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I, Andrea Borchers, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Research.

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Employment Maintenance among Women

Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence

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Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV), is a major public health problem in the United States, with a lifetime prevalence of nearly 1 in 3 women (Black et al., 2011). Negative outcomes of IPV affect women’s ability to attain and maintain stable employment. However, workplace formal and informal supports have been shown to be associated with a significantly reduced risk of negative outcomes for these women (Coker et al., 2002). Although IPV prevalence and its effects on employment and health are well documented, how women who have experienced IPV attain and maintain employment has not been fully explored.

The purpose of this study was to develop a theoretical framework that describes and explains the process by which women who have experienced IPV attain and maintain stable employment. Understanding this process is central to determining effective strategies to promote health and safety among this at-risk population.

Grounded theory methods based on symbolic interactionism, guided the exploration of this psycho-social process. Thirty four women who had previously experienced IPV, as well as five community members, familiar with IPV and employment, were recruited by posting flyers in community settings throughout west central Ohio, and interviewed regarding this phenomenon. Charmaz’s (2006) approach was used to analyze data gathered through these interviews. Initial, focused, axial and theoretical coding was used to develop a theoretical framework that describes and explains the process of attaining and maintaining employment.

Analysis of the transcripts suggests that women who have experienced IPV are able to attain employment; however, they have difficulty maintaining employment. Results suggest that women cannot have true job security and satisfaction while in an abusive relationship. All of the women experienced a period of time when the work itself was used as a source of control by the
partner resulting in the intertwining of work and IPV. Initially, women attempted to maintain employment while in the violent relationship. Repeated attempts were made to separate the work and the IPV. Eventually, maintaining work and the relationship became impossible because the work and IPV were not just intertwined, they were entangled. All of the women in the study described ways in which work and IPV were entangled including the perpetrator controlling her appearance, sabotaging work, interfering with work and controlling finances. Some women described ways in which they disentangled work from IPV resulting in work being under her control, affording job security and satisfaction. This unravelling of work from IPV was described as a dynamic process with periods of re-entanglement. The study provides in-depth insight into how women who have experienced IPV attain and attempt to maintain employment which can be used to guide future research and interventions.
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“Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; His love endures forever.” Psalms 107:1
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Chapter I

Background and Significance

Intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual violence, and stalking continue to be major public health problems in the United States, with nearly one in three women experiencing this violence in their lifetime (Black et al., 2011). According to the Centers for Disease Control (2012), the term intimate partner violence “describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse.” In contrast, IPV as defined by the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS, 2012) only includes physical abuse such as “rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault committed by an offender who is the victim’s current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend” (p. 8) Although the NCVS reports an overall decline in IPV from 1994 to 2010, during the period from 2001 to 2010, the overall IPV rate remained stable while the overall violent crime rate continued to decline (p. 1). Researchers have identified risk factors and negative outcomes associated with physical, sexual, and psychological harm as well as stalking by current and former intimate partners or spouses. These risk factors and negative outcomes affect women’s ability to attain and maintain stable employment.

Researchers have identified numerous risk factors for IPV. These include financial instability, lower education levels, unemployment, previous victimization, and housing instability (Cho, 2011; Rollins, et al., 2012). Women who experience IPV may have zero, one, or several of these risk factors. A college education decreases the risk for IPV (Bracken, Messing, Campbell, LaFlair, & Kub, 2010; Hayes, 2012). However, IPV occurs across all socio-economic levels and across cultures (Black et al., 2011; Cho, 2011; Kwesiga, Bell, Marshall, & Moe, 2007; Potter & Banyard, 2011).
Negative outcomes of IPV have been identified by researchers. Compared to women with no history of abuse, women with a history of intimate partner violence have a significantly increased risk of psychosocial, mental, musculoskeletal, and reproductive disorders. Specifically, women experiencing violence have an increased risk for sexually transmitted diseases, respiratory infections, gastro-esophageal reflux disease, chest pain, abdominal pain, urinary tract infections, headaches and contusions/abrasions (Bonomi, Anderson, Rivara, & Thompson, 2009; Humphreys, Cooper, & Miakowski, 2011; Sutherland, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2001). A relationship between IPV and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms in women has been well documented (Kimerling, et al., 2009; Ramos, Carlson, & McNutt, 2004; Romero, Chavkin, Wise, & Smith, 2003). Furthermore, an increased risk of substance abuse and depressive symptoms has been linked to IPV (Bonomi et al., 2009; Coker, et al., 2002; Tolman & Rosen, 2001).

Healthcare utilization and costs for women experiencing ongoing physical abuse was found to be 42% higher and for those experiencing non-physical abuse only, 33% higher than non-abused women (Bonomi, et al., 2009). In addition to health concerns and risks, cumulative IPV is known to have negative effects on economic capacity many years after the violence occurs (Lindhorst, Oxford, & Gillmore, 2007). Additionally, negative radiating effects of IPV to other relationships such as co-workers, friends and family members have also been noted by Riger, Raja, and Camacho (2003).

In general, women’s participation in the workforce has increased steadily from 33.9 percent in 1950 to 59.3 percent in 2005 with a projection of 59.4 percent in 2020 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Employment has been identified by women survivors of IPV as a crucial factor in becoming financially and personally healthy as well as one of the most important
factors in ending the abuse (Rothman, Hathaway, Stidsen, & de Vries, 2007; Strube & Barbour, 1984; Wilson, Baglioni, & Downing, 1989). Stable financial conditions have been found to decrease the risk for IPV (Keim, Strauser, & Olguin, 2009; Cho, 2012; Carlson, McNutt, Choi, & Rose, 2002), implying that efforts to improve socioeconomic situations and reducing poverty among women may reduce IPV. Wilson and colleagues (1989) found women’s employment was significantly predictive of the woman leaving the abusive relationship.

Mental health symptoms following IPV interfere with the ability of the women experiencing or who have experienced IPV to concentrate and complete work tasks. In one study, women who were employed reported the symptoms of intrusive memories, depression, and hyper-arousal was decreased when they were working (Brush, 2003). Mental and physical health has been noted to mediate the transition out of an abusive relationship as well as being successful in accessing further education and employment. Furthermore, Mascaro, Arnette, Santana, and Kaslow (2007) found depressive symptoms create vulnerability for job loss; however, the ability to gain employment despite high levels of depressive symptoms is linked to lowered depression levels over the long term.

The workplace has been identified as an important source of formal and informal supports. Workplace formal and informal supports have been shown among women experiencing IPV, to be associated with a significantly reduced risk of poor perceived mental health, physical health, anxiety symptoms, current depression, PTSD and suicide attempts (Coker et al., 2002). Receipt of workplace support is associated with current employment. Workplace support may help women to remain employed (Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2007). However, women in high wage, high status positions may resist seeking help in the face of IPV to avoid stigma and career implications related to being seen as a “victim” (Kwesiga et al., 2007). Additionally, women’s
help-seeking behaviors in the workplace and in the community vary across cultures (Lacey, Saunders, & Zang, 2011; Lee, Pomeroy, & Bohman, 2007).

Although we know that employment helps women who have experienced IPV in a number of ways, these women face significant problems in attaining and maintaining employment. Women who experienced physical assault were significantly more likely to report low or moderate employment stability in the preceding twelve months than women who did not experience IPV (Crowne et al., 2011). Riger, Staggs, and Schewe (2004) found that recent violence appeared to be linked to unstable employment. Additionally, mothers who were younger when their first child was born, women who were pregnant or recently gave birth and women whose family of origin received welfare worked fewer days (Riger, et al., 2004).

There are a number of issues affecting education and job training that contribute to difficulty attaining employment by women who have experienced IPV. Health concerns stemming from the IPV impact the woman’s ability to access and complete educational programs and job training. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms and psychological violence have been associated with unemployment across all social strata (Kimerling et al., 2009). For those women with children, the role demands of motherhood also negatively impact the woman’s ability to complete education and job training. These barriers further complicate the survivor’s ability to escape ongoing abuse by an intimate partner through employment and financial stability.

Once employed, there are numerous barriers to maintaining employment. Perpetrator interference and sabotage of work activities is a common experience among at-risk women (Alexander, 2011; Bell, 2003; Logan, Shannon, Cole, & Swanberg, 2007; Postmus, Plummer, McMahon, Murshid, & Kim, 2012; Moe & Bell, 2004; Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2005).
Banyard, Potter and Turner (2011) found that women experiencing IPV reported trouble concentrating and difficulty doing one’s best work. Health issues and perpetrator interference impacts the worker’s ability to concentrate on work tasks as well as regular punctual attendance, putting the woman at risk for poor work evaluations thus decreasing the potential for maintaining employment and career advancement. Poor work performance, tardiness, and absenteeism have been identified as employee characteristics indicating an employee may be suffering from IPV (McFarlane, et al. 2000; Reeves & O’Leary, 2007).

Although the prevalence of IPV against women and the effect on employment and health is well documented, the process by which women who have experienced IPV attain and maintain stable employment has not been fully explored. Understanding the process by which these women secure and maintain employment is central to determining the most effective strategies and collaborative community-wide efforts to promote health and safety among this population.

**Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to develop a theoretical framework that describes and explains the process by which women who have experienced IPV attain and maintain stable employment. This study explored the research question: What is the process by which women who have experienced IPV attain and maintain stable employment?

**Research Aims**

Thus, the aim of this study was to explore the common process by which women who have experienced IPV attain and maintain employment.

Specific aims of this study included:

1. Identify the basic psycho-social process of employment attainment and maintenance.
2. Determine the critical junctures in the process of attaining and maintaining employment.

3. Determine the social, structural, cultural, economic and healthcare institutional barriers and facilitators related to employment attainment and maintenance.

4. Development of a typology of common trajectories of employment attainment and maintenance among women who have experienced IPV.

The following chapters in this dissertation document include a review of the current literature, an overview of methods used, the findings of this study, a comparison of the findings of this study to current literature, and a discussion of limitations and recommendations for future research. The review of current literature found in Chapter II includes current knowledge of the phenomenon of IPV and employment attainment and maintenance. The literature review reveals the gap in knowledge related to the lack of understanding of the process by which women who have experienced IPV attain and maintain stable employment. The methods section in Chapter III includes the grounded theory method as the best approach to address this gap in knowledge. The findings of this study in Chapter IV are presented to explain and describe this process. Finally, a comparison of findings, limitations of this study and recommendations for future research are discussed in Chapter V.
Chapter II
Review of the Literature

A review of the current state of knowledge about attaining and maintaining employment among women who have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) was conducted. Databases searched were CINAHL, MedLine, PsychINFO, and Scopus. The key words “intimate partner violence,” “employment,” and “women” were used in combination to search for literature published from 1967 to the present. Researchers conducted seventy-six studies in the United States, providing information related to women’s employment and IPV. Each of the seventy-six articles was reviewed to identify its relevance to attaining and maintaining employment among women with a history of IPV. Twenty-six of the studies included unemployment as a risk factor for IPV. Additionally, researchers in these twenty-six studies explored unemployment and IPV as well as other psycho-social variables as risk factors for adverse health outcomes among women such as HIV diagnosis, mental health diagnoses, chronic pain, and adverse pregnancy outcomes. Investigators in these twenty-six studies did not include findings specifically related to women attaining or maintaining employment. A total of thirty-eight quantitative studies, eight qualitative studies, and four mixed-method studies with findings related to the topic were identified. A critical analysis of the purpose and research methods in these studies will be presented.

Quantitative Research Studies

Thirty-eight quantitative studies were identified with findings related to women, IPV and employment (Adams, Bybee, Tolman, Sullivan, & Kennedy, 2013; Adams, Tolman, Bybee, Sullivan, & Kennedy, 2013; Alexander, 2011; Allen, Bybee, & Sullivan, 2004; Babcock, & DePrince, 2013; Banyard, et al., 2011; Brown, Salomon, & Bassuk, 1999; Brush, 2000; Brush,

**Purpose of Studies.** The purposes of these studies were as follows. Researchers in eight of the studies explored the effects of intimate partner violence on poor women transitioning to work during welfare reform (Browne, Salomon, & Bassuk, 1999; Brush, 2000; Brush, 2003; Lindhorst, et al., 2007; Meisel, et al., 2003; Riger, et al., 2004; Staggs, et al., 2007; Tolman & Rosen, 2001). Research groups in four of the studies explored the impact of IPV on employment (Crowne, et al., 2011; Lloyd & Taluc, 1999; Postmus, et al., 2012; Potter & Banyard, 2011). Other investigators explored the role of employment as social support and a coping strategy (Carlson, et al., 2002; Coker, et al., 2002; Sabina & Tindale, 2008; Swanberg, et al., 2007; Yragui, et al., 2012). Researchers in three of the studies examined the effects of the specific ways the workplace offers support to women experiencing IPV (McFarlane, et al., 2000; Perrin, et al., 2011; Pollack, et al., 2010). Investigators in other studies explored the effects of IPV on the workplace including the effect on employee work performance (Alexander, 2011; Hayes, 2012; Reeves & O’Leary, 2007; Rothman, & Corso, 2008; Swanberg & Macke, 2006; Tiesman, et al.,
Three research groups explored the needs of women survivors including life skills, career counseling and resources to meet basic survival needs (Allen, et al., 2004; Davidson, et al., 2012; Gorde, Helfrich, & Finlayson, 2004). Several research groups included the impact of intimate partner violence on women’s mental and physical health and employment (Adams, et al., 2013; Adams, et al., 2013; Babcock & DePrince, 2013; Banyard, et al., 2011; Kaukinen, et al., 2013; Kimerling, et al., 2009; LaFlair, et al., 2012; Nurius, et al., 2003). Researchers in three studies examined the role of women’s ethnicity on the prevalence and effects of IPV on employment (Cho, 2012; Honeycutt, et al., 2001; Lacey, et al., 2011).

**Methodology.** Researchers in the thirty-eight quantitative studies used either longitudinal or cross-sectional designs. Four of the research groups conducted longitudinal studies (Browne, et al., 1999; Crowne, et al., 2011; LaFlair, et al., 2012; Lindhorst, et al., 2007) with all participants identified as having low-income. Browne and colleagues (1999) explored the impact of IPV on extremely poor women’s ability to maintain work for six months or more. Crowne, et al., (2011) explored the long term impact of IPV on employment among participants in a randomized trial of a home-visiting family support program in Hawaii. Data were collected when children in the family were one to three years old and again when the children were seven to nine years old. LaFlair and colleagues (2012) examined data collected at six month intervals over two years to determine the longitudinal influence of IPV on depressive symptoms among a sample of healthcare workers. Lindhorst and colleagues (2007) explored longitudinal effects of IPV on employment and welfare among a group of participants who were initially recruited as unmarried pregnant teenagers (under age 17) in 1988, and followed for thirteen years during the course of welfare reform. In summary, researchers conducting the four longitudinal studies varied in study
timeframe, examining data over six months, two years, eight years and thirteen years respectively.

Other researchers collected data from participants using a cross-sectional design. Two groups of investigators explored comparative data related to specific ethnic groups and employment from a large data set of two national studies. Lacey and colleagues (2011), examined data from The National Violence Against Women Study (1998). Cho (2012) explored data from the Collaborative Psychiatric Epidemiology Survey (2004). Women who participated in these studies were of varied financial and employment status. These two studies focused on comparisons among race and ethnicity, factors associated with IPV and leaving a violent relationship.

**Participants and Settings.** Investigators in thirty-eight studies recruited participants from a variety of settings including participants: (a) randomly selected from a specific geographical region; (b) receiving community social and financial services; (c) seeking protection orders through the court system; (d) working in specific workplaces; (d) accessing healthcare in a primary care setting and; (d) professionals working with women in the community and in the workplace.

Random community sampling with a resultant large sample size was used in two studies in New Hampshire (n=1079) (Banyard, et al., 2011; Potter & Banyard, 2011) and one in California (n=6698)( Kimerling, et al., 2009). One community sample included thirty-two women who had been employed within the past two years (Swanberg, et al., 2005). Researchers in one other study used a nationally representative data set to examine help-seeking behavior (Kaukinen, et al., 2013).
Investigators in eighteen studies specifically recruited participants who were receiving welfare or who were identified as having low income and receiving social services (Adams, et al., 2013; Adams, et al., 2013; Alexander, 2011; Allen, et al., 2004; Browne et al., 1999; Brush, 2000; Brush, 2003; Crowne, et al., 2011; Honeycutt, et al., 2001; Lindhorst, et al., 2007; Lloyd & Taluc, 1999; Meisel, et al., 2003; Perrin, et al., 2011; Riger, et al., 2004; Sabina & Tindale, 2008; Staggs, et al., 2007; Tolman & Rosen, 2001; Yragui, et al., 2012).

Six research groups surveyed women who were recruited for the study after they submitted a request for protection orders through the court system (Babcock & DePrince, 2013; Hayes, 2012; McFarlane et al., 2000; Nurius, et al., 2003; Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2006; Swanberg, et al., 2007). Socioeconomic and employment status among these women varied.

Additionally, researchers in two studies examined financial implications of IPV among women participating in a specific educational curriculum focusing on career advancement and economic self-sufficiency (Davidson, et al., 2012; Postmus, et al., 2012). Davidson and colleagues (2012) examined the effects of a five-week career group counseling intervention on anxiety and depression among women participants.

