

STRESS PRECIPITATING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: A QUALITATIVE
EXPLORATION OF CHANGES FROM MARRIAGE
THROUGH SEPARATION

THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a major public health problem in the United States (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP, 2012), IPV includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, threats of physical or sexual abuse, as well as psychological and emotional abuse. Although the prevalence of IPV is not limited to women, 95% of reported cases of IPV are male-perpetrated against women (CDCP, 2010a). Male-perpetrated IPV can result in a number of physical and mental health conditions (Escribà-Agüir, Ruiz-Pérez, Montero-Piñar, Vives-Cases, Plazaola-Castaño, & Martín-Baena, 2010). These can include recurring headaches, gastrointestinal problems, depression, anxiety, sleep problems, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD; Adkins, 2010; CDCP, 2010a; Coker, Smith, Thompson, McKeown, Bethea, & Davis, 2002). In extreme cases, male-perpetrated IPV can result in the death of a female partner. Disturbingly, 70% of all IPV related deaths in 2007 resulted from male-perpetrated IPV (CDCP, 2012).

Alarmingly, in their Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, the CDCP (2010b) found IPV alone affects more than 12 million people each year. These numbers include individuals who are in existing relationships or marriages, as well as those who are separated. Thus, contrary to popular belief, ending the relationship or marriage does

necessarily end IPV experienced by female victims. In fact, separated women report nine times the amount of violence compared to married women (Brownridge et al., 2008). Similarly, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2012), individuals who were separated had a greater risk of experiencing nonfatal male-perpetrated IPV than individuals who were married or widowed. Moreover, the possibility of violence after separation is not limited to individuals who experienced IPV during the course of their marriage. In other words, some women experience male-perpetrated IPV for the first time during the separation process (Spiwak & Brownridge, 2005).

Despite these findings, male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process is a fairly understudied topic (Brownridge, 2006). However, previous research indicates there are multiple influences on IPV. One potential influence is the amount of stress families experience (Fox, Benson, Demaris, & Van Wyk, 2002; Jasinski, 2001). The American Psychological Association (2012) found American families reported remarkably high stress levels that exceeded what they considered to be healthy. Moreover, because separation is a major stressor event (Price, Price, & McKenry, 2010), it is plausible that male-perpetrated IPV might be heightened during this time. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore what stressor events and resources precipitate male-perpetrated IPV during marriage and determine if these same factors precipitate IPV during the separation process among men and women who reported male-perpetrated IPV during both marriage and the separation process. In addition to stressor events and resources, a secondary goal was to explore how individuals who experienced male-perpetrated IPV during both marriage and the separation process perceived the initial crisis of male-perpetrated IPV during marriage. The intention of the second goal was to explore and further understand

stress surrounding male-perpetrated IPV for individuals who continue to experience IPV after separation occurs.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework for the current study was grounded in the Double ABC-X model. The original ABC-X model, developed by Reuben Hill (1958) to explain a family's response to stress, suggested a family experienced stress or crisis (X) not as a direct result of the stressor event itself (A), but based on the interaction of the stressor event with the family's perception (i.e., appraisal) of the stressor event (C). Hill theorized that the family's resources (B) and their perception of the stressor event buffered the family from stressors and reduced the risk of the family experiencing stress or crisis (X; Hill, 1958). Family stress has been defined as a change in the family's equilibrium that becomes problematic when the family experiences disruption (Price et al., 2010). Crisis, on the other hand, has been defined as: "(a) a disturbance in the equilibrium that is so overwhelming, (b) pressure that is so severe, or (c) change that is so acute that the family system is blocked, immobilized, and incapacitated" (Boss as cited in Price et al., 2010).

Although the original ABC-X model addressed short-term disruption experienced by the family due to a stressor event (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982; Weber, 2011), researchers desired a way to examine how families recovered from stress or crisis (X). Therefore, McCubbin and Patterson (1982) expanded the original ABC-X model to include pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis variables to better explain how a family could recover from crisis, and why some families were better equipped to adapt to stress than others. Specifically, McCubbin and Patterson (1982) expanded the original ABC-X model to include not only the initial stressor (A), but the pileup of additional stressors (a);

not only the family's existing resources (B), but the addition of new resources (b) the family used to cope with stress or crisis, and not only the family's perception of the initial stressor (C), but also the family's perception of the stress or crisis, the pileup they experienced, and their resources (c).

In addition, McCubbin and Patterson (1982) expanded the original model by explaining how stressor pileup (Aa) can include stress stemming from (a) the initial stressor event, (b) chronic strains that persisted over time due to the initial stressor, (c) transitions, (d) consequences of efforts to cope with the stressor event, and (e) ambiguity within the family and within society. They also expanded existing and new resources (Bb) to not only include the family resources considered by Hill, but also psychological/individual and social/community resources. However, their greatest contribution to the original model was the addition of coping. Specifically, according to McCubbin and Patterson (1982), the interaction between Aa, Bb, and Cc leads to coping and adaptation or crisis (Xx). If the family is able to meet the demands of the stressor event and the initial crisis, then positive adaptation, referred to as bonadaptation, occurs. On the other hand, if the family is unsuccessful and continues to experience a state of disequilibrium or disruption, then maladaptation occurs (Weber, 2011).

In using the Double ABC-X model to explain male-perpetrated IPV that occurred during both marriage and again during the separation process, male-perpetrated IPV represents the initial crisis (X), while male-perpetrated IPV during separation represents maladaptation (Xx). By applying the Double ABC-X model in this way, researchers can examine the context in which male-perpetrated IPV occurred during both the marriage and the separation process by exploring the family pre- and post-crisis to determine what

stressor events precipitated the crisis, what new and existing resources were available for the family, and the perceptions individuals held of the initial crisis. It could be argued that if individuals do not have the resources necessary to cope with the initial stressors they experience they might resort to male-perpetrated IPV. On the other hand, resources could potentially buffer a stressor event (Malia, 2006). In support of this argument, research has found that women who did not have access to resources, such as income or self-esteem, were more vulnerable to male-perpetrated IPV (González-Guarda, Peragallo, Vasquez, Urrutia, & Mitrani, 2009).

In addition, perceptions the individual and couple have of the initial crisis are highly important when determining if the individual or couple will overcome the stressor event or if they will experience maladaptation. Although McCubbin and Patterson's (1982) Double ABC-X model includes perceptions of stressor events and resources in addition to the perception of crisis (Cc), the current study only explored perceptions of the initial crisis. Previous research has explored women's perception of male-perpetrated IPV and how this perception can create stress (Dichter & Gelles, 2012; Martinez-Torteya, Bogat, von Eye, Levendosky, & Davidson, 2009), yet little is known about the perceptions of the initial crisis among individuals who continue to experience male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process. This area of research is important to explore because the perception an individual holds of the initial crisis can influence stressor events and resources post-crisis.

Problem Statement

Few, if any, studies have utilized the Double ABC-X model to explore male-perpetrated IPV. In addition, to date, no studies have used the Double ABC-X model to

explore male-perpetrated IPV during both marriage and again during the separation process. Most of the research that has been done examined very specific stressor events as predictors of male-perpetrated IPV, and did not include an examination of the individual's or family's available resources. Additionally, an examination of the individual or family's perceptions of the initial crisis has not been incorporated.

Therefore, the goals of this study were to explore what stressor events, resources, and perceptions of the initial crisis precipitated male-perpetrated IPV during marriage and determine if these same factors precipitated male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process among men and women who reported male-perpetrated IPV during both marriage and the separation process. By exploring the role of stress during the relationship, as well as after the relationship ends, the context in which male-perpetrated IPV occurred will be better understood. Moreover, information regarding stressor events and resources could help identify risk factors associated with IPV, aide in prevention, and improve intervention.

Research Questions

Given the gaps in current literature, this study aimed to build upon research examining stressor events, resources, and perceptions of the initial crisis as they related to male-perpetrated IPV during marriage and again during the separation process.

Specifically, the following research questions were explored:

Research Question 1: What stressor events (A) precipitated male-perpetrated IPV during marriage (X)?

Research Question 2: What resources (B) were available to individuals who experienced male-perpetrated IPV during marriage (X)?

Research Question 3: What stressor events and subsequent pileup (Aa) were present during the separation process in comparison to those experienced during marriage for individuals who reported male-perpetrated IPV during both marriage and the separation process?

Research Question 4: What existing and new resources (Bb) were present during the separation process in comparison to resources available during marriage for individuals who reported male-perpetrated IPV during both marriage and the separation process?

Research Question 5: How did individuals perceive the initial crisis of male-perpetrated IPV (Cc) during marriage?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To better understand how stressor events, resources, and perceptions of the initial crisis impact male-perpetrated IPV, it is important to understand previous research that examined each factor of the Double ABC-X model. The research presented includes further defining the constructs of the current study, previous research that explored the relationship between stress and male-perpetrated IPV, and the magnification of male-perpetrated IPV related to stressors (Aa), resources (Bb), and perceptions (Cc). By reviewing the literature in this fashion, results from the current study will have further meaning and significance to add to current research.

Stressor Events (Aa)

Life transitions and events causing family stress are perceived as inevitable, normal, and even desirable conditions for psychological development (Price et al., 2010). However, these normal events become problematic when the amount of stress in the family system reaches a point at which family members or the family system show signs of distress (Boss, 1988; Weber, 2011). For the purpose of this study, stressor events have been identified based on McCubbin and Patterson's (1982) descriptions of stressor events and common sources of pileup. Stressor events can include daily stressors (i.e., day-to-day causes of stress), chronic stress (e.g., financial stress, substance abuse), and major

life transitions (e.g., divorce; Price et al., 2010). Price and colleagues (2010) defined the collection of stressor events, normative and/or non-normative, as *stress pileup*. Pileup can stem from the initial stressor, hardships the initial stressor created and that have persisted over time, transitions, consequences of coping, hardships on resources, and uncertainty within the family the initial stressor created (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982; Weber, 2011). When everyday stressors begin to accumulate, or when a new stressor is added, pileup can occur (Lamanna & Riedman, 2012), potentially resulting in negative outcomes such as male-perpetrated IPV. In support of this assumption, individuals in stressful situations where pileup occurred experienced twice as many physical assaults from an intimate partner in the past year compared to individuals with IPV as a singular stressor event (Graham-Bermann, Sularz, & Howell, 2011).

Daily Stressors

Daily stressors are unpleasant events of everyday life that occur by chance or circumstance (Serido, Almeida, & Wethington, 2004). In comparison to other forms of stress, daily stressors occur more frequently and have the potential of increasing chances for pileup (Price et al., 2010; Serido et al., 2004). Individuals' appraisals of daily stressors, in turn, influence the level of distress the daily stressor creates. Distress created by daily stress and appraisals of daily stress have been related to male-perpetrated IPV (Lutenbacher, 2000). To illustrate, in her study examining levels of daily stress experienced by women with histories of IPV, Lutenbacher (2000) found histories of partner abuse were positively associated with increased amounts of everyday stressors. In addition to women who experienced higher levels of daily stressors, abusive partners who

experienced higher amounts of daily stress were more likely to use IPV (American Psychological Association, 2012).

Other areas of research have focused on more specific forms of daily stress in relation to male-perpetrated IPV. Some specific examples of the daily stressors examined have included balancing work with relationships and family demands, traffic, and child care (Evans & Wachs, 2010). One of the more researched areas of daily stress was work-related stress. Studies that examined work-family conflict found individuals in management positions experienced higher rates of work-family conflict when work-related stressors were high (Jacobshagen, Amstad, Semmer, & Kuster, 2005). Research has also found that individuals who experienced higher levels of work-related stressors and negative workdays came home angrier and withdrew from their spouse (Schulz, Cowan, Pape Cowan, & Brennan, 2004). Negative reactions to daily stressors experienced in the work place, such as withdrawing from a spouse, have been associated with physically abusive husbands (Holtzworth-Munroe, Smutzler, & Stuart, 1998).

Chronic Stress

Chronic stress has been defined by the American Psychological Association (2012) as constant and persistent stress that spans over an extended period of time. Price and colleagues (2010) explained chronic stressors as uncharacteristic stress stemming from circumstances that occurred over a period of time, were more complicated to correct than short-term stressors, and had more negative implications for families. To gain an understanding of how this related to IPV, McNulty and Hellmuth (2008) explored a variety of sources of chronic stress including finances, school, unemployment, health, partner's health, family, and partner's family. Results showed couples with higher levels

of chronic stress also showed higher levels of IPV (McNulty & Hellmuth). Two common sources of chronic stress often examined as precursors to male-perpetrated IPV are financial stress (Anderson, 2010; Benson, Fox, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2003; Rollins et al., 2012) and substance use (Moore, Easton, & McMahon, 2011; Testa et al., 2012; Zavala & Spohn, 2010).

