FACTORS WHICH ENABLE WOMEN
TO LEAVE THEIR ABUSIVE PARTNERS

by

Ramona M. Barron

B.A. (With Distinction), University of Alberta, 1987

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS (EDUCATION)
in the Faculty
of
Education

© Ramona M. Barron 1991
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
April 1991

All rights reserved. This work may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without permission of the author.
APPROVAL

Name: Mona Maria Barron
Degree: Master of Arts (Education)
Title of Thesis: Factors Which Enable Women to Leave Their Abusive Partners
Examinining Committee:
Chair: W. John C. Walsh

Suzanne DeCastell
Senior Supervisor

Stephen J. Smith
Assistant Professor

Naida D. Hyde
Private Practice
Clinical Psychology
3940 West 23rd Avenue
Vancouver, B. C. V6S 1L2
External Examiner

Date Approved 15th April, 1991
PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis, project or extended essay (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

Factors Which Enable Women to Leave Their Abusive Partners

Author:

(signature)

Mona Maria Barron

(name)

APR 15, 1991

(date)
Abstract

This exploratory study investigated how women who have been abused by their intimate partners have succeeded in ending the abuse. Many factors have been cited in the literature as reasons for leaving and returning to an abusive partner. However, in order for service providers to effectively help women who wish to end the abuse, it is necessary for them to know which conditions are critical in enabling the women to leave and stay away. Thus, the purpose of this research was twofold. First, it was to identify factors which enable women to leave their abusive partners. Second, it was to determine whether these enabling factors differentiate between temporary and permanent leaving behavior.

The data for this study were obtained via triangulation of research methods designed to elicit in-depth information framed within the context of the women's lives. Six participants responded to open-ended questions in written questionnaire, and semi-structured individual and group interview formats.

The findings of this study reveal that a combination of four factors, namely, support, resources, relief from abuse and loss of hope is positively related to the women's ability to leave their abusive partners for good. It was found that if one or more of these factors were not in place, the women returned to their abusers. Emotional support to leave was necessary to override imposed traditional social ideology.
Access to resources was required in order for the women to live independently and in relative safety. A period of respite from the abuse provided an opportunity for the woman to gain confidence in her ability to succeed on her own. When the women gave up the hope that 'he will change', they could no longer reconcile the discrepancy between the prevalent social ideology and their individual realities. The factors of support, resources, relief from abuse and loss of hope were found to be individually necessary and jointly sufficient to enable permanent leaving.
To John, whose love made this work possible.
Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the members of my thesis committee; Dr. Suzanne deCastell for agreeing to oversee research on this challenging topic - her belief in my abilities inspired my progress; Dr. Stephen Smith who equally validated and challenged my beliefs and ideas; and Dr. Naida Hyde for her timely agreement to be the external examiner.

I wish to offer special thanks to Dr. Nand Kishor for his unwavering support and encouragement.

I would also like to thank Dr. Mike Manley Casimir for his enduring organizational efforts, and Margaret Williams for her help in meeting program deadlines.

I would especially like to thank Ted Kuntz, Director, Counselling Services, Share Counselling Center for providing invaluable information regarding participant recruitment, and for making the Center's interview facilities available to me.

I would also like to thank transition house counsellors: Devon, Rosemary, Dee, and Jan; Sue Wiggins, Co-coordinator, Wife Assault Intervention Program, Share Counselling Center, and Mona Jurczyk, Executive Director, Richmond Crisis Center, for their assistance in obtaining participants, for providing interview facilities and a front-line perspective. I want to thank my friend Janet for 'being there' for the duration.

I wish to thank the women who willingly told their stories, for their courage and compassion.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Stance</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determinants of Staying/Leaving</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect of Social Learning and Psychological</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalysts for Change</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending the Violence - Steps Taken</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research to be Done</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Method</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling Procedure</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vii
FOOTNOTES ......................................................... 106
APPENDICES ...................................................... 107
  Appendix A - Informational Letter .......................... 107
  Appendix B - Informed Consent .............................. 108
  Appendix C - Demographic Information ..................... 110
  Appendix D - Written Questionnaire Format ............. 112
  Appendix E - Individual Interview Format ............. 114
  Appendix F - Group Interview Format .................. 115
  Appendix G - Participant Information Summary Sheet 116
REFERENCES ....................................................... 117
List of Tables

Table 1  Factors Which Enabled the Women to Leave.... 80
CHAPTER I
Introduction

"Wife beating is controlling behavior that serves to create and maintain an imbalance of power between the battering man and the battered woman" (Adams, 1988).

It is estimated that one in ten Canadian women are assaulted every year by their husbands or by the men with whom they are living (MacLeod, 1980). It has also been estimated that some 4,000 to 5,000 women are beaten to the point of serious injury each year in the lower mainland of British Columbia alone. Wife battering is responsible for 1/5 of Canadian homicides (Ministry of Attorney General, 1986).

However, wife assault is often a hidden crime. Thus, as startling as they are, the statistics available to date are well-below actual occurrence. Women often do not admit that they are battered because of the stigma of blame society attaches to the victim of such a crime, a stigma not unlike that suffered by victims of rape or incest. The Canadian Urban Victimization Survey, for example, found that as many as 56 percent of wife assault cases are not reported to the police (1982).

In addition to being a problem of phenomenal proportion, wife assault occurs across all socio-economic groups, educational levels and cultural and ethnic groups (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; MacLeod, 1987; Wetzel & Ross, 1983). Despite efforts to try to create one, there is no stereotypic profile
of a battered woman. According to Walker (1983), "...there are no specific personality traits which would suggest a victim-prone personality for [battered] women..." (p. 32). Further, Del Martin (1982) points out that "The battered woman is no different from the rest of us...the plight of the battered woman magnifies what most women have experienced at some point in their lives...just because you haven't been physically hurt does not mean that you are not in an abusive situation" (p. viii).

The phenomenon of battering has been explained in terms of individual personality variables, learning theory, and socio-cultural variables. Research to date on battering has been aimed at: 1) documenting incidence and prevalence, 2) discovering patterns in wife assault and factors contributing to its occurrence and/or cessation, 3) describing the influence of social factors such as cultural norms and helping agencies, 4) presenting psychological analyses of the abuser and the victim, 5) attempting to answer the question - why does the battered woman remain in the violent relationship?, and 6) describing the strategies employed by battered women in response to the abuse.

Unfortunately, the tone of much of the research mirrors the typical public reaction to most social problems, namely, victim-blaming, and in this case, woman-blaming. By asking the all-too-frequent question "Why does she stay?" (Gelles, 1976), blame is implicitly assigned to the woman and the focus is
shifted away from the source of the problem, namely, the man's use of violence as a means of controlling the woman.

There is an overwhelming need to take a less blaming, more constructive stance and conduct research on methods of effectively ending the violence. One way of accomplishing this goal is to look for guidance to battered women who have succeeded in escaping the abuse.

The most common solution actually taken to a battering situation is for the woman to leave her abuser (Barnsely, 1980; Gondolf, 1988; Pagelow, 1981). Rouse (1984) provides some insight into why leaving is necessarily the option most often chosen: "Some men do change. Most do not. Current estimates are that 9 out of 10 batterers do not believe they need to end their abusive behavior" (p. 16). The advice given by formerly battered women to women still in dangerous relationships is direct and unambiguous: "don't let the pattern persist, no matter what", "leave the batterer" (Gondolf, 1988); "get out as quickly as possible" (Nicarthy, 1987).

The purpose of this study is to explore what it is that enables women to leave abusive relationships. Specifically, the purpose is to gain a thorough description and understanding of the factors that have enabled women to leave; the context in which they occur; their development over time; and their meaning, particularly for the women concerned.

Leaving a battering partner is a complex process. Wetzel & Ross (1983) found that "most victims do not extricate
themselves from violent homes abruptly, but progress through a series of stages" (p. 428). Moreover, battered women leave and return several times prior to ending an abusive relationship permanently. Dobash and Dobash (1979) describe leaving and returning as "a necessary part of the process of leaving and a reflection of the difficulties of doing so" (p. 159). In their study of violence against wives they found that the patterns of leaving and returning, and the reasons for doing so, change over time. In an effort to better understand the decision-making process, this study will include a comparison of different stages of leave-taking behavior.

Thus, the purpose of this study is two-fold. First, it provides a context-specific exploratory analysis of what enables women to leave abusive relationships. Second, it compares enabling factors across stages of leaving. The description, analysis and comparison of enabling factors will aid advocates for the autonomy of women in determining the most effective therapeutic interventions with which to aid battered women. The major research question addressed in this study is: what was it that enabled you to leave your abusive partner?

Research Stance

My experience in the world has led me to adopt a feminist research perspective. The feminist analysis of wife abuse (Yllo, 1983) makes implicit sense to me based on my experience as a woman living in a patriarchal society, and as a formerly battered woman. It is the only analysis which accounts for the
fact that it is men who batter and their targets for abuse are their intimate female partners. The feminist analysis is based on the premise that:

...for aggression to be chosen as a response and for women to be chosen as a target of this aggression, there has to be 'a climate in which interpersonal aggression is condoned and reinforced, a climate in which asymmetrical sex roles are adopted and the female devalued' (Stark-Adamec & Adamec, 1985, p. 361).

Yllo (1983) describes the feminist analysis of wife-beating:

...is at heart a critique of patriarchy. The central argument is that the brutalization of an individual wife by an individual husband is not an individual or 'family' problem. It is simply one manifestation of the system of male domination of women which has existed historically and cross-culturally. Societal tolerance of wife-beating is a reflection of patriarchal norms which, more generally, support male-dominance in marriage. Traditional marriage, in turn, is a central element of patriarchal society.

Dobash and Dobash (1979) specify how wife abuse is culturally inherent:

men who assault their wives are actually living up to cultural prescriptions that are cherished in Western society - aggressiveness, male dominance, and female subordination - and they are using physical force as a means to enforce that dominance. (p. 24).

This study was conducted from a feminist perspective. In general, this means acknowledging the importance of the dimensions of gender and power inherent in the problem of woman abuse. Violence is a form of maintaining dominance over another individual, and batterers are men and their victims are women.
Research conducted from a feminist perspective recognizes woman abuse as a social and political problem rather than an individual or family problem, which therefore, must be examined in context. Instead of asking "why does she stay", we should be posing the question: "why does our society allow men to beat the women they claim to love?" In fact, the institutions of marriage and the family as upheld by the courts, religion, and other legal and social institutions often promote, maintain and support men's use of physical force against women (Barnsley, 1980; Couchman, 1988; Martin, 1976; Pagelow, 1981; 1984).

Conducting research from a feminist perspective also means including: 1) a description of women's experience from their own frame of reference, 2) a description of the researcher's experiences with the abused women, and 3) advocacy for women as a crucial characteristic of the research effort. (Yllo & Bograd, 1988).

Definitions

Given the perspective of this study, the following definitions are employed. It is my contention that the problem of spouse abuse exists as wife abuse in the spousal relationship. Although it is said to exist, studies have shown that husband battering is a very different phenomenon than wife battering (MacLeod, 1980). Research shows that "long-term physical abuse between spouses is almost always perpetrated by the man" (Hamlin, 1978, p. 127). Of the few women who inflict serious harm on their husbands, they usually do so for
self-preservation after enduring prolonged violence against themselves or their children (Hilberman & Munson, 1977; Saunders, 1988).

The terms 'wife' and 'husband' are used to refer to married and unmarried cohabitants. This study is not limited to legally married couples. A woman does not have to be married to be battered.

The terms wife/woman battering, abuse, beating, or assault are used interchangeably to denote: any type of "'male-identified violence': physical battery, sexual assault and rape, sexual exploitation in positions of trust or situations where men have more power than women, and serious psychological abuse by a man in order to get a woman to do what he wants without regard for her rights" (Walker, 1989, p. 695). Terms commonly used by non feminist researchers of wife abuse, such as family violence and spouse abuse, obscure the fact that batterers are men. Furthermore, by focussing on and blaming the victim, and ignoring the context in which woman abuse occurs, these researchers have created an individual pathology, thereby, effectively minimizing a social political problem of epidemic proportion.

For the purposes of this study a woman is considered to be a 'permanent leaver', having left an abusive partner for good, if she has been free of the relationship for two or more years. The rationale for employing this duration is two-fold. First, women may leave and return a number of times prior to leaving
the abuser for good. Second, Lesser's study (cited in Dalto, 1983) found that a duration of one year or more may elapse between leaving and returning. Thus, a two year period should enable us to catch the end of the leaving/returning pattern.
CHAPTER II

Literature Review

There are very few studies which directly address factors related to the process of leaving an abusive relationship. To date, there does not appear to be any research which directly addresses factors that enable women to leave battering relationships. However, there are a number of studies which provide insight into potential enabling factors by describing the difficulties women face when they attempt to end the violence.

The following review of the literature will be presented in five parts. Part one comprises studies which have attempted to pinpoint determinants of staying with or leaving an abusive partner. In part two, research on the effect of social learning and psychological variables on a battered woman's ability to leave an abusive relationship is presented. Part three is made up of those studies designed to determine which factors are related to the battered woman's decision to leave. Part four includes two opinion articles which address the process of victimization and subsequent catalysts for change. The studies reviewed in part five outline the steps taken by battered women who have left their abusive partners, and the sources of help sought by others who have successfully ended the violence.

**Determinants of Staying/Leaving**

Gelles (1976) conducted one of the earliest studies aimed
at identifying variables related to why women remain in abusive relationships. He interviewed 33 women who had been physically assaulted by their husbands during their marriage. He concluded that the more severe and more frequent the violence, the more likely the woman was to leave her abusive husband. In fact, the frequency of violence findings are more complex than is indicated by this statement. Gelles reported that:

Only 42 percent of the women who had been struck once in the marriage had sought some type of intervention, while 100 percent of the women who had been hit at least once a month and 83 percent of the women who had been struck at least once a week had either obtained a divorce or separation, called the police, or went to a social service agency (p. 662).

Of the women that had been hit more than once, Gelles reports:
"Women hit weekly to daily are most likely to call the police, while women hit less often (at least once a month) are more inclined to get a divorce or legal separation" (p. 662). Therefore, the conclusion that "the less frequent the violence, the more a wife remains with her husband" (p. 659) accounts for only a portion of Gelles' findings regarding frequency of abuse. Nonetheless, this study is particularly interesting because it appears to be the only research that attempts to identify variables related to battered women seeking different types of intervention. Gelles also found that women who were hit more often as children and who had fewer resources (education and employment) were more likely to stay with their abusive husbands. However, these findings are dubious due to
the instrument used to measure frequency and severity of violence. Specifically, Gelles used a modified version of the 'Conflict Tactics Scale' (Straus, 1979). The original scale's reliability coefficients range from high to low (Straus, 1979), and it is designed to measure use of conflict resolution tactics rather than frequency and severity of violence. Moreover, no reliability or validity data are given for the modified version used in Gelles' study. Interviews with the women did yield additional helpful information regarding external constraints which affect abused women. Gelles noted that even when women did seek outside help, they found it to be of little benefit. He states that "most agencies and most legal organizations are quite unprepared and unable to provide meaningful assistance to women who have been beaten by their husbands" (p. 666). Although strides have been made by various organizations over the past decade and a half, it is clear that ineffective action on the part of the helping agencies, courts, etc., remains a major obstacle in the path of abused women and plays a significant role in their decision-making process.¹ Gelles relays one other important point made by the women he interviewed: they reported that holding a job gave them a view of another world or culture. By becoming less isolated, they were able to see their situation from a different perspective. Specifically, they were able to see that their family problems were less normal and more serious than they had been led to believe. Putting an end to the extreme isolation in which many
battered women are forced to live is one of the primary goals of shelter and counselling programs for abused women.

