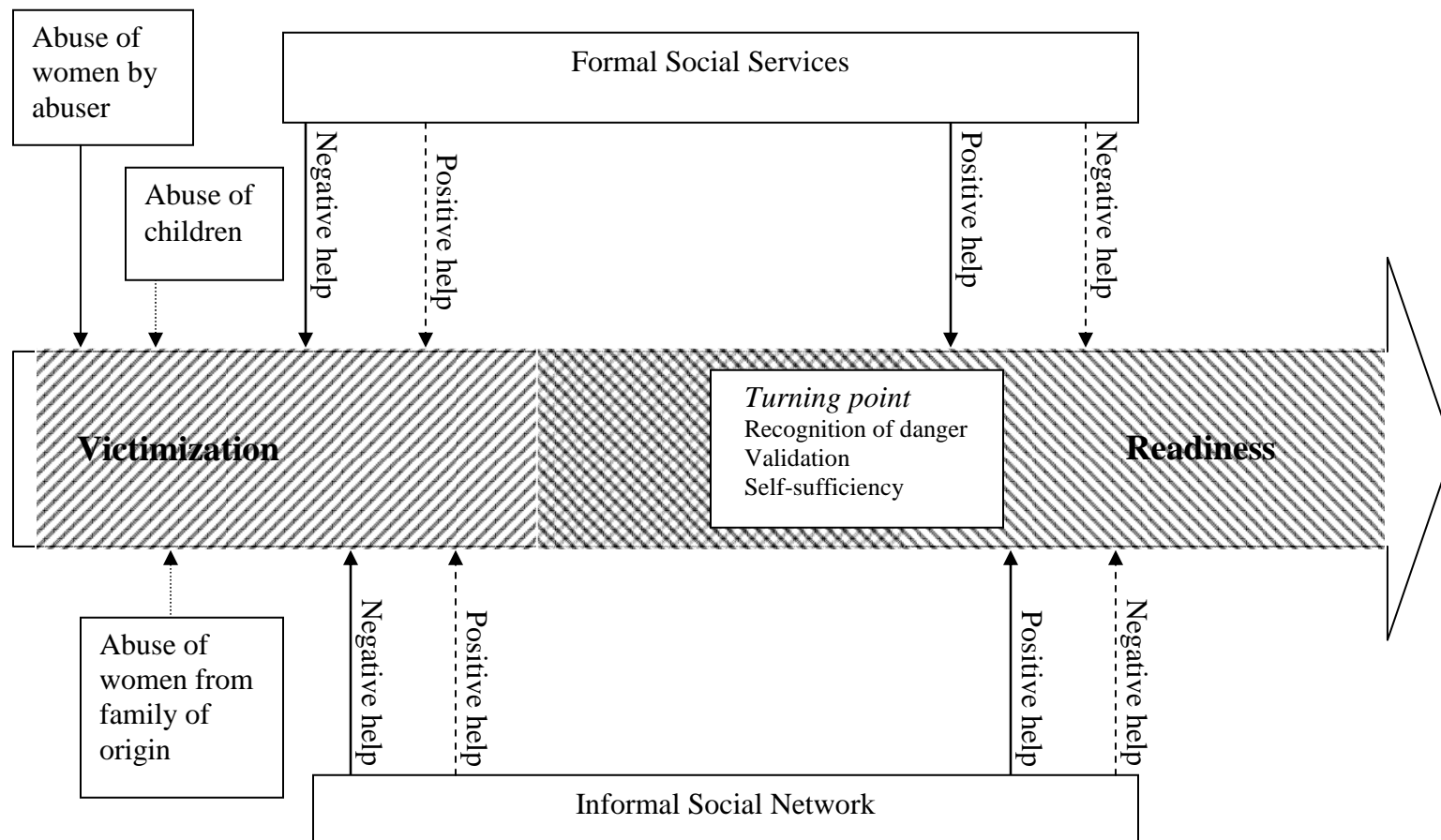
A Conceptual Model for This Study

A conceptual model for battered women's help-seeking from formal social services is illustrated in Figure 1. This conceptual model explains battered women's help-seeking from formal social services in the process of the transition from victimization to readiness or survival throughout their relationships with abusive partners. The women's turning point is included in the individual level and located on the continuum of victimization and readiness. Abuse of children, including direct abuse by the abuser and exposure to the abuse of their mothers, is considered to be a part of women's victimization. Women's experiences of abuse in their families of origin and by abusers are also included as a part of the women's victimization. Together, women's experiences of abuse and abuse of their children are included in the interpersonal system. Women's informal social networks are also a part of the interpersonal system. Responses from women's informal social network members can be either positive or negative, depending on how women perceived them. Formal social services are located

in the institutional-organizational system. Helpfulness of formal social services, either positive or negative, is constructed by women's perceptions of responses from formal social services.

Eisikovits, Buchbinder, & Mor (1998) define the "turning point" as "1) the culmination of an inner process by which a battered woman switches from living with violence to a rejection of violence and an unwillingness to continue to live with it, 2) the woman's public acknowledgment of the violence and open search for ways to curb it, and 3) the woman's confrontation of her partner about her unwillingness to tolerate the violence and her involvement with formal organizations specializing in domestic abuse."

Figure 1. A conceptual model for battered women's help-seeking



* arrows with solid line: affecting **arrows with dotted line: not affecting

Research Questions

To better serve battered women's diverse, specific, and timely needs, service providers, policy makers, and researchers need to understand their evolving needs and changes in help-seeking over time, including factors that contribute to these changes. For this purpose, this study conceptualizes “help,” and “battered women's help-seeking strategies” from formal social services and also constructs a conceptual (theoretical) model for battered women's help-seeking from formal social services.

To achieve specific aims of the study, research questions include:

1. What are the kinds of abuse battered women experienced throughout the relationship with their abusive partner?
2. What kinds of formal service responses did battered women perceive as helpful or unhelpful? What other kinds of expectations did they have?
3. What kinds of help-seeking strategies did battered women use in the process of living with the abuser and escaping from the abuse?
4. What are the patterns of distinctive changes in battered women's help-seeking from formal social services?
5. What contributed to or promoted these distinctive changes? What constructed the “turning point” from victimization to readiness?
 - 5-1. How did battered women's recognitions on the abuse (assessment of the situation) change over time?
 - 5-2. How did battered women's awareness of the problem change over time?

5-3. What kinds of informal support did battered women perceive as positive or negative? How did their perceptions of the helpfulness of informal support change over time?

Chapter 4: Methods

The research method used in this study is a qualitative data analysis based on data collected for the LINK Project at the Minnesota Center against Violence and Abuse (MINCAVA). The original research project was designed to gather in-depth data from women who had been in abusive relationships at least three years prior to the interviews. Repeated, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with twelve women who had experienced domestic violence. The women participated in at least two interviews each. The data gathered from the interviews produced sufficient depth and detail to be utilized for the original research project and this study. Between two and five interview sessions were conducted with each of the twelve battered women. The data was tape recorded and transcribed. The grounded theory method was used to analyze the data.

Data Description

Sampling

To achieve research goals, specific criteria for sampling were adopted and sampling was conducted until the data reached the saturation point. A woman was included in the research if she met the following criteria: a) self-identified as having previously been in an abusive relationship, b) was not currently in an abusive relationship, c) had at least one child who was at least 13 years old at the time of the interview and who was living in the home at the time of the abuse, and d) had gained some temporal and emotional distance from the abuse, which might allow her to be more reflective during the interviews.

The research team recruited study participants through several domestic violence and victim advocacy programs less than 90 miles from a university campus in a Midwestern metropolitan area. The research team contacted agencies in the target area by phone and sent them information about the research project. Women who were interested in participating in the study either called the interviewers directly or provided written permission for the agency to release information to the research team. One of the two interviewers called each woman and explained the study over the phone, then arranged a time to interview her if she fit the criteria and was still interested. Only the two interviewers knew the women's full names and contact information.

Participants

Demographic information of the twelve women is shown in Table 1. At the time of the interviews, the women ranged in age from 31 to 59 years old. They had been in relationships with abusive boyfriends or husbands for 3 to 37 years. Most of the women had been out of their abusive relationships for at least five years and none were in an abusive relationship at the time of the interviews.

Seven of the women were divorced or separated from their abusive partner at the time of the interviews. Another four women had divorced and were remarried at the time of the interviews. One woman was still married to her abusive husband, but the abuse had stopped.

The women had three children on average, with a range from one to four. The children's ages ranged from one year to 37 years, with the vast majority in their teens and twenties at the time of interviews. Most children were younger than twelve years old at the time of the abuse, including several children who were infants. While all of

the children were the woman's biological children, at least one of the children was not the biological child of her abusive partner in nine of the twelve cases.

Among the twelve women, eight of the women were European American, two were Native American, one was African American, and one was Jewish American. All of the women had completed high school. Most of the women had at least some post-secondary education, and four had a bachelor's degree or higher level of education at the time of the interviews. Most of the women worked full-time, and their annual household income ranged from \$12,000 to \$100,000 at the time of the interviews. For most of the women, the income reported at the time of the interviews was higher than their income when they were still in the abusive relationships. The five married women reported higher household incomes than the single and divorced women, due largely to the income of their spouses.

Table 1. Participant Demographics (At the time of the interviews)

ID#	Age	Ethnic Identity	Former Partner	Years of Relationship	Children Girls/Boys	Marital Status	Education Completed	Housing Situation	Employment (Last full year)	Annual Household Income
F01	50	European American	M01	7	1 /2	Divorced	MA	Own house	Part-time	35,000
F02	47	European American	M02	23	1 /1	Divorced	AA	Own house	Mix part/full	21,000
F05	49	Jewish American	M05	18	0 /1	Divorced	JD	Rent apt.	Mix part/full	15,000
F06	36	African American	M06	7	1 /1	Re-married	BA	Own house	Full-time	70,000
F10	59	European American	M10	37	3 /2	Married	HS	Rent apt.	Part-time	50,000
F11	43	European American	M11	9	2 /1	Re-married	HS	Own house	Full-time	54,000
F12	40	European American	M12	12	2 /2	Divorced	AA	Own house	Mix part/full	23,000
F13	42	Native American	M13	8	1 /3	Divorced	HS	Own house	Mix part/full	18,000
F15	51	European American	M15	12	1 /3	Re-married	HS	Own house	Full-time	100,000
F19	31	European American	M19	3	0 /1	Divorced	HS	Rent apt.	Part-time	22,000
F22	48	Native American	M22	18	3 /1	Re-married	HS	Own house	Mix part/full	90,000
F25	40	European American	M25	4	2 /3	Divorced	HS	Transition	Unemployed /SSDI	12,000

Data Collection Methods

Repeated, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used to collect the data for this research. The interview guide and the interview procedure were developed by one of the principal investigators of the research project. Repeated, semi-structured, in-depth interviews allowed the researchers to gather good quality data, in terms of breadth and depth, regarding battered women's experience of abuse, their children's exposure to domestic violence, their help-seeking from informal and formal help sources, and their experience with their family of origin. Two doctoral level students, research assistants for the research project at that time, conducted all of the interviews. Each of the twelve women was interviewed between two and four times, depending on how the interview went. Each interview lasted approximately two hours and was tape recorded with the permission of each woman. Each woman chose the location of the interview. An informed consent procedure was conducted and completed by obtaining each woman's signature at the beginning of the first session of the interviews. A cash gift of \$20.00 was provided to the woman after each interview, up to \$80.00 total, regardless of the length of the interview.

An interview guide was used for all of the interviews. The Link Research Project Face to Face Interview Guide was used as the interview guide which was developed by Beeman, Edleson, and Hagemester (1999). A summary of the interview guide is shown in Appendix A. The interview guide was developed for the interviewers to use as a reference, but it was meant to be used in a flexible way. The interview guide enabled each interviewer to be focused while they followed the interviewee's stories,

but to collect all of the necessary stories from interviewees in the areas of interest to the research project.

The guide included sample interview questions regarding the specific areas of research interest and basic information, such as the couple's relationship, the type, duration, frequency, and severity of abuse of the women, the children's exposure to abuse, specific and typical incidents of the abuse, their help-seeking efforts from informal and formal help sources, and their experience with their families of origin. The question regarding each woman's experience with her family of origin included her experiences with abuse and formal social services during her childhood.

Specific incidents of the abuse of women included the first, worst, and most recent incidents. Questions also included typical incidents of the women's abuse. Asking the interviewees about the three specific incidents of the abuse and other typical incidents of the abuse was a data collection strategy that allowed us to collect a full range of specific memories from each woman. While each woman identified her incidents of abuse, she tended to recollect every detail of all the incidents that she had experienced. If the incidents were not identified as one of the specific incidents of abuse, they were included as typical incidents of the abuse. Data collection based on target incidents has been used in previous research and recommended for future studies (Bowker, 1984, 1986; Cluss, et al, 2006).

Questions regarding each woman's involvement with her informal social network and formal social services were asked following the description of each incident of abuse. Informal social network members included friends, family members, neighbors, and co-workers and formal social services included police, medical services,

child protection services, domestic violence programs, legal services, chemical dependency programs, counseling, clergy, and other community social service agencies. Each woman was asked if she had ever asked for help from any informal social network members or formal social services, the kinds of responses of informal social network members or formal social services, and how she evaluated their responses in terms of satisfaction or helpfulness.

All interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of the participants. The interviewers wrote brief field notes at the completion of each interview session. The field notes included a description of the interview setting, observations about the woman's level of comfort in telling her stories, comments on the interview, and the interviewers' feelings.

Tape-recorded interviews were transcribed by two trained transcribers after each interview session was finished. For the confidentiality, anonymity, and safety of the interviewees, the interviewers removed all identifying information and names from the transcripts.

Data Analysis

The data was prepared for analysis, transcribed in an MS Word format and transferred to The Ethnograph v5.07, a software program that aids in the coding and analysis of text-based data. The Ethnograph software formatted the files with large margins for coding and numbered each line of the transcript. The transcribed interviews resulted in approximately 1300 regular (8.5x11", double-spaced) pages of textual data (108 pages on average per interview, with a range of 75 to 200 pages) (Hagemeister, 2002).

Grounded theory and analytic induction are methods used for the analysis of data. First, the grounded theory method was used to conceptualize core concepts, such as “help” and “help-seeking strategies.” The grounded theory method was also used in the initial stage of constructing a model for battered women’s help-seeking from formal social services. Grounded theory is an especially useful method for developing sensitizing concepts and is appropriate for building theories (Gilgun, 2001). Sensitizing concepts, different from definitive concepts, provide a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances (Blumer, 1986). The purpose of sensitizing concepts is to suggest directions in which to look. Sensitizing concepts do not have fixed meanings or benchmarks (Gilgun, 2001) but often become core concepts, which serve the important purpose of organizing findings (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In analysis, a set of empirical instances are identified, compared, and then named (or coded) as a concept. The researcher looks at the data, finding definitions and dimensions of the categories and concepts while she immerses herself in the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). New findings are incorporated to build a theory. Once a vague structure of a model (a hypothesis) is developed from the data, the analytic induction method is used to modify hypotheses, using negative case analysis and falsification to fit the findings until the cases are no longer adding new dimensions to the existing theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) called this phenomenon theoretical saturation (Gilgun, 2001). Analytic induction is used both to build and test the theory, whereas grounded theory is a method appropriate for building, but not testing, theories (Gilgun, 2001).

I conducted an analysis of the data in multiple stages. I printed out the transcripts with line numbers from the Ethnograph program for analytical reading and coding. After repeatedly reading all of the transcripts, I developed a set of preliminary coding categories based on sensitizing concepts in the literature and theoretical frameworks, questions from the interview guide, and the transcribed interview texts. This initial set of codes was open to revision and reformation. I reread each interview transcript and highlighted relevant text passages using the initial codes. Coded segments of text can overlap or be nested within one another. Revision to the coding schema was made on an ongoing basis as new codes were added and thematic patterns emerged. The list of codes was applied to all twelve cases, including cases that had previously been coded. I then examined the data for saturation and identified thematic trends. Saturation occurs when no new information emerges from the data as additional cases are coded (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). No new themes regarding “help,” “help-seeking strategies,” and “women’s readiness” emerged after the coding of the 7th case. Another trained doctoral student was involved in the coding procedure in order to achieve trustworthiness and to maximize the credibility of the findings through triangulation. Data matrices were developed after the completion of the coding procedure to help the analysis of the data and to provide visual representation of the data (Table 2). To construct a conceptual model for battered women’s help-seeking from formal social services, I developed data matrices with a final set of codes of the concepts, then conducted case comparisons of the patterns of each woman’s help-seeking from formal social services based on the developed concepts.

Five sets of codes were developed under the categories of analysis, including “battered women’s help-seeking strategies,” “help from formal social services,” “help from informal social network,” “reasons for not seeking help,” and “women’s readiness.” For “battered women’s help-seeking strategies” based on the kinds of battered women’s help-seeking efforts, five subthemes were developed, including “seeking emotional support,” “seeking information/education,” “seeking problem-solving,” “seeking resources,” and “seeking protection.” These subthemes were maintained to develop subthemes for “help from formal social services” and “help from informal social network.” “Help” from formal social services or informal social network was coded into “positive,” “negative,” and “other.” The designation of either “positive” or “negative” was determined by women’s perceptions that a response from formal social services or their informal social network was helpful or unhelpful. “Reasons for not seeking help” was coded into three subthemes: internal barriers, external barriers, and other. Codes for “women’s readiness” were developed from the women’s subjective accounts of victimization and readiness. Victimization reflects the battered women’s stay in the status quo because of the effects of abuse that they experienced by the abuser and of negative responses of informal social network and formal social services. Readiness reflects all of MINCAVA battered women’s attempts against the status quo toward a violence free status. Subthemes of ‘turning point’ were developed to understand the ways in which it is constructed and to trace the women’s transitions from victimization to readiness.

Table 2 Battered women's help-seeking and their readiness

Category	Themes		Definition
Help-seeking strategy	Seeking emotional support		Strategies used to seek emotional support
	Seeking information/education		Strategies used to seek information or education
	Seeking problem-solving		Strategies used to solve the health or mental health problems from the effect of abuse
	Seeking resources		Strategies used to get resources
	Seeking protection		Strategies used for safety or separation
Help from formal social services	Positive	Emotional support	Formal social services responses women perceived as positive for their emotional state.
		Information/education	Formal social services responses provided information or education and women perceived as positive.
		Problem-solving	Formal social services responses that helped women recover from physical or mental problems including the effects of the abuse.
		Resources	Formal social services provided women with resources and women perceived them as positive.
		Protection	Formal social services that women perceived as positive successfully provided safety to women.
	Negative	Emotional support	Formal social services failed to provide emotional support
		Information/education	Formal social services failed to provide information or education
		Problem-solving	Formal social services failed to help women recover from health or mental health problems including the effects of the abuse
		Resources	Formal social services failed to provide resources
		Protection	Formal social services failed to provide safety
	Other expectations		Women's expectations other than positive or negative responses from formal social services.
Help from informal social network	Positive	Emotional support	Informal social network responses that supported women's emotional needs
		Information/education	Informal social network responses that informed or educated the women
		Resources	Informal social network responses provided women with resources
		Protection	Informal social network responses provided safety for the women
	Negative	Emotional support	Informal social network responses failed to meet the women's emotional

		needs
	Information/education	Informal social network responses failed to provide information or education
	Resources	Informal social network responses failed to provide women with resources
	Protection	Informal social network responses failed to protect women from the abuse or abuser
	Other expectations	Women's expectations other than positive or negative responses from informal social networks.
Reasons for not seeking help	Internal barriers	Women's reasons for not seeking help in their personal level.
	External barriers	Women's reasons for not seeking help in the societal level.
Women's readiness	Victimization/status quo	Women's expressions of unwillingness of change the situation because of the effects of their victimization from the abuser or because of negative responses from informal social networks or formal social services.
	Turing point	Women's expressions of willingness to change the situation, including, but not limited to, their decision to end the abuse.
	Maintenance of change	Women's attempts to maintain the changes after the abuse ended.

Study Limitations

This study included only battered women who contacted formal social services at least once during the abuse. The results of this study did not reflect the experiences of battered women who had never contacted formal social services. However, as long as the goal of this study is to conceptualize “help” and “battered women’s help-seeking strategies,” and to build a conceptual model for battered women’s help-seeking from formal social services, this limitation can be considered a strength of the study.

Although battered women who have never contacted formal social services might tell us completely different stories, the negative impact of this limitation can be reduced by comparing patterns of battered women’s reactions after they contacted formal social services with their reactions before this contact.

Another possible limitation of this study is that, although the data contains all the necessary information for this study, I had limited contact with the interviewees. I could not access live interactions between the interviewers and interviewees, and I was not be able to consider non-verbal expressions of the interviewees. In order to reduce the impact of this limitation, I repeatedly listened to the audio-taped interviews and referred to the field notes which the interviewers had written after each interview session.

Chapter 5. Experiences of Abuse

This chapter develops an understanding of battered women's help-seeking from formal social services in the context of their victimization, including the abuse directed at them by the abusers, the abuse of their children, and their experiences of abuse from their families of origin. Women in this study experienced all types of abuse, including verbal, emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, and controlling by their partners and families of origin. Children of these women also experienced this range of abuse by the abusers and were exposed to the abuse directed at their mothers.

Abuse Directed to Women

Throughout the relationship, the abuse became more frequent and severe. Toward the end of the relationship, the women tended to experience all types of abuse almost daily. Almost all of the women in this study recalled their experience of abuse at the end of the relationship as, "It was a daily thing." Verbal abuse tended to start at the beginning of the relationship, followed by emotional abuse, both types of abuse that hurt the women's feelings. The abuse tended to progress to psychological, physical, and sexual abuse and controlling behavior as her relationship with the abuser went on. The specific examples of the abuse that the women in this study experienced are summarized in Appendix B.

Verbal abuse included yelling and swearing. F02's abusive partner had temper tantrums, and she was a target for him to release it. Like she said, "At midnight he would [wake] me up in the middle of the night and start yelling about his job and about family." That was how he ended the day. F22's partner constantly used cuss words and swear words.

Emotional abuse included all kinds of blame, name-calling, isolation, and the silent treatment. The abuser criticized her housework, parenting, appearance or personality, and blamed her for his problems or for her childhood experiences of abuse. Anything served as a reason for him to blame her.

Nothing I ever did was good. He told me that I was fat and ugly and lazy...that I was a terrible mother and whatever I did with the kids was wrong. (F22)

He would also call her or her family of origin names. For example, F19 was exposed to his name calling of her family of origin. There existed a racial conflict between her family and him, and he used it against her.

I mean he, he would um, he would, you know, like, wouldn't call me names, but my family - he's Black and I'm White, and my family's White. And so he would use that against me. That I was you know, um, just use, just that in itself, use that against me...and also knowing that I wasn't having family support at that time. (F19)

Isolation and the silent treatment were also ways that the abusers hurt the women's emotions. F22 had lived in the country for about three years with her infant children and had no means of transportation. She was completely isolated at that time. She said, "I was scared all the time something would happen." F19 had moved several times from one state to another. She felt physically and emotionally distant from her family of origin. Her abusive partner prohibited her from contacting informal social network members, including her family of origin.

In addition, when F22's abusive partner was in the Navy, she was left alone with her son while he was out at sea. When he came back, he did not say "a word" to her. F12 also talked about her experience of the silent treatment.

I wasn't working. I wasn't helping with the family...um...he would ignore me, like I wasn't even there. If he was mad at me, he would do the rejection type

things...um...ignore me. (F12)

Psychological abuse included all kinds of threats toward her. The abuser would threaten to kill himself, leave her, or hit her. The abuser would throw or hit things, letting her know that she might be next. The abuser would threaten her with weapons like a gun or a knife. For example, F02's abusive partner threw the cupboard right next to her to make her feel threatened.

The cupboard one was really a bad one. That one scared me to death 'cause it was so close and it was like, you know, it... everything kept getting closer and closer and closer. Like next time, it's going to be...you know, not within an inch... (F02)

Physical abuse included beating, kicking, choking, spanking, pushing, and chasing. The abuser would also hit her with objects or hit her while someone else threatened her with a weapon. For example, after F05 separated from her abuser, he arrived with someone who pointed a gun at her while he beat her into unconsciousness.

He came into the house with a man with a gun; didn't bother him at all that he would want something and in order to keep me under control, he had somebody stand over me with a gun. (F05)

F06's most recent incident also involved both a weapon and physical abuse after their separation. He came to the house to take some money from her to "get high." She told him that she did not have any.

He went in the kitchen and grabbed the butcher knife and saying, "I'm going to kill this Bitch" He hit me on top of the head with the knife. (F06)

The most salient characteristic of sexual abuse was that he would do things his own way. The abuser would force her into sexual activities that she did not want or would rape her. He would also avoid her and refuse sex when she wanted it. F25 provides an illustration of how marital rape happens in abusive relationships.

