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Final Technical Report

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Grant number:	2001-WT-BX-0502
Investigators:	Suzanne Swan, Ph.D., and David L. Snow, Ph.D.
Report prepared by:	Suzanne Swan, Ph.D., David L. Snow, Ph.D., Tami P. Sullivan, Ph.D., Laura Gambone, M.A., and Alice Fields, B.S.

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Abstract

Women's use of violence in intimate relationships is an issue that is not well understood. Over 100 studies have found that women self-report as much perpetration of violent behavior as men (Straus, 1999). These findings have generated a great deal of controversy, in part because there has been no theoretical framework advanced to explain women's violence and because issues of coercive control have not been considered or measured until recently. Several reports have appeared recently in the popular press, concluding that women, after all, are just as violent as men. These conclusions are oversimplifications that fail to place the occurrence of women's violence in a broader social and relational context.

The criminal justice system also struggles with how to deal with the issue of women's violence with male partners. Many states have implemented mandatory arrest laws in cases of domestic violence, and large numbers of women are being arrested. Most interventions for domestic violence offenders were designed for men and do not necessarily translate well to female offenders. It is critical for theory and research to be advanced in the area of women's violence for these interventions to meet women's needs.

The purpose of this study was to develop an empirically based theoretical framework of women's use of violence in intimate relationships. The study focuses on the following contextual factors: Victimization: The study examines women's violence in the context of their victimization from male partners. Race/ethnicity: A major goal of the project was to examine the role of race, ethnicity, and culture in shaping the experiences of women in violent relationships. Cognitive factors: The study examines women's motivations for using violent behavior, and the strategies that women use to cope with violence in their relationships. Childhood trauma: Women who use violence have very high rates of childhood trauma. Outcomes: The outcomes of injury, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder,

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anxiety, and substance abuse were also examined.

Participants included a community sample of 150 African American, 150 Latina, and 112 White women. Participants were administered an approximately two-hour quantitative interview. In addition to the quantitative portion of the study, focus groups were conducted to qualitatively assess the role of culture, ethnicity, and race on women's motivations for and beliefs about their use of violence in relationships.

This technical report provides a description of the methods used to conduct the study, a detailed description of the measures used, challenges in conducting the study and how we dealt with them, and descriptive results. Further data analyses and discussions of theoretical issues will be described in future published papers.

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An Empirical Examination of a Theory of Women's Use of Violence in Intimate Relationships

Women's use of violence in intimate relationships is an issue that is not well understood. Over 100 studies have found that women self-report as much perpetration of violent behavior as men (Straus, 1999). A meta-analysis (Archer, 2000) of gender differences in rates of physical aggression with intimate partners found equivalent rates of aggression by men and women. These findings have generated a great deal of controversy, in part because there has been no theoretical framework to explain women's violence (Straus, 1999).

Data from domestic violence arrests add to the controversy around women's violence, as women are being arrested in increasing numbers for domestic violence offenses. In Concord, New Hampshire, 35% of domestic violence arrests in 1999 were of women, compared to 23% in 1993. In Vermont, 23% of arrests in 1999 were of women, compared with 16% in 1997 (Goldberg, 1999). And in Connecticut, 20% of persons classified as domestic violence offenders were female in 1999 (Connecticut Department of Public Safety, 1999).

Several reports have appeared in the popular press, concluding that women, after all, are just as violent as men (e.g., Zuger, "A Fistful of Hostility is Found in Women", The New York Times). These conclusions are oversimplifications drawn solely on the basis of reported incidence rates of certain types of behaviors, and do not place the occurrence of women's violence in a broader social and relational context. Without a theoretical framework that includes these contextual variables, women's violence in intimate relationships cannot be understood. Renzetti (1999) argues that intimate violence is *gendered*, i.e., women's motivations for violence and the contexts in which the violence takes place are qualitatively different than those of men. A gendered, feminist theoretical approach, i.e., one that "uses gender as a central organizing variable for understanding human behavior and social organization" (Renzetti, 1999, p. 45) is needed to understand women's violence.

The risk of an approach that ignores gender is that policy makers and others will draw erroneous conclusions from the data and will implement policies that penalize women and place them in increased

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danger.

The primary goal of this project was to develop a comprehensive, theory-driven approach to understanding women's violence by empirically examining a theory of women's violence in intimate relationships. The second goal was to examine women's violence within the context of race, ethnicity, and culture. Quantitative interviews were conducted with a community sample of 112 White, 150 African American, and 150 Latina women. In addition to the quantitative portion of the study, eleven focus groups – four with African American women, four with Latina, and three with White women -- were conducted to qualitatively assess the role of culture, ethnicity, and race on women's motivations for and beliefs about their use of violence in relationships.

This technical report will provide a description of the methods used to conduct the study, a detailed description of the measures used, challenges in conducting the study and how we dealt with them, and descriptive results. Further data analyses and discussions of theoretical issues will be described in future published papers.

Methods

Quantitative Interviews

Recruitment. The community sample was initially recruited from four large inner-city primary care clinics. To increase the number of interviews, recruitment was expanded to include many locations throughout the New Haven area, including other health clinics, churches, shops, libraries, community kiosks, restaurants, grocery stores, laundromats, convenience stores, tiendas, etc. Our primary method of recruitment was to place brochures and posters with tear-off sheets in these locations. All recruitment materials were written in both English and Spanish. In the four large primary care clinics, brochures included a tear-off sheet, on which people interested in the study could write their contact information. Brochures instructed them to put the tear-off sheets in locked boxes located in the waiting rooms. To "give back" to the clinics and increase the interest of staff in the study, we conducted "Domestic Violence 101 for Health Practitioners" training for staff, and we used this as an opportunity to inform

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staff about the study and ask for their help in recruitment.

Telephone screening. A fifteen minute telephone screen was conducted with women interested in the study to assess if they met study criteria. Questions on the screen included demographic items and abuse items from the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus et al., 1996). The screening measure is shown in Appendix A. The primary study criteria were that the woman 1) was African-American, White, or Latina; 2) had committed at least one physically violent behavior against a male partner in the previous six months; 3) did not exceed our income criteria. The purpose of the income criteria was to maximize demographic similarity among the three ethnic groups.

