BATTERER INTERVENTION PROGRAMS IN NOVA SCOTIA: A QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF OFFENDER EXPERIENCES

by

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Dedication

For Audrey…

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Abstract

The present study examined the experiences of men court-mandated to one of two batterer intervention programs in Nova Scotia. Eight men participated in 45 minute—1 hour-long semi-structured interviews and spoke to a number of themes including their likes and dislikes of the program, what tools they had learned, and how beneficial they found the intervention program. In addition, two program facilitators were interviewed and provided insight into the theoretical basis of the programs as well as their experiences with the program. The narratives provided by participants indicated that both intervention programs provided offenders with a safe space to discuss intimate and uncomfortable details of their lives. In addition, both programs provided offenders with valuable tools for deescalating potentially volatile situations. Future research should focus on offenders who fail to attend sessions as well as the implications of intimate partner violence on the children of offenders.

Keywords: intimate partner violence, offender, court-mandated batterer intervention program, program facilitator, shame, children, self-esteem, responsibility, and accountability.

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would not otherwise have. And to my best friend, Brody, who was there with me every step of the way.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent years court-mandated batterer intervention programs have come to the forefront of intimate partner violence research. In the wake of pro-arrest policies that emerged in the 1980s, court-mandated batterer intervention programs began to appear as new thinking arose around the best methods for protecting women and children from recurring acts of intimate partner violence (Feder & Dugan, 2002; Scott & Wolfe, 2000). For instance, in 2010 there were 2,801 reported incidences of intimate partner violence in Nova Scotia (Sinha, 2012). Of those offenders who were held criminally responsible for their actions, most were sentenced to one of the following: probation, participation at a batterer intervention program, or prison, with participation at batterer intervention programs being the most widely ordered sentence (Feder & Dugan, 2002, Hanson et al., 2004, Scott & Wolfe, 2000).

Researchers have paid particular attention to the damaging effects that intimate partner violence crimes have on victims as well as the role that the criminal justice system plays in the lives of said victims. Few, however, have examined offender perspectives of the criminal justice system. In particular, researchers have all but ignored offender perspectives of court-mandated batterer intervention programs. Although researchers have conducted in-depth examinations of court-mandated batterer intervention program typologies and recidivism rates associated with said programs (i.e. Babcock et al., 2004), the opinions, views and experiences of those actually attending

court-mandated batterer intervention programs has remained unexamined in the current literature.

Why are the narratives of offenders important?

Court-mandated batterer intervention programs began operating in Nova Scotia in the 1990s and they have had questionable success (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2001). Although the Nova Scotia Department of Justice has begun to take the necessary steps to providing victims of intimate partner violence with better and long-term protection, women each year fall victim to the ineffective response our province is currently taking to rehabilitating offenders and ensuring victims safety. For instance, the Nova Scotia Department of Justice, Policy, Planning and Research (2010) released a one-day snapshot taken in 2009 outlining the number of Nova Scotia men serving time in correctional facilities. Of the 402 incarcerated male offenders, just under one-third were serving time for crimes of intimate partner violence. Of those, 78 percent were considered to be at a high risk of recidivating and, more importantly, a high risk of lethality (JSDJPPR, 2010).

Furthermore, researchers have noted that court-mandated batterer intervention programs may have unintended harmful consequences and effects on victims (Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino & Finckenauer, 2000). For instance, Feder and Dugan (2002) suggest that mandating counseling for offenders essentially diverts funds and resources away from battered women's services. Furthermore, Feder and Dugan (2002) suggest that ineffective treatment provided to offenders at batterer intervention programs may

actually be more harmful than no treatment whatsoever and may ultimately provide victims with a false sense of security that their partners will be fully rehabilitated (Babcock et al., 2004, Holztworth et al., 1995, Austin & Dankwort, 1999). As outlined by Feder and Dugan (2002),

> Research has indicated that the most influential predictor of an abused spouse's return to her husband is his participation in counseling. If treatment is essentially ineffective in decreasing recidivism, then continuing to mandate treatment may be inadvertently providing these victims with a false sense of security that, in the end, may lead to a higher likelihood of future injury (pp. 345).

Clearly, further research is required in order to examine the programs that society and the criminal justice system rely on to change men's use of intimate partner violence. The present study, therefore, sought to examine the perspectives, views, and experiences of eight men who had been mandated by the provincial judicial system to participate in one of two batterer intervention programs in Nova Scotia. In particular, I was interested in uncovering what program tools offenders viewed as being useful (or subsequently not useful) to their rehabilitation process what aspects they liked and disliked at the program. By engaging participants in semi-structured interviews I hoped to gain insight into how effective offenders viewed the programs under study. In addition, two program facilitators were interviewed to provide contextual information on the programs themselves including the theoretical basis, the tools used, and their perspectives about the effectiveness of the programs. In conclusion, I suggest that while the vast majority of clients viewed the program as beneficial, future research should focus on those offenders who

refuse to accept responsibility and accountability for their actions and ultimately change their use of violence in their intimate relationships.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Throughout the eighteen and nineteen centuries there was a deep ambivalence about state intervention in incidences of intimate partner violence in North America resulting in very little meaningful intervention or protection of victims (Epstein, 1999; Kaye & Knipps, 2000; Moore, 2009). In fact, research shows that United States legislation "… condoned intimate partner violence and protected the right of men to beat their wives through the mid-nineteenth century" (The Harvard Law Review Association, 1993. pp. 1502). Throughout the twentieth century, on the rare occasions when police had made arrests, cases would often be dismissed or dropped altogether due to a lack of victim cooperation and substandard police work (Sherman & Berk, 1984; Moore, 2009). When cases of intimate partner violence did proceed to trial, traditional criminal courts lacked effective sentencing options to hold offenders truly accountable and were ill-equipped to provide victims with access to social services and victim advocates (Moore, 2009; Bennet et al., 1999). In other words, traditional responses to intimate partner violence by the criminal justice system were highly inflexible and unresponsive to the needs of victims (Epstein, 1999; Ptacek, 2010 A).

However, the development of restorative justice procedures, influenced in part by the battered women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s, have aided in the evolution of the way that the criminal justice system deals with intimate partner violence. This system now recognizes the need for specialized approaches to dealing with the inherent complexities in cases of intimate

partner violence (Epstein, 1999; Frederick & Lizdas, 2010). For instance, specialized domestic violence courts have been developed in addition to batterer intervention programs.

Throughout this chapter I will use an anthropological lens to explore the evolution of criminal justice policies in relation to intimate partner violence and how these policies have evolved over the past two decades. Exploring the evolution of criminal justice policies, especially those pertaining to highly consequential crimes such as intimate partner violence, is pertinent as public policies are increasingly central to the organization of society (Wedel et al., 2005). Furthermore, as noted by Shore and Wright (2011), one key quality of policies is that once they are created they often migrate into new contexts and settings ultimately acquiring a life of their own resulting in consequences that stretch beyond their original intention.

I will begin by reviewing the North American historical response to intimate partner violence. Next, I will explore the implications of the battered women's movement and how this movement influenced the development of new restorative justice policies including pro-arrest and no-drop policies as well as specialized problem solving courts, also referred to as specialized domestic violence courts. Furthermore, I will explore the relatively recent development of batterer intervention programs and how they contribute to reducing incidences of intimate partner violence in Nova Scotia. Lastly, I will present an overview of the literature examining the personality characteristics

of men who use violence in their intimate relationships as well as their perspectives of court-mandated batterer intervention programs.

History of the State's Response to Intimate Partner Violence

Tsai's (2000) research on the evolution of the North American criminal justice system reveals that historically, intimate partner violence has been seen and responded to by the State as a private family matter between husband and wife (Tsai, 2000; Moore, 2009). Tsai (2000) points to Old English common law which considered women to be the property of their husbands and which permitted "moderate" chastisement as evidence of the failure of the criminal justice system to appropriately respond to incidences of intimate partner violence. According to Tsai (2000), from the 1700s throughout the late 1850s, the criminal justice system was a legislative vacuum when it came to developing policies that responded to incidences of intimate partner violence. However, by the late nineteenth century criminal justice responses to intimate partner violence began to change. For instance, in 1871, the Supreme Court of Alabama in *Fulgham v. State* determined for the first time in American history that a husband did not have the right to beat his wife (Tsai, 2000). This landmark case found that a wife was entitled to the same protection of the law that her husband could invoke for himself (Tsai, 2000). According to Tsai (2000), by the end of the 19th century several states had adopted legislation addressing intimate partner violence and which made assault upon a wife a punishable offence. However, evidence suggests that these laws were rarely enforced and that sanctions were applied only in extreme circumstances of

unequivocal and severe injury (Tsai, 2000).

In their research on police responses to reports of intimate partner violence, Sherman and Berk (1984) have found confirmatory data supporting Tsai's (2000) argument that the illegality of intimate partner violence was not strictly enforced throughout the twentieth century. Sherman and Berk's (1984) experimental research in Minneapolis between 1981 and 1982 demonstrated that while police officers operated under strict guidelines regarding when to arrest and charge intimate partner violence perpetrators, they often chose to respond to incidents using their own moral code. Sherman and Berk's (1984) study revealed that when police officers were called to an intimate partner violence incident they regularly provided victims and perpetrators with marital advice instead of arresting and charging perpetrators even when there was evidence that an assault had taken place. Tsai (2000) and Sherman and Berk (1984) provide invaluable research demonstrating how the criminal justice system has historically remained unresponsive to victims and oriented towards the non-enforcement of punitive legislation.

Pro Arrest and No Drop Policies

Beginning in the early 1980s, Canada developed pro-arrest policies in an attempt to enhance the criminal justice response to intimate partner violence. As outlined by Rusen (1992), these new pro-arrest policies gave police officers the ability to arrest any individual where they held "…reasonable and probable grounds to believe that an assault has occurred"

(Rusen, 1992. pp. 21). The new mandatory pro-arrest policies resulted in a significant increase in the number of arrests and charges laid against perpetrators in addition to an increase in reports of abuse by victims of intimate partner violence (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001; Rusen, 1992.). According to the new policies, police officers did not have to witness first-hand the violence that had occurred, but rather they were required to have reasonable and probable grounds to believe that violence had taken place (Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, 2011).

Historically, criminal jurisdictions in North America were routinely forced to drop intimate partner violence cases due to a lack of victim cooperation. This lack of cooperation included, but was not limited to, victims requesting that charges be dropped, victims refusing to testify, victims recanting statements and victims failing to appear in court (Corsilles, 1994; Davis, Smith & Davies, 2001). In cases where victims refused or were unwilling to cooperate, approximately fifty to eighty percent of all intimate partner violence cases were dropped (Ford & Regoli, 1993). In response to this high dismissal rate of intimate partner violence cases, no-drop policies were introduced in Canada in the early 1980s, beginning with federal guidelines issued to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and to federal and territorial Crown prosecution offices (Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, 2011; Davis, Smith & Davies, 2001). As outlined by Corsilles (1994), no-drop policies are defined as denying the victim of intimate partner violence "…the option of freely withdrawing a complaint once formal charges have been filed"

(Corsilles, 1994. pp. 856). Subsequently, the new no-drop policies limited or eliminated the prosecutor's discretion to drop a case solely because the victim was unwilling or unable to cooperate (Corsilles, 1994; Waits, 1985).

As outlined by Brown (2000), by 1985 no-drop policies were in effect in nearly all provinces of Canada. Advocates of the new no-drop policies argued that historically the criminal justice system had responded inadequately to incidences of intimate partner violence and that the new policies would counter the notion that intimate partner violence was a private affair (Brown, 2000). Furthermore, advocates argued that no-drop policies would give recognition to intimate partner violence as being a serious social problem and, importantly, a direct violation of the Canadian Criminal Code (Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, 2011). In addition, advocates of no-drop policies argued that " …by placing the onus for laying charges on the police and Crown, the victim could indicate to her abusive partner that the decision to proceed was not hers, and thereby reduce the potential for violent recriminations" (Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, 2011. pp. 12). Thus, the goal of no-drop policies was to significantly reduce the number of intimate partner violence recriminations by placing the onus to lay charges on the prosecution and not the victim, therefore providing victims who choose to stay with their intimate partner with some semblance of safety (Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, 2011; Brown, 2000). As outlined by Brown (2000), by recognizing intimate partner violence as a serious crime and as a direct violation of the law, prosecutors hoped that offenders would be less

likely to reoffend their victims when they were aware of the negative consequences of this crime.

Evolution: Restorative Justice, Specialized Courts & Batterer Intervention Programs

The use of restorative justice gained support during the 1960s and 1970s when social movements such as the battered women's movement began to challenge and transform traditional criminal justice responses to intimate partner violence (Ptacek, 2010). For instance, the Feminist's Movement began in North America during the 1960s with campaigns to raise awareness about the severity and frequency of violence against women. Furthermore, advocates of the Feminist Movement argued that society was structured around an unequal distribution of power and that men oppressed women. In addition, advocates of the Feminist Movement argued that the criminal justice system mistreated victims or indirectly placed the blame on victims for incidences of intimate partner violence (Ptacek, 2010). Also during this time, new thinking arose around alternatives to prisons such as methods of conflict resolution and victim advocacy. For instance, advocates for both the battered women's movement and the restorative justice movement promoted a new form of conflict resolution—community intervention. By promoting intimate partner violence as a social problem, advocates for the battered women's movement and the restorative justice movement began to engage communities in mending the harm caused by intimate partner violence (Ptacek, 2010). Although they differed in their views on implementation, both groups agreed

that changing a community's climate of tolerance toward intimate partner violence was a key goal.

As outlined by Ptacek (2010), one prominent example of community intervention in intimate partner violence took place in Duluth, Minnesota in the early 1980s. Although initially considered an experiment, the model has evolved into what is now referred to as the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) model. The CCR model focuses on community intervention through linking various social services, developing stronger communication between social services, and enhancing offender accountability through intervention programs (Ptacek, 2010).

Ptacek's (2010) research on restorative justice and violence against women reveals that during this period legal scholars began writing about "informal justice" and "community justice" as alternative methods of dealing with cases of intimate partner violence. Although most of the restorative practices that emerged out of social movements of this time were primarily concerned with youth crimes, Ptacek (2010) argues that the informal practices inherent in restorative justice provided fertile ground for feminists to explore how to support victims, how to hold offenders truly accountable and how to address the harm that intimate partner violence does to communities (Ptacek, 2010).

Specialized Domestic Violence Courts

During the 1990s, restorative justice responses to crime became especially topical in response to the failure of the traditional criminal justice

system to adequately and efficiently respond to and prevent future incidences of intimate partner violence (Eley, 2005). With the growing recognition that traditional criminal courts were ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of intimate partner violence cases, specialized intimate partner violence courts began to emerge as a restorative justice alternative (Eley, 2005; Epstein, 1999; Tsai, 2000). As outlined by Eley (2005), specialized courts, also referred to as 'problem solving courts', are premised on principles of therapeutic jurisprudence—a theoretical model rooted in the tradition of sociological jurisprudence and legal realism. The multidisciplinary approach of therapeutic jurisprudence requires an examination of the positive and negative effects of the legal system on the social and psychological functioning of the offender and victim (Tsai, 2000). According to Eley (2005), common elements of therapeutic jurisprudence include re-engineering the criminal justice and societal response to intimate partner violence as well as judicial monitoring of the offender with the main objective of keeping the victim safe. Mandating offender's participation in batterer intervention programs as a sentence in specialized intimate partner violence courts is illustrative of a key component of therapeutic jurisprudence when applied to intimate partner violence.

Throughout her in-depth literature review exploring specialized intimate partner violence courts, Moore (2009) argues that the literature to date presents an agreement amongst researchers that it is difficult to identify one uniform procedural model apparent in all specialized intimate partner violence courts (Moore, 2009). However, Moore (2009), as well as Epstein

(1999) and Eley (2005) agree that all specialized intimate partner violence courts are dedicated exclusively to cases involving allegations of intimate partner violence and to the integration of civil and criminal dockets so that the court can provide a comprehensive, coordinated response and provide meaningful intervention. In addition, Moore (2009), Epstein (1999) and Eley (2005) agree that specialized intimate partner violence courts share several common goals, including efficient case processing, coordinated responses, informed decision making, offender accountability, reduced recidivism, and victim safety and services.

The evolution to specialized intimate partner violence courts is especially important as it marks the first time in modern history that a court has been instituted and dedicated to addressing the multiple legal, mental health, and social aspects of intimate partner violence. As argued by Tsai (2000), this evolution deviates dramatically from the traditional approach to intimate partner violence by providing a more comprehensive and integrated approach through the coordination of a greater variety of community resources and social services. This interdisciplinary criminal justice approach to intimate partner violence is a crucial element in addressing the negative effects of intimate partner violence on family, children, finances, and the psychological functioning of all involved (Tsai, 2000).

