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Factors Involved in Battered Women's Decision to Leave Their Abusive Partners: Shelter Research in the Southeast

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To: Dr. Jay Teachman,
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Fm: Dr. Elizabeth Morrissey,
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Subject: Thesis defense

Date: May 2, 1988

This is to inform you that Mary Ellen Miles has successfully completed her oral thesis defense on FACTORS INVOLVED IN BATTERED WOMEN'S DECISION TO LEAVE THEIR ABUSIVE PARTNERS: SHELTER RESEARCH IN THE SOUTHEAST.

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FACTORS INVOLVED IN BATTERED WOMEN'S
DECISION TO LEAVE THEIR ABUSIVE
PARTNERS: SHELTER RESEARCH IN THE SOUTHEAST.

By

Mary Ellen Miles

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Applied Sociology
Old Dominion University/Norfolk State University

May 1988

Approved by: _____
Thesis Chairperson)

Program authorized to
offer degree: Applied Sociology

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ABSTRACT

FACTORS INVOLVED IN BATTERED WOMEN'S DECISION TO LEAVE THEIR ABUSIVE PARTNERS: SHELTER RESEARCH IN THE SOUTHEAST.

Mary Ellen Miles

Applied Sociology
ODU/NSU
1988

This paper is an examination of some of the factors involved in battered women's decision to leave their partners. A review of past literature on battering, suggests factors that account for the women's decision: 1. the more financially dependent (whether actual or perceived) the battered woman is on the batterer, the more likely the woman will stay in the violent relationship regardless of the shelter services offered; 2. women with a teenage child or children will be more likely to leave the violent relationship than women without teenage children; 3. women who were abused as children will be more likely to stay in the violent relationship as adults; 4. women who enter shelters that have all the programs they feel are necessary in order to allow them to successfully become independent will have a higher "success" rate than women who enter shelters that do not have programs that they feel are needed for their individual success. Actual financial dependence was the most significant factor relevant to the women's decision. It is concluded that more research is needed to thoroughly examine these factors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Wife battering is a contemporary social problem demanding research attention. The phenomenon cannot be prevented, or even adequately handled, unless it is thoroughly examined. In this research, I examine some of the factors involved in battered women's decision to leave their partners.

Many factors have been hypothesized to account for why the violence begins, why it continues, why women leave, and why they return. In this research, I hope to identify the most significant factors that are involved in the woman's decision to continue or not to continue the violent relationship.

Drawing from the literature on battering, I hypothesize that the more financially dependent, actually or perceived, the battered woman is on the batterer, the more likely the woman will stay in the violent relationship regardless of the shelter services offered. Therefore, the women with low levels of education, few job skills, and no access to money, will be more likely to stay in the violent relationship, as will women who would not normally be considered financially dependent, but who perceive themselves to be. Women with a teenage child or children will be more likely to leave the violent relationship than women without teenage children.

Women who were abused as children will be more likely to stay in the violent relationship as adults. Women who enter shelters that have all the programs they feel are necessary in order to allow them to successfully become independent will have a higher "success" rate than women who enter shelters that have no programs that they feel are needed for their individual success.

II.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of protection from one's own spouse is becoming a widely recognized social problem as studies increasingly document the prevalence of domestic violence, specifically wife beating (Richardson, 1981).

"Battered women exist because women as a class lack political, economic, and social power which limit their options, because of the culture of male violence, and because the legal system has condoned the husband's right to physically 'punish' his wife" (Richardson, 1981, p.121).

It seems that many women, married as well as single, are trapped in violent homes out of fear and dependency. Wives report that calling the police only serves to increase the husbands' violence, which is of great concern since the male is usually not arrested, and will not be removed from the presence of the wife (Richardson, 1981).

PREVALENCE OF BATTERING

It is difficult to measure the extent of battering since it is a "behind closed doors" phenomenon, because people are ashamed and unwilling to tell others, and because law enforcement agency records do not reflect accurate information (Melville, 1980). Family violence incidents are among the most underreported of crimes (Melville, 1980).

Recent studies enable us to make some estimates about the prevalence of family violence. In a study by Suzanne Steinmetz, (cited in Melville, 1980) it was concluded that among 47 million American couples, 3.3 million wives and more than .25 million husbands have experienced severe beatings by their spouse. This study only included families that were still intact, so the extent of violence is actually greater than that which was reported.

According to Straus et. al., (1981), and Gelles and Cornell (1983, 1985) about 7.5 million couples per year have a violent encounter in which one spouse tries to physically injure the other. Silverman (1981) reported in a national survey that 3.8 percent of couples admitted to one or more attacks of the wife during a twelve month period (this is approximately 1.8 million wives). The FBI reports that every eighteen seconds a woman is beaten (Silverman, 1981).

Many women fail to report the abuse. Reasons for non-reporting are many and diverse. The victim believes that the abuse is extraordinary, and will not reoccur. She believes the male's apologies and promises of no further violence will prevent future attacks. The victim believes she has "earned" her treatment. She thinks if she tries harder to be a good partner, mother, etc., the abuse will end (Silverman, 1981). Past literature has shown that the violent partner often

becomes more abusive if he is reported. With so many reasons not to report the crime, it may be assumed that the actual abuse rates are even higher than the current estimates show.

SOCIAL CONTROL OF BATTERING

Despite the increasing awareness of the battering syndrome, much of the available research continues to concentrate on psychological problems of the battered woman. Her immediate needs for safety, housing, money, etc. have largely been ignored.

States have begun to act against domestic violence, and over one-half of the states have laws dealing with spouse abuse. However, the law generally still assumes that once married, a woman belongs to the man (Richardson, 1981). This assumption sets up many women for a difficult future.

The women's movement fostered a concern for victims of domestic violence, and as a result of this concern, there is now help for such victims in many American cities (Melville, 1980). There are special shelters for abused women, "hot-lines" that enable women to call for help, and police teams specially trained for domestic intervention (Melville, 1980).

The shelter movement began partly as a response to the growing consciousness of abused women's situation, and the movement helped to increase the visibility of the women.

Shelters were established mostly by battered women themselves in the early 1970's (Silverman, 1981). They were based on the idea that battered women may need a secret place to stay for a while to be safe. By 1979 there were over three hundred shelters in the U.S. (Silverman, 1981). Today, there are over six hundred U.S. shelters.

Shelter programs for battered women usually involve a twenty-four hour crisis intervention telephone line, a shelter or safe house, a support group, and advocacy services for the women (Silverman, 1981). Davidson (cited in Silverman, 1981) notes that they work closely with legal and welfare personnel to provide the women with adequate help.

COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVES

Some churches, the Salvation Army, or YWCA's run an on-site form of shelter (Nicarthy, 1982). They do not offer the same range of services as the typical shelter. They mainly offer a safe place to stay, where men, as well as women, are welcome (Nicarthy, 1982). Another type of service for battered women in a community is a safe home. A safe home is a private residence where emergency help is given for two or three days (Nicarthy, 1982). It provides a calm, non-crisis environment with one or two helpers who may or may not have been battered themselves. If wanted, informal counseling

is given. The women must find another place to stay after a few days. Safe houses are usually found in small towns which do not have shelters (Nicarthy, 1982).

THE EXPERIENCE OF BATTERED WOMEN

Upon entering a shelter, a battered woman realizes that her problem is not unique, and that it is often the result of her failing to find the "right answer" (Miles, 1985). Shelter programs can help her to recognize that no one has the right to abuse or physically assault another person. The woman will be meeting others who have been in her situation and have taken charge of their own lives. They have lived through the pain and fear and are able to give comfort and help to the new shelter members (Miles, 1985). The battered woman needs to know her options. Membership in a group can be a big help in boosting her confidence, giving information, empathy, support, and helping her to be a successful individual.

When one battered woman is introduced to another, she is usually totally lacking in self-confidence, convinced she's done something wrong, and is a failure as a wife and possibly a mother (Silverman, 1981). Most of the women who go to the shelters are facing a very bleak financial situation. Many of them have quit high school to get married, or got married right after high school, had babies, and have rarely, if ever,

worked (Miles, 1985). It is common for them not to own a car, and not to have a checking account. If a woman has never been in the work force, she probably cannot imagine how she will survive on her own.

If a battered woman wants to become independent, she will need to develop self-respect in order to find the inner strength to change her life. She will need to recognize that she has strengths within herself, that she can be a responsible, self-reliant individual. It is also extremely important that she learn information about finances, employment, housing, and the law (Silverman, 1981). The woman must develop self-esteem and survival skills in order to become independent.