Three investigator groups recruited working participants within specific workplaces (LaFlair, et al., 2012; Reeves & O’Leary, 2007; Swanberg & Macke, 2006). LaFlair and colleagues recruited a large sample (n=1438) of female healthcare workers to explore depressive symptoms resulting from IPV. Reeves and O’Leary (2007) implemented a web-based survey among female (n=1550) and male (n=823) employees in three midsized organizations to examine productivity and costs affecting the employer related to IPV. With a small sample (n=34), Swanberg and Macke (2006) collected data related to employee work performance, disclosure of IPV, workplace supports and effects of supports on employment outcomes.
Researchers in two studies explored social support among women accessing healthcare in a primary care setting (Carlson, et al., 2002; Coker, et al., 2002). Researchers in both studies included employment as one aspect of social support providing protection against the negative health effects associated with IPV. Coker and colleagues (2002) surveyed a large sample (n=1152) recruited from family practice clinics from 1997 to 1999. Carlson and colleagues (2002), included employment as a social support and protective factor among five hundred and fifty seven women accessing primary care services in two clinics serving urban, ethnically and economically diverse populations. One research group recruited employee assistance program (EAP) professionals to explore the impact of EAPs on IPV (Pollack, et al., 2010).

Qualitative Research Studies

**Purpose of Studies.** Eight qualitative studies were identified with findings related to women, intimate partner violence and employment (Bell, 2003; Galvex, Mankowski, McGlade, Ruiz, & Glass, 2011; Levin, 2001; McDonald & Dickerson, 2013; Moe & Bell, 2004; Riger, et al., 2002; Rothman, et al., 2007; Wettersten, et al., 2004). The purposes of these studies were as follows. Researchers in three of the studies explored how IPV impacts the working lives of women including employability and factors contributing to cycling in and out of work (Bell, 2003; Moe & Bell, 2004; Wettersten et al., 2004). Investigators in three studies examined the ways perpetrators interfere with women’s employment including the radiating effects of IPV carried out in the workplace (Galvez, Mankowski, McGlade, Ruiz, & Glass, 2011; Riger, et al., 2002; Swanberg & Logan, 2005). McDonald, and Dickerson (2013) explored the common meanings a history of violence has for women out of abusive and violent relationships for five or more years, including the role of employment in becoming self-sufficient. Rothman and colleagues (2007) explored ways in which employment is helpful to survivors of IPV. Levin
(2001) surveyed caseworkers working with families receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to determine the effectiveness of an on-site program for victims of IPV being placed in work activities.

**Participants and Settings.** Investigators conducting the eight qualitative studies recruited women, male batterers and TANF caseworkers to explore IPV and women’s employment, from several different settings. Researchers included participants: (a) with a history of living in a domestic violence shelter; (b) with a history of receiving TANF benefits; (c) employed by a large healthcare organization; (d) who were employed male batterers and (e) who were TANF caseworkers. Galvez and colleagues (2011) and Levin (2001) used focus groups of four to nine participants. McDonald and Dickerson (2013) completed interviews with twenty-one women recruited through a list serve and a clinic system. Rothman and colleagues (2007) interviewed twenty-one women employed for at least nine years in a large healthcare organization. Investigators in two of the studies used four focus groups to explore interference tactics of male perpetrators (Galvez, et al., 2011) and the perspectives of TANF caseworkers to determine program effectiveness (Levin, 2001).

**Mixed Methods Studies**

**Purpose of Studies.** Four mixed-methods studies were identified with findings related to women, intimate partner violence and employment (Gorde, et al., 2004; Logan, et al., 2007; Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Yoshihama, Hammock, & Horrocks, 2006). The purposes of these studies were as follows. Two research groups explored partner stalking and other interference tactics toward employed women and the women’s responses to the interference (Logan, et al., 2007; Swanberg & Logan, 2005). One group of investigators explored whether IPV leads women to turn to welfare for assistance as well as the effect of physical and mental health concerns as a
result of cumulative IPV, on women’s employment status (Yoshihama, et al., 2006). Life skill needs of victims of IPV were explored by researchers highlighting the lack of skills to become self-sufficient as the main reason for the inability to attain and maintain employment. Victims repeatedly attempted to leave the abusive relationship, however financial dependence on the perpetrators trapped the women in a cycle of abuse and unemployment (Gorde, et al., 2004).

**Participants and Settings.** Researchers conducting the four mixed methods used convenience sampling, recruiting within community programs, a sheltered population, a community sample of women living in rural and urban areas, and a group who sought protective orders through the court system. A majority of the women in two of the studies were Caucasian and had some work experience (Logan, et al., 2007; Swanberg & Logan, 2005). Gorde and colleagues (2004) and Yoshihama and colleagues (2006) conducted research with primarily African American participants. The population in both studies reported PTSD and other health symptoms related to the IPV that affected their ability to attain employment.

**Summary.** In summary, researchers primarily completed studies using quantitative methods using a cross-sectional design and convenience samples. Researchers conducted studies in several regions across the US including: New Hampshire, Texas, Hawaii, California, North Dakota, Michigan, Illinois, and Kentucky. Sample sizes varied across studies, ranging from large community samples describing the extent of IPV in a particular state, to a small sample of participants living in a specific sheltered environment. The ethnic origin of participants across studies included, Caucasian, African American, Latino, Asian American Pacific Islander and Native Americans. Additionally, investigators recruited participants from a variety of settings including, random telephone interviews, social service agencies, domestic violence shelters, the workplace, community programs, the court system, primary healthcare system, and professionals
working with women affected by IPV. This suggests that women who have experienced IPV seek assistance at several different entry points. The random telephone survey conducted by researchers in New Hampshire (Banyard, et al., 2011), suggests that there are a number of women experiencing IPV who may not enter a structured social system for support. Although IPV is known to occur among women across the socioeconomic spectrum, investigators conducting a majority of the studies reviewed, focused primarily on participants from low income families.

**Review of Findings**

Researchers in the fifty studies reviewed describe the factors that influence women’s experiences of IPV and employment. Findings were clustered in four categories. These include findings related to: (a) IPV and women attaining employment; (b) IPV and women maintaining employment; (c) the impact of employment on women who have experienced IPV and; (d) the impact of IPV on employers. These previous studies revealed factors influencing the attainment and maintenance of employment, the impact on the women who experienced IPV and the impact on the employers. Although, factors were identified, researchers in previous studies did not explore the process by which women attain and maintain stable employment. In general, this study examined and explained this process by which women who experienced IPV attained and maintained stable employment from the perspective of women who lived this experience.

Findings will be synthesized across studies. Limitations will be discussed at the conclusion of the review of findings. Gaps in the literature will be presented following the review of findings.
IPV and Women Attaining Employment

Eight groups of investigators explored factors associated with IPV and attaining employment (Allen, et al., 2004; Alexander, 2011; Brush, 2000; Davidson, et al., 2012; Gorde, et al., 2004; Honeycutt, et al., 2001; Levin, 2001; Lloyd & Taluc, 1999). These factors include health concerns, lack of resources to meet basic needs, poor collaboration among social service agencies, and lack of education and past history of abuse. Lloyd and Taluc (1999) found that women who experienced IPV were more likely to have been unemployed, be welfare recipients and to suffer health problems than women with no history of IPV. For women in welfare to work transition programs, IPV made a difference in whether the woman dropped out of the program. Alexander (2011) found that women who were told by the perpetrator that their duty is to motherhood were especially vulnerable to dropping out.

Health concerns, especially PTSD symptoms, were cited as factors negatively associated with women benefitting from life skill programs, completing job training, participating in employment seeking activities, and actively accessing community resources (Brush, 2000; Davidson, et al., 2012; Gorde, et al., 2004). Allen, et al., (2004) found that 77% of the women receiving family-centered advocacy identified healthcare as a need for women with children, and 67% indicated they needed to address childcare and child health related issues. Furthermore, Levin (2001) found that poor organizational communication among case managers and domestic violence advocates led to few referrals, decreasing access to services designed to facilitate the attainment of employment by women experiencing IPV.

Two groups of investigators found ethnic differences contributing to underemployment among women experiencing IPV. Alexander (2011) suggested that minority women were less likely to be employed due to less education and racial discrimination, while non-Hispanic White
women with a history of child sexual abuse and IPV were less likely to seek and attain employment. Differences related to employment and recent IPV among African Americans, European Americans and Mexican Americans were found by Honeycutt and colleagues (2001). Victimization had less effect on African American women’s employment. However, current IPV had a negative impact on Mexican American and European American women’s employment (Honeycutt, et al., 2001).

**IPV and Women Maintaining Employment**

Factors associated with the ability of women who have experienced IPV to maintain employment and establish economic self-sufficiency were explored by several groups of investigators (Adams, et al., 2013; Adams, et al., 2013; Bell, 2003; Browne, et al., 1999; Crowne, et al., 2011; Galvez, et al., & Glass, 2011; Hayes, 2012; Kimerling, et al., 2009; Lindhorst, et al., 2007; Logan, et al., 2007; Meisel, et al., 2003; Moe & Bell, 2004; Nurius, et al., 2003; Postmus, et al., 2012; Potter & Banyard, 2011; Riger, et al., 2004; Sabina & Tindale, 2008; Staggs, et al., 2007; Swanberg, et al., 2006; Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Swanberg, et al., 2007; Tolman & Rosen, 2001; Wettersten, et al., 2004; Yoshihama, et al., 2006; Yragui, et al., 2012). These factors include physical and psychological health concerns, current IPV, social support, workplace support, perpetrator interference, and economic abuse.

Researchers found that recent victims of IPV have higher rates of physical health concerns and psychiatric disorders, including depression, generalized anxiety disorder, PTSD, drug dependence, and alcohol dependence than women who never experienced IPV (Nurius et al., 2003; Tolman & Rosen, 2001; Yoshihama, et al., 2006). The presence of psychiatric symptoms related to PTSD, was found by Kimerling and colleagues (2009) to be associated with unemployment. Additionally, health concerns, especially psychiatric symptoms related to
depression and PTSD affect the use of healthy coping strategies (Nurius, et al., 2003; Sabina & Tindale, 2008). Healthy coping strategies are essential for women to maintain consistent employment despite the unpredictable behavior of the perpetrator. Psychological distress experienced by women in an abusive relationship was found by Lindhorst and colleagues (2007) to be associated with the inability to attain and maintain unemployment over the thirteen year longitudinal study of teens before and after welfare reform.

Women reporting recent and not past IPV were found to have a decreased ability to maintain employment (Browne, et al., 1999; Crowne, et al., 2011; Riger, et al., 2004). Recent IPV as well as multiple types of victimization in women’s lives were found by Potter and colleagues (2011) among working women across all income levels. These findings suggest that victimization and employment instability may occur among working women in all career fields and employment situations.

Investigators found that women who disclosed IPV to others in the workplace were most likely to receive informal and formal supports. This workplace support from co-workers, supervisors and formal employee assistance programs has been found to increase women’s ability to maintain employment (Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Swanberg, et al., 2006; Swanberg, et al., 2007; Yragui, et al., 2012). Workplace support is essential to maintaining employment because IPV is carried over into the workplace environment. Additionally, workplace support is essential because violence in the form of homicide has been identified in the workplace. Thirty-three percent of workplace homicides against US women were perpetrated by an intimate partner (Tiesman, et al., 2012).

Interference tactics used by perpetrators of IPV to attempt to control women interfere with women’s ability to maintain employment through direct verbal harassment during the
workday, manipulating resources such as child support and childcare, stalking behaviors, and intimidating co-workers and friends (Bell, 2003; Galvez et al., 2011; Hayes, 2012; Logan, et al., 2007; Moe & Bell, 2004). Interference tactics were used by perpetrators against women across all socioeconomic levels. Women reported that interference and harassment by perpetrators caused problems in the workplace that led to women losing their jobs. Additionally, for some women, employment triggered an increase in violence (Moe & Bell, 2004). Although specific individual instances of work interference by perpetrators have been described, Bell (2003) described a cycling of abuse related to women cycling in and out of welfare receipt.

Furthermore, economic self-sufficiency among women attempting to maintain employment is sabotaged by perpetrators through economic abuse and exploitation. Economic abuse is the use of threats and violence by a perpetrator to establish power and control, forcing women to be financially dependent on the perpetrator (Postmus, et al., 2012). These findings indicate that a dynamic process with unpredictable behavior by perpetrators requires on-going negotiating by women within the home and work setting to maintain employment.

**Impact of Employment on Women Who Have Experienced IPV**

The impact of employment on women who have experienced IPV has been found by investigators to increase abuse, decrease abuse, decrease mental health symptoms related to PTSD and increase self-sufficiency (Babcock & DePrince, 2013; Brush, 2003; Carlson, et al., 2002; Cho, 2012; Coker, et al., 2002; Kaukinen, et al., 2013; Lacey, et al., 2011; McDonald & Dickerson, 2013; Perrin, et al., 2011; Pollack, et al., 2009; Rothman, et al., 2007). Although women receiving public assistance reported an increase in abusive behaviors by perpetrators, women perceiving themselves as financially secure reported less victimization (Cho, 2012). Investigators found that employment is a source of social support that protects against the
negative effects on mental health by providing a place of peace and respite from abuse (Coker, et al., 2002; Rothman, et al., 2007). Women’s use of supports in the workplace ranges from limited informal support to use of all formal and informal supports available (Perrin, et al., & Glass, 2011). Employee assistance program personnel reported a mixed response to IPV among employees, often addressing psychiatric symptoms related to substance use related to IPV (Pollack, et al., 2010). Lacey and colleagues (2011) found some evidence of racial differences between women of color and White women related to economic status and leaving an abusive relationship. Women of color with higher socioeconomic status were less likely to leave the abusive relationship. The mixed results reported by investigators suggests a variety of processes used by women to attempt to maintain employment, become economically self-sufficient, effectively care for dependent children, and survive IPV.

**Impact of IPV on Employers**

Although IPV spills over into the workplace in the form of work interference by perpetrators and stalking behaviors, IPV also impacts employers through decreased employee productivity, decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism and difficulty concentrating among employees experiencing IPV (Banyard, et al., 2011; McFarlane, et al., 2000; Reeves & O’Leary, 2007; Swanberg & Macke, 2006). Mental health symptoms related to PTSD and depression suffered by women as a result of IPV, interfere with concentration at work, while physical injuries suffered by women affect attendance (Banyard, et al., 2011; LaFlair, et al., 2012). Additionally, radiating effects on other personnel in the workplace have been reported by Riger and colleagues (2002). Costs of IPV for work organizations are impacted by the increase in healthcare needs of victims as well as lost productivity and absenteeism (Reeves & O’Leary, 2007). These negative outcomes for employers may impact women’s ability to attain and
maintain employment due to employers’ focus on profitability and ensuring the overall well-being and productivity of all employees. A decrease in women’s productivity and absenteeism negatively affects her evaluation resulting in job loss. Additionally, poor evaluations lead to her inability to make progress toward increased compensation and potential for career progression. Poor work evaluations also affect the woman in the form of negative references when she attempts to attain other employment.

**Limitations**

Several limitations noted in the literature reviewed will be discussed in this section. Researchers used a cross-sectional design and convenience sampling for most of the studies reviewed. Recruitment was conducted by researchers in a majority of the studies at specific entry points for services established for women experiencing IPV or financial assistance, rather than a community sample. This approach limited the sampling by researchers to those women actively seeking services. Participants were recruited from rural, urban and suburban areas; however, the majority of participants across studies were from urban areas. Community sampling enables the recruitment of participants from diverse socio-economic status, women who are at different phases of a relationship with the perpetrator as well as women who have not accessed formal support services.

**Summary of Findings**

In summary, IPV negatively affects women’s health and ability to attain and maintain employment. The literature indicates women following different paths of employment maintenance such as women who attain and maintain stable employment for two years or longer, women who attain employment and maintain for less than six months and women who cycle in and out of employment. Additionally, IPV has radiating effects on those with whom the woman
interacts at home and in the workplace. Women’s health concerns impact productivity resulting in a negative effect on the employer. Perpetrators of IPV use stalking behaviors as well as physical violence to exert control over the woman attempting to work, interfering with her ability to maintain employment.

However, employment has been found to have a positive effect on women’s health and self-sufficiency. Psychological symptoms associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and anxiety disorders reportedly decrease for women when they are at work. Attaining and maintaining employment involves an evolving, dynamic process requiring women who have experienced IPV to access and negotiate informal and formal support systems. These supports may impede or facilitate the process and include relationships with family and friends, social service agencies, healthcare organizations, employers, financial systems, residential shelters, the criminal justice system and the legal system. Women who have experienced IPV seek assistance through a variety of support systems and at various points within the violent relationship. Women with children report the need to include the perpetrator in this negotiation process, expressing difficulty in leaving the relationship due to dependency on the perpetrator for childcare and financial support. Additionally, differences in help-seeking activities have been identified among women of different ethnicities and among women in different socioeconomic levels.

**Gaps in Current Research**

The literature review reveals that the current body of knowledge related to the process by which women who have experienced IPV attain and maintain employment is limited. An understanding of this process, including the barriers and facilitators and critical junctures in the process, need to be delineated through research from the perspective of those women, across all
socioeconomic levels, who have experienced this phenomenon. Researchers conducting previous studies described how IPV negatively affects women’s health and ability to attain and maintain employment. Additionally, previous studies found that IPV has radiating effects on those with whom the woman interacts at home and in the workplace. Employment has been found to have a positive effect on women’s health and self-sufficiency. Previous studies identified and described factors contributing to the challenges women face in attaining and obtaining employment, however; the dynamic, interactive process has not been explored in depth. By collecting narratives through grounded theory research, from those women who have experienced IPV and lived through the process of attaining and maintaining employment, further understanding of this process was established. This understanding will further guide persons in the health and social service professions to support women’s health, sustainability of employment and prevention of further intimate partner violence and its effects on future generations.

