

GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS' VIEWS AND  
ATTITUDES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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By  
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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother Gina Hall. She has been there every step of the way along my journey in life from the moment of conception, always encouraging me to strive to reach my goals. She has challenged me at every corner and made me stop to pause long enough to think through all my decisions in life. She has taught me many things along the way, shared in my joys and frustrations, walked me through my anger, and wiped away many tears. She is a pillar of strength and has never quit trying to attain all her own goals. Thank you mom for always being there and always accepting my path ways in life even when you disagreed with me. Without your love and support and sometimes your criticism I would never have dreamed I would be so passionate about social work and domestic violence.

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## ABSTRACT

Domestic violence affects families as a whole and is wide spread across the world. At any given moment a social worker can come into contact with a victim of domestic violence. Many social workers do work with victims on a daily basis. This is why it is so important that students in graduate MSW programs are exposed to domestic violence knowledge and trainings. The purpose of the study is to examine graduate social work students' perceptions and attitudes about domestic violence. The findings clearly show that students still have a tendency to believe the many myths of domestic violence. The participants (n= 48) were given an electronic survey that they completed in privacy and at their convenience. The program participants consisted of students who were in their first, second, and third year of obtaining their Masters degree in Social Work. The findings suggest that more exposure to educational content on domestic violence while the students are in school would only serve to prepare social workers better. The researcher discusses the way that more exposure can be offered in the curriculum, field, and post graduate work.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Domestic violence (DV) has become more than just an unspoken, behind closed doors situation. It is now more openly addressed, agencies have been established to help those in abusive situations, and there are laws that govern the practice of intimate partner violence as illegal. Nevertheless, statistics show that every nine seconds in the United States a woman is assaulted or beaten; around the world, at least one in every three women has been beaten and it is usually by a family member (Haight, Shim, Linn, & Swinford, 2007). Furthermore domestic violence is witnessed by an estimated 3.3 to 10 million children annually in the United States. Men, who as children witnessed domestic violence, are twice as likely to abuse their own partners than are sons of nonviolent parents (Domestic Violence Statistics, 2013).

Although national data are lacking, existing evidence indicates the rates of exposure to domestic violence are particularly high among children involved in the public child welfare system with estimates of up to fifty percent (Haight et. al., 2007). Recent research suggests a pervasive link between adult domestic violence and child abuse and neglect (CAN). A majority of studies investigating the co-occurrence of CAN with DV estimate that the phenomenon co-occurs at rates between 30 and 60 percent. In a recent study, researchers reviewed police records for DV and cross-

referenced them with records on child protection referrals and found that 64.3% of the cases were identified as dual violence families: domestic violence between partners co-existing with child maltreatment (Folsom, et. al, 2003).

In cases where domestic violence was identified, CPS workers removed children at a far higher rate than in other cases. Over the past decade CPS has struggled to adequately respond to families experiencing domestic violence and whether exposure to DV constitutes child abuse. In a recent study on assessment practices, while 90% of CPS agencies surveyed included questions about DV on their risk assessment, only 56% reported including similar questions on their investigation forms (which are completed at the screening phase of a referral). Advocates for victims of domestic violence assert that many social workers' attitudes are taking the stance of "blaming the victim". They assert that victims of domestic violence are not offered supportive services, and often CPS workers remove their children. After the removal of the children, the victim is still left at the mercy of the perpetrator (Haight et. al., 2007). The threat of removal of the children is cited as a reason why many women in abusive relationships do not report child abuse by their partners (Jones, Gross, & Becker, 2002).

Everyone has a belief system that is shaped in one way or another by societal views; social workers are not immune to this. As a result, their personal biases, beliefs, education, trainings, and their personal exposure to domestic violence can play a part in how they may choose to interact and deal with clients who have DV in their background. National studies have been completed over time looking at how

social workers, especially in the child welfare setting, have chosen to intervene in the cases that they come across where DV is present. The beliefs of the social worker involved can be a determining factor in regards to the actions the social worker may or may not take. There are some critics who have said that social workers often fail to identify domestic violence, possibly because of inadequate training and skills (Jones, Gross, & Becker, 2002). Victims of abuse and their children are already traumatized and to have any social worker involved can sometimes feel as though they are being re-victimized. The beliefs and attitudes of social workers can have an enormous impact for the families involved.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to examine graduate social work students' perceptions and attitudes about domestic violence as it relates to child abuse cases. The training, education, and exposure that graduate students receive are vital to the way in which they may interact with children and families who have been exposed to domestic violence. To conduct the research, an electronic survey was created based on the work of Postmus (2010) to describe graduate students' perceptions and attitudes.

The guiding research question is: What are the views and attitudes of graduate social work students in one MSW program regarding domestic violence. Based on similar studies, it is hypothesized that students in the MSW program lack knowledge about screening for domestic violence and possess biases and myths that are potentially dangerous to work with victims of domestic violence, which will in turn

suggest the need for more exposure and training regarding domestic violence. Since domestic violence is so prevalent in society it is important that students going into the social work field know the signs and symptoms and how to adequately screen and respond to domestic violence. Knowing what domestic violence is and how to assess for it, and understanding personal beliefs and attitudes can make all the difference when working with families who are or have been dealing with domestic violence. Biases are about the beliefs and values that people have. The study does primarily focus on women in domestic violence relationships to keep the study focused. In no way does the focus of this study intend to minimize the fact that men experience domestic violence as well or make them any less important. Social workers need to constantly engage in critical self-reflection to explore how their attitudes and behaviors impact others. This study is intended to contribute to this self reflection work.

### **Significance of the Study**

The research is designed to capture students' perceptions of domestic violence which can lead to future research about their preparedness to work competently, knowledgably, and sensitively with victims of domestic violence. Researching and analyzing students' beliefs and attitudes about domestic violence may provide insight into how it could impact their future work with these victims. The research may also lead to changing current graduate program curriculum to add more exposure to domestic violence so students are better prepared to work with these victims and their

families and be allowed to explore their thoughts, attitudes and beliefs, as well as understanding the current myths surrounding CAN and DV.

By conducting this study it is anticipated that more exposure to information regarding domestic violence will have a more profound effect for MSW students in understanding their personal biases, so that as future social workers they are better able to identify and help victims of DV and the often silent victims of DV (the children exposed to it). By conducting in-depth research on the education of future social workers, it was anticipated that at the conclusion of the research study the author would determine that changes should be included in the education of Social Workers. It is also important to examine this because there are currently no local studies in the California Central Valley regarding domestic violence and graduate social work students. There needs to be a call to action to educate our social work students before placing them in a field where they will commonly and frequently come into contact with victims of domestic violence.

