**Contextually Addressing the Complexity of Women's Use of Force:**

**Emergent Research and Practice Trends**

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## Introduction: Laying the Groundwork

This draft is intended to stimulate discussion regarding research about and programming responses to women's use of force in their intimate relationships. The final product will be a book chapter regarding the information below that integrates participant feedback.

- Changes the Criminal Justice System (CJS) have made are in response to battered women's advocates, members of the feminist movement, and research promoting the deterrence aspects of pro- or mandatory arrest policies (Sherman & Berk, 1984; Sherman, 1992) over the past several decades, particularly the implementation of mandatory (or presumptive) arrest policies requiring arrest if probable cause exists that an act of violence occurred.

- These changes have been lauded for increasing protection for women and encouraging offender accountability by removing police discretion at time of arrest. When enforced

properly, the changes ensure an appropriate arrest is made and, hopefully, serve as a deterrent to future violence as well as show the state is no longer trivializing intimate partner violence (IPV).

- Mandatory arrest policies, in some instances, may do more harm than good because the CJS rests on an incident-driven model, void of context, which removes women's decision-making power. Furthermore, police officers typically do not consider the full context of the incident, even if legally required to do so (Finn and Bettis, 2006). O'Dell (2007) provides further insight into why police officers continue to make illegal arrests of victims, citing police force paramilitary and patriarchal culture and a misinformed reliance on the myth of mutual combat.

- With the lack of effective, informed police intervention there is growing evidence of women's increased IPV arrests, when women are either the sole offender or are arrested as part of a dual arrest. Furthermore, women are often wrongly arrested for defending themselves. Additionally, abusive male partners often manipulate the situation to their own advantage (Larance and Rousson, Forthcoming; Miller, 2005; Muftic et al., 2007; Osthoff, 2002; Roy, 2012). For example, 10 of 19 women in Pollack et al.'s (2005) research who were arrested for using force against a partner "reported that their male partner used his knowledge of the criminal justice system (including how mandatory charge policies work) to portray her as the primary aggressor and have her arrested and charged" (p. 11). Pollack et al.'s (2005) findings are similar to those of Miller, (2005), Dichter (2013), Roy (2012), and Larance and Rousson (Forthcoming).

- Thorough understanding why women use force is a critical aspect of placing the violence in context, undertaking informed research, and implementing effective programming. Swann, Gambone, Van Horn, Snow, and Sullivan, (2012) address the need for more thorough investigation into women's aggression. They argue that a gendered analysis accurately portrays women's experiences of IPV, pointing out that women's aggression is distinctly different from women's victimization.

- Women have stated a range of motivations for using force (Dasgupta, 2002; Hamberger et. al. 1994, 1997; Larance, 2006; and Weston et. al., 2007). Their reasons include but are not limited to physically defending themselves; defending who they are as individuals; "turning the tables" of power and control; protecting their children; retaliating for past relationship wrongs; demanding attention; expressing anger; regaining lost respect; using his abusive actions against him; and attempting to escape abuse. This does not excuse women's use of force but it does explain the complex

power and controls dynamics. Such an explanation is necessary for more thorough research and effective intervention.

- Some police refuse to make arrests even when mandatory arrest policies exist (Frye et al., 2007); while others rely upon their own beliefs about what behavior is 'normative' for offenders and victims and make arrests Stalans and Finn (1995). In some jurisdictions, where preferred arrests statutes have been passed, the statutes are implemented as if they are mandatory arrest statutes (Gardner, 2007).

- Studies reveal that police officers do not always find abused women credible and still may blame them for the violence (DeJong et al., 2008; Ferraro and Pope, 1993; Goodmark, 2008; Stalans and Finn, 2006).

- Ritmeester and Pence (1992) suggest that agents of the criminal justice system contribute to women's criminalization through the way in which they process the experiences of women.

- This, and multiple contributing factors, blurs the boundaries between victims and offenders. It also highlights the CJS's possible lack of capacity for taking multiple factors into account. There is hope, however, given examples from Washtenaw County Michigan's coordinated community response (Larance and Rousson, Forthcoming).

- Growing informed awareness of the problem by advocates, CJS staff, and academics is challenged by arrest statistics, lack of appropriate programming, entrenched structural and gender inequalities, which all contribute to these issues for women (Larance and Miller, Forthcoming).