Batterer Intervention Programs

Intimate partner violence was first recognized as a criminal offence by the Canadian government in the early 1970s. Prior to the 1970s, intimate

partner violence was largely ignored in the public sphere and by the criminal justice system. Today, intimate partner violence is a criminal offence and is categorized together with other crimes in "…assault, aggravated assault, assault with a weapon, attempted murder and murder", although the punishment of the crime is dealt with very differently than other assault-related crimes (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001. pp. 1). The majority of criminal cases involving acts of intimate partner violence result in the sentencing of offenders to mandatory enrollment in an intervention program. As outlined by Eckhardt et al. (2006),

> BIPs [batterer intervention programs] were designed to go beyond mere incarceration or legal punishment in cases of IPV {intimate partner violence} and provide an intervention that might actually change perpetrators behavior for the long term and prevent future abuse from occurring (pp.372).

A form of rehabilitative justice, intervention programs emerged partially out of the realization that a substantial percentage of women in battered women's shelters would return to their abusive partners after receiving aid (Hamberger & Hastings, 1993; Feder & Wilson, 2005). Furthermore, researchers concluded that battered women's shelters only provided victims with temporary aid and that in most cases offenders would go on to abuse the same, or other, victims (Feder & Dugan, 2005). Thus, researchers and policy makers alike came to the conclusion that the best way to cease intimate partner violence was to alter the behavior of the

perpetrators and that this was unlikely to occur through a prison sentence (Feder & Wilson, 2005).

The theoretical impetus for batterer intervention programs stemmed from the work of Paulo Friere. Friere, a Brazilian educator, pioneered literary education programs for landless peasants (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001; Mederos, 1999). In addition, Friere believed that relationships in Western society were "…hierarchical, authoritarian and maintained through oppressive control and an uneven balance of power" (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001. pp. 14). Ellen Pence and Michael Paymar used the theoretical underpinnings of Friere's work as the foundation for the Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (also referred to as the Duluth model), the first intervention program for domestically abusive men in North America (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001). In the view of Pence and Paymar, "…just as landless peasants saw their plight as inescapable, so do batterers…physically abusive men have belief systems that legitimize and obscure their abusive behavior in various ways" (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001. pp. 14; Mederos, 1999. pp.132).

Batterer Intervention Programs in Nova Scotia

New Leaf was the first Duluth-model batterer intervention program to operate in Nova Scotia. Located in a northern region of Nova Scotia, New Leaf operated from the late 1980s until the mid 1990s (Hanson & Whitman, 1995). Like most batterer intervention programs, New Leaf was developed in response to the failure of a battered women's shelter serving Northern Nova

Scotia to protect women and children from the cycle of intimate partner violence. Accordingly, New Leaf operated an open-ended, two-hour long unstructured meeting once a week for domestically abusive men in the community (Hanson & Whitman, 1995). Program facilitators promoted the feminist viewpoint that "…violence is a means of control supported by a patriarchal society (John Howard Society of Alberta, 2001. pp.15). Prior to admittance into the program men were required to partake in an intake interview where program facilitators attempted to teach the potential participant the feminist viewpoints of battering and to motivate men to change their behavior. It is of value to note that nearly all men voluntarily joined the group following their intake interview. In addition to the weekly meeting, New Leaf provided crisis counseling to all participants. For instance, Hanson and Whitman (1995) note that

> One of the group leaders is continuously available to respond to calls from the men or their partner. The leaders provide on-site crisis intervention, visit men in jail and at their work, and even make unannounced house calls when they suspect the woman might be in danger (pp.5).

As noted by the John Howard Society of Alberta (2001), the New Leaf program was unique in its ability to intervene with "high risk" individuals. The unannounced home visits, as suggested by Hanson and Whitman (1995), were not negatively perceived in the Northern Nova Scotia community, as this type of behavior was usual in the rural community. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that New Leaf was effective in significantly reducing incidences of intimate partner violence (Hanson & Whitman, 1995).

Throughout the past decade there has been a shift away from Duluth styled batterer intervention programs in Nova Scotia to psycho-educational programs designed to give male participants the opportunity to tell their stories and to learn from their past mistakes. Whereas Duluth model advocates viewed intimate partner violence "…as being chiefly a manifestation of patriarchy" others have begun to view the problem of intimate partner violence as being the result of individual or interpersonal dysfunctions that can be addressed through therapeutic perspectives and interventions (Austin & Dankwort, 1999. pp. 152). For instance, cognitive behavioral therapy emerged as a preferred form of therapy for domestically abusive men in batterer intervention programs (Babcock et al., 2004). Cognitive behavioral therapy programs were initially developed by psychologists and made the act of violence the primary focus of treatment (Babcock et al., 2004). Using the cognitive behavioral therapy model teaches clients that violence is a learned behavior and that nonviolence can similarly be learned (Babcock et al., 2004). Facilitators teach clients the following skills: communication and anger management techniques, assertiveness, social skills training and address client attitudes regarding women and the use of violence toward women (Babcock et al., 2004).

In Nova Scotia, batterer intervention programs are based on the theoretical underpinning of Narrative Therapy. Throughout *Partner Abuse Group Intervention: Lessons from Education and Narrative Therapy Approaches* Augusta-Scott and Dankwort (2002) critique traditional therapeutic

approaches to intimate partner violence as using "categorical, dichotomous terms" that are unhelpful in the recovery of domestically abusive men (pp. 785). Comparatively, Augusta-Scott and Dankwort (2002) suggest that narrative therapy is a preferred model because it endorses the tenets of feminism while simultaneously highlighting women's safety and men's accountability. For instance, one unique component of the narrative therapy model is that it deconstructs how men feel both shame and entitlement to power. According to Augusta-Scott and Dankwort (2002), although domestically abusive men may lack feelings of shame in some regards they also experience some forms of shame for the deconstruction that they bring to their families. The expression of shame in narrative therapy is perceived as evidence that the abuser does in fact desire a healthy, respectful relationship with his intimate partner (Augusta-Scott & Dankwort, 2002).

As outlined by Augusta-Scott and Dankwort (2002), therapists using the narrative therapy approach create conversations with men that underscore women's safety and men's responsibility for their use of abusive behavior. During these conversations, Augusta-Scott (2002) explains that

> In practice, as a framework for intervention with clients, the narrative therapy paradigm guides helpers to assist clients in the art of detecting, 'reauthoring', and reinforcing a pattern of behavior and thinking that frees them from their former unproductive and destructive stories (pp. 788).

In addition, throughout conversations with offenders, program facilitators using the narrative therapy approach recognize men's desires for power and control while underscoring their desires for equal, loving, and caring

relationships. One critical element in the narrative therapy approach is that men prefer nonabusive relationships with their intimate partners, relationships based on love.

Efficacy of Batterer Intervention Programs

Currently, there is a wide divergence of opinion regarding the ability of court-mandated batterer intervention programs to significantly reduce rates of recidivism. The first wave of evaluation research in both Canada and the United States initially indicated that court-mandated batterer intervention programs produced high rates of success in reducing the frequency and/or severity of subsequent violence (Feder & Dugan, 2002; Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2001; Palmer et al., 1992). For instance, the earliest evaluation of one court-mandated batterer intervention program, conducted by Palmer, Brown, and Barrera (1992) used a random assignment of male offenders to a treatment and a no-treatment control group in Ontario, Canada (Tolman & Edleson, 1995). The thirty court-mandated batterers were assigned to a 10 session group which met for 1.5 hours per week. The group was characterized as being 'psychoeducational', was combined with cognitive-behavioral content, and held a specific focus on sex roles (Palmer et al., 1992). Based solely on police reports, Palmer et al. (1992) concluded that 10% of the treated offenders recidivated, while 30% of the untreated control group recidivated. These initial positive findings supported the growth of court-mandated batterer intervention programs throughout Canada.

However, later evaluations of the project revealed that Palmer et al's. (1992) research methods were unsound and ultimately produced inaccurate findings (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2001). Specifically, Palmer et al. (1992) did not conduct follow-up interviews with victims and relied solely on official police reports. Palmer et al's. (1992) reliance on official police reports were only indicative of *reported* incidences of intimate partner violence (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2001). It is imperative to note that in nearly all studies that examine offender accounts and official police records on recidivism that the findings of small but positive effects of batterer intervention treatment are *not* replicated when victim accounts are examined (Feder & Wilson, 2005).

In comparison, Hanson and Wallace-Capretta's (2004) 1993-1995 research on the efficacy of court-mandated batterer intervention programs found dramatically different results. Also conducted in Canada, Hanson and Wallace-Capretta's (2004) evaluation of five court-mandated batterer intervention programs found that of the 320 male offenders with follow up information, 55 (17.2%) recidivated with a violent offence and 82 (25.6%) recidivated with any offence. The difference in findings between Palmer et al. (1992) and Hanson and Wallace-Capretta's (2004) research illustrates the methodological shortcomings found in the early literature examining the efficacy of court-mandated batterer intervention programs.

Recent evaluations on the efficacy of court-mandated batterer intervention programs showcase relatively consistent findings that court-

mandated batterer intervention programs do not significantly reduce rates of intimate partner violence recidivism. For instance, the largest experimental study to date, conducted by Dunford (2000) at a San Diego Navy base, revealed that participation in a batterer intervention program did not result in a reduction of rates of recidivism amongst this population of offenders. Dunford's (2000) study included 861 men who had been convicted of assaulting their wives and who were currently living on and working on the San Diego Navy base. The participants in Dunford's (2000) study were randomly assigned to one of four conditions including a) six months of weekly cognitive-behavioral treatment, followed by six months of monthly group sessions, b) six months of group counseling for couples, followed by six months of monthly group counseling, c) a rigorous monitoring and case management program similar to the probation programs in San Diego at the time, and d) safety planning that was similar to the work of victim advocates in San Diego and which served as a control group (Dunford, 2000). Based on official police reports as well as victim reports, Dunford (2000) concluded that no significant differences between the four groups existed regarding recidivism rates. The overall recidivism rate was 30% by spouse report and 4% by arrest (Dunford, 2000). As noted by Bennett and Williams (2001), it is imperative to make clear that Dunford's (2000) Navy experiment is unique in regards to the research participants. Excluded from the experiment were individuals in the following categories: substance abusers, men with mental disorders, men with prior criminal records, unmarried men, and unemployed

men (Bennett & Williams, 2001). In addition, the above programs were mandated by the men's employer and at their place of employment (Bennett & Williams, 2001). Although Dunford's (2000) findings are illustrative of one specific population, the large sample size makes this experimental study arguably representative of this group of male offenders in general.

The Broward Experiment provides similar data showcasing that court-mandated batterer intervention programs do not significantly reduce rates of recidivism. Feder and Forde (2000) evaluated 404 male offenders convicted of misdemeanor intimate partner violence crimes in Broward County (Fort Lauderdale, Florida) over a five-month period. Male offenders were randomly assigned to one of two groups: a) offenders sentenced to probation and participation in a six month Duluth model batterer intervention program or b) probation only. According to Feder and Forde (2000), at the twelve-month follow-up period there were no significant differences apparent in recidivism rates between the two groups. Furthermore, there were no significant differences between the group's beliefs about the use of violence against their intimate partners, attitudes toward treating intimate partner violence as a crime, or estimated chances of physically or verbally assaulting their intimate partners within the next twelve months (Feder & Forde, 2000).

Although the most recent research studies indicate that court-mandated participation in batterer intervention programs do not significantly reduce rates of recidivism, Taylor, Davis, and Maxwell's 2001 examination provides an interesting counterpoint to the literature. Taylor et al. (2001)

randomly assigned 376 male offenders into one of two groups: a) either 40 hours of a Duluth model batterer intervention program or b) 40 hours of community service. In order to track recidivism rates, Taylor et al. (2001) examined both victim reports and official police reports over a six-month and a twelve-month period. According to Taylor et al. (2001) at follow-up with the female victims, male offenders sentenced to participation in the batterer intervention program had engaged in fewer acts of intimate partner violence than the comparison group. Furthermore, when examining official criminal justice records, Taylor et al. (2001) concluded that the men who had participated in the intervention program were 50% less likely to have reoffended at both the six-month and twelve-month follow up periods. However, as noted by Bennett and Williams (2001), enthusiasm for this positive result is tempered by the fact that the judge, prosecutor, and offender all had to agree on the offender's referral to the batterer intervention program. By only including men that agreed to participate in the batterer intervention program, Taylor et al. (2001) screened out participants that were not motivated to change their use of violence and therefore created a biased sample of research participants (Bennett & Williams, 2001).

Methodological Shortcomings of Batterer Intervention Programs

"After their review of the research literature, Hamberger and Hastings asked the question, 'What do we know about the short- and long-term effects of treatment on wife assault?' They conclude 'Not much', due to methodological problems of the existing research". (Babcock et al., 2004. pp. 1025)

Large-scale meta analyses are currently being conducted to evaluate the methodological tools used by researchers examining the efficacy of court-mandated batterer intervention programs in order to shed light on the discrepant conclusions apparent in the literature. Babcock, Green, and Robie's 2004 meta-analytic review of intimate partner violence treatment programs is indicative of this movement. Babcock et al. (2004) examined the findings of twenty-two studies evaluating treatment efficacy for domestically violent males. They reviewed the outcomes of the literature, which included controlled quasi-experimental and experimental studies, in order to test the relative impact of the Duluth model, the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy model, as well as programs that used a combination of the two. Overall, Babcock et al. (2004) found that "…effects due to treatment were in the small range, meaning that the current interventions [had] a minimal impact on reducing recidivism beyond the effect of being arrested" (pp. 1023). Although Babcock et al. (2004) found that batterer intervention programs did not significantly reduce recidivism rates, it is imperative to note that any positive change is important. For instance, Babock et al. (2004) found that there was a 5% increase in success rates of non-reoffending attributable to court mandated batterer intervention programs. Here, Babcock et al. (2004) explain that

> …. To a clinician, this means that a woman is 5% *less likely* to be re-assaulted by a man who was arrested, sanctioned, and attended a batterers' program than by a man who was simply arrested and sanctioned. …[Although] a 5% decrease in violence may appear statistically insignificant, batterer treatment in all *reported* cases of domestic violence in the United States would equate to approximately 42,000 women per year *no longer being battered* (pp. 1044).

A number of researchers have begun to argue that the discrepant conclusions found in previous research projects reflect methodological shortcomings inherent in these studies rather than batterer intervention programs' actual ability to reduce rates of recidivism for court-mandated clients (Eckhardt et al., 2006; Feder & Wilson, 2005; Ford & Regoli, 1993). The Nova Scotia Department of Justice's (2001) review of the effectiveness and viability of intimate partner violence interventions as an adjunct to the formal criminal justice system in Canada provides a valuable perspective on understanding and comprehending the methodological shortcomings of previous research projects. For instance, the Nova Scotia Department of Justice (2001) argues that previous research projects have relied on objective measures to evaluate reductions in levels of violence. Using objective measures to evaluate reductions, according to the Nova Scotia Department of Justice (2001), results in a failure of the researchers to capture the severity or effects of abuse. Furthermore, the Nova Scotia Department of Justice (2001) argues that there is a lack of consensus on how to measure program effects, as well as systematic problems with the use of self-report measures of recidivism and reliance on official police reports. Palmer et al's. (1992) research on the efficacy of court-mandated batterer intervention programs is illustrative of

this over reliance on official police reports as an accurate measure of recidivism. Post-publication, Palmer et al. (1992) noted that systematic problems with the use of self-report measures of recidivism, reliance on official police reports, comparison of personality tests before and after the program, and comparison of court-mandated men with other convicted offenders resulted in methodologically unsound conclusions.

The lack of empirical evidence supporting the ability of court-mandated batterer intervention programs to statistically reduce rates of recidivism encourages researchers to examine the continued usage of these programs. For instance, Eckhardt et al's. (2006) research found that to date, there are *no* interventions for intimate partner violence offenders that are empirically valid or supported. Eckhardt et al. (2006) further suggests that the majority of research studies examining the efficacy of court-mandated batterer intervention programs lack the necessary element of random assignment to treatment versus control conditions, thus effectively ruling out alternative explanations. Alternative explanations include spontaneous change over time or selection artifacts (i.e. preexisting differences between treatment and controls that explain results) (Eckhardt et al., 2006). According to Eckhardt et al., (2006), selection effects are a prominent alternative explanation for research findings between comparison groups because individuals who complete treatment and individuals who do not complete treatment are likely to differ in many important ways. For instance, those who dropout or refuse to participate in court-mandated batterer intervention programs are more likely

than individuals who complete the program to have a lower stake in conformity, to have more disorganized lifestyles, and to have greater antisocial features that *may* account for their inability to complete the program (Eckhardt et al., 2006).

Batterer Intervention Programs: Characteristics of a Batterer

In order to fully understand the experiences and views of male offenders court-mandated to participation in batterer intervention programs it is paramount to first examine the common characteristics of this specific group of offenders. As noted by Craig (2003), by understanding the personality styles most prevalent in batterers, treatment programs can more effectively define treatment options that will be successful. According to Hanson and Wallace-Capretta (2004), men who are court-mandated to batterer intervention programs are often prone to violent recidivism and tend to be young and unmarried with a history of criminal behavior. Furthermore, these offenders often have unstable lifestyles that are characterized by frequent moves, poor accommodations, unemployment, substance abuse, and little commitment to pro-social values (Hanson & Wallace-Capretta, 2004). In addition, as outlined by Ventura and Davis (2005), this population's history of intimate partner violence is significantly linked to an increased probability of re-arrest for violent and nonviolent criminal activity. This means that an individual, specifically a male, with prior arrests has a significantly greater likelihood of re-arrest. For instance, in Ventura and Davis' (2005) examination on the effect of intimate partner violence convictions (or a related charge) on

the recidivism rates of male offenders, results indicated that most male offenders were chronic lawbreakers. Here, 59.3 percent of male offenders had a history of one or more previous arrests for intimate partner violence incidences, 26.4 percent had a history of one or more violent felony charges, 48.9 percent had nonviolent felony charges in their criminal history, and 89 percent had one or more nonviolent misdemeanor charges in their history (Ventura & Davis, 2005).