Procedures. Individual interviews were conducted at a community-based agency. All interviews were conducted by female interviewers who were of the same race/ethnicity as the participants they interviewed. Latina participants were interviewed by a bilingual/bicultural interviewer. The surveys were administered on laptop computers using Questionnaire Development System software. Interviewers read questions to participants and typed in their responses. Interviewers and participants sat next to each other so that participants could see the computer screen. The advantages of computerized survey administration were considerable: no data entry and immediate access to the data. Interviews took, on average, two hours to complete. Participants were compensated $50 for their time.

Maximizing safety of participants. Several steps were taken to decrease the possibility that women's safety would be jeopardized due to participation in the study. When women wrote their contact information and left it in the boxes at the health clinics, they were asked to indicate if it was okay for us to contact them by phone or letter. If not, the brochure provided a phone number for them to call us. When interviews were scheduled, participants were again asked if it was okay to call them at the number they provided. At the time of reviewing informed consent forms, women were asked to consider carefully if their participation in the interview would create a problem with their partners. Finally, because of the possibility that study-related paperwork participants brought home might be found by partners, we did not provide copies of consent forms unless participants asked for them. After

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completing the interview, participants were given brochures with detailed information about local resources for domestic violence, counseling, substance abuse treatment, housing, food, and other issues.

Measures.

The *Relationship Self-Efficacy scale* (Lopez & Lent, 1991) assesses the extent to which respondents feel able to openly and effectively participate in their relationships, and is used here as an indicator of women's empowerment in their relationships and the extent to which relationships are egalitarian. Sample items include, "how confident are you that you can share equally with your partner in planning activities together?" and "how confident are you that you can openly express your personal wishes and needs?" Reliability in the present study is alpha = .92.

Measures of abuse. All of the abuse measures assess the participants' own violent and abusive behaviors (perpetration), and the violent or abusive behavior of their partners towards them (victimization). The *Conflict Tactics Scale* is a very widely used measure of physical aggression within the field of family violence. We used the physical assault, psychological aggression, and injury subscales from the revised Conflict Tactics Scale-2 (Straus et al., 1996). In the present study, reliability for the CTS perpetration scale was alpha = .87. Reliability for the victimization subscale was alpha = .91. The brief version of the *Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory* (Tolman, 1999) was used to assess emotional abuse and coercive control behaviors. Reliability for the perpetration subscale of the PMWI was alpha = .66, and reliability for the victimization subscale was alpha = .82. Sexual coercion was assessed with the commonly used *Sexual Experiences Survey* (Koss & Oros, 1982). The Sexual Experiences Survey has been used primarily with college populations and requires a fairly high reading level. We believed that the measure would be difficult to understand for many participants, so we created a simplified version for this study. Reliability for the perpetration subscale was alpha = .83, and for the victimization subscale was .90. A S*talking* measure used in the National Violence Against Women Survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998) was also included. Reliability for the perpetration subscale was alpha = .77, and for the victimization subscale was alpha = .73. To our knowledge, this is the first

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time the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory has been used to measure women's coercively controlling behaviors. Likewise, we believe this is the first time the Sexual Experiences Survey has been used to assess women's sexually coercive behaviors.

The *Motivations for Violence* scale, developed by the researchers, assessed participants' motivations for their use of violent behaviors (Swan & Sullivan, 2002). Reliability for the measure is alpha = .93. The Motivations for Violence scale is described in detail in the results section. The *Women's Experiences of Battering* scale (Hall Smith, Earp, & DeVellis, 1995) was used to assess women's fear, shame, and feelings of being controlled by their partners. Sample items include, "He makes me feel unsafe even in my own home" and "I feel ashamed of the things he does to me". Reliability for the measure is alpha = .92. The *Shame for Violent Behavior* (Swan, 2002) and the *Fear of Partner* scale (Swan, 2002) were both developed by the researchers for this project and are described in detail in the results section. Reliabilities are alpha = .83 for the Shame for Violent Behavior scale and alpha = .90 for the Fear of Partner scale.

Experiences of childhood physical, sexual, and emotional abuse were assessed with the widely used Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ; Bernstein et al., 1994). The CTQ assesses physical abuse ("People in my family hit me so hard that it left me with bruises or marks"), physical neglect ("My parents were too drunk or high to take care of me"), emotional abuse ("I thought that my parents wished I had never been born"), emotional neglect ("People in my family looked out for each other", recoded), and sexual abuse ("Someone molested me"). The measure also contains an assessment of minimization and denial of childhood abuse ("I had the perfect childhood"). This measure obtained a reliability of alpha = .95 in the present study.

Participants' ethnic identity was assessed with the *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure* (MEIM; Phinney, 1992). The measure assesses the extent to which participants identify with, take pride in, and participate in the cultural practices of their ethnic group. Examples of items include, "I have a clear sense of my background as a [insert ethnic group label] and what it means for me" and "I participate in

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cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs". Reliability for the MEIM is alpha = .85. For Latina participants, level of acculturation was assessed with the *Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics* (Marin, Sabogal, VanOss Marin, Otero-Sabogal, & Perez-Stable, 1987). Items assess language use and social groups and include "What language do you speak at home?" and "You prefer going to social gatherings/parties at which people are: primarily Latino or primarily non-Latino". Reliability for the acculturation scale is alpha = .90.

