

**Stories of Resistance: Women Moving Away From  
Intimate Partner Violence**

---

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree

of

**Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work**

at the University of Canterbury

by

**Yvonne I Crichton-Hill**

University of Canterbury

2016

---

## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Dedication.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Acknowledgments .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1 Chapter One: Introduction.....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Significance of the problem .....	7
1.2 Introduction to Intimate Partner Violence .....	9
1.2.1 The Role of Social Work .....	10
1.2.2 A Departure from Justice .....	16
1.2.3 Social Justice and Intimate Partner Violence .....	18
1.3 Research Aims .....	19
1.4 Research Questions .....	21
1.5 Defining Terms.....	22
1.6 Structure of the thesis .....	24
<b>2 Chapter Two: Review of Intimate Partner Violence Literature....</b>	<b>27</b>
2.1 Intimate Partner Violence.....	31
2.2 The Impact of Intimate Partner Violence .....	35
2.2.1 Impact on Women .....	35
2.2.2 Impact on parenting.....	38
2.2.3 Economic Impact.....	42
2.2.4 Impact on Children.....	43

2.2.5	Impact on Families and Friends.....	46
2.3	Feminism and Intersectionality and IPV .....	48
2.3.1	Feminist Explanations of IPV.....	48
2.3.2	Intersectionality, Feminism and Intimate Partner Violence .....	52
2.4	The New Zealand Context and the Influence of Feminism .....	55
2.4.1	The New Zealand Response .....	57
2.5	Women’s Responses to Intimate Partner Violence .....	63
2.5.1	Why doesn’t she leave?.....	64
2.5.2	Cultural Narratives and Gender Role Socialisation .....	66
2.5.3	Resisting IPV .....	70
2.5.4	Help seeking .....	71
2.6	Risks associated with leaving.....	77
2.6.1	Risk of personal harm .....	77
2.6.2	Risk of harm to others .....	79
2.6.3	Financial, social, legal risks .....	81
2.7	Moving Away From Intimate Partner Violence.....	85
2.7.1	Turning Points .....	87
2.7.2	The Process of Moving Away from IPV .....	92
2.7.3	Phased process of leaving .....	93
2.7.4	Social-Psychological Process of Leaving.....	96
2.7.5	Stages of Change .....	98

2.8	Conclusion .....	108
<b>3</b>	<b>Chapter Three: Methodology .....</b>	<b>110</b>
3.1	Background to the Study .....	111
3.2	Research Questions .....	114
3.3	Epistemology and Theoretical Framework.....	115
3.3.1	Epistemology.....	119
3.3.2	Social Constructionism .....	120
3.3.3	Theoretical framework.....	122
3.3.4	Critical Theory .....	123
3.3.5	Feminist Theory .....	126
3.3.6	Intersectionality .....	130
3.4	Narrative Research .....	134
3.5	Participant Representation.....	137
3.6	Researching Sensitive Topics .....	139
3.7	Recruitment of Participants.....	143
3.8	Data Collection .....	147
3.9	Data Analysis.....	154
3.10	Quality and Rigour .....	159
3.10.1	Social value and significance of the research .....	162
3.10.2	Thoroughness of Data Collection and Interpretation .....	162
3.10.3	Transparency and Reflexivity of Researcher.....	163
3.10.4	Coherence of the Research Approach.....	163

3.10.5	Due Regard for Research Participants .....	164
3.11	Limitations of the Research.....	165
3.12	Conclusion .....	166
Prologue to Findings, Analysis and Discussion, and Implications		
Chapters.....		167
Brief Introduction to the Women.....		170
Sharnie.....		170
Lisa.....		171
Ellie .....		171
Celia .....		172
Adele .....		172
Maggie.....		173
Vicky.....		173
Ana .....		174
Tui .....		174
Briana .....		175
Rose.....		175
<b>4</b>	<b>Chapter Four: Narratives of Turning Points .....</b>	<b>177</b>
4.1	An end to coping.....	177
4.2	The possibility of death from violence .....	178
4.2.1	Sharnie .....	179
4.2.2	Maggie .....	180

4.2.3	Adele.....	181
4.2.4	Ana.....	182
4.3	Protecting my child.....	183
4.3.1	Tui.....	183
4.3.2	Sharnie .....	184
4.3.3	Rose .....	185
4.3.4	Vicky.....	187
4.3.5	Briana.....	187
4.4	Broken promises .....	189
4.4.1	Ellie.....	189
4.4.2	Celia.....	190
4.4.3	Tui.....	192
4.4.4	Maggie .....	193
4.5	External Encouragers .....	194
4.5.1	Lisa .....	194
4.5.2	Briana.....	195
4.6	Summary.....	197
<b>5</b>	<b>Chapter Five: Narratives on the Process of Separation.....</b>	<b>198</b>
5.1	Concern and Justification .....	198
5.1.1	Sharnie .....	199
5.1.2	Lisa .....	199
5.1.3	Ellie.....	201

5.2	Taking responsibility .....	202
5.2.1	Briana.....	203
5.2.2	Adele.....	203
5.2.3	Celia.....	204
5.2.4	Ellie.....	206
5.2.5	Ana.....	207
5.3	Loving and needing .....	208
5.3.1	Adele.....	208
5.3.2	Celia.....	210
5.4	Family, wife, and motherhood .....	212
5.4.1	Lisa .....	213
5.4.2	Adele.....	215
5.4.3	Ellie.....	216
5.4.4	Tui.....	217
5.4.5	Ana.....	218
5.4.6	Briana.....	219
5.5	Consequences to leaving .....	220
5.5.1	Vicky.....	220
5.5.2	Tui.....	220
5.5.3	Maggie .....	222
5.5.4	Sharnie .....	222
5.6	Summary.....	223

