

Beyond Patriarchy: A qualitative Study of Men's Experience of Domestic Abuse

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To the survivors, thank you so much.

Dedication:

For dad: my inspiration, my motivation, my constant.

1.0 ABSTRACT

There is a particular dearth of research into heterosexual men's experiences of domestic abuse (DA) and currently no research from a counselling psychology perspective. The investigation examined heterosexual men's experiences of DA. Nine men who self-identified as having been subject to DA within a prior heterosexual relationship were interviewed regarding their experiences. The gathered data were analysed qualitatively using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Themes generated suggested that many facets of the abuse experience were comparable to that of female survivors. Accordingly, survivors experienced a range of unpredictable abusive behaviours with control cited as the desired end of abuse perpetration. Male survivors were also observed to develop depression, post-traumatic stress and difficulties with traumatic bonding and affect regulation as a result of DA. Despite these similarities, it was noted that the concept of female perpetrated DA inverted prevailing socio-cultural gender norms and expectations. Consequently, the socio-cultural context in which men experienced DA was cited as largely hostile, persecutory and dismissive. This hostile context differentiated the experience of DA for the male survivor. Firstly, it enabled the perpetrator to abuse with minimal social or legal ramifications. Secondly, it created an opportunity for the perpetrator to control and abuse via false allegations of DA. Thirdly, it resulted in survivors experiencing repeated re-victimisation, ridicule, disbelief and humiliation when the abuse was disclosed. Deep-seated feelings of shame, emasculation and isolation were therefore noted to entrench the experience of being a male abused by a female. This shame and isolation was thought to potentially augment experiences of depression and post-traumatic stress. A key implication of the findings is the need for counselling psychologists to be aware that men can be subject to DA and that such abuse can have a severe, traumatic and enduring impact. The findings also help to advance counselling psychologists' understanding of the potential relevance of gender norms and to appreciate how such norms may distinguish the experience of DA for a male survivor, creating an alternate set of vulnerability and mediating factors. The results also suggest that these norms may have an impact on how a male survivor behaves in therapy and responds to the therapeutic relationship. Suggestions are also made for further research in the area.

Key Words: Domestic abuse, domestic violence, interpersonal violence, female violence, male domestic abuse, female perpetrated abuse, counselling psychology, male survivors, male victims, interpersonal trauma.

2.0 REFLEXIVE STATEMENT – PART ONE

The etymological root of the word 'reflexive' is to 'bend back upon oneself' (Finlay & Gough, 2003). Reflexivity within research implies that the researcher "*makes visible their individuality and its effects on the research process*" explicating the "*inter-subjective dynamics between researcher and researched*" (Finlay & Gough, 2003, p.23). Reflexivity is also considered a central concern within counselling psychology (Woolfe, Dryden & Strawbridge, 2003). Accordingly, this short section is offered to give the reader an appreciation of the assumptions and beliefs held by the researcher prior to engaging with the research. This can be linked to section 7.0 in which reflections are made as to how these assumptions and beliefs have altered as a consequence of committing to the topic area. It is hoped that these reflexive statements alongside the steps detailed in section 4.8 generate transparency, enabling the reader to evaluate the research process and scrutinise the integrity of the research (Finlay & Gough, 2003).

The most influential figure in my life has always been my father, he was the epitome of stereotypical masculinity; stoic, confident, self-assured, likable, fun but also somewhat dominant, traditional and openly sexist. He was a figure I greatly respected but also strongly reacted against. Consequently, as I grew up I held quite liberal and feministic values. Women's rights became somewhat of a passion of mine and at the outset of counselling psychology training I was working as a manager for a women's refuge. In retrospect, such employment served to reinforce and validate my existing assumptions and beliefs of men and women, i.e. men are perpetrators, protectors, strong and dominant. Women are capable but suppressed and victimised by patriarchal values and beliefs.

Whilst running the refuge I met the manager of a local gay-male refuge. When discussing with him the services his refuge provided, I realised that the notion of male victimology and vulnerability had struck me and that I had never considered the concept of a male survivor of DA. Consequently, I began to recognise that my assumptions around gender needed to be re-evaluated and challenged. I therefore decided to look into female perpetrated DA. I was astounded by the level of contention and hostility within the

literature toward male survivors. I therefore decided to complete research in this area for two reasons. Firstly to challenge myself and my preconceptions of gender. Secondly, I wanted to address this topic to hopefully alleviate some of the stigma surrounding it.

Thus at the onset of the research I was aware I held a number of assumptions and beliefs. I knew I had quite feministic values influenced by my upbringing and work at the refuge. I was also aware that the concept of male-as-vulnerable/victim was somewhat of a revelation to me as it countered my prior beliefs and assumptions. Equally, over this period, my father had been diagnosed with cancer. I noticed I was struggling to connect with him whilst he was unwell. I was, therefore, aware that this may impact upon the research, however I was not entirely sure how. In retrospect, I believe it is possible that I was, in part, motivated to complete this research in order to challenge my views and beliefs around male vulnerability in order to re-connect with my father and his recent vulnerability.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

3.1 Overview

The first half of the following literature review explores the current and historic context of DA and locates past to present theoretical conceptions of DA within this context. In addition, terminology, estimates of prevalence and key concepts will be detailed. As the current study is explorative and broad in focus, an overarching understanding of DA will be useful for the reader. Four primary areas of the abuse experience will, therefore, be detailed within the second half of the review. These include how the abuse is perpetrated, how a survivor copes with the DA experience, what prevents a survivor from leaving the abusive relationship and the impact of DA upon a survivor. Services and treatment for DA survivors will then be discussed in light of the reviewed literature. The research rationale and research question shall then be proffered.

3.2 Introducing key concepts and prevalence

3.2.1 Definitions

A range of expressions have been employed to describe the experiences of abuse and violence within intimate relationships. As shall be noted presently such expressions depend on the theoretical paradigm ascribed to by the researcher. Terms include: domestic abuse, domestic violence, wife battering, wife beating, patriarchal terrorism, common couple violence and so on (McHugh et al., 2005).

For the purposes of this study the term ‘domestic abuse’ shall be adopted over that of domestic violence, as this acknowledges that a range of behaviours including but not limited to, physical violence constitute the larger concept of abuse (Sanderson, 2008). ‘Wife battering’ and ‘wife beating’ connote both a violence and gender based model of an abusive relationship which, for the current study is both unhelpful and inappropriate. Equally, concepts of ‘patriarchal terrorism’ and ‘common couple violence’ reside within

a feminist paradigm and are therefore not considered apposite. Further information on this paradigm shall be detailed in section 3.3.2

Given this variety in terminology, it is unsurprising that a multiplicity of definitions for DA exist, with no single, universally agreed categorisation. Early definitions of DA emphasised the role of violence and female-as-victim thereby assuming male-as-perpetrator (George, 1994, 1997). The more recent definition adopted by the British Government makes apparent a change in attitude concerning DA and explicates a gender neutral approach, emphasising a range of abusive behaviours:

“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality” (Home Office, 2005:7).

Such a definition, while valuable, does not include the concept of coercive power and control. Although, as shall be noted, these constructs originate from feminist theory, more recent literature has contended that DA in all intimate relationships is about power and control (Sanderson, 2008) (see Section 3.3.4 for further detail). Most scholars therefore now encompass these concepts within their definition of DA, for example;

“DA is the misuse of power and exercise of control by one adult person over another within the context of a close personal relationship. Abuse can be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial” (Robinson & Rowlands, 2005 p.22)

This definition will be employed for the purposes of the research at hand.

Finally, the reader shall observe that the term ‘survivor’ has been adopted over that of ‘victim’ when referring to those who have experienced DA. In the past, women who encountered DA were labelled ‘victims’. More recently, however, research has made apparent that, far from being passive ‘victims’, those who encounter DA are active ‘survivors’ who display considerable strength and resource in the face of ongoing

adversity (Sanderson, 2008). The term 'survivor' has therefore been deemed more empowering and appropriate for describing a female who has experienced DA (Sanderson, 2008).

An established term to depict a male who has faced DA is still wanting. However, as shall be noted presently, a number of scholars have argued that the gender norms still active in our culture render the concept of male-as-victim unacceptable (e.g. George, 1994, 1997, 2003). Internalisation of such norms is believed to result in men experiencing the term 'victim' as emasculating (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001). In the absence of an agreed term, 'survivor' is therefore considered most apt and shall be used throughout unless in quotation.

3.2.2 Prevalence

Overall prevalence rates for male or female perpetrated DA have been severely compromised by a lack of universal definition which obfuscates the data (Sanderson, 2008). Equally, controversy about the existence and nature of men's DA has precluded the development of consistent or recognised incident estimates. The hidden nature of the sample and the various socio-cultural factors impeding disclosure has exacerbated this difficulty (Straus, 2007) (see section 3.3.3 for further detail). Figures shall therefore be provided within the present research as an initial guide only.

In community samples, male and female rates of violence are cited as equivalent with approximately 11-12% of intimate couples experiencing acts of violence by a current intimate partner (e.g. Archer, 2002; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2005). Conversely, the British Crime Survey detailed an estimated 635,000 incidents of domestic violence in England and Wales between 2001 and 2002, 81% of which were reported by female survivors (Home Office, 2005). As can be observed, both of these data sets give a very different understanding of prevalence. This is to be explored in greater detail within section 3.3.3.

3.3 Overarching theoretical backdrop

3.3.1 Historical conceptions of domestic abuse

Female perpetrated DA is acknowledged in a range of town, court and literary historic records (Underdown, 1985a, 1985b). Customs existed throughout Europe from the middle ages until the late seventeenth century designed to satirise, punish and deride a husband who had transgressed traditional gender norms by being beaten and therefore dominated by his wife (George, 2003).

Post civil war England until the onset of the twentieth century saw the DA of men become increasingly shunned from social consciousness (George, 2002). Scientific advancements immersed in patriarchal values, an imperialistic climate, economic stressors in the more deprived urban working-class populations and a masculine centered 'hero' culture within media and film are put forward as factors which reflected, inflated and perpetuated norms of male propriety, rendering the concept of male-as-victim untenable (George 2002, 2003; Tomes, 1978).

The domestic violence movement developed from this socio-political context and involved the rise of feminism and women's liberation (Straus, 2009). The now popularised "rule of thumb"¹ became the cornerstone of the women's movement alongside published accounts of women being controlled by their abusive husbands (Kelly, 1994). Feminists thus began to define DA as a gender issue, the logical, if not extreme result of a patriarchal social structure (George, 1994).

¹ The "Rule of Thumb" was said to be legislation passed in eighteenth century permitting men to hit their wives with a swatch "no wider than their thumb" (Kelly, 1994). Feminists popularised this "law" and put it forward as evidence for the patriarchal paradigm of DA (Kelly, 1994). More recently it has been discovered that no such law ever existed. A journalist misinterpreted the original historic document and published an article based on the misconstrued findings (Kelly, 1994). This was then adopted and circulated by the women's movement and became a cornerstone of the feminist conception of DA (Kelly, 1994)

3.3.2 Challenge to the feminist conception of domestic abuse

George (1997) argues that no real challenge was made toward the feminist theory until 1987, when McNeely and Robinsons-Simpson published an article highlighting the fallacies within research paradigms that had been used to study DA. They utilised the results from a growing number of quantitative studies purporting gender equivalence in intimate partner violence rates. These studies were conducted with the aid of the Conflicts and Tactics scale (CTS). The CTS was developed in 1979 by Straus. The scale measures, quantitatively, the prevalence, frequency and severity of intimate partner violence. The CTS has now been utilised in over 600 peer reviewed research papers with largely consistent findings, observing that men and women's use of violence within intimate relationships are comparable (see Archer, 2002 a for meta-analytic review of 58 nationally representative studies more recent papers include Hamel, 2009; Hoff, 2012; Desmarais, Reeves, Nicholls, Telford & Fiebert, 2012).

This apparent gender symmetry has been put forward as a challenge to feminist conception of DA. A distinct division of opinion has resulted; family theorists purport that the CTS results prove spousal abuse is part of an ongoing pattern of violence among all family members, regardless of gender (for example, Straus 2007, 2009). Feminist theorists dispute this notion and maintain that gender-based power relations remain at the center of DA (for example, Dobash et al., 1992, Johnson, 2010). This contentious debate has continued to the present day, with the majority of literature and research pertaining to female perpetrated DA centering on proving or disproving one or other theory (Straus, 2007, 2009; Randle & Graham, 2011).

Feminist theorists level a number of criticisms at the CTS as a measurement tool and the notion of gender symmetry that is concluded. Firstly, it is argued that the community sample used in the CTS does not resemble the extreme clinical sample upon which the feminist paradigm is based (Dobash & Dobash, 1988, Johnson, 2010). Secondly, feminist theorists state that a woman's use of intimate violence is only ever in self-defence or expressive retaliation, such violence is purported to be non-instrumental and,

therefore, non-abusive (e.g. Kurz, 1993; Smith, Baker, Buchan & Bodiwala, 1992). It is further argued that the CTS does not account for the meaning and impact of the violence, with men less likely to suffer physical injury or emotional distress (Chan, Straus, Brownridge, Tiwari & Leung, 2008; Moffitt et al., 2001). Finally, it is highlighted that those men who do report experiencing severe violence are either exaggerating or lying, usually to justify or excuse their own abusive behaviour (Dobash et al., 1992).

Supporters of the CTS utilise a number of arguments to counter this critique. Firstly, it is suggested that if DA was the result of a patriarchal culture then the majority, rather than the minority of men residing within it, would be domestically abusive (George, 2003). The existence of DA within lesbian relationships has also been cited as evidence that women can be abusive within intimate relationships regardless of patriarchal norms (Lie, Schilit, Bush, Montague, & Reyes, 1991, Ard & Makadon, 2011; Irwin, 2008; Walters, 2011). Indeed DA within lesbian relationships is said to occur at a rate equal to or greater than that found in heterosexual relationships where the perpetrator is male (Eaton, Kaufman, Fuhrel, Cain, Cherry, Pope, Kalichman, 2008, Brown & Pantalone, 2001). Additionally there is a small but growing body of research reporting a high prevalence of sexual abuse and rape within such relationships (e.g. Campbell, 2009). Women's use of violence and abuse in other contexts is also cited as evidence that women are capable of being aggressive for reasons other than self-defence for example, child sex abuse is perpetrated by females at rate just below that of males (Sanderson, 2010), non-sexual child abuse is perpetrated by females at a rate higher than males (Report of The Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse, 1994) and child murder is committed least as frequently by women as men (Marks & Kumar, 1993, 1996). Further to this critique is the finding that women do not perpetrate DA only in self-defence. A number of studies have found that women cite punishment for wrong behaviour, work stressors, feelings of anger, desire to gain control and power over ones partner, sexual jealousy and confidence that the partner will not retaliate as reasons for acts of violence, with self-defense being referred to in only the minority of instances (less than 20%) (Bourget & Gagne, 2012; Bair-Merritt, Shea, Crowne, Tompson, Sibinga, Trent & Campbell, 2010; Follingstad,

Wright, Lloyd & Sebastian, 1991; Demaris, 1992; Morse, 1995; Carrado et al., 1996; Sommer, Banres & Murray, 1992; Brahan, 2000; Fiebert & Gonzalez, 1997).

Finally, it is to be noted that most of the evidence employed by feminist theorists is sourced from female refuges (Straus 2007, 2009). The inherent sample bias here is evident. Without men being included in the data set there is no empirical evidence as to whether they experience DA. Similarly, the suggestion that men are lying when they claim to have experienced DA is not based on empirical research, such an emotive assertion appears reminiscent of the reaction women received at the outset of the shelter movement (Straus, 2009).

In summary, there is now considerable evidence supporting the notion that women use violence within intimate relationships and that this violence can, at times, be instrumental and therefore abusive. Perhaps therefore what is of most interest is the striking hostility with which this notion is met.

3.3.3 Examining the controversy

A number of researchers argue that the concept of female perpetrated DA elicits antagonism as it contravenes socio-cultural paradigms of masculinity and femininity (Allen-Collinson, 2010). Norms of hegemonic masculinity accept masculine standards of perpetration and protection, thereby reinforcing feminine notions of vulnerability and victimisation (Allen-Collinson, 2010). Consequently, being an abused male displays an apparent lack of aggression and with it the assumed inability to protect (George, 2003). As Farrell, (1994) affirms “woman-as-victim attracts men, men-as-victim repulses women” (p.49). Acknowledging female aggression also counters socio-cultural notions of femininity, i.e. vulnerability, nurturance, love and compassion. Ogilvie (1996) suggests that neither men nor women wish to recognise such attributes. Thus the notion of male victimisation and female brutality is “a form of oppositional knowledge aimed at disrupting accepted notions of women’s and men’s proper place, and challenging customary categories and meanings that constitute our knowledge of gender” (White & Kowalski, 1994, p 477).

A number of studies and critical academic observations support these assertions. For example, research has found that men and women are reluctant to acknowledge male survivors of abuse and that female perpetrators are consistently judged less negatively than male perpetrators and attract less disapproval (e.g. O’Learly, 1993; Gerber, 1991; Harris & Cook, 1994, Sorenson & Thomas, 2009; Terrance, Plumm & Thomas, 2011; Wigman, 2009; Rhatigan, Stewart, & Moore, 2011; Hamby & Jackson, 2010). The studies by Harris and Cook (1994) and Sorenson and Thomas (2009) utilised vignette techniques to compare responses to stories about an abused woman, an abused gay man, an abused lesbian and an abused heterosexual man. Both males were rated less favourably or sympathetically than the abused females with the abused heterosexual male rated least favourably. George (2003) remarked on Harris and Cook’s (1994) findings and noted that prejudices and discriminations against gay men have been pervasive and deeply ingrained historically, yet the abused heterosexual male was rated even lower suggesting that prejudices against such men are possibly even more entrenched and even more severe (George, 2003).

Scholars have also argued that social representations of violence posit female aggression as expressive whilst emphasising male violence as instrumental (e.g. Campbell, Muncer, Guy, & Banim, 1996). This representation can be located within various academic articles in which the terms “men doing” and “women expressing” are utilised when referring to respective acts of violence (e.g. Marshall, 1992). Innumerable pieces of research on DA have also been found to deliberately omit results from male survivors or female perpetrators (e.g. Kennedy & Dutton, 1989; Lackey & Williams, 1995; Johnson, 1999; Johnson & Leone, 2005). Furthermore, it has been argued that societal reticence to acknowledge female perpetrators is one of the primary reasons that female perpetrated child abuse, child-sex abuse, lesbian DA and female perpetrated sexual violence is so under-researched and under-reported (Campbell, 2009, Sanderson, 2010, Brown & Pantalone, 2001) Debatably, this prevailing paradigm is even reflected in the types of research that have been committed to exploring female perpetrated DA. Numerous articles debate whether women can be domestically abusive with scant to nil works investigating men’s experience of such matters. It can be suggested that this wanton

research gap reflects an inability to truly acknowledge the male survivor and a reluctance to accept the female perpetrator.

Some have argued that the controversy surrounding the notion of male DA is akin to Kuhn's concept of a paradigm shift (1965) in which an intellectual battle occurs between followers of a new paradigm and the advocates for the old (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). One could suggest that the feminist paradigm of DA gained acceptance as it appeared to "intuitively make sense" (Merril, 1996 p.11) against the increasingly recognised milieu of women's oppression. Arguably, this concept is now being challenged as our traditional assumptions of gender are being questioned in light of the evolving social roles of men and women.

3.3.4 Psychological conceptualisations of domestic abuse

Many theorists have now steered away from the feminist conception of DA, recognising its limitations (e.g. Sanderson, 2008; Straus, 2007). Psychological models of attachment, and social learning have instead been adopted. These recognise the various factors which may lead an individual to abuse or experience abuse.

Dutton (2007) proposes that the roots of abusive behaviour can be traced to early attachment deficits, in particular insecure attachment. Early childhood trauma, excessive losses, separations and attachment disruption can cause insecure attachment styles marked by a hypersensitivity to perceived threats of abandonment, enmeshment or harm. Abusive behaviours within intimate relationships are therefore cited to be a form of self-defensive attack, unconsciously designed to reestablish a safe level of interpersonal proximity (Burke & Follingstad, 1999). A number of studies appear to support this notion and have noted that insecure attachment styles are predominantly higher in male and female perpetrators of DA than in the general population (as high as 80-90% compared to 35% in the general population) (Follingstad, Bradley, Helff & Laughlin, 2002; Dutton, 1993; Holtzworth-Monroe, Gregory & Hutchinson, 1997; Valdez, Lilly & Sandberg, 2012). The concepts of power and control established within feminist theory are therefore applicable to the attachment model. However, it is believed that the need for power and

control is born from a fear of abandonment rather than a patriarchal requirement for dominance.

The link between childhood experiences of DA and abuse in adulthood has been acknowledged by many researchers (e.g Murrell et al, 2007; Shlonsky & Friend, 2007; Renner & Slack, 2006). This phenomenon is termed the ‘intergenerational transmission of violence’ or the ‘cycle of violence’ (Murrell et al., 2007). Social learning theory suggests that children who have witnessed or experienced abuse learn and model destructive and abusive conflict resolution skills, communication patterns and problem solving strategies (Bandura, 1979). Several researchers have noted a direct link between reported childhood family violence and the perpetration or experience of DA in adulthood (e.g. Stith, Rosen, Middleton, 2000; 1995; Renzetti, 1992; Adams, 2009). It is also to be noted that the facets of secure attachment i.e. “consistent, reliable and empathic parental care” (Marrone, 1998, p23) are more difficult for a parent to exercise whilst within an abusive relationship (Marrone, 1998). Therefore, a child from an abusive background may not only learn abusive behaviours but may also be insecurely attached. In fact, estimates of secure attachment among children exposed to DA are significantly lower than in the general population (Gewirtz & Edleson, 2007; Wolfe et al., 2003).

3.4 Abuse dynamics: Research and theory

3.4.1 Perpetration of abuse

As noted in the definition, DA is not necessarily physical and an entire myriad of behaviours are implemented to undermine, isolate and destabilise the survivor. Table 1.0 details the range of abusive behaviours that can be perpetrated. Research on both male and female perpetrators has established the use of these behaviours within abusive intimate relationships (Hines, Brown & Dunning, 2007). Preliminary research on female abusers has suggested that physical abuse may be perpetrated with the use of weapons in an attempt to nullify or reverse the male physical strength advantage (Hines, Brown & Dunning, 2007). Equally, assaults may not take place within a confrontational sequence

of forewarning. Consequently, the unpreparedness or vulnerability (e.g. sleep) of the male counterpart may negate any advantage of physical strength (Hines, Brown & Dunning, 2007).

The aforementioned gender norms of female-as-victim and nurturer and male-as-perpetrator are suggested to create an opportunity for females to abuse intimate males via manipulation. Baumgartner (1993) states that the norm of female-as-nurturer establishes a position of power and control via threats of divorce, removal of children or the alienation of children from their father via his continual denigration. As yet there is limited empirical research to support these assertions, however anecdotal evidence in the form of newspaper articles and court proceedings potentially substantiate these claims (for examples see Cook, 1997; George 2003).

A number of authors have also posited that the norm of female-as-victim creates the opportunity for abusive women to make false allegations of DA and be believed without question (e.g. George, 2003, Straus, 2007). This has now been supported by research. Sarantakos (2004) interviewed 68 families who had experienced separation proceedings in which DA was said to be prevalent. The wives claimed to have used violence once whilst within the relationship and had stated that this was in self-defence. The biological mother and children of the women were also interviewed; it was found that the argument of self-defence was not supported by these relatives and they identified the female as the primary assailant. When the women were then presented with these alternate narratives most of them admitted that they had, in fact, been the dominant, violent and abusive partner. In each of these cases the authorities had sided with the female and therefore treated the male as a perpetrator.

Physical abuse	Emotional and Psychological Abuse	Sexual Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throwing things • bruising, broken bones, cuts scratches • kicking, slapping, hitting • Pushing shoving, grabbing • Chocking, strangling, suffocating. • Using a weapon, knives, scissors, firearms • Biting burning, chemical burns, scalding, ice baths, left in the cold • head injuries • miscarriage • Physical neglect – deprivation of sleep, food, warmth. • Death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercive control • terror, fear and intimidation • verbal abuse – unrelenting criticism • threats – to survivor, children, family, pets, suicide • humiliation, degradation, derogation • Isoaltion from family, friends and social network • Denial of privacy • Emotional neglect – unresponsive, unavailable • Cognitive neglect – work • Interpersonal neglect – going out, use of telephone, hiding/destroying of clothes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape • Sexual assault • Degrading and humiliating sexual acts. • Forced sex with others. • Forced sex with children or animals. • Unsafe sex.
Financial abuse	Spiritual abuse	Other forms of abuse.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denying access to cash or credit. • Not consulting on decisions of how income is spent • Denying access to employment • No contributing to family income, expecting partner to fund everything. • Forcing partner to work long hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing observation of holy days • Preventing religious contemplation, rituals • Preventing worship • Ridiculing religious/spiritual views and beliefs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage to personal property • Theft of property • Threats and violence to pets • Stalking and cyber stalking, especially after relationship ended.

Table 1: Range and type of abusive behaviours encountered within DA extracted from Sanderson (2008).

The ‘cycle of violence’ is a popular theory developed by Walker (1979, 2000) to highlight the cyclical nature of abuse. Three phases exist within the ‘cycle of violence’. The first is the ‘tension building phase’ in which there is a gradual escalation of tension within the relationship, this tension may be expressed in a series of minor incidents. Once the tension becomes unbearable for the perpetrator, the ‘abuse or crisis phase’ ensues, marked by an acute abusive incident (Sanderson, 2008). The third phase of the cycle, the ‘honeymoon or reconciliation phase’ is characterised by contrition and remorse and binds the perpetrator and survivor in a ‘folie à deux’ (Sanderson, 2008 p76). With each abuse cycle, the perpetrator’s fear of abandonment increases and with it the associated necessity for control. The cycle is therefore posited to escalate in frequency and severity over time (Walker, 2000).

Research has established the existence of the cycle of violence within same-sex relationships and heterosexual relationships in which the male is perpetrator (e.g. Ard & Makadon, 2011; Walters, 2011; Renzetti, 1992; McClennen, Summers & Vaughan, 2002; Utton, 2008; Curnow, 1997; Coleman, 1994). However, only one piece of qualitative research could be sourced regarding heterosexual female perpetrators. This suggested that abuse may become increasingly severe and frequent over time (Migliaccio, 2002).

It has been argued that Walker's model is limited in that it only accounts for abuse enforced by certain types of perpetrator (Sanderson, 2008). The pattern of abuse perpetration may therefore differ according to the profile of the perpetrator. Various models of perpetrator typology have been put forward for example, Dutton (2007), Jacobson & Gottman (1998), Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart (1994). Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart (1994) proposed that three sub-types of perpetrator could be identified these include the family only (FO) type perpetrator, the borderline-dysphoric (BD) type perpetrator and the generally violent anti-social (GVA) type of perpetrator. According to this typology a GVA perpetrator would not necessarily perpetrate abuse in the cyclical nature suggested by Walker's model, rather a GVA-type of perpetrator may implement abuse with high frequency and limited or nil reconciliation or remorse. Consequently, a survivor may not experience abuse in the cyclical nature suggested by Walker's model. Equally, some survivors may never experience a "tension building" or 'honeymoon and reconciliation' phase.

To discuss perpetrator typology in further detail is beyond the scope of the current research, however it is to be noted that perpetrator typologies refer primarily to male perpetrators. A perpetrator typology for female abusers has not been created, however many argue that such typologies could equally apply to some female perpetrators (Sanderson, 2008, Dutton, 2007).

3.4.2 Remaining within the relationship

Traumatic bonding or Domestic Stockholm Syndrome (DSS) is "an automatic, often unconscious emotional response to the trauma of becoming a victim" (Dutton & Painter

1993, p. 106). DSS was identified when studying captive responses within hostage situations. This theoretical model has now been applied to survivors of DA as an explanation for how a survivor copes with DA and why they remain within the relationship (Dutton & Painter 1993).

The presence of a power imbalance, and the experience of intermittent reinforcement, are believed to be critical features in the formation of a traumatic bond (Dutton & Painter 1993). The vacillation between love and abuse within the cycle of violence serves as intermittent reinforcement, which is thought to enthrall the survivor in anxious anticipation and hope (Dutton & Painter, 1993). The power imbalance is posited to evoke the dependency of early infancy, in which the perpetrator symbolises both a threat to and bequeather of, life (Dutton, 2007). Thus, to ensure survival, the negative attributes of the perpetrator must be denied and the positive exemplified. Dutton (2007) states that these features of DA promote the development of a strong positive emotional bond which is unconscious and beyond the survivor's control. The severity and duration of the DA, the degree of the survivor's isolation and an exposure to violence and abuse in childhood, are believed to be further factors which promote traumatic bonding (Dutton & Painter, 1993).

Some theorists propose that, in order to fully comprehend traumatic bonding, the cognitive restructuring or "cognitive bond" that accompanies it must be appreciated (Sanderson, 2008.). Theoretically, there are four stages in the development of a cognitive bond (Sanderson, 2008; Dutton & Painter, 1993).

The first stage, the 'trigger phase' is where security within the relationship is undermined; acute stress reactions are believed to be activated as a result. A phase of reorientation is posited to ensue (Sanderson, 2008.). During this phase the survivor must reconcile the cognitive dissonance between abuse and the continuation of the relationship. A number of strategies are purported to help reduce this dissonance. These include; humanising and empathising with the abuser, blaming factors external to the relationship for the abuse, i.e. substance misuse problems or attributing the abuse to one's

own inadequacies, thereby adopting a position of self-blame (Sanderson, 2008; Dutton & Painter, 1993).

The third 'coping' phase is said to be typified by cognitive abuse management strategies, such as psychic numbing and denial or dissociation. These are thought to help the survivor focus on the positive aspects of the relationship while compartmentalising the bad (Sanderson, 2008; Dutton & Painter, 1993). Finally, the adaption phase is theoretically marked by the incorporation of all the abuser's projections and distortions; depression, low self-esteem, a loss of identity, and belief of being completely dependent upon the perpetrator, is thought to result (Sanderson, 2008; Dutton & Painter, 1993).

Quantitative and qualitative research into male perpetrated DA have ascertained that survivors experience a number of the features necessary for traumatic bonding, i.e. feelings of total dependence, cognitive dissonance, self-blame, externalisation of blame, dissociation, denial and acute stress, and trauma reactions (e.g. Dutton & Painter, 1993). However, no research appears to have been conducted to date on the traumatic bonding within the context of heterosexual male DA; there is no reason to assume the same processes could not occur for a male survivor.

A number of cognitive and emotional coping strategies can be noted within the theory of traumatic bonding. These include; denial, dissociation, self-blame, empathising with the abuser, focussing on the positive and a repudiation of affect. A number of behavioural coping strategies have also been observed in survivors. Research has noted that survivors manage DA by becoming increasingly submissive and compliant in their interaction with the perpetrator (Waldrop & Resick, 2004). As a result, they reportedly become hyper-vigilant to the abuser's mood in an attempt to anticipate his or her every need and avoid 'causing' further abuse (Waldrop & Resick, 2004). Some female survivors have also been noted to resort to compulsive busyness, distraction and workaholism (Dutton, 1992). These behaviours are believed to be a way in which the survivor attempts to rebuild a semblance of self-esteem and self-efficacy as well as avoid abuse.

To date, no research which examines heterosexual male survivors' coping strategies has been conducted. However research into how men cope with other forms of victimisation such as childhood sexual abuse or physical assault suggests that men tend to cope with victimisation via avoidance, minimisation and denial (Hamel, 2009; Ceung, Leug, Tsui, 2009; Burcar & Malin, 2009; Holmes, Offen & Waller, 1997). This literature suggests that they tend to deny the seriousness of the situation, minimise the extent of impact and avoid reporting the incident or seeking help. Once again the literature suggests that such coping strategies are rooted in socio-cultural gender norms. Accordingly, the experiences of victimisation and vulnerability associated with assault, abuse or injury invert the hegemonic ideals of strength, self-reliance, stoicism and aggression. (Hamel, 2009; George, 2003; Ceung, Leug, Tsui, 2009; Burcar & Malin, 2009; Davies, McCrae, Frank, Dochnahl, Pickering, Harrison, Zakrzewski & Wilson, 2000). Thus a male survivor of DA may cope with such abuse via denial, minimisation and avoidance as to report or acknowledge the abuse would be considered antithetical to his masculine identity (Hamel, 2009, George, 2003).

3.4.3 Challenges in leaving the abusive relationship

In addition to the attachment created during traumatic bonding, research has established that female survivors, and survivors from same-sex relationships, cite fear, love, hope, pride, embarrassment, loyalty, financial dependence, low self-esteem, religious beliefs, children, and ignorance, as reasons for remaining within an abusive relationship (Island & Letellier, 1991; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980; Sanderson, 2008; Dutton, 1992). Preliminary research suggests that heterosexual male survivors cite love, children, marriage and a lack of social support as reasons for remaining within an abusive relationship (Migliaccio, 2002, Hines & Douglas, 2010) (see section 3.7 for further detail on Migliaccio's 2002 study).

Socio-cultural gender norms of male-as-perpetrator and female-as-victim are thought to create additional challenges for the male survivor when leaving the abusive relationship. Four key areas of difficulty have been identified. Firstly, literature asserts that men have

internalised the socio-cultural image of masculinity which views them as initiators of aggression but never the victims (Cruz, 2000). Equally, as noted previously, norms of genteel femininity do not readily acknowledge the capacity for a female to perpetrate instrumental violence or abusively dominate a male (George, 2003, 2007). Some men may therefore be unable to define themselves as being abused or have a limited narrative with which to express such a status (Cruz, 2000). Howard and Hollander (1997) believe that victimisation is *“so deeply encoded as a female experience that a man who is victimised is literally feminised in respondent’s cognitive evaluations”* (p.86). Consequently, if a man recognises his experience of DA, this recognition is liable to generate feelings of emasculation, compounding the shame and embarrassment already inherent to the abuse process (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001). These norms are, therefore, believed to make it more challenging for a man to disclose or admit his experience of DA (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001). To date, limited empirical research has been dedicated to exploring this theory.

As noted previously, traditional gender norms do not only operate at an intra-personal level, the belief of male-as-perpetrator and female-as-victim can be observed at a social-cultural and interpersonal level (Dobash et al., 1992). Thus, Peterman and Dixon (2003) suggest that, if a male survivor discloses his DA to a friend or family member, he is likely to experience ridicule, disbelief or accusations of abuse. Unfortunately, such a reaction is likely to collude with the survivor in minimising his abuse as well as exacerbate his feelings of shame and isolation. No research has yet been committed to empirically validating these assertions.

Another challenge thought to confront the male survivor, is a fear of secondary victimisation by the police, the judicial system, social services and the media, if the abuse is reported (Peterman & Dixon, 2003). Evidence suggests such fears are not unfounded. Family law, the police, social services and various other statutory services have been observed to be traditional in views of gender and hence, protective of women, often at the exclusion of men (Collier, 1995; Hamilton & Worthen, 2011; Hamel, Tonia, Malley-Morrison & Aaronson, 2009). This gender bias within the statutory services is thought to

create a further challenge for men, such as the risk of losing their homes or access to their children, if they do report the abuse or leave the relationship (Collier, 1995; George, 2003; George, 1997). The study detailed previously by Sarantankos (2004) provides empirical support for this contention, observing that men may experience counter-accusations, litigation and removal or restricted access to their children if they leave the relationship. Such concerns are suggested to be particularly prominent if the survivor believes he is protecting his children from the perpetrator (Sanderson, 2008). Furthermore, traditional masculine parenting norms highlight the paternal parental role as that of protector and provider (Hammer & Good, 2010). The desire to remain within the relationship in order to protect the children may therefore be amplified for the male survivor. It could thus be suggested that such parenting norms potentially provide an opportunity for a female perpetrator to exert power over a male survivor.

Finally, a stark deficit is noted in terms of service provision for heterosexual males who have encountered DA. Very few DA shelters accept male survivors and only one small specific heterosexual male shelter exists in the UK (Peterman & Dixon, 2003; Robinson & Rowlands, 2005). This resource deficit has been directly attributed to assumptions rooted in gender norms and is thought to create a further obstacle for men in terms of leaving the abusive relationship (George, 2002, 2003).

3.4.4 Psychological impact of domestic abuse

Research on female survivors has established that DA has innumerable repercussions. Shame, isolation, low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy and self-loathing, depression, post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTS), psychosomatic symptoms, alcohol and drug abuse, low self-esteem and suicidal, self-destructive, self-mutilating behaviours have all been found to be significantly higher in female survivors of DA than in the general population (Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd & Sebastian, 1991; Cascardi et al., 1992; Set & Straus, 1990).

Less research has been committed to exploring this issue for men; most of the research has focused on the impact of violence rather than abuse. It has been found that the higher the levels of interpersonal violence are, the more severe the experience of depression, post-traumatic-stress, stress, suicidal ideation and psychosomatic symptoms. (Sets & Straus, 1990; Simonelli & Ingram, 1998; Hines, 2007, Hines & Douglas, 2011; Randle & Graham, 2011). Only one quantitative study could be located exploring the impact of emotional abuse and it found that emotional abuse predicted 14-33% of the variance in depression and psychological distress (Cascardi et al., 1992). Accordingly, the consequences of DA against men are less researched. Consequently, the following information is based on literature and research regarding the formation of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in female survivors of DA. These two psychological difficulties are being detailed as they are considered the most prevalent disorders to result from DA (Sanderson, 2008).

Research indicates that depression and DA are highly correlated, with a mean prevalence rate of 47.6 per cent in female survivors (Golding, 1999). A number of factors are thought to influence the onset of depression. Firstly, it is argued that fears of repercussion prevent a survivor from being able to express anger toward the abuser. The anger thus becomes internalised, eroding self-esteem and potentially leading to the development of depression (Sanderson, 2008). Secondly, research has established that the feelings of subjugation, dehumanisation, defilement, disgust and humiliation that are common within DA are closely linked to experiences of shame (Lockley, 1999). Shame has been found to generate self-loathing and self-hatred and is thereby considered a factor in the formation of depression for female survivors (Lockley, 1999). Finally, the abuser's persistent denigration and derogation are thought to impute a negative identity upon the survivor, which in turn may cause depression. A number of pieces of qualitative research have supported this assertion (e.g. Dutton, 1992).

Golding (1999) found that approximately 63.8 per cent of female survivors have experienced Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) compared to a mean of 3.47 per cent in the general population. Consequently, PTSD is considered the most prevalent disorder

associated with DA (Humphreys & Thiara, 2003; Jones, Hughes & Untersaller, 2001; Krause et al., 2007).

PTS reactions are believed to result from the brain's inability to integrate and process a traumatic event (De Zulueta, 2009). Symptoms of PTS include hyper-arousal, re-experiencing of the trauma and avoidance of internal and external cues associated with the trauma (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Equally, survivors of interpersonal trauma often have experience narratives which lack coherence, accurate chronological sequencing and personal meaning. This narrative incoherence is believed to be reflective of disrupted thought and memory processing (Foa, Molnar, & Cashman, 1995; Hembree & Foa, 2000).

Theoretically, PTS symptoms within DA are caused by prolonged exposure to an underlying, unpredictable traumatic threat which the survivor feels helpless to avoid. This unpredictability generates confusion which inhibits mentalisation and prevents integration of the experience into the long-term memory (De Zulueta, 2009). There is some evidence to suggest that the experience of abuse in childhood may impede mentalisation which can create a vulnerability to both the toleration of DA and the development of PTSD (Bateman & Fonagy, 2004).

3.5 Psychological interventions and services for domestic abuse survivors.

Within the UK there are currently 4000 places for women in refuges and over 1000 agencies providing services to abused women (Christodoulou, 2011). These agencies include independent specialist advocacy and support services e.g. refuge accommodation, resettlement services, specialist counselling services, dedicated statutory teams/ responses from the police, health, housing, social services, family law courts, and mental health services e.g. specialist domestic violence courts, and additional services such as Sanctuary Schemes (Womens Aid, 2009).

Counsellors, psychologists and counselling psychologists can be expected to work within any of these fields either in a counselling, managerial, clinical lead, expert witness, supervisory or advisory capacity (Woolfe, Dryden & Strawbridge, 2003). Counselling psychology is also active in publishing literature and research in this area, for example, Harris (2006) explored the research and considerations associated with deciding to employ conjoint therapy for treating DA issues. He found that conjoint therapy can, where appropriate, have a unique and important place within intervention. Latta & Goodman (2011) examined the subjective experiences of friends and family members who support female DA survivors. The study highlighted that support and educational systems are required to aid network members in helping survivors effectively.