Resource utilization and coping. A measure of resource utilization, the *Resource Utilization Questionnaire* (RUQ), was developed for the study and is described in detail in the results (Swan, Gill, & Sullivan, 2002). The measure assesses resources participants used to help them with violence in their relationships across a number of domains, including social services, legal interventions, and family, friends, and community supports. Reliability for the RUQ is alpha = .74. Two measures were used to assess how participants coped with the difficulties in their relationships. Amirkhan's (1990) *Coping Strategies Inventory* was used to assess the extent to which participants used the traditional coping categories of avoidance of the problem ("trying to distract yourself from the problem"), problem-solving activities ("setting some goals for yourself to deal with the situation"), and seeking social support ("confide your fears and worries to a friend or relative"). Reliability for the Coping Strategies Inventory is alpha = .80. The *Africultural Coping Systems Inventory* (Utsey, Adams, & Bolden, 2000) was also used with all participants to assess coping behaviors not examined in the traditional coping literature, but nonetheless frequently used. These included cognitive/emotional debriefing ("Sought out people I thought would make me laugh"), spiritual-centered coping ("Praying that things would work themselves out"), collective coping ("Got a group of family or friends together to help with the problem"), and ritual-centered coping ("Light a candle for strength or guidance in dealing with the problem"). One item from the original scale that would not be applicable to all ethnic groups was deleted: "I thought of all the struggles Black people have had to endure and this gave me strength to deal with the situation." The

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reliability for the Africultural Coping scale is alpha = .89.

Various mental health-related symptoms and behaviors were assessed, including depression (via the *Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression* scale, Radloff, 1977; alpha = .92 in the present study), posttraumatic stress disorder (using the *Posttraumatic Stress Diagnostic scale*, Foa, 1995; alpha = .91 in the present study), anxiety (with the *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory*, Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970; alpha = .93 in the present study**)**, problem drinking (using the *Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test*, Babor & Grant, 1989; alpha = .89 in the present study), and drug abuse with the *Drug Abuse Screening Test* (Skinner, 1982; alpha = .86 in the present study).

The extent to which participants wished to appear socially desirable was assessed with the *Short Social Desirability Scale* (Greenwald & Satow, 1970). Examples of items include "There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone" and "I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoing". Reliability for the Social Desirability Scale is alpha = .76.

Translation Procedures. A few measures had Spanish versions available. Most measures, along with brochures and other study materials, were translated by the bilingual/bicultural member of the research team. An experienced translator and researcher reviewed all translations.

Qualitative Methods

Eleven focus groups -- four with African American women, four with Latina women, and three with White women -- were conducted to qualitatively assess the role of culture, ethnicity, and race on women's motivations for and beliefs about their use of violence in relationships. Participants were told that they would be asked a series of questions about norms, beliefs, and behaviors among men and women in intimate relationships specifically in their communities (e.g., the African American community in New Haven). They were then asked to describe what roles men and women should have in relationships; what kinds of things men and women should <u>not</u> do in relationships; what kinds of violent and coercive control behaviors men and women commit, and how they may differ; and how men and women who are abusive are viewed in the community. Participants were also asked some questions

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about their own relationships: what were the motivations behind their use of violence against their partners; what messages they received from their families, friends, and communities about their violence; how they felt about themselves when they were violent; and what advice they would give to other women experiencing violence in their relationships. Participants were paid $50.

Focus groups ranged in size from 3-9 participants. The final sample achieved for the qualitative focus groups was 23 African Americans, ranging from 5-7 women in each of the four focus groups, 21 Latinas, with 4-6 in each of the four focus groups, and 16 White participants, ranging between 3-9 across the three focus groups. For the African American and Latina focus groups, participants were recruited from the community in the same manner as the participants who completed the interviews. Because we had difficulty recruiting White participants for the interviews, White focus group participants were recruited from the participants who had already completed interviews and who had consented to be contacted later regarding future studies.

We did have two additional study criteria for focus group participants. Because the questions focused on how people in the women's communities (e.g., the Latino community in New Haven) viewed violence in relationships among people of that community, we excluded women whose partners were not of the same ethnicity as themselves. We also required participants to have lived in New Haven for at least two years so that they could have knowledge of and experience with the community

The focus groups were conducted by teams of researchers and assistants who were of the same ethnicity as the participants. Following focus group procedures recommended by Morgan and Krueger's (1998) *The Focus Group Kit*, a research assistant served as the note taker, whose role was to write the participants' answers to questions on flip charts so that the participants could review the data as it was being collected and make corrections if necessary. Another research assistant tape recorded the focus groups and took her own notes. For the African American and Latina focus groups, this individual then transcribed the tapes. The White focus groups tapes were translated by students, with the aid of the Principal Investigator. Translation of the Latina focus groups was conducted by the research assistant

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who aided in conducting these focus groups.

Methodological challenges

Our primary challenge was that we were not able to achieve our goal of 150 White participants. Our final N for the White sample is 112. In contrast, we easily achieved our sample of 150 African American women. Achieving the sample of 150 Latina participants took longer than expected but was achieved. We received a no-cost extension additional year to the two-year grant to be able to complete the Latina and White samples, to conduct the White focus groups, and to complete translation of the Latina focus group transcripts.

We speculate that there are several reasons why we were unable to obtain a complete White sample. Because we were trying to achieve demographically matched ethnic groups, we recruited heavily from lower income areas and excluded women whose incomes were above $50,000 per year. Few White people live in these areas. We expanded our recruitment to include other lower income White areas, but this still did not yield as many White participants as we had hoped. Secondly, we suspect that White women are less likely to be interested in participating in this kind of research. Some of our White participants told us that women in their communities kept violence in their relationship to themselves and did not want to "discuss their business" with others.

We know of at least one other study of intimate partner violence that has found lower participation rates among White women than women of other ethnic groups. In their seven year longitudinal studies of partner violence among African American, Mexican American, and White women in Texas, Linda Marshall and Rebecca Weston found that 80% of African Americans completed all six interviews, as compared to 72% of the Mexican Americans and 67% of the White participants (Marshall & Weston, 2004 grant report for National Institute of Justice).

Because of our difficulty in recruiting White participants, White focus group participants were recruited from the participants who had already completed interviews and who had consented to be contacted later regarding future studies. We were only able to conduct three White focus groups,

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whereas we were able to conduct four groups with African American and Latina women.

The second challenge we encountered is that we were not able to achieve demographic matching between the three ethnic groups that were the focus of the study. The income per person (household income divided by the number of people supported by that income) did not differ significantly between African American and Latina participants, but it was significantly higher for White participants as compared to the other two groups.