That was a lot, too. It...a lot of times, like when he was being abusive, like if he hit me or he hurt me, and then I'd be crying, and then he'd come...and that...that would be like his...in his mind, he was thinking he was making it up to me but I was, like oh man...he was like, well, you know I want to do this, whatever, but...and I then I'd just feel like I had to do it anyway because it might make him even more mad. (F25)

The abusers also had affairs with other women. For example, F22's partner had treated her as his "sexual object" in the beginning and in the middle of the relationship, and he had affairs with other women "all through" her marriage. At the end, it got worse.

The last three years were...he was really blatant...having intercourse in the swimming pool in front of her parents. He started getting real open with that kind of stuff, like forgetting to come home occasionally. (F22)

Controlling tended to be a major type of abuse, including his control of her whereabouts, her social gatherings, her activities, her job, and her phone use. He controlled her by restricting her mobility. He forbade her to use birth control. He took her money or refused to allow her to have money. He was also financially demanding, forcing her to pay for his stuff. He made their financial decisions by himself and blamed her for spending money without his permission. In sum, his controlling seemed to restrict her independence. The following example shows how F22 was manipulated by her partner around employment.

He was really good at creating some kind of crisis so I would have to quit my job. Any time I started to be successful, and I think that was really abusive to me emotionally because I was...could never succeed at anything. It really confused me when he told me that I had to go out and get a job and then he would control my work. If I made too much money and was enjoying my work then I couldn't work anymore. I am surprised I kept getting jobs. (F22)

The women in this study also addressed other types of abuse. The abuser took her children away from her. For example, "They were gone for three weeks, and I had no

contact with them at all (F22).” F02’s partner threatened to tell their children that they were conceived through artificial insemination even though it was a family secret. F11’s abusive partner planned to kill himself and her, although he failed to do that and she only became aware of it after the incident.

Abuse Directed to Children

In the families where a woman was abused by her partner, her children also experienced the same types of abuse by the abuser. As shown in Appendix C, the children were verbally abused through yelling.

He would yell at him (S1). I don't, I don't remember him ever calling him names. But you know, S1 would be, and M19’s very loud, but he didn't have to be. S1 was very scared. You know. (F19)

Emotional abuse tended to have the widest range. The abuser called the children names. He blamed the children for “the deterioration of the family.” He blamed the children for their appearance, and made comments like, “You are really fat....If you don’t lose some weight, no boys are ever going to date you (F22).” He made the children stay out of his sight. For example, F12’s abusive partner said to her daughter, “Get off in your bedroom so that I can’t see you and know you are even alive.” The abuser blamed the children for everything so that the children came to think that they were not good enough for him. F22’s son told her, “No matter what I do...it’s never good enough for Dad.” The abuser did not care about the children. For example, F25’s abusive partner treated their daughter, D2, as if “D2 didn’t matter to him.” She thought it was emotional abuse to her daughter. F05’s abusive partner provides an extreme example of isolation.

He'd take him to daycare at 6, go home and be with his wife....Okay? He

wouldn't pick S1 up 'til 6 at night. So he went to daycare, he went to his classes and he went back to daycare. So he never had an interaction with kids, when he was at home he was not allowed to eat at the table. He could live downstairs in the basement. (F05)

Children also experienced psychological abuse when the abuser made them feel threatened while he was driving or slammed objects. F22's two daughters were his target when she was not around. He threatened them when they attempted to wake him up by slamming the coffee mug on the table.

D2 and D3 attempted to wake their father up before I come back home from work. She (D2) tried to get him up with a cup of coffee, and he picked the coffee up and slammed it on the coffee table, and of course, coffee and parts of the mug went flying. (F22)

Physical abuse directed against children included whipping, hitting, kicking, spanking, and pushing down. The abuser harmed their bodies in other ways, such as dislocating their elbow or burning their hands. F05 believed that the abuser intentionally hurt her son's body.

One time he took him (S1) out of the tub and S1 started, you know, I was in the other room and S1 started screaming, he dislocated S1's elbow and you know, oh I picked him up and he squirmed and you know and we took him to the emergency room. (F05)

The abuser controlled the children in other ways as well. He took their money or cancelled their medical coverage so that they could not continue to see a psychiatrist. F12's second daughter once told her, after her first daughter died, that D1 taught her how to hide money from their father. It was the first time that she realized that he had been taking her children's money.

"No, I got money. Sissy taught me how to hide money from Daddy." I said, "What?" D1 taught her because M12 would take all their money. They would get money for their birthday and stuff...he would take it and go use it to go get drunk and shit. She (D2)...there was a little tiny hole in her pocket and she stuck her

fingers in there and started pulling dollars out. D1 had taught them. She had taught them how to take care of themselves and what Dad was all about. (F12)

The example shown above explains the economic condition of F12's family in addition to how M12's drinking problem affected the ways in which children of F12 were abused by the abuser. This also may show how class shapes the means of the abuse children experience.

In another way of controlling, the abuser did not allow the children to interact with their mother. For example, F11's abusive partner did not allow D1 to meet her. She said, "He physically tried to separate D1 from me. D1 could not come into the house. If I wanted to see my daughter, I had to go elsewhere to see her."

The abuser neglected the children by leaving them alone in the house while their mother was at work or by not spending money on the children. While F19 was at work, he "left a year old son alone in the house while he was getting high," and she found the son alone when she came home. F12's children could not get the necessary things, including "school pictures." Her partner said to the children, "No, you don't need that stuff." When the children needed milk, he even said, "Oh, just get them powdered milk. They don't need milk." These also show how children's experiences of abuse were shaped by class.

Table 3 summarizes the abuse directed toward the women and children by the abuser. All types of abuse aimed at the women were occurring at the same time against the children by the abuser. The next section examines the ways that children are exposed to the abuse directed toward their mothers, and how women and children are victimized again in the course of their attempts to protect one another from their abuser.

Table 3. Experience of abuse

Case	By the abuser	Abuse of children	Other issues
F01	Verbal, emotional, psychological, controlling, heavy physical abuse but not severe sexual abuse	S1 saw and heard. S1, S2, and D1 were abused by him.	He threatened her not to give her custody of the children.
F02	Verbal, emotional, psychological, controlling daily, sexual abuse was less frequent after she gained weight, no physical abuse but lots of threats to hit her	Both D1 and S1 exposed to abuse on her, verbally, emotionally, physically abused by him, D1 carried over his temper and her role, S1 became a protector but stayed away.	He threatened to kill himself. She became alcoholic and attempted to commit suicide to get help at the end.
F05	Verbal, emotional, psychological (a gun), sexual, controlling, physical abuse (beat her unconscious)	S1 exposed to abuse on her, was main target of all kinds of abuse by him including heavy physical abuse	He had a sexual identity issue.
F06	Verbal, emotional, psychological (a knife and a gun), sexual, controlling, physical abuse becoming more severe	S1 saw and heard, also saw the result of it, yelled at him to stop, called the police, hit him with his cello. D1 was young (four at the most recent incident), saw it and talked to others. S1 was a target of verbal abuse and physical abuse.	He became an alcoholic when his mother died.
F10	Verbal, emotional, psychological, controlling daily, heavy sexual and physical abuse (thought she could be killed)	D1, D2, and S1 were exposed to abuse on her but they stayed out of it. She hit S1 on the head to distract him. All of them were physically abused by him.	After twenty years of physical abuse, she finally got help from treatment.
F11	Verbal, emotional, psychological (a gun), controlling, and sexual abuse weekly, four incidents of physical abuse (started after five years)	D1, D2, and S1 were exposed to abuse on her. D1 and D2 saw and heard it, saw the results. S1 (two) also saw. No physical but emotional and psychological abuse to D1 and D2, but physically abusive twice to S1. He took S1 away from her frequently. D1 once called the police.	He was an alcoholic after his father and brother died. He got killed by the police.
F12	Verbal, emotional, psychological, sexual abuse (also had an affair), and controlling daily, first physical after five years together getting worse to choke her to death	D1, S1, and D2 saw and heard it. He verbally, emotionally abused all of them. Not heavily physical but suspected sexual abuse on daughters. He hit S1 when S1 stood up against his abuse. He took D1 and D2's money. He threatened to take children away from her.	She had been in an abusive relationship with her ex-husband. There was always a threat to kill her, the kids, and himself since four months of marriage. D1 died at ten.
F13	Verbal and controlling daily, physical abuse twice after S1 was a year old and after D1 was born, no sexual abuse	S1, S2, S3 and D1 saw and heard it.	
F15	Verbal, emotional abuse, controlling, five times of physical abuse at the end of	S1 and S2 saw and heard it. S1 was a target. All of them verbally, emotionally, physically abused and used as a tool by	He was an alcoholic.

	twelve years of relationship, heavy sexual abuse	him. She was also abusive to protect them.	
F19	Verbal, emotional, psychological abuse daily, physical abuse started when she was pregnant became more severe, sexual abuse once a month	S1 saw and heard It, used it as a tool, neglected.	He was an alcoholic and drug addicted.
F22	Verbal, emotional abuse, controlling, most times left her alone, no physical abuse, heavy sexual abuse but stopped when she looked like an adult	S1, D1, D2, D3 saw and heard it. S1 stayed away. D1 was a target of sexual abuse. D2 talked back to him. D3 called the police once. S1 and D2 were physically abused. All three daughters might have been sexually abused by him.	He sexually abused young girls.
F25	Verbal, emotional, psychological abuse, controlling daily, physical abuse once a week, sexual abuse daily	D1, D2, S1, S2, and S3 saw and heard it. Verbally, emotionally, physically abused by him.	

* D1 refers to the first daughter, and S2 refers to the second son.

Children's Exposure to the Abuse on Their Mothers

When the adult domestic violence occurred, where were the children and what did they experience? Children were exposed to the abuse in a variety of ways. The types of exposure found in this study were "eyewitnesses," "saw the aftermath," "overheard the abuse," "saw the initial part of the incident of abuse," "intervened," "participated," "experienced the aftermath," and "were victimized" (Table 4).

Children simply witnessed the incident when they were in the same room while it was occurring. As the abuse progressed, the abuser did not care whether the children were present or not. F25 said, "He didn't care about that either, and he would still hit me whether I was holding her or not." Often, the women failed to recognize if the children were present while the abuser was severely hurting them. Children were too scared to move toward their rooms and witnessed the entire incident.

D2 was talking about it and she was saying things that were like...she knew what had happened, and I said, "But D2, you were in your bed sleeping, too." She said, "Don't you remember the next day when you asked how come the couch was all wet?" I said, "Yah." She said, "I was on the couch and I saw it all and I wet because I was so scared [I] couldn't move." And it ...so I had never, for years, [I] didn't know she had witnessed that. (F15)

They would see the bruises on her or the broken things after the incidents of abuse. After the incidents happened, the children saw the bruises on their mother and asked about them. As they saw the bruises on their mother, they got scared enough to keep quiet.

D1 and D2 were there [when] the first physical abuse happened. D1 was 12 years old at that time. It happened at my house and I took them to their dad's. They saw the bruises and the next week asked me about them. The girls were living with their dad at that time... D2 was 10 years old... They were scared and kept quiet. (F11)

Table 4. Children's exposure to the women's abuse

Types of exposure	Definition	Examples
Eyewitness	The children saw the abuse toward her in the same room.	He punched and beat her up and brought a kid into the room; He choked her and stuck his fingers in her eyes and a kid saw it; a kid came into the kitchen and saw the dishwasher pushed at her; he was yelling, slamming, and pushing her when a kid was in her arms; a kid was in the same room when he was yelling and throwing things; the kids saw that he was breaking things; the kids saw that he pointed a gun at her.
Saw the aftermath	The children saw the bruises on her after the incident of abuse.	The kids saw the bruises after the incident and asked her about them. They were scared and kept quiet.
Overheard	The children heard the incident of abuse upstairs or in another room.	The kids went upstairs or in their rooms but heard him yelling. The kids heard him threatening her with a knife and hid the knife.
Saw the initial part of incident of abuse	The children tried to stay away from him during the incident of abuse.	As soon as he would start yelling at her and grabbing her, kids run away.
Intervened	The children asked him to stop.	A kid asked him to leave her alone.
Participated	The children took over her role.	A kid took over her role and became a target of his abuse.
	The children took his side and yelled at her in order not to be hurt by him.	A kid would side with him and yell at her. Otherwise, the kid would get hurt by him.
Experienced the aftermath	The women were unable to care for the children the way she wanted due to the abuse.	She would be completely withdrawn and ignore the kids after the abuse. She would be a "screaming idiot" while marital rape was going on. She felt crazy and did not want the kids to be around. Her rage would come out at the kids instead of him.
Victimized	Her disagreement of his ways of disciplining the kids caused the abuse.	She tried to be a buffer and got hurt by him. She tried to physically stop him from disciplining the kids and got hurt.
	The women hurt the children to protect them from his abuse.	She did not want the kids to get hurt, so she would yell at them to get out of the way. He would get madder at her and took it out on her.
	Children were used as pawns by the abuser to get to her.	When he was on probation, he hit a kid knowing he could not hit her. He would be meaner to the kids to get to her because he knew that was her button pusher. He used visitation to see her.
	He took (attempted to take) children from her.	He attempted to take the kids from her while she got orders for protection. He took the kids away from her not contacting her for a while.
	The children got hurt by him during incidents of abuse.	When he was beating her, a kids tried intervening and he physically harmed the kids.

They would hear him yelling at their mother in another room or upstairs. When her children heard him start to yell at her, they went upstairs or other places. F12 said, "If M12 and I were fighting, D1 would kind of take the kids upstairs or wherever so they weren't around it." (F12) However, they still heard him threatening her. For example, after F11's children heard him threatening her with a knife upstairs, they removed all the knives.

And then after a while the kids would hear it upstairs and all my knives disappeared. The kids hid them. (F11)

Children sometimes saw the initial part of the abuse and stayed away from him while the incident was happening. They had seen or heard such abuse repeatedly and they knew what might happen in the end when the violence started to escalate. They were scared enough to escape from the situation. They felt guilty for not protecting their mother and thought that they would do something next time.

He would start yelling at me or he would start grabbing at me, S1 would run, and then the next day, he'd say. "Wish I could do something. Next time I'm going to come out with a baseball bat." But he would be afraid in that because his father was so much physically larger than he was. (F22)

They would intervene by telling the abuser to stop. Growing up, sons tended to become their mother's protector. They told the abuser to leave their mother alone. F02 said, "He (S1) was the one that would say, 'Leave mom alone.'" The story of F12 shows how much children might be perpetually confused and scared.

One time I was laying on my bed and the bedroom door was like right directly by the living room and M12 came in and jumped on the bed and was laying there holding me and stuff, kissing me, and S1 went berserk, screaming, "Get off of her. You're hurting her. Get off of her." ... And I said, "What is going on? It's okay for Daddy to hug Mommy. That's okay." "No, he's hurting you...No. Get, get out of here," and he was telling his Daddy, "Get out of here. Leave her alone. You're hurting her." (He was less than 10 years old.) (F12)

Other children were forced to do something to their mother by the abuser. For example, they might take his side and be abusive to her to avoid getting hurt by the abuser. The children became as abusive as the abuser to her, and when the abuse was directed at the child, she would also start to fight back against the abuser.

She (D1) would...she would side with him. She would yell at me... umm...yes, extremely more so toward D1. Because... if she had sided with him, she was okay. If it got to be something that involved her, his anger then turned against her and she wasn't afraid to...umm...give it back to him in the same volume or... (laughing)...and name calling...and so the two of them then would start yelling and saying things, bad things to each other, so... I would interfere and then he would start yelling at me... (F02)

One woman was unable to care for her children the way she desired due to the abuse. She was completely withdrawn or feeling too crazy to care for her children. F25 felt she was going through 'her own stuff' and, when her daughter approached her, she said, "Oh, go over there."

One woman became aggressive with the children to keep "the sick system going." F22 said she became violent toward her children and expressed her rage at them.

[My] response to the violence was to be violent myself, and I had [a] surge sometimes, just rage, and it would come out at the kids instead of him, and it was awful. When the marital rape was going on and those incidents happened, the next day I'd be just a screaming idiot. (F22)

The woman got hurt when she tried to stop him from physically disciplining the children. Whenever she opposed his physical discipline, the abuser blamed her for her parenting and often ended up physically abusing her.

He believed in physical spanking and, you know, hollering and loud and...He was abusive so, you know that...the way he thought I should be raising her. He had other kids, but he didn't...he didn't raise them, but...so he felt that I should be that way with my daughter, but...I...I didn't want to be, so...it caused... that caused problems in itself... (F25)

One woman sometimes hurt her children to protect them from his abuse. She would yell at them to go back to their room or physically abuse them to distract him.

I didn't want them to get hurt, so I would yell at them to get back in the bedroom, get out of the way. Yah, very much so... There was a time when my son...I don't know if he was spitting his food out at the table or what...and I knew that was something that drove M12 just nuts...and I smacked him and then M12 was yelling at me for smacking him and it was like...what the hell happened, you know... always yelling at them to make sure... and I don't know if I kind of figured that maybe he would get more mad at me yelling at them and then take it out on me and not on them. I would say probably at least once a month...even...once a month. (F12)

The children were also used as pawns by the abuser. He abused the children because he knew that she could not tolerate it. He knew that hurting the children also hurt her, and so he abused her in this way. F12 said, "I think he would be meaner to the kids to get me because he knew ...he knew that was my button pusher...." (F12)

He was on probation at that time. Knowing that he couldn't hit me, he hit S1 instead. He made the comment, "Now he knows what it feels like to hurt...just like you do." I thought "He was using it to get to me." S1 was like 5 years old. After he quit drinking for two months, he drank heavily. He took a doll with a hard plastic head and hit him four or five times in the head with the doll. S1 was covering up his head saying "No, Daddy, no." (F11)

The abuser took the children away from her and stayed out of contact with her for a while, knowing that she might experience a great fear knowing that he could hurt them. F11 recounted that she could not contact her son when the abuser took him to the reservation. Because he was a Native American and she was not, she was not allowed access to the reservation, and he used it to abuse her. It seemed that the abusers knew that the women would be scared the most when their children were taken away from them. F12's abusive partner attempted to take the children away and succeeded after they separated.

I had orders for protection and he, a couple of times...one time he waited for me to leave to go for an appointment and came over and tried to take the kids from a babysitter, and the kids were terrified. (F12)

The children often got hurt by the abuser while he was abusing their mother. The abuse became more severe and frequent as the children grew up, and they tended to intervene more. The abuser hurt them, unintentionally or intentionally, when they tried to intervene against him abusing their mother.

I know the one time when his dad was beating me, S1 tried intervening and his dad just literally picked S1 up and physically took him away. And his dad did that several times, you know. His dad wouldn't ... did not hesitate to grab S1 or if S1 were screaming he didn't care. (F05)

The abuse toward the women got more severe and frequent as the relationship continued. Children were more frequently exposed to an escalating level of abuse toward their mothers as they grew up. Exposure to his abuse increased the likelihood that they would be directly abused by the abuser, as their tendency to try to intervene against him in order to protect their mother increased. Abuse directed at the children by the women happened more frequently when the women attempted to protect them from his abuse.

Experience of Abuse from the Family of Origin

The woman, the abuser, or both of them had experienced abuse in their families of origin (Appendix D), or were at least exposed to the father's abuse toward the mother. For example, F25's biological mother was in a very physically and emotionally abusive relationship. She said, "I had seen and heard it all the time." She recollected that it was a daily thing, and her mother ended up committing suicide. She said, "That's why, because her relationship that she was in." One or both of them experienced physical

abuse, including physical discipline. Verbal abuse was the most frequent type of abuse, and almost all of them had experienced physical abuse, including physical discipline, at least once from their parents while they were growing up. Sometimes, their siblings, relatives, step-parents, or foster parents abused them if the abuser was not one of their parents. For example, F10 was physically and emotionally abused by her oldest sister after her mother died. F22 and all of her sisters were sexually abused by an uncle. Only F02 and F06 were never physically abused in their childhood.

Conclusion

A battered woman's experience of abuse should not be understood as several repeated Incidents but as isolated incidents of abuse directed toward her only at a certain point in time. She may have resisted against her experience of abuse in her childhood. When she resisted against the abuse by her abusive partner, she might have encountered the history of abuse that he experienced throughout his lifetime, including his childhood. She became aware that the abuse directed at the children by the abuser would get worse. She found out that her children were in danger of being exposed to the abuse directed at her by the abuser. The danger would progress unless the abuse toward her was stopped.

Chapter 6. Help-seeking

In order to capture patterns of battered women's help-seeking from formal social services, this study utilized interviewing, a technique with proven effectiveness. Each woman was asked to answer the same sets of questions about four incidents of abuse directed at her by her partner, other questions regarding one incident of abuse, informal social network involvement, and formal social services involvement. Each woman identified the incidents of abuse she regarded as the first, the worst, a typical example, and the most recent. For some of the women, the worst and the most recent incidents were the same. Each incident of abuse is summarized in Appendix E. The types of informal and formal help sources that the women contacted are illustrated in Table 5.

Each woman's help-seeking from her informal social network and formal social services was included in the analysis. Informal social networks included a woman's sisters, brothers, mother, friends, co-workers, mother-in-law, neighbors, and others. The women sought help from formal social services that included police, medical, child protection, legal, domestic violence, and other services.

Table 5. Types of informal and formal help sources contacted by the women

Case\Time	At the beginning	During the middle	Toward the end	Right before separation	After separation
F01	The first Counselor (Woman-ND)		Typical <i>Her mother</i> Police (Woman)NH	The worst <i>His brother, Mother, brother, sister-in-law, sister</i> DV (Woman): advocate, support group PH, CPS (Woman) PH, Legal (Woman): advocate PH, Police (Woman) NH, Therapist (Woman) PH, Medical (DVR) PH	The most recent <i>Friend, mother, aunt</i> Medical (Woman), Police (MR), Legal (Woman): advocate
F02	The first <i>Mother-in-law</i>	Typical <i>Sister D</i>		The worst = the most recent <i>Friend L, Sister C & D</i> Police (Abuser)NH, Medical (Abuser)PH, DV(MR)PH: shelter & advocate	
F05	The first None	Typical None			The worst, the most recent <i>Friends</i> Legal (custody) NH
F06	The first <i>A cousin & her husband, her mother, step-father, his mother</i>	The worst <i>Aunt, mother, step-father</i> Police (Aunt) PH, Counselor (Woman) NH, Clergy (Aunt) ND	Typical Medical (Woman) NH-ND		The most recent <i>Friend S</i> Police (Neighbor) PH, DV(Woman): crisis line, advocate, support group PH, Legal (DVR): prosecute attorney NH
F10	The first None	Typical None	The worst Psychiatrist (Woman) NH, Clergy NH	The most recent <i>Friend R, N, A, M, another couple</i> Police (Woman) PH, Legal (PR) PH, Psychiatrist (Woman) NH, DV (Woman): women's group PH	
F11			The first, typical <i>Co-worker, neighbor</i> Medical (Woman) NH-ND	The worst <i>Friend E, V</i> City attorney (Woman) NH Clergy (Woman) NH	The most recent <i>Neighbor, Co-worker, his mother & sister</i> Police (Woman & D1) NH
F12	The first <i>Brother, friend</i>	Typical None	The first physical <i>Her mother & relatives</i> Police (Mother) NH, Couple counseling (Woman) NH	The worst His CD NH, Son's counselor NH, Counselor (Woman) PH	The most recent <i>Kid's godparents & their child</i> Police (Woman) PH, Legal (Woman) PH, DV (Woman): shelter PH, Clergy (Woman) PH

F13		The first <i>His parents</i>	The worst None	The most recent <i>Her mother, co-worker, his parents</i> Legal (Woman), Police (LR) NH, DV (LR): advocate, counseling for children, support group for her PH, CPS (Woman) NH	
F15	The first None	Typical <i>Sisters and mother</i>	The worst <i>Co-worker</i> Depression TR (Woman) ND PH, Counselor (Woman) PH, Support Group (CR)	The most recent <i>Sister</i>	
F19		The first <i>Neighbor, friend</i> Police (Neighbor) NH, DV (Woman): crisis line PH	Typical <i>His brother, neighbor, her friend</i> DV (Woman): support group PH	The worst = the most recent <i>Sister & husband, friends</i> Police (Sister) NH DV (Woman): shelter, advocate, kid's advocate, support group PH, Medical (Woman) NH, Legal (Woman) PH	
F22	The first <i>Her mother, teacher</i>	The worst <i>Her mother</i> Medical (Woman) NH-ND Clergy (Woman) NH		Counselor (Woman) PH, CD TR (CR) PH Financial assistance (Woman) NH	The most recent (two years before divorce) <i>Neighbor, friend, sister</i> Police (Woman) PH, Legal (Woman), PH, DV (Woman): safe house PH
F25	The first None		Typical, the worst Neighbor, brother, manager Police (Neighbor, manager) NH, Legal (Woman) PH	The most recent Sister, neighbor CPS (Foster mother) PH, DV (CPSR): counselor, women's group PH, CDTR (Woman) PH	
Case	At the beginning	During the middle	Toward the end	Right before separation	After separation

Incidents are indicated in the first line of each cell as the first, typical, the worst, or the most recent.
Italic types indicate the kinds of informal social networks involved.