Conversely, there are minimal services available to male survivors. Within England and Wales there are only 16 dedicated places for men in refuges and only three specific services for male survivors. These services are website and phone line organisations offering advice, information and support to men who have experienced DA (Christodoulou, 2011).

At present there is no research detailing how to work therapeutically with male survivors of DA. Consequently, the following treatment guidelines are based on literature and research when working psychotherapeutically with female survivors.

Many clinicians working with survivors of interpersonal trauma emphasise the centrality of the therapeutic relationship (Dutton, 1992; Herman, 1992, Pearlman & Courtois, 2005). The coercive control and betrayal of trust inherent to DA make it difficult for survivors to trust others, often fearing further abuse or re-victimisation. Moreover, traumatic bonding experiences promote insecure attachments leading to difficulties with intimacy and autonomy (Sanderson, 2008). Consequently, when working with this population, an in-depth understanding of the impact of DA upon relational dynamics is required. How such dynamics then manifest within the therapeutic relationship is also important to acknowledge (Sanderson, 2008). Accordingly, power and control dynamics may frequently be experienced within the transference relationship (Alcock, 2001).

Equally, feelings of insecurity can generate ambivalence and/or enmeshment with the therapist and a lack of trust, even if not explicitly stated, may create fear, withdrawal, anger and/or guarded and defensive behaviour (Sanderson, 2008).

In order to work through and overcome some of these complex relational dynamics, a psychologist is required to be constant, patient, warm, engaged, accepting, mindful of power and relational dynamics and able to demonstrate that what is brought by the client can be held, contained and validated without recrimination, criticism or punishment (Alcock, 2001).

Three main phases of treatment are used for working with survivors of DA (Sanderson, 2008, Alcock, 2001, Dutton, 1992 and Herman, 1992). Alcock (2001) labels these stages as confirmation, information and affirmation. The first stage, the act of confirmation is used to build a therapeutic alliance and confirm the client's experience. This phase entails acknowledging and validating the client's experience of DA whilst reframing thoughts of self-blame and questioning any minimisations made (Sanderson, 2008, Alcock, 2001, Dutton, 1992 and Herman, 1992).

The second stage, informing, is marked by creating meaning, self-understanding and self-compassion. The psychologist is required to have an in-depth knowledge of DA and trauma in order to understand and normalise the psychological impact and coping strategies adopted by a survivor as well as aid the survivor in exploring the nature and pattern of the abuse (Alcock, 2001). A key process in this stage is the mentalisation of emotions, unmet needs and thoughts. Mentalising such emotions often highlights the clients losses, mourning such losses is therefore also a key feature of this stage (Sanderson, 2008, Alcock, 2001, Dutton, 1992 and Herman, 1992).

The final phase is that of affirmation (Alcock, 2001) during which the psychologist revisits what the client wanted at the onset of counselling. This phase involves the survivor reconnecting with the self, other and the world. Building a survivors confidence,

self-esteem, hope and social network are therefore the focus (Sanderson, 2008, Alcock, 2001, Dutton, 1992 and Herman, 1992).

3.6 Summary of research findings on male survivors of domestic abuse

The preponderance of research pertaining to men's DA has focussed on establishing prevalence rates utilising the CTS. These CTS studies have also generated figures regarding the types of abuse perpetrated, i.e. verbal, physical, sexual, etc, with further research detailing how this abuse may be perpetrated, i.e. with the use of weapons, whilst the survivor is asleep (Mcneely & Mann, 1990; Fynn, 1990; Hines, Brown & Dunning, 2007; Allen-Collinson, 2010; Migliaccio, 2002).

A body of work also examines female perpetrators and the causes of their abusive behaviour. This has linked theories of personality and attachment deficits to abuse perpetration (Hines, Brown & Dunning, 2007).

Limited research has been committed to exploring the various factors which may impede a survivor from leaving the abusive relationship. Most literature on this topic has been theoretical however one piece of qualitative research and one piece of research with a mixed design found that men cite love, children, marriage and a lack of social support as reasons for remaining within an abusive relationship (Migliaccio, 2002, Hines & Douglas, 2010)

Finally, the impact of violence has been studied quantitatively. A correlation between severity of violence and depression, post-traumatic stress, suicidal ideation, stress and psychosomatic symptoms has been found (Sets & Straus, 1990; Cascardi et al, 1992; Simonelli & Ingram, 1998; Hines, 2007; Hines & Douglas, 2011; Randle & Graham, 2011). Equally impact of abuse has been correlated with depression and psychological distress (Cascardi et al., 1992). No research has attempted to substantiate the development of such difficulties.

3.7 Qualitative studies on male domestic abuse survivors

Three qualitative studies on men's DA have been noted throughout the literature review. One by Hines, Brown and Dunning (2007), which asked male survivors about the types of abuse perpetrated and perpetrator characteristics, and two further studies aimed at exploring men's experience of DA. It is therefore pertinent to examine these two studies in greater depth as they are the most relevant to the current research.

Migliaccio (2002) completed a narrative analysis using data generated in various forms (unstructured face-to-face interview, unstructured telephone interview, email exchanges and data extracted from internet postings) from 12 heterosexual American male participants who were experiencing DA. The aim of the study was to directly compare the data gathered to existing research and literature on female survivors. Migliaccio (2002) found that increasingly severe physical and verbal abuse was perpetrated. Abusers were also cited to employ a different persona outside of the family home. The greater physical size and strength difference of the husbands was noted to be irrelevant in the prevention and perpetration of violence, with most participants stating that they refused to hit their wives as they believed it was wrong for a man to do this. Love, marriage, children and a lack of support from police, friends and family were cited as reasons for remaining within the relationship.

The second study was an initial pilot by Allen-Collinson (2010). This English study was completed from a sociological perspective and employed narrative analysis to examine data from one participant. Diary extracts taken whilst the participant was within the relationship provided the raw data. Again, this was compared to existing theory and research on female survivors. Allen-Collinson (2010) reported on a range of abusive behaviours including physical, verbal and psychological. Verbal degradation was cited as constant and the use of violence became normalised within the dyad. The norm of a male not hitting a female was put forward by the participant as an explanation on his non-retaliatory behaviour.

3.8 Research rationale and research question

Given the dearth of research into men's DA the necessity for further research is evident. Equally, a stark deficit in the literature is noted in terms of exploring the male survivor and the male survivor's experience. Quantitative research on men's DA has been criticised by feminist theorists for its lack of context (e.g. Dobash et al, 1992). Furthermore, a number of scholars have posited that experience should be the central focus of analysis in DA so that the motive, meaning and consequence of the abuse within the entire relationship is properly understood (e.g. Randle & Graham, 2011; Hines, Brown, & Dunning, 2007). Such researchers have, therefore, made a call for more qualitative studies on men's experience of DA, acknowledging that our current detailed understanding of women's DA is largely formed by the plethora of qualitative literature available (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005).

The two studies detailed (Allen-Collinson, 2010; Migliaccio, 2002) have attempted to answer this call and have thus provided a much needed starting point in exploring men's DA. However, both pieces of research hold a position which presumes that the data generated is compatible and comparable to research on female survivors. This presumption possibly created a bias when understanding the participant's narrative, potentially precluding a gender neutral approach to the data. Randle and Graham (2011) assert that too many researchers have had a tendency to draw on female-centric frameworks and models when studying men's DA. They therefore make a request for explorative work which generates hypotheses and understandings from a male perspective. Although the researcher has highlighted possible areas in which male DA could overlap with that of females, such highlights are only tentative and are proffered as a mere guide in the absence of alternative literature. It is to be acknowledged that this research intends to explore men's experience of DA in a gender neutral, person-centered manner. Furthermore, although both pieces of research were illuminating, they have still left certain aspects of the abuse experience invisible or without detail, for example, the impact of DA or how the survivors coped. The purpose of the research at hand is,

therefore, to add to this small but developing qualitative literature, with the hope of generating a more comprehensive understanding of men's DA experience.

To enable us to begin to understand heterosexual men's experience of DA, a suitable research question appears to be:

What are heterosexual men's experiences of domestic abuse?

3.9 Counselling psychology's potential contribution to the field

No research that examined men's DA from a counselling psychology perspective could be sourced. Within both the Health Professional Council's (HPC) standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists and British Psychological Society's (BPS) professional practice guidelines for counselling psychology, an emphasis is placed upon using empirical research to inform practice and ensure professional, ethical treatment for clients (BPS, 2005; HPC, 2009). It has also been noted that a thorough knowledge of DA is essential when working with DA survivors, not least for the phase of 'informing' but also to aid in confirmation and affirmation, as discussed in section 3.5 (Alcock, 2001). It, therefore, seems important that research is completed from a counselling psychology perspective, not only for counselling psychologists to work effectively and ethically with this population but also for any practitioner psychologist who may be completing work with this client group.

Professional practice guidelines also stress that practitioners understand the contexts which affect a client's experience and incorporate this understanding into assessments, formulation and intervention (BPS, 2005). Undergoing research which attempts to understand the context of male DA could therefore be considered an important first step in facilitating this process. Additionally, practice guidelines place a particular emphasis upon anti-discriminatory practice (BPS, 2005). It is stated that counselling psychologists are required to "*recognise social contexts and discrimination*" (BPS, 2005, p.2) and "*challenge the views of people who pathologise*" (BPS, 2005, p.7) on the basis of discrimination whilst working toward "*high standards of anti-discriminatory practice*" (BPS, 2005, p.2) in order to "*empower*" (BPS, 2005, p.2) those marginalised. Within the

literature review, it has been noted that the socio-cultural context of male DA is particularly hostile and persecutory. Equally, the norm of male-as-perpetrator and female-as-victim has served to pathologise and marginalise male survivors with some researchers and scholars labeling such survivors imposters or perpetrators (George, 1994 and George, 2001). To commit to this research is, therefore, to recognise and label this social context and discrimination, hopefully advancing the anti-discriminatory practice of counselling psychologists whilst also empowering a marginalised population.

Allied to this anti-discriminatory ethos, is an endeavor by the field of counselling psychology to go beyond simple 'received wisdom' and question dominant social paradigms which affect the individual (Woolfe, Dryden & Strawbridge, 2003). Consequently, professional practice guidelines also aver that psychologists should "*be attentive to areas of knowledge beyond the immediate environs of counselling psychology*" (BPS, 2005, p.7). The research at hand is attempting to achieve these aims. Firstly, it is investigating a topic area which up until now has been neglected by counselling psychology. Secondly, it aspires to transcend the prevailing contentious debate which has thus far dominated the field, and reflect upon what meta-processes such a debate may be communicating. At the same time it also intends to examine the impact of this dominant paradigm upon the individual, i.e. the potential difficulties with re-victimisation, shame or social-stigma.

Counselling psychology can, therefore, be understood to be in a unique position in terms of its potential contribution to this field. Accordingly, the current study aspires not only to address a gap in the research on men's DA as a whole, but also aims to form an initial focal point for the field of counselling psychology from which there appears to be both a conspicuous omission yet also a potentially valuable and distinctive contribution.

4.0 METHOD

4.1 Methodological Overview

4.1.1 Design

The study employed a qualitative design with interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as a methodological framework for data gathering and analysis.

4.1.2 Rationale for methodology

Quantitative methodology has traditionally been utilised in psychological research. Such methodology stresses the importance of statistical analysis and employs a positivist epistemology (Langdrige, 2007). A “crisis in social psychology” during the 1970s (Langdrige, 2007) challenged many of the a-cultural/a-historical² assumptions underlying most quantitative research and an “explosion” of interest in qualitative research ensued (Smith, 2003 p.19).

The qualitative methodological paradigm has an epistemological focus on experience or narrative. Subjective and involved methods of analysing data are therefore utilised. Such methods attempt to describe or interpret the meaning participants attribute to a particular phenomenon (Langdrige, 2007).

A qualitative orientation to data gathering and analysis would, therefore, provide the rich and illuminating data required for exploring the lived experiences of the individual. Moreover, the socio-political context within which men experience DA has been cited to be highly contentious and charged with emotive debate. Understanding the individual’s experience within this context is, therefore, important. It would be difficult to account for such individual context using a quantitative methodology.

² This refers to a lack of appreciation for the impact of historical and cultural context within quantitative work.

4.1.3 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

4.1.3.1 What is IPA?

IPA has been selected as the qualitative method for the present study. IPA is idiographic in its approach and is said to have dual epistemological underpinnings, developed from both phenomenology and hermeneutics. When a phenomenological philosophy is applied to psychological research, attention is given to the world in which participants live and what that means to them, i.e. the participants' lived experience (Langdrige, 2007). The hermeneutic aspect of IPA emphasises the role of interpretation when analysing and understanding the descriptive data (Miller & Glassner, 1997). Smith and Osborn (2003) refer to the use of a double hermeneutic. This highlights the two stage interpretation process utilised within IPA, i.e. the researcher is trying to make sense of how the participant makes sense of their experience (Smith & Eatough, 2007).

4.1.3.2: Why IPA?

IPA was the chosen as it was considered highly compatible with the research question. There are a number of reasons why it was considered compatible. Firstly IPA emphasises the opportunity the researcher may have to perceive the meaning that people attach to their experiences (Miller & Glassner, 1997). This concern with "individual experience" (Smith 2004, p.40) is central to IPA making it directly compatible to the research question.

IPA is also inductive and exploratory. It is therefore particularly suitable for investigating topics which are novel or under-researched or where issues are complex and ambiguous (Smith & Eatough, 2006). The research topic fulfils each of these criteria being not only complex and ambiguous but also novel and under-researched. In addition, IPA has a strong idiographic focus, rare even among qualitative methods (Smith & Eatough, 2006). IPA therefore permits the researcher to analyse the data comprehensively, in the depth required by the research question.

Finally, counselling psychology's professional practice guidelines state that congruence should exist between the model of research chosen and the values espoused in counselling psychology (BPS, 2005). Subjectivity, personal perception and reflexivity are fundamental to both counselling psychology philosophy (Woolfe, Dryden & Strawbridge, 2003) and IPA (Smith & Osborn, 2003). IPA therefore seems suitable in its pertinence to, and philosophical consistency with the counselling psychology philosophy and in its capacity to address the issues raised by the research question.

Although IPA has been cited as the most appropriate method for analysing the research question it is pertinent to discuss other qualitative research methods which were considered but discounted. For example, discourse analysis (Gee, 2011), like IPA can be utilised when examining under-researched or complex topics. Discourse analysis also has the same dedication to language and speech. However, unlike IPA discourse analysis holds an epistemological position which is anti-realist. It examines the role of language in describing a person's experience, arguing that speech provides an insight into how a person has constructed reality rather than how the person thinks. IPA was therefore adopted over discourse analysis as the focus of the study is on the participant's phenomenological experiences rather than their dialogue. Equally an underlying assumption within the current research is that a relationship exists between what a person says and what they believe.

Grounded Theory (GT) (Birks & Mills, 2011) is another qualitative approach which was given consideration. Similar to IPA and discourse analysis, GT is believed suitable for novel or complex research topics. Equally, akin to IPA, GT holds a realist epistemological stance. However, GT is utilised to develop theory from data. The current study did not wish to focus on the development of theory but rather gain an initial insight into participant's lived experiences. In addition, IPA has a stronger idiographic focus than GT; such focus was thought important for answering the research question in sufficient depth.

4.1.3.3 Data collection using IPA

Although IPA allows for different methods of data collection e.g. diaries or focus groups, semi-structured interviews are considered the most appropriate as they enable the researcher to make interventions, asking participants either to clarify or expand on areas of interest (Smith & Osborn, 2004). Interviews also facilitate rapport and empathy between researcher and participant, which may aid in the production of richer data (Smith & Osborn, 2004).

4.2 Recruitment Protocol

Three refuges were located within the UK which accepted male survivors of DA. These refuges were the first point of contact for the recruitment of participants. Each refuge manager was contacted in turn. The aims, ethics, recruitment procedure and inclusion criteria were outlined and discussed with each manager.

The first refuge was found to support men that had just left the abusive relationship. Ethically these men could not be interviewed as they had not permanently left the abusive relationship for the stipulated length of time (see section 4.4). The second refuge assisted both perpetrators and survivors of DA. At the time of recruitment only two men met the inclusion criteria for the study (see section 4.4 for detail on inclusion criteria). The manager of the refuge gave these men a recruitment letter. He reported that neither wished to take part in the study as they felt ‘too ashamed’ to discuss their experience. The final refuge only offered one place to men who had experienced DA. At the time of recruitment this was occupied by a male escaping an abusive gay relationship. This gentleman therefore did not meet the inclusion criteria for the study (see section 4.4 for inclusion criteria).

After extensive research the “Mankind” initiative was found. This initiative is a charity which supports men who have experienced DA. The director of the initiative was contacted and agreed to distribute the recruitment letter.

4.3 Ethical considerations

4.3.1 Ethical Approval:

This study was granted London Metropolitan University ethical approval. The study was also conducted in accordance with the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct (2006).

4.3.2 Informed consent, debriefing and distress management

Initial contact with participants was made via a recruitment letter (Appendix 1). The letter detailed the purpose of the project and highlighted that data collection would be in the form of voice recorded interviews. It also stated that the topic was emotive and possibly distressing. Potential participants were therefore advised to take time in considering their suitability for participation.

The letter outlined the researcher's contact details; potential participants could therefore contact the researcher by phone or email if they wished to take part. Once contact was made, the goals and ethics of the study were restated. The screening questions, already detailed in the recruitment letter were also reiterated: "Do you identify as having left the abusive relationship permanently?" and "How long has it been since you left this relationship?" Participants were only recruited if they identified as having permanently left the relationship for a minimum of four months. This was done to avoid interviewing those who may have been too vulnerable or still at risk of danger to be interviewed (a common phenomenon within DA situations is the survivor cycling in and out of the abusive relationship (Sanderson, 2008).

After further discussion of what the research entailed, interview dates and times were organised with those who met the criteria for the study and were still interested in participation.

All those who contacted the researcher were found to meet the inclusion criteria for the study and all went on to participate in the research.

A consent form (Appendix 2) was given to participants prior to the interview. It restated the intentions and procedures of the study and requested consent for direct quotations to be used within the final write-up. It also noted the potential for distress and the participant's right to withdraw.

Given the emotive nature of the interview topic, a three step distress protocol was created and utilised (See Appendix 5 for details of this protocol). Equally, all participants were given the opportunity to be debriefed post interview to help them process any difficult feelings, none of the participants required debriefing.

The debriefing form included information on further support, the contact details of the researcher should the participant wish to withdraw and a procedure for complaints in case the participant believed this necessary (Appendix 3).

4.3.3 Confidentiality

A number of steps were taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Firstly, the persons in charge of services contacted were asked to distribute the recruitment letter to potential participants. This protected the anonymity and safety of those who had accessed the service.

To provide participants with anonymity, each was assigned a reference number with a pseudonym allocated randomly to this number (see table 2). This pseudonym was then used throughout transcription and write-up of the research. The original, signed consent forms were kept in a locked cabinet, with the transcripts and recordings stored in a separate locked filing cabinet. During transcription the researcher removed any personal, identifying information about the participant such as town, street or place names and friend or relative names. The steps taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity were explained both verbally and in writing (in the recruitment letter and consent form) to participants prior to participation.

Participants were also made aware of the limits of confidentiality. This was noted in the consent form and was reiterated verbally prior to the commencement of the interview. Confidentiality would be breached if it became apparent that the participant was placing themselves or someone else at immediate risk.

4.4 Participants.

IPA utilises purposive sampling to find participants for whom the research question is significant (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Men who had experienced domestic abuse within a prior heterosexual relationship were therefore sought for recruitment. Those who identified themselves as the primary assailant or those who had experienced DA at the hands of a male perpetrator were not included in the data set. Equally for ethical reasons participants who were still within the abusive relationship were not recruited.

Nine participants were required for and took part in this research (see discussion section 6.4 for a critical discussion of IPA and sample size). The age range of participants was 35 years to 64 years with a mean age of 48 years. Table 2 shows the length of time each participant had been absent from the relationship and how long they were in the relationship.

Interview Reference no:	Pseudonym	Relationship Duration (years/months)	Length of time since relationship ended (years/months)
101 (pilot)	Clive	14 years	3 years
102	Barry	9 Years	7 years
103	Mike	25 years	10 years
104	Chris	18 months	15 months
105	James	3 years 6 months	12 months
106	Steven	9 years	10 years
107	Jacob	3 years	22 years
108	Peter	12 years	4 years
109	Alex	2 years 6 months	4 years 4 months

Table 2: Interviews (by reference number), assigned pseudonyms, relationship duration and the length of time since relationship ended.

4.5 Materials

The investigation utilised an interview schedule (Appendix 4) as a framework for conducting semi-structured interviews for the purposes of data collection. The topics covered within the interview schedule were generated deductively and were based upon a review of the relevant research and literature pertaining to DA.

The structure of the interview schedule was created with reference to Smith (2003). Smith (2003) asserts that the purpose of a schedule is to encourage a participant to speak freely on the subject matter with as little prompting as possible from the researcher. He states that both specific and general questions should be used with the more specific questions serving as prompts if the participant is hesitant. It is also advised that the interview schedule opens with shorter, more specific questions, moving onto the more general questions once the participant has settled into the subject matter (Silverman, 2005). The interview schedule structure was produced according to these guidelines.

Further materials used to conduct the research included the following:

- The use of a booked library/ London Metropolitan University room
- Digital voice recorder
- Recruitment letter
- Informed consent form
- Debriefing form

4.6 Procedure

4.6.1 Recruitment

The director of the 'Mankind' project distributed the recruitment letter. A number of the potential participant's told the director that they felt too ashamed and embarrassed to participate in the study. The researcher noted how feelings shame and embarrassment were a frequent obstacle in recruitment and wondered whether this reflected an over-

arching experience for men who have survived DA. This is to be discussed in more detail within the discussion and analysis.

4.6.2 Interview

Interviews, where possible, were held in a private, booked room within London Metropolitan University. Where this was not possible interviews were held in private booked rooms at libraries local to the participant. This was thought to be the best way of addressing health and safety considerations whilst remaining mindful of the practical constraints upon the participant. The researcher 'signed in' before each interview and 'signed out' upon its completion with two close relatives.

Before the interview commenced, information regarding confidentiality, its limits and the participant's right to withdraw were discussed. It was made clear to the participant that the interview was to be recorded with the anonymised results publicly accessible when completed. Any questions at this point were addressed. If the potential participant was happy to proceed, an informed consent form was given. The researcher read the consent form out loud to the participants, clarifying any points participants did not understand. Participants were then given time to read this through alone before deciding whether to sign or not.

Interviews were guided by the interview schedule and were recorded using a digital voice recorder. Interviews lasted between thirty five minutes and an hour and forty-five minutes.

Time was set aside, post interview to debrief participants. Participants were then given the debriefing form.

4.6.3 The pilot interview

A pilot interview was also carried out. This was completed according to the same procedure. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) believe that a pilot enables the researcher to check that the language used within the schedule is meaningful and clear to the

participant and alert the researcher as to any omissions or concerns with question arrangement. The pilot did not raise any concerns with the interview schedule, therefore the data gathered in this first interview were also used in the analysis.

4.7 Transcription and Analysis

Post interview, the researcher voice recorded any significant thoughts or feelings that were experienced during data collection. These reflections were then later used to help inform the analysis, ensuring both verbal and non-verbal communication was considered for interpretation and description (see Appendix 6). Prior to transcription, each interview was listened to in full. As suggested by Wengraf (2001), notes were written regarding the memories, thoughts and reflections that were elicited from the researcher during this first play-back (see Appendix 6). Interviews were then transcribed verbatim (see Appendix 7 for a sample transcript). The resulting narratives provided the raw data for analysis by IPA as detailed by Smith and Eatough (2007) and Smith and Osborn (2004).

Transcripts were initially analysed individually. Each transcript was read and re-read a number of times to facilitate maximum familiarity with the data. Any thoughts or reflections were documented by the researcher (Appendix 6). The researcher then identified and labelled themes that typified each section of the text (Appendix 8). Each theme was then speculatively organised and examined in detail and inter-relationships between the themes were noted. Themes were then clustered together and each cluster was given a cluster theme label and placed into a table (Appendix 9). The researcher repeatedly revisited the transcript and the post interview notes to ensure that the emerging patterns were an appropriate interpretation of the relevant sections of text. All transcripts were analysed in this manner.

Finally, themes from across all the transcripts were integrated, with the shared themes identified. This resulted in a number of master themes, each with corresponding constituent themes (See Appendix 10, 11 and 12 for the initial, refined and final master table and Appendix 13 for the expanded master table with quotes).

4.8 Validity and reliability

Yardley (2000) puts forward a set of four broad criteria against which one can assess the quality of qualitative research. These are: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance.

Yardley (2000) states that qualitative researchers should be sensitive to the theoretical and socio-cultural context within which the study is situated. They should also be aware of and state their attitudes towards the data they collect. Within this study knowledge of existing literature and research concerning both the topic area and the chosen methodology has been presented. This literature is believed to have been reviewed to a sophisticated level, demonstrating a thorough sensitivity to the context of the theory presented and the socio-cultural setting of the study. In fact, appreciating the influence of context has frequently been cited as central in understanding men's experience of DA. In addition the researcher has endeavoured to be transparent about her views towards the data collected and has tried to note the potential impact her opinions could have had upon the interpretation of the data (see section 2.0 and 7.0).

Commitment can be understood in terms of thoroughness and prolonged engagement (Yardely, 2000). The researcher believes that completing both masters and doctoral level research projects on the subject of DA, as well as being employed within the field for a number of years, is sufficient to demonstrate her commitment to the topic. Rigour has also been demonstrated by the depth in which the research question has been analysed, discussed and examined throughout.

Transparency involves detailing all aspects of data collection and analysis and disclosing each facet of the research process (Lyons, 2007). Transparency has been evidenced within the appendices, analysis and discussion section, where the researcher has been open and honest about the way in which the data was analysed and any factors that may have influenced this process. Coherence refers to the quality of the research narrative and the degree of fit between the research question, philosophical perspective adopted and method of analysis (Yardely, 2000). Hopefully such coherence is explicit; however,

the researcher also believes it is established not only in the consistency between the research question and the methodology used but also in the congruence between the emergent themes and data collected.

Finally, impact and importance relate to the theoretical, practical and socio-cultural ramifications of the study (Lyons, 2007). It can be argued that this research is important as it contributes to a significantly under-researched area. Furthermore, the socio-cultural context of male DA has been cited as particularly hostile and filled with contentious debate. Committing to this research could therefore be considered an important step in debunking some of the stigma and antagonism which has thus far dominated the field. It can also be argued that the study may generate awareness which could then instigate additional research, potentially further reducing stigma and contention. To these extents the study can be considered very important. Finally, as will be noted, all participants valued contributing to the research and found catharsis in being heard and understood. Equally, the researcher found enlightenment in completing the work, with many of her prior suppositions and opinions altered or completely changed (see section 2.0 and 7.0 for further detail). One could argue that such outcomes are incredibly important in and of themselves.

In addition to ensuring quality utilising Yardley's (2000) criteria, audit of the research was completed by another, independent researcher. The researcher confirmed the analysis process and provided feedback with regards to transparency.

5.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Overview

Four master themes and eight allied constituent themes emerged from the analysis of the interview data, as outlined in Table 3 below. Within the following section each of these master and corresponding constituent themes will be explored in turn. Experiences of shame, self-blame and isolation appeared to be relevant across a number of the themes and will be discussed where relevant.

Master Themes	Constituent Themes
Surviving the abuse.	The perpetration of abuse.
	“I tried to tackle it in different ways”. Coping with the abuse experience.
Love in the abusive encounter.	The experiences of love and attachment.
	“You don’t hit anyone but you certainly don’t hit someone you love”; reconciling the juxtaposition of love and abuse.
The psychological impact of the abuse experience.	“My mind just wasn’t thinking right anymore”. The psychological impact of the abuse experience.
	The evolving sense of self; the impact of abuse upon identity.
The socio-cultural construction of gender and its impact upon the abuse experience.	“It makes you feel like a bit less of a man”
	“It’s about providing a service that is for all victims....that is the challenge”.

Table 3: Table of master themes and corresponding constituent themes.

5.2 Surviving the abuse

Findings indicated that survivors experienced a range of unpredictable abusive behaviours, perpetrated with differing levels of severity. In many cases, the severity of the abuse was noted to increase over time. Control was cited as both the means and desired end of abuse perpetration. Participants were observed to cope with this abuse by employing a range of highly active and adaptive cognitive and behavioural strategies. Such strategies were employed to minimise the abuse or lessen its emotional impact.

5.2.1 The perpetration of abuse

This theme explores the types of abuse committed against participants and highlights the predominant ways in which this abuse was enforced by the perpetrator.

All participants noted experiencing verbal abuse by way of criticism, humiliation and denigration. It appeared as though such abuse was aimed at reducing participants sense of self-worth and self-esteem; it was cited as largely continuous, punctuated by episodic, unpredictable outbursts of anger:

“She would just constantly put me down and run me down [...] She would call me ugly “you big nosed fuck” and “no one else would ever want you” (Barry)

The perpetrator was also said to engage in a number of different manipulative behaviours. Firstly, the abuser would attempt to isolate the participant from his support network by manipulating the network into believing negative things of him:

“She was going around without me knowing, telling people I was losing my mind” (Barry)

“She would involve other people, coming round to try and get me to not believe myself” (Peter)

This quote by Peter is interesting. It suggests that the perpetrator was not only manipulating his social network directly, but that she was also manipulating him by proxy, via his social network. It appears as though the perpetrator was trying to use Peter's support network to reinforce the validity of her abusive messages, endeavouring to undermine his identity, conviction and self-esteem.

The perpetrator also directly manipulated the survivor. A number of participants reported that the abuser would manipulate them into believing that members of their family or support network did not like them. They would also instigate rifts between the participant and various members of his social network. This served to isolate the survivor increasing his dependency upon the relationship:

"She was very successful at alienating me from my social to the point where I became quite isolated" (Alex)

Three survivors asserted that the abuser directly manipulated their children. They noted that the perpetrator would ostracise the child if they chose to spend time with the survivor. They would also denigrate the survivor to the child or fabricate stories about the survivor's behaviour. Participants stated that this type of manipulation was used in order to abuse, hurt and acquire further power and control:

"She was telling my children I was sick [...] I would make a meal, if they ate any of the food they would get ostracised [...] effectively she uses them to hurt me further" (Clive)

Finally, five participants stated that the abuser made false counter-allegations of DA, detail on which will be noted later. What is of interest here is the way in which these fictitious allegations were used as a form of manipulation and abuse:

“She had called the police saying I was being abusive to her [...] as soon as I’m arrested that’s tickets for any chance of seeing my daughter and that’s exactly what she wants”
(Clive)

Verbal and physical abuse concerning sex and sexual intimacy was also noted in four of the participants’ transcripts. Chris experienced direct sexual abuse whereby he was frequently forced, under threat or actuality of violence to become sexually aroused:

“She would say to me “Right, you have got five minutes to get an erection” [...] when that time has ran out [...] you’d get a beating” **(Chris)**

Mike revealed that he experienced erectile difficulties whilst within the relationship. Verbal abuse centred on these difficulties and was then used by his wife as justification for acts of sexual infidelity. Similarly, two further participants stated that their partners would engage in blatant acts of infidelity. These highly conspicuous behaviours served to reinforce the participant’s self-persecutory beliefs and were thus interpreted by the researcher as abusive:

“You’re no fucking good, you can’t even fuck me” **(Mike)**

“She would torment me by dolling herself up [...] and then say [...] she was going to get a man and have sex with him” **(Jacob)**

Three participants detailed working for over 12 hours each day at the perpetrator’s demand while the perpetrator refused to gain employment. Three further participants detailed large financial losses and a control of the finances by the perpetrator; such reports seem indicative of financial abuse:

“I was working three jobs [...] for over 16 hours a day” **(Clive)**

Five participants detailed ways in which the abuser would interfere with their sleep patterns or routines. This was noted to be on a spectrum of severity, from two of the participants being asked to sleep in unreasonable conditions, to another three participants frequently being unpredictably woken from their sleep with physical abuse:

“Just think you’re going to sleep [...] there would be a punch in the face” (Chris)

An element of surprise appears to be insinuated in Chris’s statement. This suggests that he was unprepared for the assault. Other participants also reported a state of vulnerability or unpreparedness when physically attacked, i.e. being attacked whilst they were using the toilet or had their back turned. Arguably, perpetrating violence in this manner enabled the abuser to counter the physical size and strength advantage of her male counterpart.

Chris was not only physically assaulted at night he was also forcibly kept awake for days at a time. Furthermore, his perpetrator refused him access to medical attention after physical assaults and often poisoned his food. This neglect served to undermine and destabilise him:

“She was messing around with my sleep patterns, she kept me awake for three days [...] it completely took me apart” (Chris)

Participants’ reports of physical abuse appeared to be on a spectrum of severity, from one participant not experiencing any direct physical violence to another experiencing one acute battering incident and seven experiencing more severe, continuous violent acts:

“She picked a claw hammer up, she started striking my shoulder, and on the third strike, she hit me so hard the handle actually snapped. She had literally gone down my arm with this metal bar and a hammer and then started going down my legs with it [...] on and off the assault went on for about six hours with different implements” (Chris)

It is to be noted that, for the most part, physical assaults were perpetrated by the female with the use of various household objects; these objects then became weapons:

“She picked up a wooden rolling pin and beat me to the floor with it” (Peter)

All those who experienced physical abuse perceived it as increasing in severity and frequency over time:

“Probably about half a dozen incidences of actual physical violence [...] they were getting more extreme each time” (Alex)

Equally the physical outbursts were cited as unexpected and unpredictable:

“There was no warning, there was no issue beforehand, she just suddenly attacked me” (Peter)

Despite noting that each incident of abuse was capricious in its perpetration, it can be put forward that participants’ transcripts also allude to a sense of imminence in the abuse experience. The use of the words “*continual*” (**Clive**), “*constant*” (**Barry**) and “*it was always there*” (**Alex**) are an acknowledgement of the abuse as a definite, underlying presence within the relationship.

A period of calm often followed an acute act of violence with the perpetrator becoming loving and remorseful:

“She was really upset about it afterwards, she’d be crying about it “oh my god, you know, what have I done” (Alex)

Control was observed to be the desired end of all the perpetrators abusive behaviours:

“It was a progressive, isolation and control” (Peter)

The greater control the perpetrator had over the survivor, the more isolated and dependent the survivor became and the less likely he was to leave:

“I think I did become quite dependent upon the relationship and on the home” (Alex)

5.2.2 “I tried to tackle it in different ways”. Coping with the abuse experience

This theme explicates the ways in which the researcher believed participants attempted to cope with their abuse. Coping was noted to be continuous and not bound by the ending of the relationship, with the survivors still actively attempting to manage and understand their experience at the time of interview.

Whilst within the relationship, participants engaged in a variety of behaviours aimed at managing and reducing the perpetration of abuse. Participants stated that they would try to respond to the perpetrator in different ways, endeavouring to find the reaction which would be least provocative:

“I tried to tackle it in different ways; I’d try and stay very calm [...] I’d try getting angry [...] I couldn’t find a way that would de-escalate the situation” (Alex)

Survivors also noted trying to please and placate the perpetrator by taking her on holidays or doing activities she enjoyed. They cited attempts to be helpful or compliant, often trying to avoid executing any behaviour that would trigger an abusive response:

“I kept cooking for her and cleaning, hoping it would be better” (Jacob)

It could be suggested that by managing the abuse in this manner participants were unwittingly accepting responsibility for it, blaming themselves when strategies failed, attempting to adapt their behaviour accordingly. Self-blame could therefore be understood as a coping strategy, enabling the participant to feel as though they had some

level of control over the abuse. Unfortunately, this endeavour was somewhat futile; the abuse continued and participants were left feeling helpless:

“Tell me what I have done, I can right, if you don’t want me I can go’, but it was none of that” (Barry)

In this attempt to constantly satisfy and please the perpetrator survivors were noted to negate their own needs:

“I was happy because she was happy” (Mike)

Long term, the difficulty inherent in this position is that the survivors become out of touch with their own needs and feelings. Again, this would be likely to render the survivor helpless and confused, unable to attach their own thoughts or feelings to the situation:

“When you have got twenty-four hours a day of somebody, you start to be a bit brainwashed by it and you think that’s the only way” (James)

Avoidance was also used as a coping mechanism. Participants frequently cited behavioural avoidance strategies such as running and hiding from the abuser or going to stay elsewhere until the abuse subsided:

“I would flee and literally go into one of the rooms, she would try and beat the door down” (Peter)

Cognitive and emotional avoidance by the way of dissociation or distraction was also recognised within participants’ transcripts:

“I just kept down certain areas of thought, you know, I didn’t want to feed too much into the abuse. I just shut myself up, that’s the way I coped with it” (Barry)

Barry's choice of words here are interesting. He wishes to "*keep down certain areas of thought*", perhaps because to acknowledge such thoughts would mean identifying the abuse as wrong, which would then require him to act on this acknowledgement in some way, such as by asserting himself or leaving. This assertive behaviour would then be likely to instigate further abuse. Barry would then be blamed for this as he "*fed into the abuse*" by asserting himself. A repudiation of needs and a sense of responsibility for the abuse therefore seem evident.

Participants were also observed to identify with and humanise the abuser. This perhaps enabled the survivor to surrender his potentially destructive feelings of anger and instead feel empathy and pity. Once again, the inherent difficulty with this position is that it appears to sustain the relationship and therefore the abuse; the survivor determined to help the 'long suffering' perpetrator:

"I felt sorry for her strangely [...] at the time she has been at her low points and she needed me, I just felt really sorry for her" (Barry)

Participants stated that consistent hope for change and a focus on the positive assisted in coping with the abuse. It could be suggested that such strategies helped participants deny the seriousness of their situation, minimising the abuse, protecting them from the reality of the experience:

"Well, I've seen her when she is good and that's what I was focussing on" (James)

The use of minimising words such as "just" or "only" are arguably a further reflection of the participants tendency to understate the seriousness of the abuse:

*"Well she **only** actually physically got me **only** once"* (Peter)

*“No I didn’t really feel it was abuse. I **just** thought she had problems she needed to talk to me about” (Barry)*

Barry’s statement reflects a minimisation which borders on the point of denial. It could be postulated that this enabled Barry to normalise his abuse experience, helping him to “keep down” the “*certain areas of thought*” he was fearful of, thereby protecting him from feeding “*into the abuse*”.

Finally, a number of participants also discussed how important their identity within the work environment became. Many noted working extremely hard, acquiring esteem and self-worth from their employment. The researcher believed that this behaviour served as a coping strategy as it offered a reprieve from the hostility at home and compensated against the denigrating messages from the abuser:

“I probably worked twice as hard as a normal guy would work [...] I was kinda clinging on to my defence where people wanted me, where I was appreciated” (Mike)

Coping was noted to not be bound by the ending of the relationship. Rationalising the abuse and understanding it intellectually appeared to be a coping strategy that the participants had employed since leaving the relationship. Some participants reported researching DA, psychology and law for years after the relationship finished. The researcher wondered whether this intellectualisation was a way of enabling the survivor to derive some form of meaning from the event, perhaps to prevent its future occurrence, perhaps to relinquish feelings of self-blame or anger or perhaps to rebuild a sense of self-esteem and pride. Either way, it seemed important to the participants that they have a coherent explanation as to why the perpetrator abused them:

“(She was in) the turmoil of what turned out to be her own childhood [...] so there is sort of a delusional paranoid, erm, erm, which just seemed to get projected onto me [...] it was almost like a sort of, deflecting her own issues if you like onto me in the eyes of other people” (Peter)

Peter's excerpt is intriguing. There is an avid attempt to understand the abuse from a psychodynamic/psychological perspective. His statement is almost entirely devoid of feeling and one can only postulate explanations of why this may be. Understanding his abuse in this way may have helped him cope by re-establishing a semblance of self-worth and control over the experience. Alternatively, he could have been discussing his abuse experience in this manner as he was aware of the interviewer's trainee counselling psychologist status. Equally, it could be suggested that intellectualising enabled him to defend against the feelings of vulnerability/anxiety elicited by the interview situation and/or the presence of a female researcher. Finally, it could be argued that the emotions linked to the abuse were so overwhelming and traumatic they were almost entirely suppressed (see section 5.4.1 for further discussion).

