10-5-2017

Do They Know What I Need? Social Reactions to Intimate Partner Violence Help Seeking

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by
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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Psychology

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

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ABSTRACT

For women who experience abuse, seeking help is a significant event that many women undertake in attempts to increase their safety or to gain support from others. Most women who experience abuse disclose to or seek help from the people in their lives. They turn to family members, friends, coworkers, and other people for informal support. Researchers have recently recognized, however, that the reactions that women receive from their informal supporters are not necessarily experienced as helpful or positive. Abused women may experience these social reactions from their informal helpers as positive, negative, neutral, or ambivalent. The purpose of this study was to investigate abused women's as well as nonvictims' perspectives on what constitutes helpful responses to help seeking. To accomplish this goal, a Q-methodological study was undertaken. Sixty participants – 32 women who had experienced abuse in a relationship with a man, and 28 non-abused women and men took part. Participants completed background questionnaires and were asked to sort 87 social reactions to abuse disclosures along a continuum from most to least helpful for a woman who experiences abuse. Participants also completed interviews that focused on their reasons for sorting the reactions the way that they did and about their perspectives on help seeking and helper response more generally. Centroid factor analysis with varimax rotation was used and revealed three interpretable factors. These perspectives were labeled: (a) agency and understanding, (b) advice and information, and (c) action orientation. The agency and understanding perspective was characterized by a focus on a woman's emotional and volitional needs and may be analogized to the survivor centric approach in feminist literature. The advice and information perspective prioritized offering women knowledge-based support above other forms, and the action-oriented

perspective placed primacy on a women's physical safety needs before attending to other concerns. The perspectives that emerged in this study varied substantially regarding the kinds of social reactions to disclosures that were viewed as most helpful. However, there was substantial overlap across perspectives on unhelpful reactions. Additionally, the three perspectives map closely onto standard conceptualizations of emotional, informational, and tangible social support. The elaboration of these perspectives may have important implications for designing educational and skills-based intervention programs for supporting women who experience abuse.

DEDICATION

To Marin, who has taught me so much.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks are due, first and foremost, to the women and men who took the time to participate in this study. This research is not possible without your commitment of time, perspective, and self. Thank you.

I was fortunate to find a wonderful graduate supervisor, Kathy Lafreniere, who has helped me to navigate the waters of graduate school and has helped to guide my professional development. Your academic advice and moral support have meant so very much over the years. Thank you also to Charlene Senn, who has provided invaluable support and has always challenged me to think deeply and critically. To my other committee members, Patti Fritz and Betty Barrett, for your insightful readings of previous drafts, and for your mentorship. To the many other exceptional staff and faculty members in the Department of Psychology and beyond who have been a part of my graduate school career – thank you all.

To my partner, Jim, you have been a part of this work since before its inception, and I thank you for your multifaceted, and steadfast, support. You never doubted. Christin, thank you for your unflagging encouragement, and for being there for the occasional 6 a.m. phone call. To Sandra, I will be eternally thankful for you as my Applied Social cohort – I'm so glad that we made it here together. To the many wonderful friends and colleagues in Psychology and beyond, my eternal thanks. Last but certainly not least – to my family – I am grateful for your faith and your love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Do They Know What I Need? Social Reactions to Intimate Partner Violence Help Seeking

It is well established that intimate partner violence against women (IPVAW) is a pervasive problem in the lives of women in Canada and throughout the world. IPVAW has been described as a public health epidemic, insofar as it negatively affects women's physical and mental wellbeing as a social problem that contributes to social and community fragmentation. It has also been conceptualized as a human rights issue, and affects women's ability to take part in the world with the same rights and freedoms as afforded to men (e.g., Plichta, 2004; Stark, 2007). No matter the lens through which we conceptualize it, IPVAW is a significant problem in the lives of Canadian women and women throughout the world. Everywhere, women take active steps to reduce or mitigate the abuse they experience, whether a woman stays in a relationship with a partner who is abusive or whether she leaves the relationship. Abuse, of course, does not occur in a vacuum, and women's social landscapes play a significant role in helping or hindering her ability to maximize her safety and well-being when confronted with an abusive partner.

For more than three decades, the question “why does she stay?” has been cliché in the world of IPVAW research (Loseke & Cahill, 1984; Sullivan, Basta, Tan, & Davidson, 1992). A more appropriate question to ask may be, “how does a woman manage to become free from abuse despite the numerous personal, institutional, and social barriers to receiving help to mitigate abuse or to leave an abusive partner?" When viewing IPVAW from an outsider’s perspective, it can be hard to envision why a woman remains

with a man who uses tactics of abuse and violence toward his partner. Leaving is most often positioned as the de facto solution to end abuse, although leaving a relationship does not guarantee safety and in fact leaving is the time where a woman is most at risk of being murdered by her partner (Moracco, Runyan, & Butts, 1998). Indeed, that outsiders tend to consider only women's stay and leave decisions implicates leaving as the normative or expected response following the onset of abuse in a relationship (Loseke & Cahill, 1984). These simple dichotomies around staying and leaving abusive men belie the complexities that women in relationships with abusive men experience as they attempt to bolster their personal safety and security. From the inside of the relationship, however, a woman's ability to leave the relationship or end the abuse enacted by her partner is constrained. A growing body of research informs us that the process of becoming free from abuse is a more complicated process than initially believed (e.g., Brown; 1997; Burke, Gielen, McDonnel, O'Campo, & Maman, 2001; Enander & Holmberg, 2008; Liang, Goodman, Tummala-Narra, & Weintraub, 2005; Walker, 1984). Moreover, most women require some amount of assistance from various sources of support (e.g., from friends or family members, or from formal services) to protect themselves or to leave an abusive partner. Most often, women turn to individuals outside of their relationship, most often family and friends, for assistance.

Women who are in relationships with abusive men may seek assistance from a variety of sources in a variety of ways in their attempts to reduce or become free from abuse. Women rely on informal helpers[1] for many kinds of support, some of which

[1] I use the term helper often throughout this document not because all responders engage in helpful responses or behaviours, but rather because this term is commonly used in the literature.

include definitional support, emotional support, informational support, and tangible support. To date, literature has shown the benefits of social support regarding women's physical and mental health and well-being (Coker et al., 2002). Support may also increase her ability to access resources, which may then in turn facilitate becoming free of abuse (Bybee & Sullivan, 2002; Hage, 2006; Sullivan & Bybee 1999). More recently, researchers have also recognized the negative side of social resources in the context of IPVAW (e.g., Edwards, Dardis & Gidycz, 2012; Edwards, Dardis, Sylaska, & Gidycz, 2015; Liang et al., 2005; Sylaska & Edwards, 2014; Trotter & Allen 2009). Negative responses or a lack of support can undermine women's attempts to become free from abuse and help maintain women in relationships with men who are abusive. The kinds of reactions received from informal helpers may consist of helpful, ambivalent, or mixed reactions, or even those that are actively unhelpful – the so-called dark side of social support (e.g., Lempert, 1997).

For women seeking help for abuse, helpers' lack of understanding of abused women's experiences may inhibit effective help-provision. This is because they may not understand or be aware of women's needs related to recognizing abuse, and the types of assistance that are helpful for increasing safety or ending the relationship. Relatedly, the nature of the response a woman receives from her chosen helper may influence her subsequent help-seeking activities (Koepsell, Kernic, & Holt, 2006; Lempert, 1996; Liang et al., 2005). Because abused women are more likely to disclose abuse and to seek help from friends or family members than from any other source (Statistics Canada, 2013), it is vital to explore lay perspectives of women's help-seeking needs.

To support women's ability to leave abusive partners or to become safer within the context of ongoing relationships with men who are abusive, we must first clarify what it is that women find useful regarding help provision. Additionally, how non-victims' understandings may align or diverge with abused women's actual needs and preferences must also be explored. In doing so, we may better understand how to facilitate effective help-provision from informal helpers. By conducting this research, I hope to provide some insight into how individuals and communities can help support women who experience abuse. To accomplish this aim, I used a Q-methodological approach. Q-methodology is unique in that it allows for the identification and explication of diverse perspectives that people hold towards an issue – in this case, the help needs and preferences of abused women.

The decision in this study to call intimate partner violence IPVAW is political. The purpose of this terminology is to acknowledge women's disproportionate victimization in intimate relationships with men. Though this dissertation focuses on men's violence against women, men are also victimized in relationships with women, and violence and abuse can and does occur in any relationship type.

Review of the Literature

Intimate partner violence against women. In the last 40 years, IPVAW has moved from a private problem – one to be kept within the bounds of the relationship – to one that has been internationally recognized as both a pressing social problem and a major public health concern. Despite remarkable increases in public awareness, the development of specialized services, and a veritable explosion of research on the topic,

the rates of IPVAW are slow to decline in Canada and on the international stage (Cho & Wilke, 2005).

There have been many attempts to establish prevalence and incidence rates for IPVAW, and most scholars agree that data generated from national- or population-level surveys consistently underestimate the scope of IPVAW (Michalski, 2004; Murray & Graybeal, 2007). Despite the limitations inherent in measuring IPVAW, our best estimates place the global lifetime prevalence of IPVAW at between 15% and 71% (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006). This wide range of reported prevalence is likely due to variations in women's willingness to self-report IPVAW victimization, whether women define their experiences of IPVAW as such, differences regarding how IPVAW is operationalized by researchers, and variability in recruitment and sampling across studies.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation" (Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002 p. 1084). Of course, abuse in intimate partnerships is a gendered phenomenon. Most of those who are victimized are women, and most of those who perpetrate violence and abuse are men. Women, of course, are not a monolithic group; however, when women are considered as a group, we share the fact that we are disproportionately the victims of abuse in intimate partnerships. This victimization occurs most often at the hands of male partners. Therefore, IPVAW must be examined in a fashion that considers the wider sociocultural values and institutions that support and maintain women's

victimization. Through a feminist lens, violence against women is a means of social control that operates on a collective level via the oppression of individual women (e.g., Bograd 1989; Brienes & Gordon, 1983; Stark, 2007; Walker 1989).

Although IPVAW affects women of all ages, ethnicities, socioeconomic status (SES), cultural backgrounds, and religious affiliation, there is a reason to believe that women belonging to some groups are disproportionately victimized. As previously discussed, IPVAW is a mechanism of social control, and it is reasonable to assume that women who occupy less privileged positions in society may be victimized disproportionately, and suffer more adverse effects of their victimization (e.g., Bograd, 1999). Indeed, more complete understandings of women's experiences of IPVAW, resistance, help seeking, and leaving or not leaving abusive men requires acknowledging and understanding the intersection of social factors outside of gender that influence their lives (Crenshaw, 1993). Race, ethnicity, class, ability, age, sexual orientation, religion, and myriad other aspects of social identity position women within social structures, or systems of oppression, that influence access to power and resources (e.g., Kelly 2011). The interactions among these identities and social positions can have an additive effect on the inequalities that individuals experience. Thus, as women's identities vary, so too do their experiences of victimization and their experiences of interacting with others, as well as with institutions (Cramer & Plummer, 2009). In North America, women from indigenous backgrounds, racialized women, women who live with disabilities, and women from lower SES backgrounds report victimization at higher rates than women belonging to other groups (e.g., Bonomi et al., 2009a). Women under the age of 35 are at most at risk for victimization (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006; Statistics Canada, 2013), but

violence and abuse also occur in girls' first dating relationships, and can be present or develop in any relationship throughout the lifespan (e.g., Band-Winterstein & Eisikovitz, 2009).

Women's social lives and well-being are also impacted by IPVAW victimization (Barnett, Martinez, & Keyson, 1996; Katerndahl, Burge, Ferrer, Becho, & Wood, 2013; Levondosky et al., 2004; Thompson, Saltzman, & Johnson, 2003), and low-quality social support is considered a risk factor for IPVAW victimization and revictimization (Bender, Cook, & Kaslow, 2003; Goodman, Dutton, Vankos, & Weinfurt, 2005; Michalski, 2004). The availability of social support has been associated with a reduction in risk of adverse mental health outcomes (Belknap, Melton, Denney, Fleury-Steiner, & Sullivan 2009; Coker et al., 2002; Levondosky et al., 2004). Thus, lack of social support may serve to both exacerbate women's victimization and inhibit victims' ability to seek help following the onset of abuse.

Becoming safe(r). Women who are in relationships with abusive men have been critiqued in the research literature, in the media, and by friends and family for not leaving abusive partners; therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge the various forms of resistance (outside of leaving their partner) in which women engage. Formative research on IPVAW portrayed women victims as passive recipients of abuse. The first theory of IPVAW victimization to gain traction in academic and public discourses was Lenore Walker's application of Seligman's theory of learned helplessness to abused women's experiences (1984). This approach positioned abused women as passive victims who had become inured to abuse through a recursive cycling of violence and abuse that she had limited capability to resist or to leave her partner. Where there is little empirical support for the

learned helplessness theory of IPVAW victimization (Haj-Yahia & Eldar-Avidan, 2001), for many years the learned helplessness explanation was an authoritative discourse in the IPVAW research arena and continues to be a powerful influence on lay understandings of IPVAW and women's help seeking (or lack thereof).

Most research tells us that IPVAW does not remit spontaneously – that is, violence and abuse, once begun, are likely to continue in the ongoing context of a relationship, and presents ever increasing risks to women's safety. For women who experience abuse, the experience of safety is complex and involves more domains than physical safety alone. Root (2014) identified experience of economic safety, physical safety, psychological safety, and social safety as key domains influencing women's overall perception of their safety in the context of a relationship with an abusive man. She found that perceived safety was impacted by their partner (current, or former), their personal strengths, and the availability of formal and informal supports. For the women in this study, the absence of abuse was a key factor influencing perceived safety, but so too were unconditional support, decision-making power, time to heal, and self-sufficiency.

Wheras for many women, leaving an abusive partner will contribute to perceptions of safety, for many others leaving will not be a practical solution (Moe, 2009). Indeed, for some religious and cultural communities, IPVAW is not considered a valid reason to end a relationship (e.g., Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996) and in some communities a degree of abuse may be considered a normative part of relationships (e.g., Ting, 2000). In other instances, women may be strongly committed to making the relationship work despite their partner's abusive behaviours, and other women are motivated to maintain their relationships because of shared children (Klevens,

2007).Thus, personal choice and cultural factors result in many women continuing relationships with men who are abusive. Conversely, as Wuest and Merritt-Gray (1998) note, some partners become nonviolent over time and partners co-exist in relationships where abuse has substantially decreased or even ended.

Women who are unable to leave, who choose not to leave, or who are not yet ready to leave their abusers may engage in multiple forms of resistance that are designed to minimize the abuse that they experience, as well as the effects of this abuse (e.g., Enander & Holmberg, 2008; Lempert, 1996; Merritt-Gray & Wuest, 1995). Gondolf and Fisher (1988), originators of the survivor hypothesis, were among the first to recognize that women who are in relationships with men who are abusive participate in many forms of resistance and are not passive recipients of abuse. Substantial research now exists that points to IPVAW victims' multiple and varied forms of resistance. Resistance may involve placation of the partner in hopes to avoid or delay assaultive episodes (e.g., Peled, Eisikovits, Enosh, & Winstock, 2000), or may take more active forms such as fighting back, verbally or physically (Enander & Holmberg, 2008). Enander and Holmberg (2008) conceptualized both passive and active forms of resistance as adaptive strategies, in that both forms of resistance facilitate women's coping with their situation as well as the realities of their lives allow. Although seemingly a small step, the most significant forms of resistance, short of leaving, may be disclosure of the abuse to informal or formal supports, or engaging in help seeking behaviours.

Support sources. Sources of help for women in relationships with men who are abusive have often been conceptualized in terms of formal supports and informal supports (e.g., Sullivan, Campbell, Angelique, Eby & Davidson, 1994). Formal sources of help

may include: legal or law enforcement sources, specialized services for abused women, healthcare providers, counselors, religious figures, and help sought from other social institutions. Informal sources of help are women's friends, neighbours, co-workers, and family members. In the upcoming sections, I will review some of the literature on formal and informal support for women who experience abuse.

Formal supports. Formal services for IPVAW include the police and legal system, domestic violence hotlines and shelters, the healthcare system, professional counselors, religious leaders/organizations, and other institutions in society. However, women are often afraid to seek formal help because of shame or embarrassment (Campbell et al., 1998). Research shows that women have mixed reactions to the perceived helpfulness of police intervention. Some women have found police officers to be helpful in responding to abuse complaints (e.g., Cattaneo, 2010); however, other studies have found that women are often dissatisfied with the responses that they receive or report harmful effects of police involvement (Riddell, Ford-Gilboe, & Liepert, 2009; Sorenson, 1996). In their focus groups with survivors of IPVAW and hotline staff, Kulkarni, Bell, and Wylie (2010) found that women viewed contacting law enforcement as a method of last resort, only used after attempts to obtain help from informal networks had failed.

Some women may be reluctant or unable to seek help due to lack of knowledge about available services for IPVAW (e.g., Fugate, Landis, Riordan, Naureckas, & Engel, 2005), or simply due to a lack of service availability. Rural women may not have access to IPVAW resources in the communities in which they reside (Bosch & Bergen, 2006; Riddell et al., 2009). Moreover, women living in small or isolated communities often

express concern about seeking help from formal sources of support because they are fearful of the community finding out about the abuse (Riddell et al., 2009). Women who live in more urban areas also sometimes note a lack of knowledge about available resources, or resources specific to their age or cultural demographic (e.g., Beaulaurier et al., 2008). Women who are newcomers also may be less likely to use formal services due to a lack of knowledge about the existence of specialized programs for IPVAW (Ahrens, Rios-Mandel, Isas, & del Carmen Lopez, 2010).

Research conducted by Beaulaurier, Seff, and Newman (2008) on barriers to seeking help amongst older women identified the legal system response, in and of itself, as an impediment to seeking further help. Women in this study felt that police involvement increased their personal risk due to the potential for partner retaliation, and concern that their abusive partner would be harmed as the result of police intervention. The Canadian data also reflected these findings. Only 30% of women reporting IPVAW in 2009 reported police involvement, a figure that was down 4% from 2004 (Statistics Canada, 2013). When asked why they did not contact the police, most women (79%) reported that they wanted to deal with the abuse in a different way or that they considered the abuse to be a personal issue (74%), and others still (19%) did not contact the police because they were afraid to do so. Analyses of other Canadian data showed that fewer than 30% of Canadian women who reported experiencing abuse had sought help from the police (Barrett & St. Pierre, 2011).

Women are more likely to turn to healthcare providers for help than to other types of formal services (Campbell & Lewandowski, 1997). Thirty-two percent of Canadian women who experienced IPVAW reported seeking assistance from a counselor or

psychologist about abuse (Statistics Canada, 2013). For some women, requesting assistance from those in the medical system was perceived as traumatic in and of itself, particularly due to a lack of understanding of the complexities of women's situations displayed by healthcare providers (Rodriguez, Quiroga, & Bauer, 1996). Moreover, even healthcare professionals who are motivated to aid women who are experiencing abuse often question their ability to provide effective assistance (Williston & Lafreniere, 2013). However, seeking help from therapists and counseling professionals has also been identified as problematic or unhelpful. Some women who have sought help for abuse from professional counselors found that the counselors did not understand their situation, or implicitly or explicitly condoned or supported the abuse (Riddell et al., 2009).

In the Canadian context, it appears that women are least likely to seek support from shelter services for IPVAW; only 4% of women reporting IPVAW victimization have made use of shelter services whereas 26% made use of more general community or crisis support services (Statistics Canada, 2013). Less, of course, is known about why women tend not to use IPVAW shelter services, but it is reasonable to speculate that women with greater financial resources and stronger social and familial networks would be relatively unlikely to make use of shelter services if other viable options exist.

Women recognize that disclosing abuse to and seeking help from formal service risks loss of privacy and a loss of control over the outcomes of the situation. Some of the women's dissatisfaction with or reluctance to seek help from formal services may stem from a real or perceived lack of cultural competence demonstrated by service providers (Latta & Goodman, 2005). This applies in particular to women who are immigrants, who may find that staff at formal organizations are not familiar with cultural practices, or find

that it is hard to obtain services offered in the language that they speak (Latta & Goodman, 2005). Cultural sensitivity is also a concern for some racialized or ethnic and religious minority women, who may not be comfortable seeking support from people outside of their cultural community (Fraser, McNutt, Clark, Williams-Muhammed, & Lee, 2002). Sexual minority women may also be reluctant to seek assistance from formal services, in that there is a perception that services are designed for heterosexual women and the real and perceived risk that women who are victimized by other women may not result in being treated as legitimate victims, or may be met with homophobic responses (e.g., Hassouneh & Glass, 2008). Pragmatically, women may also be reluctant to seek help from formal services because they fear that their partner may retaliate in some way (Liang et al., 2005).

To summarize, most women who experience abuse do not seek help from formal services for intimate partner violence. Despite the proliferation of social services, specialized courts, and increased training and awareness for law enforcement and healthcare professionals, the fact remains that women prefer to use alternative, informal sources of support.

Informal supports. Informal support sources include the people in women's existing networks as well as the people that are a part of her daily life – family, friends, neighbours, coworkers, and the like. Women who are experiencing abuse are typically found to have fewer sources, or lower quality of informal support than nonabused women (Levondosky, 2004). A 2012 study conducted on behalf of the Canadian Women's Foundation found that at least 67% of Canadians knew personally a woman who had been physically or sexually assaulted (2012). This statistic speaks to the importance of

potential helpers' role in assisting women post-assault and behooves researchers to investigate how potential helpers who do not have personal IPVAW victimization experience understand assaulted women's needs.

Other recent Canadian data indicated that 91% of women who had experienced IPVAW had disclosed to someone about the abuse they experienced, and most of these women (88%) used informal sources of support (Statistics Canada, 2013). Furthermore, 77% disclosed their IPVAW experiences to family members or friends (Statistics Canada, 2013). These data indicate clearly that informal sources of support in general, and friends and family may be the primary sources from whom women seek help and guidance in dealing with IPVAW. Tellingly, other research indicates that women are most likely to feel comfortable with, and disclose to and seek help from informal supporters, rather than from formal sources of support (e.g., Statistics Canada, 2013).

Barrett and St. Pierre's (2011) analyses of 1999 GSS data showed similar patterns. Their study revealed that 80% of women with IPVAW victimization sought help from at least one informal support source whereas 68% reported using, at least, one formal support source. Fewer than 20% of women reported not seeking help from any informal sources. Examining the types of informal sources of support women used further, 68% reported talking to a friend or neighbour, and 67% reported disclosing to a family member, suggesting that many women may disclose to multiple informal support sources. Another study on the role of informal support networks has provided confirming evidence that women are more likely to seek help from informal networks. In a 2010 study, Rose, Campbell, and Kub found that only 34% of their participants had sought help from formalized support services.

Not all social supporters are created equally, and women use different sources of social support with varying frequency and with varying satisfaction. In general, women are more likely to disclose to and seek help from their friends than from any other support source (Bosch & Bergen, 2006; Dunham & Senn, 2000; Edwards, Dardis, & Gidycz, 2012; Fanslow & Robinson, 2012; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993; Rose et al., 2000; Weisz et al., 2007). Another frequently used source of potential support, is family (Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993), and in general, women who disclose or seek help for abuse find their female friends (Edwards et al., 2012; Rose et al., 2000), or friends and mothers to be their most supportive helpers (Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993). However, not all women may be equally comfortable seeking help from their personal networks - African-American women, Latina women, and women from other minoritized groups may be less likely to seek help from friends than are White women (Barrett & St. Pierre, 2011; Flicker et al., 2011; Kaukinen, Meyer, & Akers, 2013).

As a result of finding formal services inappropriate, inaccessible, or undesirable, many women who are abused by their intimate partners turn to people in their social or familial networks for support. In the literature, these informal helpers provide what is frequently referred to as 'social support.' Research tells us that women who have been abused enjoy lower levels of overall social support than do women who have not experienced abuse (Barnett et al., 1996; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Levondosky et al., 2004; Thompson et al., 2003). The presence of social support can also mitigate the adverse psychological effects associated with abuse (Carlson, McNutt, Choi, & Rose, 2002; Coker et al., 2002; Thompson et al., 2000). Lack of social support for abused women is doubly problematic, in the sense that social support has been shown to be a

protective factor against abuse and re-abuse (e.g., Goodman, et al., 2005). An important caveat, however, is that social support does not appear to be a protective factor against severe violence (Goodman et al., 2005).

One strategy to mitigate IPVAW that is urgently required is to increase the competency of the informal social network's ability to respond in supportive and helpful ways to women's disclosures of abuse and overtures for help. In many instances, what ultimately appears to motivate women to seek help is the severity of abuse enacted by the partner. Abuse severity is associated with help seeking in that women who experience more severe forms are more likely to disclose abuse to others and to ask for help (Barrett & St. Pierre, 2011; Coker et al., 2000; Flicker et al., 2011; Levondosky et al., 2004; Waldrop & Resick, 2004). Barrett and St. Pierre (2011) found that the strongest predictor of women's help seeking from informal and formal support sources was a feeling that one's life was in danger. These findings underscore the importance of the responses a woman receives when she seeks help. If, as research indicates, the experience of increasing abuse severity predicts women's help seeking overtures, it is imperative that potential helpers assist women in ways that work to protect her safety.

As mentioned, once a woman has decided that their partner's behaviour is problematic, or that what they are experiencing is abuse and that this abusive behaviour is a problem in their relationship, they may also choose to seek help, and may disclose this abuse to a person outside of the relationship. Alternatively, women who are in the beginning stages of recognizing that the problems in their relationship may be best described as abuse often turn to their informal networks for help in understanding what is occurring in their relationship. However, women in relationships with abusive men may

have limited abilities to seek help from external sources, thereby making every help overture, and the response they receive from each informal helper, of significant consequence.

Social Support and Support Sources

Types of social support. House and Kahn (1985) conceptualized social support along three dimensions: informational, emotional, and instrumental. I will discuss each of these dimensions as they relate to IPVAW help seeking and network member's social support responses.

Emotional support. Emotional support can be conceptualized as responses from network members that support emotional needs that allow more effective coping with stressors (House, 1981). In the case of emotional support for IPVAW, this can involve supportive listening, validation of feelings, and to not minimize the experiences that women disclose (Burge, Schneider, Ivy, & Catala, 2005; Rhodes et al., 2007). Emotional support can also be as simple as believing a woman when she discloses abuse (e.g., Trotter & Allen, 2009). For women who disclose abuse, emotional support from informal supporters is often cited as the most important kind of support that they received (Bosch & Bergen, 2006; Edwards, Dardis, & Gidycz, 2012; Lempert, 1997), and emotional support has been identified as the most common form of support received (Weisz, Tolman, Callahan, Saunders, & Black, 2007).

Instrumental support. Instrumental, or tangible, support can be described as concrete actions undertaken on behalf of informal network members to support an individual's ability to cope (House, 1981). In the context of IPVAW, instrumental supports can take many forms. Instrumental supports can include the provision of

childcare if the woman has children, help with transportation, housing assistance, provision of monetary resources, and other kinds of contributions involving an action or transfer of resources (e.g., Trotter & Allen, 2009). Women who are seeking help for IPVAW victimization often need to rely on instrumental supports provided by others to increase their safety within their relationship, to leave their partner, or to maintain a life separate from their abusive partner. Negative instrumental supports can include actions such as refusal to offer a safe place to stay. For women experiencing abuse, a lack of resources (e.g., money, alternate housing options) can contribute to maintaining them in unsafe relationships with their abusers by foreclosing viable alternatives. The level of informal support that someone receives from friends and family has also been shown to influence the likelihood of women prosecuting their abusers. Goodman, Bennett, and Dutton (1999) found that for low-SES women involved with the legal system, higher levels of self-reported instrumental support were associated with a greater likelihood of pressing charges against abusers. Some women who have experienced abuse have identified that instrumental or tangible supports as among the most supportive responses from informal helpers (Bosch & Bergen, 2006), and other research has found instrumental support to be associated with lower levels of depressive symptomatology (Goodkind, Gillum, Bybee, & Sullivan, 2003), as well as access to resources and lower levels of abuse over time (Bosch & Bergen, 2006).

Informational support. For this research, I will divide informational support into two broad categories. The first category of informational support I will refer to as informational resource support, and the second category I will refer to as definitional support. Informational resource support involves a helper conveying knowledge about

available resources or providing advice, guidance, or suggestions on how to handle a stressor to the person seeking help (Krause, 1986). In the case of IPVAW, informational support may take the form of providing information about laws related to woman abuse, or existence and availability of services and resources for survivors of abuse. Examples of negative social support in this context would be to withhold or give inappropriate or unwelcome information to women who seek help. Wuest and Merritt-Gray (1999) found that women whose supporters provided them with information about resources facilitated their ability to leave and remain free from their abusive partner.

Definitional support, because it is not a standard form of social support, requires a longer introduction. I propose that definitional support is a subtype of informational support, and functions to help women who experience abuse acknowledge that their partner's behaviours may be abusive. Because of the gradual progression of abuse over time, definitional support may sometimes be necessary for a woman to recognize that she is in a relationship with an abusive partner. Given that abusive men are likely to deny, minimize, justify, or normalize their abuses, feedback from others and outsider perspectives are particularly important for women to determine that what they are experiencing is not normal – that it is abuse.

Avoidance. Based on my review of the literature, it may be reasonable to include a fourth broad category of social responses or social reactions, best described as avoidance. Several studies have identified avoidant reactions (e.g., refusal to talk about abuse, cutting off contact, pretending that the abuse is not happening) as reactions women sometimes receive from social network members (Mitchell & Hodson, 1983; Moe, 2007; Weisz et al., 2007).

Perceived versus enacted support. It is also important to recognize the distinction between perceived support and enacted support. Perceived support refers to the social support that a person believes to be available to them should they need it (Barrera, 1986). Perceived support (vs. enacted support) has been associated with lower levels of general distress (Kaniasty & Norris, 1992; Norris & Kaniasty, 1996). In the case of woman abuse, levels of perceived support (vs. enacted support) have also been associated with lower levels of psychological distress (Thompson et al., 2000). The belief that people will be there when you need them is a protective function of social support.

Enacted support refers to support that has been received from members of informal social networks (Kaniasty & Norris, 1992). An example of enacted support would be for a potential helper to provide a woman seeking help with information regarding legal services relevant to IPVAW, whereas an example of perceived support would be that a woman believes that she could turn to her supporter(s) for information about legal services relevant to IPVAW. For this research, enacted social support will be conceptualized to include offers of support, regardless of whether the woman in question accepts the offer (e.g., offers of transportation assistance, offering child care).

Abused women's perspectives. Women who report disclosing to and seeking help from informal sources receive a variety of responses from their potential helpers. Unsurprisingly, then, different women report varying levels of satisfaction with the reactions they receive from their network members. In an investigation of social support experiences of women in methadone treatment who also experienced IPVAW, most women were dissatisfied with the help received from their social network members (El-Bassel, Gilbert, Rajah, Foleno, & Frye, 2001). Women reported that friends often told

them to leave their abusive partner immediately – an action that not all women were ready to do, or interested in carrying out. Participants in Fanslow and Robinson's (2010) study reported that most responses to their disclosures of abuse were positive. However, the participants in Rose and colleagues' (2000) study were often dissatisfied with the level of support they received. Levondosky et al. (2004) found that abused women had fewer tangible and emotional supports from their informal networks, and were apt to receive more critical responses from their social networks than nonabused women. They also found that lack of disclosure, in and of itself, did not account for the lesser quality of social support, as nearly every woman in the study disclosed to at least one informal helper. They also found that tangible/practical social support had a positive association with mental health and well being.

Men who are abusive often attempt to isolate a woman from her family and social networks, curtail her ability to participate in the workforce, and monitor her movements and communications carefully (MacMillan & Gartner, 1999). This enforced lack of contact with social and familial networks limits women's ability to disclose abuse to nonvictims. It also means that disclosures are particularly meaningful, in that a woman may have few opportunities to disclose their abuse to others. Not only do women in relationships with men who are abusive have more limited social supports than their nonabused counterparts (e.g., Katerndahl et al., 2013), they may also be reluctant to call upon the informal supporters that they do have for help, or supporters may minimize the violence or abuse that they experience (Dunham & Senn, 2000). Women also may choose not to seek formal assistance because they do not want to make public their ‘fictions of intimacy' (Tifft, 1993, as cited in Lempert, 1997).

Social Support and Social Reactions

Social support is a multidimensional construct that has been studied extensively in the psychological literature and one that that has been conceptualized in a variety of ways. In general, social support refers to the real and perceived ability of the members of one's social network to modify an individual's response to stress (Cohen, 2004; Cohen & Willis, 1985). Receipt of social support has been shown to have positive effects on well being (e.g., Cohen & Willis, 1985). That is, when they are perceived by the recipient as supportive, social support has a variety of functions in relation to battered women's health and well being, the ability to recognize their partner's behaviour as abusive, the ability to seek and access help, and the ability to maintain a life free from violence and abuse.

It is apparent from the preceding review of social support in the context of IPVAW that giving and receiving support is not straightforward. Nor is there a support strategy that works for every woman or every context. In the case of intimate partner violence, the responses that a woman receives from her network members are not always positive (Edwards, Dardis, Sylaska, & Gidycz, 2015; Tacket, O'Doherty, Valpied, & Hegarty, 2014; Trotter & Allen, 2009) nor are they necessarily always intended as supportive. Referring therefore to reactions from network members using the umbrella term social support belies the complexity and variety of responses that women receive. For this reason, following Trotter and Allen (2009), I will typically refer to and conceptualize the responses provided by informal helpers along the lines of *social reactions* as opposed to *social support*.

A handful of studies have focused explicitly on positive and negative responses given by informal helpers. Bosch and Bergen (2006) investigated the responses rural

women received from their informal and formal support networks. They found that, for abused women, the supportive people in their informal networks were friends and neighbours, and that provision of informational reactions and emotional reactions were predictive of women's ability to leave their abusers. Instrumental, or tangible, responses, although reported as important by women, was not a significant predictor of becoming free from abuse, and 40% of women were dissatisfied with the type of emotional support that they received. Unhelpful emotional support was associated with less access to resources, and higher severity of current abuse.

