Domestic violence and the reaction of Pinellas County

Angel L. McCulloch

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE REACTION OF PINELLAS COUNTY

By:
Angel L. McCulloch

Senior Honors Thesis
Committee Members:
Dr. Laura Runge, Dr. Raymond Arsenault, Dr. David Stenmark
Special Thanks

I would like to thank Frieda, Karla, MaryLou, and my dear friend Marlene for deeply expanding my knowledge on this explosive issue. Your efforts in helping victims have been extraordinary. As I researched this pandemic problem, I was constantly reminded of the need for advocates like yourselves. God bless you and the work that you do.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. The Magnitude of Domestic Violence ........................................ 1
II. Specific Theories In The Literature ........................................... 10
III. Our Area Shelters ................................................................. 15
IV. Survey Findings ................................................................. 20
V. Viable Options For Reducing Violence ................................. 32
Chapter One

The Magnitude of Domestic Violence

Each year 1.6 million wives in the United States are severely assaulted by their husbands (Gottman et al., 1995; Glazer, 1993). These assaults are criminal in nature, and yet year after year they are allowed to continue. In terms of physical injury, violence against women by their husbands or partners occurs more often in Canada and the U.S. than all incidents of accidents, muggings, and rapes combined (The Haven, 1995; Avis, 1992). It is the contention of this study that battering statistics will continue to be high so long as helping professionals (judges, criminal justice employees, members of domestic violence task forces, shelter workers, and mental health professionals), researchers, and community members disagree as to what causes battering and how to reduce the violence. A measurement of attitudes toward domestic violence among helping professionals and students in Pinellas County is presented to demonstrate how conceptualizations of violence affect domestic violence reduction.

There are a myriad of problems associated with domestic violence. These problems impede attempts to help victims. Some of the most significant problems that perpetuate violence are: lackadaisical attitudes towards abuse, using the restricted language code when discussing domestic violence (i.e. using the word “problem” instead of saying what the problem is; domestic violence), using conflicting labels to describe domestic violence, professionals’ lacking consensus as to what causes battering, passivity
among the general population, acceptance of the problem, ignorance, weak arrest policies, minimization of the problem, and denial. It is important to consider each of the above impediments to domestic violence reduction.

In 1997 when 1.6 to 2 million women are annually assaulted by their husbands or boyfriends, it seems that Americans are not intolerant of violence. Communities have become accustomed to handling domestic violence as a private family matter (Stalans & Lurigio, 1995). People often fail to help victims because they feel domestic violence is a couple's personal problem. Unfortunately, law enforcement often takes this approach. Furthermore, police routinely classify domestic assault as a misdemeanor even though the criminal conduct involved includes bodily injury as serious or more serious than 90% of all rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults (Hart, 1993; Glazer, 1993).

In the 1980s there was a revolution in the way police treated domestic violence; however, as recently as 1984 arrests were seldom made in domestic violence cases with no visible injury (Glazer 1993). The impact of police attitudes on the general public is paramount. If law enforcement minimizes domestic violence so too will the community. A group that is particularly influenced by police conceptualizations of violence is teenagers. When it comes to domestic violence, attitudes of high school students are disturbing. One study of almost 2,000 high school students in Rhode Island found that two thirds of the boys and almost half of the girls said that a man has the right to force sex on a woman if the couple has dated for at least six months (Avis, 1992). Attitudes are significant because they influence behavior. A passive attitude towards violence is likely to result in passive
behavior towards reducing violence. This is why law enforcement and helping professionals must adopt an attitude of intolerance towards domestic violence.

In reviewing the domestic violence literature, it becomes clear that researchers have a lot of power in shaping our conceptualizations of battering. The language researchers use will either facilitate or hinder one's understanding of the problem. Often researchers use what is called the restricted language code. Authors use weak or nondescript words in their descriptions, instead of being specific. They may do this intentionally or unintentionally. The effect on the reader is significant either way, especially with a topic like domestic violence. For example, one is likelier to grasp the horror intrinsic in domestic violence when the words domestic violence are actually used, instead of weaker descriptors like "partner abuse." The word "violence" has a stronger effect on the reader and more closely approximates the nature of battering. Several researchers have minimized the significance of domestic violence by utilizing poor descriptors for the problem. For example, family systems theorists or family therapists often refer to domestic violence as marital violence. In doing so, they are minimizing the victim role and overemphasizing the interactional component of battering.

Another significant impediment to reducing domestic violence is that researchers and helping professionals at large have not reached consensus on what causes battering, or even how to define it. For clarification, domestic violence in this account is considered any assault, battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another who is or was
residing in the same single dwelling unit. “Family or household member” means spouses, former spouses, persons related by blood or marriage, persons presently living like a family, and persons who have a child together regardless of whether they have been married or have resided together at any time (Pinellas County Courthouse, Civil Court Records Department, 1996). This is the definition used by most helping professionals in Pinellas County.

It is much more difficult to identify helping professionals who agree on the causes of battering. They often vary their conceptions based on the approach they take. Helping professionals and researchers often take one of the following (conflicting) approaches as to what causes battering: the feminist approach, the family systems approach, or the social learning approach. Each approach has a unique stance on who is to blame for the violence and why it continues; these approaches are analyzed in chapter two. With respect to reducing violence, the dilemma lies in the reality that problems are easier to conquer when people have a shared philosophy that allows them to work together towards affecting a positive change. If people’s views are in conflict they may not be working together to reduce the problem. Thus, they may even slow down the process of reducing domestic violence.

Another impediment in reducing domestic violence is that many people are unenlightened as to the magnitude of the violence. Most citizens probably do not even realize that women are at a higher risk of being physically assaulted, beaten, or killed at
home by their partners than in any other place or by any other person (Bryant, 1994).

Another shocking statistic reveals that approximately one quarter to one third of dating couples experience violence (Margolin & Burman, 1993). I conducted a survey measuring community awareness of domestic violence. The group mean for my sample (a middle to upper socioeconomic status population) was only 36%. Thus in my community sample only 36% answered the questions regarding domestic violence correctly, indicating a low awareness of the problem.

It is also important that people acknowledge that men are also victims of domestic violence. Women in discordant relationships are not always the victim. Furthermore, some victims are not as passive, weak, or docile as generally believed (Walker, 1995). However, most of the domestic violence literature supports the belief that 95% of domestic violence victims are female (Margolin & Burman, 1993; Avis, 1992). Therefore, I will primarily use the female as victim paradigm in this paper so as to be consistent with the literature.

