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**Intimate partner violence: women and work within an ecological framework**

Monna Bender Zuckerman

*University at Albany, State University of New York, MZuckerman@hotmail.com*

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INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE:
WOMEN AND WORK WITHIN AN ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

by

Monna Bender Zuckerman

A Dissertation
Submitted to the University at Albany, State University of New York
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Doctor of Social Work

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2011
Intimate Partner Violence:
Women and Work within an Ecological Framework

by

Monna Bender Zuckerman

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Dedication

In memory of my beloved son
Joseph Ben Zuckerman
Who inspired me with his ability to
Embrace life and love unconditionally
Through the darkest of times
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my committee co-chairs, Doctors Carolyn Smith and Jan Hagen, for their tireless support and patience throughout this long and arduous process. I would also like to thank my third committee member, Doctor Jamie Fader, for her commitment to qualitative research and support of my adventure into qualitative methodology. To Deb Castell who transcribed the audio recordings, thank you for your commitment to quality and timeliness. To my mentor and friend, Kate Lawrence, whose encouragement and grounding has kept me on track over the past several years; I would not be at this place if not for you. I am also grateful to my many colleagues and fellow students who have offered encouragement and advice, with special thanks to Maureen Sinclair, Nina Esaki, Maria Lopez, and Junqing Liu. To my family, who have listened and had my back through this process, you are the best! To my long-time friends, Chris Kerber, Bob Israel, and Sandy Pinsley thank you for hanging in there with me and for your prayers. Additionally and with equal gratitude, I want to acknowledge Doctor Bonnie Carlson who accepted me into the School of Social Welfare undergrad program all those years ago and has since been a role-model for integrity in research in the field of domestic violence. To all the many others who have aided and supported me in both small and large ways I am eternally grateful for your help.
Abstract

Background and purpose

It is estimated that 21 million working women in the United States have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV). The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that support or interfere with employment for female victims of IPV. Barriers to employment were organized using a three level ecological framework that consisted of factors closely related to the individual (i.e. microlevel), those related to extended family and community (i.e. mezzolevel) and those influenced by society (i.e. macrolevel).

Methods

Data on the subjective experiences of thirteen working victims of IPV was collected through in-depth interviews conducted between August 2010 and March 2011 resulting in 41 instances of co-occurring IPV and employment. The participants were recruited using fliers and snowball sampling. Data were recorded using audio tapes and life charts, and organized and analyzed using NVivo software designed for use with qualitative information.

Results

The majority of the IPV victims in this sample were unable to maintain long-term employment. Primary barriers were the victim’s readiness to confront IPV and the male partner’s negative attitude toward the victim’s working. Other barriers were parenting and experiencing severe abuse or work interference.

Conclusions and Implications

These findings indicate that it is difficult for IPV victims of various socio-economic groups to remain employed. They point to the need for increased public awareness of IPV, workplace IPV policies, and affordable childcare for working mothers. Further research is needed on employment for IPV victims, with emphasis on employer awareness and male partner attitudes toward female employment.
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Chapter 1

Overview

Intimate partner violence is a national health problem that affects women physically, mentally and financially. Intimate partner violence has been defined as abuse that “involves the systematic use of not only physical violence but also economic subordination, threats, isolation, and other control tactics” to maintain power and control over women (Smith, DeVellis, Earp, & Coker, 2002, p. 1209). Intimate partner violence creates barriers that interfere with victims’ working and consequent economic self-sufficiency (McKean, 2004; Merritt-Gray & Wuest, 1995). The employer’s role in the victim’s struggle for financial independence is not well understood (Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2005). However, several studies suggest that employer’s support can make a positive difference in the victim being able to remain employed (Katula & Simpson, 2006; Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007). Formal employment has been shown to have more positive benefits for low-income survivors of intimate partner violence than informal forms of employment that may entail illegal activities or health risks (e.g., selling drugs or plasma) (Pyles & Banerjee, 2010). In 2004, the Center for Impact Research (CIR) highlighted the negative impact of intimate partner violence on victims’ financial security, economic self-sufficiency and safety and pointed to the need for ongoing research on ways to increase victims’ safety and self-sufficiency (McKean, 2004).

Statement of Purpose

In response to the CIR’s plea for further research on ways to increase victim’s safety and economic self-sufficiency, this study explored women’s experiences with intimate partner violence and employment to better understand the factors that hinder or help women’s remaining employed. Given the lack of research on how victims of
intimate partner abuse are able to achieve economic self-sufficiency in the face of intimate partner violence, this dissertation will focus on one aspect of victim economic self-sufficiency – long-term employment. It fills gaps in knowledge around what victims need and want from their employer to help them retain employment and attain financial security and economic self-sufficiency in the face of intimate partner violence.

The study approaches the topic from a “person in their environment” perspective, using an ecological systems framework to organize personal factors (i.e., micro level) as well as factors at the organizational (mezzo) and societal (macro) levels that are either supports or barriers to financial security and self-sufficiency according to victims’ reports.

One goal of this study was to explore how victimized employees cope with work and workplace relationships when intimate partner violence spills over into their workplace. Victims were asked about any structural and personal factors that influence their choices around workplace disclosure and concealment of their victimization. What happens when the effects of victimization cannot be hidden from her employer? Does the abused employee disclose that she is a victim of intimate partner violence or attempt to hide it? What are victims’ concerns about disclosing to their employer? What facilitates disclosing intimate partner violence to co-workers and employers? How does her employer react when learning that the employee is a victim of intimate partner violence?

Another goal was to explore what mezzo and macro level factors influence victims’ decisions to disclose or conceal that they are being victimized. During the pilot study for this dissertation, two types of disclosure and two types of non-disclosure were identified (Zuckerman, 2009). This dissertation builds on the pilot study to further
explore preliminary findings regarding a disclosure typology and the factors that influence disclosure or concealment of victimization. Special attention was given to formal and informal supports, benefits or detriments within the workplace that contribute to the victim’s choices around disclosing her victimization to her employer or co-workers. The study also explored victims’ perceptions of the relationship between disclosure choices and employment outcomes (i.e., termination, resignation or maintaining employment). It identified additional resources that may be needed to help victims to remain employed.

Statement of the Problem

Intimate partner abuse may include any of the following: psychological abuse, emotional abuse and control, sexual abuse, stalking and financial abuse (e.g., work interference) of women (Tjaden & Thoennes, Violence and Threats of Violence Against Women and Men in the United States, 1994-1996: Machine readable codebook, 1999). Intimate partners are defined as a spouse, ex-spouse, or other intimate partner with whom the woman resides or has resided in the past. Intimate partners can be of the same- or opposite-sex; however according to the National Violence Against Women (NVAW) (1995-96) survey the rate of female intimate partner violence (i.e., physical assault, rape, or stalking) among female intimate partners who live together is about half of that of a woman living with a man (11% vs. 21.7%) (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

It is expected that women are more likely to experience intimate partner violence that interferes with employment, because of the differences between male-to-female intimate partner violence and female-to-male intimate partner violence. Johnson (1995) identified two qualitatively different types of intimate partner violence among
heterosexual couples. The first type is “common couple violence,” also referred to as “situational couple violence” (SCV) (Johnson & Leone, 2005; Johnson, 2006); the second type, “patriarchal terrorism” is also called “intimate terror” (IT) (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000) or “battering” (Smith, DeVellis, Earp, & Coker, 2002). SCV is characterized by the absence of power and control issues that characterize intimate terror; SCV is reciprocal between male and female partners and tends to not become more severe over time (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003; Johnson, 1995; Smith, DeVellis, Earp, & Coker, 2002); whereas, IT is characterized by non-reciprocity (i.e., females do not initiate or return violence) and violence that increases in severity and frequency over time (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003; Johnson, 2001; Miller, 2006; Smith, DeVellis, Earp, & Coker, 2002). SCV is estimated to occur at higher rates than IT (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003; Johnson, 2001; Miller, 2006).

IT perpetrators, primarily men, use physical violence and intimidation as a way to systematically maintain power and control over their partner (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003; Johnson, 2001; Miller, 2006; Smith, DeVellis, Earp, & Coker, 2002). A woman is more likely than a man to be victimized by a controlling partner who wants to know where she is and who she is with at all times; a partner who stalks her and attempts to limit her access to financial resources, and who scares her (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003; Johnson, 2001; Smith, DeVellis, Earp, & Coker, 2002). Women are more likely than men to be fearful of their partner (Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003; Johnson, 2001; Miller, 2006; Smith, DeVellis, Earp, & Coker, 2002) and female victims are more likely than males to be injured or suffer mental health problems that result from intimate partner violence (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Johnson (2001)
found female-to-male abuse is primarily situational and lacks the elements of control often found in male to female abuse.

Males use multiple means to try to maintain power and control over their female partner. One way identified by a program in Minnesota is through financial control. (Minnesota Program Development, 2007). One type of financial control results when her intimate partner interferes with a woman’s employment (Brush, 2002; Riger, Ahrens, & Blickenstaff, 2000). Intimate partner violence has been shown to start or increase when a woman begins to work (Brush, 2003) perhaps because female roles have traditionally focused on caring for the home and children rather than outside employment (Keith & Schafer, 1980). In contrast, male roles have traditionally included being the “bread winner” in the family (Atkinson, Greenstein, & Lang, 2005; Keith & Schafer, 1980). Findings that male unemployment or underemployment are positively related to intimate partner violence rather than employment per se, may be because men are expected to work (Fox, Benson, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2002). Men may want their partner at home where he can more easily keep track of who she sees and what she does.

According to one national survey, women are significantly more likely than men (59 and 30 percent, respectively) to be stalked by an intimate partner (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). About half of the men who stalk their partners, begin to stalk them while the relationship is intact (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Logan, Shannon, Cole, and Swanberg (2007) found in their study of 482 victims of intimate partner violence that the participants who reported stalking experienced significantly more on-the-job harrassment and work interference tactics than the participants who were not stalked.
Gender is just one of the risk factors associated with intimate partner violence; others include age, race, disability and substance abuse. Demographic factors linked to risk of intimate partner violence were reported in 20 national surveys conducted in countries around the world (O'Donnell, Smith, & Madison, 2002). Risk factors for intimate partner violence commonly found across studies include being a woman over the age of 18; having been previously raped; the presence of substance and alcohol abuse; and having a mental health problem or disability (O'Donnell, Smith, & Madison, 2002). Another risk identified in several national studies conducted in the United States is being a woman of color (Field & Caetano, 2005; Hampton & Gelles, 1994; Sorenson, Upchurch, & Shen, 1996). However, when socioeconomic factors are controlled racial differences among victims are reduced or disappear completely (Field & Caetano, 2005; West, 2004). The rates of victimization across races vary according to the type of abuse being studied, the definition of intimate partner violence used and sampling procedures.

The Scope of the Problem

Annual prevalence rates for victims of intimate partner violence vary widely depending on the source. The National Crime Victim Survey (1992-93) reports victims of male to female violence at a rate of nine per 1000 women (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995), while the National Family Violence Survey (1992) reports a rate of 91 per 1000 women (Gelles, 1997; Gelles, 2000). One criticism, and possibly the reason for the lower prevalence in the National Crime Victim Survey (1992-93) is that interviews are conducted in-person, every six months and include all household members over the age of 12. Therefore, there is no guarantee that household members have sufficient privacy to disclose sensitive information about intimate partner violence even though respondents
are offered a number to call if they want to disclose more information (Bachman & Saltzman, 1995). Respondents may fear further abuse or retribution by the perpetrator for disclosing information about violence. They may feel that the behavior they are experiencing does not qualify as a crime or even intimate partner abuse.

One of the most frequently cited sources of prevalence, the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAW) (1995-96) reports a prevalence rate for intimate partner physical assaults at 13 per 1000 women (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). They estimate approximately 1.3 million women and 835,000 men are physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually in the United States (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). The NVAW survey estimates that each female victim experiences an average of 3.4 physical assaults per year for an annual incidence rate of 44.2 assaults per 1000 women age 18 years and older (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). These rates do not take into considerations other types of intimate partner violence, such as emotional abuse and stalking and have been criticized because they do not specify the difference between severe assault and minor assaults (Johnson, 2001). Other criticisms of national telephone surveys such as the NVAW survey are that the most severely abused women are under-represented (Bachman, 2000; Johnson, 2006). Homeless women and women without telephones are unrepresented in telephone surveys such as NVAW; however, homeless and low-income women are likely to experience intimate partner violence at high rates (Browne, Salomon, & Bassuk, 1999; Dail, 1990; Smith, DeVellis, Earp, & Coker, 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

Estimates of intimate partner violence rates among welfare recipients and low-income women range between 51 and 75 percent for lifetime exposure (Meisel, Chandler,
& Rienzi, 2003; Raphael, 1997). Reported rates of current (i.e., within the past year) intimate partner violence among welfare or general assistance recipients range from ten to twenty-five percent (Goodwin, Chandler, & Meisel, 2003; Lown, Schmidt, & Wiley, 2006) in contrast to approximately two percent (1.5 %) of women in the general population (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

Women may seek employment as a way to get out of poverty; however, intimate partner violence may begin or increase when women become employed (Brush L. D., Effects of work on hitting and hurting, 2003). With adult women now comprising just over one-half (54.7%) of the US workforce (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010), it is not surprising that intimate partner violence has moved into the workplace. Nearly half of businesses that employ over 1000 people experience workplace violence, and just under one quarter of those incidents (24.1%) result from intimate partner violence (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). It is estimated that nearly 30 percent of employed women - approximately 21 million women - are involved with intimate partner violence (Department of Labor Statistics, 2010; Reeves and O'Leary-Kelley, 2007). The Bureau of Justice (2001) estimates violent incidents perpetrated in the workplace by an intimate partner (i.e., boyfriend, girlfriend, lover, or current or past spouse) to be over 18,000 annually. Intimate partner violence in the workplace costs employers through lost productivity, lateness and absence (Lindquist, Clinton-Sherrod, Hardison, & Weimer, 2006; Reeves & O'Leary-Kelley, 2007).

Nearly half (44%) of full-time employees in the United States experience lost productivity from intimate partner violence according to one national telephone survey (N = 1200) (Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2005). Among the reasons
given for the reduction in productivity were "distraction" (57%); "fear of discovery" (45%); "harassment by intimate partner at work (either by phone or in person)" (40%); fear of intimate partner's unexpected visits" (34%); "inability to complete assignments on time" (24%); and "job loss" (21%) (Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2005).

In a web-based survey of over 2,300 employees, Reeves and O'Leary-Kelley (2007) found that victims of recent intimate partner violence had 26 percent more time lost to tardiness and absenteeism than non-victims. There are no national statistics on the number of victims who resign or are fired as a result of intimate partner violence; however, it is estimated that eight million days of paid employment are lost due to intimate partner violence at a cost of over seven hundred million dollars annually (Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2008; Department of Health and Human Services, 2003).

In addition to costs from loss of productivity, costs for mental health treatment and physical health care appointments and services are a burden for both victims and employers. Over a million victims of intimate partner violence experience serious and long-lasting physical, emotional and/or psychological problems each year (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Eby, 2004; Arias & Pape, 1999; Golding, 1999) costing an estimated 4.1 billion dollars per year in direct costs for physical and mental health care appointments (Department of Health and Human Services, 2003; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2003).

Some states and businesses have begun to take steps to protect victims of intimate partner violence from discrimination in the workplace (Associated Industries of the Inland Northwest (AIIN), Spokane County Domestic Violence Consortium; Spokane
County Sheriff’s Department; Spokane Police Department; Washington State University, 2005; Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, 2000; Shaules, 2004). However, the laws vary greatly from state to state leaving many victims without protection.

In New York State, a model domestic violence policy was initiated throughout the state workforce as an Executive Law in July 2000; and a similar model policy was initiated for private employers in November, 2000 (Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV), 2000). The goal of these policies is to “heighten awareness about domestic violence and to create a supportive workplace environment” (OPDV, 2000). The model policy guidelines focus on five main areas: education for both frontline workers and managers, personnel policies that are non-discriminatory and responsive, safety plans for the workplace, accountability for offenders, and support for victims from management and supervisors (OPDV, 2000). The private employer policy for intimate partner violence is voluntary, thus there are many employers in New York State who have not initiated the full recommendations. The state does not keep statistics on the number of private workplace intimate partner violence policies that have been enacted (OPDV, 2008, Personal Conversation).

Both state and federal laws offer limited protection to victims of intimate partner violence from workplace violence and discrimination. However, in most cases in order for the victim to receive these benefits, she must identify herself as a victim to her employer (For more detail about governmental laws see the Macrolevel discussion). This raises questions about the employee’s ability to overcome her reluctance to disclose that she is a victim in order to receive the benefits to which she is entitled. What is needed to
help victims access existing resources? Are existing resources adequate to help victims achieve economic self-sufficiency?

Researchers have suggested that long-term employment is a key factor in helping victims achieve economic self-sufficiency by providing financial resources and benefits, such as healthcare, that reduce dependency on abusive partners (Katula & Simpson, 2006; McKean, 2004). Survivors who are frequently employed in service positions or in caretaking roles, report that they received the following benefits from formal employment: “a strong feeling of self-worth, appreciation of responsibilities and respect, satisfaction from caretaking activities, gratification with connections and friendships, enhanced technical knowledge and skills, and pay and benefits packages” (Pyles & Banerjee, 2010, p. 48). Low income victims of intimate partner violence have been shown to cycle between work, welfare and unemployment (Bell, 2003) resulting in an intermittent work history. Women of various income levels report leaving their job to seek shelter and safety (Moe & Bell, 2004).

Intermittent work histories may be detrimental to being hired and receiving promotions. Seniority (i.e., length of employment) is one criterion used by employers to determine promotion and salary increases at various corporate levels (Cooper & Sobol, 1969). Employers in Western society tend to view gaps in employment history negatively (Anderson, 1990). Gaps in employment have been shown to significantly reduce a person’s chance of being hired or being considered a good corporate risk when compared with a person with the same credentials but a continuous work history (Orpen, 1992). For these reasons, this study will focus on understanding what factors help or
hinder victims of intimate partner violence to maintain continuous, long-term employment.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study address three areas of interest related to intimate partner violence and long-term employment: helpful supports or resources that victims currently receive from those at their workplace; factors that prohibit victims from accessing existing resources for employed victims; and resources needed by victims to achieve long-term employment. More specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What barriers to long-term employment do victims of intimate partner violence encounter?

2. What types of employment related assistance (formal and informal) do employed victims receive from their employers and/or co-workers that help them maintain employment while they cope with intimate partner violence?

3. What is the relationship between disclosure and employment related resources?

4. What barriers or facilitating factors do victims face when trying to access existing employment related protections or resources?

5. What additional resources do employed victims of intimate partner violence need to be able to remain employed long-term?

Significance to Social Work and Social Welfare

Victims of intimate partner violence are among those vulnerable persons for whom social work practice aims to promote dignity and worth. Social work is committed to challenging social injustice against vulnerable persons such as victimized women (National Association of Social Workers, 2006). Social workers address the problem of intimate partner violence at multiple levels - at the microlevel, through direct practice
with victims, perpetrators and their children; at the mezzolevel, through court and legal advocacy; and at the macrolevel, through policy development and legislative lobbying.

The findings from this study provide direct practice social workers who work with victims of intimate partner violence a better understanding of the challenges facing their clients who are employed. Social workers armed with the knowledge of potential barriers facing victims of intimate partner violence when trying to access resources will be able to better prepare their client to overcome those barriers and guide them toward financial security. The findings also provide information helpful to those social workers who work directly with perpetrators of intimate partner violence.

The study also provides social workers and employment assistance personnel with information that is useful in developing intimate partner violence workplace policies that help victims remain employed while staying safe. The findings may also inform state and federal policy developers about what existing laws are helpful and what other laws are needed to help victims reach economic self-sufficiency. Legislative advocates and lobbyists may benefit from these findings as they work to enact legislation that will support victims and protect them from discrimination in the workplace. The findings provide a better understanding of what victims need to maintain employment in the face of intimate partner violence and provide direction for further research.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

The literature on intimate partner violence and employment is extensive, covering a broad range of topics. For this study, the relevant literature falls into four areas: first, a description of the socio-ecological framework used to organize factors that are anticipated to contribute to employment outcomes for victims of intimate partner violence; second, a discussion of microlevel factors; third, a discussion of mezzolevel factors; and finally, a discussion of macrolevel factors that are related to employment outcomes and intimate partner violence.

*Intimate Partner Violence and Employment: A Social Ecological Framework*

Intimate partner violence and its effect on working women is a complex and multifaceted problem that cannot be understood by simply looking at intrapersonal factors of the victim or interpersonal factors within the couple. Intimate partner violence interventions require a social ecological framework that acknowledges interpersonal factors while also addressing social, contextual, environmental, and individual factors (Carlson, 1997; Fondacaro & Jackson, 1999; McKinney, Siegar, Agliata, & Renk, 2006). Research must consider not only the intrapersonal and interpersonal circumstances of employed victims, but also environmental and social factors that influence a victim’s ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

One issue facing all victims of intimate partner violence is that of establishing or maintaining financial stability and economic self-sufficiency. Maintaining long-term employment is one step toward establishing financial stability and economic self-sufficiency. Victims at various socio-economic levels find that maintaining employment
in the face of intimate partner violence can be challenging (Moe & Bell, 2004; Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007).

Some state and local communities have enacted legislation to protect victims of intimate partner violence from being fired due to absences or other factors related to the abuse (Illinois Legal Aid, 2006; New York City Commission on Human Rights, 2009; New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, 2009), and many corporations have enacted policies to assist their victimized employees through increased awareness, safety plans and workplace supports (Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2008). However, victims must opt to take advantage of existing laws and policies for them to be effective. If victims of intimate partner violence are unaware of supports or try to conceal their victimization, the problem is likely to continue until it is exposed through a crisis situation that affects the victim, her co-workers, the business, and society.

There are factors on multiple levels that interact to influence the victim’s decision to disclose her victimization and seek assistance from her employer. A socio-ecological framework provides a way to organize these various factors and describe ways they may intersect when intimate partner violence enters the workplace.

*Socio-ecological framework.* Bronfenbrenner (1979) borrowed ecological systems theory from the physical sciences as a way to organize factors that influence human development. Ecological systems theory has been criticized for its lack of specificity on where and how to intervene (Payne, 2005). However, it provides a model for integrating victims’ personal characteristics with their social environments. Bronfenbrenner (1979) organized systemic factors into three levels: microsystem level,
mezzosystem level, and macrosystem level and later added a fourth level: the exosystem level, which represents the interaction between two mezzolevel systems that interact with each other but do not interact directly with the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Only the three primary levels will be discussed in this study and for convenience the systems levels will be referred to as microlevel, mezzolevel and macrolevel (See Figure 1: Social Ecological Systems).

Figure 1: Social Ecological Systems

![Social Ecological Systems](Image taken from Huit & Hummel, 2006)

The individual is the focus of the micro level of the social ecological framework, (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986). Each individual is situated at the intersection of cultural, socio-economical and personal characteristics that are fluid and dynamic (Krane, Oxman-Martinez, & Ducey, 2000). Theorists believe that individuals affect and are affected by other individuals and systems with whom they come in contact (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Krane, Oxman-Martinez, & Ducey, 2000). The following section reviews research focused on microlevel issues.
Microlevel

At the microlevel, issues within the woman and her nuclear family are explored for any relationship to employment. One microlevel issue to be examined is: how the victim’s mental health affects her employment. Another is: how the type and severity of victimization experienced by the victim influences employment. At the mezzolevel, contextual factors such as extended family (i.e., social support) and workplace characteristics (i.e., formal and informal workplace support and corporate response to intimate partner violence) are reviewed. Finally, at the macrolevel, social, policy and economic issues are explored. For example, research on governmental responses to intimate partner violence in the workplace is reviewed.

Microlevel: Intrapersonal Factors. Prior to the feminist movement, intimate partner violence was seen as a personal or family problem. Theorists attributed intimate partner violence to psychological problems of the victim and batterer (O’Neill, 1998; Snell, Rosenwald, & Robey, 1964). If a woman did not leave her abuser, many in society, including therapists accused her of staying because she received gratification from the abuse (Gelles, 1983). Intrapersonal theories of intimate partner violence began to change when Walker’s (1983) theory of learned helplessness portrayed women’s inability to leave violent situations as a consequence of the abuse rather than the cause. Following Walker’s (1983) lead, researchers began to identify mental and physical health problems such as depression, stress and chronic illness that are related to intimate partner violence victimization.

Microlevel factors that have been linked to employment among victims of intimate partner violence are personal characteristics (i.e., race, ethnicity, and
immigration status), mental and physical health factors, human capital, (i.e., work experience, skills and education), and abuse related factors, such as the type and severity of the abuse (See Figure 2: Microlevel Factors and Employment).

Figure 2: Microlevel Factors Related to Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIVIDUAL FACTORS:</th>
<th>ABUSE FACTORS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Personal characteristics</td>
<td>Severity of abuse</td>
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<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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**Personal Characteristics: Race and Ethnicity.** Intimate partner violence affects women of various races and ethnic groups and threatens their employment (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). However, Brush (2001, p.83) found in her qualitative study that having a controlling partner who sabotages her work outside of the home is “more characteristic” of a poor White woman than a poor Black woman. This may be because African-American men and women’s economic gains have been less dependant on the other (Weis, 2001). With the high rates of unemployment among Black men, Black women have often had to fulfill the “bread-winner” role (Weis, 2001). Both low-income and upper-income women of both races experience employment interference (Moe & Bell, 2004) and the secondary effects of intimate partner violence that can interfere with employment (Golding, 1999). There is little research on ethnicity and employment among victims of intimate partner violence. The few studies that focus on intimate partner violence within a specific ethnic group have not explored employment, but report financial problems resulting from language barriers, isolation, and cultural differences.
(for example see Adames & Campbell, 2005; Bui & Morash, 1999; Hicks, 2006; Shiu-Thornton, Senturia, & Sullivan, 2005). Two secondary effects of intimate partner violence are physical and mental problems.

*Health Problems: Mental and Physical Health.* Intimate partner violence affects employment through resulting health problems such as depression, anxiety and chronic health problems creating a cycle that traps victims of intimate partner violence in a cycle of poverty (Brush, 2004; Bell, 2003; Raphael, 1995; Scott, London, & Myers, 2002; Wisner, Gilmer, Saltzman, & Zink, 1999). Intimate partner violence often leads to mental and physical health problems for victims and their children that can interfere with work productivity and lead to the victim being unable to continue working (Arias & Pape, 1999; Brush, 2003; Golding, 1999; Plichta, 2004; Riger, Raja, & Camacho, 2002; Staggs & Riger, 2005; Wisner, Gilmer, Saltzman, & Zink, 1999) or that make it difficult for her to leave welfare for paid employment (Butler, Corbett, Bond, & Hastedt, 2008). Research reports that secondary effects of intimate partner violence such as physical and mental health problems have been shown to interfere with employment stability (Coker, Smith, McKeown, & King, 2000; Eby, 2004; Kocot & Goodman, 2003; Riger & Staggs, 2004).

Victims may experience injuries resulting from intimate partner violence that impair their ability to work (Farmer & Tiefenthaler, 2002; Leone, Johnson, Cohan, & Lloyd, 2004; Lloyd, 1997b; Moe & Bell, 2004), or a victim may feel shame and embarrassment that affect her desire to go to work, thus threatening her employment stability (Swanberg & Logan, 2005). However, even when mental and physical health
are controlled statistically, intimate partner violence has been shown to have a significant negative impact on the number of hours worked (Tolman & Wang, 2005).

The next section discusses the main types of mental and physical problems that provide barriers to stable long-term employment for victims of intimate partner violence.

**Depression.** The association between depression and intimate partner violence in American samples was well established in the 1990s. Golding (1999) found the weighted mean prevalence of depression among battered women was 47.6% (95% CI - 45.0, 50.0) in her meta-analysis of 18 studies of depression and intimate partner violence. Other researchers have shown that victims of intimate partner violence experience depressive symptomology at higher rates than non-victims (Basile, Arias, Desai, & Thompson, 2004; Demaris & Kaukinen, 2005; Golding, 1999; Martin, Kilgallen, Dee, Dawson, & Campbell, 1998; Tolman & Rosen, 2001). The prevalence rate for depression tends to vary depending on the sampling frame used, the type of violence, and if there has been more than one type of violence experienced.

When the sampling frames are intimate partner violence victims in shelter populations, studies tend to report higher rates of depression than in studies using community and general population samples. Rates of clinical depression among shelter populations range between 40-78% (Campbell, Kub, Belknap, & Templin, 1997; Ham-Rowbottom, Gordon, Jarvis, & Novaco, 2005; Romero, Chavkin, Wise, & Smith, 2003); in contrast, rates estimated from community and health facility samples range between 13-68% (Bauer, Rodriguez, & Perez-Stable, 2000; Demaris & Kaukinen, 2005; Jarvis, Gordon, & Novaco, 2005; Sato-DiLorenzo & Sharps, 2007). One longitudinal study found among a sample of 81 sheltered victims of intimate partner violence that the
prevalence of depression upon entering the shelter was greater than their post-shelter rate (78% vs. 43%), suggesting that the negative effects of intimate partner violence may decrease over time if the abuse is stopped (Ham-Rowbottom, Gordon, Jarvis, & Novaco, 2005).

As previously mentioned, the rate of depression is also related to the type of violence experienced. Many studies use a version of Straus’ (1990) Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) to measure levels of physical violence. The original CTS is an interview self-report measure that includes scales to measure violence, verbal aggression and reasoning and has been shown to be valid and reliable within a variety of ethnic groups. The CTS was later adapted to include scales to measure injury and sexual assault (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996). Studies using adaptations of the CTS have shown depressive symptoms to be related to intimate partner victimization, (for example, Bauer, Rodriguez, & Perez-Stable, 2000; Ceballo, Ramirez, Castillo, Caballero, & Lozoff, 2004; Demaris & Kaukinen, 2005; Jarvis, Gordon, & Novaco, 2005).

Only three studies measured non-physical abuse as well as physical abuse (Campbell, Kub, Belknap, & Templin, 1997; Jarvis, Gordon, & Novaco, 2005; Tolman & Rosen, 2001). Of the three that explored the relationship between intimate partner violence and psychological or emotional abuse, only one study reported that nonphysical abuse was significantly correlated with depression (.27, p<.001) although not as strongly as with physical abuse (.33, p< .001) (Campbell, Kub, Belknap, & Templin, 1997). The other two studies reported results for physical abuse only, most likely because of the high correlation found between psychological abuse and physical abuse (Jarvis, Gordon, & Novaco, 2005; Tolman & Rosen, 2001).
Other forms of abuse, such as childhood victimization, may be predictors of depressive symptomology among victims of intimate partner violence. When exploring the relationship among childhood physical abuse and childhood sexual abuse and depressive symptoms in victims of intimate partner violence, Campbell, Kub, Belknap and Templin (1997) found childhood sexual abuse was not correlated with depression; however, childhood physical abuse was significantly correlated with depression (.13, p<.05).

In contrast, other studies have found that being sexually abused in one’s family of origin is a significant predictor of depression for victims of intimate partner violence in adulthood (Ham-Rowbottom, Gordon, Jarvis, & Novaco, 2005; Zlotnick, Mattia, & Zimmerman, 2001). When women experience multiple types of trauma (i.e., childhood trauma, sexual trauma and/or intimate partner violence), there is a dose effect which increases the likelihood of depression (Demaris & Kaukinen, 2005; Golding, 1999; Martin, Kilgallen, Dee, Dawson, & Campbell, 1998; Rodriguez, Heilemann, Ang, Nevarez, & Mangione, 2008; Tanskanen, Hintikka, Honkalampi, Haatainen, Koivumaa-Honkanen, & Viinamaki, 2004).

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. In addition to depression, stress is another type of microlevel mental health problem related to intimate partner violence. Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is one type of trauma-related stress shown to be related to intimate partner violence (Cortina & Kubiak, 2006; DeJonghe, Bogat, Levendosky, & von Eye, 2008; O'Keefe, 1998; Stapleton, Taylor, & Asmundson, 2007; Stein, Walker, Hazen, & Forde, 1997; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Vogel & Marshall, 2001). When comparing battered women with non-battered women in a prison population, (O'Keefe, 1998) found
nearly 50% of participants who reported being battered and who had killed their abusive partner had symptoms consistent with PTSD.

PTSD consists of nine symptoms that fall in one of three domains: reexperiencing the trauma (e.g., recurrent and intrusive thoughts, distressing dreams), avoidance and emotional numbing (e.g., avoidance of reminders of the traumatic event, restricted range of affect), and hyper-arousal (e.g., sleep difficulties, exaggerated startle response) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Some researchers have theorized that women are at higher risk than men of developing PTSD because women are pre-disposed to PTSD as a result of “feminine vulnerability” (Breslau, Chilcoat, Kessler, Peterson, & Lucia, 1999; Brewin, Andrews, & Valentine, 2000). When using data from the Violence Against Women Survey (1995-96), researchers showed that although gender was associated with PTSD, when a history of victimization was added to the model, the association between PTSD symptomology and gender was reduced (Cortina & Kubiak, 2006; Pimlott-Kubiak & Cortina, 2003). Having a history of sexual or combined types of victimization was highly correlated with PTSD (Cortina & Kubiak, 2006; Pimlott-Kubiak & Cortina, 2003). These findings must be viewed with caution, because they rely on cross-sectional data. Longitudinal studies are needed to determine if there is a causal relationship between victimization and PTSD.

