Whispers in private: The lived experiences of male victims of intimate partner violence

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Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a major social problem and health concern worldwide and remains an emotional and controversial topic. While few studies have been conducted with a focus on men's experiences of victimisation from female partners there is now a growing body of literature highlighting a knowledge gap and the need for more research in this area. The current study, undertaken in Aotearoa New Zealand, explored the lived experiences of male victims of intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships.

Using constructivist grounded theory, the experiences of a group of 16 men who self-identified as victims of IPV were explored using one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Data was analysed using coding, memo-writing, categories, constant comparative analysis, theoretical sampling, and theory construction. Findings revealed participants experienced physical, psychological, legal and administrative aggression. Participants' experiences impacted on their sense of masculine self, negatively affecting their day-to-day functioning and interpersonal relationships. Remaining grounded in participants' voices, the current study resulted in an emerging constructed theory, *Male victims of IPV: A story not well told*. Male victims of IPV—their experiences and negative consequences—remain invisible in a repeating cycle of denial, derision and silencing resulting from embedded assumptions and stereotypes that continue to portray men as perpetrators and women as victims of IPV. Attitudes and responses of others towards male victims of IPV, together with male victims' personal internalised ideal masculine identity, interact and attack the core of the masculine self, resulting in silence and invisibility that continues to be reinforced and perpetuated in a repeating cyclical loop fuelled by prevailing assumptions and stereotypes.

The study contributes to the body of knowledge emerging in this field, adding depth and breadth to current understandings of men's experiences. The constructed theory has implications for foundations of policy and practice, showing the need for education at all levels of society and highlighting avenues for further research.

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Jocelyn Burke,

who encouraged me to embark on this study but died before its completion.

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ACE	Adverse childhood experience
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CCV	Common couple violence
CGT	Constructivist grounded theory
CTS	Conflict Tactics Scale
CTS2	Revised Conflict Tactics Scale
GT	Grounded theory
IPV	Intimate partner violence
IT	Intimate terrorism
NCVS	National Crime Victimization Survey (US)
NFVS	National Family Violence Surveys (US)
NISVS	National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey
NVAWS	National Violence against Women Survey (US)
NYS	National Youth Survey (US)
NZAC	New Zealand Association of Counsellors
NZCSS	New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey
NZCVS	New Zealand Crime & Victims Survey
NZE	New Zealand European
PT	Patriarchal terrorism
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
SCV	Situational couple violence
VR	Violent resistance
WHO	World Health Organization

Chapter 1: Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a major social problem and health concern both locally and internationally (Archer, 2002; Desmarais, Reeves, Nicholls, Telford, & Fiebert, 2012a; Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002; Stuart, 2005). Prevalent in societies worldwide, the behaviour often remains enacted behind closed doors: invisible, "hidden behind a cloak of silence and secrecy" (Wilson & Webber, 2014, p. 10).

Background to the Study

The phenomenon of IPV was brought to the fore of public consciousness in the 1970s by the women's movement—at that time predominantly in the United Kingdom and the United States. Their actions drew attention to the desperate plight of women victims of IPV, in order to raise public awareness to gain support and institutional aid for them (Pearson, 1997). Over the ensuing years, hundreds of studies have been carried out focusing on the types of abuse that women have experienced, documenting injuries they have suffered, together with ongoing consequences adversely affecting their lives and general wellbeing. These include financial stress, and physical and mental health problems (R. P. Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Lewis, 1998; Flinck, Astedt-Kurki, & Paavilainen, 2008; George, 2007).

During that time, two landmark national representative surveys—The National Family Violence Survey (NFVS)—were conducted in the United States: firstly in 1975 and then repeated in 1985 (Straus, 1990/1995). These large-scale surveys were the first of their kind and aimed to investigate the nature and prevalence of violence in American families. The surveys utilised a tool, the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS), designed specifically to elicit information concerning how individuals managed conflict, that could then be reported as a standardized measurement (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1988). Participants answered questions related to specific behaviours they had experienced and/or perpetrated within the previous year. Included in the findings of both surveys were results showing similar rates of male-to-female and female-to-male violent behaviour (Straus, 1990/1995; Straus et al., 1988).

The results of the National Family Violence Surveys attracted mixed reviews and criticism, particularly with respect to methodology and context (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1984; R. P. Dobash et al., 1998; H. Johnson, 1998; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010; Woodin, Sotskova, & O'Leary, 2013). Many regarded the research with scepticism, others claiming the findings were "erroneous" (Straus, 1990/1995, p. 9). Researchers reported that their findings showing evidence

regarding male victimisation in intimate relationships were largely silenced and ignored (Carney, Buttell, & Dutton, 2007; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2005). This marked the beginning of ongoing controversy and debate concerning IPV, including its characteristics, definitions, causes and how it is measured.

The thrust of the feminist movement that spoke to public consciousness was underpinned by the theory of a patriarchal society. Seen through this lens, men are the stronger, dominant, and controlling partner in intimate relationships, whereas women are weaker, more vulnerable, and oppressed. This gave weight to the argument that IPV is gender-based, its perpetrators being men against women, with women's violence toward their male partners being explained by way of self-defence (Hamberger, 2005; Loseke & Kurz, 2005). The groundswell of sentiment that followed gained in strength, directing public and political debate and action that still exists today.

Over the last 30 years more researchers have turned their attention to investigating men's experiences of IPV, which is the focus of the present study. Findings have highlighted the negative physical and emotional consequences they can suffer, some of which are severe (Ananthakrishnan, Alagappan, & Riyat, 2006; Hines, Brown, & Dunning, 2007). The issue of men being victims of violence in heterosexual relationships, when IPV continues to be predominantly understood from a background of patriarchy and, therefore, as a gendered phenomenon, remains a controversial topic. However, in recent years it appears this debate has been lessening in intensity. It has been acknowledged that continuation of the controversy is unhelpful to advancing understanding of the phenomena of partner violence and discovering solutions (Winstok & Straus, 2016a). There is increasing acknowledgement of the need for research to be gender inclusive (Hamel, 2007b; Laskey, Bates, & Taylor, 2019). Researchers are turning their attention toward finding inclusive approaches that will lessen the divide, find common ground, and enable identification, assessment and effective interventions for all (Dixon & Graham-Kevan, 2011, 2020; Nicholls & Hamel, 2015; Winstok & Straus, 2016b).

Winstok and Straus (2016a) suggested viewing IPV through a gendered lens may no longer hold dominance in academic circles and further proposed that although this perspective is not generally supported by researchers its existence and dominance still prevails among practitioners. Straus (2009) argued that the failure to acknowledge women's violence in intimate relationships could be due to greater societal acceptance of violence towards men by women. Existing societal memes of gender stereotyping that portray women as physically weak and submissive and men as physically stronger and prone to violence, add weight to the argument that female-to-male IPV is not recognised as violence or considered a serious issue (Dutton,

Nicholls, & Spidel, 2005). Issues pertaining to this controversy, the experiences of male victims of IPV and the resulting effects are taken up further in Chapter 2.

The present study does not intend to minimise, by implication, the seriousness of the experiences of women victims of IPV perpetrated by men. The prevalence of physical abuse and resulting injuries for women, the emotional and psychological consequences, and the ongoing effects on their personal lives are well documented. It is widely recognised that injuries sustained from physical IPV are usually more severe, and the long-term consequences more negative, for women victims of physical IPV than for men (Hines et al., 2007; Sarantakos, 2004; Straus, 2010).

Hines and Douglas (2010b) have commented that those who dispute the impact of women's violence against men tend to view it as "trivial, humorous, or annoying…[bearing] no social or psychological effects on the men who sustain it" (p. 38), in comparison with the effects of IPV on women. Straus (2010) proposed that it is the severity of women's experiences that form the basis of the denial of the possibility that men could be victims of IPV. Straus (2010) stressed that this should not be "allowed to obscure" (p. 336) the reality of what happens: that IPV perpetrated by women is serious and needs to be acknowledged and addressed.

There is a scarcity of literature existing on men's experiences as victims of IPV. The majority of available data concerning men's experiences of IPV has arisen from quantitative studies and in light of this the need for more research using qualitative methodologies to obtain more in-depth information was identified (Chitkara-Barry & Chronister, 2015; Desmarais et al., 2012a; Hines & Douglas, 2010a). Since the commencement of this research project, and more particularly over the last few years, rich data has been published arising from some international qualitative studies. Findings from these studies showed men experienced physical, sexual, psychological and coercive forms of IPV (Bates, 2020a, 2020b; Dim, 2020; Dixon et al., 2020; Machado, Hines, & Douglas, 2020; Machado, Santos, Graham-Kevan, & Matos, 2017; Walker et al., 2019) and a secondary aggression known as LA Aggression (Walker et al., 2019). Barriers to help-seeking, both internal and external, were identified. These included not recognising the behaviour as violence, rationalising the behaviours and fearing of not being believed (Bates, 2020a; Dim, 2020; Lysova et al., 2020; Walker et al., 2019). Many times when help was sought from professionals and organisations revictimisation occurred as a result of traditional gender stereotypes and perceptions of others (Bates, 2020b; Dixon et al., 2020; Machado et al., 2017). All of these studies revealed evidence of negative impacts to participants' physical and mental health, and other wide-ranging consequences affecting their finances and ongoing relationships.

It has been emphasised that, regardless of the numbers involved, men's experiences of IPV victimisation are worthy of investigation and "should not be ignored" (Dutton et al., 2005, p. 77). Whilst the most recent literature has given insight into a broad range of men's experiences there remains a need for more qualitative research investigating this hard-to-reach group, particularly with respect to non help-seeking population samples and in which men's voices come to the fore.

Motivation for the Study

Charmaz (2014) has reflected that "[a] journey begins before the travelers depart" (p. 1). In my professional role as a counsellor, male youth who had experienced physical abuse from their girlfriends, as well as threats of further physical violence, sought support from the counselling service in their school. They were distraught, wanting to continue their relationship but at a loss as to how to stop the abuse. Emotionally overwhelmed, they felt helpless and isolated, unable to talk to friends as they presumed they would be disbelieved and ridiculed.

This raised questions in my mind as to the nature of this type of abuse. Was this violence particular to the young men before me or did it extend beyond their experience, pointing to a wider, hidden social issue? Living in a community where male-to-female IPV was high, violence from a female partner went against the unspoken, implicitly accepted gender role behaviours. The experiences of these young men spoke to the heart of their identity and their sense of masculinity: to be strong and stoic and in control. How, therefore, did these experiences influence their scripts of masculinity they had grown into? Were there other males, of any age, who found themselves in similar positions and, if so, how were they affected by their experiences? How were their day-to-day functioning and their interactions with others affected, and what was the impact on their sense of self and wellbeing as a result?

A literature search to gain insight, relevant information and perspectives for my counselling practice revealed a paucity of studies focusing on males being victims of female abuse. In conversations with professional colleagues, some denied the possibility of female-to-male abuse, while others recounted anecdotal evidence of males known to them who had had such experiences. This formed the beginning of my research journey.

Focus of The Study

The focus of this study was the lived experiences of men who have been victims of IPV. I chose to confine the study to heterosexual relationships and individuals residing in New Zealand

because I wanted to gain contextual insight into and understanding of what happens for a particular group of men with a shared sense of masculinity who experience different forms of violence from their female partners: to hear the stories of their lives, how they experienced the violence, and how they responded. I wanted to learn how the men made meaning of their experiences; how they coped; and how their day-to-day lives and other relationships were affected. To assist in this investigation, I chose to explore the following questions:

1. How do the experiences of male victims of IPV speak to the construction of their masculinity and identity, and consequently, affect their day-to-day functioning and interpersonal relationships?
2. What might influence them to report or to refrain from reporting their experiences?
3. What might influence them to stay in their relationships and what might influence them to leave?

In literature concerning violent behaviour between partners, many definitions and terms are used, including domestic violence, intimate partner violence, partner abuse and spouse abuse. In this thesis the term intimate partner violence will be used to refer to abusive behaviour between intimate partners in heterosexual relationships. It applies to behaviour that can be physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional as well as abuse that is instigated by the intimate partner but enacted by a third party and will be referred to as IPV. A discussion providing fuller definitions and typologies of IPV can be found in Chapter 2.

Methodological Approach

With the focus of this inquiry being the lived experiences of participants, I have chosen a qualitative approach for this study. There is a consensus that grounded theory methods are particularly effective when researching topics of which little is known, as they facilitate going beyond description (Birks & Mills, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Dunne, 2011; Maijala, Paavilainen, & Astedt-Kurki, 2003). Grounded theory methods keep the researcher anchored in the data. This allows participants to remain visible and their voices heard, contributing to a deeper understanding of the topic being studied. Constructivist grounded theory methodology, as proffered by Charmaz (2006, 2014), has been followed in this research process and all data viewed through a social constructionist lens. Constructivist grounded theory underpinned by social constructionism acknowledges the position of the researcher within the research as an integral actor involved in the collaborative construction of data, as opposed to an objective neutral observer.

The importance of identifying researchers' epistemology and ontology is recognised, as these are significant in underpinning qualitative research. Crotty (1998) has discussed how "ontological…and epistemological issues tend to emerge together" (p. 10). What we know and how we look at the world interweave and inform our perspective. When examining how the world is viewed and made sense of through the epistemology of constructionism, the subjective experiences of everyday lives, together with meanings individuals attach to them, are held to be created through social interactions mediated by language as well as other dimensions including societal values, culture and history (Koro-Ljungberg, 2007). Accordingly, multiple realties exist and knowledge and truth are seen to be created according to the situatedness of experiences, rather than existing as external objects waiting to be discovered (Burr, 2019; Gergen, 2009). It is this nature of reality that fits with my beliefs about how humans make meaning of themselves and their lives.

With respect to ontology (what we know) from a social constructionist perspective, as knowledge is constructed in interaction with others, the ontological concept of relativism sits alongside it for "what is said to be 'the way things are' is really just 'the sense we make of them'" (Crotty, 1998, p. 64). A more detailed account of constructivist grounded theory and epistemological underpinnings of social constructionism as well as methodological decisions pertaining to the study are set out in Chapter 3

Positioning as a Counsellor Researcher

Much has been written on the theoretical and dichotomous concepts of insider-outsider positioning of researchers within the research process and in relation to those they study, with obstacles and advantages for each being highlighted (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002; Breen, 2007). It has been argued that outsider researchers, not belonging to the community they are investigating, lack important knowledge of the topic. By virtue of this distance, as they are strangers in a foreign landscape, gaining access to participants could be problematic, in addition to which they would be unable to gain in-depth understanding of the experiences of those they are studying. Insider researchers, on the other hand, coming from a position of membership within the group and thus possessing insider knowledge, run the risk of being too closely involved, unable to reflectively identify their own assumptions and biases towards the topic (Greene, 2014).

Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argue that the positioning of researchers as either insiders or outsiders is "overly simplistic…[and] restrictive" (p. 60), and McNess, Arthur and Crossley (2015) have cautioned against the polarisation of positioning, as we can be members of some groups but not

others. Although "in one sense we are all newcomers, strangers or outsiders…as researchers, we are rarely entirely on one side or the other—and in practice, we are often somewhere in between" (McNess et al., 2015, p. 298). Drawing attention to globalisation, and researchers working and communicating across boundaries, Arthur, McNess and Crossley (2016) further recommended the need for "an updating and re-envisioning of the ways in which we conceptualise being an insider or outsider in the research process" (p. 13).

Many authors have proposed that qualitative researchers hold no fixed insider-outsider position, arguing they are neither one nor the other but are to be found placed somewhere in between (Breen, 2007; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Kerstetter, 2012; Milligan, 2016). Hellawell (2006) has portrayed this in-between space as a continuum where researchers move backwards and forwards between insider and outsider positions. There is a growing body of literature (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Fine, 1994; Humphrey, 2007) that, rather than focusing on the duality of insider *or* outsider positioning of researchers, draws attention to the space between—the hyphen space—within which researchers can "occupy the position of *both* insider and outsider" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 54) [emphasis added]. This space contains many facets and is one "where researchers' identities, cultural backgrounds, and relationships to research participants influence how they are positioned within that space" (Kerstetter, 2012, p. 101).

Researcher positioning is inextricably linked to one's epistemology and methodology (Breen, 2007). The notion of working within the hyphen space, as both an insider and outsider, fits both with my constructionist worldview of the existence of multiple realities and constructivist grounded theory methodology that locates the researcher as an active participant within the research process, in which participants have an active role and voice, and data are co-constructed (see Chapter 3 for further description of this). Reflecting on my role as researcher from this perspective has highlighted both the insider and outsider positions I occupied within that hyphen space.

At first glance, on a basic level, as a woman researching men who self-reported as having been abused by their female partners, I was an outsider. I had not shared the same experiences as the participants, and without such insider knowledge, it could be argued that gaining an in-depth understanding would be impossible. Nevertheless, while I do not belong to the group I researched by virtue of gender, with most participants I shared other domains, such as ethnicity and language, which positioned me as an insider. In my professional role as counsellor I had been an empathic witness to accounts of similar experiences, giving me a unique insight into this

phenomenon and affording me a degree of insider knowledge. Following a constructivist grounded theory methodology, remaining deeply immersed in the data throughout the data analysis process, with participants' voices foregrounded, also brought me closer to insider understanding. Consequently, I was neither an outsider nor an insider but worked within the hyphen space with my positioning and identities changing as I interacted with the participants and the data.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is presented in seven chapters, the first of which is this introduction, providing the rationale and context for the research, the methodology used, and my positioning within the project.

In Chapter 2, relevant literature is presented and explored from a review undertaken prior to and at the beginning of this research project, that helped provide clarity on concepts and the shaping of the research topic. Following a brief historic overview, various definitions of IPV are then considered. Controversies relating to IPV, and how it is understood and measured, are presented and discussed. Theories regarding the construction of masculinity and possible influences and implications for male victims are considered, along with evidence regarding prevalence of male victimisation. Men's experiences of IPV are explored, followed by perceptions and attitudes of others regarding male victims. The literature review concludes with an exploration of research findings revealing the effects of experiencing IPV for male victims.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology and methods used in this study. Following a brief overview of epistemological and ontological underpinnings, a qualitative approach is discussed. Grounded theory is then introduced, leading into a discussion of constructivist grounded theory, the methodology followed in this study, together with ethical considerations, recruitment of participants and data collection methods. Data analysis is addressed, moving from initial coding and allocation of categories to identifying themes and the formation of a grounded theory. The importance of reflexivity in constructivist grounded research is discussed and the chapter concludes with a consideration of the limitations of the study.

The main findings resulting from the study are then presented in three chapters. Chapter 4 sets out the range of IPV participants spoke of experiencing. Chapter 5 presents the various effects the experiences of IPV had on the participants, in particular with respect to their masculine identities, their health and day-to-day functioning. The final findings chapter, Chapter 6, presents participants' reflections how they made meaning of their experiences,

Finally, Chapter 7 discusses the findings of this research project with reference to existing literature and theory. The emerging grounded theory is presented and discussed. This is followed with recommendations for policy, practice and future research and a concluding reflection on the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

While this chapter explores relevant literature pertaining to IPV, before embarking on the review, I discuss the position of the literature with respect to constructionist grounded theory methodology that has been followed in this study. Following this, an historical overview of IPV is presented, as this sets the context for the study, and the various definitions of IPV are then examined. The literature review proceeds with an exploration of the controversies that have arisen in the field: the gender debate and the ways of understanding IPV. As this study focuses on men's experiences, theories of the construction of masculinity are then considered and possible influences and implications these may have for male victims. Evidence with regard to the prevalence of victimisation of men is then reviewed followed by an exploration of studies into men's experiences of IPV and perceptions of others towards male victims. This literature review concludes with an exploration of literature discussing the effects of IPV on male victims.

The Role and Placement of Literature

The role of the literature in studies following a grounded theory methodology, together with the point in the research process at which the literature is reviewed, is a highly debated and contentious issue (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Dunne, 2011; Thornberg & Dunne, 2019). As referred to in Chapter 1, in my professional role as a counsellor I originally conducted a literature search to help explain what I was seeing in the counselling room. Once officially deciding to embark on this study, I purposefully carried out a more comprehensive literature review prior to engaging in the field.

The focus of this literature review was to help me ascertain what, if any, research had been conducted into men's experiences of IPV in heterosexual relationships; to assist in providing clarity of concepts relating to this issue; and to help me shape the direction of the study. This aligns with Dunne's (2011) argument that engaging with the literature early in grounded theory studies provides the following benefits:

- Formulating a rationale for the study and justification for the methodology.
- Identifying gaps in existing knowledge.
- Setting the context for the study, orienting the researcher, and showing how the topic of focus has been studied.

- Aiding the development of theoretical sensitivity and raising awareness of any existing biases.
- Assisting clarity of thought.

Like Dunne (2011), Tummers and Karsten (2012) have also discussed referring to existing literature when using grounded theory methods. With reference to three phases of the research process—research design, data collection and data analysis—they have identified opportunities and pitfalls of consulting extant literature during each phase. In relation to the first phase of research design, engaging with the literature before entering the field highlighted several such 'opportunities'. My initial engagement with the literature drew attention to the paucity of studies focusing on male victims, enabling me to identify the gap existing in the literature on intimate partner violence. It confirmed the justification and focus for this study and its value, with respect to adding to the body of knowledge both in the research field and for professionals practising in the community (Dunne, 2011; McCann & Polacsek, 2018; Timonen, Foley, & Conlon, 2018; Tummers & Karsten, 2012).

A more comprehensive review of the literature highlighted how male victims of IPV have been studied to date, providing a background context in which to situate this study (Charmaz, 2014; Dunne, 2011; McCann & Clark, 2003a). It "spark[ed my] thinking about [the] topic" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 30) and aided in the "formulat[ion of the] research question [and] select[ion of the] methodological approach" (Tummers & Karsten, 2012, p. 73).

Historical Overview

To gain a better understanding of the context of IPV, it is helpful to first look to the past. Historical social and political responses to violence between intimate partners provides an overview of the context for and underpinnings of how IPV is perceived today. It traces the development of IPV, from being tolerated and regarded as a private affair between couples with little or no outside intervention, to one generating major public concern, debate, political and legal action.

Evidence of spousal abuse and of institutional sanctions being afforded to men to abuse their wives can be traced back centuries. For example, Straton (2002) referred to the *Commentaries on the Laws of England* by Justice Blackstone when tracing this back to Roman times. During Roman times, men had institutional sanction to abuse their wives for certain "divorceable" behaviours (p. 105). This 'right' continued through history, and Straton proposed that this became "the foundation on which…English common law was built" (Straton, 2002, p. 106).

During the middle ages in England and in most Western countries, men held dominant positions of privilege and power both in the public domain and in the privacy of their homes (Stets, 1988). Once married, women surrendered all independence: their possessions, rights, and legal status, to their husbands. From this point they came under their husbands' protection, authority and 'rule' (Lentz, 1999; Stets, 1988). By virtue of English common law doctrine, men as heads of the household were responsible for the actions of all under their roof, and had the right to discipline or 'chastise' their wives for inappropriate behaviour (Andrews, n.d.; Cockburn, 1991; Lentz, 1999; Stets, 1988). When discussing commentaries on common law relating to wife beating, Kelly (1994) highlighted that although such discipline was directed not to be violent, in practise this was not the case as "judges accorded husbands the right of using reasonable violence in governing their wives" (pp. 363–364). There was a generally held belief that husbands had the right to beat their wives up to a point (Tomes, 1978).

It has also been emphasized that the reality of intimate relationships was such that there were also "beaten or cuckolded husbands at all levels of society" (George, 2002, p. 122). George (2002) also observed that, although court documents evidenced many cases of battered husbands, these men were usually not supported within their community. In post-renaissance England and throughout Europe, a social custom of *charivari* (George, 2002; Stets, 1988) was practised whereby men who were thought or known to have been abused by their wives were publicly shamed and ridiculed. This public shaming (also known in general folklore as skimmington) was common practice in the mid-19th century (George, 1994, 2002, 2003). Skimmington will be referred to again later in this review in relation to modern perceptions of male victims of IPV.

As industrialisation took hold and the working-class population in urban areas continued to rise, the prevalence of domestic abuse and the plight of battered wives became of increasing concern to upper middle classes. In England this led to the formation of a society aimed at protecting abused women and, as a result of public pressure, laws were enacted that gave police greater powers and provided for harsher penalties for men convicted of being violent towards their wives (George, 2002; Tomes, 1978). By the end of 19th century, a decline in violence was evident. Tomes (1978) has suggested improved conditions for working class families and more efficient legal systems as possible explanations for this being due to. However, Tomes has also raised the possibility that the violence merely became less visible as families moved to suburban areas and their lives became more private.

A common thread relating to violence between intimate partners appears through history in a repetitive cycle. Within each cycle, concern for the level of violence was brought to public

attention, with the accompanying pressure resulting in a degree of relief being provided by way of legal intervention. Lentz (1999) observed that each cycle was associated with changes at various levels of society, such as political or economic. Each cycle was then followed by a return to "disinterest and reinforcement of old views" (p. 24).

IPV once again came into the public spotlight in the 1970s during another cycle of change that heralded the beginnings of social and political action in the West. Gelles (1987) suggested several reasons for the timing of this. The Vietnam War was ending and public consciousness was sensitive to violence and alert to its consequences. A major landmark was the rise and influence of the women's movement across Western countries. In England, Erin Pizzey (1974) established the first Women's Centre in Chiswick, London, that provided shelter for abused women. She subsequently became the public figure at the forefront of the fight for women's rights. In the United States, the women's movement took up the cause of battered women to raise public awareness and gain desperately needed support. As the impact of the women's movement gained momentum across the world pressing for ongoing change, more services were put in place for abused women, legislation began to be introduced to protect women, and refuges were established (Pearson, 1997). For example, in New Zealand, the first women's refuge opened in Christchurch in 1973 and by 1977, 11 further refuges had been established around the country (New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, n.d.).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, another major landmark during this time was the NFVS conducted in the United States in 1975 (Straus, 1990/1995; Straus et al., 1988). The first of its kind, the focus of this nationwide survey was to measure the occurrence of violence in families across a nationally representative sample (Straus et al., 1988). A survey instrument designed specifically for this purpose and known as the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) was used to assess the number of times certain violent acts had been enacted in family relationships. The survey covered wife and child abuse, but also produced some surprising findings concerning violence between couples. While results showed a high rate of violence against wives, it also revealed mutual violence between husbands and wives as the most common violence; almost the same percentage of women admitted to being violent as men (11.6% women and 12.1% of men). A further unexpected finding was that men were victims of IPV from their female partners in a quarter of all homes surveyed (Straus et al., 1988).

The NFVS was repeated in 1985 with a larger nationally, representative sample that included single parent families, a dataset that had been omitted from the 1975 survey (Straus, 1990/1995; Straus & Gelles, 1986). The CTS were used again although in a slightly revised format (Straus,

1990/1995). The findings from this later survey were similar to results from the 1975 survey. In particular, there remained little change in the statistics regarding violence inflicted by women on their male partners (Straus & Gelles, 1986).

Findings from these surveys received mixed reviews. Regardless of the statistics produced concerning child abuse and severe wife abuse, the focus of attention was on the findings concerning male victims and mutual violence. Criticisms included that while both men and women were surveyed, each participant came from a different family. Others drew attention to the fact the CTS only questioned respondents on the frequency of violent acts. Critics argued that because they did not consider the context of violent episodes or motives behind the use of violence, the surveys were just an exercise in number counting (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Loseke & Kurz, 2005; D. G. Saunders, 1988). The CTS will be discussed further in this chapter.

Studies conducted by researchers in North America and other countries produced similar findings that supported those of Straus and his colleagues (Carrado, George, Loxam, Jones, & Templar, 1996; Laroche, 2005). In an early review of literature comparing aggression between men and women, Frodi, Macaulay and Thome (1977) found evidence that women could be just as aggressive as men, and at times more so. They suggested that explanations for similar findings were often not even offered by some researchers as it was assumed results would show that men were typically more aggressive by nature of their gender.

In her ground-breaking article "The battered husband syndrome", Susan Steinmetz (1977), one of the original researchers involved in the 1975 NVWS, queried whether IPV against men really was an unknown phenomenon or whether its existence was "simply another example of selective inattention" (p. 499). Upon conducting a review of historical data and popular literature, including how spousal abuse was treated with humour and exaggeration in cartoons, she raised the possibility that violence against husbands "constitute[d] a sizeable proportion of marital violence" (p. 501). Arguing there were as many violent wives as violent husbands, Steinmetz hypothesized that the lack of attention given to men's experiences could be attributed to the greater visibility of women's experiences due to the severity of their injuries and "selective inattention…by the media and researchers" (p. 504).

The events of the 1970s, namely bringing evidence of family violence out from the privacy of individual homes and into the public light, generated a surge of interest that marked the beginning of focused, systemic, empirical research into violence in intimate relationships. The findings from the surveys mentioned above, together with similar results from other studies and the strong words of Steinmetz (1977) pointing to male victims of intimate violence, prompted

the researchers to suggest that domestic violence was not solely a male problem, or related to class, but "one of family violence" (Straus et al., 1988, p. 12). This fuelled the beginning of controversy around the conceptualisation and perpetration of IPV which will be discussed later in this Chapter. Various definitions of IPV will now be considered before continuing with a critical analysis of current perspectives of this phenomenon.

Defining Intimate Partner Violence

Reports from around the world show violence to be enacted in a multitude of forms. It is a "complex, [fluid and] multi-faceted phenomenon"(Allen-Collinson, 2009b, p. 50) that is endemic, and woven into the very fabric of all levels of society (Krug et al., 2002; Straus et al., 1988). IPV knows no boundaries, existing across all socio-economic, ethnic and cultural groups (Flinck et al., 2008; Flynn & Graham, 2010). Finding an acceptable, encompassing definition of violence as it relates to behaviours between intimate partners is complex and full of difficulties, for there "exist[s] a panoply of terms" (Allen-Collinson, 2009b, p. 51) containing numerous layers of understandings that conflict and compete with each other.

Researchers in the field have found defining violence in intimate relationships no less complicated. How IPV is conceptualized and defined can influence all facets of the research methodology, including participant selection, gathering of data and analysis; and therefore also impacts subsequent findings (Heise & García-Moreno, 2002). This has a flow-on effect of influencing resulting interventions and formation of policies (Woodin et al., 2013). Mills (2003) has called for a broad definition of IPV to be adopted that takes into account the various ways violence can be enacted, by including violence that is "physical, emotional, justified, [and] unjustified [and taking into consideration] how intertwined all forms of aggression can be" (p. 69). She argued that such a definition is crucial in order to bring clarity and lead to deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Another important consideration is that for individuals affected by IPV, terminology used in interactions with them can influence whether they disclose and discuss their experiences. The possible flow-on effects from this could inform any interventions taken and whether help is received where it is needed (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004).

In the literature concerning IPV, many researchers have adopted broad definitions. For example, Dixon and Graham-Kevan (2011) referred to IPV as being "any form of aggression and/or controlling behavior used against a current or past intimate partner of any gender or relationship status" (p. 1145). However, as highlighted by Hines, Malley-Morrison and Dutton (2013), there

has continued to be little consistency in the use or distinction between such descriptors as 'aggression', 'abuse' or 'violence'. They suggested that the term 'maltreatment' better describes the phenomenon as it is "embedded in broader perspectives" (p. 8), and accordingly encompasses a wide range of different types of abuse.

Despite there being no one, universally agreed definition (Flynn & Graham, 2010), many social scientists investigating IPV (including Carmo, Grams, & Magalhães, 2011; Flinck et al., 2008; Randle & Graham, 2011) have referred to the definitions used by the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO defines violent behaviour as using physical force or power, including threats, that can result in death or injury, "psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation" (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002, p. 5). WHO further identifies IPV as "any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship" (Heise & García-Moreno, 2002, p. 89).

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Controls and Prevention (CDC) has adopted a broad definition that acknowledges IPV as occurring over four specific dimensions: physical, sexual, threats of either of these, and psychological and emotional aggression (Breiding, Basile, Smith, Black, & Mahendra, 2015). In order to gain a deeper insight into the dynamics of IPV, the CDC stresses that each of these dimensions need to be considered both separately and collectively as a single entity. Following these defining guidelines, the various dimensions of IPV have been described as follows:

a) Physical violence can include slapping, pushing, shoving, biting, choking, shaking, hitting with objects/weapons, using body size and/or strength (Breiding et al., 2015; Wilson & Webber, 2014).
b) Sexual abuse/violence includes forced intercourse or unwanted sexual contact. It can also comprise belittling a partner's sexual performance; publicly criticizing a partner's sexuality; using aids to force sex; demanding sex when a partner is unable or unwilling to participate; and forcing different forms of sexual contact against a partner's will (Breiding et al., 2015; Sarantakos, 2004).
c) Psychological/emotional violence involves not only specific acts of aggression but also coercion and threats. It can include intimidation; intentional deprivation of sleep; isolation from family/friends; humiliation; verbal abuse; controlling behaviours; withholding information or controlling and denying access to finances (Breiding et al., 2015; Hines et al., 2007; Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001). In addition, violation of personal space or personal communications (e.g. reading personal emails and text

messages), and hiding or concealing personal property and cherished possessions are also defined as forms of emotional abuse (Allen-Collinson, 2009b).

Attention has been drawn to a more recently identified form of abuse, that of legal and administrative aggression (LA aggression), that is not mentioned in the CDC definitions (Hines, Douglas, & Berger, 2015). Identified by Tilbrook, Allan and Dear (2010) in their qualitative investigation into the experiences of male victims of IPV in Western Australia, it is defined as the behaviour of "some perpetrators [to] manipulate legal and administrative resources to the detriment of their male partners" (p. 20). Tilbrook et al (2010) suggested LA aggression may be unique to men's experiences due to stereotypes held by those working in legal and domestic violence agencies that men are perpetrators of IPV thus resulting in it being overlooked by many. However, it has been shown that LA aggression can also be experienced by women (Eckstein, 2011; Watson & Ancis, 2013). In a study, in which two separate samples of men were recruited—a sample of help-seeking male victims of IPV and a population-based sample—Hines, Douglas and Berger (2015) found evidence suggesting that men are more likely to experience this form of aggression rather than perpetrate it, although they stressed more research is needed into this area. Even though LA aggression is indirect, involving a third party, it still carries the potential for inflicting psychological and emotional harm on its victims (J. L. Berger, Douglas, & Hines, 2016), and therefore needs to be included in definitions of IPV.

Other broad definitions of IPV are also to be found in statute law. For example, in New Zealand, the Domestic Violence Amendment Act (1995) defined violence between intimate partners and referred specifically to physical, sexual or psychological abuse. Psychological abuse included but was not limited to "(i) intimidation: (ii) harassment: (iii) damage to property: (iv) threats of physical…sexual…or psychological abuse: [and] (iva) financial or economic abuse" (§ 3). That statute has since been repealed and replaced by the Family Violence Act (2018) and the Family Violence Amendment Act (2018). Under this new legislation IPV is incorporated into a broader definition that includes it within the realm of family violence as opposed to simply violence between domestic partners.

Under the 2018 Act, violence, now referred to as 'family violence', is similarly referred to as abuse and defined according to the three dimensions of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse. Violent acts can fall within any or all of these dimensions, may be coercive or controlling, or carried out in order to coerce or control; and may cause cumulative harm to the victim. Of important note is that abuse can relate to a one-off event or multiple events forming a "part of a

pattern of behaviour (*even if all or any of those acts, when viewed in isolation, may appear to be minor or trivial*)" [emphasis added] (2018, § 10).

The Act provides a wide-ranging definition of behaviours, and, with respect to psychological abuse, these can include "threats of [various forms] …intimidation or harassment…watching or loitering near [a person]…following a person about…damage to property…ill-treating household pets…[and] financial or economic abuse (for example, unreasonably denying or limiting access to financial resources" (§ 11). In addition, the Act specifies that psychological abuse does *not* [emphasis added] have to take the form of "actual or threatened physical or sexual abuse" (§ 11(4). This is important to note when considering subtle forms of psychological and emotional manipulation that may be used.

As discussed above there is no universally agreed-upon definition of IPV, rather an array of definitions which are used in academic, legal and public arenas. The definitions encompass a range of abusive behaviours that can fall within the physical, psychological, emotional and sexual dimensions (Stuart, 2005). Flinck, Astedt-Kurki and Paavilainen (2008) have cautioned that an effective definition of IPV depends on making distinctions between the type of violence inflicted, the motivation behind it, and the identification of differences between perpetrator and/or victim. However, it is generally agreed that no matter what form abuse takes, it can be inflicted singly or in multiple ways, and form a pattern of behaviours.

Having considered various definitions of IPV and the breadth of influence its conceptualisation can have on research, findings, interventions and policies, I shall now explore current perspectives and controversies regarding the phenomenon of IPV and the issue of male victims.

Controversies

As noted previously, in the 1970s two important landmarks occurred in the history of domestic violence. Firstly, the success of the women's movement in gaining public and political acknowledgement of violence against women marked the beginnings of protective legislation and the establishment of women's refuges. Secondly, the first major survey conducted in the United States (NFVS) using a nationally representative sample and focusing on violence in families elicited some surprising findings. In that survey, one half of the interviews were conducted with women and the other half with men. Participants were randomly selected but did not necessarily come from the same relationship. Questions were asked to ascertain which partner held the balance of power in the relationship. While results showed overwhelming evidence of violence against women in households where males were dominant, they also

revealed across all households surveyed that women were using violence against their male partners almost at the same rate as men (Straus, 1990/1995; Straus & Gelles, 1986; Straus et al., 1988).

Also in the 1970s, Susan Steinmetz's landmark article "The Battered Husband Syndrome" (1977) was published, in which she strongly argued for gender symmetry in the conceptualisation of perpetration of IPV. Taken together, the 1975 survey results and Steinmetz's article marked the beginning of controversy around the conceptualisation and perpetration of IPV. Referred to globally as 'the gender debate', the controversy continued as researchers approached their work from either a feminist perspective or a family violence perspective.

The Gender Debate

Viewed through a feminist lens, IPV is rooted in patriarchy (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1992; R. P. Dobash & Dobash, 2004). Control and dominance lie at its core. In patriarchal societies men hold powerful and privileged positions, both inside and outside the home, while women are viewed as subordinate to and weaker than them. Physical violence against women is considered to be a continuation and extension of men's privileged positions whereby their power is used to dominate and control. Thus, IPV is viewed as an issue of gender: it is asymmetrical, conducted primarily in one direction, from male-to-female (Dutton, Corvo, & Hamel, 2009). Although the feminist view does acknowledge women can also be violent in intimate relationships, it is argued that this type of violence is mainly being used for reasons of self-defence or retaliation (DeKeseredy, 2011; R. P. Dobash & Dobash, 2004; M. P. Johnson, 2008).

Those on the opposite side of the divide view IPV through what is commonly known as a family violence lens (for example, Douglas, Hines, & McCarthy, 2012; Hines, 2015; Straus, 2010). Family violence researchers maintain IPV has multiple causes and motivations that are more complex than the feminist argument and extend beyond gender. From this perspective it is the conflicts in relationships and how individuals navigate and deal with such conflicts that are seen to be at the heart of IPV (Straus, 1990/2017). Both men and women are viewed as being mutually violent in intimate relationships, in addition to which, it is also possible that a woman may be the only violent partner in an intimate relationship. Thus, IPV is viewed as a human relationship issue rather than one of gender, the perpetration of which is symmetrical between sexes (Hamel, 2007a, 2009; McNeely, Cook, & Torres, 2001).

Researchers working from the feminist paradigm have typically used women residing in refuge shelters and men arrested for violent behaviour as subjects, along with police reports and hospital

emergency department medical treatment records, for their data collection. Such studies have consistently found a high prevalence of male-to-female violence resulting in severe injuries for women, supporting arguments that IPV is a gendered and asymmetrical issue (Archer, 2002; Ross & Babcock, 2010). In addition, results from large national surveys have also been analysed, however data used was confined to responses of women and where men's responses were available they were actively excluded from analysis (M. P. Johnson, 2006; M. P. Johnson & Leone, 2005). Conversely, researchers advocating for a family violence perspective have used community population-based samples for their research. Using mostly the CTS as the instrument with which to conduct surveys, results have consistently provided evidence of gender symmetry in the perpetration of IPV (Archer, 2002; Magdol et al., 1997; Straus & Gelles, 1986).

Ways of Understanding IPV

As the arguments between these opposing sides continued, in an attempt to bridge the gap between the two, Johnson (1995) proposed a typology of violence that could be applied by both, in order to help move research forward. Drawing attention to the different data sets used, as discussed above, he argued that two very different forms of violence were being studied by each group, and that distinctions had to be made between the two (M. P. Johnson, 1995; M. P. Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Accordingly, Johnson proposed that there were two different types of violence: Patriarchal Terrorism (PT) and Common Couple Violence (CCV).