It was also observed that the intellectualisations and rationalisations made by the survivor always placed the responsibility for the abuse outside of the perpetrator. Equally, when participants discussed the abusers' intentions, they never noted them to be malicious or deliberate. It can be put forward that, without acknowledgement of malicious intent, the survivor did not consider the perpetrator responsible for the abusive behaviour (possible reasons for this are explored in detail within the section 5.3.2):

"I don't think she was consciously manipulating me, she was very much testing how committed I was to the relationship" (Alex)

The majority of survivors voiced a great deal of anger and frustration at various systems and persons external to themselves, for example, friends, neighbours, the police, legal system, social services:

"What horrifies me most is I find 32 government ministers who have made decisions only to help woman [...] this genderising of things, is complete and utter nonsense, its like living in a Stalinist state" (Peter)

Whilst this anger was considered an entirely appropriate and natural response to the re-victimisation participants experienced (see section 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 for further detail), the researcher wondered whether it was also a form of displaced anger. As noted above, none of the participants voiced direct anger at the perpetrator, they all attempted to rationalise or intellectualise her behaviour instead. It is therefore possible that to experience anger directly at the perpetrator was considered unsafe in some way, i.e. they learned it would be met with further abuse. Or that to express direct anger was somehow inappropriate, i.e. they may have been concerned about how the researcher, as a trainee counselling psychologist was viewing/judging them. Therefore, perhaps the anger at external systems and persons served as a coping strategy as it enabled the participant to voice such feelings in a safe and appropriate way.

Finally, the researcher believed that the participants tended to overcompensate at times: This was thought to be a way in which they coped with the interview situation. Some participants were noted to overcompensate by amplifying their involvement with their children, exaggerating the perpetrator's strength or how much they helped the perpetrator:

"The strongest person in the world, literally, I mean her tensile strength is incredible"
(Clive)

"Cause I am trying to follow every single book and advice to try and protect children through divorce and separation" (Clive)

It is unlikely that Clive's perpetrator was the "strongest" person in the world or that Clive was actually trying to follow "every single book" on protecting his children. Perhaps by overstating his case in this way he was attempting to compensate against his feelings of helplessness and inability to truly protect himself or his children against the abuse. Equally, as shall be noted, participants were frequently ridiculed or disbelieved when they discussed or disclosed their experience of abuse. Clive perhaps, therefore, exaggerates here in an attempt to be believed and understood by the researcher. This

theory gains weight when it is noted that throughout the interview the participants were observed to recurrently emphasise and re-state their innocence. The researcher interpreted this as a reaction to the participants being continually disbelieved:

“I never touched her back, never hit her back, nothing, I swear, I really didn’t” (Mike)

Some participants were also frequently observed to emphasise or restate their masculinity, repeating or highlighting stereotypically masculine traits, for example physical strength or business acumen. Clive’s excerpts are utilised here to illustrate this point. It is to be noted that innumerable sentences similar to these were found throughout his transcript, often not linked directly to the topic at hand:

“I have studied martial arts for a number of years” (Clive)

“I served my country as a naval officer” (Clive)

“I don’t want to release her grip, which I could quite easily do” (Clive)

Further detail on this is to be given within the theme “It makes you feel like a bit less of a man”. What is of interest here is whether the participants felt somewhat threatened or vulnerable in discussing their abuse experience with a female researcher and, therefore, restated their masculinity regularly in an attempt to cope with such feelings.

5.3 Love in the abusive encounter

Many participants cited love as a reason for remaining with the perpetrator. Children, moral obligation and fear of the perpetrator were also factors noted to increase attachment. Participants observed an escalation in abusive behaviour when the perpetrator sensed a potential abandonment; this behaviour was linked by participants to the perpetrator’s experiences of abuse and abandonment in childhood. Participants

frequently attempted to reconcile the apparent contradiction that existed between the perpetrators' loving and abusive behaviours. Strategies to reduce this tension included the externalisation of blame and an incremental focus on the positive aspects of the relationship.

5.3.1 The experiences of love and attachment

Themes of love and attachment were frequently noted by the researcher within the participants' transcripts. Participants described what attracted them to the perpetrator and how their feelings of love developed. Most participants reported that initially the abuser seemed to fulfil a previously unmet need:

"There were things I saw in her that I hadn't had before" (James)

Others appeared to almost idealise the perpetrator, believing she was *"everything"* (Steven) they ever wanted.

A number of participants noted how the relationship progressed very quickly and was extremely passionate at its outset:

"It was quite a whirlwind thing actually [...] the start of the relationship was very intense" (Alex)

It could be proposed that this quick progression was, in part, a response to the survivor's idealisations of the abuser. In fact, a couple of participants noted how they then felt manipulated by the perpetrator into falling in love. It is as if the perpetrator deliberately fulfilled the survivor's unmet needs to create a strong attachment, which then enabled them to go on and be abusive:

“I saw it as somebody who clearly portrayed themselves as being something they wasn’t. Caused me to generate feelings for them, then traded off those feelings to then go on to abuse me” (Chris)

Participants explored remaining in the relationship; many noted how love for the perpetrator was one of the primary reasons for staying:

“Because I loved her, I would go through all that and more just to be with her [...] the love was stronger than the abuse” (Barry)

It is clear from his quote that Barry was willing to sacrifice himself and his needs in order to remain attached to the perpetrator. What is also interesting in his comment is the way in which he appears to separate out the abuse from the perpetrator *“the love was stronger than the abuse”* as if the abuse came from outside of her and was beyond her control. A couple of other participants also separated the abuser’s behaviour from her as a person and spoke of loving the person but not the abuse. Further information on this separation of love from abuse can be located within the ensuing theme.

Not all participants remained within the relationship for love of the perpetrator. Some participants had additional reasons for being attached. Chris stated that his feelings of fear prevented him from leaving the abuser. Other participants remained within the relationship for the sake of their children. They acknowledged that if they left they were unlikely to gain custody of them. This was a particularly prominent concern for those participants who believed they were protecting children from the abuser:

“She weren’t maternal at all toward the children, she just used to scream at them and that, so you know, I had to be the role of the mother” (Barry)

A couple of participants discussed their own childhood and how they believed this childhood primed them to expect violence and abuse within intimate relationships:

“When I was a kid my father would hit me and punch me [...] it made me wonder whether I went for an abusive person because I was used to abuse” (Mike)

Other participants stated that their experience of abuse in childhood created a fear of violence which was then exploited by the perpetrator, aware that the survivor would be too afraid to retaliate:

“When you have seen violence as a youngster and it has an impact it is like the ace in the pack for the perpetrator” (Chris)

Participants also discussed the feelings of love and attachment that the perpetrator had experienced in her past. Participants alluded to difficult, disrupted and/or abusive attachments within the perpetrator’s childhood. The participants cited these childhood difficulties as a reason for the perpetrator’s abusive behaviour. Unfortunately such explanations appeared to aid the survivor in rationalising the abusers behaviour:

“I think it was kind of down to her early childhood and the fact she was very badly abused as a child that she just had really bad issues with trust” (Alex)

Abusive behaviours were observed to increase once the perpetrator felt secure in the relationship, i.e. once a bond of love and attachment was established in some tangible way:

“When I look back, she changed almost within a day of signing the tenancy” (Chris)

Equally however, all participants noted there would also be an increase in abusive behaviour when the perpetrator felt insecure and/or feared abandonment:

“She said [...] “you don’t tell me you love me enough and you’ve said you’ll change. I’ll boil a kettle of water and pour it on you, see if that makes a difference” (Chris)

One can hypothesise therefore that abuse is only perpetrated once sufficient attachment and love have been established within the relationship, otherwise the survivor would simply leave. A further increment in abusive behaviour is then experienced if the perpetrator feels threatened by abandonment; the abuser thus regains power and control, preventing the survivor leaving.

Four participants also noted that their partner had engaged in abusive behaviour within prior intimate relationships:

“I speak to her ex-husband and he tells me the same, “she’d throw bottle of wine at me, she’s ripped my shirt open and she cut me with her nails” (James)

The researcher was curious as to why participants mentioned this. It could be hypothesised that they simply wished to give the researcher an overall picture of the perpetrator’s character and behaviour. It could also be purported that by acknowledging the perpetrator’s past abusive behaviour, the survivor felt less isolated and less to blame for the abuse. Furthermore, as shall be noted, participants were frequently disbelieved when they disclosed the abuse. The researcher therefore wondered whether participants mentioned the perpetrator’s past abusive behaviour to give a sense of credulity to their story.

5.3.2 “You don’t hit anyone but you certainly don’t hit someone you love”. Reconciling the juxtaposition of love and abuse

This constituent theme represents participants’ struggles to come to terms with their conflicting feelings for the abuser and the inherent contradictions that existed within the relationship.

Participants noted with some confusion the juxtaposition of love and abuse. They had difficulty understanding how a person who purported to be loving could also be abusive:

“You don’t hit anyone but you certainly don’t hit someone you love” (Alex)

This confusion was exacerbated by the participant’s experience of inconsistent reward and praise. As noted, all participants detailed times at which the perpetrator was temporarily remorseful or loving and rewarding. This was interpreted by the researcher as the experience of intermittent reinforcement:

“One minute I am the perfect husband, the next I am the worst husband in the world” (Clive)

Dissonance was also reflected in the feelings of love the survivor had for the perpetrator. Participants repeatedly, without prompt, attempted to discuss, understand and substantiate how they could love a person who was abusive:

“Everything I wanted in a woman, she had, but I wasn’t prepared for the, the kind of dark side of her character” (Steven)

Once again a separation of the abuse from the abuser can be interpreted within Steven’s quote and his reference to the perpetrator’s alternate “dark side”.

It has been noted that participants felt they had frequently experienced highly inappropriate and judgemental responses from others when they disclosed the experience of abuse. The researcher therefore wondered whether the participants felt the need to justify and discuss their love for the perpetrator out of a concern for how they were being perceived within the interview. Regardless of their motive, it is clear that participants experienced a tension between their feelings of love for the perpetrator and the abusive behaviours that were encountered. This tension had to be resolved to permit the continuation of the relationship. It appears that three main strategies were utilised to reduce this dissonance.

Firstly, the researcher hypothesised that the intermittent reinforcement participants experienced enabled them to focus on the positive aspects of the relationship. This allowed them to minimise the bad and emphasise the good, reducing the conflict between love and abuse, sustaining hope:

“There was a lot of things she brought to the relationship that were really good and that kept me there” (Steven)

As noted previously, none of the participants blamed the perpetrator for the abuse. Arguably, removing blame for the abuse away from the perpetrator could also help reduce dissonance. The survivor could then separate the abuse from the abuser, blaming something external for her behaviour, leaving the love without conflict:

“So when she would hit that low it really wasn’t her it was just her other side” (Clive)

Blame for the abuse was therefore witnessed within one of two sources; either the survivor themselves or something exterior to both the perpetrator and survivor, e.g. alcohol, drugs or upbringing:

“You try and accept it, you say “yeah ok, I know you’ve got substance misuse issues, I know you have got alcohol issues” (Steven)

“I feel as if it was all my fault, like I’d done something to provoke her and make her that way” (Jacob)

Interestingly, Jacob was the only participant who did not cite any dissonance. However upon reading his transcript, it becomes clear why. For Jacob the abuse was entirely his fault, therefore there was no dissonance; he simply drove the perpetrator to it (see section 5.4.2 for further detail).

5.4 The psychological impact of the abuse experience

These themes examine the impact of the abuse experience upon participants. Findings indicated that, psychologically, survivors experienced a range of post-traumatic and depressive symptoms. Participants' identity was also observed to alter as a result of the abuse. Most participants were noted to adopt the identity imposed upon them by the perpetrator; this was largely negative and self persecutory. At the time of interview, participants' self-concepts were in a state of flux and transition. This was considered reflective of the extent to which the individual survivor had come to terms with the experience.

5.4.1 "My mind just wasn't thinking right anymore"; the psychological impact of the abuse experience

All participants reported that an acute abusive incident tended to leave them feeling shocked and traumatised:

"I was in such shock I couldn't believe what had happened" (Chris)

Unpredictable repetition of such incidents served to destabilise and disorient the survivor, undermining their capacity to evaluate and comprehend the event:

"The violent outbursts were so prolific [...] it was like everyday when it was at its height. So you don't have chance to analyse what's happened before the next incident is on top of you" (Steven)

"My mind just wasn't thinking right anymore, I just was so confused" (Mike)

These excerpts appear to be describing an inability to impose meaning on the experience, the abuse becoming so frequent and unpredictable that the survivor could not understand

or prevent it. Helplessness seemed to result as the survivors' capacity to perceive alternatives diminished:

"I only ever had two choices [...] mentally you have been destabilised" (Chris)

Participants described dissociating or emotionally distancing themselves in an attempt to cope with the confusion:

"I was just lost, I was dumbfounded, I went in my own world, my own bubble" (Barry)

Equally, participants noted that since leaving the relationship they had avoided thinking about certain traumatic abuse experiences. Some participants had completely blocked trauma memories from their consciousness:

"I think I have blanked a lot of stuff out, it was so traumatic" (Mike)

Avoidance of trauma memories and dissociative tendencies were observed to be particularly prominent in the participants who reported having traumatic and abusive childhoods. It could be hypothesised that such strategies were adopted by the survivor as a child in order to cope. These strategies would then be activated in adulthood when similar, triggering contexts occurred.

Participants who had suppressed memories of the abuse also appeared to struggle occasionally with forming a coherent narrative. They seemed to be unable to make sense of or reflect upon their experiences and feelings accurately. Such participants would suddenly change or forget topic mid-sentence. Sentences were sometimes observed to have a lack of coherence, with words becoming muddled or contradictory:

"Erm, and then later on, erm, my daughter would say, erm, but I had some problems, hang on, I had a problem with impotence that needed sorting out" (Mike)

It can be hypothesised that this inability to form a coherent narrative was related to the survivor's tendency to guard off distressing thoughts and feelings. A comprehensive account could not be given, as it could not be fully recollected, resulting in fragmented, unintegrated memories. One participant, Mike, reflects openly on this emotional impact:

"It just hit me, I mean, I had been through all the stuttering stage and erm, erm, my loss of memory stage and erm, the grinding my teeth stage of all the trauma of my divorce and all that coming through [...] and it was about a year and a half after that it really hit me how bad it was, erm and how bad it'd been for me" (Mike)

What is worthy of attention within Mike's excerpt is his description of the abuse "hitting" him a year after the relationship ended. It is as if he suppressed all his affective responses until after the termination of the relationship. Following this excerpt Mike detailed at length the extremes he went to with the intention of expressing this sudden surge in affect, from telephoning the police, local councils, the government and various magistrates to teaching himself to use a computer and spending over eight hours a day on a variety of websites discussing his DA:

"I really wanted to express myself [...] I've been doing that for, since 2004. All the time trying to express how it felt for me and how I see things as they are" (Mike)

Other participants similarly experienced intermittent periods of emotional suppression and arousal. It could be suggested that feelings of shame created this desire to suppress whereas a need for validation and understanding generated an urge to express. The tension created by this disrupted affect appeared to culminate in some participants fearing disintegration:

"I was a gibbering wreck [...] (I) have just been in turmoil and chaos, just utter chaos, running, running, hiding, never stopping, cant stop to think you know, just running away, running, running all the time" (Barry)

Barry's quote can also be interpreted as further reference to avoidance of trauma memories, he is "running" and "hiding" from his recollections, not allowing himself to "stop to think". All participants stated that this surge in affect occurred some months after the termination of the relationship.

Another trauma response noted by participants was the experience of nightmares. Participants stated that they had experienced recurring, intrusive night terrors for a number of months after the relationship ended; some were still experiencing occasional nightmares at the time of interview. The researcher noted that nightmares were particularly prominent for those who struggled with recollecting or creating a narrative around aspects of the abuse experience. It could be speculated, therefore, that the nightmares were linked to a lack of integration:

"I had nightmares, flashbacks and insomnia for about a year and a half" (Alex)

Altered relational schemas were also a noted consequence of the abuse. Many participants detailed a loss of trust in females and an avoidance of intimate relationships. The researcher wondered how this impacted upon the interview and how comfortable participants felt discussing this with a female researcher: This will be considered at greater length within the discussion:

"I couldn't have a relationship with another woman [...] I had eleven years of complete celibacy" (Jacob)

The abuse also served to undermine participant's beliefs and assumptions about the world being a relatively safe place; this led to an avoidance of going outside:

"It took me about three weeks before I ventured out, I literally had a mobile phone in my left hand that had 999 ready to redial and a panic alarm in the other" (Chris)

Finally, it has been noted throughout the analysis that participants struggled with quite vehement self-persecutory beliefs and feelings of guilt, shame and responsibility. These reproachful thoughts and feelings appear to have contributed to a number of the survivors being diagnosed with or reporting symptoms of clinical depression such as low self-esteem, exhaustion, a loss of motivation and appetite, with medication and/or counselling being given to treat these symptoms. Participants observed the onset of such difficulties as either towards the end of the relationship or after the relationship ended. The researcher believed this to be further evidence of participants negating their needs and affect whilst within the relationship:

“I was on anti-depressants for about six weeks [...] it was a direct result of what had happened” (Alex)

5.4.2 The evolving sense of self; the impact of abuse upon identity

Participants compared their identity during the abuse to their identity prior to the abuse. This was discussed negatively by the survivors, often in terms of losses i.e. what aspects of the self were lost as a result of the abuse:

“Cause I’ve lost my job by this point, I’d lost my job, my cars, my dignity, everything had gone” (Steven)

“I’d been a supremely confident manager but it stripped me of everything, my manhood, my dignity, my self-esteem” (Jacob)

It is interesting to note that the participants discuss their employment and manhood alongside their “dignity” and “self-esteem”. It thus appears that the participants’ self-concept are very much interwoven and defined by their vocation and sense of masculinity.

Participants' initial changes in self-concept were attributed to a loss of inner-conviction. The persecutory messages from the abuser became so consuming and powerful they were believed and eventually integrated. This then enabled the perpetrator to impose her negative beliefs upon the survivor, generating a reduction in the survivor's self-compassion and self-esteem:

"I felt useless cause that's how she started to make me feel, as if I was no good and as if I was useless and I couldn't do anything right [...] all I saw was what she was telling me"
(James)

Further evidence of identity being imposed upon participants can be located within their self-blame beliefs. Perpetrators had a tendency to project blame onto the survivor. Long-term, this projected blame appeared to become incorporated into the survivor's psyche until they believed they were accountable for the abuse:

"Cracked one of those across my head, it was like solid glass, and like the third time she hit me, it shattered "now look what you've done, you've broke the vase" **(Chris)**

Arguably experiences of abuse in childhood could have created latent self-persecutory beliefs within participants which possibly generated a vulnerability to accepting and introjecting the perpetrator's abusive messages.

Once they had adopted the perpetrator's belief system, survivors noted a withdrawal from their social network, feeling too ashamed to mix with others. It can be hypothesised that a reduction in social contact would further impact upon how the survivors identified themselves:

"I felt stupid in the eyes of other people; I could not face other people because I know they were all mocking me" **(Jacob)**

Within Jacob's excerpt we can note the assumption that others are judging him negatively and are "mocking" him. Indeed, earlier in his transcript he described the perpetrator as "mocking him" and "making a fool" of him. Furthermore, he noted that he had "made a fool" of himself. It could, therefore, be argued that Jacob had fully integrated the perpetrator's perspective of him as stupid and/or unintelligent. In fact, this schema still appeared active at the time of interview, with Jacob frequently referring to himself in the present tense as "silly" or a "fool":

"I just keep punishing myself all the time, "you're very silly" (Jacob)

One could purport that Jacob had not yet managed to relinquish the identity imposed upon him by the abuser. This can be further evidenced within Jacob's aforementioned lack of dissonance which was said to be due to self-blame beliefs still prevalent at the time of interview. Conversely, a number of the other participants utilised the past tense when discussing their identity during the abuse and then compared this to their current identity. This suggests that such participants had relinquished a part of their 'abused' selves and were looking forward to a future self:

"I'm starting to look after myself a bit more and my personality has started to come back" (James)

Therefore, at the time of interview, all the participants appeared to be at different stages with regards to their self-concept. This could be considered a reflection of how much they had come to terms with their abuse experience. Some of the participants still appeared to be struggling with the impact of the abuse, disclosing active symptoms of depression, trauma and withdrawal. These were also the participants who still had prominent self-blame beliefs and negative self-concepts. On the other hand, those who had begun to relinquish themselves from the abusers identity appeared more accepting and understanding of the experience; blame was located as within the abuser and symptoms of trauma and depression were noted to be abating.

Chris described this transition in identity quite graphically. First he discussed his identity as a 'victim' of DA. A sense of ambivalence and tension with possessing such a self-concept is indicated:

"For me it made me feel worse, because here I was as a victim of a relationship that was very violent...It's like 'domestic violence' in big bold letters with flashing lights around it" (Chris)

He then went on to detail his court case against the perpetrator. He utilised quite potent imagery to explain this, comparing the court case to a boxing match:

"The trial is the fight, in the dock is me and my corner with my team, giving evidence ... all the build up, the medical evidence, that's the equivalent of the road walks in the morning [...] this is a heavy weight title fight for me and my opponent is in the corner...And I remember walking into the dock [...] and just in my head, I'm saying "this is my time, you are so ready, you are bigger, you're better" (Chris)

One could hypothesise that this narrative highlights Chris' evolution from a victim to a survivor of DA. His compelling "boxing match" analogy alludes to themes of masculinity, physical strength and power. This can be contrasted with his ambivalence regarding the term "victim" which is weighted with connotations of vulnerability, helplessness and, arguably, femininity. Being identified as a 'victim' of DA is thus possibly experienced as both disempowering and emasculating. His transition to a 'survivor' therefore becomes a source of pride as it evidences psychological strength and growth, potentially also restoring his masculine identity.

5.5 The socio-cultural construction of gender and its impact upon the abuse experience

Overall, it appeared that the participants defined strength in terms of aggression and physicality and held this as synonymous with masculinity³. Participants therefore felt undermined in their identity as men from the experience of DA. Friends, family and service providers also ascribed to traditional gender norms, specifically the concept of female-as-victim, male-as-perpetrator. This resulted in participants experiencing ridicule, disbelief and re-victimisation when they disclosed the abuse and also enabled perpetrators to make fictitious counter-accusations of abuse.

5.5.1 “It makes you feel like a bit less of a man”

This theme examines how participants understood and discussed gender and gender norms. It then highlights the predominant ways in which these norms impacted the abuse experience.

Pre-existing beliefs regarding gender and gender norms were inherent in many of the topics the participants discussed. It became apparent, that for the most part, participants held relatively traditional beliefs about men and women’s roles within society. They tended to believe that women were homemakers and mothers who openly discuss their feelings and problems with others. Men were purported to maintain their masculine identity by earning money and resolving problems for themselves, the participants noted that to discuss emotions with other men was not socially appropriate:

“She was perfect in every sense, she was a good cook, she was a seamstress, she was a meticulous housekeeper” (Jacob)

“We go into our cave, we are insular, we don’t talk to other men, it’s not suitable” (Clive)

³ This is derived from the participants’ transcripts and linked to social norms, the particular points of which are to follow.

Keeping one's feelings hidden can be linked with the aforementioned repudiation of affect. If men consider it socially unacceptable to discuss affect then they are possibly at greater risk of suppressing feeling.

Participants went on to discuss the ways in which they believed they had violated these socio-cultural gender norms. A number of participants cited themselves to be weak and ineffectual for having been abused by a female:

"Cause she was like the strong one in the relationship anyway, she wore the trousers"
(Barry)

"I didn't have the balls to confront a thing like that" (Mike)

Barry and Mike's quotes are interesting. Firstly, Barry's use of the term strength and the assumption that the female was "*stronger*" for being abusive is significant. Other participants similarly detailed the perpetrator as "*stronger*" than them. However, as was noted previously each participant had to show remarkable resilience and resourcefulness to survive the abuse. A couple of explanations can be put forward for this. Firstly it could be purported that the abuse corroded the participant's self-esteem, thus they could not relate to themselves as strong they still felt undermined by the abuser. One could also suggest that strength was understood by the participants in terms of physicality and aggression and not in terms of resilience and adaptability. The researcher wondered whether females would couch 'strength' in the same way or whether understanding strength in terms of physical prowess was related to the participant's gender.

Furthermore, Barry states that because the perpetrator was "*stronger*" she was the one who "*wore the trousers*"; this informal phrase alludes to being the dominant, male counterpart within a relationship. It can thus be interpreted that Barry believed strength was synonymous with masculinity. A number of participants made similar references to strength and masculinity.

Mike's quote can also be interpreted on many levels. Explicitly, it appears he is using a colloquialism to emphasise that he was too frightened and, therefore, too weak to confront his abuser. However, his use of the term "balls" and his reference to the absence of them appear to be an allusion to emasculation. If strength is considered tantamount to masculinity, then showing weakness can be equated with a loss of manhood and therefore a loss of one of the paramount differences between males and females: the existence of testicles. Furthermore, one can purport that testicles are responsible for the production of testosterone, a hormone culturally held accountable for male aggression and physical strength; if a man does not display these qualities in the face of abuse and threat he can be rendered impotent and can thereby be less of a 'man'. This is corroborated by participants exclaiming that they felt emasculated by their experience of DA:

"It deprived me of any masculinity, it completely emasculated me" (Jacob)

If masculinity is culturally bound by and synonymous with beliefs of physical strength and power, then it can be purported that femininity is equated with beliefs of vulnerability and helplessness. In-fact all the participants cited a difficulty with being understood by others as a victim of DA. They attributed this to the socio-cultural norms surrounding gender and the belief that men are always perpetrators and women are always victims:

"Society still struggles to appreciate that men can be victims" (Steven)

This belief of male-as-perpetrator, female-as-victim permeated and enveloped the abuse experience. It prevented participants from disclosing the abuse, fearing humiliation and degradation from others for violating such firmly held norms:

"A lot of it is pride, you know, you're almost a bit embarrassed [...] so that's really why you wouldn't say anything" (James)

It is important to observe that the feelings of shame which prevented disclosure were not always directly linked themes of masculinity. Some participants simply stated they felt too ashamed or guilty to report the abuse with no mention of gender norms. This suggests that being a male may exacerbate and reinforce the shame already intrinsic to the abuse process:

“I used to feel guilty and ashamed for thinking of telling people” (Barry)

Unfortunately, when participants were brave enough to risk their feelings of shame and fear by disclosing the abuse to another, their disclosure was often minimised, ridiculed or misunderstood in some way:

“I might have told the odd one or two but they would have been fairly close friends and most of them just laughed and made jokes out of it” (Barry)

This ridicule that Barry identifies can be considered reflective of the wider socio-cultural context within which heterosexual men experience DA. A number of participants discussed this at some length within the interview:

“You get a situation where, you know a hard man from a soap opera is getting beaten up by his wife and “The Sun” think it’s the funniest thing on the planet [...] that perception does kind of spread through society and means that when it happens for real to people who read those newspapers their mates don’t think it’s anything more than a joke either” (Alex)

Participants therefore believed that the hostility toward men who encounter DA permeates culture at both a macro and individual level, creating a challenging and persecutory environment for those who experience it. Arguably, this hostility and lack of understanding could reinforce participants’ feelings of shame and isolation causing them to withdraw even further from their support network:

“No one understood, I got completely isolated” (Peter)

In the absence of external verification and social comparison, some participants failed to recognise their experience as abusive. The abuse was therefore accepted and the survivor remained within the relationship:

“That’s just life; it is just marriage, it’s just the way it should be, you have got no comparison as to how it should be” (Clive)

5.5.2 “It’s about providing a service that is for all victims....that is the challenge”

This theme explores participants’ noted aspiration for topic recognition and provision of appropriate services, the deficit of which created innumerable challenges and difficulties and was noted to be a direct result of the gender norms highlighted above.

All participants stated that they experienced inept and malapropos responses from statutory organisations and support services. Firstly, participants reported experiences of not being believed. Police, judges, social services and support organisations were all skeptical of the validity of the survivor’s story, often presuming that the survivor was in-fact the perpetrator. They were, therefore, all cited to act inappropriately. Participants directly attributed this to their gender and the socio-cultural belief that a male must be a perpetrator:

“You’re in social services offices and the people don’t believe a word you are saying just because you’re a man, it’s a real problem” (Steven)

Two participants’ stories were believed by the police. However, in one instance the police, ascribing to the norm of a male as a perpetrator, assumed the participant was gay and went to look for a male perpetrator despite being repeatedly told the perpetrator was female:

“They assumed that if I was a victim then the perpetrator must be male as well, that I was a gay man in a relationship [...] they just didn’t seem to be able to get their heads round it at all” (Alex)

In the other incident, the police believed the survivor, but entirely against protocol removed the survivor from the house. This had many negative consequences for the survivor and was cited to be a direct result of the police having limited awareness of appropriate conduct with female perpetrator’s DA:

The first ten minutes was the judge saying “if it was a woman, you would have taken him, arrested him, bailed him and said don’t go within 100 yards of that house, but here is a victim who is male, who was going to a night shelter while the perpetrator is sat in his house and she doesn’t even own it!” (Chris)

Some participants reported being ridiculed by the police when they disclosed the abuse, other participants attempted to access various support services and were turned away. Again, this response was noted to be entirely on the basis of the participant’s gender and the inability to acknowledge a man as a victim of DA:

“The police were saying “what did you do to her first” and “I bet you deserved it” and “what’s the matter with you, why didn’t you hit her back?” “are you a man or a mouse” and “squeak up” (Jacob)

What can be noted here is the re-victimisation Jacob experiences by the police. This appeared to perpetuate and reinforce his self-blame beliefs, underpinning the denigration already imposed by the perpetrator.

Participants also noted how service provision was often for females and run entirely by females. This further exacerbated their difficulty in accessing support or being believed:

“You look at the support services, they are females, they can very easily empathise with females but not necessarily understand that a woman is capable of being bad, vindictive and hurtful” (Clive)

Service provision being directed solely for females and by females can be said to further perpetuate socio-cultural norms and assumptions. If a man has nowhere to turn and no one to tell, beliefs and norms remain unchallenged, services remain geared toward females and the abuse stays hidden, society therefore remains unaware, norms are perpetuated and men continue to struggle alone with DA:

“Just because a guy doesn’t speak about it, doesn’t mean it’s not there” (Steven)

This socio-cultural context also created an opportunity for the perpetrator to abuse via fictitious allegations of DA. Participants stated that these accusations were believed as those told also subscribed to the norms of male-as-perpetrator and female-as-victim. The perpetrators allegations were therefore accepted without question:

“I had a 32 page document written about me and they had never met me or even spoken to me, because she was the, the “victim” telling them I was the violent ex-boyfriend that couldn’t let go!” (Steven)

Such false-allegations were used to control and denigrate the survivor and had a number of negative consequences ranging from rendering the survivor homeless or unemployed, having the survivor arrested and charged with assault, preventing the survivor from having access to the children or isolating the survivor from their social network:

“So I became homeless, my kids were taken and put into their aunt’s care [...] it didn’t need to be that way, all they needed to do was say “actually what this man is telling us is true, let’s investigate it” (Steven)

This enabled the perpetrator to continue abusing the participant even after the relationship ended, utilising false-allegations to restrict child access, increase court costs or perpetuate harassment:

“If you make false allegations [...] the courts and social services have to take the defensive position [...] she insists on supervised contact, why? Because it’s £70 a contact session” (Clive)

Finally, false-allegations and the concordant lack of support participants experienced generated a lack of trust in the police and statutory organisations. Participants began to fear service involvement, anxious it could exacerbate the situation further:

“The biggest problem was, when I turned to the police and social services for help, my situation got worse and I thought it would get better” (Steven)

All participants stated that these difficult encounters with organisations rendered them helpless, often returning them to the perpetrator:

“I went back, because I was frightened, I didn’t know where to go, there was nobody to help me, I was just terrified” (Jacob)

Unsurprisingly, a prevalent theme within all of the participant’s transcripts was a desire for greater social and statutory awareness of men’s experience of DA. Participants disclosed that the deficit in awareness was a primary motivator for their participation in the study. They believed that participating in the project was one step toward disseminating some of the myths and persecutory beliefs that had served to trap and victimise them:

“If some benefit comes out of it then great, that’s the best thing that could happen” (Chris)

Seven participants had actively sought to generate topic awareness in a number of other ways. They discussed attempts to inform the council or parliament. They noted committing themselves to research, giving talks and lectures to police and various other statutory bodies. Some had joined or attempted to join victim support organisations and two had completed television interviews. Each of these participants discussed their dedication to this cause at some length:

“I think to myself, if I could stop it happening to just one other person then that’s got to be a good thing” (Steven)

Participants reported that their experiences of attempting to generate awareness was usually very challenging. They noted that when they were asked to give talks to statutory bodies, the audiences appeared unwilling to relinquish their preconceived assumptions and beliefs, unable to comprehend how a man can be domestically abused:

“I was invited to talk to the police locally [...] but they weren’t interested [...] what was established was established and that was how it was staying” (Mike)

This experience participants speak of is interesting, not only in the apparent fixedness of the support organisations, but also in the determination of the survivors to disseminate their experience even in the face of revictimisation. The researcher interpreted this in a number of ways. Firstly, it could be asserted that this is a coping strategy, utilised by participants to help relinquish their feelings of helplessness. By actively attempting to overthrow the prevailing social paradigm, participants were perhaps endeavoring to reinstate a semblance of control and mastery over their abuse experience, thus building their self-esteem. Perhaps the survivors were trying to take strength in the awareness that their painful encounter was helping others, enabling them to derive something positive from it. Maybe this tenacity was also a reflection of the research sample. As noted previously, many potential participants declined to be interviewed, some stating they felt too ashamed and not ready to discuss the experience. Therefore, it could be claimed that

the survivors who choose to participate and come forward for interview were more likely to cope with their experience in this way.

Furthermore, it is evident that being misunderstood and disbelieved was central to the participants' experience of accessing support. The researcher therefore wondered whether this attempt at enlightening others was a search for understanding and credence. In light of the cynicism and skepticism they had encountered so far, being listened to and believed could be considered quite powerful and cathartic. This theory gains weight when it is noted that most of the participants commented upon the interview as being therapeutic:

"It's been cathartic actually, yeah. It's good to talk about it" (Alex)

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 Overview

The following section will begin by discussing the study's findings in relation to the research question and the literature reviewed in chapter three. The clinical implications of the study's findings will then be considered before outlining some potential limitations. Finally, suggestions for further research in the field will be made and concluding reflections offered.

6.2 Findings

6.2.1 Abuse Perpetration

All participants detailed the outset of the relationship as particularly intense and passionate. This resulted in the formation of a strong attachment between perpetrator and survivor during the early stages of the relationship. Most of the participants stated that the perpetrator seemed to discern and realise a number of their intimate needs i.e. for love, sexual intimacy and adoration. Participants also reported experiences of neglect and abuse in childhood observing how their childhood primed them to expect, and therefore accept, violence and abuse within intimate relationships. Additionally participants described the perpetrator's childhood as abusive or marked by attachment disruption citing the perpetrator as fundamentally insecure, with abusive episodes centred on a fear of potential abandonment. These findings support prior literature on the intergenerational transmission of violence and the attachment theory of DA (Dutton, 1993; Stith, Rosen, Middleton, 2000; Gewirtz & Edleson, 2007; Valdez, Lilly & Sandberg, 2012; Adams, 2009). However, such theory has not yet been applied to male survivors. This empirically novel finding therefore warrants further research (see section 6.5).

Consistent with the definition of DA adopted in the present study and with prior research, power and control were cited as the desired end of the DA. Equally, participants reported

experiencing a range of abusive behaviours including neglect, sleep deprivation, verbal, sexual, financial and physical abuse (Robinson & Rowlands, 2005).

Participants noted a stark vacillation between love and abuse, with positive or remorseful behaviours employed sporadically by the perpetrator, usually after an acute abusive incident. Abusive behaviours were also observed to increase in severity and frequency over time. Such findings suggest that Walker's (1979; 2000) 'cycle of violence' model may also apply to heterosexual female perpetrators of DA. The cycle of violence model has not yet been linked to male survivors of DA; once again this is a novel finding which could be researched further (see section 6.5).

Some of the means by which the perpetrator acquired power and control appeared specific to the female-perpetrator, male-survivor dynamic. Accordingly, the perpetrator was said to offset the physical size and strength advantage of her male counter-part by using two main strategies. The first was to perpetrate physical attacks using household objects as weapons. The second strategy was the implementation of violence when the survivor was in a state of vulnerability or unpreparedness i.e. whilst he was asleep, whilst he was using the toilet, whilst his back was turned. This finding substantiates prior research regarding the execution of physical DA by a female perpetrator (Hines, Brown & Dunning, 2007).

Other differences in abuse perpetration appeared to centre on the exploitation of gender norms and assumptions. For example, control was acquired via forced employment, with the perpetrator utilising the norm of 'male-as-provider' to compel the participant to work long hours (see section 6.2.3 for further detail). The perpetrator was also said to use the children as a method of gaining power and control. She reportedly attempted to manipulate the children, punishing them if they spent time with the participant and/or lying to them about the participant's behaviour. This form of abuse was purportedly employed to isolate the survivor from his children. Arguably, the imposition of long working hours would make this segregation easier for the perpetrator to implement. Threats regarding the custody of the children were also frequent. Some participants stated

that these threats then came into fruition when the perpetrator used false allegations of DA to prevent or restrict child access. Although these findings are in keeping with prior theoretical literature, this is the first piece of research to corroborate the theory (Baumgartner, 1993; George, 2003; Straus, 2007). Further research on this type of abuse may therefore be useful (see section 6.5).

False allegations of DA were not only used to isolate the participant from his children. The perpetrator also made false allegations to members of the survivors support network and/or to various statutory bodies, with the intention of re-victimising, isolating and denigrating the survivor. Participants stated that these false allegations were usually believed as most of those told subscribed to the traditional socio-cultural norm of male-as-perpetrator, female-as-victim. The use of false allegations by a female has been established in prior qualitative work of Saratankos (2004) (see section 2.4.1.3 for discussion of this). However the notion of such allegations being used as a form of DA has only ever been put forward anecdotally or theoretically e.g. by George (2002, 2003), Baumgartner (1993) and Straus (2007). This finding is therefore empirically novel and worthy of further research (see section 6.5).

6.2.2 Traumatic bonding

A number of findings can be linked to the theory of traumatic bonding. As detailed, intermittent reinforcement and the presence of a power imbalance are considered fundamental to the formation of a traumatic bond: both of these features were prominent within the results. Furthermore, participants spoke of feeling dependent upon the relationship or helpless to leave it and one participant noted that fear of death and reprisal sustained his attachment to the abuser. Such narrative appears to be an allusion to the feelings of dependency and powerlessness induced within traumatic bonding, wherein the apparently omnipotent perpetrator becomes both the threat to and source of survival (Sanderson, 2008).

As noted within the literature review, a cognitive shift is thought to accompany the process of traumatic bonding; this shift can be observed in a number of the results. Firstly, participants described experiences of shock and trauma following an acute abusive incident; this appears congruent with the “trigger phase” of cognitive bonding (Sanderson, 2008). Secondly, cognitive bonding theory suggests that the interlinking of love and abuse engender a cognitive dissonance for the survivor. This dissonance must be reconciled in order for the relationship to continue (Sanderson, 2008; Dutton & Painter, 1993). The results appear to corroborate this theory; dissonance was frequently observed in participants’ transcripts with many of the interviewees struggling to substantiate how a person could be both abusive and loving. Participants were observed to cope with this tension by splitting the abusive behaviour from the abuser, enabling them to focus upon the perpetrator’s positive behaviour whilst either blaming themselves, or factors external to the relationship, for the abuse.

The third or “coping” phase of a cognitive shift is reportedly marked by denial, psychic numbing and dissociation (Sanderson, 2008; Dutton & Painter, 1993). Again, the results appear to align with this theory, repudiation of affect was frequently discerned, a number of participants also seemed to make reference to dissociative episodes and a sense of denial was evident within the minimisations participants made.

In the final stages of cognitive bonding the survivor incorporates all of the abuser’s projections. This results in low self-esteem, a loss of identity, depression and a belief of being completely dependent upon the perpetrator (Sanderson, 2008; Dutton & Painter, 1993). Again, this theory is reflected within the results; depression and low self-esteem were prominent (see section 6.2.5 for further detail), as were the aforementioned feelings of dependency. Identity and its transition was a constituent theme in itself wherein the alteration to and loss of identity was highlighted. Finally, participants reported experiences of the abusers identity being imposed upon them and then integrated into the psyche. One could identify this process as the incorporation of the perpetrator’s projections.