Financial stress. Previous research has found that IPV is more likely to occur among couples experiencing financial stress (Benson & Fox, 2001). Specifically, couples who experienced financial stress reported negative outcomes leading to the use of male-perpetrated IPV (Fox et al., 2002). Similarly, Falconier (2010) found couples who experienced financial stress also showed higher levels of male partner hostile withdrawal, intimidation, and psychological aggression (Falconier, 2010). In addition to financial stress, IPV has been linked to low wages, number of hours worked, and lack of job security (Fox et al., 2002; Kimerling, Alvarez, Pavao, Mack, Smith, & Baumrind, 2009). For example, Fox and colleagues (2002) found male-perpetrated IPV was significantly predicted by the partners' desires for each other to work more due to financial stress. Both the female's desire for her male partner to work more and the male's desire for his partner work longer hours increased the likelihood of male-perpetrated IPV (Fox et al., 2002).

Financial stress also encompasses housing instability and stress associated with low income neighborhoods. Financial stress, poverty, and neighborhood disadvantage (i.e., residential instability) have been positively associated with male-perpetrated IPV (Anderson, 2010; Benson, Fox, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2003; Rollins et al., 2011). To illustrate, Rollins and colleagues' (2011) examination of male-perpetrated IPV and

housing instability showed that 80% of the 278 female participants who reported physical and/or sexual IPV in the last six months were unable or had a difficult time paying for housing the same months that male-perpetrated IPV occurred. In addition, certain financial characteristics of neighborhoods have shown to correlate to higher levels of IPV. For example, IPV is more prevalent in areas with higher proportions of unemployment, working class citizens, and families below the poverty level (Caetano, Ramisetty-Mikler, & Harris, 2010).

There are several schools of thought as to why male-perpetrated IPV occurs in conjunction with higher levels of financial stress. One possible explanation for this finding is that males who are unemployed or underemployed may feel threatened by a higher paid female partner and perceive a loss of power and status in the relationship (Renzetti & Larkin, 2009). In order to regain control, males may use IPV to regain a feeling of masculinity and power, and use IPV to assert dominance over their female partner (Benson et al., 2003; Renzetti & Larkin, 2009). In support of this assumption, previous researchers have found employment status was a source of stress for partners (Falco, Dal Corso, De Carlo, & Di Sipio, 2008) and was related to male-perpetrated IPV (Benson et al., 2003; Benson & Fox, 2004; Fox et al., 2002). For example, Benson and Fox (2001) found as the number of unemployment periods for males increased, so did the rate of male-perpetrated IPV. In addition to male employment status, female employment status has also been linked to male-perpetrated IPV. Specifically, women who earned two thirds or more than their partners were 93% more likely to have experienced IPV by male partners (Melzer, 2002). The risk of IPV was reduced when the man earned the larger portion of the couple's income (Fox et al., 2002) and increased when female partners had

higher educations, were employed, and had higher earnings than their male partners (Kaukinen, 2004).

Alcohol or substance use. Current literature debates the role alcohol or substance use plays in both stress and IPV. The question is whether alcohol or substance use *causes* stress and IPV or if they are used as coping mechanisms. In the case of research on stress, results have shown alcohol and substance abuse individually and collectively have caused stress while, at the same time, are often used as coping mechanisms, and can lead to violent actions (Goldberg, 2010). In relation to IPV, there is some debate whether alcohol or substance use causes IPV or if they simply correlate (Klostermann, 2006; Zavala & Spohn, 2010).

Research has shown when women and/or their partner used alcohol or substances, the risk for male-perpetrated IPV increased (Connor-Smith, Henning, Moore, & Holdford, 2011; Moore, Stuart, Meehan, Rhatigan, Hellmuth, & Keen, 2008; Testa et al., 2012). For example, substance use has been related to male psychological, physical, and sexual aggression (Moore et al., 2008; Moore et al., 2011). In addition to substance use, Testa and colleagues (2012) discovered male-perpetrated IPV increased when husbands or wives had high alcohol dependency scores, but not when both partners reported high alcohol dependency scores. This suggests an unequal partner dependency on substances and alcohol can potentially create the need to resort to IPV. In other words, male-perpetrated IPV occurred when one partner used either alcohol or substances, but not when both partners used. To further illustrate, Cunradi, Caetano, and Schafer (2002) found female or male alcohol-related problems increased the risk for moderate and severe

male-perpetrated IPV against women. However, only women's drug use increased the likelihood of moderate and severe male-perpetrated IPV (Cunradi et al., 2002).

Alcohol and substance use were not only related to physical abuse, but also emotional abuse. Zavala and Spohn (2010) discovered the prevalence of male partners' drinking, along with the average number of drinks consumed during episodes of drinking, positively related to emotional abuse. However, findings have also suggested that alcohol use, when present in cases of IPV, may be moderated by aggressive tendencies and coping deficiencies (Schumacher, Homish, Leonard, Quigley, & Kearns-Bodkin, 2008). In other words, males who commit IPV against their partners may already have aggressive tendencies and lack coping skills in general. When alcohol is introduced to the system, cognitive controls are weakened, allowing for dominant cues and responses (i.e., aggression) to influence behavior towards women (Schumacher et al., 2008).

Major Life Transitions

Life transitions are a normative type of stress and may stem from the purchase of a home, marriage, birth of a child, or death of a parent (Price et al., 2010). Although they are considered normative, these life events can create stressful situations and can lead to IPV (Cano & Vivian, 2001; 2003). One of the most common and stressful of all life transitions is separation and divorce (Price et al., 2010; Riggs, Caulfield, & Street, 2000).

Separation and Divorce. In 2009, the divorce rate in the United States was 3.4 per 1,000 citizens (CDCP, 2012). Yet, few studies have explored the prevalence and characteristics of male-perpetrated IPV during separation (Brownridge, 2006). An even smaller number have explored separation as a stressor event possibly contributing to male-perpetrated IPV. Separation can create stress through a forced transition for partners

(Price et al., 2010). Individuals must reorganize their lives, handle a potentially worsened economic state, and adjust psychologically (Price et al., 2010; Walker, Logan, Jordan, & Campbell, 2004).

As a result, terminating a relationship might create a higher risk for IPV (Riggs et al., 2000; Spiwak & Brownridge, 2005). To illustrate, in DeKeseredy and Joseph's (2006) study of rural women, over half of all participants reported extreme physical violence during attempts to leave the relationship. Additionally, how separation occurred could also increase male-perpetrated IPV. In cases where the separation was motivated by the woman in the relationship, an increased amount of psychological stress for the male partner might occur. In other words, female-initiated separation threatened to reduce power and control and, in turn, males increased manipulation and intimidation to gain control over a female partners' behaviors (Bancroft, 2002; Campbell, Glass, Sharps, Laughon, & Bloom, 2007). In support of this assumption, previous literature showed males felt abandoned and desired the need to retaliate in the form of violence (Brownridge, 2006; Riggs et al., 2000). In some cases, retaliation leading to IPV might not have occurred during the marriage, but was initiated in response to separation (Anderson, 2010; Toews, McKenry, & Catlett, 2003). For example, Spiwak and Brownridge (2005) determined 57% of women who reported male-perpetrated IPV during separation had no previous violence experience with IPV during their marriage.

For individuals going through the separation process, stress can be intensified due to the presence of children (Logan, Stevenson, Evans, & Leukefeld, 2003). One of the more stressful events for individuals who have experienced male-perpetrated IPV during marriage includes determining living arrangements for their child or children. Numerous

factors can potentially affect living arrangements during the separation process, and increase the level of stress experienced by the parent (e.g., parental conflict, children's willingness to maintain parental contact, relocation, partnering or remarriage of a parent; Kelly, 2007). Yet, courts often do not take male-perpetrated IPV into account when determining custody or visitation schedules and rulings (Hardesty & Chung, 2006). In fact, the most common visitation arrangement for those with children is joint custody or co-parenting (Logan, Walker, Horvath, & Leukefeld, 2004). Co-parenting is defined as the involvement of both parents with each other on issues regarding their children after separation (Hardesty & Ganong, 2006). This form of custody requires parents to have child-related discussions, joint decisions, or participate together in children's activities, which may increase parents' levels of stress, creating higher risks for IPV during separation (Hardesty, Khaw, Chung, & Martin, 2008). To support this, Toews and colleagues (2003) found that co-parental conflict was predictive of male-perpetrated IPV during separation.

Resources (Bb)

Resources can be defined as the traits, characteristics, or abilities of family members, the family system, or the community that can be used to meet the demands of a stressor event (Price et al., 2010). Resources serve as protective factors by reducing risks and promoting adaption to difficult circumstances (Price et al., 2010). The more adequate and appropriate resources a family has, the less likely they are to view the stressor event as harmful (Price et al., 2010). Some family resources include cohesion, social support, relationship satisfaction, and positive marital communication (Hobfoll & Spielberger, 1992; Malia, 2006; Price et al., 2010).

Cohesion

Cohesion has been defined as the emotional bond or closeness between couples and family members (Olson & Gorall, 2003). Ben-Ari and Lavee (2007) found couples reported closeness as friendship, sharing with, and caring for their partner. More specifically, friendship was reported as a sense of trust between partners, mutual respect, unconditional support, and commitment; sharing as the ability to express feelings, experiences, thoughts, and ideas with one's spouse; and caring as being sensitive to the other's needs and preferences (Ben-Ari & Lavee, 2007). Couples with higher levels of cohesion reported taking on their partner's perspective while discussing current problems or conflicts within the relationship (Schröder-Abé & Schütz, 2011). In contrast, non-cohesive families were more reactive to stress than those who worked together to manage the stressor event (Price et al., 2010). In relation to male-perpetrated IPV, previous research has found that males with higher levels of violence showed lower levels of family cohesion and higher levels of discomfort and anxiety within their relationship (Lawson, 2008).

Social Support

Social support may include a variety of relationships including informal relationships, such as neighbors and acquaintances from work, extended family members, and community resources (Lamanna & Riedman, 2012). Previous research has shown social support buffered risks associated with male-perpetrated IPV (Carlson, McNutt, Choi, & Rose, 2002; Coker et al., 2002; Escribà-Agüi et al., 2010; Fortin, Guay, Lavoie,

Boisvert, & Beaudry, 2012) and reduced negative psychological consequences of stressful life events (Cohen & Willis, 1985).

Although social support might buffer risks associated with male-perpetrated IPV, a lack of social support might increase the chances for male-perpetrated IPV to occur (Plazaola-Castaño, Ruiz-Pérez, & Montero-Piñar, 2008). To illustrate, researchers in Spain found women who lacked social support were 89% more likely to have experienced male-perpetrated IPV compared to women with social supports present (Plazaola-Castaño et al., 2008). Not only does the lack of social support increase the risk of male-perpetrated IPV, victims without sources of support may not leave the relationship. For example, Zosky (2011) found the majority of the 161 female survivors of male-perpetrated IPV reported they would have remained in the relationship had they not received social support from their communities.

Additionally, the lack of social support can create specific risks for male-perpetrated IPV. To illustrate, women who experienced male-perpetrated IPV have often been cut off from potential sources of support such as family, friends, or their community (Sev'er, 1997). Males might isolate their spouses by finding ways to restrict their partner's outside activities through the use of physical threats, threats to end the relationship, and psychological abuse (Fanslow & Robinson, 2011; Tanha, Beck, Figueredo, & Raghavan, 2010). Male-perpetrated IPV in which the male partner limits resources through social isolation is a form of control (CDCP, 2010a). Males who control their partner's behaviors are less likely to allow their wives to be around family or friends, thus cutting off their resources.

Positive Communication and Relationship Satisfaction

Positive communication patterns and relationship satisfaction have also shown to be valuable resources for individuals and families (Lamanna & Riedmann, 2012). Communication encompasses verbal messages, context, tone, and non-verbal cues; however, effective communication also includes listening and expressing thoughts and feelings in a positive manner (Baugh & Humphries, 2010). Partners who listen and show signs of effective communication are more likely to be satisfied with their relationship (Lamanna & Riedman, 2012). Both positive communication (Cordova, Jacobson, Gottman, Rushe, & Cox, 1993) and relationship satisfaction have been reported in individuals where IPV was not present in the relationship (Stith, Green, Smith, & Ward, 2008).

In contrast to couples with high levels of positive communication and relationship satisfaction, a lack of communication and lower relationship satisfaction have been associated with male-perpetrated IPV (Robertson & Murachver, 2006; Stith, Amanor-Boadu, Miller, Menhusen, Morgan, & Few-Demo, 2011). To illustrate, in their study conducting interviews with 15 couples showing histories of violence, Stith and colleagues (2011) found most of the participants did not know how to communicate well with one another. Rather than positive communication, participants reported feelings of miscommunication and a lack of conflict resolution (Stith et al., 2011). Similarly, in their study exploring communication styles during times of low-conflict interactions, Robertson and Murachver (2006) found male perpetrators of IPV had a higher likelihood than males without histories of IPV to utilize negative language features in their speech (e.g., criticize, disagree).

