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**THE PROCESS OF ENDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AMONG LATINAS: AGUANTANDO NO MAS**

BY

NANCY A. COFFIN-ROMIG, RN, MSN

**A dissertation presented to the
FACULTY OF THE PHILIP Y. HAHN SCHOOL OF NURSING
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO**

**In partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree**

DOCTOR OF NURSING SCIENCE

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Dissertation Committee

**Diane C. Hatton, RN, CS, DNSc, Chair
Mary Ann Hautman, RN, PhD
Mary Woods Scherr, PhD**

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the sociocultural factors which play a role in the process of ending an abusive relationship among Latinas. Dimensional analysis was the method employed for the development of a grounded theory.

Aguantando or enduring emerged from this study as pivotal in gaining an understanding of the process of ending an abusive relationship for Latinas. Participants indicated that personal and religious beliefs, the importance of family, and the needs of their children were reasons for aguantando or enduring the abuse. The decision to no longer aguantar, or endure, occurred through a series of encounters with "allies", the loss of hope their partner was going to change his abusive behavior, and the final realization that the well-being of the children was being affected by the abuse. These conditions led Latinas to take action by *hasta aqui* or drawing the line. Through their relationships with "allies," Latinas recognized their potential to *salir adelante* or forge ahead.

Findings in this study indicate that familialism played a major role in the decision to stay or leave an abusive relationship. Family members supported Latinas leaving their abusive partners. Latinas often did not initiate plans to end an abusive relationship until effects of the abuse became evident in the children's behavior.

Interventions and outreach programs integrating these

findings are proposed for the Latino community. Future research investigating the applicability of current theoretical models of domestic violence to the Latino population are proposed.

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DEDICATION

To the Latinas who shared their stories of pain, sorrow, struggle and triumph. May their stories inspire other women to have the courage to *salir adelante*.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Violence against women is recognized as a national health problem. Decreasing the rate of domestic violence is an objective of Healthy People 2000 (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 1990) and a priority in nursing education, clinical practice, and nursing research (American Academy of Nursing, 1993). The effect of domestic violence on a woman's physical, social and psychological well-being is recognized and acknowledged by health care professionals (Kurz & Stark, 1988; Stark, Filcraft & Frazier, 1979; McFarlane, Parker, Soeken, & Bullock, 1992). The consequences of living with a violent partner can result in physical injury, depression, alcohol or drug addiction, suicide, or homicide (Loring & Smith, 1994).

Research efforts have largely focused on identifying factors influencing the decision to stay or leave an abusive relationship. Psychological, social, economic, religious, and legal factors are identified as either facilitating or hindering the decision to end an abusive relationship. The majority of professionals who work with battered women and researchers in the field of domestic violence agree there are commonalities and differences among women as to why, how, and when women choose to end an abusive relationship. Based on

research findings, numerous theoretical models of the dynamics of abuse originating from the fields of psychology, sociology, and women's studies have emerged.

The majority of research on domestic violence by various disciplines has largely focused on Anglo-European women. Few studies in the literature address the experience of abuse among Hispanics ¹, Southeast Asians, African Americans and Native Americans. Anecdotal accounts of the experience of culturally diverse women suggest they may encounter additional barriers in ending an abusive relationship (Andrade, 1982; Ginorio & Reno, 1986; Kanuha, 1994). Surveys indicate domestic violence is also a problem among Latino families (Sorenson & Telles, 1992; Straus & Smith, 1990). Cultural beliefs and values, immigration status, economic resources, educational opportunities, discrimination, and language are factors identified as barriers in accessing health care for Hispanics (Delgado, 1995; Juarbe, 1995; Richie & Kanuha, 1993). Considering these factors is essential to the planning of services for Hispanics.

Purpose of the Study

A significant body of knowledge exists regarding factors within the social context contributing to women staying or leaving an abusive relationship. Studies addressing the

¹ The term hispanic or latino is used in the literature to describe those individuals who trace their ethnic origin to Latin America or Spain. These terms will be used interchangeably according to the author's usage in the studies cited.

process of leaving a battering relationship have focused largely on the internal psychological processes. The relationship between the internal psychological processes and sociocultural context remains unclear. Anecdotal accounts in the literature by advocates for battered women identify culturally diverse women as encountering more difficulty in leaving an abusive relationship due to the lower socioeconomic status, decreased education, lack of job skills, English language proficiency and immigration status. The role of Hispanic cultural values in the process of ending of an abusive relationship has yet to be explored. Investigating domestic violence from the perspective of Latinas will illuminate the relevant sociocultural factors which play a role in the process of ending an abusive relationship.

Lines of Inquiry

This study investigated the experience of Latina women who had ended an abusive relationship. More specifically, this study pursued the following lines of inquiry:

1. Under what conditions do Latinas leave a battering relationship?
2. What role do Latino cultural beliefs and values play in ending an abusive relationship?

Research method

The interpretive tradition of qualitative research was deemed the most effective method for investigating the

process of ending violence among Latinas. The interpretive tradition of qualitative research is advocated for the study of health and illness among different cultural groups (Stern, 1986; Barnes, 1996; Leninger, 1990). Cultural groups have shared meanings which govern the behaviors within the group (Blumer, 1969). Blumer describes the shaping of human behavior as follows:

"People---that is, acting units---do not act toward culture, social structure or the like; they act toward situations. Social organization enters into action only to the extent to which it shapes the situation in which people act, and to the extent to which it supplies fixed set of symbols which people use in interpreting their situations."
(p. 88)

The qualitative approach of grounded theory was selected in order to capture an in-depth description of the meanings Latinas held which maintained them in an abusive relationship how those meanings changed over time and how they influenced the decision to leave their abusive partner. This research method facilitates the discovery of meanings individuals or groups give to events which lead to action affecting health within their social context (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986). The discovery of social and psychological processes of a phenomenon or problem provides an understanding of the conditions under which the phenomenon occurs. During the analysis of the data, an inductively derived theory emerges which is "grounded" in the data. The theory explains the processes surrounding the phenomenon under study. The theory

generated is not based on a priori theory or knowledge but emerges from the data itself. Dimensional analysis as developed by Schatzman (1991), was selected as the methodology for analysis of the process of ending an abusive relationship among Latinas.

Significance of the Study

Investigating the process of ending an abusive relationship from the perspective of Latinas within their own social context is imperative. An understanding of the role of cultural beliefs and values in the Latino culture, and how they interplay with current treatment and social service approaches for battered Latinas, can provide valuable information in the planning of interventions. Such knowledge can assist shelters, social service agencies, therapists, crisis intervention workers, and health care providers to gain a greater understanding of how Latinas are able to end domestic violence in their lives. Nursing considers the client's cultural beliefs as an integral part of the planning and delivery of health care (American Academy of Nursing, 1992). Further research is needed regarding the Hispanic population and health outcomes (Porter & Villarruel, 1993). An investigation into the cultural beliefs and values within the social context of Latinos, and the role these play in domestic violence, is needed. Identifying factors facilitating or hindering violence in the lives of Latinas can assist nurses in providing culturally sensitive care.

Summary

In summary, domestic violence has been studied from a number of different disciplinary perspectives. Few studies have addressed the experience of domestic violence from the perspective of culturally diverse women. A review of the literature reveals only a few empirical studies of domestic violence and Latinos. To date, there are no qualitative studies of Latinas and domestic violence identified in the literature. A significant body of knowledge exists regarding the factors hindering or facilitating the process of leaving an abusive partner, but the role of sociocultural factors in the process of ending an abusive relationship has yet to be determined. The purpose of this study was to investigate the experience of Latinas in ending an abusive relationship using the qualitative method of grounded theory.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

A number of factors are identified as facilitating or hindering a woman's decision to leave an abusive relationship. These factors are psychological, social, cultural, economic, and legal in nature. These factors interact and exert varying degrees of influence through time. Due to the scope of the literature and the research questions for this study, the literature review is narrowed to those studies which address: staying in an abusive relationship, leaving an abusive relationship, sociocultural context of culturally diverse women, Hispanics, Hispanic cultural values, Hispanics and health care, and research findings on battered Hispanic women. Significant findings and gaps in the literature are explored in relation to the purpose of this study.

Factors Contributing to Domestic Violence

Psychological Factors

Women employ a number of different rationalizations for staying with their abusive partners. Ferraro and Johnson (1983) interviewed 120 battered shelter residents, who were primarily white (78%) and low income, regarding their understanding of the physical and emotional abuse inflicted by their partner. Women often employed at

least one or more rationalizations or explanations for the abuse. Women rationalized that the batterers were either troubled or sick and dependent on them for nurturance and survival. The battering was perceived as an event outside the control of the couple or the battering was attributed to an external force. The occurrence of abuse was denied, or the incidents were seen as tolerable/normal, or the women took responsibility for provoking the battering incidents.

Malloy (1986) argues that one of the most important interventions with battered women is the remaking of their belief system. An important focus for shelters, therapists, hotline volunteers and battered women's support groups is helping a battered woman understand she is not responsible for causing the abuse (Wetzel & Ross, 1983; Painter & Dutton, 1985). The belief that the batterer is responsible for his/her behavior, and not the battered woman, is seen as the turning point in leaving a battering relationship (Painter & Dutton, 1985). Interventions encouraging women to break the silence and isolation by confiding in someone (Vaughn, 1987) and building resources outside the abusive relationship (Wilson, Baglioni & Downing, 1989) can also facilitate a change in beliefs.

Other factors in redefining the experience of battering which leads to the decision to leave an abusive relationship are (a) a change in the level of violence, which the woman recognizes as life threatening and which leads to concerns of

safety for self and children (Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Ulrich, 1991), (b) a change in the relationship where extended periods of love or kindness become shorter or disappear (honeymoon phase) (Ferraro & Johnson, 1983), and (c) the surfacing of feelings of hopelessness and despair as the woman realizes things are not going to get better (Ferraro & Johnson, 1983).

Social Support

Social support is cited in personal accounts by battered women as a factor in ending an abusive relationship. A qualitative study by Landenberger (1989) of the process of "entrapment in" and "recovery from" an abusive relationship identifies seeking out family, friends and clergy for social support as an important step in the process of leaving. How social support is effective in assisting women to end a battering relationship has not been fully delineated. Bowker (1986) in a study of 1,000 women, investigated their experiences with informal and formal resources of support for ending an abusive relationship. Informal sources of help most often cited by women were: families (626), friends (622), in-laws (377) and neighbors (287). Most women stated that the majority of these resources were ineffective. In general, most women progressed to formal help sources. Women rated their experiences with formal resources for effectiveness. The formal resources rated as very or somewhat effective in decreasing or ending violence were: women's

groups (60%), battered women's shelters (56%), lawyers (50%) and social service or counseling agencies (47%). The majority of women who ended the violence used a combination of personal strategies, informal social support and formal help resources.

Findings from Johnson (1988) regarding social support as a predictive factor in the decision to leave an abusive relationship indicate that 63% of battered women who had little or no support returned to their abusers. In contrast, of those who had strong support systems, only 19% returned. Ferraro and Johnson (1983) identify family, a friend, or a crisis worker as one of the catalysts in leaving a battering relationship. Social support assisted the women in their decision to leave by redefining the batterer's behavior as abusive and/or raising the issue of danger. Chang (1989) theorizes that social support is critical in the women's transformation from victim to self-saver.

The religious community as an effective source of social support for battered women has been investigated. Women are more likely to contact clergy before any other source of support, except law enforcement (Bowker, 1986; Pagelow, 1981b). Effectiveness of clergy in counseling battered women indicates that, when compared to friends, lawyers, relatives and police officers, clergy have the highest negative influence in counseling battered women (Roy, 1977; Alsdurf, 1985; Bowker & Mauer, 1986; Martin, 1989). Martin (1989)

conducted a survey of clergy from 143 churches and synagogues and found that more than half of clergy acknowledged the need to address the problem of spousal abuse but cited problems such as lack of information about state laws and programs for abusers as factors hampering their response. A more recent study by Johnson & Bondurant (1992) documents an increase in ministerial training (from 30% to over 50%) in domestic violence from 1982 to 1988. Some religious organizations have taken a very active role in aiding battered women by starting a shelter or by designing and conducting training programs for shelter staff and the religious community (Martin, 1989; Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence).

Economic Independence

Numerous studies have reported economic dependence as a barrier to leaving an abusive relationship (Gelles, 1976; Kalmuss & Strauss, 1982; Johnson, 1988; Pagelow, 1981; Strube & Barbour, 1983, 1984). Ferraro and Johnson (1983) interviewed 120 women in a shelter for battered women in southwestern United States. The study investigated what catalysts initiated action in leaving an abusive partner. A major catalyst in the decision to leave an abusive partner was the identification of a resource, usually a shelter, which provided temporary housing and food and served as a link to more permanent resources such as employment, government assistance, housing etc. Strube and Barbour (1984) interviewed 251 women to identify factors influencing a

woman's decision to leave an abusive relationship. Employment was found to contribute to a woman leaving a battering relationship. In contrast, women not leaving the batterer cited economic hardship, lack of employment, and no other place to go as reasons for staying. Johnson's (1987) study of 426 shelter residents and Aquirre's (1985) study of 1000 shelter residents concluded that women who were solely dependent on their husband's income had the highest probability of staying in an abusive relationship. Wilson, Baglioni & Downing (1989) hold that working outside the home is a crucial survival strategy as it lessens the battered woman's economic dependence on the batterer. Economic dependency is conceptualized by Barnes & LaViolette (1993) as a "form of helplessness and that working can provide a woman with the social and economic reinforcement, as well as the emotional strength, to end her dependence." (p.116)

Crosscultural research also supports economic dependency as a factor contributing to the presence of wife abuse. In a review of 90 anthropological studies, Levinson (1989) identifies wife battering as the most common form of family violence. Levinson (1989) concludes from his findings that battering is more likely to occur in societies with gender economic inequality, where men control decision making of family income, and when women do not band together in exclusively female work groups. Statistical analysis indicates the combined effect of the economic dependency

factor coupled with other factors such as violent conflict resolution, male domestic authority, and severe divorce restrictions for women, further increase the likelihood of wife beating in a particular culture (Levinson, 1989). Economic power outside the home as a deterrent to wife abuse is also supported in Campbell's (1990) review of 11 anthropological studies.

Law Enforcement

Significant progress has made in the United States by modifying preexisting laws and formulating new laws to protect women who are abused by their husbands or partners. Spousal abuse laws which exist in every state (Myers, Tikosh, & Paxson, 1992) allow the arrest and prosecution of batterers. Mandatory police reporting has received mixed results in decreasing the incidence of reported spousal abuse (Jaffe, Wolfe, Telford and Austin;1986).

The attitudes and beliefs of law enforcement officers have been found to affect officer response and arrest in domestic violence calls. Stith (1990) administered 100 domestic violence scenarios to police officers which included several individual variables, i.e., level of marital stress. Findings indicate the greater the use of violence in the officer's own marriage, the less likely he was to report and/or arrest the abuser in the scenario. In addition, the lower his belief in sex-role equality, the higher the acceptance of marital violence. Balos & Trotzky (1988)

demonstrated that police officers resented the mandatory reporting laws because they felt they had lost their individual discretion in making arrests. Negative attitudes about arrest policies for domestic violence incidents were also expressed by police officers even when the outcomes were demonstrated to be beneficial (Jaffe, Wolfe, Tilford & Austin, 1986).

Buchanan and Perry (1985) and Stubbing (1990), in contrast, have shown that domestic abuse training of police cadets improves their attitudes regarding domestic violence. Eigenberg and Moriarty (1991) examined law enforcement personnel in Texas regarding their knowledge of Texas law and domestic violence and the provision of information to battered women regarding shelters. The researchers reported that almost three fourths of the 64 officers knew Texas law. Shelters in Austin, Houston, and San Antonio reported police officers provided greater support and responsiveness to their clients. A review of these more recent findings demonstrates that in some communities there has been a shift during the last 20 years in law enforcement attitudes about domestic violence, reporting and arrests, and changes in the judicial system with regard to prosecution.