### **Definition of Terms**

Domestic Violence (DV): For the purpose of this study, “domestic violence” refers to any physical, sexual, mental, or financial abuse by intimate partners. Child abuse and neglect (CAN) refers to any type of physical, mental, or sexual abuse that a child is exposed to; including violence perpetrated between the parents that children witness, and furthermore includes all aspects of neglect. NCANDS defines neglect as being a type of maltreatment referring to failure by caregivers to provide needed, age

appropriate care (American Humane Association, 2013). The types of neglect refer to physical, emotional, medical, and educational.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Domestic Violence is a worldwide epidemic. Students working toward Masters degrees in Social Work should be exposed to domestic violence content to recognize the signs and impacts of domestic violence on its victims. Assessment is key in working with individuals who may have or are currently experiencing domestic violence. Inevitably MSW students will, at some point in their careers, be faced with a client who has or is experiencing domestic violence. The first section of this literature review focuses on the research findings related to the perceptions of helping professionals (including social work students) regarding domestic violence. The second section consists of explanations for these perceptions. This historical and theoretical information are presented in order to establish a context for understanding why helping professionals are likely to hold specific views about victims of domestic violence. Finally, the third section focuses on current strategies for preparing social workers to work with victims of domestic violence. It is important for social workers to be taught to competently assess for domestic violence and to effectively assist and support victims. The research demonstrates a need to include more education and exposure to domestic violence training in social work curriculum, and that there is a necessity to shift the tendency toward victim blaming among future social workers. Victims need a voice and a helping hand and social workers are sometimes the only support they may have.

### **Research Findings on Perceptions of Domestic Violence**

Myths about domestic violence are pervasive throughout society. Spade (2011) describes how norms surrounding positive and negative behaviors are enforced and established by major institutions (including the media, education, law enforcement, medicine, and government). Through these systems norms are established that teach us “how to view our bodies, how our actions make us into certain types of people, and how to practice techniques to modify ourselves to better fit into norms” (p. 104). It is through these norms that myths about domestic violence are nurtured and take hold. One of the most pervasive and damaging myths about domestic violence is that victims can easily leave the violent situation and that this will solve the problem.

Some of the myths that people believe are that the woman can leave, if she wants, successfully without further provocation. Those that believe in the myths generally hold the victims responsible, excuse the perpetrators acts, and minimize how serious the situation is. A public opinion survey suggests that some believe that women are masochistic and want to be beaten by their partners, choose to remain in the relationship, and that some women deserve the violence they receive (Worden & Carlson, 2005) The survey found that 23% of the public participants’ surveyed believed that women secretly wanted the abuse and 63% believed women could leave their relationship if they really wanted to.

A study completed by Yamawaki, Ochoa-Shipp, Pulsipher, Harlos, and Swindler (2015) examined the attitudes toward domestic violence, the victim, and the

perpetrator. Their participants consisted of 194 undergraduate students from psychology courses. They discuss the myths of domestic violence that people have a tendency to believe. The study compared attitudes toward traditional women (those who stay home to raise their families and run the house) to nontraditional women (those women who work outside the home and have careers). Participants tended to blame the victim more if she is a nontraditional woman. The victims were also held responsible if they were vocally hostile prior to a physical altercation taking place or if they supposedly provoked the partner. These negative attitudes towards the victims potentially come from incorrect ideas that victims are battered because they have a desire for abuse and that women are responsible for their own abusive relationships and unconsciously desire abuse to occur.

Furthermore, the research by Yamawaki et al., (2015) discovered that the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator may further have an effect on the attitudes and views that people express. They discovered that a victim in a dating relationship may be blamed more than that of married couples because of the lower level of commitment in the relationship. The study found that men are more likely to blame the victim, minimize the incident of violence, and exonerate the perpetrator more so than women. The study also found that when a victim returns that people tend to blame the victim more, that they tend to minimize the seriousness of the abuse, and that others judge and often criticize victims of domestic violence.

Cote and Lapierre (2011) discovered in their study that in cases where domestic violence was evident, front-line workers in the Child Welfare System

concentrated on the women throughout the CPS procedures and positioned these women as responsible for ensuring their children's safety and development, shifting the blame to the victim rather than the perpetrator. It would seem that some people still believe that parenting falls mainly to a mother rather than the parents sharing and ensuring the child's safety and development, making the father's contribution insignificant.

In a study conducted by Black, Weisz, and Bennett (2010), most of the 124 participants surveyed had graduated with a Masters degree in Social Work with a mental health perspective in domestic violence. However, the study found most of the participants were unaware of specific interventions for domestic violence. The study also uncovered that many of the students continued to attribute domestic violence to being a mental health disorder or domestic violence occurred as a result of the abuser being a substance abuse user. Those that were surveyed believed that a woman's behavior can contribute to the intimate partner violence and sadly, some believed that women want to be abused while a large majority believed that women can easily leave an abusive relationship. This study also showed that approximately 30% of MSW graduates recommended counseling (Weisz & Bennett, 2010). This is an important factor because often times domestic violence is treated in a mental health context. A small percentage of the participants in this study were aware of specific interventions for domestic violence and continued to attribute it to mental health and substance abuse problems in the victim and perpetrator. Often, the participants recommended more than one form of counseling. They highly endorsed

individual counseling, but marital and family counseling was the preferred form of counseling. Those who had taken the domestic violence course or stated they had a fair amount or a lot of experience with domestic violence similarly recommended individual counseling. While counseling can help with domestic violence, it is not nor has it been deemed a mental health condition, meaning that students who chose to intervene with using counseling only are not looking at the situation holistically and are only treating part of the issues.

A study that was done by Bryant and Spencer (2003) surveyed a population of students' on their attitudes and attribution of blame in situations involving domestic violence. They found that male students were more likely than female students to attribute blame to victims of domestic violence; furthermore male students who used violence in their dating relationships were more likely to blame the victim for the incidents (Bryant & Spencer, 2003). The females surveyed identified with the victim and therefore were more likely to blame the perpetrator for the violent acts. Older students were found to blame societal issues because of exposure to domestic violence in their lives. It is also possible that gender or other demographic factors may influence students' beliefs. There has been some indication that young adults as a group hold negative attitudes towards the use of physical violence more than other groups; however, those young adults who had prior experiences with dating violence (like slapping) viewed it as acceptable as opposed to those who had not experienced it in their own relationships (Bryant & Spencer, 2003). This study in particular had mixed results.

### **Explanations for Social Workers' Perceptions**

There are many reasons for a person's perceptions and what he or she believes. These reasons can range from religious beliefs, personal experiences, education regarding domestic violence, and societal views. Most beliefs are deeply embedded in our society and passed down from generation to generation. For those working in the helping fields this can often times pose a problem for the victim reaching out for help. It is important that as helping professionals we understand the values that surround domestic violence so that our own opinions, biases, and perceptions do not interfere with the help we are providing to these victims. It is important to know and understand where our beliefs come from and why we have the perceptions about domestic violence that we do to adequately be able to respond to victims of domestic violence.