Another impediment to reducing domestic violence is that many people only focus on the physical aspect of domestic violence because this is the area that receives the most attention from professionals. It is necessary, though, to recognize that domestic violence always involves emotional and verbal abuse, and often includes sexual abuse (Avis, 1992). Significant reduction of domestic violence will not occur until people become more aware of the manifestations of violence through education and social change. Realizing that
domestic violence includes emotional and sexual abuse, and becoming aware of the alarming statistics are only the first steps in reducing abuse.

Another obstacle to reducing domestic violence involves the stagnation of the criminal justice system. It was not until the 1970s that domestic violence moved from the private into the public realm. The belief that it was a private family matter often made police and judges reluctant to intervene. In 1967, for example, the International Association of Chiefs of Police published a training manual with the following advice to officers: "In dealing with family disputes, arrests should be exercised as a last resort" (Glazer, 1993).

The 1980s, however, witnessed a whole new method of police treatment of domestic violence. A campaign to treat domestic violence as a serious crime by the battered women's movement, and several lawsuits against police departments, led many states and localities to change their laws and arrest policies. By 1987 more than half of the nation's major police departments had adopted a "pro-arrest" policy, which required police to make an arrest unless they could document a good reason not to (Glazer, 1993). This "pro-arrest" policy exists today for many localities, including Pinellas County. However, there is an obvious danger in the policy; arresting batterers is based on the subjective assessment of the officer. Pinellas County can be used here as an example of how subjective arrest policies affect domestic violence cases.

Drawing from a sample three month period in Pinellas County, specifically April of 1996 through June of 1996, Pinellas County Police Departments received a total of 2,104
domestic violence reports and made a total of 1,046 arrests. Therefore, in this three-month period, only 49.7% of reported cases resulted in arrests. In April 1996 in Pinellas County there were 335 arrests. Of those arrested, 80 cases were considered felonies and 255, misdemeanors. In this same month, there were 342 non-arrests. Of those, 51 were classified as felonies, and 291 as misdemeanors (Department of Justice Coordination, April 1996-June 1996 Domestic Violence Statistics). Arrest is not always the best strategy for reducing domestic violence. However, it is always desirable to arrest whenever it is clear that victims' safety will be in jeopardy if they are left with their abusers. Often, the only way of ensuring that batterers will be removed from the couple’s environment is by arresting them.

It is important to understand the effect that arrest has on recidivism rates. Much research examines the arrested person’s stake in conformity. By stake in conformity, researchers are referring to how successful one is in society (i.e. income, career status). Thus, batterers who lack a stake in conformity (are lower on the socioeconomic ladder) are significantly more likely to abuse again. The premise is that the more successful one is, the greater the impact of arrest. Florida law states that “with respect to an arrest for an act of domestic violence, the decision to arrest shall not require consent of the victim or consideration of the relationship of the parties” (Chapter 901.15 of the Florida Statutes1996). This is positive for victims who are likely to discourage arresting their abusive partner (because of fear of retaliation, victims often object to arrests).
Denial is the final significant obstacle to reducing violence that we will review. Denying the reality of domestic violence plays a tremendous role in perpetuating abuse. Victims of domestic violence often use denial as a means of survival. However, the greatest use of denial is by the community which at large does not want to admit that terrifying domestic assault exists and that it is a product of human brutality. People do not want to acknowledge that as a species we are capable of harming one another so severely. Even family therapists appear to be in denial on some level: “We as family therapists rarely speak about violence in concrete and vivid terms.....in truly facing and naming family violence, we must grapple with the limitations of familiar and comfortable theories and interventions that were not originally conceived to address coercive, terrifying, and sometimes fatal male violence” (Bograd, 1992). Denial is functional for therapists, as well as victims and lay people. Denial allows us to avoid the pain associated with domestic violence and to live peacefully.

All of the issues discussed center around one salient problem: communities fail to conceptualize domestic violence as a crime serious enough to merit significant intervention. Each of the impediments to domestic violence reduction involve our not taking the violence seriously enough. Whether it is an issue of mislabeling, poor arrest policies, passivity, or denial, the overwhelming problem lies in our lack of intolerance for abuse. The fact is, until people recognize the seriousness of domestic violence, and react from the position that violence is unacceptable, domestic violence statistics will be high.
Until communities unite in an active attempt to reduce the violence, millions of women will continue to experience domestic violence, and many will even die.
Chapter Two

Specific Theories In The Literature

After two decades of domestic violence research, researchers still have very little knowledge about its causes or why batterers maintain aggressive behavior. This lack of knowledge is very disconcerting for victim advocates. Researchers and helping professionals lack accordance as to what causes battering and who exactly is to blame for the violence. This lack of agreement is probably one of the biggest obstacles to understanding the problem.

There are three dominant theories of domestic violence: the feminist approach, which almost entirely places the responsibility of violence on the batterer; the social learning approach, which maintains that batterers learned the abusive behavior; and the family systems approach, which asserts that battering involves an interaction between two willing parties who are both responsible for the violence (Margolin & Burman, 1993). My contention is that if helping professionals adopt one of these perspectives too stringently reducing domestic violence will be extremely arduous. The goal should be to reach a clear understanding of what perpetuates domestic violence and how to prevent it. Each theory has a unique approach to the reduction of abuse.

The feminist perspective on domestic violence begins with the claim that America is a patriarchy, and in this patriarchy violence against women is expected and condoned. The feminist analysis is strongly supported by numerous studies that indicate that large
numbers of men either engage in, or believe they have the right to engage in, coercive behaviors with women. In this analysis, incest, sexual assault, and domestic violence are considered intrinsic to the patriarchy, the most overt forms of power and control “wielded” by men as a class superior to women (Avis, 1992). Power and gender are important, as well as culturally based patterns of male-female relations (Margolin & Burman, 1993). The goal of the feminist approach is to restructure the social systems that support violence against women and sustain a hierarchical power structure. In the feminist perspective, women are encouraged to empower themselves as individuals, which often entails breaking off abusive relationships (Margolin & Burman, 1993).