Our third challenge was that we had to delete the data of 26 participants (6 African American, 7 Latina, 13 White) who appeared to meet study criteria in the initial screen, but did not meet criteria according to their interview data. Because we used computerized survey administration and had immediate access to the data, we were able to identify this problem early on and compensate by conducting additional interviews. Data was purged for reasons including: participant did not commit a physically violent behavior against a male partner in the past six months; participant had ended her relationship and no longer had contact with her partner; duration of relationship was less than six months; participant income level was above the $50,000 limit; participant was too heavily medicated to complete interview; participant became ill during the interview and could not complete it. In addition, after completing the interview, three participants gave a different name so that they could participate in the study again. The second interview was deleted from the data set.

Results

Descriptive information for interview participants

As can be seen in Tables 1 and 2, the socioeconomic status of the sample was very low. Forty-one percent of the sample had a high school education, but 28% did not finish high school. Thirty-one percent continued education past high school. The income level of the sample was very low; 43% of the sample had a household income of less than $10,000 per year. Twenty-eight percent of the sample's household income was greater than $10,000 and less than $20,000 per year. Thirty-seven percent of the women were unemployed, and an additional 27% were not able to work. Twenty percent worked part

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time and only 14% worked full time. The majority of the women in the sample received state assistance, food stamps, or disability payments. Seventy-seven percent of the women had children.

Information about relationships and the women's partners is shown in Table 3. The most frequent type of relationship status was unmarried and living together (43%), followed by dating, living apart (26%) and married (24%). Women were in the relationships eight years, on average, and most saw their partners every day. Women's relationship efficacy (how confident they felt in their ability to openly and effectively participate in their relationship) was surprisingly high, given the violence in the relationships. Most women expressed being more confident than not in their ability to manage their relationships. Partners were more likely to be working than the participants. More partners graduated from high school than women, but more women received higher education than their partners.

The prevalence of both women's aggression and victimization was very high, as shown in Table 4. A higher percentage of women committed moderate and severe physical violence as compared to what their partners did to them. However, a higher percentage of partners committed coercive control, sexual coercion, and injury as compared to the women's commission of these behaviors. A comparable number of women stalked their partners as were stalked by them, as shown in Table 5. However, the mean number of stalking behaviors that partners committed was higher than the stalking behaviors the women enacted.

Motivations for Violence. The motivations for violence scale, developed by the investigators for this study, assessed how often participants used violence for particular reasons. Factor analysis was conducted with the scale using principal components analysis. Four factors emerged that accounted for 50% of the scale variance. The four factors include Control, Self-defense, Desire to intimidate or hurt partner, and Jealousy. Table 12 portrays loadings for the four factors. Two items that loaded on more than one factor were deleted. Means for the four factors, shown in Table 6, indicate that self-defense

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and control motives were the most frequent. Using violence to hurt the partner was the least commonly endorsed motive.

Women's Experiences of Battering, Shame for Violent Behavior, and Fear of Partner. Many women experienced to some degree the fear, shame, and control of being battered, as evidenced by a mean of 3.15 on the WEB scale, shown in Table 6.

The purpose of the Shame for Violent Behavior scale was to assess women's shame and embarrassment regarding their own use of violence. Two items that detracted from the scale's reliability were deleted. The items included in the final version of the scale are:

1. I am embarrassed about how I sometimes abuse my partner.
2. Other people tend to look down on you if they know you have been violent with your partner.
3. I do not tell people that I sometimes am abusive towards my partner.
4. I would be embarrassed if anyone found out about my abuse towards my partner.
5. I feel guilty about my abusive behavior towards my partner.
6. Some of my friends would look down on me if they knew about my abusive behavior.
7. I feel guilty after I have been abusive to my partner.

Women expressed some degree of shame for their violent behavior, as shown in Table 6.

The purpose of the Fear of Partner scale was to assess women's fears that their partner would hurt them and the extent to which women altered their behavior to avoid angering their partners. The items for the Fear scale are:

1. I watch what I do to try to avoid setting off my partner.
2. I avoid talking to people that might make my partner jealous.
3. I try hard not to make my partner angry.
4. I am afraid of my partner.

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5. My partner scares me sometimes.
6. I do what my partner tells me to do to avoid making him angry.
7. Sometimes I get scared of what my partner might do to me.
8. I think my partner could really hurt me one of these days.
9. I would like to leave my relationship, but I am worried about what my partner will do to me.
10. I feel safe that my partner will not hurt me. (reverse coded)
11. People who are close to me worry that my partner will hurt me.

Some women were afraid of their partners, as shown in Table 6.

Childhood Abuse. A high percentage of the sample experienced childhood abuse, as shown in Table 7. Sixty percent of the women experienced emotional abuse and neglect, 58% were sexually abused, 52% were physically abused, and 41% had their physical needs neglected. These percentages may underreport the amount of childhood trauma, as 18% of the sample may have minimized or denied their experiences.

Ethnic Identity. African American women were particularly likely to strongly identify with their ethnic group, as shown in Table 8. Latina women did not identify with their ethnic group as much as African Americans. White women were the least likely to identify with their ethnic group. The acculturation results indicate that many Latinas are bilingual but tend to speak more Spanish than English.

The Resource Utilization Questionnaire was developed by the investigators to examine what resources women used to deal with the violence in their relationships, and how helpful they found these resources to be. As shown in Table 9, the most frequently used resource was talking to friends and family for social support (68%), followed by attending religious services (63%). For almost half of the women (48%), the police had been called, although often the woman was not the person who placed the

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call. Thirty-seven percent attended individual counseling, and 29% attended a 12 step group. The resources that were most helpful were in many cases the ones that were most frequently used. Substance abuse treatment was rated as the most helpful resource, followed by attending religious services, 12 step groups, individual counseling, and receiving parenting skills counseling for those women who were mothers. The least commonly used resources were domestic violence shelters (4%) and transitional housing (4%). Fifteen percent of the participants were themselves arrested for domestic violence in their current relationships, and 14% were arrested in past relationships. Twenty-two percent received child protective services.