Typologies of IPV

Basing his typology on feminist theory and "patriarchal ideas of male ownership of their female partners" (M. P. Johnson, 1995, p. 284), Johnson identified coercive control and male dominance to be at the core of PT. He described this as a pattern of violence perpetrated "almost exclusively" [by men where physical violence or other] multiple control tactics" [are used to] "systematically terrorize" victims (M. P. Johnson, 1995, p. 287). Johnson proposed that when the term 'domestic violence' is used, it is this form of controlling violence that most people think of and refer to. Later, acknowledging that because some women physically assault their partners and that battering can be present in gay and lesbian relationships, PT was relabelled as intimate terrorism (IT) (M. P. Johnson, 2008; M. P. Johnson & Leone, 2005). Under IT, male dominance was no longer at the core, rather coercive control (M. P. Johnson, 2008).

Johnson (2008) argued that the second type of violence, CCV, is the most common and generally symmetric: used by both men and women. Later renaming this type as Situational Couple Violence (SCV), he stressed its distinction from IT as it is "not rooted in a pattern of [power and]

control" (M. P. Johnson, 2008, p. 324). Rather, it arises in specific situations when tensions between couples escalate to verbal aggression and sometimes turn into forms of physical violence, the consequences of which can be minor or severe. Johnson identified SCV as having many different underlying motivations including intending to injure, communicate frustration or anger or even control. However, he stressed that any controlling motivation found in SCV is distinctly different from that of IT as "it is not part of a pattern of coercive control" (p. 18). Johnson asserted that it was SCV that family violence researchers focus on and find evidence of in their studies of community populations (M. P. Johnson & Leone, 2005).

Johnson's typology of IT and SCV was further developed with the addition of two extra sub-types; violence resistance and mutual violent control (M. P. Johnson, 2008; M. P. Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Arguing that women do not use violence to control their partners, but instead to defend themselves, Violent Resistance (VR) was introduced to identify situations when a victim of IT uses violence in self-defence or retaliation. Studies that have found support for this pattern of violence have shown it to be perpetrated mainly by women (M. P. Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). The fourth sub-type, Mutual Violent Control (MVC), was established to describe intimate relationships where both partners are violent and controlling. According to Johnson (M. P. Johnson, 2008) this type of intimate partnership, where each could separately be identified as an intimate terrorist, is rare and accordingly not much is known about this group.

Johnson claims those adopting a family violence lens will not find evidence of IT in community populations. Arguing that community population samples are biased and skewed towards finding SCV only, Johnson maintains that such couples would not take part in these surveys, as victims would be too scared to speak up for fear of further violence, and perpetrators would be too scared to take part for fear of being identified (M. P. Johnson, 2008).

Other typologies with different foci from that of Johnsons have also been proposed. Some of the more well-known ones include those of Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994), Gottman et al. (1995), and Rosen et al. (2005). After conducting a review of 15 existing typologies and studies of male batterers, Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) proposed a typology based on three distinguishing dimensions. They suggested three sub-types of IPV perpetrators could be identified by focusing on the characteristics of perpetrators with respect to the existence of personality disorders or psychopathology, the severity and frequency of violence and whether the violence was confined to the home. They named these sub-types as "family only, dysphoric/borderline, and generally violent/antisocial" (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994, p. 481).

In another study of couples that linked physiological indicators to violent interactions, Gottman and his colleagues (Gottman et al., 1995) distinguished between two types of batterers they later identified as Pitbulls and Cobras (Jacobson & Gottman, 1998). The label Pitbulls was given to those who perpetrated low to moderate physical violence, who could be extremely verbally aggressive but were not violent outside the home. In contrast, the group they named Cobras demonstrated antisocial behaviour and were extremely violent outside the home. Rosen et al. (2005) tested Johnson's typology in a study where mutually violent couples were interviewed. They proposed the addition of a further sub-type of intimate terrorism; Pseudo-IT. They introduced this sub-group to explain relationships where women are violent, and their male partners do not fight back.

Critics of the work of Johnson and others who support gender asymmetry point to sampling bias for these studies. In particular, that these clinical studies only include those who experience severe forms of IPV, as the majority of research samples are from women's shelters, agency and police reports, and hospital medical records (Hines & Douglas, 2019). Contrary to Johnson's theory Ehrensaft, Moffit and Caspi (2004) found IT in clinically abusive relationships was more likely to be bidirectional and in non-clinical abusive women were the primary perpetrators of IPV. Bates, Graham-Kevan and Archer (2014) found evidence of women using controlling behaviours and that they were just as likely as men to be regarded as highly controlling. In a further study testing Johnson's typology, Bates and Graham-Kevan (2016) found both men and women were equally likely to experience IT.

In a study using two samples of men— a help-seeking sample of male victims of IPV and a sample of men from a community population—Hines and Douglas (2010b) found men in the help-seeking sample to have experienced IT and that the violence they used against their partners formed part of what Johnson terms violent resistance. Further criticism of Johnson's typology points towards the narrow sampling used, that subsequent findings are not able to be replicated or generalised across populations, and where data from population-based surveys has been used, analysis has been restricted to women's responses only (Capaldi & Kim, 2007; Dutton, Hamel, & Aaronson, 2010; Dutton & Nicholls, 2005; Hines & Douglas, 2019).

The Conflict Tactic Scales

The Conflict Tactic Scales (CTS) used by those adopting a family violence perspective, as opposed to one underpinned by feminist theory as discussed above, is the most widely used data collection instrument to assess prevalence and victimisation from IPV and it is also the most widely criticised (Schafer, 1996; Straus, 2008; Straus & Mickey, 2012). Created in the 1970s by

Murray Straus it was first developed as a self-report questionnaire to be used with his college students to gather information on corporal punishment parents used on their children. At the same time, Straus took the opportunity to also ask questions concerning violence between siblings and between parents (Straus, 2008). Taking the original survey instrument he used with his students, naming it the conflict tactics scale, and adapting it for use in personal interviews, the CTS was then used as the key instrument in the 1975 NFVS in the United States (Straus, 2008).

The CTS is underpinned by sociological conflict theory and family systems theory (Straus, 2008). Drawing on these theories and the work of Coser (1967) and Haley (1976), Straus viewed conflicts as arising when inequalities exist and are therefore "an inherent and necessary part of human relationships" (Straus, 2008, p. 205). In addition, violence is regarded as a form of "social interaction [taking] place in the context of an interrelated system of relationships [such as a family]" (Straus, 2008, p. 205). On this premise it follows that conflicts within families and family systems will be inevitable as will be different methods used to resolve conflicts (Straus, 2008; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) .

The CTS originally consisted of three separate scales measuring different ways conflicts were dealt with. These were:

- Reasoning: to what extent rational discussion was used to resolve conflicts,
- Verbal aggression: verbal and non-verbal behaviour used to hurt the other, and
- Violence: acts of physical violence used to resolve the conflict.

Each of the three scales contained a subset of actions that individuals might have taken. Survey questions were presented to participants in the context that all families experience disagreements and conflicts at some time, thus normalising the behaviours discussed. Questions were presented to study participants in a hierarchical order moving in severity from low level minor acts through to high level severe acts of violence and were asked in relation to conflicts occurring over the most recent one-year time period.

Opponents of the original CTS criticised its focus on prevalence and lack of attention to context and motivation as well as its omission of questions relating to sexual abuse. Being an instrument that gathers data pertaining to specific acts and numbers of incidents, it was deemed to be merely an exercise in number counting and was also criticised for ignoring context and motive producing

flawed and misleading conclusions (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; R. P. Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Kurz, 1997).

In response to critics, the CTS was further modified and renamed the Revised Conflict Tactics Scales, more commonly referred to as CTS2. Refinements and additions included increasing items within existing scales; changing the format to enable data to be gathered through self-reports and changing some of the terminology used (Straus et al., 1996). For example, the Reasoning scale was renamed "Negotiation" as this label was considered to be a better representation of the subscale choices available to participants. Verbal Aggression was replaced with Psychological Aggression as this form of conflict includes both verbal and non-verbal acts. Physical Violence was renamed Physical Assault as this was seen as a better fit with the physical acts of abuse the instrument measures. Finally, two additional scales were included. The new Sexual Coercion scale contains seven different behaviours three of which are classed as minor relating to insisting on sex and four classed as severe relating to the use of threats to force a partner have sex. The Injury Scale contains six items ranging from minor injuries such as sprains or bruises through to having broken bones and needing medical treatment (Straus et al., 1996).The CTS and CTS2 have been designed, not as a stand-alone instrument, but to be used alongside other measurements that investigate variables such as context and motivation (Straus et al., 1996).

Questions were raised concerning the validity of the CTS with respect to violence being framed as a way of settling conflicts, as well as failing to account for context and motivation. Criticisms include the argument that restricting evidence to within a past-year timeframe does not allow researchers to obtain a complete picture of a pattern of violence, as well as relying on the retrospective memory of participants, potentially affecting data validity (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Kurz, 1997). The CTS was also criticised for no distinction being made between those who have committed one act of violence and those who have committed many; furthermore, acts of violence that vary in severity are included in the same scale (R. P. Dobash & Dobash, 2004; R. P. Dobash et al., 1998).

The CTS2 has been used in hundreds of studies, the results of which consistently show gender symmetry in the perpetration of IPV (Archer, 2002; Straus et al., 1996). Shown to be a reliable tool with which to measure IPV, the CTS has been hailed by many as being "revolutionary because it allowed researchers to quantitatively study events that had often been ignored culturally and typically took place in private" (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005, p. 109). Findings from studies using this instrument can be compared and generalised across populations. For

example, Hines and Saudino (2003) used the CTS2 in a study of college students, with the aim of replicating previous studies and contributing to knowledge of aggression in dating relationships. Their findings supported results of previous studies that showed gender symmetry in physical violence and a higher rate of psychological aggression in females and there is a growing body of literature focusing on abused men in intimate heterosexual relationships (Bates, 2020b; Dixon et al., 2020; Hines, 2015; Hines et al., 2007).

Notwithstanding this however, Johnson's typology of IPV continues to be the most long-standing, widely accepted and highly influential lens through which IPV is viewed and applied. And so, the debate between these two camps—those adhering to the feminist argument that IPV is an issue of gender and those operating from the perspective that IPV is a relationship and family violence issue—continued, with each side criticising the methodology of the other, maintaining sampling bias and skewed results (Winstok, 2011). Although feminist researchers and family violence researchers often use the same language, the underlying definitions, meanings and concepts they attach to them can be quite different.

Winstok (2011) has proposed that the debate cannot be resolved as "the controversy stems from differing and competing paradigmatic outlooks that disagree over the identification, definition and understanding of partner violence" (p. 306). Taking into account research from both the gender and family violence perspectives, Hamel (2007a, 2009) has advocated for a new direction for research and theory to be adopted: one that is gender inclusive. In doing so he drew attention to studies that "suggest that intimate partner abuse is a complex phenomenon, driven by factors inherent in the individual (including culturally-derived attitudes and beliefs), situational variables, and the particular dynamics of the relationship" (Hamel, 2007a, p. 47).

Hamel (2007a) stressed that attention must be paid to emerging research that provides strong evidence of women's use of IPV. He postulates the "theoretical foundations [of the patriarchal paradigm] are beginning to fall apart and the way is being paved for radically new perspectives on the causes and treatment of intimate partner abuse" (p. 49). Consequently, the importance of carrying out qualitative research investigating men's experiences of IPV in heterosexual relationships to gain a wider understanding of relationship dynamics and the phenomenon of IPV cannot be ignored. Investigating men's experiences of IPV in heterosexual relationships raises questions as to what effects the violence may have on their masculine identity. As discussed earlier in this chapter, IPV has become synonymous with male perpetration and female victimisation. The messages that men see and hear and their personal experiences could combine to adversely influence their wellbeing in a variety of ways. Accordingly, the next section of this

review considers the literature on masculinity, to gain insight into the construction of masculinity together with possible influences and implications that may arise for male victims.

Influences and Implications for Masculinity of Male Victims of IPV

The concept of masculinity raises important questions to consider with respect to meanings men attach to their experiences of abuse from female partners and what bearing these have on their sense of self, their masculine identity, their self-esteem. What does it mean to be a man? What constructs of masculinity—socially sanctioned gender roles and general stereotypes—become internalised as beliefs concerning the self and others? How do these then influence, consciously and unconsciously, internal and external behaviours and actions?

Studies of men and masculinity originally focused on traditional gender roles, the biological distinctions between men and women, and behavioural expectations attached to them (Connell, 2005; Pleck, 1976). Expectations such as masculine strength and size, toughness and emotional stoicism contrasted with feminine gentleness and emotional expression, were viewed as stable expressions of gender. Social learning theories were used to explain how patterns of gendered behaviour were learned from an early age; modelled by parents and others of the same gender and reinforced through reward and punishment (Addis & Cohane, 2005). The prevalence of this perspective was such that male gender role identity became the dominant, accepted, and taken-for-granted image for masculinity in Western societies (Pleck, 1981).

In further examining the male sex role identity paradigm, Pleck (1976, 1981) saw problems arising from the masculine stereotypes. Pointing to the complexity and at times, contradictory and inconsistent nature of definitions and expectations of sex role norms, he suggested this could create conflict for individuals. When demands are made that are contradictory to the stereotypical traditional expectations of masculinity, this gives rise to gender role strain. Indeed, gender role strain can be experienced solely through the effort required to consistently conform to idealised stereotypes. Examining masculinity through a lens of gender role strain acknowledges the possibilities of multiple masculinities and their changing nature.

In the 1980s, adopting ideas of hegemony from the work of Gramsci (1971), Connell (2005) promoted the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Challenging traditional views of masculinity as a single, stable entity of the male sex role, she proposed it to be conceptualised as hierarchical, operating on many levels, with power and authority forming its core. Connell agued it is this power that results in the patriarchal privileged positioning of men and the subordination of women. Further, in negotiating the tasks of becoming a man, men will conform to or resist

patterns of hegemonic masculinity. Those who resist hegemonic masculine behaviour, however, are still considered to be complicit in supporting it for they automatically benefit from the power of male privilege by virtue of their gender (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

The theory of hegemonic masculinity became a popular and widely used conceptual framework in the study of men and masculinity (Coles, 2009; Connell, 2015; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Reeser, 2015). Idealized images such as strength, power, emotional stoicism, self-reliance and success have become the pervasive, socially accepted norms and expectations synonymous with masculinity (Addis & Mahalik 2003.

Masculinity is constructed within relationships; in relationship with women "as a difference from femininity" (Edley & Wetherell, 1997, p. 208); and in relationship with other men according to similarities with them (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). We define ourselves by what we are not. "Society define[s] particular patterns of conduct as 'masculine' and others as 'feminine'" (Connell, 2015, p. 44)—gender norms that are unconsciously accepted and generally shared among any given population. In demonstrating the accepted behavioural norms, we negotiate to fit into the group we identify with (Courtenay, 2000). Gender stereotypes are a "double-edged sword" (Steinberg & Diekman, 2016, p. 433) comprising prescriptive and proscriptive rules. Prescriptive masculine norms dictate what men should be—for example, strong; protective; and successful. Proscriptive masculine norms dictate what men should not be—for example weak and submissive (Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010; Steinberg & Diekman, 2016).

Constructions of masculinity occur on many levels: at a personal individual level, and within institutions such as the workplace, sporting bodies, educational and governmental institutions to name a few. Accordingly, personal meanings and demonstrations of what it means to be a man demand ongoing effort as they are continuously being tested, contested and renegotiated in the context of these relationships and social interactions (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Connell, 2005; Oransky & Marecek, 2009).

While some have emphasised the central importance of the male body's size and muscle strength in the portrayal of masculinity (Coles, 2009), others have argued it is the acting out of behaviours that are the key indicators (see for example Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009). As masculinity is socially constructed, the way expressions are portrayed vary according to cultural, historic and geographical locations (Addis, Reigeluth, & Schwab, 2016; Berg & Longhurst, 2003; Campbell & Bell, 2000; Connell, 2015; Nye, 2005; O'Brien, Hunt, & Hart, 2005). In early 20th century New Zealand, for example, the physical attributes and adaptability of the pioneering male were valued, along with images of heroic soldiers returning from war; images of strength, bravery,

and endurance. In addition, the valorisation of the sporting achievements of the All Blacks, the country's successful national rugby team, contributed ideals of physical strength, emotional stoicism and sportsmanship to the promotion of the "male hero" that became the stereotypic norm for the New Zealand male role (Phillips, 1984, p. 84).

Wetherell and Edley (1999) have proposed that the adoption of differing performances of masculinity can be seen to be achieved through "discursive practices" that convey norms in varying situations. They examined discursive practices for explanations of how masculine norms are conveyed, internalised and utilised in making meanings of the masculine self. In doing so they found evidence of how men constructed their masculine identities in multiple ways: sometimes positioning themselves as conforming to key hegemonic norms, at other times separating from them, being complicit with or resisting them, or at times combining these two positions. They emphasize the confusion that can arise from the various ways in which how to be a man can be framed, creating "conflict …[and] a potential source of ideological dilemmas" (Wetherell & Edley, 1999, p. 351).

Contributing to the potential for conflict and confusion mentioned above is the presentation of heroic hypermasculine characters appearing in film, popular television shows and other forms of media such as advertising. Presenting characters displaying hegemonic ideals and winning at all costs, these have been shown to be powerful avenues through which traditional meanings of masculinity are explored, conveyed and reinforced (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Addis et al., 2016).

Mahalik et al. (2003) created the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory and in doing so, identified a non-finite list of 11 generic masculine stereotypes: "Winning; Emotional Control, Risk-Taking, Violence, Dominance, Playboy, Self-Reliance, Primacy of Work, Power Over Women, Disdain for Homosexuals, Physical Toughness, and Pursuit of Status" (p. 6). Each of the norms is viewed as existing on "a continuum of conformity…[ranging from] extreme conformity…[to] extreme nonconformity and be made up of affective behavioral and cognitive components" (Mahalik et al., 2003, p. 6). They have suggested the more men identify with and conform to traditional masculine norms, when their masculinity is challenged the greater the negative impact will be on their self-esteem and their willingness to seek help.

The implicit, unspoken, dominant gender role norms of hegemonic masculinity can negatively influence a man's masculine identity. With respect to male victims of IPV, an admission of victimisation could prevent them from speaking up about their experiences contributing to a an underreporting of victimisation (J. M. Berger, Levant, McMillan, Kelleher, & Sellers, 2005; Cook, 2009). In highlighting the negative effect an admission of victimisation can have on men's

identity, Migliaccio (2001) has argued that victimisation has become so entrenched in our minds as being a feminine trait, that for men "to be labeled as abused is to be labelled as a female, which disavows any form of masculinity a man may attempt to claim" (p. 208).

Hegemonic masculinity, representing the idealised masculine stereotypic image of what it means to be a man—an image of strength, power, emotional control, self-reliance, confidence—is difficult to achieve and can rarely be attained (Funk & Werhun, 2011; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). Regardless of this, it continues to remain a pervasive and highly influential norm that is used as a benchmark against which men will judge themselves and others, both real and imaginary (Courtenay, 2000; Jeffries & Grogan, 2012; Terry & Braun, 2013). Both the pressure experienced by men to conform to these idealised masculine norms and their perceived failure to meet them, can, for male victims of IPV, engender fears of not being believed, being ridiculed, and being seen as weak, resulting in stigma and alienation from friends, family and work (Allen-Collinson, 2009a; Douglas & Hines, 2011; Hines, 2007; Migliaccio, 2001; Tsui, Cheung, & Leung, 2010). Resulting actual or perceived alienation from the group they identify with can harm their mental and physical health (Funk & Werhun, 2011; Moss-Racusin et al., 2010) as they are "forced to struggle both internally and externally with the maintenance of a masculine ideal" (Migliaccio, 2001, p. 9).

This section has considered literature pertaining to masculine norms and the construction of masculinity. It has also highlighted the possible negative influences and internal conflicts that can arise as a result of adherence to hegemonic masculine norms. Attention will now be focused on men's experiences of IPV. This begins with an overview of the prevalence of male victimisation, as this underscores the significance of researching men's experiences of IPV. This will be followed by an examination of the literature pertaining to their experiences.

Prevalence of Male Victimisation

Research into IPV grew rapidly from the 1970s, as discussed earlier in this chapter, with the majority of studies focusing on women victims. A growing body of research is now turning attention to men's experiences, however establishing the prevalence of male victimisation is difficult, in part due to the variations in populations studied, definitions used, and instruments of measurement employed (Desmarais et al., 2012a). In a comprehensive review covering 750 studies across English speaking countries, Desmarais, et al. (2012a) found one in four women and one in five men experienced victimisation from physical IPV with almost a quarter having experienced at least one incident of IPV in their lifetime.

As part of the same review, Carney and Barner (2012) examined 204 studies reporting rates of emotional and psychological abuse for both men and women. They drew attention to researchers' adoption of different definitions, collection methods and methodologies that contribute to a wide variation in findings. Across all studies reviewed, Carney and Barner (2012) found rates of psychological abuse were 40% for women and 32% for men. Rates focusing specifically on coercive forms of psychological abuse showed 41% for women and 43% for men. From this review, it was generally concluded that two forms of IPV appear to exist, as argued by Johnson (2008); namely, physical violence and a more indistinct multifarious type of IPV that "has elements of power, control and coercion." (Carney & Barner, 2012, p. 318) and that they can exist both independent and can also overlap. The review also showed IPV to exist in similar forms across all the countries reviewed, confirming it is not limited to the United States. Of particular note from this review was the attention drawn to lack of male samples available that prevented comparisons to be made between men and women victims. As a consequence, a true picture of prevalence rates was unable to be drawn, however the rates shown for male victimisation are disturbing.

Estimates of the prevalence of male victimisation by IPV are mostly gained through nationally representative surveys using the CTS, (Laroche, 2005; Straus & Gelles, 1986; Straus et al., 1988), surveys on crime and safety (New Zealand Ministry of Justice, 2015, 2018) or self report surveys with a focus on safety issues such as the NVAWS (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). The majority of these come from overseas, predominantly the United States. In New Zealand, the Dunedin Longitudinal Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study (commonly known as The Dunedin Study), when re-assessing the study cohort at age 21, asked all participants questions using the CTS about their experiences of perpetration and victimisation of IPV (Magdol et al., 1997; Moffitt & Caspi, 1999). Results showed the estimated prevalence rates of perpetration as 21.8% for men and 27.2% for women, with estimated rates for victimisation at 27.1% for women and 34.1% for men (Magdol et al., 1997). In another longitudinal study following a birth cohort from Christchurch, New Zealand (the Christchurch Health and Development Study), sample participants were questioned on perpetration and victimisation from IPV when they were aged 25. Using the CTS2 as well as questions relating to consequences, data analysis showed similar rates of IPV victimisation for both men and women (Fergusson, Horwood, & Ridder, 2005)

Prevalence rates of IPV in New Zealand have more recently been measured through the New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey. Results from the 2014 survey (New Zealand Ministry of Justice, 2015), revealed that 5.7% women (from a sample of 3884) and 4.4% of men (from a

sample of 3,059) reported one or more experiences of IPV victimisation. With respect to coercive and controlling behaviour, 14.4% of women and 17% of men reported experiencing one or more incidents of this type of IPV that included financial restrictions, being stalked and being restricted from seeing friends and family. That survey was replaced in 2018 by the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) the results of which showed 59% of women (from a sample of 4,607) and 41% of men (from a sample of 3,423) reported having experienced IPV victimisation that included psychological violence. (New Zealand Ministry of Justice, 2018).

It has been noted that the reliability of reporting of prevalence rates in studies and surveys in which IPV is framed as a crime is questionable, as respondents may not perceive this type of behaviour to be a crime (Hamel, 2013). Dutton and White (2013) have drawn attention to discrepancies between men's reports of victimisation that are not consistent with the rate of women's reports of perpetration of IPV appearing in the review conducted by Desmarais et al. referred to above (2012a; 2012b). They have suggested that while women may exaggerate the extent of their perpetration, men underreport as they are socialized to remain silent about their problems. It is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss national or international prevalence rates of IPV at length. However, evidence available to date indicating the numbers of men experiencing victimisation from IPV, in particular those highlighted in the recent NZCVS mentioned above, taken together with the continued emphasis on women's experiences, are extremely concerning, and emphasize the importance of further investigation into men's victimisation experiences and its effects. The next section of this review examines the literature on IPV as experienced by men.

Men's Experiences of IPV

Although evidence of male victimisation of IPV has been identified since the 1970s, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the majority of studies have continued to focus on women's experiences for many years. Findings from studies reporting male victimisation were for a long time ignored, or their results highly criticised due to the methodology used and discounted (Straus, 2008, 2009, 2010). A common argument often put forward in support of the assertion that male victimisation is inconsequential, is that men are usually physically larger and stronger than women and thus in a position to exert physical force and control (Carney et al., 2007; Dutton, 2006). However, there is now a growing body of literature providing evidence that men's experiences of victimisation from IPV are not inconsequential and can result in negative consequences some of which can be severe (Ananthakrishnan et al., 2006; Archer, 2002; Black et al., 2011; Desmarais

et al., 2012a; Esquivel-Santoveña & Dixon, 2012; Hines et al., 2007; Hines & Douglas, 2010a, 2010b; Tilbrook et al., 2010).

Results from a nationally representative survey in Canada (Laroche, 2005) showed a number of men who had experienced IPV of the type that would classify them as being victims of IT according to Johnson's typology (M. P. Johnson, 2008). In the United States, male participants in the 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) reported incidents of IPV victimisation that included being hit or beaten with fists, being burned, choked and having had a knife or gun used on them (Black et al., 2011).

Some researchers utilising case studies have found consistent evidence of male victimisation by female partners with results revealing severe forms of abuse including scratching; body parts pulled violently; being kicked in the genitals; and having household objects including knives used as weapons against them (Allen-Collinson, 2009a; Cook, 2009; Migliaccio, 2001). In a separate review of the medical records of suspected cases of abuse, Ananthakrishnan et al. (2006) found reports of a male patient who was discovered to have rib fractures in different stages of healing. On further investigation the patient revealed he was regularly punched and kicked by his wife.

In a more recent retrospective analysis of a medical database with a focus on suspected cases of IPV in Portugal, Carmo, Grams and Magalhães (2011) found the majority of men experienced a combination physical and psychological abuse. The most common methods of inflicting physical IPV revealed in that review were scratching, punching and the use of blunt instruments to inflict harm. Drijber, Reijnders and Ceelen (2013) also reported blunt instruments such as common household objects as well as knives, were used to inflict harm. In addition, the most common forms of IPV reported were "hitting, pelting or stabbing with an object, kicking, biting, seizing the throat and scratching" (pp. 174-175).

Hines et al. (2007) conducted the first large-scale study investigating male victimisation from IPV. In that study, in which data was collected from 246 callers to a helpline dedicated to male victims of domestic abuse, they found over 20% of participants were fearful of their female partners. The study participants reported having been subjected to acts of violence including weapons such as knives used against them, being choked, and being subjected to physical attacks targeting their genitals. In the same study, participants also reported experiencing various forms of psychological abuse including controlling behaviours such as threats and coercion (77.6%), intimidation (63.3%) and emotional abuse such as humiliation (74.1%). In a later study using a different sample of 302 men who had experienced IPV from female partners and sought help,

and who were recruited from many different sources, Hines and Douglas (2010a) further identified that men can be subjected to severe forms of physical, sexual and psychological aggression by their female partners.

The more recently identified form of legal and administrative abuse (Tilbrook et al., 2010), also referred to as second wave abuse (Corbally, 2015) and LA aggression (Hines et al., 2015), arises through the manipulation of legal, justice and administrative systems by one partner against another. It has been suggested that this form of IPV is more commonly experienced by men, arising through gendered stereotypes being held by individuals working within the various institutions that become involved (Tilbrook et al., 2010).

Very recently, the first large qualitative study into men's experiences of IPV from a female partner has been conducted (Bates, 2019b, 2020b). Although expecting to recruit men from the UK for that study, participants came from as far afield as Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada. The results of this study are of significant importance as they have revealed a wide range of forms of victimisation including physical, sexual, and verbal aggression, and coercive control. Evidence was also found of different forms of coercive control that included using children as a manipulative tool and making false allegations resulting in legal and administrative aggression.

As discussed above, although the majority of studies into IPV have focused on women's experiences there is a growing body of research evidencing that can men also experience IPV. They can be subjected to physical, sexual, psychological and emotional as well as legal and administrative forms of victimisation, the intensity of which can be severe. Perspectives on IPV may also have a bearing on other ways men experience IPV and how their experiences may impact their daily functioning. Accordingly, research into prevailing perceptions of society concerning male victimisation will now be considered. This will be followed by an examination of reported effects of IPV on male victims.

Perceptions Concerning Male Victims of IPV

Before exploring the effects of IPV on male victims, I briefly examine relevant literature concerning perceptions and beliefs of others towards these men. Dutton and White (2013) have noted how studies that have supported the gender "paradigm" have strengthened the prevailing narrow conceptualisation of IPV. Schuler (2010) has also drawn attention to the way in which social norms exert "informal social control [and]…shape the thinking of…society about who abuses whom within society" (p. 164) and consequently also exert a strong influence on the

responses society makes to situations that arise. Although Schuler's (2010) comments were directed at the United States, it is suggested they equally apply to New Zealand. In this way, adherence to traditional gender role stereotypes viewing men as strong, powerful and stoic (Vogel, Heimerdinger-Edwards, Hammer, & Hubbard, 2011) could influence attitudes and behaviours toward male victims.

Findings from studies using scenarios presented in vignettes as a way of exploring societal perceptions in relation to the perpetration and victimisation of IPV have consistently shown IPV to be considered more serious in male-to-female violence and the responsibility for the violence attributed to the male perpetrator (Hamby & Jackson, 2010; E. P. Seelau, Seelau, & Poorman, 2003; S. M. Seelau & Seelau, 2005; Sorenson & Taylor, 2005; Sylaska & Walters, 2014). A study by Sorenson and Taylor (2005) found the type of violence used as well as the presence of weapons to be an important factor influencing the judgments and responses of study participants and contributed to physical and sexual violence being considered more serious than psychological aggression. In a study conducted by Hamby and Jackson (2010) it was proposed that perceptions are possibly influenced by perceived differences of strength and size between genders, as findings showed an association between these characteristics and fear of perpetrators. In a recent study in New Zealand investigating how young men talk about IPV Shum-Pearce (2016) found the idea of women's abuse of men to be generally regarded as humorous and inconsequential. In addition, there was a general perception centred on traditional masculine norms, that men are capable of standing up for themselves, and have the strength and toughness to get through adversity without needing to seek help. Follingstad, DeHart and Green (2004) found concerning overwhelming evidence of psychologists' associating gender with the seriousness of abuse. Similarly, Hamel et al. (2009) found gender bias in those involved within Court systems, legal professionals and victim support workers as their beliefs were found to be "more consistent with a patriarchal or gender paradigm" (p. 41).

Concerned with the influential role of media with respect to IPV, Scarduzio, Carlyle, Harris and Savage (2017) conducted a qualitative survey in the United States to investigate public perceptions of IPV perpetrators, the presence of stereotypes, and connections between stereotypes and dominant gender norms. Creating a factual news report of an imagined violent incident that gave no additional contextual information, their findings revealed assumptions of physical size and strength to be linked to stereotypes of male perpetrators and female victims. Experiences of male victims were viewed as non-normative, as opposed to women's experiences that were considered to be "consistent with normative femininity" (p.103). In that study, dominant gender norms in the United States were reflected in participants' responses with respect

to attributing men's IPV to internal mechanisms of anger, power and control and women's use of IPV to external mechanisms of provocation or self-defence.

The research above provides empirical evidence that adherence to stereotypes and assumptions viewing IPV to be a gendered phenomenon prevail in society. George (2002) has proposed that attitudes towards male victims of IPV, as revealed in the vignette studies discussed above, are "rooted within the same continuum of entrenched prejudice that gave rise to Skimmington Ridings centuries ago" (p. 125). He has argued that modern-day Charivari is practiced through "denial and trivialization within a public discourse [and that] the prejudicial treatment of victimised men within legal and social agencies is the means by which the Skimmington is re-enacted and revisited." (p.125).

Evidence that women's use of violence against male intimate partners is generally considered acceptable, inconsequential and at times humorous, and is often assumed to be used in self-defence or retaliation, is concerning, as such perceptions immediately position male victims at a disadvantage, particularly when they try to speak up about their situation. Apart from the obvious physical effects of IPV, how male victims are received and treated by others could interfere with accessing appropriate assistance and have serious repercussions for their mental health.

Effects of IPV on Male Victims

Literature focusing on the effects of IPV on male victims is relevant to this study as it has helped provide clarity of concepts and add context to men's experiences, thus helping shape the study's direction. From a constructionist perspective, men's experiences of IPV and how they make meaning of them will influence how they view themselves and their day-to-day functioning. For example, as previously mentioned, men's experiences are not confined just to the immediate physical results of IPV. How abused men are perceived by others could have a major influence on their day-to-day functioning.

Male victimisation in intimate relationships is not generally perceived in society as a serious issue or to have harmful consequences, the general belief being, as indicated above, that male-to-female IPV results in greater harm (Dutton & White, 2013; Randle & Graham, 2011). Until recently, relatively few studies have been carried out investigating the consequences of IPV for men. There is now, however, a growing body of research documenting that male victims of IPV can experience significant negative consequences for their physical and mental health (J. L. Berger et al., 2016; Black, 2011; Coker et al., 2002; Cook, 2009; Hines & Douglas, 2010a, 2011; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). In an analysis of results of the National Violence Against Women

Survey (NVAWS) that revealed 22.9% of men had experienced IPV during their lifetime, Coker et al. (2002) found links between experiences of physical and psychological IPV and significant physical and mental health consequences for male victims.

Adverse health consequences experienced by any victim of IPV can range from lower self-esteem, anxiety, insomnia, depression, suicidal ideation and symptoms displaying post-traumatic stress syndrome (Afifi et al., 2009; Coker et al., 2002; Coker, Weston, Creson, Justice, & Blakeney, 2005; Hines, 2007). There is much debate as to whether men suffer similar consequences to women from IPV victimisation. In the Dunedin Study, Magdol et al (1997) found a relationship between severe forms of physical IPV and substance abuse as well as depressive symptoms and those relating to anti personality disorders. From an analysis of data obtained from the US National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R) Afifi et al. (2009) suggested IPV experiences may manifest differently in men than in women. They found men suffered more externalising disorders such as disruptive behaviour and substance abuse, in contrast to women who were shown to suffer from low self-esteem and depression. Results from other studies, however, have found that male victims of IPV experience similar negative health effects to those of women victims (Fergusson et al., 2005; Hines et al., 2007; Migliaccio, 2001; Prospero, 2007). For example, an analysis of the NISVS showed negative health effects adversely affecting male victims of IPV to include headaches, high blood pressure, difficulty sleeping and poor mental health (Black et al., 2011). Physical injuries men have suffered from IPV have been found to include scaldings (McNeely et al., 2001), broken bones and broken teeth (Ananthakrishnan et al., 2006; Dim, 2020).

Black et al. (2011) drew attention to three causal possibilities of negative health outcomes for male victims of IPV. They could be as a direct result of acts of IPV, such as physical injury; they could be related to maladaptive coping mechanisms such as alcohol or drug abuse; or be the body's biological and physiological response to chronic stress. In the same analysis Black et al. (2011) found men who had experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner suffered from at least one symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a psychiatric condition that can occur following the experience of a traumatic event. Symptoms of PTSD include recurring distressing memories and dreams, flashbacks, persistence of negative emotions, markedly reduced interest in activities, hypervigilance, sleep disturbance, and difficulty concentrating (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). In the first cross-cultural study conducted to specifically investigate the possibility of links between PTSD symptoms and IPV victimisation among men, participants

from over 60 different universities worldwide were surveyed (Hines, 2007). Findings from that study indicated a strong association between PTSD symptoms and IPV, as participants who reported experiencing more severe forms of IPV also reported experiencing a greater number of symptoms with a greater severity of victimisation. Randle and Graham (2011) advised caution when interpreting these results as a causal relationship was unable to be established. However, recent studies have also identified symptoms of PTSD among male victims of IPV as well as depressive and anxiety disorders (Hines & Douglas, 2011, 2015a; Machado, Hines, & Matos, 2018). An association has also been found between LA Aggression and PTSD symptoms and depression in men (J. L. Berger et al., 2016).

While scholars comparing the consequences of IPV between men and women generally agree that women are injured more frequently and suffer worse outcomes than men (Archer, 2002), evidence also shows that women can instil fear in their male partners (Cook, 2009; Hines et al., 2007; Migliaccio, 2001). When re-analysing data obtained from the Canadian General Social Survey (GSS), that focused on victimisation and spousal violence, Laroche (2005) found evidence to indicate that male victims of IPV experience fear for their lives. Other forms of fear male victims of IPV have been found to experience relate to gender stereotypes and their masculinity. For example many have reported fear of being disbelieved, of being arrested, and of losing access to children (Allen-Collinson, 2009a; Cook, 2009; Migliaccio, 2001; Walker et al., 2019). These fears can act as obstacles, preventing men from disclosing their experiences of abuse, seeking help or leaving the abusive relationships (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Cook, 2009; Galdas, Cheater, & Marshall, 2005; Huntley et al., 2019). Living with fear can continue after violent relationships have ended, also negatively affecting men's mental health and interfering with their ability to form new relationships (Bates, 2019a).

The literature reveals a wide variety of negative outcomes male victims of IPV can sustain to their physical and mental health. Symptoms can arise from physical injuries, biological causes, or their own diverse coping strategies. Effects on their wellbeing can be severe, can act as barriers to their leaving, and can continue long after the abusive relationships have ended. Most of the studies explored in this literature review were conducted using the CTS, CTS2, or other nationwide surveys including the NISVS, NCS-R, and GSS. Only recently have studies been conducted using qualitative methods to investigate how men experience IPV, its effects and the dynamics of their relationships (e.g., Bates, 2020b; Dixon et al., 2020). Although there is now a growing body of literature, there remains a gap of knowledge from a qualitative perspective, particularly in respect of the effects the IPV has on the health and wellbeing of male victims of

IPV, the influence of masculinity and barriers to disclosure and leaving their relationships and hearing these men's voices. These effects are the focus of this study.

Summary

This literature review began with an historic overview of IPV, setting the context for the current study. It considered different definitions of IPV, highlighting that although there is no agreed definition among scholars a broad perspective is preferable. Ongoing controversies surrounding IPV, the gender debate, and different ways of understanding were explored. As this study investigates men's experiences, literature pertaining to theories of construction of masculinity and its possible influences and implications for male victims of IPV was considered. Evidence of the prevalence of IPV against men in heterosexual relationships was identified at together with research presenting findings of men's experiences. As perceptions and beliefs of others in relation to IPV can have a major influence on how male victims are viewed, studies investigating perceptions of others were considered and were followed by an exploration of literature providing evidence of the effects of IPV on male victims.

The literature has shown that victimisation of men through IPV is a serious issue. Studies have revealed men in heterosexual relationships can experience IPV at comparable rates to women. Evidence from empirical studies show that IPV is not an issue of gender but of human relationships and the existence and experience of male victims is not an issue to be ignored. Attention has been drawn to the general lack of research into men's experiences as victims in abusive relational dynamics and, more specifically, to the dearth of research into the effects of emotional and psychological abuse by women on their male partners (Lawrence, Orengo-Aguayo, Langer, & Brock, 2012). Regardless of a recent growth in the body of literature focusing on men's experiences, there remains much to be learned particularly from conducting qualitative studies that will provide greater insights into the context and personal experiences of IPV for men. This provides the context and direction for this study which explores the personal experiences of men and investigates how their experiences of IPV might be impacted by their masculinity.

The next chapter sets out the methodology and methods followed in the current qualitative study. It discusses the design of the research together with the methods used for data collection and analysis. The aim of the study was to explore the experiences of a sample of men living in New Zealand who self-identified as being victims of IPV in heterosexual relationships. The study sought to identify:

- How do the experiences of male victims of IPV speak to the construction of their masculinity and identity, and consequently, affect their day-to-day functioning and interpersonal relationships?
- What might influence them to report or to refrain from reporting their experiences, and
- What might influence them to stay in their relationship or leave it?

Chapter 3: Methodology and Method

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of the personal experiences of male victims of IPV and how they made sense of these experiences, as well as to understand how these experiences impacted on their identity and sense of self, their interpersonal relationships and their day-to-day functioning. I particularly wanted to know whether the participants reported their experiences and what ongoing effect, if any, the experiences had on their decision to stay or leave.

In this chapter I discuss my choice of conducting a qualitative study following constructivist grounded theory (CGT) methodology to enable participants' voices to come to the fore and remain visible. I begin with my own epistemological and ontological assumptions that I bring to the research, and examine constructivism, constructionism and interpretivism. This is followed by an overview of qualitative research and a discussion of CGT methodology as developed by Charmaz (2014). The remainder of the chapter addresses the research process itself: ethical considerations; participants and recruitment; data generation; the different levels of data analysis of coding, memoing and reflexivity, leading to theory construction.

Overview

Birks and Mills (2015) have observed that "the question of 'truth' or the nature of reality lies at the heart of a discussion about methodological preference" (p. 51). Ontology and epistemology—the theory of knowledge, what is regarded as real, and how we know what we know—underpin one's research project. They are embedded in theoretical perspectives or paradigms that inform methodologies and in turn give rise to the research methods to be used (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013a).

