

**A Search for Community-Based Responses to
Partner Abuse in Whitehorse, Yukon.**

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B.S.W., University of Regina, 2000

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ABSTRACT

This project used a bricolage of theoretical and methodological approaches to specifically explore the “space between,” status-quo feminist explanations and stereotypes (ie male abuser-female victim) of partner abuse and the ‘reality’ of partner abuse in Whitehorse. Theoretical and methodological elements included; popular education, community-based practice, popular-culture, null curricula and a gender-balanced research team. Eleven participants completed individual or focus-group interviews during which they were asked to respond to two research questions; how would they define and/or describe the problem of partner-abuse in Whitehorse; and what responses could be used to address partner abuse in the community. Key findings included a description of the community’s ‘null narrative’ of partner abuse as well as a detailed description of an already existing community-based support group for women. As well the mistrust, unwillingness, and threats that currently pose the largest barriers to the community’s professionals and citizens’ collaboration on community-based initiatives were described.

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My deepest appreciation and thanks to my father, Dick Clements, for his wisdom, and most especially for his teaching, that there are two sides to every story. That 'lesson' compelled me to search out the 'other side' of women's stories that feminism and the hard work of feminists so rightly and effectively gave voice to. That work and those stories have made local and global communities better places – and the 'other side' of those stories holds a similar promise.

No words can express my gratitude to my wife, Joanne Clements, whose love, support and belief in me and this research led her to demonstrate her commitment and dedication by accepting my offer to be my 'research assistant' – way above and beyond the call of duty and support of a typical thesis 'widow.'

And an acknowledgment of a couple of pieces of the education communities' null curricula.

One of the first things a student learns—and the lesson is taught throughout his or her school career— is to provide the teacher with what the teacher wants or expects. The most important means for doing this is for the student to study the teacher, to learn just how much effort must be expended for an A, a B, or a C grade. How long should the term paper be is a question heard not only in secondary school; it is heard in graduate school, as well. Of course, such a request for information is not entirely unreasonable; one does want to know something about the general expectations. Yet, too often, the issue becomes the expectation and the need to meet it in the most expeditious way possible.

—Elliot Eisner, 1994

Originally, graduate theses were supposed to be creative and original scholarly work which advances knowledge of the world in some significant way. In recent decades this requirement has lapsed completely, and in order to receive an advanced degree today a student need only demonstrate to the committee that he or she will not embarrass the sponsoring professors by being outspoken or taking radical positions that would disrupt the discipline. Rarely do M.A. theses or PhD dissertations contribute anything to our knowledge.

—Vine Deloria Jr, 1995 - Native American (Standing Rock Sioux) scholar, retired professor of political science University of Arizona, and retired professor emeritus of history at University of Colorado.

Dedication

To my children – Eli and Amy.

Introduction

This ... [thesis] emanates not out of an anti-feminist, promasculine orientation; rather, it results from social work values mandating the equitable and non-discriminatory concern for any individual or group in need (Kosberg, 2002, p. 1).

Feminist perspectives, theories, models and frameworks are central in social-work education, practice and research in many regions of the world. “Social work as a profession has been heavily influenced by feminist discourses” (Smith, 2006, p. 27). The discipline’s comfort with feminist depictions and descriptions is due, in no small part, to the fact that - “social work has been a woman’s profession. The vast majority of social workers have been and are women” (Weick, 2000, p. 395). Social workers have found feminist practice(s) effective in their efforts to assist and empower the disadvantaged, the disabled, the impoverished, and the victimized citizens of society (societies). Hence, many social workers’ theoretical frameworks and practice approach(es) to partner abuse are also predominated by feminist descriptions¹. The profession’s practice responses to partner abuse however, have not escaped criticism. ... “the particular role of social workers in the historical and contemporary development of interventions concerning domestic violence has been an often discussed issue, usually with disparaging implications about the social work profession” (Kanuha, 1998, p. 4).

Within both the social-work and partner-abuse literature the implications of these feminist biases and stereotypes have been noted. “Domestic violence is commonly portrayed as something male batterers do to their female victims. Much research excludes study of female-perpetrated violence” (Basile, 2004, p. 59). “The domestic abuse industry is saturated

¹ The most predominant practice approach is the Duluth Model (Pence & Paymer, 1993). The Duluth Model is the most commonly used model in batterer treatment in the U.S. (Ashcroft, Daniels and Hart, 2003) and around the world (Hoff, 1999).

in gender bias [against males] as any examination of the literature^[2] it produces will show any reasonable person” (Rolph, 2004, p. 2). Dutton and Nicholls (2005) offered this description of the “gender paradigm³” in the literature, ... “in effect, a ‘paradigm’ ... has developed in the domestic violence literature in which perpetrators are viewed as exclusively or disproportionately male. Any and all data inconsistent with this view are dismissed, ignored, or attempts are made to explain them away” (p. 682). And Kosberg (2002) offered these descriptions of the social-work literature, social workers and feminists in the profession:

social work literature is female-oriented and provides a negative view of heterosexual males. ... The attention on female-related issues^[4] may also result from the large proportion of social workers who are female and the significant number of feminists (both male and female) in the profession (pp. 1- 2).

Dutton and Nicholls (2005) went on to offer an explanation of how this present focus within the literature came to be. ... “in domestic violence research, the sense that a greater good for women’s rights and the protection of women should prevail over scientific accuracy has provided this function of directing the search, data reported, interpretations, and applications of the data” (p. 682). The result of these circumstances has led to feminist theory(ies) and practice(s) becoming so central to social-work’s explanations and understandings of partner abuse that they now virtually dominate the profession’s views of this (and other) issue(s). The limitations and concerns of such a circumstance in any area of research (or profession), and the “antidote”, however, are well known.

² See footnote 47, p. 50.

³ “The function of the gender paradigm originally was to generate social change in a direction that righted an *imbalance* [italics added] against women The result, however, has been to misdirect social and legal policy, to misinform custody assessors, police, and judges, to disregard data sets contradictory to the prevailing theory, and to mislead attempts at therapeutic change for perpetrators ...” (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005, p. 682). All of which contributes to the present imbalance (in policy, child custody, policing and legal matters) against men.

⁴ Kosberg (2002) explains – “while professional attention to the particular needs of females (in social work literature) is certainly essential, *the lack of attention to heterosexual male clients ..., [and] the biased portrayal of them, may result in an erroneous belief that their needs are less significant and social work involvement with them is less important*” [italics added], (pp. 3-4).

The nature of research requires multiple models, not a single monolithic, monopolistic structure that centralizes and controls research agendas that threaten to exclude research ideas that are new, unique, out of synch or unfashionable within the current dogma. Competition and diversity fuel discovery (Watanabe & Casebeer, 2000, p.7).

Advice specific to partner-abuse research has also been offered.

The proliferation of research, which often excludes male victims and female perpetrators, fosters the perception that women are primarily the victims of male batterers. What is needed is balanced research that studies the female batterer and her victims as well as the male batterer and his victims (Basile, 2004, p. 67).

More recently a small but growing segment of the partner-abuse literature has offered *a competition and diversity* that has begun to *fuel the discovery* of a number of challenges to the present feminist explanations and understandings of partner-abuse – presently so out of *balance* within the social-work profession⁵. The number of publications describing research findings that contradict and defy explanation with the existing feminist models and theories, of partner abuse, have become more plentiful in the last ten years.

In the mid 1990's Slowly it became apparent that academic studies across the world were beginning to refute the findings of the feminist agencies that had such a strangle hold over the refuge movement worldwide. Slowly I was beginning to be asked to talk to various Domestic Violence forums and men's groups to talk about the fact that domestic violence was not and never has been a gender issue. A gigantic hoax has been perpetrated and unsubstantiated statistics have been produced to feed a damaging and disastrous political ideology which was now a billion dollar world wide industry that discriminated against many innocent men and fathers (Pizzy⁶, 2005).

⁵ Also see further discussion of the balance/imbalance context – see pp. 50-51.

⁶ Erin Pizzy - In 1971, in the London suburb of Chiswick, she opened the first refuge in the world for victims of domestic violence. Because from the beginning, she was aware that domestic violence was not a gender issue, she opened a refuge for men in North London that would later close due to a lack of support and funding. Pizzy (2005) was aware that of the first hundred women who came into the refuge sixty-two were as violent or, in some cases, more violent than the men they left behind. Pizzy's diversion from the feminist explanations of partner abuse were 'dealt' with – "today, the shelter she founded denies her entry; her name does not appear in its official history" (McElroy, 2006; also see footnote 58, p. 60).

“There are now over 159 family conflict studies⁷ demonstrating relatively consistently that there is a rough gender equivalency of conflict, abuse, and violence in intimate relationships in North America (Straus, 1999; also see Archer, 2000; Fiebert, 1997, 2004; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989)” (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005, p. 696-697). Just recently, Straus (2006a) reported that he found gender equivalency of partner violence among university students in all 32 nations he surveyed. The 32 nations included Asian, South American and African countries – regions of the world not often thought to be as influenced by feminist thought as North-American and European countries. Despite this ever-growing body of evidence, there continue to be those within the profession calling for social workers to maintain the unbalanced, feminist approach. “If social work loses its clarity that this [domestic violence] is a women’s issue, there is a risk that the issue will be construed as a generic family problem and not a gendered problem” (Pyles & Postmus, 2004, p. 385).

The family-conflict studies, however, are not the only source of challenges⁸ to the feminist explanations of partner abuse. Two other examples include Janice Ristock’s⁹ (2002) research on violence in lesbian relationships which led her to assert that, “all-explanatory models... all monolithic understandings of abuse, are flawed” (p. xi). And a second example - another female voice - this time from within the social-work profession challenges, “that mainstream feminists have failed to understand intimate abuse and the choices women make when they are involved in abusive relationships” (Mills, 2003, p.5). Mills¹⁰ continues her critique of the feminist approach, “the mainstream feminist response to domestic violence

⁷ “with a composite sample size of 109,000 and varying demographic compositions (Dutton and Nicholls, 2005, p. 697).

⁸ One of the most comprehensive, detailed, clearly explained, compilations of the various challenges to feminist theories, practices and explanations of partner abuse is *Rethinking Domestic Violence* (Dutton, 2006).

⁹ “A lesbian and a feminist,” (p. xii) Women’s Studies professor, University of Manitoba.

¹⁰ Professor of Social Work, Affiliated Professor of Law, and Vice Provost for University Life and Interdisciplinary Initiatives at New York University.

represents the views of a relatively small minority of women who have the resources and political strength to aggressively assert their narrow explanations for domestic violence” (p. 6). “Mainstream feminists argue that abusive men do not acknowledge their own power and should be held accountable for it. Yet they, too, are guilty of the same behavior” (p. 63). In light of the evidence to support these challenges it was recognized that in order to design a research project with the greatest promise of contributing some new information, or understanding to partner-abuse research and/or the social-work profession an original¹¹ methodology with a unique approach to examining partner-abuse in Whitehorse was required.

¹¹ “It is rather difficult for any researcher to design “original methodology” (invariably all methodologies are used by different people at different times)” (K. L. Tang, personal communication, July 18, 2006). And the bricolage approach (see p. 17) of this research is no exception — as far as the *parts* go — it is the *whole* that is original (see p. 51). Brooker (1999) explains, “the bricoleur ‘makes do,’ putting together the left-over, extracted and borrowed pieces at hand so as to compose a new whole” (p. 20).

CHAPTER ONE

Statement of the Problem

To develop communitarian responses takes time and an understanding of developmental processes. It is important for social workers to set goals that enhance rather than erode communitarian responses. Although immediate crises require immediate responses, which may be privatized, the long range solution can only be found in communitarian responses. This is the challenge put forth to all social worker/human service professionals delivering services in northern/native communities (Durst, 1991, p. 372).

While many social workers practicing in northern communities may well be committed to enhancing communitarian responses, Durst's (1991) sixteen-year-old challenge has certainly not led to the disappearance of privatized responses in northern communities. Many northern communities' response(s) to partner abuse have been, and continue to be, privatized within various system-delivered programs and services (e.g. - legal, criminal, penal, police, court, probation, batterer-treatment programs, victim's services, social services, women's shelters, crisis lines/centres, employee assistance programs). In addition, as there is a paucity of research on partner abuse in the north, it seems fair to say that northern-specific inquiries into that behaviour are in their infancy in those regions. Despite the abundance of positivist inquiries in the literature, within population samples from southern centres, no such projects have been completed in the Yukon (Statistics Canada and other reports based on Yukon RCMP and court reports are available, and some of these are discussed later).

While the Yukon's northern context is frequently acknowledged both locally and "Outside"¹² as unique, the citizens of Yukon communities' dominant understandings and discussions of partner abuse share similarities with many other jurisdictions in Canada, North America, and Western Nations. In the Yukon, as in other Canadian communities,

¹² Outside – A term used, in the Yukon community, to refer to the regions of the world which lie south of the 60th parallel.

partner abuse is most often perceived as being synonymous with “wife-abuse” (Sommer, Barnes & Murray, 1992), or violence against women (Pearson, 1997). “The public’s acceptance of the wife victim and husband victimizer dichotomy stems from the inappropriate application of the ‘patriarchal model’ of spouse abuse to all instances of domestic abuse” (Sommer, 1997, p. 1). And more recently Mills (2006) similarly described, “... mainstream feminists have spent the last thirty years convincing us [Americans] that their interpretation of abuse as a result of patriarchy should be ours. This interpretation has been powerful and influential, and it now dominates how the state views domestic violence and responds to it” (p. 24).

However, in addition to the academic and research challenges already described, that stereotype, or typology, has also been publicly challenged in recent years by some of the individuals involved in high-profile cases.

This is not about men against women. It’s not about anyone against anyone. ... Domestic violence has no socioeconomic boundaries. It doesn’t see if you’re black or white. It doesn’t see if you’re gay or lesbian. It doesn’t see if you’re Democrat or Republican or what religion you are (Denise Brown – Chair of the Nicole Brown Charitable Foundation, as cited by Planck, 1999, p. 1.)

And while many Yukoners may have never heard, or read, Ms. Brown’s comments,¹³ local, national and international communities’ perceptions of social problems are frequently shaped by “popular culture” (discussed at greater length, p. 42) as presented through television media, now available in even the remotest-northern-Canadian communities via satellite. For example, from *The Oprah Winfrey Show* (1999), “according to the latest studies, 835,000^[14]

¹³ Made at the opening of the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center, October 26, 1999 (Planck, 1999).

¹⁴ This number is from the U.S. National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS), Tjaden & Thonnes, 1998.

men are attacked each year by their girlfriends or wives and the true figure may be higher” (p.1).

Throughout this report, the academic-research literature as well as the various media’s and popular culture (TV, newspaper, internet web sites, cartoons, recording industry, movies, etc.) portrayals of partner abuse will be presented – often side by side. This is not to suggest that the discussions in the non-academic sources hold an equivalent “scientific” validity to the academic and/or research-literature discussions, rather it is to present examples of the context in which Whitehorse citizens (and many Canadian citizens – and others around the world) receive presentations and representations that shape their perceptions, beliefs, personal and community narratives about partner abuse. For those inclined to readily dismiss the importance, significance or “credibility” of the non-academic contributors, this reminder – from the academic discipline of philosophy – to caution against fallacious thoughts or arguments.

A personal attack is committed when a person substitutes abusive remarks for evidence when attacking another person's claim or claims. This line of "reasoning" is fallacious because the attack is directed at the person making the claim and not the claim itself. *The truth value of a claim is independent of the person making the claim. In general, it is best to focus one's attention on the content of the claim and not on who made the claim. It is the content that determines the truth of the claim and not the characteristics of the person making the claim* [italics added] (Nizkor, 2006).

Similarly, Albert Einstein (1949/1998) advised, “...we should be on our guard not to overestimate science and scientific methods when it is a question of human problems; and we should not assume that experts are the only ones who have a right to express themselves on

questions affecting the organization of society”¹⁵ (§ 5). If feminist scholars are going to avoid hypocritical argument they will similarly need to guard against overestimates of feminist-science methods and positioning themselves as the experts on questions affecting society – such as partner abuse.

In the Yukon the “woman as victim–man as abuser” stereotype was “challenged,” five years ago when the Family Violence Prevention Unit of the Yukon Territorial Government (YTG) began offering group treatment for female batterers¹⁶ (Kwan, 2002). As these new “developments” emerge, and make their way into the public consciousness the number of variables and the complexity of abusive dynamics are unraveled and the, “old” frameworks and explanations are seen for what they are — incomplete.

Conditions of patriarchy, misogyny, heterosexism, racism and colonization are overwhelmingly present in the lives of ... [many] marginalized peoples. ... These social forces do give permission for abuse, provide its logic, and may even encourage it, but they are not sufficient to explain why abuse happens in some relationships and not in others. This does not mean that I dismiss an analysis of the social forces of oppression and domination ... Rather, I acknowledge their impact but do not see them as providing the complete explanatory framework for intimate violence (Ristock, 2002, p. 56).

Many of these challenges are being led by those in the academic and research areas, and some of that information, as just described, has made its way into the public’s awareness through various media. However, the “average” Canadian’s perception of partner abuse¹⁷ was succinctly described in an article that appeared in *The Edmonton Journal* recently. “The

¹⁵ *Wisdom of the Elders* (Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992) describes numerous examples of traditional knowledge-based understandings of how humans, nature and the world function. While that knowledge has been passed down generation after generation, academic researchers and scientists have only recently completed the necessary research/studies to now “confirm” that which has long been a part of the knowledge of traditional cultures.

¹⁶ Until 2002 the only available group treatment for partner abusers in the Yukon was for male batterers. There were 27 spousal assaults perpetrated by Yukon women in 2002 (Yukon Women’s Directorate, 2004). And as of September 2006 group treatment for female batterers continues to be offered (C. Dempsey, personal communication, September 20, 2006).

¹⁷ Also see Hughes (2004) quote, p. 47.

[Gender Issues Education Foundation] conference ... highlighted the gender bias in Canadian's understanding of domestic violence. ... Husbands and boyfriends are abused by their partners far more often than most Canadians realize, yet ... all we hear about is violence against women and children" (Kleiss, 2005, p. 1).

Accepting then, that partner abuse, like many other social problems, is a complex interaction of a plethora of variables that are subject to personal, local, and community variations and nuances, how does, or how should researchers approach this topic of inquiry? Additionally, considering Mr. Durst's (1991) earlier admonishment to northern, social workers to enhance the community response(s) in northern/First-Nation communities, what research strategy or methodology can address these two challenges? In response to these questions and considerations the methodological design of this project incorporated a synergistic bricolage¹⁸ of popular education, Just Therapy (Waldegrave, 1990), community-based, cultural studies, null-data analysis, processes and frameworks.

Purpose of the Study

A distinction that does not further understanding is no distinction.

— Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1828)

The purpose of this study was to attempt to identify the community-based opportunities in Whitehorse, Yukon to address partner abuse. That is, what are the individual and community "assets and capacities" (McKnight, 1995) available to be directed into possible solutions to partner abuse in the community. This project's choice of research at the 'community' level was informed by Durst's (1991) community-based research that utilized Blishen, Lockhart, Craib and Lockhart's (1979) model of assessing the socio-economic impact of development on Northern, Arctic communities. That model is based on

¹⁸ See Table 1 - p. 51.

a central belief — in northern communities strengths, vitality, security, and independence “are perhaps best achieved through adherence to social reciprocity obligations – and are most at risk whenever the individual is ‘freed’ of such obligations through the formal provision of ‘professionalized’ support services” (Blishen et al., p. 33). This belief in enhancing community strength, vitality, security and independence was the central reason that this project employed a community-based, participant-centered, approach to this issue rather than using a more “purely” scientific (academic or “professional”) methodology.

In order to discover the greatest number of possible community-based responses to partner abuse, this project’s approach to data collection facilitated the research dialogues in a manner that attempted to minimize the community’s framework of viewing the partner-abuse problem through a “needs” lens, while allowing participants to “take a fresh look” with an “abilities” lens in order to more readily “see” the community’s resources that could contribute to possible solutions. The anticipated obstacles to such a shift include changing or adjusting several cultural and social lenses (discussed in Chapter 3), as well as the community’s political and ethical contexts (as described in the individual participants’ and the community narratives). Therefore, it was expected that the interview and participant discourses would fall into the socially acceptable, politically correct, and safe, needs and/or problem, type descriptions. Likewise, the dominant monolithic explanations (Ristock, 2002), with accompanying binary or dualistic categories, were expected to provide the themes, frames, and words for much of the interview discourses. As such it was recognized that analyses of the data, with a focus on those socially dominant, explicit and implicit, themes and explanations, would offer less chance of “furthering understanding.”

As Goethe (1828, as quoted at the start of this section) pointed out, such a very long

time ago, that type of analysis provides “no distinction.” This study sought to provide such a “distinction” by a specific analysis of the “null curriculum”¹⁹ (Eisner, 1994, 3rd ed.). It was hoped that some of the best untapped, unused, undeveloped, “unthought” of, community assets and capacities might offer a distinction that would further the community understanding of the available individual and community resources that could be utilized to develop community-based responses to this issue.

Key Terms

What community research relies upon and validates is that the community itself makes its own definitions (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 127).

The people of northern Canada ... face [a] ... threat ... from the ideologies of southern Canada, from people who may not understand their world yet have the power to define northern problems, northern opportunities, and northern futures (Zapf, 1996, p. 55).

Community-defined terms and contexts are at odds with the positivist methodologies of much academic inquiry that suggests researchers need to, or must define the key terms within the area of study. This requirement persists despite the hazards and limitations of attempting such a task, not to mention its frivolity, well documented in research literatures, including the partner-abuse literature.

Debates over definitions and causes characterize much of the literature on intimate violence. While community patterns and beliefs influence the definition of intimate violence as a problem, and control by abusers aims in part at blocking external evaluation of the conduct, *intimate violence is ultimately self-defined* (italics added, McGillivray & Comaskey, 1994, p. 52).

Canadian sociologist, Walter DeKeseredy (2000), noted, “defining violence ... has ...created bitter divisions among social scientists and others involved in the struggle to make intimate

¹⁹ Eisner (1994, 3rd ed.) defined the null curriculum as “the options students are not afforded, the perspectives they may never know about, much less be able to use, the concepts and skills that are not a part of their intellectual repertoire” (p. 107; see p. 39). Related terms used throughout this document: null discourse, null data, null narrative, null stories, etc., are the researcher’s terms to describe the discourse, data, narrative and stories that would contribute to, or be components of, a null curricula.

relationships safer” (p. 739). If one does not desire to alienate them self from others who write or work with a view towards making intimate relationships safer, why would any such definition even be attempted? However, this is not to say that there are not concerns with participants definitions that researchers need to assess, evaluate and monitor. “... self-definition of abuse is complicated by the victim’s denial of it, and by her unwillingness to identify herself as a ‘victim’” (McGillivray & Comaskey, 1994, p. 64). While having an awareness of such a possibility - that some participants may be reluctant to offer that type of self definition - the community-based researcher can still proceed with respect for the community’s authority to provide its own definitions. As Tuhiwai Smith (1999) described (above), not permitting citizens to make their own definitions would be particularly hypocritical within a community-based framework. The risks of not allowing individuals to self-define includes: “it is axiomatic that if we do not define ourselves, we will be defined by others – for their use and to our detriment” (Lorde, 1984, 94).

Similarly, attempts to define “North,” “northern social-work practice,” and other related terms, have proved futile. In addition to Zapf’s (1996) comments, at the start of this section, he later noted, “‘North,’ [is] an imprecise and relative term that often reveals more about the person using it than the region labeled” (1999, p. 352). Nelson, McPherson, and Kelley (1987, as cited by Sellick & Delaney, 1996) believe that, in northern communities, effective social-work practice originates from the “subjective, not objective ... the immediate situation rather than standardized and established professional practice becomes the best judge of what must be done” (p. 37). Sellick and Delaney go on to suggest that social workers need to guard against bringing the existing monolithic, binary, dualistic metaphors of assessment to their work in northern communities and guide their under-standing(s), “by

advocating that the community members define their own context” (p. 36). Similarly, Collier (1993) suggests, “... there is a place for a social worker committed to the people of the community, but the place must be built on new alignments, new understandings and an adaptation of the duties of the job to community ... principles” (p. 45).

With a participant-defined-terms-and-realities approach it was readily acknowledged that more than one definition - more than one reality - would exist in the community. Indeed one of the strengths of this methodology was that it made room for multiple definitions and realities to be collected as part of the data rather than being excluded by academic or researcher imposed definitions (or limitations). Such an approach removes researchers of their duty to define key terms in order to create “space between” (Finn, 1994; see p. 27 and footnote 24) for findings that identify new alignments, new understandings of terms that originate from the community’s principles, value and beliefs. In respect and deference to these findings and warnings, and in recognition of the significance that this central value holds within such a methodological approach, the community’s definitions were collected during the interviews and focus groups and are described in Chapter 4.

Why “Partner Abuse?”

Definitions aside, the term used to describe this issue is also often a heated topic of debate and/or discussion. Ideally, in respect of the community-based, popular-education methodology of this project, the name for the problem would have also been determined by the community. However, in order to engage in peer discussions, recruit committee members, and invite research participants, the researcher named the topic and the research project without community input. One recent review of the domestic-violence literature

(Pyles and Postmus, 2004) found that in 105 abstracts of social-work articles²⁰ published from 1985 – 2000 “domestic violence” was the most frequently used term. Pyles and Postmus (2004) add, however, that “since the late 1990s, there is an indication of a new trend toward calling the issue *intimate partner violence*, particularly in health care and social work settings” (p. 383). Ultimately what term is used to discuss and describe this problem in Whitehorse should also come from the community’s citizens, not a graduate student, a researcher, an academic, or “the literature.”

Research Questions

Research participants were asked to respond to two questions; first, how would you define or describe the problem of partner abuse in Whitehorse, what does it look like, who is involved, etc.? Second, what else do you think can, or should, be done to address the problem of partner abuse in Whitehorse, over and above the existing services and programs already available in the community?

Beyond these two broad questions the methodological approach (popular-education) that was employed to facilitate the focus groups and interviews did not lend itself to further description due to it being a participant-centered and controlled process. Possible, probable, or potential, follow-up questions could have been guessed at but, as was noted in the research proposal for this project, any such list would have had to be prefaced with a disclaimer that the researchers would not guarantee that any of the listed questions would be asked. The researchers did of course ask follow-up questions in the interview and focus-group discourses and, to be as true as possible to the participant-centered approach those questions were of the “can-you-tell-me-more-about-that?” variety. As expected, and as is evident in Chapter 4,

²⁰ “To qualify for inclusion ... one of the authors of an article had to be affiliated with a department of social work in a college or university” (p. 380).

while there were obviously similarities in the interview discourses, each individual interview and focus group also went in at least one unique direction. Additional explanation and elaboration of this free-form, unstructured, informal approach is provided within the methodological descriptions which follow next.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

What a wonderful thing it would have been if the author had worked with a female collaborator who could have shone as bright a light on women as he has on men (See,²¹ 2003, p BW03).

The methodology for this project acknowledged See's concerns²² and utilized a gender-balanced²³ research team to facilitate the individual and group interviews. The more difficult methodological challenge was to contribute to the enhancement and development of the community response(s). In order to attempt and meet that challenge this methodological approach looked to identify opportunities for community responses to partner abuse by facilitating a number of focus group and individual interviews. The interviews were facilitated using combined elements of popular education, community-building, and Just-Therapy (Waldegrave, 1990). Focus group and interview data were collected using a "SWOT" analysis and the framework for data analysis was informed by concepts and premises from education (null curricula) and cultural studies. Before further description of each of these methodological 'pieces' is provided it may be useful to describe the whole, methodology that was created by the sum of those parts.

The Bricolage

This type of methodological "mish-mash" was described by Kincheloe (2001),

The frontiers of knowledge work rest in the liminal zones where disciplines collide. ... In the deep inter-disciplinarity of the bricolage, researchers learn to

²¹ From her review of Simon Baron-Cohen's book, *The Essential Difference: The Truth About the Male and Female Brain*.

²² If the author had been female would See have expressed similar concern about the absence of a male voice?

²³ My wife Joanne, and I – partners researching partner abuse – collaborated to conduct the interviews to provide this project with the credibility of a married and gender-balanced research team. It was expected that such a dynamic would enrich the findings and capture a broader, deeper understanding of this sensitive issue than a single researcher of either gender, or a male and female researcher in 'partnership' only for research purposes, could achieve. Also see Appendix D - Partners Researching Partner Abuse, p. 194.

engage in a form of boundary work. Such scholarly labor involves establishing diverse networks and conferences where synergistic interactions can take place (p. 689).

And to this inter-disciplinary-boundary work a unique approach was added that was not necessarily located in the “liminal-collision zones.” Rather the knowledge work of this project was located in the “space between”²⁴ (Finn, 1994) the explicit-implicit and the null curriculum (Eisner, 1994, 3rd ed.) of the various methodological pieces. It is a synergistic bricolage of paradoxical analyses, not unlike Tim Ward’s (1998) insight, that for him, the lessons of Buddhism were found in *What the Buddha Never Taught*. “Paradoxically, it is the epitome of a successful popular-education intervention for the people to say, ‘We have done it ourselves’” (Hurst, 1995, p. 2). Synergistic interactions have been described as the value that comes when the whole adds up to more than the sum of the parts (Covey 1989; Kanter, 1990, as cited by Zuber-Skerritt, 2001) and Covey added, “the essence of synergy is to value differences—to respect them, to build on strengths, to compensate for weaknesses” (p. 263).

If it is not already evident, from the description thus far, it certainly will be more so after the popular-education description (see p. 30), the complexity of the bricolage,

mode of inquiry precludes the development of a step-by-step set of research procedures. ... this inability to proceduralize undermines efforts to “test” the validity of their [bricoleurs’] research. The researcher’s fidelity to procedure cannot simply be checked off and certified. In the complex bricolage the products of research are “evaluated” (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 689).

This description also highlights a significant consideration that applied to the popular-education framework for the focus groups and the data analysis component of this methodology (see *Null Curricula*, p. 39). That is, the methodological components could not

²⁴ Which Finn (1994) defined as: “the space between category and reality, the space of the ethical encounter with the other as other and not more of the Same[sic]” (p. 101).

be proceduralized in a step-by-step description beyond what is described here. The research proposal for this project was not able to provide a concrete sense of where this research was going because the hope was that it would go where the participants directed or chose it to go. The researchers approached the data collection, interviews and focus groups, with the conscious intent to try not to do anything to direct or chose where the participant dialogues and discourses went. The range and diversity of the discourse and data suggest those efforts were at the least partly successful.

Participant Recruitment

In order to attempt and capture as wide a range of views regarding partner abuse in the community a combination of individual and group interviews were facilitated. Each of the focus-group sessions attempted to draw different segments of the Whitehorse population with as much diversity in each group as possible (i.e. age, gender, etc.). The recruitment for focus groups sessions targeted health and social-service professionals, and First-Nation community members. Within each of these sectors approximately a dozen individuals were invited to participate in a focus group. Other research participants were recruited by word of mouth at the end of these sessions and through the circulation of information pamphlets (see Appendix D, p. 194) provided to key staff at government, non-government and First Nation social-service organizations. The pamphlet provided a brief description of the research project and the researcher's name and contact number.²⁵ Group or individual sessions were then arranged and scheduled as required in consideration of personal safety issues (see p. 21).

²⁵ The contact number was the researchers' cell-phone number.

Possible Recruitment Limitations

Those of us who are driven to correct the wrongs in culture can be over-bearing, intolerant, and ready for factionalism and infighting. We are all burdened by internal domination. Wanting change in the world drives us to use all sorts of power. (Mindell, 1995, p. 95).

The number of possible biases and limitations of this research, including the way in which participants were recruited, may be numerous. However, in particular, a couple of descriptions of typical research limitations from the literature seem relevant. “Social scientists frequently become aligned with contemporary notions of social justice and attempt to fit their enterprise to the objectives of achieving social change. In so doing, they increase the risk of straying from objective reporting of the data” (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005, p. 682). More specifically, “the heuristic paradigm recognizes that one of the scientist’s most challenging tasks is to truly understand her or his assumptions, values, options, and choices including their implications ... and to apply this understanding to effective research design and evaluation” (Heinman-Pieper, Tyson & Heinman-Pieper, 2002, p. 23). Within partner-abuse research and literature gender bias, and the gender paradigm are two examples of the limitations that the gender variable has on the field.

In order to specifically address the limitation(s) of gender, this research project utilized a gender-balanced research team to facilitate the interviews and to offer participants, of both genders, a greater sense of safety (and comfort) than they may have experienced with a single researcher of either gender.²⁶ However, given the nature of this research it was also acknowledged that some possible participants may not have felt safe participating in an interview where a member of the opposite gender was present, and such individuals would have self-excluded. It is readily acknowledged that the views of such citizens are not

²⁶ A related discussion of the researcher’s biases – ‘balance/imbalance’ is presented on pp. 50-51

represented in the findings of this project. That said, those citizens have had, and will continue to have, their voices heard through other research findings, community initiatives, and existing community forums. There were certainly a number of participants (at least three) who in their role as service providers may have in addition to their own views also contributed at least some of the concerns of such individuals.

Participants' Safety

Personal risk and safety are two factors that all partner-abuse-research participants should carefully consider before taking part in research processes. In keeping with this project's value for people having the answers to their problems, the guiding principle to addressing the participant's safety was that the safest safety plan was for each participant to design their own safety plan, ideally with the help of family, friends and other resources available in their neighbourhood and the community. The participant information pamphlets (Appendix D, p. 194) that were circulated in the community to recruit possible participants provided information about safety plans and indicated that possible participants were welcome to contact the researcher/facilitators before participating in a focus group for assistance to address any questions or concerns with regard to a safety plan for themselves. As well the researchers had the opportunity to address safety planning with each participant prior to his or her participation in the research project as pre-registration was required.