**Perspectives of Criminal Justice Professionals**

- Miller's 2005 book reflects research conducted with police, prosecutors and defense attorneys, other CJS and social service professionals, and women arrested for using force in their intimate relationships.

- Police ride-along component – 11 researchers covered shifts on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings (when IPV is most likely to occur) with the three major police departments (city, county and state levels) in one state, June-September. During this time, there were over 400 calls for service or police-initiated encounters and the researchers observed 63 incidents of IPV, though only 50 of these involved calls with

altercations between intimate partners and former partners (i.e., not domestic calls involving siblings, parents, children, grandparents, and non-romantic partners).

- Six calls involved women's use of violence, but in only one of these incidents did a woman use aggressive force instead of defensive force.

- Ten of the 50 resulted in arrest; 2 were of women, one was a dual arrest and the remaining 7 involved male suspects who had either violated Protection from Abuse orders or used aggressive force against females.

- Themes raised by other CJS professionals and social service workers include: dismissed idea of mutual combatants; an understanding of power and control dynamics and men's primary power; attributed women's increased arrested for IPV to change in police; believe male offenders manipulate women and the CJS; misguided police motivation exacerbate the problem; collateral damage is extensive.

- Current strategies are underway to address how alienating the legal/court process can be for women who are survivors of domestic violence such as instituting primary aggressor guidelines so police/prosecutors can distinguish better between victims and offenders; when police can't determine primary aggressor, they still arrest one or both parties and let the courts figure it out (Bohmer et al., 2002; Miller 2005). The Center for Court Innovation is on the cutting edge of this effort by sponsoring Open Houses for grantees in communities that demonstrate outstanding responses to the issue (Ann Arbor Open Houses , 2009 and 2012) as well as hosting webinars on the issue (Center for Court Innovation).

- O'Dell (2007) and Finn and Bettis' (2006) work found that police officers were not trained or prepared to identify primary aggressors. In a review of 128 domestic violence cases over 6 years, Hester (2012) found that women identified by police as "perpetrators" rarely exerted the power and control inherent in battering tactics. With the decontextualized approach, women in Hester's sample were three times as likely as their male partners to be arrested. Hester also emphasized the importance of women's substance use and age in their being arrested.

- Leisenring (2011) looks at women's understandings of their interactions with police, suggesting that women's self-presentation to police fail to achieve the desired results; this "unsuccessful identity work" occurs either when women were unable to convince officers that they were victims and consequently were arrested, or, when women were

unable to convince officers that they were not victims and experienced their abuser's unwanted arrest (p. 358); 14 of 22 women in her sample believed they had been wrongly arrested (and in all but 2 of these incidents, she was not longer in the relationship – this may have a tie-in to Johnson's recent piece on ex-spouses). Several women were told by police that since she called before but failed to leave him, not fitting the expectation that a "good" victim would have left, she was arrested. (great example we could use on page 359-360). Other women who were arrested said that they were violent and admitted it to police (for self-defense or frustration reasons) and police arrested them for "damaging property." Still other women believed their emotional state (very upset) harmed credibility and police took their claims less seriously. This confirms Miller's research (2001, 2005) that revealed women's partners/ex-partners used the women's emotions as evidence that they were crazy, diminishing their credibility. Who was able to proactively define the situation, such as who called 911, also influenced which side the police believed. Again, this supports Miller's research that abusers have learned how to manipulate the system (see 2001 article, p. 1354). (In Leisenring's research, she also found that women who did NOT want their abusers arrested and/or jailed also failed even when strategies women used were that she wasn't a "true" victim – it was an accident, he had never been violent before, etc.). In 5 of 14 arrest incidents, police seemed unsure, or at least one of the two responding officers. This shows how cases will be assessed differently by police officers and could explain more why stereotypes of "normative" characterizations of victims still hold sway with cops (could also cite DeJong et al., 2008; Buzawa and Buzawa, 2003) and that officers interpret mandatory arrest policies differently (see Crager et al. 2003 study of 6 police agencies in Washington).

- Will integrate and respond to this article: Rajan and McCloskey, 2007 (Victims of intimate partner violence: Arrest rates across recent studies. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 15 (3/4), 27-52).

**Perceptions from Women Who Have Used Force**

- Our current research includes more than 200 women who have used force from programs on the east coast, the Midwest, and Hong Kong, China. The research's purpose is to identify, in their own words, women's motivations for using force. In doing so the researchers will create a visual graphic to depict the nuances of the women's motivations. This visual tool will serve practitioners, women who have used

force, members of the CJS, the judiciary, and researchers to better understand the complex dynamics of women's forceful actions.