I approached my research from the assumption that we know and gain knowledge of the world and ourselves not only by observing but also by participating and experiencing. It is through interacting with others—individuals, groups, institutions, societies—that we make meaning of ourselves, our lives and our sense of the world. As we each do this through our personal lens, our unique subjective experiences give rise to the existence of multiple perspectives of realities. These realities can be fluid and change according to time, situation and context, and also as we ourselves change. In our personal and professional lives, we wear many hats and present different selves to the world depending on the situation we are in. These multiple selves influence our

philosophical positioning which in turn, as researchers, influences our choice of methodology and methods (Birks & Mills, 2015).

Constructionism and Constructivism

Crotty (1998) illustrated the interrelatedness of ontology, epistemology, theoretical perspective, and methodology. Ontology and epistemology can overlap and merge together, underpinning theoretical perspectives which in turn inform methodologies and methods. With respect to the current research project, as depicted in Figure 1, a relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology underpin an interpretivist theoretical perspective that in turn informs my chosen methodology of CGT and methods that complement my social constructionist lens.

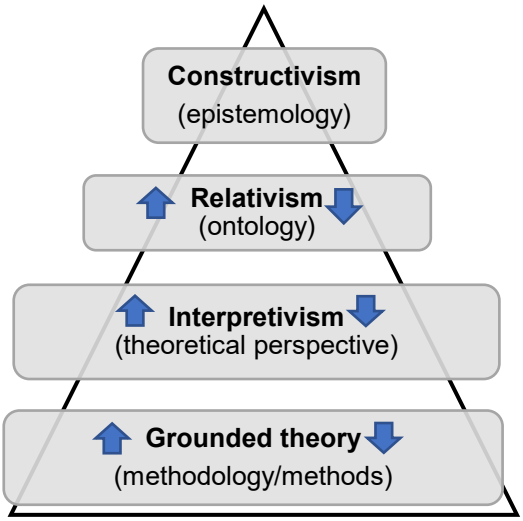

Figure 1. Elements of this research that inform and are informed by each other

(Adapted from Crotty, 1998, p. 4)

The terms 'constructivism' and 'constructionism' are often used interchangeably (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013a). With respect to the existence of reality, both take the position that meanings are assumed to be created and constructed through our engagement and social interactions with the world around us: "It is in and out of this interplay that meaning is born" (Crotty, 1998, p. 45). As we interpret interactions through our individual subjective lens, it follows that multiple truths and realities exist. Constructivism/constructionism requires researchers to be open to many possibilities and to reinterpretation of what they see and hear.

Constructivism and constructionism are concerned with co-construction of meaning through engagement and interaction. The central focus of constructivism is the mind: the subjective meanings that are constructed in our minds as we individually engage and interact with the world (Ab Rashid et al., 1985; Crotty, 1998). The initial central focus of constructionism is the

collective generation of meaning. We are born into an existing culture and environment at specific times in history, that "provide us with meanings…[that] we are taught and we learn in a complex and subtle process of enculturation" (Crotty, 1998, p. 79). Accordingly, meanings imparted through our cultural heritage already exist before we engage in the co-construction of meaning. Burr (2015) proposed it is the "culture in which we live…our society's economic conditions and…power relations in which we are embedded" (p. 223) that provide and shape our interactions, thought processes and understanding.

Crotty (1998) pointed to the subtle distinction between constructivism and constructionism, referred to above. While each overlaps and informs the other, drawing on the work of Gergen and Gergen (1994), he suggested "reserv[ing] the term constructivism for epistemological considerations focusing exclusively on 'the meaning-making activity of the individual mind' and [using] constructionism where the focus includes 'the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning" (p. 58).

Interpretivism

As mentioned previously, our worlds and environment speak into our lives on multiple levels as we engage in interactions and make sense of our lives. From the constructivist/constructionist position, as meanings are co-created, researchers cannot be separated from the research. As our worldview drives our interpretations and therefore our perspectives and the way we conduct our research, it follows that our analysis and research findings are not free of values as they are our interpretations of what we see and hear (Chowdhury, 2014; C. Harris & Jimenez, 2001).

Interpretivism can be traced back to the writings of Weber who stressed the need to seek understanding and interpretation in social science research (Crotty, 1998). Developed as an alternative to the positivist research tradition whereby truth was taken to exist and be capable of being discovered, interpretivism is based on the central idea that, owing to the existence of multiple realities, there is never one definitive single truth that is able to be found (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013a; O'Reilly, 2009; Willis, 2007). The "interpretivist tradition stresses the dynamic, constructed and evolving nature of social reality—[its core aim] seeks to understand social reality through the eyes of those being studied" (Chowdhury, 2014, p. 434).

Taking an interpretivist approach and employing CGT methods allowed me to enter into the worlds of my participants in order to gain understanding of their lived experiences, feelings and perceptions. The data generated was co-constructed with participants as we interacted in dialogue

with each other through our personal worldviews. It is this co-constructed data that has then been used in an iterative process to shape and interpret my understanding of their experiences.

I have discussed my worldview that I bring to the research and have considered the relativist ontology and constructivist epistemology underpinning an interpretivist theoretical perspective that in turn informs my chosen methodology of CGT. The remainder of this chapter gives an overview of qualitative research and CGT. It then presents and discusses the research process itself: ethical considerations; participants and recruitment; data generation; and the different levels of data analysis including coding, memoing and reflexivity, leading to theory construction.

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research methods, a "distinct kind of social science" (Hammersley, 2013, p. 9), grew in popularity and use during the 1960s and '70s in what Denzin and Lincoln (2013b) have termed a "methodological revolution" (p. vii). It was against a tide of majority opinion that quantitative methods were the only way to conduct rigorous studies and produce valid results that this "revolution" took hold. This 'revolution' was a result of growing dissatisfaction with the suitability of using quantitative inquiry to explore individuals' personal experiences and social issues.

During the traditional and modernist periods, quantitative methods dominated the field of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Regarded as the best scientifically and empirically sound method available, results could be measured objectively and be validated, and experiments replicated. With a focus on deductive inquiry proceeding from an initial hypothesis, quantitative research is concerned with investigating cause and effect. Knowledge is seen as stable: reality is an entity that is "fixed and measurable…deductive and linear" (Minichiello & Kottler, 2010, p. 19). The researcher, viewed as an expert, tests hypotheses while controlling for variables, searching for objective evidence in order to prove or disprove theories. The researcher remains apart from research subjects, viewing and reporting results objectively. Data gathered are assigned numerical values, statistically measured and standardised. Results can be generalised across populations and used to make predictions for future outcomes.

In contrast, conducting research using qualitative methods was widely regarded as a "soft" option, only worthy of being used for the refinement of details prior to the commencement of quantitative studies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). With the central focus of such inquiry being individual subjective experiences, thoughts and opinions, the majority consensus deemed its subjective nature meant results were devoid of scientific rigour. Scholars argued that qualitative

methods were “idiosyncratic, impressionistic, unsystematic, biased, and impossible to replicate” (Charmaz, 2012, p. 2). However, the groundswell in favour of employing qualitative methods to investigate social phenomena, in answer to growing dissatisfaction with quantitative methods, was such that it eventually became firmly established as “a field of inquiry in its own right” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013b, p. 5).

From the 1970s to the 1990s, researchers employed new methods to gain a deeper understanding of their research subjects’ experiences, challenging the positivism of traditional and modernist thinking. The postmodern era rejected positivist thinking: the certainty of the existence of knowledge and the assumptions that reality was fixed and could be identified. In contrast to positivist quantitative methods, postmodern qualitative researchers viewed reality and truth as fluid and constantly evolving. Knowledge and reality were now considered to be socially constructed in context, as opposed to being entities that already exist, waiting to be found (Minichiello & Kottler, 2010). Accordingly, multiple realities exist as they are seen and experienced through the lens of each individual.

Qualitative research methods comprise a wide range of “theoretical perspectives that differ quite sharply from one another” (Hammersley, 2013, p. 9) and form an “eclectic collection of approaches and methods” (Saldaña, Leavy, & Beretvas, 2011, p. 3). Consequently it is difficult to assign one all-encompassing definition (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It is, however, generally agreed that the term “qualitative research” is more an over-arching, umbrella term (Leavy, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Saldaña et al., 2011; Sandelowski, 2004) under which sit many differing “attitudes toward and strategies for conducting inquiry” (Sandelowski, 2004, p. 893).

All qualitative approaches have the central focus of investigating personal human experiences in social contexts, with a common goal of gaining an understanding of how humans make meaning from their experiences. With this in mind, Denzin and Lincoln (2013b) proposed the following generic definition as one that can be applied across the range of approaches:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. [It] consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 6)

With a focus on investigating deep personal meanings, the majority of qualitative research projects are usually smaller in size than quantitative ones, with participant samples purposefully rather than randomly selected (Hammersley, 2013; Sinuff, Cook, & Giacomini, 2007). Inquiry is a collaborative process between participant and researcher. The researcher, rather than viewed as an expert who gathers data to test a pre-determined hypothesis, as occurs in quantitative research, is often situated as an integral part of the research process.

Qualitative researchers are the main research device or tool by which data is collected and analysed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The participants, by way of their experiences that are shaped by many factors including their environments, cultures, worldviews and social interactions, are regarded as experts on the phenomena being investigated. It is their words and narratives, together with their interactions with researchers, the researchers' field notes, memos and other observations, that form the raw data to be analysed.

When considering the varying approaches to qualitative research, together with the many differing skills researchers employ during the process, Denzin and Lincoln (2000, 2008) offered the analogy of a bricolage, or quilt. From this perspective, a qualitative researcher can be seen as a bricoleur or quilt maker who interprets and draws conclusions from the data. Just as a quilter selects various pieces of fabric, stitching them together to create specific patterns, so too do qualitative researchers bring to the data analysis their own worldviews. Interpreting the data through their personal lenses, they select, "…edit, and put slices of reality together" (2000, p. 5) creating an "interpretive structure…like a quilt" (2000, p. 6). In this way, "[q]ualitative research…informs knowledge of social rules and culture…[that] vary with perspective and situation, and have an inescapably subjective nature" (Sinuff et al., 2007, p. 105).

The premise of qualitative research holds that "individual thinking…has intelligible meaning that can be identified, described, explored, analysed, and synthesized into coherent themes" (Minichiello & Kottler, 2010, p. 13). In contrast to the deductive process of quantitative research methods, the qualitative approach is underpinned by inductive inquiry that lends itself to being applied to the investigation of sensitive issues to gain in-depth understanding of intensely personal experiences of relatively little-understood phenomena (Minichiello & Kottler, 2010).

A key aspect and strength of qualitative methods is the means whereby data are obtained and then analysed. Data, incorporating the words, behaviours and experiences of participants as observed, or as related by them, are mostly collected in the field in as natural a setting as possible. This stands in contrast to quantitative projects that collect data largely in clinical settings or by way of surveys. Data collection in qualitative research is carried out in many ways: most

commonly through interviews, observations, focus groups, and sometimes surveys. The information obtained by a variety of methods including recordings, videos, researchers' field notes and memos, are then transcribed into text and it is these texts together with researchers' personal observations that form the platform for analysis.

Willig (2017) argues for replacing the term "analysis" with "interpretation" with respect to qualitative research, as she believes it is a better fit. In discussing her reasoning behind this, she draws on the work of Ricouer who proposed the existence of two forms of interpretation: empathic or suspicious. Empathic interpretation seeks to understand how events are experienced by participants, and proceeds from the ground up (as in qualitative research), whereas suspicious interpretation seeks to uncover meanings believed to be already existing but hidden (as in quantitative research). The former works from the data outwards without bringing in preconceived theories whereas the latter works from the top down, using existing theories with which to question the data.

Drawing on this, Willig (2017) suggests that the various forms of qualitative methodologies can be mapped on a continuum with empathic interpretation at one end and suspicious interpretation at the other. She proposes that by doing so, a better understanding of how interpretation is applied during the analytic process, depending on the methodology used, can be gained. She places grounded theory very close to the empathic end of this continuum due to its being "a data-driven, bottom-up method" (p. 278) with theory being formed at the end of the process rather than being used to begin the process. This level of empathic interaction, together with constant reflexivity, acts as a safeguard against researchers imposing their own worldviews on the data.

The study investigates in-depth a phenomenon of which little is known or understood; therefore, I have chosen to follow a qualitative approach. The central focus has been the participants' experiences; gaining an understanding of these and the meanings personally attributed to them, together with any ongoing effects on their lives. Approaching the current research by way of qualitative inquiry has enabled me to engage deeply with participants on an individual basis. Meeting participants individually for one-on-one interviews, listening to their responses and narratives, I was able to be taken into their worlds. We collaboratively explored their experiences and the meanings they have attributed to them, as related through their personal lenses.

The focus, as described by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), has been "…on process, understanding, and meaning" (p. 15), to let their voices be heard. All data—interview conversations together with my observations from the field—have been gathered and analysed within the framework of constructivist grounded theory. As CGT has grown out of the original grounded theory

developed by Glaser and Straus (1967) an overview of the foundations of grounded theory will now be considered followed by a discussion of CGT.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory (GT) was developed by sociologists Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, when they worked together collaboratively to research how health care professionals dealt with issues arising around death and dying. Their book detailing the research strategies they used, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967), was hailed as ground-breaking and revolutionary (Charmaz, 2008; Wertz, Charmaz, & McMullen, 2011). Published at a time when qualitative methods were viewed with distrust and scepticism and quantitative research methods dominated the field, grounded theory challenged prevailing views that qualitative research was unscientific, "subjective, impressionistic, and anecdotal" (Wertz et al., 2011, p. 56), promoted as an exercise to be carried out as a precursor to a quantitative study and therefore lacking in rigour.

Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss as a "systematic, inductive, iterative, and comparative method of data analysis for the purpose of sociological theory construction" (Wertz et al., 2011, p. 56). Glaser and Strauss showed it to be a research method that, being grounded in data, produced empirically sound results and middle-range theories: theories that "fall between the 'minor working hypotheses' of everyday life and the 'all-inclusive' grand theories" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 33). Accordingly, they argued that grounded theory could stand alongside and be equivalent in scientific rigour to quantitative methods.

Grounded theory has its roots in sociological research and the philosophical underpinnings of the objectivity of positivism, pragmatism and symbolic interactionism. Glaser and Strauss each contributed different strengths to the method they developed, coming as they did from "diverse but complementary approaches to doing research" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 6). Glaser's training and work were influenced by the positivist methodology of quantitative methods, (particularly surveys), and the ideas of Robert Merton with respect to developing middle-range theories. From his training, with a focus on bringing scientific rigour to sociological research (Wertz et al., 2011, p. 57), Glaser brought scientific terminology, systematic procedures and logic to grounded theory, giving it its specific scientific language and coding structure (Charmaz, 2000).

Strauss' contribution to grounded theory was "the pragmatist philosophical study of process, action, and meaning" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 253). Pragmatism contends that knowledge is

collective; that we are all influenced by our surrounding environments. Accordingly, "acts of knowing embody perspectives" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 20).

Strauss was also influenced by the works of Dewey and Mead who both "assumed …that knowledge is created through action and interaction" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 19) and that consequently, thought has a temporal dimension. Humans act based on what they believe the results of their actions will be, and the course and direction of any action they take may be altered over time throughout the process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Following their collaborative research that resulted in the development of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss went separate ways. Glaser continued to remain faithful to his original writings and positivist background. He stressed the importance of researchers entering the research with no preconceived ideas or assumptions generated from extant literature that could influence or impede the research (Glaser, 1992). Strauss continued to follow the pragmatist and symbolic interactionist underpinnings of his earlier training. Later teaming with Juliet Corbin, together they added new techniques to the GT method, setting out precise instructions for researchers to follow (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, 2018). Thus, by the 1990s two distinct forms of grounded theory had emerged.

Doctoral students introduced to grounded theory methods while studying under Glaser and Strauss in the late 1960s included Charmaz, Corbin, and Clarke, each of whom further developed the method (Bryant, 2014). Mills, Bonner and Francis (2006b) used the metaphor of a spiral to depict all grounded theory variations; the positioning of each being dependant on "the researcher's ontological and epistemological beliefs" (p. 3). Beginning with the original version of grounded theory, the spiral moves outwards with each new adaptation. Mills et al. (2006b) described the adaptation of Corbin and Strauss as "*evolved grounded theory*" (p. 3) and positioned it further along the spiral. At the end of the spiral, they placed CGT.

Constructivist Grounded Theory

In the 1990s Charmaz began to advocate for the adoption of a constructivist approach to GT. Acknowledging the lasting influence Glaser and Strauss have had on her work (Charmaz, 2014), Charmaz has defined the method to be:

> A systematic method of analysing and collecting data to develop middle-range theories…begin[ning] but not end[ing] with inductive inquiry. It is a comparative,

> iterative, and interactive method…[with an] emphasis…on analysis of data; however early data analysis informs data collection (Charmaz, 2012, p. 2).

Now considered a leading advocate of CGT, Charmaz has continued to demonstrate through her work and various publications, including *Constructing Grounded Theory* (2006, 2014), the strength of this approach that places emphasis on what is being studied, the collection of data and "gives tools to answer [the] 'why' questions from an interpretive stance" (Charmaz, 2012, p. 4).

Constructivist grounded theory is underpinned by symbolic interactionism, whereby "the processes of interaction between people's social roles and behaviours" (McCann & Clark, 2003a, p. 8) are explored. Symbolic interactionism proposes that individuals, events and society are socially constructed. Humans, seen through this lens, are held to be active agents in their lives, having a variety of choices of action available to them. Actions are taken toward situations and others, based on meanings humans make of them. It is in the social interaction with others that these meanings are developed, and altered, according to individual interpretations of any particular circumstance (Blumer, 1969).

The original and evolved versions of grounded theory discussed above remained underpinned by an objectivist lens viewing the existence of knowledge as an external reality, waiting to be discovered. From this position, conceptual categories are formed from the data. Researchers have no part in shaping the data: they are objective neutral observers, able to remain separated from any possible influence their own personal histories or worldviews may have on the way they perceive and record their data collection (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Once discovered, these external realities can be "described, analysed, explained, and predicted" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 524) and will be reported by different researchers in similar ways.

In direct contrast to this, and central to CGT, is the acknowledgement of the place of the researcher within the body of the research. Rather than sitting outside as a neutral observer, the researcher adopts an active part in the process (Charmaz, 2008, 2014; McCann & Clark, 2003a; J. Mills et al., 2006b). Mills and colleagues (2006b) have described the constructivist approach as being one of "data generation as opposed to data collection" (p. 9) as reciprocity is created between researcher and participant.

"The qualitative interview is a construction site of knowledge" (Kvale, 2007, p. 21). When following a CGT approach, data collected from interviews, their meanings and resulting theories, are co-constructed. Co-construction in this context refers to the conversational process of the

interview. Researchers, together with participants, actively interact in a reciprocal process and it is this interaction that creates the knowledge, the raw data, from which theory emerges (Hand, 2003; J. Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006a; J. Mills et al., 2006b).

All researchers are influenced by their histories, memories, worldviews, culture and environments (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Both researchers and participants bring their experiences and assumptions to the process. The CGT approach assumes the existence of multiple truths and multiple realities, for "what we take as real, as objective knowledge and truth, is based upon our perspective" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 523). Each time an experience is told or heard it is told and heard in a slightly different way. Accordingly, as researchers interact with participants and later with data, what they see and hear is interpreted through their personal lenses. Thus, it is through their subjective interpretations as researchers interact with the data, creating codes, concepts and theory, that they shape the process, analysis and interpretation of results. Charmaz (2000, 2003) has likened the process and resulting theory to the creation of a painting, as researchers "construct an image of a reality…[that is] "a rendering, one interpretation among multiple interpretations " (2000, pp. 522–523).

Grounded theory provides a set of strategies and tools with which to study processes, with the emphasis being on the analysis of data gathered. These strategies, originally developed by Glaser and Strauss and also used in CGT, include coding, focused coding, memo writing and theoretical sampling—strategies that set this methodology apart from other qualitative methodologies.

The grounded theory researcher remains immersed in the data, analysing the words, actions and behaviours of participants, in an iterative process, constantly comparing raw data with raw data, data with concepts and interpretations, and circling back and forth. It is by way of this immersion in, and constant comparison of, the data that in-depth understanding of participants' experiences thoughts, meaning making and interpretations in social contexts is gained. Thus, moving inductively from the data outwards, grounded theory researchers build concepts and explanatory theories (Charmaz, 2014).

In contrast to other methods where analysis does not commence until all data have been gathered, in CGT, wherever possible, analysis commences as soon as the first data have been obtained. Data analysis begins with coding which "starts the chain of theory development" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 515). Central to the analytic process, coding is an important step by which researchers "organize, categorize, and draw insights from data" (Cope, 2009, p. 648). When engaging in initial open coding, researchers become immersed in the data as they scrutinize it: word-by-word, line-by-line, phrase-by-phrase, paragraph-by-paragraph. Being immersed in the data in this way

and asking questions of it in the search for meanings, enables researchers to enter participants' worlds. Thus, it can be argued that researchers interact with data empathically: seeing it through participants' lenses.

The coding process commences as soon as data collection has begun. Grounded theory researchers allow codes to emerge from the data rather than beginning with a set of preconceived codes. Continuous interaction with the data from commencement of its collection, and the resulting codes assigned to them (labels representing emerging concepts), inform the focus of further data collection. Thus, data collection and analysis continue simultaneously in a cyclical process. With each collection of new data, a new cycle begins. Each new cycle represents a new phase of analysis and interpretation being applied to codes.

Charmaz (2014) likens this process to using a camera, first employing a wide lens to gain an overview and subsequently, with each round, applying different lenses in order to zoom in to bring key ideas into focus. She has also described this process as a spiral (Charmaz, 2012), with each round of the spiral signifying a different phase of analysis leading to increased levels of abstraction, for as researchers continuously interact with and question the data, codes are continuously refined. Bryant (2017) also pictures the iteration process of analysis as a spiral. He refers to the spiral moving simultaneously both "inward" as the analysis incorporates codes into core concepts and "upward toward a single core category or…two or three core categories" (pp. 96–97).

Another major strategy is that of memo writing. This process allows researchers to engage with and question the data. This is an "intermediate step between coding and the first draft of the completed analysis" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 517). Memo writing is a way for researchers to ask questions and tease out the data; to explore, reflect and record what they see happening in the data; to expand or refine codes and meanings; to discover connections; and to highlight any overt or hidden assumptions (Birks & Mills, 2011, 2015; Lempert, 2007). Charmaz (2000) has described memo writing as assisting in "linking analytic interpretation with empirical reality" (p. 517). Memos gradually become more analytically refined as the process of data collection and analysis progresses, with some memos being incorporated into the theoretical writing.

As the cycle continues, and emerging codes and categories are refined to create theoretical constructs, theoretical sampling may be undertaken. A "pivotal part of the development of formal theory" (Charmaz, 2001, p. 519), theoretical sampling is conducted to fill out and expand the properties of categories in order to obtain specific data relating to emerging theories. In doing so, theories are further refined, developed and strengthened. When engaging in theoretical

sampling researchers may return to the field or the same participants as before; look at documents and other empirical research or consider different groups of individuals. Theoretical sampling continues until researchers conclude that saturation has been reached and no new data is forthcoming.

Charmaz (2012) argues that "[u]sing grounded theory strategies fosters…an analytic edge" (p. 3) as they are flexible, and enable data to take researchers in unexpected directions. Researchers' interpretations are continuously refined, as data, codes, concepts and emerging themes are compared until core themes are identified and theories built from them. Throughout this inductive process, the employment of constant comparison ensures that analytical interpretation is open ended, validated and remains grounded in the data.

Ethical Considerations

Approval was obtained for this study from The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 22 December 2014, Reference number 013237 (Appendix 1). In 2018, I was approached by a further prospective participant. As obtaining participants had proved more difficult than I had originally envisaged and the time for collecting data under my original Ethics approval had expired, I sought an extension from the Ethics Committee to enable me to carry out this interview (Appendix 2); this was approved.

Participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 3) setting out details of the project, together with a Participant Consent Form (Appendix 4). This included the purpose of the research; the nature of participant involvement and what was being asked of them; their right to withdraw from the research; the intended use of the results; and confidentiality and protection of personally identifiable information. They were offered the opportunity to discuss this information by phone after initial contact had been made with me. Later, at the time of our meeting, and immediately prior to commencement of interview, the Participant Information Sheet was again sighted and verbally addressed with participants, after which they signed the Participant Consent Form.

Because of the challenges in obtaining participants and the fact that they resided in various geographical locations throughout New Zealand, I travelled to meet them in places of their choice. The place of meeting at which each interview was conducted was a location negotiated and agreed upon with each participant, having regard to their emotional safety and confidentiality while maintaining the integrity of the research process.

In the field of IPV, the idea of female aggression against males is a highly controversial issue (refer to discussion on gender debate under Controversies in Chapter 2). Because of the strong, persistent assumption that men are the sole perpetrators of IPV, it was believed likely that individuals or groups may react negatively to this research. In the past, researchers overseas have been subjected to severe criticism and censorship. I was also expecting at times the participants' stories to be distressing and emotionally taxing for me. I therefore ensured appropriate personal and academic support was in place. This took the form of regular debriefing with my research supervisors and ready access to counselling support when required. In addition, during the data gathering process, I used my university email address for all correspondence as it is not personally identifiable. I also arranged a different cell phone number from my personal one, specifically for use in conducting the current research project.

Because of the nature of the topic being studied, I was mindful of the possibility that a participant (or particularly a child) may be in imminent danger of serious harm (i.e., if a violent partner may also be currently violent towards children). If that became apparent in the course of interviews, I would need to discuss with participants the necessary steps to protect any children and to help the participants access professionals to support them in identifying pathways forward. Because of my professional experience as a counsellor in dealing with crises and children at risk, I was well-resourced to deal with any such circumstances, had they arisen. No such circumstances became apparent.

The possibility of participants experiencing emotional distress while recounting their experiences was also considered. Interviews were carefully paced and when any participant showed signs of distress, they were offered the opportunity of taking a break. At these times recording was paused, and interviews only recommenced when the participants acknowledged they were ready and happy to continue. My professional experience as a counsellor enabled me to be sensitive to their psychological distress and respond accordingly while remaining in the role of researcher. I also discussed with participants suitable resources for accessing the support of skilled professionals in their area should they require it.

The current research involved investigating very sensitive personal experiences, and the privacy of participants' information and protection of their identities was paramount. As stated in the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form, any personally identifiable information has been anonymised or excluded from the research report. At the start of each interview, confidentiality was again addressed, and participants were asked to choose pseudonyms which would be used in transcriptions and all writing arising from the research project to protect their

identity. Two participants chose not to use a pseudonym, preferring to use their given name. My concern for their privacy and that of their families led me to seek further guidance on this matter from the Ethics Committee. Following the Committee's emailed advice (see Appendix 5) the given names of the participants in question have remained in place.

Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger (2015) have highlighted the "practical and ethical challenges" (p. 616) qualitative researchers face with respect to participant anonymity, the complexity of which involves "balanc[ing] two competing priorities: maximising protection of participants' identities and maintaining the value and integrity of the data" (p. 617). Participants shared very intimate details with me concerning their personal lives. They spoke not only of themselves but also of wives, partners, children and wider family members. Because of the sensitive and controversial nature of this research topic, protecting their identity and that of others they spoke of has remained extremely important. As mentioned above, pseudonyms have been used for all participants except for those who made a deliberate, informed choice against this, wanting their given names to appear. In addition to the use of pseudonyms, names of any other individuals mentioned throughout all participant interviews have been replaced in transcriptions, and all reporting on this project; for example, by using 'my partner said', 'my wife said'.

Another challenge for this project related to geographical location and other personally identifiable characteristics of participants. For this reason, place names have been changed to indicate a general geographic area as opposed to specific identifiable locations. Saunders et al. (2015) have suggested that following the procedure of anonymising place names is "another compromise to the integrity of the data as…[it]…can result in decontextualization, limiting the scope for analysis" (p. 623). However, in a country the size of New Zealand, containing such a small population, anonymisation of place is essential.

While participant occupation or pastime was not pertinent to the research topic, in some instances it factored highly in their narratives and was inextricably linked to their experiences. In some instances, applying vague description would have been impossible due to the uniqueness of occupation or pastime and so all mention of occupations/pastimes for all participants has been omitted. Even after adopting these anonymising procedures some of the very rich data that has been gathered has not been able to be used, as it was so unique to the individuals concerned that if used in any way it would result in their being easily identified by others in their communities.

All participants were given the right to withdraw their data within 3 weeks after the interview. None did so.

Recruitment of Participants

The topic of this research is highly emotive and contentious, and not one that is commonly acknowledged in public. Because of its sensitive nature and the possibility of difficulties with recruitment, it was decided to advertise within the counselling community. There was the added assumption that participants recruited in this way would be likely to have undergone some form of therapy and begun a healing process. In addition, for the same reasons and the expectation that it could be difficult to recruit participants, it was also decided to keep the criteria for inclusion broad. To be able to take part, participants had to be aged over 18, reside in New Zealand, and have experienced intimate partner violence in a heterosexual relationship; however, no time restraint was imposed on when the relationship and experiences of IPV had occurred.

Advertisements to recruit participants (Appendix 6) were sent with an accompanying letter to the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC) (Appendix 7) requesting that they be placed in the Association's national online newsletter over the course of three publications. In these advertisements, NZAC counsellors were requested to pass on information about the research, together with my contact details, to any clients or former clients who they believed may meet the research criteria.

The information in the advertisements was disseminated outwards and passed on by word-of-mouth. This resulted in the advertisement appearing in the online newsletter of The Men's Centre, an organisation focusing on providing support for men. Although based in Christchurch, men from around New Zealand and abroad subscribe to the centre's online newsletter. I was contacted by men from Australia and the UK wanting to take part but they were excluded as they did not meet the criteria of geographical location. Although participants were scattered throughout the country, many responded to the advertisement from this online source, while some heard about it from other sources including doctors and others employed in the public service sector.

Participants

Initially, I had hoped to recruit between 20 to 30 participants for this study. I was successful in finally recruiting 16 participants for this study who were geographically spread throughout New Zealand from the greater Auckland area to Christchurch and its surrounds.

At the time of the interviews, participants ranged in age from 31 to 67 years. The ethnicity of 13 of the participants was New Zealand European (NZE). Within this group one participant

preferred to give himself a unique ethnic descriptor as he was not happy with NZE or Pākehā, but this has not been included to preserve anonymity. Of the remaining three participants, two were of British origin and one Other European. All resided in New Zealand.

The intervening time period between the occurrence of participants' experiences and speaking with me ranged from two months to 30 years. The relationships that were the focus of their experiences for the current research project ranged in duration from 6 months to 33 years; nine of these were marriages and seven cohabiting partnerships. Fourteen of the participants were no longer in these relationships. Some still had ongoing contact with their ex-partners for several reasons, including having access to younger children from the relationship pending court proceedings relating to custody or simply trying to maintain contact because they still cared for their ex-partners. Two participants still remained in their relationships: they spoke of working together with their partners towards positive outcomes and expressed hope for their ongoing futures together.

Nine participants had children resulting from the relationships that were the focus of this study. Two had children from a different relationship and the partners of three participants had children from other relationships.

The difference in ages between participants and their partners in these relationships was quite widespread. Of the 16 participants, the partners of 14 of them were younger. This age difference ranged from being the same age or 6 months younger through to 16 years younger. Two of the participants' partners had been older than them, and this age difference ranged between 1 and 10 years.

Initially, participants responded to the advertisement by email or text. Having indicated interest in participating, they were sent copies of the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form. Once they had read these and agreed to participate, we then arranged a suitable time and venue (convenient to where they resided) to meet face-to-face for an interview.

Data Collection Methods

Data for this project were gathered by conducting individual semi-structured interviews. Sensitive research has been defined as that which can be emotionally challenging, with the potential of causing distress to both participants and researchers owing to the nature of the topic being investigated (Dempsey, Dowling, Larkin, & Murphy, 2016; Elmir, Schmied, Jackson, & Wilkes, 2011; Liamputtong, 2007). Because of the sensitive nature of this research project it was

important that participants were interviewed face-to-face, in person. Warr (2004) has also drawn attention to "significant details" revealed in face-to-face encounters between researchers and participants that enrich data and that cannot be "captured on a tape recorder or in the pages of an interview transcript" (p. 579).

To conduct the interviews, I travelled to a town or city near where participants resided, or a to different geographic location of their choice. The importance of offering participants the opportunity of negotiating timing and locations for interviews to take place has been highlighted by many including Ashton (2014), Dempsey et al. (2016), Doody and Noonan, (2013), and Elmir et al. (2011). Because of the geographical spread of participants and the practicalities of travel involved, some interviews had to be grouped and conducted over a short time frame, e.g., within a five-day period.

Attention has been drawn to the consideration that needs to be given to the setting where interviews will take place to "maximise comfort and to put [participants] at ease" (Ashton, 2014, p. 27). Finding venues in locations that I was not familiar with that were suitable to conduct confidential interviews proved challenging; however, this was overcome by collaboration and negotiation with participants. For most interviews conducted in Auckland and Wellington, a private room was booked on university campuses. In Christchurch, a private room, usually used for confidential counselling purposes, was booked at The Men's Centre. Some participants were interviewed in the privacy of their offices at their place of work (at their request). One interview was conducted in a participant's home at his request. His now-wife (not the partner involved with his experience of abuse) was also present in the house at the time. This was agreed upon after investigating the location and suitability of all other possible venues in the area that would afford the necessary privacy and finding none, and after consultation with my supervisors.

Prior to the start of each interview participants were asked to choose a pseudonym to maintain their anonymity. Refreshments were provided and participants were reminded they could request a break or end the interview at any time. At this stage in the process I also collected a small amount of demographic information: age; ethnicity; and that relating to the abusive relationship (status of the relationship under discussion; i.e. whether they were married, co-habiting or dating, whether the relationship was still current or past); the duration of relationship and whether there were any children involved (Appendix 8).

The duration of the interviews, although expected to take between 1 and 2 hours, was dependant on participants' responses to my initial opening questions and the resulting unfolding of their

narratives. Most of the interviews were completed within this time frame however, three of them were of longer duration due to the amount of detail participants were eager to share.

Dempsey et al. (2016) have proposed a framework for research involving sensitive topics that includes research flexibility, private locations for interviews and the development of an interview schedule. For this research project I developed a set of open questions "to be used in a flexible manner as a guide" (Dempsey et al., 2016, p. 483) with which to open and focus the interviews (Appendix 9) and to facilitate exploration of participants' responses. I began with a general open question inviting participants to tell me about themselves, their backgrounds and what led them to volunteering to take part in this research. This gentle opening aided in the building of rapport, an important ingredient in the research relationship (Dempsey et al., 2016; Doody & Noonan, 2013). In most cases this led participants to asking me about my reasons for doing the research and again, this sharing of information contributed to building of rapport, helped participants feel more comfortable, and eased them into the interview. I then moved on to broader questions concerning their relationships and then focused on their individual experiences.

The interviews, conducted in a conversational style, enabled me as researcher to gently probe participants' responses "within [an] individualized context" (Regmi & Kottler, 2010, p. 15). The use of non-judgemental open-ended questions enabled the interview process to be flexible and fluid. Mindful that I was not forcing the direction of conversation, I used open questions, gently prompting participants to "tell me more about…". Together, we explored their responses in greater depth, enabling exploration of areas that arose in their narratives (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The flexibility of this process also allowed directions to be changed depending on the responsiveness and openness of participants in order to "follow [new] leads that emerge[d]" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 25). This gave participants control over the direction of our conversations and helped me, as researcher, "explore inside the mind and heart of the [participants]" (p. 15), to bring their voices to the fore.

While participants "set the tone and pace" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 63) of the interview process, as researcher I was, "constantly reflexive" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 63) and always alert to non-verbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and also as to whether or not the questions were working for participants. In this way, participants were able to reflect on and relate their experiences. This also enabled me to be alert to those times in the process where suggesting a pause in the interview was appropriate to give participants a break, as relating personal experiences on such sensitive issues can be intense and emotionally taxing.

As soon as possible following each interview, I wrote field notes on the interview process. A focus on the interactions that take place during the dialogue also forms an important contribution to data to be analysed (Koro-Ljungberg, 2007). Accordingly, my field notes included my observations such as participants' body language, type of language used, silences and any emotional affect that became apparent during the interview, as well as other thoughts on the interview process itself. I also noted what it was like for me to be privileged to hear their deeply personal stories and the emotional effect that this had on me. Notes on my personal experiences were also added to by way of memos during the transcription process and analysis phase when I again engaged deeply and personally with the data.

All interviews were digitally recorded with participants' agreement. Because of the sensitive nature of the data being collected I personally transcribed all recordings. To assist me in this I used Express Scribe Transcription Pro Software (version 5.85), designed and supplied by NHC Software for transcription of audio recordings (retrieved from https://www.nch.com.au/scribe/index.html). Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim into MS Word documents. Copies of the transcripts were then forwarded to participants to check for accuracy of content and to give them an opportunity to delete any material they did not wish to be included. All transcripts have remained complete, with no deletions. At this stage, one participant added extra content and description to the transcript. Two others emailed further information they had not recalled at the time of the interviews, asking that it be included in the data. All three extra pieces of documentation were added to the transcripts for analysis.

Data Analysis

The approach to data analysis in this study has been informed by interpretivism and constructivism that underpin CGT (as discussed earlier in this chapter). This has provided a systematic framework within which all data have been collected and continuously compared and analysed in an iterative process that has, in turn, facilitated the obtaining of rich data. To do this I employed the following strategies:

- Theoretical sensitivity (literature review)
- Coding (initial open coding followed by focused coding)
- Memo writing
- Assigning of categories
- Constant comparative analysis
- Theoretical sampling and constructing theory.

Theoretical Sensitivity

There has been, and continues to be, much debate in the literature concerning grounded theory methodology and the timing of a literature review (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Dunne, 2011). Problems arising from delaying the literature review until later in the process have been raised by others, including Thornberg (2012), Tummers and Karsten (2012) and Dunne (2011). In addition, Charmaz (2014) has highlighted that for grounded theorists today, it is "naïve" to not engage early in the literature, adding that "lack of familiarity with relevant literatures is unlikely and untenable" (p. 306). Timonen et al. (2018) also agree that omission of an early literature review is unrealistic.

Researchers come to the research with their personal histories, professional backgrounds, knowledge and understanding (Heath, 2006). In constructivist grounded theory, the methodology I have followed for the current study, researchers are seen as an integral part of the research process and as such, influence both the data collection and analysis. Dunne (2011) has referred to a growing agreement for a middle ground to be adopted: one that acknowledges concerns for the influence of external theories but at the same time recognises the advantages and realities of engaging with the literature early in the research process. It is also well recognised that a knowledge of existing literature is required by academic institutions for funding applications and research proposals (Birks & Mills, 2011, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Thornberg, 2012).

In line with this thinking, to gain theoretical sensitivity, I engaged with the literature prior to the commencement of data collection. My initial interest in the topic arose from issues clients presented with within my counselling practice, together with conversations around the topic with male colleagues, and I had in fact, been searching for relevant literature for up to two years before deciding to embark on this study. While extensive studies have been carried out investigating women's experiences of IPV, little is known of men's experiences. As discussed in Chapter 2, conducting a literature review prior to and at the start of entering the research project enabled me to ascertain how men's experiences have been studied to date, and what areas of further research were called for. Initially articles were accessed via Google Scholar, however once officially embarking on the current study, a range of search databases were used including, but not limited to, PsycEXTRA, PsycINFO, EBSCOhost, Ovid and Scopus.

In addition to the enhancement of theoretical sensitivity a preliminary literature review provides, McCann and Clark (2003a) have drawn attention to additional benefits that arise from engaging with the literature during data analysis, including:

- Providing a secondary source of data
- Highlighting questions that may be asked of the data
- Aiding theoretical sampling, and
- Contributing to validation of the theory.

In CGT, data collection and analysis occur concurrently in a circular fashion and in this process, as new ideas and themes began to emerge from the data, I sought out relevant literature in order to investigate them further. This provided "a greater understanding of the relevant phenomena" (Tummers & Karsten, 2012, p. 73) that were appearing, in addition to "enhance[d] insights…[and]strengthen[ed] theoretical sensitivity" (p. 76). Consulting the literature in this way during the analysis phase contributed to in-depth engagement with the data, aiding in the formation of questions to ask of the data as ideas arose from emerging themes. The knowledge gained helped me "clarify ideas, make comparisons and identify connections between the [data] and existing research" (McCann & Polacsek, 2018, p. 40). In this way, the existing literature became a secondary source of data, particularly relevant in the formation and integration of theory (McCann & Clark, 2003a).

Coding

Coding of data is central to the CGT approach as it enables core themes to be identified and insights to be drawn from them (Cope, 2009). It is the "pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory…[as it] generates the bones of…analysis" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113). In CGT, coding is carried out at different levels beginning with initial coding and then moving to focused coding.

