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**Social support for women who are abused
in heterosexual relationships**

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**A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of Psychology
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Doctor of Philosophy at the
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ABSTRACT

Previous studies of social support for abused women have reported both supportive and unsupportive responses from friends and relatives to disclosures of abuse. Little attention has been paid to factors that influence such support. The present study examined influences on social support for abused women and on how it was evaluated. Of particular interest was the impact of the confidants' experiences of abuse. Other potential influences included the abused women's and their confidants' attributions for the abuse, the confidants' attitude toward abuse and loyalty to the abusive partner, the prior relationship history of the confidants and the abused women, and the abused women's beliefs about help-seeking. Three hundred and six female undergraduates completed extensive surveys assessing their experiences of abuse, disclosure, and social support, as well as their experiences with other women's disclosures of abuse and their responses. Factors influencing social support and the evaluation of support were identified through regression analyses. When women disclose abuse that was verbal in nature, the tendency toward unsupportive responses increased if their chosen confidant had experienced more severe abuse. This finding suggests that the disparity in experiences of abuse has deleterious effects on social support for abused women. Moreover, the shared experiences of abuse do not necessarily facilitate supportive responses to disclosures. Other impediments to effective social support included the confidants' loyalty to women's abusive partners and a history of conflict with the confidants. Confidants' and women's attributions for their abuse also influenced the evaluation of support. Suggestions for future studies of

social support for abused women and for interventions based on the findings of the present study are presented.

**This is dedicated to Mom and Dad,
for your endless love and support.**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Researchers studying violence against women in intimate relationships have recently begun to consider the importance of women's informal social networks in helping them cope with the effects of abuse. Battered women often seek support from friends or relatives instead of turning to professionals (e.g., Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; Pirog-Good & Stets, 1989). A number of studies have documented the responses women receive to disclosures of abuse, but few have addressed factors that influence these responses and their effectiveness.

The physical and psychological abuse of women is widespread in the context of intimate heterosexual relationships. A recent Canadian study (DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993) of women undergraduates found that 22% reported physical abuse in a dating relationship in the prior year, and that 35% had experienced abuse at some point in their lives. Physical abuse from male partners ranged from slapping to threats with weapons. The same study found that the rate at which women experienced psychological abuse by their partners--including insults, threats, and other attempts to demean them--was 79% in the prior year and 86% in their lifetime. Other studies of university and college students have reported similar rates (Gelles & Straus, 1988; Gryl, Stith, & Bird, 1991; Hornung, McCullough, & Sugimoto, 1981; Lane & Gwartney-Gibbs, 1985; Rouse, Breen & Howell, 1988; Smith, 1987; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1989; Stets & Straus, 1989).

Physical and psychological abuse produce serious consequences for women, including injuries, depression, guilt, anger, confusion, low self-esteem, and low sense of personal control over their lives (Dobash & Dobash, 1988; Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Henton, Cate, Koval, Lloyd, & Christopher, 1983; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983; Nurius, Furrey, & Berliner, 1992; Trimpey, 1989). In addition to these damaging consequences, abusive males often attempt to protect the relationship by limiting their partners' other social contacts, thereby creating an atmosphere of isolation and emotional dependency (Gamache, 1991).

An excerpt from an interview with a battered woman illustrates her feelings of isolation:

You live in a world of pain, in isolation, on the verge of death, in terror, and when you get numb enough not to care whether you live or die you are experiencing the only grace God is going to send your way. . . . Your neighbours hear you screaming. They do nothing. . . . They send you back. They say it's your fault or you like it or they deny it's happening. Your family believes you belong with your husband. . . . You begin to feel you don't exist. . . . You cannot talk to anyone because they will not help you and if you do talk, the man who is battering you will hurt you more. . . . I'm upset by the phony mourning for Lisa Steinberg--the hypocritical sentimentality of a society that would not really mind her being beaten to death once she was an adult. . . . Why is it alright to hurt adult women? (Dworkin, 1989, p. 238)

The deleterious consequences of abuse on women's physical and emotional well-being highlight the need to find ways to help women recover from the devastating effects of abuse. Services are available to assist women who are abused by their intimate partners, including shelters, individual counselling, and support groups. Unfortunately, many abused women do not make use of these services. More commonly, women turn to their friends or family members (e.g., Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; Pirog-Good & Stets, 1989). Indeed, most feminists argue that the best place for women to seek help is from other women (NiCarthy, Merriam, & Coffman, 1984). For example, Walker (1979) argued that the "natural" support systems of women should be strengthened to help them cope with the effects of abuse. Kelly (1996) asserted that women's families, neighborhoods, and communities know about abuse long before professional services are informed, and that professional services cannot meet the needs of the many women who experience abuse.

Relatively little research has examined women's attempts to seek help from their social network or the consequences of such attempts. Once a woman has taken the risk of sharing the experience with a friend or relative, what responses does she typically receive? How do friends' attitudes about abuse and relationships influence their responses? On one hand, the behaviour of those she tells may be supportive. On the other hand, their behaviour may perpetuate the damaging effects of the violence she has experienced. How do battered women feel about the responses they receive upon disclosure of the abuse? The following discussion of relevant theory and research is framed in terms of these issues.

The literature on violence against women offers a few insights into social support for battered women. In order to develop a more comprehensive conception of the potential influences on this process, however, it is also useful to borrow from theory and research on helping and social support. Abuse has not been discussed in these areas, but some general principles derived from the research may be applicable to the present study. Relevant research published in the literature on violence will be noted as such.

In order to educate communities about how to provide support to abused women, the most effective types of social support have to be identified, as do factors that facilitate helpful responses to women. Facets of this process include factors within the woman herself, aspects of the abuse, and the characteristics of those with whom she shares her experience, or their relationship (Sarason, Pierce, & Sarason, 1990). Consideration of such factors could provide for a better understanding of abused women's help-seeking efforts (Dutton, 1996).

The focus of this dissertation is on heterosexual couples. Issues of abuse in gay and lesbian couples are different and cannot be incorporated into a discussion of abuse in heterosexual couples (Kelly, 1996; Levy & Lobel, 1991). The present study considers factors that facilitate helpful responses to women who have been abused by intimate partners. Practical applications of the results include increasing awareness about the needs of battered women for social support. Efforts such as educational campaigns in schools and universities and other community awareness programs could be shaped by the results of the present study. For example, these efforts could educate

people about how to help friends and relatives who are abused, thereby producing more sensitive and helpful social networks for battered women.

It is important to educate individuals who form part of the informal support network of abused women about violence and its consequences for survivors of abuse including issues of blame for the abuse and survivors' sense of control. Social support for battered women is more effective if the support provider manages her own feelings about the abuse, including her anger and desire to take control of the situation (Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993). The present study expands on earlier work by exploring responses to disclosures of abuse in more detail, and by examining predictors of various responses. The choice of likely predictors was informed from research on social support for other types of problems.

Conceptualizations of Social Support

Social support can be defined as "social transactions that are perceived by the recipient or intended by the provider to facilitate coping in everyday life, and especially in response to stressful situations" (Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason, 1990, p. 173). Because not all social support is experienced as such by the recipient, researchers in the area refer to offers of help as "support attempts." There have been three main conceptualizations of social support put forth in the literature: the network approach, enacted or received support, and perceived support.

The "network" approach dominated early research on social support. This approach focuses on the structure, size, and density of an individual's social network, which is also referred to as the individual's degree of social integration (Burleson,

Albrecht, Goldsmith, & Sarason, 1994; Buunk & Hoorens, 1992; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1994). Studies have found that network characteristics are only weakly associated with the availability or adequacy of social support and health-related outcomes; not all social ties are helpful. It is also necessary to consider the quality and meaning of the social relationships (Buunk, Taylor, Collins, VanYperen, & Dakof, 1994).

The "enacted or received support" perspective considers the actual receipt of supportive acts, based on the recipient's accounts. There is often a lack of agreement between the recipient's and the provider's estimation of how much support was offered; providers usually report that they offered more support than the recipient reports receiving (Buunk & Hoorens, 1992; Sarason et al., 1990, 1994). Some researchers assert that enacted support is a confounded mixture of support availability, the recipient's apparent coping skills, and the severity of the recipient's stress as perceived by the provider (Sarason et al., 1990).

The third perspective on social support--perceived support--focuses on the recipient's cognitive appraisal of the support attempt or her perception of the availability and adequacy of social support. The correspondence between enacted and perceived support is not always clear. Perceived support is often described in terms of several types or functions of support (Burlinson et al., 1994; Cutrona, Suhr, & MacFarlane, 1990; Sarason et al., 1990, 1994). There is a great deal of consensus in the literature on these functions, though labels vary. The five functions are informational, tangible, emotional, esteem, and network support. Informational support

involves providing information about the stressor itself or how to deal with it. Tangible support consists of the provision of goods or services needed to cope with the stress. The communication of love and caring represents emotional support, and the communication of respect and confidence in the abilities of the person in crisis is esteem support. Finally, network support involves communicating a sense of belonging to a group with interests and concerns similar to those of the individual in distress (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992; Cutrona et al., 1990; Sarason et al., 1994). The functional approach assumes that for social support to be most effective, the specific function offered must match the type of stressor. For example, an uncontrollable stressor is better served with emotional support as opposed to informational or tangible support (Cutrona & Russell, 1990; Sarason et al., 1994).

The literature to be reviewed regarding social support for abused women represents all three perspectives. There are examples of studies of the network characteristics of battered women, the enacted support they report, and their perceptions of the adequacy of the support they receive, which is sometimes described at the functional level.

Utility of Social Comparison Theory in Research on Support for Abused Women

Social comparison theory is relevant in discussions of social support in general, and in discussions of support for abused women in particular. The general tenets of this theory will be presented and links between the theory and social support theory will be highlighted. The role of social comparison theory will be discussed with

respect to studies of potential influences on social support for abused women (e.g., the similarity of the abused woman and her confidant).

Festinger (1954) developed social comparison theory in order to explain how individuals evaluate their own psychological characteristics (e.g., abilities, opinions, feelings), which do not have objective standards as referents for comparison. Rather, we must rely on each other as referents for comparison (thus social comparison). Two motives or goals for social comparison have been identified: self-evaluation and self-enhancement (Wills, 1987; Wood, 1989). If the goal is self-evaluation, we seek the most accurate evaluation possible, whereas if we are motivated to self-enhance, we opt for the most favourable self-evaluation in order to boost our self-esteem.

Circumstances determine the goal, which, in turn, influences the choice of referent for comparison (Wood, 1989). If accurate self-evaluation is desired, the best comparison referent is a person similar on the characteristic under evaluation. By contrast, the goal of self-enhancement is better served by comparing to someone who is inferior on the characteristic under evaluation (i.e., downward comparison).

Social comparison activity is important in coping with stressful life events, but only recently has social comparison theory been addressed in the coping literature. Downward social comparisons have been found to be commonly used by individuals under stress (Taylor, Buunk, & Aspinwall, 1990). More specifically, Buunk and Hoorens (1992) argued that social comparison theory is a useful theoretical perspective for social support. Social comparison is integral to social support. For example, telling someone in distress that you once had the same problem and how you coped

with it is a form of social support. These statements would be most effective for the recipient if the support provider is a similar person whose advice could be particularly useful because of the shared experience. Individuals in distress are faced with two tasks: to regulate their emotions and to obtain information about how to solve the problem. Social comparison contributes to both of these tasks. Individuals can compare their emotional responses to those in similar situations and observe others' coping strategies to learn how to solve the problem (Taylor et al., 1990).

Social comparison theory can also explain instances of negative effects of social support. If the stressor entails strong emotions, embarrassment, or social disapproval, the involvement of other people can worsen the stress. This effect can include increases in the negative perceptions of the stressful situation through discussion of the stressor with others, which exemplifies the group polarization process (Buunk & Hoorens, 1992).

Additional aspects of social comparison theory and research will be discussed later. The next section reviews research to date regarding disclosure of experiences of abuse and the responses that abused women have received.

Disclosure of Abuse

If a woman chooses to disclose her experience of abuse in hopes of mobilizing social support, she may elect to disclose the abuse to formal or professional sources of support or to members of her informal social network (i.e., to friends or relatives). A number of studies of intimate violence have reported the frequency with which women disclose to formal and informal sources of social support (Bergman, 1992; Burcky,

Reuterman, & Kopsky, 1988; Henton et al., 1983; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; Pirog-Good & Stets, 1989; Roscoe & Kelsey, 1986). These studies suggest that women are more likely to tell a friend or family member than a counselor or legal official. For example, at least 60% of abused high school or college students will tell a friend about the violence, and anywhere from 10 to 40% will tell a family member, whereas far fewer (usually less than 10%) will tell a counsellor or the police (e.g., Bergman, 1992; Henton et al., 1983). Relatively few women go to shelters for battered women (Gelles & Straus, 1988). Rates of disclosure in random community samples have not been documented to date. Because women in abusive relationships are more likely to tell informal sources, the focus of the present investigation was on interactions in informal social networks.

Social Support following Disclosure

A variety of responses can follow a disclosure of abuse. These consist of various types of social support, some of which are actually unsupportive or avoidant. Relevant studies (Bowker, 1984; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; McAuslan & Gottlieb, 1993; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983) have frequently reported both supportive and unsupportive responses.

As noted, isolation of the woman from her social ties by the abusive male is a common component of abuse in intimate relationships. The abusive male purposefully restricts his partner's access to her friends and family to isolate her and protect the relationship (Gamache, 1991). The members of her network may increase this isolation by consciously or unconsciously ignoring the abuse in the relationship or the

resulting stress the woman suffers. If friends or relatives are approached for support, they often pressure the woman to do something about the abuse but ignore both the difficulty that abused women face when they try to leave their partners and their inability to stop the partners' violence (Pence & Shepard, 1988). They may also disregard her loyalty to him and her fear of further violence. Friends and relatives may even imply that she is to blame for the abuse and that she is responsible for making the relationship better. They may even encourage her to stay with him and to make the relationship work at all costs (Gamache, 1991; NiCarthy et al., 1984).

Bowker (1984) conducted interviews with abused women regarding their experiences seeking support from their informal network. The abused women reported that they often sought help from their families. The most common type of support from the family came in the form of material aid or direct services, including the provision of shelter. These women were generally satisfied with the help they received from family members. In a few cases, however, abused women were turned away by their families when they sought help, being told that they deserved the abuse. Indeed, Bowker reported a few instances where family members actually witnessed violent incidents and failed to intervene.

In some cases, the women interviewed by Bowker disclosed the abuse to friends. Again, friends offered material aid or direct services to the abused women, who rated their friends' responses as very helpful. Their friends offered them strong interpersonal support that helped them to rebuild their self-confidence. This assistance

was cited by the women as a necessary prerequisite for any further actions taken to stop the violence.

In another study, McAuslan and Gottlieb (1993) interviewed a small sample of battered women in a shelter about their experiences with disclosure and social support. These women reported that emotional support and practical assistance from members of their social network were most helpful to them. Unwanted advice and questioning the woman's decisions were typically considered to be unhelpful.

A recent study of young women in violent dating relationships (Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993) also examined disclosures of abuse, the ensuing responses, and the women's satisfaction with those responses. The researchers noted that the responses often shape the meanings women assign to the abuse and their coping strategies. Such responses fall along a continuum from those that preserve the patriarchal status quo to those that resist it. Examples of the former include any endorsement of the man's use of violence against an intimate partner. Examples of the latter include reassuring the abused woman that she is not to blame for the abuse and that the abuser is responsible for the violence.

Mahlstedt and Keeny (1993) raised some issues specific to young women in dating relationships. Women in their adolescent and young adult years are struggling to achieve independence from their parents, which could influence their disclosure of problems in dating relationships. The researchers examined patterns of disclosure and responses, including the respondents' feelings about the reactions of those to whom they disclosed. The women reported that they most commonly told friends about

abuse in a dating relationship, followed by sisters and then by mothers. They were most satisfied with the responses of friends and professionals. Fathers gave the least satisfactory responses. The typical responses offered by the confidants included listening, giving helpful advice, and getting angry with the abuser. Open-ended questions about the usefulness of these responses indicated that understanding and emotional support were by far the most welcome and the most helpful. Advice from the support provider was a delicate issue. If the provider listened to the woman first and then offered some advice that did not reflect an attempt to take control of the situation, women found it more helpful than if the advice came first with no attention to her feelings or expressed needs. Women experienced the provider's anger at the abuser and excessive advice as insinuating that they were to blame for the abuse. By contrast, if anger at the abuser was expressed in a way that did not blame her or pressure her to take some action, women found it supportive.

The responses of members of a woman's informal support network to disclosure of abuse can influence her emotional well-being and willingness to continue to seek help. For example, abused women who receive avoidant responses from their informal support network are more depressed than women who receive supportive responses (Mitchell & Hodson, 1983). In addition, being able to spend time with supportive friends apart from the abuser is associated with a greater sense of personal control and higher levels of self-esteem.

Predictors of Social Support for Abused Women

There is a good chance that an assaulted woman will receive supportive and helpful responses when she discloses her experiences of abuse, and that these responses can have significant consequences for her psychological adjustment (Bowker, 1984; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; McAuslan & Gottlieb, 1993). The possibility of helping battered women cope with the effects of abuse points to the importance of examining factors that could positively influence the responses abused women receive from their confidants. The person to whom an abused woman discloses will hereafter be referred to as the confidant because this person may or may not provide social support, and thus "support provider" may not be an accurate term. Several factors have been identified that may play such a role. These factors have been placed in four categories: (a) characteristics of the abused woman, (b) the nature of the abuse, (c) characteristics of the confidant, and (d) the relationship between the abused woman and the confidant.

Characteristics of the abused woman

The research on help-seeking by abused women has not addressed the issue of whether particular characteristics of the abused woman influence the response she receives from her informal network. Nonetheless, the social support literature suggests that particular characteristics of the abused woman may affect the response she receives.

The abused woman's beliefs about violence in relationships could affect her evaluation of the response she receives upon disclosure. It is possible, for example,

that if she does not perceive her situation as a crisis and the person she tells appears alarmed by her experiences and concerned for her safety, she may feel that the confidant is overreacting and overprotective and may withdraw as a result. The abused woman's attributions of responsibility for her abuse could also affect her evaluation of the support she receives upon disclosure. Issues of blame figure heavily in the minds of abused women (Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993).

Social support researchers have developed the concept of network orientation, which represents an individual's attitude toward accessing social support. A positive orientation is characterized by an openness to receiving help and a positive view of interpersonal support, whereas a negative orientation embodies the opposite view (Vaux, Burda, & Stewart, 1986). If a woman has a negative network orientation, she is less likely to disclose her experiences of abuse or to seek help from her social network; if she discloses, she may resent attempts to offer help. Those with a positive network orientation tend to evaluate social support attempts more favourably (Barrera & Baca, 1990; Vaux & Wood, 1987).

Characteristics of the abuse

Particular aspects of the woman's relationship with the abusive partner are likely to affect her willingness to disclose her experiences of violence and the response she receives. Battered women are more likely to disclose when the violence becomes severe (Gelles & Straus, 1988). Nonetheless, the severity of violence is positively associated with the likelihood of avoidant responses from friends (Mitchell & Hodson, 1983). When there is a high level of violence, the abused woman's social contacts

may be reduced or friends may be more reluctant to become involved. As a result, women who are most in need may be the most likely to disclose but least likely to receive a supportive response, either because these women have no one to approach for support or because those approached are reluctant to offer support.

Because Mitchell and Hodson (1983) surveyed women residing in shelters, the experiences of these women may not generalize to others who experience violence. In addition, the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) was used to assess the severity of abuse. Numerous criticisms have been lodged against this measure, and one of its principal problems is its categorization of certain acts of violence as more severe than others without assessing the physical injury or emotional harm to the victim (Smith, 1994). Smith (1987) found that a number of the incidents coded as less severe on the CTS needed to be recategorized as more severe. Hence, these issues need to be re-examined using a measure of abuse that better assesses severity, preferably with a larger and more representative sample.

Research on social support suggests that the duration of a problem influences the form of social support provided by the social network. The form of support offered may depend on whether the person in need is involved in an acutely stressful situation or a chronic one. If a stressor is long-lasting, its resolution may be in question. Chronically stressful situations (e.g., long term abuse) demand different forms of support to effectively meet the needs of the person in distress. Such situations can deplete available sources of support or lead to ineffective forms of support (Eckenrode & Wethington, 1990). In contrast, studies with battered women

have found that if the violent behaviour began quite recently, the woman may believe it will soon cease and that help is not required (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). As the duration of abuse lengthens, the woman begins to doubt herself and her relationships with others. Effective support can mitigate this process; unsupportive responses can make matters worse (Kelly, 1996).

It would be reasonable to hypothesize, then, that if a woman has been involved in an abusive relationship for an extended period of time, the type of support that is most beneficial to her will differ from that which might most benefit other abused women. Specifically, if a woman has often sought support previously, she may receive less, or less helpful, support as time goes on, which could reinforce her sense of isolation and reduce the likelihood that she will terminate the abusive relationship. These issues have not yet been examined in research with abused women.

Characteristics of the confidant

The response that an abused woman receives upon disclosure depends to a large extent on the person to whom she discloses. Social support researchers have noted that sociocultural and life-experience similarity between the recipient and provider predicts more effective social support. Indeed, individuals with similar life experience are in a unique position to offer effective social support (Wortman & Lehman, 1985). These individuals may be less likely to feel anxious when the person in crisis expresses distress because they are more likely to understand the experience. They may also be less likely to hurry the person in crisis through recovery. Some helping researchers assert that help is often sought from similar others because it is

less threatening to discuss personal problems with someone who has had comparable experiences (Medvene, 1992). Nonetheless, based on their research with reactions to aid, Fisher, Goff, Nadler and Chinsky (1988) proposed that help from a similar person can be threatening if the individual in distress feels that the provider has succeeded where they have failed. In these cases, the social comparison may make the person in distress feel inferior.

Based on social comparison theory and the popularity of self-help groups comprised of people who share similar problems (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous), Thoits (1986) argued that both sociocultural and life-experience similarity allow the confidant to empathize with the person in distress, which is important for effective social support. If the person in distress perceives the confidant's experiences to be similar, the support offered will be more easily accepted. In addition, a confidant who is socioculturally similar will offer suggestions that are more applicable to the life experience of the person in distress. Offers of support from dissimilar others can be perceived negatively by the person in distress, and thus be ineffective or even harmful. If the woman in crisis feels that the confidant does not understand her situation because of ignorance or inexperience, the confidant's advice may appear to trivialize her problems (Wortman & Lehman, 1985), which could create resentment and reduce the effectiveness of the support attempts.

The effect of similarity on recipients' reactions to social support may depend on the individual's choice of particular social comparisons and her motives for those comparisons. It seems clear that similarity represents one piece of an elaborate puzzle

of factors that influence the mobilization and effectiveness of social support in personal relationships. Previous studies that identified the benefits of similarity were performed in natural settings such as support groups (e.g., Thoits, 1986), which would be similar to the situation where a woman discloses abuse to a friend or relative. By contrast, much of the research performed in laboratories with relative strangers concluded that similarity could be detrimental.

The original formulation of social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) included the similarity hypothesis, which stated that a comparison referent who is similar on the characteristic under evaluation is maximally informative for self-evaluation. If the goal for social comparison is self-enhancement, however, the choice of referent varies with the characteristic under evaluation. If the characteristic is an undesirable trait, the individual may feel better if the referent is similarly flawed. If the characteristic is desirable, a comparison with a dissimilar and inferior referent is self-enhancing and may be preferred for that reason (Wood, 1989).

The outcome of the social comparison is also dependent on other aspects of the characteristic under evaluation. A downward comparison (i.e., with an inferior referent) can lead to two possible conclusions. It may indicate to the individual that he or she is not doing as poorly as others are, or it could lead to the conclusion that the situation could get worse. The choice of conclusions can depend on the stability of the stressor. On one hand, if the stressor can be alleviated, the individual may take comfort in a downward comparison. On the other hand, if the stressor is not easily resolved, the downward social comparison may lead the individual to fear that the

situation will worsen. Similarly, if the individual has little control over the stressor, downward comparisons can be threatening.

It may not always be possible to identify a similar or inferior referent in one's social environment. If a person is suddenly confronted with someone who is under similar stress, this situation represents an essentially forced social comparison. The impact of such a comparison may be greater if there is a close relationship between the person in distress and the support provider (Taylor et al., 1990; Wood & Taylor, 1991).

Although social comparison with someone who is similar and performing better is assumed to be threatening to the self-esteem of the individual seeking comparison, upward comparisons are sometimes preferred (Medvene, 1992). Contact with others with similar problems may be helpful when the stressor makes the individual feel deviant in some way. Exposure to others with the same problem reduces feelings of deviance. For example, many survivors of rape find support groups to be very beneficial (Gibbons & Gerrard, 1991). Perhaps the perceived benefits outweigh the potential threats to one's self-esteem that can surface from comparisons with individuals with similar problems who may be performing better. These referents may be perceived as offering opportunities for reciprocal disclosure and support (Medvene, 1992).

The impact of the social comparison depends on the motive (self-evaluation versus self-enhancement), the controllability and desirability of the dimension under evaluation, and several other factors including the individual's self-esteem and the

self-relevance of the characteristic under evaluation (Gibbons & Gerrard, 1991; Taylor et al., 1990; Wood & Taylor, 1991). Thus, it may not always be possible to predict the effect of a comparison with a similar person.

Feminist researchers and service providers have long argued for the importance of similar life experiences in providing support to battered women (NiCarthy et al., 1984; Ridington, 1978; Rodriguez, 1988). They argue that the staff of battered women's shelters should be similar in sociocultural background and life experiences. Some shelters have survivors of intimate violence as staff members in order to increase empathy and trust and to provide role models for residents. The similarity with the staff reduces battered women's sense of isolation and self-blame, and shows them that the abuse is not just an individual problem but rather a social and political one. Similarity of social class and life experience contributes to the success of shelters because the similarities help to blur class and status boundaries (Rodriguez, 1988). Based on experiences with shelter support groups, Davis and Srinivasan (1995) argued that participation in support groups for battered women is essential to reduce self-blame among women who have experienced abuse. Support groups can validate a woman's feelings and experiences, provide her with emotional support, and teach her specific coping strategies that others have adopted in similar situations.

Other studies of women in shelters have noted some hazards when support comes from other abused women (Henderson, 1995). Specifically, residents often want to help each other because they feel they are in the best position to do so based on their shared experience. The women in shelters can be in a vulnerable emotional

state, and when offering support to other residents they may have certain expectations about that process (e.g., a need to feel they can be of help). If the recipient does not respond as expected to the offer of support, the shelter residents could become very upset because their attempts have failed. Such interpersonal dynamics may be a detriment to relationships among residents in the shelter. This is not always necessarily the outcome, but the vulnerable emotional states of the shelter residents can lead to this reaction. It would be informative to examine social support as a function of the similarity of the abused woman and her chosen confidant in terms of their history of abuse.

The gender of the confidant has repeatedly been noted as a significant influence on the response to support-seeking attempts. A national study on help-seeking after a crisis revealed that women were 30% more likely than men to help others after a crisis. Other studies have found that women have a greater propensity to involve themselves in helping others with their problems (Kessler, McLeod, & Wethington, 1985). Furthermore, women prefer talking to other women about their problems, particularly those involving relationships (Barbee, Gulley, & Cunningham, 1990). The stereotype that women are more helpful and nurturant than men may lead to the assumption that women will be better able and more willing to provide support to a person in distress. Cutrona, Cohen, and Igram (1990) further suggested that recipients may evaluate the quality of support from men and women differently in some situations as a result of these stereotypes. Regardless of whether there is any

truth to the stereotype that women are more supportive, such an expectation may influence the recipient's view of the confidant's response.