The foregoing provides a general picture of the woman who comes to a shelter for help. This is not to say that battering does not occur within all social classes. Studies have shown battering to occur in all classes, but little information is available on higher status victims. Higher status women may be more likely to go to professionals for help. But why are higher status battered women not coming forward with their problems? Perhaps even though they may be educated and financially independent, they may be too emotionally tied to their family status. Perhaps some higher class women do not have any control over the family finances.

Perhaps the women are too afraid of their husband's power; they may be fearful of being "tracked down" and brought back home. It is probable that being stigmatized is another fear that keeps these women from seeking help with their situation. These are only a few possible explanations; researchers have not yet answered these questions. The concentration here is lower class victims since they are typically the ones who go to the shelters, and this research focuses on finding the best shelter programs to offer the current clientele.

OUTCOMES OF SHELTER PROGRAMS

Several women in a study, (Clifton, cited in Johnson, 1985) talked about their new identity after receiving shelter assistance. One woman felt that the shelter experience had made her more independent, and more aware of her rights. Other women expressed the importance of learning practical skills. If a battered woman is to become independent, she needs to learn to be her own person with a separate identity. If she stays in her home and goes to a support group, when she is able to tell her husband things like, "I can't live without a washer anymore," "I need some money of my own," or "I want to go back to school," then she is beginning to feel like an individual (Silverman, 1981).

SHELTER SERVICES OFFERED

There is almost always someone in the shelter to help the woman sort out practical problems related to money, school, work, children, and professional assistance (Nicarthy, 1982). Clifton, (cited in Johnson, 1985) identified the following four main services that the refuge workers provide: liaison and negotiation with outside funding agencies, helping with difficult legal, housing and financial matters, working with children, and overall support of the woman.

Many times counselors are present, and public assistance workers often make regular calls for the women (Nicarthy, 1982). Counseling of some kind is most always provided to help the women adjust to the immediate crisis that led them to flee from the situation, and to help with future plans (Johnson, 1985). Other services that the shelter might offer include job counseling or placement services, practical assistance in obtaining food stamps, clothes, food, a driver's license, housing assistance, furniture, education for the children, etc., and education for the women themselves (Johnson, 1985). Other women in a similar situation will be at the shelter, and childcare may be shared by those present.

But, disadvantages do exist. Many times the shelter is overcrowded, so a lack of privacy exists. Too many people in crowded conditions are likely to increase the level of stress.

Many rules are also a part of shelter life. Examples of rules are: no physical punishment, no drugs, no revealing the shelter location or phone number, a curfew, a bedtime for children, no guests, chore-sharing, someone must be told if the woman leaves the shelter for any reason, a sliding-scale fee for the care provided, and a time limit on the length of time a given woman can stay (Miles, 1985). Shelters commonly provide battered women with refuge on a short-term basis, with most shelters limiting a woman's stay to four or six weeks (Johnson, 1985). If a rule is broken, the offender may be asked to leave the shelter.

LIFE AS A BATTERED WOMAN

In a study by Homer, Leonard, and Taylor, from 1977 to 1982, (cited in Johnson, 1985) eighty women who had stayed in a Cleveland refuge were part of a study whose aim was to provide a thorough picture of the women's lives, and their problems. The wives did not typically hold jobs. It was found that the largest category of labor for the husband was skilled manual labor (Homer, cited in Johnson, 1985). Ninety percent of husbands were manual workers or unclassifiable long term unemployed for periods of at least three months to ten years (Homer, cited in Johnson, 1985). Some of the women said that their husbands had not worked since they had known them.

Looking at wives individually, poverty was both more prevalent and severe than in the male population. When patterns of income distribution were examined, Homer (cited in Johnson, 1985) found that forty-nine percent of the husbands controlled the income, but gave their wives an allowance. However, the money was far less than the wives needed to meet minimal daily requirements. Three wives reported that their allowances were taken by the husband within twenty-four hours of receipt (Homer, cited in Johnson, 1985). Forty-two percent of these women did not even know their husband's salary. When the husband had total control of the income, the woman was not usually employed, which gave the husband more control and dominance. When the woman was employed, it was common practice for the husband to lower her allowance, or expect her to take on greater financial responsibilities (Homer, cited in Johnson, 1985). Those women who were responsible for a large amount of the bills were still expected to finance the husband's entertainment.

Homer (cited in Johnson, 1985) found that controlling the finances in a family is an important element of power distribution. This is probably highly significant when economic power is accompanied by physical violence. Using one hundred forty percent of the supplementary benefit standard as a poverty line, Homer, (cited in Johnson, 1985)

found that sixty-three percent of the families affected by violence lived in poverty, and husbands were found to be the one who controlled the finances. It was also found that of the seventy-eight families involved in the study, (two of the eighty were separated) only twenty-one had savings accounts with small amounts in them (Homer, cited in Johnson, 1985).

Homer, (cited in Johnson, 1985) stated that the long-term solution would require a change in public and personal attitudes which must include giving women more equal access to economic and social resources in their own right. Attempts by battered women to find alternatives to the relationship continue to be restricted by this basic inequality.

Supplementary benefit regulations, low pay, and domestic care discourage women from working. Men's psychological control over wives is also important. Some women said they dare not suggest going to work; one woman said, "He'd have killed me." (Homer, cited in Johnson, 1985, p.89)

Three months before going to the refuge, twenty four percent of the women had been employed, most often part-time. As a rule, when most women get to a refuge, they are not employed since there is a tendency to quit working when the domestic situation crumbles (Homer, cited in Johnson, 1985). There were four women who had full-time jobs with a fairly high status (Homer, cited in Johnson, 1985). But, the women

who worked part-time had almost all low-status, poorly paid jobs like bar worker, cleaner, or kitchen worker. Of the working women, it was found that whatever their contribution to the housekeeping money was, it was always higher than the husband's contributions. So, these women were no better off financially working than not working. The women would remain in poverty despite efforts to improve the situation. Almost one-half of the women whose income was between one hundred and one hundred forty percent of the poverty line returned to their violent spouses (Homer, cited in Johnson, 1985). This rate of return was greater than women in higher income groups. The group seemed more helpless with such financial debts.

Homer, (cited in Johnson, 1985) found that women who felt like they had too much responsibility, and whose partners closely controlled the money, were less likely to return to their husbands if the husbands were unemployed (seventy-nine percent of the wives left compared to forty-three percent of the wives with working spouses). Also, the relationship was more likely to end when the women felt excess responsibilities, little control over finances, and when their employment had not helped their financial situation (Homer, cited in Johnson, 1985). Economic dependency, together with the responsibilities of childcare, can become an unbearable burden for battered women to face alone.

In a study by Roy, (cited in Pahl, 1985) many women described how their husbands seemed to use money as part of a more general attempt to control and subordinate them. Some husbands used the wife's financial dependence to prolong the marriage. This was greatly effective when the wife had few support systems. One woman said she would leave if she could get an education. Then she would be able to support her children (Silverman, 1981).

Wilson, noted that the Women's Aid Society recognized that the violence in marriages expresses a power relationship of which one part is the violence, and another the economic dependence of women upon men (cited in Johnson, 1985). Roy's study, (cited in Pahl, 1985) identified four factors which most often led to violent confrontations. The following are in order of importance: disagreements over money, jealousy, sex, and alcohol.

Gelles, (cited in Costa, 1983) found that wife abuse often occurs when the educational level of the husband is lower than that of the wife. In this situation, the husband may feel inferior and frustrated which plays a role in the domestic violence. Due to the wife's higher education, she may be able to verbally express herself in an argument better than the male, which leads him to use physical force to win the argument. Several studies have shown that more often than

not, physical violence is linked with verbal violence (Straus, Flynn, and Gelles in Costa, 1983). Even though, sometimes, the wife's education is higher than the husband's education, they both must have a fairly low level of education, or else the wife would probably have more job skills, be less dependent, and more likely to leave the relationship.

O'Brien, (cited in Gottlieb, 1980) found that the achieved statuses of abusive men (achievements in employment, educational, and social areas) is quite frequently less than that of their wives, neighbors, and co-workers. In our society, a male's ascribed status is regarded as superior relative to that of a female's. It is likely that these men experience status inconsistency, and are extremely frustrated.