<b>6</b>	<b>Chapter Six: Narratives of skill and strategy .....</b>	<b>224</b>
6.1	Compliance and Secretly Planning .....	225
6.1.1	Ana.....	225
6.1.2	Rose .....	226
6.1.3	Maggie .....	227
6.1.4	Briana.....	227
6.1.5	Adele.....	228
6.2	Gaining Independence.....	229
6.2.1	Sharnie .....	230
6.2.2	Lisa .....	232
6.2.3	Ellie.....	232
6.3	Personal development and determination.....	233
6.3.1	Lisa .....	234
6.3.2	Tui.....	234
6.3.3	Ellie.....	235
6.3.4	Tui.....	237
6.3.5	Celia.....	240
6.3.6	Rose .....	241
6.3.7	Ana.....	242
6.4	Using informal supports .....	243
6.4.1	Vicky.....	243
6.4.2	Maggie .....	244

6.4.3	Celia.....	245
6.4.4	Briana.....	246
6.4.5	Sharnie .....	247
6.4.6	Vicky.....	247
6.5	Contacting the authorities: the role of social services .....	247
6.5.1	Ana.....	248
6.5.2	Tui.....	248
6.5.3	Maggie .....	250
6.5.4	Rose .....	252
6.5.5	Maggie .....	252
6.6	Summary.....	252
<b>7</b>	<b>Chapter Seven: Narratives of help seeking responses.....</b>	<b>254</b>
7.1	Justice system .....	254
7.1.1	Vicky.....	254
7.1.2	Rose .....	255
7.1.3	Maggie .....	256
7.1.4	Adele.....	256
7.1.5	Lisa .....	259
7.2	Police.....	260
7.2.1	Rose .....	260
7.2.2	Maggie .....	261
7.2.3	Adele.....	262

7.2.4	Tui.....	263
7.2.5	Ana.....	264
7.2.6	Adele.....	264
7.3	IPV service providers .....	265
7.3.1	Women’s Refuge.....	266
7.3.2	Other Professionals .....	271
7.3.3	Counselling and Group Services.....	276
7.4	Service Provision.....	279
7.4.1	Face-to-Face Contact .....	279
7.4.2	Holistic Service .....	280
7.4.3	Non-Judgemental Approach .....	283
7.4.4	Accessible services.....	284
7.4.5	Consistent Workforce.....	285
7.5	Summary.....	285
<b>8</b>	<b>Chapter Eight Analysis and Discussion .....</b>	<b>287</b>
8.1	Findings: Turning Points .....	290
8.1.1	Turning points occur pre- and post-leaving the relationship.....	291
8.1.2	Turning points arise from a critical analysis of the violence context.....	293
8.1.3	Violence and loss as turning points .....	295
8.1.4	Protection of children is a powerful turning point .....	297

8.1.5	Others influence turning points.....	299
8.1.6	Turning points are interconnected .....	300
8.2	Findings: Skills and Strategies .....	301
8.2.1	Women acted compliantly in order to action plans.....	302
8.2.2	Self with attitude .....	304
8.2.3	Spiritual belief .....	307
8.2.4	Engagement in education and employment.....	308
8.2.5	Informal support: physical, emotional, practical.....	310
8.2.6	Formal help seeking: Police and Women’s Refuge .....	314
8.3	Findings: Supports and Barriers to Leaving Violent Relationships .....	316
8.3.1	Mixed experiences in dealing with formal supports .....	317
8.3.2	Stigma and discrimination .....	324
8.4	Findings: The Process of Moving Away from Violence.....	330
8.4.1	Leaving is a gradual process .....	330
8.4.2	How women explain early signs of violence can prevent leaving	331
8.4.3	Leaving is complicated by gender role expectations .....	333
8.4.4	Safety concerns impact on the process of leaving.....	337
8.4.5	Contact post relationship: unwanted and necessary .....	338
8.5	Intersections .....	339
<b>9</b>	<b>Chapter Nine: Implications for Practice and Conclusions .....</b>	<b>343</b>

9.1	Containment of violent partners.....	343
9.2	Safe housing alternatives.....	346
9.2.1	Security technology.....	347
9.3	Funding.....	348
9.4	Service Provision.....	349
9.4.1	Accessibility of services.....	349
9.4.2	Acknowledging women’s competency.....	350
9.5	Specific Service Provision.....	351
9.5.1	Police.....	352
9.5.2	Primary Health Care.....	353
9.5.3	Programmes and counselling for women and children....	354
9.6	Educating Professionals about IPV.....	355
9.7	Implications for social work.....	357
9.7.1	Holistic Emancipatory Approach.....	358
9.8	Further research.....	365
9.8.1	The role of extended family in the moving away process	365
9.8.2	Engaging with men.....	367
9.9	Conclusion.....	367
	<b>References.....</b>	<b>371</b>

## **Dedication**

To my parents, Eric Crichton and Jenifer Crichton, I am deeply grateful for the start I had in life; an environment of love and laughter and a constant belief in big dreams being achievable. This thesis is dedicated to you.

Mo ou matua pele ia,

Oute fa'afetai atu mai le taele o lou agaga mo mea silisili ese sa lua faia mo a'u - ia alofagia oulua e le Atua.

## **Acknowledgments**

This thesis has taken some time to complete. Finding time to write a PhD thesis amidst family, work, and community, commitments was a challenge; one that I could never have endured on my own. There are many to thank.