Many studies of disclosure by battered women have failed to report the gender of the confidant, particularly when it is a friend. Bowker (1984) found that 20% of his sample told a sister, and 43% told their mother, whereas only 8% told their father and 11% disclosed to their brother. Approximately half had told a friend, but the gender breakdown was not given. Mahlstedt and Keeny (1993) reported that 80% of their sample had told a friend (no gender reported), 47% told a sister, and 43% told their mother; 30% told a brother and only 15% told their father. In both studies, participants had usually told more than one person. These studies suggest that women are more commonly chosen as a confidant.

The confidant's attributions regarding the problem can also influence her willingness to offer support to the person in distress (Barbee et al., 1990, 1993; Dunst & Trivette, 1988; Fisher et al., 1988; Schwarzer & Weiner, 1991). Barbee (1990) found that support providers who perceived that the problem was uncontrollable were more sympathetic, empathetic, and more willing to offer some form of social support to the person in distress. On the other hand, if the provider attributed the problem to controllable causes, he or she would often dismiss the problem or avoid the person in distress.

Dunst and Trivette (1988) described a model that incorporated attributions for the solution to the problem as well as for the problem itself. The model was originally developed by Brickman et al. (1982). The provider may believe, for

example, that the person in distress did not cause the problem to arise but is still responsible for finding a solution. Depending on the provider's attributions regarding the problem and the solution, he or she may offer no support or, alternatively, forms of support that are very controlling and could induce feelings of dependency in the recipient. Schwarzer and Weiner (1991) tested a version of this model in a study using hypothetical scenarios describing various social stigmas, in which they manipulated the controllability of the problem as well as the coping efforts of the individual with the problem. Respondents were asked to indicate the type and degree of social support they would offer to a person in that scenario. Individuals who were considered to be responsible for the onset of their problem were blamed for it and were less likely to receive support, as measured by the participants' statements regarding how they would react to this individual in the hypothetical scenarios. Similarly, those who were not perceived to be actively coping with the problem induced more anger, more stress, and were less likely to receive support. Thus, it seems that the confidant's attributions for the problem and its solution are both highly influential in predicting support to the person in crisis. Because blame is an important issue for abused women (Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993), its role in the provision of social support to abused women should be examined.

The confidant's attitudes toward abuse could also affect her response to an abused woman's disclosure. A support provider's beliefs about the problem at hand have been cited as influencing social support (Fisher et al., 1988). If the confidant believes that the abuse of women in intimate relationships is acceptable, she may

dismiss or trivialize abused women's experiences, encourage them to tolerate it, or blame them for it.

Research on violence against women has identified that the confidant's feelings toward the abusive partner could influence the response to the disclosure (Stacey & Shupe, 1983). If the confidant feels loyal to the abusive partner, she may dismiss the woman's disclosure. This result was obtained with women in battered women's shelters reporting about their experiences with disclosure and their perception of their confidant's loyalty to their partner, and it may not generalize to other abused women not residing in shelters.

Characteristics of the relationship with the potential confidant

Closer relationships are often characterized by unsolicited offers of support that can be more effective because they reduce the embarrassment of having to ask for help. In addition, data from studies of helping behaviour suggest that closer, communal relationships are characterized by more helping than less intimate relationships (Clark, Powell, Ouellette, & Milberg, 1987). Other studies have found that individuals are more satisfied with social support during crises when they have an intimate relationship with the provider (Hobfoll, Nadler, & Lieberman, 1986).

The history of support provision in the relationship with the confidant may determine the abused woman's reaction to social support attempts. The recipient may react negatively to current support attempts if the confidant has previously been unwilling or unable to provide effective social support (Leatham & Duck, 1990). The

perception of support in this relationship has been found to predict the evaluation of current support attempts in laboratory studies (Pierce, 1994).

A history of conflict in the relationship between the abused woman and the confidant may also affect the outcome of social support attempts (Shinn, Lehmann, & Wong, 1984). The role of the history of support or conflict with a confidant in determining social support for abused women has not been examined. The studies of conflict have used a variety of samples and helping situations, including pregnant teens and widows, and may not have resembled the typical context of a battered woman seeking social support (Barrera, 1981; Rook, 1984, as cited in Shinn et al., 1984).

Critique of Social Support Studies with Abused Women

Studies of responses to disclosure by abused women have used different types of samples, which could substantially affect their results. Many studies drew their participants from battered women's shelters (e.g., McAuslan & Gottlieb, 1993; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983; Pence & Shepard, 1988; Stacey & Shupe, 1983). The experiences of women in shelters may not generalize to the larger number of abused women who do not go to shelters. Bowker (1984) recruited women through ads in the media, surveying married and cohabiting women who had experienced violence in a relationship, but the violence had to have terminated at least a year prior to the study. Again, this may be a unique sample. Mahlstedt and Keeny (1993) surveyed university students and found an abnormally low incidence of violence; only 13% of their large sample reported abuse and were included in their analysis. These researchers stated that the nature of the study may have discouraged many abused women from

participating, thus producing the lower than expected incidence. Hence, the representativeness of their sample is in question.

The measures used in these studies also varied a great deal. Some were based on interviews with women involved in shelter programs and some on surveys of university or community samples. Moreover, specific operational definitions of supportive behaviours were often poor. For example, Mitchell and Hodson (1983) defined the availability of social support as the number of times a woman had contact with friends or relatives in the last month before she left her abusive partner to go to a shelter. This particular characterization of social support and the time frame may not accurately reflect a woman's sense of available support from her social network. The woman's behaviour in the month before entering a battered women's shelter may not represent her typical pattern. This study also used items the researchers felt reflected empathic versus avoidant responses. Nonetheless, the validity of their items is in question, particularly those assessing empathic responses. These were: "were sympathetic," "urged you to talk about how you felt," and "met with you more often." The first two could reflect empathic responses but the third does not necessarily assess empathy. It would be useful to replicate this study with a better measure.

Bowker (1984) asked formerly battered women whether supportive responses had contributed to ending the violence in their relationships. The participants rated the help they received as more or less "successful" in contributing to the cessation of violence. This is an important potential outcome of social support for battered women but it is not the only significant outcome they may experience. Furthermore, the

cessation of abuse would be affected by many other factors aside from the supportive responses of the woman's friends or relatives, but these were not studied. Social desirability may have caused the participants to focus on their friends' and family's responses as being responsible for ending the abuse. Bowker and Maurer (1986) raised the possibility that women who rate these sources of help as very successful might be those who would be more likely to use those sources of help in the first place. It may have been more useful to ask how the responses had contributed to other important outcomes, including the woman's sense of self-worth, her coping ability, and her views of the alternatives to the abusive situation.

Mahlstedt and Keeny (1993) categorized responses to battered women according to three mutually exclusive dimensions: supportive, unhelpful, and directive. Supportive behaviours included listening and nurturing. Examples of unhelpful behaviours were trivializing the situation and wanting to seek revenge on the abusive partner. Giving advice and making decisions for the woman were included in the directive category. The total number of behaviours in each category (ranging from 4 to 6) were used as indices of the network response. These researchers did not present any clear evidence that the participants would have placed specific responses in these categories. Rather, they used qualitative data from open-ended questions to make judgements as to what was helpful. Corroboration of their categories in these qualitative data was not reported. The analysis of the three response category scores (supportive, helpful, and directive) with such limited range would have limited statistical power. Finally, the participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the

response they received on a 4-point scale; relatively high mean scores are suggestive of a ceiling effect.

Even after considering these methodological flaws, the common themes running through the results of these studies and the literature on therapy with battered women imply that the findings are of value. The themes regarding the importance of nondirective, emotional social support and tangible assistance for abused women run through all of these sources. Nonetheless, replication with larger non-shelter samples and more reliable and valid measures is in order.

Rationale for the Present Study

The abuse of women by their intimate partners is a very common and profoundly damaging experience. Studies of the disclosure of abuse indicate that women who choose to disclose usually tell a friend or relative (Bergman, 1992; Burcky et al., 1988; Henton et al., 1983; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; Pirog-Good & Stets, 1989; Roscoe & Kelsey, 1986). These confidants can play a critical role in providing emotional support and assistance. It would be useful for research with abused women to examine factors that enhance the likelihood of effective social support. The few studies of battered women that have examined the impact of social support from friends and relatives suggest that effective support can improve their psychological well-being (Bowker, 1984; Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; McAuslan & Gottlieb, 1993; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983).

Abused women have reported a variety of responses to disclosure, ranging from encouragement to make the relationship work with the abusive partner and blaming

her for the abuse, to emotional support and assistance that communicates to her that she is not to blame and offers her alternatives to the abusive situation (e.g., Bowker, 1984; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993). Several factors determine these responses. Few studies have examined potential predictors of support for battered women. This is surprising when one considers the potential positive impact of social support from friends and relatives, and the possibility that a greater understanding of the process would increase public awareness of the needs of abused women.

The present study examines several potential determinants of the responses abused women receive upon disclosure of their experiences. The predictors of support for abused women were drawn from relatively few studies of social support for battered women and on other investigations of helping and social support. Several potential predictors of social support and the evaluation of support were investigated to determine if and how they are involved in this process. Some researchers (Dunkel-Schetter, Folkman, & Lazarus, 1987; Fisher et al., 1988) have pointed out the need to examine causes and correlates of social support and not just its consequences. These could include characteristics of the recipient, the provider, and the crisis situation. Understanding the causes and correlates of support could be useful in designing interventions to help mobilize social support for assaulted women. Furthermore, social support researchers are acknowledging the need to develop comprehensive models and to adopt interactional frameworks for social support that include these various factors (Sarason et al., 1990). The predictors of social support for abused women (reviewed

above) were categorized as characteristics of the abused woman, the abuse, the confidant, and the relationship with the confidant.

A specific innovation in the present study is the incorporation of the confidant's perspective on her response to an abused woman's disclosure, although actual dyads were not used. Sarason et al. (1990) argued for the importance of including the support provider's perspective in social support research. The omission of the providers' perspective has been noted as a limitation of most social support studies because the actual behaviour or intentions of providers are often unknown (Dunkel-Schetter et al., 1987). An ideal study of social support for abused women would use actual dyads, consisting of the battered woman and the support provider. Because it is virtually impossible to recruit actual dyads, this was not considered practical for the present study. In this study, both abused women who have disclosed and women who have been confidants to abused women were identified, and their perspectives on the support process were assessed. This approach can be considered a step forward in understanding the dynamics of social support for battered women.

A convenience sample of female university students was used in the present study. This sample is admittedly limited in generalizability, but the results of the present study still add substantially to the existing literature regarding social support for battered women. Moreover, this sample improves on research using shelter samples, which have limited generalizability (Mitchell & Hodson, 1983). The sample for the present study included a reasonable age range by recruiting from all year levels and from day and evening classes. The decision to recruit only women was based on

previous studies that found that abused women primarily tell female friends and relatives (Bowker, 1984; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993). Indeed, a pilot study revealed that 89% of women who disclosed experiences of abuse did so with a female (see Appendix Pilot).

The measures used also represent an improvement on the existing research. The abuse measure chosen for this study (Measure of Wife Abuse; Rodenburg & Fantuzzo, 1993) allows for a more valid index of severity of abuse, as well as providing scores for four separate types of abuse. The total severity score as well as the abuse type index (verbal abuse only versus other types of abuse) were the focus for the analyses in the present study. This index, though crude, was thought to represent a common dichotomy in the perception of abuse, whereby verbal abuse is considered to be less serious than other forms of abuse. The measures used to assess the confidants' support attempt and the abused women's evaluation of that support attempt were much more comprehensive than those utilized in earlier work. Indeed, both were more detailed and multidimensional than those used in the studies reviewed previously. The support measure was based on coding schemes for social support (Barbee, 1990; Cutrona, Suhr, & McFarlane, 1990) and on previous studies of social support for abused women (Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993). The evaluation measures were developed and tested in a previous study of social support for problems in relationships (modified from Goldsmith & Parks, 1990), and assessed aspects of the support attempt that were relevant to the present study (e.g., effects on the woman's

perceptions of the problem, and of the relationship with the confidant and with her partner).

The measures used to assess the influences on social support for abused women were largely published scales that have been shown to be relevant to social support in general, or in some cases to abuse specifically. The measure of attributions for abuse assesses both origin and solution attributions for abuse, both of which are important in reactions to abused women (Sugarman & Cohn, 1986). For participants' attributions for other women's experiences of abuse, the attributions were aggregated into helping models proposed by Brickman et al. (1982). Based on research by Sugarman and Cohn (1986), a specific contrast between two such models (i.e., moral versus compensatory) that could be relevant in reactions to abused women was examined. The moral model is characterized by attributions of responsibility for both the origin and solution to the abuse, whereas the compensatory model entails attribution of responsibility for only the solution. This allowed for a more complex analysis of participants' attributions as confidants to abused women.

To assess participants' attitudes toward abuse, a relatively new measure of attitudes toward abuse in dating relationships was used (Byers, 1995). The content of this measure was deemed more relevant than other measures that often refer to marital situations (e.g., Inventory of Beliefs about Wife Beating; Saunders, Lynch, Grayson, & Linz, 1987). The measure used in the present study included attitudes toward psychological (including verbal) and physical abuse. The attitude toward physical abuse was of particular interest, as it is likely less acceptable to most people than

psychological abuse. The prior relationship between the participant and her confidant was assessed with the Quality of Relationship History scale (Pierce et al., 1991). This scale has been found to predict social support and the evaluation of support. The participants' views of help-seeking were assessed with the Network Orientation Scale (Vaux et al. 1986), which has been shown to predict the evaluation of social support. Finally, the confidants' loyalty to the women's abusive partners was measured with a single item developed for the present study.

The role of the confidant's experiences of abuse in her responses to other women's disclosures of abuse, and in the evaluation of those responses, was the primary focus of the present study. Several additional factors were examined in the regression models to examine their influence as well.

From the perspective of the abused woman, the study focused on the effect of the woman's attributions for her abuse, her prior relationship with the confidant, her network orientation, and the confidant's loyalty to the woman's abusive partner on the social support she receives and her evaluation of that support. From the confidant's perspective, the role of the confidants' abuse in influencing their response to the other women's disclosures and the subsequent evaluation was examined. In addition, the study was designed to identify variables that may moderate the effect of the confidant's abuse on social support, including the confidant's attitudes toward abuse, attributions for abuse, and loyalty to the abusive partner. The severity of abuse of the woman disclosing was also included as it was predicted to be associated with the social support offered to her and her evaluation of it.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses regarding the effects of the confidants' abuse and other factors on social support and the evaluation of that support are quite general due to the exploratory nature of this study

Confidants' abuse

a) The confidant's experience of abuse as measured by scores on a modified version of the Measure of Wife Abuse (Rodenburg & Fantuzzo, 1993) will affect the social support offered (as identified by a support checklist based on measures used by Barbee, 1990; Cutrona et al. 1990; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993) and the evaluation of that support (measures modified from those used by Goldsmith & Parks, 1990). If the confidant has experienced abuse, she may be in a better position to provide empathy. If the abused woman knows that her confidant has experienced abuse, she may evaluate the response more favourably. The discussion could strengthen the relationship between the abused woman and her confidant and help the abused woman to consider alternatives to the abusive relationship.

Characteristics of the abused woman

b) The abused woman's attitude toward abuse (Attitudes toward Dating Violence; Byers, 1995) may affect her evaluation of the confidant's response to her disclosure. More specifically, it is expected that if women have an accepting view of abuse (high score), they may feel their confidants are overreacting and evaluate their support attempts less favourably.

c) The abused woman's attributions for her own abuse (Origin and Solution Attributions for Abuse; Sugarman & Cohn, 1986) may affect her evaluation of the response she receives upon disclosure. If the woman blames herself for origin of the abuse, she may not evaluate the confidant's responses favourably, particularly if the confidant blames the abusive partner for the origin of the abuse.

d) The abused woman's network orientation (Network Orientation Scale; Vaux et al., 1986) may affect her evaluation of the confidant's response. A negative network orientation (high score) is expected to be associated with more negative evaluations of the support attempts.

Characteristics of the abuse

e) More severe abuse experiences (high scores on Measure of Wife Abuse; Rodenburg & Fantuzzo, 1993) may lead to a less supportive response from the confidant and a more negative evaluation of the response.

f) The duration of the abuse (single item developed for present study) may affect social support for abused women, but no specific predictions can be offered.

Characteristics of the confidant

g) The confidant's attributions for the woman's abuse (Origin and Solution Attributions for Abuse; Sugarman & Cohn, 1986) may affect her response and her evaluation of her support attempt. The particular orientation of blaming women for both the origin and solution for their abuse (high scores) is expected to be associated with less supportive behaviours and less favourable evaluations of the support attempts.

h) The confidant's attitude toward abuse (Attitude toward Dating Violence; Byers, 1995) may influence her support attempt and her evaluation of her response. If she is accepting of abuse (high score), she may dismiss or trivialize the woman's experiences and may evaluate her own response less favourably as a result.

i) If the confidant is loyal to the woman's abusive partner (single item developed for the present study), she may be less supportive and evaluate her support attempt more negatively.

Characteristics of the relationship with the confidant

j) The relationship with the confidant (Quality of Relationships Inventory; Pierce et al., 1991) may influence the confidant's response and the abused woman's evaluation of the response. If they have had a close and supportive relationship (high scores on depth and support subscales) in the past, the confidant's response is more likely to be supportive and evaluated positively. The opposite could occur if they have a history of conflict (high score on conflict subscale).

Moderators of confidants' abuse: Confidants' perspective

Three potential moderators of the effect of the confidant's abuse were examined in the analyses from the perspective of the confidant.

k) The confidant's attitude toward abuse (Attitude toward Dating Violence; Byers, 1995) may moderate the effect of the confidant's abuse on her response to the abused woman's disclosure. If the confidants' abuse has a positive effect on social support for abused women, this effect could be reduced if the confidants also have an accepting view of abuse (high score).

l) The confidant's attributions for the woman's abuse (Origin and Solution Attributions for Abuse; Sugarman & Cohn, 1986) may moderate the effect of the confidant's abuse on the response to her disclosure. If the confidants' abuse has a positive effect on social support for abused women, this effect could be reduced if the confidants also blame the women for their experiences of abuse.

m) The confidant's loyalty to the abused woman's partner (single item developed for present study) may moderate the effect of the confidant's experience of abuse on the response to her disclosure. If the confidants' abuse has a positive effect on social support for abused women, this effect could be reduced if the confidants also feel some loyalty toward the women's abusive partners (high score).

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

Three hundred and six female undergraduate students from the University of Windsor were recruited from undergraduate courses (at all levels) in several departments with permission by the instructors to visit the class. Women of any relationship status and sexual orientation were invited to participate. The mean age of the participants was 23.02 years ($SD=5.89$, range 17-51 years). Seventy-five percent of the women were Caucasian, 10.2% were Afro-Canadian, 11.5% Asian, and 3.7% Other, including Native and Latin. Thirty percent were in their first year of university, 30% in second, 31.8% in third and fourth years, and 8.6% had obtained a college or university degree previously and were returning to university for further training.

Potential participants were offered bonus points, if the instructor provided them, or raffle tickets for two cash prizes of \$50 each. In accordance with the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association, the participants read and signed a comprehensive consent form (Appendix A) prior to participation.

Measures

The measures were presented to participants in four major sections. The first section was completed by all participants, the second section only by those who experienced abuse, the third by those who had been confidants to abused women, and the fourth was the filler measure for those for whom the second and third sections did not apply.

Demographic variables

Several items were developed to assess various demographic characteristics of the participants, the people to whom the participants had disclosed experiences of abuse, and the women who had disclosed abuse to the participants. The demographic items about the participants appear in Appendix B, for the person to whom the participant disclosed in Appendix C, and for women who disclosed to participants in Appendix D. In each case, age, education level, ethnic background, religious affiliation, relationship status, and sexual orientation were assessed.

Measure of Wife Abuse

A relatively new measure developed by Rodenburg and Fantuzzo (1993), the Measure of Wife Abuse (MWA), was used to assess the severity and frequency of psychological, sexual, verbal, and physical abuse by male partners that the participants had experienced (Appendix E). This measure is comprised of four subscales: physical, verbal, psychological, and sexual abuse. The items assess the frequency of abuse by asking respondents how many times in the past 6 months (or last 6 months of a previous relationship) their partner engaged in various behaviours. The severity of abuse is measured by asking how much the respondent was hurt or upset by those behaviours (4-point scale ranging from never hurt or upset to often hurt or upset). For each subscale, a frequency score, a severity score, and a multiplicative composite of the two can be computed. The scale authors used the severity scores to examine the reliability and validity of the MWA.

The reliability of the MWA was calculated based on responses of a sample of battered women residing in a shelter. Rodenburg and Fantuzzo (1993) reported internal consistency coefficients of .81, .94, .73, and .83 for the physical, psychological, sexual, and verbal abuse subscales, respectively. The reliability of the total scale was .93. Concurrent validity of the physical and verbal subscales was established, as significant correlations were found between the MWA subscale and the violence and verbal abuse subscales of the Conflict Tactics Scale. No comparable measure of sexual abuse of partners was available to check the validity of the sexual abuse subscale.

A pilot study was performed to test the reliability of a short form of the MWA. The short form was developed by aggregating similar items on the full scale. The short forms of the physical (10 items), sexual (12 items), and psychological (9 items) subscales had satisfactory reliabilities of .79, .78, and .65, respectively (See Appendix Pilot). The verbal subscale was used in the original form (15 items), as the reliability of the short form was substantially lower than it was for the long form. For the present study, if the participants experienced abuse in more than one relationship, they were instructed to describe the relationship that "most affected them" to encourage them to convey their most abusive relationship.

Following the administration of the MWA, participants were asked how long the relationship had gone on before the incidents started, and how long the abuse lasted. The respondents were asked to categorize the relationship they had with the

abusive partner as casual dating, exclusive dating, engaged, married, or cohabiting (see Appendix E).

To assess the confidants' abuse experiences, participants who had disclosed experiences of abuse used a checklist version of the MWA (Appendix F), if the confidant was female. This checklist was a simplified version of the MWA. The respondents were also asked to describe the relationship of the confidant to her abusive partner, using the same categories described above (e.g., casual dating, exclusive dating, etc). Two additional items assessed the frequency and severity of the abuse in the confidants' relationship. The participants were asked if their confidants had been abused before the participants disclosed their own experiences of abuse and if the participants knew about the confidants' abuse at the time of their own disclosure (Appendix F).

Respondents who reported that they had provided support to abused women were asked to respond to a different checklist version of the MWA (Appendix G). They were asked to read through a checklist of the behaviours from the four subscales of the MWA. After reviewing the checklist, they were asked if they had known a female friend, relative, or acquaintance who had experienced any of those behaviours in an intimate relationship. If they had, they were asked to respond with reference to the first woman who disclosed to them. They were then asked to check each of the behaviours that the woman they knew had experienced, to the best of their knowledge. These respondents were also asked what type of relationship the woman had with her abusive partner (e.g., casual dating, exclusive dating, engaged, cohabiting, married).

In addition, two items assessed the frequency and severity of the abuse in their friend or relative's relationship (see Appendix G). For each version of the abuse measure, an additional index was computed, the abuse type index. The abuse was coded as verbal only, versus other types of abuse.

Attitude toward dating violence

A new measure developed by Byers (1995) was used to assess participants' attitudes toward physical and psychological abuse by male partners in dating relationships. This measure was selected because the majority of the sample was likely to be young adults who have not yet been married. Other measures of attitudes toward intimate violence often refer to marital situations and children, and thus would not be appropriate for this sample.

Two subscales of Byers' measure were used in the present study: the Attitude toward Male Physical Abuse and the Attitude toward Male Psychological Abuse subscales. There are 15 items on the Attitude toward Male Psychological Abuse subscale that tap the respondents' views on whether it is appropriate for a male to insult, control, or threaten his girlfriend. The Attitude toward Male Physical Abuse subscale (12 items) includes items referring to conditions under which it is acceptable to hit a girlfriend (Appendix H). The items use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Some items are positively keyed and some negatively to avoid response sets. A higher score indicates a more accepting attitude toward dating violence. Based on data collected from a sample of high school students, Byers (1995) reported reliability coefficients of .86 and .85 for the Attitude

toward Psychological and Physical Abuse subscales, respectively. In terms of validity, the subscale scores were found to correlate significantly with each other, as well as with measures of traditional gender role attitudes and with reported abusive behaviour with dating partners. This measure was given to all respondents.

Origin and solution attributions for abuse

This measure was developed by Sugarman and Cohn (1986) to assess attributions of responsibility for the origin of and solution to abuse in a relationship. The items ask the respondent to indicate the degree to which they feel the woman (or man) was responsible for the "problem" and for its solution on a 9-point Likert scale (0=not at all responsible, 8= totally responsible). Additional items assessed perceptions of how much control each have for finding a solution to the "problem" on a 9-point Likert scale (0=no control, 8=total control). Sugarman and Cohn (1986) did not report any reliability or validity information. The respondents were instructed that the "problem" refers to the incidents they reported on the MWA. Both respondents who report experiences of abuse (Appendix I) and the confidants to abused women (Appendix J) were given this measure, with wording appropriate to the context.

Disclosure of abuse

Respondents who report experiences of abuse were asked if they had ever discussed those experiences with a friend, relative, or acquaintance. If they said they had not disclosed the experiences, they were asked to explain why not in an open-ended item. If the respondents reported they had disclosed their experiences of abuse, they were asked to respond to questions with respect to the first disclosure they made.

The respondents were then asked about their relationship with that person (e.g. friend, mother, etc). They were also asked how long the abuse had lasted before they disclosed. Finally, they were asked if they told the confidant about all of the incidents of abuse, and if not, to describe which incidents they disclosed (Appendix K).

Support responses to participants

Responses to disclosures of experiences of abuse were assessed by presenting respondents with a checklist of behaviours (Appendix L). This checklist was derived from the questionnaire developed by Mahsstedt and Keeny (1993). In order to get a more detailed conception of the responses women receive to disclosures of abuse, the checklist provided to the respondents in the present study was substantially larger than that used previously. Specifically, the behaviours on the checklist were drawn from three sources. Several behaviours on the checklist came from a coding scheme for support-intended behaviours developed by Cutrona, Suhr, and MacFarlane (1990), who grouped the behaviours into five categories: esteem support, information support, network support, emotional support, and tangible assistance.

Some additional behaviours were drawn from a typology of support developed by Barbee (1990), who selected behaviours from coping and social support inventories and placed them in a scheme formed by crossing emotion versus problem-focused and approach versus avoidance responses. The behaviours she categorized as Escape (emotion-focused, avoidance) and Dismiss (problem-focused, avoidance) responses were used in the present study. These include ignoring the person in distress or talking about another topic (Escape), and joking about the problem or telling the

person their problem is not serious (Dismiss). Barbee (1990) reported that recipients found escape and dismiss responses to be less supportive than responses that involve approach instead of avoidance; thus, they were included here as examples of unsupportive responses. As further examples of unsupportive responses, some behaviours categorized as unhelpful and directive responses by Mahlstedt and Keeny (1993) were used. Only those that did not appear in either of the other schemes were selected. The "unhelpful" responses were: "was angry with the abusive partner", "wanted to seek revenge", and "saw the woman as a failure". The "directive" responses were: "made decisions for the woman" and "gave her unhelpful advice". These behaviours were characterized as unhelpful by the respondents in Mahlstedt and Keeny's (1993) study, and were included here to further assess the negative aspects of responses to disclosures of abuse. The respondents were asked to indicate which behaviours in the checklist they received. A supportive behaviour score was obtained by summing the number of supportive behaviours that were offered, and an unsupportive behaviour score was obtained by summing the number of unsupportive behaviours.