Women used a variety of coping strategies to deal with the violence in their relationships, as shown in Table 10. Given the large percentage of women who attended religious services and found them to be helpful, it is not surprising that spiritual coping was the most frequently used of the Africultural coping types, followed by cognitive/emotional debriefing (a similar construct to seeking social support). Fewer women used ritual-centered coping. Regarding the more traditional Coping Strategies Inventory, the most frequently used strategy was problem solving coping, followed by avoidance coping. Finally, some women did show some socially desirable responding, as indicated in Table 10. The social desirability scale will be used as a covariate in future analyses.

Many of the women were dealing with mental health issues, as shown in Table 11. Twenty-four percent of participants took psychiatric medication, and 69% were struggling with depression. Almost one in three met criteria on the PTSD screen. It should be noted that the PTSD measure assessed posttraumatic stress reactions to their experiences of violence with their partners, not other traumatic events in their lives. Most of the participants met criterion B (reexperiencing the violence from their partners), criterion D (persistent increased arousal), or criterion E (duration of PTSD symptoms greater than one month). Almost one in five were suffering from alcohol or drug problems.

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Conclusions

Although these results are preliminary, this report indicates that the overwhelming majority of these women were victims of violence themselves. Participants were more likely to experience coercive control, sexual coercion, injury, and stalking than they were to commit these behaviors against their partners. Many participants appear to be battered women who have used violence, as indicated by scores on the Women's Experiences of Battering and Fear of Partner scales. Women's motivations for their behaviors were complex and indicated that violence was often multiply determined by different motivations. Many women used violence in self defense, but many also used violence to control their partners. Jealousy was a frequent motivator of women's violence. Most women were dealing with many challenges in addition to relationship violence, including extreme poverty and a range of mental health difficulties. In addition, the majority of women had endured traumatic childhood abuse. These data suggest that the context of women's use of violence differs in many ways from that of male violence with intimate partners. A greater understanding of the variety of reactions women have to abuse, including mental health difficulties, substance use, and fighting back, is needed to improve the criminal justice system's responses to women involved in domestic violence.

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Table 1

Participant Descriptives

		Percentage	N	Mean	SD
Ethnicity					
	African American	36.4%	150		
	Latina	36.4%	150		
	Caucasian	27.2%	112		
Education					
	Grade school	0.2%	1		
	Middle school	4.9%	20		
	Some high school	22.6%	93		
	High school or GED	41.2%	170		
	Vocational training	6.1%	25		
	Some college	17%	70		
	College	6.6%	27		
	Post graduate	1.5%	6		
Age				36.61	8.92
Number of children					
	Mean number of children			1.96	1.65
	No children	22.6%	93		
	One child	20.6%	85		
	Two children	22.1%	91		
	Three children	20.1%	83		
	Four children	7.5%	31		
	Five children	4.4%	18		
	Six children	1.0%	4		
	Seven children	0.7%	3		
	Eight children	0.7%	3		
	Nine children	0.2%	1		

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Table 2

Participant Income and Work

		Percentage	N	Mean	SD
Income					
	Less than $10,000	42.7%	176		
	$10,000 - $19,999	28.2%	116		
	$20,000 - $29,999	17.0%	70		
	$30,000 - $39,999	7.8%	32		
	$40,000 - $49,999	4.4%	18		
Income per Person[1]					
	African American			$7,134.31	$4,485.46
	Latina			$6,095.60	$3,753.05
	Caucasian			$8,609.85[2]	$5,665.14
	Overall			$7,207.37	$4,759.25
Work Status					
	Unemployed	37.4%	154		
	Unable to work	26.7%	110		
	Working part-time	20.4%	84		
	Working full-time	13.8%	57		
	Full-time student	1.7%	7		
Income sources					
	Own work	36.0%	148		
	Partner's work	46.5%	191		
	Other's work	3.2%	13		
	State assistance	33.8%	139		
	Food stamps	59.9%	246		
	Disability payments	24.8%	102		
	Child support	11.2%	46		
	Alimony	0.7%	3		

[1] Yearly household income divided by number of people supported by that income.
[2] Caucasian participants had significantly greater income per person than African American or Latina participants.

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Table 3

Relationship and Partner Descriptives

		Percentage	N	Mean	SD
Relationship Status					
	Married	23.8%	98		
	Unmarried, living together	43.2%	178		
	Separated/divorced	1.7%	7		
	Dating, not living together	25.7%	106		
	No longer together	1.2%	5		
	Not together, still talk	4.4%	18		
Years in relationship				8.00	6.91
How often see partner[1]				.24	.63
Woman's Relationship Efficacy[2]				5.99	1.65
Partner's work status					
	Unemployed	20.6%	85		
	Unable to work	14.6%	60		
	Working part-time	13.8%	57		
	Working full-time	50.7%	209		
	Full-time student	0.2%	1		
Partner's education					
	Grade school	2.7%	11		
	Middle school	6.2%	25		
	Some high school	15.8%	64		
	High school or GED	56.9%	231		
	Vocational training	3.9%	16		
	Some college	8.6%	35		
	College	4.7%	19		
	Post graduate	1.2%	5		
Partner's age				39.14	9.75

[1] How often participant sees or talks to her partner. 0: everyday, 1: 4-5 times a week, 2: 2-3 times a week, 3: once a week, 4: A few times a month, 5: Once a month, 6: Less than once a month.
[2] How confident a woman feels about her ability to openly and effectively participate in her relationship. Range 0-9; 0: not at all confident, 9: completely confident.

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Table 4

Abuse

	Women's victimization			Women's aggression		
	Percentage of partners who abused	Mean	SD	Percentage of women who abused	Mean	SD
Emotional abuse	99.8%	55.40	30.04	100%	53.07	24.92
Moderate physical violence	88.6%	11.45	12.79	99.3%	12.15	11.43
Severe physical violence	67.5%	6.58	11.02	76.9%	5.96	8.80
Coercive control	95.3%	25.34	19.77	89.8%	16.09	13.73
Sexual coercion	52.9%	7.84	15.19	31.9%	2.65	6.96
Injury	68.2%	4.63	7.06	58.8%	3.01	5.12

Note: Means represent the average number of times an act occurred in the previous six months.