A brief examination of historic American values reveals where some of the current beliefs of people originate. Democratic egalitarianism was a primary tenet in the founding of the United States: Every citizen is equal before the law and no one has privilege based on class, heritage, wealth, or other factors irrelevant to citizenship (Day & Schiele, 2013). However, the original Constitution only gave citizenship to male property-holders, denying this right to women, the propertyless, white ethnic immigrants, and people of color. Women did not even have the rights to vote until 1918. Today women are still denied specific equal rights under national law, and customs restrict achievement opportunities for those of color, women, and other minority groups. The belief that we must be self-reliant, in control of and responsible

for our own lives to be successful and to ask for help is an admission of weakness and failure. It therefore makes it easy to see how women in domestic violence situations are reluctant to ask for help when it is needed. These values that we still hold today are one of the many reasons that we have a tendency to blame the victim. It is these values that have taught us to believe that a person in such a situation should not have placed herself in the situation and should have no problem leaving and changing her situation because to stay means she was asking for it.

Looking further into the history of where our belief system comes from, Day and Schiele (2013) argue that Social Darwinism is another dominant American value. As a result of this value, as a society, we have a tendency to believe various myths about domestic violence. A woman in a domestic violence situation is oppressed by her abuser, and many cannot survive without the abusers income. Many who do leave the abuser wind up having to rely on public assistance to try and care for their children. Those who receive public assistance are stigmatized, given low grants that are not enough to survive on, are scrutinized through eligibility testing, and are put to work regardless of their situations (Day & Schiele, 2013). This is like re-victimizing the abused and telling them that even though they may have gotten out of the domestic violence they still are not good enough because they are not self-reliant. These victims are looked at as less than and judged first for being in a domestic violence situation, then again judged for not being able to be self-reliant.

Day and Schiele (2013) also contend that patriarchy, as a dominant American value, has taught us that power and authority are given to men; whereas women and

other powerless groups, such as children, workers, and people of color are oppressed and often times owned. This system gave absolute power to men over their families and clans. It believed that male authority is the ultimate authority and made them the “head of household.” This value still rings true today in many facets of society, such as those that hold office, make laws, decisions, and policies. Women were taught that they should serve their husbands, keep home, and raise and nurture their children. They are taught they are less than, dependent upon their husbands economically and that their well-being depends on that of a man. The belief that women are the nurturers of the children is a long held belief, and when a woman is in an abusive relationship we judge her for not protecting her children, all the while still holding the belief that the man is the head of the house and makes all the decisions for the family, including doling out punishments as he sees fit to keep his wife and children in line. This old belief system puts the male in the role of being stronger and more capable and sees women as the weaker more inferior sex. We raise our boys to believe they should be the bread winners and take care of the family and that they cannot be successful if they are not the head of the house and produce heirs. In relation to domestic violence, we judge women because this belief system that is still so strongly held teaches that women should excel in caring for and loving others above themselves, keeping house, and in helping the dependent (Day & Schiele, 2013).

Day and Schiele (2013) also identify marriage and the nuclear family as a dominant American value that contributes to the oppression of women in domestic violence relationships. There is the belief that women should remain pure while men

are encouraged to “sow their wild oats”. This dominant American value again teaches members of society that women are inferior and that should pregnancy occur it is the woman’s fault, and demands that women take responsibility for the children. It also has taught members of society to believe that a man’s home is his castle and he should be king and rule over it. Again, women are taught they need a man and should obey him despite the fact that his actions may be abusive. We raise our girls and prepare them for motherhood and housekeeping duties. Often times the phrase is spoken “boys will be boys,” or “that’s just the way men are,” excusing their behaviors and expecting them to be aggressive and often times controlling. Though virtually all of these dominant American values have been challenged, many still remain and hold fast in society today.

A qualitative study conducted in Canada revealed that child protection workers primarily relied on children’s and parents’ behaviors in their assessment of domestic violence situations (Côté & Lapierre, 2011). In this particular study the front-line workers expressed feeling powerless and frustrated when working with families where domestic violence was present, and that these feelings were attributed to the mother’s actions or inactions in regards to the violence perpetrated against them. Child Protection workers when intervening in domestic violence situations, had concerns with the mother’s ability to protect and care for the children because they remained in abusive situations, and the mothers themselves found the services provided to be blaming and punitive. These women had harsher requirements than other clients because workers had blaming attitudes. Fathers were rarely engaged.

The fundamental reasoning behind this was that the mother is the nurturer and responsible for rearing the children. It was also noted that the workers found it harder to work with the men and that resources were very limited to men. Looking at history and then looking at this research it is easy to see how our belief system is related to the feelings of those who participated in this study.

Dominant American values have taught us that men are superior and women inferior. We have also been taught that women are responsible for the rearing of the children and keeping house, and the male is to support his family and make all the decisions for the house. Despite our changing society with high divorce rates and women becoming more independent and holding the head of household roles, we still stigmatize women as the weaker more inferior sex of society. These old school beliefs that have been a part of our society for years influence our behaviors and beliefs in every facet of life including biases and misinformation regarding domestic violence.

### **Strategies for Preparing Social Workers**

Social work education should place more importance on coursework that includes prevalence, characteristics, and treatment of domestic violence, and should also teach knowledge and skills that are vital for assisting clients who are involved in domestic violence (Forgey & Colarossi, 2003). The research shows that there are many different models which schools already have in place or can adapt to include in the curriculum to achieve this. However, even though there is considerable curriculum models available, some schools do not choose to implement what is such a core and important part of learning. It is impossible (and beyond the scope and

purpose of this study) to attempt to cover all educational and training approaches that are being offered to prepare social workers to better engage with persons experiencing domestic violence. However, it is important to acknowledge and recognize some of this work. As such, in this section the reader is introduced to three important components of the literature: an example of a specific curriculum model that can be used in an MSW Program to prepare social workers for this work; a discussion of a model field placement experience that can help graduate social work students apply knowledge and skills; and a discussion of a post MSW training approach that seeks to further develop social workers understanding of domestic violence.

Forgey and Colarossi, (2003), present a model curriculum that strives to improve interdisciplinary understanding by teaching effectively about each field in which social workers will need to be educated about to work effectively with domestic violence clients. The curriculum is designed to integrate (1) domestic violence knowledge (such as theories, characteristics, consequences), (2) information on legal regulations and procedures and social work interventions pertaining to domestic violence, and (3) interdisciplinary training in collaborative practice between social workers and lawyers in response to domestic violence (Forgey & Colarossi, 2003). The course offered at Fordham University is a three-credit interdisciplinary 14 week course that both law and social work students enroll in that is taught jointly by a social work and law professor.