Foremost I would like to express gratitude to my supervisors Dr Annabel Taylor (University of Central Queensland) and Dr Andrew Frost (University of Canterbury). It was Dr Taylor who suggested that my involvement in a collaborative research exercise between Christchurch Women's Refuge, Family Help Trust, and the Te Awatea Violence Research Centre (University of Canterbury), could be the foundation for my PhD thesis. I will always be grateful that Dr Taylor considered me for the project, and for her guidance throughout the thesis. To Dr Andrew Frost, my neighbour in the work corridor, for his encouragement, for calmly listening to my mad PhD rants, and for being the voice of reason in times when I doubted myself. I am appreciative to both supervisors for the time they have given to reading thesis work and providing feedback, and to providing encouragement and advice along the way.

I thank the Lottery Community Sector Research Fund for the funding that made the research, and thus my PhD, possible. The research process was

supported by a project team made up of professionals from Aviva (formerly Christchurch Women's Refuge), Family Help Trust, and Te Awatea Violence Research Centre. I am very appreciative of the time that Nicola Woodward, Elizabeth Rathgen, Libby Robbins and Bill Pringle committed to the project.

Central to the PhD are the stories of a group of wonderful women who were courageous enough to share their leaving violence stories with me in the hope that their experiences would be useful to others. I am indebted to all of the women who took part in the study.

I must give particular thanks to Associate Professor Jane Maidment (University of Canterbury) who, along with Professor Marie Connolly (University of Melbourne), provided me with many opportunities that helped me to forge an academic career. Both Jane and Marie have been powerful forces in my academic career and have continued to see potential in me that I would never have seen in myself. I will always be thankful for the opportunity to have known and learned from such conscientious, inspiring and respected women.

There are many others who have provided support, encouragement, and much needed reality checks and distractions along the way, including,

Karen Meadows-Taurua and Gilbert Taurua, Jim Anglem, Tanya McCall, the Thompson whanau (Robyn, Joshua, Samaria, and the late Larry), Nikki Evans, Tony (Kof) Kalauta, Shannon Pakura, Robyn Corrigan, Jan Duke, and members of the Pacific community I have worked with in Christchurch and in New Zealand. A special thanks must go to Fa'amatuainu Tino Pereira for his words of wisdom. You have all provided me with much needed motivation and support throughout the PhD process.

My family have been extraordinary in their support of me. To my husband, John Hill, whose calmness, strength and emotional support has sustained me through the long thesis journey – my eternal love and thanks. Thank you to our children, Josh, Maia and Eboni who I am incredibly grateful for and who have had to put up with ‘Mum doing her PhD’ for much of their adult lives! To my in-laws, Tiny and the late Marge Hill, and Gay Hill, I thank you for your love and support.

I must make special mention of my incredibly gifted and creative sister Heather who I admire immensely. I hope your dreams continue to come true as mine have.

## **Abstract**

There has been substantial work concerning intimate partner violence (IPV) around the world (Abrahams, 2010; Garcia-Moreno & Stockl, 2013; Krug et al, 2002; WHO, 2005) and in New Zealand (Crichton-Hill, 2010a; Crichton-Hill, Coker & Taylor, 2010b; Fanslow, 2004; Fanslow & Gulliver, 2015; Fanslow & Robinson, 2010; Morgan, Coombes, Te Hiwi & McGray, 2007; Murphy, 2002); and there is an increasing body of literature about the process of leaving violent intimate relationships. Understanding the nature of the moving away process is important to the development of successful systems of support for women and their families.

In this respect, however, there is a gap in the literature. Studies have not examined the combination of factors, both individual and structural, that influence the leaving process. This research thesis combines investigation of the following: factors that prompt women to move away from situations of intimate partner violence; the process of moving away; the strategies used to move away; and the individual and structural factors that supported women's move toward safety from IPV. Eleven women were interviewed about their moving away journey and each woman shared her unique story of this process. The thesis employed a narrative thematic analysis to understand the women's experiences of 'moving away from

intimate partner violence'. The findings reveal a range of overarching themes related to the moving away from violence process. Furthermore, the study found that each woman's process of leaving violent relationships was strongly influenced by intersecting factors comprising personal, relationship and structural elements.

The study adds valuable insight to social work practice with women in violent relationships by extending our knowledge of the complexities of the leaving process. A holistic response system for social work practice, taking into account these complexities, is developed from the thesis findings. The holistic response system consists of four areas of work with women and advocates the need for practice responses that provide both short and long term support for the entirety of the moving away process. Furthermore, the holistic response system includes both individual healing and empowerment approaches and advocacy components aimed at improving the way in which the system responds to women in violent relationships.

## **1 Chapter One: Introduction**

I have always worked in the field of violence, mostly as a child protection social worker and educator with the statutory agency responsible for child protection work in New Zealand; the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services. Child protection work necessitates working with families and often I found myself working with women who were desperately trying to cope with state intervention in their lives, while at the same time trying to survive a violent intimate relationship.

My entry in to social work in the field of violence came along almost by accident. I was twenty years old and about to go on my final social work field placement as part of my undergraduate social work degree with Massey University. The field placement was to be a 'block' placement over the Stevetmas holidays and so I requested a placement close to my home town in the Horowhenua. A placement was found for me at the then Department of Social Welfare in the town of Levin. I learned some influential lessons on that placement. I learned that team work and good supervision are vital to the development of competence in social work and to survival as a social worker. I also learned that families and how they operated fascinated me. I was fortunate to have discovered that I enjoyed

working with diverse ethnic cultures. Finally, I found that working in the area of violence was where I wanted to focus my social work career.