According to Gelles then, factors which affect an abused woman's ability to leave the abusive relationship are frequency and severity of abuse, abuse as a child, available resources, response of helping agencies, and her perception of the normalcy of the relationship. Despite the fact that Gelles, along with many other researchers, approaches the issue of woman abuse from a victim-blaming stance ("why does she stay?", versus "why do men beat their wives?") his study is one of the first to provide evidence of the complex nature of the decision to leave.

Gelles' hypotheses were subsequently tested by other researchers. Aguirre (1985) attempted to replicate Gelles findings by testing the hypothesis that women are more likely to return to abusive relationships after leaving shelters if they (1) were abused/neglected as children, (2) had limited resources, or (3) endured less severe/frequent violence at the hands of their batterers. Data for the study were a subset of responses to a previous survey comprised of 312 respondents (married women who were residing with their husbands immediately prior to entering a shelter). The data were analyzed using the FUNCAT procedure in Statistical Analysis System (SAS). It was found that of the three variables examined, financial dependence predicted return to an abusive partner. This study provides evidence that abuse is only one
factor in a battered woman's decision to leave. Further, it
points to economic independence as an important enabling
factor.

Pagelow (1981) also tested Gelles's hypotheses as one part
of a large study designed to describe battered women's
perceptions of spousal violence. The major hypothesis tested
in this study was: "the fewer resources, the more negative the
institutional response, and the more intense the traditional
ideology of women who have been battered, the more likely they
are to remain in relationships with batterers and the less
likely they are to perform acts that significantly alter the
situation in a positive direction" (p. 16). Pagelow conducted
in-depth case studies using a 'context-specific' approach. The
techniques employed for data collection were face-to-face
semi-structured interviews, completion of a survey
questionnaire, unobtrusive observation, participant
observation, and records analysis. Respondents for the study
included 317 battered women residing in shelters and 33 non
shelter, formerly battered women. The dependent variable was
length of time women remain in relationships after violence
begins until they terminate the violence either by leaving the
relationship or by other means. Pagelow found that together,
the variables of resources, traditional ideology, and
institutional response explained only a small portion of the
variance in the length of stay in an abusive relationship.
However, the factor of resources on its own accounted for
nearly one half of the accounted for variance (43 percent).

These data offered some support to Gelles's first variable, resources; gave no support to the second, severity/frequency of abuse; and argued against the third, childhood victimization. Pagelow reported that "correlations were in the negative direction, indicating that the greater the childhood victimization, the shorter the length of stay" (p. 172). This study is unlike others in many respects, one being that it acknowledges the fact that a large proportion of abused women are not married to their batterers, rather, they live with them in common-law arrangements. Pagelow broadens the focus of her study by including these women, thereby portraying a more realistic representation of the problem.

Hodson's (1982) research also examined the length of stay in a battering relationship. Sixty battered women residing in four shelters in the San Francisco Bay area completed a packet of questionnaires designed to measure history of violence in the woman's family of origin, her sex-role attitudes, personal resources, coping responses, and perception of institutional helpfulness. Correlational analyses revealed that individual variables (history of violence, sex-role attitudes, personal resources, and coping responses) were not related to length of stay in a battering relationship. However, helpful responses from social institutions (police, lawyers, therapists) were negatively related to length of stay. Battered women were found to use more avoidant-coping responses to deal with a
battering incident versus another stressful, non-battering incident. The implication of this finding is that battered women are not passive, rather, "there may be an interaction between the specific context of a battering event and the style of coping a woman uses" (p. 74). Other correlational results showed that women with a history of violence in their family of origin held more traditional sex-role attitudes. Traditional attitudes about sex-roles were, in turn, positively related to having fewer personal resources as well as to a greater proportion of avoidance coping responses being used to deal with a battering incident. Women with fewer personal resources were more likely to employ avoidant-coping responses. The findings provide indirect support for Walker's (1979) theory of learned helplessness as one of the reasons why women remain in abusive relationships. The battered woman may be more likely to use avoidance coping responses after finding that active coping responses did not work to end the violence. Thus, her coping responses will be altered as a result of the experience.

One of the limitations of this study is that the coping response questionnaire focuses on one battering incident only, as well as one other stressful non-battering incident. These two incidents may or may not be representative of other incidents and should therefore, not be the basis of generalization. A second limitation is that the end of the battering relationship is not operationalized reliably, rather, it is assumed that the abusive relationship has ended upon the
woman's entry to a shelter. Without long-term follow-up, the author cannot know which women did or did not eventually return to the relationship. It is well known that battered women often leave and return a number of times prior to terminating the abusive relationship permanently. Finally, no information was given regarding how sample and sample size were determined and selected.

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, Hodson's study is a significant addition to the woman abuse literature because it systematically seeks to include individual and socio-cultural factors in a conceptual framework rather than focusing on a single level of analysis.

Dalto (1983) investigated factors influencing whether or not former shelter residents return to the abusive relationship, using a two-wave panel design. In the first phase of the research forty women at four different shelters in Massachusetts who had been in shelter for at least 10 days consented to an extensive exit interview designed to provide information in three areas: personal background and relationship factors, beliefs and attitudes about battering, and aspects of the shelter experience. The second phase comprised responses to a brief follow-up questionnaire which was sent to the respondents six weeks after their departure from the shelter. Dalto found that women were more likely to return if they: 1) had a history of childhood abuse, 2) had tolerant attitudes toward battering, 3) believed people in
their lives were favorable to reconciliation, 4) blamed themselves for the violence, and 5) attributed the violence to a stable factor. Conversely, women were less likely to return if they formed a close relationship with other shelter residents, identified with a shelter role model, and remained in the shelter for a longer period of time. The results of this study point to the important role that a woman's beliefs about why she is beaten play in her decision to leave.

Overall, the qualitative portion of Dalto's study was designed with a great deal of attention given to explaining the procedures and analysis employed in replicable detail. Limitations include: unexamined missing data, ever-changing and shrinking sample size, especially for the history of childhood abuse portion of the questionnaire (i.e., N = 15), use of percentages in reporting results versus raw data, and the use of multiple regression analysis with such a small sample. Dalto acknowledges that follow-up data obtained so close to the time of leaving are likely indicative of one stage in a process of leaving and returning by the battered women. Regarding the complexity of this process, Dalto found that the women gave an average of six reasons for returning after the previous battering incident, and an average of five reasons for leaving at the current point in time. This study breaks new ground by evaluating the impact of various aspects of the shelter experience upon the battered woman's outcome.
In 1977 Lenore Walker postulated a psychological rationale to explain why women remain in abusive relationships, namely, the construct of learned helplessness (Walker, 1977-78). Seligman and Maier (1967) demonstrated with dogs that learned helplessness results when they are subjected to noncontingent negative reinforcement, thereby, learning that their voluntary behavior has no effect on controlling what happens to them. Repeated noncontingent negative reinforcement resulted in a motivational deficit, depression and anxiety. Walker (1977-78) theorizes that as a result of the female sex role socialization process in our society, women are prone to learned helplessness. Of the battered women interviewed for this study, 25 percent had been physically abused as children, the majority had learned traditional social roles. "They learned very early that their competence in areas other than the social arena would not be useful to them in life...in order to be popular with the boys, they had to give their power away" (p. 529). According to the learned helplessness theory, the only way to reverse the resultant cognitive, emotional, and motivational deficits is to learn or re-learn, under which conditions responses will effectively produce results.

In the Battered Woman Syndrome Study, Walker (1983) tested her adaptation (to battered women) of the learned helplessness theory. Four hundred and three self-identified battered women
in a six state United States region were administered a 200 page questionnaire as well as locus of control, depression, and self-esteem scales, in a 6-8 hour face-to-face interview. It was hypothesized that battered women would suffer from low self-esteem and depression, and would make external locus of control attributions. Findings revealed that these women did not report powerful others as being in control of their lives (external control). Nor did they have low self-esteem. In fact, they perceived themselves as "stronger, more independent, and more sensitive than other women" (Walker, 1983, p. 40). They did, however, score higher than the high risk for depression cut-off score. Walker also stated that "they were...not consistent in demonstrating the negative cognitions and moods we would have expected in other indices within the questionnaire" (p. 41). Thus, although the author purports that this study provides evidence for the 'battered woman syndrome', or learned helplessness, in fact it does not. Indeed, what it shows is that battered women scored higher than a comparison sample on a measure of depression. The comparison sample is not described. In a separate study, Walker (1979) found no evidence of depression or anxiety among the battered women she interviewed. It is important to note, then, that although the theory of learned helplessness on the part of battered women is espoused by clinicians and lay persons who work with battered women, there is a dearth of empirical evidence to date to support it. As will be explicated later,
battered women are not helpless or passive and they do leave. Depression and anxiety do occur as a direct result of being beaten. It is more probable that battered women suffer the same kind of post-traumatic stress disorder suffered by other victims of extreme psychological trauma.

The main difficulty with Walker's theory of learned helplessness is the underlying assumption that battered women mistakenly believe that they have no control over the battering, and that they cannot change their situation. In other words, it negates the realities of many battered women who have in fact tried to stop the abuse, and have attempted to seek help only to be rebuked for breaking up the family. Having left, they have been forced to return because of no place to go, or else they continue to be harassed, battered, even murdered, while living apart from their abusive mate. These women believe that there is nothing they can do to stop the violence because that has been their reality.

Painter and Dutton (1985) proposed and tested a theory of traumatic bonding to explain why women remain in abusive relationships. They hypothesized that a perceived power imbalance and intermittent abuse ensures that a battered woman will remain with her abusive partner. Twelve battered women recruited from a transition house participated in in-depth, structured 1-3 hour interviews. A modified version of the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) was included in the interview to derive mean scores across the groups and for
comparison purposes. Evidence was found for an imbalance of power between the battered women and their battering partners, and for the periodicity of abuse. An additional element, cognitive process, was also found to play a role in the pattern of intermittent abuse. That is, Painter and Dutton conclude that "as long as she continues to believe that she causes the violence, and that changes in her behavior might prevent the violent behavior from occurring, she is locked into the battering relationship" (p. 373). This study, therefore, provides some evidence for the construct of traumatic bonding, even though such a theory does not account for those women who eventually leave for good. One of the weaknesses of this study is that numerous inferences and conclusions are drawn from one particular episode of violence reported by each of the women interviewed. Another limitation inherent in the study is the persistent use of unsubstantiated inferences made in the face of contrary evidence. One example is the authors' inference that battered women are unable to leave because they believe that they cannot; or in the authors' words, "a strong impression of helplessness or impotence pervades the women's response" (p. 371). In fact, the authors themselves present evidence that the women suffered "an emotional collapse indicative of extreme aversive, prolonged arousal similar to that experienced by disaster victims" (p. 366) after a battering incident. Moreover, five of the women in this study reported that their partners physically restrained them from
leaving. Other faulty inferences include accusing battered women of being passive in their efforts to end the violence, and of perceiving a power imbalance where none exists.

Despite the limitations in Painter and Dutton's reasoning, this study provides evidence of cognitive and affective determinants of staying with a batterer, which suggests that it is more than a simple conditioned response. A woman's belief that she caused her abuser's violence may be an attempt to view herself as having control in a no-control situation. As long as she believes she has control, she has hope that she can change or save the relationship. Hope and fear entrap her in the battering relationship.

Pfouts (1978) analyzed and categorized responses of battered women to the violence they endured. Responses were classified according to a theoretical schema based on the "exchange theory formulation of Thibaut and Kelley, which asserts that behavioral outcomes depend on the interaction between the level of satisfaction experienced by the individual in the existing situation and the comparative level of satisfaction offered by available alternatives" (Pfouts, 1978, p. 102). Thirty-five abused women were chosen for the study from cases of violent families obtained from a county welfare department. Pfouts describes four major coping responses abused women are likely to choose based on a two-step cost-benefit analysis. The responses of the women in this study were thus fit into the pre-existing categories of:
self-punishing, aggressive, early disengagement, or mid-life disengagement. Results of this study suggest that a woman will be enabled to leave her batterer if she believes that there is an alternative that would be more satisfying than her marriage, and if she has access to that alternative. The results of this study are limited due to the biased nature of the sample, and lack of information regarding methods of classification and inclusiveness of the categories. Finally, the schema does not predict which responses an individual will make or which factors influence her decision.

Strube and Barbour (1983; 1984) investigated factors related to the decision to leave an abusive relationship on two separate occasions. In 1983 they collected objective and subjective data gleaned from intake forms on 98 battered women who had contacted a counselling unit in a western United States city. Data included demographic information and responses to a counsellor's open-ended request for reasons why they had remained with their partners thus far. Follow-up data was collected between 1 and 18 months after intake. The results indicate that both economic dependence and psychological commitment were significantly related to decisions to leave an abusive relationship. The economic dependence findings are purportedly strengthened as the relationship was significant for both subjective and objective measures. However, failure to find an association between the objective and subjective measures of psychological commitment points to the complexity
of investigating such variables and to the difficulties generally inherent in attempting to quantify subjective relationship data. One of the strengths of this study is that Strube and Barbour analyze and report their missing data, a heretofore unheard of procedure in this literature.

The major drawback of this study is the nature of the measures employed. Particularly, women were asked, "why have you remained with your partner thus far" (p. 787). We are not told how many responses they were allowed to make. In fact, it appears that one reason per person was recorded. Despite the author's acknowledgement of the complexity of this decision-making process, they base their findings on an unnecessarily limited response set.

In 1984 Strube and Barbour expanded their investigation to include factors such as employment, length of relationship, ethnicity, coping strategies, love, beliefs regarding change (of the batterer), and resources. Subject data (251) were recruited in the same manner and from the same source as in the 1983 study. Follow-up contact was made within 2-3 months after intake. Strube and Barbour found that women were more likely to leave if they were non-Caucasion, had exhausted more external resources, had somewhere to go, and did not believe their husbands would change. Consistent with their earlier study, they also found that women were more likely to leave if they were employed and less committed to the relationship.

The major flaw in this study is again in measurement.
Prior coping strategies of battered women are assessed by measuring whether women "had sought counseling for themselves or for their children or had sought legal assistance" (p. 838). I need not even point out how limited this definition of coping strategies is - it does not even include seeking residence at the most obvious resource available for battered women - the shelter.

Both of these studies highlight the complexity of the 'leaving' issue and related enabling factors. In fact, Strube and Barbour (1984) admit that "the combined influence of variables in this study accounted for only 25 percent of the variation in relationship decisions" (p. 143).

Malloy (1986) examined psychological and demographic variables as predictors of women's decisions to leave abusive relationships. She hypothesized that while some women have the necessary resources to leave a violent relationship, there may be psychological variables that cause them to remain with their abusers. Malloy proposed that variables such as low perceived self-efficacy, the woman's appraisal of the violence, and the methods she chooses to cope with it, may have an impact upon her ability to leave.

One hundred twenty seven women who had been physically abused by their partners and were residing in shelters, volunteered to participate in the study. They completed a packet of questionnaires addressing self-efficacy, cognitive appraisal, coping strategies, social support, demographics,
marital adjustment, social desirability, as well as exit and follow-up questionnaires which were used to discriminate between intent to return and actual returning to the abusive partner. Follow-up occurred between 5 and 28 weeks after exit from the shelter. Individual items on questionnaires were factor analyzed, discriminant analysis procedures were employed to assess differences between subjects, and Chi-square analysis was performed to determine significant differences across shelters between the two different groups of women.

Malloy found that, at exit, 25 percent of the women intended to return to their batterers, whereas, at follow-up, 50 percent had actually returned. The differences between those that returned to the abusive relationship and those that did not were that the latter were able to not blame themselves for the violence and used cognitive restructuring in dealing with the last violent incident. These findings provide support for Miller and Norman's (1979) reformulation of learned helplessness theory based upon an attribution theory model, (i.e., an individual will not respond to a learned helplessness situation with motivational deficits if they attribute the noncontingent outcomes to external rather than, internal factors). They also lend additional support to the notion of a necessary change in perception prior to leaving an abusive partner.