Although it is known that IPV affects women’s ability to attain and maintain employment, the process by which women negotiate and solve this complex issue over time has not been explored in depth. Chapter III describes the methods by which this process was explored from the perspective of the women experiencing this phenomenon, through a grounded theory approach.
Chapter III

Overview of Methods

Qualitative, grounded theory methods were used to develop a theoretical framework that describes and explains the process by which women who have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) attain and maintain stable employment. The research addressed the research question: What is the process by which women who have experienced intimate partner violence attain and maintain stable employment? The specific aims of this study were:

1. To identify the basic psycho-social process of employment attainment and maintenance;
2. To determine the critical junctures in the process of attaining and maintaining employment;
3. To determine the social, structural, cultural, economic and healthcare institutional barriers and facilitators related to employment attainment and maintenance; and
4. To develop a typology of common trajectories of employment attainment and maintenance among women who have experienced IPV.

Grounded Theory Method

A qualitative grounded theory approach was used to answer the research question. Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe grounded theory as “the discovery of theory from data” (p. 1). According to Glaser (1978), the goal of grounded theory is to “generate a theory that accounts for a pattern of behavior which is relevant and problematic for those involved” (Glaser, 1978, p. 93). Women experiencing IPV and attempting to attain and maintain employment, interact and negotiate with others within their individual, unique environment to improve their quality of life. Additionally, Strauss viewed humans as active participants in the dynamic process
of their lives (Charmaz, 2006). Glaser and Strauss shared an interest in studying social processes resulting in a description of the process in new theoretical terms through a grounded theory research approach (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theorists attempt to move beyond description toward identifying key concepts and relationships among them (Wuest, 2007). Additionally, grounded theories are useful explanatory theories of behavior within a specific social context (Wuest, 2007).

The underlying assumptions of grounded theory as addressed by Strauss (1987) give credence to grounded theory as the method most suited to explore this social problem. These assumptions are: (a) change is a characteristic of social life that needs to be addressed through the exploration of social interaction and social process and (b) interaction, process, and change are best understood from the perspective of the person living the experience (Strauss, 1987).

**Philosophical Underpinnings**

Wuest (2007) suggests that symbolic interactionism and pragmatism inform the underlying assumptions of grounded theory. Blumer (1969) identifies three assumptions of symbolic interactionism that are consistent with grounded theory as the best method to address the research question: (a) people’s actions are based on the meanings they have toward people and issues they face; (b) meanings are based on interactions with others; and (c) people’s meanings change through the interpretive process used to manage their social worlds. Pragmatism is a theoretical perspective that highlights the practicality and usefulness of a process with a goal of the process being transformative (Seigfried, 1998). According to Seigfried, “Pragmatic reflection begins with experience as an interactive process involving individuals and their social and natural environment”(p. 51).
Charmaz (2006) describes grounded theory as a “way to learn about the worlds we study” (p. 10). Charmaz’s (2006) approach assumes that the researcher is a part of the world studied and the data collected. Building on Glaser and Strauss’s work, Charmaz’s (2006) view emerged that grounded theories are constructed through “past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices” (p. 10).

Attaining and maintaining employment by women who have experienced IPV is a dynamic psycho-social process requiring women to negotiate support systems and make daily decisions while interacting with family members and work associates. This process has not been explored in-depth in previous studies. The underlying assumptions and philosophical underpinnings of grounded theory form the basis for discovering a social process as lived and described by the participants themselves. Therefore, a grounded theory approach was chosen to explore the research question: What is the process by which women who have experienced intimate partner violence attain and maintain stable employment?

**Study Methods**

This section describes the methods that were used to answer the research question. Procedures for sampling and data collection are discussed first, followed by methods for data analysis and establishment of trustworthiness.

**Sampling.** Community sampling was used for this study (Martsolf, Courey, Chapman, Draucker, & Mims, 2006). Inclusion criteria were: (a) women who had experienced IPV during their adult lifetime; (b) women who had obtained employment and; (c) women age eighteen and older. These women were recruited from communities representing urban, suburban and rural regions in West Central Ohio. Exclusion criteria for this study included; (a) women currently at risk for immediate danger if participation in the study were known; (b) women who had never
been hired or employed. Theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2006) was also implemented to allow for data collection to be informed by the emerging theory.

Community assessments, using the Community Assessment and Walk Through Guide (Appendix A) developed by Martsolf (2006) and colleagues, were conducted on each of the targeted communities in Montgomery County, Ohio. Community assessments of the areas within Montgomery County targeted for this study included windshield surveys to obtain a general overview of the socioeconomics of each community. Montgomery County, Ohio has an estimated population of 535,846 living in urban, rural and suburban communities, with 74.4% Caucasian, 21% African American and 4.6% other ethnicities. 16.8% of the population in the county earns a household income below the poverty line, with a median household income of $43,895 (Montgomery County Demographic Information, 2014).

This information was used to determine the best place to post flyers to recruit a diverse group of participants. Additionally, a walk-through survey was conducted to assess the services available, recruitment sites, interview sites and to interact with community members. Targeted communities included: (a) Brookville; (b) Englewood; (c) Huber Heights; (d) Riverside; (e) East Dayton; (f) West Dayton; (g) Trotwood; (h) Germantown; (i) Miamisburg; (k) West Carrolton; (l) Kettering and; (m) Centerville.

Based on the literature reviewed, three trajectories for employment maintenance among women who had experienced IPV were anticipated: (a) women who are hired and maintain employment for less than six months; (b) women who are hired and maintain employment for at least two years and; (c) women who are hired and cycle in and out of employment over the course of their potential income-producing years. Thomson (2011) found the average sample size in one hundred grounded theory studies was thirty participants and suggested that more
complex phenomena similar to this study, with the potential for three trajectories, need more participants. Due to the this complex phenomena, it was estimated that forty women who had personal experience with IPV as well as five community members who were not personal survivors of IPV but did have knowledge of the phenomenon, were needed to produce data representative of the phenomenon and to address the research question. Participant survivors of IPV were asked to identify two employers and one friend as community participants for the study. One women’s shelter caseworker and one person from the criminal justice system with professional experience with IPV were recruited by telephone by this researcher.

**Procedures for data collection.** Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the University of Cincinnati Institutional Review Board (Appendix B). Participants for the study were recruited by posting flyers across the communities in gathering places determined through the community surveys to most likely be frequented by women (Appendix C). These gathering places included public libraries, restaurants, church and religious organizations, and college campuses. Flyers included a toll-free telephone number on a slip of paper attached to the flyer that potential participants could tear off and take with them. The flyer identified the inclusion criteria and a statement that $35 was offered to compensate for time and travel (Appendix C). Potential participants were instructed to call the toll-free number and leave their name and contact information after listening to the telephone message (Appendix D). The researcher contacted the potential participant to determine that they met the study criteria. The screening interview and distress protocol developed by Draucker, Martsolf and Poole (2009) was completed to determine potential participant’s current risk of danger if participation in the study were known (Appendix E).
Data were collected in one-on-one interviews during the field period of June 25, 2013 to April 2, 2014. One interview site in each community was identified. Sites included libraries with private meeting rooms, healthcare facilities, women’s domestic violence shelters, local domestic violence advocacy center and college campus buildings that were accessible by public transportation. Participants were asked to choose an interview location from a list of researcher identified sites. Prior to beginning the interviews, participants were asked to read and sign a consent form to participate in the study (Appendix F). Each participant was also asked to complete a demographic form (Appendix G).

Each interview was audiotaped. Participants were asked to share their story related to IPV and attaining and maintaining stable employment. Open-ended questions and prompts were used to elicit in-depth interview data (Appendix H). If, during the course of the interview a participant exhibited distress or safety concerns, the Research Interview and Distress Protocol developed by Draucker and colleagues (2009) was followed (Appendix I). At the conclusion of the interview, participants were debriefed by asking if the interview was upsetting. Further assessment related to desire to harm self or others was conducted. If participants reported no undue distress, they were offered contact information for local mental health and community resources that could provide assistance (Appendix J). One participant reported distress related to impending retirement and an upcoming surgery, and a referral to Crisis Care of Montgomery County (Appendix K) was made for further assessment. Participants were asked if they would like to receive any correspondence relating to findings. If so, contact information was collected (Appendix L).

**Data analysis.** Transcripts of each interview were uploaded to qualitative data analysis software, NVIVO on the University of Cincinnati College of Nursing’s, research-compliant
share drive. A team of four members, including two researchers with experience with qualitative data analysis and one undergraduate nursing student conducted the data analysis during weekly research team meetings. Charmaz’s (2006) approach was used to conduct analysis of data starting with data from the first interview. The process of analysis began with initial coding, consisting of the study of words, lines, segments and incidents of the first transcript. During coding, segments of data were categorized with a short name, accounting for each piece of data. Researchers used the codes, to sort and separate data to start analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Members of the research team reviewed the first five transcripts individually, identifying the most descriptive codes. The list was presented at the research team meeting and compared with other research team members’ list. The most useful initial codes were then selected and tested against other data in a process known as focused coding. Categories and subcategories were identified and used to sort subsequent interview data. Throughout the process the research team used constant comparison to compare data with other data and then data with codes within and across transcripts. Approximately two interviews were conducted and transcribed per week allowing the research team to conduct on-going constant comparison of data. Constant comparison was used throughout the analytic process starting with initial coding to establish analytic distinctions and gain awareness of concepts emerging from the data (Charmaz, 2006).

Axial coding was then employed, relating categories to subcategories and reassembling data that were broken up during initial coding to convert text into concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). According to Strauss and Corbin, (1998) axial coding answers questions such as who, what, when, where, why, how and with what consequences.

Theoretical coding was used to move the analysis in a theoretical direction. Theoretical codes specified potential relationships between categories, identified during focused coding
(Charmaz, 2006). Memos were written throughout the research process to capture comparisons and connections among concepts and determined directions to pursue for further analysis. The interviews were conducted weekly, in between the time when the research team met to discuss emerging concepts. This allowed the researcher to more deeply explore the identified concepts through participants’ stories during subsequent interviews, to reach theoretical saturation for emerging concepts.

**Evaluation criteria.** Lincoln and Guba’ (1985) criteria for establishing trustworthiness were used to evaluate the scientific rigor of this research. Trustworthiness was established through four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Specific actions that were taken to establish trustworthiness in this study are discussed in the section below.

Credibility is related to the extent that research findings reflect accurate depictions of the phenomenon. Credibility was ensured in this study through a prolonged and in-depth review of the extensive data collected through interviews with thirty-nine participants. Analysis was conducted by a team including the principal investigator, the dissertation committee chairperson and a nursing faculty member with experience using qualitative research methods as well as an undergraduate nursing student. Discussions and analysis began after the first interview was conducted.

Rich descriptions obtained from a large number of participants supported the potential for transferability of findings to other contexts and settings. Demographic and the interview data provided by participants were used to assess the applicability to other situations and contexts.
A reflective journal was kept by the principal investigator to document rationale of theoretical decision-making and a detailed report of the methodology followed throughout the study. This journal ensured the dependability or reliability of the findings.

An audit trail consisting of memos and reflective journal were kept to document the analytic process. The dissertation chair and another experienced qualitative researcher with extensive knowledge in grounded theory reviewed transcripts and participated in on-going discussions about the interpretation of the data. These processes supported the confirmability of the study.

Summary

In summary, the purpose of the study was to explore the phenomenon of employment attainment and maintenance among women who have experienced IPV. The intent was to use the grounded theory method to develop a mid-range theory that explains the process of how women with a history of IPV attain and maintain stable employment. By developing a better understanding of this process, researchers, clinicians and employers may be positioned to develop effective strategies to facilitate employment maintenance resulting in self-sufficiency and enhanced quality of life among women who have experienced IPV.
Chapter IV

Data Analysis and Findings

Study Sample

The study sample consisted of thirty-four women who have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) and five community members with experience with the phenomenon.

Table 1 illustrates the demographic characteristics of the women participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Women Participant Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment at the time of interview</td>
<td>Employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51 and older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Less than 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10,000 to 19,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20,000 to 44,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45,000 to 74,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75,000 to 99,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100,000 to 199,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>200,000 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children under age 18</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Status</td>
<td>No longer in relationship with abuser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In relationship with abuser</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community members participating in the study were: (a) two employers, one male and one female; (b) one friend; (c) one administrator of a local domestic violence shelter; (d) one
women’s advocate and supervisor working at the local domestic violence center. Community members were recruited and interviewed to gain their perspective on the phenomenon of IPV and employment. Results from these interviews are shared within the context of the theoretical framework developed from the women participants’ responses.

**Theoretical Framework**

The aim of this study was to explore the common process by which women who have experienced IPV attain and maintain employment. Specific aims of this study were:

1. To identify the basic psycho-social process of employment attainment and maintenance.
   
   This process is explained in the section labelled: Intertwining of Work and IPV;

2. To determine the critical junctures in the process of attaining and maintaining employment. Critical junctures are discussed in the section labelled: Unravelling Process;

3. To determine the social, structural, cultural, economic and healthcare institutional barriers and facilitators related to employment attainment and maintenance. Barriers are discussed in the sections labelled: Entangled Work and IPV and Re-entangled Work and IPV. Facilitators are discussed in the section labelled: Disentangled Work and IPV and Unravelling Process;

4. Development of a typology of common trajectories of employment attainment and maintenance among women who have experienced IPV. Three common trajectories were identified and are discussed in the section labelled: Trajectories.

**Core Category**

**Intertwined work and IPV.** The core category emerging from interview data among all participants is the intertwining of work and IPV. The participants shared stories that described their lives in which work and IPV were intertwined. While the participants had little difficulty
attaining employment, they had great difficulty maintaining employment. This difficulty was related to the intertwining of the work with the violence. The word intertwined is defined as “twisted together, closely involved with each other” (Merriam-Webster, 2014, Intertwined). Intertwined is used to describe how all women initially viewed the relationship between their work and their violent relationship because all women described situations in which their work was negatively affected by their violent relationship. The women saw their work and their violent relationship as being connected or closely involved with each other. One participant described her inability to maintain a job while in a violent relationship and how connected the work and violent relationship was,

   I had no problem getting jobs, they would see that I do want to work and I am a hard worker, and a lot of jobs, even though I had a number of absences it would take them awhile to fire me, for when I was there, I worked good and they would give me chances but they just couldn’t give me chances no more.

   Once the woman experiencing a violent relationship attained employment, work became another vehicle for control by the perpetrator, resulting in the intertwining of the work with the violence. Women who were already employed prior to being in a violent relationship also experienced the intertwining of work and IPV. The work and IPV was intertwined when the perpetrator used the participant’s job as an area of control.

   All women participants initially tried to stay in the violent relationship and maintain employment. All women described ways in which they attempted to keep the work and violent relationship separate. A majority of women participants tried to maintain work and stay in a violent relationship by covering up injuries with clothes or make-up or hiding emotional
expression during work. One participant described her attempts to try to keep work and IPV separate:

> It was a bruise on my arm, so when I went to work I had to wear something that would cover it up. And I had trouble cuz I was a cashier and I had to lift something so I had to call one of the guys over to help me lift some of the stuff and they said ‘what is wrong with your arm’ and I said, ‘I hurt it.’ I said I just hurt it, I was at weight lifting today…you know. I pulled a muscle, whatever.’ They bought it. I was able to pull it off and I thought OK I can do this.”

Another participant described the attempt to cover up the violence, “I had scars, I have a face that would swell up and I had to be in the office,…and I wouldn’t tell, I would make up excuses. However, eventually all participants reached the conclusion that keeping their work separate from their violent relationship was not possible. They all determined that they could not be both in a violent relationship and maintain work. Their attempts to separate the work and IPV were futile because the work and the violence were not just intertwined, they were entangled.

All participants related that the resultant entanglement of work and IPV made maintaining meaningful employment impossible. One participant explicitly expressed, “…it was very hard to maintain a job with him, it was impossible I couldn’t.” Another participant noted, And I just want to make you know, and I just want to make sure that it’s very well understood that me personally I feel like it’s pretty much impossible to hold a job and keep a job and be in a domestic situation. One way or another, something is going to have to give.

Another participant also reflected,
…so this was a revolving process, and once again they say look, it’s either the job or him. You’re going to get fired if you don’t leave him or quit. So I quit and move on to the next job and the next job…I mean, it’s hard…you can’t really maintain a job with an abusive partner. It allows for a little bit but it won’t last forever, I would suggest staying away from it, not having someone abusive. Believing in yourself. It’s hard to do but I’m trying.

All women described a process by which they attempted to unravel the entangled work and IPV. The process of unravelling entangled work and IPV is a dynamic process of separating the entangled threads of work and IPV, with periods of re-entanglement along the way. Unravelling is defined as: “to disengage or separate the threads of, to disentangle” (Merriam-Webster, 2014, Unravelling). This process can be compared to attempting to pull apart the threads of a fine chain of a necklace that has been knotted into a ball. As attempts are made to pull apart the chain, other areas of the chain become more entangled and knotted. However, with continued persistent attempts, as each knot is separated and the chain is unraveled, it finally becomes disentangled and can be used for the purpose intended.

In comparison to the analogy of the process of unravelling the chain of a necklace, there are experiences women have throughout the process of unravelling of work and IPV, leading toward the disentanglement of work and IPV. There are periods of re-entanglement during this process that may take the women’s work back to being entangled with the violence. Either work continues to be entangled in the violence and the woman loses employment or the unravelling process continues, resulting in the end of the violent relationship, whereby work and IPV becoming disentangled and the woman becomes engaged in meaningful, stable employment. Ultimately, work is either about the perpetrator, under his control and entangled with the
violence or work becomes about her, under her control, and part of her identity as a strong woman.

The data yielded descriptions of entangled work, disentangled work, a process by which the women worked to disentangle the violence and the work and the ways in which the work and IPV became re-entangled. The description of each of these areas this will be discussed in the following way. First, a description of the ways work and IPV are entangled will be discussed. Next, a description of disentangled work and IPV will be presented. Additionally, the unravelling process will be discussed. A description of ways women’s work and IPV become re-entangled will be described. Finally, three trajectories of women experiencing IPV and maintaining employment will be discussed.