Outcomes of disclosure

Participants who have disclosed abuse were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the responses they received. Mahlstedt and Keeny (1993) asked women who had been abused in dating relationships to rate their satisfaction with responses to disclosures of the abuse, using a 4-point Likert scale that ranged from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. Responses were very skewed in their sample. This is a common

method of assessing support satisfaction (Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason, 1983), but most support inventories use a 6- or 7-point Likert scale of satisfaction. Thus, the scale used by Mahlstedt and Keeny was modified to a 7-point scale ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied.

Respondents were also asked open-ended questions about the support they received, derived from Mahlstedt and Keeny's (1993) questionnaire about disclosure of abuse. Specifically, the participants were asked what kind of support they wanted most and how the person they told could have been more supportive (Appendix L).

Respondents who had disclosed experiences of abuse were asked about the outcomes of that process using items developed by Goldsmith and Parks (1990). The outcome items included both an evaluation of the response received and consideration of the effects of the disclosure on the relationship with the confidant and with the abusive partner (Appendix M). Goldsmith and Parks (1990) listed four dimensions of the evaluation of the interaction, derived from factor analyses of a pool of items, each using the same 9-point Likert scale of agreement. The first factor, comprised of seven items, assesses the sense of satisfaction that resulted from an enhanced sense of certainty and control. The second dimension taps the degree of negative behaviour of either party; six items form this factor. The third factor, comprised of four items, assesses the extent to which a negative impression of the partner or romantic relationship had been created. The fourth and final aspect of the evaluation is the extent to which the problem had worsened as a result of seeking social support (4 items).

Four items asked about the impact of the conversation on the participant's relationship with the confidant, and four items assessed the effects on the relationship between the participant and her abusive partner. Each item used the same nine-point Likert scale of agreement (see Appendix M).

Beliefs about social support

The Network Orientation Scale (NOS; Vaux et al., 1986) assesses a person's expectations about how useful their social network is in helping them cope with problems. Respondents can have a positive or a negative network orientation. The scale contains 20 items using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with a mixture of positively worded and negatively worded items (Appendix N). Items are scored so that a high score reflects a negative network orientation. Vaux et al. (1986) report reliabilities ranging from .60 to .88 in various samples. Scores on the NOS were significantly correlated with specific aspects of social support behaviours and personality characteristics. Specifically, a negative network orientation was associated with less perceived availability of social support and less perceived support. A negative network orientation was also associated with lower scores on scales of affiliation and nurturance and with lower scores on a measure of interpersonal trust. Only those participants who disclosed abuse were given this measure.

Relationship with the confidant

The history of the relationship between the abused woman and the confidant was assessed with the Quality of Relationships Inventory (Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason,

1991). This inventory assesses the degree of support, conflict, and depth of a specific relationship. There are 25 items in total, each using a 4-point Likert scale (ranging from "not at all" to "very much"). The support subscale consists of 7 items, the conflict subscale has 12 items, and the depth subscale has 6 items (Appendix O). These subscales were derived by factor analysis, which confirmed the authors' conceptualization of the items. Pierce et al. (1991) administered the scale to an undergraduate sample who responded regarding their relationship with a friend; reliabilities of the subscales were found to be .85, .91, and .84 for the support, conflict, and depth subscales, respectively. High scores on each subscale indicate a high level of perceived support, conflict, and depth, respectively.

Pierce et al. (1991) examined the validity of the QRI in several ways. First, they found that the correlations among the three QRI subscales were larger when they assessed the same relationship than when assessing different relationships. Second, the QRI scores were significantly correlated with observer ratings of social interactions between the respondent and the designated person for whom they completed the scale (spouses and parents). Observers rated the supportiveness, sensitivity, and conflict during social interactions involving provision of social support or discussion of their relationship; these ratings were significantly related to the QRI subscale scores. Finally, the QRI scores significantly predicted intentions to seek support from a particular person. Only those respondents who had disclosed abuse were given this measure.

Confidant's feelings about the abusive partner

The confidant may have loyalties to the abusive partner that complicate her ability to provide social support. Hence, respondents who disclosed experiences of abuse were asked to indicate how close the confidant was to the abusive partner, whether the two were related, and how loyal the confidant was to the abusive partner at the time of the disclosure. Seven-point Likert scales ranging from "not at all close" to "very close" and "not at all loyal" to "very loyal" were used (Appendix P). Respondents who had been confidants for abused women were asked the same questions as a self-report measure of their feelings toward the abusive partner (Appendix Q)

Participants' experiences with women's disclosures of abuse

Women in the sample who reported that they had been told by other women of experiences of abuse were given a set of items about the disclosure process, again drawn largely from the questionnaire developed by Goldsmith and Parks (1990). They were instructed to respond based on the first time that a woman (friend, relative, or acquaintance) disclosed experiences of abuse to them. They were asked about their relationship with the abused woman (e.g., friend, mother, etc), the duration of the abuse before disclosure (Appendix R), and if the woman who confided in them was also the woman to whom they disclosed experiences of abuse. If they had also experienced abuse, these participants were asked if their own abuse occurred prior to the disclosure by the other women and if the women disclosing to them knew about their experiences of abuse at the time.

Support responses to abused women

Respondents who reported that they had provided support to abused women were given the same checklist of support responses described earlier, with both supportive and unsupportive behaviours included (Appendix S). They were asked to indicate which behaviours they offered. They were also asked open-ended questions about how they might have been more supportive to the women who disclosed abuse to them, and what they believe to be the most beneficial form of support for women in that situation (Appendix S). These participants were given the portion of the outcome items that they could reasonably assess (18 of the 30 items in the self-report outcome measures). The items were reworded to suit their perspective (Appendix T).

Filler measure

In the event that some participants had not experienced abuse or been told by others of experiences of abuse, a filler measure was included to ensure that those women who had experienced abuse would not be embarrassed or singled out because they were taking longer to complete the measures than women who had not. The filler measure consisted of one open-ended question asking if the participant has learned about a woman's experience of abuse indirectly, and if so, to describe the situation and how she dealt with it (Appendix U).

Procedure

Participants were recruited from classes at all levels in several departments of the University of Windsor, including psychology, sociology, business, political science, and history (265 participants from psychology courses and 41 from other departments).

Comparisons of the dependent variables by course (psychology versus other departments) revealed no significant differences (see Appendix V). The researcher informed the classes that the study concerned obtaining social support from friends and relatives for problems in romantic relationships. Women were invited to participate in the study, regardless of their current relationship status or sexual orientation. If the course instructor provided them, two bonus points were offered. Otherwise, raffle tickets for two cash prizes of \$50 each were offered for participation. Sign-up sheets with dates, times, and room locations on the university campus were circulated. The data collection occurred in groups, with the researcher present to answer any questions that arose. Participants were seated separately to ensure their privacy. The participants read and signed a consent form, and kept a copy for themselves. The measures took 20-40 minutes on average to complete, depending on the experiences of the participants. Following completion of the measures, participants were given an information sheet (Appendix A) that described the purposes of the study and summarized the literature to date regarding the social support needs of abused women. Participants were also given a list of community resources (phone numbers and hours of operation) in case further assistance was desired. Confidentiality was maintained by separating consent forms from completed questionnaires. The participants were told that they could receive a summary of the results of the study by mail if they so requested.

The measures were presented in four sections, each on different coloured paper. The first section was completed by all participants, and included demographic items,

the self-report Measure of Wife Abuse, and the Attitudes toward Dating Violence scales. The order of the MWA and the Attitudes toward Dating Violence scales was counterbalanced within this section. Participants who reported experiences of abuse were directed to the second section that included the measures concerning disclosure and responses, attributions for the abuse, and several characteristics of the confidant, including her experiences of abuse, her demographic characteristics, and so on.

The participants were then asked if a woman had ever disclosed abuse to them, and if so, they were asked to complete the third section that asked about the abused woman's experiences, demographic characteristics, the participants' attributions for her abuse, their responses to the disclosure, and the outcome of the support attempt. The order of the second and third sections was counterbalanced, thus forming four possible orders with the counterbalancing within the first section. The paper colour scheme varied with the order of measures. The effect of the order of the sections on all the dependent variables was assessed and proved nonsignificant (see Appendix W). The fourth section was the filler measure that was completed only by participants who had not experienced abuse nor disclosures by abused women.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Of the 306 women in the sample, 15.6% were casually dating, 34.8% were exclusively dating, 3.3% were engaged, 6.6% were married, 10.3% were cohabiting, and 29.4% were not currently in a relationship. Ninety-eight percent of the women were heterosexual, 0.7% lesbian, 0.7% bisexual, and 0.7% indicated they were not sure of their sexual orientation. Forty-seven percent of the women reported that Roman Catholicism was their religious affiliation, 18.7% Protestant, 20% "Other," which included Jewish, Lutheran and Hindu; 14% stated they had no religious affiliation.

Reliability of Measures

The reliability coefficients for the scales are presented in Table X.1 in Appendix X. Among these, the internal consistency of the two attitudes toward abuse scales, the network orientation scale, and the three Quality of Relationship Inventory subscales was satisfactory, with coefficients ranging from .73 to .86. The four subscales and the total scale for the self-report Measure of Wife Abuse also had moderate to high reliability coefficients (.70 to .92). The checklist version of the abuse measure for the participants' confidants had moderate to high reliability for the subscales (.71 to .92). The checklist abuse measure for the women who had disclosed abuse to the participants had good internal consistency (.64 to .85 for subscales, .90 for total).

Revision to Outcome Measures

The items of the six outcome subscales and the general satisfaction rating (completed by participants who had experienced and disclosed abuse) were reduced to three outcome scales through principal components analysis. The items of the six outcome subscales completed by participants who had provided support to abused women (subset of the items from the above scales) were also reduced to three outcome scales through a separate principal components analysis. The principal components analysis used varimax rotation, and initially factors with an eigenvalue over one were requested. Perusal of the factor matrix led to forcing a three-factor solution, which proved to be the most interpretable. Some individual items were recoded so that all items on each factor were scored in the same direction for scale scoring and interpretation purposes.

The factor solution for the outcome measures for participants who experienced and disclosed abuse is presented in Table X.2 in Appendix X. The three factors accounted for 29.7%, 17.8%, and 7.9% of the variance, respectively, for a total of 55.4%. The first factor, entitled Positive Outcome (Self), reflected a positive evaluation of the conversation in terms of gaining a sense of certainty and control of the situation, a positive effect of the conversation on the relationship with the confidant, and the general satisfaction rating. The second factor (Negative about Partner (Self)) consisted of statements that the conversation had created a negative impression of the abusive partner and the woman's relationship with him. If she was still involved with the abusive partner at the time of disclosure, this scale also

assessed whether the conversation had a negative impact on her relationship with him, including the possibility that she might terminate the relationship. The third factor, entitled Negative Outcome (Self), consisted of items describing a negative reaction by the confidant and a negative impact of the conversation on the situation and the relationship with the confidant. The reliability coefficients of the three new outcome subscales were high: .92 for the 11-item Positive Outcome (Self) scale, .91 for the 8-item Negative about Partner (Self) scale, and .84 for the 11-item Negative Outcome (Self) scale. The Positive and Negative Outcome (Self) scales were correlated, as were the Negative about Partner (Self) and Negative (Self) scales. The correlations are presented in Table 1.

The factor solution for the outcome measures for participants who had provided support to abused women is presented in Table X.3 in Appendix X. The factors obtained for the outcomes for participants who were confidants to abused women were similar to those for the participants who disclosed abuse, although they emerged in different orders in the solution. Item 6 ("took too much effort") was dropped as it did not load on any of the three factors. The three factors accounted for 23.3%, 17.6% and 8.9% of the variance, for a total of 49.8%. The first factor, entitled Negative about Partner (Confidant), consisted of the items reflecting a negative impact of the conversation on the relationship with partner including the possibility of termination (if still involved at disclosure) and a negative impression of the partner created during the conversation. The second factor, entitled Positive Outcome (Confidant), consisted of items describing enhanced certainty and control about the situation and a positive

Table 1.

Correlations among Self-report Outcome Subscales.

Subscale	1.	2.	3.
1. Positive Outcome (Self)	---		
2. Negative about Partner Outcome (Self)	.09	---	
3. Negative Outcome (Self)	-.52**	.33*	---

N=122

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

impact on the relationship with the confidant. The third factor, entitled Negative Outcome (Confidant), described negative behaviour by the confidant and a negative effect on the situation. The reliability coefficients of the three new outcome scales were adequate: .76 for the 8-item Negative about Partner scale, .76 for the 5-item Positive Outcome scale, and .66 for the 4-item Negative Outcome scale. The correlations among the outcome subscales from the confidant's perspective are provided in Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics on Scale Scores

The means, standard deviations, and the possible and actual ranges of the attitudinal and confidant relationship history scales are presented in Table X.4 in Appendix X.

Overview of Principal Analyses

The results will be presented separately for the two roles participants could play: (a) as an abused woman who disclosed her experiences, and (b) as the confidant to an abused woman. The breakdown of the sample into the two roles is summarized in Table 3. Specific descriptive statistics, correlational, and regression analyses will be presented for each role.

A series of regression models were computed. To assess bias due to influential cases, Cook's distance was evaluated for each model. Cook's distance never exceeded 1.0, indicating that there were no outliers that overly influenced the regression solutions.

Table 2.

Correlations among Outcome Subscales from the Confidant's Perspective.

Subscale	1.	2.	3.
1. Negative about Partner Outcome (Confidant)	---		
2. Positive Outcome (Confidant)	.04	---	
3. Negative Outcome (Confidant)	.05	-.44**	---

N = 216

*p < .01. **p < .001.

Table 3.

Breakdown of Sample into Two Roles.

Group	<u>N</u>
Total Sample	306
A) Experienced abuse	182
Disclosed	122
Confidant also abused	55
B) Told by other women about abuse	216 ^a
Experienced abuse also	146

^a 100 of these participants had also disclosed abuse.

Participants' Experiences of Abuse

Perusal of the abuse scores and comments on questionnaires led to the decision to exclude some reports of abuse even though items on the abuse measure were endorsed. The decision to exclude a case was made carefully as to not underestimate abuse in the sample. Some participants would comment on the questionnaire that the incident was not at all traumatic, or was pleasurable or consensual activity. Cases where the participants consistently responded that the incidents never upset them were dropped to create a new index of abuse in the sample. For example, a few women reported that their partners had screamed at them (on verbal abuse subscale) or had squeezed their breasts (on sexual abuse subscale), but indicated that these incidents had never upset them. Eighteen cases were dropped for these reasons. Both the original and revised descriptive statistics on the self-report abuse data (severity and frequency scores) are presented in Tables X.5 and X.6 in Appendix X. With the original scoring, 65% of the sample experienced at least one incident of abuse; with the revised version, 59% (N=182) experienced abuse. The revised version was used in further analyses.

Thirty-two percent of the sample reported only verbal abuse, but participants often reported more than one type of abuse. Seventeen percent reported all four types of abuse; 13.7% physical, verbal, and sexual; 12.1% physical and verbal; and 7.1% reported verbal and sexual abuse. The frequencies of the combinations of types of abuse are in Table X.7 in Appendix X.

Other characteristics of the abuse, including its duration and the type of

relationship with the abusive partner, are presented in Table X.8 in Appendix X. For the majority of participants, the abuse began within the first 12-18 months of the relationship and the abusive behaviour lasted less than one year. Most participants were in exclusive dating relationships with the abusive partner. The descriptive statistics for the participants' attributions for their experiences of abuse are presented in Table X.9 in Appendix X. The participants attributed more responsibility to their abusive partners than to themselves for the origin of the abuse, $t(119) = -11.45$, $p < .001$, but less responsibility for its solution, $t(119) = 3.71$, $p < .001$, and attributed less control to their partners over the solution to the abuse, $t(119) = 3.46$, $p < .001$. The participants attributed more responsibility to themselves for the solution to the abuse than for its origin, $t(119) = -10.37$, $p < .001$, and stated that their partners were more responsible for the origin than the solution to the abuse, $t(119) = 5.73$, $p < .001$.

Disclosure of Abuse

Of the 182 participants who reported abuse, 67% disclosed it to a friend or relative (non-professional source of support). Those who did not disclose their experiences offered reasons for their decision. The two most frequently cited reasons were issues of privacy and/or embarrassment, and the feeling that the abuse was not serious or was unimportant. Other less frequently cited reasons were a lack of available social support and fears that the partner would find out she had told.

Eighty percent disclosed to a friend, 7.4% told a sister, 11.5% told their mother, and 1.6% told a more distant relative (e.g., cousin). Fifty-four percent disclosed the abuse immediately after it occurred, 16.4% waited less than 3 months,

and 10.7% waited 4 to 6 months. Nine percent waited until after the relationship with the abusive partner had ended (see Table X.8 in Appendix X). The mean age of the participants at the time of the disclosure was 21.27 ($SD = 4.66$; range 14-40 years).

Ninety-six percent of the confidants chosen by the participants were female. Their mean age at the time of the disclosure was 25.16 ($SD = 10.25$; range 14-65 years). Eighty-one percent were Caucasian, 8.3% Afro-Canadian, 8.3% Asian, and 2.5% were of other ethnic origins. Women generally told women of the same racial group, at least in terms of Caucasian versus women of colour, $\chi^2 (1, N=120) = 69.71$, $p < .001$. Ninety-six percent of Caucasian women disclosed to other Caucasian women, and 79.2% of women of colour told other women of colour. Other demographic characteristics for the confidants are presented in Table X.10 in Appendix X. Five percent of the confidants were related to the abusive partners of the participants.

The participants rated the closeness of their abusive partner to their confidant; the mean rating on a 7-point scale was 3.40 ($SD = 2.00$), with higher scores indicating greater closeness. The mean rating of the confidants' loyalty to the participants' partners on a 7-point scale was 2.66 ($SD = 1.95$), with higher scores indicating greater loyalty.

The participants were asked if they disclosed all of their experiences of abuse to the confidant, and if not, which experiences they did disclose. New severity scores were computed based on what they told the confidant. The descriptive statistics for the "told" abuse scores are presented in Table X.11 in Appendix X. The "told" scores

were used in the correlational and regression analyses to be presented later, because they represented what was being discussed by the participants and their confidants.

Response to Disclosure

The mean number of supportive behaviours received was 9.51 ($SD = 4.60$, range 1-22). The mean number of unsupportive behaviours received was 1.77 ($SD = 1.51$; range 0-7). The most frequently reported supportive behaviours were "gave helpful advice, ideas or suggestions" (83%), "said positive things about me and emphasized my abilities" (66%), and "agreed with my perspective" (65%). The most frequently reported unsupportive behaviours were "got angry with my partner" (52%), "told me my situation was not serious" (17%), and "wanted revenge on my partner" (16%).

The supportive behaviours were subdivided into the five functional types of social support (Sarason et al., 1994). Ninety-four percent received informational support, 92.6% emotional support, 90.9% esteem support, 60.3% network support, and 59.5% tangible support. The participants were asked what form of support they wanted most from the confidant. Eighty-six percent stated they wanted listening, emotional, or esteem support, 5.3% wanted advice (some specified advice after listening), and 3.9% wanted advice from someone with the same experience. Other forms of support listed were tangible aid and a response that did not blame either partner. Participants were also asked how the person they told could have been more supportive. Fifty-eight percent wanted more listening and emotional support, 15.8% wanted less negative affect toward their partner, and 15.8% wanted more advice. A

few women also wanted more tangible support.

Influences on the Response to Disclosure

In order to be able to draw conclusions about the influence of the confidant's experience of abuse on her response to the participant's disclosure, the participants who indicated their confidants had experienced abuse were asked if the confidant's abuse occurred before the conversation. If the confidant had been abused since the disclosure, they were given a score of 0 on the abuse measures for the analyses of influences on the response to disclosure (i.e., they were grouped with those confidants who were not abused¹). Forty-seven percent ($N = 55$) of the confidants had experienced some abuse; 45 of these were abused before the participants' disclosure. Descriptive statistics for the confidants' experiences of abuse (prior to disclosure) are presented in Tables X.12-X.14 in Appendix X.

To examine potential influences on the response to disclosure of abuse, correlations of several variables with supportive and unsupportive scores were obtained. Table 4 provides correlations of the supportive and unsupportive scores with the participants' abuse scores, the duration of the participants' abuse (overall and prior to disclosure), the type of relationship between the participants and their abusive partners (dating/engaged versus married/cohabiting), the three subscales of the Quality of Relationships Inventory for the relationship between the participant and the confidant, the confidant's loyalty and closeness to the participants' abusive partner, and the confidants' abuse scores. An alpha of .01 was used to reduce the likelihood of Type I error due to the number of tests. There were significant positive

Table 4.

Correlations with Supportive and Unsupportive Behaviour Scores

Variable	Supportive	Unsupportive
Participants' abuse^a:		
Physical	.24*	.17
Verbal	.37**	.16
Psychological	.10	.05
Sexual	.08	.15
Total	.36**	.21
Verbal only versus Verbal + other types ^b	.05	.16
Duration of abuse	.14	.16
Duration before disclosure	.06	-.04
Relationship to abusive partner ^c	.09	.12
Participants' network orientation	.08	.16
Participants' origin attribution-partner	.04	.07
Relationship with confidant:		
Social support	.23	-.09
Depth	.10	.04
Conflict	-.13	.37**

(table continues)

Variable	Supportive	Unsupportive
Confidant's closeness to participant's partner	-.03	-.05
Confidant's loyalty to participant's partner	-.21	-.18
Confidants' abuse:		
Physical	.07	-.09
Verbal	.17	.02
Psychological	.11	-.03
Sexual	-.01	.07
Total	.14	.00
Verbal only vs. Verbal + other types	.19	-.09

N = 121

^a using told version. ^bcoded 0= Verbal only, 1= Verbal +other types; "Verbal + other types" includes sexual only, psychological only, and physical only.

^c coded 1=dating/engaged, 2=married/cohabiting.

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$

correlations of the participants' verbal, physical, and total abuse scores (told versions) with the supportive score, indicating that higher scores on these abuse measures were associated with receiving more supportive behaviours. The conflict subscale of the Quality of Relationships Inventory (confidant with participant) was significantly positively correlated with the unsupportive score; thus, if the participants had a history of conflict with the confidant, there tended to be more unsupportive responses by the confidant.

Evaluation of Response

Participants who disclosed abuse were asked what they found most and least helpful about the response they received from the confidant. Eighty-nine percent of the participants rated emotional/esteem support as most helpful, 5.2% rated support from someone with the same experience as most helpful, 4.3% felt tangible support was most beneficial, and 1.7% preferred tangible support. Many participants (35.5%) found anger at their partner, being told to leave him, or confronting him as least helpful. Twenty-three percent reported that the confidant's trivialization or lack of understanding of the situation was unhelpful. Some participants (14.5%) found it unhelpful when the confidant talked about herself or her problems, and 11.3% found the confidant's loyalties to their abusive partner were problematic. The descriptive statistics for the outcome scales that formed the evaluation of the response to disclosure of abuse are presented in Table X.15 in Appendix X.

Influences on Evaluation of Response

To examine potential influences on the evaluation of the response to disclosure, correlations of several variables with the three outcome scales were obtained. Table 5 provides correlations of the outcome scales with participants' abuse scores, the duration of participants' abuse (overall and prior to disclosure), the type of relationship between participants and their abusive partners (dating/engaged versus married/cohabiting), participants' attributions for their abuse, their attitude toward abuse, the three subscales of the Quality of Relationships Inventory for the relationship between the participant and confidant, participants' network orientation, the confidant's loyalty and closeness to the participants' abusive partner, and the confidants' abuse scores. An alpha of .01 was used for significance to reduce the likelihood of Type I error due to the number of tests.

Three of the subscales (physical, verbal, psychological) and the total score for participants' abuse were significantly correlated with the Negative about Partner (Self) outcome score; participants who experienced more abuse tended to rate the confidant's response as being more negative about the abusive partner. The abuse type index for participants' abuse (verbal only versus verbal plus other types) was significantly correlated with the Negative Outcome (Self) score; participants who had experienced more than verbal abuse rated the support they received more negatively. The duration of participants' abuse prior to disclosure was correlated with the Negative about Partner (Self) outcome score; the longer the abuse had gone on before disclosure, the more negative the confidant was about the abusive partner.

Table 5.

Correlations with Outcome (Self-report) Scales

Variable	Positive Outcome	Negative about Partner Outcome	Negative Outcome
Participants' abuse:^a			
Physical	-.05	.33*	.17
Verbal	.11	.29*	.03
Psychological	.06	.39**	.09
Sexual	-.02	.22	.19
Total	.07	.42**	.15
Verbal only vs. Verbal + Other	-.20	.24	.28*
Duration of abuse	-.12	.01	.07
Duration prior to disclosure	-.18	.33*	.15
Attitude toward psychological abuse	-.04	-.17	.22
Attitude toward physical abuse	.02	-.21	.14
Attributions:			
Self - origin	.02	-.27*	.07
Self - solution	.02	.27*	.10
Self - control over solution	.19	.03	-.25*
Partner - origin	-.06	.44**	.22
Partner - solution	-.07	-.38**	-.05
Partner - control over solution	-.04	-.31*	.02

(table continues)

Variable	Positive Outcome	Negative about Partner Outcome	Negative Outcome
Relationship to abusive partner ^f	-.32*	.00	.21
Network orientation ^d	-.25*	.12	.42**
Relationship with confidant:			
Social support	.57**	.15	-.37**
Depth	.34**	.04	-.17
Conflict	-.48**	.03	.45**
Confidants' loyalty to participants' partner	-.13	-.51**	-.01
Confidants' closeness to participants' partner	-.15	-.28*	.10
Confidants' abuse:			
Physical	-.06	.05	.17
Verbal	.01	-.07	.11
Psychological	.03	-.07	.16
Sexual	-.23	-.09	.18
Total	-.06	-.07	.19
Verbal only vs. Verbal + Other	.07	.26	.25
Supportive behaviour	.31*	.29*	.02
Unsupportive behaviour	-.21	.35**	.37**

N = 121 ^a told version. ^b 0= Verbal, 1= Verbal +other types. ^c 1=dating/engaged, 2=married/cohabiting. ^d high score= negative orientation.

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$

If the participants attributed more responsibility to themselves for the origin of the abuse, they tended to rate the response they received as less negative about their partner. If they felt they were more responsible for the solution to the abuse, they often rated the response as more negative about their partner. Participants who attributed more control to themselves for the solution to the abuse tended to score lower on the Negative Outcome (Self) scale. Those who held their abusive partners more responsible for the origin of the abuse often scored higher on the Negative about Partner (Self) outcome scale, whereas if they held the partner more responsible for the solution to the abuse they often scored lower on the Negative about Partner (Self) outcome scale. If they felt their partner had control over the solution to the abuse, they tended to rate the response as less negative about their partner. If the participants were married or cohabiting with the abusive partner, they often scored lower on the Positive Outcome (Self).