Healthcare

Domestic violence as a healthcare problem requiring intervention has moved to the forefront of healthcare. Medicine and nursing are taking an active role in documenting

the effects of domestic violence on the physical health of women. Evidence from studies regarding domestic violence and health outcomes indicates that healthcare providers are part of the social context of battered women. Healthcare providers in all specialty areas encounter battered women but have failed to assess, question or recognize the possibility of domestic violence as the client's cause of injuries and illness. Domestic violence as a possible underlying cause of acute injury, chronic health problems, late prenatal care, miscarriage, stillbirths, preterm labor and low birth weight babies has been documented (Gin, N.E., Rucker, L., Frayne, S., Cygan, R., & Hubbell, A. 1991; McFarlane, J., Parker, B., Soeken, K. & Bullock, L., 1992; McLeer, S.V. & Anwar, R., 1989).

Failure to recognize the problem is due to the lack of routine inquiry or documentation of the cause of the woman's symptoms. Salber (1996) summarizes research findings about the reasons underlying healthcare provider's failure to respond to domestic violence: (a) a lack of training about domestic violence, misconceptions about who is affected by domestic violence, biases and/or prejudices, (b) fear of opening a "Pandora's box" and/or because of concerns regarding time constraints, (c) concerns of privacy and confidentiality, (d) domestic violence not seen as the provider's area of responsibility, and (e) frustration with battered individuals. Studies document that most patients want healthcare providers to ask about abuse and would answer

truthfully if asked (Freidman et al., 1992; Rounsaville & Weisman, 1978). A study comparing the nurse interview and client self-report as methods for assessing the presence of abuse demonstrated considerable higher report rates of abuse in a personal nurse interview (McFarlane, Christoffel, Bateman, Miller & Bullock, 1991).

Studies reveal a number of factors play a role in a woman's decision to leave a battering relationship. A number of informal and formal resources such as family, friends, clergy, law enforcement, judicial system and health care services, assist or hinder women in ending domestic violence. Studies have yet to explore the kinds of experiences Latinas have, how these affect their and the resources available to them.

Theoretical Models of Partner Abuse

The "cycle of violence" model by Walker (1979) is the most renown for explaining the psychological process of why women stay in a battering relationship. This theory explains battering as a cyclic process with three phases: tension building, explosive or battering episode, and the honeymoon phase. This model is used most frequently by shelters and advocates for educating battered women, communities and social service agencies regarding the dynamics of abuse and ways to help women break the cycle. Breaking the cycle is deemed essential if a woman is going to be able to stop the violence. Breaking the cycle often means leaving. Other

theories have evolved from Walker's original work to explain the psychological changes occurring as a result of being in the cycle of violence. Walker based her model of the cycle of violence on Seligman's (1975) behavioral theory of "learned helplessness". The portrayal of battered women as psychologically impaired led to a debate regarding the perception of battered women as victims or as survivors (Bowker 1983, 1988, 1992; Hoff, 1990).

Feminists conducting research in the area of battered women have investigated battering as a form of oppression. The use of violence by men as a form of power and control is the central premise of feminists in the battered women's movement (Yllo, 1993). Gender role expectations and inequity are learned from birth and continue through adult development (Barnett & LaViolette, 1993; Yllo, 1993). The distribution of power within female and male relationships is learned throughout the socialization process. The learning of gender roles begins within the family and is further sanctioned by societal institutions. Society's values are viewed as deeply embedded in its institutions. The institutions of law enforcement, court justice, church, health care, mental health services, and social programs require a greater awareness of societal sanctions embedded within their structure. Uncovering and changing institutional practices and policies which affect the perpetuation of violence against women is the goal of the battered women's movement

(Richie & Kanuha, 1993; Stark, Filcraft & Frazier, 1979; Swift, 1987; Warshaw, 1994).

Theories of the Process of Leaving an Abusive Relationship

Landenberger (1989) conducted a quantitative and qualitative study to describe the experience of abuse while in an abusive relationship. The investigator interviewed 30 women who were both in and out of abusive relationships. Open-ended, semi-structured questions were asked to explore how an abusive relationship influences the choices a woman makes over time. Phenomenology provided the framework for understanding the meaning of the experience of being battered. The investigator used Spradley's ethnographic method for data collection and analysis.

Landenberger (1989) theorizes a four phase process of 'entrapment in' and 'recovery from' an abusive relationship which included the phases of: binding, enduring, disengaging, and recovering. During the 'binding' phase, the woman focuses on the positive aspects of the relationship and minimizes the negative aspects. During this phase, women desire a loving relationship, overlook or minimize warning signals, work harder in the relationship to resolve problem areas and question their role in the abuse.

The 'enduring phase' is the period when the woman placates the batterer and tolerates the abuse. She often takes partial or total responsibility for the abuse, covers for the abuser and begins to experience "shrinking of the

self".

The third phase is the 'disengaging phase'. The woman begins to identify with other women in similar situations through magazines, television, stories etc. During this phase the woman sees herself as "abused". She begins to seek out family, friends, and clergy to stop the battering. Tension and anger begin to emerge. This phase is "reemergence of self".

The fourth phase or "recovering phase" is the initial period of readjustment. The woman is generally struggling to secure food, shelter and safety. The grieving process is initiated as the woman grieves for the loss of the positive aspects of the relationship. Women during this phase also question why they stayed in the relationship and whether they might become involved in another abusive relationship.

Merritt-Gray & Wuest (1995) investigated the process of leaving an abusive relationship using the grounded theory method. Thirteen formerly battered women in rural eastern Canada were interviewed. The central or basic psychological process identified in the study was "reclaiming self". During the first phase of the process, identified as counteracting abuse, women cycled through a subprocess consisting of relinquishing parts of self, minimizing abuse and fortifying defenses. "Relinquishing parts of self" is the part of the cycle describing the consequences of the abuse. During the phase of "minimizing abuse" the woman minimizes the abuse by

developing strategies of 'protecting', 'reasoning' and 'fighting back'. The third part of the process of counteracting the abuse is termed "fortifying defenses" during which the woman begins the necessary psychological preparation for leaving the relationship. "Breaking free" is termed the transition phase between counteracting abuse and not going back. During this phase women explore ways to leave their abusive partner and begin the gradual process of disengaging from the relationship by staying away from home as much as possible, moving belongings and than eventually making the break.

These theories primarily construct the process of leaving an abusive relationship from a psychological perspective, with little explanation of the role that individuals within a woman's social context play in the process of leaving.

Sociocultural Context of Culturally Diverse Women

There is a lack of research in the area of domestic violence and the experience of culturally diverse women in ending an abusive relationship. Anecdotal reports in the literature suggest racism, cultural stereotypes, gender roles, discrimination, and language barriers may serve as obstacles for ethnic minority women in ending an abusive relationship.

Kanuha (1994) and Ginorio & Reno (1986) assert gender roles and expectations need to be understood in the context

of a woman's ethnic identity. Research focusing on the interplay of gender roles and expectations of Latina women and the role they may play in ending an abusive relationship is lacking. The historical influence of Catholicism and its role in promoting self-sacrifice, humility, and devotion to family as traditional and ideal characteristics of the Latina has perpetuated the belief that domestic violence is the norm in the Hispanic culture. Legitimate questions can be raised about what role cultural values may play in domestic violence.

Richie and Kanuha (1993), through their work with women of color, argue that their social context is different from mainstream women. Recognizing the social, political and cultural context of women of color is imperative in order to understand their experiences. An investigation of domestic violence among Latinos, requires an understanding of the social context of Latinos in the United States. Further research may provide more knowledge leading to culturally sensitive interventions for battered Latinas and their families.

Kanuha and Richie (1993) further assert that women of color are often put in a position of attempting to balance "conflicting needs and expectations of their batterer, their communities and the larger society" (p.289). Being battered and being a member of an ethnic group which may experience discrimination presents a dilemma for women of color. A

double jeopardy exists for these women who seek help in ending a battering relationship (Ms. Magazine, 1990) Seeking help may entail the risk of being discriminated against and also places her in direct conflict with a desire to protect the batterer from the treatment he may receive from law enforcement officials and the judicial system.

Battered women of color may be reluctant to seek out formal sources of help. Kanuha (1993) states "their fear of bringing attention to themselves, their families, and by extension to their racial/ethnic communities may further contribute to the stigmatization and stereotyping of people of color as pathological"(p.436). Latina women's fear or lack of understanding of the American justice system (Jang, 1994), their experience with oppressive political systems in their country of origin and immigration status (Volp, 1995) also may result in under utilization of services.

Richie and Kanuha (1993) point out that cultural stereotypes of women of color by health care providers may have a negative effect in seeking healthcare. Stereotypes perpetuated by the social science literature and learned by health professionals are often negative and serve to perpetuate victim-blaming (Andrade, 1982).

Hispanics

The unique sociopolitical history of each country has affected the circumstances under which their citizens have immigrated to the United States. A review of demographic and

health status data for Hispanic communities by the National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations [COSSMHO] in 1995 reveals Hispanics represent 1 in 10 people in the United States. A total of 22.4 million Hispanics live in the United States, 49% or 10,966,000 of which are women. Mexican Americans comprise the largest group, 63.7%. The median age for Hispanic women in the U.S. is 26 years. The two parent family remains the most common family structure with 59% of children living with their biological mother and father. One in 10 Hispanics (9.3%) hold a bachelor's degree, compared to 1 in 4 for non-Hispanics. Economically, 1 in 4 or 26.5% live in poverty compared to 10.2 % of non-Hispanics. This is due mainly to lower wages, not to low participation in the work force (COSSMHO, 1995).

Juarbe (1995), in her analysis of the literature of Hispanic women, found the women, in general, are younger than Anglo women, have children at a younger age, are more likely to head a household (34%), and live below the poverty line. The average educational level of Hispanic women is 8.8 years, which significantly affects their employment, income level, and the availability of health insurance. Juarbe concludes educational advancement is affected by Hispanic women's lack of role models, lack of awareness of educational opportunities and lack of access to educational programs for higher paying occupations. Employment for Hispanic women is equally discouraging. When compared to Anglo men and women,

Hispanic women are employed at a lower wage for equal work. Employment generally includes sales, domestic services, administrative support, agriculture, manufacturing and factory plants which seldom provide health insurance.

Hispanic Cultural Values

Familialism is identified as a cultural value of Hispanics (Sabogal, Marin & Otero-Sabogal, 1987; Marin & Marin, 1991). It involves strong family ties of loyalty, reciprocity and solidarity among nuclear and extended family members. Behavioral and attitudinal dimensions of familialism have been identified and include three types of value orientations: 'family obligations' or the respondent's perceived obligation to provide for the material and emotional support of extended family members; value orientation, or support from the family members which is perceived as reliable providers of help and support for solving problems; and, 'family as referents' in which respondents report relatives as behavioral and attitudinal referents. COSSMHO (Delgado, 1995) has identified familialism as a cultural factor that affects access to health care for Hispanics. An individual who values familialism may subordinate their own individual needs to the general good of the family when decisions regarding health care needs are made. Money spent on seeing a health care professional may be seen as directing resources away from the family.

Gender role perceptions of femininity and masculinity of

Hispanic women have been investigated. Vazquez-Nuttal, Romero-Garcia & DeLeon (1987) conducted an evaluation of the research in this area. Acculturation was identified as a factor affecting changes in traditional marital roles. Women's level of education was identified as affecting the equalitarianism between husband and wife. The authors also examined studies which addressed employment as a factor affecting conjugal roles. They concluded that employment outside of the home increased a woman's influence in family decision-making.

Machismo is a negative cultural stereotype often attributed to Hispanic men. Cromwell and Ruiz (1979) analyzed four major studies on marital decision making with Mexican and Chicano families and conclude that the data fails to support the belief that Mexican and/or Chicano male dominance exists in marital decision-making. The studies revealed that wives make fewer unilateral decisions and husbands make more, but "joint decisions are by the far the most common in these samples of Mexican, Chicano, and Anglo working-class people" (p.370).

Hispanics and Healthcare

Juarbe (1995) identifies sociopolitical and cultural issues as key factors influencing the health of Hispanic women and their access to health care. Language is identified as a common barrier in access to health care, housing, education and mental health services for Hispanic women

(Delgado,1995). Richie and Kanuha (1993) point out the lack of bilingual services. Health care professionals use untrained personnel such as "housekeeping staff" or family members as translators, violating patient confidentiality. Trained translators are vital given the nature of interview techniques needed to help women reveal that they are in an abusive relationship.

The National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations [COSSMHO](Delgado,1995) identifies discrimination as another barrier in accessing health care. A review of the literature by COSSMHO reveals that 27% of Hispanics believe they face discrimination in the quality of health care they receive, 30% believe they are not treated with respect at clinics, 28% believe they do not have the same opportunity for receiving health care information and overall 22% believe they encounter discrimination when seeking health care. To date, there are only anecdotal reports cited in the literature regarding the experiences Latinas have encountered in obtaining help from informal and formal resources. An investigation of these factors as barriers to ending an abusive relationship is needed. How these experiences are perceived, what meaning the experiences are given and how it may affect their ability to end an abusive relationship remains unanswered.

In the provision of mental health services to Latinas, Espin (1985) stresses the importance of considering the

sociocultural circumstances of Latinas in addressing their intrapsychic issues. Minority status, rapid changes in the family, circumstances of the decision to migrate, loss of social support during migration, available social support in the new country, contradictory expectations related to the role of women in the current culture, low income and single parenting may all combine to increase levels of stress for Latinas (Espin, 1987; Juarbe, 1995). The importance of assessing the psychological impact of acculturation for Latina women in the provision of counseling services is emphasized by Espin (1987) and Juarbe (1995). Acculturation is identified as a significant source of stress affecting the mental health of Hispanic women and is associated with higher rates of depression (Amaro & Russo, 1987; Vasquez, 1994).

Research Findings on Domestic Violence and Hispanic Women

Five studies concerning Latinas and domestic violence were found in the literature. Four of the five studies are crosscultural studies comparing Hispanics and Anglos on the incidence of domestic violence and the effect of education, income, types of abuse and number of children between Hispanics and Anglos. Findings from three studies show there is no significant difference in the frequency of abuse between both groups (Sorenson & Telles, 1991; Strauss & Smith, 1990; Torres, 1991). When family income, age of respondent and urban residence for Hispanics is controlled,

there is no significant difference between the rate of spousal abuse among Hispanics and Anglos (Strauss & Smith, 1990). Sorenson & Telles (1991), in a sample of 1,243 Mexican-Americans and 1,149 non-Hispanic whites, found no significant difference in frequency of abuse, however; Mexican-Americans born in the U.S. report abuse at rates 2.4 times higher than those born in Mexico.

A recent study by Perilla, Bakeman & Norris (1994) of abused and non-abused Latinas demonstrated acculturation level and the degree to which a woman subscribed to traditional feminine and masculine roles in society as unrelated to levels of abuse. In contrast, depression and high levels of stress were strongly related to higher levels of abuse

A comparison of the types of abuse between Anglo-Americans, Hispanics and Blacks has been investigated. Findings in a study by Gondolf, Ferron & McFerron (1988) show minimal differences in types of abuse across all three groups. Torres (1991), in a comparative study of Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans, demonstrated Mexican-American women, in comparison to Anglo-American women, did not identify "throwing things" as a regular serious incident of abuse. Mexican-American women only identified 7 of the 14 items on the 'Survey on Family Violence' compared to Anglo-American's who identified all 14 incidents as constituting abuse.

Gondolf, Ferron & McFerron (1988) and Torres (1991)

demonstrated significant differences in educational level between Hispanic and Anglo women, with Hispanic women having a lower educational level. Educational level as a predictor of the incidence of abuse among Hispanics is not supported (Perilla, Bakeman & Norris, 1994 and Sorenson & Telles, 1991).

Two studies have investigated differences in income of Hispanics and Anglo-Americans. Findings indicate Hispanics have a significantly lower level of income than Anglo-Americans (Strauss & Smith, 1990; Gondolf, Ferron & McFerron, 1988). A more recent study by Perilla, Bakeman & Norris (1994) comparing 30 battered Hispanics and 30 Hispanic women demonstrated a relationship between a women's income and the rate of abuse. The investigators theorize the more income a woman contributed to her family the more abuse she experienced.

The presence of children as a predictor of spousal violence has been investigated in two studies (Sorenson & Telles, 1991; Perilla, Bakeman & Norris, 1994). Results from the studies indicate that the number of children in the household does not predict the rate of spousal abuse.