**Entangled work and IPV.** Entangled is defined as: “wrapped or twisted together, involved in a perplexing or troublesome situation, or to make complicated” (Merriam-Webster, 2014, Entangled). Working women who experience IPV live out daily, complicated situations where violence is wrapped up in her work with the perpetrator exerting control over work as well as home life. Entangled work was focused on or colored by the abusive partner and under his control. When work was about him, under his control and entangled with the violence the woman considered the relationship, even if it was violent, as of paramount importance – more so than her own well-being. One participant noted,

He just was physical…I kind of felt …I had no choice to quit too…if he just hits me in the face; they’re going to ask me questions because I was…I was scared he’d go to jail. I didn’t want him to be upset with me. That’s all I cared about.
Both women and community participants shared four common ways that work and IPV were entangled and the abuser exerted his control. These included: (a) controlling appearance; (b) sabotaging work; (c) interfering with work and; (d) controlling finances.

Controlling appearance. One common way work and IPV were entangled was by the perpetrator controlling her appearance. The perpetrator exerted control well before the woman went to work by telling her what she could and could not wear to work. One participant noted,

I had to wear certain clothes. We had to wear black and white; that was the description. I couldn’t wear a skirt to work. That kind of thing; I had to wear pants, nothing tight, no tight shirt, I didn’t look cute in my clothes… I just know I never bought cute stuff like that because I wasn’t allowed to wear it. So, yeah, that’s how he controlled with the work piece.

Another participant noted,

…I was always interrupted by my husband, everytime I found something I thought was appropriate and nice, he was like, ‘you cannot go with that, they will fire you with that, let me get your clothes’ and like everything you know he controlled, he started controlling that sector…

Additionally, another participant shared,

…he would say before work, ‘why are you putting on make-up or why are you putting on a dress? Why the fuck are you putting on that for or why are you dressed up, why are you getting dressed up or why are you putting on perfume, or why are you curling your hair like that?

Sabotaging work. Another common way violence was entangled with work was through the perpetrator sabotaging work. Steps were taken by the perpetrator to prevent her from leaving
home to go to work each day or to be on time for work through sabotage. Sabotage was attempted prior to the woman leaving home to go to work on a daily basis through exerting physical and emotional abuse, refusing childcare, sabotaging transportation, and causing sleep deprivation.

*Physical and emotional abuse.* Several women described the entanglement of work and IPV by sabotage through physical and emotional abuse exerted prior to her going into work. This abuse caused participants to call in sick so the employer would not see the abuse. A participant described the abuse she experienced prior to going to work,

He’d smack me and blood come out of my mouth and say do you eat like that at work?...you an airhead and stuff like that and you don’t need no job and just beat you down every day and like with the words like stressful before you go to work it’s like stressful and you can’t hardly focus and you get to the point where you like, somebody else is at the job making it hard for you… you like don’t know what people are goin through and what life is like at home and then I come home from work, here we go, ‘you late, it don’t take you that long to get home’… I would rather just stay at home and just sit and would be like you’re a prisoner in your own home, cuz if you go out (to work) that causes the problems.

Another participant described,

He beat me in front of the kids when I actually was going to work…I was really pressed for time trying to get out the door…I took his noodles out of the microwave and he got angry...he spit on me and smacked me…of course I was crying and distraught and I went upstairs to get ready for work, and I was thinking that was when I was leaning down, I
remember I kept saying I’m leaving, I sat up and I felt a elbow hit my head…he was on
top of me…that was one instance I was late for work…

Several women described attempts to sabotage her ability to maintain employment.

One described a particularly violent episode,

He beat me really bad for about an hour in front of our children, he pointed a gun at me,
took a,…spoon down my throat…took a spoon and shoved it down my throat I mean he
was just tormenting me that night and I couldn’t go to work after that: I explained to them
what happened and they did give me a few days off but, well I was new, I was only there
for about 3 months so they fired me.

Another participant described the perpetrator’s sabotage,

He picked up a shoe and threw it at my face and I started crying…he slung the dirty mop
water on me then I went to take a shower, I thought he was done and he came in there
and while I was in the shower and he put a dog in the shower with me, he told me I was
an animal and I needed to take a shower with a dog…why he did that I don’t know, by
for a long time mentally got to me and I called off work a few days and let him leave with
the car for a few days and just stayed to myself.

Refusing childcare. A majority of women participants with children experienced the
entanglement of work and IPV through sabotage related to the children. Perpetrators sabotaged
work by refusing to care for children, abusing children while the participant was at work,
verbally threatening to abuse children while caring for them or undermining the woman’s efforts
to prevent pregnancy. One perpetrator refused to care for the children. The participant note, “I
ended up quitting my pizza delivery job because he was starting to not want to keep the kids.”
Sabotaging work by passively refusing childcare was also noted by the women’s advocate
community member, “He says he’ll help with child care and he doesn’t show up and she’s got to call off. …she’s trying to find child care and then of course that makes her look like she’s an unreliable employee.”

Other perpetrators sabotaged work by abusing the woman’s children while she was at work. One participant described her thoughts after her abuser left her son alone at an apartment complex when he was four years old, “I had to quit. That was just too terrifying. What if something would have happened to my son?” One participant described her abuser’s treatment of her children while she was at work, “during that time he was very physical abusive with our sons...to the point where our youngest son had severe head trauma that causes him to learn how to walk, talk, eat, etc. all over again.”

Additionally, perpetrators sabotaged work by undermining the woman’s efforts to prevent pregnancy. One participant described her abuser’s actions that caused her to become pregnant in his attempt to sabotage her ability to graduate from her educational program,

So I went to school. It took two years. I got a job. I graduated on September 27th and I had a job on September 25th. Yeah, so like two days before I graduated, I had a job. It started out part time and in the process of all that I think once he figured out I was really doing good in school. I made straight A's. I was doing really well. I was interviewing and he figured okay, she's really doing this. I got pregnant with my fourth one. He started messing with my birth control. I think in his mind, okay, she's really starting to do this. She really doesn't need me. So, things started going downhill slowly so he started pushing the fact of having another kid.

*Sabotaging transportation.* A few participants described the entanglement of work and IPV through sabotaging transportation. One participant noted,
He started taking my car and wouldn’t come back for me to get to work…when I did get to work he was supposed to come get me in the morning and never would come, I would sit outside for two hours after working all night and pregnant and I would sit there waiting for him to come, no bus money, nothing,…and it was winter time and it was cold. Another participant shared, “one time I was going to work and he actually flattened my tires and he took my tags off my car, to where I couldn’t go anywhere, and I just called in, I called off and told them I was sick so they excused me for that day.” The women’s advocate community participant confirmed this sabotage tactic, “one of the big examples I have heard over the years is that he would take the car so she doesn’t have the car the next day to get to work.”

*Causing sleep deprivation.* Some participants described the perpetrator’s role in the entanglement of work and IPV through sabotage by causing sleep deprivation, resulting in the inability to conduct work activities. One participant explained how her abuser sabotaged her work by keeping her up all night demanding attention, causing sleep deprivation:

> It was really hard maintaining a job because we would be up arguing all night, I was up all night and had to go to work the next morning,…I couldn’t work at my full ability…sometimes; he wouldn’t let me go to work because he would accuse me of messing with, other staff members.

The participant was so exhausted she could not go into work and consequently developed a poor history of attendance at work.

Additionally a participant noted,

> He had, raped me while I was sleeping and I woke up in the middle of sex and I didn’t want to be having sex and on top of that both of these times I was on my period and I had a tampon inside of me… at that time one of my cousins was working for a gynecologist
and it was like five or six in the morning and I’m like crying and really upset and told her what happened and she told me to come in and just so embarrassing to have a woman that I don’t know, you know having to remove a tampon that happened because he would do this in the middle of the night kind of thing and that is when I realized I could just not trust him at all and he had no care for my health or my boundaries or my wishes at all you know…but I remember those days I would go in really early because (tearful) I felt like I had to get myself together and be strong for that day and I had already gotten up in the middle of the night and not had a lot of rest and, and you know just having to put on another face after what felt like a very humiliating experience.

**Interfering with work.** The entanglement of work and IPV was also exemplified through interference with work activities. Once the woman was at work, the perpetrator continued to exert control through interference in two ways. The perpetrator interfered with the woman’s work activities through his actions at the worksite and through his behaviors outside of the worksite that mentally distracted her from her work. The perpetrator interfered with work activities at the worksite through stalking, abusing the woman verbally and physically at her workplace and by calling her boss or co-workers.

**Interfering at worksite.** Interference through stalking while the participant was at work was described by the majority of participants. One participant noted,

He sat outside my work all night cuz I made him leave, and I took the house keys and I said no, you ain’t getting back in and he sat outside my work all night and people saw it and I got fired over that.

Stalking also occurred for a majority of participants via constant email, texts and phone calls, during the work day, further interrupting work activities. One participant noted, “he would call
and leave me harassing phone messages on my phone line [at work].” Another participant noted, “But then he started thinking I was going out on him, like seriously and he would email me, email me, email me. I was like stop, stop, stop. He was another one that he would call, and call. I’m like you can’t keep calling me at work. You can’t do this.”

A few participants described episodes of interference through verbal and physical abuse at her place of employment. Verbal abuse was noted by one participant,

He'd drink. He'd come in. He'd start yelling at me from across the dining room. He'd be at the entrance and I’d be maybe trying to wait on a table and he'd just come in and start yelling at me. So therefore these people don't want to tip me. They'd don't even want me to be their waitress anymore because I got this man yelling at me.

Additionally, physical abuse was demonstrated towards a participant at her worksite,

He would come to that job and embarrass me and stuff like that, and they knew he was crazy but when he came there and tried to fight in the office complex where I worked, that was the last straw for them, cuz they was like they said, ‘ you need to leave him,’ they understood, but when he came in and acted a fool in front of clients and people there they didn’t have a choice they had to let me go… he came in the office and literally jumped me up.

Entanglement of work and IPV through interference in work activities was also exemplified through the perpetrator calling the woman’s boss or co-workers at her workplace. One participant’s story exemplified this interference tactic.

He actually called my job. I told him I didn’t want to be with him anymore. He told all my personal business. I mean all of it. He also told lies about me. Said I was abusing
residents and I was sleeping with a lot of my coworkers and that I was drinking and doing
drugs and I was coming to work intoxicated.

*Interfering outside of work.* A majority of participants described the entanglement of
work and IPV through interference by perpetrator behaviors, outside of the work environment,
that instilled fear, impacting the woman’s performance at work. Fear was instilled through
perpetrator behaviors such as expressions of extreme jealousy of co-workers, threatening to show
up at her worksite or threatening violence after work. This constant fear experienced by the
woman interfered with her ability to perform work activities.

Several participants described the perpetrator expressing extreme jealousy, viewing work
associates as rivals. One participant describes the perpetrator’s jealousy resulting in physical
abuse,

One time he hit me when I came back from work, I was late, he had hit me, right there I
had to have plastic surgery, he hit me so bad with a bottle, on that side of my face cuz he
thought I was cheatin, .. it was because I came home late, cuz I stopped, I gave somebody
a ride home… The timeframe didn’t add up to him.

Another participant described how interference through instilling fear impacted her work
performance. One noted,

[I was] trying to stay focused and that was a job like with, (workplace) like in the meat
and also we working with switchblades. You had to be very, very careful and if your
mind ain’t focused you can’t do the job well.

Another participant described this entanglement of work and IPV through interference by
instilling fear,
you couldn’t hardly focus, you’d be like, you walk on eggshells, thinkin, I gotta do this, I can’t be late, I gotta hurry up, there’s stuff I got to do but I don’t want to have him go off, I don’t want to set him off in no kinda way.

Another participant described her fear that interfered with her work, “I would just be so scared to work because I was afraid that he would just pop up there and just stalk me.” Additionally another participant noted,

My mind would go crazy and I couldn’t focus…because I would think this, this, and this because at work when I was trying to do my work, it’s like okay I’m trying to do it but then it’s like what can I do to make him happy so he doesn’t get mad? Because it was always walk eggshells, walk on eggshells. It did affect my work in the sense that when I tried to focus my mind to go here, I’m on a roll and then he’d call me or I’d get this email from him. And it’s like my god, it was almost like a prison in a sense because I was so afraid to do anything.

A few women decided to quit work because it was too hard to continue working due to the abuse or she felt she had no choice. One participant noted,

I couldn't even work because I'm crying and that's all I'm doing is crying. I couldn't even work so they tell me you know, you got to leave him or you got to leave us. I'm like how in the hell are you going to make me choose? So I would leave my job and then I would go get another. I was good about getting jobs. I could get jobs.

Several participants decided to quit the job before they could be fired because of perpetrator interference. A participant also noted that she was afraid to find another job because of her experience with a previous job and violence,
I was afraid because I had left him before and I wanted to do a lot of things from leaving him before and he told me if I tried to leave him again he would kill me. At that time I thought he was serious. And I was really, really scared. So I thought that it would be best to do whatever he said. I thought it would be easier. It eased up for a little while but they’re never satisfied. That was why it took me so long to get another job.

Another participant described interfering thoughts influenced by the perpetrator,

The owners really liked me, they really cared for me. They saw something in me I didn't see… All I had to do was get rid of him and that store would have been mine I mean, it would have been my store but I...how dare you tell me to leave the man that I'm with or keep my job… That's what was going through my head because I got him telling me ain't nobody going to love you and nobody is ever going to want to be with you.

Another participant describes the perpetrator’s interference, “…well if I don’t quit my job they’re going to fire me anyway. I don’t want that on my record. No one wants to say they got fired. So I would just quit.” Feeling the need to make him happy or keep him happy played a part in work and IPV remaining entangled through the interference of the perpetrator’s control, “I was just trying to keep everybody happy and it just became a lot, a lot for me to take care of and a lot for me to manage. So my work started going back downhill, they were starting to write me up at work.” Additionally, a participant shared how entangled the work and relationship were for her, “it wasn’t too long after that arm thing and when I quit the job…he seemed like he was a lot happier that I quit the job.”

**Controlling finances.** Finally, for the majority of women, once the woman started working outside the home and started earning an income, work and IPV became entangled through the perpetrator controlling finances, including the woman’s earnings. The perpetrator
controlled finances by telling her what she could spend money on, forcing her to pay all expenses and using money she earned to support his illicit drug habit.

One participant noted, “I was only allowed to spend a certain amount of money for groceries and there was certain things that were controlled and certain things I could spend money on. His way of keeping in control or keep me in check.” Another participant described financial control, “So anytime I wanted money for anything I had to ask. That’s another horrible thing; you go to work and you work hard and put everything into it and payday rolls around. Then, you see that you have nothing.”

The entanglement of work and IPV was also exemplified through the control of finances by forcing the participant to pay all household expenses. One participant described this financial control,

The pressure was on me to provide the income, to manage the bills. I did a 100 percent of financial taking care of the family through the entire relationship. He never wrote a check. He never paid a bill. He never did anything. And how he spent his time or where he spent his time was not subject for me to know…he was controlling in a very passive way …He was the man and that's just the way it is. He didn't physically threaten me but I couldn't do anything, like I couldn't request a day off without talking with him first.

Entanglement of work and IPV through financial control was also recognized by an employer,

He makes her work a ton of time and spends every dime she ever had, she will never be able to retire…she has no money to spend on herself…when we do bonuses or gifts or something like that, we’ve actually given her gift certificates to clothing stores because he spends all her money on him.
Other participants described financial control exerted through forcing the woman to support the perpetrator’s illicit drug habit,

All of a sudden I found out he smoked crack and then he quit working and I took care of everything, everything and supported his habit. Then, when he wouldn’t have it he would be mean, call me names, hit me…, all my jobs, he hung out outside, and like waited on me to make money. Whenever I would make $20 or $30 he would come and take it… We had a car at this time and he would sit in the car and I'd get money. He's go get dope and he'd come back and sit in the car and do his drugs and wait on me to make more money.

One participant noted, “he was so jealous of me and especially since he had a drug addiction that he was trying to take advantage of me and take all my money.” Another participant noted,

It’s all around the work, because if I don’t have enough money or if I wanted to call off that day or if I was even off that, there were periods where I never had a day off. I mean, I would work 16 hours a day just to pay bills, take care of the kids and support his drug habit. It just went on and on and it was very tiring.

In summary, all participants experienced entangled work and IPV. The most common ways work and IPV were entangled was through controlling appearance, sabotaging work, interfering with work and controlling finances. A majority of women made attempts to unravel the work and IPV and a few successfully disentangled the work and IPV. Further discussion of the ways work and IPV were disentangled, the process of unravelling, and ways the work and IPV were re-entangled will follow.

**Disentangled work and IPV.** Some women were able to successfully unravel the violence and the work to achieve disentangled work. Disentangled is defined as: “to separate
(things that are twisted together or caught on one another), or to remove the twists or knots in something)” (Merriam-Webster, 2014, Disentangled). In order to maintain meaningful employment, the work needs to be separated from the violence.

When work becomes disentangled from the violence, the work is about her as a strong woman, and under her control. Work being disentangled from IPV means creating a new identity and part of that new identity is her work. For those women who unraveled work and IPV, once her work was no longer about the violent relationship and became about her and her meaning and purpose, she regained control and job stability. One participant expressed, “Now I have learned that I'm a good (work position). So now I'm focused on career and that kept me kind of balanced.” A few women described several aspects of the state of work being disentangled from violence including: (a) gaining pride in work; (b) choosing a career path; (c) gaining control over finances and; (d) finding joy and meaning in work.

**Gaining pride in work.** A few participants expressed gaining pride in their work and in their work ethic. One participant reflected, “And then I got my full time job. This is where I got my appraisal. This is where I was allowed to feel good about myself.” Another participant shared that she had applied and accepted a job as a nursing assistant after her abuser was sentenced to prison.