It appears that the theory of traumatic bonding could help explain a number of the results obtained. As yet, this theory and its various components, i.e. the cognitive shift, the experience of shock, trauma, dissociation, psychic numbing and loss of identity have never been applied to male survivors of DA. The capacity to apply traumatic bonding theory to male survivors is, consequently, a novel concept. Further research regarding the role and relevance of traumatic bonding in the experiences of male survivors of DA therefore seems needed (see section 6.5 for further discussion).

6.2.3 Coping

All participants stated that they attempted to manage the abuse via a number of behavioural strategies such as avoidance, constant busyness, workaholism and placatory or pleasing behaviours. These behaviours were reportedly adopted to either avoid the abuse or prevent its recurrence. Similarly, prior research on female survivors has found that the survivor may attempt to evade abuse via avoidance or conciliatory and pleasing behaviours (Waldrop & Resick, 2004). No prior research on coping in male survivors of DA was identified in the present investigation, however these findings do partly support the literature suggesting that men cope with other forms of victimisation (such as assault or childhood abuse) via avoidance, minimisation and denial (Hamel, 2009; Ceung, Leung, Tsui, 2009; Burcar & Malin, 2009; Hewolmes, Offen & Waller, 1997). With limited direct research on this topic, further research would be useful (see section 6.5).

The aforementioned workaholism requires further attention here. In corroboration with prior research on female survivors, men were observed to cope with the abuse by absorbing themselves in their paid employment (Waldrop & Resick, 2004). Additionally, it was noted that employment formed a large part of the participant's masculine identity. It could therefore be suggested that the socio-cultural gender norm of 'male-as-provider' (Loscocco & Spitze, 2007), increases the likelihood that a male survivor would use his employment to help him cope with DA. As noted previously, a number of the participants also stated that they were forced to work long hours by the perpetrator who used the norm of 'male-as-provider' to perpetrate abuse. One could suggest that a male survivor may

experience a tension between the exploitation and abuse of his finances and the reprieve and identity this employment offers. Such a position potentially creates a vicious cycle which may be difficult for the survivor to escape or recognise. It seems that themes of work and employment may be prevalent for a male experiencing DA. Again, this is a novel idea in terms of men's experiences of DA, follow-up research on themes of employment and male survivors would, therefore, be pertinent (see section 6.5).

Finally, participants' tenacity in disseminating their abuse experience to various professionals and statutory bodies was interpreted by the researcher as a way in which they attempted to cope with the DA. The challenges encountered during recruitment have led the researcher to believe that this finding was a reflection of the research sample rather than a process ubiquitous to the abuse experience. Accordingly, a large number of survivors who received the recruitment letter declined to be interviewed stating that they felt too ashamed and humiliated to discuss their experience. This suggests that male survivors do not cope with DA in the proactive manner found by the research sample. The literature highlighted in the introduction supports this contention, detailing the hidden nature of the sample, suggesting that gender norms induce feelings of shame, emasculation and embarrassment which prevent disclosure (Howard & Hollander, 1997; Migliaccio, 2002; George, 2003). It is, therefore, possible that experiences of shame are more prevalent for male survivors than the findings from the current study suggest. This has implications for future research and the field of counselling psychology; these shall be discussed further in sections 6.3 and 6.5.

6.2.4 Leaving

Similar to prior research on female survivors and survivors from same-sex relationships, participants cited love, hope, fear, pride, dependency, helplessness, isolation, marriage, children and ignorance as reasons for remaining within the abusive relationship (Dutton, 1992). This finding also corroborates the previously discussed qualitative findings of Migliaccio (2002). It therefore appears as though men and women have similar reasons for remaining within an abusive relationship.

Results also suggested that prevailing socio-cultural gender norms impacted upon the participants' capacity to leave the abusive relationship. Accordingly, some participants reported an inability to label their experience as abusive, unaware that a female could abuse a male. This finding substantiates the theoretical literature which proposes that socio-cultural gender norms preclude a narrative of female perpetrated DA, preventing a male survivor from recognising his experience, reducing the likelihood of him leaving the relationship (Cruz, 2000). Participants also voiced a tension with being understood as a victim of DA. The label "victim" was held in conflict with internalised masculine gender norms. This finding supports theoretical literature which contends that a male survivor may feel emasculated by his experience of DA and the apparent contravention of gender norms this experience implies (Howard & Hollander, 1997; Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001). In terms of empirical research, both of these findings are novel and therefore have implications for the field of counselling psychology and future research (see section 6.3 and 6.5).

When participants did manage to articulate their difficulties and realise the situation was abusive, leaving was compromised by the inept and re-victimising responses received upon disclosure. As discussed previously, statutory bodies and the participant's support network subscribed to the norm of male-as-perpetrator, female-as-victim and were thus said to be belittling, minimising, accusatory and disbelieving. This position was further exacerbated by the stark lack of male-orientated service provision rendering survivors helpless in the face of limited acknowledgement and support. These findings are consistent with prior theoretical literature and prior research (George, 2002, 2003; Peterman & Dixon, 2003; Collier, 1995, Hamel, 2009; Hamilton & Worthen, 2011; Hamel, Tonia, Malley-Morrison & Aaronson, 2009).

Leaving the abusive relationship was further impeded by the aforementioned tendency of the abuser to exploit gender norms via threats of posing as the victim should the survivor leave or presenting as a victim to various statutory bodies when the survivor left. For the participants, leaving the relationship inferred re-victimisation via the social and legal

ramifications of being portrayed as a perpetrator of DA. As noted previously, such findings correspond with existing theoretical literature (George, 2002, 2003) but are novel empirically. The use of false allegations in female-perpetrated DA is, therefore, a potentially important point of further research (see section 6.5)

Finally, leaving was also jeopardised by the participant's awareness that family courts are traditional in their views of gender, usually granting custody of the children to the mother. Consequently, leaving the relationship implied a loss of contact with the children. This was a particularly pertinent concern for those participants who believed they were protecting the children from the perpetrator. As noted in section 3.4.3 traditional masculine parenting norms highlight the paternal role as that of protector and provider (Hammer & Good, 2010). Arguably therefore this socio-cultural gender norm reinforced the participants desire to protect their children, further hindering them from leaving the relationship, further reinforcing the perpetrators power and control. Again, these findings support the prior theoretical literature (George, 2002), Migliaccio's (2002) qualitative research and prior research regarding family law as traditional in its views of gender (Collier, 1995; Hamilton & Worthen, 2011; Hamel, Tonia, Malley-Morrison & Aaronson, 2009).

The overarching impact of these challenges was an almost complete absence of messages highlighting the abuse as wrong. Participants' feelings of isolation, shame, self-blame helplessness and dependency were therefore reinforced, often returning them to the perpetrator.

6.2.5 Impact

Consistent with prior research on female survivors, all participants stated that the experience of DA generated feelings of shame, inadequacy, self-loathing and self-blame. Survivors also reported symptoms of depression, including low self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, low mood and impaired concentration. Depressive responses were linked to the participants' self-persecutory and self-blame beliefs. Such beliefs were posited to be the

result of the survivor integrating the perpetrators belief system. These findings are consistent with prior literature on female survivors (Sanderson, 2008; Lockley, 1999)

All participants appeared to experience at least some of the symptoms of post-traumatic stress (PTS), i.e. nightmares, flashbacks, avoidance of certain external stimuli associated with the abuse, avoidance and/or suppression of memories regarding the abuse, dissociative episodes and a struggle forming a coherent narrative during parts of the interview (Foa, Molnar & Cashman, 1995). Findings therefore suggested that, similar to female survivors, male survivors can also experience symptoms of PTS (Golding, 1999). Some participants appeared to experience PTS symptoms with greater frequency and severity than others, particularly those who had dissociated or blocked trauma memories from their consciousness. Such participants also reported experiences of abuse or trauma in childhood. These findings support the theoretical literature which proposes that a failure to mentalise and intergrate traumatic events causes symptoms of PTS (De Zulueta, 2009). These findings also support the contention that exposure to abuse in childhood may impede mentalisation which not only exacerbates the impact of a trauma, but also creates a vulnerability to re-experiencing such trauma (Bateman & Fonagy, 2004).

A further impact observed was that of impaired affect regulation. Affect regulation refers to the capacity to modulate and control emotions in a manner befitting the environment (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist & Target, 2002). As noted previously, all participants attempted to cope with the abuse by suppressing feelings, with most participants observing a surge of emotion after the relationship had ended. Equally, a polarity was noted between participants' tendency to intellectualise and rationalise, thus suppressing feelings and overwhelming urge to express feelings, with a couple of participants seemingly fearing that this emotional tension could result in their psychic disintegration. Such reports are consistent with literature detailing the impaired affect regulation of female survivors (Sanderson, 2008).

Theoretically, difficulties with affect regulation stem from two sources, shame and alexithymia (Sanderson, 2008). By its very nature, shame is associated with a fear of

expressing feelings and needs (Leskela, Dieperink & Thuras, 2002). A survivor may therefore have to manage the conflict between the desire to express difficulties and feelings of shame creating a need to suppress such difficulties (Sanderson, 2008). Management of this tension can result in intermittent outbursts of emotion (Sanderson, 2008). Results appeared to corroborate this theory, with experiences of shame prevalent within the participants' transcripts. Many participants also noted how shame prevented them from discussing the abuse with others. One could therefore posit that feelings of shame contributed to the participants' difficulties with affect regulation.

Alexithymia is a common reaction to ongoing trauma in which it is believed that the necessity for survival demands meagre energy is directed to the expression of emotion (Krystal, 1998). Articulation of feelings is, therefore, defended against and the survivor becomes unable to reflect upon his or her own needs (Krystal, 1998). Once the trauma provoking stimulus is extinguished, and the survivor establishes a position of relatively consistent safety, the emotions and feelings attached to the experience can be processed (Krystal, 1998). Processing such feelings is believed to be overwhelming for a survivor who may then attempt to suppress this surge in affect (Sanderson, 2008). This can result in presentation which vacillates between effusive expression and repression (Sanderson, 2008). Again, this theory is reflected in the results. Emotional numbing was frequently interpreted within participants' transcripts. Equally, participants were observed to struggle with acknowledging their own needs and feelings. Such results could be understood as evidence of alexithymia (Krystal, 1998). Participants also stated that notable affect was not experienced until some months after the ending of the relationship at which point it fluctuated markedly between expression and repression. This could be considered consistent with the emotional vacillation which results as the impact of alexithymia abates (Sanderson, 2008).

Arguably, experiences of shame and alexithymia could be exacerbated in the male survivor. Firstly, it is widely recognised that socio-cultural gender norms render displays of affect untenable for males (e.g. Howard & Hollander, 1997; Cruz, 2000). Participants remarked upon this norm, highlighting an ambivalence with expressed emotion which

they rooted in socio-cultural gender norms. Secondly, as noted within the literature review and further corroborated within the results, norms of male-as perpetrator and protector and female-as-victim compound experiences of shame for a male survivor (George, 2003). Therefore, the propensity for a male survivor of DA to suppress feeling and experience shame is potentially amplified, possibly augmenting difficulties with affect regulation. Alexithymia and shame are also theoretical mediators in the development of PTSD (Yehuda et al, 2006; Leskela, Dieperink & Thuras, 2002). One could therefore suggest that a male survivor is more likely to develop PTS symptoms due to his increased chances of experiencing shame and alexithymia.

As noted within the literature review the impact of DA upon male survivors has been significantly under-researched. Male survivors experiencing PTS, affect regulation issues, shame and alexithymia as a result of DA is, therefore, a novel finding. Equally, although quantitative links have been made between depression and men's experience of DA the causes of this have never been researched. Similarly links between male survivors PTS symptoms, abuse in childhood and DA have not been made. Finally, the possibility that men may be more likely to experience PTS as a result of DA has not been considered empirically or theoretically. The scope for further research on in this area is therefore extensive (see section 6.5 for further detail).

6.3 Implications of findings.

A key implication of the results is the need for counselling psychologists to be aware that heterosexual men can be subjected to DA. A counselling psychologist is therefore required to develop a comprehensive understanding of the gender norms which dominate a survivor's culture as well as appreciate how such norms can be perverted to suit the attachment needs of the perpetrator. It is also to be recognised that a male survivor can experience PTS reactions, depression, affect regulation issues and difficulties linked to traumatic bonding as a result of DA. Indeed, PTSD and impaired affect regulation have been cited to be potentially more prevalent for the male survivor.

Sanderson (2008) states that when working with female survivors, an in-depth understanding of the impact of DA upon relational dynamics is required. How such dynamics then manifest within the therapeutic relationship is also important to acknowledge (Sanderson, 2008). Accordingly, the results of the present study indicated that socio-cultural gender norms may influence how a male survivor presents within the therapeutic setting. Thus, feelings of vulnerability elicited by the therapeutic environment may be defended against with anger, intellectualisation, rationalisation, exaggeration or recurrent emphasis of innocence and masculinity.

These processes may be compounded by the gender of the counselling psychologist. Accordingly, the findings of the present study suggested that a female psychologist may be perceived as potentially threatening or abusive which may then elicit or exacerbate a survivor's feelings of fear and vulnerability, possibly provoking further defensive and compensatory behaviours. It could also be argued that with innumerable experiences of re-victimisation by the police and judicial system, the majority of whom are male (Deech, 2011; Gillett, 2011) a male psychologist may represent a secondary perpetrator to the survivor. Moreover, it could be submitted that a male psychologist poses a greater threat to the survivor's damaged sense of masculinity. Consequently, one could purport that the gender of a psychologist may influence how vulnerable a male survivor feels which in turn could influence the expression of defensive or compensatory behaviours. It could also be suggested that the nature of the therapeutic environment unwittingly places a psychologist in a position of power. This power differential could also augment the expression of these defensive behaviours.

These findings have two primary implications for the field of counselling psychology. Firstly, it appears as though further research is required regarding client and therapist treatment experiences and survivor treatment preference. This will hopefully give a clearer picture of how the therapeutic relationship is experienced and coped with and whether a psychologist's gender is important to a survivor and his treatment outcomes. Secondly, these findings highlight the potential for process difficulties when working with male survivors and, therefore, suggest specific supervisory input for working with

this client group. In terms of process issues, a counselling psychologist may struggle to understand or contextualise the type of defensive or compensatory behaviours enacted by a male survivor. Such process difficulties were experienced first hand by the researcher who at times struggled to separate her pre-conceptions of gender from the participant's defensive reactions (see section 7.0 for further detail on the process difficulties and dynamics between researcher and participant). It is possible that other psychologists could experience similar challenges. This risks the psychologist perceiving such behaviours as indicators of pathology or disturbance, similar to how health professionals first conceptualised female survivors' coping strategies and defensive behaviours (Sanderson, 2008). This highlights the importance of supervision for counselling psychologists working with male survivors. Such supervision should offer psychoeducation as to the context and impact of male DA, equally, if appropriate, the therapist's preconceptions regarding gender should be explored with process issues formulated and contextualised accordingly.

Shame has also been cited to be a particularly prominent experience for a male survivor. This has a number of implications for the counselling psychologist. Firstly, as noted previously, shame potentially exacerbates depression, PTS and difficulties with affect regulation. Shame can also prevent disclosure for fear of being vulnerable to further humiliation and abuse (Sanderson, 2008). Disclosure may then be further impeded by the survivor's limited awareness of male DA, preventing him from being able to label his experience as abusive. A counselling psychologist therefore requires a familiarity with the prominent themes and risk factors associated with male DA in order to facilitate disclosure, create a narrative of the abuse and assess risk adequately.

Disclosure during therapy has been found to generate feelings of inadequacy, shame and self-blame as the survivor begins to question why the perpetrator's behaviour was tolerated (Sanderson, 2008). Consequently, it is appropriate for a counselling psychologist to have a comprehensive understanding of the mediating and vulnerability factors associated with male DA alongside an appreciation of the various relational dynamics that may be relevant. In this way the internal and external obstacles to leaving

the relationship can be clarified for the survivor, potentially reducing levels of shame and self-blame.

A final implication of these findings is how counselling psychologists can disseminate this knowledge and educate others regarding male survivors of DA. It is suggested that DA forms a mandatory part of counselling, clinical and forensic psychology training and that men's abuse experiences, potential vulnerabilities and risk factors form an essential component of this training. Alternatively, mandatory training in socio-cultural gender norms and the impact this may have at an individual level could incorporate teaching on male victimisation and DA. Such training would serve to highlight and hopefully challenge any preconceived prejudices a trainee psychologist may have and may also provoke greater awareness of gender and risk in their client work. Research into the area could also be encouraged at this juncture. With more research into men's DA, awareness could be raised and stigma reduced. Active dissemination of such research into key publications, the local media and the press would continue to raise awareness, challenge socio-cultural gender norms and also debunk the myths and stereotypes surrounding the topic. With greater social awareness survivors may feel encouraged to come forward. With more male survivors coming forward the topic would again receive greater attention, hopefully facilitating the generation of more services for male survivors. With more services available, hopefully more male survivors would be able to come forward and more awareness would be raised and so on.

Alongside training future psychologists, counselling psychologists could offer training and give talks to charities, various counselling centres, mental health services and drug and alcohol teams and local statutory services e.g. social services, schools, the council, police and the various sectors of the NHS. If such training and talks were held in a manner that enabled those present to be open and honest about their preconceived ideas, prejudices and attitudes regarding DA then such beliefs could be discussed fully and therefore hopefully challenged comprehensively. The humanistic philosophy of counselling psychology would potentially enable a counselling psychologist to give such talks in this manner whilst also being mindful of those present who may have already

faced such prejudices and discrimination. The current study could also be used by counselling psychologists to help train health professionals to become more aware of and able to identify potential risk factors in heterosexual female perpetrated DA. With the aid of further research, such training could also incorporate detailing protocols for identifying male DA survivors, hopefully aiding professionals in recognising DA and reducing risk to the individual male survivor.

Active interest and participation in governmental policy making at a local and national level could also serve to raise discussion and awareness. With the backing of psychological knowledge and sound, comprehensive research a counselling psychologist could attempt to facilitate change in local and national policy. Such policy changes could centre on increasing and improving services, educating and informing those who may come into contact with male survivors and generating awareness via government funded public awareness campaigns and adverts which seek to recognise the problem, highlight sources of support and encourage people to come forward. This advertising could be placed in public places such as GP surgeries, hospitals, universities and library's etc. Such a campaign could potentially be delivered in a similar manner to the campaigns that have been undertaken to highlight DA against women.

6.4 Limitations of the current study

The analysis employed in the present research, IPA, is idiographic in focus (Smith et al., 2009). Consequently the current study does not make claims of generalisability but rather offers a valuable insight into the lived experiences of men who have been abused by a female intimate. Research implications must, therefore, be considered within this context. Moreover, the interpretative focus of IPA recognises that findings are partly based upon the researcher's own interpretations. It is thereby acknowledged that others might have understood and thus analysed the data somewhat differently. As detailed within the methodology section, transparency regarding the analytic process, the provision of an audit trail, reflexivity as well as an independent assessment of researchers themes and

sub-themes were adopted in an attempt to ensure all interpretations were coherent and grounded within the data.

Smaller sample sizes of around three to six participants are often recommended for IPA (Reid et al, 2005). However, in his most recent guidelines assessing quality in IPA, Smith (2011) does not detail an optimum sample size. Rather he suggests that high quality IPA illustrates each theme with a certain number of participants, depending on the sample size. At nine, the sample size for the current research is considered to be at the larger end of estimates (Smith, 2011). The idiographic commitment of IPA was, therefore, maintained by giving illustrations from at least three-four participants per theme and indicating how prevalent such illustrations were. This is in line with Smith's (2011) recommendations. Upon reflection, the use of nine participants may have also meant that the researcher took an overarching perspective to the analytic process, examining themes common or disparate to the collective whole. Had the sample size been smaller, greater detail of individual accounts may have been possible. Either position has its benefits and drawbacks, smaller sample sizes permit greater depth but slightly larger samples enable more comparison.

It is to be noted that by using IPA as a research method and by taking this more overarching position to the analysis certain minor differences between participants may have been missed as such differences were not considered prevalent enough to be included in the analysis. For example, a minor finding not detailed was that of somatisation. Somatisation is the tendency to experience and communicate psychological distress in the form of somatic symptoms (Lipowski, 1988). One participant (Participant 101, Clive) referenced experiencing headaches, stomach problems and weight loss which he directly linked to his experience DA. Similarly another participant reported experiencing ongoing headaches whilst within the relationship (participant 103, Mike). Arguably these experiences are evidence of somatisation. Somatisation is a common symptom of alexithymia (Bateman & Fonagy, 2004). Had these reports of somatisation been more prevalent or had a different methodology been used e.g. grounded theory which develops theory from data these reports of somatisation may have been explored in the analysis

and perhaps would have been put forward as further evidence of alexithymia. Additional minor differences between participants include differences in abuse perpetration e.g. the use of more or less physical violence or differences in the perpetrators level of remorse after an acute abusive incident and differences in both the perpetrators and survivors reported childhood experiences. Consequently it can be argued that the larger sample size and the utilisation of IPA as a research method resulted in certain minor differences between participants being omitted. Future research using a different qualitative method or research which take a case study approach or compares and contrasts different accounts e.g. the experience of abuse with and without physical violence could therefore be useful (see section 6.5)

A further consideration regarding sampling within the present study is the type of participant who came forward for interview. As noted within the analysis, and within section 6.2.3, some of the themes generated were understood to be a reflection of the research sample rather than of the overall abuse experience. One could, therefore, contend that the study contained a sample bias in which only certain types of survivor came forward to discuss their abuse experience e.g. those who felt less ashamed, those who coped with the experience by discussing it and/or disseminating information about it. Given the preliminary status of the research topic, and the hidden nature of the sample, it would perhaps be unfeasible to complete this research without such a bias. The researcher has attempted to offset the impact of this bias by remaining reflexive, transparent and mindful of its presence. For example, in section 5.2.2, the researcher highlighted for the reader that the theme being discussed was possibly a reflection of the sample type. The researcher then went on to give a rationale for this belief.

The impact of the researcher's gender is also important to acknowledge. As noted above, the researcher believed her gender may have exacerbated participants' defensive and compensatory behaviours. Accordingly, the feelings of anxiety and vulnerability created by the presence of a woman could have unintentionally increased participants' propensity to intellectualise, rationalise or repeatedly affirm their masculinity. Some participants were also observed to intermittently qualify or justify certain statements, for example: "I

know it must also be really hard for a woman but....” (Participant 106, Steven). The researcher questioned whether these qualifications were influenced by her gender.

Finally, a number of the participants stated that since leaving the abusive relationship they had struggled to trust other women. The researcher wondered whether this lack of trust extended to her and what consequence this had for the interviews. It is possible that a wariness of the researcher impeded disclosure, with participants potentially fearing an abusive or angry reaction to certain admissions. Equally, the status of the researcher as a trainee counselling psychologist could have unwittingly placed her in a position of power. This power differential could have been experienced as reminiscent of the power dynamic encountered within the abusive relationship, possibly exacerbating wariness of the researcher. Experiences of shame may then have compounded this difficulty. It is, therefore, possible that some of the participant’s narrative was limited by the gender of the researcher and/or the power dynamic within the research-participant dyad.

6.5 Suggestions for future research

Given the breadth of experiences described by participants, a case-study analysis of each of the accounts would perhaps prove a useful starting point for further research. For example, it was noted within the analysis that some participants experienced very severe, frequent physical abuse whereas others either experienced such abuse intermittently or not at all. Completing a case-study on each of the accounts would therefore provide further illumination on the different aspects of the individual abuse experience. Equally as noted previously comparing and contrasting different accounts may also offer further insight into the differences between the individual abuse experiences. Thus the experiences of a survivor who did not encounter any physical violence could be compared to that of a survivor who did experience more on-going physical violence. Further, using Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart’s typology (1994) (see section 3.4.1 for further detail) one could compare the experiences of the survivor according to the typology of the perpetrator. Thus one could compare a participant’s account of abuse by a

generally violent anti-social (GVA) type abuser with a participant's account of abuse by a borderline-dysphoric (BD) type perpetrator.

Throughout the discussion a number of findings have been identified as potential future research points. These include the possibility of disrupted attachment histories in male survivors, the possibility of traumatic bonding experiences, the potential impact of DA upon male survivors e.g. PTS, depression, the use of certain abusive behaviours by female perpetrators e.g. false allegations, financial abuse, the use of children as emotional abuse and the use of certain coping strategies by male survivors e.g. employment, rationalisation, intellectualisation. Such findings, and any hypothesis made from them, are currently only tentative as they are novel and drawn from an IPA analysis which does not make claims of generalisability. However, each finding and concordant hypothesis was underpinned by a theoretical rationale, making them viable areas for future research. For example, the hypothesis that PTS, and affect regulation difficulties could be more prevalent in the male survivor was supported by a number of theoretical concepts.

Relevant future research questions identified by the current research could therefore include: How do male survivors of DA experience their attachment to the abuser? What are the attachment histories of male survivors of DA? How do male survivors cope with DA? What are the most common forms of abuse experienced by male survivors? What is the impact of DA upon male survivors? Are there links between PTS symptoms, DA and abuse in childhood? Is the experience of PTS and affect regulation difficulties more prevalent in a male survivor? What factors impede or facilitate a male survivor leaving an abusive relationship? It is to be acknowledged that our current, extensive understanding of female DA is largely informed by the plethora of qualitative literature available (Hines, Brown & Dunning, 2007). The researcher, therefore, recommends that, where possible, these research questions are initially explored qualitatively to create an in-depth, contextual knowledge of men's DA. Grounded theory or other qualitative research methods could be used to analyse data from different perspectives. This may aid researchers in the development of theory regarding the causes of male DA, the prominent

themes associated, the impact it has and how best to support survivors and facilitate recovery.

A mixed method (MM) design could also prove illuminating. Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) define mixed methods as “research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry” (p. 4). Teddie and Yu (2006) state that MM sampling strategies “involve the selection of units or cases for a research study using both probability sampling (to increase external validity) and purposive sampling strategies (to increase transferability)” (p.78). Consequently combining qualitative and quantitative data enables the MM researcher to “generate complementary databases” (Teddie & Yu, 2006 p. 85) that include information which has both “depth and breadth” (Teddie & Yu, 2006 p. 85). There are various different styles of MM research and various related epistemological issues in terms of the complexity involved when combining qualitative and quantitative data within the same study. To discuss such issues is beyond the scope of this recommendation however a specific MM study that may be worthy of future research could include an examination of the impact of DA upon male survivors. A purposive random sample could be used to quantitatively establish how many male survivors of DA experience PTS and affect regulation issues. These figures could then be compared with that of female survivors and the rate at which female survivors experience PTS symptoms and affect regulation issues. A purposive sample of male survivors could then be selected from the initial random sample to qualitatively explore how male survivors believe the experience of DA has affected them. A further MM study could explore male survivor’s attachment styles and experiences. The quantitative component of such a study could include an assessment of male survivor’s attachment styles. A small sample could then be selected to qualitatively explore how the survivors describe their attachment histories and how they experienced their attachments to the abuser.

Research in these areas is important to counselling psychologists for a number of reasons. Firstly, with limited literature on this topic any discussion of working with male survivors

necessarily draws on female-centric frameworks. This is assumptive and potentially risks a psychologist overlooking or misinterpreting certain aspects of the experience, for example the current study has identified that male survivors encounter different types of abuse to female survivors. Secondly, counselling psychology philosophy emphasises the importance of being a scientist-practitioner, informed by current research (Woolfe, Dryden & Strawbridge, 2003). With the present dearth of research in this area it is difficult to understand how a psychologist can work with a male survivor in a sufficiently informed manner. Finally, the treatment protocol detailed in chapter three (p. 103) stressed the importance of a comprehensive knowledge when working with survivors. Further research in the areas noted above is, therefore, required to help psychologists work with this client group in a sufficiently informed manner.

With extensive qualitative and mixed-method research, a DA questionnaire could be developed. Such a tool could then be used for quantitative research in order to increase the validity, reliability and generalisability of prior findings as well as generate a more accurate picture of prevalence. With a thorough understanding of male DA, services could be established and tailored accordingly i.e. specific support groups, legal advice services, refuges etc. This tool could also be used by various statutory bodies e.g. the police, social services, family courts to screen for DA. This may help such bodies identify the primary assailant when accusations of DA are made and signpost survivors to the most applicable help and resources. Such a tool could also be used by counselling psychologists to inform them of the prevalent themes, vulnerability and risk factors associated with male DA, possibly aiding them in their assessment of clients and helping them identify those at risk.

A further research point identified by the study is the need for qualitative research on counselling psychologist's experiences of working with male survivors. Understanding and working with the therapeutic relationship has been cited as central when working with this client group. Understanding how counselling psychologists have worked with male survivors to date and what (if any) process issues were most prominent would help inform psychologists of the dynamics that could manifest themselves within the

therapeutic relationship. Such dynamics could then be grounded within the context of the DA enabling the psychologist to work with and through them accordingly. Finally, the study has also identified that the gender of a counselling psychologist may affect the survivors engagement with treatment. Further research regarding male survivor's treatment preferences is therefore important.

The scope for further research in this area is extensive. The remaining challenge to such research is perhaps in accessing this hidden population. It has been noted throughout that shame envelops the experience of being a man domestically abused by a woman. It may, therefore, be useful to access this population via more autonomous, less invasive methods e.g. via the internet. Participating in online research could possibly be experienced as safer for a male survivor, who may still find interpersonal situations challenging or anxiety provoking. Online research may therefore prove more successful for accessing this population.

7.0 REFLEXIVE STATEMENT – PART TWO

Reflecting upon my own personal journey in the research process I am reminded of the hermeneutic circle as described by Smith *et al.* (2009). This states that the researcher enters the circle influenced by prior beliefs and experiences. The researcher may not be aware of all these preconceptions but attempts to acknowledge and bracket them off. Similarly, as noted in section 2.0, at the outset of the research process I was aware of being influenced both by prevailing socio-cultural gender norms and by my prior work with female survivors of DA.

Smith *et al.* (2009) note how the researcher continues to move around the circle, encountering and engaging participants and analysing the data. With each new encounter the researcher is irreconcilably altered, with beliefs and presumptions modified. Accordingly, I became aware of a feeling of anxiety following the pilot interview. I noticed that I was questioning the validity of the participants' narrative and I felt uncomfortable with this. When the participant exaggerated, re-stated his innocence and masculinity repeatedly (see section 5.2.2, p134), I began to doubt him and question his testimony. Following a process of self-reflection, supervision and close examination of the transcript, it became evident that I was struggling with my own assumptions of gender, particularly concept of male-as-victim and vulnerable and female-as-perpetrator. Accordingly I realised that my preconceptions of gender made me unwilling to engage with the underlying vulnerability inherent to the participant's defensive behaviour and instead led me to doubt and be sceptical of him.

Following a later interview, I observed myself struggling to connect with and feel empathy for the participant's experience. Again, this encounter left me feeling anxious. Extensive reflection and engagement with the participant's narrative enabled me to untangle this difficulty. At a surface level, I noticed that my inability to connect with and feel empathy for this participant was a result of the lack of affect within his transcript. However, with further reflection I noticed that whenever this participant broached an emotional topic he veered away from it, evading any displays of vulnerability. I also

recognised that once again I was struggling with my own assumptions of gender, particularly the concept of male vulnerability. I began to question why male vulnerability was proving so challenging for me, I then realised it was, in-part linked to my father's recent death. Accordingly, my father had recently passed away. His vulnerability whilst he was unwell was exceedingly difficult for me to acknowledge, as it countered my prior understanding of him as a man and as a father. Consequently, I began to think that my own tensions around male vulnerability were colluding with, and exacerbating the participant's tensions around this. Perhaps both these participants and I were evading what we did not wish to recognise, male vulnerability. I then began to appreciate how pervasive and ingrained socio-cultural gender norms are. If I was struggling to experience a male as vulnerable, it must be even more challenging for a male survivor to present as such.

I had previously been unaware of these assumptions regarding male-as-perpetrator and protector. Smith et al. (2009) observes that it is only in the encounters with the new that some of our fore-understandings become apparent. Accordingly, as I moved around the circle, immersing myself in the data, reflecting upon my experiences, I continued to be altered. Through this process my prior beliefs and assumptions of gender slowly emerged and I began to move incrementally closer to the data.

The research process has, therefore, made me acutely aware of how socio-cultural gender norms can disadvantage men, particularly during times of vulnerability or victimisation. How these norms permeate culture and become perpetuated and internalised has also been highlighted. It is for this reason that I believe the impact of the research has been so important. It has challenged me to confront my preconceptions of gender, of which I was previously ignorant and avoidant, and has served to highlight the profound impact that socio-cultural assumptions have upon the individual. Such lessons will inevitably have bearing upon my future practice, hopefully enhancing my understanding of socio-cultural norms, gender, DA and trauma.

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9.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Recruitment letter

To whom it may concern,

I am a trainee counselling psychologist at London Metropolitan University and am currently carrying out research to discover more about heterosexual men's experiences of domestic abuse.

Very little is known about the topic and only a sparse number of services are available in the UK to help survivors of such abuse. Equally, very limited research has been conducted in this area which has not helped to break the silence around this very important issue. My hope is that by carrying out this research we will be able to gain a better understanding of men's experiences of domestic abuse so that victims of abusive partnerships are able to get the support, help and services they need.

I am writing in the hope that you will be interested in helping me in this endeavor and share your experience of domestic abuse by participating in an interview. The interview would last approximately 1 hour and will be voice recorded. Data from your interview will be used for my Doctoral level counselling psychology project.

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate you are free to withdraw at any point (up until two weeks after the interview date) without question. Interviews will be voice recorded and strictly confidential. All recordings will be kept securely and destroyed once the project is completed.

Before you decide to participate it is more important that you understand that the interview will be discussing a very emotive topic and therefore may evoke some distressing and difficult feelings for you. In line with this it is also important that you have left the relationship that you will be discussing for a minimum of four months and be older than 18 years of age. Therefore please take your time in deciding whether or not you wish to take part. You will have the opportunity to discuss any feelings evoked at length post interview with the researcher and be given information on sources of support if you would like this.

Thank you so much for your time, if you have any further queries please do not hesitate to ask either by phone: ***** or email: *****@hotmail.com.

I look forward to hopefully hearing from you soon.

Yours Sincerely,

Penny Utton.

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of research: Beyond the patriarchy; an exploration of the experience of domestic abuse for heterosexual men.

Description of procedure: In this research you will be asked a number of questions regarding your experience of domestic abuse within a voice recorded interview.

- I understand the procedures to be used.
- I understand I am free to withdraw at anytime during the study without question. However, all data will be aggregated by the 21st of August 2009; therefore if I wish to withdraw it has to be done by the 21st of August 2009.
- I understand that participation in this study is anonymous. My name will not be used in connection with the results in any way, a pseudonym will be used on the digital voice recording and all information that may otherwise identify me (e.g. address, friend's names) will be changed prior to transcription. There are limits to confidentiality however; confidentiality will be breached if I am believed to be putting myself or others at immediate risk.
- I understand that the results of the study will be accessible to others when completed and that excerpts from my interview (minus identifying information) may be used within the study.
- I understand that I may find this interview upsetting and that it may evoke a number of difficult and distressing feelings for me. I will be offered support and the opportunity to discuss these feelings at length post interview with the researcher. The researcher will also give information on further support available if required.
- I understand that I have the right to obtain information about the findings of the study and details of how to obtain this information will be given in the debriefing form.
- I understand that the data will be destroyed once the study has been assessed.

Signature of participant:.....

Signature of researcher:.....

Print name:.....

Print name:.....

Date:

Date:

Appendix 3: Debriefing Form

DEBRIEFING FORM.

Thank you for taking part in this research. This is part of a Doctoral project that the researcher is conducting.

If you are interested in the results of the study, or if you have any questions about this study, or if you wish to withdraw, please contact the researcher on the following email addresses: *****@hotmail.com.

Emails will be checked regularly.

Please remember that if you wish to withdraw it should be done by the 21st August 2009 as it may not be possible at a later stage.

Equally, if you have any questions or concerns you are more than welcome to address them now.

If you have any complaints regarding any aspect of the way you have been treated during the course of the study please contact the academic course supervisor; Mark Donati on: 0207 ***** or Email: *****@londonmet.ac.uk

If participation has raised any concerns or issues that you wish to discuss further, a number of agencies can provide advice and support in confidence.

- The **Mens Aid** charity has been set up in Milton Keynes to provide free practical advice and support to men who have been abused. They can be contacted on 0871 223 9986 or accessed via www.mensaid.com
- The **ManKind** Initiative is a men's civil rights charity that helps victims of domestic abuse. There national helpline phone number is: 0870 794 4124
- **Victim Support** is the independent national charity for people affected by crime. Staff and volunteers offer free and confidential information and support for victims of any crime. They can be contacted on 0845 30 30 900 or supportline@victimsupport.org.uk.
- **Stop Abuse For Everyone (SAFE)** is a online human rights organization that provides services, publications, and online support to everybody, regardless of age, race or gender. Website: <http://www.safe4all.org> or email them on safe@safe4all.org
- **The National Centre for Domestic Violence** is a service is available to everybody, regardless of age, race or gender. The national helpline phone number is: 0844 8044 999 or 0800 970 20 70
- In an emergency, always call the police on 999.

Appendix 4: Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. First of all, could you tell me a little bit about how the relationship began and how long you were in the relationship for overall?

2. Could you describe how you experienced the relationship prior to the abuse?

3. In as much detail as possible could you describe how you experienced the abuse?

Asking these prompts depends on answers given; these are potential prompts and may be altered or not asked if already answered elsewhere.

- How did the abuse begin?
- How did you experience the abuse as it continued?
- What types of abusive acts were committed against you?
- How regular and severe was the abuse?
- Why do you think your partner was abusive and what do you think her motives were?

4. How did you try and cope with the abuse?

5. What factors do you think were involved in you remaining within the relationship/what prevented you in leaving the relationship?

6. Can you tell me what factors caused the relationship to come to an end?

7. Do you think being male affected the experience of abuse? If so how?

8. How are things for you now?

9. Is there anything else you would like to add or talk about that you think might be relevant to our discussion of your experience or this topic?

10. What has doing this interview been like for you?

N.B. Bullet points are potential prompts/further questions if the interviewee does not cover such areas in their answer; these may be refined or altered post pilot study.

Appendix 5: Distress Protocol.

Protocol to follow if participants become distressed during participation:

This protocol has been devised by Chris Cocking (Chris Cocking is a grade 5 qualified Mental Health Nurse registered with the NMC (Pin no: 00E0275E), and first-aider, and so has experience in managing situations where distress occurs) to deal with the possibility that some participants may become distressed and/or agitated during their involvement in research into PTSD, as some by definition will already be suffering from psychological trauma as a result of their previous experiences. This has since been modified slightly by Penny Utton to deal with the possibility that some participants in her research may become distressed and/or agitated whilst discussing their experience of domestic abuse, such participants, by definition, will have experienced some form of psychological trauma inflicted upon them by an intimate partner. Penny Utton is a trainee counselling psychologist at London Metropolitan University and so has had experience in managing situations where distress occurs. There follows below a three step protocol detailing signs of distress that the researcher will look out for, as well as action to take at each stage. It is not expected that extreme distress will occur, nor that the relevant action will become necessary. This is because most of the participants will have been accessed professional services within which there will usually be an existing structure set up to deal with extreme distress which professionals can implement. However it is included in the protocol, in case of emergencies where such professionals cannot be reached in time.

Mild distress:

Signs to look out for:

- 1) Tearfulness
- 2) Voice becomes choked with emotion/ difficulty speaking
- 3) Participant becomes distracted/ restless

Action to take:

- 1) Ask participant if they are happy to continue
- 2) Offer them time to pause and compose themselves
- 3) Remind them they can stop at any time they wish if they become too distressed

Severe distress:

Signs to look out for:

- 1) Uncontrolled crying/ wailing, inability to talk coherently
- 2) Panic attack- e.g. hyperventilation, shaking, fear of impending heart attack
- 3) Intrusive thoughts of the traumatic event- e.g. flashbacks

Action to take:

- 1) The researcher will intervene to terminate the interview/experiment.
- 2) The debrief will begin immediately
- 3) Relaxation techniques will be suggested to regulate breathing/ reduce agitation
- 4) The researcher will recognize participants' distress, and reassure that their experiences are normal reactions to abnormal and distressing events.