Additional findings from these studies show Hispanic women remain longer in a battering relationship than Anglo-American women (Torres, 1991) and Anglos and Blacks (Gondolf, Ferron & McFerron, 1988). Hispanic women reported the longest duration of abuse (Gondolf, Ferron & McFerron, 1988).

Conclusion

Psychological beliefs, social support, economic dependence, law enforcement and health care providers are identified as factors contributing to a woman's decision to stay or leave an abusive relationship. Theories of wife/partner abuse as a method used by men to maintain power and control over women and the cycle of violence proposed by Walker (1979,1993) provide different perspectives in understanding domestic violence. Theories that explain the process of leaving an abusive relationship stem primarily from a psychological perspective. Little explanation of the role individuals play in a woman's decision to leave an abusive relationship is found in current research findings.

Demographics reveal that Hispanic women, when compared to Anglo women, are: younger, at a lower educational level, more likely to be head of household, twice as likely to live in poverty, lack opportunities for educational and economic mobility, and lack health insurance. Language barriers, stress of migration and acculturation, and discrimination are factors which influence the provision of health care. Anecdotal reports in the literature raise questions on the role of discrimination, racism, stereotyping, English language skills, and religious beliefs for battered Latinas. The impact of these factors on access to services and in the provision of care for battered Latina women has yet to be determined.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Grounded theory was selected as the methodology for the development of a theory of the process of ending an abusive relationship among Latinas. The goal of grounded theory is to construct a working and dynamic theory from the data regarding the phenomenon under study. Grounded theory is a method which seeks to discover the derived meaning, contextual conditions and the interactional processes surrounding a phenomenon from the perspective of the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994). The discovery of social and psychological processes of a phenomenon or problem provides an understanding of the conditions under which it occurs.

The method of dimensional analysis by Schatzman (1991) was selected for the analysis of the data. The impetus for the development of dimensional analysis as an methodology for the development of grounded theory was influenced by Schatzman's long term interest in constructing a general theory of cognitive and scientific analysis. Concerns over the lack of clarity in data analysis procedures in grounded theory, and teaching experiences in field research also served as an impetus for the development of dimensional

analysis.

Schatzman (1991) asserts that dimensional analysis is "generally informed by the core ideas and practices of grounded theory, it nevertheless, has its own procedures, epistemological assumptions, and logic " (pg. 303).

Dimensional analysis differs from traditional grounded theory in that the discovery of a basic social processes is not the aim of the method but rather the discovery of people's interpretation and meanings of phenomenon within their social world (Robrecht, 1996).

Philosophy of Inquiry

The philosophical underpinnings of dimensional analysis lie within symbolic interactionism (Kools, McCarthy, Durham & Robrecht, 1996). The three basic premises or assumptions of symbolic interactionism stated by Blumer (1969) are: 1) humans behave toward things based on the meanings that objects, people and everyday events have for them 2) the aforementioned meanings are derived from or arise out of social interaction with others and 3) those meanings derived are used and modified in an ongoing process of interpretation. All human behavior is envisioned by Blumer (1969) as the result of "a vast interpretive process in which people, singly and collectively, guide themselves by defining the objects, events and situations they encounter" (p.132).

Schatzman's (1991) method of dimensional analysis is built on the premises of Blumer's theory of symbolic

interactionism. The interpretive process inherent in symbolic interactionism is termed "natural analysis". The interpretive process of "natural analysis is theorized by Schatzman as a normative cognitive process used by individuals to interpret and understand problem situations, experiences and phenomena beyond the basic cognitive processes of recognition and recall (Kools, McCarthy, Durham, Robrecht, 1996; Schatzman, 1991). Through the learning of language and the ability to engage in social interaction, people refine their ability to perform natural analysis. Natural analysis provides "individuals with a schema they subsequently use to structure and analyze the intricacies of phenomenon of ordinary life. Scientific analysis is but an extension of natural analysis" (Kools, McCarthy, Durham, Robrecht, 1996, p. 314).

Dimensionality is an extension of a person's natural analytic processes when recognition and/or recall fail to provide understanding of an experience or event. Dimensionality is a cognitive attribute which allows an individual to derive meaning through interpretation of the different attributes of a phenomenon or situation (Schatzman 1991; McCarthy, 1991; Kools, McCarthy, Durham, Robrecht, 1996.). These attributes or abstract aspects of a constructable reality are referred to as dimensions (Schatzman, 1991).

Dimensional Analysis

Dimensional analysis relies on the data collection

methods of qualitative research and grounded theory. Data is collected primarily from semi-structured interviews, observations, field notes and any other relevant sources as in the traditional grounded theory approach. Theoretical sampling is driven by simultaneous and concurrent data analysis during data collection. The constant-comparative method is also employed during data analysis in guiding the development of grounded theory.

Data analysis and data collection simultaneously occur in dimensional analysis as in the traditional method of grounded theory. Designation, differentiation and integration are delineated as the three phases of data analysis (Kools, McCarthy, Durham, Robrecht, 1996; McCarthy, 1991; Schatzman, 1991).

Designation Phase

The first phase of data analysis is the designation phase. Identification of dimensions or dimensionalizing is the first step in the analysis of the data and is similar to open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The purpose of dimensionalizing is to identify, name or label dimensions and properties (attributes) noted during data collection. This provides the researcher with a vocabulary to describe the data but does not assign relative importance, relationship, or meaning of specific dimensions and their properties (Schatzman, 1991; McCarthy, 1991; Kools, McCarthy, Durham, Robrecht, 1996). The main methodological question during this

phase of data analysis and collection is "What all is involved here?" Schatzman (1991) asserts that it is important for the researcher to obtain a "critical mass" of dimensions (considerations) related to the phenomenon.

Differentiation Phase

The second stage of data analysis is the differentiation phase. Entry into this phase is marked by the attainment of a "critical mass" of dimensions and their properties which begin to provide some explanatory power. At this stage the researcher moves to the use of the explanatory matrix. The explanatory matrix is the analytic tool used by the researcher for analyzing the dynamics and context of the phenomenon. The explanatory matrix is used as a tool or framework to move dimensional analysis from description of the phenomenon to explanation (Kools, McCarthy, Durham, Robrecht, 1996). The explanatory matrix serves to "further differentiate the innate characteristics of identified dimensions into various conceptual components such as context, conditions, process (actions/interactions), or consequences" (Kools, McCarthy, Durham, Robrecht, 1996 p. 318). The dimension with the most significant explanatory power is designated as the 'perspective'. The dimensions which facilitate, block, or shape action or interaction as viewed by the perspective are assigned as 'conditions'. Dimensions which describe outcomes of a specific action or interaction reflecting the assigned perspective are labeled

as 'consequences'. The dimension(s) which denote the intended action/interactions impelled by the prevailing conditions are identified as the 'process'. Dimensions designating boundaries to the situation/environment and giving rise to circumstances are assigned as 'context'. The matrix serves to reconstruct and explain the participants' viewpoint of the event or phenomenon. During this phase of data analysis the researcher identifies and selects the central dimension which provides the most significant explanation for the phenomenon under investigation. The central dimension is selected as the central perspective by virtue of its ability to provide the greatest explanation for the relationship among all the other dimensions (Schatzman, 1991). The central dimension or key perspective orchestrates the organization of the explanation of the phenomenon under study.

Integration Phase

The third and final phase of the data analysis is the integration phase. During this phase, final clarification and integration of the phenomenon under investigation is confirmed through theoretical sampling and data saturation. This allows the researcher to confirm the configuration (perspective) and the relationships between dimensions. The final explanatory matrix serves as a rich narrative of the phenomenon under investigation.

Investigator as the Research Instrument

Background

My interest in this topic stems from my experience of living in Latin America during my childhood and adolescence and my clinical work as a staff nurse and psychiatric clinical specialist. My work as a labor and delivery nurse, a psychosocial clinician in the neonatal intensive care unit, and discharge coordinator in the perinatal unit brought me into contact with many Latino families. Interpreting for medical and nursing staff and my own clinical practice often provided me the opportunity to contrast and compare differences in Hispanic and other culturally diverse clients regarding their values, beliefs, perceptions of health and illness. The medical and nursing perspective of health and illness were often contradictory to the client's perspective. This interaction came to play an important factor in my role as a psychiatric clinical specialist and in the interventions I implemented in my practice. I recognized early in my nursing practice that clients bring to the nurse-client relationship their own particular perspective or interpretation of the cause of their health or illness. These "explanatory models", a term coined by Kleinman (1988), served as a framework of explanation for clients, family members and health practitioners.

As a nurse educator in psychiatric and mental health nursing over the last fourteen years, my interest has turned

towards gaining a better understanding of the relationship between culture and mental health, in particular with Latinas. Heightened awareness of domestic violence, course work in women's psychology, encounters with clients and nursing students living in a battering relationship and my questions regarding culturally sensitive psychosocial therapeutic interventions for abused Latinas served as an impetus for this study. My personal experience of living in various cultures and my observations of how culture shapes interpretations of events and people, which in turn shapes behavior, raised many questions regarding mainstream or traditional models of psychosocial interventions which may run counter to a client's cultural values and beliefs.

Enhancing Cultural Sensitivity

The importance of identifying and understanding the effect of my own cultural beliefs, psychiatric nursing background, and feelings generated during the study became evident during the proposal stage of the study. A number of strategies (Lipson, 1991; Aamodt, 1991) were employed to enhance cultural sensitivity and increase self awareness during the study. Maintaining a journal, talking to my committee members and discussions with a classmate and friend provided outlets for feelings and thoughts, which in turn enhanced the process of data analysis.

Cultural background

Garcia-Preto (1994) views being bicultural as "Living on

the bridge", a unique vantage point allowing one to travel between two cultures. This vantage point, I believe, has an inherent advantage in research. A series of contacts or travels to one side of the "bridge" were planned with Latinas from Mexico, given that the majority of participants for the study would be recruited from San Diego. During doctoral coursework and preparation of the study proposal, a number of opportunities arose to facilitate my travels. I planned a number of contacts into the Mexican culture to facilitate reentry into the Latino culture. Experiences as a bilingual translator for my dissertation chair, assistance with the Spanish translation of a research instrument, visiting a nursing school and two hospitals in Tijuana, Mexico with a member of the nursing faculty at Universidad Iberoamericana, and a visit to two agencies in Baja California providing services to battered women in Mexico proved invaluable. These experiences provided me the opportunity to increase my proficiency in Spanish and resocialize myself to the cultural norms. The last two experiences provided me the rewarding experience of dialoging with women in Mexico who are dedicated to assisting battered women in Mexico with the limited resources available.

Discussions with these dedicated women regarding my research project also provided a rich and stimulating exchange of contrasting ideas. All these experiences served to increase my self-awareness of the cultural values I had

adopted from both cultures, increase my Spanish non-verbal and verbal communication skills, and practice gender appropriate behaviors.

Clinical Nursing Skills

During the planning of the study, the possibility of the need for psychosocial intervention during interviews with participants was identified. During the preparation of the proposal, I familiarized myself with the theories of domestic violence, assessment and interventions techniques, and available resources for battered women in the community. An experienced counselor was made available in each agency participating in the study as a consultant, when necessary. Midway through data collection and analysis, the researcher was able to complete a crisis hotline training by an agency providing services for domestic violence which was certified by the state of California.

Self-awareness

During the proposal stage and data collection and data analysis of the study, the importance of an outlet for feelings became evident. Field research with different cultural groups requires an awareness of the interaction between researcher and participant and provides an additional dimension to the data (Aamodt, 1991). Recognition of feelings and the importance of self awareness (Lipson, 1991; Aamodt, 1991) during the research process were facilitated by the use of a journal and discussions with committee members, two

close friends and a mentor. Having the opportunity to examine my thoughts and feelings heightened my self awareness of the different aspects of my bicultural identity. Commonalities and differences with the participants in the study emerged in regards to gender role expectations. An awareness the latter assisted me during the interviews and data analysis.

Human Subject Considerations

With the support of one community agency, the study was approved by the University of San Diego Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects (Appendix A) prior to commencement of the study. Approval of additional community agencies was given after the researcher identified other agencies serving a larger percentage of Latina clients (Appendix B). After contacting or receiving the name of an interested participant, the researcher contacted the participant by phone. The women were given an explanation of the purpose of the study, protection of confidentiality, sample interview questions, approximate length of interview, \$20.00 compensation, and a free health education session for participating in the study. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions; concerns or points of clarification were answered. An interview date, time and place were arranged and the researcher's phone number given for any further questions. At the time of the interview the participants were again given a verbal explanation of the study, assurances of confidentiality, language preference for

the interview, and answers to any remaining questions. Written informed consent was obtained in the participant's language of preference (Appendix C).

Potential Benefits

The potential benefits for the women participating in the study included: (1) an opportunity to review and reflect their recent accomplishments and to receive positive feedback (2) recognition of their personal strength in surviving and leaving an abusive relationship (3) self-reaffirmation of their decision to leave their abusive partner (4) an increase in self-esteem by sharing their success stories for the benefit of other Latinas trying to end an abusive relationship (5) the satisfaction that in sharing their experiences, nurses and other professionals may become more knowledgeable in providing care to other Latinas attempting to end violence in their lives and (6) a sense of empowerment in having their voices and stories heard along with other Latinas. Compensation for the participation in the study was a \$20.00 stipend and a health education session in Spanish by the researcher.

Potential Risks

The major risks to participants identified in the study were: (1) confidentiality; (2) privacy; (3) resurgence of painful feelings; (4) the identification of the need for further resources; and (5) need for counseling services. Confidentiality was maintained by coding all audiotapes,

interview guides, demographic data sheets, transcripts and computer files containing interview data and were kept in a locked file cabinet. In addition, the transcriptionists were required to sign a confidentiality pledge (Appendix D). Privacy was maintained by conducting the interviews in a private location. All the interviews ended with an emphasis of the women's identified strengths, positive coping strategies and the value of sharing her story for other women (Parker & Ulrich, 1990). If, during the interview process, a determination was made by the participant or researcher that intervention was needed, prior and current sources of assistance were discussed and the women was encouraged to contact those resources. In addition, a list of shelter phone numbers, legal information and counseling resources were provided to every participant in the study (Appendix E).

Gaining Entree

Administrators of agencies known to provide shelter, legal and counseling services for victims of domestic violence were first contacted by phone regarding the study a personal appointment was then made. Questions regarding the study, and an information packet containing an abstract of the study, consent form (Appendix C), interview guide (Appendix F), approval from the University of San Diego Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects (Appendix A), and flyers (Appendix G) advertising the study were provided. Agency approval for participation in the study was solicited

and a letter (Appendix H) confirming the agreement was provided and forwarded to the University of San Diego Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHHS) for approval. During the appointment with the agency administrator, counselors, therapists, legal advocates, and shelter workers having direct contact with potential participants were identified as the next contact person for information regarding the study. Once approval was given by the University of San Diego CPHHS, the individuals identified within the agencies were contacted. During the phone contact, a personal appointment was made and information about the study, inclusion criteria, and flyers for potential clients were given.

Recruitment of Study Participants

A contact person within the agencies, who was knowledgeable about the inclusion criteria of the study, provided information to potential participants. Women wishing to participate gave the contact person permission to release their phone number to the researcher or directly contacted the researcher. During the first contact by phone with the participant, the researcher provided information regarding inclusion criteria, the researcher's background, purpose of the study, and compensation for participation. A location and time were agreed upon for the interview.

Participants

The recruitment of Latina participants for the study was

done primarily through contacts in approved agencies providing services to battered women and one therapist in private practice. The contact person identified potential participants as Latinas who had established or were in the process of establishing emotional and economic independence from the batterer. Other criteria for participation in the study included Latinas between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five, self-identified ethnic background as Mexican, Central American, Puerto Rican or South American, and proficient in speaking and understanding Spanish.