- Women of diverse backgrounds use force for a variety of reasons. In the words of one woman, "I fought back to get him off of me. He won't give my daughter back and has abused me in every way. I had had enough and he wouldn't get off of me so I had to do something." Another woman explains, "My husband found out that I saw my ex-boyfriend. We are just friends but he still got mad. We got in an argument and he broke his own nose and scratched his own arms. He called the police and when they came he said I did it to him. I couldn't believe it. I got arrested."

- Dichter (2013) mentions how coercive control (Anderson, 2009; Stark, 2007) fits in victims' use of force in response to forms of IPV "that are not as clearly identifiable to outsiders but may be as damaging as, or more damaging than, physical attacks; examples include isolating the victim from social supports, controlling the victim's activities and access to resources, and using verbal threats and nonphysical forms of intimidation" (p. 83; see also Smith, Smith and Earp, 1999).

- The collateral damages of arrest (criminal record, affects employment; housing, children, costs for treatment, lawyer, childcare, often greater use of violent retaliation from abuser, etc.); Dichter's (2013) study gives some monetary amounts of expenses incurred by women as a result of arrest, how many had trouble getting a job, etc. (see p. 92); also could lead to depression, suicide attempts, substance abuse (impacts financial and employment stability, parenting).

- In some jurisdictions advocacy organizations believe they cannot help victims who are arrested because of their rules. This means the women do not receive emotional support, tangible help, shelter opportunities, etc.

**Trends in Research**

- Failing to acknowledge or consider issues the most marginalized women including issues of: race/ethnicity, immigration (Dasgupta, 2002; Roy, 2012), poverty, LGBTQ, disabled (Ballan & Freyer, 2012), as well as over-criminalize poor women of color (Potter, 2008; Richie, 1995; Richie, 2012; Sokoloff, 2005; West, 2002; 2012)

- Related to the above is the concern that some racial/ethnic/immigrant groups would avoid the police as a resource for help, which could increase the likelihood that an individual will use violence as a means of self-protection (Miller, 2005).

- Danger of constructing image of a "pure and blameless battered woman" (to get public sympathy and resource support) which was a part of the "battering affects every woman" banner. "In order to gain public support and sympathy and understanding, it was initially politically wise to emphasize the common experiences of battered women – 'it could be anyone.' But this trivialized the dimensions that underlie the experiences of different victims and suggest that there is universal risk." As Richie (2000) says, poor women of color are "most likely to be in both dangerous intimate relationships and dangerous social positions" (p. 1136). Beth Richie continued this critique in Miami, 2014.

- Battered women are often set up to be "good women," which means they are passive, non-violent, and very afraid of the abuser (Loseke, 1992; Lamb, 1999; Berns, 2004); harmful if social service providers or CJS do not view women as victims if their actions/situation deviate from this characterization (Dunn, 2008; Creek and Dunn, 2011).

- Focusing on the intersectional nature of women experiences is critical. "Strategies based on the experiences of women who do not share the same class and race backgrounds will be of limited utility for those whose lives are shaped by a different set of obstacles" (Crenshaw, 1994, p. 86). It is necessary to move beyond issues regarding race, class, and gender as individual identity characteristics; instead, these need to be seen as interlocking structures that interact with other forms of inequality and oppression, such as racism, ethnocentrism, class privilege, and heterosexism, and how they constrain and shape women's lives and choices (Crenshaw, 1991; Larance, 2012).

- Raises issue of 'culture' – how to take into account that different cultures define IPV differently, without allocating blame to an immigrant's culture, for example, or excusing/tolerating cultural practices in ways that justify batterers who use cultural defenses; we need a sociocultural context; but can't elevate cultural difference so that structural power is erased (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005).