In addition to participants' safety plans, the researchers also took a number of steps to provide for the personal safety of all participants. Pre-registration for each session was mandatory, and the information pamphlets did not provide any details as to time and place that sessions would be held, only the researchers' name and a contact number were provided. The date, time and location information was provided only to individuals who; called the

researchers, completed the pre-screening questions, and then agreed to participate. The pre-screening process took place when participants called to express an interest in attending a focus group. Possible participants were asked if there was anyone they knew whose presence, at the same session as them would cause them concern for their personal safety. Possible participants were also asked if they thought that their presence in a focus group could make anyone else who may be at the same group feel unsafe. With the information provided from those pre-screening questions, the researchers selected the participants for each session in order to ensure that anyone identified as a threat by another participant would not be in attendance at the same focus group. Any individuals identified as a concern to other participants would either be asked to participate in a focus group at a different place and time, or to sit for an individual interview.

During pre-screening none of the participants identified a specific individual that would cause them concern for their safety. One professional service provider identified possible concerns with attending the same focus group as some of his or her past or present clients. That concern was addressed by the researchers planning with this participant that if the participant recognized a past or current client when she/he arrived for the focus group they would let the researchers know they were not going to participate in the group and would reschedule for another group. None of that participant's clients were in the group and she/he was able to participate at that time.

At the beginning of each focus group there was also a further check with all participants to see if they had any concerns for their personal safety by the presence of any of the other participants at the session. This was done with the last question on the participant questionnaire that was completed at the beginning of the two focus groups (see Appendix C, p. 193). In the event such a concern was identified, the focus group would not have proceeded

until the safety concern had been addressed. In the event that no means or mechanism to address such an issue could have readily been determined, the session would have been cancelled and the participants contacted at a later time to reschedule the focus group, once the necessary changes to the participant roster had been made. As a further safety measure, each focus group and interview was facilitated in a different location within the community (known only to the participant(s) and the researchers).

At the start of each interview and focus group session, participants were informed that the session would conclude with a debrief to determine if any participants had concerns for their personal safety or were experiencing any emotional responses triggered by the discussion. During the course of the research, all debriefs were completed with no concerns being identified or described by any of the participants. In addition participants were provided with contact numbers for the Family Violence and Victim's Services programs in the event that they experience any delayed reactions or responses from their participation in an individual interview or focus group session.

The individual and group interviews were not audio or video taped, and names were not assigned to comments, suggestions, ideas, etc., either in the session notes or in this research document. Participants were informed at the start of each interview session that they were free to withdraw their participation at any time. In the event that they wished to do so they were offered the choice to do so by no longer speaking or answering any questions, or they were free to leave the room and/or building if they wished. None of the research participants did so.

Focus Groups and Individual Interviews

We actually went out into the communities with our clipboards and surveys to ask people their opinions about domestic violence (Yvonne Andrews²⁷).

²⁷ Community Organizer, Queen Lane Domestic Violence Community Mobilization Initiative, as cited by Fullwood, 2002, p. 11).

The use of two formats for data collection provided for person triangulation of the data sources. “Person triangulation is the collection of data from at least two of the three levels of persons: individuals, groups ... or collectives. ... Data collected from one source is used to validate data from the other source(s)” (Kimchi, Polivka, & Sabol Stevenson, 1991, p. 66). This methodology collected data from individuals and groups, and reported the similarities and differences from those sources.

Focus groups have been used with a wide range of research topics, including domestic violence (Davis & Srinivasan, 1995). Yoshihama (2002) utilized focus groups with a community-based sample when she completed the first study ever of battered women in Japan. Yoshihama identified the advantage of focus groups over individual interviews - as their potential to facilitate intersubjectivity, that is, through listening to others' experiences and perspectives, participants may develop increased insight and understanding of their own situation. Intersubjectivity may be particularly important in research on domestic violence, a topic long considered a personal issue. These aspects of intersubjectivity enhanced the synergistic aspects of this methodology and also address Durst's (1991) challenge to develop communitarian rather than privatized responses.

In this project two focus groups were completed during data collection; one group was made up of two participants (1 male; 1 female) and another had five participants (1 male; 4 female). The small size of these groups allowed all participants ample ‘air time’ to voice their contributions. The two-person focus group took an hour and twenty-five minutes to complete and the five-person focus group was two and a half hours in length. Both sessions began by the lead researcher taking 10 – 15 minutes to describe the research project and to review the participants' rights (which were also provided to each participant in writing

(Appendix B, p. 191) to assist the participants to provide informed consent. The consent forms (Appendix A, p. 190) were then completed, signed and collected. In order to allow for maximum community participation, focus groups were scheduled on weekends (April 16 and 30, 2005).

In order to increase the opportunity that participants who for personal safety, desire for anonymity, or other personal reasons preferred not to participate in a focus-group session, four individual interviews were also completed (April 12, May 5, 14 and July 29, 2005). The individual interviews used the same research questions, session facilitation and recording format (SWOT), as the focus-groups in order to more readily allow for comparisons and contrasts with the focus-group data. The individual interview sessions lasted between sixty-five minutes and two hours. Both the focus groups and the interviews concluded with the interviewers offering participants an opportunity to debrief the session. None of the 11 participants indicated an interest in doing so, and to the best of the researchers' knowledge none of the participants experienced any delayed responses or safety concerns as a result of their participation in this research. Participants were also invited to contact the researchers if they realized that they had more information to contribute. Again, none of the participants did so, however, one of the male participants did contact the lead researcher to invite him to coffee with an associate to discuss possible community-based initiatives for males. The participant's associate was not interested in participating in any such ventures at that time.

SWOT analysis.

The collection and recording of data were organized into categories through the use of a "SWOT" analysis format. The acronym "SWOT" stands for: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The four categories used in this recording format are often

employed in strategic planning exercises (Burkhart & Reuss, 1993; Mintzberg, 1994) and the format is also widely used by social service and health delivery organizations (Sharma & Bhatia, 1996; Lanzotti, 1991). In addition to the SWOT categories, it was anticipated that a fifth category of “other factors” might be useful. The addition of a “catch all” category offered participants the opportunity to talk about aspects of partner abuse that might fall outside the SWOT categories.

Because there were no electronic recordings or transcription of the data, verification of the data took place as it was written on the flip chart or interview notes. This required the facilitators to check with the participant after their idea or contribution were written down and allowed the participant to indicate if the recorded note accurately captured their comment or contribution. The date and location were noted on each piece of flip chart or note paper from each of the group and individual interviews. No identifying information of participants was recorded or associated with the recorded data. Participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire (Appendix C, p. 193) and when the questionnaires and consent forms were completed the individual interviews or focus-group dialogues began.

The questionnaire consisted of 13 items, the first five items asked basic socio-demographic information; age, gender, education, length of residency in Whitehorse, children (18 years or younger) living with you. Items six through nine asked participants about their personal and professional experience with abusive relationships. The intent of these four items was to get a sense of the scope and/or point of view that the participants brought to the discussion. The next three items, numbers ten to twelve, asked the participants to identify various types of assistance or services they would use if they and/or their partner were engaging in abusive behaviours within their relationship. The intent of asking items ten and eleven was

to determine if participants had a preference for family or professional help, or would utilize both. Item twelve was asked to determine if the gender, gender balance, and/or a partnered (married, common-law) counselling team were relevant considerations in their choice of professional service provider(s). The final item, 13, was to provide participants with one last opportunity to address their personal safety, if necessary.

The remainder of this chapter will discuss each of the five theoretical elements of the methodological bricolage.

The Space Between

This space between category and experience, representation and reality, language and life, is, I believe, the necessary and indispensable space of judgment; of creativity and value, resistance and change. It is the ground of the critical intentions and originating experience which enables us to call the status quo into question (Finn, 1994, p. 107).

When Finn articulated the concept of the space between she envisioned it as a tool that feminism could utilize to challenge the ethical premises of the institutions and their practices as opposed to criticizing the political praxis of the institution's representatives. Finn suggested that ethical inquiry – and the possibility of real change – from feminist praxis was pre-empted when objectives and criticisms were articulated in terms of the values and categories that were institutionalized and endorsed by the political realities they were attempting to change. Finn added that the “authorised and regulatory categories” (p. 106) were so deeply entrenched in our society that alternative claims and/or criticisms that could not, or were not, described within the “authorised categories of Western thought are ruled out of court” (p. 106). Finn outlined two means of creating space between; first, while making claims against the system using the status-quo terms that the system recognizes, feminist praxis must also include questioning the values inherent in the categories that they are obliged to employ in making claims against the political status quo. Second, while feminists

may need to make claims against the system in the system's terms, they do not have to believe in those terms.

Within the partner-abuse literature and the social-work profession feminist theories, models and practices are *the status quo*. Therefore, this methodology will employ the "space between" to challenge the categories and inherent values, and to express a lack of belief in the terms used in feminist explanations of partner abuse.

Attending to Context

Silverman (1993) described the relationship of context to qualitative research thusly, "the qualitative researcher seeks to see things in context" (p. 31). Adequate consideration of context should include the personal and the social, the micro and the macro, contexts of people's lives. While the social context (examined in more detail in the *Cultural Studies* discussion, p. 42) of partner abuse was beyond the influence of this project's methodology, some observations from the literature seem relevant before discussing how the personal context of gender was addressed within the methodology for this project.

The moment he hits a woman, mainstream feminists have legislated that he be taken out of the *context* [italics added] of his biography ... he will be defined as a product of patriarchy, and his masculine privilege will account for the sole source of his aggression (Mills, 2003, p. 3).

Dutton and Nicholls (2005) similarly noted, "when women are instigators ... it is a 'pre-emptive strike,' aimed at instigating an inevitable male attack ... In contrast, male violence is not similarly contextualized and is always attributed to a broader social agenda" (p. 683). In contrast to those descriptions of feminist practice with male perpetrators there are a number of treatment approaches or therapeutic models that support the importance of attending to the context in which social issues or problems occur. Just Therapy is described as "... one that takes into account the gender, cultural, social and economic context of the

persons seeking help” (Waldegrave, 1990, p. 1). Over the last two decades Just Therapy has inspired and challenged community workers and therapists working in many different contexts and countries to give therapeutic considerations to the issues of gender, culture and socio-economic justice. The approach has had powerful implications for therapeutic practice as has taking client’s personal stories into the political and policy arenas. Just Therapy has signaled a new way of conceptualizing working relationships through building committed, caring and dignified cultural partnerships. The understanding of the responsibilities of therapists and healers has been changed forever by the ways in which Just Therapy seeks culturally appropriate healing, describes therapy as a sacred encounter, and honours Indigenous spirituality and traditions (Dulwich Centre, 2006). It must also be acknowledged however, empirical validations of the Just Therapy approach are not sufficient at this stage to judge its wider applicability.

Similarly the Satir Model (Satir, Banmen, Gerber & Gomori, 1991) describes congruent communication, or responses, as those which acknowledge self, other and context. Partner abuse most frequently occurs in the context of an intimate partnership between two humans. To respond, intervene, or study partner abuse, or other relationship dynamics without a partnered team leaves that context incompletely acknowledged by the individual practitioner, professional, or researcher. Kincheloe (2001) noted that in many traditional research epistemologies and ontologies, “entities are often removed from the contexts that shape them, the processes of which they are a part, and the relationships and connections that structure their being in the world” (pp. 688-689).

While the significance of gender to the topic of partner abuse seems more than obvious, the literature is devoid of qualitative partner-abuse research by gender-balanced

research teams. This situation persists despite social scientists having systematically analyzed the impact of gender on the fieldwork process for more than 30 years (Silverman, 1993). Silverman noted, “increasingly, the gender of fieldworkers themselves was seen to play a crucial factor in observational research. Informants were shown to say different things to male and female researchers” (p. 34). This project will offer particular attention to the personal context of partner abuse by facilitating the group and individual interviews with a husband and wife research team. While the gender-balanced, partnered, interviewers can offer an important contextual component to the facilitation of the participant interviews, a popular-education approach was used to facilitate the focus groups and interviews in order to provide for a participant-centered process.

Popular Education

Popular-education’s interventions and practice skills are processes that are not only unique to each community but also often lead to each practitioner creating his/her own unique tools and responses. This uniqueness is more than evident in the outcomes of the works of two of popular-education’s best known practitioners, Paulo Freire and Myles Horton. Paulo Freire’s (1973) techniques included “consciousness raising,” the “culture of silence,” and “education for critical awareness,” while Horton’s (1990) approaches included his “two-eyed theory of teaching,” “islands of decency” and “the long-haul of social change.” Similarly, the Canadian popular-education organization, GATT-Fly²⁸ (1983), calls their popular-education technique the “Ah-hah Seminar.” That popular-education practitioners’ interventions differ is certainly a reflection of the different communities with which they

²⁸ GATT-Fly was created by a coalition of Canadian churches in 1973. Its name was an irreverent way of stressing its mandate to ‘bug’ the Canadian Government about its role in International trade organizations such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (Laurie, 1990).

worked: Horton, with poor, southern-US, cotton-mill workers, and black-civil-rights leaders; Freire, with Brazilian peasants and slum-dwellers, and Chilean farmers; and GATT-Fly with Toronto area steelworkers, Latin-American immigrant workers, and the Kayanah Area Tribal Council. With the community specific nature of this approach, it is somewhat difficult to prescribe, or describe, the interventions and practice skills of popular education beyond this brief description. As Myles Horton (1990) noted, “what we tried to do could not be described as a method or a technique, but a process that had many strands. ...All of them are of a piece and blend in, and all are based on a love for humanity and trust in the ability of people to control their own lives” (p. 135-136). And GATT-Fly (1983) elaborated, “we feel the setting out of a formula or a rigid set of guidelines to be followed is a contradiction of the participant-controlled approach” (p. 12). It was also noted earlier that the bricolage, “mode of inquiry precludes the development of a step-by-step set of research procedures” (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 689). However, there are several key assumptions and characteristics that underlie popular-education-based interventions. Those characteristics include:

- It is collaborative, so leadership is shared, everyone teaches and learns.
- The creation of new knowledge starting with learners’ experience and concerns, using active participation and critical reflection.
- Examining the distribution of power and challenging inequalities.
- Knowledge of oppression is shared with the aim of developing a collective action to remove that oppression (Bellefeuille, 2002).

Two of popular education’s key assumptions are:

- The human capacity to act consciously is a gift that allows for mediation between self and reality in order to change the world (Bellefeuille, 2002).
- Community provides the medium for learners to interpret, reflect and form meaning.

- Community settings offer the social interaction to dialogue with others and see the variety and diversity of perspectives on an issue (Brown, 1994, as cited by Bellefeuille, 2002).

That is about as descriptive and prescriptive as popular-education, process-type interventions and skills can be articulated. The contribution and collaboration of the popular-education process to enhancing the community-based approach was significant, especially to the second research question that was asked to all the participants.

Community Capacity-Enhancement

Effective projects aimed at changing harmful beliefs and practices in a community must engage and be lead by members of that community. Organizations can play an important facilitative and supportive role, yet the change must occur in the hearts and minds of the community members themselves (Michau, 2005, p. 4).

Earlier, the systems and organizations that exist in most communities to address partner abuse were listed (see p. 6). This network of service and treatment providers offers programs that are intended to address, reduce and eliminate the occurrence and re-occurrence of partner abuse. McElroy (2002) – of Fox News – commented,

“the domestic violence industry” - [is] a multibillion dollar business ... [with] shelter directors, political advocates, lawyers, university professors, social workers, and consultants whose incomes derive from domestic violence. It would be embarrassing if nonprofit organizations could solve the problem as well ... or better (p. 2).

As the scarce but slowly developing evaluative literature – of treatment programs for partner abusers is now discovering (e.g., Ashcroft, Daniels & Hart, 2003) the programs offered by these agencies, organizations and service providers often do not work.²⁹ Dutton

²⁹ Dutton identified a number of specific concerns with the Duluth model. “Duluth models had two major flaws that prevented effective treatment: (1) they attempted to shame clients, and (2) by taking a strong adversarial stance to clients (based on a feminist view that a major issue in domestic violence is male sex role conditioning), they failed to establish a therapeutic bond with their clientele” (p. 304). It is little surprise when Dutton then concludes, “the result of evaluations of Duluth interventions is therefore clear: there is no treatment success from this approach. Given the theoretical problems ... described above ... it’s hard to imagine a therapeutic case for positive treatment result in groups where no therapeutic bond is developed” (p. 300).

(2006) described two significant concerns present in most court-mandated approaches. First, rather than assess for differences in mutuality, severity, chronicity and any personality disorders, all cases are treated alike. Second, “they opt for superficial ‘re-education’ of attitudes when attitudes are not the issue. Mysogynistic opinions are a symptom, not a cause. The key underlying issue has to do with personality disturbance” (p. 300). Similarly Straus (2006b) noted these concerns with present treatment approaches:

Almost all violence prevention and treatment programs are based on the assumption that partner assault is almost exclusively a male crime. ... Program providers are committed to the idea that men are almost always the only violent partner ... rather than the dominance of one partner regardless of whether it is the male or female partner, as was found as long ago as the 1975 National Family Violence Survey (Straus, Gelles, & Stienmetz, 1980). ... Violence is most often a family system characteristic, and joint treatment is usually needed to treat systemic problems (p. 1091).

Baskerville (2006) notes, “enormous media attention has been devoted to family violence. Governments have responded with new programs and huge expenditures. Yet these massive outlays seem [to] have resulted in little reduction of the problem” (p. 3). The evidence to support Mr. Baskerville’s (2006) assertion³⁰ is plentiful and includes Jiwani, Moore, and Kachuk’s (1998) findings in two rural B.C. communities; “participants expressed little confidence in the justice system, ... police response was inadequate, ... mental health services were ... inadequate and insensitive, ... social services were ...critically lacking in their awareness of and adequate response to the needs of women experiencing or leaving violent relationships” (p. 3). Edleson’s (2000) review of domestic violence prevention

³⁰ Daniel Quinn (1999) made a similar assertion in *Beyond Civilization* - “programs never stop the things they’re launched to stop. No program has ever stopped poverty, drug abuse, or crime, and no program ever *will* stop them” (Quinn, 1999, p. 7). *Beyond Civilization* is a philosophical discussion in which Quinn examines the question of civilization. In a nutshell, Quinn asserts that we should move beyond hierarchy to a new form of tribal living, not the communal style of the 1960s but one suffused with conscious, purposeful awareness of each action’s greater impact. Quinn notes, “Beyond civilization isn’t a geographical space ... it’s a cultural space that opens up among people with new minds” (p. 187).

programs in Minnesota reported: “Programs often appear to be based in institutional goals rather than tied to reducing risks or promoting protection” (p.11). Similarly Boyd (2004) reported: “mandatory arrest and court-ordered diversion do not appear to deter violence to any significant extent” (p. 188).

Examination and reviews of a number of the community-based approaches in the research literature were not particularly informative to the unique application that was utilized in this project. There are numerous research projects within the community-based literature that describe initiatives to examine, improve, or co-ordinate intervention services and programs that respond to family violence (e.g. Clark, Burt, Schulte, & Maguire, 1996; Gault, 2001). That approach amounts to trying to improve one program by having a better program and/or offering better service by co-ordinating the existing programs. Better programs and more programs collaborating with each other more efficiently does nothing to redress the problems with programs already described. Those types of community-based approaches had little to offer this project - other than what not to do.

Yoshihama’s (2002) use of community-based focus groups in Tokyo was mentioned earlier (p. 24). In discussing the implications of her findings, Yoshihama did so by examining how battered Japanese women might be assisted by the monolithic, North-American feminist, needs-based, problem-type programs and services. The existing assets, capacities and strengths of the Japanese women, their communities, and their culture were not highlighted. This was a particularly unfortunate oversight as Yoshihama reported that ongoing support groups were established by the participants.

Another popular methodology in the community-based literature is Participatory Action Research (PAR). While considering the possible approaches for this project, a small

but representative sample of the PAR literature was reviewed including the “how-to” and theoretical; McTaggart (1989); Sohng (1995); Robinson, (1996); Stringer (1996); O’Brien, (1998); Goff, (2001); and Reason, and McArdle, (2004), as well as reports on the application of PAR with the following communities that share some commonalities with the Whitehorse community: prisons (Fine, et al., 2001), rural development (Huizer, 1997), women preventing FAS (Leischner, 2001), and Native communities (Hoare, Levy, & Robinson, 1993). As a community-based approach PAR shares many similarities with Popular-Education, however, the PAR methodology involves an ongoing four step process - the action-research spiral (Zuber-Skerritt, 2001). The action-research spiral is a

cyclical process of (1) strategic planning, (2) implementing the plan (action), (3) observation, evaluation and self-evaluation, (4) critical and self-critical reflection on the results of (1) – (3), and making decisions for the next cycle of action research – that is, a revised plan, followed by action, observation and reflection, and so on (Zuber-Skerritt, p. 15).

At most, this project gathered information that may be useful to the strategic planning phase of such a process. The completion of even one ‘loop’ of the action-research spiral was well beyond the scope and timeline of this project.

In reviewing the literature the best description of a research project with the greatest similarity to the methodology used in this project was Fawcett, Heise, Isita-Espejel and Pick’s (1999) community-based research in Iztacalco, Mexico. “The goal of the focus groups was to explore community norms, attitudes and beliefs around the following themes: (a) origins of violence against women, (b) responsibility for violence against women, (c) strategies available to women living with a violent partner, and (d) intervention of others in cases of domestic violence” (p. 42). Fawcett et al. (1999) wanted the focus group discussions to go beyond the underlying community norms that perpetuate violence against the community’s women. “Therefore we adapted popular education techniques to the focus

group setting, in order to encourage spontaneous discussion ...” (p. 42). The researchers’ multi-faceted (popular theater, small-scale media and peer outreach), community-based intervention consisted of two main components: “1) a 12-session intensive consciousness-raising and skills-developing workshop for women and; 2) a large scale community campaign” (p. 47). The interventions were designed to facilitate the progress of the community’s abused women through, “the transtheoretical (“stages of change”) model proposed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1982) adapted to the case of battered women by Brown (1997)” (Fawcett et al., 1999, p. 46).

Like popular education the central belief of community capacity-enhancement interventions is that the citizen’s are best able to define and solve their problems. An assets-based or strengths-based orientation is central to a community-capacity enhancement approach. Most importantly, perhaps, solutions designed through community capacity-enhancement draw upon the individual, and collective, assets and capacities of the community (McKnight, 1995). As a result the communities can sustain the solution without the assistance of non-resident experts and other outside resources. With this approach the community’s focus is shifted from identifying needs (to perhaps obtain funding) to finding the abilities and resources in its citizens, its organizations, and its businesses. The therapeutic value for the community and its citizens of shifting their focus from the negative to the positive, limitations to strengths, problems to solutions, deficiencies to abilities, and needs to capacities can be enormous over and above the specifics of a response to an issue or problem.

A Whitehorse-based research project (S.O.S. & C.M.H.A, 2002) analyzed the completed written questionnaires of sixteen organizations and agencies as well as the

transcripts of one-hour interviews with twelve individuals who had experienced an emotional crisis during the preceding two years. The focus of the research was to examine the need for after-hours emotional crisis support services in Whitehorse. The twelve individual participants identified the largest source of crises as family problems followed by alcohol/drugs. The individual participants identified informal supports as the most helpful during their crisis with the top three being; someone to talk to informally, access to recreational and cultural activities, and their own inner resources. The formal programs and services available in Whitehorse were not identified as helpful by most of the participants. Increased operational funding and increased staffing were the resources that service providers identified as necessary to improve their ability and to support people in crisis. However, Second Opinion Society, the non-government organization that conducted and co-sponsored the research, was identified as helpful by nine of the participants, “probably because most of the interviewees were from the S.O.S. community” (p. 39). Yukon Family Services and Mental Health Services were each mentioned by four participants as being helpful to some degree during their crisis. All of which suggests what was found in the analysis of the questionnaires completed by the formal service and program providers, “... the services they provide are inadequate to the needs” (p. 8). This accurate self-awareness by the professional support-providing community in Whitehorse of the inadequacy of their programs and services translated into their active participation in, and hopefully their receptiveness to the findings of, this project. While the findings of the research projects just mentioned offer evidence of the short-comings and failures of programs some might still want to debate Mr. Baskerville’s (2006) and Mr. Quinn’s (1999) earlier assertion. Such a discussion was not essential to the development of the methodology for this project; rather, if Baskerville’s

(2006) and Quinn's (1999) assessments of programs are accepted as accurate then what "no-programs" response held the promise of an end to partner abuse (and other social ills) in communities?

The importance and significance of social relationships in Northern/First Nation communities were outlined in Durst's (1995) description of his research in two Arctic communities. Durst measured the communities' social relationships with a model developed by Blishen et al. (1979) to assess the socio-economic impact of development on Northern, Arctic communities. That model³¹ examined a community's social relationships to determine the patterns of social behaviours that occur along a continuum from privatized (social isolation) to communitarian (social integration). Jiwani et al.'s (1998) research in two rural B.C communities also reported on the services that participants considered useful and effective; "... transition houses, women's centres, various *community-based* [italics added] outreach programs and Victim Assistance Services" (p. 3). Although Blishen et al.'s (1979) model will not be used directly in this project's methodology, it provides support to this project's methodological approach that will seek to identify potential community-based solutions to partner abuse.

Five key assumptions of community capacity enhancement are:

- The community has the will and resources to develop its own solutions.
- The community, not experts, knows what is best for itself.
- Ownership of the solutions rests within, rather than outside, the community.
- The preferred process for initiatives is through partnerships involving organizations and the community.
- The use of strengths in one area will develop strengths in other areas (Bellefeuille, 2002).

³¹ Also see earlier description pp. 10-11.

After consideration of the various approaches to community-based interventions the specific community-based aspects of this methodology were incorporated into the research design. The crucial component of this approach was the popular-education process used to facilitate the interviews and focus groups. Three other significant considerations were (1) Blishen et al.'s (1979) observation that the vitality of northern communities is not well served by the provision of professional services; (2) often delivered to clients in the form of programs that Baskerville (2006) and Quinn (1999) observed do not prevent the occurrence of what the program is designed to prevent; and (3) McKnight's (1995) observation that the best solutions utilize the individual and collective assets, capacities, and skills of the community's citizens.

This approach offers further support to asking participants the second research question, what else can be done to respond to partner abuse in our community?

Null Curricula

We have now moved from the struggle to control the means of production, the characteristic of class war and traditional Marxism, to the struggle to control and regulate the means of expression. Language is the new means of production. The politically-correct intellectual class are its new managers. This is Marxism without the economics. The growth of PC has undermined our confidence in our ability as individuals to make moral and intellectual judgements. In fact, to make judgements is the new sin.

Note what has happened here: the politically correct commissariat condemns us for being 'judgemental', yet reserves the right to pass judgement on us...chastised and bullied in this manner, we fall silent. And this silence in the face of intimidation, which masquerades as the defender of tolerance, is deeply threatening to democratic society. (Maxim Institute, 2004).

This description of political correctness includes elements of the null curricula of political correctness. From this example the PC null curricula could be described as an examination of the judgmental tactics of the politically correct intellectual class and the undemocratic aspects of those tactics (inhibiting freedom of speech). That is, the null

curricula are the items, content, ideas, theories, alternatives, solutions, etc., that someone, or some group, do not want to acknowledge, consider, or believe belong within the discourse, dialogue, practice, model, theory, framework or paradigm of an issue. Eisner's (1994, 3rd ed.) definition of the null curriculum was described earlier (footnote 19, p. 12) and he also noted: "there is something of paradox involved in writing about a curriculum that does not exist" (p. 97). Environmental educators, Jickling and Weston (1997) described the null curriculum as "what is not said, discussed, or included. Often it reflects basic political decisions made during the process of curriculum development" (p. 2). Uhrmacher (1997) noted: "The null curriculum has done its work when it reminds us of an educationally significant aspect of the curriculum that has been omitted. ... as a linguistic tool it reminds us that the neglected may be very important" (p. 320). Foucault (1976/1990) described that discourses have not one but many silences as well as the relevance that null discourses hold.

There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses. (p. 27).

Smith (2006) suggests that null discourses can be *more* important than the explicit discourses. "Such is the power of discourse, those patterns of dominant beliefs and assumptions that determine what we're allowed to say and perhaps more importantly what we're not allowed to say" (p. 23). Eisner (1994, 3rd ed.) similarly described, "it is my thesis that what schools do not teach may be as important as what they do teach" (p. 97).

In identifying and describing the null data and findings of this research the researcher utilized his knowledge and understanding of the explicit, implicit and null issues and themes in the literature as well as the explicit, implicit and null components of the

Whitehorse community's partner-abuse narratives as he has come to understand that narrative as a resident and social-work professional during his 13 years in the community. Having described the null data and discourse, the researcher then provided the description of the null data to his research assistant, his wife³² (who assisted with co-facilitating the interviews and focus groups) for her to evaluate if she agreed that the description of the null data did not include any items that had been mentioned, described or discussed by any of the research participants. Furthermore, she was also asked to identify any other null data not yet included in the null data description. No further items were offered.

As discussed above, partner-abuse research designed with feminist theoretical frameworks and the feminist practice and frameworks embraced by the social work profession share a similar null curriculum with the partner-abuse issue. While it is always more difficult to describe something that is absent, some of the items on the feminist-partner-abuse null curricula include: violence in lesbian relationships,³³ in particular the implications and application of findings from research on lesbian violence for heterosexual women, male victims of female violence, programs and services for female perpetrators and male victims of partner abuse,³⁴ alternatives to punishment for male perpetrators,³⁵ identifying the strengths, assets and positive traits of male perpetrators, definitions of violence that include

³² Who at the time the interviews and focus groups were completed had resided in Whitehorse for 9 months – which provided her with a more objective view of the data than the lead researcher – she had previously practiced social work in northern Ontario for 14 years.

³³ “The lack of attention in the social work literature to domestic violence in lesbian relationships is disquieting. ... lesbians do not fit the typical gendered explanation for domestic violence so researchers have ignored this “messy” issue (Carlson 1992)” (Pyles and Postmus, 2004, pp. 384-385). “Psychological aggression was highest in FF [female-female] relationships. ... Similarly the physical assault rate is highest in FF relationships” (Basile, 2004, p. 63).

³⁴ “The proliferation of research, which often excludes male victims and female perpetrators, fosters the perception that women are primarily the victims of male batterers” (Basile, 2004, p. 67).

³⁵ “Help residents identify new community-driven ways of holding perpetrators accountable for ending their abuse. Devise strategies that do not rely so heavily on the criminal justice ... system” (Fullwood, 2002, p. 16).

female aggressive strategies,³⁶ (discussed further p. 71) the aggressive and violent responses of feminist supporters towards those who challenge their perspectives,³⁷ theories, explanations and models, and alternatives to the dominant explanations of partner abuse,³⁸ (e.g. patriarchy, testosterone, male privilege, misogyny), culturally sensitive approaches for treatment that work with partners,³⁹ and much more. Some of that “much more” - misandric themes and stereotypes in popular culture, are discussed next.

Cultural Studies

The history of feminist responses to intimate abuse has precluded any adequate understanding of the complexity and intimacy of violence in domestic relationships (Mills, 2003, p. 15).

While the herstorical or historical (which ever you prefer) feminist involvement with violence against women is well known, critiques of the herstorical or historical development of the broader feminist theories and political agenda are not plentiful. The relevance of such a critique to this project is largely to provide a context to the historical beginnings of the feminist, null curricula. One of the few such examinations is Wilson’s (2003) critical discussion of the, “current required version of history: women have been exploited and oppressed by men” (p. 133). Wilson (2003) argues that before 1930 the social-power structures of most significance in people’s lives were the church, home, and community. With ongoing industrialization and consumerism, the shift from household to individual as society’s smallest unit of measure also led to the new power structures of today; namely, government, industry and the media. When we look back and say women were not involved

³⁶ “In opposite gender relationships female defendants were significantly more likely to make harassing phone calls, ... improperly use the court system” (Basile, 2004, p. 64).

³⁷ See examples; footnote 58, p. 60.

³⁸ “There is neither a widely accepted theory on the etiology of domestic violence (Heise, 1998) nor is it entirely clear how to adapt existing behavior change theories to the special case of domestic violence” (Fawcett et al, 1999, p. 45)

³⁹ See description of *Circle of Harmony Healing Society*, Terrace, B.C., p. 88.

in government or commerce; therefore, they were powerless, we have imposed a reflection of our current context that is not rooted in a grasp of women's pre-1930 reality, but our present chauvinism and ignorance (Wilson, 2003).

Today, when we see old references to women and children as property, it is insulting. But only because for us, now, property is less than a man.

In an agrarian society, women as property put them on a pedestal. It is not that family was treated as property. Property was the family in all its generations. It was not an insult then, but privilege. Contrary to what has become popular to believe today, women had special status, and if a woman committed a crime, her husband was punished. Men died for their property. We now call that oppressive to women (Wilson, 2004, p.1).

Wilson (2003) believes that by the 1960s the changes and shifts of social power made Women's Liberation inevitable. Wilson, however, is curious as to why women pursued their hopes of liberation through the very processes that were oppressing them, the literal, the physical, the material. They did not seek room for femininity in the social power structures to add special and unique feminine qualities to government and industry. Feminism became, "a movement bred of envy of others, not pride of self" (Wilson, 2003, p. 146). Similarly, Kohn (1992) noted:

in terms of political and economic power ...the man's "predicament" has left him to run the show, to monopolize the public sphere. But any feminism that leaves it at that is a feminism that accepts a male set of priorities, that fails to question the infatuation with wealth and power, that accedes to the devaluation of relationship, that says "Me too!" instead of What a mess!

