

# **NOTE TO USERS**

This reproduction is the best copy available.





SAME-SEX DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:  
TESTING THE CYCLE THEORY  
OF VIOLENCE

BY

JEANNE JEANETTE JOHNSON

A dissertation submitted  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of  
Doctor of Psychology in Forensic Psychology  
Alliant International University  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Fresno Campus  
2004

UMI Number: 3160046

Copyright 2005 by  
Johnson, Jeanne Jeanette

All rights reserved.

#### INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



---

UMI Microform 3160046

Copyright 2005 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.  
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against  
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

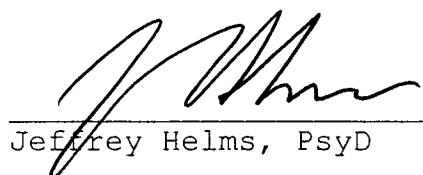
ProQuest Information and Learning Company  
300 North Zeeb Road  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

FRESNO CAMPUS

The dissertation of Jeanne Jeanette Johnson, "Same-Sex Domestic Violence: Testing the Cycle Theory of Violence," approved by Jeffrey Helms PsyD, has been accepted and approved by the Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences, Fresno Campus, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Psychology in Forensic Psychology.

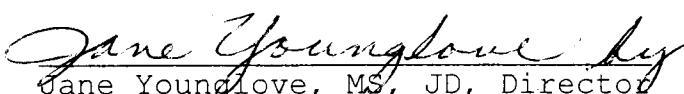
Dissertation Chairperson:

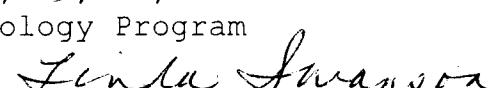


---

Jeffrey Helms, PsyD

April 14, 2004



Jane Younglove, MS, JD, Director  
Forensic Psychology Program  


DEDICATION

To my marmie, Jan, for her love, support, and eternal belief in me and to my pappy, Gary, for his love, support, and knowing that I deserve more than I believe. You are the greatest parents a daughter could ever have. Thank you.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The process of this dissertation could have never been accomplished had it not been for some very important and influential people in my life. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the many people who have contributed to this final product of my professional development and to whom I have been blessed to know personally.

The person that must be thanked for this never-ending process is my chairperson, Dr. Jeffrey Helms. His constant dedication, hard work, and support were invaluable and, without it, I would not be in this place today. He provided much support, many pep talks, and constant concern for my well-being during this process. Without his humor and dedication I would not have made it through this process. Despite the long distance phone calls, numerous emails, and multiple moments of despair, Dr. Helms was there to push me through this arduous process. Dr. Helms, you have taught me more than you could possibly know in areas that span larger than education alone. Thank you for your respect, much needed humor, and most importantly, for never giving up on me.

I would also like to thank my committee member, Dr. Rhea Witt, for taking me on despite her already busy schedule. I also need to thank those many friends who assisted in the tedious process of data collection. This includes Jaime Martin for his salesman-like quality of persuading people to give 10 minutes of their time and Shelby Palmer for being my stress relief and at times cheerleader and friend.

I also would like to thank the friendship and support of those fellow students who began this dissertation process along with me under the direction of Dr. Helms. It was always nice to know that regardless of where we stood in this process, we were all there for each other. Despite the worry, stress, and fear there was always laughter and late nights at Denny's that kept me going. Therefore, I would like to thank Tamar Kenworthy and Stephanie Scott for their support during this process. I would especially like to thank Stephanie Neumann for her continued support and enthusiasm during this process. Her excitement kept me going, and her humor was often desperately needed. She contributed numerous hours to data analysis, for which I am truly grateful.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their continued support, encouragement, and love. They always believed in me and never once doubted that this seemingly impossible goal would one day be reached. I have been so blessed to have such wonderful people in my life, and I cannot thank you enough for all you have done for me. I would like to thank my Grandma Nan for all her support, love, and wonderful hugs, and especially my Bald-Headed Grandpa for his love, humor, and wondrous stories which kept me wide eyed and childlike. Thank you both. I especially would like to thank my mother, Jan, for her support, concern, love, and trust in my abilities; my father, Gary, for his constant belief in me and never ending love and encouragement; and my sister, Jamie, for many nights of stress relief and for reminding me what fun means. I would not be here today if it were not for you all; I love you and am blessed to have you in my life.

Thank you.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Same-Sex Domestic Violence:

Testing the Cycle Theory

of Violence

by

Jeanne Jeanette Johnson

College of Arts and Sciences, Fresno Campus

Jeffrey L. Helms, PsyD

Dissertation Chairperson

2004

The cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) is the most widely relied upon theory of domestic violence as to how a battering incident occurs, for all relationships. However, this theory, originally for domestically violent heterosexual relationships, is now being applied to domestically violent nonheterosexual relationships with little or no empirical support. This study empirically tested the theory and found that two of the three phases (i.e., Phases 2 and 3) and the overall fit of the theory produced results suggesting that the theory fits the opposite-sex victim better than the same-sex victim of

domestic violence. This suggests that the cycle theory of violence is more applicable to opposite-sex victims than to same-sex victims of domestic violence.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION .....	v
 Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
LITERATURE OVERVIEW .....	5
Statement of the Problem.....	19
The Present Study.....	20
Significance of Study.....	21
Research Question/Hypothesis.....	21
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	23
Introduction.....	23
Domestic Violence Defined .....	26
Prevalence of Domestic Violence.....	35
Culture and Domestic Violence.....	40
Theories and Issues in Domestic Violence.	45

Chapter	Page
Summary of the Literature.....	92
Gaps in the Literature.....	98
Research Question/Hypothesis.....	101
3. METHODOLOGY.....	103
Introduction.....	103
Participants.....	103
Procedure.....	105
Research Question and Hypothesis: Cycle Theory of Violence.....	107
Development of Questionnaire.....	108
Potential Risks.....	111
Data Analysis.....	112
Descriptive Statistics.....	113
4. RESULTS.....	114
Introduction.....	114
Descriptions of Participants.....	114
Three Phases of Cycle Theory of Violence and Overall Fit.....	116
Frequencies of Types of Abuse.....	119
Other Information Gathered on Domestic Violence Victims.....	123

Chapter	Page
5. DISCUSSION.....	127
Introduction.....	127
Three Phases of the Cycle Theory of Violence .....	127
Overall Fit of the Cycle Theory of Violence.....	132
Types of Abuse.....	134
Additional Information Gathered.....	136
Limitations of Study.....	139
Future Research.....	141
REFERENCES.....	143
APPENDICES .....	153
A. INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS .....	154
B. CONSENT FORM .....	157
C. QUESTIONNAIRE .....	160
D. QUESTIONNAIRE CODING AND SCORING .....	170
E. RESOURCES FOR PARTICIPANTS.....	182

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

Within the last few decades, society has been made more aware of the increasing problem of domestic violence. The women's movement has worked hard to ensure that violence against women is known to be more than just a marital problem. The women's movement fought to ensure that services were available for victims, as well as passing legislation to protect women, while simultaneously fighting to make the world aware that violence against women would no longer be tolerated. What has been forgotten, however, is that same-sex domestic violence is also a prevalent problem.

When a majority of society thinks of domestic violence, they think of men battering women. Many people have seen bumper stickers against domestic violence and television commercials attempting to educate the public about domestic violence; however, many of these messages have one thing in common, they are talking about opposite-sex domestic violence issues. Rarely, if ever, will one hear a commercial or see a bumper sticker proclaiming that

same-sex domestic violence is just as prevalent and damaging as opposite-sex domestic violence, and that this, too, needs to be stopped. The majority of society does not realize that, indeed, same-sex intimate relationships have violence in them. As a result, the problem of same-sex domestic violence is an issue that has not had proper attention devoted to it.

Recently, same-sex domestic violence has become an issue that many feel needs to be addressed. There are domestic violence shelters for battered women; however, only a portion of these shelters actually have programs for victims of same-sex domestic violence. There are only about a handful of domestic violence shelters for men throughout the country. Speculation for this is that most of society feels that men are always the perpetrators rather than the victims in any relationship.

One area of domestic violence that has been investigated at length is that which occurs in heterosexual relationships (Baker & Piland-Baker, 2000; Bernhard, 2000; Brand & Kidd, 1986; Campbell & Soeken, 1999; Carlson, 1977; Gamache, 1991; Herold, Mantle, & Zemeitis, 1979; Lystad, Rice, & Kaplan, 1996; Martin, 1976; McCarthy-Barnes, 2001; Walker, 1979; Weidman, 1986; Woodworth, Byrd, Shelton &

Parcel, 2001). There has been a plethora of research studies done in this area, especially in the areas of perpetrator characteristics, victim characteristics, and the effects upon children in the homes where domestic violence is occurring. Yet, the greatest amount of writing done on heterosexual domestic violence may be that on the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979). This theory has been widely used and cited when discussing domestic violence. The phrase *cycle of violence* has become associated with any type of domestic violence within relationships; many authors use this phrase to mean any theory of domestic violence. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the cycle theory of violence refers to Walker's (1979) original conception of the theory, which is the one most widely cited and utilized in the domestic violence field. Additionally, for the purposes of this study the term nonheterosexual is used interchangeably with the terms homosexual and same-sex. Also used are the terms lesbian women and gay men, all of which are considered to be subsumed under the term nonheterosexual.

There is a greater understanding of how heterosexual domestic violence impacts the lives of all those involved, as well as those who witness the violence. While the

amount of theoretical and research information on domestic violence has increased, most of the time these theories and research studies are focusing upon heterosexual relationships. The problem with this is that most of these theories and a majority of the research may not apply to nonheterosexual relationships. Contrary to popular belief, nonheterosexual relationships do not resemble heterosexual relationships in fulfilling the masculine/feminine gender roles (Letellier, 1994). Therefore, applying heterosexual relationship theories to nonheterosexual relationships may be inappropriate.

There is a great deal of literature on heterosexual domestic violence; however, the literature on nonheterosexual domestic violence is limited. Many authors writing in the area of same-sex domestic violence theorize about the causes of domestic violence in nonheterosexual relationships and recognize that there is little or no empirical research on that particular topic. While other authors provide empirical research, they also recognize that there is a great deal of information about same-sex battering that still needs to be empirically researched. This brief overview of the literature on same-sex domestic

violence demonstrates this point and many of the aforementioned issues.

### *Literature Overview*

Domestic violence is thought of as a complex behavioral phenomenon that involves emotional, physical, sexual, verbal, as well as psychological abuse against an intimate partner. This violence includes threats or the use of physical force that can result in injury or even death. Social or intimate partners pose the greatest threat of harm or violence for most women (Woodworth et al., 2001). It has been found by many that those in nonheterosexual relationships report more use of mutual aggression as well as violence (Letellier, 1994; Lie, Schilit, Bush, Montagne, & Reyes, 1991; Walker, 1986). However, there are few theoretical explanations as to why this may occur. One assumption as to why there is a high rate of perceived mutual aggression is that both partners are the same-sex and oftentimes the same size (Letellier, 1994). However, there is discussion as to whether this is considered self-defense or mutual aggression, two different concepts with very different meanings (Letellier, 1994, 1996; Lie et al., 1991; Renzetti, 1992).

The rates of domestic violence are alarming. Current statistics estimate 960,000 incidents of violence against a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend per year. Other statistics show that up to 4 million women are physically abused by their husbands or live-in partners per year (United States Department of Justice, 1998). The U.S. Department of Justice reported that violence by an intimate partner accounts for about 21% of violent crime experienced by women and about 2% of the violence experienced by men. The rate of domestic violence among nonheterosexual couples is 1 in 4, which is equivalent to that of heterosexual couples (Stevens & Richards, 1998; Warner, 1999). Most domestic violence statistics refer to women who are being abused by their male counterparts. Few statistics exist concerning same-sex domestic violence, and even fewer refer to battered men regardless of their sexual orientation.

Brand and Kidd (1986) found that the frequency of physical abuse in lesbian relationships was equivalent to physical abuse experienced by heterosexual women, while the prevalence of attempted or completed rape against lesbian women was slightly greater than that of heterosexual women. Results also suggested that men committed violent acts against women significantly more often than did women

against men (Brand & Kidd, 1986). From these findings they suggested that the rate of heterosexual domestic violence is greater than nonheterosexual domestic violence (Hanson & Maroney, 1999; Letellier, 1996; Renzetti, 1992). It is possible that the reason for a perceived higher rate of heterosexual domestic violence as compared to nonheterosexual domestic violence is that while women have shelters or other resources they can access, lesbian women are not offered as many services as their heterosexual counterparts (Fray-Witzer, 1999; Leland, 2000). It also is suggested that because the frequency of violence is different in lesbian relationships than reported by women in heterosexual relationships that lesbian relationships are different than heterosexual relationships (Brand & Kidd, 1986).

Bernhard (2000) found similar results in that an equivalent amount of lesbian women had experienced some form of physical or sexual violence as did heterosexual women. Also, an equal amount of lesbian women as heterosexual women reported having been the victim of verbal abuse or threats from their intimate partner with whom they were involved currently. The findings by Bernhard suggested that the level of domestic violence in lesbian

relationships is comparable to that in heterosexual relationships. Other authors have agreed upon these findings as well (Coleman, 1994; Leland, 2000). However, Gardner (1989) found that heterosexual couples had the lowest rate of abuse, whereas lesbian couples had the highest rate. The prevalence rate of domestic violence among gay men was in between these two groups.

Renzetti (1988, 1992) found that the level of violence in lesbian relationships increased in frequency and severity over time. The longer the couple remained together, the more frequent the violence became and the more intense the violence became. From these findings, Renzetti (1988, 1992) suggested that the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) also applies to lesbian battering.

Some authors believe that violent perpetrators in domestic violence situations are alike, regardless of sex or sexual orientation. Baker and Piland-Baker (2000) constructed a list of traits that batterers have in common; however, the authors do not solely focus upon whether or not that perpetrator is male or female. Baker and Piland-Baker's list of characteristics includes isolating the victim, power and control, becoming jealous, controlling the victim's behavior, having unrealistic expectations, and

blaming others for problems. Baker and Piland-Baker believed that all perpetrators have these characteristics in common, regardless of whether they are male or female. Batterers engage in much of the same activities such as alcohol as well as possible drug abuse, they have a sense of powerlessness and low self-esteem, and they tend to be overly jealous and dependent upon their partner (Leeder, 1988; Lobel, 1986). These findings agree with Baker and Piland-Baker as well in that the batterers appear to have the same characteristics in common. Coleman (1994) agreed with Baker and Piland-Baker; however, Coleman who specifically studied lesbian batterers stated that they have similar personality traits as do heterosexual male batterers.

Merrill (1996) listed the four main misconceptions about same-sex domestic violence, which may help to explain why heterosexual theories of domestic violence may not explain same-sex domestic violence. The four misconceptions are: (a) gay male domestic violence is logical because all or most men are prone to violence; however, lesbian violence does not occur because women are not prone to violence; (b) same-sex domestic violence is not as severe as heterosexual violence; (c) because the

partners are of the same gender, it is mutual abuse with each person giving and receiving an equal amount of abuse; and (d) the perpetrator has to be the *man* or the *butch* in the relationship and the victim has to be the *woman* or the *femme* in the relationship because they emulate heterosexual relationships.

Nonheterosexual men also have the problem of admitting that domestic violence exists in their relationships. Oftentimes, within these relationships, it is difficult for a man to admit that he is the victim of domestic violence, partly because one is not socialized to think of men as being the victims of domestic violence. As a result of this, it may be difficult for men to define domestic violence in their relationships (Letellier, 1994, 1996). This in part may be due to there being no shelters for male victims of domestic violence.

Furthermore, gay men oftentimes have a difficult time admitting that they are the victims of domestic violence because they are men. According to societal values, men are supposed to be able to care for themselves in any situation. Therefore, for many gay men, physical injury needs to occur before they realize that they have been victimized. Also, with the silence in the gay community

about same-sex domestic violence, it may be difficult for gay men to seek help or leave their partners (Letellier, 1994).

As a result of the amount of information that has recently been researched on domestic violence against women, one would think that the tendency for abused women to seek help is great. However, Lie and Gentlewarrier (1981) asked a large group of lesbian women if they would be likely to use a list of community resources after they experienced a violent attack. A majority of the women stated that they would seek help from those services available; however, there was a large portion of women who also stated that they would not seek help from community resources.

There is a problem with gay men seeking help as well; namely, there are few to no services available for male victims of domestic violence (Letellier, 1994; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000). One reason many battered nonheterosexuals do not seek help is for the fear of being *outed*. This is the term used when a nonheterosexual person's sexual orientation becomes known to members of the community. Many battered victims do not leave their partner, seek help, press charges against their partner, or feel that

they have many choices because others do not know their sexual orientation. If this information became known, many may face the possibility of losing their jobs, being evicted from their living situations, or even being targeted for antihomosexual violence (Hanson & Maroney, 1999; Letellier, 1996; Renzetti, 1992, 1996).

There is some speculation as to why nonheterosexuals do not seek help from resources that are available to them. The results suggest that nonheterosexuals feel that it is unsafe for them to seek help from these resources for fear of not being heard or protected, by the authorities, from their partners (Lie & Gentlewarrier, 1981; Younglove, Kerr, & Vitello, 2002). Also, with the lack of resources for battered men, there are literally thousands of men who are remaining in their homes being victimized (Letellier, 1994).

Larger cities are now providing services for male victims of domestic violence as well as offering their police officers specialized training in domestic violence, which includes same-sex domestic violence (Baker & Piland-Baker, 2000; Leland, 2000). It is especially important that police officers receive sensitivity training in how to handle same-sex domestic violence issues. Police

insensitivity or ignorance of same-sex domestic violence is one reason many victims do not seek help. These victims are afraid of not being believed, that there will not be any action taken against their batterer, or that they will be further victimized by the police (Comstock, 1989; Hanson & Maroney, 1999; Letellier, 1996).

There are many different theories of domestic violence; however, theories as to what contributes to same-sex domestic violence are few in number. Additionally, there is much controversy concerning whether or not the strict heterosexual model of domestic violence fits nonheterosexual relationships. One author argued that while these theories are valid for heterosexual relationships, these theories need to be modified to fit the context of a same-sex relationship (Coleman, 1994). Still others believed that there needs to be a totally separate model of domestic violence as it relates to nonheterosexual relationships (Island & Letellier, 1991; Letellier, 1994).

An example of how heterosexual theories of domestic violence differ from nonheterosexual domestic violence is that there is little written on how the woman may influence the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979). This may be

because women who batter do not fit the stereotypical model for a woman (Baker & Piland-Baker, 2000). Also for lesbian women to admit that there is violence in their relationships is diametrically opposed to the lesbian myth of healthy, violence-free, egalitarian relationships (Coleman, 1994; Hanson & Maroney, 1999).

Gay men lack one single factor that has often been the focus of domestic violence research; they are not female (Letellier, 1994). With this in mind, gay male relationships cannot fit into the heterosexual model of domestic violence. There is no submissive woman to be abused by her male partner. Letellier believed that the theories of heterosexual domestic violence do not agree with same-sex relationships in that single factor; same-sex relationships are just that, same-sex. There is no woman to be dominated by her male counterpart and to be controlled by male societal constraints, just as there is no man who needs to maintain control over his female partner. In short, there is no heterosexual make up in nonheterosexual relationships.

Theorists who believe that the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979), while originally conceived from heterosexual relationships, is also applicable to

nonheterosexual relationships have modified their theories to better fit nonheterosexual relationships. For example, Coleman (1994) added other pressures to the relationship that heterosexual couples do not need to face. Examples of these pressures include sexual orientation, discrimination, social isolation, and a lack of resources. Many minorities also feel many of these same pressures. Feelings of internalized homophobia also have been theorized to be a possible cause for same-sex domestic violence in that it leads to feelings of shame, powerlessness, and self-hatred. All of these feelings are then projected onto the batterers' partner (Anderson, 1982; Coleman, 1994).