A second approach is the social learning perspective. This analysis focuses on observational learning and reinforcement of the perpetrator’s performance within a social context. Adherents contend that “the batterer learns when, where, and against whom to aggress, and also learns that aggression is functional” (Margolin & Burman, 1993). With the social learning approach, family of origin, peer group, and current family relationships are emphasized far more than societal systems or cultural patterns. Finally, with respect to reducing violence, those holding this perspective believe that it is more important to understand why batterers abuse than to prosecute them.

The final perspective is the family systems approach. It is based on ideas that clash with both of the other approaches, but particularly the feminist approach (Margolin & Burman, 1993). In family systems theory (the theory of many family therapists) the family, not the individual, is diagnosed and treated for what is considered familial violence.
A repeating pattern, like domestic violence, is viewed like other behavior, as an interactional sequence maintained by both the batterer and the victim as a homeostatic mechanism preserving the equilibrium of the system (Margolin & Burman, 1993). With the family systems approach, there is a special focus on causal factors such as intergenerational transmission, pathology in the batterer and/or victim, substance abuse, and system dynamics (Bartle & Rosen, 1994). This perspective maintains that the best way to reduce domestic violence is to identify the reasons for discord between the couple and find ways to heal the relationship.

Each of the approaches could be analyzed further. The feminist approach is probably the position with the most credibility. Domestic violence does affect more women than men, and it does occur in a society that tolerates violence. However, the feminist approach obscures the idea of the male victim. Those who take this approach do not appear to acknowledge female batterers at all. However, the feminist approach encourages empowering victims, and the empowerment model is very effective in helping victims realize their own potential to live productive, happy lives. Battered women’s shelters often use the empowerment model for example. Through the empowerment process victims learn how to recognize and use their inner strength not only to escape violence, but to cope with the daily hassles of life.

It is also important to analyze the social learning approach further. It is a good approach in the sense that it emphasizes that violent behavior is learned and modeled. However, this approach could be dangerous because one is likely to minimize the violence
in one's avid attempt to understand and explain it. Furthermore, domestic violence is an extremely vast subject, and understanding why it occurs necessitates careful analysis and in-depth thinking. Sometimes in an effort to make domestic violence understandable, one underestimates its significance by using simple explanations to describe it. This of course does little to emphasize the horror intrinsic to violence. A specific problem with this approach in respect to reducing domestic violence is that it limits the roles of power and control in the battering relationship. Proponents of this approach fail to emphasize batterers' attempts to control their victims through their abuse.

The family systems approach could also be reviewed further. First of all, the family systems approach offers an appreciation and concern for the family unit. It is important to consider that many couples will remain together despite the abuse; therefore there is reason to understand the family context in which the batterer and the victim reside (Margolin & Burman, 1993). These aspects of the approach are positive; however, this view partially blames the victim for the violence, and is therefore dangerous. Victims do not cause the violence, and therefore are not responsible for it. Judith Myers Avis provides a good criticism of this approach: “Systems theory is committed to understanding any one element of a system as determined by the maintenance of the whole system. In spite of criticisms from within the field, the writing of many family theorists is still rooted in the belief that systems are essentially ‘cooperative,’ apparently unaware that the superficial cooperation visible in a system may actually be the product of coercion and misunderstanding” (Avis, 1992). It is important to consider that a victim's refusal to leave
an abusive relationship is due to intense fear of leaving, not a desire to continue living with their abusive partner. No victim wishes to be continually abused.

The best way to approach domestic violence is through a holistic analysis. Combining all three approaches as well as new philosophies allows a theorist or victim advocate to be open minded enough to consider all possible explanations for why violence occurs and how best to reduce it. It is important to adopt a theoretical stance because failure to do so could lead one to be less effective in helping victims. This is because in formulating theories one is forced to think seriously about the myriad of issues involved with the problem at hand. Certainly significant reduction of domestic violence requires people to engage in both in-depth thinking and active behavioral measures to reduce the abuse.
Chapter 3

Our Area Shelters

Domestic violence is significantly reduced when citizens unite and design, as well as carry out, viable reduction strategies. Shelter workers and volunteers work particularly hard at victim advocacy. It is because of their devotion to peace that victims have the opportunity to break the cycle of violence and live in a safe environment again. What seems ubiquitous among shelter workers is their shared belief that violence is completely unacceptable. Furthermore, they tend to believe that victims are never responsible for the abuse they endure.

The battered women’s shelter movement began in the 1970s. The first shelter opened in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1974 (Glazer, 1993). Shelters are havens for domestic violence victims and much more. Examples of services provided by the typical shelter include: child care; aid in obtaining financial security; financial assistance; employment assistance; accompaniment to welfare offices and social security offices; assistance in getting housing; and survival-skill development, such as money management and parenting (Margolin & Burman, 1993). Shelters vary in the number of victims they will assist and the length of stay. An ongoing problem throughout the U.S. is that the need for shelters far exceeds their availability. It is estimated that only about 3% of all battered women find refuge in shelters (Margolin & Burman, 1993).
Pinellas County is fortunate to have two particularly highly functioning shelters that are readily accessible to victims: CASA and The Haven. Both aim to reduce violence through victim advocacy, education, victim empowerment, and developmental efforts to affect positive social change.

CASA (Center Against Spouse Abuse) has been providing refuge and service to Pinellas County victims since 1977. CASA offers a variety of services: a 24 hour Crisis Line, emergency shelter, counseling, information and referrals, aid in obtaining injunctions for protection, and an extensive victim advocacy program overall.

Since its inception, CASA employees and volunteers have earnestly striven to provide assistance to victims. When CASA first developed, there was only enough room to accommodate eight victims. Furthermore, the shelter had a very limited budget. Through fund raising and efforts to expand, CASA today has a twenty-one person staff, numerous volunteers, and a shelter capacity of thirty. CASA Director, Linda Osmundson and her staff have transformed the shelter into a very attractive safe haven for victims. CASA has legal advocates that work at the State Attorney’s Office, as well as the Clerk of Court’s Office, several community based support groups, a substance abuse program, and a thorough community outreach service program. CASA follows a philosophy which encourages validating victims, aiding them in recognizing and accepting their feelings, helping them set goals, and building self-esteem.

CASA is truly a community based program. It is funded in part by the Marriage
License Trust Fund, HRS, the Juvenile Welfare Board, United Way, civic groups, churches, and private donations. CASA’s staff and volunteers actively participate in fund raising activities to gain financial support. CASA utilizes and appreciates its volunteers who represent community groups, colleges, churches, business agencies, and law enforcement agencies. According to the Volunteer Training Manual, volunteers are requested to work at least four hours weekly and to make a six month commitment to CASA. Furthermore, volunteers are required to attend a 15 hour training program.