Initial Coding

Initial coding consists of "examining the data in minute detail" (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 96) by breaking it down into fragments and focusing on words, lines or pieces of data such as sentences or paragraphs. Codes—defining labels that identify relevant concepts of what is seen and understood to be happening—are attached to these pieces of fragmented data. Codes in CGT are researchers' constructs, formed through repeated and deep interaction with the raw data. During this initial coding phase questions, initially raised by Glaser and later added to by Charmaz (2006, p. 47), are asked of the data:

- What is this data a study of?
- What category does this incident indicate?

- What is actually happening in the data?
- From whose point of view? (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 116)

Questioning the data in this way, allows the researcher to remain open to new ideas that can present different paths to follow and examine (Charmaz, 2014).

Personally transcribing the digital recordings of all interviews was a valuable exercise and, for me, an important part of the analytic process. As I listened to each recording, I was transported in my mind back to the actual interview, visualizing and re-connecting once again with the research participants. Prior to commencement of analysis and coding, I also read through transcripts to further deepen my familiarity with the data and understanding of what was occurring (McCann & Clark, 2003b). This also enabled me to identify a small number of possible initial codes emerging from the data and I used these to begin the coding process.

Consequently, on commencement of the coding process, I already had a deeper familiarity with the content and context of the data. Coding began after the first interview had been transcribed and approved by the participant and continued with the addition of each new interview. Rather than waiting until all interviews have taken place, in CGT data collection and analysis continue simultaneously.

I proceeded to engage with and code the data by initially analysing it line-by-line. I then repeated the process phrase-by-phrase, sometimes returning to focus on some pieces individually, word-by-word. Engaging with the data in this way, being immersed in it, enabled me to intimately interact with and, remain grounded in, it. Being focused in this way also helped me identify and assign further relevant codes as they emerged (Charmaz, 1990, 2014; McCann & Clark, 2003b).

Charmaz (1990) has proposed that "[c]oding for processes, actions, assumptions, and consequences…leads to greater analytic precision" (p. 1168). By assigning codes in this way, rather than coding for topics or events, the focus remains on what is happening in the data rather than on individual participants. When coding for action, Charmaz (2011, 2014) recommends the use of gerunds, "the noun form of the verb" (2011, p. 172) as they help make participants' actions visible. In addition, assigning action codes in this way also aids when comparing data with data from another participant, comparing different pieces of data within the same transcript, or, comparing categories with categories (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012).

At first, the codes I saw emerging from the data in this project seemed to focus on events. However, in the cyclical process of revisiting data, constantly comparing data with data, it

became clear that as a novice researcher in CGT, my inexperience in coding had a significant bearing on this. As more data were generated and I became more comfortable with the coding process, more action codes became visible. As I became more confident, wherever possible I coded for action using gerunds. At times coding in this way flowed and other times it proved challenging, depending on how participants had narrated their stories during the interviews.

Charmaz (2014) discussed how codes at this stage are interim: they can be altered or reworded further into the analysis process or may need to be changed to "improve their fit with the data" (p. 118). I experienced this when, upon coding new data and comparing it with previously coded data, I found the wording of some codes less suitable than they had originally been—they were no longer an appropriate 'fit'. It also became apparent, further into the coding process, that there were times when in my initial coding I had not used action verbs (gerunds). Accordingly, there were occasions when I renamed these initial codes and they too became better descriptors for data that was being coded to them. Examples of my initial coding using gerunds—for example, 'walking on eggshells'; 'foreseeing a reaction'; 'expressing fear'; 'blaming self'— can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Example of initial coding

Transcript data to be coded	**Initial codes assigned**
I: Did you ever try to confide in anyone about what was happening?	
P: Its um. We went to various different sorts of couples counselling. That wasn't so great. Pretty glib.	Attending counselling together Not a great experience
Ummm I had a horrific experience at counselling. I knew I had to be very careful about saying anything critical about her. I was absolutely walking on eggshells about saying anything critical of her because I knew that would evoke something. We finally got round, and I very gently brought out a story when she hadn't behaved well towards me and [the counsellor] said to her that's not a good way to behave, she shouldn't have done that. And then he turned around to me and said what I need to know is that she wouldn't behave that way unless you'd done something to make her behave that way. Right time up. See you next week!	Having a horrific counselling experience Explaining the need to be careful what was said Walking on eggshells Foreseeing a reaction. Going slowly. Being gentle. Being Brave Speaking up about her behaviour Receiving initial support Describing counsellor's response Being rejected Being accused. Being diminished Being blamed for her behaviour
And I went home, and I started to think about killing myself. And that was scary [becoming extremely upset] because it's like someone holding a gun against your head except it's you. It's like it was, cause just it was like I can't be right. Even the counsellor knows that I'm wrong. The counsellor knows that I'm wrong. It's not like here's the thing you did. It's like No you must have done a bad thing. They knew that I must have done a bad thing. They just know. And it just seemed hopeless and I thought I've lost my health; I've lost my wife I've lost anything worthwhile [huge sigh]. But clearly, I didn't.	Being shut down. Being silenced Thinking about killing himself Feeling scared Facing his suicidal thoughts Expressing fear Believing he was in the wrong. Facing self. Blaming self. Believing counsellor blames him. Repeating his self-blame Being unable to identify any action linked to blame. Convincing himself he's done a bad thing. Convincing himself others know he's bad. Repeating internalising the "badness"
I: So, what helped you get past that very low point?	Feeling hopeless. Explaining hopelessness Losing anything worthwhile
P: That suicidal ideation? Ummmm the love of my kids. I um I couldn't leave a legacy of suicide. I couldn't do that to my kids. That would be too horrific. I loved them too much for that. So, I had to make it look like an accident. And I just couldn't come up with a way of making it look like an accident.	Affirming his living Moving past suicidal ideation Loving his kids. Refusing to leave a legacy of suicide. Foreseeing the effect of suicide Loving his kids too much for that. Describing his plan. Having to make it look like an accident. Failing to find a way

In the example given in Table 1, the participant was describing a "horrific experience" he had when attending counselling with his wife in which he had tried to speak up about her behaviour

towards him. He was conscious of having to be careful, as he expected anything received as a criticism would evoke an unpleasant response from his wife. He moved from being careful, to gently and bravely speaking about the behaviour: from being heard and supposedly affirmed to quickly feeling accused and blamed.

Wherever possible I tried to use the participant's words: for example, walking on eggshells, thinking about killing himself. I first coded "thinking of killing himself" as "thinking of suicide". On reflection, the word suicide did not capture the intensity of the participant's experience or his description immediately following this, of turning inwards, grappling with his inner self and confronting his fear. Using the participant's words not only kept me grounded in the data but also captured the sense of action and depth of emotion present as he described his experience.

When I revisited the coding for the section appearing in Table 1, and that concerning the response to the participant's disclosure, I had a strong sense of the participant's words being silenced, ignored and diminished. While these were not his words, I used them as codes to show the powerful effect these few words in the counselling session had on the participant.

Dey (1993) has observed that "diagrams can help us to disentangle the threads of our analysis" (p. 201). As more data were generated and coded, I found it increasingly difficult trying to visualise the essence of what was emerging working solely from a computer screen. Consequently, to aid in my visualisation and the process of moving from coding to focused codes and then to categories, I created a large picture wall using hand-written brainstorms showing initial coding, adding coloured sticky notes as I moved into focused coding. Being a visual learner and being able to see things in this way added an extra depth and dimension to my analysis. The result (Figure 2) provided me with another way of working, "a multi-dimensional space in which to think about the data" (Dey, 1993, p. 201).

Figure 2. Picture wall of codes leading to focused codes

Focused Coding

Focused coding involves identifying the most significant or frequent codes that have appeared in the initial phase. It is a stage of pruning, where decisions are made determining how the initial codes will be used and which ones will be taken further into analysis. This can involve comparing codes with each other, combining codes, creating new codes or using "certain initial codes that [have] more theoretical reach, direction, and centrality" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 141). For example, one of my initial codes, 'Walking on Eggshells', was carried through as a focused code as it encapsulated a significant theme that was emerging from the data. Later in the analysis this focused code was incorporated into the sub-category 'Harm to Health'.

While initial and focused coding can be perceived as occurring in a linear process, Charmaz (2014) has indicated that in practice this is not always the case. I experienced this in the process of analysing and coding my data, as I repeatedly cycled through assigning codes, returning to the data, comparing data with data, codes with codes, creating new codes and refining and renaming existing codes. For example, I had incorporated initial codes of participants' reflections on how they coped at the time, how hindsight provided them with behavioural indications and thoughts on what they may have done differently, and other comments as 'Looking Back'. I also had a focused code for participants' reflections on their future that included their plans, thoughts and fears and how life was for them in the present and beyond, as 'Looking Forward' and had sub-codes within each of these. During the iterative process of analysis, I merged these into a new focused code labelled 'Observations from a Distance'. As more data were recoded into this focused code, I later renamed this as 'Reflecting on IPV' as it provided a better summation of the data coded to it: it encompassed participants' reflections on their personal experiences of IPV, on their lives in the present and in the future, and reflections on IPV in general.

Table 2. Example of focused coding

Initial codes assigned	Focused codes assigned
Attending counselling together	
Not a great experience	
Having a horrific counselling experience	
Explaining the need to be careful what was said	
Walking on eggshells	Walking on eggshells
Foreseeing a reaction.	
Going slowly. Being gentle. Being Brave	Being brave
Speaking up about her behaviour	Speaking up
Receiving initial support	
Describing counsellor's response	Perceptions of others
Being rejected	Abused by others
Being accused. Being diminished	
Being blamed	
Being shut down. Being silenced	Being silenced
Thinking about killing himself	
Feeling scared	
Facing his suicidal thoughts	Facing fear
Expressing fear	
Believing he was in the wrong.	
Facing self. Blaming self. Believing counsellor blames him. Repeating his self-blame	
Being unable to identify any action linked to blame.	
Convincing himself he's done a bad thing. Convincing himself others know he's bad. Repeating internalising the "badness"	Wrestling with self
Feeling hopeless. Explaining hopelessness	Internalizing hopelessness
Losing anything worthwhile	
Affirming his living	
Moving past suicidal ideation	
Loving his kids. Refusing to leave a legacy of suicide.	
Foreseeing the effect of suicide	
Loving his kids too much for that. Describing his plan.	For the sake of the children
Having to make it look like an accident.	
Failing to find a way	

Table 2 shows an example of Focused Coding from the initial codes using the same piece of data as that shown in Table 1 earlier. This example shows the pruning that occurred as codes to be taken further into the analysis have been identified and, in some cases merged with others and renamed. For example, I initially had many codes for data containing the participant's narrative concerning his suicidal ideation, failing to find a way to do this, and coming to the realisation that he did not want to leave a legacy of suicide to his children. On deeper reflection it became clear that this piece of data concerning his thoughts and actions was underpinned by his relationship with his children. This prompted me to create a focused code 'For the sake of the children'. I then returned to the data from other participants who had children, to see if their experiences also related to this new code and if so, how. The implicit had become explicit and

on circling back through the data and re-engaging afresh with narratives from other participants, the importance of this new, focused code became clear (Charmaz, 2014).

Birks and Mills (2011) have drawn attention to theoretical sampling that "at this point…really comes into its own" (p. 99). During the iterative focused coding process of constant comparative analysis, areas where more information is needed to achieve theoretical saturation becomes clear. Charmaz (2014) has stressed that this is a strategy of CGT that can be applied in a variety of ways. As recruitment of participants for this study had proven to be difficult, in consultation with my supervisors, my approach to theoretical sampling was twofold. Interviews had generated an abundance of material from which "information-rich data…[emerged] to meet analytical needs" (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 11). I therefore returned to the data as well, and also included questions in interviews with new participants to ensure I also gathered information on ideas that were developing. In doing so I was able to achieve theoretical saturation in which no new data were forthcoming.

From Focused Codes to Categories to Developing an Emergent Theory

Focused codes become indicators of theoretical categories enabling identification of the main themes and categories that emerge from the data. As focused codes identify and group together patterns appearing in initial coding, so do categories identify and group together patterns appearing in focused codes (Saldaña, 2016).

In a similar process to one I followed with the initial coding, I created a second picture wall (Figure 3) that I used as an extra analytic tool to enable me to physically visualise focused codes moving and merging into sub-categories, then major themes leading to the emerging theory.

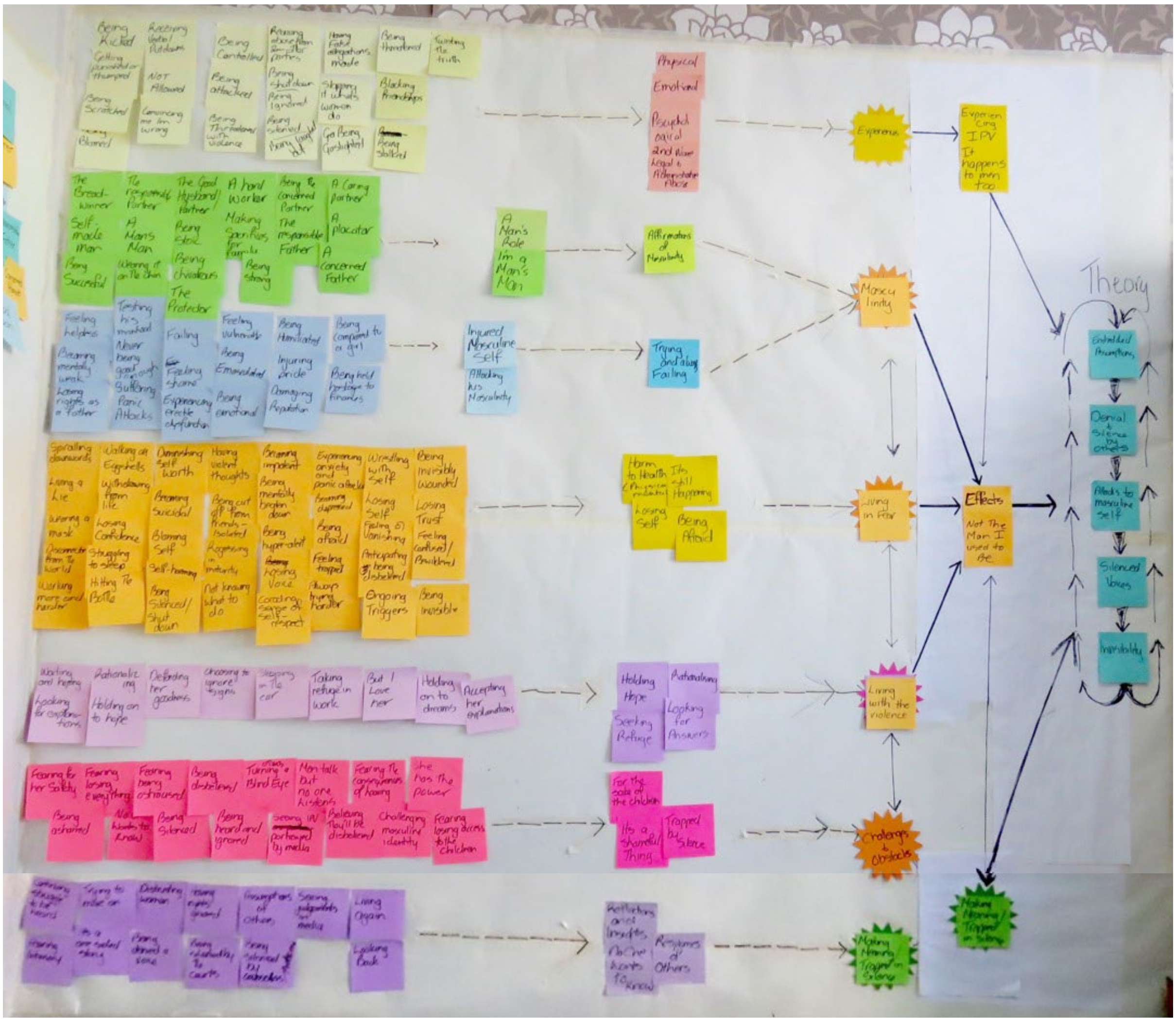

Figure 3. Visual wall from codes/focused codes to categories to theory

Figure 3 provides a visualisation of the process I followed moving from focused codes on the left to categories with arrows flowing across to the emerging theory on the far right. For example, focused codes for statements of masculinity—e.g., 'making sacrifices'; 'wearing it on the chin'—appear in green on the top left-hand side of Figure 3. These were condensed firstly into 'A man's role' and 'I'm a man's man' and then combined into a sub-category 'Affirmations of Masculinity'. Focused codes representing attacks on masculinity; —e.g., 'damaging reputation'; 'being emasculated'; and 'injured pride'—appear on the upper left of Figure 3 in blue. These were initially combined into two sub-categories of 'injured masculine self' and 'attacking masculinity' and were then condensed into one of 'Trying and Failing'. These two sub-categories of 'Affirmations of Masculinity' and 'Trying and Failing' were then incorporated under a major category labelled 'masculine self'.

Through constant comparative and iterative analysis, seven main categories emerged. Two of these, 'affirmations of masculinity' and 'trying and failing', were condensed into one, resulting

in six main categories. The final categories were: ‘Experiencing IPV: It happens to men too’; ‘Masculine Self’; ‘Living with Fear’; ‘Living with the Violence’; ‘Challenges and Obstacles’; and ‘Making Meaning: Trapped in a Web of Silence’.

Observing the data in this way, standing back and perceiving the whole, while at the same time remaining immersed in it, helped consolidate in my mind the central core category that was emerging from the data to form the development of theory. These six categories then merged into three main themes, as follows: Experiencing IPV: It happens to men too; Effects of IPV: Not the man I used to be; and Making meaning of experiences: Trapped in a web of silence. These three themes and their interrelatedness move and combine in the core category of the emerging theory. This progression is set out in Figure 4.

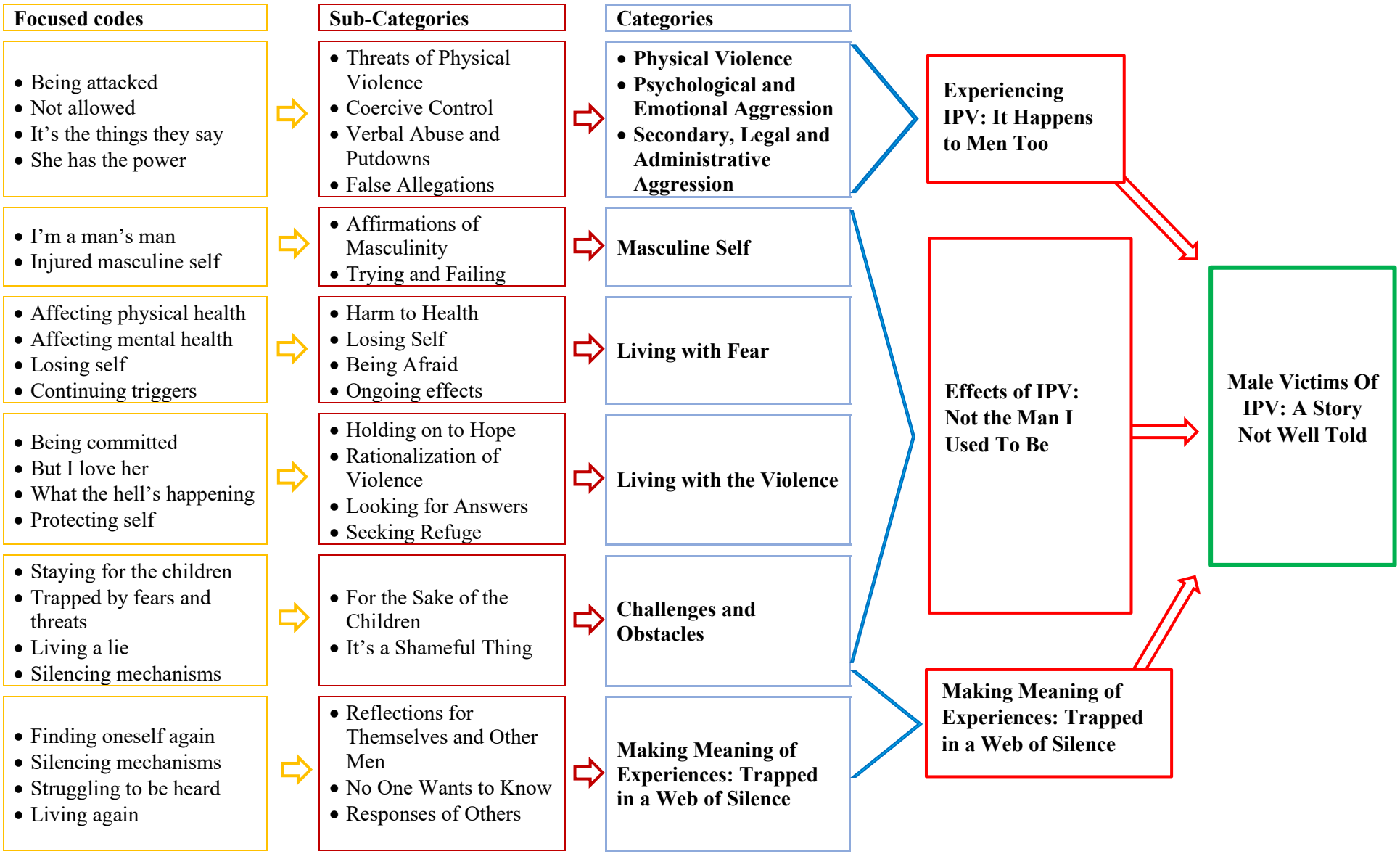

Figure 4. From coding to theory

Computer Aided Software (CAQDAS)

In consultation with my supervisors I decided to use computer aided software to assist in the analytic process, and for this I chose QSR NVivo version 11. Specifically designed for use in qualitative and mixed-methods research, QSR NVivo is an extremely powerful database, claimed by its developers to be the software package most widely used globally for qualitative data analysis (QSR International, 2015). It provided me with a robust platform within which I was able to upload all transcripts and organise the data, assign codes, make comparisons as well as question the data, and create visualisations and mind-maps. Where applicable, I found it was easy to assign multiple codes to one piece of data and to keep track of these using the highlighting and coloured coding stripes facilities. A feature of CGT is remaining open to new areas that may emerge from the data leading to other lines of inquiry. Using NVivo facilitates flexibility in gathering further data from various sources including newspaper articles, reports, videos, that can also be easily uploaded into the database to be included in the coding process. Further written data provided by three participants subsequent to their interviews were also uploaded into the database and coded.

While stressing that computer software packages are only a supporting tool in the building of theory, and not responsible for conducting the actual analysis, Weitzman (2000) has acknowledged there are benefits in using them, including "writing up, editing, coding, storage, search and retrieval…memoing, content analysis…verification; [and] theory building" (p. 805). He also points out such programmes allow researchers the ability to conduct searches almost instantaneously within data and to "quickly…redefine codes, and re-assign chunks of text" (p. 807). The function provided to create memos within the computer programme, linking them to relevant sections of transcript and specific quotations, was extremely helpful both in the early stages of analysis and later as the process became more abstract and conceptual. In addition, the advantages of having an electronic research journal, capable of being coded and linked to other uploaded documents and nodes, has also been highlighted (Johnston, 2006).

When considering the benefits of using QSR NVivo as an aid for the analysis, I was also mindful of the need to be alert to possible drawbacks. While procedures can be carried out quickly, the possibility of being side-tracked with the intricacies and functionality of such programmes can be detrimental to researchers' main focus remaining on the data analysis and emerging meanings (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Richards and Richards (1998) have contended that the use of computers in qualitative methods can be viewed both positively and negatively as they can have "dramatic

implications for the research process and outcomes… [including]…unacceptable restrictions on analysis to unexpected opening out of possibilities" (p. 211).

While the use of software can promote a "rigorous, consistent, and thorough" analysis and resulting theory (Weitzman, 2000, p. 817), caution has also been advised and concerns raised as to any such programme being implemented incorrectly. For example, it may result in researchers becoming lazy, taking shortcuts and remaining distant from the data. Conversely, Johnston (2006) has argued that researchers can get too close to the data and get caught in a coding and retrieve cycle. Even though QSR NVivo is an extremely powerful database and after hours I invested in being trained for its use, the possibility that I had not implemented the programme correctly or had unconsciously taken shortcuts was a concern. To ensure validity and rigour, and to guard against inadvertently taking shortcuts in the analytic process, I decided to also code some transcripts manually.

I found returning to manual coding an extremely valuable exercise. Not only did it act as a check against cautions as mentioned above, I also found that I engaged with the data in a different way: a deeper and personal way. For this reason, I decided to manually re-code all transcripts. While this took extra time, it proved invaluable. I was re-engaging with the data with a fresh pair of eyes and once again immersing myself in the data. Not only did manually re-coding provide validation of emerging codes I had identified using NVivo, in some instances it also revealed codes I had originally missed and which were important to the analysis.

Memoing

Writing memos is a key aspect of CGT methodology (Bryant, 2017; Charmaz, 2014; Lempert, 2007). Memos are the way in which researchers move through analysis towards a grounded theory. It is "both a methodological practice and a simultaneous exploration of processes in the social worlds of the research site" (Lempert, 2007, p. 245). It is a process by which researchers can have conversations with themselves about what is emerging in the data, where questions are asked of the data, and where ideas emerging from the data can be explored, sorted, discarded or further developed.

Researchers begin crafting memos with the coding of the first piece of data. Below is an example of a memo written early in the research process. My third participant spoke of struggling with the changing behaviours of his partner that gave rise to hope and loss of hope and the cyclical pattern of abuse he experienced. Exploring this small piece of narrative in a memo was like

holding it up to a light and observing it from different angles and in doing so, having questions arise. It also raised in my mind the concept of shame, leading me to another area to explore.

Memo: Hope/Loss of Hope

He clung on to hope. Hope carried him through. But there is also a cyclical pattern of hope and losing hope and hope being revived again and being lost again.

How do other participants talk of hope and loss of hope? How does loss of hope in the relationship affect them? How does this link in with the fluctuating behaviour of their partners, the love and affection given and then suddenly being withdrawn? How does this affect their state of mental health and wellbeing? What else is happening for them at a deeper level?

Hope was a coping mechanism. For Straus, the hope that things would improve. For him things would improve for a while but then hope would be dashed and the same behaviour would reoccur.

> *"we would have these honeymoon periods … And during that …it's just like everything's normal, everything's fine, everything's happy. It's incredible. And then there'd be something. There'd be an incident that would evoke something, and it would all be gone."*
> *"intermittent rewards are the strongest reward, and these were intermittent rewards…and the intermittent reward would be so incredibly rewarding, so it would be like this is fantastic, I'm so in love with my wife, we're going to have a great future and it would really aghhh lock me in I guess (Straus)*

He talks of intermittent rewards. Is this just applicable to him or does this appear in other transcripts? Straus talks of learned helplessness

> *"I think probably the worst impact of all of this on me would be what's described as learned helplessness. I kept trying to do something and I failed and failed and failed and every time I tried, just about every time I tried, I failed. And that lesson gets extrapolated into the rest of my life. Don't hope, don't try, don't, don't, don't. Things won't turn out OK" (Straus)*

The loss of hope has gone to a deeper level and invaded his self-belief. Invaded the inner core of who he is, of part of his identity. Note: Does shame appear here?

As coding and analysis progress, memos become more refined and abstract as researchers move towards identifying and articulating theory. Memos can be formally written or can just be short notes jotted down as thoughts come to hand. In CGT, researchers live with the data. I found I was always reflecting on the analysis with ideas and insights suddenly coming into focus at any time of day or night. Some memos were written by hand in notebooks that I carried with me. Others were scribbled notes, jotted down as thoughts suddenly came to mind. This frequently occurred as I was falling asleep or when I woke in the middle of the night. Figure 5 shows an example of two such informal memos created on different occasions. Each of these notes, hastily scribbled in the middle of the night before I lost the thought, were instrumental in processing and consolidating my thoughts concerning the emerging theory and how it might be presented in diagrammatic form.

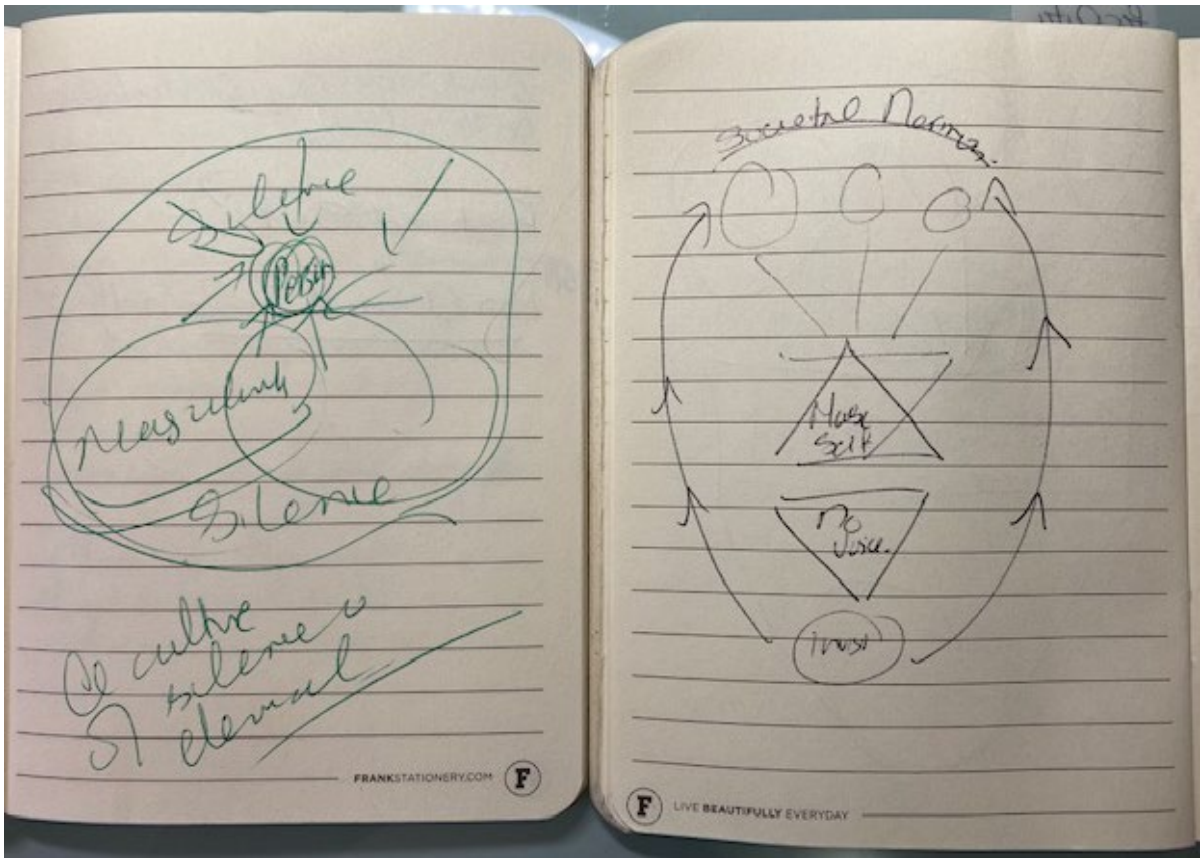

Figure 5. Two examples of informal memos recording initial diagrammatic presentation of emerging theory

I also kept a research journal that was created using MS Word. I treated this document as an ongoing memo of the research journey. It was in this document that I recorded any ideas related to the research including the entire analytical process, reflections on interviews, my responses to participants and personal reflections on my position as a researcher.

When collapsing focused codes into categories and seeing the emerging theory beginning to take shape, I went over the research process again that I had followed, as another check that I had not strayed from the original research question or allowed my own prior knowledge to contaminate the research. For this exercise I created a matrix that enabled me to see in one picture the themes, categories and links back to the research questions (Table 3).

Table 3. Categories and themes linking to research question

Breakdown of themes	Themes under categories	How these answer the initial research question	Main categories
Physical Violence Psychological and Emotional Aggression Secondary, Legal and Administrative Aggression	Types of IPV Experienced	Shows what the experiences of male victims in this study were	Experiencing IPV: It Happens to Men Too
Affirmations of Masculinity Trying and Failing	Masculine Self	Shows participants constructions of masculinity Shows how the experiences affected their masculine selves and daily functioning	Effects: Not the Man I Used to Be
Harm to Health Losing Self Being Afraid Ongoing Effects	Living with Fear	Links to how the experiences affected participants masculine self, day-to-day functioning and relationships	
Holding on to Hope Rationalisation Looking for Answers Seeking Refuge	Living with the Violence	Shows coping mechanisms developed by participants. Links to how the experiences affected participants' day-to-day functioning and interpersonal relationships	
For the Sake of the Children It's a Shameful Thing	Challenges and Obstacles	Links to silencing mechanisms influencing their decisions to speak up or remain silent and to leave or stay. Links to emerging theory	
Reflections for themselves and other men No one wants to know Responses of Others	Making Meaning of Experiences: Trapped in a Web of Silence	Links to silencing mechanisms and fears	Making Meaning of Experiences: Trapped in a Web of Silence

Reflexivity

An underlying principle of constructivist grounded theory methods is that researchers remain open to how participants experience and view their worlds (Timonen et al., 2018). Because of the acknowledged position of researchers within the research, the prior knowledge and understanding that they bring to it and the concern for the possibility of preconceptions contaminating the research, it is essential that reflexivity is an integral part of the process (Hand,

2003). This can be achieved in several ways, one of which being my positioning as a counsellor and researcher that I have addressed in Chapter 1.

Reflexivity is not merely confined to considering the role of the researcher. It "requires researchers to operate on multiple levels" (Etherington, 2004, p. 46): to be alert to all factors influencing the research including interactions with participants and relationships with both participants and the research topic. Undertaking reflexivity throughout the research in this way by documenting what is done, decisions made and reasoning for them, is a means of making the process "transparent and open" (Hand, 2003, p. 18).

Throughout this study I continuously reflected on multiple areas including:

- How my gender may have influenced the interview process and as a result what participants may or may not have been shared with me;
- What was emerging from the data;
- How this differed from my expectations;
- How emerging themes related to or differed from the literature I consulted on such emergent themes; and
- How the research process was affecting me as a researcher and as an individual.

I engaged in constant reflexivity through writing a research journal, engaging in conversations with my doctoral supervisors, and memoing. The latter is a particularly powerful way of reflective writing in which "the multiplicity of influences in the reconstruction of theory" (J. Mills et al., 2006a, p. 11) can be made clear. It is where "[t]he theoretical world that we attempt to reconstruct is being constantly rewritten…to reflect both participants' stories and our own making of meaning" (p. 11). I also engaged in counselling sessions with my counselling supervisor. These sessions had a very important place for me in the research as they enabled me to tease out and verbalise thoughts on what was emerging from the data, as well as process feelings and effects the research was having on me personally.

Limitations of the Study

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. I am addressing the limitations in this current chapter as they are relevant to the methodology and methods used.

Recruitment of participants proved difficult, resulting in a smaller number (16 in total) than originally planned for. Using the word "victims" when seeking participants may have contributed to this, whereas seeking male "survivors" of IPV could have elicited a stronger

response. While the sample size of the study may be seen as a limitation by some, results of a CGT study are not necessarily dependent on large numbers of participants, as theoretical saturation is the guiding principle for data generation (Charmaz, 2014; Mason, 2010). By following the strategies of CGT, the resulting categories, themes and emerging theory remain grounded in the data.

Participants in the study did not represent a diverse ethnic cross-section of society. Because of the difficulties expected in reaching participants for this study ethnicity did not form part of recruitment criteria. Although rich data was obtained, it may be that men from different ethnicities have different experiences to those of the participants in this study.

The study was based on self-reports of men who identified themselves as having experienced IPV. Partners or other family members were not spoken to for verification of participants' narratives. The intense emotional effect on participants when recalling their experiences of IPV was obvious and, at times, their distress tangible. From what was seen and heard, it seems unlikely that exaggerations were made. For some of the participants an extended amount of time had passed from their experiences of IPV and when the interviews were conducted. Therefore, the accuracy of their memories of such events may have been affected.

It must also be acknowledged, that CGT is an interpretivist methodology where the researcher is very much part of the process. Data generation was co-constructed in interviews with participants and my interpretations have been part of the analysis process. Codes, constructs, categories and emerging theory, while remaining grounded in the data and participants words, have been interpreted and created by me through my personal lens. While this is a strength of CGT it might also be seen as a limitation as the results of this research are a reflection of what I found in the data.

Summary

To investigate the lived experiences of male victims of IPV I chose to conduct a qualitative study. Constructivist grounded theory methodology formed the framework for this research project. Being underpinned by constructivism and interpretivism and informed by social interactionism, it was a good fit for my social constructionist stance. Few qualitative studies following an interview process have been conducted that explore the experiences of male victims of IPV. Employing CGT methods is an effective way of investigating a topic about which little is known. Using these methods enabled me to remain grounded in the data with participants' voices remaining at the forefront. One-on-one interviews were conducted with participants that

generated rich data. Through iterative comparative analysis and following the CGT process, strong themes emerged from the data leading to the development of a grounded theory.

The findings emerging from this study will be presented over the next three chapters according to the main categories that emerged from the data—experiencing IPV; effects of IPV; and making meaning of experiences—as shown in Table 4. This is followed in Chapter 5 by an exploration of the various effects the violence had on participants. Chapter 6 then concludes the findings section with a presentation of the wider-reaching effects on male victims of IPV at individual, professional and societal levels

Table 4. Outline of findings presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6

Chapter 4	Experiencing IPV: It Happens to Men Too
	• Physical Attacks
	• Psychological and Emotional Aggression
	  o Threats of Physical Violence
	  o Coercive Control
	  o Verbal Abuse and Putdowns
	  o False Allegations
	• Secondary, Legal and Administrative Aggression

Chapter 5	Effects of IPV: Not the Man I Used to Be
	• Masculine Self
	  o Affirmations of Masculinity
	  o Trying and Failing
	• Living with Fear
	  o Harm to Health
	  o Losing Self
	  o Being Afraid
	  o Ongoing Effects
	• Living with the Violence
	  o Holding on to Hope
	  o Rationalization of Violence
	  o Looking for Answers
	  o Seeking Refuge
	• Challenges and Obstacles:
	  o For the Sake of the Children
	  o It's a Shameful Thing

Chapter 6	Making Meaning of Experiences: Trapped in a Web of Silence • Reflections: For Themselves and Other Men • No One Wants to Know • Responses of Others

Chapter 4: Experiencing IPV: It Happens to Men Too

Introduction

As indicated earlier, the focus of this research was to investigate the experiences of male victims of IPV in heterosexual relationships. In relation to this I was interested in how their experiences may have affected their masculine identities and as a consequence, their day-to-day functioning. I was also interested in what may have influenced their decisions with respect to staying in or leaving these relationships and speaking up about their experiences.

In the current chapter, the findings relating to the different types of IPV participants reported experiencing are presented (see Table 5). These fall under the main themes of physical violence, psychological and emotional aggression, and a secondary form of abuse that some participants experienced when they became involved with the legal system and other professionals.

Table 5. Outline of findings presented in Chapter 4

Experiencing IPV: It Happens to Men Too
• Physical Attacks
• Psychological and Emotional Aggression
○ Threats of Physical Violence
○ Coercive Control
○ Verbal Abuse and Putdowns
○ False Allegations
• Secondary, Legal and Administrative Aggression

Participants in this study reported experiencing physical attacks, psychological aggression including verbal abuse and putdowns; threats of violence towards themselves and others; and coercion and control. Some also described forms of secondary abuse following allegations of violence made against them. I begin with findings relating to physical attacks. This is followed by descriptions of differing forms of psychological aggression participants reported being subjected to. These include verbal abuse putdowns and coercive control. The chapter concludes with consideration of secondary/legal and administrative IPV that was experienced by some.

Physical Attacks

Although most of the violence participants reported experiencing fell within the definition of psychological violence (see Chapter 2), 12 of them spoke of being physically attacked in violent episodes. These attacks included having objects thrown at them, having their hair pulled, and/or

being scratched, slapped, punched and/or kicked. Some described the episodes of being physically attacked as a pattern within the relationship, while for others this violence was unexpected and a new experience.

Frank was living with his partner when his experience of physical violence occurred one night while he was sleeping:

> I'd given her two paintings, framed in glass, as a present and I just remember I was asleep in bed and one of these was bashed over my head and broken and I woke and there was all this glass around me. and I actually had no idea why she did it. I still don't have any idea. But she expressed something, you know, about being jealous of, I don't know who, I still don't really know who and it just seemed…. I was really upset about it.

Although Frank spoke of arguments and tension arising in the relationship from time to time, including threats of possible violence, the actual act of being physically attacked was a completely new experience: he had never experienced or witnessed violence in any relationship prior to that event or since. He found the suddenness and unexpectedness of the violence frightening and enough to prompt him to end the relationship.

Stew's partner would use violence against him from time to time throughout their relationship. Although not a regular occurrence, he would be hit, kicked, and have objects thrown at him:

> When I say violent, she would just … if we were having an argument, she would just lose her temper and smack me. Often (in the face). She would kick me from behind. She just…it happened often enough that it was inexcusable. Only for whatever reason she hit me. She would literally lose her temper and smack me. Bizarre. She would kick me, even in public.