In parentheses, the ways which the women become involved is indicated

ND: did not disclosed the abuse / PH: Positive Help / NH: Negative Help

PR: Police made referral / MR: Medical made referral / CPSR: CPS made referral / CR: Counselor made referral / LR: Legal made referral

DV: Domestic violence services / CDTR: Chemical dependency treatment program

Battered Women's Help-seeking Strategies

At the beginning of the relationship, the battered women tended not to seek help from informal social networks or formal social services following an abusive incident. They sought self-help without asking for specifics from outside.

The women had several responses at the beginning of the abuse. They 'socialized' with friends or in a community society club. They "went back to their religion." They utilized "strategies of stay away from him." Otherwise, they "dissociated" themselves from what was happening. F22 was left alone most of the time when her abuser was on the boat while in the Navy. She socialized with community members after the worst incident while she lived in the military base.

But I looked good. Boy, I looked good, and I did good things, and I was...I just...boy, I was...elected president of the Navy Wives' Club, and I went with...worked with people who were bereaved...the losses of husband and brothers and...oh, I looked good, and I dressed well, and I smiled and swam three times a week, and I had a beautiful figure, and I did my nails and I was...Everybody thought, "What a wonderful..." They didn't know... (F22)

F02 utilized strategies of staying away from her abuser to be safe. She would go "walking through the woods." If the abuser came in his car, she would "hide behind trees" just to know that "I was safe." One of the other strategies the women used was dissociation. F22 tried to dissociate herself from what was happening in her life when she was with him. She said, "I would leave my body and watch myself do things." She explained dissociation as "a tactic I learned when I was pretty young." It seems that her tactic of dissociation helped her maintain room for herself.

It served me well a lot of times because that's what, I think, umm...and there's a lot of things that maybe I don't even remember that he did to me because of that ...I mean...to the...time things got too physically, emotionally painful, I would leave. (F22)

The women sometimes involved someone in their informal social networks or formal social services, although they did not reveal their experiences of abuse. They would talk to someone in their social network or to professionals in formal social services without divulging much detail.

I was supposed to go to work that day and I called and umm...I was and I called in and told the person who I was to replace at work that I wouldn't be in, and that was a neighbor...also, and umm...I believe I told her that...I had been crying and ...kind of a real brief, "I won't be in," and "My eyes are almost swollen shut and I can't come in." (F15)

While they were involved with their abusers, the women were asked if the abuse was happening in their family, but they hid it. F12 went to the hospital when she found blood on her daughter's underwear. The medical doctor asked if she thought her daughter was being sexually abused by someone in the family.

Of course I said, "No. I don't know who would do that. She hadn't been around anybody other than her father and brothers and her brothers wouldn't do it, and oh, S1 wouldn't do that." (F12)

F19 went to a women's support group at the end of relationship, but she found it uncomfortable to talk about her experience of abuse in the group. She "did not talk that much, because mine was, to me was real devastating and real serious. It was going on right then and I hadn't left the relationship."

The types of battered women's help-seeking strategies identified by the women in this study were "seeking emotional support," "seeking information/education," "seeking problem-solving," "seeking resources," and "seeking protection." The women's help-seeking strategies from informal social networks were limited to "seeking emotional support," "seeking information," and "seeking protection," whereas all of the identified

help-seeking strategies were mobilized through formal social services. Types of battered women's help-seeking strategies are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6. Battered women's help-seeking strategies

Themes	Subthemes	
	Informal social networks	Formal social services
Seeking self-help	Stayed away from him, socialized, (dissociation)	
Contacting without disclosing the abuse	Not in great detail, hide, couldn't talk	
Seeking emotional support	Called/talked about abuse	Called the crisis line, went to a support group
Seeking information/education	Called a friend and asked about available shelters	Went to educational groups, went to services for single parents, participated in the meetings to get information, called the attorney to get informed with legal processes
Seeking problem-solving		Saw counselors, therapists, or psychiatrists, went to the hospital to get help with her depression or her drinking problem
Seeking resources		Went to a self-sufficiency program, sought financial assistance, went on welfare, searched for a place to live, went to church, went back to school, got a job
Seeking protection	Called her sister to ask for a place to stay, asked someone to call the police, asked her kids to take pictures to have them on record, asked her friends to be with her when she confronted him about abuse, took kids to relatives' places to protect them from abuse, asked friends to be part of her safety plan	Contacted an advocate, called the attorney to prosecute him, went to a shelter, called the police, got OFP, went to the hospital to take pictures to have them on record, filed a divorce

The women's help-seeking strategies for emotional support from informal social networks included "calling" one of them or "talking about the abuse." F06 "talked to one of my friends," and she called the friend "periodically about situations." The women sought information on available shelters by "calling a friend and asking" about it.

They sought protection from informal social networks in various ways, including "calling her sister to ask for a place to stay," "asking someone to call the police," "asking her children to take pictures to have them on record," "asking her friends to be with her when she would confront him about the abuse," "taking children to relatives' places to protect them from abuse," and "asking friends to be part of her safety plan."

Called my sister and asked her if she could put me up and the kids up for a couple of days. I thought that it was a weekend coming up and I couldn't do anything until Monday. (F15)

I stopped at the office and I was telling the people at the office, and there was...this guy outside...he's outside and we...need...somebody needs to call the police, and I need to go up to my apartment, check on my kids, and ...it was...it was kind of happening so fast and everything. And then I was talking to the guy in the office, and he said, "Okay. I'm going to call the police...." (F25)

The battered women's help-seeking strategies from formal social services were more diverse than those used with their informal social networks. They "called the crisis line" or would "go to a support group to seek emotional support."

I called this, I, I called a some kind of crisis line and talked to somebody about it...and I told them what had had happened and that I was pregnant...I felt like, I felt like I was kind of having a nervous breakdown or something. (F19)

Um, they (shelter), um, they had a support group there, on site in the evenings. So, um, that was for the community but they said I was welcome to go...I did go once. (F19)

To seek information/education, they would "go to educational groups," "go to

services for single parents," "participate in the meetings to get information," and "call the attorney to get informed with legal processes." F06 went to the programs for single parents and she "got all the services I could get for being a single parent...with two children." F12 went to a support group that was an "educational group. It was like the eye opener of all eye openers." She thought it was "a really good source of support" for her with "everything on that Power and Control wheel."

The battered women 'saw counselors, therapists, or psychiatrists' or 'went to the hospital to get help with their depression or their drinking problem' when seeking problem-solving. F11 took the abuser to counseling when his father and brother died, but he quit. She said, "He manipulated the therapist like, 'Oh, I can quit drinking and I can do this and I can do that.' The therapist dropped him." F06 saw a psychiatrist during the period when her son was seeing his psychiatrist. She thought, "Well, maybe I could see a psychiatrist, too." F02 went to the hospital to get help for her drinking problem two or three years before the most recent incident.

At that time, I was...I was going to (Behavioral Medicine Clinic). I had a therapist, one-on-one, so I would tell of incidents to this therapist. I was also going there for ...umm...my alcohol and ...in classes and it was like filtering.
(F02)

When seeking resources, the women would "go to a self-sufficiency program," "seek financial assistance," "go on welfare," "search for a place to live," "go to church," "go back to school," and "get a job." F12 became connected to a self-sufficiency program when her first daughter died. She continued the connection to get resources that she needed toward the end of the abusive relationship.

I got involved with the kids' Head Start program and I found out about Tri-CAP. I had gotten to know Tri-CAP somewhat before D1 died because they helped us

out...there was one lady there that was just the best. And I found out about the self-sufficiency program. I got back into school and I told him to get the fuck out, and then...the shit really got scary. (F12)

F11 went back to school to get the professional degree that she had wanted since her high school years. She contacted the college and was accepted. In addition, she "asked them for financial aid and they offered it." F11 went on welfare right after her abuser died during the most recent incident.

It was overwhelming after the incident and quit working. I went to Social Security and found out that my Social Security benefits were only \$40 less than I was bringing home. We took that summer and we healed. (F11)

To seek protection, the women would "contact an advocate," "call the attorney to prosecute him," "go to a shelter," "call the police," "get order for protection," "go to the hospital to take pictures to have them on record," and "file a divorce." After she got the order for protection, F06 explained, "I always had one, and it stayed in force." F19 said, "I had a list of shelters. And I picked the furthest one." F11 called the district attorney at the time of the second arrest and said, "What do I have to do to prosecute this guy? What do you need from me to put his ass in jail?" F12 decided to divorce him and put "my name on the list at Legal Aid." F19 went to the hospital to have her injuries examined so that the evidence would be on record. F11 called the police to report that her abuser was around the house after separation and while she was in the divorce process.

I called the police to report the guns were missing, I stayed on the phone with my daughter until the police came...I called the sergeant in Property Crimes to report that I found clues of him staying in the house. (F11)

The battered women's help-seeking strategies were diverse while they were seeking help for emotional support, information and education, problem-solving,

resources, and protection. They still sought emotional support from formal social services and protection from their informal social networks. Especially when seeking protection, the women expanded the help-seeking strategies they used with both informal social networks and formal social services. Their help-seeking strategies were also apparent in the area of problem-solving. Living with the abuser, they might have been struggling with effects of the abuse, including depression, anxiety, or chemical dependency. The women took the abuser or children to receive these services in order to get help solving their own health or mental health problems. The battered women's strategies for seeking resources were also diverse. The women connected themselves to religious organizations or self-sufficiency programs to get financial help, and they often went on welfare. They also tried to advance their careers to make a better life.

"Help" from Informal Social Networks and Formal Social Services

To conceptualize the type of "help" that the battered women sought specifically from formal social services, "positive help" from their informal social networks and formal social services were compared. "Help" is conceptualized based on the women's account of positive responses of informal social networks and formal social services. First, "help" sought from both informal social networks and formal social services were illustrated. Second, the "help" the women sought uniquely from formal social services were explained.

Themes found in the "battered women's help-seeking strategies" were used to conceptualize "help" themes such as "emotional support," "information/education," "problem-solving," "resource," and "protection." Subthemes were identified under each category of themes for both the informal social network and formal social services. Subthemes within each theme for formal social services were compared to those for the informal social network. Kinds of positive help from informal social network and formal social services are illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7. Positive help from informal social networks and formal social services

Themes	Subthemes		
	Both	Formal social services	Informal social networks
Emotional support	Listened, cared, showed empathy, valued her self-determination, encouraged her	Helped her feel safe to talk about abuse	
Information /Education	Validated that it was abuse, provided information on other social services	Provided a safety plan, validate that the abuse was not her fault, validated that she had other options	
Problem -solving		Helped her with health/mental health problems	
Resources	Provided financial assistance, provided transportation	Provided housing, food, and medication; helped her get GED/professional degree, provided services for kids, mobilized her informal network	Gave her self-help materials
Protection	Provided a place to stay, helped her stay away from him, stopped further abuse, confronted him, helped her file evidence of abuse	Arrested him, gave her OFP, forced him to follow legal decisions	Called the police for her, kept kids safe, kept her whereabouts confidential, became part of her safety plan
Other		Worked together with other social services, shared a sense of humor, connected her to culturally sensitive services	

'Help' from both informal social networks and formal social services

Common subthemes found under "emotional support" for both the informal social network and formal social services were "listened," "cared," "showed empathy," "valued their self-determination," and "gave encouragement." Under "information/education," subthemes that were common to seeking help from both the informal social network and formal social services included "validated that it was abuse," and "provided information on other social services." "Providing financial assistance" and "providing transportation" were identified as subthemes of positive help that the women sought from both informal social networks and formal social services for "resources." Finally subthemes identified under seeking "protection" included "provided a place to stay," "helped her stay away from him," "stopped further abuse," "confronted him," and "helped her file evidence of abuse."

The women seeking help for emotional support considered it positive help that they "listened." The women did not always want to take action or talk in detail about what had happened. Instead, they wanted to have someone just listen to them so they could let their hard emotions out. After she talked to her sister after one typical incident of abuse, F02 said, "as long as I had somebody that I could let it out to... that helped" (F02). F15 told a similar story regarding her talking to her sisters and mother after a typical incident of abuse.

I don't know, I don't think, I really went into great detail about any abuse, but he was abusive and...don't think it was really like he would beat me up and then the following day I would call and say, "Mom, this is what happened," or you know, it was just kind of, "I'm really depressed today,"...that kind of thing. (F15)

The women sought the same help from the domestic violence (DV) hotline. F19

called the number after the first physical abuse incident. It was less than two years before she left him, but she was not ready to take any other action. She called the hot line and cried.

You know, they were trying to console me, or whatever.....They were very supportive and they wanted me, you know, to get a bag packed and, and um, and leave. And I couldn't do it...Whoever I talked to, you know, was very supportive and listened to me and, you know, offered this, any support that she could that, you know, I wasn't willing to accept it at that time. I think I just wanted to cry. I did cry. I just wanted to cry. (F19)

A battered woman thought that she got positive help when she felt the person "cared." Being cared for implied that the service provider understood her feelings about being abused and her isolation. F25 reflected her experience with the legal system after the worst incident:

They (legal) were really nice there, and I guess I got that feeling somebody cared and that my safety was important, and they understood that....They understood how I was feeling and what I was going through. I did feel like...isolated like I was the only one. (F25)

It also included members of her informal network caring about her personal tastes. F02's sister D brought her favorite drink to the shelter when she stayed in the shelter after the worst incident of abuse which was also the most recent one for her.

One of my big things in life is Pepsi. I, Pepsi (laughing) and they (shelter) have juice...we had juices and water and stuff like that. But we don't buy pop for the residents, and so she's going, "I'm going to bring you some pop." (F02)

She recounted that her sister shared "a real strong mental and physical" bond with her. She continued, "If we could believe in sixth sense, D and I have it." Another sister of F02 sent a "love you" card every single day of her forty-five day stay in the shelter. While other women in the shelter received bills in the mail, she got "the most beautiful cards from her sister. It made her feeling cared and special." (F02)

One woman reported that she sought “empathy” from her informal social network and formal social services. She often thought that only someone who knew about the domestic violence issues could understand her more deeply. If someone shared the experience of abuse, she felt much more comfortable because the person, like F06 felt from the response of her friend after the most recent incident of abuse because she “was more able to empathize with her.” When F06 started to engage with formal social services at the end of her abusive relationship after the most recent incident had happened, she met two different advocates and differentiated their responses.

The advocate at P (DV), I just felt a sense of, the P advocate understood more where I was coming from. She was not so much sympathetic, but she could say things in a sense that, you know, make me feel good about myself and not that I was actually the bad person. (F06)

“Encouragement” from both her informal social network and formal social services tended to keep one woman moving forward to make a change. Encouragement was a mixture of a suggestion, a compliment, and an expression of hope. When F02 met her therapist after she had been in a shelter, she complained about the environment of the shelter. The therapist asked her to stay there for a couple more days.

My therapist then wanted me to come in that Monday, and they (shelter) drove me out there and I got to talk to her, and she’s a very professional lady.....She put up her hands and she went on, she goes, “Thank God, you’re finally out of that home...”It was 90 some degrees. We have no air conditioning (at the shelter). And it’s like... “I can’t stay (at the shelter). I have to be with my children, and ...but I don’t want to go back,” and she said, “Just give it a couple of days.” She said, “Will you do it for me....and do it for you and just give it a couple days and go to a couple of your support groups and talk to these other women,” and I said, “Okay, I’ll give it until Friday,” and then she wanted to see me again. (F02)

F22 saw a counselor while she was working on her drinking problem after the worst incident of abuse. One of her friends whom she met in the hospital gave her self-

help material to get over the chemical dependency, and she was practicing it. The counselor saw the change in her and encouraged her to keep doing it.

The counselor could see a visible change in me after reading this material and understanding the dynamics that alcoholism played in the relationship and how it affected me, and she said, "I don't know what you're doing in that bathtub, but keep doing it," (laughter). And so, she says, "You look...you look more at peace now." (F22)

When F12 went to court because of a custody battle at the end of relationship after the abuser had moved out, her son told her to win so that he would not have to see his father. She interpreted the message from her son as encouragement which moved her forward to make a change with confidence.

I don't ever want to go see him again, and when you go to court, I hope you win because I don't ever want to go. (F12)

The subtheme, "valued her self-determination," is closely related to not placing blame on the woman for the abuse or for staying. One woman perceived help as positive when service providers or someone in her informal network valued her self-determination. F19's counselor and friend did not tell her to leave or blame her for staying with the abuser, when she was involved in a women's group at the end of the relationship. She recollected her friend's response was the most helpful over those of other help sources.

She didn't tell me to leave the relationship. She told me, you know, listened to me and told me basically, when I was ready that I would do it. Because I was always you know, beating myself up about why I wouldn't leave. And umm, I just remember her saying, you know, to this day that you will when you are ready to. (F19)

She (one of F19's friends) was not like a person that is like I'm sorry you are going through this and cry on my shoulder type of person but that I was able to...she was just a person that I could say it to and I didn't get judged by it. And she never told me to leave....she didn't like visit, but she always, she was in my

life. (F19)

What the women really wanted was to have their self-determination respected whether she decided to stay or to leave. F15 mentioned, "It really goes along with, I guess, supporting the woman, not being judgmental and blaming her or having her feel like she's being blamed" (F15).

Subthemes under "information/education" included "validated that it was abuse" and "provided information on other social services." Validation that the woman was experiencing abuse was accomplished in different ways. F19 thought it was positive help when service providers explained about the abuse and its effects on her. She learned what was domestic violence from service providers when she got involved with the DV shelter after the most recent incident of abuse.

They did have talk about the cycle of violence....they had power and control wheel. And they had us highlight all the areas that we had been victimized by. They gave me that education....because that was the first time I ever seen all the abuse that I had been through in my lifetime. (F19)

When she was involved with the shelter after the most recent incident, F02 found it most helpful that an advocate from the shelter explained her drinking problem in relation to the impact of the abuse she had been experiencing. It seemed that realizing that the abuse was the cause of her drinking problem helped her to escape from feeling guilty.

She (advocate from shelter) made abuse clear to me and in a non-judgmental way because when I went in there, I was suffering from the alcohol and that, too. And...she made me feel it's...it's not you, you are not bad. This is part of being abused, so I think she....she kind of opened my eyes....You are okay, and it's like no....I'm drinking and I'm crazy and I'm fat and....and all this stuff. No, you're not (laughing). You are okay. You will be okay, you know. You are safe, so... (F02)

F02 sought help for "validation" that he was abusive. For example, thinking back, F02 wished her mother-in-law would have realized that his behavior was abusive and talked to her about it after the first incident of abuse.

Well, I guess I wish she (his mother) would have realized it more as abuse and maybe talked to me as...umm...let's see what we can do, or if she would have admitted that this has to be hard on you and things, you know, should...this shouldn't be happening, but it was more like, it's just another incident...you know it's gone now we'll forget it and go on. (F02)

Validation from formal social service providers that he was an abuser helped the women move beyond the need to prove that they had been abused and accessed further services. F22 sought further services after her counselor validated that her partner was abusive.

She (counselor) would tell me her observations about what she saw in this behavior. Umm...it was really interesting because he was...mouth was saying something and his body was saying the opposite and, you know, and then we talked about the abuse, umm...that her being supportive of me to be able to kind of break through the silence and get it out in the open. (F22)

F25's child protection workers witnessed the aftermath of the most recent incident of abuse on her body. She did not need to prove that she had been abused by him. CPS workers arranged other social services for her.

They (CPS) set up a court date and it was like soon after and when I went there, I was all full of bruises and black marks, and they seen that, and they said, you know, "What's going on? What happened to your house?" and so...then I think with all the workers and everybody got more involved.... (F25)

In addition to validation, the women sought information on other social services. They usually got the information from the police after they were involved in an incident. The police tended to give them a card which listed the places that the battered women could call.

They (police) gave me that card and told me some people I could call....They told me that there was some women's support groups whose number was on the card they gave me, and some shelters....giving me the information they gave because I didn't tell anybody in school about what I was going through. (F06)

Sometimes they received information from other formal social services, including shelters, women's groups, churches, and hospitals. In rare cases, the women also got information about other social services from their informal social networks.

It was from staff and other people that were there. They (hospital for her CD treatment) had people come in and give us little talks about services, that...different services, that were available and the we...we were suppose to pick the ones that we were comfortable with going to. (F22)

She (friend from hospital) was the one who told me about the victim services and about safe housing and that I should call and she said, "If you, you know, are really that scared," and I was. I was petrified. S3 was petrified. We didn't know if he was coming back, you know, or if he would be angry enough to come back and harm us. (F22)

Other than when the women found information about necessary resources for themselves, they found it helpful when formal social service providers gave information on places to find materials for their children. It seemed that, since the living situation of the women and their children dramatically changed when they left the abuser, information on where to get material goods for their children became essential. F06 found such information helpful when she sought help from the DV program after the most recent incident of abuse.

They (women's group) were saying the concerns that they had about their children and the low self-esteem and lack of nurturing that their kids were feeling and stuff like that....they said that there was resources to get like gifts and stuff for Christmas, like toys for, and they like helped us out with food and stuff. We could go to the Salvation Army and get food, so all those resources they told me about. (F06)

Resources that the women sought from both their informal social networks and

formal social services were "financial assistance" and "transportation," although the women rarely sought resources from their informal social networks. F05's friend gave her money for her custody battle. She said, "Friends in New York donated the money to hire the attorney to pay the fee." (F05)

Financial assistance was sought usually through religious groups including churches and Catholic Charities. F12 sought financial assistance through a church after the most recent incident.

For Christmas, Thanksgiving basket at Thanksgiving time, a lot of gifts.....And as far as my bills and stuff, too....He (clergy) also offered to do financial, like budget counseling, for anyone, free, at the church, totally confidential, to make sure I was getting the help I needed, to make sure all the bills were paid and everything, and to help me set up a budget so that I could do that. (F12)

When the women left their abusers, they tended not to have transportation. The women found it a positive help when formal social services, like shelters and inpatient treatment programs, or their informal social networks provided a ride for them.

I was so happy with everything. And they (CD inpatient) even found a Native American support groups, and they'd transport me to them. (F25)

She (sister C) was a big help, like after I left the shelter and I was in the apartment. I was having a lot of financial problems, and she had her church, and it was out in B (name of the city), and in the beginning I didn't have a car, sister D and friend L would take me there and stuff like that, and through the church, she (sister C) would get me cereal. (F02)

The women sought help for from their informal social network and formal social services that included "a place to stay," "to take her stay away from him," "to stop further abuse," "to confront the abusers," and "to file evidences of abuse." F19 went to a shelter after the most recent incident of abuse and found it helpful. "They gave me a safe place to be....that there was a place for me to go and be safe." (F19) F25 found the

inpatient treatment program for chemical dependency was helpful because it provided a safe place free from her abuser.

I lived there (CD inpatient) for 30 days and ...umm...it ...it reallyit took my mind off of...and I was focusing on myself and not drinking and stuff. It just really took my mind off of everything, and like I said, it was kind of like a freedom. I was...I was having a good time in there. I was...you know, I had no worries. I had no worries. I could focus on myself and my issues. (F25)

In cases in which a shelter was not available, one woman asked for a place to stay from her informal social network. Most women in this study who used shelter services tended to stay at the houses of their informal network members for a few days before they entered the shelter. It seemed that shelters were not usually available on weekends or holidays, and they needed time to adjust to get into the shelters. F11 stayed at her friends' houses after the worst incident of abuse, before she entered a shelter.

FR1 was the one I stayed with the first couple of days. FR2 was the one I stayed with the last couple of days.....FR1 was very understanding, very supportive. We had made part of our protection plan was that we would help each other....should the need arise....She was the first person I thought of calling. And she was there, saying, "Okay, come on over."....She was there for everything I needed that day.....FR2 was there and she was supportive. (F11)

Other than a place to stay away from her abuser, the woman needed a break from his abuse. She found it helpful when a member of her informal social network took her into their house or another safe place and allowed her to rest. She also felt it was helpful when formal social services understood that she was scared of her abuser and helped her to stay away from him. F19 found such a response helpful when she was in the courthouse after the most recent incident of abuse.

I was afraid to appear (in the court room with him). So, um, they really you know, worked with me. Um, I did go to court but I didn't have to appear. I just was in this, you know, in the court house, in the, in their offices (while the trial was going on)....it, at that time it was really important that I didn't look at him or that

he couldn't see me. (F19)

The women sought help "stopping a specific incident of abuse" from both their informal social networks and formal social services, especially from the police. F19 found that the police involvement was helpful in stopping the incident at the point when the police arrived.

I: Do you think the police's knock at the door stopped any further violence that could have continued?

R: Yah. Definitely. (F19)

To stop the specific incidents, this woman used her informal social network more, including her brothers, aunt, and mother-in-law. They sometimes tried to be a buffer or they were able to stop the abuse by just showing up in the situation where it was happening.