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Table 5

Stalking

		Percentage	N	Mean	SD
Stalking Victimization; partner's stalking behaviors					
	Mean frequency of stalking victimization			11.73	12.96
	Not stalked in the past 6 months	15.0%	62		
	Stalked in the past 6 months, but not very frightened	68.4%	282		
	Stalked in the past 6 months and very frightened	16.5%	68		
Stalking Perpetration; women's stalking behaviors					
	Mean frequency of stalking perpetration			9.58	11.65
	No stalking in the past 6 months	17.5%	72		
	Stalking in the past six months	82.5%	340		

Note: Mean frequencies indicate the average number of times a stalking behavior has taken place in the last 6 months.

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Table 6

Abuse Related Constructs

		Range	Mean	SD
Motivations				
	Control partner	0-3	.86	.53
	Self defense	0-3[1]	.85	.65
	Hurt partner	0-3	.41	.43
	Jealousy	0-3	.71	.56
Women's Experiences of Battering (WEB)		1-6[2]	3.15	1.43
Shame for Violent Behavior		1-4[3]	2.45	.59
Fear of Partner		1-4[4]	2.42	.61

[1] Motivations scales: Frequency participants used violence for various reasons. 0: Never, 1: Sometimes, 2: Often, 3: Almost always.
[2] WEB: Degree to which participants experienced fear, shame, and being controlled in relation to being battered. 1: Agree strongly, 2: Agree somewhat, 3: Agree a little, 4: Disagree a little, 5: Disagree somewhat, 6: Disagree strongly.
[3] Shame: Feel ashamed or embarrassed about own violence. 1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Agree, 4: Strongly agree.
[4] Fear: Feel afraid of partner and adjust behavior to avoid angering him. 1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Agree, 4: Strongly agree.

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Table 7

Child Abuse

	None or minimal	Low to moderate	Moderate to severe	Severe to Extreme
Child emotional abuse	39.8%	21.2%	13.3%	25.9%
Child sexual abuse	42.4%	6.4%	17.2%	34.1%
Child emotional neglect	39.3%	31.0%	12.2%	17.6%
Child physical neglect	58.8%	16.3%	11.7%	13.2%
Child physical abuse	48.4%	12.4%	11.2%	28.0%

Note: 18.5% of the sample is suspected to have underreported experiences of childhood trauma based on positive responses to the minimization and denial subscales.

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Table 8

Ethnic and cultural variables

	Range	Mean	SD
Multigroup Ethnic Identity			
African American	1-4[1]	3.13*	0.39
Latina	1-4	2.87*	0.21
Caucasian	1-4	2.64*	0.38
Acculturation	1-5[2]	2.75	0.73

[1] Multigroup Ethnic Identity: Strongly identify with own ethnic group. Scale is designed to be used by individuals of any ethnic group. 1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Agree, 4: Strongly agree.
* All groups differ from each other at the $p<.001$ level of significance.
[2] Acculturation: How much participants speak English or Spanish at home and in social settings. Mean is based on Latina participants only (n=150). 1: Only Spanish, 2: More Spanish than English, 3: Both equally, 4: More English than Spanish, 5: Only English.

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Table 9

Resource Utilization

Item	Yes		No		Helpfulness[1]	
	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	Mean	SD
Talked to a friend, family member, etc. for support or advice about the violence in your relationship.	68.0%	280	32.0%	132	3.61	1.20
Stayed with a friend, family member, or someone you knew to keep yourself safe.	28.4%	117	71.6%	295	3.74	1.23
Saw a doctor or other healthcare provider as a result of a fight with your partner.	20.5%	84	79.5%	326	3.70	1.29
Attend religious or spiritual services	63.3%	261	36.7%	151	4.32	0.91
Has your partner been arrested for domestic violence	29.5%	121	70.5%	289	3.08	1.54
Have the police been called	47.7%	196	52.3%	215	2.88	1.48
You called the police	32.5%	134	15.1%	62		
Your partner called the police	14.6%	60	33.0%	136		
Someone else called the police	21.1%	87	26.5%	109		
Spoken to a victim advocate at the court	19.2%	79	80.8%	333	3.35	1.40
Received a protective or restraining order from the court	22.9%	94	77.1%	317	3.11	1.60
Called a domestic violence hotline	9.5%	39	90.5%	373	3.13	1.56
Called Infoline (211)	13.1%	54	86.9%	358	3.72	1.40
Stayed in a shelter	15.5%	64	84.5%	348		
A domestic violence shelter	4.1%	17	11.4%	47	3.82	1.59
A homeless shelter	9.5%	39	6.1%	25	3.49	1.37
A women's shelter	3.9%	16	11.7%	48	3.38	1.54
Transitional housing	4.4%	18	11.2%	46	3.56	1.20
Attended a support group for domestic violence	9.7%	40	90.3%	371	3.58	1.30
Attended a 12 step group	29.4%	121	70.6%	291	4.10	1.25
Attended individual counseling	36.9%	152	63.1%	260	4.06	1.16
Attended family counseling	7.3%	30	92.7%	382	3.20	1.50
Attended couple counseling	13.6%	56	86.4%	356	3.25	1.54
Attended substance abuse treatment	27.4%	113	72.6%	299	4.35	1.05
Got help from a lawyer or legal aid	9.5%	39	90.5%	373	3.79	1.28

[1] Degree to which participant believes this resource helped her situation. Range 1-5, 1: Not at all helpful, 3: Moderately helpful, 5: Very helpful.