- West (2007) looks at what she calls "victim-defendants" who are black women and develops her concept of bidirectional asymmetric violence. Cites Rajan & McCloskey (2007) – across a review of samples, the number of women arrests is as high as 60%, but

they are battered women who have used violence in the context of self-defense; also only approximate 1-7% of women arrested for IPV appear to be primary aggressors across samples. Argues that Black women use aggression to protect themselves/children or in retaliation against their abusers so Black women are disproportionately labeled as mutual combatants and/or arrested, and cites studies showing that mandatory arrests polices are associated with increases of Black women arrested (Melton and Belknap, 2003, Simpson, Bouffard, Garner, and Hickman, 2006); also, Swan and Snow's 2002 sample had predominately black low income women (108) and found that although women and men committed equivalent levels of verbal abuse, and women did more moderate physical violence (throwing objects, pushing, and shoving) the men committed significantly more severe physical violence (choking, sexual aggression, coercive control) and the men were better able to control the women's behavior (p. 303 in Swan & Snow). West provides same explanations why blacks are over represented in arrests. West, p. 100: "Several factors may account for the association among poverty, residence in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, and Black female-perpetrated IPV. Low-income urban areas are often characterized by racial segregation, social isolation, rampant unemployment, and community violence, including high rates of non-IPV homicide. In these communities, the appearance of physical or emotional weakness can be dangerous, making at least the show of violence essential for survival. When violence is routinely modeled for Black women (and men) as a way of achieving one's goals, as a means of self-protection, or as a conflict resolution strategy, this aggressive behavior can easily spill over into intimate relationship (Benson & Fox, 2004; Websdale, 2001)." After pro-arrest legislation was expanded in Maryland, arrests of women increased for all groups, but more drastically for Black within (25.3% and 38%, respectively , before and after the policy, Simpson et al., 2006)

- Swan and Snow (2006) use an intersectional approach — with particular emphasis placed on social, historical, and cultural contexts — to understand the complex nature of women's use of force. Their "model proposes a number of risk and protective factors that appear to be related to women's use of violence with male partners, including the male partners' violence against women, experiences of childhood trauma, women's strategies for coping with problems in their relationships, women's motivations for using violence, and the outcomes of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and PTSD" (p. 1039).

- Methodological issues arise: mainstream research of IPV lacks sociocultural contexts. As Yoshihama (1999) points out, turning over a dining table is a culturally specific form of abuse in Japan because it questions women's legitimate role in the family, while

dousing a woman with liquid in Japan conveys she is impure or contaminated (Yoshihama, 1999). Garfield's(1991) life history interviews with African American women reveals that the women "did not always regard physical aggression as violence, whereas acts of racism were uniformly experienced as such" (p. 42) and could be concerned that calling the police subjects black men to racist treatment by CJS in addition to confirming racist stereotypes. Similarly, Bui and Morash (1999) point out that Vietnamese women who have been taught that saving face and family unity are more important than individual safety may be at a disadvantage in a system that believes otherwise. While Ristock (2002) reminds us that Lesbians who are not out to their friends and family are at risk of an abusive partner who may disclose their sexual identity.

- An emerging focus on trauma-informed, gender-responsive practice (Bloom, Owen, and Covington, 2004) practice. This approach acknowledges survivorship histories but could be used to frame as micro-level crime (individual pathology oriented explanations); may also be used to ignore victim's agency; and may be used to excuse men's violence if they experienced trauma (Gilfus, 1999).. It is very appealing because it validates how early trauma could have a long-lasting impact, and can also help to understand why adults may have frightening flashbacks and fears. It could empower women to know there is a scientifically proven explanation so they won't believe they brought the IPV upon themselves. Finally, trauma research has facilitated treatment interventions very helpful for victims. But, there are limitations. If trauma is understood as an individual psychological response, it could be seen as a "psychological condition caused by exposure to violence/extreme stress, leading to the assumption that all types of traumatic events are precursors of psychological symptomatology, unless the victim is exceptionally resilient" (Gilfus, 1999, p. 1241).

- If we focus too much on childhood traumatic experiences, we risk losing structural factors, including racism, poverty, and other forms of oppression that could be also/just as traumatic. By focusing on the trauma victim, we also ignore the offender.

- We must not lose sight of the social and political context and the gendered nature of the inequalities of power which IPV occurs.

- Women's use of force is increasingly used against them in custody/visitation disputes (exacerbated by men's rights groups, see Dragiewicz, 2011). Paper abuse is an additional consideration regarding abusive men manipulating the system against women (Dragiewicz, 2011).

- In addition, some jurisdictions charge mothers of minor children "fail to protect" if the children are exposed to IPV (Kantor and Little, 2003).