Victimization results such as depression and PTSD can be detrimental to a victim’s ability to obtain or maintain employment that will help them escape or avoid further abuse. In one longitudinal study of 46 African American victims of intimate partner violence, women who experienced depressive symptoms were more likely than non-depressed women to become unemployed and to remain unemployed at the six-
month follow-up (Mascaro, Arnette, Santana, & Kaslow, 2007). In addition to depression and PTSD symptomology, intimate partner violence also correlates with poor physical health and long-term health problems that are associated with poverty in later life suggesting an association between intimate partner violence, health problems and gainful employment (Browne, Salomon, & Bassuk, 1999; Paranjape, Sprauve-Holmes, Gaughan, & Kaslow, 2009; Plichta, 2004).

Physical Health Problems. Physical and mental health problems are among the strongest negative predictors of employment among welfare recipients: recipients who have physical or mental health problems remain on welfare longer and are less likely to find employment (Butler, Corbett, Bond, & Hastedt, 2008; Scott, London, & Myers, 2002; Tolman and Rosen, 2001). Among the health problems that interfere with employment are a greater frequency of serious and chronic illnesses among victims of psychological abuse, and chronic pain, osteoarthritis and severe headaches among victims of physical abuse (Coker, Davis, Arias, Desai, Sanderson, & Brandt, 2002; Marshall, 1996). Victims are more likely than non-victims of intimate partner violence to experience a disability that prevents them from working (Coker, Smith, McKeown, & King, 2000) and are more likely to use health care resources (Tomasulo & McNamara, 2007; Wisner, Gilmer, Saltzman, & Zink, 1999).

In one Australian study of over 14,000 women between 45 and 50 years of age, after controlling for demographics, health care behaviors and menopause, researchers found intimate partner violence was associated with several health issues (i.e., allergies or breathing problems, pain or fatigue, bowel problems, vaginal discharge, eyesight and hearing problems, low iron, asthma, bronchitis or emphysema, and cervical cancer)
Intimate partner violence is also linked with behaviors that increase health risks such as smoking, substance abuse, and suicidal behaviors (Browne, Salomon, & Bassuk, 1999; Coker et al., 2002; Golding, 1999; Caetano, Ramisetty-Mikle, Vaeth, & Harris, 2007).

**Workplace functioning.** In addition to mental and physical health problems, violence in the home has been shown to affect workplace functioning (Trachtenberg, 2007) and to reduce victim productivity at work (Logan, Shannon, Cole, & Swanberg, 2007; Moe & Bell, 2004). In their web-based survey of over 2300 employees in three midsized organizations, Reeves & O’Leary-Kelley (2007) found distractability at work to be significantly higher among current victims of intimate partner violence than non-victims or life-time victims. Distractability caused more lost work hours than absence and tardiness (Reeves & O’Leary-Kelley, 2007).

Using three waves of the Illinois Family Study (1999 – 2002), Staggs, Long, Mason, Krishnan, and Riger (2007) found that intimate partner violence at wave one was significantly negatively associated with employment stability at wave three. In contrast, employment stability in waves one and two was positively associated with employment stability in wave three (Staggs et al., 2007). Therefore, we can conclude that intimate partner violence is a factor in reducing stability in women’s employment.

**Human Capital: Education, Job skills, and Work experience.** Victims as well as non-victims with limited personal capital face barriers that result in their cycling between work and welfare (Bell, 2003; Danziger, Corcoran, Danziger, & Heflin, 2000). However, victims of intimate partner violence earn less, work fewer weeks and more frequently work involuntarily in part-time positions than their peers who are not battered (Brush,
Researchers have found, when controlling variables such as demographics and human capital (i.e., education, job skills, and work experience), that the relationship between intimate partner violence and work may no longer be significant (Danziger, Corcoran, Danziger, & Heflin, 2000; Tolman & Raphael, 2001; Tolman & Rosen, 2001). One reason for this may be that women - both victims and non-victims - who have low levels of education, who lack job skills and work experience, and are responsible for large families, have a difficult time being able to find stable employment that will cover the costs of work related expenses such as childcare, transportation, medical care and other hidden costs of working (Danziger, Corcoran, Danziger, & Heflin, 2000). In some cases victims are forced to become involved with informal employment (i.e., house cleaning) or illegal activities (i.e., selling drugs or prostitution) to support themselves and their families (Pyles & Banerjee, 2010).

Abuse related factors: Severity of Abuse and Type of Abuse. The links between mental and physical health, intimate partner violence and employment are complex. Mental and physical health are not the only microlevel determinents of employment for victims of intimate partner violence. The severity and type of intimate partner violence perpetrated by the victim’s partner also play a role in whether the victim is able to remain employed and contribute to the extent of the victim’s physical and mental health problems.

Severity of abuse. When intimate partner violence is severe, victims are likely to terminate their employment in order to seek shelter or relocate for safety reasons (Moe & Bell, 2004; Riger, Ahrens, & Blickenstaff, 2000; Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007). Lloyd & Taluc (1999) found when surveying 824 women in a
low-income area that those who experienced severe abuse at some time in their life were more likely than those who did not experience severe abuse to have been unemployed, to suffer mental and physical problems that could interfere with work, and to have work-limiting disabilities. Severe abuse can result in injuries that make it impossible for the victim to go to work (Zuckerman, 2009). Research is needed to compare less severe victimization (i.e., pushing, shoving, verbal assault) with severe victimization (i.e., being punched, kicked, choked, hit with an object, etc.) to determine how each affects the victim’s ability to remain employed.

*Type of Abuse: On-the-job harrassment and stalking.* Stable employment is difficult for a victim to maintain given the ways that intimate partner violence can interfere with employment. In their research review of over 96 articles, book chapters and reports, Swanberg, Logan and Macke (2005) identified two main categories of job interference tactics: on-the-job stalking and harassment, and work disruption. The first type of job interference tactics, on-the-job harassment, occurs when the abuser bothers the victim at work either by phone or in person (Bell, 2003; Browne, Salomon, & Bassuk, 1999). Examples of on-the-job harrassment include repeatedly telephoning her at work even when it is against company rules (Brush, 2000; Lloyd & Taluc, 1999); calling her boss or supervisor and telling lies about her, such as claiming to be her drug dealer (Riger et al., 2000; Swanberg & Logan, 2005), and repeatedly showing up at her workplace, coming into her workplace and making a scene, or harassing other employees or her supervisor in the workplace (Brush, 2000, 2003; Lloyd & Taluc, 1999; Moe & Bell, 2004; Riger et al., 2000; Swanberg & Logan, 2005).
Estimates of on-the-job harrassment range from 8% to 75% depending on the definition of harrassment and sample selection (Brush, 2000; Lloyd, 1997; Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2005; Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007; Tolman & Rosen, 2001). Lower estimates were reported from a sample that consisted of non-employed, as well as, employed participants (Brush, 2000; Lloyd, 1997). Shelter samples report higher estimates (see Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2005). Estimates of on-the-job harassment by telephone are slightly higher than in-person harrassment (70% vs 40%) (Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2005; Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007). When phone and in-person were combined, estimated rates were highest (see Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2005). On-the-job harrassment can occur separately or in conjunction with stalking behavior which is generally defined as:

Harassing or threatening behavior that an individual engages in repeatedly, such as following a person, appearing at a person’s home or place of objects, or vandalizing a person’s property. (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998)

When victims of intimate partner violence are stalked, it is difficult to keep the violence separate from employment. Logan, Shannon, Cole and Swanberg (2007) compared two groups of employed women who had received a Protective Order against a violent partner, one group had been stalked (n=243) and the other group had not (n=239). They found that the group that was stalked experienced statistically significant greater amounts of on-the-job harrassment and work disruption tactics (discussed below) than the group who were not stalked. The only work disruption tactic that was not significantly different between the two groups was “not show up to care for the children” (Logan, Shannon, Cole, & Swanberg, 2007, p. 275). The group of victims who were stalked also
reported significantly higher rates of job performance problems than the group of victims who were not stalked (Logan, Shannon, Cole, & Swanberg, 2007). Therefore, a stalking victim might be more likely to be terminated or feel that she must resign for safety reasons.

*Type of Abuse: Work Disruption.* The second type of work interference categorized by Swanberg et al. (2005) is “work disruption.” Work disruption occurs when the abuser acts to prevent his partner from going to work, or causes her to be late, leave early or terminate employment. Among the ways he does this are by threatening her, her children or her pets if she works (Brush, 2003; Moe & Bell, 2004; Lloyd, 1997; Riger, Raja, & Camacho, 2002), by depriving her of sleep so she is late or misses work (Brush, 2003; Moe & Bell, 2004; Raphael, 1997; Swanberg & Logan, 2005), by causing chronic fatigue that contributes to poor productivity or job performance (Moe & Bell, 2004), by destroying her property needed for work, or damaging or disabling her vehicle (Brush, 2003; Moe & Bell, 2004; Riger, Raja, & Camacho, 2002; Swanberg & Logan, 2005), by cutting her hair or inflicting physical injury (Raphael, 1995); and by physically restraining her from going to work (Lloyd & Taluc, 1999; Riger, Ahrens, & Blickenstaff, 2000; Shepard & Pence, 1988). However, Reeves & O'Leary-Kelley (2007) found no significant difference in tardiness between victims of intimate partner violence and non-victims.

Research has shown that current victims are less likely to be absent from work than lifetime victims (Coker, Smith, McKeown, & King, 2000; Golding, 1999; Plichta, 2004; Reeves & O'Leary-Kelley, 2007; Wisner, Gilmer, Saltzman, & Zink, 1999). One possible explanation is that current victims may find refuge from the abuse at work.
Another reason may be that victims view work as a means to rid themselves of the abuse. In her analysis of 276 cases, Lloyd (1997) reported that a small portion (6%) of the women said intimate partner violence had a positive effect on their work or school such as making them mentally stronger or more determined to succeed (Lloyd, 1997). This illustrates how the individual responses to the environment can vary among victims.

Socioecological theorists recognize that microlevel systems are nested in a context of larger systems (e.g., extended family/community) at the next level of the ecological system – the mezzolevel (sometimes written as mesolevel) (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Transactions between microlevel units and the context in which they are situated are not unidirectional, actions at each level support or constrain those at other levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986). The next section discusses contextual factors found at the mezzolevel that influence employment choices and outcomes for victims of intimate partner violence.

*Mezzolevel*

Transactions at the mezzolevel are often between two or more micro-level systems, such as between the victim and her partner, between the victim and her family, or between the victim and her workplace. These transactions may be related to employment (See Figure 3: Mezzolevel Factors Related to Employment). Here several areas of literature are reviewed: first, literature that focuses on the victim’s relationship with her intimate partner as it relates to employment; second, how social support from family and friends may influence employment; and finally, literature on workplace support and resources, and workplace structure and culture.
Figure 3: Mezzolevel Factors Related to Employment

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<th>FAMILY RELATED</th>
<th>WORKPLACE RELATED</th>
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<td>• Couple Relationship</td>
<td>• Workplace support</td>
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<td>• Social support –</td>
<td>• Disclosure &amp; Employer Response to IPV</td>
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<td>o Emotional support</td>
<td>• Workplace Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Tangible support</td>
<td>• Structure and culture of the workplace</td>
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_Couple Relationship: Gender-roles & Relationship._ Literature at the mezzolevel has come at the problem of intimate partner violence in the workplace from many directions. Much of the literature in the late 90s and early 2000s focused on low-income women or welfare recipients (Bell, 2003; Browne, Salomon, & Bassuk, 1999; Brush, 2000, 2003; Lloyd, 1997; Lloyd & Taluc, 1999; McFarlane, Malecha, Gist, Schultz, Wilson, & Fredland, 2000; Riger, Ahrens, & Blickenstaff, 2000). Findings from these studies established a relationship between intimate partner violence and disruption of employment or school for victims; however, the causal direction between intimate partner violence and women’s poverty was not established.

Researchers looked to stress and resource theories (Fox, Benson, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2002), relative and gendered resource theories (Atkinson, Greenstein, & Lang, 2005) and grounded theory (Moe & Bell, 2004) to explain the relationship between intimate partner violence and women’s employment. Studies focused on combined resources or the relationship between the victim’s resources (i.e., education, income, status, etc.) and those of her intimate partner (Atkinson, Greenstein, & Lang, 2005; Fox, Benson, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2002; Kaukinen, 2004). Findings indicate that stress alone does not result in intimate partner violence, nor does a disparity in couple resources; it is the combination of gendered attitudes and resource disparities that
increase the likelihood of intimate partner violence (Atkinson, Greenstein, & Lang, 2005; Fox, Benson, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2002; Kaukinen, 2004).

Marital satisfaction for men in dual-income couples has been shown to be related to the relative difference between his and his wife’s income (Brennan, Barnett, & Gareis, 2001). The man who indicates satisfaction from being the bread-winner reports less marital satisfaction when his wife’s salary is much higher than his (Brennan, Barnett, & Gareis, 2001). Fox and her colleagues (2002) used two waves of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) to examine the effects of employment as a predictor of intimate partner violence. They used logistic regression with a sample of couples present in both waves one and two of NSFH (N=3,262) and found that employment of either spouse alone did not increase risk of intimate partner violence; however, a drop in the man’s share of household earnings increased the risk of violence by 30% (odds ratio=1.305). This is similar to Macmillan and Gardner’s (1999) findings that being employed reduced a woman’s risk of intimate partner violence by 51% when her spouse was working, but increased the odds of intimate partner violence by 48% when her spouse was unemployed.

Brush (2003) learned that employment has a mixed impact on the occurrence and severity of intimate partner violence. She found that violence began or increased when they were working for 40% of victims in her sample (n=25), remained the same for 40%, and decreased for 20% (Brush, 2003). However, these findings should be viewed cautiously because the sample was small and non-representative. Researchers have shown that other factors such as employment status, partners’ relative income and gender
attitudes influence the correlation between employment and victimization (Atkinson, Greenstein, & Lang, 2005; Fox, Benson, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2002; Kaukinen, 2004).

Atkinson, Greenstein and Lang (2005) used data from the first wave of NSFH (N= 4,296) to examine the interaction effects of husband’s earnings relative to the total couple earnings and husband’s gender ideology (i.e., egalitarian, transitional, or traditional) as predictors of intimate partner violence (i.e., physical, non-sexual abuse). Using logistic regression, they found that as the man’s earnings decreased relative to total couple earnings, the risk of intimate partner abuse increased significantly among the group of men with traditional gender ideology (i.e., husbands should be bread winners and wives should stay at home) (Atkinson, Greenstein, & Lang, 2005). Among men with egalitarian gender ideology (i.e., husbands and wives should share the work involved in family life), there was a very weak association between the risk of intimate partner violence and the level of relative income. The transitional or moderate group of men (i.e., those whose scores fell midway between the traditional and egalitarian scores on the gender ideology index) showed a small positive association (i.e., an increase in risk of intimate partner violence as their relative income decreased) (Atkinson, Greenstein, & Lang, 2005). Kaukinen (2004) found similar results for both physical and emotional abuse using a Canadian sample.

Kaukinen (2004) used the 1999, Canadian General Social Survey data to examine the association between status incompatibility and intimate partner violence (both emotional and physical abuse). She found that a reverse status woman (i.e., employed with an unemployed partner) has a 40% higher risk of emotional abuse than a woman with traditional status (i.e., both employed). In general, when a woman’s education and
income increase, her risk of intimate partner violence decreases (Kaukinen, 2004). However, when a woman’s education or income is greater than her partner’s, her risk increases for both physical and emotional abuse (Kaukinen, 2004). This supports Yllo’s (1983, 1984) findings that show a curvilinear relationship between the rate of violence and woman’s economic status, with the highest rates of violence among high-status women married to men with male-dominant attitudes.

To summarize, employment may reduce the risk of intimate partner violence as women earn more. However, it can also lead to increased risk of intimate partner violence when there are disparities in earnings or employment status between partners where the woman has the higher status. Women may experience increased risk of both emotional and physical abuse as her salary increases relative to her male partner. The risk is even greater when her partner has traditional gender ideologies. Working increases risks for women, but it also provides benefits to victims that may not be available when they are not employed, such as social support and financial resources.

**Social support: Friends and Family.** Research has continued to identify environmental and social factors that interact with intrapersonal factors to affect the victim’s ability to escape the violence (Carlson, 1997; Fondacaro & Jackson, 1999). Social support is one factor known to be associated with reduced mental health outcomes and improved employment. Social support has been defined as either support that has actually been received or support that the victim believes to be available (Lee, Pomeroy, & Bohman, 2007). Social support has been identified as emotional support, informational support, advice and feedback, and tangible goods and resources such
providing financial assistance, childcare or transportation (Fowler & Hill, 2004; Kocot & Goodman, 2003; Lee, Pomeroy, & Bohman, 2007).

Social support interacts in a positive way with the victim’s personal coping style to reduce mental health problems that can prohibit a woman from being able to escape her abusive partner (Ards & Myers, 2003; Coker, Smith, Thompson, McKeown, Bethea, & Davis, 2002; Glass, Perrin, Campbell, & Soeken, 2007; Kocot & Goodman, 2003; Lee, Pomeroy, & Bohman, 2007). However, it is important not to generalize these findings to all women, because Lee et al. (2007) found differences between Caucasian and Asian women in the effects of perceived social support on mental health outcomes, when victims used a passive coping strategy.

Social support did not have a mediating effect on either PTSD or depression in a sample of 61 victimized Asian women who used a passive coping strategy to deal with intimate partner violence (Lee, Pomeroy, & Bohman, 2007). The researchers suggested that even though the Asian women in their study perceived they had available social supports within their culture, their hesitancy to use those resources led to victims feeling trapped and potentially increased their symptomology (Lee, Pomeroy, & Bohman, 2007). Research is needed to better understand what is needed to facilitate disclosure among various ethnic groups.

There are few studies that have focused on intimate partner disclosure to family and friends. Montalvo-Liendo (2009) reviewed 42 articles on disclosure of intimate partner violence to formal (i.e., medical personnel, service providers, and police) or informal (i.e., family and friends) supporters and identified factors across different ethnic groups that influence a woman’s choice to disclose. She found cultural differences
among various ethnic groups and even between two studies of the same ethnic group. For instance, one group of Japanese women reported they preferred a one-on-one setting when talking about intimate partner violence, whereas, another group of Japanese women were comfortable sharing about abuse in a focus-group setting (for a full discussion on ethnic differences see Montalvo-Liendo, 2009).

Victims of intimate partner can become isolated from family and friends because they do not want to endanger those they care about by exposing them to their abusive partner (Campbell & Soeken, 1999). When the victim is self-confident, in a safe environment, showing signs of abuse, living in the United States for some time and having a supportive family, she will be more likely to disclose than when she is feeling insecure or in an uncomfortable environment (Montalvo-Liendo, 2009). The main categories of factors that inhibit disclosure are fear, shame, embarrassment, time constraints by providers, providers not asking about intimate partner violence, religious beliefs, issues around children (i.e., not wanting to displace them from home, fear of losing custody, etc.), language barriers, settings for self-disclosure (i.e., group settings were more difficult for some), and forced silence (i.e., by perpetrator or by cultural pressures) (Montalvo-Liendo, 2009).

Workplace support. Research indicates that the workplace may offer some level of social support that helps to reduce mental health problems of victimized employs (Brush, 2003) and provides resources to victims that increase their likelihood of remaining employed (Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007). One qualitative study of 21 victims of intimate partner violence found that working benefited these women in six ways: by improving their finances, promoting physical safety, increasing self-esteem, improving
social connectedness, providing mental respite and providing motivation or purpose (Rothman, Hathaway, Stedsen, & deVries, 2007). By increasing social connections, employment may help reduce the mental health effects of intimate partner violence on victims.

Supportive social relationships have been shown to have a positive effect on the improvement of PTSD symptoms in crime victims and victims of physical or sexual trauma (Glass, Perrin, Campbell, & Soeken, 2007; Hyman, Gold, & Cott, 2003; Vogel & Marshall, 2001). Many of the nine symptoms associated with posttraumatic stress improved when women in a sample of welfare recipients were working; however working had no impact on nightmares and a negative impact on dissociative symptoms (i.e., emotional numbing) – numbing started or became worse with working (Brush, 2003). One possible explanation for the positive impact of work on symptomology is that employment offers the victim an opportunity to share her feelings and experiences in a supportive atmosphere.

There is also evidence that working may reduce depression among victims of intimate partner violence. Women with low socioeconomic status or living in poverty are at increased risk of intimate partner violence and mental health problems that can interfere with employment (Campbell, Kub, Belknap, & Templin, 1997; Ceballo, Ramirez, Castillo, Caballero, & Lozoff, 2004; Ham-Rowbottom, Gordon, Jarvis, & Novaco, 2005). However, when work is measured as a single dimension (i.e., employed/unemployed), researchers have found no significant correlation between work and depression (Campbell, Kub, Belknap, & Templin, 1997; Demaris & Kaukinen, 2005).
Thus working does not increase depressive symptoms and may even provide protection against depression.

One longitudinal study of women survivors of intimate partner violence found that women who were employed had a significant reduction in depressive symptoms when compared with women who remained unemployed (Mascaro, Arnette, Santana, & Kaslow, 2007). These findings are similar to those of Campbell and her colleagues (1997). They combined income, education and occupation to form an index of tangible resources to measure economic security and found that economic security was significantly negatively correlated with depressive symptoms (r=-.20, p<.01) (Campbell, Kub, Belknap, & Templin, 1997).

Rothman et al.’s (2007) study would indicate that working benefits victims in multiple ways, however, one limitation of their study is that researchers used a sample of convenience recruited from a large health-care organization. The 21 women who participated in the study were less than half of those eligible for interview (n=51) according to the researchers’ criteria (i.e., at least three visits with the Employment Assistance Program counselor around the issue of intimate partner violence). There is no way to determine if the other potential participants experienced the same or similar benefits from working, or if only those who had positive experiences were willing to participate. Also, it is not known how many victims of intimate partner violence employed by the company did not seek help from the Employment Assistance Program. Another limitation of Rothman et al.’s (2007) study is that all women were recruited from one organization; women employed in a different organization may feel differently about the benefits of working. The types of response victims receive from their
employers and the way employers view the company’s role in regard to victims’ of intimate partner violence varies among corporations (Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2007).

**Disclosure and Employer Response.** Corporate executives are slower to recognize the extent and impact of intimate partner violence on the workplace than their employees. Slightly less than half (48%) of corporate executives interviewed in one national survey believe that intimate partner violence has a negative impact on their company’s bottom line (Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2007). Corporate executives are just beginning to understand that intimate partner violence affects employee absence and productivity for both victims and their co-workers when both victims and co-workers experience fear, threats and danger to their well-being from perpetrators of intimate partner violence (Katula & Simpson, 2006; Reeves & O'Leary-Kelley, 2007). In contrast, studies focusing on employees have found between 57 to 98% of employees believe that victims in their workplace are negatively impacted by intimate partner violence in terms of work performance (Associated Industries of the Inland Northwest, Spokane County Domestic Violence Consortium; Spokane County Sheriff’s Department; Spokane Police Department; Washington State University, 2005; Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2007).

One reason corporate executives may be unaware of the extent of the problem of intimate partner violence is the employee’s reluctance to disclose victimization by an intimate partner to their manager or supervisor. Women in managerial or professional positions fear that if their employers see them as a “victim,” it will undermine their role as an authority figure and impair confidence in their ability to handle problem situations
(Kwesiga, Bell, Pattie, & Moe, 2007). Women are significantly less likely than men to believe that disclosing intimate partner violence victimization to their employer would elicit a positive response (AIIN, 2005).

There is very little literature on disclosure of intimate partner violence in the workplace. One study by Maij-de Meij, Kelderman, and van der Flier (2005) used a computer-administered questionnaire to test workplace disclosure models at a Dutch consulting firm (n=1113; 811 men, 302 women). The study was not specific to intimate partner violence; however, they found that even disclosure of benign information involves the interaction of latent personality traits, environmental cues and situation specificity (Maij-de Meij, Kelderman, & van der Flier, 2005). This is consistent with Montalvo-Liendo’s (2009) findings that factors that cut across ethnic and racial groups to positively influence disclosure fall into two areas: first, the characteristics of the person to whom the disclosure is being made; and second, the characteristics of the person disclosing. As might be expected, it is easier for women of various groups to disclose to a person who is a good-listener, non-judgemental, trusted, understanding, validating, not rushed, and not probing for too many details (Montalvo-Liendo, 2009). When victims are getting negative cues that trigger feelings such as “fear of losing their job,” or “fear further humiliation from abuser,” they are unlikely to disclose (Logan, Shannon, Cole, & Swanberg, 2007). One small qualitative study has identified personal characteristics that inhibit disclosure in the workplace (Swanberg & Logan, 2005). Swanberg and Logan (2005) interviewed 32 women who were currently employed or had been employed in the two years previous to the interview while being simultaneously experiencing intimate partner abuse. The researchers initially used focus-groups to collect data, but revised the
method to include individual interviews because participants preferred to give the details of their experience confidentially. The reasons reported for not disclosing included fear of job loss, shame over the situation, and their ability to cope with the abuse on their own (Swanberg & Logan, 2005).

One small unpublished qualitative study, using in-depth interviews with victims of intimate partner violence reported within nine paid positions two types of workplace disclosure: forced disclosure (i.e., situational disclosure) and non-forced disclosure (i.e., purposeful disclosure); and two types of victim non-disclosure: non-disclosure that results because the intimate partner violence does not interfere or spill over into the victims employment (i.e., inactive concealment), and victim concealment of intimate partner violence in anticipation of negative consequences (i.e., purposeful concealment) (Zuckerman, 2009) (See Figure 4: Disclosure Typology).

An example of purposeful disclosure is when the victim purposefully decides to tell her employer, supervisor or manager that she is a victim of intimate partner violence and her decision is made without coercion or pressure from anyone else. One participant disclosed to her co-worker that she was a victim of intimate partner violence because she was concerned for the safety of her co-worker (Zuckerman, 2009). Another reason that a victim may choose to disclose is for the safety of customers where she works (Collins, 2004).

Figure 4: Disclosure Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES</th>
<th>FORCED</th>
<th>NON-FORCED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure</td>
<td>Situational Disclosure</td>
<td>Purposeful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Outed” by circumstances,</td>
<td>Chose to disclose without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>abuser or others</td>
<td>pressure from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Disclosure</td>
<td>Purposeful concealment</td>
<td>Inactive concealment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Concealed” for fear of</td>
<td>No disclosure; no reason or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consequences</td>
<td>pressure to disclose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41
Situational disclosure occurs when the circumstances surrounding the victimization force a disclosure. For example, one victim felt compelled to disclose the abuse to her employer when she entered a shelter for battered women and missed several days of work due to injuries suffered from the abuse (Zuckerman, 2009). She believed that if she did not disclose the reason for her absence, she would lose her job.

The employee may believe that she has no choice but to disclose that she is a victim of intimate partner violence when others are already aware (Swanberg & Logan, 2005). One victim confided in a co-worker about her problems because the abuse was affecting her work:

> My [work] partner was very good because I was at a different job at that time; my partner was very good, like “it’s okay, go home” or “do you need to take the afternoon off?” What made it difficult too was that I was working with families like directly, you can’t show up for a home visit and being like… you know, a complete wreck so there were definitely days that I just said “I need to go home, I can’t do this” and I had to leave and… (Zuckerman, 2009)

Other examples of situational disclosure occur when the perpetrator or others inform the victim’s employer that she is being victimized or when the violence occurs in the workplace (Logan, Shannon, Cole, & Swanberg, 2007; Swanberg & Logan, 2005). For example, when an intimate partner stalks his victim at work and makes negative comments in the presence of her co-workers, it is impossible for her to keep the abuse a secret (Zuckerman, 2009).
Non-disclosure can result from no action on the part of the victim, or the victim may take steps to prevent disclosure. One form of non-disclosure, inactive concealment results when the victim conceals that she is a victim because the violence is not interfering with work and there is no compelling reason to disclose the victimization to her employer. For example, one victim did not tell her employer and co-workers at her job because the abuse at that time was limited to text messages and cell-phone messages that did not interfere with her working (Zuckerman, 2009). Another victim chose not to disclose to anyone at two of her positions, but terminated her employment before the abuse spilled over into her work place (Zuckerman, 2009).

When the violence or its effects spill over into the workplace it becomes more difficult to keep the employer from knowing. Purposeful concealment occurs when the victim actively tries to prevent her employer from finding out that she is a victim of intimate partner violence or that the victimization is continuing. Victims try to hide their victimization by lying, or making up alternative explanations for injuries, missed days, or other signs of their victimization. Known reasons for concealing the violence include fear of job loss, shame about the situation, perceptions that it is a personal matter, or fear of further humiliation by the abuser for telling someone at work (Busch & Wolfer, 2002; Kwesiga, Bell, Pattie, & Moe, 2007; Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007; Swanberg & Logan, 2005). Another reason is that the supervisor gives the victim clear cues not to involve those at her workplace (Zuckerman, 2009).

Swanberg, Macke, and Logan (2007) interviewed a sample of women who had experienced victimization during the time they were employed and had disclosed the abuse to their employer (N=310). Of the women who disclosed, 73% were employed and
27% unemployed at the time of the interview with workplace support being a significant predictor of employment retention (Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007). Logistic regression was used to show that disclosure and workplace supports were significant factors in the victims’ current employment status. The women who remained employed had received a significantly greater number of workplace supports than the women who were unemployed (Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007). The researchers combined support from co-workers and employers into “workplace support,” so it is difficult to determine the primary source of support came from the employer or co-workers.

Women who were employed at the time of the interview received significantly more of the following social supports or resources: referrals to a counselor or professional; schedule flexibility; assistance with work security plans; calls from partner screened; listening ear about the situation; coworkers spending break time with the victim; and coworkers coming up with a safety plan for a specific night (Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007, p. 304). Thus, receiving either formal support or informal support from those in her workplace can make a difference in the victim being able to remain employed.

These findings are similar to findings from a qualitative study in which Swanberg and Logan (2005) found that most (86%) of the 15 women interviewed, who disclosed abuse to their supervisor or manager, received either formal or informal workplace supports similar to those previously listed (Swanberg & Logan, 2005). Other items that victims in the qualitative study identified as valuable to remaining employed were having their abusive partner removed from the premises and being allowed to use vacation time or sick leave to deal with the violence (Swanberg & Logan, 2005).
In contrast to Swanberg and Logan’s (2005) findings, other victims have received a negative response upon disclosing intimate partner violence. Logan, Shannon, Cole, and Swanberg (2007) found in their mixed-methods study with a small sample of 62 stalking victims that employers commonly “apply social pressure or disciplinary action” on the victimized employee when learning of her victimization. Another victim, a bank employee, reported being terminated after trying to protect others by disclosing that she and possibly they (i.e., coworkers and clients) were in danger from her violent partner (Collins, 2004). Other studies report mixed responses from employers with some women receiving support and others being terminated (Browne, Salomon, & Bassuk, 1999; Brush, 2002; Lloyd, 1997; Riger, Ahrens, & Blickenstaff, 2000; Saltzstein, Ting, & Saltzstein, 2001).

There is little research on factors that influence the employer’s choice of response to a victim’s disclosure of intimate partner violence. However, one factor to be considered is the extent that abuse spills over into the workplace. It should be noted that in the Logan et al. (2007) study that reported a negative response from the employer, nearly all (95%) of the stalking victims (n= 243) and 75% of non-stalking victims (n=239) reported on-the-job harrassment, work disruption, and job performance problems; whereas in Swanberg et al. (2007) study that reported a positive response, less than half (40%) of the sample (n=494) experienced in-person harrassment on the job and just over half (60%) experienced phone harrassment. Perhaps employers are more likely to hold the victim responsible when intimate partner violence disrupts the workplace. More research is needed on how the type of abuse, the amount of workplace disruption,
and other factors influence employer response and its subsequent effect on victims’ employment.

Workplace Structure and Culture

Other factors that influence a victim’s decision around disclosing her victimization and using available resources are the size and type of business. A small business with few employees may not be able to offer the type of benefit plan and resources available to employees at a large corporation (Associated Industries of the Inland Northwest et al., 2005; Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2007). A small, family run business may be concerned about their image and patrons. For example, one manager informed a victimized employee who had recently returned to work after spending a few days in a domestic violence shelter recovering from injuries:

Nice to see you back to work but you know we’re a friendly, family type business and I would hate to think that there might be any trouble…. we’re running a nice restaurant and there’s families…and I hope we won’t see any trouble. (Zuckerman, 2009)

Smaller businesses usually require employees to earn benefits by working for an extended period of time before benefits begin (Piotrkowski & Kessler-Sklar, 1996). Many small businesses and non-unionized employers offer few or no benefits for paid personal time, sick days, or other family-supportive benefits to any of their employees, and to new hires in particular (Piotrkowski & Kessler-Sklar, 1996). This puts a hardship on victims of intimate partner violence who may be hesitant to miss work to attend medical appointments, make criminal reports or attend legal hearings if it means a loss of
income. Recent changes in health care legislation may have an effect on health care benefits.