- 5) If any unresolved issues arise during the interview, accept and validate their distress, but suggest that they discuss with mental health professionals and remind participants that this is not designed as a therapeutic interaction
- 6) Details of counselling/therapeutic services available will be offered to participants

Extreme distress:

Signs to look out for:

- 1) Severe agitation and possible verbal or physical aggression
- 2) In very extreme cases- possible psychotic breakdown where the participant relives the traumatic incident and begins to lose touch with reality

Action to take:

- 1) Maintain safety of participant and researcher
- 2) If the researcher has concerns for the participant's or others' safety, he will inform them that he has a duty to inform any existing contacts they have with mental health services, such as a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) or their GP.
- 3) If the researcher believes that either the participant or someone else is in immediate danger, then he will suggest that they present themselves to the local A&E Department and ask for the on-call psychiatric liaison team.
- 4) If the participant is unwilling to seek immediate help and becomes violent, then the Police will be called and asked to use their powers under the Mental Health Act to detain someone and take them to a place of safety pending psychiatric assessment. (This last option would only be used in an extreme emergency)

Appendix 6: Example of post interview reflections.

Participant 102, Barry has been utilised to demonstrate the reflections the researcher engaged in at various stages of the analysis process. Each of these reflections were recorded by the researcher on a digital voice recorder and then transcribed verbatim:

6.1 Reflections immediately after interview

Well I have just seen my second participant, a very, very genuine guy. Still seems very, very, very confused about his abuse experience. Erm, the interview was only 25 minutes, he wasn't a particularly communicative person, I need to ensure that this is about him and not the interview schedule. Erm, which is a bit of a concern. Erm, I also think, you know, erm, male perpetrated DA is different from female perpetrated DA but how? Because when a man hits a woman they know its gunna hurt, they know its gunna smack the woman down, but when these women hit men or when some of these women have hit men its more about expressing the power and control over that person than it is about physically hurting that person, I don't know, I don't know, I need to think about it. Anyway, those are my thoughts, lovely, lovely guy, feel so terrible for him, seems so caught up in it all, it has made me think about some of my assumptions regarding men and women, particularly the idea of male vulnerability.

6.2 Memories, thoughts and reflections elicited for researcher after first play back of interview:

Erm, this participant stuck in my memory more than some of the others, I'm not sure why. I remember I how he sat, erm, err, hunched and quite anxious. It felt as though it was the first time he had discussed his experience with anyone and it seemed as though he had been anticipating the interview for the days leading up to it. He struggled to articulate himself at times and erm, erm, I felt this had possibly been exploited by his perpetrator. His distress is evident in the way he speaks and the words he uses "I just suffered I did" has really played in my mind, erm, I guess, if I am honest I feel sorry for him. I also feel a great deal of empathy, I think I connect more with his vulnerability and abuse experience than with some of the other participants, I dunno why this is?

6.3 Thoughts and reflections after repeated reading of the transcript:

It is interesting that I was worried as to the length of this participant's interview, although he did not say as much as others his data is incredibly rich. It is interesting that I did not think he was very articulate, I do not think this is correct, his choice of words are direct, succinct and straight to the point which in many ways is extraordinarily articulate. Erm, a lack of comprehension as to why the perpetrator was abusive is evident, the participant was clearly still attempting to reconcile his feelings for the perpetrator and remains phenomenally confused, maybe this is why I felt he had difficulty articulating himself. His isolation and sense of shame are also apparent; it appears as though he is just beginning to build a semblance of self-esteem, participating in the research is perhaps evidence of this as I, I, erm think it took him a lot of courage and strength.

Appendix 7: Sample Transcript

This is an excerpt from the transcript of participant 102, Barry.

Researcher: How, erm, what did you feel about, what did you feel about the abuse when you were within the relationship?

Participant: I dunno, its like, its strange, really I didn't mind the abuse, but you know, cause on the physical side it wasn't really, I wasn't really getting hurt, but, err, you know, it was still violence whatever, but it was the mental stuff that really done me, I was just lost, I was just dumbfounded, I went in my own world, in my own bubble, you know, I just shut myself up, off from everything really, that's the way I coped with it.

Researcher: And do you think being male effected how you experienced it?

Participant: Yeah, I think, yeah definitely. You know, it was, I didn't talk to no one about it, I didn't confide in friends or my family, I think even to this day my mum doesn't know anything about this. You know, its just, I thought it didn't matter, it was trivial, that was the way I looked at it, but really it wasn't, now I look back on it wasn't trivial because abuse is abuse no matter what gender you are isn't it. I didn't tell anyone because I thought I wouldn't be listened to, I thought they would have, you know, sort of, belittled me for it, you know they've made jokes out of it my friends so I didn't wanna go to them and I thought I would be less of a man to tell them anyway, you know? It's so easy like, cause you tell someone when you're in that position and they are like 'give her a slapping' and just things like that, but if your not like that, you know, that advice is pointless for you, you know, and they are not where your at and they might never be where your at so they don't really understand do they.

Researcher: So did you ever approach anyone did you tell anyone?

Participant: I might have told the odd one or two but they would have been fairly close friends and most of them just laughed and made jokes out of it, you know, so really didn't want to take it from there point of view either, I used to feel guilty and ashamed for thinking of telling people. You know, like prwor, I should just say nothing. And you know, I should imagine there is a whole lot worse of violent abuse with some women that goes on with men so it must be horrific for some guys like you know, especially if they don't think like they cant talk about it to anyone because of the stigma attached to it you know, but I feel , through this generation its gunna break through there is guunna be a break through on this.

Researcher: So did you actually, at the time where you were being abused did you actually think of yourself as being abused? How did you think about it at the time?

Participant: No I didn't feel it was abuse. I just, I thought she had problems that she needed to talk to me about, and I use to, like I said, I just shut it off at a stage and I just sort of, went into a protective shell like, you know, I just kept down certain areas of thought, you know, I didn't want to feed too much into the abuse cause you know, I was there at the time.

Appendix 8: Sample transcript with researcher's annotations and interpretations

This is an excerpt from the transcript of participant 102, Barry. For legibility and therefore transparency, the annotations made during the analysis, on the original transcript have been copied exactly by the researcher onto this excerpt. Initial impressions of the dialogue are noted on the left-hand side of the transcript. Identification of emerging themes are noted on the right-hand side of the transcript.

Researcher: How, erm, what did you feel about, what did you feel about the abuse when you were within the relationship?

didn't mind the abuse? Is it OK to be abused.

Participant: I dunno, its like, its strange, really I didn't mind the abuse, but you know, cause on the physical side it wasn't really, I wasn't really getting hurt, but, err, you know, it was still violence whatever, but it was the mental stuff that really done me, I was just lost. I was just dumbfounded. I went in my own world, in my own bubble, you know, I just shut myself up, off from everything really, that's the way I coped with it.

verbal abuse vs physical

shock?

coping?

repudiation of needs

minimisation coping strategy

confusion

disincarnation - coping strategy

Researcher: And do you think being male effected how you experienced it?

more important to him?

Participant: Yeah, I think, yeah definitely. You know, it was, I didn't talk to no one about it, didn't confide in friends or my family, I think even to this day my mum doesn't know anything about this. You know, its just, I thought it didn't matter, it was trivial, that was the way I looked at it, but really it wasn't, now I look back on it wasn't trivial because abuse is abuse no matter what gender you are isn't it. I didn't tell anyone because I thought I wouldn't be listened to, I thought they would have, you know, sort of, belittled me for it, you know they've made jokes out of it my friends so I didn't wanna go to them and I thought I would be less of a man to tell them anyway, you know? It's so easy like, cause you tell someone when you're in that position and they are like 'give her a slapping' and just things like that, but if your not like that, you know, that advice is pointless for you, you know, and they are not where your at and they might never be where your at so they don't really understand do they!

withdrew from others isolated receiving

isolation withdrawal shame

minimisation coping strategy

retrospective reassignment - psychic numbing

asking or telling me?

misunderstood

others minimize - norms

erotic - outsider perspective - lack of empathy

Researcher: So did you ever approach anyone did you tell anyone?

humiliated when brave enough to disclose

Participant: I might have told the odd one or two but they would have been fairly close friends and most of them just laughed and made jokes out of it, you know, so really didn't want to take it from there point of view either, I used to feel guilty and ashamed for making of telling people. You know, like prwor, I should just say nothing. And you know, I should imagine there is a whole lot worse of violent abuse with some women that goes on with men so it must be horrific for some guys like you know, especially if they don't think like they cant talk about it to anyone because of the stigma attached to it you know, but I feel, through this generation its gunna break through there is guunna be a break through on this.

lack of understanding

withdrawal isolation

make norms ridicule

shame = violation

downward social comparison coping + minimisation

talking in third person

hopeful?

hope for change

masculinity

Researcher: So did you actually, at the time where you were being abused did you actually think of yourself as being abused? How did you think about it at the time?

Participant: No I didn't feel it was abuse. I just, I thought she had problems that she needed to talk to me about, and I use to, like I said, I just shut it off at a stage and I just sort of, went

minimisation, denial coping

badly underplaying severity

dissociation,
year?

dissociation - coping

dissociation -
coping -
evidence

into a protective shell like, you know, I just kept down certain areas of thought, you know, I didn't want to feed too much into the abuse cause you know, I was there at the time.

self-blame

constant

Appendix 9: Table of cluster themes and cluster theme labels for participant 102, Barry

Cluster theme labels:	Cluster themes:
Incremental, unpredictable abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of abuse (physical, emotional, financial etc) • Increasing severity • Unpredictable yet constant • Threats • Physical vs emotional
Manipulation and control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perpetrators façade • Manipulating others. • Manipulating survivor • Control via degradation
Defence mechanisms/compensatory strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification • Dissociation • Normalisation • Denial • Rationalisation/intellectualisation • Minimisation • Focus on positive
Psychic numbing/repudiation of needs/affect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repudiation of own needs • Disrupted affect regulation • Retrospective reassessment of abuse
Love and attachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love for the perpetrator • Cognitive dissonance • High early investment.
Self blame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self blame for abuse. • Self blame evident in behavioural changes. • Self blame since leaving the relationship • Projected blame.
Shame and isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal from others due to shame • Withdrawal from others, enforced by perpetrator. • Social support, unsupportive, increases shame and isolation. • Withdrawal for fear of perpetrator.
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim • Rescuer • Projected onto • Annihilation of • Rebuilding of • Emasculation
Depression and Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance • Dissociation • Inability to mentalise experience • Nightmares • Fear

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjugation • Suicidal • Low self-esteem • Anti-depressants
Gender norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim/perpetrator • Gender norms – survivors subscription to • Gender norms – others subscription to • Emasculation • Identity • Reinforces shame and isolation • Lack of social comparison/label for experience
Organisational issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subscribe to gender norms • Lack of services – increases helplessness • Reinforces isolation • Further perpetuates norms • Creates lack of social comparison/label for experience. • Loss of children.

Appendix 10: Central Table of Themes for all Transcripts - Initial

Master Themes	Constituent Themes
The interpersonal dynamics of the abuse experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incremental, unpredictable abuse • Intermittent reinforcement • Attachment relationships • Manipulation and coercive control
Ways of coping with the abuse experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defense mechanisms/compensatory strategies • Self blame • Placation of perpetrator • Reflection and reevaluation
The intra and interpersonal effects of the abuse experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation • Identity • Cognitive impact: Dissonance and helplessness • Post traumatic and depressive symptoms
The impact of socio-cultural norms upon the abuse experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and gender norms • Organisational issues • Misunderstood, not believed, accused.

Appendix 11: Master Table of Themes for all Transcripts - Refined

Master Themes	Constituent Themes
The interpersonal dynamics of the abuse experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The perpetration of abuse. • “I tried to tackle it in different ways”; coping with the abuse experience. • The experiences of love and attachment.
Shame and isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persecuted and misunderstood • Reflection and reevaluation
The intra-personal effects of the abuse experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Cognitive Dissonance • Post traumatic and depressive symptoms
The impact of socio-cultural norms upon the abuse experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It makes you feel like a bit less of a man” • Organisational issues and challenges

Appendix 12: Central Table of Themes for all Transcripts – Final

Master Themes	Constituent Themes
Surviving the abuse.	The perpetration of abuse.
	“I tried to tackle it in different ways”; coping with the abuse experience.
Love in the abusive encounter.	The experiences of love and attachment.
	“You don’t hit anyone but you certainly don’t hit someone you love”; reconciling the juxtaposition of love and abuse.
The intra-personal impact of the abuse experience.	“My mind just wasn’t thinking right anymore”; the psychological impact of the abuse experience.
	The evolving sense of self; the impact of abuse upon identity.
The socio-cultural construction of gender and its impact upon the abuse experience.	“It makes you feel like a bit less of a man”
	“It’s about providing a service that is for all victims....that is the challenge”.

Appendix 13: Expanded Master table of themes for all transcripts with quotes.

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Poor text in the original
thesis.

Some text bound close to
the spine.

Some images distorted

<p><i>Mother</i> theme/constituent themes</p>	<p><i>Transcript 1</i> Clive</p>	<p><i>Transcript 2</i> Barry</p>	<p><i>Transcript 3</i> Mike</p>
<p><u>Surviving the abuse.</u></p>	<p>I view the emotional element erm, worse. Bruising can heal over time but it is the emotional aspects [...] that's going to stay with me for the rest of my life. I was thinking to myself, the physical is going to be nothing compared to the emotional abuse I have suffered so far. Continual degradation. Just picking up all these bits just time and time again and throwing them continually at you just to wear you down. Having been put down, my self esteem out down, whenever I came home she wasn't happy, she would shout at me. Continually putting you down and never building your esteem up. She would explode at the smallest thing. She just flew off the handle, pushing me down the stairs, screaming and shouting at me. Next minute, door bursts open and she lets rip, she is screaming and shouting, pushing me down the stairs.</p>	<p>(It) started off as screaming and shouting at me, and she would advance towards me with armed postures and threatening gestures, but she wouldn't touch me, and then as time went on and she realised I wouldn't retaliate. Real anger and hate coming from her. She would just constantly put me down and run me down [...] She would call me ugly "you big nosed fuck" and "no one else would ever want you". All the time yeah, that was constant like, you know, you know, from morning to night, she would just constantly put me down and run me down. First of all she started digging her nails into my head, really digging them hard, pulling faces, real anger and hate coming from her, then it advanced from that, she started scrintiching, erm scratching the top of my arms, then punched the top of my arms, then erm, went right up to chucking ashtrays at me. So I guess as the abuse continued it got more and more violent.</p>	<p>It wasn't long before she was putting me down, you know, blatantly, you know, even in front of other people. I was having trouble with my erection.... I was having premature ejaculation... and this happened and she really got angry..... She erm, packed her suitcase, Tuesday night this was, she was gonna go back to **** to find a man, to get a man that was gonna last twenty minutes... You know, so I packed mine and I said "well if your going back to ***, we are all going back" ... Anyway, she was really adamant she was going to do this, she would come out with all this, abuse, you know, mental abuse came out. You're no fucking good, you cant even fuck me. The next thing I know she is trumping me in the face with the heel of one of my shoes, really thumping and lashing, really going to town. My wife was hitting me with a metal rod with ***** sitting on the bag watching. Got the rolling pin out and started whacking me with it [...] she started whacking my van with the rolling pin, so I went out and "stop that" you know "stop it, don't do this" then she whacked me a few more</p>

	<p>I was working three jobs.</p> <p>It felt as though I was doing everything to earn money and to continually ploughing money onto this endless pot.</p> <p>She moved the brother into the house [...] I was sharing the living room floor with him [...] she had moved her mum down as well... I had the two of them and I was not the favourite person in the house [...] every day I came in to face it [...] sleeping on the couch [...] her brother got a job and would come back and turn the TV on at five o'clock in the morning when he came in [...] just anything to aggravate me.</p> <p>Any denigration, shouting, verbal abuse, conflict would be done in front of the children and she would not relent from that.</p> <p>My wife has just taken bits out of me in front of my daughter.</p> <p>Its just so many small things all added up to erm, denigrate and ostracize me.</p> <p>She threatened to kill me on three occasions</p> <p>She was pushing her fist up against my face saying "I would hit you but then that would be a problem with the police"</p> <p>She was locking herself in the bedroom professing I was harassing and domestically violent to her [...] but she was locking herself in the bedroom because she was drinking.</p>	<p>It was there all the time.</p> <p>On the physical side it wasn't really, I wasn't really getting hurt, but, err, you know, it was still violence whatever, but it was the mental stuff that really done me.</p> <p>We start and we stop and we start again, it was always there at some level.</p> <p>She was going around without me knowing, telling people I was loosing my mind.</p> <p>She wanted to tell her family, her friends, my friends, that I was loosing my mind, that I was loosing the plot.</p> <p>She wanted other people to think I was loosing my mind.</p> <p>He is going mad.</p> <p>Cheated on me in the end, three times [...] end scenario she just asked me to leave.</p>	<p>times , ran inside, closed the door [...] I saw ***** on the stairs with his air rifle pointing at me.</p> <p>Next thing is, my shin is through it and I looked up and it was her, she had driven at me with the car and stopped just as she hit my shins right, come out the car, ran at me, screaming "oh he has left me with no money" right erm, started breaking my rear mirrors and my wipers and really started kicking my van.</p> <p>I think she could do it, I think she must have picked up on it that I would take it, I think she enjoyed it [...] I just think she picked up I had a weak spot [...] perhaps it made her feel stronger, err, perhaps she liked seeing me [...] I mean, if you don't stand up to these people when they are doing it to you, you have got to be crawling after 'em, perhaps.</p> <p>She got very lairy when I hadn't given her control and there shouting at me.</p> <p>Her having control of the money.</p> <p>Immediately he walked out the gate, those two (<i>wife and daughter</i>) ran up to the bedroom and got all my clothes and chucked them outside, in the front garden!</p> <p>They were coming downstairs saying "ain't you gone yet" you know "what you still doing here" you know, "haven't you gone yet" and that's what was going on all afternoon.</p> <p>Three of my sisters came down at separate times to help me with children... the children didn't even</p>
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The façade came down that she would present to people and I got the bad side of her all the time.

Its that whole aspect of that façade that is presented to other people... its "I am this upstanding citizen who works for the police, I am a fantastic mother and I have got this husband who is being abusive and violent toward me, I have to lock myself in the bedroom" but the bedroom is where she has got all this alcohol.

She would use the sexual aspect of things to get what she wanted... like er, bone to the dog type of thing.

I beg my own wife [...] to be intimate with me.

She had been out professing she was going to do X, Y and Z to other men and all the rest and make there Christmas and birthday come at the same time.

She is shouting at me again, to the point I was in tears thinking my daughter is hearing this upstairs and the damage this is doing to her psychologically.

I would make a meal, she would refuse to eat and would have a go at her brother or my eldest daughter if they ate any of the food I'd prepared and my daughter [...] effectively would sit and we would get ostracised.

It felt as though I was doing everything to

talk, didn't even acknowledge them. It was all part and parcel of her with them and the way she was, you know.

I sat down to dinner and as I sat down I looked over at **** and he said "don't look at me, I don't want you looking at me" and then **** said "don't you look at me either, I don't want you looking at me" [...] I just wanted to get up and leave the dinner [...] so I got up and I went out to the van [...] I came back in, **** had taken the keys and I came back in, cause I realise she'd got the keys, anyway, when I came in, she took my glasses off me, she started shouting at me, took the glasses off my face, right, put them on the floor and said "I'm gunna stamp on these" shouting at me.

I just think she picked up I had a weak spot.

	<p>earn money and to continually ploughing money onto this endless pot.</p> <p>I would say to her "if you want and helped out with the work then I could work less."</p> <p>I was working three jobs [...] within six months, it wasn't good enough.</p> <p>So effectively she uses *** (the daughter) to hurt me further, part of the harassment and abuse.</p> <p>Whenever I was on the telephone trying to get support from friends she would say err, to me or loud enough to me so the girls could here "look he is going off to women again" ...to the point that all my communication with my friends closed down.</p> <p>Everything had to be done in front of the children.</p> <p>*** (the daughter) will never be with you, that's not a threat that's a promise.</p> <p>Culminated now in the point that it is easier for her to say "I don't want to be with dad" erm and give in to her mum.</p> <p>As soon as I am arrested that's tickets for any chance of seeing my daughter and that's exactly what she wants.</p> <p>She professed mental instability.</p> <p>Throwing her fork down at the table. shout at</p>		
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	<p>me whenever there was any discussion at the table.</p>		
<p>"I tried to tackle it in different ways"; coping with the abuse experience.</p>	<p>She suffers from alcohol addiction.</p> <p>Champagne was something she could not handle.</p> <p>She's probably bi-polar or border line personality disorder, when I met her she was on anti-depressants.</p> <p>I don't know if it was related to the alcohol.</p> <p>I can understand why she is like that and were her history comes from, but at the time I was ignorant.</p> <p>I didn't understand relationship psychology [...] cause her mum actually left her dad and her mum, is, was, is an alcoholic still.</p> <p>It think, it's her history [...] I think her childhood has caused the psychological issues she has had, with her father, her mother, her foster care.</p> <p>Her self esteem, her insecurity, erm, her bipolar issues, er, so when she would hit that low it really wasn't her it was just her other side.</p> <p>She was basically anorexic.</p> <p>The strongest person in the world, literarily, I mean her tensile strength is incredible.</p> <p>You could see the tensile strains in her</p>	<p>I went in my own world, in my own bubble, you know, I just shut myself up, off from everything really, that's the way I coped with it.</p> <p>I felt sorry for her strangely, for a brief, you know cause, at the times she has been at her low points and she needed me to talk to and she has been crying and that scenario, and really I've just felt sorry for her.</p> <p>You know, it's just, I thought it didn't matter, it was trivial.</p> <p>I just shut it off at a stage and I just sort of, went into a protective shell like, didn't feel nout.</p> <p>It's strange, really I didn't mind the abuse, but you know, cause on the physical side it wasn't really, I wasn't really getting hurt, but, err, you know, it was still violence whatever.</p> <p>And you know, I should imagine there is a whole lot worse of violent abuse with some women that goes on with men so it must be horrific for some guys like you know, especially if they don't think like they cant talk about it to anyone because of the stigma attached to it you know.</p> <p>No I didn't feel it was abuse. I just, I thought</p>	<p>I was trying to avoid it but it was like a situation where I really shouldn't have been avoiding.</p> <p>I probably worked twice as hard as a normal guy would work, cause I wanted to provide and I wanted the business to succeed, I even learned three trades, I mean I was a qualified electrician, qualification city and guilds to an advanced level, plumbing to an advanced level, and, erm, central heating to an advanced level, and I was corgi registered, registered, OLF registered all of these just so I felt secure. I always used to go in my overalls, whoever I went to see [...] when I went to the doctor, always had my overalls on, I was kinda clinging to my defence where people wanted me, do you follow? And where I was appreciated.</p> <p>I had achieved more than any of them [...] financially anyway</p> <p>I mean I was bloody daft. I mean, if you came to the house, I would be falling over myself, to make you, my wife and her friend, the coffee and all that like I was the skivvy boy, why? Why didn't I just sit down and let her do it.</p> <p>When I was a child, my dad was a very dominant bully, and I did the opposite I think, so instead of [...] standing up to strong personalities when you feel you need to, I would tend to back off and sort of, become compliant if you know what I mean.</p> <p>I saw this program, I thought, why the hell didn't the</p>

<p>tendons and stuff.</p> <p>When you look at personality types.</p> <p>Cause I am trying to follow every single book and advice to try and protect children through divorce and separation.</p> <p>I served my country as a naval officer.</p> <p>I'll send you come articles on parental alienation.</p> <p>I wanted to get across how woman and men [...] use parental alienation and children as a way of abusing through contact, not allowing contact</p> <p>What is interesting is when you look at the type of person it is almost following from one relationship to another.</p> <p>I gradually started spending the year educating myself on psychology, law cases, the way things work.</p> <p>Parental alienation is labeled as "implacable hostility".</p> <p>Nothing hugely physical to any degree but a lot of verbal.</p> <p>All my friend kinda pointed and said [...] "there is always tension [...] Its not right" and I said "no its not, there are the good elements.</p>	<p>she had problems that she needed to talk to me about.</p> <p>She is hitting me and all this, you know, I thought this will all blow over, I thought when she got it out of her system she would be fine.</p> <p>I was the best thing she ever had and that I'm a lovely guy, you know, its just ironic in a way, you know, dunno, maybe she had underlying problems, issues, and I like, sometimes, take it out on a loved one or someone your close to.</p> <p>Tell me what I have done I can right I, if you don't want me I can go', but it was none of that.</p> <p>I just kept down certain areas of thought, you know, I didn't want to feed too much into the abuse. I just shut myself up, off from everything really, that's the way I coped with it.</p> <p>That's all I use to think to myself, you know, what have I done? And I kept asking 'what have I done?' and I could get no answers out of her, you know, Tell me what I have done I can right I, if you don't want me I can go', but it was none of that.</p> <p>And why she was doing that, and that's all I use to think to myself, you know, what have I</p>	<p>doctor say anything about this, I'm getting all this grief off her, she used to "your no fucking good, you cant even fuck me" you know, it was dreadful, you think, I mean, you have got that on top of, you know. [...] eventually they were going to give me the injection, and the first time the injection worked. It was good, she was very happy, I was happy cause she was happy [...] whether it was the trauma of the household or the tension, even the injection I started having problems and then of course I would get the abuse [...] I had to go and see someone privately to get the Viagra [...] and that was better.</p> <p>I would tend to back off and sort of, become compliant if you know what I mean.</p> <p>I didn't know how to deal with it and I just walked upstairs, I never said about it, there was no confronting them.</p> <p>I was happy cause she was happy.</p> <p>I didn't have the balls to say "no I don't want you to."</p> <p>I used to try and give them two holidays a year, one in the spring, one in the summer, late, like, like, last week of August, first week of September, and do one round about April/May to give her something to look forward to all the time, and then there would be Christmas to come and things like that.</p> <p>I get the kids to have horse riding, skiing, they'd have everything I could think of to try and give them the activities and that inspiration that would have got</p>
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	<p>Want to help others that are in my position.</p> <p>I just want to help others.</p> <p>It must be me, there must be something wrong with me [...] it must be me, what can I do better.</p> <p>You are continually thinking "it must be me."</p> <p>Continually blaming me and putting me down.</p> <p>I would continue trying to please her.</p> <p>The only time she was happy was when she was on holiday [...] in the sun drinking...she was happy and therefore the family were happy.</p> <p>I will do anything [...] just tell me what want me to do and I will do it.</p> <p>I didn't want to disturb her because I was petrified of actually getting abuse from her.</p> <p>I have studied martial arts for a number of years.</p> <p>I am a martial artist but a complete pacifist.</p> <p>I don't want to release her grip, which I could quite easily do.</p> <p>Its weird, I'm third down in Karate but I am the most passive person going.</p>	<p>done [...] I just suffered I did.</p> <p>I was always at hand to help her.</p> <p>What I done to get away from this abuse, the violence and that, I used to just go into the shed and just potter along and build things and make things.</p> <p>I just let her carry on and do it, you know.</p> <p>I wish I would have known why cause I could have helped her or tried to help her at least, you know.</p>	<p>had they had a fit mother, swimming, diving, etc and all that sort of thing, everything I could think of.</p> <p>I would spend with my kids, was, were, a lot of, erm, if they went horse riding, I would get, leave for work early and go there for their ride and watch them do it for an hour and either go back to work then or [...] I didn't have the amount of time in some respects as what, but what I did, the time I did have, I tried to make it useful time [...] I would take them swimming, and I taught them to swim, I had them swimming by the time they were four, erm, erm, and diving, I would teach them diving, right after I would teach them swimming because I loved diving [...] he won a competition with diving and I really thought he could go somewhere.</p> <p>I never touched her back, never hit her back, nothing, I swear, I really didn't.</p>
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<p>Love in the abusive encounter.</p>			
<p>The experiences of love and attachment.</p>	<p>Her father had in theory abused her.</p> <p>She had come from a, erm, abusive family and it tends to roll on and this is the problem, the cycle rolls on.</p> <p>She had gone to children's home herself and her father [...] had abused her.</p> <p>In that 'in love' phase that you go through and you do absolutely everything for that other person, to make them happy, things are fine and all very good.</p> <p>Initial stage a huge amount of investment.</p> <p>I was completely in love with her.</p> <p>You have a child together; you have got to then make it work.</p> <p>I love her, I don't love the way she treats me but I love her and number two I have a family.</p> <p>She did the same thing to *** (step daughter) dad [...] she wouldn't let her see her dad.</p> <p>I was just helpless, what can I do? I can't move out otherwise she won't let me see my daughter.</p> <p>You couldn't leave because you have to leave your children and you had to stay there and suffer that abuse.</p>	<p>Because I loved her and to me that, to go through that was worth the sacrifice of being with her, I would go through all that and more just to be with her [...] the love was stronger than the abuse.</p> <p>I was the best thing she ever had and that I'm a lovely guy, you know, its just ironic in a way, you know, dunno, maybe she had underlying problems, issues, and I like, sometimes, take it out on a loved one or someone your close to.</p> <p>She cheated on me in the end, three times [...] end scenario she just asked me to leave.</p> <p>I was well, according to myself I was dead, I died on that day, I still believe I died in 2001, I died, that's it, I died.</p> <p>I go through the emotions about feeling I love her and all that, but maybe I shouldn't.</p> <p>I brought the children up like a mother, she wont maternal at all towards the children she just used to scream at them and that, you know, so I took on the role as mother.</p> <p>I used to feel guilty and ashamed for thinking of telling people. You know, like prvor, I should just say nothing.</p>	<p>So it was a bit of a strange one, but I kinda thought, well at least she has levelled it out [...] and it thought, that you know, there is a lot to, there is a lot, there is so much potential there you know.</p> <p>She did seem to make me feel, erm, special.</p> <p>When I was a child, my dad was a very dominant bully, and I did the opposite I think, so instead of [...] standing up to strong personalities when you feel you need to, I would tend to back off and sort of, become compliant if you know what I mean.</p> <p>I had been so insecure as a child.</p> <p>I was so insecure as a young lad that I think, being a catholic it was quite reassuring as a child and one of the things they believed in was marriage.</p> <p>I don't like violence... when I was a kid, my father would hit me and punch me, when I was eight or nine years of age, I had to have surgery, it was dreadful you know, and I just couldn't abide it.</p> <p>I don't think it was just fear of her but I think it was the fear right back from childhood, of insecurity and that was making me feel insecure.</p> <p>I think she could do it, I think she must have picked up on it that I would take it.</p>

<p>I had, from back in childhood, my father [...] he had a sock full of nuts and bolts and the next thing he was hitting me with it [...] "right I want you to charge him" but I couldn't, I said "he's my father, I can't do it"I have got a weakness there do you see what I am saying.</p> <p>When I was a kid my father would hit me and punch me [...] It made me wonder whether I went for an abusive person because I was used to abuse.</p> <p>Going through a divorce was the last thing I wanted to do.</p> <p>It was all I had, and I put everything into it, my best years of my life went into it and what was going to happen was I was going to lose it all.</p> <p>And I had two children, she'd, by being, morbidly obese and making herself ill, she wasn't going to be well enough to look after those kids, erm, she would go off with the bloke at the market and the bloke from, coming round from when she was on the ward, I mean, what the hell is she gonna to get herself into and where are those kids going to come off of, you know, what's gonna happen there, you know.</p> <p>So I've got my stuff in the hall and said "its too late to go now" hoping it would be like the other times, but totally against logic that I should be there.</p>					
<p>"You don't hit anyone but you certainly don't hit someone you love";</p>	<p>I love her, I don't love the way she treats me but I love her and number two I have a family.</p> <p>There was some excellent times.</p>	<p>And why she was doing that, and that's all I use to think to myself, you know, what have I done [...] I just suffered I did.</p>			

<p>reconciling the juxtaposition of love and abuse.</p>	<p>It was just a rollercoaster ride, you never knew where you stood with her.</p> <p>It's the ups and downs and each time your in an up you think this is great and when your in a down you think well "its just me, it must be me.</p> <p>Love the good side, you don't like the other side of the coin.</p> <p>The use of the good times and that continual "oh it will be alright, that was only then, its not going to happen again" and the bad times, you've got this ebb and flow and each time you reach pit point you think to yourself "well there were good times, it must be good, it must be me."</p> <p>Everything was extreme, there was no grey it was either black and white, one minute I am the perfect husband, the next I am the worst husband in the world.</p> <p>Her self esteem, her insecurity, erm, her bipolar issues, er, so when she would hit that low it really wasn't her it was just her other side.</p>	<p>Tell me what I have done I can right I, if you don't want me I can go', but it was none of that.</p> <p>I still don't know until this day like [...] she says herself, I was the best thing she ever had and that I'm a lovely guy [...] So I never understand it, I couldn't fathom it, cause if I could I could change a lot what was going on, you know cut from the distress but there was nothing, there was nothing I could do to help her there, it was just coming from her like, and I wish I would have known why cause I could have helped her or tried to help her at least, you know.</p> <p>I was the best thing she ever had and that I'm a lovely guy, you know, its just ironic in a way, you know, dunno, maybe she had underlying problems, issues, and I like, sometimes, take it out on a loved one or someone your close to.</p> <p>I would definitely liked to have seen someone about it cause I was that confused about it all.</p>	
<p>The intrapersonal impact of the abuse experience.</p>	<p>Self esteem was next to zero for me.</p> <p>My self esteem was so low.</p>	<p>She would just constantly put me down and run me down. I used to try my best like.</p>	<p>Well I just feel such an idiot you know? I feel such an idiot.</p> <p>Oh shoot I don't like talking about this, I feel such an</p>

<p>impact of the abuse experience.</p>	<p>She (said) she would much prefer it if I committed suicide and when you have driven that person to the point that they are actually completely in tears, emotionally drained and exhausted.</p> <p>I eventually went to counseling.</p> <p>It's just a whole multitude of things and you can see my mind spinning through them even now, but I just have nightmares of her standing face to face or pushing me down the stairs.</p> <p>It was almost like a cartoon now I look back at it.</p> <p>I had lost so much weight my pants were practically falling down.</p> <p>I was just completely physically exhausted.</p> <p>I think my intuition was saying there was something wrong.</p> <p>I was just helpless, what can I do? I cant move out otherwise she wont let me see my daughter, if I stay I have to put up with the abuse day in and day out.</p> <p>And there is nothing I can do, absolutely nothing.</p> <p>I just cant handle this anymore, I do not know what to do.</p> <p>There is nothing I can do about it.</p>	<p>Sometimes you're blind to see it aren't you.</p> <p>I couldn't see any problems at all at the time.</p> <p>Now I look back on it wasn't trivial because abuse is abuse no matter what gender you are isn't it.</p> <p>I still don't know until this day like, you know [...] So I never understand it, I couldn't fathom it [...] I would definitely liked to have seen someone about it cause I was that confused about it all.</p> <p>I went in my own world, in my own bubble, you know, I just shut myself up, off from everything really, that's the way I coped with it.</p> <p>I just shut it off at a stage and I just sort of, went into a protective shell like, didn't feel</p> <p>nout</p> <p>I was well, according to myself I was dead, I died on that day, I still believe I died in 2001, I died, that's it, I died.</p> <p>I was a gibbering wreck [...] (I) have just been in turmoil and chaos, just utter chaos, running, running hiding never stopping, can't stop to think, you know, just running away, running, running all the time, its horrible.</p> <p>I was just lost, I was just dumbfounded, I went</p>	<p>idiot</p> <p>I just couldn't do it, whereas I could have had her for assault and everything else and everything would have gone much easier for me in divorce... my mind just wasn't thinking right any more. I just, I just was so confused.</p> <p>I just found myself in the morning ringing up the chief constable to try and explain how bad it felt to me having heard it, you know.</p> <p>I suppose when we were courting I picked up on it a little bit.</p> <p>I really didn't know how to deal with being abused by a woman. I really didn't know how to deal with it, its quite fearful.</p> <p>All the time trying to express how it felt for me and how I see things as they are.</p> <p>but I was stuttering and everything else so I couldn't, but once I got over the stuttering and that [...] I really wanted to express myself.</p> <p>it just hit me, erm, I mean I had been through all the stuttering stage and erm, erm, my loss of memory stage and erm, erm, the, the grinding my teeth stage of all the trauma of my divorce and all that coming through and that had all past now and sorted all that financial side and it was about a year and a half after that and so it really hit me how bad it was, erm how bad it'd been for me.</p>
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	<p>I was completely helpless and everyone I spoke to for her [...] no one would help.</p> <p>Look back that you can start to make comparisons and see some of the markers of what went wrong.</p> <p>I have only realised now, having investigated, being involved in the mankind initiative that it was abuse and I am only realising it now.</p> <p>She had the wonderful story that he (her previous partner) had been domestically violent toward her, I had taken it hook line and sinker.</p> <p>I am very wary of any female now.</p> <p>Having seen the other side of her now I am doubting as to the dynamics that went on.</p> <p>She called me up saying she had been raped [...] she dropped the charges [...] I could never understand why he was in her apartment and why she was drinking champagne with him.</p> <p>My daughter came along who was not planned at all and there again you question.</p>	<p>in my own world, in my own bubble.</p> <p>I would definitely liked to have seen someone about it cause I was that confused about it all.</p> <p>I just kept down certain areas of thought, you know.</p> <p>Still haunt me now like, still cant get rid of it, I don't like to sleep because I have dreams [...]. I take sleeping pills till I fall asleep and pass out.</p>	<p>I just let it go cause it hurts so much... its so painful, I think I have blanked a lot of stuff out, it was so traumatic.</p> <p>There is lots of things that I could probably be telling you if I was speaking to you ten years ago erm, but, but, because once the divorce happened that was so traumatic [...] I have kinda shut it off if you know what I mean, I have put it in a box.</p> <p>She would come out with all this, abuse, you know, mental abuse came out, I can't remember what it would be now.</p> <p>I can't remember, I just can't remember now, I just can't remember.</p> <p>That went on like that and I was low, very low.</p> <p>I did feel like committing suicide, a few times, two or three times. Erm, I never did, but I mean, it, I felt so low that I, I, I thought about it several times.</p> <p>I'm struggling with remembering...</p> <p>(<i>researcher asked about physical abuse</i>) And erm, anyway, erm, but there was a problem with **** he didn't really like mixing, erm, and, it seems, since I have learned more and more, he might have had traces of Aspergeus, erm, erm, he was very difficult when he first went to school, he always had problems, and erm, I got him in the football club, in the local one, he didn't participate really.</p>
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I have probably talked about this before, so many times, I just let it go because it hurts so much and other things have come up since and its gone, its so painful [...] and I'd really have to search to give you the answers, I don't find it easy to talk about.

Anyway, let me try and think back, that's quite involved that one cause that, that, went different ways, erm, erm, made me go to the, oh, oh, I don't know.

Erm, and then, later on, erm, my daughter would say, erm, but I had some problems, hang on, I had a problem with impotence that needed sorting out, I went to my doctor about it and he never told me about the, erm, methods you could use.

Oh no, prior to that, after I sent her back, yeah that's right, they, no, did she take the keys then? Yeah she had, yeah, I don't remember. Anyway, erm, erm.

I got this packing done, and I said something to her and I was going to tell her, and I was gonna tell her, I actually said, she said something to me and I said, I cant, it was inferring something.

Erm, erm, I don't know where I'm going from this, I don't know where I started off.

All the time trying to express how it felt for me and how I see things as they are.