After completing my undergraduate degree, I continued to work for the next sixteen years in the Department of Social Welfare through its various restructurings and name changes. Throughout that time, I was fortunate to be involved in supporting the development of Pasifika responses to child protection. More recently I have been involved with the New Zealand Pacific Advisory Group (PAG), tasked with the role of advising the New Zealand government's taskforce on violence within families, and the Pasefika Proud Research Komiti, that works to implement the Pasefika Proud Research Plan (Ministry of Social Development, 2013).

Having worked in the field of violence for a number of years I wanted to focus my research on stories that highlighted women's strengths in relation to experiences of violence. The opportunity arose for me to be involved in a project to capture women's stories of moving away from violence (see Section 3.1). I was a management committee member of Te Awatea Violence Research Centre at the time and acted as a cultural adviser to many of its undertakings in research and consultancy. The 'moving away from violence' research project provided me with the opportunity to

achieve my goal of undertaking positively-framed qualitative research. Additionally, the subject area connected with my social work practice experience in family violence, and my academic interest in violence research.

The first chapter introduces the topic of intimate partner violence, the significance of moving away from violence research, and the role for social work in working with women who have experienced violence. The aims of the research study are introduced and the structure of the thesis is explained.

### **1.1 Significance of the problem**

Much of the international research conducted about the process for women who move away from intimate partner violence (IPV) is based on interviews with women residing in shelters or refuges. In New Zealand, studies have tended to focus on women's experiences of moving away from IPV at the end of a formalised process, such as court proceedings (Morgan, Coombes, Te Hiwi & McGray, 2007), or on women's coping strategies in relation to a specific form of IPV, such as Murphy's (2002) study of psychological abuse. New Zealand research has also examined women's experiences of the legal system (Hann 2004; Robertson et al.,

2007), of particular services (Crichton-Hill, Coker & Taylor, 2010b), and women's attempts at help seeking (Fanslow & Robinson, 2010). In terms of women who have moved away from IPV, Lewis (2006) examined the long-term consequences for women who had rebuilt their lives after IPV; highlighting the impact of abuse and the factors that contributed to women rebuilding their lives, while Giles (2004) examined the process of recovery for women who had been in abusive relationships. Robins (2010) considered women's experiences as mothers separating from a violent partner. Here, the focus was on those factors that supported or undermined a mother's ability to keep their children safe.

There has been considerable research on IPV in New Zealand (Crichton-Hill, 2010a; Crichton-Hill, Coker & Taylor, 2010b; Fanslow, 2004; Morgan, Coombes, Te Hiwi & McGray, 2007; Murphy, 2002). However, there have been few studies that combine investigation of the factors that prompt women to move away from situations of intimate partner violence, the process of moving away, the strategies used to move away, and the individual and structural factors that supported women's move toward safety from IPV.

## **1.2 Introduction to Intimate Partner Violence**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a feature of New Zealand society. There is a profusion of literature that underlines the prevalence of IPV, and the impact of IPV on women and children. Additionally, there is a range of services that provide support to those who have been subjected to violence in their personal relationships, and services to rehabilitate those who perpetrate violence.

Early literature on women in violent relationships characterised women as weak and passive (Chantler, 2006). However, studies have also indicated that women are active rather than passive agents in violent relationships (Cavanagh, 2003). A substantial amount of literature on IPV has focused on the factors that influence women's decisions to stay or leave the violent relationship (Anderson & Saunders, 2003; Kim & Gray, 2008; Meyer, 2012; Moe, 2009; Velonis et al., 2015). Examining women's actions in relation to IPV requires consideration of the nature of the violent relationship, the actions of the violent male partner, the skills and strategies women used to manage the violence, and the socio-cultural context within which the violence occurred. To view the ending of violent relationships only by examining how women make decisions in such situations may be considered reductionist (Cavanagh, 2003).

The most commonly asked question about women experiencing IPV is: “why doesn’t she leave?” Schneider (2008) suggested that this question demonstrates a general lack of understanding of the dynamics of IPV and is reflective of society’s woman-blaming past where historically IPV was invisible. Predominantly, the IPV literature suggests that IPV is deeply connected to gender socialisation and traditional gender attitudes that view men as strong and independent and women as fragile and dependent (McPhail, Busch, Kulkarni & Rice, 2007). A discussion of the contribution of feminism to the IPV field is discussed in Chapter 2 along with an exploration of the other factors that may influence the actions women take in response to violence. Responses to women moving away from IPV need to be cognisant of women’s individual needs as well as the cultural and structural elements that impede or enhance women’s safety from IPV.

### ***1.2.1 The Role of Social Work***

Social Work has a dual purpose; to work with individuals to encourage problem solving and empowerment, and to work towards social change.

Social work has, from its conception, been a human rights profession, having as its basic tenet the intrinsic value of every human being and as one of its main aims the promotion of equitable social structures, which can offer people security and

development while upholding their dignity' (United Nations Centre for Human Rights, 1994, p. 3).

Accordingly, social workers are expected to work with women in violent relationships in a way that simultaneously meets women's needs and generates social change. In light of this, the first part of this chapter briefly explores the practice of social work in advancing its two purposes.

Following this discussion, the aims and significance of the research are explained and the research questions presented. The chapter presents the tension that exists between key terms used in the research study. Finally the structure of the thesis is outlined.

Dual ideas about the purpose and method of social work practice were developed by Mary Richmond and Jane Addams and their respective organisations in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the US (Fischer & Whipps, 2006; Franklin, 1986; Hare, 2004). Today, both individual and social reform approaches are still discussed in the literature. The definition of social work provided by the International Federation of Social Workers encapsulates the two-fold purpose:

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective

responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.