It is pathetic and outrageous that women have had to wait, like Sleeping Beauty, to be awakened with a kiss. But it would be tragic indeed if, finally able to rouse themselves, they did so only to mimic the prince. This is why I call the cheerleaders of competition for women pseudofeminists: they are responding to sexism by appropriating the worst of male values, which represents a serious error in judgment if not a kind of betrayal. (p. 179)

The social context was not challenged or re-conceptualized in ways that it might recognize the meanings of womanhood. Rather, sameness, material sameness, became the measure of equality; same wages, same career opportunities, same number of political offices, same

budget for sports: “women’s athletic programs look more like men’s athletic programs every year” (Diamant, 1979, p. 21). Femininity was omitted, many women left confused. That sameness might not be the best measure of equality⁴⁰ has been, for the most part, a part of feminist null-discourse. However, some female Canadian social workers were aware of the distinction. Sharon McKay (1996) noted: “Equality does not mean sameness. Differences are to be recognized, respected and valued” (p. 128). More recently feminist Sally Platell (2006) publicly criticized the sameness legacy that feminist leaders have bequeathed the women of today.

“If you want to be like a man, then feminism hasn’t gone far enough,” she [Fay Weldon] said, “if you want to be like a woman, it has gone too far.” And there, straight away, was the kernel of the matter: feminism was supposed to be about equality, not sameness. We wanted to better our sex, not obliterate it. But that is what happened. In striving to be the same as men, the only things we were guaranteed were the exhaustion and stress and guilt that came with the effort of labouring to become something we never were and never could be. So why had we put up with it for so long? Because to tell the truth felt like a betrayal of the core promise of feminism, an admission of failure (Platell, 2006, ¶ 16-17).

The sameness in the portrayal of men and women’s lives in the media has not been the focus of most popular-culture researchers. Well-known and respected feminist and cultural-studies researcher, professor, and lecturer, bell hooks (1996), has done a masterful job of identifying and describing the misogynistic, racist, oppressive portrayals of women in popular culture.

There is nothing trivial about popular culture. It is the folklore, the conventional wisdom, of an urban, industrial society. ... What people see on television can have a significant impact on the way almost everyone feels, thinks, and behaves. Otherwise, the people who produce commercial television, let alone commercials, would be out of business (Nathanson & Young, 2001, p. 81).

⁴⁰ Compare this to the First-Nation concept of equality, pp. 88.

The messages of popular culture, however, have created a sameness that now includes men in social and cultural oppression – stereotyping, misandry, objectification, sexism, gender-bias – with much similarity to women’s social and cultural realities. Kohn (1992) noted that, “females still appear as little more than window dressing in many contemporary movies ... to the extent there has been a departure from this sexist tradition, it has chiefly been to feature women in the *same* [italics added] dismal roles that men have hitherto occupied” (p. 175). To some this comparison will seem naive, unfair, outrageous, backlash, politically incorrect, and perhaps stupid, and for those who feel that way, perhaps some specific examples may be of use.

However, before moving on to some examples of the similarities, it is worth noting a prevalent difference in the perception of violent men and violent women in popular culture. Emerson, Dobash and Noaks (1995) noted that the traditional stereotyping by society and members of the criminal justice system continues to exist with regard to men’s violence as criminal or “bad,” and women’s violence as a deficiency of mental health or “mad.”⁴¹ Despite that distinction popular culture continues to promulgate negative portrayals and stereotypes of both genders which are not supported by research (not all violent women are insane and not all violent men are criminals).

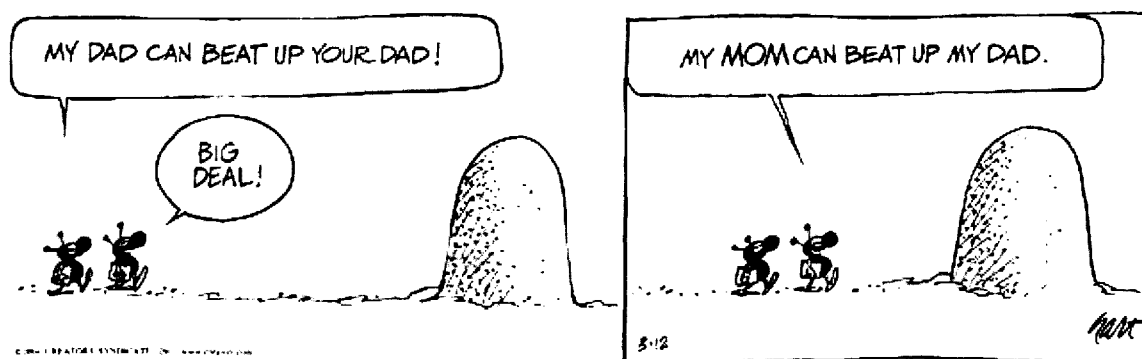
This parallel between the fate of men and women in ... [society] is not accidental but inherent. As such, the former can hardly be considered irrelevant in any work of art focused on the later. In fact, examining both simultaneously is necessary for any understanding of these societies. ... Our society is now preoccupied with the problems of women (Nathanson & Young, 2001, p. 114).

⁴¹ However, there is at least one study in the literature that supports the stereotype of women as “mad.” Henning, Jones and Holdford (2005) found female perpetrators of partner assault to be more likely than male perpetrators to have longstanding psychiatric problems.

The Hart⁴² (2004) cartoon, *B.C.*, (below) is an example of the outcome of the present focus of this ‘collective social lens’ — a culture that portrays violence against men as

Figure 1

B.C. Cartoon Strip



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laughable in various genres of popular culture. “When Dwayne Bobbit had his penis cut off by his wife in 1993, it became material for late night comedy routines”⁴³ (Dutton, 2006, p. 148). “Look what’s on television. It’s a comedy when a woman slaps a man” (Dias,⁴⁴ as cited by ABCNews.com, 2003).

Prison rape, injury to a man’s testicles, sexual abuse of boys by women under the guise of “initiation” and other behaviours, easily identifiable as physical or sexual abuse and assault when they happen to girls or women, are exploited for “humour” so regularly that they have basically become a norm in comedy films and entertainment (Mathews, 1996, p. 17).

It is worth thinking about how men are portrayed in our media; obsessed with tits, sport and beer, we’re more often than not the victims of our desires and stupidity in advertisements and TV shows. Not convinced? Try think of a TV show (even an ad) where a mother is the subject of sustained ridicule? Fathers as far back as *Kingswood Country*, *Hey Dad*, *Roseanne* and *The Cosby Show* right up to *The Simpsons*, *Neighbours* or *Malcolm in the Middle*, however, are fair game (The Age, 2006, p. 2).

⁴² “He [Johnny Hart] is the most widely read cartoonist on the planet” (World Magazine, 2000).

⁴³ “His wife was found not guilty by reason of temporary insanity. This reaction [making jokes] would have been unthinkable with the genders reversed” (Carney, Buttell & Dutton, 2006, p. 111).

⁴⁴ “Claudia Dias, an attorney and psychologist who runs batterers programs for men and women” (ABCNews.com, 2003).

And if one tires of laughing at men in popular culture there are alternatives. The recording industry has provided people with the opportunity to listen to two artists sing about women killing men, Garth Brooks and Pat Alger's, *The Thunder Rolls* (1990), and the Dixie Chicks' *Goodbye Earl* (1999)⁴⁵

If you want to find an example of ultra-successful brainwashing of the public by the media, you need look no further than the subject of domestic violence ... If you ask the man-in-the-street what he thinks domestic violence is, he will probably tell you that it is men attacking women within the family. If you further ask him why he thinks this, he will tell you that he has heard it many times in TV news broadcasts, read about it in newspapers and magazines and has seen adverts about it on television (Hughes, 2004, p. 1).

Our insensitivity to male victims can be viewed in the depiction of male abuse in popular media images, commercials, comedy films and television programs, and the "funnies" or comic sections in any Canadian newspaper. (Mathews, 1996, p. 17).

Mathews (1996) later added, "our minimization and denial of male victimization so permeates our culture that it is in evidence everywhere from nursery rhymes, comic strips, comedy films, television programs and newspaper stories to academic research" (p. 34). In research "done for Ms Robertson's PhD thesis on 'intimate partner violence' [in New Zealand] ... people tended to find female violence amusing. "When asked, 'does a man deserve to be hit', women often laugh. They said they did often deserve it as they did things that wound you up" ("Domestic Violence," 2006). Mathews believes that researchers and the helping-fields professionals also need to acknowledge and accept their role in maintaining the stereo-types portrayed in the media.

⁴⁵ The Dixie Chicks attempted to 'minimize' their support for killing men with the following distinction, "The Dixie Chicks do not advocate premeditated murder, but love getting even." They do not explain however, how it is that the murdered man and the 'beaten' woman, who murdered him, are "even." Just to point out the absurdity of that distinction - if the Dixie Chicks really 'walked' their they-love-getting-even 'talk' wouldn't that require that they now write a verse or new song in which they advocate for someone to murder the woman? Without premeditating it of course.

We are the ones who conduct single-gender and biased research. We are the ones who present to the media more political opinions about male victimization than provide objective, empirically based information. We are the ones who help maintain biased stereotypes about boys and young men that keep them trapped in their silence. We are the ones who help reinforce in the public mind an image of strong and resilient males victims who are, in truth, human beings suffering in much pain isolation and loneliness (Mathews, 1996, p. 35).

Nathanson and Young (2001) identified and provided a multitude of examples of the six misandric themes present in television and movies: laughing at men, looking down on men, bypassing men, blaming men, dehumanizing men and demonizing men. This is not to suggest that misogyny has disappeared from popular culture but rather that, “like misogyny, misandry can be found in almost every genre of popular culture” (Nathanson & Young, p. 7). Unlike misogyny however, misandry has not received the same attention and efforts to address it: “violence toward males is so normalized in our society that it is invisible to the average person” (Mathews, 1996, p. 17). Feminists have been most thorough in identifying the disastrous consequences of the endemic teaching of contempt for women in our society. That there are likely to be similarly disastrous consequences “as a result of pervasive contempt for men ... is seldom taken seriously or even acknowledged” (Nathanson & Young, 2001, p. 6).

Nathanson and Young identified six characteristics of misandric popular culture:

- every major female character is heroic;
- every major male character is psychotic, evil, less than adequate, or all of these things;
- until they develop the inner resource to fight back, either individually or as a group, female characters are the victims of male ones;
- until their true nature is revealed, male characters often appear to be charming, benevolent, and trustworthy;
- female characters are either already feminists or ready for conversion by remembering traumatic events in their own lives; and

- evil or psychotic male characters are often eliminated through death or “surgery,” and inadequate ones converted through contact with female friends into honorary women.

Token minority men, in particular, are often given that status as a way of showing that feminism opposes both sexism and racism. “The primary message is very clear: there is nothing about men as such that is good or even acceptable” (Nathanson & Young, p. 8).

Synnott (1996) put it even more bluntly, “the downfall of men from god-like beings to shit has been as pervasive as it has been rapid” (p. 93). The social perceptions created by these themes and characteristics of popular culture are critical for support of the dominant portrayal of partner abuse as a dynamic in which men are blamed for women’s trauma. Men are abusers – women are victims.

There is also at least one other explanation for the sameness in men’s and women’s lives that has yet to receive much discussion in either the academic or popular-culture literature. This alternative explanation was recently described by Philosophy professor Dr. Steven Yates (2006) and begins with an excerpt from an interview of Aaron Russo (Grigg, 2006) in which Mr. Russo describes his interview of an unnamed male member of the Rockefeller clan.⁴⁶ In the course of the interview, Mr. Russo defended his sympathy with the women’s movement and with equal opportunity. Russo reports this chilling response from Mr. Rockefeller,

he looked at me and said, ‘You know, you’re such an idiot in some ways. We ... created the women’s movement, and we promote it. And it’s not

⁴⁶ “The Rockefeller family, founded by John Davison Rockefeller (1839-1937) (“Senior”) and his brother William Rockefeller (1841-1922), is a German-American industrial/banking/philanthropic family that made a fortune in the oil business during the late 19th century, primarily through the Standard Oil Company, now ExxonMobil, but is also famous through its long association with the Chase Manhattan Bank, now JP Morgan Chase. ... For many reasons, the family and its oil and banking institutions is still considered a benchmark for extreme wealth (“as rich as Rockefeller”), as *Rockefeller Senior is still today regarded as the wealthiest man who has ever lived, surpassing Bill Gates, based on individual wealth as a percentage of US GDP*” [italics added] (Wikipedia, 2006).

about equal opportunity. It's designed to get both parents out of the home and into the workforce, where they will pay taxes. And we can decide how the children will be raised and educated' (Grigg, 2006, p. 4).

Yates (2006) comments,

Behind the feminist movement, like a shadow, was the super elite lusting for control – over men, over women, over children, over the workplace, over education, eventually over society itself. ... Feminism was never really about women or their opportunities, which is why its benefits, viewed objectively, turn out to be illusory. A lot of women have filled their prescribed roles unwittingly. Still more have followed their leaders naively. Political correctness has been a good tool for gaining the cooperation of men – or, at least, intimidating many of them into silence. Thus today's "feminized" order: women don't trust men; men don't trust women. Women have careers in record numbers; their children are in state-sponsored daycare Neither men nor women have lives. Neither pays significant attention to their real enemies at the top (pp. 4-5).

With the present popular-culture representations (and misrepresentations), the research literature,⁴⁷ and social-work approaches to partner abuse so heavily weighted with feminist theories, views, and stereotypes, any attempt to bring a balanced approach to those various areas of partner abuse must first rebalance the descriptions and context by presenting the research, stories and views that add weight to the non-feminist accounts and depictions of this issue. Presenting a balanced description would only maintain the existing imbalance.⁴⁸

In spite of the unbalanced perceptions in the public and professional realms, much of the literature, reviewed next, will show there is evidence of gender balance in the findings from a growing number of partner-abuse studies. While several sections of this report have therefore intentionally added more weight to the lighter, non-feminist, side of (the scale) this issue, then, having presented evidence to rebalance some of the contextual and perceptual

⁴⁷ "In social work literature, over the past decade [1990-2000] there has been a fraction (about 25 [publications]) that focused upon males in the title, and about half of these focused upon gay men ... of topics associated with heterosexual males ... the majority dealt with males as abusers, HIV victims, prisoners, absent fathers, disengaged fathers, youths on probation, and the homeless" (Kosberg, 2002, p. 4).

⁴⁸ As described earlier by Dutton & Nicholls (2005) – footnote 3, p. 2; and by Basile (2004), quoted p. 3.

issues the methodology for this project used a balanced approach that included a male and female lens, that focused those lenses on the implicit, explicit, and null discourses to identify the interconnected gender parallels of partner abuse, and whether the unbalanced descriptions of partner abuse in the larger societal, popular culture, and professional contexts were mirrored in the Whitehorse community's partner-abuse narratives. As a means of diagramming and summarizing this methodology each of the elements, and the segment of the project in which it was used is described in Table 1 (below).

Table 1
The Synergistic Bricolage Methodology

Model/Theory/Practice	Component Used	Researcher(s)	Segment of Project Where Component was Used
Community-based practice	enhance the communitarian response	Durst	Focus for 'best' northern research practice
<i>Space between</i>	question (feminist) "all-explanatory models"-categories, values, labels	Finn	Interviews/analysis
Community social relationships	citizens helping citizens - reciprocity	Blishen et al.	Methodology & analysis to find possible communitarian responses
	<i>space between</i>		
Community enhancement (strengths based)	focus on the citizen's & community's assets, capacities, skills	McKnight	Focus of interviews and analysis
		<i>space between</i>	
Popular education	participant centered	Freire/Horton	interview facilitation
			<i>space between</i>
Popular culture	social context of PA/ misandric themes/ negative stereotypes	Nathanson & Young	Discuss/describe present and historical contexts & data analysis
		<i>space between</i>	
Just Therapy/Satir Model	gender-balance/partner context	Waldegrave, Satir	gender-balanced research team for data collection
	<i>space between</i>		
Educational curricula	null curricula	Eisner	data analysis

CHAPTER 3

Partner-Abuse Literature Review

This whole book is a refusal of the social science/social service drive to create all-explanatory models. My point is that all such models, all monolithic understandings of abuse are flawed. 'Mutual abuse' is wrong, 'power and control' is wrong, 'effects of patriarchy is wrong (Ristock, 2002, p. xi).

As Ristock notes, a great deal of the partner-abuse discourse has focused on creating all encompassing explanations of the behaviour. What is also evident from her comments is the present preoccupation of the literature with problems, faults, blame, needs, and other deficiencies-type lenses. Publications of research that employed various feminist theoretical and methodological frameworks frequently focus on the treatment needs and behavioural deficiencies of males and male power. “What is appallingly apparent is that we [feminists] have refused to address the role of women in the dynamic of intimate violence” (Mills, 2003, p. 9). Within the dominant problem-focused lenses of the partner-abuse-literature’s discourse, a number of needs-or-deficiencies-type themes have emerged that provide a means of summarizing the vast quantities of research publications. While some of the more prevalent and relevant theoretical perspectives, methodologies, and explanatory models are reviewed here it must be acknowledged that much has been left out.⁴⁹

The Great Divide - Feminist Perspective ----- Family Violence Perspective

The partner-abuse-research literature is sharply divided into two perspectives, feminist (Kurz, 1993), and family violence (Straus, 1993). Researchers with a family-violence perspective (FVP), suggest that men and women commit partner abuse equally and obtain their research findings, most often, by administering the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS:

⁴⁹ Such as the literature specific to; violence in dating relationships/college; violence and substance use; violence and socio-demographic variables – poverty, education, income, religious affiliation, marital status, etc.; recanting/lying by victims; alternative treatment approaches to the Duluth model; differences in court referred and self-referred assaulters.

Straus, 1979) or the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2: Straus, Hamby, McCoy & Sugarman, 1996) to general-population samples. Before continuing with this section several considerations related to the “the feminist perspective” should be made. In the context that Grandin and Lupri (1997) use “the feminist perspective” it is not to suggest that there is “a” single or unifying feminist perspective, but rather that there are researchers whose theoretical and methodological approaches share certain characteristics that frequently lead to similar findings and conclusions. Nathanson and Young (2001) suggest the central value/principle of “the” feminist perspective is, “gynocentrism, because that is surely the one thing that all schools of feminism have in common: Primary concern for the needs and problems of women” (p. xv). It is also fair to say that there are nuances of the feminist perspective of violence that includes acknowledgment and an understanding of female-to-male violence, lesbian and gay relationship violence, etc. As the literature review here suggests, this awareness appears to be rare among feminist researchers but is more prevalent among the feminist practitioners of social work (and other helping professions) that provide services to the perpetrators and victims of partner abuse (e.g., Erin Pizzy, Donald Dutton, Linda Mills, Claudia Dias, Joanne Clements and most of the 8 Whitehorse research participants who identified themselves as having worked with partner abuse victims and/or perpetrators).

The feminist perspective (FP) theorizes, that partner abuse is asymmetrical, with women, by far and away, the most frequently victimized, and all reports of males being victimized by their female partners are dismissed. Mills (2003) summarized the FP thusly: “it has served mainstream feminism both socially and politically to simplify and reduce the violence continuum to include only physical abuse perpetrated by men. Mainstream feminists made domestic violence unilateral” (p. 10). The FP supporters obtain their results

with a variety of measurement instruments that employ various measures and definitions of abuse and/or violence, and draw their samples from clinical populations (i.e. women's shelters, hospital emergency rooms, crime/court statistics, etc.). A number of the FP researchers have modified their position to acknowledge that while some women do perpetrate partner abuse, they do so only in self-defence⁵⁰ (Pleck et al. 1978; and Walker, 1979, as cited by Sommer, 1994). "Female violence ... mainstream feminists have argued ... is always defensive" (Mills, 2003, p. 9), and observers report, "the abuse industry perpetuates these myths of man = bad, woman = good" (Rolph, 2004, p. 3).

The widespread acceptance of these feminist beliefs has had an undesirable (some might say unethical) impact on the practice of social workers, clinicians, first responders and other professionals throughout the system. For example, retired La Mesa, California police-officer George Sperry (2006) offered this reflection of his experiences with police partner-abuse matters throughout his career,

I don't know if the "feminist movement" per se is behind the *imbalanced* [italics added] judicial system's behavior ... but the abhorrent domestic violence laws passed years ago were poorly written, perhaps by their biased influence In the hundreds of calls of domestic violence I responded to in my career, perhaps 90 percent to 95 percent were false, yet I saw children's and men's lives destroyed irrevocably due to vindictive, greedy, spoiled, mentally imbalanced, and/or drug infested women perverting the judicial system. ... On rare occasion, able to prove the woman's claim was false, I would arrest only her. Obviously, in those cases, I was not popular with ... supervisors or prosecuting attorneys so self absorbed with political correctness that truth was irrelevant.

⁵⁰ However, Straus (2006a) reports, "rather than self defense, the most usual motivations for violence by women are coercion, anger, and punishing misbehavior by their partner" (p. 4).

Similarly, Lieutenant Greg Schmidt, who created the Seattle Police Department's domestic violence investigation unit, describes how the investigation of domestic dispute calls are handled,⁵¹

men are often presumed guilty in domestic disputes ... The domestic violence industry ... can spin things however they want, but most street cops know that women are just as likely to start domestic disputes as men are. But arresting women puts you under a lot of scrutiny. It's bad for your career (as cited by Sacks, 2002, p. 1).

The feminist influence on court processes has led to the type of outcomes described by Gover, MacDonald and Alpert (2003) after their examination of the Lexington County, South Carolina Domestic Violence Court - all persons arrested for non-felony domestic violence had no possibility of being found innocent since all (197) defendants received some punishment, a fine, jail and/or treatment. University of Western Ontario, constitutional law professor, Robert Martin (2001) offered this description of Canadian Domestic Violence policy, "this bill is classic police-state legislation and violates just about every constitutional principle that anyone with even a minimal familiarity with our Constitution might think of" (p. 8).

Then, when partner-abuse perpetrators attend for assessment, counselling, or treatment the feminist-based, gender inequalities continue,

clinicians working with male offenders ... are encouraged to obtain collateral information whenever possible to compensate for the high level of socially desirable responding ... In contrast, clinicians working with female offenders often accept their client's self-reports as valid^[52] (Henning, Jones, & Holdford, 2005, p. 132).

⁵¹ The Yukon RCMP's way of "handling domestic dispute calls" (in 2002) resulted in 105 males being charged with spousal assault as compared to 27 females. And as long as Statistics Canada has been reporting the annual rates of spousal assault by the perpetrator's gender, the Yukon RCMP have always arrested and charged (many) more Yukon males than females with spousal assault (Yukon Women's Directorate, 2004).

⁵² Which numerous research findings show is not always so. See footnote 79, p. 107.

And finally two examples to tie it all together;

When Stanley Green's wife beat him over the head with a heavy blunt object, causing blood to run, his troubles had only just begun. The police officer refused to take a report, the judge laughed at medical reports and photos of his injuries, and the domestic violence programs he contacted refused to help (RADAR, 2006).

Fredrick Mathews, PhD., Psych. (1996), offered this description of the male victim's experience in the system;

We give male victims a message every day of their lives that they risk much by complaining. Stated succinctly, if a male is victimized he deserved it, or is lying. If he is injured, it is his own fault. If he cries or complains, we will not take him seriously or condone his "whining" because he is supposed to "take it like a man." We will laugh at him. We will support him in the minimization of the impact. We will encourage him to accept responsibility for being victimized and teach him to ignore any feelings associated with his abuse. We will guilt and shame him to keep a stiff upper lip so he can "get on with it" (p. 34).

Having had these experiences in the system it is little surprise that, "research findings and practice experience lead to the conclusion that males are less involved with health and social service systems. They are less likely to admit having problems, seek professional assistance, actively participate in interactive therapies, and remain in treatment programs" (Kosberg, 2002, p. 7).

As with any myths, arguments, continuums or "spin" on a social issue they require carefully chosen and selected pieces of information and stories to support them, while at the same time excluding and not attending to sources that offer alternative or contrary evidence. Such a partner-abuse-specific example follows.

An Example of a Selected and Unselected Story

Because they ['histories'] have been written to support claims to territories and resources or about past injustices, they have been constructed around selected stories (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 143).

Similarly, both nationally and internationally (in most Western nations), the “herstory” of partner abuse has been written to support feminist claims⁵³ of injustices, with the use of selected stories. While many of those claims are valid and have led to much needed programs and services for women, as with any historical account the stories selected for inclusion in the feminist account of partner abuse left other stories untold and unselected. The events described next are one example of this selection and null selection process that created a significant part of the partner-abuse herstory, or history, in Canada.

In 1989 the *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science* published a paper titled, the *Incidence of Wife Assault in Alberta*, which described a 1987 study completed by Leslie Kennedy (University of Alberta) and Donald Dutton (University of British Columbia). Kennedy and Dutton reported that their analysis of 1045 completed Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) surveys indicated that in 11.2% of marriages in Alberta husband-to-wife violence had occurred. Kennedy and Dutton (1989) then went on to state that their use of the CTS, as their measure of violence, was to “make the current research comparable to the considerable corpus of published incidence research on U.S. family violence by Straus and his colleagues (Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz, 1980; Straus & Gelles, 1986)” (p. 40). Anyone familiar with these two publications by Straus and his colleagues, will know that one of the most controversial and significant findings, reported in both publications, were the incident rates of wife-to-husband abuse that were virtually identical to the incident rates for husband-to-wife violence. However, Dutton and Kennedy did not report an incident rate for wife-to-

⁵³ Claims, applications, proposals, etc., for services, programs, facilities for women battered by their male partners. Claims that men are perpetrators and women are victims of domestic violence, that 1 in 4 women are sexually assaulted in their lifetime, that women only hit men in self-defence, etc, etc.

husband abuse in their 1989 research publication, despite their stated desire for comparability with Straus and his colleagues' data.

In the years leading up to Dutton and Kennedy's (1989) publication, the concerns in Canada with wife assault had led to an all-party committee (Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs, 1982), the proliferation of treatment groups for court-ordered wife assaulters (Browning, 1984), and a change in national police, charging practices (MacLeod, 1987). Following the 1989 release of Dutton and Kennedy's findings, an event occurred in December of that year at L'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal that "confirmed" Kennedy and Dutton's Alberta findings.

After the Montreal Massacre of 14 women Dutton and Kennedy's paper, became the spark that mobilized governments to pour millions of dollars into shelters for women. It led Ottawa to issue its own report, *The War Against Women*,^[54] and fostered an atmosphere in the courts, social services and among police and the public in which wife abuse is taken very seriously, while abuse against men is shrugged off or even justified (Sullivan, 1999, p. 1).

This window of opportunity presented a questionable combination of "truth" for all Canadians to see, a gripping front-page-news story⁵⁵ that was a heart wrenching, tragic example of what Kennedy and Dutton's "scientific" research "proved." What followed, in the

⁵⁴ Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women, June 1991. "*The War against Women* undermined at least two legal principles that are fundamental to any democratic society. One is that no group should be singled out for attack by the state. In this case, the citizens of an entire class identified by a biological characteristic (maleness) became the object of governmental suspicion and therefore public prejudice. Another principle is that the accused are presumed innocent unless proven guilty. In this case, an entire group was clearly presumed guilty unless it could be proven innocent. And no attempt was made to do that" (Nathanson & Young, 2006, pp. 73-74).

⁵⁵ "The incident made headlines throughout the world as an example of woman-hating. The Canadian government spent millions reeducating men in their attitudes toward women. [About a year and a half earlier, May 1988, another null story had taken place] ... a Chicago woman (Laurie Dann) shot five elementary school boys, poisoned food at two fraternities, burned down the Young Men's Jewish Council, burned two other boys in their basement, *shot her own son*, [italics in text] and justified her murder of an 8-year-old boy claiming he was a rapist. Not a single headline or article summary in the index to the *Chicago Tribune* pointed out that every person killed or wounded by the Chicago woman was a boy. No government spent millions reeducating women on their attitudes toward men" (Farrell, 1993, p. 216). Men? – No! This woman's victims were boys - a minimum of 9 boys - imagine the outrage if Lepine had killed 14 elementary-school-aged girls.

next decade (1989–1999), as Sullivan described, were numerous government decisions⁵⁶ to spend large amounts of Canadian tax payers' money to support battered women. That story has been selected as part of the accepted partner-abuse history within Canada, and is also an example of how,

mainstream feminist theory sought to explain violence against women by linking it to male oppression. After a relentless and successful effort, these feminist explanations took hold, and many men's and women's narratives of intimate violence incorporated notions of patriarchy into their explanations of it. The feminist strategy to construct domestic violence as a gender issue has worked. (Mills, 2003, p. 8)

However, there is second chapter to this story, a chapter that tells the rest of the story, but it is a chapter that remained untold for ten years and, even since it's discovery, it continues to be a part of the null partner-abuse history of Canada. This unselected part of the story began to unfold in 1996 when Simon-Fraser-University-graduate student, Marilyn Kwong, began exploring the partner-abuse literature for a possible research project of her own. Along the way Kwong teamed up with fellow graduate student, Kim Bartholomew, and they began to make preparations for a Vancouver survey with a similar methodology to Kennedy and Dutton's (1989) Alberta project. During that preparation process they apparently conducted a detailed review of Kennedy and Dutton's Alberta data. They discovered that Kennedy and Dutton had indeed found rates of wife-to-husband violence similar to the husband-to-wife violence reported in their 1989 survey but, "didn't bother to report the wife-to-husband violence because they [Kennedy and Dutton] simply weren't interested" (Sullivan, 1999, p. 2). Remarkably, however, once this "slight" oversight was brought to Mr. Dutton's attention he apparently developed the "interest" he had previously

⁵⁶ For example, see the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, Marshal, & Vaillancourt (1992) on p. 64.

lacked and joined Kwong and Bartholomew to publish the “new” findings. The result was Kwong, Bartholomew, and Dutton’s (1999) *Gender Differences in Patterns of Relationship Violence in Alberta*, published in the very same *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science* that published the original paper ten years earlier⁵⁷.

Kennedy and Dutton’s publication is not the only research publication to omit data (accidentally and/or intentionally) on the violence perpetrated by women against their male partners. “Many researchers have published only the data on male perpetrators or female victims, deliberately omitting data on female perpetrators and male victims” (Straus, 2006b, p. 1087) Canadian authors, Patricia Pearson and Kate Fillion have both researched and written books on females that perpetrate partner abuse and also described the non-reporting of findings of violence by women.

A 1978 survey conducted by the Kentucky Commission on Violence against Women uncovered that thirty-eight per cent of the assaults in the state were committed by women, but that finding wasn’t included when the survey was released. (the information was discovered some years later by scholars) (Pearson, 1997, p. 121).

Currently, findings on all types of female physical and sexual aggression are being suppressed; academics who do publish their research are subject to bitter attacks^[58] and outright vilification from some colleagues and activists,

⁵⁷ There is no evidence and/or report of what response, if any, Mr. Kennedy had to this oversight - other than his apparent ongoing disinterest, as evidenced by his null collaboration on the second publication. While there are obviously a multitude of possible reasons that Dutton and Kennedy did not publish the female rates in the 1989 paper neither researcher has ever offered an explanation in either the literature or popular-culture media.

⁵⁸ “Among researchers not committed to that [feminist] ideology, many (including some of my own colleagues) have avoided publishing results showing gender symmetry to avoid becoming victims of vitriolic denunciations and ostracism, as I have” (Straus, 2006b, p. 1087). Other examples include; Christina Hoff Sommers was the recipient of such a feminist attack at an US government-sponsored conference on November 1, 2001, at which she was an invited presenter. Ms Sommers’ statement is available at; <http://www.angryharry.com/esFeministsarenastythings.htm> [,] and an on-line news article about the incident can be found at; <http://www.nationalreview.com/contributors/kurtz120501.shtml> [,] Hoff Sommers (1995) had also described such attacks, before she experienced that one of her own - “When Suzanne K. Stienmetz ... was being considered for promotion, the feminists launched a letter writing campaign urging that it be denied. She also received calls threatening her and her family, and there was a bomb threat at a conference where she spoke” (p. 200). Erin Pizzey mentioned earlier (p. 3) reported, “anywhere I spoke there was a contingent of screaming, heckling feminists waiting for me. Abusive calls to my home, death threats and bomb scares, became a way of living for me and for my family. Finally, the bomb squad, asked me to have all my mail delivered to their head quarters. One night the family dog was killed” (as cited by McElroy, 2006, p. 1).

and others note the hostile climate and carefully omit all data on female perpetrators from the published reports. (Fillion, 1996, p. 229-230).

“Among the many examples of respected researchers publishing only the data on assaults by men are Kennedy and Dutton (1989), Lackey and Williams (1995) and Johnson and Leone (2005)” (Straus, 2006b, p. 1087).

Among the debates in the field of domestic violence, none is more acrimonious than the debate around female initiated violence — a debate that has been troubling for feminists since the first U.S. National Family Violence Survey of 1975 found women to be as violent as men. Because this finding contradicts feminist theory, it has been suppressed, unreported, reinterpreted, or denied (Carney et al., 2006, p. 108).

These examples of null findings in research projects and publications not only support the importance of examining the null discourse, data, and curricula but also describe some of the processes that have contributed to the current portrayal of partner abuse in popular culture, which includes the feminist constructed herstory of partner abuse. (A herstory that is an important contextual consideration in understanding and appreciating the methodology of this project.) As Kincheloe (2001) noted, “multiperspectival approaches to research may not be very helpful unless the object of inquiry and the various methods used to study it are situated historically” (p. 690).

Feminist Community-Based Research

In addition to the contributions of Feminist research and researchers, already acknowledged, feminist researchers have led the way in utilizing community-based research and responses to partner abuse. The literature reviewed in this section has also been discussed further in other sections of this paper in reference to the specifics of the support, findings or insights these reports contributed to the discussions in those other sections. The discussion in this section serves two purposes; first, to offer further support to the

community-based component of the methodology of this research. Second, is to offer additional linkage (beyond that already described in Chapter 2) to the second research question.