Workplace resources. Victims do better when organizations offer benefit packages that offer personal time to deal with appointments (Johnson & Indvik, 1999); however as previously mentioned some women are fearful about using their benefits because they worry that taking time off will jeopardize their chances for promotion or may put their job at risk. When employers clearly support victims and reassure them that taking time to deal with their abusive partner will not jeopardize their position, women are more likely to take advantage of available benefits (Johnson & Indvik, 1999). Having a workplace culture that supports women may encourage women to use existing resources.

Researchers propose that workplace culture can affect the victim’s decision to use resources available in the workplace (Kwesiga, Bell, Pattie, & Moe, 2007). Kwesiga et al. (2007, p. 316) argue that when women are employed by gendered organizations, those organizations whose “cultures, policies, and norms … are constructed in ways that advance the interest of men,” they are less likely to access resources, such as the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Advocates for victims of intimate partner violence suggest that when the organization’s culture is family-friendly, women are more likely to continue working while they cope with intimate partner violence (Partnership for Prevention, 2002; Safe Horizon, 2007). When employers enact intimate partner violence policies and programs that increases awareness among victims, their coworkers and management personnel, it creates an atmosphere that promotes disclosure and support of victims in the workplace.
Family-friendly organizations offer a range of resources that help victims of intimate partner violence remain employed longer (See Figure 5: Family-friendly Corporate Resources). Family-friendly resources such as childcare and flexible hours enable women to better able to maintain steady employment. Another example, when the employer allows a victim to work a flexible schedule, it makes it difficult for her abuser to know when his partner will be entering or leaving work thus making it safer for her to continue working (Farmer & Tiefenthaler, 2002; Katula & Simpson, 2006b).

**Figure 5: Family-Friendly Corporate Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>RESOURCES NON-SPECIFIC TO IPV</strong></th>
<th><strong>RESOURCES SPECIFIC TO VICTIMS OF IPV</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Paid or unpaid time off (or leave of absence); sick days, personal time, vacation time</td>
<td>• Specialized teams designed to provide education on intimate partner violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexible hours</td>
<td>• Paid or unpaid time off to take protective actions (moving, file for protective order), to seek medical attention or counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Affordable childcare</td>
<td>• Alternate scheduling, relocation to another job site; or unpredictable scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employee Assistance Program</td>
<td>• Changing parking spot, provide a security escort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Specialized teams designed to provide multidisciplinary assistance to victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pressing charges against perpetrator and going to court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing legal assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing financial assistance (e.g., paying for accommodations, loans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluate paycheck delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Screen phone calls &amp; remove victims’ names from outgoing messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide picture of perpetrator to security personnel and managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assistance with identifying and maintaining emergency contacts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Katula & Simpson, 2006; Lindquist, Clinton-Sherrod, Hardison, & Weimer, 2006)
For example, one tactic commonly used by abusive partners to sabotage women’s employment is failing to provide childcare as promised (Brush, 2002; Katula & Simpson, 2006a; Moe & Bell, 2004). When employers provide affordable daycare options, victims do not have to rely on their abusive partner to provide childcare and are better able to remain employed.

Employers are being challenged by victim advocacy groups such as “Safework 2010” to recognize intimate partner violence as a corporate problem that can be addressed through workplace initiatives (Safe Horizon, 2007). Liz Claiborne Incorporated, the Altria Family of Companies, and the National Business Group on Health are among the corporations that have accepted the challenge and have initiated coalitions and organizations towards the aim of developing workplace policies and increasing awareness of employer responsibility (Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2008; Safe at Work, 2002; Safe Horizon, 2007). Labor unions have also accepted the challenge and are working with businesses and domestic violence programs to provide training, offer resources and increase awareness within the business community (Safe at Work, 2002).

One of the first and largest initiatives is the Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence (CAEPV) (Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2008). CAEPV funds research and supports websites that provide resources and information on intimate partner violence in the workplace (Associated Industries of the Inland Northwest et al., 2005; Bailey, 2002; Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2008; Farmer & Tiefenthaler, 2002; Lindquist, Clinton-Sherrod, Hardison, & Weimer, 2006). Groups such as the Family Violence Prevention Fund, the Safe at Work Coalition, Peace at Work, and the
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence offer on-line resources and consultation on how to design and implement intimate partner violence policies.

However, there is little empirical evidence that corporate initiatives are making a difference in workplace disclosure or retention. The evidence provided is often based on program evaluations and anecdotal reporting of victim “success stories,” that depict ways in which the company helped the victim to maintain her employment. Only six companies studied by Lindquist et al. (2006) attempted any type of program evaluation; two companies used participant satisfaction surveys from employees who used the program; two companies had pre- and post-tests regarding specific components of the program; and two companies issued employee surveys regarding knowledge of steps to take in certain situations related to intimate partner violence. Other companies and organizations measure success by the number of people educated or the number of companies enlisted into the alliance (Associated Industries of the Inland Northwest et al., 2005; Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2008; Milano, 2008; Safe Horizon, 2007).

Milano (2008) deemed one program successful because the company relocated 100 employees who were victims of intimate partner violence and planned to educate all of their 70,000 employees. However, Milano (2008) did not report how many employees were victims of intimate partner violence or what percentage of victims received assistance. Based on the data she provided, the lauded company relocated less than one percent of their employees (.001 %) (Milano, 2008), while estimated rates of current intimate partner victimization among female employees is between ten and twenty-seven percent (Associated Industries of the Inland Northwest et al., 2005; Reeves & O'Leary-
Kelley, 2007). There was no mention of follow-up with the victims to determine if they remained employed or safe after re-location.

Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence (2008) reports 95% of companies currently do not have an intimate partner violence policy. They are not necessarily gendered organizations, but employers who do not see intimate partner violence as a workplace issue. Many companies still believe that intimate partner violence is a personal problem and need not be addressed by the employer (Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2002, 2007). One possible reason for their attitude is that intimate partner violence represents only one percent of all workplace violence (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001). In the current economy, it is unlikely that many companies, even family-friendly companies, will be motivated to develop intimate partner violence programs without empirical data to show that such a program would actually increase their bottom line.

To summarize, at the mezzolevel victims of intimate partner violence experience transactions with individuals who are part of a larger system (e.g., family or workplace) that have direct and mediating effects on the individual. Social support from her family, friends or workplace has been shown to mediate both depressive symptoms and PTSD symptoms in women. However, the victim’s culture and personal characteristics may influence her use of available social support to cope with intimate partner violence. For example, one study using a sample of Asian women reports that having social support available did not mediate mental health effects of intimate partner violence, because of victims’ hesitancy to use existing resources (Lee, Pomeroy, & Bohman, 2007).
Literature that has focused on intimate partner violence and employment has often ignored contextual factors of the workplace, because early studies were grounded in interest related to women moving off welfare into the workforce (Browne, Salomon, & Bassuk, 1999; Brush, 2000; Danziger, Corcoran, Danziger, & Heflin, 2000; Meisel, Chandler, & Rienzi, 2003). Much of the research on work and women has been conducted with low-income women and welfare recipients, leaving a huge gap in the literature on working women who are considered mid- or high-income.

Kwesiga, Bell, Pattie, and Moe (2007) propose that high-income high-status working women are affected by their work environment in that gendered environments prohibit female victims from accessing available resources; however, there is no empirical evidence to support or refute their claims. Swanberg, Logan, & Macke (2005, p. 298) reviewed the literature on working women and intimate partner violence and suggested that disclosure of intimate partner violence in the workplace was an “overall positive experience.” Their conclusion may have been premature, because the women in Logan, Shannon, Cole, and Swanberg’s (2007, p. 287) study reported that intimate partner violence disclosure resulted in “responses of their employers or co-workers essentially punished the stalking victim for her partner and/or former partner’s behavior.” The contradiction in responses points to the need for continued research, including that which simultaneously considers multiple factors at once – personal, abuse related and workplace factors – that affect disclosure and employment outcomes.

One study that explored the relationship between workplace disclosure of intimate partner victimization and employment status using a sample of victimized women who were employed within the past year (N=485) found a significant positive relationship
between disclosing to someone at the workplace and remaining employed; however, they used *employed in the past year* as the criteria, because they acknowledge differences between long-term and short-term employment issues (Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007). Research that goes beyond short-term (less than twelve months) will help researchers understand how the length of employment affects women’s decisions to disclose and what issues to consider for future research.

Another area that needs further research is how severity of the abuse affects disclosure and employment outcomes. Swanberg, Macke, and Logan (2007) found a significant (p<.01), difference in the severity of sexual abuse between the employed and unemployed groups but failed to include it in the analysis because of missing data. Disease theory used with HIV-positive patients says that as the disease progresses, the rewards outweigh the risks prompting disclosure (Serovich, Lim, & Maon, 2008). Perhaps it is the similar with victims of intimate partner violence; perhaps women who are more severely abused feel that they have less to lose by disclosing and more to gain. Or perhaps they are forced to disclose because of missed time or injuries. To date there is only data from a small pilot study that explores the types of disclosure and how different types are related to employment outcomes.

The factors at the mezzolevel interact with microlevel and macrolevel factors to influence behaviors and outcomes. The following section discusses economical and political environments (i.e., macrolevel factors) that interact with mezzolevel systems to influence victim’s decisions and actions.

**Macrolevel**

Social, political and economic systems at the macrolevel influence actions at
the microlevel and mezzolevel. Economic trends, social values, state and federal legislation, and international factors all have an impact on employers, families and individuals. Here the literature on selected factors is reviewed (See Figure 6: Macrolevel Factors Related to Employment) including literature on social stigma, economic realities in today’s society, and legislation at both the state and federal levels.

**Figure 6: Macrolevel Factors Related to Employment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Factors</th>
<th>Economic Factors</th>
<th>Social Policy Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Stigma of IPV</td>
<td>High unemployment</td>
<td>Federal Legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competitive Market</td>
<td>State Legislation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Social stigma.* One study that explored public attitudes toward intimate partner violence in a random probability sample of 1200 telephone interviews found that although most people believe intimate partner violence commonly occurs, they are not sure what types of intimate partner violence constitute criminal behavior (Carlson & Worden, 2005). Two thirds of the sample said they believed that intimate partner occurs frequently or sometimes (Carlson & Worden, 2005). As awareness of intimate partner violence increases among the general public, one might expect that the stigma of being victimized would be reduced. However, studies show that victims tend to withhold or downplay their victimization for various reasons including cultural loyalty (Bent-Goodly, 2004; Shiu-Thornton, Senturia, & Sullivan, 2005; Weis, 2001). They do not want to bring shame to their family or their community by openly talking about their victimization, thus women continue to believe that intimate partner violence carries a stigma.
There are no empirical studies on the relationship between intimate partner violence, stigma and disclosure but research has been done on another stigmatizing problem, that of a positive HIV diagnosis and disclosure. When evaluating the decision to disclose a positive HIV diagnosis, consequence theory contends that disclosure requires the person to perceive that rewards outweigh the costs before they will disclose (Serovich, Lim, & Maon, 2008). A meta-analysis of studies focused on disclosure of HIV-positive status found a negative, homogenous correlation between disclosure and stigma ($r = -0.189$) and a positive, heterogenous relationship between disclosure and social support ($r = 0.159$) (Smith, Rossetto, & Peterson, 2008). The homogenous findings indicates that findings across studies indicate that greater HIV stigma correlates negatively with disclosure (Smith, Rossetto, & Peterson, 2008). The heterogenous relationship between disclosure and social support indicates that there may be moderators, such as participants’ ages or the date of the study that influence disclosure (Smith, Rossetto, & Peterson, 2008). Also variations in how social support was operationalized across studies may have influenced findings. Serovich, Lim, and Maon (2008) report that HIV-infected women are likely to evaluate the consequences before they disclose their diagnosis to family and friends. As women’s symptoms progress, perceived rewards of disclosing begin to outweigh the negative consequences and significantly increases disclosure (Serovich, Lim, & Maon, 2008). More research on domestic violence disclosure is needed to see whether and how the HIV-disclosure findings relate to disclosure of intimate partner violence; however, both HIV-diagnosis and intimate partner violence are stigmatizing conditions that have been met with both positive and negative responses when disclosed. Most HIV studies in the meta-analysis
focused on disclosure to family and friends; in contrast, this study is focused on workplace disclosure. Workplace disclosure can have direct financial consequences that raise victims’ concerns around being fired if their employer finds out they are being victimized.

Economic factors. Systems at the macrolevel, such as national and international systems that affect economic conditions worldwide, can impact systems at both the microlevel and mezzolevel of the ecological system. For example, individuals at the microlevel can be affected when a national financial recession results in job loss or other financial problems within the family that lead to stressors that increase family conflict and intimate partner violence (Fox, Benson, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2002) and potentially increase women’s vulnerability to violence by reducing their financial options (Weissman, 2007). For example, victims may be hesitant to leave their abusive partner because they are financially dependent on him (Raphael, 1995). At the mezzolevel, national financial trends may cause employers to tighten their belts by freezing hiring or laying off employees.

Workplace competition is high in the current environment. Over 2.6 million Americans lost their jobs in 2008, and more cuts were experienced in 2009 according to the National Association of Business Economics (Goldman, 2009; US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). The unemployment rate increased from nine million in 2009 to over 14 million by January, 2010 (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). Greater competition for employment allows employers to demand more of employees and to increase work hours, thus heightening work-related stress; all of which have been shown
to be associated with increased intimate partner violence (Brush, 2003; Butler, Grzywacz, Bass, & Linney, 2005; Fox, Benson, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2002).

At the same time, competition for employment may reduce a victim’s willingness to share information about the violence with her employer for fear it would be used against her in decision-making around staff cuts (Kwesiga, Bell, Pattie, & Moe, 2007; Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2005). Even when her position offers benefits such as personal days or family leave time, a victim may be hesitant to take time off from work to seek a protection order, medical care or other abuse-related assistance for fear that it would increase her chance of being fired or reduce her chance of rehire (Kwesiga, Bell, Pattie, & Moe, 2007; Runge, 1998; Shepard & Pence, 1988).

Social Policy Factors. As previously discussed, employers who want to avoid coping with intimate partner violence in their workplace may choose to terminate the victimized employee rather than risk a law suit if the victim, her co-worker or a customer is injured by an abusive intimate partner. Research indicates between 21–60% of victims of intimate partner violence are at risk of losing their jobs for reasons stemming from the abuse (Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, 2007; McFarlane, Malecha, Gist, Schultz, Wilson, & Fredland, 2000; Riger, Ahrens, & Blickenstaff, 2000; Shepard & Pence, 1988). The broad range in estimates results from variation in methodology and differences in subject recruitment across studies; shelter populations tend to have higher rates of job loss. Many victims of intimate partner violence who are terminated have little recourse because the vast majority of employers in the United States hire and fire “at will” which means they do not need to have a reason to terminate an employee and can fire a victim for any reason, including “just for disclosing that she is a victim of
domestic violence” (Runge, 2004, p16). Victims may have recourse if they are protected by governmental law, a collective bargaining agreement as a union member, or a contractual agreement designated by workplace policy or employee’s handbook (Runge, 2004). With the law behind her, a victim who is fired illegally may win her case, but women are often more concerned with their immediate financial needs than what they might get in the future (Weiser & Widiss, 2004). Victims are already dealing with a stressful situation due to the violence and have little energy to battle with an employer who does not want them there (Zuckerman, 2009).

There are no federal laws designed specifically to protect victims of intimate partner violence from termination caused by violence that spills over into the workplace. However, there are federal statutes that can be applied to victims in some circumstances. For example, the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA) may protect a victim whose abuser is employed by the same company, because OSHA holds companies responsible "if there is a recognized hazard of workplace violence in their establishment and they do nothing to prevent or abate it" (Safe at Work, 2002). With no federal laws to protect victims from termination, state legislation is the only recourse to prevent discriminatory firing of victims and is an important factor in employment outcomes for victims.

Throughout most of New York State, the law offers a victim little protection when she is employed by a private company or small non-unionized business. According to tables and bulletins of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008, 2009), women tend to work in jobs characterized by 1) low wages; 2) clerical, sales, service, and related occupations; and 3) small establishment size. Small businesses rarely have policies to protect victims
of intimate partner violence and offer few benefits such as health care, sick days, and personal days with pay.

Low-income victims of intimate partner violence are often limited to unskilled positions, because they cycle in and out of employment creating an intermittent work pattern (Bell, 2003; Danziger, Corcoran, Danziger, & Heflin, 2000). Some states have passed legislation to help protect victims of intimate partner violence from being fired for reasons related to their victimization, however the legislation only applies to businesses with at least four employees and in some cases more.

The New York State Penal Law § 215.14 protects victims from being terminated when they attend court as a witness to a crime or when their partner harasses them at work (New York State Division for Human Rights, 2009). According to New York Labor Law § 593, if an employee quits or leaves work because of intimate partner violence, she should not be denied unemployment benefits (New York State Division for Human Rights, 2009). Nor should she be fired for misconduct related to the abuse (i.e., absenteeism or tardiness), because Judges in New York have ruled that intimate partner violence is “good cause” for the behaviors and the victim should not be penalized (Safe@Work Coalition, 2000).

In 2003, Illinois enacted the Victim’s Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA) that prevents employers (i.e., state government, school districts and private companies with 50 or more employees) from firing victims of intimate partner abuse for taking time off from work to attend appointments or other activities related to the violence (Safe at Work, 2002; Shaules, 2004). The Illinois VESSA law allows victims to take up to 12 weeks of job-guaranteed unpaid time off in a 12 month period; the time can
be taken in multiple short periods without fear of being fired, of losing health benefits, or of losing seniority (Illinois Legal Aid, 2006). Other states which have similar laws are California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine and New York (New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV), 2009; Shaules, 2004).

In summary, victims of intimate partner violence are influenced by factors at every level of their social ecological system. Social, economic and political factors at the macrolevel influence family and workplace systems at the mezzolevel, and the individual at the microlevel. These systems are interactive and dynamic. Factors at each level of the participants’ ecological systems interacted to influence their employment outcomes.
Chapter 3
Methodology

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to better understand what facilitates or hinders long-term employment by victims of intimate partner violence who are working. It explored the factors that facilitate or inhibit victims from accessing available resources that might help them remain employed in their current position for the long-term. The study focused on long-term employment as one step toward achieving economic self-sufficiency in the face of intimate partner violence. Long-term employment, that is remaining in the same position for a minimum of twelve months (Fischer, 2005) may improve the intimate partner violence victim’s chance of obtaining employment benefits such as wage increases, promotion, and health benefits, as well as intangible resources such as support from co-workers, increased self-esteem, and increased self-worth. In many cases, accessing resources requires employees to disclose victimization to their employer; therefore, the study also explored the factors that may inhibit or encourage disclosure to supervisors or managers in the workplace.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What barriers to long-term employment do victims of intimate partner violence encounter?

2. What types of assistance (formal and informal) do employed victims receive from their employers and/or co-workers that help them maintain employment while they cope with intimate partner violence?

3. What is the relationship between disclosure and employment related resources?
4. What barriers or facilitating factors do victims face when trying to access existing employment related protections or resources?

5. What additional resources do employed victims of intimate partner violence need to be able to remain employed long-term?

Method

This study is a qualitative, exploratory study using in-depth personal interviews. As previously mentioned, victims of intimate partner violence are often undercounted in surveys and hesitant to disclose confidential information without establishing trust. In-depth interviews allow the researcher the opportunity to develop trust and explore the interplay between factors at various levels. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for this study because there is very little research in the area of intimate partner violence among women who are working. Qualitative methods are the preferred way to gain an in-depth understanding or *verstehen* about the “lived experience” of a person (Padgett, 1998) and “as a means of acquiring holistic knowledge of complex social problems” (Fortune & Reid, 1999, p. 96). Therefore, the researcher used a retrospective, cross-sectional design that reviewed with the participant her lived experience during the period of her life when intimate partner violence and employment co-occur. The victim provided information about her experiences with co-occurring intimate partner violence and employment throughout her life.

Elder (1998, p. 45) proposed that mezzolevel structures mediate the “intersection of personal and social history.” Using a “person in her environment” approach, the study explored microlevel, mezzolevel, and macrolevel factors that transacted with personal or individual factors to influence the victims’ employment experiences.
Sample

To be eligible for the study a participant had to be a female between the ages of eighteen and sixty-four, who had simultaneously experienced heterosexual intimate partner violence and employment at some time in the thirty-six months prior to the interview (See Figure 7: Sample Parameters). The thirty-six month time frame was chosen based on the pilot study findings in which all of the participants had been separated from their abusive partner for over twelve months and had worked or sought employment at some time in the two years previous to the separation (Zuckerman, 2009). Initially, victims who had been abused within the six months prior to the interview were restricted from participating by the Institutional Review Board; however, after reconsideration that restriction was removed as of November 1, 2010, and any woman who had been abused within the previous thirty-six months was eligible for inclusion if she met other criteria. The IRB also restricted the inclusion of victims with severe mental health issues. The victims of same-sex intimate partner violence and male victims were excluded because variations in their relationship dynamics and disclosure variables may skew findings. Pregnant female victims were screened out for the protection of the fetus.

Figure 7: Sample Parameters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCLUSION CRITERIA</th>
<th>EXCLUSION CRITERIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Female who is</td>
<td>• Non-English speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ English speaking</td>
<td>• Males – of any age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Between the ages of 18 and 64</td>
<td>• Females - age 17 and below or age 65 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Experienced co-occurring IPV &amp; employment at any time within the 36 months prior to interview</td>
<td>• Co-occurring IPV &amp; employment ended 37 months or more prior to interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Victim of IPV by male partner</td>
<td>• IPV perpetrated by same sex partner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*IPV = intimate partner violence

Women who are pregnant at time of the interview

Women with severe mental health issues
The target number of 15-20 interviews was based on previous qualitative studies that explored the issue of intimate partner violence and employment. Those studies reported sample sizes ranging between 15 and 32 participants (Moe & Bell, 2004; Riger, Raja, & Camacho, 2002; Swanberg & Logan, 2005). However, this study contains only 13 participants. According to Creswell (1998), saturation is reached when categories of information are complete and additional interviews contribute no new information. Saturation was unattainable in this study, because it did not include victims with severe mental health issues per IRB restrictions. Also, none of the participants had experienced stalking by an intimate partner, which limits the ability to generalize these findings. However, in this study, over two thirds (n=9) of the thirteen participants had experienced at least two abusive relationships during the time she was employed and reported on an average of three full-time positions during the time they were abused. Subsequently, data was drawn from twenty-four abusive relationships and forty-one full-time positions and three part-time jobs held while experiencing intimate partner violence. The thirteen participants provided information from various perspectives (i.e. multiple racial/ethnic groups, varying educational levels, parents and non-parents, various age groups, rural and urban, and of various types and severity of abuse experiences). Their interviews resulted in sufficient new data on variation of work-related issues that data collection was ended when no additional participants came forward. Examples of new data included findings that intimate partner’s attitudes toward his partner working and the type of workplace structure played a role in long-term employment for victims. Clearly defined patterns emerged from the data collected from the thirteen participants.
Recruitment

The sample was recruited through two methods: first, through the use of fliers, and second, through snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a variation of convenience or accidental sampling in which individuals who fit the study criteria are asked to identify additional individuals who fit the criteria (Fortune & Reid, 1999). It was expected that some participants recruited by flier may know of other women who had been victimized while being employed and who may be interested in participating in the study.

Recruitment fliers (See Appendix 1: Recruitment Flyer) were posted at programs that serve either current or past victims of intimate partner violence (See Appendix 2: Program Sites) in the capital district area of New York State. Program personnel informed eligible clients about the study, and answered questions about the study based on a one-page overview (See Appendix 3: Study Overview). However, program staff did not actively recruit participants or mandate participation.

Twelve participants were recruited from fliers placed at three domestic violence programs and one substance abuse agency in three of the four counties included in recruitment area in upstate New York. One additional participant was recruited by snowball sampling. Although participants were recruited from only three of the counties where fliers were posted, those participants satisfied the goal of including victims from each type of community: urban, suburban and rural. Two potential participants were not included because the intimate partner violence occurred outside the designated time parameters. At the time of interview, eight participants were domestic violence shelter residents; three participants attended drop-in programs or received other services such as
housing assistance from a domestic violence program, one participant occasionally attended a twelve-step alcohol program, and the one participant who was recruited by snowball sampling was not associated with any program.

The participants contacted the researcher by calling the phone number printed on the flyer. The researcher responded to the call following a specific protocol (See Appendix 4A: Response Protocol) and screened the caller according to the inclusion criteria for the study. If the caller met the inclusion criteria, the interviewer and participant agreed on a time to meet, and the participant was asked to choose a location for the interview - somewhere she felt safe and yet private enough to conduct an interview. Five participants chose to be interviewed in their home, six chose to be interviewed at the domestic violence program office, and two chose to be interviewed at the researcher’s office. Two participants’ children were at home during the interview but not present in the room; one participant’s young children were in another part of the house under the care of a family member and the other participant’s teenage child remained in his room listening to music with his earphones. Two participants brought their children to interviews at the program offices; one was an infant who slept through the interview and the other was a middle school age child who remained in the playroom throughout the interview. There were no calls from male partners, however a protocol was set up to respond in the case that it occurred (See Appendix 4B: Response Protocol - Male Caller).

Data collection methods: Life Chart, Audio Recording and Researcher Notes

Life Chart. For the purposes of this study, a life chart was used to collect data on the co-occurrence of intimate partner violence and employment in the participant’s life
(See Appendix 5A: Life Chart). The life chart is based on the Life History Calendar (Yoshihama, Gillespie, Hammock, Belli, & Tolman, 2005), and the life chart (Clausen, 1998). The life chart, a pre-printed calendar-type form on which data is recorded, was completed by the researcher in conjunction with the participants. The researcher briefly noted the participant’s responses on the life chart. The life charts were scanned into the computer and entered into NVivo for analysis.

Figure 8: Life Chart Data Collection Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1: Demographic Data</th>
<th>Step 2: Work History From age 18:</th>
<th>Step 3: Abuse History From birth</th>
<th>Step 4: Overlapping IPV &amp; Employment**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Date of birth*</td>
<td>• Employment and reason for leaving</td>
<td>• Any abuse experiences.</td>
<td>• Start &amp; end dates of co-occurrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Race/ethnicity of self</td>
<td>• Workplace earning, benefits or policies</td>
<td>• Type of abuse &amp; relationship to perpetrator</td>
<td>• IPV &amp; Work intersections (e.g., missed work, reduced performance, perp come to work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Births of children</td>
<td>• Salary</td>
<td>• Severity</td>
<td>• Ways of coping with IPV &amp; work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dates of marriage, separation, divorce</td>
<td>• General benefits</td>
<td>• Physical effects</td>
<td>• Disclosures, if any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Start and End dates for education &amp; reason for leaving (e.g., drop-out, graduate)</td>
<td>• IPV related resources</td>
<td>• Emotional effects</td>
<td>• To whom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Degrees earned</td>
<td>• Other work related info (e.g., structure of the workplace, size of the business, etc.)</td>
<td>• Disclosure, if any</td>
<td>• Why / why not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deaths of significant others (e.g., parent, sibling, or child)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Treatment received, if any.</td>
<td>• How much info shared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All dates were recorded as accurately as the participant remembered: day, month, or year.
**Some of this data was collected as participants reported in other areas and was recorded when reported and followed-up in step 4 for more in-depth information.

The participant was allowed to present information as was comfortable for her and generally data was not shared in a specific order. However, the first interview question asked for her demographic information (i.e., birth date, educational milestones, relationship history, etc.). If the flow of the interview came to a halt, pre-developed steps
were used to determine subsequent questions (See Figure 8: Life Chart Data Collection Steps). After being asked about demographics, the participant was asked about her employment history; her abuse history; and finally, about her experiences during the time period when she experienced co-occurring intimate partner violence and employment (e.g., if she received any resources – formal or informal, whether she disclosed her victimization, if her productivity was affected, etc.). The topic of each step was pre-determined by findings that participants’ recall is cued by seeing data previously recorded on the Life History Calendar (Yoshihama, Gillespie, Hammock, Belli, & Tolman, 2005) and by the previously mentioned findings on what victims of intimate partner violence need to feel comfortable enough to disclose (Montalvo-Liendo, 2009).

Participants were invited to observe, give input on the notations, and use the charted information to cue further memories. The interview was loosely guided by questions about each area of interest (See Appendix 5B: Interview Guidelines). However, participants were asked open ended questions followed by clarifying questions or probes. The interview guide was used toward the end of the interview to identify areas that had not yet been addressed. Each participant was encouraged to call the researcher if she remembered anything else that she felt was important, if she wanted to further clarify data or if she had any questions about the study. However, none of them called.

Some participants identified themselves as “talkers” and others initially needed more encouragement to speak freely, but eventually each participant became more comfortable in the interview and shared freely. Several of the participants shared that they felt better or had gained insight after talking about their experience. The average length of an interview was ninety minutes. The first interview lasted just under two
hours; thereafter, the researcher asked participants to allow two hours for the interview, if possible. However, most interviews were approximately ninety minutes. Only one participant met on two occasions due to a tape-recorder malfunction and was compensated accordingly. Participants received a monetary stipend of twenty dollars for the first ninety minutes and ten dollars for each additional thirty minutes.

Audio recording. In addition to completing the Life Chart the interview was audio-tape recorded, transcribed and entered into appropriate NVivo files. NVivo is software that was developed in the 1990s for use in organizing data in qualitative studies (QSR International, 2010).

Researcher Notes. In addition to audio-recording the contents of the interview, the researcher recorded observational field notes on details surrounding the meeting with the interviewee. These notes were kept in NVivo as a resource file labeled “Fieldnotes” and were useful in providing context and visual descriptions of the participants. Throughout the research process the researcher kept a project journal as recommended by Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) which contained notes with insights and analysis questions and decisions that arose during the interview process. One example of the way the research journal was used involves the researcher’s struggle with how to categorize employment outcomes (i.e. fired, quit, continued working, etc.). One aspect of the dilemma was how to categorize employment outcomes when they did not appear to be distinctly different. After writing and revisiting the issue, it became clear that trying to differentiate between being fired and quitting was not necessary, because the end result was the same – an end to long-term employment.
**Project Journal.** The researcher also kept a project journal that contained notes on major coding decisions to create an audit trail. An audit trail contains all the raw data – fieldnotes, transcripts, journal notes – that are used in developing findings (Padgett, 1998). The researcher’s visuals also reflect her thoughts and are part of the audit trail. Visuals include flow-charts, cross tabulations of the data, or other visual representation of the data. Together the raw materials provide a detailed account (i.e. audit trail) of the reasoning behind coding decisions, and conceptual and theoretical developments. The audit trail allows the researcher and others to review decisions and findings for potential biases.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis began immediately with the first interview and continued until conclusions were reached. NVivo software was used for analyzing the data, because it facilitated organizing the data for analysis and it contained tools for detailed analysis and qualitative modeling (QSR International, 2010). One reason NVivo 8 was chosen for this study is that it enabled the researcher to code data directly from the life chart, once the chart had been scanned into the computer. Another reason was NVivo’s ability to compute cross-tabs and frequencies for data, such as participants’ ages, ethnicity and other demographic data. NVivo has been used by researchers across a broad range of disciplines including social sciences (QSR International, 2010).

**Coding.**

The first round of coding was “open coding” which avoids reliance on previously known concepts or categories (Padgett, 1998) and was facilitated by the NVivo software that has “free” nodes and “tree nodes” that are used in the first round of coding. The
coder identified units of meaning, assigned category names to similar units and assigned code names to categories (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Padgett, 1998; Tutty, Rothery, & Grinnell, 1996) or nodes (QSR International, 2010). Among the items noted were “key terms” which helped to understand the “language” of the participants and the meanings key terms had for the participants (Denzin, 2001). For example, in the first interview Anna discussed her ability to remain employed because her job was “flexible.” Flexible was the “term” used to identify a category of workplace structure that included the workplace factors that the participant identified as helping her be able to remain employed.

The goal of coding activities was to begin to “identify, elaborate and refine analytic insights… for the interpretation of data” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 151). An example of how a category was identified and subsequently refined by assigning related categories is that of the node “financial abuse” and its subsequent child-nodes. Behaviors perpetrated by the participants’ intimate partners that affected the participants’ economic security in any way was coded in a node labeled “financial abuse.” The behaviors under the node “financial abuse” were then further coded according to the term used for the behavior and the role it played in the participant’s economic stability or instability.

One sub-category (i.e. child node) of financial abuse experienced by participants was labeled work interference, also known as “work disruption” (Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2005). Work interference includes behaviors that contribute to the participant losing her employment. These behaviors are discussed in detail in the Chapter 4. Other “child-nodes” of the financial abuse node were coded as “stealing” (i.e. behaviors such as
the participant’s intimate partner taking control of her paycheck or taking her money), “financial decisions” (i.e. making major financial decisions without the participant’s input), “irresponsible decisions” (i.e. making irresponsible financial decisions that affected the participant’s financial stability), and “deny access” (i.e. denying the participant access to family financial information).

In the second round of coding, the researcher sorted the concepts and categories and compiled them into themes with the assistance of the NVivo software. The researcher selected which themes to pursue and which to set aside for later as suggested by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, (1995) and Padgett (1998). “How police responded to intimate partner violence calls” is an example of a topic that was set aside because it was not related to the primary focus of this study, but might have been pursued in another study.