His one brother, you know, would wait with me while you know, his brother was out getting high. And he'd be well, just as worried about him as I was. But when it came to the physical part, you know, I would say that he tried to distract him.....One other time when he had pushed me up against the wall his one brother, um stopped, you know, got him away from me. (F19)

My mom's sister, my aunt, who was coming upstairs and she was calling me and stuff and I wasn't responding and so he hurried up and dashed out down the back doorway through the kitchen and went downstairs. (F06)

One woman considered it helpful when her informal social network and formal social services confronted her abuser to make him stop. For example, F22 found it helpful when the police talked to him to bring an end to the most recent incident (F22), and F11 found it helpful when a neighbor talked to him, "If you want to hit somebody, you hit me. You don't hit her." (F11) F25's story illustrates the collaboration of her informal social network and formal social services. Her apartment manager told her abuser that the police were on the way, so he should leave her alone during the worst

incident of abuse.

I heard the...umm...the guy from the office started talking, and he...umm...so then he said, "Well, you know, the police are on their way right now," and you know, "Leave her alone," and whatever, so I laid there for a little while, but then I went up and I got my kids. (F25)

The women wanted to file evidence of the abuse. F10 had her daughter do it. F01 went to the hospital to have pictures taken of the injuries on her body.

"Help" sought only from formal social services

The battered women in this study labeled the help from formal social services as positive when it "helped her feel safe to talk about abuse" (emotional support); "provided a safety plan," "helped her be aware that the abuse was not her fault," or "validated that she had other options" (information/education). Help was also deemed positive when it "helped her with health/mental health problems" (problem-solving); "provided housing, food, and medications," "helped her get her GED or other professional degree," "provided services for children," or "mobilized her informal social network" (resources). Other types of positive help identified by the women included help that "arrested him," "gave her OFP," "forced him to follow legal decisions" (protection), "worked together with other social services," "shared a sense of humor," or "connected her to culturally sensitive services" (other).

The women wanted formal social service providers to help them feel safe enough to talk about abuse. It could be a confidentiality issue or just to make them feel comfortable enough to talk more about their experiences of abuse. For example, F06's felt that it was helpful when her counselor explained the confidentiality issue when she met the counselor after the most recent incident.

When she said that it wouldn't leave the room and that it was my own personal information unless I requested that it be given to someone else... (F06)

He (pastor) told me, "What's wrong?" I told him what had happened. The first thing out of this mouth was, "F12, the abuse has to stop."And he told me ...if I was having problems, he needed to know. I needed to let him know, because he couldn't help me if he didn't know what was wrong. As long as he knew, he would help, in some way, shape, or form. There was always that help..... "F12, my wife is here. If you'd like to talk to her, you can," he said. "But, I want you to know something." And I said, "What's that?" He said, "The abuse has to stop."He was like a number one supportive. He was fantastic. (F12)

The women found it helpful to have a safety plan, including the ways of safely staying and leaving. F19 learned from her women's counseling group how to leave safely when she felt ready.

That's when I found out basically about a safety plan. And they talked to me not really, I mean what we call a formal one, but just talked to me about um, getting ready to leave the relationship. How to plan, um, you know, a suitcase. That's how I did. I um, got all the papers separated and in my mind I started planning for it. (F19)

Other than a safety plan for leaving, F02 felt it was helpful when her therapist gave her tools to use to stay away from her abuser and help herself.

The therapy that I had had let me know that I wasn't crazy, that they gave me some tools to use, like get away from it, and in the summertime I would go for walks around the lake or hide out in the woods, but in the wintertime, there isn't a lot of places you can do, so I found that the basement was my refuge... With her tools of getting away from it and going for walks and things like that...many times...oh, I would say at least three to five times he had....during a fight, I had taken off to get away from him. (F02)

It seemed very important to the women to receive validation from formal social service providers that the abuse was not their fault. This confirmed that there was nothing wrong with them and that they were not the cause of the abuse.

I was real satisfied when she (counselor) discovered that there wasn't anything wrong with me and I just need to get my life back on track and decide whether it was time to move on...she more made me to realize that it wasn't me who had the

problems and I wasn't the one causing the problems, that I was basically a scapegoat for someone else's problems. (F06)

It (CD treatment) was wonderful. It helped me understand...umm...that it's hard to explain. You know, that I wasn't a bad person that the drinking was an outlet for me, and it was real hard for me to accept that alcohol had become a crutch, and I had no idea. I had had no idea on what alcoholism was and what it can do and different effects, so by learning that...umm...and then I was on medication then for my anxiety attacks and the two of them together, how deadly it was, so...it...it opened my eyes....that was my refuge....why it was the reason why a big part of it, and not making excuses and accepting that I had a problem, but that there were undercurrents to the problem, you know, and I just wasn't a party person that was overdoing and...had to fix what was causing me to do it, too. (F02)

The women found it helpful when formal social service providers talked to them about other options. It helped the women think about the abuse in different ways, opening up and broadening the paths that they might take. As F15 mentioned, it served as "the seed" for her even to think about "making changes" when her counselor suggested another option when she met him between the worst and the most recent incidents of abuse.

He (counselor) actually told me that I had a right to say no...umm...to having sex or any, I had a right to say no...umm...even to M15...Umm...and (laugh) that was just like a light bulb. He also had mentioned at one point that...divorce could be a consideration. Umm...it was more of a suggestion, like, you know, divorce could be an option....I think he planted the seed that allowed me to even think about making changes....thinking about me as...as a worthwhile human being and not deserving that situation. (F15)

I didn't consider it...I didn't know it was abuse because most of it was verbal...and she (therapist) kept trying to swing me back to that, "That isn't right," and she would ask me questions, as if... "Have you ever thought of going into a shelter?" and that was the farthest thing from my mind because I'm not abused....I'm not, you know, coming in there with wounds...and things like that.... (F02)

In seeking problem-solving assistance, the women found it helpful when formal social services providers "helped them with health/mental health problems." After

getting through the abuse, the women wanted to get services for themselves to alleviate the effects of the abuse. F25 wanted to "fix" herself to "be independent and learn how to live on my own...adult...because I felt like I was so dependent on him for everything," when she met a counselor toward the end. F25 appreciated the formal social services that she was mandated to attend by the child protection service after the most recent incident of abuse. She actively participated in all of them to rebuild herself.

Well, it was ...it was kind of like a job. I had to be there, like from 8 to 4 everyday, Monday through Friday, and we did a lot of ...a lot of hard work on my own...my own personal, you know, they started from the beginning...you know, how were you raised and what happened to you in your life and how it...what led you up to this relationship. And it was kind of focused on what were...you know, my own self-esteem issues and stuff like that and dealt with that...and like empowering me within my self, and it helped me feel better about myself and my kids and...and a lot of parenting stuff. I needed the parenting stuff because I needed to ...um...figure out that...that whole part of it. (F25)

The women in this study thought formal social services were helpful when they provided resources, not only for their immediate needs, but also for their career development. They also perceived it as helpful when formal social services "provided services for children" and "helped her mobilized her informal social network."

F19's immediate needs were met when she went into a shelter after the most recent incident of abuse. The shelter provided a place to stay away from her abuser, as well as transportation, food, and medication. F12 sought help in obtaining her GED or a professional degree at college after the most recent incident of abuse.

Well, my needs were met, my immediate needs were met...They offered me an option for low housing, low income housing basically, that saved me...it was what I needed at that time, to get me going on my feet...I was able to get to the hospital. I was able to save my money. I didn't have to buy food or um, you know, they had clothes and stuff like that. They, you know, were able to offer me medication if I needed it for headache or a cold, flu or something. They pretty much all worked together. I didn't, there was no like a missing link, I don't

believe. (F19)

Tri-CAP (self-sufficiency program), and what they do is, they have like counselors that will come in your home. So if you don't have transportation, it's not a blocker; they helped me get back into school. They helped me get back into school. They helped me with my GED. They helped with anything that needed help. If my car broke down, there was a program where I could get money that I didn't have to pay back to get my car fixed. If the kids need school clothes and I couldn't afford it, they found the money, you know, so that those things were not blockers. If my bills got behind, they helped me find this program and that program that would help me. It was wonderful. (F12)

Most of the domestic violence services provided programs for children. F25's children were involved in the programs after the most recent incident of abuse and she thought it was helpful.

They (G women's program) basically....they had kind of like a daycare thing there where the kids could come and they stayed down like in the daycare part; they were involved with some...some part of it, things like they did some therapy for my daughter with athey did some testing on her and... (F25)

The women also perceived it as helpful when, as part of their involvement with formal social services, they were expected to mobilize their informal social network. It could be in the form of family sessions to which her relatives were invited or making new friends in other programs.

In fact, the...my kids came. We had family (sessions in the hospital) once a week, and one of my sisters and my other came along also. Each time a different sister came and brought the kids and my mom. So, they were all involved. It was really interesting. (F22)

I...before when I was with M25, I was like so isolated all the time. And it's like, I...I was making all these friends, doing all these activities and crafts and I was laughing with everybody all the time. I was having a good time in there (CD inpatient). (F25)

The women thought it was helpful when the police arrested the abuser. They seemed most satisfied when the police witnessed the abuser still hurting or threatening

them so that they did not need to explain to the police what had happened.

They (police) had seen him on top of me and they knew I was hysterical and the officer immediately snatched him up off me and handcuffed him and took him out....they asked if we....how we all were doing...They were basically talking to me, but just observing how the kids were doing and...I wouldn't have wanted them to get any more involved in what they had already seen. (F06)

They (police) were on the phone the entire time the incident happened, like before he came through the window with the rake, they were on the phone and I was all recorded.....He went over...his sister lived a mile from us. He went over to her house and sat and waited for them to come and get him, and actually the car that picked him up, they....there were two cars over at her house waiting....He (police) took pictures....they did talk to the godparents who were there and got their statements also....They arrested him, you know, it was just kind of like they did their job and left. (F12)

The women sought orders for protection to protect themselves or their children from further abuse. In addition to safety, they also sought orders for protection to show other service providers that they had taken action against the abuse. F25 got an OFP toward the end of the relationship and recollected:

So then....then...I had the papers with me....all the time after that...I had papers and everything, and he would always stay there like a short few minutes and then leave...he'd try to get in or he'd ring my doorbell, he's thrown rocks at my window and stuff like that, and like begging to talk to me and stuff...and then he would just leave because he always knew...I felt more safe than normal, but I didn't feel completely safe to be out in public or anything... (F25)

But I felt like...when I thought ...I had the Order and I had it on paper, so that if they (police) ever came, this time they would know, I had something on paper to show them, that wasn't just a phone call, a skinned knee, or whatever. I felt better having it. (F25)

The women regarded it as positive help when service providers enforced legal decisions against their abuser. When F12 divorced her abuser after the most recent incident of abuse, she thought her attorney's response was helpful.

My attorney started going toward him, and M12 crawled up in the corner, literally trying not to get the divorce papers, and he said, "Mr. M12, you're going to get

these one way or another. You might as well turn around and take them.” And he handed them to him and came back with me and went down this hall, out the side doors, and he was just excellent. (F12)

The women also found it helpful when service providers worked with other social services, both providing a referral and following up with the women about their achievements with other social services. F25 explained that it helped her keep moving forward.

They (G women’s program)...actually they were really close with Child Protection...They followed everything...everything that I did there, my Child Protection worker knew all....about it and came to all the meetings....I hadumm....little cards I needed to get signed saying that I was going. (F25)

I think we need the medical doctor to be working with outside services and be willing to say, “I don’t know how to help this person,” or “You can benefit more by going outside of me and getting a specialty in something,” I think....umm...even from the medical doctor to the therapist to the police department. I think it all needs to be connected, and I think we have to feel safe and umm...eloquent about communication ... (F02)

When F02 went to the hospital after she attempted suicide following the most recent incident of abuse, medical doctors referred her to a battered women’s shelter. She felt this was very helpful because they knew that she needed to be safe from his abuse.

They (medical) stretched. They really stretched to find me somebody, so I am totally grateful, amazed, and for their...for their efforts and for the reason that Women’s Home accepted me, I think that’s why I’m here. I think if I would have just gone in for the mental part, I don’t think my life would have been complete. I think they would have tried to fix the one part, but the other part would still be there. (F02)

F02 perceived her therapist's sense of humor as positive help, recollecting that it was what she needed while she lived through the abuse. She said, “She (therapist) probably didn’t know I appreciated her humor because I was in such bad shape, but boy, I tell you...I just...I think back and that’sI think we needed that then.” (F02)

F25 thought it was helpful when service providers connected her with culturally specific services. "They (CPS) did try to refer me to...places that were culturally specific and that was...I...that was helpful." (F25)

"Help" sought only from informal social networks

The "help" that the women sought specifically from informal social networks was not as varied as what the women sought from formal social services. The women perceived help as positive when their informal social network "gave her self-help materials" (resources); "called the police for her," "kept her children safe," "kept her whereabouts confidential," and were "involved as a part of her safety plan" (protection).

The women acquired self-help materials from their informal social networks. This was not the kind of help they actively sought, but they found it helpful. It seemed that self-help materials were regarded as only minor "resources," but the women might have felt a connection with their informal social networks that helped them move forward.

One of the patients I was in the Stress Center with the first two weeks gave me...it's called the Axxx 12 steps and 12 traditions book, and she took me back to the Stress Center the second time, and she said, "You read this book," and I had hemorrhoids really, really better, and I had to soak them for 20 minutes three times a day, and I took that book with me and read it. (F22)

She (sister C) would give me little trinkets and put it...just you know, thinking of you, here take a bubble bath, and here's a candle...you know, make you feel better....The self-healing type things...and then it would be like Thanksgiving dinner and stuff like that. I was invited there, but sometimes I couldn't make it and stuff, so they helped me...it was just, yah, it was the trinkets and the being there. (F02)

The women also considered it helpful when members of their informal social networks called the police. Most of the time, they could not call the police themselves due to fear or the abuser's interference. F06's aunt called the police when she heard

about the abuse right after the worst incident of abuse.

She's (her aunt) like, "What's going on?" and you know, crying and stuff, telling her that he came in and was threatening me with a gun and stuff, and she's like, you know, well, you know, "We need to call the police"...so, my aunt called the police. (F06)

A neighbor called the police when he heard him (yelling)...I couldn't have called the police, so... (F25)

The women in these two examples did not ask their supporters to call. F19's story provides an example of the use of a safety plan. When the abuser was hurting her during the worst incident, she called her sister and asked her to call the police.

I mean, she (sister) called the police right away. They (sister and her husband) got over there right away. Um, they were always very supportive to me. You know, wanted me to, if I needed to live there or whatever. They were willing to help. (F19)

When she went to a shelter after the most recent incident of abuse, F22 needed someone to watch her house and her son. Her friend took care of both, which she felt was helpful. In another case, when the abuse started at the beginning of the relationship, F12's mother removed her children from the house, which she thought was helpful.

Across the street the other way was my friend J, and she was behind it 100%, and her and her husband at that time watched the house for us....They knew what was going on, and so that they could help keep S1 safe, and that they knew S1 was there alone. (F22)

My mom would come and get them. She would get them (kids) and take them over to her house because she knew all hell was going to break loose. She couldn't get me to get away from it....she would get those kids away from it, but that only worked while we lived in New York. (F12)

While she was hiding from her abuser after the worst incident of abuse, F19 worried that one of her friends would tell him where she was staying. When her friend kept this information confidential, she identified it as a great help.

I was worried that she (friend) would keep my whereabouts confidential after that...um, because very few people knew where I was, but I was, you know, worried, I don't know that he, you know, could get it from somebody....(But) she kept my whereabouts confidential. She never, ever, ever told where I was....I was always hiding and everything was hush hush....when I was there they weren't to talk about that I had been there, that they had seen me. (F19)

One woman thought that members of her informal social network were helpful when they took part in her safety plan. For example, F11 had a neighbor who volunteered to be a person whom she could call whenever she needed help. F11 also had her safety plan through other women in her domestic violence services program and she utilized the women after the worst incident of abuse.

It was nice to know that somebody else knew....He (neighbor) said, you know, "If you ever need me, don't ever think twice about calling me. And I don't care if it's the middle of the night...." When M11 was out to drink, I'd call him up and say, okay if the phone rings once, call 911. (F11)

We had made part of our protection plan... was that we would help each other....should the need arise....She was the first person I thought of calling. And she was there, saying, "Okay, come on over."....She was there for everything I needed that day....FR2 was there and she was supportive. (F11)

*Negative Help from Informal Social Networks and Formal Social Services**Negative help from both informal social networks and formal social services*

Types of negative help from informal social networks and formal social services (Table 8) were identified only in "emotional support" and "protection," including "blamed her for abuse," "failed to value her self-determination," "told her to preserve the family" (emotional support); and "did not intervene" (protection).

The women were sometimes blamed for the abuse from their informal social networks and formal social services. F12 encouraged her abuser to attend a chemical dependency treatment program. His counselor told her that she was controlling and should understand that he had been abused as a child. She thought the counselor blamed her for his problem.

He had gone through five weeks of outpatient treatment at the VA, and we had started seeing his counselor out there where he told me that he hated me and this and that and I'm controlling and blah, blah, blah. And his counselor would ask me why I'd do this and all this crap, and then why I would talk about stuff M12 was doing, "Well, you know, you have to understand," he says, "that M12 was abused as a child." And I was like, "I don't fucking think so." And I confronted the counselor. That was the last time I went back. I said, "This is bull crap. You know, you're telling M12 everything he does now is okay because he was abused, and that's wrong." And "I'm not going to participate in this." (F12)

Her informal social network also blamed her. F12 overheard one of her brothers saying to her abuser, "I don't know how you can live with her. She's just a fucking bitch." She thought, "I deserved it because I was a bitch." (F12) Another example of being blamed was her sister-in-law's comment, "It takes two to make it work." (F12)

Table 8. Negative help from informal social networks and formal social services

Themes	Subthemes		
	Both	Formal social services	Informal networks
Emotional support	Blamed her for his abuse, failed to value her self-determination, told her to preserve the family	Failed to provide a safe environment for her to talk about abuse, lack of respect, lack of empathy, threatened to take the kids away from her	
Information /Education		Failed to give her information on other social services, failed to keep her informed about the legal processes	Failed to acknowledge abuse
Problem-solving		Failed to acknowledge the cause of the symptoms	
Resources		Lack of financial assistance, kicked out from the apartment	
Protection	Did not intervene	Failed to enforce the full range of a legal remedy, allowed him to take the kids, failed to keep her whereabouts confidential	
Other		Did not work together, shelter environment, did not listen to the kids' testimony	

The women tended to be blamed for staying with their abusers or not leaving them by both their informal social networks and formal social services. It made the women angry that they were blamed for not leaving and also that their networks and social services regarded leaving as the only and easiest option for them to take.

The police, they would ask, like umm...you know, does he live here? That was a main factor with them. Does he live here? And if...you know, it seemed like that would lessen the severity or...of it or whatever.... "Yah, he lives here," and then they would...it seemed like to...it felt like to me that they thought, "Well, if he lives here and seeing this is going on, then it's your fault." You know, like "You're..." you know, "You should do something, kick him out," or whatever. I just felt like, like that didn't matter to them....they'd just say, "Well, you know, if anything else happens, call us, okay." And then they would leave. (F25)

The officers (police), after all the calls overall, some of them just were not very cooperative with me. They tried to victimize me more, and it was real difficult. Because as if I just need to just get, stay away from him, like it's that easy, and I get really angry when I hear women tell me that the police officers tell them that they should try to get out of the situation or "You need to stay away from this guy," like it's really an easy choice. (F06)

At the same time that one woman heard that she should leave her abuser, she received mixed messages that she should preserve the family. When F22 asked her mother and pastor for help after the worst incident of abuse, her pastor reminded her of her wedding vows. Her mother told her:

"Well, you make your bed. You got to lie in it, you know, you haven't even tried. Go back and try." Just that it was my fault that I wasn't trying...and that's where their (mother and pastor) focus was. (F22)

Another example was that other family members, like her brothers-in-law, wanted F19 to stay with her abuser in order to take care of their needs. Thinking back, she was disappointed that they did not consider her safety to be important.

Nobody, um, you know, confronted him on being abusive to me. They (his brothers) pretty much, you know wanted me to keep staying there and be a family and take care of their needs. (F19)

Members of one woman's informal social network often knew that she was being abused, but just stayed away from her experiences of abuse. An incident of abuse might have happened in front of them, yet they did not get involved to stop the abuse. In another example, one woman's family kept some distance from her when she started to get involved with abuser, and the distance made her not want to have further contact with them further.

She (his friend) knew and she had seen him that way (broke a chair), so she knew. And she wasn't going for it. So, but she was never really around to protect me when other stuff happened. (F19)

I wasn't able to tell anybody in my family what had been going on for years. And um, and they pretty much you know, disowned me when I married him, disowned me even worse when I had a child by him, so, you know, I was pretty much separated. (F19)

F12 wanted CPS to become involved.

Knowing what I know now (laughs), I wish Child Protection had been involved because then my legal battles would have been so much easier....because....he'd been nabbed for child abuse, he would have been nabbed for all kinds of crap, you know, and my legal battle would have been downhill. You know, there wouldn't have had to be a guardian ad litem, there wouldn't, you know, all of those expenses, there would not have been (F12).

Negative help only from informal social networks

A type of negative help identified only with informal social networks occurred only in the information/education category when a member of the network "failed to acknowledge the abuse." The woman's informal social network either regarded his abuse as simply his temper problem or as his right as a husband, not recognizing the abuse as negative help.

I didn't even talk to her (his mother) about it. It was like, this is one of M02's

temper tantrums. We know he has it. He'll get over with it...and so there was no conversation...it was a pattern...it was a passing thing. I don't know [if] she realized either what abuse was. I was in my role, so why I knew M02 had a temper...his dad had a temper, and she had gotten through all these years with him, too. So it's just something that you live with. (F02)

Umm, they (sisters and mother) would agree that he wasn't a very nice person (laughs), but I don't recall anybody ever really talking about...umm...leaving the situation...umm...getting help...because of my mother's attitude, I guess, of ...about marriage, in general, and husband's right, ah...and the home that I grew up, my father was abusive, so it was kind of a fact of life that this is what took place, and so talking about it didn't really change anything." (F15)

Negative help only from formal social services

The women perceived it as negative help under the category "emotional support" when formal social services "failed to provide a safe environment for her to talk about abuse," "did not show respect," "did not show empathy," or "threatened to take the kids away from her."

The police came when F19's neighbor called, but the abuser made them leave. The police suspected him of abusing her and called her to ask whether she felt okay being left with the abuser in their apartment. She did not feel safe enough to tell them the truth.

I think they, well, they (police) knew enough to call me. They'd call and asked to speak to me. But it's still you know, with him in the room, what can I say. (F19)

One woman felt uncomfortable talking about her experience of abuse in front of strangers in her support group. It was more uncomfortable when the strangers did not share her experience of abuse. A service provider suggested that F19 attend a community based women's support group, but the focus was not on domestic violence.

I was the only woman out of the shelter that was there. The rest of women were from the community. And it was different to me. I came in with a black eye. I was wearing, you know, they were, you know, they were out of their relationships or

you know, coping, and I was just out of the relationship....it wasn't the right setting for me. I didn't, I thought everybody would be there, you know, from the shelter or some other people, but it was just me. (F19)

Another woman considered it as negative help when her confidentiality was threatened. F25 met with a counselor to get help for herself toward the end of the relationship, but the counselor wanted her to take legal action against the abusers from her childhood. The counselor failed to respect her confidentiality and her goals.

Because what I thought when...when I was going to counseling, I thought counseling was, you know, something personal that you just talk amongst, you know, between you and a counselor, and it...it seemed like he really wanted to be really proactive and get really involved in all this outside stuff. (F25)

The women recollected that a lack of respect from providers of financial assistance was one of the most awful experiences. These women described their treatment from the staff in financial assistance services as "degrading" and "humiliation," reporting that they respected neither the women nor their financial needs.

When it came to um, getting financial assistance it was like, well, it felt really degrading first of all, and then you know, a lot of probing questions....They had somebody that came out there and signed you up for assistance and...you know, you didn't have to go anywhere but, um, I was like, why this, why are they so cold? And I was like, I could be a financial person, you know, an AFDC person, because I would just be totally different....I was like I would not treat people like this. Never really verbalize it, you know, to them. I just thought, you know, I am going to do what I need to do, but I really could do it better. (F19)

I think that when I went and applied for help at...financial help through the county...that there was something more there. You know, I don't know what I expected there to be, but it didn't ...it....that was the hardest, awful thing [to] go through. It was so humiliating and I just...you know, there wasn't any kindness there the 18 months I was on that program. And that was...that those folks missed the boat. You know, there would've been a time and a place to intervene to, you know, ask the questions....ask about kids, you know, what's happening with them... (F22)

Among people who worked in domestic violence services, there existed some who

failed to show empathy. The women identified this as problematic because their emotional needs were not considered important. F10 went to a shelter after the most recent incident of abuse but she expressed that she did not have a chance to talk about her experience of abuse other than at the time of intake.