Renzetti (1992) believed that motivation within a relationship needs to be closely examined in order to understand who has the power in the relationship. Renzetti believed that there are different types of violence; therefore, looking at self-defense or verbal violence alone does not automatically determine who the batterer is and who the victim is. This is considered an easy task in heterosexual relationships, because it is often considered that the male is the batterer while the female is the victim, even though this is not always the case. Yet, when looking at same-sex relationships, one cannot focus upon

who has sustained the most severe injuries because both men in the relationship may have the capacity to hurt the other; therefore, simple deduction will not work (Letellier, 1994).

One such theory that explains the existence of same-sex domestic violence is the social-psychological theory. This theory acknowledges the role of homophobia within same-sex domestic violence relationships by hypothesizing that the opportunity for abuse can exist when the victim has not only less physical power but also less social power. Abuse is especially likely to occur when the victim is less likely to report the abuse. Homophobia helps to create a situation in which the opportunity to abuse increases by isolating the victims and preventing them access to outside resources, which may be scarce (Merrill, 1996; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000).

Letellier (1994) agreed with Coleman (1994) in the belief that internalized homophobia may be a contributing factor in same-sex domestic violence. However, there is another factor that the nonheterosexual community has been forced to give attention, human immuno-deficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Many gay men feel that the pressures of internalized homophobia

compounded with the worry of impending death from HIV/AIDS, as well as the absence of healthy gay relationship role models, are the recipe for those who tolerate violence from their partners (Hanson & Maroney, 1999; Letellier, 1994). The junction of serious physical illnesses and same-sex domestic violence can clearly be seen in the few shelters or organizations around the country that deal with same-sex domestic violence and HIV/AIDS (Letellier, 1996).

Health issues are a concern for multiple reasons, one of which is whether the extra pressures placed upon the relationship causes more violence. This concern of serious physical illnesses (i.e., HIV/AIDS) has not been previously addressed in domestic violence theories because it is considered to be mainly a nonheterosexual issue. Yet, this is a perfect example of the additional pressures/stressors that nonheterosexual couples must face that is not addressed by heterosexual theories of domestic violence.

As a result of the HIV/AIDS media attention, a great deal of emphasis is placed upon the nonheterosexual communities as being *infested* with this disease (Letellier, 1994). However, it is important to note that HIV/AIDS does not cause battering but is often used as a weapon of control in

violent relationships (Hanson & Maroney, 1999; Letellier, 1996).

It has been found that in both lesbian relationships (Hanson & Maroney; Renzetti, 1992) and gay relationships (Letellier, 1996) physical and verbal violence are not the only forms of violence. It has been found that frequently the batterer will use any means of control tactics on his or her partner, often focusing on his or her partner's vulnerabilities. If his or her partner is HIV-positive, this can become a powerful weapon (Hanson & Maroney; Letellier, 1996). This misinformation that only the nonheterosexual community has contracted or is spreading the virus results in a greater amount of violence directed toward this specific population within the community (Berrill, 1990). Particular attention needs to be given to same-sex couples. It is believed that domestic violence has always been present in same-sex relationships, but it is only recently that attention is being placed upon this problem.

While there is a great deal of research on heterosexual couples in domestic violence relationships, there is little on same-sex couples. Much of the research attempts to modify or mold heterosexual theories to fit

nonheterosexual couples. The present study begins to fill in some of these gaps that are found within the literature.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Although widely used, there have been few theoretical articles and no empirical research on whether or not the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) actually fits same-sex domestically violent relationships. There has been controversy and arguments for both sides of the debate as to if same sex domestically violent couples fit the cycle theory of violence. However, to date the cycle theory of violence has not been empirically tested to determine whether or not same-sex domestic violence couples adhere to the cycle theory of violence.

Due to the increase of information dealing with this population, although still quite minimal, the necessity to investigate this topic has become great. The community -at large, and the nonheterosexual community in particular, can no longer ignore the fact that same sex domestic violence exists. There can no longer be apathy toward this serious issue of domestic violence while ignoring the causes, stressors, or implications this type of violence has upon these relationships. Every aspect of domestic violence

needs to be investigated; victims are marginalized in society as believing that something the victim did must have caused his or her partner to abuse him or her. With the nonheterosexual community being already marginalized by society, those victims of domestic violence do not speak out or seek help as they are in double jeopardy of being harmed and ignored by those who can help. The more that this topic is discussed and investigated, the more likely society will listen to those who are being victimized.

#### *The Present Study*

In the present study, the particular populations that were focused upon were self identified heterosexual and nonheterosexual men and women who have been in a physically violent relationship. This population is of particular interest because of the lack of research in the area of same-sex domestic violence, especially when considering the different theories that are associated with nonheterosexual partnership violence. The purpose of this study was to determine if the cycle theory of violence proposed by Walker (1979) for heterosexual couples applies to same-sex relationships. This study compared and contrasted how well same-sex versus opposite-sex domestically violent

relationships adhere to the tenets of the cycle theory of violence.

### *Significance of Study*

The findings of this study were significant for multiple reasons. The findings potentially affected how the nonheterosexual community viewed domestic violence as well as shine light on the prevalence of same-sex domestic violence. The results of this study also potentially affected how medical, psychological, and law enforcement professionals view same-sex domestic violence.

These findings were helpful for policy makers in law enforcement agencies, medical staff, and mental health professionals. Theories of causes and explanations of same-sex domestic violence were changed to better account for differing intimate relational structures.

### *Research Question/Hypothesis*

Based on the literature the following research question has been developed: Do same-sex domestically violent relationships adhere to the stages and tenets of the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) as well as opposite-sex domestically violent relationships purportedly

do? From this research question, the following hypothesis was drawn: The cycle theory of violence and its related tenets will be as applicable to same-sex domestic violence couples as it purportedly is to heterosexual domestic violence couples.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### *Introduction*

Domestic violence is an area about which many people have heard but know little about the intricacies that work in the violent relationship. There is much talk about how to solve domestic violence, how to raise money to help victims, and speculation as to why the victim stays with the abusive partner.

When most people think of domestic violence, they picture a large angry man beating his frail, helpless wife. While this may be true in some instances, there is also a population of victims that is not considered in mainstream thinking. That is the victim within a same-sex relationship. The literature on battered, nonheterosexual victims, while theoretical in nature, is scarce compared to the amount of literature on heterosexual domestic violence. Much like nonheterosexual victims, little is written on the role of women and how they influence the domestic violence cycle in a relationship. Although it is often difficult to conceptualize for some, women can be just as violent as

men. However, women simply do not fit the stereotypical image of being violent (Baker & Piland-Baker, 2000).

Maybe the most obvious way in which heterosexual domestic violence theories are different from nonheterosexual domestic violence theories is that by definition gay men and lesbian women are not heterosexual; therefore, how does one expect theories that were designed to fit heterosexuals to fit them? Those in same-sex relationships who are suffering from domestic violence cannot blame their sexual orientation, they are not battered by their partner because they are nonheterosexual men and women; they are also not battered because they are fulfilling a masculine or feminine role (Island & Letellier, 1991; Letellier, 1994). In fact, research indicates that most nonheterosexual men and women are well-adjusted in their relationships, and they experience the same rate of domestic violence as their heterosexual counterparts (Elliott, 1996; Peplau, 1991). The theories of why domestic violence occurs are extensive and vary in their perspective; however, the theories of same-sex domestic violence are few and differ in their perspective.

Although the ways that batterers maintain control (either through or by means of sexual, physical, economic,

or emotional abuse) are the same regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity, age, religion, and ability, the specific behavior of a batterer always reflects the community in which the batterer lives. All batterers exploit vulnerabilities and play on community values and resources (or lack thereof) to the best of their ability. As a result of the differences in community resources and values, nonheterosexual domestic violence looks differently from heterosexual domestic violence. Understanding these differences is essential to understanding same-sex domestic violence (Allen & Leventhal, 1999). This chapter attempts to demonstrate the differences between heterosexual and nonheterosexual theories of domestic violence, as well as to organize the literature on domestic violence concerning both heterosexual and nonheterosexual domestic violence.

While reviewing the literature concerning domestic violence, one quickly realizes that there is an extensive amount. This chapter attempts to organize the literature on domestic violence theories of both heterosexual and nonheterosexual couples. In order to begin talking about domestic violence, it is first necessary to define domestic violence. Included within this section is a brief

discussion of how the domestic violence movement was started and its journey into public conversation. After this is a discussion on the prevalence of domestic violence both within the heterosexual and nonheterosexual communities. Next, demographics of domestic violence victims and perpetrators are presented. Following this is a discussion of both heterosexual and same-sex domestic violence theories. Concluding the chapter are closing remarks, including the gaps within the literature and the hypothesis/research question. Although it is not the intent to diminish the prevalence or severity of heterosexual domestic violence, this study focuses upon same-sex domestic violence.

#### *Domestic Violence Defined*

Before one is able to discuss domestic violence at length, there must first be an understanding of the legal and societal developments of the perception of domestic violence. Historically, domestic violence has been considered acceptable when it involved a husband and wife. It is only recently that society has thought of domestic violence as being unacceptable. This section begins with a brief discussion of the history of heterosexual and

nonheterosexual domestic violence. Following this are definitions of the different types of abuse that occur within domestically violent relationships.

#### *Historical Perspectives on Domestic Violence*

There are many different perspectives on the history of tolerance of domestic violence. One such perspective is that of several cultural factors believed to contribute to the tolerance of violence, especially violence perpetrated by men against women. Patriarchal rule over women also took into consideration the legal tradition of *wife chastisement* laws (Bailey, 1996; Gamache, 1991). These laws acknowledged an allowable level of physical abuse. While simultaneously placing value on privacy within marriages, combined with the rejection of any outside interference in family matters, these values are seen as the beginning of society's tolerance of domestic violence.

Patriarchy is defined as being the institutionalization of male dominance over women, both in the public and private sectors. The most widespread cultural expression of hierarchy is based on sex. Historians argue that the subjugation of women by men in ancient times served as the model for the development of

current oppression of women (Gamache, 1991). These specific cultural norms have also influenced policies and practices within religious, judicial, legal, and social institutions. These norms keep women trapped in abusive relationships, which passively supports the batterers' actions (Gamache, 1991; Martin, 1976). For example, by paying women lower wages than men women are locked in a societal status that does not allow them as much mobility as their male counterparts. Economic dependency on men forces women to remain in abusive relationships. This allows the battering to continue and explains the disproportionate number of women who are victims. This also explains how some batterers come to believe that violence against their female partners is supported by society or is at least tolerated (Allen & Leventhal, 1999; Gamache, 1991).

The feminist political viewpoint of domestic violence has been the driving force in defining the perpetrator and the victim (Bailey, 1996). This viewpoint states that men are the perpetrators of violence while women are the victims. This is a direct result of adherence to traditional gender roles and culturally determined ideas, such as males as dictators and females as subordinates

(Bailey, 1996; Letellier, 1994). This view has come to be considered heterosexist in that it promotes the idea that men cannot be victims and that women are always weak, passive, and do not express anger (Bailey, 1996; Goldberg & Hornick, 1991). Although domestic violence is thought of as one partner being more dominant and the other being more submissive, stating that only one sex can fit into one of these roles, while the other is only allowed to fit into the other, is ignorant at best.

Domestic violence is considered to be a pattern of behavior in which attempts to coerce, dominate, or isolate an intimate partner occur. The abuse occurs in order to maintain control over an intimate partner through emotional, economic, physical, and possibly sexual means that result in the victim presenting with low self-esteem, guilt, severe stress reactions, helplessness, self-blame, and chronic progressive isolation from friends and family (Bailey, 1996; Coleman, 1994; Letellier, 1994; Walker, 1979). Until recently most domestic violence theories have focused upon the male-female duo, with little emphasis on domestic violence in same-sex relationships. This may be that researchers had always thought domestic violence occurred exclusively in heterosexual relationships, and the

possibility of domestic violence occurring within nonheterosexual relationships was never even considered or given concern (Bailey, 1996; Letellier, 1994; Martin, 1976).

Violence against nonheterosexuals has been prevalent for decades. Aside from the more famous cases, such as Matthew Shepard and Scott Amedure, who were violently and mercilessly murdered for being open about their homosexuality, violence is an ongoing, everyday occurrence for many nonheterosexual people trying to live their lives. For example, it was found by Berrill (1990) that nonheterosexual men and women of color, most of whom were Black or Hispanic, were more likely to experience threats and violence (e.g., being chased or followed, pelted with objects, or physically assaulted) than were their White counterparts. It was also found that significantly more women than men fear for their safety and have had to modify their behavior (such as avoiding certain locations or eliminating showing affectionate physical contact with their lovers or same-sex friends) in order to reduce the risk of being attacked (Berrill, 1990).

Same-sex domestic violence is considered a controversial taboo. Same-sex domestic violence is kept

quiet; much like heterosexual domestic violence and child abuse was 20 years ago. It can be argued that same-sex domestic violence is still kept quieter than heterosexual domestic violence was before extensive research brought it into public awareness. This is considered to be true because same-sex domestic violence victims are stigmatized for two reasons, the fact that they are victims and the fact that they are in a nonheterosexual relationship. Also, the nonheterosexual community wishes to maintain that violence does not exist (Renzetti, 1989; Walker, 1986). Admitting violence within a community already plagued by social prejudices may only add to their unacceptability in the dominant society.

#### *Types of Abuse*

There are many different types of abuse that need to be taken into consideration when discussing domestic violence. Some of these types of abuse are physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and spiritual, to name but a few. Some of these types of abuse are well known, while others may be considered confusing and performed in conjunction with others. For example, some may consider that verbal abuse and emotional abuse are one and the same;

while others may consider verbal and emotional abuse to be performed simultaneously with physical abuse.

It has been noted that when conducting domestic violence research it is important that the participants in the study be able to self-identify their types of abuse; for if they do not identify with their abuse, they may not see specific patterns in their relationship, which will limit their reports of abuse (Renzetti, 1988, 1992). Therefore, the following definitions of abuse are taken from Walker's (1979) cycle theory of violence; however, there may be other types of abuse or different definitions for the same type of abuse.

Physical abuse may be the most common form of abuse, or what many imagine when they think of domestic violence. Physical abuse may contain, but is not limited to, some of the following types of abuse: hitting with an object or by the perpetrator, slapping, kicking, and any type of contact forced on one person by another (Walker, 1979). In conjunction with this type of abuse is being denied medication for illnesses (Hanson & Maroney, 1999; Letellier, 1996). This is a type of physical abuse that has only been recently considered.

Sexual abuse may be defined as being forced to participate in any type of sexual activity against one's will, such as intercourse either by the person or by an object, oral sex, anal sex, or any other type of sexual activity (Walker, 1979). Sexual abuse may also include refusing to practice safe sex, sexually humiliating or degrading a person for having HIV, telling a person that he or she is *dirty* or undesirable, or using the victim's HIV infection as an excuse for going outside the relationship for sex (Hanson & Maroney, 1999). This type of abuse may often be ignored within adult relationships. Although it is of great concern when considering children, it is often difficult to comprehend in adult relationships. For example, until recently, the concept of marital rape did not exist (Lystad et al., 1996). Alongside this line of thinking, same-sex relationships are often not considered to be *real* relationships, rather they are thought of as *one-night stands* which only perpetuates the notion that sexual abuse cannot exist within adult relationships, especially same-sex relationships (Younglove et al., 2002).

Verbal abuse can be considered anything verbal that may be derogatory in nature. Examples include being *put down*, yelled at, belittled, demeaned, called names, or any

other type of verbal confrontation that strips one of his or her self-esteem or self-confidence (Walker, 1979).

Emotional abuse may be considered as anything that may play on one's emotions or using one's emotions in order to manipulate that person for gain. Examples include having one's feelings toyed with, feeling like one is on an emotional roller-coaster, feeling as though one minute being loved and the next minute being berated by the other person (DeKeseredy, 2000; Walker, 1979). Emotional abuse may also include degrading a person for being HIV-positive or telling a person that he or she deserves to have HIV. In blaming the victim and his or her health status for the violence, the batterer projects onto the victim society's negative attitudes about people living with HIV/AIDS (Hanson & Maroney, 1999).

As previously mentioned, there may be other, more inclusive definitions of the types of abuse previously mentioned. There may also be different definitions altogether for these types of abuse. However, based on the dominant writers in the field (Baker & Piland-Baker, 2000; Campbell & Soeken, 1999; Gamache, 1991; Hanson & Maroney, 1999; Walker, 1979), these definitions are considered to be the most consistent and widely held.

*Prevalence of Domestic Violence*

Most domestic violence studies are conducted on heterosexual couples. Because there are so many different findings of heterosexual domestic violence, the statistics vary greatly.

Some studies conducted to determine the prevalence of domestic violence only ask whether or not the participant has been in a violent relationship. However, they do not specify what type of relationship this is, whether it is heterosexual or nonheterosexual. This supports the notion that many do not feel that same-sex domestic violence exists, let alone is a concern that needs to be addressed. This section discusses the current available statistics for heterosexual and nonheterosexual domestically violent relationships.

*Heterosexual Domestic Violence Statistics*

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (1994), in 92% of all domestic violence cases, crimes are committed by men against women. Between 1976 and 1996, 31,260 women were murdered by an intimate male partner (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998). Spousal homicides are responsible for approximately 10% of homicides in the U.S., with White

wives two times more likely to be killed than White husbands, and Black husbands approximately two times more likely to be killed by their Black wives (Lystad et al., 1996).

It has also been found that a child seeing the father abusing the mother is the strongest risk factor for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next (Weidman, 1986); this suggests that the roots of domestic violence begin early. Research supports this notion with the finding that 40% of teenage girls between the ages of 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age that has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998).

Teenage girls are not the only age group in danger of being victims of domestic violence. The U.S. Department of Justice found that women between the ages of 35 to 49 were the most vulnerable to intimate murder, while women between the ages of 16 to 24 were the most vulnerable to nonfatal violence (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001).

Domestic violence has consistently been a problem among young women, and the rate of domestic violence continues to be studied. Eighty-four percent of college women reported having been the victim of a sexual offense,

which ranged from obscene phone calls to rape (Herold et al., 1979). A majority of these women stated that they had not reported the offense to the authorities, although reporting was found to be higher among those offenses that were more serious (Herold et al.).

#### *Nonheterosexual Domestic Violence Statistics*

Current statistics on domestic violence are difficult to obtain for nonheterosexual relationships. Because nonheterosexual men and women are considered a minority, they are often not given their own category when domestic violence issues are surveyed (Bernhard, 2000). Yet, the survey data that do exist for lesbian women indicate that lesbian women have a high level of physical and sexual violence in their relationships.

A conservative estimate is that half a million gay men are battered every year; yet there are only approximately half a dozen agencies or organizations that exist specifically to help these victims (Island & Letellier, 1991; Letellier, 1994, 1996). According to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, the rate of same-sex domestic violence increased 29% in 2000 (Condon, 2001).

It is estimated that about 28% of the gay male population and 25% of all lesbian women have experienced domestic violence, making it, by some estimates, the third largest health issue facing the nonheterosexual population. The traditional theories for why this rate of violence is so high among the nonheterosexual community are speculative. The traditional theories proposed by the battered women's movement and domestic violence theories in general do not adequately explain why the rates of domestic violence are so high in the nonheterosexual communities (Bailey, 1996).

Brand and Kidd (1986) conducted a study to determine if men or women were more violently aggressive in the form of attempted or completed rape, physical abuse, or infliction of pain beyond that which was consensual in the practice of sadomasochism in their relationship. Heterosexual relationships as well as lesbian relationships were looked at specifically. It was found that men committed violent acts against women significantly more often than did women against men. The prevalence of physical abuse by a partner in a committed relationship was found to be 25% for lesbian women and 27% for heterosexual

women, while the prevalence of attempted and completed rape was 33% for lesbian women and 30% for heterosexual women.