CASA also helps victims through its domestic violence prevention program. This program emphasizes community education and outreach groups for domestic violence “survivors” who do not live with their abusers (and therefore may not need to live in the shelter). Victims in this situation benefit greatly from the outreach counseling services provided (CASA Handbook & Volunteer Training Manual).

The Haven Domestic Violence Center is the other Pinellas County shelter. The Haven opened on December 1, 1980. In its earlier years the program was funded entirely by donations. As with CASA, The Haven employees and volunteers have worked so that today the shelter receives funds from several local, state and federal funding bodies, plus numerous “interfaith congregations,” as well as concerned individuals and groups. In the beginning, The Haven had only one full time employee and several volunteers. Today The Haven has a staff of 20, as well as a shelter capacity of 20, and approximately 100 volunteers.

The Haven offers victims a variety of services: safe, confidential housing, food,
clothing, counseling, information and referrals, aid in obtaining injunctions, advocacy with social service and legal systems, therapy, parenting classes, and a commitment to empowering victims so that they will become confident, independent people. The Haven’s philosophy is to empower victims through education and unconditional support. Empowerment is the process through which people become aware of their ability to control their own lives. Employees and staff use the Empowerment Model in helping victims restructure their lives.

The Haven’s program demands dedication and strength from staff and volunteers. The staff and volunteers must enlighten themselves to all types of abuse: physical, sexual, and psychological. They must concretely understand the cycle of violence and the significant roles that power and control play in perpetuating violence. Since domestic violence occurs in a relationship in which victims have relinquished all of their autonomy, victims must be taught how to become independent so that they can gain control over their own lives. The Haven employees teach victims how to recognize the signs of unhealthy love. Much of their focus is on teaching victims about boundaries, and what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior (The Haven Handbook, 1996).

One of the most beneficial aspects of the shelter experience, particularly with our Pinellas County shelters, is the emphasis on education. Educating victims is paramount in both Pinellas County shelters. During their shelter stay victims learn about the cycle of violence. They learn that violent behavior involves a pattern beginning with tension, escalating to frustration, aggression, and finally “the honeymoon phase,” a brief period
where the batterer is apologetic about the abuse and is extremely kind to the victim (a very overt form of manipulation). Through weekly support groups victims learn (based on the shelter’s philosophy) what perpetuates violence, and how to recognize low self-esteem and dysfunction in themselves, others, and their relationships. After the shelter experience victims are more assertive in demanding freedom from abuse.
Chapter 4

Survey Findings

As discussed in Chapter two, the theoretical approach one takes in conceptualizing domestic violence has an impact on one’s behavior towards victims and batterers. Therefore, it is important to know and understand how helping professionals feel about domestic violence and, in particular, what their theoretical approach is. In order to gain insight into how Pinellas County professionals think about the problem, I conducted a survey designed to discover whether they took the feminist approach, social learning approach, or family systems approach to understanding battering behavior. I administered my survey to employees at CASA, The Haven, a randomly selected Pinellas County police department, and the Pinellas Domestic Violence Task Force. It is important to study these groups and their orientations to domestic violence because members of each work directly with victims and batterers. My goal in conducting the research was to discover the level of agreement within each group, and between the groups, on what perpetuates domestic violence and who is responsible for it. My belief is that if helping professionals share the same explanations of what causes battering they will work together more effectively to reduce the violence.

I designed numerous questions that were consistent with the feminist approach, the social learning approach, and the family systems approach to battering. From those questions, I randomly selected seven for inclusion in the survey questionnaire. Each
survey had a total of 17 questions, but only the 7 identifying the subject’s theoretical approach were of particular interest to me. See Appendix A, page 36. I designed each of the questions from literature consistent with each line of reasoning. When the subject answered four or more questions of the same theoretical approach, that subject was considered to abide by that specific theory.

The theoretical approach one held in the survey is believed to represent their overall outlook on domestic violence. If a subject answered the bulk of the questions with the feminist line of reasoning, that subject is considered to view the batterer as the sole perpetrator of the violence. Again, those taking the feminist approach believe that victims are never responsible for the violence. Furthermore, individuals with the feminist outlook often view battering as a crime.

If a subject answered questions consistent with the social learning approach, that subject is considered to blame primarily the batterer’s environment, or past history of abuse for the violence. Those taking the social learning approach believe that it is more important to understand the role of the family and society in developing batterers than placing the bulk of responsibility on the batterers themselves. Subjects holding this perspective are likely to minimize the roles of power and control in battering behavior.

Subjects that take the family systems approach focus on the interactional component of battering. That is, contenders believe that victims play a large role in perpetuating the violence. Family systems theorists focus on the entire family and the role each person plays in contributing to familial discord. Subjects with this perspective argue
that by refusing to leave the batterer, victims have a significant role in allowing the abuse to continue.

The specific questions asked were designed to identify (according to the subject) who is responsible for battering, the roles that the family, society, batterers, and victims play, what constitutes the typical battering relationship, and how best to conceptualize battering. Each question has a response for each of the theoretical positions, as well as an: "I'm not sure" response.

The first question asked was: "In your opinion, which of the following is the most important area to focus on when choosing a strategy for reducing domestic violence?" The feminist response to this question is: "the societal norms that permit wife abuse." The social learning perspective response is: "characteristics of individual batterers." The family systems response is: "the interpersonal relationships that serve as the context for the violence." This question is important because it is concerned with how to approach domestic violence reduction in general.

The second targeted question for determining one’s theoretical standpoint asked: "Which do you believe is the first thing that should be done to end domestic violence in a relationship?" The feminist response is: "to remove victims from batterers and work on empowering them." The social learning response is: "to provide therapy for the batterer and attempt to teach him (or her) new methods for dealing with their anger." The family systems response is: "have the couple resolve the underlying conflict in couple’s therapy."
The way one responds to this question reveals if the subject’s interests lie mostly in preserving the couple’s relationship, saving victims from continued abuse by removing them from the batterer, or helping the batterer through therapy.