Malloy's study could have been strengthened had she employed a more comprehensive screening questionnaire, given a
rationale for including the social support and marital adjustment scales, not included scales for which there is no reliability or validity data available, and achieved a higher follow-up rate of information directly from the women (i.e., 53 percent of follow-up data was obtained from shelter records). None of the appraisal or coping variables were found to discriminate between women who returned and those who did not. It is likely that in-depth interviews using open-ended questions rather than a 5-point Likert scale, would have tapped the women's cognitive processes better.

**Catalysts for Change**

Ferraro and Johnson (1983) provide evidence of factors which may potentially enable women to leave abusive relationships in their study of the victimization process as it related to battered women. The authors were participant observers at a shelter for battered women located in the southwestern United States from July 1978 to September 1979. Their goal was to examine how women experience battering. Subjects were 120 women who stayed at the shelter during the time of the study. Personal relationships were established with each of these women, records were kept of their experiences and verbal accounts, informal conversations, staff meetings and crisis phone calls with battered women were audiotaped. In addition, interviews with 10 residents and five battered women who had left their abusers without entering the shelter were audiotaped. Ferraro and Johnson found that women
who find themselves trapped in an abusive relationship cope with the situation by rationalizing the violence using one of six methods: (1) appeal to the salvation ethic, (2) denial of the victimizer, (i.e., denying the husband's intent to do them harm, blaming it on some external force, such as alcohol), (3) denial of injury, (4) denial of victimization, (5) denial of options, and (6) appeal to higher loyalties. A battered woman may use one or more of these techniques over the course of the abusive relationship.

Two main points are made by the authors regarding leaving an abusive relationship. First, the process of victimization is not synonymous with experiencing violent attacks from a spouse. Therefore, the second point made is that "only when battered women reject these rationalizations and begin to view themselves as true victims of abuse does the victimization actually begin" (p. 325).

Ferraro and Johnson list several sources of change that may enable a battered woman to redefine the abuse; namely, changes in 1) the level of violence, 2) resources, 3) the relationship, 4) despair, 5) the visibility of violence, and 6) external definitions of the violence. In the authors' 20 years of combined experience in the field of woman abuse, they have found that battered women may respond to one or more of these catalysts for change, and then "it may take years of struggle and aborted attempts before 'they are' able to establish a safe and stable lifestyle; for some, this goal is
never achieved" (p. 336).

Wetzel and Ross (1983) provide indirect evidence of potential enabling factors in their analysis of the forces that keep women captive in battering relationships. The article is based upon "professional experiences during crisis intervention and the readjustment of victims out of domestic violence" (p. 423). According to Wetzel and Ross, fear, isolation, and drastic changes in the batterer's behavior are factors which serve to maintain the abusive relationship. A very real fear, based on many violent acts and innumerable threats, is said to be the most immobilizing factor for a battered woman. Because men who batter usually succeed in isolating their partners from important sources of support (i.e., family and friends), these women may have no one with whom to evaluate their sense of reality. Fear and isolation serve to immobilize a battered woman. Add to that, a man who is violent one day, loving and contrite the next, violent again at a later date, and the result is a strong bond between the couple produced by this intermittent reinforcement for the woman. The authors also maintain that leaving a battering relationship is a process. Battered women progress through a series of stages in making the decision to leave, usually manifested by leaving and returning a number of times prior to making the final break.

Wetzel and Ross outline a counselling methodology for battered woman as well as indices for assessing readiness for change. Accordingly, they assert that the most reliable indice
for change is a cognitive shift, or change in perception, which they call, the "click of self-recognition" (p. 427). Wetzel and Ross state: "the sense of detachment and the tone of finality in her voice together with a manifestation of basic survival skills and returning self-confidence indicate readiness for change. When seeing this combination, I feel reasonably sure that this woman will start a new life for herself free of violence" (p. 427).

**Ending the Violence - Steps Taken**

Bowker (1983) took a slightly different approach to exploring how women end the violence. His study examines how battered women in Milwaukee, Wisconsin were able to end the violence while remaining in their marriages. It was Bowker's intent to "encourage beaten wives and battering husbands to actively seek solutions to the problem of marital violence to the best of their abilities" (p. 20). The goal of this study was to provide a wider range of options than "grin and bear it", and "see your lawyer". ...to discover realistic options for the nuclear family" (p. 20).

Previously battered women were recruited as subjects for the study via newspaper advertisement. In order to be included in the sample, a woman had to have been beaten at least once by a person with whom she was married or cohabiting at the time of the violence; she had to have triumphed over the violence, with or without the help of the aggressor, and the violence had to have ended at least one year prior to the interview. The
sample size information provided is ambiguous. Bowker states that recruitment produced 136 interviews (p. 22). However, many of the tables included in the analysis are comprised of 146 subjects. Two to four hour informal, in-depth interviews were conducted with the participating women in order to obtain information on help sources used for the first, second, third, worst, last, and a composite incident of all remaining battering incidents. Frequency distributions and Tau b correlations were used to analyze the data. Sources of help utilized by the formerly battered women to end the violence were divided into the three categories of: 1) personal strategies and techniques, 2) informal help sources, and 3) formal help sources.

Analysis of the battered wives' answers to questions about their ability to demand an end to the violence revealed several enabling factors. Bowker found that "two factors were mentioned much more often than any others. The first was that 27 percent of the women had simply had enough and decided that the abuse must end. The second factor, which was mentioned by 23 percent of the women, was that their participation in women's groups gave them the confidence and information necessary to end the battering" (p. 123). Other enabling factors commonly cited by the women included: 1) fear, 2) contact with family members, and 3) experiences with social service agencies. Once again there is evidence of the importance of the woman's cognitive process in determining her
ability to end the abuse. As Bowker states: "the most common piece of advice refers to internal states rather than external conditions: "Don't let the pattern persist, no matter what" (p. 125-126).

Unfortunately, this study has some serious structural deficiencies. First, the focus, namely, what enabled battered women to end the violence, once again puts the onus on the woman to save the marriage by attempting to change the batterer's behavior. This type of viewpoint reverts to the traditional attitude of women being solely responsible for the success or failure of the relationship and takes the focus off the source of the problem, namely, the man and his use of violence. The second difficulty is that the criteria for being included in the study are not congruent with the purpose of the research. That is, ending the violence while remaining in the marriage is not included in the criteria. Moreover, the newspaper advertisement used to solicit volunteers is unclear and does not match the criteria listed in the study. We can see the effect of this ambiguous respondent definition, as well as envision the unrealistic nature of Bowker's quest for the intact nuclear family expunged of former violence, in the statistics available at the time of the interviews. According to Bowker, "at the time of the interview...half of those who had ever been married were no longer living with their husbands" (p. 29). We are not given similar information regarding unmarried cohabitants. Ninety-four percent of his
sample were married to their batterers. Therefore, for at least 46 percent of the sample, an intact marriage was not a long-term result. In fact, we are never told how many of the 136 or 146 subjects ended the violence while remaining with their abusive partners. A third problem arises from interpretation of results. Consistent with Bowker's interest in preserving the 'nuclear family', he fails to acknowledge the overwhelming advice of formerly battered women to others in similar situations to leave the batterer. Indeed, twenty-five percent of the women interviewed for this study advised other women to "leave the batterer" (p. 126). Six percent advised pressing charges against the batterer. When asked for their recommendations to other battered women, 12 percent recommended taking shelter. Although unacknowledged by Bowker, a large number of formerly battered women obviously feel that the best solution to a violent relationship is to leave or otherwise end the relationship. The fourth difficulty is with the practical usefulness of the results of the study. We are provided with lists of sources of help the women contacted as well as a list of the types of personal strategies they employed, but we are not told how or why these sources succeeded in deterring the battering husband from further violence, where other efforts had failed. This is the case because the women's responses were not analyzed within context, that is, what had she tried before, what was the batterer's response, etc. Nonetheless, this piece of research does provide evidence of a) the active
role battered women take in attempting to end the violence, and
b) specific factors which enabled battered women to escape the
violence. Bowker's study is particularly instrumental in
eradicating the view of battered women as passive recipients of
abuse. He concluded:

> It is clear from these data that many battered
wives actively fight to remove violence from
their lives. The efforts to end the abuse
suffered by the women in the...sample were
extensive and intensive, and were completely at
variance with the image of the battered woman
as passively accepting her fate. As the women
explored different combinations of strategies
and help-sources, they tended to progress from
what might be called low-coercion strategies to
high-coercion strategies; moving from personal
efforts to informal help-sources to formal
help-sources. They did not abandon their
personal efforts when they added informal and
formal help-sources, but integrated these into
an armada of forces individualized to be most
effective in their own situations. (p. 104)

Gondolf (1988) took Bowker's (1983) findings regarding the
active role battered women play in seeking an end to the
violence and elaborated upon them. He proposes a survivor
theory, hypothesizing that rather than suffering from learned
helplessness, "women respond to abuse with helpseeking efforts
that are largely unmet" (p. 11). In order to test this
hypothesis, 6,612 battered women who entered 50 Texas shelters
during an eighteen month period between 1984-85 were
administered an 84-question interview. Data were obtained on
three areas: the woman's background, abuse, and helpseeking.
Gondolf employed the multivariate analysis technique of
structural equation modeling to develop the causal model that
tests the helpseeking hypothesis.

Findings reveal that: a) the helpseeking behavior of battered women is diverse and extensive, and b) the range of help sources contacted by women increases as the batterer's anti-social behavior increases. This research suggests that battered women are more likely to leave a relationship when it is clear that the batterer is not going to change or that the batterer is a generally dangerous person, in which case the battered woman's rationalizations no longer suffice and a shift in perception occurs.

The women in this study initiated an average of six helpseeking efforts prior to entering a shelter. Once in the shelter, the best predictors of a woman's planning to leave a batterer were economic independence and the batterer not being in counselling. Background variables or abuse-related variables were not related to shelter outcome. In light of the information provided by the women interviewed, the helping sources had failed to respond effectively in two ways. They were unable to ensure safety for the women, and had been unable to intervene and end the violent behavior of batterers.

Gondolf also employed a cluster analysis to devise a typology of batterers. The cluster findings reveal three types of batterers: 1) the sociopathic batterer, 2) the antisocial batterer, and 3) the chronic batterer. This typology is based on the batterer's abusive and antisocial behavior reported by the women. "At one extreme is a substantial portion of
generally violent and severely abusive men who are unlikely to be responsive to short-term counselling. At the other extreme, a portion of men appear to be less severe in their abuse and likely to respond to it with profuse apologies, as the 'cycle of violence' notion suggests (Walker, 1979)" (Gondolf, 1988, p. 59). The fact that many battering men are unlikely to be responsive to batterer counselling causes great concern, considering that one of the strongest predictors of a battered woman returning to her abuser is his promise to attend counselling.

According to Gondolf then, "an integrated system of community interventions is needed to assure a decisive interruption of violence and sufficient resources to enable the battered women to live independently from the batterer", and the main obstacle to be overcome is "learned helplessness within our community services" (p. 4). The implication from the survivor model is that the way to activate battered women to leave the abuser is to "heighten their awareness of their batterers' antisocial nature and general incorrigibility" (p. 38). Gondolf points to the need for society to stop viewing the battered woman as the source of the problem, and to intervene more decisively with abusive men.

Summary

Taken together, the literature reviewed provides evidence of a large array of variables that appear to play a role in determining whether a battered woman will remain with or leave
an abusive partner. Factors identified in that literature as being related to returning to the abusive partner include: 1) lack of resources, 2) tolerant attitudes towards battering, 3) fear, 4) isolation, 5) intermittent abuse, 6) psychological commitment to the relationship, 7) stable attributions for the violence, 8) the batterer seeking counselling or claiming an intention to, 9) significant others favoring reconciliation, and 10) the belief that they caused and can control the violence. Conditions such as traumatic bonding or learned helplessness are espoused as reasons why women remain with abusive partners. Factors found to be related to leaving an abusive partner include: 1) level of abuse (more severe), 2) helpful responses from social institutions, 3) a favorable shelter experience, 4) having somewhere to go, 5) ability to use cognitive restructuring as a coping mechanism, 6) having exhausted more external resources, 7) belief that there is a more satisfying alternative, 8) belief that the abusive partner will not change, and 9) rejection of previous rationalizations for violence.

A few of the studies reviewed provide evidence of variables which may be potential enabling factors. Gelles (1976) found that battered women who became less isolated were exposed to a different world view which subsequently changed their perceptions of their relationship. Ferraro and Johnson (1983) found that changes in the level of violence, resources, despair, visibility of the violence, and/or external
definitions of the violence often serve as catalysts for change. Once the women in Bowker's (1983) study had decided that the violence must end now, participation in women's groups, contact with family members and social service agencies, enabled them to demand an end to the violence. Gondolf (1988) noted that a heightened knowledge of the batterers antisocial behavior enables women to leave.

There are a number of consistencies across studies which ought to be noted. The majority of studies (10/16) found beliefs or attributions to be significant predictors of staying and leaving behavior (Bowker, 1983; Dalto, 1983; Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Gondolf, 1988; Malloy, 1986; Painter & Dutton, 1985; Pfouts, 1978; Strube & Barbour 1983; 1984; Wetzel & Ross, 1983). Many (7/16) studies implicated resources as important determinants of relationship decisions (Aguirre, 1985; Gelles, 1976; Gondolf, 1988; Pagelow, 1981; Pfouts, 1978; Strube & Barbour 1983; 1984). Three (3/16) studies found that the more severe the abuse was, the more likely a woman was to leave the relationship (Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Gelles, 1976; Gondolf, 1988). At least three (3/16) studies found affective factors such as depression and emotional collapse indicative of post-traumatic stress disorder to have an effect on a battered woman's ability to leave (Gondolf, 1988; Painter & Dutton, 1985; Walker, 1983). Two (2/16) studies implicated childhood abuse as a factor related to staying in an abusive relationship.
A number of discrepancies between studies should also be noted. For example, Pagelow's (1981) data argued against childhood victimization as increasing the length of stay in a battering relationship. She found the reverse to be true—those who were abused as children were less likely to be tolerant of abuse in their adult relationships. Walker (1980; 1983) herself found a lack of evidence among battered women of the symptoms said to result from the condition of learned helplessness. She found support for depression in battered women only. However, Hodson (1982) found some support for the learned helplessness theory among her sample of battered women. Others found that, contrary to the learned helplessness theory, battered women were more, rather than less likely to leave an abusive partner after exhausting more internal and external resources (Gondolf, 1988; Strube & Barbour, 1983; 1984). That is, rather than giving up on trying to end the violence after attempting and failing to change their partner's behavior, battered women gave up on the relationship. Contrary to Walker's (1979) learned helplessness theory, battered women were found to play an active role in seeking an end to the violence (Bowker, 1983; Gondolf, 1988).

Unfortunately, the findings of the majority of studies reviewed are limited by some type of methodological flaw. The main reason for this is that research on the topic of woman abuse is extremely difficult to carry out because of practical and ethical barriers. For instance, in attempting to study the
phenomenon of battering, the primary source of respondents is shelters for battered women. This leads to a biased sampling of the population. It has been found that women who seek help from shelters are predominately from lower income and educational brackets; that more affluent women have resources other than crisis centers (Wetzel & Ross, 1983). It is equally likely that women who appear at shelters differ from those who do not, on other variables of interest as well. On the other hand, some of the limitations of the foregoing research are a result of the research design and process, for example, inattention to determinants of attrition at follow-up, use of unreliable and/or limited measures, and application of inappropriate statistical procedures.