Table 1 provides a demographic profile of the twenty Latinas participating in the study. The Latinas participating in the study ranged in age from 18-58. Years of education varied, with six women having 6-11 years of education, five women having completed a high school education and the remaining nine having 13-16 years of education. The number of children ranged from 0-5, five women having 0-1 child, seven women having 2 children, six women having 3-4 children and only one woman having 5 children. Thirteen women were born in Mexico, and the remaining were born in the U.S. Seventeen of the participants' parents were born in Mexico, one participant had parents born in the U.S. and the two remaining participants each had one parent born in Puerto Rico. Years living with abusive partner ranged from four

TABLE 1
Demographic Data

	Birth Place	Age	Years in U.S.	Years of Education	Number of Children	Years living with abuser	Time since leaving partner	Medical treatments
1	Me	37	32	15	2	17	3 years	2*
2	PR	42	40	18	2	14	10 years	3
3	CA	58	58	11	3	20	6 years	1
4	CA	25	25	14	0	8 months	6 months	1
5	CA	24	6	6	2	2.5	1 years	0
6	Me	35	28	12	4	13	8 years	1
7	Me	23	6	15	3	6	3 months	1
8	TX	45	45	13	0	5	22 years	0
9	Me	42	26	12	4	11	16 years	1
10	CA	33	33	16	2	11	5 years	2
11	NY	28	22	14	0	4 months	3 months	0
12	Me	48	32	12	1	7	1 year	1 *
13	Me	18	15	11	1	2	2 months	0
14	Me	31	3	15	3	9	10 months	2
15	Me	30	14	6	4	14	3 months	0
16	Me	40	33	15	2	5	5 months	0
17	Me	27	15	12	2	10	6 months	0
18	Me	35	11	9	1	5	2.5 years	0
19	Me	51	7	12	2	21	4.5 years	0
20	Me	40	5	6	5	23	2.5 years	0

CA = California
Me = Mexico

NY = New York
TX = Texas

* Miscarriage

months to 23 years and the time period since leaving an abusive partner ranged from three months to 22 years. Approximately nine women received formal medical treatment as a result of an abusive episode, two due to miscarriage or stillbirth; three women described a need for treatment but chose to seek none. Over half of the participants described the presence of alcohol or drug abuse problems in their partners.

Data Collection

Data were primarily collected by semi-structured interviews lasting approximately one-and-half to two hours. At the completion of the interview the demographic data were collected. Approximately one third of the interviews took place in the women's homes and one half in a private office of the referring agencies or in a college campus classroom. One interview took place in a public park. The interview guide (Appendix C) provided the format for data collection. The initial interview guide was revised as the data analysis progressed. All interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed. A bilingual transcriptionist transcribed Spanish interviews. The researcher listened to the audiotapes and examined the transcripts for accuracy. A code was assigned to each transcript for confidentiality. The key to code numbers, raw data, and consents are stored in a locked file cabinet. After transcription, the researcher erased the audiotapes.

Periodic meetings with committee members occurred during

data collection and analysis. The researcher provided updates of the emerging dimensions and the english translation throughout the data collection and data analysis phase of the study.

Other sources of data were: publications in Mexico about domestic violence, audiovisual material in Spanish for battered Latinas, notes of discussions with advocates for Latinas including a Spanish marriage, family, child therapist working with Latinas. Latina shelter counselors, a former Latina counselor and author and a Mexican psychologist providing individual and group counseling to battered women in Mexico served as culture brokers. A group of dedicated women in a private agency in Mexico providing support groups, legal assistance, and public education to women provided an opportunity to learn about the social context of domestic violence in Mexico.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed during the data collection procedure using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and dimensional analysis (Schatzman, 1991). The process of data analysis was documented through a systematic recording procedure for the provision of an audit trail. The audit trail included observational, theoretical and methodological notes as described by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) to maintain rigor. Through the review of the transcripts of audiotaped

interviews, the researcher identified salient dimensions without assigning relative importance to their relationship or meaning to the phenomenon. The question "What all is involved here?" was continuously asked during the coding of transcripts. Approximately half way through the data collection and analysis relevant dimensions needing further dimensionalization were identified and revisions made in the interview guide. Once a "critical mass" of dimensions and their corresponding attributes or properties occurred, the explanatory matrix (Kools, McCarthy, Durham & Robrecht, 1996), as described by Schatzman (1991), was used to reconstruct and explain the participants' viewpoint of the process of ending an abusive relationship. During this phase, the central dimension or perspective of *aguantando*, or enduring, was identified by its ability to provide the greatest explanation of the phenomenon. The final explanatory matrix of the configuration of the patterns and relationships between dimensions of the phenomenon were confirmed through the last five interviews.

Summary

The tenants of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990,1994) and dimensional analysis (Schatzman, 1991) provided the methodological approach for the development of a substantive theory regarding the process of ending an abusive relationship among Latinas. The results of the study are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter Four

Findings

The dimension of *aguantando* (enduring) emerged as the perspective through which Latinas explained their decision-making process for staying and subsequently leaving an abusive relationship. An understanding of *aguantando*, and the conditions leading Latinas to the decision to no longer *aguantar* or endure, provided an understanding of the process of ending an abusive relationship among Latinas (Figure 1).

Fulfilling a Commitment

The Latina participants shared numerous beliefs stemming from their religious and family upbringing that bound them to endure their partner's abusive behavior. Their belief in marriage as a lifelong commitment and divorce as unacceptable was described by the participants as reasons for staying²:

It is stipulated that when you get married that the relationship doesn't matter, you have to endure for the rest of your life more so when you have children.

[Matrimonio]eso es una cosa muy importante latino americano. Es que ellos creen que la mujer queda con su hombre para siempre, cuando te casas. Muchos latinos son católicos y creen que no deben de

² Quotations in Spanish are cited with the English translation for the Spanish only interviews so as to preserve the 'voice' of the Latinas participating in the study.

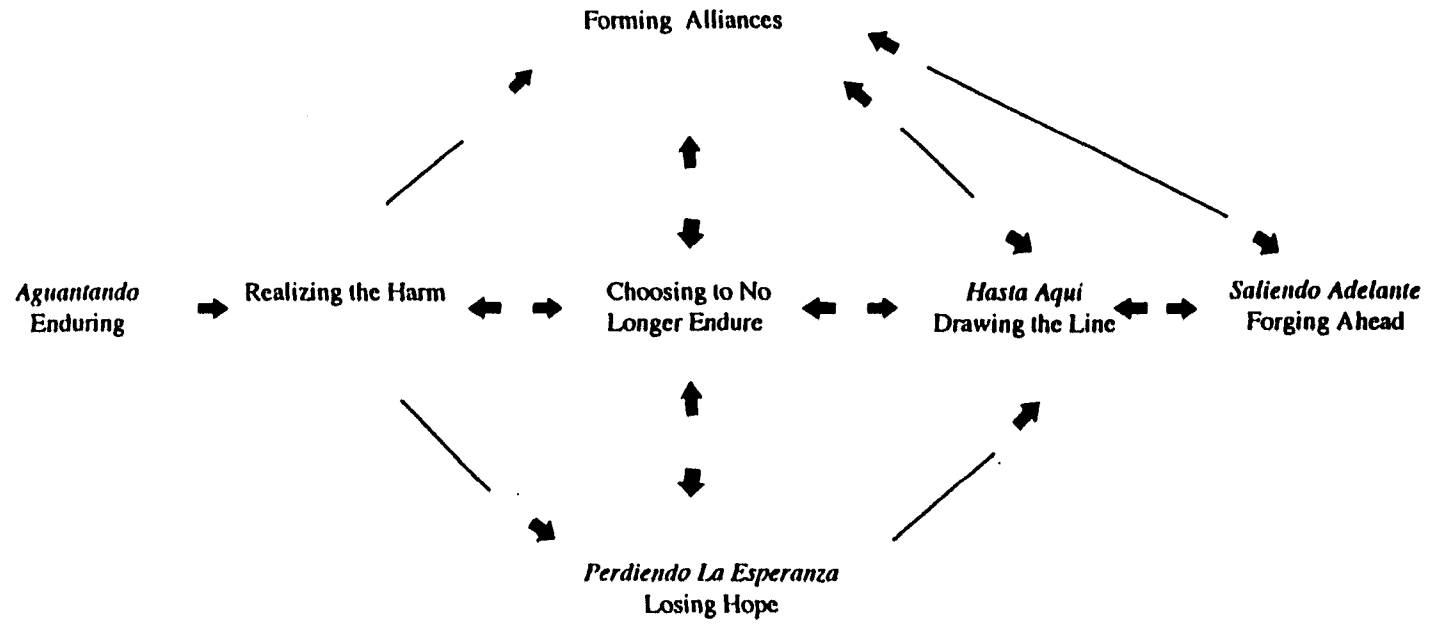


Figure 1. Choosing to No Longer Endure An Abusive Relationship

divorciarse, no creen en el divorcio...you cannot leave your husband, you cannot get a divorce because you're the bad person there.

[Marriage] is very important Latin American thing. They believe a woman must be with her man forever when you get married. Many latinos are catholic and don't believe you can divorce. They don't believe in divorce...you cannot leave your husband. You cannot get a divorce because you're the bad person there.

Simplemente que aceptaba mi vida, ese era mi destino y yo me tengo que aguantar hasta que Dios diga (14 años). Más que nada por los niños porque le digo que entre él y yo no hay nada.

I simply accepted my life. This was my destiny and I needed to endure as God wished (14 years). If nothing more than for the children because between him and I there is nothing left.

But my place and my duty was to my husband and my family and to raise the children and not cause waves and not cause tension, nor the embarrassment. I'll never forget, my mother said, "no one in the family has ever been divorced and no one will ever be divorced. You make your bed hard, you lie in it." I would have brought shame on my family if I was divorced. Eventually, he got arrested for stealing because he developed a big substance abuse problem. I divorced him while he was in jail. So that was one way I got out of it. That sort of smoothed it over for my family because, this man is a criminal, he steals, he robs.

Having a family

Many of the Latinas in the study described the presence of a father in the lives of the children as very important. "Papá" and his importance as a provider and role model in the lives of the children was often cited as a reason for *aguantando* or enduring. Many participants chose to endure the

episodes of abuse in the belief that a father was necessary for the well being of the children. The father was seen as providing the economic resources needed for food and shelter for the children and for themselves. Latinas also saw a father as being important to the children's emotional needs. The participants expressed guilt at depriving the children of their father and feared the children would not understand their actions.

But you know you want to keep your home together as long as you're doing okay. This is what God meant it to be, a husband and a wife. I always wanted a home for my children. I always wanted a husband to take to church with us all doing it as a group. I left my job because I was ready to leave him. But I had to try again to keep the family together.

I never wanted to leave him because I believe my children are supposed to have a father and a mother and I didn't want them to suffer without a father.

Yo vivía en una familia que nunca hubo una separación, ni divorcio ni nada, hasta que murieron, los dos siempre juntos. Entonces yo decía, y mi hijo que va a pasar, solo, sin su papá. Yo sentí que le iba faltar el amor de su papá.

I had lived in a family where there had never been a separation nor a divorce, even until they died, [my parents] always remained together. I thought "What is going to happen to my son, alone with no father...I felt he would be missing his father's love.

Lacking Economic Resources

Their primary role as caretakers of the children placed

many Latinas in an economically dependent position with their partners. This economic dependency was further compounded by a lack of job skills, few opportunities to learn English, and strict control over their activities outside the home by their partner.

Me aguantaba porque no tenía donde irme, no tenía, o sea posibilidad de trabajar. Cuando eran muy duro los problemas yo me salía de la casa y me iba a refugiar con una amiga, ya desde muchos años antes. Me sentía como en una prisión, como un pajarito en una jaula que no tenía como desenvolverse ni como salir de eso.

I endured because I had nowhere to go, I had no possibility of getting work. When the problems would get too hard, I would leave the house and I would hide at the house of a longtime friend. I felt sometimes like I was in prison, like a little bird in a cage with no way to untangle myself or a way to get out.

Mi hijo me decía - Vámonos mami-. Entonces yo quería salirme pero tenía miedo porque decía yo: ¿Qué voy a ser? ¿A dónde me voy a ir? Yo no tengo familia, yo no tengo padres, no tengo hermanos, ¿Qué voy a hacer? ¿Cómo le salgo yo al problema este?

My son would say, 'Let's leave mami'. I wanted to leave but I was afraid, What was I going to do? Where could I go? I have no family, no parents, no brothers or sisters...What could I do? How was I going to get out of this problem?

Descriptions of Latinas' day to day lives revealed relative isolation. Many of the Latinas had lived a number of years in the United States but had mastered very little English. Accessing resources for leaving their abusive partner would largely come from encounters with the police and neighbors.

Choosing To No Longer Endure

A further exploration of the dimension of *aguantando* or enduring provided a way to identify the conditions leading to a Latina's decision to no longer *aguantar* or endure. Forming alliances, losing hope and realization the abuse was harming the children emerged as relevant conditions that led to the decision to leave their abusive partner.

Forming Alliances

Latinas often described key individuals or allies that served different roles in their decision to no longer endure their abusive relationship. These "allies" were often described as a neighbor, employer, friend or family member who often provided support by listening, offering advice, providing resources or linking Latinas to resources in the community. Encountering and connecting to an ally(ies) was an essential condition in the decision making process of choosing to no longer endure. Latinas expressed deep appreciation for the individuals they encountered and felt they would not have been able to leave their abusive partner without their support. Allies were identified by the women as not supporting *aguantando* or enduring the abuse. Different roles were played by the allies. These roles are played by different individuals encountered along the journey of living in an abusive situation. The three ways in which an ally facilitated the women's decision to leave were by: (a) uncovering the secret (b) nurturing self-esteem and

independence, and (c) linking to resources.

Revealing the secret

Seeking help for the abuse was hampered by feelings of shame or pride. Latinas described feelings of shame as the reason for not revealing the secret of abuse. They spoke of a need to feel successful and proud of their husband and family. Revealing the secret of the abuse would reveal their failure to select the right partner. They were now bound to their commitment by religious and personal beliefs to stay with their partner for life and to "endure" their decision.

Revealing the abuse was most often initiated by the "ally" upon noticing significant changes in the Latinas' behavior or by noting actual physical injuries.

Yo todo me lo guardaba adentro y hasta que me fui a platicar con una vecina, con una mamá de una compañerita de mi niña que va a la escuela. A veces nos encontramos en el bus y empecé a platicar y me dijo - 'la miro muy triste'- Me inspiró confianza porque se miraba muy buena señora, verdad, y le comenté todo porque yo ya estaba que explotaba.

I kept everything inside until I went to talk to a neighbor, with a mother of a little classmate my little girl goes to school with. At times we would encounter each other at the bus stop and I would start to talk and she would say 'You look very sad.' She inspired my confidence because she looked like a kind woman, and I told her everything because I felt like I was going to explode.

Latinas often confirmed the abuse when confronted, and described the ally as concerned and protective. Allies appealed to the Latinas' self worth by stating "no lo mereces" ("you don't deserve to be treated this way"). The

women were often encouraged by the ally(ies) to leave their partner. The employers of one Latina shared their concerns regarding her visible injuries when she would arrive after a weekend with her family in Mexico:

Si muchas veces yo llegué golpeada. El señor es judío y me decía que no se le golpea a ninguna mujer. Entonces ellos me empezaron a hacerme sentir más bien, más diferente. La señora Anita y el señor me dieron muchos consejos y yo empecé a pensar muchas cosas. Ellos me ayudaron mucho, me empezaron a decir que yo era muy buena madre, que yo era muy trabajadora, que era muy bonita y que no tenía porque estar aguantando esa situación.

Many times I came with bruises. El señor was Jewish, and he would say to me that no one should hit a woman. They started to help me feel better, different about myself. Mrs. A. and her husband gave me lots of advice and I started to think about a lot of things...[T]hey helped me a lot, they would say to me, I was a good mother, a very hard worker, I was pretty and why I shouldn't endure (put up with) the situation any longer.

Another participant spoke of friends encouragement and support in leaving her abusive husband:

Me decían que me necesitaba salir de mi casa pero con los niños y rentar un apartamento y buscarme un trabajito y buscar a alguien que me cuide a la niña. Para que yo salga adelante, para hacerme independiente, Me decían, si no lo haces así y vas con tu esposo, él va a hacer lo mismo (golpear). Pero yo lo veía bien duro, bien difícil.

They told I needed to leave my home but with the children and rent an apartment and look for a little job and someone to take care of my daughter. So I could move ahead and become independent. They told me if I stayed with my husband, he would do the same (abuse). But it seemed too hard, too difficult.

Upon becoming aware of the abuse, the future father-in-law of a young eighteen-year-old condemned his own son's behavior:

I don't care if he is my son, my own blood, you're not supposed to put up with that. If you were my daughter I wouldn't like you to be in a situation like that so if you want to leave I will respect your decision, you have every right to leave.

