



Supporting Well-Being Among Female Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence

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Background

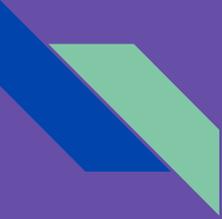


Intimate partner violence (IPV) which can include psychological, physical, and sexual abuse, involves attempts by the abuser to dominate their partner to maintain control over (Kelly & Johnson, 2008).



Background

- IPV can create barriers such as economic problems and a lack of access to necessary resources in order to meet one's basic needs (Tolman & Rosen, 2001).
- Participation in therapy (Rhoads, 2015) and empowerment programs (Garcia, Stoeber, Wang, & Yim, 2019) that meet the survivor needs can help ameliorate these barriers.
- Beyond increasing the probability of experiencing IPV, women who live in poverty and disadvantage are also more likely to be severely battered and to suffer prolonged IPV due to restricted access to economic resources (Alcalde, 2006).



Objectives

The purpose of this study is:



To investigate and explore the needs of survivors of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as well as socioeconomic disparities in needs and access to services



Methodology

Design: Qualitative -- Semi-structured interviews

Consists of a demographic sheet and open-ended questions about any issues or problems women may be facing as a result of their experience of IPV

Legal support received	Financial/employment	Health
Legal support needed	Housing	Social support

Data Collection

- Recruitment
- Transcriptions

Data Analysis

- Coding for themes, enumeration, matrices, triangulation

Participant Information

Total Participants: 19 female survivors of IPV

Age:

- $SD = 10.60$
- $M = 42.89$
- Range = 21 to 60

Ethnicity:

- 11 White
- 5 Hispanic/Latinx
- 3 Multiethnic

Experiences with IPV

- 19 experience IPV
- 18 experience physical abuse
- 17 experience sexual abuse

Socioeconomic Status:

- 9 below the poverty line
- 10 above the poverty line

Employment Status:

- 9 unemployed
- 6 part-time
- 3 full-time
- 1 did not respond

Education Level:

- 3 High school diploma
- 7 Associate's Degree
- 4 Bachelor's Degree
- 4 Master's Degree
- 1 did not respond

Results

6 Emergent Themes and Illustrative Statements

1. Struggle to Pay Bills:

“The financial expectations are tremendous when I went in the blink of an eye one night from being, you know, a stay-at-home mom, and I chose to make a decision to leave an abusive relationship, so that my boys did not witness continual abuse of their Mother [...] and now I, I just struggle constantly to pay bills that that were enforced upon me.”



Results

2. Financial Burden of Legal Fees:

“When this all started, he was fighting me for custody of the kids [...] Um, the court ordered an evaluation. A twenty thousand dollar evaluation, and I drowned in debt. I owed all of that to my attorney, um, a lot of my house payment went to that attorney, and I couldn’t afford him anymore.”



Results

3. Feeling Misunderstood in the Legal System:

“We need the [domestic violence] training for judges. That they don’t think that women are just lying about abuse to get custody.”



Results

4. Need for Access to Therapy that Specializes in Cases of DV:

“So, I was working with a professional [therapist] that was licensed but didn’t recognize some of the things that were happening to me. It wasn’t until there were crimes that there was real domestic violence. Psychological, emotional, financial abuse did not recognize that as domestic violence.”



Results

5. Help Overcoming the Effects of DV on Children:

“Um, probably the hardest thing is dealing with how to help my kids deal with the abuse. Um, so, yes, they need counseling and, um, services for the trauma for what they went through so we need help for that sort of thing. Um, that’s probably the number one. Help with services to heal my children witnessing the abuse and the trauma.”