The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels. (International Federation of Social Work, 2014)

Kam (2014) posits that because the international definition of social work states that *principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work*, striving for social justice is the “the primary mission of social work.” (p.4).

Gil (2012) explained that social justice can be thought of in three ways: individual relations, social institutions, and global relations. At the *individual level* people who are treated justly are autonomous, and have equal rights and responsibilities as do others. At the *institutional level* social justice is about how social conditions enable all people to fulfil their needs and reach their full potential in all aspects of life. In socially just societies, institutions promote equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities in terms of the distribution of goods and services and the distribution of resources; the way in which work is organised; and the way in which the society is governed. When social institutions are acting in a just way, resources are distributed with everyone’s needs in mind. In a just

society, no one group of people can dominate. Social justice in terms of *global relations* implies that people around the world live peacefully and share resources so that all intrinsic needs are met and people are able to reach their full potential.

Gil (2012) further argued that whether a society is just or unjust is dependent on the policy systems that govern people's interactions with each other. Policies are operationalised by institutions and determine: how services are distributed and delivered; how working life is organised; and, how human and natural resources are developed, maintained, and protected. Policies, via institutions, determine the processes of social control and socialisation. Policies are therefore connected to individual circumstance, the distribution of individual and group power, the nature of relations between people, and the quality of life in society. It follows that where social group differences exist, some groups are privileged and others disadvantaged. This is otherwise known as oppression (Young, 2011) which:

...is embedded in unquestioned norms, habits and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutions and rules, and the collective consequences of following those rules. It refers to the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions that are

supported by the media and cultural stereotypes as well as by the structural features of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms. In short, the normal processes of everyday life (p.41).

The International Federation of Social Work ethical standards state that it is the responsibility of social workers to promote social justice for individuals and in society generally. In practice this means:

Challenging negative discrimination, recognising diversity, distributing resources equitably, challenging unjust policies and practices, and working in solidarity (International Federation of Social Workers & International Association of Schools of Social Work, 2007).

In the New Zealand context, the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) Code of Ethics, Section 2.3 states:

Members advocate social justice and principles of inclusion and choice for all members of society, having particular regard for disadvantaged minorities. They act to prevent and eliminate discrimination against any person or group based on age, beliefs, culture, gender, marital, legal or family status, intellectual, psychological and physical abilities, race, religion, sexual orientation, and social or economic status. (ANZASW, n.d.)

And in Section 2.4, in order to promote social justice members must:

...promote socially just policies, legislation, and improved social conditions, that encourage the development and just allocation of community resources. They also act to ensure that everyone has access to the existing resources, services and opportunities that they need (ANZASW, n.d.).

The Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB), the New Zealand regulatory authority for Social Workers, assesses the competence of social workers to practice social work. The competence assessment comprises ten standards based on the International Federation of Social Workers, the Social Workers Registration Act, 2003, and the ANZASW Code of Ethics. According to competence standard three, social workers must demonstrate their competence to promote the principles of human rights and social justice. In practice therefore, the Social Worker:

- understands, has a commitment to, and advocates for human, legal and civil rights, social and economic justice, and self-determination;
- understands and challenges mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and also has the knowledge, skills and an understanding of how to appropriately leverage those which enhance power and privilege;
- respects and upholds the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of people and creates an environment of respect and understanding (Social Workers Registration Board, 2015).

Social work, then, can be conceptualised as working at the margins with vulnerable populations in pursuit of equality and fairness (O'Brien, 2011). However, there is debate about whether social work practice is committed to addressing social injustice in practice.

### *1.2.2 A Departure from Justice*

Professionalization in social work occurred so that social work would be seen as credible in a male-dominated world where scientific measurement and knowledge were valued (Fook, 2012). Professionalization led to the differentiation of social work from other professions thereby delineating areas of responsibility and identifying specific knowledge, skills and tasks that are particular to social workers (Abbott, 1988). However, professionalization and its connection with scientifically acceptable social work influenced a move to individual and therapeutic approaches building on orthodox psychoanalytic traditions (Healy, 2000).

Consequently, the argument has arisen that social work has in recent years moved away from its social justice commitments (Kam, 2012). Gil (2012) asks the following question of social work:

Can social workers, while helping people deal with diverse social problems in prevailing realities, act also as agents of

fundamental social change, aimed at overcoming injustice and oppression? (p.28).

Social work has always struggled with the dual focus on the individual and on social change (Lundy & van Wormer, 2007); a struggle which O'Brien (2011) claimed is being partially won by the individual focus. In a quantitative study of 710 New Zealand Social Workers, O'Brien (2011) found that social workers frequently identified social justice work in the daily social work activities they carried out on behalf of individuals and families. Social justice activity was focused on attempting to change organizational procedures that disadvantaged the individual or family. O'Brien (2011) wondered if discussions about social justice and social work in the literature have focused too much on broader structural social and economic change, ignoring the implementation of social justice in daily social work practice.

The suggestion that social justice occurs in everyday social work practice is one supported by Healy (2000) who argued that challenging social structures can occur in diverse ways including within communities and within rule driven bureaucracies.

Lundy and van Wormer (2007) argued that “social workers have often found themselves torn between the values instilled in them in schools of social work and the realities of trying to help clients against an increasingly lean and mean social system” (p.733). Within a context of rapid global change, increased professionalization and regulation, social work has increasingly focused its efforts on individual and therapeutic interventions (Chu, Tsui & Yan, 2009; Karger & Hernandez, 2004; O’Brien, 2011).