- As framed in by Michael Johnson and colleagues' (2014) recent article, researchers are urged to think about problems inherent with using large general survey data to analyze intimate partner violence perpetration. In the article Johnson et al detail a new operationalization of intimate terrorism and situational couple violence using ex-spouse data from the National Violence Against Women Survey. This has multiple implications for women who have used force as it not only confirms differences between intimate terrorism and situational couple violence but establishes that "intimate terrorism is much more likely to be perpetrated by men, it involves more frequent and more injurious violence, and it has debilitating psychological consequences for victims.

- Emphasis on after-the fact, not causation, structural reasons for IPV, prevention; Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological nested model is a useful tool is exploring this further.

- Research and practice (Dichter, 2013; Miller, 2005; Osthoff, 2002) shows that it often takes being arrested for many women to receive the services they need. One woman in Dichter's study said, "[Arrest] saved my life-but it shouldn't work like that." When a woman receives helps only after she is arrested, it is a wake-up call for the spectrum of violence prevention programs.

- Shunting women to 'anger management' groups that do not focus on IPV. Women are sent to groups where they are taught to control their anger (anger management) rather than groups that focus on the complex dynamics of IPV. As a result the women waste their time on money on services that do not address their true needs – and overlook survivorship issues.
- Gondolf's (2012) investigation of BIP participants finds distinct differences between the men's violence and the violence of their female partners, refuting claims that BIP participants in the U.S. are primarily engaged in "mutual violence."

- Weston, Marshall, and Coker's (2007) work provides an in-depth investigation into women's motivation for violent as well as nonviolent behaviors. Among their findings was that women perceive self-protective actions as more retaliatory than self-defensive. Weston et al., (2007) did not, however, consider women's violence within context of their partners' violence perpetration, which is clearly a limitation of their work.

- A Finnish study (Flinck and Paavilainen, 2010) that interviewed 24 heterosexual women to gain insight into their violent behavior in relationships. The researchers accepted the empirical evidence that women are as much or more likely to use IPV in heterosexual relationships, citing quantitative studies conducted by Straus and his colleague and Archer's meta-analysis (2000). They question the feminist perspective that IPV is strongly related to social causes, implicating a patriarchal social system as a primary contributor – asking the questions why don't all men use IPV and why do many women use IPV. Their analysis revealed three things: (1) women rejected violence due to religious or ethical principles or feeling they had a moral superiority over an abusive man; they did not see their verbal or psychological abusive behavior as violence; they also refused to interpret their own behavior as violence, seeing it instead as relationship conflicts or the man's false interpretations – they just felt they were expressing anger but they denied or downplayed their violent behavior because they didn't cause injuries; women were also shocked by their violent thoughts and desires to hurt/destroy their parents and feared consequences , felt guilt over feelings; also normalize violence because they wanted to be strong survivor and felt a degree of violence was normal and could help in forcing the men to seek help. (2) women justified violence – self-defense or to protect their privacy or their children's rights. Also some felt it reasonable to use revenge and punish the men. Some panicked while overburdened (which led to substance abuse, which led to loss of control); some reported venting repressed feelings; some used violence to defend their self-determination and human dignity; some acted to help the family (free family from suffering). Some women did not recognize they might need help because they were disappointed in their own behavior; some 'woke up' and wanted to get out. However – these categories are complicated – there's no information provided that tells us what is the more dominant belief. Women did not believe they committed violence or any harm unless it was physical (yet there is no contextualizing the relative "emptiness" of women's verbal abuse because it doesn't come with the threats and physicality that is part and parcel of men's verbal abuse). Women consistent attributed greater blame to their partners and downplayed either own violence and say it as part of a normal relationship.

- Conradi and Geffner (2009)'s article provides an introduction to a *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* special issue. Before summarizing the articles, they provide an overview of the contentious issue of women's use of violence and encourage researchers, as well as those discussing this issue, to define such terms as "abuse" and "aggression."