Another participant recalls her mother's advice regarding the abuse

Mira, hija, si tu tienes problemas con A., si él te golpea, yo como tu mamá te voy a decir déjalo. Pero como mujer, hablando de mujer a mujer, yo te digo que no le permitas que te golpea, porque si tu lo permites que te golpea, toda tu vida él te va a golpear.

Look mi hija, if you are having problems with A., if he is hitting you, as your mother I'm telling you to leave him. Talking to you woman to woman, I'm telling you, do not allow him to hit you, if you allow him to hit you, all your life he will abuse you.

Nurturing self-worth

Latinas described the ally as encouraging and nurturing their self-worth by helping them realize they were not to blame for the abuse. The ally's interpretation of who was responsible for the abuse helped the woman change her feelings about herself. Most often allies would tell the women they did not deserve to be abused or mistreated. By appealing to the Latinas' importance and worth as a person, the 'ally' prompted her to reexamine her beliefs about herself and her ability to create a better future for herself

and her children. This new message from the ally (ies) served to nurture a new hope for the potential of changing their future.

The following participants recount the impact of their ally:

...ella me hacía ver que yo era una persona que no merecía lo que me estaba pasando. Y ella me decía, 'Yo te conozco por tantos años y yo veo que no mereces estar en esa situación, sal de allí, ese hombre no te merece. Supérarte, ve a la escuela, búscate un trabajito, cuídate como mujer, como madre.

...she helped me see that I was a person who didn't deserve what was happening to me. She would say, 'I've known you for many years. You don't deserve to be in this situation. Get out, that man doesn't deserve you. Overcome the situation. Go to school, look for a little job. Take care of yourself as a woman and a mother.

Cuando reprobé fue para él un mayor triunfo. Fue como un trofeo para él, para enseñarme que era cierto que yo era estúpida y que yo nunca iba hacer nada en la vida, que yo tenía que entenderlo, que no estar pensando en cosas que no fueran realísticas. Y por un momento yo lo pensé. Pero gracias a Dios, estuve trabajando para esa doctora muy buena, muy buena ella, me ayudó mucho. Me hizo ver que no era cierto, que yo podía salir adelante. Pues fue la doctora que me oyó, que me dijo que podía hacer; ella me dió las tarjetas, me refirió, y hablabamos. Pues fue la doctora que fue me dió las tarjetas y me referió a una consejera privada.

When I failed [my college course] it was major triumph for him, to show me it was true that I was stupid. That I would never do anything with my life and I needed to understand that and not to be unrealistic. I believed him. But thank God, I was working for a kind doctor. She was so kind. She helped me so much. She helped me see it wasn't true. I could forge ahead. It was the doctor who listened, told me what I could do. It was the doctor who gave me the cards and referred me to a

private counselor.

Two Latina participants shared how an ally helped them gain hope that they could *salir adelante*:

Pero gracias a Dios, estuve trabajando para esa doctora muy buena, muy buena ella, me ayudó mucho. Me hizo ver que no era cierto, que yo podía salir adelante..

But thanks to God, I had been working for that doctor. She was good person. She helped me very much. She made me see it wasn't true, that I could move forward.; she gave me the cards, referred me and we would talk.

This Latina returned to school, divorced her abusive husband, graduated from a community college and is working as a registered nurse.

Linking to Resources

Latinas spoke about positive encounters with neighbors, family, and the police. The participants described a support person, often a neighbor or friend, who shared information about available resources for the Latina and her family. The ally became a step in the process of leaving and for many Latinas was a key link in accessing resources in the community. The outcome of encounters with "allies" often involved receiving information about therapists, agencies providing services and resources for battered women. Being unable to envision another future for themselves or their children, their despair finally was alleviated. Latinas cite this new information as providing new hope for a better

future. With information about available resources, Latinas put into place a plan for leaving. The plan was enacted with a final episode of abuse. Most often the final episode involves protecting the children and themselves from further abuse.

I had this friend, neighbor and I talked to her, and I talked about my situation and she helped me a lot. Sometimes she gave me food or she helped me ...she taught me to drive and she gave me so much support. She told me, "You can drive..you have to...if you don't feel good you just come and talk to me. You don't have to be there. Leave him. If he abuses you physically, you can call the police. I know you have problems, but if you ever need help, just knock on the wall.

A few months later, during another abusive episode, she moved in with her neighbor who linked her to an agency providing services to battered women.

Another participant recounts an experience with a police officer during a battering episode:

Salí de mi casa porque yo me enteré que había lugares donde yo podía ir. La policía me dió un papel ese día cuando A. me golpeó. El policía ese día me dijo 'Si tu dices que él no te hizo el brazo, es tu decisión, pero aquí hay lugares donde tu puedes ir si tu quieres salir de tu casa.' Yo realmente le agradezco mucho a esa policía que me dió ese papel.

I left my home because I found out there were places I could go. The police officer gave me a paper when A. hit me. The police officer said to me that day "If you're saying he didn't hurt you arm, that is your decision, but there are places where you can go if you want to leave your home." I really am very grateful to that police officer who gave me that paper.

Le hablé al director para decirle que voy a sacar a Miguel de la escuela para desaparecerme dos semanas, Entonces llamó a la "counseling" y entonces yo le empecé a decir mi vida y me dijo que tenía que hablar a la policía y ella me refirió al Safe House. Y en esa casa por primera vez me empecé a sentir que era yo alguien. Me dieron counseling...Ellas no me hicieron sentir como algo malo, además me hicieron sentir que no era mi culpa.

I called the principal to tell him I was going to take Miguel out of school so I could disappear for two weeks. He called counseling and I began to tell them about my life and they told me I needed to call the police and she referred me to Safe House. In that shelter, I began to feel for the first time that I was someone. They gave me counseling...They didn't make me feel bad, instead they made me feel it wasn't my fault.

Perdiendo La Esperanza or Losing Hope

Another condition identified in choosing to no longer endure was *perdiendo la esperanza* or losing hope. Latinas described losing hope as the moment when they came to the realization their partner was not going to stop the abuse. Previously, the belief he would change or the women could stop her partner's abusive behavior sustained many of the participants in their efforts to *aguantar* or endure their abusive relationship. Latinas described a number of strategies they employed in attempting to stop their partner's abusive behavior. Latinas most often appealed to the importance of their partner respecting them as a good wives undeserving of such treatment, their status as the

mother of the children, and the consequences of his actions towards them and the children. Subsequent strategies cited by the women included calling the police and, in some instances, eliciting assistance from family members. After exhausting all efforts, the Latina lost hope that her partner would or could change. This realization gave her the final reason to no longer endure. The following participant expressed her final relinquishment of hope when her husband told their 10 year-old daughter she was to accept his abuse of her mother, and accept abuse from her future husband,

Perdí la esperanza cuando yo dije, él está muy ignorante o muy confundido de lo que es realmente un hombre y una mujer. Es una cosa lo que yo estoy esperando de él y yo no tuve a mis hijos para que se vuelven como él. Mi hija va tener lo que yo no quiero para mí y en ese momento dije que eso pasará en el futuro, decidí mejor dejarlo.

I lost hope when I realized he is very ignorant or confused about what a man and woman really are. It is one thing for me to wait [for him to change]. I didn't have my children so they could become like him. My daughter is going to have what I don't want for myself... Since I did not want that future for her I decided it was best I left him.

Another participant described her cycle of hope and the final realization he would not change:

I thought if he loved me he would change but it never happened. All I know now is he has to be the one to change, not even for the children would he change. You think he is going to change, because he loves you, but it isn't true. I thought he would listen to his mother and he would change but no. My mother-in-law thought being with me he would change... I had hoped she would change him.

Another participant stated:

...para que voy estar perdiendo mi tiempo con él? Ya estuvimos juntos muchos años, tenemos tres hijos, y para él eso no cuenta. Entonces, ese fue el motivo que me motivo más a salirme de la casa porque antes pensaba que iba cambiar.

...what am I wasting my time with him? We have been together many years, we have three children, and for him it doesn't matter. So, that is what motivated me the most to leave the house because I thought he was going to change.

One Latina spoke of her final relinquishment of hope:

Yo tenía la esperanza de que él iba a cambiar. Y ahora estoy consciente de que yo ya no lo puedo cambiar, él es el único que tiene que cambiar, ya lo acepte. Porque yo pensaba que lo podía cambiar, él me dice que me quiere, que me quiere...

I had the hope he would change. And now I'm aware that I can't change him, he is the only one who can change, I've accepted it. Because I thought I could change him, he would tell me he loved me...

No fue la primera vez, que había ido a la cárcel...Ya no aguantaba, porque era lo mismo y nada cambiaba...eso era lo peor. Entonces, yo dije a mi hija que las cosas iban a cambiar. Pedí a una amiga que tenía un carro que me ayudara y me ayudó a llevar a mis cosas to storage and otra amiga habló a un shelter.

It wasn't the first time, he went to jail... I couldn't take it anymore, because it was always the same and nothing changed,... that was the worse part. So I told my daughter things were going to change, I asked a friend who had a car for help and she helped me and we took all my things to storage and another friend helped me contact a shelter.

Realizing the Harm

The realization that the abuse was affecting the well-being of the children also became a pivotal point and condition in Latinas' decision to no longer *aguantar* or endure. The realization that the abuse was beginning to affect the children was recounted in descriptions of behavioral changes in the children at home and school, and reactions to the direct witnessing of the abuse.

Faltando el respeto (disrespect)

Many women expressed a growing realization that the children were showing her disrespect because they were aware of the abuse and learning disrespectful behavior from their father. The disrespectful behavior was described as younger children beginning to hit them and often encouraging the behavior. Older children were described as siding with their father and were often drawn into confirming their mother's whereabouts and activities.

La niña me trataba también muy mal y me decía - 'Has de tu vida lo que quieras pero tu no me vas a quitar a mi papá porque yo lo quiero, Si tu quieres irte, vete.' Yo me acuerdo que le dije a mi hermana, ¿Qué he echo? He aguantado 14 años para no quitarle el papá a los niños y los estoy perdiendo yo. Me dijo mi hermana - 'Los años que permanezcas allí, los hijos se te van a echar encima, porque él los esta poniendo en contra tuya, a pesar de que estas dando toda tu vida a ellos.' Fue entonces que dije, ya no más.

My daughter was treating me very badly, she would say 'Do with your life want you will, but you are not going to take my father away because I love him. If you want to go leave.' I remember saying to my sister, What have I done? I have endured for 14 years so as not to take the children from their father and now I am losing them. My sister told me,

'The years that you continue to stay, the children will turn against you because he is turning them against you even though you are giving your life to them.' It was then I thought -no more.

Eso fue el miedo que me dió de pensar que mis niños van a pensar que este trato es normal, que ellos me quieran empezar a controlar y a faltar el respeto. Al rato mis hijos me van a faltar el respeto y decidí hablar al shelter por primera vez y ponerle una restricción por primera vez también y él estuvo en la cárcel. Fue algo muy difícil pero...pero yo dije hasta aquí y ya se acabó, ya no soportaba más.

That was my fear. It made me think, my children would think this type of treatment was normal, that they would start to try and control me and would lose respect. In awhile, my children will be disrespectful of me, so I decided here it stops. It's over. I can't bear this any longer.

Era la palabra que siempre decía y delante de mi hijo ya no había respeto, delante de mi hijo. Y entonces yo dije aquí ya se perdió todo el respeto, esa es la base, yo pienso, de una familia. Cuando se pierde el respeto pues se pierden todos los valores.

It was a word he would always say in front of my son (fucking bitch). I thought, all respect has been lost here, I believe it is the foundation of a family. When respect is lost you lose all values.

Besides observing their childrens' reactions to abuse, one Latina vividly describes an incident between her husband and the children. She recalls her concern for the children's future if she remained with her abusive partner:

Entonces él le dijo a la niña 'Sabes que cuando tu crezcas yo no quiero que seas como tu madre, porque ella no vale nada. Si a ti te está manteniendo un hombre lo vas a tener que obedecer, y le tienes que cuidar la espalda y soportar sus vergüenzadas, sus grocerías. Mientras te esté manteniendo, si quieres ser una buena mujer, tienes que quedarte callada y

tienes que obedecerlo, porque él es tu hombre.' ¿Qué clase de vida iba tener mi hija si piensa lo que ella debería de hacer cuando ella sea una mujer?, va a ser muy desgraciada y a la vez mi hijo también. Porque así no van a ser feliz. Perdí la esperanza. Yo realicé que era ignorante o confundido de que era una mujer y un hombre. En ese momento estaba enseñando a los niños a repetir lo que estaban viendo en la casa y decidí dejarlo. Pensé que no era justo.

He said to my daughter, "You know when you grow up I don't want you to be like your mother, because she is worth nothing. If a man is supporting you, you have to obey him, you have to watch his back and put up with his shameful behavior and mistreatment. As long as he supports you and you want to be a good woman, you must keep quiet and obey because he is your man...[I thought] 'What kind of life was my daughter going to have when she became a woman, she will be wretched and so will my son, they will not be happy..' I lost hope. I realized he is was very ignorant or confused about what a woman and man are. That moment he was teaching the children they should repeat what they were seeing at home and I decided to leave him. I thought it wasn't right.

This participant contacted a shelter the next day and left with her children.

Changes in the Children

Latinas described problems in school performance and behavior among their children as a signal that the abuse at home was affecting them. The children's behavior was the growing evidence that the abuse was no longer affecting them but also the children. One Latina described her fifteen-year-old son as engaging in fights at school after abusive episodes at home and also episodes of physical violence between her husband and her son. The loss of respect between

her son and husband as evidenced by the use of physical violence, warnings by a police officer and a growing fear her son might be killed by her husband during one of the episodes, initiated her plans to leave her abusive partner.

[Yo] tenía la responsabilidad de mis dos hijos, entonces yo tenía que ver por el futuro de ellos. No me gustaba el ejemplo que estaban viendo que un hombre fuera tan abusador verbalmente, aparte físicamente, mentalmente, entonces yo miraba que mis hijos, especialmente el más grande. El siempre andaba buscando pleitos en la escuela. Tenía buenos grados, pero cuando nosotros teníamos un problema, al día siguiente o en la semana, la escuela me mandaba llamar. Y yo miraba como entre ellos, entre los dos, estaban peleando, ví muchas cosas que nunca había visto antes; no querían comer, preferían estar todo el tiempo afuera de la casa.

[I] had the responsibility of my two sons, so I needed to look out for their future. I didn't like the example they were seeing of a man verbally abusive, aside from physically and mentally. I started to realize that my sons, especially the oldest, was always getting into fights at school. He had good grades, but when we had a problem (abusive episode) the next day or week, the school would call. I was noticing that they (sons) were fighting with each other. I was starting to see things I hadn't noticed before. They didn't want to eat, and preferred to spend all their time away from the house.

Another Latina spoke of her concerns for the well-being of the children if she remained with her abusive husband:

I never wanted to leave him because I believe my children were supposed to have a father and mother and I don't want them to suffer without a father. But I realized they were being affected because of

the violence, they were always crying when they saw this type of situation, physical violence, that is why I decided to leave. When I saw my kids crying, that gave me the courage to leave him. He was confusing my girls because he was always asking them questions about me. I realized I was giving more problems to them if I continued living with him.

Hasta Aquí: Drawing the Line

Many Latinas cited commitment to their marriage, personal and religious upbringing, their partner's status as father of their children and their economic dependence as factors in *aguantando* or enduring the abuse. The women in the study clearly described the point at which they were no longer willing to *aguantar* or endure their partner's abusive behavior as *hasta aquí* or the need to protect the children and themselves from further abuse.

Accounts during this critical time reveal an escalation of abuse to a dangerous level. In many descriptions by the women, the batterer threatened to take the children or kill her. The women felt impelled to act to not only protect the children, but also themselves. The decision to leave seemed imperative if they were to continue to protect and care for their children and their future.

The presence of an ally(ies), giving up hope their partner would stop the abuse, the availability of resources, and the realization that the abuse was affecting the well-being of the children, were conditions under which Latinas declared *hasta aquí*. The need to protect the children and

themselves mobilized the women to activate the resources needed to carry out their plan to leave their abusive partners.

I don't love him anymore...every time he hurt me it was less love..my son is the first thing..he comes before me. So when he hit my son just because he was crying that just drew the line....because I could defend myself. I could either shut up or hit him back or whatever but my son can't do that.

