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Women, Domestic Violence Service Providers, and Knowledge of Technology-Related Abuse

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

Women, Domestic Violence Service Providers, and Knowledge of Technology-Related

Abuse

by

Nadine White

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

May 2019

Abstract

Many victims of domestic violence face continued exposure to abuse through technology because intimate partners may use technology as weapon against them. Some domestic violence service professionals lack necessary information or training to educate victims. The impact on victims has not been thoroughly examined. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to assess the impact on women when domestic violence service providers do not provide current information about technology-related abuse to promote safety when providing service to victims. The conceptual framework was the Duluth model of power and control and the feminist perspective on intimate partner violence. The primary research question centered on the impact of domestic violence service providers' knowledge of trending issues with technology-facilitated violence on victims after they seek assistance. Another research question concerned the role that the victim's level of education plays in making protective decisions when using technology. The analytical procedures included taking notes, developing codes, and identifying themes. A conclusion was that domestic violence service providers are not consistently soliciting information on technology-facilitated abuse at the point of service and that some victims are continuing to experience technology-facilitated abuse and subsequent emotional and psychological trauma. Additionally, a woman's level of education is not associated with following proper safety protocols when using technology. Implications for social change include consistent legislation by policy makers and improved dissemination of information about technology-facilitated abuse by governments, courts, law enforcement, and advocacy groups.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the victims of domestic violence for displaying courage and strength in the face of various forms of abuse.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Technology is a necessity in modern society. People use technology such as

cellular telephones, tablets, laptops, global positioning systems (GPS), the Internet, and

interactive software such as social media and e-mail for communication, work, school, or

entertainment. Technology also facilitates information management and storage, which

allows ease of access for everyone who needs that information. Technology is used to

communicate with friends, relatives, or coworkers around the world. Others use

technology for educational purposes such as completing grade school or completing

degree programs.

Although technological advancements have improved communication or access to

information for segments of the population, some people abuse or misuse technology to

the extent that it causes harm to others. Emerging technology can be manipulated and

used as a form of coercive control allowing perpetrators to monitor and intimidate

victims, researchers have found. Furthermore, technology facilitates cyberharassment,

cyber sexual harassment, and abuse of women without the perpetrator being in physical

proximity of the victim (Shimizu, 2013). Victims have little to no control over this form

of abuse and perpetrators exploit this avenue to continue abuse against victims.

Some of the adverse effects that abuse of technology has on women who are

victims of domestic violence include changes in sleep and eating, anxiety, safety

concerns, and feelings of helplessness (Winkelman, Early, Walker, Chu & Yick-

Flanagan, 2015). In a study measuring the psychological impact of cyberharassment on

women over a 12-month period, more than 80% of participants reported feelings of discomfort with the experience (Winkelman et al., 2015). Technology-facilitated abuse is often an extension of physical violence in a relationship that can last as long as the perpetrator wants it to last because the laws in many states do not adequately address the phenomenon and provide women with the protection they need.

There is a need for domestic violence service providers to assist in making women aware of the phenomenon and to raise awareness of the relevant laws that states currently have in place. Domestic violence service providers and advocates should create opportunities for open dialogue to disseminate information about technology-facilitated intimate partner violence. The process of informing or educating women should be standard for domestic violence service providers when interacting with victims of domestic violence to assist with reducing the occurrence or reoccurrence of technology-facilitated abuse. Research shows that women continue to experience various forms of technology-facilitated abuse at higher rates than men (Winkelman et al., 2015). As such, domestic violence service providers should expect that victims of physical intimate partner violence may also be victims of technology-facility violence and may need assistance or guidance to stop that form of abuse.

Background

Domestic violence or intimate partner violence affects people of all races, socioeconomic groups, religious affiliations, gender, and people with various levels of education. Domestic violence involves the use of physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, threats of violence, humiliation, and intimidation of

the victim to gain control (United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2011). This type of violence affects victims, children, friends, family members, and coworkers (United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2011). In this digital age, domestic violence has advanced beyond physical abuse to electronic aggression, which can occur during the relationship or after the relationship ends. Some abusers also use technology against victims by withholding technology to gain control (New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence, n.d.). Furthermore, the use of technology to humiliate and attack victims provides the abuser with the satisfaction of public attacks and retaliation to gain compliance from the victim (Schnurr, Mahatmya & Basche, 2013). With the proliferation of new technologies, abusers, therefore, have new ways to harm their victims.

Research shows that one in seven women experiences stalking in their lifetime, and one in five children are exposed to domestic violence in the home (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, n.d.). Domestic violence programs nationwide reported that 94% of survivors experience harassment through text messages, 86% through social media, and 78% through e-mail (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2014). Staff with the Safety Net Project at the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) conducted a survey in which they discovered that 97% of victims seeking domestic violence services reported being monitored and threatened through technology (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2014). These percentages illustrate that technology is a key facet of many victims' experience of domestic violence.

Prosecuting electronic forms of domestic violence is difficult and often results in unsuccessful prosecutions because many state statutes do not adequately protect women (Cox, 2014). As Shimizu (2013) noted, courts, which sometimes grant civil orders of protection that protect women from physical abuse, may not grant such orders of protection for electronic aggression or cyberstalking because current state and federal statutes provide limited or no provision for such infractions. Some states have enacted laws to address the growing problems associated with cyberstalking and cyberharassment, but it is difficult to create or enforce laws because there is no precise definition of these phenomena (Hazelwood & Koon-Magnin, 2013). Furthermore, as current researchers studying the association between continued domestic violence and technology have noted, existing laws do not protect victims of intimate partner violence from cyberstalking and electronic harassment because some of the communication is protected by the First Amendment (Shimizu, 2013). According to Shimizu, more needs to be done to protect victims of domestic violence.

The gap in the literature suggests the need for more public awareness of the emerging problems attributed to technology-facilitated intimate partner violence and the need to educate women about strategies for self-protection to prevent the emotional or psychological effects of this form of abuse. This study may make domestic violence service providers aware of the mounting problem that technology is creating for women experiencing intimate partner violence and stress. Study findings may also highlight the need for preventative services as advocates continue to petition lawmakers to change or create applicable laws to combat the problem of technology-facilitated abuse.

Problem Statement

Most women who are victims of physical intimate partner violence are also victims of some form of technology-facilitated violence (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2014). Yet, current laws do not protect these women because the laws are ambiguous or irrelevant to specific domestic violence situations, which makes prosecution difficult in many states (Cox, 2014). Some women are also predisposed to technology-facilitated abuse because of their online practices and a lack of proper education regarding identity protection and managing of digital footprints (Winkelman et al., 2015). Moreover, some domestic violence service professionals are uncomfortable assisting victims of technology-based intimate partner violence because they are inexperienced technology users and require additional information or training about the phenomenon to educate victims (Murray, Chow, Pow, Croxton, & Poteat, 2015). For these reasons, women often continue to suffer the emotional and psychological effects of the various forms of technology-facilitated violence by abusers.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to assess the impact on women's lack of awareness of technology-facilitated abuse and to determine the role that domestic violence service providers play in ensuring that women are educated about technology-facilitated abuse at the point of service. In the study, I also analyzed women's perceptions of the concept of personal protection when using various types of technology prior to experiencing technology-facilitated abuse. The study may provide information that

organizations can use to improve women's access to current information and to address the emerging challenges technology presents for many women.

Research Questions

The research questions for this qualitative study are listed below.

RQ1.   What are the implications for victims of domestic violence if they are not up-to-date on the growing danger of technology-facilitated abuse?

RQ2.   What are the implications for victims of technology-facilitated violence if they lack knowledge about the legal options available to stop perpetrators from using this form of abuse?

RQ3.   What information is provided to victims of domestic violence about technology-facilitated violence during contact with domestic violence service providers?

RQ4.   To what extent does a woman's level of education aid in decisions to follow existing technology safety protocols?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that informed the study was the Duluth model of power and control and the feminist perspective on domestic violence. Because domestic violence extends beyond physical violence, perpetrators often use other tactics to gain and maintain control of intimate partners. The Duluth model of power and control describes several types of nonphysical abuse that victims experience, such as coercive control, intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation, denial, the use of children, and economic abuse (Burge et al., 2016). The Duluth model was created in the late 1980s by

the Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs (DAIP) in Minnesota to ensure that abusers are held accountable and victims are safe (DAIP, 2017). Users of the model aim to engage a community response when dealing with domestic violence, which includes participation from all criminal and civil justice agencies (DAIP, 2017). In this study, emphasis is placed on coercive control because many perpetrators use technology to gain power and control over victims. Coercive control is defined as a pattern of manipulative behavior by one or both intimate partners to limit the independence, self-image, and decision-making authority of the other (Hamberger, Larsen, & Lehrner, 2017). Coercive control affects all aspects of the victim's activities of daily living such as interpersonal relationships with friends, family, coworkers, and educational and work opportunities (Hamberger et al., 2017). Perpetrators of intimate partner violence who have low self-esteem or suffer from feelings of powerlessness tend to depend on intimate partners for social connection and identity and are more likely to use coercive control tactics in addition to physical abuse (Wager, 2015). It is foreseeable that if victims decide to leave an abusive relationship, the perpetrator will likely continue using coercive control tactics such as the use of technology due to feelings of powerlessness or loss of control.

The feminist perspective is concerned with empowering women by addressing the many issues women face, may which include disabilities, race, gender domination, powerlessness, social inequality, social devaluation, and domestic violence (Creswell, 2013). The feminist perspective postulates that coercive control results from the societal structure of patriarchy, gender inequalities, and male dominance that shapes the mindset of men at the individual and societal levels (Crossman & Hardesty, 2017). Therefore,

women are more often the victims of coercive controlling behavior from men seeking

power and control over them.