The first component of the course is: Interdisciplinary Understanding of Social Work and Law. It involves an exploration of the in-depth missions of social work and law to encourage understanding and respect between the two, including ethics and legal responsibilities. The second section focuses on domestic violence knowledge and uses a historical perspective. It provides timelines of how the United States has responded to domestic violence starting with colonial times. The third section is an understanding of the case situation from legal and social perspectives and presents content where phases of engagement, identification, assessment, and legal fact investigation in domestic violence are covered. This entails learning client engagement and basic interviewing skills. The fourth component of the curriculum presented is social service and legal intervention planning and implementation. This last component teaches the processes of planning and implementing a variety of social service and legal interventions that address both the immediate and the long-term needs of the survivor, the perpetrator, and the child witnesses of domestic violence. Social workers, especially those who work with domestic violence clients deal more and more with the legal system. This curriculum presents joint social work and law with a focus on domestic violence for this reason. Not only does the curriculum provide domestic violence knowledge and skills but can also be used in their careers in a coordinated community response to domestic violence by teaching them collaboration with medical personnel and lawyers, and can help with work with areas such as child welfare, gerontology, criminal justice, or mental health.

Field education is another integral part of the social work degree and is just as important as the aspects of the in class education. This program presented shows just one of the ways that domestic violence can be taught in the field education aspect. LeGeros (2012) wrote an article about Brigham Women's hospital in Boston. The hospital has a domestic violence program called Passageway. The program takes on interns with quality clinical supervision. The program embodies the social work value of empowerment with collaborative supervision, staff meetings, an intern group, and consultative interactions with the larger hospital. The interns are expected to take on the roles and duties of staff advocates when they are trained and participate in all aspects of the Passageway advocate and carry the on-call program pager one day a week to respond to all new requests for services. Before the interns are placed, they attend a two day intense orientation that supplements concepts offered in schools of social work curricula and integrate practice realities relevant to domestic violence, such as the empowerment approach, the ecological approach, and liberation health model, and trauma theory. The interns are then taught risk assessment and safety planning and are put through a mock-up restraining order to identify risks, as well as how vulnerable populations are affected. The interns move from orientation, to shadowing, to developing their own caseloads. The interns are able to get micro, mezzo, and macro skills in clinical practice and advocacy of real-life situations. They make recommendations that all field departments and liaisons be educated about domestic violence practice. One of the local schools in this study requires Social Workers to complete a comprehensive online training about domestic violence

assessment and intervention during the foundation year. One of the final recommendations of the study discussed was inviting to classes social workers and practitioners to present on the current trends in domestic violence.

The need for ongoing education on domestic violence after a social worker graduates can greatly increase their productivity in the field. This curriculum is just one of the many ways in which social workers can continue their education about domestic violence after they graduate from an MSW program. Ixcamey (2003) presented a curriculum for recent graduate social workers. It is a six hour session that included lunch, group discussion, and participation. It is to be used to educate recent graduates of social work in the complex needs of traditional Latino women who are victims of domestic violence. It was designed to help reduce the frustrations professionals often times experience because of how often the victims return to the abusive partner and helps to develop a deeper understanding of the psychopathology behind domestic violence, as well as seeking to help them discover their own biases and prejudices. There are six sections to the curriculum: 1) what is domestic violence, 2) why women stay in an abusive relationship, 3) consequences of domestic violence on women, 4) coping mechanisms, 5) traditional Latino women and domestic violence, and 6) current interventions and recommendations for social workers. The facilitator of the course should be aware of his or her own biases and judgments before presenting the class and should personalize with stories of experience or personal knowledge and activities to engage the learners. The course is designed to

also be cultural in that in this particular curriculum is specifically about Latino women.

Education is the key feature in all the articles presented to change victim blaming and reduce the amount of myths believed about domestic violence. There are many programs that contain a certain amount of education within the curriculum; unfortunately, once students have completed these classes, they are often the only true educational exposure they receive in traditional programs regarding domestic violence. The only way many of the Social Work students take these classes, however, is as an elective. Those programs considered the most successful not only include education on domestic violence in the classroom, but provide strong opportunities for field work and exposure to how these cases are handled in the field. These programs provide not only curriculum, but an in depth study that extends beyond the classroom in the form of orientations, field work that exposes them to victims, shadowing of Social Workers already dealing with domestic violence situations, and opportunities for further education after graduation. Domestic violence is a prevalent issue in society today and social workers will come in contact with victims at least once if not several times in their careers, making education an important part of the learning process for all social workers.

CHAPTER III  
METHODOLOGY

**Overview**

The purpose of this study is to describe the current views and attitudes that students at California State University Stanislaus, in the Masters of Social Work program, have about domestic violence victims and their families. Research shows that many parents who experience domestic violence have CPS case files which have harsher conditions of service plans and contracts than those who do not experience domestic violence and have a higher likelihood of having their children removed. Other research has shown that some caseworkers would employ using a safety plan while others would remove the child (ren) for safety, and some of the workers would assist the victim and children in moving to safety. It is important to understand the views and beliefs of the students regarding domestic violence, and their understanding of domestic violence to determine if more MSW curriculum exposure is needed.

**Design and Sampling**

This study is descriptive by design and is a quantitative study meant to serve as a foundation for further research relating to students' understanding of domestic violence. This study employs a quantitative questionnaire to address the guiding research question. Students at California State University Stanislaus, who are currently enrolled in the Masters of Social Work program, were asked to participate

by taking the survey. A self-administered questionnaire, that took approximately 20 minutes to complete, was given to all participants. A standardized Likert scale was used to measure respondents' attitudes regarding domestic violence. To insure a robust sample size, the survey went out to all students in the Masters in Social Work Program and included all first, second, and third year program students. The quantitative survey tool was designed to measure their attitudes and views about domestic violence. The survey responses were statistically analyzed to determine current attitudes and beliefs of the students regarding DV victims and their families.

The survey link was given to the MSW program, and the MSW program forwarded the link to the survey to all students in the program through email. The participants included all graduating students in the program, with an expectation that all three cohorts would participate. The participants were social work students working toward their Masters in Social Work degree through Stanislaus State University in 2015. The type of sampling used for this research study is probability sampling. Each questionnaire was sent with instructions requesting individual's participation in the study and letting them know that their responses were anonymous and that participation was voluntary.

### **Instrumentation**

The survey used in this study addressed the attitudes and beliefs of graduate students regarding families who are experiencing domestic violence. The questionnaire was taken from another study that was done by Postmus (2011). The survey was modified to address the questions to students rather than child protection

service workers currently in the field. A standard Likert scale was used for most of the questions for the participant to answer, with the exception of the last few short answer response questions at the end that allow the participants to describe in their own words successes and frustrations. Appendix A shows the survey provided to each participant of the study.