As outlined by Simmons et al., (2005) there are a number of studies that have used personality tests to assess the personality characteristics of men arrested for intimate partner violence crimes (i.e. Craig, 2003; Gondolf, 1999; Retzlaff, Stoner & Kleinsasser, 2002). These tests use the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-III, a psychological assessment tool that provides valuable information on psychopathology. Based on this, researchers have found domestically abusive men exhibit antisocial, aggressive-sadistic, passive-aggressive (negativistic), and narcissistic personality traits (Craig, 2003). The Canadian Resource Center for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) provides confirmatory data on the profiles of domestically abusive men. According to *Spousal Abuse*, prepared by the CRCVC (2011), although offenders come from all social groups and backgrounds as well as from all personality profiles, there are undoubtedly common characteristics that fit with a general offender profile. Firstly, offenders hold traditional sex role expectations**.** According to the CRCVC (2011), batterers tend to be preoccupied with a 'macho' ideal of manhood. For instance, they feel a need to dominate and control women and

often expect it as their right and privilege. They tend to associate feminine qualities, such as displaying vulnerable emotion, with weakness and fear. Secondly, domestically abusive men often objectify women, choosing to see them as property or sexual objects rather than as people (CRCVC, 2011). Thirdly, this population often exhibits communication deficits such as lacking assertive communication skills, therefore appearing as alternatively passive or aggressive. Subsequently, this population of offenders is more inclined to resolve problems that they face through violence. Similarly, domestically abusive men often exhibit poor impulse control. When compared with non-batterers, batterers show higher levels of hostility and

> …their range of emotions tend to be reduced to anger, which in turn is expressed primarily through violent behavior sanctioned by various male subcultures. Typically, these emotional tensions are suppressed until they ultimately 'explode' (CRCVC, 2011. pp.10).

According to CRCVC (2011), despite the bravado that many domestically abusive men display in their day-to-day lives, this population characteristically suffers from low self-esteem and feel that

> …They have not lived up to the male sex role stereotype and consequently overcompensate with hyper-masculinity. They become emotionally dependent on their partners and consequently become threatened by the possibility of their departure. This is often evident in excessive jealousy and possessiveness. A batterer feels powerless and ineffective in the world. He may appear successful, but inside he feels inadequate (pp. 11).

In addition, alcohol and/or drug abuse are common characteristics of domestically abusive men. In comparison with non-batterers, batterers exhibit higher incidences of alcohol and drug abuse. In some cases, the alcohol acts as

an instigator and subsequently intensifies abusive incidences, although it does not "cause" the abuse (CRCVC, 2011). Some researchers theorize that alcohol and drug abuse act as a sedative for the emotional distress that batterers bear in response to traumatic and/or abusive incidences that they experienced during their childhood or to feelings of inadequacy and poor communication skills. Similarly, the experience of an abusive childhood is a common factor in the profile of domestically abusive men. According to the CRCVC (2011), the majority of domestically abusive men experienced or witnessed some form of childhood violence, leaving them with poor role models and low self-esteem.

Denial and false genuineness are two of the most prominent characteristics found in the profiles of domestically abusive men. In these cases, the abuser denies that there is a problem and will refuse to take responsibility and accountability for their actions (CRCVC, 2011). In an attempt to deflect blame, the abuser will place blame on others for making him angry, thereby excusing his use of violence. In these instances, the abuser will externalize their behavior by placing blame on external factors including stress, other individuals, as well as alcohol and drug use (CRCVC, 2011). Similarly, domestically abusive men will appear pleasant and charming between periods of violence. During this period, the abuser will appear as a "nice guy" to outsiders. In sum, the CRCVC (2011) argues that domestically abusive men exhibit signs of extreme jealously, possessiveness, are poorly tempered and ultimately unpredictable.

The [Nova Scotia] Association of Men's Intervention Programs (2003) presents culturally specific information on men who are court-mandated to batterer intervention programs in Nova Scotia. According to the Association of Men's Intervention Programs (2003), male offenders who have been mandated to one of the six provincial batterer intervention programs will have been referred through either the Criminal Justice System, through Family & Children's Services/ Children's Aid, the Department of Community Services, or other community referral sources. In some cases men self-refer to batterer intervention programs (Association of Men's Intervention Programs, 2003).

Although it should not be assumed that batterer intervention programs in Nova Scotia only work with men from low socio-economic backgrounds, the programs in Nova Scotia do find that there is a high degree of economic marginalization present among male offenders court-mandated to participation (Association of Men's Intervention Programs, 2003). For instance, the New Start program in Dartmouth estimates that 50% of its clients are economically marginalized and subsiding on social assistance (Association of Men's Intervention Programs, 2003). Similarly, Second Chances located in Sydney notes that it has a high percentage of clients with low socioeconomic status (Association of Men's Intervention Programs, 2003).

Batterer Intervention Programs: Client Perspectives

Researchers have paid particular attention to the long-term and damaging effects that intimate partner violence crimes have on victims as well as the role that the criminal justice system plays in the lives of these victims.

Few, however, have examined offender perspectives of the criminal justice system. In particular, researchers have all but ignored offender perspectives of court-mandated batterer intervention programs. Although researchers have conducted in-depth examinations of court-mandated batterer intervention program typologies and recidivism rates associated with said programs, the opinions, views and experiences of those actually attending court-mandated intervention programs has remained relatively unexamined in the current literature.

Scott and Wolfe (2000) conducted one of the first examinations of men's experiences of court-mandated batterer intervention programs in Canada through in-depth qualitative research with men enrolled at Changing Ways Inc., a community agency devoted to rehabilitating domestically abusive men in London, Ontario. All participants took part in a semi-structured hour-long interview where researchers asked questions designed to "…elicit men's personal stories of both how and why they made changes in their abusive behavior" (Scott & Wolfe, 2000. pp. 831). As outlined by Scott and Wolfe (2000), participants stated that the treatment that they received was beneficial. For instance, the most important part of treatment was "…learning to recognize their own abusive behavior" (Scott and Wolfe, 2000. pp. 834). According to participants, this took place during interactions within group sessions and through listening to the experiences of other group members. Additionally, participants stated that they learned valuable communication skills through the intervention program, which greatly aided in their ability to

identify the warning signs of anger and to "…intervene at an early stage to prevent the escalation of angry feelings" (Scott & Wolfe, 2000. pp. 837).

Brownlee and Chlebovec (2004) found similar results in their exploratory study of 88 self-reports from men who had attended The First Step Program in Timmins, Ontario, an open/voluntary batterer intervention program. The First Step Program ran for 24 weeks in total, with weekly group meetings lasting approximately two-hours which included 8-10 participants (Brownlee & Chlebovec, 2004). According to Brownlee and Chlebovec (2004), participants noted that they experienced positive skill development in relation to "…anger, recognition of abusive behaviors, admission of wrongdoing, learning/educational experience(s), empathy, focus on one self, safe environment and accepting responsibility" (pp. 210). Ultimately Brownlee and Chlebovec's (2004) research revealed that participants viewed their experience at The First Step Program as valuable and beneficial to changing their use of violence in their intimate relationships.

In a similar manner, the Rhode Island Justice Assistance program conducted a combination of quantitative and qualitative research on the effectiveness of one court-mandated batterer intervention program. Their analysis covered the period between July 2006 and July 2010 and included male offenders who had violated a state intimate partner violence statute and had "…pled 'nolo contendere', entered into a 'filing agreement', and were ordered to enroll in a state certified program and complete 40-hours of 'psycho-educational' classes" (Houston, 2011. pp. 2). Of the 2,251 male

offenders who had been court-mandated to attend the batterer intervention program, 240 completed qualitative, in-person interviews with Justice Assistance staff on their experiences and perspectives of the program (Houston, 2011). Results indicated that 98.8 percent of the participants surveyed felt that they were treated fairly by the staff, 99.2 percent felt that their questions were answered directly and clearly, and 5 percent of respondents indicated that the program had little or no impact on them (Houston, 2011). In addition, participants also noted that the self-control and anger techniques that they learned were the most beneficial aspects of the program (Houston, 2011). Overall, Justice Assistance coded the majority of comments as positive although negative comments were apparent and most often concerned the cost of the program ($40 per week) and transportation issues (Houston, 2011). Lastly, research participants indicated that program policies focusing on post-participation follow-up services were the biggest downfall of the program (Houston, 2011).

Motivated by his experiences as a clinical psychologist, Dr. Ray Montella (2011) has completed an in-depth examination of offender experiences of court-mandated batterer intervention programs in North America. Montella (2011) examined the experiences and perceptions of seventeen male intimate partner violence offenders who had (with one exception) been court-mandated to participate at one batterer intervention program in Maui, Hawaii. According to Montella's (2011) findings, the male offenders stated that the tools they were taught for controlling their anger were the most helpful and

that more time spent learning how to consistently use these tools would have been useful. In addition, the male offenders stated that group support was integral to their success in the batterer intervention program and that the addition of family and community support would aid their rehabilitation. Sixteen of Montella's (2011) seventeen research participants were satisfied with the batterer intervention program. Importantly, Montella (2011) notes that future studies should provide a cultural context, such as an analysis of deeply embedded values and attitudes, in order to better understand the reasons why some men use intimate partner violence in their relationships.

Lastly, Tutty, Ogden & Warrell (2011) have completed an in-depth examination of men court-mandated to the YWCA of Calgary Sherriff King Home in Alberta, Canada. Tutty et al. (2011) conducted qualitative and quantitative research with twenty participants, nineteen of whom completed the 14-week program. As outlined by Tutty et al. (2011), the participants in this study discussed their experiences with the program, paying specific attention to whether being mandated to the program had affected their overall involvement, the significance and impact that their group members had on them and their use of violence, as well as an evaluation of the exercises and topics that they found to be particularly helpful or unhelpful. Ultimately, Tutty et al. (2011) concluded that "…the rich comments from the men about their experiences with the criminal justice response to domestic violence and treatment [were] valuable" (pp.55). Furthermore, Tutty et al. (2011) highlighted that despite participants' perceptions of bias in the judicial system

toward female victims as well as their minimization of the details surrounding their use of violence, most participants left the program acknowledging their use of violence and taking responsibility for their behavior.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to explore the experiences of men court-mandated to one of two batterer intervention programs in Nova Scotia. Specifically, I was interested in uncovering how the programs were run and what tools participants were given to change their use of violence in their intimate relationships. The rich comments from the men about their experiences with the criminal justice response to intimate partner violence and treatment are valuable for several reasons. First, North American courts are increasingly mandating both male and female intimate partner violence offenders to batterer intervention programs (Hanson & Wallace-Capretta, 2004; Feder & Dugan, 2002). The referral of offenders to these programs suggests a certain level of public, and governmental, confidence in the effectiveness of these programs despite inconclusive research findings (Babcock et al., 2004, Bennett & Williams, 2001, Dutton, 2000, The Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2001). Moreover, as noted by intimate partner violence researchers and advocates alike, victims of intimate partner violence often want to remain in a relationship with their offenders (Bennet & Williams, 2001, The Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2001). Therefore, victims expect that intervention programs will provide them with a certain degree of safety through the rehabilitation of their partners (Bennet & Williams, 2001). The

promise of hope that victims are given through their partners' court-mandated participation in batterer intervention programs is problematic because it provides victims with a false sense of security and places them at a greater risk of future violence (Austin & Dankwort, 1999 B, Bennett & Williams, 2001, Babcock et al., 2004, Feder & Dugan, 2002).

Lastly, in order to improve program effectiveness and program outcomes, it is important that researchers and program facilitators understand *how* these programs work for offenders and for *whom* they work the best (Bennett & Williams, 2001). A one-size fits all program may in fact be more dangerous for victims and ultimately less likely to rehabilitate offenders. This research project, therefore, provides invaluable information on what tools offenders find valuable to their rehabilitation and change process.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This research project was designed as a small-scale qualitative examination of men's experiences with court-mandated batterer intervention programs in Nova Scotia. In total, ten interviews were completed—eight with program participants and two with program facilitators, on average lasting 50 minutes. The themes explored during interviews with program participants included participants' experiences at the batterer intervention program, with specific attention focused on exploring participants' likes and dislikes about the program, what they had learned through attending the program, as well as what they would like to see done differently. Comparatively, interviews with program facilitators focused on the theoretical underpinnings of the program, the successes and failures of the program, as well as the future directions of the program. Throughout interviews with program participants and facilitators alike, frank and open discussions were elicited allowing the researcher to uncover rich commentaries about the batterer intervention programs as well as the criminal justice system's response to intimate partner violence in Nova Scotia.

In the section that follows I begin by presenting the theoretical underpinnings of this research project, paying specific attention to the theories that are currently being used to explain men's use of intimate partner violence. Next, I outline my positionality as a female researcher conducting qualitative research with a population sample of highly stigmatized men. Similarly, I

outline why I chose to use qualitative research methods for this project. Lastly, I present comprehensive information on the population sample of this research project including the inclusion/exclusion criterion, the recruitment methods, the requirements of participants, the number of participants as well as interview lengths and locations.

Qualitative Research Project

This research project is comprised of a qualitative analysis of the narratives provided by research participants to the researcher. Qualitative methods were chosen for this research project as qualitative data provides researchers with "…well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanation of processes in identifiable local contexts" (Miles & Luberman, 1994. pp.1). In addition to the rich descriptions that qualitative data provides, Miles and Luberman (1994) suggest that

> …Qualitative data are more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and to new integrations; they help researchers to get beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual frameworks. Finally, the findings from qualitative studies have a quality of 'undeniability'. Words, especially organized into incidents or stories, have a concrete, vivid, meaningful flavor that often proves far more convincing to a reader—another researcher, a policymaker, a practitioner—than pages of summarized numbers (pp.1).

Merriam (2008) echoes this sentiment throughout *Qualitative research in practice: examples for discussion and analysis*. According to Merriam (2008), qualitative data provides researchers with an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within the context of the participants' perspectives and experiences. In addition, qualitative research is more "…flexible, responsive, and open to contextual interpretation than in quantitative research, which

uses inventory, questionnaire, or numerical data to draw conclusions" (Merriam, 2012. pp. 442). Likewise, Scott and Wolfe (2000) suggest that qualitative methodology provides researchers with the advantage of obtaining in-depth descriptions as well as explanations of processes while simultaneously establishing and maintaining connections to the quantitative body of literature.

The use of qualitative methods to clarify and elaborate on quantitative research, theories and findings has become an increasingly popular research design within intimate partner violence research (Scott & Wolfe, 2000). For instance, Gondolf and Hanneken (1987) conducted qualitative research with twelve men who had been categorized as successfully changing their use of intimate partner violence within their intimate relationships. Gondolf and Haneeken's (1987) use of semi-structured and open-ended questions allowed the researchers to answer questions that would not be possible in quantitative research. The use of qualitative research throughout the current research project provided the researcher with the foundation for better understanding how men experience treatment at court-mandated batterer intervention programs by providing the opportunity to ask open-ended questions that did not limit the participants' responses.

Major Theories That Explain the Cause of Intimate Partner Violence

As outlined by the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime (CRCVC) (2011), there are many theories that have been developed to best understand why some men use violence in their intimate relationships. These

theories include (but are not limited to) family dysfunction, inadequate communication skills, stress, chemical dependency, lack of spirituality and economic hardship (CRCVC, 2011; Gelles, 1980). Many intervention programs in both Canada and the United States are influenced by multiple theories and create holistic approaches (CRCVC, 2011).

Psycho-dynamic/Insight Theory

As outlined by Stordeur & Stile (1989), early theories about the cause of intimate partner violence postulated that psychological problems related to the experience of childhood trauma, developmental difficulties or mental illness were the underlying causes of intimate partner violence. Stordeur and Stile (1989) outline these problems as including immature personality traits such as poor impulse control, personality disorders such as fear of intimacy and/or abandonment as well as psychiatric illnesses. Although this argument has merit, Adams (1998) suggests that by attributing men's violence to individual pathology, counselors may not encourage offenders to take responsibility and accountability for their actions. For instance, throughout her work with intimate partner violence offenders, Anne Ganley (1989) states that she has not found a higher proportion of mental illness among her clients that use violence in their intimate relationships in comparison to her clients that do not use violence in their intimate relationships (Paymar, 2000). Furthermore, critics of this approach argue that it does not deal with the immediate safety issues inherent in cases of intimate partner violence and ignores the control that offenders hold over their victims (CRCVC, 2011).

Family Systems Theory

The family systems theory presupposes that both victim and offender are entangled in a maladaptive pattern of interaction (Bograd, 1984; Health Canada, 2000). For instance, under the family systems theory, violence is viewed as being one way in which the couple can reinforce specific family dynamics that are already in place in the relationship (Bograd, 1984; Health Canada, 2000).