Nature of the Study

I conducted this study as a qualitative inquiry because it was necessary to

determine what women knew about technology-facilitated abuse and if the knowledge

they had was gained after contact with domestic violence service providers. This

information was necessary to determine the extent of these women's experiences with

and without the prior knowledge. A qualitative inquiry provided more in-depth evidence

about the information that is provided to victims from different agencies, which enabled

me to assess the consistency with which that information is provided. The research was

completed as a case study of victims of domestic violence to analyze the procedure

domestic violence providers use to assess and manage the emerging issues of technology

in furthering intimate partner violence. In case studies, researchers aim to analyze

individuals, programs, or processes or compare organizations (Baxter & Jack, 2008). My

study illuminated the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of governments, nonprofit

organizations, and advocacy groups in disseminating information to the public and

preparing employees to manage the growing threat technology pose to women in abusive

relationships.

Definition of Terms

Cyber abuse: Abuse that is inclusive of all technology-based abuse such as

cyberbullying, cyberstalking, cyber sexual solicitation or harassment, and online

pornography (Winkelman et al., 2015).

Cyberharassment: Online predatory behavior such as stalking, threats, and intimidation (Winkelman, 2015). The term is interchangeable with cyber abuse, cyberstalking, and cyberharassment (Winkelman, 2015).

Cyberstalking: The recurring use of the Internet, e-mail, instant messages, or other technology to aggravate, intimidate, or threaten individuals or groups (Winkelman, 2015).

Cyberbullying: Deliberate and repeated harm to a person through an electronic medium (Winkelman, 2015).

Revenge pornography: The publication or distribution of nonconsensual images or video of ex-girlfriends or ex-wives by their former in boyfriends or husbands as vengeance for the dissolution of the relationship (Bloom, 2014).

Assumptions

The expectation was that most participants would have experienced technology-based abuse at some point in the abusive relationship and contacted domestic violence service providers two or more times to demonstrate that there is a pattern of abuse. Preliminary research data suggested that victims of physical intimate partner violence also experience electronic violence at high rates. The criteria for the study was exposure to technology-facilitated violence and interaction with domestic violence professionals on at least one other occasion before the current one. If the pool of potential participants was low and participants did not meet the criteria for the study, the eligibility criteria would have been relaxed. It was also expected that the victims would be willing to participate in the study without compensation.

Scope and Delimitations

I sought responses from those women who had experienced technology-facilitated violence during a current or former intimate relationship within the last five years. The women selected had to demonstrate that they had contacted domestic violence service providers seeking assistance within that period.

Limitations

A potential limitation of the study was the inability to generalize the results to a larger population or other domestic violence organizations because there was a possibility that some participants may not have had contact with more than one domestic violence organization throughout the abusive relationship. This limitation was eliminated because participants were prescreened before the interviewed to determine the number of agencies or domestic violence professionals, they were in contact within the past five years. Overcoming this limitation was dependent on the pool of participants available. I did not seek any specific information about the abuse experienced that would have upset or embarrass victims. Information collected pertained to their communication with various professionals about technology facilitated violence.

Significance

The original contribution this study may make is illuminating the effectiveness of the domestic violence services provided to victims regarding technology-facilitated violence and personal safety during and after an abusive relationship. Additionally, the study may help to promote more education for women about self-protection and provide strategies to prevent them from becoming victims or stop victimization. Educating

women about the phenomenon is a necessary provision pending the implementation of relevant laws in each state. The implications for social change are consistent legislation, increased dissemination of existing and new information about technology-enabled abuse, harassment, or stalking through governments, courts, law enforcement, and support groups to ensure women feel empowered and safe.

Summary

The current literature about technology facilitated domestic violence illuminates the growing problem that women face with technology and prolonged violence. It is hard for women to escape technology facilitated abuse by a current or former intimate partner without specific knowledge about how perpetrators can exploit various technological mediums to threaten or intimidate them. Women may need the assistance from domestic violence service providers to ensure their safety during and after the relationship in lieu of the inadequate laws and poor prosecutorial success of cyberharassment and cyberstalking cases. The goal of the study was to emphasize the need for provider supported education of women seeking domestic violence services about technology-facilitated violence and self-protection.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review in this chapter highlights current issues surrounding the misuse of technology by perpetrators, specifically those who perpetrate violence against women. I critically analyzed and evaluated the existing literature about technology-facilitated intimate partner violence. In completing the review, I focused on past literature and studies related to the impact of technology-facilitated violence on women and their children, and the long-term adverse effects on those victimized. I examined the legal constraints of freedom of speech and cyberharassment or cyber aggression and the difficulties the justice system faces when prosecuting cyber violence and specifically cyber violence directed at women who may also be victims of physical abuse by the same perpetrator. In addition, I examined the laws created to protect women from abuse or further victimization through technology. The goal of the review was to highlight the need for education sponsored by domestic violence service providers, community outreach programs, and advocates to help protect women from further psychological or emotional abuse by their abusers as an interim to lawmakers changing existing laws or creating new legislation to prevent or reduce the incidences of technology-facilitated abuse.

Literature Search Strategy

I conducted the literature review using Walden University Library resources in combination with Google Scholar to identify sources. Most relevant articles were selected using Walden's multidisciplinary databases, specifically Academic Search Complete, to

gather sources relevant to the subject across many disciplines. A few sources were

gathered using ProQuest Criminal Justice, which is one of the criminal justice databases

within the Walden Library. I used search terms such as *online harassment*,

cyberharassment, *cyber aggression*, *cyberharassment and domestic violence*, *intimate*

partner violence and electronic aggression, and *domestic violence and technology*

facilitated abuse.

<div align="center">**Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts**</div>

Overview of Technology Misuse

The benefits of technology are often overshadowed by deliberate misuse of

electronic devices by perpetrators who willfully violate the privacy, security, peace of

mind, and rights of women. Some of the frequent misuses of technology include online

impersonation, cyberharassment, cyberbullying, cyberstalking, and cyber sexual

harassment or abuse (Winkelman et al.). As discussed in the review, these types of

technology abuse directly affect the lives of those affected, specifically women who were

victims of physical violence by the same perpetrator.

Cyberharassment and cyberstalking. Cyberharassment and cyberstalking are

sometimes used interchangeably but may have different meanings in various jurisdictions

(Cox, 2014). Cyberbullying is also interchanged with cyberharassment and cyberstalking

on occasions (Winkelman et al., 2015). However, the specifics of each component are

different because a perpetrator needs to cyberstalk a victim and subsequently engage in

cyberharassment of that victim. Cox (2014) described cyberharassment as deliberate and

threatening electronic communication from a current or former intimate partner to a

victim solely to cause the victim distress. Cyberstalking is equivalent to real-world

stalking and associated with intimate relationships and former relationships (Dreßing,

Bailer, Anders, Wagner, & Gallas, 2014). A prior study by Spitzberg and Hoobler

showed that 30% of the 339 survey participants, who were college students, were victims

of cyberstalking and that 10% of the participants received insulting, harassing, or

threatening e-mails from a spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend (as cited in Winkelman et al.,

2015). Spitzberg and Hoobler also found that 10-15% of the college students reported

receiving multiple e-mails and instant messages from a significant other (as cited in

Winkelman et al., 2015). In addition, 54% of participants knew someone who

experienced cyberbullying through social media, instant messages, or cellular phones (as

cited in Winkelman et al., 2015). Winkelman et al. mentioned that the percentages varied

for each study because some studies were conducted using different terminology because

the terms are interchangeable or are poorly defined. The studies discussed in the articales

by Winkelman et al. did not refer to gender differences regarding cyberbullying or

cyberstalking experiences. Previous researchers have concluded that cyberharassment

often involves intimate partners and that perpetrators engage in the following activities:

- monitoring the victim's emails;

- sending the victim harassing, threatening or insulting e-mails;

- sending the unwanted e-mails, spam e-mail, and e-mail viruses and
  manipulating the victim's personal data;

- conducting Internet searches to obtain personal information about the victim
  to further the electronic harassment;

- sending false e-mail messages to others or making purchases using the

  victim's e-mail identity;

- frequent texts or instant messages from the perpetrator; and

- stalking victims in chat rooms and posting bizarre messages on blogs,

  websites, and other personal social networking sites (Winkelman et al., 2015)

The Internet is another source that perpetrators could use to abuse women and

avoid consequences in some cases. The Internet plays a key role in cyberstalking and

cyberharassment because the abuser expends little to no money perpetrating the crime

and does not need to be in the same physical location as the victim to monitor the

activities of the victim (Shimizu, 2013). Perpetrators of cyberstalking can use the Internet

to encourage others to harass and intimidate the victim while maintaining some

anonymity (Shimizu, 2013). Perpetrators use other Internet-based technology like people

finding websites such as Pipl, Spokeo, and People Finder to find personally identifiable

information about victims (Cox, 2014). Pipl is a free website that allegedly uses the deep

web to obtain information about people that a perpetrator can use to gather pertinent

information about a victim or to locate the victim (Cox, 2014). Perpetrators who use

Spokeo, and People Finder are required to pay for personally identifiable information

such as the victim's Social Security number and place of residence (Cox, 2014). The

Internet is a source that is often exploited to the detriment of the victims.