In a similar vein, Trotter and Allen (2009) interviewed 48 women about the reactions they received from their informal social networks. Women reported that they often experienced negative or ambivalent reactions from informal helpers. Thirty-two women reported positively perceived emotional supports, including validation and talking about feelings, whereas 23 women reported negative emotional supports, including blaming and emotional distancing. Positively perceived input or information, reported by 17 women, included information provision, and negative input, reported by 15 women, included others telling the woman what she should do. Finally, 28 women reported positively perceived forms of tangible assistance. A study conducted by Tacket et al. (2014) analysed open-ended responses from 254 women regarding what they considered helpful and unhelpful communication from family and friends. Four themes emerged from their analysis. The first theme focused on women’s desire for affirmation, encouragement, appreciation, and validation. The second theme highlighted a preference for understanding, empathy, listening, and respect. The third theme centred on a desire for contact and connection with family and friends. The final theme centred on what women

did not value: judgemental or blaming responses, directive advice and intrusiveness, and the experience of being socially isolated. In a study of disclosure by LGBTQ+ individuals, Sylaska and Edwards (2015) found that friends were most often the targets of disclosure and that empathic support, listening, practical (tangible) support, and giving advice found to be the most helpful responses. The least helpful responses were not understanding the situation and giving advice or taking control of the situation.

Finally, in a previous study, I performed a discursive social psychological analysis of help seeking messages on an online forum for intimate partner violence (Williston, 2008). Women who were actively questioning whether their partners' behaviours were abusive, based on definitional feedback received from other members of the online forum, were sometimes observed to modify their definition of what they were experiencing (e.g., from 'maybe' being abuse to 'actually' abuse). Other research on women's definitional process has revealed that feedback from others is instrumental in changing women's understandings of their partner's behaviour (Enander & Holmberg, 2008; Ferraro & Johnson, 1983).

Responses to IPVAW disclosures and overtures for help do not occur in a vacuum. The attitudes that people hold towards IPVAW will influence their actual and hypothetical responses to women who experience abuse. These views are tied to adherence to social norms as well as beliefs about victims of crime in general and victims of IPVAW in particular (Salazar et al., 2003). When abused women seek support from friends and family, they may be subject to a variety of negative or ambivalent judgments or evaluations. Helpers who react in nonsupportive ways may inhibit women's help seeking efforts in a variety of ways. There is growing evidence that negative and critical

responses from helpers are not infrequent (Lempert, 1997; Levondosky et al., 2004; Trotter & Allen, 2009).

Helper's perspectives. Investigations of informal helper's actual responses have furthered our knowledge of understanding of the complexities of help seeking and help provision in the context of IPVAW. One example, Latta and Goodman's (2011) study of 18 informal helpers' experiences assisting women who disclose abuse found that, although helpers were motivated to help women in relationships with men who are abusive, they were also unsure of what their role should be. Most helpers believed that they should try to offer support, but struggled to determine how to help women without impinging on women's autonomy. Informal helpers reported providing a variety of emotional and instrumental supports (e.g., listening to the women and providing resources to her or her partner), and they reported asking the women themselves what they wanted or needed from them. In another study, Beeble, Post, Bybee, and Sullivan (2008) conducted a random telephone survey undertaken to investigate informal helpers' responses to women experiencing abuse. Out of 6,010 respondents, 57% reported knowing someone who had experienced IPVAW, and 50% reported assisting this person. Among these informal helpers, the majority (88%) reported providing emotional support. Forty-nine percent of responders said that they had referred women to or connected them with formal support services and 15% reported providing instrumental or tangible supports. In all support categories, women were significantly more likely to give support to victims of IPVAW than were men; a logistic regression revealed that women were 18% more likely to provide support.

In Seelau, Seelau and Poorman's (2003) study of potential helpers' recommended responses to an IPVAW scenario, 30% of participants advocated noninterference, and 52% endorsed calling the police or a domestic violence hotline whereas 18% recommended intervention by friends or neighbours. These recommendations contrast with the actions that women who find themselves in relationships with abusive men are likely to take, as most will seek assistance from friends, family, or neighbours. That 30% of participants indicated that nonintervention was the best strategy is problematic because abuse is likely to continue and escalate in the absence of interruption. In the same study, men were more likely than women to recommend nonintervention and were less liable to support the use of formalized services such as domestic violence hotlines or getting the police involved. When asked how they would have responded if they had overheard the hypothetical scenario themselves, 55% stated that they would have spoken with the couple, 21% said that they would call the police, and fewer than 15% said that they would not have engaged in any intervention, called a hotline, or attempted to involve a friend of the couple. The results of this study suggest that although most people recommend some form of intervention in general for IPVAW, the norm supporting nonintervention is a factor in potential helpers' responses to IPVAW.

Limitations in the IPVAW help seeking and social response literature. A general critique of the IPVAW help-seeking literature has been that most research has relied on survivor's narrative accounts or survey methodologies. Although these are valuable methods, they do not allow for a holistic, systematic understanding of women's perspectives on what kinds of help is useful. Different women also may perceive the same types of support to be differentially helpful. For example, being told that she should leave

her partner may be viewed as a useful social reaction for some women whereas other women will find this response unhelpful and critical, or feel as though they are being pressured into a particular course of action. Moreover, survey methodology is limiting in that a nuanced understanding of experience cannot be obtained. Research on help seeking and social support or social reactions in the context of IPVAW has also suffered from an over-reliance on women who have sought services from formal services (e.g., shelter-involved women). The literature on helper response to IPVAW is more fragmented still, and no study to date has compared the perspectives of women with lived experience of abuse with those of their potential helpers on help seeking. Furthermore, a critique of quantitative research in both areas is that researchers define a priori the types of support and social reactions that are expected to be of use to abused women.

Goodman and Smyth (2011) have argued for greater attention to a social-network approach for providing care for survivors of IPVAW, acknowledging that existing formal systems of support do not adequately address abused women's experiences. When we recognize that women are more likely to disclose abuse and to seek help from friends or family members than from other sources (Statistics Canada, 2011), it becomes logical to place more emphasis on the importance of lay perspectives of women's help seeking and abuse disclosures. Mostly absent from the dialogue, however, is a discussion of the negative social reactions that women receive from their potential helpers. Some researchers (e.g., Liang et al., 2005; Trotter & Allen, 2009) have explicitly called for the study of both positive and negative reactions received by victims of IPVAW. Also, missing from the body of literature is the exploration and comparative examination of women's help seeking wants and needs and potential helpers' understandings thereof. It

has become evident that there are significant disparities regarding how women view their help seeking needs and the kinds of support that helpers are willing and able to provide.

Q-methodology and IPVAW research. As a brief introduction, Q-methodology involves the rank ordering of a set of statements along a continuum from agree to disagree, or completely like my view to completely unlike my view, or some other dimension, along a quasi-normal distribution (Brown, 1980; McKeown & Thomas, 1988). A feature that distinguished Q-methodology from other quantitative methods is that participants engage with the sorting stimulus to display what is subjectively meaningful to them about the topic of interest. These ordered responses are then correlated by-person and factored to uncover 'similarities and differences' in perspective on a given topic (Van Exel & de Graaf, 2005). Clusters, or latent factors, of similar viewpoints among participants, are thereby revealed and can be interpreted by examining the patterning of responses that cluster together. Accordingly, in Q-methodology, people (or more accurately, opinions or viewpoints) are the variables of interest. Consequently, this approach represents a conceptual reversal of quantitative investigations of similar topics.

The types of questions amenable to Q-methodology are often those that attempt to assess people's subjectivities. Often, attitudes towards or understandings of issues, usually social phenomena, or perspectives on personal experience, or perspectives on self are investigated. To my knowledge, two published studies have used Q-methodology to investigate currently- and formerly-abused women's perspectives on phenomena related to intimate partner violence, and one published study on recognizing intimate partner violence has employed Q-methodology.

In the first, Dell and Korotana (2000) used Q-methodology to investigate people's theoretical explanations of IPVAW. In their study, 40 participants who had some direct experience with IPVAW (e.g., victimization experience, or through their experiences of working in shelters, policing, healthcare or in sex-work) sorted statements representing various social discourses about IPVAW victimization, causes, and responses. Participants' sorts produced five factors or perspectives. The first perspective, on which 9 participants loaded, was a view of IPVAW as embedded within our culture, and therefore, subject to a criminal justice system response. The second factor, defined by 8 participants (primarily participants with personal experience of victimization) was that victims know best, in that institutional responses are not always appropriate or helpful, and can be exclusionary for victims. The third perspective, defined by 6 participants (nonvictims), focused on involving police in IPVAW issues. The fourth view was represented by 4 participants, and viewed both victims and perpetrators in a sympathetic light, believing that perpetrators were damaged. The final perspective, defined by 3 participants, focused on understanding violence and its aftereffects, with an emphasis on assisting, rather than punishing perpetrators. Of note in this study was the patterning or clustering of people with background characteristics in individual perspectives. As an illustration, when comparing the first factor (‘criminalization of IPVAW') with the second factor (‘victim knows best'), the sorts of several police officers defined the first factor, whereas participants with lived experience of violence tended to load on the second factor. This illustrates the power of Q-methodology to uncover and elucidate various perspectives on the same topic.

In the second study that employed Q-methodology, Barata (2007) investigated 58 currently- and formerly-abused women's perspectives on interactions with the Canadian criminal justice system (CJS). Her analysis revealed five distinct perspectives on the CJS regarding its handling of IPVAW. The first perspective, exemplified by 21 women's responses, was that the CJS is helpful for victims and that women can have confidence in the CJS. The second perspective, defined by 20 women's responses, was that the CJS has some potential use for IPVAW victims, but that it typically fails victims or does not live up to expectations. The third perspective, defined by five women's responses suggested that women should have greater input into the processes within the CJS and that victims should use the CJS with caution. The fourth perspective, also defined by five women's responses, was that the CJS fails to protect women's safety and that involving the CJS often leads to undesirable outcomes. The final perspective, again defined by five women, was that the CJS has a role in protecting women and in treating abusive men, even though the CJS response is flawed. These findings revealed that women have complex, sometimes idiosyncratic perspectives of the utility and effectiveness of the CJS in handling cases of IPVAW.

These two studies demonstrate the utility of Q-methodology to identify and allow for the explication of diverse viewpoints held towards topics related to IPVAW. Moreover, as Kitzinger notes, "Q-methodology's focus on uncovering research participants' perspectives, understandings and definitions, instead of only measuring participants' understandings about an operational definition imposed on them by the researcher, is one of the key features that should make this methodology attractive to feminist researchers" (p. 268). Moreover, the aim of Q-methodology is to access a range

of perspectives in the population (Stenner, Watts, & Worrell, 2008), making it an ideal methodology with which to study topics where people are likely to have very different perspectives, as is the case in perspectives related to social reactions to IPVAW help seeking.

This Study

A great deal of research on IPVAW has relied on women who have sought services from IPV shelters, from the legal system, or from the healthcare system as participants. However, the fact remains that most women who find themselves in relationships with abusive partners will not use shelter services or contact law enforcement, and many will not access other formal forms of support. This speaks to a need to understand help seeking from informal channels of support, and the help, or lack thereof, that is provided by informal supporters. As Liang and colleagues (2005) argued, women's help-seeking overtures may be affected by their prior experiences with their informal and formal support networks. The responses that someone receives during the first disclosure or help-seeking event and other early help-seeking events will affect a woman's perception of the relative safety and helpfulness of support sources. Verily, early research on abused women's help seeking found that women with higher levels of informal support were engaged in more help-seeking behaviours (Mitchell & Hodson, 1983).

The objective of this dissertation research was to help close the knowledge gap surrounding the interactive nature of help seeking and help-provision by (a) investigating abused women's perspectives on help seeking and helpful reactions and (b) comparing that to helpers' understanding of helpful assistance to abused women's help seeking

perspectives. This comparison was designed to reveal overlaps and discrepancies between women's and helpers' understanding of what abused women's help seeking wants and needs are, and what reactions are perceived to be most and least helpful. This research also adds to our knowledge of women's help-seeking experiences, and thus enhances practical help provision to abuse disclosures.

Many studies have examined social support, but few have moved beyond emotional and functional support distinctions and looked at the specifics of support and subjective appraisals of support. Most investigations rely on survey methodology or more narrative accounts of what kinds of support are helpful. No previous research has made a direct comparison between the perspectives of women with lived experience of IPVAW and the perspectives of potential and actual helpers. In the present study, I attempted to include as participants women who have experienced abuse in relationships, but who have not sought help from or otherwise been involved with services for IPVAW. This study will provide a unique contribution to the literature on IPVAW help-seeking preferences and helper response. Although much research has investigated social support and social reactions in the context of IPVAW, and the responses of informal helpers to abused women's disclosures of abuse and help seeking overtures, little work has integrated the perspectives and experiences of both abused women and their potential helpers.

A Q-methodological approach was used to achieve these research objectives. As can be seen in the two studies reviewed in the previous section, Q-methodology demonstrates utility in IPVAW research on the identification and explication of diverse viewpoints held towards target issues – and in this case, social reactions to IPVAW

disclosure and help seeking. The broad aim of Q-methodology is to reveal an array of perspectives held by members of society (Stenner, Watts, & Worrell, 2008), making it an ideal methodology with which to study topics where people are likely to have very different perspectives, as is liable to be the case for perspectives related to social reactions to IPVAW help seeking.

Research Questions. Several research questions were developed to guide this study. The first research question was designed to establish the appropriateness and suitability of the participants in terms of their background characteristics and personal experiences, to be able to contribute to answering the two primary research questions in this study. These background research questions were:

1. What are participants' experiences with victimization, help seeking, and help provision?
    a. What are participants' experiences of abuse in the context of current or former intimate partnerships?
    b. Among participants who have experienced abuse, what helping strategies did they use, and how helpful did they find them to be?
    c. What were participants' experiences of helping women who were in relationships with abusive men?

The central research questions of interest to this study were:

2. What are participants' perspectives on helpful and unhelpful social reactions in the context of IPVAW help seeking?
3. Do women who have experienced abuse share perspectives on what constitutes helpful and unhelpful social reactions with experienced and potential helpers?

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Q-Methodology Overview

Q-methodology was developed as a method to study subjectivity in the 1930s by psychologist and physicist William Stephenson (Stephenson, 1935, 1936a, 1936b). It is a hybridized methodological approach that blends qualitative research aims and interpretations with statistical analyses and procedures. Instead of focusing on measures as the variables of interest, Q-methodology places its focus on people (or rather, their perspectives) as the topic to be considered. The person is put at the centre of the investigation, and therefore the interest is in the exploration of subjectivity rather than of objective measurement. This shift of focus then also involves a theoretical departure from typical quantitative investigations. Q-methodology employs a factor analytic technique, but one that conceptually upends traditional understandings and use of quantitative data.

Following with the empiricist zeitgeist of mid-20th-century psychology, Q-methodology, with its express interest in subjectivity, fell out of use as a standard methodological approach. However, the turn towards more qualitative and discursively informed-research approach of the late 20th and early 21st century created space for a minor resurgence of the method. The revival of Q-methodology may be attributable to a recognition and elaboration of its compatibility with social constructionist and feminist approaches and epistemologies (Kitzinger, 1999; Lazard, Capdevilla, & Roberts, 2011; Watts & Stenner, 2005).

Q-methodology, viewed through a social constructionist lens, can be conceptualized as a means to investigate how people construct and display their

subjectivities – that is, their individual perspectives on a topic. In the words of Watts and Stenner (2012), social constructionists: "…use Q-to reveal the dominant viewpoints extant in a particular data set. This method allows them to identify the key bodies of knowledge about a particular subject matter and to render those knowledge structures empirically observable" (p. 44). Participants then actively construct accounts of their subjectivity (Barbosa et al., 1998; Cross, 2005). Accordingly, Q-methodology is an ideal method to explore how different socially available discourses or people take up understandings of experiences or social phenomena. The researcher does not determine a priori the concepts or constructs that are important to the topic or the participants (e.g., Baker, Thompson, & Mannion, 2006; Kitzinger, 1999), but rather attempts to sample from a range of possible perspectives on the topic. A researcher can uncover the distinct and rich perspectives that people hold on an issue – in this case, helpful and unhelpful responses to IPVAW disclosures and seeking help – that are mostly inaccessible through other methodological approaches. The "thrust of Q-methodology is […] not one of predicting what a person will say but getting him [sic] to say it in the first place (i.e., by representing it as a q-sort) in hopes that we may be able to discover something about what he means when he says what he does" (Brown, 1980, p. 46).

To elaborate on the conceptual reversal of standard statistical techniques found in the Q-methodological approach, broadly speaking, quantitative methods can be divided into so-called Q- and R-varieties. Stephenson (1936a, 1936b) proposed that label 'Q' be used to distinguish his version of factor analysis from other types of factor analysis because they rely on different data matrices. R methods consist of data obtained from 'objective' tests, for example, from tests of heart rate, blood pressure, IQ tests, aptitude

tests, and the like (Brown, 1997). R methods were so named after Pearson's *r* (Brown, 1980). Q-methodology involves correlating by person and then subsequent factorization of these correlations. The goal of Q-methodology is to elucidate the nature of and relationships between people's viewpoints (Brown, 1980). Thus, Q and R techniques each rely on different data matrices (one being the inverse of the other) to conduct their analyses. Stephenson (1936a, 1936b) proposed that label Q be applied to his approach to distinguish Q-methodology's version of factor analysis from more traditional forms (i.e., those employing R methodologies). In conventional R methods, data are obtained from tests or scales that one may refer to as 'objective,' for example, a social support questionnaire, which is passively measured. It is these passively measured test data that are then treated as variables. Q-methodology, in contrast, stipulates that the individual participants, who actively interact with the test stimulus through the process of card sorting, are the variables, rather than the tests (Barbosa, Willoughby, Rosenberg, & Mrtek, 1998; Brown, 1996; Cross 2005). The set of items is referred to as the Q-set and the response instructions given to participants are called the 'condition of instruction' (Barbosa et al., 1998; Ellingsen, Størksen, & Stephens, 2010).

Participants sort the final Q-set statements, the development of which is described shortly, to produce the Q-sorts that will be analyzed. These individually rank-ordered responses are then correlated, by person, and factor analyzed such that the common variability between participants' Q-sorts uncovers clusters of subjective opinion (Van Exel & de Graaf, 2005). Q-methodology involves the rank ordering of a set of stimuli, the Q-set, from agreement to disagreement, or from most similar to most dissimilar, or some similar continuum of response options. This response continuum is laid out to create a

grid upon which cards are placed in a quasi-normal distribution (Brown, 1980; McKeown & Thomas, 1988; see Appendix A for a sample sorting board). The end goal of the statistical operations employed in Q-methodology is to produce a factor exemplary that can be used to describe the prevailing attitudes or subjectivities exemplified by the Q-sorts that load onto each given factor. Participants whose Q-sorts load onto the same factor will have had similar sorting arrangements (Stephenson, 1935; Watts & Stenner, 2005), and it can be said that they have a shared viewpoint on the topic of interest.

Clusters of similar perspectives shared among participants are thereby revealed and can be interpreted by examining the patterning of item distribution in similar and dissimilar sorts. This approach allows for the holistic exploration and elaboration of subjectively- and socially-understood patterns of meaning, which can also be thought of as representations of the available discourses that people use to make sense of their experiences and social worlds (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Q-methodology allows participants to construct their perspectives in a manner that is meaningful to and understood by them. The overall configuration of participants' sorting represents their perspective on the topic of interest.

Q-Set Development

In Q-methodology terminology, the concourse is the overall population of identifiable statements for, or about, the situation or topic under study (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The concourse has also been defined as "the extensive body of opinions related to a given subjective topic" (Barbosa et al., 1998, p. 1034). Here, the concourse refers to potential social reactions to women who disclose or seek help from informal helpers. Once the concourse was estimated, the next step was to select items that are

representative of the broader concourse of attitudes and opinions towards the topic of interest. Although the goal is to generate statements that represent all known aspects of the concourse, I must note the caution of Watts and Stenner (2005) who suggest that the Q-set may never actually reflect the full concourse of what can be thought, said, or done about a topic.

To develop the Q-set I used an unstructured approach (c.f. a structured approach to Q-set development described in Watts & Stenner, 2012). The unstructured approach taken in this investigation first involved undertaking an extensive review of the academic literature surrounding disclosure, seeking help, and helper response for women experiencing abuse in their relationships. Included in this review were quantitative and qualitative studies, scales, as well as theoretical work; approximately 20-30 published articles. I then examined the literature from a public education campaign for IPVAW (Neighbours, Friends, and Families), and my experience as a researcher of individuals and helper response to IPVAW. My intent was to cover plausibly the range of social reactions to help seeking and disclosure which women can and do get from their informal supporters. I stopped reviewing material once I had reached saturation in helper responses. The preliminary list of social reactions included 494 responses – positive, negative, and mixed – to women's abuse disclosures and abuse-related help seeking.[2]

The next step was to select a subset of concourse items (researchers usually select between 60 and 90) that are representative of the broader concourse of attitudes and opinions towards helpful and unhelpful IPVAW helper responses. These items constitute

[2]Different readers or participants use the term mixed here to refer to social reactions that may be judged as neutral, or ambivalent, or that may be contextually bound, or thought of differently.

the Q-set. In this case, these 494 sample social reactions were then thematically organized, and their number was reduced via the selection of representative statements and concepts. To decrease the number of statements to a manageable number, I grouped statements thematically. I then identified statements that were similar to one another and chose representative statements from the list or wrote new statements to represent a particular kind of reaction. For example, within the instrumental reactions subset of the concourse, I drew five statements involving assisting with childcare from the literature. These were a) 'providing a room for the children', b) help with children, e.g., homework,' c) 'childcare is a problem,' d) 'affordable child care,' and e) 'offer/provide childcare.' From this selection, I judged 'offer/provide childcare' and 'affordable child care' to reasonably encompass the breadth of the topic, and modified the wording to 'Offers to provide child care or to help her access affordable child care' to both blend the original items and also to align with the condition of instruction.

This process resulted in a set of 86 statements that comprised the Q-set that I pilot-tested before larger-scale administration of the main study. As a general framework, these statements can also be considered in terms of instrumental, emotional, informational, and avoidant forms of support. The full set of statements used in the pilot study is presented in Appendix A.

Pilot Study

The purpose of conducting a pilot study was twofold. First, it was carried out to confirm that the initial background questionnaire that I had created and scales that I had selected to assess participants' experiences were adequate to the task. The second goal was to ascertain that the Q-set adequately captured the range of social reactions/responses

to IPVAW help seeking and disclosure and was comprehensible and phrased appropriately.

Participants. Six participants were recruited from the researcher's personal and professional networks, and snowball sampling from these initial contacts. Five of the pilot participants were women, and their ages ranged from 26 to 65 (M = 37.83, SD = 16.77) years. Two people were content-area experts in IPVAW (e.g., IPVAW researcher), two had experienced IPVAW, and two had no personal experience of IPVAW.

Measures and materials.

Questionnaire. Participants completed a questionnaire that asked about their demographic information, and their personal and professional experiences dealing with or learning about IPVAW (Appendix B). Personal experiences of previous IPVAW victimization were assessed using the Checklist of Controlling Behaviors (the CCB, which is described in more detail in the section covering the main study materials, and presented in Appendix C).

Q-Sort. Participants then sorted the pilot Q-set onto the pilot Q-sorting board (see Appendix A for pilot Q-set items sort board and the set of sorting instructions adapted from Stenner and Watts, 2012).

Feedback interview. Following the completion of the Q-sorting task, pilot participants were asked to provide feedback on the study content and procedures. The interview guide is presented in Appendix D. This discussion was audio-recorded.

Procedure. All participants provided informed consent and completed the study in person at a mutually agreed upon private location. Participants all completed the background questionnaire, and the Q-sorting task, which included 86 items. Following the

completion of the sorting task, participants were asked for feedback on item content and wording, and whether any potential reactions were missing from the set of statements. Participants received $20.00 CAD as remuneration and were offered light refreshments as a thank-you for their participation. Based on pilot participant feedback, the wording of several q-set items was modified. Specifically, in several items the pronoun ‘she' replaced where the hypothetical woman experiencing abuse was identified as ‘a woman,’ or ‘the woman' to improve the readability of the statements. One item, where the helper responds by offering to take or accompany a woman to seek medical care (item 87) was added to the Q-set on the recommendation of one participant.

Main Study

Participants. A total of 60 people participated in this study. Fifty-one were women and nine were men. Sixty participants were deemed a reasonable target for this study because in Q-methodology, the number of participants should be fewer than the number of items in the q-set (Brown, 1980; Stenner & Watts, 2012). Attempts were made to recruit approximately equivalent numbers of women with victimization experience in heterosexual relationships and men and women with no victimization experiences by male partners in heterosexual relationships. These participants can be subdivided into two groups – women who have personal, self-reported experience of IPVAW victimization, and women and men who do not. The first group will be referred to as the lived experience group. Thirty-two women belonged to this group, and were recruited based on their personal experience of victimization in romantic relationships with men. The second group, which I called the nonvictim group, represent real and potential helpers for women who experience abuse. This group was comprised of men and women who did not

identify as having been victimized in a heterosexual romantic relationship with a man (*n* = 28).[3] To attempt to include participants with a variety of backgrounds and life experiences in this study, I opted to recruit University students and individuals from the wider community. Participants were recruited purposively from the University of Windsor's participant pool and also from the broader community.

For the Participant Pool recruitment strategy, a screening question was used to identify women who self-reported experiencing abuses in a romantic relationship – women enrolled in the participant pool were asked: Have you ever been in a relationship with a man who acted in abusive ways towards you? If participant pool members responded 'yes' to this question, they were able to view a tailored advertisement for women who have experienced abuse. For women who had no self-reported abuse experiences in heterosexual relationships, and for men, a separate study advertisement was posted. Over the course of two semesters (Fall 2014 and Winter 2015), 15 women with lived experience of IPVAW and 19 nonvictims with no IPVAW victimization experience recruited from the participant pool took part in the study. Participants recruited from the participant pool received 2.5 bonus points as compensation for their participation.

Concurrent to the participant pool recruitment, I advertised the study (targeted towards both women who had personal experience of IPVAW, and toward women and who no personal IPVAW victimization experience, and for men) through the Ontario

[3] It is expected that some participants in both the lived experience group and the nonvictim group will have known and/or provided assistance to women who have experienced abuse, and some participants in each group will have not known or provided assistance to women who have experienced abuse.

Women's Health Network listserv. Several individuals and organizations reached through this listserv reported further disseminating the study recruitment materials to their personal and/or professional networks or within their organizations. Interested parties were invited to contact me via email or telephone for more information about the study or to arrange a meeting. Eight women who identified as having lived experience of IPVAW and five women and five men with no IPVAW victimization experience were recruited through this strategy.

Throughout data collection, participants recruited through any channel were asked to share information about the study with other people in their lives, if they chose to do so. I provided letters of information and contact cards to participants who were interested in these materials. This snowball sampling strategy resulted in the recruitment of eight participants with lived experience of IPVAW and seven participants with no IPVAW victimization experience. Participant recruitment from all sources is depicted in Figure 1. All participants resided in Central or Southwestern Ontario (e.g., the Greater Toronto Area, Hamilton/Wentworth, London-Middlesex, Windsor-Essex regions) at the time of their participation.

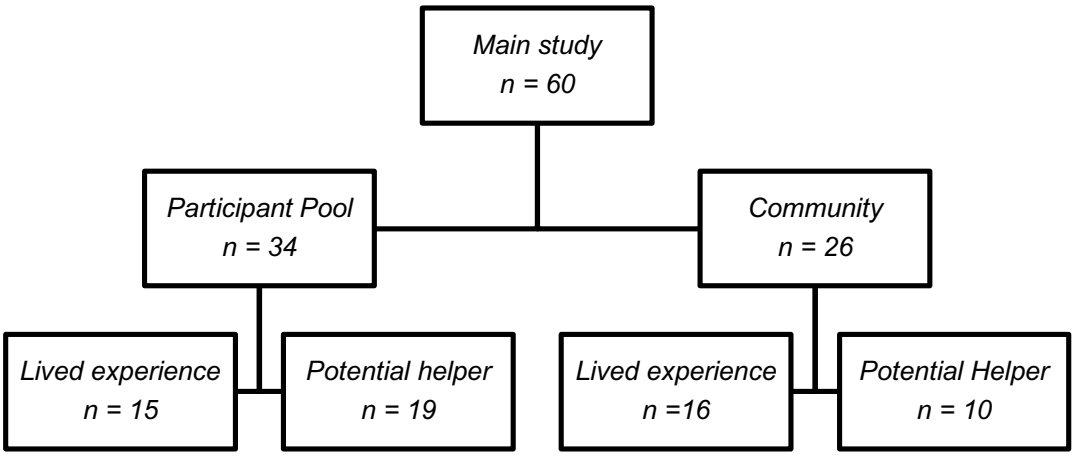

Figure 1. Participant recruitment channels.

Measures and Materials.

Background questionnaires. Background information was collected using demographic questionnaires (Appendix E). Participants reported on their age, their ethnic or cultural identification, the level of education they had attained, and other demographic characteristics. The questionnaire asked whether they have known someone who has experienced IPVAW. It also asked whether they provided support to these people or persons and what the nature of this support was. Participants reported on whether they had personally experienced abuse in the context of an intimate relationship. Women who belonged to the lived experience group responded to questions related to the relationship(s) in which they experienced victimization.

Checklist of Controlling Behaviors (CCB). The Checklist of Controlling Behaviors (CCB; Lehmann, Simmons, & Pillai, 2012) is an 84-item questionnaire that assesses experience with a variety of forms of violence, abuse, and coercion in intimate relationships (see Appendix C). This checklist was administered to all participants, regardless of self-identified abuse victimization experience, to assess participants' experiences with negative partner behaviours. The CCB is designed to measure the relative frequency and severity of abuse experienced. The CCB uses as its framework the Model of Coercion developed by Dutton and Goodman (2005). The CCB has10 subscales, each assessing a different aspect of abuse in relationships. These subscales are: physical abuse (10 items, e.g., pinned me to the wall, floor, or bed), sexual abuse (9 items, e.g., pressured me to have sex after a fight), emotional abuse (7 items, e.g., insulted me in front of others), economic abuse (7 items, e.g., made me ask for money for the basic necessities), intimidation (7 items, e.g., threw or kicked something), threats (7 items, e.g.,

to come after me if I left), minimizing and denying (7 items, e.g., told me I was lying about being abused), blaming (7 items, e.g., blamed me for his abusive behaviour saying that it was my fault), isolation (10 items, e.g., restricted my use of the telephone) and male privilege (8 items, e.g., treated me like an inferior). Apart from the final item in the male privilege subscale, the wording was changed to be gender neutral or gender inclusive where applicable.

CCB items are scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale referencing the frequency with which behaviours occurred, where one indicates *never*, two indicates *rarely*, three indicates *occasionally*, four indicates *frequently*, and five indicates *very frequently*. Higher subscale scores and higher composite scale scores reflect more frequent victimization experience. Although this is a relatively new scale, its initial validation (Lehmann, Simmons, & Pillai, 2012) demonstrated good reliability and internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha for subscales ranged from .80 to .92, with a composite alpha of .94. Test-retest reliability was also assessed using the Guttman split-half method, and scores for subscales ranged from .72 to .89, with a whole-scale score of .97.

Intimate Partner Violence Strategies Index (IPVSI). The Intimate Partner Violence Strategies Index (IPVSI; Goodman, Dutton, Weinfurt, & Cook, 2003) is a 33-item measure designed to assess women's strategic responses to violence and abuse in their intimate relationships (see Appendix F). Only participants who self-reported previous abuse victimization experiences were asked to complete this measure. The types of responses assessed by the IPVSI include private strategies (e.g., placating) and more public strategies (e.g., seeking help from social networks or formal services). The items in the IPVSI are divided into six categories of responses to abuse. These include (a)

engaging formal network resources (e.g., talked to a doctor or nurse about abuse), (b) engaging legal resources (e.g., called police), (c) safety planning (e.g., kept money and other valuables hidden), (d) engaging informal network resources (e.g., stayed with family and friends), (e) resistance strategies (e.g., ended, or tried to, end the relationship), and (f) placation strategies (e.g., tried not to cry during the violence). Items are scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale referencing the frequency with which behaviours were experienced (where one indicates *not at all helpful* and five indicates *very helpful*). The original scale included 'Tried to get help from employer or coworker' as an item in the formal support subscale. However, because this form of support is often conceptualized in the literature as informal (e.g., Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2006), I included this item in the informal network subscale. I modified the response options to include a 'did not use' choice and treated this as a dichotomous variable where appropriate to understand patterns of support use. Select items were also modified where applicable to be more inclusive (e.g., 'religious leader' was used to replace 'clergy').

Q-set and Q-sort board. The final Q-set contained 87 items that represented various kinds of social reactions received from informal helpers. These items were derived from the set of pilot statements presented (Appendix A), based on recommendations from pilot participants. The final Q-set; modified to reflect feedback from pilot testing is presented in Appendix G. Q-set items were printed on laminated cards. The sorting board was made of paper laminated and mounted on a tri-fold board.

Post-sort interviews. Following the completion of the sorting task, participants took part in a semi-structured interview. Participants were asked questions about items that they thought were particularly easy or difficult to sort, their overall impressions of

the process, and their perspectives on help provision in the context of IPVAW. For the complete interview schedule, please refer to Appendix H.

The purpose of these interviews was to provide additional qualitative information about participant perspectives that would serve to help contextualize and assist in my interpretation of the perspectives revealed following the analysis of the Q-sort data. Post-sorting interviews are recommended by Brown (1980) and Watts and Stenner (2012) to gather additional information can increase the richness and quality of study data. In these interviews, the goal is to explore participants' comprehensive understanding of helpful and unhelpful reactions. It is designed to shed additional light on why participants have sorted items in the way that they have, what items were the most salient for them, or if any issues were not addressed.

I completed a post-sort interview with all 60 participants. Interviews were digitally audio-recorded. I chose the five highest-loading interviews associated with each perspective for full transcription and analysis. This was done for two reasons. First, it would be impractical to transcribe and analyse 60 semi-structured interviews for these purposes. Second, and most importantly, these participants' Q-sorts contributed the most strongly to each perspective and are therefore the most representative of the perspective. Thus, it is from 15 interviews (5 representing each perspective) that the presented contextualizing quotes are drawn.