In a study by Finn (1986), he found a strong relationship between traditional sex role preferences and attitudes supporting the use of physical force. The husbands held a stronger belief in traditional values than the wives, and the men were more likely to sanction with physical force in their marriage.

Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz (1981) found support for the notion that violence in families passes from generation to generation. From their national study, it was found that one out of four people who grew up in homes where parents often physically punished their children and hit one another,

used some amount of physical force upon their spouse each year.

Another factor which plays a major role in the woman's decision about the spouse is the amount of abuse she experienced as a child. The less frequent the violence, the more likely it is that the woman will not seek help or leave the relationship. The more often the woman was abused by her parents, the more likely it is that she will view the behavior as routine, and will stay with her spouse (Gelles, cited in Costa, 1983). Victimization as a child raises her adult tolerance level. This partially explains the idea of violence breeding violence in the next generation. Finn (1985) found that battered women suffer from many stressors and are lacking in coping skills. He found that both the husband and battered wife failed to use appropriate problem-solving strategies.

Wives reported that having a job allowed them to see another world (Gelles, cited in Costa, 1983). They were able to notice that their family situation was not "normal". They also had their own source of income and were not totally financially dependent upon their partners.

Teenage children were found to be a major influence on the decision to seek outside help (Gelles, cited in Costa, 1983). Snell, Rosenwals, and Robey (cited in Costa, 1983) found that the women who brought the husband to court had

teenage children. Many of the wives said that their children had become old enough to get involved in the physical arguments, and the wives sought help to protect the children (Gelles, cited in Costa, 1983) (The mean age of the oldest child was 13.7). In a study of one hundred women in England, Gayford (cited in Price, 1982) found that fifty-four percent claimed that their husbands had abused their children. For many of these women, the crisis that made the woman leave, or try to leave, was their children also becoming victims of abuse. Evidence has shown, however, that under economically deprived conditions, young children reinforce women's dependence. Women with several small children would be more dependent than women with no children.

The research continually stresses the role of women in society as a major reason for why abuse begins, and why it continues. Women as a class lack political, economic, and social power, therefore, women as a class are generally dependent on men. There is certainly convincing evidence to lead to the conclusion that with a restructuring of society, battering probably would not occur. Societal equality obviously ties in with individual change, and with individual women having opportunities to be independent, they would not feel so pressed to stay in a violent relationship. Dependency in any form helps keep battered women in violent relationships.

In order to give battered women the self-esteem and survival skills that they need in order to leave the relationship, if the woman desires to, shelter programs must provide appropriate assistance. Shelter personnel need to ask the women what type of assistance they desire. Evidence clearly shows that assistance must be offered in the following areas in order for a woman become independent: legal, housing, childcare, educational, personal counseling, financial skills, job training, job placement, and practical skills not previously listed. It is of grave importance that women be trained in areas other than traditional "female" jobs. The traditionally female dominated service and clerical jobs are usually low-status, low-paying jobs which will not enable women to become financially independent, especially if they have children.

This research questions what specific types of program components and what situations of battered women predict outcomes of the violent relationship. Given this knowledge, and the application of it, communities may be more effectively equipped to aid battered women in their many difficult decisions.

HYPOTHESES

Based on this review of the literature, data collection and analysis were guided by the following hypotheses:

- 1) The more financially dependent (whether actual or perceived) the battered woman is on the batterer, the more likely the woman will stay in the violent relationship regardless of the shelter services offered; therefore, the women with low levels of education, few job skills, and no access to money, will be more likely to stay in the violent relationship, as will women who would not normally be considered financially dependent, but who perceive themselves to be.
- 2) Women with a teenage child or children will be more likely to leave the violent relationship than women without teenage children.
- 3) Women who were abused as children will be more likely to stay in the violent relationship as adults.
- 4) Women who enter shelters that have all the programs they feel are necessary in order to allow them to successfully become independent will be more likely to leave their partners than women who enter shelters that have no programs that they feel are needed for their individual success.

My main prediction is that the fit between a woman's needs and the shelter services offered will be the most important determinant of whether or not the woman leaves the

abusive relationship. The shelters' services are designed to encourage the women's independence. The programs are designed to enable women to see their options, and encourage them to make their own decision about the relationship.

Using a pretest-posttest design, (Campbell and Stanley, 1963) I examined the independent variables that are most important in getting a battered woman out of her violent relationship. Since my hypothesis about the availability of services has not been previously tested, and I am evaluating the effects of program components, I used structured interviews for pre and posttesting.

III.

RESEARCH METHODSDESIGN

In the present study a one-group pretest-posttest design was employed (Campbell and Stanley, 1963). This design allowed for the examination of several independent variables and an assessment of which independent variables are most significant in a battered woman's decision to end an abusive relationship. I used this design because with the population, and in analyzing program components, it was the most useful. A quasi-experimental, or experimental design was inappropriate because it is unknown when and to whom abuse was to occur, and it would be too expensive to randomly sample women, only some of whom may be abused. Therefore, I did not have a control or comparison group with which to make comparisons.

In-person interviews allowed attitudinal, motivational, and historical information to be gathered in the best possible way (Kahn and Cannell, cited in Smith, 1981). Data structuredness and collection efficiency are strengths of the interview (Smith, 1981). I was able to tell the women that the study was important, and that the responses would be kept confidential. If the women had been administered question-

naires, they might have been less open about their experiences. Interviews are always expensive, but they are the best possible method of data collection due to the sensitive nature of this research. The use of an interview allowed the use of probes in order to get more accurate information. Some probes were written in parentheses on the interview schedule; other probes were used when necessary. The first probe was always to repeat the question. After that, other probes were used.

Possible external validity problems can typically be found in experimenter characteristics, participant characteristics, and treatment characteristics. To help reduce effects having to do with experimenter status, I wore clothing similar to lower-middle class standards. Since it seems that these women are generally from the lower classes, people wearing clothing similar to theirs is likely to allow the women to feel more comfortable.

During the pretest, women should not have been trying to "guess" what I was studying since they were subject to many questions during their stay at the shelter, and my interview did not seem unusual. Questions as to what type of program might be needed to help the woman get out of her relationship were asked. At the time of the posttest, women knew that I was not a member of the shelters' staff, and should have been more willing to critically examine and share their feelings

about the programs than they would have been with a shelter staff person. I am a volunteer at one of the shelters, so I identified myself as a shelter volunteer as well as a student.

Participant characteristics could have been a problem in that the shelters mainly cater to lower class women. The literature reviewed earlier documents this, and available findings are based on studies of lower class populations. Because my hypotheses are derived from this literature, my use of mainly lower class participants is appropriate. Mortality may have played a role in that some women disappeared in the months before the posttest. The effects of mortality were examined in the preliminary data analysis, and results indicate few differences between those lost to follow-up and those participating in the posttest.

Differences in the shelter programs may have had an effect on posttest responses, in that the women may have felt a sense of dedication towards the shelter during the time of the posttest, and they may not have wanted to disclose any information that they perceived as harmful to the shelter. To counteract this possibility, I stressed the importance of the women's total honesty, the confidentiality of their responses, the importance of the research, and the potential benefits the research could give the shelter and women with experiences similar to their own.

A convenience sample of five shelters in two mid-Atlantic states was drawn. A list including all current programs was obtained from each shelter. To interview the women in the shelters, I selected a day when each shelter was "busy," and began the interviews. I then kept interviewing new clients until one hundred and two women were interviewed.

This design presents some problems. The results are not highly generalizable to shelters outside of the two mid-Atlantic states in my study, unless their programs are very similar to the ones in my study. The results are generalizable to shelters in mid-Atlantic states because they all offer essentially the same services. The services typically offered are the following: emergency shelter and crisis intervention, group and individual counseling, community education, information and referral, volunteer training, legal and medical assistance, parenting groups, batterer groups, housing assistance, and employment assistance. I have chosen shelters through convenience, therefore I cannot generalize every piece of information to all shelters, or to all battered women. I have studied predominantly lower class women who go to shelters and therefore results must be carefully interpreted.

DATA COLLECTION

The shelters selected were a convenience sample. The selected shelters were mailed a letter requesting a list of all the programs they offered, or to which they referred the women. They were then asked to participate in the study. One shelter had a policy that the women must receive something in return for their participation in research. For this shelter, I made up a separate consent form, and gave the women two dollars at the end of the pretest, and three dollars at the end of the posttest. When the interview was conducted by phone, I mailed the woman the money.