Participants with a negative view of social support (network orientation) tended to rate the support they received more negatively. When the participants felt they had a supportive relationship with the confidant in the past, they tended to score higher on the Positive Outcome (Self) and lower on the Negative Outcome (Self). Similarly, there was a significant positive correlation between the depth rating of the relationship with the confidant and the Positive Outcome (Self) scale, indicating that the closer the relationship with the confidant, the more positively the response was rated. If there had been conflict in the relationship with the confidant, participants tended to score lower on the Positive Outcome (Self) scale and higher on the Negative Outcome

(Self). If the participants perceived that their confidant was loyal and close to the abusive partner, they often scored lower on the Negative about Partner (Self) outcome scale (i.e., the discussion was rated as less derogatory about the abusive partner).

Regression Analyses

The regression analyses examined the role of the confidant's experience of abuse in the response to disclosure of abuse and the evaluation of that response. The other predictors were selected based on the hypotheses and based on their simple correlations with the dependent variables. Those variables that were substantially correlated ($r = .3$ or $.4$) with at least one dependent variable were included in the regression analyses. The choice among the six attribution ratings and the three subscales of the Quality of Relationship Inventory was based on the strength of their simple associations with the dependent variables. One predictor in the regressions was not predicted in the hypotheses (type of relationship with the abusive partner). In addition, the interaction of the confidant's total abuse with the participants' abuse type index was not predicted but was discovered in preliminary exploratory analyses. The same set of predictors were used in each model for the sake of consistency, even if some were not significantly correlated with that particular dependent variable. All predictors were entered simultaneously, and thus each predictor is evaluated with all others in the model held constant. Due to the lack of agreement concerning whether to include interactions on the same step as main effects (Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Darlington, 1990), the analyses were run with the interactions on the same step and on their own subsequent step. Both approaches produced the same result, so the analyses

with the interactions on the same step are presented. Once again, if the confidant had been abused since the disclosure, they were included in the nonabused category.

The correlations among the independent variables are presented in Table 6. None were substantial except one correlation of a main effect with its interaction with another variable; thus, multicollinearity was not apparent.

The model for supportive behaviours (Table 7) was not significant ($R^2=.14$, $F(8, 92) = 1.80$, $p > .05$). The model was significant for the unsupportive score ($R^2=.27$, $F(8, 92) = 4.15$, $p < .001$, Table 8). If the participant had a history of conflict with the confidant, there was more unsupportive behaviour. The confidants' total abuse, the participants' abuse type index, and their interaction also significantly predicted unsupportive behaviours. To interpret the interaction, the values for the dichotomous variable (participants' abuse type index) were plugged in to the regression equation to observe the change in slope based on the level of the dichotomous variable (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). The slope for the confidants' total abuse score was .19 when participants experienced verbal abuse only, and -.09 when participants experienced more than verbal abuse. Thus, the effect of the confidant's abuse on unsupportive behaviours depended on the type of abuse the participant (recipient) experienced.

The regression model for the Positive Outcome (Self) (Table 9) accounted for a significant amount of variance ($R^2=.46$, $F(10, 90) = 7.74$, $p < .001$). Conflict with the confidant, participants' network orientation, the participants' type of relationship (dating/engaged versus married/cohabiting) with the abusive partner, and the

Table 6.

Correlations among Independent Variables in Regression Analyses for Participants' Disclosures

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Network Orientation ^a	---									
2. Conflict with Confidant	.24	---								
3. Relation with abusive partner ^b	.03	.18	---							
4. Partner: origin attribution	-.14	-.02	-.12	---						
5. Confidants' loyalty to abusive partner	.02	.09	.07	-.11	---					
6. Confidants' total abuse	-.03	.07	.32**	-.19	.03	---				
7. Participant abuse type index ^c	.13	.11	-.09	.33**	-.04	.04	---			
8. Interaction of 6. and 7.	.06	.11	.25*	-.12	.08	.88**	.32**	---		
9. Supportive behaviour	.08	-.13	.09	.04	-.21	.15	.05	.07	---	
10. Unsupportive behaviour	.16	.37**	.12	.07	-.18	.01	.16	-.04	.34**	---

N = 121 ^aHigh=negative. ^b1=dating;2=married/cohab. ^c0=verbal; 1=verbal+other types; told version. * $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

Table 7.

Regression Analysis on the Supportive Behaviour Score

Variable	b	β	sr^2
Network orientation ^a	.11	.15	.02
Conflict with confidant	-.14	-.16	.02
Relation with abusive partner ^b	.97	.09	.01
Partner: origin attribution	.12	.05	.00
Confidants' loyalty to abusive partner	-.42	-.18	.03
Confidants' total abuse	.58	.52	.04*
Participants' abuse type index ^c	1.38	.15	.01
Interaction	-.55	-.43	.03

$R^2 = .14$

N = 121

Note: Coefficients obtained from complete model.

^aHigh=negative orientation. ^b 1=dating/engaged; 2=married/cohab. ^c 0=verbal abuse only; 1= verbal + other types; told version.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 8.

Regression Analysis on the Unsupportive Behaviour Score

Variable	b	β	sr ²
Network orientation ^a	.02	.09	.01
Conflict with confidant	.10	.35	.12***
Relation with abusive partner ^b	.29	.08	.01
Partner: origin attribution	-.00	-.00	.00
Confidants' loyalty to abusive partner	-.14	-.18	.03
Confidants' total abuse	.19	.53	.04*
Participants' abuse type index ^c	.91	.29	.05*
Interaction	-.28	-.65	.06**

$R^2 = .27***$

N = 121

Note: Coefficients obtained from complete model.

^aHigh=negative orientation. ^b 1=dating/engaged; 2=married/cohab. ^c 0=verbal abuse only; 1= verbal + other types; told version.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 9.

Regression Analysis on the Positive Outcome (Self) Score

Variable	b	β	sr^2
Network orientation ^a	-.40	-.17	.03*
Conflict with confidant	-.61	-.25	.04**
Relation with abusive partner ^b	-10.35	-.30	.08***
Partner: origin attribution	-.82	-.11	.01
Confidants' loyalty to abusive partner	-.29	-.04	.00
Confidants' total abuse	.61	.19	.01
Participants' abuse type index ^c	-1.82	-.06	.00
Interaction	-.90	-.23	.01
Supportive score	1.10	.37	.10***
Unsupportive score	-1.67	-.18	.02 [†]

$R^2 = .46^{**}$

N = 121

Note: Coefficients obtained from complete model.

^aHigh=negative orientation. ^b 1=dating/engaged; 2=married/cohab. ^c 0=verbal abuse only; 1= verbal + other types; told version.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. [†] $p = .06$.

supportive behaviour score significantly predicted the Positive Outcome (Self). If the participant had a history of conflict with the confidant, a negative network orientation, and was married or cohabiting with the abusive partner, she rated the confidant's response less positively. If the confidant had offered more supportive behaviours, the participant rated the response more positively, and the opposite pattern occurred for unsupportive responses (marginally significant).

The model for the Negative about Partner (Self) Outcome (Table 10) explained 50% of the variance, $F(10, 77) = 7.79, p < .001$. Participants' origin attribution to her partner and the confidants' loyalty to that partner significantly predicted this outcome. If participants blamed their partners for the origin of the abuse, they tended to rate the response as more negative about their partner, whereas if the confidant was more loyal to the abusive partner, they tended to rate the response as less negative about the partner.

The model for the Negative Outcome (Self) (Table 11) accounted for a significant amount of variance ($R^2 = .49, F(10, 90) = 8.78, p < .001$). The participants' network orientation, conflict with the confidant, attribution of responsibility for the origin of the abuse to the partner, and unsupportive behaviours as significant predictors. If the participants had a negative network orientation, a history of conflict with the confidant, blamed the partner for the origin of the abuse, and received more unsupportive behaviours, they rated the response to disclosure more negatively.

Table 10.

Regression Analysis on the Negative about Partner Outcome (Self) Score

Variable	b	β	sr ²
Network orientation ^a	.33	.13	.01
Conflict with confidant	-.09	-.03	.00
Relation with abusive partner ^b	2.16	.06	.00
Partner: origin attribution	3.08	.38	.12***
Confidants' loyalty to abusive partner	-3.17	-.41	.15***
Confidants' total abuse	-.17	-.05	.00
Participants' abuse type index ^c	1.62	.05	.00
Interaction	.14	.03	.00
Supportive score	.34	.10	.01
Unsupportive score	1.95	.20	.03 [†]

$R^2 = .50***$

N = 121

Note: Coefficients obtained from complete model.

^aHigh=negative orientation. ^b 1=dating/engaged; 2=married/cohab. ^c 0=verbal abuse only; 1= verbal + other types; told version.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. [†] $p < .06$.

Table 11.

Regression Analysis on the Negative Outcome (Self) Score

Variable	b	β	sr ²
Network orientation ^a	.73	.35	.11***
Conflict with confidant	.49	.22	.03*
Relation with abusive partner ^b	3.71	.12	.01
Partner: origin attribution	2.03	.30	.07***
Confidants' loyalty to abusive partner	-.05	-.01	.00
Confidants' total abuse	-.10	-.03	.00
Participants' abuse type index ^c	.06	.00	.00
Interaction	.99	.28	.01
Supportive score	-.29	-.11	.01
Unsupportive score	2.08	.25	.04**

R² = .49***

N = 121

Note: Coefficients obtained from complete model.

^aHigh=negative orientation. ^b 1=dating/engaged; 2=married/cohab. ^c 0=verbal abuse only; 1= verbal + other types; told version.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001. † p < .06.

Participants' Experience with Other Women's Disclosures of Abuse

Seventy-one percent of participants ($N=216$) had been told by another woman about experiences of abuse. The mean age of the women who disclosed to participants was 22.32 ($SD = 6.83$; range 12-53 years). The women were 78.9% Caucasian, 9.4% Afro-Canadian, 7.5% Asian, and 4.2% were from other ethnic groups. The participants were generally told about abuse by women of the same racial group, at least in terms of Caucasian versus women of colour, $\chi^2 (1, N=210) = 139.86, p < .001$. Ninety-three percent of Caucasian women told Caucasian participants about abuse, and 93.2% of women of colour told other women of colour. Other demographic characteristics for the women who disclosed abuse to the participants are presented in Table X.16 in Appendix X. The mean age of participants when the women disclosed to them was 20.80 ($SD = 5.41$; range 12-50 years). Of the women who disclosed abuse to participants, eighty-two percent were friends, 6.5% sisters, 3.7% mothers, 6.5% other female relatives, and 1.4% acquaintances.

The descriptive statistics for the abuse scores and abuse-related variables for the women who disclosed to participants are in Tables X.17-X.19 in Appendix X. The mean rating of closeness of the participants to the abusive partners of the women who disclosed to them was 2.44 ($SD = 1.92$; range 1-7) and the mean loyalty rating was 2.04 ($SD = 1.73$; range 1 -7). Nine percent of the participants were related to the abusive partner of the women who disclosed to them.

The descriptive statistics for the participants' attribution ratings for the abuse experienced by the women who disclosed to them are in Table X.20 in Appendix X.

The participants attributed more responsibility to the abusive partners than to the women who disclosed to them for the origin of the abuse, $t(214) = -23.46, p < .001$, but less responsibility for its solution, $t(214) = 3.47, p < .01$. There was not a significant difference in the attribution of control to the woman versus the abusive partner over the solution to the abuse, $t(214) = 1.03, p > .05$. The participants attributed more responsibility to the women for the solution to the abuse than for its origin, $t(214) = -12.32, p < .001$, and stated that the abusive partners were more responsible for the origin than the solution to the abuse, $t(214) = 12.51, p < .001$. These findings were similar to the patterns in participants' attributions for their own experiences of abuse.

Response to Other Women's Disclosures of Abuse

The mean supportive and unsupportive behaviour scores were 10.93 ($SD = 5.24$; range 1-25) and 1.23 ($SD = 1.05$; range 0-6). The most frequently endorsed supportive behaviours were "gave helpful advice, ideas or suggestions" (86%), "said positive things about her or emphasized her abilities" (78%), and "expressed willingness to help her" (73%). The most frequently endorsed unsupportive behaviours were "got angry with her partner" (59%), "wanted to seek revenge on her partner" (22%), and "talked about another topic" (11%). The supportive behaviours were subdivided into the five types (or functions) of social support. Ninety-four percent gave informational support, 97.2% emotional support, 90.7% esteem support, 57% network support, and 56.7% tangible support. The participants were asked what form of support they felt would be most beneficial for a person in this situation.

Forty-eight percent of participants felt that emotional or esteem support was most beneficial, 38% felt that women experiencing abuse need professional counselling or legal intervention, 9.4% reported responses that are typically deemed unsupportive by abused women, including telling them to leave their partner or getting angry with the partner, and 3.3% stated that abused women should talk to women with similar experiences. A few women stated that tangible support was most beneficial.

Influences on Response to Disclosure of Abuse to Participants

Participants who had been told by other women about experiences of abuse and who had themselves been abused were asked if their experiences of abuse had occurred before being told by the other women, and if the other women knew about their abuse at the time of the disclosure. If the participants had been abused since the disclosure by other women, they were assigned a score of 0 on the abuse measure and included in the nonabused category². Sixty-eight percent ($N = 146$) of the participants who were told by other women about abuse had also experienced some abuse themselves; 46 of these were abused since the women disclosed to them. Descriptive statistics for the participants' experiences of abuse are presented in Tables X.21 and X.22 in Appendix X. Twenty-three percent of the participants experienced verbal abuse only, and 77% experienced more than verbal abuse.

To examine the potential influences on the support offered to abused women, the correlations of several variables with the supportive and unsupportive scores were obtained. Table 12 shows the correlations of the supportive and unsupportive scores with the abuse scores for the women who disclosed abuse to participants, the duration

of their abuse (overall and prior to disclosure), the type of relationship between these women and their abusive partners (dichotomous; dating/engaged versus married/cohabiting), the participants' loyalty and closeness to the women's abusive partners, the participants' attitudes toward abuse and attributions for the women's abuse, and the participants' abuse scores. An alpha of .01 was used to reduce the likelihood of Type I error due to the number of tests.

The abuse experienced by the women who disclosed to the participants correlated significantly with the support offered to them. All four subscales and the total abuse score were significantly positively correlated with supportive behaviours, and the sexual abuse subscale and the total score were also significantly positively correlated with the unsupportive score but not as strongly as with the supportive score. The frequency and severity ratings for the abuse experienced by the women who disclosed to participants were significantly positively correlated with the supportive score, suggesting that the more frequent and severe the women's abuse had been, the more support they received. The more accepting attitude participants had toward psychological abuse, the more unsupportive behaviours they offered to abused women. If participants felt the woman who disclosed to them had control over the solution to the abuse, they often reported less unsupportive behaviours. The participants' abuse did not correlate significantly with support offered to other women, with the exception of the abuse type index. Participants who experienced more than verbal abuse tended to provide more unsupportive responses.

Table 12.

Correlations with Supportive and Unsupportive Behaviour Scores

Variable	Supportive	Unsupportive
Abuse of women who disclosed to participants:		
Physical	.35**	.17
Verbal	.44**	.13
Psychological	.39**	.17
Sexual	.36**	.20*
Total	.50**	.20*
Frequency rating	.20*	.10
Severity rating	.22*	.02
Duration of abuse	.10	.14
Duration before disclosure	.05	.11
Relationship to abusive partner ^b	-.00	.05
Participants' closeness to woman's partner	-.03	.08
Participants' loyalty to woman's partner	-.06	.07
Participants' attitude toward psychological abuse	-.05	.19*
Participants' attitude toward physical abuse	.00	.17

(table continues)

Variable	Supportive	Unsupportive
Participants' attributions for women's abuse:		
Woman - origin of abuse	-.03	-.02
Woman - solution to abuse	.03	-.13
Woman - control over solution to abuse	-.07	-.26**
Partner - origin of abuse	.15	-.04
Partner - solution to abuse	-.10	-.11
Partner - control over solution to abuse	.04	-.01
Helping model: Compensatory vs. moral ^c	.16	-.18
Participants' abuse:		
Physical	.00	-.00
Verbal	.04	-.03
Psychological	.06	.01
Sexual	.05	.02
Total	.04	-.01
Verbal only vs. Verbal + other types	.31	.34*

N=216

a 0=verbal only; 1=verbal + other types. ^b 1=dating/engaged; 2=married/cohabiting.

^c Compensatory (0): woman responsible for solution not origin; Moral (1) : woman responsible for both.

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

Evaluation of Response to Women who Disclosed Abuse to Participants

The participants were asked how they could have been more supportive when the abused women disclosed. Only 26% said that they could have been more supportive. Of those who felt they could have been more supportive, 42.1% felt they should have offered more informational support, 42.1% more emotional support, and 15.8% more tangible support. Of those who stated they could not have been more supportive, 77.5% stated they did all they could, 10.8% said the woman refused help, and 8.1% said the abused woman was not in crisis anymore. A few women stated that concerns about the woman's partner prevented them from doing more. The descriptive statistics for the three outcome scales are presented in Table X.23 in Appendix X.

Influences on Evaluation of Response to Women who Disclosed to Participants

In order to identify influences on the evaluation of the social support offered to abused women, the correlations of several variables with the three outcome scales were obtained. Table 13 provides correlations of the three outcome scales with the abuse scores for the women who disclosed to participants, the duration of their abuse overall and prior to their disclosure, the type of relationship between these women and their abusive partners (dating/engaged versus married/cohabiting), the participants' attitudes toward abuse and attributions for the women's abuse, the participants' closeness and loyalty to the women's abusive partners, and the participants' own abuse scores. An alpha of .01 was used to reduce the likelihood of a Type I error.

Table 13.

Correlations with Outcome Scales (Confidant-report) for Disclosures to Participants

Variable	Negative about Partner Outcome	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome
Women's abuse:^a			
Physical	.20	-.07	.08
Verbal	.27*	.04	.00
Psychological	.32**	.02	.08
Sexual	.20	.04	.08
Total	.32**	.01	.06
Frequency rating	.34**	.02	.03
Severity rating	.30**	.06	.07
Duration of abuse	-.04	-.09	.13
Duration prior to disclosure	-.01	.02	.03
Relationship to abusive partner ^c	.00	-.09	.29**
Participants' attitude toward psychological abuse	-.17	-.15	.14
Participants' attitude toward physical abuse	-.16	-.14	.19*
Participants' loyalty to women's partner	-.37**	-.09	.13
Participants' closeness to women's partner	-.38**	.01	.05

(table continues)

Variable	Negative about Partner Outcome	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome
Participants' attributions for women's abuse^a:			
Woman - origin	-.25*	-.13	.04
Woman - solution	-.02	.07	-.03
Woman - control over solution	-.03	.07	-.18*
Partner - origin	.31**	.04	-.04
Partner - solution	-.10	-.12	.03
Partner - control over solution	-.19	-.04	-.11
Helping model: Compensatory vs. moral ^d	-.51**	-.16	-.05
Participants' abuse:			
Physical	.09	.04	-.01
Verbal	-.05	.06	-.08
Psychological	.11	.01	-.02
Sexual	.02	.06	.03
Total	.02	.06	-.04
Verbal only vs. Verbal + Other	.59**	.14	.18
Supportive behaviour	.16	.33**	-.11
Unsupportive behaviour	.19	-.06	.34**

N = 216^a women who told participants. ^b 0= Verbal, 1= Verbal +other types; very few in verbal only. ^c 1=dating, 2=married/cohab. ^d Compensatory (0): woman responsible for solution not origin; Moral (1) : woman responsible for both. * $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$

The verbal, psychological, and total abuse scores for the women who disclosed to participants were significantly positively correlated with the Negative about Partner outcome (Confidant). The greater the abuse the women who disclosed to participants had experienced, the more negative the participants were about these women's abusive partners. The frequency and severity ratings for the abuse experienced by the women who disclosed to participants were also significantly positively correlated with the Negative about Partner outcome (Confidant), indicating that the participants tended to be more negative about the women's abusive partners if the women's abuse was more frequent and severe. The type of relationship between the women who disclosed to participants and their abusive partners was significantly related to the Negative Outcome (Confidant), such that if the women were married or cohabiting with the abusive partner, the participants often reported a more negative outcome of the disclosure (i.e., more negative behaviour during the conversation, making the problem worse, etc). Participants with more accepting views of physical abuse in relationships reported a more negative outcome of the conversation. Participants who rated the women as more responsible for the origin of the abuse were often less negative about the partner. If the participants attributed greater control to the women for the solution to their abuse, they tended to report a less negative outcome. If they attributed more responsibility to the abusive partner for the origin of the abuse, they were often more negative about him during the conversation. Participants who held the women responsible for the solution but not the origin to the abuse (compensatory model) were often more negative about the women's abusive

partners than those who held the women responsible for both the origin and solution to the abuse (moral model). If the participants were close and loyal to the women's abusive partners, they tended to be less negative about the partners. None of the participants' abuse scores were significantly correlated with the outcomes, but the participants' abuse type index was significantly correlated with the Negative about Partner outcome. If participants experienced more than verbal abuse, they tended to be more negative about the abusive partners of the women who disclosed abuse to them.

Regression Analyses

The regression analyses were performed to examine the effect of participants' abuse on their response to women's disclosures of abuse and their evaluation of those responses. In addition, three possible moderators of that effect were tested in the regressions: the participants' attitude toward abuse, the helping model contrast (compensatory versus moral models) based on participants' attributions for the women's abuse, and the participants' loyalty to the women's partners. The two helping models contrasted (compensatory versus moral models) are particularly relevant for attributions for abuse (Sugarman & Cohn, 1986). One additional predictor (total abuse score for the women disclosing abuse to participants) was included due to its substantial correlations with one or more of the dependent variables. Correlations among the independent variables are in Table 14.

Table 14.
Correlations among Independent Variables in Regression Analyses for Disclosures to Participants.

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Total abuse score for women disclosing	---									
2. Total abuse	.11	---								
3. Helping model contrast ^a	-.21	-.15	---							
4. Attitude re physical abuse	-.09	.10	.21	---						
5. Loyalty to women's abusive partner	-.07	-.10	.19	.13	---					
6. Interaction of 2. and 3.	.12	.28*	.38**	.01	.06	---				
7. Interaction of 2. and 4.	.07	.94**	-.13	.29**	-.09	.34**	---			
8. Interaction of 2. and 5.	.11	.73**	-.08	.08	.22*	.34**	.65**	---		
9. Supportive behaviour	.50**	.04	.16	.00	-.06	.12	.03	.11	---	
10. Unsupportive behaviour	.20*	-.01	-.18	.17	.07	-.16	-.01	.01	.17	---

N = 216 Note. Variables 2.-5. are from participants' perspective.^aCompensatory (0): woman responsible for solution not origin; Moral (1) : responsible for both. * $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$

None were substantial except correlations of main effects with their interactions with other variables. Thus, multicollinearity was not apparent. The abuse type index for the women who disclosed to participants was not included because of the small number with only verbal abuse ($N=12$); inclusion of this variable and its interaction with the participants' total abuse created anomalies in the regressions.

The model for supportive behaviour (Table 15) accounted for a significant amount of variance (36%, $F(8, 58) = 4.11, p < .001$). The total abuse score for the women who disclosed to participants and participants' attributions for the women's abuse significantly predicted supportive behaviour. The greater the abuse experienced by these women, the more support offered to them. If participants held the women responsible for both the origin and solution to the abuse, they often reported more supportive responses than those who only held women responsible for the solution.

The model for unsupportive behaviour (Table 16) was not significant ($R^2 = .14, F(8, 58) = 1.16, p > .05$). The interaction of participants' abuse and the abuse type index of the women who disclosed to them was not tested due to the small cell size reported earlier. The partial correlation of participants' total abuse with unsupportive behaviours offered to abused women (abused women's total severity score partialled) was obtained separately for women with verbal abuse only and those with more than verbal abuse to see if they would resemble the partial associations for the first role; they did. The partial correlation of participants' abuse and unsupportive behaviours offered to women with verbal abuse only was positive ($r = .40$); for

Table 15.

Regression Analysis on the Supportive Responses offered by Participants

Variable	b	β	sr ²
Total abuse score for women disclosing to participants	.43	.58	.30***
Participants' total abuse	-.12	-.45	.01
Participants' attitude toward physical abuse	-.09	-.09	.00
Participants' abuse*Attitude	.01	.36	.01
Helping model contrast ^a	4.29	.39	.09**
Participants' abuse*Helping	-.23	-.17	.02
Participants' loyalty to women's abusive partner	-.42	-.14	.01
Participants' abuse*Loyalty	.04	.26	.02

$R^2 = .36***$

N = 216

Note: Coefficients obtained from complete model.

^aCompensatory (0): woman responsible for solution not origin; Moral (1) : woman responsible for both.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 16.

Regression Analysis on the Unsupportive Responses offered by Participants

Variable	b	β	sr^2
Total abuse score for women disclosing to participants	.03	.20	.04
Participants' total abuse	.01	.25	.00
Participants' attitude toward physical abuse	.06	.28	.04
Participants' abuse*Attitude	.00	-.31	.01
Helping model contrast ^a	-.40	-.18	.02
Participants' abuse*Helping	-.02	-.08	.00
Participants' loyalty to women's abusive partner	.05	.08	.01
Participants' abuse*Loyalty	-.00	-.02	.00

$R^2 = .14$

$N = 216$

Note: Coefficients obtained from complete model.

^aCompensatory (0): woman responsible for solution not origin; Moral (1) : woman responsible for both.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

women who experienced other types of abuse it was close to zero and negative ($\beta = -.05$); neither was significant.

The model explained a significant amount of variance (41%, $F(10, 40) = 2.83$, $p < .01$) in the Negative about Partner outcome (Confidant) (Table 17). The helping model contrast and the participants' loyalty to the women's abusive partners significantly predicted this outcome. If participants attributed responsibility to the women for the solution but not the origin of the abuse (compensatory model), they tended to be more negative about the women's abusive partners than those who held the women responsible for both the origin and the solution (moral model). If the participants were loyal to the women's abusive partners, they were often less negative about the partners.

The model accounted for a significant amount of variance (29%, $F(10, 56) = 2.24$, $p < .05$) in the Positive Outcome (Confidant) (Table 18). The total abuse score for women who disclosed to participants, the helping model contrast and supportive behaviour significantly predicted this outcome. With increasing severity of abuse experienced by the women who disclosed to participants, the participants rated their response less positively. If participants felt the women were responsible for the solution to the abuse but not the origin, they often rated the support more positively than those in the moral model. Participants who offered more support tended to rate the conversation positively. The model for the Negative Outcome (Confidant) was not significant (Table 19, $R^2 = .19$, $F(10, 56) = 1.26$, $p > .05$).

Table 17.

Regression Analysis on the Negative about Partner Outcome (Confidant) for Disclosures to Participants

Variable	b	β	sr ²
Total abuse score for women disclosing to participants	.18	.13	.01
Participants' total abuse	.05	.10	.00
Participants' attitude toward physical abuse	.04	.02	.00
Participants' abuse*Attitude	-.01	-.23	.00
Helping model contrast ^a	-9.43	-.44	.10*
Participants' abuse*Helping	-.06	-.02	.00
Participants' loyalty to women's abusive partner	-1.72	-.29	.06*
Participants' abuse*Loyalty	.01	.04	.00
Supportive score	.27	.14	.01
Unsupportive score	.74	.08	.01

$R^2 = .41^{**}$

N = 216

Note: Coefficients obtained from complete model.

^aCompensatory (0): woman responsible for solution not origin; Moral (1) : woman responsible for both. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 18.