Procedures. I met with participants recruited from the University of Windsor participant pool in a private room on the University of Windsor campus. I met with participants recruited from the community in a wide range of settings that were mutually agreed on by the participant and me (for example, in private homes or offices, quiet study

rooms at public libraries, or meeting rooms in apartment buildings). I reviewed the consent form with participants, reiterated their rights as participants in this study, and answered any questions that they had about the study or what was requested of them. All potential participants provided informed consent. Participants were then given the paper-and-pencil survey package to complete.

The survey package consisted of several sections that collected information on demographics, familiarity with intimate partner violence, experience providing help or support for someone who has experienced intimate partner violence, participants' own experiences with intimate partner violence, the Checklist of Controlling Behaviors (Lehmann et al., 2012), and for participants who self-reported experiences of abuse, the Intimate Partner Violence Strategies Index (Goodman et al., 2003). All participants received survey package components in the same order. The questionnaire package was completed within 15-40 minutes.

Participants were asked to sort each statement under the following condition of instruction: *From the perspective of a woman disclosing intimate partner violence or seeking help from intimate partner violence, what reactions from other people would she find more, or less, helpful?* Participants were asked to read first the entire set of 87 statements and sort these statements into one of three different piles. The piles were: (a) most helpful responses from helpers, (b) least helpful responses from helpers, and (c) neutral, mixed, or irrelevant responses from helpers. Next, participants were asked to select from their 'most helpful' pile the three statements that to them represented the most helpful responses to women experiencing IPVAW. They placed these two statements in the 11 column of the sorting board. Participants were then asked to go through the

remainder of the items in their ‘most helpful' pile and place the remaining statements on the board, working from the outside of the sorting board to the middle. Next, participants were asked to select the two statements they thought represented the ‘least helpful' responses to women experiencing IPVAW and place them in the 1 column of the Q-sort board. Participants then went through the remainder of the items in their ‘least helpful' pile and placed the remaining statements onto the sorting board, working again from the outside of the sorting board to the middle. Finally, participants placed the items from the ‘neutral or mixed' pile into the sorting board in the remaining spaces. (See Appendix G for full sorting instructions). The Q-sorting task was completed in 20-60 minutes. Responses were left on the board in the positions in which the participant had placed them. At the end of the study session, I recorded the location of each statement on a template of the sorting board.

Following the completion of the Q-sort, participants completed a semi-structured interview in which they were asked about general reactions to the Q-set items with which they had just interacted. All participants consented to have their interview digitally audio recorded, and interviews ranged in length from 7 to 76 (M = 23) minutes.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

To set the stage for addressing the research questions, I present participant demographics and relevant background information. Following this, I will present the findings that address each research question in turn.

Descriptive Findings and Participant Experiences

Demographics. Sixty people participated in the primary study. Fifty-one participants identified as women and nine identified as men. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 71 (M = 28.30). Participants identified with a variety of ethnic backgrounds, with the majority (n = 42) identifying as White or European. Most participants (n = 55), and all the men, identified as heterosexual, four women identified as bisexual, and one woman identified as lesbian. Thirty-two participants, all of whom were women, reported that they had been in at least one relationship with a man who was abusive towards them. Most participants (n = 49) reported that they know at least one woman who has experienced abuse. Detailed demographic and other characteristics of participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 60)

Characteristic	*n*	%
Gender identification		
Woman	51	85
Man	9	15
Abuse experience		
Yes	32	53
No	28	47
Known someone who has experienced abuse		
No	6	10
Not sure	5	8
Yes	49	82
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	55	92
Bisexual	4	7
Lesbian	1	2
Age		
≤20	17	28
21-30	25	42
31-40	11	18
41-50	3	5
51-60	1	2
61+	3	5
Parent		
Yes	13	22
No	47	78
White/European	42	70
Multiple	7	12
Southeast Asian, Indian, Pakistani	6	10
Black/African/Caribbean	3	5
Middle Eastern/Arabic	3	5
Latin/South American	2	3
Other	2	3
Length of time lived in Canada		
Since birth	46	77
More than 10 years	8	13
Fewer than 10 years	6	10
Student status		
Non-student	14	23
Part-time	6	10
Full-time	40	67
Employment status		
Full time	14	23
Part time	32	53
Retired	2	4

Unemployed	12	20
Highest level of education attained		
Elementary	1	2
Some high school	1	2
High school diploma	1	2
Some college/university	28	47
College/university diploma/degree	10	17
Some graduate school	2	4
Graduate diploma/degree	12	20
Household income		
$0-30,000	13	22
$30,001-60,000	7	12
$60,001-90,000	7	12
$90,001-120,000	18	30
$120,001-150,000	6	10
$150,001+	6	10
Prefer not to say	3	5
Familiarity with services for IPVAW		
Unfamiliar/somewhat unfamiliar	21	35
Somewhat/very familiar	39	65
IPVAW courses, training, work or volunteer experience		
No	39	65
Yes	21	35

Experiences of victimization (research question 1a). All participants regardless of gender or group membership (self-reported lived experience vs. no self-reported IPVAW victimization experience) completed the CCB to assess the potentially abusive behaviours in which their partners have engaged. In this administration, the CCB demonstrated good to excellent reliability as a composite measure and across all subscales (scale composite $\alpha = .99$; physical abuse subscale $\alpha = .90$; sexual subscale $\alpha = .94$; emotional abuse subscale $\alpha = .96$; economic abuse subscale $\alpha = .96$; intimidation subscale $\alpha = .95$; threat subscale $\alpha = .86$; minimization subscale $\alpha = .93$; blame subscale $\alpha = .94$; isolation subscale $\alpha = .95$; male privilege subscale $\alpha = .96$). CCB items are scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale referencing the frequency with which behaviours occurred, where 1 indicates *never*, and 5 indicates *very frequently*.

The thirty-two women in the self-identified lived experience of IPVAW group reported a total of 53 relationships in which a partner was abusive. Fifteen women (47%) reported having been with one male partner who was abusive, 12 women (41%) reported relationships with two abusive men, and six of the women (19%) reported having been with three abusive men. At the time of their participation, all but one woman who participated in the study was no longer in a relationship with their abuser. This woman reported that the abuse in her relationship had ceased after she and her partner had obtained treatment for substance use.

None of the participants in the nonvictim group reported having been in an abusive relationship with a man. However, these participants' experiences of controlling behaviours in relationships were also assessed. One woman and one man reported that a female partner had previously acted in abusive ways towards them. They were retained in

the nonvictim/potential helper group (vs. the lived experience of IPVAW group) because the criterion for inclusion in the lived experience group was self-identification of IPVAW victimization in a heterosexual relationship with a man.

Despite the fact that all but two of these participants reported not having been in a relationship they would consider abusive, nevertheless, a variety of controlling behaviours were reported. CCB results for both groups are presented in Table 2. The experience of abusive behaviours between the women in the lived experience group (M = 204.22, SD = 12.52) and the men and women in the nonvictim group (M = 86.64, SD = 1.89), were significantly different, $t(32.41) = 9.29$, $p < .001$[4]. Women in the lived experience group reported significantly higher levels of abusive behaviours enacted by a partner than did participants in the nonvictim group.

[4] Levene's test for equality of variances was significant, revealing that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, $F(58) = 73.13$, $p < .001$. Therefore, equal variances between groups were not assumed, and the statistics are reported accordingly.

Table 2

Victimization Experiences as Measured by the Checklist of Controlling Behaviors

	Lived experience group				Helper/non-victim group			
Scale	*n* (%)	Range	*M*	*SD*	*n* (%)	Range	*M*	*SD*
Total	32 (100)	91-329	204.22	12.52	28 (100)	80-121	86.64	1.89
Subscales								
Physical abuse	29 (91)	9-31	1.91	0.12	6 (21)	9-12	1.14	0.07
Sexual abuse	31 (97)	9-45	2.68	0.21	8 (29)	9-26	1.19	0.05
Emotional abuse	31 (97)	9-45	3.26	0.20	15 (54)	9-17	1.01	0.01
Economic abuse	19 (59)	7-35	1.97	0.21	1 (4)	7-8	1.19	0.05
Intimidation	30 (94)	7-34	2.92	0.20	13 (46)	7-12	1.01	0.01
Threats	28 (88)	7-27	2.05	0.17	1 (4)	7-8	1.04	0.04
Minimizing/denying	32 (100)	8-33	2.37	0.18	1 (4)	7-15	1.08	0.06
Blaming	27 (84)	7-33	2.46	0.21	4 (14)	7-19	1.06	0.03
Isolation	30 (94)	10-48	2.58	0.20	5 (18)	10-17	1.04	0.02
Male privilege	30 (94)	8-40	2.88	0.21	1 (4)	8-10	1.14	0.07

Strategies used by women in response to victimization experiences (research question 1b). The second part of this research question sought to explore the variety of strategies women who had experienced abuse used to respond to their partner's abusive behaviours. Participants in the lived experience group were asked to complete the IPVSI to document the strategies that they had employed (or not) to mitigate their partner's abusive behaviour, to seek help, or to leave the relationship. This measure also assessed how helpful or unhelpful participants found the strategies that they used. The range of possible scores for each item is 1-5,where 1 = not at all helpful and 5 = extremely helpful.

Of particular interest to this study are interpersonal strategies that women used to reduce or mitigate the violence or abuse that they experienced. There were no single strategies that all women reported using. Eighty-one percent (n = 24) reported engaging informal network resources (e.g., stayed with family and friends) to help to lessen or mitigate the abuse that they were experiencing, and generally found informal support strategies to be helpful. More than half of the women (n = 21) in the lived experience group reported that they spoke with family or friends about how to protect themselves, and 90% of these women found this strategy to be neutral or helpful (M = 3.96). Additionally, of the 18 women who reported staying with family or friends, 94% found this approach to be neutral or helpful (M = 4.27). Making sure that there were other people around, (i.e., not being alone with the abusive man) was found to be neutral or helpful by 14 out of the 15 women who reported using this strategy (M = 4.00).

Sixty-three percent reported that they had ever engaged in any formal network resources (e.g., talked to a doctor or nurse about abuse). Most who sought help from a

religious leader, employer or coworker, healthcare provider, counselor, or IPV-related service provider, found these interactions to be helpful. However, less than 50% of women who stayed in a shelter, or attempted to seek counseling for their partner found these strategies to be helpful in mitigating their victimization. Thirty-three percent (*n* = 11) indicated that they had used legal resources (e.g., called the police) to help to alleviate the abuse their partner was enacting. Women found getting a restraining order or accessing legal aid to be helpful, whereas women who filed criminal charges or called the police had more mixed perceptions of the helpfulness of these strategies.

Regarding more intrapersonal strategies, most women reported engaging in safety planning, for example, by keeping money and other valuables hidden from their abuser). All but one woman reported using one or more kinds of resistance strategies, for example, ending or trying to end, the relationship. Almost all women who had experienced abuse reported the use of one or more placation strategies, for example, that they tried not to cry during abusive incidents. Detailed strategy use and satisfaction information are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Strategies Women with Lived Experience Used to Respond to Abuse Victimization (*n* = 32)

	Reported using the strategy			
	N	%	Mean	*SD*
Strategy				
Formal network	20	63	3.15	1.38
Legal	11	34	3.18	1.38
Safety planning	21	66	3.97	1.80
Informal network	26	81	3.74	1.96
Resistance	31	97	3.03	1.63
Placating	30	94	3.15	1.77

Experience helping victims of abuse (research question 1c). All participants were asked about whether they have known someone who has experienced abuse, the nature of their reactions, and how this was perceived to have affected their relationships with the woman who they assisted.

Forty-nine participants (82%) reported knowing and providing some form of assistance to at least one woman who experienced abuse. Twenty-seven of these reported knowing one woman, and 22 reported knowing two or more women, for a total of 87 network member women who participants know have experienced abuse. The most common relationship between helper and woman experiencing abuse was that of friendship (n = 50, 57%). The next most common relationship was family (e.g. a mother, a sister, or an aunt), at 30% (n = 26). The least most common relationship forms reported were co-worker (n = 6, 7%) and other relationships (n = 6, 7%), e.g., a friend's mother.

Breaking these figures down further, within the lived experience group, 66% (n = 21) reported knowing at least one other person who had also experienced abuse, 31% reported knowing more than one person, and 3% (n = 1) reported being unsure of whether they know someone who has experienced abuse. Among participants in the nonvictim group, 64% (n = 18) reported knowing or having known at least one person who has experienced abuse.

Participants were asked to indicate whether they believed that they offered emotional, informational, definitional, or tangible support to the woman or women who was experiencing abuse. Thirty-eight participants reported that they had provided emotional support to a total of 69 women; 27 participants indicated that they had helped a total of 46 women acknowledge/define her experience as abuse; 19 participants reported

that they offered informational support to a total of 35 women, and 14 participants reported providing tangible support to 31 women in total.

Participants were asked about whether providing support or assistance (or not providing support or assistance) affected their relationship with the person in question. Participants commented on 70 out of the 87 helping instances in which they had participated. In twenty-six (37%) of the reported helping occurrences, helping had changed their relationship, in thirty-two (46%) instances it had not, and participants were not sure if the relationship changed in twelve (17%) of the relationships. Participants were asked to provide open-ended comments that specified how they perceived the relationship to have changed following the provision of assistance. The majority (n = 20, 77%) of the 26 relationships participants reported to have changed in some way moved in what was thought to be a positive direction, for example, that they became closer, built trust, or similar sentiments. Four relationships were negatively affected by the helping experiences, such that intervening resulted in increasing tension when a woman they assisted remained in a relationship with her partner. Two relationships were affected in ways that were difficult to categorize (one instance involved work-related dynamics, and in the other instance, the abused woman's partner murdered the woman whom the participant had helped).

Q-Analysis: Perspectives on Helpful and Unhelpful Social Reactions to Abuse (Research Question 2)

The second, and primary, research question in this study seeks to determine the nature of participants' perspectives on what constitutes helpful and unhelpful responses to women who experience abuse in relationships with men. This research question was

addressed through the Q-sort component of the study. Before presenting the results of the analysis of Q-sort data, I will present an outline of the statistical and interpretive procedures and decisions during the analysis.

Q-Analysis. Q-methodological analyses are best conducted using specialized software, and I used PQMethod version 2.35 (Schmlock, 2014) software for statistical analyses. PQMethod runs on an MS-DOS platform, and I ran PQMethod on Mac OS X using the open source DOS emulator program DosBox (Version 0.74; 2015).

To produce the appropriate data matrix for Q-methodology, rank-ordered data in standardized units must be used. Intercorrelations among the Q-sorts are calculated, and a correlation matrix is produced. The resulting correlation then represents the degree of association between any given two sorts. Positive correlations represent similar sorts; negative correlations among dissimilar sorts, and the magnitude of the associations are interpreted in the usual way. The correlation matrix that was calculated from the Q-sorts was subjected to Horst centroid factor analysis. Horst is a centroid factor analytics that uses an iterative solution to produce communalities. Factors were then rotated orthogonally using the varimax technique. Varimax rotation is designed to account for as much of the common variance in participant Q-sorts as possible, while also increasing the likelihood that each factor loads significantly on only one factor. Accordingly, a varimax rotation emphasized the majority perspectives present in the data, and was therefore the appropriate method to use for this inductive analytic approach. Given that my goal was to reveal the perspectives that exist towards helpful and unhelpful assistance for women experiencing IPVAW, a varimax rotation was particularly suitable.

Factor extraction. Several elements must be considered in determining the number of factors/perspectives to retain for interpretation. Often, factors are extracted based on their eigenvalues (greater than 1.0) or by the examination of eigenvalues in conjunction with the examination of a scree plot. However, in Q-methodology, researchers are cautioned not to rely on these methods exclusively when determining the number of factors present. Although some of these considerations have a more objective appearance (e.g., the examination of significantly loading sorts, factors that have eigenvalues greater than one, examination of scree plots), and some appear as more subjective (e.g., theoretical importance and interpretability of a given perspective), prominent Q-methodologists (e.g., Brown, 1980; Watts & Stenner, 2012) stress the importance of taking both objective-appearing and subjective-appearing criteria into account and coming to a holistic decision on the number of factors to interpret. Generally, Q-methodologists are more concerned with extracting factors that represent interpretable viewpoints more than maximizing the proportion of variance explained.

As a preliminary analysis, I extracted seven factors, which is the recommended starting point for Q-analyses (Brown, 1980). This strategy is encouraged when there are no preconceived ideas about the number of factors that might be present in the data. I then examined rotated factor loadings for significant, purely loading sorts. This first stage of analysis pointed towards three- and four-factor solutions as being particularly promising and warranting further investigation. I thus performed three- and four-factor extractions. In general, factors that have more than two significantly loading sorts may be considered worthy of examination. However, when examining Q-sort loadings, care should be taken that confounded factors should not be used in the creation of factor estimates, which are

produced using a weighted averaging of all significantly loading sorts on a given factor. Significant factor loadings are calculated by hand, using the formula: 2.58 (1/ √no. of Q-sorts in the study). In this dataset, the significant factor loading is .028 at $p < .01$. With the present data set, the 0.28 significance criterion resulted in the production of many confounded loadings across factors, in both the three- and four-factor solutions. On the recommendation of Watts and Stenner (2012), I decided to use a more conservative criterion in determining which sorts would be used to create factor estimates when using the statistically significant value results in an overabundance of confounded sorts[5].

To remove confounded sorts from factor estimates, and to ensure that sorts used in the estimation of factor scores were closely related to the pole of the factor, I chose a loading cutoff of .50 to be used for factor estimation and applied this to all factors in this and any subsequent analyses. These criteria would allow for a maximal number of purely loading sorts to be used in the creation of factor estimates across all analyses in this study (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In other words, this criterion allows the largest number of participant sorts to be used to create prototype perspectives for interpretation. Extraction considerations for various factor extractions at the .28 and .50 standard are presented in Table 4. Given that raising the factor cutoff to a figure of .50 would produce far fewer confounded loadings, I proceeded to replicate the analysis using this cutoff. I returned to each of the above factor solutions and used the new cutoff to determine if any of the analyses would be more productive in explaining the variability in participant Q-sorts. Finally, when extracting three factors, this solution explains 73% of the study variance

[5] Standard factor loading cutoffs of .40 or .50 are often used in Q-methodology to determine whether a sort loads onto a factor (Stenner, Cooper, & Skevington, 2003).

and 45 out of the 60 Q-sorts in the study load purely (based on a .50 cutoff) on one of the factors/perspectives. Based on a holistic consideration of purely loading sorts, percentages of variance explained, eigenvalues, and the interpretability of factors extracted, I determined that this three-factor solution best fit the data. Table 4 presents factor extraction information in detail. I also must note that factor analyses of the factor arrays for each group (lived experience and non-victim) were conducted separately in addition to the superordinate factor analysis. However, the factors that were revealed in these analyses mapped so closely on to the superordinate factor analysis that I elected to present and interpret just the superordinate analysis containing both participant groups.

Table 4

Factor Extraction

Loading Cutoff	No. of factors	% Variance Explained	EVs < 1	Factors with Pure Loadings	Purely Loading Sorts	No. Purely Loading Sorts
.28						
	7	76	4	2	F3: 3, F7: 1	4
	6	75	4	3	F2: 1, F3: 3, F6: 1	5
	5	76	4	3	F1: 4, F2: 3, F4: 1	7
	4	75	4	3	F1: 2, F2: 1, F4: 1	4
	3	73	3	3	F1: 5, F2: 1, F3: 1	7
.50						
	7	76	4	3	F1: 6, F2: 33, F3: 7,	46
					F4: 7, F5: 32, F6: 1,	
	6	75	4	4	F7: 8	48
	5	76	4	3	F1: 36, F2: 7, F4: 14	57
	4	75	4	3	F1: 36, F2: 11, F4: 8,	55
	3	73	3	3	F1: 28 F2: 10 F3:7	45

Note. Loadings above .28 are statistically significant at $p < .01$.

Factor estimation. Factor estimates are based on a weighted average, meaning that Q-sorts with higher factor loadings will contribute relatively more to the final factor estimate (i.e., a sort that has a factor loading of .76 will be more influential in creating the prototype factor estimate than a sort with a factor loading of .51). In this study, significant sorts are those that loaded above .50 and purely on the factor. To determine the most representative prototype array for each factor, the scores of participants who load significantly on a factor are merged; however, relatively more influence is given to participants whose sorts have a higher loading than to participants whose sorts have a lower loading.

Factor arrays are produced through weighted averaging of factor scores. All Q-sorts that load onto a given factor are averaged into a single Q-sort or ideal factor array. Once factor rotation has been completed, the total weighted scores for each item offers insight into a factor's general viewpoint because items are now rank-ordered for each factor. However, for cross-factor comparisons to be made, these rankings must be standardized and are therefore converted into z-scores. A z-score for each item is calculated by multiplying the raw scores for each item by their weighted score. These z-scores are then transformed back into the integers that align with the layout of the Q-sorting board upon which participants originally represented their perspective – they are converted into a single factor array, or prototype sort, for each factor. This factor array facilitates the interpretive process and can be said to represent the prototypical viewpoint or perspective of the factor. Factor loadings, eigenvalues, and proportions of variance explained for each factor are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Factor Loadings, Eigenvalues and Proportions of Variance Explained

	Factor loading		
Participant	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
pd08 Johanna	0.85*	0.32*	0.31*
pc10 Sonia	0.80*	-0.12	0.12
pc01 Jennifer	0.78*	0.30*	0.36*
pa15 Robin	0.78*	0.42*	0.29*
pa13 Holly	0.78*	0.11	0.38*
pb11	0.78*	0.48*	0.25
pc17	0.77*	0.33*	0.25
pd10	0.77*	0.33*	0.39*
pc04	0.74*	0.42*	0.33*
pa12	0.74*	0.35*	0.29*
pc13	0.73*	0.48*	0.29*
pa06	0.72*	0.27	0.21
pc16	0.71*	0.37*	0.45*
pc06	0.71*	0.33*	0.40*
pa10	0.70*	0.41*	0.27
pc12	0.70*	0.39*	0.29*
pd05	0.70*	0.23	0.49*
pc03	0.68*	0.45*	0.33*
pb04	0.68*	0.45*	0.37*
pc05	0.68*	0.47*	0.27
pa09	0.67*	0.47*	0.34*
pc09	0.67*	0.47*	0.22
pa04	0.61*	0.32*	0.42*
pa11	0.58*	0.37*	0.36*
pd04	0.57*	0.48*	0.41*
pb13	0.57*	0.39*	0.45*
pb07[Ŧ]	0.57*	0.45*	0.17
pc02	0.54*	0.35*	0.49*
pb02 Saadia	0.42*	0.76*	0.29*
pb15 Justin	0.25	0.71*	0.46*
pb06 Michael	0.49*	0.71*	0.22
pd06 Jeremy	0.49*	0.67*	0.32*
pa14 Kamini	0.49*	0.66*	0.19
pb17	0.30*	0.57*	0.38*
pb12	0.47*	0.56*	0.37*
pd01	0.42*	0.53*	0.47*
pb14	0.47*	0.53*	0.31*

pa05	0.49*	0.51*	0.48*
pc11 Agnes	0.28*	0.18	0.85*
pd09 Pamela	0.28*	0.18	0.85*
pa07 Lauren	0.19	0.43*	0.67*
pb01 Erica	0.49*	0.34*	0.66*
pb09 Morgan	0.41*	0.37*	0.60*
pb10	0.49*	0.27	0.60*
pc07	0.15	0.36*	0.51*
pb16	0.67*	0.50*	0.36*
pb03	0.63*	0.30*	0.58*
pc14	0.61*	0.31*	0.51*
pc08	0.58*	0.52*	0.39*
pa16	0.55*	0.50*	0.41*
pd11ŦŦ	0.54*	0.40*	0.59*
pa08	0.54*	0.45*	0.51*
pb05	0.54*	0.69*	0.30*
pd12	0.51*	0.68*	0.28*
pa01	0.43*	0.46*	0.49*
pa03	0.42*	0.51*	0.53*
pb08	0.37*	0.59*	0.50*
pd03	0.23*	0.49*	0.47*
pb18	0.22	0.53*	0.56*
pa02	0.01	0.36*	0.13
Eigenvalue	39.53	2.50	1.70
Variance (%)	34	21	18
Cumulative Variance (%)	34	55	73

Note. Participants with the five highest-loading sorts per factor are identified with pseudonyms. Their interviews were used to enhance the analysis of the perspectives that emerged from the factor analysis.

ŤThis participant reported abuse victimization in the context of a lesbian relationship.

ŦŦ This participant is the man who reported having experienced abuse in the context of a heterosexual relationship.

Factor interpretations. Interpretation of factors, hereafter referred to as perspectives, in Q-methodology, is a multi-step process. It involves the overview of complete factor array(s) while maintaining an eye towards the patterning within each array. Q-methodological analysis and interpretation are by nature subjective. The researcher must rely on their prior experience with the subject matter, their knowledge of the literature, observations of participants during the sorting process and interviews, as well as personal insights, hunches, and other influences. I chiefly followed the process for interpretation outlined by Watts and Stenner (2012).

Interpretively, particular attention was given to polar or opposing statements, i.e., the items that participants place in the most and least helpful positions in each perspective. Consideration was also given to making cross-factor item comparisons. This included an examination of the lists distinguishing and consensus statements between perspectives that are provided by PQMethod. Consensus statements are those that have been ranked in nearly identical positions in each perspective. Distinguishing statements, presented in Appendix I are items that hold significantly different positions between factors (as determined by *z-score*s – higher and lower ranked items compared to another factor). Consensus statements are items that do not differ significantly by *z-score*s across perspectives. In contrast, distinguishing statements represent differences in perspectives and consensus statements represent agreement or shared viewpoints across participant perspectives. Later, interpreting the meaning of the perspectives also involves an examination of any patterns in demographic information among participants who are significantly associated with each factor. Finally, reviews of the participant interviews are drawn upon to verify, refine, and deepen my interpretation of the perspectives revealed by

the initial statistical analyses. Prototype factor arrays for each perspective are displayed in Table 6.

In the sections that follow, I will describe the patterns that characterize each perspective. Interpretations are presented in a narrative format, supplemented by data tables in the text and in the appendices, where applicable. For each perspective, quotes from the five most strongly loading selected participants' interviews are presented where they enliven, corroborate, or diverge from the overarching interpretation of the perspective in meaningful ways. I gave each factor/perspective a brief descriptive name that illustrates the general thrust of what participants who define each perspective believe to be helpful: perspective one: *agency and understanding*; perspective two: *advice and information*, and perspective three: *action oriented*.

Table 6

Factor Arrays for all Perspectives

		Rank		
No.	Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1	Tries to avoid passing judgment on her	2	2	0
2	Tries to take over and fix the situation for her	-4	-2	-3
3	Offers information about what abuse is and the effects of abuse	0	3	1
4	Talks to or confronts the abusive man about his behaviour	-3	-3	-4
5	Offers or provides a safe place for her to stay	2	2	5
6	Lets her know that she is not to blame for her partner's actions	3	4	0
7	Only provides assistance to her if she follows their advice	-3	-2	-3
8	Does not expect her to make any immediate decisions about what to do	3	0	0
9	Keeps an escape bag for her at their own home	1	0	1
10	Calls police or other law enforcement on her behalf	-2	-1	3
11	Lets her know that abuse is not always physical	2	3	2
12	Tells her that they need to figure out a way to work it out for themselves	-3	-3	-3
13	Avoids getting involved only professionals know how to handle these situations	-2	-3	-2
14	Provides information about shelters or other services for intimate partner violence	1	1	5
15	Asks her if she is being abused, if they are suspicious	1	2	-1
16	Acknowledges her conflicted feelings and the complex nature of making decisions	4	1	2
17	Retaliates physically against her partner	-3	-4	-4
18	Validates her feelings	4	3	1
19	Encourages her to leave the abusive partner	-1	0	-1
20	Suggests that she see a counsellor or therapist	0	3	4
21	Believes that what she is saying is true	5	4	0
22	Asks her how they can help her	3	4	0
23	Tells her to leave the abusive partner	-1	0	-1

No.	Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
24	Tells her that she is overreacting, or misinterpreting what is happening	-5	-4	-4
25	Suggests that she talk to a religious leader	-1	-1	3
26	Just having someone else know about what is going on in the relationship	2	0	1
27	Tells her that she needs to get out immediately	-1	0	-1
28	Offers to help, or helps her find a job	0	0	2
29	Provides direct advice when asked to give advice	-1	1	-1
30	Tells her she should stay and try to fix the relationship	-4	-3	-3
31	Avoids getting involved abuse isn't usually serious	-4	-4	-2
32	Pressures her to make a particular decision that they want her to make	-3	-2	-3
33	Denies that the abuse is occurring	-5	-5	-5
34	Does not get involved unless she directly asks for their help	-1	-2	-2
35	Shows an ongoing, active interest in her well-being	3	3	0
36	Assists her with safety planning	1	3	4
37	Does not get involved concern over unintended consequences that might result from helping	-2	-2	-2
38	Takes the abuse seriously	5	5	2
39	Provides information about or help accessing legal services	0	2	4
40	Tells her that she should put up with the abuse for the sake of the family	-4	-5	-4
41	Avoids getting involved because it puts the woman or themselves at more risk for harm	-2	-3	-2
42	Takes the side of the abusive partner	-5	-4	-5
43	Asks what she does to make the abuser angry or cause the abuse	-4	-3	-3
44	Offers information about a variety of resources	1	1	3
45	Tells her that what she is experiencing qualifies as abuse	0	2	1
46	Tells her other friends or family members about the abuse	-2	-2	-2
47	Offers to or provides assistance with transportation if needed	1	-1	3
48	Provides a variety of suggestions or options about what she can do	2	3	3
49	Avoids getting involved, because if it were really that bad she would leave	-3	-3	-2

No.	Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
50	Names or labels what she is experiencing as abuse	0	-1	-1
51	Does nothing	-3	-5	-5
52	Avoids talking about abuse because it is embarrassing	-2	-3	-2
53	Tells her how to fix the situation	-2	-1	-1
54	Offers to, or assists her with her finances	0	-1	0
55	Lets her know that abuse usually won't go away on its own and usually gets worse over time	0	2	1
56	Tries to understand the situation and how she feels about it	4	2	0
57	Talks to others to get advice about how to help her	-1	-1	-1
58	Tries to break up arguments or fights between her and her partner	-2	-2	-3
59	Tells her that her partner is responsible for his own actions	1	3	-1
60	Cuts off contact with both her and her partner	-4	-4	-3
61	Allows her to vent her feelings	4	4	1
62	Offers to or provides care for pets, if she has them	0	-2	3
63	Tells her that abuse in relationships is not acceptable	0	5	-2
64	Pretends that they do not know that abuse is occurring	-3	-4	-4
65	Encourages her to call the police	-1	0	4
66	Lets her know they are there if she needs anything	2	2	1
67	Offers to provide child care or to help access child care	1	0	4
68	Offers or provides clothing, food, or other resources	1	0	5
69	Provides information about counselling to the abuse	-2	-1	2
70	Is emotionally available for her	4	4	3
71	Expresses anger toward the perpetrator to her	-1	-2	-4
72	Talks to her alone	2	1	0
73	Is there to listen	5	5	2
74	Not feeling like they are judging her when she talks to them	4	1	0
75	Allows her to make her own decisions and supports the decisions that she makes	3	0	3

No.	Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
76	Does not pressure her to end the relationship	1	-1	0
77	Recognizes that the partner's actions are abusive when the woman discloses to them	2	1	2
78	Tells her hat what she is experiencing is not normal	0	4	0
79	Recognizes she might not be ready to call what is happening abuse	3	1	1
80	Has a conversation about the nature and impact of abuse in relationships	0	2	1
81	Labels particular behaviours as abusive	-1	0	-1
82	Understanding that she might not be ready to make changes at one time, but may be ready to at a different time	3	1	1
83	Understanding that she might need different things at different points in time	3	1	2
84	Understanding she may want to try to work things out with her partner	2	-1	0
85	Offering the same helping strategies all of the time	-1	-1	1
86	Knowing that that the helper had personal experience with abuse	1	1	2
87	Encouraging her to seek, or goes with her to obtain medical care	0	0	4

Perspective One: Agency and Understanding

Twenty-eight participants loaded purely on the *agency and understanding* factor, 26 of whom (93%) were women. Four women identified themselves as bisexual, one woman identified as lesbian, and the remainder of participants identified as heterosexual. Participants' ages ranged from 18-71 years, with a mean age of 28.70 (*SD* = 11.85). Twenty-one women had been victimized in romantic relationships with a male partner (eight reported abuse in one relationship and thirteen reported abuse in two or more relationships). One woman had experienced abuse in a relationship with another woman[6], and six had not personally experienced abuse. Most (*n* = 19) reported that they were familiar with services for IPVAW and slightly less than half of this group (*n* = 12) reported that they had received some IPVAW-related training or education.

Among the 21 women with lived experience of abuse in this perspective, thirteen reported having talked with family or friends and found this to be helpful. Half reported that they had stayed at the home of with family or friends or made sure that there were other people around. Eight sought help from a coworker or employer. None of these women stayed in a shelter. However, three talked to a counselor, six tried to get their partner counseling, and three spoke with someone at an IPV-related service. Three women filed for a restraining order, and four called the police. Twenty-five reported knowing at least one woman who experienced abuse, and 19 reported that they had provided some kind of support response to her. Emotionally focused responses were

[6]This participant is categorized in the nonvictim group according to the purposes of this research because she did not experience abuse in the context of a heterosexual relationship with a man.

reported most frequently, followed by abuse acknowledgment, information-based, and tangible responses. Nineteen participants were full- or part-time students.

Detailed demographic information for participants representing this perspective is presented in Table 7. This factor had an eigenvalue of 39.53 and accounted for 34% of the variability in participant Q-sorts.