It's quite painful writing stuff sometimes [...] and its taking me a long time [...] I used to spend a lot more time, initially at first. I had to learn the computer as

<p>The evolving sense of self; the impact of abuse upon identity.</p>	<p>Want to help others that are in my position.</p> <p>I just want to help others.</p> <p>It must be me, there must be something wrong with me [...] it must be me, what can I do better.</p> <p>You are continually thinking "it must be me."</p>	<p>She really took my self-esteem, and ego away and everything.</p> <p>You know, it's sad, eight years on, nine years on, and I still haven't got my confidence back.</p> <p>I was well, according to myself I was dead, I died on that day. I still believe I died in 2001,</p>	<p>well [...] but I needed to learn [...] I needed to express so much.</p> <p>I actually, I'd gone through all my medical notes everything that I could find that could be relevant to it I got, anything that I could find that could be relevant to it I put in, I had already in a folder, copied, I had in the folder about forty or fifty different things [...] information back to baroness Scotland and I took the envelope that was all ready and I said "make sure she gets it" [...] I took another set of copies to the chief constable, I've still got receipts for it, cause I had it, you know, I've still got 'em [...] I was doing it for eight hours a day, maybe more, I was really, really put myself into it, I mean I really, really, did cause I really realised how much it effected, how much was wrong that needed to be changed.</p> <p>I was really, really put myself into it, I mean I really, really, did cause I really realised how much it effected.</p> <p>I really wanted to express myself [...] from then on I started to express myself. I've been doing that for, since 2004.</p>
			<p>I was brought up a Catholic, and it was very important as Catholic, the way you were brought up was to make it work.</p> <p>A project men would be proud to get on to.</p> <p>I was so insecure as a young lad that I think, being a catholic it was quite reassuring as a child and one of</p>

	<p>Continually blaming me and putting me down.</p> <p>I used to teach fitness classes I used to teach yoga and various other classes and all of that stopped so that compounded things.</p> <p>Having been put down, my self esteem out down, whenever I came home she wasn't happy, she would shout at me.</p> <p>Continually putting you down and never building your esteem up.</p>	<p>I died, that's it, I died.</p> <p>I just exist now I don't live, like you know.</p> <p>I am existing, but there is the old parts of me coming back, I don't know if they are coming back still, but things have mellowed out, things have reached a level.</p> <p>I felt sorry for her strangely, for a brief, you know cause, at the times she has been at her low points and she needed me to talk to and she has been crying and that scenario, and really I've just felt sorry for her.</p> <p>I brought the children up like a mother, she went maternal at all towards the children she just used to scream at them and that, you know, so I took on the role as mother.</p>	<p>the things they believed in was marriage and everything else, and that sort of fitted in to everything I believed in, you know, and I was afraid of divorce.</p> <p>I hired a nurse, full time, six days a week [...] And so I did that, and then for another four and a half years, home helps in, every day of the week to help her with the home[...] so of course I got help in again and all that and erm, did It all over again and look after her.</p> <p>I probably worked twice as hard as a normal guy would work, cause I wanted to provide and I wanted the business to succeed, I even learned three trades, I mean I was a qualified electrician, qualification city and guilds to an advanced level, plumbing to an advanced level, and, erm, central heating to an advanced level, and I was corgi registered, registered, OLF registered all of these just so I felt secure. I always used to go in my overalls, whoever I went to see [...] when I went to the doctor, always had my overalls on, I was kinda clinging to my defence where people wanted me, do you follow? And where I was appreciated.</p>
<p>The socio-cultural construction of gender and its impact upon the abuse experience.</p> <p>"It makes you feel like a bit less of a man"</p>	<p>That's just life, it is just marriage its just the way it should be, but you have got no comparison as to how it should be and when its subtle its more difficult.</p>	<p>You know, it was, I didn't talk to no one about it, I didn't confide in friends or my family, I think even to this day my mum doesn't know anything about this.</p>	<p>Erm. I never told them what had happened, I never told them that she had come out doing this and that and the other, I had a problem. I should have done</p>

I think the realization is, your not the only one, that this happens, its common, its almost standard with regards to the elements of the children, but also the domestic violence aspect that you are continually thinking "it must be me" and then you begin to read through education and through meeting other people that no actually you have done nothing wrong.

And everyone I have spoken to say "oh you should just give up on your children" and there are so many fathers out there who end up in that position.

When I went to the international attachment network [...] 95% were females, you look at the support services, they are females, they can very easily empathize with females but not necessarily understand that a woman is capable of being bad, vindictive and hurtful.

Its ok to speak out about I, guys and men tend to have the whole mentality of 'Mars and Venus' of we go into our cave, we are insular, we don't talk to other men, its not suitable.

We've moved into the family and parent place now as woman have moved into the work place. It's time that guys actually have to evolve now and deal with modern society in the sense that they have to talk about these things.

I worked as a personal trainer and understood muscles and exercise. I worked as an IT engineers understanding computers and then I educated myself with regards to my business.

You tell someone when you're in that position and they are like 'give her a slapping' and just things like that, but if your not like that, you know, that advice is pointless for you...so they don't really understand do they.

They are not where you're at and they might never be where you're at so they don't really understand do they.

I might have told the odd one or two but they would have been fairly close friends and most of them just laughed and made jokes out of it, you know, so really didn't want to take it from there point of view.

Cause she was like the strong one in the relationship anyway, she put the trousers on, she wore the trousers anyway.

I had a dispute, with someone I was having a bit of an argument with, she would come in and cut short and take over the argument and things like that, when I should be sort of, trying to, sorting it out, getting myself out, you know what I am saying.

Now I look back on it wasn't trivial because abuse is abuse no matter what gender you are isn't it.

I thought I would be less of a man to tell them.

I brought the children up like a mother, she

A project men would be proud to get on to.

I had achieved more than any of them [...] financially anyway.

I didn't have the balls to confront a thing like that.

She was gunna go back to **** to find a man, to get a man that was gunna last twenty minutes... You know, so I packed mine and I said "well if your going back to ***, we are all going back".

I've always, right to my mind, you don't hit women, you know and erm, and I really didn't know how to deal with being abused by a woman. I really didn't know how to deal with it, its quite fearful.

I probably worked twice as hard as a normal guy would work, cause I wanted to provide and I wanted the business to succeed, I even learned three trades, I mean I was a qualified electrician, qualification city and guilds to an advanced level, plumbing to an advanced level, and, erm, central heating to an advanced level, and I was corgi registered, registered, OLF registered all of these just so I felt secure. I always used to go in my overalls, whoever I went to see... when I went to the doctor, always had my overalls on, I was kinda clinging to my defence where people wanted me, do you follow? And where I was appreciated.

	<p>I served my country as a naval officer.</p>	<p>wont maternal at all towards the children she just used to scream at them and that, you know, so I took on the role as mother.</p> <p>I wish I would have known why cause I could have helped her or tried to help her at least, you know.</p> <p>I was always at hand to help her.</p> <p>Can't talk about it to anyone because of the stigma attached to it you know, but I feel, through this generation its gunna break through there is gunna be a break through on this.</p>	
<p>"It's about providing a service that is for all victims....that is the challenge".</p>	<p>Want to help others that are in my position.</p> <p>I have spent a total of £30000 on solicitors fees trying to see my daughter.</p> <p>I just want to help others.</p> <p>The other aspect is the use of the contact centre, its another form of abuse in the sense that you make false accusations.. the courts and social services always have to take the defensive position [...] you get put in a contact centre is you are lucky.</p> <p>The contact centre she insists on supervised contact [...] CAFCAS says 'no it doesn't need to be supervised' she insists on it, why? Because its £70 a contact session.</p>	<p>I would like it to be shown more publically, like, so that men know there is a place to go where they wont be ridiculed or laughed at or made jokes out of what they have got to say because until then men got to stay by themselves and hide away from it.</p> <p>it must be horrific for some guys like you know, especially if they don't think like they cant talk about it to anyone because of the stigma attached to it you know.</p> <p>She just asked me to leave, forget your stuff and the children and that was it I left.</p> <p>The children was what got me cause as I said I brought the children up like a mother...so it was a bigger loss for me when we did split up.</p>	<p>I never told the doctor till around about two weeks, I mean I was rough, really rough I was off work for about three weeks, four weeks, and erm, and erm, even then when I told him he didn't write it down as an assault, he just wrote down in his notes that "he didn't feel very supported", ha!</p> <p>Where as if there had been a woman telling them that there would have definitely been something done. So I kind of feel that doctors when it comes to men, viewing, they don't kind of, errr, well I don't know if it is different now.</p> <p>I was round there with that sort of treatment, I was like, I don't know if I can deal with this, its very difficult, anyway what he did do is send me on a self-assertive course [...] and there was another one,</p>

	<p>I spoke to the domestic violence unit and they didn't really want to know anything about it.</p> <p>There is no accountability for false accusations...you can make as many as you want and they can be proven false but there is no consequence for you.</p> <p>I think professionals should sit back and actually think to themselves "do I take this as fact" I mean, you should be questioning everything I am telling you, I mean it is a story there is no validation of fact behind it and the same goes when a woman tells the police something, they need to actually question.</p> <p>The relate counselor [...] picked up her chair and sat next to my wife and the two of them had a go at me for working too much.</p> <p>It was like anything dad said was ignored.</p> <p>That is the accuracy of the reporting based on information told by my wife to them.</p> <p>The chances of you getting an injunction against her are minimal, even if you do its not likely to stop her verbal and emotional abuse, the chances are she will make a counter allegation against you and its only going to make things more hostile" – solicitors advice in relation to partner breaking and entering into the home.</p> <p>Everyone I spoke to for help [...] no one would help [...] they weren't interested in</p>	<p>cause we, at the end of the day I wasn't missing her I was missing my children you know, she didn't even, after three months I got her out of my head you know, I had to, but it was my children, which still haunt me now like.</p> <p>It breaks my heart looking back on it [...] until they want me I will be here and that's all I can say really.</p> <p>When I was going through it I didn't see any help at all, you know, not professional anyway.</p> <p>Lack of help, and not knowing who to turn to anyway, you know, the GP?</p> <p>I have heard you can seek help here or whatever, but I think when you start emphasising the point maybe people will start to seek help.</p> <p>Well it's been a breath of fresh air, you know, I wanted to tell my views on it you know.</p>	<p>erm, self-esteem.</p> <p>I said (to the police) "they are telling you lies, I called you, what they are telling you is lies, I never did anything of the kind" he wouldn't take no notice of me, he said Mrs ***, we will go in the front room and talk.</p> <p>Well the message that copper gave me was I got no backing and he made me actually feel that I had to get out, I mean the whole thing, the whole way it was dealt with just made me feel totally inadequate [...] I haven't got any support or anything here.</p> <p>I didn't feel safe enough with the police to be able to do anything there.</p> <p>I didn't know what to do, it was just totally, I just should never have been left in that situation, the message appears to be, if you are a man, you have got no rights.</p> <p>I realised how bad it was when I was arrested.</p> <p>I was invited to talk to the police locally [...] but they weren't interested [...] they were prepared to remove, no all prepared to take a man but not the women and that was pretty obvious that they had had no victim-perpetrator training [...] there training had been based on female only victims, men only perpetrators. What was established was established and that was how it was staying.</p> <p>At the domestic violence forum, it was all women's</p>
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	<p>anything I had to say.</p> <p>The report, it was completely mums side of view.</p> <p>It's almost standard that the male leaves, in these cases the worrying thing about it is the children stay with the mother.</p> <p>I was told, never denigrate mum or put her down because you will loose the court case.</p> <p>Fathers have no rights.</p> <p>Its effectively her word against yours and that it and its normally the mother that gets the voice in the sense that she is speaking to all the social services...she is the one who normally automatically gets the children...it is not gender specific but in general it tends to be the men that are the worse off at the minute.</p> <p>It's almost standard that the male leaves, in these cases the worrying thing about it is the children stay with the mother.</p> <p>I think you need to look at the personality types and what is driving the behavior that sits behind it.</p> <p>Then it came to the end and she literally ripped my daughter away and erm, parentally alienated her against me to the point that she doesn't even want to talk to me.</p> <p>Ten minutes later I look up and a police</p>	<p>aid see, and she proposed to women's aid that the funding shouldn't just be for female victims, it should be for all victims and their reply was, she told me this, there reply was "we have all the funding, we are not losing it" and **** was, she received comments about she was running against the sisterhood.</p> <p>Women's Aid were actually advising women that they were, erm erm, that they had taken on as victims, advising them to make false allegations.</p> <p>Anyway, the next thing, a few days later, I got a letter from the solicitor, she said that I pushed her, so they were doing me for a molestation order or something.</p> <p>I was like, guilty when I wasn't guilty and I wasn't guilty I hadn't done anything.</p> <p>Unless people like me speak upthe excuse that men don't speak up cant be used, so really what I'm trying to do is speak up, truthfully as best I can.</p>
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officer was there [...] she had called the police saying [...] was being abusive to her.

Saying I was harassing her, I was being domestically violent towards her and u err [...] I forget the other accusations, I was being controlling of her.

She made allegations of domestic abuse and harassment.

She tried to have me arrested twice.

She had made the allegation that I was being err, err domestically violent and abusive toward her.

(She) called the doctors surgery and said to the doctor's surgery that I was holding a knife and threatening herself and myself with a knife.

That's why I wanted to speak to you, so you could see the varying ranges (of abuse).

So I think the one aspect I want to highlight is DV with regards to separation and children and how children get used.

I hope it helps with your research, I hope it helps others in the future.

theme/constituent themes

Surviving the abuse.
The perpetration of abuse

Chris

She punched me once. There was then nothing for five months [...] and then realistically, for the last twelve months of the relationship was violent.

the very first assault that took place I was totally amazed...she very openly said to me "no I want to know what you did in the bedroom, what sexual acts you performed" she had a bit of a quirky sense of humour, I actually laughed cause I thought it was a bit of a joke, she stopped hovering, turned round, cause I was reading the paper, and the Hoover literary went right across my face, and I was just, it was as if somebody had sprayed me with ice, I was just, utterly, shocked and then she started ranting and raving.

So what went on between May 07 and May 08 was a whole host of assaults and I'll give you some examples, erm, she broke a magnum of Champagne across my legs, she broke a glass vase across my legs, one of her favourites was to take a mobile phone and hammer on the eye socket like you would do a nail into the wall. I think the worse ones were [...] last thing at night, go to bed, whatever time it was, put the lamp off, just think your going to sleep and then in the pitch black there would be a punch in the face

She said, "Look" she said "we have had so many arguments, that you don't tell me you love me enough and you've said you'll change" she said it very calmly she said "I'll boil a kettle of water and pour it on you. see if that makes a difference".

James

At that point she just flipped and I had never seen her like this throughout the whole of, since I had met her, she just went into this rage, she was screaming and shouting at them erm, and I turned up and she was screaming and shouting at me "why don't you fucking kids like me" this, that and the other "your fucking... in front of the children.

A lot of mental and psychological, erm abuse I suppose.

She then started to say to me "your useless and you cant do this and you cant do that" cause it was her way of controlling, it was her way of being in control of me, cause otherwise she wouldn't be in control of me if she wasn't being this forceful.

I said "look, calm down, will you calm down, we will deal with it in the morning, when the children have gone, we will talk about this", she wasn't having any of it, she shooed me round, she was shooing me round the house [...] and I turned round and she launched at me, erm she hit me across the head, must be ten or twelve time, in like a slapping motion, but over me head here so she was hitting my ears, she was hitting me in the stomach and in the chest. and I have never had a woman

Steven

What happens with abuse is that it starts off so minor, you don't really notice it [...] you kind of fall into this lifestyle where it almost becomes acceptable.

Three minutes later she came running up the road in bear feet waving the knife, erm, and alarm bells were obviously really ringing in my head, and I was like "I've only known you two weeks" and erm, yeah that's how it started.

Her behaviour was just really irrational.

She'd be, she'd be tearing the skin off her face one minute and the next minute she'd be attacking you with anything that comes to hand, it might be boiling water that is in a kettle or throwing objects at you, wild animal.

I've got about twelve stitches in the top of my head [...] she hit me over the back of the head, I laugh about it now, with a marble chopping board, which could have killed me or blinded me.

Her favourite ones were stiletto heels, when you were sleeping, that was a favourite one, or cigarettes out, putting cigarettes out on you when you were sleeping. Or, erm, cause she would wait for me for me to sleep you see, often and being a speed freak she is awake all the time. Putting kettles against you, a hot kettle, that was another favourite one. Ahh, she would spit in your face on a regular basis, that's just disgusting, it came in all, she would scratch, bite,

<p>I'm sat watching T.V. and over my shoulder, great big jug kettle, waachhhhh right over my groin, full kettle of boiling water [...] I am in agony and I'm like that literally, gripping my hands and it is killing me, she said "now I'm gunna boil it again" and I could not move, I was physically stuck and she boiled it again. She did that twice.</p> <p>Said "well, you know, I've punched you, I have poured a kettle of water on you" she said several things " its made no difference, what's the point in us being together" and I said "well there isn't it is there so your wasting my time" to that she walked over very calmly put the iron on my arm and pressed the steam button, she said to me "take your T-shirt off or else I'll steam you on your face."</p> <p>Hoovers, which was one of her favourite, the plastic piping, all the different extensions across the head, the knees she broke them, just shattered them, punch you, kick you, bite you, ram a mobile phone.</p> <p>Flash bleach into my eyes, thank god there is no damage there, that was excruciating.</p> <p>Anyway, the night before the police turned up I remember her saying to me [...] "your not going to go to bed, this time it's gunna be different, I'm gunna kill you."</p> <p>She got a metal bar, she started literally. hitting, going right down my arm, she must have hit me a couple of dozen times, mobile phone she hit under both eyes which was excruciating cause you obviously have got no give, erm. sunk her teeth</p>	<p>hit me before.</p> <p>I couldn't hear out of my ears, my ears were ringing, there was a buzzing noise in my ear [...] Erm, after a couple of days, I still couldn't hear, ringing in my ears, couldn't hear anything.....so I went to A and E and got checked out, and A and E, the ear, nose and throat department, had a look at it and said "you have perforated both of your ear drums".</p> <p>All down the side here (<i>points to side of face</i>) was black and blue, was starting to come up really red and was starting to become bruised.</p> <p>A row broke out and I can't even remember what the row was [...] she started to chase me round the house, she'd follow me into a room, be very aggressive [...] she picked up one of the empty red wine bottles, she threw it, but we were only sat as close as we are, she threw it and she hit me on the head with it, erm, split my head open, there was just blood everyw.here.</p> <p>Was still very aggressive whilst she was pregnant, she used to hit me and things like that, usually when it was an argument, usually in the evenings she would do that and it was usually fuelled by having something to drink.</p> <p>I was asleep on the sofa, and then I wasn't allowed to sleep on the sofa [...]</p>	<p>kick, punch.</p> <p>She is so dangerous and unpredictable erm, that, if she found out that I was staying at a friends house she would have, she would, she'd drive a car into the front of there house.</p> <p>There is nothing she wasn't capable of.</p> <p>But I have never known anybody with that level of violence anybody, male or female. But because it, because it was introduced into the relationship really quite slowly, what happens is, you, you accept it as your life, you say "ok, this is what my life is, this is what it's turned out to be.</p> <p>Yeah, the physical was the easy bit to be honest, if it was just that, the emotional, psychological violence is the problem for me.</p> <p>You kind of, go through this process of errr, kind of analysing what's going on and trying to make sense of it and going "well yeah, ok".</p> <p>She is so dangerous and unpredictable erm, that, if she found out that I was staying at a friends house she would have, she would, she'd drive a car into the front of there house.</p> <p>I think the abuse started over the telephone, "what time you gunna be home from work" that sort of thing and very aggressive.</p> <p>I think as she got more attached to me and realised I could fund that lifestyle then her manipulation and control became more profound.</p>
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	<p>into my head, was punching and kicking me, went and sat down, made a cup of tea, ten minutes, half an hour later she would walk over and start doing it again.</p> <p>She picked a claw hammer up, she started striking my shoulder, and on the third strike, I always remember, she hit me so hard the handle actually snapped. I was in absolute agony, she had literally gone down my arm with this metal bar and a hammer and then started going down my legs with it, on and off the assault went on for about six hours, different implements. It would get to daylight, I don't know what time it was and then she said "I'm off to bed; you can do what you want."</p> <p>By the time I get home, the front door is off, is on its hinges, and I've got the key, she comes rushing out, just punched me full in the face.</p> <p>One of the favourite times for her was last thing at night, go to bed, whatever time it was, put the lamp off, just think your going to sleep and then in the pitch black there would be a punch in the face.</p> <p>She was messing around with my sleep patterns, worse case was when I couldn't actually go to bed for three days, she kept me awake for three days. She changed my whole structure [...] sleep pattern, meal times, completely took that apart without me realising it.</p> <p>My food was definitely being messed with, I know she was putting something in my food.</p> <p>She would say to me "right, you say you love me,</p>	<p>so I had to sleep on the rug, she wouldn't let me have a duvet to be warm.</p> <p>I had three jobs...I worked for a big property company, a very, very well known one and I was manager [...] I had two part time jobs as well so every night I was going out doing bar work or working in the restaurant.</p> <p>I was working literally, twelve hours a day, more, 16, 17 hours, more than that, from seven in the morning I was getting up and I was getting home midnight, one o'clock, I was shattered.</p> <p>It seems really petty saying "oh someone is calling you names, you know, sticks and stones" but when it's all day, everyday, someone's being like that.</p> <p>At that point, I started feeling a bit scared I suppose, I was thinking "she is not calming down here and I have got, we've got three toddlers in the house".</p> <p>That's when I started to see that she wanted to control me, and that's what a lot of it was, she wanted to control me.</p> <p>I asked her to phone the ambulance she said "no I'm not phoning the ambulance cause women go to prison for doing things like this, I've heard of women going to prison for this" "well, I'm not going to say anything, just phone me an</p>	<p>she would say "I'm just popping out to the shops to get some milk" and she'd be gone for three days, phone off, you know, and I'm trying to, I'm trying to run a business, I'm trying to get the kids to school.</p> <p>She was certainly very manipulative with and very good with money, erm with the feel sorry for me factor.</p> <p>Erm, other forms of manipulation, I can't really think to be honest, nothing specific other than the kids, the sexual thing, the money thing, erm, yeah and just the, yeah, emotional blackmail can be a very powerful weapon. Her favourite line would be "I'm the mother of your children".</p> <p>So yeah, that was another, that's another part of her manipulation and control [...] You know and when you still love someone and you hear them have sex with another man, not a very nice thing.</p> <p>She's frightening, yeah, really frightening. You know, I think what made her frightening was not the level of violence that she could bring but what, how capable she was of manipulating other people, that's what makes her dangerous.</p> <p>It was only as I started coming out of the relationship I realised actually what my life had become, it was just completely under her control.</p> <p>Well obviously children are great weapons aren't they.</p> <p>You throw kids into the mix then you have got a really powerful weapon.</p>
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<p>right, you have got five minutes to get an erection" she would be sat with her watch, "you have now got four minutes and forty seconds, you have now got four minutes and thirty seconds" counting down, and when you hear time going downwards all that does is create pressure [...] the last thing I want to do is have sex with anybody" let alone a person who has just hit you, bear in mind there might be blood running down, this was split, by a mobile phone or fist has hit you in the face, and then, when that time has run out, she would, you'd get a beating.</p> <p>There would be a punch in the face, her lamp would go on, "you don't tell me you love me enough.</p> <p>Cracked one of those across my head, it was like solid glass, and like third time she hit me, it shattered "now look what you've done, you've broke the vase."</p> <p>You go to bed when you're told to go to bed, you eat when you are told you can eat so there is only ever two choices.</p> <p>She knew what my two weaknesses [...] she knew I really didn't like violence [...] she changed my whole structure [...] sleep pattern, meal times.</p> <p>I remember thinking "god I hope nobody sees me that she knows", cause she knew I had a routine. And then one weekend she turned up and said "I've had a massive argument with." her step brother and father which is who she lived with "do you mind if I spend a little of time with, I wont stay long, it will just be a long weekend". Anyway,</p>	<p>ambulance, I'm covered in blood here" She didn't phone an ambulance, I had to phone it.</p> <p>Buying all me clothe, erm, what furniture we would have in the house, erm, absolutely everything, total control of everything, erm, what, where I go at night, what I did [...]. I'd like this, I think I'll have this to eat" "well no you're not having that, you're having this, it would be cheaper" she would have the steak and I would have the pizza.</p> <p>Unless it was with her or she wanted to do something, didn't have a choice. So that was the sort of control.</p> <p>She then started to say to me "your useless and you cant do this and you cant do that" cause it was her way of controlling, it was her way of being in control of me, cause otherwise she wouldn't be in control of me if she wasn't being this forceful.</p> <p>The day I lost my job she said erm "right, that's it, get out the house, get out of my house" she said "get out of my house" erm, and erm, she said again "don't come back until you've got another job, a full time job".</p> <p>I think once she realised I wasn't going anywhere and she had control in that way, erm, I just think as a man, I think she realised she knew which buttons to press</p>	<p>"If you don't do what I say, I will stop you seeing the kids".</p> <p>Sexual things can be manipulation and control, very powerful weapon for a woman, particularly for a woman who was as highly sexed as she was, and she was very highly sexed woman.</p> <p>She'd start having sex with some of her dealers and she would phone me while she was having sex with them to try and torture me.</p> <p>Got a letter from the CPS about two weeks before we were due to go to trial saying all charges against me had been dropped, there was nothing to answer for, she'd been arrested for falsifying evidence, wasting police time etc, etc.</p> <p>She turned it round to make it look like I was the perpetrator, and they came and arrested me. And so it went on and it was just, it was unbelievable.</p> <p>she even started an affair with one of the police officers [...] she was making out that she was the victim of all this violence [...] the CPS wrote to me to say all charges against me were dropped [...] he was investigated and discharged from the force for err, for conduct that wasn't befitting [...] I would have thought, that would be quite a common thing. I said we'd discussed it at length many times and I wasn't going to live with her over at, in her house and she got a pen, like that, and she hit herself in the forehead with it so violently, that this like, egg appeared within seconds, this big swollen, and aid "you did that" walked the half a mile to the police station [...] I've seen her hit herself with bricks in the head, that's how I got charged with ABH.</p>
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	<p>she never ended up going back...I didn't see looking back and it was a way of her getting a foothold in.</p> <p>She basically said to me over the phone at work "when you come home, you are going to get the beating of your life".</p> <p>When your in pain you just don't move, you just sit still, got complete control.</p> <p>She had so much control over me, to the point of, the minute I stepped foot outside the door to go to the local shops, she would give me a mobile phone, she would be on the house phone, literally one step outs the door, so she was on the phone talking to me, making sure I couldn't speak to anybody.</p> <p>I knew I wanted to leave and what I wanted to do, but she had so much control over me.</p> <p>She also knew I had a tremendous dislike for violence because of what I saw, and ultimately she used those to arm herself, to destabilise me, which is what she did.</p> <p>She would send me to the shops after an assault to display my injuries, to go and buy her cigarettes which is a bit of a role reversal, because they say that perpetrators buy a gift, no matter how futile, chocolate, cigarettes, a packet of favourite crisps, she would say, having battered me, blood down me face "go wash your face, I want some cigarettes".</p> <p>I described it as an artist that's just finished there</p>	<p>and she kept pressing and pressing and pressing until she was on control, totally in control.</p> <p>She was still a very controlling type, she was obsessed by money, she always wanted to have this bit more money, more money [...] she would never, erm, go and find herself a job.</p> <p>Nobody else giving you advice other than her and if somebody else is giving you advice it is overshadowed.</p> <p>She stopped the children coming round.</p> <p>Wanted to, me to get a better job, start earning, you know, twice of what I was earning, and to be honest I wasn't capable of doing it cause I don't have qualifications [...] it started to put a bit of a strain on the relationship.</p> <p>We'd come out with £35,000 of equity from the house we'd sold [...] she was in total control. Within three months we'd had a new bathroom, decking, the house was fully redecorated, it was all furnished, brand new furniture [...] and within three months the money ran out [...] I saw it then, she changed again.</p> <p>Erm, I've got two children...they used to come and stay with us and she took a total dislike to them [...] they used to come and stay with us and she took a total dislike to them [...] they were always</p>	<p>She said "I'm in trouble, I have been out to a bar and there is three paddys following me home, I'm scared I think they are gunna rape me or whatever, can you come and get me?" [...] I would go there to help her, then she'd would phone the police and say "look he is harassing me" [...] (so) I said to my mate "phone the police" [...] was I said to her, "I'm gunna be there in a minute don't worry" and then I heard the police car go, and this copper said "where's the Irish men then ***, where's the baddys" and she said "you barstad" down the phone to me, hung up the phone [...] And it was about three, four days after that, I got the phone call from the police saying "its been noted what you've been saying" so yeah around that sort of, late November 05 the police started to get really switched on to her.</p> <p>Around two months into the relationship I started giving her money, the first one was when she said she hadn't paid her rent, that was eleven hundred quid and it started from that point [...] so including the house, I reckon she has cost me over a million pounds.</p>
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	<p>latest painting, "come and see what I've done".</p> <p>Punching and kicking me, went and sat down, made a cup of tea, ten minutes, half an hour later she would walk over and start doing it again. But my additional fear that I had, that she told me after we had move in that she had brothers who were into organised crime, and she talked quite graphically about some of the things that had gone on, now for me that was part of the intimidation [...] she made it very clear that if I upset her, her brothers would break me into pieces.</p> <p>Then as part of the assault she was saying "if you, if you throw me out, or ring anybody, I promise you now my brothers will kill ya".</p> <p>Outside, is a very dangerous place because of the climate which is portrayed, she has got these brothers that are into organised crime, described real horrific cases of violence, in real detail as well [...] So if it was genuine you were safer in the house compared to being outside.</p> <p>She was messing around with my sleep patterns, worse case was when I couldn't actually go to bed for three days, she kept me awake for three days.</p> <p>She changed my whole structure [...] sleep pattern, meal times, completely took that apart without me realising it.</p> <p>She began to destabilise that routine, and it completely threw me out.</p> <p>That was the most painful assault because for, I never got medical attention. she got in touch with</p>	<p>trying to avoid her and that put an even bigger strain on the whole thing. She stopped the children coming round.</p> <p>I had stopped speaking to my parents because they saw straight through her and they didn't want to be involved with her</p> <p>I stopped speaking to my parents, stopped speaking to my sister, erm, I wasn't taking any advice off anybody.</p>
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	<p>the local chemists, took some advice to say that someone had poured a pan of water over me and I had burns and they said you need some gauze and some cream and I basically applied my own dressings for three weeks.</p> <p>Secondly, if I did leave when I look...she had stripped a lot of money away, so where was I gonna go, she'd manipulated people in conversations [...] She caused arguments between me and family members [...] So suddenly if I then left, well how was I gonna get where I wanted to go cause she took charge of my money and the people who I used to speak to I had either had an argument with because she had generated a situation or I had not spoken to them in such a long time, how could I possibly go and turn up at their doorstep.</p>		
<p>"I tried to tackle it in different ways"; coping with the abuse experience.</p>	<p>The choice at that point, you've had a kettle of water poured on you, you have had an iron put on your arm, in your mind what your thinking is "god anything but the face" so I take the T-shirt off.</p> <p>Which is a bit of a role reversal, because they say that perpetrators buy a gift, no matter how futile, chocolate, cigarettes, a packet of favourite crisps, she would say, having battered me, blood down me face "go wash your face, I want some cigarettes".</p> <p>I think that is just an insight into the mind of the perpetrator, that violence, to use intimidation and what a thing to say to a mother.</p> <p>There are people worse off than me, I have seen kids starving in Gambia dragging bits of wood</p>	<p>Now she used to drink a lot.</p> <p>She used to like, she'd drink a bottle of wine every night, there was always wine open, from 12 o'clock she would start drinking wine.</p> <p>We'd had quite a few to drink, again.</p> <p>Whilst she was pregnant she used to continue drinking.</p> <p>Was still very aggressive whilst she was pregnant, she used to hit me and things like that, usually when it was an argument, usually in the evenings she would do that and it was usually fuelled by having something to drink.</p>	<p>Her behaviour was quite odd, I mean, I was aware she had an amphetamine problem, cause I was, I was, you know, because I was an ex drug user myself.</p> <p>So split the back of my head, funnily enough, it doesn't hurt, cause she has hit me with an iron bar as well around the head. But your heads kind of you know, it's full of skull and thin skin, so you get the sensation of the power of the blow but you don't really sense pain.</p> <p>She had a real problem with people walking a way from her, which I think stemmed from her dad, when she was four, four and a half, erm the last image of her dad was err, dragging her mum by the hair down the hallway, leaving and walking out.</p>

	<p>three miles, and I said that in the first week when I left, there are people worse off than me and I think that allowed me to recover.</p> <p>Thank god, I have not got one single scar from the incident; I have not got one single scar.</p> <p>Flash bleach into my eyes, thank god there is no damage there, that was excruciating.</p> <p>I'm starting to get back, the one thing she couldn't destroy, while she smashed my laptop up, she could never get rid of my email contacts, so I was really fortunate that I was able to send a flyer out to people that I had done some work for before.</p> <p>I have got the scars, they went go, all I can do is deal with what I have got, not what I have lost. And that's what I've concentrated on, I can still walk, I can still see, I can still hear, I can still speak, I've got all my main faculties, I have still got my professional skills which she couldn't take away. She couldn't wipe my brain, she tried knocking it out my head, but I've still got those skills so, I'm moving forward, onwards and upwards.</p> <p>Nobody would make a call and I was amazed that no body was ringing the police, they got a guy who was coming in this shop for ten years, coming in every night with horrific injuries, and that did genuinely surprise me as to why no one made an anonymous call.</p> <p>She said (<i>an old neighbour</i>) "oh my god" she said "I'm so pleased your alright and you've gotten out, do you know" she said "I can tell you honestly"</p>	<p>Well, I've seen her when she is good and that's what I was focussing on, when she is good she is very nice, she is pleasant, you know, she is a lovely person, great fun to be with, you know she was very, in my eyes she was attractive.</p> <p>She got pregnant and when she was pregnant I was really happy cause I thought this is going to change everything now, we have got something to focus on.</p> <p>I don't even get upset about it, it was the worse three years of my life, but I don't even get, I'm not even, I've not even got upset about it the day I left, never cried once.</p> <p>I just went along with it because it was what she wanted, it was anything to make her happy and when she was happy she wasn't a bully.</p> <p>You don't realise when you start, when you agree to it, your agreeing to everything she says, you get used to, "ok, yep, fair enough".</p> <p>I thought "this is perfect, I go out to work seven in the morning, I go straight to my part time job, get back at midnight, I don't have to see her" [...] I was shattered, but it was lovely cause I didn't have to see her, speak to her.</p>	<p>Through her whole life she really searched for the love of her dad which was never forthcoming, the only way he showed his love to her was by giving her money and I think this is where I disrespect for money came from.</p> <p>So whenever you walked away from her she'd get worse and I kinda figured that maybe it was something to do with that trauma as a child, that last image of her dad walking away</p> <p>She's a product of what her young life was, she is a really very angry woman and there is evil in her that doesn't sleep [...] there was incidence of drug rape in her young life, erm, I think several times, she always used to get herself in sticky situations, at parties with other men and I think a few of her boyfriends were jealous and possessive.</p> <p>I think it progressed as she became more reliant on me, erm, I think it, it became quite obvious to me that she hadn't had anything stable in her life for a long time.</p> <p>I gave her a real stable life and a real stable platform, she could make the mistakes that she'd made in the past and not get punished for it, and have solid ground to land on.</p> <p>When she is on a comedown from amphetamine, I've never experienced anything like it.</p> <p>I think by this point she had progressed to crystal meth and crack.</p> <p>I think the problem is that she really, really loves and adores men, ok, she is a really girly sassy woman</p>
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she said "for the last two weeks me and my husband didn't have a complete nights sleep. we were just waiting for you to come out in a body bag, we genuinely thought you was gunna be murder" [...] (*participant said*) "but can I just ask you, why didn't you ring the police" [...] she said "because we thought, if she could do something like that to someone she loves, what on earth would she do to us if she found out it was us when we are nothing to her."

I would imagine, that most DV cases are uncovered because a friend, a family member, a neighbour makes a call, whether it is anonymous or otherwise [...] this street is a small street, its only got, maybe fifteen houses in it, I would be knocking on there door asking them why they didn't come forward.

Why wouldn't someone ring up crime stoppers or ring the police and say "look there is a guy on our street, I'm so worried about him, I'm not leaving a name but would you please go to number **** and go and knock on the door".

That's the bit I don't get, I don't get it, cause it was so regular, and the change was so obvious, you would have thought one person, cause I was going to the same place all the time, the local newsagent, the local shop and I'd lived there for ten years so its not as though they didn't know me, that's the bit I don't get cause you can do it anonymously. I don't understand that, but maybe that's a piece of work for somebody to do.

I lost a home initially that I could have got back, I could have even redecorated it out of choice, cause

who understands what men are all about but by the same token she also has a deep inner hatred for men, cause men are the ones that have hurt her in her life.

And for a time you try and accept it, you say "yeah ok, I know you've got substance misuse issues, I know you have got alcohol issues but your not all bad" I wouldn't have been with her for ten years if she was all bad.

I think she became addicted to violence somewhere in her life.

There was the hope that it would change, but do you know what, it doesn't.

I found my solace in my music, I have got a great collection of music and it kept me sane.

I really, really wanted to make it work, I tried everything I could to make it work.

But I have never known anybody with that level of violence anybody, male or female. But because it, because it was introduced into the relationship really quite slowly, what happens is, you, you accept it as your life, you say "ok, this is what my life is, this is what it's turned out to be.

You kind of fall into this lifestyle, where it, it almost become acceptable.

But because it, because it was introduced into the relationship really quite slowly, what happens is, you, you accept it as your life, you say "ok, this is what my life is, this is what it's turned out to be.

obviously the things in the house would have been a reminder of her, I could have changed its image completely, totally redecorated it, but I lost that opportunity because ultimately, somebody made a mistake.

So she is doing seven years for the assault with the iron, she got four years for pouring the kettle over me. I can remember that three weeks of excruciating pain, for me she is not doing a sentence for that, she is only doing the sentence for the iron, everything else is concurrent.

To court a month later, was assessed as being a high risk to society which is the highest category you can be in [...] I remember very clearly, her defence barrister standing up, "your honour my job is very difficult today, my client has asked me to indicate that you and the jury, you have all got it wrong, she is innocent". So there is no remorse [...] now how can someone like that get 50% off at day one.

Here I am 18 months on, or 15 months on from leaving, I mean I had 12 months of abuse, you know, I can't get emotional over what I experienced, so it is still with me although it doesn't distress me in that way, it is still emotional to talk about, how can her mind be clear in three and a half years.

Three and a half years just does not seem enough, it doesn't seem tough enough.

You admit whatever the accusation is. In the middle of an assault, you comply.

So you learn that if you comply, you hope, its like the eye of the storm, that it will blow over quicker, if I, if I, don't resist, if I answer a question, this could be the last punch, the last blow.

You just want to keep the peace.

You go to bed when you're told to go to bed, you eat when you are told you can eat so there is only ever two choices.

You just did as you were told to stop violence and in the middle of violence you complied hoping it would stop, the next blow would satisfy her in some way.

So what I found was, firstly, by agreeing to whatever the allegation was, it definitely minimised, it reduced the violence.

But you knew, if you denied it, it wouldn't mean a fist, it would be a metal bar, well given the choice, what would you sooner accept? So you would actually produce conversations that were totally fictitious, that would give her a reason cause you knew she was already angry, but it would be minimised.

You just paid an innocent compliment, like "that was really nice" and she would be looking for some type of accreditation and as soon as there was the compliment [...] two or three hours later you would still be sat there, and if you were talking about her [...] it would like, keep her at peace, she would be quite content, we were talking about her, and there were some days where, then she would go to bed, cause you would be talking

	<p>about her for three, four hours, constantly, so "I am really tired" so she would be quite content.</p> <p>Firstly, when there's an allegation for want of a better phrase, you know the choices are either, admit it knowing you're still gunna get beaten or dispute it, knowing that the beating is going to be worse, so you admit whatever the accusation is.</p> <p>My honest choice? It was to try and pacify, to comply, to pacify sorry, if not, the only option is, they have to kill them, now I don't want to take the gamble of being in the dock, accused of murdering somebody [...] So that's the honest answer why, cause, to stop her, I would have had to kill her, that is what I believe, genuinely what I believe.</p> <p>I either comply through allowing her to hit me, knowing that if I genuinely hit back I would have to kill her, or, you're almost feeding that habit of praising her for something she had done, keeping her occupied.</p>		
<p><u>Love in the abusive encounter.</u></p> <p>The experiences of love and attachment.</p>	<p>Because of my own brother and father as well were quite violent.</p> <p>I saw it as somebody who clearly portrayed themselves as being something they wasn't. Caused me to generate feelings for them, then traded off those feelings to then go on to abuse me.</p> <p>She seemed to change almost within a day of signing the tenancy; it was as if there was some security for her.</p> <p>But when you have seen violence as a youngster</p>	<p>Yeah she was very attractive, very outgoing, there was things I saw in her that I probably didn't have before.</p> <p>Everything was fine at the beginning of the relationship, there was no, errr, I saw no aggression in her at all, you know, she was a very pleasant, you know bubbly girl, that, you know, I thought, you know, she's great, yeah there was no, I couldn't see anything at that time.</p> <p>She got pregnant and when she was</p>	<p>She's a woman that understood what makes men tick, cause we are quite basic creatures at the end of the day, aren't we, you know, we are not rocket science to work out, we have quite basic needs, men, generally speaking, and she really tapped into that.</p> <p>But yeah, you know, there was a lot of things she brought to the relationship that were really good and that kept me there.</p> <p>She is exquisitely beautiful woman.</p> <p>In a lot of ways it can be very exciting and very</p>

and it has an impact, it is like the ace in the pack for the perpetrator.