As outlined by Stordeur and Stille (1989) many feminists voice concerns over the family systems theory because it minimizes the seriousness of violence by removing the responsibility from the hands of the perpetrator. Furthermore, Stordeur & Stille (1989) suggest that the family systems theory overlooks the power differences inherent in our society and in our intimate relationships. Ganley (1989) further critiques the family systems theory by suggesting that real communication between intimate partners is not possible as long as violence, or the threat of violence, is still a part of their relationship.

Cognitive-Behavioral and Psycho-Educational Theories

Cognitive-behavioural and psycho-educational theories make the act of violence in the relationship the primarily focus (Health Canada, 2000; Saunders, 1996). Both theories view violence as a learned behavior and that non-violence can similarly be learned through proper interventions (Health Canada, 2000; Saunders, 1996). For instance, clinicians using the cognitive-behavioural or psycho-educational theory will teach clients to write in "anger logs" as one mechanism to learn how to identify and to separate their

thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Similarly, "time-outs" are recommended for stopping aggressive behavior as well as stress management techniques and the identification of dysfunctional thinking that escalates to anger (Daniels, 1997; Health Canada, 2000). Lastly, intervention techniques in these theories include interpersonal training such as communication techniques.

Advocates against the cognitive-behavioural and psyco-educational theories argue that these theories are focused on too narrow a view of men's use of violence in their intimate relationships and that they do not address power and control over women on a larger scale (Stordeur & Stille, 1989).

Pro-Feminist Theory

Advocates of the pro-feminist theory, such as Julie Stubbs (2002), view men's use of violence in intimate relationships as one way of maintaining power and control over women. The ways in which men oppress women in their intimate relationships include rape, physical violence and well as verbal and physiological violence to undermine women's self-esteem (Bograd, 1988). There are two fundamental principles inherent in the pro-feminist theory—that no woman deserves to be beaten, and that men are responsible for their actions (Stordeur & Stille, 1989). Throughout interventions, pro-feminist facilitators encourage similar anger management techniques as the cognitive-behavioural and psyco-educational theories including anger management techniques and communication skills (Stubbs, 2002). However, the pro-feminist theorists argue that additional commitment to changing men's sense of entitlement over women and children is vital (Health Canada, 2000; Stubbs,

2002). In addition, pro-feminist theorists seek to change the social, legal and economic systems that support the oppression of women and their experiences of sustained violence (Health Canada, 2000; Stubbs, 2002).

According to Dutton and Glant (1995), critics of the pro-feminist theory argue that it ignores individual personality traits or issues that contribute to perpetrators sustained use of violence such as addiction issues and mental health issues.

This research project is based on the principles of the pro-feminist theory. The pro-feminist theory was chosen as the theoretical underpinning of this project as it places women and gender in a central focus while suggesting that patriarchy is a significant factor contributing to the sustained oppression that abused women experience (Felter, 2005; Rosser, 2012). For the purpose of this research project, patriarchy is defined as

> …The historically produced institutionalization of men's domination over women. Furthermore, although patriarchy is hierarchical and men of different races, classes, and ethnicities occupy different places within it, men are united in their shared relation of dominance over women within the same social group and dependent on other men to maintain this domination (Marshall, 2005. pp.102).

Advocates of the pro-feminist model, such as Dobash and Dobash (2000), have used this model to examine the politics and policies of responding to violence against women. For instance, Dobash and Dobash (2000) have used the pro-feminist model when examining incidences of intimate partner violence to suggest that these incidences are best understood when the context in which they occur is explored. Additionally, Dobash and Dobash (2000) suggest that by exploring the context in which the violence

occurs from the perspective of both the offender and the victim, insight into the nature of the incident as well as the rationales for the use of violence will begin to emerge. According to Dobash and Dobash (2000) these insights would not be possible without locating the incident within the social and personal context in which it occurs. In making this argument, Dobash and Dobash (2000) expand Loseke and Kurz's (2005) pro-feminist model by suggesting that feminist's examine the accounts of men who use violence against their female intimate partners. As outlined by Dobash and Dobash, (2000), men often minimize their violence, deny responsibly for their own actions, and blame others for what they do. Thus, as men are the primary perpetrators of severe acts of intimate partner violence, these are the individuals who need to be studied in order to eliminate their use of violent behavior.

Research on the link between gender and intimate partner violence by Catherine Itzin (2000) provides confirmatory evidence that further validates the pro-feminist model's central argument that men use violence as a way to maintain power over women in intimate relationships. Itzin's (2000) in-depth fieldwork with men convicted of intimate partner violence crimes reveals that large numbers of men regard using violence against their intimate female partners as a normal part of their behavior. This admission by male offenders is illustrative of how normalized gendered relations are in incidences of intimate partner violence (Itzin, 2000). Furthermore, Itzin (2000) points to the systematic research of Dobash and Dobash (2000), which reveals that many men who assault their intimate female partners are habituated to such violent

acts. These acts of violence, according to Itzin (2000) and Dobash and Dobash (2000), are intentional behaviors chosen by men as a tactic or resource associated with attempts to dominate, control, and punish women. Thus, one of the pro-feminist approach's major contributions to intimate partner violence criminal justice policies

> …Has been to identify men as primarily the perpetrators of domestic violence and to incorporate this as a problem of men's violence in the context of social power relations gendered in the terms of male dominance and female subordination (Itzin, 2000.pp. 360).

This project has been based on the theoretical underpinnings of the pro-feminist theory, ultimately viewing intimate partner violence as form of patriarchy that is embedded in intimate relationships.

Positionality as a Female Researcher

It is critical for researchers to reflect on how one's personal circumstances will shape and influence one's research (England, 1994; Herod, 1993; Jaffe & Miller, 1994; Pini, 2005). I began the interview process by reflecting on how my "positionality" as a young, middle class, educated female may influence how participants respond to my interview questions. As argued by Russell et al. (2002), questions of difference between the researcher and the researched cannot be generalized as being either positive or negative (Wong, 1999). For instance, Touchard and Porter's (2002) research experiences with older, marginalized men reveal that men often position themselves

> …As both men and as experienced persons with authoritative tales to tell. In the course of the interview, they would dispense information and advice to them as a younger, less experienced person. They believe this kind of relationship helped to blur their 'higher' status as a researcher and led to a more free-flowing, informal interaction (pp. 12).

Pini (2005) points to similar research findings between female researchers and male subjects. According to Pini (2005), it can be problematic for female researchers interviewing male subjects as men are often aware of power hierarchies and might manipulate these hierarchies to benefit themselves. Pini (2005) supports this argument by exploring points Winchester (1996) made about his research with lone fathers. Winchester's (1996) male research participants reinforced "… stereotypical gender discourses which suggested that women's role in conversations is to be an empathic listener and facilitator for men's narratives" (as cited in Pini, 2005. pp. 203). Although some female researchers may experience this as disadvantageous, Pini (2005) suggests that being located in traditional discourses of femininity by male participants can present female researchers with opportunities that would otherwise not exist (i.e. Horn, 1997).

It is important to note that not all relationships between male research participants and female researchers can be identified as being strictly positive or benign. As noted by Russell et al. (2002), some male research participants attempt to sexualize their relationships with young female researchers in the field. Previous researchers, such as Lee (1997) note that one way to combat this is to consciously not perform traditional femininity (i.e. including dress and make-up) as one way of avoiding and/or minimizing the likelihood of

sexual advances from male participants. Based on Lee's (1997) suggestion of consciously not performing tradition femininity when interviewing I attempted to present myself in a desexualized manner. This included a make-up free face and lose-fitting, non-sexual dress.

Recruitment Methods

Study Population

The study population for this research project included eight men residing within the province of Nova Scotia and who were enrolled at one of two registered and licensed batterer intervention programs in, referred to herein as Location A and Location B. In order to protect the identity of all research participants, the names, locations, and any identifying features of the batterer intervention programs under study will not be disclosed.

In addition, two program facilitators were also interviewed as part of this project. One full-time program facilitator was interviewed from both Location A and Location B. At the time of research, there was a sample size of approximately eight program facilitators that were available in addition to four program interns who were completing on-site job training as part of their program requirements in the Masters of Social Work programs at Acadia University and Dalhousie University.

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of research participants from Location A and Location B. Two participants were taking part in interventions at Location A while six participants were engaged in interventions at Location B.

Pseudonym	Location A	Location B
1. Thom	✓	
2. John	✓	
3. Peter		✓
4. Chris		✓
5. Marcus		✓
6. Andrew		✓
7. Mike		✓
8. Grant		✓
Total= 8		

The original proposal for this research project indicated that an equal number of participants would be drawn from Location A and Location B. However, program facilitators at Location B proved to be invaluable allies in recruiting potential participants, ultimately resulting in an uneven distribution of participant recruitment.

Inclusion/ Exclusion of Participants

The purpose of this research project was to uncover the experiences of men who were currently participating in one of two court-mandated batterer intervention programs in Nova Scotia. Therefore, the primary requirement for inclusion in this research project was that participants be currently enrolled at either Location A or Location B. Based on caseload numbers and recruitment requirements, Location A and Location B provided a potential sample size of approximately 160 men between April 2014 and November 2014. One exception was made to this rule as one particular participant came highly recommended by program facilitators and who ultimately proved to be an invaluable source of information. Although this participant was not currently

enrolled at either intervention program they had received treatment at both Location A and Location B for a number of years.

Participants were not excluded from participating if they had previously been enrolled in a different intervention program. Likewise, participants who were first time enrollees' were also not excluded. Individuals who had been enrolled but had yet to attend a minimum of one session were excluded from this research project.

On average, participants had been receiving treatment at the intervention program for approximately six—eight weeks prior to participating in this research project. Although this project required that participants be court-mandated to the batterer intervention program, the researcher quickly realized that many participants were unclear on their exact court sentences. For instance, several men initially stated that they were attending the program voluntarily; however, as the interview progressed they would concede that their participation at the program was a direct mandate by the courts.

The inclusion criteria for program facilitators were based solely on availability. Location A facilitated an interview with a senior program facilitator while Location B provided a less senior, although equally competent, program facilitator.

Recruitment

Through personal communication with program facilitators, facilitators from both Location A and Location B suggested that they personally select

participants for this research project. In the past, program facilitators had worked with graduate student researchers and had found this form of project recruitment to be the most efficient method while also being the least intrusive method for their clients.

Program facilitators reviewed their client intake folders on individuals currently receiving treatment at each facility. Based on the agreed upon criterion (participants must be court-mandated to the program and have attended a minimum of one session), program facilitators then approached potential participants during intervention sessions and informed them of this project. During this time potential participants were provided with an overview of the researcher's interests as well as the potential questions that they would be asked. In addition, at this time potential participants were informed of the time requirement of this project (45 minutes—1 hour). Potential participants were also informed that participation in the project was both voluntary and confidential and that there were no direct benefits to participating. In addition, all potential participants were informed that they had the option to withdraw from the project at any point in time including during the interview process itself should they choose to participate. Potential participants were then offered the opportunity to ponder participation in the project and were not forced to make an immediate decision. Once potential participants decided to commit to participating they arranged an interview time that was convenient for themselves with their program facilitator who then informed the researcher of the date and time of the interview.

Having the program facilitators facilitate interview times proved to be the most efficient and successful form of participant recruitment. In the beginning stages of this research project, program facilitators informed potential participants of this project and provided the researcher's contact information for potential participants to make contact on their own time. This method was ineffective and required potential participants to take the uncomfortable step of reaching out to the researcher personally. Similarly, the researcher also spent several days at Location A "hanging out". The researcher would sit in a common area and read a book while hoping to meet clients. This was an exceedingly inefficient method, as the clients did not pass through this common area while travelling to and from their sessions.

Number of Research Participants

Men Attending Batterer Intervention Programs

This research project was designed to require the participation of eight participants. The requirement of eight participants was based on previous research methodology designs, specifically Gondolf and Hanneken (1987), Scott and Wolfe (2000) as well as Silvergleid and Mankowski (2006). Gondolf and Hanneken interviewed twelve men, Scott and Wolfe (2000) interviewed nine men and Silvergleid and Mankowski (1987) also interviewed nine men enrolled at batterer intervention programs in addition to ten program facilitators. Personal communication with Tod Augusta-Scott, an internationally renowned intimate partner violence researcher and advocate, indicated that a sample size of eight participants would be reasonable and was

the maximum number of participants that was suggested given the project's resources (personal communication, January 2014).

Program Facilitators

One program facilitator from each of the two batterer intervention programs under study took part in the interview process. Research by Silvergleid and Mankowski (2006) suggests that including the testimony from additional sources, such as program facilitators, offers more comprehensive information. In addition, Silvergleid and Mankowski (2006) suggest that interviews with program facilitators shed light on how the programs themselves are run. For instance, program facilitators are able to speak to the duration of the programs, the theoretical underpinnings of the programs as well as provide a contextual background that greatly aids the researcher's understanding of how the programs function. Augusta-Scott highly recommended interviewing program facilitators in order to obtain a contextual understanding of how the intervention programs are designed and function. It is important to note that there is very little information available to the general public about how batterer intervention programs in Nova Scotia work, thus making interviews with program facilitators an essential aspect to this project.

Interview Locations

Due to the sensitive nature of this research project, choosing an interview location that was safe and comfortable for both the researcher and interview participants was a crucial task. On one hand, as a young female

researcher conducting independent interviews with men convicted of assault-related crimes, the researcher sought a location that was public and safe. On the other hand, the researcher acknowledged that this project required participants to discuss a very private and sensitive aspect of their life, a topic most would not want to discuss in public (Morton-Williams, 1985). Several previous research projects influenced the decision-making process in choosing where to conduct interviews (see Elwood & Martin, 2000; Morton-Williams, 1985; Yin 1989; and Krueger, 1994)

As suggested by Krueger (1994), a location was sought that was neutral for both the researcher and the interview participants. Therefore, all interviews were conducted in private rooms at both programs. Conducting interviews at the research locations proved to be both advantageous and disadvantageous. First, Location A and Location B were convenient for participants, second, they were places the interviewees were familiar with and thus provided greater comfort during interviews. However, by conducting interviews in the very rooms where participants had been receiving treatment there was a seemingly unfair power dynamic. Although all participants were informed that they had the right to refuse to answer any questions that they did not feel comfortable answering, none did. As noted by Elwood and Martin (2000) "…social interactions have inherent power dynamics that operate or are simultaneously manifest at different spatial scales" (pp. 652). During interviews, this power dynamic was favorable towards the researcher and perhaps would not have occurred had interviews taken place in a more neutral

location. As noted by Nagar (1997), however, all interviews are shaped by inherent hierarchies thus making neutrality virtually impossible.

As previously stated, all interviews were conducted at the batterer intervention programs under study. At Location B, all interviews were conducted in a small room located immediately off the waiting room. Outfitted with one small loveseat and an oversized chair facing it, this room proved to be comfortable and inviting. Many participants, for example, commented on how comfortable the seating was. However, due to the room's close proximity to the waiting room, outside conversations could easily be overheard. Similarly, interviews were easily overheard from the waiting room. In addition, the room's close proximity to the waiting room meant that clients inevitably ran into one another.

In comparison, interviews at Location A took place in a large, multi-purpose room. This room doubles as a lunch/break room for the staff as well as the group meeting room for the batterer intervention program. Outfitted with several mismatched chairs and a large sofa, this room was less comfortable and welcoming than Location B although adequate for the purpose of this research project. In comparison to Location B, this interview room was located at the end of a long hallway, which proved to be very quiet and private.

Requirements of Participants

All participants were required to participate in a 45 minute to one-hour long interview. As suggested by Austin and Dankwort (1999), an interview

guide was used throughout this project that served as an outline to facilitate conversation between participants and the researcher (See Appendix A). By facilitating conversation with semi-structured questions, participants were provided with the opportunity to share their own perspectives and experiences. In addition, as outlined by Geertz (1973), semi-structured interviews provided a rich source of "thick evidence" that greatly aided in the project's ability to uncover the experiences of participants.

Due to the sensitive nature of this research project, it is important to note some of the difficulties that the researcher experienced while seeking to achieve rapport with a sample of participants, many of whom were socially and economically oppressed, stigmatized, or otherwise socially disadvantaged. As outlined by Tewksbury and Gagne (1996),

> The key to successful research with stigmatized groups is their willingness to embark on a risky course of action… This decision is based on trust and the rapport that precedes it. If and when the stigmatized feel accepted and respected and perceive some degree of similarity with their explorers, a relationship can proceed, and the qualitative researcher can pursue investigation of inhabitants' identities, identity components, and experiences (pp. 128).

It is of value to note that both Location A and B are psycho-educational batterer intervention programs. Throughout program sessions, all clients are encouraged to discuss their experiences with violence as a means of rehabilitation. Thus, individuals participating in this project were somewhat accustomed to speaking about their experiences with intimate partner violence.

Program Participants

Program participants were asked semi-structured questions and encouraged to speak freely on a number of themes in order to describe their experiences at the program. In order to elicit men's personal stories I used Spradely's (1979) recommendation of beginning the interview process with a "…relatively long, grand-tour question" (Scott & Wolfe, 2000. pp. 831). This process was then followed by numerous prompts by the researcher in order to elicit further information or to redirect the interview when participants started to deviate from their personal stories.