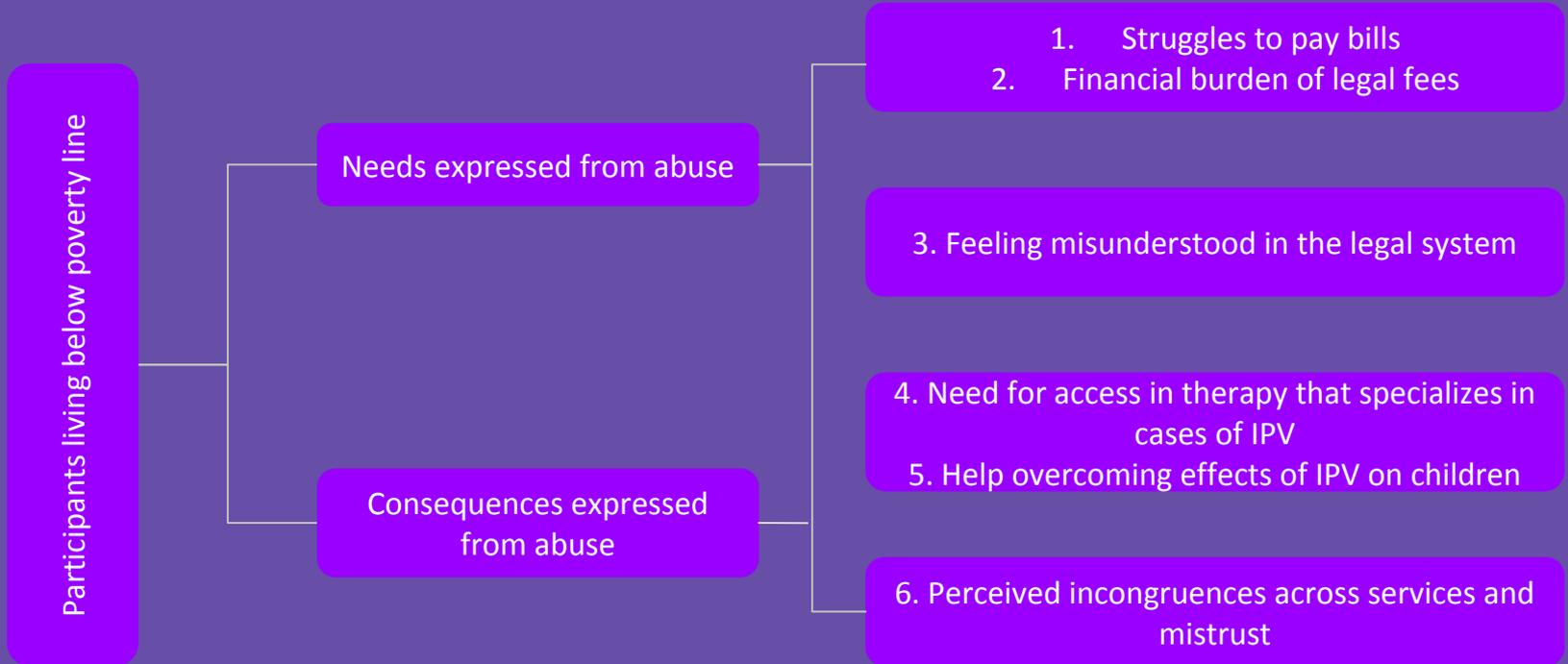
Results

6. Perceived Incongruences Across Services and Mistrust:

“I think um there’s a real disconnect between the, like the, therapeutic community and what they’ll tell you is the best way to deal with things, and then, the legal system because you can get a restraining order, but they don’t enforce it [...] I think you are almost in a worse situation if you have a restraining order because as soon as they [the abusers] find out that the police aren’t gonna enforce it, then they feel like they can do whatever they want.”



Conclusion



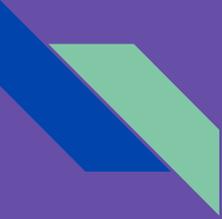


Conclusion

- These preliminary findings suggest that a holistic approach to addressing survivor needs might set the stage for a healthier recovery trajectory
- There needs to be further exploration of the experiences of victims of IPV that considers how socioeconomic differences impact distribution of resources involving race, ethnicity, and gender.
- For future research, in order to understand the role that law enforcement plays in preventing survivors from accessing social services, it is important to recognize how experiences are shaped by various layers (i.e. SES, ethnicity, immigration status).

Lessons Learned

- The importance of qualitative research in having more connection and deeper understanding of the experiences for survivors of IPV
- The importance of being empathetic and present when interacting with a survivor of intimate partner violence
- To not judge or try to change the mind of a participant who shares that they will get back with their partner who they experienced abuse from
 - Believing that each survivor has their own path and way of processing how to liberate themselves
 - Providing them with the support needed for once they are ready to get out of the abusive relationship
- The power of letting them know that they are NOT alone
- Embracing my boundaries



Questions?

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