I said "yeah, fine" now at that point, she is isolated and I saw my chance, but again, you still don't know what to say.....and she always said to me if ever the police turn up you tell them that two blokes turned up at the house, so I still did, even though I am in the van I said "two guys have turned up."

There would be a punch in the face, her lamp would go on, "you don't tell me you love me enough.

She said, "Look" she said "we have had so many arguments, that you don't tell me you love me enough and you've said you'll change" she said it very calmly she said "I'll boil a kettle of water and pour it on you, see if that makes a difference."

She said "well, you know, I've punched you, I have poured a kettle of water on you" she said several things "its made no difference, what's the point in us being together" and I said "well there isn't is there so your wasting my time" to that she walked over very calmly put the iron on my arm and pressed the steam button.

I spent a couple of nights in a B and B, the phone was going off every ten minutes.

She would sit and watch Jerry Springer [...] he would take something from that story and then accuse me of it [...] so it might be, blokes been on T.V. he got his girlfriend pregnant and then left her, "have you got any children, I bet you fucking

pregnant I was really happy cause I thought this is going to change everything now, we have got something to focus on.

And I speak to her ex-husband and he tells me the same "she'd throw bottles of wine at me, she's ripped my shirt open, and she cut me with her nails.

She said "what a horrible woman she was". I never saw that, I just saw this person I had fallen in love with I suppose.

She pestered me for about three weeks after that because I didn't return.

I've been married twice [...] deep down inside me was thinking "I can't break up from another relationship again" cause I'll get a reputation, you know, someone who goes from one woman the another [...] in my mind, it's another relationship failed. And she used to say this as well erm, she used to say "oh, you going to leave me like you've left your other two wives".

stimulating, she's an incredibly intelligent woman, very intelligent, very articulate, very creative, she's got wonderful vision for things.

Everything I wanted in a woman she had, but I wasn't prepared for the, the kind of dark side of her character.

I saw him once in *** he had a big black eye and I laughed and said "is that from her" and he said "yeah, what do I do?" and I said "walk away".

She doesn't, she is not an affectionate person, she doesn't, you don't have strokes and cuddles with her, its like hardcore sex, that's her way of communicating [...] she kinda can detach herself from it emotionally, and she can use sex as a weapon and I think she learnt that from a really young age.

She said "you're the best thing to happen to my life for a long time, don't leave".

So wherever you walked away from her, if she was confrontational in an argument, if you walked away to diffuse that she'd get worse and I kinda figured that maybe it was something to do with that trauma as a child, that last image of her dad walking away.

She fell pregnant after about six weeks of us meeting.

She's a product of what her young life was, she is a really very angry woman and there is evil in her that doesn't sleep.

I think it progressed as she became more reliant on me, erm, I think it, it became quite obvious to me

have.”

Outside, is a very dangerous place because of the climate which is portrayed, she has got these brothers that are into organised crime, described real horrific cases of violence, in real detail as well [...] So if it was genuine you were safer in the house compared to being outside.

There would be a punch in the face, her lamp would go on, “you don’t tell me you love me enough, you don’t instigate sex”.

She was ranting on about was “see I know you don’t find me attractive cause you’ve had five minutes to be ready and if you really find me attractive you would be able to have sex with me” so she would look at that point in time as being proof and completely ignore what had gone on before hand.

“You physically can’t do it so you cant be attracted to me, you don’t love me, its all lies!”

She saw a change in me, she kept saying, “your different what’s the matter with you” I knew, I so wanted to get out, just to take those tablets, I just wanted one opportunity [...] I remember her saying [...] “your not going to go to bed, this time it’s gonna be different, I’m gonna kill you” and I genuinely believed she would I said well “look I’ve got some tablets upstairs, just let me take them, you wont get in trouble, it will be suicide” “you think I’m letting you take the easy way out” she said “you must be joking!”

“I’ve just said to you to make love to me, and you

that she hadn’t had anything stable in her life for a long time.

I gave her a real stable life and a real stable platform, she could make the mistakes that she’d made in the past and not get punished for it, and have solid ground to land on.

I think the problem is that she really, really loves and adores men, ok, she is a really girly sassy woman who understands what men are all about but by the same token she also has a deep inner hatred for men, cause men are the ones that have hurt her in her life.

I don’t know how many times she has phoned me during the night and she has got herself in a sticky situation in a party you know, go in the room and there would be three guys in the room with her, and I would have to go in and rescue her, you know, I have lost count of the amount of times that that happened.

But man, man as it were, is the one that she, is the per, that you know, is what she blames for her behaviour, because man hurt me, therefore I have to, she calls it defending herself, “I have to defend myself against you as a race, as a species” sort of thing.

She was asking me to go back to live with her, that she needed my help, erm and didn’t want me living on the other side of town any more, she thought I was having lots of woman round my house [...] I said we’d discussed it at length many times and I wasn’t going to live with her over at, in her house and she got a pen, like that, and she hit herself in the forehead with it so violently, that this like, egg appeared within seconds, this big swollen, and aid

physically can't do it so you can't be attracted to me, you don't love me, it's all lies!" The assault is completely erased from the process, the background to it as to what's gone on before that question.

She said look, financially it would be cheaper for you to get an apartment, I know your only here for three days, but I can look after it for you.

She also knew I had a tremendous dislike for violence because of what I saw, and ultimately she used those to arm herself, to destabilise me, which is what she did.

Absolutely, complete and utter fear, that I was not safe if I left that house, absolutely, number one two and three.

I always described it as looking into the heart of stone.

You'd look and their eyes were just cold.

There was always this point where her eyes literally glazed as if they totally shut down, so it went from a person, who is just like, I don't know what she was seeing, but her eyes literary, you could almost see a very thin pair of curtains just pull over.

I would imagine, that most DV cases are uncovered because a friend, a family member, a neighbour makes a call, whether it is anonymous or otherwise [...] this street is a small street, its only got, maybe fifteen houses in it. I would be knocking on there door asking them why they

"you did that" walked the half a mile to the police station.

I said to her on the door that I was leaving and her, she laughed actually, she laughed and said "you're not going anywhere".

Yeah and her pregnancy was an absolute nightmare, she erm, we weren't living together during her pregnancy....She started to drink quite a lot of red wine, I think her cocaine and amphetamine abuse increased during pregnancy. So you're living with this "oh my god, is my child gonna be born with some difficulties" etc etc.

And if you throw children into the mix as well, you know, its easy for people to say "oh why don't you get out sooner" but when you've got children in the mix you can't, you can't walk away from that responsibility.

There is nothing she wasn't capable of.

I started to learn things about her past, she had a real problem with people walking a way from her, which I think stemmed from her dad, when she was four, four and a half, erm the last image of her dad was err, dragging her mum by the hair down the hallway, leaving and walking out

Love, kids. I think also, I was a dad for the first time in my life and I really, really wanted to make it work, I tried everything I could to make it work.

I can't tell you how difficult it is to leave somebody you love, that was really hard.

<p>“You don’t hit anyone but you certainly don’t hit someone you love”; reconciling the juxtaposition of love and abuse.</p>	<p>She had a lot of energy; she had a good sense of humour.</p> <p>Over that time she became tearful, very apologetic, assured me it was a one off [...] she assured me that erm, that things would be ok.</p> <p>I left in the middle of January because the first assault was between Christmas and new year and I went back, early March just after my birthday it was, and it was absolutely fine until my contract</p>	<p>It was new year, it was a one off.</p> <p>I said “no, no, she has promised, it wont happen again”.</p> <p>Next day she was like “I’m really sorry, I need help, I need counselling, I drink too much, I need aggress, I need erm, the anger management course” and I said “well, you’ve never been like that, so its probably just a one off” and that was it</p>	<p>I didn’t leave her cause I didn’t love her, I use to say to her all the time, even today, you know, “love wasn’t the problem, it was your behaviour and your lifestyle was the problem, you know, I will always love you, but I can’t, I couldn’t cope with you any more”.</p> <p>Initially I was attracted to her because she is a very extreme woman and I like extreme people, I am attracted to that, I like people who kind of, push the envelope and she does, and, but everything, in every aspect of her life that’s, that’s, that’s how she lives it.</p> <p>Through her whole life she really searched for the love of her dad which was never forthcoming, the only way he showed his love to her was by giving her money and I think this is where I disrespect for money came from.</p> <p>I think the abuse started over the telephone, “what time you gonna be home from work” that sort of thing and very aggressive.</p> <p>She is like David Beckham, he started learning his skills when he was five years old, she’s the same, she really, she is so good at what she does.</p> <p>In a lot of ways it can be very exciting and very stimulating, she’s an incredibly intelligent women, very intelligent, very articulate, very creative, she’s got wonderful vision for things and, but that erm, but that extreme personality that she’s got, also can have a really negative impact on your life and that’s, that’s what she is, everything that she does is to an extreme degree.</p> <p>Say to her all the time, even today, you know, “love wasn’t the problem, it was your behaviour and your</p>
<p>didn’t come forward.</p>			

finished at the end of May.

really for a couple of months.

Again, after that, very apologetic and this, that and the other.

Erm, we then, there was lots of rows, I mean, you would have a row virtually every other night, usually over money or the children because the children didn't want to, you know, be around. Erm, and then the relationship would go, and then it would go to a point where the relationship would be fine for a few months you know, been spoken to like shit all the time and then within the space of an hour, she'd be like a total totally different person, she'd calm down, and I used to struggle with that.

Hang on, we were, an hour ago, we were screaming and shouting and you were ready to throw things at me and picking knives up and all this, you know, all this horrible stuff and now you want me, I couldn't get my head round that.

How can somebody change that quickly, from being a really horrible nasty person, ready to do you harm and then they want to go on and make love to you at night, I just, I couldn't understand it, I couldn't understand it, really, it baffles me to this day.

She said "what a horrible woman she was". I never saw that. I just saw this

lifestyle was the problem, you know, I will always love you, but I can't, I couldn't cope with you any more".

Just from vengeance, but then in the next breath you've got, you've got somebody who tells you they love you and they are sorry for what they have done.

And for a time you try and accept it, you say "yeah ok, I know you've got substance misuse issues, I know you have got alcohol issues but your not all bad" I wouldn't have been with her for ten years if she was all bad.

Everything I wanted in a woman she had, but I wasn't prepared for the, the kind of dark side of her character.

		person I had fallen in love with I suppose.	
<p>The intrapersonal impact of the abuse experience.</p> <p>“My mind just wasn’t thinking right anymore”; the psychological impact of the abuse experience.</p>	<p>I remember, for about half an hour thinking [...] I have been hit in the face for doing nothing [...] I physically threw up, physically.</p> <p>I got to the point where I ended up not even speaking to them, walking past them in the street, the change in mentality.</p> <p>I was in such shock I couldn’t believe what were, what had happened.</p> <p>Really putting people under pressure, so your rushing all the time, doing things at pace, so you’ve not slept, your not eating, sometimes your dizzy, your rushing round that much.</p> <p>Internally it was throwing my body clock; my body clock was all over the place. I said “the only way I can answer it is, if you have ever been at work and felt really rough, and you think ‘I’ve just gotta get through the end of today and then I’ll go home and ring in sick tomorrow if I need to’ you know that you don’t do your job as well as you normally would do, you don’t look at things the same..</p> <p>So you then say well “surely you would walk out” well mentally you have been destabilised, physically you have been destabilised.</p> <p>I think looking back I only ever had two choices.</p>	<p>But all the time, I’m thinking it’s me, to the point where, one night [...] we’d had a row about how useless I was and how I should be earning more money and how the children, you know, “this is your fault the children are like this and this is your fault for this” to the point where [...] I had 16 antidepressants in the cupboard and I thought “better off if I wasn’t here, all these problems would go away”.</p> <p>When you have got twenty-four hours a day of somebody, you start to be a bit brainwashed by it and you think that’s the only way.</p> <p>Nobody else giving you advice other than her and if somebody else is giving you advice it is overshadowed.</p> <p>But when you look back could see everything that was happening and you know.</p> <p>It came to light then that she was very money orientated.</p> <p>I remember the first day I met her and I regret going into that house, I just don’t believe it.</p> <p>I felt that, I can’t control my children, who were as good as gold but I couldn’t</p>	<p>It was only as started coming out of the relationship I realised actually what my life had become, it was just completely under her control.</p> <p>That was a business decision definitely (<i>the pregnancy</i>). I think with hindsight, I think she thought whatever happens with our relationship that she’d be looked after.</p> <p>I am really quite weary about women too since I’ve come out.</p> <p>You kind of, go through this process of errr, kind of analysing what’s going on and trying to make sense of it and going “well yeah, ok”.</p> <p>I think what the biggest problem was, that incidences of her violent outburst were so prolific [...] it was like everyday, when it was at its height. So, what happens is you don’t have chance to analyse what’s happened before the next incident is on top of you, so you cant, ever really get the chance to work out what’s going on, cause its just, its so much.</p> <p>Yeah, and I think, yeah, you just go through that process of trying to work out what’s going on and before you know I years have gone by.</p> <p>Yeah. If I allow myself to remember, I still get quite bad nightmares to be fair, you know, there’s a lot of things that have happened, that you don’t know about, really, over those ten years, as I say incidence</p>

	<p>I knew I wanted to leave and what I wanted to do, but she had so much control over me.</p> <p>I said "yeah, fine" now at that point, she is isolated and I saw my chance, but again, you still don't know what to say [...] and she always said to me if ever the police turn up you tell them that two blokes turned up at the house, so I still did, even though I am in the van I said "two guys have turned up".</p> <p>"My honest choice? It was to try and pacify, to comply, to pacify sorry, if not, the only option is, they have to kill them, now I don't want to take the gamble of being in the dock, accused of murdering somebody [...]. So that's the honest answer why (he didn't hit her back), cause, to stop her, I would have had to kill her, that is what I believe, genuinely what I believe.</p> <p>I am just not ready for a relationship because I am still trying to recover some of the things that I have lost.</p> <p>And the other side of it is, if you turn up looking a mess, god what are they gunna think. Ok you turn up "God what on earth has happened to you" [...] you wanna tell somebody whose gunna do something about it, not somebody who is gunna say to you, as some people have done why did you put up with that?"</p> <p>Secondly, if I did leave when I look...she had stripped a lot of money away, so where was I gunna go, she'd manipulated people in conversations [...] she caused arguments between me and family members [...] so suddenly if I then</p>	<p>see it, all I saw was what she was telling me they are.</p> <p>I feel useless cause that's how she started to make me feel.</p> <p>I'd lost all my confidence, all my confidence.</p> <p>Once she started again all my self confidence went, I lost me job.</p> <p>It got to a point where I was so low, I couldn't tell anybody.</p>	<p>were everyday and unless I read my diaries I forget about things.</p> <p>I'm immune to pain now I think.</p> <p>For the first time, in approaching four years, I wake up and every day is sunny, you know, but it has taken a lot of hard work.</p> <p>You know I think like, with other people that speak out like me, you've gone through such a massive trauma in your life that it's part of your therapy, your recovery to talk about it.</p> <p>You know, and that was a factor in me having a breakdown, but I just realised that it just couldn't continue. You know, it started to really affecting my health, what was happening.</p> <p>I have had nightmares every now and again, I will probably have them tonight, because of, after speaking to you.</p> <p>I won't get rid of that dent, that will be there forever, erm, to remind myself how bad I was that night cause I would have sat in that car and pulled the trigger, no question in my mind, twice I was there.</p>
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<p>left, well how was I gonna get where I wanted to go cause she took charge of my money and the people who I used to speak to I had either had an argument with because she had generated a situation or I had not spoken to them in such a long time, how could I possibly go and turn up at their doorstep.</p> <p>They took the view, if you can do that to someone you love, what on earth are you going to do to somebody you have got no emotional contact with.</p> <p>Completely took that apart without me realising it [...] she began to destabilise that routine, and it completely threw me out.</p> <p>If somebody can put a kettle on me, if somebody can put a iron on me, if somebody can ram a mobile phone, for no reason at all, if I hit back, what would they then do?</p> <p>So I can take these tablets and go to sleep, my time, in my place, I don't have to wake up it will all be over.</p> <p>It took me about three weeks before I ventured out, but I literary had a mobile phone in my left hand that had 999 ready to redial and a panic alarm in the other and I used to walk, down the side of the street, right on the edge because I felt as though people would look at me.</p> <p>You leave. I mean, I lost three stone in weight, you feel really unattractive because you've been beaten and bruised.</p> <p>Cracked one of those across my head, it was like solid glass, and like third time she hit me, it</p>		
<p>The evolving sense of self; the impact of abuse</p>	<p>In a way I didn't know what was wrong with me, I just thought that it was me, you</p>	<p>Cause I've lost my job by this point, by November of 05, I'd lost my job, my cars, erm my health, my</p>

<p>upon identity.</p>	<p>shattered "now look what you've done, you've broke the vase!"</p> <p>I had to go into work the next day and I did the classic, when I look back, "what happened to you?" "oh I was tired, putting food away, had a cupboard door open, turned around, walked into it".</p> <p>And the lad sat opposite me, he heard this shouting down the phone and just said to me if that's one of our customers, give me the phone cause I'm not putting up with that, I said it was to shut him up.</p> <p>I said to my manager, I said erm, "look, I'm really sorry, I don't like letting people down, but I have got a personal problem that I have to sort out."</p> <p>I had no clean clothes, she had thrown all my clothes away, every item I had was covered in blood.</p> <p>I heard in the summing up, talked about how my appearance changed and they described me as being a guy who would often come and go, even at late times of the night some times, I used to go greyhound racing, but basically never disturbed anybody, never had an argument with anybody in the ten years I was there and I went from being immaculately dressed to what was, looked like a tramp [...] quite upsetting because that's how people saw me.</p> <p>I had never been in a violent relationship before... you suddenly realise that you fell into a category somewhere and you was in a relationship where someone had been violent to you.</p>	<p>know "I'm useless, I'm this, that and the other".</p> <p>I feel useless" cause that's how she started to make me feel, as if I was no good, and as if I was useless and I couldn't do anything right, erm, and at that point she then started to say to me "your useless and you cant do this and you cant do that".</p> <p>Cause I was made to feel as if it was all my fault.</p> <p>I've accepted it and I've started to talk to people about it, close people, friends, and family and friends.</p> <p>I tend to keep a lot of problems into myself because I can deal with them myself.</p> <p>And I've never felt like that, I'm very confident, erm, outgoing person, you know. Put me in a room with somebody I don't know, and I'll have a conversation with them all night, you know. I'm a people person, I meet people, I was an estate agent, you know, I would walk into somebody's house and talk to them for hours about rubbish.</p> <p>I'd lost all my confidence, all my confidence.</p> <p>I had quite a good strong personality and I was quite a confident person.</p>	<p>dignity, everything had gone.</p> <p>I will, I'll carry the scars for the rest of my life, from what I went through with that woman, not physical scars, I mean I've got scars all over my body but that's the easy bit.</p> <p>Do you know, I don't want to spend another day of my life like this, you know, I have got a lot to give this world and I don't want to give it to you any more, you don't deserve it, you don't deserve who I am".</p> <p>I look at it I was like, "my god, I was born with a silver spoon up my arse, in a very wealthy family and I'm lying under the pier in other peoples piss, how on earth did my life get to this point".</p> <p>For the first time, in approaching four years, I'm like a Sunday afternoon; I'm so chilled and relaxed.</p> <p>You know, I don't know how many times she has phoned me during the night and she has got herself in a sticky situation in a party, you know, go in the room and there would be three guys in the room with her, and I would have to go in and rescue her, you know, I have lost count of the amount of times that that happened.</p> <p>I think it progressed as she became more reliant on me, erm, I think it, it became quite obvious to me that she hadn't had anything stable in her life for a long time.</p> <p>I gave her a real stable life and a real stable platform, she could make the mistakes that she'd made in the past and not get punished for it, and have solid ground to land on.</p>
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Its like "domestic violence" in big, bold letters with flashing lights round it, it wasn't just domestic violence it was *domestic violence*. So people were actually making me feel worse by saying "this is the worse case I have ever heard."

But I have found as an individual, the thing that gets me is other people being upset.

I couldn't tell you how many times this has happened to me say "look its not a sex thing but at the end of the night, tell me where you are, I want you to come back to my house, I want you to sleep in my bed", they want to make sure I am alright.

She was trembling, she was so distraught. I actually ended up buying her a brandy. I thought she was gunna pass out seriously. she was, she was shaking like that, she was trembling, "oh I cant believe it" she said, erm, she said "I've read about it" she said "its just disgusting" she was, she couldn't compose herself, I had to buy her a brandy to clam herself down. That's the bit that gets me, seeing other peoples reaction when they are stressed, because for me I have been through it, I can't change it.

And I remember, walking into the dock. I was walking from the room and just, in my head I'm saying "this is my time, you are so ready, you are bigger, you're better, just answer the question."

I got to the point where I ended up not even speaking to them, walking past them in the street, the change in mentality.

But I think when it gets to a point and it took two years to constantly beat me down, its almost as if you have been hammered into the ground slowly.

It seems really petty saying "oh someone is calling you names, you know, sticks and stones" but when it's all day, everyday, someone's being like that.

I feel better and I've put a bit of weight on, and, you know, I'm starting to look after myself a bit more and my personality has come back and everybody says "you have totally changed back to the old ***, back to the old ***" when they knew me before I met ***.

I felt useless cause that's how she started to make me feel, as if I was no good and as if I was useless and I couldn't do anything right [...] all I saw was what she was telling me.

I've been married twice [...] deep down inside me was thinking "I can't break up from another relationship again" cause I'll get a reputation, you know, someone who goes from one women the another [...] in my mind, it's another relationship failed. And she used to say this as well erm, she used to say "oh, you going to leave me like you've left your other two wives".

Love, kids. I think also, I was a dad for the first time in my life and I really, really wanted to make it work, I tried everything I could to make it work.

	<p>I am just keen really to make a difference for other victims, and try and promote things.</p> <p>I have started doing some voluntary work with the council, which, have spoken about my experiences of being homeless and obviously the presentation I have done on domestic violence, and its really rewarding I like helping people.</p>		
<p>The socio-cultural construction of gender and its impact upon the abuse experience.</p> <p>“It makes you feel like a bit less of a man”</p>	<p>I just asked for the charge nurse, and the officer got the charge nurse, and I just said to her “the next person that sticks there head through that door I’m gonna give them a bill or sell them a raffle ticket, the elephant man is not in town deal with it”. I know there was a curiosity, here was a guy who turned up who has been beaten up by his Mrs’s and he was in a right state.</p> <p>I don’t see it particularly as being any different because I was male, it was just an abuse of feelings.</p> <p>And the other side of it is, if you turn up looking a mess, god what are they gonna think. Ok you turn up “God what on earth has happened to you”....you wanna tell somebody whose gonna do something about it. not somebody who is gonna say to you, as some people have done why did you put up with that?..”</p>	<p>Erm, they asked me what I did, I said “oh, new year, I had a few to drink, I was getting dressed, I slipped and I banged my head on the side of the bed.</p> <p>Cause it was a women, you almost think that people will think “what, you let a woman hit you” type of thing. Erm, so that’s really why you wouldn’t say anything.</p> <p>He didn’t believe me the doctor...I still protested, fallen over this, that and the other.</p> <p>I think at that point my dad noticed that I had this cut in my head, he said “oh how did you do that “oh I slipped in the kitchen” and again, you don’t really tell people.</p> <p>I just felt so low, and I couldn’t even go</p>	<p>I wouldn’t be here for two friends I have got, two male friends and for this charity because they were the first people.</p> <p>Society still struggles to appreciate that men can be victims.</p> <p>“It’s all a new thing” bullshit, its not a new thing, men have been abusing women and women have been abusing men since the dawn of time, its only just now that men are becoming more comfortable about, you know, coming forward about speaking about it.</p> <p>I’ve heard people say, oh you know, “is it the pressures of modern living, women now having more powerful jobs” bullshit, its human nature, its human nature, its been going on forever, but just all of a sudden people like me say, “do you know actually, this is wrong and people need to know the truth about what’s going on out there”.</p>

to the doctor, because I was embarrassed I suppose to say, you know "I feel like this".

I was never the type of person who would air my feelings to people and lean on people's shoulders and say "oh, you know, I'm feeling really low at the moment, or I'm feeling this or feeling that".

You're almost a bit embarrassed to say that you're feeling a bit low, or that you're feeling, erm, or what's going on or what's happening.

I think, again your scared to tell anybody so no body knows really.

There is a lot of pride there, you know, your own pride.

I should have spoke to people but you don't you just keep it inside because you're embarrassed.

Again, you don't really tell people, cause it almost seems [...] why do you stay with this women if she is doing it and b, how can you let somebody do that to you.

And I have never had a women hit me before, I never hit a woman, but, I've had a slap, but I have never had, you know, a bating from a woman so to speak.

I think it is pride. I think it is pride that

But just because a guy doesn't speak about it, doesn't mean its not there.

I think at some stage down the road it will be accepted, that man, man can suffer, it's a really heinous crime and I think it will be accepted more in main stream, like it is now, its still brushed under the carpet.

it was very easy for her to turn it round and make it look like I was the perpetrator [...] I shaved my head every day, I was in the gym, I was massive, I looked like a thug, first time I walked into court, I was guilty before I opened my mouth, just because of the way I looked [...] I was big and the police just took one look at me, "you must be guilty, look at the way you look" you know [...] and cause of the way she looked, such a dainty little thing, and erm, so the, yeah so when I went to say to the police that I am getting attacked on a regular basis by my, by my, what was my ex-partner then, what, what can I do, I need your help.

You can walk into a room or an in a custody cell or your in social services offices and the people you are talking to don't believe a word your saying, just because you're a man and the way you look, it's a real problem.

I think being a man, it, it, profoundly changes, effects things because you hit a brick wall, like there is no safety net, I thought there would be a safety net for me, you know, I come into the police station [...] and I thought there would be some kinda of safety net that I could fall into and I feel right, straight through it and hit the floor, erm, so yeah, being a man makes it all, very different I think.

you don't, your almost embarrassed to say a women's done this to you. If it was a bloke that did it, I would have said "I've been in a fight, and you know, got clocked one".

And again, a lot of it is pride, you know, you're almost a bit embarrassed, cause it was a women, you almost think that people will think "what, you let a woman hit you" type of thing. Erm, so that's really why you wouldn't say anything.

Again if it was a man, you would knock them out, you know, you would hit them back, and that's what I never did, I would never do that.

Was never the type of person who would air my feelings to people and lean on people's shoulders and say "oh, you know, I'm feeling really low at the moment, or I'm feeling this or feeling that". I suppose a lot of girls do, you know, when they go out and they go round to each other and have a drink and they say "oh, I'm feeling like this". Blokes don't have that, they don't have many people to turn round and talk to.

I've been married twice....deep down inside me was thinking "I can't break up from another relationship again" cause I'll get a reputation, you know, someone who goes from one women the another....in my mind, it's another relationship failed. And she used to say

Ross Kemp did it about ten years ago didn't he, with the News of the World "I'm a sufferer" and everyone laughed at him, he was ridiculed, and this is the problem, people don't want to be ridiculed.

And I think somewhere down the line it will be accepted that we are victims whether we are male or female, vegetable or dog or whatever! Ha! It shouldn't be gender specific, should it.

She's a woman that understood what makes men tick, cause we are quite basic creatures at the end of the day, aren't we, you know, we are not rocket science to work out, we have quite basic needs, men, generally speaking, and she really tapped into that.

You know, I don't know how many times she has phoned me during the night and she has got herself in a sticky situation in a party, you know, go in the room and there would be three guys in the room with her, and I would have to go in and rescue her, you know, I have lost count of the amount of times that that happened.

You don't go up the pub and say to your mates "do you know what, I'm getting knocked about at home" it's a bit of a macho thing in it, its very, it makes you feel like, a bit less of a man, you know, particularly if you are very into the gym scene, its very, its bullshit, its all machosistic and testosterone.

I think it progressed as she became more reliant on me, erm, I think it, it became quite obvious to me that she hadn't had anything stable in her life for a long time.

		<p>this as well erm, she used to say "oh, you going to leave me like you've left your other two wives".</p>	<p>I gave her a real stable life and a real stable platform, she could make the mistakes that she'd made in the past and not get punished for it, and have solid ground to land on.</p> <p>Is what she blames for her behaviour, because man hurt me, therefore I have to, she calls it defending herself, "I have to defend myself against you as a race, as a species" sort of thing.</p>
<p>"It's about providing a service that is for all victims....that is the challenge".</p>	<p>So quite quickly gone from saying, "it wasn't her", to "I don't want any trouble" to "well actually", looking back, it was a real good thing, somebody was saying "I'm gonna help you, but the rest is nothing to do with you" it was as if he had pulled a rug from under me, he had taken control and I had none.</p> <p>I lost a home initially that I could have got back, I could have even redecorated it out of choice, cause obviously the things in the house would have been a reminder of her, I could have changed its image completely, totally redecorated it, but I lost that opportunity because ultimately, somebody made a mistake.</p> <p>So she is doing seven years for the assault with the iron, she got four years for pouring the kettle over me. I can remember that three weeks of excruciating pain, for me she is not doing a sentence for that, she is only doing the sentence for the iron. everything else is concurrent .</p> <p>I only found out a just a month ago is that she will be released after doing just 50% of her sentence.</p>	<p>I've now got this big court battle with her.</p> <p>At the moment the courts, we are going to court for ***** but the courts won't allow me access until they deal with this domestic violence.</p> <p>So we've actually got a court case on this domestic violence.</p> <p>So I've had to go and get medical records when she perforated my ears, the biggest battle I'm going to have with that is "why didn't you report it to the police" you know, it could only be hear say, so I have had to get a lot of people involved who I didn't really want to get involved.</p> <p>funnily enough, she has admitted them all, she has admitted doing it on the court [...] she has admitted it, but she saying it was all in self defence, she is saying it was because I was violent to her, but as I say, I have never hit a women, the only woman I have ever hit was her, slapped her because she spat in my face and that</p>	<p>The biggest problem was, when I turned to the police and social services for help, my situation got worse and I thought it would get better.</p> <p>It was very easy for her to turn it round and make it look like I was the perpetrator [...] I shaved my head every day, I was in the gym, I was massive, I looked like a thug, first time I walked into court, I was guilty before I opened my mouth, just because of the way I looked [...] I was big and the police just took one look at me, "you must be guilty, look at the way you look" you know [...] and cause of the way she looked, such a dainty little thing, and erm, so the, yeah so when I went to say to the police that I am getting attacked on a regular basis by my, by my, what was my ex-partner then, what, what can I do, I need your help.</p> <p>Custody cell or your in social services offices and the people you are talking to don't believe a word your saying, just because you're a man and the way you look, it's a real problem.</p> <p>So the biggest problem, by far, as a victim, from my experience was that people, yeah, belief, they don't believe a word your saying, five and a half years is an unacceptable period of time for them to get tuned</p>

To court a month later, was assessed as being a high risk to society which is the highest category you can be in [...] I remember very clearly, her defence barrister standing up, "your honour my job is very difficult today, my client has asked me to indicate that you and the jury, you have all got it wrong, she is innocent". So there is no remorse [...] now how can someone like that get 50% off at day one.

Here I am 18 months on, or 15 months on from leaving, I mean I had 12 months of abuse, you know, I can still get emotional over what I experienced, so it is still with me although it doesn't distress me in that way, it is still emotional to talk about, how can her mind be clear in three and a half years.

Three and a half years just does not seem enough, it doesn't seem tough enough.

The first ten minutes was the judge saying "if it was a woman, you would have taken him, arrested him, bailed him and said don't go within 100 yards of that house, but here is a victim who is male, who was going to a night shelter while the perpetrator is sat in his house and she doesn't even own it!"

I got dropped off at a night shelter I had to find my own accommodation and it was twelve months going to trial.

If you turn up somewhere, you want somebody who will say "right we are gonna get the injuries sorted out and I'm gonna do something about it" which is where the police have a really crucial

was after 10-15 minutes of her chasing me around the house, thumping, hitting, kicking, punching, she wasn't in control.

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I had a 32 page document written about me and they had never met me or even spoken to me, you know, you know, because she was the, the victim at home, trying to raise kids, and I was, she was telling them I was the violent ex-boyfriend that couldn't let go and it couldn't be further from the truth, it was the other way round.

I had access everyday, "you are so far off the mark its untrue, its not about that, it s that this woman's lifestyle is not suitable to raise children and I need your help [...] I need your help to get the kids safe Social services said to me, "until your story can be proven as true then we wont help you" and when I asked about how it is the other way round, its different.

So I became homeless, my kids were taken and put into their aunts care and it cost social services I dunno how much money, and it didn't need to be that way, all they needed to do was say "actually what this man is telling us is true, lets investigate it" they were crap, they are my nemesis I swear.

The biggest problem was, when I turned to the police and social services for help, my situation got worse and I thought it would get better.

Social services said to me, "until your story can be proven as true then we wont help you" and when I asked about how it is the other way round, its different.

I mean its quite fashionable at the moment to talk about domestic violence, you don't really go a day