Yoshihama (2002; also see p. 24) undertook an investigation of battered women in Japan using an action research, focus-group, methodology that resulted in Japan's first community-based support group for battered women. Yoshihama found that the participants' narratives described a web of entrapment from which the women saw little hope of escape. The women reported that taking the risk to expose their private and shameful experiences broke their isolation. Yoshihama described the women's negative experiences with Japan's professionals and first responders as "a serious breach of professional standards" (p. 397). In light of that observation Yoshihama recommended that Japan's service providers need to reconceptualize welfare policies and services in a broader, more comprehensive approach.

Fawcett, et al's., (1999; also see pp. 35, 72, 96, 104, 133, 149, 157) report was also described in a number of other sections of this report as it's methodological approach was the most similar to the methodology used in completing this research. The researchers "undertook an extensive program of formative research that included participant observation, eight focus groups with a total of 45 people recruited from the community ... and five in-depth interviews with abused women" (p. 42). Fawcett et al's report presents a Stages of Change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982) model, adapted by Brown (1997) to describe behavioural indicators for each stage, in the context of wife abuse. The goal of the community-based intervention was to create a supportive environment so that once an abused woman's awareness was raised she could continue along the pathway to change. The

intervention had “two main parts; (a) a 12-session intensive consciousness-raising and skills-developing workshop for women and (b) a large-scale community campaign” (p. 47).

Michau’s (2005; also see p. 157) community-based research publication discussed the rationale for developing primary prevention programs to address violence against women. The paper also described a conceptual framework and approach to mobilize communities to prevent domestic violence. The paper outlined six guiding principles for mobilizing communities including community ownership, “effective projects ... in a community must engage and be lead by members of that community” (p. 4). In similarity to Fawcett, et al.’s approach (1999) Michau’s process of community mobilization employed the Stages of Change Theory (Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross, 1992) as she has found it to be “intuitive, simple, and generally cross-cultural” (p. 4). Michau’s report is one of the few feminist publications that acknowledges that both “men and women ... need to be supported to make changes in their personal and professional lives,” and “prevention work must encourage personal reflection and action” (p. 10). Michau also speaks to the importance of partnerships between service providers and community citizens and advises community organizations to accept that while they may need to guide community-based programs they also must “recognize that it cannot be completely controlled” (p. 11)

Fullwood’s (2002; also see p. 156) report summarized the findings from “a range of community-based programs in local mobilization efforts to prevent and reduce family violence” (p. 3). The central focus of the report was on the “five key goals that emerged from the FVPF [Family Violence Prevention Fund] survey, goals that are critical to family violence prevention efforts. The five goals were; (a) raising awareness of the problem of family violence and establishing social norms that make violence unacceptable, (b)

connecting community residents to services, (c) changing social and community conditions that contribute to violence, (d) building networks of leaders within a community, (e) making services and institutions accountable to community needs. Fullwood's hope was that,

after reading this report, community leaders and residents, social service providers, domestic violence advocates, and child welfare workers will be able to approach community engagement to prevent family violence from a more informed perspective. This, in turn, should facilitate better working relationships among participating groups and individuals and help foster the successful creation and implementation of new community-based engagement efforts to combat family violence in communities across the country (p. 3)

In conclusion Fullwood (2002) again stressed that the most promising community-based projects surveyed involved local residents at every step of the process. Fullwood says that "organizations that do this kind of work recognize the sense of ownership that grows when community members are involved in solving problems. They also recognize the importance of collaborating with the systems charged with responding to family violence—and of holding those systems accountable for changing practices" (p. 17).

The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, Marshal, & Vaillancourt (1991), with its national scope, is possibly the largest community-based study ever completed. With a federal government mandate, and funding, the nine member panel, headed by Pat Marshal, spent the winter of 1991 touring the country. Access to the Panel was "by invitation only and frequently behind closed doors" (Lees, 1992, p. 51) and in advance of the Panel's arrival participants were provided a,

booklet that revealed the usual litany of male violence: at least one woman in ten is battered by her husband; one woman in four is sexually assaulted at some time in her life, half before the age of 17; a study of women with disabilities found that almost half had been sexually assaulted as an adult; and one in five Canadian men living with a woman admitted to using violence against her (Lees, pp. 51-52)

At the outset Marshal promised the Panel, “would chart ‘a road map toward zero tolerance’ of violence against women” (Lees, 1992, p. 51) and added, “it’s a pretty unique experience to be part of a federally financed revolution” (Lees, p. 51). The Panel’s findings on sexual assault were that, “when all kinds of sexual assault are taken into account (to include rape, attempted rape and unwanted sexual touching to the breasts or genitals), two out of three women [in Canada] had experienced what is legally recognized to be sexual assault” (The Panel et al., 1991, Appendix A) The Panel also completed a random study of four-hundred and twenty women in Toronto (interestingly seventeen percent of the “random sample” were handicapped women).

In addition to the Panel’s significant contribution to feminist research, as with Kennedy and Dutton’s (1989) study discussed in the preceding section, “irregularities” within the Panel’s membership began to emerge by the summer of 1992. “The National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Dis-Abled Women’s Network, the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women and the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres—pulled out amid a welter of bitter denunciations” (Lees, 1992, p. 52). At one point during the Panel’s mandate Pat Marshal took it upon herself to discredit the work of Murray Strauss (some of which is reviewed in the next section). Rather than addressing the validity of Strauss’ work Marshal raised “the possibility that he beats his wife and seduces his students” (Lees, p. 53). Legal advisors to the Status of Women (Ms. Marshal’s employer at the time) compelled her to write Strauss an apology for her remarks, which Marshal maintained she never made (Lees).

Each of the feminist community-based reports just reviewed have employed community-based methodologies that effectively gave voice to many women’s narratives and

reported findings that led to much needed programs and services for women. Furthermore the community-based approach supports the importance of asking community citizens the type of research questions that this project has asked. However, despite feminisms clearly stated value of gender equality these projects all failed to employ a gender-balanced research team as part of their methodological approach, and many made little effort to be fully inclusive of males in the communities.

Incident Rates of Partner Abuse

The commodity of victimization is a much hotter property than reasoned writing about the state of gender relations within contemporary culture (Boyd,⁵⁹ 2004, p. 170).

The findings from research projects employing the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) and/or quantitative methodologies could be described as incident-rate surveys. Before looking at some of the CTS literature however, a brief look at the history of the CTS and its limitations is useful.

CTS history and criticisms.

Would anyone ... disagree that women are capable of being as intelligent as men? That they are as capable of being CEO's as men or holding high political office? Why do we then question that women are equally capable of acting in an abusive and violent fashion? (James Fagan⁶⁰).

When Straus, Gelles, and Stienmetz (1980) pioneered the study of partner abuse in 1975 with their national U.S. survey, they operationalized the prevalence of partner abuse with the Conflict Tactics Scales. The original CTS, developed by Murray Straus (1979) in 1971, measured three relationship variables: reasoning, verbal aggression, and violence or physical aggression. Between 1972 and 1995 the CTS was used in 20 countries on over

⁵⁹ Neil Boyd, Simon Fraser University professor of criminology and past chair of the SFU harassment committee.

⁶⁰ Defence lawyer, as cited in the *Yukon News* by Stockman, 2002, p. 35).

70,000 research participants with diverse cultural backgrounds, and approximately 400 publications have reported on data obtained with the CTS (Straus, Hamby, Bonney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996). The CTS records the presence of partner abuse in a relationship whenever a positive response is obtained to any of the questions on the verbal-aggression or physical-aggression scales.

Despite and/or because, “the CTS is the most widely used measure of partner violence” (Rosenfeld, 1992, as cited by Date, & Ronan, 2000, p. 3) it has been criticized for a variety of flaws and omissions. These include: failing to consider gender differences in the perception of aggression (Lloyd, 1987, as cited by Thompson, 1991), failing to distinguish between offensive and defensive behaviour (Pleck, Pleck, Grossman, & Bart, 1978; and Straus, 1989, as cited by Thompson), subjects’ willingness to report perpetrating or receiving aggression (O’Leary, Barling, Arias, Rosenbaum, Malone & Tyree 1989; Szinovacz, 1983, as cited by Thompson), and the intent and consequences of the aggression (Yllo, 1988, as cited by Thompson). These, and other concerns, with the original CTS eventually led to development of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2) (Straus et al., 1996).

The additions, changes and differences of the CTS2, as compared to the original CTS, are significant, and the explanations and rationale are too lengthy to present here. Straus et al’s., (1996) thirty-plus-page publication has all the details for those interested in all the details. Some of the highlights include the addition of two new “scales to measure an additional type of partner abuse (sexual coercion) and a consequence (physical injury from assaults by a partner)” (p. 286), as well as “additional items in each of the three original scales” (p. 286). With these additions, “the CTS2 is almost twice as long as the CTS1 (39 compared with 19 items or 78 compared with 38 questions” (p. 304). Some simpler changes

were also made, “the awkward ‘his/her’ or ‘him/her’ was replaced by ‘my partner’” (p. 287). Also, the “hierarchical order of social acceptability starting with the socially desirable negotiation scale items ... and ending with the most severe of the physical assault items” (p. 288) was replaced with “interspersed items [as it] requires participants to think about each item more that would be the case if they were in groups of similar items” (p. 288). As well a number of the criticisms of the CTS were rebutted,

Some scholars ... fault the CTS for measuring acts out of context. The criticism that the CTS does not take into account the context and meaning of the acts is analogous to criticizing a reading ability test for not identifying the reasons a child reads poorly ... and for not measuring the harmful effects of reading difficulty” (p. 285).

While recognition and support of the new and improved CTS2 as an adequate measure of partner abuse for general-population surveys exists (Gordon, 2000; Grandin & Lupri, 1997), others continue to call for a further broadening of the abusive/aggressive behaviours being measured (DeKeseredy, 2000; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998). In order to understand the context of this broaden-the-types-of-aggressive-behaviours discussion, a brief-historical explanation is helpful.

As described earlier, one of the findings, reported after Straus et al.’s (1980) first US national survey, was that the rate of husband-to-wife abuse was identical to the rate of wife-to-husband abuse. With the existing feminist-political agenda of the day, the response to such a finding was quite predictable, “our 1975 study was criticized for presenting statistics on violence by wives” (Straus and Gelles, 1986, p. 472). In other words right from the birth of the partner-abuse literature the FP and FVP (described earlier, pp. 52-53) camps have existed within the partner-abuse-research community.

The FVP supporters have charged that feminists and other women's groups fear that drawing attention to women's violent behaviours and battered husbands will impede attempts to battle the more serious problem of men's violence and battered wives (Campbell, 1993, as cited by White and Kowalski, 1994; Flynn, 1990). The FP supporters have countered with behavioural descriptions and abuse measures that would inevitably show males as far more abusive than females. One such example was offered by Catherine MacKinnon, University-of-Michigan-law professor, and the leading-US-feminist-legal expert on date rape. "Under conditions of male dominance ... if sex is something men normally do to women, the issue is less whether there was force than whether consent is a meaningful concept" (as cited by Farrell, 1994, p. 418). Fortunately the FP researchers choose not to incorporate the legal opinion of Ms. MacKinnon into their definition and/or description of abuse. However, broadening the types of behaviours included in relationship violence beyond the present, narrow, legal definition is precisely the direction the FP researchers are currently moving. "Just because the law does not define an abusive incident as serious does not mean that legal definitions coincide with women's real-life feelings and experiences" (DeKeseredy, 2000, p. 734). The new definition (types of behaviours) proposed by the FP researchers would address psychological and other nonphysical or nonsexual types of abusive and controlling behaviours, including stalking (DeKeseredy). The measures being used by the FP researchers to assess these non-physical types of aggression include; Koss, Gidycz, and Wisniewski's (1987) Sexual Experiences Survey, Tolman's (1989) Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory, the Measure of Wife Abuse (Rodenburg, & Fantuzzo, 1993), and stalking measures from the National Violence Against Women Survey (Tjaden & Thonnes, 1998).

At this point there appears to have been no response to incorporating indirectly-aggressive behaviours into the measures of partner abuse from the FVP researchers. The FVP researcher's findings of gender-symmetrical rates of partner abuse may be the result of several factors, including, "evidence that women's use of physical aggression has increased during the last 20 or 30 years in the Western world" (Lagerspetz, 1999, p. 229). Also, as will be discussed next, it is the more indirect types of abuse and/or aggression that are often the preferred approach of women that engage in such behaviours. That the FVP researchers have remained silent on the inclusion of the women-preferred-types-of-aggressive behaviours in the emerging-broader description of abusive behaviours is somewhat surprising.

In order to fully understand the aggressive strategies of men and women would require an in-depth analysis of children's socialization within the societies in which they were raised. The relevant component of aggression analyses for this project is the gender-based-aggressive strategies resulting from the socialization process. Studies that followed large samples of boys and girls raised in Western societies from school entry to the end of adolescence, clearly indicated that as children grow older they generally resort to less and less physically aggressive behaviour (Cairns, & Cairns, 1994, as cited by Tremblay, 1999). Later studies using teachers', peers', mothers', and self-reports found that four-year-old boys and girls had the highest levels of physical aggression while eleven-year-old boys and girls had the lowest levels of aggression. As well, at each age level the girls had lower levels of physical aggression, compared to the boys (Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Ferguson & Gariépy, 1998, as cited by Tremblay). However, when indirect aggression, a behaviour intended to hurt someone without the use of physical aggression, was measured, a much different picture emerges (Tremblay, 1999).

Girls have higher levels of indirect aggression at all ages from four to eleven compared to boys (Tremblay, 1999). In and of itself, this finding is most informative to the broadening-the-description-of-abusive-behaviour discussion; however, an additional finding has perhaps even greater significance. Unlike the negative correlation between the physically aggressive behaviours and the children's age, the frequency of indirectly aggressive behaviours increases with age (Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1992). "Thus, it appears that part of the effects of the socialization process is to bring some children [predominantly girls] to use indirect means of aggression in their interpersonal relationships rather than physical aggression" (Tremblay, 1999, p. 58). Anecdotal experience seems to suggest that the childhood trend of an-increasing-use-of-indirect aggression does not continue throughout one's life span. The age at which the increasing frequency of indirectly-aggressive behaviours levels off or declines is perhaps a function of individual maturity. However, research findings do suggest that females' greater use of indirect methods of aggression persists into adulthood. "Women appear to be more likely than men to use indirect methods of aggression, such as sabotaging another's performance (Björkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992; Lagerspetz, Björkqvist & Peltonen, 1998)" (White & Kowalski, 1994, p. 491). Also, Burbank (1987, as cited by White & Kowalski) documented eight categories of aggressive acts perpetrated by females in three-hundred-and-seventeen societies. The behaviours included passive-aggressive behaviours, verbal, nonverbal, and physical aggression, property damage, and locking someone out of the house.

In a search of the community-based literature, only one report⁶¹ could be found that had even asked women about the types of aggressive or abusive behaviours they used. "The

⁶¹ There is a larger quantitative literature that has described the preferred aggressive strategies of women (e.g. Björkqvist and Niemelä, 1992).

forms of aggression that they acknowledged using were withholding sex, insulting their partner or criticizing his sexual ability and his ability to support the family, not serving him his meals, and locking him out of the family home” (Fawcett et al., 1999, p. 45). The researchers preface those comments with the women’s contention that their aggressive behaviours were in response to their partners’ behaviour. While most feminists would have quickly challenged men attempting to blame their behaviour on someone else, Fawcett et al., (1999) give no indication (null data) that they had any concern with the context the women presented. This would appear to be an example of the theme of service providers believing the women’s version of events (see p. 107). It is unclear how a community would become violence free if these types of female behaviours continue to be overlooked.

These findings of increasing levels of indirect aggression among children, as well as girl’s and women’s higher levels of indirect aggression, seem to indicate that research measures of abuse (such as the CTS and CTS2) that do not account for indirect means of aggression, are probably missing the most prevalent means of aggression – particularly if the intention was to include and measure female aggression. This suggests that if or when the CTS or other measures of aggression and/or partner abuse are revised to include measures of indirect aggression, research findings are likely to show that women are more aggressive overall than are men.

Incident-rate research findings.

Some incident-rate-research publications only report rates of partner abuse perpetrated by men while others report abuse rates for both men and women. A sample of 13 incident-rate publications is summarized in Table 2. Eleven of the projects sampled regional or national Canadian populations. One U.S. based and one multi-national project were also

Table 2
Summary of Incident-Rate Publications

Researcher(s)	Date	Sample size	Rate by men	Rate by women	Survey location
Yukon Women's Drive	2004	N/A	105 assaults (2000)	27 assaults (2000)	Yukon
Bunge & Locke (Stats. Can.)	2000	25,786	8%/5yrs	7%/5yrs	Canada
Gelles & Straus	1997	Can. 1123 U.S. 4082	18.3%/yr	23.8%/yr	Canada
Kennedy & Dutton	1989	1045	11.2%	Not reported	Alberta
Gelles, Brinkerhoff & Dutton	1990	707	12.9%/yr	12.3%	Alberta
Smith	1990	604	14.4%/yr.	Not reported	Toronto
Gelles	1994	World 1257	7.1%/yr	6.8%/yr	World
Straus	2006a	13,601	9.9% in the last yr.	21.4% in the last yr	32 Nations*
Yukon Task Force	1985	N/A	700cases/yr**	Not reported	Yukon
Brinkerhoff & Lupri	1988	562 couples	10.3%/yr	13.2%/yr	Calgary

* South Africa, Tanzania, China, China-Hong Kong, India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Romania, Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico, Portugal, Venezuela, Iran, Israel, Canada, United States, Australia, New Zealand.

** estimate only, no survey completed.

included for comparison purposes.

Straus and Gelles (1986) examined and compared the rates of child and spouse abuse as determined in a 1975 study and a 1985 replication. The CTS was used to measure the incidence of abuse in both surveys. The results indicated a 47% decrease in the rates of child abuse and a 27% decrease in the rates of wife abuse. During the same time period (1974 – 1984) the rate of husband abuse increased slightly, and the authors comment, “that, in marked contrast to the behavior of women outside the family, women are about as violent within the family as men” (Strauss & Gelles, 1986, p. 470). The researchers note that equivalent rates of partner abuse have been confirmed by other investigations including: “Brutz & Ingoldsby, 1984; Gelles, 1974; Giles-Sim, 1983; Laner & Thompson, 1982; Lane & Gwartney-Gibbs, 1985; Jouriles & O’Leary, 1985; Makepeace, 1983; Sack, Keller &

Howard, 1982; Saunders, 1986; Scanzoni, 1978; Stienmetz, 1977, 1977-78; Szinovacz, 1983” (p. 470). Straus and Gelles (1986) suggest that the increased anonymity offered by the telephone led to more truthfulness and, therefore, increased reporting of violence. In addition, the higher level of anonymity was thought to be responsible for the 20% increase in the survey completion rate.

Straus’ (2006a) most recent research used the CTS2 to examine the dominance and symmetry of partner violence by 13,601 students at 68 universities in 32 nations. Straus found that “among the 32 national settings, there is none in which ‘Male-Only’ is the largest of the three mutuality categories. ... In every one of the 32 national settings, mutual violence is the largest category” (p. 8). “The second largest category was couples where the female partner was the only one to carry out physical attacks” (p. 12). “This contradicts the widely held belief that partner violence is predominantly a crime committed by men. Indeed, almost every treatment and preventative effort is based on that assumption, which these results suggest may be false” (p. 12). Given these findings it is hardly surprising that Straus suggests that prevention and offender treatment programs need to replace the assumption that partner violence is mostly male-only with the understanding that most partner violence is mutual or female-only, and before remedial efforts begin, the pattern needs to be determined. Furthermore the “patriarchal system” model’s single causal factor must be replaced by a multi-causal model and equal attention to developing prevention programs that target violence by women and girls must be given. “It is time to make the prevention and treatment effort one that is aimed at ending all family violence ... only then will women, as well as all other human beings, be safe in their own homes” (p. 16).

The Yukon Task Force on Family Violence, (1985) was co-sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Resources and the Department of Justice. The task force conducted a critical evaluation of services available in the Yukon at that time. Information and data were gathered from the public, communities, agencies and professional practitioners. The task force also conducted a literature review of over 200 related articles and manuscripts.

The Task Force report discussed the rate of spousal assault and provided estimates based on rates from research in other jurisdictions. These estimates were then examined in light of the higher reported number of incidents of spousal assaults to Yukon RCMP than to other detachments in Canada. The study briefly addresses the issue of female-perpetrated spousal assault by first reporting that men commit the majority of spousal assaults, and that women's perpetration of spousal assaults are in self-defence. In the end the report is somewhat unclear about what the Task Force believes the incidence of spousal assault is. The report suggests that an estimated 700⁶² Yukon women are assaulted by their partners each year. The Task Force offers some evidence that Yukon rates are higher than that, but also admits that the numbers received from the Transition Home and the RCMP do not support that estimate. While this publication's date and unscientific calculation of the numbers of physically-abused women may diminish its present relevance, the information does provide a historical context of the partner-abuse problem and partner-abuse research in the Yukon.

⁶² This compares to 105 assaults reported by the Yukon Women's Directorate (2004) in 2002 – a remarkable 85% reduction! in seventeen years – a 5% average yearly reduction – if the 1985 estimate is accepted as accurate. For some unknown reason no one, no organization, no feminists have stepped forward to accept credit, celebrate or acknowledge this tremendous accomplishment! This success remains a null-reported (celebrated) accomplishment in the Whitehorse and Yukon community. (see further discussion p. 140)

Kennedy and Dutton (1989) used a combination of face-to-face and telephone interviews to determine rates of wife assault in Edmonton, Calgary, and rural Alberta. The research was conducted in 1987 using the CTS. Comparisons to U.S. data Straus & Gelles, (1986) were conducted and indicated that the overall rate of relationship violence in Alberta (11.2 %) was virtually identical to the U.S. rates. Rates of wife assault were found to be; highest in the 18 – 34 years of age category, and higher in urban than in rural populations. Several differences were noted however, including a lower incidence of severe husband-to-wife violence (76.6% of the U.S. rate). As was previously discussed (p. 59) it was later found that Kennedy and Dutton had also collected data that showed Alberta women were equally violent towards their partners but did not describe those data in their research publication.

The findings from Dutton and Kennedy's (1989) data of wife-to-husband abuse were eventually reported by Kwong, Bartholomew, and Dutton (1999). That publication, however did not address the most obvious question, which is why the abuse by wives had not been included in the original (1989) paper. In addition to finding rates of wife-to-husband assault, identical to the rates of husband-to-wife assault, the researchers also noted that most of the violence was bidirectional (62% of men and 52% of women who reported violence). The bidirectional violence was further analyzed for symmetry; that is, that the numbers of acts of violence perpetrated by the wife or husband were within five of the number of acts perpetrated by their partner over the last twelve months. The majority of respondents (76%) reporting bidirectional violence also reported symmetrical patterns of violence (of the 24% reporting asymmetrical patterns, 66% of men and 34% of women reported receiving more violence than they perpetrated). The researchers go on to describe that the most frequent

pattern of couple violence as minor, infrequent, and not physically injurious. A surprising finding was that both men and women in physically violent relationships tended to attribute the initiation of violence to themselves (49% of men, 67% of women).

Smith (1990) acknowledged that “none of these [feminist] theories has been rigorously tested” (p. 42), “perhaps in part because several of the theories are not distinct conceptually” (p.43). Those two statements, however, were as far as Smith pursued any challenges to feminist explanations of partner abuse. Smith analyzed data from a 1987 research project that assessed eight socio-demographic risk factors (family income, current marital status, education, occupational status, employment status, religion, ethnicity, and age of respondent) for wife abuse, using a telephone survey of 604 Toronto-area women. Smith’s measure of abuse was the CTS, despite his concern with two serious weaknesses of that instrument. These were that the CTS was not inclusive of some women’s particular abusive experiences, and that the CTS had the potential for misclassification of the type of violence. Of the eight variables, family income, education and occupational status of wives and husbands, and husband’s employment status, were inversely related to the risk of abuse. Divorced or separated couples had a significantly increased risk and the younger women were somewhat more at risk of partner abuse than were the older women.

Sommer, (1994) used an innovative research design that incorporated a multitude of variables and generated a series of findings that challenged many of the long-held FP beliefs about partner abuse. The two waves of the research project were conducted in Winnipeg in 1990 and 1992 using the CTS. Analysis indicated that 7.1% of males and 6.6% of females reported perpetrating current partner abuse (occurring in the past twelve months). The

partner-abusing males reported 3.08 incidents of abuse and the partner-abusing females, 3.91 incidents in the past year.

With its two points of measure, this research project was able to assess the impact of recanting on the reporting of partner abuse. Sommer's findings on recanting challenge the validity and reliability of the cross-sectional research designs utilized in the majority of incident-rate type partner-abuse research (that would include all the other publications reviewed here). She found that recanting was present among 18% of the males and 25% of the females who reported perpetrating partner abuse during the first wave of her study. Sommer suggests that recanting may have been the result of the subjects' knowledge of the interview content due to their participation in interval one of the study.

Grandin and Lupri (1997) compared data from U.S. (1985) and Canadian (1986) national surveys of family violence and found that Canadian men and women were more likely than their American counterparts to report perpetrating a violent act against their partner. That finding was contrary to the "culture-of-violence theory" (Wolfgang & Ferracuti, 1967), "general-culture-pattern model" (Levinson 1989), and "culture-pattern theory" (Masamura, 1979) which suggest, "that all forms of violence and aggression in society, including intimate violence, may have a common etiology" (p. 421). In both countries the inter-gender rates of violence reported were similar.

Grandin and Lupri's analysis was also guided by Johnson's (1995) distinction of "common couple violence" and "patriarchal terrorism" (see pp. 81-82). That framework would suggest that within the general-population-survey data from both countries, ongoing serious physical abuse, symptomatic of patriarchal terrorism, would be largely absent.

However, within the data from both countries, and particularly within the Canadian data, severe reports of violence were present.

Bunge and Locke's (2000) report for Statistics Canada reported on a number of family-violence issues, and included, for the first time, analysis of spousal violence by both men and women. Previous Statistics Canada reports addressed only spousal violence reported by women. The General Social Survey was administered by telephone in 1999 to 26,000 people (14,269 women and 11,607 men). The focus of the report was the incidence of spousal violence reported by both men and women. The survey found that 7% of people who were married or living in a common-law relationship experienced some type of violence by a partner during the previous five years. The rate of violence was similar for women (8%) and men (7%). While provincial rates were reported, there was apparently no sampling of the northern regions. There was a geographical trend to higher rates of reported spousal violence by both men and women in the Western provinces. Women reported more severe types of violence, more repeated victimizations, more injuries, greater levels of fear, and more negative emotional consequences. The report also noted, "the rate of spousal homicide has declined gradually over the past two decades, particularly wife killing" (p. 6).

While the incident rates of partner abuse that these research projects determine may be useful for needs-based funding, (and the publication of findings with similar methodologies continues to be plentiful) they focus attention on the deficiencies and problems, not the opportunities for improvements and solutions, which are the strengths, assets and capacities within the communities or study populations.

Abuser and Violence Typologies

Another prominent theme within the partner-abuse literature has focused on categorizing sub-types of violence and batterers (so far only sub-types of male batterers⁶³) most often through classification of attachment style, and measures of psychopathology in order to determine the typologies based on DSM-IV classification. A sample of five such publications is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Violence and Batterer Sub-Types Publications

Researcher(s)	Year	Sample Size	Batterer/Violence Subtype(s)	DSM-III/IV diagnoses &/or other characteristics	Pattern of Attachment
Dutton	1995	20-years of studying/treating abusive men	• cyclical batterer	borderline personality organization pay-attention to the abuse cycle	- fearful
Fongay	2000	N/A	• predatory	- authoritarian parenting - inadequate “mentalizing” capacities	- disorganized
Holtzworth-Munroe, Stuart, et al.	1994 & 1999	N/A Theoretical discussions	• family only • dysphoric/borderline • generally violent antisocial • low-level antisocial	- narcissistic dependent - borderline or schizoid - antisocial/psychopathic - narcissistic	- secure or preoccupied - fearful or preoccupied - dismissing - dismissing/fearful
Johnson	1995 & 2000	N/A Theoretical discussions	• intimate terrorism • common couple violence • violent resistance • mutual violent control	- motive to control one's partner - occasional disagreement(s) - man and woman controlling and violent	- not described
Tweed & Dutton	1998	123	• instrumental • impulsive • overcontrolled	- antisocial/psychopathic - borderline or schizoid - narcissistic	- preoccupied - fearful - dismissing

⁶³ But the call for female-batterer typologies has been made. “Just as researchers have identified different typologies of male batterers (eg., Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994), this study suggests that women arrested for domestic violence are not a homogeneous group and may require a tailored treatment approach” (Busch & Rosenberg, 2004, p. 56).

While research focusing on describing the typologies of men who abuse their partners began over twenty-five years ago (e.g., Faulk, 1974, as cited by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart, 1994), a great deal of the present research interest was generated by the work of UBC-psychology-professor, Donald Dutton. Dutton (1995) put forth a set of characteristics he found to be common among partner-abusing males, in his book, *The Batterer: A Psychological Profile*. Dutton's research sample consisted of both court-referred and self-referred-male batterers attending treatment programs in Vancouver and Victoria, BC. The batterer's profile included a series of similar childhood experiences that contributed to his later wife assaults. Those experiences, "in order of importance, are: feeling rejected by one's father, feeling a lack of warmth from one's father, being physically abused by one's father, being verbally abused by one's father, and feeling rejected by one's mother" (p. 84). Dutton also noted that these men's abusive behaviours followed a similar and repetitive pattern with all their female partners, which led him to describe them as "cyclically abusive men." After administering and analyzing several personality tools, Dutton went on to conclude that borderline personality disorder was at the center of the cyclically abusive male's psychological profile.

At approximately the same time as Dutton (1995) was developing this batterer's psychological profile, Michael Johnson (1995) was identifying two types of partner abuse. Johnson's findings led him to suggest that the reason the FVP and FP researchers were obtaining different results was, in part, due to them describing two distinct forms of couple violence. The FP's clinical-population samples were the victims and perpetrators of "patriarchal terrorism" while the FVP's general-population samples identified the victims and perpetrators of "common-couple violence." Johnson (1995) described patriarchal

terrorism as “a form of terroristic control of wives by their husbands that involves the systematic use of not only violence, but economic subordination, threats, isolation, and other control tactics” (p. 2). The perpetrators of patriarchal terrorism would include Dutton’s (1995) cyclically abusive men. Johnson’s second category of abuse, common-couple violence, is described as not so much a product of the patriarchy, but rather a less-gendered casual process where, occasionally, conflict gets out of hand, leading most frequently to minor violence and rarely to more serious or life threatening forms of violence.

Other researchers, (Dutton & Starzomski, 1994; Hamberger & Hastings, 1986; Saunders, 1992; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; and Tweed & Dutton, 1998) using various personality tools, developed three abusive-male typologies that were characterized by three-major dimensions. Tweed and Dutton (1998) described these three subgroups of batterers as: instrumental, impulsive, and overcontrolled. Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart describe the three dimensions as: severity of violence, generality of violence (violent with partner and family only and/or violent in other relationships also), and the batterer’s psychopathology and/or personality disorder. Instrumental batterers use moderate to severe forms of violence and engage in more violence outside the home than do other abusive men (Tweed & Dutton, 1998). They may have narcissistic, psychopathic, antisocial, and aggressive-sadistic personality traits, and may abuse alcohol and/or drugs. Instrumental batterers have been shown to respond to conflict with their intimate partners with a decreased heart rate.

Impulsive batterers use moderate to severe violence that is primarily restricted to their families. They may have borderline and schizoid personality disorders and exhibit emotional

volatility and psychological distress. Impulsive batterers are more likely to have substance abuse problems and elevated levels of depression (Tweed & Dutton, 1998).

Overcontrolled batterers evidence little psychopathology or they may have passive-dependent, and/or compulsive-personality disorders. Their violent behaviours are usually restricted to their family and they most often engage in the least severe forms of violence (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994).

Meanwhile, Johnson (2000) revisited his two original types of couple violence (Johnson, 1995) and expanded it to four. The common-couple violence and patriarchal-terrorism typologies remained, although patriarchal terrorism was renamed “intimate terrorism.” This change of nomenclature appears to be an acknowledgment of the FVP researchers’ findings that, “battering does happen in gay male couples and in lesbian couples, and some heterosexual women do physically assault their male partners” (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000, p. 949). The first new typology, violent resistance, describes abuse perpetrated in self-defence, which, it is suggested, is perpetrated more often by women than men. Which may be true from a FP-clinical sample, however, Sommer’s (1994) analysis of self-reports by men and women in a general-population sample in Winnipeg found that more men than women perpetrated partner abuse in self-defence⁶⁴ (men 15% vs. women 10%).

The second new typology, mutual violent control, is a pattern of abuse in which both the man and woman “are controlling and violent, in a situation that could be viewed as two intimate terrorists battling for control” (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000, p. 950). While Johnson and Ferraro suggest that this pattern is rare within violent relationships, it again appears they

⁶⁴ And similar findings continue to emerge, including from other corners of the world, Fergusson, Horwood and Ridder’s (2005) New Zealand study reported – “it was the male sample members who more often reported that their perpetration of physical assault was in self defense as a result of their partner hitting them first” (p. 1116).

are referring to the findings of FP-clinical samples. Straus' (1980) general-population sample found mutual violence to be the predominant pattern⁶⁵ (50% of couples - with 27% of couples husband-only violent and 23% of couples wife-only violent).

These abuse and abuser typologies are useful for revisiting the findings of the FP and FVP researchers. The FP researcher's use of clinical samples (e.g. women's shelter residents, batterer program participants) would tend to consist of instrumental and impulsive batterers (Tweed & Dutton, 1998) that had perpetrated, or been victimized by, intimate terrorism (Johnson, 2000). The FVP researcher's use of general-population samples (which would not include women's shelter residents or batterers that were incarcerated or residing in half-way houses etc.) would be predominantly composed of overcontrolled batterers (Tweed & Dutton, 1998) that had perpetrated, or been victimized by, common couple violence, mutual violent control, and violent resistance (Johnson, 2000).