The third question asked: “Which of the following is the most prototypical battering situation?” The feminist response is: “victims are not physically aggressive with their abuser; if they harm their abuser at all it is in self defense.” The social learning approach’s response is: “the batterer is not solely responsible for his (or her) violence because he/she learned this behavior in childhood, or from a reinforcing society.” The systems approach’s response is: “both parties engage in physically assaulting each other, although victims (usually female) have more obvious bruising.” The way the subject responds to this particular question reveals their conception of the typical battering situation.

The fourth question asked is: “Battering is conceptualized best as: a) a learned behavior which continues because it is reinforced; b) an interaction between two people who both contribute to the violence between them; c) a crime and a social problem rooted in a patriarchal society; and d) I’m not sure.” The feminist answer is option c. The social learning response is option a. Finally, the family systems response is b. This question directly examines what is most important to this analysis: how the subject conceptualizes domestic violence.

The fifth question was designed to discover how one defines battering: “Battering
is: a) an irrational act of violence in which the batterer due to his (or her) mental state had no control; b) an intentional act of violence with the aim of establishing control over the victim; c) an intentional act of violence usually resulting from provocation from the victim; and d) I’m not sure. The feminist response is b. The social learning is a; and the family systems is c. This question is important because it could demonstrate what the subject has decided is the most important aspect of battering. Thus, in defining a subject, one must identify what one believes to be the most important characteristics of that subject. If a subject answered with the feminist response, we can assume that this subject feels that batterers aim to establish control over their victims. Thus defining battering with the feminist response tells us that this person views the batterer as responsible for the violence.

The sixth question asks: “Which is the best way to conceptualize victims of domestic violence?” The feminist response is: “passive, scared, survivor.” The social learning response is: “compliant, weak, submissive.” The systems answer is: “combative, aggressive, reactive.” This question aims to discover how positive the subject’s view of the victim is, and whether the subject views the victim as a participant in the violence.

The seventh question aimed at discovering what one’s theoretical approach to battering is asked: “Which is the best description of a batterer?” The feminist response is: “a criminal.” The social learning response is: “a victim him/herself of a violent society.” The family systems response is: “a member of a relationship in which he (or she) abuses and is often abused by their partner/victim as well.” One’s response to this question
provides insight into whether one has compassion and understanding for the batterer, and whether one feels the batterer is a criminal.

The first population surveyed was The Domestic Violence Task Force. Surveys were sent to forty members with a response rate of 32. The Domestic Violence Task Force is a victim advocacy group in Pinellas County composed of powerful professional leaders (judges, professors, shelter representatives, successful lawyers, mental health professionals etc.). The demographic composition of this group (only those responding to the survey, not the whole task force population) was 50% male and 50% female. Age varied, with 3% in the 20-29 range, 22% between 30 and 39, 44% in the 40-49 age cohort, 22% in the 50-59 range, and 6% in the 60-69 range. Thirty-eight percent have a Master’s Degree, 28% a Ph.D., and 25% have a Bachelor’s Degree. Eighty-four percent are Caucasian, and 9% are African American. The results were that 47% of this population had a varied approach (the approach that represents all three approaches). Forty-one percent took a feminist approach, 6% had a social learning approach, and another 6% had the systems approach. See Table 1.

The second group surveyed was CASA staff and volunteers. CASA’s sample included 10 staff members. Seventy percent answered questions that would qualify them as taking the feminist approach, and the remaining 30% took the varied approach. The sample was 100% female. The age distribution was relatively evenly dispersed with 10% in the 20-29 range, 10% in the 30-39 range, 30% between 40-49, 20% in the 50-59 age
Table 1
Survey 2 - Domestic Violence Task Force Sample

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cohort, and 30% between 60-69. Forty Percent have a Bachelor’s Degree, and 10%, a
Master’s Degree. This group is 90% Caucasian and 10% African American. See Table 2.

The third population surveyed was The Haven staff and volunteers. Eleven staff
members participated. The sample was 91% female, with a varied age distribution. Nine
percent were in the 20-29 age cohort, 45% were in the 30-39 range, 18% were between
40 and 49, and 27% were in the 50-59 range. Seventy percent had a Bachelor’s Degree,
and 20% a Master’s. Seventy percent of the sample is Caucasian, 20% is African
American, and 10% is Hispanic. The results for this group are 55% held a feminist
approach, and 45%, a varied approach. See Table 3.

The fourth population surveyed was a randomly selected Pinellas County police
department. Thirty officers participated. Of these, 20% answered questions consistent
with the feminist perspective; 3% had the social learning approach; 17%, systems, and
60% had the varied approach. Eighty-three percent were males. Forty-three percent were
20-29; 23% were in the 30-39 range, 17% were between 40-49, 13% were in the 50-59
range and 3% were 60-69. Fifty percent of the officers have an AA Degree; 29% a
Bachelor’s Degree; 11% have a Business College Degree or Technical School Degree,
and another 11% have a Master’s Degree. The population was 96% Caucasian, (and 4%
selected other). See Table 4.

The results of my first survey (just discussed) only partially support my thesis.
First of all, each of the surveyed groups contain individuals who hold jobs that would
Table 2
Survey 2 - Casa Sample

[Bar charts and graphs representing data on various categories such as Feminist Approach, Social Learning, Systems, Varies, Male vs. Female, Age groups, Education levels, and Ethnicities.]
Table 3
Survey 2 Haven Sample

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Table 4
Survey 2 - Randomly Selected Police Department
qualify them as “helping professionals.” That is, each person surveyed works with domestic violence victims or batterers, or has an impact on how domestic violence is handled in Pinellas County. My survey results provide some insight as to how each group conceptualizes domestic violence. It is significant that the majority of battered women’s shelter employees hold a feminist perspective. With this knowledge we know that they are working together with a shared belief that there is no excuse for domestic violence, or for American’s passivity towards it.

It is important to examine the battered women’s shelters survey results a little closer. First of all, the results from both shelters support my thesis that it is easier to deal with domestic violence reduction and aiding victims when helping professionals agree on what causes battering, and who is to blame for the violence. Shelter workers in Pinellas County appear to blame society and the batterer for the violence. Neither shelter sample had one subject that held either the social learning or the family systems approach. Therefore, it is clear that our domestic violence shelter employees do not believe that battering is the result of an interaction between two willing participants. Furthermore, Pinellas County domestic violence shelter employees most likely contend that batterers are the sole perpetrators of the violence.