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest using a matrix or other visual representations of the data to identify relationships (or the lack of). The NVivo mapping tool was used to produce working visuals that were helpful in developing conceptual categories or frameworks. For example when thinking about how the various types of abuse presented as barriers to employment and how they fit into the ecological framework a visual was developed to represent the data.

At this step the ecological framework was used to organize the factors according to the impact those factors have on the victim’s ability to maintain long-term employment. Abuse to employment outcome is affected by factors at each ecological level. According to Denzin (2001, p.138) an act “has no meaning out of context.” Therefore, the thick description was put in context to give it meaning. The final result
hopefully gives the reader what Denzin (2001, p.139) calls “authentic emotional understanding” rather than superficial or simple cognitive understanding of working victims’ struggle to remain employed when dealing with a violence intimate partner.

*Data organization.*

Data were organized using an ecological systems framework in which data from each participant is initially filed as a “case” file, and following coding sorted into the appropriate ecological level (micro-, mezzo- and macrolevel). The microlevel data included demographic information on participants including their age, race/ethnic group, education level, socio-economic level, number of children and current marital status and relationship status between the victim and perpetrator at the time of co-occuring intimate partner violence and employment. Demographic data were coded as “attributes” in NVivo 8 (QSR International, 2010).

Category files, referred to as nodes in NVivo 8, also contain data in two other areas: one on the participant’s abuse history, and the other on her work history. The abuse history includes the type and severity of abuse, her relationship to the perpetrator and any physical and emotional effects of the abuse. The types of abuse were each coded as a child node under intimate partner violence and then later sorted into categories (e.g. severe physical abuse and mild physical abuse). Emotional, psychological and verbal abuse were combined into one category because of overlap in their affect on the victims. When a form of abuse occurred with only one participant, it was combined with other similar types of abuse. For example, only one person reported “child as hostage” (i.e. using her child to keep her from saying anything about the abuse when she was at work). Therefore,”“child as hostage” was combined with other types of threats under the category “threats.”
The work history node included data on positions held outside of the time the participant experienced intimate partner violence and positions held during the time she experienced intimate partner violence. The participants did not always specify the length of employment during the time they experienced intimate partner violence; however, if they reported it “did not last long” it was categorized as short-term. Most participant’s abuse history included “event data,” described by Giele and Elder (1998, p. 100), as the “transition from one state to another;” however, some participants had a long history of abuse and many short-term jobs making it impossible to record every transition. When asked about work transitions, the participants generally described their most recent or most traumatic transitions. The participants were asked about any significant changes or turning points in the period of overlapping abuse and employment histories and what influenced them. A turning point may be defined as a point where one’s life “took a different direction” (Giele & Elder, 1998, p. 203). The participants generally described their decision to end the relationship with their abuser as a turning point.

A barrier to long-term employment was coded at the microlevel when it related to the participant personally. A barrier was placed at the mezzolevel when it related to the family or the workplace. Intimate partner violence coded at the microlevel included the participant’s personal experience with abuse (i.e. type and severity) and how it affected her employment. Family and workplace relationships that impact the participant’s employment and workplace factors (i.e. structure and culture) that act as barriers or supports to employment were coded at the mezzolevel. Macrolevel barriers were societal factors related to intimate partner violence that influenced long-term employment outcomes. The primary focus was on the period of time when the abuse history and
employment history overlapped. The participants described their workplaces (e.g., the size, culture, and available resources) and the factors that contributed to employment outcomes (e.g., resignation, termination, or maintenance of employment). All concepts were deduced from the data with the exception of long-term employment.

It was important to be clear about what constituted long-term employment because it is a key concept in this study and could be conceptualized in various ways. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, long-term employment was defined as continuous employment at the same establishment for at least twelve months from the onset of overlapping intimate partner violence. The twelve month time frame was chosen for consistency with employee retention literature that defines long-term employment as “labor market retention of at least twelve months” (Fischer, 2005, p. 1). However, to capture employment retention in the presence of intimate partner violence some stipulations were added. First, employment that occurred prior to the onset of intimate partner violence was not considered part of the twelve months. Also, in cases where intimate partner violence occurred prior to the victim becoming employed, the twelve month count began when the victim began working. It was considered long-term employment only when the victim remained employed twelve months from the onset of overlapping intimate partner violence and employment. Employment that began when the abuser was no longer in the victim’s life was not considered in this study. In one case the participant left her violent intimate partner nine months from the onset of abuse, so her employment was not considered “long-term.”

In the event that a participant changed positions, in order to be defined as long-term employment the new position had to be within the same company or corporation.
For example, Joyce’s employment was considered “long-term” employment because although she was put in a new position, Joyce remained employed at the same company for twelve months following the on-set of intimate partner violence. If she had been employed by various companies for a total of twelve months following the onset of overlapping intimate partner violence, that would not have been considered long-term employment.

*Trustworthiness*

*Researcher bias.* One threat to trustworthiness is the researcher’s bias that stems from attitudes, experiences and opinions formed prior to the study. Researcher bias in this study could be a significant threat because of the researcher’s extensive work in the area of intimate partner violence as a therapist, advocate, researcher and consultant. The researcher’s interest in intimate partner violence was triggered by her sister’s abuse by an intimate partner in the 1980s. These personal and professional experiences increase the risk of bias. However, they also provide a deeper understanding of the issues facing victims of intimate partner violence and facilitate trust-building that is necessary for victims to feel comfortable enough to disclose. The researcher’s deep interest in gaining information that is non-biased and useful to those who work with victims has guided her coding process, analysis and reflexivity. In order to ensure that the findings in this study are non-biased and accurate, the researcher took multiple precautions to guard against researcher bias.

*Researcher credibility.* The researcher kept an audit trail as one way to avoid researcher bias that can be a threat to validity (Johnson, 1997) and to avoid the temptation to see only that which confirmed the desired findings and ignored the data that
contradicts them. The researcher kept an audit trail that includes the interview transcripts, the life charts, and field notes, as well as, visual representations of the data to identify and check thought processes. The researcher used reflexivity as suggested to reduce researcher bias (i.e., critical self-reflection) (Johnson, 1997; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Padgett, 1998; Tutty, Rothery, & Grinnell, 1996). A research journal was kept to keep track of research procedures followed, and the rationale that lead to major coding decisions and subsequent conclusions (Johnson, 1997; Tutty, Rothery, & Grinnell, 1996).

Some researchers argue that an audit trail may be useful for reproducibility (Padgett, 1998) or showing the researcher where she may have been biased, but it does not ensure truth or rigor in research (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). Only when errors are identified and corrected during the data collection process, “before they are built in to the developing model and before they subvert the analysis” will the research be reliable and valid (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002, p.9). Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers, (2002) suggest one way to detect mistakes is by maintaining the focus of the work through repeated checking of the data for fit with the developing model and theory. Therefore, the researcher continuously went between previously collected data to newly collected data to see if there was a fit or if the new data offered new insight or contributed to a pattern. As new data was collected, visuals were modified or new information added to existing models.

Although, Miles & Huberman (1994, p. 69) suggest using reflexive self-notes or “marginal notes” throughout data collection and coding, this researcher tended to use visual representations of the data easily done with NVivo 8 to review concepts and connections.
Another way to off-set researcher bias is through rigor in interviewing and obeying rules for coding (Tutty, Rothery, & Grinnell, 1996). Therefore, the researcher was rigorous in using the interview guide and newly identified data to guide interviews. Direct quotes from participants were used to support positions or conclusions drawn during analysis.

**Member checking.** Member checking was considered but rejected for this study, although it has been suggested as a way to increase trustworthiness of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Padgett, 1998; Tutty, Rothery, & Grinnell, 1996). It was impractical or inconvenient for participants to meet again for the purpose of checking researcher conclusions, because some participants left the area following their interview. Only one participant expressed an interest in seeing the final report. There are some who suggest that member checking may actually be a threat to validity because participants may be too close to the data to be objective (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002) or participants may reject the researcher’s conclusions because they do not understand them or disapprove of them (Padgett, 1998). For all of these reasons member checking was not used.

**Researcher responsiveness.** The trustworthiness of the study has been increased through researcher responsiveness. Researcher responsiveness requires that the investigator maintain an openness to the data and the flexibility to listen to the data and change direction if necessary. In this study, the researcher developed a dynamic relationship between sampling, data collection, and analysis by continuously moving between newly collected data and previously collected data. She looked for similarities, differences, and demographic groups that had not been included, and continued
recruitment until cases that might present alternate or additional data, and that filled gaps were included. When the researcher is responsive to the data, the result is text with depth and clarity (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). Researcher responsiveness has been verified by journal entries, visuals, and analysis products.

In addition to researcher responsiveness, verification strategies were used to increase trustworthiness of the findings. Verification strategies included “methodological coherence, sampling sufficiency, developing a dynamic relationship between sampling, data collection, and analysis, thinking theoretically, and theory development” (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). To achieve methodological coherence there must be a fit between the research question and the methods used to address the question (Fortune & Reid, 1999; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Padgett, 1998). Qualitative methods were deemed most appropriate for this dissertation, because of the lack of information on intimate partner violence and employment in general, and specifically on intimate partner violence and long-term employment.

Sampling sufficiency. Sampling sufficiency is another verification strategy that enhances the reliability and validity of qualitative studies. The sample must represent the population under study and must be sufficient to “account for all aspects of the phenomenon” (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002, p. 12). By limiting the sample to women who have co-occurring intimate partner violence and employment, the participants represent the population under study. Snowball sampling was used to recruit a participant who had experienced no physical abuse but who had experienced emotional and financial abuse in her most recent abusive relationship, because the participants who were recruited from fliers at domestic violence programs had experienced at least minor
physical abuse. The researcher continued collecting data until she collected information from participants from various demographic groups who provided sufficient new information about the experiences of working victims of intimate partner violence.

Glaser and Strauss, (1967) recommend seeking negative cases until it appeared that another case would offer no further information. Most of the data reflected short-term employment outcomes. Therefore, the researcher continued recruitment until the data reflected cases that would give information on what was necessary for long-term employment. When the researcher had collected data on both short-term and long-term employment experiences and was getting no additional information, recruitment was halted.

**Ethical Considerations**

*Institutional Review Board.* The study was presented to and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). There were special considerations because victims of intimate partner abuse are considered a vulnerable population. One restriction imposed by the IRB was that women who reported a history of a mental health condition that would increase their personal vulnerability (e.g. Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, drug abuse, or anxiety disorders) be screened out. Another restriction initially imposed was that women who had been in an abusive relationship in the six-months prior to the interview would be screened out. The restrictions were modified in October 2010 and women who had been abused in the previous six-months were no longer screened out.

*Informed Consent.* Prior to the interview, the researcher reviewed the consent form (See Appendix 6: Participant Consent Form) with each participant. The researcher emphasized that the participant could refuse to answer any question, refuse to have the
interview audio-taped or stop the interview at any time and still retain the stipend. However, none of the participants refused to answer or stop the interview. The researcher explained to the participant that she could ask for clarification of any instructions or questions. The Institutional Review Board gave approval to waive signed consent forms, because victims of intimate partner violence are a particularly vulnerable group. Therefore, participants were not asked to sign the consent form, but each gave verbal consent that was audio taped.

Provisions for Confidentiality. All identifying information was kept confidential and filed separately from interview data. Each participant was asked to choose a pseudonym that was used on her Life Chart and during the interview. The transcriptionist heard only pseudonyms on the tapes. The transcriptionist took the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training, and was aware of the need for confidentiality. Only the primary researcher had access to the participants’ identifying information. All data were kept in a computer file under password protection and all hard copies were kept in a locked file cabinet separate from any identifying information. All research journals and other field notes were entered into NVivo and hard copies kept in locked files or in password-protected computer files, accessed by the primary investigator only.

Risks and Benefits. To ensure only minimal physical risk to the participant, she contacted the researcher; chose the location of the interview and the extent to which she wished to disclose information. All identifying and contact information was stored in a password protected file. No one (e.g., the participant’s employer, spouse or other individual) was informed of the victim’s participation in the study. Steps were taken to
assure that the victim’s identity would be protected in the event that her partner finds the researcher’s phone number; however, that did not happen.

The emotional risk to participants was expected to be minimal; however, Johnson and Benight (2003) report that trauma related research can have a detrimental effect on some victims of intimate partner violence. A small percentage (6%) of the participants (n=55) in their study regretted participating and another 25% reported being more upset than they anticipated (Johnson & Benight, 2003). The participants in Johnson and Benight’s (2003) study were recent victims of intimate partner violence - they had experienced intimate partner violence within the six months prior to the study. However, the participants in this study reported that talking about their experience made them feel better. However, to ensure that participants were fully informed, the consent informed participants that “certain individuals (i.e., recent victims, those with abuse histories and those with greater distress) are at increased risk of being more upset than expected,” (Johnson & Benight, 2003, p. 570). All participants were given information on services and counseling resources for intimate partner violence. Each participant received a booklet produced by New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence- *Domestic Violence: Finding Safety & Support*. The booklet contained information on how to develop a safety plan, Orders of Protection, the police and courts, and resources in New York State for victims of intimate partner violence. Each participant was debriefed about how they were feeling at the end of the interview. None of the participants reported a negative response to the interview; their overall responses were very positive.

The study offered the participants the following benefits: an opportunity to discuss issues that they would like to share; an opportunity to inform the public, other
researchers and educators about the type of issues working women face when they are battered; and an opportunity to inform policy makers about issues important to working victims of intimate partner violence. One participant asked for and was provided information about getting her teeth repaired through a program for victims of intimate partner violence, and another victim said that discussing her situation helped her to clarify her role in the intimate partner violence:

… I see a couple of things discussing this with you about how I kind of took on more [ownership of the abuse] than I should have…Inez
Chapter 4

Findings

Characteristics of the Sample

All of the participants are English speaking women who experienced intimate partner violence while they were employed at some point in the thirty-six months prior to the interview (See Appendix 7: Participant Vignettes). Nearly two thirds (n=8) of participants identified their race as White/ Caucasian, the other third (n=4) identify as Black/African American or as multi-racial (i.e. Asian and Caucasian) (n=1); and two participants reported their ethnic identity as Latina. All of the participants are between the ages of nineteen and sixty-four, with the majority (n=10) of participants falling within the age range between thirty and fifty-five years at the time of the interview (See Table 1: Participant Demographics).

The majority (n=10) of the participants are mothers of children ranging in age from seven months to thirty-one years. The average number of children is 2.4, and the mode is two children. Although some participants reportedly had step-children, they are not counted here. Over half (n=4) of participants with children under age eighteen (n=7) had custody of one or more of their children at the time of interview.

At the time of their most recent abusive relationship, most participants were either married to (n=6) or residing with (n=4) their abuser; the remainder (n=3) were separated, divorced or residing separately from their abusive intimate partner. Three participants had been with their most recent abusive partner for 21 years or longer, five had been with their most recent abusive partners between 8 - 20 years and five of the participants for less than 5 years.
Table 1: Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Recent IPV Relationship</th>
<th>Relationship Length Est.*</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Highest Income**</th>
<th>Highest Paid Job</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>LPN</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>Nurse Auditor</td>
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<td>Betty</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>AS in Bus. Admin.</td>
<td>Live-in</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20,800</td>
<td>Office Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>AS (2) Bus. &amp; IT</td>
<td>Married but Separated</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>IT Resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dora</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>White/Latina</td>
<td>Less than HS CNA Cert.</td>
<td>Intimate – not live in</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20,800</td>
<td>CNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwina</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Black/Latina</td>
<td>MS in Finance</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Financial Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
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<td>White</td>
<td>Less than HS</td>
<td>Live-in</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20,800</td>
<td>Clerical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina</td>
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<td>White</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Live-in</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22,200</td>
<td>Admin. Asst.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>White</td>
<td>Less than HS</td>
<td>Intimate</td>
<td>&lt; 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20,800</td>
<td>Housecleaner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inez</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Asian/White</td>
<td>Less than HS CNA Cert.</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>Private Duty- CNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>Insurance clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Business Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>BA in Music</td>
<td>Live-in</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>Business Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimi</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>LPN</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimated to the nearest year.

**Estimated highest gross annual income ever earned (when reported as an hourly wage, annual income was determined by multiplying hourly wage x average number of hours worked per week x 52 weeks).
Education and employment. The sample represents levels of education from less than a high school degree to a master’s degree. Table 1 reports the highest level of education obtained by the participant prior to or during her most recent abusive relationship, the highest paid position held by the participant during the most recent intimate partner violence and the estimated highest annual income that she earned prior to or during that relationship. Many (n=9) of the participants held multiple low-income positions of various types or in some cases did not return to work for the duration of the relationship; therefore, the lowest paid positions are not included. Some (n=4) of the participants held two jobs at the same time, so their highest annual income reflects the combined income of the two positions. The participants did not report every position they held; however data was gathered on jobs they held during the time of the intimate partner violence. The average number of jobs held by the participants during periods of intimate partner violence is three jobs. The length of employment (i.e. short- or long-term) and salary amounts were estimated for some positions based on participant reports.

The women who participated in this study were women who worked hard, enjoyed being employed, and felt pride in their work as can be seen by these statements by Carla, Dora, Anna and Kate:

I ended up working as a help desk support person so I was always on the phone trying to help people with their computer problems, I really enjoyed that because I liked people… after working since I was sixteen, so I was a worker, I was always raised in a household where everybody worked. You didn’t stay home, you didn’t collect – my mother or father never ever collected public assistance, never. Carla
I have always been on my own. I’ve never depended on welfare. I’ve always paid my own rent, and paid my own bills. Dora

It was interesting when I got the job as the auditor and when I first started out it was like I didn’t know what I was doing and it was a new job but I realized I really liked it, I was getting a lot more respect in my work, I was doing very well, I had in a sense a position that was respected. Anna

I owned my own [hair] salon, after my first divorce I opened up a salon so when my second husband and I met I owned the salon; during the course of our marriage I sold it. Kate

_Abuse History_

_Child and adolescent._ The participants in this study report extensive abuse histories that for some began in childhood. The majority (n=11) of participants experienced some form of domestic violence as a child; nearly one fourth (n=3) of the participants witnessed intimate partner violence in their home; some personally experienced childhood abuse including physical abuse (n=5), emotional abuse (n=6), and/or childhood sexual abuse (n=4). Betty felt that witnessing intimate partner violence contributed to her accepting abuse from her intimate partners:

It was really hard and I watched my mother get beat all the time by men so I just thought that that’s what happens. Betty
Five of the participants reported having an alcoholic or drug addicted parent and/or being abandoned by a parent. Childhood physical and emotional abuses experienced by this sample were generally perpetrated by a family member (i.e. mother, father, step-parent or foster parent) and the sexual abuse perpetrators of the participants in this sample were older brothers, an uncle, step-father or foster-father. Two participants reported date rape or abuse by their teenage boyfriends. Nine participants had been in at least one other abusive relationship as an adult prior to the one that qualified them for this study.

Adult physical abuse. Under half (n=6) of the participants reported severe physical abuse by their most recent abusive relationship; for the purpose of this study, severe physical abuse is defined as being beaten, choked, kicked, stabbed, or other abuse that results in broken bones or injury. Some examples of severe abuse are evidenced by these statements from Betty, Dora, Edwina, Felicia and Inez:

We lived in Puerto Rico for three months and he beat the crap out of me, I woke up one morning to him, over me, choking me… Betty

…then it escalated to pushing me, grabbing me, you know, choking me at times, downgrading me as a person then he got really physical at times when I was pregnant- with him actually [pointed to son who ran through the room] and it escalated too after I got pregnant with my second daughter… Dora
He broke my finger one time so I could tell everybody I did it in the car door- just because the eggs weren’t right…he stabbed me, this was the third time he’d stabbed me.          Edwina

He cracked my cheekbone, I have a bone sticking out in my chin - he knocked half a tooth out of my mouth… He choked me, he punched me, hit me, threw me…He gave me a concussion a couple of years back          Felicia

…but then the last I’d say ten years it really picked up and he would push me and all kinds of things, kick me. One time he kicked me I couldn’t… for a year I couldn’t sit and then get up like for a whole year. It was just awful.          Inez

Just under one-quarter (n= 3) of the participants experienced no severe physical abuse, but did experience minor physical abuse such as being slapped, having small objects thrown at them, being pushed or being grabbed as described by statements from Joyce, Laura, and Carla:

He may have slapped me a few times because I said something he didn’t like or something of that nature…          Joyce

Being pushed away, one time being grabbed by the arms and shaken.

Once being pushed hard enough to go back against the wall.          Laura
It got physical a couple of times, but never to an extent where he was beating on me, but it very well could have easily gotten into that … Carla

**Verbal/ psychological abuse.** All of the participants experienced verbal abuse or psychological abuse from their intimate partner. The following statements by Anna, Betty, Felicia and Gina provide a sampling of the types of verbal or psychological abuse experienced by the participants:

I remember leaving work and going “If I make a right I go home; if I make a left, I can’t go home.” I really wanted to make a left. I didn’t want to go home. It was just too much - the raging, the constant raging.

Anna

He would just put me down, I was abused as a child sexually, he would throw that up in my face…He would call me a “nigger lover” basically because my kids were black…You know, just stuff about my past, things that I’ve done to get high and stuff, he would just constantly throw it in my face. Betty

He’d just downgrade me and talk down to me… Felicia
… really getting me upset, calling me names, just non-stop. I can only remember maybe five days out of a three year relationship that there was actually no drama. Gina

A lot of emotional abuse that way too. Like “you need to be quiet because this is not your house; if you so much as raise your voice to me I will call the police on you” and one time he did …after my Dad had died and I made a dumb comment of acting on my emotions and saying “I don’t even want to live anymore, I just want to shoot myself” and I ran upstairs and he said “That’s it, I’m calling the police” and I said “No, I’m not really going to do it, I’m just so upset with you” and he said, “Nope, I’m calling the police” and I said, “They’re going to take me away” and he said, “I’m calling the police” and he did. He got right on the phone and of course they took me to Ellis Hospital and because of the fact that it was Christmas I had to stay overnight because they had no counselor there to evaluate me so I ended up staying overnight…I wasn’t sure what he would do; I wasn’t afraid of him where I thought he would hit me or anything ever but as far as…like I didn’t know what extent he would go to emotionally with the emotional end of it. Kate

*Excessive jealousy.* The majority (n=9) of the participants had intimate partners who were excessively jealous and made outrageous accusations to the participants. Some
of the accusations are found in the following statements by Anna, Carla, Edwina, Felicia and Joyce:

Mike would put me in the position where I would be alone and because I was alone he was always telling me or accusing me of screwing around and it was like I didn’t have time to screw around, I didn’t want to…the guy who put the canopy on the trailer with my grandmother’s things - he [Mike] accused me of screwing around with this man, when I worked in the nursing home he accused me of screwing around with one of the nurses there… Anna

My husband was jealous of my oldest child, he accused me of sleeping with my oldest son, that was how extremely jealous he was and I mean jealousy, when you’re not used to someone really showing any kind of affection to you, in the beginning it’s cute and in some ways, shapes or forms, when you have low self esteem, it makes you feel that somebody finally loves me enough to be jealous of me but then when it gets to be sick and twisted to the point of someone accusing you of having sex with your child. Carla

The first time that he hit me was because he had lost his key to the house and I was sleeping, I didn’t hear him knocking at the door or anything so he came around the back and broke the back window and got in and beat
me up in the bed for not answering the door and looked all over the house saying that I had a man in there. Edwina

He’d be there ten-fifteen minutes before I got off just sitting around making sure I wasn’t talking to any of the guys that worked there. Felicia

I would see him ride by the house here in the morning and I said something to him and he said to me “Well I’m just making sure you don’t have anybody staying there”…When he started all this stuff he made these accusations about me having affairs with other men, males that are either coworkers or friends, he kept accusing me of “Well I know you were having sex with him.” Joyce

Isolation and control. Just over one-third (n=5) of the participants experienced controlling and isolating behaviors from their abusive intimate partner. The most extensive control and isolation is described by Edwina:

… Sometimes I couldn’t sleep in the bedroom, sometimes I couldn’t eat the food until after he ate or whatever was left on his plate I could eat, things like that. Edwina

Other participants described less severe controlling and isolating behaviors by their intimate partners. Some examples are these by Inez, Felicia, Joyce and Laura:
Even at a year he was always controlling…what I was wearing, who I was talking to. Just odd things, if I wasn’t paying attention I must have been looking at the man walking down the road; well, if you weren’t doing that you would have been able to do this. So I just said “Okay”, so it took me there. Inez

He’d call me names, he’d discourage me from talking to my family, from going to school, from getting an education, from having friends – I couldn’t have any friends, I couldn’t go out. Felicia

…the one thing that stands out in my mind the most is that he was constantly demanding me to do things, what he wanted done, he wanted this cleaned in the house, he constantly wanted the house to be spotless, he wanted to have his meal on the table at a certain time. Joyce

This might sound silly but it affected me greatly in my most recent relationship because it was just he and I, we had a duo act that we would perform, and because he was kind of the leader on the bandstand it really was up to him what song was going to be played next, how the evening was going to go, that kind of thing, and often times I would have prepared five or six new songs that I really wanted to do and out of spite he would just not do them and as a performer, that’s kind of like being punched in the stomach; you know, you really spend your whole week working hard
on something and then you’re just not able to do it and that’s completely out of your control. Laura

Threats. Just under two-thirds of participants (n=8) reported that their abusers often used threats rather than physical force to maintain control. Threatening suicide was one way abusers controlled their partners, as can be seen in these statements by Betty and Felicia:

I couldn’t take him drinking himself to death, this is after I had lost my father to alcoholism, I can’t, I’m just not going to do it and he threatened to kill himself. Betty

He just didn’t like me dressing up and looking good all the time and then he threatened to kill himself. Felicia

Intimate partners also used threats of physical harm to the participant or others as a way of getting or maintaining control. Some examples of these types of threats are provided by Carla, Joyce, Anna and Mimi:

He was a very intimidating person, he was the type of person that would tell you “if I ever catch you doing this, or if I ever catch you doing that”, threatening what he would do to me and he always bragged about having access to a gun and I had seen a lot of the ways that he dealt with other guys his age and people that he knew and he was a threatening person, he really was and he used his threatening ways to intimidate a lot of people
including myself because I was never really sure if he would actually harm. Carla

…but he always told me that he knows how to kill people, he could do something to somebody’s car and nobody will know or be able to trace it back. He could fix a car so that it would catch on fire and he could fix somebody’s brakes so that it would take a little bit of time but they would lose their brakes and die in a car accident so this is things that he told me before, and that thought was always in the back of my mind. Joyce

I was afraid to basically because of his threats. His threats were so scary that to think about living in the aftermath of doing it was more frightening than dealing with the pain and the situation. He was constantly threatening to kill people, constantly threatening to “knock off” Veronica’s [her daughter’s] boyfriend, you know “I’m going to kill the bastard”, blah, blah and I didn’t want to deal with it and I’m like “Oh, my God.” Anna

…my husband has performed every domestic violence tactic, every classic domestic violence tactic known to man, that he’s performed every single one and now that I’m out of it, but because I still talk to him because we still have custody, and there was different language added into our restraining order so he tried to use our daughter for a tool and he still has a
lot of power and control issues and he still makes threats, “watch what I’m going to do to you,” “watch how I’m going to treat you”… Mimi

Sexual abuse. Three of the participants reported their most recent abusive partner used sex against them. Edwina’s intimate partner forced sex on her:

Sexual abuse which I didn’t know was sexual because when I was married to him I just thought that when he wanted to have sex with me that that was my wifely duty until once when I had my period and I told him that I can’t, and couldn’t believe he wanted to have sex and he smushed my face down and had sex with me and I would be sleeping and I would wake up and he was slapping me in my face with his penis. Edwina

Two intimate partners withheld sex in their relationships:

He withheld, but never like rape or anything like that, but he did withhold. Kate

No, actually there was no sexual abuse, it was more or less like not even having sex at all and if there was any sexual relations it was like every seventy-five or ninety days…Mimi

Vandalism. Some of the participants (n=5) or their family also experienced having their car or home vandalized by the participant’s intimate partner, as in the statements by Anna, Dora, Felicia and Mimi:
I came home and he punched the window out in the car, kicked the door in to the house because he was angry…Anna

…I got away because he’s in jail at the moment. He vandalized my house, my car, everything. He took everything from me and I told him it was enough. Dora

..and he destroyed the whole house. There was glass everywhere. We rented the house together and I finally realized that my son can’t be in an environment like this, he can’t, it’s not right. Felicia

He’s taken all my clothes, my bed, the kids beds, a lot of things that he didn’t take – he kind of trashed it, the house looks like it’s been vandalized right now. He trashed the house, he has taken for himself, given away or sold and the house is trashed… He just took the ventilation system out of the bathroom. He’s taken all the fixtures, head of the shower, even the thing you hang your towels and washcloths on… Mimi

Previous partner abuse. When intimate partner violence from previous relationships is considered, all thirteen participants experienced physical abuse as an adult. Examples of the types of physical abuse by former intimate partners are presented in the following statements by Betty, Carla, Dora, and Kate:
These were two of my most severe, I feel that they were my most severe but they weren’t my first two abusive relationships with men and stuff, I’ve been in other ones where I had Orders of Protection… he [former intimate partner] ended up moving to [the town where she lived] with his new wife and kids and he killed her father and he wasn’t supposed to be anywhere near me and I had a permanent Order of Protection that just didn’t have an expiration date because of everything that he had done to me. Betty

There was [abuse] in my [relationship with my] youngest son’s [father], early on that’s what caused the relationship to end because it got physical and that’s what made me separate from him well before my son was even born. Carla

Jason [first husband] pulled a knife on me, that was the straw of everything and I told him he had to leave. He left New York, that’s how I got out of that situation. I wouldn’t go home; I would stay at Mom’s. I would try and get away from him. Dora

By my first husband…That could get a little more physical, that one. A lot of emotional abuse and a lot of physical, well I shouldn’t say a lot but it could happen at any time you know; not punching me or beating me to a pulp but knocking me across the bed or onto the floor or throwing a bottle
at me and me ducking and missing; him putting a hole in the cabinet, you know, punching things.    Kate

None of the women in this study reported being stalked by their intimate partner. However, three participants reported that he would “show-up” unexpectedly at her home, “drive-by” her house, or pursue her in a way that did not scare her, or wait outside the shelter where she was staying. This finding is contrary to other research which has linked stalking to domestic violence (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998).

Financial abuse. Examples of financial abuse, other than work interference which is discussed in a later section, are described in the following statements from Carla, Kate, Edwina and Anna:

He stole from me, just out right stole from me…and a lot of times especially towards the end when I was working at the government job I used to make good money and I would miss chunks of money, like a $150 – $200 and I know those chunks of money were going to his drug habit…my funds became depleted very quickly and I ended up having that house foreclosed on, lost my home.    Carla

I couldn’t even cash my check, if I cashed my check that was a beating waiting to happen; we either went together or he took it and gave me $5.00. I never had any money, he never let me keep any money except for maybe $5.00 every other day or if we needed paper towels or toilet paper he’d give me $5.00; he never gave me more than $5.00.    Edwina
…my daughter was getting married and he just came home and he said “She’s not my kid and I’m not helping pay for the wedding.” I would just get home and there would be registration in the mail that he’d bought a new car and I didn’t even know. He actually bought a piece of property and told everybody else not to tell me, up in the Adirondacks, and I didn’t find out for a few weeks later so it was like he had this whole separate life

Kate

…we got a house and Mike wrangled somehow with the seller, a young kid who had had inherited the house or whatever and didn’t pay the commission and we ended up getting sued, okay… We went out to dinner, I can’t remember when it was but Veronica was a baby, we went out to dinner, the stool rolled out from underneath him [Mike] and he sued the restaurant, he got like $12,000 which was the minimal amount that you’d get and he and his buddy went to the race track. I wanted a washing machine… He had an accident with my car… he came home and never told me about the accident… Anna

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

The majority (n=10) of participants in this study reported that they did not drink or use alcohol to excess or use drugs other than to occasionally smoke marijuana; only Carla reported that she began drinking heavily prior to meeting her abuser:
I think I had a drinking problem long before I was with him, but I’m sure my drinking problem progressed extensively during the period of time that I was with him because that was one of the main things I think that got us together, I mean we met in a bar…I was abusing alcohol and I tried to drown every ache, pain, emotion, anything that I felt I tried to drown it out with alcohol. Carla

Laura reported that she began abusing alcohol as one way to cope with the abuse from her intimate partner:

I began abusing alcohol because we were singing together in a band that worked regularly on weekends and I had unlimited access to an open bar at work usually, so if things were rotten between us I would often drink at work. Laura

Betty reported that she began using drugs to help her cope with emotional and mental health problems related to the abuse:

He wouldn’t let me go to Mental Health treatment, he made [me stop]…and I just didn’t care. I dove deep into drugs, I just went really deep to deal with it…I smoked marihuana, I sniffed cocaine, I smoked crack, I did pain killers when I had cancer and at the end I was strung out on heroin.

Betty

Participant Health

Mental health. There were very few mental health problems reported by participants in this sample, because of the IRB restriction that women who had serious
mental health problems must be screened out. Only fifteen percent (n=2) of participants reported that they had experienced depression; however, the depression reported had been quite severe:

Then I started getting depressed again, really bad, I thought about dying all the time, I wanted to die so bad because I just didn’t want to live and when he would beat me up, I’d tell him “just kill me, please just kill me.