She (advocate in D) was somewhat understanding. I still think that if you've not been a person familiar with your own experience in domestic violence, you don't really quite understand what women's needs are and what they are feeling... (F06)

I don't think my emotional needs were met. Um, I only talked about the abuse one time, when they came in and did the intake. And it was only about the incident. Um, I didn't talk with, didn't really talk with my advocate. She didn't really you know, ask about other instances or um, how I was coping or feeling about other instances." (F10)

After F11 kicked her abuser out of the house, her oldest son told a counselor that this man had abused him. F11 did not know about the abuse. A child protection worker found out and threatened to take her child away if the abuser came back to her house. A child protection worker did not take her child away because she did not stay with the abuser.

At the other incident while S1 was in counseling. A worker (CPS) came to the house saying, "Do you know if this happened?" I said, "I don't know." "Well, I am going to say M11 did. We are not going to take S1 away from you, because M11 is out of the house. But if he ever comes into the house you think about us taking your son away." (F11)

The women perceived it as negative help under the "information/education." category when formal social services "did not give her information on other social services" and "failed to keep her informed about the legal processes." It seemed that the police were the main source of information on other social services. The women felt that the police "delivered a threat from him" when they told her not to stay at the house

without providing any information on the places she could contact to get shelter.

He (police) suggested that we not stay there (home), but he didn't give us any alternative, and if it wasn't my friend A (from hospital), I wouldn't have known about the services. (He said) it would be a good idea if you didn't stay here for a few days or tonight. He might come back. It was like they delivered a threat from him. (F22)

F11 was frightened at the legal decisions that gave her abuser biweekly, overnight unsupervised visitation with her child. He had a drinking problem. Whenever he got drunk, he became abusive. Although the legal decision stated that he should be sober for 24 hours before visiting with the child, F11 was not informed about the places or persons that she could contact if she needed.

If he did drink, if he violated that, what were my resources, who was I to contact? You know, it's like, I had this piece of paper that said this, but what do I do with it... Do I call the cops and forcibly remove the child, you know? It's like you are thrown into this system, I mean you are the nice middle class law abiding person that believes the police are out there to protect you and the law are out there to protect you and it's like, I did everything I could to protect S1 and I, but it's like there was so much that they did not tell you. (F11)

Another woman perceived it as negative help with "problem-solving" when formal social services "failed to acknowledge the cause of the symptoms." Service providers, such as medical doctors, failed to recognize the abuse when she did not disclose it. "They (medical doctors) just seemed to accept that I had fallen" (F11) even when there was physical evidence. They never identified sexual abuse if he did not bruise her. F22 explained, "He didn't bruise me as much anymore. That's not to say that the forced sex didn't stop." (F22)

Formal social service providers tried to establish other causes for the injuries while not acknowledging the abuse. This frequently happened when an abused woman visited medical doctors or counselors to get help for her emotional problems. Like F11

said, "They (medical doctors) were flying in the dark." (F11)

He (medical doctor) talked to me. He even, he set up a special appointment for me to come in (laughing). And he talked to me for a long time about, trying to see, I think he was analyzing the situation (laughing). "Should I put her on medication, throw her in the hospital, what am I going to do?" Umm...he just talked to me and let me know that, you know, if I needed, I could call him and talk to him, that was kind of the typical...umm...he did put me in the hospital. (F15)

I had been seeing my physician and he could not figure out what was wrong with me because...of the panic attacks, and he didn't even know they were panic attacks. He tested me for everything...a tumor in the brain, if I was...I had gone through EKG's. I had gone through so many different things....He was M02's family's MD, and so I didn't feel like I could open up and tell him what was going on...I had a panic attack in front of him, and he would think that was a nervous condition. "We got to figure out what's going on here..." So finally he recommended a therapist. And it was after probably three years of me going through...I don't think he understood domestic abuse...at all. I mean the flags were there, and he should have seen or put together something. (F02)

F11 expected formal social services, especially medical doctors to discover the abuse in her family. She wanted them to initiate the process of change after the worst incident of abuse, since she was not ready to tell them about the abuse herself. She expected them to ask more questions to uncover the abuse.

They (medical doctors) should have questions more. When they didn't find an organic reason, they should have probed into, you know, emotional or psychological reasons why he (S1) was doing, behaving, or having the symptoms he was having, because it was a manifestation of emotional trauma. (F11)

The women perceived it as negative help under the "resources category." when formal social services did not provide "financial assistance" and "kicked him out of the apartment."

I'm really...I don't know why I'm feeling crazy, and it's free, and the economic structure in most battering homes, there...the women don't have a dime. Where're they going to get free support? ...No place. (F22)

F25 was evicted from her apartment after the most recent incident of abuse. After

she left the apartment to hide from her abuser, he came back and demolished it. "I got kicked out of my apartment. I got 24 hours eviction." (F25)

The women perceived it as negative help under the category of "protection." when formal social services "failed to enforce the full range of a legal remedy," "allowed him to take the kids," and "failed to keep her whereabouts confidential." The women in this study explained that the police usually did not arrest their abuser. The police tended to think, "it is something that happens all the time" and told the abuser "just to leave."

Police involvement stopped a specific incident, but the abuser would then return.

They (police) took him a block away, and he came right back home...because he gets loud without, and verbal without, you know, he had done that without hitting me, so, um, I think they had been out to the house one other time and had taken him down the block and he came back. (F19)

I felt like, and I got a feeling from the police, like...just the way they were and stuff like, you know, they weren't really too concerned and they kind of had an attitude like, well, this happens all the time anyway...that kind of a thing where, where I think, you know, if they were more...seriously with the...you know, if they know that you're abused and, you know, should arrest him on the spot. (F25)

Another woman was frustrated that her abuser was not placed in jail after he was arrested after the most recent incident of abuse. F19 asked for his jail time. However, she discovered that the legal system did not even force him to complete the mandated treatment program.

He got um, you know, no jail time. He was, they asked me what I, you know, what kind of punishment that I wanted and I said jail time, and um, treatment. I think he was on probation. He was supposed to go to anger management something. Um, which he never did...I wouldn't say them, but the judicial system in itself did enforce, you know, the anger management and treatment and whatever, whatever punishment that they gave him. It wasn't enforced, I did check up on it, um, you know, and it wasn't enforced. He never did any of it, so... (F19)

I later found out from an advocate in the after care group, if it's within two years

you are entitled to a year in jail and three years of probation....I was sitting there thinking, I would have gone for the whole boat. If I had known that's what it was....Nobody's ever explained anything to me in the whole process. Everything I found out, I found out after the fact. (F11)

F19 was hiding successfully from her abuser after the most recent incident. She asked her informal social network members to refuse to tell him where she was living. When she got child support from him, she suddenly found that he had discovered the county where she was staying.

My whereabouts were safe. Um, you know, to this day he doesn't know where I live, you know. So, something along the way, you know, everything I had and kept in place for my privacy, somehow, you know, like with phone company, all those things, are helpful if a person really does want to stay away. But it depends on how, you know, one thing though, I mean, that did come to child support, I think he eventually did find out the county that I live in. So, you know, I suppose he had that right. (F19)

The women also perceived it as negative help when formal social services "did not work together with other social services," "did not listen to the kids' testimony," or provided an uncomfortable "shelter environment." When formal social services did not work together, F12 experienced unexpected consequences and was blamed. While she had an order for protection, she was invited to Family Night, a part of his chemical dependency treatment program.

I went to Family Night for him, took kids, when he was going through his so-called treatment and I had called the sheriff beforehand because I had the Order for Protection. I said, "Now I want to make sure. He's having a Family Night tonight. The kids and I would like to go and support him in his treatment program. I have an Order for Protection. Is it going to be [okay] for me to go?" And the sheriff said, "I think it's very commendable for you to do this, you and the kids, to do this for him, and I believe it will [be] only him...so, go. He will not be arrested." So we went to the meeting. Someone else called the Sheriff's Office complained about it, and they arrested him and they didn't arrest...they didn't come out and arrest him, they sent him a ticket, and there was a big..., but ...treatment person, counselor for the treatment, was very mad and pulled us into the office there and I was being vindictive in getting him charged. (F12)

When one woman wanted to get an Order for Protection for her child after her abuser had physically abused the child in the worst incident, she was surprised that the police did not contact his probation officer.

I mean I told them M11 was on probation. And the fact that they didn't contact his probation officer still surprises me. I thought because he was on probation and this incident was mainly against S1 that it didn't apply. Well then when I talked to his probation officer later he said, "Why didn't you call me?" I didn't know I could. I didn't know it was related... You know, and it's like I wanted this information--I kept trying to get it and couldn't. (F11)

F05 found a custody battle, which occurred after she had separated from and divorced her abuser, to be extremely unhelpful. She also felt that it was the extension of the abuse that her children's voices could not be heard in the court.

The system here is adults, lawyers who can make whatever case they want, social workers, and this is not it's going to who are taught you know who have this mind set and we don't want to listen to the children in court....so, the children will talk maybe to a social worker for 20 minutes....and they won't see this spontaneous interaction because they don't want to see that....So, the child becomes another tool of abuse, and a very big tool of abuse.(F05)

Shelters provided safe places for the women to stay. However, the shelter environment was awkward for some women. When F12 went to a shelter for the first time, she left the shelter and thought, "This is the craziest place I've ever been...I don't want to be here" (F12). She and her children could not continue their normal life, in which "they (children) are in an air-conditioned house with their own bedroom and their friends and his basketball and stuff..." (F02)

The diversity of shelter residents was another problem for some women. This example shows how class and race affects women's accounts of helpfulness of formal social services.

It was really scary for me because I went from my nice little safe suburban home into a shelter that house...that it is ...we...house all different types of women, from the really, really....and backgrounds and...and some are extremely tough and young women...some that have had to use prostitution and things like that...so I was in the total different environment....I'm going, "Can I have a glass of water?" you know. They looked at you like, "What is this?" "Who's going to get you the....what?" Not having to serve me, but you know... I can I ask permission. "You want it girl, you find it, and you get it...." Oh, okay (laughing). (F02)

Reasons for Not Seeking Help

Most battered women in this study did not seek help from either their informal social networks or formal social services at the beginning of the relationship. Subthemes for not seeking help were identified under the categories of "internal barriers," "external barriers," and "other" (Table 9). The women did not seek help from outside sources because they "did not take the abuse seriously," "feared further abuse," and "feared being blamed" (internal barriers). They also avoided external sources of help because they thought a certain service was "not useful," did not have "knowledge of resources," did not have "available resources," "feared losing children," wanted "to preserve the family," or were inhibited by "his power in the community" (external barriers), or because they wanted "to protect other family members" (other).

Table 9. Reasons for not seeking help

Themes	Internal barriers	External barriers	Other
Subthemes	Did not take the abuse seriously, fear of further abuse, fear of being blamed (shame & guilt)	Not useful, lack of knowledge of resources, lack of available resources, fear of losing the children, to preserve the family, his (family's) power in the community	To protect family members

The women often did not take the abuse seriously. The abuse itself might not have been quite as severe at the beginning of the relationship, or they might have minimized it. F06 recalled, "I was pretty naïve then. I don't think that there was much going on....I didn't really talk about it to anybody." In another case, F12 was dealing with her first daughter's death, so she did not consider the abuse as the most urgent issue.

R: I didn't talk to anybody about it. And even when my daughter, after she had been diagnosed, and when we started seeing counselors then to help us deal with it because they told us, the doctors told us, right from the initial appointment,

“She (D1)’s going to die.”She (D1) is going to die. You need counselors, you get a counselor. And then our world kind of ...that was the focus.

I: So you were seeing counselors to help you deal with her death, impending an illness...

R: Right. And I was strong. I could deal with anything, except for her dying. The rest of it was just minor. (F12)

The women identified "fear of further abuse" and "fear of being blamed" as additional internal barriers to seeking help from their informal social networks or formal social services. F11 was not able to tell anybody or contact formal social services because she was "so scared and so frightened." F06 did not contact any social services because she was "too afraid...scared of him finding out" and abusing her more next time. F25 was "focusing more on the actual part of it" and then, when the abuser left after the incident, she thought, "I wonder where he went or I wonder why he did that."

The women were afraid to talk about the abuse to other people because they did not want to be blamed for not leaving him or to hear them say, "It's your fault."

I was afraid to tell people because I always felt like the first responses would be, "Well, just get rid of him," or "Just leave him," or "Just....," you know...like it was going to be all pointed back to me, like it was my own fault, I was still there, and he's still in my life, and I always...I...I hated to hear that so I never wanted to really tell people anything because I felt like that was going to be their response anyways and ...and then I always felt, too, like they don't really know exactly how afraid you are or how not easy it is to leave somebody like that... (F25)

For some women, a certain social service was not useful for them. In the case of F02, she did not need to stay at a shelter after she got the Order for Protection. F05 "didn't feel like there was anything broken," so she thought that she "really didn't need" any help from medical services.

The women often did not seek help from outside sources while they were with the abuser because they did not know that there were services and resources for battered

women. It was not until F11 became involved with the court system that she found that there were services available for her.

I did not know it (DV services) was there. Other than that (church) I did not have a, I did not know of anything out there, at that point. It was not until I got involved in the court systems that I found out there was anything out there. (F11)

For some women, their available resources did not fit them or their needs. For example, F05 could not find an available shelter in her community and F19 did not think that going to a shelter would make her situation any better. For F05 living in a Jewish community, a shelter was not considered to be a useful resource that Jewish women would turn to. For F19, using a temporary shelter temporarily was not a choice because she did not have close family members who could provide support after her use of the shelter. These two examples show how class and race are intertwined with gender power relationships.

Oh! There, well, number one, the Jewish people do it differently than non-Jewish people. So there was nothing. (F05)

I knew my family wouldn't be of any support whatsoever. So, I knew that I couldn't go into a shelter and then go back home. That's not a, it wasn't a possibility. And uh, I felt like, you know, it was me and him alone in this and that somehow, and you know, that this was just, I was, this is what I asked for. This was what was going to, you know, was going to just, I deserved. (F19)

The women worried the most about their children's safety and feared losing their children. F06 had heard that child protection workers took children away from battered mothers; she thought this was more threatening than his abuse. She chose not to tell anybody about the abuse. F06 shows how the structural power of formal social services affected battered women's help-seeking process.

By this time, I knew that there could be problems for the kids and stuff because I had heard horror stories of people losing their kids from being in domestic stuff,

so...I didn't want to involve them (police)...because I didn't want any problems. (F06)

The women tended to internalize the societal norm that women should preserve the family. Informal social networks and formal social services delivered the societal norm to the women and affected the women's help-seeking processes. F02 thought that, since the abuse occurred in the family, it should be kept within the family. "Outsiders do not intervene." She thought that she should preserve the family because "I felt that this is my marriage, I'm in it for life." (F02) F22 always covered for the abuser, because she thought the children needed their father. She said to her children, "It's going to be okay. He just had a bad day. He still loves us." The wedding vows she made through the church pushed F22 to keep her family intact.

My pastor just quoted lots of Bible verses and reminded me of my wedding vows. And so I decided that I'd (go back). And about two weeks after...not even two weeks after, I flew back to... (F22)

When the abuser had power in the community, it is understandable that the woman could not find a place to get help within that community. His abuse was hidden well in the family because of his power in the minority community along with high social status. This example shows how women's help-seeking is shaped in the intersection of race, class, and gender. "His mother was on the board of the domestic abuse, so do you want to tell me where I would go? Nowhere...." (F05)

He, wait a minute. He was not only a paramedic. He was President of the Emergency Medical Services, he was a Rotarian, and he was the owner of a business. His family was respected. He uh, won community service awards. OK? ...He was everything, you know? This is not a person who would do it.You sit in courts and the judge would say, "Mr. M05, what do you want," OK? (F05)

The women tried to protect their family members by not telling them much detail

of their experience of abuse. F02 did not want her family “to get hurt by the abuser or to feel pushed to do something for me.” (F02) F25 did not want her sister to feel burdened.

I felt like ...I...I didn't want to be like a let-down to her (sister). I didn't want to be like a disappointment ...or I didn't want to put her in a position to feel like she needed to take care of me. (F25)

The women faced a diversity of internal and external barriers in their help-seeking processes. These barriers delayed the women's help-seeking from informal social networks and formal social services. Internal and external barriers seemed to be intertwined with one another. F22 summarized her reasons for not seeking help at the beginning of the relationship by stating that she was "not ready."

They sent me to a civilian therapist that I went to see a couple of times....and I didn't...I don't'...I wasn't ready to face what was going on and to really deal with it, so I quit going right away. (F22)

Chapter 7. Readiness: Turning Point

Based on the women's stories in this study, three themes are identified that help us understand battered women's readiness to change (Table 10). These themes include "not ready to change (status quo)," "ready to change (turning point)," and "maintain the change." The three themes show how battered women became ready to change as their victimization continues. Subthemes of "not ready to change" were found throughout the relationship, from the beginning to the end. Subthemes of "ready to change" tended to be found toward the end of the relationship. Subthemes of "maintain the change" were found after separation, or after the most recent incident of abuse if this incident happened after separation.

Subthemes of "not ready to change" included "minimized the abuse," "denial," "thought she could control the situation," "felt isolation," "internalized the messages," and "lost herself." The last three subthemes reflect the effects of either the abuse or negative responses from their informal social network and formal social services.

The women minimized the abuse because they were used to it from their family of origin or did not believe it would continue. Some women who experienced abuse in their childhoods tended to normalize abuse by their intimate partner.

I realize it was abusive at the beginning, but it was not as abusive as was what I lived with all my life. (F05)

F11 did not take the abuse seriously even when he pointed a gun at her face.

After he pointed the gun at my face when D1 quit coming over to me, I still wanted to believe it could not happen, that I would be killed by him. I minimized it in front of D1. (F11)

One woman showed 'denial' that she was an abused woman, especially because

she did not experience physical abuse. F02 said, "Abused women have cuts and bruises and pain that hurts and that shows...and...mine was inside."

I was seeking out their help, and my therapist asking me about shelters, and I couldn't see myself as being abused, and for some strange reason, I just kept thinking, you know, I'm capable of holding this marriage together and I'm bad, and I'm ugly and all this kind of stuff... (F02)

The women also tended to think that they could control the situation, especially at the beginning of the relationship. They tried so hard to control the situation by doing anything that they could to not escalate him, to protect themselves, and to protect their children, from the beginning until toward the end of the relationship. For example, F15 "never slapped him again" and "did not fight back" when the future incidents happened. F11 "was under the grand illusion that by sending them (children) upstairs and arguing away from them," she "was protecting them." She "did everything" that she could "to get them out of there on Friday nights." (F11)

The women felt isolated physically and emotionally while they were with their abusers. Although they might be aware of the abuse, they did not have someone to ask for help. F15 said she felt "pretty much isolated" and as if she had to deal with it herself (F15). F22 thought, after the worst incident of abuse, that she needed to "put up with whatever it was that went on."

I remember my brother lived a couple of blocks away, but I remember feeling all alone. I was out in California and away from my mother and my family and felt isolated and alone. (F12)

Living in the abusive relationship, the women internalized the messages from their abuser, informal social networks, and formal social services. The messages included all the blame messages from their abusers and blame for staying or leaving.

They tended to internalize the abuser's message;

I believed absolutely 100% of what he told me. So...even though she (mom) was trying to tell me what was happening, I just couldn't see it, so ...those were horrible years (laughs)...I was fat and I was ugly and I was stupid, and I kept an immaculate house, but it wasn't good enough and so I was a bad housekeeper and I was a bad mother. (F02)

Just...you know...umm...dealing with the situations that I dealt with...and you keep bottled inside and not trying to seek help right away and stuff because it seemed like the blame was coming from my mom that I should have done something to get out of this and then from M06 telling me that I wasn't nothing and this and that and that no man would want me, you know...I thought I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, you know, just because I was worrying all the time, I was skinny as can be. I wasn't barely eating, just all stressed out.... (F06)

The abused women also internalized the conflicting messages from their informal social networks and formal social services that they should leave and that they should preserve their family. Internalizing the mixed messages, they felt blamed whether they decided to leave or to stay.

I still kind of in the back of my mind kept thinking I can go back home because M02 is going to get therapy and I'm a stronger person and that was always, and then after, it was like I'm not going to go home, but if I get a divorce, that's bad in the eyes of the church, and my sister, who is extremely Catholic... (F02)

Living with the abuser for a long time, abused women tended to lose themselves.

They came to think, "I was the crazy one" and the abuse was "a reaction to a crazy person." (F22) They were emotionally drained. They "didn't know what to do" and "contemplated suicide." (F19)

I lost what was. I became a shadow of a person. There was no M02. My sisters had talked to me about it, too. They were concerned that I ...I was a shadow. I had no will to live. I had no wishes. I had no...I couldn't even dream of what I wanted to happen in the future. There was no future...The only place I felt safe was curled up in a corner of the basement. That's how bad it got...I was not functional at all...He drained my person...I think the thought that somebody can actually change a person from what they really are...umm...is amazing that somebody can have that power. And I considered myself to be intelligent and I had done a lot

when I was young. I traveled by myself and did a lot like that, and toward the end, even going to the grocery store was considered, you know, major, major thing for me to...I lost myself...it was very horrible. (F02)

Subthemes of "ready to change" included "felt danger to herself," "realized danger to the children," "realized that she was not the cause of the abuse," "started to do things to become more independent," and "decided to leave." The first three subthemes are related to awareness of the abuse, as the first two concern the effects of the abuse and the third one comes from positive responses by informal social networks and formal social services. Becoming aware of the abuse and active engagement in making changes related to ending the abuse were not distinctively separate stages, but rather a continuum.

Some women found that the abuse progressed toward another stage, coming to realize that they could be killed by their abuser either intentionally or unintentionally. F11's oldest daughter made the following statement and then quit coming over to visit her right before the most recent incident of abuse. She said, "I'm going to come over there one day and find you dead. And I don't want to find you that way." She said her daughter's comment "planted a seed" and she accepted that "it was a possibility." (F11)

Other examples are:

It was just like...all of a sudden...it just felt like something washed over me...umm...a feeling, and I relaxed and just put my arms down to my side and thought, "Well, he's going to kill me, there's nothing I can do. Let's just get it over with." (F15)

As soon as my head hit the wall, I knew, I knew it was something that I could be killed over...it was...it was that scary. Before I had never been, you know, he scared me. But he had never physically... it had never been that physical. Um, that you know, to my head and to my eye... It was like all at once. And I, I just...I knew then....And it was, it had become that violent that there was no other choice. (F19)

She never planned to leave, but “he was what I call knocking some sense into my head, when he did that...” (F19)

Other women felt that the level of abuse was progressing “another step higher.”

The abuse happened not only “in public” but also “when he was not drunk.”

It always happened in our house and ... it was in public, and he didn't care and he was trying to chock me, kept saying he was going to kill me, and ...and I was thinking ...he wasn't worried about getting caught. He wasn't worried about anybody seeing him actually chocking me or nothing. You know, that's...that scared me a lot...I guess...like other times...he would just be really drunk all the time so I always thought he was going to end up killing me if...if...but he wouldn't realize it because he was so drunk. Do you know what I mean? Like...but I think this time, he was...I don't think he was drunk, but he was...in...in saying it, you know, “I'm going to kill you...you're dead,” and... (F25)

Realization of the danger to their children seemed to propel a big change. The women expressed this change in various ways, including "set a fire in my butt," "the last straw," and "a click point (F02)." F12 suspected that he had sexually abused her daughter:

I don't care what you do to me. I can survive anything. They're ...they're children. Their spirits are so precious...anybody that could hurt them to get sexual gratification or any kind of gratification is just...a parasite...and that, for me, that's...any abuse of any form to children...just set a fire in my butt... Can't tolerate that one... (F12)

I thought, “It was the last straw when he actually physically laid a hand on one of the kids.” (F11)

The women came to be aware that they were not the cause of the abuse. They described that moment as "the eye opener," or "a magic." The awareness "started to click" when they encountered other women getting through the same thing. It seemed that those encounters meant a lot to the women because it freed them from all the

blame, including "self-blaming."

It was like the eye opener of all eye openers because we were all married to the same God-damn man. You know...it was...I was just aware when I would sit there and hear all these different women describe what I was going through. I just couldn't fathom that there was that many people doing this same thing. (F12)

The magic for me was finding out I wasn't alone in this, that there are other people that have gone through the same kind of thing and they have come out okay and that there's that wonderful world...world of choice beyond...that you don't have to live that way anymore. You know, and I think, for me, knowing that things were done to me and I didn't cause them to happen, helped me so much, so much to know that...that self-blaming and...and to be okay with who I am and ...gave me the strength to hold my head up. (F22)

One woman explained that she finally admitted that she was being abused while she was staying in a shelter after the most recent incident. She pointed out that "that was the changing point in my life."