Our area shelter employees are committed to the process of reducing domestic violence. Their shared philosophy that violence is unacceptable and the community’s problem has aided them in helping victims. A randomly selected month in 1996 (June) can
be used as an example of how much effort and energy these victim advocates put into the reduction effort. Let us look specifically at CASA employees. In June of 1996, there were 305 domestic violence cases that were brought to their attention (for outreach service). They attempted to contact all of the victims. They were largely successful. They reached 113 victims by phone, and 129 by mail (Department of Justice Coordination, Domestic Violence Statistics). In these contacts (which occur daily) shelter employees provide victims with information on how to obtain the help they need, either through them, or another helping agency.

The police department surveys revealed a varied perspective toward domestic violence. That is, Pinellas County police contribute to the domestic violence reduction effort because they often arrest batterers, and yet, this group does not have a shared perspective on what causes battering, or how to reduce it. With respect to Pinellas County police departments, arrests occur in about half the reported cases. It is important to consider that many of the non-arrests may be due to false claims of abuse (i.e. a victim may claim domestic violence has occurred in hopes of winning a custody battle).

Let us consider a sample time period to review Pinellas officers in their arrests of batterers. In May of 1996 for example, there were 761 reported cases, and in 355 of those the batterer was arrested. The survey results demonstrate that the randomly selected Pinellas police department did not have a shared perspective on what causes battering. It may be that this lack of concensus does not have an impact on their efforts to
reduce the violence.

The Pinellas Domestic Violence Task Force had a varied approach to domestic violence. This may impact the way they deal with domestic violence reduction. To review, 41% of this population holds the feminist approach, 6% has the social learning approach, 6% has the family systems, and 47% has a varied approach. The Pinellas Domestic Violence Task Force is crucial to domestic violence reduction in our community.

The task force is a heterogenous group of helping professionals, and therefore, it is understandable why this group lacks a shared approach to what causes battering. Members of the domestic violence task force include key shelter employees, circuit court judges, members of the State Attorney’s Office, police officers, and mental health professionals. It was the Pinellas Domestic Violence Task Force that specifically worked for a preferred arrest policy in our community. This policy would not have been approved without the efforts of the members. The task force also builds relational ties between different helping agencies. For example, area shelters aid law enforcement, and law enforcement aids area shelters through interagency communication at task force meetings.

I also conducted a survey measuring community awareness of the problem. There were 30 questions in this survey. As with the other survey, I designed questions based on scholarly literature, and then randomly selected questions from a pool of developed questions. See Appendix B, page 42. The population surveyed was Saint Petersburg Junior College students enrolled in an introductory psychology course. The results were
disappointing. As alluded to earlier, this group of subjects (4 separate classes) only answered 36% of the questions correctly. This may be due to their lack of knowledge on battering. The difficulty of the questions also may have contributed to the low success rate. Thirty-eight percent of the population was male. Thirty-eight percent of the population were under 20, 41% were between 20-29, 15% were between 30-39, 5% were in the 40-49 range, and 1% were between 50-59. Eighty-two percent had a high school degree, 81% had some college experience. Sixty-two percent were Caucasian, 14% were African American, 3% were Hispanic, and 21% answered other. See Table 5.

The results of this survey are important because they demonstrate a possible lack of knowledge among community members. In the survey, I asked subjects general questions, such as which courthouse to go to for an injunction, or whether there is one or more battered women's shelters in Pinellas County. It was disconcerting to find that my sample missed a lot of very important questions, indicating that they never learned about domestic violence related issues. Only 21% of the subjects knew that there was more than one domestic violence shelter in Pinellas County. Only 10% of those surveyed knew that sexual assault is considered domestic violence by our Pinellas County Court System. This is important because if one or more of these individuals is being sexually assaulted they are probably unaware that they are able to receive the services provided to domestic violence victims. Importantly, 59% of the sample remarked that it is accurate that at least two million American women are battered each year by their husbands or partners. This
Table 5
Appendix C
Community Sample Survey: Gender

Score # is # correct out of total of 30 questions
demonstrates that this sample has some conceptualization of how many women are affected annually.
Ways To Help Reduce The Violence

As discouraging as it can be to live in a society that perpetuates and tolerates abuse, there is hope for victims of domestic violence. There are some promising, viable ways of reducing the abuse including: counseling batterers in a group, as couples, or in an individual setting; educating the public on how to detect signs of battering; arresting batterers; removing victims from batterers; encouraging victim advocacy, and creating a general intolerance of abuse.

Counseling for batterers could occur in an individual, couples, or group setting. Individual counseling may not be the best method because it could easily create an adversarial situation in which the batterer views his/her therapist as an arbitrator and counseling as punishment. Conjoint therapy, or couple’s counseling, is another mode of counseling batterers. This could be harmful to victims, however, because evidence suggests that both the batterer and victim are likely to deny the abuse or minimize it when in the presence of the other, and the counselor (Bryant, 1994).

Group intervention, on the other hand, has proven to be highly effective for treating male batterers. Small group environments can create a feeling of belonging and intimacy. The primary goal, however, in treating batterers is to change the violent behavior itself, and help the batterer admit and accept responsibility for the violence. Slowly, the
batterer's belief system changes, and the violence should lessen (Avis, 1992).

Arrest is also a treatment option. However, arrest usually only reduces recidivism if the batterer has a high stake in conformity. Since battered women often stay with their abusers, and most arrests are not followed by prosecution, it is not advantageous to consider arrest as a superior treatment for this problem (Sherman et al., 1992).

Removing victims from batterers is a promising option. This is difficult though for various reasons. Victims are terrified of leaving their abusers because of the threat of retaliation. However, once victims leave their abuser (as in the shelter situation) concerned people can help them explore safety options, find ways to gain financial security, bolster their self-esteem, and help them become autonomous adults.

Another reason why it is difficult to remove victims from batterers is that there are some aspects of the battering relationship that are positively reinforcing. For example, battering relationships tend to function under a partial reinforcement schedule. Batterers abuse their partner approximately 95% of the time, and occasionally deviate from the violence to give a brief hug, kiss, or gift. Like the occasional pay off of the casino slot machine, this type of situation is very reinforcing to victims. Advocates for battered women, like shelter workers, often spend time teaching victims about the dynamics of battering relationships. Advocates specifically stress that the abuse they endure is not worth the occasional hug, kiss, or gift.