These findings suggest that the frequency of physical aggression in heterosexual relationships is equivalent to that of physical aggression in nonheterosexual relationships (Brand & Kidd, 1986; Coleman, 1994). Brand and Kidd (1986) stated that most studies focusing on male perpetrators of violent acts seem to ignore any evidence of similar acts against females by other females. They speculated that one reason for this is that physical aggression by males is socially encouraged and accepted in society as a norm of male behavior, while physical aggression by females is socially discouraged and unacceptable as a norm of female behavior.

It was also found by Gardner (1989) that heterosexual couples had the lowest rate of violence, while lesbian couples had the highest rate; gay couples were directly in the center of these two prevalence rates. Lie et al. (1991) conducted a study on the frequency of violence in current lesbian relationships and found that the level of sexual aggression was greater in past relationships than it was in current relationships. However, they also found

that the level of physical aggression was greater in current relationships.

It can be concluded that the rate of nonheterosexual domestic violence is at a minimum equivalent to heterosexual domestic violence. However, as there is limited research within this area, this conclusion is drawn from a limited number of studies. Some of these studies suggest that nonheterosexual violence of any type is greater than heterosexual violence and that the only reason this is not reflected is the lack of reporting that occurs within the nonheterosexual community. This may also explain why nonheterosexual domestic violence is under reported and, as a result, not considered by mainstream society to be a problem.

#### *Culture and Domestic Violence*

Although domestic violence does not afflict only specific races, cultures, religions, ages, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientations, some of these differences may influence the severity, lethality, or perception of domestic violence. Not only do some of these differences determine the possibility of an understanding of domestic violence, but some of these differences also determine the

likelihood of seeking help, as well as the type of help offered. This section takes these differences into consideration and discusses the impact these differences can have.

#### *Domestic Violence and Culture*

Different cultures view domestic violence in different ways. When working with an individual from a culture other than the dominant culture these factors need to be considered. This is not to say that one race/ethnicity or culture is more prone to domestic violence than another. For example, a Euro American person is just as likely to abuse his or her loved one as is an African American person (Lystad et al., 1996; McCarthy-Barnes, 2001). Someone from the upper-middle socioeconomic class can be a victim just as someone who is from the lower socioeconomic class (McCarthy-Barnes, 2001). It has been suggested, however, that some factors that may contribute to the level of violence within a household often include poverty and unemployment, economic disparity, lack of housing, racism and injustice, alcohol and substance abuse, and feelings of hopelessness and despair, all of which are stressors that

may increase the likelihood of domestic violence (Carlson, 1977; McCarthy-Barnes, 2001).

Particular cultural beliefs about domestic violence have been looked at to determine if these beliefs may contribute to domestic violence. For example, in the Muslim community, despite admonishment in Islamic teachings, approximately 10% of Muslim husbands emotionally, physically, and possibly sexually abuse their wives. The teachings of Islamic beliefs promise women protection from violence and abuse; however, family violence still occurs (McCarthy-Barnes, 2001). In fact, many Muslim men use teachings from the *Koran* to legitimize their abuse (Kondo, 2001). Many Muslim households attribute the causes of domestic violence to the same causes of domestic violence in other homes; this assumes that domestic violence occurs in other Muslim households and is tolerated. The Muslim community recognizes the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979); however, because there is a lack of resources in the Muslim community, many women are seeking help outside their community, which may lead to misunderstandings and further isolation and marginalization (McCarthy-Barnes, 2001).

Within the Latino culture, it has been found that domestic violence exists with exceptional ferocity (McCarthy-Barnes, 2001; Wood, 2001). Because the Latino culture has not been adequately represented in the legal system, their community lacks the resources to help the victims and batterers of domestic violence. Many Latina women find it difficult to find help from someone who speaks their language and understands their culture; this is essential to women who are seeking help (Wood). Without understanding and the ability to communicate, further isolation and marginalization are produced. Especially important in the Latino community is the sense of family. However, present domestic violence services separate the victim from the abuser rather than trying to work with the family as a unit. This disconnects the abuser from the family rather than promoting family loyalty; and disconnection from the family may result in further victim upset (McCarthy-Barnes, 2001; Wood, 2001).

Another culture that has been looked at in terms of how they handle domestic violence in their communities is that of the Oglala Sioux Indians (also called Lakota Indians; Pan, 2000). The traditional value of this culture is that women and the family are to be honored, and

violence against the family is considered a crime against the tribe. When the European settlers came through the Native American land, many scars were left on the people of the Oglala Sioux tribe. These scars took the form of alcoholism and unemployment, which resulted in increases in violence. In response to the violence that was occurring in their tribes, many tribes felt that action needed to be taken.

The response came in the form of the Spousal Abuse Code, Cangleska, Inc. This was founded to provide shelter, intervention, and legal aid for battered women, as well as rehabilitation for the batterers. Cangleska is Lakota for *medicine wheel*, which is considered a sacred object that reflects the true self of the one who looks into the medicine wheel. The Cangleska is an example of a successful program that addressed the problem while taking culture into consideration and using cultural values to help those who were in domestic violence situations (Pan, 2000).

The Spousal Abuse Code, Cangleska, Inc. (Pan, 2000) is an example of how programs can help to prevent domestic violence while still maintaining and adhering to the cultural beliefs and values. It is important to consider

cultural beliefs when providing help to those in domestic violence situations. For many who are in domestic violence situations, their cultural beliefs take precedence over all else, including their personal safety. These cultural programs are examples of ways in which cultural beliefs can be respected while simultaneously helping both the victim and the perpetrator.

#### *Theories and Issues in Domestic Violence*

Within the field of domestic violence, there are many different theories that incorporate both heterosexual and nonheterosexual relationships. However, the amount of literature on heterosexual domestic violence far outweighs the amount of literature on nonheterosexual domestic violence.

One of the most famous and widely held theories of domestic violence was conceptualized by Lenore Walker (1979); this is the cycle theory of violence, which is discussed at length in a following section. The cycle theory of violence is an example of one type of feminist theory. Feminist theories, such as this one, were instrumental in bringing to light the domestic violence problem, protecting battered women, and starting services

for these women and their families (Bailey, 1996). These theories purportedly fit well for heterosexual domestically violent relationships; however, many authors feel that this theory does not fit nonheterosexual domestically violent relationships. This concept is elaborated upon when looking at nonheterosexual theories of domestic violence.

Another theory, feminist theory, adopts the belief that men are the abusers and women are the victims. This theory has also contributed to the invisibility of nonheterosexual domestic violence due to the assumption that domestic violence has to be committed by a man against a woman. Many authors believe that this theory of domestic violence, regardless of sexual orientation, helps to explain the reaction of male and female victims. However, many also believe that this theory is heterosexist and cannot explain same-sex domestic violence (Letellier, 1994). The mere existence of female abusers and male victims defies the core assumption of this theory (Letellier, 1996).

Rather than focusing theories on the sex of the victim, research needs to concentrate upon the use of violence to maintain power and control over the victim (Elliott, 1996; Letellier, 1994). Many different theories

of domestic violence exist within the literature, and specifically, same-sex domestic violence theories, while scarce in the literature, offer many different conceptualizations of this growing social concern. One such theory is that the ultimate goal of the abuser is not love, but power and control. Initially this is done through the isolation of the victim from the family, friends, and even society in general. According to this theoretical perspective, when isolation of the victim has occurred, emotional abuse begins, which then leads into the cycle theory of violence (Baker & Piland-Baker, 2000; Walker, 1979). One concept of same-sex domestic violence is that of Baker and Piland-Baker, who stated that there are different clues in a relationship that are predictors of violence. These include jealousy, controlling behavior, unrealistic expectations, and blaming others for problems. Furthermore, these authors stated that these clues lead into one of the most famous theories of domestic violence, Walker's cycle theory of violence. However, many authors believe that this theory does not explain nonheterosexual domestic violence because it leaves out many important issues that heterosexual couples do not have to face, such

as prejudice, internalized homophobia, and fear of backlash if they seek help from outside forces.

The findings of domestic violence studies suggest that there are many similarities between nonheterosexual and heterosexual abuse in relationships. However, unlike heterosexual relationships, nonheterosexual relationships are devalued and stigmatized in this society, which may contribute to the level of violence found in nonheterosexual relationships (Renzetti, 1989).

Another possible reason that nonheterosexual domestic violence remains such a societal secret is that many individuals within the nonheterosexual community deny or are afraid to admit that there is violence within their community. For example, many lesbians will not admit that violence exists in their relationships, for to do so would be in complete opposition to the myth that lesbian relationships are healthy, violence-free, and egalitarian (Coleman, 1994; Goldberg & Hornick, 1991).

Many gender-based theories exclude same-sex relationships where both perpetrators and victims of battering can be either sex. Resulting from this, same-sex domestic violence has become almost completely invisible in mainstream domestic violence literature (Letellier, 1994).

When same-sex domestic violence is mentioned, it presents challenges to heterosexual domestic violence theories that are not addressed by the authors. Instead of tackling the problems with the theories, many heterosexual domestic violence theorists simply tailor the theory to fit the same-sex relationship, or worse yet, same-sex domestic violence is considered the *exception to the rule* (Letellier, 1994).

This section discusses many theories of domestic violence at length. Both heterosexual and nonheterosexual theories are taken into consideration. Some of the theories that are discussed include the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979), social structural theory, health concerns and domestic violence, theory of mutual combat, theory of power, help seeking theory, and resources and protections for both heterosexual and nonheterosexual victims of domestic violence.

#### *Cycle Theory of Violence*

Within this section it is important to note that the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) explains a phenomenon rather than offering an explanation of the origin of violence and in that way it is not a traditional

theory. This section takes into account many different aspects of the cycle theory of violence, discussing many different concerns that relate to heterosexuals and nonheterosexuals. Beginning this section is an in-depth discussion of the cycle theory of violence and how it pertains to heterosexuals as described by Walker. The section then discusses the concerns of why the cycle theory of violence may not apply to nonheterosexual couples of domestic violence and the specific concerns as to why this may be. Following this is a discussion of possible causes of domestic violence that are only applicable to nonheterosexual couples of domestic violence, such as internalized homophobia which demonstrates why the cycle theory of violence may not apply to nonheterosexuals.

*Cycle theory of violence and heterosexuals.* Perhaps the most prominent theory of domestic violence is that of Walker (1979), who gave birth to the cycle theory of violence and, shortly thereafter, the battered woman's syndrome. The cycle theory of violence is often recognized as being the main theory of domestic violence. The cycle is broken into three main phases. The first phase is called the *tension-building phase*. In this phase the

tension begins to build as the perpetrator increases his or her threat of violence. This is often done through name calling, pushing, or shoving. During this phase, the victim may become nurturing, compliant, and stay out of the perpetrator's way. When the violence does occur, the victim assumes the guilt and through this becomes the perpetrator's accomplice by enabling him or her to feel justified in his or her abuse. The victim rationalizes the past abuse and even minimizes the abuse, knowing that it could have been worse. During this phase, the perpetrator becomes more jealous and possessive, with the objective that this control and fear will keep the victim captive. For many victims, the tension-building phase is unbearable, and the victim incites the perpetrator in order to begin the violence phase.

The second phase of the cycle theory of violence is the *acute battering incident*, which is the violent act itself. During this phase, the violence can be minor and begin to grow as time passes or it can be severe the first time. However, if the violence starts minor, eventually it becomes severe (Walker, 1979). Often the victim makes great efforts to please the perpetrator in hopes of preventing the abuse that may follow. However, the

violence is only postponed, not prevented. Over a period of time, the victim begins to recognize this phase and attempts to do whatever it takes in order for the violence to occur, just to end the violence phase in order to start the *honeymoon phase*.

The last phase of the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) is called the *honeymoon phase*, in which the abuser apologizes and expresses guilt and remorse for having abused his or her partner. Often the perpetrator promises that he or she will never hurt his or her partner again. Sometimes during this phase the abuser minimizes the violence and blames it on the victim. However, usually victims believe abusers are sincere in their promise that the violence will never happen again and victims take abusers back into their lives. Once the victim allows the abuser to come back, the cycle begins anew. Each time the cycle begins, the abuser gains more and more control over the victim. The more control that the abuser has, the less amount of time he or she spends explaining his or her actions, and eventually the honeymoon phase will become shorter and shorter until it becomes nonexistent.

*Cycle theory of violence and nonheterosexuals.* While many theorists agree that the cycle theory of violence as identified by Walker (1979) is applicable to nonheterosexual couples (Lystad et al., 1996; Woodworth et al., 2001), other authors disagree and feel that this theory needs to be adapted to fit the needs of nonheterosexual couples (Baker & Piland-Baker, 2000; Coleman, 1994; Elliott, 1996; Leeder, 1988; Lie et al., 1991; Lobel, 1986; Lystad et al., 1996; Renzetti, 1988, 1992; Walker, 1986; Weidman, 1986), while still others believe that the theory does not fit at all and should be abandoned (Letellier, 1994). Currently, there is no domestic violence theory that offers an adequate explanation for the dynamics that contribute to same-sex domestic violence. This has, to a certain degree, contributed to the denial of the problem in the nonheterosexual community (Bailey, 1996).

One author who believed that the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) also applies to lesbian women in domestically violent relationships was Renzetti (1988, 1992), who conducted a study in which 100 self-identified battered, lesbian women showed that violence in lesbian relationships increased in frequency and severity over a

period of time. Renzetti found that 77% of the women had experienced at least one incident of violence within the first 6 months of the relationship, and 71% of these women reported that battering increased in both frequency and severity over time. According to Renzetti, these findings, along with clinical interviews, indicate that the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) also applies to women in lesbian relationships. However, the study did not address same-sex male domestic violence.

Although there are many similar dynamics between heterosexual and nonheterosexual relationships that may explain why the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) possibly pertains to both relationships, there are also many differences (Coleman, 1994). For example, there are particular sociopolitical factors that nonheterosexual couples must deal with that are not necessarily present in heterosexual couples. When studying domestic violence from a sociopolitical standpoint, one is better able to understand how social systems, cultural beliefs, and political factors facilitate and enable the occurrence of battering. For example, some factors that may increase the incidence of violence in relationships are social stress, social isolation, low socioeconomic status, and rigid sex

roles (Lystad et al., 1996; Weidman, 1986). Because society is a result of strong patriarchal principles that disregard male domination, subordination, and control of women, social relationships tend to be hierarchical (Dobash & Dobash, 1978).

In addition to this, violence is viewed by society as a socially acceptable means for both heterosexual and nonheterosexual individuals in relationships to exert power and maintain dominance and control over their partners (Gamache, 1991). Therefore, even in lesbian relationships there is a heightened potential for one partner to seek domination and control over the other (Coleman, 1994). Integrating theories of battering with analyses of the social context in which domestic violence occurs, along with the psychological make-up of the perpetrator and victim, result in inclusive theories on domestic violence (Letellier, 1994). Inclusive theories account for victims and batterers of either sex. They also take into consideration the role that homophobia and heterosexism play in same-sex battering. Although there are similarities between battered men and women, taking the inclusive theory into consideration does not mean that nonheterosexual men and women have to be compared to the

battered heterosexual women described in historical literature. Rather, nonheterosexual men and women can be seen as victims who have had a similar experience but respond differently to being battered.

Heterosexism is defined as promoting the heterosexual lifestyle while simultaneously subordinating any other lifestyle and calling it *deviant*. Heterosexism contributes to *gay bashing*, discrimination, social isolation, and denial of appropriate legal and social rights to nonheterosexuals (Bailey, 1996). Homophobia can be defined in two ways: it is a fear or hatred of nonheterosexuals, and it is also a fear of becoming close to someone of the same sex (Benowitz, 1986). According to Herek (1991), there are three assumptions associated with homophobia: that antigay prejudice is primarily a fear response, that it is irrational and dysfunctional for individuals who display it, and that it is primarily an individual abnormality rather than a reflection of cultural values. However, empirical data do not reflect these assumptions (Herek, 1991). Homophobia affects everyone by producing isolation and separation among groups of people (Benowitz, 1986; Hammond, 1986). Homophobia is rooted in sexism; it is used to keep nonheterosexuals *in their place*. For

example, the words *lesbian* or *queer* are used as psychological weapons against those who deviate from societal sex-role expectations (Benowitz, 1986). However, recently the nonheterosexual community has reclaimed these words, taking the power away from those who use it as a weapon.

Those who internalize the homophobic beliefs that they have been hearing throughout their lives come to believe that nonheterosexuals deserve the oppression they are receiving and that the myths about them must be true. Because homophobia permeates society, nonheterosexual women and men have internalized the stereotypes that are motivated by homophobia (Benowitz, 1986; Renzetti, 1989).

Through the internalization of homophobia and heterosexism, nonheterosexuals are faced with discrimination, social isolation, and a general lack of available resources and social support (Coleman, 1994). Not only can internalizing homophobic beliefs lead to feelings of shame, powerlessness, and self-hatred, but these feelings can also be projected onto one's lover (Coleman, 1994; Hammond, 1986). According to Coleman, many nonheterosexuals mirror or idealize the self-object, which is described as being the object of one's affection that is

viewed as being like oneself. This idealization can be heightened as a result of being in a relationship with a partner of the same sex. In addition, feelings of jealousy and envy, which are often found in battering, may be intensified. In the relatively closed system of the nonheterosexual community, friends are not implicitly distinct from potential partners (Coleman, 1994).

#### *Heterosexual Domestic Violence: Other Theories and Issues*

There are many theories of heterosexual domestic violence; however, within the domestic violence community these other theories are not as widely held as the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979), although they are used in conjunction with one another. One such theory takes into consideration many different social causes. This theory proposes that individuals and groups use violence to establish and maintain control or power over others. In this situation, violence is easier to justify or tolerate when it is directed at *appropriate* victims, those viewed by society as being deserving of such treatment. For example, society is less likely to become enraged when a nonheterosexual woman is murdered by her partner than if a child is murdered by his or her parents. Relationships

such as these, or power relationships, are organized in a hierarchical pattern in which someone has power over another based on their status (Gamache, 1991; Martin, 1976).

Violence in any relationship is reinforced by cultural norms that support the evolutionary need for hierarchy in human relationships. The ideals of equality and nonviolence remain in conflict with constant beliefs that domination in a relationship is normal. Those who follow this belief are most likely to view violence as acceptable behavior; therefore, they use violence to maintain their position and control over others (Gamache, 1991; Peters, Shackelford, & Buss, 2002). Some research has indicated that violence is especially likely among heterosexual couples when the male partner perceives his power in the relationship to be diminishing. Therefore, he uses violence as a way to assert dominance and control in the relationship (Finkelhor, Gelles, Hotaling, & Straus, 1983; Martin, 1976).

Within this section, several different theories are discussed. Some of these theories have been applied to same-sex domestic violence relationships, although they were originally developed to fit opposite-sex domestically

violent relationships. Some of the other theories do not propose to fit same-sex relationships at all. Among the theories discussed here is the social structural theory, as well as other theories, including the intergenerational cycle of violence, the socioeconomic status theory, and the social isolation theory. The presentation of theories ends with some misconceptions of battered women. Following this is a discussion of the resources and protections relied upon by battered victims.

*Social structural theory.* One theory of domestic violence is that of the social structural view of family violence (Gelles, 1972). This theory suggests that the source of violence does not lie within the pathology of the individual (mental illness) or within certain subcultures. Rather, this theory holds that the source of domestic violence comes from complex, socioeconomic, and societal structures (such as poverty) which, in turn, create environmental stressors that are distributed unevenly across the family structure (Carlson, 1977; Martin, 1976). Poverty is one such environmental stressor. This theory suggests that poverty creates an uneven balance between lower socioeconomic families and higher socioeconomic

families, which, in turn, creates added stressors upon the family system, which then creates a climate more conducive for domestic violence to exist. Some authors believed that poverty connects the family's social resources and economic resources. For example, the family's socioeconomic level also determines the amount of social support that is available to them. If the family is of a lower socioeconomic status, then they will have less societal support and services available (Carlson, 1977; Martin, 1976).