Building on the rejecting parenting style described in the batterer's psychological profile proposed by Dutton (1995), Fongay, (2000) described the attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) processes and outcomes experienced by the male batterer. The rejecting parent's inability to meet the child's emotional needs leads to the child having inadequate mentalizing capacities; that is, the ability to determine another's mental or emotional state. Authoritarian parenting that responds to the infant's distress with frightening or frightened behaviour leads to a disorganized attachment in which the child learns to associate his or her own distress as frightening. In order to achieve a bearable and coherent self-representation, the care-giver's frightening responses must be externalized by the child. In adulthood this disorganized self-representation can only maintain a relationship with someone else to the extent the

⁶⁵ As did Kwong, Bartholomew, and Dutton (1999) described earlier – pp. 76-77.

relationship allows for externalization of the frightening parts of the self. Such a person's violent acts perform two functions. First, it allows them to recreate and re-experience the frightening self within their partner and second, to then attempt to beat-up the frightened self in the unconscious hope that it will be destroyed forever.

The positive intentions of the researchers responsible for this line of inquiry within the literature could be represented by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart's (1994) description, "developing a typology of violent men would allow a systematic examination of how and why different men use violence against their wives. ... Tailoring treatment to meet the *needs* [italics added] of each subtype of violent men might improve therapy efficacy" (p. 476). However, similar to the incident-rate line of inquiry, these findings identify needs, deficiencies, inadequacies, and insufficiencies.

Northern/First Nation Contexts

For Native communities to gain full participation in non-Native society, research should be more in tune with cultural values (Hoare, Levy & Robinson, 1993, p. 5).

To date, Canadian based [partner-abuse] research has failed to provide reliable data testing the relationship between race and abuse (Sommer, 1994, p. 24).

As Sommer (1994) indicates, race-specific-partner-abuse data are, for the most part, unavailable in Canada, and Hoare et al. (1993) highlight the importance of any such inquiries utilizing methods grounded in First Nation (Native) cultural values. Some northern-Canadian reports do exist (e.g., Durst, 1991; Poelzer & Poelzer, 1986, as cited by Chester, Robin, Koss, Lopez & Goldman, 1994), and an Alaskan-Inuit report (Guemple, 1995, as cited by Hamby, 2000). The bulk of Native or First-Nation partner-abuse data, however, come from studies of southern-Native-American populations. The findings of those studies,

though, are often difficult to access and assess for accuracy as a result of several factors with particular relevance to northern-Canadian-partner-abuse research.

First, while Native-American women have been found in battered women's shelters at 14 times their proportion of state populations (McIntire, 1988, as cited by Chester et al., 1994) those on reservations are often not included in research populations as many do not have telephones and do not speak English. With nearly one third of Native-American adults identified as illiterate, they are similarly excluded from mail surveys (Flemming, 1992, as cited by Chester et al., 1994.). Secondly, Native Americans face the identical oversimplification process that sees Brazilians, Puerto Ricans and others lumped under a "Latino" category, and Japanese, Laotians, and many others put in the "Asian" group (Hamby, 2000). This occurs despite the U.S. government's acknowledgement of 512-Native entities and 365 state-recognized-Indian tribes with 200 distinct languages (Chester et al.). Chester et al., also reports that the use of these broad-cultural groupings often leads researchers to omit a Native-American category and include them under "other." While this inappropriate categorization of Native Americans by "others" continues within research circles, it is only fair to acknowledge also that, many reservation communities are currently in conflict over how an individual's tribal identity and affiliation are determined. This issue is often complicated by the conflict between tradition and politics, especially on occasions when blood quantum and tribal enrollment are used to define research parameters (Chester et al., 1994). The uncertainty this identity conflict creates for Native Americans (individuals and tribes), as well as researchers is most unfortunate. Its significance to partner-abuse research is highlighted when one considers that affiliations to band, tribe, clan, religious society, and extended family are significant in the sanctioning and defining of violence (Chester et al.).

Also, there are a significant number of factors, some of which are centuries old, that are specific to certain tribal groups and affect how the context and definition of domestic violence is determined (Chester et al.). This is evident when one evaluates the traditional-Native-gender roles and their fit with the FP and FVP of partner abuse described earlier.

Within the literature there is evidence that Native Americans and Canadian-First Nations are leery of both perspectives. Chester et al., (1994) warn that some “studies and writings of domestic violence among American Indian people [have led] to unsubstantiated notions among some service workers that women within certain tribal groups initiate violence to an equal or greater degree than do their male partners” (p. 250). This example is typical of the somewhat-skeptical view taken by Native Americans of the FVP. On the other side, the dynamics of the relationship between Native Americans and the FP supporters is somewhat more complex. This appears to originate from the idealistic and inaccurate interpretation many feminists have of the significance and prevalence of matriarchal societies within Native-American communities. “American Indians are often idealistically held up as examples of egalitarian or matriarchal societies (e.g., Guemple, 1995; Gunn Allen, 1990). The implication of these portrayals is that violence was not part of male-female relations in matriarchal societies” (Hamby, 2000, p. 656). While Hamby goes on to explain why such a portrayal is inaccurate,⁶⁶ for the purposes of the discussion here, examining the traditional-gender roles is more relevant.

Traditionally, many Native-American cultures equally value the contributions of men and women to their family and society, and women’s role as child bearers is typically honoured. An extremely important aspect of Native-American cultures is a spirituality that

⁶⁶ This has to do with the differences between, and various combinations of, matriarchal, matrilineal, and matrilineal characteristics of the social organization within a tribe.

emphasizes respect and honour. The egalitarian-social relations, that are also a strength of many native cultures, appears to be based not in equality as per Feminist definitions, but rather in respect, honour and the complementarity of the different but *equally valued* roles⁶⁷ performed by both genders (Hamby, 2000). This consideration provides strong support for the methodological approach of this project to research partner abuse with a gender-balanced research team. This traditional view of gender roles has led to Native-based-treatment programs that avoid sexual bias, work with couples, and view the participants as equals (Oates, date unknown, as cited by Hoff, 1999). However, the traditional feminist approach to treatment has not met with the approval of all, and criticisms of traditional programs have been leveled.

We don't really give a damn about what white people think. All participants are considered equal and not adversaries. All our programs avoid sexual bias. Local gender feminists were telling us it would be a disaster. We call those people the 'wounded healers' because they try to help people but they have not yet dealt with their own pain and agony (Oates, date unknown, as cited by Hoff, 1999, p. 4).

Additionally, the traditional programs have experienced difficulty securing funding. Maurice Oates Jr., a co-founder of the highly successful Native-based Circle of Harmony Healing Society, located in Terrace, B.C., added,

We have ... faced serious opposition from a small but vocal group of non-native (sic) women over the last five years. We have found that it is almost impossible to attain funding for our native (sic) programs because our traditional values towards families are not politically correct ... current non-native (sic) approaches to family violence appear to be based on male-bashing, rather than healing relationships between people (2000, p. 1).

This apparent attempt to impose non-First Nation values or approaches to family-violence treatment onto this First-Nation program is an example of a disrespectful approach all

⁶⁷ Notice how that contrasts with the feminist pursuit of equality described and discussed earlier, p. 44.

workers, researchers, funders, politicians, feminists, and protesters must avoid when dealing with northern populations and First-Nation communities. The traditional-gender roles of Native American and Canadian First-Nations have recently undergone devaluation and disparagement through interaction and adjustment to industrialization, the wage economy, and the dominant culture (Chester et al., 1994; Durst, 1991; Hamby, 2000). Hamby (2000) goes on to explain that in order to fully appreciate the present domestic-violence problem, both the traditional and modern eras need to be examined. Equally relevant is Chester et al.'s (1994) observation that,

traditionality is a fluid construct. Societies are constantly evolving and changing; therefore, establishing an integrated system of values, behaviors, and cognitions as traditional is difficult. That process is further complicated when tradition is defined by someone outside of the existing community, whose perceptions occur within an entirely different cultural or temporal framework (p. 253).

These factors undoubtedly contribute to the debate within the literature surrounding the historical occurrence of partner abuse in Native cultures or communities; however, there are indications of an increased prevalence of partner abuse within most groups during the last 150 years (Durst, 1991; Hamby, 2000). Still, “definitive research establishing increasing amounts or severity of abuse as a result of modernization and acculturation has not yet been accomplished” (Chester et al., 1994, p. 253). Hamby also points out that it is highly probable that Native Americans are not necessarily more violent than other groups. Rather they are over represented in demographic categories that have an increased risk for violence (i.e., poverty, less educated, alcohol/drug users). These demographic variables, with Native over representation, as well as the many recent changes to the traditional-gender roles, warrant careful consideration in research with northern and First-Nation communities.

While the devaluation and disparagement of traditional Native gender roles has affected both men and women, it appears that the men's roles have been more severely eroded (Durst, 1991; Hamby, 2000). Wolk (1982, as cited by Hamby 2000) suggests that this is the result of hunting and fishing activities now being more restricted, and the employment opportunities for men outside the home being scarcer. In contrast, women's traditional roles as caregivers and food preparers may have been better preserved (Hamby). Native women have also competed for jobs in the wage economy with greater success in many instances than men have. This has led to the role of hunter-trapper as family provider no longer being the exclusive domain of men (Durst, 1991). Maguire (1987, as cited by Hamby) reported that battered Navajo women felt men could not handle their wives success when faced with unemployment or similar stresses. Also, as is often the case among people who experience long-term oppression, they begin to disparage themselves (Horton, 1990). "For example, DeBruyn et al. (1990) discuss the current problem, common in some tribes, of using the term 'Indian love' as a slang term for domestic violence" (as cited by Hamby, 2000, p. 656).

Durst's (1991) research in two Canadian-Arctic communities offers further insights relating to the changes to traditional-Native-gender roles. The industrialization (hydrocarbon development) of the region was found to have accelerated the shift from the traditional economy to the wage economy, with an accompanying shift in gender roles. The women's successful competition in the wage economy appeared to increase their personal esteem and confidence. This also seemed to produce an increased independence for the women that were believed to be responsible for increased promiscuity which created further strain in many male-female relationships. A number of the respondents viewed this behaviour as

instigating conflict that invited male retaliation. Some community members expressed frustration with the legal system's predisposition to always blame the male while ignoring the women's actions or behaviour. While Durst found that the changes to gender roles had contributed to an increase in family violence, he also found the communities had developed responses to violence that utilized the available community resources. Chester et al. (1994) similarly concluded that, "within American Indian societies, the community as a variable is often more important than individual or system responses" (p. 255). The variables and considerations discussed in this literature clearly support the community-based, gender-balanced components of the methodology for this project.

CHAPTER 4

Data Findings and Analysis

The data analyses of the participant questionnaires and the interview and focus group notes are described in this chapter. Those analyses include the description of findings from the null data, and descriptions of similarities and differences between the feminist stereotypes and null agenda (including the misandric themes) as compared to the participants' narratives and the explicit themes in the research data.

In order to provide ongoing anonymity for research participants they are referred to throughout this chapter by whether they participated in an Individual Interview (II) or Focus Group 1 or 2 (FG1, FG2) and the interview participants are also identified by a participant number – P1 through P11 (e.g.; individual interview, participant 1 is IIP1). As was explained earlier, during the focus group sessions no identifying notations were made as to which, or exactly how many participants made each or any contribution. In spite of that precaution there were still some participant contributions which the researcher felt may reveal the participant's identity. In those cases no identifying information of any kind was reported. The researcher erred on the side of caution and did not disclose any possible identifying descriptors of a participant if there was any doubt that participant's anonymity could be compromised.

The quantitative data from the participant questionnaires was assessed with simple mathematical and statistical calculations to provide a brief statistical description of the socio-demographic characteristics of the research participants. The questionnaire also asked participants about the types of help they had and/or would access if and/or when they were in an abusive relationship. The responses to those items were tabulated in order to determine

which type(s) of assistance people believe is most helpful to them and their partner in the event that they found themselves involved in an abusive relationship.

One socio-economic variable that was not included in the participant questionnaire was ethnicity or culture. That was a deliberate choice because the researcher had no intention of attempting to describe a First-Nation or any other cultural and/or ethnic view of partner abuse in the community. That said, it is the personal knowledge of the researcher and/or his partner that three of the participants have a Yukon-First-Nation heritage and three other participants grew up in other First-Nation cultures.⁶⁸ All participants' comments and descriptions represent their personal opinions and not those of the researchers. None of the participants were asked to, or offered to, speak on behalf of their profession, three of the participants hold BSW degrees, or service agencies where they were employed. Also, their comments about the perceptions and the prevalence of partner abuse in any segment of the community are reported here regardless of whether or not they are politically correct, backlash, insensitive, offensive, brilliant, insightful, original, or wise. All participant comments are reported in this document to describe a piece of the community's view of the partner-abuse problem. As described earlier, the researchers endeavoured to capture as wide a range of views of the partner-abuse problem as possible.

Participant Questionnaire Data

Two focus groups, one with two participants (one male, one female) and one with five participants (one male, four females), as well as four (two male, two female) individual interviews were completed, for a total of eleven research participants. Each participant was asked to complete a one-page (13 items) questionnaire (see Appendix C) before beginning

⁶⁸ Which is a total of 6 participants (54%) from First-Nation cultures, more than 3 times higher than the Statistics Canada (2001) census data - 16% of the Whitehorse population reported an Aboriginal identity.

the interview or focus-group discussions. Most of the questionnaire responses were analyzed by calculating three sets of statistics; one set for male participants, one set for female participants, and one set for all participants to allow for comparisons and contrasts (see Table 4).

Table 4
Summary of Participant Questionnaire Data

	Females (7)	Males (4)	All Participants (11)
Age (yrs)	Average: 46.2 Range: 33 – 53	Average: 55 Range: 46 – 65	Average: 49.7 Range: 33 – 65
Years in Whitehorse	Average: 26 Range: 12 – 32	Average: 21.5 Range: 16 – 26	Average: 24.4 Range: 12 – 32
Years of Education	Average: 12.3 Range: 11 – 18	Average: 17.8 Range: 14.5 – 21	Average: 14.7 Range: 11 – 21
Children (under 18) living with you	2 – 29%	1 – 25%	3 – 27%
Present Relationship	2 – 29%	2 – 50%	4 – 36%
Present Abusive Relationship	1 – 14%	0 – 0%	1 – 9%
Past Abusive Relationship	7 – 100%	3 – 75%	10 – 91%
Service Provider	6 – 86%	2 – 50%	8 – 73%

There were four male (36% - IIP1, FGP2, FGP6 and IIP10) and seven female (64% - FG1P3, FG2P4, FG2P5, FG2P7, FG2P8, IIP9, IIP11) participants ranging in age from 33 – 65 years, with one female participant (FG2P8) recording “irrevelent (sic) – mature.” The average age of all the participants was 49.7 years, the average age of the male participants was 55 years, and the average age of the female participants was 46.2 years.

The number-of-years-of-education item was analyzed by using the mid-point of each range; e.g., for 13 – 16 years, 14.5 was used. Two of the female participants (FG2P4,

FG2P5) did not record a response to this item, and because one of those participants (FG2P5) was also a service provider, the average for all participants and for the female participants may actually have been higher.

Despite the female participants being 9.2 years younger than the male participants, they had lived in Whitehorse an average of 4.5 years longer than the male participants. The participants were knowledgeable, experienced, well informed about their community, the issue of partner abuse and, had a demonstrated commitment to live in the community and to work at making it a better place to live. This was indicated by their combination of higher levels of education⁶⁹ (14.7 years), length of residence in the community (24.4 years), older⁷⁰ age (49.7 years), and seven (64% - IIP1, FG1P3, FG2P5, FG2P6, IIP9, IIP10, IIP11) identifying themselves as service providers⁷¹ (it is personal knowledge of the researchers that three of the service provider participants hold BSW degrees).

Ten (91% - all participants except IIP1) of the participants reported a past involvement with an abusive relationship most had “moved on.”⁷² Only one participant (FG2P7) indicated that she was currently in an abusive relationship; however, that female participant also indicated that she was not in an intimate relationship at this time. This participant also indicated that she had children under the age of 18 living with her at the time of her participation in the research. That situation was the most concerning as determined by

⁶⁹ Statistics Canada (2001) reported 28.3% of the Whitehorse population aged 45 – 64 had received a university certificate, diploma or degree. The highest such rate for any province or territory in Canada.

⁷⁰ The average age of Whitehorse residents reported by Statistics Canada (2001) was 35.1 years.

⁷¹ Three of the service provider participants were employed in Executive Director/Manager positions with either government or non-government organizations. Participants that answered yes to participant questionnaire (Appendix C, p. 193) item ‘9’ were considered to be service providers.

⁷² An expected finding given the average age (49.7 yrs) of the research participants. Kaufman, Kantor and Jasinski’s (1998) review of the literature on the length of relationships concluded that the newer a relationship the more likely it is to contain violence. “There is also evidence that violent behavior decreases or desists as perpetrators age” (Edleson, 2000, p. 5).

examining the questionnaire responses, but during prescreening (see p. 21-22) and on the questionnaire check (item #13) no safety concerns were raised by any of the participants that attended that focus group. This leaves the researchers to believe that this participant's circumstances and/or safety plan allowed her to feel comfortable with her participation in the focus group.

The remaining three questions (see Table 5, p. 97) asked participants to identify the types of services, service providers and family or community supports they would access, or they would like to access, if they found themselves involved in an abusive relationship. Participant's responses to the first of those questions showed that eight (73% FG1P3, FG2P4, FG2P5, FG2P6, FG2P8, IIP9, IIP10, IIP11) of the participants would ask family or friends for help and three (27% - IIP1, FG1P2, FG2P7) would not. Analysis of the next item showed that nine participants (82% - IIP1, FG1P3, FG2P5, FG2P6, FG2P7, FG2P8, IIP9, IIP10, IIP11) would ask a private or government service agency for assistance and two (18% - FGP2 and FG2P4) would not. Only one participant (FG1P2) indicated that he or she would not ask friends, family or a service agency for help. While these findings suggest that these participants would access help from family and friends (8), approximately as frequently as they would the service agencies (9) in the community, one observation from the null qualitative data seems relevant. Several participants offered criticisms and concerns about the services they had received from private or government service agencies; however, no such complaints (null data) about the assistance of family or friends were described. That said, just how critically important the first response of family and friends can be when a family member asks for help was described by Fawcett et al., (1999), "how this individual [family member] responds to the woman's first efforts to reach beyond herself is often

defining of whether the woman continues on the road toward externalizing blame or whether she retreats once again into isolation and self-doubt” (p. 46).

Six participants identified the following specific agencies as places they would be prepared to access services if they were involved in an abusive relationship; Kaushee’s Place, Family Violence Prevention Unit (2), Yukon Family Services Association, Alcohol and Drug Services, Employee Assistance Program (provided by Barb Nimco and Associates). Three generic responses were also recorded; Health and Social Services, private agency only, and counsellors (see Table 7, p. 115).

One of the questionnaire items asked participants to choose from four possible complements of competent counsellors that they and their partner would prefer in the event that they wanted relationship counselling. The four choices of counsellors were female, male, male and female, husband and wife (see Table 5). There were two reasons for asking

Table 5
Participant’s Preferred Counsellor(s) Choice

	Male Counsellor	Female Counsellor	Male and Female Team	Husband and Wife Team	“N/A,” No Response, “None”
IIP1 (M)					1
FG1P2 (M)					1
FG1P3 (F)					1
FG2P4 (F)			1		
FG2P5 (F)			1	maybe	
FG2P6 (M)			1		
FG2P7 (F)	1				
FG2P8 (F)	1	1			
IIP9 (F)			1		
IIP10 (M)			1		
IIP11 (F)					1
Totals/Percent	2 / 18%	1 / 9%	5 / 45%	? / ?%	4 / 36%

this question. The first was to evaluate if gender,⁷³ as represented by the first two choices, and/or gender balance, as represented by the last two choices; and second, if a relationship context, and/or role modeling of a relationship, as represented by the last choice, were considerations for someone seeking relationship counselling with their partner. One male participant (FG1P2) indicated “none of the above” and one female participant (FG1P3) responded “gender would not be part of choice – comfortable fit is what would be necessary.” The relevance of that response to the first two choices is evident, but it is unclear if gender balance, or the context of a relationship would impact this woman’s sense of a ‘comfortable fit’ for her and her partner. One male participant (IIP1) did not record a response and one female participant (IIP11) wrote “n/a.” The remaining seven participants responded as follows; four participants (2 male, FG2P6, IIP10; 2 female, FG2P4, FG2P5) selected male and female, one female participant (FG2P5) made two selections, male and female and “maybe” husband and wife. A female participant (FG2P7) answered male, and another female (FG2P8) indicated - male “and/or” female counsellor. There were a total of four modified or participant-generated responses and two non-responses to this item, the most for any questionnaire item, suggesting the relevance and importance of the context of gender to partner abuse and for individuals and couples looking for professional services.

There were a number of possible contradictory responses from participants when analyzing their responses to items eleven and twelve. Two participants (IIP1, IIP11), one that recorded “n/a,” and one that made a non-response to item twelve both indicated in their responses to item eleven, that they would access private or government services for help if

⁷³ “To be sure, the professional’s competence is more important than gender; yet gender is a consideration ... professionals would do well to assess the importance of gender ... in the determination of whether they will be well received in the helping process” (Kosberg, 2002, p. 7).

they were in an abusive relationship. Another participant (FG2P4) who indicated that they would not use private or government services then indicated that their preference for the provision of counselling services was a male and female counselling team. Despite all the participants taking part in research interviews facilitated by a husband and wife team, only one participant (FG2P5) indicated that “maybe” s/he would seek counselling services from such a duo. However, the male and female counsellor team was the most frequently selected (45%) response to this item. Among the participants that marked a response to this item, the only other response (than “male and female counsellor team”) that was selected by more than one participant was “male counsellor.” Four of the five participants who selected the “male and female counsellor” response were also service providers (FG2P4, FG2P5, FG2P6, IIP9). This finding suggests that those participants believed that a gender-balanced counselling team can offer something more to relationship counselling than a single counsellor of either gender can. Further support for that conclusion was found in the qualitative data from the second focus group. The (five) participants described counselling services provided by a female and male team as an opportunity for improving the community’s response to partner abuse.

Participants who identified themselves as service providers were more likely to select the male and female team in the event that they and their partner wanted counselling services (57% vs. 25%). As service providers these individuals would have experience delivering programs and services on their own. Therefore, based on those practice experiences they may have some beliefs about what else or more a gender-balanced team of counsellors could

have to offer in the delivery of relationship counselling.⁷⁴

The apparent reluctance of participants to choose a husband and wife team of counsellors to provide the context and role modeling of a functional relationship, as well as gender balance to counselling sessions may be the result of participants having a null appreciation or understanding of what that dynamic may have to contribute to relationship counselling. Counselling services for couples including those in abusive relationships offered by either a gender balanced and/or a husband and wife counselling team, are not available in Whitehorse. (Such services are not common in larger Canadian centres. Interestingly, the most numerous and easily accessed counsellors in Whitehorse, females, was only selected once, by a female participant (FG2P8) whose complete answer was “male or female.” These participants indicated that if they and their partner were looking for counselling, ideally they would like those counselling services to be provided by a male and female counselling team.

Interviews and Focus Groups Data

As already described the interview and focus group data were recorded into six categories: Definitions/Descriptions, the four SWOT headings, and Other. With the intent of this project to capture as broad a range of views as possible, one indication that was achieved is that a number of the community resources identified as strengths by some participants

⁷⁴ This is not to suggest that only gender-balanced counselling teams should be allowed to provide relationship counselling. Some couples may prefer to work with an individual counsellor of one gender or the other. What these data indicate is that some couples would prefer to receive counselling services from a gender-balanced counselling team. The practicalities and logistics that agencies and organizations may face in offering such service is a discussion beyond the scope of this project. Despite the size of those obstacles, however, should there ever be a body of research findings and program evaluations which show that programs or counselling delivered by male and female teams provide for better outcomes for victims and/or perpetrators in individual or couple therapies it would be unethical for professionals and agencies not to then provide such services. To do so would be analogous to the medical profession not offering patients the best medical care as identified through medical research (i.e. if two surgeons performing an operation leads to better surgical outcomes for the patient than when one surgeon performs the operation).

were also identified as weaknesses by other participants. As well the participants identified approximately twice as many weaknesses as strengths, Perhaps this is an example of the prevalence of the system and program requirement to focus on *needs* in order to obtain and maintain funding which then also shapes the community's views (as discussed earlier, p. 36). This observation is not intended to suggest that the participants' views were only *needs* focused. Indeed, with the number of participants that were service providers (7 of 11) it was encouraging that they were able to identify as many strengths as they did, despite many of their workplaces having intake processes and/or practice approaches that focus on client needs. In order to synthesize the themes that emerged in the data across the six categories used for recording, all the categories were analyzed to identify the similar themes.

When the data recorded in response to the research question that asked participants to define/describe partner abuse and the responses to the second research question that were recorded in to the SWOT and Other categories, were analyzed four themes emerged in many of the categories. Those four themes were: system/community level history, values, resources; feminist explanations, stereotypes; missing services and missed citizens; existing services and programs. In addition the data were also analyzed to identify the misandric themes and then to describe the null data. To assist the reader to follow the descriptions of the themes and categories used to structure the data analysis, Table 6 (next page) is provided.

Several times during the data gathering sessions participants spoke of community in reference to the fourteen smaller Yukon communities outside of Whitehorse. While this project's focus was partner abuse in Whitehorse, what happens in the other Yukon communities often has a direct or, at least, an indirect impact on Whitehorse. When citizens leave their community willingly or otherwise to access services, to flee an abusive

Table 6
Data Analysis Table of Categories and Themes

Themes ↓ : Categories →	Narrative Descriptions	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats	Other
System & community level history, values, resources.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Feminist explanations, stereotypes	✓		✓			
Missing services; missed citizens	✓	✓		✓		
Existing Services and Programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Null Data						
Misandric Themes						

partner, for perspective taking, or to escape from their abusive relationship whether they are a victim or a perpetrator, they very often come to Whitehorse for various periods of time. As those comments and contributions were not great in number, they have also been included.

Narrative Descriptions of Partner Abuse

In response to the first research question, How would you define or describe the problem of partner abuse in Whitehorse, what does it look like, who is involved?, the participant's unanimously responded to this question with narrative descriptions; that is, none of the participants offered a definition of partner abuse. Interestingly, the only mention any participant (FG2) made of a definition occurred in terms of how questioning or changing the accepted definition (of partner abuse) could be threatening to individuals and organizations throughout the community. Other than that one instance, participant definitions were part of the null data and the *space between* the definition category and their experiences. It is unclear why these participants had a preference for narrative descriptions rather than formal-definition responses, however two considerations seem relevant. First, Northern and First Nation cultures have historically had a strong tradition of oral story-telling and narrative descriptions. Second, as was described earlier (p. 12), the complexities of partner abuse mean that it is not an issue that readily lends itself to a definition. With the relatively higher

than average level of education of the participants within this sample, the null definition responses would seem unlikely to be the result of unfamiliarity with the concept of a definition, in fact the opposite would appear to be true. That said, perhaps this finding is an indication of the lack of utility that definitions have in the day-to-day lives of many people.

System and community level history, values, resources.

Participant FG1 briefly described a historical description of the community's perception of the partner-abuse issue. At one time (\pm 25 years ago) in the community, there was no mention of violence in intimate relationships. Then women began to break the silence and organized a powerful grass roots lobby to have services provided for women and children, while deliberately excluding men in the community.

The community's perception of the size and nature of the partner abuse problem in Whitehorse was evident by the initial responses in several of the sessions: "Very common, and rampant in the community" (IIP1), "Epidemic" (IIP9), "Very high profile, extremely noticeable, major problem" (IIP10), and "Partner abuse is a significant problem" (IIP11). Participant IIP11 said that s/he believed that the frequency of partner abuse in the community was above the national average.⁷⁵ Several participants (IIP1, IIP9, IIP10) indicated that the victims of partner abuse were predominantly females and FG2 described that the types of abuse could include physical, psychological, mental, financial, sexual, or verbal abuse.

Participants offered a number of explanations and hypotheses for the extent of the partner abuse problem, including descriptions of some of the community values and norms about relationships, aggression, and violence. A community norm of "physicalness" in relationships, the community being accepting of dominating characters, and violence being

⁷⁵ Discussed further on p 139.

accepted as norms in dysfunctional families were all described by FG2. When such behaviours are perceived as a community norm, some people do not know how to respond in the face of such widespread acceptance of violence by others in the community (IIP10, FG2). One participant described that in some of the communities (outside of Whitehorse) the only models of relationship are dysfunctional and/or abusive (IIP11). This can then lead some citizens to cope with the abusive behaviours they see all around them by hiding their heads in the sand (IIP10). Some victims sense that there is a community culture that is unsupportive of abused women (IIP9, FG2) which leaves them to feel they are unable to leave (FG2), especially when there is no priority housing available for them (IIP9). This may be an example of the outcome of Durst's (1991) concerns with privatized rather than communitarian responses in northern communities. There is also a large segment of the Whitehorse population that are migrant (FG2) in that they live in the community for a relatively short period (1 – 6 years) of time. They are often suspected of coming here to hide and their behaviours (violent or otherwise) are frequently dismissed as “that’s just the way they are” (FG2).

The FG2 participants described youth violence in the community as extreme; that is up to, and including murder, “but it is overlooked and not taken seriously.” The importance of challenging the existing community norms that support violence is described as a significant intervention in any community-based response to partner abuse (Michau, 2005; Fullwood, 2002; Fawcett et al., 1999). The FG2 participants noted that violence by young females in particular was increasing.

Low education, unemployment, alcohol use, drug use and poverty were described by all participants as being prevalent among perpetrators and victims of partner abuse in the

community. One service provider (IIP1) indicated that a third of his clients were past or present perpetrators of partner abuse. There was also evidence that partner abuse is prevalent among the educated, employed and more well-to-do citizens in Whitehorse. Participant IIP1 described that he had provided services for a number of clients who were female social workers with abusive partners who thought they could change or rescue their partner. Another service provider (IIP11) indicated that she received about five requests a month from professional women, with 'white-collar' jobs, wanting help on the "q.t." without anything being written down to cope with, or leave, their abusive relationships. Yet another participant (IIP11) suggested that there are two social classes of abuse in the community; physical abuse, prevalent among the less educated citizens of the community; and emotional abuse, more often perpetrated by the more educated citizens in the community. The emotional abuse was described as being covert and denied by the couple despite that everything except hitting was occurring in the relationship. The victims of emotional abuse may engage in rationalizing to deny their circumstances; which then means that as abuse is occurring in these homes the child's or children's experience of the abusive environment is ignored (IIP11). Ignoring their children's and their own experience is often the result of a victimized woman being focused on how to ensure her children and her own survival. This non-attentive type response as a protective strategy used by women in trauma was described by Fawcett et al.'s (1999) community-based research. They found six survival strategies used by abused women to protect themselves and their children: tolerance, remaining silent, patience, hiding from their partner, having sex with him, doing exactly as he asked. "None of them had thought of developing an emergency plan in case their own life or those of their children were at risk" (p. 45).

Several participants (FG2) reported that broadening the definition of abuse (beyond the present narrow legal – physical definition)⁷⁶ to include all abuse, (i.e., emotional, mental, verbal, indirect, etc.) and abusers, would threaten everyone from those at the top of the Justice and service provider systems to the average Whitehorse citizen.

Feminist explanations, stereotypes.

Participant's comments described in this theme (here and in the other categories too) captured a wide range of experiences, inefficiencies and frustrations that Whitehorse citizens have experienced as a result of the existing status-quo feminist explanations of partner abuse being so widely accepted within the community by citizens, professionals, first responders and their organizations and agencies.

All of the participants indicated that females who abuse their male partners are also prevalent in the community. Some participants indicated that female abusers were not as numerous as male abusers (IIP9, IIP10), while others believed both genders perpetrated partner abuse with similar frequency (IIP1, IIP11, FG1, FG2). Participant IIP9 indicated that “socio-economic factors” contribute to women’s violence and suggested that women are becoming more violent due to being held in low esteem by others in society. Participants in FG2 described increasing female violence in the community, particularly among younger girls. They also noted that awareness of the reciprocal and equivalent nature of partner abuse between male and female partners is largely limited to those involved in service or program delivery in the community. Both focus groups reported that most of the general public in the community perceive partner abuse in terms of the feminist stereotype – males are abusers,

⁷⁶ Also see earlier discussion, p. 70.

females are victims.⁷⁷ A FG1 participant added that the community's perception of male perpetrators is that they are "the enemy."

Participant IIP1 noted that the reason that it appears that there are not as many male victims of abuse as female victims is because of cultural norms and the shame experienced by male victims. That shame is often a barrier that prevents male victims from reporting their abuse. If male victims can overcome that barrier, those who do report their victimization are not believed.⁷⁸ Focus Group 1 participants commented that investigations of partner abuse are not done. Instead the woman's version of events is taken as the truth because no one looks for the truth.⁷⁹ Participant IIP1 gave an example of a 53 year-old male client who had been charged with assault despite his requirement of an ambulance in order to go to the hospital for medical attention for the injuries inflicted by his female partner. Two participants (IIP10, IIP11) indicated that male victims experienced less physical violence than women victims, but more emotional, mental and verbal abuse. An example given by IIP11 was a couple who both laughed about the male's black eye received from his female partner.

⁷⁷ Basile (2005) described similar circumstances in Massachusetts, "there is little public awareness and attention given to female initiated violence, and resources for male victims are scarce" (p. 178).