Program Facilitators

Interviews with program facilitators were conducted in a similar manner as the interviews with program participants. Interviews began with a longer, more broad question which was then followed by a series of prompts. In comparison to program participant interviews, interviews with the program facilitators were designed to gain important contextual information on the programs themselves, how they function on a day-to-day basis, as well as their theoretical underpinnings. Additionally, questions about the efficacy of the program as well as program funding were discussed at length.

Length of Interviews

The lengths of interviews varied greatly throughout this research project. Some men were eager to discuss their experiences not only with the intervention program but also with the criminal justice system as a whole. Furthermore, many men voluntarily outlined their life stories including

everything from their childhood experiences with violence and addiction to their relationships with their children. Comparatively, others appeared to be reticent to participate in the interview, which resulted in shorter interviews times. In the latter case, all questions were answered although men were often unwilling to elaborate or give examples.

The shortest interview with a program participant lasted 31 minutes while the longest interview lasted 75 minutes. On average, interviews lasted approximately 50 minutes in length with program participants.

Comparatively, interviews with program facilitators were similar in their average length—50 minutes.

Data Analysis

As suggested by Lofland and Lofland (2005), data analysis ran concurrently with data collection. Following traditional ethnographic methods, field notes were written and explored concurrently with the interview process (Lofland & Lofland, 2005). While the interview process was taking place, field notes were taken and then organized and analyzed, ultimately revealing key themes. The researcher transcribed each interview verbatim and accounted for participant's changes in voice as well as long pauses. All interview were transcribed within two weeks of the interview having taken place. Following the transcription of each interview, interviews were coded by key themes (i.e. "liked the whiteboard", "disliked the whiteboard", "paying for sessions", "not paying for sessions") and entered into a large Word documented that linked participants and key themes.

Conclusion

The ten interviews completed with program participants and facilitators successfully facilitated in-depth critiques of the batterer intervention programs under study. Interviews provided the researcher with a unique perspective on the relatively unexamined nature of batterer intervention programs in Nova Scotia and provided a voice to the men who are receiving treatment at these programs. In addition, interviews with program facilitators provided the researcher with the opportunity to make connections between the current body of literature on batterer intervention programs and the practices and issues under study.

Chapter 4: Results

"I feel good about myself, actually. I told her the last time I came in and this time, I was just happy. The sun was shining, I'm just happy"

Introduction

This research project explored the experiences of eight men participating in one of two court-mandated batterer intervention programs within the province of Nova Scotia. Throughout the roughly 1 hour long interviews, the men were asked a variety of questions about their experiences with the program including what they found to be helpful, the design of the program, and what they would like to see done differently in the future. In addition, two program facilitators were also interviewed. The program facilitators spoke to a number of themes including the programs theoretical basis, the services they offered, as well as program effectiveness and viability. Ultimately, interviews provided invaluable information and highlighted an important fact—intimate partner violence is not just a women's issue; men, too, are entangled in the complicated cycle of intimate partner violence.

Shared Experiences

Gondolf (1996) suggests that common experiences or characteristics of men court-mandated to batterer intervention programs have significant implications for program development and evaluation research; with three main implications. First, Gondolf (1996) suggests that many of the speculations about the most appropriate intervention models and treatment programs for batterers rests on assumptions and stereotypes about offender behavior and characteristics. In addition, the common experiences of men

court-mandated to batterer intervention programs significantly contributes to programs outcomes and subsequently needs to be considered when evaluating programs efficacy (Gondolf, 1996). Lastly, Gondolf (1996) suggests that common experiences of offenders in one specific intervention program may assist in determining how representative a sample of men are of other programs; one program may appear more effective than another similar program because it has different "kinds" of men in it.

Research on court-mandated batterer intervention programs reveals that several generalizations have emerged about offenders "characteristics" or lifetime experiences. For instance, Eisikovits & Edleson (1989) and Tolman and Bennett (1990) suggest that profile characteristics of male batterers typically point to an age group of men between twenty and thirty years of age, who are employed as laborers, who often have drinking problems, prior arrest records, as well as personality disorders. It is pertinent to note, however, that all batterers have unique experiences and that they cannot easily be grouped together as all having the same experiences or characteristics. What follows, therefore, are the shared experiences as uncovered during interviews with eight batterers.

Fatherhood

At the time of the study, all eight participants had children. Ranging in age from toddler to grown adult, participants' children had witnessed first-hand the violence that took place in their homes. In the majority of cases, the men had children with multiple women. Two participants did not have custody

of their children but were both granted supervised visitation. In one case, Child Protective Services had granted custody of the couple's toddler to the offender's mother.

Research examining the characteristics of domestically abusive men reveals that as parents, they often present authoritative and rigid behaviors (Bancroft and Silverman, 2002). Throughout their research on the effects of intimate partner violence on children, Bancroft and Silverman (2002) found that domestically abusive men generally expect unquestioned obedience from their immediate family members. Furthermore, this population is often reluctant to accept parenting feedback and criticisms. Francis, Scott, Crooks, and Kelly (2002) argue that these are problematic characteristics. According to Francis et al. (2002), the control that domestically abusive men exert can lead them to view their children as being "rightfully" theirs. Thus, Francis et al. (2002) argue that domestically abusive men feel justified in parenting in an authoritarian manner and using excess physical punishment. Crooks and Scott (2004) provide confirmatory data that the characteristics of domestically abusive men are problematic in childrearing. Throughout their research with domestically abusive men, Crooks and Scott (2004) found that domestically abusive men admit to experiencing a sense of entitlement over their children.

While the literature suggests that domestically abusive men engage in poor child rearing practices, Crooks et al. (2004) argue that these practices can be fixed. According to Crooks et al. (2004), by emphasizing men's increased awareness of their abusive behavior in treatment programs men have the

ability to change their behavior. Furthermore, by examining denial and minimization in treatment programs, domestically abusive men have the opportunity to change their child rearing practices (Crooks et al., 2004)

Financial Pressures

According to Metcalf, Anderson, and Rolfe (2001), over 50 percent of men released from prison and under the supervision of probation officers are unemployed. In Sherman et al's. (1992) examination of 1,200 intimate partner violence cases, for instance, results indicated that 56 percent of offenders were unemployed. Of those offenders who were employed, most were working blue-collar service jobs (Sherman et al., 1992). Two of the eight participants in the current project were employed in a full-time position at the time of interviews. Andrew worked as a wood harvester, a temporary full-time position. During the winter Andrew expected that he would be laid off and would draw from his employment insurance. Comparatively, John was employed as a full-time government employee who had been at his current position for approximately twenty years. The remaining six participants were unemployed at the time of interviews. Several of the unemployed participants were contemplating moving to Alberta to work in the oil fields. All unemployed participants were receiving government subsidies for themselves and their children. Similar to Sherman et al.'s (1992) research, nearly all of the unemployed participants had worked in blue-collar jobs, such as construction, in the past.

Although Thom was not currently employed, he had been successful in his given career prior to be sentenced to prison. While in prison, Thom took

advantage of his time and studied for the GED, received a diploma in environmental sciences and attended the University of New Brunswick distance program for two years. Although Thom had a post-secondary education, he was still unable to obtain employment. Metcalf et al. (2001) suggest that this is a common experience—for those with serious criminal convictions, approximately 90 percent will be rejected for employment. According to Metcalf et al. (2001), offenders exclusion from the workforce results in persistent economic problems often resulting in social exclusion and re-offending. It is of value to note that while this project did not examine recidivism rates, some scholars such as Sherman et al. (1992) suggest that an offender's employment status is an important link to their stake in conformity and their views and opinions regarding intimate partner violence.

Past Histories of Criminal Behavior

The research on intimate partner violence research has consistently found that this population of offenders often have past histories of criminal behavior (Hanson & Wallace-Capretta, 2004; McCormick et al., 2011). McCormick et al's. (2011) research on intimate partner violence offenders reveals that on average, offenders have between four and seven previous convictions. Therefore, not surprisingly, past incidences of criminal behavior were a common experience of the research participants in this project. Past criminal activities included arson, armed robbery, breaking and entering, breach of conditions, uttering threats, sexual abuse against a minor, driving on

a suspended license, and driving under the influence. Seven out of the eight participants held multiple criminal convictions.

Drinking and driving convictions were common among the men—six of the eight participants conceded that they had received at least one driving under the influence conviction. Furthermore, some participants had permanently lost their driving license due to multiple of drinking and driving convictions. For instance, Marcus received five drinking and driving convictions over a ten-year period. Similarly, Chris had also permanently lost his driving license after receiving several drinking and driving convictions. As outlined by Easton et al. (2007), alcohol and substance abuse are common characteristics found in men who are domestically abusive. According to Easton et al. (2007), alcohol and illegal substances often precede incidents of intimate partner violence. These findings are supported by several longitudinal studies including Fals-Stewart (2003) who collected and examined daily diaries from intimate partner violence offenders. As outlined in the diaries, alcohol was often consumed prior to violent incidents, 60% of which occurred within two hours of the alcohol being consumed (Fals-Stewart, 2003). Similarly, Buzawa and Buzawa (2003), also suggest that alcohol and substance use are common experiences of domestically abusive men. According to Buzawa and Buzawa (2003), alcohol and substance abuse are closely correlated with recurrent violence. Mike discussed at length how alcohol had contributed to his use of violence in his intimate relationships and

how he had continued to struggle with maintaining his sobriety. Mike reported that

> *I've been in and out pretty much my whole life…Because of alcohol in and out for, I think was twenty years I've been in and out, in and out. Alcohols destroyed my life. But now I've been clean and sober for, it would have been over two years, but I had a slip inside with the home brew, so it's just over 18 months now*

Correspondingly, all eight of the participants were attending Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings during the research period. As described by John:

> *I'm not a person that can go out and have a couple of drinks or have a glass of wine with dinner. I wish that was me but it's not*

Morgenstern, Labouvie, McCrady, Kahler, and Frey (1997) argue that AA promotes a number of similar change strategies as batterer intervention programs. According to Morgenstern, AA and batterer intervention programs both encourage participants to elicit self-change. While some participants such as John were attending four to five sessions a week, other participants such as Grant were attending sessions on an infrequent basis. For John, attending AA meetings on a regular basis was part of his new routine. In comparison, Grant was attending AA meetings as a suggestion from his program facilitator although he conceded that he was struggling with attending the sessions because his live-in partner was abusing alcohol and did not support his decision to abstain from alcohol.

Abuse as Children

Research on childhood exposure to intimate partner violence reveals a strong link between exposure to violence as a child and adult mental and

physical health issues, including the use of intimate partner violence (Caetano, Field, &Newton, 2003; Dube, Anda, Felitti, Edwards, & Williamson, 2002; Whitfield, Anda, Dube & Felitti, 2003). For instance, Dube et al's. (2002) research on adult's exposure to violence as children reveals that this exposure is directly related to mental and physical health issues including alcoholism, substance abuse, low self-esteem, and coping difficulties. Similarly, Caetano, Field, and Nelson's (2003) research on the association between childhood exposure to violence and mental and physical health problems in adulthood indicates a strong connection between childhood exposure to violence and adult alcoholism.

Witnessing intimate partner violence between their parents was a common experience discussed throughout interviews with the men. Participants described experiencing intimate partner violence as children in two ways—directly, by experiencing physical harm and indirectly, by hearing the violence or being in the environment in which the violence was taking place. The frequency and degree of abuse varied, with two men detailing extreme sexual abuse by multiple family members to psychological abuse from alcoholic partners that engaged in risky lifestyles. Thom, for instance, described how abuse played a prominent role in his childhood

> *Tthis is supposed to be somebody who's supposed to care about me, protect me, 7 years old and he's a teenager and he's beating on me. So it takes that away from you, that umm… that compassion, love, you kinda get… very confused…and my, one of my older brothers he sexually abused me when I was younger, neighborhood people have, where I grew up, I grew up in the city, I moved out to the country when I was 11 with my parents so I got away from that for a bit. But anyway umm so I was sexually abused, I was physically abused, I was verbally abused, I mean, it was an ongoing thing*

As described by Thom, experiencing childhood abuse affected him well into adulthood

> *I've been going through a lot of uh sleepless nights thinking about all the traumatic events in my life and things that I, that contributed to who I became to try to understand myself more, it's very hard*

To date, the literature on the effects of intimate partner violence on children is limited. Wolfe, Crooks, Lee, McIntyre-Smith, and Jaffe (2003) conducted one meta-analysis on the effects of children's exposure to intimate partner violence that has produced valuable information on the impacts. According to Wolfe et al. (2003), children who have witnessed or experienced intimate partner violence firsthand can be negatively affected in two ways. First, these children are at a greater risk than children who have not been exposed to violence in the home to experience physical harm themselves (Wolfe et al., 2003). Second, these children are also at a greater risk for developmental and psychological disorders (Wolfe et al., 2003). Cunningham and Baker's (2004) research on children's exposure to intimate partner violence provides additional information. According to Cunningham and Baker (2004), children who witness or experience intimate partner violence in the household are likely to develop severe behavioural problems such as aggression difficulties as well as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Suicidal Thoughts

Research by Wolford-Clevenger et al. (2014) demonstrates that a strong link exists between male batterers and suicidal symptoms. Wolford-

Clevenger et al.'s (2014) research with 294 men court-mandated to one batterer intervention program revealed that 22 percent of participants experienced suicidal ideation within two weeks of entering the program. Similar findings were found in the current project with three participants (37 percent) acknowledging that they had experienced suicidal symptoms and depressive thoughts. For instance, Thom noted that he had called the Nova Scotia Mental Hospital requesting assistance after experiencing severe suicidal thoughts. After outlining the violence that he had committed, the nurse advised Thom that he should kill himself. Experiencing depressive and suicidal thoughts as well negativistic agency responses were also found in Corvo and Johnson's (2001) Ohio research. According to Corvo and Johnson (2001), several batterers experienced severe depressive symptoms and one research participant had committed suicide. In response to learning of the suicide, Corvo and Johnson (2001) informed one agent at the Ohio Domestic Violence Network who responded with "I'm surprised that occurred. I didn't think that they ('batterers') could have those kind of feelings" (pp. 227)

Low Self-Esteem

Research on men attending court-mandated batterer intervention programs reveals a strong correlation between intimate partner violence and low self-esteem. For instance, Hale et al. (1988) administered the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) to 67 male batterers and found that reports of low self-esteem were exceptionally common. Research by Gondolf and Hanneken (1987) on men attending one court-mandated batterer

intervention program found similar results. The twelve men that Gondolf and Hanneken (1987) interviewed reported experiencing low self-esteem following incidences of intimate partner violence suggested that their low self-esteem was related to feelings of "failed machoism", not having a complete sense of the self, and feeling emotionally stunted.

Although self-esteem was not formally measured in the current project, interview data revealed that several research participants struggled with feelings of low self-esteem. According to Jenkins (1989), men who use violence in their intimate relationships often experience a profound sense of shame and have little respect for themselves. Jenkins' (1989) arguments can be found in several participants throughout this research. Marcus, for instance, felt that his current intimate partner was the "best that he could do". Even though his partner's living conditions disgusted Marcus, he felt that he would not find somebody "better than her" because of who he was and what he had done to his previous partner. Similarly, Thom discussed at length how ashamed of himself he was and how he had lost his job and his family after his conviction and subsequent jail time. Thom described how he now lived with his "friendly neighborhood sex offenders" because those were the only people that he believed would accept him. Thom felt, as a convicted sex offender, that he was not worthy of living with anyone other than those who had also committed arguably heinous crimes. Although Thom had entered the batterer intervention program with low self-esteem, he discussed at length how his program facilitator had helped him overcome this.

> *…By helping me by building my self-esteem, like I'm somebody… I'm not a horrible person. I did some horrible things, yes that's true, but I'm not a horrible person*

Augusta-Scott and Dankwort (2002) found similar results regarding shame and self-esteem. According to Augusta-Scott and Dankwork (2002), participants often noted feeling ashamed over their use of intimate partner violence. While some program facilitators may interpret accounts of shame as being an attempt to avoid taking responsibility and accountability, Augusta-Scott and Dankwort (2002) argue that these feelings are actually beneficial to the rehabilitation of offenders because feelings of shame can serve as a positive motivating force of change for offenders.