The survey contained 50 questions that were used to measure MSW student attitudes and views about domestic violence. The first section of the survey addressed myths and biases surrounding domestic violence, with questions that were designed to measure the students' current perceptions and attitudes. The second section of the survey addressed students' confidence and comfort in asking clients about their exposure to domestic violence to determine how comfortable the students would be assessing for DV. The third section of the survey addressed students' knowledge regarding what agencies they knew of in the area that provided services to victims and if they had any knowledge of what services they provided. The fourth section of the survey addressed students' personal experience with DV to get a sense of what they had personally experienced or knew about. Finally, the last section of the survey asked two demographic questions regarding the age of the student and the gender of the students to address a possible correlation between the age of a student or gender and their current beliefs and attitudes to DV. Also in this section students were given an opportunity to add information regarding training they received and what they would like to see. It was important to make sure the survey was complete and that there are no technical difficulties, eliminating the possibility of not reaching students

because they were unable to access the survey. It was tested to insure that all the questions can be answered as they are instructed.

### **Data Collection Strategies**

The survey was administered through SurveyMonkey with a link that participants clicked on to take them to the survey. Survey participants were given three weeks to complete the survey from the time it was emailed. There were two different reminders sent out to participants. One reminder was sent after the first week the survey was available and the second reminder went out three days before the survey was closed.

There are a number of strengths in the data collection process. The first of these is the convenience of an online survey. The time that it takes to send out the survey is short and does not require a list of complicated steps. The participants were able to take the survey at their convenience and were able to take it within the comfort of their homes, which also allows for privacy when answering the questions. Another strength is the anonymity of the survey. SurveyMonkey is an electronic program that makes it impossible to trace the answers back to the participant. Being that the survey is electronic, it allows the researcher to reach more people, giving the researcher a broader range of participants and reaching a greater number of students to compile and analyze the results.

As with any research there are also weaknesses to the study. The survey is electronically sent to students. This does not allow for the researcher to elaborate on the questions being asked. There are no in-depth interviews with students to really get

in-depth knowledge of their views and opinions regarding domestic violence. The sampling plan could be another weakness as well. While the researcher is reaching many students in the cohorts, the students are very busy with school work and with field work. This makes it difficult because there is no way to control how many surveys from each cohort were received, or if all students were even reached. As with any online survey there are dangers. People, especially students, are extremely busy and may find it hard to find the time to respond and complete the online survey. It is much easier to not respond to email than it would be if an interview took place face-to-face.

### **Plan for Data Analysis**

Since this is a quantitative study, particular procedures were taken to ensure that the data were analyzed consistently. The researcher used the SPSS program to analyze the answers to the questions of the survey in Appendix A.

The quantitative data were examined using two statistical processes. First, descriptive statistics were generated on each question related to the intersection of domestic violence and child abuse. Specifically, frequency distributions and measures of central tendencies (mean, median, and mode) were generated to quantitatively describe the participants' views on the items of the survey. The plan was to do bivariate analysis; however, because of the small sample size, univariate analysis was the only option.

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

It is important to protect the participants from physical or psychological harm when conducting research. This can be achieved by using an electronic survey to keep the participants' identities anonymous. The email that went out to each participant completely explained that the results are anonymous and would not be linked to them in any way, and that their participation was voluntary. This was explained in a language that was easy to understand with any risks related to taking part in the research and their rights to refuse to participate or withdraw from the survey at any time. The researcher made sure that the participants had access, via email, to be able to ask any questions that might have arose from participation in the survey or the process relating to the research. Permission was granted by the Masters in Social Work Program to send the survey to all students in each of the three cohorts.

The data collection method was also fully explained to each participant via email, including how the results were recorded and how their anonymity would be retained throughout and after the study was completed. For the purposes of this study and to protect the safety of the participants, not even the researcher was able to link the participants' answers with the participants themselves. At the completion of the research all information was disposed of in a timely manner so as to further make sure that none of the responses could ever be traced back to the participants in the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The following chapter discusses the quantitative and descriptive results of the study. The first section provides an overview of the sample. This includes the demographic characteristics of the sample and the participants' experiences with domestic violence. The second section provides an overview of the responses to the survey that focused on the myths of domestic violence and the perspectives of the respondents. The third section examines the results of the perspectives of the respondents in regards to CPS workers' interventions. The fourth section discusses the responses to questions regarding social work practice and respondent's feelings of preparedness to work with victims of domestic violence. Finally, the fifth section addresses respondents' knowledge and perceptions of community services for domestic violence.

#### **Overview of the Sample**

The sample consisted of 48 graduate students who were in their first, second, or third year of MSW graduate school. There were demographic questions regarding gender and age, and a series of questions regarding personal experiences with domestic violence. Eighty-eight percent (37) of the participants were female, 9% (4) were male, and one of the respondents identified within the other category. Of the participants, 59% (25) were between the ages of 20-30, 28% (12) were between the ages of 31-40, 9% (4) were 41-50, and 1% (1) was between the ages of 51-60. Eighty-

one percent (36) said that they personally knew someone who had been in a domestic violence relationship or experienced sexual assault, while only 18% (8) did not. Almost half (44%, 19) of the participants indicated that they have experienced domestic violence personally, with 53% (23) saying they had not, and only 2% (1) being unsure. It is noteworthy that the results yielded 60% (26) of participants responding that they believed that domestic violence and sexual assault had indeed impacted their lives in some way, while only 27% (12) said it had not, and 11% (5) were unsure. Looking at the data, one can see how prevalent domestic violence is in the sample and despite whether there has been personal exposure or not, many feel that it is a factor and has impacted their lives greatly. With so much exposure to domestic violence by the people who comprise this sample, one might expect that this group would not be likely to believe the myths that surround domestic violence.

### **Myths**

Based on the current literature, we know there are many myths surrounding domestic violence. In this study, there were a total of eighteen myths that were presented to the participants. For each of the 18 myths, at least two of the participants in the sample of 48 graduate students believed the myth to be true. Additionally, there were a total of seven myths where more than 30% of the participants believed the myth to be true. What follows, is a closer examination of some of the more common myths that produced the largest percentage of graduate students who believe the myth to be true. All the results collected from the questions regarding myths about domestic violence raise concern for social work practice.

The statement the researcher felt showed clear evidence of participants believing myths was the statement that most women can find a way to get out of an abusive relationship if they wanted to, with 32% (16) of the participants believing this to be true. More than 30% (18 or more) of the participants felt that domestic violence and sexual assault are more prevalent among ethnic minority groups. Seventy-three percent of participants believed the myth that children who were abused or witnessed abuse in their homes have the greatest likelihood of becoming abusers as adults. Similarly, 83% (40) of participants also believed that children who are abused or witnessed abuse have a high probability of becoming adult victims.

Twenty-six percent (13) of the participants believed that the rise of the women's movement and feminism contributed to the increased occurrences of domestic violence and sexual assault. Eight percent (4) of the participants in the study agreed that if a woman continues to live with a man who beats her, then it is her fault if she is beaten again. Similarly to this, fourteen percent (7) of the participants believed that often times a woman provokes her male partner to physically assault her, that she is asking for him to abuse her. Finally, twelve percent (6) of participants believed the myth that people are only victims if they choose to be.