Betty

I lost weight, twenty-three, twenty-four pounds and I wasn’t even trying. I asked the doctor for anti depressants because I was depressed and the doctor understood and gave them to me. Joyce

*Physical health.* Participants experienced health problems; some were related to the stress they experienced and others were injuries resulting from physical abuse. I think that the years of just the bullshit that went on just probably kept me in such a total state of stress that it obviously stressed my body…I think it was in ‘92-93, I had strabismus really bad in my right eye and I had surgery to correct it…2007 and that’s when the tumors were discovered…So you know that was that, I also had my gallbladder out, I took care of him for like 20 years. Because I didn’t have health insurance from him, I had to get my own health insurance through work in order to have the gallbladder surgery…Basically I took care of myself in the whole relationship and got abused in the process. Anna
I was supposed to be on hormone replacement therapy because I had cancer when I was twenty-one and had to have a hysterectomy and he refused to buy my medications. Betty

He constantly called me a fat pig, when we went to a Chinese buffet he told the guy to take down the “All you can eat” sign because look who’s here. So I started drinking Ipecac syrup with my food and became a bulimic, so much so that I had to go to the hospital into a program for bulimia, that’s an everlasting problem, that’s my disease. I can’t get that “fat pig” thing out of my head…He hit me in my really low back so much that I have sciatic nerve damage forever. I have a torn kidney, there’s something wrong with it; I’m always peeing blood. I have headaches constantly from concussions. Edwina

That’s been over the last 4 years, it’s a weekly thing you know and I was getting – my head took a lot of abuse and then it was just too much. Inez

I’ve had female problems throughout my life; I had cystic ovaries and about six years ago I had to have – I went to the hospital to have one of my ovaries removed and they took out both of them and found endometriosis and that was pretty much it and then I did have a hernia fixed… Joyce
Summary of characteristics. The characteristics of the thirteen participants in this study cover a broad spectrum. Participants exemplify various age groups, race and ethnic groups, and educational levels, from various types of communities. Their work experiences range from pink collar positions such as nurse aides and retail jobs to professional positions such as a Licensed Practical Nurse or financial manager. Both parents and non-parents are included. The ages of the children of the women who are parents ranged from seven months to over thirty years of age. The abuse histories of the participants included intimate partner abuse that ranged from severe physical to emotional abuse only, including minor physical abuse, excessive jealousy, and control issues. The only type of intimate partner violence that was missing from this sample is stalking.

Research Question Findings

The findings show that workplace outcomes were consistent across education levels, income levels and racial groups. Regardless of how educated the participant or how prestigious the job or even the type of abuse, each of the women in this study lost a job or was demoted to a lower job as the result of intimate partner violence. Some participants were able to maintain employment for longer periods of time due to the way their employment was structured and the type of abuse she experienced. However, each participant reported her job performance was affected by intimate partner violence even though she may have been able to continue working. The majority of positions ended in under twelve months. The findings of this study indicate that the majority of participants in this study spiraled down from well-paid positions in a professional setting to lower-
paid positions that offered fewer resources, as a result of their victimization by an intimate partner.

*Question 1. What barriers to long-term employment do victims of intimate partner violence encounter?*

The results indicate that there are multiple barriers that interfere with long-term employment for victims of intimate partner violence. Barriers to long-term employment are organized using an ecological framework at three levels: microlevel (i.e. factors related to the individual participant), mezzolevel (i.e. workplace and relationship factors) and macrolevel (i.e. factors that are related to society at large). It is recognized that barriers at each level may overlap or be interconnected with barriers at the other two levels, but for the sake of simplicity each barrier will be discussed at the level with which it is most closely related.

**Figure 9: Workplace Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Node Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quit</td>
<td>The participant quits or resigns her paid employment (for reasons other than health).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Leave</td>
<td>The participant leaves the position for health reasons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fired</td>
<td>The participant’s employer terminates her employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ended</td>
<td>The participant’s business is sold or shut down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain employed</td>
<td>The participant and her employer continue their employee/employer relationship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Workplace outcomes in this study were coded into five general categories, the categories are as follows: quit, medical leave, fired, ended by the participant and remain employed (See Figure 9: Workplace Outcomes). Categories were identified by “keywords” used by the participants. However, analysis of the results indicates that in most situations where employment comes to an end, there is no clear line of distinction
between the categories. For example, Inez reported that she quit her job but, further discussion revealed, that she quit because she was injured and could not do her job. Other examples, Betty reported that she left for medical leave, but then she did not return for other reasons, and Laura had to end her relationship due to the affects of the abuse which meant ending the business as well, because they worked together (See Figure 10: Workplace Outcomes and Disclosure Type). Some participants were employed in additional positions during the time period between abusive partners or prior to abuse in the relationship; however, only the positions held by participants while with an abusive intimate partner have been reported in Figure 10.

Microlevel Barriers to Long-term Employment

Barriers to long-term employment are defined as factors that result in the participant’s employment ending twelve months from the onset of abuse or before (See Figure 11: Microlevel Factors Related to Long-term Employment). Individual factors such as human capital (i.e. education and work skills) have previously been linked to employment (Danziger, Corcoran, Danziger, & Heflin, 2000; Danziger & Seefeldt, 2002; Staggs, Long, Mason, Krishnan, & Riger, 2007). However, only factors that emerged from the data in this study are included in Figure 11. For example, human capital and personal characteristics were not found to be barriers to long-term employment in this sample. Therefore, they are not included in Figure 11, even though they are discussed here.
Figure 10: Workplace Outcomes and Disclosure Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>JOBS REPORTED</th>
<th>TYPE OF DISCLOSURE</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Office</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nursing Home</td>
<td>When leaving</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>When leaving</td>
<td>Quit (10+)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Fast Food</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gas Station</td>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Med. Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>Concealed</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office Job</td>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Fired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>Legal Secretary</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IT Help line</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IT Help line</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Fired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer Job</td>
<td>Purposeful</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hospital clerk (p/t)</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>(5+ yr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dora</td>
<td>Bank teller</td>
<td>Purposeful</td>
<td>Fired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CNA</td>
<td>Concealed</td>
<td>Fired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwina</td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Non-Disclosure</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Store Accountant</td>
<td>Non-Disclosure</td>
<td>Fired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bar-tender</td>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donut shop</td>
<td>Purposeful</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub shop</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina</td>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telemarketing</td>
<td>Purposeful</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Fired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena</td>
<td>House cleaning</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Fired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subway</td>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Quit (3yr)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housecleaning</td>
<td>Purposeful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inez</td>
<td>CNA</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private – CNA</td>
<td>Concealed</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CNA</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Fired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CNA</td>
<td>When leaving</td>
<td>Quit**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce</td>
<td>Ins. underwriter</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Demoted (34+ yr)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>Purposeful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>Salon owner</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Sold (2+yr)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ins. Company</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>(2+yr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hair dresser (p/t)</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Music Business</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singing Duo</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Ended (7+) **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voice over (p/t)</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>(2+yr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimi</td>
<td>NY Ass. – clerk</td>
<td>Non-disclosure</td>
<td>Quit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CNA – county</td>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Fired (18 mo.)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CNA – Hospital</td>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Fired</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Helena has been at this job over a year, but was with her recent abuser only 9 months.
** Remain employed full-time more than 12 months from onset of abuse.
Abuse awareness and readiness for change are themes that arose from the data in this study. Therefore, they have been included in Figure 11 as individual factors, along with physical and mental health, and workplace functioning which are issues that have previously been linked to employment and were reported as issues by the participants in this study.

Microlevel factors that are reported as barriers to long-term employment by the participants in this study are sorted into two categories (i.e. individual factors and abuse related factors). Each of the individual factors mentioned are dynamic and influenced by the participant’s life experience such as the type of response she has previously received when seeking assistance or childhood exposure to intimate partner violence.

Figure 11: Microlevel Factors Related to Long-term Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIVIDUAL FACTORS</th>
<th>ABUSE RELATED FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abuse Awareness/Readiness to Confront</td>
<td>Severity of the Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Health:</td>
<td>Type of Abuse:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Injuries that interfere with work</td>
<td>- Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Medical conditions</td>
<td>- Emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional/Mental health:</td>
<td>- Work interference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Overwhelmed emotionally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fatigue/inability to function</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Functioning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Individual Factors*

*Human capital: Education and work skills.* Education did not appear to be a barrier to obtaining employment for the women in this sample. However, those at the lower education levels (i.e. less than High School or High School Diploma) generally held jobs that were at the lower end of the pay scale and that offered few benefits; among
the types of positions held by participants were telephone marketing, certified nurse assistant (CNA), waitress/fast-food, and clerical work. However, one participant whose education ended at High School owned her own business – a hair salon. Participants at each of the other education levels held well paying jobs prior to interference from intimate partner violence. Among the jobs held were legal secretary, financial officer, Licensed Practical Nurse, and an office manager. Some participants (n=5) reported that intimate partner violence interfered with their obtaining additional education that may have helped them access higher paying positions. A few examples of educational interference are these from Betty, Felicia, Gina and Anna:

We had stopped seeing each other for a little while because I had decided I was going to go to school and he didn’t want me to and I was like “I’m going to school regardless,” this is when I went to college and at that point that’s when he stopped hitting me up until two days before we got arrested. He had hit me again and he had really hurt me pretty bad and that was that, I kept praying for a way out. BeautifulSoup

Betty

…he’d discourage me from talking to my family, from going to school, for getting an education… my teachers came and met me, and I’d go there two-three times a week and get my paperwork and do my schooling and after a while, he got sick of that too because my old friends from school would catch me from walking back to the house from that building and he didn’t like that so I had to discontinue that. He told me I couldn’t go, he’d take the paperwork - homework that I’d done and throw it out or he’d rip
it up, he just thought it wasn’t a good idea because why would I need an education if I wasn’t going to go out and work, and that wasn’t my place.

Felicia

I went to Wright Business College in Oklahoma City; I completed office courses for Certified Medical Assistant…I didn’t actually get my certification due to the abuse by their father, I ended up having to quit before I got certified.

Gina

I remember my Dad died in 1983, I think it was summer 1984 when his inheritance came in and that’s when I got the car. When the inheritance came in I wanted to go back to school [to become a Registered Nurse] and Mike was like….screaming about it… [I] wanted to shut him up

Anna

Lack of education beyond a high school diploma did discourage one participant from seeking a higher position. Joyce reported that her lack of a college education prevented her from leaving her position at the insurance company to look for a higher position:

I’ve always thought about leaving my job and going to something else but the lack of education that I have is really detrimental looking for a better paying job or anything like that. I do occasionally look out at other positions within the company and I also look out on the Internet to see if there’s something out there…

Joyce
Personal Characteristics: Race/ethnicity. Variations in length of employment did not appear to be related to race or ethnicity for the women in this sample. However, the sample is small and unrepresentative thus it cannot rule out that possibility. Many of the participants of color reportedly received positive feedback from supervisors or the people they served at their workplace. The first example is that of Dora a young, Latina woman who did not graduate from high school but was employed first as a bank teller and later as a Certified Nurse’s Aide:

… she [supervisor] even tried to give me like references and stuff like that for another job you know; she would always talk to me about it [the abuse]…I’ve gotten postcards from people that were at the [nursing home] about how good I was with them and stuff like that so I know that my work performance wasn’t bad... Dora

The second example is Carla, an African American woman with two Associates Degrees, one in Information Technology (IT), who was given positive feedback from her supervisor about her ability to do her $40,000 per year job as an IT consultant:

She [supervisor] said, “You have the intelligence to get a handle on this job and do the job extremely well but there’s something going on with you” and I didn’t realize that I was wearing my emotions on my sleeve…Carla
The third example is Edwina, born to African American/Mexican parents; she earned her Master’s Degree in finance while she was in the Marines and took a job in charge of accounts payable for a large chain restaurant. Edwina reports:

At first, my job was my escape - that was the way that I could get some freedom. The only thing about it was I felt I was only working because I couldn’t enjoy the benefits of my job you know, so I just enjoyed my job. I ate there, they wanted to promote me to manager early, you know when you have an evaluation after thirty days, he told me he wanted to promote me then but he couldn’t because it was only thirty days and I was such a good worker and when he offered that to me I told him, “No.” He said, “Why?” and [I said] “I’m not going to see any of the money” and he said, “What are you talking about?” and I didn’t say nothing.  

Edwina

Participant awareness and readiness. The data in this study suggests that in some cases the participant did not know how to cope with intimate partner violence that interferes with employment because she did not recognize it as abuse. In some cases, the participant’s lack of awareness was so great that she required an external source to identify her experience as abuse, as in the cases of Kate and Carla:

…That my feelings have worth too, that my feelings are just as important as him. I was seeing a counselor that said I had to call it what it was, that it was abuse and I had to face that fact… a counselor that said to me “you have to face the fact that this is abuse” and I was like “Really?” you know because I was comparing it to the first husband where it was more physical and outright really nasty, outright verbally, vulgar things and
names he would call me and stuff but this one was more subtle to me and comparing it to that… Kate

…I think that what really helped me to come out of that was when I went to the DV[domestic violence] Unit that I went to and they helped me realize that abuse is not only physical, that it’s a mental thing that can go on with you that can just ruin your whole life and I didn’t realize that and economic, I didn’t realize that was a form of abuse. I thought that because he was not physically harming me and leaving marks on my body that there was no way that I could prove that he was abusing me. Carla

In some cases the participant was unaware of the abuser’s impact on her employment, as in the case of Inez:

It was weird, I’m being abused watching shows about women being abused which was quite odd and then they’d say, “I love him” and I’d say, “How can you love this man?” and I’m sitting there going through the same thing. You do love them, so there is a good side but this whole… I think as a woman you just want to be a family, you want things to work out, you know so that was my biggest thing…I was completely unaware of, like I was saying before, when working I didn’t understand the influence he had over that…Yeah, he pretended and he said nice things but what he did was different, you know he pretended to say, “Oh, I’m proud of you,” but on the other hand, “Who you looking at”? “Who’d you
talk to? You know – you, or women, honestly think it’s going to get better. That’s because he’s a good “promiser” and I think he meant it but he just didn’t. Inez

Other participants knew the situation they were in was abuse, but they were not ready to confront it, as in the case of Betty:

Because of the way he would act when he came to the job, you know I’d left him a couple of times and moved in with my mother once; he came up to my mother’s house. I had him arrested several times and every time I kept taking him back because I really believed that he was going to change… Betty

When faced with the choice to confront her relationship with an abusive intimate partner or leave the position, a participant’s lack of readiness to confront her abuser presented a barrier to employment. One example of this is found in the case of Edwina:

Yeah they did, my boss was like “He can’t come back in here no more” and I was like you don’t understand he drinks and then I have to switch jobs. He was like, “No, let him go.” Edwina

When Anna could no longer deny the abuse, she left both the abuser and her job. Although she reconciled with her intimate partner, she did not return to her job:

I remember I went to the Director of Nurses at work and I said “you know he works for the transport business, I’m having marital problems” and they
were going to ban him from the facility I think and I said, “You really don’t have to do that,” but I had left, I got in the car and left, I don’t know where I went. I went to visit the doctor I had worked for, I had the kids, we went and stayed in a motel in Clearwater and I might have gone down to my mom’s, I can’t remember…So he went to work in Louisiana, two weeks on, one week off, two weeks on and then he got back on the boats and he called me and wanted to come home… Anna

For the participants in this study, their readiness to confront the intimate partner violence often came after the loss of multiple jobs, injury to their health, damage to their property and fear for their children’s well being. Giele and Elder (1998, p.203) define “turning points” as a point where one’s life “took a different direction.” Some examples of “turning points” in this sample are described by Betty, Edwina, Laura, and Mimi:

He was totally inebriated, I’m in recovery and he was drunk and he was threatening me, I had to call the police up here because he was calling and threatening me on my voice mail and stuff and I was scared and that’s when I really realized that it’s over, you know what I mean, like it has to be. Betty

It was horrible, and I’m not going to let him stab me again, I’m not going to let him do it to some other woman so this time he’s with the police… Edwina
I came to the realization – it was really almost a light bulb that I wasn’t going to be able to get myself to the point of health and well being that I wanted to as long as I was in this relationship… another thought was the realization that if you are enabling them [the abuser], that you are not doing them any service at all and that’s when I said that we would be better off without each other…I think there’s truth in that.  Laura

For me it’s like, it happened so fast and because abuse is not always just physical, it’s emotional and mental and I think more or less meanness. My husband, I know that he knew what he was doing and he tried to use like a lot of mental abuse but when he tried to use mental abuse it affected me more emotionally, you know he used emotional abuse which affected me more mentally. I don’t know if he knew that but I was aware of that and you have to know that it’s not you because it always got to a point where he had me almost a hundred percent convinced that [it was me]. I’d wake up and it was always too late, that your life is not me, it’s not me, it’s not me. I don’t know, sometimes it’s hard. It takes time, it takes time.  

Mimi

*Physical Injury and health.* Another microlevel barrier to employment for some participants is injury or health problems resulting from the abuse. Some examples were listed previously and other examples are these from Betty and Gina:
Briefly, I had one job and I was there three weeks, I worked second shift and he didn’t like me working second shift because he usually worked first [shift]; so he broke my ribs which made it impossible for me to work.

Betty

He had bitten me and scratched my eye and I didn’t feel like I could continue especially with no sleep and him keeping me up until four a.m., I just couldn’t perform my job. So I ended up just not going anywhere.

Gina

Emotional stress and fatigue. One microlevel barrier to long-term employment was the participant’s ability to simultaneously cope with the stress of the job while coping with the stress of being abused. Carla describes the pressure of trying to balance both stressors and finally quitting:

After I graduated from Bryant Stratton I ended up working as a help desk support person… when you get a phone call from someone whose slovenly drunk and they’re at your house and are with your kids, nonetheless, that one call can take your mind…oh my God, I can just remember should I leave work, if I leave work then I’ll lose my job and then we’re all going to be in a mess because I don’t have a job and it was just awful, terrible thing…he ended up losing his job which was right across the street because he called in so much because of his alcohol and drug abuse so that overlapped into my job, it definitely did and it got to
keeping me stuck and got me feeling like I didn’t want to work anymore…

I wasn’t fired from that job, actually now that I’m thinking about it, I quit that job. I did go back to work eventually but after this job that I quit which now I’m just realizing I quit that job. Carla

Carla continued to be harassed at work at her next job and ended up leaving that job as well:

That was another IT job I got right after, it was at a local [company]… it got to be tricky, trying to hide those things from your co-worker who was sitting right next to you, it was very tricky and trying to hide the conversation that was taking place when you’re sharing a cubicle with someone he would be yelling and screaming at me and cursing, using vulgar language. It got really bad because the more he drank the more abusive and vulgar he got and he didn’t care that I was at work and I, of course, had to care if I didn’t want to get fired from my job and working as a help desk support person there was always a possibility that the phone calls were being recorded so I would always think “Oh God, I’ve got to hurry up and get him off the phone because what if there’s somebody listening to this.” It was terrible, it was awful. Carla

Even when the job offered benefits such as a high salary, it was not enough to offset the emotional stress caused by the intimate partner violence as reported by Carla:
Towards the end I worked for a government facility and I really wanted to stay with that job because it brought in a lot of money…I called up and quit my job and that was the highest paying job I’d ever had; when I had just had enough and I couldn’t take it anymore. It didn’t matter how much the money was that I was bringing in, because at that point I couldn’t take it anymore and I knew I couldn’t function on any job. Carla

Fatigue was a contributing factor in participants leaving their employment. Some missed work or quit working because they were tired from being kept awake in their time-off hours as in the cases of Gina, Carla and Anna:

I was only there for about maybe three months; again the abuse was a lot and he was complaining that I wasn’t making enough money, again with the no sleep and not being able to sell was just too overwhelming. Gina

…Because it [his drinking] kept me up nights. I’d be up, sometimes I wouldn’t go to sleep on purpose at night because I was expecting, if I hadn’t heard from him all day, I knew I’d be getting a phone call where he would call me up late, drunk somewhere and want me to come and pick him up and that happened daily. Carla

He went to a doctor, the doctor finally ordered some Xanax for him and it was like the first time in three months I slept. I was [working] nights…I slept with my clothes on. Anna
Others quit because of chronic fatigue from putting up with years and years of abuse as in the case of Inez:

I guess I just got burned out and it got really bad there because he wasn’t working. Yeah, well my last job I was there for three and a half years and I was working sixty hours a week in a nursing home and there you’re really having a good spirit and being compassionate which I really enjoyed but that became…but it [the abuse] took its toll mentally; it was definitely [hard]…my ‘upbeatness” was hard to maintain because I do like to be up but that became a challenge and I would say, you know I won’t say his physical violence ever stopped me from working; it has maybe once or twice, as much as a mental abuse where it was just hard to maintain a good spirit and yeah…just…like I said I was just burned out…And he’d get really mad and that’s when he was really pushing me on the floor and just losing his mind and I’m like…so I ended up losing everything because I took a hiatus from life in general because I was tired… Inez

Inez struggled to remain employed for three and a half years in spite of experiencing constant abuse because like Carla, she was dedicated to her family and felt she needed to work to support them. She reports:

And just over the past, since he stopped working, he’s been home and it got worse… I’d say for the past 5 years – he always worked –and for the
past 5 years I supported all of us but until then he always worked and I worked on and off… Inez

*Workplace functioning.* Just over one-third (n=5) of the participants reported their spouses’ extra-marital affairs created issues that interfered with their functioning at work: for example, Anna’s children began to act out knowing that their father was having an affair and was not home to supervise them.

I was working out patient site then and that’s when he had his girlfriend apparently during that time and the children were acting up then and that really interfered with my work… I come home from work and Tommy is sitting on the couch half buzzed and I said, “Where’s your father?” I don’t know what he said to me he was angry or crying, and he said “He’s at the Hilltop [a motel] with Patty,” and when I came home I was so pissed, I said, “No way, this is wrong”…Mike was not home to be supportive or help or anything, and then when they acted out he got more abusive… Anna

… just around the time my ex-husband started his affair with a young woman that he works with… he kept calling me [at work] and yelling at me and threatening me … Joyce

… there was flirting going on and he would just tell me that I was a jealous, angry person but… So it was things like that, like turning it back
on me… it did end up that they did have something going on because the
girl called me and asked to meet with me… How I felt at work, you know
I tried to separate it though but I think as a woman, at least for myself, I
can’t speak for every woman though,  I tend to dwell on that stuff you
know… it affected where my head was at times as far as where my
thinking was. Kate

Other participants reported that they had trouble focusing at work because of things said
to them by their partner. One example is from Carla:

I was the only one working, I actually worked two jobs believe it or not,
but it was hard for me to focus because he would call after he’d gotten a
good amount of whatever he had in his system, either drugs, alcohol or
both and he’d call me up drunk and just talk all “off the wall” stuff. Carla

Abuse factors

Many of the types of intimate partner violence reported by participants in this
study (i.e. physical abuse, emotional abuse, controlling behaviors, excessive jealousy, and
financial abuse- specifically work interference) were instrumental in ending the
participants’ employment either directly or indirectly. Sexual abuse and stalking have
been reported as factors detrimental to employment in previous studies (Tjaden &
Thoennes,2000; Tjaden & Thoennes,1998). However, they were not reported as barriers
to long-employment by the participants in this study.
Severity of abuse. Participants who experienced severe physical abuse more often reported being fired due to work absence, lateness or other factors related to the abuse; whereas participants who reported emotional abuse or minor physical abuse more often reported quitting their job. Mimi was fired when she was absent from work because she failed to notify her supervisor when she went into the shelter to escape severe physical abuse. Dora was fired on two separate occasions because of abuse-related absences: 1) In the first instance, separating from her first severely abusive partner meant losing her child care provider; 2) in the second instance, the abuser fractured her leg causing her to be sent home from work. In addition, Dora’s abuser would refuse to provide child care or create arguments that caused her to be late or absent from work. She is currently having trouble finding another job:

I was telling my [bank] manager every time I went through something or was going through it and stuff like that; he gave me a few days off at one point and told me “you don’t have to worry about it, just take care of what you have to take care of and I’ll give you these few days off;” come to find out it became a part of my attendance and they fired me. Dora

I was a CNA ending of 2008, I was there for almost 6 months when I got fired [for too many absences]…I never explained that it [was] one of those [intimate partner abuse] situations because of what happened to my last job. I said, “I’m not going to explain to them what’s really going on because I don’t want to get fired like I did my last job,” and I worked hard at that [CNA] job. I’m a hard worker when it comes down to it so for them
to just fire me, you know without anything, it was just like “okay,” you know. Dora

…it could be from the absences you know, a job with absences, they’re not going to hire, not knowing what the situation was or is, just all those absences appear and they’re not going to hire me so I think that played a huge part in it. Dora

*Type of abuse.* Abuse that occurred in the workplace or that prohibited the participant from attending work posed the greatest barrier. Abuse, identified here as workplace interference, included behaviors such as: harassing the participant at work, phoning her at work, making threats or depriving her of needed sleep, causing the participant to be late or absent from work, denying her childcare or transportation to work, and lying to the participant’s employer to get her fired. The following participants and others reported that when abusive behaviors spilled over into their workplace, the result ultimately was their being fired or having to resign:

Yes, I worked at [fast food restaurant] and it didn’t last very long, I was forced to quit basically. He “guilted” me into not wanting to work basically anymore, he made it very difficult, he wouldn’t watch the children that were his, he stopped picking me up and taking me to work, he was my only transportation to and from work…Okay, then I tried to have another job and he would show up at my job, he was harassing me, he wouldn’t leave the premises so he made it completely – they had to let
me go basically because he just wouldn’t stop, he made it completely impossible for me to work there  Betty

Then I got a little job at a corner store and the guy was real nice to me, he was really a nice man and everything so he [her abuser] thought that I was going to sleep with him [her boss] so…[the abuser sent a man to the store] I’ll never forget this, a big black guy showed up at work and this man had gone to a Price Chopper or something and bought two cartons of cigarettes and went to the store was like, “Here, she stole those” and my boss didn’t believe me that I didn’t take them. He didn’t believe me and [I] was in charge of all of the money. I could have taken everything - groceries and cigarettes - and I had a huge black eye. He just said like, “you’re fired.” I couldn’t get a reference from him, nothing.  Edwina

…I’ve been late for jobs because of arguing and stress, so I’ve lost jobs because I’m late.  Inez

Even participants who were self-employed or had their own business found it difficult to maintain their business or continue serving clients while coping with their intimate partner’s abuse. As in these examples from Kate, Edwina, and Laura:

I didn’t miss work, No, because I just had a sense of responsibility,
I have to be there you know, I had clients that were booked that were counting on me and I wasn’t going to keep calling and canceling, I couldn’t…like a lot of the times, because I worked
Saturdays at the salon he would just take off for the weekends too...So it was that kind of thing. I was working like sixty-five/seventy hours at the time and it was just hard, we had moved up to [far from her shop] in the meantime...it was just exhausting so I wanted to sell it. Kate

After the bar job, I just worked for people under the table so I’d maybe just get cash so I put up a thing like you got for doing taxes and any kind of small bookkeeping done cheaply and well; I started getting some call backs, a man had problems with his taxes, he owned a garage and he hadn’t filed taxes in about five years and I fixed it all for him. I had a lady that had a small little boutique with shoes and bags and I helped her set that up financially, I helped an older man and I got a grand, he had an arcade so I helped him with that, but he [abuser] thought that all the times that I was going places that I was messing with somebody. He didn’t believe that I was working because I’d come home with cash so he called me a black whore and that I was a prostitute so...so he got tired of that too...Edwin

In my most recent relationship, I would turn down work because I didn’t want to go, so certainly I wasn’t making as much as I could have because you know, I didn’t want to go to work with him and
especially when I started to get sober, I didn’t want to put myself in that position of you know - having free booze at my disposal whenever I wanted it, trying to keep myself safe… it was really almost a light bulb that I wasn’t going to be able to get myself to the point of health and well being that I wanted to as long as I was in this relationship. Laura

Other types of financial abuse were not reported as barriers to long-term employment. Participants were in some cases compelled to remain employed by their intimate partner’s lack of financial responsibility or pressure on her to work, as in the cases of Anna and Edwina:

I wanted to stay at home with the baby and it was just impossible to do. I mean he I think expected me to support him… The thing is I kept thinking I have to go to work, I have to work, I have to make a paycheck, I have to pay for this house, I can’t leave the house, I’ve lost too many things and finally I just reached a point where I’d had enough, it doesn’t matter whether I have reason or not. Anna

…he had my check; so he bought himself a new car and all this other stuff and I got clothes, he’d be like here’s hundreds of dollars and he’d drive me to the mall or a store or whatever I needed to get because he wanted me to keep that job… but on my days off he would lock me in the house by putting a deadbolt on the outside so I couldn’t go out. Edwina
The ways in which intimate partner abuse poses barriers to long-term employment are very complex. As previously described, intimate partner abuse affects victims mentally, emotionally and physically; often with the result that she no longer desires or has the energy to work. In other cases, the choice to work is taken away when she is fired or let go for reasons related to the abuse.

Mezzolevel Barriers to Long-term Employment

Mezzolevel results that were explored for any relationship to long-term employment included factors related to the family, kin and community supports (i.e. domestic violence programs, religious organizations and counseling not provided through the workplace) and the workplace. (See Figure 12: Mezzolevel Factors Related to Long-term Employment). The Mezzolevel factors reported by participants in this study are organized into two main categories; community and family factors and workplace factors. One community factor discussed here is social support from organizations found in the community, for example support from faith communities or domestic violence programs. Community factors are not included in Figure 12, due to a lack of evidence to relate them to long-term employment.

Family factors are family-related situations or conditions that directly or indirectly impact long-term employment. Couple issues such as male attitudes or behaviors are included under family factors, as well, as support from parents and siblings, and parenting issues. Only family factors that are related to long-term employment are potentially related to long-term employment in this sample are included in Figure 12.
Employment factors are situations or conditions that are work related and may impact employment, such as, workplace support and workplace structure. Social support in the workplace has not been included in Figure 12, because of a lack of evidence that it is related to long-term employment. However, it is discussed under *Workplace Factors*.

Figure 12: Mezzolevel Factors Related to Long-term Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY &amp; COMMUNITY FACTORS</th>
<th>WORKPLACE FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COUPLE:</strong> Male issues related to IPV &amp; Work</td>
<td>• Structure of the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Male attitude toward female’s employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Male Privilege</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PARENTHOOD</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Having young children at home</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Family and Community Factors*

*Community Social Supports.* One participant disclosed that her faith community helped her to cope with intimate partner violence. Both Kate and Laura maintained long-term employment, but sought support from different types of community resources:

Oh yeah, I couldn’t have done it [survived] without God. I did go to counseling, a Christian counselor, and I had a really good support group of people praying for me, my church, going up for prayer for that [the abuse]. I went every single week after he left probably for almost a year and just had people around me, praying and…And forgiveness is huge too, letting go of that because it doesn’t…I remember these things because they’re facts in my life but the sting is gone. Kate
Yoga, a couple of different therapists, social workers, crystal therapy. I really tried a variety of things [for support in coping]. Laura

Betty prayed for to help to escape her abuser and eventually did get out when he was arrested, but was unable to remain employed long-term while she was with him:

I was with him [her most recent abuser] maybe 2 ½ months and he had put a knife to my throat and I was like, “Oh my God, what did I just get myself into?” and it was too late by then because he wasn’t letting me go and I had really believed that he would kill me...that was that, I kept praying for a way out... Betty

The majority of women in this study (n=11) turned to domestic violence programs for assistance. However, they sought help when leaving their abuser and after leaving their employment. Helena was the only shelter resident who participated in the study, who reported that she was continuing to work during her shelter stay.

Couple: Male issues related to IPV and Work. Demographic and other factors that might influence male impact on female long-term employment were considered for the couple analysis. The participant and her most recent partner were explored. However, Helena’s relationship was not considered, because the relationship lasted less than twelve months – the length of time necessary for long-term employment. Therefore, only twelve couples were considered. The couples’ relationships were analyzed to see what, if any, differences there were between couples in which the female partner was able
to maintain long-term employment and those couples where she did not maintain long-term employment.

Length of Couple Relationship. The demographic characteristics explored were and length of the couple relationship (See Table 3: Length of Relationship and Participant Employment Type). In this sample, couples who were together for eleven or more years were more likely to report long-term employment for the female partner. It should be noted that participants who remained with their abusive partner 11 years or more and who remained employed long-term reported minor physical abuse and/or emotional abuse rather than more severe physical abuse as reported by participants in short-term employment. Thus longer relationships and longer employment may both be the result of less severe abuse.

Table 3: Length of Relationship and Participant Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT EMPLOYMENT LENGTH*</th>
<th>LENGTH OF RELATIONSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>≤ 5 YEARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term (n=6)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-Term (n=6)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Helena’s relationship is not included because her relationship ended prior to 12 months.