I have not had any issue from this job, no issue about having to call off or anything, and I’m excited to start school and move forward with my life and keep pushin…everyone’s very happy with me and it’s less stressful, its not as painful cuz I’m not getting hit on and going to work.

**Choosing a career path.** Some women described choosing a career path. One participant noted, “…so where is my solace, in the books and learning. I went back to school. I
commuted…not quite an hour’s drive. I went to school and worked full time.” Another participant shared her decision to return to school, “I think being in school really reconnected for me with my hopes and wishes and dreams from 30 years ago that I had just kind of buried. “

**Gaining control over finances.** A few participants described gaining control over finances by making decisions about managing expenses and savings. One participant expressed the importance of having control over her finances, “and while I was working I saved money and got an apartment…I got off at seven in the morning and didn’t get home until 10 because I went out for breakfast. It was so nice.” Another participant describes re-gaining control over her finances, “I switched the money around and I keep a personal account just for myself now that I’ve had a job, with earnings and that’s how I deal with it.”

**Finding joy and meaning in work.** Participants who described work being disentangled from violence expressed finding joy and meaning in work. One participant who had unraveled work from violence noted, “I just love what I do taking something and making it beautiful. I feel like it is a gift.” Meaning of work was also described by other participants in relation to their pride in independently supporting their children and protecting them from the violence. One woman expressed proudly, “I always worked two or three jobs to help support my kids…I thought I didn’t care what happened to me as long as I could work and take care of my kids.” A community member noted, “I think that value comes from saying, I’m doing this. I can do this. I’m the one who deserves better. I’m the one who’s helping the kids… then I do think that they’re going to get to the point of job before him. I think it takes some energy to pick job over him. …when you get there I think it’s easier to maintain.”

Several participants found joy and meaning through supportive relationships with co-workers and supervisors. Participants described their work relationships as a source of strength
and companionship, “I think that working in an environment with women who are compassionate and understanding has been what has allowed me to grow and reach and achieve the ability to get to where I am.”

In summary, a majority of the women were not able to disentangle work and IPV. However, some women did disentangle work and IPV. Women described a process they went through to disentangle the work and IPV. This process to disentangle work and IPV will be described in the next section labelled, unravelling process.

**Unravelling process.** All women participants experienced the intertwining of work and IPV and initially attempted to separate the work from the violence. After repeated attempts to keep the work and IPV separate and maintain employment, they realized they could not do both. Participants realized that the work and IPV were more than closely connected, or intertwined, they were entangled. All women participants described a process by which they attempted to disentangle the work from the violence. This process is described as an unravelling process.

The process of unravelling entangled work and IPV is a dynamic process of separating the entangled threads of work and IPV, with periods of re-entanglement along the way. Unravelling is defined as: to disengage or separate the threads of, to disentangle (Merriam-Webster, 2014, Unravelling). This process can be compared to attempting to pull apart the threads of a fine chain of a necklace that has been knotted into a ball. As attempts are made to pull apart the chain, other areas of the chain become more entangled and knotted. However, with continued persistent attempts, as each knot is separated and the chain is unraveled, it finally becomes disentangled and can be used for the purpose intended.

**Awareness.** While the process is dynamic, participants who began the unravelling process, started from a common starting point. The starting point for the unravelling process for
the majority of participants was when they became aware of the violence. This awareness was facilitated through confrontation by others or a particular violent episode involving the participant or her children.

A majority of participants discussed being so entangled in the violent relationship that they were not even aware of the abuse. A point of awareness occurred when co-workers, family or friends confronted the woman about the abuse. The workplace was one of the sources of this awareness. Most participants described co-workers confronting them about the abuse. One participant noted, “I had to have somebody else that was my co-worker tell me because I didn’t know.” One participant reflected on the love she felt for the perpetrator and how co-workers recognized the effect, “Like a couple of people said well…you don’t look the same anymore. I don’t think you need to be in that situation. I couldn’t see it because I’m so in love.”

Some participants described a time when they finally shared their story with co-workers. One noted,

It’s funny how close the coworkers are…It’s a good thing. Like the night he hit me. hit me on my chin and I bit my tongue. Before that he held a knife to my throat. And that next morning, I got up to go to work. And I showed the girls my tongue so they could look at it to see where it was swollen and if it was red or swollen. You could tell it that it was hurt. And I asked them I had this scar on my neck and that was where the knife was. And I hadn’t even looked yet to see if it left a mark. So I asked them and you know when you think of it, why would a person do that because you’re kind of broadcasting… And I don’t know, maybe I felt like they were my witnesses or maybe or yeah maybe I wanted their sympathy. I don’t know. I didn’t want to keep it a secret though that it was happening to me.
Coming to this awareness at a work-related training was described by another participant,

There was role playing… just little scenarios where it was depicted…physical and verbal abuse. And a light went on, oh my god; somebody had hid a camera in my house. I went home and said I’m not doing this anymore. I can’t do this anymore.

**Facilitators.** Once aware of the entangled work and IPV, the unravelling process was further facilitated in four common ways: (a) receiving emotional or physical help from others; (b) standing up to the abuser; (c) putting her trust in God; and (d) having a reason to get out of the relationship.

*Emotional or physical help.* All women shared stories related to receiving emotional or physical help from others as part of the unravelling process of the entangled work and IPV. Emotional help came in the form of encouragement to seek help, or to pursue an education. Physical help was provided by giving her a way to leave the relationship or establishing a safe place. One friend of a woman experiencing IPV noted,

There was a particularly aggressive attack and I told her we need to call your parents. We need to let people know about this. This is wrong. Call the police. I will call the police for you. You don’t have to put up with this. She was very scared to do that.

Co-workers and bosses played a significant role in helping the woman by providing emotional support for her to pursue an education or further her skills at work. The women’s advocate community member participant confirmed the co-workers’ role noting, “I think coworkers can be that huge support piece for folks if they have the courage.”

One participant described a particularly supportive boss,
She was amazing. She was incredibly encouraging. She forced me to do things that I didn’t think I could do that well but she said you’re going to get experience. So I had someone who was pushing me and it worked out very well because I started as an entry level in January and then October as a manager. Then I became a director but I don’t think any of that ever would have happened if it wasn’t for her. She helped me tremendously. And I had a couple of other people that I worked with that were really, really encouraging.

Another participant described the push she received from others at work to take steps to pursue further education,

But what's disturbing about it is if not for that program for someone at (work) pushing me to do it I'd still be there feeling trapped and that's disturbing to realize…These were not active steps that I took. I didn't actively end my marriage. I didn't actively pursue an education. ..I feel like I am so driven now but it's just really interesting to look at the dynamics, to just how trapped I felt and powerless and unable to do anything about it. And how it took people around me and truthfully primarily it worked because I didn't have a whole lot of friends outside of work.

Another described emotional support from her bosses, “Thankfully I had two bosses who were going through what I was going through. And they did not listen to him or believe a word that he said.” Another participant described help after a poor performance review by her employer, …they told me at work that my work performance were really bad, that I started so great and they were all impressed but right at the moment they couldn’t trust me with the easiest things, and they were very nice about it, and I was just upset that it happened, because I take a lot of pride in my work, we had a review…and the person gave me some
pointers that made things better… I was very fortunate to have a company like that that was so understanding.

Another participant describes an attempt by her boss to support her in leaving the relationship, “The boss was trying to build me up, make me stronger I guess you could say. To stand up to him…” Additionally, one participant described how employment helped her in the unravelling process, noting, “It seemed that after each job I got stronger.”

Counselors and ministers were identified as important in providing emotional support through couples’ therapy or to help the survivor heal from the trauma of the abuse through individual therapy, “it was the best thing I ever did…the minister was incredibly supportive, he was wonderful, I would not have gotten through without him.”

Family and friends were called on by the survivor when they were in crisis to help with moving out or help take care of the children, providing physical support. One participant describes the helped she received to escape the abuse,

I called her (mom) and I said I can’t take it no more. This is it. I have to go…when she pulled up I took the kids outside and kind of nonchalantly threw them in the car and she took off…I went to my mom’s for about two months before I got my own place.

A few participants described a time when a boss, co-worker, family or friends created a safe place. One participant described a boss who had experienced a previous employee being murdered by a violent partner at work and how he ensured physical security and blocked electronic interference by calling the abuser’s boss. She noted,

What really helped me was the fence, was the fence and the security…This guy actually saw one of his employees killed by the husband in California. It like shook him to his roots so that he would take action …… for that 13 years it was an awesome safe spot. It
got to a point where I even had a secretary who could screen my calls. I didn't have to take it from nobody.

Another participant noted,

The work environment was safe and it gave me the opportunity to really think about when I wasn't busy writing or whatever, think about what are you doing. And so being able to draw upon my intellectual self to get to a decision and move out of that emotional bondage that I was in.

One participant reflected on her realization that she could survive without him exemplified in her narrative, “…work has always been my place to go. My safe haven is what keeps me sane because I know I can support myself and I can support the kids if I had to.”

A majority of women participants received help from a local advocacy center after a particularly violent episode or an escalation of the violence. One participant shared the event preceding seeking help, “I thought he was going to kill me. And was at some point where he was taking me to abandoned houses to beat me up…there was nobody that would hear me. So I had to go somewhere where they were going to hear.”

*Standing up to the abuser.* All women participants described a time when the unravelling process was facilitated through an episode when they stood up to the abuser. Women stood up to the perpetrator in several ways such as calling law enforcement, filing a civil protection order, fighting back or secretly taking steps to get a job or register for classes. One noted, “I called the police and he knew I was serious and that keeps them away. You know they don’t want to go to prison”. Several women sought help from law enforcement and the legal system by filing a CPO … “he kind of pushed my daughter out of the way and like “move” and I don’t know that kind of made me very angry and I called the cops and he was arrested and from there I got a protection
order and I just never was ever bothered with him again.” Another describes conflicting thoughts when she sought help from law enforcement,

Well, it was one day we got into it, and I just said I’m tired, and the police was involved and….well I felt kinda good and I felt kinda sad at the same time, I don’t know, part of me still wanted to be with him, and a part didn’t, I don’t know I was just confused, I don’t know, I just figured, maybe I made the right choice by doing this, I might be hurt behind it, but I know I’m doing the right thing.

Another participant noted, “I had the education. I was smart enough. ..I had the hootspa to throw myself into like what I thought were safe spots for me and why for that 13 years (at work) it was an awesome safe spot.”

The decision to apply for a job or register for classes was a significant event described by several participants. One participant registered for classes to be a phlebotomist as soon as her abuser went to jail. She noted, “he ended up going to jail for 30 days for child support and the class was only 3 weeks long, so it was a perfect timing so I went to class, I graduated, I took the state test, I did very well in that class.”

One participant described a turning point when she envisioned the future of continued violence resulting in standing up to the abuser by leaving the relationship,

I showed my attention to my nephew who was two at the time. He didn’t like that at all. He actually was very mean to my nephew; he never hurt my nephew but he was verbally yelling at him and those kinds of things. Didn’t hurt him when I was around but a month later is when I left… I knew that would be probably what my child would have known from the beginning.
Additionally, several women described a particular time when they finally stood up to the perpetrator by fighting back physically, taking a stand verbally about an issue or secretly hiding money to prepare to leave the relationship. One participant described a time when she stood up to her abuser, “…I pulled away when I wanted to instead of letting him just have his way…I was done hugging…you give me my space, something so simple like that he couldn’t stand me doing something I wanted to do.” Another participant described physically and verbally standing up to her abuser, 

He said, ‘you think you’re the man of this home don’t you?’ and I said, ‘ I am when I have to be.’ It bothered him; physically I was able to push him off of me. I thought yeah you haven’t worked for seven years. I am the man of the home right now basically... ‘ If you ever lay your hands on me I will call the police and I’ll press charges.’ He just couldn’t take me being who I wanted to be, standing up for myself, and thinking for myself…and doing something I wanted to do.

One participant noted, “I stashed money. I made tips so I wouldn’t tell him about it. I wouldn’t be honest with him. So I could have my little bit of cash” Another participant stood up to her abuser noting, “he was mad because every tax time I would give him a thousand dollars...But this time I didn’t I paid for my school.” Several participants applied for jobs or registered classes without the perpetrator’s knowledge,

I talked to a teacher of mine and told her about the situation at home and that I was desperately trying to get out of there and um I said can I have, I asked her if I could make phone calls, if they could permit me this because I could not do them at home because he monitors the calls, there’s a caller lock, I already struggled with him looking at things on
the internet and so I deleted the history and he was frantic about it because he said if I
didn’t have something to hide I wouldn’t have to delete it.

*Putting her trust in God.* A few women participants related that their faith played a role
in the unravelling of work and IPV through putting their trust in God. Women survivors’ faith
stories related to a specific violent event where she felt protected by God, when she sought
comfort and help from God, or when the job was seen as coming from God, giving her life
meaning and purpose. One participant reflects… “With all his strength he’s straining to get me
out of there. I am just standing there. What’s going on? It was like I was untouchable. It was
very strange. It was the lord’s protection because he could have killed me.” … “I’ll be thankful
and the lord has taught me to be a boss. This is where he placed me.” Another participant
reflected,

And the biggest part is even though I had faith and believed in God it only has been in the
last probably three to four years. I truly put my faith last year, I don’t know what
happened but I just decided that I had to trust God for everything. And quit trying to run
it myself. And I turned everything over to Him.

One survivor who had experienced IPV as well as violence against her children
summarized her hope for the future in her writing,

So for anyone who hears my story …there is a rainbow that comes after the storm. The
sun will shine. But you have to forgive yourself, and the men that caused this pain in
order for you and your children to heal and move thru [sic] the pain in order for you to go
forward with your lives. To see the goodness that God want for us to experience in our
lives. Now I am able to help someone else’s life with my story and that in itself makes
me very happy to help someone else.
Having a reason to get out. A majority of participants described episodes leading to the unravelling of work and IPV through having a reason to get out of the relationship. Women described the episodes where she was either forced to make the decision to attempt to leave the abusive relationship by someone in a position of authority such as criminal justice personnel, a boss, children’s protective services, or the participant decided on her own that she had had enough of the abuse and decided to protect herself and/or her children from further abuse.

In addition, a majority of women described family members, friends, bosses and co-workers giving the woman a reason to get out of the violent relationship. Children played a significant role for the majority of participants in giving the woman a reason to attempt to leave the relationship and unravel the work and IPV. Children were described by several women as witnesses to the violence. One participant noted,

The last time he did it in front of the kids. I just felt like he didn’t really care. You know that was just to see the fear in their eyes of him doing that to me I promised that I would never put them in that tough situation again. I have a little girl now and a little son and I decided to stop the cycle and break it.

Another participant noted,

After I began to work for my son, I began to have more control because they started having programs where I could go to college and stuff. And then I was deciding to leave him (the abuser) alone because I was feeling better about myself.

Finally, one participant summarized her thoughts regarding her children and the relationship,

If you’re in a domestic, if you’re in a violent relationship, basically it’s all the same, one of three things is gonna happen, you’re gonna end up dead, he’s gonna end up in jail, or you get tired of it and leave, but either way, the kids are not gonna have their dad, and
that’s a big part of it, look I want my boys to have their dad but they can’t and I’m not blind to that anymore but they’re always gonna go with that missing feeling of, my dad’s not there and only one parent can do so much, I had boys so there’s gonna be things that they’re gonna look for a man to answer when they get older, I can only tell them so much.

In summary, the unravelling process begins when the woman becomes aware of the abuse. Co-workers were described by a majority of participants as playing a key role in increasing awareness of the abuse. The unravelling of work and IPV continues, with the woman receiving emotional and physical help from others, standing up to the abuser, putting trust in God and having a reason to get out of the relationship. However, throughout the unravelling process, re-entanglement occurs. Ways in which work and IPV become re-entangled will be described in the next section labelled, re-entangled work and IPV. Eventually, with persistence and on-going support some women are able to unravel the work and IPV resulting in the ability to maintain meaningful employment.

**Re-entangled work and IPV.** During the unravelling process the work and IPV become re-entangled. The woman starts to disentangle the violence from the work as she receives help from others, stands up to the abuser, puts her trust in God, or has a reason to get out of the relationship. The abuser reacts to the woman’s attempt to pull apart the entangled work and IPV with further violence and intensified attempts to control. In doing so, the work and IPV becomes further entangled with an increase in violence.

There are episodes resulting in re-entanglement that occur while the woman attempts to unravel the work and IPV. The re-entanglement takes her back to the violent relationship resulting in a re-entanglement of the work and IPV. Participants described three common ways
her work and the violent relationship becoming re-entangled: (a) lacking emotional and physical support; (b) going back to the relationship due to financial hardship or loneliness; and (c) re-introduction of interference in the workplace.

**Lacking emotional and physical support.** The lack of emotional or physical support from others was described by a few participants as a way the work and IPV became re-entangled. One participant noted, “He (employer) just said my personal issues were interfering with the job so he had to let me go.” Lack of emotional support at work leading to feelings of shame and embarrassment was described by another participant, “When my husband or my ex would call I would break down and cry and have to go to the bathroom and didn’t want people to see me. But people who worked around me knew what was going on and I went through that shame part. I went through shame a lot.”