Interviews with program facilitators provided insight on the low self-esteem and feelings of shame that offenders reported experiencing. According to one program facilitator, acknowledging experiences of low self-esteem and shame is an important stepping-stone in an offender's rehabilitation. This program facilitator explained that

> *…A lot of guys come in, umm, with experiences of shame and guilt and we'll unpack that, we'll explore that and our approach here at {program} is that we, while shame and guilt are uncomfortable experiences, we help the guys to understand "well what does that say about you that you are having the experience of shame or guilt?", right. And they come to realize that shame can actually be an ally rather versus an enemy. So we look at negative and positive ways of, umm, reacting to shame and we'll build a list with them. What might we do if we are experiencing shame? Well, we might turn to drugs or alcohol, the weight of that experience is so powerful. What are the positive ways that we can relate to shame? Seeing that, it tells us that we know right from wrong, that I am experiencing shame because of something that I did versus something that I am, it's about not labeling the guys. And then just helping them to see shame as kinda good news*

According to Leary, Schreindorfer, and Haupt (1995) low self-esteem is one of the strongest predictors of emotional and behavioral problems in men. Leary et al. (1995) argue that individuals with low self-esteem tend "…to be more anxious, depressed, lonely, jealous, shy, and generally unhappy" which results in behavioral problems, including intimate partner violence (pp. 297). Murphy, Meyer, and Leary (1994) found similar results in their study comparing men who had physically assaulted their female partners with men in discordant nonviolent relationships and happily married nonviolent men. According to Murphy et al. (1994), men who are physically abusive in their intimate relationships report significantly low levels of self-esteem. In addition, men who are physically abusive also report high levels of 'perceived personal inadequacy' (Murphy et al., 1994)

Social Marginalization

Throughout my interviews it became abundantly clear that the men under study were, in a sense, also victims. Augusta-Scott and Dankwort (2002) found that men in batterer intervention programs are often victims of oppression or victimization through various social status indicators including unemployment, low socioeconomic status, poverty, racism, and family-of-origin violence. Furthermore, many of these men experience witnessing and experiencing parental violence including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse as children that contributed to their alcohol and substance abuse later in life and created a trigger for their own intimate partner violence (Augusta-Scott & Dankwort, 2002; Buzawa & Buzawa, 2003).

Uggen, Manza, and Thompson (2006) indicate that due to the social marginalization that offenders experience they often face difficulties with reintegration into society. According to Uggen et al. (2006), moving convicted offenders from a stigmatized group marked as social outsiders to reintegration into civil society continues to be problematic in the twenty first century. Thom, for instance, discussed at length the difficulties he had experienced since being released from prison. According to Thom, he had been pulled over during a routine traffic stop by police. During this traffic stop, Thom was arrested and charged with violating his parole. Thom fought the charges and ultimately won, however the stigma of being a 'repeat offender' resulted in the loss of his job as well as several of his closest friends.

As suggested by Augusta-Scott and Dankwort (2002), it is important to note the complexities inherent in offender's experiences of marginalization and injustice. On one hand, program facilitators want to acknowledge rather than dismiss the injustices and prejudices often experienced by offenders. However, program facilitators do not want offenders to use experiences of injustice and marginalization to avoid taking personal responsibility for their use of intimate partner violence.

Shared Themes of Discussion

Throughout interviews participants were asked a variety of open-ended questions about their time at the two batterer intervention programs. Asking open-ended questions allowed participants to speak freely and openly about their experiences at the program and encouraged participants to

contextual and provide examples. Participants discussed at length several key experiences including feeling that the programs were a safe place to talk, learning strategies such as defining abuse and how to diffuse potentially volatile situations, learning to say "no" to their intimate partners, accepting responsibility and accountability for their actions, as well as not wanting to be at the program.

A Safe Place to Talk

The most common theme throughout interviews was the emotional safety that the programs provided. All participants noted that they felt safe discussing the most intimate details of their lives with the program facilitators at both programs. For instance, several participants noted that the topics that they discussed with their program facilitators were too private to discuss with their intimate partners or that they felt that they could not discuss things with their intimate partners because they would not understand. Furthermore, nearly all participants noted that they enjoyed coming to the program because it provided them with an outlet. For instance, participants noted during sessions that they enjoyed being able to vent about their day and what had been bothering them. Chris, for instance, described how "nice" his counselor was and that he felt that she was truly there to help him while not judging him. In comparison, Andrew, while being the most evasive participant, admitted that

> *Coming in here and stuff just really mellows me out. Just makes me look at different things and talk about the things and I get to vent. I always get to vent*

Similarly, all of the participants noted that the programs were a safe space to tell their story. For participants, telling their stories about experiencing abuse firsthand seemed to provide a form of therapy in itself. Marcus outlined how he had been sexually abused as an adolescent by a female family member. That family member was later found not guilty by the criminal justice system. For Marcus, having someone legitimize his experience proved to be an invaluable asset in changing his current relationships. Thom also outlined how having someone legitimize his experiences with abuse and violence proved to be an effective tool in his own healing process. According to Thom,

> *When you get to a certain point in your life you figure you're such… you're uh so unworthy and you're so bad and you meet somebody like {program facilitator} that looks at you like wow you're a great guy, you're a good guy, you're a good person, right, so that's one of the biggest things about people who commit any type of offence in my thinking, this, they're not feeling all that good about themselves, I mean I think that it's installed in them if they think that they are a good person, that they can do good things, that they will*

Participants also outlined how beneficial receiving feedback from their counselors was. For instance, Peter described how his counselor had been teaching him strategies for coping with his mentally ill teenage daughter. Receiving feedback on such situations provided Peter with the opportunity to reflect on how he could react differently with his daughter and how to keep similar situations from becoming violent in the future. According to Peter,

> *There are always that feedback back and forth and she, yup, always gives me the chance to uhh 'what do you think you should have done?' 'What do*

> *you think would have been the best outcome?' 'Would you have liked that outcome?' 'Would you...'… she's asked me some pretty straight up questions and I've actually answered them shamefully but honestly*

In his own words, Peter described how having someone acknowledge his experiences has changed his life

> *The only reason I'm here is because of these guys*

Defining Abuse

All participants in the current project reflected on how learning the different forms of abuse was a crucial aspect of the program. For most participants, learning that name-calling and withholding financial means constituted abuse was shocking. As outlined by Canter (2014), intimate partner violence is defined as any threatening behavior, violence or abuse including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional, between individuals who are, or have been, in an intimate relationships or are family members. Most participants noted that prior to their participation in the program they thought intimate partner violence was a purely physical act (i.e. hitting and punching). For instance, Grant discussed how he had recently broken his partner's eyeglasses during a heated conversation. According to Grant, he did not know that breaking his partner's eyeglasses constituted intimate partner violence until his program facilitator outlined the various forms of intimate partner violence. Similarly, Peter confided that he once he learned the different forms of abuse that he was shocked

> *…Informed me three months ago that that's a form of abuse and I was blown away, I almost hit the floor because I never thought of myself as an abusive person…so the word 'abusive' kinda really sunk an arrow into my*

> *heart and I've really had to look at the word and what it actually means and stuff so it was kinda, kinda a big turning spot in my relationship I guess even though I did it a little too late but I did*

Interviews with program facilitators highlighted the importance of defining abuse throughout program sessions. According to program facilitators, many men come into the program denying that they are perpetrators. However, once they learn that abuse is not only physical they begin to understand that their behavior was in fact abusive and they begin to take responsibility for their actions.

Strategies

Participants noted that they learned a variety of strategies to help them engage in healthy, nonviolent intimate relationships. Most commonly, participants noted strategies that would help them de-escalate and defuse contentious situations such as breathing techniques and getting fresh air. For instance, Peter discussed how his program facilitator provided him with techniques to help him de-escalate potentially violent situations in his vehicle. Peter outlined how his program facilitator had advised him to pull his vehicle over, get out and walk somewhere where he could take calming breathes before returning to the vehicle. In practice, Peter admitted he found this strategy to be incredibly beneficial and that he had used it multiple times in the recent past.

> *… I would have never been able to do that without this program. Like this is a good place for these guys, because when that's happening I'm thinking of {Program Facilitator} and I'm thinking of all the good things that they are telling me, 'that's good, Peter, you held on to your temper. You didn't*

> *blow'. So all these things are going through my head that I would have honestly never have learnt anywhere else that I know of…*

Learning to evaluate escalating situations was particularly important for Thom. Thom, who can be described as a client who completed one batterer intervention program, emphasized how important his newfound ability to evaluate situations was

> *But the thing is, you know, {program facilitator} kinda helped me to evaluate things on my own. He gave me the ability to look at things from different angles… So {program facilitator} started giving me, he helped me get the, develop the ability to look at things from different points of view or different angles or different sides and just look at yourself and whatever the problem is like a person*

These findings are similar to Scott and Wolfe's (2000) research. Based on interviews with nine men attending one court-mandated batterer intervention program, Scott and Wolfe (2000) found that de-escalating and defusing contentious situations to be an important strategy for batterers.

Learning to Say 'No'

Learning to say 'no' to others was also a common theme throughout interviews. Several participants noted that in the past they had experienced difficulty in saying no to their intimate partners and that they would harbor resentment that ultimately resulted in violent outbursts. Marcus discussed how he had never been able to say 'no' to his ex-wife and that once he learned that it was okay to say 'no', he felt empowered for the first time in his life. Marcus explain how much better he felt about himself when he learned to say 'no' with the following quote

> …Umm just cause the woman wants to go to bingo, doesn't mean that you have to pay for that, that's your money. Learn to say no. I was never able to say no because I was always such a nice guy. So I said no one day and she freaked out, this was another girl not, so I went and bought myself a nice dress shirt and a tie… If I didn't buy the tie I would have had enough to send her to bingo… so I said you know what, I'm going to buy a tie. I put myself first for once and…it was a nice feeling

Similarly, John discussed how he had spent his entire life doing things for other people, never putting himself first. According to John, his program facilitator encouraged him to start saying 'no' to the individuals in his life who were taking advantage of his generosity. John described to me how empowering this felt and that he felt that by learning to say 'no' he had greatly increased his self-esteem. For instance, John provided me with the following example of how learning to say no 'no' changed his life

> *…I'll do whatever for you, right, I'll put away whatever I was going to do for myself and go help you. Which isn't a problem I find if I haven't got something else to do, but sometimes I push away some things that I thought were important to go help you and she's told me that I need to be a little assertive and say no to these people and do what I need to do for me first and then help them out, you know what I mean, that kind of structure. And that's pretty specific, one of the things we talked about. So that's uh, I started to say no and she said can you take a week and say no to people and I said yeah and I did!*

Accepting Responsibility and Accountability

Both of the batterer intervention programs under study were based on the premise that offenders must accept responsibility and accountability for their actions in order to produce lasting change in their intimate relationships. As outlined by Waldman (1999), when men blame the system it impedes their ability to examine their responsibility in the incident and to be accountable.

Furthermore, Waldman (1999) suggests that by creating the opportunity for men to explore the incident and the issues surrounding the incident that they are more likely to be able to examine their own behavior as well as the roles that they played and ultimately to take responsibility for their use of violence. Tutty et al., (2011) as well as Scott and Wolfe (2000) echo this sentiment, arguing that men's ability to take responsibility for past behavior is a crucial aspect in their ability to make lasting changes in their intimate relationships.

For some participants, accepting and taking responsibility for their past actions was part of their own healing process, while others conceded that this was something that they continued to struggle with. John, for instance, described how he had instantly regretted the incident that led to his arrest and conviction and appeared to be eager to fix his relationship with his estranged partner while also working on his anger problems.

> *And that just went on to an incident that shouldn't have happened and it happened so I took responsibility for it and… here I am, I'm happy to have been through the program and they ground me up and made hamburger out of me and now they've made me into nice patties*

Andrew, in comparison, appeared to be bitter about his criminal conviction and unwilling to accept that what he had done was wrong. Andrew was the only participant that suggested that he would not take responsibility for his actions or change his use of violence in his intimate relationships. For instance, Andrew discussed at length how he was unhappy to be at the program and how he felt that because he had pled guilty to his criminal charges that he should have not been required to attend the batterer

intervention program after being released from prison. When asked if there were any benefits to coming to the program, Andrew replied " I don't look forward to coming here. It's like a kid going to day care…".

As noted by Tuty et al., (2011) participant's commitment to the program and their willingness to take accountability and responsibility is an essential aspect in their ability to change their use of violent behavior. Throughout their evaluation of one batterer intervention program in Alberta, Tutty et al. (2011) found that the men who got the most out of the batterer intervention program were those "…who were able to shift their thinking from viewing the group as a punishment to viewing it as something that could enhance their personal lives" (Tutty et al., 2011. pp. 56). Andrew argued that he did not need to be at the program because the incident that resulted in his participation at the program took place over four years previously. The long wait-list times are explored in further detail below.

These findings are similar to Gondolf's (1996) research. In his evaluation of four court-mandated batterer intervention programs, Gondolf (1996) found that only 40 percent of participants acknowledged engaging in recent acts of intimate partner violence and less than one fifth of participants acknowledged using severe acts of intimate partner violence.

Throughout the interviews I noted that most participants initially provided elaborate justifications for their violent behavior. Mike, for instance, in addition to being charged with assault against his former intimate partner as well as for armed breaking and entering, hostage taking, possession of an

illegal substance, and an array of other charges, initially justified his behavior by arguing that he *needed* to resort to violence because he wanted to see his children. However, as the interview progressed and Mike and I developed an open, comfortable dialogue, Mike disclosed the amount of guilt he felt over his use of violence as well as the long term negative effects that it had had on him emotionally. By the end of the interview, it appeared that Mike truly had taken responsibility and accountability for his actions. For instance, Mike disclosed to me that he had recently begun writing in a journal to better understand himself and take responsibility for his actions. According to Mike,

> *…I started doing a lot of deep working on myself {in prison}, reflective writing and ummm so I really dug deeper this time so, and, I did an autobiography sorta that was connecting my past behaviors, or past history, umm to you know my current behaviors and my current behaviors throughout my life, so I was, yeah it helped my identify a lot of things I didn't recognize about how problematic my actions were…*

Tutty et al., (2011) are a valuable source of information for understanding why men continue to justify their use of violence in past intimate incidents. Tutty et al. (2011) argue that even when men complete court-mandated batterer intervention programs they still exhibit a willingness to blame their partners and provide elaborate justifications or excuses to describe the incidents that led to their arrest. In addition, many men continue to mutualize and minimize their own abusive behavior (Tutty et al., 2011). Tutty et al. (2011) suggest that this is, in fact, not surprising because the men have been required to repeat their narratives numerous times during the criminal justice process and that this story telling has become routine.

Program Structure: The Positive & The Negative

Throughout interviews, participants were asked to speak about which aspects of the program that they found to be the most beneficial and which they found to be the least helpful. Nearly unanimously, participants found the use of the whiteboard to be the most beneficial aspect of the program. Participants also suggested that they found the length of appointment times to be beneficial as they presented participants with an adequate amount of time each session. In contrast, participants noted that the size of the waiting room, the use of interns, and the program fee's to be undesirable aspects of the program.

The Positive

The Whiteboard

The use of a large whiteboard is a unique feature of narrative therapy and was used at both batterer intervention programs where my research took place. As outlined by Augusta-Scott (2003), by putting the problem or the ideas outside of the men, the program facilitator is able to lead the conversation to the ideas *rather than* the client. This externalizing process, according to Augusta-Scott (2003), provides the program facilitator with the opportunity to explore and examine the client's ideas and behavior in a collaborative manner rather than directly opposing them and placing blame on the client (Augusta-Scott, 2003). Some of the ideas that are explored on the whiteboard include blaming the victim for ones abusive behavior, justifications for abuse, and excuses.

All but one participant found the whiteboard to be a beneficial tool. For Peter, the whiteboard was beneficial because it allowed him to visualize situations and see where he escalated to violence. Furthermore, Peter noted that seeing his violence on the whiteboard was a crucial factor in his ability to take responsibility for his actions. In Peter's words, the whiteboard provided him with the opportunity to see where he had gone wrong

> *Yeah I can see where I've done wrong and then say 'well do you think this may have something to do with this' and that, that's good, you can see…*

Similarly, Andrew found the whiteboard to be beneficial because it was one way of keeping his thoughts organized. According to Andrew,

> *It's easy to go back to when you forget what was just done… I have a very ummm… I don't focus well at all so I'm always like 'what just happened?' I don't remember things very well. I've got a little ADD or something going on, so it helps me*

In comparison, Marcus found the whiteboard to be a distraction and he preferred to talk with his program facilitator without the use of the whiteboard. When asked if he found the whiteboard at all helpful Marcus replied

> *Nah, I'd rather just hear it… Seeing it written down isn't that helpful for me. Yeah… Yeah I prefer just hearing it*

Appointment Lengths & Times

Participants were asked about the length of appointment times and the frequency in which they attended the program. While all appointments were one hour in length, the frequency in which clients attended the program was diverse. While some participants attended on a regular bi-weekly basis, others confided that they often skipped or rescheduled their appointments, resulting in inconsistent treatment. Andrew, for instance, confided in me that

he would often scheme excuses to not have to attend his scheduled sessions. When asked about his excuses and justifications for not attending his sessions, Andrew informed me that,

> *Ummm usually there very valid excuses, I could have made it but it's like, one time it was storming and I was in Bass River and I was like 'I can't come because it's a snow storm'. I technically could have, I got studded tires on my car, I just reallllly… it was a good excuse at the time…*

The lack of a concrete schedule for participants appeared, in part, to be the result of poor follow-up with participants by program facilitators. This is discussed in length below.

All participants found the one-hour appointment time to be reasonable and easy to accommodate into their daily schedule. The one participant who had difficulty with adjusting to the available appointment times was John. For John, having a full-time job that required him to be in an office from 8am-5pm, scheduling appointment times was problematic. John confessed that he would lie to his employer when he went to his appointments so that he would not have to disclose why he was attending a batterer's intervention programs. For the remaining participants, most of whom were unemployed, attending sessions was not problematic and provided them with a routine.