Research to be Done

To date there does not appear to be any evidence of research which directly addresses factors that enable battered women to leave abusive partners. It appears that no one has asked formerly battered women the question: "In your opinion, what enabled you to leave?" Nor has data been collected in context, specifically to answer this question. There also remains one consistent gap in the research to date on factors related to the decision to leave an abusive relationship, that is, the determination of the end of the relationship. The populations sampled (shelter residents, women applying for counselling and legal aid) and the manner of collecting data (at intake and/or exit from the shelter or counselling
situation) are not conducive to arriving at the necessary conclusion - that the woman has indeed left the relationship for good. The majority of studies in this area consider entry to a shelter as evidence of relationship termination. For example, Hodson (1982) and Ferraro and Johnson (1983) collected data at intake and base their conclusions about relationship termination on these data. Others have attempted to obtain more accurate indicators of relationship status by collecting follow-up data. For example, Malloy (1986) collected data on relationship status up to 28 weeks after women had departed the shelter. Although this is the lengthiest follow-up period to date, response rate may have been as low as 47%. Thus, much valuable information is unavailable. Strube and Barbour (1983) collected data at intake and 1-18 months following intake. In 1984 they collected data at intake and 2-3 months after intake. In both studies, the women were living with their husbands at intake, and the authors do not report the length of separation for those women who were no longer with their abusers at follow-up. Finally, Dalto (1983) collected data at exit from the shelter and 6 weeks after exit. Taken as a whole, the studies that provide follow-up data give a more accurate indication of relationship status than those in which data is collected at intake only. It has been documented that reported rates of returning often double from intake to exit and the actual rate of return triples from intake to follow-up (Gelles, 1974; Pfouts, 1978). Moreover, leaving an abusive relationship
is a process and women often leave and return a number of times prior to ending the relationship permanently. Lesser (cited in Dalto, 1983) found that a duration of one year or more may elapse between leaving and returning. Therefore, because the research to date cannot provide evidence of permanent relationship termination, the findings can only be attributed to various stages in the process of leaving. We have no way of knowing which women left for good and which ones eventually returned to the battering relationship from the type of research conducted thus far.

There have been no studies comparing factors related to the different leaving stages, that is, leaving temporarily on one or more occasions, and leaving permanently. It is possible that enabling factors may be responsible for the difference between these various stages. Battered women in all stages make the same decision - to leave. However, sometimes they will stay away, while at other times they will return to their abusive partners. By speaking to women who have experienced different stages of the leaving process, it will be possible to explore the question of whether the factor(s) which enabled them to leave, is a predictor of whether or not they returned.
CHAPTER III
Research Method

Research Design

What enables battered women to leave their abusive partners? An exploratory research design was employed in order to further understanding of this issue by defining important variables related to ending the abuse. This study is what I call a 'feminist-ethnography' in terms of it's research perspective, orientation and strategy. It considers the issues of gender and control inherent in a feminist analysis. The research design and strategy adhere to the product and process principles of the ethnographic research perspective which Goetz and LeCompte (1984) describe as: a) analytic description of intact cultural scenes or groups, b) representation of the world view of the participants; participant constructs are used to structure the research, c) construct descriptions of phenomena within their various contexts, and d) application of a variety of techniques to collect data. It is primarily a qualitative study with quantitative data based on the qualitative information. Data were gathered via in-depth, semi-structured interviews comprised of open-ended questions (excluding demographic information). The data were collected on three separate occasions by means of three different research methods: 1) questionnaire, 2) individual interview, and 3) a group interview.

Sampling Procedure
Participants for this study were battered women who have left their abusive partners on at least one occasion. Half of the sample was comprised of women who have left their abusive partners for good. Thus, there were two categories of participants. The first category or group, comprised women who have left their abusive partners for good. The second group included women who have left but have since returned. The first group then included those who have, a) left once permanently, and/or b) left more than one time and eventually left for good, whereas, the second group included those who have a) left and returned, and/or b) left and returned a number of times. One of the objectives of this research was to ascertain whether enabling factors predict returning or permanent leaving behavior. Thus, including these two groups of women made comparison across various stages of the leaving process possible.

Sample size was small, three women in each group, due to the time-consuming nature of the methods of data collection and analysis. Walker (1979) discovered that the eight-hour face-to-face interview schedule that was planned for her participants was a crucial factor in obtaining reliable and valid data. She explained: "The battered women needed time to perceive the interviewers as interested in them in order to be able to talk about the violence they had experienced" (p. 696).

Participants were obtained from two sources. First, at a counselling agency, volunteer participants were solicited from
a group for women who have been battered. This was done via an informational letter (see Appendix A) which was distributed by the group facilitator. Two of the six women in the group volunteered to participate. They were subsequently contacted by telephone. The other four participants were former residents of a transition house. The staff of the transition house obtained permission for me to contact four women who fit the study's criteria. Once I outlined the purpose of my study (on the telephone), all four women volunteered to participate. The informational letter was then mailed to them.

**Procedures and Instruments**

Throughout the course of data collection I asked the women to relate information pertaining to painful and difficult times in their lives. Therefore, it was particularly important for me to obtain their informed consent (see Appendix B) prior to participation in the study.

Each woman provided demographic information (see Appendix C) such as age, marital status, number of children, number of years in the abusive relationship, education and income level, as well as related background information such as history of violence and/or other forms of abuse in the woman's family of origin, number of past abusive relationships and so on. This information was collected in order to provide a detailed description of the participants and to enable analysis in the event of sample attrition.

The women participated in a three part procedure. Each
component was designed to glean information related to the factors which enabled them to leave their abusive partners. Examples of questions which were included are: What were your reasons for leaving? What was different about this time? What were your fears around leaving? What happened when you left? Did anyone help you to leave? If so, who and in what way? In your opinion, what enabled you to leave? The research questions were designed to encompass a broader picture. Participants answered these types of questions on a written questionnaire, in an individual interview, and then in a group interview with other participants (see Appendices D, E, and F). The rationale for employing three research methods for collecting data was to enhance the reliability of the results obtained. Radway (1984) found that people tend to report/recall different aspects of incidents in different contexts (i.e., written versus verbal or one-on-one versus in a group setting). Collecting data by several means produces more detail, and assists the interviewer in reconciling discrepancies, thus, it allows for a more in-depth understanding of the woman's situation. This triangulation of methodology increases confidence in the research findings as it is a form of replication. (Borg & Gall, 1989). It also avoids the kind of "one-dimensional snapshot of a very wide and deep social scene" (Shipman, 1981, p. 147) produced by using one method only.

In order to counteract possible effects of instrumentation
bias which could occur if my perceptions and interpretation of the interview data were to change over the course of the study, I built in three controls. First, I pilot tested my questionnaire to ensure that it was exhaustive and made required changes prior to beginning actual data collection. Second, the interviews were tape-recorded, and third, I employed analytic induction (Denzin, 1970) as part of the data analysis process.

Data Collection

This exploratory study was carried out in Richmond, British Columbia. The data were collected between August 7 and 16, 1990. Six women participated in the study. I met with five participants on three different occasions. During our first meeting informed consent was obtained, demographic information was obtained verbally, and the written questionnaire was completed by the participants. The second meeting was reserved for the individual interview. All six participants were present at the third and final meeting for the group interview. Due to limited availability of her time, one of the participants completed the written questionnaire in her home and provided demographic information over the telephone. This did not result in a change of format, nor did it produce noticeably different information from that given by the other participants. The first meetings took approximately one and one half hours; the individual interviews were an average of two hours in duration; the group interview lasted
two and one half hours.

The interviews took place either at the Share Counselling Center, the Richmond Crisis Center, or in the participant's home. Care was taken to ensure that the interview settings were private, free of distraction, and at a location easily accessible to the participants.

Each interview was tape-recorded. The women were given a fee of ten dollars for every time they met with me to cover any costs they may have incurred as a result of participating in the study. A thank you card was mailed to each participant upon completion of the data collection portion of the study. Each of the participants have requested, and will be given a copy of the findings of this research.

**Data Analysis**

All tape-recorded interviews were transcribed in full. The questionnaire and interview data were then analyzed for the purpose of identifying and defining factors which enabled the women to leave their abusive partners.

Data analysis was performed in three parts: organization, analytic induction, and narrative profiles. Part one began with reading each questionnaire and interview transcript, and highlighting segments of responses containing information indicated as being positively related to the participant's ability to leave her abusive partner. The individual segments were then sorted into groups according to their content. Next, the sorted groups of responses were named using the inductive
exemplar method (Anderson, 1986) in which the groupings are defined by their contents, rather than by external properties assigned to them. Seven categories of enabling constructs were established in this manner, these were: fear, anger, loss of hope, support to leave, resources, relief from abuse, and intervention. Finally, clusters of similar responses within three of the categories were identified. Thus, the sub-categories of legal assistance, place to stay, financial assistance, information, and employment fell under the general category of resources. The relief from abuse category comprised the sub-categories of time spent at a transition house, time spent on own (he left), and time spent with relatives. The category of fear included fear of escalated abuse and of having children apprehended.

Part two of the data analysis comprised the process of analytic induction, a research strategy which involves:

...scanning the data for categories of phenomena and for relationships among such categories, developing working typologies and hypotheses upon an examination of initial cases, then modifying and refining them on the basis of subsequent cases. (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981, p. 57)

Enabling factors were compared between participants and across stages of leaving (i.e., first versus last). Four factors were found to be common to the cases of women defined as permanent leavers. Examination of these four factors across stages of leaving revealed an overall pattern to instances of permanent leaving. Each case was then studied in light of this pattern,
or hypothesis, in order to determine whether or not the hypothesis fit the facts of the case.

In part three of the data analysis, narrative profiles were generated. In order to illustrate the enabling factors 'in-context', a profile of the process of leaving for each woman is presented. A narrative form of presentation was chosen as it succinctly portrayed the large amount of data obtained. Common enabling factors are summarized following the narratives. Then, the combination of enabling factors which appear to differentiate between temporary and permanent leaving behavior is described in terms of each woman's experience.

The Participants

All participants were Caucasian, ranging in age from twenty-six to forty-three. Place of residence was the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Two of the participants were married, two were separated, and two were divorced. All of the women had children. One woman had one child; three had two children; two women had three children.

One woman had a grade eleven education. Four of the participants had grade twelve plus some college or university education. One participant had grade twelve plus two college diplomas. The women's occupations were as follows: cook, counsellor (2), homemaker, salesclerk, cashier, and self-employed.

The women's personal income levels ranged from 9,600 to 30,000 dollars per year. Five of the participants lived in
rental accommodations; one was a homeowner.

Two of the women stated that they had no religious affiliation. The other four participants were: Catholic (2), United, and Christian.

The length of relationship between the women and their abusive partners ranged from five to seventeen years. The abuse began for one woman while she was dating, for two women it began while they were living common law, prior to marriage. For the remaining three women the abuse began after they were married (wedding night; one month after married; one year after married).

There was a wide range in the frequency with which the abuse occurred depending on the type of abuse. Emotional abuse occurred daily or was described as being dependent on the man's substance abuse. Physical abuse for one woman occurred once to twice per month and escalated to weekly during the last six months of the relationship. Others were physically abused as follows: twice during the relationship; once per year; and sporadically. Sexual abuse occurred a few times per month for one woman; once during the relationship for another, and sporadically for a third woman. One participant reported that she suffered "economic" abuse daily, meaning that she was deprived, by her husband, of financial resources necessary to meet the basic needs of herself and her children.

This information is presented for each participant in the Participant Information Summary Sheet (Appendix G).
Other types of abuse the women endured were: threats, accusations, rages, isolation, child abuse, pet abuse, harassment, slander, theft, death threats to self, children, and other family members, suicide threats, threats of child abduction, destruction of possessions, confinement, brainwashing tactics, forced drug consumption.

Physical injuries suffered as a result of the abuse were: broken nose, fractured facial bones, swelling, bruises, cuts, sprained joints, pulled muscles, concussions, eye damage, neck injury, and rape. Two women reported that they were rendered unconscious as a result of either being punched or attempted strangulation.

The number of times the women left their abusive partners ranged from one to ten.

The above information was taken from the transcribed responses to the demographic questionnaire and from the written questionnaire.
CHAPTER IV

Process of Leaving

This chapter presents narrated profiles of the process of leaving, for each participant. Each profile is an edited composite of the responses to the written questionnaire, the individual and group interview. Only those segments of the questionnaire and interviews which pertain to the process of leaving are included in the profiles. Factors which helped or hindered the women in their attempts to end the violence are emphasized. The names of the individuals involved, as well as names of locations and certain agencies have been either changed or deleted in order to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Catherine

When they were married, Catherine and Mark belonged to what she described as an Eastern fundamentalist religion—wherein the teachings centered on "one life, one wife, no divorce, and the woman served the man".

Mark's controlling behavior began on their wedding night when he announced "you're not gonna use any contraception from now on". This came as a complete shock to Catherine, as they "had been meticulous about contraception prior to that". She wasn't ready to have a child. But, "he started quoting the teachings...he made it sound like that was the logical conclusion to come to".

Mark became increasingly abusive, attempting to control
Catherine's behavior through intimidation and put downs.

Not long after that I was just saying how I felt about something, not about him, just about some situation, and he said to me, 'I can't stand to hear you talk like that, I don't want to ever hear you talk like that again'...when that didn't happen...he would just start slamming down books...

It was not long before Catherine began to lose hope in their relationship. "I wanted out almost a month after we were married". Mark's strong beliefs regarding divorce prevented her from having her way. "His mother was married five times and he had been dragged around from home to home...we couldn't discuss separating cause he would start throwing furniture as soon as the word came up, it had such powerful impact for him."

Eight weeks into the marriage Catherine was pregnant.

Catherine related how the religious influence had an impact on her staying in the relationship.

When I would disclose to someone what was happening in my home, they would get really upset, number one that I would ever say out loud the words and just that it's not allowed, that can't be happening, well, what have you done? ...you have to have the dinner on the table in a different way or keep it calm in a different way than what I was doing. ...and I didn't have a lot of contact with what I would call the outside world, so all the impressions I was taking in were saying the same thing, and I didn't have tv and magazines and things like that in my home.

Conversely, she found "the thing that was the most helpful was stepping out of that and into the real world and meeting real people". This, however, did not occur until after the first time she and Mark separated.
When Catherine sought help certain friends or professionals would give advice without useful information.

I was told things like, well you need a lawyer. They didn't say how to get the money to get the lawyer, they didn't say I could have a lawyer free, they just said, well you need a good lawyer, or you should go to a transition house, or you should get out of there, but they never really explained, and when you're in a crisis you're not really relaxed enough to absorb and ask the questions. At the time you're kind of stupefied. Everybody's intentions were quite good but they were assuming that I knew what they meant. The social workers assume that you know what to do.

Relatives were equally unhelpful: "relatives living 2,000 miles away, saying you should get out of there. And I lived in a small town, there was nowhere to go".

Their fifth year of marriage was particularly difficult for Catherine and it was the first time she left. Both she and Mark had agreed on a home birth for their second child, Mark committing to provide the necessary supports. It was a "very difficult, unexpectedly long birth, and he just didn't come through at all, in any way. As a matter of fact he turned quite weird and was like a baby himself and needed to be served and waited on". Mark left the country six weeks after their son was born.

Lack of support and desertion at this crucial time spurred Catherine to seek a separation. When Mark returned she announced, "I can't do this anymore, I'm leaving". He agreed to a temporary separation only, and promptly left town. Catherine stated that at that time she was helped by a
supportive social worker and received some financial assistance from social services to support herself and two children.

Catherine described their nine month separation as

"nine months of bliss. ...within six weeks, I felt like the top of my head was gonna blow off. Like the energy, coming up inside of me was just so exciting cause I had been using so much energy to keep everything calm, cool and collected. And I didn't need to do that anymore...I started going to aerobics, and I started volunteering and I started looking good and...talking positively instead of negatively.

After nine months apart, Mark began harassing Catherine and pressuring her to move to a large city where he was living.

That's when all the tension and fights and his weirdness really accelerated. ...lots of threats, lots of accusations...saying, 'you'll never get away with this, you can't leave me, you'll never see these kids again, you'll never see these kids alive, I'll take them out of the country...