Some perpetrators use global positioning systems (GPS) to monitor the location

of victims. GPS technology is incorporated into most mobile technological devices such

as cellular telephones, tablets, and watches (Cox, 2014). Those intending to indulge in

cyberstalking can download and install applications onto a victim's smartphone without that person's knowledge, which report the exact the location of the victim (Cox, 2014). A popular GPS software used by many employers for tracking activities is ePhoneTracker. When ePhoneTracker's software is installed on a person's smartphone, the software can track the person's precise location and monitor text messages, contacts, e-mails, and websites visited (Cox, 2014). Victims would not know that this software was installed on their cellphones and are therefore vulnerable to physical attacks by the perpetrator.

Winkelman et al. (2015) stated that women are more likely to experience cyberstalking than real world stalking because of the lack of boundaries in the cyber world and the ability of the abuser to change their identity or remain anonymous. A study of social network users and the relationship between perpetrator and victim revealed that 69.4% of cyberstalking perpetrators were male, 28.1% were female, and 2.5% had unknown gender (Dreßing et al., 2014). Conversely, cybercrimes such as harassment and stalking are denoted as crimes against women because more women than men are reported to experience cyberharassment or cyberstalking (Winkelman et al., 2015). Twice as many adolescent girls than boys were affected by cyber abuse or solicitation (Winkelman et al., 2015). Dreßing et al. (2014) reported that some victims experienced cyberstalking that transitioned to real world or offline stalking, while other experienced both forms of stalking simultaneously. In the same study, the authors also discovered that 25.8% of respondents experienced only cyberstalking, while 42% reported experiencing both forms of stalking concurrently (Dreßing et al., 2014). Other researchers have reported similar findings regarding the transition from cyberstalking to offline stalking or

vice versa. Winkelman et al. (2015) indicated that 16.1% of victims reported being offline after being experiencing cyberstalking. The article suggested that the victims might have known the perpetrators in some instances but did not specify whether there was a prior intimate relationship.

      Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is another term that can be interchanged with cyberharassment and cyberstalking, but by definition the terms are not closely linked. The definition of cyberbullying stems from the academic classification of bullying among children. Bullying usually entails repeated verbal and physical, and a power differential where one person has the advantage (Klonick, 2016). Cyberbullying is concerned with online verbal aggression, threats, blackmail, and rumors (Klonick, 2016). The phenomenon of cyberbullying involves one or more people willfully sending distressing information about another through electronic means to inflict emotional and psychological harm (Crosslin & Crosslin, 2013). Cyberbullying was first associated with children or adolescents in an academic setting, but when cyberbullying involves adults, the phenomenon is called cyberharassment because of similar threats, blackmail, and verbal aggression (Klonick, 2016). Cyberbullying is exhibited in several forms such as harassment, cyberstalking, denigration, happy slapping, exclusion, outing and trickery, impersonation, and indirect threats (Langos, 2015). Langos listed cyberstalking as a subsidiary of cyberbullying, which demonstrates the lack of concrete or accepted definition of the various components of cyber abuse. Langos (2015) describes harassment as repeated messages from the perpetrator to the victim and describes cyberstalking as an outcome of more severe harassment leading the victim to experience significant offline

fear. Denigration involves disseminating derogatory information or images of the victim by the perpetrator (Langos, 2015). The expression of happy slapping encompasses the act of publishing videos that depicts a physical assault of the victim to embarrass the victim (Langos, 2015). Langos (2015) further described exclusion as preventing the victim from entering desired online spaces. Outing and Trickery are concerned with coercing the victim into divulging information and subsequently using that information against the victim (Langos, 2015). The perpetrator may also impersonate the victim in online settings to send unpleasant messages to others as though the victim sent the messages (Langos, 2015). Langos (2015) defines indirect threats as online communication that implies a veiled threat to the safety of the victim.

        Technology-facilitated sexual violence or harassment. Under the umbrella of domestic or intimate partner violence, perpetrators can either verbally degrade women or disseminate nude or sexually explicit images of former intimate partners through technology. This tactic of seeking revenge against a former intimate partner by publishing sexually explicit pictures of the victim is classified as revenge pornography, which falls into the category of domestic violence, rape and sexual harassment (Bloom, 2014). Technology facilitated sexual violence or cyber sexual harassment often target women and girls, and websites that publish the revenge pornography are controlled by males (Franks, 2012 & Bloom, 2014). Prior research revealed that some former intimate partners use sexual images to humiliate former partners, but some domestic violence perpetrators use explicit images to intimidate and control current and former partners (Henry & Powell, 2015). Existing laws do not address the issues women face with sexual

violence or harassment on the Internet (Franks, 2012). The author stated that current

discrimination law only takes action against violators who harass women in schools or

the work environment. Similarly, the current discrimination laws associate the harm

caused by sexual harassment to those protected environments, but no provision is made

for sexual violence or harassment via the Internet or social networking sites (Frank,

2012). Victims remain at risk of continued electronic violence by their perpetrators.

Education and cybercrime. Even though the statistics illuminate the problem

that cybercrimes pose, cyberharassment and cyberstalking remains misunderstood by

many and is often ignored in scholarly settings even though it is a pervasive problem that

affects many youth and adults. Criminal justice introductory textbooks do not mention

stalking or cyberstalking, which is a current problem for many college students (Huffman

& Overton, 2013). Huffman and Overton (2013) stated that introductory criminal justice

college textbooks provide an overview of the important areas of study within the field but

stalking and cyberstalking are noticeably absent. Similarly, little information about

cyberstalking or abuse is printed in scholarly journals (Winkelman et al., 2015). Students

may be misled about the current state of affairs regarding the subject matter.

Experiences of Women with Technology-Facilitated Violence

Several researchers and authors shared the experiences of women who were

victims of various forms of technology facilitated abuse. Cox (2014) described a case of a

woman from California who began receiving unexpected visitors from strange men who

stated they were responding to a personal advertisement on Craigslist and communicated

with her through email regarding fulfilling her fantasy of being raped. The woman in this

case, did not post an advertisement on the Craigslist and did not communicate by email

with any of the men. This case is an example of online impersonation and cyberstalking

that subsequently led to California's first conviction for cyberstalking (Cox, 2014).

In another case, a female victim of domestic violence attempted to leave her

abuser by seeking partner organization at a domestic violence partner organization and

received a text message from her abuser questioning her reason for being at the partner

organization (Cox, 2014). The woman relayed this information to the domestic violence

provider, who later escorted her to the courthouse to obtain an order of protection (Cox,

2014). While at the courthouse, the woman received another text message from her

abuser, again questioning her location (Cox, 2014). It was subsequently determined that

the woman's abuser installed an application to track her location on her smartphone

without her knowledge (Cox, 2014). This is another example of cyberstalking, where a

woman could be exposed to further danger due to ignorance of the technology misuse and

the extreme behaviors of some abusers who want to monitor and control them.

This is another example of a former partner threatening and distributing

unauthorized images of his ex-girlfriend as revenge for alleged infidelity after their

breakup. Many refer to this phenomenon as revenge pornography. Bloom (2014)

describes the experiences of a woman named Annmarie who experienced cyber sexual

abuse by her former partner named Joey. Joey was in possession of eighty eight nude

pictures of Annmarie and threatened to auction the pictures on eBay, in addition to

sending links to the pictures to all of her friends, family, and coworkers, and followed up

on the promise (Bloom, 2014). Family, coworkers, and other acquaintances informed the

victim of the links they received from the auction on eBay and contacted the police

(Bloom, 2014). The author stated that the police informed the victim that there was

nothing they could do about her situation. Annmarie lived in fear and panic for a year.

She then googled her name and found her name and address to link to a pornography site

without her consent (Bloom, 2014). The victim again went to the police and received no

assistance, and the victim became afraid to be seen in public for fear of becoming a

victim of stalking (Bloom, 2014). A few days later, Annmarie unsuccessfully attempted

to commit suicide because of her ongoing ordeal. She then decided to fight the problem

of revenge pornography by becoming an advocate (Bloom, 2014). Existing research

showed that 20% of participants shared intimate pictures with companions and one in ten

were threatened with the online publication of those pictures after a breakup, and 60% of

those who threatened, carried out the threat (Bloom, 2014).

Impact of Technology-Facilitated Abuse on Women

Studies show a nexus between cybercrime against women and emotional and

psychological harm. For instance, the study conducted by Dreßing et al. (2014) reported

that 80.5% of women were victims of cyberstalking perpetrated largely by males. The

same study reported that 2.5% of cyberstalking victims did not suffer any adverse effects

from the victimization (Dreßing et al., 2014). More than 50% of the respondents

acknowledged feelings of aggression, anger or helpless, while two-thirds of the

respondents reported feelings of distrust (Dreßing et al., 2014). More than 80% of

respondents in this study reported feeling uneasy about the experience (Dreßing et al.,

2014). In another study conducted by Winkelman et al. (2015), the authors reported a

similar psychological impact on victims who experienced cyberharassment or

cyberstalking. Table 1 depicts the effects of cyberharassment on victims in the 12 months

preceding Winkelman's study.

Table 1

Psychological Symptoms Experienced in the Past 12 Months Due to Cyberharassment

Symptoms	n	%
Changes in sleeping or eating patterns	56	20.7
Nightmares	46	17.0
Hypervigilance	50	18.5
Anxiety	95	34.9
Feelings of helplessness	58	21.3
Fear for safety	67	24.6
Feelings of shock and disbelief	103	38.1

Note. Preprinted from "Exploring Cyberharassment Among Women who Use Social Media," by S. B. Winkelman, J. O. Early, A. D. Walker, L. Chu, & A. Yick-Flanagan, 2015, *Universal Journal of Public Health, 3,* p. 197.

Cyberharassment has also led to suicides, loss of employment, decreased interest

in social activities and decreased interest in educational and online activities (Franks,

2012). Cyberbullying also has a psychosomatic or psychosocial impact on victims.