A letter describing the research was mailed to each of the shelters. A few days after the letter was received, a phone call was made to the program director to discuss the research with her, and to arrange an appointment to discuss the research in greater detail. With information from the director regarding the average number of clients per month, and the typically "busiest" days, I made an appointment for the starting date of the interviews. After the initial interviews took place at each shelter, I made return trips to the shelters until one hundred and two women were interviewed. At times a staff person called me when a new resident checked into the shelter; other times I called, or just stopped by to see if there were any new residents.

To help prevent mortality prior to the posttest, I received cooperation from some of the shelter staff to help me stay updated on the address changes of the women. At the time of the pretest, three stamped, self-addressed cards were given to the women to send to me in the event of an address change.

The posttest interview occurred two to six months after the pretest. On the consent form the women ranked the alternatives for my contacting them for the second interview. For four of the shelters the alternatives were: 1. through a contact person; 2. through a shelter staff person; 3. through a postcard; 4. through a phone call. For the fifth shelter number 2 did not apply.

A complete manual (including a coding guide) was used. To check for possible coding errors, two complete data checks were made, and then several spot checks. Missing data was dropped from the analysis, but patterns of systematically missing data were examined.

I set up the posttest interviews according to alternatives preferred by the women. I drove to the agreed upon location if it was within a two hour drive. If the woman lived further than a two hour drive, the interview was completed by phone, except for the self-esteem scale which was mailed to a location of the woman's choice, with a stamped,

self-addressed return envelope. The women were asked by phone to complete and return the scale.

I tried to reach women through whatever method they listed as most desirable. After at least three tries per method, I continued to the next method chosen by the woman, until I contacted the woman, or I had no more choices. If a woman listed only one method as desirable, I stopped attempting contact after approximately six months. If a woman was not contacted after approximately six months, her posttest became missing data.

With information from shelter files, friends, or relatives of women regarding current addresses, I attempted to contact women who ranked the mail as their first choice for contact. I mailed a postcard to the most current address asking the woman to call me (collect if necessary). I did not use the word "shelter", or jeopardize the women's confidentiality or safety in any way.

If some of the women could not be reached by phone the first try, an alternate day and time was chosen. The second call was within a four day period. After a third try, the women were mailed a postcard with a plea for a prompt response. I kept trying to reach women through appropriate methods until approximately six months after the pretest. If I got no answer to the postcards, and could not reach the

woman by any other method, the interview became missing data.

When a woman refused to participate, I made a notation of the refusal, and waited to interview the next woman. Only eight women refused participation in the pretest (3 from one shelter, 4 from another, and 1 from another). Five women (one from each shelter) were inappropriate and could not participate for the following reasons: two came to the shelters because they had been living on the streets. They had not come from abusive situations, although they both had been abused in the past. One woman was hiding from a cult that had recently attempted twice to kill her. She had been abused as a child, and had run away from the cult in which she was to become a leader. She was offended that she could not participate, so I listened to her story. Another woman could not be interviewed because she spoke Spanish only. The last woman was leaving the shelter the next morning, and could not answer the interview questions in terms of receiving future assistance from the shelter; she felt she had already received help. Her needs were different when I spoke with her than they had been several days earlier.

In collecting the posttest data, I had only one refusal. The refusal came after the woman's college-aged children had found my telephone number, and had called me (thinking the number was a shelter number) threatening to sue me if I kept

helping their mother. When the mother called me back, there was nothing I could say to convince her to talk with me, even by phone. She said the shelter had been fine, but she did not want to answer any specific questions.

I did not receive many of the postcards I had given the women after the initial interview to mail me in case of an address change. When asked for information, the shelters' staff usually pointed me towards their stacks of files, but I did question many staff members about specific clients that I knew they would remember.

I was in touch with at least eleven women who did not participate in the follow-up; at some point they moved, and I was never able to get in touch with them again. More than half of these women were back with their partners. All of them tried to schedule appointments for the second interview. Several of the women had more than one job, and therefore had trouble scheduling an appointment time. Other women were attempting to find a way to get away from home without arousing suspicion. Since the partners usually kept a close track of the women's whereabouts, it was difficult for the women to meet with me. Because I tried to get face-to-face interviews, it was more difficult to interview these women. If I had been interviewing everyone by telephone, it would have been easier to have gotten posttest interviews with these

women, but because in-person interviews were used in the pretest, it was most desirable to use the same method in the posttest.

I also was in touch with several women's mothers, a few daughters, and sisters. I spoke several times with these relatives who gave the women the messages, but the women never got in touch with me. One mother explained that her daughter probably would not call me because she was in a worse situation than she had been before. No other relative gave me any message from the women. They all said they had given the women the messages, and apparently the women intended to call. One mother yelled and cursed at me. She said her daughter was not living with her, she did not know where she was, and I was never to call her again. I got this same message from one estranged husband who afterwards called my house on several occasions (using different names) to find out where his wife was.

SHELTER DESCRIPTIONS

The five shelters had variations mainly in their physical environments, and relationships between staff members and residents.

Four of the five shelters were located in residential sections of large urban areas; the other one was in a rural

area. Three of the shelters were able to house at least nine women; the other shelters usually housed three or four. Four of the shelters tried to maintain strict secrecy regarding the shelter's location. The remaining shelter did not make a point of advertising the location, but it was not considered a threat to let people know its location. Security problems had not yet arisen from the decision.

From the outside, three of the shelters appeared to be different in some way than the surrounding homes, but the differences were minor, and would not be noticed unless someone were looking for differences.

Three of the shelters had a comfortable inside environment. These shelters had air conditioning for the residents, newer furnishings, and were kept tidier than the remaining shelters. The comfortable environment seemed to add greatly to a sense of well-being for the residents of such shelters. Residents at the comfortable shelters seemed more peaceful, better dressed, and more organized than residents at the other shelters. In the other shelters, overcrowding, sweltering heat, and dirty surroundings served as irritants for the already over-stressed residents.

It is understandable that the smaller the shelter, the easier it is to keep it clean, but I saw that large shelters can be well-kept also. Three of the shelters had well--

enclosed private offices for the regular staff members. The other shelters' offices could be temporarily segregated from the rest of the home, but was more difficult to maintain confidentiality with this arrangement. Whispering had to occur frequently. The "open" office in one shelter led to the residents feeling talked about "behind their backs". In the other shelter, the open office allowed the residents to feel more freedom to associate with staff members.

In the two shelters with uncomfortable environments, a clear sense of the staff as "them" and the residents as "us" existed. There were obvious "favorites" among the staff. Residents often mentioned that they felt the staff members who had been abused themselves were better counselors. I was also told by some residents that counselors who were not married were too naive, and could not possibly understand how a battered wife feels. I heard consistent complaints of counselors being too busy to help residents; counselors often got caught up in paperwork, and seemed to forget that their main duty was as a counselor.

MEASURES

For purposes of this research abuse/battering was defined as physical, emotional, or sexual harm of a woman by a man--including any type of assault/battery, or intent, (threats) of harm, and any psychological abuse which strips the woman of her self respect. The abuse was operationalized as a woman entering a battered woman's shelter.

Actual financial dependence was defined as situations where women were dependent upon another person for financial support, or were lacking job skills, educational experience, and financial resources. Perceived dependence (whether financial or emotional) was defined as situations where women did not believe they could adequately support themselves if they terminated the relationship. Termination of the relationship was operationalized as the woman not returning to her abusive partner after leaving the shelter.

Women with jobs were considered less financially dependent than women without. The higher the grade of school that women have completed, the less dependent they were considered. Women with their own bank account were considered less dependent than women with joint accounts only, or no accounts. Women who were co-owners or owners of a car, were considered less dependent than women who were not owners or co-owners of cars. All of these items were combined in a scale of actual

dependence. A complete copy of the interview schedule is included in appendix II.

I used the Rosenberg self-esteem scale because battered women have typically been found to have low self-esteem. The women were handed the scale with directions on how to complete it. Women who could not read or see well enough to fill out the questionnaire, were read the items orally and asked to write down their answers on a sheet of paper. It was my assumption that the women with low self-esteem would perceive themselves as more dependent than women with medium or high self-esteem. The self-esteem scale is included in appendix I.

Together, these items are the predictors of whether the woman decided to leave the relationship, or remain in it. The higher a woman scored on the dependence and self-esteem scales, the greater the chance that the relationship would not be terminated.

IV.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In the past literature, predictor variables have been education, number of children, and other personal characteristics of the battered woman. I consider these factors to be antecedent variables, and I chose to concentrate on the gap between the desired and actual program components.