Entonces a él le dió más coraje que pensó que yo había llamado a la policía. Pero yo nada más abrí el cristal, y él pensó que yo le había hablado. El me decía - 'Si me siguen y me agarran, yo te mato ahorita mismo.' La niña grande estaba despierta y empezó a llorar, 'No le vayas a pegar a mi mamá.' él le dijo - 'Sí, porque ella no es una esposa buena-.' Entonces de momento yo le dije, 'No!, yo le grité, Yo ya no puedo aguantar más, y hasta aquí se terminó. En ese momento decidí, quería una orden de restricción, seperación o divorcio. Ya no podía seguir viviendo de esta manera.

And so he became even angrier thinking I had signaled the police car, But all I had done was open the window, he said, 'If they arrest me I'm going to kill you now'. The oldest daughter was awake and began to cry 'don't kill my mother' and he said to her, 'Yes because she is not a good wife' At that moment I yelled "I can't take it anymore and here it stops. That moment I decided, I wanted a restraining order, a separation or a divorce I couldn't go on living this way anymore.

Tomé la decisión cuando la policía me dijo, él puede matar uno de mis hijos y los hijos lo pueden matar a él, en mi mente dije, ya mató uno de sus hijos. Yo no voy a esperar que vaya a matarlo, o que ellos vayan a matarlo a él. Mi niño ya tiene 15 años y es muy desarrollado.

I decided to leave after the police officer came and said he (husband) could kill one of my children or the children could kill him. In my mind I thought..he has already killed one of his children, he already did it (She recently had a miscarriage

as a result of an abusive episode). I'm not going to wait for him to kill one of them, or they kill him. My son is 15 and he is big like a man.

Saliendo Adelante - Forging Ahead

Latinas in the study identified the relationships with allies as pivotal in their decision to no longer *aguantar* or endure their abusive relationship. By pointing out to Latinas their self-worth and the availability of helpful resources, allies often inspired Latinas with hope for a better future for their children and themselves. The recognition of the availability of resources and new growth in self-esteem helped many Latinas believe they had alternatives and could *salir adelante* or forge ahead of their circumstances. Many Latinas describe activating a definitive plan. Others chose to access resources offered by allies while others turned to law enforcement or their children's school for help.

Many participants spoke of the importance of continued support from friends, family and domestic violence counselors in sustaining their belief in themselves and their ability to *salir adelante* or forge ahead after leaving their abusive partners. Many of the women also found support from other women encountered during outpatient support groups by maintaining contact outside the formal groups through visiting, cooking and socializing together.

..they (counselors and friends) said it was the best thing I did, separate from the situation (abuser) because in the future it would hurt my

daughter. As a mother the first and most important thing is the children, to give the children a good future.

En las clases también recibí apoyo de que voy a seguir adelante y todo va a salir bien. Ahí me dicen que con esta preparación ya puedo salir adelante y al ver que a ellas les va bien en sus negocios. Muchas compañeras tienen sus casas y sus carros y ellas me dicen que viven felices. Me dicen 'Tu vales mucho, poco a poco te vas a ir recuperando, más que tu eres maestra y has trabajado.' Ellas me dicen - yo tengo seis niños, la otra cuatro. 'Pues casi todas tienen niños que cuidar y, pues les va bien.

In the classes also I received support that I could forge ahead and everything will be fine. There they told me with preparation (education, training, and working) I can move ahead. In seeing the other women, they tell me their little businesses are going well. Many friends have their own place, a car and they tell me they are living happily. They tell me 'I am worthy and little by little I will recover, more so you are a teacher and have worked.' They say 'I have six children', another said 'four'. They almost all have children to take care of and they are all doing fine.

Ella dijo que tengo que ver por mí para poder ver por los demás y para cuidar a mi hijo. Ella dijo 'si usted sale adelante, si el niño ve que usted está fuerte, cree que él también es fuerte.' Sus palabras me hacen sentir que yo valgo y que yo tengo un lugar muy especial aquí, todo esto me hizo reanimarme a salir adelante.

She [counselor] said I have to look out for myself to be able to look after others...and to take care of my son. She [counselor] said 'if you move forward, and your son sees you are strong, he will believe he is strong also.' Her words made me feel I was important and that I had a special place here, all that revived me to forge ahead.

Latinas expressed relief in being out of their situation but recognized that a long difficult road lay ahead of them.

Many of the women spoke with enthusiasm about their current activities of job training, English classes, and college courses for establishing economic independence. Two participants shared their sense of accomplishment in meeting their first goal, signifying their independence:

"Por cinco años, nunca aprendí a manejar un estandard. Cuando aprendí y compré ese carro estándar me sentía la mujer más feliz del mundo. Ahora voy entrar al college, si Dios me lo permite, para hacer algo más de mi vida. Estoy en una escuela donde estoy recibiendo preparación para mejorar a mi inglés y para computers. No digo todo en mi vida es lo mejor, tengo problemas pero son mínimos."

"I had never learned to drive a standard car, and when I did and I bought a standard car I felt like the happiest woman in the world. I'm going to be entering college, God willing, to make more of my life. I am in school now receiving instruction for improving my English and in computers....I'm not saying everything in my life is better, I have problems but they are minimal."

"Tengo fuerza, hasta ya saqué mi licencia del Day Care para cuidar niños, y tengo mucha esperanza pues de esta forma atiendo a mi casa y a mis niñas al mismo tiempo."

"I have the strength [to move ahead], to the point I got a day care license to take of children. I am hoping, that in this way I will be able to take care of my home and my daughters at the same time."

Sociocultural Context of Choosing to No Longer Endure

Many of the Latinas participating in this study were recruited from agencies that provide shelter services for Latinas. The availability of bilingual lay and professional

agency/shelter staff undoubtedly was an important factor for the participants in the study who spoke only Spanish. Individual and group counseling services in Spanish are readily available in community agencies providing services for domestic violence.

The overall positive response participants received from law enforcement during episodes requiring police intervention may be attributed to the existence of domestic violence unit in the County of San Diego. The domestic violence unit consists of members of the district attorney's office, victim witness program, and crisis counselors which review and follow-up all domestic violence reports. The majority of police cadets in the various police and sheriff departments receive training in domestic violence calls. Many women in the study cited police officers responsiveness in providing lists of available services in English and Spanish, and arresting their partner during an acute episode of violence. One agency has a full-time Spanish speaking counselor in the police department who does follow-up calls on all police reports of domestic violence.

The agencies providing domestic violence services in this Southern California county also have legal clinics for women needing assistance in filing restraining orders and divorces not involving custody or property disputes. At least one legal assistant who speaks Spanish is available at all the agencies. Many of the women are also provided a bilingual

advocate to accompany them to court.

The proximity of the county to the U.S.- Mexican border region provided some women close access to extended family members residing in Mexico. In some cases, periodic contact with family members aided in the recognition of the abuse during family visits and provided emotional support.

Despite many years as residents in the United States, many of the participants had not acquired English language proficiency nor had the childcare resources to work full-time. Generating a sufficient income for economic independence presented a challenge for many of the Latinas in the study. Many of the women gave accounts of saving enough money to leave and live with a family member in another part of the state for a period of time away, from the batterer. Some women were able to leave their partners for as long as one year. Some women expressed guilt at burdening family members or a neighbor for any extended period of time and usually returned to their partner in the hope that his new promises of discontinuing the abuse would be fulfilled.

Conclusion

The dimension of *aguantando* (enduring) emerged as the perspective through which Latinas explained their decision for staying in an abusive relationship. The formation of alliances, the loss of hope that their partner would stop the abuse, and the realization the abuse was affecting the children were conditions identified by Latinas as influential

in their decision to end their abusive relationship. These conditions lead Latinas to the decision of *hasta aquí* or to no longer *aguantar* or endure their abusive relationship. Through their relationships with "allies," Latinas began to recognize their potential to *salir adelante* or forge ahead. Latinas emphasize the importance of continued support from friends, family and agencies providing services for domestic violence in sustaining their belief in themselves and in their ability to *salir adelante* or forge ahead after leaving their abusive partners.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Implications of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore how Latinas end an abusive relationship. The findings from this study provide a firsthand account of the process Latinas move through in ending an abusive relationship. Theoretical findings, sociocultural context of Latinas ending an abusive relationship, and implications for nursing practice and research are discussed.

Theoretical Findings

Aguantando or enduring was the most salient dimension or central perspective through which Latinas explained the process of staying and leaving an abusive relationship. Latinas in the study often referred to the process of staying in an abusive relationship as *aguantando* or enduring. Landenberger (1989) identifies enduring as a phase in the process of entrapment in an abusive relationship. This phase is described as the period of time when the woman consciously blocks out the negative aspects of the relationship, takes partial or total responsibility for the abuse and covers the abuse. Her willingness to tolerate the abuse is related to investment and commitment to the relationship.

Latinas in this study also describe commitment as a key

reason for enduring their partner's abusive behavior. Taking responsibility for their choice of partner and fulfilling their commitment to that choice was most often cited by study participants.

Previous research has suggested that women's rationalizations or explanations of their partner's abusive behavior kept women in the abusive relationship (Ferraro & Johnson, 1983). Reasons cited by women for remaining with an abusive partner include: perceptions of the batterer as troubled, dependent; attribution of the battering to an external force, denial of abuse, and the abuse as normal or at least tolerable. Latinas in this study cited most often their personal beliefs of a life long commitment to their partner and the importance of having a father for the children as the most important reasons for enduring an abusive relationship. These findings indicate that the Hispanic cultural value of familialism plays a key role in Latinas decision to stay in an abusive relationship.

Familialism

Familialism is identified as a cultural value among Latinos. Familialism refers to an individual's strong identification and attachment to nuclear and extended families resulting in strong feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity among members of the same family (Trandis, Marin, Betancourt, Lisansky, & Chang, 1982). Three types of value orientation are found within familialism: (a)

perceived obligation to family members (b) reliance on relatives for help and support and (c) perceptions of family members as behavioral and attitudinal referents (Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin & Perez-Stable, 1987).

Latinas in this study chose to aguantar or endure their abusive relationship for the well-being of the children. The importance of fulfilling their perceived obligation to family members reflects a dimension of familialism. Latinas cited family members as significant allies in providing emotional support and in some cases temporary refuge. The absence of family members as a support system for some Latinas was largely due to the presence of extended family residing in the interior of Mexico. Latinas having family members closer to the border region had more frequent contact with family members which resulted in more frequent visits and interventions by extended family to stop the abuse. The importance of determining the geographic proximity of extended family may play a role in determining available resources for emotional and economic resources.

The role of family members as behavioral and attitudinal referents is another dimension of familialism. Family members and other 'allies' appear to provide another frame of reference for Latinas living in an abusive relationship. Latinas identified family members, as 'allies' in the process of ending their abusive relationship. Many Latinas shared the impact of messages given by their mother, grandmother, aunt,

sister, father, and brother that the abuse was not deserved (no lo mereces) and received encouragement to end the abusive relationship. The presence of an intolerance of abuse in this component of familialism appears to play a strong determining factor for Latinas in providing the support needed to leave an abusive relationship. Latinas in this study gave very few accounts of family members encouraging them to *aguantar* or endure the abuse. Lum (1978) argues that reference groups "provide the individual with the sources of values that he selects in guiding his behavior, especially in situations where a choice has to be made" (p.137). Latinas having available family members who can provide another frame of reference for evaluating the effect of abuse on the Latina and her family played a significant role in the decision to end an abusive relationship. Allies were not necessarily a family member. The role of the ally was assumed by a variety of individuals in their social environment.

Forming alliances

Bowker (1993) argues that informal resources are often ineffective and that most women often require formal resources in ending an abusive relationship. Latinas in this study, however, indicate informal resources such as family, neighbors and friends can be a "catalyst" in accessing formal resources such as shelters, counseling services and law enforcement services (Johnson & Ferraro, 1983). Latinas most often describe allies as playing a significant role by

helping them realize they did not deserve to be abused, pointing out the consequences of remaining in the abusive relationship for the children and themselves and the availability of resources.

Landenberger (1989) includes family, friends and clergy in the stage of 'disengaging self'. Women are described as seeking out individuals for assistance in stopping the abuse after self-identifying themselves as abused. Latinas in this study, in contrast, describe family, friends and neighbors as reaching out or initiating contact to help them stop the abuse. Latinas describe the significance of the 'ally' as an advocate for their well being by pointing out they were undeserving or should not tolerate the abuse. Findings from this study indicate a different relationship between potential allies and Latinas. Further clarification of the role of the ally in defining and interpreting abuse is needed. Findings that Latinas indicate fewer incidents as constituting abuse, stay longer in an abusive relationship and have longest duration of abuse when compared to other groups of women is in need of further investigation. The relationship between these factors and the findings from the Latinas in this study regarding enduring and the role of allies may play a significant role.

The importance of recognizing family, friends and neighbors as an influential resources for providing support and bridging Latinas to programs for domestic violence is

another avenue for intervention. Building on the Hispanic value of familialism may facilitate the development and implementation of community programs for domestic violence among the Latino community.

Realizing the Harm

Latinas heavily weighed the well-being of the children and the importance of the children having a father in their decision to end an abusive relationship. For many Latinas, the absence of a viable means of independent economic support for the children and the absence of direct abuse towards the children were most often cited as reasons for choosing to endure their situation. Latinas described their partners as loving fathers and often as good providers.

Growing evidence that the children were indirectly being harmed, and in some instances direct abuse, motivated many Latinas in the study to 'draw the line' in order to protect the children. Latinas described resigning themselves to enduring the abuse for the well being of the children. Evidence of the children being adversely affected, coupled with information from friends, neighbors etc. regarding resources, catapulted many women into leaving as an act of protection for the children and themselves.

Losing Hope

Walker (1993) attributes a psychological theory of violence based on the behavioral theory of 'learned helplessness' as to why women remain in an abusive

relationship. Learned helplessness is described as a psychological outcome of being subjected to painful experiences (psychological or physical). The 'cycle of violence' or 'battered women's syndrome' developed by Walker (1979, 1984, 1993) consists of three stages. During later stages of abuse, the honeymoon phase which served as a source of hope that the battering would stop, usually disappears. Failure to stop the experiences through repeated efforts results in feelings of hopelessness and any further attempts to stop the abuse.

Latinas, in this study however described losing hope their partner was going to change as an important step in their decision to no longer endure. Choosing to endure was often based on the hope he would change and that she would be able to continue her commitment to her partner and ensure the well being of the children and herself. The Latina's commitment to maintaining the integrity of her family, her role expectations, and the cultural value of familialism fueled her efforts to manage the abusive episodes. The final recognition that her attempts, and later those of others such as family and law enforcement, had no effect on the abuse resulted in the final relinquishment of hope.

Living in an abusive relationship can result in feelings of hopelessness and low self-esteem with a psychological outcome of depression. Latinas able to attain relationships which sent strong messages to the women about being non-

deserving of the abuse, their value as a person, the importance of self-care in order to care for the children and access to information about resources all helped to counteract feelings of hopelessness. These relationships or connections may serve as a protection by providing a new hope and the possibility of new options outside an abusive relationship.

The cultural value of familialism as an added dimension to be considered in the dynamics of partner abuse needs further research among the Latino population. Alternative theories of abuse need to be developed and tested for the Latino population. Psychosocial interventions for domestic violence which are culturally sensitive and attend to the Hispanic cultural value of familialism are in need of further research. Further investigation of the loss of hope as a part of the process of leaving an abusive relationship is in need of further research.

Alternative Theories of Psychological Development

The psychological models of learned helplessness and Walker's cycle of abuse are based on western paradigms of mental health and illness. Traditional psychological theories of human behavior and development are also based on western views of the psychological "self" which rest on individualism. Cultural groups who do not place a high value on individualism, Latinos, therefore, may perceive the dynamics of abuse differently.

Most developmental theories of psychological health are guided by theories of separation and individuation. Recent developments in psychology and infant development have begun to explore an alternative approach which considers the importance of connection and relationship as a construct of mental health (Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1976; Stiver, 1991)

Recent developments in the area of women's psychology (Miller, 1976, 1991; Surrey, 1991) and women's moral development (Gilligan, 1982) point to alternative theories that shed light on the findings in this study. Latinas in this study confirm Swift's (1987) contention that battered women must make new connections or new relationships outside the "system of violence". Swift argues that shelters are the primary source of new connections for battered women.