One participant, Mike noted that the programs hours were problematic because they did not provide evening assistance to individuals needing immediate assistance from their program facilitators. Mike informed me that the program was great but that

> *…You can't always get somebody afterhours. This stuff is great through the week but if you come into a crisis at night or on the weekend, well, you're shit out of luck*

Although after-hours assistance was not directly examined in this project, it does warrant attention in future research.

It is important to note that many of the participants engaged in a lengthy commute in order to attend program sessions. It was not uncommon for participants to inform me that they lived 45 minutes to 1 hour away. Peter discussed how the distance that he travelled to attend his sessions encouraged him to get the most out of each session. As noted by Peter

> *…For me it's distance. Like I travel 45 minutes to get here so it's an hour and a half of travelling so I… I don't want to be in here all day but I actually do want to try to, if I'm going to be here I'm gonna try to, I'd like to try to get my point and, not my point, but learn as much as I can while I'm here. I would hate to have to come in for 15 minute sessions and try…. It's not going to work. I think the hour thing is good*

For those who did not have a driver's license this was especially problematic. These participants either relied on friends and family to provide transportation to and from their sessions or they drove illegally.

The Negative

The Size of the Waiting Room

The most disliked aspect of both batterer intervention programs was the size of the waiting rooms. The waiting rooms in Location A and Location B were both located beside the front desk and entrance doors. Participants

noted that they often ran into other clients, some of whom they were familiar with from other programs that they both attended. For instance, several participants noted that they would run into people from AA while in the waiting room. Participants described running in to other clients as "awkward" and "uncomfortable". For instance, John discussed how he would often sit in an uncomfortable silence in the waiting room with other individuals he knew from his AA meetings

> *…There was a lady there that goes to the same spot and she's still got issues …but the three of us were there and we go to the same meeting for our addiction purposes. Well we could have had our own meeting, you know what I mean, I thought oh you come here, see ya when we go down there, we don't talk about where we seen each other, it's a confidentiality thing…*

Similarly, Marcus discussed how the small waiting room also made him feel uncomfortable. Marcus described this as follows

> *Umm I think they should have a little more space out there for people to sit. One day, it doesn't happen too often, there are four chairs for four people, and you kinda don't want everyone knowing that you are here and there's people coming out of the sessions. It's like oh hey. I think there should be 15 minutes between each session, it gives more time for people to leave and to arrive*

The Use of Interns

When asked if they liked their program facilitators, nearly all participants stated that they were happy with whom they had been assigned. However, those participants who had been assigned to an intern, a Master's student who was completing on-site training, participants were hesitant and

disappointed that they were not being seen by someone who they perceived as being fully qualified. For instance, John discussed at length his anger in learning that his program facilitator was a student. In John's words he felt like he was "…*being railroaded coming to a person who was still in school*". However, John explained that after several sessions he came to respect his program facilitator and that in the end "…*it all turned out really good*".

Program Fees

Fees proved to be a contentious subject matter throughout interviews. According to the program facilitators, program fees are based on a sliding scale—the higher your income the more you are expected to pay per appointment. If you are not employed or are unable to pay, the sessions are free. The program fees were posted at Location B and were titled "Payment Schedule"

Family Income per year	**Fee per session**
Above 150,000	150.00
100,000-150,000	100.00
70,000-100,000	85.00
50,000-70,000	75.00
30,000-50,000	65.00
20,000-30,000	45.00
Under 20,000	10.00

One program facilitator described the fee structure as follows

> *…so we do a fee structure that is basically a sliding scale, so we take into account the person's work status— are they working full time, part time or*

> *not at all, umm and then if they have children, so. So the fees for group, to give you a range, there's a few people that are not paying anything and then I think in the current group I'm running there's a guy paying $50 a session. And that's kept between us and each individual*

John, a full-time government employee, paid the most per session—$50. Although the program fees were covered under his employer's insurance company, John chose not to inform his employer of his criminal charges and subsequent participation at the program and thus paid out of pocket. In comparison, Chris and Andrew also paid—$10 and $15 respectfully. The remaining five participants were not paying for their sessions.

Table 2: Participant's Financial Contribution to Location A and Location B

Paying	Not Paying
○ Andrew $10/session	○ Marcus
○ John $50/session	○ Peter
○ Chris $15/session	○ Grant
	○ Mike
	○ Thom

Program Facilitators

Interviews with two program facilitators provided invaluable insight into the inner workings of each program. Previous research on batterer intervention programs by Silvergleid and Mankowski (2006) suggests that program facilitators' narratives provide comprehensive and valid information on how batterer intervention programs affect offenders. For instance, Silvergleid and Mankowski (2006) argue that the accounts of male offenders attending court-mandated batterer intervention program may be "…based on

retrospective, potentially self-serving constructions…" (pp.157). Furthermore, Silvergleid and Mankowski's (2006) research reveals that

> …Perpetrators reports are undoubtedly shaped, in part, by their own motivation to either complete an intervention program or avoid further sanctions. Furthermore, people in treatment rarely have a complete and accurate understanding of their own change process. For these reasons, including testimony from additional sources (e.g. group facilitators, victims, and probation officers) creates a more comprehensive and potentially valid picture…(pp.142).

Overall, both program facilitators suggested that the programs are greatly beneficial for men as they provide offenders with the appropriate tools for de-escalating potentially violent situations. In addition, both program facilitators discussed how they brought awareness to offenders on the following topics: defining abuse, the warning signs of violence, triggers that stimulate violence, gender roles and expectations, and how to respect ones own values.

While both program facilitators discussed how beneficial the programs were, perhaps even at times overemphasizing the benefits, there were several key problems that were highlighted during interviews. First, the program facilitators are not responsible for enforcing the routine attendance of clients at the programs. As outlined by one program facilitator, if a client is court-mandated to the program and stops attending sessions after a short period of time, they are not repeatedly contacted by the program or forced to attend sessions. This program facilitator explained that they have large caseloads and that there is very little time available for tracking down truant clients. Furthermore, the program facilitator explained that it was the

responsibility of assigned parole officers to ensure that offenders were following the terms of their sentence. Here there appeared to be a break-down in communication between program facilitators and parole officers. Although program facilitators suggested that it was not routine for clients to fail to attend sessions, during my time at each location I noted on several occasions that clients failed to appear for their scheduled appointments. One potential downfall, therefore, is that if program facilitators do not enforce attendance how do the programs motivate and encourage clients to attend on their own?

Augusta-Scott and Dankwort (2002) acknowledge that encouraging and motivating offenders to willingly attend sessions and engage in the process of change is a difficult task. According to Augusta-Scott and Dankwort (2002), the difficulties inherent in this task can lead to pessimism over whether batterer intervention programs can elicit change in men at all. For instance, the authors point to researchers such as Miedema (1996) as well as Pence and Paymar (1993) who argue that there is no illusion that all male offenders who are court-mandated to a batterer intervention program will be willing to change their use of violence in their intimate relationships. According to Miedema (1996), intimate partner violence offenders *benefit* from using violence and other forms of patriarchy in their intimate relationships. Similarly, Pence and Paymar (1993) argue that most men are not voluntarily going to give up their power, something they benefit so greatly from.

Second, program facilitators suggested that the programs do not end men's use of violence in their intimate relationships. Rather, according to one program facilitator, the programs have seen men engage in less frequent and less severe acts of intimate partner violence. This finding supports previous research findings that argue that court-mandated batterer intervention programs do not significantly reduce rates of recidivism (Babcock et al., 2004; Feder & Forde, 2000; Dunford, 2000). Babcock et al. (2004) conducted an evaluation on the findings of 22 studies evaluating treatment efficacy for men attending batterer intervention programs and their results indicate that, overall, the programs under study had a minimal effect on reducing rates of recidivism. While it is discouraging that offenders continue to engage in intimate partner violence, it is important to note that any amount of small change is positive.

Lastly, the amount of provincial and federal funding that both programs received severely limited their abilities to provide adequate rehabilitation to offenders. After all fixed costs were paid (i.e. salaries, rent), program facilitators outlined the extremely small budgets with which they were left to provide services. Although each program appeared to be doing their best, additional funding would greatly aid the programs' abilities to operate effectively and efficiently. For instance, several participants noted the long wait-list time for the programs. Due to the small operating budget of each program, a very small number of staff is available for a large number of clients ultimately resulting in long waits to enter a program. As mentioned above,

several participants found this problematic because they were attending intervention sessions years after the original incident. One program facilitator discussed the long wait times and suggested that additional funding to shorten the wait times would greatly aid in the rehabilitation process. According to this program facilitator:

> *…We're aware that the closer, or the more quickly that we can get to somebody that the less amount of time between an incident and when someone begins to receive treatment that the outcomes are better, right. You know, guys who are coming in for whatever reason, like the incident happened two years ago, it's a different experience, working with those people than working with somebody where the incident happened in May and then they were counseling in June. It's just a lot more immediate and the work, in my experience, the work can proceed a lot more quickly because it's fresh and it's right there and uhh yeah. So additional resources would help us in terms of just reducing our wait list and not having people waiting to see a counselor.*

As noted by Gondolf (2001), batterer intervention programs often provide services to individuals who cannot afford to pay for the services. Based on Gondolf's (2001) research, client's payments only cover approximately half of the cost of operating a batterer intervention program. Thus, additional funding is greatly needed in order to increase caseload efficiency (i.e. decreasing wait-list times) and to further strengthen coordinated community responses to intimate partner violence. It is important to note here that I am not suggesting that funding be averted from battered women's shelters or resources.

Institutional Culture

Lastly, the differences in institutional culture between Location A and Location B were an unexpected finding in this project. While Location A was in

a professional office space with bleak walls and a stiff atmosphere, Location B was a significantly more relaxed and comfortable space. Mismatched furniture and brightly painted walls presented a friendly and inviting environment. Interviews with program facilitators at Location A and Location B directly reflected the institutional differences. During an interview with one program facilitator at Location A, the program facilitator arrived at the interview prepared with notes and a clear, explicit agenda to promote. In comparison, the program facilitator at Location B was very relaxed and willing to engage in a free flowing conversation about the batterer intervention program. This interview was very candid and honest, with the program facilitator not directing the interview or seemingly promoting an agenda.

Peterson & Spencer (1990) and Horigan (2008) provide insight on the differences in institutional culture between the two batterer intervention programs under study. Peterson & Spencer (1990) define institutional culture as "…the deeply embedded patterns of organizational behavior and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that members have about their organization or its work" (pp. 142). Both Peterson & Spencer (1990) as well as Horigan (2008) suggest that it is reasonable to assume that multiple cultures operate within any institution or organization. According to Horigan (2008), institutional differences can best be explained by differing perspectives of staff as well as the differences in staff management. In the current project, there were clear differences between staff management. While staff at Location A appeared to operate under strict rules, the staff at Location B were all very

casual, friendly and open. For instance, one program facilitator at Location B described the difficulties in working at the program and how emotionally draining the job had become. While Horigan (2008) argues that different institutional cultures can contribute to situated learning, this is not something that was found in the present study.

Conclusion

Interviews with eight men court-mandated to one of two batterer intervention programs and two program facilitators in Nova Scotia produced invaluable insight into how domestically abusive men perceive their own rehabilitation process. While the vast majority of men viewed the services that they received at the batterer intervention programs to be useful, the program inevitably fails those who are unwilling to accept responsibility and accountability and ultimately change their use of violence in their intimate relationships. It is this small group of men that causes concern over the efficacy of batterer intervention programs. If a man is unwilling to change his behavior how does the system protect his current and future victims?

Ultimately, the most beneficial aspect of the two batterer intervention programs under study was their ability to provide a safe space for clients to discuss intimate and uncomfortable details of their life. All eight participants noted that they felt like they could show emotion at the programs, something that they did not feel comfortable showing with their intimate partners. In addition to providing a safe space to talk, the programs also provided the

participants with valuable tools for deescalating potentially violence situations.

Chapter 5: Methodological Limitations of the Current Project

For the purpose of the current project, qualitative fieldwork served as an excellent method for obtaining in-depth descriptions and narratives. Specifically, conducting interviews provided the opportunity to engage participants in a conversation, something that would have not been possible with quantitative methods. However, while there are several benefits to conducting qualitative research there are inherent difficulties that are faced when conducting person-centered research. First, when interviewing a group of individuals with extensive criminal histories under the Canadian Criminal Code the researcher must be aware of the "deviant" and/or "stigmatized" characteristics that this sample of research participants may cast. Russell et al., (2002) suggest that deviant and/or stigmatized sample groups have the potential to post particular problems relating to access and relationship.

As suggested by Russell et al., (2002) the social background of the researcher (young, middle class, university educated) may exacerbate the difficulties that this sample of participants experience socially. In their study with impoverished middle–aged men, Denise Touchard and Maree Porter (2002) mitigated these differences by wearing lose fitting casual clothes and going without make-up or jewelry to field site locations. This appearance allowed Touchard and Porter (2002) to better blend into their field setting while simultaneously de-sexualizing them as young women. I employed Touchard and Porter's (2002) strategies to blend into the setting and to

mitigate any social differences between myself and my research participants and ultimately encountered no problems relating to social differences.

The population sample used for the current project was limited by the lack of random assignment. By relying on program facilitators to approach individuals that they thought would be willing to participate, a large group of individuals were effectively excluded. Similarly, by relying on program facilitators to essentially handpick participants, it is possible that I was exposed to a select group of individuals who had positive experiences and not exposed to individuals who had a negative experience at the program. Eckhardt et al. (2006) suggests that by excluding individuals who program facilitator's deemed inappropriate, researchers effectively screen out individuals who struggle to complete the program, which is an equally important area of research. It is of value to note that this methodological flaw is a common characteristic of qualitative evaluations of court-mandated batterer intervention programs and can be found in several other studies (Eckhardt et al., 2006).

Specific geographical, economic, and cultural characteristics of the Nova Scotia region make this case study illustrative of the experiences of Nova Scotia male intimate partner violence offenders. This case study is not illustrative or representative of male intimate partner violence offenders in other Canadian regions. In addition, this case study is not representative of the experiences of male offenders court-mandated to similar rehabilitative programs for other criminal convictions in Nova Scotia.

Lastly, while researchers seek to be objective, research can never be completely value-free or objective (Griffin & Phoenix, 1994). With that said, while I attempted to be as objective as possible throughout interviews and the writing processes, my own values, opinions, and beliefs inevitability shaped the research process.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Research

While the purpose of the current project was to elicit the narratives of men court-mandated to one of two batterer intervention programs, the open, candid, and personal dialogue that emerged came as a surprise to myself. Participants were not asked about the incident(s) that had led to their participation at the program, yet all volunteered their personal histories and discussed at length the circumstances that led to their current predicament. While I suspected some did this as one means of justifying their actions, others appeared genuine and sincere in a manner that I had not anticipated. Marcus, for instance, discussed at length his struggles with alcohol and substance abuse and his fears about his current relationships. Similarly, Peter began tearing up as he discussed how helpless he felt in his current predicament.

Likewise, I was struck by how *nice* participants were. Considering seven out of the eight participants had lengthy criminal backgrounds, the participants in this project were courteous and polite. For instance, Mike visited the batterer intervention program several hours before his scheduled interview to inform the program that he would be five minutes late for his interview. Furthermore, several participants expressed an interest in my research as a whole, asking questions after our interview about what it was like to be in University and what the research process was like. Based on my positive experience with these batterers, I suggest that future research examine the vilification of batterers. As suggested by Corvo and Johnson (2001), the legitimization, dismissive, and degrading categorization of intimate

partner violence offenders may in fact be negatively impacting research, policy development and implementation as well as interventions in the field of intimate partner violence.

In conclusion, I argue that in order to produce lasting change in male offenders it is integral that we move the source of research from female victims to male perpetrators. Past research has focused heavily on victims of intimate partner violence with attention focused on victim safety and well being and overlooking batterer treatment altogether. The irony here is that in order to produce lasting change, that is, to cease incidences of intimate partner violence, we need to examine the primary issue—the treatment that offenders receive. Moreover, this project shows that by exploring the experiences of offenders we are provided with the opportunity to learn what tools are the most effective and which are ineffective in stopping violence from occurring. It is my hope that this small case study will lay the foundation for more extensive research on offender's experiences of court-mandated batterer intervention programs and how their initiatives, practices, and techniques influence offender's willingness to change. By examining offender's experiences of court-mandated batterer intervention programs I suggest that a discussion will arise outlining the most effective practices and policies for batterer intervention programs and their clients.

Findings from this project provide future researchers with a small case study for understanding how male offenders view their experiences with court-mandated batterer intervention programs in Nova Scotia. Specifically,

this case study illustrates how court-mandated batterer intervention programs provide men with a safe location for discussion and learning centered on their use of violence in their intimate relationships. As evidenced in the above findings, most men find batterer intervention programs to be beneficial. However, future research should focus on the individuals who fall through the cracks—that is, the men who choose not to accept responsibility for their actions and elicit lasting change in their intimate relationships. Future research examining male offenders who are reluctant to accept responsibility and accountability for their use of violence in their intimate relationships should focus on offenders use of minimization, externalizing blame for their behavior (including victim blaming), as well as denial.