### ***1.2.3 Social Justice and Intimate Partner***

#### ***Violence***

New Zealand has signed a number of international charters and declarations such as the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic Social, and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (Fenrich & Contesse, 2008). None of the charters and declarations noted here explicitly addresses IPV; however, each prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender or sex (Fenrich & Contesse, 2008).

From a human rights perspective, responses to women who move away from intimate partner violence need to address women's individual needs and the part that social institutions, such as those women seek assistance from, play in either impeding or facilitating women moving away from violence.

Professional social work ethics and values require competence in policy advocacy and social change strategies, as well as a radical approach to individual, family and group practice. United under the banner of a human rights framework, social workers, in collaboration with others, can be a vital force in advancing a social and economic justice agenda (Lundy & van Wormer, 2007)

### **1.3 Research Aims**

This study investigated women's experiences of 'moving away from intimate partner violence'. It draws on data from a Te Awatea Violence Research Centre project that collected women's stories about the moving away process. The Te Awatea project was funded by the Lottery Community Sector Research Fund and involved two organisations who work with women who have experienced IPV, and their families; the Christchurch Women's Refuge and the Family Help Trust. The project was

conceived as a participatory, community based research collaboration that would provide partner organisations with a deeper understanding of the moving away process, thus benefitting service delivery, whilst simultaneously increasing each organisations familiarity with the process and benefits of conducting research. My role in the project was that of principal researcher and author of the final report: *Women moving away from violence: planning it-doing it* (Crichton-Hill, 2012).

The thesis is developed from the project fieldwork and reports on the narratives of women and their experience of IPV, and the contextual and personal factors that supported their journey towards safety. While there is overlap between the thesis and the project report, the thesis expands on the report in a number of ways. While parts of the thesis literature review are similar to the report (Crichton-Hill, 2012), the thesis literature review provides a more extensive and in-depth discussion of literature pertinent to the topic of women 'moving away from IPV'. The thesis examination of epistemological, theoretical and methodological material is more detailed and connected with the aims of the study. Such theoretical material was not required in the original project report required by the key stakeholders. Finally, the thesis provides a more sophisticated analysis and interpretation

of data. As a result of these differences, the conclusions reached in the thesis are more comprehensive than in the original project report.

In the thesis, through an examination of the women's stories, using narrative analysis, I explore the ways in which women were able to move on from intimate partner violence; the strategies they used, the tensions they experienced, the supports they utilised, and the influence social, economic and cultural power had on their moving away journey. The aim of this study is to contribute to the field of IPV by providing policy makers and social work practitioners with a nuanced understanding of women's moving away experiences and suggestions about how services and systems might better respond to women's needs.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The thesis posed the following research questions:

*What prompts women to move away and seek safety from intimate partner violence?*

*What skills and strategies do women use in order to address violence in the home and in moving away from violence?*

*What is the process of moving away from intimate partner violence?*

*What are the helpful and not so helpful responses for women in addressing violence in the home?*

*What are the implications for social service provision?*

While there was not a specific question about the role of children in women's experience of moving away from IPV, the women interviewed referred to their relationship with their children and the role children played in their moves to a violence-free life. Therefore, the role of children, while not specifically identified as one of the purposes of the study, will feature throughout the thesis.

## **1.5 Defining Terms**

IPV has been described in a range of ways with different expressions being used to describe it. The range of expressions include terminologies such as “intimate violence, partner violence, wife beating, women battering, wife abuse, marital violence, spouse abuse, and domestic violence” (Crichton-Hill & Taylor, 2013). In an examination of the language used, Walker (1990, p.96) suggested that expressions such as ‘wife beating’ or ‘women battering’ have been “extrapolated from the existing discourse on child abuse, already ‘discovered’ and designated as a ‘syndrome’ by medical practitioners in the 1960’s”. A further view was put forward by Johnson

(1995), who stated that the expressions like “marital violence” ... presume that the partners are married, and fail to recognise that violence between partners is overwhelmingly male violence against women” (p.101).

Furthermore, expressions that use the terms ‘beating’ or ‘battering’ indicate that the violence is “constant, repetitive and of a serious physical nature; therefore the terms ‘wife beating’ and ‘women battering’ neglect the range of psychological behaviours employed by the perpetrator to maintain a woman’s fear of violence” (Crichton-Hill & Taylor, 2013). None of the terms accurately identify that the majority of violence in relationships is carried out by men towards women.

The term ‘intimate partner violence’ does not accurately identify the gender dynamics of violence; however, the term does signify the close personal relationship within which violence against women occurs. A more thorough measurement of the incidence of family violence, the forces that influence family violence and the impact on families and victims, is needed. However, for the purposes of this study, the term “domestic violence” will be used only when referring to the New Zealand legislation and “intimate partner violence” (IPV) will be used elsewhere.

## **1.6 Structure of the thesis**

I begin the thesis by providing a review of the literature in the IPV area. I have approached the literature review beginning, in Chapter Two, by providing an overview of the phenomenon of IPV before moving to a discussion on the impacts that IPV has on women, children and on families. Having set this context I move on to discuss feminism and intersectionality; acknowledging the significant role that feminism has played in the IPV field historically, and the significance of new ways of thinking, through feminist intersectionality. It is against this theoretical backdrop that I examine the New Zealand context of IPV, before focusing the discussion on a review of women's responses to IPV and in particular, the literature relating to moving away from IPV.