Miller (1976) argues women's psychological development is different from traditional developmental models. The psychological development of women, Miller says, occurs through the ability to maintain "connections" or relationships, in contrast to men's psychological development, which rests in their ability to become separate and independent in relationships. Connection and relationship become a central part of a woman's development of self. Miller (1976) goes on to say "...for many women the threat of disruption of connections is perceived not as just a loss of a relationship but as something closer to a total loss of self " (p. 83).

Latinas in this study indicate that family, friends, neighbors and, law enforcement officials can all provide new connections for women. The presence of a number of connections serving different purposes by different individuals at different times serve to facilitate the decision-making process. Making connections with allies is an essential condition for Latinas in the decision to end an abusive relationship.

Gilligan (1982) states women's moral development emanates from an ethic of care grounded in their social and psychological development of caring for others. Latinas in this study reveal their decision-making process involves more than individual rights but primarily reflects concerns of responsibility and care for their children. These findings seem to indicate Latinas in this study grapple with an ethical dilemma in their decision to leave an abusive relationship. Latinas in the study struggle with concerns of potentially hurting the children psychologically, their need to follow through with their commitment to their partner and the effect of the abuse on their own well-being. Latinas expressed feelings of guilt and anguish during the process of deciding to leave their partners.

Gilligan contends, "in women's development, the absolute of care, defined initially as not hurting others, becomes complicated through a recognition of the need for personal integrity. This recognition gives rise to the claim for

equality embodied in the concept of rights, which changes the understanding of relationships and transforms the definition of care"(p.166). Further exploration of the applicability of Gilligan's theory of moral development of women may shed further light on the ethical dilemma women appear to face in choosing to leave an abusive partner.

Sociocultural Context of Latinas Ending An Abusive Relationship

A significant condition affecting Latinas efforts in leaving an abusive relationship was the availability of economic resources. Latinas having the most limited resources were those with small children, little or no work history, and lack of proficiency in English. Latinas, by and large, lacked a source of economic support for their children and themselves. The realization of the availability of temporary shelters and economic resources through neighbors, friends, and law enforcement officials facilitated plans for leaving their partner. These findings support previous findings by other studies that economic dependency is a major factor in a woman's decision to stay or leave an abusive relationship.

Law Enforcement

Latinas, by and large, described law enforcement officials as providing assistance in helping them become aware of shelters and domestic violence programs. Police officers were frequently called by women in the study for assistance in stopping an abusive episode. Partners were

often arrested on more than one occasion. Latinas calling the police often harbored the hope and belief that intervention by law enforcement officials would deter or stop the abuse. Yet, many Latinas described calling the police as often escalating abuse, retaliation and threats of taking the children.

Clergy Support

Few Latinas cited experiences with their religious community as having a significant impact on their decision to stay or leave an abusive relationship. Those Latinas who had married in the church cited their marriage vows as a commitment to stay or endure. Those women who were involved in the church were reluctant to disclose the abuse due to feelings of shame. Many Latinas describe praying to God for assistance in finding a way to get out of their abusive situation.

Healthcare Providers

Study participants related few encounters with healthcare providers for injuries sustained during an abusive episode. Latinas often chose not to seek medical attention even when warranted. When seeking medical attention, Latinas were more often alone. Sometimes their partner accompanied them. In either instance, they did not give the true account of the cause of their injury. One participant shared her interaction with a Spanish speaking nurse in the emergency room where she had sought care for a fractured wrist. The

participant recalled her effort to seek help by relaying the true account of the injury. However, the nurse abruptly cut her off and told her that she did not deal with personal problems-only physical and medical problems. The response of healthcare providers or their inability to respond, has received attention elsewhere in the literature (Kurz & Stark, 1988; Stark, Filcraft & Frazier, 1979; McFarlane, Parker, Soeken, & Bullock, 1992; Salber, 1996). The providers' lack of response underscores, again, the need for education regarding assessment and interventions for domestic violence for healthcare providers. Language is not the only barrier to seeking help for an abusive relationship.

Implications for Nursing Practice

The expectation that healthcare providers should routinely assess clients in all types of practice settings for abuse is a recent development. An intensive campaign to educate nurses about domestic violence and the importance of taking an active role in identification, intervention and referral remains a high priority (Henderson & Ericksen, 1994; King & Ryan, 1989). Nurses and other health care professionals have viewed domestic violence as a social problem which is out of the realm of traditional healthcare. A substantial body of research has demonstrated that domestic violence has consequences for physical and psychological health, which in some cases are life threatening. Henderson & Ericksen (1994) reframe domestic violence as a healthcare

problem which nurses have an ethical obligation to address. A supportive atmosphere, through the establishment of a therapeutic relationship, facilitates the disclosure of the presence of abuse. Establishing an environment of safety and trust through support and respect for the women's decision to stay or leave her partner empowers battered women in a situation where they may feel powerless.

Latinas revealed that 'allies' who communicate concern for their well-being, interpret the abuse as undeserving treatment, raise concerns of the effect of the abuse on the children and discuss the availability of resources had a significant impact. The importance of assessing for the presence of abuse by direct nurse interview is supported by research (McFarlane, J., Christoffel, K., Bateman, L., Miller, V., & Bullock, L., 1991) and is further indicated by this study. Latinas frequently did not volunteer that they were abused and cited shame as the most frequent reason for remaining silent. Nurses are in a variety of healthcare settings and have numerous opportunities to become an ally to Latinas. It is essential for nurses to communicate that the women are undeserving of physical and emotional abuse, to provide information about available resources i.e. shelters, legal clinics, counseling, hotline counseling and to communicate concern for her safety and for the well-being of the children.

Another important consideration in developing

interventions with Latinas is the importance they place on maintaining the integrity of the family and the well being of the children in their decision to leave an abusive partner. The Hispanic cultural value of familialism plays a determining factor in the decision-making process. The emphasis on autonomy and women's rights reflects a western view which obscures the complexity of the decision-making process of leaving an abusive relationship for Latinas. The decision-making process involves more than individual rights. The process of leaving an abusive relationship involves concerns regarding the possible repercussions in severing the relationship between her partner, children, and extended family. Findings is this study suggest nurses recognize the importance of not over-emphasizing a Latina's individual rights, which may communicate a lack of understanding of the importance placed on the value of the family among Latinos. An approach that balances concerns for the emotional and physical well-being of the woman and the impact of the abuse on the children and the family as a whole, may promote further trust.

Encouraging Latinas to identify potential support systems within the extended family or immediate community is an essential intervention that can build on the Hispanic cultural value of familialism. In addition, nurses need to ensure the availability of Spanish speaking materials about shelters and community resources for domestic violence that

are culturally appropriate, along with translators knowledgeable about domestic violence.

Outreach in the Hispanic community for prevention and identification of domestic violence is also mandated. Identifying appropriate media such as radio spots, television announcements, posters and educational materials emphasizing the effects of domestic violence on the family are needed. Healthcare settings that Latino families access such as public health clinics, prenatal clinics and pediatrics clinics are ideal settings for education and early identification of domestic violence. The potential of public schools as an avenue for domestic violence outreach programs for Latino families is in need of further exploration. Four study participants were able to access community agencies providing domestic violence programs through school counselors and a principal.

Implications for Nursing Research

Findings from this study have several implications for future nursing research on domestic violence and the Latino population. More research is needed regarding the experience of domestic violence and Latinas. First, further exploration of 'aguantando' or enduring as a central reason for staying in an abusive relationship needs to be done in relation to Walker's theory of the cycle of violence and Gilligan's ethical model of caring.

Latinas in this study point to shame as a reason for

concealing the presence of abuse. The majority of Latinas in the study did not choose to reveal the presence of abuse or denied the abuse. This finding is supported by other studies but has been attributed to fear of further abuse by the batterer. The significance of shame in choosing to endure an abusive relationship and its connection to personal or religious values requires further exploration. The presence of shame as a barrier to revealing the abuse has implications for Latinas and perhaps for other women in developing interventions.

Secondly, research is needed on Walker's cycle of violence and learned helplessness theory as it applies to Latinas. Her model is based on western views of the psychological construction of self in individualistic terms. The applicability of these traditional theories on the dynamics of abuse rest on person-centered models. Cultural groups who do not place a high value on individualism may define the dynamics of abuse differently. The Hispanic cultural values of familialism as an added dimension or dynamic in an abusive relationship needs further research. Further exploration of the distinction between the loss of hope as a necessary step in the decision to leave an abusive relationship and hopelessness as an outcome leading to the battered woman's syndrome is needed. Alternative models of the dynamics of domestic violence need to be developed and tested for their applicability to the development of

interventions and outreach programs for the Latino population.

Thirdly, the majority of participants reported the presence of alcohol or substance abuse problems in their partners. Alcoholism is reported as a significant health problem among Hispanic men (Delgado, [COOSMHO]1995). Findings from a study by Perilla, Bakeman and Norris (1995) confirm a relationship between alcohol abuse and domestic violence among Latinos. Anecdotal accounts in the literature among migrant Latinos support the presence of alcohol during battering episodes. Gelles (1993) asserts that the occurrence of battering during alcohol intoxication is sanctioned by certain cultures. Further research on the role of alcohol or drug abuse in the dynamics of domestic violence and the attribution of blame among Latinos is in need of further research.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate Latinas chose to *aguantar* or endure an abusive relationship for the sake of the well-being of the children, personal values, beliefs regarding family and marriage and a lack of economic resources. Latinas identified 'allies' as playing a pivotal role in assisting them in the decision-making process of ending an abusive relationship. Allies communicated concern for their well-being, interpreted the abuse as undeserving, raised concerns regarding the effect of the abuse on the

children, and provided information regarding resources. The loss of hope they could stop their partner's abusive behavior and the gaining of a new hope for a better future were integral steps in the decision-making process. The final decision to no longer *aguantar* or endure was made with the final realization that the abuse was affecting the children. Latinas' decision to no longer endure lead to *hasta aqui* or 'drawing the line'.

The words of the following participant reflect how her ally provided her hope for a new future:

"Ella me hizo ver y sentir que yo valgo, que yo tengo un valor muy especial. Yo puedo salir mas adelante. Tengo que ver primero por mi para poder ver por los demas...y para cuidar a mi hijo. Porque si yo no veo por mi, que va ser de mi. Sus palabras me hacen sentir que yo valgo y que yo tengo un lugar muy especial aqui, todo esto me hizo reaniarme a salir adelante."

"She made me see and feel that I am important, that I am special. I can forge ahead. I need to look out for myself first so I can take care of my son. Because if I don't take care of myself what will happen to me. Her words made me feel that I am important and I have a special place here, all that revived me to forge ahead."

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Appendix B

To: Dr. Jane Friedman, Chair
Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects
University of San Diego

From: Nancy A. Coffin-Romig RN, DNSc(c)

Date: March 19, 1996

Subject: Proposal "An Investigation of the Experience of
Latina Women in Ending Domestic Violence In Their Lives

Re: (a) Notification of Additional Community Agency Support
for Study Participants
(b) Stipend as compensation for participation in the
study

Three additional agencies have been contacted for recruitment of participants for the study. Please find attached the support letters. Also I am requesting approval of a \$20.00 stipend as compensation for women participating in the study. The agencies have recommended the stipend as a more realistic compensation since most of the women have limited financial resources. I will also continue to offer the free health education session in addition to the stipend to interested participants. Participants will be compensated at the end of data collection. If there are any further questions, you may contact me at (619) 449-5315 or Dr. Diane Hatton in the School of Nursing. Thankyou and I look forward to your response in this matter.

Appendix C
University of San Diego
Consent To Act as a Research Participant

Nancy A. Coffin-Romig is a doctoral candidate in Nursing at the University of San Diego and is conducting a research study of women who have ended a relationship with an abusive partner. After giving my consent to participate in the study, I understand I will be interviewed for approximately one hour.

Participation in the study should not involve any added risks or discomforts to me except for probable discomfort in answering personal questions about ending an abusive relationship.

I understand the interview will be audiotaped, transcribed and coded so as to maintain anonymity. I also understand my research records will be kept completely confidential and the audiotapes will be destroyed. My identity will not be disclosed when findings are reported. I further understand that findings from this study will be reported in such a way as to maintain my anonymity.

I understand a list of phone numbers for counseling and legal services will also be available at my request. Nancy Coffin-Romig has explained this study to me and answered my questions. If I have other questions or problems related to the research, I can reach Nancy Coffin-Romig at 680-5343.

There are no other agreements, written or verbal, related to this study beyond that expressed on this consent form.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanations and, on that basis, I give consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

Signature of Participant

Date

Location

Signature of Principal Researcher

Date

Appendix C

Universidad de San Diego
Consentimiento Para Actuar Como Participante de Investigación

Nancy A. Coffin-Romig está dirigiendo un estudio con mujeres latinas que han dejado un compañero violento. Después de dar mi consentimiento para participar en esta investigación, entiendo que yo seré entrevistada sobre mis experiencias al tratar de dejar un hombre violento. Esta colección de datos tomará aproximadamente una hora.

Mi participación en esta investigación no involucrará riesgos o molestias salvo por la posibilidad de sentir una leve fatiga al contestar preguntas personales sobre mi experiencia con la violencia doméstica.

Entiendo que la entrevista será grabada y después transcrita y mi identidad permanecerá anónima. Entiendo que la información que yo dé en esta investigación será completamente confidencial. Mi identidad no será revelada durante la presentación de esta investigación. También entiendo que la información será usada de tal manera que mi identidad será anónima.

Nancy A. Coffin-Romig me ha explicado esta investigación y ha contestado mis preguntas. Si tengo otras preguntas o problemas relacionadas a esta investigación, puedo comunicarme con Nancy Coffin-Romig al 680-5343.

No hay otro acuerdo, oral o escrito, relacionado a esta investigación fuera de los explicados en este consentimiento.

Yo, el suscrito, comprendo la explicación antes mencionada y bajo estos fundamentos, doy mi consentimiento voluntario para esta investigación.

Firma del Participante

Fecha

Localidad

Firma del Investigador Principal

Fecha

Appendix D

TRANSCRIBERS' PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

I will be participating in the dissertation research titled:

The Experience of Latina Women

In Ending Domestic Violence In Their Lives

I will be transcribing audio-taped interviews into text. Even though I will not know the names of the interviewees, I may come across information that may enable identification. I agree to maintain the anonymity and the confidentiality of these people. By signing this form, I agree to keep all information strictly confidential. I will not discuss the information I transcribe with anyone for any reason. I understand that to violate this pledge would seriously infringe on the participants' right to privacy and would be unethical.

Signature of Transcriber

Date: _____

Nancy A. Coffin-Romig
Primary Investigator

Date: _____

Appendix E

SAN DIEGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE / SEXUAL ASSAULT*

If you have become the victim of domestic violence, you have certain rights and privileges under the law. This information is provided by the San Diego Police Department for your convenience.

You may ask the District Attorney or City Attorney to file a criminal complaint for any crimes committed. (A police report is required in order for a complaint to be reviewed.)

You may file a petition in Superior Court requesting any of the following orders for relief:

An order restraining your attacker from abusing you or any other family members.

An order directing your attacker to leave your household.

An order preventing your attacker from entering your residence, school, business or place of employment.

An order awarding you or the other parent custody of or visitation rights to your minor child or children.

An order restraining your attacker from molesting or interfering with minor children in your custody.

An order directing the party not granted custody to pay support of minor children, if that party has a legal obligation to do so.

An order directing the defendant to make specified debit payments coming due while the order is in effect.

An order directing either or both parties to participate in counseling.

You have the right to file civil suit for losses suffered as a result of abuse, including medical expenses, loss of earnings, and other expenses for injuries sustained and damage to property, and any other related expenses incurred by the victim or by any agency that shelters you. You have the right to apply for an Emergency Protective Order. This is a restraining order valid until 5:00 P.M. the next court business day.

Be aware that despite official restraint of a person alleged to have committed domestic violence the restrained person may be released at any time.

Sexual assault by a stranger or a person known to the victim; including sexual assault by a person who is the spouse of the victim, is a crime.

Sexual assault victims should notify the police department immediately. A police officer will respond to take a report and collect evidence. Victims should retain any clothing worn during the assault and other evidence, such as bed sheeting. Officers will transport victims to the hospital for a medical examination. Victims should not shower or douche before the exam.