Table 7
Perspective One Participant Demographics *(N = 28)*

Characteristic	*n*	%
Gender identification		
Woman	26	93
Man	2	7
Abuse victimization experience		
No	7	25
Yes	21	75
Known someone who has experienced abuse		
No	1	4
Not sure	2	7
Yes	25	89
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	23	82
Bisexual	4	14
Lesbian	1	4
Age		
≤20	6	21
21-30	14	50
31-40	7	25
41-50	0	0
51-60	1	4
61+	1	4
Parent		
Yes	6	21
No	22	79
Ethnicity		
White/European	19	68
Multiple Ethnicities	7	25
Southeast Asian, Indian, Pakistani	1	4
Black/African/Caribbean	0	0
Middle Eastern/Arabic	0	0
Latin/South American	1	4
Other	0	0
Length of time lived in Canada		
Since birth	23	82
More than 10 years	2	7
Fewer than 10 years	3	11
Student status		
Non-student	9	32
Part-time	2	7
Full-time	17	61
Employment Status		
Full time	9	32
Part time	15	54

Retired	1	4
Unemployed	3	11
Highest level of education attained		
Elementary	0	0
Some high school	0	0
High school diploma	0	0
Some college/university	11	39
College/university diploma/degree	6	21
Some graduate school	1	4
Graduate or professional degree	10	36
Household income		
$0-30,000	6	21
$30,001-60,000	4	14
$60,001-90,000	5	18
$90,001-120,000	5	18
$120,001-150,000	4	14
$150,001+	4	14
Prefer not to say	0	0
Familiarity with services for IPVAW		
Unfamiliar/somewhat unfamiliar	9	32
Somewhat/very familiar	19	68
IPVAW courses or training		
No	16	57
Yes	12	43

Participant profile and perspective array. The post-sort interviews of the five most highly-loading Q sorts on perspective one were transcribed and analysed. These interviews were drawn upon to provide supplemental analysis and contextual information, given that these individuals' sorts were most closely associated with the perspective and may therefore have offered the most relevant interpretive information. All participants were given pseudonyms. Detailed individual profiles of these five participants are presented in Table 8, and the representative perspective array is presented in Table 9.

Table 8

Perspective One Key Interview Profiles

Name	Profile
Johanna	Johanna is 30 years old, heterosexual, and holds an advanced degree. She identifies as White/European and has lived in Canada for more than ten years. She has known two women who have experienced IPVAW and had no personal experience of victimization.
Sonia	Sonia is34 years old, identifies as Latina and has lived in Canada for more than ten years. She has an advanced degree. She identifies as heterosexual, and has known one woman who has experienced abuse. She has personal experience of victimization.
Jennifer	Jennifer is 38 years old and has lived in Canada from birth. She identifies as White/European and as heterosexual. She has a university degree. She has known one woman who has experienced IPVAW and has personal experience of victimization.
Robin	Robin is 32 years old, identifies as White/European, and has lived in Canada fewer than ten years. She identifies as bisexual and has some post-secondary education (current student). She has known two women who have experienced IVPAW and has personal experience of victimization.
Holly	Holly is 26 years old, identifies as White/European, and has lived in Canada since birth. She identifies as heterosexual, has one child, and has some post-secondary education (current student). She has known two women who have experienced IPVAW and has personal experience of victimization.

Note: Participants are presented in order of descending factor loadings on the perspective.

Table 9

Perspective One Factor Array with z-Scores

No.	Statement	Rank	*z-score*
73	Is there to listen	+5	1.61
21	Believes that what she is saying is true	+5	1.60
38	Takes the abuse seriously	+5	1.54
61	Allows her to vent her feelings	+4	1.44
70	Is emotionally available for her when she needs support	+4	1.39
56	Tries to understand the situation and how she feels about it	+4	1.37
16	Acknowledges her conflicted feelings and the complex nature of making decisions about the relationship	+4	1.36
18	Validates her feelings	+4	1.36
74	Not feeling like they are judging her when she discloses or asks for help	+4	1.36
8	Does not expect her to make any immediate decisions about what do to	+3	1.33
75	Allows her to make her own decisions and supports the decisions that she makes	+3	1.33
22	Asks her how they can help her	+3	1.30
82	Understanding that she might not be ready to make changes at one point, but may be ready at another time	+3	1.27
35	Shows an ongoing, active interest in her well-being	+3	1.26
83	Understanding that she may need different things at different points in her help seeking process	+3	1.23
79	Recognizes that she might not be ready or willing to call what is happening abuse	+3	1.14
6	Lets her know that she is not to blame for her man's actions	+3	1.14
1	Tries to avoid passing judgment on her	+2	1.12
66	Lets her know that they are there if she needs anything	+2	1.08
72	Talks to her alone	+2	1.05
26	Just having someone else know about what is going on in the relationship	+2	0.92
5	Offers or provides a safe place for her to stay	+2	0.78
84	Understanding that she may want to try to work things out with the man	+2	0.76
77	The helper recognizes that the man's actions are abusive when she discloses to them	+2	0.69

No.	Statement	Rank	*z-score*
48	Provides a variety of suggestions or options about what she can do	+2	0.69
11	Lets her know that abuse is not always physical	+2	0.63
36	Assists her with safety planning	+1	0.61
76	Does not pressure her to end the relationship	+1	0.53
44	Offers information about a variety of resources	+1	0.52
47	Offers or provides assistance with transportation if she needs it	+1	0.52
59	Expresses that the abusive partner is responsible for their own actions	+1	0.49
67	Offers to provide child care or to help her access affordable child care	+1	0.47
68	Offers or provides clothing, food, or other resources if she needs them	+1	0.47
86	Knowing that the helper had personal experience with abuse themselves	+1	0.42
15	Asks her if she is being abused, if suspicious	+1	0.38
14	Provides information about shelters or other services for intimate partner violence	+1	0.30
9	Keeps an escape bag for her at their own home	+1	0.28
62	Offers to or provides care for pets, if she has them	0	0.27
20	Suggests that she see a counsellor or therapist, or gives her information about counselling services	0	0.20
39	Provides information about the legal process or help accessing legal services	0	0.18
54	Offers to or assists with her finances	0	0.17
28	Offers to help or helps her find a job	0	0.17
63	Tells her that abuse in relationships is not acceptable	0	0.15
87	Encouraging her to seek or goes with her to seek medical care	0	0.10
3	Offers information to her about what abuse is and the effects of abuse	0	0.09
80	Have a conversation about the nature and impact of abuse in relationships	0	0.07
55	Lets her know that abuse usually won't go away and gets worse over time	0	0.00
45	Tells her that what she is experiencing qualifies as abuse	0	-0.01
78	Tells her that what she is experiencing is not normal	0	-0.07
50	Names or labels what she is experiencing as abuse	0	-0.09
29	Provides direct advice about what she should do when asked for advice	-1	-0.14
19	Encourages her to leave the abusive partner	-1	-0.22
65	Encourages her to call the police	-1	-0.33

No.	Statement	Rank	*z-score*
34	Does not get involved unless she directly asks for help	-1	-0.35
85	Offering the same helping strategies all of the time	-1	-0.37
81	Labels particular behaviours as abusive	-1	-0.37
57	Talks to others to get advice about how to help her	-1	-0.47
25	Suggests that she talk to a religious centre or religious leader	-1	-0.50
71	Expresses anger toward the perpetrator to her	-1	-0.61
27	Tells her that she needs to get out of the relationship immediately	-1	-0.67
23	Tells her to leave the abusive partner	-1	-0.71
69	Provides information about counselling to the abuser	-2	-0.76
41	Avoids getting involved because it puts themselves or the woman at more risk for harm from the abusive partner	-2	-0.79
58	Tries to break up arguments or fights between her and her partner	-2	-0.83
46	Tells her other friends or family members about the abuse	-2	-0.85
37	Does not get involved because of concern over unintended consequences that might result from offering help	-2	-0.92
53	Tells her how to fix the situation	-2	-0.94
10	Calls police or other law enforcement on her behalf	-2	-0.96
52	Avoids talking about the abuse because it is an embarrassing topic	-2	-1.01
13	Avoids getting involved because only professionals know how to handle the situation	-2	-1.05
7	Only provides assistance if she follows their advice	-3	-1.14
32	Pressures her to make a particular decision that they want her to make	-3	-1.15
12	Tells her that she and her man need to figure out a way to work it out themselves	-3	-1.18
4	Talks to or confronts the abusive man about their behaviour	-3	-1.19
64	Pretends that they do not know that abuse is occurring	-3	-1.26
51	Does nothing	-3	-1.31
17	Retaliates physically against her partner	-3	-1.33
49	Avoids getting involved, because if it were really bad, she would just leave	-3	-1.34
30	Tells her that she should stay with her partner and try to fix the relationship	-4	-1.35
60	Cuts off contact with both her and her partner	-4	-1.37
2	Tries to take over and fix the situation for her	-4	-1.44

No.	Statement	Rank	*z-score*
31	Avoids getting involved because abuse isn't usually serious	-4	-1.49
43	Asks her what she does to make the abuser angry or cause the abuse	-4	-1.55
40	Tells her that she should put up with the abuse for the sake of the family and the relationship	-4	-1.56
33	Denies that the abuse is occurring	-5	-1.76
24	Tells her that she is overreacting or misinterpreting what is happening	-5	-1.84
42	Takes the side of the abusive partner	-5	-1.88

Agency and understanding perspective interpretation.

Emotionally engaged. In this perspective, reactions that attend to a woman's emotional needs are paramount. Being listened to, believed, being met free of judgment, and being supported in decision-making are all thought to be the most important kinds of responses a woman who experiences abuse can receive. Providing practical or instrumental assistance, for example, safety planning, or the provision of resources are all also seen as beneficial but are only valuable in the context of ongoing emotional support. Little interest is placed on the provision of advice and information; it is preferred that helpers avoid providing their opinion or advice unless it is sought by the woman receiving assistance. Rather, helpers should follow her lead regarding these issues.

Helpers who are there to listen (73: +5), to validate feelings (18: +4), and who try to understand the nature of her situation or relationship and how she feels about it (56: +4) are viewed as being very supportive by participants who load on this factor. Robin reported that self-blame might make it difficult for women to talk about their abuse experiences and that when a woman discloses her experiences she is subtly asking for help:

> I think a lot of times if you're being abused you're not going to want to – it's going to be hard to tell people, because it's – I think a lot of times women think that they've put themselves in that situation […] so they internalize, and they keep it in. So, when they do express it to someone that's their way of asking for help without, you know kind of sitting down there and being like, 'I need help.' It's a way of saying 'this is how I'm feeling' and they're looking for validation, you know what I mean?

- Robin, survivor and experienced helper

A disclosure met with understanding and validation is an important experience because it is very difficult to break the silence that surrounds victimization.

Most important for people sharing this perspective was an acknowledgment that a woman was truthful about what she was experiencing (21: +5), and that the abuse was being taken seriously by the person she seeks help from or discloses to (38: +5). Jennifer's quote captures the importance of receiving support and acknowledgment:

> …the blaming ones were easy to place in least helpful, and um the supportive, acknowledging ones were easy to place. Taking the abuse seriously, being there to listen, pets, um, yeah those were actually really easy to place.
>
> - Jennifer, survivor and experienced helper

However, Sonia offered a contrasting view on this, stating:

> All of those [strategies] are only if the woman wants it. Including *takes the abuse seriously*. Because if she's not all torn up about it, then what help are you doing? It's like you should mirror the woman's level of distress almost, without going into craziness yourself.
>
> - Sonia, survivor and experienced helper

Helpers who respond in a way that is responsive to and mirrors a woman's understanding of the situation are viewed well – for a helper to offer an emotional mismatch would detract from/shift focus from the woman's experience and may be seen as inappropriate.

For these participants, placing blame on a woman who is experiencing abuse for the abuse is detrimental. Accordingly, letting her know that she is not blameworthy for

her partner's abusive behaviours is quite beneficial (6: +3). Although some helping responses were viewed as contextually bound, belief was perceived as universally beneficial:

> Believing that what the woman says is true, you know, that doesn't matter, [it is always a good reaction] regardless of context and things like that. Blaming her for the situation, you know, that [the context of the situation] doesn't matter [because blaming is always a negative reaction].
>
> - Jennifer, survivor and experienced helper

Linked to the importance of being believed, participants also felt that a helper's attempt not to judge a woman experiencing abuse (1: +2), and relatedly, that the woman does not perceive that her helper is judging her, are welcome and help to support her (74: +4). Fear that disclosures and overtures for help will be met with judgment may inhibit women from talking to potential supporters about their experiences:

> …and also not being sure that I would get that [a nonjudgmental] response influenced my nondisclosure when I was going through the thing. Like, I was very afraid that I would get responses like giving me advice or telling me to leave him or that kind of thing. So that's why I didn't say anything because I wasn't – I didn't trust anyone to be able to do that.
>
> - Sonia, survivor and experienced helper

Conversely, participants endorsing this perspective felt that it was unhelpful for a helper to deny that the woman was experiencing abuse (33: -5), or to pretend that the helper did not know what is going on in the relationship as being firmly undesired (64: -3). The corollary of this is that helpers who take the side of the abusive man (42: -5), or who

question the woman's reality or perception of the situation by telling her that she is overreacting to what she is experiencing or misinterpreting the meaning of her partner's behaviours are not seen as positive (24: -5). Challenges to her perception or assessment of her ongoing situation are not viewed as welcomed or beneficial forms of assistance.

Helpers who acknowledge that a woman may have conflicted feelings about her situation and are dealing with difficult decision-making are more constructive than helpers who do not recognize these factors (16: +4). For this group of participants, the knowledge that someone else is aware of the ongoing abuse is reassuring (26: +2). Respect for the privacy of a woman who is disclosing or seeking help for abuse is also viewed as important (72: +2).

Helpers who are responsive to a woman's current state of preparation to address the various facets of her situation are perceived as more helpful or useful than those who neglect this factor. Specifically, participants thought that helpers who acknowledge that a woman might not be ready to call what her partner does abuse (79: +3) would be helpful for a woman to receive. Understanding that she might not be ready to make changes in her relationship or living arrangements (82: +3), or that she may want to attempt to work things out with her abusive partner are also viewed as being more encouraging by those who share this perspective than others (84: +2). Robin commented on the potential downfalls of contingent reactions:

> A lot of times people want to help, but they only provide help if it works for them. If it's what they think, that they believe, it's their thoughts on the whole situation. Because you can't walk in another person's shoes, and you can't necessarily know what they are feeling, or why they're feeling that way.

> - Robin, survivor and experienced helper

Reactions that focus on the helper's needs or perspective run the risk of being irrelevant or even harmful for the woman who is seeking help.

Regarding further supporting a woman's needs, not expecting her to make immediate decisions about what do, (8: +3) and understanding that she may need different things from helpers at different times throughout her help-seeking process are viewed as positives (83: +3). Having a person who is ready to provide when the woman is ready to receive it is a valuable resource:

> They need to know that you can go to that helper at some point and say, 'OK, I'm ready. Let's do this. We have our plan we know what we're going to do, let's do it. I'm ready to do it now'. And at the same time the helper needs to not, every hour be like, 'hey are you doing OK? 'how are you doing?' Because that [constant checking in] just adds more stress to the situation as well.
>
> - Robin, survivor and experienced helper

Examining unhelpful reactions in more detail, participants thought that a helper turning against the woman by taking the side of the abusive man (42: -5) is highly unwelcome. It sends the message to the woman that the partner's abusive behaviour is warranted, acceptable, or that she is somehow deserving of his abuse. Moreover, asking her what she does to make him angry or cause the abuse (43: -4) implies that she is to blame for her victimization.

For this perspective, avoidant reactions are rated as somewhat unhelpful, and doing nothing at all is viewed as relatively less harmful than engaging in what is perceived as detrimental support (51: -3).

> I see doing nothing as less harmful than, for example, asking what she does to make the abuser angry, or telling her that she's overreacting. Because not only are you not addressing the situation, you're now making her question her feelings about it, or sort of whether or not she's right about it, or whether she's to blame. Because doing nothing is one thing. You're not helping the situation, so it's almost passively not helpful. But these [other strategies] are actively not helpful because you're making assumptions about what she needs to do, regardless of the situation.
>
> - Johanna, nonvictim and experienced helper

Make tangible assistance meaningful. Looking exclusively at the rankings participants in this perspective allocate to tangible forms of assistance, it may appear that these participants view instrumental forms of help with some indifference. However, considering what participants said about 'doing' in their interviews, a different and more complex picture begins to emerge:

> …it wasn't even about them [reactions] being helpful in and of themselves. It's about laying the foundation for other strategies or tactics to be helpful…So I think you taking the abuse seriously is kind of helpful in and of itself, it's just without having those you can't actually be helpful, I think. So they almost lay the foundation.
>
> - Johanna, nonvictim and experienced helper

Rather than these strategies being viewed as in competition with one another, emotional support reactions were conceptualized as the substrate required for more action-oriented strategies to be perceived as helpful and as welcome by women experiencing abuse.

Among the tangible helping strategies that these participants found most useful were providing her with a safe place to stay (5: +2), offering or helping with transportation (47: +1), provision of or help accessing child care (67: +1), and help obtaining food, clothing, and related items (68: +1), as well as keeping an escape bag for her at their own home. Among the informational helping strategies that participants who define this perspective viewed as most useful were providing information about shelters or services for abuse (14: +1), assisting her with safety planning (36: +1), and providing information about a variety of resources (44: +1). When a helper is responsive to a woman's needs, offering tangible forms of assistance can provide substantial peace of mind, and potentially serve a protective function for women:

> I think assisting the person with a safety plan, if they're willing to do it, is a huge thing. Um, just so that they do know that if they need to get out, there is a plan in place. And I think that does give a peace of mind to someone because it's in their head that, 'OK, this is what I'm going to do, and this is how I'm going to do it. If it gets to the point where I need to use that safety plan, it's there.' It's more of a safety net for the person. Um and it's a safety net for the helper because they know that the plan is in place. So you know it's there, and the person can access it, and it helps on both sides as far as worrying about what could happen.
>
> - Robin, survivor and experienced helper

Although these overtures are valuable, careful attention must also be given to ensure that the context of the situation and the individual woman's personal preferences are considered:

> Specifically, those cards related to the offers of help, offers of financial support, offers of job, that kind of thing because those are really um, concrete levels of support, which can be awkward depending on who you're talking to.
>
> - Jennifer, survivor and experienced helper

Information indifference. Statements that highlighted information-provision or offers of advice or guidance were met with indifference and sometimes dislike from participants in this group. Providing information or advice about abuse (3: 0) or telling her how to fix her situation (53: -2) is viewed as unwelcome and as potentially alienating. Not pressuring her to end the relationship (76: +1) or that she needs to leave immediately (27: -1) are not viewed as meaningful or positive approaches to help provision. Holly mentions distinct problems associated with receiving unwanted advice or opinions, "I would want someone to validate how I feel, and not just give me their personal opinions on what I should do. (Holly, survivor and experienced helper).

This group of participants also does not view provision information or support to the abusive partner (69: -2) as a tactic especially useful to a woman experiencing abuse. For these perspectives, supporting women's decision-making and autonomy are viewed as more beneficial than offering advice and forms of aid that women may view as being directive.

Compared to the other two perspectives, participants in this grouping assigned relatively less helpfulness to some informational strategies. Relatively less importance is placed on having discussions about the nature of abuse (80: 0), effects of abuse (3: 0), what kinds of behaviours qualify as abuse (45: 0) and its typical trajectory over time (55: 0). Mentioning that what a woman is experiencing is not normal or that it is something

that is unacceptable, or something that she should not tolerate should be approached delicately because there is a risk that a woman will interpret these as implicating her as somehow deviant or culpable:

> I don't know. So the 'not normal' thing I think goes back to labeling it as abusive where it's clearly something that's on her mind enough to talk to you about it. On the one hand labeling it as 'not normal' is a, 'OK, you shouldn't be abused, and let's figure out a way for you not to get abused.' But on the other hand, it sort of would put me into the situation of like, I'm telling you you're weird, or you're unusual, or you're one of those, you know. I don't know; I think it's the 'normal' part.
>
> - Johanna, nonvictim and experienced helper

Moreover, participants in this perspective view the suggestion that a woman seeks help from a counsellor or a therapist (20: 0) and providing legal information or help accessing legal resources as less helpful than those who load on the other perspectives (39: 0). Engaging in pressure tactics is not viewed favourably among those who define this perspective. A helper's suggestions that she involve the police (65: -1) or involving law enforcement on her behalf are not seen as optimal support strategies (10: -2, -1, +3), except under certain high-risk conditions.

Helper's limitations. It was not reflected in the sorting materials, but participants who were associated with this perspective in their interviews sometimes noted that they had to be aware of their limits as helpers. Acknowledging their limits had two aspects. The first was the necessity to take emotional care of the self:

> I think sometimes it's good to be emotionally available and supportive to somebody, but there becomes a point where the helper needs to support themselves as well, and you can't always be emotionally open to someone. Where the person gets into a pattern where they're just using it as a way to get it out and then they're OK, I'm good now because I talked to you about it. So that one was a sticky one for me.
>
> - Robin, survivor and experienced helper

The second aspect was to acknowledge that it is not always realistic to offer someone particular kinds of help:

> I wonder if a way of balancing that is like saying I'm here for whatever you need, and give examples of what you can do, so you know whether you just need to talk, you need a meal, you need help with your pets. I think it speaks to what I was saying earlier about how you don't want to overextend yourself and promise things you might not be able to do.
>
> - Johanna, nonvictim and experienced helper

These participants found it important to not promise more assistance than they can provide, whether this is on an emotional level or a tangible level.

Summary. Emotional support, non-judgment, and patience comprise the core strategies viewed as helpful by people who share this perspective, which may be best characterized as survivor-centric. However, this is not to discount the importance and value placed on certain forms of tangible aid. Many of those who loaded on this perspective emphatically endorsed the importance of wanted tangible assistance, particularly during post-sort interviews. The caveat here is that for tangible forms of aid

to be viewed or experienced as useful from the perspective of a woman who is experiencing abuse, tangible assistance must be coupled with emotional support and lack of judgment. Tangible assistance offered or provided in the absence of emotionally supportive responses is not perceived as being productive, or even in some instances, welcome:

> It's a delicate dance. I think fundamentally it comes down to just being there. Listening and acknowledging what it is she's going through so that you don't even need to actually be able to offer her tangible support. Just connecting to her.
>
> - Johanna, nonvictim and experienced helper

In the interviews of the five participants whose Q-sort loaded most strongly on this perspective, the words, 'it depends' 'it's contextual' and 'it's situational' were commonly stated. The overarching flavour of this point of view is that what is most helpful to a woman who is experiencing abuse depends. It depends on her as an individual, it depends on her situation, it depends on timing and her readiness, and it depends on the abilities of her helper. It was the responses that were contextual, or that were dependent on the individual characteristics of the person or situation that participants found the most difficult to place on the board and to incorporate into their overall personal narrative of what is helpful:

> It just depends on their situation. For some women, they'd be really helpful, but for me not so much. So, they're one of those it depends, one of those contextual sorts of responses. Whereas, believing that what the woman says is true, you know, that doesn't matter, regardless of context and things like that. Blaming her

> for the situation, you know, that doesn't matter. Some of the more contextual-driven ones are more difficult to place.
>
> - Jennifer, survivor and experienced helper

For Jennifer, reactions that were considered to have a contextually driven meaning were difficult to place because the meaning and likely interpretation of the reaction depends on the context in which it occurs.

Perspective Two: Advice and Information

Ten participants are significantly associated with the advice and information perspective: six women and four men. All who represented this perspective identified as heterosexual. Two of the six women had been victimized in romantic relationships with a male partner. Six people reported knowing at least one woman who had experienced abuse, and one person indicated that they were not sure if they had known a woman who experienced abuse and three reported not having known any. Ages ranged from 19 to 33 years, with a mean age of 22. Nine of the ten participants were full-time students, and one was a part-time student.

Between the two women with lived experience in this perspective, both reported having talked with family or friends, and both reported staying with family or friends. One reported both speaking with a healthcare provider, sought help from a co-worker or employer, and had stayed in a shelter. Half of the participants who represented this factor (n =5) reported that they were familiar with services for IPVAW, and one participant reported that they had received some IPVAW-related training or education. Six people reported knowing at least woman who experienced abuse, and four reported that they had provided some kind of support response. Emotionally focused responses were reported

most frequently, followed by abuse acknowledgment, instrumentally-focused reactions, and only one person reported having offered information.

Detailed demographic information for participants representing this perspective is presented in Table 10. Perspective two has an eigenvalue of 2.50 and explains 21% of the variability in participants' Q-sorts.

Table 10

Perspective Two Participant Demographics *(N = 10)*

Characteristic	n	%
Gender identification		
Woman	6	60
Man	4	40
Abuse victimization experience		
No	8	80
Yes	2	20
Known someone who has experienced abuse		
No	3	30
Not sure	1	10
Yes	6	60
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	10	100
Bisexual	0	0
Lesbian	0	0
Age		
≥20	3	30
21-30	6	60
31-40	1	10
41-50	0	0
51-60	0	0
61+	0	0
Parent		
Yes	0	0
No	10	100
Ethnicity		
White/European	4	40
Multiple Ethnicities	0	0
Southeast Asian, Indian, Pakistani	3	30
Black/African/Caribbean	1	10
Middle Eastern/Arabic	0	0
Latin/South American	0	0
Other	2	20
Length of time lived in Canada		
Since birth	6	60
More than 10 years	3	30
Fewer than 10 years	1	10
Student Status		
Non-student	0	0
Part-time	1	10
Full-time	9	90
Employment Status		
Full time	0	0

Part time	7	70
Retired	3	30
Unemployed	0	0
Highest level of education attained		
Elementary	0	0
Some high school	0	0
High school diploma	0	0
Some college/university	8	80
College/university diploma/degree	2	20
Some graduate school	0	0
Household Income		
$0-30,000	1	10
$30,001-60,000	1	10
$60,001-90,000	1	10
$90,001-120,000	4	40
$120,001-150,000	1	10
$150,001+	1	10
Prefer not to say	1	10
Familiarity with services for IPVAW		
Unfamiliar/somewhat unfamiliar	5	50
Somewhat/very familiar	5	50
IPVAW courses or training		
No	9	90
Yes	1	10

Participant interview profiles. The post-sort interviews of the five most highly loading Q-sorts on perspective two were transcribed and analysed. These interviews were drawn upon to provide supplemental analysis and contextual information, given that these individuals' sorts are most closely associated with the perspective and may therefore offer the most relevant interpretive information. All participants were given pseudonyms. Detailed individual profiles of these five participants are presented in Table 11, and the representative perspective array is presented in Table 12.

Table 11

Perspective Two Key Interview Profiles

Name	Profile
Sidra	Sidra's is 23 years old, identifies as Southeast Asian and has lived in Canada for more than ten years. English is her second language. She is currently a student and identifies as heterosexual. She has known one woman who has experienced IPVAW and has no personal experience of victimization.
Justin	Justin is 21, identifies as White/European and has lived in Canada since birth. He identifies as heterosexual and is a post-secondary student. He has not known anyone who has experienced IPVAW.
Michael	Michael's is 24 years old, identifies as White/European and has lived in Canada from birth. He identifies as heterosexual and is a post-secondary student. He has not known anyone who has experienced IPVAW.
Jeremy	Jeremy's is 22 years old, identifies as White/European and has lived in Canada from birth. He completed high school and has known one person who has experienced IPVAW.
Kamini	Kamini's is 22 years old, identifies as Southeast Asian and has lived in Canada since birth. She identifies as heterosexual and is a post-secondary student. She has known two women who have experienced IPVAW and has personal experience of victimization.

Note. Participants are presented in order of descending factor loadings on the perspective.

Table 12

Perspective Two Factor Array with z-Scores

Item no.	Statement	Rank	z-score
73	Is there to listen	+5	1.89
63	Tells her that abuse in relationships is not acceptable	+5	1.73
38	Takes the abuse seriously	+5	1.54
6	Lets her know that she is not to blame for her man's actions	+4	1.54
22	Asks her how they can help her	+4	1.50
70	Is emotionally available for her when she needs support	+4	1.48
61	Allows her to vent her feelings	+4	1.42
78	Tells her that what she is experiencing is not normal	+4	1.35
21	Believes that what she is saying is true	+4	1.26
11	Lets her know that abuse is not always physical	+3	1.14
35	Shows an ongoing, active interest in her well-being	+3	1.09
59	Expresses that the abusive partner is responsible for their own actions	+3	1.08
18	Validates her feelings	+3	0.98
3	Offers information to her about what abuse is and the effects of abuse	+3	0.98
48	Provides a variety of suggestions or options about what she can do	+3	0.93
36	Assists her with safety planning	+3	0.89
20	Suggests that she see a counsellor or therapist, or gives her information about counselling services	+3	0.84
66	Lets her know that they are there if she needs anything	+2	0.81
45	Tells her that what she is experiencing qualifies as abuse	+2	0.81
55	Lets her know that abuse usually won't go away and gets worse over time	+2	0.77
56	Tries to understand the situation and how she feels about it	+2	0.74
80	Have a conversation about the nature and impact of abuse in relationships	+2	0.72
39	Provides information about the legal process or help accessing legal services	+2	0.70
5	Offers or provides a safe place for her to stay	+2	0.68
15	Asks her if she is being abused, if suspicious	+2	0.64
1	Tries to avoid passing judgment on her	+2	0.61

Item no.	Statement	Rank	z-score
82	Understanding that she might not be ready to make changes at one point, but may be ready at another time	+1	0.60
86	Knowing that the helper had personal experience with abuse themselves	+1	0.58
83	Understanding that she may need different things at different points in her help seeking process	+1	0.58
14	Provides information about shelters or other services for intimate partner violence	+1	0.51
17	Retaliates physically against her partner	+1	0.49
44	Offers information about a variety of resources	+1	0.49
16	Acknowledges her conflicted feelings and the complex nature of making decisions about the relationship	+1	0.48
72	Talks to her alone	+1	0.47
79	Recognizes that she might not be ready or willing to call what is happening abuse	+1	0.43
29	Provides direct advice about what she should do when asked for advice	+1	0.42
77	The helper recognizes that the man's actions are abusive when she discloses to them	+1	0.41
8	Does not expect her to make any immediate decisions about what do to	0	0.36
67	Offers to provide child care or to help her access affordable child care	0	0.32
19	Encourages her to leave the abusive partner	0	0.27
65	Encourages her to call the police	0	0.22
87	Encouraging her to seek or goes with her to seek medical care	0	0.20
26	Just having someone else know about what is going on in the relationship	0	0.14
81	Labels particular behaviours as abusive	0	0.14
27	Tells her that she needs to get out of the relationship immediately	0	0.12
75	Allows her to make her own decisions and supports the decisions that she makes	0	0.11
23	Tells her to leave the abusive partner	0	0.06
9	Keeps an escape bag for her at their own home	0	0.04
28	Offers to help or helps her find a job	0	0.03

Item no.	Statement	Rank	z-score
68	Offers or provides clothing, food, or other resources if she needs them	0	0.03
54	Offers to or assists with her finances	-1	0.01
47	Offers or provides assistance with transportation if she needs it	-1	0.00
50	Names or labels what she is experiencing as abuse	-1	0.00
69	Provides information about counselling to the abuser	-1	-0.06
84	Understanding that she may want to try to work things out with the man	-1	-0.09
53	Tells her how to fix the situation	-1	-0.09
57	Talks to others to get advice about how to help her	-1	-0.15
25	Suggests that she talk to a religious leader	-1	-0.26
85	Offering the same helping strategies all of the time	-1	-0.34
76	Does not pressure her to end the relationship	-1	-0.34
10	Calls police or other law enforcement on her behalf	-1	-0.54
62	Offers to or provides care for pets, if she has them	-2	-0.56
46	Tells her other friends or family members about the abuse	-2	-0.56
34	Does not get involved unless she directly asks for help	-2	-0.68
58	Tries to break up arguments or fights between her and her partner	-2	-0.77
71	Expresses anger toward the perpetrator to her	-2	-0.89
37	Does not get involved because of concern over unintended consequences that might result from offering help	-2	-0.99
2	Tries to take over and fix the situation for her	-2	-1.07
7	Only provides assistance if she follows their advice	-2	-1.11
32	Pressures her to make a particular decision that they want her to make	-2	-1.12
41	Avoids getting involved because it puts themselves or the woman at more risk for harm from the abusive partner	-3	-1.14
4	Talks to or confronts the abusive man about their behaviour	-3	-1.14
13	Avoids getting involved because only professionals know how to handle the situation	-3	-1.20
49	Avoids getting involved, because if it were really bad, she would just leave	-3	-1.28
43	Asks her what she does to make the abuser angry or cause the abuse	-3	-1.30

Item no.	Statement	Rank	z-score
12	Tells her that she and her partner need to figure out a way to work it out themselves	-3	-1.31
30	Tells her that she should stay with her partner and try to fix the relationship	-3	-1.34
52	Avoids talking about the abuse because it is an embarrassing topic	-3	-1.42
64	Pretends that they do not know that abuse is occurring	-4	-1.56
17	Retaliates physically against her partner	-4	-1.58
24	Tells her that she is overreacting or misinterpreting what is happening	-4	-1.61
60	Cuts off contact with both her and her partner Pretends that they do not know that abuse is occurring	-4	-1.61
31	Avoids getting involved because abuse isn't usually serious	-4	-1.79
42	Takes the side of the abusive partner	-4	-1.81
40	Tells her that she should put up with the abuse for the sake of the family and the relationship	-5	-1.83
33	Denies that the abuse is occurring	-5	-1.94
51	Does nothing	-5	-2.18

Perspective interpretation. *Information and instruction.* Those whose Q-sorts contribute to this perspective believe that providing advice and information are central forms of support for women in relationships with abusive men. More than any other perspective, those in this group placed emphasis on the utility of providing a woman who is experiencing abuse with information relevant to her situation and how to reduce abuse or to leave her partner. Participants reported that letting her know that abuse in relationships is not acceptable (63: +5) and that what she is experiencing is not a normal part of relationships are viewed as beneficial forms of assistance (78: +4). It was viewed as important for women who experience abuse to understand/be told that what is happening to them is not okay and that it is not something that she should feel that she must put up with. Kamini felt that the central premise of helpfulness was:

> I'm here for you. I'm here to listen, and I want you to know that it's not OK what he's doing and that it's not normal. I found that most of the helpful pile circles around that. And if you thought you were alone, from now on you're not. You can talk to me.
>
> - Kamini, survivor and experienced helper

Justin echoes Kamini's sentiment that letting a woman know that her experiences are outside the relational norm:

> The ones like this one here, *tell her what she experiences is not normal*. I thought those were very important because it's important for them to know that normal people don't hurt each other. Like if you love somebody, or you're with somebody you don't – it [abuse] doesn't have to be part of a relationship. Relationships are

> supposed to be loving, caring, and nobody's supposed to be higher than the other person.
>
> - Justin, nonvictim and potential helper

Relaying the information that abuse and controlling behaviours are not a central part of healthy relationships was viewed as significant because participants felt that if a woman assumes that what she is experiencing is a typical part of a relationship, she will be more likely to stay with an abusive partner.

