

# **Categorization, Quantification, and Analysis of Abuse Inflicted on Domestic Violence Victims by Their Partners in the Year Previous to Shelter Entry**

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### **Research Findings:**

Five women were surveyed for this study. Each individual had been at the Esperanza Shelter for Battered Families less than one week when they participated in the study. These women answered 94 questions about the different types and forms of abuse they may have experienced in the last year from the partner they were seeking shelter from. They also quantified by week or year how many times their partners used these specific tactics to hurt them.

Once the surveys had been completed and collected, descriptive statistics were run on the survey data. There were a total of 267 variables used in the survey. Pie charts were created for the nominal variables, and frequency tables were used to show the data for scale variables. A third document, labeled "Table 1" was produced from the information contained in the above mentioned documents. This table shows the key survey questions, how many respondents identified that they had experienced a certain type of abuse, and the number of times last year they identified having experienced that specific abuse. Each page of the table reports data on a different form of abuse.

The forms in order of how they appear in the survey and on the table are: economic, isolation, physical, emotional, sexual, coercion & threats, male privilege, using children, intimidation, stalking, minimizing & denying & blaming, past attempts to reconcile. By analyzing the data it is clear that the individuals surveyed have experienced a great deal of abuse. **The total number of incidence reported by all respondents to all the survey questions is 54,281. This is an average of 10,856.2 incidence per respondent, per year. The number of total incidents per abuse category is as follows: a) economic = 5,213 b) isolation = 9,610 c) physical = 2,715 e) emotional = 9,036 f) sexual = 573 g) coercion & threats = 1,963 h) male privilege = 8,424 i) using children = 472 j) intimidation = 1,929 k) stalking = 3,640 l) minimizing, denying, & blaming = 6,959 m) past attempts to**

**reconcile = 3,747.**

These incident numbers show that the top three highest reported forms of abuse are **isolation, male privilege, and emotional abuse**. Within these categories the highest incident numbers were for the following statements: **a) My partner was jealous of other men b) My partner tried to keep me from seeing my family or friends c) My partner tried to keep me from doing things to help myself. Each of these statements scored an incident number of 1,820. With each of these statements all 5 respondents indicated that their partner behaved in the indicated way seven times a week for the entire year.** It is telling of the prevalence of isolation in abusive relationships that all of these most prevalent behaviors fell into this category.

There were many statements on the survey that all 5 women agreed with, showing the widespread nature of the abusive behaviors described and the shared experiences many survivors of abuse have in common. All respondents answered affirmatively to the following statements: My partner was jealous of other men, My partner accused me of having an affair, My partner tried to turn friends or family members against me, My partner tried to keep me from seeing family or friends, My partner tried to keep me from leaving the house or getting a job, My partner tried to keep me from doing things to help myself, My partner restricted my use of the telephone or car, My partner has pushed, shoved, hit, pinched, pulled hair, scratched, bit, or in any other way physically hurt me, My partner called me names or put down the way I look, My partner gave me the silent treatment or acted like I wasn't there, My partner tried to make me feel crazy, My partner blamed me for his problems or when he was upset, My partner yelled or screamed at me, My partner's mood changed radically, My partner made all the big decisions, My partner has not taken their hurting of me seriously or has made jokes about it, My partner has said that he or she didn't hurt me when they did, My partner has tried to make their hurting of me seem like no big deal, My partner has tried to say that I caused the trouble or abuse, My partner has tried to convince my family or friends that I am the abusive one, My partner said he/she will not hurt me again, My partner bought me a gift or gave me compliments to get forgiveness for

hurting me. These statements were compiled from the categories of isolation, physical, emotional, male privilege, minimizing & denying & blaming, and past attempts to reconcile. This data indicates that for these respondents, these were the specific offender behaviors and broad categories which were most pervasive. They may not however have occurred most on an incidence level.

The two least reported categories were using children and sexual. It is possible that these forms of abuse really do occur less. It is also probable that respondents may be more reluctant to admit to sexual or child abuse by their partners due to the stigma attached to these forms of abuse. Admitting to child abuse might also be interpreted by a respondent as putting themselves in jeopardy of punitive action by law enforcement. There were 9 statements that none of the respondents agreed applied to their relationship. Six of these statements came from the categories of using children or sexual. All respondents answered negatively to the following statements: My partner has used threats to try to make me have sex, My partner used a weapon to try to make me have sex, My partner forced me to have sex, My partner has used visitation to harass me, My partner has threatened to hurt the children if I do not do what he says, My partner has actually hurt the child/children in the household, My partner has called police, CYFD, or filed court papers to hurt me, My partner said it was against our religion or upbringing to separate, My partner has gotten my family or friends to ask me to get back together. While respondents did not indicate that they had experienced these behaviors from their partners, it is probable that these statements would garner affirmative answers if there were a larger sample size.