A symptom of social stressors is that of alcohol abuse; however, this does not alleviate the problem but only exacerbates it. Many battered women claim that when their partners are not intoxicated, they function normally (Carlson, 1977). One can conclude from this that alcohol is not the cause of domestic violence, but instead it decreases the inhibitions of the batterer allowing the man to abuse the woman (Carlson, 1977; Martin, 1976).

*Other Theories.* Other theories of domestic violence include the intergenerational cycle of violence, socioeconomic status, and social isolation. The intergenerational cycle of violence suggests that those who

have been victims of violence as children, or witnessed violence in their homes, are themselves more likely to be child and spouse abusers than are those who have not experienced and witnessed violence as a child (Farley, 1996; Weidman, 1986).

The socioeconomic status theory of domestic violence suggests that abuse is most prevalent in lower socioeconomic households (Weidman, 1986). However, there is much controversy regarding this theory both in support of and opposition to the idea that lower socioeconomic status leads to domestic violence and abuse.

The social isolation theory states that the lack of social supports increases the risk for domestic violence (Weidman, 1986). This may also be applied to nonheterosexuals as well, in that their social support network may be less than acceptable. Some factors that contribute to this lack of support are substance dependence, cultural factors, rigid sex roles, and status and power inequalities in males and females; also included are psychological factors such as psychopathology, low self-esteem, and poor impulse control (Lystad et al., 1996; Weidman, 1986).

Adding to the social isolation of battered victims are the misconceptions that are thought of about battered women. Some of these misconceptions are that (a) battered women are sadomasochistic (i.e., that they enjoy being abused); (b) the battered women actually instigate the violence by antagonizing the batterer (if the victim would refrain from partaking in verbal abuse, the battering would cease); and (c) battered women are masculine, outspoken, and domineering (they tend to exploit and profit from their husband's passiveness; Carlson, 1977).

*Resources and protections.* Many heterosexual women tend to rely on the police and other informal types of networks. Through these networks these women mostly received sympathy and assistance. If these types of networks were not sought out, the victims tended to seek no help at all. It was found that most battered women had two characteristics in common, an incredibly low self-concept and a severe degree of isolation (Carlson, 1977).

Many believe that because a woman does not leave her abuser, she must enjoy the abuse. It has been found that oftentimes physically leaving the situation may not solve the problem but rather escalate the problem (Carlson,

1977). It has been found that the more resources a woman has (e.g., a job, family, or friends) the more likely she was to seek outside help. Also, if the attacks were severe and frequent, it was found that a woman would be more likely to seek outside help. However, women who had experienced violence as a child or who had witnessed violence in their childhood homes were more likely to stay in the abusive relationship and not seek outside help (Carlson, 1977).

Suggestions have been made as to how to better serve the victim and family unit who suffer from domestic violence (Lystad et al., 1996; Weidman, 1986). First, more cooperation among different service providers will allow an integration of services for the victim of domestic violence (Lystad et al.). Without this, the victim of domestic violence is likely to receive conflicting messages, making the experience more difficult to handle. Also, treatment needs to be integrated to include both the abuser and the victim, because many families of domestic violence often stay together, and this needs to be taken into account when offering treatment to the family in order to provide the best possible services. This component of couples therapy is often missing from many treatment services focused on

domestic violence. However, couples therapy is suggested to only occur if the victim is safe from the abuser. It is also important to reassure the victim that domestic violence is a crime and that the victim is not at fault (Lystad et al., 1996).

It has been found that most families with domestic violence remain together for many varied reasons (e.g., children, finances; Lystad et al., 1996; Weidman, 1986). Because this is often the case, there is an argument to be made for the intergenerational cycle of violence theory. Children often witness violence in the home, thus learning about relationship roles that are later applied in their own life. In order to combat the intergenerational cycle of violence, a few programs have started to offer couples therapy in order to teach healthy ways to deal with stress in the relationship, as well as attempt to teach healthy communication skills and ways to facilitate growth in the relationship (Lystad et al., 1996; Weidman, 1986). Many of these programs are also offering children's, women's, and batterers' groups in conjunction with couples therapy (Lystad et al., 1996; Walker, 1986; Weidman, 1986). Weidman also suggested that if the man and woman are living together, that conjoint family therapy should begin with

the first phone call to the treatment center and continue throughout the treatment process.

Many women who are victims of domestic violence seek legal protection in the form of protective orders (Carlson, 1977; Lystad et al., 1996). Some courts have held that the protective order creates a special relationship between the police and the abused victim. The police may be more likely to feel that they owe a victim special care because they know that they will be held criminally or civilly responsible for failing to enforce a protective order. The case that led to criminal responsibility of police officers in instances of domestic violence was *Thurman v. City of Torrington* (1984). In this case, the City of Torrington failed to protect Tracy Thurman from her abusive husband. Tracy Thurman had a protective order against her husband, and the police department was aware of her situation due to previous encounters. Tracy's husband beat her into paralysis while a police officer watched and did nothing to help Tracy from the beating.

Facing these examples, it is no surprise that the number of resources and the types of protections for heterosexual domestic violence victims are great. It also lends an explanation to why there is a great deal of

research and funding available for heterosexual victims of domestic violence.

*Nonheterosexual Domestic Violence: Other Theories and Issues*

As with heterosexual theories of domestic violence, there are also different theories of domestic violence that have been applied to same-sex domestic violence relationships. Within this section different theories of domestic violence that are believed to be applicable only to same-sex domestic violence relationships are addressed. Specific theories of same-sex domestic violence are be discussed first. The theories discussed are those of mutual combat, power, and help seeking. Next is a discussion of the health concerns and their relationship to domestic violence, followed by a discussion on the stereotyped gender roles that many believe exist in same-sex relationships. Following this is a discussion on the misconceptions of same-sex domestic violence. This section ends with a discussion of the resources and protections that the victims of domestic violence must rely upon, followed by concluding comments.

Authors suggest that many nonheterosexual persons were not raised with a positive sense of nonheterosexual identity, history, or wisdom passed down through generations. Most nonheterosexual persons were also not taught how to deal with oppression, especially nonheterosexual oppression. Therefore, many negative messages were learned and, as a result, instilled shame, fear, and self-hatred. These feelings were learned, although they may not have been verbalized (Allen & Leventhal, 1999).

Findings by Lie et al. (1991) suggested that about two thirds (68%) of the women in their study had been in a lesbian relationship where they were victims as well as perpetrators of aggression. It was also found that about 20% of the women had both experienced and used aggression in current relationships. These findings support Walker's (1986) hypothesis that fewer differences in size and weight between female partners and fewer normative restraints on *fighting back* were reasons for the higher frequency of women abusing women. However, this does not explain the higher levels of combined victimization and use of aggression in past relationships as opposed to current relationships. It was also found that if an individual had

been in an abusive lesbian relationship in the past where she had been both a victim and a perpetrator then she was more likely to be victimized by and aggressive with a current partner. These findings support the idea that aggression in past relationships is a risk factor for expressions of aggression in current relationships (Lie et al., 1991).

*Theory of mutual combat.* For many in the public, it is difficult to comprehend how domestic violence can exist in same-sex relationships. One difficulty with this is that the persons in the relationship are of the same-sex. Speculatively, if both partners are of the same-sex, they may also be approximately equal in weight and size; therefore, the partners will be equally abusive (Letellier, 1994, 1996).

It is interesting to note that many women in domestic violence situations use violence against their partners, mostly in self-defense (Saunders, 1988). However, this is generally not considered to be mutual combat by society. Many authors (Elliott, 1996; Fray-Witzer, 1999; Hart, 1986; Letellier, 1994; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Renzetti, 1992; Walker, 1986) believed that nonheterosexual victims of

domestic violence may use violence against their partners as self-defense; however, this does not mean that it is mutual combat. Renzetti (1992) challenged the myth of mutual battering in same sex domestic violence by stating that one major weakness is that not all violence is the same. There are major differences between initiating violence, using violence in self-defense, and retaliating against a violent partner. Renzetti also made it clear that one needs to take a careful look at the relationship in which the violence is occurring in order to determine who holds the power in the relationship. Also, violence is violence, whether or not it is done in the victim/perpetrator dichotomy.

Hart (1986) has also found that lesbian women who report that they have responded only one time with violence to their partner as self-defense, question if they were victims of domestic violence. This being the case, it has been hypothesized that nonheterosexual victims of domestic violence perceive that there is no difference between being victims of domestic violence and using self-defense against domestic violence (Letellier, 1994). Often, gay men will not consider themselves to be in a domestically violent relationship because they are socialized to fight back and

use physical force to protect themselves. Therefore, it is difficult for them to admit that they may be victims of domestic violence if they used violence, in any way, against their partner even one time (Bailey, 1996; Hart, 1986; Letellier, 1994).

Female victims of domestic violence, where the perpetrator is male, were more likely to describe their use of aggression against a male as self-defense or a combined use of self-defense and mutual aggression rather than only mutual aggression. Whereas female victims who were abused by another female were more likely to describe their use of aggression as mutual aggression or a combination of self-defense and mutual aggression only (Lie et al., 1991).

*Theory of power.* The literature on lesbian battering suggests that certain factors are in place that may lead a partner to abuse. The excessive dependence upon their partner and the balance of power in lesbian relationships suggests that abusers may be excessively dependent upon their partner for emotional and often financial support. When one partner has greater resources than the other partner, abuse is more likely to occur (Renzetti, 1989, 1992).

It has been found that a difference in intelligence between partners has been considered a major source of conflict in relationships. Certain forms of abuse were found to be more prevalent in relationships where this difference was found. These types of abuse included being pushed down the stairs and being stabbed or shot (Renzetti, 1988).

*Help-seeking theory.* Many victims of same-sex battering do not seek help from outside sources and those who do, do so with reservation. Many nonheterosexuals encounter violence at a young age. Violence in nonheterosexual teen relationships suggests that these youth are vulnerable to being socially isolated by the domination of their partner in their relationship (Gamache, 1991; Simoni & Cooperman, 2000). One major problem with battered gay men is that many of these victims do not see themselves as victims of domestic violence. Many battered gay men feel that only women can be victims of domestic violence; therefore, since they are not women, they cannot be victims. Because they believe men cannot be victims of domestic violence, they do not see their victimization as being consistent with their male identity. While this is

the case with many male victims, they may need to be physically injured before they admit that they are in a domestically violent relationship (Letellier, 1994, 1996).

Even when physical abuse does occur, many men lack the ability to describe their victimization, which hinders them from taking the necessary steps to leave their violent relationships. This is especially true when relationships are new and the violence is just beginning. As a result of nonheterosexual domestic violence being kept silent, many victims may not have the awareness that they are, in fact, a victim, that what they are experiencing is, indeed, domestic violence. As a result, many may neither come forward and talk about the abuse, nor will they seek help to escape the abuse (Letellier, 1994).

If gay men do choose to seek help, they may encounter one major difficulty, which is the sheer lack of resources for battered men (Letellier, 1994, 1996; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000). As a result of there being few shelters to help specifically gay or bisexual male victims, there are numerous men who are battered and are remaining with their partner because they have nowhere to go (Letellier, 1994, 1996). There is also a lack of resources for lesbian women (Renzetti, 1992). Although many feel that the needs of

lesbian women can be met at domestic violence shelters for heterosexual women, in actuality the services are not available or do not address the needs of lesbian women who are victims of domestic violence (Allen & Leventhal, 1999; Goldberg & Hornick, 1991; Hammond, 1986). Although, nonheterosexual victims of domestic violence need to be viewed in terms of their current situation first, their sexual orientation also needs to be acknowledged. This can include their family, who has disowned them or does not recognize their relationship (Goldberg & Hornick, 1991).

Renzetti (1989) conducted a study on third-party responses to lesbian domestic violence. In this study it was found that when lesbian women confide in third parties, such as friends, they are hesitant to label their experience as abuse. As a result of having little or no support system, many lesbian women who are victims of domestic violence stated that they stayed in the abusive relationship because they felt isolated from their family and friends. When victims did try to reach out to others, they were told that the abuse was mutual, thereby making the victim feel unjustified in her attempt to seek help. Renzetti identified some ways in which third-party responses can be improved so that victims of same-sex

domestic violence will feel more comfortable in seeking help from others.

According to Renzetti (1989, 1992), some of the ways in which third parties could be more sensitive to same-sex domestic violence is by making police personnel, shelter volunteers, shelter staff, counselors, physicians, and other help providers participate in homophobia workshops as part of their training. This would assist them in being more effective in how they respond to all domestic violence cases, both nonheterosexual and heterosexual (Renzetti, 1989). Renzetti (1989, 1992) also suggested that mediation between the abuser and the victim be used in order to facilitate communication between partners so that they may be able to develop a mutually beneficial resolution to their conflicts. However, research indicated that the more hostile the relationship is, the less likely that the couple will be able to settle their disagreements (Renzetti, 1989). It was also suggested that other courses of action be taken (e.g., a signed agreement in which the abuser promises to end the violence) before legal action is taken (Renzetti, 1989).

Many lesbian women are afraid to fuel society's hatred and myths of lesbian women by speaking openly about

same-sex domestic violence. The fear also exists out of being retaliated against by the police, courts, shelters, or therapists. Therefore, many lesbian women are reluctant to call the police, seek counseling, or write about the abuse that is, indeed, occurring (Benowitz, 1986; Hammond, 1986; Renzetti, 1989).

A great deal of fear may exist for the victim of nonheterosexual domestic violence. He or she is often threatened by his or her partner to be *outed*, which means that if he or she is not open about his or her sexuality for fear of backlash, his or her partner makes this information known to those around the victim. Often, if the victim has told his or her family and loved ones, he or she may be disowned, resulting in isolation from his or her family and friends thus making it less possible to seek help or services. If the victim has not been disowned, he or she may feel compelled to present a picture-perfect life to his or her family and loved ones simply to deny the homophobic stereotypes and attitudes (Allen & Leventhal, 1999; Elliott, 1996; Goldberg & Hornick, 1991; Hammond, 1986; Hanson & Maroney, 1999).

*Health concerns and domestic violence.* Homophobia also relates the nonheterosexual lifestyle to HIV/AIDS, which only perpetuates violence against nonheterosexuals or perceived nonheterosexuals. There is evidence that HIV/AIDS has negatively affected the attitudes about nonheterosexuality, specifically influencing violent behaviors towards nonheterosexuals (Berrill, 1990). It is theorized that HIV/AIDS is less of a cause of antihomosexual attitudes and violence than it is a new justification for expressions of preexisting antihomosexual prejudice (Herek, 1989).

Many view HIV/AIDS as God's punishment for male homosexuality and feel that those suffering from HIV/AIDS should not be given care and that there should not be any laws protecting those with HIV/AIDS against abuse or violence (Herek, 1991). Research has found that many gay men were more comfortable with their identities as a person with AIDS than with their identity as a nonheterosexual (Odets, 1990). While much of society may have held antigay attitudes before HIV/AIDS became a public concern, the emergence of this disease simply gave those with antigay attitudes an excuse to verbalize their beliefs. However,

violence does not only affect those nonheterosexuals with HIV/AIDS, but anyone with this disease (Herek, 1991).

Domestic violence is now considered one of the major health concerns for women (Campbell & Soeken, 1999). HIV/AIDS contraction is of great concern within the heterosexual community, as the largest growing population of those contracting HIV is no longer nonheterosexuals, but heterosexuals (AIDS Health Project, 1985; Simoni & Cooperman, 2000). Many women who are HIV positive also have been emotionally, sexually, or physically abused since discovering their HIV status (Hommander, 2001; Simoni & Cooperman). It was also found that the longer the women had known about their diagnosis, the longer their abuse had been occurring (Hommander, 2001). Recently, research has reported the connection between domestic violence and HIV/AIDS and the devastating costs that ensue as a result of the combination (Klein, Birkhead, & Wright, 2000). While other authors assume that because alcohol use is reported to be a risk factor for HIV infection and that alcohol abuse is also associated with domestic violence, it is reasonable to assume that increased risk of HIV infection is related to an increase in violence (Lystad et al., 1996).

Most domestic violence shelters only screen for domestic violence symptoms, they do not screen for health problems, especially HIV/AIDS (Gielen et al., 2000). It has been found that women who are HIV-positive and disclose their health status to others are either abused physically or emotionally (Gielen et al., 2000). Oftentimes they are even disowned from their families, making them more isolated from resources that may be of help to them. By being isolated from resources outside their home, this enables further victimization by their partner. It was also found that women who were HIV positive experienced more abuse, possibly as a result of their HIV status. Furthermore, they experienced more negative consequences as a result of their HIV status, such as being disowned, losing their job, and becoming isolated from others (Gielen et al., 2000). However, other authors contradict this, stating that heterosexual women who are HIV-positive do not experience more abuse than other heterosexual women who are HIV-negative (Vlahov, Wientge, & Moore, 1998).

It has been speculated that the effects of homophobia, compounded with the absence of healthy, nonheterosexual relationship role models, creates a situation where nonheterosexuals tolerate violence from their partners

(Letellier, 1994, 1996; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Renzetti, 1992). The intersection of domestic violence and HIV/AIDS can be seen at the few shelters across the country that provide services for nonheterosexual victims of domestic violence (Letellier, 1996). However, it must be said that HIV/AIDS does not cause violence. To place the blame elsewhere and find excuses for violence only trivializes the pain and anguish that victims experience. However, HIV/AIDS can be used as a weapon against a victim of domestic violence (Letellier, 1996).

Many batterers will use anything within their means to intimidate and control their partners, including HIV/AIDS. Perhaps the most destructive perpetrators are those who purposefully infect their partner with HIV in order to keep them from leaving. Although infecting one's partner may be the most deadly use of HIV as a weapon, there are other ways in which HIV can be used as a weapon. For example, threatening to infect one's partner, threats to withhold medicine or not allow him or her to seek medical attention, and threats to reveal HIV-positive status can also be devastating. These are but a few means that batterers may use HIV against their partner in order to maintain control and power (Letellier, 1996). Those who are suffering from

HIV and are the victim of domestic violence may be dependent upon their batterer for shelter and economic and emotional support and may feel incapable of surviving independently (Hanson & Maroney, 1999).

*Gender roles.* Other authors, such as Martin (1976), believed that same-sex battering occurs when nonheterosexual men and women act out masculine and feminine (butch/femme) roles. However, the theory also states that battering is less likely to happen with couples who do not imitate the *mom and dad*-type roles. This sentiment is shared with other authors, who believe that as nonheterosexuals may have been raised in heterosexual households, they were taught that power differences existed between men and women (Letellier, 1994). This further taught them societal sex-role patterns, which in turn modeled the roles within their same-sex relationship (Letellier, 1994). Walker (1979) also defined same-sex relationships as imitations of heterosexual relationships and implied that nonheterosexuals who are affected by domestic violence are actually acting out heterosexual male and female sex roles.

Another theory, which has been sparked by homophobia, is that nonheterosexual women and men are not *real* women or men; rather they really want to be heterosexual. In turn these nonheterosexual women and men react to these stereotypes by attempting to choose among traditional male or female sex-roles (Benowitz, 1986). With the assumption that same-sex relationships are merely mimicking heterosexual relationships, it is not a far leap to make the connection that the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979), one of the most widely relied upon domestic violence theories designed for heterosexual relationships, must therefore also apply to nonheterosexual domestic violent couples. Despite this widely held belief, much evidence states that the majority of nonheterosexual women and men actively reject heterosexual sexual roles as models for their own relationships (Peplau, 1991).