Regression Analysis on the Positive Outcome (Confidant) for Disclosures to Participants

Variable	b	β	sr ²
Total abuse score for women disclosing to participants	-.32	-.37	.08*
Participants' total abuse	.19	.59	.02
Participants' attitude toward physical abuse	.03	.03	.00
Participants' abuse*Attitude	-.01	-.45	.01
Helping model contrast ^a	-5.50	-.44	.10**
Participants' abuse*Helping	.25	.17	.01
Participants' loyalty to women's abusive partner	.29	.08	.01
Participants' abuse*Loyalty	-.05	-.28	.03
Supportive score	.71	.61	.23***
Unsupportive score	-.84	-.15	.02

R² = .29*

N = 216

Note: Coefficients obtained from complete model.

^aCompensatory (0): woman responsible for solution not origin; Moral (1) : woman responsible for both.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 19.

Regression Analysis on the Negative Outcome (Confidant) for Disclosures to Participants

Variable	b	β	sr ²
Total abuse score for women disclosing to participants	.11	.15	.01
Participants' total abuse	-.03	-.10	.00
Participants' attitude toward physical abuse	.11	.11	.01
Participants' abuse*Attitude	.00	.12	.00
Helping model contrast ^a	.44	.04	.00
Participants' abuse*Helping	-.04	-.03	.00
Participants' loyalty to women's abusive partner	.31	.10	.01
Participants' abuse*Loyalty	-.01	-.05	.00
Supportive score	-.24	-.23	.03
Unsupportive score	1.68	.33	.09*

R² = .18

N = 216 Note: Coefficients obtained from complete model.

^aCompensatory (0): woman responsible for solution not origin; Moral (1) : woman responsible for both.

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Simplification of Regression Analyses

Due to the substantial number of nonsignificant predictors in the regression analyses, the models were rerun with only those predictors that had emerged as significant in the original models. The significance and direction of prediction was confirmed in these revised analyses, so they will not be presented.

Filler Measure Results

Twenty-seven participants completed the filler measure that asked about third-hand experiences with abuse (e.g., learning about another woman's experiences of abuse without her disclosing it to the participant). Fifty-six percent of these participants knew the woman who experienced abuse; the rest did not know the woman personally. Most of the women participants described had experienced physical abuse (76.9%), and the others experienced psychological or verbal abuse (19.2%), or sexual abuse (3.8%) in intimate relationships. The majority of these participants did not intervene (92.3%); the others spoke to the woman much later, usually after the abusive relationship was over. Many participants stated that the reason they had not intervened was that they did not know the women well enough if at all (45.5%), or that it was not their place to act (22.7%). Other reasons cited less often included fears of risking their own safety, the abusive relationship quickly ended, or that others had intervened.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The present study examined different contexts in which a woman reveals to a friend or relative that she has been abused by a male partner, with the aim of gaining insight into conditions that facilitate helpful responses to abused women. Does a shared experience of abuse between the woman and the person she tells (i.e., the confidant) facilitate social support? Do the abused woman's or the confidant's attributions for the abuse influence social support for abused women? Do more general characteristics such as the abused woman's attitude toward help-seeking or perception of the prior relationship with the confidant affect her evaluation of the confidant's support attempt? If the choice of confidant is limited to an individual who has some loyalty to the woman's abusive partner, is her response to the abused woman less supportive? These questions were addressed from the perspectives of confidants to abused women and abused women themselves. The findings were obtained from primarily young women in abusive dating relationships of relatively short duration, who usually sought support from female friends of the same age and race. The results of the current study should be interpreted in that context.

The present study identified several aspects of the process and context of social support that can facilitate helpful responses to abused women. The main findings of the present study will now be briefly summarized prior to a more detailed discussion of the results. With respect to abused women's preferences for social support, the present study found that abused women perceive emotional support and validation of

their self-worth as most helpful. Confidants also viewed these forms of support as most beneficial, but many felt that professional help is necessary for abused women. Confidants may have felt that they were not as well equipped as professional services to deal with abused women.

Several influences on social support and evaluation were identified in the present study. Positive views of help-seeking on the part of abused women increased the likelihood that they perceived responses from friends and relatives as helpful. The nature of the abusive relationship also played a role, in that women who experienced abuse in the context of dating relationships tended to receive more supportive responses than those in marital or cohabiting relationships who may have had more complex support needs. The shared experience of abuse with the confidant did not necessarily facilitate helpful responses. Confidants who experienced more severe abuse than the women who disclosed to them were often unsupportive. More similar abuse experiences may foster more helpful responses.

Other characteristics of the confidant also facilitated effective social support for abused women, including the confidant's feelings toward the woman's abusive partner and attributions for the woman's experiences of abuse. Confidants who felt little or no loyalty to the women's partners could provide more supportive responses, but must still take care not to derogate the abusive partners. Confidants' who believed that abused women were not to blame for their experiences of abuse but had the responsibility to find a solution to the abuse tended to provide effective social support. Finally, a history of close and supportive relations with the confidant typically led to

more supportive responses to the disclosure of abuse. These findings will now be discussed in greater detail, and in the context of relevant previous research.

Influences on Social Support for Abused Women

For the sake of interpretation of the findings of the current study, supportive behaviours included empathy, efforts to boost self-esteem, practical help such as loans of money or shelter, and offers of advice or information about the problem or how to cope with it. Examples of unsupportive responses in the present study included trivializing the problem, changing the topic, and expressing anger toward the woman's abusive partner.

The additional measures that assessed the evaluation of social support consisted of three dimensions derived from factor analyses. First, the positive dimension included perceptions that the response had provided useful information, which had helped the woman decide how to cope and enhanced the relationship with the confidant. The positive evaluation also included overall satisfaction with the response. Second, the negative dimension of the evaluation of support consisted of perceptions that the confidant had been unsupportive or exaggerated the severity of the problem. This dimension also included references that the discussion had worsened the problem, and had created problems with or burdened the confidant. The third dimension described the support attempt in terms of what it conveyed about the abusive partner and the woman's relationship with him. Specifically, this dimension assessed how derogatory the confidant's response was about the partner and the relationship, and whether the discussion had led to the possibility that the abused woman would

terminate the relationship with the abusive partner.

To identify conditions that facilitate social support for abused women, the current study examined influences on social support and their evaluation using responses derived from two sources: (1) women who had disclosed experiences of abuse, and (2) confidants to abused women. Some participants provided data for both roles. The effect of the confidant's experiences of abuse on social support and evaluation is the principal focus of the current study. This factor will be placed in a more realistic context by considering other influences on support and evaluation aside from the confidants' abuse. These additional influences will be discussed in terms of the following categories: characteristics of the abused woman, the abuse, the confidant, and the relationship between the abused woman and her confidant. Finally, the effects of supportive and unsupportive responses (i.e., behaviour) on the evaluation of social support for abused women will be discussed.

Influence of the confidants' abuse

Confidants who had experienced abuse of greater severity tended to respond to disclosures by participants in relatively unsupportive ways. This association was influenced by the type of abuse disclosed by participants. Confidants with more severe abuse offered more unhelpful responses, but only if the abused women disclosed solely verbal abuse; otherwise, the confidants' abuse had no impact on her responses. It is possible that discussing the other woman's experiences of abuse reminds the confidant of the trauma of the abuse she experienced and leads her to respond in ways that inflame the conversation. For example, she may have expressed

a great deal of anger toward the woman's partner, which abused women typically experience as unhelpful. She may have also dismissed the participants' experiences of verbal abuse as trivial compared to her own abuse. Confidants may have been unaware of the full extent of participants' abuse because participants often minimized their experiences in relating them to others. Such lack of awareness could have worsened the negative impact of the confidants' trivialization of participants' experiences of abuse.

Disparities in experience may lead to unsupportive responses from confidants who have experienced more severe abuse than the women disclosing to them. Henderson (1995) described stages women in shelters go through in coping with their abuse, including their patterns of interaction with other residents. If women offer support to other residents who are at different stages in this process, support attempts can fail. Women can experience revelations about their own abuse when discussing it with others, as they come to appreciate the gravity of their experiences. Confidants in the present study could be having such revelations that may reopen the trauma of their own abuse, which could lead to unhelpful responses to other abused women. Another possibility is that discussions of a stigmatized problem such as abuse could worsen women's views of their own situation through a process similar to group polarization (Buunk & Hoorens, 1992).

Social comparison processes could play a role in the reactions of the confidants to other abused women. Confidants may feel inferior to women who tell them about experiences that may seem much less serious than their own experiences of abuse.

Women often blame themselves for abuse, believing there is something wrong with them if a man hits them (Hanmer & Saunders, 1984). Such feelings of inferiority could lead the confidants to react badly and perhaps dismiss the other women's experiences.

In sum, the data from the present investigation provided little evidence that a shared experience of abuse leads to more supportive responses to disclosures of abuse, or to more positive evaluations of support attempts. This finding was derived from analyses with several other factors held constant. This result flies in the face of arguments by social support researchers for the importance of shared experience (e.g., Thoits, 1986), and policies of feminist shelters who employ survivors of abuse as staff members in order to facilitate social support to residents (e.g., Rodriguez, 1988). Therefore, the question of the impact of similarity of experience should be investigated further. Perhaps the women disclosing abuse and their confidants were not truly similar. Even though they may have both experienced abuse, the disparity in severity or type of abuse may manifest itself in unsupportive responses and negative evaluations of support attempts. Confidants who have more similar abuse experiences may be able to offer more supportive responses.

People involved in romantic relationships that do not involve abuse prefer confidants who are receptive to requests for support and who will not be burdened by such requests (Goldsmith & Parks, 1990). Though women in the present study may have sought individuals with these characteristics, they may not have found such a situation when their chosen confidants had experienced more severe abuse than they

had. The unsupportive responses to disclosure could actually be the opposite of what is sought from such help-seeking efforts. It is also possible that abused women expect too much from confidants who have also experienced abuse which results in perceptions that the support attempts are ineffective.

Characteristics of the abused woman

Potential influences on social support for abused women were assessed only from the abused woman's perspective. These included the abused woman's network orientation or view of help-seeking, and her attributions for her experiences of abuse. Individuals with a positive network orientation, who feel that seeking social support is beneficial, tend to perceive support attempts as more helpful than those with a negative view of help-seeking (Barrera & Baca, 1986; Vaux & Wood, 1987). If participants in the current study had a negative network orientation, they tended to evaluate the response they received more negatively. The negative evaluation included less satisfaction with the response and perceptions that the response had not accomplished much and had not enhanced the relationship with the confidant. Moreover, the response was often rated as burdening the confidant, leading her to interfere in the situation or to further upset the abused woman. Thus, this general attitude toward help-seeking can colour women's perceptions of their confidants' responses to disclosures of abuse. Confidants could try to address the abused women's negative views of help-seeking by encouraging them to recognize the potential value of support from friends and relatives. If women with negative network orientations could be convinced of the potential merits of seeking support from those

close to them, they may be more likely to react favourably to support attempts and reap the benefits of such support.

Participants' attributions for their own abuse emerged as significant predictors of the evaluation of social support in the current study. Specifically, if women blamed their partner for the origin of the abuse, they rated the confidants' responses as more negative about their partners. This evaluation included perceptions that the conversation had created a negative impression of the abusive partner and the woman's relationship with him, which had led to the possibility that she would terminate her relationship with him. Women who blamed their partners for the abuse also rated the response more negatively overall, including feeling more upset afterward, burdening the confidants who may have reacted more negatively than anticipated, and gaining little from the response. Confidants may have tried to support the women's judgements that their partners were to blame, but went too far with negative portrayals of the partners to the point where the women evaluated the responses negatively. Women can experience criticism of their abusive partners as an indirect insult to themselves (Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993). They may also feel that the confidants overreacted to the situation if they had already concluded that their partners were responsible for the abuse.

Without knowing what the participants' views were prior to the disclosure, it is difficult to draw clear conclusions from these findings. Perhaps when the discussion was not overly negative about the partner, the abused woman came to believe that the partner could cease his abusive behaviour. When women attributed responsibility for

the solution to the abuse to their partner, they tended to describe the support attempt as less negative about the partner. The abused woman's belief that her abusive partner can change is less derogatory about him and may have set the tone of her discussion with her confidant. Perhaps women who believed their partners could change convinced the confidants of this, making the discussion less derogatory about the abusive partners and not having a negative impact on the abusive relationships. This outcome cannot be seen positively. Little evidence exists that abusive men will change their behaviour (Walker, 1981), and women should not be encouraged to consider this as a likely outcome.

The issue of the confidant's reaction to the abusive partner's behaviour is a difficult one. Relevant studies have found that confidants' anger toward women's abusive partners can sometimes be experienced as supportive, but is not always perceived that way. Such anger can also insinuate that the woman is to blame for the abuse. Some women want confidants to blame their partners for the abuse, but the blame needs to be communicated carefully (Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993). Ideally, women experiencing abuse need to perceive that they have options, and discussion with friends and relatives should promote this view. In sum, confidants must take care not to strongly criticize women's abusive partners in order to provide more effective support to abused women.

Characteristics of the abuse

The type of relationship between the woman and the abusive partner was also related to her evaluation of the support attempt. If the women were dating their

abusive partners, they rated the response to their disclosure more positively than women who were married or cohabiting with their abusive partners. The positive evaluation included feelings that the discussion provided useful information or enhanced the relationship with the confidant, and overall satisfaction with the response. Results from previous studies indicate that women who are married or cohabiting with the abusive partner have a greater investment in the relationship than most dating couples and are thus less likely to leave the relationship (Stets & Straus, 1989). As a result, if the confidant does not seem to appreciate the complexities of the woman's relationship with her abusive partner, the confidant's response may be evaluated more negatively. In addition, the common view that violence in the family is a private matter may be more likely to shield married and cohabiting couples from successful intervention by friends or relatives (Makepeace, 1989; Stets & Straus, 1989). Confidants of married and cohabiting women may not have appreciated the unique difficulties they experience, particularly because most of the confidants were young, single women.

Certain findings emerged only in the analyses of data obtained from confidants to abused women. For example, confidants reported offering more supportive responses to women who experienced more severe abuse, yet they evaluated their responses less positively. Other studies have not found a relationship between severity of abuse and supportive responses, but have reported increases in avoidant responses to women who experienced more severe abuse (Mitchell & Hodson, 1983). As was discussed earlier, the data obtained from abused women revealed a significant effect of

severity on unsupportive responses, but the effect depended on the confidants' experiences of abuse. Mitchell and Hodson's (1983) measure of avoidant responses included a few behaviours similar to those in the current study (e.g., changing the topic). The measure also included aspects similar to the negative evaluation assessed in the current study, such as annoying the confidant or making her uncomfortable. The difference in findings could have resulted from this conflation of support behaviour and evaluation, or perhaps it arose due to different definitions of abuse severity. Mitchell and Hodson (1983) used the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) which has been criticized for inaccurately measuring severity (e.g., Smith, 1987). Regardless, this finding requires further investigation.

Characteristics of the confidant

Previous studies have suggested that loyalty to the abusive partner can complicate the confidant's ability to provide effective support to abused women (Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; Stacey and Shupe, 1983). Confidants who are loyal to the abusive partners may take his side and blame the woman for the problems. The present study found that if the confidant was loyal to the abused woman's partner, her response was evaluated as less negative about him. Loyalty to the women's abusive partners may have led confidants to be less derogatory about the women's partners. It is also possible that the abused women may not have expressed an intention to end their abusive relationships to confidants who were loyal to their abusive partners. Confidants who were loyal to these men may have hoped that the relationship would be preserved, and may have even encouraged the abused women to stay with their

partners.

It is not clear whether the evaluation of the confidant's response as negative about the woman's abusive partner was experienced as supportive or unsupportive, other than the fact that it was positively correlated with the negative evaluation. In this study, the loyalty of the confidant to the partner may not have been experienced as unsupportive by abused women, but this is difficult to discern from the available data.

Some potential influences on support could be assessed only from the perspective of participants as confidants. For example, confidants' attributions for the abuse affected how they responded to the abused women. Attributions were evaluated in the context of helping models that are defined by specific combinations of attributions for the origin and solution to a problem (Brickman et al., 1982; Dunst & Trivette, 1988). The attribution of responsibility for the origin and solution to a problem to the person in distress defines the moral helping model. The compensatory model is characterized by attributions of responsibility only for the solution of the problem. These models permit the examination of the effect of specific constellations of attributions for the origin versus the solution to abuse. Specifically, the moral helping model was contrasted with the compensatory model in terms of their effects on support for abused women and confidants' evaluation of their own responses. Confidants who held women responsible for the abuse and its solution (moral model) were less negative about the abusive partners and reported offering more supportive behaviours. Yet, confidants with this view also rated their response to the abused

woman's disclosure less positively (e.g., felt they had not been supportive, felt burdened, felt alienated from the abused women) than those who held the compensatory model. Confidants following the moral model in the current study may be responding with more support attempts but their attempts are not received well. In some ways, the moral model views the abused women as defective in some way, a person who could have stopped the abuse and did not. While this may invoke helping in the mode of "charity", the attitude is probably not likely to receive a favourable response from the women being helped, as she may feel offended by the confidant's approach. The recipient could perceive the confidant's response as interference and react against that (Fisher, Nadler, & Witcher-Alagna, 1982). Perhaps then, participants who held women responsible for both the origin and solution to their abuse felt that they had offered more supportive behaviours but that their response had not been effective. Social support is more likely to be beneficial if the recipient is held responsible for the solution to the problem but not for its origin (Dunst & Trivette, 1988). This finding supports the view that abused women should not be encouraged to believe that they can stop the abuse, as they often are made to feel that way by the abusive partner but can rarely force him to cease the abuse. Rather, if they consider leaving the abusive partner, support for that option should be offered.

Characteristics of the relationship with the confidant

Another potential influence on social support was the abused woman's perception of her relationship with the confidant prior to disclosure. It was hypothesized that this relationship would colour her perceptions of the confidant's

response to her disclosure of abuse. In the current study, a history of conflict with the confidant was associated with a greater incidence of unsupportive responses and less positive evaluations of the support attempts. If the relationship was supportive and close, however, confidants' responses were rated more positively (e.g., they were satisfied with the response, viewed the confidant as very supportive and as not being burdened). The present findings confirm Pierce's (1994) conclusions that a history of conflict in a relationship with the support provider predicts unsupportive responses. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that the relationship history with the confidant can influence the social support she offers to an abused woman and its evaluation. Thus, abused women should be advised to choose confidants with whom they share close and supportive relationships, if they have a choice at all.

Characteristics of the response

Supportive and unsupportive responses to disclosures by abused women influenced evaluations of the support attempt. Supportive responses by the confidant were positively evaluated by both the confidant and the abused woman. Although the number of support behaviours does not necessarily dictate perceptions of supportiveness, a positive association between the number of behaviours and evaluation was discovered. The number of unsupportive responses to disclosure also predicted positive and negative evaluations (in the expected direction), but only from the perspective of abused women. In addition to its role in the regression analyses in the current study, this finding supports the validity of the categorization of behaviours as supportive or unsupportive.

Reasons for Differences in Findings in the Two Roles

The results varied to some degree depending on the perspective of the participants (i.e., as abused woman versus confidant). There could be several reasons for the differences in findings. One possibility could stem from the fact that women who disclosed to participants tended to have more cases of physical, sexual or psychological abuse than did the participants themselves. Participants may have recalled such cases because they seemed more prototypically "abusive" than cases of women who experienced only verbal abuse. Support for this claim is found in the results of a recent study that assessed attitudes toward physical and psychological abuse in high school students and found that students were more accepting of psychological abuse (Byers, 1995). The same pattern was observed in the present sample. Therefore, the differences in findings between the two roles could have arisen due to this discrepancy in the abuse experiences of the women seeking support. It may be that confidants may have felt more pressure when dealing with women with more severe abuse to provide the "correct" response and to be very supportive, or at least to report that they had been supportive.

Another possibility is that the confidant's perspective on her behaviour and her evaluation of her response was biased. Specifically, confidants reported significantly more supportive and less unsupportive behaviour than did the abused women.³ This finding could represent a self-enhancing bias on the part of the confidant. Other studies have also reported that support providers often claim to offer more support than the recipient reports receiving (Buunk & Hoorens, 1992; Sarason et al., 1990,

1994). Indeed, the self-enhancing bias in confidants' reports of social support appears to be a common feature of social support research in general, and not just this study.

A third possibility is that the same type of support attempt is experienced differently by abused women and confidants. Because actual dyads were not used in the present study, this hypothesis cannot be tested directly. Nevertheless, the confidant may feel that she tried her best to provide effective support, but that her response was inadequate at meeting the needs of the abused woman. Nowhere was this situation more obvious than in the difficult area of reactions to the abusive partner.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Present Study

A critical examination of the sample, measures, and methods used in the present study revealed certain strengths and weaknesses that should be acknowledged. With respect to the sample, social support for women experiencing abuse has not been studied with younger women in dating relationships as much as it has with married women who seek help from shelters. The sample in the present study was relatively young (85% \leq 26 years), but included women up to 51 years of age. There was also a reasonable representation of women of colour (25%). Previous studies of abuse with undergraduates have used samples that were predominantly of European origin (DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993; Gryl et al., 1991; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1989). The larger proportion of dating relationships was anticipated based on the age level of the sample. The sample also included a fairly sizeable number of women who were married or cohabiting with their abusive partners (20.3% of abused participants and 31.5% of women who disclosed to participants), which allowed for comparisons between dating

and married/cohabiting women. In short, the demographics of the present sample substantially extend the existing research base in this area.

The sample for the present study allowed the expansion of some previous studies of support for abused women to non-shelter samples. It has been noted repeatedly that relatively fewer women turn to shelters than to other sources of assistance (Gelles & Straus, 1988), and the generalizability of findings of studies relying on shelter samples is limited. It should be noted that it is not known whether the participants or the women who disclosed to participants had also sought professional or legal assistance in response to their experiences of abuse. Given the relatively low severity of abuse experienced by most participants, it is reasonable to assume that most have not.

For the most part, the measures used in the present study represent an improvement over those used in past research. Specifically, the present measures were more comprehensive and multidimensional than those used previously. For example, the present abuse measure assessed four types of abuse, whereas other studies have assessed only physical abuse. Many of the measures used here were standardized published scales (e.g., Measure of Wife Abuse, Rodenburg & Fantuzzo, 1993), or slight modifications of published scales (e.g., evaluation measures, Goldsmith & Parks, 1990; attributions for abuse, Sugarman & Cohn, 1986). Others were developed for the present study and require further validation. The qualitative data obtained through open-ended questions concerning issues such as evaluation of social support and perceptions about the most beneficial forms of support served as a rich source of

information that supplemented the closed-ended responses.

A specific example where the open-ended questions were particularly useful was the scoring of the Measure of Wife Abuse (Rodenburg & Fantuzzo, 1993). This measure contained a few behaviours that many participants dismissed as unimportant and not upsetting. For example, screaming by their partner was often dismissed and some participants indicated that they had never been upset by this behaviour, particularly if it was the only type of incident reported. Other behaviours considered to be examples of sexual abuse were described by some participants as consensual or even pleasurable (e.g., squeezing breasts). The inclusion of the severity rating (never upset to often upset) and open-ended comments afforded the opportunity to record such instances. A revised scoring method was developed where certain participants who endorsed one or a few behaviours on the abuse measure but had never been upset by them could be rescored as not having experienced abuse. This prevented the contamination of the sample of women who had been abused by nonabused participants.

The present study revealed that women do not always fully disclose their experiences of abuse to friends and relatives. Over one-third (36.1%) of participants who disclosed abuse had minimized their experiences of abuse (often substantially) when they related them to friends or relatives. Studies of support for abused women need to address this issue to accurately document the support process. Experiences of abuse may affect abused women's needs for support and their reaction to support attempts, while the confidants remain unaware of the extent of the abuse. Future

investigations should assess both the women's self-reports of abuse and the abuse experiences they choose to reveal to friends and relatives, without assuming that these are identical.

The importance of assessing instances of unsupportive behaviour in studies of support for abused women was highlighted, both due to the low variance in the type of supportive behaviours reported and because the extent of unsupportive behaviours was found to be associated with the confidant's abuse and her relationship history with the abused woman.

The inclusion of the confidant's perspective on social support for abused women represents a substantial addition to social support research in general, and to studies of support for abused women in particular. Many social support researchers have argued for the need to include the confidant's viewpoint in order to capture the actual behaviour or intentions of the confidant (Dunkel-Schetter et al., 1987; Sarason et al., 1990). Indeed, the current study permitted exploration of the confidant's own experiences of abuse, her attributions for the woman's abuse, her feelings toward the woman's partner, and the effects of these experiences, attributions, and feelings on the support she offered. The study revealed that these factors play an important role in social support for abused women.

The present study examined a multifaceted model of social support for abused women and its evaluation. Such models have been developed for social support in other situations, but not for abuse. Several researchers have noted the importance of developing models of the causes and correlates of social support (Dunkel-Schetter et

al., 1987; Fisher et al., 1988; Sarason et al., 1990). These models can help to inform interventions designed to mobilize social support for abused women. Such multifaceted models, evaluated in a single study, represent an improvement over more piecemeal approaches where one or very few factors are examined per study. Indeed, some factors may lose or change their impact on social support in the context of other influences. Several factors were identified in the present study that had substantial effects on perceptions of support (e.g., attributions, network orientation, relationship history with the confidant). Analyses without inclusion of such factors would be misleading.

Even with these strengths, some problems exist with the sample and methods used in the present study. The generalizability of the results may be limited by the fact that the experiences of women in university do not necessarily resemble those of women in general. Indeed, the experiences of women of lower socioeconomic status who encounter barriers to access to higher education could be substantially different.

The frequencies of the different types of social support as assessed by the support behaviour checklist were similar to findings based on comparable coding schemes from previous studies (e.g., Cutrona & Suhr, 1992). Informational, emotional, and esteem support were reported by almost all participants. Unfortunately, this finding precluded consideration of influences on the specific type or function of support (e.g., informational or emotional) offered to abused women.

Much of the data collected in the present study asked respondents to speculate about the experiences of others, and on the efficacy of their own actions. For

example, participants were asked about the abuse experienced by their confidants and by the women who disclosed to them. They were also asked to evaluate the support they offered to abused women. The validity of these reports could be questioned due to their second-hand and sometimes self-serving nature. The common findings in the study across the two roles, however, indicate that a severe problem with validity was not evident. Until research with confidant-abused woman dyads is possible, this limitation is unavoidable.

Some features of the methods of the current study may limit the validity of the findings to some extent. The assessment of social support focused on one specific interaction, namely the first time participants had disclosed abuse or were told by other women about abuse. This focus was intended to control for previous discussions of experiences of abuse. Social support can be construed as a temporal process, gained through repeated interactions between an abused woman and her confidant. Thus, a snapshot of one interaction may not fully capture this process. Nonetheless, the initial disclosure of abuse is likely to be critical in shaping the support process that follows. The cross-sectional nature of the assessment of this first interaction limits the ability to make causal inferences about the influence of specific factors on support and evaluation. Longitudinal designs would be useful in this regard, although the logistics of such designs are difficult. At the very least, future studies could assess the efficacy of social support by examining more than one interaction.