Langos (2015) perceives the impact of cyberbullying in the context of philosopher Joel

Feinberg's conception of harm. Langos (2015) stated that Feinberg analyzed harm as

defeating interests as in violating the interest of a person. Langos' (2015) perception of

harm as it relates to cyberbullying includes anxiety, stress, panic, resentment,

embarrassment, and some long-term psychiatric injury. The author, like other authors, noted that the phenomenon was new, and much research was not done to document the harm that cyberbullying cause victims. Crosslin (2014) stated that cyberbullying created trust issues for victims and wrote that many victims avoid new relationships.

Similarly, cyber sexual violence or cyber sexual harassment has similar effects on victims. Public disclosure of elicit images of women in online settings can lead to career issues because of the damage to the woman's reputation (Bloom, 2014). The author stated that the damage to the woman's reputation could also lead to the woman changing her name to avoid future harassment. Bloom (2014) also mentioned that 47% of revenge pornography victims contemplate suicide and are likely to become victims of stalking by some of the men who view the unauthorized pictures. Women who are victims of online sexual harassment or violence become sexual objects, which promote gender stereotypes that women are not worthy (Bloom, 2014 & Franks, 2012). Consequently, women lose their privacy, anonymity, and ability to present themselves in a favorable light to others (Franks, 2012). Women also lose other liberties such as their interaction with society and trust in future relationships (Bloom, 2014).

Potential Impact on Children

Parents' role in educating children about technology abuse. One of the trickledown effects of technology-based violence is the impact on children in the relationship. Educating women about technology facilitated abuse are beneficial to the safety of children or adolescents who are also technology users. The reason this is important in the context of domestic violence is the dissolution of a relationship or

marriage because of violence. Very often, after a violent relationship ends, women are the primary custodians of the children from that relationship and are responsible for their wellbeing when using technology. Women should understand how they are at risk of technology-based violence, so they can also understand how their children are also at risk. Researchers refer to the role of parents in reducing the risks to children when using the Internet as parental mediation (Appel, Stiglbauer, Batinic & Holtz, 2014). Parental mediation is concerned with active mediation, which includes talking youth about the Internet, and restrictive mediation, which places stipulations on teen Internet use (Appel et al., 2014). Schools do play an active role in educating children about the potential dangers of technology, but it is the primary role of the parents to monitor their children's use of technology and be familiar with the potential dangers that exist. Parents who are not technologically savvy may need additional assistance or resources to highlight all the dangers that exist.

   Technology-facilitated youth violence. Children and adolescents are subject to the same forms of technology-based violence as adults. Some adolescents engage in cyberharassment, cyberbullying and cyber sexual harassment or cyber sexual abuse, and cyber dating abuse. The adverse effects on youth victims are the same or in some instances more traumatic because adolescents are more sensitive to humiliation and any form of bullying. Recent studies reveal that technology has led to increased incidences of adolescent electronic youth violence. A recent study of the prevalence of harassment in high school and universities concluded that 33.6% of high school students and 8.6% of college students experienced cyberharassment (Beran, Rinaldi, Bickham & Rich, 2012).

Another study conducted of 10-15 years old by UNICEF in Croatia, found that the

prevalence of cyberbullying was increasing (Bilic, 2013). The Croatian study revealed

that 38.7% of the children were exposed to cyberbullying on social networks, 33.9%

received unpleasant text messages, and 15% of the children experienced cyberbullying in

forums and blogs (Bilic, 2013). Children and adolescents are also susceptible to another

form of cyber abuse, which is cyber grooming. Cyber grooming involves the solicitation

of minors to through the Internet to engage in cyber sexual abuse or to arrange physical

meetings to engage in sexual abuse (Wachs, Jiskrova, Vazsonyi, Wolf & Junger, 2016).

The authors stated that some children might be more vulnerable to cyber grooming if they

are victims of other cyber abuse such as cyberbullying (Wachs et al., 2016).

Children and adolescents also experienced cyber dating abuse that

disproportionately affects females more than males (Zweig, Dank, Yahner & Lachman,

2013). A study of ten schools in three northeastern states revealed that more females than

males experienced nonsexual cyber dating violence (Zweig et al., 2013). Furthermore,

victims of cyber dating abuse were seven times more likely to become victims of cyber

sexual coercion (Zweig et al., 2013). Parents have a vital role in protecting their children

from the same dangers that they experience in abusive interpersonal relationships.

Therefore, educating women before or after they become victims of intimate partner

cyber violence can circumvent the same faith for children, as either victims or offenders.

Technology-Facilitated Violence and the Criminal Justice System

Laws protecting women. The criminal justice system has the burden of preventing

and prosecuting incidences of cybercrime based on existing laws. One of the burdens of

the criminal justice system is protecting citizens from cybercrime when technology is always changing, which can make any existing laws obsolete when attempting to prosecute certain types of cybercrime. Cyberstalking and cyberharassment can be prosecuted under federal statutes such as the Interstate Communications Act and the Federal Interstate Stalking and Prevention Act (Cox, 2014). The Interstate Communications Act seeks to prosecute perpetrators who directly communicate a threat to kidnap or injure victims (Cox, 2014). Direct threats to the victim do not constrain the Federal Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act. The statute is concerned with stopping perpetrators who intend to harm, kill, threaten, intimidate, surveil, or distress a victim through the use of technology (Cox, 2014). Another federal statute that should deter perpetrators is the Telephone Harassment Act, which was amended in 2006 to include language that prohibited the use of electronic communication harass, intimidate, or abuse others (Cox, 2014). The authors noted that some states had not created specific laws for cyberstalking and cyberharassment, and of the states that do, the legal requirements are different. Instead of creating new laws, some states had attached cyberstalking to existing stalking laws (Shimizu, 2013 & Cox, 2014). Therefore, the cyberstalking laws in many states do not address every aspect of the cyberstalking and cyberharassment, particularly in the context of domestic violence.

Difficulties prosecuting cases. Though some states have cyberstalking and harassment laws in place, it is sometimes difficult for prosecutors to obtain convictions for domestic violence cases. Prosecuting cyber violence against women is complicated by the First Amendment rights of the perpetrator and the courts determining about what type

of cyberspeech is criminal and violates the rights of the victim. Some speech in public forums is protected, but speech not protected by the First Amendment includes speech that is obscene, defamatory, fraudulent, and provocative, presents a real threat, and speech that indicates criminal conduct (Shimizu, 2013). Courts evaluate cyberstalking based on the true or credible threats to the welfare of the victim (Shimizu, 2013 & Cox, 2014). Victims of domestic violence who claimed online speech threatened them have the burden of proving intent by the perpetrator (Shimizu, 2013). Cox (2014) that Internet acts a barrier between the victim and the perpetrator, which allows the perpetrator to claim he never intended to cause distress to the victim or state he has no direct connection to the victim because he may not be in proximity to the victim. Further, prosecutorial issues arise when victims attempt to report anonymous cyber victimization by a known perpetrator based on the online rhetoric but still have to prove the identity of the stalker to ensure a successful prosecution (Shimizu, 2013). This is not always a successful avenue for victims because it does not guarantee the prosecution of the perpetrator.

Tenth Amendment constraints also hinder prosecuting cyberstalkers and cyber harassers. Shimizu (2013) stated that the Tenth Amendment's Commerce Clause views the Internet and the content on the Internet as interstate commerce. Courts have frowned upon one state criminalizing Internet content that can potentially affect all the Internet and users outside the jurisdiction of the state attempting to pass cyberstalking legislation (Shimizu, 2013). Therefore, when states attempt to regulate cyberstalking, the laws created are limited in language to the specific state and the conduct of the stalker, rather than the content of the online material (Shimizu, 2013). Prosecuting cyberstalking

presents many challenges and prosecutors have to plan how they would approach charging and prosecuting perpetrators who use the Internet to continue abusing women.

Similarly, when attempting prosecution of illegal publication of nude images or videos, poses similar challenges. Historically, sexual crimes committed by intimate partners on a spouse or girlfriend were not given the same attention as a sexual assault committed by a stranger (Bloom, 2014). Accusers and prosecutors in some states have the burden of proving the harm caused to the victim was intentionally created by the perpetrator, which sometimes mean the victim is forced to testify in court and face cross-examination (Bloom, 2014). New Jersey was the first state to enact a law that deters distribution of unauthorized images without requiring the victim to prove the adverse intentions of the perpetrator (Bloom, 2014).

Technology-Facilitated Violence and Domestic Violence Service Providers

Technology-facilitated violence against women presents new challenges for all domestic violence service providers. Domestic violence providers include emergency partner organization and crisis intervention providers, program facilitators and other support staff, advocates, law enforcement, the courts, medical and mental health professionals, program evaluators, researchers, and public policymakers (Murray et al., 2015).Given that very few studies in the area of cyber violence exist to demonstrate the impact on women, organizations may not feel the need to discuss the phenomenon with clients or further, to make public service announcements to educate the public. Cyber violence or abuse against women by current or former intimate partners is a growing problem in society that can leave women feeling defenseless. Before providers can

educate women about cyber violence, providers should first be comfortable with technology and then knowledgeable about the many ways that domestic violence victims are abused through technology.