*Misconceptions of same-sex domestic violence.* Society has many misconceptions about same-sex domestic violence, which some authors have considered within their research. Listed here are some common misconceptions as determined by Carlson (1977), Island and Letellier (1991), and Merrill (1996):

1. Only straight women are battered. Men are never victims of domestic violence, and women never batter.
2. Domestic violence is more common in heterosexual relationships than in nonheterosexual relationships.
3. It is not really violence when same-sex couples fight. It is just a lover's quarrel and a fair fight between equals.
4. It really is not violence when gay men fight. It is normal. It is *boys being boys*.
5. The batterer will always be *butch*, or bigger, and stronger. The victim will always be *femme*, or smaller, and weaker.
6. People who are abusive while under the influence of drugs and alcohol are not responsible for their actions.
7. Nonheterosexual domestic violence is sexual behavior, a version of sadomasochism. The victims actually like it.
8. The law does not and will not protect victims of nonheterosexual domestic violence.
9. Victims exaggerate the violence that happens to them. If it were really bad, they would just leave.

10. It is easier for nonheterosexual victims of domestic violence to leave the abusive relationship than it is for heterosexual battered women who are married.

11. Domestic violence primarily occurs among nonheterosexual men and women, who hang out at bars, are poor, or are ethnic/racial minorities.

12. Victims often provoke the violence done to them. They are receiving what they deserve.

13. Victims of domestic violence are codependent. These are among some of the more prominent misconceptions that surround same-sex domestic violence. Some of these misconceptions are strikingly familiar in that some of them are the same misconceptions about battered heterosexual women. While it is interesting to note the similarities among the misconceptions, the relationships in which they occur are very different. These misconceptions demonstrate how nonheterosexual relationships are often thought of as having the same dynamics as heterosexual relationships, therefore using the same theories of domestic violence (e.g., the cycle theory of violence, Walker, 1979).

*Resources and protections.* Part of the reason for the absence in available resources for nonheterosexual victims

is that the domestic violence movement has mainly focused upon heterosexual domestic violence, specifically women victims. In conjunction with this, domestic violence among the nonheterosexual communities is still not acknowledged as being a serious problem (Island & Letellier, 1991; Letellier, 1994; Lobel, 1986; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Renzetti, 1992).

Larger cities have organizations that provide services to victims of domestic violence as well as the batterers. However, many of these services are designed to meet the needs of heterosexual individuals involved in domestic violence (Bailey, 1996).

Renzetti (1989) found that many lesbian women do not feel comfortable calling the police in their area. They feel that police responses are heterosexist in nature. It was found that many lesbian women felt as though same-sex domestic violence was low on the priority list of many police officers. They felt as though the police who responded to the domestically violent situation were blaming the victim (Renzetti, 1989).

However, a recent study by Younglove et al. (2002) suggested that the police do not perceive situations of domestic violence differently based on the make-up of the

couple. It was hypothesized that regardless of the police officers' personal opinions or beliefs, there is an expressed need to comply with the legal specifications. However, these authors recognized that the police officers' perceptions of how they would act to a same-sex domestic violence situation may not be how they would actually act in this situation. Within the State of California, these laws state that domestic violence no longer can only exist within heterosexual relationships (Younglove et al., 2002).

Many state laws regarding spousal abuse specifically exclude same-sex partners by indicating that the law only applies to opposite-sex couples. However, it is important to note that small steps are being made to remedy this. For example, the State of California recently changed the wording of the domestic violence law to state *any person* rather than *a person of the opposite sex* (Cal. Penal Code § 273.5, 2001).

Unfortunately, the federal government has ruled that same-sex relationships are not as valued by society or the legal system as are opposite-sex relationships. Same-sex oppression has been maintained through sodomy laws (*Bowers v. Hardwick*, 1986), as well as through anti-non-heterosexual legislation, such as the Defense of Marriage

Act (1996), which denies access to marriage to same-sex couples. Also, many nonheterosexuals may not feel worthy of legal protection because people, such as former Senator Jesse Helms [R-NC] and other elected officials, attempted to block passage of the Hate Crime Statistics Act because it included antigay violence among the *hate crimes* to be monitored by law enforcement personnel (Gonsiroek & Shernoff, 1991). With actions such as these, it is no surprise that many nonheterosexuals do not feel safe going to law enforcement officials for protection from violence.

Many religions also have an influence upon the laws that are passed and upheld. For example, in *Bowers v. Hardwick* (1986), Justices White and Burger both cited Judeo-Christian teachings in their written opinions that upheld the constitutionality of state sodomy statutes. Although religious arguments are no longer accepted as an excuse for such intolerance, they still carry significant weight when applied to nonheterosexuality (Herek, 1991). However, there are also many beliefs that are considered to be outrageously prejudicial and not scientific; such as the beliefs of Dr. Paul Cameron, who was publicly ostracized by many psychological organizations as a result of his research practices and beliefs regarding nonheterosexuality

as wrong and immoral. These faulty studies, which supported his beliefs, were published in many of his pamphlets (Herek, 1991).

When the government, both state and federal, is conveying the message that nonheterosexuals are *bad*, it is encouraging self-loathing, creating separation from heterosexuals as well as other nonheterosexuals, creating a sense of false-security within the nonheterosexual community, and forcing nonheterosexual victims of domestic violence to be faced with the prejudices of the legal system. In order for certain governmental officials to maintain the difficulty for nonheterosexuals to obtain help and protection from the legal system, these messages are all necessary (Allen & Leventhal, 1999; Elliott, 1996; Lundy, 1999).

*Conclusions.* In the United States, nonheterosexuals are constantly bombarded by homophobia, both internalized and externalized. Despite the progress in nonheterosexual rights and societal awareness, most of society still views nonheterosexuals as having a mental disorder, being perverts, criminals, and a danger to children (Margolies, Becker, & Jackson-Brewer, 1987).

When discussing violence in same-sex relationships, one often thinks of the male perpetrating the violence; this is caused by stereotypes and media images of the male being the aggressor, while the female is the helpless victim. However, within same-sex relationships, this is neither always the case nor is it possible in nonheterosexual relationships. The reality of women battering other women challenges societal stereotypes and tears apart gender-based, sociopolitical domestic violence theories (Coleman, 1994). Many of the theories of gay-male domestic violence are based upon experiences and theoretical ideas of the authors, not on empirical evidence (Letellier, 1994).

It is especially important to gather valid and reliable data on same-sex domestic violence because policymakers need this information to determine the needs for policies and legislation, as well as to be able to identify areas for funding. The nonheterosexual communities also need to know the scope and extent of the problem for the same reasons (i.e., research, services, policy; Herek & Berrill, 1990). However, documenting nonheterosexual domestic violence has not been a high priority for criminal justice personnel or for individual

researchers. This has led activists within the nonheterosexual community to take it upon themselves to conduct surveys focusing on the prevalence of nonheterosexual domestic violence. These surveys have led to several important findings regarding same-sex domestic violence relationships (Herek & Berrill, 1990).

Different characteristics have been found to exist in batterers of each sex. One controversial suggestion is that some of these personality characteristics found in lesbian women batterers are similar to those found in heterosexual male batterers (Coleman, 1994). Clinical and anecdotal evidence suggests that lesbian women who batter frequently abuse alcohol or drugs, feel powerless, have low self-esteem, and tend to be overly dependent and jealous (Coleman, 1991; Lobel, 1986). These findings support Renzetti's (1992) research that stated the batterers' level of dependency, jealousy, and substance abuse is correlated with their use of violence. In support of this is Leeder's (1988) findings suggesting that many lesbian batterers fear abandonment, have poor communication skills, tend to be self-absorbed, and are unable to empathically relate to their partners.

There are many reasons contributing to an individual's need to dominate and control others. The female abusive personality is not dependent but aggressive, angry, and vengeful. There are usually incidents that occur that lead up to the violence, such as threatening statements, angry phone calls, violent fantasies that are related to others, and provocative behaviors (Baker & Piland-Baker, 2000). Studies have also found that nonheterosexual male batterers frequently have personality traits that are consistent with various levels of psychopathology (Dilalla & Gottesman, 1991). In these situations the punishment perpetrated on the victim is especially harsh when the abuser feels he is losing control (Baker & Piland-Baker). It was also found that most lesbian women, as well as gay men, would not use the resources available to them after they had experienced violence (Lie & Gentlewarrier, 1991; Younglove et al., 2002).

Understanding the similarities and differences in heterosexual and nonheterosexual domestic violence relationships is important in order to find a theory that works for both types. However, it is not essential to find one theory that works for both types of relationships. It is possible that two theories can coexist without being

detrimental to the other. However, this may lend to the notion that one type of relationship is superior to the other or that one type of relationship is a *real* relationship, whereas the other is not. Yet, fully understanding the similarities and the differences of these relationships will allow for a more comprehensive theory of domestic violence as a whole.

#### *Summary of the Literature*

The current literature on domestic violence theory as it applies to heterosexuals stems from the patriarchal definition of a wife being considered property. In fact, *the rule of thumb* is often referred to as a perfect example of how women were viewed. The *rule of thumb* refers to an old common-law practice that imposed a limitation on men's disciplinary authority over their women by imposing a rule that husbands had to follow when they hit their wives with a stick no wider than their thumbs (Lystad et al., 1996).

Women were considered property; therefore, it was considered by society to be normal when they were beaten or even killed. This attitude was maintained until, slowly, this type of behavior became unacceptable, at which point theories of domestic violence started to evolve. These

theories evolved in order to make sense of why domestic violence occurred, why the victim stayed with the abuser, and what made the abuser so effective in keeping the victim from fighting back or leaving. Women were once viewed, and to some degree still are, as unimportant and holding no political clout. Likewise, nonheterosexuals are currently viewed much the same way.

There are many domestic violence theories that are becoming more widespread and attempt to explain why domestic violence occurs in all types of relationships. Perhaps the most relied upon and well-known of the domestic violence theories is that of the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979). The cycle theory of violence consists of three phases and attempts to explain why the victim remains with the abuser, as well as explain the dynamics in the relationship that allow the abuser to continue the abuse. There are many other theories of domestic violence that were previously discussed. These theories include social causes, social structural views, social stressors, intergenerational cycle of violence, socioeconomic status, and social isolation. Many of these theories appear to overlap somewhat and may even be intertwined with each other. However, all these theories, while they do not

justify domestic violence, attempt to explain the dynamics within the relationship as well as why the violence occurs.

There are also differing nonheterosexual theories of domestic violence that attempt to explain why domestic violence occurs. While many authors feel that the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979), as well as other theories (such as intergenerational cycle of violence, social stressors, and social isolation), is able to explain nonheterosexual domestic violence, other authors do not agree. There is much controversy as to why these theories, specifically designed to explain heterosexual domestic violence, cannot explain nonheterosexual domestic violence.

There are theories of domestic violence that were designed to specifically address same-sex domestic violence. These theories include internalized homophobia, social isolation, inclusive theories, heterosexism, and stereotyped gender roles. Many feel that nonheterosexual domestic violence needs its own theory, separate from heterosexual domestic violence, to explain the dynamics within nonheterosexual relationships. However, keeping all of these different theories in mind, it is interesting to note that many of the misconceptions of same-sex domestic

violence are similar to misconceptions of heterosexual domestic violence.

There are studies that have found that those who suffer from a physical health problem also experience more violence in their lives. It was also found and speculated by some authors, that those who are HIV-positive also experience more violence. This is presumably a result of their HIV status.

The belief that same-sex domestic violence does not really exist is a common misconception. One reason this misconception exists is because many believe that there is no defined victim and abuser, because they are abusing each other. The concept of mutual combat appears to apply only to same-sex domestic violence, for when a woman uses self-defense against her battering husband, this is not considered mutual combat but understandable self-defense. However, if the two parties are of the same-sex, it is no longer considered domestic violence nor self-defense, but mutual battering.

Power is a common theme among both heterosexual and nonheterosexual domestic violence. It is necessary that the abuser have power over the victim in order for the abuse to continue. The batterer will use many different

means to obtain and maintain power and control over the victim. These means range from verbal threats to withholding health supplies.

Also somewhat similar among both heterosexual and nonheterosexual victims of domestic violence is their help-seeking methods. Most victims feel trapped in their abusive relationships because of lack of resources or fear of retaliation by the abuser. If the victim is male, especially a gay male, there are specific deterrents to seeking help. Most male victims of domestic violence do not recognize themselves as being victims, they see themselves as fighting back, or they are ashamed of being male victims, for many men do not see these two as potentially coexisting.

Statistics of domestic violence for both heterosexuals and nonheterosexuals appear to be somewhat equivalent. There is not an overwhelming difference between the rates of heterosexual and nonheterosexual victims of domestic violence. However, the statistical numbers do differ, depending upon what the research defines as domestic violence. Some researchers do not ask the victim his or her sexual orientation, or they only focus upon heterosexual domestic violence, never inquiring about

nonheterosexual domestic violence. However, one common theme that runs throughout statistical studies is that age does not protect against domestic violence. Both heterosexual and nonheterosexual victims of domestic violence appear to be in all age categories. The same appears to be true relative to religious preference, race, ethnicity, and sex.

Cultural values and beliefs appear to greatly influence the abusers' reasons for domestic violence. Many different cultures suffer from domestic violence, and yet, these cultures are attempting to decrease the level of domestic violence through culturally specific means. Many cultures are devising different treatment plans that will allow them to best serve their communities through an avenue that will follow their cultural values and beliefs.

There are particular community resources that victims as well as abusers of domestic violence can utilize. However, there appear to be more resources for female victims of domestic violence, specifically directed toward heterosexual female victims. Although there are community resources for lesbian women who are victims, they are not as convenient nor do they specifically address the needs of lesbian women. Rather, they are designed to address the

needs of heterosexual women and will also accept lesbian women into their program but not necessarily address their specific needs. This is in comparison to the resources for male victims of domestic violence, of which there are practically none; these types of community resources are scarce at best. Specifically, resources that are designed to address the needs of gay male victims are almost nonexistent.

There are other forms of protection that address the needs of domestic violence victims. Again, these forms address mostly female victims. These other forms of protection are state and federal laws. However, most state laws that address domestic violence victims specifically refer only to heterosexual female victims who are married. The laws actually state that the victim must be married to a partner of the opposite sex, while there is no mention of same-sex partners. Case law also exists regarding domestic violence; however, these decisions are only in favor of heterosexual victims of domestic violence.

#### *Gaps in the Literature*

There are many different controversial topics that need to be taken into account when discussing domestic

violence, especially when considering heterosexual versus nonheterosexual theories of domestic violence. For example, many believe that there is a stereotypical notion that there must be a male role or *butch* and a female role or *femme* in lesbian female relationships. This same belief can also be applied to gay male relationships. As a result of this belief, many believe that the theories of heterosexual domestic violence (e.g., cycle theory of violence, Walker, 1979) can also apply to nonheterosexual domestic violence. If the gender roles are identical in both types of relationships, there should be no reason why the theories do not apply to both relationships. This is the argument that many authors give despite research stating that most nonheterosexual couples do not follow these stereotypical gender roles.

A concern is that heterosexual theories of domestic violence, like the ones previously mentioned, do not adequately explain nonheterosexual domestic violence. One such criticism is that heterosexual theories do not take into account the specific stressors that nonheterosexuals face on a daily basis. The stressors that nonheterosexuals face are completely different or in addition to the ones faced by heterosexuals. There are societal and community

stressors that are faced by nonheterosexual couples that heterosexual couples will never have to endure. Although the theories of domestic violence may take into account stressors that heterosexuals face, these may not be equivalent to the stressors faced by nonheterosexuals.

Therefore, it is difficult to conclude that heterosexual theories of domestic violence can be applied to same-sex domestic violence when the relationship dynamics are different. How is it possible that the dynamics in a same-sex relationship are assumed to be the same dynamics in an opposite-sex relationship? Does it make it easier for society to accept nonheterosexual relationships if they are assumed to be dynamically designed similar to heterosexual relationships? Why must theorists make same-sex domestic violence more acceptable for society to understand?

Not only is it assumed that the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) is applicable to specific sexes or sex roles, but also that the cycle theory of violence is a cycle that is specific to all domestic violent relationships (Coleman, 1994; Lie et al., 1991; Lystad et al., 1996; Renzetti, 1988, 1992; Weidman, 1986). Therefore, the cycle theory of violence is applied to all

domestic violent relationships, although it was originally designed specifically for heterosexual domestically violent relationships. As there is no empirical evidence to determine if the cycle theory of violence applies to nonheterosexual domestic violent relationships, it only follows that this needs to be determined.

#### *Research Question/Hypothesis*

Based on the literature, the following research question has been developed: Do same-sex domestically violent relationships adhere to the stages and tenets of the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) as well as opposite sex domestically violent relationships purportedly do? From this research question, the following conclusion can be tentatively drawn: As the cycle theory of violence was designed for heterosexual domestically violent relationships and despite evidence to the contrary (Peplau, 1991) it is assumed that nonheterosexual domestically violent relationships follow the same dynamics as do heterosexual domestically violent couples (Benowitz, 1986; Martin, 1976; Walker, 1979). In conjunction with this hypothesis, there are certain characteristics of heterosexual male batterers that have been found within

lesbian batterers. Researchers believe that these characteristics of batterers, despite their sex, are similar(Baker & Piland-Baker, 2000; Leeder, 1988; Lobel, 1986). Therefore, this suggests that regardless of the sex of those within a domestically violent relationship, the cycle theory of violence pertains to all domestically violent relationships, not only heterosexual domestically violent relationships. Therefore, it follows to hypothesize that the cycle theory of violence will fit equally well both heterosexual and nonheterosexual domestically violent relationships as the cycle theory of violence is argued to be a cycle that is not necessarily only acceptable for specific sex roles.

This study attempted to fill in some of the gaps within the literature, specifically those regarding the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) and whether or not this theory applies to nonheterosexual domestically violent relationships. The gaps in the literature are of much debate. However, to date there has been no empirical attempt to fill this gap.

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Introduction*

This chapter presents the methodology of the study. The participants of the study are discussed at length, in particular, why only these types of participants were targeted for this study. Next, the procedure of the study is discussed. Specifically, the access to the participants and explanation of the study are presented. This section also refers to the appendices, which include instructions for the participants, the consent form, and the questionnaire. Potential risks, if any, to the participants of the study are reviewed. Finally, the data analysis procedures are discussed.

#### *Participants*

Cohen (1988) recommended that in order to increase the power of the test being used, one must increase the sample size being tested, as the power of a test is directly related to the sample size. Power is defined as being the probability of claiming a significant difference when a

true difference really exists or the probability of rejecting a false null hypothesis (Minium, King, & Bear, 1993). Cohen (1992) suggested that the desirable level of power be .8 in order to discover a medium-sized effect (alpha level = .05) and that there should be a minimum of 64 subjects per group when two groups are compared. Keeping this in mind, the preferred number of participants consisted of 128 men and women who had been in a physically violent same-sex or opposite-sex relationship, for a total of 64 participants per condition (Domestic Violence/Opposite-Sex Victims and Domestic Violence/Same-Sex Victims). The participants were not ruled out based upon their sexual orientation, religion/spiritual preference, race/ethnicity, or geographical location of residence.

Men and women who had been in a physically violent same-sex or opposite-sex relationship were targeted for this study as the purpose of this study was to compare opposite-sex domestically violent relationships to same-sex domestically violent relationships to determine differences among them in relation to the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979). Because this study only looked at domestically violent relationships, any participant who was

not currently or had not been in a physically domestically violent relationship in the past was excluded from the data analysis.

Access to participants was attempted through multiple outlets, including community centers, domestic violence shelters, and clinics that serve both heterosexual and nonheterosexual communities. Access also was attempted through attendance at nonheterosexual community events (e.g., gay pride events). Permission from these organizations was obtained where necessary.

Although multiple attempts (e.g., mail, email, and phone calls) were made to garner participation from the aforementioned organizations, participation was significantly below that needed, particularly for the same-sex domestically violent population. As a result, access to this population through the Internet was attempted (i.e., chat rooms).

#### *Procedure*

##### *In-Person Participants*

In-person participants were approached by the researcher for their participation in this study. A brief description of the study was provided to the participant

(Appendix A) and an informed consent form (Appendix B) was given to the participant for his or her signature. Upon obtaining his or her signature on the informed consent form, the questionnaire was handed to the participant (Appendix C). The researcher then waited nearby for the participant to complete the questionnaire. The completed questionnaire and consent form were filed separately to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the participant.