Educating the public on how to detect signs of battering is a viable approach to
reducing domestic violence. Lay people can educate themselves about this issue, and after becoming aware of the basics of battering, can correct current faulty lines of reasoning. For example, some people feel that because victims remain with their abuser they find the abuse tolerable. It is more accurate to say that they feel the abuse is intolerable, but they remain in the abusive relationship because of their intense fear of leaving. Some important characteristics of most batterers are: male batterers tend to have difficulty in being assertive, have high power needs, have low self-esteem, feel more easily threatened than other males, and have more alcohol related problems compared to nonviolent men (Hamberger & Hastings, 1991).

Encouraging victim advocacy is important to both the reduction of domestic violence and direct aid to victims. The volunteer movement within domestic violence is paramount. Much of the work at CASA and The Haven is done by volunteers. Volunteers can learn about domestic violence and share their knowledge with an unenlightened victim, just as a counselor would do. Volunteers do not even have to counsel victims in the traditional mode; they can simply listen to victims and validate their story, and in the process be one of the first people to take them seriously.

Overall, the most significant way to help reduce battering is for the public to adopt an attitude of intolerance when it comes to violence of any kind, particularly domestic violence. Changing our attitudes on male violence to one of intolerance will have an impact on our behavior as a society. Americans should be alarmed at shocking battering statistics, but because statistics are so high it is obvious that as yet, we are not alarmed. If
anything, we have become habituated to the violence. By recognizing the symptoms of physical, emotional, and sexual assault, we can help victims get the help they need to escape violence. It may be painful for society to recognize domestic violence as a serious crime, but until we do millions of women will continue to experience its invasive effects, as the violence disrupts their physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual worlds.
Bibliography


Appendix A

Insight Into Helping Professionals
Perceptions of Domestic Violence

The following survey is part of a comprehensive study on domestic violence in our community. Thus I am a senior at the University of South Florida working on my Undergraduate Honors Thesis. My purpose in conducting this research is to gain insight into how Pinellas County professionals working with domestic violence conceptualize the problem and related issues. I believe that your opinions on domestic violence are important because you work directly with victims, batterers, or both; or have some power in how our county attempts to reduce the violence.

I am asking you to please fill out my survey and mail it back with the stamped addressed envelope provided. I do not need the survey back until January 10, 1997. If you choose to participate you will be contributing to important research that could lead to an increased understanding of the way our county deals with this extremely pandemic problem. Knowing your opinion; a professional working with this issue, could lead to a better understanding of how to help victims and batterers. Furthermore, since I am administering my survey to different Pinellas organizations working to reduce domestic violence the results could help the groups understand the way the others view the problem; and thus, the way they deal with the problem. I will give the survey results to the appropriate project manager, director, or chairperson. Your participation would be greatly appreciated. Please note too that if you choose to participate there will be no identifying information that will indicate your involvement. Thank you.
Thank you for choosing to participate in this survey. It should take no more than ten minutes of your time. Please answer the following questions by circling what you believe is the best response.

1) In your opinion, which of the following is the most important area to focus on when choosing a strategy for reducing domestic violence?
   a) the societal norms that permit wife abuse
   b) characteristics of individual batterers
   c) the interpersonal relationships that serve as the context for the violence
   d) I’m not sure

2) Which do you believe is the first thing that should be done to end domestic violence in a relationship?
   a) have the couple resolve the underlying conflict in couple’s therapy
   b) remove victims from batterers and work on empowering them
   c) provide therapy for the batterer and attempt to teach him (or her) new methods for dealing with their anger
   d) I’m not sure

3) Which of the following is the most prototypical battering situation?
   a) both parties engage in physically assaulting each other, although victims (usually female) have more obvious bruising
   b) victims are not physically aggressive with their abuser; if they harm their abuser at all it is in self defense
   c) the batterer is not solely responsible for his (or her) violence because he/she learned this behavior in childhood, or from a reinforcing society
   d) I’m not sure
4) Battering is conceptualized best as:
   a) a learned behavior which continues because it is reinforced
   b) an interaction between two people who both contribute to the violence between them
   c) a crime and a social problem rooted in a patriarchal society
   d) I'm not sure

5) How often is this the case?
   Victims cause their abusers to become violent by aggravating them in one form or another?
   Circle one:
   | never | rarely | sometimes | frequently | always |

6) How often is this the case?
   The batterer is male.
   | never | rarely | sometimes | frequently | always |

7) Based on your experience do you believe that approximately 95% of domestic violence situations involve a male batterer and a female victim?
   Circle one: YES NO

8) Battering is:
   a) an irrational act of violence in which the batterer due to his (or her) mental state had no control
   b) an intentional act of violence with the aim of establishing control over the victim
   c) an intentional act of violence usually resulting from provocation from the victim
   d) I'm not sure
   turn please...
9) Which is the best way to conceptualize victims of domestic violence?
   a) passive, scared, survivor
   b) compliant, weak, submissive
   c) combative, aggressive, reactive
   d) none of the above
   I would choose the descriptors: 1) __________ ; 2) __________ ; 3) __________

10) How often is this the case?

   The batterer aggresses on the victim while under the influence of alcohol?

   never rarely sometimes frequently unsure

11) Which is the best description of a batterer? The batterer is:
   a) a victim him/herself of a violent society
   b) a member of a relationship in which he (or she) abuses and is often abused by
      their partner/victim as well
   c) a criminal
   d) psychologically ill

   For the last five questions please rate how accurate each statement is in describing facts
   related to domestic violence. Please use the following scale:

   1- very inaccurate
   2-inaccurate
   3-don’t know
   4-accurate
   5-very accurate

12) Domestic violence offenders in Pinellas County should, but are not required to attend

   counselling and education sessions to correct their violent behavior. ____
13) Drinking or drug usage is the main problem in partner abuse. 

14) The only people who can file for an injunction are people that have had at least 2 incidences of physical violence against them within the last six months. 

15) If one is a victim of abuse and they do not leave their abuser then they should be held responsible for allowing the abuse to continue. 

16) One cannot file for a restraining order if one has only had threats of violence against them but no actual physical violence took place. 