Data presented in Tables I and II provide the information necessary to compare pretest and posttest distributions on major variables measured in this investigation. The mean length of time between the pretest and posttest was 3.5 months. Of the 51 women interviewed for the posttest, 14 of them had returned at some time to the abuser, but only 4 of the 14 were back with the abuser at the time of the posttest. So, there were a surprisingly high number of women living away from the abusive partner. Many of these women move from friend to friend, and need a great deal of assistance trying to meet the basic necessities of life.

Of the 14 (27%) women who returned to their partner, 9 (64%) told me at the pretest that they wanted to end the relationship. Of the 27% who returned, 8 (57%) said that the shelter had provided some service which helped her to return to the relationship, even if it was throwing her out of the shelter for misconduct.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Pretest</u> <u>N=102</u>	<u>Pretest</u> <u>N=51</u>	<u>Posttest</u> <u>N=51</u>
Age(mean)	27	29	---
<u>employment</u>			
full-time	23%	23%	33%
part-time	4%	4%	10%
time of	4%	4%	8%
homemaker	65%	65%	35%
in school	1%	0%	2%
work and school	4%	4%	2%
other	0%	0%	10%
hrs. worked per week(mean)	38	43	38
<u>Job</u> ¹			
service work	27%	24%	33%
clerical/kindred	18%	18%	20%
other	55%	58%	47%
have children	78%	75%	75%
number of children(mean)	2	2	2
have teenagers	14%	16%	16%
education(mean years)	12	12	12
<u>Banking</u>			
own name & joint	4%	4%	6%
own name only	15%	20%	26%
joint	14%	18%	10%
none	67%	59%	57%
have no car	51%	55%	49%
income(mean)	\$5223	\$5300	\$5452
<u>Marital status</u>			
married	72%	71%	52%
just living with	24%	24%	8%

¹ The main occupations represented in the service category of employment in Table I were the following: childcare workers, elderly caretakers, housekeepers, dry cleaners, exterminators, cosmetologists, cleaning crews, city painters, hotel clerks, phone solicitors, sales, newspaper distributors, and cashiers (not for fast food). The main occupations included in the clerical/kindred category in Table I were the following: bank tellers, bookkeepers, any office clerks, typists, secretaries, receptionists, office machine operators (keypunch, computer, switchboard). Examples of the other category include women who have never been employed, teachers and aids, nurses, dieticians, etc..

TABLE I CONT.

	<u>Pretest</u> <u>N=102</u>	<u>Pretest</u> <u>N=51</u>	<u>Posttest</u> <u>N=51</u>
legally separated	2%	2%	16%
divorced	0%	0%	4%
single	2%	2%	20%
live with abuser	91%	84%	22%
yrs. of abuse(by partner, mean)	5	6	6
left partner before	78%	76%	---
stayed in shelter before	35%	29%	---
<u>types of abuse</u>			
emotional	98%	100%	---
physical	98%	96%	---
sexual	40%	45%	---
<u>child abuse</u>	60%	65%	49%
emotionally	98%	97%	93%
physically	67%	58%	67%
sexually	36%	29%	26%
child abuse by non-family	33%	26%	35%
child abuse by secondary family	11%	19%	11%
abused by immediate family	90%	87%	78%
abused infrequently	4%	3%	7%
abused frequently	18%	13%	37%
abused constantly	78%	84%	56%
months between pre and posttest(mean)	---	---	3.5
returned to abuser	---	---	27%
self-esteem score(mean)	3.6	3.7	4
<u>reasons for returning</u>			
love/caring	---	---	46%
wanted relat. to work	---	---	15%
children's benefit	---	---	50%
financial	---	---	21%
<u>quest. that bothered woman</u>	14%	10%	---
abuse from partner	57%	60%	---
child abuse	29%	20%	---
whether left before	7%	20%	---
future plans	7%	0%	---

TABLE II
 DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS
 OF THE ABUSIVE PARTNER
 (POPULATION)

	<u>Pretest</u> <u>N=102</u>	<u>Pretest</u> <u>N=51</u>	<u>Posttest</u> <u>N=51</u>
<u>abuser's employment</u>			
full-time	70%	57%	43%
part-time	2%	2%	2%
school	0%	0%	0%
retired	2%	4%	4%
work & school	0%	0%	8%
other	20%	28%	8%
don't know	---	---	35%
 hrs. worked per week(mean)	 42	 42	 45
<u>Job</u> ¹			
mechanic	25%	25%	24%
heavy laborer	23%	22%	24%
other	52%	53%	52%
 military	 17%	 12%	 8%
 his education(mean years)	 12	 12	 12

¹ The main jobs included in the mechanic category in Table II were the following: maintenance/repair of planes, cars, machinery, etc.. The main occupations included in the heavy labor category of Table II were the following: construction workers, truckdrivers, packers, and pipefitters. Examples of the other category include machinists, counselors, engineers, plumbers, carpenters, etc..

The services listed most often at posttest as the ones that were most helpful were counseling (75%), and fostering independence (36%). These women felt that because they were more independent, they knew they did not have to return. They were returning because it was their own decision to give the relationship another chance.

Women gave many reasons for returning to the relationship, but the reasons given most often were the following:

1. she loved or cared for him and wanted to give the relationship another chance; (6, 3 said this reason was most important in the decision to return)
2. she wanted the relationship to work; (2, 2 listed this as the most important reason for returning) I was often told that the woman wanted the relationship to work because they had not known each other long enough, or had not been married for long.
3. for the children's benefit; (7, 4 felt this was the most important reason for returning) I was consistently told that if they had not returned, they would have lost custody of their children, or they were afraid their children would have to grow up in poverty.
4. no money to live decently--no job, no place to live; (3, 2 said this the most important reason for returning).

Of the 37 women who did not return, 51% (19) felt that counseling was helpful in allowing them to make this decision, and 30% (11) felt that having a place to stay and their basic needs met allowed them to make their decision.

Substantial differences between the pretest and posttest are the following:

1. women's employment status increased 10% in full-time work, 6% in part-time work; and there was a 30% decrease in the number of housewives;
3. legal separations increased by 14%; a 16% decrease in cohabitation occurred, and a 62% decrease in women residing with the abuser;
4. reports of abuse as a child decreased by 16% as well as the percentage of women reporting that they were abused constantly as a child (-28%). Women reporting that they were abused frequently increased by 28%. Perhaps during the women's stay at the shelter they were more "open" about discussing abuse; therefore, more women admitted being abused as a child at the pretest than at the posttest. Women who could remember the ages the abuse began and ended, most often said the abuse began in infancy and ended in the teen years.
5. Abuser's full-time employment dropped by 14%. During the pretest many women explained that their partners were currently employed, but did not have a history of holding their

jobs. This could explain a drop in full-time employment. Also, women whose partners were employed full-time were probably less likely to participate in the posttest because they felt, in some sense, their lives were normal, and did not wish to bring up unpleasant memories.

To measure degree of dependence, I combined several items into a scale. The higher the woman's score on this scale, the more dependent she is, and the less likely to leave the relationship. To create the scale of actual financial dependence, I combined the answers to the relevant items. Women fell into the less dependent group if they had a bank account in their own name, had at least a high school education, were employed, and owned a car. Women in the more dependent group had either a joint or no bank account, had a less than high school education, were not employed, and did not own a car.