### **Perspectives Regarding CPS Workers Interventions**

There were a total of six questions that were presented to the participants regarding their thoughts and perceptions on CPS interventions in regards to domestic violence clients. It was clear from the findings that the students were somewhat unsure or confused about what CPS workers should do regarding domestic violence.

Eighty-seven percent of the participants felt that domestic violence screenings should be part of CPS's risk assessment. However, 55% (27) of the participants responded that CPS's first priority was to protect the children, not assessing for or intervening with domestic violence, while 43% (21) of the participants said that the protection of the children is the most important. Another contradiction was that 43% (21) of the participants believed that if a woman is being abused and remains in the home with her abuser that her children should be removed for their safety, while 55% (27) felt that the child should not be removed. Ten percent (5) of the participants felt that child abuse should not be reported if the child is unintentionally injured during a domestic violence incident, while eighty-eight percent (43) felt that child abuse should be reported. Fourteen percent (7) felt that child abuse should not be reported if the child only witnesses the incident, while 85% (41) felt that it should be reported. Fifty-nine percent (29) felt that child abuse should not be reported if the child did not witness the domestic violence event or was injured. However, 39% (19) of the participants did feel that as long as domestic violence was in the home where children were present that child abuse should be reported whether a child witnesses or is hurt.

### **Social Work Practice and Preparedness**

This section consisted of seven questions that have to do with how prepared participants are to go into the field of social work after finishing graduate school. Part of the graduate experience is becoming comfortable and confident in their abilities to work with all clients and understanding how to deal with situations that are uncomfortable. Ten percent (5) of the participants said they did not feel comfortable

asking their clients if they had experienced domestic violence. Twenty-one percent (10) of the participants did not feel that they could confidently refer victims to appropriate places for domestic violence. Fourteen percent (7) of participants' did not feel comfortable asking if clients had experienced sexual assault, and 11% (5) percent did not feel comfortable asking if a client had experienced economic abuse.

Knowledge of strategies to help clients change their domestic violence situation can be very helpful, so participants were asked if they felt confident in their knowledge of strategies to help change the situation. Forty-one percent (19) of the participants' did not feel confident that they could help a victim change her situation related to experiencing domestic violence. Thirty-nine (18) percent of participants did not feel confident they could make appropriate referrals for clients who were in same sex relationships who are victims of domestic violence. Thirteen (6) percent of participants admitted to feeling afraid of offending clients by asking about domestic violence or sexual assault. Social workers need to feel confident in their abilities to help all clients they come into contact with and need to know how to work with and appropriately refer clients who are victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

### **Community Services**

The final section consisted of questions regarding participants' views and perceptions about domestic violence community services. There were a total of eight questions for this section. Thirty-eight percent (18) of participants did not feel at all prepared to provide services to clients experiencing domestic violence. Forty-seven percent (22) did not feel they were prepared or felt confident to provide services to

clients experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault as a result of training or education they may have received. The questions further went on to ask about how participants' felt about the agencies in their communities and the types of relationships they may have with them. Thirty-one (14) percent of the participants' were unsure if domestic violence agencies in their community were willing to provide services to victims involved with child welfare systems. Several of the participants (40%) were undecided about whether or not they had a positive working relationship with staff of domestic violence agencies in their communities. Fifty percent (22) of those who answered were undecided if domestic violence services were adequate in their communities. The next two questions were about victims and staff experiences that may have been shared with the participants. Seventy-five percent (33) of those who participated had no opinion if victims they had worked with shared experiences they have had with using domestic violence services, while 81% (36) of participants answered to having no opinion about staff in offices sharing positive experiences. Finally, 25% (11) of participants disagreed that community agencies provided culturally sensitive services. All the results in this section indicate a strong sense of the participants not knowing about domestic violence services and agencies in their communities or having little or no knowledge or exposure to the agencies within their communities.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### **Overview of Major Findings**

The data collected in this study indicate that though there are more participants who do not believe in the myths of domestic violence, there is still a large number of future social workers who do believe the myths. There were five major findings to emerge from the study. There were at least two participants who believed each of the 18 myths were true. One of the most pervasive myths was that a woman can just leave an abusive relationship whenever she wants to. Believing any of the myths of domestic violence can be potentially damaging to work with victims. Another finding was that this sample of graduate students did not appear to know much about CPS interventions and believed that children who witnessed or were abused would either become abusers themselves or they would become future victims. These findings appear to suggest that relative to this sample, future CPS social workers are more inclined to remove a child from a home where domestic violence is present (regardless of the circumstances) in order to protect the child. The participants of the study were asked about feeling prepared to work with victims of domestic violence and a large portion responded that they did not feel prepared to work with these victims. The final major finding was that those who participated in the survey did not know of or were not sure about domestic violence agencies within

their communities. Not being aware of their community resources for services like this could be problematic.

### **Existing Knowledge**

Based on previous literature, the research results support previous research findings. In previous research completed by Spade (2011) it was found that some people believe the myth that a woman can leave a domestic violence relationship anytime. This is one of the most pervasive myths. He further established that norms surrounding behavior, even domestic violence thoughts and perceptions and the ability to believe in the myths are established through society and family systems. Worden and Carlson (2005) also collected data showing that participants believed in the myth that a woman could leave as well if she wanted to and could leave successfully. Their data also showed that the participants who believed in this myth also believed in the myth that the victim was responsible and that by choosing to stay she in fact wants to be abused. The research again shows that there are people who do in fact believe that she wants to stay and it is her fault if she is beaten again. There are many reasons a woman may not leave her abuser. A woman may fear her partner's actions, such as the fear of being hunted down and killed, or the effects of the abuse may make it difficult to leave, such as their self-esteem being so low they don't feel they deserve better. Fears for their children, attachment, and personal history are just some of the many reasons a woman may have a difficult time leaving the abuser. There are a myriad of psychological, socioeconomic, cultural, gender, and interpersonal factors for why women stay (Hadeed, 2003).

Much of the previous literature shows that myths about domestic violence are still believed by a large population. Yamawaki, Ochoa-Shipp, Pulsipher, Harlos, and Swindler (2015) discovered when they examined the attitudes toward domestic violence, the victim, and the perpetrator that victims who return are often times blamed for the abuse which only further connects the current research findings. Several of the participants believe that people are victims only if they choose to be. Black, Weisz, and Bennett (2010) further connects to the current research in that they found those they surveyed believed a woman's behavior contributed to the violence. Their data as well showed that many of their participants also had a fair amount or a lot of experience with domestic violence personally. A major finding in the current study show that a large number of the participants have experience with domestic violence either personally or through people they know.