17) Probably the #1 reason batterers physically assault their victims is:

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Optional Open Ended Question:

Can you offer any ideas about how community members can help to reduce domestic violence? ____________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Please check all that apply:

1) SEX: Male___ Female___

2) AGE: ___ 20-29 ___ 30-39 ___ 40-49 ___ 50-59 ___ 60-69 ___ 70 or above

    turn please...
3) EDUCATION: ___ business college or technical school degree
     ___ AA Degree
     ___ Bachelor’s Degree
     ___ Master’s Degree
     ___ Ph.D

4) What is your ethnicity?
     ___ Caucasian
     ___ African American
     ___ Hispanic
     ___ Asian
     ___ Other

This concludes the survey. Thank you for your participation.
Appendix B

Please answer the following questions by filling in the blanks at the end of each item. The questions are aimed at discovering what you know about the issues involved. If you honestly do not know the answer to a question that is O.K. In this case please do not guess, rather fill in 3 for “don’t know.”

How accurate is the statement in describing facts related to domestic violence?

1 - very inaccurate
2 - inaccurate
3 - don’t know
4 - accurate
5 - very accurate

1) Men and women batter each other about equally. __
2) Two-thirds of the families that experience domestic violence are poor. __
3) To get a restraining order against a perpetrator of violence in Pinellas County one goes to the clerk of courts in criminal court. __
4) There is only one domestic violence shelter in Pinellas County. __
5) Florida law requires police departments to give domestic violence related police reports to shelters for battered individuals. __
6) A restraining order (or injunction) is defined as a civil action for protection that a client can take against their batterer. __
1 - very inaccurate
2 - inaccurate
3 - don't know
4 - accurate
5 - very accurate

7) There used to be a mandatory arrest policy for batterers, now it is up to the individual discretion of police officers to arrest or not. ___

8) At least two million American women are battered each year by their husbands or partners. ___

9) Most professionals working to reduce domestic violence in our county regard couples counseling as a positive way to intervene between a relationship plagued with domestic violence. ___

10) A woman is battered in the U.S. every 15 minutes. ___

11) Domestic violence offenders in Pinellas County should, but are not required to attend counseling and education sessions to correct their violent behavior. ___

12) Battering results in more injuries that require medical treatment than rape, auto accidents, and muggings combined. ___

13) Women are the victims of violent crime committed by family members at a rate twice that of men. ___

14) Domestic violence mostly occurs among lower socioeconomic groups. ___

15) Sexual assault is a criminal offense but it is not considered domestic violence by our Pinellas County Court System. ___
16) Most victims of domestic violence are passive and do not stick up for themselves.

17) Last year Pinellas County police departments received at least 5,000 police reports that were domestic violence related.

18) Drinking or drug usage is the main problem in partner abuse.

19) Approximately 95% of the victims of domestic violence are women.

20) In Pinellas County restraining orders are free of charge.

21) Battering is mostly about the batterer's inability to control his or her anger.

22) The only people who can file for a restraining order are people that have had at least 2 incidences of physical abuse against them within the last 6 months.

23) Victims and batterers are equally responsible for the violence between them.

24) If one is a victim of abuse and they do not leave their abuser then it's their own fault if they continue to be abused.

25) Battering usually occurs because of the batterer's need to have power and control over his/her partner.

26) One cannot file for a restraining order if one has only had threats of violence but no actual physical violence took place.
1 - very inaccurate
2 - inaccurate
3 - don’t know
4 - accurate
5 - very accurate

27) Most victims of domestic violence stick up for themselves and defend themselves in every possible way. ___

28) Battering mostly occurs because the batterer is psychologically ill. ___

29) Battered individuals and batterers come from every social, racial, ethnic, and economic background. ___

30) The average number of women that a typical shelter could hold is 50. ___

At this time please answer some general biographical questions that are typically asked of research participants:

For each of the items please put a check next to the appropriate response.

1) SEX: Male___ Female___

2) AGE:
   ___ under 20
   ___ 20-29
   ___ 30-39
   ___ 40-49
   ___ 50-59
   ___ 60-69
3) EDUCATION (check all that apply):

- high school degree
- some business college or technical school experience
- some college experience
- business college or technical school degree
- AA degree
- Bachelor’s Degree
- Master’s or higher degree

4) What is your ethnicity?

- Anglo Saxon
- African American
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Other

Thank you for participating. Remember, you will be given the results of this survey in the future!
Appendix B Notes

Total # of Subjects in sample: 96

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<tr>
<td>Question #</td>
<td>Correct Answer</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 or 2 (false)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 or 2 - Domestic violence affects all socioeconomic levels; researchers have not reached a conceptualization of which socioeconomic group is affected most.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1 or 2 - one goes to the civil court</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 or 2 - There are two battered women’s shelters in Pinellas County.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4 or 5 - The statement is accurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4 or 5 - The statement is accurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4 or 5 - The statement is accurate; Pinellas County has a “preferred arrest policy.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4 or 5 - The statement is accurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1 or 2 - Most professionals in Pinellas County working with domestic violence discourage couple’s counseling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 or 2 - A woman is battered in the U.S. every 15 seconds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4 or 5 - The statement is accurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>4 or 5 - The statement is accurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1 or 2 - It is at the rate of three times that of men.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1 or 2 - Research does not support this.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1 or 2 - Sexual assault is a form of domestic violence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1 or 2 - There is no prototypical victim; to say that “most” victims are any certain way is incorrect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>4 or 5 - The statement is accurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1 or 2 - Researchers debate why batterers abuse their victims; drinking is not always involved.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>4 or 5 - Based on much of the domestic violence literature this is accurate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1 or 2 - Restraining orders are not free of charge; they cost up to $165.00 (the fee can be waivered).</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1 or 2 - There is a debate on what the number one reason is for what causes batterers to aggress on their partner; many researchers maintain that it is due to the batterers desire to establish power and control over their victim; anger is thought to play a lesser role.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>1 or 2 - One can file if they have only had threats of abuse, and no actual physical abuse.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1 or 2 - Victims are never responsible for the violence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>1 or 2 - Only the batterer is responsible for the continuation of his (or her) violence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>4 or 5 - This is largely the contention of many researchers and helping professionals in Pinellas County.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>1 or 2 - One can file if there has only been threats of abuse.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
continued..

27  1 or 2 - There is no prototypical domestic violence victim; therefore, we cannot say that most victims behave in any usual way (some are passive and docile, while others are combative).

28  1 or 2 - Literature does not support this.

29  4 or 5 - The statement is accurate.

30  1 or 2 - Shelters all over the United States vary in the number of victims they can hold.