Similar to almost all other research in the field, participants' reports of their experiences with disclosures of abuse were retrospective. On average, disclosures had

occurred approximately two years prior to data collection, and a few as long as 30 years prior. Although the disclosure was probably a significant and salient event in these women's lives, their recall may have been faulty. Participants recall past events in light of later events or present circumstances that shape their perceptions of the past (Arvey & Cavanaugh, 1995; Bernard, Kilworth, Kronenfeld, & Sailer, 1984). Events since the disclosure, such as further discussions with the same or another confidant, may have coloured their perceptions of the support attempts at the first disclosure. Because events such as social support for abuse do not necessarily happen regularly, retrospective reports are often a necessary research tool. In future studies, participants could be asked to limit responses to discussions in the past year to reduce the possibility of memory distortion, although such a time limitation would require a much larger sample size.

The quantitative nature of the study did not allow participants to express feely their subjective views of social support for abused women. Further, as with any quantitative study, the conclusions regarding what abused women find supportive and unsupportive do not reflect every woman's perceptions but rather the trends among the women as a group.

Interventions Suggested by the Findings

Informal social support for abused women is of crucial importance. Families and friends know about a woman's abuse long before professionals are told. Futhermore, professional services cannot possibly meet the demands of all abused women. The findings of the present study highlight several possible options for

educational programs designed to facilitate effective social support for abused women. These programs would be appropriate for "general" audiences that contain abused women as well as potential confidants, such as peer counselling programs or community workshops. While it would be unfair to place the onus on abused women to learn how to obtain effective social support, participation in some of the programs described below might assist abused women in avoiding some of the problems that can arise in the process of obtaining help.

Women who are experiencing abuse need to be informed about a number of issues. Because serious problems such as abuse may not elicit spontaneous offers of support, women should be informed that this does not necessarily reflect a lack of concern (Fisher et al., 1988). Moreover, women may need to be prepared for all types of responses from confidants, including potentially unsupportive behaviours (Kellogg & Huston, 1995; McNulty & Wardle, 1994). In this study, confidants' loyalty to the abusive partners and a history of conflict with the confidants were identified as potential impediments to supportive responses. Assaulted women could be informed that confidants who are friends or relatives of their abusive partners may not be effective sources of support (Mitchell & Hodson, 1983), and that it might be better to avoid confiding in people with whom they have a history of conflict. Women should also be encouraged to seek social support elsewhere (e.g., from professional sources) if they do not receive helpful responses to their initial disclosures. Sadly, women who are experiencing abuse may have little choice of who they can approach for social support.

Potential confidants to abused women could be educated about the support needs of abused women in order to produce more sensitive support networks (Heise, 1996). For example, potential confidants could be told that they must manage their own feelings of anger and their need to control the situation in order to provide the most effective support (Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993). Programs could also address attitudes toward abuse and attributions for abuse, since both of these factors were shown to affect support and its evaluation in the present study. Young people need to be educated about the dynamics of abuse and its social and cultural bases. In addition, people could be taught how to communicate their awareness of abuse and their desire to help in a nonthreatening manner (Fisher et al., 1988). Potential confidants to abused women could be trained in common techniques of crisis intervention, such as giving the abused woman options without telling her what to do (Kelly, 1996).

Implications for Future Research

If possible, future studies should use actual dyads of abused women and their confidants to compare their viewpoints on the support process. Although this would be logistically difficult, it would shed light on many issues raised in the present study. It would reduce the possible bias of speculative reports and allow contextualization of self-enhancing portrayals by confidants.

Modifications to the design of the present study might clarify some of the present findings. The impact of the confidants' experiences of abuse on social support and its evaluation could be explored in more detail through specific questions that address abused women's feelings about receiving support from someone who was also

abused. Qualitative data may provide a better means of exploring this issue.

It would be useful to determine if negative comments about the abusive partners lead to a more negative evaluation overall. The two scales were moderately correlated in the present study, but only from the perspective of the abused women. Many participants reported in open-ended questions that they found anger toward their partners to be unhelpful. The issue of expressing blame and anger toward the abusive partner is complicated in those circumstances. Because it is such a common component of responses to abused women, it is worthy of further study. Specifically, studies could investigate whether responses that derogate the abusive partner and the relationship become more acceptable later in the support process, perhaps in discussions subsequent to the first disclosure or after the abusive relationship has ended. In addition, the difference between negative comments about the partner's behaviour versus about the partner as a person could be explored.

Future studies could assess abused women's reasons for disclosure. Several studies have examined reasons why abused women do not disclose. It is possible that their motivation for disclosing would affect the way that they present their situation, and how they evaluate the responses they receive. Furthermore, their reasons for choosing a particular confidant could be explored on the same grounds. Finally, the ways that abused women elicit support could be assessed, because these could influence the responses received and their subsequent evaluation. Cutrona et al. (1990) developed a coding scheme for elicitation strategies that could prove to be useful in these types of investigations.

It would also be helpful to assess how many people abused women tell. If they only tell one person, that places a tremendous responsibility on that one individual as compared to situations where the abused woman seeks support from a number of individuals.

Summary/Conclusions

One of the most compelling findings of the present study is that a majority (79.3%) of participants who disclosed experiences of abuse received at least one unsupportive behaviour from their confidants, and that 72.6% of participants who had been confidants offered at least one unsupportive behaviour. Nonetheless, many participants reported overall satisfaction with the support they received from friends and relatives, and similarly positive evaluations were offered by confidants. Thus, the picture is not entirely negative.

The present study replicated previous findings regarding what abused women find helpful and unhelpful with a larger and more diverse sample. The importance of emotional support and validation of abused women's self-worth was confirmed in the present study. In addition, the conclusion of earlier studies (e.g., Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993) that anger toward the abusive partner is a complicated issue was also replicated in the present study, and needs further study.

With respect to influences on social support and evaluation, one of the main questions addressed in the present study was the role of the confidant's abuse. It seems that a disparity in the experience of abuse between the abused woman and her confidant often leads to unsupportive responses, even after other influences on social

support were held constant. The confidant's loyalty to the woman's abusive partner also complicates her ability to provide effective social support. The confidant's attributions for the woman's abuse also played a role, as predicted. Confidants who held women responsible for the origin of the abuse were less supportive. Moreover, women's attributions for their own abuse influenced their reactions to social support attempts. For example, if women blamed their partners for the abuse, they evaluated the response they received as less supportive and as having a negative impact on their relationship with their partners. General factors such as the abused women's beliefs about help-seeking and their relationship history with the confidants also affected their perceptions of social support. All of these factors play a role in social support for abused women, and their reactions to such support. These results illustrate important areas to address in educating abused women and potential confidants about how to best support women who experience violence in intimate relationships.

Endnotes

1. Prior to aggregating the confidants who had not been abused with the confidants who had been abused since the disclosure, these two groups were compared on the dependent variables and the patterns of correlations between the independent and dependent variables. Multivariate ANOVAs on the supportive and unsupportive scores and the three outcome scales revealed no significant differences between the nonabused confidants and those abused after the disclosure. Comparisons of the correlations between the independent and dependent variables across these two groups revealed no significant differences. Thus it was deemed appropriate to aggregate the two groups into the nonabused category.
2. Prior to aggregating the participants who were confidants to other abused women who had not been abused themselves with those who had been abused after the disclosure, the two groups were compared on the dependent variables and the patterns of correlations between the independent and dependent variables. Multivariate ANOVAs of the supportive and unsupportive scores and the three outcome scores revealed no significant differences. Comparisons of the correlations between the independent and dependent variables across the two groups revealed only one significant difference; specifically, the correlation of the total abuse score of the women who disclosed to participants (covariate) and the Negative Outcome score differed across the two groups. Thus, it was deemed appropriate to aggregate the two groups into the nonabused category.

3. Paired t-tests were performed to compare the self-report to the confidant's report on the supportive and unsupportive behaviour scores. These comparisons revealed that confidants reported significantly more supportive and significantly less unsupportive behaviour, $t_s = -3.62$ and 3.84 , $p < .001$).

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Appendix A

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ (please print), hereby understand and consent to the following:

I am being asked to answer a series of questions asking about: 1) my experiences in intimate relationships, 2) seeking help for problems in those relationships, and 3) helping others who had problems in relationships. Although many of the questions are of a general nature, some of them ask about very personal matters that are potentially upsetting to some people such as conflict in relationships and problems finding support from friends and family. The purpose of this study is to learn how to help those who are having problems in intimate relationships.

I am aware that my participation in this study is completely voluntary. I have the right to withdraw from participation at any time without explanation or penalty, and I may also refrain from answering any questions that I prefer to omit. I may ask questions any time during my participation, and Katy Dunham (doctoral student) or Dr. Charlene Senn (supervisor) can be contacted for any further questions, comments or discussion. Confidentiality regarding my responses will be protected by not having my name or any other identifying information appear on the survey. The results of this study may be published at a later date, but my identity or that of the other participants will not be known. If I want feedback concerning the results of the study, I can ask the doctoral student to mail me a summary of the findings.

I am being asked to participate on one occasion for approximately 1 hour. I will receive two (2) experimental credit points for my participation.

This procedure has been reviewed and cleared by the University of Windsor Department of Psychology Ethics Committee. Questions or comments can be directed to Katy Dunham at ext. 2217 or Dr. Charlene Senn at ext. 2255, or to the Chair of the Ethics Committee at ext. 2217. I have received a copy of this form. The copy of the consent form which I submit to the researcher will be kept separate from my survey to protect my identity.

I understand this information and voluntarily consent to participate in this study conducted by Katy Dunham, a PhD student, working under the supervision of Dr. Charlene Senn.

Signature

Date

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ (please print), hereby understand and consent to the following:

I am being asked to answer a series of questions asking about: 1) my experiences in intimate relationships, 2) seeking help for problems in those relationships, and 3) helping others who had problems in relationships. Although many of the questions are of a general nature, some of them ask about very personal matters that are potentially upsetting to some people such as conflict in relationships and problems finding support from friends and family. The purpose of this study is to learn how to help those who are having problems in intimate relationships.

I am aware that my participation in this study is completely voluntary. I have the right to withdraw from participation at any time without explanation or penalty, and I may also refrain from answering any questions that I prefer to omit. I may ask questions any time during my participation, and Katy Dunham (doctoral student) or Dr. Charlene Senn (supervisor) can be contacted for any further questions, comments or discussion. Confidentiality regarding my responses will be protected by not having my name or any other identifying information appear on the survey. The results of this study may be published at a later date, but my identity or that of the other participants will not be known. If I want feedback concerning the results of the study, I can ask the doctoral student to mail me a summary of the findings.

I am being asked to participate on one occasion for approximately 1 hour. I will receive a raffle ticket for one of 2 cash prizes of 50 dollars each for my participation.

This procedure has been reviewed and cleared by the University of Windsor Department of Psychology Ethics Committee. Questions or comments can be directed to Katy Dunham at ext. 2217 or Dr. Charlene Senn at ext. 2255, or to the Chair of the Ethics Committee at ext. 2217. I have received a copy of this form. The copy of the consent form which I submit to the researcher will be kept separate from my survey to protect my identity.

I understand this information and voluntarily consent to participate in this study conducted by Katy Dunham, a PhD student, working under the supervision of Dr. Charlene Senn.

Signature

Date

Information about the Study

This study was designed to examine the responses women receive when they tell a friend or a relative about problems they are having in a romantic relationship. More specifically, the purpose was to examine how women reveal their experiences with serious conflicts with their partner to friends or relatives, and what responses they receive.

The information to be gained from this study will help psychologists learn about how women seek help for problems in their relationships, and to learn what responses women find helpful in these situations. This information can be shared with the community at large through educational campaigns, so that we can all learn how to help women experiencing serious problems with their partners.

According to previous studies, many women find it difficult to tell others about serious problems they are having with their partners, such as physical or psychological abuse. Once they do discuss them, they do not always receive a response that they find helpful or supportive. Studies suggest that when a woman reveals such problems, she faces the possibility of shame and embarrassment, upsetting her partner if he learns she has told someone about their problems. She may also receive unhelpful advice or blame from the person she tells. Women want to be provided with a safe and supportive context to discuss problems they are having with their partners. They want someone to hear what they feel and not blame them for the partner's behaviour. They sometimes also need practical help to get out of the relationship, but they must be allowed to make that decision on their own.

It can sometimes be painful to think about relationships that have hurt us or people we care about. If you find yourself feeling upset about this now or in the days ahead, please call one of the services listed for assistance.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact Katy Dunham through the Psychology Department (253-4232, ext. 2217). Thank you again for your participation in this study.

Appendix B

Instructions:

There are four major parts to this survey. Certain parts of the survey may not apply to you, and you will be instructed to skip these sections. **Please read the instructions for each section carefully** and ask questions if you are unsure of how to proceed.

Thank you very much for your participation.

Information about You

What is your age? ____

What is the highest educational level you have achieved?

- Some college/some university (year level ____)
- College diploma/degree
- University degree
- Postgraduate degree

To which ethnic group(s) do you belong?

- European Canadian (i.e., Caucasian)
- Afro-Canadian
- Native/First Nations
- Latin American
- Asian Canadian
- Other: (please specify)_____

What is your religious affiliation?

- Roman Catholic
- Protestant
- Jewish
- Other: (please specify)_____
- None

What is your relationship status at this time?

- Casually dating Not currently in a relationship
- Exclusively dating
- Engaged
- Married
- Living together
- Divorced or separated
- Other: (please specify)_____

What is your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual (straight)
- Lesbian/Gay
- Bisexual
- Not sure

Appendix C

Please answer these questions about the person who you FIRST told about the incidents in your intimate relationship:

What was their sex? Male Female

How old was s/he at the time? ____ How old were you at the time? ____

To which ethnic group(s) does s/he belong?

European Canadian (i.e.,Caucasian)

Afro-Canadian

Native/First Nations

Latin American

Asian Canadian

Other: (please specify) _____

What is her/his religious affiliation?

Roman Catholic

Protestant

Jewish

Other: (please specify) _____

None

Do not know

What was her/his relationship status at the time?

Casually dating Not in a relationship at the time

Exclusively dating

Engaged

Married

Living together

Divorced or separated

Other: (please specify) _____

What is her/his sexual orientation?

Heterosexual (straight)

Lesbian/gay

Bisexual

Not sure

What level of education has s/he completed?

Some high school

High school diploma

Some college/Some university

College diploma/degree/certificate

University degree

Postgraduate degree

not sure

Appendix D

Please answer the following questions about the person who discussed problems in her intimate relationship with you:

How old was she at the time (approximately)? _____

How old were you at the time (approximately)? _____

To which ethnic group(s) does she belong?

- European Canadian (i.e.,Caucasian)
- Afro-Canadian
- Native/First Nations
- Latin American
- Asian Canadian
- Other: (please specify)_____

What is her religious affiliation?

- Roman Catholic
- Protestant
- Jewish
- Other: (please specify)_____
- None
- Do not know

What was her relationship status at the time?

- Casually dating Not in a relationship at that time
- Exclusively dating
- Engaged
- Married
- Living together
- Divorced or separated
- Other: (please specify)_____

What level of education has she completed?

- Some high school
- High school diploma
- Some college/Some university
- College diploma/degree/certificate
- University degree
- Postgraduate degree
- Not sure

What is her sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual (straight)
- Lesbian/gay
- Bisexual
- Not sure

Appendix E

Measure of Wife Abuse
(modified from Rodenburg & Fantuzzo, 1993)

The tables below list a number of experiences you may have had with male partners on dates or in intimate relationships. If a male partner has ever engaged in any of these behaviours in a relationship with you, please indicate how many times each behaviour occurred in the **last 6 months** of the relationship in the first column of the table. **If the incidents occurred in more than one relationship, please answer only for the relationship that most affected you.** It can be a current or past relationship. Next, please indicate **how much each behaviour that you experienced hurt or upset you** by placing a check in the appropriate column. If you did not experience a particular behaviour, please put a zero (0) in the first column.

So, for each behaviour you should indicate how many times it occurred in the last 6 months of the relationship and how much it hurt or upset you.

	No. of times in 6 months	Never hurt or upset me	Rarely hurt or upset me	Sometimes hurt or upset me	Often hurt or upset me
Your partner screamed at you					
Your partner squeezed your pelvis or breasts					
Your partner imprisoned you in your bedroom or your home					
Your partner threw objects at you					
Your partner kneed you in the genital area					
Your partner called you a whore					
Your partner slapped you					
Your partner locked you out of your home					
Your partner told you that you were crazy					
Your partner put foreign objects in your vagina or cut your pubic hair					
Your partner mutilated your genitals					

	No. of times in 6 months	Never hurt or upset me	Rarely hurt or upset me	Sometimes hurt or upset me	Often hurt or upset me
Your partner told you he would kill your children					
Your partner tried to rape you					
Your partner took your wallet or car keys, or disabled your car, leaving you stranded					
Your partner punched you or kicked you					
Your partner told you he was going to kill you					
Your partner kidnapped your children					
Your partner stole your possessions including food or money					
Your partner told you that no one would ever want you					
Your partner told you that you were lazy					
Your partner stabbed you with a knife or shot you with a gun					
Your partner called you a bitch					
Your partner told you he was going to take away your children					
Your partner attempted suicide					
Your partner called you a cunt					
Your partner hit you with a belt or whipped you					

	No. of times in 6 months	Never hurt or upset me	Rarely hurt or upset me	Sometimes hurt or upset me	Often hurt or upset me
Your partner prostituted you or forced you to have sex with other partners					
Your partner told you that you were not good enough					
Your partner shook you or pushed you					
Your partner forced you to have sex with animals					
Your partner treated you as a sex object					
Your partner called you stupid					
Your partner told you he would kill your parents or family					
Your partner told you that you were ugly					
Your partner ripped your clothes off					
Your partner forced you to do unwanted sex acts					
Your partner choked you					
Your partner turned off your electricity					
Your partner bit you or scratched you with his fingernails					
Your partner raped you					
Your partner burned you or your hair					

	No. of times in 6 months	Never hurt or upset me	Rarely hurt or upset me	Sometimes hurt or upset me	Often hurt or upset me
Your partner followed you, harassed you at work or school, or hung around outside your home					
Your partner threw you onto the furniture					
Your partner harassed you over the telephone					
Your partner took porno pictures of you					
Your partner told you that you were a horrible partner					

How long had you been seeing your partner when these incidents started?

- never occurred
- 0-6 months
- 7-12 months
- 13-18 months
- 19-24 months
- over 2 years

How long did the incidents last?

- never occurred
- 0-6 months
- 7-12 months
- 13-18 months
- 19-24 months
- over 2 years

Which of the following best describes your relationship with the man who engaged in any of the behaviours?

- Casual dating
- Exclusively dating
- Engaged
- Married
- Living together
- Other: _____

Appendix F

Provider's experiences of abuse

(modified from Rodenburg & Fantuzzo, 1993)

Only answer this section if the person you told about incidents in your relationship was a woman. If it was a man, please skip now to page 13.

Has the woman you told about incidents in your relationship ever had similar experiences? Yes No Do not know. **If no or you do not know, please skip to pg. 13.**

If yes, please comment on her experiences. _____

If you know of any **specific incidents** she experienced, please check them off in the list below.

Her partner:

- screamed at her
- squeezed her pelvis or breasts
- imprisoned her in her bedroom or her home
- threw objects at her
- kneed her in the genital area
- called her a whore
- slapped her
- locked her out of her home
- told her she was crazy
- put foreign objects in her vagina or cut her pubic hair
- mutilated her genitals
- bit her or scratched her with his fingernails
- burned her or her hair
- followed her, harassed her at work, or hung around her home
- told her he would kill her children
- tried to rape her
- took her wallet or car keys, or disabled her car, leaving her stranded
- punched her or kicked her
- told her he was going to kill her
- kidnapped her children
- stole her possessions, including food or money
- told her no one would ever want her
- told her she was lazy
- stabbed her with a knife or shot her with a gun
- called her a bitch
- told her he was going to take away her children
- attempted suicide

- called her a cunt
- hit her with a belt or whipped her
- raped her
- threw her onto the furniture
- harassed her over the telephone
- told her she was a horrible partner
- took porno pictures of her
- prostituted her or forced her to have sex with other partners
- told her she was not good enough
- shook her or pushed her
- forced her to have sex with animals
- treated her a sex object
- told her she was stupid
- told her he would kill her parents or family
- told her she was ugly
- ripped her clothes off
- forced her to do unwanted sex acts
- choked her
- turned off her electricity

To your knowledge, how long had she been seeing this partner when these incidents started?

- 0-6 months never occurred
- 7-12 months
- 13-18 months
- 19-24 months
- over 2 years

To your knowledge, how long did these incidents last?

- 0-6 months never occurred
- 7-12 months
- 13-18 months
- 19-24 months
- over 2 years

To your knowledge, how often did these incidents occur?

- | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Rarely | | | | | | All the time |

To your knowledge, how severe were these incidents?

- | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Not at all | | | | | | Very severe |
| severe | | | | | | |

What was her relationship to the man who engaged in these behaviours?

- Casual dating
- Exclusively dating
- Engaged
- Married
- Living together
- Divorced/separated

Did the incidents in her relationship occur before you told her about the problems in your relationship which you described in the coloured section? Yes No

Did you know about her experiences at the time you told her about the incidents in your relationship? Yes No

Appendix G

Experiences of abuse of abused woman who disclosed to participant
(Modified from Rodenburg & Fantuzzo, 1993)

First, please read through the following list of incidents which can occur in an intimate relationship. You may know female friends, relatives or acquaintances who have experienced one or many of these incidents. You may know only one person, or several, who have experienced these incidents. Did a female friend, relative, or acquaintance ever tell you that she had experienced ANY of the incidents listed below? Yes No.

If not, please skip to the yellow section.

If a woman has told you about any of these incidents, please think of the **FIRST WOMAN WHO TOLD YOU** that she had experienced them. For **THIS WOMAN ONLY**, please check off any incidents, that you know about, which she experienced. Check as many as apply to **THIS WOMAN ONLY**.

Was this the same woman you told about the incidents in your relationship (whom you described in the last section of the questionnaire)? Yes No.

Her partner:

- screamed at her
- squeezed her pelvis or breasts
- imprisoned her in her bedroom or her home
- threw objects at her
- kneed her in the genital area
- called her a whore
- slapped her
- locked her out of her home
- told her she was crazy
- put foreign objects in her vagina or cut her pubic hair
- mutilated her genitals
- bit her or scratched her with his fingernails
- burned her or her hair
- followed her, harassed her at work, or hung around her home
- told her he would kill her children
- tried to rape her
- took her wallet or car keys, or disabled her car, leaving her stranded
- punched her or kicked her
- told her he was going to kill her
- kidnapped her children
- stole her possessions, including food or money
- told her no one would ever want her
- told her she was lazy

- stabbed her with a knife or shot her with a gun
- called her a bitch
- told her he was going to take away her children
- attempted suicide
- called her a cunt
- hit her with a belt or whipped her
- raped her
- threw her onto the furniture
- harassed her over the telephone
- told her she was a horrible partner
- took porno pictures of her
- prostituted her or forced her to have sex with other partners
- told her she was not good enough
- shook her or pushed her
- forced her to have sex with animals
- treated her a sex object
- told her she was stupid
- told her he would kill her parents or family
- told her she was ugly
- ripped her clothes off
- forced her to do unwanted sex acts
- choked her
- turned off her electricity

How long had the woman been seeing this partner when these incidents started?

- 0-6 months
- 7-12 months
- 13-18 months
- 19-24 months
- over 2 years

How long did these incidents last?

- 0-6 months
- 7-12 months
- 13-18 months
- 19-24 months
- over 2 years

To your knowledge, how often did these incidents occur?

- | | | | | | | |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Rarely | | | | | | All the time |

Appendix H

Attitudes toward Dating Violence
(Byers, 1995)

The statements below describe attitudes toward a variety of behaviours in intimate relationships. There are no right and wrong answers, only opinions. Therefore it is very important that you answer each question honestly.

Please express your agreement with each statement by placing a check in the appropriate column.

	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree
A guy should not insult his girlfriend. (ps)*					
A guy should not tell his girlfriend what to do. (ps)*					
A girl should ask her boyfriend first before going out with her friends. (ps)					
Relationships always work best when girls please their boyfriends.(ps)					
There is never a reason for a guy to threaten his girlfriend. (ps)					
Sometimes guys just can't help but swear at their girlfriends. (ps)					
A girl should always change her ways to please her boyfriend. (ps)					
A girl should always do what her boyfriend tells her to do. (ps)					
A guy does not need to know his girlfriend's every move. (ps) *					
There is never a good enough reason for a guy to swear at his girlfriend. (ps) *					
It is understandable when a guy gets so angry that he yells at his girlfriend. (ps)					
It is okay for a guy to badmouth his girlfriend. (ps)					

	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree
There is never a reason for a guy to yell and scream at his girlfriend. (ps) *					
A girl should not see her friends if it bothers her boyfriend. (ps)					
It is important for a girl to always dress the way her boyfriend wants. (ps)					
A girl should break up with a guy when he hits her. (ph) *					
Some girls deserve to be slapped by their boyfriends. (ph)					
It is never okay for a guy to hit his girlfriend. (ph) *					
Sometimes guys just cannot stop themselves from punching girlfriends. (ph)					
There is no good reason for a guy to push his girlfriend. (ph) *					
Sometimes a guy cannot help hitting his girlfriend when she makes him angry. (ph)					
There is no good reason for a guy to slap his girlfriend. (ph) *					
Sometimes jealousy makes a guy so crazy that he must slap his girlfriend. (ph)					
Girls who cheat on their boyfriends should be slapped. (ph)					
Sometimes love makes a guy so crazy that he hits his girlfriend. (ph)					
A guy usually does not slap his girlfriend unless she deserves it. (ph)					
It's okay for a guy to slap his girlfriend if she deserves it. (ph)					

*recoded

(ph=Attitude toward physical abuse; ps=Attitude toward psychological abuse)

Appendix I

Appendix J

Origin and solution attributions of
responsibility for wife abuse
(Sugarman & Cohn, 1986)

The "problem" mentioned in the following 6 items refers to the incident(s) on pgs. 1-2 of THIS section which your friend, relative, or acquaintance experienced. Please circle the option that best describes your views.

1) How responsible was the woman for the origin of the problem?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not at all responsible								Totally responsible

2) How responsible was the woman for finding a solution to the problem?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not at all responsible								Totally responsible

3) How much control did the woman have over finding a solution to the problem?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No control								Total control

4) How responsible was her male partner for the origin of the problem?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not at all responsible								Totally responsible

5) How responsible was her male partner for finding a solution to the problem?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Not at all responsible								Totally responsible

6) How much control did her male partner have over finding a solution to the problem?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No control								Total control

Appendix K

Questions about disclosure of abuse and response

(Barbee, 1990; Cutrona, Suhr, & McFarlane, 1990; Goldsmith & Parks, 1990; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; modified by Dunham, 1995)

If you did NOT experience any of the incidents in a relationship listed in the tables on pgs. 5-8 in the blue section, please SKIP now to pink section.

The focus of this section of the survey is to explore how women share their relationship experiences with others and the ways in which people they tell are helpful or not.

Have you ever told a friend, relative or acquaintance about the incidents you described on pgs. 5-8 in the blue section? Yes No

If you did NOT tell anyone, why didn't you? _____

If you did NOT tell anyone about ANY of the incidents, please SKIP NOW to the pink section.

If you HAVE told anyone about those incidents, **PLEASE THINK OF THE FIRST PERSON YOU TOLD** who was not a professional (e.g., therapist, doctor, etc). Think of the first friend, relative or acquaintance you told, and respond to the following sections with regard to THAT first time.

What is this person's relationship to you (e.g., friend, mother, etc)? _____

Did you tell this person about all the incidents? Yes No
 If you only discussed some of the incidents, which did you discuss? **Please be specific.** _____

How long had the incidents gone on in your intimate relationship before you discussed it with this person?