The individual items significantly correlated with the sum of the scores on these items were combined into a scale. Table III shows the item-total correlations for the original scale of actual dependence. Since number of children, income from the past year, and marital status were not significantly correlated with the other variables or with the scale score, they were dropped from the scale. Table IV shows the revised item-scale correlations for the dependence scale at posttest. Tables VI-IX show the relationships between individual items

TABLE III

PEARSON CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ACTUAL DEPENDENCY
INDICATORS BASED ON TOTAL POPULATION

PRETESTN=102

	BANK	EDUC	WORK	CAR	# KIDS	INC	MARR	SUM
BANK	1.00000 0.0000	-0.29749 0.0024	0.20584 0.0379	0.27677 0.0049	0.06763 *0.4994	0.05041 *0.6148	0.24199 0.0143	0.47626 0.0001
EDUC	-0.29749 0.0024	1.00000 0.0000	-0.00723 *0.9425	-0.05722 *0.5679	0.02897 *0.7725	-0.13040 *0.1904	0.02206 *0.8258	0.32962 0.0007
WORK	0.20584 0.0379	-0.00723 *0.9425	1.00000 0.0000	0.20776 1.0361	-0.01090 *0.9134	0.28702 0.0034	-0.09827 *0.3258	0.52505 0.0001
CAR	0.27677 0.0049	-0.05722 *0.5679	0.20776 0.0361	1.00000 0.0000	0.27654 0.0049	0.04725 *0.6372	-0.16608 0.0953	0.54350 0.0001
#KIDS	0.06763 0.4994	0.02897 *0.7725	-0.01090 *0.9134	0.27654 0.0049	1.00000 0.0000	-0.12886 *0.1968	0.12798 *0.1999	0.41371 0.0001
INC	0.05041 *0.6148	-0.13070 *0.1904	0.28702 0.0034	0.04725 *0.6372	-0.12886 *0.1968	1.00000 0.0000	0.00545 *0.9567	0.30935 0.0016
MARR	-0.24199 0.0143	0.02206 *0.8258	-0.09827 *0.3258	-0.16608 0.0953	0.12798 *0.1999	0.00545 *0.9567	1.00000 0.0000	0.13523 *0.1754
SUM	0.47626 0.0001	0.32962 0.0007	0.52505 0.0001	0.54350 0.0001	0.41371 0.0001	0.30935 0.0016	0.13523 *0.1754	1.00000 0.0000

* p > .10

TABLE IVPOSTTESTN=51

	BANK	EDUC	WORK	CAR	SUM
BANK	1.00000 0.0000	0.46106 0.0007	0.35182 0.0114	0.34605 0.0129	0.83362 0.0001
EDUC	0.46106 0.0007	1.00000 0.0000	0.30828 0.0277	0.13439 0.3471	0.74127 0.0001
WORK	0.35182 0.0114	0.30828 0.0277	1.00000 0.0000	0.37890 0.0061	0.63900 0.0001
CAR	0.34605 0.0129	0.13439 *0.3471	0.37890 0.0061	1.00000 0.0000	0.56563 0.0001
SUM	0.83362 0.0001	0.74127 0.0001	0.63900 0.0001	0.56563 0.0001	1.00000 0.0000

* P > .10

in the scale and outcome. The analysis by individual items shows that level of education, followed by access to a bank account, are the most important items in the scale of actual dependence. Of the women with their own banks accounts only, one woman returned to the abusive partner. Table XXV shows that the mean education and income for the women who returned was slightly lower than those who did not return. However, as is evident from Table V, the relationship between the variables is stronger when they are used as a scale rather than examined separately.

In hypothesis number one, the independent variable is financial independence; the dependent variable is likelihood of terminating the relationship. The crosstabulation (Table V) showed that 57% of the women who returned to their abusive partner had actual dependency scores in the top three highest categories of dependency combined. 38% of the women who did not return had scores in these same categories. So, the women who had little access to finances, low levels of education, were out of the labor force, and were not owners or co-owners of cars, were more likely to return than women who scored lower on the dependency scale.

As a measure of perceived dependence, women were divided into four categories. They were considered the least dependent if they said they thought they could support themselves

TABLE V

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY THE WOMEN'S
ACTUAL DEPENDENCE SCORES AT POSTTEST

N=51
SCORE¹

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	2 (22%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)	3 (37%)	2 (20%)	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	7 (78%)	6(100%)	5 (83%)	5 (63%)	8 (80%)	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	9 (17%)	6 (12%)	6 (12%)	8 (16%)	10 (19%)	6 (12%)	6 (12%)	

CHI-SQUARE = 6.492 * PROBABILITY=.370

* P > .10

¹ The higher the score the higher the actual dependency

TABLE VI

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY TYPE OF
BANK ACCOUNT

N=51

	OWN & JOINT	JOINT	NONE	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	2 (12%)	2 (40%)	10 (34%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	15 (88%)	3 (60%)	19 (66%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	17 (33%)	5 (10%)	29 (57%)	

CHI-SQUARE = 3.2 * PROBABILITY=.20

TABLE VII

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY EDUCATIONAL
LEVEL

N=51

	< = 8TH	9-11	> = 12	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	5 (16%)	3 (33%)	6 (55%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	26 (84%)	6 (67%)	5 (45%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	31 (61%)	9 (18%)	11 (21%)	

CHI-SQUARE = 6.206 PROBABILITY=.045

TABLE VIII

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY
EMPLOYMENT STATUS

N=51

	NOT WORKING	WORKING	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	6 (27%)	8 (28%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	16 (73%)	21 (72%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	22 (43%)	29 (57%)	

CHI-SQUARE = .001

* PROBABILITY=.980

TABLE IX

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY
PRESENCE OF A CAR

N=51

	CAR PRESENT	NO CAR PRESENT	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	7 (27%)	7 (28%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	19 (73%)	18 (72%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	26 (51%)	25 (49%)	

CHI-SQUARE = .007

* PROBABILITY=.931

and their children if they had to do so, a little less dependent if they answered "maybe"; more dependent if they said they did not know, and the most dependent if they said they could not support themselves and their children.

Listed in Table X is the crosstabulation of women's termination status by their perceived dependence. The crosstabulation for perceived dependence shows results that do not confirm what was expected. 27% of the women with dependency scores in the lowest category, returned to the partner. Perhaps these women felt pressured to say that they were indeed capable of providing for themselves and their children.

In hypothesis number two, the independent variable is presence of a teenage child or children; the dependent variable is likelihood of terminating the relationship.

The crosstabulation in table XI shows that of the women who did not return to the abuser, 74% had no teenager living with them. Even though the chi-square was not significant, results are the opposite of those hypothesized. Perhaps the number or sex of the teenage children is more important than the presence of teenagers. Only 18% of the women had teenagers, and this hypothesis may require more cases in order to fully test it. I chose to examine teenagers because recent literature suggested that they, not younger children, would have an influence on the woman's decision.

TABLE X

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY THE WOMEN'S
PERCEIVED DEPENDENCE SCORES

N=51

	THINKS CAN SUPPORT	MAYBE CAN	DON'T KNOW	CAN'T SUPPORT	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	12 (27%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	32 (73%)	1 (50%)	1(100%)	3 (75%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	44 (86%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	4 (8%)	

CHI-SQUARE =.902 * PROBABILITY=.825

* P > .10

TABLE XI

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP
BY THE PRESENCE OF TEENAGERS

N=51

	NO TEENS PRESENT	TEENS PRESENT	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	11 (26%)	3 (33%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	31 (74%)	6 (67%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	41 (100%)	9 (100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = .190

* PROBABILITY=.663

TABLE XII

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY
PRESENCE OF ABUSE AS A CHILD

N=51

	NOT ABUSED AS CHILD	ABUSED AS CHILD	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	6 (23%)	8 (32%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	20 (77%)	17 (68%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	26 (100%)	25 (100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = .510

* PROBABILITY=.475

* P > .10

TABLE XIII

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY THE
WOMEN'S SCORE OF SERVICES ASKED FOR
BUT NOT RECEIVED

N=51

SCORE

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	1 (17%)	1 (17%)	4 (33%)	2 (20%)	1 (11%)	4 (67%)	1 (50%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	5 (83%)	5 (83%)	8 (67%)	8 (80%)	8 (89%)	2 (33%)	1 (50%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	6(100%)	6(100%)	12(100%)	10(100%)	9(100%)	6(100%)	2(100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = 7.538

* PROBABILITY=.274

* P > .10

1 The higher the score the higher the actual dependency

TABLE XIV

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY
PROTECTION

N=51

	ASKED & RECEIVED PROT.	ASKED & DID NOT RECEIVE	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	12 (29%)	2 (22%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	30 (71%)	7 (78%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	42 (100%)	9 (100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = .150 * PROBABILITY=.699

TABLE XV

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY
COUNSELING FOR HER CHILD

N=51

	ASKED & RECEIVED KID COUN.	ASKED & DID NOT RECEIVE	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	12 (30%)	2 (18%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	28 (70%)	9 (82%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	40 (100%)	11 (100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = .605 * PROBABILITY=.437

TABLE XVI
CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY
LEGAL ASSISTANCE

N=51

	ASKED & RECEIVED LEGAL	ASKED & DID NOT RECEIVE	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	9 (26%)	5 (31%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	26 (74%)	11 (69%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	35 (100%)	16 (100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = .169 * PROBABILITY=.681