	<p>role.</p> <p>It's about providing a service that is for all victims and it has gotta be accessible for all victims and I think that's a challenge for society and for the professionals that work within that.</p> <p>I do think it is important to get to the root cause of it, it is an important area, we do need to find out why it happens, but whatever that is, be it substance misuse or whatever, but why do people misuse substances. But we have got to balance the scales as well and recognise that victims are entitled to be listened to, that is my thing that I am trying to do and male victims have got have a platform to stand on and say "I'm no difference" and that is why I went on T.V. to try and do that.</p> <p>If it helps to you to help others, or in whatever way and if some benefit comes out of it then great, the best thing that could happen.</p> <p>I'll take questions and of course one of these questions "well why didn't you hit her back?"</p>	<p>without something being on the TV or a magazine somewhere, but a lot of people just still don't get it, they don't get, its just so much more than being punched in the face.</p> <p>I really hope it's not such a hidden crime as what it still is.</p> <p>But if I could be part of that change, that has got to be good. I think to myself, if I could stop it happening to just one other person then that's got to be a good thing.</p> <p>You know I think like, with other people that speak out like me, you've gone through such a massive trauma in your life that it's part of your therapy, your recovery to talk about it.</p> <p>She turned it round to make it look like I was the perpetrator, and they came and arrested me. And so it went on and it was just, it was unbelievable.</p> <p>she even started an affair with one of the police officers [...] she was making out that she was the victim of all this violence [...] the CPS wrote to me to say all charges against me were dropped [...] he was investigated and discharged from the force for err, for conduct that wasn't befitting [...] I would have thought, that would be quite a common thing.</p>
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<p>Master theme/constituent themes</p>	<p>Transcript 7 Jacob</p>	<p>Transcript 8 Peter</p>	<p>Transcript 9 Alex</p>
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<p>Surviving the abuse.</p> <p>The perpetration of abuse</p>	<p>So really she started getting violent when I criticised one of them.</p> <p>She attacked me, we were lying in bed and erm, she raked me with her nails and erm, erm, she would erm, she just didn't stop and erm, I just couldn't believe it, I tried covering myself up and rolling into a ball and erm, and she just kept raking me with her long nails [...] it was just covered in blood and I couldn't believe it, and under the blood I could see these very deep lacerations from the nails, erm, all over my scalp, my face, my neck, it was just, it was horrifying [...] somebody saw me and helped me to the hospital or called, I can't remember exactly, and called an ambulance [...] they said they were horrendous injuries.</p> <p>It looked like I'd been mauled by a tiger or something, and, and, everyone that saw me, you know, just couldn't believe it.</p> <p>It sort of went on, she erm, she would get progressively mad at me.</p> <p>She would ridicule me by saying that she could do better than me any day.</p>	<p>So this is in the first few weeks of the marriage. And really it was this sort of roller coaster of a whole load of things after that. It wasn't until a few weeks later, sorry, a few, couple of years later that it actually started to get violent, so there was quite a build up.</p> <p>It did get violent and there was no warning, there was no issue before hand she just suddenly attacked me.</p> <p>You know, it would appear as if she would go into this sort of mental or emotional place and she would just have no control.</p> <p>She picked up a wooden rolling pin and beat me to the floor with it.</p> <p>I think virtually every single one except sexual. But you know, I've sat down and I've looked at the different types and I can literally say, that one, that one, that one, that one and that one.</p> <p>Weekly, you know, the anger tantrums and silences and everything else, were weekly.</p> <p>Well she only actually physically got me only once, erm, erm, but, I suppose that, the physical side of things where she tried to</p>	<p>About six months into the relationship in her actually erm, us having a face to face, nose to nose screaming match in her sitting room where she pushed me quite severely and then punched me in the face.</p> <p>She grabbed me by the throat and pinned me to the bed and I actually thought I was going to die, I could actually feel myself becoming unconscious.</p> <p>The violence was obviously quite dramatic but not that frequent, probably half a dozen incidence of actual physical violence although they were getting more extreme each time.</p> <p>There was the push and the punch the first time, there was the trying to strangle, pinning me down and trying to strangle me the second time, there was a couple of incidences where she just threw large objects like ashtrays or full bottle of wine at me.</p> <p>She punched me in the face once, and it sent the lens through my eye erm, ann I ended up with a massive black eye and a broken pair of glasses, but yeah, a lot of missiles being thrown.</p> <p>The physical abuse [...] became more severe each time so it was the actual physical attacks.</p>
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<p>She would torment me my dolling herself up and putting on stockings and suspenders and then say erm, "I'm just going out" and erm, I wouldn't see her for hours so she'd just be saying she was going to get a man and have sex with him.</p> <p>She'd been drinking a mug of coffee and erm, she threw it at me and it hit the side of my face and I was knocked to the floor, pretty much unconscious, and when I woke up there was blood coming out of the side of my skull and there was a wound and she was screaming at me, "don't get blood on my carpet."</p> <p>I had a hair line fracture of the skull.</p> <p>They kept me in over night because of concussion.</p> <p>She used to mock me all the time, she would say "I can do better than you, you're ugly" you know and "I have got loads of men who think I am beautiful and are chatting me up in the bar every day."</p> <p>She would say the most hurtful things and they would make me cry all the more.</p> <p>She was constantly, verbally berating me about how ugly I was and about how she could get any man.</p> <p>She said "oh, if I could sleep with you, I could sleep with anyone".</p>	<p>attack me was I suppose once every three weeks, about that. We are talking over several years here, not just you know, a few times.</p> <p>I basically got to the end of "no, I'm not doing that" erm, I wasn't angry I wasn't upset I just said "no" and then basically it was like unleashing a tornado, erm, erm, and I ended up living for three months, isolated in one room of the house because she would be violently abusive in front of the children.</p> <p>I'm trying to keep a business on the go, by this stage I've lost about £350,000 pounds worth of capital investment.</p> <p>I come in and I find her catatonic in the bath, fully clothed, there is no water in there or anything, basically, not able to talk or anything else, like you know, almost a state of shock, it turns out that she's seen a telephone bill from prior to when we were married [...] sort of, insecurity with regard to relationships to do with other people.</p> <p>She would be saying things to other people about me that weren't true.</p> <p>That progressed into her being jealous of my relationship with my sister and I was faced with a choice of having to literally cut my sister off or, you know.</p> <p>There were three day silences, anger tantrums, erms, erm, there were conditions placed on what I could and couldn't do, who I could and couldn't see, things to do with money, food,</p>	<p>She also suffered from insomnia and these horrible nightmares, erm, but she'd wake up at sort of two o'clock, three o'clock in the morning, wake me up in a fury and then start talking about something that she perceived had happened earlier in the day or a couple of days before.</p> <p>One night she woke up, she'd had a horrible nightmare, about being attacked, I mean, she'd been really badly physically abused by her dad as a kid, erm, and she'd have, she will always have flash backs of that I think. But she woke up from a nightmare where, something quite horrific had happened, she wouldn't tell me what, it was obviously a flashback to her childhood. Erm, and immediately laid into me and said it was all my fault, very irrational, erm [...] she grabbed me by the throat and pinned me to the bed and I actually thought I was going to die, I could actually feel myself becoming unconscious.</p> <p>So kind of verbal abuse and accusations from, probably about three months into the relationship and then becoming about more frequent.</p> <p>Just because you're in a relationship with one person doesn't mean you're never going to find anyone attractive ever again, you know, you see somebody in the street that's fine you don't do anything about it, erm, but the fact, you know, even if I was doing that I wasn't doing that all the time, it was the fact that she assumed I was eyeing people up all the time even if I wasn't that led to accusations all the time and then it's the verbal, quite big loud slanging matches where she was accusing me and I was denying it.</p>
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	<p>All very cruel and mentally crushing experience for me.</p> <p>I begged her to come home with me and she was sort of mocking me, she looked very beautiful and all the men were surrounding her and fawning over her and I just couldn't believe what was happening.</p> <p>And I just cried for ages and wanted to kill myself, it was just a horrible experience knowing she was up there making up with another man.</p> <p>She said "I hope you didn't talk to anyone or tell them what happened" and I went back the second time and I said I was leaving and she said "you better not have told anyone what happened."</p> <p>She was mocking me and saying "oh you'll be back" and all this kind of thing. Motivation to be with me was just for money and erm, to, to try and get... I had a visa to live over there and that was all she really wanted.</p> <p>Underlying it she was only tolerating me because she was using me to get for a better life in the (<i>another country</i>).</p>	<p>control of money and food and everything else. It was a progressive, if you like, isolation and control.</p> <p>She seemed to be able to put this front on to other people as if nothing was wrong think virtually every single one except sexual. But you know, I've sat down and I've looked at the different types and I can literally say, that one, that one, that one, that one and that one, yeah. Particularly involving the children, threats to do with the children, you know, if I said or did anything then I risked my relationship with the children. You know, lots of emotional blackmail.</p> <p>She would always intersperse the children in there, and I would never approach something like that with the children present.</p> <p>She basically threatened saying the children were nothing to do with me.</p> <p>You know I would have her family ring me up and basically have a go at me for my behaviour, she would involve other people.</p> <p>She would involve other people, coming round to try and get me to not believe myself.</p> <p>She'd given me some targets over the past year, erm, you know, "if this, this and this then everything will be ok" and I sort of let her know that, you know "right I've achieved all of that, lets move on now" and she basically turned round and said that If I didn't leave my business [...] then the marriage was</p>	<p>There were a series of quite intense rows happened, initiated by her where she accused me of eyeing up a waitress or checking someone out at the supermarket checkout or whatever, you know, which I was completely oblivious to at the time.</p> <p>So kind of verbal abuse and accusations from, probably about three months into the relationship and then becoming about more frequent.</p> <p>And then, the accusations continued and got more, erm, more frequent, to the point where I was, I was nervous about us going out as a couple.</p> <p>But it was as much the verbal abuse and the accusations, and the constant kind of picking at me, and also the, the, she was very successful at alienating me from my social group by saying they don't like me and trying very subtly make me decide between her and them to the point where I became quite isolated.</p> <p>She assumed I was eyeing people up all the time even if I wasn't that led to accusations all the time and then it's the verbal, quite big loud slanging matches where she was accusing me and I was denying it.</p> <p>The accusation was pretty much every time we went out, even if we went to the supermarket, any time we were out in public, by, toward the end, it started out pretty infrequent but just escalated, but it got to the point where it was any time we were out in public and there was anybody else about.</p> <p>But yeah, it was mainly the constant accusations</p>
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<p>“I tried to tackle it in different ways”; coping with the abuse experience.</p>	<p>The following day and she said she'd been having an affair with this guy for a while... we were trying to live together, and I was trying to not believe what happened.</p> <p>I was all ready to accept her excuses.</p> <p>But I refused to accept all the time that I</p>	<p>over.</p> <p>Two weeks after actually having gone away and the locks are changed. The next thing I know, the police have come in the garden, the police are called and I'm threatened with arrest if I don't go, for trespassing in my own house which I recorded the police actually cause I expected something.</p> <p>Virtually every other allegation you can think of has been thrown at me.</p> <p>You know I would have her family ring me up and basically have a go at me for my behaviour, she would involve other people.</p> <p>Friends and family, basically, I got completely isolated from friends and family.</p> <p>I had my own business was the people I did business with, but once the relationship actually broke up she actually destroyed those relationships as well.</p> <p>So you know, I actually ended up with no relationships whatsoever with anybody, complete isolation from any support network.</p> <p>I realised fairly soon, you know, early on, that I'd married somebody who on the face of it was very confident and self assured but underneath was actually incredibly insecure.</p> <p>(She was in) the turmoil of what turned out to be her own childhood [...] So there is almost sort of a delusional paranoid, erm, erm, which just seemed to get projected onto me. It was</p>	<p>and the, the chipping away of my right to be my own person.</p> <p>Social group by saying they don't like me and trying very subtly make me decide between her and them to the point where I became quite isolated.</p> <p>I tried to kind of, keep that support, that support network in place, it was difficult because she was trying to undermine that or her actions, I'm not sure if she was trying to, I don't know whether it was a conscious intention to but certainly her actions were, were causing it to be, those close relationships of mine to be undermined.</p> <p>A big part of it and also the isolation, I think I did become quite dependent upon the relationship and on the home because I had become so separated from my social network.</p> <p>So yeah, the isolation was a, a, I guess that's a kind of violence, it's only with hindsight that it feels like it.</p> <p>Probably about half a dozen incidences of actual physical violence [...] they were getting more extreme each time</p> <p>And then I went back to her, and we talked about it and she promised it would never happen again, and I believed her and I think she genuinely meant it at the time as well, it really scared her.</p> <p>That point we talked about us getting counselling, couples counselling together [...] but three sessions in afterwards she said "I don't want to do this anymore, it's all about me, I'm</p>
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<p>was really kidding myself.</p> <p>I was naive and refused to believe it.</p> <p>I don't know what I've done, I feel terribly guilty like I must have done something awful to deserve such punishment. And I've devoted just short of eleven years, I've lived most of my life to just helping others and trying to look after other people.</p> <p>I married her believing that it would settle down and we would have an idyllic relationship but within a week of marrying her she returned to her hot tempered forays.</p> <p>I kept cooking for her and cleaning, and erm, hoping it would be better, and you know, once the kids got older it would be alright.</p> <p>I believe that in expressing my sexuality, I just laboured to make love to her to please her all the time, I didn't think of having any pleasure from it myself, I just wanted to please her as much as possible.</p> <p>I just wanted to please her until she said she'd had enough.</p>	<p>almost like a sort of, deflecting her own issues if you like onto me in the eyes of other people.</p> <p>Luckily the children never saw it.</p> <p>You know, it would appear as if she would go into this sort of mental or emotional place and she would just have no control.</p> <p>She picked up a wooden rolling pin and beat me to the floor with it. Erm, erm, I'm pretty good in a crisis, and when she actually stopped doing it, I sort of got up, grabbed her by the wrist, basically said to her, quite calmly and everything else, "I am going to lower you to the floor now, I want you to stay there until I call the police" which I what I did.</p> <p>I think virtually every single one except sexual. But you know, I've sat down and I've looked at the different types and I can literally say, that one, that one, that one, that one and that one, yeah.</p> <p>She was abused as a child. Her mother basically denigrated her, actually hit her wit a chair herself, erm, erm, erm, basically, she suffered quite badly as a child. Essentially she's just repeating. She'd just repeating.</p> <p>I took the view that she had problems and needed help, she still has problems and needs help.</p> <p>If you research into the whole area of abuse, a woman is expected to be believed no matter what.</p>	<p>sick of talking about me all the time we are suppose to be talking about us" so refused to go to any more sessions.</p> <p>I kinda went back when it all calmed down.</p> <p>Again I left it a few days, text each other a few times, spoke on the phone but again I was sort of sofa surfing, staying at a mates so I kinda went back when it all calmed down.</p> <p>There were times we would sit down and say "well, you know, that was really wired and really shit the other night, what we going to do about it, how we gunna stop it happening again" and kind of set up all these strategies, where I'd you know, say "look, I'm really scared here, I'm leaving" and she would really commit to allowing that to happen but when we got into it, when we were in the moment, she wouldn't, she could allow that to happen.</p> <p>She'd been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder which meant, that meant she had trouble trusting people and had trouble maintaining long term relationships.</p> <p>She also suffered from insomnia and these horrible nightmares, erm, but she'd wake up at sort of two o'clock, three o'clock in the morning, wake me up in a fury.</p> <p>She pushed me quite severely and then punched me in the face [...] I said, "right, I'm getting out of here, I'm leaving because we both need to calm down" and just walked out, err, and she tried to stop me, and erm, she appeared quite</p>
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terrified of me leaving and she kind of talked about how she had issues with her family and people leaving her, when we'd talked about when she was calm, she said that she'd always find that difficult to deal with because somebody kind of walked out on her.

I think, I guess to feed her insecurities that I really was committed to her, I don't think she was consciously manipulating me, she was very much testing how committed I was to the relationship.

I think it was fear, I think it was absolute terror. Erm, I mean she was absolutely in love with me definitely and I think she was terrified of losing me, erm, and that kind of, that converted into anger just cause she was so scared of me leaving or me wanting to be with someone else, not her.

I think it was kind of down to her early childhood and the fact she was very badly abused as a child that she just had really bad issues with trust, she was unable to trust anyone including me and there was nothing I could do to make her trust I tried to kind of, keep that support, that support network in place, it was difficult because she was trying to undermine that or her actions, I'm not sure if she was trying to, I don't know whether it was a conscious intention to but certainly her actions were, were causing it to be, those close relationships of mine to be undermined.

Every few months I'll have a nightmare and it's quite a specific nightmare about being in the relationship again and her attacking me or getting into a slanging match, an argument. And, I'll

Basically, the core of my research, erm, and this horrifies me most is I find 32 government ministers who have made decisions on funding, only to help women, not to help men and there decisions have basically instituted practices, policies and procedures for one part of the population without respect for the other part of the population, what they have done is unlawful, criminal and I'm quite upset by it. Basically the availability of support services, assessments and all this and everything else should be available to anybody that is actually suffering, this gendering of things is, is complete and utter nonsense, its like living in a Stalinist state where you do not fit the profile, therefore we will have to treat you as a second class citizen, I object to that.

I just sort of ended up helping lots of other people, which was therapeutic in itself because at least it felt as though I was doing something.

Quite frankly I could institute about a dozen court cases I could prosecute police officers, judges, government ministers, you know, the whole lot of them but quite frankly I'm too tired.

I did my best to sort of keep things as normal as possible.

I would flea and literally go into one of the rooms, and have my shoulder to the door, she'd beat, she would try to beat the door down.

<p>possibly always have them very occasionally [...] it's not a problem, it is every few months and it happens and I kind of wake up and go "well that was that, I'm fine and everything is all right".</p> <p>I think it is possible that, you know it will just repeat occasionally through the rest of my life. But the insomnia is fine now, erm which is, you know a hell of a relief.</p> <p>Then I went back to her, and we talked about it and she promised it would never happen again, and I believed her and I think she genuinely meant it at the time as well, it really scared her, it, it, you know, when she was talking about it calmly afterwards she realised how traumatic that was.</p>	<p>She'd given me some targets over the past year, erm, you know, "if this, this and this then everything will be ok" and I sort of let her know that, you know "right I've achieved all of that, lets move on now".</p> <p>I ended up living for three months, isolated in one room of the house because she would be violently abusive in front of the children.</p>	<p>One night she woke up, she'd had a horrible nightmare, about being attacked, I mean, she'd been really badly physically abused by her dad as a kid, erm, and she'd have, she will always have flash backs of that I think. But she woke up from a nightmare where, something quite horrific had happened, she wouldn't tell me what, it was obviously a flashback to her childhood. Erm, and immediately laid into me and said it was all my fault, very irrational, erm [...] she grabbed me by the throat and pinned me to the bed and I actually thought I was going to die, I could actually feel myself becoming unconscious.</p> <p>It was more, the violence was obviously quite dramatic but not that frequent.</p> <p>I tried to tackle it in different ways, I'd try and stay very calm and she'd say "oh your staying</p>
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<p><u>Love in the abusive encounter.</u></p> <p>The experiences of love and attachment.</p>	<p>Fell in love with her during the course of conversations, whilst being a customer at the bar, and erm, unbelievably, I didn’t think she would date me, and then erm, she did go out with me.</p> <p>She was a very passionate woman and erm, we had a passionate relationship.</p> <p>When I met this woman who was very beautiful, very passionate, she was very sexy it was like being locked in a sweet shop almost, you know, it fulfilled all of my fantasies, it was a very passionate relationship which I never ever had before.</p> <p>Wanted me to live with her.</p> <p>Unbelievably, I didn’t think she would date me, and then erm, she did go out with me, and erm, because she was very beautiful and I’m not.</p>	<p>It was one of those sort of, instant attraction things.</p> <p>I then went over to see her, decided that, you know, it was the person I wanted to marry.</p> <p>She turned round to me and said she wouldn’t commit to our relationship until she was satisfied about my relationship with the step son, which quite shocked me because we’d actually made marriage vows and all the other bits and pieces, that’s the sort of thing you get sorted out before hand.</p> <p>I realised fairly soon, you know, early on, that I’d married somebody who on the face of it was very confident and self assured but underneath was actually incredibly insecure...(she was in) the turmoil of what turned out to be her own childhood.</p> <p>She was abused as a child. Her mother basically denigrated her, actually hit her with</p>	<p>She told me afterwards, there was a situation where she told her best friend, cause she was really upset about it afterwards she got, once she’d become rational again and realised she’d hit me, she went round to her friends crying about it “oh my god, you know, what have I done”.</p> <p>There were times we would sit down and say “well, you know, that was really wired and really shit the other night, what we going to do about it, how we gunna stop it happening again” and kind of set up all these strategies, where I’d you know, say “look, I’m really scared here, I’m leaving” and she would really commit to allowing that to happen but when we got into it, when we were in the moment, she wouldn’t, she could allow that to happen.</p> <p>It was quite a whirlwind thing actually [...] The start of the relationship was very intense. Erm, and then we, I moved in within about two months to her house.</p>

	<p>Well I really believed I loved her, she was the ideal woman for me, she was perfect in every sense, she was a good cook, she was a seamstress, she was a meticulous housekeeper.</p> <p>This to me was the perfect woman, it was the idyllic relationship, she was very sexual.</p> <p>I was just kidding myself, living in a fantasy world, I totally created a fantasy image of her, that's why I blame myself, in that, I, I was in love with a fantasy that in reality didn't exist, and I blamed myself and erm, that just increased the guilt.</p> <p>I'd try to ring her and I wanted the relationship to be back to how it was, back to saying I wanted to make love to her, and I used to think about her, and I used to get sexually aroused and miss her and I used to think about us making love.</p> <p>I said to her "look I'm really worried because when you get better, you will look at me and you will see how ugly I am, and you wont want me and you'll go off and I couldn't stand that".</p> <p>I married her believing that it would settle down and we would have an idyllic relationship but within a week of marrying her she returned to her hot tempered forays.</p>	<p>a chair herself, erm, erm, erm, basically, she suffered quite badly as a child. Essentially she's just repeating.</p> <p>Because I got married, and I was committed to the person I got married, no matter what the issues were, I loved them and I was committed to them [...] I would not make, you know, a marriage for me, is not a, you know, a, erm, erm, 'we'll see how it goes' sort of thing for me it was a permanent life-long commitment.</p> <p>I said "look, I can't just go away because there are two children" otherwise by then I would have, by then, just walked, and gone and had nothing ever to do with her again, but I can't do that because there are two children, I have responsibilities to two children, who love me.</p>	<p>Very positive, a hell of a lot of fun, it was just quite intense at the start.</p> <p>I became aware very quickly that she had a lot of trouble dealing with us out in public, if there were people that she thought I'd find attractive [...] she thought anybody was competition.</p> <p>She appeared quite terrified of me leaving and she kind of talked about how she had issues with her family and people leaving her, when we'd talked about when she was calm, she said that she'd always find that difficult to deal with because somebody kind of walked out on her.</p> <p>She got between me and the door and said "you're not going anywhere".</p> <p>I was kind [...] making sure I kept my own space by that point and making sure I had somewhere to go back to, which she took as, as, lack of commitment to the relationship, and that in itself became a kind of battle ground.</p> <p>She phoned me out of the blue about six months later in the middle of the night, erm, I imagine, again, she'd woken up from a nightmare, she was very, very stressed, stressed out and I think she'd been drinking as well, and said "can you come over" and I said well, "no, I'm not going to come over, if you need to talk, I'm here, but I'm not coming over there" erm, and she sort of talked and cried for about twenty minutes and I kind of tried to calm her and she said "ok, I'm alright now" and she hung up and that was the last time I heard from her.</p>
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But I went back to the house and erm, as I had gone back the first time.

I gave up on that and I went back, because I was frightened, I didn't know where to go there was nobody to help me, I was just terrified, I just couldn't face life, I never planned on spending any life without her and, and, I sort of half wanted to go back and try again.

It just came home to me how serious it was and erm, I still thought I loved her and wanted her [...] but erm, I just, broke of [...] and I would have periods, week moments where I'd try to ring her and I wanted the relationship to be back to how it was.

I think it was fear, I think it was absolute terror. Erm, I mean she was absolutely in love with me definitely and I think she was terrified of losing me, erm, and that kind of, that converted into anger just cause she was so scared of me leaving or me wanting to be with someone else, not her.

She'd been really badly physically abused by her dad as a kid.

I think it was kind of down to her early childhood and the fact she was very badly abused as a child that she, she just have really bad issues with trust.

I wanted to keep the relationship going, we were engaged by that point and I was intent on making it work and finding whatever I could to make it work and I think she was when she was rational.

I mean, when she was calm and lucid it was fine, it was a really good relationship a very, very loving relationship a very caring relationship on both sides.

We were very, very much in love with each other and I was fully committed to it.

I guess, we were both from, from, broken homes, both grew up with, with, my parents split up when I was very young [...] I just didn't want to be like that, I wanted to be different, I wanted to prove to myself that relationships can last.

I did feel almost paternalistic towards him thinking, you know "I want to keep him safe" [...] I was protecting him in a way, cause even

<p>“You don’t hit anyone but you certainly don’t hit someone you love”; reconciling the juxtaposition of love and abuse.</p>	<p>I just, she would, she would come back having cooled down later and erm, I was all ready to accept her excuses and erm, especially when we erm ended up with a short kiss and make up session, she would become very passionate.</p> <p>She would call me up from time to time and erm, erm, and erm, you know, try to get me to go back.</p>		<p>when I was thinking “this isn’t going anywhere and I need to end this relationship” there was a part of me thinking “I’m just gunna hang in there till he is 16 and he can leave home so at least he’s not there on his own with her”.</p> <p>I could really see them getting to the point where they would beat the hell out of each other (<i>partner and her son</i>).</p> <p>Erm, and she did try and get in between me and the door and say to me oh you know “I’m not gunna let you leave” but I did manage to get out of the situation that time.</p>
	<p>It was this sort of roller coaster.</p>		<p>She told me afterwards, there was a situation where she told her best friend, cause she was really upset about it afterwards she got, once she’d become rational again and realised she’d hit me, she went round to her friends crying about it “oh my god, you know, what have I done”.</p> <p>There were times we would sit down and say “well, you know, that was really wired and really shit the other night, what we going to do about it, how we gunna stop it happening again” and kind of set up all these strategies, where I’d you know, say “look, I’m really scared here, I’m leaving” and she would really commit to allowing that to happen but when we got into it, when we were in the moment, she wouldn’t, she could allow that to happen.</p> <p>I mean, when she was calm and lucid it was fine, it was a really good relationship a very, very loving relationship a very caring relationship on</p>

			<p>both sides.</p> <p>You don't hit anyone but you certainly don't hit someone you love.</p> <p>With hindsight, it is fairly obvious that by that stage, it was, the whole relationship was starting to fall apart.</p>
<p><u>The intrapersonal impact of the abuse experience.</u></p> <p>“My mind just wasn't thinking right anymore”; the psychological impact of the abuse experience.</p>	<p>I said to her “look I'm really worried because when you get better, you will look at me and you will see how ugly I am, and you won't want me and you'll go off and I couldn't stand that”.</p> <p>She was just using her sexuality with me, and I didn't think she liked me and I felt really stupid.</p> <p>I feel like a useless individual, my family mock me, and erm, I just don't have a place.</p> <p>I know it sounds pathetic.</p> <p>I know a lot of people would listen to me and they would just mock me and say “oh he is a wimp” you know “its crap he is just trying to get attention, all the things they say, you know.</p> <p>I feel a terrible sense of guilt. I feel as if it</p>	<p>Initially I didn't really notice, because there were, on reflection there were lots and lots of little things that were indicated, none that you'd actually put together.</p> <p>It was totally unreal environment.</p>	<p>With hindsight, it is fairly obvious that by that stage, it was, the whole relationship was starting to fall apart.</p> <p>I had nightmares, flashbacks and insomnia for about a year and a half, it really, really spun me out for a long time.</p> <p>I mean the worse thing was the insomnia [...] it got to the point where I hadn't slept for about five days, it was over an Easter weekend and everyone else had kind of gone on holidays and I felt very isolated and I actually phoned up the out of hours doctor service in the end and said “look I don't want to self harm and I am not suicidal but I just need to sleep and I cant, and I'm at the point where I'm standing t the top of my stairs thinking that f I throw myself down I'll be unconscious for a while”.</p> <p>I was on anti-depressants for about six weeks because of that, and I'm convinced that was because of, well it's fairly obvious to me it was a</p>

was all my fault, like I'd done something to provoke her and make her that way, I just keep punishing myself all the time, "your very silly."

I don't know what I've done, I feel terribly guilty like I must have done something awful to deserve such punishment. And I've devoted just short of eleven years, I've lived most of my life to just helping others and trying to look after other people.

I was trying to not believe what happened.

I couldn't have any relationship with other women. [...] I had eleven years of complete celibacy.

Then I met a lady who was very fond of me [...] she wanted to have a relationship with me and I said "no I can't, I don't want to and I don't want to get that.

I just cried for ages and wanted to kill myself.

I sank into clinical depression.

I became more and more depressed.

I had a spell in mental hospital, a couple of spells, and erm. I was seriously depressed and erm, it's just I've sort of been on and off antidepressants ever since then.

direct result of what had happened.

Every few months I'll have a nightmare and it's quite a specific nightmare about being in the relationship again and her attacking me or getting into a slanging match, an argument. And, I'll possibly always have them very occasionally [...] it's not a problem, it is every few months and it happens and I kind of wake up and go "well that was that, I'm fine and everything is all right".

But the insomnia is fine now, erm which is, you know a hell of a relief, its fairly obvious to say but it's so debilitating, that you don't get a nights sleep for a couple of nights you end up absolutely spaced. And I never had that before, I always, I never had problems sleeping.

	<p>All very cruel and mentally crushing experience for me.</p> <p>And I just felt inadequate in myself and I wanted to punish myself and I wanted to self harm and kill myself, you know, because I had been so stupid.</p> <p>I felt, erm, it was just awful it was soul destroying.</p> <p>I still suffer terrible bouts of depression.</p> <p>I feel like a useless individual, my family mock me, and erm, I just don't have a place.</p> <p>All very cruel and mentally crushing experience for me.</p> <p>The NHS is cutting back mental health services, all this you know, stop hospitalisation, you know, "we don't wanna put people in mental hospitals and erm asylums" and all this "they need to be integrated into the community and have care in the community" its absolute rubbish, its all a con, it's a way of cutting money from spending on the mental health services.</p> <p>It was an ongoing nightmare, and erm, even now twenty odd years later I'm, it still upsets me, I'm still traumatised by it, it's just frightening that I could be like that.</p>		
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<p>The evolving sense of self; the impact of abuse upon identity.</p> <p>I feel like a useless individual, my family mock me, and erm, I just don't have a place.</p> <p>I feel a terrible sense of guilt, I feel as if it was all my fault, like I'd done something to provoke her and make her that way, I just keep punishing myself all the time, "your very silly."</p> <p>I lost all my confidence and erm, erm, I'd been a supremely confident manager but it stripped me of everything, my manhood, my dignity, my self, erm, esteem.</p> <p>Here was I, the subjugated, beaten wimp if you like and erm, and that was how I felt.</p> <p>I feel terribly guilty like I must have done something awful to deserve such punishment.</p> <p>I feel like a useless individual, my family mock me, and erm, I just don't have a place.</p> <p>I said to her "look I'm really worried because when you get better, you will look at me and you will see how ugly I am, and you wont want me and you'll go off and I couldn't stand that".</p> <p>Unbelievably, I didn't think she would date me, and then erm. she did go out with me. and erm. because she was very</p>	<p>So there is almost sort of a delusional paranoid, erm, erm, which just seemed to get projected onto me.</p> <p>It was almost like a sort of, deflecting her own issues if you like onto me in the eyes of other people. I'd have people come up to me and criticise me for things, that you know, completely out of the blue that I got no idea about.</p> <p>She picked up a wooden and beat me to the floor with it. Erm, erm, I'm pretty good in a crisis, and when she actually stopped doing it, I sort of got up, grabbed her by the wrist, basically said to her, quite calmly and everything else, "I am going to lower you to the floor now, I want you to stay there until I call the police" which I what I did.</p> <p>I'm trying to keep a business on the go, by this stage I've lost about £350,000 pounds worth of capital investment.</p> <p>My family background, my family have been free people, they have never been surfs or slaves or indentured people or anything else like that right back a thousand years, so I have a very strong sense of my own identity so I have a very strong sense of my own identity as, as, as a person in this country erm, and how outraged I am, that a government, my own government should be treating the people of this country this way.</p> <p>I'm not an angry person I would just like to peacefully get on with my life and have a</p>	<p>I did feel almost paternalistic towards him thinking, you know "I want to keep him safe" [...] I was protecting him in a way, cause even when I was thinking "this isn't going anywhere and I need to end this relationship" there was a part of me thinking "I'm just gonna hang in there till he is 16 and he can leave home so at least he's not there on his own with her".</p> <p>I guess, we were both from, from, broken homes, both grew up with, with, my parents split up when I was very young [...] I just didn't want to be like that, I wanted to be different, I wanted to prove to myself that relationships can last.</p>
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	<p>beautiful and I'm not.</p> <p>My own sisters were saying "what are you doing with someone like him you could do a hell of a lot better" and my own mother said well err "you must have been daft thinking you could be the right husband for her" err, my whole family were just not very supportive.</p> <p>I, I became very introverted.</p> <p>I felt stupid in the eyes of other people, I couldn't face other people because they were all mocking me.</p> <p>I feel like a useless individual, my family mock me, and erm, I just don't have a place.</p> <p>I know a lot of people would listen to me and they would just mock me and say "oh he is a wimp" you know "its crap he is just trying to get attention, all the things they say, you know.</p>	<p>relationship with my children.</p>	
<p>The socio-cultural construction of gender and its impact upon the abuse experience.</p> <p>"It makes you feel like a bit less of a man"</p>	<p>It demeaned me, it deprived me of any masculinity, it really completely emasculated.</p> <p>I lost all my confidence and erm. erm. I'd</p>	<p>She picked up a wooden and beat me to the floor with it. Erm, erm, I'm pretty good in a crisis, and when she actually stopped doing it, I sort of got up, grabbed her by the wrist, basically said to her, quite calmly and</p>	<p>I had a few friends who, who had serious, understandably serious misgivings about the whole thing, very gently trying to say "are you sure about this".</p>

<p>been a supremely confident manager and I was confident in my own ability but it stripped me of everything, my manhood, my dignity, my self, erm, esteem.</p> <p>Didn't conform to the, erm, the idea of being a man, you know, the man who dominates the woman or who is suppose to dominate the relationship somehow, you know, be the alpha male if you like, that erm, that woman were subordinate too traditionally, the way that men were brought up.</p> <p>I wasn't the type of man who would go out and prove he was a man by sinking ten pints of beer at night, I wasn't like that, I didn't copulate with as many woman as I could jump on, I was very altruistic and idealistic and I just didn't conform to being a 'man' per sae, as the perception was at the time of what a man was, that the man was a dominant role in any relationship and here was I, the subjugated, beaten wimp if you like and erm, and that was how I felt</p> <p>I got a call from my chairman saying what had happened, and he was annoyed with me, and erm, he was annoyed with me and said erm "I hope you haven't told any of your staff for goodness sake don't let them know what happened", you know, "all our managing directors are suppose to be in stable relationships and if you cant handle a stable relationship you cant run one of our company's" because I</p>	<p>everything else, "I am going to lower you to the floor now, I want you to stay there until I call the police" which I what I did.</p> <p>By this stage I've lost about £350,000 pounds worth of capital investment.</p> <p>I took the view that she had problems and needed help, she still has problems and needs help.</p> <p>Basically I'm treated as though I'm the problem. And if you look into the research, you know, if you research into the whole area of abuse, a woman is expected to be believed no matter what, so everybody responds on the basis that what she says is true whether she tells the truth or not.</p> <p>Erm, erm, essentially, the power relationship, yeah, erm, because I'm male and she's female, erm, erm, basically she holds all the cards, the woman holds all the cards and she can exercise them with impunity.</p> <p>A woman is expected to be believed no matter what, so everybody responds on the basis that what she says is true whether she tells the truth or not.</p> <p>I would try to talk to people about it and of course, she'd already spoken to them so they didn't believe me.</p>	<p>I did talk to other friends about it, yeah. There were, there were a couple who were very, very supportive.</p> <p>His response was, "well, its only a woman hitting a bloke, its not major, she's only little" and just completely belittled my experience of it and just assumed it wasn't any big deal. Erm, so yeah, that kind of, ended that relationship really, I was very, very surprised about how he reacted.</p> <p>There were couple of good friends who, who were very supportive, and, and, were just a kind of sounding board, they didn't even try and offer advice, cause they knew that's not what I needed I just needed someone to offload to, so I tried, I tried to kind of, keep that support, that support network in place, it was difficult because she was trying to undermine that.</p> <p>But I did manage to keep some very good friendships that, that, they did support me...one it was a case of "here's some spare keys if you ever need to stay at my place, you know, if I'm not in, just let yourself in" and, and she never knew about that, I had that there as a kind of get out clause, and I know she wouldn't have known where I was, so I would have been safe there.</p> <p>She got between me and the door and said "you're not going anywhere" so I called the police, I dialled 999, called the police, erm, they turned up, assumed, I think they'd been given, over the radio a report that there was a domestic incident happening, erm with a couple, had violence, they turned up assumed I was the perpetrator, told me they were going to arrest me,</p>
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was managing director of a multimillion pound company and erm, so I was told to keep it under wraps and not say anything.

My own sisters were saying "what are you doing with someone like him you could do a hell of a lot better" and my own mother said well erm "you must have been daft thinking you could be the right husband for her" erm, my whole family were just not very supportive.

And I'm not just making a plea for men who are abused. I know that it is very silent, no one appreciates it, because everybody wants to ridicule it, saying "oh rubbish, men are the abusers, they get drunk and they rape there wives and beat them up on match days" and all this crap.

Well I really believed I loved her, she was the ideal woman for me, she was perfect in every sense, she was a good cook, she was a seamstress, she was a meticulous housekeeper.

They just didn't believe me.

they just thought that I must have done something to deserve it or that I wasn't attacked by someone else

I had to make up stories that I'd been mugged in the street and erm. or, just anything like that, I just tried to avoid talking about it cause nobody would believe me if I told them the truth.

and I said "fine, arrest me, just get me out of here" and they kind of back down and said "fine, if you wont leave we will arrest you", wouldn't accept that I was the victim and she was the perpetrator, erm, but you know that was fine, they were there and I could get out, you know, I packed my bags and left.

I was, you know pretty pissed off that they just assumed that I was naturally the perpetrator.

I said "look, my partners come and tried to kick the door in, she is very violent" she'd left by that point erm, and they, they said, they were two woman police officers, they said, you looked like, I said its not a he it's a she, they assumed that if I was a victim then the perpetrator must be male as well, that I was a gay man in a relationship, and I thought I'd explained that it was a woman, gave a description of her, and they sort of went round the block a couple of times, looking, looking and then came back and said "we can't find him, what does he look like" and I kept saying "no its not, it's a woman" and they just didn't seem to be able to get there heads round it at all, its really, really, really weird and very frustrating.

His response was, "well, its only a woman hitting a bloke, its not major, she's only little" and just completely belittled my experience of it and just assumed it wasn't any big deal. Erm, so yeah, that kind of, ended that relationship really, I was very, very surprised about how he reacted.

I think it effected other peoples response to it, I think it was, I think its not taken seriously, my

experience is not taken seriously by a lot of people, including the police, but also as I say, friendships no longer exist of mine because of other peoples response to it, you know the fact that people didn't take it seriously "oh don't be silly, its just a woman". Whereas if it had been the other way round, if, if, I'd hit her, I'd expect her friends to turn up with baseball bats you know.

Realised she'd hit me, she went round to her friends crying about it "oh my god, you know, what have I done" and her best friends response was "well you've only smacked him, its not like you've beaten him, knocked his head off". So yeah, again her friends were, some of her friends were equally belittling of, of the severity the fact that they'd been any violence because it wasn't major, because it hadn't broken my arm or something, it wasn't a big deal.

I think it's probably very different if the genders are reversed, I would imagine.

There is very, very little support out there as [...] there is a couple of groups that have been set up with very little funding [...] one of them has quite bad reputation for being a bit of a misogynistic group .

It certainly does feel as though we are not taken seriously by statutory services and the public at large, and the media as well, you know, you get a situation where, you know a hard man from a soap opera is getting beaten up by his wife and 'The Sun' think it's the funniest thing on the planet [...] that perception does kind of spread

<p>“It’s about providing a service that is for all victims.....that is the challenge”.</p>	<p>I gave up on that and I went back to try and, erm, because I was frightened, I didn’t have anywhere to live, I didn’t know where to go there was nobody to help me, I was just terrified, I just couldn’t face life, I never planned on spending any life without her and, and, I sort of half wanted to go back and try again.</p> <p>But this time they treated it seriously and they entered me in the, the book at the time it was, they didn’t have computers then, erm, they entered it into a big registered book, and they listed me, and she showed me the entry and put me down as a battered husband.</p> <p>I was horrified by the reaction of the police, they were taking the mickey out of me, and they were saying “you’ve got to be joking, what did you do to her first?!”</p>	<p>The police came and arrested her but err, nothing happened really. Basically, erm, erm, erm, she, rang the police herself about two weeks later and the police came round and said if either of us ever rang again they would arrest and prosecute us both. Which was great fun, so you know, if proceeded to these violent attacks which I sort of escaped, and I didn’t call the police again.</p> <p>Two weeks after actually having gone away and the locks are changed. The next thing I know, the police have come in the garden, the police are called and I’m threatened with arrest if I don’t go, for trespassing in my own house which I recorded the police actually cause I expected something.</p> <p>Yes I do, how, no help whatsoever.</p> <p>I was threatened with arrest, wrongfully. I’ve actually made nine complaints to the police</p>	<p>through society and that means that when it happens for real to people who read those newspapers there mates don’t think its anything more than a joke either.</p> <p>I did feel almost paternalistic towards him thinking, you know “I want to keep him safe” [...] I was protecting him in a way, cause even when I was thinking “this isn’t going anywhere and I need to end this relationship” there was a part of me thinking “I’m just gunna hang in there till he is 16 and he can leave home so at least he’s not there on his own with her”.</p>
			<p>I, would like to get involved with the domestic violence unit in **** we have got a really good one for female victims and for gay victims, erm, there is no male heterosexual presence on it and it seems a very closed shop.</p> <p>There is very, very little support out there as [...] there is a couple of groups that have been set up with very little funding [...] one of them has quite bad reputation for being a bit of a misogynistic group.</p> <p>It certainly does feel as though we are not taken seriously by statutory services and the public at large, and the media as well, you know, you get a situation where, you know a hard man from a soap opera is getting beaten up by his wife and ‘The Sun’ think it’s the funniest thing on the planet [...] that perception does kind of spread through society and that means that when it happens for real to people who read those newspapers there mates don’t think its anything</p>

	<p>And erm, their attitude was 'tuff', I said "look this is a serious assault" I had stitches in my scalp, and I showed them the thing, the hairline fracture and I had a head injury sheet.</p> <p>the police, erm, they were just mocking me, they were saying erm, things like "what did you do to her first" and "I bet you deserved it" and erm, saying "what's the matter with you, why didn't you hit her back?" "are you a man or a mouse" and they said "squeak up" it was like that, they were just taking the mick it was just ridiculous, and they wouldn't do anything, they wouldn't interview her or anything.</p> <p>Their ought to be somewhere whoever is abused, there ought to be more sensibility in the community to it, more awareness of it, to look out for the signs of abuse you know, people who are introverted, people who are frightened, who are reluctant, who, you know are withdrawn, and erm, people should be more, there should be more awareness.</p> <p>One of the great things that stop people from seeking help and they just become a loner. And I'm sure a lot of people like me end they just end their lives because they don't know how to cope with it or ask for help or if they do they just know they'll be ridiculed so they feel trapped in a corner.</p>	<p>about it, which they are dealing with at the moment, but basically the police acted unlawfully, beyond their powers.</p> <p>The court refuses, the courts refused to look at her behaviour, they have nothing that evidences anything to do with my 'bad' behaviour. Yet I'm having to, I'm having to jump through hoops to maintain the relationship with just one of the children.</p> <p>I'm still under siege, I'm still being treated as some sort of threat, erm. And there is no evidence of it, just somebody's say so, and she's lying, wholesale, and she seems to be able to just make it up and everybody, just jumps to what she says as if its true, no checking, no verification, no, you know, nothing.</p> <p>Basically, the core of my research, erm, and this horrifies me most is I find 32 government ministers who have made decisions on funding, only to help women, not to help men and there decisions have basically instituted practices, policies and procedures for one part of the population without respect for the other part of the population, what they have done is unlawful, criminal and I'm quite upset by it.</p> <p>Basically the availability of support services, assessments and all this and everything else should be available to anybody that is actually suffering, this genderising of things is, is complete and utter nonsense, its like living in a Stalimist state where you do not fit the profile, therefore we will have to treat you as</p>	<p>more than a joke either.</p> <p>Certainly my experience with the police in this area is exactly that and there involved with the domestic violence unit as well and the fact that they don't even think it's a big deal.</p> <p>Apparently there is one hostel in the entire country for, for men who've had to get out of households where they are being attacked and even the help lines all seem to be to support women, which of course there should be, but there should be stuff for men as well but there doesn't feel as though there is.</p> <p>It's been cathartic actually, yeah. It's good to talk about it, I don't talk about it very often [...] but no it's not something I talk about very often and I think it's been very helpful to do so.</p>
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And I'm not just making a plea for men who are abused, I know that it is very silent, no one appreciates it, because everybody wants to ridicule it, saying "oh rubbish, men are the abusers, they get drunk and they rape their wives and beat them up on match days" and all this crap.

They said "well don't go, go to the police, do anything but don't go back to that situation" they really did take it seriously.

Well the people in the hospital, treated me and believed me and they just made me aware that, that you know, I hadn't been kidding myself, well I had been kidding myself, but the violence was real, it was intense, that erm, she could have killed me and that if it went on, she would kill me or do me serious harm.

Their ought to be somewhere whoever is abused, there ought to be more sensibility in the community to it, more awareness of it, to look out for the signs of abuse you know, people who are introverted, people who are frightened, who are reluctant, who, you know are withdrawn, and erm, people should be more, there should be more awareness.

I want the story to get out; I want people to become more aware.

If somebody wants help I just think that you're a young person who is trying to do something worthy and I just want to help

a second class citizen, I object to that.

The courts, the local authority, the government, virtually every single government agency I've come across. Erm, erm, I've had people turn round and say "oh, we only help women".

It was in Wales. Erm, so, and, they were over-subscribed. I did about three months research looking for help and there was none at that time, there is a bit more help for people now, but at that time there was none. Nobody I spoke to was interested, erm, erm, basically, everybody was saying "the funding is only there to help women"

Basically, erm, erm, she, rang the police herself about two weeks later and the police came round and said if either of us ever rang again they would arrest and prosecute us both.

Quite frankly I could institute about a dozen court cases I could prosecute police officers, judges, government ministers, you know, the whole lot of them but quite frankly I'm too tired

Virtually every other allegation you can think of has been thrown at me.

I was threatened with arrest, wrongfully. I've actually made nine complaints to the police about it, which they are dealing with at the moment, but basically the police acted unlawfully, beyond their powers.

	<p>you that's all, if it gets the message across and your able to do that I can encourage you to help people then that's fortunate.</p>	<p>a woman is expected to be believed no matter what, so everybody responds on the basis that what she says is true whether she tells the truth or not.</p> <p>Helpful. It actually helps to talk about it, it really does help, I mean it brings up feelings and the issues and everything else but it actually helps to talk about it.</p>	
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