⁷⁸ "One can speculate that there are social norms, negative stereotypes and prejudices, that inhibit the male victim from seeking protection. A system primarily designed to protect female victims of domestic violence is most likely also a factor. ... it is impossible to say how many male victims did not use the court system because of inhibiting factors" (Basile, 2004, p. 66, 67)

⁷⁹ Henning, Jones and Holdford's (2005) comparison of male and female domestic violence offenders "found that the women also completed the ... evaluation with high levels of socially desirable responding. Like the men, the women appear to have engaged in significant minimization, denial, and external attributions ..." (p. 137). Another concern described in the literature, "false claims of domestic abuse are sometimes waged to secure custody of children" (Basile 2005, p. 178). Three other research findings that call women's 'monopoly' of the 'truth' into question; (a) "41% of the total disposed rape cases [in a small -population 70,000- mid-western US city] were officially declared false during this 9-year period ... by the complainant's admission that no rape had occurred and the charge was, therefore, false" (Kanin, 1994, p. 85); (b) Dr. Charles McDowell's (1985) review of 556 rape allegations for the U.S. Air Force found that 60% were false. Thinking these findings may only be representative of military situations, "he examined the police files from a major mid-western and a southwestern city. The findings of 60 percent held, but the cities requested anonymity for fear of political repercussions" (as cited by Farrell, 1994, p. 323). (c) "FBI officials report that out of roughly 10,000 sexual assault cases since 1989, ... about 2,000 [DNA] tests have excluded the primary suspect. The fact that these percentages have held constant for seven years and that the National Institute of Justice's informal survey of private laboratories reveals a strikingly similar 26-percent exclusion rate, strongly suggests ... underlying systematic problems that generate erroneous accusations and convictions" (Neufeld & Scheck [co-founders of the Innocence Project], 1996, p. xxviii).

Another participant described that as she was growing up in the community, she remembered her Mother and her Aunt's involvements with the Women's Centre, women's groups, the spiritual community, and her mother becoming an activist. That participant noted that having grown up with "men bashers" she developed a strong personal dislike for blaming men.

Missing services; missed citizens.

The impact of partner abuse on marginalized citizens in the community who are victimized and children who witness partner abuse were also described by all of the participants. Participant IIP9, who earlier suggested that socio-economic factors contribute to violence by women, specifically identified First Nation and ethnic minority women as part of that group. Participant IIP1 indicated that elderly First-Nation females⁸⁰ were more often victims of partner abuse than were younger First-Nation females (which contradicts most research findings that show risk of victimization declines with age, see footnote 72 p. 95). Participant IIP1 also believed that within the First- Nation segment of the community, there was not a higher prevalence of partner abuse but there was less shame attached to being a victim of partner-abuse, which then provides for more open discussion of the problem within First-Nation culture.⁸¹ The same participant also suggested that First-Nation culture condones males abusing females, which is similar to feminist beliefs about the role of the patriarchal beliefs in European cultures.

Partner abuse within gay and lesbian relationships was discussed and/or described in

⁸⁰ Statistics Canada (2001) reported 8% of the Whitehorse population was women of "Aboriginal identity" and 2.7% of the Whitehorse population were visible-minority women.

⁸¹ Statistics Canada (2006) findings appear to support this participant's observation - "Police are more likely to be contacted if the victim is Aboriginal. One half of female victims of spousal violence who self-identified as Aboriginal reported that the police were contacted compared to 35% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts" (p.6).

FG2 and by IIP1 and IIP11. Participant IIP1, who indicated he had provided services for eight clients that were the abusers in their lesbian relationship, said that violence in lesbian relationships was most often a result of jealousy. He also added that lesbians in Whitehorse are more open to accessing existing services than are the gay men in the community. There are virtually no services for gay men because they have a greater fear of *coming out* or being *outed*. This participant went on to say that as a result of these fears, gay men in the community, especially those involved in an abusive relationship, are less likely to acknowledge their sexuality and the abuse. The FG2 participants described that youth in the community who identify as gay and lesbian have no privacy. They added that in the First-Nation communities outside of Whitehorse, there is a very low level of acceptance which results in gay and lesbian youth being victimized in the community and by the community. Many of those youth escape to larger cities, which may include Whitehorse, for at least some period of time.

In addition to the earlier description of the abuse of First-Nation elderly women, IIP9 also added that abuse of the elderly occurred in the community. S/he indicated that the instances of elder abuse that are reported in the community only scratches the surface of the problem. S/he went on to describe that the same is true for marginalized women; specifically other ethnic minorities, addicts, prostitutes, and those in the community who are unemployed, unskilled, or lacking education.

Children who witness violence between their adult caregivers were described as the forgotten casualties of partner abuse (IIP11, FG1), forgotten by the system and the service

agencies in the community.⁸² However, FG1 noted that the one response the system is consistent with is removing the children from their father. This is done under the guise of *protection*, without consideration of the damage or the impact that losing a parent may have on the children and their relationship with their father.⁸³ In addition to partner abuse, IIP11 reported that there are other types of extremely violent relationships in the community; such as, stalking not necessarily by a partner but by a predator or peeping tom.

Existing services and programs.

A number of barriers to accessing existing services and typical responses from service providers were also described in the problem description and definition discussions, as contributing to the problem of partner abuse. Many participants (FG1, FG2, IIP1, IIP11) noted that the resources and services to address partner abuse in the community are limited and there are also gaps in the existing services. Participant IIP9 indicated that service agencies and citizens in the community hold abused women in low esteem. She also said she was shocked by the number of services and service providers that do not take a strength-based approach in their work with abused women. Rather than focusing on these women's strengths; that is their intelligence, resilience, adaptiveness and sense of self, the treatment focus is on teaching self-esteem (IIP9). The language used by first responders (doctors, RCMP), the courts, and the articles in the community's newspapers often minimizes the abuse, blames the victim, and "mutualizes" the abuse perpetrated by men (IIP9). However, FG1 indicated that the community newspapers report violence by males on the front page

⁸² Since the collection of the research data (April-July, 2005) funding to provide services to children who witness violence was announced (March, 2006) – "children who witness domestic violence will soon have a new crisis program available to them. The Department of Justice announced a \$216,700, five year funding program that will establish counselling for the children of parents in the Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court." (Skikavich, 2006, p. 1)

⁸³ See footnote 88 p. 124.

while violence by females is reported on the fifth page. The RCMP response was described three times in the course of interviews. These descriptions were: “made problem worse” (FG2) “skilled and dignified” (FG2), and, after those two descriptions, not surprisingly, “inconsistent” (IIP11). Participant IIP11 indicated that the inconsistency of the RCMP response was due to the high rate of turnover of officers in the community. The Victim Services program at the Family Violence Prevention Unit was described as using a feminist approach and not providing services for male victims (IIP1, FG2). Focus Group 2 described the overall program and system responses to partner abuse in the community as racist and culturally prejudiced.

Focus Group 1 noted that male victims of abuse face an absence of services; specifically, no safe houses, no police response, an institutionalized bias and discrimination within many of the community’s service agencies. Focus Group 1 and IIP11 reported that men’s voices have been silenced in the community by the service providers that embrace a feminist-based approach or practice.

Participant IIP11 described that the justice system’s responses are perceived by many in the community as inadequate and ineffective in dealing with violent crime and provided three examples. First, there is a community perception that “you can get away with murdering your wife here in Whitehorse.” Second, there are “better responses by the RCMP when the stalker is not the woman’s partner.” Third, “kids can be taken away if calls for help are frequent.”

The threat of children being removed from a home where the mother is being abused was mentioned by IIP9 and FG2 as a barrier to women seeking help. There are not services for children affected by their parents’ abusive behaviours, as was discussed above. This is an

important and significant gap in services because if service agencies and providers do not identify and offer services to children who require it, traumatized children are not going to be assisted by parents caught up in surviving their own trauma. The potential for an assault means that the mother must be vigilant about her own safety and needs, and the father's rage prevents him from thinking of anyone else (IIP11). This is not to suggest that mothers in these cases are being selfish. Rather, that by keeping herself safe the mother can be there to protect her children if required. During the periods of time when the violence or abuse is absent, the mother is preoccupied with being vigilant for indications that the next episode is approaching; therefore she is unable to recognize that her children's witnessing of the abuse has resulted in trauma and that the children will need support and/or professional help to heal. These parents appear egocentric. As a result it is easy for their kids to be "left on the side" (IIP11). Participant IIP9 commented that children who witness such abuse should be provided a course.

One participant familiar with Kaushee's Place (the women's transition shelter) program described these numbers for an "average month;"

- 70 to 80 hours with 65 contacts.
- outreach for 80 – 90 clients.
- first contacts with 50 – 70 women.
- 20 – 35 women and 10 – 20 children staying at the home.

A participant also explained that Kaushee's Place is perceived by some members of the community as Left-Wing and that it threatens those whose political preferences are more to the Right.

Strengths

Participants described a number of strengths with the existing services and programs in the community, and named a number of specific agencies that they have found helpful to themselves, their friends or families. In addition participants also described some of the assets and capacities that exist within the community.

System and community level history, values, resources.

Participant IIP9 described several multi-disciplinary initiatives between various service agency and program providers in the community. There is a commitment within the service agencies in the community to be part of the solution. “If NGOs can collaborate with sister agencies that have different strengths and capacities more holistic programming can be implemented” (Michau, 2005, p. 10). Inter-agency committees often provide the opportunity for a feminist voice to be heard (IIP9). A focus on culture – especially First Nation and Northern contexts – is often in the forefront of these community initiatives (FG2). The Whitehorse community was described by IIP1 as having a more accepting view of gay and lesbian citizens than that of the smaller Yukon communities.

Feminist explanations, stereotypes.

Interestingly, all the participants placed the strengths of feminist explanations and stereotypes of partner abuse in the null discourse of the interviews and focus group discussions. Not a one of the eleven research participants described any contributions, assistance, or insights they, their workplace, their neighbourhood, or their community had been afforded or provided by feminism and/or feminist understandings, explanations, or theories of partner abuse. As has been noted, there was acknowledgement by a number of participants that women in the community are well served by programs and services available in the community (see Table 7, p. 115) because many of these are based on feminist

understandings of partner abuse. Earlier FG1 described the historical beginnings in the community of services and programs for women and children in the community. Again, in that description the role contribution or influence of feminist thought in those developments was null data. One possible explanation for this finding may be that many participants felt it went without saying how important, influential or significant feminist ideas were to the events and ideas they shared with the researchers.

Regardless of the reason for this outcome, that feminist programs and services have made the Whitehorse community a safer place for women is indisputable, the evidence of that success is described later in the null data (see p. 139).

Missing services; missed citizens.

Several new developments in services or programs and a number of ongoing processes in the community were also described. There were five specific examples mentioned in the data: (1) The ongoing revision of the Children's Act (FG1). (2) Joint custody of children has become more prevalent in family court (FG1). (3) The RCMP are beginning to move into "resistance stories" (IIP9). (4) Some agencies are moving away from the "cycle of violence" explanation of partner abuse (IIP9). (5) A project that presented older women's concerns to doctors. Perhaps the key to the strengths described in this strand of the data was that organizations in the community do allocate resources to meet with each other to discuss new ideas and approaches (IIP9). These discussions were described as more open at this time than they have been in the past (FG2). Participant IIP9 suggested that it was the NGOs that often took the lead in pushing the envelope for services and programs which then "raised the ceiling" of the available services and programs in the community. That is exactly the NGO role Michau (2005) described, "activist NGOs can consider playing a catalytic role of inspiring and supporting others to take action."

Existing services and programs.

Many participants spoke of the valuable assistance that they had received from the existing services and programs in the community, and several participants (IIP1, FG2) indicated that women, in particular, were well served by the available support options in the community (in contrast to the earlier description of limited resources and services and service gaps). Most of the valuable services were also mentioned by participants on the participant questionnaire in their responses to item 11. For the purposes of comparison, as well as to generate a complete list of programs that received positive mention, the two sources of data are listed in Table 7. Some FG1 participants described that there were existing services to

Table 7

Programs and Services Identified by Participants as Helpful Resources

Questionnaire Data

Kaushee's Place (Women's Shelter)
Family Violence Prevention Unit (2)
Yukon Family Services Association
Alcohol and Drug Services
Employee Assistance Program
(Barb Nimco and Associates)
Health and Social Services
Private Agency
Counsellors

Interview, Focus Group Data

Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre
Family Violence Prevention Unit (4)
Victim Services Program
Alcohol and Drug Services
Employee Assistance Program
(Barb Nimco and Associates)
Healthy Families Program
Child Development Centre
RCMP

provide support to children from homes with abusive parents or caregivers (again in contrast to other earlier descriptions). Alcohol and Drug Services and the Family Violence Prevention Unit were described in FG2 as providing services for abusers and victims of partner abuse as well as collaborating to validate each other's work and their clients' experiences. Participant IIP9 described several multi-disciplinary initiatives between various service agency and program providers in the community.

The RCMP response was described earlier (p. 111). A FG2 participant who described the RCMP response as “skilled and dignified,” gave this example; two officers responded, separated the couple to cool them down, and left both partners feeling good after the RCMP had left. Two months later the RCMP completed a follow-up visit with the couple.

Weaknesses

Analyses of the interview data describing the weaknesses in the community’s existing responses included the description of a number of barriers or limitations to addressing partner abuse.

System and community history, values, resources.

Several community-wide and system-level concerns were described as weaknesses in the existing responses to partner abuse. Victims have a lack of trust with the system (IIP9, IIP11, FG2) undoubtedly for many of the reasons already described; which are, male victims are not believed (IIP1, FG1); possible breaches of confidentiality (IIP9, FG2); inadequate, ineffective or inappropriate responses by departments, organizations, responders and service providers (all participants); fear of losing children (IIP9, IIP11, FG1); gays may be ‘outed’ (IIP1) and; offenders can “get away with murder” (IIP11).

Participant IIP9 noted, offering programs and workshops that teach women to advocate for services and programs is not the answer, stopping the offenders is the answer. Programs that teach women to control their anger when that anger could be the fight that could save their lives was described as another weakness (IIP9). The community’s services, programs and social workers are not culturally aware or sensitive (FG1, FG2). Further concerns with social workers were described by participants; they deny problems within the profession and are unwilling to assess any of their wrongdoings in the community (FG1).

Participant IIP9 indicated that many people recognize that the system functions on power and control as its means of sustaining itself. “They need to continue the problem for funding purposes” (IIP9). The system has an investment in the partner-abuse industry. Women become “cases” to keep programs running (IIP9). “People’s retirement is at stake” (IIP9). Participant IIP9 also noted that offering programs and workshops that teach women to advocate for services and programs are not the answer, stopping the offenders is the answer. That services and programs were controlled by service providers was also mentioned as a weakness (FG1).

Some FG2 participants accused people of hiding their heads in the sand especially with regard to two lost segments within the community, children and the elderly (described earlier, pp. 108-110). One participant also described that when children witness violence in the home the field is split as to who is the primary victim. The participant viewed that discussion, that somebody’s value is less than another, as illogical. Such discussions do take place however and can lead to mother blaming by those inclined to identify the child as the primary victim. To the extent that the system does respond when children are removed from their home is not seen as healthy by some (FG1). Placing children who have witnessed abuse at the Children’s Receiving Home was mentioned as a specific example of an unhealthy response by FG1.

Both FG1 and FG2 indicated that the community’s services, programs and social workers are not culturally aware or sensitive. A FG1 participant also described professional service providers as biased and discriminatory in supporting feminist explanations, practices, and stereotypes. Further concerns with social workers were described by participants. They deny problems within the profession and are unwilling to assess any of their wrongdoings in

the community. Some FG1 participants described that the community has a lack of trust in the social-work profession and that the profession has a poor appreciation of how people's lives are impacted when they have bad experiences with the system its programs, services, service providers, and professionals.

Feminist explanations, stereotypes.

Stereotypes present in the services and programs available in the community are imposed and entrenched within these organizations' cultures to a degree that, as one participant who was the leader of a service agency described, it is difficult to lead people out of the stereotypes. The feminist-victim models and other related counselling models were described as not fitting the reality of partner abuse and were often found not to be helpful (IIP1, IIP9, IIP11, FG1). Perhaps the most harmful consequence the widespread acceptance of feminist approaches has on the community was described during FG 2 which observed, "it's easy for women to hide in the feminist perspective and not take responsibility." That includes female abusers because "there are no consequences" for Whitehorse women who abuse their partners (IIP11). Both FG2 and IIP11 noted that men's voices have been silenced in the community by the service providers that embrace feminist-based approaches and practices.

Missing services; missed citizens.

Many of the gaps in services described as weaknesses could also be opportunities and several of them will be discussed further in that section. Perhaps the most promising missing program identified by many of the participants was education. This occurs in the schools (IIP1, IIP10, FG2), relationship workshops for adults (IIP1, IIP10, FG2), First Nation culture camps to share traditional knowledge (FG2), and what to do and how to support someone in an abusive relationship (IIP9, IIP11). More generalized dissatisfactions were also described.

These were not enough services or support (IIP11), no built in support (IIP9), and no support in my own family or the community (FG2). That community culture of feeling unsupported leaves victims feeling they are unable to leave (FG2, IIP9), especially when there is no priority housing available to go to (IIP9). Participant IIP11 described an inadequate crisis response as a weakness; specifically, the lack of follow up because after the crisis the victim stops reaching out. Participant IIP11 also described that in some of the (rural) communities the only models of relationship are dysfunctional and/or abusive. As already described in the Descriptions data, there is a concern in the community that children who witness their parent's abusive behaviours are not getting required services and support (see footnote 82, p. 110).

Within the community, services are not available for gay men that experience abuse in their relationships (IIP1, FG2) and service providers are not educated to work with this population (IIP11). Focus Group 1 also reported that male victims of abuse face an absence of services;⁸⁴ specifically, no safe houses, and no police response, as well as an institutionalized bias and discrimination within many of the community's service agencies.

Existing services and programs.

A number of barriers to accessing existing services and typical responses from service providers were also described as contributing to the problem of partner abuse. Focus Group 2 articulated that the community desires dependable and sage service providers but described the present network of services in the community is piecemeal, ad hoc and inconsistent. Part of the inconsistency comes from Outside⁸⁵ counsellors who lack understanding and knowledge of the historical issues in the community (FG2). Many of those service providers

⁸⁴ Basile (2005) commented, "social norms suggest that men are seldom victims of domestic violence. Few services are available to male victims" (p. 171).

⁸⁵ See footnote 12, p. 6.

are not part of the community and their practice is guided by policy and rules only (FG2). That type of practice often creates barriers rather than offering something useful to partner-abuse victims. A FG2 participant noted that the counsellor s/he was seeing called the police after s/he disclosed that their partner had guns. That resulted in the participant “getting flack” from his/her partner, being blamed by his/her partner and led to them feeling self-blame and fear. The counsellors report to the police placed this individual in greater danger than s/he had been before, created a barrier to him/her trusting service providers, undermined them as the expert on his/her life, and discounted his/her personal resources; in particular his/her intelligence, resilience, and adaptiveness. Accessible and affordable service for communities outside of Whitehorse was also mentioned as a barrier to accessing services (IIP1, FG2).

As with certain services in any community, the stigma of accessing some types of services also exists in Whitehorse. That barrier to accessing services is only heightened in smaller northern communities where confidentiality is harder to maintain. Program locations and the attending participants can often easily be learned, if not already known, through the community “grapevine” or “moccasin telegraph” (IIP10). As a result clients may feel threatened or shame while attending treatment. By the time they have completed the program, they are aware that many in the community now know their secret, leading them to feel resentful and possibly to act out in backlash (IIP10). This is somewhat of a self-fulfilling prophecy that may lead treatment participants to process their experience as the belief that if people think I am violent, I might as well be violent.

Participant IIP11 noted that her attempts to access services to assist her to break her pattern of abusive relationships included pretending to be an alcoholic. She reported that her

turning point came when she attended a workshop in which the participants were asked when they were going to stop being a victim? They were also given the message you are one-hundred percent responsible for what happens to you. She found that accepting responsibility for what happened to her was very empowering, and a key to her being able to move on in her life. That message of responsibility reframed her view of abusive relationships to an extent that she said she now believes it is a disservice for service providers to present abusers' behaviours as the reason that women are victims, while the women's choices are treated as largely irrelevant and therefore remain unexamined. She said counsellors and service providers do not ask victims to take any responsibility for their circumstances. The participant reported that when she went for counselling she felt small and she experienced little building of self esteem.

However, IIP9 reported that rather than focusing on these women's strengths (intelligence, resilience, adaptiveness and sense of self), the treatment focus is on teaching self-esteem. This apparent contradiction may well be explained by the first participant describing past program practices while the second participant is describing more current practice approaches. Participant IIP11 reported that her experiences in counselling produced feelings of having nothing, being nothing, feeling helpless, and being unworthy. That description is eerily similar to Mills' (2006) observation,

if women choose to stay in their relationships after having left and encountered mainstream feminist views ... they are likely to return to their partners with judgments about themselves as helpless, dependent, or ill. They return with less clarity, confidence, and, perhaps most important personal power than they had before they left. This can be emotionally and physically damaging (pp. 65-66).

Participant IIP9 indicated that service agencies and citizens in the community hold abused women in low esteem. That participant said they were shocked by the number of services

and service providers that do not take a strength-based approach in their work with abused women. It is difficult to be strength-based when you label your clients “victims” as is the practice of most feminist-based approaches to partner-abuse.

The Victim Services program at the Family Violence Prevention Unit was described as using a feminist approach and not providing services for male victims. Focus Group 1 participants described the overall program and system responses to partner abuse in the community as racist and culturally prejudice. Another weakness of the existing programs for male perpetrators described by IIP11 is that the perpetrators’ history of sexual abuse victimization is not acknowledged, considered or discussed.

The Domestic Violence Treatment Option (DVTO) court (see Appendix F, p. 197 ⁸⁶) is perceived by many in the community as leading edge. That perception is shared by the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts which recently included the Yukon’s DVTO in it’s compilation of exemplary family court programs. The community newspaper, the *Yukon News*, reported “it will be used by other jurisdictions trying to develop their own ways of dealing with the problem of domestic violence. One of the first of its kind in Canada, the Yukon program is a model for programs across the country” (Perry, 2004, p. 6). However, not all citizens of Whitehorse are similarly impressed. The DVTO’s treatment of offenders that plead guilty does not satisfy some in the community. Participant IIP9 said that in the DVTO court process when the offender enters a guilty plea it is equated with the offender taking responsibility for their crime. However, the court’s procedures create another possible reason for offenders to enter a guilty plea; doing so prevents the offender from having a

⁸⁶ The complete (55 page) Protocols and Letters of Understanding for the Yukon’s DVTO are available on line http://www.lfcc.on.ca/Sutherland_DVTOProtocol.pdf#search=%22Domestic%20Violence%20Treatment%20Options%20Court%22.

criminal record. Participant IIP11 said a failure of the justice system to deal with partner abusers is its very light sentences that are equivalent to a slap on the hand. IIP1 described the DVTO as being too lenient with offenders. The system does everything it can to keep perpetrators out of jail due to the high costs associated with incarceration. Program evaluation to research treatment and services outcomes of the DVTO and other existing programs and services was suggested. Focus Group 1 participants offered a related criticism of Family Court. Making men pay child support in most instances of joint custody creates a potential source of frustration that could be expressed as aggressive behaviour.

Additional concerns with the justice system's treatment of offenders were described. Participant IIP1 suggested that the recidivism among partner abusers is a result of either the offender not having the capacity to learn a different pattern of relationship behaviours, or the offender not experiencing their punishment as enough of a deterrent to stop them from resorting to violent behaviour again. Participant IIP11 indicated that effective facilitators for men's groups were not available in the community.

IIP11 also reported that the justice system's responses are perceived by many in the community as inadequate and ineffective in dealing with violent crime and provided three examples. The allocation of funding has resulted in services and programs for women and no services for children and men. With the existing services in the community based on feminist explanations of partner abuse, services for male victims and female perpetrators are not available. The services that are provided for men (perpetrators) and women (victims) have a divisive approach in that they are delivered separately (FG1). Focus Group 2 participants agreed that the Women's Transition Home (Kaushee's Place) perpetuates a stigma that "you have to leave your partner." Service providers tell women what to do, the

system does not treat women as the experts in how to deal with their abusive relationships⁸⁷ (IIP9). The community service providers, programs and systems often place pressure on the non-offending parent through conflicting messages; for example, protect yourself, charge your partner with assault, but if your partner is violent we need to protect your children (IIP9). As a result victims are not only confused about what to do but can get caught in threatening relationships between two service providers (IIP9).

Focus Group 1 participants noted that the one response the system is consistent with is removing children from their fathers. This is done under the guise of protection⁸⁸ without consideration of the damage or the impact that losing a parent may have on the children and their relationship with their father (FG1). While service agencies were described as not focusing on services for children that witness abuse, the children were attended to for other reasons according to one participant. The female researcher's interpretation of the participant's comments was that some service providers record statistics that include the number of children of the women they offer services to in order to receive increased funding (FG1). The male researcher's interpretation was that the abused women were using their children as a means to access more services, particularly financial assistance. It is also possible that the participant meant both of these scenarios by her comments. This difference of interpretation was the only one noted between the two researchers when reviewing the interview and group sessions notes.

Participant IIP9 described dual charging as unfair to the real victims. What is needed

⁸⁷ Fawcett et al. (1999) described their research team's view of the "leaving" question this way, "although we believe that women who choose to leave should be fully supported in this decision, we do not feel fully comfortable saying that 'leaving' is the behavior we seek to promote" (p. 46).

⁸⁸ "Fathers are beginning to be constructed politically as a resource for children (Featherston, 2003), rather than as an irrelevance or a risk. We are beginning too, to realise how men can be marginalized in social work (and especially child protection). (Daniel and Taylor, 2001)." (as cited by Smith, 2006, p. 27).

is better training, of first responders to be able to assess abusive dynamics to determine who is the “terrorist” in the relationship and who is acting out in resistance to the abuse.

Participant IIP11 noted that the inconsistency of the RCMP response is a barrier to those who need help. In combination with the perception that the court and justice system responses are often inadequate and/or ineffective, victims are fearful to leave and to seek help.

Opportunities

Many of the contributions placed into this category appeared in some form in the participants’ comments and thoughts that were also recorded in the “weaknesses” category. Four themes emerged in the examination of the possible opportunities in the community to address partner abuse.

System and community history, values, resources.

One participant noted that resistance stories are a piece of a new paradigm with which partner-abuse victims and their narratives are viewed within the community by a small (but growing?) number of agencies and service providers. Service providers that can appreciate the resistance stories of the women’s experience are able to offer these women more effective services and programs. One service provider added that his practice with resistance stories was informed by the work of Allan Wade, Linda Coats and Kathy Richardson (no further details or description were given). The community’s readiness for such a shift, from victim narratives to resistance stories, was also in evidence in certain aspects of other opportunities that participants described. Service providers need to seek different relationships, different responses, listen, and take the time to build trust. Some alternatives are to: “Increase attachment to something new” (FG2) and “Become ‘we’ instead of us versus them” (FG2). Another type of story discussed by FG2 participants was that “talking about one’s shadow

needs to be acceptable.” Another consideration suggested was “Be willing to validate the person’s experience” (FG2).

Focus Group 1 participants described “a new system separate from the existing one” and “deinstitutionalized not system based,” with “services provided by neutrals, not social workers.” This new response would be community-based and owned with a family resource centre and focused on strengthening the community. The new system’s approach would support values that would lead to solutions respectful of the client’s and community’s cultural and religious diversity. Other values FG1 participants desired in a new system included a child-centered and family-centered approach. As part of developing such a system, holding a community meeting was suggested (IIP9) to allow citizens the opportunity to present and discuss their concerns and issues with service providers.

Focus Group 2 participants described a more communitarian approach to education. Elders or other strong family members can often provide education, and support, with a consistency and reliability that is helpful. These participants also discussed the concept of “northern ethics” and a code of ethics adapted to the northern context. They described specific programs that could contribute to the northern context, create opportunities for jobs and identity; provide funding for cultural lifestyle to increase attachment to First Nation culture, and establish education about cultural needs that can be provided in a dependable, reliable, and predictable way.

Another opportunity described by IIP9 was for the community’s service providers to build relationships and work toward solutions collaboratively. That initiative could include presentations to each other about the services they offer as well as offering inter-agency training (IIP9). Identifying commonalities between service providers and creating shared care

for women's healing were described as possible opportunities. It was hoped that such collaboration and cooperation would lead to service providers being able to offer a coordinated message to families (IIP9). Included in the service provider discussions would be an examination of the language used in the community by newspapers, lawyers, RCMP, social workers, and counsellors that invalidate women's experiences (IIP9). Participants also reported territorialness in the present system that limits interest in inter-agency and inter-departmental cooperative and collaborative initiatives (IIP9, FG2). The present system was described as perpetuating and perpetrating additional abuse of males, both victims and offenders (FG1). Program evaluations to research treatment and services outcomes of the DVTO, and other existing programs and services were also suggested (IIP9).

Feminist explanations, stereotypes.

There was not any data that identified possible opportunities for interventions or new programs and services with feminist explanations and understanding of partner abuse. This may well be a result of the feminist-based programs and services already being in place in the community, and, as a number of participants indicated, women are well served by the existing programs. As was already said in the *Strengths* category, under this same theme, one possible explanation for this finding may be that many participants felt it went without saying how important, influential or significant feminist ideas were to the events and ideas they shared with the researchers. Regardless of the reason for this outcome, that feminist programs and services have made the Whitehorse community a safer place for women is indisputable. The evidence of that success is described later; however, in the null data (see p. 139).

Missing services; missed citizens.

Better training is needed for service providers that deliver programs and counselling for couples. Specifically professionals need to learn to understand the difference between anger and violence as well as to be able to teach clients to safely and/or appropriately express their anger (FG2). Other areas of opportunity that could be enhanced with additional training opportunities for professionals include assessing offenders' capacity to respond to treatment, and earlier intervention in order to identify couples and individuals at risk of violence in their relationship (IIP1). Once such individuals were identified, appropriate case planning could be provided much earlier. Expanded services for men, perpetrators and victims, with increased and separate funding of agencies in order to provide male-specific programs were suggested (FG2, IIP1, IIP11). Providing couples counselling by a male and a female counselling team was mentioned as an opportunity (FG2). Participant IIP1 suggested that women whose relationship pattern is to go from one abusive relationship to another should be offered counselling focused on relationship skills.

Participant IIP1 also described relationship and communication education for teens that would include providing for personal safety, supports at the schools, and supervised social recreation (FG2). It was also suggested that elementary schools need to have a greater focus on the emotional development of male students (FG2). Courses and workshops for couples that would engage "couples to work on their stuff," offer new relationship skills, and new ways of relating were also suggested.

In order to offer these educational type programs and workshops, service providers may require additional training, particularly to assist service providers that deliver programs and counselling for couples to better understand the difference between anger and violence and to learn how to assist clients to safely and/or appropriately express anger. One

participant recounted that the couples counselling s/he and his/her partner received at Yukon Family Services was a “horrific experience.” The counsellor did not appear to be able to handle the anger between the two partners effectively or therapeutically. This participant’s voice had a tone of frustration and helplessness as s/he finished by saying, “where do you go?” There is support in the literature for these types of educational interventions Wolfe and Jaffe’s (2000) review, examining prevention efforts found a number of programs targeted at different stages of the lifespan that should contribute to the prevention of adult domestic violence. These include efforts to promote healthy child rearing, school-based efforts to increase awareness of domestic violence, teaching effective decision making skills for interpersonal relationships among adolescents and teenagers, and public awareness efforts in the adult population. Many of these programs do not specifically target domestic violence as an issue. Rather they focus on promoting general positive attitudes and skills in interpersonal relationships (as cited by Edleson, 2000, p. 8).

A First-Nation participant said that it can also be helpful to engage in perspective taking; that is leaving the community for a significant period of time and then coming back. This participant said that changing his environment allowed him to realize he “couldn’t see the forest for the trees.” Experiencing a healthier environment and taking a break from the community norms allowed him to recognize how unhealthy his community was and, most importantly, it validated that his concerns about the community were logical, reasonable, accurate and justified.

Existing services and programs.

Participant IIP1 suggested that a tougher approach with abusers, especially those that re-offend was an opportunity to improve the system’s response to partner abuse. This

participant suggested that the system should consider a range of harsher consequences that would include everything from closer supervision of offenders, to increased expectations of offenders to accept responsibility for their actions, increasing the length of sentences, and making jail conditions “more miserable.”

First responders and other service providers need to assess which partner is the “terrorist” and which one is acting out of resistance (IIP9). All service providers could adopt a more client-centered approach in their work with abused women by asking “how can we work with you?” (IIP9) An increased program focus on presenting alternatives to violence in relationships, for both offenders and victims, was suggested (IIP10).

Many service providers miss the impact of FAE in terms of understanding and addressing partner abuse with victims and perpetrators (FG2). When the person wanting to leave an abusive partner has FAE, service providers need to have a better understanding of the characteristics of that population and there needs to be a recognition that in those cases a committed and long-term involvement may be required of the service provider and the agency (FG2).

Threats

The existing threats in the community and in the present system appear to be well recognized and understood by the Whitehorse citizens who participated in this research project. The barriers to change presented by those perceived threats were clearly described by the participants. Participants also offered their descriptions of how some of the changes or opportunities they had mentioned would be perceived as threats by those working within the present system’s services and programs.

System and community level history, values, resources.

Creating an environment where people would be safe to talk about their personal “shadow” was described as something that would be perceived as threatening by some (FG2). Discussing the community shadow was also described as a discourse that would also be perceived as a threat by some citizens. The perception of those in FG2 who raised the “shadow” discussions was that so many people are closed to the “shadow” discussion that “it’s a hard nut to crack.” Perspective taking, as described earlier, is viewed as very threatening in the community, particularly in the First-Nation communities (FG2). First Nation participants in FG2 agreed that you are never forgiven by your community if you leave, and you are never accepted back. The First Nation communities always try to pull back those who want to leave by enforcing a sort of unspoken code that the community must stick together. The stigma of leaving the community becomes attached to the family of any individual who leaves, and it becomes generational. The children of the person that leaves are also never accepted back into the community (FG2).