In a recent study, Murray et al. (2015) assessed the overall technology readiness and perception of technology by various domestic violence service providers. The study revealed that employees have moderate levels of discomfort and insecurity with technology but are optimistic that technology is valuable in the workplace. The findings from the study also revealed that providers wanted more research-based information to assist victims. Further, participants of the study provided varying responses regarding their comfort level in assisting victims with technology safety issues (Murray et al., 2015). Some of the critical findings of the study conducted in 2015 revealed that studies on domestic violence, including studies relating to technology-facilitated violence is not disseminated to providers in a timely manner. There are enough evidenced-based studies available to educate providers, so they can in turn, educate victims and the public. Additionally, domestic violence administrators may not be incorporating the findings of current studies into day to day operations to improve service to victims because employees lacked evidenced based research and expressed some level of discomfort discussing technology safety with victims. If employees are not entirely comfortable and secure with using technology for operational purposes, they would not feel secure assisting and educating victims about technology safety issues.

Technology Users and Personal Responsibility

Many people use technology daily for various reasons, particularly for social networking. Social networking is very popular with many people of all ages and gender. In the context of technology-facilitated violence against women, some experts believe that women contribute to their online victimization in some cases with their online activities. A recent study of risky Internet behavior by women indicated that 96.5% of women never participated in an online safety class, but their online behavior was not overly risky (Winkelman et al., 2015). However, the study did reveal that 94.7% of women posted many pictures of themselves, 25.4% posted provocative pictures (Winkelman et al., 2015). Other findings from the study disclosed that 98.4% of the participants had profiles that were visible to all Internet users and 68.1% posted their daily or weekly plans on the Internet (Winkelman et al., 2015). The authors stated that one of the limitations of the study was that the sample did not represent the population of women because the participants were all from women's organizations with strong feminist views. The study identified the ways that women may be targeted for cyberstalking, harassment, or sexual harassment. Posting information about one's whereabouts on the Internet can expose the victim to physical by an abuser. Table 2 summarizes the results of the study.

Table 2

Internet Risky Behaviors Engaged in During the Past 12 Months

Type of Internet risky behavior	n	%
Posted your first and last name on publicly accessible Internet profiles such as discussion forums, message boards, blogs, and/or chat rooms	163	54.4
Posted your contact information (i.e. cell phone, home phone, email address, city and state) on the Internet	173	57.9
Posted a regular photo of yourself on the Internet	282	94.7
Posted what is considered a provocative or sexy picture of yourself on the Internet	76	25.4
Created what might be considered a provocative name to email address	13	4.3
Make your profile visible to all Internet users	95	98.4
Created a gender specific email address	111	37.1
Invited someone you don't not know to your social networking site	84	28.2
Accepted someone not known to you to Your social networking site	168	56.4
Entered a sex chatroom	23	7.8
Agreed to meet someone face-to-face from the Internet after minimal to a few Internet exchanges	40	13.4
Downloaded pornographic images from pornographic websites	56	18.9
Talked with someone you do not know in a chatroom about sensitive topic matters (i.e., sex, relationships, etc.…)	74	25.7
Returned an email from someone you do not know	96	33.5

Posted your plans on the Internet (i.e., what you will be doing that day or week etc.)	195	68.1
Used a webcam to talk to someone you do not know on the Internet	24	8.3
Accepted file transfers or opened links from someone you do not know or trust	37	12.8

Note. Preprinted from "Exploring cyberharassment among women who use social media" by Winkelman, S.B., Early, J.O., Walker, A.D., Chu, L. & Yick-Flanagan, A. (2015). *Universal Journal of Public Health, 3,* p. 198.

Summary

The review of the current literature highlights the problems that women encounter when attempting to manage their lives while experiencing technology facilitated abuse. Research shows that the Internet in combination with several devices and the malicious intentions of perpetrators seeking to control and denigrate current or former intimate partners, cause women to experience various forms of psychological trauma. The literature review reveals that abusers engage in cyberharassment, cyberstalking or cyber sexual harassment to threaten, intimidate or otherwise control victims without being in proximity. Both genders experience cyber abuse, but male current or former partners predominantly victimize women through this medium. Cyber abuse affects women emotionally, psychologically and affects women's ability to trust those around them. Children are also victims or aggressors in cyber abuse or harassment and need direction from well-informed parents to teach them about safe and ethical technology use. Youth violence is also an emerging societal problem that responsible adults should monitor.

Youth are affected by cyber dating violence and solicitation from strangers seeking to exploit them.

The review of the literature exposes the inconsistencies in state and federal statues inadequately protecting women and successfully prosecuting perpetrators. In some states, prosecutors are expected to prove the intent of the abuser in causing emotional or psychological harm to the victim. Interpretations of the vague laws by the courts leave women in a vulnerable state and needing to protect themselves from further harm or seek assistance from domestic violence service providers. In some cases, providers may lack the skill set to educate women satisfactorily about technology and violence.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

Introduction

In Chapter 3, I discuss the methods and procedures used to conduct and complete

the study. The research method I selected ensured that the results of the study are valid

and that they represented a sample of the population. The research methods aligned with

the purpose of the study and the research questions for consistency. The problem

identified was technology-facilitated abuse as an extension of physical violence in

intimate partner relationships. The purpose of the study was to determine the implications

of this type of abuse on victims of domestic violence and the role that domestic violence

providers have in educating women to prevent future abuse through this medium. The

research questions were open-ended and focused on assessing the impact on victims of

domestic violence if they lack the knowledge necessary to protect themselves. In devising

the research questions, I also sought to extract information about the role of domestic

violence providers should have in educating women at the point of service. The answers

to the research questions provide insight about whether domestic violence providers need

to improve or increase services offered. In using the research design and methodology

described in this chapter, I was able to obtain access to participants who experienced

technology-facilitated violence and gain in-depth information about participants'

experiences of the study phenomenon.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to assess the impact on women if they

are unaware of technology-facilitated abuse and to determine the role that domestic

violence providers have in ensuring that women are educated about technology-facilitated abuse at the point of service. In the study, I also analyzed participants' perceptions of the concept of personal protection when using various types of technology prior to experiencing technology-facilitated experience. The study may provide information that organizations can use to improve women's access to current information and to address the emerging challenges technology presents for many women who are victims of technology-facilitated violence.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Questions

The research questions for this qualitative study were the following:

RQ1.   What are the implications for victims of domestic violence if domestic violence service providers are not up-to-date on the growing danger of technology-facilitated abuse?

RQ2.   What are the implications for victims of technology-facilitated violence if they lack knowledge about the legal options available to stop perpetrators from using this form of abuse?

RQ3.   What information is provided to victims of domestic violence about technology-facilitated violence during contact with domestic violence service providers?

RQ4.   To what extent does a woman's level of education aid in decisions to follow existing technology safety protocols?

I conducted the study as a qualitative inquiry because it was necessary to determine what, if anything, women who participated in the study knew about technology-facilitated abuse, and where they obtained such knowledge. A qualitative inquiry provided more in-depth evidence about the information that was provided to victims from different sources to assess the consistency of information providers disseminate to victims of domestic violence. Researchers performing qualitative studies rely on the collection and analysis of texts and pictures combined with an appropriate strategy of inquiry (Creswell, 2013, p. 173). A qualitative inquiry allowed for comparison of information that victims received throughout their ordeal from different providers as well as the ways that technology was used as a weapon against them.

The research strategy of inquiry was a case study, use of which allowed me to analyze the process organizations use (if a process exists) to educate women about the emerging issues of technology in furthering intimate partner violence. Researchers conducting case studies aim to analyze individuals, programs, processes, or compare organizations (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Creswell (2013) stated that case studies allow researchers to gather detailed information about people and activities related to the subject matter. In this instance, the study illuminated the effectiveness of governments, nonprofit organizations, and advocacy groups in disseminating information to the public and preparing employees to manage the growing threat technology poses to women in abusive relationships. I selected this design because it allowed for the collection of specific information from different women who experienced technology-facilitated abuse by a current or former intimate partner.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher grew up in a society in Guyana, South America, where domestic violence is often overlooked as an accepted practice. Witnesses of such violence in Guyana often observe physical domestic disputes from a distance without interfering or calling law enforcement. Even when women are physically assaulted, observers rarely intervene. In adult life, the researcher was also involved in a physically and emotionally abusive relationship that ended in divorce. The researcher realizes that there may be a perception of implicit bias based on my personal experiences, but those experiences did not create a bias against men. Male victims of technology-facilitated violence were unavailable for this study at prospective study sites. Further, the literature review revealed that women are more likely than men to become victims of technology-facilitated violence as an extension of domestic violence (Winkelman et al., 2015). Researcher bias was nonexistent because the problem identified in this study involved female victims and domestic violence service organizations as a means of reducing future victimization through education.

Furthermore, I had no preexisting relationship with the participants of the study. Participants were randomly selected based on their suitability for the study. I obtained oral and subsequently written approval to conduct the study at the site.

Methodology

Participant Selection

The sample size for the study was a minimum of 9 but no more than 30 female participants. The final number of participants depended on reaching a point of saturation

after conducting several interviews. I used a purposeful random sampling technique. This sampling technique was selected because it increases the credibility of the study and does not require large samples (Creswell, 2013). I anticipated that the study would take about one or two weeks to complete after selecting respondents who met the criteria of the study. Potential participants were recruited from a partner organization. Once recruited, available offices or conference rooms were available for use during the interviews to ensure the privacy of participants were protected. The location was selected because women at the partner organization had been victims of physical violence and were now in a safe place because they wanted to stop the violence and other controlling behavior.

The other information required for victims to meet the criteria for the study was exposure to technology-facilitated violence and their interaction with domestic violence professionals on at least one other occasion before the current one. If the desired participants were not recruited during the first 3 days of recruitment, the eligibility criteria may have been revised to include participants who contacted a domestic violence provider for the first time. If participants did not meet the criteria, it would have been necessary to spend longer than the expected two weeks collecting data or add compensation to make participation more attractive. Compensation was not preferred because of the concern that the victims may participate because of the compensation and may provide misleading information to receive compensation.