DEPARTAMENTO DE POLICIA DE SAN DIEGO
INFORMACION PARA VICTIMA DE VIOLENCIA DOMESTICA / ABUSO SEXUAL*

Usted ha sido víctima de violencia doméstica tiene derechos y privilegios ante la ley. Esta información es proporcionada por el departamento de policía de San Diego.

Usted se puede comunicar a las oficinas del ministerio público (District Attorney) o con el procurador del municipio (City Attorney), para levantar cargos de acuerdo con el delito que se ha cometido. Es necesario dar parte o presentar una denuncia a la policía para tramitar los cargos contra el agresor.

Usted puede presentar una demanda en el juzgado superior (Superior Court) con el fin de solicitar ayuda o socorro mediante una orden judicial solicitada por un juez (restraining order). Una orden judicial impone restricciones a cualquier persona. Las ordenes judiciales pueden ser el siguiente tipo:

la orden que contiene restricciones en contra de su agresor o asaltante. La orden es autorizada para la protección de Usted y su familia.

la orden que obliga a su agresor o asaltante a que se aleje o se retire de su casa.

la orden que no permite al agresor o asaltante, entrada a su residencia, escuela, negocio, o lugar de empleo.

la orden que le otorga a Usted o a uno de los dos padres, custodia, o derecho de visitar a su niño o niños menores de edad.

la orden que no permite al agresor o asaltante que moleste o interfiera con niños menores de edad que están bajo su custodia.

la orden que obliga a una persona que no tiene custodia de su niño o niños, a que pague para mantener a esos niños.

la orden que obliga al acusado a hacer ciertos pagos de deudas que están por vencidas durante estos trámites.

la orden que obliga a una o ambas personas (acusado y agredido) a que participen en sesiones de consejos.

Usted tiene el derecho de presentar una demanda civil por pérdidas sufridas que fueron causadas por maltrato y abuso. Esto incluye gastos médicos, pérdida de sueldo y otros gastos que resultaron en daños y perjuicios. También incluye gastos contrados por la víctima y las agencias que la atendieron. Usted tiene el derecho de solicitar una orden judicial de emergencia. Esta orden es válida hasta las cinco de la tarde (5:00 P.M.) del siguiente día de trabajo, de acuerdo con el calendario de trabajo del personal del juzgado.

Según la ley las personas que cometen algún acto de violencia contra una persona querida deben de permanecer detenidos, pero en algunos casos la persona será puesta a la libertad.

El abuso sexual por un extraño o persona conocida de la víctima, incluyendo abuso sexual por el esposo o esposa de la víctima, es un crimen.

Las víctimas de abuso sexual deben notificar al departamento de policía inmediatamente. La policía responderá y tomará un reporte y coleccionará evidencia. Víctimas deben retener la ropa usada durante el asalto y otra evidencia, tal, como sábanas. La policía transportará la víctima al hospital para un examen médico. Víctimas no deben darse un baño o ducha antes del examen.

For further information about a shelter, you may contact:

Para más información sobre casas de asilo o refugio, llamar a las siguientes oficinas:

Child Abuse Hotline.....	562-2191
<i>(Línea telefónica para Abuso de Niños)</i>	
Center for Women's Studies & Services (24 Hr. Hotline) (Rape/Domestic Violence)	233-3353
<i>(Centro de Servicios de la Mujer)</i>	
CWSS Project Safehouse	267-6023
Battered Women's Services	234-3164
<i>(Servicios para Mujeres Víctimas de Asaltos)</i>	
Battered Women's Services, Legal Services	239-2341
<i>(Servicios Legal)</i>	
Southeast Emergency Quarters	238-1946
San Diego Life Ministries.....	234-2109
Salvation Army	239-6221
St. Vincent de Paul.....	233-7495
Child Sexual Assault Treatment Program	694-5285
<i>(Terapia Para el Abuso Sexual de Niños)</i>	

For information about other services in the community, where available, you may contact the San Diego Police Community Relations Offices:

Para información sobre otros servicios que se proporcionan en la comunidad, llamar a las oficinas de relaciones de la comunidad del departamento de policía de San Diego. Estas oficinas están ubicadas en diferentes zonas de la ciudad:

Central, 2451 Market Street	531-1572
<i>(Se habla español.)</i>	
Eastern, 4326 Euclid Avenue	531-1580
Indochinese	531-1590
Linda Vista, 6973 Linda Vista Rd. #C.....	495-7895
Northeastern, 9225 Mira Mesa Blvd. #213.....	538-8120
Rancho Bernardo, 12425 Rancho Bernardo Rd., #209	538-8146
Northern, 1940 Balboa Avenue	490-0920
Ocean Beach, 5025 Newport Avenue	531-1540
Southeastern, 1535 Euclid Avenue, #E.....	527-3487
Southern, 2953 Beyer Blvd.	690-8360
<i>(Se habla español.)</i>	
Gaslamp, 845 4th Ave.....	531-1544
Balboa Park, 1549 El Prado.....	525-8244

Other numbers (Otros números):

CWSS, TRO Clinic	338-9141
Family Court Services (for TRO's)	557-2030
<i>(Servicios Familiares Sobre Asuntos de Juegado)</i>	
Legal Aid Society.....	262-0896
<i>(Servicios de Ayuda Sociales)</i>	
City Attorney's Office (Domestic Violence Unit)	533-3000
<i>(Procurador del Municipio)</i>	
District Attorney's Office (Domestic Violence Unit).....	531-4062
<i>(Ministerio Público)</i>	
County Victim Assistance.....	531-2772
Senior Victim Assistance.....	233-7975

Appendix F**Interview Guide**

1. How did you come to arrive here in the shelter?
2. Tell me how you came to leave your partner?
 - *At what point did you decide that you wanted to leave your partner?
 - *What were some of the reasons for leaving your partner?
 - *When did the abuse start in your relationship?
3. What did you think about when the abuse started?
 - *Did that change over time? and how?
4. Tell me how you got through the abuse?
 - *What helped you get through the episodes of violence?
5. How have _____ helped or did not help you stop or leave your partner?
 - *friends
 - *family
 - *church
 - * How were you treated?
6. How have the _____ have helped or hindered you in ending the abuse?
 - *police
 - *legal system
 - *shelters
 - *hotlines
 - *therapist
 - *health care provider
 - *support groups
 - * How were you treated?
7. How has being Latina affected your ability to end an abusive partner?
8. Is there anything else you would like to add that helped you ending your situation?

9. Demographic information

a. Age: _____

b. Place of Birth: _____

Years living in country of origin: _____

Years living in U.S. _____

c. Primary Language: _____

d. Mother's birthplace: _____

e. Father's birthplace: _____

f. Marital Status: Single _____ Separated _____

Living with partner _____ Divorced _____

Married _____

g. Number of Children: _____

Please list: son/daughter age

1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____

h. Last grade completed:

Elementary _____ Junior High _____

High School _____ Years of College _____

i. Do you work? _____ if yes, how many hours? _____

j. How long did you live with your partner?

k. How long has it been since you separated or left you your partner? _____

l. Were you ever treated for injuries as a result of the abuse by your partner?

* How were you treated by health care personnel?

Appendix F

Formato de la Entrevista

1. ¿Cómo logró llegar aquí a la Casa de Refugios?
2. ¿En que momento usted decidió dejar a su compañero?
 - *¿Cuándo empezó usted a pensar que quería acabar la violencia en su vida?
 - *¿Cuáles fueron algunas de sus razones para dejar a su compañero?
 - *¿Cómo empezó el abuso (la violencia) en su relación?
3. ¿Qué es lo que pensó que estaba sucediendo cuando el abuso empezó?
 - *¿Cómo cambio con el tiempo? ¿En qué forma?
4. ¿Dígame como logró usted vivir con la violencia?
 - *¿Qué fue lo que la ayudó a sobrevivir el abuso?
5. ¿Cómo le ayudó _____ a dejar o no dejar a su compañero?
 - *amigos, compadres
 - *personas de la iglesia
 - *enfermera, doctor, trabajadora social
 - * ¿Cómo la trataron?
 - *familiares
 - *consejeros
6. ¿Cómo le ayudó _____ a acabar o no acabar el abuso?
 - *la policía
 - *el sistema legal
 - *refugios
 - *teléfono de emergencia abierto 24 horas.
 - *terapeutas
 - *equipo médico
 - *grupo de apoyo
 - * ¿Cómo la trataron?
7. Como mujer Latina, ¿cuáles han sido las dificultades para acabar con la violencia en su vida?
8. ¿Hay algo más que quiera añadir que le ayudó para terminar con su situación?

9. Información Demográfica

a. Edad _____

b. Lugar de Nacimiento _____

¿Cuántos años vivió en su país de origen? _____

¿Cuántos años ha vivido en los Estados Unidos? _____

c. Idioma Natal _____

d. Lugar de Nacimiento de:

Madre _____ Padre _____

e. Condición Marital:

Soltera _____ Separada _____

Viviendo con un compañero _____

Casada _____ Años _____ Divorciada _____

f. Número de Hijos: _____

<u>Sexo</u>	<u>Edad</u>	<u>Viviendo con usted</u>
-------------	-------------	---------------------------

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

g. ¿Cuántos años ha ido a la escuela? _____

h. ¿Está trabajando? _____ Horas por semana _____

i. ¿Cuántos años vivió usted con su compañero que la maltrataba?

j. ¿Cuánto tiempo hace que has dejado a su esposo (compañero) que la maltrataba?

k. ¿Ha tenido que recibir atención médica debido a los golpes que recibió de su esposo (compañero)?

*¿Cómo la trataron los médicos y enfermeras?

Appendix G

YOU ARE INVITED

TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF LATINA WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. THERE IS A NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF LATINA WOMEN WHO HAVE ENDED AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP. THIS INFORMATION WILL PROVIDE VALUABLE INFORMATION FOR THE PLANNING OF SERVICES FOR LATINA WOMEN TRYING TO END AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY OR WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL NANCY ROMIG AT:

562-6718

Appendix G

ESTAS INVITADA

A PARTICIPAR EN UN PROYECTO SOBRE LA EXPERENCIA DE MUJERES LATINAS CON LA VIOLENCIA DOMESTICA EN SU VIDA. EXISTE LA NECESIDAD DE SABER MAS ACERCA DE ESTE TEMA. ESTA INFORMACION SERA UTILIZADA PARA AYUDAR A LA MUJER LATINA QUE ESTA TRATANDO DE ACABAR CON LA VIOLENCIA EN SU VIDA. SI TE INTERESA PARTICIPAR EN ESTE PROYECTO O DESEAS MAS INFORMACION PUEDES LLAMAR A NANCY ROMIG

TELEFONO: 562-6718



Appendix H

November 15, 1995

Philip Y. Hahn School of Nursing
University of San Diego
Alcala Park
San Diego, Ca. 92110

To Whom It May Concern:

Nancy A. Coffin-Romig, D.N.Sc. (c) has permission to conduct her research at the San Diego YWCA from July 1995 through completion of her project.

She may use space available to conduct interviews, and, if necessary, may access charts via the computer banks.

It is understood that all of the interviews will be strictly confidential and the identity of each participant will not be revealed. Ms. Coffin-Romig has informed us that the purpose of her study will be to investigate the experience of Latina women in ending violence in their lives. She will be interviewing formerly battered Latinas or women who are/or have ended a battering relationship.

We are looking forward to working with Ms. Coffin-Romig during this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Jackie Love-Baker
Coordinator, Legal Adovocacy Program
YWCA Division of Domestic Violence Services

1012 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 239-0355
FAX (619) 233-8545

CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
4848 Seminole Drive
San Diego, CA 92115-4240
(619) 583-3821

10125 Azuaga Street
San Diego, CA 92129
(619) 538-8580
FAX: (619) 538-8582

5040 Logan Avenue
San Diego, CA 92113
(619) 263-6633

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION
Battered Women's Svcs.
1012 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 239-2342
FAX: (619) 233-8545

Legal Support Services
(619) 239-2341

Crisis Hotline
(619) 234-3164

Creative Visitation
(619) 544-0212

Counseling Services
D.V. Treatment Program
2550 Garnet Avenue
San Diego, CA 92109-3817
(619) 270-4504
FAX: (619) 270-4502

RESIDENCE TWIN
WOMEN IN TRANSITION
1012 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 239-0355
FAX: (619) 233-8545

YOUTH SERVICES
3604 Beyer Boulevard
San Ysidro, CA 92173-1930
(619) 428-5797
FAX: (619) 428-5797



A United Way Member Agency

Funded in Part by the
County of San Diego



February 16, 1996

To Whom It May Concern:

Nancy A. Coffin-Romig has developed a proposal that is integrally related to the function of Libre! Services for Women and Children, and seeks to pursue research that will enhance our ability to assist Latina victims of domestic violence.

One of the primary reasons that Libre! was established by the Community Resource Center and funded by the California State Department of Health Services is to serve this previously disregarded population of abused women and children. At least one half of the residents in our thirty-bed emergency shelter are Latino, and in need of specialized services that are responsive to their cultural origins. Ms. Coffin-Romig's research promises to give us a greater understanding of, and resultant tools to, provide both prevention and intervention in the cycle of family violence among this population.

Libre! will be able to provide Ms. Coffin-Romig with statistical data about our population, individual clients to interview in confidentiality about their experiences, and bilingual/bicultural staff to share their observations. We fully support her proposed endeavor, and look forward to working with Ms. Coffin-Romig.

Sincerely,

Yve Skeet
Program Director
Libre! Services for Women and Children

Administrative Office
Second Street
Encinitas, California 92024
Telephone: (619) 753-1155
Fax: (619) 753-1152

Thrift Stores
General Management
P.O. Box 321251
Encinitas, California 92023
Telephone: (619) 753-1225
Fax: (619) 753-1251

Encinitas Social Services
655 Second Street
Encinitas, California 92024
Telephone: (619) 753-3350
Fax: (619) 753-1252

Carlsbad Social Services
3138 Roosevelt St., Suite H
Carlsbad, California 92008
Telephone: (619) 729-9300
Fax: (619) 729-9399

Transitional Housing
P.O. Box 230952
Encinitas, California 92023
Telephone: (619) 632-9956
Fax: (619) 753-0252

Libre! Services for
Women and Children
P.O. Box 234294
Encinitas, California 92023
Telephone: (619) 842-6644
Fax: (619) 842-6637
24-Hour Domestic Violence
Hotline: (619) 633-1111



CENTER FOR COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS
formerly Center for Women's Studies and Services

128

February 27, 1996

Philip Y. Hahn School of Nursing
University of San Diego
Alcala Park
San Diego, CA 92110

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is support of Nancy Coffin-Romig research project that will investigate the experience of Latina women in ending abusive relationships.

Ms. Romig's research shows that domestic violence is a problem among Latinos with few studies completed on the experience of abuse among Hispanics. She will also research the role cultural beliefs and values play in ending an abusive relationship.

As part of Ms. Romig's project, present and former Latina clients of Project Safehouse will be interviewed with confidentiality of each strictly maintained. These interviews will be conducted on and off the shelter premises.

The Center for Community Solutions supports and approves of Ms. Romig's research project.

Sincerely,

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Laurine Baxter, Manager
Domestic Violence Services

4508 Mission Bay Drive • San Diego, California 92109 • (619) 272-5777



South Bay Community Services

315 4th Avenue, Suite E • Chula Vista • CA 91910 • (619) 420-3620 / FAX (619) 420-8722

March 6, 1996

Philip Y. Hahn School of Nursing
University of San Diego
Alcala Park
San Diego, CA 92110

To Whom It May Concern:

Nancy A. Coffin-Romig, D.N.S.C. (c) has permission to conduct her research at South Bay Community Services, beginning February, 1996 through completion of her project. She may use space available to conduct interviews, and if necessary, may speak with agency counselors with proper releases from the client.

It is understood that all of the interviews will be strictly confidential and the identity of each participant will not be revealed. Ms. Coffin-Romig has informed us that the purpose of her study will be to investigate the experience of Latino women in ending violence in their lives. She will be interviewing formerly battered Latino women who are or have ended a battering relationship.

We are looking forward to working with Ms. Coffin-Romig during this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Pam Wright
Director of Family Wellbeing & Self Sufficiency

PW/lb

Supported in part by