- In Straus's (2009) article explanations are given for the lack of public and service provider "perception" of gender symmetry, in spite of what Straus refers to as the "large body of high-quality of evidence" (p. 553). Straus explicitly states that this article is not meant to establish evidence for gender symmetry because that has already been covered. Straus's states that gender symmetry in IPV has been misperceived for multiple reasons including: 1) male violence dominates most other crimes; 2) male dominant police statistics an partner violence; 3) women are injured more and fear more. Here Straus states that "This combination is probably a large part of the explanation for the greater cultural acceptance of violence by women than by men in developed nations" (p. 557). 3) acknowledging that men have more power in society as judged by many indicators and these cultural norms must be ended; 4) the gender stereotype that women are "the gentle sex" (p.558). 5) evidence of ipv available to the public via the media, which "reflects and reinforces" gender stereotypes; and 6)there is a difficulty in changing/correcting false information. The reasons for denial of the gender symmetry argument, according to Straus, are multiple and largely the fault of academics who have the information but refuse to share it. The reasons for denial of the gender symmetry argument include: 1) lack of attention to the diversity of women's violence, for example women's advocates only focus on a small proportion of IPV; 2) defense of feminist theory grounded in the exclusive focus on female victims and male perpetrators as well as the "belief that PV is a reflection of a patriarchal social and family system" (p. 561). Straus suggests that one the "reasons for the denial is to maintain adherence to the patriarchal theory of PV" (p. 561) and "that the research showing gender symmetry has been denied because it may have been perceived as a threat to feminism in general" (p. 561). 3) If the gender symmetry evidence is believed it will weaken services for female victims. Straus asserts that the consequences of denying the gender symmetry evidence are a disservice to women as they are "hindering efforts to help women avoid engaging in PV. This is important because women, like men, need to be helped to recognize that hitting a partner is morally wrong, criminal, and harmful to the perpetrator as well as the victim" (p. 563). According to Straus, "when the evidence finall prevails the discrepancy could undermine the credibility of the feminist cause" (p.563-64). Straus states that denial of gender symmetry evidence has interfered with effective treatment programs and states that couples therapy should replace Duluth Model intervention, due to the bidirectional nature of IPV.

- Our response to this is well-covered theoretically (raising questions about context) and empirically (raising methodological questions with measurement using large quantitative survey samples) in the present chapter.

- Hines and Douglas (2009) state that the purpose of their article is to summarize a range of estimates of women's IPV against men in a manner which will move "beyond arguments over who perpetuates the most IPV and who suffers the most" (p. 582). The estimates used to make the authors' points are grounded in decontextualized research by Gelles (1974) and Straus (1995), among others. The authors assert that "IPV by women against men, like other forms of family violence, can be considered a significant health and mental health problem in this country (p. 573)." They discuss the consequences of women's violence against men which include PTSD, alcohol and substance abuse. Their assertion is followed with the statement that "a strict feminist viewpoint has hampered the ability of women who use IPV and men who sustain it to seek and get help from the social service and criminal justice systems. It has also hampered our ability to develop programs that can address the issue (p. 573)." The authors blame the Duluth Model for perpetuating the idea that "women do not and would not use IPV against men because IPV is an issue of power and control of which only men in a system of patriarchy are capable (p. 576)."

- We believe the authors' statement ignores the gendered differences in motivation, intent, and impact of the majority of IPV used by women and men in their relationships. Women are obviously capable of violence and do use violence to navigate their relationships. Hines and Douglas' (2009) work ignores these nuances.

- It is irresponsible scholarship not to include and directly address studies that challenge one's own methodology and conceptualizations. In the body of research that challenges positions taken by Straus, Hines and Douglas, and similar scholars, the gender symmetry research is explored and critiqued – and refuted by the qualitative research that incorporates a contextual examination of the gendered use of force in intimate relationships ; this kind of inquiry (contextual) is not part of the scholars espousing gender symmetry (they simply ignore or exclude studies that challenge them or raise conflicting conclusions).

**Women Who Have Used Force: Emerging Issues from Arrest to Intervention**

- In contrast to men who batter, women who have used force in their intimate heterosexual relationships typically take complete responsibility for their actions at the time of the incident while men who batter typically minimize, deny and blame women for the violence.

- When the police arrive she is often crying, detailing her abusive actions, and asking how she can help him. He is often calm, quiet and apologetic to the police. She is often reluctant to tell her survivorship story because she sees her partner as having ultimate power and simply wants the police to calm him down.

- Police, focused on identifying the "primary" or "dominant" aggressor, are eager to make an arrest. Given her presentation, she is much more likely to be arrested.

- In court women often detail the actions they used against their partner and are discouraged from taking the case to trial, pointing out they do not have enough money to endure what could be a lengthy process. Instead, attorneys often encourage women to plead "no contest." From the women's perspective at the time this makes complete sense as she wants to get back to her children and is eager to tell what she did during the incident. She is often not informed, however, that pleading no contest will result in a domestic violence charge.