Daddy spoke of his wife typically throwing things. He described this as being a normal pattern of behaviour for her:

> My wife picked up some dishes and threw them on the floor. Crockery went everywhere. This was quite typical for her. This was her stress response that she learned from her mother… her mother would fly into rage, throw dishes, smash things and storm out. So, she [my wife] does a pretty similar thing.

In addition, physical violence from his wife was also not uncommon in their relationship, some of which was carried out in front of the children. Daddy described one such incident that occurred when the family was out in the car:

> She turned around and she just punched me right in the face, and yeah. That's not the first time. It's just her response when she doesn't feel like she's in control.

He also spoke of his wife having attacked him in front of others:

> There was a witness, that's my half-sister. (It was) on my birthday. It was about a year ago or 2 years ago … and she flew off the handle… She came out like a screaming banshee. She started hitting…kicking…punching…in front of the children.

Another participant, Tim, experienced physical attacks from his partner whenever he tried to stand his ground and argue back at her. The first time this happened his partner had criticised one of his children and he proceeded to disagree with her and defend his child:

> The next minute I got one hell of a whack round the head. Seriously massive whack and I was beside myself. I walked down the road. I didn't know what to do. I was with someone who could smash me in the head. She was, once again, a reasonably sized woman. She wasn't a lightweight and I actually went and hid amongst the trees down in a reserve nearby, wondering what I could do. … It was like, close up and a WHAM! Like. It was bad and I didn't know what to do. I'd never experienced this in my life.

Tim described a physical attack that occurred on another occasion after he had made a purchase on the advice of his accountant. Although he and his partner had initially discussed the accountant's advice, Tim had made the final decision and purchase without consulting her. Later, when being questioned about his actions, and standing up for himself she became violent:

> Then she said to me "I don't know why you did that" and I said to her, "it's because I knew our relationship wasn't going to last that I did it. I didn't need your approval". And at that point she whacked me so hard I was seeing stars. And that was the final abuse. That was a serious blow on the head, and I thought, much harder and I'd be falling over, and I'd be in serious trouble with this woman who's gone manic; who's absolutely crazy.

Lewis' partner would get angry and throw things. One night she suddenly became violent without warning and from that point, it continued escalating into psychological and emotional abuse:

> I didn't see it at first, but she had a tendency now and again to get quite upset and angry. At first, she would release that by throwing things; generally, pans, cups. It wasn't directed at me at the time. [Then] at the time I didn't see it coming…the first time it happened we were putting my stepdaughter to bed, and she got upset for something. (It) just, came out. She punched me, pushed me, punched me and started screaming. I tried to walk out of the bedroom, and she blocked the door. She wouldn't let me go. And that's how it started… That was the physical.

Mark also spoke of being kicked and scratched when he was collecting the children:

> And I got this kick in the back of my leg…I didn't say anything. I just thought let it go, let it go... and there's another kick in the back of my leg. The next thing she raked down the side of my neck and I had this long gouge. So here I am getting kicked and scratched and all sorts of things. I think there might have been a punch thrown in there too.

Stuart spoke of only a few instances of physical violence. The first occurred after his wife had been drinking and he was trying to get her safely home:

> Suddenly she screams an expletive at me and smashes me on the arm. The next morning, I woke up and you know when you feel like you've been sleeping on your arm all night and it's just dead? That's what it was like for me even though I wasn't sleeping on my arm. I looked at it and there's this golf ball size welt on my wrist. My fingers were all numb.

Stuart spoke of the violence escalating following his return from an absence overseas on a work trip. Although most of the violence he experienced was verbal and psychological, Stuart related another physical incident:

> (She) punched me in the throat [indicating with his fist]…kicked me…hit me.

Several of the participants spoke of the differing ways their partners would attack them and inflict injury. Robertson described having broken ribs. However, many of the physical attacks on him were with fingernails. He spoke of the timing of these attacks coinciding with when he was in

vulnerable situations: for example, when he was wearing little and either about to go to bed or being in bed:

> She just raked my body all over with fingernails. I got broken ribs on two occasions with her kneeing me in the ribs in bed.
>
> There was another occasion, we were standing in the doorway of the dining room and I'm just about to go to bed…and she just reached out and she had, you know the usual sort of manicured feminine fingernails. Her fingers aren't as blunt as mine so there's more of a taper, and she just met her thumb and fore fingernail through the lobe of my ear. I couldn't move because it was going to rip my ear to pieces if I did and it hurt a fair bit, but it wasn't anywhere near life threatening, obviously. But blood was just going everywhere. Pouring all down over my side and she just looked at me in the eye while she held those nails in my ear.
>
> I was chopped to pieces with those fingernails. I really, really was.

The physical violence began for George when his partner did not get her own way:

> Oh yeah! [I'd go against what she wanted]. That's how things started. That's how I would get pushed or thumped…attack, attack, attack. And if I didn't want to talk it was like leap on me until I did.

As experienced by other participants, George's partner would use her fingernails either to attack him physically or as a way of controlling what he did. He described how at first it would be done to annoy him but how it would escalate and change into harm:

> Originally, she's got these really long fingernails, so it would be like a poke or a tickle and it was just like yeah, ok. I don't really enjoy being … And then, of course, when I would talk back or wouldn't do the things she wanted, the claws would dig in and it was oh OK right I'll go do it, or I won't talk about that, you know?

George described how the violence occurred daily, whenever he and his partner were together: it was unrelenting. He described being followed from room to room, not being able to get away, and how the attacks began and escalated:

> I just, argh… (she would) grab me or pull my hair or follow me around the house and just, argh…
>
> Then the claws would come out or the poking or the "Do what I say! What are you doing? Don't turn around from me"! Poke. And then the poke would turn into hair pulling and then hair pulling would turn into scratching and trying to pull me over and it was like, 'Can you fuck off'! And she would say "you fucking can't stop me"!
>
> If I talked to anyone and she heard or found out about it, I would get a blitzing. You know? Which, eventually when I turn away it turns into grabbing, pushing and poking, I'd get away, I'd get poked. I hurt my back and she would poke me in the back. She kicked me in the back one night. It was like what the fuck?!

Another participant, John, spoke of the first time his wife's violent behaviour violence escalated from verbal abuse and threats of violence when he challenged his wife's controlling behaviour:

> That was the first time, around that time, when she became physical. She jumped on my back. She threw the TV remote, smashed the TV remote. She's not very big. She jumped on my back and she's hitting [indicating fists hitting his chest].

While not experiencing scratching from fingernails, John described a later incident when he was attacked with a large bunch of keys. This occurred at a time when he was recovering from a surgical procedure and having difficulty moving around, he was vulnerable, unable to move out of the way:

> I was incapable of attacking and she just kept punching, attacking, punching, attacking I just kept staying stop it stop it, go away. Then she got the keys out and did this [indicating raking down his face]. She stopped after about five attacks...She used a big bunch of keys. Put keys through her fingers and [I] got all scratched down here [indicating his face].

Bill spoke of a physical attack that occurred out of the blue. This marked the start of an escalation of events that resulted in his arrest (described later in this chapter under false allegations):

> She attacked me this particular morning. I was turned away. She came and hit me…on the side of the head. I don't know what [with] a fist or a hand. Then

> she starts with the "get out, get out, get out". I just refused and I kept turning away. She kept coming at me … she disconnected the cord (of her laptop) and then started lashing me with the cord…It bloody hurt. She was so angry at me…but I'm not hearing a word she's saying. All I'm worried about is what she's hitting me with. She's got this little transformer box half along the plug in her hand…She ended up trying to backhand me with it and this thing went round and caught her on the back of the hand.
>
> (Then) she picked up the wall mirror in the hallway…and tried to hit me with that. I was standing close enough to her that I took it off her but I could feel the energy of her hands making sure that it got pushed into the side of the door frame to break it. So, at that point I knew, that she was trying to create a scene for something. And there's all this mirror broken on the carpet.

Some participants related incidents when objects were thrown at them. The objects comprised of anything that was to hand including television remotes or plates of food. For Stew, it was having a pot plant thrown at his head that for him heralded the ending of the relationship:

> Then one day she threw a pot plant at the back of my head. Long story short. I was sitting at the table. She had a 10-year-old son and we were playing with a matchbox car while we were eating lunch. You know, zooming it across the table, and she spoke to me and I didn't hear her. So, she smacked me in the back of the head with the pot plant.

Robertson also spoke of his wife throwing objects:

> On one occasion she made a cup of coffee. She had her coffee black and had just made the coffee and threw it in my face. Fortunately, I was wearing glasses. Then she just went out and stood in the middle of the lawn and just ***screamed*** [emphasis] at the sky.

Tony described his partner's anger visibly escalating to where she would destroy property or throw whatever was closest to hand. He also spoke of having hot coffee thrown over him, and of being slapped, punched and kicked:

> She never developed a pattern with weapons, it was like, when she got to the stage of slapping, punching she would pick up whatever was at hand and throw

> it if I didn't react to the needle, and then the slapping… she'd be kicking walls and she'd be…She'd threaten to do a whole lot of things.
>
> Yeah, it was mainly property destruction, but it wasn't targeted to anything. She'd throw a cup of hot coffee over me. She'd throw whatever was at hand. Knock stuff off the shelves and things like that. You could just see the way she was building up, building up and building up.

For some, experiencing physical attacks from their partner became a pattern in the relationship. For others, being physically attacked marked the beginning of a pattern of violence that continued and developed into emotional and psychological violence. In the next sub-section, the different types of emotional and psychological violence participants described experiencing are identified.

Psychological and Emotional Aggression

All but one of the sixteen participants in this study described having experienced psychological aggression, definitions of which were discussed in Chapter 2. This occurred in various forms, both in private and in public, and for some, escalated to becoming a daily repetitive and ongoing experience. This included threats of physical violence and escalating violence, together with other types of threats that were used as a form of coercive control. Participants spoke of experiencing verbal abuse and putdowns, being threatened with false allegations, or actually having false allegations made against them. They recounted being deprived of sleep; being isolated from friends and family; and having access to finances being controlled. Participants also spoke of their personal space and communications in the form of emails, text and social media accounts being violated, as well as personal possessions being threatened, hidden or destroyed.

Threats of Physical Violence

Being threatened was a common experience for the participants. While threats of physical violence were used as a form of control, as they were directed specifically towards the participants themselves, they are presented here separately from other forms of threats that appear later in this chapter under coercive control. Threats of physical violence to the participants themselves were mostly made verbally or with gestures, although some spoke of their partners using weapons to indicate their intention of harm.

Several participants related incidents where knives were used as weapons with which to threaten them. Tony spoke of being threatened by his partner wielding a sharp knife on more than one occasion:

> A couple of times she pointed (knives at) me…One incident when I was at the computer and she hadn't seen me for a couple of hours. I don't know what she was doing. She opened up the door and I didn't even acknowledge it. And she just walks up, and she's got a steak knife at my throat and that was probably one of the worst times.

Robertson also described an incident when he felt threatened by his wife wielding a knife:

> I do remember getting a hell of a fright one night…she had a serrated edged knife, …and she just totally lost control and she just ***slashed*** [emphasis added and demonstrating] with this thing…Like you would use a machete if you were cutting jungle.…. After about half a dozen strokes, she left it…but it was definitely a threatening situation…There really was serious danger. I don't know how serious, you know, who knows. You only know how serious it is after it's happened, but the threat was ***always*** [emphasis] there.

John described a pattern of daily threats of physical violence made towards him. Made both verbally and with gestures, they escalated over time.

> Wide-eyed, red-faced vein popping threats. "I'll hit you. Do as you're told"! And lots of gestures of I'll hit you [Interviewer - so you're showing me fists] yes like this [indicating fists and angry eye popping facial expression]…So, any attempt at any sort of independent thought, independent action was quickly turned off by "no you're not doing that" verbal.

> So [sigh] yeah just daily do as you're told and then a couple of times a day *do as you're told* [emphasizing more forcefully, demonstrating leaning forward with an angry look on his face and with fist raised and clenched]. If I didn't do as I was told or if I was attempting not to – the fists raised, the threat of violence.

Coercive Control

Participants described various ways in which their partners were coercively controlling as is evident in the above narrative. They spoke of being isolated and cut off from friends and family members. If they tried to have contact with others, often the result would be an escalation of physical or verbal attacks, so they withdrew. Some experienced threats from their partners to self-harm, suicide or harm their children. They described having their movements monitored as well as their electronic means of communication by way of texts, social media and emails being interfered with. Some related receiving threats to have possessions damaged or destroyed and others spoke of having access to finances controlled.

John spoke of how, when he tried to take back some control and assert his independence, threats of physical violence towards him escalated into ones of destroying property and suicide:

> So, the threats got more intense and more scary. So, threats of suicide – her killing herself. "I'll kill myself; I'll crash the car into a bridge. I'll set the house on fire when I'm inside". Lots of suicide threats if I didn't do as I was told.

Tony spoke of his partner also using similar threats as a way of control:

> Yeah, she was running around with a knife going I'm going to cut myself.
>
> When I did try to leave that's when she threatened suicide and I had to call the police twice to have a wellness check on her.

Fourteen of the sixteen participants in this study had one or more children, either with their abusive partner or from another relationship. For some, the children were used as a manipulative tool, in the form of threats as a pawn or as a go-between for communicating with them. Using the children as threats and forms of manipulation against them was extremely distressing for the participants and a form of control that was always present whether explicit or implicit.

George had a son from a previous relationship who stayed with him and his partner from time to time. He related how his son was used as a form of manipulation:

> "You do [kick me out] and you'll never see your son again". That was one of her threats. You'll never see your son again.

Lewis had a stepdaughter who had been part of his life since she was a baby. She had been raised with him as her father. Like George, Lewis' also experienced the child being used as a form of manipulation and control:

> She threatened to kick me out and not (let me) see my stepdaughter again.

John spoke of his partner using whatever means she had, including threats to the children, to try to control him:

> And so, when I tried to [stand up to her] the threats got worse. So, she's trying to scare me. And, "I'll hurt the kids". That was later on as well, that was another threat. If I can't hurt you, I'll hurt the kids to hurt you. I remember this very, very, clearly and I said "can you hear what you're saying? You'll hurt our kids to hurt me"? "Yes! Do as you're told"! So, there were threats to harm the children to try and control me. Everything in her power to control me.

Robertson spoke of living with the constant presence of implicit threats of losing access to his children:

> This is perhaps the one that scared me most. There was the implicit threat, always, of losing my children. I was absolutely convinced because, rightly or wrongly, I've heard all the stories and I know how men are treated. As I say, rightly or wrongly but I do believe … that men get a pretty raw deal when it comes to children. The thought of losing my children just left me in a very vulnerable position.

Another form of coercive control is that of threats to damage or destroy personal possessions. George spoke of experiencing this, particularly in relation to objects that held great sentimental value for him, when he did not want to comply with her wishes or tried to walk away:

> I had a toy collection. It was pretty phenomenal…I had everything from when I was a kid…there was like 4,000 plus pieces (and) I'd collected for the last 15 years…I would have passed them on to my kid or held onto them and put them in a museum. It was a museum. It was a box of history… "It's me or the toys". I was like, I can't do it.
>
> "I'm going to burn them. You go to work and I'm going to throw them away. I'm going to burn them."

> I couldn't walk away from an argument. It was like, no I'm leaving. I'd go for the door and it was "you leave, and you'll never see your fucking drums again. I'll smash your drums".
>
> I foolishly let myself think that she would do these things and I folded.

Not being allowed became a dominant theme in George's relationship: a theme that permeated every aspect of his life:

> It got to the point where she would say I wasn't allowed to hug my friends...And I've always just been a hugger…That wasn't allowed. I wasn't allowed people at the house…Then [it] was wrong for me to associate with them. I had to stop talking to [my friends].
>
> All these rules were put on me and everything was shut down further. And then I wasn't allowed to walk down the street. If I walked down the street, I got in trouble.
>
> She cut me off from my family. Cut me off from my friends. Used violence and intimidation. Used control issues.

George also described how his electronic forms of communication were interfered with, particularly on social media platforms. His accounts were regularly scrutinised and his online presence monitored:

> Facebook was an interesting one. I had to stop Facebook for a year 'cause she would take my phone and delete my friends.…I had to go through and delete the photos of my old girlfriends and disassociate with [them] or friends. If she knew half the guys I knew… they'd have to go as well.
>
> If I was at work while she was at work or we weren't together, and I went on Facebook I would get a text or a message on Facebook, saying "what are you doing on Facebook?" I'd say, I'm just looking. "Why? You've got no reason to be on there".

As well as his online activities being monitored, George spoke of being constantly made to account for his whereabouts, and other movements including who he saw and who he spoke to when apart from his partner:

> Then it was "where are you, what are you doing? Which way are you walking to work? What are you doing? What are you doing? What are you doing? What are you doing?" [getting faster and louder]. It's constant. It's just hundreds of texts of what are you doing.
>
> Sometimes she'd get me to send a photo to make sure I was at home. "Send me a photo. Show me you're at home!"

Other participants related similar experiences to George; having access to friends and family restricted and their activities and movements monitored. Tim echoed George's words of not being allowed although this was not directed at people he associated with:

> I didn't have much to do with friends. It was almost like…I have to use the word allowed. I wouldn't be allowed to have my own time.

Lewis was given an ultimatum, the result of which cut him off from his friends and denied him access to the one place in which he found respite and comradeship, where he could destress and feel at ease:

> I used to be a body builder and she eventually made me stop going to the gym. So, I didn't have that outlet because that was my time just for me. We all need time just for us. I had my circle of friends there that I'd had for years even before I met her. At first, she was very much wanting me to just have that time for me because it helps detox my mind and helps me physically but then that had to stop because she said I had to choose her or the gym.

John spoke of being attracted to his wife's strength and power at the start of their relationship. However, what at first seemed to be positive attributes soon for him became negative ones that were used in ever expanding ways to control his life:

> Quite quickly the power and strength and control that I was attracted to in her became abusive and suffocating and began to get more and more and more – where to go, when to go, who to hang around with, who not to associate with.

Several of the participants spoke of having their access to finances restricted:

> Well, basically she had control of the money. The budgets, you know, the money [she gave me an allowance] Ah, [for] petrol. That was it. To get to work. (Lewis)

> I didn't have any money because she had control of the money. (Stew)

> I didn't mind too much because she said she was better at it than me. I didn't mind not having to do all the administration and so on, but it did get me down not feeling like I was able to buy myself lunch if I wanted to or, anything like that. I always feel like I had to justify and go through a pile of guilt about spending any money on myself. (Dave)

Verbal Abuse and Putdowns

Verbal abuse and putdowns were a common experience for participants. The words spoken to them cut deep, to the very core of their identity. Participants voiced experiencing a daily battering of constant putdowns and belittlement. They described being ridiculed and being told repeatedly that they were worthless. No matter how hard they tried, nothing was good enough: fault was found with everything they said and did:

> It was daily belittling and bringing me down. I couldn't do a thing right. (Stuart)

> Putdowns as well as, yeah, it got more character based as well as just that I'd done something wrong. Saying I've got no value. I'm just: I'm a nobody. (Lewis)

Putdowns and other form of verbal abuse were not always confined to the privacy of home:

> And she put me down a lot in front of people and that was rather hard the way that would suddenly come up. (Tim)

Receiving daily putdowns that gradually ate away at their self-esteem and soul some eventually came to believe and accept of what was being said of them. George spoke of the relentless verbal reinforcement he received that everything about him was wrong:

> She got in my head just at the wrong time, I think. I let it carry on. She sort of talked me round to thinking I was wrong about stuff…She'd found a way to get in there and sort of niggle at all the things that were wrong and just like. … started enforcing all these things about how I was wrong and how everything I did was wrong.

> I was stupid, I was useless and everything I did was wrong. Everything I did was perverted and wrong…Get a real job. You're a loser. You're a piece of shit. …Don't use your imagination. You're a fuckin piece of shit!" screaming it in the street. It's just wrong. [She] constantly reaffirmed to me that I'm wrong, I'm scum.
>
> Mental beat-down, mental beat-down until I accept it and go "OK". I mean I'm not OK with this, but I couldn't say I'm not OK because then it just wouldn't stop.

Throughout his marriage, no matter what he did or what happened, Straus was positioned as always being in the wrong; he could never do anything right. This was constantly reinforced in private and in front of the children. Over time, he came to believe this of himself. His wife 'knew' he was wrong therefore he must be:

> There was nothing that I could do that was any good. There was, I was never hugged, never kissed, never [silent pause] anything I did was wrong, I couldn't do anything right.
>
> She said, "Straus I don't know why you're wrong I just know that you are wrong" and that pretty much summed up our relationship. She didn't know why I was wrong I wasn't doing anything wrong. She just knew deeply in her heart of hearts that I was wrong.
>
> She just knows that whatever I have to say is not important.

The daily berating George experienced continued to the point where his partner began to tell him to kill himself. This escalated and became part of a daily verbal battering he received:

> She got onto the phase in that last six months of just saying "kill yourself, go kill yourself. You're a piece of shit, go kill yourself." Most of the second half of last year I was told to kill myself …And after coming back from [holiday] when it was "kill yourself, go kill yourself, go kill yourself, go kill yourself." It was like, fuck!

Stew and his partner lived in a small town where work was difficult to find. Although in regular employment, he earned less than his partner, an issue that was included in the demeaning putdowns he experienced:

> Demeaning stuff like, you're useless. You're useless, you don't bring in enough money and you need to work harder and stuff like that.

Participants spoke of constantly being yelled and screamed at. Dave described being subjected to yelling and verbal abuse almost daily:

> A lot of verbal abuse, nearly on a daily basis. Yeah, being controlled and yelled at and told off very frequently. For disproportionately minor things…I called it to myself the list of 10,000 things, the way that she wanted to have the house kept and if I left the towels in the wrong position on the towel rack or put something away that wasn't right she would yell at me about it for 5 minutes sometimes. Nothing I did ever seemed to be good enough.

Some of the verbal putdowns participants experienced attacked their character and their sexual prowess. These struck at the heart of their masculinity:

> "If I had to ***think*** about having sex with you, I'd vomit. I'd be ***physically sick*** if I had to think about having sex with you." (words emphasised by Straus).

> She compared me to a girl a lot. Worthless. Not a real man. Girly: emotional, too sensitive. "You're like a girl, you're just like a girl. You're so moody and emotional. Be a man." (John)

False Allegations

Many of the participants spoke of what it was like living with threats of false allegations being made against them, allegations that they themselves were violent or controlling. For some, allegations against them of violence were made resulting in further distress.

Mark gave several examples where false allegations had been made against him by his wife: to family members, to the wider community and indirectly to neighbours. As a result, he was publicly shunned by the small community, and eventually he decided he had to leave the area:

> Their grandmother… said to the [children], you shouldn't believe anything your father says because he only ever beats up your mother.

> (My daughter) said "Mum's told the school that you've got trespass orders and non-molestation orders out against you". So, I rang the school…and they

> basically confirmed that was the case…(they) said…"the picture she's painted of you was actually quite black".
>
> A violent episode that happened when I picked up the kids where she did attack me. [The neighbour] wouldn't have seen anything but he would have heard it because he would have been …close enough for her yelling to be overheard. She's screaming out you assaulted me you assaulted me. [She] rang up the police to get me arrested and it very nearly did end up in my arrest. The only thing that saved me from the cells that night was the testimony of three little kids [who were present at the time]. (Mark)

Robertson also reported discovering his wife had also been relaying to others that he was violent towards her:

> I now know that she was going around telling everyone I was violent: it seems to be the standard sort of thing for women to say. It's the easiest thing to say, you know he beat me, he beat me, sort of thing. I don't know how much or who she told, and it wasn't true either.

George spoke of his partner throwing things with such force that there would be holes and dents in walls. He described how she would taunt him by threatening to use the damage as evidence against him and make allegations that he was violent towards her:

> It's just like there's holes in the walls from where she'd throw things when she wouldn't get her way. Then she would say I was the one doing it. And she'd say I've got video footage. Footage of you punching things and smashing things. Actually, all I ever did was punch the drawers because I couldn't do anything. I'd get up and walk off and punch the drawers and then walk out of the room and she'd just stalk me round the house. Just constantly [yelling] you can't make me leave. You can't do anything. And she constantly reaffirmed everything that I couldn't do anything about it.

Another participant, Tony, spoke of implicit threats that allegations would be made against him. Having described a pattern of behaviour that had gradually developed when he and his wife argued he then related his confusion when the usual pattern was not followed. His wife directly launched into punching and slapping him. Tony described a scene that was being deliberately staged to make him look as though he was being violent:

> She got a video-recorder and put it down the hallway. She just basically started punching me, slapping me, and I thought it was very odd because she'd skipped this whole argument bit. I thought, that's odd what are you doing? ...So, she came in anyway and there was no argument…and then as soon as I stood up, she just took off. So, I [said] what's wrong with you? She'd gone in front of the video camera and fallen over and then had this image of me walking up going what? And because it was in front of the camera it was really obvious.

Two of the participants, Bill and Daddy, related a series of events that began with false allegations against them and that escalated into situations involving the police and legal system.

Bill and his partner lived in an apartment in close proximity to others. He spoke of his partner at times using body language, facial expression and general demeanour to subtly imply to others that she was a victim of abuse:

> Sometimes when she was really shitty at me and somebody would be turning up or going past, she'd sit in the window and as they walked past they'd say Hi. Then she'd go [demonstrating a down looking sad face] and she was actually trying to fake the fact that she was being, you know, emotionally abused. When actually, the truth was that it was her that was emotionally abusive.

Bill related another occasion when he argued back at his partner that resulted in more behaviour that would have been indicative to anyone within hearing range, of someone being abused:

> She stood up and started screaming as if, almost like I'm being attacked kind of scream. Yeah. "Get away from me, get away from me" you know all this kind of stuff you know? And then so I did. There in a little apartment with a woman screaming. What else are you going to do? I had to leave.

It was not long after this that Bill was physically attacked (referred to earlier in this chapter) and he described what happened immediately following the incident:

> And then there was this quiet. And I got all suspicious. She was in the bathroom. She had the tube of toothpaste in her right hand and with the other hand she was giving herself an extremely vigorous, ummmm, makeover. …She was almost like this [*demonstrating by scratching his upper chest area*]

> and I realised later that what she was doing was scratching with toothpaste onto her skin. She walked back in and put this white shirt on…pulled it down a little bit to show me these scratches on her chest and said, "I'm going to destroy your life" and she walked out the door.

Bill's partner made allegations that he had been violent towards her. This resulted in his arrest, a weekend spent in police custody, protection orders made against him and follow-up court cases:

> But what she accused me of wasn't just assault. She'd said that I'd grabbed her by the throat. Thrown her to the ground. Savagely, repeatedly beat her up with punches and kicks over and over again. She'd also filed for a protection order. She spent seven pages saying what a subjugated victimised woman she'd been and I think she'd got the Duluth Model wheel and tried to pick something out of every little part of the pie that she could make up this story and she applied for a protection order. Of course, that was given.

Like Bill, Daddy also had allegations made against him that resulted in the involvement of police and the legal system. At the time, he and his wife had amicably agreed to spend some time apart while sharing the care of their children. Following a major disagreement with his wife, and on a week the children were with him, he was unexpectedly visited by the police and served with a Protection Order, Parenting Order and an Interim Property Order. Although not arrested, Daddy spoke of how things had been twisted to serve his wife's purpose and how he was from that point, denied access to his children:

> Her claims were that I called her stupid and retard. That I emotionally abused her. That I used financial means to control her and yeah, it was basically examples of that. One thing she put was that we had a week-on, week-off care arrangement that I forced upon her…I started to question, why would she write that? Because the things she wrote were very horrible.
>
> Then she'd write that out of the last 120 days I had only looked after the children for 17 days, or something. And then I think, hang on you were [overseas] for 8 weeks. Then you came back, and we lived together for two weeks. Then we had the fight. Then the kids wanted to stay with you… and I was, ok fine, whatever the kids want. I just want you guys to be happy. And then somehow that's turned around to look like, oh you've got the kids all the

> time. So, to me it looked like it was very much constructed by her legal aid to get what she wanted, which was control.

John spoke of false accusations being made retrospectively and being used against him years later. He referred to when his wife first began getting physically violent towards him and described a time when he had to hold her by her arms to stop her from hurting herself or him. This was used against him, together with other false allegations, years later when he found himself again in court fighting a custody battle:

> In family court she brought that up and said that I attacked her and choked her until she couldn't breathe, and she thought she was going to die. Not true. I have never put my hands on another woman, on a woman ever in my life. It's not how I'm brought up.

The false allegations made of Daddy and John led to them both experiencing another form of victimisation by others, known as legal and administrative aggression.

Secondary, Legal and Administrative Aggression

A more recently highlighted form of IPV is that of secondary legal and administrative violence (see Chapter 2) that has been found to be experienced more often by men. Several participants in this study described experiencing this form of IPV in their interactions with the police, lawyers and the court system, all resulting from allegations made against them by their partners. Each of them spoke of assumptions made by others that they were the guilty violent partner by virtue of being male. They related their experiences as a result of this, including how difficult it was for them to have a voice and be heard.

Bill described his experiences with the police and legal system following his partner's allegations that he had beaten her. He was arrested. Despite trying to speak up about being attacked himself, his protestations were ignored:

> And they said anything you say can be taken down. And I said well you can take this down right now. No assault occurred to her. That's my statement right here and now...They searched me up against the cop car out the front while all my neighbours pretended not to notice and took me to the back of the police station.

He was advised by a lawyer not to make a statement and let things run their course, as the result would be the same no matter what he said. This was confirmed to him by the police:

> I (asked the police) is it true that no matter what I tell you now, you're going to lock me in a cell for two and a half days? They said yes that's true. So that was it. I had no choice. Fingerprinted, mug shot, all that, and then put in a tiny little cell.

Due to a protection order taken out against Bill, he lost access to his apartment and was forbidden to have any contact with his partner. Despite the contents of a medical report following his partner's allegation of violence, Bill was not asked to give his side of the story. No one wanted to know.

> I got a [copy of the] hospital report...They found not one single bruise. Not one split lip. There was absolutely nothing wrong with her and yet they didn't even mention the scratches which either means they wore away, you know they'd gone away by then, or they recognised that they were not a sign of assault. Maybe they'd recognised that she might have done them herself.
>
> You know once you're charged with something, there's no such thing as innocent until proven guilty. They just treat you like you just haven't been found guilty yet. You know. They weren't interested in my side of the story. Nobody even asked or heard anything of my side of the story

Bill had to wait for the slow wheels of the legal system to turn, while incurring legal costs and experiencing other impacts on his life as a result (see Chapter 5). Months later, the matter came before the court. It ended quickly; not however, due to Bill finally being able to speak of the violence against him and be heard:

> It was nine months later before we had a court date… Well she didn't turn up. The prosecutor got up and admitted there never was any evidence and they didn't know where she was.
>
> I'd had enough of the whole fucking circus of the whole thing and I said, Judge, I want to speak to you". And I got up there and I told the Judge, nice Judge, and I told her, look. I was assaulted, I was abused, I was accused, I was put in a cell, there never was any evidence against me. What about the violence

> against me? How do you call this any kind of justice? There never could have been justice here today if you're looking at one side. That was it.
>
> But anyway, and my lawyer was going "Isn't this great!!!" I felt like fucking knocking him out. I was fucking wild....I was just disgusted with the whole process with the police. I was disgusted with the judge, the lawyers, the whole shitty little circus that they run under the fake guise of caring about victims. They don't care about anything. All they care about was themselves.

Like Bill, Daddy also became involved with the legal system as a result of his wife's allegations against him. He received an unexpected visit from the police one Friday evening and was served with legal documents that included denying him access to his children:

> There's a Domestic Violence Order, Protection Order, Parenting Order and an Interim Property Order … I can't go to that property. I can't see my children. I can't contact my wife. Any of these things are all violating this law and you know you read it and there could be instant imprisonment up to 3 years or 5 years. It's just like, an instant checkmate.
>
> And you're like Oh my God my children are being taken off me and if you don't have any legal expertise around you to help direct you, you're just kind of supposed to figure it out.
>
> So, I spent the next couple of days very stressed out. I mean it's Friday night. I don't have a lawyer. Never needed one. Why would I have a lawyer? Only if you're in legal trouble, right?

Daddy's description of the treatment he received by court officers and others in the legal system echoed Bill's experiences, reflecting automatic assumptions by others that he was guilty of the allegations made against him. Like Bill, Daddy tried to have a voice but was ignored, spoken over or shut down.

Following being served with court orders Daddy attended a court meeting at which solicitors for his wife and children were present. Having no legal representation at that stage he requested the meeting be recorded. This request was denied. Desperate to see his children, Daddy agreed to go ahead with the meeting, later questioning a decision that his access to the children had to be supervised:

> The result was that the lawyer for children wrote a report saying the husband, the father has chosen not to see the children. Which was not true. She said he was given several options on seeing his children and he refused all of them out of principle. All I said, from my perspective was, why should I need to have controlled access or supervised access to my own children? Why should that be the case? I said, you read the Affidavit, there's nothing here saying I'm a violent person or I'm dangerous.
>
> So, my first experience of the court system was a lady…[who] was very legal, very condescending. Anytime I went to say anything she basically shut me up and talked over the top of me. Then this lady went on to give the report to the Judge about the children.
>
> So, at that time, things were basically twisted around. There are two lawyers there. One of them supposedly was working for the children but again I think it's part of the sexist attitude of that whole Family Court system. She's not really working for the children, she's working for the woman and possibly rightly so, in a lot of situations. Possibly rightly so. But for me from my perspective, not at all.

Sometime later, still having been unable to see his children, Daddy visited the house of a mutual friend in the hope of discovering what was happening. This resulted in his arrest:

> Next thing I know there's a policeman calling me a few days later and I go down to the station to give a statement and they say they're arresting me for violation of a Protection Order. So, I get taken down to the courthouse. I get fingerprinted. I get told that I have to give a DNA swab otherwise one will be forcibly taken from me via a blood sample. So yeah, all my human rights, basically, violated on the basis of these orders which were based on false statements.

At the time of being interviewed Daddy and his wife were days away from their case being heard in court. Regardless of the court orders still in existence they had met to see if they could work things out together. However, even though Daddy had evidence that the orders were issued on false allegations, he remained in a vulnerable position with no support or protection:

> In the meantime, I've got all this documentation and it's written evidence ...And if we were to look at the language that the court's using towards me as a respondent, I would see that language as disrespectful, condescending and threatening. That's my experience of it.
>
> Technically, she still has an Order in her favour and so she could call up the Police at any time and just say he's violating the Protection Order, he's been texting me, he came around the other morning, and she could have me locked up again. She's got all the power – still!

John also described his recent experiences with the legal system. Although his situation was reversed in comparison to Bill and Daddy, in that John had been seeking parenting and protection orders against his ex-wife, the experiences and treatment he spoke of receiving by those in the legal system were nonetheless similar. He was disbelieved, and silenced.

Following an incident one evening when John was attacked by his ex-wife the police were called. After initially being told nothing would be done, John's claims that his version of events were the truth were eventually heard and believed:

> Somebody else who fucking believes me. A cop who had no right to believe me, no interest in believing me and didn't want to believe me and I begged him. For some reason he hung around. She trespassed and assaulted me with a weapon and got arrested and spent the night in jail.

Being heard and believed did not last, as John went on to describe the abuse he received from those in the legal system when the matter eventually went to court:

> She denied [my allegations] and flipped it over and said that I was the abuser and she was an angel and they've been struggling with the kids because of my behaviour. There's not one person in New Zealand who will corroborate her story. I'm not a violent person; it's just not true.
>
> I took the truth into court. I put my hand up about name calling and behaviour. She said she'd never called me a name and never put a hand on me. She told a whole bunch of lies that were believable. I told a whole bunch of truths that were unbelievable, and the Judge looked around and said you expect me to believe you against this? Immediately uplifted my daughter who was staying with me because of her physical abuse [while in the care of her mother].

> They didn't believe a word I said. The Judge said "this incident, I don't believe a word of it. You started it by saying you're not leaving. She would never had been there had you not taken the daughter there." I'm like [looking and sounding flabbergasted], "you're actually justifying her trespass as my fault!?" It was shocking.
>
> I'm in court and I'm thinking, I'm still being abused. So, the system abused me, the court abused me, the Judge abused me. (John)

Summary

In this chapter the various types of IPV that participants in this study reported having experienced from their partners have been described, demonstrating that men in heterosexual relationships can be victims of IPV. They can be subjected to physical violence that includes being punched, slapped, kicked and scratched, as well as psychological aggression including threats of physical violence, expressive aggression and coercive control. They can also experience a secondary form of abuse initiated by allegations from their partners but carried out by others working with the legal and justice systems. Systems that, the participants found, offered little protection for them. They are assumed to be guilty of perpetrating IPV by virtue of being male and as such they struggle to have a voice and be heard.

In the following chapter the effects these experiences had on the participants' physical and mental health, on their self-worth, their relationships, and on their general day-to-day functioning are described. Also presented are strategies participants developed that enabled them to cope with their experiences while in the abusive relationships.

Chapter 5: Effects: Not the Man I Used to Be

This chapter presents the various effects the experiences of IPV had on participants; their masculine identities, their health and day-to-day functioning. These are presented under four main themes: 'Masculine Self'; 'Living with Fear'; 'Living with Violence'; and 'Challenges and Obstacles' (Table 6). The chapter begins with the theme of 'Masculine Self' and a focus on the participants' affirmations of their masculinity as evident in their narratives. This was an important finding with respect to the research question. How participants viewed their masculine selves and the masculine norms they demonstrated adhering to, strongly linked to how they were affected both by their experiences of IPV and the responses of others. Accordingly, the next section of findings presented in this chapter shows how their experiences of IPV directly attacked and impacted participants' masculine selves.

The chapter then proceeds to show findings associated with the theme of Living with fear. The findings presented under this theme highlight the consequences of the IPV for participants' general wellbeing and day-to-day functioning. This included negative effects on their physical and mental health both during the relationships and for some, continuing long after the end of the relationship. The next theme, that of living with the violence, reveals the strategies and coping mechanisms participants developed. The chapter concludes with the challenges and obstacles that participants faced while in these violent relationships. The outline for this Chapter is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Outline of findings presented in Chapter 5

Effects of IPV: Not the Man I Used to Be

• Masculine Self
  o Affirmations of Masculinity
  o Trying and Failing
• Living with Fear
  o Harm to Health
  o Losing Self
  o Being Afraid
  o Ongoing Effects
• Living with the Violence
  o Holding on to Hope
  o Rationalization of Violence
  o Looking for Answers
  o Seeking Refuge
• Challenges and Obstacles:
  o For the Sake of the Children
  o It's a Shameful Thing

Masculine Self

Participants' narratives contained affirmations of masculinity indicating the hegemonic masculine norms they adhered to, and the significant influence these norms had on their lives. Findings also revealed how participants' experiences of IPV assaulted their masculine selves, directly and indirectly, and the resulting effects these had on the men.

Affirmations of Masculinity

Throughout their interviews, participants referred to their masculine selves, indicating, either explicitly or implicitly, their internalization and adherence to orthodox masculine norms. The masculine norms participants identified that spoke to their identities included being the provider/breadwinner, the supportive partner, the protector, the good husband and father, the responsible partner, strong, stoic, hard-working and successful.

John offered his definition of the traditional male role as incorporating the following:

> Breadwinner, bill-payer, car-servicer, somebody to make sure that nothing leaks, maintainer of the garden – real basic traditional stuff.

Raised in a household without the presence of his father, Daddy was a leader. Being the oldest male in his family, at an early age he developed a strong sense of responsibility to look out for loved ones that he carried through into adulthood as part of his identity. Daddy presented himself

as a good husband and father, the protector. These were the roles he loved—roles that were most the important to him and in which he excelled:

> I love my projects; I love being a provider. I love that role; I'm really good at it; really successful.

A self-made man and self-employed, Daddy sacrificed everything for his children's wellbeing and happiness. The love of his children, and supporting and providing for them, were paramount:

> I wanted to be a good dad. I want to be there for them all the time and so that's kind of, I guess that's part of my motivation, I don't want to be a failure in terms of not being able to be there as a dad for my kids…I have a very strong instinct which says I should be there to protect my kids.

Of all the participants, Daddy also indicated internalisation and acceptance of a softer form of masculinity that sat comfortably for him alongside his strong physique:

> I'm the oldest male in [the family]. I'm the alpha male. I am physically stronger than my wife or, but actually, on an emotional level I feel like it's a little bit reversed because I feel like I'm quite sensitive.

Robertson was also a family man. Raised to be chivalrous, he valued himself as a provider and supporter of others. These were very important roles to him. His narrative also highlighted other traits that appealed to his ideal sense of masculinity:

> I guess I get my male validation from it by being a provider. I've not really thought about that, but I do. I enjoy doing things for people; being supportive. I was brought up in a time when women were honoured and protected, just because they were women. I consider masculinity to be protective towards women.