Instrumentation

I was the key instrument in the research. I collected data through (a) semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with victims at a domestic violence partner

organization and (b) observation of the victims during the interviews as a secondary method of data collection. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to gather detail information about individual experiences and ask follow-up questions as needed.

Procedures for Participation and Data Collection

Data collection methods included observation and semi structured interviews utilizing open ended questions to collect detailed information about personal knowledge participants had of the phenomenon before becoming victims. Observing the demeanor and body language of respondents was a secondary means of data collection to determine the surprise factor that some women may experience realizing that technology facilitated harassment or stalking is an extension of domestic violence. The interview questions consisted of questions related to basic facts about the respondents, such as education, opinions, and knowledge questions (O'Sullivan, Rassel & Berner, 2008, p. 215). All interview questions were asked in the context of examining the knowledge base of participants regarding technology, domestic violence, and the role of domestic violence service providers.

The study used a purposeful random sampling technique to select women who had experienced electronic violence perpetrated by an intimate partner, or a combination of women who had experienced both physical violence and technology facilitated violence. Purposeful random sampling was selected because it was a more credible qualitative sampling technique (Patton, 2015). Sound judgment was necessary when choosing participants to ensure the study was representative of the population (O'Sullivan et al., 2008).

Data Analysis Plan

Analysis of data included transcribing written answers of interviews for upload into the computer software program NVivo for thematic analysis and comparison. NVivo was also be used to manage, store, and retrieve data. Some of the features of NVivo include graphical displays of codes and categories, and organization of unstructured data from open-ended interviews (QSR International, n.d.). For this study, and based on the research questions, codes were used to categorized data such as level of education, type of technology used against women, responses of each domestic violence agency response to women if any, and proactive approaches by agencies to prevent further abuse.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative validity is concerned with ensuring the accuracy of results by putting in place strategies to legitimize the conclusions drawn (Creswell, 2013, p. 190). Ensuring internal validity of this study was essential, and all the steps taken during the study were documented, and information transcribed to NVivo was be rechecked to ensure participant responses were accurately captured. Themes developed from data collected were contrasted with discrepant information to ensure the credibility of the study. Creswell (2013) describes the use of negative or discrepant information to counter themes developed in a study as a means of providing an alternate perspective of the findings for adding realism and validity. Rich, thick description was used to describe themes and to ensure external validity or transferability of the findings in this study. Creswell (2013) states that rich, thick description provides readers with a realistic perspective of the results and adds to the validity of the study. For this study, various explanations of the

themes and conclusions were presented to avoid the perception of researcher bias during the interpretation of the results. Confirming the research and the conclusion drawn entailed a process of reflection and comparison of personal beliefs and the interpretation of the findings. The presentation of contrasting explanations for the findings and rich, thick descriptions confirmed that the interpretation of the results was not solely based on the perception, personal experiences or personal belief system of the researcher.

Ethical Procedures

During the study, care and consideration of the rights of the participants was the primary concern. Participants were treated with courtesy and respect about their time, opinions and right to privacy. During the recruitment process, participants had the option of being interviewed in a private location to ensure their privacy. The consent form was thoroughly explained to participants including the option of refusing to participate or early withdrawal from the study. Participants were thanked for their time and consideration, and the focus shifted to other willing participants. The data collected from willing participants were scanned and stored on a cloud drive, and physical copies will be stored in a locked safe for five years. The names of participants would not be shared with third parties and were not be used during the analysis and interpretation of the research.

<p align="center">**Summary**</p>

Chapter 3 focuses on aligning the research methods of this study with the purpose of the study and the research questions. The research was conducted as a qualitative inquiry to gather in-depth information about the knowledge women have about the technology-facilitated violence and the response of domestic violence organizations in

educating and reducing further abuse to women. The strategy of inquiry was a case study because case studies examine processes or activities within organizations about the effect on victims of technology-facilitated violence as an extension of traditional domestic violence. This chapter also discusses the steps taken to protect the human subjects during the study. Chapter 4 examines the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In Chapter 4, I discuss the results of the study in relation to the study purpose. This chapter also includes information on the data collection and analysis procedures. The results of the study after the data were coded and themes were developed follow. The themes that emerged answered the research questions and provided insight about what women endure and the role that domestic violence service providers can play in educating and protecting women from this form of abuse.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to assess the impact on women if they are unaware of technology-facilitated abuse and to determine the role that domestic violence providers have in ensuring that women are educated about technology-facilitated abuse at the point of service. I also analyzed participants' perceptions of the concept of personal protection when using various types of technology prior to experiencing technology-facilitated experience. The study may provide information that organizations can use to improve women's access to current information and to address the emerging challenges technology presents for many women.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Questions

The research questions for this qualitative study were the following:

RQ1.   What are the implications for victims of domestic violence if they are not up-to-date on the growing danger of technology-facilitated abuse?

RQ2.   What are the implications for victims of technology-facilitated violence if they lack knowledge about the legal options available to stop perpetrators from using this form of abuse?

RQ3.   What information is provided to victims of domestic violence about technology-facilitated violence during contact with domestic violence service providers?

RQ4.   To what extent does a woman's level of education aid in decisions to follow existing technology safety protocols?

Setting

The study took place at a partner organization in Texas. Appendix A shows the letter that was sent the partner organization requesting the use of the facility to conduct the study. The name and specific location of the partner organization will remain confidential based on the agreement with the partner organization's director. The facility provides emergency shelter to adult women and their children who are victims of intimate partner violence. Women and their children may stay at the partner organization for up to six months. At the partner organization, women and children are fed three meals daily with snacks between meals. There is onsite childcare and provision of basic medical

care. The women receive assistance with accessing resources such as affordable housing, employment, and legal services. The partner organization provided the women with counseling services to help them recover psychologically and emotionally from the trauma of physical violence.

The women's partner organization did not house many victims at the time of the study. Many of the women at the partner organization were there for an extended period. Some stated that they were at the partner organization for almost six months. Others were there for three or four months, and a few were there for about three weeks. The women who were new to the partner organization and had not met with a counselor were automatically excluded from the study based on the criteria. Some women opted out of the voluntary participation because they were not interested, while others wanted some form of compensation. The partner organization offered the women what was known as "partner organization bucks" that can be used to purchase necessities at the partner organization. The women earn this form of compensation by cleaning up around the partner organization or assisting others. I did not offer compensation for participation in the study. Thus, the women who participated in the study were not recommended for "partner organization bucks" because they consented to voluntary uncompensated participation.

The women who participated in the study were surprisingly eager to share their experiences because many of them had not shared their experiences much in the past. The women shared more information than was asked. Some women shared their experiences even though they did not want to be a part of the study, but just wanted to talk about the

physical and psychological abuse they suffered. Some women stated that they felt empowered now that they were in the partner organization and had no plans to return to their abusers. Others acknowledged that they were relieved to speak freely now that they were away from their abusers. Some of the women were surprised to learn that they were not the only ones who experienced physical, emotional, or electronic violence. They comforted and shared their experiences with one another at the partner organization. Some women experienced severe physical and psychological abuse, while others experienced less severe abuse, but felt marginalized and controlled by their abusers.

Demographics

The women at the partner organization represented the predominant ethnic groups in Southeast, Texas. Most of the women were African American, Caucasian, or Hispanic. There was one woman who was of Asian descent. Many of the women were native Texans, but some moved from neighboring states such as Louisiana or Mississippi. The ages of the women at the center during the time of the study ranged from 20 to 70 years old. The women who met the criteria and subsequently participated in the study represented the dominant ethnic groups for this region. There were three African American women, three Caucasian women, and three Hispanic women. The only woman of Asian descent did not volunteer to be a part of the study.

Data Collection

The director of the partner organization approved the use of the facility and access to the victims to conduct this study. After the Institutional Review Board approved the study, the director of the partner organization agreed to post flyers around the partner

organization along with a copy of the flyer advertising the upcoming study. The flyer

provided a brief description of the study, the study start date, and my Walden university

e-mail address. The director volunteered to have her staff post the flyers around the

women's partner organization a week before the study began. The staff at the partner

organization allowed me full access to the women in the facility as needed. The staff also

provided access to one of the offices to ensure that the women were allowed privacy as

needed.

The total number of participants for the study was nine, which was the minimum

number of participants needed. One reason for this minimum sample size was that there

were few women at the center at the time of the study. Another reason was that some

women worked while others had other errands which included taking care of their

children; because of time constraints, these prospective participants opted against or were

unable to participate in the study.

I approached the women in the common areas such as the dining room, the living

room, outdoors, or in the hallways where some women were socializing or lounging

alone. After a brief introduction, and an explanation of the study, I asked each woman if

she was interested in participating in the study. The women who volunteered were

advised of the process of consenting to the study and given a day or two to think about

their decision before consenting. The participants were advised that I planned on making

several trips to the center and they were not obligated to consent immediately. Five of the

nine women decided that they wanted to go ahead and complete the study the day they

were approached because they had the time. Three of the women were interviewed 3 days later, and one woman was interviewed a week after she volunteered.

The data collection took 2 weeks because I had to return to the facility multiple times to recruit new participants as they become available or as individual schedules allowed. Some women worked or had the responsibility of multiple children, and the family's needs were accommodated. Sometimes that meant conducting the interview on another day or at another time. At the end of the data collection, 11 women were screened, but only nine women met the criteria to participate in the study and completed the study. The first woman who did not meet the criteria was over the required age limit because the age range was 18 to 60 years old, and she was 70 years old. The second woman was not directly affected by technology-facilitated violence because her abuser called her mother for reasons other than to abuse or harass either woman.