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Table 9 continued

Women's Experiences with the Legal System

Item	Yes		No	
	Percentage	N	Percentage	N
Have you been arrested for domestic violence?	15.0%	62	85.0%	350
In past relationships were you arrested for domestic violence?	13.8%	53	86.2%	332
Have you seen a family relations counselor at the court?	16.7%	69	83.3%	343
Have you attended any court mandated programs?	10.0%	41	90.0%	371

Use of Resources for Children

Item	Yes		No		Helpfulness[1]	
	Percentage[2]	N	Percentage	N	Mean	SD
Seen a child counselor	18.9%	60	81.1%	258	3.67	1.28
Received services from your child's school	11.1%	35	88.9%	280	3.80	1.21
Received child protective services	21.8%	69	78.2%	247	3.44	1.55
Received parenting skills counseling	14.8%	47	85.2%	270	4.00	1.18

[1] Degree to which participant believes this resource helped her situation. Range 1-5, 1: Not at all helpful, 3: Moderately helpful, 5: Very helpful.

2 Percentages are based on the 318 participants who have children.

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Table 10

Coping, Social Desirability, and Acculturation

		Range	Mean	SD
Africultural coping				
	Cognitive/emotional debriefing	0-3[1]	1.18	0.48
	Spiritual-centered coping	0-3	1.21	0.69
	Collective coping	0-3	0.98	0.57
	Ritual-centered coping	0-3	0.35	0.53
	Overall item response	0-3	1.05	0.45
Coping strategies				
	Avoidance coping	1-3[2]	2.11	0.39
	Social support coping	1-3	2.00	0.59
	Problem solving coping	1-3	2.42	0.46
	Overall item response	1-3	2.18	0.31
Social Desirability				
	Overall item response	1-5[3]	3.55	0.64

[1] Africultural coping: To what extent participants used certain methods to deal with relationship problem that happened in the past six months. 0: Does not apply / did not use, 1: Used a little, 2: Used a lot, 3: Used a great deal. The measure was given to all participants.
[2] Coping Strategy Indicator: How much participants used certain types of coping behaviors on a relationship problem that happened in the past six months. 1: Not at all, 2: A little, 3: A lot.
[3] Social Desirability: Degree to which participants agree with impossible/unlikely statements that make them look good to others. 1: Strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: Undecided / unsure, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly agree. A response of 5 indicates the most socially desirable responding.

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Table 11

Health Status

		Percentage	N	Range	Mean	SD
Medication						
	For medical issues	50.7%	209			
	For psychiatric issues	24.3%	100			
	Doesn't take any	39.3%	162			
Depression						
	Meets criteria on depression screen	69.0%	283			
	Mean item response			0-3[1]	1.13	.61
PTSD						
	Meets criteria on PTSD screen[2]	31.8%	128			
	Meets criterion A	46.3%	190			
	Meets criterion B	87.8%	361			
	Meets criterion C	72.0%	296			
	Meets criterion D	89.3%	367			
	Meets criterion E	89.6%	361			
	Meets criterion F	70.5%	289			
Anxiety						
	Mean item response			1-4[3]	1.96	.67
Alcohol						
	Meets criteria on alcohol screen[4]	19.5%	79			
Drug use						
	Meets criteria on drug abuse screen	19.4%	76			
	Mean item response			0-1[5]	.17	.18

[1] CES-D scale measures experiences of depressive symptoms during the past week. 0: The symptom happened rarely or none of the time, 1: some/ a little of the time, 2: occasionally/moderately, 3: Most/all of the time.
[2] PDS measures PTSD symptoms over the past month based on PTSD criteria described in DSM IV-TR (APA, 1994).
A: Event threatens death, serious injury or integrity and is responded to with intense fear, hopelessness or horror.
B: Event is persistently reexperienced. C: Avoidance of stimuli related to the event and numbing of affect.
D: Persistent increased arousal. E: Duration of symptoms is greater than one month.
F: Disturbance causes significant impairment in major areas of functioning.
[3] The degree of current anxiety-related feelings. 1: Not at all, 2: Somewhat, 3: Moderately so, 4: Very much so.
[4] Alcohol use and alcohol-related events in the last year.
[5] Drug use and drug-related events in the last six months. 0: No, the event did not happen. 1: Yes, the event did happen.

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Table 12

Motivations Scale Rotated Component Matrix

How often did you use violence…	1	2	3	4
Control				
...to make your partner do the things you wanted him to do	.666	.056	.031	.167
because your partner said something that hurt you	.568	.280	.011	.329
because he made you angry	.659	.150	-.039	.297
because you wanted him to give you something, like money, or something for your children	.523	.115	.358	-.022
because you wanted him to do something	.696	.072	.141	.070
because you couldn't stop yourself	.674	.086	.105	.095
because you were frustrated	.724	.177	.080	.160
to stop the argument	.428	.276	.332	-.065
to feel in control	.545	.016	.323	.254
because he tried to control you	.561	.417	-.027	.126
because you have a bad temper	.543	-.021	.285	.277
because of your past abusive relationships	.429	.157	.334	-.024
to get him to take you seriously	.459	.217	.416	.159
Self-Defense				
to defend yourself from your partner	.124	.796	.041	.149
to get your partner to stop hitting or hurting you	-.068	.842	.068	.159
because you knew a beating was coming and you wanted to get it over with	.322	.648	.170	-.048
because he became abusive when he drank	.240	.690	.123	-.007
because you were fed up with his behavior	.467	.472	.286	.202
because he was being mean to you	.360	.565	.192	.145
to get away as he was beating you	-.020	.831	.144	.133
to get him to leave you alone	.197	.546	.352	.025
Desire to Intimidate or Hurt your Partner				
to harm your partner	.083	.274	.633	.263
to intimidate your partner	.337	.115	.591	.317
because you feel better after a fight	.235	.095	.614	.240
to scare him	.391	.134	.514	.209
as a joke or just playing around	-.060	-.068	.464	.096
because you were drinking or using drugs	.103	.191	.550	-.004
to physically hurt him	.086	.364	.598	.227
to get "turned on" sexually	.089	.081	.554	-.023
Jealousy				
to get even with your partner for something he had done	.306	.069	.312	.538
because you thought your partner was unfaithful	.185	.177	.057	.752
to prevent your partner from leaving or going out	.236	.184	.273	.511
because you were jealous	.184	.041	.190	.740

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Appendix A

Telephone screening instrument

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Screening Questions for **INTERVIEWS**

This is a study on how male/female couples handle conflict in their relationships . Couples have many different ways of trying to settle their conflicts and there's a range of things couples do, from discussing things to fighting. The study involves one **two-hour INTERVIEW** where you will be asked a number of questions about your relationships**.** If you are eligible to participate, you will be paid $50 at the end of the interview.