The inconsistency of the RCMP response is a threat to those that need help (IIP11). And in combination with the perception that the court and justice system responses are often inadequate and/or ineffective (IIP1, IIP9, IIP11) victims are fearful to leave and to seek help (IIP9, IIP11). Providing education about partner abuse in schools could trigger students that have witnessed abuse (IIP1). As was mentioned earlier, one participant described that the Women’s Transition Home is perceived by some as “Left-Wing” and therefore threatens some whose political preferences are more to the ‘Right.’

Participant IIP9 observed that one strategy the system often uses to protect itself from threats is to include representatives from the threatening service agencies on committees where the agency representative’s participation is taken advantage of by the system then

presenting those agencies' participation as indicating its inclusiveness of all the players. The threatening agencies' participation on such committees is to serve the systems political needs more than to have those representatives serve any functional role⁸⁹ (IIP9). The separation of funding and services in order to divide the programs and service providers that work with men and women was described as a threat to the status-quo approach (IIP1, FG1).

Feminist explanations, stereotypes.

Participants mentioned that service providers and community citizens that are comfortable with the feminist explanations of partner abuse would be threatened by a number of challenges emerging in the community and in the study of partner abuse. The feminist approach used by many of the community's services and programs is a big threat to the ability of men to access services (IIP1, IIP9, IIP11, FG1). Any discussion of alternative explanations of partner abuse from the existing feminist explanations and stereotypes was also described as a threat (IIP9, FG1, FG2).

Missing services; missed citizens.

As could be expected, there was not any data identifying any threats from services that are yet to exist. The most obvious missed clients are abusive women and victimized men. A number of other marginalized groups of citizens were mentioned earlier (gays lesbians, ethnic minorities, elderly), many of these individuals would feel too unsafe to pose a threat to anyone or anything. Several participants did describe that acknowledging certain missed clients; namely male victims and victimized men, would threaten many in the community.

⁸⁹ Token participation is not a circumstance unique to Whitehorse. Fullwood (2002) reported "there is also a danger of involving community members in a tokenistic manner, rather than truly incorporating them into the leadership structure and decision-making process" (p. 14).

Existing services and programs.

“The hierarchy of Justice will not give up power,” there is a “power and control hierarchy system in Whitehorse” (IIP9). Participant IIP9 also described exclusive clubs in the justice and treatment systems whose members have a fear of a loss of identity. Focus Group 2 participants noted that the people in power need to let go of their power to allow for a de-professionalizing of the response.⁹⁰ Broadening the definition of abuse (beyond the present narrow legal – physical definition) to include all abuse; i.e., emotional, mental, verbal, indirect, etc., and abusers, would threaten everyone from those at the top of the Justice and service provider systems to many of the average Whitehorse citizens (FG2).

Other

In addition to partner abuse, IIP11 described that there are other types of extremely violent relationships in the community; such as stalking, not necessarily by a partner but by a predator or peeping tom. Accessible and affordable service for communities outside of Whitehorse was also mentioned (IIP1, FG2). A FG1 participant asked why men pay child support in most instances of joint custody, because it is a potential source of frustration that could be expressed as aggressive behaviour.

A Community-Based Response

Numerous research studies confirm that at any one time, the majority of abused women are not in contact with formal institutions; they are either in denial of their situation, overwhelmed by self doubt, or unconvinced that the benefits of action outweigh the risks. To the extent that women do reach out, they tend to do so to trusted family and friends, not to formal agencies or professionals (Kelly, 1996; Shrader, 1998; PAHO, 1998) (as cited by Fawcett et al., 1999, p. 41).

⁹⁰ This concern has also been described in the literature, “since social service [and justice] systems have not always accepted community residents as leaders and collaborators, this approach runs the risk of not being supported by the systems they hope to change” (Fullwood, 2002, p. 14).

During the course of data collection, an interview was completed with a participant who had been involved in a community-based group of women that offered support and assistance to those with abusive relationships. It was felt that the data from this interview should be presented in its own section because it is an example of a community-based response to partner abuse; therefore it may be particularly useful to the community in considering additional community-based responses. This group originated from within a group that had been meeting to practice traditional First-Nation-spiritual ceremonies. A number of the women attending that group began to meet in order to practice ceremonies that were specifically for women. During the course of the new group's first few meetings, it was discovered that almost all of the women were directly or indirectly affected by violent relationships. Analyses of the data about this community-based group focused on identifying the strengths, weaknesses and threats as opposed to traditional and/or professional services or programs.

Strengths.

This community-based group provided this participant with a sense of self-worth, a place to be, and she felt treasured in the group for her innocence as the baby of the group (she was the youngest of the women in the group). In addition to those beneficial qualities the participant described additional strengths of this community-based group.

- members have access to the support of other members 24/7, and especially when crisis response from Whitehorse service providers is lacking;
- there is no waiting period;
- there are more opportunities for families to attend this group than other professional services and programs;
- the member's children have other member's homes as a resource if their homes are unsafe (age range of group members 10 – 60);

- the group offers an opportunity to see functional, healthy relationships to members who come with a distorted view of relationships.
- the group has a holistic approach, it's not all about abuse, which helps bring a needed balance to the members' lives;
- it counters the sense of loneliness by offering a sense of belonging to something larger than yourself;
- members feel less like a victim than they do as a client in the system because one of the principles the group values is social reciprocity, you can help someone else after you have been helped;
- members are acknowledged beyond their victimhood, others see your strengths and assets and approach you to access that;
- the community-based group members come from many walks of life and bring a richness of life circumstances and experiences.
- the group offers fun, laughter, lightness;
- In a community-based group, the members know how the community narrative and context of partner abuse was created;
- the members can deconstruct and reconstruct victim's community narratives.

Weaknesses.

The participant readily acknowledged that there were also a number of weaknesses within the group and the community. There is less anonymity in a community-based group than meeting one-to-one with professional service providers. That can be a significant barrier for those in positions of leadership in the community. The group is not publicized, which makes it unavailable to people new to Whitehorse. This participant acknowledged that Whitehorse does have existing cliques that make it difficult for people to access support from some existing community-based groups.

Threats.

This participant was the only one to speak about the community response to sexual-abuse disclosures, which may not specifically occur within the context of partner abuse but are directly or indirectly, emotionally, and mentally impacting on victims, perpetrators and their partners or other family members. Often the community perceives disclosures as a threat because the unspoken community rule woven into the community's narrative is do not tell anyone because that will bring shame on us all. Often the family and the community will then protect the offender, especially sex offenders, as the disclosers violation of the community rule is seen as a greater offense than the abuser's abuse of his or her victims. The participant described one instance in which an offender disclosed his abuses before his victims, resulting in his family and he being ostracized from the community.

This participant also described a cascade of threats that can occur when someone in an abusive relationship seeks help. A friend of the participant talked to her about her abusive relationship and the friend then informed her abusive partner she had spoken to the participant. The friend's partner was threatened by the participant's knowledge of his abusive behaviours and he became challenging and threatening towards her. While she indicated that she never experienced any physical harm from those threats, she did experience emotional consequences. This participant mentioned the Ron Bax case as an example of a similar response from an abuser that can place people that help victims (friends or family) at great risk.

The impact of the unsolved Ron Bax case to the partner-abuse context and narrative of many Yukoners seems significant:

After a long history of marital discord and allegations of spousal abuse, Ronald's wife, Lynn, sought refuge in a shelter for battered women on March

1, 1992. Her only visitor that night was her best friend, Krystal Senyk. Theirs was a close friendship that sources say Bax deeply resented. When Krystal returned to her home at around 11 p.m. someone was lying in wait for her. A single shot from close range left Krystal dead in the doorway of her own home. Ronald Bax vanished immediately and is the only known suspect in the murder. Bax has family in Michigan and there is a strong possibility that he is hiding somewhere in the U.S. (*Unsolved Mysteries*, 1995).

A few years later, a 1995 segment on the U.S. television program "America's Most Wanted" [also] failed to turn up a clue (CBC, 2005).

While what happened to Krystal Senyk is known, what happened to Ron Bax is not, and Lynne Bax may still be living in fear, but one thing is certain. These events are well integrated into the Whitehorse and Yukon's partner-abuse narrative. As will be discussed next there are other significant events, well known within the community, that for whatever reason were part of the null discourse during the course of the research interviews.

A Piece of the Community's Null Partner-Abuse Narrative

While the Whitehorse community narrative and history of partner abuse and violence were mentioned and described in general terms by several participants, the only specific event mentioned by any of the participants was the Ron Bax case, just described. Another partner-abuse case that was part of the null data, as described by these participants, occurred in the community about two-and-a-half years after the Bax case, and has also left its influence on Whitehorse residents' and the community's partner-abuse narrative.

In November of 1995 the 32-month investigation into the murder of Krystal Senyk had gone cold and many citizens were experiencing a growing sense of frustration and disappointment that closure for family, friends and the community may never come (the case remains unsolved to this day). That month a well known and respected Whitehorse woman was killed by her husband;

In the early morning hours of November 02, 1995 ... Ralph Klassen killed his ... wife Susan Klassen in the bed of their home in Whitehorse,

Yukon. ... After he had killed Susan ... in an attempt to commit suicide, he drove his car into a propane truck on the Klondike Highway. Ralph survived the collision with minor cuts and bruises. ... Fourteen months later, on January 17, 1997, a Whitehorse jury found Ralph Klassen guilty of manslaughter. ... the trial judge imposed a sentence of five years.

An article in the Whitehorse STAR newspaper on January 24, 1997 reported that some abusive husbands in Whitehorse were using the Klassen murder trial as a model to reinforce their harmful behaviors. ... Michael Hanson, the unit manager at Yukon's Family Violence Prevention Unit (FVPU) said ... "they're also using it as another tactic of controlling their partner ... by saying 'This is all he (Klassen) got; I could end my problem the same way.' ... Hanson said FVPU received a number of calls from abused women who told FVPU workers that the low sentence in the Klassen murder trial made them fear for their safety. Some abusive men who were enrolled in the assaultive husband program told their counsellors that a five-year sentence would not deter them from killing their partners. Some men said that it would have been easier for them to kill their wives than to go through the program. Hanson said that while some of those comments may have been made thoughtlessly and with no actual intent to follow up on the threat, "intended or not, such remarks always have a very frightening effect on the victim" (Zero Tolerance, 2004).

It certainly seems probable that the impact and reaction to the Klassen sentence stemmed, at least in part, from there still being no closure or justice in the Senyk murder case. As a result perhaps many in the community hoped they might receive some sense of satisfaction from seeing Ralph Klassen "pay plenty" to cover for some of what was owed by Ron Bax? That the Klassen case was part of the null data, particularly as an example of the *Weaknesses* of the court's response to partner abuse, is somewhat surprising as all eleven of the research participants were living in Whitehorse when these events took place. The Klassen sentence and the community's reactions would seem to be the significant event behind part of the participant's and community's narrative, "you can get away with murdering your wife in Whitehorse."

While the Bax and Klassen cases have contributed a big piece to the Whitehorse community's partner-abuse narrative (even though the Klassen case was part of the null data)

there are also other null or untold stories (very similar to the examples described earlier, pp. 59-61) that were part of the null data, and may be part of the community's null narrative, but are explicit data in the spousal-homicide statistics for the territory.

More Null Data

In 1994 Statistics Canada reported that nationally the ratio of female to male victims of spousal homicide was 3.2:1 and the Yukon ratio was 1.7:1. That Yukon men and women kill their spouses at a closer to equal rate than spouses in the rest of the country was part of the participants' null data. More recently, Canadian

statistics show that spousal homicide rates for both men and women appear to be declining. From 1974 to 2000, the rate per million couples for women decreased from 16.5 in 1974 to 11.1 in 2000. For men, the rate went from 4.4 in 1974 to 3.4 in 2000 (Department of Justice Canada, 2003, p. 2-3).

This Department of Justice Report also goes on to specifically describe the Yukon statistics,

although few spousal homicides were actually committed in the three territories, because of the small populations the rates were the highest in the country. Between 1974 and 2000, the homicide rate for women ...was four times the national average in the Yukon. Similarly, male spousal homicide rates were six times higher in the Yukon (2003, p.3).

Within the interview and focus group discourse, partner abuse as a bigger problem for Yukon women than men, and as a bigger problem in the Yukon than in the rest of the country, was described. Also, research participants did indicate that they believed that Yukon women were abused and killed, by their partners at a higher rate (that statistics show to be 4 times higher) than women in the rest of the country. But, that Yukon women kill their spouses at an even higher rate (which statistics show to be 6 times higher) than women in the rest of the country, was another part of the null data and would seem to be part of the community's null, partner-abuse narrative.

Related to the Klassen case is the following description also offered in the Department of Justice (2003) report: “More than one in five spousal homicides culminated in the suicide of the perpetrator. However, this is almost entirely a male phenomenon. Between 1974 and 2000 ... 564 men and 15 women ... took their lives [after killing their spouse]” (p. 4). That phenomenon was another piece of the null discussion within the research data of this project. The feminist null curriculum includes males committing suicide after killing their female partners.⁹¹

Further support, and statistical descriptions, of decreasing violence in inter-gender, and relationship violence in Whitehorse are directly available from other Yukon sources. “Over the last five years, the territorial rate [of sexual assault] has been decreasing, while the national rate has been somewhat stable. However, ...sexual assault is between 2.5 and 3 times higher in the Yukon than in Canada” (Yukon Women’s Directorate, 2004, p. 2). The YWD report goes on to also describe, “the Yukon’s rate of spousal assaults has *fallen significantly* [italics added] over the last eight years [1995 – 2002]” (p. 2). The report does not point out (null reporting) that while the overall rate dropped 51%, during those eight years, 48% of that decrease was due to Yukon men committing 134 fewer spousal assaults in 2002 than they did in 1995. The remaining 3% of the decrease was the result of Yukon women committing three fewer spousal assaults in 2002 than they did in 1995.⁹² The feminist perspective’s contribution to the community’s partner-abuse narrative is evident in

⁹¹ For example - Marc Lepine’s suicide at the end of the Montreal massacre is part of the feminist null-narrative, and null herstory, of that tragic event.

⁹² This trend is also in evidence in the findings of U.S research. Straus (2006b) offered this hypothesis; “women are much less likely than men to think that they will be apprehended and punished if they assault a partner (Williams 1992). ... Many criminologists and almost all feminists argue that arrest and criminal penalties deter males from assaulting their partners. If so, it is a plausible hypothesis that the absence of this presumably deterrent effect of criminal justice intervention for women may help explain why the rate of partner assault by males has dropped ... however, the rate of partner assaults by women has not” (Straus, 2006b, p. 1093).

the language used in the next sentence of the report: “while the numbers of male offenders *appear* [italics added] to be decreasing, men are still charged with spousal assault at a much higher rate than are women” (p. 2). Appear ? If there are 239 members of a curling club in a northern community and eight years later there are 105 members, the club’s membership does not *appear* to have decreased – it *has* decreased. Rather than taking a strengths perspective and focusing on the 51% decrease (for which the Women’s Directorate undoubtedly deserves at least part of the credit) the report reluctantly acknowledges a change in Yukon men’s behaviours and then quickly points out their “much higher rate” of spousal assault. That Yukon men decreased their spousal assaults 45% more than did Yukon women, received no comment in the report (null comment). While the research participants accurately noted the greater frequency of partner abuse in the Yukon than the rest of the country, the 50% decrease in the number of spousal assaults perpetrated by Yukon males, in the last 8 -10 years was part of the null data. This is particularly surprising in light of all the participants having resided in the Yukon for 12 years or more (24.4 years on average⁹³). Is it possible that if it were widely known that Yukon men are committing half of the partner assaults that they were ten years ago the needs-based funding of some, or all, of the community’s women’s organizations would be reduced? So while programs may not stop the things they are intended to stop (although there appears to be good evidence that the Whitehorse programs have made a large reduction), programs may also want their successes or improvements to remain as null information, especially to the funding or budgeting sources.

⁹³ Two of the participants were residing in Whitehorse when the Yukon Task Force on Family Violence (1985) reported there were an estimated 700 Yukon women assaulted by their partners per year – which was mentioned earlier (footnote 62, p. 75) and would mean that a number of these participants “witnessed” the annual 5% average decline over the last twenty years in the number of partner assaults by Yukon men.

The issue of the language used in the community's partner-abuse narrative did appear in the *Problem Description* data but there were also null data related to language. While examining the language used by the community's newspapers, courts, and service providers that minimizes, blames and mutualizes the abuse that women suffer was described, language that dismisses and diminishes the abuse experienced by men, and the language that pathologizes, villanizes and sensationalizes male violence was another piece of the null data.

A woman not accessing services and programs for fear of their children being apprehended was described by several participants. That men in the community faced similar fears, not just from the possibility of their children being apprehended by Family and Children's Services, but also knowing that if their female partner sought custody of the children in family court he was at a big disadvantage,⁹⁴ even when his partner had violent behaviours - was part of the null data.

Participants described opportunities for service providers to use a strength-based approach in their work with female victims but did not describe that as a possible practice approach for working with male perpetrators, male victims, or female perpetrators.

The abuse of elderly women, and specifically elderly First-Nation women, within the community was described by a number of the research participants: however, abuse of elderly men either does not occur in Whitehorse or was part of the null data.

One participant talked of the opportunity for service agencies to collaborate to

⁹⁴ For example; Basile (2005) analyzed the requests for Abuse Prevention Order's to the Massachusetts' Garner District Court (in 1997) involving opposite gender litigants to determine if the court's response to the associated allegations was affected by the litigant's gender. "The most significant difference was found with awards of custody. Female plaintiffs were 288% more likely to receive custody of children. Male plaintiffs only received a custody award 8% of the time compared to 31% of the time for female plaintiffs. However, male plaintiffs simply did not secure long-term custody of their children with Abuse Prevention Orders. In our population a couple of male plaintiffs were temporarily awarded custody of minor children at Ex Parte Hearings, but none were awarded custody at a Ten-day Hearing, where the order usually stays in effect for a year" (p. 176).

develop a vision for the shared care of women's healing. A similar vision for the community's men's healing was a null opportunity. There was also a null vision for the community's children and families, although a "new system" with family and child-centered values was described in the opportunity data. An opportunity for workshops and education to assist partners to work on their relationships was mentioned. While a number of participants took the interview discourse into concerns for the communities' children an opportunity for parents and children to work on their relationships was also part of the null data.

Misandric Themes

The six characteristics of misandric popular culture as described by Nathanson and Young (2001), were listed earlier (pp. 48-49). While feminists (e.g. bell hooks, 1996) have examined, written and spoken about the misogynistic themes in popular culture, the misandric themes of popular culture are another piece of the feminist, null curricula. With the success that feminists have had in having their views of partner abuse presented and portrayed in popular culture, that view of partner abuse has become widely accepted (e.g. see *Edmonton Journal*, p. 9) by Yukon and Canadian citizens. The influence of the feminist stereotypes of partner abuse appears to have contributed to a number of the misandric themes found in the interview data. Some examples from the data of the misandric themes described by Nathanson and Young (2001) are described below.

- One participant commented (p. 95) that the community perceives male perpetrators as the enemy. That could be an example of the misandric theme: "every major male character is psychotic, evil, less than adequate, or all of these things" (Nathanson & Young, 2001, p. 8).
- Several participants described that the community's service providers tend not to believe a male victims version of events. That may also be related to the "evil" theme but may

be an example of, “until their true nature is revealed, male characters often appear to be charming, benevolent, and trustworthy” (Nathanson & Young, 2001, p. 8).

- The description of the Women’s Transition home stigma, “that you have to leave your partner” (p. 119), would also seem to be an example of these two themes. That message could also be supported by another misandric theme, “until they develop the inner resource to fight back, either individually or as a group, female characters are the victims of male ones” (Nathanson & Young, 2001, p. 8).
- Another misandric theme that would support the “have-to-leave” message is “female characters are either already feminists or ready for conversion by remembering traumatic events in their own lives” (Nathanson & Young, 2001, p. 8).
- An example of the misandric theme, “every major female character is heroic” (p. 8) would be the statement by the research participant (p. 118) that, it’s easy for Whitehorse women to ‘hide’ in the feminist perspective and not take responsibility, including female abusers because there are no consequences for Whitehorse women who abuse their partners.
- An example of Nathanson and Young’s (2001) misandric theme, evil or psychotic male characters are often eliminated through death or “surgery,” and inadequate ones converted through contact with female friends into honorary women” (p. 8), did not appear to be directly described in the interview data. However, that theme would support the behaviours of Yukon women who perpetrate partner homicide. The surgery part of this theme is also the most difficult to transition from movies to real life. A description of any “inadequate” Yukon men becoming “honorary women” was part of the null data. The uncollaborativeness, independence, and isolation between Yukon men and women was described by several participants, including the historical description given by FG1 participants (see p. 103), that from the beginning of the women’s movement in the Yukon women deliberately excluded men.

Summary

The interview and focus group data were collected using a SWOT analysis and the data in each category, as well as a description and “other” category, were analyzed and described in four themes. Participants described partner abuse as a “big problem” in

Whitehorse, and expressed particular concern with the increase in violence by female youth. Several participants said that women are well served by the existing services and programs in the community but all participants acknowledged that men are not afforded the same services or programs, a circumstance that many participants attribute to the feminist approaches that predominate the philosophical and practice approaches of service providers, agency programs, and many of the community's citizens. Participants also described a lack of trust in the professional responses offered by social workers, and other service providers in the community including the RCMP, the DVTO and others who have a vested interest in maintaining the partner-abuse industry. Participants identified that education for professionals and citizens was the largest opportunity to improve the skills of service providers and provide citizens with relationship skills that could reduce and prevent aggression or violence between partners. Engaging in discourses about personal and community shadows and the use of resistance stories were described as opportunities not yet being used to their full potential in the community. One participant provided a detailed description of an existing community-based group for women that offered the members support with the impact of abusive relationships on their lives. That description contained a number of considerations that can inform the development and structure of other community-based responses.

The data were also analyzed to identify the null findings which included that the research participants were unaware of the success that the existing feminist programs and services have had in dramatically reducing partner assaults by men in the last ten to twenty years. The data were also examined for the presence of any or all of the six misandric

themes, as identified by Nathanson and Young (2001) in the explicit data – and examples of all six themes were found.

A discussion of these findings and the implications for Whitehorse citizens who wish to collaborate to develop effective community-based responses to partner abuse is provided next.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The first point that requires elaboration is the meaning of an issue turning up in the null data and/or null discourse as it relates to the null curricula or null narratives in a community. There is, of course, an inter-play between the individual citizen's partner-abuse narrative and the community's partner-abuse narratives. That interaction makes it difficult to determine whether an issue in the null research data is part of that data because it is a piece of the community's null narrative, or a piece of the null narrative of all the participants in the research sample, or both. The relationship of the participant and community narratives within those four possibilities could be described as follows. (a) The issue is not really part of the community's or participants' null narratives, and some or all of the participants are aware of it, but during the course of the interview sessions the issue did not come up for any number of reasons, no one remembered, those who knew forgot, or didn't think of it, etc. (b) The issue is not really part of the community's or participants' null narrative and some or all of the participants are aware of it, but during the course of the interview sessions no one said it for fear of being judged politically incorrect. (c) The issue is not really part of the community's null-partner-abuse narrative. If other Whitehorse residents had participated in this research, the issue would have been described. However, it is part of the null narrative of all of the participants in this sample. (d) The issue is part of the community's and the participants' null narratives.

The most obvious example of the first scenario is the Ralph Klassen case and its contribution to the community's narrative: "men in the Yukon can get away with killing their wives." Certainly it could be argued that this is an example of the natural progression of a narrative, which is that an event occurs that adds a piece to an individual's or community's,

narrative, and within a number of years the piece has become so well integrated into the narrative, that the specific events or circumstances behind that part of the narrative have faded into the background. While this may or may not be an accurate analysis of the Klassen case's appearance in the null data, it does highlight an important context to consider in discussing the null data findings, that is, which of the three explanations resulted in an issue being a piece of the null data?

The uncertainty of these explanations points to the bigger questions of the validity and reliability of this research and its findings, particularly the null findings. When describing the methodology (p. 17), it was mentioned that the inability to proceduralize the popular-education, community-based, and participant-centered components of the project limited opportunities to test the validity of the bricoleurs' research. While that is a valid point, some comments about the validity and reliability of this project's findings can be made.

Validity

Because the aim of this project was to draw insights into the problem of partner abuse in Whitehorse with no intention that the findings from the research would be generalizeable to any other communities or populations, validity is not of critical importance. However, some comments about the validity of several of the components used in the methodology seem relevant. Within this project's research data and findings are both explicit and null descriptions with varying degrees of validity. The null evidence that supports the null data is more valid than the explicit data because in order for an item to be described in the null data it had not to be described or mentioned by all eleven participants. On the other hand, if one or more participants mentioned an issue it was included in the explicit data. It was also described earlier (p. 24) that person triangulation establishes validity when two of the three

levels of persons, individuals, groups or collectives are used to validate information from one with information from one of the others (Kimchi, et al, 1991). Throughout the data analyses described in Chapter 4, the individual and focus group data were as similar to and no more divergent than the similarities and differences between the three individual interviewees' data and the two focus group's data.

The methodology of this project strove to also bring the validity of a gender-balanced view of partner abuse in the community by utilizing a gender-balanced, partnered, research team to complete the interviews and focus groups. The research context of this project has a different validity than the typical, feminist, community-based projects completed by female researchers.⁹⁵ The four male participants that took part in this research are an indication of the gender-balanced validity, that other community-based researchers using a similar methodology have struggled to attain; specifically, "difficulty in recruiting male participants for these sessions [popular-education focus groups] led us to interview three groups of young men on the street" (Fawcett et al., 1999, p. 43).

The average length of time that participants had lived in the community (24.4 yrs.) was also a measure of the validity of the research. The opposing and conflicting participant descriptions of various issues that captured both ends, and various points in between of the continuum of citizen's and community views also brings a validity to the research data and findings.

⁹⁵ Some examples include Michau (2005); Fullwood (2002); and Fawcett et al., (1999). If the feminist argument that men are ill equipped to study and speak about women and their lives is accepted as valid, by extension of that logic isn't a single man or woman ill equipped to study and speak about aspects of men and women's partnerships with each other?

Reliability

Again, some qualitative researchers dismiss reliability as a meaningful concept. Short of that extreme are a number of ways to address the question of reliability in this and other qualitative research projects. The use of conventionalized methods for recording notes, data verification with participants, and inter-rater checks of coding are three means of addressing the reliability of qualitative research (Schwandt, 2001). Within this research the SWOT analysis provided the conventionalized method for recording the field notes. As was described in the *Methodology* (p. 26), verification of the data was done with the participants as notes were written to determine if the recorded notes accurately captured their comments. The interviewers collaborated in transcribing the field notes to computer files and in all cases except one (described on p. 124) shared a similar interpretation and meaning of the data, including the null data. The use of two researchers, one of each gender, contributed to an additional level of reliability of these research findings in excess of the reliability of qualitative projects completed by an individual researcher of either gender, or two researchers of the same gender. The researchers being partners also brought another level of reliability to the research data and findings.

Partners Researching Partner Abuse

Both researchers felt that one of the outcomes of investigating partner abuse as a gender-balanced, partnered, research team was that participants presented a more balanced description of partner abuse than either researcher has typically experienced when discussing partner abuse with others on his or her own. That said, it was also evident to both researchers that after acknowledging that there were men in the community that were abused by their female partners, all of the interview and focus-group discourses were predominated by

discussions of partner abuse using the dualistic feminist stereo-type, male abuser; female victim.

As mentioned above while reviewing interview or focus group notes, the researchers only encountered one participant comment to which they gave a different meaning. With no previously known qualitative investigations of partner abuse by a husband and wife research team, it is unclear if such agreement on partner-abuse-research-participants' discourses is significant, or non-significant. Given the significance that gender and gender-based interpretations have in male-female relationships in general, and in those relationships when conflict, divorce, child-custody, aggression, and violence arise, greater differences of interpretation and meaning could have been expected. This agreement between the researchers did not come as a result of similar specialized training (both have B.S.W. degrees, obtained 15 years apart) in partner-abuse treatment, etc. It was also not the result of the researchers being married to each other for a long period of time (at the time of research they had known each other for five years and been married one year) during which their views of partner abuse could converge. Given that the lead researcher's understandings of partner abuse is primarily based on theory, research, and the literature while his wife's understanding includes 15 years of family counselling as well as four years of practice facilitating assaultive men's groups, that there were not more differences noted was unexpected. There are at least three possible explanations for this outcome. (a) The lead researcher's theoretical understanding of the problem somehow includes an appreciation of the practical realities of treatment provision. (b) His wife's practice experience has afforded her an appreciation of the theories and the limitations of the feminist explanations of partner abuse. (c) Some combination of (a) and (b).

Participant's Knowledge of Feminist Null Curricula

The research participants described many of the issues that are typically part of the feminist null curricula, including a number of elements and explanations of partner abuse that are outside of the stereotypes portrayed in popular culture. Some of the typical items of the feminist null curricula described by these participants included; male victims and female perpetrators of partner abuse, no services for male victims and female perpetrators of partner abuse, violence in lesbian relationships, questioning the acceptance of women's stories as the truth, focusing on violence against women leaving children, elders, gays, lesbians and men without services, it is easy for women to hide in the feminist perspective and not take responsibility, and there are no consequences for Whitehorse women who abuse their partners. As one focus group described though, those non-traditional insights, outside the binary, dualistic feminist stereotypes, are mostly limited to service providers and professionals who encounter partner abuse in some form through their work. It was also expressed by one service agency leader that the feminist stereotypes are so deeply entrenched in the organizational cultures of service agencies that it is difficult to lead service providers out of that mindset. A few suggestions of how the community can respond to that and the other challenges in designing a community-based intervention to address partner abuse are described next.

Research Limitations

Limitations of the participant recruitment process were described earlier (p. 20). As has been described, the research sample was outside the community average in age, education, First Nation representation, service provider representation (including three executive director/manger participants) and the number of years residing in the community.

Any and all of these factors limit the representativeness of this sample. That said, a number of those factors also contributed to the participants being very well informed about partner abuse and its impact on their community. The methodology used to identify and describe the null data (see p. 40) was obviously influenced by the researchers' experiences and understandings of the circumstances and events in the community. While that data were also verified by his co-researcher confirmation from research participants and/or another community researcher could provide for better (more accurate) results. In the popular-education literature, the facilitation of focus groups have included a typical scenario of the problem in the community in order to assist participants to describe what the individuals are likely to face and how the community and its service providers are likely to respond. In hindsight, such an approach may have been useful here, particularly in identifying opportunities for community-based interventions or responses.

As stated a number of times throughout this report the data gathering and analysis components of the methodology were provided true gender equality through the use of a gender-balanced research team. That said, both the researcher and his wife would readily acknowledge their personal biases, which is that they believe that much of the feminist theoretical and practice approaches to partner abuse are flawed, and or inadequate for many of the reasons and limitations described throughout this paper, including the flaws and limitations described by the research participants. Both researchers believe that the most serious limitation of feminist theories, models and practice approaches to partner abuse are the potential they have for conflict with the social work code of ethics. In particular the code of ethics value, "social workers uphold the right of *every person* [italics added] to be free

from violence and the threat of violence” (CASW, 2005a, p. 5; see further discussion pp. 159-163).

Recommendations

Blishen et al., (1979) viewed the strengths, vitality, security and independence of social relationships in Northern/First Nation communities as most at risk when individuals were freed of social reciprocity through the provision of professionalized support services. The Whitehorse community is a mixture of individuals, some of whom were raised in a culture that included the value of social reciprocity and other residents who have moved to the North from southern communities where support services are professionalized. The research data collected examples of both types⁹⁶ of support services and included the strengths and weaknesses of both.

As a popular education, community-based project, this research has stopped short of implementing a response, next steps, or action plan that would follow if this were more than an academic exercise. While the researcher respects that what happens next⁹⁷, if anything, must come from the hearts and minds of Whitehorse citizens, not to suggest some points for consideration, some pitfalls to watch for, and the types of models that might be useful, is to be hypocritical and selfish now that the researcher has what he needs from the community. Therefore, in order to attempt to give something back the researcher humbly and modestly

⁹⁶ In the description of the community-based group (p. 133) social reciprocity was described as a principle the group valued.

⁹⁷ In the fall of 2005 a number of the Whitehorse women’s organizations collaborated (apparently without the input or participation of Whitehorse citizens) to launch Stop The Violence – www.stoppingviolenceinyukon.ca – “This site was developed by the *CORE (Circles of Respect and Equality) Group*, an inter-agency committee dedicated to stopping violence against women and children in the Yukon.” There is no indication (null content) if these organizations have any concern about the women in the community whose sons, husbands, boyfriends, fathers, brothers, grandfathers, uncles, nephews, cousins are victimized by violence.

offers the following discussion for the community's citizens' considerations of what they might do next.

Much of the community-based literature reviewed earlier (see p. 32 and p. 61) have a feminist violence-against-women perspective that does not clearly identify an opposition to all violence, including: violence against children, elders, lesbians, gays, and men⁹⁸. Why violence against "non-women" is part of the null focus in that literature is not clearly explained in those publications. Whitehorse citizens will need to adapt (expand) the frameworks or models as presented in that literature if the goal is to address all the forms of violence that were described by the research participants in order to have a truly violence-free community.

When we give a message to ...men in any shape or form that their experience of violence and victimization is less important than that of ... women, we are teaching them a lesson about their value as persons. We also teach them that the use of violence towards males is legitimate. When we dismiss their pain, we do little to encourage boys and young men to listen to, and take seriously, women's concerns about violence and victimization. When we diminish their experience or fail to hold their male and female abusers fully accountable, we support their continued victimization. (Mathews, 1996, p. 34).