In terms of relationship satisfaction and IPV, studies have shown correlations between lower levels of marital satisfaction and male-perpetrated IPV (Henning & Connor-Smith, 2011; Stith et al., 2008). Moreover, male perpetrators and female victims who reported relationship dissatisfaction were more likely to continue IPV patterns (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000; Stith et al., 2008). To illustrate, Stith and colleagues' (2008) study of perpetrators of IPV and victims found both male perpetrators and female victims had high levels of marital dissatisfaction. In addition, male perpetrators who were dissatisfied in their relationship reported negative feelings toward women, jealousy, and victim blame (Henning & Connor-Smith, 2011).

Resources Specific to Separation

In addition to the resources couples experienced during their marriage, certain resources can provide individuals with support throughout the separation process and help reduce the level of stress experienced. For women, these resources were mainly used to provide financial security and personal safety (Wuest & Merritt-Gray, 1999). Specifically, Wuest and Merritt-Gray (1999) found women reported using income assistance programs, unemployment insurance, and certain banking services during their separation and felt they were vital resources.

Other resources offered to individuals include mediation, parenting programs, and separation counseling. Mediation has shown to serve as a resource during separation as it allows for individuals to discuss topics such as financial support or parenting decisions (Milne, Folberg, & Salem, 2004). While mediation may be a resource for some individuals, previous researchers have also found it created a higher risk for male-perpetrated IPV by increasing partner conflict (Ellis, 2008). Thus, Holtzworth-Munroe

and colleagues (1998) suggested that in order for mediation to be appropriate for couples with past male-perpetrated IPV experiences, proper screenings of IPV must be in place, which is often not the case. She also concluded if male-perpetrated IPV was detected, the process of mediation should change in order to be more accommodating (i.e., allowing a friend to attend the session; Holtzworth-Munroe, Smutzler, & Stuart, 1998).

Perceptions (Cc)

Perceptions are an individual's or family's appraisal of a given stressor event, resources, and crisis (Price et al., 2010). However, for the purpose of this study, only the perceptions of the initial crisis, male-perpetrated IPV during marriage, were explored. Individuals' perceptions of the initial crisis can be an important indicator of future abuse and harmful to individual's emotional well-being. To illustrate, Bowen (2011) found that the majority of female participants who perceived male-perpetrated IPV as a threat continued to experience abuse after follow-up interviews were performed.

Previous research has also explored how men and women perceive male-perpetrated IPV. Findings showed that male perpetrators of IPV tended to view their abusive behaviors as inconsequential or warranted (Catlett, Toews, & Walilko, 2010; Henning, Jones, & Holdford, 2005; Henning & Holdford, 2006; Whiting, Oka, & Fife, 2012). For example, Whiting, Oka, and Fife (2012) found male perpetrators often denied IPV occurred or minimized the abuse. They found female victims also minimized the extent to which abuse occurred in order to cope with the level of abuse. Similarly, Henning and Holdford (2006) found male perpetrators who had previously been arrested for intimate partner violence believed that both victim and officer reports were untrue.

Research has also found that male perpetrators tend to perceive IPV as justified because of their partners' behaviors (Catlett, Toews, & Walilko, 2010; Henning, Jones, & Holdford, 2005). For example, Catlett and colleagues (2012) found the majority of male perpetrators believed they were provoked by female victims. Similarly, some male perpetrators felt their partner's were to blame for their violent behavior (Flynn & Graham, 2010; Henning et al., 2005). To illustrate, Henning and colleagues (2005) found male perpetrators placed more blame on their spouse's characteristics than their own.

Summary

The interaction between stressor events, resources, and perceptions work together to determine an individual's degree of stress as low, high, or as a crisis (Price et al., 2010). Stressor events create change within the family system and can potentially disrupt the natural state of the family. Empirical findings indicated the more stress a family experienced, the more they needed to rely on resources (Nesteruk & Garrison, 2005). If the family does not have adequate resources, however, they are at risk for experiencing stressor pileup, which can potentially lead to crisis. How the couple handles the stressor event is imperative. If one member of the couple is not handling the stressor event well, the family as a system is more vulnerable (Imig & Imig, 1986).

The relation between stressor events and resources has also been correlated to male-perpetrated IPV as both potential risks and protective factors. Resources, though highly effective in buffering against pileup, may not be adequate for the level of stress experienced, or may not be accessible due to the presence of male-perpetrated IPV (Fanslow & Robinson, 2011; Wuest & Merritt-Gray, 1999; Zlotnick et al., 2006).

The majority of current literature correlates IPV to singular stressor events or resources and does not examine an individual's stressor events, available resources, and perceptions of the initial crisis as predictors of male-perpetrated IPV. Thus, more information is needed to understand the prominence of stressor events, availability of resources, and perception of the initial crisis in the lives of those experiencing male-perpetrated IPV prior to separation as well as during the separation process. By exploring pre- and post-separation, researchers can determine what stressor events exist during and after the marriage, and how those stressor events impact male-perpetrated IPV over time. Furthermore, by exploring stressors, resources, and perceptions of crisis, a more comprehensive understanding of families reporting male-perpetrated IPV pre- and post-separation will be formed.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to explore stressor events, resources, and perceptions of the initial crisis among individuals who reported male-perpetrated IPV during the course of their marriage and the separation process. Qualitative data collected from a previous study were analyzed using thematic analysis and coding in order to explore how these concepts changed from marriage through the separation process. The analysis of qualitative data was holistic, and provided a clearer understanding of the population in question (Calabrese, 2009). This study intended to use qualitative data as a means of understanding individuals' life experiences.

Participants and Procedures

This sample was drawn from a larger mixed method study examining male-perpetrated IPV during separation. Participants were originally selected from divorce court records of parents with a child under the age of 18 who divorced in the past two years in Marion County and Franklin County, Ohio and newspaper advertisements in Franklin County. The total sample consisted of 275 divorce parents (129 males and 146 females). The current sample was selected from the quantitative portion of the study because they reported male-perpetrated IPV during separation. However, only those who reported male-perpetrated IPV during both the marriage and the separation process were

included. The final sample consisted of 46 heterosexual individuals (23 males and 23 females). Of this final sample, the majority were White (86.9%), followed by Black (8.6%), Hispanic (2.1%), or Asian (2.1%). The average age at the time of interviews was 37.3 years (range= 21-51) with an average of 2.1 children (range=1-6).

Participants were contacted by telephone after participating in a larger quantitative study, and asked if they were willing to participate in a face-to-face interview. The nature of the interview and their rights as subjects in the study were explained. Once a consent form was signed, permission was granted to record the interview. Participants were informed of their rights to refuse to answer any questions or turn off the recorder at any time during the interview process. Each interviewee was paid \$50 for his/her participation in the study.

Face-to-face interviews were used to collect original data. This format is best used for sensitive topics, including the current study's topic of marriage, separation/divorce, and male-perpetrated IPV (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Participant interviews took place in the interviewee's home or in a public location and took approximately two hours to complete. The use of interviews provided the current study with several benefits. In general, interviews are a principal form of observation in qualitative studies (King & Horrocks, 2010) due to an interview's natural flexibility (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Elliot, 2005). For example, this study incorporated general interview questions in order to create a semi-structured interview (Appendix A). This allowed the interviewer flexibility to introduce topics as they fit naturally into the conversation, as well as bring up topics addressing research questions (Cassell & Symon, 2004). Semi-structured, in-depth interviews involved each participant in an exploration of his/her experience of marriage

and separation. Each interview covered the same areas of inquiry, with the interviewer having the freedom to follow the participant's description and to ask clarifying and expanding questions. By giving the respondent the freedom to expand upon the narrative, data are precise and more reliable than structured interviews, thus creating higher internal validity (Elliot, 2005).

Interviews began with non-threatening, open-ended questions to establish rapport. Rapport helps build trust, and trust leads to higher credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Questions were asked in chronological order. Interviewers avoided the use of multiple questions at one time, and sought clarification or expansion on answers when necessary. Questions (see Appendix A) addressed the individual's marital relationship, sources of conflict, male-perpetrated IPV, incidences that led to male-perpetrated IPV, equity of the relationship, co-parenting, any conflict with their former spouse, and adjustment. These questions allowed the researcher to explore stressor events, resources, and infer perceptions as they related to the research questions. Once interviews were completed, a verbatim transcription was created.

Data Analysis

As part of this analysis, thematic analysis and coding were utilized. Thematic analysis translated observations into themes, also referred to as categories or patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and allowed the researcher to develop codes (Boyatzis, 1998). There are several benefits to thematic analysis in qualitative research including the ability to summarize findings based on a large body of data (Pope, Mays, & Popay, 2007). Thematic analysis is not directly tied to one theoretical framework, and allowed the researcher the flexibility to use a variety of frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The

Double ABC-X model provided the framework for thematic analysis in this study by exploring stressor events (Aa), existing or new resources available (Bb), and the perception of the initial crisis (Cc) during marriage and the separation process. Concepts were analyzed during the individual's marriage and again throughout the process of separation in order to develop themes.

Thematic analysis was completed in several steps, beginning with open coding of the transcripts. Open coding is the attachment of labels to distinct ideas within the text that are related to the phenomenon of interest, in this case stressor events, resources, and perceptions of the initial crisis during marriage (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). After initial codes were created, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest codes be sorted into themes.

Themes include relevant data in relation to the research question and are identified in two ways (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first, inductive thematic analysis, uses data specifically collected for the research study, and attempts to identify themes without preconceived ideas (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The current study utilized the second form, theoretical deductive thematic analysis. Deductive analysis provided an in-depth analysis in certain areas of the data, and was best for the current study's specific research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For the purpose of this study five specific questions guided the deductive analysis.

Research Question 1: What stressor events (A) precipitated male-perpetrated IPV during marriage (X)?

Research Question 2: What resources (B) were available to individuals who experienced male-perpetrated IPV during marriage (X)?

Research Question 3: What stressor events and subsequent pileup (Aa) were present during the separation process in comparison to those experienced during marriage for individuals who reported male-perpetrated IPV during both marriage and the separation process?

Research Question 4: What existing and new resources (Bb) were present during the separation process in comparison to resources available during marriage for individuals who reported male-perpetrated IPV during both marriage and the separation process?

Research Question 5: How did individuals perceive the initial crisis of male-perpetrated IPV (Cc) during marriage?

In addition to types of thematic analysis, how the analyst identified themes was also determined. Themes may be produced semantically by the direct observation of words present within the data, or latently by exploring the ideas, assumptions, and concepts behind observable content and making an inference (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). For the current study, the researcher developed themes at both levels. Stressor events (Aa) and resources (Bb) were identified semantically, while perceptions (Cc) were identified at the latent level.

As themes emerged, statements and acts were compared to determine if a connecting concept existed. Once themes were identified, the researcher analyzed results and formed conclusions based on the data and previous research evidence. These conclusions were identified as propositions (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Propositions are described as general statements reflecting the findings and conclusions of the study at hand (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Taylor & Bogdan). These propositions provided a

narrative description of the data in relation to stressor events, resources, and perceptions of stressors and resources during and after marriage.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Analysis of transcripts utilized the Double-ABC X model as a framework with five research questions as guides. All 46 heterosexual participants experienced male-perpetrated IPV during marriage and separation. Of the total number of participants, 23 females were victims of male-perpetrated IPV and 23 males were perpetrators of IPV. For the purpose of this study, male-perpetrated IPV was defined as physical abuse, sexual abuse, threats of physical or sexual abuse, as well as psychological and emotional abuse. Psychological and emotional abuse were defined as trauma experienced by a victim caused by acts, threats of acts, or coercive tactics. These behaviors included threats to a partner, including their possessions or loved ones, controlling behaviors, forceful isolation, control of resources, and harming a partner's sense of self-worth through humiliation. All definitions of male-perpetrated IPV utilized in the current study were provided by the CDCP (2012).

Deductive analysis utilized open coding to latently identify themes. Each individual described stressor events that precipitated male-perpetrated IPV as well as resources available. Perceptions of the initial crisis event were inferred based on participants' descriptions of male-perpetrated IPV during marriage. Emerging themes revealed four major stressor events during marriage that was related to male-perpetrated

IPV. These included financial and work-related stress, decision-making, overwhelming responsibility, and alcohol or substance use. Stressor events identified during the separation process that were related to male-perpetrated IPV included separation itself and co-parenting. Themes also revealed resources in connection to male-perpetrated IPV during both marriage and the separation process. Participants reported resources during marriage were lacking, whereas resources during the separation process served as protective factors against male-perpetrated IPV. Finally, the researcher explored the perception of the initial crisis (Cc). For the purpose of the current study, the initial crisis is represented by male-perpetrated IPV during marriage. Although the goal of the current study was not to explore gender differences, unexpected results showed that both males and females perceived the crisis negatively; however, their negative perception was gender specific.