- A gender-responsive (Bloom, Owen, and Covington, 2004), contextual approach to probation and parole is critically important to positive outcomes for women (Morash, 2010).

- In many states women who are charged with domestic violence lose jobs that are contingent upon state licensure (such as as child care providers, cosmetologists, doctors, social workers, nurses) as well as lose their public housing and financial aid (Bible and Osthoff, 1998; Worcester, 2002). Native women may be prevented from returning to their reservation while immigrant woman be and often are deported. Renzetti (1999) notes that these collateral consequences are examples of widespread gendered injustice and Pence (2012) frames this as a human rights issue which demands our attention.

- Many battered women continue to be arrested and court-ordered to batterer intervention programs as "primary" or "predominant" aggressors despite having used force in response to the violence perpetrated against them (Hamberger and Potente, 1994; Gardner, 2007).

- Service providers are often ill-equipped to offer effective intervention and services.

- Intervention providers across the nation continue to put women in groups designed for men who batter and/or with men in the same treatment/intervention group. This is revictimizing and ineffective. By using a "one size fits all" (Miller, Gregory, and Iovanni, 2005) approach practitioners may actually be exacerbating the problem.

- Many women are also court-ordered to "anger management" groups where they are taught to control their anger rather than address the gendered-power and control dynamics of intimate partner violence; possible survivorship issues; focus on the complex dynamics of IPV; and explore viable alternatives to using force. As a result, the women waste their time and resources on services that do not address their true needs and may be revictimized in the process.

- Many domestic violence programs have little awareness of the importance context has when addressing the women's motivation, intent, and impact of their use of force in an intervention setting.

- There are multiple ethical issues surrounding court-ordered programming for female survivors of intimate partner violence who have used force (Dasgupta, 2002; Gardner, 2007). According to Dasgupta (2002, p. 1368), identifying the women as batterers and "resocializing them to be nonviolent through education classes that are similar to men's programs seems illogical and inappropriate."



Curricula:

House (n.d.) created the first "guide book" for addressing women's use of force. Her work has been an essential resource for antiviolence practitioners around the nation and has been widely distributed free of charged by the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women. Many programs continue to use her work as a framework for violence intervention with women.

Current curricula used in intervention with women who have perpetrated domestic violence:

1) Meridians (Larance, Cape, and Garvin, 2012)
2) Turning Points (Pence, Connelly, and Scaia, 2011)
3) Vista (Larance, Hoffman, and Shivas, 2009)
4) Women Who Abuse in Intimate Relationships (Hamlett, 1998)

- An informal survey of 307 W-Catch22 Listserv members highlighted the following intervention trends among service providers working with women who have used force:

  1) modifying extant men's BIP curriculum for use in the program serving women who have used force;

  2) focusing solely on a particular published curriculum noted above;

  3) creating a separate, in-house curriculum that meets the program's and agency's needs; and

  4) integrating all of the above.

- Couples Therapy vs. Group Work

  <u>Outcome Evaluations</u>:

  Very few of the programs utilize formal outcome evaluations. One program uses a pre- and post-test format as well as quarterly service participant evaluations to monitor effectiveness as well s changes in perception and behavior. Some programs utilized a satisfaction survey at program completion to capture service participant perspectives.

- <u>Upcoming Challenges</u>:

  In an effort to more closely standardize and supervise batterer intervention programs (BIPs) that serve men who abuse their partners, most states have implemented standards for programs providing intervention to service participants (Kernsmith and Kernsmith, 2009). An issue for many states is how to implement standards for programs serving women who have used force. This is particularly challenging, and potentially problematic, due to a lack of understanding among CJS, police, advocates, practitioners, etc. of the dynamics of women's use of force and effective intervention. States struggle with the issue, utilizing a variety of approaches. For example, Section 4.2 of Michigan's intervention standards state, "*This document refers to batterers who are male,*

*reflecting the predominant pattern of domestic violence. Most men are not batterers, but most batterers are men. Female battering towards males occurs, as does battering in lesbian and gay relationships, but until more is known about appropriate intervention in such relationships, these standards will apply to a [Batterer Intervention Program] for men who batter."* (Batterer Intervention Standards for the State of Michigan, 1998 Retrieved April 14, 2014 from http://biscmi.org/other_resources/state_standards.html



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W-Catch22 Listserv, yahoo group founded by Lisa Young Larance, September 2007. As of April 14, 2014 national and international membership totaled 307.