Along a similar dimension, offering information about (3: +3) or having conversations about the nature and effects of abuse (80: +2) are considered significant. Moreover, providing information about abuse trajectories over time (55: +2), and the kinds of behaviours and acts that can be regarded as abusive (45: +2; 81: 0) is considered neutral to somewhat beneficial. Telling a woman that abuse is not always physical (11: +3) is also considered to be a helpful response. Giving advice and information is positioned as the most immediately helpful approach:

> I thought more advice-oriented ones; helping and providing and stuff like that, and suggestions based on like prior knowledge and legal problems may be more important than allowing her to vent. […] Usually, the abuse does get worse over time, especially if they [the woman experiencing abuse] don't do anything about it, kind of thing. So, I thought it was important to let them know what the facts are.
>
> - Justin, nonvictim and potential helper
>
> Talk about how, you know; they can see how serious this is and, you know, if you keep allowing this [to happen to yourself], this may happen.

- Michael, nonvictim and potential helper

As illustrated by the previous quotes from participants and item placement, there is a concern that a lack of knowledge about abuse and relationship dynamics may serve to maintain women in dangerous situations. Also evident is the presumption that the woman has a moral responsibility to take action and do something about her situation, and that if she does not act and if the abuse continues, that she is then seen as in some way complicit.

Those who share this perspective also note the importance of providing direct advice when asked to do so (29: +1). Within this viewpoint, a woman's current situation with an abusive partner was attributed partially to having limited knowledge about the resources available to her, or that her situation was something that she should not have to tolerate in her life. There is also the implication that providing a woman with informational resources and supportive advice will increase her ability to leave her partner, or at least increase her safety. More than in the other groupings, participants who share this perspective also believe in the importance and benefit of providing information and encouragement for accessing professional services, for example, seeing a counsellor or therapist (20: +3), or information and assistance regarding available legal services (39: +2). Compared to other perspectives, providing information about counseling to the abusive partner ranked relatively highly (69: -1), though as Kamini, stated, the appropriateness of this action may depend on the relationship between the helper and the man:

> I feel like that might, depending on how close I am to, like if it was a friend if I knew the guy and I felt it was safe, I might approach him, like if you ever feel like

> your anger gets out of hand there's a place you could call, something like that. But if I didn't have that kind of relationship with that person then I wouldn't recommend, or I wouldn't for sure be like hey, you need help.
>
> - Kamini, survivor and experienced helper

Help her (to overcome) emotions. Along with offering advice, participants who loaded purely on this perspective placed a large amount of importance on taking the time to listen to her (73: +5). Unless helpers take the time to listen to a woman's situation they are not likely going to be able to offer relevant or appropriate advice. Justin offers his perspective on the importance of listening:

> I put 'is there to listen' first because basically when you're there to listen to them, it helps you make decisions on what to say to them overall. So, if you're not listening to what they're saying, then you can't help them. So, I believe that's the most important thing. And if they can tell that you're listening and there for them, then they can trust you.
>
> - Justin, nonvictim and potential helper

In addition to listening to her, these participants also believe that asking her how a helper can be of assistance (22: +4), taking the time to validate the woman's feelings (18: +3) is viewed as helpful.

Those who represent this perspective believe that a woman will find it helpful if the abuse that she discloses is taken seriously (38: +5), and that the helper does not try to deny that it is occurring (33: -5). It is also important to try not to be judgmental of her (1: +2), and to actively ask her how to best be of assistance (22: +4), "like ask them, 'how

can I help you?' Anybody would want to hear that" (Kamini, survivor and experienced helper).

Although this group places a great deal of importance on listening to a woman and asking how they can help, there is less of a focus on supporting her autonomy. Here a large degree of helper intervention is believed to be helpful. Supporting the decisions that she makes (75: 0) is ranked at the mid-point of the scale, reflecting ambivalence about women's abilities to make decisions that serve her best interests. Reflecting a positive view of decision-making, Michael reports:

> I'd definitely support her in any decision she makes because that's part of friendship. You have to support your friends through thick or thin regardless of what decision she makes.
>
> - Jeremy, nonvictim and potential helper

Conversely, Sidra questions the decision-making abilities of women in the midst of an abusive relationship:

> I mean if she's taking the abuse obviously, she's used to – like, I don't want to say used to it, but she's um not as strong with her – like she's taking things. She doesn't stand up for herself. So, if you don't pressure her, maybe she's just like, not going to do it [to leave or seek other help]. But when you read it, you're just like, obviously, you're not going to do that. You don't want to pressure anybody, but then when you think about it, somebody who's already going through abuse may need the pressure.
>
> - Sidra, nonvictim and experienced helper

Here the application of some social pressure is viewed as having the potential to break the inertia of being involved in a situation where there is ongoing abuse.

Participants who load on this perspective rank statements that refer to acknowledging the complexity of a woman's emotional state and potential difficulties surrounding the decisions (16: +2) to take steps to minimize or become free from abuse relatively lower, indicating that a straightforward, unambiguous approach is perceived as being beneficial. These participants believe that it is helpful for a helper to try to understand the situation and how the woman feels, (56: +2). However, this position is not without ambiguity. For example, the ranking of the statement that indicates that a helper does not expect her to make any immediate decisions (8: 0) and telling her to get out of the relationship immediately (27: -0) are ranked very closely, suggesting a neutrality, ambivalence, or contradiction between these positions. This ambivalence is further highlighted insofar as participants in this group do not feel favourably towards a helper's understanding that she may want to try to work things out with her partner (84: -1). Michael highlights the importance of demonstrating understanding:

> Understand where she's coming from, that she may not want to react right away, and try to work things out. So, that's always what you have to keep in the back of your mind as well. Like, she may not want to do that [end the relationship]. I think that's also an important thing to realize.
>
> - Michael, nonvictim and potential helper

There is some positive valence given to a helper acknowledging the complexity of an abused woman's decision-making (16: +1), and that she may need different things from

helpers at different times, but supporting her in whatever decision she makes was viewed as a less helpful strategy (075: 0).

The rankings of statements related to blame for the abusive man indicated that these participants felt that having a helper tell her that she is not to blame for abuse (6: +4) and that her partner is responsible for his actions is quite important (59: +3).

> I think also, what you see too is, the females, if they are abused, they take the blame for it and feel like it is their fault. And you do see in the media too, they take the blame, 'well it's my fault I acted this way, I should have done this [instead].' But I think in the end they're never to blame if they're being abused. Just – you can't be blamed. So, I feel like if you can get that message across to her, that's a very important one. And allow them not to be embarrassed about the situation.
>
> - Michael, nonvictim and potential helper

Get involved, encourage action. Engaging in more action-oriented or instrumental reactions were viewed with some neutrality in this perspective. Statements related to tangible assistance were ranked somewhat lower for these participants than for participants associated with other factors, and consistently lower than the informational and advice-related statements discussed above, suggesting that these participants prioritize the sharing of information. Offering to help or helping a woman obtain food or clothing (68: 0), transportation (47: -1), childcare (67: 0) or care of pets (62: -2) tend to rank neutrally or lean towards a less helpful assessment as by participants who load on the advice and information perspective compared to the other two perspectives. A

possible reason for these rankings is that these participants may have fewer resources to offer, given their relatively young age, and that most of these participants are students.

Participants who load on this perspective do not prioritize encouraging the woman to act to mitigate abuse or end her relationship, encouraging her to leave her partner (19: 0), telling her to leave her partner (23: 0) or that she should get out of the relationship immediately (27: 0).

> I know that I would say it [get out of the relationship] though I know it wouldn't necessarily be helpful. […] You don't want to pressure her or make her uncomfortable, or you know, do what you're uncomfortable with, but really sometimes people just need pressure.
>
> - Sidra, nonvictim and experienced helper

Two of the statements ranked at the least helpful pole by these participants refer to advice to put up with a partner's abuse for the sake of the family (40: -5), and for the potential helper to do nothing regarding assisting the woman seeking help (51: -5).

> Yeah, does nothing. I felt like that was just so obvious. Cause no matter what there's no way that you could not do anything. Even if you think about it [her situation], you're doing something. And [doing nothing is] least helpful because if you don't do anything, you're basically saying, 'I don't care.' And they don't need to hear that.
>
> - Sidra, nonvictim and experienced helper

Nearly analogous to doing nothing was engaging in avoidant reactions. These included cutting off both her and her partner (60: -4), and engaging in avoidant reactions such as

avoiding because abuse is not normally serious (31: -4), because it is embarrassing (52: -3), or pretending that they do not know that abuse is occurring (64: -4).

> People know about it but they pretend they don't, and they don't get involved because they don't want that to be a part of their lives. 'They'll figure it out,' 'they're old enough.' And I feel that people need to react; sometimes go with their gut feelings. Even if it's wrong, at least you're somewhat being responsible and being aware of, you know, what potential [things could happen] ...if you know that your gut is telling you something's wrong, that you see something wrong, you have to react. Maybe not call in the authorities right away, but just pay more attention, or ask. Why shouldn't you?
>
> - Michael, nonvictim and potential helper

Summary. This perspective is characterized by a focus on the benefit of information and instructional assistance. Participants who represent this perspective believe that increasing a woman's knowledge and awareness about abuse, her relationship situation, and the services available to her are helpful reactions. Abuse and the experience of abuse is positioned as abnormal and therefore highlighting this is believed to help a woman come to terms with what she is experiencing and may also call her to action. In this perspective, the helper is positioned as knowledgeable about abuse. They are framed as a good source of advice, and someone who can offer insights into the situation and help the women decide on the next steps she should take to address the abuse that she is experiencing. In this perspective, participants think that it is helpful for a woman to be listened to and to have her feelings validated; there is also suspicion about her ability to make decisions that are in her best interest. Relatedly, it is believed to be important for

helpers to get involved and also to encourage a woman who is experiencing abuse to take action for herself. For a helper to avoid the woman or to avoid getting involved is seen as extremely unhelpful, and the worst possible reaction is to do nothing at all.

Perspective Three: Action Oriented

Seven participants loaded purely on this factor, all of whom were women. All identified as white and heterosexual. Participants' ages ranged from 18-48 years, with a mean age of 26 years. Two women reported that they had not experienced abuse, one woman reported having had one abusive male partner, and four reported having had more than one abusive partner. Four reported knowing one woman who had experienced abuse, and two reported knowing more than one woman who had experienced abuse. One person was not sure if they had known a woman who experienced abuse. Most participants in this perspective (n = 5) reported that they were familiar with services for IPVAW, and just over half of this group (n = 4) reported that they had received some IPVAW-related training or education. Five participants were full- or part-time students.

Among the four with lived experience of abuse in this perspective, three reported having talked with family or friends and staying with family or friends. Two had sent their children to stay with relatives, and two had made sure that there were other people around. Two women had seen a counselor, and two had stayed in a shelter. Three had filed for a restraining order, and two had called the police. Regarding helping experiences, six participants reported knowing at least one woman who experienced abuse, and 19 reported that they had provided some kind of support response. Emotionally focused responses were reported most frequently, followed by information-based, abuse acknowledgment, and tangible responses.

Detailed demographic information for participants representing this perspective is presented in Table 13. Perspective three has an eigenvalue of 1.70 and explains 18% of the variability in participants' Q-sorts.

Table 13

Perspective Three Participant Demographics *(N = 7)*

Characteristic	*n*	%
Gender identification		
Woman	7	100
Man	0	0
Abuse victimization experience		
No	4	29
Yes	3	71
Known someone who has experienced abuse		
No	0	0
Not sure	1	14
Yes	6	86
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	7	100
Bisexual	0	0
Lesbian	0	0
Age		
≤20	2	29
21-30	2	29
31-40	0	0
41-50	1	14
51-60	1	14
61+	1	14
Parent		
Yes	3	43
No	4	57
Ethnicity		
White/European	7	100
Multiple Ethnicities	0	0
Southeast Asian	0	0
Black/African/Caribbean	0	0
Middle Eastern/Arabic	0	0
Latin/South American	0	0
Other	0	0
Length of time lived in Canada		
Since birth	7	100
More than 10 years	0	0
Fewer than 10 years	0	0
Student Status		
Non-student	2	29
Part-time	2	29
Full-time	3	43

Employment Status		
Full time	1	14
Part time	4	57
Retired	0	0
Unemployed	2	29
Highest level of education attained		
Elementary	1	14
Some high school	0	0
High school diploma	0	0
Some college/university	3	43
College/university diploma/degree	2	29
Some graduate school	0	0
Graduate diploma/degree	1	14
Household Income		
$0-30,000	3	43
$30,001-60,000	0	0
$60,001-90,000	0	0
$90,001-120,000	3	43
$120,001-150,000	0	0
$150,001+	0	0
Prefer not to say	1	10
Familiarity with services for IPVAW		
Unfamiliar/somewhat unfamiliar	2	29
Somewhat/very familiar	5	71
Taken IPVAW courses or training		
No	3	43
Yes	4	57

Participant interview profiles. The post-sort interviews of the five most highly-loading Q sorts on perspective three were transcribed and analysed. These interviews were drawn upon to provide supplemental analysis and contextual information, given that these individuals' sorts are most closely associated with the perspective and may therefore offer the most relevant interpretive information. All participants were given pseudonyms. Detailed individual profiles of these five participants are presented in Table 14, and the representative perspective array is presented in Table 15.

Table 14

Perspective Three Key Interview Profiles

Name	Profile
Agnes	Agnes is 60 years old, identifies as White/European, and has lived in Canada since birth. She has a college education and identifies as heterosexual. She has known one woman who has experienced IPVAW and has twice been in relationships with abusive men.
Pamela	Pamela is is 51 years old, identifies as White/European and has lived in Canada from birth. She identifies as heterosexual, has three children, and a university degree. She has known several women who experienced IPVAW and has no personal IPVAW victimization experience.
Lauren	Lauren is 22 years old, identifies as White/European, and has lived in Canada since birth. She identifies as heterosexual and has one child. She is a post-secondary student. She has known three people with IPVAW victimization experience and has experienced IPVAW in one relationship.
Erica	Erica is 22 years old, identifies as White/European, and has lived in Canada since birth. She identifies as heterosexual and is a university student. She has known one person with IPVAW victimization experience and has no personal victimization experience.
Morgan	Morgan is 20 years old, identifies as White/European and has lived in Canada since birth. She is university student and identifies as heterosexual. She has known one woman who has experienced IPVAW and has no personal victimization experience.

Note: Participants are presented in order of descending factor loadings on the perspective.

Table 15

Perspective Three Factor Array with z-Scores

No.	Statement	Rank	z-score
14	Provides information about shelters or other services for intimate partner violence	+5	1.97
5	Allows her to make her own decisions and supports the decisions that she makes	+5	1.91
68	Offers or provides clothing, food, or other resources if she needs them	+5	1.83
36	Assists her with safety planning	+4	1.57
87	Encouraging her to seek or goes with her to seek medical care	+4	1.55
39	Provides information about the legal process or help accessing legal services	+4	1.42
67	Offers to provide child care or to help her access affordable child care	+4	1.41
65	Encourages her to call the police	+4	1.35
20	Suggests that she see a counsellor or therapist, or gives her information about counselling services	+4	1.33
48	Provides a variety of suggestions or options about what she can do	+3	1.23
44	Offers information about a variety of resources	+3	1.20
70	Is emotionally available for her when she needs support	+3	1.15
75	Allows her to make her own decisions and supports the decisions that she makes	+3	1.06
47	Offers or provides assistance with transportation if she needs it	+3	1.03
62	Offers to or provides care for pets, if she has them	+3	0.96
10	Calls police or other law enforcement on her behalf	+3	0.94
25	Suggests that she talk to a religious centre or religious leader	+3	0.92
28	Offers to help or helps her find a job	+2	0.87
73	Is there to listen	+2	0.82
11	Lets her know that abuse is not always physical	+2	0.79
77	The helper recognizes that the man’s actions are abusive when she discloses to them	+2	0.76

Item no.	Statement	Rank	z-score
86	Knowing that the helper had personal experience with abuse themselves	+2	0.66
83	Understanding that she may need different things at different points in her help seeking process	+2	0.63
16	Acknowledges her conflicted feelings and the complex nature of making decisions about the relationship	+2	0.60
38	Takes the abuse seriously	+2	0.57
69	Provides information about counselling to the abuser	+2	0.57
45	Tells her that what she is experiencing qualifies as abuse	+1	0.57
61	Allows her to vent her feelings	+1	0.51
55	Lets her know that abuse usually won't go away and gets worse over time	+1	0.49
26	Just having someone else know about what is going on in the relationship	+1	0.48
18	Validates her feelings	+1	0.48
66	Lets her know that they are there if she needs anything	+1	0.47
82	Understanding that she might not be ready to make changes at one point, but may be ready at another time	+1	0.47
9	Keeps an escape bag for her at their own home	+1	0.44
80	Have a conversation about the nature and impact of abuse in relationships	+1	0.38
3	Offers information to her about what abuse is and the effects of abuse	+1	0.37
79	Recognizes that she might not be ready or willing to call what is happening abuse	+1	0.36
8	Does not expect her to make any immediate decisions about what do to	0	0.33
21	Believes that what she is saying is true	0	0.32
35	Shows an ongoing, active interest in her well-being	0	0.28
74	Not feeling like they are judging her when she discloses or asks for help	0	0.20
72	Talks to her alone	0	0.20
76	Does not pressure her to end the relationship	0	0.16
22	Asks her how they can help her	0	0.16
84	Understanding that she may want to try to work things out with the man	0	0.13
56	Tries to understand the situation and how she feels about it	0	0.12
6	Lets her know that she is not to blame for her man’s actions	0	0.10

Item no.	Statement	Rank	z-score
1	Understanding that she may want to try to work things out with the man	0	0.09
54	Offers to or assists with her finances	0	0.06
78	Tells her that what she is experiencing is not normal	0	0.04
29	Provides direct advice about what she should do when asked for advice	-1	-0.04
85	Offering the same helping strategies all of the time	-1	-0.05
27	Tells her that she needs to get out of the relationship immediately	-1	-0.11
57	Talks to others to get advice about how to help her	-1	-0.23
15	Asks her if she is being abused, if suspicious	-1	-0.27
81	Labels particular behaviours as abusive	-1	-0.33
23	Tells her to leave the abusive partner	-1	-0.33
59	Expresses that the abusive partner is responsible for their own actions	-1	-0.33
19	Encourages her to leave the abusive partner	-1	-0.37
50	Names or labels what she is experiencing as abuse	-1	-0.39
53	Tells her how to fix the situation	-1	-0.65
34	Does not get involved unless she directly asks for help	-2	-0.74
46	Tells her other friends or family members about the abuse	-2	-0.74
63	Tells her that abuse in relationships is not acceptable	-2	-0.77
52	Avoids talking about the abuse because it is an embarrassing topic	-2	-0.94
37	Does not get involved because of concern over unintended consequences that might result from offering help	-2	-0.95
31	Avoids getting involved because abuse isn't usually serious	-2	-0.97
13	Avoids getting involved because only professionals know how to handle the situation	-2	-0.98
41	Avoids getting involved because it puts themselves or the woman at more risk for harm from the abusive partner	-2	-1.08
49	Avoids getting involved, because if it were really bad, she would just leave	-2	-1.14
30	Tells her that she should stay with her partner and try to fix the relationship	-3	-1.15
60	Cuts off contact with both her and her partner	-3	-1.21
12	Tells her that she and her partner need to figure out a way to work it out themselves	-3	-1.27

Item no.	Statement	Rank	z-score
2	Tries to take over and fix the situation for her	-3	-1.28
32	Pressures her to make a particular decision that they want her to make	-3	-1.29
43	Asks her what she does to make the abuser angry or cause the abuse	-3	-1.29
58	Tries to break up arguments or fights between her and her partner	-3	-1.35
7	Only provides assistance if she follows their advice	-3	-1.37
4	Talks to or confronts the abusive man about their behaviour	-4	-1.37
64	Pretends that they do not know that abuse is occurring	-4	-1.45
24	Tells her that she is overreacting or misinterpreting what is happening	-4	-1.48
40	Tells her that she should put up with the abuse for the sake of the family and the relationship	-4	-1.53
71	Expresses anger toward the perpetrator to her	-4	-1.58
17	Retaliates physically against her partner	-4	-1.64
42	Takes the side of the abusive partner	-5	-1.78
33	Denies that the abuse is occurring	-5	-1.89
51	Does nothing	-5	-1.97

Perspective interpretation. This perspective is characterized by the prioritization of material assistance and assuring that a woman's safety needs are met. The receipt of emotional support is also considered important but takes a secondary position to meeting any immediate physical safety needs and in connecting a woman with resources, and through removing obstacles that may be in the way of increasing her safety, particularly her physical and economic safety. A proportionately higher number of participants who endorse this perspective have children.

Action is assistance. Participants who load on this perspective prioritize offers of and actual provision of tangible forms of help above all else. Two of the three statements ranked as the very most helpful all involve real or offered acts – that of giving food, clothing, or other material resources (68: +5), and offering a safe place for the woman seeking help to stay (5: +5). Although not fitting the label of tangible assistance per se, the third most highly ranked statement for this perspective was to provide information about shelters or other services that are available for IPVAW (14: +5). This response may be a form of indirect provision of instrumental aid since this information could lead to the ability to meet the basic need for shelter. Agnes, who has had more than one relationship with an abusive man discussed what she thought was the most helpful kind of aid:

> Assisting with safety planning, offering clothing, food and other resources, um a safe place to stay or information about it. Counsellor or therapist definitely, and medical care, maybe medical care...
>
> - Agnes, survivor and experienced helper

Viewed analogously to meeting immediate resource and safety needs, assisting with basic life responsibilities was also viewed as valuable. Offering to help with childcare (67: +4),

encouraging her to seek or accompanying her to medical care, helping with transportation, assisting with safety planning (36: +4), and pet care (62: +3), were all ranked as being of high import and perceived helpfulness. For Erica, ensuring a woman's physical safety is first and foremost:

> First, try to get her out of the situation maybe – if she wants it if she wants to get out…Keep children safe if she has any. Just the basic resources I think should be sorted out first. The very basic needs. I guess everything else that comes after that. Make sure she's ok, um, letting her vent, and let her stress out. Just be there to talk to her. […] Being supportive, empathetic, offering assistance, taking them to the places that they need to go, maybe getting them out of that situation if she needs to.
>
> - Erica, nonvictim and experienced helper

Lauren also prioritizes immediate safety concerns, but she recognizes that there is a competition between security needs and supporting the emotional needs that a woman who is experiencing abuse may have:

> I was trying to decide would you give the person somewhere to stay first or would you talk to them first? Would you just be like, 'come to my house, I need you to get out of there so I can talk to you and you know let you know what's going on in your relationship,' or, like, it depends. Everybody's different.
>
> - Lauren, survivor and experienced helper

For a perspective where taking and encouraging action is prized, strategies that involve inaction are conversely seen as unhelpful. Doing nothing (51: -5) was one of the very least effective actions from a potential helper. Moreover, there is juxtaposition

between helpfulness attributed to strategies that are somewhat avoidant in nature and strategies that involve the helper stepping in and acting for the help-seeking woman. Participants loading on this perspective attribute significantly more helpfulness to calling the police on the woman's behalf (10: +3), albeit Morgan acknowledges that this action may or may not have a positive result:

> I think that calling the police is a good thing and that it can be a bad thing. And I think that when you call the police things can take a turn for the worse, things can get a lot worse. But I think that also in a situation you have to be kind of careful. But you also can help somebody by calling the police.
>
> - Morgan, nonvictim and experienced helper

Pamela echoes Morgan's reservations about involving police on a woman's behalf:

> Some [reactions] again just, you know, calling the police on her behalf. Um, some women are very thankful that that happened. And other women, in their eyes, all you've done is brought children's aid into my life now, and um he's blaming me, and now I have to deal with that. And again it's – safety is always number one, but it may not necessarily be viewed by her as helpful.
>
> - Pamela, nonvictim and experienced helper

Indeed, the ambivalence about involving the police makes sense for participants in this perspective, as two of the women had themselves called the police to intervene on their behalf at least once, to mixed result. Three women reported getting a restraining order against their partner, which was viewed as more effective than calling the police.

Work with emotions. Those who are associated with this perspective endorse the helpfulness of emotional supports for women who experience abuse. Specifically, they

place a positive value on being emotionally available for her (70: +3) and being there to listen (73: +2) when a woman wants to discuss her problems. Other statements that are related to emotional support are placed in a more neutral position. These include validating her feelings (18: +1), allowing her to vent her feelings, and trying to understand her situation and how she feels about it (56: 0). There was also a certain amount of ambivalence around supporting whatever choices a woman wants to make about her relationship (75: +3). Morgan said that it would be very difficult for her to see someone that she cared about make a decision that she did not agree with or decisions that that she felt kept a woman in a dangerous situation:

> Oh, and *allows her to make her own decisions and supports the decisions that she makes*, I think that can backfire. Obviously, if she makes the decision of staying, supporting her would obviously be really tough. Um, and I personally wouldn't be able to support someone that I loved, that I was close to if they stayed.
>
> - Morgan, nonvictim and experienced helper

Those sharing this perspective also feel relatively more neutral about the merit of helpers demonstrating an ongoing interest in the wellbeing of the woman in the abusive relationship (35: 0). Pamela, a social worker, cited the potential of burning out helpers over time as the reason that she thought that strategy would not be very helpful for women, noting that, "you know, they [helpers] get tired of talking about it. You know, they're human too, so I think that they – which only furthers the isolation." (Pamela, experienced helper).

There is a degree of neutrality or ambivalence felt toward the value of helpers' avoiding placing judgment on the woman seeking assistance (1: 0), and on the importance

of the woman not feeling as though she is being judged (74: 0). Moreover, this perspective does not prioritize placing responsibility for the abuse with the abusive partner (59: -1) and in asserting that the woman seeking help is not the one to blame for her partner's actions (6: 0). Similarly, there is less attention given to a helper believing that what the woman says is true (21: 0), or in the helpfulness of a helper asking how they can be of assistance (22: 0).

Care is given to avoid placing blame on the woman who is experiencing abuse. Telling a woman that abuse in relationships is not acceptable is placed mid-way towards the unhelpful pole, as this is seen as having the potential to be a statement that lays blame on the woman for her situation (63: -2). Relatedly, asking her what she does to make her partner angry is not viewed as productive, and it is thought that it can re-victimize the woman and make her believe that she is at fault for her partner's actions:

> You know, number one I put, *ask her what she does to make the abuser angry or cause the abuse*. She's been told that by him, so to have someone who should potentially be supportive [say that], only reinforces that, 'oh yeah I guess my yelling at the kids, that's why he gets so mad at me.' I mean we all have flaws, and abusive men are very quick to point out what they are and link them to why he acts the way he does. And if you just didn't do A then I wouldn't do B. So, that's so tragic when that gets reinforced.
>
> - Pamela, nonvictim and experienced helper

Expressing denial or doubt about whether the woman is experiencing abuse is viewed to be among the very least helpful kinds of reactions (33: -5), as is telling her that she is overreacting or misinterpreting what she is experiencing (24: -4). Equally unhelpful

is when a helper sides with the abusive partner over the woman who is experiencing abuse (42: -5). Erica, who has experience as a helper, considered not taking her side as the most harmful kind of response:

> The worst thing that I think someone could do would be to take the other person's side; the side of the partner. I think it's a betrayal. It's not okay for anyone to be abusive to their partner in any way.
>
> - Erica, nonvictim and experienced helper

Telling the woman that she should put up with her partner's behaviour (: -4) for the sake of her family, or telling her that the couple should try to work things out for themselves (-3) is also not a favourable position. However, in general, reactions that involve doing nothing, or turning against the woman who experiences abuse by taking her partner's side or denying her experiences are viewed as the most detrimental.

Harness knowledge. Involving outside experts is thought of as a positive strategy. Participants favour actions like offering information about shelter services (14: +5), encouraging her to call the police (65: +4), see a counselor for herself (20: +4), seek out a religious leader (25: +3) and endorse providing the abusive partner information about counseling (69: +2). Participants who are associated with this perspective believe in the helpfulness of providing information and advice to the help-seeking woman. Lauren noted that she thinks:

> …that there are a lot of positive people in the community that could help you, that there are a lot of resources and information that are good for women that are abused. Not a lot of people know about […] the resources and the information and the people that can help them."

- Lauren, survivor and experienced helper

Offering information about available legal resources, shelters or related services (14: +5), or any other resources that are believed to be helpful (44: +3) rate quite highly among this group, which should be unsurprising given the higher instances of formal service use among those in this perspective. These participants also place relatively more emphasis on the utility of suggesting that she see a counsellor or therapist (20: +4). In addition to the positioning of information as an important resource, it was also important to not be intrusive or overbearing in providing this material, as Erica noted that a helper should, "just provide information but don't push it on her, offer it." Although involving experts and providing relevant information was considered helpful, there was a sense that information and advice should be provided in a measured way so that the woman does not feel as though it is being forced upon her. More than in the other perspectives, this group felt that directly offering information about counseling services to the abusive partner (69: +2) might also be somewhat beneficial. Because more of the women in this group were mothers, there may have been a greater motivation to reduce abuse and try to repair and maintain a relationship with a father of children.

Summary. Participants who defined this perspective believe that prioritizing taking actions to preserve or increase a woman's safety are the most helpful. There is a sense of urgency insofar as strategies that do not involve immediate and practical assistance are deprioritized. However, this immediate need to protect physical safety is moderated by a sense that a helper should be careful not to overstep and become overinvolved in a potentially dangerous or delicate situation. On average participants in this perspective had more children, and therefore may prioritize physical safety for

women and their children more than those in other perspectives. Relatedly, the women with lived experience in this group may have experienced more frequent and/or severe abuse and therefore may have drawn on more tangible resources in their own help-seeking experiences and can see or anticipate this need in others' experiences.

There is also a discordance in this perspective in that these participants recognize that a woman may not necessarily find taking action the very most helpful thing at the moment, or that certain actions may not be most appreciated, but that safety concerns may supersede short-term satisfaction and that the actions that are not seen as maximally helpful at the moment are those that in the long term are the ones that matter most.

Points of Consensus among Perspectives

Although naturally there is substantial variability between the three perspectives on what is helpful and unhelpful assistance for a woman who is seeking help for or disclosing abuse, there are important commonalities in viewpoints that warrant exploration. Consensus statements are those that do not meaningfully differentiate between any factors. Participants in all three perspectives have ranked these items in nearly identical ways. In this study, there is substantial agreement across perspectives regarding what constitutes unhelpful reactions, particularly in areas involving blame, minimization, intrusiveness or intervention, and avoidance. These are all categories responses that were rated as unhelpful across perspectives. That agreement on rankings was concentrated in reactions that are considered unhelpful means that much of the variability exists almost exclusively regarding the kinds of reactions people consider being most helpful. The full set of consensus statements is presented in tabular form in Appendix J.

Blaming and minimizing. Across the perspectives, people seemed to agree that a woman seeking help would not consider taking the side of the abusive partner helpful (or implying that she is the cause of or is somehow responsible for her partner's harmful behaviours. Furthermore, denials of her claim that abuse is occurring or telling her that her assessment of the situation is faulty are very likely to be perceived as unhelpful.

No.	Reaction	P1	P2	P3
42*	Takes the side of the abusive partner	-5	-4	-5
43*	Asks what she does to make the abuser angry or cause the abuse	-4	-3	-3
33*	Denies that the abuse is occurring	-5	-5	-5
24*	Tells her that she is overreacting, or misinterpreting what is happening	-5	-4	-4

Note. P1–P3 = Perspectives 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

Overstepping and intrusion. Participants also shared the opinion that some reactions would be viewed as overstepping boundaries or as being intrusive and unwanted by a woman seeking assistance. Attempts to move in and try to fix the situation on her behalf were unhelpful. Participants also viewed any help that was contingent on doing what the helper wanted to her to do and placed pressure on the woman to follow a particular course of action as undesirable; it was preferred that the helper offer more space for the woman to choose her path and follow her desires even if these might be counter to those of the helper themselves. Additionally, telling her that she should stay and put up with her partner's behaviour to preserve the family or relationship was viewed as unwelcome.

No.	Reaction	P1	P2	P3
2	Tries to take over and fix the situation for her	-4	-2	-3
7*	Only provides assistance to her if she follows their advice	-3	-2	-3

32*	Pressures her to make a particular decision that they want her to make	-3	-2	-3
40*	Tells her that she should put up with the abuse for the sake of the family	-4	-5	-4

Attempts by the helper to intervene in the couple's ongoing relationship were viewed as unwelcome. Attempts to intervene in arguments, speak with the abusive partner about his behaviour, or retaliate against him were rated as unhelpful in all three perspectives. Participants also showed some preference that the helper try to preserve the woman's privacy by avoiding speaking about her problems with other people in the woman's life but thought that it was more helpful if this was done to obtain advice.

No.	Reaction	P1	P2	P3
58	Tries to break up arguments or fights between her and her partner	-2	-2	-3
4*	Talks to or confronts the abusive man about his behaviour	-3	-3	-3
17*	Retaliates physically against her partner	-3	-4	-4
46*	Tells her other friends or family members about the abuse	-2	-2	-2
57*	Talks to others to get advice about how to help her	-1	-1	-1

Avoidance. In general, strategies that could be best described as avoidant, although not viewed as negatively as reactions that blamed the woman or minimized her experiences, were not viewed favourably. These strategies were also consistently ranked as more helpful than reactions that would minimize what the woman was experiencing and reactions that blamed her for being in an abusive relationship or those that positioned her as responsible for the abuse itself. Across the perspectives, most avoidance items ranked somewhere between the unhelpful pole and the relative midpoint of the board.