Stressor Events

Stressor events throughout marriage (A) and separation (Aa) led to arguments and conflict, thus leading to male-perpetrated IPV. Specifically, respondents described times of male-perpetrated IPV, and what conflicts led to the incidences. Conflict was described by respondents as a source of stress for both male and female participants. Stressor events leading to male-perpetrated IPV during marriage were unique in comparison to stressor events leading to male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process. Marriage stressor events leading to male-perpetrated IPV consisted of financial and work-related stress, decision-making, responsibility, and alcohol or substance use. During the separation process, stress associated with separation, including co-parenting, led to male-perpetrated IPV.

Financial and Work-Related Stress

A large portion of respondents felt the primary source of stress in their marriage stemmed from financial and work-related stress. Stress was reported as difficulties paying for expenses, disagreements concerning work (e.g., hours worked, schedules, pay scale, inconsistent work, and lack of dual income), as well as large purchases made (e.g., vehicles and homes). Of the total participants, 20 reported financial stress and work-related stress led to conflict and male-perpetrated IPV. IPV included physical, psychological, and emotional abuse. For example, female participants reported feeling financially controlled by their spouse during marriage. One female respondent stated, “He was a control freak...I was actually given an allowance and that’s what it was called, this is my allowance.”

When females reported they made the decision to find a job to help ease financial stress, males became more controlling. To illustrate, a female participant said, “He liked the idea of more money coming into the house, but he didn’t like the idea of me being able to talk to other people.” To further demonstrate the use of control in context of financial stress, another female participant explained they could not pay the bills and she needed to get a job; however, her spouse did not allow her to work. When she made the decision to get a job she stated, “We actually got in a fist fight over me going to work. And see, after that I was so afraid he would hit me again.” In addition to female participants reporting control in context of financial stress, males also reported male-perpetrated IPV occurred in cases where their spouse had too much financial control in the marriage. One male participant described being abusive due to his wife running their finances. “I was verbally abusive and I was physically abusive, but I also let her run

everything and I would come home, she got my check.” He stated he tried not to ask about what happened to the money he gave her, but when he eventually did he became abusive. “When we would argue I would finally blow and I would tell her exactly and I would use some words that weren’t appropriate and then the physical abuse.”

Other instances of male-perpetrated IPV occurred if the male spouse was gone too much or made too little money. One male participant reported his wife told him constantly about their financial situation and complained of his long work hours. He stated his spouse’s “nagging” led him to become physically violent. He reported being told, “Where’s all the money going, why don’t you stay home more, we fight all the time.” To further illustrate, another female participant described when her husband lost his job he opened his own business and began taking money from her.

He lost his job and then started his own company and was using my checks to pay his employees and paying with the money quite a bit, and I knew about it, we just maxed our credit cards and transferred to [another city], and our house didn’t sell, so we had the payment here, plus our old house payment.

The financial stress led to her yelling at her husband, and she described he reacted with physical abuse. “He would hit back. He’d come back and slam me and give me a black eye.”

Decision-Making

Another area of conflict was decision-making. In fact, during marriage, 18 individuals reported feeling they had little say in the decision-making process, did not have a partner who wished to be a part of the decision-making process, or felt decisions were not mutual. Participants reported feeling their opinion did not count and their ability

to make decisions was discounted by their partner, thus leading to arguments and conflict escalating to male-perpetrated IPV. IPV was often identified as psychological and emotional abuse. In some instances, both forms of abuse escalated to physical abuse. To illustrate, one participant noted some of the stress associated with decision-making and how this stress led to physical abuse. “The more decisions I made the more controlling he tried to be and the madder he’d get. And then (pause) it would come to a fist fight. So, it wasn’t pretty.” One male reported while being drunk, his partner and he would argue over decision-making. He would agree to anything to make her “shut up” and, in response to feeling that she was “in my face,” he would “smack” her in the face.

The most common form of male-perpetrated IPV identified with decision-making was the use of control. One example from a female respondent described her spouse’s desire to control everything including decisions in the family. When her spouse was not in control of decisions he would become abusive. “He controlled everything, he controlled everything. That’s what happened. And when he lost control, he lost it.” Consequently, male-perpetrated IPV was reported to worsen with increased conflict of decision-making as a stressor. To illustrate, the same female participant reported her husband began not only to control decisions concerning family finances, but then became controlling of her and her decisions. The controlling behaviors over decisions eventually led to physical abuse.

I was always told oh don’t wear makeup, it makes you look ugly. You can’t have a job because I need you here at home. Don’t talk on the phone because somebody might be trying to call me. You don’t need to go out with your friends,

what do you need them for when you have me...I'd get to the point where I'd have to let everything go his way or I'd end up with a black eye.

When participants described times in which they did make decisions during the marriage, they reported their spouse did not agree with them. Participants reported these conflicts led to psychological and emotional abuse through shame and humiliation. To illustrate, one male respondent described times when his wife made decisions that he did not agree with he would shame her for making bad decisions. The participant did not like even the simple decisions she made, explaining, "Like if it's something she buys that you don't feel is necessary or like the peanut butter for example, now whatever, however you do, she might feel like you've been kind of shaming her." The respondent disclosed he was very good at "shaming" his wife over her decisions.

Overwhelming Responsibility

In addition to decision-making as a stressor event during marriage, 28 individuals reported feeling they had more responsibility than their spouse. Stress associated with feelings of overwhelming responsibility reportedly led to conflict and male-perpetrated IPV. For example, a male participant stated, "I did a lot of housework. I did the laundry. I cooked supper for the kids. She was working nights, so I gave 'em their bath and put 'em to bed and stuff...I did more than my fair share." These feelings led to arguments and male-perpetrated IPV. The same participant described that his wife felt he did not go out enough with her, and so she would go out alone while he stayed home with their children. He stated when she would come home later he would "lose control." The participant described one night when he was at home with their children his wife came home drunk. During that incident he hit her and on a separate occasion when this occurred he threw an

ashtray at her. “You got kids at home and stuff, you don’t need to be out till 2 in the morning...I was by myself, I had three girls, I didn’t get much help from her.”

Another male respondent described picking up his wife and throwing her from a room. He explained these altercations would happen frequently because, “If I bitched and complained about her laying on her ass, then that was always a problem.” The participant stated physical abuse would come from these arguments. His wife would try and stop him from leaving by locking herself in the bedroom with his keys. “I wanted to leave and I got in there and she tried jerking them from me and I smacked the piss out of her with an open hand.”

Female participants also reported overwhelming responsibility of child care and housework created stress leading to male-perpetrated IPV. To demonstrate, a female participant explained her husband worked while her responsibility was to stay at home with their son. During times when their son would become upset her husband became physically abusive.

He was working third shift and of course he had come home and I’d tell him to go upstairs and go to bed. Well, by that time our son was cutting teeth, the fussing, the crying was non-stop. Well, I was supposed to control that and when I didn’t he decided to smack me upside the head. I have no hearing in my right ear because of that.

The participant reported her husband believed it was her responsibility to control their son, and, because she was not doing so, he would then become physically abusive.

One respondent described worrying if she had finished all of her “daily chores” before her husband came home. He would become psychologically and emotionally

abusive towards her if these chores were not completed. For example, he would say “did you sit on your ass all day and watch soaps or I guess I need to go to the grocery store because there’s no dinner on the table.” Accusations of “laziness” were commonly reported in female accounts of responsibility stress. To illustrate, one female described how her husband would respond when getting home.

Where’s my supper, it’s six o’clock, and why haven’t you done the half load of laundry, and you know, I could run the sweeper and dust and he’d come home and say what the hell did you do all day.

These verbal arguments would then lead to physical violence. To illustrate, a female participant recalled arguments leading up to male-perpetrated IPV. “I said you’re not holding your own here and when I would hit that hot spot he would get very upset.” In response, her husband picked up their cordless phone and violently threw it at her.

Another example of the link between physical violence and responsibility came from a female participant who felt her husband gave her all of the responsibility of childcare and housework and was highly demanding that she maintain his “standards.”

He became very abusive if things didn’t go his way...if he came home and I didn’t have dinner done, I knew I was going to get hit for this. Or if one of the kids came in 10 minutes late, that wasn’t the child’s fault, it was mine. I wasn’t being a good parent in his eyes.

Furthermore, threats of physical violence were made in relation to individuals feeling they took on more responsibility than their spouse. To illustrate, a male respondent reported, “I felt she was really irresponsible with things and cleanliness, not herself, but picking up.” He stated that his wife stayed home with their children and he

had all of the other responsibilities. “She didn’t want to take some of the other responsibilities that needed to be done.” When asked about emotional abuse, he stated, “I was towards her because I maybe didn’t understand some of the things and how to handle those things.” The respondent then stated he eventually used threats of physical violence. When asked to describe some of the threats, he would say to his wife, “I oughta knock you on your damn head.”

Alcohol or Substance Use

Finally, alcohol or substance use was identified as a common theme of stress among 22 participants. Of those individuals, 20 reported the use of alcohol for themselves, their spouse, or both themselves and their spouse. In addition to alcohol, eight participants reported the use of substances (e.g., chemical or marijuana) for themselves, their spouse, or both themselves and their spouse. In all reports of alcohol or substance use, individuals either fell victim to male-perpetrated IPV or became the perpetrator.

“When I came home there was an empty bottle of vodka, so I knew that night wasn’t going to be good and it was not good. Uhm, I call that night my night from hell.” The respondent explained later she was picked up and thrown against a wall in the house. Her spouse had been drinking and smoking weed and would later not remember the incident. In some cases, substance use led to sexual violence. “When we first got married he smoked pot and drank and he smoked pot one night and forced me to have sex with him...He kept badgering me and then he held me down and moved my underwear and bam!”

Reports of male-perpetrated IPV were not only connected to male use of alcohol or substances, but females' use of alcohol reportedly led to male-perpetrated IPV as well. To illustrate, a male participant described waiting for his wife to come home from the bars. Reportedly, the stress associated with her drinking led to male-perpetrated psychological and emotional abuse and later physical abuse. He described one incident in which he was asleep upstairs while his wife was supposed to be watching their children downstairs. Instead, he reported his wife made the decision to go out and drink.

Later on it got to be where I would go up to lay down and she would send the kids up to their room and she'd go out drinking. And I'd wake up and I'm like, wait a minute, I need sleep here, what's going on and they'd be like, well mommy sent us up here, said she's going through the drive through. I'd get excited about it and go downstairs and I'd sit there and wait for two hours and she'd finally come in stumbling and I'm like, what are you doing?

In this particular incident, the stress from his wife's drinking and involvement of their children increased stress levels in the participant, and, when he confronted her, the conflict became physically violent. When asked about incidences of emotional and physical abuse, the participant stated that a large portion of them involved alcohol. "Probably at least 75% of them."

Separation Process

During separation, male-perpetrated violence occurred for all 46 participants. Out of the total number of respondents, 23 individuals reported violence occurred due to stress from the initiation of the separation. In terms of initiating the separation process, stress leading to male-perpetrated IPV came from individuals refusing to accept their

spouse's separation or desire for separation. Participants who reported separation as unexpected also reported higher amounts of male-perpetrated IPV. Female participants, more often than males, reported males refusing to accept the idea they wanted to leave or had left. To demonstrate, when asked if the participant still felt intimidated or threatened by her ex-spouse, one female responded by describing threats she had recently received from her ex-spouse and the night she tried leaving. The participant was physically placed back in her home by her ex-spouse.

He calls and he yells and we got in a fight a couple weeks ago and we were outside and he told me that he was gonna smack me. That night after we separated he'd come over. We didn't have a phone at that time and it was the middle of winter and I tried, I ran out of the house and got in my car, but the doors wouldn't lock. He put me back inside. Plus, he didn't want the divorce, I did.

Fewer males reported they had initiated the separation. Some males who had initiated the separation process described partners who were not willing to accept the termination of their relationship. Interestingly, this still led to male-perpetrated IPV. As expected, male participants who reported their spouse was the one who initiated the separation also reported male-perpetrated IPV. To illustrate, one participant described the night his wife came home and announced she was leaving him and taking their children with her. In reaction to this stressor, the participant described physically making his wife stay.

I mean, yeah, you throw the keys away, you bring the suitcases back in, and you sit on top of her and you know, maybe that's wrong. I don't know what else I could've done to keep her here without taking the kids.

To further demonstrate the use of male-perpetrated IPV during unwanted separation, a female participant described when she and her child first left. Her ex-spouse made threats to her home and to take her child from her.

When we first separated I left so that was a big thing...He called and threatened to blow up my house one day and he called and threatened to take [child's name] from me and at the time it was scary, thinking about that, would he really do this, because I knew what he was capable of. When we first separated it was the worse.

Several participants also stated ex-spouses withheld property in reaction to the termination of the relationship. This source of stress created conflict with the ex-spouse and led to male-perpetrated IPV. To illustrate, one female respondent reported her spouse withheld private information from her, which eventually led to physical abuse.