Of significance, the key to the success of community-based responses is a collaborative partnership between the community's citizens and the community's service providers, professionals and first responders, which is a key finding in the null *opportunities* data of this research.

⁹⁸ "At some point, one has to ask whether feminists are more interested in diminishing violence within a population or promoting a political ideology. If they are interested in diminishing violence, it should be diminished for all members of a population and by the most effective and utilitarian means possible" (Dutton & Nichols, 2005, p. 708).

Considering Community Contexts

[Community-Based programs] look at the problem of family violence in the context of the conditions present in the community. This means finding and building on community assets, using culturally appropriate messages and services, and cultivating and supporting local leaders who can advocate for and sustain change (Fullwood, 2004, p. 4).

The greatest strength of successful community-based approaches to address social problems is an emphasis on an equal partnership between citizens and service providers in forming community action teams.⁹⁹ One of the often over-looked opportunities in community-based responses is an invitation to men and the resources they have to offer to possible solutions. In order for men in the community to feel that their invitation is not a token offer, or for political appearances, it needs to be acknowledged that responses will include interventions to address women's violence and/or men's victimization. That is much different than inviting men to assist with a community-based response to violence against women because, "they may be the most effective carriers of anti-violence messages to other men and boys" (Fullwood, 2004, p. 15). Two of the more challenging community contexts, which were identified as *weaknesses* in the research discourses that will need to be examined for possible community-based alternatives are the criminal justice¹⁰⁰ and child welfare systems.

Challenging Community Norms That Inhibit Victims' Disclosure(s)

Research participants described a number of community norms and values that validate or normalize violence in relationships. Similarly a number of obstacles that impair victims from disclosing and/or reporting their violent or abusive partners were described.

⁹⁹ Also called, 'community resource teams,' or 'neighbourhood action teams' (Fullwood, 2004).

¹⁰⁰ "The case for using a restorative justice approach to partner violence has been well documented (Mills, 2003; Strang & Braithwaite, 2002). It is rare in the United States but is increasingly used in some countries in Europe and in Australia" (Straus, 2006b, p. 1092).

One of the most effective community-based supports to address those types of community contexts is to enhance the knowledge of all citizens about available services and how to offer support to partner abuse victims (Fawcett et al., 1999). Providing that type of education throughout the community has been shown to be an effective intervention as women who have not yet disclosed their abuse tend to make their first disclosure to family and friends. Educational activities that focus on outlining a series of steps that allow the family or friend to give step-by-step guidance to abused women can be effective. Fawcett et al., reported that their community-based campaign displayed posters throughout the community that provided information on how to support an abused woman through the “stages of change.” The posters encouraged citizens to offer a more constructive, less victim-blaming response. The campaign slogan aimed at attacking a community norm, whoever tries to make peace gets more than they bargained for, by transforming it to, whoever tries to make peace gains more. To be truly effective and successful, any such intervention also needs to address the feminist norms that men are not victimized, women are not violent, violence does not happen in lesbian relationships, as well as the norms that dismiss other marginalized victims in the community; specifically, the elderly, ethnic minorities, and gay men.

Process of Community Mobilization

The long-term success of community-based interventions to address domestic violence lie in viewing the community responses as a process, not an event. Whitehorse and many other communities have community norms that offer culturally reinforced tolerance (“that’s just the way it is”) of domestic violence. One of the most comprehensive descriptions of the steps in the community mobilization process was presented by Michau (2005). Michau created a table (see Table 8) which breaks down the process of community

mobilization into distinct phases that can help communities to create longer-term programs and stay focused, thereby deliberately structuring their interventions within the community. Michau's community mobilization table is presented to serve three purposes. First, to present a comprehensive model of such an approach; second, to provide a possible blue print that, with modification and adjustments to accommodate the Whitehorse context, could form a basis for intervention planning; and third, as a means of summarizing the areas that the work done in this project have addressed (fully or partially). The items in the table that are in bold and italicized text are the items that it is believed this research project addressed in some of the steps of the community-mobilization process.

Michau's (2005) community-mobilization model is not without concerns and upon examination of the table a number of questions arise. How is it that the last "key discussion point" in the "raising awareness" phase, "everyone has a right to live free of violence," can be achieved with "raising awareness" that limits its "focus" to "questioning legitimacy of practices and attitudes that violate women's right to safety?" Is Michau implying that women are everyone in the community, or that only women have a right to safety, or that only women's right to safety are violated in the community? Similarly, it is unclear how consolidating efforts with an objective to "assist community members to sustain mechanisms that advocate for women's priorities and non-violence" supports everyone's right to live free of violence. Wouldn't you need to advocate for the priorities of all of the community's victims of violence regardless of gender to achieve that? That said, those considerations can be easily accommodated into the table so that it can be a useful tool to assist with planning a community-based response.

Evaluation

A number of research participants offered criticism of professionals, existing programs and services for not completing evaluations of their professions, their organizations and their programs or services. Participants also described that completing such evaluations was an opportunity to improve the community's response to partner abuse. Such evaluation is no less important for community-based interventions. Community projects that have incorporated evaluation of their initiatives have the opportunity to determine what is working best, what else may need to be done, and how the members of the community are interpreting the initiatives.

The findings of this project also suggest a number of questions and considerations for social-work practice with victims and perpetrators of partner abuse in Whitehorse.

Implications for Social-Work Practice in Whitehorse

To be an effective social worker you must comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable. (Dunne, 1905?, source unknown¹⁰¹)

As was pointed out in the *Introduction*, the social-work profession and many social workers have become comfortable with the status-quo explanations and understandings of partner abuse that feminist theories and research have offered¹⁰². It has been the intent of this project to afflict that sense of comfort and in so doing has afflicted the researchers' own comfort, to have not accepted such discomfort would have been hypocritical. Of course many of those so afflicted will reduce their discomfort by dismissing this project, its findings, and this discussion, as backlash, politically incorrect, poor research, biased research,

¹⁰¹ The original quote was, "The job of the newspaper is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." The researcher first heard the social-work version from his father – a second-generation male social worker.

¹⁰² Recently Straus (2006b) made these comments, "There are 14 articles in these three issues of the [Violence Against Women] journal. Twelve of the 14 (86%) report no empirical data. Theoretical analyses are critically important in any field of science; however, this level of disproportion between theory and data suggests that an extremely important recommendation is 'less talk and more data'" (p. 1087).

unbalanced research – which is not to suggest that this project is above criticism and critique. However, feminists (and others) inclined to respond in such a manner may want to consider this: “If a vibrant feminism is to continue it must acknowledge ... the dogmatic, illogical, and repressive strands of feminism that have emerged during the past two decades ... the destructive mutations that continue to threaten from within” (Boyd, 2004, p. vi).

The social-work profession and most of its practitioners recognize ethical practice as the cornerstone of the profession. Because of the significant role that ethics plays in the policies and practices of the profession, many social workers would readily acknowledge that adhering to theoretical and practice approaches that do not provide for ethical practice is unethical. Two years ago the Canadian Association of Social Workers (2005a; 2005b) published the *Code of Ethics* and *Guidelines for Ethical Practice*. Within both these publications are a number of values, principles, and ethical responsibilities that merit special consideration by the profession and the individual social worker in choosing the models, frameworks and practices to assist clients who are victims and perpetrators of partner abuse. One of the principles described as underlying “Value 1: Respect for the Inherent Dignity and Worth of Persons” (CASW, 2005a, p. 4), is, “social workers uphold the right of *every person* [italics added] to be free from violence and the threat of violence” (p. 5). When social workers are not prepared to uphold that right for men with the same fervent passion and practice that they do for women they have engaged in unethical (null ethical) practice. When social workers are not prepared to identify and condemn the aggressive and violent behaviours of their women clients, and by women in general, they have again engaged in unethical practice. Social workers that have adopted feminist practices may be unable to

uphold that principle for their male clients, or their female clients' partners and, therefore, are engaging in unethical social-work practice.

In the *Guidelines for Ethical Practice*, eight ethical responsibilities are outlined, and in describing the profession's "Ethical Responsibilities to Society" it is noted that "dual ethical responsibilities are the hallmark of the social work profession and require well-developed and complex professional skills" (CASW, 2005b, p. 24). More specific direction adds,

social workers strive to identify, document and advocate for the prevention and elimination of domination or exploitation of, and discrimination against, any person, group, or class on the basis of age, abilities, ethnic background, gender, language, marital status, national ancestry, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic status (CASW, 2005b, p. 24).

The discrimination faced by males when they encounter various practitioners within the *partner-abuse industry*, including the *Whitehorse industrialists*, was highlighted in the literature review (pp. 54-56) and described by a number of the Whitehorse participants.

"Social work's commitment to gender equity ... requires social-work research, practice, and education to focus upon males; no more, but certainly no less than females" (Kosberg, 2002, p. 8).

Male victims have their own voice, their own meanings for their experiences. If we remain ignorant of, overlook or fail to explore their stories, we will miss much of what we need to engage them in therapy and healing. We will construct for them the origins and courses of their difficulties. We will shape and mold them to the limitations of our own personal and professional world views. We will, through the use of our professional practices, reproduce the same dysfunctional and disempowering patterns of communication and relationship many of these males found in their families of origin or the environments in which they grew up. (Mathews, 1996, p. 35)

Social workers who ignore, dismiss or disbelieve male victims and the documented evidence of female violence have engaged in unethical social-work practice. Social workers who do

not challenge their female client's version of events with the same disbelief they have for her male partner's description are not practicing ethically. Social workers who ignore violence in lesbian relationships are not practicing ethically.

It can be acknowledged that some social workers may not have yet developed the "complex professional skills" to be able to responsibly practice in this area. In such cases it would seem the ethical social worker would not provide services in those areas of practice until she or he has developed the necessary skills. However, ethical social-work practice would still require even the social worker without well-developed professional skills to "strive to identify, document, and advocate for the elimination of ... discrimination against ... [men] on the basis of ... gender" (CASW, 2005, p. 24). Are social workers that frame their praxis with feminist values able to fulfill this ethical responsibility to society? "For social work, educating students to the needs of heterosexual males, in general, and those from multicultural backgrounds, in particular, seems congruent with the profession's Code of Ethics ..." (Kosberg, 2002, p. 8).

If social work is going to be a profession that wants to distinguish itself by adhering to the highest of ethical principles and practice, then social workers have a choice to make. Are they going to uphold the professions highest standards of ethical principles at all times, for all people, even if doing so afflicts their own personal comfort? Or, are they going to uphold the professions ethical principles some of the time, for certain people, as long as doing so does not afflict their personal comfort? Social workers who choose the later have made an unethical choice. *Ethical practice requires a full-time commitment, and the ability to maintain that commitment in the face of one's own personal discomfort that may result from that commitment.* Waldegrave (2005) similarly described this dilemma:

the profession may also choose to address some uncomfortable and more personal questions. These include:

- Has the profession of therapy been captured by a group who believe in low taxes and minimal social policies?
- Are therapists paid off to be silent, given the profound knowledge many of them have about the lives of poor people?
- Do therapists make money off people's misery and thus have no interest in reducing their problems at root?

These are tough, reflective questions, but they are the sort a professional who is entrusted with the vulnerability of people during some of their most fragile periods should be asking. It is perhaps excusable to admit one's naiveté and unintentional behavior when first addressing these questions, but once admitted, it is surely unethical not to change. (pp. 272-273)

These examples of ethical practice may afflict the comfort that the social-work profession and many social workers have with feminist theories and explanations of partner abuse.¹⁰³

Good! That discomfort is a necessary component of ethical and effective social-work practice.

Specific policy and practice considerations for Whitehorse social workers.

If we do not open ourselves to self-criticism, conscientiously and continually reflect on our assumptions, methods and standards of practice, or allow ourselves to become trapped in rhetoric, then it is we who will become the ones who will pose the greatest threat to the credibility of the field (Mathews, 1996, p. 35).

It may well be that some Whitehorse social workers have already embraced the type of struggle the questions that follow provide; however, without any evidence to indicate that, it would be an assumption. In addition to the ethical complexities the profession and individual social workers face in choosing their responses to partner abuse, the following questions and considerations also emerged from the research findings.

¹⁰³ The Code of Ethics does not specifically direct (null direction) social workers to adhere to feminist practices, it does however specifically direct social workers to adhere to ethical practices. Therefore ethical practice must take priority over feminist practice. In situations where there is a conflict between feminist practice and ethical practice, ethical practice must prevail despite any personal discomfort for the social worker involved, otherwise unethical practice will occur.

- How can the profession, and Whitehorse social workers, effectively challenge the feminist stereotypes and other items of the feminist-null-partner-abuse agenda that the participants in this research already recognize are ineffective, inaccurate ...and so widely accepted in many service agencies that, as one manager/executive director said, “it’s difficult for leaders to lead out of this.” The profession’s individual and collective credibility with many members of the community and other professionals is at stake.
- Such a challenge will require breaking the feminist code (a particularly uncomfortable position for female social workers) not to question the *sisterhood’s* beliefs and values, to point out (as the participants here did) how easy it is for women to hide in feminist perspectives, to discuss mutual violence and women’s aggression in spite of the disapproving responses of others, and to help facilitate discussions of personal and community shadows, ideally with a resistance-narrative approach.
- Strengths-based practice requires social workers to acknowledge clients as the experts in their lives. When social workers stop identifying clients as victims and acknowledge them as capable of making decisions about their lives, including whether they need to leave their partners, whether they want to press charges, whether they want a restraining order, whether their children are safe, and to ask clients “what can I do for you” as opposed to thinking we already know what to do.
- Yukon social workers can also take pride in their, and/or their colleagues’, contribution to reducing the number of partner assaults in Whitehorse by 51% in the last eight years. It also needs to be asked, however, if the profession or some individual social workers have had any role in keeping that information from decision makers and Yukon citizens?

- The community programs and services that have facilitated that decline have done little to address the violence Yukon women inflict on their partners (and others). Is the profession going to be complicit in keeping women's (and girl's) aggression as part of the null partner-abuse agenda?
- Yukon social workers can also take some of the credit for the participants' acknowledgements of the valuable, helpful services that exist in the community, and that many women are well served by that system.
- How can the profession better serve the marginalized victims of violence in the community, the elderly, First Nations, ethnic minorities, lesbians, gays, and youth?
- The profession needs to invite an open dialogue with other professionals and the Whitehorse community, in whatever form the community's citizens are most comfortable) about perceptions of the profession. At the very least this dialogue should include these items identified by the research participants: biased feminist policies and practices, the denial of problems within the profession, lack of trust, especially with regard to children being apprehended as a barrier to accessing services, the hiring of social workers from outside, it's participation in the "partner abuse industry," and independent evaluations of programs, services and social worker practice and/or case management.
- Have Whitehorse social workers really accepted Durst's (1991) challenge to enhance the community's strengths and independence by facilitating the development of communitarian responses rather than perpetuating a reliance on professional support services.
- What can the profession do to address the silencing of men's voices in the community? Having been involved in two research projects concerning fathers, Smith (2006) commented, "the voices of these men challenged the received professional views of them as a group ...it

became clear to me that social work needed to engage with the lives and voices of men in ways that it rarely did” (p. 23) As one of only a small number of male MSW’s in Whitehorse, the researcher accepts personal responsibility for the comment of one of the participant’s that there are not any effective facilitators for men’s groups.

- Can Whitehorse social workers avoid “territorialness” and token collaboration with other professionals and the community’s citizens, and meaningfully cooperate with each other in order to provide a community-based response to partner abuse? While some social workers may argue that they are already doing this, during the last ten years there have been more professional services added or expanded in Whitehorse than have been discontinued or downsized (researcher’s personal knowledge). During the same time there has not been a proliferation of community-based responses (researcher’s personal knowledge).

Conclusions

We have to build communities from the inside out in order to make change. And if we are going to ensure child well-being and reduce violence, we are going to need thousands of people working on it — not just service providers, but community residents as well Marcie Biddleman, FVPF, as cited by Fullwood, 2002, p. 1).

This study’s findings indicated that the Whitehorse community has the two necessary resources needed to mount an effective community-based response to partner abuse. The first is a group of community residents whose commitment to addressing partner abuse has led them to develop support groups. The second is a dedicated group of service providers, professionals, and first responders who are open to exploring new approaches (e.g. resistance narratives) and are committed to work together to promote women’s healing. That said, the data also uncovered at least two obstacles to the community’s development of community-based responses to partner abuse. First, there is either an unwillingness to be inclusive of all

forms of violence in the community, or a commitment to an exclusive focus on violence against women in the community, or both. Second, mistrust exists in the relationship between the community's citizens and the community's professionals and service providers (social workers, counsellors, first responders, DVTO court, RCMP, etc.) which appears to have contributed to the prevention of their collaboration to this point in time. This circumstance presents challenges for both the Whitehorse citizens and the community's professionals and service providers.

There are two significant challenges facing Whitehorse citizens in developing a collaborative relationship with the community's professionals, service providers and first responders to address partner abuse. The first, is to shift their focus from looking at their dislikes and the weaknesses of the system and the various groups of professionals they may have had bad experiences with in the past, to seeing the resources (funding, physical structures, practice knowledge, training opportunities, etc.) the system has to offer to a community response to partner abuse. Second, the data identified that the scope of violence (beyond the male-abuser; female-victim stereotypes) in the community was mostly limited to those working as service providers. That means that many Whitehorse citizens may be challenged to broaden the scope of their view of violence in the community. However, most citizens may have an easier time in shifting their view than will some of the service providers in the community that have been delivering services and programs with a feminist approach or perspective for approximately 25 years.

The challenges facing Whitehorse professionals, service providers, and first responders in embracing a collaborative community response to partner abuse appear even greater. Many of those challenges were described in the "threats" data and included

membership in the exclusive clubs and the embarrassment¹⁰⁴ of needing lay assistance to solve the problem that professionals were hired to solve. In particular the community's social workers and other professional practitioners that have been involved in the delivery of services and programs developed from feminist theories and supported by the feminist partner abuse herstory, will struggle to be more inclusive of clients and violent circumstances that do not fit those stereotypes. There will undoubtedly also be a number of ethical struggles for service providers to work in partnership with citizens, some of whom will be past or present clients, to deliver community-based, partner-abuse interventions. For both parties some may find these challenges no less difficult to transcend than this description:

I found that I faced a highly complex situation, and that I couldn't hope to change it until I had armed myself with the necessary psychological and intellectual capacity. My contemplation of life and human nature . . . had taught me that he who cannot change the very fabric of his thought will never be able to change reality, and will never, therefore, make any progress (Anwar Sadat, date and source unknown).

Partner abuse is certainly a complex situation – “as investigations into partner abuse increase, the complexity of this phenomenon continues to unfold” (Sommer, 1994, p. 197). The desired changes or progress with the Whitehorse community's partner abuse reality will indeed depend on the citizens,' service providers,' professionals' and organizations' capacity to change a number of their deepest values and beliefs that are woven into the fabric of their thoughts about this issue. This is something the research data suggest they have the necessary psychological and intellectual capacity to do. Those collective community assets and capacities hold the promise of a future that can include a community free of partner abuse for *all* Whitehorse citizens.

¹⁰⁴ Example, see McElroy (2002) quote p. 32.

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APPENDIX A INFORMED CONSENT FORM

1. I understand that I have been asked to express my views and beliefs about; the issue of partner abuse in Whitehorse, as well as; the resources, assets and capacities within the community that could contribute to the possible reduction or prevention of partner abuse.
2. I understand that Rick and Joanne Clements, husband and wife, will complete individual and/or groups interviews with various community citizens.
3. This consent is given on the understanding that Rick and Joanne Clements and the University of Northern British Columbia (U.N.B.C.) and Yukon College will not attach my name to any data and my name will not appear in any document or publication related to this research.
4. I understand and agree that the information I have given to Rick and Joanne Clements in our interview of _____ may be:
 - (a) written in note form and reproduced;
 - (b) used by Rick Clements in the production of a research paper;
 - (c) stored as part of the archives of U.N.B.C., Yukon College for one year from the completion of Rick Clements' thesis.
 - (d) used in a published work in print or by other technologies by Rick Clements or U.N.B.C. or Yukon College.
5. I hereby waive any claim against Rick and Joanne Clements, U.N.B.C., Yukon College, their employees, directors, board members, officers, agents and publishers with respect to the use of said information, provided it is used in accordance with this agreement. I do this freely and with the full knowledge of the legal consequences of this consent.
6. I understand that I may withdraw at any time, or refuse to answer particular interview or research questions. Doing so will not result in any 'penalty.'

This study was explained to me by: Rick Clements.

I agree to take part in this study:

Printed Name of Participant

Date: _____

Participants Signature

I would like to receive a copy of the research results. Please mail me a copy at this address: _____

Printed Name of Witness

Date: _____

Signature of Witness

I believe that the person signing this form understands what is involved in the study and voluntarily agrees to participate.

Signature of Researcher

Date: _____

If I have questions or require further information about this research project, I can contact Rick Clements by e-mail - rick.clements@northwestel.net, or his Thesis Supervisor, Dr. Kwong Leung Tang by e-mail - tangunbc@hotmail.com.

If I have concerns or complaints about this research project, I can contact the UNBC Vice President of Research at (250) 960 – 5820.

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Researchers' Names: Rick and Joanne Clements

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Kwong Leung Tang

Title of Thesis: A Search For Community-Based Responses to Partner Abuse in Whitehorse Yukon

I understand that the purpose of the research is to examine how partner abuse is defined by citizens in Whitehorse, Yukon and what assets, capacities and resources are available within the community to reduce/prevent the occurrence of partner abuse. The findings of this research will present information that may, or may not, be useful to addressing partner abuse in Whitehorse, Yukon.

I understand that this research is being undertaken by Rick Clements to fulfill the thesis requirements for a Masters of Social Work degree from the University of Northern British Columbia. Joanne Clements' role in this research is as a collaborator and co-facilitator to Rick with the data gathering – interviews and focus groups – phase of this research. Joanne's personal observations or insights about her role in the data gathering phase of this research will also be part of the research data. The research proposal, the data analysis, research findings and the thesis document will be completed by Rick Clements.

I understand that as a participant in this research there may be benefits and risks to me as outlined below:

Benefits: Participants may experience a sense of self satisfaction from sharing and contributing to understanding the problem of partner abuse and potential resources to address partner abuse in their community.

Risks: Participants may experience emotional discomfort, become upset, frustrated, re-traumatized and/or traumatized by speaking about their experience(s), or listening to others speak about their experiences of partner abuse. In the event that participants have any such immediate or delayed reaction(s) the Family Violence Prevention Unit, 667 – 3581, provides counseling, crisis intervention, support, information, advocacy, and assistance to victims, families, and others impacted by trauma that may be helpful to them.

I understand that participants were recruited by invitation, word-of-mouth, or calling the contact number in an information pamphlet.

I understand that participants will be asked to tell the researchers how they define partner abuse and/or believe partner abuse is defined in Whitehorse, and what the assets, capacities and other resources, the citizens, organizations, and businesses of Whitehorse, Yukon could use to provide new/different responses than the existing services and programs aimed at partner abuse. This may occur in an individual interview or in the context of a focus group with other research participants.

My participation in this research is completely voluntary and as such I understand I will not be paid for my participation. I also understand that I may withdraw at any time, or refuse to answer any particular interview or research questions. Doing so will not result in any 'penalty.'

I understand that there will be no recording of group or individual interviews and no identifying information about me will be recorded with interview or flip-chart notes.

I understand that if I am participating in a focus group my anonymity and/or confidentiality could be compromised by one or more participants in that group. I therefore understand that I should base my contribution and participation in this research in consideration of that possibility.

I understand that only Rick and Joanne Clements will have access to participant responses. However, exceptions to that would include the situations outlined next.

I understand that Rick and Joanne Clements would be unable to maintain confidentiality in the following situations:

- **If I disclose information that suggests that a child(ren) has been or is presently at risk of neglect and/or abuse.**
- **If I disclose information that suggests that I may attempt to harm myself or someone else.**
- **If the court serves Rick and/or Joanne Clements a court order for the information I contributed to this research.**
- **Rick and Joanne Clements are propelled by law to disclose to police any necessary information.**

I understand that the information gathered by Rick Clements will be placed on computer disk and those disks and the original notes will be stored securely at Yukon College for a period of one year from the completion of his thesis (estimated date of data destruction – July 2007).

If I wish a copy of the research results I can provide my address to Rick Clements.

I understand that all participants must receive a copy of their signed consent form.

If I have questions or require further information about this research project, I can contact Rick Clements at rick.clements@northwestel.net, or his Thesis Supervisor, Dr. Kwong Leung Tang by e-mail - tangunbc@hotmail.com.

If I have concerns or complaints about this research project, I can contact the UNBC Vice President of Research at (250) 960 – 5820.

APPENDIX C PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your age in years? _____
2. What is your gender? ☐ female ☐ male _____
3. How many years of education have you completed?
☐ <10 ☐ 10 -12 ☐ 13 – 16 ☐ 17 – 19 ☐ 20+
4. How long have you lived in Whitehorse? _____
5. Do you have children (18 yrs or less) living with you? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Are you presently in an intimate relationship? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Are you in an abusive relationship at this time? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Have you ever been in an abusive relationship at another time in your life?
☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Do you work in a profession that offers services to those formerly or currently in abusive relationships? ☐ Yes ☐ No
10. If you needed help in an abusive relationship would you ask friends or family?
☐ Yes ☐ No
11. If you needed help in an abusive relationship would you ask a private or government service agency? ☐ No ☐ Yes, If 'Yes' which one(s)?

(use the back of the page if required)
12. If you and your partner wanted counselling services and had a choice of the following competent counsellors which would be your and your partner's first choice to provide those services? ☐ female counsellor
☐ male counsellor
☐ male & female counsellor team
☐ husband & wife counsellor team
13. Do you have any safety, or other, concerns about your participation in this focus group? ☐ No
☐ Yes, It's a concern I would like to speak about with the whole group.
☐ Yes, after I hand in this questionnaire I would like to have a break in order to speak to ☐ Joanne/ ☐ Rick/
☐ Joanne and Rick/ about this.

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Dates, Times, Locations for Focus Groups:

Information about the time, date and location of focus groups will only be provided to pre-registered participants in order to give a certain amount of personal safety to all participants.

From April 1 to May 31 2005 you can pre-register and/or get additional information about this research project by calling —

***Rick or Joanne
at 334 - 0000***

"You can accomplish a lot of good in the world if you don't care who gets credit for it."

— Myles Horton

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Participant Safety

As already mentioned only those who call and pre-register for a focus group will be given the time and place to attend a focus group in order to provide some level of personal safety. However, risk and safety are two factors everyone should consider before they participate in this research. In keeping with the researchers' belief that people have the answers to their 'problems' the 'safest' safety plan for you is the one you make yourself. You may need to ask family, friends or others to help you, or to be part of your plan. Anyone wanting to take part in this research but who has questions, about how they can safely do that should call and speak to Rick or Joanne about that. Rick and Joanne will also be available after each focus group if anyone has immediate concerns, and contact numbers that you can get help at, at a later time, if you need it will be given to all participants. The focus groups will *not* be audio or video taped, and names will *not* be assigned to comments, suggestions, ideas, etc., either in the focus group notes or in the research document. All participants are free to leave the focus group at any time. Participants can also stop speaking, or answering, questions any time they want. At the end of the focus groups everyone will have a chance to talk with the group or with the researchers about any concerns that came up for them during the group discussion.



**Thank-you for your time to consider
participating in this research project!**
- Rick and Joanne Clements

A Search for Community-Based Responses to Partner Abuse in Whitehorse

(April 1 – May 31, 2005)

**The researchers want to hear from
you what you think about the
problem of partner abuse and what
(else/more) you think can be done
about it.**

Systems need clients.

**Communities need
citizens.**

*"Communities grow strong by
focusing on the capacities of
people and the assets of the
neighbourhoods and not the
deficiencies and needs."*

—John McKnight

2

Partners Researching Partner Abuse

The focus groups will be lead by the husband and wife research team of Rick and Joanne Clements. Rick and Joanne have been married for two years. Both of them have been married once before and have come to truly appreciate the life lessons and relationship skills they learned as a result of those experiences. They also both have children from their previous marriages – Joanne has two teenage daughters, and Rick has a teenage son and daughter. Their dream is to work together offering counselling and seminars to couples wanting to improve their relationships.

Joanne Clements, B.S.W.

Before moving to the Yukon Joanne was employed at Sudbury Family Services in Sudbury, Ontario for 14 years, including co-facilitating an assaultive partner's program for the last 4 years. Joanne is currently working part-time at Yukon Family Services.

Rick Clements, B.S.W.

Rick is currently employed, in Whitehorse, with Residential Youth Treatment Services – 16 Klondike. Rick has also worked as an Addictions Counsellor and at the Emergency Shelter with Alcohol and Drug Services. Rick has been reading and writing about partner abuse for the past ten years. This project is his thesis research for a Masters of Social Work Degree from the University of Northern British Columbia.

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3

Why Community-Based Responses?

"By its very nature, social work and mental health education trains workers to intervene at the personal level and especially in crisis situations. Hence, there is a real danger that a well meaning social or human service worker will privatize the problem rather than approach the problem with a strategy that will utilize and reinforce the communitarian processes. ... Although immediate crises require immediate responses, which may be privatized, the long range solution can only be found in communitarian responses. This is the challenge put forth to all social worker/human service professionals delivering services in northern/native communities."

— Douglas Durst

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Why Focus Groups?

If you are reading this pamphlet in order to decide if this is a research project worth taking any of your time to participate in you probably already have a sense of what's different about this research project by what you've read so far. The key difference between this research project and most others is that Rick and Joanne believe that the people that live in Whitehorse are the experts – about the realities of, and the answers to, any 'problems' in their community – Rick and Joanne want you to explain to them what you know about the problem of partner abuse in Whitehorse. From Rick and Joanne's perspective the way they see doing research in this way is like this;

"What we tried to do could not be described as a method or a technique, but a process that had many strands. ...All of them are of a piece and blend in, and all are based on a love for humanity and trust in the ability of people to control their own lives"

— Myles Horton

APPENDIX E
PERMISSION FOR REPRINT FROM CREATORS SYNDICATE

Creators Syndicate
5777 W Century Blvd. #700
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Dear Rick Clements:

John L. Hart Family Limited Partnership has granted you permission to reprint his BC cartoon(s) dated: (3-12-04?- see your copy attached below); for your use in your Masters of Social Work thesis (on the topic of partner abuse), as one of a number of examples of the way violence against men is portrayed in "popular culture." For your thesis at the University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George B.C.. This permission is good for world wide language rights.

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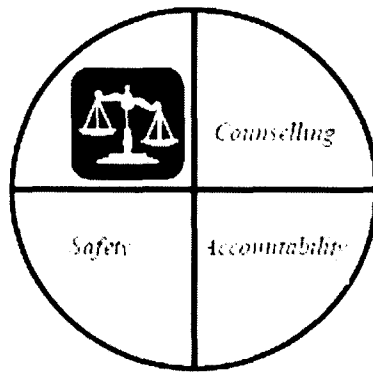
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Sincerely,

Perri Hart
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cc: Johnny Hart
Creators Syndicate

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TREATMENT OPTION COURT



*A New Approach to
addressing
Family Violence in the
Yukon Justice System*

Produced with the financial assistance of

Yukon
COURT



Government of Canada

Ministère de la Justice
Canada

APPENDIX F Yukon DVTO Court Pamphlet

The Domestic Violence Treatment Option (DVTO) Court recognises that family violence is a serious criminal act, and that a more innovative response is required.

THE DVTO OPERATES ON THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

- ◆ Family violence is a learned behaviour that can be changed.
- ◆ Offenders need to take responsibility for their actions, while also being supported with counselling.
- ◆ Early intervention by a multidisciplinary team is essential.
- ◆ Initial and ongoing support must be offered victims and their families.
- ◆ An offender must be held accountable, and any deterioration in the offender's behaviour will be reported to the Court immediately

HOW DOES THE COURT OPERATE?

- ◆ Specially assigned judiciary, crown and the defence lawyers will hear cases on scheduled Monday afternoons.
- ◆ Other resource people such as Probation Officers, counsellors from the Spousal Assault Program and Victim Services will regularly attend Court to provide assistance. ◆ Cases are fast tracked and the Court is provided monthly progress summaries by the counsellors.
- ◆ Support is provided to victims, who would like assistance with safety planning, referrals for counselling for themselves and their children, updates on the offenders progress and assistance with varying release conditions and preparation of victim impact statements for the court.

HOW DOES THE ACCUSED ENTER THE DVTO COURT?

- ◆ After the RCMP have laid a charge that involves allegations of domestic violence, a Court date will be issued for the Accused to attend DVTO Court on a Monday afternoon
- ◆ The assigned Defence Counsel will review the case with the Accused and explain the DVTO Court Process to them. If the Accused chooses to proceed with the case through DVTO Court the matter will be adjourned for approximately two weeks so that the Spousal Assault Program (SAP) counsellors can complete an assessment and determine if the Accused is eligible for treatment through the SAP.
- ◆ If the Accused is eligible for the SAP and chooses to proceed through the DVTO Court process, they will appear in court and indicate that they are accepting responsibility for the charge(s). The sentencing hearing will then be postponed for several months to allow the Accused to complete the Spousal Assault Program and address any other treatment needs.
- ◆ The Accused will be required to attend Court on a monthly basis to check in and report on their treatment progress. Following the completion of the SAP or other treatment a written summary will be done by the Accused counsellor(s) to report on their progress. A copy of the written summary will be given to the Accused, defence counsel, the crown and the Court.
- ◆ The sentencing judge will review the written counselling summary of the Accused and the sentence will reflect this progress, while also addressing any future counselling and safety issues.

Contact Us:

Phone: 667-3581 or

Toll free (in Yukon):

1 -800-661-0408, ext. 3581

Source:

<http://www.justice.gov.yk.ca/pdf/dvtocourt.pdf>