The couple analysis also explored male employment and male attitudes toward female employment (See Table 4: Male Employment and Attitude toward Female Employment). The women in this study who remained employed long-term were more likely to have intimate partners who were also employed. In some cases, the male partner had been employed at some time during the relationship, but was not steadily employed during the time she was in the position that qualified as long-term.
Table 4: Male Employment Status and Attitude toward Female Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Employment Length*</th>
<th>Male Employment Status</th>
<th>Male Employment Attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term (n=6)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-Term (n=6)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Helena’s relationship is not included because her relationship ended prior to 12 months.

**Male attitude toward female employment.** A negative male attitude toward his partner’s employment was related to short-term employment, and a positive male attitude toward his partner’s employment was associated with long-term employment. In other words, when the male supported his partner’s working, she was able to remain employed long-term. When he did not support her working, the female left her employment in less than a year. All of the participants in this study who maintained employment for more than twelve months were with men who relied on or expected her to contribute or completely support herself, him or the family. To get a sense of how male attitudes affect work outcomes compare the statements from participants whose partners had a “not work” attitude with those from partners who had an “expect her to work” attitude:

**Not work attitude**

He would say “Oh, don’t go to work today, just stay home,” “stay home with me” and he’d say, “We could get a bottle of whatever, don’t go to work today.” Of course, with me, all starry-eyed I thought it was because he loved me so much, didn’t realize it was because he wanted me to stay home and stay stuck with him and eventually lose my job probably… I would call into work at the drop of a hat if he professed to me his undying love and then he just wanted to spend time, “We never get to spend any
time together, just stay home with me and we can just chill out and do this and do that” and that was heaven for me, I thought that was it. Carla

He didn’t like me to have that job because it was a professional job and I had to dress up and I had to look good, and I had to wear heels; he didn’t like that. He thought for me to look that nice it was only for me to be at home…I cleaned, I cooked, I took care of the house. I took care of the baby. He worked in the beginning, after that he didn’t. He just stopped; he thought living off of DSS was better. We had to rely on food pantries for diapers and food. Felicia

…[partner] didn’t want me to go to work…when I was getting ready to leave for my [cleaning] appointment he would go to his niece’s, slam the door and throw a big tantrum…one time he grabbed my arm and wouldn’t let go…another time he beat me up so I couldn’t keep the appointment. Helena

*Expected her to work attitude*

I had in a sense a position that was respected and he was becoming more and more jealous of that position…and then it changed to “well, I really don’t have to work because my wife has a really good position” and he was like…then when the money started coming in, my mother’s money,
he treated my job and the money – he sort of started saying "I don’t have to work"… Anna

Well, we worked together...Yeah, I dreaded it because like I said we were working together; I absolutely dreaded it…Sure, hence the “cocktails”. I didn’t want to go to work with him and especially when I started to get sober… Laura

No, he never stopped me from going to work because he was adamant that he was not going to support me so he wanted me working. When we first met he was in a lot of debt, so I paid off his debt because at the time I owned a home and I had no debt so I re-financed my house to pay off his debt which was like - his credit cards were like $10,000 so I paid that off and he ended up getting sued because of a business deal he’d made prior to us even meeting, so I paid that off for him and… I don’t know if maybe that was one of the reasons that drew him to me in the first place, that he knew I was financially set, I don’t know and probably will never have that answer and it doesn’t really matter I guess…and it was really weird because like if we would go out for our anniversary he made me pay for my own dinner… Kate

In some cases the participants got mixed messages about working, but Inez continued to work because she was the sole financial support for her family:
For the longest time, he didn’t want me to work and so that was a big deal and then when I did work [because he was laid off], they all depended on me but they were mad at me for working or he was [punched fists in air] so there was just no rest for the wicked in this situation. Inez

Edwina’s intimate partner wanted her to work at first, but then decided he wanted her to have another child with him, so they underwent fertility procedures and she became pregnant; sadly she lost the babies when he pushed her down the stairs:

He would never hit me in my face, no way because I had to keep my job but he would hit me in that bad kidney so much…I didn’t have any money, it was a hard job and he wanted to have a baby and stuff and I didn’t want to, but I didn’t want to work for $5. So he talked me into trying to have a baby so we decided to take those shots and I got pregnant with three babies and he was drinking and smoking and I was putting lotion on me and he was like, “What’d you say?” “What?” “What’d you say?” and he threw me down the stairs and no more babies, so I quit the job, I couldn’t emotionally take it, I couldn’t emotionally think. Edwina

The reasons for the male partners in this study not wanting their intimate partners to work can only be surmised from the data; however, it seems that at least four intimate partners felt that being supported by the Department of Social Services (DSS) or family members was better than working, as shown in these statements by Felicia, Carla, Betty, and Gina:
He worked in the beginning, after that he didn’t. He just stopped; he thought living off of DSS was better. Felicia

…so this bright idea of public assistance and unemployment came from my husband, that was the cure all for everything, I didn’t even know how to work the system but he certainly showed me how… he had custody of his child and I thought that that represented him as being a responsible person and it didn’t; because at the time he was actually living with his mom in her house, paying no rent. Carla

…he depended solely on his mother to take care of him and Social Services and stuff like that… Betty

…basically Ralph never worked…he never kept a full time job and we were always struggling, getting evicted so we moved out here with his sister …Gina

Male privilege. The male’s sense of entitlement to make important decisions has been reported as “male privilege” on the Minnesota Project power and control wheel (Minnesota Program Development, 2007). Some participants report that their intimate partner would exert his male privilege and expect her to move when and where he wanted even if it meant leaving her family, friends and job. In one case, the participant had
reasons she did not want to live where he chose, but her opinions were not considered.

Some examples are these by Felicia, Kate, and Gina:

He’d steal from a friend or break into cars, or destroy property. He does so many stupid things when he’s drunk. We’ve moved from to New York to New Mexico to Texas to New York, every time we moved it was always because he’d done something and we had to get away and escape until things cooled down and they always cooled down right in time when he’d get in trouble in another place. Felicia

One time we were looking for a house and were at this one house and he was like “Do you like this house?” and I said “No, it is a money pit and I started naming off a couple of things like the girls are going to be driving and the driveway is treacherous, it’s on a busy road, they’re going to have to back out on to [busy road], “I’m worried about that, I’m concerned” and he said, “Are you in or out?” and I said, “Rob, let’s just look for something else, please can’t we just look for something else.” So he said, “Guess you’re out” and he walked downstairs and signed the paper Kate

We ended up moving to New York from Oklahoma [her home state]… Gina
Male alcohol and substance use. As mentioned in some of the previous quotes, the abusive partner was under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs when their behavior affected her working (See Table 5: Male Alcohol/Drug Use and Female Employment). Many (n= 8) of participants’ most recent abusive partners used alcohol to excess and three of those who drank also used, grew or sold drugs. Only one participant’s intimate partner sold drugs, but did not drink or use drugs. Most of the women did not realize the extent of their partner’s alcohol or substance abuse when they met; as in the case of Carla:

I was impressed with the fact that he had custody of his daughter who at the time was only six - seven years old, not realizing that he had custody of his daughter because her mother was and probably still is a crack head and not realizing that the two of them probably got together because they were using crack cocaine together. I was thinking that, “Oh, his problem is mainly just the alcohol,” it had nothing to do with crack cocaine, its alcohol. So I was misled. Carla

In other cases, the substance abuse started or got worse over time as in the cases of Edwina, Inez and Felicia:

It really started over his drinking; his alcoholism when we got married was not progressed to the point of violence and black outs, and things like that. He just socially drank… Edwina
It was always when he was drunk, every time he was drunk he’d hit me… over the years it was starting to get more and more regular. Felicia

Oh good Lord yes, he’s a drinker…Mainly alcohol, like he had a temporary moment over the past, it was an interesting life because we started out with good intentions of raising a family and then who knew? …like over the past five years since he lost his job, yeah so that’s where he is. Then he had a moment with cocaine, they were both pretty much where he lived. Inez

Table 5: Male Alcohol/Drug Use and Female Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT</th>
<th>MALE ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUG USAGE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMPLOYMENT LENGTH</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LONG-TERM (n=6)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHORT-TERM (n=6)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Male Mental and Physical Health. Four participants thought their intimate partner’s health issues contributed to his violent behavior. However, not all participants commented on their partner’s health, because it was not asked about directly. Each of the four participants who reported on their most recent partner’s mental/or physical health remained employed long-term. The professionals who provided counseling for these participants offered “second hand” mental health diagnoses based on the participants’ description of his behavior or in two cases based on firsthand knowledge from speaking directly to the intimate partner. Some of these diagnoses are described by Kate, Anna, and Joyce:
We went to thirteen counselors, and every single time that they would say to him like, “You have to put your finances back together.” He’d say, “I’m done with this, I’m never going back.” So every time they challenged him to change in some way he didn’t want to go back so we would end up trying somebody else and there were thirteen…yeah. The last counselor that we went to said [he was] “narcissistic,” you know like textbook narcissistic. Kate

I had one psychologist I was talking to and she said he could be bipolar and I said, “Okay.” Like this is a mess. Anna

I asked my husband to speak with this counselor and he went in and the counselor said - I asked him had he met my husband and he said, “Yes, I did, Yes I did, Yes I did” and he said it three times and I figured Okay, and I said, “Well what did you think?” The man took off his glasses, wiped his face down and said, “I think your husband is suffering from severe depression and he needs to be medicated and that he’s really not good” and I was like, “Okay” and when he told me that, I felt a definite release… Joyce

Inez diagnosed her abuser based on his behavior:

I’d be sitting there doing dishes and I’d say something and he’d be like “stop nagging on me” and he’d just blow up and I’m like, “Okay,” so I
didn’t understand so I would think like manic depressive and all these things but you can’t be that way. Inez

Among the physical health problems found among the participants’ intimate partners are heart disease and diabetes. Anna and Joyce report their partner’s health issues contributed to the abuse in their relationship:

He couldn’t work on the boats anymore and I think he chose the hospital because he wanted to go into nursing because it was the safest place to be. If he had a heart attack, somebody would be there because he kept saying “If I go out on the boat and have a heart attack I’m history.” I decided I was going to leave when I was working [as an LPN] in the one nursing home because it was getting so ridiculous, he was raging and screaming all of the time and everything Anna

When he found out he was a diabetic I took a lot of verbal abuse from him because he blamed his diabetes on me because I allowed him to eat the foods that he was eating, that he demanded me to give him so it was kind of an interesting situation there. Joyce

Community and Family: Family Support. Some of the themes that emerged from data related to the participants’ families were “support/lack of support” and “isolation from.” The participants in this study who received help from family and friends most often reached out when they were at the point of
leaving the relationship and/or employment. Participants were often isolated from family and friends as previously noted in the case of Felicia and as described by Laura:

…for instance, the friends and family that I went to go and see in January [after their break-up] I hadn’t seen since the beginning of our relationship, some more than eight years… Laura

Mimi shared with her family that she was being abused, but received no support because they believed him over her:

…just like two of my sisters, my mom, my niece – they actually didn’t believe me until my younger sister came the first time that I actually had to go into work on the day shift and get time off because she’d seen my face, but he lied about it and when he covered it so well that he told them that I was jealous and acting erratic and I was going crazy because I was accusing him of being with other women and that he comes home every night… Mimi

Some participants reported receiving advice from family members, but did not heed it at the time it was given as in the cases of Carla and Betty:

I can remember my mom saying “Carla, he’s using you” and she just passed in June and I’m thinking about the things she told me. She gave me warning signs, she saw them and she also saw how much I cared for
him and she saw the signs, she did. Yep, she saw the signs. That’s pretty tough. Carla

I had my family telling me to leave him, leave him, leave him and I didn’t want to hear nobody else tell me that. I loved him. I loved him more than I’ve ever loved anybody and that relationship hurt me the most when it was finally over. When reality set in and I realized that it was really over, it was devastating. Betty

Assistance from family, such as shelter or transportation did help participants escape the abuse in some cases. As previously mentioned in the cases of Anna and Carla, leaving to escape the abuse, meant leaving their jobs as well. In some cases, when the participant turned to certain family members the abuser bothered them or damaged their property as in the cases of Dora and Betty:

The only place...he would come by and harass my mom, he’s pop her tires, he’d knock on my other sister’s door but the only one he would not knock on - was her door, my older sister… Dora

I had left, I went to my cousin’s house, he came over there starting a mess, I left and went to my mother’s house and he came over there starting stuff. I just really didn’t have nowhere to go, everywhere I went he came. Betty
Community and Family: Parenthood. Concern for their children’s well being and happiness were themes that emerged from the data on parenting. For some participants in this study, concern for their children undermined mothers’ attempts to end the violence as in the cases of Anna, Betty, Mimi and Inez:

…I felt very responsive to this child and I just felt like to walk away from the father wasn’t the right thing but what was happening in front of me was just like “forget it”, you know – this was not what I had signed up for so you know he drank, and did drugs not on a total regular basis in front of me but whatever he did he did,… Anna

…my son was hurt, he didn’t want me to leave – that was his “Pops” because his own father didn’t want nothing to do with him so it was just really hard, it was like I was being emotionally blackmailed by both of them. Betty

…that was my first time actually being in a shelter I was there for about a week, maybe four, five days, maybe six give or take. I didn’t stay very long, that was the first time that I went into a shelter with my children and they were very unhappy and my husband was also calling me and I said, “Okay, well I’ll give it another shot and try to work it out” but it just gets worse with time. Mimi

… I’d end up feeling guilty because at one point, there were a couple of times early on that I’d call the cops and then took him to court and then
later down the road, I don’t know why, I must feel guilty because then I was - they called me “cop caller” and my teenage kids, I was a “cop caller”, I felt bad. It’s not that I mean to, I just…I guess I was an easy person to be made to feel guilty. My older ones are like “Okay, you’ve done this” and they talk to their father and have a relationship with him…they know that we are separated now so it’s all been very interesting because…they don’t want to be associated with it anymore… Inez

In other cases having to rely on their intimate partner for childcare led to the participant’s loss of employment. Dora was fired when she was faced with the dilemma of no appropriate childcare for her young children while she went to work:

He used to tell me…you know because he’d stay with my kids here and there when I needed a babysitter for work and it got to the point when he said he wouldn’t stay with my kids because he didn’t want me to go to work or he couldn’t do it, or he couldn’t come and stay with them, things like that. So I’d have to take off from work…Yeah, he wouldn’t watch them. That would be his main thing to get me but then he wouldn’t want me to put them in daycare because they were “his” kids and he didn’t want anybody else raising them. Dora

Felicia was unable to depend on her partner for childcare because he was not a reliable or safe caretaker:
…then they’re calling me in [to work] and he doesn’t like that, [he said] “No, I don’t want you to go,” I’m not scheduled to work, why am I going to work and he yelled at me and says it’s my job to take care of the baby when I’m not at work and I shouldn’t go because our son needs me… he’s not capable of taking care of a child. He is a good dad but he cannot take care of a child full time without somebody else being there and even when he did have him while I was at work he had his cousin feed him and change him and watch him. He’d play with him a little bit but that’s not really taking care of him. Felicia

Another example of how being a parent creates additional stress and worry for working victims is described by Carla:

It was bad, it got really bad and then of course, if we hung from each other, or if I hung up on him, it would only make him more and more angry … then my mind would always wander to “Oh God, what if he does something to my kids” or takes whatever we’re arguing about on my kids and I’m not there to defend them so there was always tons of stuff roaming around in my mind and trying to keep that and keep the job together, it was horrible. Working was a nightmare. Carla

Both Carla and Felicia ended their employment and/or the relationship to protect their children:
I believe the last time was, he was holding the baby in his arms and he [her son] was screaming and crying in a panic while he [the abuser] was hitting me, and he destroyed the whole house… and I finally realized that my son can’t be in an environment like this, he can’t, it’s not right.

Felicia

I just didn’t know how to make it stop other than to do something as drastic as quitting my job and I handed in my two week’s notice and I didn’t know any other way to do it. I knew I had to get me and my boys out of there. Carla

In summary, support from community and caring extended family did not appear to be a determining factor in participant’s ability to remain employed long-term in the face of intimate partner violence for participants in this study. On the other hand, her partner’s negative attitude toward the participant’s working and being a parent with responsibility and consideration for the welfare of young children had a negative effect on the participant’s ability to remain employed long-term in the face of intimate partner violence. Male alcohol and drug usage, male health, and male privilege are mezzolevel factors that emerged as themes for further study with a larger more representative sample of working victims of intimate partner abuse.

*Workplace Factors*

At the mezzolevel workplace factors emerged as potential barriers or supports for long-term employment. These were sorted into two categories: workplace relationship
factors and workplace structural factors. Relationships with co-workers, supervisors and employers were analyzed to determine which, if any of those relationships were related to long-term employment.

Workplace: Co-worker support. Carla had been an employee with the law firm for nearly fifteen years and had made friends in her workplace, but even so she did not share information about the abuse with her friends and did not remain employed there for long once the abuse started:

The other employees at my job noticed that there was something going on between me and him and knowing me as well as they did, because I had worked at this law firm for about thirteen, fifteen years and looking at him as who he was, they automatically knew that “this is not the person for her,” of course, I didn’t. I was in love and they were “yeah, he doesn’t look like” - one of the secretaries that I had grown very fond of and she had grown very fond of me after finding out that we didn’t make it said to me “I looked at him and knew he wasn’t a lifetime partner for you.” So she knew me well enough to know. So… sometimes it was embarrassing when he would come in for me because I knew that they looked and they knew he wasn’t the right kind of person for me and I knew; you know what I mean, so it was difficult. Carla

Support from a friendly co-worker increased Felicia’s awareness that she deserved better and that there was help, but she quit after only a few months due to her partner’s criminal behavior:
When I worked at [donut shop] there was nothing but females working there so it was really nice, all the girls got really close and I got really close to this lady named Tanya and we’d go over to her house both me and Adam and we’d hang out and just talk and he’d let me go over there alone so I’d be able to talk to Tanya and tell her how I felt and when he’d get me so upset I’d walk down the street to her house - she lived right down the road - and I’d be able to cry and go talk to her and she kind of helped me… She comforted me, she talked to me, she always told me that I could always do better; there’s always something out there, there’s something I could do to get away, that there’s police to help…[I worked there] for about six months, I was pregnant when I was working there. I had to quit because Adam got into some trouble and we moved, we always move when he gets into trouble.

Felicia

Mimi reported that one of her co-workers who also experienced intimate partner violence was unable or unwilling to discuss her situation; however, another co-worker was very willing to share about her intimate partner violence but Mimi did not share in return:

…there were a few girls like at the county job that, I’d say at least two, one girl I kind of knew from high school and I knew that she was going through a lot of domestic violence and we actually stopped speaking because I gave her my opinion on it and at the time she didn’t know that I was going through it and she just stopped talking to me and I don’t even know why…I was making up all these excuses but she was actually
having domestic problem situations herself. There was another girl, she’s a friend of mine…and she was actually in a domestic violence situation and she talked a lot about it to me and I just listened at the time…I was going through my own so I really couldn’t give any feedback or advise on it…We sort of just went our separate ways you know… Mimi

Kate remained employed long-term (i.e. two years). When asked if she confided in her co-workers about the abuse she replied:

At the insurance place, no. Not until everything was over and he had left for the last time, he had left me three times, but the last time was when I did tell people some things. I didn’t tell people everything and at the place - at the hair salon-, a couple of my clients I confided in but I tried to keep it where my co-workers didn’t know because he would come in for a haircut and I just didn’t want everybody knowing I guess, that was my decision. Kate

Anna remained employed long-term. However, she did disclose to her friends at work but not to her supervisor until she was leaving after ten years:

But the domestic violence, yes. I’d go in and I’d be crying in the morning, it was just my out. The girls there were very, very supportive and one girl in particular you know. Co-workers, I mean they were in different departments - I was by myself. She was in her own element, she had her own kind of things - my life stunk. I never interacted with any of the
supervisors or anybody in authority until the end when I left… Anna

**Workplace: Supervisor support.** Although Mimi was at her position for over a year, she hesitated to discuss the intimate partner violence with her supervisor, even when her supervisor tried:

Well, I think at the county job they knew, I’m pretty sure. Like there were two supervisors that I was really close with and one of them, she ended up getting terminated, about one and half years before I did but the other supervisor, we talked about a lot of different things and I think that she kind of had an idea but she just couldn’t pull it out of me and I couldn’t bring myself to tell her… she was just more or less talking like in-between the lines and I should have picked up on it but maybe I just didn’t want to more or less, I think maybe I just didn’t want to and tried to avoid it, talking about other things instead of the issue of the abuse. I think that it’s on me. Mimi

It is suggested by the previous examples that there is no evident relationship between long-term employment and workplace relationships. Participants who felt supported by co-workers and supervisors were just as likely to have their employment end as those who did not have that support. Likewise, participants who were able to maintain employment for many years may or may not have had support from co-workers, supervisors or their employer. Disclosure in the workplace will be discussed further in response to research question two.
Workplace structure. Themes that emerged repeatedly in relation to workplace structure were: “flexible” and “supervised.” A position that was very flexible would be a job that has varied hours, no set time to arrive or leave, and little or no supervision. A position that is not at all flexible is one in which the hours are fixed, with a predetermined start and end time, and employees are highly supervised, such as having calls recorded or having your work systematically reviewed. Flexibility is depicted by the X-axis, and supervision by the Y-axis in a grid depicting workplace structure (See Figure 13: Workplace Structure). The positions described by the participants in this study primarily fell within the lower left quadrant or the upper right quadrant of the grid.

Figure 13: Workplace Structure

The following description by Anna, a Licensed Practical Nurse, helps to point out how being in a highly flexible/little supervised position helped her stay employed long-term in the face of intimate partner violence:

I worked at [health care company] for ten years…if I had any other job I probably would have been fired but because I was my own boss in a sense, I could work at my own speed, I could work my own hours or whatever so
if I could focus on my work which would take me away from my worries or I could acclimate, I could come in late if I needed to or if I could work late or go in early to get away… My hours, he’d be calling me five-six-seven times a day at work and “can you come with me to get the car registered?”, can you do this, can you do that – well, I could do it but I also had to produce so I had to go back and finish my work or whatever… I never interacted with any of the supervisors or anybody in authority…

Anna

Laura and Carla were able to maintain part-time positions over the years due to the flexible hours and little to no monitoring of their positions:

Now I do mostly just voice over, acting and occasional singing…certainly the days I didn’t want to work I didn’t have to work but that was detrimental to me because not only was I not making money, I would feel bad about myself. I was having a hard time getting out of bed because I had to walk into the next room and do my work and not having to do that was not good for me… I certainly can see that I would not have held a job… I mean I have missed enough work that I could certainly predict that I would not have been able to hold a job and - or if I had determined the job was more important perhaps left the relationship earlier but I can’t imagine I would have had the strength to do that, I would probably have let the job go first rather than leave the relationship until that light bulb went off [when she decided to leave]… Laura
I had a part time job; I was working at the [local] hospital working my part time job and through all of that, the abuse and losing the jobs. I never got rid of my part time job that was always my crutch. That’s where I work full time now…I’ve always worked it as a second job and that job was always my cushion, when I fell off of whatever with whomever I always had that job to fall back on because I always had the capability to go back and get hours if I needed it part time, per diem, it was just always my fail safe.

Carla

Joyce was able to maintain long-term employment even though in many ways her position was highly structured (i.e. set hours and monitoring of her work) but the company was flexible in that they placed her in a lower position that was less technical when her error rate went up rather than firing her:

They constantly monitor your work and check your work to see if you make a typo, and mine was typos, things like that, they constantly recheck your work and that’s their way of determining your raise and if they want to keep you as an employee and things like that and it’s a constant pressure on you too…I got put into a lower position and I was kind of relieved because there wasn’t as much technical stuff to work over and the woman I was working for then at that time was very good. They changed management people or team leader changes quite frequently there, I mean I’ve been with the company thirty-four years and I must say I’ve probably
had thirty-two or thirty-three different team leaders so it changes. When you get sick of one, if you don’t like it, just wait a little while – a couple of months- and they’ll be gone and you’ll get someone else. Joyce

Another feature of the company that helped Joyce remain employed was that she worked for a large company with multiple positions to be filled, unlike Edwina who worked for a small, family owned business:

They really couldn’t [help me], it was a little family dive, the guy that owned it was Jamaican and wasn’t even a legal citizen, it was just under the table, part time type of job. There was no way that he could put himself out on a limb for me. Edwina

Summary. Mezzolevel barriers to long-term employment reported by participants in this study involve three family related issues and one workplace related issue. The family related issues are 1) male attitude toward the female partner’s employment, 2) male privilege to decide where the family lives, and 3) parenthood where concern for her children’s welfare is detrimental to long-term employment. When the male attitude is such that he does not want his partner to work, then he is likely to actively prevent her from attending work, from being on time and from being able to focus while she is there. He is also likely to harass her by phone or in person while she is at work. In this study, when the male partner insisted that his family relocate, his intimate partner had to quit her job or found it difficult to continue working due to the inconvenience of the long commute.
In addition to partner issues, parenting also puts victims of intimate partner violence at risk of losing long-term employment. Being the parent of a young child at home increases the stress for working victims of intimate partner abuse, specifically when their partner is not working and is the caretaker for the child(ren). In some cases, leaving their abusive partner for the sake of the children also resulted in the participant quitting her job. The participants who were able to remain employed long-term were participants with no children or whose children were grown, or where the victim was the sole bread-winner for the family and did not have to rely on her abusive partner for childcare.

The one workplace factor related to long-term employment is workplace structure. Results indicate that when participants held positions where they could take time to deal with intimate partner demands and fulfill their work responsibilities outside the normal nine to five work day (i.e. flexible structure) were able to stay employed longer than those who worked in positions that demanded a nine to five schedule with fixed start and end times (i.e. not-at-all flexible). It would seem from this study that a large business with multiple positions is better able to offer assistance to victims of intimate partner abuse than a small family owned business with limited resources; however, this finding should be viewed cautiously because of the small sample size.

*Macrolevel Barriers to Long-term Employment*

The ways in which factors at the macrolevel such as societal factors (e.g. societal attitudes that lead to stigmatizing victims of intimate partner abuse), economic factors (e.g. high unemployment) and social policy factors (e.g. state or federal legislation) affect long-term employment are very subtle. Some of the factors that emerged in this study
that play a role either directly or indirectly in victim’s of intimate partner violence being able to maintain long-term employment are societal messages portrayed by the media, public servants responses to victims, and economic factors (See Figure 14: Macrolevel Factors Related to Long-term Employment).

It is difficult to point to one of these factors and definitively say that it is directly related to long-term employment; however, the results provide examples of how societal factors influenced the ways in which victims perceive themselves, the abuse and their recourse to deal with their abusive partner. Media portrayals, professionals’ attitudes and public servants responses to intimate partner violence are grounded in the way the broader society views intimate partner violence. Below are listed a few examples of how societal messages about intimate partner violence influenced victim behaviors.

Figure 14: Macrolevel Factors Related to Long-term Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL FACTORS</th>
<th>ECONOMIC FACTORS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Media Portrayals of IPV</td>
<td>• Economic environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Public Servants’ Response</td>
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*Social factors.* In the first example, media portrayals of intimate partner violence resulted in Carla not being aware that what she was experiencing was intimate partner violence:

…it [the abuse] wasn’t what I’d seen with my mom, it wasn’t what was portrayed on TV. What’s portrayed on TV and the places where it really reaches people, it’s always a physical thing, it’s always someone being choked or punched, or someone that has to call the cops because their husband is beating the crap out of them. Carla
In the second example, Inez was confused because the nursing home where she worked maintained a “low tolerance” for abuse (i.e. workers who abused patients would be fired) but in her personal experience it was common for people to experience intimate partner abuse:

Oh yeah, domestic violence. Anywhere mainly, there was always something, a poster, they did the low tolerance, you’d see it. I don’t know. This is why I was very interested in, “Why?” Because this is like so common, like almost everybody lives this way. There is all this help, there is all this information; there is counseling. I don’t know.  Inez

The third example shows how misinformation kept Felicia from leaving because she did not think she would be able to remain safe:

Well, I’ve known there were shelters out there, I didn’t think there were any out there that could actually keep me hidden and safe; I really thought he’d be able to find me. Like when I came to the shelter I’m in now, I thought he was standing outside of the other shelter across the [local] bridge thinking I was in that shelter just waiting for me to come out.

Felicia

Public employees’ responses. Some participants in this study turned to public employees (i.e. police and county medical personnel) to help them cope with intimate partner violence; while others hesitated to reach out for help because they were afraid of
being judged or losing custody of their children. Although Betty reached out for help, the response she received resulted in her becoming even more isolated:

I was seeing this doctor in [city] and I was going to the County Mental Health first and they said that they were going to call Adult Protective in because I was being abused and I was subjecting myself to a dangerous, unhealthy situation so I stopped seeing them… then I went and was seeing this other doctor and the doctor had told me that if I came in there one more time with a scratch, anything, a red mark, a bruise, he was placing me in the hospital and he could do that because he had power over me because of the mental health system and stuff, so I had left and I had made the mistake of telling him [her abuser] and that was it. After that he wouldn’t let me go no more, that was it. I couldn’t go, I wanted to start Crime Victims Counseling for the incest and he [her abuser] wasn’t going for that neither. Betty

Betty stopped seeing the doctors and slipped into substance abuse to cope with her mental health issues and could no longer hold down a job. The police and medical personnel in New York seemed to be at a loss of how to help Betty deal with the threats from her abusive intimate partner:

… I was able to get away, went next door and called the police [in Puerto Rico] and they told me “you no cut, you no bleed, he no jail” and that’s exactly how the cop told me and I was like you’ve got to be kidding me…[In New York State] he kept threatening that he was going to commit
suicide and all that and they [the hospital staff] kept telling me, “What are you going to do?” The police kept telling me, “We’re tired of coming here all of the time, why do you keep calling us?” and I had stopped calling but other people were calling now and everything. Betty

Anna was too embarrassed to call the police and was afraid that calling them would make her situation worse:

So I was afraid to get involved with the police, I was embarrassed, I was totally embarrassed…I realized the police aren’t going to help anyway. It’s just going to exacerbate the whole thing for me and was going to cause financial burdens… Anna

Mimi called the police, but the law protected her husband in this example:

I have wanted my husband to get on the deed to our home and he never would but the cops had told him at one time, he kicked the door in and then [I] called the cops, and the cops told me that although he wasn’t on the deed that he could do what he wanted to because he is my husband and legally it’s joint shared property; if he kicks the doors and bursts the windows or sets the house on fire it’s okay because he is still part owner so he has basically vandalized the house… Mimi

Mimi had to leave her home and go to a shelter to find safety and subsequently lost her job because of the time she missed from work.
Economic factors. Like the other factors mentioned at the macrolevel, economic factors are not directly identified as barriers to long-term employment by the participants in this study; however, economic factors have contributed indirectly to the end of employment for some participants. One example is that of Kate, who owned her own business, but decided to sell as a result of the combined stress of the job and abuse:

…people were leaving and I couldn’t find booth renters because it was a lot… and it was in a time when it was just hard to find booth renters so to keep the place going at that time; I had to put in quite a few hours… I was working like sixty-five- seventy hours at the time…

Kate

Another example is that of Mimi, whose home depreciated and she went into bankruptcy and had to work four jobs to save her home:

When [husband] was incarcerated we almost lost our home so I went into a Chapter 13 bankruptcy, that’s only for five years and I did so go and I was struggling so hard that the banks, of course, did allow me to stay in the loan over five years so probably I was in it for about five years and three or four months give or take…I worked four jobs then…I worked my nights on there [at the county job] and on my nights off I’d call the agency and say “Look I’m available,” and they’d put me on and I’d work and I also held two part-time day jobs, one from nine a.m. to one p.m. where I was doing telemarketing and another one I did a cleaning job, two hours a piece so I worked from five p.m. to nine p.m. and then I’d go home, get myself together, make sure my kids were together and go back to work at
eleven p.m. to seven a.m. so...Like I said the value of our home depreciated so fast... Mimi

Mimi was unable to keep working such a heavy work load when her partner was released from prison. She believed that he would be able to work and help her with the bills; however, he has not found a job and she is in danger of losing the house again:

...you’re [her husband] putting in millions of applications everywhere for two years and you still haven’t landed a job then something’s wrong, you know. Nobody is ever calling, you’re never calling places of employment saying that you had put in an application, just the normal thing that you do when you’re really pursuing a job there was never any proof of that... I just got out of bankruptcy in June 2010 and now my house is in foreclosure because I couldn’t manage everything by myself. Mimi

Coping with the stress of abuse and her financial situation contributed to Mimi’s not being able to take the steps necessary to protect her job when she decided to go into the shelter.

Summary. Participants in this study described factors at the macrolevel which indirectly had an impact on their ability to remain employed. Some of these factors included media portrayals of intimate partner abuse that failed to include relevant types of intimate partner violence, public employees who were at a loss of how to best help victims of intimate partner violence cope with controlling partners, and an economic
environment that made it difficult for participants to survive on their own without a partner’s financial assistance.

**Question 2.** What types of assistance (formal and informal) do employed victims receive from their employers and/or co-workers that help them maintain employment while they cope with intimate partner violence?