The findings revealed that many of the participants were unaware and may even be confused as to what the CPS interventions are. There were many in the research who did not feel that social workers should assess for domestic violence or would be uncomfortable doing so. Day and Schiele (2013) discussed many different facets in society that have contributed to social workers' perceptions regarding domestic violence. There were a portion of participants who believed in the myth that since the rise of the women's movement and feminism that domestic violence and sexual assaults have risen. Day and Schiele (2013) also talked about the belief in history that we must be self-reliant, in control of and responsible for our own lives to be successful. This still is true today in the fact that we blame the victim for being in

her current situation and further place blame on her when she does not leave the relationship. Men have long been given authority in history and women have been thought to be the nurturers of the children, making the women responsible for getting out of the abusive relationship.

Looking at the current research and examining prominent social values connects the current belief systems of many CPS workers. Women are thought to be the nurturers, but are also thought to be the weaker sex as well, and yet we still believe they should be the one to leave, that she perpetrates the abuse she receives because she tolerates it. In the current research participants seemed conflicted about assessing for domestic violence and whether to report abuse or not to report abuse. Côté and Lapierre (2011) discussed workers feeling frustrated with a mother's inactions or actions where domestic violence was present and that these workers had blaming attitudes towards the mother because they believed her to be the nurturer. This still seems evident in the current data, as some participants felt that if the mother did not leave the abuser her children should be removed.

Data from this research show that many of the participants did not feel prepared to provide services for domestic violence to clients nor did they appear to be very knowledgeable about current community resources. Existing knowledge shows that there are efforts being made to increase social workers' knowledge, including social work curriculum, field experience, and post MSW training. Nevertheless, the results of this study suggest more work is needed. The current data showed that approximately a fourth of all the participants did not feel they could adequately refer

a client to domestic violence services. Forgey and Colarossi (2003) presented curriculum for the very purpose of educating MSW students about domestic violence to reduce victim blaming. Many of the participants expressed feeling they did not have enough education and exposure to domestic violence while in the program. The participants also seemed to be unaware of current community resources in their areas and did not appear to have relationships with any domestic violence programs. LeGeros (2012) presented a field education program that gave the necessary exposure to students in the field and helped them to connect with resources for victims and create relationships in the field that would be critical to working with victims of violence. Ixcamey (2003) created a curriculum that could be used after graduation to teach social workers about domestic violence but from the viewpoint of being culturally sensitive to traditional Latino women. All of these programs would help to reduce the confusion of the participants about interventions in CPS and would help to better prepare them to work with victims of domestic violence.

### **Limitations to the Study**

As with all research there are some limitations to the study. One of the limitations of the study was that the research was taken from a small sample. There were a total of 45 participants who responded to the survey. Of those participants, some chose not to answer each question that was asked. Another limitation was not being able to control how many of the participants came from each cohort within the program that was surveyed. Ideally, there would have been an equal amount of participants from each first, second, and third year student cohorts and a way to

analyze the data according to each year the participants were in order to make comparisons. Another limitation is the gender composition of the sample. There were 37 participants who responded as female to only 4 males, while the others chose to identify as other. There were few demographic questions that were asked making the data impossible to relate to factors in their lives that could contribute to their personal thoughts and perceptions regarding domestic violence. The survey was only given to one graduate program which is another limitation to the study. Not being able to conduct a larger study on more schools results in a lack of generalizability.

### **Implication for Practice, Policy, and Future Research**

Understanding domestic violence and its victims is an important aspect in the social work field. Many social workers will at some point in their careers come into contact with a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault. Those who work in the helping field should be educated to assess for and understand domestic violence or sexual assault. Social workers should have a better understanding of the myths of domestic violence and how they can be damaging to themselves and to their future clients. The myths of domestic violence prove damaging and lead to the victim feeling re-victimized and blamed for her situation. Education is an important facet of changing behaviors and changing the norms of society. The results of this study have clear implications regarding the preparation of future social workers. Understanding the workings of CPS is important to the social work field because so many students can potentially end up in this field. The field of CPS is changing and more and more social workers are being taught to assess for domestic violence. Children are affected

by domestic violence and are the silent victims of circumstances. Mothers should not be solely responsible for protecting and rearing their children. Perpetrators should be held equally responsible for the damages done as a result of domestic violence. There is existing curriculum that can be implemented in schools and in field work to help students get a better understanding of domestic violence, reduce myths of domestic violence, and reduce victim blaming.

Feeling and being prepared to go into the field of social work is important to students graduating from an MSW program. Domestic violence questions are sometimes invasive and difficult to ask, and according to the survey some of the participants felt they were not adequately prepared and comfortable to ask such questions. This can be damaging to the client-social worker relationship. There are multiple strategies that can be used to help victims of domestic violence. Empowering clients who have or are still experiencing domestic violence is helpful to them growing and healing.

Many of the participants felt that their knowledge of strategies was lacking and they did not possess the knowledge to help adequately. Not only should Social Workers feel prepared to work with victims of domestic violence, but should also be aware of resources in their communities to assist the victims as well. The current data collected suggests that several participants were unaware of their community resources for domestic violence and how these services were viewed.

The roles of CPS are to assess for predominantly the safety of the children. Domestic violence in a home is a potential danger to the children who live there.

Children can be inadvertently hurt during an altercation, and even just witnessing an event can be damaging to children. In the past the policy of CPS was not to assess for domestic violence; however, this is shifting more and more. Future social workers need to know how CPS works and responds, and how they assess for danger, including domestic violence assessments. Education of the interventions and assessments of CPS can prove helpful to their future careers, especially those who are going to enter the field of child welfare.

Future research should look at how to implement programs in the schools and the best program that would work to accomplish these goals. Future research may also look at program outcomes and how much, if at all, such curriculum reduces victim blaming and the myths of domestic violence. Students could be given a survey to assess ways they may suggest that may help them to feel more empowered and prepared to work with victims of domestic violence. Trainings can be implemented into the schools to help future social workers look for and discover community services in their own communities and how to broach the gap and create relationships within community agencies. This could provide them an opportunity to learn the referral processes for future victims with which they may come into contact.

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## REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX

APPENDIX  
SURVEY QUESTIONS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. For most of the following questions, you will be given a set of short answers and asked to choose the one that is closest to your view or experience. It is important that you answer as accurately as possible so take your time. It should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete this survey.