Physical strength and having a muscular stature and good-looking body were other descriptors participants used to indicate the ideal masculine self to aspire to:

> On the surface I was a healthy guy. I was healthy. I had, at the time I look back I had a hell of a physique with the body building and to look at me you'd think Oh my God you know? (Lewis)

> Big, strong, good looking guy…big strong man. You would look at him and think wow what a man! (Robertson)

Other participants also indicated the importance of being strong and stoic and putting up with situations without complaining or showing emotions. These were traits they valued in themselves and in others:

> My macho; I'm in control, I'm the provider, I'm the man of the family and I'm a good friend to my kiwi friends. I used to be ashamed of showing emotion and tears and sadness. (John)

> That's that psyche of being a male, you know. You're a guy, you've got to wear it on the chin. Suck it up. (Mark)

Trying and Failing

Participants described the effect their experiences of IPV had on their masculine selves. They spoke of feelings of failure; feelings of helplessness, of being weak and vulnerable. They believed these experiences were unique to them and happened to no other men. They spoke directly of, or alluded to, the shame they associated with their circumstances as they did not fit with their identities and masculine selves at their very core. They spoke of the importance of covering up, of hiding what was happening and how they were being affected. They needed to be strong and stoic as to be otherwise, to show themselves as being less of a man, was too shameful.

John described the anguish he experienced as his wife constantly compared him to a girl. This feminine depiction, being the total antithesis to his masculine identity, was devasting for him:

> "You're like a girl, you're just like a girl. You're so moody and emotional. Be a man." So that was damaging to me. That was horrible to me. That was horrible to me. Cause I'm a man's man. But she was touching a nerve. I am soft. I am emotional. I do get affected by that sort of stuff.

Robertson spoke of his experiences of IPV leaving him with a sense of failure. Failing goes against the masculine norm of success and winning and, in relation to this, Robertson's self-esteem diminished:

> A sense of failure on the one hand. Personal failure. Injuries to my sense of self-worth. Injuries to my pride.

Tony spoke of feelings of helplessness. Although during his relationship he realised something was wrong, he was unable to pinpoint exactly what it was except to liken his position to that of an abused woman. For him, the only solution was to keep trying harder, living with hope that by doing so, tomorrow things would improve:

> I remember sitting in my car getting ready to go to work after being told off and feeling terrible and the thought went through my mind maybe if I try really, really hard tomorrow she won't yell at me as much, and realising that that is the kind of thing that battered wives say and thinking then that something was wrong but not feeling like I could do anything about it.

Straus summed up the impact his experiences of IPV had on his masculine self by identifying his overall sense of failure and helplessness. This adversely affected every part of his life. Although at times he did have a sense of hope this was always followed by despair resulting in an underlying hopelessness:

> I think probably the worst impact of all of this on me would be what's described as learned helplessness. I kept trying to do something and I failed and failed and failed and every time I tried, just about every time I tried, I failed. And that lesson gets extrapolated into to the rest of my life. Don't hope, don't try, don't, don't, don't. Things won't turn out OK.

Daddy also expressed his feelings of helplessness, when access to his children was suddenly taken away from him and, leading on from this, when he was trying to navigate the legal system. Even though Daddy had experienced physical violence from his partner, it was the loss of his children that caused him the most pain. The loss of being the father he wanted to be, the protector and provider:

> I felt helpless because I wasn't able to contact her directly and let her know how painful it was for me.
>
> But to deny someone who absolutely loves and adores his children, for 8 weeks, any access whatsoever to them…I'd never leave the children; not for a day. I've wanted children since I was young and, yeah, I wanted to be there. I feel so much, my role and duty is to protect my children and to be there for them. Like a lion really.

> It [the physical violence] was actually nothing. Absolutely nothing, compared to having my children taken off me for 8 weeks. Absolutely nothing. She could have done it with a bat.

Some participants referred to their experiences of IPV and the resulting emotional anguish as negatively affecting their sexual performance. This was a direct assault on their masculinity. George spoke of a diminishing sexual relationship with his partner. As the situation worsened, and the violence increased, he began experiencing erectile dysfunction. This was a new and bewildering affront to his masculinity:

> So sex was diminished and that sort of made me lose my [silence] about it and I just sort of lost all charge and it just sort of…it got worse and worse and I started having mental issues with ***that*** *[emphasised]*. And then she was telling me it's my fault and I'm the problem …It's not me, it just doesn't want to do anything. But some days it would work and then some days it wouldn't work, and I don't get it and she'd say it was in my head. But I've never controlled it like that. It doesn't make sense. It's like you're not a male.

Stuart regarded himself as having regressed mentally in his maturity. He also described experiencing problems with impotency that rocked him to the core:

> All the way along it made me really depressed and emasculated and completely changed my thoughts and my decision making. I started doubting my sexuality because I wasn't feeling intimate about her at all, so I sort of thought it was all women. One night I went to a brothel to find out and I couldn't do anything. I was so humiliated…I think I mentioned at the start, the regression in my maturity. I think that there is a link there between my masculinity and that: being emasculated.

Living with Fear

Participants' daily lives were affected on many levels, all of which seemed to be underpinned by fear. They voiced many different fears as they spoke of their experiences of IPV: fears for their own mental health and safety, fears for their partners and for their children.

> I was scared for my emotional safety. I'd been through this suicidal ideation episode and I was scared of whether I'd cope. Whether I'd survive myself in that. (Straus)

They expressed fear of going home; of losing everything; of speaking up and not being believed; and fears grounded in partners' threats. The participants' masculine sense of self, as discussed above, was a major contributor to this. They related how their day-to-day functioning had changed, both at the time and continuing after the abusive relationship had ended. Participants also expressed their bewilderment and confusion around what was happening, their fears, and self-blame.

> I ended up apologising for something that I hadn't done but I remember sitting at the top of the stairs just crying. A grown man crying. I thought wow, who would believe this, a guy who would bench press 350lbs for fun just sitting crying because I didn't know what to do. I didn't know how to handle it. (Lewis)

> The world didn't make any sense. I thought I was crazy actually. I thought I was living in some bizarre world. (Straus)

Being Afraid

Some participants spoke of the fear they experienced on finding themselves having thoughts of lashing out at their partners and responding with violence. They described these thoughts as being foreign and frightening, as they became afraid, they would be pushed to their limits and would suddenly erupt, acting on these unwelcome thoughts.

Daddy related how low he became when he lost access to his children. Although practised in the art of mindfulness meditation, he nonetheless struggled with thoughts of lashing out violently:

> I felt absolutely so low after that. I went home and I felt like there was this literally a metal cage being put over my head. I don't know why that visualisation came into my head or why I felt that, but it felt like that.

> I experienced a lot of violent thoughts and I'm very grateful that I discovered meditation when I was 18 and I've learned to observe my thoughts and be able to sit with them for hours. And I know thoughts change; thoughts come, and they go. As long as you don't act on your thoughts, you're fine. But even still, even with all of that experience…I was still a total wreck! And I was at risk of becoming the violent criminal I was portrayed to be. (Daddy)

Straus spoke of being afraid for his wife's physical safety due to the thoughts he was having. The thoughts scared him, as he, like Daddy, was afraid of finally cracking and lashing out at her:

> If anything there was a fear for her physical safety because um I wasn't quite sure, um, how to describe it at the time but I've read since then about, I've forgotten the term now, something like unwanted thoughts or intrusive thoughts that would come into your head and I would think about hitting her.
>
> There was like a very calm scene and I'd just be imagining myself hitting her. Umm and it would only happen when we were arguing, and I would see myself hitting her or punching her or kicking her or something. I'm not a violent person and it was like…it was scary to me and I thought what if one day I cracked? What if one day I did that? (Straus)

Straus also expressed experiencing fear for his mental health and his own safety following his experiencing suicidal thoughts:

Bill's fear of becoming violent was directed towards others rather than his partner. When he was released after spending a weekend in police custody, he felt anger as never before and he described the fear this created in him:

> [I was] bewildered. Mystified and for the first time in my life, angry as hell. I was angry. I was really scared of myself. I was scared of what I was going to do. I was scared I might walk down the street, that somebody might knock into me and I would turn around and take them out. I was volatile. I was ummmm, somebody might start a small argument with me and I'd end up ripping their fucking head off. You know?

Bill was self-employed, his work taking him into private homes. Working alone, with no one else around except the homeowner, who was usually female, Bill was afraid of what he might do if he was taken by surprise by an individual suddenly appearing behind him. Bill's fear was so great he no longer felt safe working in a self-employed capacity:

> So, I ended up, I just couldn't work for myself...and I ended up getting another job… and I felt I was safer… I actually didn't want to be around any women. I just didn't feel safe around women and I had very low tolerance for anything.

Participants voiced their fears of going home. They were afraid of what they might find, what mood their partners may be in and how they would be treated:

> So [sigh], I'd cry in the car on the way home from work. I'd be scared of what I was going to find...cause sometimes she'd be ok, and sometimes she'd be sigh you know just really, really cold toward me. (Straus)

> I used to drive home in a lot of fear, not knowing what person I'd come home to. Whether she'd be the nutter or the friendly one, 'cause she could just switch personalities so quickly. (Stuart)

For some, although they described not experiencing fear in the beginning, as confrontations increased, this changed:

> I was becoming more and more scared of the confrontations. I don't like confrontation. I was terrified [she was going to take the children away]. (Robertson)

> And there's all this mirror broken on the carpet. It looked like a scene out of some horror movie. You know once you see bits of broken mirror, and at that point, I finally started to get quite frightened. (Bill)

Some participants found nights particularly difficult as they feared not only for their own safety but also for that of their children:

> There were other nights [when] I got out of bed and I went through in the kids' room because I was scared to go to sleep. I was absolutely terrified. I was also terrified that if she couldn't get me, she might go through [to the kids]. So, I'd go and sit in the girls' room. Freezing cold, frightened to go to sleep; frightened to not be near them. (Robertson)

> I was worried a few times going to bed and being in the same house with her asleep. (Tony)

> I blocked up my door each time. I jammed it with a 4x2 each night and that's how I slept. I locked myself in there and I knew that I couldn't leave the door unlocked because it would be dangerous. (Tim)

Stew expressed his fear as all-encompassing, a fear of life and of finally losing everything:

> I think just fear of life in general, to be honest. I think fear of… I guess fear of winding up nowhere with nothing. Which actually eventually happened.

Harm to Health

Participants spoke of the differing ways in which their experiences of fear affected their physical health and mental wellbeing. They described high states of stress: they became hypervigilant always watching their backs as they never knew what to expect and when a violent outburst would occur. Some participants became extremely anxious and experienced panic attacks while many struggled with sleeping. Varying levels of low mood were common, with some suffering from depression.

Lewis spoke of the negative impact the stress of his situation had on his physical health, as his blood pressure increased and maintained extremely high levels. This effect on his health has continued to the present day:

> My health had been suffering. My blood pressure. Found out my blood pressure went up to the point where it was quite serious. Affecting me to the point where my blood pressure was up to 210 over 105. (Lewis)

Tom spoke of the stress he felt having to return home at the end of a working day. He turned to drink, consuming large amounts of alcohol. Tom related becoming dependant on alcohol and the negative effects on his general wellbeing as his health deteriorated as a result of this:

> Every time I had to go home at the end of the day from working, I'd be tensed up you see. I wasn't looking forward to going home.

> Oh, it was terrible, and I just went and hit the bottle, of course. I made my home brew and drank and drank and drank. Turned into an alcoholic. And, of course, my body started breaking down.

Alex spoke of being always on edge, never knowing what would happen at any time. He observed how unhappy and depressed he had become. He described feeling exhausted and stressed, to the point of burnout. Struggling with sleep and feeling helpless, he did not know what to do:

> I felt so unhappy, like being in prison. It was like I always felt like I walked on (*sigh*) eggshells. Glass. It could only be a word or something I did, or not much from my point of view, it could trigger a huge, there was just immediately right into yelling.
>
> Sleeping problems and I just felt really, really, stressed; helpless, I guess. I didn't know what to do…It was exhausting. Very exhausting. I was sort of almost burnt out. I felt too weak. It felt like I wasted my life. That's how it felt. I just felt so down and it's just I don't want to live my life like this.

Straus also referred to having had to 'walk on eggshells' and take great care not to criticise anything his wife said or did. From experience, he knew that it would only take a word to evoke a negative response:

> I was absolutely walking on eggshells about saying anything critical of her because I knew that would evoke something.

Dave echoed the comments of Alex and Straus. He described being on edge all the time, not knowing what would happen next. These feelings led to anxiety and he then began having panic attacks when returning home:

> I had panic attacks. When I was walking in the door. I put it down to the noise of the children…but it was just being on edge waiting for the next tirade to start happening. (Dave)

Stuart was an avid sportsman. He spoke of gradually becoming more depressed as the violence continued and reaching a point when he stopped exercising and slept little:

> It wasn't really easy. No exercise. I gained weight and was just depressed out of my mind.
>
> In the end no, [not sleeping]. I was sleeping on the couch just watching sport all night. Getting a couple of hours doze where I could.

Some participants spoke of experiencing periods of such great distress, and as their moods spiralled downwards, they turned to self-harming behaviours:

> She made me think I was wrong about stuff and it was just, fuck my life. Then, I would hit myself. I used to hit myself in the head. I concussed myself once. (George)

> It was like "what the hell!" and I remember biting myself. Actually biting myself…I was so distraught. I couldn't believe what was doing on. My whole life was falling apart. (Tim)

> I was afraid for what I would do to myself. there were a number of times when I was so depressed, I would punch my throat. (Stuart)

The mental anguish and ongoing stress became so great for some participants, they began thinking of suicide and some came close to following through with their suicidal ideation:

> I remember looking in the mirror in the hallway and saying it's all happening again [strong emotional reaction here] it's all happening again. So, I'm not going to put up with it. I'm going to kill myself. I couldn't cope with being abused again. (John)

> It was pouring down with rain that night and I was sitting on top of a tree with a rope round my neck telling myself to jump off it. Another time I was pretty low …. I was watching the approaching train come, I was standing on the platform telling myself to jump. But there's always this little voice inside me saying "No". (Stuart)

While most of the suicidal ideation participants spoke of, seemed to be a direct consequence of the IPV from their partners, Straus spoke of having suicidal thoughts following a traumatic experience in a joint counselling session with his wife. Having tried to speak up about his wife's behaviour and been advised he must be to blame for her behaviour, he concluded that everyone believed he was wrong; therefore, he must be bad. He described a sense of hopelessness at having lost everything dear to him:

> And I went home, and I started to think about killing myself. And that was scary [becoming extremely upset] because it's like someone holding a gun against your head except it's you…And it just seemed hopeless and I thought I've lost my health; I've lost my wife I've lost anything worthwhile.

> I thought about it a lot. I was looking round for concrete pillars that I could find that I could drive into. Um [long pause].

Losing Self

Participants' descriptions of their experiences highlighted the resulting impacts these had on their core being and self-worth. For some, this resulted in losing touch with their sense of self, their identity. They spoke of being gradually worn down over time as the same violent behaviours towards them were repeated, again and again:

> You can apologise, you can do nice things and if it doesn't happen again for a long time you can think oh well that was a one-off and sort of gloss over it. But you keep chipping away and doing those nasty things and eventually the water dripping on the stone will wear it down. (Robertson)

> You just feel beaten down and stupid. (George)

Straus described how the accumulation of daily experiences of psychological and emotional IPV sank into his soul and eroded his sense of self, his dignity:

> But it was a little bit like ummm you know you talk about putting a frog into cold water and bringing it to the boil? It was like that. I didn't quite get it, but it just got worse and worse and instead of boiling water it was like acid. It was like slowly corroding away at my self-esteem. Slowly corroding away at any sort of sense of dignity or respect that I had for myself [getting very upset] just eating into me a little bit at a time.

Straus further described how he changed from being outgoing, confident and successful in life to being a shell of his former self:

> I was not some sort of loser in life, I guess. But I became more and more of a loser. I lost my confidence in lots of different ways. I still haven't got it back.

Stuart lost touch with his adult self. He regressed to a younger, less mature self:

> It's the things they say that leave a lasting imprint on you. And that was the same for me. It left me in a place where I was really, really regressed in my maturity.

> So I think, from my perspective, I'd feel I was being told off by my mother a lot of the time by my ex-wife and I'd cave and I'd feel like I'd been sent to my room, that sort of thing. And I'd almost become younger. I'd lost years off my life, in terms of my maturity.

Lewis related how he did not know who he was any more:

> I didn't know who I was, you know. If I'd look at it, I don't think I was allowed to know who I was. I'd been changed to suit her; you know? Yeah.

Stew went from being an outgoing man, who enjoyed the company of others to withdrawing from life. He rejected interacting with others and taking part in activities he usually enjoyed. His former self had disappeared:

> So, I'm an outgoing guy; I have a lot of friends. I also love mountain biking and fishing and all of those things. I stopped doing them. I stayed home. I stopped interacting with my friends. I just vanished and I stayed home, and I did what she needed me to do: trim the trees, work in the yard.
>
> I became quite withdrawn. I became quite socially isolated.
>
> I literally shut down. I know when it happened; it was about a year into our relationship and something turned a switch and I shut down.

John echoed Stew's sense of vanishing: he did not know who he was any more. He was fading away, disappearing:

> I said I'm falling to pieces…I don't know who I am anymore. I've lost myself. I don't even exist. I don't even know who I am. I'm just this - going invisible. I'm becoming transparent.
>
> I felt like I was fading, like in a movie. I felt like I was disappearing [an emotional reaction] I haven't spoken about this; I haven't spoken about this for a long time. So that was, yeah, it really was a feeling of disappearing. It really was a feeling of disappearing.

Ongoing Effects

At the time of the interviews, the relationships of all but two of the participants had ended. Some were in new relationships, some had married or remarried and others remained single. Regardless of their relationship status, however, most spoke of living with ongoing effects resulting from their experiences of IPV. These included nightmares and behaviours in others that would trigger memories and stress responses. A common thread in the participants' descriptions was a loss of trust and an underlying anxiety with respect to interacting with women and entering into an intimate relationship.

Stew, since remarried to a gentle woman, described how being spoken to in a certain way can still trigger a fear response within him:

> To this day it affects me, and I can't decide whether it's [my ex-partner] and/or whether it's my mother, but I've got those triggers and if my wife speaks to me in the wrong way I often snap. I don't become violent because I'm not a violent person, but I can become quite aggressive in my speech. But yeah, sometimes she speaks quite bluntly and sometimes I find myself getting triggered. I know what to do with it and I deal with it but yeah, it does happen, it still exists.

Alex spoke of the long-term effect his experiences have had for him. He has found it difficult to trust and interact with women again on an intimate level, finding himself unable to progress to a more serious relationship:

> I still struggle with mmm. For a while I really had [long pause] you know to mistrust women. I thought I really struggled with that, to have trust in women and now just last year I was sort of almost getting close to somebody and I was just panicking after it became more serious. I just can't do it yeah. So, I still, it's a long-term thing.

Alex also described how memories come to the surface and trigger stress responses when he collects his young child for weekly visits. He still has times when he continues to feel very vulnerable and controlled:

> It's had a huge impact, yes. Because I still have to have weekly contact with her almost. It's almost, phew, it's so hard to break up from it and to [silent pause]. It would be much easier if you didn't have a child. Then I just would

> never have to talk to her again and I wouldn't [silent pause]. But now, because we have a child, we still have to have contact.
>
> When it runs OK or when it is smooth, I'd say then I feel comfortable but there are moments when it feels very vulnerable constantly. I know sometimes just a thing can trigger and upset her and that brings back the emotions of yeah, the stress and anxiety you know doing something not right or. So, it feels very vulnerable although most of the time it goes well but, yeah it feels vulnerable.

Stuart expressed his desire for counselling to help regain his confidence and recognised he needed to learn how to relate to women again:

> I also think I need a female [counsellor] as well. Just to help with that masculinity. Someone who's not afraid to say some things I might not want to hear and teach me how to relate to women again 'cause I just don't think like I can anymore.
>
> I think one thing. I think my masculinity now is…. I would think that most men in my position now are facing that; where their relationships with other females, whether it be their mother, their sister, their new partner, or friends, would be different. And I think that's a key thing to work on for any man who's been through this. Because I know for a fact that it gets affected. Um. Yeah. For me, any women, for a long time, who raised their voice at me, I just caved like hell.

Stuart related the existence of lasting echoes of the verbal abuse he had experienced that have given rise to a lingering anger residing within him:

> I've talked to young women who have gone through domestic abuse and they say you know the cuts heal; the bruises heal, but it's the things they say that leave a lasting imprint on you. And that was the same for me…There's still that fluttering anger inside me and I don't know if I could ever get rid of that. I don't really know how to.

He also referred to having nightmares that lasted long after the relationship ended:

> We were cleaning the house out and dad found 12 loose knives under her side of the bed which she claims it was to keep me safe because she thought I was

> suicidal and that's just not the sort of thing you want to find under your partner's side of the bed directly near their pillow, 12 giant knives. It just freaks you out. And so, I'd have nightmares about that. I'd have nightmares about the verbal stuff she used to say to me about the assaults, just all sorts of things. It took me a long time to work through them. (Stuart)

When Bill met his partner, he was ready for a new relationship, looking for love and companionship and to settle down. Bill spoke of having not gone out with anyone since the ending of this relationship. He has lost trust in women, preferring to remain unattached and on his own:

> And personally, I haven't had a date since then. I haven't had a date. I'm just way, way, not ready and I'm just way, way, all out of trust and my innocence is lost when it comes to all this stuff. You know I would need to meet somebody pretty special and, that had a bit of a heightened awareness. Sometimes, you know, I see stuff now, the way people carry on in relationships and I could never do that anymore. Not after what I've been through….Oh maybe one day. I'm actually OK on my own now.

Living with the Violence

As discussed earlier in this Chapter, although some participants expressed fear of the thoughts they were having of becoming violent towards their partners or others, they all spoke of being raised to be protective of women and not to hit them. Nevertheless, one participant spoke of finally reacting with violence, at a time when he had had enough of the physical attacks

> She was raising the rafters with the screaming. I'm just putting an arm up here and another one there and turning away to stop her kicking me in the vitals and wondering what to do because this can't go on… and I punched her in the belly. I don't know how far I thought that through but you don't have to hit someone hard in the belly to wind them and it's all over then, they're not going to do anything to you… and it was all over. I said, "if you ever touch me again there'll be more of that". And she never did. (Robertson)

Others indicated had had to use some form of strength or force to restrain their partners for the safety of them both

> I woke up on the spot (snapped his fingers) and I thought I'm not having this. I stood up and I grabbed her arms like this (indicating his hands around upper arms) and I marched her to the couch and I told her to sit down cause I said "if you don't I'm gonna smack you". Now I've never hit a woman in my life. (Stew)

Throughout their narratives, participants indicated strategies they adopted that enabled them to cope with their situations rather than leave. Leaving for most was not an option. Those with children expressed the fear of losing access to them if they left the relationship. Some referred to being concerned for their children's safety if they left the relationship and were no longer present in the house to protect them. Participants also spoke of strong emotional bonds and love that prevented them from leaving the relationships. They spoke of trying to stay positive, hoping their situation would improve. Some rationalised and excused the behaviour by looking at their partner's past. It was important for some participants to search for reasons explaining the abusive behaviour and others found relief from their experiences in various ways.

Holding on to Hope

Participants spoke of reasons for remaining in the relationship and of holding on to hope. They loved their partners and held onto the hope that the relationships could be maintained or saved. Those with children spoke of not wanting to break up the family unit: so, they held on.

> How did I cope? (pause thinking) I don't know, I kept hoping that we could do it. She's a good person, I'm a good person. deep down We care for each other…we love our children...I kept working at it I kept thinking "I'm gonna keep trying I'm not gonna give up." So, I guess it's that bit of hope that I hung onto. (Straus)

> And I always hoped. I thought it was temporary and thought it will improve. It's only for now so I'll work harder and put more effort into it, and it will get better. Yes, so it was always the hope that it will get better, it will get better. I'll just work harder and do everything she wants me to do then it will improve. (Alex)

> I think, even though I knew it was futile, I always held onto this dream of having a good family and good relationships. I think that's what it was. Yeah. Despite the fact that I knew that it wasn't going to get better. (Stew)

Tim spoke of wanting a loving relationship where he could build a life with his partner. Although Tim and his partner separated on several occasions he always went back, holding on to the belief that she was as committed to the relationship as he was. He spoke of how he loved her, how he kept going back to her; how they had chemistry together:

> We were committed to actually building a life together. But we had a natural chemistry. There was no doubt. And she said all the right words, "I love you" and everything that you're looking for. She was a lovely woman.

Tim rationalised that the good times were very, very good and chose to hold onto hope and focus on the positive:

> And you know leaving, considering her history, and we'd been together for about 8 years, was very hard for me to see that. We had chemistry together. There was no doubt. She said she loved me, and the good times were very, very good and that's what I tried to focus on, being a positive person. But when I look back it wasn't at all healthy that I went back to her.

Straus recounted what he termed honeymoon periods, that restored his hope and gave him something to hold onto:

> So, we'd have honeymoon periods. And during that it's just like, it's like it's all off it's just like everything's normal, everything's fine, everything's happy. It's incredible. And then there'd be something. There'd be an incident that would evoke something, and it would all be gone.

He likened the honeymoon periods to being intermittent rewards. These were times of respite from the violence: times that restored his hope, providing strength to continue:

> You know you learn from behavioural psychology that intermittent rewards are the strongest reward, and these were intermittent rewards, because things were crap and then there'd be the intermittent reward. And the intermittent reward would be so incredibly rewarding - so it would be like this is fantastic, I'm so in love with my wife, we're going to have a great future and it would really ah lock me in I guess into being in that. It's a little bit like Stockholm syndrome, I guess. It's a little bit like, you get this little bit, this little bit of a reward. The reward's so good and it just...(long silent pause).

Rationalisation

As part of keeping hope alive participants rationalised what was happening. Some looked to their partners' early lives and experiences as explanations for their behaviour. Many believed the responsibility lay with themselves, they must be wrong somehow and therefore things would improve if they tried harder

When Bill's partner offered explanations for her behaviour, he rationalised that given time things would settle and improve:

> But it was sort of generally explained to me that men hadn't treated her well in her past and that I was sort of bearing the brunt of that. That all her mistrust for me was because of the result of the way she had been treated. So therefore, it sort of instilled in me, well maybe she'll just settle down one day and get into it.

Bill accepted his partner's explanation because he loved her. He wanted the relationship to work:

> I wanted it so much to be good. I wanted. I loved her and I wanted to be part of a couple. I wanted to have some togetherness. I wanted um and I put up with a lot of things.

Mark had experienced an abusive childhood. When his wife became abusive, he would compare his situation to that when he was a child as a way of rationalising to himself that things were not that bad:

> I'd try and comfort myself by thinking mum was more abusive than you were. Weird eh. I was trying to make a situation better by comparing it to another bad situation. Odd. Odd indeed.

> Many believed that if they only tried harder then things would improve.

Looking for Answers

Some participants intentionally researched for information that would offer explanations for what was happening for them, as they continued to hold on to their dreams and to hope.

As the polaric swings in Bill's partner's behaviour continued and following her allegations of his violence that resulted in his arrest, he began to search for answers online. Bill had the

documentation setting out the events leading to his arrest, but he was at a loss to understand why his partner would have done such a thing:

> I could explain that part, but I couldn't explain why the hell, even to myself, why the hell a woman would do such a thing. You know? What sort of person would do this sort of thing? And so, and I never thought I'd get anywhere but I started looking up personality disorders.

The information Bill found online concerning borderline personality disorder provided a plausible and acceptable explanation: one he could link to his partner's behaviour:

> Then I hit on the borderline and it was like the lightbulb went on. This is what I've been dealing with. So that was a massive understanding and that was a huge relief, just to have that understanding of what I'd been up against. Yeah. That was a big one.

Straus indicated he had done some reading on IPV to try to come to an understanding of his wife's behaviour. Near the time he and his wife separated, Straus also found information online that was powerful and illuminating for him.

> I came across a web-based support site for what's called NONs, the non-borderline partner in a relationship. I started reading through the experiences that people have living with a borderline personality partner and I just felt like I'd come home. I just felt like holy hell, it's me, this is what's been happening to me. It's like (sigh) these are my experiences…Then I looked into what borderline personality is like in the DSM and she doesn't have borderline personality as you'd clinically define it…but she displays traits of it.

Tim also carried out online research in the hope of finding an explanation for his partner's behaviour. From the information he found, Tim became convinced she was suffering from bipolar disorder:

> I went online and I thought she must have bipolar. So, I joined, I just got a regular update from a bipolar supporter's group. I don't know why I felt I had to be a victim (nervous laughter) and I remember reading all these things and thinking surely this must be it.

Although Tim found a rational explanation for his partner's behaviour, he related how he kept looking for other answers, reading as much as he could. Like Bill, Tim also questioned himself:

> And I would have loved that to happen. I would have like that to work out, but I was with someone who, well I think has a mental disorder. You know, the reality is you do your head in trying to figure it out. I read every book. I used to get books on co-dependency and, you know, got a shelf of books on trying to analyse the other person. But it was me as well. I needed to question why I was having to do all that. (Tim)

Seeking Refuge

Participants related various ways they found refuge. Some self-medicated turning to alcohol or drugs while others immersed themselves in work or would deliberately stay away from home as long as possible.

Lewis turned to drink "trying to find solace in the bottom of a glass or a bottle, but it never happens." He found himself staying away from home more, finding relief in his work:

> I think I ended up becoming a workaholic I just worked and worked and worked.

He expressed a reluctance to return home at the end of a working day. He would look for reasons not to go home, and would often drive around aimlessly, to pass the time:

> I didn't want to [go home]. I would try any excuse; I would look for anything not to. I would even drive around … just to pass the time so I didn't have to walk in that door. (Lewis)

Alex echoed Lewis' comments on work and wanting to stay away from home as much as possible. He found work a place of refuge as it provided a safe and supportive environment:

> Work felt like kind of a holiday for me. It was kind of a time out to go to work and then weekends were terrible. That was the worst time, the evenings and the time after work.
>
> It [Friday] was terrible. I didn't want to go home, and I was happy at the end of the weekend when I could go back to work.

Straus would take refuge in his car in order to escape the environment at home. At times, he would also sleep in his car:

> But I guess it just comes down to fight or flight. It was really just I'm being hurt here…how can I protect myself from this hurt? And I'd sometimes run away...Half a dozen or a dozen nights I would have gone off and slept in my car 'cause I just couldn't stand to be in that environment anymore. I couldn't stand to be in that corrosive environment. Running away, yeah, I guess. To remove myself from the situation.

Stuart deliberately removed himself from the situation. He also spoke of sleeping in his car or would book himself into a hotel:

> A couple of times I slept in the car just to get away in the middle of the night to get the heck out of the house.
>
> A lot of the time I was just booking hotel rooms to get the hell away from her and have some time to [myself]. I'd just try to relax and get away from the abuse. Have a break. (Stuart)

Being in the company of other men proved instrumental in regaining a sense of self for both Lewis and John. It was in a group situation, experiencing the camaraderie of other men, where they each had time away from their respective situations and found a sense of belonging and validation.

Lewis spoke of secretly returning to the gym and the positive effect this had on his wellbeing:

> I actually started going back to the gym secretly. So, I would finish work a little bit earlier. Go to the gym. Have the bag with my gym gear in the car, in the boot, hidden. I'd go to the gym, workout, get back into my business clothes, suit, before I went home. So that was another part of that little, you know, street that I'd walk down each night thinking, Yeah, I'm getting back to me. I deserve this.

Although he did not confide in his mates at the gym, this was a place where Lewis experienced belonging and acceptance:

> That helped me both physically and started to strengthen me mentally as well. Cause my friends were there. As soon as I stepped back into the gym they were

> there anyway. It was as though I'd never been away so that in itself was just an awesome feeling 'cause no matter how much of a shitty day I'd had, they were always there for me and they didn't judge me and that's the biggest thing.

Being in the company of other men proved to be a life saver for John, who was introduced to a men's group, purely by chance. Although initially reluctant to engage, he did attend a meeting and was surprised to find how much he connected with it. The men in the group provided John with a lifeline through which he learned coping strategies and gained inner strength:

> It [the group] was unbelievable. It saved my life. It saved my life.

Challenges and Obstacles

Challenges and obstacles participants faced could also be viewed as part of their experience of IPV, however these findings have been placed in this chapter as they are closely linked to effects described above and participants' masculine identities. For these men, the shame of being a man abused by his female partner, and fears related to speaking up left them feeling trapped Those with children spoke of the importance of remaining in their relationships for the children.

For the Sake of the Children

Participants with children spoke of their children as being a major reason for staying in the relationship. As presented earlier in this Chapter, they spoke of fears, if they left the relationships, of losing access to them. Some also feared for the safety of their children if they were not present.

Mark spoke of staying and surviving in the relationship for seven years after the birth of his youngest child. Although unbearable, he stayed for the children:

> So, I just basically lived out those last few years. [The youngest child] was 7 when we split so I was basically just living, hating it but living it for the kids.

Tim also spoke of remaining in the relationship for the children. Making sure they were safe, keeping them happy and keeping the family unit intact were important to him:

> It should have lasted a lot less than that [14 years]. People said, why didn't you leave a lot earlier; because of the kids. I was trying to protect the kids. I kept going back home because I had to keep the kids happy and keep the family going and keep things rolling along.

John spoke of the significance of continuing the legacy of his parents, that of staying together. It was that legacy that kept him in the relationship for such a long time When he did finally begin to consider separation, and disclosed his experiences of IPV to a friend, John was advised to stay for the safety of the children:

> [I stayed]. My parents never split-up and that was part of my mantra. I'm not splitting up.
>
> I didn't want to separate, and I wanted to be together like my parents were – that's the model for the kids. I remember [my friend] saying don't you ever leave her; don't leave those kids on their own with her. I said I've got no choice. He said don't you leave those children alone with that woman.

Dave spoke of his children hearing, and being a witness to, the abuse he was subjected to. However, he believed it was important to stay for them. Eventually, when the relationship did come to an end, he recognised it was better that the children were no longer exposed to the violence:

> That was pretty terrible. I'd often thought that I couldn't leave the marriage because of the kids. It wouldn't be good for them to be from a broken or split-up home but once she said the marriage was over I realised it was better for them not to be seeing that all the time and to see me modelling a healthy relationship with someone else.
>
> Once we'd broken up, I visited and spelled out exactly what would happen if I ever feared for their safety. Yeah. And if I thought they were getting – not just physical safety – but if I thought they were getting the same kind of treatment I was getting.

When Straus decided his situation had become such that he could no longer continue living in the same house, he attempted to leave. In recounting that occasion, strong emotions re-emerged for him as he spoke of reaching his car and turning back with the realisation he could not live apart from his children. They were his world and he could not bear the thought of not being able to see them every day:

> At one stage I packed my bags and thought I can't I just can't take this anymore. I have to leave. And um I packed up, told her I was leaving, and I was just about getting out to the car and then I realised I'm not going to kiss

> my kids goodnight. (*becoming very emotional with huge intake and out breath*). I thought well lots of people do that lots of people don't kiss their kids goodnight. You know you'll see them every second week, you know. I thought fuck that I'm not not kissing my kids goodnight every night. I don't care what I go through I'm going to kiss my kids goodnight every night. And so, aahhhh, I came back in and unpacked my bags and said I'm staying.

Thinking of his children also served as a safety barrier for Straus when, he was suicidal. He related trying to find ways of making his death look like an accident as he could not leave a legacy of suicide to his children:

> Ummm the love of my kids. I couldn't leave a legacy of suicide. I couldn't do that to my kids, that would be too horrific. I loved them too much for that. So, I had to make it look like an accident. And I just couldn't come up with a way of making it look like an accident.

At the time of the interviews both Tony and Daddy remained in their relationships, each determined they would be a success.

Daddy was determined to make the relationship work for the sake of the children. Doing everything for his children to protect them, to ensure they had a safe and happy upbringing, was paramount to him. He also spoke of growing up without the presence of his father and did not want the same situation for his children. They were his world and the focus of his life:

> I am still with an open heart saying hey I want this to work. I want us to be a family. Even if we're not together sexually, living together, I really don't mind. Just as long as we still have this family unity. Not for you and me, for the kids.
>
> When there's actions and words and feelings of unity our children are very happy. I see their eyes light up. I see that's what they want. I listen to them; I hear that's what they want. They want unity. They want harmony and they want love. When they see love happening between me and my wife they light up with joy. It's what I want them to see and that's my big thing now.
>
> I just feel like, for me, this is the only children, I mean I may have other children but right now this is it for me. This is it. This is my opportunity. My dad left when I was 6 months old. I never want to repeat that. It's actually one of those things. It's one of my missions, one of my goals to be together for the

> kids. To have a father, the father that I never had. I want to be there for my kids.

Tony spoke of his relationship as being a success story. He gave several reasons for staying together: the children, financial concerns and the fact that he did not want to give up:

> Kids would be one. Financial reasons would be another. Pig headedness because I could see we were getting somewhere. The fact that she acknowledged what she was doing; where she was wrong and where I was wrong, and we could actually acknowledge our roles within the situation. And that I didn't feel directly that I was going to be killed.

It's a Shameful Thing

> I think, umm I think my experience and being able to talk wouldn't necessarily be the same for everyone. I think a lot of men would be ashamed to talk about it. (Frank)

Participants referred, either directly or indirectly, to the shame generated by their vulnerability and inability to stand up to their partners. Shame undermined their masculine selves, as described earlier in this Chapter, and operated as a barrier to speaking up and seeking help. Because of that and because of their perceptions of existing beliefs and attitudes of others, most of the participants remained silent. Holding expectations of not being believed and being ridiculed, they continued to present an image to the outside world of a strong, in control, successful male.

Alex spoke to his parents but only in terms of having arguments with his partner. He remained silent about most of his experiences. He hid what was happening:

> I so I sort of kept it secret kind of. Nobody knew. Everybody thought it was just this happy family. And it was terrible because I felt I'm living a lie. Everybody thought everything was fine, but it was just hell.

Mark referred to keeping silent as being part of the male makeup: being stoic, getting on with things and not letting on that anything is wrong:

> I don't know, it's that stubborn kiwi male thing, you know, not wanting to admit that you have a problem.

John spoke directly of how he did everything to hide from his friends and colleagues what was happening in his personal life as it did not fit with his self-image and what he believed they perceived him to be:

> All I was thinking of…was how to not reveal what's going on, because I present a certain personality to my friends and colleagues that doesn't match up to the fact that actually guys, I'm not the boss of the house. I am actually weak and have no power and no say in that house and I do as I'm told. And if I don't, I get threatened. And if I keep trying to assert myself, I get hit.

Stuart spoke of the shame he felt that prevented him from speaking to anyone about his circumstances or trying to seek help. Thinking he was the only man this happened to, he referred to the contribution media had in fuelling his expectations he would not be believed:

> Shame…You watch the news and every time they talk about domestic violence it's always the women who are the victims, it's never ever thought about and they just have to mention the word and all of a sudden a female or woman comes into it. And I thought that's what domestic violence is. I think most New Zealanders probably think that…and I thought I was the only guy who was suffering from this…And I just thought everyone would bloody laugh if I tried to tell them that I was a domestic abuse victim and I just didn't.
>
> Yeah, I just didn't have any trust in what people would say and you know I was also worried about the ramifications of that for my family. Of how they would react. So, I just felt completely trapped and just didn't want to tell anyone. It was just embarrassment, [pause] humiliation.

When Straus sought help and attended counselling for depression, he chose to remain silent and not disclose anything about what was happening in his intimate relationship. Because he had come to see himself as being in some way essentially bad, he believed he should not speak up:

> But whenever I went to counselling, for some reason I never told them about what was going on in the relationship. I sort of felt like I have to deal with me somehow. It was too, it was like, it was this individualisation. It's not about what's happening in society or my relationship, it's about me so I'll have to deal with what's happening for me, but I won't mention stuff about what [she] is doing or what's going on.

Like others, Straus also echoed adherence to masculine norms of being stoic:

> I guess I felt when I was going individually for counselling, I was going… to deal with my depression and I shouldn't, if I'm dealing with my depression, I shouldn't blame that on someone else or on the circumstances. It's my problem.

Lewis spoke of feeling embarrassed and therefore not confiding in his friends. He felt it would be burdening them with something that was his problem to solve:

> No. I didn't want to burden them, and I felt embarrassed at the time as well. You know. Would they believe me? Probably cause they're my friends but they had their own lives. They obviously had their own um what they had to deal with on a day-to-day basis, whatever that was, but why? Why would I burden them with my problems? Because it was me, it was my problem and it was mine at the time. I thought I was the one who caused it so why should I try to find, you know, any sort of resolution for that because it was my problem.