Would it be okay if I ask you a few questions now **to see if you are eligible to participate**? Unfortunately, not everyone who is interested in participating can be in the study. You have to meet certain requirements to be able to be interviewed. Your answers to these questions are completely confidential. We will not report your answers to anyone.

1. How did you hear about the study?

2. Where do you get your health care?_____

3. Are you currently involved in a relationship with someone (married, living with someone, or dating someone)?
   ____yes
   ____no (**go to # 5**)

4. How long have you been with this person? _____ **(if more than 6 months, go to #7)** [**must be at least 6 months -- if less than 6 months, read exclusionary statement when you get to question #14]**

5. Were you involved in a relationship with someone in the last 2 weeks? For example, an ex-husband or ex-boyfriend or the father of your children?
   ____yes
   ____no (**go to #10, then read exclusionary statement when you get to question #14**)

6. How long were you with this person? _____
   (**must be at least 6 months**, **if not read exclusionary statement when you get to question** #14)

7. What is your relationship with this person?
   ____husband
   ____boyfriend
   ____girlfriend/female partner(**if girlfriend/female, read exclusionary statement when you get to question #14**)
   ____father of children
   ____other:_____

8. How often do you see or talk to this person? _____
   (**if less than 1x/week read exclusionary statement when you get to question #14**)

9. Can I have ***just*** the first name of your partner _____(husband, boyfriend, etc)
   Age _____

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What is his race or ethnicity, (for example is he White, African American, Latino, etc.?)
_____

10. I would like to ask a few questions about you
Age _____ **(if 67 or over, read exclusionary statement before question #14)**
What is your race or ethnicity, (for example are you White, African American, Latina, etc.?) _____
I have to ask, are you a man or a woman? _____(**if a male – read exclusionary statement before question #14**)

11. Are you or your partner currently in school? ____ yes ____no
11b. If so, where do you go to school?_____ (**if Yale or Quinnipiac – read exclusionary statement before question #14)**

12. What's your household income per **month**, in other words the total amount of money supporting you and your family from people working, money from the state, etc.
_____
- does that include your partner's income? ___ yes ___no (**if Yes,** go to 13)
- If No "Does he live with you or contribute to rent or bills or things like that? ___yes ___no (**If Yes**, what is his income?" – add to above, If no, got to 13)

(**if more than $4,200 a month, or $50,000 a year – read exclusionary statement before question #14)**

13. How many people (adults and children) live off of that income?
_____number of adults
_____number of children

IF APPLICABLE, READ EXCLUSIONARY STATEMENT HERE:

14. Couples have different ways of handling conflict. I am going to ask you a few specific questions about
how you and your partner handle conflict? Remember that your answers to these questions are completely confidential and will not be reported to anyone.

A. In the last 6 months (**define 6 months ago**, e.g., "since December"), have you explained your side of a disagreement to your partner?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

B. In the last 6 months, has your partner explained his side of a disagreement to you?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

C. In the last 6 months, have you suggested a compromise to a disagreement?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

D. In the last 6 months, has your partner suggested a compromise to a disagreement?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

E. In the last 6 months, have you insulted or swore at your partner?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

H, In the last 6 months, has your partner insulted or swore at you?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

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I. In the last 6 months have you pushed or shoved your partner, either when you were defending yourself or were upset with him?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

J. In the last 6 months has your partner pushed or shoved you?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

K. In the last 6 months have you slapped your partner, either when you were defending yourself or were upset with him?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

L. In the last 6 months has your partner slapped you?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

M. In the last 6 months have you hit your partner, either when you were defending yourself or were upset with him?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

N. In the last 6 months has your partner hit you?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

O. In the last 6 months, have you shouted or yelled at your partner?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

P. In the last 6 months, has your partner shouted or yelled at you?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

Q. In the last 6 months have you thrown something at your partner, either when you were defending yourself or were upset with him?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

R. In the last 6 months has your partner thrown something at you?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

S. In the last 6 months have you destroyed something of your partner's?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

T. In the last 6 months has your partner destroyed something of yours?
____yes ____no How many times? _____

V. In the last 6 months did you do anything else to your partner that I haven't mentioned, like biting, kicking, scratching, or hitting him with something like a frying pan, either when you were defending yourself or were upset with him?
____yes ____no

If yes, please describe what happened *and note, next to each event, how many times it happened*_____
_____
_____

V. In the last 6 months, did your partner do anything else to you like the things I just mentioned?

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____yes ____no

If yes, please describe what happened ***and note, next to each event, how many times it happened***

_____
_____
_____

<u>CRITERIA:</u> Answers to ALL of these questions must be YES for her to qualify for this study.

Yes No Woman must be between the ages of 18 to 65
Yes No She has been in a dating or marital relationship with a man for the past six months
Yes No She has had contact with the man at least once per week in the past six months
Yes No She has perpetrated at least one act of physical violence against him in the past six months (ONLY BOLDED ITEMS – e.g. ITEMS WITH BORDERS COUNT)
Yes No Caucasian/Latina/African Descent
Yes No Her household income is $50,000 a year or less
Yes No Neither she, nor her spouse, is a Yale or Quinnipiac student
Yes No She is a resident of the state of Connecticut
Yes No Only one participant per household

***FOR HISPANIC WOMEN:**

17. When people are speaking English how much do you understand? (very little, some, a lot, all of it)?
18. How well are you able to speak in English? (not very well. Some/limited English, my English is good, my English is very good)
19. When people are speaking Spanish, how much do you understand? (very little, some a lot, all of it)
20. How well are you are you able to speak in Spanish? (not very well, some/limited Spanish, my Spanish is good, my Spanish is very good).

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