**Going back to the relationship due to financial hardship or loneliness.** Several participants described re-entanglement of the work and IPV when they returned to the violent relationship due to financial hardship or loneliness. One participant described her financial struggle related to housing,

I had eventually had to leave my dad’s house and I didn’t have anywhere to go. I had gone to a shelter because I had been there before but it was a bad, bad place. My ex offered for me to stay where he was staying. So after about a week or so I decided to go ahead and go there. They agreed to let me set the money up so I could go ahead and get a place for me and the kids…he then began to embarrass me…calling me names and smacking me, smashing my head up against the wall…I was still going to work while I was going through those things…
A few participants shared feelings of loneliness resulting in turning to a subsequent abusive relationship, “I was lonely even though things were going great. I was lonely. I didn't want to be myself. I didn't want to have to take care of four kids by myself, you know what I mean and so I just left it go again.” Another described her feeling of loneliness after ending the abusive relationship, “...just being alone makes me feel some type of way like, sad and down and out cuz I feel like I don’t have nobody there, yeah it’s kind of stressful at times.” Another woman shared her feeling that she could continue to make the relationship work so she would not feel lonely and that she could change him for the better, “…because I was looking for that love, the intimacy, the love that when he wasn't battering me like oh, sorry I love you… I wanted to believe that he was sorry.”

Finally, another participant expressed wanting to have the ideal family life of mother and father together raising their children to prevent feeling lonely,

So growing up from a little itty bitty person I was faced with this whole notion of wanting to belong and finding a way, finding some place to belong and I wanted my life to look like the life of everybody else in the neighborhood and everybody on TV specifically everybody had mommies and daddies and puppies and I sought that out.

Deciding to start a subsequent relationship with another abusive partner to prevent loneliness was described by a few women as another way work and IPV became re-entangled. One participant reflected on the decision to start a relationship with a second abusive partner and resultant interactions at work,

Unfortunately I jumped from the fire into the frying pan when I married my kids’ dad… And he said ‘I’ll never touch you again, I promise’. I’m gonna quit drinkin, I would never hurt you.’ OK I believe you, let’s just move on…I wasn’t going to upset him… So when
I went back to work….it was still hot in September, I was wearing long sleeves this time
people were like…’what’s goin on?’ Oh, I’m just really cold, I’m cold, it’s cold in here’
..there was a lady that I worked with and she called me out on it, she said, ‘is he hittin
you?’ and I said, ‘he doesn’t mean it’ and she said ‘they all say that,’ she had been in a
relationship and she tried to help me out she was an older lady and she realized I was too
young and I was not going to listen.

Another participant describes conflicting thoughts about the relationship and work,

In the back of your mind you know you should leave him, you know that you'll that you'll
be okay and I took care of myself before when I was a kid. I took care of myself. I had a
whole bad life so I knew I could take care of myself. I just didn't want to be alone. I
didn't, even when he was in prison I took care of him so you know, …I battle my head, I
battle myself about leaving him or quitting my job.

Another participant described continuing the relationship despite the violence, feeling the need to
take care of her abuser after he became ill,

He ended up collapsing on the driveway and I took him to MVH. He was told, had he
gone to bed that night he would have suffocated because his lungs were so filled with
fluid and he was told that he had idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. So, he was put on the
transplant list, so, can’t leave a husband that’s sick.

Re-introduction of interference in the workplace. For several women, work and IPV
became re-entangled with a re-introduction of interference at work. Court ordered
responsibilities were described by a few participants as interfering with work, productivity and
attendance as noted by one participant,
Going through the court again, going to the court for the CPO and doing this, and doing that and there was many days I was losing, where I couldn’t earn the money cuz I had to go to court, all the time, ridiculous but every day at work I had to say can I go there, I am obliged to go there, I missed work, I missed the hours, the payment, I mean you get reimbursed $5 when you go to court and then I lost $50 you know and it upset me because again it was my damage, he did it and he damaged me.

A few participants described the re-introduction of interference in the workplace by work becoming unsafe. One participant shared, “But there I was at work one day and he was...and I just got done teaching a nurses aid class and I came in and he was rifling through my desk. And I no longer felt safe at work.” Another participant described,

…I liked that job it was a receptionist job, he came to the job, and used to sit out there and embarrass me …and they knew he was crazy but when he came there and tried to fight in the (job) office where I worked that was the last straw for them…I just got in the car with him and left I knew it was over…they said, if I’m gonna be with him, they can’t have that, him coming into that environment and doin that.

Another participant shared, “I don’t know who he thought he was going to beat up, but he threatened to come up there (to work) and beat people up and commit violence on other people for I’m not sure why. I never could figure out why.”

In summary, all women experienced episodes of re-entanglement of work and IPV in three common ways: (a) lacking emotional and physical support; (b) going back to the relationship due to financial hardship or loneliness; and (c) re-introduction of interference in the workplace. These episodes of re-entanglement were barriers to completing the unravelling process and the work and IPV being disentangled.
With continued support from others and persistence by the woman to stand up to the abuser, the unravelling of the entangled work and IPV continues. It is through a process of multiple, continued attempts to unravel the entangled work and IPV, despite repeated episodes of re-entanglement that some women completely unravel the work and IPV. The work is then disentangled from violence, is meaningful and is about her as a strong woman.

**Trajectories**

Three trajectories were identified among women who had experienced IPV, and were attempting to attain and maintain employment:

1. **Entangled** - Women whose work and IPV were entangled and were unable to unravel the work and IPV, remain employed, or establish job stability;
2. **Unravelling** - Those who were actively engaged in attempting to unravel work from the violent relationship and were trying to establish job stability and meaning;
3. **Disentangled** - Women who disentangled work and IPV and were able to establish job stability and meaning. Following are three case exemplars that illustrate the three trajectories emerging from the data.

**Entangled.** One trajectory identified was women whose work and violent relationship were entangled and who were unable to unravel the work and IPV, remain employed, or establish job stability. Typical participants who exemplified this trajectory were women under age 40 who cycled in and out of employment while attempting to maintain a violent relationship. These women were able to attain employment, typically in retail, for example, as a waitress in various restaurants or in positions in the fast food industry. However, these women repeatedly experienced perpetrator interference during the workday that continued the entanglement of
work and IPV. This interference was often recognized by co-workers and bosses resulting in some co-workers confronting her about the abuse and she either remained employed or stood up to the abuser. After each incident, participants often chose to quit the job rather than be fired. Consequently, these participants never were able to disentangle the work and IPV or progress through the unravelling process. One participant shared a scenario illustrating the entanglement and re-entanglement that continued with each job she attained,

He would just yell at me in front of everybody...then, he would want me to borrow money from the owner when I worked and he would just expect me to take it out of the safe so he could get his drugs...it was just horrible...he would sit outside...and I’d get money. He’s go get dope and he’d come back and sit in the car and do his drugs and wait on me to make more money...the manager would have to go out and tell him you got to leave and when he wouldn’t leave they would call the cops...when we got home he would tell me I caused all his trouble and I ran my mouth and told everybody what he was doing. ...so it was all my fault and he would throw items at me, like random shoes and cups...he choked me a couple times...and I blacked out...it was hard holding onto jobs... I was afraid of being alone and I didn’t want that so I thought I had to take care of it...but the owner came in on one instance and he called the cops...they came out and talked with me and they talked with him and they made him leave. He got mad and it was just never ending.

Another participant described her thoughts after she quit her job rather than be fired,

He has people watching me. He can tell me where I’m at any given time of day. It’s scary. Who wants to go to work like this so he can pop up at my job and I get fired?...It’s hard going to work because you’re embarrassed. People know what’s going on. It’s not
really something you can hide when you’re getting beat up on. You can make excuses but they really know what’s going on. ..you’re scared to let them help you because I don’t want nobody to get hurt because of me.

Consequently, women in this trajectory cycled in and out of employment and were never able to unravel the work and IPV and were unable to establish job stability and meaningful employment.

**Unravelling.** The second trajectory identified was women who were actively engaged in attempting to unravel work from the violent relationship and were trying to establish job stability. A typical participant who exemplified this trajectory were women, typically under 40 years old, who were, at the time of the interview, attempting to disentangle her work from a violent relationship. These women tended to make attempts to disentangle the work and IPV and often experienced re-entanglement during the unravelling process. These women were attempting to stand up to their abuser at the time of the interview and had started to let other people, such as co-workers, know what they were experiencing. One participant noted,

He would call and leave me harassing phone messages on my phone line…so my workplace became unsafe and I had to worry about him coming into my place of employment when we were divorced, and I had to call security over here and say look, this is what’s going on, here’s my civil protection order, he cannot be coming in here and harassing me…and that was very hard, it was very demeaning for me to go, to the president of the foundation [work] and say I’m getting these phone calls, I’m trying to stop them, I’ve contacted security, I can’t afford to lose my job…fortunately he was very understanding he said just keep security in the loop, let us know what we can do for you, be safe.
These participants also continued to experience episodes of re-entanglement through returning to the relationship, often due to loneliness or financial hardship. One participant shared her experience of actively attempting to disentangle work from violence and the re-entanglement resulting from her hopes to go back to the relationship,

I’m just trying to deal with it. And I’m trying not to let it affect my job because I’ve gotten three occurrences or so for being late…it took so long and took so much energy to get over it and it ended up costing my job…even though I’m trying my hardest to straighten my life out so that maybe in time we’ll live together again...I’m just trying to settle myself down enough that so I know I can go to work and do what I have to do while I’m alert so I just can clock out and go home and deal with how I’m feeling at home…I just want to be okay. I don’t want to be worried all the time. I don’t want to have to be wondering what he’s doing or else how is he going to treat me today.

Although women in this trajectory experienced periods of re-entanglement, they were actively attempting, at the time of the interview, to disentangle the work and IPV by standing up to the abuser and receiving emotional and physical support from others such as co-workers, employers, friends and family.

**Disentangled.** Finally, the third trajectory identified was women who successfully disentangled work and IPV and were able to establish job stability and meaning. Participants who exemplified this trajectory were typically older women who worked through the unravelling process and consequently disentangled the work and IPV and maintained meaningful employment in careers they loved. These participants often experienced IPV early in their careers through perpetrator sabotage with physical and emotional violence. They found their work and education as safe havens to help them deal with the violence. These participants
became aware of the abuse after being confronted by a friend, relative or co-worker. They then began the unravelling process by standing up to their abusers and receiving help from family and friends. After experiencing periods of re-entanglement by returning to violent relationships, these participants often received help from counselling and co-workers to continue the unravelling process. They maintained employment with persistence and using work and education as their safe place. One such participant described her experience,

> He would fight all the time with me and just was never satisfied with anything even though in my mind we were living in what I thought was the American dream…I went to work. I cooked everyday…I finally got to what was making me really angry. I’m doing all this what I think I’m supposed to do as a wife and mother and all he could do was complain about it and make me feel really bad about that. So the last battering took place after I fought back in my own way by throwing away the food…and he went literally berserk and was awful, just awful and then he left. It was at that point I called my mom. .. I filed for a divorce…so where is my solace, in the books and learning. I went back to school.

One participant described her interaction with a co-worker, “…she said, ‘what are those marks on your neck,’ and I remember just breaking down crying and sharing with her what was going; that I was being beat. Because I still went to work because most of the time where he hit me wasn’t on my face.” This participant also described the episode in the unravelling process when she put her trust in God, “…it was just God’s divine intervention because what happened was while he had me down this cold wind kind of just blew between us, scared both of us, he jumped up and I ran out.” The participants who exemplified this trajectory described periods of re-entanglement when they returned to the relationship often due to loneliness, “…there were signs
but I stayed because I wanted this life that everyone talks about…and so I stayed because I thought I could fix it.”

These participants successfully unraveled the work and IPV. They persisted through the unravelling process through emotional and physical help from others, standing up to the abuser and for some, by putting their trust in God. They tended to use a safe work and school environment to continue to work through the unravelling process. Consequently, work and IPV were disentangled and they found joy and meaning in their careers. One participant said, “Now I have learned that I’m a good [work]. So now I’m focused on career and that kept me kind of balanced.”

In summary, three trajectories emerged from the data for employment maintenance among women who have experienced IPV. Although all participants described their experience within one of these three trajectories, the case exemplars discussed, best illustrate each trajectory.

**Summary**

Women who have experienced IPV are able to attain jobs; however, they cannot maintain meaningful employment while in a violent relationship. Work and IPV are integrally intertwined. Women initially view the relationship between their work and their violent relationship as intertwined because work is negatively affected by the relationship. Women try to keep the violent relationship and work separate for a period of time, however, this becomes impossible. Women’s attempts to separate the work and IPV are futile because the work and the violence are not just intertwined, they are entangled. Work and IPV are entangled through the perpetrator controlling appearance, sabotaging work, interfering with work and controlling finances. Some women are able to disentangle the work and IPV, resulting in their gaining pride in work, choosing a career path, gaining control over finances and finding joy and meaning in work. Once
aware of the work and IPV being entangled, the unravelling process begins. The unravelling process is facilitated by receiving emotional and physical support from others, the woman standing up to the abuser, putting her trust in God and having a reason to get out of the violent relationship. There are periods during the unravelling process when work is re-entangled with the violence. Re-entanglement occurs when the woman lacks emotional and physical support, when she returns to the relationship due to financial hardship or loneliness and when there is a reintroduction of interference in the workplace. In conclusion, work is either about the perpetrator, under his control and entangled in the violence, or work is disentangled from the violence and becomes about her, under her control, and part of her identity as a strong woman.
Chapter V

Discussion

This chapter includes a review of the findings of this study, a comparison of the findings to current literature, limitations, implications and recommendations for future research related to intimate partner violence (IPV) and women’s employment.

Review of Findings

This research study sought to explore the common process and develop a theoretical framework to describe how women who have experienced IPV attain and maintain employment. Women who have experienced IPV are able to attain jobs; however, they cannot maintain meaningful employment while in a violent relationship. Work and IPV are integrally intertwined. Women initially view the relationship between their work and their violent relationship as intertwined because work is negatively affected by the relationship. Women try to keep the violent relationship and work separate for a period of time, however, this becomes impossible. Women’s attempts to separate the work and IPV are futile because the work and the violence are not just intertwined, they are entangled. Work and IPV are entangled through the perpetrator controlling appearance, sabotaging work, interfering with work and controlling finances. Some women are able to disentangle the work and IPV, resulting in their gaining pride in work, choosing a career path, gaining control over finances and finding joy and meaning in work. Once aware of the work and IPV being entangled, the unravelling process begins. The unravelling process is facilitated by receiving emotional and physical support from others, the woman standing up to the abuser, putting her trust in God and having a reason to get out of the violent relationship. There are periods during the unravelling process when work is re-entangled with the violence. Re-entanglement occurs when the woman lacks emotional and physical support, when
she returns to the relationship due to financial hardship or loneliness and when there is a re-introduction of interference in the workplace. In conclusion, work is either about the perpetrator, under his control and entangled in the violence, or work is disentangled from the violence and becomes about her, under her control, and part of her identity as a strong woman.

**Comparison of Findings**

Similarities and differences were found between findings in this study and those of previous literature. Previous literature included findings related to: (a) IPV and women attaining employment; (b) IPV and women maintaining employment; (c) the impact of employment on women who have experienced IPV and; (d) the impact of IPV on employers.

Similarities were found related to women who have experienced IPV attaining and maintaining employment, the impact of employment, and the impact on employers. Findings from previous studies included the difficulty women experienced in attaining employment (Allen, et al., 2004; Alexander, 2011; Brush, 2000; Davidson, et al., 2012; Gorde, et al., 2004; Honeycutt, et al., 2001; Levin, 2001; Lloyd & Taluc, 1999). A few of the women in this study did report difficulty attaining employment after being unable to unravel the work and IPV, resulting in the establishment of a poor work history. This sporadic work history then impacted their ability to attain future employment.

Researchers in previous studies described factors impacting employment maintenance. These factors included physical and psychological health concerns, current IPV, social support, workplace support, perpetrator interference, and economic abuse. (Adams, et al., 2013; Adams, et al., 2013; Bell, 2003; Browne, et al., 1999; Crowne, et al., 2011; Galvez, et al., 2011; Hayes, 2012; Kimerling, et al., 2009; Lindhorst, et al., 2007; Logan, et al., 2007; Meisel, et al., 2003; Moe & Bell, 2004; Nurius, et al., 2003; Postmus, et al., 2012; Potter & Banyard, 2011; Riger, et
Similarly, this study found employment maintenance as difficult for women with experience with IPV, with similar factors impacting the ability to maintain employment. In addition, this study described specifically how work and IPV were entangled and the re-entanglement women encountered in the process of attempting to unravel the work and IPV with rich descriptions for each. The entanglement of work and IPV and episodes of re-entanglement impacted the woman’s ability to maintain employment.

Identification of employment as critical to escaping abusive relationships was found by researchers in previous studies. Investigators found that women who disclosed IPV to others in the workplace were most likely to receive informal and formal supports (Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Swanberg, et al., 2006; Swanberg, et al., 2007; Tolman & Rosen, 2001; Wettersten, et al., 2004; Yoshihama, et al., 2006; Yragui, et al., 2012). Similarly, this study found that co-workers and bosses had a significant impact on the woman’s ability to maintain employment. Most of the women who unraveled work and IPV and found job stability cited co-workers and bosses as supportive by helping her recognize the abuse and providing emotional support, and helping her physically remove herself from the relationship. Emotional support was extended in the form of positive statements, providing training or a work contract to maintain productivity. Women also cited ways in which co-workers and bosses provided physical boundaries with security, and initiating the involvement of law enforcement personnel. Those women who attempted to hide the abuse from co-workers and employers were less likely to gain co-worker support and maintain employment.

Previous researchers identified interference tactics used by perpetrators of IPV, to attempt to control women, interfere with women’s ability to maintain employment through direct verbal
harassment during the workday, manipulating resources such as child support and childcare, stalking behaviors, and intimidating co-workers and friends (Bell, 2003; Galvez et al., 2011; Hayes, 2012; Logan, et al., 2007; Moe & Bell, 2004). This study revealed similar interference tactics used by perpetrators to include work itself as a source of control.