After I filed for divorce, he had like a safe box where he put like titles to cars and um precious coins and things on that line...it was like the next day he took that box out of the house and I realized he had my diploma from high school, my diploma from college, my birth certificate, the title to my car...I just stood in front of him and said I want my papers and he said no and he nudged me with his shoulder like to get past me and my feet were on the edge of the carpet stairs and I started to go backwards and um...had the sense enough to have grabbed the side and then as I was going backwards, he gave me a push to get by me and slammed me into the wall.

Another female participant reported her ex-spouse kept the plates of her vehicle during the separation as a means of control, and during a drop-off she asked for the plates back. Her ex-spouse became physically violent, pushing her to the ground.

I went down, he's grabbing my arm, he's pulling my shirt, he's, you know, I'm down on the ground in the mud and I'm crying because I look up and see all my kids' faces of hysteria. And he's mad and he's screaming in my face and spitting on me.

In response to the uncertainty of separation, males reacted with IPV in order to maintain control and keep the relationship going. One way in which this occurred was through threats of violence. Of the 23 participants, 12 reported receiving threats, including threats to take children away, physical harm, and death. To illustrate, one female reported while trying to discuss separation her spouse would threaten to kill her. "He always used to say...you are not going to get away from me or you know stuff like that, or I'll kill you before I leave you or you leave me." Another female respondent described times she tried to leave her ex-spouse. He would threaten to take their house and their son away from her and eventually the conflict led to physical abuse.

He had so much control I thought I can't make it on my own. That's what he kept grinding in, you'll lose this, you'll lose this, and you can't do this. If you were to walk out that door right now he said the house would be mine and so would our son. He said you don't deserve it, we do. So I turned around and told him no.

Well that set him off. We were outside and he shoved me and I fell down and busted my elbow on the concrete.

After falling on the ground, the respondent stated she got back up and pushed her ex-spouse. "He gets up, grabs me around the throat and he's holding me up in the air, I'm swinging thinking this is it. He's going to snap my neck." The participant described kicking him so he would let go of her, so he responded with emotional abuse.

I said well you just go live with your girlfriend and I'll move in here with my son. He said bullshit. He said your son wouldn't live with you for all the money in the world. He said your son doesn't even love you.

Other ways in which males reacted negatively to stress from the initial separation was through harassment. Participants reportedly received numerous phone calls, mail, and visits from their ex-spouse and, in one case, an ex-spouse's co-workers. For instance, one male reported "not dealing with" his wife desiring a separation. He explained he would send his ex-spouse "gifts" repeatedly and call constantly wanting to know, "What can I do, I mean, just to talk it over."

Co-Parenting

Co-parenting was reportedly a highly stressful situation for both males and females. "You can't move on because you're stuck in that same cycle... You're still kind of stuck in the relationship." A large number of participants, 26 to be exact, reported co-parenting as a stressor event precipitating male-perpetrated IPV. For instance, one female participant described how she was required to remain in contact with her ex-spouse due to co-parenting. Her ex-spouse had recently threatened to physically harm her. "He has threatened to hit me or drive his car through my front door." In addition to remaining in contact due to co-parenting, stress of visitation through pick-up and drop-off times often led to male-perpetrated IPV. In one instance, a female participant described a physical altercation between her and her ex-spouse while dropping off her children for visitation.

Actually, now I'm a little afraid of him. He can be very physical, he's a bully to me. I'm not comfortable going to their house and he physically picked me up and threw me out of the house at one point, so..right in front of the kids.

Similarly, another female participant described dropping her son off with her ex-spouse.

I was late...but he was 10 minutes early so he had actually sat there for 20 minutes. So he was pretty livid when I got there. He was screaming at me and I said, "you know what, maybe if you were more happier with your life, you wouldn't try and make my life such hell" and he scared me because he raised his hand at me and I felt my heart drop through my stomach and just by the look on my face, he just dropped his hand and realized what he did, but he wanted to hit me so bad.

In some cases, extreme levels of violence occurred at times of transition due to stress associated with co-parenting. One female participant said she and her ex-spouse were arguing over a tent she had bought their son. He wanted the tent, but she said it did not belong to him. During a drop-off, her ex-spouse confronted her about the item and, after she ignored him and drove away, he came after her in his own vehicle. "I look in the rearview mirror and all I see is bumper and headlights, it's him. He's honking the horn, he's swerving back and forth trying to get me to stop." She drove to a public parking lot and he kept driving.

Not only did times of transition create stress leading to male-perpetrated IPV, control was often reported in context of co-parenting. One female participant reported her child did not want to visit his father and would often scream and run from the house. Her ex-spouse would then make constant harassing phone calls, blaming her for using their son against him. She later reported feeling this was due to her ex-spouse's need to maintain control over her.

It's a control issue. It's been a control issue for a long, long time and it's always what he says and he'll go to any measures to make sure that it's what he says.

And it'll be that way until the day I die. Even after [child's name] turns 18. I've already come to realize that he's going to control me for the rest of his life.

Stress related to co-parenting also included threats to an ex-spouse concerning custody. One female participant discussed threats she received. "His threat to me ever since he walked out was if you don't give me this, I'm going to file for full custody." These threats created fear and stress for participants. In some cases, these threats were associated with pick-up and drop-off transitions. For example, one female participant noted:

I constantly feared that I would drop them off and he would end up in Montana with them...Not because he loved them or because he wanted to be their dad or he wanted to raise them. It came back to just wanting to hurt me and piss me off.

Threats of losing a child were highly stressful for participants and were seen as a need for control by an ex-spouse. To illustrate, one female participant stated:

There was always threats that he was going to take my baby and everyone would say to me, there's no way, you're the perfect mom, there's no way he's ever going to get your kid, but I still had that fear because of the control issue and because he's always had way more money than my side has ever had.

In addition to males threatening to take custody, females who threatened to take custody also increased co-parenting stress in males, thus leading to male-perpetrated IPV. To illustrate, one male explained his wife came to pick up their daughter after his scheduled visitation and did not like the fact another woman was there at the home. In

response, the ex-spouse threatened to take their daughter away and he would never see her again. “It pissed me off and I just gave her a little shove, and she made it seem like I pushed her hard and she fell down on the floor.”

For some participants, male-perpetrated IPV concerning co-parenting involved child-rearing decisions. Female respondents reported feeling their ex-spouse would make decisions concerning their child in order to upset or hurt them. For example, a female participant reported her ex-spouse would purchase items for their son that she did not agree with, such as a motorcycle. She felt he did this to maintain he was the dominant parent. These disagreements over child-rearing decisions not only resulted in dominating acts and control, but physical violence and threats of physical violence as well. For instance, a female participant reported receiving threats from her ex-spouse that he would take their child away from her. In response, she tried “to be nice to him occasionally” by visiting him and discussing what would be best for their child. “He would twist it into talking about us, can’t we have dinner next week or whatever, and then he would get extraordinarily angry and vindictive, there were a lot of issues.” The participant reported the situation escalated into death threats. “I had a half dozen in one day of [him saying] you will not live to see the end of this weekend.”

Resources

During marriage, individuals reported several areas of relationship resources they felt were not present, including communication, sexual intimacy, and trust. Each of these resources interacted with the other. For example, individuals who reported a lack of communication often reported a lack of sexual intimacy resulting in a lack of trust. To illustrate, one male participant explained why his marriage did not work out. “Uhm, the

reason it didn't work out is lack of communication, lack of time spent together, and we kind of just drifted apart. She did her little thing, I did my thing and kind of just got to the point where I wasn't really thinking of her romantically and wanting to be with her anymore." The same respondent then discussed how they would fight about their marriage not working and when asked if he was ever emotionally abusive toward his wife during these times he responded:

Emotionally abusive. Just when we got into a fight. I just keep pushing and pushing. I'm the kind of guy I want to get the fight over with, but if you're just going to sit there and say silly, stupid things, I can do the same thing and I'm going to outdo you.

The lack of communication created a pileup of conflict within the marriage and, as shown, created further sources of stress and male-perpetrated IPV. In contrast to the lack of resources leading to male-perpetrated IPV during marriage, some resources were present that helped improve and protect against male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process. Respondents reported relying on friends, family, and co-workers as a means of avoiding male-perpetrated IPV through emotional support, security, and preventing conflict with ex-spouse that could potentially lead to violence.

Lack of Communication

Among the participants, 25 reported a lack of communication during the course of their marriage. One female participant explained, "We never used I messages, it was always you, you, you! I didn't realize how much mental abuse there was until after and there was a lot, emotional and mental. It was degrading." For those who indicated communication was lacking, 14 expressed this was done in order to avoid conflict. To

illustrate, a female participant described her husband's tendency to holler at her and his use of emotional abuse. "I got to the point where I very rarely said anything to him. If I think someone is going to be angry with me I will avoid them...I'm so afraid somebody's going to blow up at me that I will avoid them." Consequently, the avoidance of communicating and addressing stressor events would often lead to pileup and male-perpetrated IPV. For example, one male participant reported his spouse did not want to address any conflict within the marriage and felt his emotions were being bottled up. They never discussed her alcoholism (i.e., stressor event) and when she came home drunk one night, they proceeded to argue. He then disclosed he felt he would lose it, and eventually the conflict became violent. "I didn't smack her across the face...I told her I was sorry I hit her. But other than that, nothing was ever said about it." After the participant argued and hit his spouse, avoidance of communication still existed and pileup continued. Another example from a female participant described an incident when her husband began to argue with her. She would not argue back with him, so he threw a chair across the room and "just started smashing everything."

In addition to females avoiding conflict, males who avoided conflict and communication were also reported to lead to male-perpetrated IPV. One female participant described herself as a "verbal person" and initiated conversation. After her husband would ignore her, she became angry and he still did not respond. "He just internalized everything. He internalized it until he blew." Another example from a male respondent stated he avoided communicating with his wife during marriage, and male-perpetrated IPV ensued. "I didn't understand where she was coming from and it upset me quite a bit."

Lack of Sexual Intimacy and Emotional Support

Thematic analysis also revealed 18 participants expressed a lack of sexual intimacy and eight reported a lack of emotional support either from themselves or from their spouse. The lack of sexual intimacy and emotional support led to acts of male-perpetrated IPV. For example, one male discussed how he was not emotionally supportive, but provided financially, which “should have been good enough.” He explained, “I showed my love by providing for you. I don’t need to tell you I love you...eventually we weren’t going anywhere or being around anyone. I felt totally uncomfortable with her.” The lack of emotional support was reported to then lead to male-perpetrated IPV, and in most cases, emotional abuse. One example comes from a female participant who stated during pileup of financial pressure, a miscarriage, and the death of a parent, her husband became emotionally abusive. She stated, “The support wasn’t there emotionally for me.” When asked what his typical responses were, she explained he would tell her,

“Quit your blubbering, what’s the big deal?” My mother died, you know I’m sobbing, and after I left the doctor’s office with him telling me, “quit your crying there’s nothing you can do about it,” that kind of emotional not there. The cat died, “what the hell are you crying about? Shut the hell up.”

To illustrate the significance of sexual intimacy, one male expressed how sex played a large role in the amount of conflict between his wife and himself. When asked if it was a complaint more on his part, “Well, hell yeah! I want some or I’m going to go somewhere else. (laughter). Hello there!” The lack of sexual intimacy was also reported as a precursor of male-perpetrated IPV including physical and emotional abuse. To

illustrate, one female participant reported how her husband was physically abusive during intercourse.

When he was trying to initiate intercourse, he slammed my head into a wall and I thought okay, if I don't get out of this and do it really soon, I'm going to end up dead and I wasn't thinking hurt because it wasn't an accident, he tried to cover it like it was um, when you see stars, you know your head had hit the wall a little bit harder than an accident.

To further demonstrate the use of male-perpetrated IPV and lack of sexual intimacy, another female respondent described her sexual relationship with her husband. "[It was] awful. It was a duty. It was like a once a week thing, let's hurry up, just do it and get it over with." When asked if her husband ever complained she described the emotional abuse she experienced. "I'm a cold prude. I'm a fish. I'm an ice princess. I'm an ice queen...He was always that way."

For some participants, when sex did take place it was to avoid male-perpetrated IPV. One female respondent described having sex with her husband to avoid being beaten. "I didn't want to...I just didn't, I would rather do that than get a beating. I knew he would go to sleep afterwards. I guess you could call it a formal rape, but not really."

In some cases, respondents reported a connection between the lack of emotional support as a resource and the lack of sexual intimacy. For example, one male participant described his wife's desire during marriage for emotional support. However, because she did not provide him with adequate sex, he did not see the need to provide her with emotional support. "She expected total emotional support from me without any repercussion."