Because they lived in a small town without a transition house Catherine had a difficult time obtaining information regarding legal assistance and there was no safe place for her to go. She tried to obtain help on one occasion which met with complete failure.

In _____ at that time I remember riding my bicycle to the RCMP station. I remember even hiding it because it's a small town. I went inside and asked these guys about a restraining order because somebody at legal services said, 'what you need is a restraining order'...they said...'well you are legally entitled to get a restraining order, however, we here at this station would never recommend it...that was like waving a red flag in front of a bull'...they just really talked me out of doing that.
Eventually, "social workers talked me into moving and he pushed his way back into the family". By this time Catherine had lost all hope that she and Mark could ever have a successful marriage. "Then it was just a process of how do you get rid of someone who doesn't want to be gotten rid of?" From then on it was a matter of "a slow building up of information as to how I could do it, and what my choices were and waiting for an opportunity".

The abuse continued - now that Mark knew Catherine was serious about wanting to end the relationship, he resorted to physical violence in an attempt to regain control.

Catherine knew that if she was to leave or get rid of him, she would need a support network. So she set about creating one, which she stated "took an incredibly long period of time". She explains, "after getting over the shame and depression and actually reaching out to someone for help...if somebody told me something discouraging, it would set me back for like a month. I wouldn't make the next phone call".

Her search for support was made somewhat easier by the fact that Mark would often leave the country for extended periods of time, thus "the pressure was off here".

Catherine received support primarily from friends she acquired. In particular,

...having friends that weren't just friends but were supportive in that when I would be whining and complaining and venting and things like that, they'd say to me, 'you know, I've heard this before, so what are you gonna do
about it? ... I got that as being really supportive rather than, 'oh, gee, I'm so sorry that happened to you' ... that was really the difference... I had two people like that, that just stopped me short by saying, 'I've heard all this before'.

... a particular friend who coached me on being afraid and doing it anyway.

Indeed, later, when she did leave, friends provided support and resources:

... I had one friend who stored my stuff in his house and he slipped some money into it so that I could take a taxi. I had another friend that let me stay at his house with my kids hiding out while my lawyers were doing their thing.

Catherine was still lacking information regarding her legal rights as well as legal support. When she asked a friend who was getting a divorce about how he was doing it, and he gave her a pamphlet on legal services, "that was the start of the thinking process that maybe I could actually divorce him".

Still, one of her greatest fears was that Mark would take the children away from her. He threatened to take them out of the country so that she would never see them again. So, for her, the problem was "how do you get out of it with your kids?"

Therefore, it was "like a miracle" to Catherine when her lawyer said, "...you think they're gonna give kids to a guy like that? You're crazy".

... Things are changing now, I mean they might give a guy like that kids, but in those days, he said, 'no problem'. And that was what I needed to hear, that I could get out of it with my kids. And when he told me that he could get the eviction order to get him out and then a restraining order to keep him out... it was
wonderful.

Catherine sums it up:

The last time I left it was different because I had the support of a lawyer and the law. My friends and my lawyer helped me to leave by providing support and encouragement and a place to stay temporarily. I could get out of the relationship because I had a restraining order, an eviction order, custody and a divorce petition.

She relates how fortunate she was to have a supportive lawyer:

I had a young legal aid lawyer right out of law school who had done one of his papers on wife battering... he tried harder. He really wanted to do it right. He came to the place where I was hiding out for me to sign the papers... I didn't have to trot off, take the kids to his office all the time. When I told him that my husband was threatening to take my son out of the country, he went to court the next morning and had the custody access agreement varied so that he could only see him within the province of British Columbia.

Catherine was granted her divorce and has remained separated from her ex-husband for nine years. Since the divorce she has had one serious long-term relationship which was not abusive.

Laura.

Sam began to attempt to control Laura soon after they were married: "he wanted to have my full attention and he didn't want to have others around". He would resort to abusive behavior whenever she did not focus on him, kicking things, yelling, telling Laura what she could and could not do. Later reflecting on those early years, Laura stated: "I should have known the first time he kicked a hole in my guitar because I was spending too much time playing it and enjoyed it too much;
that was about one month after we were married!"

Like Catherine, Laura also became pregnant during the first year of marriage. Sam became "despondent".

Sam's controlling behavior became increasingly abusive. Three years into the marriage, after the birth of their second child, the physical abuse began.

He punched me in the eye; from then on it seemed to be kick the kids, hit the dog, shake me up; I was always on edge. Then he isolated me by moving us away and I became the good little wife I was supposed to be; cleaning and taking care of his needs. As soon as I would step out of this mold he would start in abusing me, my children, my pets, name calling my friends, my family. He continually put me down, didn't listen when I talked, making me feel like I was crazy and it was all my fault.

Laura tried to leave Sam on two occasions before she actually succeeded. When she would tell friends and relatives about her situation they would simply reinforce the traditional sex roles attitudes that her husband was imposing on her.

My mother-in-law told me that in a marriage it was ninety percent man and ten percent woman - as far as importance goes. That if there was anything wrong...you were to give in to the man at all times. It did not support me in thinking that I could leave or should leave.

Friends said things like 'everybody has a tough time', and 'you can always expect some men are that way'.

On two occasions Sam left Laura and the children to look for work. The first time he was out of town for three months, then he was out of the country for five months. Laura took advantage of the first separation by taking a stand upon his
return and informing Sam that she liked living on her own and wanted to remain separated. In order to dissuade her, first he cried, and then talked to her for three hours, saying it was all her fault. When he could not break her spirit completely, Sam raped Laura. The family moved to a new city.

NOTE: This "three hours of talking" was a tactic mentioned by four of the women in this study. It was a tactic used by the men designed to curtail any independence the women exhibited, i.e., leaving ideation. They were described as "three or four hour dissertations", wherein the women would be told that they caused the violence and would be instructed as to what they should and shouldn't do in order to be better wives. Maria likened it to being "kidnapped and interrogated". Similarly for Laura, "there would be no break in that time for me. It would be constant". Catherine concurred: "he would keep me up till two, three o'clock in the morning, and his eyes just bulging, spit coming out of his mouth...he was just so intense".

This tactic commonly resulted in breaking the spirit of the woman. Laura stated "I would feel strong in the first part...by the time he was finished talking...I'd feel as if I should really feel sorry for him, I should be more understanding...and if I didn't do this or that, things would be better".
The second time Sam left home to look for work, Laura regained confidence in herself and in her ability to succeed on her own. "I got myself a job and really felt good about myself. ...I was working and supporting my kids, and I was doing all sorts of things".

This new-found freedom was to be short-lived. After five months of absence, Sam insisted that they all move to _____. Laura protested, but, "he phoned and told me I was breaking up the family; he would tell everyone I was a terrible mother; that I was crazy. It was a long [three hour] phone call". The family moved once again.

Laura completely lost hope that Sam would ever change during this last reconciliation. She explains:

He had succeeded in isolating me once again. We were in a new country, he was about to lose his job again, my daughter came in drunk, almost alcohol poisoned, my son had been abused at the school he was attending. Not only was I being abused, but I was getting no help with the kids. I had no family or friends to rely on. ...one day Sam came home and beat up my oldest daughter and ripped up the resume she had been working on all day. I decided I was going to go back to Canada.

However, it was not until she gained support from Phil, a new friend, that Laura was actually able to leave. Phil believed Laura and supported her decision to leave. Laura stated, "when I left the last time it was different because I had someone who told me I was worthwhile and could do it". He also provided her with the finances she needed to make the break. Laura was able to get her old job back almost
immediately, but in the interim, Phil gave her money for rent. She was able to stay with her brother until she found a place to live for herself and three children. Around this time, she also benefitted from individual counselling with a family therapist. "It helped me to focus not on why I let it happen, but how to overcome it".

Laura did not have the benefit of transition house support, thus, she did not engage legal support immediately. This presented some problems because when she left, the abuse escalated.

He threatened to kill himself and me. He threatened to abuse my family. He had a gun and kept reminding me. He went around to all my family and told them I was crazy, I was breaking up such a wonderful family. He tried to break me down by phoning me in the middle of the night, phoning at work and telling my boss things about me. He would sneak into my house and take things. Finally, he ended up punching me in the face.

Laura stated that if she could re-live the last time she left, the only thing she would do differently, would be to get a restraining order immediately.

Laura and Sam have been separated and divorced for four years. Laura married Phil. Difficulties remain, as Sam tries to "get back at me through the children, and threatens that I have to pay for leaving him". She has found strength through the relationship with her caring, supportive husband, and with her new in-laws, as well as through her "faith in Jesus Christ". Laura has just finished attending a support group for battered women which she found to be extremely helpful.
The support group has been the best. ...meeting people who think of you as being intelligent, able to do alternative things, that you're not crazy, but what you're saying...this has happened, it isn't right...you're a human being and we speak to you like you're a person and that you can think.

Laura finally stopped having nightmares three years after leaving Sam.

**Linda**

Linda's husband Ted became physically abusive two years into their marriage, as in Laura's case, after the birth of their second child. It began when Ted "started going to school and got hooked on drugs". He was beating Linda, and, as she was to learn later, also abusing the children.

When Linda approached her grandparents for help, she was told, "no matter what you do, you stay with him. ...whatever he says, you do".

Linda's brother Peter knew that she had suffered a concussion on one occasion and that she had been beaten up before by Ted. It was Peter who was to intervene and help Linda to leave. Linda explained:

Peter lived with us for six months once. ...he began to see what was going on with the children more than I did. ...Ted would never hit them in front of me...I would be out somewhere...and then it would happen. ...Peter saw once when Ted hit ____ in the head. He hit him so hard his ear started bleeding. ...he went home and phoned the Zenith number for kids, and they sent a welfare worker over...who said, 'if you can't protect your kids from your husband, they will be taken away'. That's what really panicked me. Obviously I couldn't protect them if he did it behind my back. ...I
didn't want to lose my children. She gave me the phone number of a transition house but didn't explain what a transition house was. She was no help other than threatening to take my kids away. I didn't know how to get out and I was too afraid to kick him out because he was very violent. I didn't have any money...he was addicted to drugs and that costs...I wouldn't even be able to take a cab.

It was mostly my brother who helped me out. ...he sent a cousin over who never visited us before...and he asked how things were going and kept prying...I ended up breaking down and just crying, telling him I didn't know what to do...he said, 'well why don't you just pack the kids up and come with me right now'.

We stayed at his place for about a week until Ted agreed to leave the house and we moved back in. My brother stayed with us for a while. I got financial support from welfare.

I was glad that [Peter] was around when I needed him. I found out that he was the one who called when I got to my cousin's house. I thanked him cause I didn't have the strength to do it on my own. I was too scared to go, I had nowhere to go, and I had no money.

Linda refused to return to Ted unless he stopped using drugs and received counselling for his addiction and violent behavior. They were separated for one year. During that time Ted received treatment for his drug problem, and sought counselling for other issues. He also took a parenting course. Linda returned because she still had hope. "I went back because I still loved him and thought he could change".

After they were reunited, Linda attended a support group for battered women while Ted attended the coinciding group for men who batter. They have been together now for eighteen months since the separation. Linda explained that leaving was
the thing that has been most helpful to her. "By leaving you get a new perspective on things. ...I know I can do it on my own now because I have a job and my self confidence is way up."

Linda contends, "the physical abuse has stopped but economical and emotional abuse are still happening, but not as often as before".

Hope for change and traditional religious influence keep Linda tied to an emotionally abusive partner:

...my sister's a Nun, my God, I can't leave my husband, I'd have to get a divorce. What is she gonna think of me? ...we gotta go to counselling...we gotta make everything right, cause no way am I getting a divorce. I still think we'll make it work.

Maria

Maria and Lou dated for four weeks before living together. Maria stated that the abuse began "after five months of knowing each other". They were married and stayed together for a total of eight years. During that time "the emotional abuse became almost daily - the physical abuse escalated from once or twice a month to weekly in the final six months".

Maria left Lou ten times during the course of their relationship. At first she left because she was afraid for her own safety. Later on she feared for the safety of herself and her child. The first seven times, with the exception of the third, Maria left for short durations ranging from two days to three weeks and stayed with her parents. The third time, Lou had isolated Maria by moving her away from her family and
friends to another country. Thus, when she left for ten days, she stayed with her sister-in-law. Each time Maria left, Lou would "phone and phone", and she stated, "I'd always go back because he promised not to hit me again".

The first time Maria sought refuge at a transition house was the eighth time she left - by then she had a child with her.

He had not been coming home like all night for about two or three months, and I knew something was going on but I just couldn't look at it.

...One night he says, 'oh, by the way, I was walking by a travel agency today and I decided I need a vacation, I'm going to ______. ...I nearly died, I knew he was going with his girlfriend. My girlfriend said to 'tell him you're going on a trip too'. So the next day I got up and said 'well, yes, this is a coincidence, I'm going on a trip too'. Well he went absolutely crazy. And that was the worst he had ever hit me. ...he went to work and said 'I'm phoning there in a half an hour', and I just left with the clothes on my back.

On this occasion Maria telephoned a crisis center from her parents house and they put her in touch with a transition house. She stayed away for six months and returned because Lou promised, and she hoped, that he would change. Maria left on one more occasion - overnight to her parents house, before leaving for the final time.

She explained how concern for her two year old son, anger, and loss of hope impacted her decision to leave.

I left finally because of the effect my marriage was having on my son. The last time my husband hit me I will never forget my child's reaction. ...it's funny though because in the beginning and the first time I left for
six months, I thought I was going back because of my son partially, that it would be good for him to have a mommy and a daddy and the typical home, but as the year wore on I just couldn't bear to see what was happening to him. ... I do not want my child growing up in an unhealthy environment. I do not what him re-acting to fear the way that I was. I also do not want to encourage him to become an abusive person. When I left my husband had not only hit me, but forced me to consume pills against my will. It was demoralizing to such a point that something finally snapped inside. It was as if a voice that wasn't even mine said 'I won't tolerate this anymore'. I also finally came to the realization that my husband's continual promises that 'it won't happen again' weren't true.

After locking Maria in a room all morning, Lou permitted her to take their son to the park. She never returned.

Maria went to a transition house where she received support and gained access to the resources she needed to remain on her own. She received financial support from social services. Lou was court ordered out of the house. Maria obtained a restraining order and was given a guard to ensure her safety.

Maria described how fear, anger, and a support group have helped her to stay away.

Even though there was a part of me that still wanted to go back I knew the day I went back he would hit me because he'd made me swear to him that I would never leave again and get restraining orders and humiliate him, and so on and so on. I knew there was no way I would ever go back there and him not take it out on me.

Anger was most helpful to me in ending the abuse. Because after eight years of going yes, yes, and not having any opinion that I could
vocalize, I had a lot of anger and at the end when I left I was very angry. But I'm glad that I was angry because I wouldn't have gotten to where I am now if I hadn't had that anger.

One thing that really helped me was getting into a support group right away. The last time that I left I was at a transition house for a month. At the suggestion of the woman at the transition house I got a counsellor at family services immediately and she got me into a support group - as soon as the next one was starting. It's like when you leave you're sort of in limbo... 'I can do it, I can do it, but who's gonna help me?', and I think your peers can mean well, but the thing about a support group and the leader of a support group is that they are people who are having the same experiences and I really don't think anybody else can really understand... it makes all the difference.

Maria has remained separated from Lou for eleven months. Although she hasn't finalized her divorce yet because "it's still that whole sort of guilt system", she stated, "that's really something I have to work on... I think I'm just about ready now".

Lou's refusal to change has destroyed the hope she had, freeing Maria to choose a non-abusive life.