I think it was the final admitting I am abused...I was totally sick from the stomach pumping (laughing)...umm...shaking because of scared and stopped drinking and the medication and everything like that...umm...but at that point, I never, ever desired a drink. I had done or stepped over or...there's a reason for me to go on. I don't have to give up. So I think that was the changing point in my life. And I admitted I was...totally turned in life around in those couple of days in the shelter and started opening up... "No, you don't have to have cuts and bruises to be abused," and "It's harder to heal the inside hurt..." it has to stop. There was no going on from that point. I could take no more, so... (F02)

The women started to do things to become more independent of their abusers. For example, one woman "got herself on welfare," "took a driver's permit," "got a job," "went to a self-esteem group," and "went to a domestic violence service." The women did these things right before the most recent incident of abuse, and only left when they felt that they had "enough strength." Engaged in those activities, the women gained more strength.

Then right after D1 died, we had to move because he wouldn't stay in that house and I started doing things to become more independent, and he didn't like that

either. I went and got myself on welfare, went and started...I took a driver's permit. I said I was going to get my own license and get a job and do what I had to do to get the hell out of there. (F12)

I had...umm...gained enough strength to go...and I got a job...my first interview, and they had taken me through and were excited to have me, they (company) were going to just start me out at a couple of hours and I could add as I wanted to, and I'd be in my own little cubicle and I felt, you know, I didn't want to do this, but this was something that maybe will help me, and I can reach out. (F02)

Um, I was working, It would have, had gotten really bad between us. We hated to be around each other. Um, I had been going to, he thought I was going to a self-esteem group and I was going C (DV program) and taking um, I was going to a support group on coupling, and um, I knew the end was coming and I just, I didn't know how to do it.... (F19)

She recollected that, at that particular time, he could feel changes in her. She "became more verbal," calling him "a crack head" when he blamed her that she was ugly and fat. Her inner voice said, "I'm not taking this shit no more." (F19)

One woman decided to leave her abuser and put her name on the list at Legal Aid because "it was getting worse." She got a letter from Legal Aid saying that her name had come up.

I called them and I said, "Yes, send me the papers." M12 got the papers out of the mailbox and really blew a gasket. (F12)

F25 had never considering getting out of the relationship "in her whole life." She thought that "that was the way she was going to live the rest of her life." However, she changed her mind when she had to go through Child Protection;

That's when I started realizing this is the beginning of the end, and this is going to buy my way out...so it was toward the end that I felt like... (F25)

When they decided to end the relationship, some women left their abusers by leaving the house and others kicked him out of the house. The following quote shows how F19 prepared to leave her abuser. They had to move to another apartment and she

planned to use it as a chance to leave him.

I had, something in me had been changing, too. And, you know, I had all those thoughts. I had already been preparing. I just didn't really know it. I mean I knew I was preparing. I just didn't do it the whole way that they said I should. But, you know, I had all out important papers um, his drivers license, everything. Bills and everything else, just, you know, I left everything else, you know, photo albums and everything. But, I just knew I was separating my identity from him and that he couldn't have, I didn't leave any of my, my Social Security number, drivers license, name, address...S1's birth certificate, nothing, I didn't leave anything. It was all in a box. And um, a lot of stuff I had thrown away that was not going to be used. Um, things were already packed up... (F19)

When the women left the house they shared with their abusers, they tended to plan it thoroughly. Sometimes their informal social network members were involved in this process of leaving.

My son and I sat down together and made plans. We packed a suitcase and hid it out in the garage. I called one of the girls in women's group program, saying that we needed someplace to go right away. As soon as he came home, we escaped from the house. A friend from women's group program called at her home to check if we were safe and coming. We stayed at the friend's house for the weekend. On Monday, I took my son to daycare and went downtown and got order for protection for him. (F11)

Others attempted to end the relationship by kicking their abuser out of the house.

I kicked him out of the house, and it was the end of January when I went into the hospital, so it was within the first month... (F22)

Although they were separated from their abuser, it did not mean that the abuse had ended. For example, F11 and F22 took actions to be separated from their intimate partners after a specific incident of abuse, but the abuse by their partners happened again. Leaving cannot be regarded as the way to end the abuse.

Subthemes of "maintain the change" include "tried to get herself back," and "tried to restore the relationship with her children." The women usually tried to get themselves back a while after the most recent incident of abuse had occurred. Some women went

back to school and got professional degrees. For example, F05 stated, "I decided I had to do something for me and I applied to law school." (F05) and F11 said, "After he died, I went to the college. It changed my life." (F11)

Other women tried to build their work careers. F02 found a job at the apartment building where she moved after leaving the shelter. She started with a caretaking job, but became "a human resource person."

They hired me, and S1 and I moved into the Village and from that caretaking, I was given a building of my own, and from that I went into leasing apartments, and from leasing apartments, I went into residential...umm...I forget. They gave me this title. I didn't get a raise, but they gave me this title, so whenever there were problems, I would be the one to sit down with the residents and try to solve them....It was a pretty big complex, and so I was kind of human resource person...(laughing). (F02)

Still others tried to rebuild themselves from the inside by going back to their religion or by learning about healthy relationships. It seemed that they rehabilitated themselves from the deep effects of the abuse.

I stopped listening to most of the outside world. I literally shut it off. And um, I started going to a homeopath. And I started going deeper and deeper into the beliefs and the parts of me that really held to be me....and tapping into the gift that God gave me. (F05)

Being able to learn about boundaries and where...where I stop and somebody else starts. I didn't know any of that stuff. I was just like this...I don't know. Just this being kind of gloppy, glob running through life, not knowing... (F22)

The women also tried to restore the relationships with their children. This did not seem to be an easy process, because the abuse had made it hard to be a good parent. Some women admitted that the main focus of their recovery was "to be a good role model for their children."

My recovery was my main focus, to get better and to be a...to be a good role model for my kids, the right kind of role model, to see that you can go crazy and

you can have awful things happen, but also can get better...If I wouldn't have the time to focus on myself, I still would have probably be in the same mess. (F22)

Others wanted to gain back "the respect" by setting a clear boundary between parent and child. One woman's daughter took the abuser's side and was abusive to F02 while they lived with the abuser. F02 wanted to parent her daughter;

I kept trying to reassure her that I loved her; I'm still your mother. She had a lot of anger toward me and a lot of it was again due to the drinking...I knew I had to set boundaries because before I let her walk all over me, and so now I would say, "No. This is not...in my...my home, you do not...yell or scream, you know. Don't put on temper tantrums." She'd get mad and she would leave... (I) said, "If you really don't enjoy living here, you can go home." And ...and I think as I gained, regained some of my strength, then, you know, she gained back some of the respect...and she's still staying with me. (F02)

Table 10. Turning point on victimization and readiness continuum

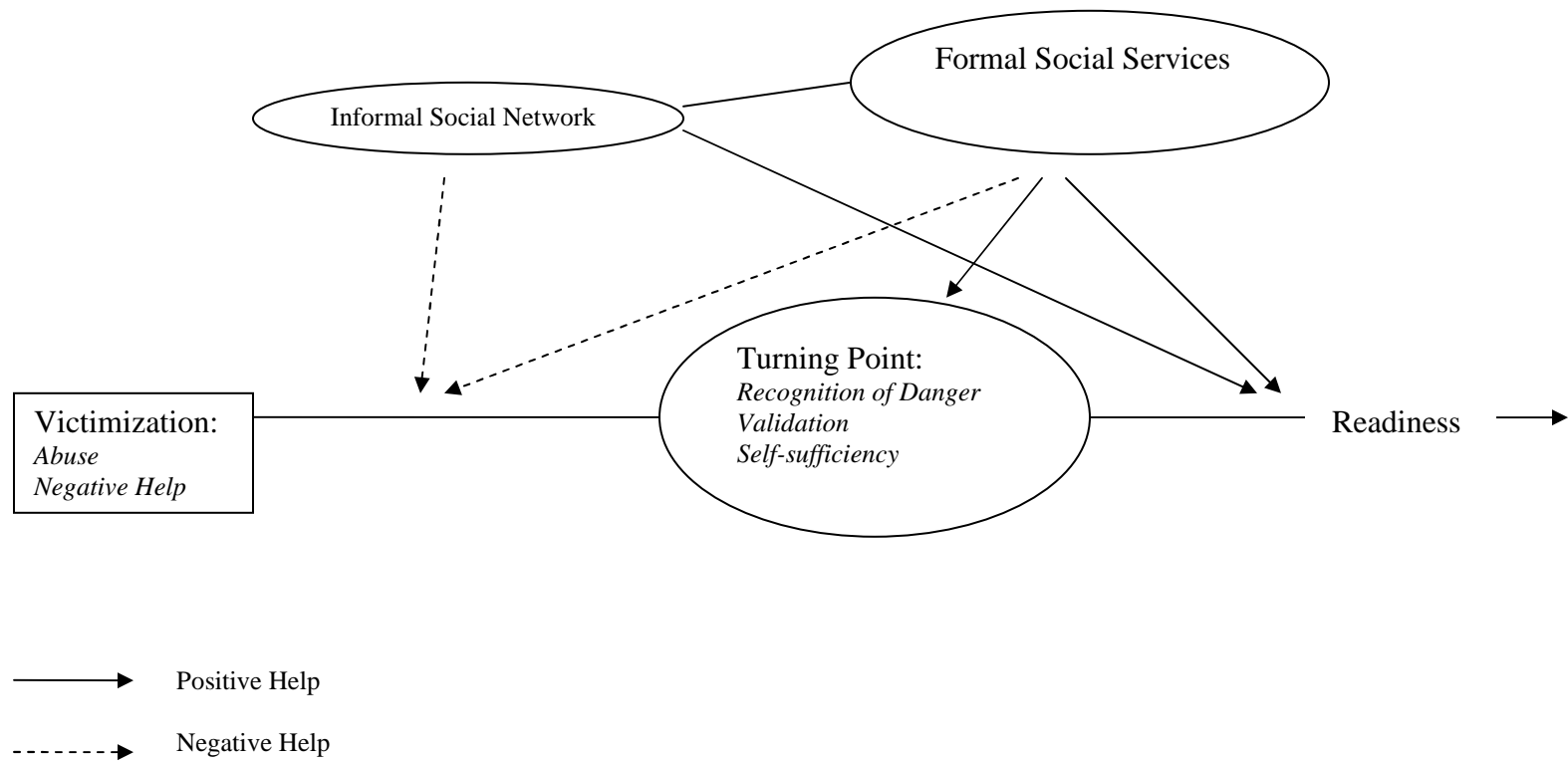
Readiness	==== Victimization ===== Turning point ===== Readiness =====>		
Themes	Not ready to change (Status quo)	Ready to change (Turning point)	Maintain the change
Subthemes	Minimized the abuse Denial Thought she could control the situation Lost herself Felt isolation Internalized the messages	Felt danger to herself Realized danger to the children Become aware that the abuse was not her fault Started to do things to become more independent Decided to leave	Tried to get herself back Tried to restore the relationship with kids
Relationship	At the beginning =====>	During the middle =====>	Toward the end =====> At the end =====> When the abuse ended
Stage	Precontemplation	Contemplation/Preparation/Action	Maintenance

Chapter 8. Discussion

This study attempted to conceptualize battered women's help-seeking strategies and the "help" they sought, and to construct a theoretical model for battered women's help-seeking from formal social services. First, battered women's help-seeking strategies from formal social services were conceptualized with five categories, "seeking emotional support," "seeking information/education," "seeking problem-solving," "seeking resources," and "seeking protection." "Problem-solving" was not found under the informal social network. Second, "help" that battered women sought was conceptualized into "positive help" and "negative help." Third, a theoretical model for battered women's help-seeking from formal social services was introduced (Figure 2).

Battered women's help-seeking is explained on the continuum from victimization to readiness. The women's experiences of abuse and negative help from informal social networks contributed to their victimization at the interpersonal level and negative help from formal social services contributed to their victimization at the societal level. The turning point was constructed on the continuum of victimization and readiness based on the women's recognition of danger, validation from formal social services, and self-sufficiency through their contact with formal social services. Informal social networks often connected the women to formal social services and vice versa. The women turned from victimization to readiness through their turning point. Before they reached this turning point, negative responses from informal social networks and formal social services increase their victimization. However, after reaching the turning point, negative responses of those help sources did not affect the women's readiness.

Figure 2. A modified conceptual model for battered women's help-seeking



Battered Women's Diverse Help-seeking Strategies as Actions to End the Abuse

This study showed battered women's help-seeking strategies from informal social networks and formal social services. The women in this study used diverse help-seeking strategies from formal social services to get help for emotional support, information/education, problem-solving, resources, and protection. The women tended to use more help-seeking strategies to get assistance from formal social services towards the end of relationship, when they were approaching a turning point. Their help-seeking strategies from formal social services were much more diverse compared to the strategies they used with their informal social networks.

It is noteworthy that the women's help-seeking from formal social services was not limited to seeking protection. They also sought help with emotional support, information/education, problem-solving, and resources. This result supports the findings of previous research (Allen, et al., 2004; Cluss et al., 2006). Allen et al. found from a study of 278 battered women who had stayed in a Midwest shelter program that battered women have a multitude of needs, including safety related needs and other basic needs, and they suggest that service providers recognize the need for a comprehensive response to survivors' needs. Programs that focus exclusively on one domain of service delivery are unlikely to meet the full range of needs that women present.

It is important for women to meet their basic needs in order to increase their safety (Davies, 2001; Dutton, 1992; Gondolf, 1998). This finding is particularly important given that coordinated community response efforts almost always focus on creating reforms in the criminal justice system, but often fail to address broader social and human service delivery needs (Allen, et al., 2004). While not wanting to minimize

the importance of a criminal justice response in fostering batterer accountability, it is also essential to focus on battered women's varied and self-identified needs and to increase their access to those resources. Connecting women to the breadth of resources they identified as important may play a greater role in fostering their safety than focusing only on criminal action against the abuser (Allen, et al, 2004; Davies, Lyon, & Monti-Catania, 1998; Goodman, Bennett, & Dutton, 1999). Cluss et al. (2006) defined a range of help-seeking behaviors as "safety seeking behavior." This is supported by another study that found that having adequate tangible support, such as child care and transportation, was positively related to battered women's decisions to participate in the prosecution of their batterers (Goodman, et al., 1999).

Positive and Negative Aspects of Formal Social Services

This study shows that help from formal social services has both positive and negative aspects. Positive help from formal social services promotes a woman's transition toward a turning point on the continuum of victimization and readiness. Other than protection, the women in this study especially wanted formal social service providers to value their self-determination (emotional support), validate that what they were experiencing is abuse, and that the abuse is not their fault (information/education). Moreover, they identified financial assistance, transportation, other material resources, education (GED or professional degree), and services for children as positive help that they sought from formal social services. Allen et al.'s (2004) study supports the result of this study. They also found that a significant portion of women needed to address issues beyond meeting basic needs, such as housing, material goods, and services. Many women were focused primarily on continuing their educations and obtaining

employment. It is important that service providers assist women in achieving these life goals. A focus on only meeting women's basic needs, while necessary, may be insufficient for many women. They mention that it requires us to think "outside the box" when considering how to serve battered women (Davies, 2001; Allen, et al., 2004).

Negative responses from formal social services keep abused women in the "not ready to change" status. Blaming women for the abuse was found to be one of the negative responses of formal social services. Court officials view victims as pathetic, stupid, or even deserving of the abuse they have endured. The victim-blaming attitudes and behaviors of court professionals create an atmosphere of intolerance and paternalism towards women (Gillis, et al., 2006). Erez and Belknap's (1998) study of 498 battered women from the Victim Assistance Program affiliated with the prosecutor's office in two counties in Ohio found that half of the women participants stated that they encountered discouraging comments from police officers investigating their cases, and some felt that the police were even inclined to side with the male abusers.

The attitudes and behaviors of police who hold "power to refer, arrest, investigate, and influence access to other parts of the criminal justice system and various social service agencies" have a strong impact on women's experiences of the legal system (Gillis, et al., 2006).

The women in this study felt it was not helpful when service providers failed to intervene. Victim blaming is connected to noninvolvement of service providers in the abuse. Court officials who hold a victim blaming attitude will not get victim cooperation in prosecuting their partner (Gillis, et al., 2006).

"Failed to keep her informed with the legal processes" was also one of the negative types of help identified in this study. Women tend to be unfamiliar with the process of laying charges and testifying in court. Officials often fail to provide women with information about "what they should expect from the trial process and about their rights as survivors and witnesses" (Gillis, et al., 2006). Women are also often confused and frustrated by the criminal justice process and find court procedures and evidentiary rules disturbing, inappropriate, and unhelpful.

The women in this study wanted professionals in the health and mental health fields to acknowledge that the abuse is the cause of their symptoms or illness, such as depression, anxiety, or alcoholism. There is ample evidence that battered women frequently use the health care system, but their abuse is not detected without overt screening or assessment (Plichta, 2007). Even when the abuse is detected, women may not receive the services that they need. Studies generally indicate that battered women want to be asked about the abuse, that health care providers are reluctant to intervene with battered women, and that most health care institutions are unprepared to assist battered women or the clinicians that seek to help them (Plichta, 2007).

The women in this study mentioned that formal social services often failed to enforce the full range of legal remedies. Some researchers support this result by noting that many court officials perceive domestic violence as a victimless crime because of the relationship between the abuser and the victim (Erez & Belknap, 1998; Gillis, et al., 2006). Others show that while protective orders appear to offer substantive relief to victims, they are "just a piece of paper" (Logan, et al., 2008) when they are not enforced. Still others mention that police tend not to take the case seriously or fail to

provide adequate protection by not arresting the abuser, minimizing domestic violence situations, disbelieving the victim, adopting a "we don't care" attitude, and behaving arrogantly toward abused women (Stephens & Sinden, 2000).

The women in this study thought it was negative help when formal social services failed to value their self-determination. Many women perceived that, in order to get help from formal social services, they must be prepared to end the relationship. This focus on ending the violence and relationship is apparent in the domestic violence research (Fugate, et al., 2005). The study participants confirmed that women were more readily referred to legal help by police when the women appeared determined to change their situation rather than expressing ambivalence. The women in this study often heard from members of their informal social networks and formal social services that they should leave, and from others that they should stay and preserve the family. In either case, women may be reluctant to seek further help because they perceive that an intervention from further help-seeking may cause their relationship to end.

Importance and Limitations of Informal Social Networks

Battered women's help-seeking strategies from informal social networks were not found as diverse as those from formal social services. They were limited to the categories of "seeking emotional support," "seeking information/education," and "seeking protection." It is noteworthy that battered women sought help from informal social networks not only for emotional support but also for protection. In particular, it was found that battered women seek help both from informal social networks and formal social services together when they seek protection.

Battered women's help-seeking from informal social networks has importance in

ways that they are the first contact a battered woman makes (Kelly, 1996; Goodkind, et al., 2003), the most frequent contact (Schulman, 1979), and a connector/enabler of women to formal social services (Rose, et al., 2000). The battered women's help-seeking from informal social networks was started relatively early and was made more frequently compared to that from formal social services. The members of the women's informal social networks sometimes enabled the women to seek more formal support. The women also utilized their informal social network members as a part of their safety plan.

Battered women's help-seeking from informal social networks is not always positive (Lempert, 1997; Kocot & Goodman, 2003). Although their informal social networks provided the women in this study with emotional support and protection, they were also a source of blame and mixed messages affecting the women's further help-seeking. Kocot and Goodman's (2003) study found that women were more disempowered when they got these mixed messages or advice to stay with their partners.

Help-seeking on a Continuum of Victimization and Readiness

The battered women's help-seeking from formal social services happened along a continuum of victimization and readiness, affecting the construction of the turning point. Battered women cannot be fully explained as either victims or survivors. "Survivor" and "victim" are identities that can co-exist within the same individual at the same time. This explanation permits a fuller exploration of the meaning of agency in the lives of battered women by rejecting the all-victim and all-agency approaches (Mahoney, 1994). As "victims," they are not entirely passive, and as "agents," they are

not co-acting equals in their interactions with their partners and others.

Their help-seeking overtures also occur within complex relational dynamics that both limit and evoke external assistance (Lempert, 1997). When women seek help from formal social services, they take a series of actions. However, these actions are not always successful and the women are often victimized by service providers. For example, the prosecution process is a period of intense stress for women survivors of violence, as they must face an intimidating legal process while they are still vulnerable to further acts of violence by their partners (Gillis, et al., 2006).

Victimization continues throughout the relationship, even after women are aware of the abuse or leave their abusers. Women's experience of abuse by their partners and negative help from their informal social network and formal social services keep them in the status quo. However, these experiences do not stop them from seeking help to change their situations after a "turning point."

Turning point: Transition from Victimization to Readiness

The turning point is important with regard to women's readiness to change the status quo, but it has not received much attention from researchers in the field of domestic violence. There is little literature on the phenomenology of the experiences that lead women who have remained in violent relationships to the turning point. Only two studies support the turning point model that, when women get to the point, they "never return back" (Eisikovits, et al., 1998; Chang, et al., 2006). The turning point is a process that provokes a transition from victimization to readiness, from victim to survivor with agency.

Victimization was a source of this transition, but once women reached the turning

point, victimization could not keep women in the status quo while it continued. For example, negative help from formal social services could negatively influence the women's further help-seeking before the turning point, but lost this influence after the women in this study reached the turning point. Logan et al.'s (2008) study of 756 women recruited from out of court at the time they received a civil protective order found that for some women, the protective order may have been the impetus for separation, while for other women it was but one part of the separation process. They maintain that women do not endlessly tolerate ongoing abuse. Finally, they suggest that advocates may want to consider assessing women's readiness (which they explained as "relationship status or intentions of separation or continuing a relationship with the protective order partner," p.383) in order to better tailor safety planning for women seeking protective orders (Logan, et al., 2008).

Construction of Turning Point

The help from formal social services that the women in this study perceived as positive was found to be essential in the women's transition from victimization to readiness. The turning point from the status quo to readiness was constructed in the following manner. First, the abuse progressed to a different level. He abused the woman beyond the way that he used to, and the children became a major target of the abuse. This suggests a "threshold for abuse," implying that after a certain point, either the injuries are serious enough or the situation becomes frightening enough, such as threatening to harm the children, to seek formal intervention to end the abuse (Fugate, et al., 2005). Fugate et al. (2005) maintained that these thresholds are personally determined and vary among women, but may not be free from others' perceptions.

Second, the women became aware that "the abuse was not their fault." They attained this validation from their involvement with formal social services. The validation was one of the most important types of help that the women sought from formal social services; only help with protection was more important. The women needed validation from a third party, especially from formal social services, to confirm their interpretations of their own situations as an "antidote to those of their partners" (Lempert, 1997). Without other perspectives, the women were unable to relinquish their old definitional frameworks and re-define their situations (Mills, 1985). Mills maintained that women come to new definitions only with the help of outside validation.

Third, the women dramatically increased their help-seeking from formal social services in order to become more independent. The women's self-sufficiency accumulated as positive help from formal social services increased. Cluss et al. (2006) identified "self-efficacy" as an important theme affecting women's tendency to move toward or away from help-seeking behaviors. They defined self-efficacy as the "belief that one has the power to produce effects by one's actions" (p.269). Self-efficacy seems to be a bigger term than self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency seems to be a precondition of self-efficacy, as women may believe that they have the power to produce effects by their actions after they build up external or internal resources for their independence from the abuser.

Women's Readiness: Stages vs. Turning point

The women in this study supported the turning point model rather than the stage of change model. The stage of change model suggests five stages of readiness to change

(Burke, Gielen, McDonnell, O'Campo, & Maman, 2001). The stages are precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance.

Because a woman's turning point is constructed with the cooperation of formal social services, the stages of contemplation, preparation, and action cannot be considered as separate stages. Cluss et al. (2006) supports this result, stating that they failed to identify those stages as separate ones, so contemplation, preparation, and action could not be considered as separate stages. In addition, the three stages did not always happen in the same order, meaning that contemplation did not always occur ahead of preparation or action. For some women, when they took action, they finally reached a contemplation stage. The women often "leapfrogged" directly over a stage, and the stages most commonly skipped were preparation and contemplation (Chang, et al., 2006).

Promoting Women's Readiness

Positive help from formal social services affects women's readiness by constructing the turning point, providing women with validation and self-sufficiency. Formal social service providers need to build awareness among battered women and communities about domestic violence to bring thresholds of abuse down. They also need to increase awareness about available services and continue to evaluate whether existing services meet women's diverse needs. Most of all, formal social service providers need to value women's self-determination while not blaming them for the abuse or for staying. Such blaming before the turning point tends to stop women from further help-seeking and affects women's readiness. This study suggests that we should continue to honor women's self-determination and not mandate specific paths of action

as the only correct way to cope with violence (Fugate, et al., 2005). The women in this study support that there may be no ideal form of help-seeking. Women make the most of what is available and may try different strategies over time as their situation changes. The women in this study suggest that formal social services should promote their readiness while respecting their self-determination.