Summary

In this chapter the range of effects the experiences of IPV had on the men in this study have been presented, some of which have proved to be ongoing. These experiences conflicted with their personal constructions of masculine identity, resulting a sense of failure, helplessness, isolation and shame. Participants thought processes, beliefs and experiences of the assumptions and responses of others added other layers of stress, challenges and obstacles they faced on a daily basis. In order to preserve their standing, they became engulfed in silence as they strove to hide the reality of their personal lives from others. To present a public persona that conformed to the masculine norms of their peers and their own constructions of masculinity was paramount. Many became trapped: unable to leave, unable to speak up and seek help. For many the consequences of their experiences had negative effects on their physical and mental health in varying degrees of severity.

The following chapter presents how participants made meaning of their experiences, moving from a personal focus to a wider one of society and systems in general.

Chapter 6: Making Meaning of Experiences: Trapped in a Web of Silence

This chapter details how participants came to make meaning of their experiences as they reflected on their personal circumstances; they also turned their gaze outwards to society's perceptions of and responses to IPV. It begins with participants' inward reflections of their own actions, as they found explanations to make meaning of what happened to them. In doing so, they offered suggestions to other men who may find themselves in similar situations. The focus then shifts to the internal and external mechanisms operating at a personal level, a systems level or societal level. These mechanisms either prevented or impeded the participants' efforts to alert others to their situation, ask for help, or leave the abusive relationships, effectively trapping them in a web of silence. The outline for this chapter is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Outline of findings presented in Chapter 6

Making Meaning of Experiences: Trapped in a Web of Silence
• Reflections: For Themselves and Other Men
• No One Wants to Know
• Responses of Others

Reflections

Many of the participants questioned how they could have become tied up in these relationships at all, and how they did not manage to stand up for themselves. Feelings of shame were evident in their comments as they reflected on their experiences, how they responded and how others reacted.

> I sort of decided to stop caring that I was getting yelled at instead of standing up for myself. [That was] pretty terrible really. I keep looking back at it now and thinking why did I not do something about it then? (Dave)

For themselves

Some participants made meaning of their experiences through rationalizing their partners behaviours, linking them to trauma and adverse childhood experiences their partners suffered at an early age or in their teenage years.

> I see a situation where a little girl, (was abused), night after night, and…she's still struggling with that in her adult life and she's projected that onto me. (Daddy)

Others wondered if their own experiences of being abused as a child or of losing a father figure at an early age contributed to their vulnerability and made them more susceptible to victimisation of IPV as an adult.

> I often think men who find themselves in those situations had violent mothers. I'm not saying in all cases, but certainly in a lot of the cases where I've talked to men about this, they've had violent mothers. And for me; I'd have flashbacks. Because my mother was incredibly violent and so it kind of led me, I think, to be a bit of a pleaser and so I would try and please my wife, my partner. I would try and placate her and do the right things when, in reality, she needed me to stand up to her and tell her to get stuffed and I wasn't able to do that…She had some unresolved issues of her own around her dad and violence and around being raped as a 15-year-old by a bunch of guys as well and so she had some unresolved issues around that. So that made her fight to be the boss. (Stew)

George's experiences were so intense and had become so much part of his every-day existence, that he has struggled to live on his own again even though he was free from the violence and controlling behaviour of his partner. He spoke of finally being able to see the relationship for what it was and looking back wished he had been able to stand up for himself:

> The house is mine again…That's when the quietness and the realisation that I'm alone…Being alone, it's harsh. That's what I find the hardest, I think. Even though I enjoy being alone.
>
> I wished I seen it for what it was. Or I had, I just wish I'd had the balls or the backbone or whatever it was to just push and say no instead of giving in and thinking that I'm wrong. I can make this better. Which is what she got me doing…I'm wrong. I need to make up for it. I'll make it better, I'll make it better, I'll make it better.

Since leaving, George has also struggled with low mood. Like Dave, George has spent time ruminating on his experiences, questioning how he came to be in such a relationship and how even after the relationship was over, she was still trying to exert control over him:

> How could I have been so stupid? I just, I can't believe I got into such a situation actually. I just feel really stupid. I sit here reflecting on it. Oh my God, what the fuck is wrong with me. Am I that retarded? You know? Am I that stupid that I am the dumb piece of shit that let that happen? And I did.
>
> It was like it was thrown at me, this ball of sticky goo and then it consumed me and held me in this relationship. But I had a realisation a few weeks back. It was like I'd been stuck in a box or a jar. Like she'd taken me, put me in a jar and slowly sealed the lid and cut me off from the light. Everything that I knew. Took me away from what I knew …and had a straw and was sucking the energy out of me. She was sucking the life out of me.

Some participants spoke of warnings signs that became apparent early in the relationship or with hindsight they later recognised. Some of them realised something was not quite right but failed to identify what was making them uncomfortable. Regardless, they all spoke of choosing to continue with these relationships as they were looking for love, companionship and commitment and believed they had found this in their partner:

> There were warning signs there that I saw at the time and chose to ignore. So, these are truths that I've never spoken about…I was looking for - how am I going to say this – I was looking for somewhere to land. I was like an aeroplane at an airfield and I was told to hold my position 'cause everything was full. I wanted some stability: I wanted a partner; I wanted a house; I wanted children and she represented stability, organisation, control…I was looking for some stability and she represented it when I met her. (John)
>
> There were obviously a few probably um red flags that I probably should have recognised but I was sort of eager to find someone new and I was probably a little bit over-eager…I wanted it so much to be good. I wanted. I loved her and I wanted to be part of a couple. I wanted to have some togetherness. (Bill)

> The signs were there, it's just living in it and not wanting to believe it…Everyone else could see it. I didn't want to see it. I knew it was there, but I didn't want to see it…it's a mess, an absolute mess. (Mark)

Looking back at how he was treated and how he put up with things, Bill reflected that it must show a fault within himself for despite everything, he still loved her:

> I've got to take responsibility for what happened because I fell in love with a woman who had borderline personality disorder. She was abusive. She was horrible. She was mean. She locked me out. She threw things at me. She did bloody horrible things to me and I still loved her anyway. Now that shows there's something wrong with me.

Daddy was one of two of the participants in this study whose relationship had not ended. At the time of interview, he and his wife had come together and were working towards finding amicable solutions. While a part of Daddy wanted to move on with their lives together and get on with their lives together, for the sake of the children, another part of him wanted his day in court so he could stand up and be heard:

> We'd both decided pretty much to forget these court orders and go away and in that moment it was like God dammit I feel like I really need to stand up here and say hey, look I haven't actually done anything wrong… part of me would love to go to court and say, hey look you know this is perjury lady. This is what you've done.

Daddy also reflected how vulnerable his position remained: he was still at the mercy of his partner as she could change her mind at any time:

> Technically, she still has an Order in her favour and so she could call up the Police at any time and just say he's violating the Protection Order, he's been texting me, he came around the other morning, and she could have me locked up again.
>
> She's got all the power – still.

For Other Men

Being able to stand back and reflect on their experiences from a distance contributed to participants making meaning of IPV, not only from a personal perspective but also considering

those at professional and other societal levels. From the advantage of a wider perspective they were able to see interconnections with all levels, and offered suggestions for other men, professionals and those involved in systems relating to IPV. They spoke of the importance of believing in oneself, of knowing and being grounded and secure in one's personal boundaries, before entering into any relationship. and not compromising themselves or their standards. They all stressed the importance of finding support, and having others walking alongside:

> So, my advice is to find someone who you can talk to who does show empathy who can help you. Don't be a typical kiwi male and bottle it up like I did. (Stuart)

Participants spoke of the importance of finding the courage to stand up for oneself within the relationship but also to let go of any resentment resulting from their experiences:

> To value yourself enough to stand up for yourself. To learn strategies to be able to express how you're feeling and what your opinions are. (Dave)

> Say no. Seriously. Say no. Grow a pair of balls and stand up and say actually woman, I love you to bits, but you can't treat me like that. (Stew)

> I say forgive…themselves and their abusers. I say the day you learn to forgive is the day they can stop hurting you. And forgiveness doesn't necessitate coming together again. (Stew)

A theme that was voiced by all was the advice to others not to remain silent but to speak up and seek help. Participants unanimously spoke of wishing they had found the courage to speak up and seek help for their situations, rather than hide what was happening. They did however acknowledge how difficult this can be to do:

> Don't be afraid to ask for help. I think people are still trying to get that through, through the John Kirwan advertisements on all the time. There are still men who don't ask for help and they think that they can battle through it. That's something women do a lot better I think, overall is to express their feelings. But it's really difficult when it's something that you think is as humiliating as this. (Stuart)

When referring to seeking help, Lewis also commented on how men struggle with this but how important it is, no matter what the situation:

> The biggest thing and what men don't normally do [is] talk. Ask for help, you know…If you see it, talk to someone. If you're affected or suffering, talk to someone or if you're doing it and know that it's wrong, talk to someone. There's always someone out there who can help.

Three of the participants had found help from support groups, two while still living in their relationships and one after he had left. All three spoke of the positive influence this had on their wellbeing as they felt accepted by others:

> Just look for support. You can't do it by yourself. Just get as much support as you can and talk to people openly about it. But look for support groups who can relate to you...People who are in a similar situation, who can relate to your experience; and that's sometimes not your friends. It's not necessarily your family, they don't understand. (Alex)

In looking back participants reflected on how earlier, when they were in the abusive relationships, they believed they had to stay for the sake of the children, for example, or they could make things better. In the present, they identified a change in thinking and offered this as strong advice to other men:

> First and foremost, don't hang around just for the kids. That was a mistake I made. I thought I was doing the right thing, but it was just making things worse [pause] time out is a good thing. I still believe that. (Mark)

> If you fuck up. It's done. That's past. If you're going to make it better don't compromise what you are or believe in. Cause so many times I was talked into things. I just agreed with what I didn't agree with to stop the mayhem, the chaos, the screaming, the yelling which progresses into this. (George)

> You've actually be honest with yourself. If you feel it's wrong just leave. You've got to suck it up and do it. You're better off without that person and that's 100% I believe that now. Don't let someone control you. But it's seeing that someone is controlling you. You've got to be able to [see]. (George)

No One Wants to Know

In effect, participants became trapped by their own silence, or the silence, derision or inaction of others. They presented a façade to others to mask their emotional pain. Consequently, their

situations mostly went unnoticed. However, if their victimisation was recognised or they attempted to speak up, they were largely ignored by others or ridiculed. Generally, no one wanted to know. This had the result of rendering their experiences invisible or, if not invisible, irrelevant.

Stew spoke of how male children are conditioned from a young age not to speak up, but to be stoic. This silence, creating a tradition of stoicism, is then carried forward into their adult lives:

> They can't speak because they're conditioned to not speak, and they live in fear and I think that the breakdown of the modern family came about because men are unable to be strong enough to speak. We're scared, we live in fear.

John alluded to the mask male victims of IPV wear in order to hide emotional pain. Appearing as outwardly calm, he wears a smile as it is important not to show one's emotions. Because of his outward appearance it is assumed he is all right. No one thinks to question his situation or emotional wellbeing and his plight remains invisible:

> I don't show it so it's easy for people to say there's nothing wrong with you, is there? I'll say yeah, there is actually, just ask. I'm not well. I'm in pain. But I can still smile and look like I'm ok because the emotions, the showing of emotions, is a sign of weakness where I come from. You don't show emotional unwellness.

Participants also held expectations that they would not be believed. This operated as another silencing mechanism, confirmation that they should remain silent:

> No because I didn't think anyone would believe me. You know, how could she be abusing you? How could she? Cause nobody would believe that somebody as big as me would be the victim and someone as small as her being the perpetrator. And so, yeah, when you hear or if you're told, he beats her up, you're going to believe it. (Mark)

At times, when some participants tried to speak up, they found their experiences were not taken seriously or were in fact ignored. Frank related responses he had received from others when talking in general terms about IPV occurring for men and the possibility of shame preventing them from speaking up:

> This crops up occasionally in my professional life [the idea that shame may prevent men from speaking up] and I have spoken with people and when I've

> said, I've raised the issue to people. 'Cause we have plans and things of how we are going to deal with violence against women. And when you sort of say well actually what about dealing also with violence against men the response has generally been that very rarely happens, it's an almost negligible problem and it's discounted.

George spoke of attempts he made to speak up to his friends. He did this in roundabout ways, dropping hints that he was being controlled. However, as soon as they reacted in response, he was unable to continue, immediately shutting down and turning his comments around:

> And every so often I would drop these little bombs, what do you call them, like tongue-in-cheek things. I would say things and I would get the angry scowl, but people wouldn't kind of click over. Or I'd say, when she was not around, oh yeah, I'm not allowed to do that, and they'd be what?! Oh no, no. I don't feel like doing that. Why did you stop playing music? Oh yeah, I'm not allowed to. What?! Oh no, I just don't want to. You know? Things like that.

It wasn't just friends whom participants tried to speak up to. Several related experiences when they had seen their doctors or other professionals. Tim would visit or phone his doctor regularly, seeking to understand what was happening and receive some help. He considered his situation was not taken seriously and he did not receive the support he needed:

> I felt the doctor [there] could have supported me a lot more. Because I used to contact him distraught. You know, games were going on and I couldn't figure out what was going on. He just said look there's only three things you can do. You can either leave, she needs to get diagnosed. It's like well what can I do about that? Or you need to just put up with that.

John also spoke of trying to communicate his experiences to his doctor. Being unable to show his vulnerability, needing to be seen as strong, he found he was unable to be direct. Instead, like George, John spoke up a round-about way resulting in his situation not being addressed and discussed with his doctor for many years:

> I never complained and said I'm not well and I'm a victim and I need help. But I did report what was going on in a way that would have come across as what's wrong with her (in a questioning tone), not what's wrong with me. I would have made sure that was played like that cause … I wasn't prepared to

> say to my doctor, who I want to see me as a strong healthy man, "doctor that's lies, I'm fucking blown to pieces." I couldn't admit that to him.
>
> Recently when I went in there...he knows me well and he said, "you've been reporting domestic violence to me for years." I said, "no I haven't." He said, "I haven't put victim of abuse; but in conversation…I know this has been going on for 16 years." (John)

Other participants related various occasions when they found the courage and attempted to speak with friends about their circumstances and how distressed they were. Most reported similar responses of total disbelief: they were not listened to:

> Others, I've had friends they've been close friends for years…I said "look I need to talk to you to let you know what's been going on in my life, it's been pretty horrific and I need to tell you the story". The same as what I've told you today, and they've been friends for a long time. They just rolled their eyes and went "this can't be true". (Straus)

John also related trying to talk to friends on occasions. At these times he was not believed, and he quickly shut down at their responses. People did not want to know. John's disclosures went against the norm and he believed they felt uncomfortable:

> In an inappropriate way, back then, I would describe her behaviour to some of my friends. Kind of like test the waters. Very quickly it was like what are you talking about, bullshit. Her? No, she's lovely. We know you're a bugger. Rubbish. Quickly I'd go oh you know, sometimes she loses her temper. Of course, I'm not going to continue to argue and press my point to a friend. But my attempts to talk to anybody else were shut down; it made them uncomfortable and they didn't want to know. Because she is a little tiny doll-like...and they couldn't see it.

Having struggled to speak up directly to his friends concerning his experiences, George related another occasion where his injuries were plainly visible. Even then, nothing was said. He was not asked about the injuries, and no-one enquired about his wellbeing. It seemed that no one wanted to know:

> I came to work one night. I had these four gigantic scratch marks down my neck. No one asked a fucking thing. No one. Everyone could see it. You could

> see these giant red claws. Blood and stuff like crusted blood and it was like mmmm it was obvious I got attacked last night but you know.

After George's relationship was over, he spoke about that incident to his friends. They admitted realising something was wrong but chose to remain silent. Their silence was an obstacle preventing him from opening up:

> My friends all say, oh we sort of figured something but we got to a point where we figured you're in that relationship and we know if we'd said anything you wouldn't have…But if someone had said something I would have turned around and told them exactly how I felt. It was like it's wrong. I don't know how to get out of this.

George also related times when his partner was outside and screaming at him but again, no one came to see what was happening. It was ignored:

> There was no one around when she was screaming at me. It was always at night-time and it was on the street and no one bothered to notice. The neighbours said they heard it but ones across the road were like yeah, afterwards.

Unlike other participants, Daddy spoke up about his situation from the start and continued to do so throughout his ordeal. This was how he always coped with stressful situations. He just talked and talked and talked to whoever would listen:

> Couldn't stop talking about it. That was my coping mechanism and I'm just a bit like that really. If I've got something on my mind, I express it…But yeah, when I'm emotionally distraught it's a little bit the same. I just go right into that and kind of have to talk it through until I'm feeling better. So, I generally talk about it for an hour or two every day.

Some participants also spoke of times when they did manage to open up about their experiences and were heard, listened to and validated. John described eventually speaking up to another male when he was feeling suicidal. This proved to be the right decision and marked a turning point for him; because, unbeknownst to him, he discovered they shared similar experiences and his friend could therefore empathise.

> With a great deal of trepidation and shame, [I spoke] with a mutual friend of mine and my partner's. He believed me because he said that he'd gone through the same thing with his partner and his two kids. I told him I was desperate. I had to tell somebody. I said look at her, butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. And he said, "It's happened to me, come on let's go for a walk." We went for a walk and I told him what was going on. So, he was, I don't know why, but he was the right person for me to tell because he said, "that happened to me".

For the duration of the relationship he was in Stew did not confide in anyone. Once he had left the relationship, however, he managed to speak to his flatmate, and received validation and support:

> So, what happened, when I…one of the guys where I worked, I flatted with him. I told him what happened, and he said oh bloody women, let's go to the pub. That's what we did. It was the best way to deal with it for me. It was great. So, we went to the pub. Then we went back to the pub a few days later and we went to the pub and we went to the pub. And for about a year that's what we did.

Tony related confiding in a female work colleague after she had realised something was amiss and approached him with concerns. Working in an environment where he was with other men who he knew had experienced violence in their relationships made it easier to confide in his colleague:

> Her advice was, you're going to lose everything, get out before you lose your life. Get out before you lose, you know you can always rebuild; you can always start again but you're going to lose everything.

Tony also related speaking to the police about his situation but framing the conversation in such a way that he was asking question about his rights. They acknowledged his vulnerability but gave him advice about self-protection to get out.

> I did actually talk to the cops…I talked to the police and I didn't come out and tell them everything. [It] was framed like, what is my right to defend myself, the kids and physically stop her from self-harm? He was like, yeah, yeah, we know that happens; just be very careful that you don't hit her back. Get out of the house and if she's breaking stuff we'll come and pick her up. They said if

> there's any doubt, you're going to get arrested. He did acknowledge that they know it happens; they know it happens more often and, yeah, basically unless there's no doubt, you're going to be arrested. You're just better off out and we will help you if you keep yourself out of it. But it's the getting out!

Two of the participants were still trying to make their voices heard, wanting to bring attention to their situation and their experiences acknowledged. At the time they were interviewed, both still found themselves being ignored, or being denied an audience in which to have their voices heard:

> You just get nowhere. And you know, I'm trying to bring awareness to what's happened to you. If I'd been a woman talking about domestic violence everybody starts falling over themselves and running round as if you're someone important. But no. No one wants to know about it at all. (Bill)

> Men do talk but no-one listens. That's a problem. Not that men won't talk but that no-one listens when they do. Men very often don't because they don't think anyone will listen, and mostly they're right. (Robertson)

Responses of Others

Reflections presented in this section resulted from the impact on participants of how IPV was portrayed in the media and anti-violence campaigns as well as participants' interactions and varying responses received from the police, those working in the justice system, legal and healthcare professions. Those participants who spoke of having dealings with healthcare professionals either did not believe they had been adequately supported or felt unable to disclose the IPV.

> GP's even though it was a holistic medical centre and they only have 15-minute slots it's just not enough time to gather the information. You tell them a bit what your problem is and then "oh yeah you need this and this and this" [chuckle]. It was almost after 5 mins I was out of there. They didn't even take the time to dig a little deeper, ask a few more questions. (Alex)

With respect to the legal system, Daddy spoke of the suddenness of being served with legal papers on a Friday evening with no warning. He believes the system needs to be redesigned with a view to having specially trained individuals available to speak to those who find themselves in similar situations. That would have been greatly beneficial for him. He also spoke of the need for clear information to be provided at the time on where help may be found:

> For the respondent there should be help. Either a phone number or a link. I think it would not be that hard to create a blog or something like that or a Facebook group. There are heaps of resources out there but when you first get hit with this document and you're threatened with your children being taken off you, logic just goes whoosh…So I think, yeah, making it really clear really where to go for help and what the rights of the respondent are is something.

> Send a social worker to listen to my side of the story for an hour or two. Someone who actually is trained to give a balanced point of view.

Daddy also wanted to draw attention to how inflammatory the system can be. It seemed once proceedings had begun, they had to run their course, and could in fact worsen a situation:

> This was a kind of cage for me and it made me react in ways which I think are counter-productive to why this system's designed. The system's designed to protect people but from my perspective it only inflamed the situation. It only made it more dangerous for me and my wife. My wife talked about committing suicide. The number of violent thoughts [I had]– I'm not a violent person, never have been.

Participants spoke of the importance of raising awareness that IPV is experienced by men as well as women. From their experiences it seemed that health professionals either were not aware of the existence of male victimisation in heterosexual relationship or did not deem it important enough to take the time to enquire about:

> Just raising awareness really so that they know that professionals know that [when] people present with, let's say sleeping problems, then dig a bit deeper. Where does it come from? And find out more and then referring people to other groups, support groups or, instead of just trying to fix it with medication, trying to seek more systemically and more holistically. (Alex)

Participants referred to how IPV is portrayed in the media and in other advertising campaigns. They spoke of how unhelpful they can be in perpetuating a message that IPV against men does not exist or is inconsequential.

Stuart spoke of what he saw on television and how this contributed to him believing he was the only male who had experienced IPV:

> You watch the news and every time they talk about domestic violence it's always the women who are the victims, it's never ever thought about and they just have to mention the word and all of a sudden a female or woman comes into it and I thought that's what domestic violence is. I think most New Zealanders probably think that.

He commented that the existence of advertisements and campaigns acknowledging IPV happens to men would be greatly beneficial in helping men realise they were not alone:

> I think there needs to be a push that, like a marketing campaign that it does happen. I think that could get to the root of the problem. Not the root of the problem but the root of the feelings in terms of males, that they're not alone, that it does happen.
>
> I think it would take away that humiliation aspect. Like 2 years ago if I saw an advertisement that instead of just this giant one male standing over the top of this quivering frightened female, and it was the other way round, then I would have probably felt a bit more OK about what had happened to me and I would have been more upfront.

Alex also questioned why advertising campaigns only portray women victims:

> It's also the media campaign, you know violence against women...Why is it only about women?...But that's powerful as well, I believe. But I think it should be acknowledged. It's not only one [way], it goes both ways. It's not only that men are evil, and the women are the victims. That's how it feels, a bit. Yeah, definitely. I get upset about it…Most of the campaigns are just about that [women]. And that's all you hear about as well. That's all that is reported on. But I think, I don't know the statistics, but I think there's a high percentage who have it exactly the other way around. And it doesn't need to be physical.

Straus also spoke of how the media portrays IPV and reinforces the belief in society that it is always men inflicting the harm and not women:

> There's a term in sociology called idea perseverance where you can put up as much empirical evidence and you can say as much as you like to someone but if they've got a strongly held belief it doesn't get budged I don't think. My experience has been you can bang your head against a brick wall talking to

> people but if they've got a fixed view...And our society reinforces this all the time. It reinforces it with, you know you look at public service broadcasting on intimate partner violence; it's always a man…it's always a man that's hurting women. It's just that its inculcated in our society.

Other participants also raised their concerns of campaigns that are one-sided: they send strong messages to men not to hit women but remain silent on messages to women not to hit men:

> That's why I don't like that White Ribbon campaign. Because every time I've heard all the messages it says it's basically, to me, sounds like it's removing men's right to self-defence. Nowhere does it say it's not OK to hit men but if women know that men aren't allowed to hit women ever, then it doesn't sound like a particularly good campaign to me. (Dave)

> You see the White Ribbon campaign is a pledge, pledge I swear never to condone or commit violence against women. Right?! No, its fine about men, yeah don't worry about them but against women, that's supposed to be our solution to domestic violence. (Bill)

> You hear a lot about violence in relationships these days and what I guess I find, for example, when they go around, I think it's once a year, with the White Ribbon campaign and you know let's campaign against violence against women. Well I refuse to wear one of those because I see that the whole violence issue is being portrayed as something that males do against females and that it's part of this ideology of, I guess it's part of the feminist discourse that basically says women are victims of male violence and rather than, what I think often happens is that relationships are inherently, have inherent potential for conflict and depending on the individuals in that relationship it can become violent or not. (Frank)

> Who doesn't believe in the White Ribbon appeal? Isn't that fantastic. It's an organisation of men getting together to tell other men not to abuse their wives. Isn't that wonderful. The only thing is that the subtext behind that is that men abuse their wives because society tells them it's ok and if society gets together and tell them that it's not ok…the abuse will stop. Except that men abuse their wives and wives abuse their husbands for a lot more reasons than society tells

> it's ok. As a matter of fact, society doesn't say it's ok. I've been told since I was this high that you never hit a girl. (Straus)

Frank spoke about his concerns with campaigns against violence as he believes it is another barrier operating against men being able to speak up about their experiences:

> I think that the White Ribbon campaign actually does harm because I think it makes it harder for men to speak up because it says that this is a problem that women have, not men. It's like a man having breast cancer. Of course, men get breast cancer… every time I see it, it really irks me because of that lack of acknowledging what's happening to a lot of men around the place.

Frank commented that there needs to be a balance in these campaigns with an acknowledgement that violence can happen to both men and women. He spoke of the general response men receive due to their perceived physical strength and position of power:

> [The] it's not OK message would be good as long as it was not portrayed as just a male issue.
>
> The sort of response you get is well um if you're a male as the victim of violence well it's sort of like you're how would you describe it, it's a bit hard, um, it's not a real issue you know, 'cause in theory you're the stronger, physically stronger of either couple and so why would it ever be a problem, you know. Yeah and that irks me given my own experience, given what I know other men have experienced.

When taking into consideration general assumptions that are evident in society, Dave commented on how if their roles had been reversed and it was his wife receiving the same treatment from him, the behaviour would have been counted as abuse and help would have been available a lot earlier:

> Even though I was never physically abused, what I went through, if it had been genders the other way around it would have counted as partner abuse and gotten a lot more support sooner. So, don't just focus on cases of physical abuse.

As though in confirmation of participants' and his own comments on media and advertising campaigns, Stuart reflected that although he has since been able to speak about his experiences, he is not taken seriously:

> I still get that when I say, "beat up by my ex-wife". People laugh.

Summary

This chapter began with participants' reflections as they strove to make meaning of their experiences and offered valuable insights to other men in similar situations. All participants were in accord with a core message of finding the courage to reach out and speak up, and to keep doing so until someone takes note. The story of male victims of IPV is one that is not well told. Assumptions and perceptions that they do not exist, or their experiences are trivial and inconsequential, are perpetuated via many avenues including media, anti-violence campaigns, denial, silence and dismissiveness at all levels of society. Accordingly, men can become trapped in a web of silence. The findings from this study have highlighted the importance of acknowledging and supporting male victims of IPV. They have demonstrated the value of men being able to disclose their experiences and access support, without fear of being disbelieved or ridiculed: of having a voice and being heard.

In the next chapter I present the theory of '*Male victims of IPV: A Story not well told*' that arises from these findings. I explain the theory and discuss the findings from this study with reference to current literature.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of male victims of IPV: what they consisted of; how they impacted participants' masculinity; how their daily lives and interpersonal relationships were affected; and what might influence their decision making with respect to speaking up or leaving the abusive relationships. After a summary of the main findings that emerged from the study, I will outline how the findings have led to the development of an emergent theory, presented in a diagrammatic form. This will be followed by concluding comments and recommendations.

As is clear from the preceding chapters, three main categories emerged from findings of this study: the experiences, effects, and participants' meaning making as victims of IPV. The first category (experiences) revealed the different types and range of IPV participants experienced in response to the first research question. This included physical, psychological and secondary aggressions. The second category extended the answer to this first research question, with a focus on the effects of these experiences, providing insights about how the violence affected participants, including their construction of masculinity. Findings revealed impacts on their masculine identity that had adverse flow-on effects on their day-to-day functioning and interpersonal relationships. Data from the interviews showed how they coped with the challenges and obstacles they were faced with, including factors that influenced participants' decisions to remain silent or speak up, and to stay or leave the abusive relationships. The final category focused on how participants made meaning of their experiences in response to research questions two and three. Participants' insights for themselves and others highlighted a web of silence that had been constructed around them by themselves and through the responses and behaviours of others they interacted with. This added insights into what might have influenced them to report or to refrain from reporting their experiences, and whether to stay or leave their relationships. The main findings will now be discussed with reference to existing literature and theory.

Experiencing IPV

The findings from this study revealed a range of experiences of IPV in the form of physical attacks, psychological aggression and legal and administrative aggression (Figure 6).

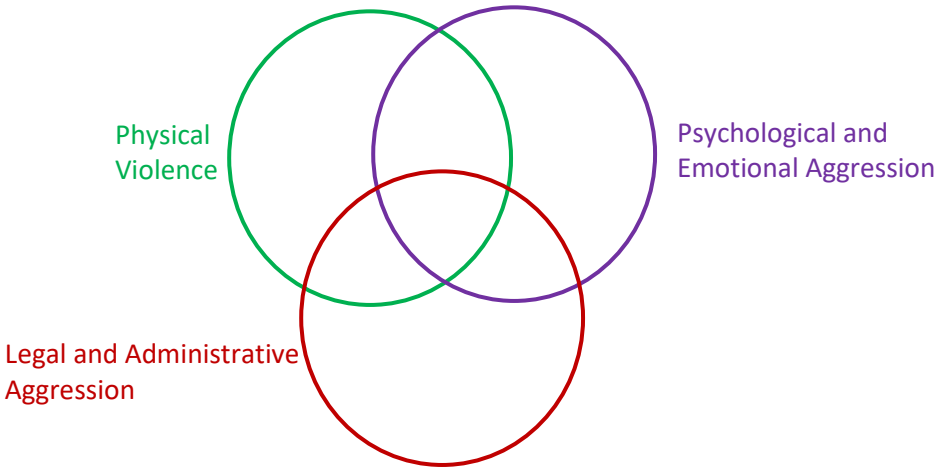

Figure 6. Experiencing IPV

Eleven of the sixteen participants described experiencing physical attacks that ranged from what is classified in the literature as minor (being pushed and shoved), to major in severity: being slapped, scratched, kicked, punched, and having objects thrown at them or used as weapons with which to harm them. Scratching with fingernails was a commonly reported method of inflicting harm on participants, as was being slapped or punched. Other recent studies have revealed similar findings (Bates, 2020b; Dim, 2020; Dixon et al., 2020; Hines & Douglas, 2010b).

Participants in the current study stressed that they did not hit back, offering several reasons for not doing so. In support of similar findings (Bates, 2020b; Cook, 2009; Migliaccio, 2002), they spoke of being raised to protect and not to hit women. Some indicated that had they become violent, because of their size and strength, their partners could have been badly injured, in addition to which they would have faced legal consequences. Societal sanctions on men hitting women and the shame that would be felt if violence was enacted, were also given as reasons for not responding with violence. It is suggested that these can be viewed as indicators of the masculine norms participants adhered to, articulated in their affirmations of their masculine identities that included being good husbands, providers and protectors of their families.

Notwithstanding participants' strong convictions against men inflicting violence on women, three spoke of incidents where they physically restrained their partners to keep both of them safe. A fourth spoke of finally snapping and reacting to another attack from his partner with a single punch to the stomach. The aim of this response was not to establish power and control but was intended to stop his partner's physical aggression and accordingly can be viewed as being

consistent with violent resistance as articulated by Johnson (2006, 2008) and Johnson and Ferraro (2000).

Some participants described intermittent physical violence as being a regular pattern in the relationship. For others, once the physical violence began, it continued and was then used in conjunction with escalating forms of psychological aggression. It is interesting to note that in three of the relationships where physical and psychological aggression were present, it was physical violence that occurred first before the onset and subsequent escalation of psychological aggression. Participants spoke of a gradual build-up of aggression over time from physical to psychological or psychological to physical, This is in line with findings from a recent qualitative study in which participants over four countries described experiences shifts in types of aggression over time, some of which moved from physical to psychological (Dixon et al., 2020). These findings are contrary to existing literature in which psychological and verbal aggression in intimate relationships have been found to be predictive of future physical violence (Murphy & O'Leary, 1989). More research investigating the emergence of these different patterns of aggression and the underlying reasons for them is needed.

It has also been highlighted that emotional abuse can exist on its own (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001), or that physical and emotional abuse can often occur together (Bates, 2020b). In the current study, four participants reported experiencing only psychological aggression. Of the remaining twelve participants, one experienced only physical violence and ended the relationship following the violent incident. The remaining eleven participants experienced both physical and psychological aggression.

Participants reported not understanding what was happening as the attacks occurred with no warning and for no apparent reason or seemed to be an instant reaction to something they said. This could be evidence of their female partners' lashing out, initially in anger or frustration, as a way of communicating their feelings. It is suggested the participants' non-combative stance could have made them more vulnerable to increasing violence. The knowledge these men were not retaliating with violence could have served to increase their partners' anger and frustration as well as instilling in them a sense of control that could have contributed to increasingly aggressive and controlling behaviour on the part of their partners.

All but one of the participants in this study experienced psychological aggression ranging from verbal abuse to more severe forms of coercion and manipulative control. These included threats of violence towards participants or threats of suicide, self-harm, harm to loved ones and destruction of property. Findings also revealed false allegations made against participants to

friends, family, and the wider community. Access to finances, friends and family was restricted. Participants' whereabouts had to be accounted for, and forms of communication were monitored. For those with children, threats of losing access to or never seeing them again were constantly present. These findings support a growing body of literature documenting controlling behaviours experienced by some men in heterosexual relationships (Bates, 2020b; Dixon et al., 2020; Hines et al., 2007; Morgan & Wells, 2016; Tilbrook et al., 2010).

Another form of IPV revealed in this study was that of LA aggression (referred to in Chapter 2) as experienced by three participants when their partners made false allegations against them to those in positions of authority. This resulted in arrest for one, loss of access to children for two and court proceedings for all three. These findings are congruent with emerging research that documents how intimate partners use legal and justice systems for their own benefit (Hines et al., 2015; Tilbrook et al., 2010; Walker et al., 2019). Although outside of the realm of the legal and justice system, it was concerning to note that another participant in the current study endured similar experiences: when attempting to speak of his wife's psychological aggression during a joint counselling session with a psychologist working in the private sector, he was shut down, and blamed for her aggressive behaviour. It is suggested this response from a qualified health professional, that resulted in severe negative impacts on the participant's mental health, can be likened to LA aggression or "second wave abuse" as identified by Corbally (2015, p. 167).

In the examples referred to above, participants were assumed to be guilty of violence and subsequently not listened to, disbelieved and not given a voice. This suggests the dominant assumptions and stereotypes viewing men as the perpetrators of IPV in heterosexual relationships prevails amongst those who work within the legal and justice systems in New Zealand, even though gender neutral language has been adopted in the recent New Zealand law (*Family Violence Act*, 2018). Furthermore, it is likely that these assumptions and stereotypes prevail amongst those working within the legal and healthcare professions.

The experiences of psychological aggression revealed in this study reflect the behaviours depicted on the Power and Control Wheel created by Pence and Paymar (1993). Commonly referred to as The Duluth Model, it was developed as an instrument in an education curriculum run for men who batter, and still remains in widespread use. In that model, the outer rim of the wheel represents physical violence and the inner wheel is divided into eight segments each dedicated to different forms of power and control as follows:

- Intimidation; including gestures, actions, destroying property, showing weapons.

- Being emotionally abusive including use of putdowns, name calling, humiliation.
- Isolating the victim including restricting and controlling access to people, controlling movements.
- Minimizing or denying the abuse or blaming the victim for the abuse.
- Using the children against the victim.
- Being economically abusive that includes restricting access to finances.
- Using coercion and threats including threatening harm to self and others and threatening suicide.
- Using male privilege that includes treating the victim like a servant, being in control, deciding roles and making decisions (Pence & Paymar, 1993, p. 3).

In a study investigating the characteristics of male victims of IPV, Hines et al. (2007) "altered the 'male privilege' category of the Power and Control Wheel to reflect [their participants] experiences…of their spouses using the system…to their advantage" (p. 70). By doing so, findings from their study slotted into all categories on the Power and Control Wheel. By using the same approach for the findings from the current study and replacing "male privilege" on the Power and Control Wheel with LA aggression, participants' experiences fit into all eight segments of the inner wheel. These findings are congruent with other studies showing that this instrument can be applied to men's experiences as well as women's (Bates, 2020b; Hines & Douglas, 2010b).

Findings from the current study stand in contrast to Johnson's argument that Intimate Terrorism (IT) is mainly perpetrated by men against women (2008; M. P. Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Many of the experiences, particularly with respect to severe psychological and controlling forms of aggression, indicate that the participants fit into Johnson's category of being victims of IT. This is further supported by the forms of psychological aggression participants experienced, fitting into all segments of the Power and Control Wheel. These findings are similar to those of other recently reported studies, (Bates, 2020b; Hines & Douglas, 2010b; Jasinski, Blumenstein, & Morgan, 2014; Lysova, Dim, & Dutton, 2019).

As discussed earlier, most participants in the current study were not violent towards their partners, nor did they use controlling tactics. The use of violence by one participant on one occasion, as described above, was carried out for self-protection and falls into Johnson's category of violent resistance (M. P. Johnson, 2008; M. P. Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). The results from the present study also provide further support for the contention that the experiences of male victims of IPV are not trivial, nor are they to be laughed at (Hines & Douglas, 2010a). They also support

findings from a recent qualitative study of male victims of IPV conducted by Bates (2020b), in which it was found that controlling IPV had the most impact on participants.

Effects

Findings from this study have shown that participants experienced a wide range of effects that negatively impacted on their sense of masculine identity; their physical and mental health; their daily functioning and social relationships, both at the time of the relationship and beyond, as presented in Chapter 5. Participants indicated their adherence to traditional masculine roles, strongly aligning themselves with descriptors that included being strong, stoic and in control; the bread winner; the provider and protector. Their narratives indicated a strong connection between their masculine identity and the consequent effects of attacks on their masculinity, on their daily functioning, their internal and external responses to the violence and to others, and the adoption of coping strategies.

Findings revealed that the IPV participants experienced produced feelings of failure, vulnerability, shame and helplessness that acted in direct conflict with their masculine selves. They expressed bewilderment and confusion. Believing their experiences of violence were unique to their particular relationship, they carried the conviction that they were the only male who had ever experienced such violence. Shame and humiliation were affects they struggled with, particularly in an environment where acknowledgement of male victimisation of IPV is seemingly non-existent. Being abused by a female partner in their experience was unheard of and did not fit with their masculine ideal. Most participants went to great lengths to hide their experiences and emotions from others. They remained silent, continuing to portray a public persona of a successful, confident and in-control male, and in doing so, demonstrated enacting complicit masculinity as discussed in Chapter 2 (Eckstein, 2010; Wetherell & Edley, 1999).

Consistent with findings from recent studies (e.g., Cook, 2009; Dixon et al., 2020; Hines & Douglas, 2010a), participants developed various coping strategies. Some became immersed in their work; others spoke of staying away from home as long as they could. Two self-medicated with alcohol, although with hindsight recognised this merely masked their problems rather than helped. Not understanding what was happening, most participants blamed themselves; assuming responsibility to “fix things”, they believed that trying harder was the answer. This is in line with a recent report by Dixon et. al (2020)

A common strategy was one of rationalising their partners’ violence. Consistent with findings from other studies (e.g., Machado, Hines, & Matos, 2016), some participants looked to

challenges their partners had faced in their early lives or what they believed were mental health challenges, as a way of excusing the behaviour. In this respect it is interesting to note that in a study of male victims of IPV by Hines, Brown and Dunning (2007), the majority of participants reported their wives as having experienced childhood trauma. In addition, many participants in that study, reported their wives had a mental illness. For some participants in the current study love and the promise of dreams fulfilled became a dominant coping mechanism allowing them to hold on to hope. Although they spoke of red flags early in relationships and seeing warning signs, they choose to ignore them as they were looking for love and were committed to making these relationships work.

It is noteworthy from these findings that although shame was specifically named by only a few participants, all indirectly indicated in their narratives the extent to which they had been deeply affected by shame. Descriptions of how they believed they would be perceived by others and expectations of derision and rejection point to external shame (Shepard & Rabinowitz, 2013) Participants described feeling worthless, hopeless and diminished, wanting to hide their experiences and feeling overwhelmed, trapped and powerless. All such feelings and experiences have been found to be characteristics of shame (Brown, 2006; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1992; Van Vliet, 2008).

The findings from this study document significant physical and mental health challenges that may be directly attributed to participants' experiences of IPV: high blood pressure; sleep disturbance; depression; anxiety; self-harm and suicidal ideation. Findings also revealed a corrosive effect on participants' confidence and self-worth that contributed to their withdrawal from social life and isolation. These negative influences on participants' health are consistent with findings from other studies that suggest a connection to significant health concerns for male victims of IPV (J. L. Berger et al., 2016; Coker et al., 2002; Hines & Douglas, 2015b, 2018). The findings also support literature concerning the various ways internalised shame can be experienced and the resulting negative impact on individuals' health and day-to-day functioning (Brown, 2012; Lewis, 1971; Reilly, Rochlen, & Awad, 2014).