I like living in a peaceful and calm environment. I also realize that my husband will never stop hitting and abusing me because he doesn't believe he has a problem with abuse. I can finally accept that. But I will not live with it. It's okay that he is refusing to deal with his own issues, but I can't be a part of his life because of this... I made that choice. He told me he liked himself, he didn't want to change, and I've accepted that, but I chose not to live with him.
Colleen

Ben hit Colleen once before they were married, but was not physically abusive again until their first year of marriage when Colleen became pregnant. She stated that his abusive behavior coincided with his "coke addiction".

Colleen left on five different occasions. She was prompted by Ben's erratic drug induced behavior, physical beatings, and finally, because he was a danger to the children.

The first time she left, Colleen stayed with her brother for only a few days before he told Ben where she was and Ben came and got her. He promised that he would stop taking drugs. Colleen hoped he would change, and she was afraid not to go back with him as she explains: "I was scared of him too. He was hanging around with bike clubs and they can be pretty irate people to deal with, especially in situations like that".

Ben's addiction and abusive behavior worsened. Shortly after one beating, Colleen went to see her family doctor and told him about the abuse. He was to be Colleen's first source of support for leaving. Up to this point Colleen acted on traditional attitudes passed on from her family regarding the sanctity of marriage and the role of the woman, such as "abuse was part of marriage. ...you stick around for better or worse. You give your word, your word's your bond. And you just try and make it cause eventually things are gonna get better."

Ben's siblings also admonished her to stay and endure the abuse: "you married him, you made your bed, now lie in it". 
She tried harder, "I twisted myself into thinking that there was more I could do until one of these times I'm gonna do the right thing and it's gonna stop".

But her doctor said, "he's had trouble ever since growing up...as soon as he started doing drugs and hanging around with the wrong people. ...All you can do right now is go get your kids, I'll send a cab to your mother-in-law's, you don't go home. You got shoes on your feet and a coat on, you go to the transition home". He sent Colleen to her first transition house and insisted that she make a police report. He also filed a report with the police.

However, being a small town, Ben found out from the taxi cab company dispatcher where Colleen was. He began phoning and urging her to return. She remained in the transition house for one month. Colleen stated that she obtained a good lawyer who got Ben out of the house. She got a restraining order. During their separation Ben "admitted to the assault and went to court. They sent him to family violence treatment, they sent him to a drug counsellor. He got a suspended sentence and was put on probation for one year".

The separation lasted three months. Since Ben was receiving help for his problems, Colleen had hope that the relationship would return to the way it was prior to his addiction. Ben moved back in. Colleen reported that there was no physical abuse for a number of months - then Ben began taking prescription drugs and abusing alcohol. Six months
after they were reunited Ben beat Colleen up in their car - she was pregnant with their third child at the time.

After that, "he didn't do anything for a couple of weeks. He felt real bad but he told me, 'listen, this is the way of life I live and I'm not gonna change anymore'. So I knew then, I just had to bide my time until I could get out of there safe again".

Ben sensed that Colleen was going to leave. He would take her car, not give her any money, and not allow her to leave the house. But when she felt it was safe, Colleen called the police - they took her to the transition house.

This time she stayed in the transition house for five weeks, then moved to another province and changed her name, so that Ben would not find her.

This separation was especially helpful for Colleen. "...the geographical move...put me in a position where, once I made the decision, I could move and I did it on my own and I had my baby on my own and raised her, so I knew I could do it. ...I started getting confidence in myself that I never had before.

Colleen's independence was to be short lived. "My mother phoned me and said she told him where I was staying. He was on his way out cause he missed us and he'd been through treatment and he wasn't using anymore".

Within three months of their reconciliation Ben had spent all of the money from the sale of their house on drugs.
Colleen explains how she was prompted to leave for the safety of her children.

I think it was my instinct that just said I gotta get out a here because although I never felt like protecting myself I knew I had to protect my children. ...he threw a chair at me and hit my son the week before, that's really what snapped in me, and got me, cause one of the kids was gonna get hurt. He threw a chair at me two days before I left and it missed the baby's head by that much. He would have killed her...

Colleen sought refuge at another transition house, this time for two days and then went to stay with her father in another country. But her father's advice was to go back home. Ben verbally agreed to move out of the house, so she returned. This was a mistake she was lucky to live to regret. Ben did not leave their home as promised, and he held Colleen captive for three days, severely beating her before she was able to escape to safety with her children.

Colleen went to another transition house where she received support and gained access to the legal and financial resources she needed to stay safe. She explained, "the last time I left it was different because I lost hope, felt depressed, I was lost, he had hurt the children". She described how support, leaving, and access to resources helped her to leave and stay away for fourteen months.

The knowledge I had acquired with each time I left was one of the things that helped me to leave for good. It took me three or four times leaving him...

I had to get to the stage where I'd learned
enough in the transition homes...realizing I have some self worth and it wasn't meant to be that way.

...I knew it was time so I phoned the transition home and they told me that they'll find me room, just to get packed and get ready...and they found me room in _______, so I went there.

I think everybody who's been a part of my life since the first transition home I went in, and all the support I've had from the different friends I've had, it's all been a factor in helping me leave.

My mother-in-law was supportive. It's funny. She would explain to the family - cause they were all giving me a hard time about leaving him...that I didn't have to live with somebody who's abusive.

I've had a lot of support and been able to build up my self esteem.

However, at the time of our interview, Colleen's hope had been renewed. She was seeing Ben again and considering marriage counselling. She had a new sense of hope because Ben had been "clean and sober" for a number of months. He was receiving therapy and attending both AA and NA meetings.

Tanya

David became emotionally abusive toward Tanya after about seven months of dating. She stated,

I think it was probably not far into the relationship when there was little bits of emotional abuse. ...I knew I was feeling uncomfortable and didn't like the way he was treating me but I thought it was something we could handle. ...I think it was once he knew he'd hooked me, then the abuse started.

I was uncomfortable with the amount he drank initially...he was so young, I couldn't imagine
that he could be an alcoholic.

Tanya explained how traditional socialization and David's blaming affected her ability to leave.

David had me convinced that I was responsible, you know, 'if you did this and you didn't do that', and I really believed him...because you're so trained into that way of thinking...so I tried harder.

Eight months after they were married, Tanya decided to leave.

I have a girlfriend who worked at [a drug and alcohol agency]...she told me a little about counselling and whatnot that they had there, and I sort of was starting to know enough that he needed some help, but I didn't really think he was an alcoholic. And I decided I just couldn't take it anymore.

I'd get stressed out, then he'd all of a sudden stop bugging me, and I'd relax. Just as soon as I got relaxed he'd start again. ...was just on this big roller coaster.

He would leave me stranded somewhere if I didn't say the right thing.

And I left. One day he came home from work...and I was gone. I did it a cowardly way because I guess in a way I was kind of scared of him, or a little intimidated by him.

Tanya stayed with her parents the first time she left. She informed David that she would not return until he sought counselling for his alcohol abuse.

David made an appointment for both of them with a drug and alcohol counsellor. He went to one counselling session, left after ten minutes, and told both Tanya and the counsellor that
he could quit on his own, "he didn't need anybody's help".

Tanya stayed with her parents for one week. David stopped drinking and she moved back. "I guess I wanted to believe at that point. I still felt enough for him that I felt there was something to work on". They went through what she described as a "honeymoon stage". It lasted three months, at which time she became pregnant and David resumed drinking.

David's behavior became increasingly abusive: "he was putting me again in situations that were scaring me. ...I was pregnant and he would drive like a maniac, out of control until I would scream and cry - he'd laugh...he thought it was so funny that he had such control over me".

Tanya sought help to deal with David's behavior and found a supportive counsellor who was to have a significant impact on her ability to leave the relationship.

My friend had talked to me more about the counselling at ___ and said that you don't have to be an alcoholic or have a drug problem to go, you can be a friend or a loved one. ...So I started going, and I went once a week without David knowing.

The counsellor I had, helped me a great deal. ...I was really surprised that he was as supportive to me for getting out of the relationship as he was. He was quite blunt with me and just said...if David wasn't hitting me yet, he was going to. He also said that while I was staying in the relationship I was abusing my child in me. And that my child had been abused that night before by feeling the stress in me. And it just went 'click'. I bawled my eyes out, feeling so responsible that this poor little thing inside me is stressed out...and it hasn't even seen the light of day yet. He said even if there is a chance you do
work it out, there's no way of it ever happening unless you leave. And he said 'I know of a good transition house you can go to'. ...I went home again, I had my family and friends come over and pack me up while he was working, and I went into a transition house.

Tanya described how she experienced feelings of guilt and resistance toward going against traditional expectations.

That was the hardest thing I have ever done in my life, ever. ...I felt, I got married in God's house, and I just had this big guilt, now I'm getting divorced and I only wanted to do it once. I went through a lot of 'what will my family and friends think and what about the baby? ...I wasn't quite ready to take the legal step.

When she left, David moved in with his parents. Tanya stayed at the transition house for two weeks and then moved into her parents' home. David stopped drinking again and began seeing a counsellor and attending AA meetings. Tanya suspected that he had replaced the alcohol with drugs. Six weeks later,

I didn't want to get back with him but he was convincing me. My mom and dad and everybody's saying, 'oh, wow, the new David, he's really changed, he seems so nice'. ...it just made me feel I had to take another look. The AA counsellors even said he seems really sincere, like he's really doing it. ...I asked my parents if he could move in for just a month or two to try it and see how it was gonna work, and if it wasn't I would just ask him to leave. And they agreed.

Several incidents occurred thereafter which convinced Tanya that there was no hope that David would change.

The very day he moved in he decided he didn't have to go to that AA meeting that night, and never went again.

I suspected that he was drinking outside of my
parents' home.

I had been going to pre-natal classes with him and initially he seemed into it but when it came to the part where you're having touching contact with your spouse...a bit of real bonding with what's coming, he refused to participate. We sat there like two bumps on a log while everybody else was all happy and joyous... And it just made me think. I felt like this isn't gonna work.

On day while I was nursing the baby he came in the room and made some very crude and suggestive physical motions connecting what I was doing with what he would like me to be doing. I was repulsed. I knew then that he was a really sick person, not just an alcoholic.

Tanya began to let go of the relationship while she was still living with David.

I feel like I mourned the loss of the relationship and went through a real grieving process...while I was still living with him because I knew it wasn't gonna work. He had shoved me a couple of times, once knocking me down on the ground and once grabbing me by the neck and shoving me up against a wall, and I could certainly see it getting worse, but the emotional abuse...was incredible.

A girlfriend who supported her decision to end the relationship helped her to act upon it, and Tanya asked David to leave. But David would not leave.

...and I didn't know what to do so I went and talked to the counsellors at _____ (transition house). They got me to get my mom over too and talked to her. I had the baby with me and they just said 'leave now, just don't go home'...I hated to do this to my parents, but they agreed that the best thing to do was for me to get out and let them handle him.

Tanya stayed at the transition house and her father
demonstrated his support by telling David, "she's made a decision and doesn't want you here and we're standing by our daughter and you're not welcome here". David still refused to leave. Tanya's parents had to wait until he left the house for a couple of hours, then they changed the locks on their doors.

David found out where the transition house was and followed Tanya to the doctor's office where he grabbed their daughter and ran. The police were called and talked David into handing the baby over. After this incident Tanya was moved to another transition house with the aid of a police escort. She was ready to take the legal step. She obtained a legal aid lawyer, and three weeks after leaving, had custody of her daughter, as well as a restraining order and was able to move safely back into her parents home.

Tanya has remained separated from David for three and a half years. They have been divorced for two years. She stated, "when I left the final time it was different because I no longer loved, liked or respected him as a human being".

Since leaving Tanya has been through "numerous legal battles" with David. He has harassed her and her family, and threatened her life, for which he has spent time in jail.

Common Factors

Each woman mentioned several factors which helped her to leave an abusive partner, either temporarily or permanently (see Table 1, p.80).

Resources such as financial and legal assistance, and a
Table 1

Factors which Enabled the Women to Leave

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITICAL FACTORS:</th>
<th>Tanya</th>
<th>Colleen</th>
<th>Maria</th>
<th>Catherine</th>
<th>Linda</th>
<th>Laura</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legal assistance</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place to stay</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>financial aid</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employment</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief from Abuse:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time spent in transition house</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time spent on own (he left)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time spent with relatives</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Hope</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ADDITIONAL FACTORS:           |       |         |       |           |       |       |
| Fear:                         |       |         |       |           |       |       |
| of escalated abuse            | ✓     |         |       |           |       |       |
| of having children apprehended|       |         |       |           | ✓     |       |
| Anger                         |       |         |       |           | ✓     |       |
| Intervention*                 |       |         |       |           |       | ✓     |

*helpful only when accompanied by available resources.
place to stay were crucial factors in enabling each woman to leave. Obtaining information on legal services helped Catherine make the final break. Employment increased Laura and Linda's confidence in their ability to make it on their own. Intervention helped Linda to leave when she was paralyzed by fear and had no place to go. Experiencing an absence of abuse allowed Catherine and Laura's independence to grow, increased their confidence, and strengthened their resolve to leave.

Losing hope that their partners would change helped Catherine, Laura, Tanya, Colleen and Maria to leave. Emotional support from various sources (family, friends, transition house counsellors) was mentioned by all of the women as one of the factors which enabled them to leave. Anger spurred Maria to leave, and fear was one factor in her staying away. Fear of having her children apprehended (if she could not protect them from her husband) provided the impetus for Linda to leave temporarily.

No one factor alone accounted for the women's ability to leave permanently. Rather, an overall pattern of four contributing factors emerged from the data. That is, the women left permanently when they had a) support to leave, b) access to resources, c) experienced relief from the abuse, and d) lost hope that their partners would change.

This combination of enabling factors differentiated the stages of leaving. Simply put, when all four factors were not in place, the women returned to their abusive partners, but
when all four were in place, the women were able to stay away. These four factors were found to be individually necessary and jointly sufficient to the ability to leave an abusive relationship.

Catherine's first period of respite from the abuse was when Mark agreed to leave temporarily. She had already lost hope that he would change, and she had some of the resources (social assistance) she needed. The second and final time she left, Catherine had many friends who provided emotional and financial support, as well as a temporary place to stay. She also had the legal assistance which enabled her to get away safely with her children.

Similarly, Laura had lost hope early in the relationship. She experienced two lengthy separations from Sam while he was away seeking employment. These periods of relief from the abuse were instrumental in re-building her self confidence. However, Laura was not able to leave and stay away until she received emotional and financial support from her friend Phil.

Tanya had a place to go and access to resources the first time she escaped to her parents' home. The second time she also had the support of a counsellor. Prior to the third and final time Tanya left, she received support from a friend, transition house counsellors, and her family, and had lost hope that David would change.

Linda's brother and cousin intervened to help her leave. She left temporarily when provided with a safe place to stay.
Linda's brother supported her decision to stay away while Ted received treatment for his problems, and he helped to ensure her safety. Linda returned to her husband and retains hope that he will change.

Maria had access to a place to stay and to some resources via her parents the first seven times that she left Lou. After her eighth and ninth times leaving she obtained emotional support to leave from the transition house counsellors. The last time she left, Maria also gained access to financial and legal resources and to additional support through the transition house. When Maria left the last time she still harbored some hope that Lou would change. Since then she has gained confidence in herself and lost hope that Lou will ever change.

Colleen had some support to leave and a place to go the first time she left. She obtained additional emotional support and access to resources through the transition houses she stayed at each time she left. She did not make the final break until she had also lost hope that Ben would change. However, he has since exhibited signs of change. Colleen's hope has been renewed and at the time of our interview, some fourteen months after their last separation, with her divorce papers ready to be filed, she had resumed a relationship with Ben.
CHAPTER V

Conclusion

This study has documented the complex process of leaving an abusive partner. The findings reveal that a combination of four factors, namely support, resources, relief from abuse, and loss of hope is related to the women's ability to leave permanently. The significance of these four enabling factors can be understood when examined within the context of the women's lives.