TABLE XVII
CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY TECHNICAL
AND EDUCATIONAL TRAINING

N=51

	ASKED & RECEIVED TRAINING	ASKED & DID NOT RECEIVE	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	7 (21%)	7 (41%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	27 (79%)	10 (59%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	34 (100%)	17 (100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = 2.412 * PROBABILITY=.120

* $p > .10$

TABLE XVIII

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS OF
THE RELATIONSHIP BY MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

N=51

	ASKED & RECEIVED MED. HELP	ASKED & DID NOT RECEIVE	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	9 (28%)	5 (26%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	23 (72%)	14 (74%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	32 (100%)	19 (100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = .020

* PROBABILITY=.889

TABLE XIX

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY MEDICAL
ASSISTANCE FOR HER CHILDREN

N=51

	ASKED & RECEIVED HELP	ASKED & DID NOT RECEIVE	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	10 (28%)	4 (27%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	26 (72%)	11 (73%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	36 (100%)	15 (100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = .007

* PROBABILITY=.935

TABLE XX

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS OF
THE RELATIONSHIP BY HOUSING ASSISTANCE

N=51

	ASKED & RECEIVED HELP	ASKED & DID NOT RECEIVE	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	7 (22%)	7 (37%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	25 (78%)	12 (73%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	32 (100%)	19 (100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = 1.341 * PROBABILITY=.247

TABLE XXI

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS OF
THE RELATIONSHIP BY JOB PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE

N=51

	ASKED & RECEIVED HELP	ASKED & DID NOT RECEIVE	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	9 (22%)	5 (50%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	32 (78%)	5 (50%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	41 (100%)	10 (100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = 3.176 PROBABILITY=.075

TABLE XXII

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS OF
THE RELATIONSHIP BY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

N=51

	ASKED & RECEIVED HELP	ASKED & DID NOT RECEIVE	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	6 (21%)	8 (36%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	23 (79%)	14 (64%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	29 (100%)	22 (100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = 1.543 * PROBABILITY=.214

TABLE XXIII

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS OF
THE RELATIONSHIP BY ASSISTANCE WITH HER CHILDREN'S NEEDS

N=51

	ASKED & RECEIVED HELP	ASKED & DID NOT RECEIVE	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	8 (20%)	6 (55%)	14 (27%)
DID NOT RETURN	32 (80%)	5 (45%)	37 (73%)
TOTAL	40 (100%)	11 (100%)	51

CHI-SQUARE = 5.170 * PROBABILITY=.075

TABLE XXIV

CROSSTABULATION OF THE TERMINATION STATUS
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BY THE WOMEN'S
SELF-ESTEEM SCORES AT POSTTEST

N=51

SCORE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL
RETURNED TO PARTNER	0 (0%)	2(100%)	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	4 (36%)	4 (22%)	12(29%)
DID NOT RETURN	2(100%)	0 (0%)	3 (60%)	4(100%)	7 (64%)	14 (78%)	30(71%)
TOTAL	2(100%)	2(100%)	5(100%)	4(100%)	11(100%)	18(100%)	42

CHI-SQUARE = 8.403

* PROBABILITY=.135

* P > .10

1 The higher the score the lower the self-esteem

TABLE XXV

TERMINATION STATUS OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BY THE MEANS OF EDUCATION AND INCOME

	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL (MEAN)	INCOME LEVEL (MEAN)
RETURNED TO PARTNER	10.1	\$5263
DID NOT RETURN	12.5	\$5402
DIFFERENCE	2.4 YEARS	\$ 139

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE TERMINATION
STATUS OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BY THE WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL AND INCOME LEVELS

	F VALUE	PR > F
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	6.48	.0146
INCOME LEVEL	.27	* .6074

* P > .10

In hypothesis number three, the independent variable is presence of abuse as a child; the dependent variable is likelihood of terminating the relationship. The crosstabulation in table XII shows that 32% of the women who returned to the abusive partner had been abused as children. 77% of the women who did not return had not been abused as children. Of the women who said they had not been abused as children, almost every one of them told me that their families had been dysfunctional in some way (alcoholism, mental illness, etc.).

For hypothesis number four, the independent variable is shelter programs; the dependent variable is likelihood of terminating the relationship. From the pretest data on services the women felt they needed from the shelter (to become independent) and the data from the posttest regarding the services the women received, I created a scale measuring the discrepancy between services desired and services received. The more services lacking, the more dependent the woman. Table XIII shows that lacking services may not be a major factor in the decision to end or not end an abusive relationship. Perhaps what the women feel is best for their situations may not be important. The crosstabulations in tables XIV through XXIII show each of the service variables in relationship to the termination status. The three services which seem to be most important are technical training, Table

XVII, (41% of those who returned asked for help and did not receive it), job placement, Table XXI, (50% of those who returned asked for help and did not receive it), and children's needs, Table XXIII, (55% of those who returned asked for help and did not receive it).

Table XXIV shows that both the women who did not return to the relationship and the women who did return had low self-esteem. This is an understandable finding since self-esteem does not usually change in a short period of time.

Table XXVI lists shelter services that the residents most often said needed to be available or be improved. Overall, the respondents felt that the shelter system itself needed a great deal of improvement. The most frequently mentioned recommendations in the categories of shelter system improvement were the following: 1. a better chore system/overall organization; 2. more activities/entertainment (physical, educational, etc.); 3. a room where children are not allowed; 4. a spiritual sense such as meditation/moment of silence before group meetings; 5. information about the services that the shelter offers; 6. better laundry facilities and rules of usage; 7. better initiation into the shelter environment; 8. more resident participation at the shelter (helping out with some of the work volunteers usually do); 9. better/more transportation.

TABLE XXVI

MOST IMPORTANT NEEDS OF THE SHELTER
RESIDENTS (SERVICES THE RESIDENTS
FELT NEEDED TO EXIST OR IMPROVE)

N=51

SHELTER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT	32 (63%)
BETTER/MORE COUNSELING	23 (45%)
BETTER/MORE HELP WITH KIDS	17 (33%)
BETTER/MORE COMM. COOPERATION	12 (24%)

Counseling services seen as needing improvement were the following: 1. better/more counseling or counselors; 2. outreach counseling for those who have left the shelter; 3. a personality test given prior to granting shelter; 4. a counselor to escort women checking into a hospital from the shelter.

Recommendations for services for children are the following: 1. be associated with a summer camp for kids; 2. baby-sitters available for shelter children; 3. change in nap time for children; 4. have a place for older male children to stay; 5. have more items for infants; 6. counseling for children (even adult children); 7. supervisor solely for children.

Suggestions regarding community cooperation are the following: 1. better housing options (cooperation with the city); 2. cooperation with employers; 3. better social service cooperation; 4. better/more cooperation with the police departments.

After the pretest, I had intended to divide the women into three groups which would allow me to predict their situation in the posttest. Women who were financially independent at the time of the pretest; women who were financially dependent, but were at shelters which had programs they felt would enabled them to become financially independent;

and women who were financially dependent, but were at shelters which did not have programs they felt would enable them to become financially independent. My posttest sample size was too small for me to complete those analyses. The analysis was restricted to the zero-order relationships without using any control variables because of sample size.

V.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Actual financial dependence was found to be the most significant factor relevant to the women's decision. Of the 25 women who had been abused as children, only 8 of them returned to their abusive partners, but of the 26 women who had not been abused as children, 77% of them did not return to the abusive relationship. The influence of teenage children and women's perceptions of their service needs require additional research to thoroughly examine these factors.

The main objective in conducting this research was to develop the information to recommend the best shelter programs possible. I had a 50% posttest response rate, which did not enable me to accomplish all that I had intended, but I was able to analyze data and show what direction the results leaned toward and what gaps in the data need to be examined in further research. The sex and age of children as they influence the woman's decision need to be examined further. The perception of the woman's needs as a predictor of the termination status of the relationship should also be further examined.

This study can be seen as a pilot study. The research will hopefully spark attention away from examining psychological characteristics of battered women and toward shelter components and the extent to which specific needs of the women are met.

Since shelters are a fairly recent development, and they remain full, it is important to concentrate on maximizing effective programming. Shelter personnel need to know what services to provide in order to best serve their population.

After I give the information to the shelters, many of them may not do anything with the information, or may be unable to obtain the funds that may be necessary. To help prevent this problem, in my report I will suggest optimum and sufficient alternatives for better programs.