Making Meaning of Experiences

Underlying the participants' agreement to take part in the current study was a desire to share their experiences in the hope that this would be of help to others. During the interview process some struggled with emotional reactions as they related their experiences. This suggests the power of shame they experienced and its significant lingering impact. Regardless of this, and

taking rest breaks when necessary, they all continued with a determination that their voices be heard. Taking part in this study, being given the time to say what they needed and wanted to share, and being heard as part of the process was a powerful mechanism that enabled participants to reflect on and make meanings of their experiences. In doing so, they offered insights to other men who may find themselves in similar situations.

The unchallenged perception of IPV that permeates society places men as perpetrators and women as victims (Eckstein, 2010; Machado et al., 2020). It is well documented that men are reluctant to seek help, particularly when their problems are related to what society views as non-normative behaviour (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Machado et al., 2016; Tsui, Cheung, & Leung, 2012). Findings from the current study revealed a reluctance of participants to speak up at the time of their victimisation. Struggling with the stigma associated with men being victims of IPV and consistent with existing research (Cook, 2009; Dixon et al., 2020; Drijber et al., 2013; Walker et al., 2019), they feared they would be disbelieved, ignored or ridiculed. For some, these fears became a reality. Even though many of the men in this study were silenced, all stressed the importance for men of finding the courage to speak up about their experiences. They also emphasised the importance of continuing to do so until they found someone who would listen.

Interestingly, one participant did speak to others right from the start as this was his usual stress coping response for any problem. Using others as sounding boards was also his way of trying to make sense of the painful situation he was experiencing. He also spoke of feeling his emotions more, compared to his wife, suggesting the internalisation of a softer, more inclusive form of masculinity (Anderson, 2009).

It was evident from participants' narratives that public advertising on broadcasting and social media platforms play a large part as a silencing mechanism. There is a telling absence of male victims in advertisements on IPV. Words are not necessary when powerful images of strong men leaning over cowering women are depicted on our screens, images that reinforce the (unspoken) assumptions embedded in society of IPV being a male problem (George, 2002, 2003; Migliaccio, 2001, 2002). Anti-violence campaigns such as 'White Ribbon' and 'It's Not OK' also relay messages that IPV is a male problem, adding weight to the silencing mechanism operating in the participants' lives.

The findings from the current study, grounded in participants' voices, have led to the development of an emerging theory—*Male Victims of IPV: A Story Not Well Told*. Hines et al (2013) have pointed to the importance of "recognizing the place of theories within paradigms…" (p. 15) and have shown how family violence sits within the "prevailing ecological

paradigm..[that] derives from the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979)' (Hines et al., 2013, p. 15). The emerging theory presented below shows how the interplay between different levels within the ecological paradigm compete, conflict, and together contribute to its development.

Development of Emerging Theory

Findings from the current study have highlighted how male victims of IPV are silenced; at their own volition and by others. From an ecological systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1981) it is from these two dimensions of silencing that the emerging theory has developed: operating externally at the macro level through the responses and behaviours of others, and internally at the micro level via the responses of the masculine self. While these dimensions are separate in and of themselves, they are also interlinked and feed into each other. They will first be presented individually, as *Responses to Male Victims of IPV* followed by *Effects on Male Victims of IPV*. These two elements will then be combined and presented as they interact with each other in an emerging theory—male victims of IPV: A story not well told.

Responses to Male Victims of IPV

It is well documented that behaviours of individuals are influenced by prevailing societal norms (Archer, 2006). As the data from the current study and extant literature show, the feminist paradigm and accompanying hegemonic discourse underpin the dominant prevailing assumptions and stereotypes: that women are victims of IPV and men are the perpetrators. This dominant discourse, with a focus on the strength, power and control associated with masculinity, has become embedded in society and is part of our way of viewing cultural norms (Dutton & White, 2013).

Research examining attitudes and judgements towards perpetrators and victims according to their gender, (e.g., Hine, 2019; McNeely et al., 2001) show that a high proportion of the general public, together with many academics and professionals in the mental health sector, continue to adhere to these stereotypes. The idea of men being victims of IPV in heterosexual relationships is considered humorous and inconsequential. Being abused by a female partner acts in direct opposition to normative masculine roles, previously discussed.

Experiences of the participants in the current study, associated with the actions and behaviours of others clearly demonstrate the prevailing gender stereotypes and assumptions that IPV is a gendered phenomenon, perpetrated by men against women (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005; Dutton & White, 2013; Scarduzio et al., 2017). This is represented in Figure 7.

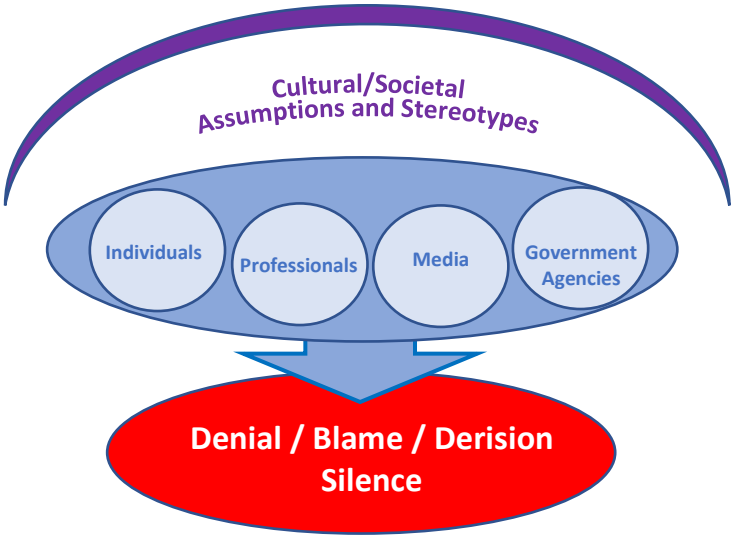

Figure 7. Responses to male victims of IPV

The curved shape at the top of Figure 7 represents an overarching umbrella comprising the dominant hegemonic discourse and related stereotypes and assumptions prevailing in society that frame men as the violent partners in intimate relationships. The circles sitting in the oval shape directly beneath represent the various individuals and bodies that participants spoke of as having had interactions with during their abusive relationships. These included:

- Friends, family members and work colleagues;
- Professionals including psychologists, counsellors and, doctors;
- Media – public broadcasting, advertisements, and anti-violence campaigns; and
- Government agencies and those working within them, including the police, the court system, court officers and judges.

The blue oval shape and arrow leading downward symbolises the prevailing dominant assumptions and beliefs held concerning male victims of IPV that seemed to influence the positions adopted by those with whom participants interacted. The arrow leads into the red oval shape that encapsulates the common responses and behaviours participants spoke of experiencing.

Pleck (1976) drew attention over 40 years ago to the "commonly held assumptions, norms or stereotypes, [that] constitute cultural notions of masculinity" (p. 163). It has also been highlighted that these "patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting" (I. M. Harris, 1995, p. 17) that all cultures contain, are relayed both explicitly and implicitly. Findings from the current study revealed both implicit and explicit reactions. There was denial that participants' partners

could have been violent; blame that if she was violent it must have been because of something the men themselves did; derision arising from men as victims of IPV being viewed as ludicrous and having little consequence; or silence, when what others saw or heard concerning the participants' situation was ignored. Figure 7 represents the first dimension of the emerging theory: the second dimension presented below.

Effects on Male Victims of IPV

Participants' experiences of IPV, together with responses and behaviours of others (Figure 7), directly spoke to their construction of masculine identity. The combined impact of these effects on the masculine self is depicted in Figure 8.

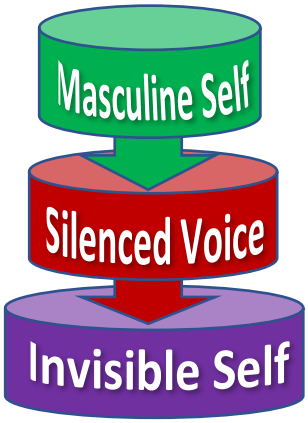

Figure 8. Effects on male victims of IPV

The green shape at the top of Figure 8 represents the masculine self, identified by participants as embodying traditional masculine norms that include being a provider and protector, a supportive partner, a caring husband and father. The masculine self portrays confidence, strength, stoicism, and success.

As the experiences of IPV and the responses and behaviours of others take hold, the masculine self becomes negatively impacted. The adverse effects and consequences are represented by the middle shape in Figure 8, depicting the masculine self whose voice has been silenced: a self who is trapped in a web of silence that is not only inflicted on them by others but also of their own making. Being abused by their female partners was not the social norm participants grew up with and expected. In addition, admitting to being abused in this way is, in one respect, a betrayal of one's masculine self. Their experiences violated participants' masculine identity, giving rise to internalized shame.

Shame by its very nature is secret and silencing (Brown, 2006). It was important to the participants that they continued to be recognised and known for who and what they were. Maintaining an external image of normative masculinity has been shown to be an important strategy adopted by many male victims of IPV so as to avoid expected stigmatisation and ostracism by one's peers if it should be discovered they are violating masculine norms (Allen-Collinson, 2009b; Eckstein, 2010; Migliaccio, 2001). Accordingly, participants wore a mask, remaining silent or taking great care as to who they spoke to, in order to ensure the continuation of their masculine image. Shame was not only induced by the experience of being abused by a female but was also compounded and intensified by failure to live up to societal masculine norms and personal, internalised views of self. In addition, the behaviours of others by way of the denial, derision, blame and silencing, together with the reinforcement of societal masculine norms via assorted forms of media, added yet more layers to their shame.

Finally, as the negative responses from others together with the internal responses of the self continue, so the impact of shame and compulsion to remain silent is reinforced. These silencing mechanisms, operating both independently or together, render the existence and experiences of male victims of IPV invisible, as represented in the final shape in Figure 8. As invisible victims of IPV, these men are not seen to exist in the eyes of members of society, but if they are seen, their circumstances are not considered a concern.

Emerging Theory: Male Victims of IPV: A Story Not Well Told

Remaining grounded in participants narratives, the dimensions of responses and behaviours of others according to prevailing assumptions and stereotypes, and the effects on male victims of IPV come together in the emerging theory depicted in Figure 9—*Male Victims of IPV: A Story Not Well Told.*

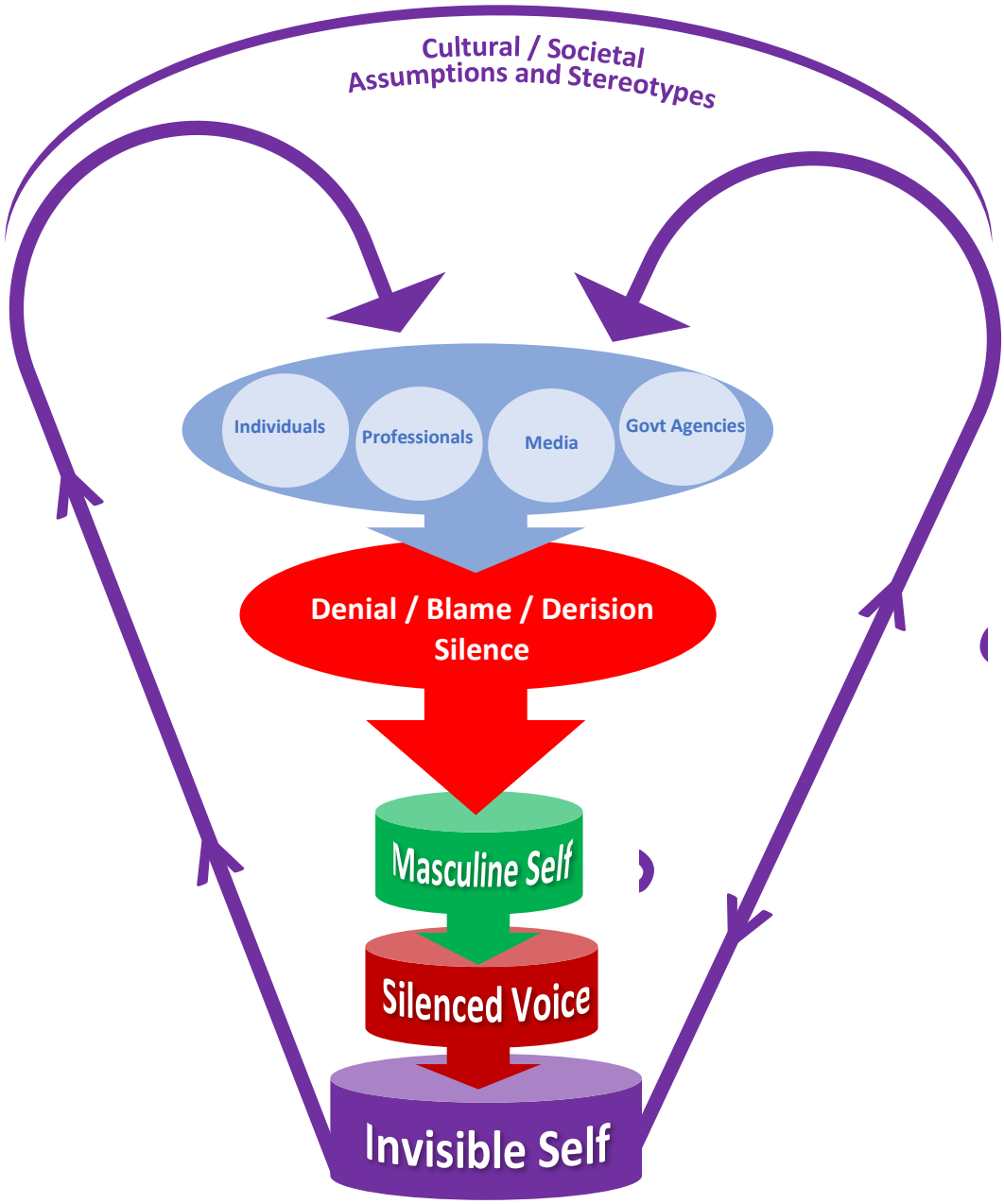

Figure 9. Male victims of IPV: A story not well told

The prevailing hegemonic dominant discourse surrounding IPV, and the accompanying underlying assumptions and stereotypes that men are the perpetrators of IPV and women are the victims, influence attitudes and behaviours throughout all levels of society. These influences can be seen to be demonstrated in the responses and behaviours of others towards male victims of IPV.

The responses of others, and the impact on the masculine self resulting in silencing and invisibility, combine in a cyclical repeating pattern of experience for male victims of IPV. This cyclical movement is indicated in Figure 9 by the long arrows moving from the invisible self, on

the left-hand side of the figure, back up to the overarching umbrella of cultural/societal assumptions and stereotypes. This arrow then curves around and faces downwards to represent the cycle beginning again.

On the right-hand side of Figure 9, the long arrow leading from the invisible self contains two arrowheads, pointing in opposite directions. The downward arrowhead symbolizes the cultural/societal assumptions and stereotypes, both explicit and implicit, that feed into the self and are at play from an early age in socialisation and the construction of masculinity (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Addis et al., 2016). The arrowhead pointing upwards and moving away from the masculine self symbolizes the silenced, invisible male victim of IPV who, in continuing to outwardly portray a self that adheres to dominant masculine norms, is also contributing to and reinforcing the perpetuation of those prevailing assumptions and stereotypes accepted by society.

The experiences of male victims of IPV are often denied. Some refuse to acknowledge men can be victimised this way; others will actively silence male victims when they try to bring attention to their experiences or to speak up in their own defence. Male victims of IPV can also find themselves being derided for being beaten or controlled by a woman, or are blamed for her violence. Others will ignore the situation completely and remain silent. Such responses and behaviours feed into and attack the masculine identity at its core.

Messages that deliver condemnation for being male victims of IPV operate within different layers. The responses and behaviours of others confront and attack the masculine self from a societal level. From a personal level the male victim of IPV is also confronted, attacked and condemned by his inner self. Shame operates as a silencing mechanism. Internalized shame can be "a debilitating inner-experience that involves a global sense of the self as defective, lacking, and unworthy of kindness" (Reilly et al., 2014, p. 22). Signalled as being the dominant emotion (Scheff, 2003), when shame is induced it attacks the core of the self. It comprises "an overwhelming assault on self-concept and identity, on how individuals define themselves and who they perceive themselves to be" (Van Vliet, 2008, p. 237).

Socio-cultural norms and expectations have been identified as lying at the core of shame (Brown, 2006). Masculinity is socially constructed and the prevailing hegemonic discourse with its underlying assumptions and stereotypes form part of this construction. Being a male victim of IPV not only violates the prevailing socio-cultural norms and expectations, it also violates the masculine self, creating internal conflict for the individual, as they no longer 'fit' the persona they believe themselves to be. These internal and external forces come together and compete with and against each other. It is in this interplay that the voices of male victims of IPV become

silenced; either by themselves, or by others. Consequently, their experiences and the resulting adverse effects on to their wellbeing and functioning in daily life are rendered invisible to society. Although some members of society might see or have an intimation of what is happening, many will choose to ignore. Most will not see due to the prevailing hegemonic discourse and accompanying societal assumptions and stereotypes and, thus, the experiences of male victims of IPV is a story not well told.

Conclusion

The "story not well told*"* that is depicted in Figure 9 illustrates the self-perpetuating cycle and resulting negative consequences for male victims of IPV that endures while their experiences remain unacknowledged and unaccounted for. While society continues to uphold the hegemonic discourse and underlying assumptions and stereotypes that frame men as perpetrators of IPV and women as its victims, the experiences of male victims of IPV will continue to be denied, derided, ignored and silenced. Male victims will continue to be confronted with confusion and conflict as their masculine identities are attacked. Their voices will continue to be silenced and they will remain invisible, with the resulting negative physical and mental health challenges continuing to go largely unrecognised.

Few qualitative studies have been conducted examining the experiences of male victims of IPV in heterosexual relationships and the resulting consequences. Findings from the current qualitative study add to the body of knowledge in this field, providing a deeper insight into men's experiences of IPV, particularly of psychological and emotional aggression. This study has highlighted how adherence to masculine norms, and the prevailing discourse of hegemonic masculinity and its underlying assumptions and stereotypes, operate at both societal and personal levels. The consequences of the interplay of the mechanisms operating at the different levels negatively impact on male victims' sense of self, wellbeing and day-to day functioning and not only serve to render their experiences invisible but also helps perpetuate the prevailing stereotypes.

The foregrounding of participants' voices has led to the development of the theory that the reality and experiences of male victims of IPV constitute a story not well told (Figure 9). Intimate partner violence is not a problem of gender' instead, it is a "human problem" (McNeely et al., 2001, p. 246). The silencing of these men's voices, and the resulting invisibility of their circumstances, will continue to prevail while their experiences continue to be viewed as non-normative and trivial, and as a consequence remain unacknowledged, denied or ridiculed.

Recommendations

Various implications and recommendations for policy, practice and future research arise from the findings and the emergent theory developed from them.

Policy and practice

Assumptions and stereotypes underpinned by the feminist paradigm and accompanying hegemonic discourse have become embedded within society. A major concern that calls for attention is the need for education at all levels of society to raise awareness of the existence and experiences of male victims of IPV, including the reality that the consequences can be serious and should not be minimised or discounted. Men in this study believed they were alone in their experiences of IPV. Public education and dialogue will also serve to validate men's experiences and help in the facilitation of their disclosures.

Findings from this study revealed that advertisements carrying implicit messages of male perpetration serve to strengthen stereotypic images of male perpetrators and female victims, therefore adding to male victims' feelings of isolation and shame. These consequently contribute to the challenges and obstacles victimised men face, particularly with respect to disclosing their victimisation and seeking help. The majority of advertising and anti-violence campaigns specifically targeting IPV currently carry messages concerning male perpetration. A recommendation from this study is that these campaigns need to portray a balanced and unbiased view that both men and women can be victims of IVP. Likewise, messages of managing behaviour and getting help for anger need to be directed at both men and women, and not solely towards men.

While gender neutral language is used on websites and publications concerning IPV, when the information provided only addresses male perpetration this again serves to render men's experiences invisible and perpetuate assumptions and stereotypes that are both unhelpful and contribute to negative health outcomes for male victims. It is suggested that careful reviews be undertaken within government agencies, legal and justice systems and other organisations responsible for advocating for victims of IPV, with respect to the ways in which information within publications and on websites is presented.

Gender neutral language also appears in statue law (*Family Violence Act,* 2018). However, the findings revealed that many working in the judicial system and the health care sector (both private and public) have a gendered view of IPV. Again, education is vitally important, not only

for the general public but also for all professionals who may interact with male victims of IPV. Anonymous surveys undertaken within government departments, including the justice system and the health sector, would help to identify the prevalence and depth of assumptions held by those working within these sectors. These could serve as a foundation for professional development.

Education specific to the experiences and needs of male victims of IPV is necessary for all who come in contact with them. This includes police, those working in the legal and court systems, health professionals and others working in the health sector both privately and publicly. Ongoing training and annual professional development for all is essential to ensure competency in the behaviour and language used towards all victims of IPV, the validation of their experiences and accessing of appropriate resources.

It is clear from the findings of this study that male victims of IPV can struggle to disclose their situation to health professionals, even trusted GPs. Screening men for victimisation needs to be incorporated as a routine part of relevant assessments. This is particularly important if they present with physical injuries, or other issues pertaining to their health, that would raise concerns of possible IPV victimisation, similar to those conducted with women. It is important that health professionals raise the subject of IPV with male patients as appropriate, verbalising what they may see or suspect, even if it is not raised by the men themselves.

Indications from this study are that some male victims, while not volunteering information, are waiting and hoping for their situation to be recognised and validated so they feel safe enough to then disclose their experiences of IPV. However, careful attention needs to be given to the language used when screening men for IPV victimisation. This is significant: for some men direct questioning can result in non-disclosure while for others subtle questioning can have the same result (Corbally, 2015; Dixon et al., 2020). Beginning by asking general questions about how things are going at home or in their intimate relationships would serve to indicate validation, support, and open a pathway for disclosure. Taking time to dig deeper, remaining flexible in how the subject is approached, validating men's experiences and listening would go a long way to supporting men in these situations.

Findings revealed a lack of readily available resources and support specifically targeted at male victims of IPV. Participants struggled to find information relevant to their situation: who they could contact, where they could go, and what resources were available to them. Having a dedicated platform where such relevant information, advice and links to various avenues of help was available would be greatly beneficial in supporting these men.

Future Research

This study explored the experiences of a group of 16 men reporting victimisation from IPV using constructivist grounded theory. Further research into men's experiences using different methods, particularly a combination of survey, interview and focus groups is recommended. An online anonymous survey would have the benefit of reaching men throughout the country with the likelihood of achieving representation from a wide cross section of society and ethnicities. A mixed methods approach to this topic could also prove useful if statistical data pertaining to prevalence of victimisation and perpetration could be obtained via a questionnaire, together with qualitative information by interviews, or from the inclusion of open questions if an online survey is undertaken. Recruitment of participants through a variety of avenues including online platforms, medical and tertiary education facilities, would enable information to reach a more nationally representative population sample.

This study relied on self-reports of men who identified themselves as having experienced IPV. Future research could include qualitative interviews conducted not only with male victims but also with other family members. It is suggested this would give a broader picture of the dynamics of the abusive relationships as well as provide further credibility of the men's accounts of their victimisation.

Some participants in the current study spoke of their own adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) that included the absence of fathers from a very young age and being subjected to verbal and physical abuse from either their mother or from both parents. This raises questions concerning a possible relationship between ACE's and men's future vulnerability to victimisation in intimate relationships, of which little is known. Future research in this direction would further expand our knowledge of underlying factors that may contribute to the effects on male victims of IPV, further informing policy and shaping appropriate interventions.

Surveying counsellors and psychotherapists who support male victims of IPV, to obtain information about their experiences working with these men, would increase our knowledge of the implications for practice and for professional development. Gaining insight into what therapeutic approaches work best, from the experiences of these professionals, would deepen our understanding of how we can support men in moving through from victimhood to survivorship. future research.

Concluding Reflections

Intimate partner violence is a very sensitive and emotive topic, none the less so when researching the experiences of male victims. Because of the sensitive nature of this topic and for reasons of confidentiality, I choose to transcribe all interviews myself. Engaging in this way with the material and the intimate details of IPV that participants shared with me at times was extremely challenging. In addition, during the process of data analysis, each time I went back to the data, a part of me was transported back in time, seeing and hearing the participants as they were on the day of their interviews. I often found I needed to take complete breaks, ranging from hours to days, to gain distance from the emotional content and re-ground myself. I also attended professional supervision sessions with an experienced counselling supervisor, using these sessions to discuss and process any issues that were arising for me resulting from the research process and engagement with the data.

As an experienced counsellor I brought my counselling skills of empathic and non-judgmental listening to the research process. However, at the time of the interviews, I felt some participants were being protective of me; for example, showing their chivalrous side and apologising for swearing or being hesitant in the descriptive words they chose to use. On later reflection I realised this could also have been self-protection. It was very brave for these men to talk about their experiences of being abused by women, to another woman. Given the shame associated with masculinity this raises an interesting question of gender and how men might respond—disclosing more or less— if a researcher is male.

I began this project a novice researcher in the field of constructivist grounded theory and discovered that no matter how much I read on this methodology, understanding only came by doing. CGT is very demanding of the researcher; it has taken me into in-depth analysis and exploration of existing literature and the data generated in this study. Being grounded in the data with participants' voices remaining in the forefront, CGT has proven to be an invaluable methodology with which to research a hard-to-reach population on a topic on a sensitive issue of which little is known

I always carried a notebook with me and endeavoured to jot down thoughts as they came to mind, regardless of where I was or what I was doing. However, often I would later find my scribbled jottings were illegible or meaningless. My smartphone became a necessary resource and I recorded everything I could—including meetings with my supervisors. I found this to be invaluable as time and again I would return to our conversations to consolidate clarification and understanding of points made when we met.

This research journey has been long, at times emotional, draining, and yet incredibly rewarding. Doing PhD research can be a lonely undertaking, and it was only in the later stages of the research process when I was able to switch to full-time study that I came to appreciate and value the camaraderie and peer support resulting from interaction with other PhD candidates via regular meetings. At first these were held in person and then moved to online. Having a forum where one could air questions, share each other's day-to-day struggles and frustrations as well as victories, and check-in simply for conversation and wellbeing was invaluable. Also in the later stages of the research I discovered the existence of a group for grounded theorists at the University of Auckland, in respect of which the saying 'better late than never' is very apt. Members of this network ranged in their knowledge and expertise from beginning to accomplished grounded theorists. I learned so much as we shared and discussed thoughts on our own and others' research projects.

Completing the current research project has enabled me to grow personally and professionally. Attending the International Family Violence and Child Victimization Research Conference in Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 2018 has been a highlight. Presenting a poster on the current research project and meeting other researchers was an unforgettable experience. Experiencing highs and lows, I have thrived on this academic journey of learning. Viewing the world through a social constructionist lens is something I had never until now formally articulated. I am now even more acutely aware of the nuances of the humanness of us all and how easily any of us can unconsciously and unquestioningly adhere to explicit and implicit assumptions that surround us.

My aim for the current research project was to explore and discover what experiences of IPV victimisation men have in heterosexual relationships, and how these impact on their daily lives and sense of identity. From clients in my counselling practice and conversations with colleagues, I saw first-hand and heard stories of male victimisation from their female intimate partners that were incongruent with that which was presented in the media and wider public forums.

It has been a great privilege and an emotional and humbling experience to meet with participants of the current study and have them share with me intimate details of their lives. Using constructivist grounded theory was extremely important to me as it acknowledges the place of the researcher within research and remains grounded in the data, in this case, the participant's words, was extremely important to me. I have felt a great sense of responsibility carrying the trust the participants put in me to honour their stories and let their voices be heard.

This research project has significantly contributed to the knowledge base of this topic, and it is my hope that the increased visibility of male victims of IPV stimulates ongoing conversations,

particularly for those responsible in media, government institutions, legal and health sectors with respect to education, professional development and ongoing revision of policy and practice. IPV is not an issue of gender but a human issue and all victims need to be acknowledged so that relevant resources and support can be made available to those affected and appropriate and effective interventions put in place for both victims and perpetrators.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethics Approval

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Finance, Ethics and Compliance

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

Level 10, 49 Symonds Street
Telephone: 64 9 373 7599
Extension: 87830 / 83761
Facsimile: 64 9 373 7432

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

22-Dec-2014

MEMORANDUM TO:

Dr Margaret Agee
Counselling, HumServ & SocWrk

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 013237): Approved

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled **Whispers in private: The lived experiences and effects for male victims of intimate partner violence**.

We are pleased to inform you that ethics approval is granted for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 22-Dec-2017.

If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

If you have obtained funding other than from UniServices, send a copy of this approval letter to the Research Office, at ro-awards@auckland.ac.nz. For UniServices contracts, send a copy of the approval letter to the Contract Manager, UniServices.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals. If you wish to do so, please contact the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

Please quote reference number: **013237** on all communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

UAHPEC Administrators
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Counselling, HumServ & SocWrk
Ms Alison Burke

Appendix 2: Ethics Extension

Research Office
Post–Award Support Services

The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

Level 10, 49 Symonds Street
Telephone: 64 9 373 7599
Extension: 83711
Facsimile: 64 9 373 7432
ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

17-May-2018

MEMORANDUM TO:

Dr Margaret Agee
Counselling, HumServ & SocWrk

Re: Request for change of Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 013237): Amendments Approved

The Committee considered your request for change for your study entitled **Whispers in private: The lived experiences and effects for male victims of intimate partner violence** and approval was granted for the following amendments on 17-May-2018.

The Committee approved the following amendments:

1. To extend the research project for a further three years.

Comment: The extension has been approved given the circumstances explained in the amendment request despite it being outside the normal time frame for extension requests.

The expiry date for this approval is 23-Dec-2020.

If the project changes significantly you are required to resubmit a new application to the Committee for further consideration.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, it would be appreciated if you could notify the Committee once your study is completed.

The Chair and the members of the Committee would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals. If you wish to do so, please contact the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

Please quote reference number **013237** on all communications with the UAHPEC regarding this application.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

UAHPEC Administrators
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Counselling, HumServ & SocWrk
Ms Alison Burke

Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work

Faculty of Education
University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: Whispers in Private: The lived experiences and its effects for male victims of intimate partner violence

Researcher: Alison Burke

I am a PhD student at the University of Auckland. I have worked as a counsellor for many years. During this time I have become interested in understanding the experiences of men who experience intimate partner violence against themselves in their intimate heterosexual relationships.

Invitation:
You are invited to take part in this research. I am inviting men aged 18 or over who are, or have been, in a violent intimate heterosexual relationship, and who have experienced violence by their female partners, to share their experiences with me in individual, confidential interviews.

What are the aims and benefits of the research?
The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of male victims of intimate partner violence - something that we know little about. Recent research has documented that in many instances women may be more violent than men and can also be the sole perpetrators of such violence. Sharing your experiences by taking part in this research will add to the growing body of knowledge in this field. The results may be used to develop greater understanding of the phenomena associated with intimate partner violence, in order to educate others. The information gathered may also contribute to building the basis for more informed policy and practice to support men who are victims and prevent this form of intimate partner violence from occurring.

What happens in the interview?
The interview will be likely to last between one and two hours and will take place at a suitable time and location that we will discuss and agree upon. You will be asked to sign a consent form. Each interview will be voice recorded, and transcribed, and after this has been done the transcription will be sent to you to check. During the interview you are free to have the recorder turned off at any time as long as you like, and only continue if and when you chose to do so. As a voluntary participant, you have the right to withdraw your consent to participate at any time and withdraw what you said in the interview up to 2 weeks after you have reviewed the transcript of the interview. If at any time you feel uncomfortable when talking about aspects of your experiences, I will provide support and if you would like further assistance after the interview, I will discuss with you a list of suitable resources and professionals available within or nearby your community of residence.

What happens to the information you share in the interview?
The interviews will be audio recorded, for the purposes of producing a written transcript. Once the accuracy of the transcripts has been verified, and the analysis of the transcripts has been completed, all recordings will be erased. Transcripts will be stored securely (in locked filing cabinets and/or a

password protected computer) at the University of Auckland for a period of six years. I will be the only person who listens to the recording of your interview, and my supervisors are the only other people who may view the transcripts. If you withdraw from the study within the 2 week period after reviewing the transcript, your information will be destroyed immediately. Following the completion of the study you will have the opportunity to receive an executive summary of findings, via email or post, if you provide me your contact details.

How is your identity going to be kept confidential?
The utmost care will be taken to ensure your privacy in the research report. You will be asked to provide a pseudonym, a false name which will be used when writing up your story. When transcribing and typing up the interview I will use your chosen pseudonym. From that time the information that you have supplied will be identified only by that pseudonym. My research supervisors will have access to the written format of your interview and data for analysis.

In addition, I will take care that any other personal details that could lead to your identification will be disguised or omitted, to maintain your privacy. When you review the transcript of your interview you will have the right to ask that any particular material you have provided that seems personally identifiable is also withdrawn.

As well as writing up the research report in the form of my thesis, I intend use information from this study in conference presentations and journal articles in the future.

Thank you very much for your time. Please contact me if you would like to take part in this research project or would like further information about it.

Alison Burke

My contact details are:
Email: avin023@aucklanduni.ac.nz
Phone: 027-545-4049

My supervisors are:
Dr Margaret Agee and Associate Professor Michael O'Brien
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Faculty of Education
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601, Symonds Street
Auckland.
Phone: 373 7599 ext. 87852; 623 8899 ext. 48648
Email: m.agee@auckland.ac.nz; ma.obrien@auckland.ac.nz

The Head of School is:
Associate Professor Christa Fouché
School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work
Faculty of Education
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601, Symonds Street
Auckland.
Phone: 373 7599 ext. 48648
Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON …… FOR (3) YEARS, REFERENCE NUMBER …… /……

Appendix 4: Participant Consent Form

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
School of Counselling,
Human Services and Social Work

Faculty of Education
University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
Symonds Street
Auckland

CONSENT FORM (PARTICIPANT)
THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Whispers in Private: The lived experiences and its effects for male victims of intimate partner violence
Researcher: Alison Burke

I have read the Participant Information Sheet for this research and understand the nature of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that taking part in this research is voluntary. I understand that the interview will be between one and two hours in duration and will be audio-recorded.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time, without giving a reason. I also have the right to withdraw any data that I have contributed at any time up to two weeks after I have reviewed the transcript of my interview. (date to be inserted).
- I understand that during the interview I may request that the recorder be turned off at any time.
- I understand the researcher will transcribe the interview recording herself.
- I understand that neither my name, nor any personally identifiable information about me will be used in any documents related to this research.
- I understand that the materials from this research will be kept securely for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.
- I understand that the results will be used in Alison Burke's thesis and may also be used in conference presentations and articles for publication.
- I wish/ do not wish to receive a summary of the findings. (Email or postal address if yes)

_____

Name _____

Signature _____ Date ____/_____/_____

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON …… FOR 3 YEARS, REFERENCE NUMBER …… /……

Appendix 5: Ethics Committee Email

Copy of email received by supervisor Margaret Agee on September 24 2018

From: Maran Cassin
Sent: Monday, September 24, 2018 4:33 PM
To: Margaret Agee
Subject: RE: Ethics Query

Dear Margaret,

I have been in touch with the Chair of the UAHPEC committee. After consideration, she has asked me to pass her comments and recommendation on to you. See here -

Dear Maran. If participants don't want to take advantage of the confidentiality processes it is really up to them. I think it is just important that the researcher has raised with them the issues of being identified - such as impact on family - but I don't think she should be forcing confidentiality on them if they choose not. It could be different if their choice to be identified would affect other participants - but that doesn't seem to be the case.
I think what is important is that she has an explicit agreement with them as to how they wish to be referred to if she cites anything she wishes to attribute to them.
Please convey this to the researchers.
Jan Crosthwaite

I hope this answers the question for you. Let me know if you have any further queries. I will leave it to you to inform Alison Burke of the chairs decision.

Ngā mihi | warm regards,

Maran Cassin

Regulatory Approvals Administrator
Office of Research Strategy and Integrity
The University of Auckland/Te Whare Wananga o Tamaki Makaurau
Level 11, 49 Symonds Street, Auckland 1010
Telephone +64 09 373 7599 | Extension 83025

Appendix 6: Advertisement for Participants

Men as Victims of Intimate Partner Violence

Hi, my name is Alison Burke and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Auckland. I am currently undertaking research on the lived experiences and its effects for male victims of intimate partner violence (IPV).

Recent research overseas has highlighted that men in heterosexual relationships can be victims of IPV. There is a need for more study in this field particularly in relation to men's experiences in these abusive relational dynamics.

For the purposes of my research IPV may include physical violence (slapping, pushing, shoving, biting, choking, shaking, hitting with objects/weapons); sexual abuse; psychological/emotional abuse (e.g. coercion and threats, intimidation; deprivation of sleep; isolation from family/friends; humiliation; verbal abuse; controlling behaviours; withholding information or controlling and denying access to finances.

As part of my research I would like to interview men who are over the age of 18 and who have experienced IPV in their personal lives in a heterosexual relationship.

Do you have a male client or former client who is or has been a victim of intimate partner violence/abuse?

Is he aged over 18?

Would he be willing to be interviewed for 1-2 hours about his experiences?

Interviews can take place at a time and location convenient to your client. He will be asked to choose a pseudonym and his confidentiality will be respected through the entire project.

If you do have a client or former client who fits the criteria please pass this advertisement on to him. If he is interested in talking with me or wants more information on my study, he can contact me at avin023@auckland.ac.nz or 027-545-4049 and I can discuss the study with him further.

Any assistance in passing this advertisement on to possible prospective participants would be greatly appreciated.
APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 22/12/2014 FOR 3 YEARS, REFERENCE NUMBER……..

Appendix 7: Letter to NZAC Requesting Placement of Advertisement

Men as Victims of Intimate Partner Violence

Hi, my name is Alison Burke and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Auckland. I am currently undertaking research on the lived experiences and its effects for male victims of intimate partner violence (IPV).

Recent research overseas has highlighted that men in heterosexual relationships can be victims of IPV. There is a need for more study in this field particularly in relation to men's experiences in these abusive relational dynamics.

For the purposes of my research IPV may include physical violence (slapping, pushing, shoving, biting, choking, shaking, hitting with objects/weapons); sexual abuse; psychological/emotional abuse (e.g. coercion and threats, intimidation; deprivation of sleep;

Dear [insert NZAC Newsletter editor's name]

As a Member of NZAC I am also a PhD student at the University of Auckland and I am writing to request your assistance. I am currently undertaking research on the lived experiences and effects of intimate partner violence for male victims, and I am seeking participants.

To date, little local research has been undertaken into the experiences of male victims, and in fact neither practitioners nor researchers have significantly acknowledged the existence of male victims. As part of my research I would like to interview men who have experienced this phenomena in intimate heterosexual relationships.

I would appreciate it if you would place the attached advertisement in the monthly newsletter to enable any members who may have clients or former clients who are male victims of IPV the opportunity of passing the information on to them.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any queries.

Kind regards,

Alison Burke (MNZAC)

Email: avin023@aucklanduni.ac.nz
Mob: 027-545-4049

Appendix 8: Participant Demographics (*N*=16)

Demographic	*N*
Age range (31–67 at time of interview)	
30–39	2
40–49	7
50–59	4
60–69	3
Type of relationship	
Married	9
Cohabitating	7
Duration of relationship	
0–12 months	1
1–5 years	5
6–10 years	3
11–15 years	3
20+ years	2
Continuing	2
Presence of children in the relationship	
Children together	9
Children with another	3
Participant's highest education	
Tertiary	12
Trade	2
High School	2
Age difference of female partner	
Younger (<12 months–16 years)	14
Older (1–8 years)	2

Appendix 9: Interview Schedule

Research Topic: Whispers in Private: The lived experiences effects for male victims of intimate partner violence

Interview Guide

1. Tell me a bit about yourself, your background and what led you to volunteering to take part in this research?

2. When we talk about violence/abuse this can mean many things. What violent/abusive experiences have you had?

3. Can you tell me about your relationship? I(i.e. your partner, how you met, how long you've known each other)

4. When did the violence start?

5. How did it unfold?

6. What was it like for you and how did you respond and cope?

7. If you had children at the time what was that like for you?

8. If you ever tried to confide in anyone what happened?

9. If you choose not to tell anyone what was happening for you, what influenced you to make that decision?

10. How have your experiences affected your life, i.e. at home, with your extended family, at work, your friendships (at the time and long term)?

11. If you tried to leave the relationship, what happened?

12. If you have left the relationship – how did you manage this?

13. How have things been since you left?

14. Thinking back, what might you have done differently?

15. What ideas would you have to offer other men who are in similar situations?

16. Are there suggestions you would like to make to professionals or others about the kinds of support you or other men in similar situations would value?

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