The women in this study were dominated by men who claimed to love them. They were subject to control tactics such as physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, even 'brainwashing' techniques. Many of the people who figured predominantly in the women's lives, especially family members, reinforced this oppression by espousing traditional sex role attitudes such as, "no matter what...you stay with him...whatever he says, you do" (Linda); "in a marriage it is ninety percent man, ten percent woman...give in to the man at all times" (Laura); "you just try and make it cause eventually things are gonna get better" (Colleen).

Critical Factors

Support

Support was the one factor mentioned more often than any other as being helpful in enabling the women to leave. Support appeared to be most helpful when it was expressed in terms of believing the woman, validating her feelings and desire to
leave, as well as, providing some kind of assistance to act on that decision. Laura's case provides a concise example. She was finally able to leave after meeting Phil. "He believed me. ...I had someone who told me I was worthwhile and I could do it. ...he gave me money for rent...to get started."

Catherine and Tanya also made reference to the assistance which helped them to take action:

...having friends that weren't just friends but were supportive in that when I would be whining and complaining and venting and things like that, they'd say to me, 'you know I've heard this before, so what are you gonna do about it?'

Tanya's counsellor supported her desire to leave and referred her to a "good transition house". Another time, "a girlfriend of mine...I had made the decision, but was really supportive and it was helping and enabling me to actually act on it...it was like, 'there's no reason why you can't go home and get rid of him right now, after you leave here'...it helped me to get the determination that, 'yeah, you're right, I can do it right now'.

Support appeared to give the women the strength to ignore the prevalent traditional ideology and listen to their feelings instead. Feelings such as Maria's anger, which when acknowledged, said, "I won't tolerate this anymore".

Transition house counsellors and others were supportive in helping the women to counteract the traditional rules they were previously admonished to live by. Affirming the woman's right not to be abused, replaced the traditional idiom, "no matter what...you stay with him" (Linda). Since the women's feelings
and thoughts, i.e., "I didn't think I should have to tolerate the abuse" (Linda), were incongruent with what others were telling them, when they received support and validation, it went a long way to help them. The women gained confidence and strength when their feelings were validated, rather than negated, and when their belief that they did not deserve to be abused was strengthened, rather than denied. Laura did not believe that she deserved to be abused, but her husband repeatedly tried to convince her that it was all her fault. She found strength in individual counselling; "it helped me to focus not on why I let it happen, but how to overcome it".

Surprisingly, support, the factor most often mentioned by the women in this study as an important enabling factor, has been noticeably absent in previous research. Bowker's (1983) study appears to be the only one which mentions the importance of support in helping women to leave. He reported: "participation in women's groups gave them the confidence and information necessary to end the battering. The importance of the social support of women's groups as a force to end marital violence is clearly shown by this factor" (p. 123). There does not appear to be any research available which addresses the nature of this support, i.e., to counteract traditional ideology.

**Resources**

Resources such as financial and legal assistance, and a safe place to stay afforded the women some independence.
During the course of their relationships with abusive men, these women experienced many forms of forced economic dependence. Some were not permitted to work. For others, advanced education was "taboo" (Maria). Those who were allowed to work usually had their income controlled by their partners. In addition, many women lose their income upon leaving their partner due to the escalated threat of retaliation. Because they must hide from their abusive partners, they are either forced to quit or take an extended leave of absence from work, as it is unsafe to go there. Financial dependence was one of the most debilitating forces the women encountered. This information is congruent with Aguirre's (1985) finding that "the wives economic dependence on their husbands almost always ensured that they would return" (p. 350).

When they had a safe place to go to, the women could escape the violence, at least temporarily. Financial assistance enabled them to stay away by providing them with the money they needed to support themselves and their children. Most of the women found legal assistance to be crucial to their ability to stay away. Obtaining custody enabled them to leave without the fear of child abduction. Eviction and restraining orders allowed them to live in relative safety.

Unfortunately, prosecution for assault was rarely carried out. In fact only one of the men in this study was charged for assaulting his wife. At least one study (Hilton, 1989) reports that although charging assaultive husbands was made mandatory
in Canada in 1983, the police force is still reluctant to enforce this law.

All of the above resources added to the women's independence from their abusive partners, a crucial component of their ability to leave. Gondolf's (1988) analysis affirms that "an increase in resources that afford greater independence do in fact contribute to a woman's leaving the batterer" (p. 4).

Relief from Abuse

Periods of respite from the abuse functioned as important confidence building opportunities for the women in this study. Whether the women left or the husbands left the family, these breaks were described as being beneficial to the women. They were often periods of time free from the constant negative influence, of calm and peace, during which the women experienced the freedom to think, make their own choices, and to evaluate their commitment to the relationship.

When Mark agreed to a temporary separation and left town, Catherine had new-found energy and the freedom to try new things.

...the energy...was just so exciting cause I had been using so much energy to keep everything calm, cool and collected. And I didn't need to do that anymore...I started going to aerobics and I started volunteering and I started looking good and...talking positively instead of negatively.

The women's self confidence increased when they succeeded in making it on their own, even if only temporarily. Sam
constantly told Laura that she was a bad wife and mother, that their problems were all her fault. But she re-gained confidence in herself as a parent and as a provider for her three children when Sam left the family to seek employment. She explained: "I got myself a job and really felt good about myself...I was working and supporting my kids, and I was doing all sorts of things".

Similarly, during one period of respite, Colleen's confidence to 'make it on her own' increased significantly. She stated, "I [moved] on my own and I had my baby on my own and raised her, so I knew I could do it...I started getting confidence in myself that I never had before". Colleen described how the differences she noticed in her children strengthened her resolve to stay away: "I started seeing how his behavior affected the children...I saw the difference of having the last one on my own. Being on my own for those months I saw the difference in my older daughter and the beauty in that baby that was in my first child before the violence..."

A new found confidence in their ability to succeed without their abusive partners usually strengthened the women's resolve to leave. At other times it strengthened their ability to stay away. In the early stages of the leaving process it fortified the woman's determination not to be abused. Linda insisted on a one year separation from Ted and found the time away from him to be particularly helpful. She explained: "I don't think I could have sorted things out while still having him there,
abusive or not. Just needed time...I know I can do it on my own because before I didn't have a job or nothing. Now I got a job and my self confidence is way up, and I know I can do it on my own".

Above all, these experiences belonged to the women. They could not be taken away or otherwise controlled. They gained knowledge and experience which would later be crucial in enabling them to remain away from their abusive partners.

**Loss of Hope**

Once feelings of love had been eroded through repeated abuse, hope became the emotional commitment upon which a relationship with the abusive partner was based. Maintaining hope that 'he will change' allowed the women to reconcile the discrepancy between what they had been led to believe a committed relationship would be like and their individual reality. In turn, hope for change kept them connected to their partner. For some of the women hope was strengthened by the intermittent nature of the abuse, combined as it was with loving, contrite behavior. For others, the memory of the beginning of the relationship, during which there was no discernible abuse, added strength to their feelings of hope.

Women have traditionally been socialized to believe that maintaining a relationship is their responsibility. Thus, if the relationship fails, they fail. With this type of traditional ideology in mind and being constantly culturally reinforced, the women tried hard to save the relationship.
Hope often kept them there long after the abuse began. When they lost hope that he would change, there was nothing left. Hope was eroded gradually with a building up of small incidents, or squashed altogether by one particularly significant incident. The women in this study lost hope when their partner openly refused to change, when they witnessed an increase in his deviant behavior, when his abuse extended to the children, and/or when they encountered others who condemned the abuse, particularly other men. Research by Gondolf (1988) mentions the significance of similar factors: "battered women are more likely to leave a relationship when it is clear that the batterer is not going to change or that the batterer is a generally dangerous person" (p. 37).

On the other hand, hope was either kept alive or renewed when the men attended counselling or promised to do so. These findings are congruent with Gondolf's (1988) finding that "the batterer's being in counselling is one of the strongest predictors of a woman's returning to the batterer" (p. 4). Learning to let go gives the woman the freedom to pursue alternatives because she no longer has an emotional investment in the relationship.

**Temporary and Permanent Leaving**

It was my hope that I would be able to find a criterion based on the literature on woman abuse which would demarcate permanent leavers from those who have left temporarily. However, this was not to be the case. For the most part,
permanent and non-permanent leavers separated according to the 'free of the relationship for two or more years' criterion as well as according to the critical factor criterion. That is, Tanya, Catherine and Laura are considered to be permanent leavers because they have all been away from their abusive partners for two or more years. In turn, these permanent leavers had the four critical enabling factors in common. Conversely, Colleen and Linda have neither remained away for two or more years, nor do they have all four critical factors in place. They both retain the hope that their partners will change. Thus, they are considered to be non-permanent leavers or in a temporary stage of leaving. Maria's case is an anomaly. At the time of our interview she had been separated from her abusive partner for eleven months. However, she had all four critical enabling factors in place. According to the objective criteria of this study then, Maria would be considered a non-permanent leaver. However, Maria need not be ruled out a permanent leaver. Although inductive analysis cannot verify that Maria is in fact a permanent leaver, it is also not possible to conclude that a person who has not yet left for two years, will not in fact, stay away for two years.

It is my opinion that Maria is a permanent leaver. She has the four critical factors in common with the permanent leavers in this study. In addition to these enabling factors Maria is receiving ongoing support through counselling and a support group for battered women. These sources of support
have helped her to adopt a new world view which makes it unlikely that she will ever live with an abusive partner again. On the other hand, based on the findings of this study and others (Gondolf, 1988; MacLeod, 1987), I would predict that Maria, like the other women, may return to her partner if he voluntarily seeks counselling to deal with his controlling behavior.

Obviously the woman must remain away from her abusive partner for a period of time before she can be considered to be a permanent leaver, but this time frame does not appear to be quantifiable. Furthermore, the batterer's behavior plays a crucial role in the woman's leaving status.

**Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

The highly selective method of sample selection employed, means that the stories the women tell are illustrative, representative and exemplary, even though not positivistically generalizable. This method of obtaining participants permitted in-depth exploration of the process of permanently leaving an abusive partner, which would have been impossible using a statistically representative sample, given time and financial constraints.

The triangulation of research methods used in this study allowed responses to be substantiated across methods, thus the reliability of the findings was increased. For example, on the written questionnaire Colleen indicated that she had left Ben three times, whereas, in the individual interview she described
leaving on five different occasions. Further questioning revealed that she did in fact leave five times. On the written questionnaire she had not included the first instance because it lasted only a few days, nor the last because she considered the fourth time leaving to be her final break. Colleen did not return to her partner willingly after that and was subsequently held against her will until she was able to escape to safety. The findings are further strengthened by the fact that different participants gave similar responses to general open-ended questions.

Because I am a formerly battered woman, my biases and expectations can lead to distortions of the data. In order to avoid this source of bias I used the process of analytic induction in my data analysis. However, this potential limitation was also an asset to the conduct of this study, in that, I was in the best position to interpret what the women were saying. In turn, my experience guided me in the selection of appropriate areas of exploration and in the generation of questions. It also attracted participants to the study. Several of the women stated that one of the reasons they agreed so readily to participate in a study which involved discussing very personal and painful experiences, was because of our shared experience. They felt that I would be better equipped to understand and to interpret their experiences. They trusted that I would act in their (our) common interest, rather than exploiting them for the purposes of self-enhancement, e.g., to
complete a Masters thesis.

It is important to note that there is a strong element of interpretation to this study, since it is impossible for the authorship of a study not to influence the findings. Although I worked from the data as it was presented to me, some things may have stood out based on my experience. Therefore, although another person analyzing the same data using the same methods would likely find the same essential features, s/he may use different words to describe them.

I regret that due to pragmatic constraints I was unable to provide a description of my experiences with the participants.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Given that this is an exploratory study, the conclusions reached are tentative and require further substantiation.

The women in this study reported that various social and religious ideologies influenced their ability to escape the abuse. It is interesting to note that during the process of leaving their abusive partners, Catherine and Laura both gave up their interest in traditional religions. It appears that these two women became disenchanted with strong religious injunctions, specifically those which stress the subservience of women and the subordination of women to men. Of the four women identified as permanent leavers, two reported no religious affiliation, one having left a fundamental eastern religion; one discontinued her affiliation with the Lutheran Church, later becoming a non-fundamentalist Christian.
Membership in a traditional religion appears to be inversely related to the critical enabling factor of support. When the women in this study approached relatives and friends who had traditional religious beliefs, they did not receive support to leave. In fact, they were admonished to stay and keep the family together. Future research should be aimed at refining the role of ideological factors in ending woman abuse. What kinds of ideology, particularly religious ideology, are related to staying with or leaving an abusive partner?

A second area of inquiry is into the role of other men in helping women to escape the abuse. Five of the six women interviewed for this study mentioned that one of their sources of support to leave was 'other men'. Linda's brother and male cousin supported her leaving; Catherine had male friends and a male lawyer who were important sources of support; Tanya received support to leave from her male counsellor; Laura was supported by her friend Phil; Colleen's first source of support to leave was a male physician. What is the nature of support by other men? Does it differ from support of women? It may be that the women identified with these men, thereby gaining a sense of power and control over their lives. It may also be that other men were exemplars of alternative male behavior. This may have provided the impetus for the women to adopt a broader perspective of male, female relationships. It is my view that if non-violent, non-controlling men, especially those admired and respected by men, were to speak out against
violence against women it would help to deter abusive men. Is it possible that men can help in other ways? Future researchers could try to ascertain the nature of support by other men to help women leave their abusive partners.

A third area for future research is into the question of how to maintain an abuse-free life-style? Some women leave an abusive partner and later become involved with another abusive man. Tanya's first 'serious' boyfriend was physically and emotionally abusive, she went on to marry David, who was also abusive. In Linda's case her husband sought counselling, is no longer physically abusive, but is emotionally abusive. In addition to the enabling factors already explicated, the women in this study who have maintained an abuse-free life-style over an extended period of time, also appear to have adopted a new world view. Laura married a supportive, caring man and enjoys an egalitarian relationship. She explained how her views have changed:

...everything was always perfect on the outside. Like with my mom and dad...even though all these horrible things were going on at home...they always had a perfect image on the outside. And when I was in my marriage that seemed to be the important thing. It was how you looked to everyone else, and these things just go on. ...now I have a relationship that when I close the door I know that what's going on inside is great and that's what's really important to me.

Maria has also come to embrace some very different views:

...I've gained things that I wouldn't have had a year ago. Being able to do things that I want to do or just even the...atmosphere in my
home. ...even though there's one less person in it, it's a completely different home. It's a home now, so you know, even though at times the loneliness comes, and I think this will be the way it is forever, I'm at the point where even if it was...then that wouldn't be the end of the world either. Because I like it this way.

...and when I think about it, thank God that I can do what I want to do. Would I have gone for my whole life, for sixty or seventy years, just doing what was acceptable to somebody else? Why have a life?

What are the factors related to maintaining a life-style free from abuse? It appears that those women who are able to accomplish this task adopt a new world view wherein controlling relations are intolerable. Women who have not yet attained this goal could be guided by future research which asks those women who have managed to do so, to explain their world view, and how it has changed.

Finally, future research should define critical enabling factors according to the battered woman's geographic location, that is, rural versus urban areas. Three of the women identified as permanent leavers in this study (Catherine, Laura, Maria) lived in small towns at some time during their abusive relationships. They were not able to leave their abusers until after they had moved to larger urban centers. Small towns, as the findings of this study reveal, pose additional problems for women attempting to flee their abusive partners. Specifically, they do not appear to be able to provide adequate safety or anonymity for the women. Thus, it is likely that factors which enable her to leave will differ
according to the battered woman's geographic location.

**Practical Implications**

This research is quite timely given the new monies allocated by the federal and provincial governments to a media campaign against domestic violence (Taylor, 1991). This new exposure will likely result in an increase in the number of women seeking help to end the abuse. The response these women receive to their helpseeking efforts will be crucial in determining their future safety. In-line with the expected increase in helpseeking efforts by battered women, a number of practical implications for advocates arose from this research.