- immediately discussed them
- less than 3 months
- 4-6 months
- 7-12 months
- 1-2 years
- more than 2 years
- after relationship had ended

Appendix L

The person you told about the incidents in your relationship may have reacted in a number of ways. Some you may have considered helpful, some less so.

Use the checklist below to describe this person's reactions when you told them about the incidents with your partner. Check as many as apply.

Remember to respond according to this first discussion. There may have been other discussions since then which were different; we want to know about the FIRST discussion.

Check as many as apply.

Behaviour:	Occurred
offered helpful advice, ideas and suggestions	
suggested you contact other source of help	
summarized the situation for you	
reassessed or redefined the situation	
provided detailed information about your situation or ways to deal with situation	
said positive things about you or emphasized your abilities	
expressed agreement with your perspective on the situation	
tried to alleviate your feelings of guilt about the situation	
reminded you not to worry about situation	
left you alone at your request	
offered to lend you something	
offered to perform a task directly related to the stress you were under, e.g., help you move away from partner	

Check as many as apply.

Behaviour:	Occurred
offered to take over your responsibilities while you were under stress	
offered to remove you from the situation to distract you from the stress	
expressed willingness to help you	
stressed the importance of closeness and love in her/his relationship with you	
offered you physical comfort, including hugs, handholding, etc	
promised to keep situation in confidence	
expressed sorrow or regret for your situation or distress	
made attentive comments as you spoke	
expressed understanding of your situation or disclosed a personal experience that communicated understanding	
provided you with hope and confidence	
prayed with you	
offered to spend time with you	
offered to provide you with access to new companions	
told a story that others have been through similar situations	
made fun of your situation	
told you that your situation was not serious	
laughed when you did not	
talked about their problems which they felt were bigger	
talked about another topic	
ignored you	
left the room when you discussed your situation	
gave you unhelpful advice	

Appendix M

The following statements refer to the conversation where you FIRST told someone about the incidents in your relationship from pgs. 5-8 of the blue section. Please circle the option that best describes your views.

I was satisfied with the way our conversation went. (e)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Our conversation helped me decide what to do about the problem. (e)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

I saw the problem a lot more clearly after talking to this person. (e)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

This person blew the problem all out of proportion by making it sound bigger than it really was. (pw)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Sharing the problem put too great a burden on this person. (nb)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Nothing was accomplished in this conversation. (e) *

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

This person was quite negative about my partner during the conversation. (np)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Talking about the problem emotionally drained this person. (nb)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

We had a really good talk about the problem that was bothering me. (e)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Talking with this person made the problem seem more complex. (pw)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

This person was quite positive about my romantic relationship during the conversation. (np) *

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

It took too much effort to have this conversation. (nb)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

I got a lot of useful information relating to the problem during our conversation. (e)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Talking to this person increased the chance that s/he will interfere. (nb)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Sharing the problem with this person made me feel like I owed him/her something that I did not want to owe. (pw)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

This person was not very supportive. (nb)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

This person reacted much more negatively than I thought s/he would. (nb)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Our conversation gave this person a bad impression of my romantic relationship. (np)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Talking to this person left me even more upset about the problem.(pw)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Sharing the problem with this person made my romantic partner look bad. (np)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

I felt much more in control of this situation after we talked than before we talked. (e)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

e=enhanced certainty/control; pw=problem worse; nb=negative behaviour; np=negative view of partner; *=recoded

The following items deal with how you think talking about your problem affected your relationship with the person you talked to about the problem. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below.

I felt closer to this person after talking with him/her.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Talking about this problem will probably create problems in my relationship with him/her.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

This person probably likes me less now than before we talked about the problem.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Sharing the problem with this person made me appreciate just how important s/he is to me.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

The following items deal with how you think talking about your problem affected your relationship with your romantic partner (the man who engaged in the behaviours on pgs. 5-8 of the blue section).

If you were no longer involved with the partner at the time you told someone about the incidents in your relationship with him, please omit these next 4 items, and indicate here this was the case: Was no longer involved with partner (_ yes).

Otherwise, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below.

I felt closer to my romantic partner after talking to this person.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Discussing the problem with this person made me realize that I may need to end my relationship with my romantic partner.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Discussing the problem with this person made me more satisfied with my romantic relationship.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Discussing the problem with this person made me realize just how important my romantic partner is to me.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Do you have any additional comments about this first discussion? Is there anything else you would like us to know?

Appendix N

Network Orientation Scale

(Vaux et al., 1986)

The following set of items concern your thoughts about seeking help from others for personal problems. Please indicate your agreement with the following items by placing a check in the appropriate column.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Sometimes it is necessary to talk to someone about your problems.*				
Friends often have good advice to give.*				
You have to be careful who you tell personal things to.				
I often get useful information from other people.*				
People should keep their problems to themselves.				
It's easy for me to talk about personal and private matters.*				
In the past, friends have really helped me out when I've had a problem.*				
You can never trust people to keep a secret.				
When a person gets upset they should talk it over with a friend.*				
Other people never understand my problems.				
Almost everyone knows someone they can trust with a personal secret.*				
If you can't figure out your problems, nobody can.				
In the past, I have rarely found other people's opinions helpful when I have a problem.				
It really helps when you are angry to tell a friend what happened.*				

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Some things are too personal to talk to anyone about.				
It's fairly easy to tell who you can trust, and who you can't.*				
In the past, I have been hurt by people I confided in.				
If you confide in other people, they will take advantage of you.				
It's okay to ask favours of people.*				
Even if I need something, I would hesitate to borrow it from someone.				

* recoded

Appendix O

Quality of Relationships Inventory
(Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason, 1991)

The following questions concern your relationship with the person you first told about the incidents in your relationship. Place a check in the appropriate column.

	Not at all	A little	Quite a bit	Very much
To what extent could you turn to this person for advice about problems? (ss)				
How often do you need to work hard to avoid conflict with this person? (c)				
To what extent could you count on this person for help with a problem? (ss)				
How upset does this person sometimes make you feel? (c)				
To what extent can you count on this person to give you honest feedback, even if you might not want to hear it? (ss)				
How much does this person make you feel guilty? (c)				
How much do you have to "give in" in this relationship? (c)				
To what extent can you count on this person to help you if a family member very close to you died? (ss)				
How much does this person want you to change? (c)				
How positive a role does this person play in your life? (d)				
How significant is this relationship in your life? (d)				
How close will your relationship be with this person in 10 years? (d)				
How much would you miss this person if you could not talk to each other for a month? (d)				
How critical of you is this person? (c)				

	Not at all	A little	Quite a bit	Very much
If you wanted to go out and do something this evening, how confident are you that this person would be willing to do something with you? (ss)				
How responsible do you feel for this person's wellbeing? (d)				
How much do you depend on this person? (d)				
To what extent can you count on this person to listen to you when you are very angry at someone else? (ss)				
How much would you like this person to change? (c)				
How angry does this person make you feel? (c)				
How much do you argue with this person? (c)				
To what extent can you really count on this person to distract you from your worries when you feel under stress? (ss)				
How often does this person make you feel angry? (c)				
How often does this person try to control or influence your life? (c)				
How much more do you give than you get from this relationship? (c)				

ss =social support subscale

c = conflict subscale

d = depth subscale

Appendix P

Appendix Q

Appendix R

Disclosure: Provider's perspective

(Barbee, 1990; Cutrona, Suhr, & McFarlane, 1990; Goldsmith & Parks, 1990; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; modified by Dunham, 1995)

The following questions refer to the first woman who told you about these incidents in her relationship and the conversation when she told you.

What is this person's relationship to you (e.g. friend, mother)? _____

How long had the incidents gone on in her intimate relationship before she told you?

- immediately told you
- less than 3 months
- 4-6 months
- 7-12 months
- 1-2 years
- more than 2 years
- after relationship had ended

If you experienced any of the incidents on pgs. 5-8 of the blue section, did these incidents occur before this woman told you about the problems in her relationship?
 Yes No

Did she know about your experiences (pgs. 5-8, blue section) at the time she told you about the problems in her relationship? Yes No

You may have had a variety of reactions to the woman who told you about the incidents in her intimate relationship. Some may have been helpful, some less so.

Please use the checklist below to describe your reactions when she told you about the incidents with her partner. Check as many as apply.

You may have had other discussions since then, but please refer ONLY to the FIRST discussion and how you reacted then.

Appendix S

Check as many as apply.

Behaviour:	Occurred
offered helpful advice, ideas and suggestions	
suggested she contact other source of help	
summarized the situation for her	
reassessed or redefined the situation	
provided detailed information about her situation or ways to deal with situation	
said positive things about her or emphasized her abilities	
expressed agreement with her perspective on the situation	
tried to alleviate her feelings of guilt about the situation	
reminded her not to worry about situation	
left her alone at her request	
offered to lend her something	
offered to perform a task directly related to the stress she was under, for example, help her move away from partner	
offered to take over her responsibilities while she was under stress	
offered to remove her from the situation to distract her from the stress	
expressed willingness to help her	
stressed importance of closeness and love in your relationship with her	
offered her physical comfort, including hugs, handholding, shoulder pats, etc.	
promised to keep situation in confidence	
expressed sorrow or regret for her situation or distress	
made attentive comments as she spoke	
expressed understanding of her situation or disclosed a personal experience that communicated understanding	
provided her with hope and confidence	
prayed with her	

Check as many as apply.

	Occurred
offered to spend time with her	
offered to provide her with access to new companions	
told a story that others have been through similar situations	
made fun of her situation	
told her that her situation was not serious	
laughed when she did not	
talked about your problems which you felt were bigger	
talked about another topic	
ignored her	
left the room when she discussed her situation	
gave her unhelpful advice	
got angry with her partner	
saw her as a failure, blamed her for the situation	
made decisions for her	
wanted to seek revenge on her partner	
Other: _____	
Other: _____	
Other: _____	

Do you think could you have been more supportive to her? If so, how?
(leave space)

What do you think was the form of help or support that would be most beneficial to someone in her position? Please comment.
(leave space)

Appendix T

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about the conversation with the woman who first told you about the incidents in her relationship by circling the most appropriate option.

Sharing the problem put too great a burden on me. (nb)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

I was quite negative about her partner during the conversation. (np)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Talking about the problem emotionally drained me. (nb)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

We had a really good talk about the problem that was bothering her.(e)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

I was quite positive about her romantic relationship during the conversation. (np) *

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

It took too much effort for her to have this conversation. (nb)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

I was not very supportive. (nb)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Our conversation gave me a bad impression of her romantic relationship. (np)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Talking to me left her even more upset about the problem.(pw)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Sharing the problem with me made her partner look bad. (np)

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

e=enhanced certainty/control; np=negative view of partner; nb=negative behaviour; pw=problem worse; nb=negative behaviour; np=negative view of partner

The following items deal with how you think talking about your problem affected your relationship with the person you talked to about the problem. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below by circling the most appropriate option.

I felt closer to this person after talking with her.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Talking about this problem will probably create problems in my relationship with her.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

This person probably likes me less now than before we talked about the problem.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

Sharing the problem with this person made me appreciate just how important she is to me.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------------------	----------------	-------	----------------	---------------------

The following items deal with how you think talking about the problem affected her relationship with her romantic partner (the man who engaged in the behaviours on pgs. 1-2 of THIS section).

If she was no longer involved with the partner at the time she told you about the incidents in her relationship with him, please omit these next 4 items, and indicate here this was the case: Was no longer involved with partner (___ yes).

Otherwise, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements below by circling the most appropriate option.

She felt closer to her romantic partner after talking to me.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
---------------------------	----------------------	----------	----------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------	-------	-------------------	------------------------

Discussing the problem with me made her realize that she may need to end her relationship with her romantic partner.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
---------------------------	----------------------	----------	----------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------	-------	-------------------	------------------------

Discussing the problem with me made her more satisfied with her romantic relationship.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
---------------------------	----------------------	----------	----------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------	-------	-------------------	------------------------

Discussing the problem with me made her realize just how important her romantic partner is to her.

Very strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Very strongly agree
---------------------------	----------------------	----------	----------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------	-------	-------------------	------------------------

Do you have any additional comments about this first discussion?

Appendix U

Filler Measure

Only complete this section if:

a) you did NOT experience the incidents in the tables on pgs. 5-8 of the blue section in a relationship,

OR b) you have not been told by another woman about incidents in her relationships.

You may have become aware in some way that a woman had experienced some of the incidents in the tables on pgs. 5-8 of the blue section. Perhaps you heard about it from a third person, or witnessed the incident yourself. If you have learned about a situation like this without the woman telling you herself, please describe the situation below in your own words. Discuss how you learned about the incidents, and what, if anything, you did after learning about them.

Appendix V

Table V.1.

Comparisons of psychology versus other departments on dependent variables.

Variable	<u>F</u> ^a	<u>p</u>
Support received	2.03	.14
Support offered	1.42	.24
Outcome (self-report)	0.10	.96
Outcomes (support offered)	0.03	.99

^a multivariate F values.

Appendix W

Table W.1.

Order effects on dependent variables.

Variable	F ^a	p
Support received	0.48	.82
Support offered	0.46	.83
Outcomes (self-report)	0.95	.48
Outcomes (support offered)	0.93	.50

^a multivariate F values

Appendix Pilot

Pilot Study

The pilot study tested several measures developed for the dissertation. A short version of the Measure of Wife Abuse (Rodenburg & Fantuzzo, 1993) was developed by aggregating similar behaviours into fewer items. A modification of Sugarman and Cohn's (1986) measure of origin and solution attributions for abuse was tested. In their study, participants were presented with a vignette describing an incident of abuse. For this study, the participants were instructed to refer to the incidents of abuse in the MWA that either they or a friend or relative had experienced, to respond to the attribution items. The rest of the measures used in the pilot study were those developed for the dissertation study.

Method

Participants

The 72 participants for the pilot study were recruited from three introductory psychology classes, and were offered 2 bonus points for participation. The age of the participants ranged from 17 to 28 years ($M=20.04$, $SD=2.15$). Seventy-seven percent reported they were Euro-Canadian, 6% Afro-Canadian, 14% Asian, and 3% "Other." Forty-six percent were currently exclusively dating, 21% were not involved with a partner, 18% were casually dating, 6% were cohabiting, 4% were married, and 4% were engaged. All but one participant reported being heterosexual.

Measures

Demographic variables

Several demographic items were included for the participants, the person to whom

they disclosed experiences of abuse, and the person who disclosed abuse to them. These items included age, gender, ethnic background, educational level, religious affiliation, relationship status and sexual orientation.

Measure of Wife Abuse

The Measure of Wife Abuse (MWA; Rodenburg & Fantuzzo, 1993) was administered in its published form and in a short form developed for the pilot study. Half of the participants were given the published form, and half the short form. There are four subscales on the MWA: Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Verbal Abuse, and Psychological Abuse, each with 15 items. One minor addition was made to the published form; an item referring to being burned by the partner was added. In the published scale, one item on the physical abuse subscale asks if the partner burned the woman's hair. As this item seemed overly specific, the more general form of "burned you" was added for comparison. The long (published form) of the MWA contained 61 items and was administered randomly to half of the participants. The short form contained 36 items and was given to the other half. The severity rating was a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Never hurt or upset me" to "Often hurt or upset me." The severity ratings were analyzed for the pilot study, as the scale authors used these ratings for psychometric evaluation of the measure. The ratings per item were summed to form scale scores. Frequencies of the incidents of abuse on the MWA were also requested. The participants were asked in open-ended questions when the incidents had started and how long they had lasted.

Those participants who reported abuse and had disclosed those experiences to a

friend or relative were asked if the person they told had experienced any of the same incidents in a relationship. They were given the MWA in a checklist form. At the end of the checklist, they were asked to rate the severity and frequency of that woman's abuse on 7-point scales. The checklist came in long and short forms as the self-report version of the MWA had.

Those participants who had been told by other women of experiences of abuse were also given a checklist form of the MWA to describe the incidents their friend or relative had experienced, and severity and frequency rating scales as above. The participants were asked to categorize their relationship with the male partner who had been abusive, and the relationship between the woman who disclosed abuse to them and her partner.

Participants' perceptions of experiences as abuse

Those participants who experienced any of the incidents on the MWA were asked if they perceived their experiences as physical abuse, psychological abuse, or sexual abuse (yes/no/uncertain for each).

Participants' attributions for experiences of abuse

Participants were presented with items reflecting origin and solution attributions for their own experiences of abuse as well as those of the women who disclosed abuse to them. These items were developed by Sugarman and Cohn (1986), and consisted of 9-point Likert scales of responsibility for the origin and solution of the "problem", and for control over the solution. Ratings were requested for the woman involved and her abusive male partner.

Participants' disclosure of abuse

Participants who had experienced any of the incidents on the MWA were asked if they had ever told a friend or relative about them. If they had not, they were asked to provide reasons why they had not.

Response to disclosure of abuse

Participants who had disclosed experiences of abuse were asked about the response they had received from their friend or relative. They were presented with a checklist of responses, including both supportive and unsupportive behaviours, and were asked to check those they received, wanted and/or requested upon disclosure. These participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the responses they received on a 7-point Likert scale.

Those participants who had been told by others of experience of abuse were presented with the same checklist, and were asked to check those behaviours they gave and were asked for by the woman who disclosed to them.

Beliefs about romantic relationships (developed for pilot study)

Participants were presented with two items referring to their beliefs about romantic relationships. They were asked to rate the importance of romantic relationships in their lives on a 7-point Likert scale, and to indicate the degree to which they felt a woman should do whatever possible to preserve a romantic relationship on a 7-point scale.

Those participants who had disclosed experiences of abuse to a friend or relative were also asked to respond to these same two items with regard to the beliefs of the person they told. Finally, those participants who had been told by a woman about

experiences of abuse were asked to respond to these two items according to that woman's beliefs.

Loyalties of support provider to abusive partner (developed for pilot study)

Those participants who had disclosed experiences of abuse were asked about the relationship between the person they told and the abusive male partner. They were asked to rate the closeness of that relationship on a 7-point Likert scale, to indicate if the two were related, and if so, how. Finally, they were asked to rate how loyal the person they told was to their partner on a 7-point Likert scale.

Those participants who had been told by another woman about experiences of abuse were asked these same items about their relationship with the partner of the woman who disclosed to them.

Filler measure

There was a possibility that some participants would not have experienced abuse or been told by another woman about experiences of abuse. As a result, these women would require very little time to complete the surveys. In order to avoid embarrassment on the part of the remaining women due to some participants leaving much earlier, and to avoid revealing to other participants that these specific women had not encountered these situations before, a filler measure was included to ensure that all participants would spend a reasonable amount of time completing the surveys. The filler measure consisted of an open-ended question at the end of the surveys which asked if the participants had ever become aware of a woman who was experiencing abuse in an intimate relationship without having been told directly by the

woman involved. If they had, they were asked how they responded to that situation, if at all.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from introductory psychology classes, and were offered 2 bonus points for participation. Women students of any relationship status were invited to participate. They completed the surveys in small groups, and took on average approximately 30-40 minutes to finish. The measures were presented in a specific order. The first section of the surveys was filled out by all participants. The second section was only completed by those women who had experienced abuse, and asked about their disclosure to friends or relatives, the response they received, and the characteristics of the person they told. The third section asked if the participants had ever been told by a friend or relative about experiences of abuse, and if so, asked about that woman's experiences of abuse, the disclosure and the participants' response to it, and the characteristics of that woman. The fourth section contained the filler measure. Those participants for whom the second and third sections did not apply were directed to the filler measure. Upon completion of the surveys, the participants were given their copy of the consent form, a list of phone numbers for relevant community resources, and a one-page feedback sheet which briefly outlined the purposes of the study and the research to date on disclosure and social support for battered women.

Results

Abuse in intimate relationships

The responses to the self-report MWA, specifically the severity ratings, were used to calculate reliability coefficients and descriptive statistics for the total scale and the four subscales. These were computed for both the long and short forms of the MWA. For the long form (61 items), the mean for the total scale was 13.69 (SD=16.93) out of a possible score of 244, and the reliability coefficient was .90. The physical abuse subscale (16 items) had a mean of 2.25 (SD=4.11) out of a possible score of 64, and an alpha of .74. The sexual abuse subscale (15 items) had a mean of 2.33 (SD=3.99) out of a possible score of 60, and an alpha of .66. The psychological abuse subscale (15 items) had a mean of 2.72 (SD=4.19) out of a possible score of 60, and an alpha of .64. The verbal abuse subscale (15 items) had a mean of 6.39 (SD=7.75) out of a possible score of 60, and an alpha of .83. The subscale reliability coefficients for this version of the MWA, obtained by Rodenburg and Fantuzzo (1993), were .81, .73, .94, and .83 for the physical, sexual, psychological and verbal subscales, respectively. They found the total scale had a reliability coefficient of .93.

The short form (36 items) had a mean total scale score of 6.89 (SD=11.62) out of a possible score of 144, and an alpha of .88. The physical abuse subscale (10 items) had a mean of 1.69 (SD=4.03) out of a possible score of 40, and an alpha of .79. The sexual abuse subscale (12 items) had a mean of 2.17 (SD= 4.39) out of a possible score of 48, and an alpha of .78. The psychological abuse subscale (9 items) had a mean of 1.20 (SD=2.99) out of a possible score of 36, and an alpha of .65. The verbal

abuse subscale (5 items) had a mean of 1.47 ($SD=3.06$) out of a possible score of 20, and an alpha of .65. No one endorsed either the "burned your hair" or "burned you" items so no comparison was possible. Open-ended questions for duration of abuse and when it started did not work well; the responses were too vague. Closed-ended questions were used for the dissertation.

Participants' relationship with abusive partner

Of the 46 participants (63.9%) who had experienced at least one incident on the MWA, 30% described their relationship with the abusive partner as casual dating, 61% exclusively dating, 5% engaged, and 5% cohabiting.

Perceptions of experiences as abuse

Of those participants who had experienced at least one incident on the MWA, 16% perceived the experience as physical abuse, 18% stated they were uncertain, and 66% said it was not physical abuse. Forty-five percent perceived their experience as psychological abuse, 9% were uncertain, and 45% said it was not psychological abuse. Nine percent felt their experience was sexual abuse, 14% were uncertain, and 77% said it was not sexual abuse.

Attributions regarding experiences of abuse

The participants rated their own responsibility for the origin of the abuse on a 9-point scale. The mean rating was 3.86 ($SD=2.25$). The mean self-rating of responsibility for the solution to the abuse was 5.30 ($SD=2.20$) and for control over the solution was 5.48 ($SD=1.76$). The mean rating by the participants for their partners' responsibility for the origin of the abuse was 5.94 ($SD=1.78$) and for the

solution to the abuse was 3.54 ($SD=2.55$). They rated his control over the solution to the abuse on the 9-point scale with a mean of 4.52 ($SD=2.34$).

Disclosure of abuse

Of the 46 participants who had experienced at least one incident on the MWA, 80% had disclosed those experiences to a friend or relative and 20% had not. Reasons for not disclosing included statements that the problem was not serious enough to discuss with anyone, and fears that someone would tell them to leave the abusive partner.

Seventy-six percent had told a friend, 8% a parent, and 16% a sibling. The open-ended question regarding how long the abuse had gone on before disclosure did not work well, and a closed-ended item was used for the dissertation. The age of the participants when they disclosed experiences of abuse ranged from 15 to 21 years, with a mean of 18.34 ($SD=1.77$).

Participants' beliefs about romantic relationships

The participants rated the importance of romantic relationships in their lives on a 7-point scale; the mean was 5.69 ($SD=1.05$). They rated their agreement with the statement that a woman should preserve a relationship at all costs on a 7-point scale, with a mean of 2.79 ($SD=1.58$).

Provider characteristics

Those participants who had disclosed experiences of abuse were asked several questions about the person they told (the provider). The age of the providers ranged from 16 to 54 years, with a mean of 20.97 ($SD=7.99$). Eighty-nine percent were Euro-

Canadian, and 11% Asian. Eighty-nine percent were female and 11% male. The frequency breakdown for the relationship status of the provider at the time of disclosure was as follows: 41% not involved, 28% exclusively dating, 19% casually dating, 3% engaged, 8% married, and 3% divorced/separated. The providers' level of education was as follows: 19% had some high school, 30% had a high school diploma, 38% had some college/university, 11% a college degree, and 3% a university degree. All were heterosexual, except one participant who was not sure of her provider's sexual orientation.

The participants were asked about the providers' beliefs about romantic relationships. They rated the importance of romantic relationships in the providers' lives on a 7-point scale with a mean of 5.49 ($SD=1.67$), and the providers' belief that a woman should do whatever possible to preserve a relationship with a mean of 3.71 ($SD=1.87$).

The participants also described the relationship between their provider and the abusive partner. The mean closeness rating was 4.06 ($SD=2.15$). Only 3% were related to the abusive partner. They rated the providers' loyalty to their partner on a 7-point scale with a mean of 3.31 ($SD=2.01$).

The participants were given a checklist form of the MWA to describe the provider's experience with abuse, if any. Both long and short forms of the checklist were used. There was a relatively low rate of response to this measure; an open-ended item was included immediately before this checklist in the dissertation which asked if the provider had experienced incidents in an intimate relationship similar to those that

the participant had disclosed. If they had, they were asked to respond to the checklist if they knew any specific incidents.

The items on the checklist form were scored 0 or 1, so the possible scale scores are equal to the number of items for that scale. For the long form of the checklist, the mean of the total scores was 2.33 (SD=5.14), with an alpha of .93. The mean for the physical abuse subscale (16 items) was .800 (SD=1.66), and an alpha of .79. The mean for the psychological abuse subscale (15 items) was .467 (SD=1.36) and an alpha of .81. The mean for the verbal abuse subscale (15 items) was .867 (SD=3.41), and an alpha of .83. The mean for the sexual abuse subscale (15 items) was .200 (SD=.561), and an alpha of .42. For the short form, the mean of the total scores was .09 (SD=.30). Reliabilities could not be computed due to the low number of responses to the short form.

The participants rated the severity of the providers' experience of abuse on a 7-point scale, with a mean of 3.00 (SD=1.83), and the frequency rating had a mean of 2.71 (SD=1.50). The duration of the abuse and when it started were assessed with open-ended questions; the responses were vague, so closed-ended items were used for the dissertation.

Responses of provider to participants' disclosure:

The 41-item checklist (including 3 "other" responses) included "got," "wanted," and "asked for" columns; these may not have been clear to some participants. The "got" column seemed the most trustworthy. The mean number of behaviours checked in the "got" column was 13.11 (SD=6.40), with an alpha of .85. The mean number of

supportive behaviours in the "got" column (26 possible) was 11.35 ($SD=5.57$), with an alpha of .86. The mean number of unsupportive behaviours in the "got" column (12 possible) was 1.70 ($SD=2.13$), with an alpha of .78. The mean number of behaviours checked in the "asked for" list (41 possible) was 2.06 ($SD=2.31$), with an alpha of .67. The mean number of behaviours in the "wanted" list (41 possible) was 4.49 ($SD=4.70$), with an alpha of .85. The participants rated their satisfaction with the provider's response on a 7-point scale; the mean was 5.57 ($SD=1.09$).