Lack of Trust

Coinciding with the lack of sexual intimacy, 29 individuals reported a lack of trust between themselves and their spouse. One female participant recalled how her husband often cheated on her while gone for work. “He cheated on me at truck stops with prostitutes. That hurt more than anything.” Reports of affairs coincided with reports of harboring negative feelings. A male participant described his feelings toward his wife after finding out she had an affair. “She let me know she had an affair; she had a one nightstand with some guy. So I let it go. I never forgot it.” Affairs and secretive behavior often led to further male-perpetrated IPV occurrences and control. One participant recounted the multiple times she found out her husband had been tapping her phone line. He was reportedly consumed with the idea of her cheating. “He literally went and got all the equipment from Radio Shack and found out how to wire the phone and hid the wires.” When she confronted her husband, “He said I didn’t deserve any privacy.” In addition to control from lack of trust, physical abuse was also reported from the lack of trust within the relationship. Both the discovery and confrontation of affairs increased male-perpetrated IPV. To illustrate, a female participant described confronting her husband during their marriage about her suspecting he was having an affair. “He’d come back and slam me and give me a black eye.” Another female participant described how the physical abuse worsened after she discovered her husband had been cheating on her. “The rest of the time we were together, from the time the infidelity happened, he began questioning my time. He began to grow aggressive behavior, pushing, he ripped the phone out of the wall.”

Social Support

Although resources during marriage were lacking, resources during the separation process increased. During the separation process, 29 respondents reportedly received one or more forms of support that helped reduce male-perpetrated IPV including family, friends, co-workers, and new relationships. These social supports served as protective factors against male-perpetrated IPV in three primary ways. Most often, social supports reportedly provided emotional support to the individual through motivation or reassurance. Furthermore, respondents reported social supports provided security, either financially or physically. Finally, individuals reported social supports helped the participant to avoid conflict with an ex-spouse. All three led to respondents feeling independent from their ex-spouse. According to the Double ABC-X model, new resources can increase or existing resources can be strengthened or developed in response to a crisis. The current study found that while resources were developed and utilized more during the separation process, male-perpetrated IPV still occurred. These results show that while some forms of resources protected against male-perpetrated IPV, they were not adequate to overcome the initial crisis and maladaptation of male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process.

Respondents who reportedly felt social supports provided emotional support described receiving motivating discussions or feelings of reassurance. To illustrate, one participant described feeling “beaten down” after leaving her ex-spouse. She explained how her family provided reassurance through emotional support.

I used to get depressed about the bills. Because it still came back to him saying you’ll never make it, you’re nobody. And that took a long time to get through.

And of course my mom and my sister I have to thank for that. They'd call and say look at the money you make.

In addition to reassurance, participants reported the emotional support received provided motivation. In some cases, emotional support helped to provide a new perspective on former relationships, thus motivating the individual. One female participant described the advice she received from a co-worker in relation to the threats she was receiving from her ex-spouse.

My boss walked by my desk one day and I was on the verge of tears and really shook up and he said, I couldn't help but overhear. Was that your ex-husband? And I said, yeah. And he says, let me give you some advice, his reason for doing whatever it is he's doing, and I don't know what arguments or disagreements you have, but I know men, and he wants you to react like this. If you refuse to react, he'll quit.

In other cases, participants reported relying on social supports to provide them with security. This included both physical and financial security from an ex-spouse. Physical security was reported as a social support offering physical protection from an ex-spouse. To illustrate, a female participant described having friends over after her husband was arrested for physical male-perpetrated IPV. "Friends came to stay with me that weekend when he was gone, I was afraid he would come back." Another female participant reported she could not envision how she would have left her abusive spouse had her parents not offered her a place to live.

The children and I lived with them for the first three months and then I got my first apartment. I am not sure that I would have had the confidence, even though I

had all the motivation in the world, to actually get off the guided lead, had I not known I had somewhere to go that was safe.

One female was being chased through her town by her ex-spouse and happened to see her father at the same time. Up until this point her family had no idea about the level of male-perpetrated IPV she had experienced during the marriage or the continued male-perpetrated IPV during separation.

He showed up and was terribly upset and was chasing me around town in my car and threatened me and throwing things at me. I noticed my dad's car so I made a u-turn and went back and they went to my house and I jumped out and for the first time ever, ran to my father, and I told him that I was very afraid that he was coming and so they saw what was going on. So, no, they supported me totally.

They were actually mad at me because I had never told them what was going on.

Other respondents felt they could not have "survived" without financial support from family members. One illustration is a male participant's description of the support he received from his family members after his ex-spouse left. He explained how she took everything from the house and, the day afterwards, how his uncle arrived with a new washer and dryer for him. He further went on to describe how his mother helped each year to provide his children with Christmas gifts from him. It "relieved stress" for him to know some financial worries could be taken care of.

In addition to emotional support and security, participants reported relying on social supports to avoid conflict with an ex-spouse and ultimately avoid male-perpetrated IPV. For instance, a male participant described feeling upset with his ex-spouse throughout their separation and during times of conflict relied on his new girlfriend to

help avoid arguments. “I did not get so mad because I did have somebody there to talk me through some of that stuff and say don’t do that.” With the help of his girlfriend, the participant reported his relationship with his ex-spouse had improved some. Another male who drank heavily during his marriage and was physically abusive disclosed his father came to him and told him “point blank” that he didn’t agree with the way he had treated his wife. After the couple separated, this relationship provided him with strength to avoid conflict with his wife and become sober.

Perceptions of Initial Crisis

For the purpose of this study, perceptions were defined as an individual’s appraisal of, or attitude toward the initial crisis. Using the Double ABC-X model, the initial crisis was represented by male-perpetrated IPV during marriage. Participant perceptions, though not directly part of the interview guide, were inferred based on the context of participant conversations with the interviewer which included the participants’ expressions of feelings and thoughts toward the initial crisis event. Although the current study did not intend to explore gender differences, the researcher found males and females had unique perceptions toward the initial crisis.

The perception of the initial crisis included an individual’s view of the stressor or crisis, related hardships, and the meaning the individual attached to the situation (McKenry & Price, 2005). The current study focused on male-perpetrated IPV during marriage as the initial crisis. Inferences derived from descriptions of male-perpetrated IPV and the context surrounding the crisis led the researcher to determine females perceived male-perpetrated IPV as a major crisis. On the other hand, male participants perceived male-perpetrated IPV during marriage as inconsequential or justified.

Female participants described the context in which male-perpetrated IPV situations occurred, as well as feelings associated with the initial crisis. These descriptions were then utilized to form inferences and themes. To demonstrate this process, one example from a female participant who experienced both physical and emotional abuse during both marriage and the separation process described how she felt during her marriage. “I felt like such a mouse for so long and I was always under somebody’s thumb.” These feelings demonstrated the perception the participant held of herself and the marriage due to male-perpetrated IPV. These inferences revealed crisis during marriage caused disruption in the individual’s life. To further illustrate, one female participant discussed the level of emotional and psychological abuse during marriage. “I didn’t realize how much mental abuse there was until after and there was a lot, emotional and mental. It was degrading.”

While discussing male-perpetrated IPV, female participants often described feeling “hopeless.” One female participant who described physical abuse during her marriage stated, “He was going to start it [physical abuse] anyway so it won’t matter what I said.” Her husband would start with emotional abuse and “then it would escalate from there.” When asked how she responded to the crisis she stated,

I just didn’t answer. I wasn’t going to answer because why would I answer when I knew that was just going to make it worse. Pretty soon they would pass out and go to sleep and then you just go to bed and just hope they don’t wake up.

These descriptions led the researcher to determine female participants regarded the initial crisis of male-perpetrated IPV as highly disruptive.

In contrast, male participants did not view the initial crisis as highly disruptive. A negative perception was still held, yet this perception was due to the fact that males perceived the abuse as inconsequential or justified. To demonstrate, one male participant described the physical abuse he inflicted during marriage and his feelings. The participant disclosed that he felt he would lose it, and eventually the conflict became violent. However, during this description, the participant stated that he didn't "smack her across the face" while at the same time "I told her I was sorry I hit her." In other words, because the participant did not hit her in the face, he believed the abuse was not as severe as it could have been. Similarly, other male participants described their own definitions of physical abuse, and, according to these definitions, they felt they had not been abusive. These feelings were then coded as perceptions. For example, one male participant stated:

You know, it might get to the point where you would start walking down the hallways and she'd be standing there and you kind of just push her out of the way, but you don't like throw her into the wall or anything. I mean, there was never any kind of abuse...I'd grab her by her arms and push her away, but nothing ever physical.

Although the participant had become physically abusive to his wife during marriage, he felt that because he had not "pushed her into a wall," then it did not count as physical abuse. The researcher inferred, based on these feelings and descriptions, that the participants perceived the IPV they perpetrated during marriage as insignificant.

To further illustrate, another male stated "I didn't want to hit her. The last fight that we had that I, I didn't hit her; it was more like a smack or push. Like get away." The

same participant also described how he felt when his wife came to him and stated that she was leaving him.

She said I made her life a living hell, and I'm like, how did I do that, you know? I mean, I tried. I bent over backwards kissing this woman's ass, you know? I was just trying to make her my friend and my partner.

The participant did not understand why his wife felt that her life was a "living hell" because of the physical abuse. Based upon these feelings, the researcher then inferred that the male participant did not perceive his abusive actions to have impacted the marriage to the degree that his wife felt.

Summary

Overall, stressor events (Aa) and resources (Bb) precipitating male-perpetrated IPV (Xx) were unique for participants from marriage through the separation process. Specifically, for the duration of marriage, participants reported financial and work-related stress as a precursor to conflicts leading to male-perpetrated IPV. Interestingly, this was reported when one spouse worked as well as when both spouses worked. In addition, decision-making was also reported as a source of stress. Individuals felt they did not have control over decisions, while at the same time reported a sense of overwhelming responsibility as another source of stress. For example, many of the respondents felt they took on more responsibility than the spouse, yet they still did not have decision-making power within the relationship. Others reported that when they did make decisions, their spouse did not acknowledge these as quality decisions. Alcohol or substance use during marriage was a unique stressor compared to other forms of stress reported because, unlike the other stressor events, participants reported heavy alcohol consumption or drug use

always resulted in male-perpetrated IPV. This was true for both males' consumption of alcohol or drug use as well as females' consumption of alcohol or drug use.

During the separation process, two common themes were observed including stress associated with separation and co-parenting. Individuals who reported separation as a stressor event reported the termination to be unexpected for one spouse, thus leading to higher levels of stress and male-perpetrated IPV. The most unique reports came from instances in which males initiated the separation and reported their spouses did not accept the termination. These men explained how when their spouse did not agree with the relationship ending, they became "harder to deal with" thus increasing the level of conflict during the separation process and increasing the risk for male-perpetrated IPV.

Although some participants reported experiencing male-perpetrated IPV as a consequence of the separation stress, others reported experiencing male-perpetrated IPV in the context of co-parenting. Times of transition, namely pick-up and drop-off, as well as phone calls to discuss the children, created opportunities for ex-spouses to interact and potentially increase the chance of male-perpetrated IPV. In other words, remaining in contact with an ex-spouse was highly stressful. This was compounded for some individuals who realized they would need to have contact throughout their child's life, thus creating stress about their future interactions as well.

One of the largest differences between marriage and the separation process was participants' resources. Throughout marriage, individuals reported a lack of resources. Participants reported a lack of communication, sexual intimacy, emotional support, and trust. Notably, respondents felt the lack of relationship resources made stressors more evident and conflict worse. Conflict from the lack of resources often led to male-

perpetrated IPV. In contrast to marriage, resources were more evident to respondents during the separation process. The primary source of support came from social supports such as family, friends, co-workers, and new relationships. These relationships were highly important to participants and served as protective factors against male-perpetrated IPV. Most interestingly, this was true for both victims of IPV as well as perpetrators.

Although the current study did not intend to explore gender differences, males' and females' perceptions of the initial crisis during marriage differed. These perceptions were inferred based upon participants' reports of male-perpetrated IPV, the context of the report, and feelings expressed. Female participants' perceived the initial crisis, male-perpetrated IPV during marriage, as highly disruptive to their life as well as their families' lives, difficult to overcome, and harmful to their sense of self-worth. Based on the researcher's inferences of feelings and descriptions of male-perpetrated IPV, it was concluded that the males perceived their abusive behaviors to be inconsequential.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore male-perpetrated IPV in the context of the Double ABC-X model during the course of the marriage and examine if these concepts precipitated male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process. The model's concepts included precipitating stressor events of male-perpetrated IPV, resources, and perceptions of the initial crisis. Five questions guided deductive analysis of participants' transcripts in order to explore concepts of the Double ABC-X model. The sample consisted of 23 males and 23 females and, similar to previous research, themes revealed both male and female participants reported similar stressor events and resources (Sansom & Farnill, 1997). Perceptions of the initial stressor also coincided with previous research that showed males and females perceived IPV differently (Henning, Jones, & Holdford, 2005; Henning & Holdford, 2006; Whiting, Oka, & Fife, 2012).