No.	Reaction	P1	P2	P3
13	Avoids getting involved because only professionals know how to handle the situation	-2	-2	-3

34	Does not get involved unless she directly asks for help	-3	-3	-3
41	Avoids getting involved because it puts themselves or the woman at more risk for harm from the abusive partner	-3	-4	-4
52	Avoids talking about the abuse because it is an embarrassing topic	-2	-2	-2
49	Avoids getting involved, because if it were really bad, she would just leave	-1	-1	-1

Associations between Perspective Endorsement and Personal Experiences

The third and final research question posed in this study asked if there was patterning of perspective representation as a function of victimization experience. I expected that there would be differences between the perspectives of women with lived experiences and their potential helpers with no personal experiences of victimization, but did not speculate as to in which ways these groups may differ. This research question was addressed through a Chi-square analysis in which I compared participant victimization (prior victimization versus none) with the factor on which a person's perspective loaded. If there were no association between victimization experiences and perspectives on what constitutes helpful and unhelpful support, we would expect to find that participants with and without victimization experience would be evenly distributed among factors.

A contingency coefficient test, based on the chi-square statistic, was computed to see if participants were equally likely to load significantly on each of the three perspectives that emerged from the main Q-analysis. Consistent with analyses throughout the study, all participants who loaded purely on a single factor at the .50 levels were included in this analysis. Across all study participants, 45 of the 60 loaded significantly on a single factor, and these are the cases that were included in the analysis. The three perspectives were compared to the two participant groups. The number of participants loading significantly on each factor as a function of their personal experiences of abuse victimization is shown in Table 16. The analysis[7] revealed that perspective association was not evenly distributed, $X^2(2, N = 45) = 8.43, p = .019$. To further break down these relationships, a series of three 2 X 2 Chi-square tests were performed. The *agency and*

[7] Due to small cell sizes Fisher's exact test was used for these analyses.

understanding perspective contained significantly more participants with lived experience than participants from the nonvictim group, than did the advice and information perspective $X^2(1, N = 38) = 7.96, p = .008$. There were no significant differences in group membership between the *advice and information* perspective and the *action oriented* perspective, $X^2(1, N = 17) = 1.04, p = .593$. There were also no significant associations between victimization status between the *agency and understanding* and the *action oriented* perspective $X^2(1, N = 23) = 2.03, p = .200$. The results of this analysis reveal that life experiences along the dimension of victimization history have a significant influence on what participants believe constitutes helpful and welcome forms of assistance. Women who have personal experience of victimization are overrepresented in the *agency and understanding* perspective and underrepresented in the advice and information perspective.

In anticipation that other life experiences may influence perspective endorsement, post-hoc contingency coefficient tests were also conducted to explore the influence of a) personal helping experiences (having provided assistance to someone who has experienced IPVAW vs. not having provided assistance to someone who has experienced IPVAW) and, b) of work, volunteer, or school exposure to IPVAW-related topics (exposure vs. no exposure). Helping experiences were not found to be associated with perspective endorsement $X^2(2, N = 45) = 4.00, p = .110$. Additionally, work, volunteer, or course-based IPVAW-related experience was also found to be unrelated to perspective endorsement, $X^2(2, N = 45) = 2.87, p = .239$.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to explore and elucidate the perspectives that women who have experienced abuse and their potential helpers hold regarding what kinds of social reactions to IPVAW help seeking will be helpful to women who experience abuse. To accomplish this aim, I adopted a Q-methodological approach. Q-methodology is unique in that it allows for the identification and explication of diverse perspectives that people hold towards an issue – in this case, the help needs and preferences of abused women. To accomplish these goals, I designed this research to explore: 1(a) the nature of participants' experiences of abuse in intimate partnerships; 1(b) strategies used by women who had experienced abuse to mitigate or end abuse, and how helpful they found them to be; 1(c) participants' experiences of providing assistance to women who were in relationships with abusive men; (2) participants' perspectives on helpful and unhelpful social reactions in the context of IPVAW help seeking; and finally (3) whether or not women who have experienced abuse share perspectives on what constitutes helpful and unhelpful social reactions with real and potential helpers.

Perspectives in Context

In Q-methodology in general and also in this study, it was important to select as participants those who would be able to interact meaningfully with the study material, i.e., "participants whose viewpoints matter to the subject at hand" (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 71), but who are also not homogenous. To establish participants' suitability for this research, I collected a variety of information about their demographics, abuse victimization experiences, and helping experiences.

Abuse experiences. Among women participants who had experienced abuse, a wide variety of experiences were reported, and they also reported undertaking diverse strategies to attempt to mitigate or end the abuse they had experienced. All participants in this group reported having partners that minimized or rationalized the abusive behaviours in which they engaged. More than 90% of the women in this group reported experiencing forms of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, isolation, behaviours related to male privilege, and intimidation tactics. More than 80% of these women reported being threatened, and also that they had been blamed for their partner's behaviours. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that most women who experience abuse in a relationship will experience multiple forms (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006; Statscan 2013).

It is important to note that some of the 28 men and women participants who represented potential and real helpers also reported experiencing some negative partner behaviours in their relationships. These negative behaviours were reported in relationships with both women and men. However, these behaviours were reported with less frequency and diversity than their counterparts in the lived experience group who identified their relationship experiences and partner's behaviours as abusive. Most importantly, in the context of their relationships, participants in the nonvictim group did not consider (i.e., label) their partner's actions to constitute abuse. Although it is not possible to comment further on the context in which these behaviours occurred in the participants' relationships, research suggests that defining behaviours as abuse is not always immediate, and may be a complex process. Sometimes behaviours that at one point are not considered to 'qualify' as abuse are later considered abusive (e.g., Williston, 2008). Other research has indicated that women are more likely to consider the same

behaviours abusive when they are more severe and occur with greater frequency (Hamby & Gray-Little, 2000; Kearney, 2001). Additionally, people have varying levels of tolerance for behaviours that they believe constitute abuse (Garcia-Diaz et al., 2017).

Strategies used to respond to abuse victimization. Consistent with much of the literature on informal network support, women in this study reported more positive social reactions than negative ones from their informal supporters (e.g., Fanslow & Robinson, 2010; Trotter & Allen, 2009); however, not all participants had positive experiences. All but one participant in the lived experience group reported that they had talked with someone in their informal network about their abusive relationship(s). When asked about specific strategies used by their informal network supporters (for example, talking with someone about how to protect herself or her children), on average, women found the strategies to be useful.

Experiences assisting women who experience abuse. Most participants (82%) reported knowing at least one woman who had experienced abuse. This figure is somewhat higher than the 67% reported in a study that surveyed a random sample of Canadians (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2012). This higher figure may be at least partially attributable to issues of self-selection given that it is likely that individuals who are interested in participating in an in-depth study about IPVAW have a particular interest or personal connection to the topic. Beyond simply knowing a woman who has experienced abuse, most participants also reported that they had provided some form of assistance to the woman or women experiencing abuse.

Concordant with the findings of previous research (e.g., Beeble et al, 2008; Weisz et al., 2007; Sylaska & Edwards, 2005), the most common support reaction provided in this study was emotional, with participants reporting that they provided this kind of

assistance in the majority of the instances they had provided support. Again, in line with previous research, participants reported that they engaged in instrumental and informational support with relatively less frequency (Beeble et al., 2008; Weisz et al., 2007). Regarding how assisting affects the dynamics of ongoing relationships, participants reported that in most cases, their relationship with the woman who was experiencing the abuse did not change after offering assistance or support. Participants did report a change to the relationship a minority of cases; however, most of these changes were reported to be positive. This pattern of change indicates that the support that was provided was likely to have been appropriate to the situation and was welcomed by the woman who received it, and that there were few negative effects on the relationship because of offering support. These findings may indicate that the participants in this study provided assistance that was perceived as neutral or helpful by the women whom they assisted.

Perspectives on Helpful and Unhelpful Social Reactions

The primary aim of this study was to uncover and explore perspectives that exist on what is considered helpful and unhelpful responses to women who seek help for abuse. Three distinct perspectives on helpful and unhelpful social reactions were identified among the participants in this study. The largest number of participants defined the *agency and understanding* perspective. It was characterized by support for a woman's emotional well being, demonstrating a lack of judgment toward the woman, and supporting her autonomy and agency. Participants who defined the *agency and understanding* perspective tended to be women and were very likely to have been survivors of one or more relationships with men who are abusive. Those who defined this perspective viewed tangible forms of support as highly beneficial with the caveat that

tangible support can only be supportive if these strategies follow and stem from emotional support and understanding. Ideally, emotional support will be the substrate upon which more action-oriented forms of support are built. Those aligned with the *agency and understanding* perspective describe a hierarchy of unhelpful responses, with inactive unhelpful reactions (e.g., avoidance or doing nothing) being perceived as more desirable than actively unhelpful reactions like for example, telling her that she is overreacting or misinterpreting what is happening.

The *agency and understanding* perspective aligns well with a feminist, anti-oppressive approach to assistance. It is characterized by a contextual, subjective approach in which the preservation of a woman's agency and sense of self is viewed as paramount. This approach can be characterized as survivor-centric, insofar as it places a focus on the needs, rights, and desires of the woman experiencing abuse (UN Women, 2012). The aim of this approach is to create a supportive environment that will facilitate recovery and a woman's capacity to make decisions about her needs.

The *advice and information* perspective represents a more abstract or theoretical approach to what is considered helpful, as it focuses less on the provision of tangible assistance or emotional support and more on the provision of information or advice. Participants tended towards informational support reactions, working under the presumption that women who are in relationships with abusive men may remain in a relationship or not take steps to mitigate a partner's abuse due to a lack of information about abuse or limited access to resources and specialized services for IPVAW. Participants who contributed to the *advice and information* perspective were on average younger and were comprised of more current university students than the other

perspectives. There were also more men who contributed to this perspective than to the other two, and participants were less likely to have personally experienced victimization.

In the *advice and information* perspective, it is thought that women who experience abuse are best served by helpers who are knowledgeable about IPV, or someone who can access information on behalf of the woman who is experiencing abuse. It is believed that women will find informational resources quite helpful and that in many instances, it is a lack of knowledge or perception that works to keep women in danger. Participants who define the *advice and information* perspective acknowledge that women who are experiencing abuse need to be comfortable with the actions undertaken by their helpers; however, these participants also make assumptions about what women in these situations will want, and that women who are experiencing abuse also may not have sufficient insight into their needs in order to determine what they need from a helper most. At times, the views held by participants in this perspective seem contradictory, and one of the advantages of Q methodology is that it can reveal the idiosyncratic, and at times competing viewpoints that people can simultaneously hold.

Participants in the *advice and information* perspective can be seen to draw on institutional discourses about women who experience abuse. These participants are well-meaning but can be seen to invoke the notion that women who experience abuse may not fully grasp the realities of their experiences and if they do understand their situation, that they may not be aware of steps to take to increase their safety. Conventional characterizations of abused women sometimes highlight their helplessness (real or perceived) and that they are not able to see their situations clearly for what they are (e.g., Walker, 1979). Thapar-Bjorkert (2010) found that victim service advocates sometimes use victim-blaming discourses, though they explicitly try to avoid placing blame on the

victims with and for whom they work and advocate. There is a contradiction in that these participants actively avoid calling women helpless in the face of abuse, yet there is a presumption that a lack of knowledge, confidence or initiative is what maintains women in their relationships. In interviews, participants were careful to avoid victim-blaming discourses, but they did take up elements of institutional discourses, which sometimes position women who experience abuse as helpless or in need of outside intervention and protection. This discourse reflects the findings of Loseke and Cahill (1984) who discuss how experts on women who experience abuse, or people who consider themselves as such believe that their understanding of the situation should be used to inform and provide assistance for those who are experiencing abuse or who are less knowledgeable. It may also be that public awareness campaigns have sensitized people to the nature of IPVAW and available resources and this is what these participants have internalized as being important to convey to women who experience abuse. However, this perspective may also reflect some degree of stereotyped notions about victims of abuse (i.e. as lacking knowledge or being helpless, e.g., Walker, 1979), and are using notions of victim helplessness to form their views.

The content of *advice and information* perspective may be analogized to a phenomenon that has recently been identified and labeled in feminist online media – that of 'mansplaining.' Mansplaining is a neologism used to describe the phenomenon that occurs when someone explains something "without regard to the fact that the explainee knows more than the explainer, often done by a man to a woman" (Rothman, 2012). Mansplaining is also often used to describe instances when a man explains something to a woman who has demonstrated or expert knowledge of a topic (Doyle, 2014). It is reasonable to presume that a woman who is experiencing abuse has more knowledge of

her situation and the options available to her, so mansplaining may be a concept that applies to this situation. Significantly, this perspective is the one that has the greatest proportion of male-identified participants. However, this perspective also appears to be the most variable in terms of the ethnic and cultural identities reported by participants. It also contained the highest proportion of students and the lowest average age. Therefore, it would also be important to tease apart the influence of these personal characteristics on perspective endorsement. Ironically, whereas the participants who espouse this perspective may be the least knowledgeable or experienced regarding IPVAW, they may also be the most motivated to provide information and advice to women who experience abuse.

Of course there is more involved in this perspective than can be explained by stereotyped views of victims and the invocation of mansplaining. Significantly, some young women, and some women with abuse victimization experience also endorsed this perspective. In the interview data, it could be seen that Kamini, a woman in this perspective who had victimization experience, found it valuable to hear from others that her partner's abusive behaviours were not de facto parts of relationships, and that the behaviours could be described as abusive. This suggests that in this perspective there may also be a relative lack of information about the complexities and subtleties of abuse that is present among these women and men. In light of less internalized information about abuse, it would make sense that these participants report finding significant value from receiving advice and information focused responses. So although previous research has found that informational responses are perceived as least helpful across a group of women who experience abuse (e.g., Tacket et al., 2014), for individual women, informational responses may be very helpful. In addition, these participants report having had fewer

personal connections with abuse survivors, and less work or educational experiences related to abuse, however these experiences did not relate significantly to perspective endorsement. In contrast to the *agency and understanding* perspectives, and the *action oriented* perspectives, these participants have been exposed to less, or have internalized less, of the feminist discourses around responding to abuse.

The third perspective that emerged can be described as having an *action orientation.* All but one of the seven women who contributed to this perspective reported that she was a survivor of abuse. These participants placed greater emphasis on tangible, or instrumental forms of assistance. These participants consider women's immediate safety needs to be the primary driver of the kinds of assistance that will be regarded as helpful when she discloses or seeks help for abuse. In discussing help seeking and provision during interviews, participants drew upon threat and risk discourses to contextualize what would be most helpful for women. There was also a pragmatic flavour to this perspective, in that these women considered all other needs or reactions as relatively superfluous so long as there was a sustained threat to a woman's health and well-being. Participants in this perspective also tended to be older and were more likely to be parents than participants in other perspectives. It is possible that they have access to – or are more willing to harness – personal, financial, or social resources to assist victims and may therefore be engaging in more instrumental responses than participants in the other perspectives, and therefore may be more likely to endorse their use and utility. Alternately, it is possible that these participants would not themselves be able to provide instrumental support, but nevertheless believe that it is the most beneficial kind of reaction from a helper.

The *action-oriented* perspective mirrors the *agency and understanding* perspective in important ways – while *agency and understanding* places emotional support needs as the first requirement in the temporal chain of help provision, participants endorsing the action-oriented perspective place safety needs first in a sequence of preferred support reactions. In some ways, the *action-oriented* perspective is a counterpoint or a mirror to the *agency and understanding* perspective in significant ways. However, a key point of departure involves the temporal sequence of what makes reactions more or less helpful. In the *action-oriented* perspective, there is a sense of danger and immediacy that is absent from the *agency and understanding* perspective, and this explains the enhanced focus on instrumental and tangible forms of assistance.

Participants who espouse this perspective are proportionately more likely to have children, therefore they may place differential importance on securing physical and other kinds of safety for their family. Two of the three women in this group with personal experience of abuse victimization report having stayed in a shelter, and this group reports lower household income, on average than the other groups. These factors suggest that these women may live in more precarious positions and have access to fewer tangible resources, or that they may have experienced greater abuse severity. Therefore, receiving practical and physical aid may be of objectively higher value, and is perceived as such.

The finding that most women who had personal experience of IPVAW were concentrated most strongly in the *agency and understanding* perspective and to a lesser extent the *action-oriented* perspective may help to clarify conflicting findings in previous research on the most effective or helpful types of social support for battered women. Results from the chi-square analysis indicated a higher concentration of women with lived experience of abuse in the *agency and understanding* perspective than would be

expected by chance. Although this research is exploratory and cannot be held up as representative of all women who have experienced abuse and their potential helpers, it does point to emotional support strategies as being welcomed most by women who experience abuse. Said a different way, emotional support reactions may be less likely to be perceived as unwarranted or unhelpful by a woman who is experiencing abuse, particularly if a helper also intends to offer other forms of support in addition to engaging in reactions that validate her experience, indicate belief, and do not place blame on her for the victimization. In the literature, there is some support for emotional supports being perceived as the most helpful type of reaction that women can receive when they seek help for IPVAW (Coker, 2002; Thompson, 2000). It is also important to note that for women who are in more precarious situations, as was the case for several women who were associated with the *action-oriented* perspective, more tangible forms of help may be perceived as more immediately beneficial. This interpretation is supported by the findings of Bowker (1984) who studied the support preferences of shelter-residing women, and found that these women preferred instrumentally-oriented responses from their helpers compared to emotional or informational supports.

Advice and information, which is more strongly information-based, would seem to be less valuable to many women who have experienced abuse. However, this is not meant to suggest that these kinds of strategies are without value. Women who are younger and women who may not have had exposure to discussions of abuse or healthy relationship dynamics due to familial or cultural norms may benefit from a helper who uses these strategies. One participant, Kamini, who had experienced victimization herself and whose interview is profiled in the *advice and information* perspective, said that she found it incredibly valuable for friends to provide information about what they thought

was and was not acceptable in a relationship. Participants who did not have personal experience of IVPAW victimization were more likely to represent the *advice and information* perspective than the other two perspectives. This may be explained both by relatively less experience having acted as a helper to a woman who has experienced abuse, and also potentially by less ability to place themselves in her position. It may also be the case that because these participants had less breadth of life experience, and potentially fewer resources to offer, providing information and advice may make them feel as though they can do something for the woman they are trying to assist.

Moderating factors. ***Temporality.*** Relationships with men who are abusive change over time. Usually, abuse increases gradually during an ongoing relationship (e.g., Stark, 2007). Just like abuse within the context of an ongoing relationship varies with the passage of time, so too do women's perceptions of and responses to the abuse. Responses from participants, particularly from those who represent the *agency* and *understanding* perspective, note that the meaning and helpfulness of actions may vary depending on how frequent, diverse, or severe a man's abusive behaviours have become and her readiness to make changes in her situation.

Blame and judgment. There were differences across perspectives regarding how reactions that involved calling abuse 'not normal' or suggesting that abuse was 'unacceptable' were perceived. In the *advice and information* perspective, these reactions were considered to be helpful for a woman to receive and were thought to communicate the notion that a partner's behaviours were not appropriate in the context of a relationship and were not something with which she should have to endure. In contrast, participants in the *agency and understanding* perspective, and to a slightly lesser degree, the *action-oriented* perspective, felt that these reactions give the impression that the helper thinks

that the woman is deviant for getting into or continuing to be in a relationship with an abusive man. Here again the contradictions in viewpoints are illustrated, where at once participants report that women who experience abuse are not deserving of poor treatment, yet they are also positioned as somewhat blameworthy by choosing to remain in the relationship.

Views about women's agency. How agentic a woman in a relationship with an abusive man is perceived to be, as well as how much importance is placed on the preservation of her agency shows variability between perspectives. Those in the *agency and understanding* perspective believed that the support and maintenance of an abused woman's real and perceived agency were paramount regarding what was considered helpful. This orientation contrasts with those in the *advice and information* perspective who indicated that sometimes it would be most helpful to step in and intervene on a woman's behalf if she seemed unwilling or unable to engage in action independently. The *action-oriented* perspective also seems to support more intervention in the form of tangible assistance, but interventions are presumed to be undertaken with the consent of the woman who is experiencing the abuse.

Implications for Practice

Points of consensus. The three perspectives also demonstrated agreement on the relative helpfulness of offering definitional assistance, with most participants viewing these strategies with ambivalence or neutrality. One potential explanation for this pattern relates to the stage in which a woman finds herself at the point where she is likely to disclose to and seek help from an informal supporter. If these women are at the point where they are seeking help outside of their relationship, most women will have identified their partner's behaviour is, at the minimum, a serious problem, and many will actively be

calling their partner's actions abuse by this time. It is also a matter of interest that participants were generally ambivalent about items related to abuse definition or acknowledgment in the Q-sort activity. However, when participants discussed their own experiences of assisting women who were experiencing abuse, definitional assistance was provided in 53% of cases of reported helping. The frequency with which definitional support reactions are offered suggests that despite feelings of ambivalence around their utility, helpers do frequently offer these strategies and find them to be useful from this perspective. No participants with helping experience reported that the provision of definitional reactions offered an indication that these strategies had negative effects on their relationship with the women whom they had assisted. Thus, although participants may have had mixed feelings regarding definitional items from the perspective of a woman who experiences abuse, helpers often do engage in these reactions and find them, at a minimum, not detrimental.

A good deal of agreement exists across all three perspectives on what kinds of reactions are perceived as unhelpful. This convergence suggests that there is a shared view of what is not helpful when a woman discloses or seeks help. It also bears reiteration that although the receipt of emotional support was central to helpfulness for most survivors in this study, it was not central for all. Consequently, simply knowing that emotional support is what is most desired by most women, is not enough. It is also crucial to recognize that there is significant diversity in the kinds of support that are positioned as being most helpful, for whom, and when. Building on this idea, the kinds of reactions that are not perceived as helpful is much more consistent across perspectives, and across survivors and potential helpers alike. This knowledge represents a solid platform from which to build our collective understanding of how to be maximally helpful. In general,

reactions that involved contingencies or attempts to control the woman's choices or behaviours were also viewed as unhelpful across perspectives. It would be warranted in future research to explore the relationship between perspectives on helpfulness and what is actually found to be helpful in practice.

Perhaps the most important takeaway that can be drawn from these findings is that people tend to have similar ideas about what may be considered unhelpful for a woman who experiences abuse. These overlapping views tend to be present regardless of participants' personal experiences of victimization, experiences as helpers, and sociodemographic characteristics. This suggests that there may exist a solid substrate upon which to build effective training programs to enhance effective support provision. There was remarkable agreement that reactions that minimize, deny, or negate the experiences and perceptions of a woman who is experiencing abuse are not helpful. In many circumstances, inaction or avoidance, although not thought of as helpful, may be more desirable than actions that serve to blame a woman or turn against her. This points to a broadly shared cultural knowledge about intimate partner violence, and suggest that the decades of awareness-raising public educational campaigns begun by feminists in the 1970s have had a meaningful effect on knowledge and social norms. Based on these findings, it appears that many people now know to circumvent actively harmful responses, and also that there is a desire to be helpful and to avoid blaming women for their victimization. Significantly, this has been distilled into the perspectives of individuals, and not only those who have explicitly received education or training on how to respond to IPVAW disclosures and help seeking.

Social support. Although there was not a perfect correspondence of social support types mapping on to preferred social reactions for each perspective, there was a

clear patterning of perspective alignment with social support type. Specifically, the *agency and understanding* perspective aligns with emotional support, *the advice and information* perspective can be seen to highlight informational support strategies, and the *action-oriented* perspective places focus on instrumental strategies. These findings corroborate a multidimensional conceptualization of social support, insofar as participants in this study perceive emotional support, tangible support, and informational support as different conceptually and functionally. That each perspective can be interpreted as roughly corresponding to each of these types of support is also a key finding. In the sexual assault literature, it has been found that when helper reactions are devoid of an emotional component, their actions are not perceived as being as helpful as those that also address emotional support concerns (Ahrens & Aldana, 2012; Ahrens, Campbell, Ternier-Thames, Wasco, & Sefl 2007).

The present study also suggests methodological implications for the study of social reactions to IPVAW. The finding that different reactions are perceived with varying degrees of helpfulness for different women has implications for the study of social reactions. Research practices of categorizing reactions as positive or negative a priori oversimplify the complexity of how these reactions are experienced by women who experience abuse. Researchers' categorizations will often, but will not always, align with participants' perceptions, and when studies rely on exclusively quantitative measures these discrepancies may not be evident.

The findings of the present study may serve to shed light on sometimes contradictory findings that studies have shown regarding the kinds of reactions that are perceived as helpful or wanted by women who experience abuse. For example, some studies have found that emotionally supportive reactions are the most desired and helpful

(e.g. Edwards et al., 2011; Moe, 2007), whereas others have found that reactions that focus on instrumental support are more helpful (e.g. Wuest & Merrit-Gray, 1999). Although these findings do at first appear to contradict each other, the apparent inconsistencies in these findings can be explained if these studies have different proportions of individuals who prefer different reactions from their helpers, i.e., one study may include more women that align with the *action-oriented* perspective, who would rate instrumental responses more highly than women who align with the *agency and understanding* perspective, who would feel more favourably toward emotionally-oriented strategies. The findings from this study also suggest that the perceived helpfulness of support reactions may be influenced by the timing or order in which they are offered. Both the *agency and understanding* perspective and the *action oriented* perspective placed significant value on emotional supports, and instrumental supports, respectively. However, the preferred order in which these responses were offered or given was quite clear between perspectives, with the participants in the *agency and understanding* perspective desiring emotional responses that were followed by instrumental responses, and participants in the *action oriented* perspective desiring the reverse order.

Implications for developing a helping culture. The findings from this study reinforce the notion that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. This fact, however, does not mean that there are no helping strategies or types of social reactions that are, for women who experience abuse, more likely to be perceived helpfully or unhelpfully. Acknowledging that there are some general trends towards what may be considered helpful and unhelpful, and for whom, may allow us to develop educational programming that explains and focuses on generally helpful reactions and also offers insight into what kinds of responses potential helpers should avoid. In particular, helpers should avoid

engaging in reactions that serve to directly or indirectly blame the woman for her partner's behaviour. This finding corroborates the decades of feminist research and practice literature that has called for support and understanding for victims, insead of blaming reactions. That participants who defined the perspectives were aligned in their views of victim blaming suggests that feminist discourses and educational messages have been woven into public consciousness on a wide scale. An alternate explanation for participants who shared a focus on nonblame would be that some participants have themselves encountered blame, or have encountered victim-blaming discourses in the wider culture, and recognize their harm. Accordingly, at the macro level, public educational efforts should focus on reducing victim blame, and highlight the nature and dynamics of abuse perpetration and victimization. We have come very far in recent decades in regard to making IPVAW a public issue that is considered a health and social problem in our society. However, work must continue to alter social norms that place blame or responsibility on victims. Bystander approaches have shown promise in creating positive hehavioural, cognitive, and attitudinal change for IPV and sexual assault prevention and response. Bystander theory, developed from Latane and Darley's (1970) work has elaborated the stages that bystanders move through when deciding to act. First, a bystander must notice a problem; second, they must believe that it requires intervention; third, they must decide that they will assume responsibility and intervene; and finally that they have the capacity, efficacy, and skills for effective intervention (Banyard, 2011).

In this study, none of the three perspectives portrayed confronting the perpetrator as being of help to a woman, which at first glance runs counter to what is supported throughout the bystander literature, which encourages bystanders to engage with the negative behaviours of others, and thereby influence change in cultural norms (Banyard,

Plante, & Moynihan, 2004). It is likely that confrontation was not supported by these participants not because they believe that negative behaviour should go unchecked, but rather because their intervention could place themselves and a woman at heightened risk from her partner. Moreover, because most IPVAW does not occur in social settings, and women are most likely to seek help when they feel that they are in danger, a helper intervening with a partner when a woman seeks help may be particularly ill-timed – confrontation may serve to decrease a woman's overall safety. It may be that in the case of IPVAW, to support women's desire for help, while also challenging norms that support abuse, confronting attitudes in everyday situations may a useful bystander approach that carries less risk than overt confrontation.

This study suggests that people are indeed interested in intervening – that is, they think that offering assistance when a woman who is experiencing abuse discloses to them or asks for help is important, and most participants have a self-reported history of intervening. This finding also suggests that intervention or bystander programs for tertiary prevention of IPV/IPVAW may want to place special emphasis on skills for intervening. It is not enough to hold attitudes that support victims, or to have the intent to help. What is important is for people to actually step in and offer effective assistance, when asked to do so, or when appropriate to the situation. The most successful prevention programs involve behaviour scaffolding (Nation, 2003), so it may be appropriate for prevention and education programs to model a variety of behavioural responses that are generally considered helpful for participants. This is so that they will be more likely to engage in helpful responses, and have more confidence in doing so when confronted with real-life helping scenarios. Moreover, effectively preparing potential helpers to offer assistance in the context of IPVAW may require emphasis on later stages in the bystander model, since

it is often the woman experiencing abuse who reaches out for assistance, instead of the bystander having to notice a problem and choose to intervene.

For more targeted outreach, data shows that young women are most likely to experience IPVAW (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006; Statistics Canada, 2013), and also that young adults are the most willing candidates to serve as helpers (e.g., Beeble, et al., 2008). There are additional factors involved in who is likely to help. More specifically, IPVAW and sexual assault research have shown that knowing someone who has experienced abuse increases willingness to intervene (Banyard 2008; Beeble et al., 2008; McMahon, 2010). Additionally, personal experience of victimization is associated with intervening (Beeble et al., 2008). Of course, public education cannot modify this variable, but strategies to increase in-group identification with victims may operate similarly to increase helping behaviours (Baldry, 2014). However, we cannot leave helper gender out of these discussions. Sylaska and Walters (2014) found that men are more likely to hold a victim responsible in IPV scenarios, and this attitude represents an obstacle to men's support provision.

If what participants in this study perceive to be helpful can be used as a proxy for what is found to be helpful in the real world, when considering the findings from the present study in concert with those of previous studies, it is evident that helpers may be most effective if they focus on offering emotional support as a first strategy. The exception to this may be when a woman is in a crisis, and in these instances, focusing on instrumental responses to address immediate risk, and then following these up with emotional supports may be found most helpful. It seems likely that women who have already decided to make large-scale changes in their relationship may welcome instrumental assistance and find it more immediately helpful than women who are in

earlier stages of readiness to make changes. This suggests that helpers should ask about what kinds of assistance they can provide, with the expectation that a specific desired response at a first helping instance may not be desired later in the helping process, and vice versa.

Moreover, programming should include components that are designed to build potential helpers' sense of responsibility for stepping in when the situation is appropriate, and for increasing their confidence in their abilities to intervene effectively and provide responses that are likely to be helpful. Banyard (2008) and Banyard and Moynihan (2011) found that people who reported feeling more responsible for intervening and also who felt more confident about their abilities were more likely to become involved in bystander situations involving IPV. Such training may involve modeling and practice the appropriate intervention skills to achieve feelings of efficacy among informal network members.

Limitations and Strengths

Limitations. Every study carries with it several limitations. As this research was undertaken for a dissertation, there were certain pragmatic limitations on participant recruitment. Although recruiting from a university population as well as from several communities within Southern Ontario allowed for some degree of diversity of participant age, demographic background and experience, there were inherent limitations on my ability to sample representatively the wider Canadian populace. However, in a Q-methodological study, fully representative sampling is not necessary to obtain a participant group that will reveal important differences in perspective. My sampling strategy allowed for the inclusion of both university students and community-dwelling men and women of various ethnic and religious backgrounds, varying educational

attainment and SES, and with some geographic variability. Despite the variability achieved, it is notable that the participants in this study also had a higher educational attainment than the general population. There was also a marked gender imbalance among the potential helpers, both in the university and community groups.

Although there is a notable gender imbalance among helpers in this study, this imbalance is likely to reflect the actual proportions of helpers by gender in vivo closely, given that women are more likely to act as sources of assistance (Beeble et al., 2008; McMahon, 2010). Therefore, this imbalance may be less problematic than it appears at first glance. Moreover, it was not possible to design the study to investigate similarities and differences in the perceived helpfulness of reactions to individuals in non-heterosexual relationships due to the time and material constraints associated with this research. Researching similarities and differences between help preferences in different relationship forms warrants dedicated attention in future research. An additional factor to consider for this study is that of self-selection. Recruitment materials made clear that the study was about attitudes or experiences related to help-seeking and response to IPVAW. It seems unlikely that participants would participate in a longer study if they did not attach some level of importance to these issues, or have meaningful personal experiences that spurred their interest in participation. Moreover, the length of the study required a fairly extensive time commitment, and it therefore is likely that this would act as a deterrent for individuals who felt indifferently toward the issues under investigation. Indeed, the vast majority of participants in this study have known, and have attempted to provide some form of assistance to a woman who has experienced abuse.

Another potential limitation pertains to the condition of instruction under which participants sorted the set of Q-statements. The condition of instruction involved

responding from the perspective of a hypothetical woman who is experiencing abuse in the context of a relationship with a man. An alternate way to have set up the condition would be to ask participants to respond (a) as if the participant were themselves the woman in that scenario who was experiencing abuse, instead of it being a non-self-referential question, or (b) as if they were the helper for a woman who was experiencing abuse. It is plausible that a change in vantage point would have an influence on the way participants judged the helpfulness of particular reactions, though it is difficult to anticipate what changes, if any, would have resulted from a different condition of instruction.

A more nuanced understanding of how women address abuse in their relationship involves a stage model of behaviour change. The Transtheoretical Model (TTM) was originally developed to explain health behaviour change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982). Brown (1997) first applied it to explain how women move from beginning to experience adverse partner behaviours to deciding to leave the relationship or end or mitigate abuse using other tactics. TTM has practical value relevant to understanding 'readiness to change'. The TTM proposes that people move (sometimes nonlinearly) through five stages of readiness. These stages are (1) precontemplation, where a person is not thinking about change, (2) contemplation, where a person considers change, (3) preparation, wherein change is actively planned (4) action, wherein change is enacted, and (5) maintenance, wherein changes are established and sustained. Thus, future research should examine the perspectives of women who are currently in relationships with abusive men and who are at various stages of readiness per the TTM to investigate if and how perspectives on helpfulness cluster as a function of readiness to make changes.