In Chapter Three I focus on the methodological aspects of the study. A background to the study is provided along with a discussion about the theoretical framework underpinning the research design. Along with the methodological and design discussion, I have considered the challenges of researching a sensitive topic such as IPV, and the need for researcher self-reflexivity throughout the research process. Limitations of the research are also addressed in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four signals the beginning of the participant narrative chapters. The narrative chapters contain components of the eleven women's stories. Each of the narrative chapters, running from Chapter Four through to Chapter Seven, presents the women's narratives in relation to a specific research question. Therefore, Chapter Four, on "turning points", relates to the question *what prompts women to move away and seek safety from intimate partner violence?* Chapter Five comprises narratives about separation relating to the question: *What is the process of moving away from intimate partner violence?* In Chapter Six, the focus is on narratives about skills and strategies used by the women, reflected in the question: *What skills and strategies did women use in order to address violence in the home and in moving away from violence.* Finally, Chapter Seven presents narratives about help seeking in response to the research question: *What have been the helpful and not so helpful responses for women in addressing violence in the home?*

Chapter Eight is the analysis and discussion chapter which considers the narrative areas presented in the previous four chapters and highlights the themes and interconnections within and between narrative stories.

Conclusions are drawn about turning points, skills and strategies and help

seeking supports and how each of these areas influences the moving away from IPV process.

One of the aims of the research is to provide knowledge that will contribute to the delivery of social services, and inform social work practice, in relation to women in IPV relationships. Chapter Nine deals first with the implications for delivery generally and, built on this study's findings, makes suggestions regarding containment of violent partners, safe housing alternatives, and service funding. I consider the influence the thesis research findings might have for police work, primary health and for counselling programmes for women and children. Finally, I consider the study implications for social work practice, highlighting the dual social work focus on personal empowerment and social justice, and suggesting a holistic emancipatory approach to working with women moving on from IPV.

## **2 Chapter Two: Review of Intimate Partner Violence Literature**

This chapter provides an exploration of the literature relevant to the study.

As stated in Chapter One, the thesis literature review is built on the foundation literature review written for the *Women moving away from violence: planning it-doing it* (Crichton-Hill, 2012) report.

A literature review assembles and analyses the literature available on a particular topic; the related literature is therefore assessed for its contribution to the research question. Boaz & Sidford (2006), quoting the work of Fink, 1998, stated that a literature review is:

A systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and interpreting the existing body of recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners. (Fink, 1998, p. 3).

There is a large quantity of scholarly work on IPV, therefore the thesis literature review needed to be focused and systematic. In the first section of this chapter I discuss the process used to collect and analyse the literature relevant to women's experiences of 'moving away from intimate partner violence'.

A systematic approach to the review of literature includes following a particular procedure, enacting a search strategy, developing inclusion and exclusion criteria, and critiquing the quality of the literature found (Aveyard, 2010). For this thesis review of literature on women's experiences of 'moving away from intimate partner violence', I conducted the literature search according to a number of areas which became the inclusion and exclusion criteria for what would be included in the review and what literature would not:

- Focused on intimate partner violence prevalence and impact
- Focused on how women moved away from violent relationships
- Related to New Zealand and international contexts

I used key words to search electronic databases and government reports. I used a variety of terms to search for literature to make sure the search was rigorous. For example, intimate partner violence may also be called domestic violence, gender violence, battering, violence against women, or spouse abuse, and so I conducted searches under each of these terms. As I found key articles I searched reference lists to find further search terms. Occasionally I discovered new key word ideas as I became more familiar

with the research topic. For instance, I searched for the impact of intimate partner violence on women and while reading the literature I began to consider the social and familial context of women in violent relationships. This reflection led me to add search terms related to the impact of violence on children, family and friends. The search for literature also included a search for key journals and key authors in the intimate partner violence field.

The search for literature was an inductive process. As I discovered relevant literature, the inclusion and exclusion criteria expanded to become more specific to the thesis topic of research, thus:

- Focused on how women moved away from violent relationships
  - Phased processes of leaving
  - Decision making

Wallace and Wray (2006) suggested that the literature collected for a review could be organised into four categories: theoretical literature, research literature, practice literature, and literature relating to policy. I used Wallace and Wray's (2006) categories as an organising framework. As I collected and read relevant literature I recorded notes in an exercise

book pertaining to the particular literature topic. The notes recorded the key themes of the article, highlighted further literature search areas, and recorded questions for further consideration. By the end of the literature search I had a series of exercise books related to the following categories: definition and prevalence; theoretical literature; research studies and methods; the New Zealand context; and, 'moving away from intimate partner violence'.

The literature reviewed in the thesis is thus focused on qualitative and quantitative scholarly work related to women moving away from violent intimate relationships in the New Zealand and international context.

The literature review chapter provides a critical appraisal of the concepts and challenges associated with intimate partner violence, the impact of IPV on women and children, and women's responses to intimate partner violence internationally and in the New Zealand context. I have elected to introduce two theories in the literature review: feminism and intersectionality. Feminism and the women's movement have played a key role in the development of IPV studies and it would be negligent not to acknowledge the contribution feminism has made to the IPV area.

Intersectionality theory is explored, because of its significance to feminist scholarship in IPV.

Next, the literature review focuses on the complex debates that surround women's responses to IPV. Finally, I discuss the work that has contributed to understanding of the moving-away- from- IPV process.