#### *Internet Participants*

Initially a small blurb describing the study was sent out to individuals via chat rooms and message boards on the Internet. At this point the interested party had to contact the researcher and ask questions, express interest, or ask for the survey. The survey was then sent to the interested party via email with instructions on what to do. Potential participants were given the option to either print out and send in the survey or have the survey sent to them complete with a stamped envelope to return the survey. Once these surveys were received, the consent form was detached and filed separately, while the survey was assigned a number and filed.

*Research Question and Hypothesis:  
Cycle Theory of Violence*

The research question was: Do same-sex domestically violent relationships adhere to the stages and tenets of the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) as well as opposite-sex domestically violent relationships purportedly do? Springing from this question was the following hypothesis: The cycle theory of violence and tenets will be as applicable to same-sex domestic violence couples as it purportedly is to opposite-sex domestic violence couples.

As there were no empirical data previously collected determining whether the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) is theoretically consistent for same-sex domestic violence relationships, the data analysis for this particular portion of the questionnaire came from the research question and hypothesis noted in Chapter 2 as opposed to hypotheses derived from the literature. This study attempted to, for the first time, collect and analyze this information.

*Development of Questionnaire**The Tension Building Phase  
(Phase 1)*

The first phase (i.e., the tension-building phase) was addressed by Questions 7 through 11 and 13 through 15, all derived from the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979), for a total of eight questions. Each question has a score range from 1 to 5 on a Likert-type scale, with a higher score indicating a better fit with the cycle theory of violence. Thus, the total score for Phase 1 can range from 8 to 40. From the total score of Phase 1, a mean was calculated for the whole phase so that the phases could be compared to one another. See Appendix D for the questionnaire coding and scoring.

*The Acute Battering Phase  
(Phase 2)*

The second phase (i.e., the violent act) was addressed by Questions 16 through 18 and 20 through 22, all derived from the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979), for a total of six questions. Each question has a score range from 1 to 5 on a Likert-type scale, with a higher score indicating a better fit with the cycle theory of violence. Thus, the total score for Phase 2 can range from 6 to 30.

From the total score on Phase 2, a mean was calculated for the whole phase so that the phases could be compared to one another. See Appendix D for the questionnaire coding and scoring.

*The Honeymoon Phase  
(Phase 3)*

The last phase (i.e., the honeymoon phase) was addressed by Questions 23 through 29, all derived from the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979), for a total of seven questions. Each question has a score range from 1 to 5 on a Likert-type scale, with a higher score indicating a better fit with the cycle theory of violence. Thus, the total score for Phase 3 can range from 7 to 35. From the total score on Phase 3, a mean was calculated for the whole phase so that the phases could be compared to one another. See Appendix D for the questionnaire coding and scoring.

*Cycle Theory of Violence  
Questions: Overall Fit*

The three phases of the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) were addressed through Questions 7 through 11, 13 through 18, 20 through 22 and 23 through 29, for a total of 21 questions (Appendix D). As noted in the sections relating to the separate phases, a mean was

calculated for the individual phases in order to appropriately compare the phases with one another. Remember, although questions were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, there were differing numbers of questions per phase. In addition to these separate phase means, an overall mean of these means was calculated so that a comparison of the fit of the theory could be made between the same-sex and opposite-sex domestically violent relationship participants.

#### *Additional Questions*

Twelve questions on the questionnaire (1 through 6, 12, 19, and 30 through 33; see Appendices C and D) do not specifically relate to the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979). However, they are looking at domestic violence on an unrelated construct. These questions included the number of violent relationships the participants were in, the number of times they left their partner, and the length of their relationship. These questions were analyzed using analyses of variance (ANOVAs) in order to report the findings for each group. Other additional questions asked the participants whether they had received counseling for the abuse they experience, if

they were still in this relationship, and if their partner used drugs or alcohol while the abuse was occurring. These questions were calculated for frequency of event in order to report the findings for each group.

#### *Potential Risks*

Potential risks to participants included disclosure of domestic violence within their relationships. Disclosing this information may have created some concern for the participants, including triggering traumatic experiences they may have experienced. As a result of this, all participants were provided information on domestic violence centers in their area, nonheterosexual community centers within their area, as well as national and local help-line numbers they could call for assistance (Appendix E). Additionally, the contact information for both the researcher and the advisor of this study were provided to the participant. As stated in the consent form given to the participant, neither the researcher nor advisor were responsible for any expenses that may have resulted from accessing services.

*Data Analysis*

A one-way ANOVA allows a comparison of means of the groups. The cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) was tested using one-way ANOVAs, which compare the opposite-sex and same-sex domestic violence groups to determine whether they differ in their match to the cycle theory of violence as devised by Walker.

As the phases have varying number of questions, the means for each individual phase, the mean of the means of the individual phases (i.e., the overall mean), and means for the additional questions were calculated for the opposite-sex and same-sex domestically violent groups. This was necessary due to uneven numbers of questions per phase so that one phase would not be weighted more than another when analyzing the overall fit beyond the individual phases (Minium et al., 1993). One-way ANOVAs were also conducted on Questions 2, 30, and 31, which asked about the number of violent relationships, number of times they left their partner, and the length of the relationship, respectively.

*Descriptive Statistics*

There were multiple questions asked of the participants in order to obtain information about them to better understand the population obtained for the study. The following demographic information was received: age, sex, education, personal income, and ethnicity. Additionally, descriptive information regarding whether or not the participant was still in the abusive relationship, types of abuse experienced, and use of alcohol/drugs by the perpetrator was obtained. This information was analyzed by using descriptive statistics (i.e., means, standard deviations, and percentages) for both the opposite-sex participants and the same-sex participants.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS

#### *Introduction*

This chapter presents the results of the study. Presented first is the description of the participants. Following this are the results of the analyses of variance performed in order to test the different phases of the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979). Also included in this section are the results of the hypothesis, which tested the overall fit of the theory. Frequencies of those questions designed to ask about the different types of abuse encountered are then presented. Finally those questions which are not directly related to the theory itself but were designed to gather additional information about domestic violence victims are addressed.

#### *Descriptions of Participants*

There was a total of 94 participants, 79 victims of opposite-sex domestic violence (opposite-sex) and 15 victims of same-sex domestic violence (same-sex). Of the 79 opposite-sex respondents gathered, 38 (48.1%) were received through face-to-face contact or shelters and 41

(51.9%) were obtained through Internet solicitation. Of the 15 same-sex respondents gathered, 2 (13.3%) were received through face-to-face contact and 13 (86.7%) were obtained through Internet solicitation.

Of the 79 opposite-sex participants, 9 (11.4%) were male and 70 (88.6%) were female. The educational level of the opposite-sex participants was 8 less than high school (10.1%), 21 high school/GED (26.6%), 30 some college (37.9%), 14 college degree (17.7%), and 6 graduate school (7.6%). The income level for the opposite-sex participants was 51 in the \$0 to \$20,000 range (65.4%), 18 in the \$20,001 to \$40,000 range (23.1%), 9 in the \$40,001 to \$60,000 range (11.5%), and none in the \$60,001+ range (0%).

Of the 15 same-sex participants, 7 (46.7%) were male and 8 (53.3%) were female. The educational level of the same-sex participants was accordingly: 1 less than high school (6.7%), 1 high school/GED (6.7%), 5 some college (33.3%), 7 college degree (46.7%), and 1 graduate school (6.7%). The income level for the same-sex participants was 6 in the \$0 to \$20,000 range (40%), 3 in the \$20,001 to \$40,000 range (20%), 5 in the \$40,001 to \$60,000 range (33.3%), and 1 in the \$60,001+ range (6.7%).

The ethnicity of the opposite-sex respondents was 3 African American (3.8%), 1 Asian American (1.3%), 53 White/Caucasian (67.1%), 20 Hispanic (including Mexican American; 25.3%), and 2 others (Indigenous Australian and Portuguese; 1.3% each), while the ethnicity of the same-sex respondents was 2 African American (13.3%), 1 Native American (6.7%), 11 White/Caucasian (73.3%), and 1 Hispanic (including Mexican American; 6.7%). The average age for opposite-sex participants was 35.95 ( $SD = 9.90$ ), while the average age for same-sex participants was 31 ( $SD = 8.33$ ).

*Three Phases of Cycle Theory of Violence  
and Overall Fit*

*The Tension Building Phase  
(Phase 1)*

The first one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed using the independent variable of sexual orientation (i.e., same-sex/opposite-sex domestically violent relationship) and the dependent variable measuring the tension-building phase. This was not significant,  $F(1, 91) = .528$ ,  $p = .469$ . It can be determined from this that there is no significant difference between the ways that opposite-sex victims ( $M = 3.95$ ;  $SD = .530$ ) and same-sex

victims ( $M = 3.84$ ;  $SD = .533$ ) experience the tension building phase in their relationship.

*The Acute Battering Phase  
(Phase 2)*

The second one-way ANOVA was performed using the independent variable of sexual orientation (i.e., same-sex/opposite-sex domestically violence relationship) and the dependent variable measuring the acute battering incident phase. This was significant,  $F(1, 91) = 8.502$ ,  $p = .004$ . In other words, the acute battering phase described by Walker (1979) appears to fit the experience of opposite-sex victims of domestic violence ( $M = 3.11$ ;  $SD = .492$ ) significantly better than the same-sex victims of domestic violence ( $M = 2.7$ ;  $SD = .513$ ).

*The Honeymoon Phase  
(Phase 3)*

The third one-way ANOVA was performed using the independent variable of sexual orientation (i.e., same-sex/opposite-sex domestically violent relationship) and the dependent variable measuring the honeymoon phase (phase 3). This produced significant results,  $F(1, 92) = 5.592$ ,  $p = .020$ . In other words, the honeymoon phase described by Walker (1979) appears to fit the experience of opposite-sex

victims of domestic violence ( $M = 3.63; SD = .733$ ) significantly better than the same-sex victims of domestic violence ( $M = 3.11; SD = .966$ ).

#### *Overall Fit of Theory*

The fourth one-way ANOVA tested the overall fit of the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) for both opposite-sex and same-sex victims of domestic violence. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between opposite-sex and same-sex victims of domestic violence. The analysis examining the results of the ANOVA between the independent variable of sexual orientation (i.e., same-sex/opposite-sex domestically violent relationship) and the dependent variable measuring the overall fit of the theory was significant,  $F(1, 90) = 7.223, p = .009$ . In other words, the overall cycle theory described by Walker (1979) appears to fit the experience of opposite-sex victims of domestic violence ( $M = 3.55; SD = .436$ ) significantly better than the same-sex victims of domestic violence ( $M = 3.22; SD = .476$ ).

*Frequencies of Types of Abuse*

Within the survey there were three questions that were used to determine the frequency of the different types of abuse victims often report. Question 6 asked the participants to report the different types of abuse they had experienced. Of the victims of opposite-sex domestic violence, 92.4% ( $n = 73$ ) stated they had experienced physical abuse, 93.7% ( $n = 74$ ) reported they had experienced emotional abuse, 53.2% ( $n = 42$ ) reported having experienced sexual abuse, and 97.5% ( $n = 77$ ) reported having experienced verbal abuse. There was also an *other* category in which 16.5% ( $n = 13$ ) reported they had experienced some other type of abuse not listed. Within this category, the following types of abuse were listed: mental ( $n = 3$ , 3.8%), financial ( $n = 7$ , 8.9%), pets ( $n = 1$ , 1.3%), spiritual ( $n = 2$ , 2.5%), ethnic ( $n = 1$ , 1.3%), and children ( $n = 1$ , 1.3%).

Of the victims of same-sex domestic violence, 100% ( $n = 15$ ) stated they had experienced physical abuse, 80% ( $n = 12$ ) reported they had experienced emotional abuse, 33.3% ( $n = 5$ ) reported having experienced sexual abuse, and 86.7% ( $n = 13$ ) reported having experienced verbal abuse. There was also an *other* category in which 20% ( $n = 3$ ) reported they

had experienced some other type of abuse not listed. Within this category, the following types of abuse were listed: threatened with murder ( $n = 2$ , 13.3%), financial ( $n = 1$ , 6.7%), the threat of harm to family and friends ( $n = 1$ , 6.7%), pets ( $n = 1$ , 6.7%), and reported their partner had tried to run them over with their car ( $n = 1$ , 6.7%).

Question 12, which was placed within the tension building phase, asked the participants to report the different types of tension they had experienced. Of the victims of opposite-sex domestic violence, 91.1% ( $n = 72$ ) stated they had experienced name calling, 93.7% ( $n = 74$ ) reported they had experienced screaming/yelling, 91.1% ( $n = 72$ ) reported having experienced put downs, and 89.9% ( $n = 71$ ) reported having experienced pushing/shoving. There was also an *other* category in which 29.1% ( $n = 23$ ) reported they had experienced some other type of tension not listed. Within this category, the following types of tension were listed: choking ( $n = 3$ , 3.8%), threats ( $n = 2$ , 2.5%), throwing objects ( $n = 4$ , 5.1%), spitting ( $n = 3$ , 3.8%), punching ( $n = 5$ , 6.3%), kicking ( $n = 2$ , 2.5%), beating ( $n = 2$ , 2.5%), and weapons ( $n = 2$ , 2.5%). The following types of tension were reported only once each (1.3%): hair

pulling, twisting limbs, beltings, isolation, rape, stabbing, and financial.

Of the victims of same-sex domestic violence, 80% ( $n = 12$ ) stated they had experienced name calling, 93.3% ( $n = 14$ ) reported they had experienced screaming/yelling, 100% ( $n = 15$ ) reported having experienced put downs, and 86.7% ( $n = 13$ ) reported having experienced pushing/shoving.

There was also an *other* category in which 53.3% ( $n = 8$ ) reported they had experienced some other type of tension not listed. Within this category, the following types of tension were listed: punching ( $n = 3$ , 20%) and slapping ( $n = 2$ , 13.3%). The following types of tension were reported only once (each 6.7%): fist fighting, throwing things, threats, kicking, using weapons, stabbing, and restraint. Obviously, within this question there are many *other* answers which can be considered violence rather than tension, even though Question 19 was designed to assess the differing types of violence victims had experienced. As a result, many of the answers for question 12 appear more consistent with Question 19.

Question 19, which was placed within the acute battering phase portion of the questionnaire, asked the participants to report the different types of violence they

had experienced. Of the victims of opposite-sex domestic violence, 84.8% ( $n = 67$ ) stated they had experienced hitting/punching, 39.2% ( $n = 31$ ) reported they had experienced beating with objects, and 48.1% ( $n = 38$ ) reported having experienced sexual violence (including forcing sex). There was also an *other* category in which 43% ( $n = 34$ ) reported they had experienced some other type of violence not listed. Within this category, the following types of violence were listed: choking ( $n = 8$ , 10.1%), being swung into walls ( $n = 3$ , 3.8%), verbal abuse ( $n = 6$ , 7.6%), stabbing ( $n = 3$ , 3.8%), throwing objects ( $n = 5$ , 6.3%), pushing ( $n = 5$ , 6.3%), biting ( $n = 3$ , 3.8%), kicking, ( $n = 7$ , 8.9%), twisting limbs ( $n = 2$ , 2.5%), and restraint ( $n = 4$ , 5.1%). The following types of violence were reported only once each (1.3%): boiling water thrown, disappearing for days, spiting, using weapons, dragging, pets, and being brainwashed into believing it was their fault.

Of the victims of same-sex domestic violence, 93.3% ( $n = 14$ ) stated they had experienced hitting/punching, 33.3% ( $n = 5$ ) reported they had experienced beating with objects, and 33.3% ( $n = 5$ ) reported having experienced sexual violence (including forcing sex). There was also an *other*

category in which 46.7% ( $n = 7$ ) reported they had experienced some other type of violence not listed. Within this category, the following types of violence were listed: choking ( $n = 2$ , 13.3%), pushing/shoving ( $n = 3$ , 3.8%), and breaking furniture ( $n = 3$ , 3.8%). The following types of violence were reported only once each (6.7%): burning, hair pulling, using knives/forks, stabbing, kicking, and mock executions.

*Other Information Gathered on Domestic Violence Victims*

Within the survey there were questions that did not directly relate to the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) but were useful for understanding the experience of the victim. These questions included numbers 2, 5, and 30 through 33.

Question 2 asked the participants how many physically abusive relationships they had experienced. Opposite-sex respondents reported that on average they had been in 1.90 ( $SD = 1.064$ ) physically abusive relationships, while same-sex respondents reported that on average they had been in 1.67 ( $SD = .976$ ) physically abusive relationships. A one-way ANOVA was performed with sexual orientation (i.e., same-sex/opposite-sex domestically violent relationship) as

the independent variable and number of physically abusive relationships as the dependent variable. There was not a significant difference between the groups,  $F(1, 91) = .607$ ,  $p = .438$ .

Question 5 asked the participants if they had received counseling for having been a victim of domestic violence. Of the victims of opposite-sex domestic violence 51.9% ( $n = 41$ ) reported that they had received counseling while only 33.3% ( $n = 5$ ) of the victims of same-sex domestic violence reported that they had received counseling.

Question 30 asked the respondents how many times they left their partners due to the violence they received. A one-way ANOVA was performed with sexual orientation (i.e., same-sex/opposite-sex domestically violent relationship) as the independent variable and how many times they left their partner as the dependent variable. The results were significant,  $F(1, 91) = 7.67$ ,  $p = .007$ . Analysis of the results indicate that victims of opposite-sex domestic violence left more times ( $M = 2.81$ ;  $SD = 1.57$ ) than did their same-sex counterparts ( $M = 1.60$ ;  $SD = 1.40$ ).

Question 31 asked the respondents how long they were in the physically abusive relationship. Another one-way ANOVA was performed with sexual orientation (i.e., same-

sex/opposite-sex domestically violent relationship) as the independent variable and length of relationship as the dependent variable. The results were significant,  $F(1, 88) = 8.85$ ,  $p = .004$ . This supports the findings in Question 30 in that victims of same-sex domestic violence ended the violent relationships earlier than did their opposite-sex counterparts. The average length of the relationship for victims of opposite-sex domestic violence was 83.61 months ( $SD = 62.95$ ) or 6.97 years, while the average length of the relationship for victims of same-sex domestic violence was 34.27 months ( $SD = 25.88$ ) or 2.86 years.

Question 32 asked the respondents if they were still in the physically abusive relationship. Of the victims of opposite-sex domestic violence 11.4% ( $n = 9$ ) reported that they were still in the relationship while 87.3% ( $n = 69$ ) reported that they were no longer in the relationship. Of the victims of same-sex domestic violence 0% ( $n = 0$ ) reported that they were still in the relationship while 100% ( $n = 15$ ) reported that they were no longer in the relationship.

Question 33 asked the respondents if the violence only occurred when their partner was consuming some type of substance (alcohol or drugs). Of the victims of opposite-

sex domestic violence, 5.1% ( $n = 4$ ) stated partner only used alcohol, 10.1% ( $n = 8$ ) reported their partner only used drugs, 7.6% ( $n = 6$ ) reported their partner used both alcohol and drugs, 18.9% ( $n = 15$ ) reported that their partner did not use drugs or alcohol, and 56.9% ( $n = 45$ ) reported that whether or not their partner used drugs or alcohol violence occurred. Of the victims of same-sex domestic violence, 13.3% ( $n = 2$ ) stated partner only used alcohol, 0% ( $n = 0$ ) reported their partner only used drugs, 13.3% ( $n = 2$ ) reported their partner used both alcohol and drugs, 33.3% ( $n = 5$ ) reported that their partner did not use drugs or alcohol, and 40% ( $n = 6$ ) reported that whether or not their partner used drugs or alcohol violence occurred.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

#### *Introduction*

This chapter explores the relevance of the results of the current study. The results that are discussed include (a) the results of the analyses of variance performed in order to test the different phases of the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979), (b) the results of the hypothesis that tested the overall fit of the theory, (c) those questions designed to ask about the different types of abuse encountered by the victim, and (d) those questions that are not directly related to the theory itself but were designed to gather additional information about domestic violence victims. Finally, the limitations of the current study and implications for future research are discussed.