During the interviewing process, the women were offered a private office to discuss the questions. Only one woman accepted that offer of privacy. The other eight women decided on interviewing in the living room or dining area of the Women's Center. Those public areas were usually empty. People walking close to those areas could not overhear the conversations because there was plexiglass surrounding the areas.

The voluntary participants were prescreened at the time that they chose to be interviewed. Appendix B detailed the prescreening criteria and interview questions used in the study. If they met the criteria for the study, the consent form was reviewed with them in detail, and they were asked to sign and date the form. After which the interview began. Each interview took about 30 minutes. As participants were interviewed, the

information they provided was written on the questionnaires that were pre-coded in random order to protect their privacy during analysis. The consent form and prescreening form were also assigned the same code as the questionnaires at the time of the interview to be identified later if needed and for storage. The alphanumeric codes were written on the front page of the consent forms.

Data Analysis

The questions and the responses written on the questionnaires were transcribed into word documents and imported into NVivo 12 for analysis under a subfolder labeled interviews. Each word document was labeled with the alphanumeric codes in place of names as they were on the questionnaires. The data was automatically coded in NVivo for recurring themes and the sentiment of the respondents. The themes that emerged include the use of cell phones to harass the victims. Most victims reported receiving threatening phone calls or text messages. Some victims stated that family members were called to determine their whereabouts. At least one victim reported being tracked by her abuser using her cell phone. Other victims reported that the abuser would use other people's phones to call and harass them or the abuser would change his number multiple times when he became aware the victim blocked his number. Another recurring theme was harassment. Victims were harassed with phones calls, text messages and through social media. Victims reported experiencing cyberstalking and cyberharassment through social media outlets such as Facebook. Facebook was a common medium used by many abusers to gain information about the current status of victims. Domestic violence service providers such as law enforcement and partner organizations were another recurring

theme because many victims had contacted those providers and some failed to report incidences of technology-facilitated violence because the assumption was that it was not important enough to report or they were not asked about it when interviewed by those providers. At least two victims reported that they were able to obtain restraining orders when they reported the incidents along with the physical violence that occurred in the relationship. Some victims who reported technology-facilitated violence to domestic violence service providers were not given any guidance to prevent future occurrences. Most of the victims stated that providers did not solicit this information from them. At least three victims reported that they were asked about or given advice regarding electronic violence at community partner organizations.

Those victims who did receive information were given basic information such as changing their passwords or blocking the abuser. There was no specific guidance to seek prosecution of the abuser. One victim was told to keep a record of each time the abuser contacted her electronically. A few victims who knew about the relationship between intimate partner violence and electronic violence received that information from sources other than the domestic providers. One victim learned about electronic violence in a college English class when another student wrote a paper about it. One victim was skilled in conducting research to learn how her abuser was able to use her electronic device to cyberstalk her and track her precise location. She was able to notify the cell phone provider to alert her if anyone attempted to deceptively acquire her cell phone identification numbers or log into her cell phone provider account. This victim also set up her email accounts to receive notification if someone attempted to log into her accounts.

NVivo captured the overall sentiment of the victims through their responses. Most of the victims expressed moderately negative to very negative sentiments regarding their experiences with technology facility abuse. These sentiments related to technology facilitated abuse are in addition to the physical abuse they suffered because all of the women interviewed were all victims of physical violence by their abusers. The sentiments expressed included feeling afraid, jittery, threatened, cautious when communicating with the abuser, and difficulty focusing at work. Some reported suffering posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). NVivo captured some moderately positive sentiments such as victims feeling safer in the partner organization, and others receiving information about electronic abuse from family or friends.

There were no significant results obtained for the interview question related to experiencing technology facilitated abuse outside of the state of Texas. Two victims lived in two different states and did experience electronic violence but did not report it to any providers. One woman did not think it was important enough to report and the other woman relied on the abuser for financial stability and did not make an outcry to anyone regarding physical or electronic abuse. NVivo did not highlight the women's level of education even though the women's educational level ranged from two years of high school to a master's degree.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

As stated in Chapter 3, Creswell (2013) describes the use of negative or discrepant information to counter themes developed in a study as a means of providing an alternative perspective of the findings for adding realism and validity to the study. NVivo

did not code education as a theme, and this may have been because the answers to that

question were documented with one or two-word answers and NVivo codes data in

sentences or paragraphs when coding for themes. An alternative explanation may be that

a woman's level of education may not factor into her ability to protect herself from

becoming a victim of electronic violence anymore that education prevents a woman from

becoming a victim of physical violence. Another explanation could be the inconsistency

in the levels of education. Two of the women did not complete high school, one woman

obtained a General Education Development (GED), two women have some college

education, two women have associate degrees, one woman has a bachelor's degree, and

one woman has a master's degree. Since ensuring internal validity of this study was

important, NVivo was rechecked to ensure participant responses were accurately

captured. The data was coded several times and coded by sentences and then by

paragraphs to verify that themes that emerged were consistent. Themes developed from

data collected were contrasted with discrepant information to ensure the credibility of the

study. Rich, thick description provide readers with a realistic perspective of the results

and adds to the validity of the study (Creswell, 2013). Rich, thick description was used to

describe the themes and to ensure external validity or transferability of the findings in the

study.

Results

The themes that emerged from the study answered the research questions. The

first question asks, what are the implications for women if domestic violence service

providers or specialists are not informed on the growing danger of technology facilitated

abuse? One of the themes that emerged was the high degree of negative sentiments expressed by the victims associated with technology facilitated violence. Almost all of the women who participated in the study felt a range of emotions and had their activities of daily living disrupted after they decided to leave their abusers. Many of the women continue to feel insecure and intimidated. Most of the women were abused for many years and had contact with many domestic violence service providers through the years, but most providers provided basic information for self-protection. In some cases, if more information was provided victims it may minimized the level of continued abuse they experience.

The second research question was what are the implications for victims of technology-facilitated violence if they lack knowledge about the legal options available? The research showed that women continued to experience technology-facilitated violence if they are not advised of their legal options among other options. Many of the women were unsure about how to stop the abusers if blocking them proved ineffective. A few of the women were told to keep logs of each time the abuser contacts them electronically as proof of the continued abuse to obtain a restraining order. If women are unaware of those legal options and are not advised by providers, they would continue to experience the emotional and psychological effects of being cyberstalked, cyberharrassed or called relentlessly by the abuser. Some of the women endured this form of abuse in addition to physical abuse. Most of the women reported that they were not given specific information about existing state or federals laws that may be applicable in helping them pursue the matter legally and potentially seek prosecution of their abuser. It could have been that

they were not provided with this information because providers may just be focused on giving them immediate assistance or providers may not be aware of the current laws and new options that may be available to victims.

The third research question asked, what information are provided to victims about the phenomenon during contact with domestic violence service providers? The study revealed that a few women were given basic information to protect themselves such as blocking the abuser's telephone number or obtaining protective orders. However, this was not consistent among providers. Some women are still unaware of their rights and the link between technology facilitated abuse and domestic violence even after they sought partner organization from their abusers. Some of the women continued to fear that their abusers would continue to use technology against them.

The fourth research question asked, to what extent does a woman's level of education aid in decisions to follow technology safety protocols? The level of education for participants ranged from two years of high school to a master's degree. Some of the women learned to protect themselves after experiencing technology facilitated abuse by blocking the abuser from calling or contacting them on social media. One of the women at the partner organization had conducted enough research on her own to protect herself from being tracked by her abuser electronically. She took the initiative to assist some of the other women at the partner organization by showing them how to turn off the cell phone global positioning systems and this woman has some college education. Other women continue to be verbally abused telephonically or through social media. A few of the women with college degrees were not aware that technology-facilitated violence by

an intimate partner was also a form of domestic violence. The study revealed that a woman's level of education does not determine that they would follow proper technology safety protocols. Women have to obtain specific knowledge about technology facilitated abuse through independent research or sources who are knowledgeable on the subject.

Summary

The study revealed that women continue to experience moderate to high sentiments when dealing with abusers who physically abuse them and use technology to continue emotionally and psychologically abusing them. The range of emotions are the same as physical abuse or may be amplified because they were also physically abused by the perpetrator. Domestic violence service providers are not consistently initiating discussions about technology facilitated abuse with victims about their experiences to better assists them. The study revealed that some women might not mention they are experiencing this form of abuse during contact with domestic violence service providers because they often do not know or see this form of abuse as an issue that needs addressing. The women's level of education does not dictate that they possess the knowledge to protect themselves from the many ways that abusers can use technology against them.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

In Chapter 5, I discuss the interpretation of the findings, the limitations of the study, and its implications for social change, in addition to offering recommendations for domestic violence service providers. The purpose of this qualitative study was to assess the impact on women when domestic violence professionals or advocates do not or cannot provide current information about technology-related abuse to promote safety when providing service to victims. The study may provide information that organizations can use to improve women's access to current information and empowerment by restructuring organizational training to address the emerging challenges technology presents for many women.

The results of the study revealed that participants continue to experience moderate to high sentiments when dealing with abusers who use technology to abuse them emotionally and psychologically during the relationship or after the relationship ends. The research showed that domestic violence service providers are not consistently initiating discussions or soliciting information about technology-facilitated abuse women may have experienced and continue to experience. Some women may not divulge this information if they are not asked about it because some believe it may not be significant enough to report. The study also revealed that a women's level of education does not determine whether she possesses the knowledge to protect herself from the ways abusers may use technology against them.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of the study as they relate to the emotional and psychological response of women when they are abused through technology are the same compared to when they are physically abused. According to researchers, women feel threatened, scared, and helpless in stopping the abuser in some instances. Cox (2014) described technology-facilitated harassment as deliberate and threatening electronic communication from a current or former intimate partner to a victim to cause deliberate distress. The findings extend the existing knowledge in the discipline that technology-facilitated abuse distresses victims in many ways. The findings also extend the existing research, which shows that 97% of victims seeking domestic violence services are also monitored and threatened through technology (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2014). Women who are victims of physical violence are likely to have enhanced fears if a perpetrator continues to attack them electronically.