This study involved participants who had previously been in a relationship with an abusive man (except for one woman who reported being with a man who had previously but was no longer engaging in abusive behaviours). Therefore, it was not possible to directly investigate whether helping preferences change based on the stage of the TTM in which a woman is located. It reasonable to expect that women at different stages of readiness to make changes in her situation may prefer different kinds of reactions, or may receive differential benefits from reactions at different times. It would, therefore, be a valuable endeavour to extend this research including women who were currently involved with abusive men and to ascertain a woman's place in the TTM continuum and how this relates to perspective endorsement. It may be reasonable to expect that individuals whose perspectives align with the agency and understanding view are well-equipped to respond to women across the TTM continuum, while those who align with the advice and information perspective may be most helpful for women in the pre-contemplation or contemplation stages, and those who align with the action-oriented perspective may be very effective responders for women in the preparation and action stages of the TTM.

This study does not address the issues faced by women who find themselves in a true absence of an informal network to call upon for support or to intervene for her. Although many women can rely on their natural/informal networks, there are some women in relationships with abusive men who report that they have no one to whom they can turn for assistance (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). It would then be useful to undertake an investigation similar to the present one with formal support providers and women who have turned toward formal services for assistance.

Strengths. We know significantly more about what happens in the courtroom or the examination room than about what happens in the living room. Yet, the living room

may be one of the most important spaces in which to investigate. Of course, as researchers, we are seldom privy to the real-life conversations of people in real time. So, we rely on retrospective accounts, opinions, and hypothetical situations to help us understand what happens in people's social and familial lives.

Researchers often presume that it is necessary to make use of community samples to study IPV. It is true that community-residing women tend to be older and more diverse in terms of backgrounds and SES. However, the diversity and severity of dating abuse experiences reported by the younger women who participated in this study indicate that university samples may be more representative than previously considered. A large proportion of participants with lived experience were traditionally aged university students, many of whom experienced abuse from a male partner before entering University. This observation underscores a need for a greater focus on abuse during adolescence, and also for more dialogue between researchers of adult IPVAW and researchers of dating violence. We should not neglect the fact that university populations do contain substantial numbers of women who have experienced varied, and often severe, forms of abuse. This is true of very young women too (many experienced abuse from dating partners during high school years). That these are largely separate literatures does both areas a disservice given that aspects of lived experience are potentially more alike than we often consider. Although it is necessary to study IPVAW among diverse groups of women, this observation also speaks to the relevance of university populations for studying IPVAW.

Intimate partner violence is a sensitive topic, and survivors are sometimes nervous to participate in research for a variety of reasons, and researchers are concerned with the potential for revictimization and exploitation, which is a warranted concern. At some

point during the study, several of the participants who had experienced abuse disclosed to me that they were nervous participating in a study about abuse. Specifically, some participants mentioned that they were unsure of what would be required of them in terms of disclosure and that they also had some concern that participation would be difficult emotionally. Most participants who experienced these reservations spoke of them towards the end, and some discussed this after we had completed the post study information routine. Encouragingly, without exception, women who spoke with me about initial trepidation reported that they found the Q-sort task to be pleasant to complete and that they were glad that they had decided to participate. Feedback from these and other participants also indicated that they found the Q-sort task to be interactive and engaging. It was my observation that participants remained focused throughout the task and took care and consideration in the completion of their sorts. Participating in research of this nature may also have educational or transformative potential. Several participants in this study reported that the Q-set contained reactions that they had not previously considered as options, and may consequently have more response strategies to draw from if they find themselves in a position to offer assistance in the future.

It would not have been possible to conduct this study without the use of Q-methodology. Q-Methodology permits us to see how participants would contextualize and choose to prioritize their responses to women seeking help for abuse. The forced-choice format requires participants to make difficult decisions and makes the rationale for particular preferences more clear, particularly when these choices were explored in post-sort interviews. This valuable contribution of the methodology is particularly evident in the action-oriented perspective where participants prioritized instrumental responses above emotional responses. This was not due to a devaluing of emotionally focused

reactions, but it was due to a pragmatic concern with first using action oriented strategies to support a woman's immediate well-being. However, had Q-methodology not been used, the contextual factors around these support preferences may not have been revealed and it would be reasonable to conclude that the participants in the action-oriented perspective simply did not find emotionally-focused responses of great import, and the nuance of this perspective would be lost.

A key strength of this study was its use of source and methods triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2001). Involving two groups of participants – women with personal IPVAW victimization as well as a group of non-victims – increased the likelihood of uncovering various perspectives on the kinds of reactions that are helpful and unhelpful. Thus, this strategy supported the development of a richer understanding of this issue than would have been possible by only including either women with lived experience, or those who have not experienced victimization. Additionally, using a variety of data sources (e.g., Q-sort, interviews, surveys) allowed for the collection of various data sources, which when considered in concert form a more complete or holistic view of the issue and allows for a richer interpretation. This also provides additional opportunities for readers to draw conclusions of their own about my interpretations.

Future Research Directions

The findings of this study suggest that women who experience abuse may want different things, depending on specifics of their relationship and their personal background and experiences. As the present findings are exploratory, further research should be conducted to tease these differences apart. It would be beneficial to conduct a parallel examination of social reaction experiences and preferences among LGBTQ+ individuals who experience abuse, as well as an examination of preferences among men

who are victimized by women. The limited literature on disclosure for male victims of sexual assault suggests that male victims meet with less positive or helpful responses (Sylaska & Walters, 2014) than women who are victimized in heterosexual relationships. It would also be of great interest to perform a similar investigation to the present one with formal instead of informal helpers, given that the kinds of reactions that formal helpers provide and believe to be beneficial may be distinctly different from those under investigation here.

Previous research has indicated that women who experience abuse have varying experiences with seeking help depend on whom they choose as a helper and that women are more satisfied with the help that they receive from female friends (Bosch & Bergen, 2006). Moreover, other studies have shown that female relatives and female friends are more likely than other familial and social connections to be sought as helpers. It would be generative to examine in greater detail the relationship of the woman who is disclosing to the disclosure recipient, and to how these pre-existing relationships may influence the types of reactions that are perceived as more or less helpful from both the perspective of the helper and the help recipient. A related issue that warrants more thorough exploration is the gender match between the person seeking help and the helper. The particular circumstance of the abusive situation for which a woman seeks help is also an important consideration. A woman who is experiencing frequent and acute physical abuse may prefer different social reactions when compared to a woman who is experiencing long-term emotional abuse. If a woman is in a very precarious situation, more tangible support strategies may be perceived as more helpful. It will be necessary to consider intersectionality as the notion of what is effective help, and who is an effective helper – when and for whom – is more fully explored.

It will also be important to investigate the role of relationship dynamics in effective help provision. In the qualitative contextualization participants provided to support their viewpoints, a recurring theme was that reactions do not occur in a vacuum. In didactic helping situations in the real world, it seems likely that the relative helpfulness or unhelpfulness reaction will be partially determined by the nature of the pre-existing relationship dynamic between the individuals involved. Thus, a particular reaction may be received in different ways depending on its source. Moreover, the motivation that is behind an action or that is attributed to an action will influence how helpful or effective it is perceived to be by the recipient. It would be informative to replicate and extend this research by administering the Q-sort and asking participants to respond to the condition of instruction with a particular help source in mind (for example, close female friend versus mother, and so on).

It would also be worthwhile to speak with women currently experiencing abuse, given that all the women who participated in this study who have personal experience with victimization were no longer in relationships with abusive men. It may be that women who are actively engaging with decisions about disclosure, help seeking, and receiving responses from others would have different perspectives than women who are looking at this issue retrospectively. It may also be worthwhile to add items that consider the limitations of help seeking in this interactive context.

Future research should place more explicit focus on negative reactions to help seeking and disclosure. It is evident from the literature that women often receive reactions that they consider unhelpful. Indeed, in this study reactions that have been identified as broadly negative in other studies, and those that have the most negative face value were positioned as unhelpful in all three of the perspectives described herein. Despite

participants in this study reporting that these reactions are undesirable, it is clear from other research that women who experience abuse can and do receive negative or unhelpful reactions from their helpers on a regular basis. There may be several reasons then for the findings in this study. First, participants in this study may have demonstrated a socially desirable responding bias, particularly given that the study took place face-to-face and involved a high degree of interaction. Second, self-selection factors may have resulted in the participation of individuals who are more knowledgeable about, or comfortable with, assisting women who experience abuse. Accordingly, these participants may more readily recognize many of the unhelpful strategies as such and may therefore not be the people who would enact them in practice. Third, participants in this study were responding to a hypothetical scenario and were not reporting on actual responses that they have given or received.

It may also be a worthwhile endeavour to recreate this study in a format for service providers (e.g. healthcare providers, law enforcement officers, social workers, and other service providers) to determine the perspectives that exist on help provision in these fields, and the patterning thereof. This type of investigation may serve as a starting point to create a scale for service providers to determine the nature of the perspective that they are working from in their interactions with women who experience abuse. This information could readily be used to inform training initiatives among service providers.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that there is no one-size-fits-all way to approach help provision in the context of IVPAW. However, there are important patterns in help preferences that may be useful to guide people to provide more effective and considered assistance to women who experience abuse. As shown by the relative proportions of

participants representing each perspective, the preferences of women who have themselves experienced abuse tends toward the prioritization of the preservation of agency, and the offer of emotional support coupled with tangible resources when necessary. Where we find more agreement is in the strategies that are perceived as least helpful across perspectives by both women who have experienced abuse and their real and potential helpers, where denials, minimization, and avoidant strategies are almost universally perceived as detrimental. Future public educational initiatives on disclosure should focus on building responder capacity from what appears to be shared perceptions of the kinds of reactions that are considered unhelpful. This focus will allow initiatives to work towards creating safer spaces for disclosure that will ultimately enable more effective social reactions and ultimately, more meaningful and effective support for women who seek to reduce the violence in their lives.

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APPENDIX A

Pilot Q-Set Items

Item no.	Statement
1	Tries to avoid passing judgment on her
2	Tries to take over and fix the situation for her
3	Offers information to the woman about what abuse is and the effects of abuse
4	Talks to or confronts the abusive man about their behaviour
5	Offers or provides a safe place for the woman to stay
6	Lets her know that she is not to blame for her man's actions
7	Only provides assistance if the woman follows their advice
8	Does not expect her to make any immediate decisions about what do to
9	Keeps an escape bag for the woman at their own home
10	Calls police or other law enforcement on the woman's behalf
11	Lets the woman know that abuse is not always physical
12	Tells the woman that she and her man need to figure out a way to work it out themselves
13	Avoids getting involved because only professionals know how to handle the situation
14	Provides information about shelters or other services for intimate partner violence
15	Asks the woman if she is being abused, if suspicious
16	Acknowledges the woman's conflicted feelings and the complex nature of making decisions about the relationship
17	Retaliates physically against the woman's partner
18	Validates the woman's feelings
19	Encourages the woman to leave the abusive partner
20	Suggests that the woman see a counselor or therapist, or gives her information about counseling services
21	Believes that what the woman is saying is true
22	Asks the woman how they can help her
23	Tells the woman to leave the abusive partner
24	Tells the woman that she is overreacting or misinterpreting what is happening
25	Suggests that the woman talk to a religious centre or religious leader
26	Simply knowing about what is going on in the relationship
27	Tells the woman that she needs to get out of the relationship immediately
28	Offers to help or helps the woman find a job
29	Provides direct advice about what the woman should do when asked for advice
30	Tells the woman that she should stay with her partner and try to fix the relationship
31	Avoids getting involved because abuse isn't usually serious
32	Pressures her to make a particular decision that they want her to make
33	Denies that the abuse is occurring

Item no.	Statement
34	Does not get involved unless the woman directly asks for help
35	Shows an active interest in her well-being
36	Assists the woman with safety planning
37	Does not get involved because of concern over unintended consequences that might result from offering help
38	Takes the abuse seriously
39	Provides information about the legal process or help accessing legal services
40	Tells the woman that she should put up with the abuse for the sake of the family and the relationship
41	Avoids getting involved because it puts themselves or the woman at more risk for harm from the abusive partner
42	Takes the side of the abusive partner
43	Asks her what she does to make the abuser angry or cause the abuse
44	Offers information about a variety of resources
45	Tells the woman that what she is experiencing 'qualifies' as abuse
46	Tells the woman's other friends or family members about the abuse
47	Offers or provides assistance with transportation if the woman needs it
48	Provides a variety of suggestions or options about what the woman can do
49	Avoids getting involved, because if it were really bad, the woman would just leave
50	Names or labels what the woman is experiencing as abuse
51	Does nothing
52	Avoids talking about the abuse because it is an embarrassing topic
53	Tells the woman how to fix the situation
54	Offers to or assists with the woman's finances
55	Lets the woman know that abuse usually won't go away and gets worse over time
56	Tries to understand the situation and how the woman feels about it
57	Talks to others to get advice about how to help the woman
58	Tries to break up arguments or fights between the woman and her partner
59	Expresses that the abusive partner is responsible for their own actions
60	Cuts off contact with both the woman and her partner
61	Allows her to vent her feelings
62	Offers to or provides care for pets, if the woman has them
63	Tells the woman that abuse in relationships is not acceptable
64	Pretends that they do not know that abuse is occurring
65	Encourages the woman to call the police
66	Lets the woman know that they are there if she needs anything
67	Offers to provide child care or to help the woman access affordable child care
68	Offers or provides clothing, food, or other resources if the woman needs them
69	Provides information about counseling to the abuser
70	Is emotionally available for the woman when she needs support

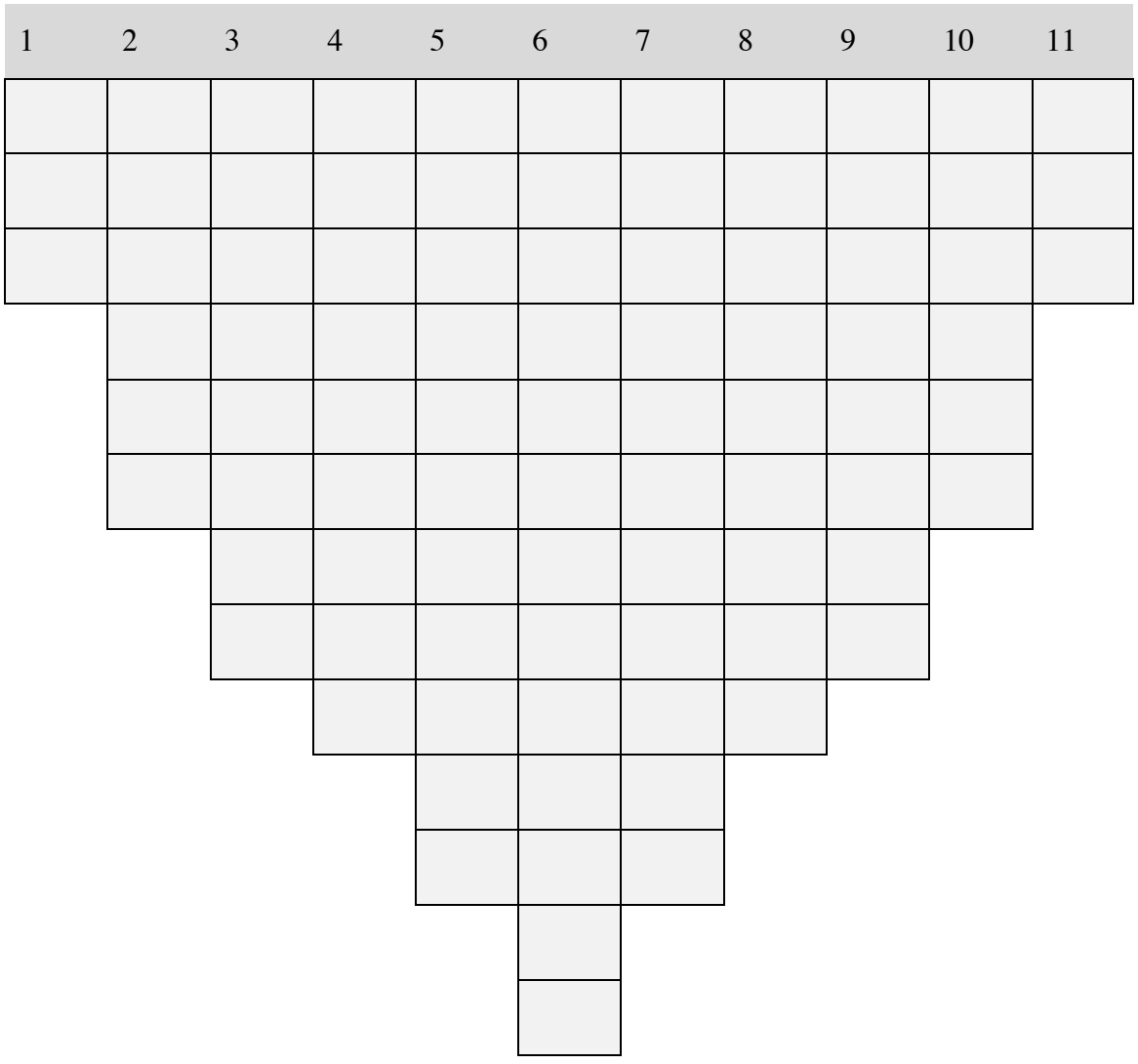
Item no.	Statement
71	Expresses anger toward the perpetrator to the woman
72	Talks to the woman alone
73	Is there to listen
74	Not feeling like they are judging her when she discloses or asks for help
75	Allows the woman to make her own decisions and supports the decisions that she makes
76	Does not pressure the woman to end the relationship
77	Recognizes that the man's actions are abusive when the woman discloses to them
78	Tells her that what she is experiencing is not normal
79	Recognizes that she might not be ready or willing to call what is happening abuse
80	Having a conversation about the nature and impact of abuse in relationships
81	Labels particular behaviours as abusive
82	Understanding that the woman might not be ready to make changes at one point, but may be ready at another time
83	Understanding that a woman may need different things at different points in her help seeking process
84	Understanding that women may want to try to work things out with the man
85	Offers the same helping strategies all of the time
86	That they had personal experience with abuse themselves

Q-Sort Board

Sorting Instruction:

From the perspective of a woman disclosing intimate partner violence or seeking help from intimate partner violence, what reactions from a helper would she find more or less helpful?

Least Helpful Most Helpful



Sorting Instructions

You have 86 cards in front of you, as well as a sorting board. Read carefully the following background and instructions:

This study is looking at helpful and unhelpful social reactions to women who disclose abuse or who seek help for abuse from the people in their lives.

If you have experienced abuse in previous relationships, or have helped or provided support to people experiencing abuse, please consider all of these experiences when you sort your cards.

You will be asked to sort these cards in terms of the following instruction:
From the perspective of a woman disclosing intimate partner violence or seeking help from intimate partner violence, what reactions from other people would she find more or less helpful?

1. Read through each card and make three piles.

In the first pile, place the responses that you think are **most helpful** to women in abusive relationships. Make this pile to your left.

In the second pile, place responses that you think are **least helpful** to women in abusive relationships. Make this pile to your right.

In the third pile, place responses that you think are **neutral**, or that you have **mixed feelings** about, or that you are **not sure** how helpful they are to women in abusive relationships. Make this pile in the middle of the other two piles.
Tips:

- *You can put any number of cards in each pile. Just make sure that you are true to how you feel about the cards.*
- *There are no right or wrong answers.*
- *Continue sorting into these three piles until you have no cards remaining.*

2. You should now have three piles of cards in front of you.

For now, put the 'least helpful' and 'neutral or mixed' piles aside, but make sure that you know which pile is which.

Spread the cards from the 'most helpful' pile in front of you, so that you can see all of them at the same time. Choose the **two cards** that you think are the **most helpful** responses and place them in the **'11' column** of the sort board.

Next, choose the card that contains the next most helpful response and place it in the **'10' column**. Continue selecting the next most helpful responses and place them on the sorting

board, working from the outside inwards. Keep going until you have used all of the cards in your 'most helpful' pile.
Tips:

- *Try not to get worried about the ranking of a specific response (for example, if it is hard to for you decide if a card should be placed in the 11 column or the 10 column). I am looking for a general sense of how helpful you think these responses are.*
- *Don't worry if your 'most helpful' cards reach the middle, or go past the middle of the sorting board. This doesn't mean that I will think that you feel neutrally about these responses, or that you think that they are not helpful. What matters is that as you move from right to left across the sorting board, it means that you find each response a little helpful than the ones on the right.*
- *The order in which cards are placed within a column does not make a difference.*

3. You should now have two piles of cards in front of you.

For now, keep the 'neutral or mixed' piles to the side.

Spread the cards from the 'least helpful' pile in front of you, so that you can see all of them at the same time. Choose the **two cards** that you think are the **most helpful** responses and place them in the **'1' column** of the sort board.

Next, choose the card that contains the next least helpful response and place it in the **'2'** column. Continue selecting the next least helpful responses and place them on the sorting board, working from the outside inwards.

Keep going until you have used all of the cards in your 'least helpful' pile.

4. You should now have one pile of cards in front of you.

Spread the remaining cards in front of you, so that you can see all of them at the same time. Begin with the cards that have the responses that you think are most helpful, and place them in the remaining spaces, beginning at the left side of the empty slots.

Keep going, working left to right (most to least helpful) until you have used all of your cards. Keep going until you have used all of the remaining cards.

5. You have now completed your sorting task.

Please take a moment and review your sort as a whole. Feel free to change the positions of any of the cards on the board, but remember, there are no right or wrong answers! I am looking for your individual perspective towards this topic.

Once you are satisfied, please let me know and we will discuss your sort.

APPENDIX B

Pilot Study Background Questionnaire

Instructions: Please fill out the following questions to the best of your knowledge. Please mark the relevant response with a check or an x, and fill in the blank questions where applicable.

1. With which gender do you identify?
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Intersex
- ☐ Two-spirited
- ☐ Transgender (male to female)
- ☐ Transgender (female to male)
- ☐ Other

2. What option best describes your sexual orientation?
- ☐ Heterosexual/Straight
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Asexual
- ☐ Other

3. What is your age, in years? _____

4. With which ethnicity or ethnocultural groups do you most identify? (Please check all applicable.)
- ☐ White/European Canadian
- ☐ Black/African/Caribbean Canadian
- ☐ Latin/South American Canadian
- ☐ East Asian/Chinese/Japanese Canadian
- ☐ South Asian/Indian/Pakistani Canadian
- ☐ Aboriginal/Metis/First Nations
- ☐ Oceanian or Pacific Islander Canadian
- ☐ Multiple ethnicities (please specify): _____
- ☐ Other (please specify):_____

5. What is your first language? _____

6. For how long have you resided in Canada?
- ☐ Since birth
- ☐ Fewer than 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

7. What is the population of your current city/town of residence?

- ☐ 10,000 or fewer
- ☐ 10,000-25,000
- ☐ 25,000-50-000
- ☐ 50,000-100,000
- ☐ 100,000-250,000
- ☐ 250,000-500,000
- ☐ 500,000-1,000,000
- ☐ 1,000,000+

8. What is your religious affiliation? Please specify (e.g. Muslim, Protestant, agnostic, none):

_____

9. Do you actively practice your religion or consider yourself observant?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No

10. What is your highest educational attainment?

- ☐ Elementary school
- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school diploma or GED
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ College diploma or certificate
- ☐ Some university
- ☐ University degree
- ☐ Some graduate school
- ☐ Graduate or professional degree

11. Are you currently a student?

- ☐ Yes, full-time
- ☐ Yes, part time
- ☐ No

12. Are you currently employed?

- ☐ Yes, full time
- ☐ Yes, part-time
- ☐ Semi-retired
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ No

13. What is your current (or former) occupation? _____

14. Are you a parent?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If you responded 'no' to this question, please skip ahead to question 15 in this section.

14a. How many children do you have? _____
14b. What are the ages of your children? _____

15. Including yourself, how many people live in your household? _____

16. To the best of your knowledge, what is your annual **personal** gross income?
☐ $0 - $30,000
☐ $30,001-$60,000
☐ $60,001-$90,000
☐ $90,000-$120,000
☐ $120,000-150,000
☐ $150,001+
☐ Prefer not to say

17. To the best of your knowledge, what is your annual **household** gross income?
☐ $0 - $30,000
☐ $30,001-$60,000
☐ $60,001-$90,000
☐ $90,000-$120,000
☐ $120,000-150,000
☐ $150,001+
☐ Prefer not to say

18. What is your current relationship status?
☐ Single, not currently in relationship
☐ Currently in relationship
☐ Common-law
☐ Married
☐ Separated/divorced
☐ Widowed
☐ Other (please specify): _____

SECTION B

1. Do you consider yourself familiar with the types of services available for intimate partner violence?

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Neither familiar or unfamiliar
- ☐ Somewhat unfamiliar
- ☐ Not familiar

2. Have you ever taken any courses or attended workshops related to intimate partner violence?

- ☐ Yes, more than once
- ☐ Yes, once
- ☐ No

2a. If you answered 'yes' to the question above, please describe any courses or workshops that you have taken:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Have you ever worked with or volunteered for an organization that assists women who have experienced intimate partner violence?

- ☐ Yes, more than once
- ☐ Yes, once
- ☐ No

3a. If you If you answered 'yes' to the question above, please describe your work and/or volunteer experience:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SECTION C

1. Have you known someone who has experienced abuse in an intimate relationship?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Yes, more than one person
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ No

If you responded 'no' please skip ahead to **Section D**

2. What was your relationship to this person?
- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Family member
- ☐ Coworker
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

3. Did you provide any support to this person (or persons) during or after their abuse experience?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you responded 'yes', please complete questions 3a through 3d. If you responded 'no' please skip ahead to question 5.

3a. Did you help the person (or persons) realize or acknowledge that what they were experiencing might be abuse?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Do not remember

3b. Did you provide information about resources and/or services for abuse to the person (or persons) that you were supporting?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ Do not remember

3c. Did you provide emotional support to the person (or persons) that you were supporting?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure
☐ Do not remember

3d. Did you provide any tangible support (e.g. money, housing, childcare, etc.) to the person (or persons) that you were supporting?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure
☐ Do not remember

4. Did providing or not providing supports change your relationship with this person in any way?

☐ Yes
☐ Not sure
☐ No

If you responded 'yes' or 'not sure', please describe how your relationship changed:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. How long ago, in years, did you have this experience? _____

SECTION D

Part I

1. Have you ever been in a romantic relationship with someone who acted in abusive ways towards you?*(Abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to: physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, and spiritual abuse.)*

☐ No
☐ Yes, once
☐ Yes, more than once

If you responded 'no' please return this package to the researcher.

2. Are you currently in a relationship with a person who is or was abusive towards you?
☐ Yes
☐ No

2a. If you responded 'yes' to the question above, is the person still engaging in abusive behaviours?
☐ Yes
☐ No

3. What was the nature of the relationship with the person who was or is abusive towards you?
☐ Dating
☐ Co-habiting
☐ Common-law
☐ Married

4. What was this person's gender?
☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Intersex
☐ Two-spirited
☐ Transgender (male to female)
☐ Transgender (female to male)
☐ Other

5. For how long were you in a relationship with the person who was abusive towards you? _____ months/years (please circle one)

Part II

If you have been in more than one relationship in which someone was abusive towards you, please fill in the questions below about a second relationship:

1. What was the nature of the relationship with the person who was or is abusive towards you?

☐ Dating
☐ Co-habiting
☐ Common-law
☐ Married

2. What was this person's gender?

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Intersex
☐ Two-spirited
☐ Transgender (male to female)
☐ Transgender (female to male)
☐ Other

3. For how long were you in a relationship with the person who was abusive towards you? _____ months/years (please circle one)

Part III

If you have been in more than two relationships in which someone was abusive towards you, please fill in the questions below about a third relationship:

1. What was the nature of the relationship with the person who was or is abusive towards you?

☐ Dating
☐ Co-habiting
☐ Common-law
☐ Married

2. What was this person's gender?

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Intersex
☐ Two-spirited
☐ Transgender (male to female)
☐ Transgender (female to male)
☐ Other

3. For how long were you in a relationship with the person who was abusive towards you? _____ months/years (please circle one)

APPENDIX C

Checklist of Controlling Behaviors

Lehmann, Simmons, & Pillai (2012)

Instructions: For each of the statements below, please select the box that best explains the abusive behaviour that you or your partner may have experienced within the relationship that brought you here today.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
1	2	3	4	5

Physical abuse

1. Threw something at me
2. Pushed or grabbed me
3. Pulled my hair
4. Choked me
5. Pinned me to the wall, floor, or bed
6. Hit, kicked, or punched me
7. Hit or tried to hit me with something
8. Threatened me with a knife, gun or other weapon
9. Spit at me
10. Tried to block me from leaving

Sexual abuse

1. Physically forced me to have sexual intercourse
2. Pressured me to have sex when I said no
3. Pressured or forced me to into other unwanted sexual acts (e.g. oral, anal, etc.)
4. Treated me like a sex object
5. Inflicted pain on me during sex
6. Pressured me to have sex after a fight
7. Was insensitive to my sexual needs
8. Made jokes about parts of my body
9. Blames me because others found me attractive

Emotional abuse

1. Insulted me in front of others
2. Put down my sexual attractiveness
3. Made out I was stupid
4. Criticized my care of children or home
5. Swore at me
6. Told me I was crazy
7. Told me I was irrational

8. Blamed me for his problems
9. Made untrue accusations

Economic abuse

1. Did not allow me equal access to the family money
2. Told me or acted as if it were "their money, their house, their car, etc."
3. Threatened to withhold money from me
4. Made me ask for money for the basic necessities
5. Used my fear of not having access to money to control my behaviour
6. Made me account for the money I spent
7. Tried to keep me dependent on him for money

Intimidation

1. Moved toward me when he was angry
2. Pounded his fists on the table
3. Hit the wall
4. Smashed or broke something
5. Threw or kicked something
6. Used angry facial gestures
7. Drove angrily or recklessly
8. **Threats to:**
9. Hit or kill me
10. Turn others against me
11. Take the children (if any) away
12. Make sure I didn't have money
13. Show up unexpectedly or to always be watching me
14. Come after me if I left
15. Have me committed

Minimizing/denying

1. Denied that he had abused me
2. Told me I was lying about being abused
3. Insisted that what he did was not so bad
4. Told me to forget about what he did and leave it in the past
5. Told me that abuse was a normal part of relationships
6. Told me that he couldn't remember hurting me
7. Told me I hurt myself when I fell

Blaming

1. Blamed me for his *or her* abusive behaviour saying:
2. It was my fault
3. I deserved it
4. He or she has to teach me a lesson
5. I provoked him or her
6. It "takes two to tango"
7. I hurt him first
8. I asked/dared him or her to hit me

Isolation

1. Told me I couldn't do something
2. Forbade me or stopped me from seeing someone
3. Monitored my time or made me account for where I was
4. Restricted my use of the car
5. Restricted my use of the telephone
6. Listened to my telephone conversations
7. Pressures me to stop contacting my family or friends
8. Made it difficult for me to get a job or pursue a vocation
9. Kept me from getting medical attention
10. Tried to turn people against me

Male privilege

1. Demanded obedience
2. Treated me like a servant
3. Treated me like an inferior
4. Expected me to meet their sexual needs regardless of my needs
5. Treated me like I was helpless or incapable
6. Told me I couldn't get along without him them
7. Had or demanded the final say in decisions
8. Did not allow me to do the things that he thought he had a right to do because he was a man

APPENDIX D

Pilot Interview Guide

1. What is your overall impression of the set of statements that you just sorted?
2. Did you struggle to decide where to place particular cards in the sort board?
3. Did you find any cards very easy to place on the board?
4. Were there any statements that could be worded differently, or better?
5. Were any statements redundant or repetitive?
6. Do you think that there were any kinds of responses that were missing from the options?
7. Do you have any other comments or suggestions about any other study materials?

APPENDIX E

Main Study Background Questionnaire

SECTION A

Instructions: Please fill out the following questions to the best of your knowledge. Please ✗, and fill in the blank questions where applicable.

1. With which gender do you identify?

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Intersex
☐ Two-spirited
☐ Transgender (male to female)
☐ Transgender (female to male)
☐ Other

2. What option best describes your sexual orientation?

☐ Heterosexual/Straight
☐ Lesbian
☐ Gay
☐ Bisexual
☐ Asexual
☐ Other

3. What is your age, in years? _____

4. With which ethnicity or ethnocultural groups do you most identify? (Please check all applicable.)

☐ White/European Canadian
☐ Black/African/Caribbean Canadian
☐ Latin/South American Canadian
☐ East Asian/Chinese/Japanese Canadian
☐ South Asian/Indian/Pakistani Canadian
☐ Aboriginal/Metis/First Nations
☐ Oceanian or Pacific Islander Canadian
☐ Multiple ethnicities (please specify):
☐ Other (please specify):_____

5. What is your first language? _____

6. For how long have you resided in Canada?

☐ Since birth
☐ Fewer than 10 years

☐ More than 10 years

7. What is the population of your current city/town of residence?
☐ 10,000 or fewer
☐ 10,000-25,000
☐ 25,000-50-000
☐ 50,000-100,000
☐ 100,000-250,000
☐ 250,000-500,000
☐ 500,000-1,000,000
☐ 1,000,000+

8. What is your religious affiliation? Please specify (e.g. Muslim, Protestant, agnostic, none): _____

9. Do you actively practice your religion or consider yourself observant?
☐ Yes
☐ Somewhat
☐ No
☐ Not applicable

10. What is your highest educational attainment?
☐ Elementary school
☐ Some high school
☐ High school diploma or GED
☐ Some college
☐ College diploma or certificate
☐ Some university
☐ University degree
☐ Some graduate school
☐ Graduate or professional degree

11. Are you currently a student?
☐ Yes, full-time
☐ Yes, part time
☐ No

12. Are you currently employed?
☐ Yes, full time
☐ Yes, part-time
☐ Semi-retired
☐ Retired
☐ No

13. What is your current (or former) occupation? _____

14. Are you a parent?*
☐ Yes
☐ No

*If you responded 'no' to this question, please skip ahead to question 15 in this section.