As the turning point is a process that is constructed with the collaboration of formal social services, the providers should be prepared for women's repeated use of those services until they finally make a change. While the goal of formal social services, especially the legal system, is to end the abuse, the way to achieve that goal should be to locate women's self-determination at the center and should promote women's readiness by helping them to reach the turning point. For example, mandatory arrest and no-drop policies may be effective in achieving the goal of ending the abuse, but they do not respect women's self-determination or their readiness. Those policies may even discourage women from seeking help from the criminal justice system. Since the original core approach of the battered women's movement required that battered women take the initiative to seek help by making contact with a domestic violence shelter (Fugate, et al, 2005), domestic violence advocates must be in the forefront of supporting women with individualized and comprehensive helping strategies.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to broaden the knowledge base of battered women's help-seeking from formal social services by conceptualizing the types of help-seeking strategies they employ and "help" that they seek from informal social networks and formal social services, and by developing a theoretical model. This study identified several types of women's help-seeking strategies. From these help-seeking strategies, the women received both positive and negative help from formal social services. Whereas they sought positive help, negative help tended to yield unexpected consequences or extend the abuse that served as the source of victimization. Through identification of positive help, the diversity of "help" that women sought from formal social services became clearer. Regarding the development of a theoretical model to understand battered women's help-seeking from informal social networks and formal social services, the results of this study with women who were exposed to abuse by an intimate partner suggest that positive help from formal social services promotes women's readiness by affecting construction of a turning point in the continuum of victimization and readiness to change.

A unique contribution of this study on women's readiness is to show that the turning point model is a better fit for battered women than the stages of change model. The turning point model is not to be considered a modification of the stage of change model which explains battered women's readiness with five separate stages. It rather explains a dialectic transition from victimization to readiness that women experience as an agent when they seek help from formal social services. The role of women's help-seeking from formal social services can be more explicitly addressed in women's

transition from victimization to readiness in the turning point model. Battered women's help-seeking is only identified as actions that women take in the action stage in the stage of change model. However, in the turning point model, battered women's help-seeking is considered to be a major contributor in shaping the transition. After outlining implications for practice, policy, and future research, this chapter will describe limitations of this study.

Implications

Implications for research

While a theoretical model for battered women's help-seeking has not yet been developed, this study takes one step further in developing theoretical models for help-seeking research by placing battered women's help-seeking from formal social services along the continuum of their victimization and readiness. This study suggests that further research should focus more on the relationship between women's readiness and help-seeking from formal social services, such as how help-seeking from formal social services impacts women's readiness and vice versa. There is a need to define readiness in more varied and cultural, socio-economically, contextually specific ways. In addition, the relationship between formal social services and how they are situated in relation to informal social networks must be taken into account. The role of formal social services was found to be powerful in the construction of women's turning points, so it is suggested that further research focus more on the ways in which formal social services can help shorten the period of time the women live within the abuse in the "not ready" phase.

Future research on the effectiveness or helpfulness of formal social services needs to consider where battered women are on the continuum of victimization and readiness considering more varied context-specific meanings of victimization and readiness. Because the effectiveness of formal social services is often measured by if the abuse ended and because women who reached at the turning point are more likely to end the abuse, the results of studies on the effectiveness of formal social services may simply reflect whether women in their sample reach the turning point or not. Different ways of measuring the effectiveness of formal social services are required in order to reflect women's perceived effectiveness or helpfulness of those services.

Negative help from formal social services should also be investigated more in future research on battered women's help-seeking. The results of this study found that negative help from formal social services inhibits women from future help-seeking before they reach the turning point and keep them in the status quo. Most help-seeking research tends to detach women from their victimization. However, it is noteworthy that their victimization continues when they seek help from formal social services and their informal social networks. For example, battered women often encountered their informal social networks and formal social services delivering societal norms which affected women's help-seeking negatively as they inhibited women from further help-seeking. As women in this study addressed, they often felt that formal social service providers blamed the abuse by the abuser on her. The aspects of negative help need to be explored further including how class, race, and gender power relationships intersect in the process of battered women's help-seeking.

It is suggested that future research on battered women's help-seeking also be integrated with studies on children's exposure to domestic violence. The results of this study found that women's recognition of the danger to their children is important in the construction of the turning point. Although thresholds for abuse imply a certain point at which the abuse on women escalates in different levels, it may also indicate the point of time when women come to lose enough control over their children's safety that is intolerable for them.

Research on batterers' turning points, if there are any, is also suggested. Studies on women's readiness are still very rare. However, because it is the abuser's responsibility to end the violence, it is suggested that further research examine if batterer's turning points exist.

Implications for practice

Service providers can learn to target interventions to women's readiness by providing positive help, including emotional support, information and education, problem-solving, resources, and protection. They also need to be aware that women's involvement with formal services can be their initial attempt to end the abuse, so they need to be prepared to provide for women's repeated use of those services without blame until they get to their turning point.

Women's victimization should be understood as operating along a continuum, and service providers who assist battered women must be aware of this continuum. They must be trained and prepared to address women's experiences of abuse by their intimate partners in the context of a variety of other victimizing experiences. Women's victimizing experiences may be shaped by the politics of racial and class based

stereotyping. They should provide services to promote women's readiness while they respect women's self-determination.

It is suggested that service providers work collaboratively with other social services to mobilize women's informal social networks. When service providers work collaboratively and encourage women to mobilize their informal social networks, they must remain aware that informal social networks and other formal social services have both positive and negative aspects.

Service providers should also be aware that women have a multitude of needs, and they must consider all of women's needs in order for women to be ready to make a change. Service providers should regard themselves as important parts that promote the change.

Implications for policy

While the police and legal system's responses to domestic violence have improved greatly over the last two decades, continuing evidence of their inappropriate responses to domestic violence suggests that there is still room for improvement in their implementation of the policies. The police and legal system are supposed to enforce the policies to help protect women. However, these policies tend to be friendly only for women who have already decided to leave their abusers. Service providers tend to stereotype battered women who are eligible to the services, and this stereotyping tends to be built through the practice of class and race. This, in turn, affects battered women's help-seeking. The police and legal system's attitudes toward women who were involved with them repeatedly were found to be negative, disrespecting the women's self-determination. As long as the police and legal system are positioned as the primary

mechanisms of help for women, it is imperative that they strive to have positive and supportive interactions with all battered women. If not, women may continue to be dissuaded from using the very systems that they are most expected and encouraged to use, thereby severely limiting avenues of help-seeking available to them. While maintaining the goal of these policies to end the abuse, the police and legal system still need to respect women's self-determination and promote women's empowerment.

Limitations

All the participants of this study were survivors who had ended the abuse at the time of the interview. The results of this study may be affected by this participant characteristic. Battered women who were not included in this study may not use as many diverse help-seeking strategies, or may not get as much positive help from formal social services. However, to understand battered women's help-seeking from formal social services in the context of helping them to end the abuse, it was necessary to focus on the survivors' help-seeking experiences.

Battered women's help-seeking from informal social networks and formal social services was discussed in this study, while other ways of help-seeking, such as self-help, were not included. Thus, this study might have missed the chance to catch a wider variety of self-help seeking strategies. Considering that women may spend a much longer time without seeking any help from outside, it would be meaningful to explore this further.

Reasons for not seeking help were included in this study, but were not fully explored because of the limitations of the data. Understanding the reasons for not seeking help can also be essential for improving women's help-seeking from formal

social services. The women's interview answers in this regard tended to be short and without follow-up questions. This may have partly been done to protect the women from blaming themselves for not seeking help. Interviews focused more on exploring the negative responses of services in order to identify possible barriers that may inhibit women's help-seeking.

The women's turning points were explored only indirectly. Identification of women's readiness was not one of the primary intentions of the original research project, so questions asking women about their moments of change were not included in the interview guide. However, it was not difficult to identify these turning points within their stories because all of the women addressed these moments with a full expression of their thoughts and emotional states.

This study did not adapt intersectional feminism as a main framework for the analysis because of the limitations of data. Although race was found to have shaped women's experiences of abuse and their help-seeking processes; however, the ratio of women in this study from minority communities was relatively small for a comparison between racial groups. Nevertheless, the analysis from this perspective was included in the findings section. Future research on battered women's help-seeking will benefit from it.

Despite these limitations, this study makes a significant contribution to the help-seeking literature by conceptualizing "help-seeking strategies" and "help" according to women's identification of these concepts and by advancing a theoretical understanding of battered women's help-seeking from formal social services.

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Appendix A. Summary of Link Face-to-face Interview Guide

Part One

A. Beginning of relationship

1. What was that person's first name?
2. What was your relationship with that person?
3. Can you tell me a little about when and how your relationship began?
4. What was your relationship with him like in the beginning?

B. Onset of abuse

1. At what point in the relationship would you say it became abusive?
2. Did it begin with verbal, emotional, physical or sexual sorts of abuse?
3. How often was your partner abusive to you in the beginning?

C. Types, frequency, and patterns of abuse

1. How often would you say your partner was abusive to you in the relationship, overall?
2. Was he ever verbally abusive? How frequently was he verbally abusive towards you?
3. Was he ever emotionally abusive? How frequently was he emotionally abusive towards you?
4. Was he ever manipulative or controlling towards you? How frequently was he manipulative or controlling?
5. Was he ever physically abusive towards you? How frequently was he physically abusive towards you?
6. Was he ever sexually abusive towards you? How frequently was he sexually abusive towards you?
7. Were there any other ways that your partner was abusive towards you that we have not already talked about?

D. Change in the abuse and violence over time

1. Can you tell me about the ways the abuse you experienced changed over time from the beginning to the end of your relationship?
2. What do you think contributed to these things changing over time?
3. Looking back on what you described, which type of violence and abuse do you think was the worst or most difficult for you?
4. Can you tell me more about what it was about that type of abuse that was hardest?

E. Children: General

1. How many children do you have?
2. How many lived with you at the time of the relationship?
3. When was each of them born beginning with the oldest one first?
4. What are their first names?

5. What is the sex of each of your children?
6. Do any of the children have some type of physical, emotional, or behavioral disability?
7. What is _____'s relationship to you?
8. What is _____'s relationship to the man who was abusive to you?

F. Children: Involvement with abuse

1. When would you say _____ first became aware of the abuse that was directed at you by your partner? About how old was he/she then?
2. How do you think _____ first became aware of the abuse that was directed at you by your partner?
3. Did _____ ever try to get involved in any of the incidents of abuse in any way?
4. Did _____ ever talk with you about the abuse?
5. From your perspective, were parenting issues or issues related to the children ever a factor in the abuse your partner directed at you?
6. What worries did you have about how the violence might be affecting the children at the time the abuse was going on?
7. Did you have different worries about different children? If so, can you tell me more about what your worries were for particular children and why?

G. Physical abuse and threat of abuse to children

1. Can you tell me about any fears you had about your partner harming your children?
2. Were there any times when your partner was physically abusive toward your children?
3. How often was your partner physically abusive towards your children?
4. Which child(ren) was he physically abusive toward?
5. In what ways was he physically abusive?
6. Were there any times when your partner was verbally abusive toward your children?
7. How often was your partner verbally abusive towards your children?
8. Which child(ren) was he verbally abusive toward?
9. In what ways was he verbally abusive?
10. Were there any times when your partner was sexually abusive toward your children?
11. How often was your partner sexually abusive towards your children?
12. Which child(ren) was he sexually abusive toward?
13. Were there any times when your partner was abusive toward your child(ren) in some other ways that we have not talked about? If so, can you tell me about what other ways he was abusive to them?
14. How often was your partner abusive in this other way towards your children?
15. Which child(ren) was he abusive toward in this manner?
16. Are there any other ways that your partner was abusive towards your children?
17. Do you think you were more likely to be abusive, overtly aggressive or violent

with your children because of the abuse you were experiencing? If so, can you tell me about how you see that?

18. Were there any times when your children were physically harmed by you?
19. When were your child(ren) first harmed by you? Was it before or after the abuse towards you began?
20. Which of your children did you harm?
21. What sorts of things happened? What types of abuse occurred?
22. How frequently would you say that you were physically abusive toward your children?
23. Were there any times that you might have been verbally or emotionally abusive toward your children?
24. When were your child(ren) first verbally or emotionally harmed by something you did? Was it before or after the abuse towards you began?
25. Which of your children do you feel you verbally or emotionally harmed?
26. What sorts of things happened? What types of verbal or emotional abuse occurred?
27. How frequently would you say that you were verbally or emotionally abusive toward your children?
28. How did the abuse you experienced affect your ability to be the kind of parent you wanted to be for your children?
29. In what other ways did the abuse you experienced affect your relationship with your children?
30. Were the children ever used as a tool of your partner's abuse and violence?
31. Do you see any connections between the abuse that occurred to you and that which occurred to the children?
32. Were there times when you feared for the children's safety at your partner's hands if you didn't intervene?
33. Did any particular child get more involved than other children in the abuse that was occurring to you? Can you tell me about that?
34. Do you feel you or your partner's use of abuse or violence toward your children changed over time?

Part Two

A. Incident in general

1. Can you tell me about how the incident of abuse toward you began?
2. Can you tell me about what happened during this incident using as many specific details as possible?
3. What ended this incident, or how did it end?
4. What were the results of the incident?

B. Children's involvement: Specific incident

1. During the incident of abuse toward you, the one you have been describing, where were your children?
2. If the children were present or in the house or area, what did they do?

3. How did your partner respond to them?
4. How did you respond to your children at the time of this incident?
5. Were any of the children injured in this incident? If yes, how?
6. Following this incident, did any of the children talk to you about it?
7. As far as you know, did the children see or talk to your partner after the incident?
8. In the aftermath of this incident, how did your children react?
9. Is there anything I have not already asked about, that you feel is significant to describing this particular incident?

C. Informal resources

1. Did you talk to any family, relatives, friends, neighbors, or co-workers about the abuse after this incident? Or did any of these people I just listed find out about the abuse and talk to you after the incident?
2. Can you give me just their first names and their relationships to you?
3. How did _____ find out about it?
4. How did you feel about _____ knowing?
5. Was this the first time you talked to _____ about the abuse? If so, what prompted you to talk to _____ his time?
6. How soon after the incident did _____ become involved?
7. How did _____ respond? What did they do or say?
8. Did _____ ever suggest that you talk to someone else or go somewhere for help with the abuse? If so, where did they suggest that you go? Who did they suggest that you talk to? (Which ones? Did you go or contact them? Can you tell me why or why not?)
9. How supportive do you feel _____ was of you?
10. Was there something else you would have liked _____ to do?
11. Did talking to _____ about the abuse change your relationship with them in any way? In what ways?

D. Formal system

D1. Police services

D2. Child Protection services

D3. Medical services

D4. Legal services

D5. Domestic violence services

D6. Other professional/social services

1. Did they become involved with this incident?
2. How did they become involved? (Did you call them? Did your partner call them? Did one of your children call them? If yes, did you know your child was going to call them? Someone else – who?)
3. When did they become involved? (During the incident? Immediately after? At some later time?)
4. How did they respond to you?
5. How did they respond to your partner?
6. How did they respond to your children?

7. To your knowledge, did they make a report to Child Protection as a result of this incident? If so, can you tell me what happened with that?
8. Did they suggest that you talk to any other professionals? Who did they suggest that you contact or where did they suggest that you go? (Which ones? Which of those did you go to or contact? If you did not contact them, why did you not contact them?)
9. In general, how satisfied were you with the way they responded to you after this incident?
10. In general, how helpful were they following this incident?
11. In general, how effective were the actions of the police in decreasing or ending the violence or in helping you to leave the abusive relationship?
12. Is there something else you would have liked them to do after this incident? If so what?

D7. Most helpful

1. As you reflect upon this particular incident, I am interested in knowing what you think was most helpful for you at that point of time. This might have been a particular person, or an agency, or any combination of responses. Looking back at this incident, who or what was the most helpful to you and why?
2. How did the professionals involved work together (collaborate) to help you and your children?

D8. Counselor/counseling/therapy – Ever

D9. Alcohol or drug treatment services – Ever

D10. Clergy services –Ever

E. Most helpful overall & Collaboration

1. Overall, who or what was most helpful to you in stopping the violence?
2. What about that person or agency was so helpful?
3. Overall, who or what was least helpful to you during this time?
4. What about that person or agency was so unhelpful?
5. Is it important to you that certain services work with each other to serve families where there is domestic abuse occurring? If yes, which ones do you think should work together?
6. In order for different services to work together, in your opinion, what would need to happen?
7. Are there some services that you would want to remain separate and not collaborate with other agencies? If yes, which ones? Why not?

F. Family of origin questions

1. Who raised you and who did you live with while you were growing up?
2. As a child, what was your parent's relationship like?
3. Did you witness or were you ever involved in any abusive or violent incidents between your mother and father (or her partner)?
4. As a child, what was your relationship like with your parents or the adults who

- raised you?
5. How did your parents discipline you?
 6. Were you or any of your siblings abused or maltreated in any way by your parents?
 7. Were you ever abused or maltreated by others especially others in your family?
 8. If there was abuse, did you ever talk with anyone about what happened to you when you were a child?
 9. Who raised him (your partner) and who did he live with while he was growing up?
 10. As a child, what was his parent's relationship like?
 11. Did he witness or was he ever involved in any abusive incidents between his mother and father/her partner?
 12. As a child, what was his relationship like with his parents or the adults who raised him?
 13. How did his parents discipline him?
 14. Was he or were any of his siblings abused or maltreated in anyway by his parents?
 15. If there was abuse or violence, as far as you know, did he ever talk with anyone about what happened to him when he was a child?

Appendix B. Types of abuse on women by the abuser

Types of abuse	Abuse	Examples
Verbal	Yelling	Uh-huh. Before that time, it would be...umm...sometimes it was almost daily because at nighttime he would wake me up in the middle of the night and start yelling about his job and about the family and...stuff like that, so... (F02)
	Swearing	He would always find something. Cussing, swearing, and using sexual connotations. (F22)
Emotional	Blame her for housework	I: So something is wrong with the company... R: It's because his home life is so bad and... (F02)
	Blamed her for parenting	Um, you know, but I was uh, um, towards the, you know, after we had a child, that I wasn't a good mother, that I would be, I would be an abusive mother. (F19)
	Blame her for her appearance	You know, "You should be glad I would marry you." You know, "You're useless." Those things were always there. But, that was more of a carryover, you know, (pause). I mean he didn't like me physically. (F05)
	Blamed her for her personality	He hated me because of bubbly personality, which I had always been told was one of my pluses. He hated me for that because everybody liked me, no matter where I went. (F12)
	Blamed her for his problem	"I started to go off on my own and being with other friends, and he did not like that at all. That was the actual first time the physical abuse happened....He was going to come over or something and I left early so I wouldn't have to deal with all the questions and fighting and stuff, so then he had went off and he got really drunk and he got into an accident in his truck, and he smashed his truck and the next day he came over, and he brought that up, that was my fault and he slapped me. That is when it all started." (F25)
	Blamed her childhood experience of abuse	Um, he would um, you know, when you're - in a relationship you kind of confide in your childhood, he kind of used that against, he used that against me later on, by you know, saying this is why you were sexually abused or this is probably why your step-mother hit you. Those things. (F19)
	Calling her names	At first it was like...umm....like name calling, you know, he would talk, you know, say bad things about me all the time to make me feel bad. And he would start to, I don't know how to explain it. Like, you know, if there were a lot of other people around, he would try to say stuff in front of a lot of people...personal things about me, like to try to embarrass me or make feel bad in front of other people. It started out like that. (F25)
	Calling her family names	I mean he, he would um, he would, you know, like, wouldn't call me names, but my family - he's Black and I'm White, and my family's White. And so he would use that against me. That I was you know, um, just use, just that in itself, use that against me. And also knowing that I wasn't having family support at that time. (F19)
	Not enough	Nothing I ever did was good. He told me that I was fat and ugly and lazy...that I was a terrible mother and whatever I did with the kids was wrong. (F22)
Accused her of having an affair	He told me that I was having an affair with a guy that was on board the ship with him. I was never having an affair. When I	

		got pregnant with my third daughter. He said, "Well, that's not my child." (F22)
	Isolation	Leaving me alone. At one point we lived out in the country for about three years and I had an infant child and no telephone and no transportation. I was completely isolated. I was scared...all the time something would happen. (F22)
	Silent treatment	I wasn't working. I wasn't helping with the family...um...he would ignore me, like I wasn't even there. If he was mad at me, he would do the rejection type things...um...ignore me. (F12)
Psychological	Threatened to kill himself	There was always the underlying thing...that he would kill, either them or me. Umm, and suicide, too. That was a big one from him, threatening suicide. I always feared for that. It was always, always there because he had threatened suicide right probably four or five months after we were married. That was always kind of lying under there. (F12)
	Threatened to leave her	He told me that if I didn't help support our family financially that he would leave and so when my youngest was six months old, I went and got a full-time job and started working. His big threat was to leave me, and he used it for everything. (F22)
	Threatened to hit her	The cupboard one was really a bad one. That one scared me to death 'cause it was so close and it was like, you know, it... everything kept getting closer and closer and closer. Like next time, it's going to be...you know, not within an inch... (F02)
	Threw things	He used to ...umm...like throw...you know, like one time he picked the whole dining room table up and threw it up in the air, you know, and he would just...whatever was around and if he could throw it, he would... (F25)
	Threatened her with weapons	There were times that after the kids went to bed, he would go to the drawer and pull out a butcher knife. He put it on the table and dare her to touch it. If she did it, he could claim self defense. A lot of mind games. (F11)
Physical	Beat her up	Beat me up. I mean I couldn't get off the floor (pause) and ah (pause) and I didn't want S1 to realize how badly I had been hurt. By the end I eventually ended up in the hospital. (F05)
	Kicked her	He banged my head up against a wall and drop... kicked me. (F11)
	Chocked her	He chocked me and stuck his finger in my eyes. (F11)
	Spanked her	He spanked me once because I was acting like a naughty girl, very hard and very mean. (F22)
	Pushed her	But, he, um, you know, would push me. When, when it got bad, um, it was really, um, had to, it was after I had S1. And he would um, you know, push me up against a wall, um. He um, it was a lot of pushing. (F19)
	Hit her with objects	You know...he would grab something and hit me with it. He hit me with a lamp one time. I don't know...he...was...I would say pretty much everything, and at least, everything you would think of, probably." (F25)
	Hit her & weapon involved	He came into the house with a man with a gun, didn't bother him at all that he would want something and in order to keep me under control, he had somebody stand over me with a gun. (F05)
	Chased her	I mean he had men chase, I mean I would come home in the evening and he have people outside in cars chasing me through streets. (F05)

Sexual	His own way	Yah. And...and toward the end too, it would be, you know, that when he wanted it, he would get it, or else he would make me feel that I'm fat and ugly and I can't do it... (F02)
	Forced her to do what she didn't want to do	But I would have sex or give him oral sex, um, when he demanded it, you know...Even if I didn't want to.... what I think was, was abusive was like, the, you know, that I didn't want to do oral sex and he would, he would, um, force me to do oral sex, or force me to you know, just be k- real harsh about it. (F19)
	Raped	That was a lot, too. It...a lot of times, like when he was being abusive, like if he hit me or he hurt me, and then I'd be crying, and then he'd come...and that...that would be like his...in his mind, he was thinking he was making it up to me but I was, like oh man....he was like, well, you know I want to do this, whatever, but...and I then I'd just feel like I had to do it anyway because it might make him even more mad. (F25)
	Avoided her	I mean, there were times when, I mean, there were times when he wouldn't even want to be in bed with me for six months at a time and I took it as my fault, you know. (F05)
	Had affairs with other women	I felt like a puppet on a string and he did everything he could to completely and totally control me. He was having affairs all through our marriage. The last three years were...he was really blatant...having intercourse in the swimming pool in front of her parents. He started getting real open with that kind of stuff, like forgetting to come home occasionally. (F22)
Controlling	Her whereabouts	It was almost a daily thing because he would call me at work. He would pick me up at work (laughter). He would leave messages...if I would be out shopping with friends or doing some... something with friends, he would leave a ton of messages with my mother for me to call him, so...as controlling, just knowing what I'm doing... (F02)
	Social gathering	He started getting really jealous all the time. He did not, never want me to go anywhere unless he was with me. (F25)
	What to do	You know, if I had plans, he could change my plans to what he wanted. If he wanted to go to a car show and I wanted to go to a craft show, it would definitely be a car show...so... (F02)
	Restricted her mobility	By not letting me drive, not letting me have the car. I mean, he deliberately screwed the cars up so then I couldn't drive them, couldn't go any place. (F12)
	Financial decision making	I would do...take care of the checking account and stuff like that, but he would make the final decision and I would always ...no matter if I knew what was right, I had to check it out with him. You know, is it okay if I buy D1 a new dress? And... if I did do it without him, then it would be well, "You know we can't afford this," or something like that. Then I would feel bad that I had made the decision without him...(F02)
	Took her money; not allow her to have money	He was also financially controlling. He gave her his paycheck on Friday night but asked for it back by Saturday afternoon. (F11)
	Demanding	He always wanted me to pay for everything and give it to him. But for him everything and the kids didn't need stuff. He needed guitars and amplifiers and crap like that. (F12)
	Forced her to have his kid; birth control	I wasn't willing to have a child being homeless. So, um, it was always a big thing for him to have a child...he's, he has other

		children, but not by me. But he, you know, has kind of like lost touch with them. So he wanted me to have a child and it was something that I think he wanted to control. He wanted to have a love child...a messenger of...all this stuff. (F19)
	Thought own his way	He really could manipulate me well. A lot of times he'd make things kind of seem like they were my idea when they weren't. His favorite thing was, "that never happened." He would tell me that all the time. "That was that didn't happen." (F22)
	Her job	He was really good at creating some kind of crisis so I would have to quit my job. Any time I started to be successful, and I think that was really abusive to me emotionally because I was...could never succeed at anything. It really confused me when he told me that I had to go out and get a job and then he would control my work. If I made too much money and was enjoying my work then I couldn't work anymore. I am surprised I kept getting jobs. (F22)
	Phone use	He used to...umm...rip the phone cord out all the time and he would break the phone jack. He would always take my money from me. (F25)
Other	Took kids away from her	They were gone for three weeks, and I had no contact with them at all. (F22)
	Threatened her to tell kids about artificial insemination	He would always, if I didn't do something, he would threaten to tell the children that they were of artificial insemination, and that was a big key to me. That would just blow my mind, and this is after that they were older and we had decided, you know, it was important that they didn't know. It was a big decision and he would use that constantly. (F02)
	Planned to kill her and himself	She had the divorce about two weeks from being final and he had planned a murder suicide. To kill her and kill himself. But her daughter stopped it. "And she saw the glow of a cigarette in through the back of the house then, and we had the police come in and search and he pulled a rifle on the officers and was shot and killed." (F11)