During the pretest, women may have said they needed a certain program component (or components) that was not provided at that particular shelter. So, during the posttest, if some women were dissatisfied with any of the programs, it may have been due to the lack of the missing component. The posttest included a question about missing programs. In my analysis I examined the impact of the desired component versus the true program components on the women's decisions.

I cannot be sure that the best program for every battered woman could be found since I examined existing programs in two Southeastern states only.

VI.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

A. New York Esteem Scale --explanation of scoring

APPENDIX II

A. Pretest

B. Posttest

New York Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg self-esteem scale)

The R.S.E. is a ten count Guttman scale with a coefficient of reproducibility of seventy-two percent and a coefficient of scalability of seventy-two percent. Respondents will be given a pencil or pen to take the test, and will be asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following items (asterisks represent low self-esteem responses).

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

SA A D* SD*

2. At times I think I am no good at all.

SA* A* D SD

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

SA A D* SD*

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

SA A D* SD*

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

SA* A* D SD

6. I certainly feel useless at times.

SA* A* D SD

7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on equal plane with others.

SA A D* SD*

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

SA* A* D SD

9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

SA* A* D SD

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

SA A D* SD*

Scale item 1 (combination of items 3, 7, & 9)-- if the woman answers two of three or three of three positively, she gets a positive (low self-esteem) score for scale item 1.

Scale item 2 (combination of items 4 & 5)-- if the woman answers one of two or two of two positively then she is considered positive for item 2.

Scale item 3, 4 & 5 are scored as positive or negative based on answers to questions 1, 8, & 10.

Scale item 6 (combination of 2 & 6)-- if the woman answers one of two or two of two positively, then she is considered positive for item 6.

Pretest of women at the shelters

respondent's code# _____

Let me explain again that I am an interviewing women at shelters for my thesis, and you have been selected to participate in my study. I want to know what you think. There are no right or wrong answers.

First let me ask you some questions about yourself:

1. Last week, were you working full-time, part-time, going to school, housekeeping, or what?

1-working full-time

2-working part-time

3-taking time off from work

4-homemaker

5-going to school

6-retired

7-school and work

8-other _____

(if 1, 2, or 3 continue; otherwise skip to #3)

2. How many hours per week do you usually work?

3. What is your current job title, or if you have worked in the past, what was your job title?

respondent's code#_____

4. Do you have any children currently living with you?

1-yes_____number of children

2-no

(if she has kids continue; if not, skip to #6)

5. How old is each child?

(ages)

6. What is the highest grade of school that you finished and got credit for?

7. Do you have a bank account in your own name, a joint account, or no account?

1-both in own name and joint

2-in own name

3-joint only

4-none

8. Are you a co-owner or owner of a car?

1-yes

2-no

9. Now, could you tell me your total income(not including anyone else's money) last year before taxes?

1_____

2-don't know

respondent's code#_____

10. Do you think that you could support yourself(& the children if the woman has any) if you had to?

1-yes

2-maybe

3-don't know

4-no (why not?)_____

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about the man who abused you.

11. Are you currently married to him?

1-yes

2-no, just living with

3-no, legally separated

4-no, divorced

5-no, single

99-don't know

12. Last week was the man who abused you working?

1-full-time

2-part-time

3-taking time off from work

4-school

5-retired

6-working and going to school

7-other_____

(if 1, 2, or 3 continue; otherwise skip to #14)

respondent's code#_____

13. How many hours per week does he normally work?

14. What is his job title, or if he has worked in the past, what was his title?

15. Is he presently in the military?

1-yes

2-no

16. What is the highest grade of school that he completed and received credit for?

17. About how long(months, years..)has he been abusing you?

18. In what ways were you abused?(phys, ment, sex)

Now let's talk about your childhood.

respondent's code# _____

19. When you were a child, did either of your parents (foster parents, or whoever the child lived with) threaten to hurt you, commit sexual acts/allow others to commit sexual acts on you, abandon you, or abuse you in anyway? (if yes---how?--what kinds of abuse and neglect?)

1-no

2-yes _____

(If there was abuse in the childhood home; if not, skip to #21)

20. How often did abuse occur in your childhood home?

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about receiving help from the shelter.

respondent's code#_____

21. Have you ever left your partner before?

1-yes_____how many times?

2-no

22. Have you ever stayed in a shelter before?

1-yes_____how many times?

2-no

23. How often do you discuss or have you considered separation, divorce, or terminating your relationship?

1-All of the time

2-most of the time

3-occasionally

4-rarely

5-never

24. Since you came to a shelter, do you plan on living apart from the man who abused you at least temporarily?

1-yes

2-no

3-don't know

respondent's code#_____

25. What types of assistance do you feel would be most helpful to you?(check all that apply)

1-food stamps

2-AFDC

3-individual counseling

4-educ/voc training with job placement

5-just job placement

6-housing

7-parenting training

8-group counseling

9-other_____

10-don't know

11-none

26. Can you think of any other types of assistance you will need from the shelter?

1-yes_____ (what?)

2-no

27. I realize we have discussed some sensitive issues, and I wonder if there were any questions that bothered you?

1-yes_____ (which ones?)

2-no

respondent's code# _____

28. Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you so much for your cooperation in this survey.
I appreciate your help and your time.

Posttest

Let me explain again that I am interviewing women at shelters for my thesis, and you have been selected to participate in my study. Remember, I want to know what you think. There are no right or wrong answers.

First let me ask you some questions about yourself:

1. Last week, was she working full-time, part-time, going to school, housekeeping, or what?

1-working full-time

2-working part-time

3-taking off from work

4-homemaker

5-going to school

6-retired

7-school and work

8-other

(if 1, 2, or 3 continue; otherwise skip to #2)

How many hours per week does she usually work?

2. What is her current job title, or if she's worked in the past, what type of work has she spent the most time at?

respondent's code#_____

3. Does she currently have any children living with her?

1-yes

2-no

(if she has kids, continue; if not, skip to #6)

4. How many children are currently living with her?

5. How old is each child?(in years)

6. What is the highest grade of school that she finished and got credit for?

7. Does she have a bank account in her own name, a joint account, or no account?

1-both in own name and joint

2-own name

3-joint

4-no account

8. Is she a co-owner or owner of a car?

1-yes

2-no

99-don't know

respondent's code#_____

9. Now, could she tell me her total income(not including anyone else's money) last year before taxes?

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about the man who abused you.

10. Is she currently married to him?

1-yes

2-no, just living with

3-no, legally separated

4-no, divorced

5-no, single

99-don't know

11. Does she usually live with him?

1-yes

2-no

12. Last week was he working?

1-full-time

2-part-time

3-taking off from work

4-going to school

5-retired

6-working and going to school

7-other

99-don't know

(if 1, 2 or 3, continue; otherwise skip to #14)

respondent's code#_____

13. How many hours per week does he normally work?

Is he in the service?

14. What is his job title, or if he's worked in the past what type of work has he done the most of?

15. What is the highest grade of school that he finished and got credit for?

16. Has she returned to her abusive partner since she was in the shelter?(in a living-together situation)

1-no

2-yes

(if the woman went back to the abuser continue; otherwise skip to #20)

How many times has she returned since she left the shelter?

respondent's code#_____

17. At the time period she was involved with the shelter, did she want to end her relationship?

1-yes

2-no

3-maybe

99-don't know

18. What were the most important reasons why she went back to her partner?(list them in order of importance).

1-love him and want to give him another chance

2-wanted it(the relationship) to work

3-for the kids

4-financial(housing, \$ to live decently, no job)

19. Did the shelter provide services which helped her to go back to the relationship with her partner?

1-yes(if yes, ask the woman what services)

2-no

(ask only if the woman ended the relationship)

20. What shelter services did she feel were the most helpful in terms of allowing her to leave the relationship?

respondent's code# _____

21. When she was a child, did anyone threaten to hurt her, commit sexual acts/allow others to commit sexual acts on her, abandon her, or abuse her in anyway?

1-no

2-yes

If there was childhood abuse continue; if not, skip to #25

Was the abuse mental, sexual, physical?

22. Was the abuse by a family member or non-family?

23. How often did the abuse occur during your childhood?

1-infrequently

2-frequently

3-constantly

24. Between approximately what ages did the abuse occur?

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about the shelter services you participated in.

25. What shelter services did she use?

respondent's code#_____

26. Do you feel that the shelter needs any type of service that it did not offer? If so, please tell me what it needed.

27. Is there anything else you would like to add?

WAS THE INTERVIEW DONE FACE-FACE BY PHONE OR MAIL?

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