The first implication is related to the critical factor of loss of hope. Advocates for battered women should be aware that the batterer being in or promising to seek counselling is a strong predictor of the woman returning to him (Gondolf, 1988). This is because the notion of counselling suggests change. Therefore, it increases the woman's degree of hope that the batterer will change, thus counteracting the critical leaving factor, loss of hope. It seems particularly important then, to inform women who are considering returning to their abusive partners because they are attending counselling or promise to do so, of the limitations of batterer counselling. Although my research did not extend to the efficacy of batterer counselling programs, I did encounter some disturbing findings. For example, most men do not believe they have a problem, therefore, they do not seek help (Rouse, 1984). It has been
found that the majority of those who do seek counselling are in treatment not because they want to change, but because they are either court mandated (Gondolf, 1988) or believe that entering a counselling program is their last chance of getting their wives back (MacLeod, 1987). As a result, batterer counselling programs often exhibit high drop-out rates (Schuerger & Reigle, 1988) (i.e., he quits the program as soon as she returns). There are many different types of programs and those that do not deal with the fundamental control issues are not likely to be effective in ending the man's abusive behavior. Linda's case provided an illustration of this point. Ted attended a batterer counselling program, he stopped using physical violence as a form of control, but is still emotionally abusive. In fact, battered women have reported that their spouses' involvement in groups for men who batter has resulted in an "escalation in psychological, verbal and economic violence as the physical violence decreases" (MacLeod, 1987, p. 97). Furthermore, Gondolf (1988) and Russell, Phillips, Lipov, and Sanders (1990) point out that some abusive men can not be helped by short term counselling. Rather, they require a multifaceted treatment approach, including for example, "substance abuse and mental health treatment as well as severe restraint for their criminality" (Gondolf, 1988, p. 67). Finally, a cause for great concern is the fact that it is not yet clear whether counselling programs for batterers work. MacLeod (1987) reports that for most batterer programs in
Canada "evaluation is still not a built-in feature" (p. 95) and that "while wide-ranging evaluation studies are planned by the federal government, evaluation to date has been minimal (p. 97). Advocates for battered women should familiarize themselves with the information available on batterer counselling programs so that they do not inadvertently undermine the women's process of leaving.

The second implication of this research is related to the critical factor of support to leave. Social support appeared to be necessary to offset the impact of traditional social and religious ideology. These findings suggest that advocacy from a feminist perspective, directed toward changing sociocultural norms that maintain oppression of women, is most effective for helping to end woman abuse. The implication for transition house and other counsellors working with battered women is that a traditional value-free stance is inappropriate for helping victims of abuse. Walker (1989) purports that:

Women victims of violence cannot understand neutrality. Their heightened sense of danger and realistic need for safety causes them to categorize would-be helpers as either 'with' or 'against' them, and those who try to be neutral are seen as 'against' them. They are only able to relax and build a trusting relationship with a therapist who advocates for them. (p. 699)

Wetzel and Ross (1983) suggest that as a counsellor, "among the ways to validate and share your reality are to agree that maltreatment is outrageous indeed; that she should not be treated thus; that she does not deserve it; and, that she does
not cause the abuse (p. 426).

There appears to be an enormous amount of responsibility placed on women by society in general. Women are held responsible for maintaining relationships, for keeping the family intact, and for the abuse they suffer. Advocates can help to delimit the women's sense of responsibility by having the safety of the women and their children as their primary concern, and by addressing it in part by reinforcing the fact that the responsibility for the violence rests with the perpetrator, not the victim. Reinforcing social norms such as; 'it is the woman's responsibility to save the relationship', undermine the critical enabling factor, support to leave.

Given that support appears to be a critical factor in enabling women to permanently leave their abusive partners, advocates should actively promote this aspect of helpseeking. For example, in Maria's case, the advocate immediately referred her to a support group for battered women. Eleven months later Maria expressed that she continued to benefit from the support network she had established through the women's group.

I would like to close this discussion with recommendations made by the women for service providers and for women who are in abusive relationships.

A. Recommendations to Service Providers

...some way to continue ongoing support. I know there aren't a lot of support groups going, or they fill up really fast. They only take seven people and they have thirty people wanting to get in, but if there is any way that
that could be built upon. (Maria)

I would like to see counsellors and therapists being blunter. ... more straight shooting, not to tell somebody what to do, but to tell them what you see. (Catherine)

Social workers should tell you about free services like counselling and legal aid. And don't expect people to understand their jargon. They'll say 'well they have a sliding fee scale'. I didn't know what that meant. I'd never heard that expression before, but if they had've said 'you can pay as little as five dollars a session', I would have got it right away, 'oh, I get it, discount'. (Catherine)

... social workers should think about explaining those transition houses and realize that the women that they're going to see aren't always emotionally together. ... They should spend more time explaining what do you do with this transition house number and what do you expect after you phone this number. ... and they don't say anything about counselling. (Linda)

... better laws, and really be set up to put restraining orders on... to stop any kind of abuse. (Laura)

[education on woman abuse] in the schools and even in Church groups. ... Where a speaker could go and say 'this is equality in a marriage, this is what we would all like. This is a controlling relationship, and this is abusive and we don't like this'. ... to see a different way so that they can make a choice... (Laura)

B. Recommendations to Women who are in Abusive Relationships

There is a lot of support out there but the squeaky wheel gets the oil. You have to ask and keep asking... (Catherine)

What you see is what you get. ... things didn't get better, they just progressively got worse. ... trust your instincts, it's not gonna get better. I'd say that's virtually impossible. (Tanya)
...the very first time, say 'I'm leaving, you get counselling, straighten up, find out what your problem is, and then we can maybe talk about it'. And just stick to that and do not under any circumstances go back until that's straightened around, because from there you go back to doing what they want and you completely isolate yourself...just a continual oppression...to leave is where it's at. And go from there. (Laura)

**Final Comments**

The findings of this study suggest that two of the most effective resources for battered women who are seeking an end to the abuse are transition houses and women's support groups. Transition houses provide support, relief from abuse, and access to resources, albeit, limited resources. Support groups offer validation of the women's experience and help build their self confidence. They provide the type of ongoing support and information necessary to help women adopt a new world view wherein abusive, controlling relations are intolerable. Thus, in addition to public condemnation of wife assault, ongoing support and expansion of transition houses and support groups for battered women must be recognized as crucial components of the solution to the problem of wife assault.

This research adds to the understanding of the issue of leaving an abusive partner. The women's stories demonstrate how, as women in a patriarchal society, they must have great strength of spirit and tenacity in order to gain independence from abusive men. Until such time that new egalitarian norms for marriage and family exist, millions of women need help to
re-claim their human rights. It is my hope as well as the
desire of the women who volunteered their time to be a part of
this research effort, that service providers and women
currently in abusive situations may benefit from the experience
of those who have succeeded in escaping the abuse.
Footnotes

1 For example, in Toronto, in 1989, an assaulted woman lost interim custody of her child to her abusive male partner because she stayed in a shelter for battered women. The judge ruled that the man could provide a more "stable" environment for the child than could a woman seeking refuge from violence in a shelter. (Randall, 1989).
Dear ______:

My name is Mona Barron. I am currently a graduate student in the Counselling Program at Simon Fraser University. I also work as a counsellor at a shelter for battered women. I am conducting a study to explore the kinds of things that have helped battered women to make positive changes in their lives.

My interest in the area of woman abuse has been long-standing. Ten years ago, I was a battered woman. My own personal experience, as well as knowledge of the great number of women who suffer, and the consequences for the children, has prompted me to choose this area as my thesis topic.

The majority of research that has been done on battered women, blames the woman, for example, by repeatedly asking: Why does she stay? There is a great need to stop blaming, and to conduct research on ways to end the violence. The type of research I propose may be very useful to other battered women, and to agencies or people who try to help battered women.

I need six women who have left an abusive partner on at least one occasion, to participate in my study. I would like at least three of these women to have left an abusive partner permanently (two or more years ago). Should you agree to participate, we will meet on three occasions for 1-2 hours each time. I will ask some basic questions about you and your family history, but the bulk of the questions will be about the time(s) you left your abusive partner.

I will tape-record our interviews. All tapes will be erased when the study is finished. The information you provide will be used for research purposes only, and will be kept strictly confidential at all times.

If you have any questions about the study you may call me at home, at ________.

I thank you for taking the time to read this letter and hope very much that you will decide to become involved in this project. Your effort will help people who work with battered women to provide better services, and will help other women who have suffered from violence.

Yours sincerely,

Mona Barron
APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT
INFORMED CONSENT BY SUBJECTS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT OR EXPERIMENT

Note: The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures, risks and benefits involved. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received the document described below regarding this project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Having been asked by Mona Barron of the Education Faculty/School/Department of Simon Fraser University to participate in a research project experiment, I have read the procedures specified in the document entitled:

   Informational Letter

I understand the procedures to be used on this experiment and the personal risks to me in taking part.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this experiment at any time.

I also understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the experiment with the chief researcher named above or with Dr. Jaap Tuinman, Dean/Director/Chairman of Education Simon Fraser University.

Copies of the results of this study, upon its completion, may be obtained by contacting:

   Mona Barron

I agree to participate by providing demographic information, completing a written questionnaire, participating in an individual and group interview.

   (state what the subject will do)

as described in the document referred to above, during the period: August, 1990

   Richmond Crisis Centre, Richmond, B.C. &/or
   Share Counselling Centre, Coquitlam, B.C.

   (place where procedures will be carried out)

NAME (Please print): ____________________________________________

ADDRESS: ___________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

SIGNATURE: __________________________________ WITNESS: ______________

DATE: _______________________________________________________

Once signed, a copy of this consent form and a subject feedback form should be provided to you.
APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

A) Personal

1. What is your age?
2. What is your current marital status?
3. Do you have any children?
   IF no, skip to question 4
   a) number of children
   b) gender and age of children
   c) parentage of children
   d) location of any children not living with you
4. Please describe your educational background.
5. What are your sources of income?
6. What is your occupation?
7. How long have you been employed in this field?
8. What other types of work have you done?
9. What is your personal income level?
10. What is your family income level?
11. Do you own or rent your home?
12. What is your religious affiliation?
13. What is your ethnic background?
14. Do you have a driver’s licence?
   IF yes, how long have you had one?
15. Do you own a vehicle?
   IF no, what is your usual mode of transportation?
16. How many close friends do you have?
17. If you had a problem that you needed help with, who would you most likely turn to for assistance?
18. What are you hobbies, activities, and interests?

B) Family of Origin

19. Were you raised in a rural or urban area?
   location
20. a) Are your parents still living?
   IF yes for both, please skip to question 21
   b) IF either or both parents are deceased, please indicate when?
   c) What was the cause of death?
21. IF both parents are living, are they still married?
22. Please indicate:
   a) mother’s educational level
   b) mother’s occupation
   c) father’s educational level
   d) father’s occupation
23. How many siblings do you have?
   IF none, please skip to question 24
   a) Please list their age and gender
b) Please state how many, if any, have been involved in abusive relationships (including their age and gender)

24. Please indicate whether the following people have been abused (i.e., emotional, physical, sexual), and by whom?
   a) mother
   b) father
   c) siblings
   d) yourself

25. Please indicate whether the following people have abused drugs and/or alcohol:
   a) mother
   b) father
   c) siblings
   d) yourself
APPENDIX D

WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE FORMAT

A) History

1. What was the length of your relationship with your abusive partner?
2. What was the length of your dating relationship?
3. When did the abuse begin?
4. Please state the kinds of abuse you endured? (e.g., physical, emotional, sexual)
5. How often did each type of abuse occur?
6. If you endured physical abuse, how severe was it? (i.e., were you ever hospitalized, any broken bones, etc.)
7. How many times did you leave this partner? (Please respond to question 8 on the extra paper supplied with this questionnaire)
8. For each incident of leaving please indicate:
   a) what enabled you to leave?
   b) where did you go?
   c) how long did you stay away?
   d) what were your reasons for returning?
9. How long has it been since your last separation?

B) Leaving

Please answer the following questions as they apply to the LAST time you left.

1. Do you recall any significant events which took place prior to your decision to leave? IF yes, what were they?
2. What affect, if any, did these events have on your decision to leave?
3. What were your reasons for leaving?
4. What was different about this time?
5. Did anyone else influence your decision? IF yes, who? How?
6. Did anyone try and fail to influence your decision? IF yes, who? How? Why did this fail?
7. What were your fears around leaving?
8. Under what conditions do you believe you would have stayed at that time?
9. Did anyone help you to leave? IF yes, who? How?
10. How did you leave?
11. Where did you go?
12. Did your partner try to find/contact you?
13. What happened then? (i.e., did you see him again, how did it finally end?)
14. What type of assistance/support, if any, did you receive when you left (e.g., emotional, financial) and from whom?
15. What difficulties did you encounter upon leaving?
16. How did you deal with them?
17. If you could re-live this instance of leaving, what, if anything would you do differently?
18. In your opinion what enabled you to leave?
19. In your opinion what has enabled you to stay away?

For Linda who at the time of the interview was living with her husband, the written questionnaire was revised as follows:

Question 1 revised:

1. How long have you been with your current partner?

Question 19 deleted

Questions 20, 21, and 22 added:

20. What prompted your decision to return?
21. Who, if anyone, played an influential role in your decision to return?
   In what way?
22. What were your reasons for returning?
APPENDIX E

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW FORMAT

1. Tell me a little about your childhood; what was it like growing up in your family?

2. What were your teen years like?

3. How did you meet ______(abusive partner)?

4. What first attracted you to him?

5. What did you like most about him once you got to know him?

6. What was your relationship like prior to the abuse?

7. Tell me about the time(s) you left?

8. What is your life like now?

9. What changes, if any, would you like to see?

For Linda who was living with her husband at the time of the interview, question 8 read: What is your relationship like now?
APPENDIX F

GROUP INTERVIEW

1. Write down one word which best describes what has been most helpful to you in ending the abuse.

2. How did others made it easier or harder for you leave?

3. How did your beliefs make it easier or harder for you to leave?

4. Summary - how does the word you wrote down fit into what has been said?

5. What would be your advice to people who work with battered women and to women who are in abusive relationships?
## APPENDIX G
### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SUMMARY SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>TANYA</th>
<th>COLLEEN</th>
<th>MARIA</th>
<th>CATHERINE</th>
<th>LINDA</th>
<th>LAURA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>divorced</td>
<td>separated</td>
<td>separated</td>
<td>divorced</td>
<td>married</td>
<td>married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>grade 11</td>
<td>some college</td>
<td>some university</td>
<td>2 college diplomas</td>
<td>some college</td>
<td>some college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>salesclerk</td>
<td>homemaker</td>
<td>counsellor</td>
<td>counsellor</td>
<td>cook</td>
<td>self employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Income (per year)</td>
<td>9,600-13,200</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9,600 (p/t)</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>9,600</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own/Rent Home</td>
<td>rent</td>
<td>rent</td>
<td>rent</td>
<td>own</td>
<td>rent</td>
<td>rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Affiliation</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>united</td>
<td>catholic</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>catholic</td>
<td>christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Relationship with Abusive Partner (years)</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse Began</td>
<td>after 7 months dating</td>
<td>3 months before married</td>
<td>after 4 months common-law</td>
<td>wedding night</td>
<td>after married 1 year</td>
<td>after married 1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Abuse:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>daily</td>
<td>sporadic</td>
<td>daily</td>
<td>sporadic</td>
<td>daily</td>
<td>sporadic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>twice</td>
<td>sporadic</td>
<td>1-2/month up to 1/week</td>
<td>sporadic</td>
<td>once/year</td>
<td>sporadic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>few times/month</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>sporadic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>daily</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Times Left</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


introduction to sociological methods. Chicago, IL: Aldine.


Walker, L. E. (1977-78). Battered women and learned