IPV was shown in previous studies to impact employers through decreased employee productivity, decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism and difficulty concentrating among employees experiencing IPV (Banyard, et al., 2011; McFarlane, et al., 2000; Reeves & O’Leary, 2007; Swanberg & Macke, 2006). Participants in this study also described the negative impact of the abuser’s interference with daily work activities and their inability to maintain consistent attendance, or productivity in the workplace.

Differences from previous literature were found related to women who have experienced IPV attaining and maintaining employment, the impact of employment, and the impact on employers. Previous literature described the attainment of employment for women with IPV experience as difficult, citing several factors such as education, and health concerns (Allen et al., 2004; Alexander, 2011; Brush, 2000; Davidson, et al., 2012; Gorde, et al., 2004; Honeycutt, et al., 2001; Levin, 2001; Lloyd & Taluc, 1999). In contrast, women in this study described that initially attaining employment was easy; however, it was difficult to maintain consistent employment. Previous researchers reported that women who experienced IPV had established poor work histories while cycling in and out of abuse (Bell, 2003), however, the unravelling process leading toward job stability and the ways work and IPV were re-entangled resulting in the inability to maintain employment were not identified. Specifically, the role of co-workers during the unravelling process was found to be critical to women’s ability to maintain employment in this study. The daily, on-going physical and emotional impact of the violence
was also described in this study through the rich descriptions of the women’s attempts to prepare for work each day and also meet the constant daily demands of the abuser. All of the women in this study experienced a period of time when the work itself was used as a source of control by the partner to abuse the woman, resulting in the entanglement of work and IPV.

In summary, previous literature focused on women’s inability to attain and maintain employment and did not explore the actual process by which women unraveled work and IPV and established job security. Although researchers in previous studies determined factors impacting women’s ability to attain and maintain employment, this study further delineated the ways work and IPV were entangled and disentangled, as well as the unravelling process and ways work and IPV were re-entangled, impacting the ability of women to maintain meaningful employment. Women participants in this study identified the process by which employment became about her as a strong woman and unraveled from the violent relationship.

Study Limitations

Researcher bias was a potential limitation of this study. Perceptions and subsequent analysis may have been influenced by this researcher’s education and experience as a nurse and administrative supervisor of women employees who experienced IPV. Use of an interview guide and on-going analysis of transcripts by the research team were used to prevent these biases from influencing the development of the theoretical framework. However, it is possible that researcher bias may have influenced the participant responses.

Self-report was used to gather data thus limiting the descriptions to those memories participants were able to remember and were willing to share during the interview. The presence of the interviewer and the tape recorder may have affected what participants said. Some may argue that a limitation of qualitative research is the participants responding based on
what they perceive as socially desirable or biased and not reflective of actual events. However, grounded theory is based on the participants’ responses as their own individual perception of the events and experiences of the psycho-social process of attaining and maintaining employment.

The retrospective design of the study is another methodological limitation of the study. Differences among participants in time in and out of relationships and work may have also influenced their responses. Additionally, stories were recalled from memory which may have impacted the participants’ accurate recall of events, people and thought processes. However, in this study there were six women out of the thirty four total participants who had been out of the abusive relationship for greater than one year. Furthermore, all participants described events, thoughts and feelings related to how they attained and maintained employment in extensive detail.

The convenience sample of those responding to the flyer, word of mouth and the snowball effect, as well as the sample being limited to one region of a Midwestern state in the United States, may not be a representative sample of all women experiencing this phenomenon. Additionally, the sample included only African American and Caucasian women potentially limiting the results to those races exclusively.

**Transferability**

The phenomenon of IPV is present across all demographics. Participants in this study were spread across a diverse range of age, income and places of employment, however, the entanglement of work and IPV was consistent across all participants. This similarity increases the transferability of data and analysis to other women who have experienced IPV and are attempting to attain and maintain employment. Transferability would be further strengthened in future research including a more racially diverse population.
Study Implications

Recognition of the ways work and IPV are entangled and ways re-entanglement occurs are critical in guiding and supporting the women in her attempts to unravel the work and IPV while minimizing episodes of re-entanglement. For education, reinforcement and expansion of education and training around recognition of IPV in the workplace for personnel in all levels is critical. Additionally, after being educated about the ways women attempt to maintain the relationship while working and the ways work and IPV are entangled, disentangled and re-entangled in the unravelling process, healthcare workers, occupational health nurses, advocates and criminal justice personnel may be able to recognize and intervene during these episodes to guide the woman toward unravelling the work and IPV, while minimizing re-entanglement.

The study confirms the need to continue to take proactive steps to ensure the security of all personnel in the workplace especially those in positions working with the public who are most vulnerable to public perpetrator interference such as restaurants. Policies ensuring electronic security (phone lines and email) are also essential. Additionally, the study highlights the critical role of co-workers and bosses in assisting the survivor in becoming aware of the abuse and the support in taking steps to protect herself and her family. Consequently, policies that support on-going encouragement of employees and administrators to use existing resources such as security personnel and involvement of law enforcement to establish and maintain a secure workplace are essential. Education of supervisors responsible for scheduling, attendance and productivity is critical to early intervention to support the survivor in ending the abuse and maintaining consistent employment. Use of secure on-line access to payroll information as well as on-site credit union facilities may be encouraged for women who need to establish financial independence, further protecting their assets from a perpetrator’s economic abuse.
**Future Research**

Given the prevalence of IPV and women working outside the home across cultures, this study may be replicated in other areas of the US and within other countries to gain further understanding of the process among a more diverse population and within other cultures. Additionally, further exploration of each of the ways work and IPV are entangled, disentangled and re-entangled and the unravelling process may provide more in-depth understanding of the barriers and facilitators to women attaining and maintaining stable employment to enhance her health and quality of life. Identifying these barriers and facilitators may lead to the development of inter professional collaborative partnerships and implementation of interventions designed to break down barriers and facilitate women’s ability to attain and maintain employment, eventually unravelling work from violence.

**Conclusions**

The rich descriptions provided by the participants in this study helped the researcher to meet the purpose of the study to develop a theoretical framework that describes how women who have experienced IPV attain and maintain employment. Thirty four women and five community members who met the inclusion criteria participated in interviews to provide insight about their experiences with IPV and employment. Analysis using the constant comparative method identified ways that violence and employment were entangled, ways women were employed that were meaningful and separate from the violence, and the critical junctures and setbacks during the process of becoming meaningfully employed. Every participant described ways work and IPV were entangled. All women described experiences in which work itself was used as a source of control by the partner to abuse the woman. Women described attempting to maintain both the abusive relationship and employment; however, this eventually became impossible to continue.
Consequently, the interview data revealed that women cannot have true job security and satisfaction while in an abusive relationship. In conclusion, unravelling entangled work and IPV, and gaining job security and satisfaction, is a dynamic process with periods of re-entanglement for women who have experienced IPV.

Knowledge gained through these participants’ descriptions extends nursing knowledge about the process by which women who have experienced IPV attain and maintain employment. Therefore, the findings from this study can guide efforts to inform providers, employers, criminal justice personnel, survivors’ advocates and women experiencing IPV, about effective steps to take to work toward unravelling work from violence, maintaining women’s employment and decreasing the negative effects of abuse among women and their families.
References


APPENDIX A

Employment Maintenance Among Women
Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence

Community Assessment and Walk-Through Guide

Date: _________ Zip code: _________ Physical location: ____________

Community observations/description

Geopolitical boundaries

Size (sq mi.)

Transportation

Physical environment (housing, condition, land usage)

Population Demographics

Formal groups (schools, churches, businesses)

Production, distribution & consumption of goods & services

Gov’t & business groups

Socialization of community members through community social events

Health and Human Service Organizations
APPENDIX B
IRB APPROVAL

Institutional Review Board – Federal wide Assurance #00003152
University of Cincinnati

Date: 10/4/2013
From: UC IRB Committee
To: Principal Investigator: Andrea Borchers
External
Study ID: 2013-0790
Re: Study Title: Employment Maintenance Among Women Experiencing or Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence

This study expires on: 6/4/2014.

An amendment to the above referenced protocol was reviewed and APPROVED using an EXPEDITED review procedure as set forth in 45 CFR 46.110(b) on 10/4/2013.

Amendment Documents:
Maler_COI[1].pdf

Add Jeffrey Maler as study staff.

Please note the following requirements:

OTHER APPROVALS: Principal investigators are responsible for maintaining approval from other applicable review committees and performance sites. This includes, but is not limited to, Divisional Scientific Review committee, General Clinical Research Center (GCRC), Radiation Safety, Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), Conflict of Interest (COI) Committee, and any sites (i.e. schools, hospitals) where the research may be conducted. Principal investigators are also responsible for maintaining approval from the FDA and a valid contract between the sponsor and this institution, as applicable. If any of these entities require changes to the IRB-approved protocol and/or informed consent/assent document(s), the changes must be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

AMENDMENTS: The principal investigator is responsible for notifying the IRB of any changes in the protocol, participating investigators, procedures, recruitment, consent forms, FDA status, or conflicts of interest. Approval is based on the information as submitted. New procedures cannot be initiated until IRB approval has been given. If you wish
to change any aspect of this study, please submit an Amendment via ePAS to the IRB, providing
a justification for each requested change.

CONTINUING REVIEW: The investigator is responsible for submitting a Continuing Review
via ePAS to the IRB at least 30 days prior to the expiration date listed above. Please note that
study procedures may only continue into the next cycle if the IRB has reviewed and granted re-
approval prior to the expiration date.

UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS: The investigator is responsible for reporting unanticipated
problems promptly to the IRB via ePAS according to current CCHMC reporting policy found on
CenterLink.

STUDY COMPLETION: The investigator is responsible for notifying the IRB by submitting a
Request to Close via ePAS when the research, including data analysis, has completed.

Statement regarding International conference on Harmonization and Good Clinical Practices:
The Institutional Review Board is duly constituted (fulfilling FDA requirements for diversity),
has written procedures for initial and continuing review of clinical trials; prepares written
minutes of convened meetings, and retains records pertaining to the review and approval process;
all in compliance with requirements defined in 21 CFR Parts 50, 56 and 312 Code of Federal
Regulations. This institution is in compliance with the ICH GCP as adopted by FDA/DHHS.

Thank you for your cooperation during the review process.

§46.110. Expedited review procedures for certain kinds of research involving no more than
minimal risk, and for minor changes in approved research.

§46.108(b) An IRB may use the expedited review procedure to review either or both of the
following:

1. some or all of the research appearing on the list and found by the reviewer(s) to involve
   no more than minimal risk,
2. minor changes in previously approved research during the period (of one year or less) for
   which approval is authorized.

Under an expedited review procedure, the review may be carried out by the IRB chairperson or
by one or more experienced reviewers designated by the chairperson from among members of
the IRB. In reviewing the research, the reviewers may exercise all of the authorities of the IRB
except that the reviewers may not disapprove the research. A research activity may be
disapproved only after review in accordance with the non-expedited procedure set forth in
§46.108(b).
APPENDIX C

EMPLOYMENT MAINTENANCE AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

RECRUITMENT FLYER

Women’s Intimate Partner Relationships and Employment
Research Study Participants Needed
You receive $35 for your time.
Your story may help others.
Interviews Conducted in Your Community

1 in 3 women have been abused by a current or former partner or spouse.

I would like to talk with you if you are a woman age 18 or older who have experienced intimate partner violence and have been employed outside the home.
or
if you are an employer, friend or professional working with women who have experienced intimate partner violence.

Participation involves:
1 to 1 1/2 hour private face-to-face, audio-taped interview.
For more information and to sign up, call this confidential, toll-free number:
937-369-0953

This study is conducted by Andrea Borohers MS, RN a doctoral student at the University of Cincinnati College of Nursing
and has been approved by the UC Human Subjects Review Board: # 2013-0790

Tear off number below
Andrea  Andrea  Andrea  Andrea  Andrea  Andrea

107
APPENDIX D

Telephone Message Script

“Hello, You have reached the phone number for participating in the study about
Women’s Intimate Partner Relationships and Employment being conducted by Andrea
Borchers RN of the University of Cincinnati College of Nursing. The purpose of this
study is to explore the process by which women experiencing or who have experienced
intimate partner violence attain and maintain stable employment. If you are a woman
over the age of 18 who is experiencing or who has experienced intimate partner violence
during your adult lifetime and have obtained stable employment, you may be eligible for
this study.

If you are an employer, friend or professional, over the age of 18, working with a
woman who is experiencing or who has experienced intimate partner violence during her
adult lifetime, you may also be eligible for this study.

Participation in this study involves a 60 – 90 minute face-to-face interview with me,
Andrea Borchers at a convenient, private meeting room at a local library, healthcare
facility or college in your area. If you are currently at risk for immediate danger call 911
or the 24 hour domestic violence hotline: 222-SAFE (7233). You are not eligible for this
study if you are in immediate danger if participation in the study were known or if you
have never been hired or employed outside the home.
If you would like to share your experiences with intimate partner violence and employment for this important study, please give only contact information that will NOT put you at risk of harm and the best time to reach you. Again, if you are in immediate danger call 911 or the 24 hour domestic violence hotline: 222-SAFE (7233).

Thank you for calling.”
APPENDIX E
Employment Maintenance and Intimate Partner Violence Study
Screening Interview and Distress Protocol

All screening will be conducted by an experienced mental health clinician:
As a service coordinator and program manager for the Help Me Grow Program through the Ohio Department of
Health, Montgomery County from 1994 to 2007, Andrea Borchers PhDc, RN, provided care and crisis intervention
for individuals and families challenged with child abuse, intimate partner violence, and potential for suicide and
homicide in the community. During this time she routinely assessed and provided intervention for individuals and
families at risk for harming self or others. She coordinated interdisciplinary teams to provide services for at risk
families and families in crisis. Additionally, Andrea Borchers reviewed and developed nursing educational modules
related to care of individuals and families in crisis from 2007 to 2011. As a school nurse, Andrea routinely assessed
and provided interventions for children, teens and families experiencing mental health challenges. Currently, Andrea
is an associate professor of nursing in the BSN program at Kettering College, teaching psychiatric nursing and
health promotion and wellness.

“This is Andrea Borchers from the University of Cincinnati College of Nursing. Thank you for your interest in our
study. Do you have any questions about the study? (If yes, answer questions. If no, proceed.)
Could you please verify your name, address and phone number?
Because the topic of intimate partner violence and employment can be sensitive and might bring up tough feelings, I
am advising individuals who are experiencing a high level of stress or emotional distress or whose participation
might put them in danger not participate at this time. Is it all right if I ask you some questions to determine if there is
any reason you should not participate? “ (If no, thank for time and interest. If yes, conduct screening interview).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screening Questions</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Follow-up Questions</th>
<th>Caller’s Responses</th>
<th>Acute Emotional Distress or Safety Concern? (Y or N)</th>
<th>Imminent Danger? (Y or N)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are you experiencing a high level of stress or any emotional distress?</td>
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<td>1. Tell me what you are experiencing. 2. Is it getting in the way of you doing things you need to do (work, family obligations)? 3. Is it getting in the way of you taking care of yourself? 4. Have you been in the hospital recently for this problem?</td>
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<td>2. Are you currently having thoughts of harming yourself?</td>
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<td>1. Tell me what thoughts you are having. 2. Do you intend to harm yourself? 3. How do you intend to harm yourself? 4. When do you intend to harm yourself? 5. Do you have the means to harm yourself?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Are you currently having thoughts of harming others?</td>
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<td>1. Tell me what thoughts you are having. 2. Do you intend to harm someone else? Who? 3. How do you intend to harm him/her/them? 4. When do you intend to</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions for screener:</td>
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<td>1. If answers to screening questions are all NO, read confidentiality statement and schedule an interview. Confidentiality statement: “All answers that you give will be kept private. But under law, I must report to the state suspected cases of child or elder abuse or if you tell me you are planning to cause serious harm to yourself or others.”</td>
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<td>2. If a participant’s responses reflect acute distress or safety concerns but NOT imminent danger, take the following actions:</td>
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<td>a. Do not schedule an interview.</td>
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<td>b. Recommend that the caller contact her mental health care provider OR Crisis –Care 937-224-4646 OR Artemis 24 Hour Domestic Violence Hotline 222-SAFE (7233).</td>
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<td>c. Indicate that, with the caller’s permission, Crisis-Care will call her the next day to see if she is okay.</td>
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<td>d. Notify Dr. Donna Martsolf (Dissertation Chair) of the results of the screening.</td>
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<td>3. If a participant’s responses to additional screening questions reflect imminent danger:</td>
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<td>a. Contact local law authorities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Indicate that, with the caller’s permission. Crisis-Care will contact her the next day to see if she is okay.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Notify Dr. Donna Martsolf and Crisis-Care the results of the screening immediately.</td>
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Title of Study:
Employment Maintenance Among Women Experiencing or Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence

Introduction:
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Please read this paper carefully and ask questions about anything that you do not understand.

Who is doing this research study?
The person in charge of this research study is Andrea Borchers MS, RN of the University of Cincinnati (UC) College of Nursing. She is being guided in this research by Donna Martsof PhD, RN, FAAN. There may be other people on the research team helping at different times during the study.

What is the purpose of this research study?
Some women are abused by their husband or boyfriend. The purpose of this research study is to find out how these women get and keep jobs.

Who will be in this research study?
- About 45 people will take part in this study.
- Everyone must be at least 18 years old to take part in this study.
- Some women in this study will have been abused by their husband or boyfriend. To be in this study they also must have had a paying job at some time.
- Some people in this study have hired abused women or are their friends. Some work to help abused women.