Disclosures to participants

Seventy-one percent of participants had been told by a female friend or relative about experiences of abuse, and 3% had witnessed abuse. Their age when told ranged from 12 to 28 years, with a mean of 18.24 ($SD=2.77$). The women who disclosed abuse to the participants ranged in age from 15 to 65 years, with a mean of 22.90 ($SD=10.21$). Thirty-three percent of these women had some high school, 25% had a high school diploma, 25% had some college/university, 12% a college degree, 4% a university degree, and 2% a postgraduate degree. Eighty-eight percent were Euro-Canadian, 8% Afro-Canadian, and 4% Asian. The women's relationship status at the time of disclosure to the participants were as follows: 15% were not involved (may have meant currently), 8% casual dating, 4% regularly dating, 48% exclusively dating, 4% engaged, 13% married, and 8% cohabiting. The women who disclosed to participants were mostly friends and some relatives including mothers, grandmothers, sisters, etc.

The participants rated the beliefs about romantic relationships of the women who

disclosed abuse to them. They rated the importance of relationships in the woman's life with a mean of 5.86 (SD=1.24) and the belief that a woman should preserve a relationship at all costs with a mean of 4.29 (SD=1.95).

The participants used a checklist form of the MWA to describe the experiences of abuse they had been told about. The items were scored 0 or 1, so the possible scale scores were equal to the length of the scale. For the long form of the checklist (61 items), the total score had a mean of 11.37 (SD=9.72), and an alpha of .94. The psychological abuse subscale (15 items) had a mean of 2.19 (SD=2.48), and an alpha of .79. The verbal abuse subscale (15 items) had a mean of 4.63 (SD=3.60), and an alpha of .86. The physical abuse subscale (16 items) had a mean of 3.26 (SD=3.11), and an alpha of .84. The sexual abuse subscale (15 items) had a mean of 1.30 (SD=2.84), and an alpha of .92.

The short form (36 items) had a mean total score of 6.77 (SD=5.785), and an alpha of .89. The psychological abuse subscale (9 items) had a mean of 1.54 (SD=1.70), and an alpha of .69. The verbal abuse subscale (5 items) had a mean of 1.62 (SD=1.42), and an alpha of .80. The physical abuse subscale (10 items) had a mean of 2.08 (SD=2.19), and an alpha of .80. The sexual abuse subscale (12 items) had a mean of 1.54 (SD=1.84), and an alpha of .70. The severity rating had a mean of 4.24 (SD=1.49), and the frequency rating had a mean of 3.63 (SD=1.83). The open-ended question concerning the duration of abuse and when it started did not work well and was replaced with closed-ended questions.

Participants' attributions for the friend/relative's abuse

The participants rated the attribution items on 9-point scales (0-8). They rated the woman's responsibility for the origin of the abuse with a mean of 2.10 (SD=2.21), responsibility for the solution to the abuse with a mean of 4.50 (SD=2.67), and her control over the solution to the abuse with a mean of 4.35 (SD=2.38). They rated her abusive partner's responsibility for the origin of the abuse with a mean of 7.17 (SD=1.22), responsibility for the solution to the abuse with a mean of 2.92 (SD=2.70), and his control over the solution to the abuse with a mean of 4.43 (SD=2.99).

Relationship between participant and abusive partner of friend/relative

The closeness of this relationship was rated on a 7-point scale (higher score, closer) with a mean of 2.76 (SD=2.17). Fifteen percent of participants were related to the abusive partner of the woman who disclosed abuse to them. The mean rating of the participants' loyalty to the partner was 2.39 (SD=2.13) on a 7-point scale.

Response of participants to the disclosure

The 41-item checklist included "gave" and "asked for" columns, and it appeared that some participants also had some confusion about these distinctions, as was noted earlier with the response checklist for the participants' disclosure. The "gave" column seemed the most trustworthy. It had a mean total score of 13.75 (SD=6.66), and an alpha of $\alpha = .87$. The supportive behaviours on the "gave" list (26 possible) had a mean of 12.60 (SD=5.78), and an alpha of $\alpha = .86$. The unsupportive behaviours on the "gave" list had a mean of 1.10 (SD=1.50), and an alpha of $\alpha = .70$. The mean of the total score on the "asked for" list was 3.02 (SD=3.54), and an alpha of $\alpha = .82$.

Conclusions

The results of the pilot study suggest several necessary changes to certain measures and to instructions to participants. The format of the MWA items was altered so that the frequency column appeared first, followed by the severity rating to avoid confusion. The short form of the physical, sexual, and psychological abuse subscales was used as their reliabilities were comparable to the long forms. The long (original) form of the verbal abuse subscale was used as the reliability of the short form was substantially lower than the long form. The open-ended questions regarding the onset and duration of abuse, and the duration of abuse before disclosure were replaced with a set of options (e.g., 6-12 months, etc). The abuse checklist for the women who provided support to the participants was prefaced with an open-ended question asking if the provider had experienced incidents in a relationship similar to those the participants had reported. If they had, the participants are asked to use the checklist if they are aware of specific incidents the provider had experienced. The response checklist was simplified to only include "got" and "gave". The other rating scales, including attributions for abuse, the relationship between the provider and the abusive partner, and the beliefs about romantic relationships functioned well and were used as is for the dissertation.

Appendix X

Table X.1.
Reliability Coefficients for Scales

Scale	Alpha Coefficient	Number of items
Attitude toward Psychological Abuse	.73	15
Attitude toward Physical Abuse	.81	12
Network orientation	.80	20
Quality of Relationships Inventory		
Social Support	.86	7
Depth	.85	6
Conflict	.86	12
Self-report Measure of Wife Abuse		
Physical Abuse	.79	10
Verbal Abuse	.87	15
Psychological Abuse	.70	9
Sexual Abuse	.78	12
Total	.92	46

(table continues)

Scale	Coefficient	Number of items
Abuse Measure for Confidant		
Physical Abuse	.72	10
Verbal Abuse	.82	15
Psychological Abuse	.71	9
Sexual Abuse	.92	12
Total	.87	46
Abuse Measure for Abused Woman		
Physical Abuse	.78	10
Verbal Abuse	.85	15
Psychological Abuse	.64	9
Sexual Abuse	.76	12
Total	.90	46

Table X.2.
Factor Solution for Outcomes for Participants who Disclosed Abuse.

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Community
Helped decide what to do	.84	-.11	-.11	.74
Satisfaction rating	.80	-.05	-.25	.71
Saw problem more clearly	.80	-.11	-.07	.66
Nothing accomplished*	.76	.01	-.34	.69
Satisfied with conversation	.76	-.18	-.29	.70
More in control	.76	.02	-.15	.60
Good talk	.74	.09	-.28	.64
Got lot of useful information	.74	-.18	-.04	.58
Not supportive*	.65	.13	-.43	.62
Closer to confidant now	.58	.17	-.09	.37
Appreciate confidant	.54	.21	-.33	.45
More satisfied with partner*	.07	.85	.09	.74
May need to leave partner	.02	.84	.06	.71
Made partner look bad	.13	.78	.13	.65
Closer to partner*	-.01	.78	-.06	.62
Positive about my relationship*	.06	.75	.15	.59
Negative about my partner	.16	.73	.33	.67
Partner important*	.00	.71	.01	.51
Bad impression of my relationship	-.09	.67	.28	.53
Owe confidant	-.13	-.16	.71	.54
Created problems with confidant	-.25	-.14	.68	.55
Emotionally drained confidant	-.23	.14	.64	.48
Confidant likes me less now	-.29	-.05	.63	.48
Put burden on confidant	-.25	.12	.61	.45
Too much effort	.29	.08	.61	.47
She will interfere	.11	.28	.55	.39
Reacted more negatively than expected	-.01	.39	.55	.46
More upset about problem	-.35	.33	.54	.52
Exaggerated problem	.17	.20	.46	.28
Problem seems more complex	-.20	.21	.37	.22

* item recoded

Factor 1=Positive Outcome; 2: Negative about Partner; 3: Negative Outcome

Table X.3.

Factor Solution for Outcomes for Participants who Provided Support to Abused Women.

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communality
More satisfied with partner*	.78	.16	-.24	.70
Closer to partner*	.77	.22	-.21	.68
Her partner important to her*	.67	.08	-.32	.56
Negative impression of her relationship	.61	-.23	.07	.43
Made her partner look bad	.55	-.09	.20	.36
Negative about her partner	.52	.04	.30	.36
Positive about her relationship*	.48	.21	.15	.30
May leave partner	.48	.36	.05	.36
Closer to her	.02	.85	.05	.73
Appreciate her	.01	.69	.01	.48
Good talk	-.16	.67	-.16	.51
Created problems with her*	.15	.60	-.46	.60
Likes me less now*	.11	.54	-.32	.41
Burden on me	.04	-.09	.74	.55
Emotionally drained me	.14	.07	.71	.53
Not supportive	-.19	-.33	.57	.47
More upset about problem	.07	-.42	.51	.45

* recoded

Factor 1: Negative about Partner; 2: Positive Outcome; 3: Negative Outcome

Table X.4.

Descriptive Statistics for Attitudinal and Relationship History Scales

Scale	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	Potential Range	Actual Range
Attitude toward Psychological Abuse	23.82	6.70	296	15-75	15-48
Attitude toward Physical Abuse	15.17	5.36	298	12-60	12-42
Network Orientation	40.39	6.04	111	20-80	29-58
Quality of Relationships Inventory					
Social Support	24.40	3.69	113	7-28	11-28
Depth	19.14	3.80	116	6-24	8-24
Conflict	18.87	5.58	108	12-48	12-42

Note. NOS and QRI only completed by participants who disclosed abuse.

Table X.5.

Descriptive Statistics for the Original Scoring of the Self-report Abuse Measure

Scale	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	Potential Range	Actual Range
Physical Abuse: Severity	2.17	4.85	0-40	0-28
Physical Abuse: Frequency	3.29	16.33	---	0-181
Verbal Abuse: Severity	6.64	9.86	0-60	0-56
Verbal Abuse: Frequency	28.34	146.15	---	0-1745
Psychological Abuse: Severity	1.29	3.40	0-36	0-28
Psychological Abuse: Frequency	5.15	30.31	---	0-362
Sexual Abuse: Severity	1.71	4.30	0-48	0-31
Sexual Abuse: Frequency	6.67	34.02	---	0-519
Total Abuse: Severity	11.81	18.78	0-184	0-111
Total Abuse: Frequency	43.46	204.19	---	0-2728

N=306

Table X.6.

Descriptive Statistics for the Revised Scoring of the Self-report Abuse Measure

Scale	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	Potential Range	Actual Range
Physical Abuse: Severity	2.14	4.86	0-40	0-28
Physical Abuse: Frequency	3.15	16.29	---	0-181
Verbal Abuse: Severity	6.60	9.89	0-60	0-56
Verbal Abuse: Frequency	28.29	146.16	---	0-1745
Psychological Abuse: Severity	1.29	3.40	0-36	0-28
Psychological Abuse: Frequency	5.15	30.31	---	0-362
Sexual Abuse: Severity	1.65	4.31	0-48	0-31
Sexual Abuse: Frequency	5.50	32.92	---	0-519
Total Abuse: Severity	11.68	18.85	0-184	0-111
Total Abuse: Frequency	42.09	204.23	---	0-2728

N=306

Table X.7.

Frequencies of Combinations of Types of Self-reported Abuse.

Types of Abuse	<u>N</u>	Frequency (%)
Verbal only	58	31.9
Physical, verbal, psychological, and sexual	30	16.5
Physical, verbal and sexual	25	13.7
Physical and verbal	22	12.1
Verbal and sexual	13	7.1
Verbal and psychological	11	6.0
Physical, verbal and psychological	11	6.0
Verbal, psychological and sexual	6	3.3
Sexual only	3	1.6
Psychological only	2	1.1
Physical and sexual	1	0.5

Table X.8.

Abuse-related Variables

Variable	<u>N</u>	Frequency (%)
Length of relationship when abuse started:		
0 - 6 months	64	40.0
7 - 12 months	35	21.9
13 - 18 months	20	12.5
19 - 24 months	10	6.3
Over 2 years	31	19.4
Duration of abuse:		
0 - 6 months	89	56.3
7 - 12 months	22	13.9
13 - 18 months	18	11.4
19 - 24 months	8	5.1
Over 2 years	21	13.3
Duration of abuse prior to disclosure:		
Immediately	66	54.1
Less than 3 months	20	16.4
4 - 6 months	13	10.7
7 - 12 months	4	3.3
1 - 2 years	3	2.5

(table continues)

Variable	<u>N</u>	Frequency (%)
Duration of abuse prior to disclosure (cont'd)		
Over 2 years	5	4.1
After relationship ended	11	9.0
Relationship with abusive partner:		
Casual dating	16	9.8
Exclusively dating	105	64.4
Engaged	9	5.5
Married	12	7.4
Cohabiting	21	12.9

N = 122

Table X.9.

Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Origin and Solution Attributions for their own Experiences of Abuse

<u>Attribution</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Actual Range</u>
Self - origin	2.62	2.11	0-7
Self - solution	5.42	2.04	0-8
Self - control over solution	5.57	2.06	0-8
Abusive partner - origin	6.01	1.84	0-8
Abusive partner - solution	4.16	2.89	0-8
Abusive partner - control over solution	4.40	2.85	0-8

N = 120

Note. All ratings had 0-8 scale; 0=no responsibility, no control; 8=total responsibility, total control.

Table X.10.

Demographic Characteristics of Confidants for Participants

Characteristic	<u>N</u>	Frequency (%)
Religious affiliation:		
Roman Catholic	54	44.6
Protestant	24	19.8
Other	13	10.7
None	17	14.0
Not sure	13	10.7
Current relationship status:		
Casual dating	24	19.8
Exclusive dating	35	28.9
Engaged	3	2.5
Married	21	17.4
Cohabiting	4	3.3
Not in relationship	34	28.1
Sexual orientation:		
Heterosexual	118	97.5
Lesbian	1	0.8
Not sure	2	1.7

(table continues)

Characteristic	<u>N</u>	Frequency (%)
Highest education level:		
First year university	22	18.2
Second year	14	11.6
Third year	61	50.4
Fourth year	10	8.3
College degree	12	9.9
University degree	2	1.7

N =122

Table X.11.

Descriptive Statistics for the "Told" Version of the Self-report Abuse Measure

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Potential Range</u>	<u>Actual Range</u>
Physical Abuse: Severity	1.45	3.63	0-40	0-28
Physical Abuse: Frequency	2.08	11.87	---	0-171
Verbal Abuse: Severity	4.96	7.73	0-60	0-52
Verbal Abuse: Frequency	19.02	102.70	---	0-1280
Psychological Abuse: Severity	.89	2.78	0-36	0-28
Psychological Abuse: Frequency	2.34	14.58	---	0-184
Sexual Abuse: Severity	1.01	3.49	0-48	0-31
Sexual Abuse: Frequency	3.13	14.42	---	0-123
Total Abuse: Severity	8.31	13.78	0-184	0-106
Total Abuse: Frequency	26.58	122.13	---	0-1662

N=306

Table X.12.

Descriptive Statistics for the Confidants' Experiences of Abuse

Type of abuse	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	Potential Range	Actual Range
Physical	.37	1.07	0-10	0-5
Verbal	1.34	2.48	0-15	0-11
Psychological	.28	.88	0-9	0-6
Sexual	.19	1.09	0-12	0-10
Total	2.17	4.24	0-46	0-21
Severity rating	3.57	1.96	1-7	1-7
Frequency rating	3.20	1.92	1-7	1-7

N = 117

Note. 10 additional confidants had experienced abuse since disclosure; assigned 0 here. Scores on abuse scales are number of items endorsed on checklist.

Table X.13.

Abuse-related Variables for Confidants' Abuse

Variable	<u>N</u>	Frequency (%)
Length of relationship when abuse started:		
0 - 6 months	11	25.6
7 - 12 months	5	11.6
13 - 18 months	5	11.6
19 - 24 months	4	9.3
Over 2 years	18	41.9
Duration of abuse:		
0 - 6 months	16	38.1
7 - 12 months	1	2.4
13 - 18 months	4	9.5
19 - 24 months	6	14.3
Over 2 years	15	35.7
Type of relationship with abusive partner:		
Casual dating	8	18.6
Exclusive dating	15	34.9
Married	16	37.2
Cohabiting	4	9.3
<hr/>		
<u>N</u> = 45		

Table X.14.

Frequencies of Combinations of Types of Abuse Experienced by Confidants.

Types of Abuse	N	Frequency (%)
Verbal only	17	39.5
Physical and verbal	8	18.6
Verbal and psychological	7	16.3
Physical, verbal and psychological	6	14.0
Physical, verbal and sexual	2	4.7
Verbal and sexual	1	2.3
Verbal, psychological, and sexual	1	2.3
Physical, verbal, psychological, and sexual	1	2.3

N =43

Table X.15.

Descriptive Statistics for Outcome Scales

Outcome	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	Potential Range	Actual Range
Positive Outcome (Self)	75.63	13.77	120	11-99	15-97
Negative about Partner (Self) ^a	45.42	15.00	96	8-72	12-72
Negative Outcome (Self)	32.07	12.59	120	11-99	11-66

^a only obtained when still involved with abusive partner at time of disclosure.

Table X.16.

Demographic Characteristics of Women who Disclosed to Participants

Characteristic	<u>N</u>	Frequency (%)
Religious affiliation:		
Roman Catholic	93	43.9
Protestant	40	18.9
Other	24	11.3
None	23	10.8
Not sure	32	15.1
Current relationship status:		
Casual dating	27	12.8
Exclusive dating	97	46.0
Engaged	3	1.4
Married	33	15.6
Cohabiting	26	12.3
Not in relationship	25	11.9
Sexual orientation:		
Heterosexual	210	98.6
Lesbian	1	0.5
Not sure	2	0.9

(table continues)

Characteristic	<u>N</u>	Frequency (%)
Highest education level:		
Some high school	57	27.1
High school diploma	46	21.9
Some college/university	72	34.3
College degree	15	7.1
University degree	15	7.2
Not sure	5	2.4

N = 216

Table X.17.

Descriptive Statistics for the Abuse of the Women who Disclosed to Participants.

Type of abuse	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	Potential Range	Actual Range
Physical	2.50	2.25	0-10	0-9
Verbal	5.13	3.56	0-15	0-15
Psychological	1.56	1.61	0-9	0-7
Sexual	.94	1.64	0-12	0-8
Total	10.13	7.11	1-46	1-36
Severity rating	4.47	1.64	1-7	1-7
Frequency rating	3.77	1.78	1-7	1-7

N = 216Note Abuse scores are number of items endorsed on checklist.

Table X.18.
Abuse-related Variables for Women who Disclosed to Participants.

Variable	<u>N</u>	Frequency (%)
Length of relationship when abuse started:		
0 - 6 months	57	26.6
7 - 12 months	61	28.5
13 - 18 months	26	12.1
19 - 24 months	14	6.5
Over 2 years	56	26.2
Duration of abuse:		
0 - 6 months	80	38.1
7 - 12 months	30	14.3
13 - 18 months	21	10.0
19 - 24 months	25	11.9
Over 2 years	54	25.7
Duration before disclosure:		
Immediately	40	19.0
Less than 3 months	45	21.4
4-6 months	26	12.4
7-12 months	19	9.0
1-2 years	11	5.2

(table continues)

Variable	<u>N</u>	Frequency (%)
Duration before disclosure (cont'd):		
Over 2 years	19	9.0
After relationship ended	50	23.8
Type of relationship with abusive partner:		
Casual dating	24	12.4
Exclusive dating	101	52.1
Engaged	7	3.6
Married	37	19.1
Cohabiting	24	12.4

N = 216

Table X.19.

Frequencies of Combinations of Types of Abuse Experienced by Women who Disclosed to Participants.

Types of Abuse	N	Frequency (%)
Physical, verbal, and psychological	55	25.5
Physical, verbal, psychological, and sexual	52	24.1
Physical and verbal	35	16.2
Verbal only	16	7.4
Verbal and psychological	16	7.4
Physical, verbal, and sexual	15	6.9
Verbal, psychological and sexual	10	4.6
Psychological only	4	1.9
Sexual only	3	1.4
Physical only	3	1.4
Verbal and sexual	3	1.4
Physical and psychological	2	0.9
Psychological and sexual	1	0.5
Physical and sexual	1	0.5

N = 216

Table X.20.

Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Origin and Solution Attributions for the Abuse of the Women who Disclosed to Them.

Attribution	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	Range
Self - origin	1.64	2.00	0-8
Self - solution	4.49	2.59	0-8
Self - control over solution	4.71	2.51	0-8
Abusive partner - origin	6.61	1.87	0-8
Abusive partner - solution	3.54	3.15	0-8
Abusive partner - control over solution	4.46	2.91	0-8

N = 216

Note. 0=no responsibility, no control; 8=total responsibility, total control.

Table X.21.

Descriptive Statistics for the Revised Scoring of the Self-report Abuse Measure for those Participants who were Told by Other Women about Abuse

Scale	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	Potential Range	Actual Range
Physical Abuse: Severity	1.74	4.97	0-40	0-28
Physical Abuse: Frequency	3.06	16.64	---	0-181
Verbal Abuse: Severity	4.85	10.08	0-60	0-56
Verbal Abuse: Frequency	24.02	141.05	---	0-1745
Psychological Abuse: Severity	1.11	3.09	0-36	0-20
Psychological Abuse: Frequency	5.68	35.33	---	0-362
Sexual Abuse: Severity	1.26	3.90	0-48	0-27
Sexual Abuse: Frequency	5.25	39.97	---	0-519
Total Abuse: Severity	8.96	18.95	0-184	0-111
Total Abuse: Frequency	38.01	218.36	---	0-2728

N=146

Note. 46 participants were abused after the disclosure by other women; they were assigned 0 here.

Table X.22.

Abuse-related Variables for Participants who were Confidants to Abused Women.

Variable	<u>N</u>	Frequency (%)
Length of relationship when abuse started:		
0 - 6 months	24	40.7
7 - 12 months	14	23.7
13 - 18 months	8	13.6
19 - 24 months	5	8.5
Over 2 years	8	13.6
Duration of abuse:		
0 - 6 months	29	50.0
7 - 12 months	11	19.0
13 - 18 months	6	10.3
19 - 24 months	2	3.4
Over 2 years	10	17.2
Relationship with abusive partner:		
Casual dating	7	11.7
Exclusively dating	40	66.7
Engaged	3	5.0
Married	3	5.0
Cohabiting	7	11.7

Table X.23.

Descriptive Statistics for Outcome scales for Disclosures to Participants

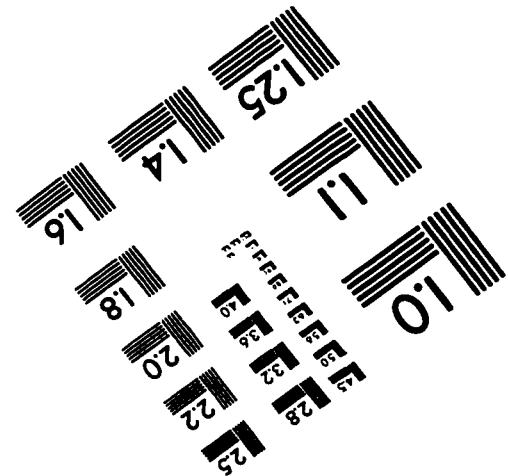
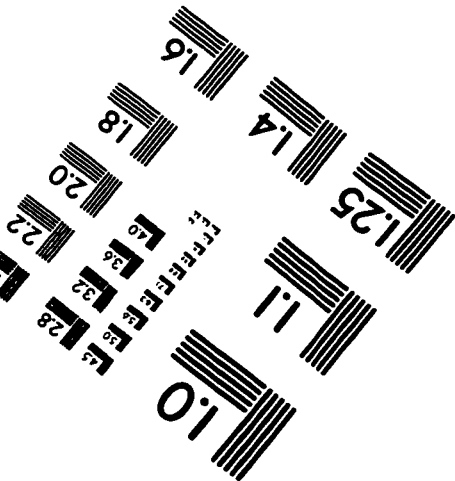
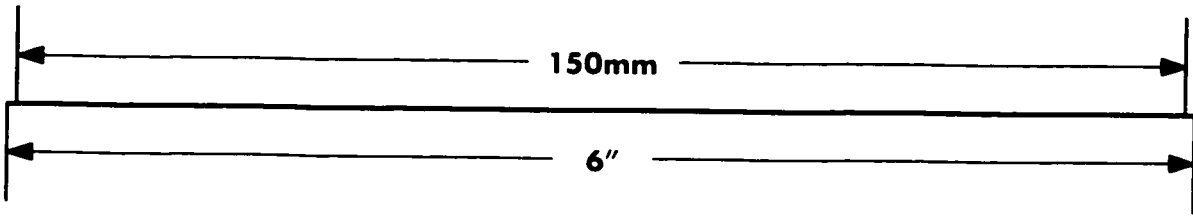
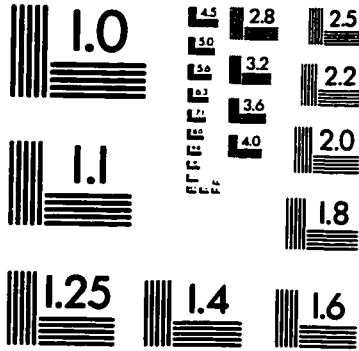
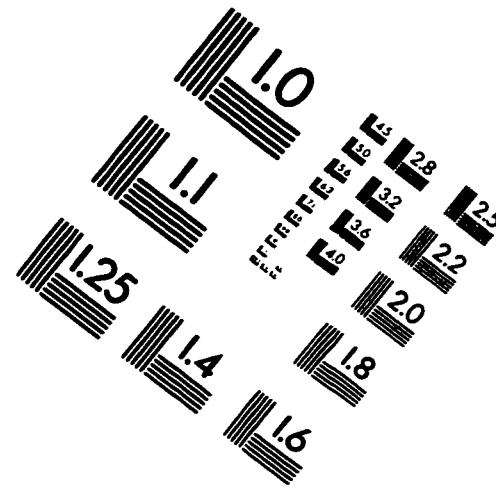
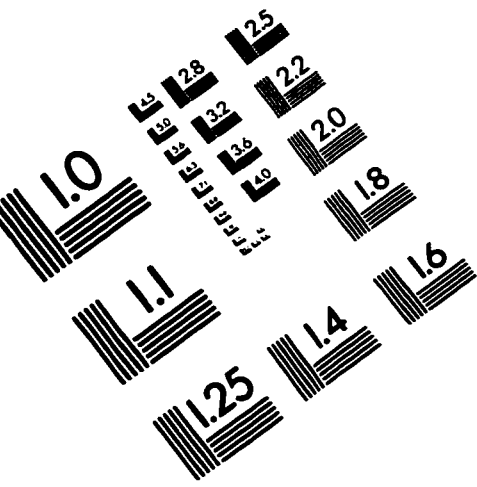
Outcome	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	Potential Range	Actual Range
Negative about Partner (Confidant) ^a	51.40	10.25	136	8-72	13-72
Positive Outcome (Confidant)	35.77	6.06	211	5-45	12-45
Negative Outcome (Confidant)	12.42	5.46	213	4-36	4-33

^a only obtained when still involved with abusive partner at time of disclosure.

VITA AUCTORIS

Katherine Dunham was born in Columbia, Missouri on June 28, 1965. She received her high school diploma from Halifax West High School (June 1982). She received her Honours Bachelor of Science (June 1986) and Master of Science (October 1988) from Dalhousie University, and her Master of Arts (February 1991) from the University of Guelph. Since September 1990, she has been enrolled in the Doctoral Program in Applied Social Psychology at the University of Windsor.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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