*This information CANNOT be linked to your identity and your responses will be anonymous.*

**I. In this first section, for each of the following statements, please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by checking the appropriate response.**

1. The rise of the women's movement and feminism has increased the occurrence of domestic or sexual violence.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree				

2. If a woman continues to live with a man that beats her, then it is her own fault if she is beaten again.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree				

3. Domestic violence is more likely to occur in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree				

4. Supporting a woman who stays in a violent relationship excuses the abuse.

	1	2	3	4	
	Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree				

5. Often women who say they were raped agreed to have sex and then regret it.

	1	2	3	4
5				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

6. Most women could find a way to get out of any abusive relationship if they wanted to.

	1	2	3	4
5				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

7. Domestic violence is more common in ethnic minorities.

	1	2	3	4
5				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

8. It is never the victim's fault if her partner abuses her.

	1	2	3	4
5				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

9. Often, the female victim provokes her male partner to physically assault her.

	1	2	3	4
5				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

10. If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for what happened.

	1	2	3	4
5				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

11. Often, a woman's sexually suggestive clothes or behavior leads to her being sexually assaulted.

	1	2	3	4
5				
Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

12. Most domestic violence involves mutual violence between partners.

	1	2	3	4
5				
Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

13. Sexual assaults are more common among ethnic minorities.

	1	2	3	4
5				
Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

14. People are only victims if they chose to be.

	1	2	3	4
5				
Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

15. It shouldn't be considered rape if a man is drunk and didn't realize what he was doing.

	1	2	3	4
5				
Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

16. If a woman starts to have sexual intercourse with a man and then changes her mind, it is her fault if she is raped.

	1	2	3	4
5				
Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

17. Children who were abused or witnessed abuse in their homes often become abusers as adults.

	1	2	3	4
5				

- |       |                   |          |           |  |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-----------|--|
|       | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Undecided |  |
| Agree | Strongly agree    |          |           |  |
18. Children who were abused or witnessed abuse in their homes often become victims as adults.
- |       |                   |          |           |   |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-----------|---|
|       | 1                 | 2        | 3         | 4 |
| 5     |                   |          |           |   |
|       | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Undecided |   |
| Agree | Strongly agree    |          |           |   |
19. CPS should include domestic violence screening as part of the risk assessment.
- |       |                   |          |           |   |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-----------|---|
|       | 1                 | 2        | 3         | 4 |
| 5     |                   |          |           |   |
|       | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Undecided |   |
| Agree | Strongly agree    |          |           |   |
20. The mandate of CPS is to give first priority to protecting children – not assessing for and intervening with domestic violence.
- |       |                   |          |           |   |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-----------|---|
|       | 1                 | 2        | 3         | 4 |
| 5     |                   |          |           |   |
|       | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Undecided |   |
| Agree | Strongly agree    |          |           |   |
21. Child abuse should be reported if a child is unintentionally injured during a domestic violence incident.
- |       |                   |          |           |   |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-----------|---|
|       | 1                 | 2        | 3         | 4 |
| 5     |                   |          |           |   |
|       | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Undecided |   |
| Agree | Strongly agree    |          |           |   |
22. Child abuse should be reported if a child witnesses a domestic violence incident even if the child is not physically hurt.
- |       |                   |          |           |   |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-----------|---|
|       | 1                 | 2        | 3         | 4 |
| 5     |                   |          |           |   |
|       | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Undecided |   |
| Agree | Strongly agree    |          |           |   |
23. Child abuse should be reported if domestic violence occurs in the home – even if the child did not witness the event nor was injured.

	1	2	3	4
5				
Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

24. If a domestic violence victim chooses to remain with the abuser, the children should be removed for their safety.

	1	2	3	4
5				
Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

**I. Based on the following statements, please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements choosing the appropriate response.**

25. I feel comfortable asking my clients if they have experienced domestic violence.

	1	2	3	4
5				
Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

26. I feel confident that I can make the appropriate referrals for women who are victims of violence.

	1	2	3	4
5				
Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

27. I feel comfortable asking my clients if they have experienced sexual violence.

	1	2	3	4
5				
Strongly disagree		Disagree	Undecided	
Agree	Strongly agree			

28. I feel comfortable asking my clients if they have experienced economic abuse.

	1	2	3	4
5				

Strongly disagree                      Disagree                      Undecided  
 Agree                      Strongly agree

29. I feel confident in my knowledge of strategies to help victims of violence to change their situation.

1                      2                      3                      4  
 5  
 Strongly disagree                      Disagree                      Undecided  
 Agree                      Strongly agree

30. I feel confident that I can make the appropriate referrals for clients in same sex relationships who are victims of domestic violence.

1                      2                      3                      4  
 5  
 Strongly disagree                      Disagree                      Undecided  
 Agree                      Strongly agree

31. I am afraid of offending clients if I ask them about domestic violence or sexual assault.

1                      2                      3                      4  
 5  
 Strongly disagree                      Disagree                      Undecided  
 Agree                      Strongly agree

32. I feel adequately prepared to provide services to clients experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault.

1                      2                      3                      4  
 5  
 Strongly disagree                      Disagree                      Undecided                      Agree  
 Strongly agree

33. I feel prepared to provide services to clients experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault as a result of training and education I have had.

1                      2                      3                      4  
 5  
 Strongly disagree                      Disagree                      Undecided                      Agree  
 Strongly agree

**II. Listed below are a few statements about domestic violence service providers in your community. Please indicate if you agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or have no opinion?**

34. Domestic violence agencies in my community are willing to provide services to victims involved with the child welfare system.

	1	2	3	4	5
agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly

35. I have positive working relationships with staff of domestic violence agencies in my community.

	1	2	3	4	5
agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly

36. Domestic violence services are adequate in my community.

	1	2	3	4	5
agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly

37. The victims I work with share negative experiences they have had when using domestic violence services in my community.

	1	2	3	4	5
agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly

38. The staff in my office share positive experiences of domestic violence agencies in my community.

	1	2	3	4	5
agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly

39. The community agencies usually provide culturally sensitive services to victims of domestic violence.

	1	2	3	4	5
agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly

**III. Personal experience with violence against women: For the next few questions, you will be asked about your personal experiences with domestic violence and sexual assault. As a reminder, you may choose not to answer any of these questions if you don't wish to describe your experiences.**

40. Do you know anyone personally, such as a friend, family member, or coworker, who has experienced domestic violence or sexual assault?

Yes  No  Unsure

41. Have you ever personally experienced domestic violence or sexual assault?

Yes  No  Unsure

42. Do you feel your life has been impacted by domestic violence or sexual assault?

Yes  No  Unsure

**For this last section, please complete the following questions about some general demographic information.**

43. Please indicate your age group

20-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

60+

44. What is your gender?

Female  Male  Other

45. Have you received information, training or education about domestic violence or sexual assault from another source outside of the school?

Yes  No  Can't Recall

46. If you answered yes to the previous question, please specify the primary sources of this domestic violence or sexual assault information, training or education. Check all that apply:

Domestic violence or sexual assault agency

Undergraduate education

In-service training from workplace/internship

Community presentation

Independent conference

Television or documentary program

Independent research

Other: Please specify

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47. If applicable, what are some of your successes in advocating for change towards women in general and domestic violence or sexual assault with your workplace, family members, or friends?
48. If applicable, what are some of your frustrations in your efforts to promote change?
49. Thank you for completing this survey. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding domestic violence as it pertains to your exposure or trainings at school or internships?

**Thank you for your willingness to divulge your personal experiences with domestic violence. If you wish to speak to someone privately and confidentially regarding these experiences, The National Domestic Violence Hotline is (800) 799-7233**