What will you be asked to do in this research study, and how long will it take?
- You will be asked to talk about the ways being abused affected having a job. What you say will be tape-recorded.
- It will take about 60 to 90 minutes.
- The research will take place in a place you have chosen.
Are there any risks to being in this research study?
- Talking about your experiences may make you feel sad or upset. Please let the researcher know if you feel this way.
- You may answer only those questions you wish to answer.
- You may stop the interview at any time.
- The husband or boyfriend of some women might hurt them if they talk about their experiences. If you are afraid that might happen to you, please stop being in this study.
- You may pick a safe place to have the interview.
- Your name will be kept confidential. There is more information about that later in this paper.
- You may ask for information about getting help if you want it.

Are there any benefits from being in this research study?
- Talking about your experiences might make you feel better.
- People who help abused women might learn new ways to help them.

What will you get because of being in this research study?
You will be given $35 cash today for participating in the study.

Do you have choices about taking part in this research study?
You may skip any questions you do not want to answer. You may ask that the tape recorder be turned off for some or all questions.

How will your research information be kept confidential?
- Your name will not be used on the audio-tape or transcript to protect your privacy.
- Exceptions include information related to the abuse of a child or indications of danger to self and others.
- Under law, we must report to the state suspected cases of child abuse or if you tell us you are planning to cause serious harm to yourself or others.
- Results will be reported for the group as a whole, although descriptions of your experiences and your words may be used as examples.
- Audio-tapes of the interviews will be destroyed after being transcribed.
- Transcripts of the interview will be kept on a password protected share drive at the University of Cincinnati College of Nursing until data analysis is complete. After that it will be destroyed by being deleted from the share drive.
• Agents of the University of Cincinnati may inspect study records for audit or quality assurance purposes.

What are your legal rights in this research study?
• You will keep any legal rights you have.
• Nothing in this consent form waives any legal rights you may have.
• This consent form also does not release the investigator, the institution, or its agents from liability for negligence.

What if you have questions about this research study?
• If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, you should contact Andrea Borchers MS, RN at 937-369-0953.
• The UC Institutional Review Board reviews all research projects that involve human participants to be sure the rights and welfare of participants are protected.
• If you have questions about your rights as a participant or complaints about the study, you may contact the UC IRB at (513) 558-5259.
• Or, you may call the UC Research Compliance Hotline at (800) 889-1547, or write to the IRB, 300 University Hall, ML 0567, 51 Goodman Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0567, or email the IRB office at irb@ucmail.uc.edu.

Do you HAVE to take part in this research study?
• No one has to be in this research study.
• You will NOT receive a penalty and you will NOT lose any benefits you have if you decide not to participate in the study.
• You may start and then change your mind and stop at any time.
• To stop being in the study, you should tell Andrea Borchers MS, RN.

Agreement:
I have read this information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I give my consent to participate in this research study. I will receive a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep.

Participant Name (please print) ____________________________________________

Participant Signature ___________________________ Date _________

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent ___________________________ Date _________
APPENDIX G
EMPLOYMENT MAINTENANCE AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

Age:

Which of the following BEST describes how you see yourself?

_____Latino or Hispanic
_____American Indian or Alaskan Native
_____Asian
_____Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
_____Black or African American
_____White
_____Appalachian
_____More than one race
_____Other

Are you currently employed? _____yes     _____no
   If you answered “yes”: Starting date of employment________  #hours per week_____

Have you been employed in the past? _____yes    _____no
   If you answered “yes”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position #1</th>
<th>Start Date (month/year)</th>
<th>End date(month/year)</th>
<th>Hours/week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Position #2</td>
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<td>Position #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Position #4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marital Status:

Number of Children:

_____ Under age 18 _____Number Living with you _____ Not Living with you
_____ Over age 18 _____Number Living with you_____ Not Living with you

Religious affiliation:
Zip Code:

Number in Household:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Personal Income:</th>
<th>Current Household Income:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$10,000 to 19,999</td>
<td>$10,000 to 19,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>$20,000 to 34,999</td>
<td>$20,000 to 34,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>$35,000 to 44,999</td>
<td>$35,000 to 44,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>$45,000 to 59,999</td>
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<td>$60,000 to 74,000</td>
<td>$60,000 to 74,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$75,000 to 99,999</td>
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<td>$100,000 to 124,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>$125,000 to 149,999</td>
<td>$125,000 to 149,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>$150,000 to 199,999</td>
<td>$150,000 to 199,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>$200,000 or more</td>
<td>$200,000 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H
EMPLOYMENT MAINTENANCE AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE
INTERVIEW GUIDE

You have expressed that you have experienced violence or mistreatment within an intimate relationship and have been employed. I am interested in finding out what your experience(s) of intimate partner violence and the process of attaining and maintaining employment were like for you.

Tell me about your experiences of intimate partner violence and employment.

How did you go about attaining employment?

What actions have you taken to attain and maintain employment?

How did you manage your employment while experiencing intimate partner violence?

What was this experience like for you?

What else was going on in your life?

What other ways have you experienced violence or abuse in your life?

What/Who was helpful to you and why?

What/Who was not helpful to you and why?

How was your employer involved in helping you attain or maintain employment?

Based on your experiences, what advice would you give professionals and employers who encounter women experiencing or who have experienced intimate partner violence and attempting to attain or maintain employment?

What would be your advice to others in your same circumstances?
## APPENDIX I

### Employment Maintenance and Intimate Partner Violence Study

#### Research Interview and Distress Protocol

The following protocol outlines the actions of the mental health clinician if, during the course of the interview, a participant exhibits acute distress or safety concerns – or imminent danger to self or others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indications of distress during interview</th>
<th>Follow-up questions</th>
<th>Participant behaviors/ responses</th>
<th>Acute emotional distress/ safety concern? (Y or N)</th>
<th>Imminent Danger (Y or N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicate they are experiencing a high level of stress or emotional distress, OR exhibit behaviors suggestive that the interview is too stressful such as uncontrolled crying, incoherent speech, indications of flashbacks, etc.</td>
<td>1. Stop the interview 2. Offer support and allow the participant time to regroup 3. Assess mental status: a. Tell me what thoughts you are having. b. Tell me what you are feeling right now. c. Do you feel you are able to go on about your day? d. Do you feel safe? (If NO, ask questions below) 4. Determine if the person is experiencing acute emotional distress beyond what would be normally expected in an interview about a sensitive topic.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicate they are thinking of hurting themselves.</td>
<td>1. Stop the interview. 2. Express concern and conduct a safety assessment a. Tell me what thoughts you are having. b. Do you intend to harm yourself? c. How do you intend to harm yourself? d. When do you intend to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Indicate they are thinking of hurting others. | 1. Stop the interview.  
2. Express concern and conduct a safety assessment.  
a. Tell me what thoughts you are having.  
b. Do you intend to harm someone else? Who?  
c. How do you intend to harm him/her/them?  
d. When do you intend to harm him/her/them?  
e. Do you have the means to harm him/her/them?  
3. Determine if the person is an imminent danger to others. |
| Indicate they would be in any danger if anyone else found out about their participation in the study. | 1. Stop the interview  
2. Assess danger from other person  
a. How might you be in danger?  
b. How might the other person find out you were participating?  
c. What do you think the other person would do if they found out you were participating in the study?  
3. Determine if the person is experiencing a safety concern. |

Actions for mental health clinician:

1. If a participant’s distress reflects an emotional response reflective of what would be expected in an interview about a sensitive topic, offer support and extend the opportunity:  
a) stop the interview; b) regroup; c) continue.
2. If a participant’s distress reflects acute emotional distress or a safety concern beyond what would be expected in an interview about a sensitive topic, but NOT imminent danger, take the following actions
   e. Recommend that the participant contact her mental health care provider OR Crisis – Care 937-224-4646 OR Artemis 24 Hour Domestic Violence Hotline 222-SAFE (7233).
   f. Provide the participant with the number of the emergency room at the hospital. And encourage the participant to call either if she experiences increased distress in the hours/days following the interview.
   g. Indicate that, with the participant’s permission, a Crisis-Care clinician will contact her the next day to see if she is okay.
   h. Notify Dr. Donna Martsolf (Dissertation Chair) of the recommendations given to participant.

3. If a participant’s distress reflects imminent danger:
   d. Contact local law authorities unless arrangements can be made for the participant to be transported to the emergency room by a family member.
   e. Indicate that, with the caller’s permission. Crisis-Care will contact her the next day to see if she is okay.
   f. Notify Dr. Donna Martzolf and Crisis-Care of actions taken immediately.
APPENDIX J
COMMUNITY RESOURCES

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A CRIME IN OHIO.
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIM
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEEK RELIEF THROUGH CRIMINAL OR CIVIL MEANS OR BOTH.

CRIMINAL
You have the right to participate in the prosecution process. The option to “drop” charges is not available. Domestic violence is not only a crime against you, but also against the state; therefore, the decision to “drop” charges can only be made by criminal justice professionals.

You have the right to provide the court with a victim impact statement for their use in any case decisions.

You can request a Temporary Protection Order (TPO), which will order the abuser to stay away from your residence, work place, and/or school. It will also order the abuser to refrain from telephoning, harassing, or threatening you directly or through others. This TPO were in effect only from the time your abuser is handed the TPO through the end of the criminal case. A TPO lasting a longer time is available through your civil options, which are described in the next section, with the label “CIVIL”.

To participate in obtaining relief through criminal options, follow the instructions given to you by the law enforcement officer who gives you this sheet. Depending on where you live in Montgomery County, you may be instructed to go to your local police department, prosecutors’ office, and/or clerk or courts. You can call the number listed on the back of this sheet inside the box at the bottom of the page. You can also call Artemis Center for Alternatives to Domestic Violence (222-7233) for legal advocacy and court accompaniment.

If your abuser is found guilty, the outcome may be that your abuser is put in jail, ordered into counseling, ordered to pay a fine, put on probation, some combination of these, or receive a suspended sentence.

CIVIL
To seek civil relief you may want an attorney, but also can file paperwork without an attorney. If you do not have an attorney, you can get assistance and/or an attorney through Legal Aid Line of Western Ohio (1-888-534-1432) or Artemis Center for Alternatives to Domestic Violence (222-7233). Civil relief is granted through Domestic Relations Court, which can provide the following:
- A CPO for up to five years which is renewable
- An order vacating the abuser from the home
- An order awarding temporary custody of children
- Child visitation orders
- An order for child support
- An order for temporary use of family car
- Appointment of household items
- An order for treatment for the abuser

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A CRIME IN OHIO.
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE.
COMPENSATION
You may be eligible to seek Crime Victims Compensation for financial losses such as medical costs and lost wages not covered by other insurance or benefits; call a program listed on the back of this sheet in the RESOURCES section to pursue this.

CPO/TPO ENFORCEMENT
You have the right to enforce your TPO/CPO against the person who assaulted you. Violating a TPO/CPO is a crime in Ohio. If your abuser violates a TPO/CPO, report the violation to your local law enforcement agency. If your TPO is from Domestic Relations Court, you may also seek contempt proceedings.

OVER FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

RESOURCES
Help is available. If you have children, they are also affected by the violence, even if they are not directly abused. The following agencies can provide services for you and/or children.

ARTEMIS CENTER for ALTERNATIVES to DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
24 Hour Domestic Violence Hotline 222-SAFE (7233) TTY 461-7910 Business 461-5091 Fax: 461-2852

Provides ongoing emotional support and problem-solving, safety planning, information & referral, court advocacy, limited legal services, child therapy, support and education groups, and assistance with filing Crime Victim Compensation. Accepts collect calls. No fees for services.

YWCA Shelter Services
24 Hour Domestic Violence Hotline 222-SAFE (7233) TTY 331-7112 Business 461-5550

Provides emergency shelter, information & referral, related supportive services for domestic violence victims. Accepts collect calls. No fees for services.

Legal Aid Line of Western Ohio
This telephone and web-based system provides free legal information, advice and referral to eligible residents of northwest and west central Ohio. New legal aid applicants outside of Lucas County should call Legal Aid Line toll-free at 1-888-534-1432. (Para ayuda en Español llama gratis al 1-866-794-7281.) Provides legal services to domestic violence victims who meet financial and other criteria. You may also access on-line at: http://www.ablelaw.org

VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday)
Provides defendant custody information and notification of release from county jail, state prison or state juvenile facility. You may call 1-800-770-0192 for offender status information and notification.

DEVELOP A SAFETY PLAN
Once abuse has started, it is likely to continue and to get worse. Make a plan to protect yourself and your children. If your children are old enough, share the safety plan with them. If you are planning on leaving, keep in mind that your abuser is likely to become more violent and/or unpredictable during or just prior to separation. Please call the Montgomery County Domestic Violence Hotline at 222-7233 to discuss options about how to stay safe at such a critical time.

Know who to call for help.
- Family or Friends
- YWCA Shelter Services 222-SAFE (7233)
- Artemis 222-SAFE(7233)
- Your Local Law Enforcement Agency or 911
Remember, if you feel unsafe or threatened, there are resources in this community to help you.

**NOTE:** Even if your abuser was arrested, you still need to plan for your future safety. Your abuser may be released on bail without notice to you. To find out if your abuser is in jail, you can call the Montgomery County Jail at 225-4160 or the VINE program at 1-800-770-0192. If your abuser was not taken to the Montgomery County Jail; contact the law enforcement officers who gave you this sheet to find out where your abuser is jailed.
Help is available. If you have any children, they are also affected by the violence, even if they are not directly abused. The following agencies can provide services for you and/or your children.

**Resources**

**DEVELOP A SAFETY PLAN**

Once abuse has started, it is likely to continue and to get worse. Make a plan to protect yourself and your children. If your children are old enough, share the safety plan with them. If you are planning on leaving, keep in mind that your abuser is likely to become more violent and/or unpredictable during or just prior to separation. Please call the Montgomery County Domestic Violence Hotline to discuss options about how to stay safe at such a critical time.

**Montgomery County Domestic Violence Hotline**

**222-7233**

Know who to call for help

- Family or Friends
- YWCA Shelter services 222-SAFE (7233)
- Artemis Center 222-SAFE (7233)
- Your Local Law Enforcement Agency or 911

Remember, if you feel unsafe or threatened, there are resources in this community to help you.

**NOTE:** EVEN IF YOUR ABUSER WAS ARRESTED, YOU STILL NEED TO PLAN FOR YOUR FUTURE SAFETY. YOUR ABUSER MAY BE RELEASED ON BAIL WITHOUT NOTICE TO YOU. TO FIND OUT IF YOUR ABUSER IS IN JAIL, YOU CAN CALL THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY JAIL AT 225-4160 OR THE VINE PROGRAM AT 1-800-770-0192. IF YOUR ABUSER WAS NOT TAKEN TO THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY JAIL; CONTACT THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WHO GAVE YOU THE SHEET TO FIND OUT WHERE YOUR ABUSER IS JAILED.
Safety Plan Checklist

⇒ Call 911; program this number to your phone

⇒ Go to shelter (222-6333)

⇒ Obtain Temporary Protection Order (TPO)

⇒ Pack safety bag with extra clothes, documents, cash, and an extra set of house keys, car keys, bus tokens, and quarters for phone calls. Put bag in a safe place

⇒ If in the same room with the abuser, Avoid rooms with no outside doors and those containing potential weapons (kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, and/or garage)

⇒ Stay with friends/ family who will help keep you safe; ideally hidden from abuser

⇒ Change locks, code on alarm system, garage door opener, and answering machine access code

⇒ Save a little money each week and hide in a safe place only you know about (avoid places abuser has access to such as bank accounts); open your own bank account with statements mailed to a safe place

⇒ Inform your neighbors of situation and ask them to call police if suspicious.

⇒ Develop a safety plan with children such as: stay in the bedroom during arguments, leave house and go to a friend/ neighbors, call 911, tell a relative

⇒ Develop a code word with family, friends, and children so that they can call for help

⇒ Identify 2-3 people who are your main supporters and know of the situation and can help if a crisis occurs.

⇒ Give schools and/or child-care providers written instructions about who has permission to pick up the children; give copies of any custody papers and/or TPO.

Important items/ documents to have originals/ copies of:

<p>| Birth certificates | Social security cards |
| Phone numbers for family/friends | Car title |
| School and health records | Insurance information and forms |
| Keys, medications, prescriptions | Bank account numbers/savings passbook |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divorce papers/ other court documents</th>
<th>Credit cards/ATM cards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable clothing for you and children</td>
<td>Welfare and immigration documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage and driver license</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REHEARSE SAFETY PLAN regularly and change as needed. IT IS ALWAYS BEST TO TRUST YOUR OWN JUDGEMENT ABOUT WHAT IS BEST AND SAFEST AT THIS TIME. ANYTHING THAT WORKS TO KEEP YOU (AND CHILDREN) SAFE.
APPENDIX K

CRISIS CARE RESOURCE

24 hour Crisis Care contact information for referral for crisis intervention related to potential for participant’s harm to self or others:

937-224-4646.
APPENDIX L

CONSENT TO RECALL PARTICIPANTS

CONTACT FORM

Study: Employment Maintenance Among Women Experiencing or Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence

Are you interested in receiving a copy of the research findings from this project?

_____yes  _____no

Are you interested in receiving correspondence regarding the project?

_____yes  _____no

If you responded Yes to either question, how/where should I send this information?

PLEASE PROVIDE ONLY THE ADDRESS WHERE RECEIVING MAIL WOULD NOT PUT YOU AT RISK IF SOMEONE DISCOVERED THIS PIECE OF MAIL.

If you prefer email please provide your email address:________________________

If you prefer US mail please provide your mailing address:

Name/Initials ________________________________________________________

Address______________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

If you prefer another method please provide contact information:

____________________________________________________________________

Would you be willing to return for a second interview?

_____yes  _____no

If Yes, please provide a telephone number where I can reach you:______________

May I leave a message? _____yes  _____no

If Yes: ______ voicemail? ________ text?