Another important area for future research is the protection of children who are entangled in the complicated cycle of intimate partner violence. As argued by several researchers, children have become the most recent victims in the literature on intimate partner violence (Edleson, 1999; Elbow, 1982; Groves, Zukerman, Marans, & Cohen, 1993; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981). According to Edleson (1999), "these children have been called the 'silent', 'forgotten', and 'unintended' victims of adult-to-adult domestic violence" (pp. 839)

As noted earlier, all of the participants in this research project had children who had witnessed multiple incidences of intimate partner violence in their household. In some cases, the children had been removed from their homes and placed in temporary care of extended family members. As children,

many of the participants noted how they had witnessed and experienced intimate partner violence in their households and that as adults went on to engage in the exact same behavior that they had been exposed to as children. The clear link between childhood exposure to intimate partner violence and later behavioral problems is illustrated by Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt, and Kenny's 2003 examination of the literature on childhood exposure to intimate partner violence. Kitzmann et al. (2003) reviewed 118 studies on the psychosocial outcomes of children exposed to intimate partner violence. Results indicated that there is an undeniable association between exposure to intimate partner violence and later behavioral problems (Kitzmann et al., 2003). Similarly, The Transition House Association of Nova Scotia (THANS) (2003) provides important data indicating that children who are exposed to intimate partner violence and subsequently stay at one of THANS' (2003) shelters for abused women and children often reenter the system as adults. According to THANS (2003), shelters are now reporting that they are witnessing female children return to the shelters as abused women and that male children are entering the criminal justice system as perpetrators of intimate partner violence.

Therefore, the following question emerges: how do we keep children who have an ascribed status defined by low socioeconomics, alcohol abuse, and violence from engaging in the same troublesome behavior as adults? During interviews with program facilitators, both discussed how the programs were unable to offer services to children who were involved in intimate

partner violence but that in the future this was something that they would like to see the programs be able to offer. As explained by one program facilitator,

> *Oour service is basically 18 and up although it is sort of a ummm wish list item that we would in the future be able to work with children. Because again, acknowledging that cycle is there, that pattern is there, is there something that we can do early on to help the kids. That they then don't repeat that, not that it's a direct connection but it's definitely a factor. So if we can work with the kids, is there a way that we can prevent people from choosing to use abuse and violence*

Clearly, there is a link between childhood exposure to intimate partner violence and adult experiences of violence (Wolfe et al., 2003). It is my hope that this area will be further researched in the future.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions: Program Participants

Introductory Questions:

Hi! As the counselor's have already explained, I am interested in learning about your experiences here at _____(fill in intervention program). I would like to remind you that if at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable and would like to withdraw from the interview, please do not hesitate to let me know. Also, I would like to emphasize that this interview is and will remain *confidential*. No identifying personal features will be in my final thesis and you will be given a pseudonym. Do you have any questions? Would you like to begin?

Part 1:

This section is designed to give me a bit of background information on yourself and your time at _____ (fill in BIP)

- So, you are currently participating at _____ (fill in BIP). You are participating in group therapy sessions, correct?

- How many sessions have you attended thus far?

- Have you previously participated in an intervention program? If so, which program did you attend and for how long?

Part 2:
I am really interested in learning about your experiences with _____ (fill in BIP). Could you walk me through an average session? I would like it if you would begin with your arrival at the program.

- Upon initial arrival at _____ (fill in BIP) how are you greeted?
  → Is there a waiting room?

- Could you tell me about the atmosphere at _____ (fill in BIP)?Is it a friendly atmosphere? Is it a welcoming atmosphere?

- I would like it if you would please describe the room that the sessions are held in. For instance: Are the chairs put in a specific place?
  → Is there a pre-arranged seating arrangement?
  →What else is in the room?
  → How is the room decorated?
  → Is the room comfortable?

- Next, I would like you to describe how each session begins. Does each session start the same or differently?

- How many men are participating in your group sessions? Is this same number that started the program with you? Have any men dropped out? How many?

- Could you tell me about how each program session ends?

How long is each program session?
→ Is this enough time for you?
→ Would you like to have more (or less) time in each session?
→ How would you like to use the added time?

Part 3:

- What have you learned through attending sessions here at _____ (fill in BIP)

- What skills have you learned?
→ Can you integrate these skills in to your day-to-day life?
→ How have you been integrating these skills into your day-to-day life? Please give me an example.

- The counselor's have explained to me that at group sessions all participants are invited to tell their stories. What do you think of this concept?
→ In what ways is telling your personal story during group sessions beneficial?
→ Do you find telling your story to be therapeutic?
→ Are there any negative consequences to telling your story as a form of therapy? Could you give me an example?

Part 4:

- I would like to end this interview by asking you what you like and don't like about this program. Could you list three things about the program that you like and three things that you dislike?

- Lastly, if you could, what would you change about the program?

Part 5: Concluding Remarks

All done! I would like to thank you for your time. You have been a great help. If you would like a copy of my final thesis you can email me directly or you can contact _____ (fill in BIP) where I will be leaving copies.

APPENDIX B

Inerview Questions: Program Facilitators

Introductory Remarks:

I want to begin by thanking you again for making time to participate in this research project; your time and remarks are greatly appreciated. I would like to reiterate you will be given a pseudonym in my final thesis and everything you disclose is confidential.

Part 1: Introduction to Program Facilitator

I would like to begin by learning a bit about you and your role here at _____ (fill in blank for BIP).

How long have you been here?

What is your role in the program?

Were there any circumstances that led you to this career? If so, please explain.

Part 2: BIP Structure

So, I have spent a considerable amount of time in the past year reading about intervention programs and the services they offer but I would like it if you could tell me about this program and the services that you offer.

Could you explain the theoretical basis underlining this program?

Why these theoretical underpinnings?

How does an average session go? For instance, what's the average Wednesday afternoon group session like?

How many sessions are clients required to attend?

How long is each session?

How many individuals are in each session? (ie. # of men in each group)

What type of atmosphere do facilitators seek to achieve during group therapy sessions?

How do they achieve this atmosphere? OR, why is it difficult to achieve this atmosphere?

Part 3: Clients

Could you tell me about the men who attend this program?

What is the personality of the average male participant like?

What are clients attitudes typically like towards the program? Towards the program facilitators?

How do you think clients view the program?

In what ways are clients eager, or uneager, to participate during group sessions?

Part 4: Success and Failures

Failures:

In your opinion, in what ways does the program fail to rehabilitate clients?

What makes you feel this way?

How often do men attend the program more than once? Have they been court-mandated on more than one occasion?

What factors contribute to the program's inability to rehabilitate these men?

Successes:

Conversely, what factors contribute to men's success at the program?

What tools do you believe to be the most effective in this program?

Could you outline an instance in which you witnessed the program having a positive impact on a client's life?

Part 5: Changes

Given the opportunity, what would you change about this program? Please explain

In what ways do you view this program to be a positive and successful example of rehabilitative justice?

What are the most negative aspects of this program? In your opinion how can these be changed or altered to make them successful?

In what ways does governmental funding contribute to the programs offered here?

Lastly, do you think that the Nova Scotia government should continue to mandate intervention programs as a form of rehabilitative justice in cases of intimate partner violence? Please explain

Concluding Remarks:

Thank you again for your time, it has been greatly appreciated.

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM: PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Intimate Partner Violence in Nova Scotia: Uncovering the Personal Narratives of Men Attending Court-Mandated Intervention Programs

Researcher:
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Researcher's Supervisor:
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Research Services
Catherine Connors, Director of Research Ethics
(902) 494-1462
Catherine.Connors@dal.ca

Contact:

If you have questions at any time during or after this research, please feel free to contact the researcher, Dr. Liesl Gambold, or the Director of Dalhousie University's Office of Research Ethics at (902) 494-1462

Intimate Partner Violence in Nova Scotia: Uncovering the Personal Narratives of Men Attending Court-Mandated Intervention Programs

Introduction:
Hello, my name is Brittany and I am a Masters Candidate in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University. I am interesting in learning about your experiences at New Start or The Bridges Institute. I would like to invite you to participate in a one-hour long interview where I will ask you about the program you are participating in as well as what you like and do not like about the program. This research project requires the participation of ten men who are currently participating in program sessions at either New Start or The Bridges Institute. In addition, I will interview two program facilitators, one from New Start and one from The Bridges Institute. I would like to emphasize that this project is **not** affiliated with the Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

Benefits:
Participating in this project provides you with the opportunity to discuss your experiences with the intervention program in a safe and confidential environment. There are no direct benefits to participating in this research project. Specifically, you will *not* receive any benefits relating to the intervention program or to any criminal justice matters.

Voluntary Participation:
Participating in this project is voluntary. This means that you are under no obligation to participate if you do not wish to. Also, should you choose to participate, everything you say throughout the interview will be kept confidential. No features that could potentially identify you will appear in my final thesis.

Who Will Be Conducting The Research:
I, Brittany, am the only researcher in this project. I am currently in my second year of the Master of Arts program in Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University. Previous to this program I completed a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sociology and Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University.

Requirements for Participation:
Participation in this project requires that all participants be a client at either New Start or The Bridges Institute. All participants are required to have attended a minimum of one program session. In addition, participants in this research project are required to have been court-mandated to enrollment and participation at the intervention program. Lastly, all interviews will be tape recorded by myself. Recording interviews will allow me to engage more fully in the interview process by not requiring me to copy down everything that is said by hand.

What You Will Be Asked To Do:
Participation in this project requires a one-hour time commitment. I will ask you to speak to a variety of questions on your experiences at New Start or The Bridges Institute. All interviews will take place in a private room at the intervention program you are currently enrolled at. Once the interview is completed you are not required to participate in any follow-up interviews.

Research Location:
All interviews will take place at the office of the New Start program in Dartmouth and the office at The Bridges Institute in Truro.

Possible Risks and Discomforts:
This research project is designed to give me insight into your experiences at New Start or The Bridges Institute. Given the sensitive nature of these programs, you may feel uncomfortable at some point during the interview. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

Should you inform me of any ongoing criminal harm against children or an adult in need of care I am legally obligated to report these incidences to the proper authorities which I will immediately do.

Withdrawing from Research Project:
I would like to emphasize that participation in this project is purely *voluntary*. Participation in this project is not a requirement of your program at New Start or The Bridges Institute. In addition, you have the right to withdraw from the interview at any point in time. After the interview is completed the information you have provided cannot be withdrawn.

If you do not wish to answer any question(s) that is posed to you, you may state that you do not want to answer that question and I will continue with the next set of questions. You will not face any negative consequences for not answering questions or for withdrawing from the research project. If you would like a section of your interview to be omitted from my final thesis you can simply inform me immediately following the interview and it will not be included in my final thesis in any form nor will the section be transcribed.

If any questions are unclear to you I would be happy to provide you with clarification.

Confidentiality:
Protecting your confidentiality is an essential part of this project. I will provide all participants with a fake name in my final thesis. In addition, any and all distinguishing features that could identify you will be omitted from my final thesis. In addition, fake names will be used in my transcripts. Although I will

do my best to avoid this, other clients and program facilitators at New Start or The Bridges Institute may see you entering or exiting the interview room.

Storage of Data:
All data (including interview recordings, transcripts and written material) will be stored on my password-protected work computer. All physical copies of data will be stored in my home office in a locked filing cabinet that only I have access to. Only my research supervisor and myself will have access to the data produced in this project. I will retain all data from this project for a minimum of five years after which all data will be electronically and physically disposed of.

Follow-up:
You are not required to participate in any follow-up interviews. If you would like a copy of my final thesis you can e-mail me directly, contact my research supervisor or contact New Start or The Bridges Institute for an electronic copy of my final thesis.

Questions:
Do you have any questions? I'd be happy to discuss any questions you may have regarding participation in my project. Please do not hesitate to contact my research supervisor, Dr. Liesl Gambold if you would feel more comfortable. You can find Dr. Liesl Gambold's and well as my own contact information on the cover page of this form.

Consent:

By signing this form you are consenting to the following:
- A one-hour interview
- The audio recording of the interview
- You agree to be quoted and/or paraphrased

Date:
Participant Name:
Participant Signature:

Date:
Researchers Name: Brittany E. Parker
Researchers Signature:

<u>Immediately following the completion of interview:</u>

By signing this form you agree that you have completed the interview process and that you may be quoted and/or paraphrased in Brittany Parker's final thesis.

Date:
Participant Name:
Participant Signature:

Date:
Researchers Name: Brittany E. Parker
Researchers Signature:

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM: PROGRAM FACILITATORS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Intimate Partner Violence in Nova Scotia: Uncovering the Personal Narratives of Men Attending Court-Mandated Intervention Programs

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If you have questions at any time during or after this research, please feel free to contact the researcher, Dr. Liesl Gambold, or the Director of Dalhousie University's Office of Research Ethics at (902) 494-1462

Intimate Partner Violence in Nova Scotia: Uncovering the Personal Narratives of Men Attending Court-Mandated Intervention Programs

Introduction:
Hello, my name is Brittany and I am a Masters Candidate in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University. I am interesting in learning about your experiences at New Start or The Bridges Institute. I would like to invite you to participate in an one hour long interview where I will ask you about the program, how it runs and your experiences with program participants. Participating in this project provides you with the opportunity to discuss your experiences with the program in a safe and confidential environment. This research project requires the participation of ten participants currently participating in group therapy sessions at either New Start or The Bridges Institute. In addition, I will interview two program facilitators, one from New Start and one from The Bridges Institute.

I would like to emphasize that participating in this project is voluntary, meaning that you are under no obligation to participate if you do not wish to. Also, should you choose to participate, everything you say throughout the interview will be kept confidential.

Who Will Be Conducting The Research:
I, Brittany, am the only researcher in this project. I am currently in my second year of the Master of Arts in Social Anthropology program at Dalhousie University. Previous to this program I completed a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Sociology and Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University.

Requirements for Participation:
Participation in this project requires that you be a program facilitator at either New Start or The Bridges Institute.

What You Will Be Asked To Do:
Participation in this project requires a one-hour time commitment. I will ask you to speak to a variety of questions on your experiences at New Start or The Bridges Institute. All interviews will take place in a private room at the intervention program you are affiliated with. Interviews will be tape recorded in order to allow myself to fully engage in the interview process.

Research Location:
All interviews will take place at the office of the New Start program in Dartmouth and the office at The Bridges Institute in Truro.

Possible Risks and Discomforts:
This research project is designed to give me insight into your experiences at New Start or The Bridges Institute. Given the sensitive nature of these

programs, you may feel uncomfortable at some point during the interview. I will do my best to make you feel comfortable.

Possible Benefits:
Participation in this research project provides you with the opportunity to share your experiences with an eager researcher.

Voluntary Participation:
I would like to emphasize that participation in this project is purely *voluntary*. You have the right to withdraw from the interview at any point in time. After the interview is completed you are no longer able to withdraw from the project.

If you do not wish to answer any question(s) that is posed to you, you may state that you do not want to answer that question and I will continue with the next set of questions. There are absolutely no repercussions for not answering questions or for choosing to withdraw from the research project.

If any questions are unclear to you I would be happy to provide you with clarification.

Confidentiality:
Protecting your confidentiality is an essential part of this project. I will provide all participants with a pseudonym in my final thesis. Any and all distinguishing features that could identify you will be omitted from transcripts as well as my final thesis. In addition, pseudonyms will be used in my transcripts

Storage of Data:
All data (including interview recordings, transcripts and written material) will be stored on my password-protected computer. All physical copies of data will be stored in my home office in a locked filing cabinet that only I have access to. Only my research supervisor and myself will have access to the data produced in this project. I will retain all data from this project for five years after which all data will be electronically and physically disposed of.

Follow-up:
You are not required to participate in any follow-up interviews. I provide all program facilitators with an electronic copy of my final thesis.

Questions:
Do you have any questions? I'd be happy to discuss any questions you may have regarding participation in my project. Similarly, please do not hesitate to contact my research supervisor, Dr. Liesl Gambold. You can find Dr. Liesl Gambold's and well as my own contact information on the cover page of this form.

Consent:

By signing this form you are consenting to the following:

- An one-hour interview
- The audio recording of the interview
- You agree to be quoted and/or paraphrased

Participant Name:
Participant Signature:

Researchers Name: Brittany E. Parker
Researchers Signature:

Immediately following the completion of interview:

By signing this form you agree that you have completed the interview process and that you may be quoted and/or paraphrased in Brittany Parker's final thesis.

Date:
Participant Name:
Participant Signature:

Date:
Researchers Name: Brittany E. Parker
Researchers Signature:

APPENDIX E

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Truro, Nova Scotia B2N 1G6
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bridges@bridgesinstitute.org
www.bridgesinstitute.org

Date: February 3rd, 2014

Letter of Reference

I am writing this letter to recommend Ms. Brittany E. Parker who is currently seeking approval from the Dalhousie University Ethics Committee.

I have discussed with Ms. Parker at length her research project and see merit in her research objectives. I have agreed to work in partnership with Ms. Parker by facilitating the recruitment of research participants at The Bridges Institute. Moreover, I have agreed to facilitate interviews with research participants by providing a safe environment for the completion of all interviews.

I can clearly say that Ms. Parker is very committed to pursuing her graduate education and I strongly believe that she will complete this project in an ethically appropriate manner.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Tod Augusta-Scott

The Bridges Institute