Appendix C. Types of abuse on children

Types of abuse	Abuse	Examples
Verbal	Yelled	He would yell at him (S1). I don't, I don't remember him ever calling him names. But you know, S1 would be, and M19's very loud, but he didn't have to be. S1 was very scared. You know. (F19)
Emotional	Called names	He calls D1 the "B" word...the bitch (laughing). He would call him (S1) stupid and... not as extreme words but there would still be verbal attacks against him...It (verbal abuse) tended to be more toward D1 because D1 started speaking up and...saying that she thought and standing up, which she...she was taught to do by him because she was put in that position, so... (F02)
	Blamed kids for problems in family	And so then he started, you know, blaming the kids for what was the...the deterioration of the family and that... (F02)
	Blamed kids for their appearance	He raised her (D2) that way with just...had no time for her, never talked to her, hardly at all and when he did, it was really naughty...like "You are really fat," and "If you don't lose some weight, no boys are ever going to date you," and "You better do some sit-ups." (F22)
	Not enough	S1 told me, "No matter what I do...it's never good enough for Dad." (F22)
	Made kids walk on eggshells	You knew to get the hell away, you were walking on eggshells and all that type of stuff. (F12)
	Made kids stay out of sight	I: So, her involvement in it basically was that she was hollered at and threatened to have things taken from her... R: Uh-huh, and kind of kicked to the curb, so to speak...get off in your bedroom so that I can't see you, know you're even alive. I just have a thing about sending (laughter) kids to their bedroom. I hate it. (F12)
	Withdrawal	Oh, I think it was emotionally abusive of him towards her because the way he treated me and, you know, the way he was abusive towards me and D2 didn't matter to him, that she saw that or even, you know, that would...you know, he was...I knew he knew he was loud and controlling with his moods and all that, and of course, that...to me I saw that as emotional abuse to her, that he wasn't ...he didn't care about that... (F25)
Psychological	Isolation	He'd take him to daycare at 6, go home and be with his wife....Okay? He wouldn't pick S1 up 'til 6 at night. So he went to daycare, he went to his classes and he went back to daycare. So he never had an interaction with kids, when he was at home he was not allowed to eat at the table. He could live downstairs in the basement. (F05)
	Made kids feeling threatened	They (M22 and S1) showed up at the door and S1 came running in the house and just fell in my arms, and at this time he's pretty big. "I got to tell you what dad did...he tried to kill us. He tried to kill both of us."S1 was so afraid for his life. M22 drove too fast so that S1 was just petrified the whole time. (F22)
	Slammed objects	D2 and D3 attempted to wake their father up before M22 came back home from work. She (D2) tried to get him up with a cup of coffee, and he picked the coffee up and slammed it on the coffee table, and of course, coffee and parts of the mug went flying. (F22)

Physical	Spanked or hit with a belt	Whooped him, you know, harshly at a very early age. So S1 had a lot of fear at a very early age of his father... but to me S1 was too young to be whooped with a belt. (F19)
	Hit	He would grab their arms and kick them in the butt, smack them on the back of the head...umm...wail on their butts with his...with his hand...umm...slap them across the face. (F15)
	Kicked	There was one time that came out in S1's counseling that M11 had kicked him. CPS was involved because I got the order for protection for S1. (F11)
	Spanked	R: Umm...umm...I think it was mostly what I...what I meant by tough was more excessive...where S2 at times seemed to be more of an annoyance in our relationship, and M15 was real quick to...umm...spank him, but it was the force that he used to spank him... I: So, like he spanked him really hard? R: Yes, and...and more than like one smack. (F15)
	Pushed kids down	He used to push her (D1) down, but he never hit her, like with an open hand or anything, but he would grab her arm and shake her, or if she was trying to walk away from him or something he would grab the back of her hair and pull her back to him. (F25)
	Harmed kids' body in other ways	One time he took him (S1) out of the tub and S1 started, you know, I was in the other room and S1 started screaming, he dislocated S1's elbow and you know, oh I picked him up and he squirmed and you know and we took him to the emergency room. (F05)
Sexual	Suspected sexual abuse	D1 went with two boys to a teen dance when she was 15. She came home at 8 o'clock. Her father said, "I'm going to go talk to her. I'm going to let her know how wrong that is for her to go with these two boys." ...as I was opening the door to her room, I heard him said, "I'm going to show you what those boys would do to you." ...I said, "No, you're not." (F22)
	Forced kids to do things that they did not want to do	"The things that he made me do when I washed him...he'd make me wash his back, like it wasn't always just his back." "There was always ...there was something uncomfortable about when you weren't there...that it was worse than, you know, when you left us alone with Dad." "I don't know if anything happened. ...pretty little. I was never comfortable when you would leave us home. I never could figure out what that was." (F22)
Controlling	Took kids' money	"No, I got money. Sissy taught me how to hide money from Daddy. I said, "What?" D1 taught her because M12 would take all their money. They would get money for their birthday and stuff...he would take it and go use it to go get drunk and shit. She (D2)...there was a little tiny hole in her pocket and she stuck her fingers in there and started pulling dollars out. D1 had taught them. She had taught them how to take care of themselves and what Dad was all about, and? (F12)
	Cancelled medical coverage	M05 cancelled the medical coverage, that part of the medical coverage so S1 could not see the psychologist. I mean that's how much this good psychologist hurts the father. (F05)
	Not allowed kids to meet her	He physically tried to separate D1 from me. D1 could not come into the house. If I wanted to see my daughter, I had to go elsewhere to see her. (F11)

Neglect	Left kids alone	While I was at work. Um, one... (M19) left S1 alone in the house when S1 was probably a year... while he was getting high... and I came home and S1 was there alone. (F19)
	Did not spend money for kids	Different, different things, you know, that mean a lot to kids. School pictures, "No you don't need that stuff." Financially, he was always, "You don't need it, you don't need it." ...Maybe someday he'd be famous, but it's like he didn't want to give the kids the things they needed. Even milk...he tried to, you know, "Oh just get them powdered milk. They don't need milk." (F12)

Appendix D. Family of origin

Case	Family composition	Experience of abuse	Other issues
F01	Mother, father, one sister and one brother	None mentioned	Her father was an alcoholic.
F02	Mother, father, two older sisters	Her father yelled and screamed once, not a lot. She and her siblings were never abused.	He father had a drinking problem.
M02	Mother, father, a brother	His father had a temper and threw things. His mother was yelling. No physical abuse between his parents. They were affectionate.	His mother had a panic attacks and hospitalized once.
F05	Mother, father, a younger sister	Her father said that nobody would want her and she was such a terrible person. She had to hear all her life, "Everything is your fault." A lot of emotional abuse by parents.	Observant Jewish in orthodox community Her grandmother died the day she was born. It was used as an excuse for her parents to abuse her.
F06	Mother, step-dad, two brothers and one sister	No physical abuse. They were never maltreated by parents.	None
M06	Mother, step-dad, two sisters and three brothers	He got a lot of "whoopings."	One of his brothers died before she met him.
F10	Mother, step-father, sisters	Her mother spanked her from time to time. Her oldest sister was physically and emotionally abusive to her.	Her mother and biological father died when she was twelve. Her oldest sister took care of her and became an alcoholic.
M10	Mother, father, the oldest of two brothers and one sister	His father was physically abusive to his mother. When he was twelve years old, he started hitting his mother back to protect his brothers and a sister.	Four generations of battering in his family.
F11	Mother, father, three younger brothers	She heard her parents arguing once. Her mother was abusive to her. Her mom would slap her with a brush or a leather belt for her not cleaning her room. Physical abuse stopped when she was 16 years old. She slapped her mom back. Controlling and putting down happened, like when she went out on a date, her mom would say, "Make sure you keep your legs together." Her next brother got punished with a belt. But he was sent to his room more.	Her father was in the military, but not an iron fisted military person. They moved a lot and lived in Holland and England.
M11	Mother, father, eight siblings, an older brother and two older sisters	None mentioned	His parents were "the biggest drunks in the world." His family lived on the reservation. He had to take over a parent role.
F12	Mother, father, four siblings including three	She was sexually abused by the boy next door when she was five years old. She had a spanking once from her mother. Her father	None mentioned

	brothers and one sister	punched her in the mouth once when she got older.	
M12	Mother, father, five siblings including one elder brother	He was beaten severely by his father. He hated his mother for not protecting him.	None mentioned
F13	Mother, father did not discussed, one sister and one brother	None mentioned	None mentioned
F15	Mother, father, five siblings	Her father was physically abusive to her mother. With her brother, she ran a mile to call for law enforcement. He had a rifle and pointed it to them telling that they were no good and he should just shoot them. Her mother did a lot of yelling and threatening. Her father was not around a whole lot of the time. She remembered spankings, once from her mother but other times from her father. She experienced sexual abuse by a relative and a friend of the family.	Her parents were separated and got back together. They divorced when she was 25 years old. Her father had a drinking problem.
M15	Mother, father, five siblings	His step-mother was sexually abusive toward him.	When he was 10 years old, his parents separated. He lived with his mother at first and then later with his father and a step-mother. When he was 19 years old, he had some jail time.
F19	Father, step-mother, two sisters from her mother, four children from her step-mother	Her step-mother was physically, verbally, and emotionally abusive and controlling. Spanking and hitting her with wood were involved. Her step-mother caused her to have an eating problem. School nurses and CPS workers were involved because of injuries but her father explained that it was discipline. A son of her step-mother sexually abused her.	Her father got custody of her. They split up when she was born. Her two sisters returned to her mother. She did drugs.
M19	Mother, twelve siblings	His parents fought from time to time. He got hard "whoopings."	His father died when he was young.
F22	Mother, father, four sisters and four brothers	Her mother was physically abused by her father with a belt. Her mother spanked all the siblings. Her father once hit her with his belt when she was pregnant. All of her sisters including her were sexually abused by an uncle. Her father used to push her away because she resembled his dead sister.	Her father had a drinking problem. They moved around a lot. One of her brothers was pretty heavy into drugs. Her father had an affair with a woman once.
M22	Mother, father, eleven siblings	He sexually abused his three sisters.	One of his sisters committed suicide.
F25	Mother, foster mother, foster father, older sister and older brother	Her birth mom was in a very physically and emotionally abusive relationship herself. She had seen and heard it all the time. Her mother yelled at her a lot. Her father was not abusive to them. A foster mother was verbally abusive to a foster father. The foster mother	Her mother died when she was five years old. His mother committed suicide because of her father's abuse. Her father drank a lot. He was not capable of

		was abusive to her physically, emotionally, and verbally. After her father died, she was sexually abused by a man that he said her father but he was not.	taking the kids or having full custody. Her mother also had a drinking problem. She went to a foster home and stayed 10 years there. The state had legal custody of her. We were Native American and they were White. She started running away and drinking.
M25	Mother, father, step-mother, older brothers and younger sisters	None mentioned	His father was in the Marine Corp. His father passed away because of a heart attack. He lived with his mom and after his father had another son he lived with his father.

Appendix E. Incidents of abuse

Case	The first	Typical	The worst	The most recent
F01	They went on a Caribbean cruise with a four month old S1. He forced S1 to get a sun tan. After five minutes, she took S1 in. He finally hit her. She got a bruise on her arm.	In the park, he tried to snatch their son. Her mother was with her at that time. She called the police.	He was talking bad things about her bother and wanted her to agree with him. She refused t. He picked up a piece of wood and started striking her with it. She got a bruise on her thigh. She jumped on his back. He kicked her repeatedly. S1 saw it and said, "Daddy, don't hit mommy."	The abuse happened after he was out of the house. He put a chemical paste on D1's bottom. She noticed the redness and swelling on D1's bottom and took her to the hospital. The medical doctor called the police.
F02	The cabin incident: They were up at the cabin and he couldn't get the stove lit. He was banging the stove door and going to blow up the whole thing. She had her daughter in her arms trying to hold her ears. His mother heard, came, and calmed him down.	He woke her up in the middle of the nights and started to complain about somebody or something. It could be her, the kids, or his work.	She was suicidal and took heart medication. She got a job that day and asked him to go out for dinner. He told her no and went to the cabin with her daughter. When they came back, she drank wine and took medication attempting to commit suicide. She became unconsciousness. He called the paramedics. She heard him saying, "She can come back when she is fixed." She said, "Don't let him hurt me anymore." He said, "She drinks and she is gotten so fat and...umm...she has mental problems..." to the doctors even in the hospital. The doctors had him leave there.	
F05	Before they got married. He decided where to live and restricted her ability to get job promotions and everything.	He was controlling her with everything.	After he moved out. He had punched and beat her up unconscious. He brought S1 into the room. She couldn't get off the floor and ended up in the hospital.	After he moved out. He had a guy outside in a car chasing her through streets. He came into her house with the guy with a gun. He threw her against walls.
F06	Before they got married during grade school. He started to be disrespectful to her, saying, "You must really have a reputation." He got suspicious of her talking to other guys. He made her stand at a tree and told her not to move, telling her that he would kick her butt if she would	As the relationship went on, he was talking to all different girls and would bring the girls around her house. He came to her house to take her money. His girl friend was in the car outside of the house. He found something in her room and started running. He pushed her down the stairs.	When she was in college, before her first son was born. She was giving a surprise birthday party for her mother. He came to her house and pulled out a gun. He told her that he was going to kill her. Her aunt came and he left. Her aunt called the police and he ended up arrested.	After separation, he was still around. He came in, ran toward her and grabbed her. He was dragging her around the house telling her who she hired to kill him. She knew he was high on crack. He went in the kitchen and grabbed the butcher knife and saying, "I'm going to kill this B..." He hit

	move from there. She stood there for 40 minutes.	She got her finger bent. He said, "It's your fault. You shouldn't have been trying to grab on me." He took her to the hospital, threatening her not to tell it to a medical doctor.		her on top of the head with the knife. She was down on the floor. He had the knife up to her throat. A neighbor called the police who came and arrested him. Her kids witnessed the incident.
F10	On her honeymoon, while he was still on top of her. Because she didn't have an orgasm, he started hitting her with his fist. She did nothing to resist him except crying. She got up and went to the bathroom and locked herself in.	If they were in the car and got lost, she would get abused. At the dinner table for whatever reason, he would jump up and beat her.	He choked her. She never thought he would intentionally kill her. "He would just go too far and not know his own limits and that would be that." She passed out for a moment.	They were in the car. He got lost. She did not volunteer directions. He started slugging her with his fist. She attempted to get out of the car, but he pulled the seat belt in such a way that she could not get out of the car. She could not go to the police until the next day. She got a bruise on her arm and she "had her daughter take a picture that the police did something."
F11	After several years of emotional and verbal abuse. He came back home drunk. She went to take her daughters to their dad's and came back. He grabbed her and threw her across the kitchen. He kicked her in the hip. He threw her stuff in a box and threw it down the stairs. He was ready to push her down the stairs and a neighbor came and stopped him. Her son (a year old) was sleeping in the bedroom.	Friday nights. After he got back from work, "about 6:30, 7:00, he'd call everybody in for his quote-unquote family meetings. And they would consist of putting the kids down, putting down. Anything he could look and see around – I mean, we don't keep it clean enough, um, we are no good, all we are is a bunch a screw ups and it's a good thing he's around because we would never make it without him. All kids would be there. And that would go on for a good hour. Nobody could move. Nobody could go anywhere."	He was on probation at that time. Knowing that he couldn't hit her, he hit S1 instead. After he quit drinking for two months, he drank heavily. He took a doll with a hard plastic head and hit him four or five times in the head with the doll. S1 was covering up his head saying "No, Daddy, no." She was just stunned. She grabbed S1 and they went into the back bedroom and locked the door. He made the comment, "Now he knows what it feels like to hurt. Just like you do." She thought "He was using it to get to me." S1 was like 5 years	They had been separated for a year and a half. He broke in the house over the weekend while she was gone. Her daughter saw him in the house and called her. She found the guns gone. She called the police. She found out later that he was in the basement while the police officers filled out the report. She was hiding then went out of the house. Finally, he was killed by the police.

			old.	
F12	<p>He had gotten really drunk. She told him if he drank while he was on duty, he was going to lose his job. The silent treatment came and he wouldn't take her anywhere. He screamed at her daughter and had her grounded to her bedroom. Her daughter was three or four at that time.</p> <p>The first physical abuse was after five years since they had been together. He accused her having an affair at a dart game. Going back home, they were walking up the stairs. He spun around, punched her right in her mouth, and knocked her on her butt.</p>	<p>The most typical kinds were him not being around and him not helping out. One day, when they lived in New York, "He left to go get some milk for the kids... Three days later when I got the phone call from him, he was in Minnesota." "Another incident, I used to have epileptic seizures. And one night I wasn't feeling good. He took us over to my mom's and then he went to work. He was supposed to be back to my mom's..." But he did not come. When she came back to their apartment, she found him with his best friend's fiancée.</p>	<p>One time he had been out drinking, he came back home blaming her, "If you weren't fat, I would want to be home." She spit in his face. He choked her to almost to death. S2 saw it, picked up a Playschool hammer, and started hitting M12 on the back. "Don't hurt my mommy." And M12 flung him, and he went flying across the living room. She could breathe again and managed to get out of the war.</p>	<p>When they were separated, he came to her house and argued for money. Right after she came into the house, she said, "Call 911." "I looked out the window and here comes this rake handle and the window just shattered throughout the whole trailer. There was glass all over the kids, all over me, and he was out there screaming at me, calling me every name in the book..." Her kids were standing right in front of the window. Kids' godparents and their kids were with her."</p>
F13	<p>When she went out and came back home, he was whipping her with her clothes. She went upstairs to call the police but he took the phone away. She threw a chair in front of him and he threw it to the wall. She ran in the bathroom and spent the night. The kids were too little. They slept through it.</p>	<p>No information</p>	<p>At a barbecue party, he slammed her on the floor with her plate. She had bruises on her wrists. She cannot even tell how it happened. She just knew she was on the floor. It happened because of a bottle of ketchup.</p>	<p>She poured herself a glass of water and she spilled a little bit. She put the water back in the fridge and went downstairs doing laundry. He found a water drop on the counter. He threw S2 down the stairs. She thought 'This guy is out of control... we are going to do something... today is the day.' She made the kids prepare and went to the courthouse and then her mother's.</p>
F15	<p>They had a break in the relationship and he stayed with his ex-wife again. She had gotten pregnant and she told him she was</p>	<p>Most of the time, drinking was involved. When she drank, she was a little bolder to say "no" to sex or give him her</p>	<p>They had been out drinking. They went upstairs to go to bed and she was almost totally undressed and he wanted to have</p>	<p>They had been somewhere and on the drive home she had mentioned to him that she felt that he was mean to S1. The</p>

	<p>pregnant. He told her that she should get an abortion. She slapped this face when he said that. It was a very repulsive idea to her. He slapped her very hard in the face. She was crying and they were arguing about it. It ended when he left. They talked about the incident after a while. He said that she should not slap him. It was just like it was set on a shelf somewhere.</p>	<p>opinion on something that she would not normally do. He would get angry and the name-calling and yelling and hitting would start. To protect herself, she typically covered up and curled up. She tried to shield herself basically. She was sure they heard. She did not think they typically saw. They tended to stay away.</p>	<p>sex. She really wasn't feeling like it. He got angry. He kicked her off the bed onto the floor and hit her. She screamed for him to stop. She ran out of the bedroom and got to the stairs. He kicked her down the stairs. In the living room on the couch were two of the boys. She headed for the basement and went down the stairs. She collapsed into the laundry. He noticed that she was bleeding and quit.</p>	<p>conversation continued and he got angry. He started to hit her. They had a portable dishwasher and at one point he pushed it across the room at her. She went down to the floor. He then started kicking her. She was trying to protect her body and crying. She felt that something washed over her. She relaxed and put her arms down to her side and thought he might kill her. S3 had seen the dishwasher pushed at her. "I think he (S3) just went into another room...went to find his brothers."</p>
F19	<p>When they were in Colorado and she was seven months pregnant, he drank a beer and started an argument. He started talking real crazy to cause problems between them. He threw a full beer can at her head.</p>	<p>Pretty much toward the most recent incident. He was drinking and talking all kinds of things. He made her stay up all night. He always searched her body to find money. He would sell everything to get high. He did not care about the bills getting paid. He was in a zombie state.</p>	<p>When her son was two years old on the day before moving to Minnesota, he paid all the money for a deposit (apartment) and did not have any money to get high. They were sitting in the room and he started to call her names, degrading her. She talked back and called him a crack head. He pushed her against the wall and lifted her up by her neck. He started banging her head into the wall. She lost consciousness. S1 came at him and he backhanded S1. S1 went back and fell against the floor. She picked up S1 and ran to the bathroom.</p>	
F22	<p>When they were seniors in high school, F22 was in the classroom having a discussion with other boys. M22 reached over and grabbed her arm and gave her a snake bite. She felt great pain and got a bruise horribly for weeks. He kept doing it and her arms were almost always bruised after the incident.</p>	<p>No information</p>	<p>Neglect and sexual abuse. Emotional abuse was terrible during that time frame. The abuse started to come back when he was in the military. She was isolated and he was gone on the boats. When he came home he wanted her to be his pretty lovable dressed up plaything in the bed and to be the perfect</p>	<p>About two years before they divorced. They were separated before the incident. They both filed for divorce so that he was not allowed to take anything from the house until it was decided in court. He wanted his bin building equipment that was in garage. She told him to come the next day when the police could attend.</p>

	<p>It was probably right about the time that I became pregnant.</p>		<p>housekeeper and mom, but he never spoke to her. After he came back from another cruise, his violence caused her miscarriage. Her son S1 was a year old at that time.</p>	<p>He just came with her cousin, his girlfriend, and his girlfriend's daughter. He came to the back door angry. He had some punch and was throwing it on the ground and hitting his hand, and then he'd pick it up with a knife. Her daughter (D3) was staring at him hammering the punch and she noticed that D3 stood right with her, "I could feel her body shaking." After he had left and before the police came, D3 said, "He could have killed us both. He was threatening to kill us both." D3 was 12 years old.</p>
F25	<p>When she met her friends, he became angry, drank, and smashed his truck. The next day he came to see her at her sisters' house and blamed her for it. He called her in the bathroom and shook and pushed her. He walked out and left.</p>	<p>It mostly occurred in their apartment when he was drinking. It still occurred when he was not drinking. She felt it was harder when he was drinking because she could not reason with him. He was just mad for really stupid stuff including old stuff when he was drinking. Whenever the daughter cried he thought it was her fault if she could not keep the daughter quiet. He blamed her that she had D1, a half Mexican (D1's father was Mexican.) and she could not give him a 100% 'native daughter.' (He was a Native American.)</p>	<p>She was home with her daughters (D1 and D2). Her kids were going to go out to eat for lunch and they were not expecting him to come. She was afraid of him because the abuse was pretty full swing (so much worse) at that time. He came and grabbed her by her hair and pulled her back down the steps backwards. She went tumbling down the steps backwards. She was lying on the steps at the bottom. He grabbed her neck and was choking her. He kept saying, "I'm going to kill you. You're dead." She could feel herself blacking out.</p>	<p>He was all upset and beat her up. She had bruises all over her face and arms. She ran out of the apartment and called her sister. She stayed at her sister's house that night. When she came back to her apartment, she found that he had demolished the whole house. The foster mother called the CPS. He took the kids out of town like a month so that she could not see her kids for a while.</p>