Research Question 1

Research question one aimed to explore stressor events (A) precipitating male-perpetrated IPV during marriage (X). Themes revealed four major stressor events during the course of marriage. Financial stress and work-related stress reportedly led to male-perpetrated IPV. Individuals reported difficulties paying for expenses, disagreements concerning work hours, and large purchases led to conflicts within the relationship

leading to male-perpetrated IPV. These results are similar to those of Fox and colleagues (2002) who found more male-perpetrated IPV occurred among spouses who desired their partner to work more.

Individuals in the current study also reported financial and work-related stressors were associated with spousal hostility, intimidation, and withdrawal. These results are similar to Falconier's (2010) finding that financial stress experienced by couples was associated with higher levels of hostile male withdrawal, male intimidation, and male psychological aggression. Additionally, the participants in this study reported experiencing stress from spouse's control over finances and work led to male-perpetrated IPV. These results coincide with previous research finding that males may resort to violence to exert power and control if they feel financially dominated by a partner who works (Benson et al., 2003; Renzetti & Larkin, 2009).

The use of power and control in order to regain dominance is a potential explanation for male-perpetrated IPV due to stress from financial and work-related stress, as well as stress from decision-making. Participants, male and female, reported stress from the lack of decision-making during marriage led to conflict and male-perpetrated IPV. In terms of power and control, individuals felt spouses held more control and power over decisions, thus leading to an increase in conflict and male-perpetrated IPV. Earlier studies examining decision-making found male-perpetrated IPV increased when males reported female spouses exerted more power in decision-making (Sagrestano, Heavey, & Christensen, 1999). Coinciding with these results, the current study found when male participants felt they did not have decision-making abilities, male-perpetrated IPV

occurred. Similarly, when female participants did make decisions, spouses did not approve and male-perpetrated IPV transpired.

In addition to decision-making, individuals also reported stress from overwhelming responsibility, particularly in terms of housework and child care. Male-perpetrated IPV, which occurred due to this stressor, coincides with previous research finding daily stress experienced led to male-perpetrated IPV (Evans & Wachs, 2010; Lutenbacher, 2000). Lutenbacher's (2000) work, however, consisted of women who experienced male-perpetrated IPV due to child care as a daily stressor. The current study found both males and females experienced stress due to child care and responsibilities and, in both cases, male-perpetrated IPV occurred. Previous research focused on division of labor found female participants still bear the majority of household responsibilities when compared to males (Kulik, 2011). Gender role studies and the division of labor may relate to the current studies' results in terms of males feeling emasculated by performing activities deemed as what should be the female's role. In other words, female participants who reported stressors leading to male-perpetrated IPV coincides with previous research showing household work and child care as a risk factor for violence, whereas males who reported overwhelming responsibility felt they were being emasculated, thus male-perpetrated IPV occurred.

One of the more prevalent themes throughout the analysis was alcohol or substance use as a precursor to male-perpetrated IPV. Previous research has debated whether alcohol or substance use causes IPV or if it is used more so as a coping mechanism (Klostermann, 2006; Zavala & Spohn, 2010). Results coincide with Testa and colleagues (2012) in which male-perpetrated IPV occurred when either males or females

reported high levels of alcohol use, but not when both partners reportedly used high levels of alcohol. Participants of the current study disclosed a single partner's use of alcohol or substances increased stress and male-perpetrated IPV; however, none of the participants reported both partners use of alcohol or substances led to male-perpetrated IPV. In addition to alcohol use, substance use was also reported to cause stress and lead to conflict in which male-perpetrated IPV occurred. The current study found that male dependency resulted in male-perpetrated IPV. These results coincide with Moore and colleagues results' (2008) in which the only time in which spouses' substance use led to male-perpetrated IPV were in cases where male spouses were dependent upon substances, not females.

Research Question 2

The second research question explored resources (B) available to participants who experienced male-perpetrated IPV during the course of marriage (X). As stated by Price and colleagues (2010), resources serve as protective factors by reducing risks and promoting adaption to difficult circumstances. If available resources serve as protective factors, the lack of resources available create risk factors by creating vulnerabilities to stress and crisis (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). During the course of marriage, participants did not describe resources available that served as protective factors against male-perpetrated IPV. In contrast, respondents reported a lack of resources thus increasing risk of male-perpetrated IPV. These results are comparable to previous research where resources acted as a buffer against male-perpetrated IPV among couples (Cordova et al., 1993; Stith et al., 2008).

On the other hand, a lack of resources might lead to male-perpetrated IPV. To illustrate, of the 46 individuals in this study, 25 reported the lack of communication precipitated male-perpetrated IPV. Participants reported avoiding communicating with a spouse to avoid conflict, and when communication between spouses did occur, male-perpetrated IPV followed. Previous research has documented a lack of communication predicts both assaults and emotional abuse (Ellis & Stuckless, 2006). Similar to other studies, the current study's participants felt emotions and feelings were being held back. When the conflict finally came out, situations became volatile. These results are comparable to Stith and colleagues' (2011) findings in which individuals who avoided communication with a spouse to avoid arguments, or to comply with the spouse, temporarily eased stress; however, the inability to resolve conflict, in combination with other stressors and vulnerabilities, escalated male-perpetrated IPV. One explanation for the increase in male-perpetrated IPV is forced communication between spouses. Sagrestano and colleagues (1999) found that when partners demanded interaction or forced communication, male verbal aggression increased. This could be said for both males and females who forced spouses to confront each other over conflicts rather than utilize positive communication.

The lack of resources was also observed when individuals described the lack of sexual intimacy with a spouse, as well as the lack of emotional support. Male perpetrators reported they did not provide enough emotional support to their spouse, and yet felt they did not receive adequate amounts of sexual intimacy. Female respondents reported not receiving adequate emotional support from spouses and felt sex was unpleasant and done in order to further avoid male-perpetrated IPV. The association between emotional

support and sexual intimacy reported by participants may be due to the differences in needs between men and women. Marelich and Lundquist (2008) found men were more motivated by sexual needs while women were more likely to need affiliation (e.g., companionship, somebody to love). In other words, female participants did not receive emotional support, which they find more important, thus influencing their sexual desire. Males who deemed sex to be more important than emotional support could not relate to their spouse's needs. Both instances reduced emotional support and sexual intimacy as a relationship resource. Furthermore, the absence of both resources placed participants at high risk for male-perpetrated IPV.

One final theme throughout marriage was the lack of trust between spouses as a missed resource. The lack of trust created negative feelings toward spouses and, as a result male-perpetrated IPV, continued or became worse. The most common theme related to a lack of trust was the presence of an affair and secretive behavior of a spouse. Most often secretive behavior was due to a spouse's suspicion of an affair. These results coincide with findings from previous research showing the risk of male-perpetrated IPV was higher when individuals felt their partner had been unfaithful (Buss & Duntley, 2011). Buss and Duntley's (2011) review of IPV literature found females who had affairs experienced male-perpetrated IPV in response to their spouses attempting to regain control of the marriage. In contrast to Buss and Duntley's results, the current study found that male-perpetrated IPV increased when both males and females had an affair. These results may be explained by examining how males and females react to infidelity. Miller and Maner (2008) found males became violent in reaction to infidelity, whereas females became saddened. These results, in combination with the current study's results, indicate

that males resort to male-perpetrated IPV when a female partner has an affair or an affair is suspected. Similarly, male-perpetrated IPV also occurred in response to the husband's infidelity. Specifically, some participants reported experiencing IPV as a result of confronting their husbands about their infidelity. In response, individuals who demanded interaction or communication, specifically concerning areas of high conflict, increased the risk for male-perpetrated IPV.

Research Question 3

Research question three explored the stressor events (Aa) present during the separation process in comparison to those experienced during marriage for individuals who reported male-perpetrated IPV during both marriage and the separation process. Although all 46 participants reported male-perpetrated IPV occurred during both marriage and the separation process, stressor events (Aa) differed. During the separation process, two overall stressor events precipitated male-perpetrated IPV; the separation itself and co-parenting. Stress from the initial act of separation often led to male-perpetrated IPV. These results are supported by DeKeseredy and Joseph's (2006) study in which more than half of the sample of women had been physically attacked by a male partner when trying to leave the relationship (DeKeseredy & Joseph, 2006). Furthermore, previous research findings showed not all individuals are ready to leave abusive relationship (Arriaga & Capezza, 2005) and, as current results show, participants reported spouses did not react positively to the termination of the relationship. Respondents reported spouses' reactions to stress included male-perpetrated IPV in order to regain control of the relationship, as well as male participants who reported female spouses refusing to accept separation. Although only a few males reported male-initiated

separation, interestingly, male-perpetrated IPV still occurred. One explanation is the use of verbal aggression reportedly experienced by these males increased male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process. In support of this explanation, Toews and colleagues (2005) found females' verbal aggression during separation was related to males' use of verbal and physical aggression during separation. These results, in combination with the current study's results, indicate that male-perpetrated IPV can still occur even when males initiate the separation process

During the separation process, participants also reported harassment through repeated phone calls, mail, and stalking, as well as withholding property as stressor events. These findings are consistent with Burgess and colleagues' (2001) results that male perpetrators would contact an ex-spouse through gifts, letters, calling repeatedly, and stalking. As previous research has indicated, harassment of this nature can lead to further acts of violence, including emotional abuse, sexual assault, and physical violence (Mechanic, Uhlmansiek, Weaver, & Resick, 2000). In addition to repetitive calls, mail, and stalking, participants reported property being withheld or damaged during the separation process as a stressor event. Although not widely researched, withholding or damaging a person's property is a form of IPV (CDCP, 2012). In fact, results from previous crime victim surveys found victims of domestic violence are more likely to report property crime than non-victims (Buskovich & Peterson, 2009). However, individuals may not report withheld or damaged property as a form of IPV, thus showing more research and awareness is needed.

Further accounts of stressor events during the separation process included threats. Threats of violence were utilized during this time in order to maintain control as well as

to preserve the relationship. In the most severe cases, threats of physical harm or death were made during the separation process, thus increasing the participants' level of stress. It is possible threats made during the separation process could potentially increase the risk of male-perpetrated IPV later. Prior studies have shown physical threats predict the use of physical assault during separation (Ellis & Stuckless, 2006).

In addition to stress experienced from the separation itself, co-parenting was reported as a major stressor event during the separation process. As previous research indicates, co-parenting is a major stressor event during separation due to the need to continue the relationship (Hardesty et al., 2008; Kelly, 2007; Sansom & Farnill, 1997). The current study found co-parenting created a continued need to communicate between ex-spouses allowing for male-perpetrated IPV to continue. Hardesty and Ganong (2006) also found similar results in which females who had experienced male-perpetrated IPV during marriage continued to experience male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process due to the continued need to co-parent. As with Hardesty and Ganong's (2006) results, the current study found the most predominant times of co-parenting stress included pick-up and drop-off times as well as threats concerning custody. Not only did the respondents report pick-up and drop-off times as stressful, these events precipitated male-perpetrated IPV. These findings are supported by other research that found individuals who experienced male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process experienced high levels of male-perpetrated IPV during pick-up and drop-off times due to co-parenting requirements (Hardesty & Chung, 2006).

Results from the current study indicate that co-parenting serves as a means to allow male-perpetrated IPV to continue from marriage through the separation process.

Previous researchers have found a high level of co-parenting involvement was another way of maintaining control over former spouses (Hardesty & Ganong, 2006). Hardesty and Ganong (2006) found participants who reported high levels of male-perpetrated IPV during the marriage also reported high levels of co-parenting involvement during the separation process from males. These results coincide with the current research study in the fact that individuals reported control in conjunction with co-parenting stressors.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question explored what existing and new resources (Bb) were present during the separation process in comparison to resources available during marriage for individuals who reported male-perpetrated IPV during both marriage and the separation process. Themes indicated that during the separation process individuals utilized social supports to provide emotional support, security, and avoid further conflict. These forms of social support served as protective factors against male-perpetrated IPV. Previous research found individuals with social supports present reduced the risk associated with male-perpetrated IPV (Coker et al., 2002; Escribà-Agüi et al., 2010; Fortin et al., 2012).

Similar to previous research, the current study found social supports included friends, family, co-workers, and new relationships. For example, Henderson and Argyle (1985) found that women who were going through the process of separation found friends to be the most important source of support, closely followed by family, while Yragui and colleagues (2012) found that women who experienced male-perpetrated IPV found supervisors at work to be a source of support. Price and colleagues (2010) explained resources reduced risk and promoted adaptation to difficult circumstances. This

idea was supported by the current results as well. Respondents who utilized social supports were able to reduce the risk of male-perpetrated IPV and tried to adapt to the separation process. Adapting to separation is one possible way respondents were able to reduce the level of male-perpetrated IPV.

As with previous research, participants were more likely to seek out resources during the separation process rather than during the course of marriage (Vatnar & Bjørkly, 2012; Zlotnick et al., 2006). One possible explanation for the presence of support during the separation process compared to marriage is the lowered stress levels of individuals. Sansom and Farnill (1997) found individuals with higher levels of support during the separation process experienced lower levels of stress. Reducing stress may be a protective factor against male-perpetrated IPV. By terminating the relationship, individuals may feel they are safely able to reach out to sources of support. Barrett and Pierre (2011) found individuals were more likely to seek out resources during the separation process due to a reduced sense of fear and stress by leaving the marriage.