**Informal Assistance.** Emotional support is the most frequently reported type of informal workplace assistance; however, there was no evidence that receiving emotional support in the workplace assisted participants in maintaining long-term employment (Refer to *Workplace: Coworker Support, Supervisor Support*) for a review of examples of workplace emotional support from co-workers and supervisors). The second most frequently reported type of informal workplace assistance was the employer’s offer to ban the participant’s abuser from the workplace; however, as previously reported two of the participants chose to leave their jobs rather than have their abusers banned from their workplace. Keeping her abuser away from her work did help Helena continue working as a contract house cleaner. Another type of informal assistance that helped Helena remain employed was that her employer kept her work location confidential, so she was able to continue working while avoiding her abuser:

…[boss] supports you…he lets me work when I wanna…and he don’t tell nobody where you work…and he don’t let nobody else come in the house where you workin’…Helena

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Formal assistance. Participants report two types of formal assistance that helped them remain employed: health insurance and company provided counseling. Examples are provided by Anna, Joyce and Kate:

Because of the health insurance I could go to counseling, I went to counseling on and off, marriage counseling, [and] individual counseling because of all these catastrophic events that went on and to deal with them. Anna

I did get to talk to the company-provided counselor and I spoke to him and it was interesting because he told me that there was nothing wrong with me. Joyce

Then I also, during the last couple of years of our marriage, I got a job full time because of benefits and stuff at an insurance company so I worked full time there and part time at the salon. Kate

Holding the participant’s position open is another type of formal assistance offered by supervisors. Giving the participant time to deal with her intimate partner violence and then letting her return to the same position has the potential to promote long-term employment; unfortunately the participants did not utilize the offered assistance for various reasons. Inez chose not to accept her supervisor’s offer because she is “burned out,” but found the offer to be an eye opening experience:
Yeah, that was the first time that I had ever heard of - she said “Well, this is domestic violence,” you know I was taken aback and it was pretty much basically, I was [opened eyes wide as if to express surprise]. She said “You know you can take three months off and we will keep your job open for you” so I was quite surprised by that. I don’t say that was a cure-all but it certainly would make women think a little differently.       Inez

Betty could not keep the job in spite of her employer’s offer and efforts:

They tried, they really tried. She held on to my job for me, my position and everything because my cousin and I worked together - we closed [the station at night], and I just went and told her “I can’t, he’s not going for it.”       Betty

Another employer fired the participant but promised to re-hire her when she was ready to come back to work:

…Director of nursing that promised me, to come back in for re-hire but she actually terminated me but she said that I needed time and she knew, even during the interview, that I was having domestic violence issues at home… Mimi

The participants in this study reported being unaware of any laws to protect victims of intimate partner violence such as that in New York State an employee has the right to take time off work to go to court or make a police report if that employee is a victim of a crime (New York State Division for Human Rights, 2009) or that if a person is
terminated due to intimate partner violence they are entitled to unemployment benefits (Safe@Work Coalition, 2000). Anna worked in Florida but was unaware of any assistance or protection for victims of intimate partner violence in Florida.

Summary. Although the participants in this study did receive some assistance – both formal and informal, it was not enough to help them retain employment long-term. The few who were able to remain employed for more than twelve months report that counseling through the use of health insurance or company-provided counseling was helpful, but only a few of the participants had counseling available to them. The majority of positions held by the participants did not offer health insurance or counseling services. The other type of formal assistance came when the participant was exiting the position in the form of an offer to hold her job. Again this assistance did not help participants maintain long-term employment, it could be seen as “too little - too late” to make a difference.

Question 3. What is the relationship between disclosure and employment related resources?

Participants were asked about disclosing intimate partner violence at work, what information they shared, what prompted them to tell, and any other information that might provide a greater understanding of disclosure and how it related to employment resources (i.e. time off, flexible hours, etc.). Their responses revealed that very few participants shared that they were being abused until they were leaving the job.

Disclosure typology. Disclosures in this study fell into one of four categories of disclosure as identified in the typology previously discussed: Purposeful disclosure; Situational disclosure; Non-disclosure; and Active Concealment of the abuse (See Table
Purposeful disclosure is the participant’s willful disclosure that she is being victimized; situational disclosure is when those in the workplace become aware of the abuse due to circumstances related to the abuse; non-disclosure is when the participant chooses not to disclose the abuse; and active concealment is when the participant purposefully hides the fact that she is a victim of intimate partner violence.

Table 6: Disclosure Typology Report: Number of Positions per Disclosure Type*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Forced</th>
<th>Non-forced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Situational Disclosures (n=6)</td>
<td>Purposeful Disclosure (n=10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure</td>
<td>Witness IPV or Harassment (4)</td>
<td>To Coworkers (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Absent due to IPV (2)</td>
<td>To Supervisor/manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prior to Leaving (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When Leaving (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Disclosure</td>
<td>Purposeful Concealment (n=9)</td>
<td>Inactive Concealment (n=23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conceal injuries (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lie about cause of injuries/ Absences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/or other Abuse (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Avoid Discussing IPV (n=23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some positions had more than one type occur.

**Purposeful disclosure.** In this study, the majority of purposeful disclosures were made at the time the participant left employment or when the victim wanted to explain her absences prior to being out. Examples of purposeful disclosure are these by Anna and Dora:

…when I left and told my supervisor about it [the abuse]… she understood, she said she was sorry… but it was my decision [to leave the job]. Anna

I was telling my manager every time I went through something or was going through it and stuff like that… Dora
Situational disclosure. Situational disclosures in this study occurred when participants experienced abuse while at work or when she felt the need to explain absences that were related to intimate partner violence. Some examples of situational disclosures are described by Edwina and Mimi:

They saw it, they told him to stop talking to her like that, stop grabbing her like that. The owner of the bar had an apartment right above the bar and one night he [the abuser] was so ignorant that the owner of the bar wouldn’t let me leave with him… Edwina

…when I first went into the shelter I had two days off after the first day that I went in and I called and had one of the caseworkers at the shelter speak to my supervisor and it was passed on to the Director of Nursing there… Mimi

Non-disclosure. Participant-reported explanations for not disclosing can be categorized as microlevel, mezzolevel, or macrolevel factors. Microlevel factors are mezzolevel factors are those features of the workplace or people in the workplace that interfered with disclosure; and macrolevel factors are factors related to social policies that inhibited disclosure.

Microlevel non-disclosure factors. Reasons for non-disclosure at the microlevel include those previously discussed such as lack of awareness of the abuse, her readiness to confront the those most closely related to the participant (i.e. her feelings, fears, and
past experiences); abuse, and her past-experience with disclosure, as well as the participant’s embarrassment, her desire to protect the abuser, her fear of her abuser, and to avoid judgments and advice from others. Some examples are these by Mimi, Kate, Dora and Betty:

I don’t know, just thinking that people would look down on me due to embarrassment, I don’t know. Just not so much as being afraid but just, I guess maybe just fear of what people think about you and also I was getting so used to people feeling like people – nobody believed me.

Mimi

I did it [avoided disclosure] more to protect him, you know, I didn’t want to be talking about him. I didn’t want to talk about him with everybody.

Kate

I basically explained the problems with my babysitter or whatever the case was, I didn’t go into detail because I would always be afraid of what would happen to me if I did you know...You know, of my abuser, which he would tell me if I did something that he would get me fired you know? It was like that so I never said anything about anything but I explained that sometimes here and there I’m going through something or whatever the case was...You know because of the situation they feel like you’re going through too much, the time of my first job that’s what happened, they felt that I was going through too much.

Dora
I felt some shame but I didn’t really feel that it was anybody’s business
and I didn’t really want to hear anybody else. Betty

*Mezzolevel disclosure factors.* Mezzolevel non-disclosure factors include the lack
of willingness of the supervisor or co-worker to discuss the abuse, their lack of awareness
of intimate partner violence, and opportunity for the participant to disclose in privacy to a
caring individual. When participants felt those in the workplace were not interested or
not willing to talk about the abuse, it was more difficult to disclose the abuse as in the
case of Felicia:

No [I did not tell], not there, it was a professional place… I don’t think
that they really noticed, I got the hang of it and everybody does their own
thing. They’re not really worried about this quiet girl over in the corner
who does her job. Felicia

One example of how mezzolevel factors facilitated disclosure is presented by Carla:

She [supervisor] pulled me to the side, she didn’t call me out in front of
other people and make it an embarrassing situation but she pulled me in
the bathroom to talk to me and the minute she mentioned that to me I just
broke down, broke down in tears…I told her what was going on at that
point and she understood and I have since called her and told her “thank
you,” because she was one of the first people that actually shared with me
what she saw leaking out, my slip was hanging and I think that other
people noticed it too but they didn’t want to make me embarrassed about it
so they didn’t say anything.  Carla

**Macrolevel non-disclosure factors.** Macrolevel factors non-disclosure factors are influenced by stories heard by victims. Many victims of intimate partner violence have heard stories about battered women losing custody of their children to the system, Dora and Felicia were afraid to disclose the abuse because of the risk of losing custody of their children:

No, [I did not tell] because I was always afraid that somebody would say something and something would go wrong so I never really tried to like, I never wanted my kids to be taken away or anything like that.  Dora

I didn’t want some people to show up at the house or anything to happen; my son is my world, I don’t know what I would do without him.  I couldn’t let anything happen.  Felicia

**Concealment.** In some cases participants actively tried to conceal the fact that they were victims of intimate partner abuse. As might be expected, the severity and type of abuse played a role in whether or not women were able to hide the signs of abuse from their employer, but even when signs were obvious, some participants would lie to conceal the abuse as in these examples from Laura, Dora, Betty, Inez and Felicia:

I tried to cover it up; I mean it was due to his illness so for professional appearances I don’t think anybody, no one in the band or any of his colleagues, knew – they all thought he was kind of crazy at the end but
they didn’t know the extent and the history and the number of years that he battled it… yes [to protect him], and to protect our livelihood because we had a music business together.  Laura

I almost broke my leg because I was trying to get out of the car to like run and he shoved me back into the car and he slammed the door on my foot and I went to the hospital as I had sprained my foot or whatever the case was. That was probably the only thing that happened. I never said it was from him or whatever the case was but I did go to work with a sprained ankle, a fractured leg actually. They sent me home that day because they didn’t want me working under the conditions of my leg.  Dora

…like they [people at work] suspected but he didn’t hit me in my face and I would like cover up, I wouldn’t wear t-shirts, I wore long sleeve shirts and stuff like that. I didn’t really show any bruises or anything  Betty

Oh good Lord, no. I’d make something up, and then of course they’re employers, they were like… (Shrugs, as if to say “so what?”)  Inez

I didn’t really tell anybody; they always said something about him [her abuser], that he’s not good enough, that I was too pretty, just that I should leave and let him go and try to get a life…  Felicia
Summary. Analysis of the results did not reveal any relationship between disclosure and accessing employment related resources; however, this finding must be viewed cautiously because of the low rate of disclosure prior to giving notice. Regardless of the type of disclosure there was no relationship between disclosure and workplace resources. The most common workplace resources reported (i.e. insurance and company provided counseling) were available to any employee and did not require disclosure. The only reported resource specific to intimate partner violence was that of holding the victim’s position open (discussed further under Question Four); in one case the disclosure was situational because the employer was aware of the abuse because it occurred in the workplace; in the other case the victim did not disclose but the employer suspected abuse. In other cases, participants did not receive unemployment even though they had disclosed that they were victims of intimate partner abuse. Victims who are fired due to absences related to intimate partner violence are entitled to unemployment benefits (Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, 2000).

Question 4: What barriers or facilitating factors do victims face when trying to access existing employment-related protections or resources?

The primary factor that either helped or hindered participants from accessing protections or resources that may help them remain employed was the “human” factor. The human factor took the form of those in positions of power showing concern, informing the participant about her entitlements, and helping her receive the benefits to which she is entitled. An example of a participant being offered a benefit that she was not even aware of was Inez’s employer letting her know that they would keep her job open for three months. An example of an employer not respecting a participant’s
entitlement is when Dora was unjustly fired because of absences after being told to take the time she needed (as previously described). Dora found no recourse from the employer, nor did she receive benefits she was entitled to from unemployment:

… come to find out it became a part of my attendance and they fired me. I actually went to the president about this and “it wasn’t my fault and you were the one who gave me these days off, you were the one who said it would be okay, just to take care of what I had to take of.” I went to the bank president but nobody ever got back to me with that, about the absences, that’s what they told me and that it was just not acceptable and they can’t take it back. That’s what they said and I said, “Okay.” They didn’t give it [unemployment benefits] to me; because it was just lack of work was what they said. I went through a lot with that job. I mean if I took so many days, I would never have lasted three years at your job, you know, I was almost on my third year… I think they fired Dave [the manager], I heard about it because he was doing a lot of things that weren’t supposed to be done. Dora

Mimi was also fired even though she disclosed that she is a victim of intimate partner violence. She is currently unsuccessful in trying to collected unemployment:

Yes, as a matter of fact I’m having trouble with unemployment right now, collecting that, I’ve never collected unemployment before but I’m having trouble getting it for the first time because I just received a letter last week saying that I was fired from the county for misconduct when actually I
was fired for a “no call-no show” and it was the third time. But it was all due to domestic violence, which to me is a conflict of interest because those times I worked the night shift and there were different supervisors for all three shifts and when I went in to the job, just so that they could physically see me, and I told them what was going on, there was never anything written but they gave me the time off, but it was still considered “no call-no show” and me not knowing because I didn’t actually call in on my shift but I thought it would be passed on so there’s a problem with that… Mimi

*Question 5:* What additional resources do employed victims of intimate partner violence need to be able to remain employed long-term?

The results indicate there is little that employers can do if the victim is not ready to acknowledge they are victims of intimate partner violence. A few participants felt that there was nothing that the employer could have done, because they were too “stuck” to heed advice or too afraid to ask for help. Felicia explained it this way:

I don’t think that there’s anything out there that they could have done because I was so stuck and not saying anything until I had my son with me and I was alone and I knew that we’d be safe.

Felicia

Mimi reported that even when her supervisor offered help and encouraged her to call if the abuse happened again; the circumstances and consequences of being a victim prevented her from reaching out when she was in crisis:
when I came from the domestic violence shelter back into work, I was called into a meeting with the Director of Nursing and she told me if it ever happened again that I could call them twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and somebody would be able to give me help and it did happen again but I didn’t call and that’s my fault, I was out again so I guess…because it [the abuse] was always happening right before my days off on that particular job so I ended up losing that. Mimi

Some participants felt that if they had been better informed it may have helped, Carla said it best:

…the thing that would have helped me the most, being that I worked in such extreme professional environments, I mean like a law office, how much more professional can you get than a law office, I worked in an IT field, I worked in many different venues that were very professional, I think the one thing that would have helped me immensely to know from the beginning is that domestic violence comes in so many other forms other than physical and that it’s not a difficult thing to prove, and it’s nothing to be embarrassed about because it happens to anybody and everybody, every walk of life and it just isn’t confined to physical. That’s the main thing that would have helped me; if I had known that there were other ways of domestic violence that were being recognized because I thought it would never be recognized unless it was physical and I had a
bruise or cut, or a black eye to show for it, so that kept me confined and stuck. Carla

Others reported that educating supervisors and managers about intimate partner violence and its effect on workplace performance and helping people understand how difficult it is to leave an abusive intimate partner would help:

    All managers and management staff that supervise any group of people should take a course on the signs to look for - for any domestic violence; you know like hospitals take so that they could see drug seekers. I think that management or any corporation should have a course on that and I think that they should at least have a domestic violence Hotline on cards, do you understand what I’m saying?    Edwina

I don’t know, I think that now the laws have gotten a lot tougher on domestic violence, you know a lot of people are taking it more seriously but alot of times people sit there and say “Well, if it’s that bad why don’t you leave?” Leaving an abusive relationship is the hardest thing you will ever have to do and it is the scariest, it is so hard. Betty

Other participants thought that having someone other than co-workers, someone who was a professional or counselor in the workplace to talk to would be helpful:

    I think it helps if you have an accountability type thing or someone that you can just talk to or pray with, you know but that was my choice. I
can’t say that the people there wouldn’t have been supportive but possibly
maybe counselors right there [at work] you know.       Kate

Summary. Some participants suggest increasing awareness among victims,
supervisors, and managers in the workplace as a way to facilitate long-term employment
for victims of intimate partner violence. Others suggested counseling in the workplace
might be helpful to victims. Others reported that as long as the victim is “stuck,” nothing
will help – so the question becomes how to help victims become unstuck.
Chapter 5
Discussion and Conclusion

Study Summary

The purpose of this research was to investigate the factors that support or interfere with employment for working victims of intimate partner violence in order to better understand how to help victims achieve long-term employment and financial stability. Barriers to employment were organized using a three level ecological framework that consisted of factors closely related to the individual (i.e. microlevel), those related to extended family and community (i.e. mezzolevel) and those influenced by society (i.e. macrolevel). Thirteen participants were interviewed over an eight month time frame beginning in August 2010 and continuing through the end of March 2011 resulting in 41 instances of employment and intimate partner violence occurrence. Audio tapes and Life Charts were used to collect data on the subjective experiences of intimate partner violence survivors who had simultaneously worked and experienced intimate partner violence within the thirty-six months prior to their interview. Data was organized and analyzed using NVivo software designed for use with qualitative information.

Study Limitations

Qualitative research was chosen to explore in-depth the experiences of women who balanced working with coping with intimate partner abuse because little is known about this topic. Open-ended questioning allowed participants to respond in their own words and put their experiences in a richer context than using a questionnaire and quantitative methods; however, the ability to generalize from a qualitative study is
limited by the size of the sample, retrospective data, self-report data collection, social desirability effects and researcher bias.

Sample. This study uses a small non-probability sample which limits the ability to generalize this data to the population of working victims of intimate partner violence. Using both snowball recruitment and fliers placed in multiple sites resulted in a sample with a broad range of characteristics key to this study (e.g. type and severity of intimate partner violence, education and workplace experiences). Recruitment continued until the sample contained participants with a variety of personal characteristics (i.e. race, ethnicity, age, education and socio-economic levels); however, a sample size of thirteen cannot possibly represent all women in the population.

The researcher was restricted by the IRB from recruiting participants who currently had a serious mental health condition which limited the ability to determine if mental health problems caused by intimate partner violence limit long-term employment. It is not possible to know how victims with serious mental health issues differ from those interviewed for this study, or how the findings of this study have been influenced by their exclusion. Findings from other studies report mental health as an issue related to employment for victims of intimate partner violence (Browne, Salomon, & Bassuk, 1999; Paranjape, Sprauve-Holmes, Gaughan, & Kaslow, 2009; Plichta, 2004). However, because those with current, serious mental health problems were excluded this study was unable to contribute to this discussion.

A related issue is that none of the participants in this study reported being a victim of stalking behavior. Restricting victims with a serious mental health issue may have inadvertently also screened out potential participants who had experienced stalking.
Stalking has been linked with work interference and higher rates of job performance problems than a group of victims who were not stalked (Logan, Shannon, Cole, & Swanberg, 2007). Therefore, that this study did not include victims who experienced stalking behavior must be taken into consideration when thinking about work interference within this sample.

Another limitation of the study is the small number of participants who disclosed that they were victims of intimate partner violence to those in their workplace. Because there were so few victims who disclosed, it was difficult to make any comparisons between those who disclosed and those who did not or to determine how disclosure affected the participant’s ability to obtain workplace resources. Related to this is the small number of participants who worked for corporations that might have had corporate resources to help victims.

All of the participants in this study volunteered to participate which means they may differ in some way from other victims of intimate partner violence who fit the criteria of the study but chose not to volunteer. It is not possible to know how the group who volunteered differs from those who did not, but the volunteer group may be more motivated to help other victims, more curious about the topic, or more motivated to participate because they wanted the opportunity to discuss the way intimate partner violence impacted their employment. Victims whose employment was not impacted may have chosen not to participate. Also, each of the participants had received some type of counseling; therefore, this group of women may differ from women who are victims of intimate partner violence and choose not to seek counseling.
Retrospective Data. Participants were asked to discuss experiences that happened months or years in the past. Time and life development can change the meaning of events for the individual (Giele & Elder, 1998). Therefore, the accuracy of self-reported data, in particular data about events that occurred over one’s life is suspect. However, using a Life History Calendar method has been shown to elicit more accurate recall than using a structured interview survey (Yoshihama, Gillespie, Hammock, Belli, & Tolman, 2005). The Life History Calendar – or life chart - as used in this study, provides cues that can trigger the participant’s memory of intimate partner violence. When recalling recent intimate partner violence that occurred in the twelve months prior to the interview, either method works equally well (Yoshihama, Gillespie, Hammock, Belli, & Tolman, 2005), but the participants in this study are being asked to recall events that may have happened up to 36 months prior to the interview. Therefore, the life chart was used as a way to help participants remember data, but it is very likely that some jobs and/or incidents of abuse were not reported due to lack of memory.

Social desirability effects. In a study in which the researcher is asking participants to disclose personal information about a potentially stigmatizing problem such as intimate partner violence, the researcher must be aware of the possibility that participants may minimize or deny the existence of the problem. Trevillion, Agnew-Davies, and Howard (2011); have identified barriers that inhibit disclosure of intimate partner violence in healthcare settings. Three of the identified barriers are likely to be relevant to this research study as well; they are: 1) “fear of the consequences of disclosing;” 2) “lack of engagement between professional and client;” and 3) the “hidden nature of domestic violence” (Trevillion, Agnew-Davies, & Howard, 2011, p.52). In
order to address the first of the potential barriers, fear of the consequences of disclosing, the participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses through the use of pseudonyms, measures taken to keep the data securely stored, and reporting procedures that respected their confidentiality. The second barrier, engagement between professional and client was addressed by asking questions about intimate partner violence after building rapport with less threatening personal questions about her education, children and work experience. And the third barrier to disclosure, the hidden nature of domestic violence, was addressed by allowing participants to describe the intimate partner violence in their own words and using probes to have her clarify or expand on her description. Toward the end of the interview, the participant was asked directly about specific types of abuse (e.g. sexual abuse or stalking) when they had not been previously mentioned. Participants’ descriptions of the abuse occasionally revealed more severe abuse or another type of abuse than what was originally shared.

In order to address another potentially stigmatizing area of inquiry around participant work history and workplace outcomes (such as being fired), participants were reassured that any paid employment experience during the time she was experiencing intimate partner violence was important to this study regardless of the outcome. Participants would often offer additional data around previous employment/intimate partner abuse experiences. Participants would be reminded of abuse when speaking of various jobs and, vice versa, they would be reminded of jobs when discussing abuse.

**Researcher bias.** The potential for researcher bias is a limitation in any type of research, but especially so in qualitative research that relies heavily on the researcher’s interpretation and conclusions. In order to minimize bias, the researcher kept a project
journal, field notes, and visual representations of the data, in addition to transcripts and life charts that together create an audit trail to track decisions and check the accuracy of conclusions reached. The researcher used a dynamic approach moving back and forth between newly collected data and previously depicted models in order to check the accuracy and “fit” of the model to the data. In addition, the researcher was motivated by the desire to provide accurate information and interpretations that would be useful to practitioners and policy makers.

**Summary of limitations.** This study is limited in that one cannot generalize these findings because of the small sample size, the voluntary nature of the sample and that it did not include victims of intimate partner violence who experienced serious mental health problems or stalking by an intimate partner. The study’s ability to address the research questions was limited by the small number of participants who disclosed intimate partner violence to their employers and the lack of participants who worked for corporations.

**Strength of the study.** The strength of this study is that it brings awareness to the issue of intimate partner violence among working women. Little is known about working women and violence and this study provides an initial look using in-depth interviews that allow us to see this problem from the victim’s perspective. It gives voice to the concerns and issues faced by women who work and experience violence. By allowing these thirteen women to share their experiences, it gives us an in-depth look at how violence impacts their working lives. These in-depth interviews point to the need for education about intimate partner violence for employees, supervisors, and employers. That some participants did not know what behaviors constitute intimate partner violence and what
resources were available to help them confront the abuse, and how to obtain safety for them and their children points to the need for better education about intimate partner violence. This study also reminds readers that intimate partner violence is found in various racial and ethnic groups; in multiple socio-economic groups, in rural, suburban and urban areas; and across age groups. Although limited in size, the concepts that emerged from this study are important and deserve further consideration using larger more representative samples.

Summary of Major Findings

Barriers to long-term employment. Long-term employment outcomes for victims of intimate partner violence are bleak. The findings of this study revealed that a mere fifteen percent (n=6) of full time positions (n= 41) held by participants continued longer than twelve months from the time the abuse began. Four of the six participants who were able to maintain one full-time position long-term experienced primarily emotional abuse and had no small children at home during the time they were employed in that position. The other two participants who maintained one full-time position long-term experienced severe physical abuse and had at least one child under age eighteen at home, but did not rely on their abusive partner for childcare.

In the six cases where the participant was able to remain employed long-term, the participant’s intimate partner either relied on her to work or expected her to be the primary bread winner for the family or herself. In one case, the participant who is a parent surpassed the benchmark for long-term employment by only six months before she was fired due to absences related to the intimate partner violence and remained employed in her second job only a matter of weeks before she was fired. Two participants who
were employed long-term quit work due to emotional and physical exhaustion and were unable to continue working; one after ten years and another after three and a half years. One participant ended the relationship and her joint business after nearly eight years of emotional abuse. One participant is working for the same employer, but was demoted to a lower position when stress from the intimate partner violence increased her error rate. Only one of the six participants employed more than twelve months from the onset of intimate partner violence is in the same position she held at the time she experienced intimate partner violence.

In fact, she is the only one out of the thirteen participants whose experience with an intimate partner abuse lasted more than a year to hold the same full-time position that she held while experiencing intimate partner violence. Three participants continue part-time positions that they held during their most recent experience with intimate partner abuse. One participant who left her most recent abuser after nine months is in the same full-time position that she held prior to that relationship. The barriers that kept over half (n= 7) of participants from being able to maintain long-term employment include factors at each ecological level.

Microlevel barriers. The participant’s awareness and readiness to confront intimate partner violence is perhaps the most important of the barriers to long-term employment identified in this sample, because until the participant is aware that what she is experiencing is abuse and is ready to confront that she is a victim of intimate partner abuse, she will not be able to see its affect on her and on her employment. Participants in this study continued to lose job after job and the majority of them were unable or
unwilling to disclose their victimization until they were forced to do so because of injuries, absences or signs of abuse in the workplace, or until they were quitting.

There is little research on how to help victims of intimate partner violence recognize and confront their abuse; however, one study that used focus groups and individual interviews to gather information on “turning points” for sixty-one victims of intimate partner violence found that readiness for change was related to five major themes: 1) protecting others from the abuse/abuser; 2) increased severity/humiliation with abuse; 3) increased awareness of options and/or access to support and resources; 4) fatigue and/or recognition that the abuser was not going to change; and 5) partner betrayal and/or infidelity” (Chang, et al., 2010). Chang et al.’s (2010) themes are helpful when exploring the turning points in the participant’s most recent abusive relationships. The largest percentage of participants (n=6) decided to end the relationship because of fatigue or recognition that the abuser was not going to change; two participants left to protect their children from abuse; two decided to leave (and not return) because the abuse increased in severity; two participants’ relationships ended because of partner infidelity; and one participant refused to take her abuser back when he was released from prison, because she was in recovery and had become aware of other options and had access to support and resources.

*Physical and mental health.* Other microlevel factors that impact long-term employment are participants’ physical health (i.e. injury or medical conditions which made it impossible to work), and emotional or mental health (i.e. being overwhelmed emotionally or fatigued). Medical injuries were most commonly the result of severe physical abuse that resulted in the participant needing medical care or that left signs of
abuse that causing her to be too embarrassed to return to work. The medical conditions and injuries reported by the participants in this sample are consistent with the type of injuries and conditions reported in other studies (Tomasulo & McNamara, 2007). Only two participants reported leaving work for physical health reasons, whereas, four participants reported leaving jobs because they were emotionally overwhelmed or “burned out.” Participants’ reports of fatigue from being kept awake, being put down and being too embarrassed to return to work are similar to those reported in previous studies (Moe & Bell, 2004; Swanberg & Logan, 2005).

Type and severity of abuse. As reported by previous research (Brush, 2004) physical violence and abuse that spilled over into the workplace made it difficult for the participant to remain employed. Work interference or work disruption tactics reported by the participants in this study are consistent with those reported in other research that looked at battered women and work interference (Brush, 2000; Moe & Bell, 2004; Swanberg & Logan, 2005). One study than looked at the consequences of work interference on job stability reported that work interference tactics “have a negative consequence on short- and long-term job stability” (Swanberg & Logan, 2005, p. 14); however, they did not define the time frames represented by “short- and long-term.” When using the time frame of over twelve months to represent long-term jobs and under twelve months to represent short-term jobs; the results of this study support Swanberg and Logan’s (2005) finding.

Mezzolevel Barriers.

Barriers at the mezzolevel include factors related to the family and factors related to the workplace. The family factors that were explored include family and
community supports, the couple relationship and the parent/child relationship (i.e. parenthood). The most important factor related to the couple relationship is the male partner’s attitude toward the participant’s employment. Male attitude toward his partner’s employment in this sample is the most decisive factor to predict long-term employment. However, this finding should be regarded with caution because of the small sample size.

A negative male attitude toward his intimate partner working resulted in behaviors that interfered with her maintaining employment. When the male’s attitude toward his intimate partner working was positive, she was able maintain employment. When males sent mixed messages regarding his intimate partner’s working, her work experience was varied as well. Research has pointed to the combination of gendered attitudes toward female employment and resource disparities as factors that increase the likelihood of intimate partner violence (Atkinson, Greenstein, & Lang, 2005; Fox, Benson, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2002; Kaukinen, 2004). Male partner unemployment was higher (n=5 vs. n=2) among the short-term employment group than the long-term employment group. However, in this study, there was little evidence to support that the male negative attitude towards his partner’s working was gender driven. Four of the participants who were unable to maintain full-time positions long-term had intimate partner’s who preferred to rely on other sources of income (i.e. social services, unemployment, or family support) or who would rather have her spend time with him than work.

**Male Privilege.** The male’s sense of entitlement, often called “male privilege” is when men make important decisions without regard for their partner (Minnesota
Program Development, 2007). Participants in this study reported they had to leave family, supportive friends, and jobs that they liked, because their partner wanted to move. Moving or changing residence resulted in two participants quitting their jobs and one participant selling her business. Being forced to move is not a commonly reported barrier to employment; however, it is form of coercion faced by the participants in this study and represents the type of control that abusive partners in this sample exerted over their partner.

**Social Support.** Social support has been considered as a potential protective factor in helping victims of intimate partner violence maintain employment by reducing the negative impact of abuse on victims’ health or by providing tangible resources such as transportation that may help victims remain employed. The results of this study showed no relationship between social support from family and friends and long-term employment; however, intimate partner violence was reportedly reduced participant’s opportunity to receive support from friends and family. These findings are consistent with longitudinal research that looked at intimate partner violence, social support and employment over a three year period using the Illinois Family Study of over 1000 families (Staggs, Long, Mason, Krishnan, & Riger, 2007). Staggs et al. (2007) found that social support at waves one and two did not predict stable employment at wave three; however, intimate partner violence at wave one was negatively associated with social support at wave two, and social support at wave three was negatively associated with intimate partner violence at wave three.

Male substance abuse and male mental health were also identified as factors that may increase intimate partner violence and subsequently reduce the length of
employment for victims. This is consistent with findings from other studies that find alcohol to be a risk factor for intimate partner violence (Caetano, Ramisetty-Mikle, Vaeth, & Harris, 2007).

**Mezzolevel Work Related.** Work-related barriers at the mezzolevel include the structure of the workplace. Having a flexible work schedule, with flexible start and ending times helped participants remain employed, even in cases where their male partners were demanding of their time. This finding is similar to that of one quantitative study of 227 victims of intimate partner violence who had worked in the past year. The researchers found when comparing working victims with those who were unemployed at the time of interview that working victims were significantly more likely to have flexible work schedules \((F(1, 309) = 9.75; p< .01)\) than non-working victims (Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007).

In their study on the work experiences of survivors of gendered violence, Pyles and Banerjee (2010) found that many survivors of intimate partner violence held low-income jobs in either the formal, informal or underground economy. Findings from my study suggest the possibility that victims of intimate partner violence may choose informal and underground economy positions because these types of employment offer flexible work schedules that allow women who are coping with an abusive intimate partner and/or the aftermath of intimate partner violence to remain employed.

Reasons given by participants who worked in office settings for not disclosing intimate partner violence included feeling that co-workers were not interested, being embarrassed, being ashamed, and feeling that it was no one’s business. Supervisors’ attitudes and/or lack of knowledge about intimate partner violence may create barriers to
disclosure or result in a negative response. These findings are consistent with research that reports having privacy and opportunity (i.e. time and not being rushed) facilitate disclosure of intimate partner violence (Montalvo-Liendo, 2009; Trevillion, Agnew-Davies, & Howard, 2011). Having a supervisor who provided an opportunity to disclose in privacy, and who was comfortable addressing the signs of the abuse facilitated disclosure for one participant.

**Macrolevel barriers.**

Macrolevel barriers to long-term employment are indirect and subtle; they include social factors such as incomplete media portrayals of intimate partner violence, public servants who do not handle intimate partner well, and economic factors that contribute to the victim not being able to continue working.