#### *Three Phases of the Cycle Theory of Violence*

The study's research question was: Do same-sex domestically violent relationships adhere to the stages and tenets of the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) as well as opposite sex domestically violent relationships purportedly do? This section discusses the findings that

address this question. Specifically the three phases of the cycle theory of violence will be discussed.

*The Tension Building Phase  
(Phase 1)*

The first phase of the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) is the *tension-building phase*. This phase is defined by when the tension begins to build as the perpetrator increases his or her threat of violence. The dynamic between the perpetrator and victim is such that the victim assumes the guilt and becomes the perpetrator's accomplice by enabling him or her to feel justified in his or her abuse. For many victims, the tension-building phase is described as unbearable.

The ANOVA conducted found no significant difference between the ways that opposite-sex victims of domestic violence and same-sex victims of domestic violence experience this phase. Although some authors (Lystad et al., 1996; Woodworth et al., 2001) suggested that while there are no differences between heterosexual and nonheterosexual couples who experience domestic violence, power and control are viewed by society as a socially acceptable means for individuals to use in relationships (Gamache, 1991). As there was no significant difference

found between the opposite-sex and same-sex victims of domestic violence it is possible that the perpetrators of domestic violence use similar means to demonstrate their dominance over their partner. Therefore, if the perpetrators are using similar means of power and control in their relationships, the victims in these relationships would experience the tension in the same manner.

*The Acute Battering Phase  
(Phase 2)*

The second phase is the *acute battering incident*, which is the violent act itself. During this phase, the violence can be minor and begin to grow as time passes or it can be severe the first time. However, if the violence starts minor, eventually it will become severe (Walker, 1979). The ANOVA conducted found a significant difference between the ways that opposite-sex victims of domestic violence and same-sex victims of domestic violence experience this phase. It was found that opposite-sex victims of domestic violence fit this phase significantly better than do same-sex victims of domestic violence.

Given that the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) was originally designed with opposite-sex couples in mind, this supports the theory's premise. The findings suggest

that opposite-sex victims experienced this phase as being more violent than did same-sex victims of domestic violence. This may be due to another finding in this study that opposite-sex victims remain in the relationship longer than do their same-sex counterparts. This finding is discussed with the other additional information questions. As opposite-sex victims remain in the relationship longer than same-sex victims, it may give the opposite-sex victim a longer period of time to experience more violence.

The cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) suggests that the violence will grow in severity over a period of time. As these victims are in the relationship for longer periods of time than are their same-sex counterparts, this finding is in agreement with the theory that the level of violence experienced by the victims is greater for opposite-sex victims as they are in the relationship for longer periods of time than are the same-sex victims of domestic violence.

#### *The Honeymoon Phase (Phase 3)*

The last phase is the *honeymoon phase* in which the abuser apologizes and expresses guilt and remorse for having abused his or her partner. Eventually the honeymoon

phase will become shorter and shorter until it becomes nonexistent (Walker, 1979). The ANOVA conducted found a significant difference between the ways that opposite-sex victims of domestic violence and same-sex victims of domestic violence experience this phase. It was found that opposite-sex victims of domestic violence fit this phase significantly better than do same-sex victims of domestic violence.

As previously mentioned, it was also found that opposite-sex victims remain in the abusive relationship longer than do same-sex victims of domestic violence. As they remain in the relationship longer it may lend to the explanation of why this phase fits the opposite-sex victim better than the same-sex victim. The theory suggests that over time, the honeymoon phase becomes shorter and shorter until it is eventually nonexistent. As the opposite-sex victim of domestic violence remains in the relationship longer than his or her same-sex counterpart, the opposite-sex victim is given more time to experience the shortening of the honeymoon phase.

*Overall Fit of the Cycle Theory of Violence*

The second part of the research question focuses on the entire cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) as one construct. The cycle theory of violence was designed for heterosexual domestically violent relationships and, despite evidence to the contrary (Peplau, 1991), it is assumed that nonheterosexual domestically violent relationships follow the same dynamics as do heterosexual domestically violent couples (Benowitz, 1986; Martin, 1976; Walker, 1979). This section discusses the overall fit of the opposite-sex victim's experience versus the same-sex victim's experience of the cycle theory of violence.

The ANOVA conducted found a significant difference between the ways that opposite-sex victims of domestic violence and same-sex victims of domestic violence experience the overall theory. It was found that opposite-sex victims of domestic violence fit the overall theory significantly better than do same-sex victims of domestic violence.

This finding supports those authors who believed that this theory needs to be adapted to fit the needs of nonheterosexual couples (Baker & Piland-Baker, 2000; Coleman, 1994; Elliott, 1996; Leeder, 1988; Lie et al.,

1991; Lobel, 1986; Lystad et al., 1996; Renzetti, 1988, 1992; Walker, 1986; Weidman, 1986). It also supports those who believed that the theory does not fit nonheterosexual domestically violent couples at all and should be abandoned (Letellier, 1994). This finding also supports those authors who believed that an entirely new theory of violence needs to be developed in order to fit the needs of non-heterosexual domestically violent couples (Letellier, 1994).

This finding supports the notion that nonheterosexual couples have different dynamics in their relationships than do heterosexual couples, which are not addressed by the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979). As this theory was originally designed with opposite-sex couples in mind, it fits that this theory would take heterosexual dynamics into perspective and address them specifically. It also suggests that this theory does not take nonheterosexual specific dynamics and issues into account, therefore not applying to the experience of same-sex victims of domestic violence.

Although Renzetti (1988, 1992) believed that the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) also applies to lesbian women in a domestically violent relationship, this study

did not analyze the data looking at the sex of the victim and the sex of the partner alone. In other words, the data were not analyzed looking specifically at lesbian and gay couples separately but rather looking at same-sex couples as a whole. Therefore, this study was not able to either support or contradict Renzetti's (1988, 1992) findings.

Lastly, it is important to note that the means for the separate phases as well as the overall mean for the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) ranged from 2.7 to 3.95 on a 5-point Likert-type scale for both groups. This clearly suggests that regardless of the gender make-up of the relationship something is not accounted for by the theory.

#### *Types of Abuse*

There were also questions that were used to determine the frequency of the different types of abuse victims often report. These findings suggest that while same-sex victims of domestic violence experience more physical abuse than do their opposite-sex counterparts, opposite-sex victims of domestic violence experience more emotional, sexual, and verbal abuse than do the same-sex victims of domestic violence. In the survey, the participants were given the

option to write in any other types of abuse that were not listed. Within this category, the same-sex victims of domestic violence reported experiencing other types of abuse more frequently than did opposite-sex victims.

There were also questions regarding specific types of abuse within the different phases of the theory. The findings from these questions suggest that opposite-sex victims of domestic violence report experiencing more name-calling, screaming, pushing, being hit with objects, and sexual violence; while same-sex victims of domestic violence reported experiencing more put downs, and other types of abuse.

Once again, these findings may be explained by the amount of time the opposite-sex victim is in the relationship, which is longer than the same-sex victim. As the opposite-sex victim remains in the relationship longer than the same-sex victim, the opposite-sex victim may be given more time to experience differing types of abuse. Although Renzetti (1988, 1992) found that specifically with lesbian relationships the severity of violence increases the longer the relationship continues, this study was not able to support that finding. However, Renzetti's (1988,

1992) findings are the same as those theorized in the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979).

Other literature is contradicted by this finding. Gardner (1989) found that heterosexual couples had the lowest rate of abuse whereas lesbian couples had the highest. Once again, while this study did not separate lesbian couples from gay couples in the analysis, the findings suggest that opposite-sex victims of domestic violence fit the theory better than do same-sex victims of domestic violence in this regard.

#### *Additional Information Gathered*

Additional questions were asked of the participants in order to gain a better understanding of the victims' experiences of the abuse. These questions have been helpful thus far in explaining some of the differences found between the opposite-sex victims and the same-sex victims of domestic violence.

Within these questions, the only question that did not produce significant differences between the two groups was the number of abusive relationships in which the victims had been. This suggests that overall, heterosexual and

nonheterosexual people are just as likely to become involved within an abusive relationship.

The remainder of the questions either produced significant differences or had percentages that were different worth discussing. Overall, it was found that opposite-sex victims of domestic violence were more likely to receive counseling than were their same-sex counterparts. This is supported by research that states that services for same-sex victims of domestic violence is limited or that the helping professionals to whom a victim would turn are not supportive (Renzetti, 1989, 1992). This is further supported by the experiences encountered during this research (i.e., difficulty finding same-sex victims to participate).

Other findings that were significant included how many times the victims left their abusers. The findings suggest that opposite-sex victims left their partners more times than did their same-sex counterparts. This finding is also supported by a separate finding that suggests that opposite-sex victims are more likely to remain with their partners despite the abuse received by their partners. Within this study, it was found that while all the same-sex participants had left their partners due to domestic

violence, there were opposite-sex victims who remained with their abusers despite the violence received. The literature suggests that most families of domestic violence remain together for many varied reasons (e.g., children, finances; Lystad et al., 1996; Weidman, 1986). This may suggest an explanation as to why opposite-sex victims remain in abusive relationships. It is possible that opposite-sex victims believe that society has placed upon them a moral obligation to remain in a legally binding marriage despite the problems that may arise. It is also possible that opposite-sex victims of domestic violence are more inclined to remain in an abusive relationship if children are involved, especially if both the victim and perpetrator are the biological parents. Unfortunately, same-sex victims do not have the luxury of being allowed to legally marry. Often if children are involved, only one partner is the biological parent, making a decision to leave an abusive relationship potentially easier for same-sex victims of domestic violence. Additionally, the lack of support by the state of same-sex relationships further explains this difference.

The last finding of the additional questions asked of participants was how long they had been in their abusive

relationship. The ANOVA produced significant findings that show that opposite-sex victims of domestic violence remained in the abusive relationship longer than did same-sex victims of domestic violence. This finding has allowed many of the previously discussed findings to be explained. This particular finding may suggest why the different phases and overall fit of the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) fit opposite-sex victims of domestic violence better than their same-sex counterparts.

#### *Limitations of Study*

Possibly the biggest limitation of the current study was access and availability of the target population. Due to the difficulty of reaching same-sex victims of domestic violence the sample sizes were not equal and were obtained via multiple sources (i.e., in-person and via the Internet). Despite this, however, significant results were obtained. This suggests that if a larger sample size was obtained the results would have been even more powerful.

The limitations of the study also included the inability to question nonheterosexual men and women at great length about their relationships and investigate the causes and stressors in their relationship. Also, because

this study was done through a questionnaire there may be other factors and stressors that are not accounted for or discovered through a questionnaire. Self-report measures further limited the purity of the population due to participants' own motivations to endorse abusive acts they did not experience or to not endorse abusive acts they did in fact experience.

This study only surveyed those who are currently in or have previously been in physically abusive relationships. This was done in order to ensure that those who are or have been in physically abusive relationships had the opportunity to go through the entire cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979). As a result, this may exclude those who are in abusive relationships but have not experienced physical abuse. It may also exclude those who are in the tension building phase but have not yet experienced physical abuse in their relationships. By doing this, there will not be the opportunity to analyze data from those who are experiencing psychological abuse, which is thought to be extremely detrimental to the victim (Carlson, 1977; Gamache, 1991; Hanson & Maroney, 1999; Lystad et al., 1996; Walker, 1979).

Also, as this study only focuses upon the victims of domestic violence, the perpetrators of domestic violence are not being questioned; therefore, an entire portion of the domestic violence population is not being addressed by this study. By doing this, an important side of the domestic violence problem is not being studied. Regardless, this study may serve as an impetus for future research in the areas not covered in this research.

#### *Future Research*

The results of this study suggest that future research could be conducted in a multitude of areas. These areas for future research include looking specifically at nonheterosexual couples in order to determine what dynamics make them different from heterosexual couples and further applying these dynamics to a theory of domestic violence that can be used with same-sex victims to assist them in their recovery process. While there have been attempts at offering changes (Baker & Piland-Baker, 2000; Coleman, 1994; Elliott, 1996; Leeder, 1988; Letellier, 1994; Lie et al., 1991; Lobel, 1986; Lystad et al., 1996; Renzetti, 1988, 1992; Walker, 1986; Weidman, 1986) to the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979), as of date, no theory

specifically designed for same-sex victims of domestic violence has been introduced.

Also, looking at the perpetrators of domestic violence in both heterosexual and nonheterosexual relationships will assist in better understanding the relationship dynamics of these couples. This information can be used to better understand the victims' experience as well as to better help the perpetrators of domestic violence.

Overall, this study attempted to, for the first time, empirically test the cycle theory of violence (Walker, 1979) to determine if it fits both opposite-sex and same-sex victims of domestic violence. Many of the findings were significant, which suggests that more research needs to be conducted on using this specific theory when treating both opposite-sex and same-sex victims as well as their abusers and families of domestic violence. Furthermore, it appears that the theory may be leaving out some aspects for both populations. As a result, further empirical study of the theory is strongly recommended.

#### REFERENCES

## REFERENCES

- AIDS Health Project, University of California San Francisco. (December 1985). Where is AIDS going? *Focus: A Review of AIDS Research*, 1(1), 1-2.
- Allen, C., & Leventhal, B. (1999). History, culture, and identity: What makes GLBT battering different. In B. Leventhal & S. E. Lundy (Eds.), *Same-sex domestic violence* (pp. 73-81). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Anderson, C. L. (1982). Males as sexual assault victims: Multiple levels of trauma. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 7, 145-162.
- Bailey, G. R., Jr. (1996). Treatment of domestic violence in gay and lesbian relationships. *Journal of Psychological Practice*, 2(2), 1-8.
- Baker, T. E., & Piland-Baker, J. (2000). Domestic violence: The "enigma call." *Law & Order*, 48, 129-138.
- Benowitz, M. (1986). How homophobia affects lesbians' response to violence in lesbian relationships. In K. Lobel (Ed.), *Naming the violence: Speaking out about Lesbian battering* (pp. 198-201). Seattle: The Seal Press.
- Bernhard, L. A. (2000). Physical and sexual violence experienced by lesbian and heterosexual women. *Violence Against Women*, 6, 68-79.
- Berrill, K. T. (1990). Anti-gay violence and victimization in the United States. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 5, 274-294.
- Bowers v. Hardwick*, 478 U.S. 186 (1986).
- Brand, P. A., & Kidd, A. H. (1986). Frequency of physical aggression in heterosexual and female non-heterosexual dyads. *Psychological Reports*, 59, 1307-1313.

Cal. Penal Code § 273.5 (2001).

Campbell, J. C., & Soeken, K. L. (1999). Forced sex and intimate partner violence: Effects on women's risk and women's health. *Violence Against Women*, 5, 1017-1035.

Carlson, B. E. (1977). Battered women and their assailants. *Social Work*, 22, 455-460.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112 (1), 155-159.

Coleman, V. E. (1991). Violence in lesbian couples: A between groups comparison. (Doctoral Dissertation, California School of Professional Psychology, Los Angeles, 1990). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 51(11), 5634.

Coleman, V. E. (1994). Lesbian battering: The relationship between personality and the perception of violence. *Violence and Victims*, 9, 139-152.

Comstock, G. D. (1989). Victims of anti-gay/lesbian violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 4(1), 101-106.

Condon, L. (September 11, 2001). Tracking violence at home. *The Advocate*, 14.

Defense of Marriage Act, September 21, 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-199, Stat. 2419.

DeKeseredy, W. S. (2000). Current controversies on defining nonlethal violence against women in intimate heterosexual relationships: Empirical implications. *Violence Against Women*, 6, 728-746.

Dilalla, L. F., & Gottesman, I. I. (1991). Biological and genetic contributors to violence--Widom's untold tale. *Psychological Bulletin*, 109, 125-129.

- Dobash, R. E., & Dobash, R. P. (1978). Wives: The "appropriate" victims of marital violence. *Victimology: An International Journal*, 2, 426-442.
- Elliott, P. (1996). Shattering illusions: Same-sex domestic violence. In C. M. Renzetti & C. H. Miley (Eds.), *Violence in gay and lesbian domestic partnerships* (pp. 1-8). Binghampton, NY: The Hawthorne Press.
- Farley, N. (1996). A survey of factors contributing to gay and lesbian domestic violence. In C. M. Renzetti & C. H. Miley (Eds.), *Violence in gay and lesbian domestic partnerships* (pp. 35-42). Binghampton, NY: The Hawthorne Press.
- Finkelhor, D., Gelles, R. J., Hotaling, G. T., & Straus, M. A. (Eds.). (1983). *The dark side of families*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Fray-Witzer, E. (1999). Twice abused: Same-sex domestic violence and the law. In B. Leventhal & S. E. Lundy (Eds.), *Same-sex domestic violence: Sage series on violence against women* (pp. 19-41). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gamache, E. (1991). Domination and control: The social context of dating violence. In B. Levy (Ed.), *Dating violence: Young women in danger* (pp. 69-83). Seattle: The Seal Press.
- Gardner, R. (1989). Method of conflict resolution and characteristics of abuse and victimization in heterosexual, lesbian and gay male couples. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Georgia, 1988). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 50, 746B.
- Gelles, R. J. (1972). *The violent home*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Gielen, A. C., Fogarty, L., O'Campo, P., Anderson, J., Keller, J., & Faden, R. (2000). Women living with HIV: Disclosure, violence, and social support. *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 77, 480-491.

- Goldberg, S., & Hornick, J. (1991). Lesbian battering: A resource guide for Columbus. *Feminisms*, 4, 6-10.
- Gonsiorek, J. C., & Shernoff, M. (1991). AIDS prevention and public policy: The experience of gay males. In J. C. Gonsiorek & J. D. Weinrich (Eds.), *Non-heterosexuality: Research implications for public policy* (pp. 230-243). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hammond, N. (1986). Lesbian victims and the reluctance to identify abuse. In K. Lobel (Ed.), *Naming the violence: Speaking out about lesbian battering* (pp. 190-197). Seattle: The Seal Press.
- Hanson, B., & Maroney, T. (1999). HIV and same-sex domestic violence. In B. Leventhal & S. E. Lundy (Eds.), *Same-sex domestic violence* (pp. 97-110). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hart, B. (1986). Lesbian battering: An examination. In K. Lobel (Ed.), *Naming the violence: Speaking out about lesbian battering* (pp. 173-189). Seattle: The Seal Press.
- Herek, G. M. (1989). Hate crimes against lesbians and gay men: Issues for research and policy. *American Psychologist*, 44, 948-955.
- Herek, G. M. (1991). Stigma, prejudice, and violence against lesbians and gay men. In J. C. Gonsiorek & J. D. Weinrich (Eds.), *Non-heterosexuality: Research implications for public policy* (pp. 60-80). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Herek, G. M., & Berrill, K. T. (1990). Documenting the victimization of lesbians and gay men: Methodological issues. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 5, 301-315.
- Herold, E. S., Mantle, D., & Zemitis, O. (1979). A study of sexual offenses against females. *Adolescence*, 14, 65-72.