Although the current study's results indicate that resources present during the separation process helped reduce the risk associated with male-perpetrated IPV, participants still experienced male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process. The Double ABC-X model indicates that new resources may come available and be utilized in response to a crisis; however, even if new resources do become available and are utilized, a crisis may still be experienced and maladaptation may occur if new resources are inadequate. In support of this assumption, Carlson and colleagues (2002) found that while the presence of social supports may have reduced the risk of male-perpetrated IPV for some women, the presence of social supports may be less effective for those who had

experienced male-perpetrated IPV for longer periods of time. Given the fact that the participants in the current study experienced male-perpetrated IPV during the course of the marriage, it is possible the newly acquired resources were not adequate to overcome maladaptation during the separation process.

Research Question 5

Research question five explored how participants perceived the initial crisis during marriage (Cc). According to the Double ABC-X model, perceptions post-crisis (Cc) consist of an individual's perception of stressor events, resources, and the initial crisis (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982). However, for the purposes of this study, only the individual's perceptions of the initial crisis were explored. Perceptions were not directly addressed throughout the interview process; therefore, the researcher utilized participants' descriptions of and feelings toward the initial crisis to determine inferences and form themes.

Although the current study did not intend to explore gender differences, the narratives showed a difference in female's and male's perceptions. Specifically, female participants perceived male-perpetrated IPV during the course of marriage as highly disruptive, while males tended to see their abusive behaviors as inconsequential. In fact, male participants expressed feeling wrongly accused of male-perpetrated IPV during marriage, and did not feel their actions should be considered as abusive. These results coincided with previous research analyzing perceptions of male-perpetrated IPV. Women who experienced male-perpetrated IPV perceived the crisis and stress associated with the crisis as highly disruptive and harmful to their physical and emotional well-being (Martinez-Torteya et al., 2009). Similarly, female respondents in the current study

reported feeling worthless and felt male-perpetrated IPV negatively affected their lives and the lives of their family members. Although the current study's results agreed with Martinez-Torteya and colleagues (2009) results, some previous research has found that both perpetrators and victims of IPV are more condoning of IPV than non-victims and non-perpetrators (Robertson & Murachver, 2009). It is possible that female respondents within the current study were more aware of the affects that male-perpetrated IPV had on their lives during their marriage once they were separated, and this newly found awareness influenced respondents' feelings during the interview process.

In contrast to female perceptions, results indicated that males' perceptions of the initial crisis differed from female perceptions of the initial crisis. These results coincide with previous research exploring males' perception of IPV. Whiting and colleagues (2012) found male perpetrators often denied their abusive behaviors occurred, minimized the amount of IPV, and rationalized IPV by blaming their spouse. It is suggested that male-perpetrators deflect their responsibility and justify their actions in order to maintain a more positive self-image (Whiting et al., 2012). Other research suggests that male-perpetrators perceive IPV as less impactful due to the fact that they associate violence with acceptance. Eckhardt and colleagues (2012) found that males who were seeking treatment for male-perpetrated IPV for a current relationship were faster than non-violent males to associate violent concepts as positive. It is possible that by associating violent acts as more positive, male perpetrators of IPV may not see the extent of abuse or violence as harmful. The current study found that males defined violence for themselves, and felt that the extent of abuse inflicted was reasonable. Levitt and colleagues' (2008) results indicated that the majority of male perpetrators of IPV felt both partners shared

the responsibility of male-perpetrated IPV. The respondents reported it was not all their fault because of wives' nagging tendencies and felt they were being insulted as a male (Levitt, Swanger, & Butler, 2008). If the male spouse felt the IPV was justified or did not meet their definition of abuse, then the perception that they were falsely accused of male-perpetrated IPV could be explained.

Strengths and Limitations

Few studies have explored male-perpetrated IPV in the context of the Double ABC-X model. Strengths of the current study include the use of the Double ABC-X model rather than the original ABC-X model in order to examine IPV during both the course of marriage and the separation process. By utilizing the Double ABC-X model, perceptions of the initial stressor event could be explored for individuals who continued to experience male-perpetrated IPV, an area of research that is currently underdeveloped. In addition, the Double ABC-X model allowed the researcher to explore pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis. The current study is unique in the fact that it explores male-perpetrated IPV during the course of marriage into the separation process. Although previous research on male-perpetrated IPV explored relationships during marriage and the separation process, they were done as unique periods of time.

An additional strength of the current study is the combination of the theoretical framework with the study's design. Through the use of qualitative interviews, the researcher was allowed to explore the context in which male-perpetrated IPV occurred for both victims and perpetrators. This includes the role of stressor events that precipitated male-perpetrated IPV during marriage into the separation process, resources available to individuals who experienced male-perpetrated IPV during the course of

marriage, as well as new resources during the separation process, and the perceptions individuals who experienced male-perpetrated IPV have of the initial crisis event. The current study not only yielded a large body of results, the results are consistent with current research findings and the Double ABC-X model, thus helping to add to the current body of literature. For example, results show that while individuals may gain resources after the initial crisis, maladaptation (Xx) can still occur.

Given the strengths of the current study, some limitations must be addressed. One limitation is the partial use of the Double ABC-X model. The data collected did not yield itself to fully explore perceptions of stressor events and resources during pre-and post-crisis. Although the current research study utilized the majority of the Double ABC-X model, future studies designed specifically for the model would strengthen the current study's results. Additionally, due to the interview occurring post-separation, some biased opinions of the marriage may have been formed. Participants may harbor negative feelings toward an ex-spouse that could potentially skew results taken from accounts of their marriage or from the separation process. Moreover, participants may not have been able to recall all details of their marriage or separation. Inferential findings of the current study should also be interpreted circumspectly because of several limitations. First, participants for this study were not directly asked about their perception of the initial crisis. Second, by only utilizing one researcher to form inferences, the results are weakened and restrict generalizability of the results. In addition to the inferential findings, the use of one researcher to determine codes and themes weakens the study's results.

Limitations of the current study also include natural limitations of qualitative research. One-on-one interviews require the respondent to answer openly and honestly in order for a more in-depth exploration to occur. Due to the sensitive nature of the current study, participants may have felt embarrassed, nervous, or had difficulty accessing memories. Another natural limitation of qualitative research is that the results cannot be generalized. Finally, the current study did not focus on couples, but rather on individuals who reported male-perpetrated IPV during both marriage and the separation process. Future studies could focus on comparing couples' stressor events, resources, and perceptions to see if commonalities reported in the current study remain true.

Implications

The current study has several important implications for future interventions, practices, and studies on male-perpetrated IPV. Given the absence of literature and the extent and potential dangerousness of male-perpetrated IPV, identifying potential stressor events, resources, and perceptions of the initial crisis of both victims and perpetrators of male-perpetrated IPV can help professionals in several ways. First, by understanding the context in which male-perpetrated IPV occurs, practitioners can better identify risk factors associated with male-perpetrated IPV during marriage as well as during the separation process. From this study, risk factors for male-perpetrated IPV during marriage may include extreme differences in role expectations concerning finances and work, decision-making, and responsibilities. The lack of relationship resources also serves as a potential risk factor. Professionals working with individuals who have experienced male-perpetrated IPV can also explore resources within the marriage and

help build upon these in order to protect against male-perpetrated IPV and strengthen the marriage.

In addition to risk factors of male-perpetrated IPV during marriage, professionals should also consider risk factors associated with continued male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process. Participants within the current study continued to experience male-perpetrated IPV throughout separation process, thus creating a need for practitioners to monitor for intervention. The two most common stressor events for individuals who continued to experience male-perpetrated IPV included separation itself and co-parenting. Although not as widely researched, findings coincide with previous research that both male-initiated and female-initiated separation can lead to male-perpetrated IPV. Co-parenting stress often precipitated acts of male-perpetrated IPV and allowed for IPV to continue. These results emphasize the importance for screening tools and assessments during the separation process. For example, professionals are encouraged to screen for IPV and, if found, explore alternative options for co-parenting in order to ensure the safety of everyone involved. Finally, professionals should consider perceptions of male-perpetrated IPV as an initial crisis. Although victims of male-perpetrated IPV have separated, negative perceptions of the initial crisis influence both stress during the separation process and the possibility of maladaptation.

In addition to intervention, results also provide insight for practitioners such as marriage counselors for couples who are about to enter marriage or couples who are attending marriage counseling prior to making the decision to separate. Results indicated individuals who discuss definitions and expectations of marriage may feel they are more of a resource to their spouse and agree upon roles within the marriage. Counseling

sessions that focus on these needs will potentially prevent stressor events and build positive resources. Moreover, counselors working with couples in marriage counseling can potentially redefine definitions so that control feels shared rather than one individual feeling a lack of control within the marriage.

Future studies utilizing the Double ABC-X model should directly address perceptions of individuals who experienced male-perpetrated IPV during the course of marriage and the separation process. While the current study helped to shape future research in the field of male-perpetrated IPV and the Double ABC-X model, the partial use of the model in conjunction with the use of inferences to determine perceptions of the initial crisis weakens results. Additional research focused on perceptions would not only build upon current research concerning perceptions in the context of male-perpetrated IPV, it would also allow future research to continue exploring how perceptions shape stressor events and resources from marriage into the separation process. Although the current study provided future studies with direction, a study that directly addresses individuals' perceptions would strengthen the current study's results.

In closing, future researchers should continue exploring stress as a precipitating influence to male-perpetrated IPV during marriage and through the separation process. Given the high levels of stress experienced (American Psychological Association, 2012), the increased numbers of women who endure male-perpetrated IPV during the separation process (Brownridge et al., 2008), and the current study's results, further understanding of stress may help practitioners better provide intervention and prevention to male-perpetrated IPV. This study adds to the current literature on the Double ABC-X model applied to male-perpetrated IPV relationships; however, further understanding of the

context in which male-perpetrated IPV occurs will create further understanding of stress as it relates to male-perpetrated IPV.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Tell me about why your marriage didn't work out.
Probes:
 - What happened?
 - Whose fault was it (mostly)?
2. How traditional was your marriage?
Probes:
 - How did you and your wife/husband divide household responsibilities; e.g., work, housework, childcare?
 - Who made the decision in your family?
 - Who was "the boss" at home?
3. Again, thinking back to when you were married, what caused conflict in your marriage?
Probes:
 - How did you usually resolve your conflicts?
 - Did you ever feel like you lost control or were about to lose control?
 - Were you ever physically abusive? Emotionally abusive? Were you ever physically abused? Emotionally abused?
 - How did these abusive incidents start?
 - Did they ever involve drugs or alcohol?
4. How long were you separated before your divorce?
Probes:
 - When did you and your wife/husband separate?
 - When was your divorce finalized?
5. How do you feel about your settlement agreement?
Probes:
 - Do you feel that the settlement is fair?
 - Are you satisfied with the visitation arrangements?
 - Did you participate in mediation?
 - What services were most helpful in terms of coming to an agreement?
 - How do you feel about your current financial situation?

6. How difficult was your divorce?

Probes:

- How much conflict did you experience with your former spouse in the process of the divorce?
- What issues caused the problems?
- Did you ever feel intimidated or threatened during the divorce process?
- Did you ever feel physically threatened?
- Were you verbally harassed?
- If you did feel intimidated or threatened, was this something that you had anticipated happening during your divorce?
- Did anybody other than your spouse intimidate you during your divorce?
- Did your feelings of intimidation influence the decisions you made during the divorce negotiations (e.g., financial settlement, custody, etc.)?

7. Tell me what it's like now co-parenting with your former spouse.

Probes:

- How well do you get along with your former spouse?
- Does your visitation schedule work well?
- Does your former spouse do anything that hurts your relationship with your children?
- How easy is it to come to an agreement about parenting issues?
- What do you do when differences of opinion come up?
- Do you think that the problems you've had with your former spouse have had a negative impact on your children?
- How well do your children get along with your former spouse?
- Do you feel that your role as a parent is fully recognized (by your former spouse, the courts, etc.)?

8. Today, do you continue to feel intimidated or threatened by your former spouse?

Probes:

- In what situations do these feelings occur?
- Do you ever feel physically threatened?
- Are you verbally harassed?

9. How do you feel like you're handling life now as a single person?

Probes:

- What has been the most difficult adjustment?
- How are you doing financially?
- How are you doing socially?
- Do you ever regret getting the divorce?

10. In general, how have you felt since the time of your divorce?

Probes:

- Have you been depressed?
- Have you felt lonely?

- Have you felt angry or hostile?
- Have you been drinking or using drugs?
- What sort of help has been particularly useful as you've adjusted to your divorce?

11. What is your idea of the "perfect" male-female relationship?

Probes:

- Do you feel like you have or will ever find that kind of relationship?
- Do you know anybody with that perfect relationship?

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