14a. How many children do you have? _____

14b. What are the ages of your children? _____

15. Including yourself, how many people live in your household? _____

16. To the best of your knowledge, what is your annual personal gross income?
☐ $0 - $30,000
☐ $30,001-$60,000
☐ $60,001-$90,000
☐ $90,000-$120,000
☐ $120,000-150,000
☐ $150,001+
☐ Prefer not to say

17. To the best of your knowledge, what is your annual household gross income?
☐ $0 - $30,000
☐ $30,001-$60,000
☐ $60,001-$90,000
☐ $90,000-$120,000
☐ $120,000-150,000
☐ $150,001+
☐ Prefer not to say

18. What is your current relationship status?
☐ Single, not currently in relationship
☐ Currently in relationship
☐ Common-law
☐ Married
☐ Separated/divorced
☐ Widowed
☐ Other (please specify): _____

SECTION B

Instructions: Please fill out the following questions to the best of your knowledge. ✗, and fill in the blank questions where applicable.

1. Do you consider yourself familiar with the types of services available for intimate partner violence?

☐ Very familiar
☐ Somewhat familiar
☐ Neither familiar or unfamiliar
☐ Somewhat unfamiliar
☐ Not familiar

2. Have you ever taken any courses or attended workshops related to intimate partner violence?

☐ Yes, more than once
☐ Yes, once
☐ No

2a. If you answered 'yes' to the question above, please describe any courses or workshops that you have taken:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Have you ever worked with or volunteered for an organization that assists women who have experienced intimate partner violence?

☐ Yes, more than once
☐ Yes, once
☐ No

3a. If you If you answered 'yes' to the question above, please describe your work and/or volunteer experience:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SECTION C

Instructions: Please fill out the following questions to the best of your knowledge. Please ✗, and fill in the blank questions where applicable.

What is abuse in a romantic or intimate relationship?
Abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to: physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, and spiritual abuse.

Romantic or intimate relationships can include: dating relationships, cohabiting relationships, and marital relationships.

1. Have you known someone who has experienced abuse in an intimate relationship?*

☐ Yes
☐ Yes, more than one person
☐ Not sure
☐ No

If you responded '**no**' to the question above please skip ahead to **Section D (page 16)**. If you have known **more than one person**, please fill out one set of questions for each person that you have known. You can give information about up to four people you have known who have experienced abuse

PERSON 1 (Note: This section is repeated 3 more times for persons 2-4)

1. What was your relationship to this person?
☐ Friend
☐ Family member
☐ Coworker
☐ Other (please specify): _____

2. How long ago, in years, did you have this experience? _____

3. Did you provide any support to this person (or persons) during or after their abuse experience? *
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I knew this person after their abusive relationship ended or the abuse stopped

*If you responded 'yes' to the question above, please complete questions 4-8 below. If you responded 'no' please skip ahead to Person 2 (page 9), or if you have not known any more people who have experienced abuse, skip ahead to Section D (page 15).

4. Did you think that you may have helped the person realize or acknowledge that what they were experiencing might be abuse?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure
☐ Do not remember

5. Did you provide information about resources and/or services for abuse to this person?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure
☐ Do not remember

6. Did you provide emotional support to this person?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure
☐ Do not remember

7. Did you provide any tangible support (e.g. money, housing, childcare, etc.) to this person?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure
☐ Do not remember

8. Did providing or not providing supports change your relationship with this person in any way?

☐ Yes
☐ Not sure
☐ No

If you responded 'yes' or 'not sure', please describe how your relationship changed:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SECTION D

Instructions: Please fill out the following questions to the best of your knowledge. Please ✗, and fill in the blank questions where applicable.

Abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to: physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, and spiritual abuse.

1. Have you ever been in a romantic relationship with someone who acted in abusive ways towards you?

☐ No
☐ I'm not sure
☐ Yes, once
☐ Yes, more than once

If you responded 'yes, more than once' you will have an opportunity to answer questions for up to three relationship in which a partner may have behaved in abusive ways towards you.

2. Are you currently in a relationship with a person who is or was abusive towards you?
☐ Yes
☐ No

2a. If you responded 'yes' to the question above, is the person still engaging in abusive behaviours?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Please respond to the following questions (on the next page) if you have been involved in one or more relationships where your partner behaved in abusive ways. Please also respond if you are not sure whether any of your partners have behaved in abusive ways towards you.

If you have never been in a relationship with someone who was or may have been abusive towards you, please move ahead to Section E (page 19).

PARTNER A

1. What was the nature of the relationship with the person who was or is abusive towards you?

☐ Dating
☐ Co-habiting
☐ Common-law
☐ Married

2. What was this person's gender?

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Intersex
☐ Two-spirited
☐ Transgender (male to female)
☐ Transgender (female to male)
☐ Other

3. For how long were you in a relationship with the person who was abusive towards you? _____ months/years (please circle one)

PARTNER B

If you have been in more than one relationship in which someone was or may have been abusive towards you, please fill in the questions below about a second relationship:

1. What was the nature of the relationship with the person who was or is abusive towards you?

☐ Dating
☐ Co-habiting
☐ Common-law
☐ Married

2. What was this person's gender?

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Intersex
☐ Two-spirited
☐ Transgender (male to female)
☐ Transgender (female to male)
☐ Other

3. For how long were you in a relationship with the person who was abusive towards you? _____ months/years (please circle one)

PARTNER C

If you have been in more than two relationships in which someone was or may have been abusive towards you, please fill in the questions below about a third relationship:

1. What was the nature of the relationship with the person who was or is abusive towards you?

☐ Dating
☐ Co-habiting
☐ Common-law
☐ Married

2. What was this person's gender?

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Intersex
☐ Two-spirited
☐ Transgender (male to female)
☐ Transgender (female to male)
☐ Other

3. For how long were you in a relationship with the person who was abusive towards you? _____ months/years (please circle one)

APPENDIX F

Intimate Partner Violence Strategies Index

SECTION F

Instructions: If you have been physically, emotionally, or otherwise mistreated by a current or former partner, what strategies have you used to try to stop or reduce the mistreatment? Please circle how helpful you found each strategy, or check "did not use" if you did not use a particular strategy.
If you have experienced mistreatment in more than one previous relationship, please consider all of these relationships when you are responding.

If you have not experienced abuse or mistreatment from a current or former partner, please skip ahead to Section G (page 24).

Did not use	Not at all helpful				Extremely helpful
□	1	2	3	4	5

Formal Network

1. Tried to get help from clergy [religious leader]
2. Tried to get help from her employer or coworker
3. Talked to a doctor or nurse about abuse
4. Called [or visited] a mental health counselor for yourself
5. Tried to get him [partner] counseling for violence
6. Stayed in shelter
7. Talked to someone at a domestic violence program, shelter, or hotline
8. Tried to get help for yourself for alcohol or substance abuse
9. Tried to get him help for alcohol or substance abuse

Legal

1. Filed a petition for CPO [for a restraining order]
2. Filed or tried to file criminal charges
3. Sought help from legal aid
4. Called police

Safety Planning

1. Hid car or house keys
2. Kept money and other valuables hidden

3. Developed a code so that others would know that I was in danger
4. Worked out an escape plan
5. Removed or hid weapons
6. Kept important phone numbers I could use to get help
7. Kept an extra supply of basic necessities for myself/children
8. Hid important papers from him [partner]
9. Put a knife, gun, or other weapon where I could get it
10. Changed locks or somehow improved security

Informal Network

1. Talked to family or friends about what to do to protect myself/children [and/or my children]
2. Stayed with family or friends
3. Sent children to stay with friends or relatives
4. Made sure there were other people around

Resistance

1. Fought back physically
2. Slept separately
3. Refused to do what he [partner] said
4. Used or threatened to use a weapon against him
5. Left home to get away from him
6. Ended (or tried to end) the relationship
7. Fought back verbally

Placating

1. Tried to keep things quiet for him [partner]
2. Did whatever he [partner] wanted to stop the violence
3. Tried not to cry during the violence
4. Tried to avoid him [partner]
5. Tried to avoid an argument with him [partner]

APPENDIX G

Main Study Q-Set, Sorting Board, and Sorting Instructions

Item no.	Statement	Inspiration/ Source(s)	Type of Support
1	Tries to avoid passing judgment on her	Latta & Goodman, 2011, Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010.	Emotional
2	Tries to take over and fix the situation for her	Nicolaidis, 2002.	Instrumental
3	Offers information about what abuse is and the effects of abuse	Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010, Sullivan et al., 1992.	Informational
4	Talks to or confronts the abusive man about his behaviour	Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010; Latta & Goodman, 2011	Instrumental
5	Offers or provides a safe place for her to stay	Beeble et al., 2008; Haj-Yahia, & Eldar-Avidan, 2001, Latta & Goodman, 2011, Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010	Instrumental
6	Lets her know that she is not to blame for her partner's actions	Latta & Goodman, 2011, Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993, Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010, Nicolaidis, 2002.	Emotional/ Informational
7	Only provides assistance to her if she follows their advice	Bosch & Bergen, 2006	Instrumental
8	Does not expect her to make any immediate decisions about what to do	Haj-Yahia, & Eldar-Avidan, 2001, Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993	Emotional/ Instrumental
9	Keeps an escape bag for her at their own home	Cluss et al., 2006	Instrumental
10	Calls police or other law enforcement on her behalf	Cluss et al., 2006, Saunders, Lynch, Grayson, & Linz, 1987, Trotter & Allen, 2009	Instrumental
11	Lets her know that abuse is not always physical	Ismail, Berman, & Ward-Griffin, 2007, Walters, 2011	Informational
12	Tells her that they need to figure out a way to work it out for themselves	Haj-Yahia, & Eldar-Avidan, 2001, Latta & Goodman, 2011, Popescu et al., 2009	Emotional/ Informational

Item no.	Statement	Inspiration/ Source(s)	Type of Support
13	Avoids getting involved only professionals know how to handle these situations	Researcher-generated	Avoidant
14	Provides information about shelters or other services for intimate partner violence	Beeble et al., 2008; Latta & Goodman, 2011, Saunders, Lynch, Grayson, & Linz, 1987	Informational
15	Asks her if she is being abused, if they are suspicious	Gill, 2004, Latta & Goodman, 2011, Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010, Nicolaidis, 2002.	Emotional/ Informational
16	Acknowledges her conflicted feelings and the complex nature of making decisions	Latta & Goodman, 2011	Emotional
17	Retaliates physically against her partner	Magnussen et al., 2008.	Instrumental
18	Validates her feelings	Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010, Trotter & Allen, 2009	Emotional
19	Encourages her to leave the abusive partner	Ahrens et al., 2010, Cluss et al., 2006, Dell & Korotana, 2000 Latta & Goodman, 2011, Nicolaidis, 2002, Trotter & Allen, 2009	Informational
20	Suggests that she see a counsellor or therapist	Beeble et al., 2008; Latta & Goodman, 2011	Informational
21	Believes that what she is saying is true	Cluss et al., 2006, Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010, Popescu et al., 2009	Emotional
22	Asks her how they can help her	Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010	Emotional/ Instrumental
23	Tells her to leave the abusive partner	Edwards et al., 2012; Dell & Korotana, 2000.	Informational
24	Tells her that she is overreacting, or misinterpreting what is happening	Ismail, Berman, & Ward-Griffin, 2007	Emotional/ Informational
25	Suggests that she talk to a religious leader	Beeble et al., 2008; Saunders, Lynch, Grayson, & Linz, 1987	Informational
26	Just having someone else know about what is going on in the relationship	Researcher-generated	Emotional

Item no.	Statement	Inspiration/Source(s)	Type of Support
27	Tells her that she needs to get out immediately	Dell & Korotana, 2000	Informational
28	Offers to help, or helps her find a job	Sullivan et al., 1992	Instrumental
29	Provides direct advice when asked to give advice	Latta & Goodman, 2011	Informational
30	Tells her she should stay and try to fix the relationship	Ahrens et al., 2010, Trotter & Allen, 2009	Informational
31	Avoids getting involved abuse isn't usually serious	Edwards et al., 2012	Avoidant
32	Pressures her to make a particular decision that they want her to make	Cluss et al., 2006	Instrumental
33	Denies that the abuse is occurring	Latta & Goodman, 2011	Avoidant
34	Does not get involved unless she directly asks for their help	Latta & Goodman, 2011	Avoidant
35	Shows an ongoing, active interest in her well-being	Cluss et al., 2006	Emotional
36	Assists her with safety planning	Latta & Goodman, 2011, Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010	Instrumental
37	Does not get involved concern over unintended consequences that might result from helping	Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010	Avoidant
38	Takes the abuse seriously	Edwards et al., 2012; Gill, 2004, Ismail, Berman, & Ward-Griffin, 2007, Yoshihama, 2002.	Emotional
39	Provides information about or help accessing legal services	Beeble et al, 2008; Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010, Sullivan et al., 1992	Informational
40	Tells her that she should put up with the abuse for the sake of the family	Ahrens et al., 2010, Latta & Goodman, 2011, Popescu et al., 2009, Yoshihama 2002.	Informational
41	Avoids getting involved because it puts the woman or themselves at more risk for harm	Goodkind et al., 2003; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983	Avoidant
42	Takes the side of the abusive partner	Magnussen et al., 2008.	Emotional
43	Asks what she does to make the abuser angry or cause the abuse	Yoshihama 2002.	Emotional/ Informational
44	Offers information about a variety of resources	Ahrens et al., 2010.	Informational

Item no.	Statement	Inspiration/Source(s)	Type of Support
45	Tells her that what she is experiencing qualifies as abuse	Enander & Holmberg, 2008	Informational/ Definitional
46	Tells her other friends or family members about the abuse	Latta & Goodman, 2011	Instrumental
47	Offers to or provides assistance with transportation if needed	Sullivan et al., 1992	Instrumental
48	Provides a variety of suggestions or options about what she can do	Nicolaidis, 2002.	Informational
49	Avoids getting involved, because if it were really that bad she would leave	Researcher-generated	Informational
50	Names or labels what she is experiencing as abuse	Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Latta & Goodman, 2011	Informational/ Definitional
51	Does nothing	Weisz et al., 2007; Saunders, Lynch, Grayson, & Linz, 1987	Avoidant
52	Avoids talking about abuse because it is embarrassing	Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010	Avoidant
53	Tells her how to fix the situation	Cluss et al., 2006	Informational
54	Offers to, or assists her with her finances	Beeble et al, 2008	Instrumental
55	Lets her know that abuse usually won't go away on its own and usually gets worse over time	Dell & Korotana, 2000, Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010	Informational
56	Tries to understand the situation and how she feels about it	Latta & Goodman, 2011	Emotional
57	Talks to others to get advice about how to help her	Latta & Goodman, 2011	Instrumental/ Informational
58	Tries to break up arguments or fights between her and her partner	Latta & Goodman, 2011	Instrumental
59	Tells her that her partner is responsible for his own actions	Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993	Informational
60	Cuts off contact with both her and her partner	Latta & Goodman, 2011	Avoidant
61	Allows her to vent her feelings	Beeble et al., 2008; Edwards et al., 2012; Trotter & Allen, 2009	Emotional
62	Offers to or provides care for pets, if she has them	Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010	Instrumental
63	Tells her that abuse in relationships is not acceptable	Cluss et al., 2006, Latta & Goodman, 2011	Informational

Item no.	Statement	Inspiration/Source(s)	Type of Support
64	Pretends that they do not know that abuse is occurring	Ferraro & Johnson, 1983, Latta & Goodman, 2011	Avoidant
65	Encourages her to call the police	Cluss et al., 2006, Haj-Yahia, & Eldar-Avidan, 2001, Latta & Goodman, 2011, Saunders, Lynch, Grayson, & Linz, 1987Trotter & Allen, 2009	Informational/ instrumental
66	Lets her know they are there if she needs anything	Researcher-generated	Emotional
67	Offers to provide child care or to help access child care	Haj-Yahia, & Eldar-Avidan, 2001, Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010,	Instrumental
68	Offers or provides clothing, food, or other resources	Lempert, 1997, Sullivan et al., 1992	Instrumental
69	Provides information about counselling to the abuse	Latta & Goodman, 2011	Informational
70	Is emotionally available for her	Beeble et al., 2008; Haj-Yahia, & Eldar-Avidan, 2001	Emotional
71	Expresses anger toward the perpetrator to her	Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993	Emotional
72	Talks to her alone	Nicolaidis, 2002	Emotional
73	Is there to listen	Beeble et al., 2008; Cluss et al., 2006, Latta & Goodman, 2011, Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010, Trotter & Allen, 2009	Emotional
74	Not feeling like they are judging her when she talks to them	Latta & Goodman, 2011	Emotional
75	Allows her to make her own decisions and supports the decisions that she makes	Cluss et al., 2006, Latta & Goodman, 2011; Neighbours, Friends & Families, 2010, Nicolaidis, 2002.	Emotional/ Instrumental
76	Does not pressure her to end the relationship	Nicolaidis, 2002.	Emotional/ Instrumental
77	Recognizes that the partner's actions are abusive when the woman discloses to them	Researcher-generated	Informational
78	Tells her that what she is experiencing is not normal	Researcher-generated	Informational

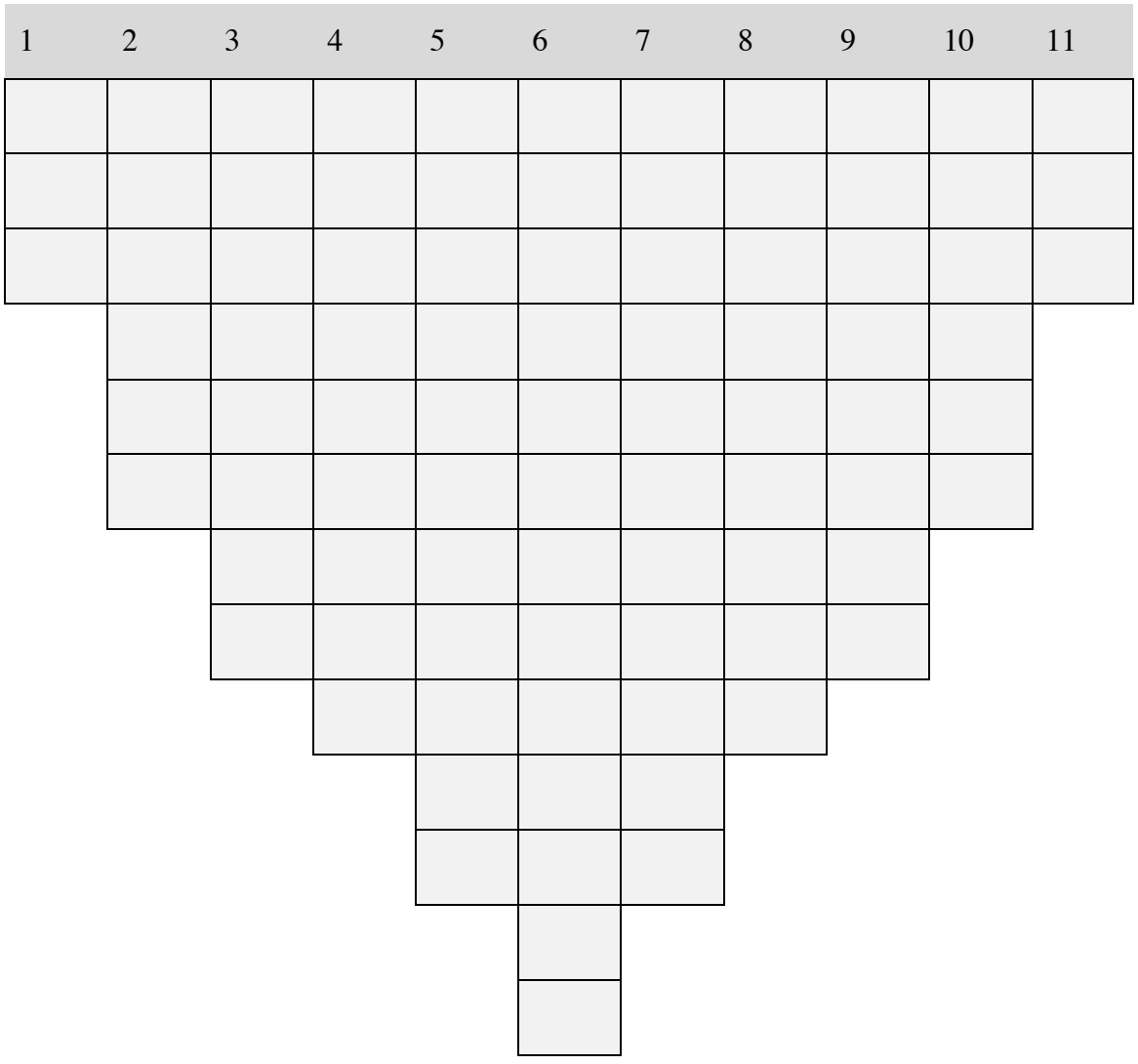
Item no.	Statement	Inspiration/ Source(s)	Type of Support
79	Recognizes she might not be ready to call what is happening abuse	Researcher-generated	Emotional
80	Has a conversation about the nature and impact of abuse in relationships	Researcher-generated	Informational
81	Labels particular behaviours as abusive	Researcher-generated	Definitional
82	Understanding that she might not be ready to make changes at one time, but may be ready to at a different time	Researcher-generated	Emotional
83	Understanding that she might need different things at different points in time	Researcher-generated	Emotional/ Instrumental
84	Understanding she may want to try to work things out with her partner	Researcher-generated	Emotional
85	Offering the same helping strategies all of the time	Researcher-generated	Mixed
86	Knowing that that the helper had personal experience with abuse	Researcher-generated	Informational/ Emotional
87	Encouraging her to seek, or goes with her to obtain medical care	Pilot-generated	Informational/ Instrumental

Q-Sort Board

Sorting Instruction:

From the perspective of a woman disclosing intimate partner violence or seeking help from intimate partner violence, what reactions from a helper would she find more or less helpful?

Least Helpful Most Helpful



Sorting Instructions

You have 87 cards in front of you, as well as a sorting board. Please read the following instructions:
This study is looking at helpful and unhelpful social reactions to women who disclose abuse or who seek help for abuse from the people in their lives.

If you have experienced abuse in previous relationships, or have helped or provided support to people experiencing abuse, please consider all of these experiences when you sort your cards.

You will be asked to sort these cards in terms of the following instruction:
From the perspective of a woman disclosing intimate partner violence or seeking help from intimate partner violence, what reactions from other people would she find more or less helpful?

1. Read through each card and make **three piles**.

In the first pile, place the responses that you think are **most helpful** to women in abusive relationships. Make this pile to your right.

In the second pile, place responses that you think are **least helpful** to women in abusive relationships. Make this pile to your left.

In the third pile, place responses that you think are **neutral**, or that you have **mixed feelings** about, or that you are **not sure** how helpful they are to women in abusive relationships. Make this pile in the middle of the other two piles.
Tips:

- *You can put any number of cards in each pile. Just make sure that you are true to how you feel about the cards.*
- *There are no right or wrong answers.*
- *Continue sorting into these three piles until you have no cards remaining.*

2. You should now have three piles of cards in front of you.

For now, put the 'least helpful' and 'neutral or mixed' piles aside, but make sure that you know which pile is which.

Spread the cards from the 'most helpful' pile in front of you, so that you can see all of them at the same time. Choose the **two cards** that you think are the **most helpful** responses and place them in the '**11' column** of the sort board.

Next, choose the card that contains the next most helpful response and place it in the **'10' column**. Continue selecting the next most helpful responses and place them on the sorting board, working from the outside inwards.

Keep going until you have used all of the cards in your 'most helpful' pile.
Tips:

- *Try not to get worried about the ranking of a specific response (for example, if it is hard to for you decide if a card should be placed in the 11 column or the 10 column). I am looking for a general sense of how helpful you think these responses are.*
- *Don't worry if your 'most helpful' cards reach the middle, or go past the middle of the sorting board. This doesn't mean that I will think that you feel neutrally about these responses, or that you think that they are not helpful. What matters is that as you move from right to left across the sorting board, it means that you find each response a little helpful than the ones on the right.*
- *The order in which cards are placed within a column does not make a difference.*

3. You should now have two piles of cards in front of you.

For now, keep the 'neutral or mixed' piles to the side.

Spread the cards from the 'least helpful' pile in front of you, so that you can see all of them at the same time. Choose the **two cards** that you think are the **most helpful** responses and place them in the **'1' column** of the sort board.

Next, choose the card that contains the next least helpful response and place it in the **'2'** column. Continue selecting the next least helpful responses and place them on the sorting board, working from the outside inwards.

Keep going until you have used all of the cards in your 'least helpful' pile.

4. You should now have one pile of cards in front of you.

Spread the remaining cards in front of you, so that you can see all of them at the same time. Begin with the cards that have the responses that you think are most helpful, and place them in the remaining spaces, beginning at the left side of the empty slots.

Keep going, working left to right (most to least helpful) until you have used all of your cards. Keep going until you have used all of the remaining cards.

5. You have now completed your sorting task.

Please take a moment and review your sort as a whole. Feel free to change the positions of any of the cards on the board, but remember there are no right or wrong answers! I am looking for your individual perspective towards this topic.

Once you are satisfied, please let me know and we will discuss your sort.

APPENDIX H

Interview Guide – Main Study

1. What is your overall impression of the set of statements that you just sorted?
2. Did you struggle to decide where to place particular cards in the sort board?
3. Did you find any cards very easy to place on the board?
4. Do you think that there were any kinds of responses that were missing from the options?
5. How would you describe your general perspective toward how helpers respond to abused women's disclosures of abuse and their help seeking?
6. How important do you think that friends and family members' help is for women who experience abuse?
7. How do you think that other people can help or be unhelpful for women who experience abuse?

APPENDIX I

Distinguishing Statements

Statements that Distinguish Perspective 1 from Perspectives 2 and 3				
			Rank	
No.	Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
56*	Tries to understand the situation and how she feels about it	4	2	0
16*	Acknowledges her conflicted feelings and the complex nature of making decisions about the relationship	4	1	2
18	Validates her feelings	4	3	1
74*	Not feeling like they are judging her when she discloses or asks for help	4	1	0
8*	Does not expect her to make any immediate decisions about what do to	3	0	0
82*	Understanding that she might not be ready to make changes at one point, but may be ready at another time	3	1	1
83*	Understanding that she may need different things at different points in her help seeking process	3	1	2
79*	Recognizes that she might not be ready or willing to call what is happening abuse	3	1	1
6	Lets her know that she is not to blame for her man's actions	3	4	0
1*	Tries to avoid passing judgment on her	2	2	0
72*	Talks to her alone	2	1	0
26	Just having someone else know about what is going on in the relationship	2	0	1
84*	Understanding that she may want to try to work things out with the man	2	-1	0
47	Offers or provides assistance with transportation if she needs it	1	-1	3
59*	Expresses that the abusive partner is responsible for their own actions	1	3	-1

68	Offers or provides clothing, food, or other resources if she needs them	1	0	5
62*	Offers to or provides care for pets, if she has them	0	-2	3
20*	Suggests that she see a counsellor or therapist, or gives her information about counselling services	0	3	4
39*	Provides information about the legal process or help accessing legal services	0	2	4
63*	Tells her that abuse in relationships is not acceptable	0	5	-2
55	Lets her know that abuse usually won't go away and gets worse over time	0	2	1
45*	Tells her that what she is experiencing qualifies as abuse	0	2	1
65*	Encourages her to call the police	-1	0	4
27*	Tells her that she needs to get out of the relationship immediately	-1	0	-1
69*	Provides information about counselling to the abuser	-2	-1	2
10	Calls police or other law enforcement on her behalf	-2	-1	3
51*	Does nothing	-3	-5	-5

Note. All items are significant at $p < .05$; * denotes significance at $p < .01$

Statements that Distinguish Perspective 2 from Perspectives 1 and 3

		Rank		
No.	Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
63*	Tells her that abuse in relationships is not acceptable	0	5	-2
6	Lets her know that she is not to blame for her man's actions	3	4	0
78*	Tells her that what she is experiencing is not normal	0	4	0
59*	Expresses that the abusive partner is responsible for their own actions	1	3	-1
18	Validates her feelings	4	3	1
3	Offers information to her about what abuse is and the effects of abuse	0	3	1
20	Suggests that she see a counsellor or therapist, or gives her information about counselling services	0	3	4
56	Tries to understand the situation and how she feels about it	4	2	0
39*	Provides information about the legal process or help accessing legal services	0	2	4
1	Tries to avoid passing judgment on her	2	2	0
19*	Encourages her to leave the abusive partner	1	0	-1
65*	Encourages her to call the police	-1	0	4
75*	Allows her to make her own decisions and supports the decisions that she makes	3	0	3
68	Offers or provides clothing, food, or other resources if she needs them	1	0	5
47*	Offers or provides assistance with transportation if she needs it	1	-1	3
69*	Provides information about counselling to the abuser	-2	-1	2
53	Tells her how to fix the situation	-2	-1	-1
76	Does not pressure her to end the relationship	1	-1	0
10	Calls police or other law enforcement on her behalf	-2	-1	3
62*	Offers to or provides care for pets, if she has them	0	-2	3

Note. All items are significant at $p < .05$; * denotes significance at $p < .01$

Statements that Distinguish Superordinate Perspective 3 from Superordinate Perspectives 1 and 2

No.	Item	Rank Factor 1	Rank Factor 2	Rank Factor 3
14*	Provides information about shelters or other services for intimate partner violence	1	1	5
5*	Offers or provides a safe place for her to stay	2	2	5
68*	Offers or provides clothing, food, or other resources if she needs them	1	0	5
36*	Assists her with safety planning	1	3	4
87*	Encouraging her to seek or goes with her to seek medical care	0	0	4
39*	Provides information about the legal process or help accessing legal services	0	2	4
67*	Offers to provide child care or to help her access affordable child care	1	0	4
65*	Encourages her to call the police	-1	0	4
20	Suggests that she see a counsellor or therapist, or gives her information about counselling services	0	3	4
44*	Offers information about a variety of resources	1	1	3
47	Offers or provides assistance with transportation if she needs it	1	-1	3
62*	Offers to or provides care for pets, if she has them	0	-2	3
10*	Calls police or other law enforcement on her behalf	-2	-1	3
25*	Suggests that she talk to a religious centre or religious leader	-1	-1	3
28*	Offers to help or helps her find a job	0	0	2
73*	Is there to listen	5	5	2
38*	Takes the abuse seriously	5	5	2
69*	Provides information about counselling to the abuser	-2	-1	2
61*	Allows her to vent her feelings	4	4	1
18	Validates her feelings	4	3	1
21*	Believes that what she is saying is true	5	4	0
35*	Shows an ongoing, active interest in her well-being	3	3	0
22*	Asks her how they can help her	3	4	0

56	Tries to understand the situation and how she feels about it	4	2	0
6*	Lets her know that she is not to blame for her man's actions	3	4	0
1	Tries to avoid passing judgment on her	2	2	0
15*	Asks her if she is being abused, if suspicious	1	2	-1
59*	Expresses that the abusive partner is responsible for their own actions	1	3	-1
63*	Tells her that abuse in relationships is not acceptable	0	5	-2
31	Avoids getting involved because abuse isn't usually serious	-4	-4	-2
58	Tries to break up arguments or fights between her and her partner	-2	-2	-3
71*	Expresses anger toward the perpetrator to her	-1	-2	-4

Note. All items are significant at $p < .05$; * denotes significance at $p < .01$

APPENDIX J

Consensus Statements

Consensus Statements		Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
Item	Statement	Rank	z-score	Rank	z-score	Rank	z-score
2	Tries to take over and fix the situation for her	-4	-1.44	-2	-1.07	-3	-1.28
4*	Talks to or confronts the abusive man about his behaviour	-3	-1.19	-3	-1.14	-4	-1.37
7*	Only provides assistance if she follows their advice	-3	-1.14	-2	-1.11	-3	-1.37
9*	Keeps an escape bag for her at their own home	1	0.28	0	0.04	1	0.44
12*	Tells her that she and her partner need to figure out a way to work it out themselves	-3	-1.18	-3	-1.31	-3	-1.27
13*	Avoids getting involved because only professionals know how to handle these situations	-2	-1.05	-3	-1.20	-2	-0.98
17*	Retaliates physically against her partner	-3	-1.33	-4	-1.58	-4	-1.64
24*	Tells her that she is overreacting or misinterpreting what is happening	-5	-1.84	-4	-1.61	-4	-1.48
30*	Tells her that she should stay with her partner and try to fix the relationship	-4	-1.35	-3	-1.33	-3	-1.15
32*	Pressures her to make a particular decision that they want her to make	-3	-1.15	-2	-1.12	-3	-1.29
33*	Denies that the abuse is occurring	-5	-1.75	-5	-1.94	-5	-1.89
34*	Does not get involved unless she directly asks for help	-1	-0.35	-2	-0.68	-2	-0.74

37*	Does not get involved because of concern over unintended consequences that might result from offering help	-2	-0.92	-2	-0.99	-2	-0.95
40*	Tells her that she should put up with the abuse for the sake of the family and the relationship	-4	-1.56	-5	-1.83	-4	-1.53
41*	Avoids getting involved because it puts themselves or the woman at more risk for harm from the abusive partner	-2	-0.79	-3	-1.14	-2	-1.08
42*	Takes the side of the abusive partner	-5	-1.88	-4	-1.81	-5	-1.77
43*	Asks her what she does to make the abuser angry or cause the abuse	-4	-1.55	-3	-1.30	-3	-1.29
46*	Tells her other friends or family members about the abuse	-2	-0.85	-2	-0.56	-2	-0.74
49*	Avoids getting involved, because if it were really bad, she would just leave	-3	-1.34	-3	-1.28	-2	-1.13
50*	Names or labels what she is experiencing as abuse	0	-0.09	-1	0.00	-1	-0.39
52	Avoids talking about the abuse because it is an embarrassing topic	-2	-1.01	-3	-1.42	-2	-0.94
54*	Offers to or assists with her finances	0	0.17	-1	0.01	0	0.06
57*	Talks to others to get advice about how to help her	-1	-0.47	-1	-0.15	-1	-0.23
58	Tries to break up arguments or fights between her and her partner	-2	-0.83	-2	-0.77	-3	-1.35

Note. All items are significant at $p < .05$; * denotes significance at $p < .01$

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