When providers interact with victims of intimate partner violence, they should consistently ask about technology-facilitated abuse because some victims do not divulge that they are victims of this form of violence. Under the Duluth model of power and control (DAIP, 2017), technology-facilitated abuse is a coercive form of control that abusers use to continue intimidating and harassing victims. This form of coercive control prolongs the emotionally and psychological suffering of women after they leave the relationship. When domestic providers intervene to help women, they need to help in each area that victims are affected. One of the goals of intervention in domestic violence is helping women to regain power and control, which is lost or significantly diminished

during the period when women experience abuse and are controlled by their abusers. The feminist perspective is concerned with gender and its relationship to power inequality (Crossman & Hardesty, 2017). Failing to address all aspects or forms of abuse leaves women vulnerable to future abuse and feelings of powerlessness.

The study revealed that many participants received inconsistent assistance from domestic violence service providers. Some women in the study voluntarily disclosed that they were being abused electronically to domestic violence service providers and received advice. Other women disclosed the same information and received no guidance about proceeding methods of self-protection. A few women stated that they were never asked if they are also being abused electronically in addition to their physical abuse. These findings illustrate that there is inconsistency in how providers intervene when women are abused through technology. The literature review revealed that domestic violence professionals are uncomfortable assisting victims of technology-facilitated intimate partner violence because they are inexperienced technology users themselves and reportedly require additional information about the phenomenon to educate victims (Murray et al., 2015). One of the technology savvy participants took the initiative to research how to protect herself after her abuser installed software on her cell phone to track her whereabouts. In cases where abusers are skilled technology users and can target their victims in ways that may be difficult to detect and deter, the victim may need more expert assistance and advice, however. To empower women, providers should prepare themselves to handle all areas of domestic violence, including the violence associated with emerging technology. Technology-facilitated abuse has the potential to keep victims

under the control of their abusers because they can control women from a distance and sometimes anonymously.

I concluded that a woman's level of education is not a factor in determining whether she follows technology safety protocols. Some women who participated in the study possessed knowledge and skills in the particular area while others did not. The study revealed that some women knew certain basic methods of self-protection when using technology; others knew much more because they may be more technologically inclined than others. There was no indication from the results of the study that the women who are more educated are more likely to adhere to safety protocols when using technology.

Limitations of the Study

A potential limitation of the study is the inability to generalize the results to a larger population of participants if victims had no prior contact with domestic violence providers. Because most of the participants were in long-term relationships where they admitted to having contact with other domestic violence service providers before seeking partner organization during the prescreening stage, the limitation was eliminated. Most of the participants were in intimate relationships for more than 5 years, though a few of the participants were in the relationships for less than 2 years. All of the women had more than one encounter with domestic violence service providers while in the relationships to meet the criteria for the study. No other limitations were identified that would affect the outcome of the study or the ability to generalize the results of the study.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, there appears to be inconsistency in how domestic violence service providers intervene when women who are victims of physical violence are also victims of technology-facilitated violence. The responses from the participants led to the conclusion that domestic violence service providers need to be unified in their approach to assisting and educating women who are victims of technology facilitated violence. Because existing literature shows that many providers are not comfortable enough with technology to assist victims (Murray et al.), providers can team with entities external to their organizations who can provide women with the expertise needed to help themselves when the laws are ambiguous or nonexistent. Further, domestic violence service providers should be in contact with sources who can also educate them about current trends in technology and the new ways that abusers use technology against victims. There are available resources for women and providers alike, but domestic violence service providers need to connect with those who have current information, so they can help empower women.

Implications

The implications for social change are consistent legislation, increased dissemination of existing and new knowledge about technology facilitated abuse, harassment, or stalking through governments, courts, law enforcement, and support groups to ensure women feel empowered and safe. Social change with regards to technology facilitated abuse is most beneficial to victims because it may reduce the occurrences of this form of abuse and prevent abusers from exploiting that medium to

maintain control. Equipping women with the knowledge and in some cases, technical skills to protect themselves may reduce the powerlessness that some women may feel. Civil and criminal organizations may use the knowledge gained from the study to find a unified approach to consistently deal with physical intimate partner violence and technology facilitated abuse.

Conclusion

I assessed the impact on women when domestic violence service professionals or advocates do not or cannot provide current information about technology related abuse to promote safety when providing service to victims. The study concludes that women are not only affected by physical abuse but face the same emotional and psychological effects when abusers use technology as a coercive control tactic. The study highlights the need for all domestic providers to develop consistent methods of handling technology-facilitated violenceat the point of service. The study confirms that most victims who seek services for intimate partner violence are also victims of technology facilitated violence. There were inconsistencies in how domestic providers deal with victims of technology abuse. If domestic violence service providers hope to help women, all areas of abuse should be addressed to prevent women from experiencing the emotional and psychological effects of domestic abuse. It is not beneficial to women if they are separated from the abuser and have an order of protection in place, but the abuser is threatening or harassing them through social media, phones, or tracking them via an electronic device. Domestic violence service providers should ensure that there is

consistency in soliciting information about technology facilitated abuse because some women do not mention it unless they are asked.

The feminist perspective, which is concerned with empowering women by addressing the issues women face that include disabilities, race, gender domination, powerlessness, social inequality, social devaluation, and domestic violence (Creswell, 2013). The feminist perspective in relation to technology facilitated intimate partner violence looks at the loss of power that women experience through this ordeal. Technology facilitated abuse is another means that men can take power away from women and in many cases not face any consequences. Technology facilitated abuse is another means that women experience powerlessness and are devalued within the family structure or the home environment. Technology facilitated abuse is another means that women are exploited by an intimate partner who seeks to retain control even after the relationship ends. This sense of powerlessness can affect women's perspective in other settings such as the workplace and the dissolution of rights that women have earned after years of suffrage.

The study concluded that women with different educational backgrounds are affected in the same ways by technology facilitated abuse. Regardless of the educational background of the victim, the emotional and psychological effects technology facilitated abuse are the same. The role of domestic violence service providers is to ensure that women are not feeling devalued and powerless and are educated about the ways they can stop abusers from continuously pursuing them electronically after physically abusing them. Domestic violence service providers should be using existing and new resources to

assist them in helping women stop this growing threat. Providing women with knowledge about the technology facilitated abuse helps them to regain the power and control that was taken by the abuser.

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Appendix A: Invitation Letter to Partner Organization

Partner Organization
Director
Texas

February 8, 2018

Dear Director,

My name is Nadine White, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am conducting research to fulfill my dissertation geared at understanding the role that domestic violence service providers can play in providing women with current information or assistance about technology facilitated abuse. With the rapid growth and use of technology such as cellular phones, emails, social media and other mediums, women victims of domestic violence are at risk of cyberharassment, cyberstalking, and other forms of electronic monitoring and intimidation by current or former intimate partners. Unfortunately, many state and federal laws do not adequately address all the ways women victims of domestic violence face further harm by abusers through this medium. This study will analyze women's perception about the concept of personal protection when using various types of technology. The implications for social change are consistent legislation, improved dissemination of existing and new information about technology facilitated abuse through governments, courts, law enforcement, and advocacy groups.

Women who consent to the study will be recruited, informed of the purpose of the study and their right to refuse to participate or voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time. Once recruited, women who meet the criteria of the study will be asked to share their experiences with technology facilitated abuse and their interactions with various domestic violence service providers.

Please call at [redacted] or email me at [redacted] with more questions or concerns about the study or contact information about university research faculty. I also attached a sample letter of cooperation.

Sincerely,

Nadine White

Appendix B: Interview Procedure

Date: _____

Location: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Name of Interviewee: _____

Prescreening:

1. Have you met with one of the counselors as yet?

2. How long ago did you experience violence at the hands of your abuser?

3. Do you feel as though you are emotionally ready to discuss your experiences at this time and for the purposes of this study?

4. Are you between the ages of 18 and 60?

5. Did the violence in the relationship extend to technology facilitated or electronic violence such as threats or verbal abuse via text messages, telephone calls, emails, or through social media to control or intimidate you?

6. Did you contact a domestic violence organization such as a local police department, county or city family violence center, a partner organization for battered women, or other domestic violence professionals on more than one occasion?

Interview Questions:

1. What is your current level of education?

2. Are you aware of the many ways that an abuser can stalk or harass you with the use of technology, which is an extension of domestic violence? If yes, where did you obtain this information?

3. Have you ever been harassed, threatened, verbally abused, or cyberstalked by your current or former boyfriend or husband through technology such as instant or

text messages, emails, chatrooms, blogs, or social media (Facebook, Myspace, Instagram etc.)? If so, which medium was used and how was it used?

4. What effect did this form of violence have on you and your sense of safety?

5. Did you voluntarily report the incidences of technology facilitated abuse to a domestic violence provider such as law enforcement agency, a family violence center, or other domestic violence service providers? What was the advice, recommendation, or solution offered to deal with the problem?

6. Did you experience technology facilitated abuse in another state? If so, did you report those incidences to domestic violence service providers? What was the response of provider or providers? If you did not report the incidences to a domestic violence provider, why not?

7. Did domestic violence service providers educate you about current state and federal laws designed to protect you from various types of electronic abuse such as cyberharassment or cyberstalking?