- Hommander, D. (2001). As if having HIV weren't enough. *Family Planning Perspectives, 33*(1), 3.
- Island, D. & Letellier, P. (1991). *Men who beat the men who love them: Battered gay men and domestic violence.* Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press.
- Klein, S. J., Birkhead, G. S., & Wright, G. (2000). Domestic violence and HIV/AIDS. *American Journal of Public Health, 90*, 1648.
- Kondo, A. (2001, June 24). Los Angeles; Muslim domestic abuse examined; Conference: At the first gathering of its kind in Los Angeles, speakers denounce using Islam as a justification for violence against women. *The Los Angeles Times*, B5.
- Leeder, E. (1988). Enmeshed in pain; counseling the lesbian battering couple. *Women and Therapy, 7*, 81-99.
- Leland, J. (2000, November 6). Silence ending about abuse in gay relationships. *New York Times*, A18.
- Letellier, P. (1994). Gay and bisexual male domestic violence victimization: Challenges to feminist theory and responses to violence. *Violence and Victims, 9*, 95-106.
- Letellier, P. (1996). Twin epidemics: Domestic violence and HIV infection among gay and bisexual men. In C. M. Renzetti & C. H. Miley (Eds.), *Violence in gay and lesbian domestic partnerships* (pp. 69-81). Binghamton, NY: The Hawthorne Press.
- Lie, G. Y., & Gentlewarrier, S. (1991). Intimate violence in lesbian relationships: Discussion of survey findings and practice implications. *Journal of Social Service Research, 15*(1/2), 41-59.
- Lie, G. Y., Schilit, R., Bush, J., Montagne, M., & Reyes, L. (1991). Lesbians in currently aggressive relationships: How frequently do they report aggressive past relationships? *Violence and Victims, 6*, 121-135.

- Lobel, K. (1986). *Naming the violence: Speaking out about lesbian battering*. Seattle: The Seal Press.
- Lundy, S. E. (1999). Equal protection/equal safety: Representing victims of same-sex partner abuse in court. In B. Leventhal & S. E. Lundy (Eds.), *Same-sex domestic violence: Sage series on violence against women* (pp. 43-55). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lystad, M., Rice, M., & Kaplan, S. J. (1996). Domestic violence. In S. J. Kaplan (Ed.), *Family violence: A clinical and legal guide* (pp. 139-180). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.
- Margolis, L., Becker, M., & Jackson-Brewer, K. (1987). Internalized homophobia: Identifying and treating the oppressor within. In The Boston Lesbian Psychologies Collective (Eds.), *Lesbian psychologies* (pp. 229-241). Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Martin, D. (1976). *Battered wives*. San Francisco, CA: Glide.
- McCarthy-Barnes, B. (2001). Family violence knows no cultural boundaries. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 93(1), 11-14.
- Merrill, G. S. (1996). Ruling the exceptions: Same-sex battering and domestic violence theory. In C. M. Renzetti & C. H. Miley (Eds.), *Violence in gay and lesbian domestic partnerships* (pp. 9-21). Binghamton, NY: The Hawthorne Press.
- Merrill, G. S., & Wolfe, V. A. (2000). Battered gay men: An exploration of abuse, help seeking, and why they stay. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 39(2), 1-30.
- Minium, E. W., King, B. M., & Bear, G. (1993). *Statistical reasoning in psychology and education* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Wiley.

- Odets, W. (1990). The non-heterosexualization of AIDS. *Focus: A guide to AIDS research and counseling*, 5, 1-2.
- Pan, E. (2000). Medicine wheel: A federal program that actually works. *Washington Monthly*, 32(112), 26-30.
- Peplau, L. A. (1991). Lesbian and gay relationships. In J. C. Gonsiorek & J. D. Weinrich (Eds.), *Non-heterosexuality: Research implications for public policy* (pp. 177-196). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Peters, J., Shackleford, T. K., & Buss, D. M. (2002). Understanding domestic violence against women: Using evolutionary psychology to extend the feminist functional analysis. *Violence and Victims*, 17, 255-264.
- Renzetti, C. M. (1988). Violence in lesbian relationships: A preliminary analysis of causal factors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 3, 381-399.
- Renzetti, C. M. (1989). Building a second closet: Third party responses to victims of lesbian partner abuse. *Family Relations*, 38, 157-163.
- Renzetti, C. M. (1992). *Violent betrayal: Partner abuse in lesbian relationships*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Renzetti, C. M. (1996). The poverty of services for battered lesbians. In C. M. Renzetti & C. H. Miley (Eds.), *Violence in gay and lesbian domestic partnerships* (pp. 61-68). Harrington Park Press, NY: The Hawthorne Press.
- Saunders, D. (1988). Wife abuse, husband abuse or mutual combat? A feminist perspective in empirical findings. In K. Yllo & M. Bogard (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on wife abuse* (pp. 90-113). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Simoni, J. M., & Cooperman, N. A. (2000). Stressors and strengths among women living with HIV/AIDS in New York City. *AIDS Care*, 12, 291-297.

- Stevens, P.E., & Richards, D. J. (1998). Narrative case analysis of HIV infection in a battered woman. *Health Care for Women International, 19*, 9-22.
- Thurman v. City of Torrington*, 595 F. Supp. 1521 (Conn. 1984).
- United States Department of Justice. (1994, January). *Violence against women*. Retrieved November 24, 2001, from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>.
- United States Department of Justice. (1998, March). *Violence by intimates: Analysis of data on crimes by current or former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends*. Retrieved September 23, 2001, from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov:80/bjs/pub/ascii/vi.txt>.
- United States Department of Justice. (2001, October). *Intimate partner violence and age of victim, 1993-99*. Retrieved November 25, 2001, from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/ipva99.htm>.
- Vlahov, D., Wientge, D., & Moore, J. (1998). Violence among women with or at risk for HIV infection. *AIDS Behavior, 2*(1), 53-60.
- Walker, L. (1986). Battered women's shelters and work with battered lesbians. In K. Lobel (Ed.), *Naming the violence: Speaking out about lesbian battering* (pp. 73-76). Seattle: The Seal Press.
- Walker, L. E. (1979). *The battered woman*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Warner, J. (1999, June 14). Confronting a hidden problem. *Adweek, 36*(24), 8.
- Weidman, A. (1986). Family therapy with violent couples. *Social Casework, 67*, 211-218.
- Wood, D. B. (2001, July 16). Latinos redefine what it means to be 'manly.' *The Christian Science Monitor*, 1.

Woodworth, H., Byrd, T. L., Shelton, A. J., & Parcel, G. S. (2001). Health care professionals' skills, beliefs, and expectations about screening for domestic violence in a broader community. *Family and Community Health*, 24(1), 39-54.

Younglove, J. A., Kerr, M. G., & Vitello, C. J. (2002). Law enforcement officers' perceptions of same sex domestic violence: Reasons for cautious optimism. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 17, 760-772.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

### Instructions for Participant

I am conducting a study in partial fulfillment for my doctorate in psychology at Alliant International University located in Fresno, California. This study will be looking at many different aspects of relationships, including difficulties faced within relationships. The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If at any time you feel uncomfortable during the process of filling out this questionnaire, please be aware that you may voluntarily withdraw from the study. If you have any further questions and/or concerns about this study or would like a copy of the results when finished, please feel free to contact those listed below. Thank you for your participation in this study.

#### Advisor:

Dr. Jeff Helms

Alliant International University,

5130 E. Clinton Way

Fresno, CA 93727

(559) 456-2777 x 2241

#### Researcher:

Jeanne Johnson, M.S.

Alliant International University, Fresno, CA

[jjohnson@alliant.edu](mailto:jjohnson@alliant.edu)

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

### Consent Form

This consent form is an agreement on your part to participate in a research study on relationships. If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to answer a series of questions. The entire task should take approximately 10 minutes.

By signing your name below you are giving me permission to collect data from you as a participant in this research project. Please be aware that this data will be kept confidential and that the researcher will follow the American Psychological Association's Ethical Standards including those for Research with Human Participants.

Please be aware that you may participate or withdraw from the study at anytime. You will suffer no penalty of any kind should you choose to withdraw. You understand that this study presents little potential risk to your person physically, psychologically, socially or otherwise. But, if you experience some ill effects and are in need of professional help, the present researcher will refer you to resources with the understanding that you will be responsible for all resulting expenses. (If you do suffer any ill effects as a result of your participation, please inform the researcher or the research office.)

If you have any questions or comments about the conduct of the research you may reach me at jjjohnson@alliant.edu or at (559) 456-2777 x2241.

---

Signature of Participant

Date

---

---

Signature of Researcher

Date

---

APPENDIX C  
QUESTIONNAIRE

## Questionnaire

Please fill in the following questions with the appropriate information. This information will not be connected with your name in any way.

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: (circle one)            MALE            FEMALE

Education: (check one)

Less than High School             High School/GED  
 Some College             College Degree             Graduate  
School

My personal income (before taxes) would fall in which of the following ranges? (circle one)

\$0-\$20,000    \$20,001-\$40,000    \$40,001-\$60,000    \$60,001 or more

Ethnicity (check the one which best describes you):

African-American             Asian-American  
 Native American             White/Caucasian  
 Hispanic (including Mexican-American)  
 Pacific Islander  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please answer the following questions by either circling,  
checking or writing in your answer when indicated.**

1. Have you ever been in a physically violent intimate/dating relationship or marriage?

Yes                          No

**If no,** you do not have to participate any further in this study. Please return the questionnaire to the researcher.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

**If yes,** please go to the next question.

2. How many physically abusive relationships have you been in?

1                          2                          3                          4                          5 or more

**If you have been in more than one** physically abusive relationship, please fill this questionnaire out with regards to the most physically violent relationship you have been in.

3. For the majority of the abusive relationship(s), who initiated/began most of the physical abuse:

Self                          Partner

If you answered **Self**, you do not have to participate any further in this study. Please return the questionnaire to

the researcher. Thank you for your participation in this study.

If you answered **Partner**, please continue.

4. What was the sex of your partner within this physically violent relationship?

Male                    Female

5. Have you ever received counseling for physical abuse?

Yes                    No

6. Of the types of abuse listed, please circle those that you have experienced.

Physical Abuse              Emotional Abuse              Sexual Abuse

Verbal Abuse              Other (specify):

---

7. In the abusive relationship, how often did your partner limit your activities with friends or family members?

\_\_\_\_\_ Always              \_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always              \_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes

\_\_\_\_\_ Rarely              \_\_\_\_\_ Never

8. How often did your partner demand to know where you were?

\_\_\_\_\_ Always              \_\_\_\_\_ Almost Always              \_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes

\_\_\_\_\_ Rarely              \_\_\_\_\_ Never

9. How often was your partner suspicious about your activities?

Always       Almost Always     

Sometimes

Rarely       Never

10. How often was your partner jealous?

Always       Almost Always     

Sometimes

Rarely       Never

11. People who are in physically abusive relationships sometimes experience tension. How would you describe the tension that was present?

Unbearable/Severe       Almost Unbearable

Medium Severe       Not Very Bad

There was no Tension - (SKIP TO QUESTION #16).

12. Which of the following types of tension have you experienced in your physically abusive relationship(s)?

(CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

Name Calling      Screaming/Yelling      Put Downs

Pushing/Shoving      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

13. On the scale below, circle the number that indicates when the tension was at its WORST:

After the Violence is Over → Right Before the  
Violence Starts Again

1                  2                  3                  4                  5

14. How often did you attempt to reduce the tension in  
order to make your partner happy at all costs, often going  
to great lengths in hopes of preventing the violence?

Always       Almost Always     

Sometimes

Rarely       Never

15. How often did your attempts to reduce the tension  
actually delay the violence from happening?

Always       Almost Always     

Sometimes

Rarely       Never

16. When you feel like your partner was going to be  
violent toward you, how often do you wish they would go  
ahead and do it so it would be over with?

Always       Almost Always     

Sometimes

Rarely       Never

17. How often do you antagonize your partner to become violent in order to go ahead and get the violence over with?

Always       Almost Always     

Sometimes

Rarely       Never

18. How often did you feel in control of when the violence would begin?

Always       Almost Always     

Sometimes

Rarely       Never

19. Which of the following types of violence have you experienced? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

Hitting/Punching       Beating with Objects

Sexual Violence (including forcing sex)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

20. Over the course of the relationship did the severity of the violence get:

A Whole Lot Worse       A Lot Worse

A Little Worse       Stayed About The Same

Better

21. How well are you able to recall the details of the violence that occurred (time, place, type, etc.)?

Extremely Well       Very Well       Somewhat  
Well

Not So Well       Not At All

22. How often were you afraid for your life, believing you would be killed?

Always       Almost Always        
Sometimes

Rarely       Never

23. After your partner was violent, how often did your partner promise that they would never again be violent with you?

Always       Almost Always        
Sometimes

Rarely       Never

24. How often did you believe your partner's remorse and promises that they would not be violent again?

Always       Almost Always        
Sometimes

Rarely       Never

My Partner Never Made Promises

25. How often did your partner blame their violent actions as being your fault?

Always       Almost Always     

Sometimes

Rarely       Never

26. How often did your partner downplay the violence (say that the violence wasn't **that** bad)?

Always       Almost Always     

Sometimes

Rarely       Never

27. How often did your partner try to make it up to you after a violent episode by being overly nice (for example buying presents for you)?

Always       Almost Always     

Sometimes

Rarely       Never

28. Over the course of the relationship, did these periods of your partner being nice get:

A Whole Lot Shorter       A Lot Shorter

A Little Shorter       Stay About the

Same

Got Longer

There were no periods where my partner was overly nice.

29. During this time when your partner was being nice, how often did you attempt to make this period last even longer?

Always       Almost Always     

Sometimes

Rarely       Never

There were no periods where my partner was overly nice.

30. How many times did you leave your partner due to the violence (CHECK ONE):

Never (Still with partner)

1       2       3       4       5 or more

31. How long were you/have you been in this relationship?

years       months

32. Are you still in this relationship?

Yes       No

33. The violence **only** occurred when my partner was consuming (CHECK THE ONE THAT FITS BEST):

Alcohol       Drugs

Both Alcohol and Drugs

My partner did not use alcohol or drugs

Didn't matter, violence occurred both with and without alcohol/drugs.

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY**

APPENDIX D  
QUESTIONNAIRE CODING AND SCORING

## Questionnaire Coding and Scoring

Sex: MALE (0)                  FEMALE (1)

Education:

Less than High School (1)

High School/GED (2)

Some College (3)

College Degree (4)

Graduate School (5)

My personal income (before taxes) would fall in which of the following ranges?

\$0-\$20,000 (1)

\$20,001-\$40,000 (2)

\$40,001-\$60,000 (3)

\$60,001 or more (4)

Ethnicity (check the one which best describes you):

African-American (1)

Asian-American (2)

Native American (3)

White/Caucasian (4)

Hispanic (including Mexican-American) (5)

Other (6)

1. Have you ever been in a physically violent intimate/dating relationship or marriage?

Yes (1)                  No (2)

2. How many physically abusive relationships have you been in?

1                  2                  3                  4                  5 or more

3. For the majority of the abusive relationship(s), who initiated/began most of the abuse:

Self (0)                  Partner (1)

4. What was the sex of your partner within this physically violent relationship?

Male (0)                  Female (1)

5. Have you ever received counseling for physical abuse?

Yes (1)                  No (2)

6. Of the types of abuse listed, please check those that you have experienced.

Physical Abuse                   Emotional Abuse

Sexual Abuse                   Verbal Abuse

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**The HIGHER the score, the better the fit with the Cycle**

**Theory of Violence** (Walker, 1979).

#### **TENSION BUILDING PHASE**

7. In the abusive relationship, how often did your partner limit your activities with friends or family members?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

8. How often did your partner demand to know where you were?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

9. How often was your partner suspicious about your activities?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

10. How often was your partner jealous?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

11. People who are in physically abusive relationships sometimes experience tension. How would you describe the tension that was present?

Unbearable/Severe (5)

Almost Unbearable (4)

Medium Severe (3)

Not Very Bad (2)

There was no Tension - SKIP TO QUESTION #16. (0)

12. Which of the following types of tension have you experienced in your physically abusive relationship(s)?

**(THIS IS FOR FREQUENCY CALCULATION ONLY)**

Name Calling (1)

Screaming/Yelling (2)

Put Downs (3)

Pushing/Shoving (4)

Other (5)

I have not/do not experience tension in the abusive relationship. (0)

13. On the same below, circle the number that indicates when the tension was at its WORST:

After the Violence is Over → Right Before the  
Violence Starts Again

1            2            3            4            5

14. How often did you attempt to reduce the tension in  
order to make your partner happy at all costs, often going  
to great lengths in hopes of preventing the violence?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

15. How often did your attempts to reduce the tension  
actually delay the violence from happening?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

#### **ACUTE BATTERING INCIDENT**

16. When you feel like your partner is going to be violent  
toward you, how often do you wish they would go ahead and  
do it so it would be over with?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

17. How often do you antagonize your partner to become violent in order to go ahead and get the violence over with?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

18. How often did you feel in control of when the violence would begin?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

19. Which of the following types of violence have you experienced? (**THIS IS FOR FREQUENCY CALCULATION ONLY**)

Hitting/Punching (1)

Beating with Objects (2)

Sexual Violence (including forcing sex) (3)

Other (4)

20. Over the course of the relationship did the severity of the violence get:

A Whole Lot Worse (5)

A Lot Worse (4)

A Little Worse (3)

Stayed About The Same (2)

Better (1)

21. How well are you able to recall the details of the violence that occurred (time, place, type, etc.)?

Extremely Well (5)

Very Well (4)

Somewhat Well (3)

Not So Well (2)

Not At All (1)

22. How often were you afraid for your life, believing you would be killed?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

**HONEYMOON PHASE**

23. After your partner was violent, how often did your partner promise that they would never again be violent with you?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

24. How often did you believe your partner's remorse and promises that they would not be violent again?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

25. How often did your partner blame their violent actions as being your fault?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

26. How often did your partner downplay the violence (say that the violence wasn't **that** bad)?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

27. How often did your partner try to make it up to you after a violent episode by being overly nice (for example buying presents for you)?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

28. Over the course of the relationship, did these periods of your partner being nice get:

A Whole Lot Shorter (5)

A Lot Shorter (4)

A Little Shorter (3)

Stay About the Same (2)

Got Longer (1)

There were no periods where my partner was overly nice. (0)

29. During this time when your partner was being nice, how often did you attempt to make this period last even longer?

ALWAYS (5)

ALMOST ALWAYS (4)

SOMETIMES (3)

RARELY (2)

NEVER (1)

There were no periods where my partner was overly nice. (0)

30. How many times did you leave your partner due to the violence (CHECK ONE):

Never (Still with partner) (0)

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 or more

31. How long were you/have you been in this relationship?

\_\_\_\_\_ years                \_\_\_\_\_ months (**CODE AS NUMBER OF MONTHS**)

32. Are you still in this relationship?

Yes (1)                    No (2)

33. The violence **only** occurred when my partner was consuming (CHECK THE ONE THAT FITS BEST):

Alcohol (1)

Drugs (2)

Both Alcohol and Drugs (3)

My partner did not use alcohol or drugs (4)

Didn't matter, violence occurred both with and without alcohol/drugs. (5)

APPENDIX E  
RESOURCES FOR PARTICIPANTS

Resources for Participants

National:

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE

TTY: 1-800-787-3224

Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project

Crisis Line: 1-800-832-1901

[www.gmdvp.org](http://www.gmdvp.org)

Men Overcoming Violence (MOVE)

415-777-4496

Northern California:

Community United Against Violence

160 14<sup>th</sup> St.

San Francisco, CA 94103

24 Hour Support Line: 1-415-333-HELP

[www.cuav.org](http://www.cuav.org)

Rosalie House

San Francisco, CA 94121

Hotline/Crisis: 415-255-0165

WEAVE, Inc.

P.O. Box 161356

Sacramento, CA 95816

Hotline/Crisis: 310-370-5902

For Male Victims: 916-448-2321

WOMAN, Inc.

333 Valencia St., Suite 251

San Francisco, CA 94103

Hotline/Crisis: 415-864-4722

Central California:

Central California Pride Network

625 E. Belmont Ave.

Fresno, CA 93701

1-559-486-2216

ccpn@earthlink.net

Southern California:

D.O.V.E.S. of Big Bear Valley, Inc.

P.O. Box 3646

Big Bear Lake, CA 92315

Hotline/Crisis: 909-866-5723

Gay/Lesbian Center Stop Domestic Violence Program

1-800-799-7233

Gay and Lesbian Center - LA

1625 N. Schrader Blvd.

Los Angeles, CA

323-993-7400

laglc.org

LA Rape and Battering Hotline

213-626-3393

310-392-8381

626-793-3385