**Assistance and disclosure in the workplace.**

The participants in this study received informal assistance in the form of emotional support from co-workers when they disclosed that they were being victimized; however, few participants in this study shared their victimization with co-workers. The reasons that participants gave for not disclosing were both internally motivated (i.e. embarrassment, shame, fear of abuser retaliation, or protection of abuser) or externally motivated (i.e. feeling those in the workplace would not be interested or that telling would have a negative effect on her employment). These responses are similar to those in other studies that have identified reasons that victims of intimate partner violence do not disclose (Busch & Wolfer, 2002; Kwesiga, Bell, Pattie, & Moe, 2007; Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2005, Swanberg & Logan, 2005).
Participants in this study received very little informal support from supervisors or managers, in contrast to Swanberg and Logan’s (2005) study which found that 85% of the 15 victims received both formal and informal support from their employer when they disclosed abuse. The reason for the disparity may lie in the fact that very few participants (n=4) in this study shared their victimization with their supervisor before they were leaving. In two cases in which the abuse occurred in the workplace, the employer offered to ban the abusive intimate partner from the premises, but the participants left their jobs anyway. There was no evidence that emotional support in the workplace resulted in long-term employment.

Participants received very little formal support as well. The most helpful types of formal support reported by participants in this sample were health insurance and company-provided counseling. Both of those types of formal support were available to all employees and did not require disclosure. In three cases, when the participant quit she disclosed she was leaving due to intimate partner violence and was told that her job would be held up to three months if she wanted to come back. However, none of the three returned because they were too burned out or ill by the time the offer came.

This finding points to the need for ways to notify employees of resources for victims of intimate partner violence that do not require disclosure, such as education for all employees and managers, posters in the workplace, or employee handbooks that offer information on intimate partner violence. Three factors that reportedly facilitated disclosure in this study were: 1) having a supervisor/manager who is willing to discuss the signs of abuse; 2) having the supervisor/manager approach the subject in a caring way, and 3) a private location to talk. There is little research on workplace disclosure;
however, these conditions are similar to facilitating factors for disclosure found in studies on disclosure to helping professionals (Montalvo-Liendo, 2009) and medical personnel (Trevillion, Agnew-Davies, & Howard, 2011). Trevillion et al. (2010) found that lack of confidence is one barrier that prohibits medical professionals from the broaching the subject of intimate partner violence with their patients. It is unlikely that supervisors in the workplace are more confident than medical personnel to discuss intimate partner violence with those they supervise. One of the supervisors in this study who spoke with the participant about intimate partner violence was a former social worker and another had had personal experience with intimate partner violence; therefore, they may have been more comfortable with the topic than other supervisors. More research is needed around disclosure of intimate partner violence in general and specifically on disclosure in the workplace.

*Employment related protections and resource access.*

The factor most often related to the participant being able to access employment related protections and resources is the human factor – the knowledge and willingness of supervisors or managers to inform participants of resources and rights. Participants in this study were unaware of their rights as victims in New York State regarding time off for court, to make police reports, etc. They were also unaware of federal legislation that entitles women who are fired from their job due to intimate partner violence to collect unemployment benefits. Employers should be aware of these rights. However, in this study some employers found ways around the law by telling unemployment office that the employee was laid off due to cuts, when they told the victim it was due to absences caused by the domestic violence. Although three of the participants were told their job
would be held for them, they only received that information when they were at the end of their rope, and quitting. Had these three participants known their rights as victims of intimate partner violence earlier, they may have been able to remain employed while they sought shelter or developed a safety plan. One of the participants suggested that supervisors be educated about the signs of intimate partner violence; and I would add that supervisors also need to be educated about the rights and protections afforded victims of intimate partner violence before they have a victim in their workplace.

Additional Resources.

This study revealed that working victims of intimate partner violence have few resources to help them remain employed long-term; however, several participants in this study could not articulate what would have helped them. One participant said that nothing would have helped because she was “so stuck,” others said that having counseling in the workplace, someone besides co-workers to talk with would possibly have helped. Those who did have counseling in the workplace said that it was helpful. One way to provide counseling for victims, who work for small businesses that cannot afford to hire an on-site counselor or provide health insurance for their employees, is to connect those businesses with local shelters that can do training and provide counseling/safety services for victims. Having domestic violence organizations work with larger corporations to educate their managerial staff, employees and employee assistance personnel about intimate partner violence may help to offset the barriers to long-term employment in highly structured, professional organizations.
Implications of the study

The Social Work Code of Ethics requires that social workers “promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients” (National Association of Social Workers, 2009). This study aimed to inform social work practitioners, health care providers and policy makers with information that will help promote social justice for victims of intimate partner violence.

Social workers and domestic violence advocates in New York State are involved in promoting legislation that will prevent the discrimination of intimate partner violence in the workplace; however their efforts are prompted by anecdotal information rather than empirically tested data. This study was the first step in a progression of studies that will help to inform policy makers - both corporate and governmental – about what is needed to not only delay termination/resignation of employment for victims of intimate partner violence, but to help victims safely achieve long-term, stable employment.

Implications for practice and advocacy. From a quarter to nearly half of victims of intimate partner violence are estimated to seek treatment from a mental health professional following an incident of intimate partner violence (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2003; Coker, Derrick, Lumpkin, Aldrich, & Oldendick, 2000). Victims are hesitant to talk about being abused unless they are asked about it directly and want to have their autonomy respected when they disclose (Chang, et al., 2005). It is important for mental health providers to know the signs and symptoms associated with intimate partner violence, to be familiar with available resources and to be comfortable raising the issue as discussed in the following sections.
Recognizing victimization. The women in this study were victimized in multiple ways: financially, emotionally and physically by intimate partners. Some victims had bruises or physical injuries, while others had no physical indicators but were caught in a web of power and control by an abusive partner. The lack of overt violence does not mean that it easy or safe for a victim to leave a controlling partner. Therapists who are not aware of the signs and symptoms of all types of intimate partner abuse may miss opportunities to educate and support victims who experience hidden types of abuse such as emotional, psychological and financial abuse. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions offer courses on intimate partner abuse and require those who provide therapy to have competency in the area of family violence.

High-income victims. Results indicate that intimate partner violence cuts across all socio-economic levels; it is found among those with college degrees and at upper income levels as well as, among those with lower education and income levels. When testing domestic violence attitudes and practices among residents at a large teaching medical center, Baig, Shadigan, and Heisler (2006) found sixty-six percent (N=167) of residents incorrectly believed that intimate partner violence was more prevalent among women of lower than of higher socio-economic status; however, there was no significant difference in their screening practices between the two groups. It is important for practitioners to realize that a woman who holds a professional position and is very accomplished in her career may struggle with intimate partner violence in her intimate relationship. Shame and fear of being seen as “stupid” for staying with an abusive man make it difficult for women at any socio-economic level to admit to being a victim, but it may be more difficult for educated women who feel they should “know better” to
Victims of financial abuse might be embarrassed to admit that even though they earn a high salary, they do not have access or control over the money. Therefore, public education that helps to remove the stigma of intimate partner abuse is needed, as well as, education for those in helping professions, including but not limited to medical personnel, educators, social workers, employee assistant personnel, and law enforcement personnel.

*Substance abuse/male unemployment.* This study reports a high number of unemployed intimate partners many of whom used alcohol or drugs. The presence of either of issues should be a “red flag” that prompts practitioners to ask about intimate partner violence. It is even more important to do so when both issue are present.

*Disclosure.* Practitioners have long been aware that victims of intimate partner abuse hesitate to report their victimization and the results of this study make it clear that the barriers to disclosure are complex. Practitioners must consider factors at multiple levels of the victim’s ecological system to determine the best way to break through the victim’s denial and move her toward readiness for change. Personal factors (i.e. fear for herself or her children, wanting to protect the abuser, shame, embarrassment, etc.) and those related to the environment (i.e. opportunity, safety, a caring individual, etc.) interact to create barriers that keep victims stuck in relationships with abusers. It is important to victims that professionals respect where they are in the readiness process and not threaten them with negative consequences when they are not ready for change (Chang, et al., 2005; Prochaska & Di Clemente, 1992). As reported by one participant, threats of hospitalization and loss of autonomy resulted in her becoming even further isolated.

*Employment and housing.* Domestic violence advocates often work with victims to help them secure housing and employment needed after separating from their abusers,
but as can be seen by the stories of the participants, ways are needed to prevent victims from losing their homes and employment as a result of intimate partner violence. When therapists and advocates are aware of victim rights and protections, they may be able to offset some of the false information told to victims by their intimate partner. Advocates may be able to work with employers and mortgage loan personnel to protect the victim’s assets and employment.

**Implications for policy: Legislation.** The need for legislation to protect victims of intimate partner violence from being doubly victimized is clear. Some participants in this study were abused by their intimate partners and again by their employers when they were fired for absences related to being a victim. Many of the victims were unaware that they had rights or protections in their workplace. Policies that require all employers to give their employees information on victim rights would potentially alert victims of intimate partner abuse that they had rights and recourse without singling them out.

**Public education.** The responses from participants in this study indicate that much of their understanding of intimate partner violence came from the media, from other women, and from helping professionals. Unfortunately the information they received was not always accurate or complete. Carla and Kate did not recognize financial and emotional abuse as intimate partner violence until it was explained to them by counselors. Felicia was not aware that domestic violence services would help her. She was afraid that seeking help might result in her losing her child. Victims, like Felicia, are often isolated by their abusive partners. Therefore, it is important that accurate information is broadcast in public media that can reach out victims in their homes. As recommended by the participants, efforts are needed to reduce the stigma of
being a victim of intimate partner violence. More effective ways to inform victims of their rights regarding employment and the laws that are in place to protect them are needed. Social mores dictate much of policy development and intimate partner violence has only recently been seen as a social problem rather than a family problem (Miccio, 2005); however, as the results show there are still those who feel that intimate partner violence is a private matter. The results here suggest the public response to intimate partner violence needs to be preventative as well as, reactive. Finding ways to dispel the myths surrounding intimate partner violence and educating women, men and the general public would perhaps help to reduce the stigma associated with intimate partner violence and make it easier for women to seek help.

*Health care policies.* Health care research has been actively exploring the problem of non-disclosure to health care workers by looking at screening procedures (Daugherty & Houry, 2008), physician barriers to screening (Jaffee, Epling, Grant, Ghandour, & Callendar, 2005); and both physician and patient barriers to disclosure (Trevillion, Agnew-Davies, & Howard, 2011).

The research on the effectiveness of screening policies is mixed, thus screening for intimate partner violence may or not be mandatory. Therefore, even though many victims of intimate partner abuse seek medical treatment for a variety of problems the abuse often goes undetected (Willson, et al., 2001). Public health policies must be reviewed for better ways to identify victims of intimate partner violence, encourage disclosure, and provide services to those victims who need them.

*Childcare policies.* The participants who were parents in this study relied on their intimate partner to help with childcare, and when their partner refused to provide
childcare she was forced to quit working or was fired for missing work. The need for affordable childcare cuts across income lines. Until women are able to access affordable childcare for their children, they will be vulnerable to men who use children to control and manipulate women.

Future research

As previously mentioned, researchers in the medical field have taken the lead on exploring barriers to disclosure in medical settings. Similar research is needed to understand what are the barriers that prevent supervisors and managers from talking to their employees about intimate partner violence in the workplace. On the other side, victim readiness for change was identified as a major barrier to victim disclosure in the workplace. More research is needed to understand ways to help victims move toward change readiness. Other victims reported fear of consequences as a barrier to workplace disclosure. While this study hoped to shed light on the relationship between disclosure and workplace outcomes, the small number of purposeful disclosures prior to leaving employment precluded any meaningful findings; therefore, more research is needed to explore that relationship, if any exists.

Participants with serious mental health issues were restricted from this sample by the IRB. Intimate partner violence often results in serious mental health issues that can affect employment. Therefore, further research that includes participants with serious mental health issues is crucial to gain a full understanding of the impact of mental health issues on employment and, vice versa, employment’s impact on mental health of intimate partner victims.
Research that explores how workplace structure is related to long-term employment for victims of intimate partner violence is needed. A better understanding of how structure of the workplace supports or hinders long-term employment could open the door to new ways of helping victims who do not have flexible work schedules be able to maintain employment longer and increase opportunities for victims to seek and receive assistance in the work environment.

**Conclusion**

It has been nearly thirty years since my sister asked, “What can I do to make my husband stop beating me?” Now as then, the answer is, “You have no control over him, you can only change yourself and what you do;” however, those of us who care what happens to victims of intimate partner violence must work to find ways to help women recognize controlling behaviors as intimate partner violence and to offer solutions based on the best possible information. This study adds to the information arsenal for professionals and will hopefully increase awareness for victims of intimate partner violence about the ways abuse jeopardizes their ability to support themselves and their families.


Appendix 1: Recruitment Flyer

Has domestic violence affected your job or work productivity?

Did you miss work? Did your boss know about the abuse?

- Audio-taped in-depth interview
- Completely confidential
- Stipend for your time

A research project to study how employed women handle working when being hurt by their male partner.

Eligibility criteria: Women between the ages of 18 and 65; who were employed and being abused by a male partner at any point in time within the past 36 months. Some screening for special issues; Pregnant women are excluded.

Contact person: Monna Zuckerman, LCSW 518-421-0000
## CAPITAL DISTRICT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

### Recruitment Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence Services</td>
<td>480 Broadway, Saratoga, New York 12866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equinox, Inc. DV Services</td>
<td>95 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families in Crisis – Unity House</td>
<td>504 Broadway, Troy, New York 12180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanicville – MACSC</td>
<td>6 Main Street, Mechanicville, NY 12118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWCA Families in Violence</td>
<td>44 Washington Avenue, Schenectady, New York 12305</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study Title: Intimate Partner Violence and Employment within a Socio-ecological framework
Primary Investigator: Monna Bender Zuckerman, Ph: 518-421-0000, MZuckerman@albany.edu
Faculty advisor: Dr. Carolyn Smith, Ph: 518-442-5341, csmith@albany.edu

Monna is a PhD Candidate at the University at Albany and former therapist who has worked with various programs throughout the Capital District in various capacities, such as a group facilitator, children’s counselor, an advocate and others. Carolyn Smith is the chair of her dissertation committee and the faculty advisor for this study.

Description of the study: This is an exploratory, qualitative study to look at the issues faced by victims of intimate partner abuse who are employed. The study involves in-depth, audio-taped interviews with women between the ages of 18 and 64 who identify themselves as having experienced intimate partner violence while simultaneously working. The co-occurring IPV and work must have occurred between 7 to 36 months ago; those who experienced IPV in the past 6 months are ineligible. Pregnant women and women who are in same-sex relationships are excluded from participation. To reduce the danger of extreme distress to participants, those who are experiencing serious mental health issues. Women who are actively involved in drug/alcohol use or who have entered treatment for serious drug usage within the past 12 months are excluded.

Location of the study: Interviews will be held in a location chosen by the participants; somewhere the participant deems to be safe and yet private enough to conduct an interview (i.e., my office, her office or home, or some other identified location such as the program site, the library meeting room, etc.). Subjects will be recruited from domestic violence programs throughout the Capital Region through the use of flyers, and by referral from other participants. Each month, I will post a new flyer with accurate dates for inclusion.

Compensation: Respondents will receive a $20.00 cash stipend for the first 90 minutes of their time, and $10.00 cash for each additional 30 minutes. Interviews are expected to be between 1 and 2 hours depending on the number of jobs held and the extent of the intimate partner violence.

Risks & Benefits: The risk to subjects is minimal as they will contact the researcher; choose the location of the interview and the extent to which they wish to disclose information. All identifying information will be kept in a locked file and no other person will have access to the information. Information will not be shared with their employer, spouse or any other individual. Subjects will be informed that they can refuse to answer any question or stop the interview at any time. All subjects will be debriefed about how they are feeling at interview end and will receive a resource booklet.

The participants have an opportunity to inform researchers, educators, and policy makers about the issues employed individuals face when being battered. They may experience only minor personal benefit from talking about their experiences, but will be providing an important service for other victims.

Request of Program:
1) Display flyers regarding the study;
2) Point out fliers to those that fit the study criteria and answer questions or encourage potential participants to call me if they have any additional questions;
3) Inform potential participants that their safety and confidentiality is my primary concern.

If you have any questions concerning this study that have not been answered by the investigator or if you wish to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University at Albany Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at 518-442-9050 or orrc@uamail.albany.edu.”
Appendix 4A: Response Protocol

**CALL COMES IN**

Ask where she got my name & Ask if the caller if it is safe for them to talk right now

- **NO**
  - Ask Caller if she needs immediate assistance

- **YES**
  - Screen if appropriate for the study (i.e. Caller not pregnant, between ages 18-64, worked in past 3 years, abuse occurred during time caller was working, etc.)
  - **IF NOT APPROPRIATE**
    - Thank caller explain limits of study and end call
  - **IF APPROPRIATE**
    - Ask caller if she feels it is safe to meet in-person to complete the interview

- **YES**
  - **IF**
    - TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION (i.e. Call the police, make safety plan, etc.)
    - **IF NO**
      - Stress that I do not want to put her in danger. Ask the caller to call back when it is safe to talk.
    - **IF YES**
      - Arrange a time to conduct the interview (Where, when, how to recognize one another, etc.)
CALL COMES IN-
CHECK CALLER ID – IF CALLER IS UNKNOWN

Answer: Hello, How may I help you?

If caller starts asking questions or demanding to know who I am: Ask: What is it that you are looking for?

If the person says they want to know why their partner has my name and number explain there must be some mistake, that I am sorry for his/her upset, but that I really cannot be of help.

Remain calm and speak in a soft voice, but continue to state that I really cannot help and hang up.

If harassment persists, follow through with authorities.

If the person persists or begins making threats, threaten to contact the authorities.

Make note of the number; if the person calls back let it go to voice mail.
Appendix 5A: Life Chart

<table>
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<tr>
<th>LIFE CHART</th>
<th>PARTICIPANT_________</th>
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<td>D.O.B.</td>
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<td>Ethnicity:</td>
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<td>Age 18 (Start work history)</td>
<td>Current Age _____</td>
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Using the Life Review Chart provided, we are going to chart events from your life. Positive events go higher in the chart - the most positive events will be at the top of the chart. Neutral items should be charted in the middle section and low spots in your life will be at the bottom. I will chart your responses to the following items, and you can look on and let me know where to chart the items.

❖ **STEP 1:** **Demographic events** to be charted are:
- Your birth date,
- Your parents ethnic/racial group
- Dates when you entered or left high school, college or other school and the reason (e.g. graduated, dropped-out, degree earned, etc.)
- Dates of Marriages, separations and/or divorces, please include first name of spouse
- Dates of the start or end of other significant relationships (e.g. live-in boy-friend)
- Birthdates of children (include miscarriages or child deaths)
- Date of the death of any significant person (e.g. parent, sibling, best friend)

❖ **STEP 2:** **Lifetime work history** includes the start and end dates for paid positions held since age 18. Please include the following:
- The type of position (i.e. front line, supervisor, manager, service, etc.)
- Type and size of the business, number of employees, and general location (e.g. rural or city)
- Salary and Reason for leaving the position, if applicable.
- Benefits: general and those related to intimate partner violence

❖ **STEP 3:** **Lifetime abuse history:** include the start and end dates of any abuse you experienced at any time in your life. Include the type of abuse and your relationship to the perpetrator.
- **Child (CA) physical abuse** (i.e. slapping, kicking, choking, hitting with an object, etc.)
- **Child sexual abuse** (CSA) (i.e. touching or exposure of genitals, oral, vaginal or anal sex)
- **Child verbal and emotional abuse** (CEA)(i.e. being called names, being screamed at or threatened, being emotionally rejected or neglected)
- **Intimate partner (IPV) physical abuse** (PA) (i.e. slapped, kicked, hit with an object, choked)
- **Intimate partner (IPV) sexual abuse** (SA)(i.e. attempted or completed oral, vaginal or anal rape)
- **Intimate partner (IPV) power and control tactics** (P&A) (i.e. extreme jealousy, limits your contact &movements, puts you down, frightens, shouts or swears at you)
- **Intimate Partner (IPV) Financial abuse/work interference** (FA) or (WI) (i.e. prevents you from knowing about or access to family finances; destroys work possessions, interferes with transportation, promises childcare & does not provide it, keeps you up at night, calls or shows up at work repeatedly, threatens or lies to your job, prevents you from going to work)
- **Adult abuse by other than an intimate partner** (OA) (e.g. stranger rape, sexual harassment by co-worker, or physical assault by a neighbor)
STEP 4: Context for co-occurring intimate partner violence and employment.
In this step, we are going to talk about how being abused impacted you at work?

- Describe how intimate partner violence intersected with your employment; for example, tell me about times when you had to miss work because of intimate partner violence; or when your abuser came to your job?
- Did anyone at work know about the abuse? Who? How did they find out? How did they react? How did you feel about that person knowing? Who else knew?
- Did you have any health problems at that time? Any mental health problems? If so, did you get treatment? If so, what type of treatment did you get?
- Did anyone of your family or friends help you out during that time so you could keep working? If so who? What type of help did they give you?
- Did anyone at work help you out so you could keep working? Who? In what ways did they help you?
- Did anyone at work make it harder for you to keep working? Who? What did they do?
- Did you use any laws to help you keep working? If so, which ones? How did you learn about them?
- What, if anything made it difficult to keep working?
- What if anything helped you keep working? What would you like to see change?
- Describe any turning points that occurred during that time period?
  A turning point is when your life takes a change in direction, for example a time when you said, “This has to stop!” or “I just can’t do this anymore.”

STEP 5: We are done with the interview. How are you feeling? Is there anything else that you would like to share?
Appendix 6: Client Consent Form

Participant Consent Form for Research Study: Intimate Partner Violence, Women, and Work within an Ecological Framework. Primary Investigator: Monna Bender Zuckerman, University at Albany, School of Social Welfare. Faculty advisor: Dr. Carolyn Smith.

Monna, a PhD Candidate at the University at Albany, is a researcher, educator, and former therapist. She has worked with child abuse and domestic violence programs throughout the Capital District. Carolyn Smith is the Director of the PhD Program and co-chair of Monna’s dissertation committee and faculty advisor for this study.

The purpose of this study is to gather research data about employed victims of intimate partner violence with the goal to better understand the factors that hinder or help abused women remain employed. It hopes to inform researchers, policy makers, practitioners and employers as they make laws and decisions that affect battered women.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate, withdraw at any time, and do not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer. Everything you share is important and will be kept confidential. It is important that all interviews be audio-taped for consistency in coding. You can ask me to stop the tape at anytime or refuse to answer any question; however, in order to participate the interview must be audio-taped.

The risks of participating in this study are minimal. Everything you say and all identifying information will be kept confidential; I will not use your name, the name of your employer, or any combination of information that will indicate that you participated in this study. Some people may find some of the questions to be distressing, but remember you can stop the interview at any time and keep the $20.

The benefits of this study are of little direct or personal benefit to you. The results of this study may be published in journal articles or presented at a conference, or in reports that will inform other social workers, lawmakers and policymakers to help other victims of intimate partner violence. You will not be personally identified in any way. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the results, please provide me with your contact information.

The time required and compensation. The time required is approximately an hour; however, if you have held many different jobs or have many abuse experiences, it may take longer. When you consent to participating in the study, you will receive $20.00 in cash for a 90 minute interview. If the interview takes longer than 90 minutes, you will receive $10 in cash after each additional 30 minutes. If you become upset or cannot continue the interview you may keep the $20.00 stipend. If you choose not to participate, you will receive a $10.00 cash compensation for meeting today and a handbook. Each participant receives a handbook that has information about counseling and services for victims of IPV.

Do you agree to participate? (Tape the consent).

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or if you wish to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University at Albany Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at 518-442-9050 or orrc@uamail.albany.edu.” You can also contact the researcher atMZuckerman@albany.edu or call 518-421-0000 or contact the faculty advisor Carolyn Smith at csmith@albany.edu, phone 518-442-5341 for more information.
Appendix 7: Participant Vignettes

Participant Vignettes

The purpose of these vignettes is to provide rich context for the quotations used in Chapter 4. The names of the participants have been changed and specific information that could possibly jeopardize their anonymity has purposefully been omitted. Meeting these beautiful, strong, intelligent women enriched my life and repeatedly reminded me of the need for research on intimate partner violence. I thank them for sharing.

Anna

Anna met with me at my office. Her short, grey hair and minimal makeup reflected her honest down-to-earth approach to life. Anna is a white woman in her fifties and not afraid to show it. Her big smile, dancing blue eyes and ready laugh reflected her sense of humor and we were soon comfortable with each other. Anna’s life had been hard from the beginning. She experienced emotional abuse from her mother from an early age to well into her adulthood. Her early dating experiences were traumatic due to her mother’s interference and date rape. Her first adult relationship was also abusive and she moved down South to forget and make a new start after getting her degree as a Licensed Practical Nurse. She soon met the man she married and stayed with for nearly thirty years even though he was emotionally and financially abusive. Anna put her two children, grandchildren and her husband ahead of herself until stress took its toll on her body and she could no longer continue to work. Her only recourse was to leave her family and move to a rural area of New York with relatives who care for her while she continues to recover. Anna applied and was approved for Medical Disability.

Betty

I met with Betty in her home, a small apartment in an urban area with poor street lighting. Betty’s hair was dyed blond and she was dressed casually in slacks and slippers. She had a hearty laugh, and spoke with a slight New England accent. She described herself as a “talker” and spoke freely about her abusive childhood and multiple abusive relationships as an adult. Betty’s mother was a cocaine addict who physically and emotionally abused her. Betty experienced sexual abuse by an uncle and saw her mother beaten by the men in her life. After struggling with several abusive relationships, losing custody of her children, and finally being arrested for drugs Betty turned her life around. She relocated to an up-state New York shelter and went to treatment for her substance use. She has been clean and sober for over a year and is committed to remaining violence free in her life. With tears in her eyes, Betty thanked me for caring enough to research intimate partner abuse. She said, “Society needs to change their attitude toward domestic violence before things will change for victims.”
Appendix 7: Participant Vignettes

Carla

I met with Carla at her apartment in an urban neighborhood. She had just gotten home from work and still was dressed in her work outfit- a dark tailored dress - and slippers. Carla, a statuesque African American woman, was warm and welcoming. Her teenage son was in his bedroom when I arrived. Carla knocked on his bedroom door to let him know that dinner was in the oven. When her son opened the door, he was wearing his headphones. She laughed and said that was typical of him. She said we could speak freely without worrying that he would hear.

Carla spoke about watching her mother being beaten by her father, and how upsetting it was for her to grow up in that environment. She was not physically abused by her father, but had started drinking at a young age in response to the stress at home. The father of Carla’s oldest son abused her, and her younger sister is currently being abused by her husband. When Carla spoke about the emotional and financial abuse from her most recent partner, it was as if she was realizing for the first time how that relationship affected her. She was moved when talking about how she had ignored her mother’s warning of the signs of abuse. Carla was sad that she had not listened. As reported by so many of the women, she was madly in love with him.

Dora

Dora lives with her three young children and her parents in a low-income suburb. Her father was picking her oldest child up from school so we would have time to meet. Dora is a 27 year old, beautiful, Latina woman who had a rough childhood. When growing up, she had lived in homeless shelters with her mother because the family did not have enough money to survive on its own. Dora reported that she had been a very angry teenager, although you would never guess because she seemed so sweet and gentle with her toddler who would wander into the room from time to time. She refused to take her children to a domestic violence shelter, even though she had suffered severe physical abuse from both her husband and her most recent male partner. Dora is determined to become independent. She is going to school and looking for a job, while her parents help her with the children.

Edwina

I met with Edwina in the office at the domestic violence office. Her muscular arms and “yes ma’am” response gave me a clue that she had been in the military at one time. Edwina’s mother is African American and her father Mexican. Edwina had shining black eyes. When she smiled I could see that several of her teeth were broken, although
Edwina continued

she kept her hand over her mouth. She described severe abuse by her husband, who was not the father of her children. Edwina earned a master’s degree in finance while she was in the Marines and enjoyed working, but had been denied access to her earnings by her abuser. She described fighting back and said she could have hurt or killed her partner if she wanted to. She had been trained in self-defense by the Marines, but she could not hurt him in that way, because she loved him.

Felicia

Felicia was a pretty young white woman, with long red hair and translucent skin. She came in pushing her sleeping baby in a stroller. She made him comfortable and sat down. She was shy and not well educated, but it was clear that she was a loving mother. She described a life of isolation and abuse. She left home at an early age, because her step-father was verbally and physically abusive to her. She said she felt unwanted because her mother did not protect her. Her abuser kept her so isolated that she knew little of what was going on in the world. He had interrupted her education and kept her moving from place to place so she was unable to build a relationship with anyone who might be able to help her escape his abuse. She was leaving the area to enter a program that would help her finish school and get on her feet.

Gina

Gina was a pretty woman with long hair, glasses and rosy cheeks. She was dressed casually in jeans that fit tightly over her ample hips. We met at the program office, because Gina was from a rural part of the county. Gina described going from one abuser to another. She explained that when she left her first controlling partner, she thought her second partner would be better, but again she missed the signs of abuse. When her third partner threatened her with a weapon, she decided it was time to leave. Gina had been a straight A student in high school and was determined to change the pattern. She said learning about the cycle of abuse was her “aha” moment, and she knew that she had to repair her childhood abuse or she would continue choosing abusive men.
Appendix 7: Participant Vignettes

Helena

Helena was a hearty, rough looking woman with a big laugh and an outgoing personality. She had spent her life working as a housekeeper, and was surprised to learn that she was getting $20.00 just for talking about her life. She had several abusive relationships and learned that abuse would only get worse with time. When her current partner started trying to control her behavior after only a few months into their relationship, Helena went into the shelter so she could get an Order of Protection and break off their relationship. Helena spoke kindly about her current employer and was happy that he made it possible for her to keep working. Helena regretted that she did not have her children with her due to previous abusive relationships and substance use in those relationships, but she too was determined to make changes in her life that would keep her safe and healthy.

Inez

Inez was a small, dark woman who was barely taller than her middle-school aged daughter. The two had traveled by bus to the program offices to meet with me. Her daughter took a book into the playroom and hung-out there while we met. She checked in on occasion to make sure we were still there, but did not seem to mind having the chance to read her book. Inez shared that her mother was Asian, and did not tell Inez about life; a mistake that Inez would not make with her daughter. Inez did not want her daughter to marry a controlling man, so she was honest with her daughter about the abuse. Inez felt she had made a mistake by going back to her abuser time after time, but she felt her boys who are now in their teens and twenties needed their father when they small. Inez is reconsidering her life and the decisions she has made. Her current quest for knowledge about intimate partner abuse is one reason she volunteered for the study.

Joyce

I met with Joyce at her suburban home in a nice neighborhood development. She met me at the door with her large dog at her side. The dog soon realized that I was no threat and tried to lay his head in my lap and we sat down at the kitchen table to talk. In contrast to the stories of severe abuse that I had been hearing, Joyce’s abusive experience consisted of verbal abuse, and control through subtle and not-so-subtle threats. Joyce, a white woman with dyed blonde hair, was in her mid-fifties. She grew up in a generation and community where women got married right out of high school with no thought of
Appendix 7: Participant Vignettes

Joyce Continued

going to college. Her goal was to get married and raise a family, but her “female problems” prevented her from conceiving, so she took a job with an insurance company where she remains employed. As with many abusive men, Joyce’s partner became more controlling and abusive over the years. The abuse took a sharp turn for the worse when she discovered that he was having an extra-marital relationship with a woman at his job. Joyce was confused by his behavior, because even though they are now separated and he lives with the other woman, he still tries to control Joyce’s behavior.

Kate

Kate met with me at her home in a beautiful suburb with perfectly manicured lawns and lovely big homes. Her house was one of the smaller ones on her street, but it was surrounded by trees in the back. She was a small, white woman with short, dark hair in her mid-fifties. She insisted on making us a cup of tea and we sat in her spacious living room to talk. Kate’s most recent partner was one of the most severe financially and emotionally abusive men of any in this study. She said that her faith and counseling had helped her recover and not feel bitter toward either of her abusive husbands. Kate said her grown children have not repeated the pattern of abuse, and she attributes it to God. She is a hard worker and is content in her life now even though she is not in an intimate relationship.

Laura

Laura met with me in my office. She lived in a rural area and was not currently associated with a domestic violence program. Laura was the most beautiful of the participants, she was tall and thin with a dancer’s body, and long brown hair. Laura had earned a degree in performing arts and had worked as a performer throughout her adult life. Somewhat guarded at first, Laura eventually opened up and talked about her alcohol use and her two abusive relationships. The first was with her husband and then with her most recent partner. Laura’s situation was quite different from the other participants, because her work was unstructured – not the typical nine to five job, and because she both worked and lived with her abusers.
Mimi met with me at the program office. She was a tall, African-American woman with a serious face and beautiful eyes. Mimi was an intelligent woman in her forties who had worked for the State Legislature when she was younger and had attained a degree as a Licensed Practical Nurse to support her children after her first marriage broke up due to his cheating and abuse. Mimi reported that she was frustrated with her situation because her life had not progressed the way she had thought it would. She loved and trusted her husband and felt extremely betrayed as she realized that he was lying, manipulating and financially abusing her in multiple ways. Mimi felt that the time he had spent in prison for selling drugs had changed him from the man he had been before his arrest to the abusive man that she found him to be when he returned home.