## **2.1 Intimate Partner Violence**

Violence against women by an intimate male partner is one of the most common forms of violence throughout the world, cutting across boundaries of culture and class (Garcia-Moreno & Stockl, 2013). Tragically, a significant number of women die as a result of intimate partner violence. It has been reported that across a range of countries, 40-70% of women who were murdered were killed by their husband or boyfriend (World Health Organization, 2005). New Zealand literature estimated that the lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual IPV was 57.6% for Māori women, 34.3% for European/Other women and 32.4% for Pacific women (Fanslow et al., 2010). Other literature has also reported that Maori women are more likely to report they had experienced IPV in their lives; Koziol-McLain et al., (2007) explored the partner violence rates of women attending a Maori Health provider clinic in South Auckland. At the clinic,

23% of women positively screened for IPV. The partner violence rates of attendance are similar to a 2004 study of women who were surveyed in an emergency department, also in South Auckland, where 21% of women screened positive for partner violence (Koziol-McLain et al., 2004). The same methodology was used in both studies.

Pacific women are likely to experience IPV and available literature focusing on IPV experienced by Pacific mothers' reports prevalence at 22.9% with 11% of mothers describing the violence they experienced as severe (Paterson et al., 2007).

In New Zealand, national data about the experience of IPV have been collected through Crime and Safety surveys. In 2006 changes were made to the 2006 New Zealand Crime and Safety survey to increase the number of offences that counted as crime. Thus:

In the 2006 survey, respondents were asked about offences committed by anyone (same or opposite sex) who had been a partner since the beginning of 2005. In 2001, they were asked only about their current (opposite sex) partner. This will have drawn more offences into the 2006 survey, since abusive behaviour may be a reason for leaving a previous partner (Mayhew & Reilly 2007, p.28)

The 2006 survey found higher rates for IPV among both men and women than in the previous study. Including previous partners in the research methodology may have led to this increase.

The 2009 New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey (Ministry of Justice, 2010) reports a decrease in the incidence of partner offences but states that “85% of serious partner offences were against female victims” (p.1).

Further evidence of the women’s vulnerability to violence from their male partners can be found in the statistics of the number of women who seek safe refuge from IPV. The New Zealand Women’s Refuge provides a range of services to women and children. These services are provided through community initiatives and safe houses.

IPV statistics must be treated with caution. IPV is a sensitive issue and it is likely many women will not report to police or emergency departments. Koloto (2003, p.59), from a study of the needs of Pacific crime victims, reported that:

The results suggest that some women who experienced repeated abuse and assaults from their male partner, either live in fear of them or wish to protect their partner and family from the criminal system. In addition, some victims did not want their partners to be considered in a negative light by their own family, hence protection of their husbands and family rather

than looking after their own safety and wellbeing was a priority.

With this in mind, Burton, Duvvury & Varia (2000) suggested that household victimisation surveys are possibly more accurate, in terms of prevalence information, than police or hospital records. This is supported by Knickerbocker et al., (2007) who stated that “low prevalence estimates ... are obtained when surveys assess partner physical maltreatment from a crime-oriented perspective” (p.36). Alternatively, Morris et al., (2001) proposed that it is important to have both Police and victimisation survey information as each provides information that the other lacks.

Furthermore, it is difficult to compare IPV prevalence data from around the world because of differences in how IPV is defined (Hughes, 2004; Krug et al., 2002; Knickerbocker et al. 2007). Defining violence is an important matter because, as Itzin (2000, p.357) states, “how violence is conceptualised and defined will determine what is visible and seen and known; how it is understood and explained; and what is and is not done about it through policy and practice”.

## **2.2 The Impact of Intimate Partner Violence**

In order to understand how women move away and seek safety from IPV it is necessary to understand how experiencing IPV impacts women and their families and friends. The impacts may influence the actions women take or do not take, the skills and strategies they employ, and the overall process of moving away from IPV. This section explores the impact of IPV on women, their children and their families and friends.

The physical and psychological impacts of IPV on women and children are immediate and long-term. Scholarship has examined how women manage the range of stressors associated with violent relationships (Haeseler, 2013; Waldrop & Resick, 2004; Zanville & Cattaneo, 2012) with a focus on examining: women's coping mechanisms (Waldrop & Resick, 2004); the development of resilience (Weinzimmer, Bach & Bhanari, 2013); and, on exploring how women manage stressors at various stages of change (Khaw & Hardesty, 2007; Shurman & Rodriguez, 2006 ).

### ***2.2.1 Impact on Women***

IPV has both immediate and long-term repercussions on women's health. Women frequently suffer immediate injuries when an incident of IPV has occurred, but there are also longer-term physical consequences including

back pain, digestive problems and chronic fatigue (Campbell, 2002). IPV has been associated with a range of negative health outcomes for women including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and eating disorders (Bonomi et al., 2009; Bundock et al., 2013; Evans, 2007; Gao et al., 2010). Other psychological consequences include depression and anxiety (Houry, Kaslow & Thompson 2005; Roberts et al., 1998), along with behavioural consequences, such as alcohol and drug abuse, cigarette smoking and unsafe sexual behaviour (Krug et al., 2002). Furthermore, women with anxiety, depressive and post traumatic disorders are at a greater risk of experiencing IPV than those without a mental disorder (Trevillion, Feder & Howard, 2012).

Sussex and Corcoran (2005) in their study of 286 teen mothers found that emotional and physical violence have a “significant impact on depression for young mothers 18 and older” (p.117). Furthermore, “even the fear or the threat of IPV is sufficient to have some adverse impact on depression” (p.118). Women may also experience illness associated with chronic fear and stress; examples are gastrointestinal disorders and loss of appetite (Campbell et al, 2002). These impacts were confirmed by Fanslow and Robinson (2004) in their study of IPV undertaken in the Auckland and Waikato regions of New Zealand. They also discovered that women who

had experienced IPV were more likely to have attempted suicide. This is confirmed by World Health Organization research (2005), which concludes

...ever-partnered women who had been abused by their partners were much more likely to have ever thought of suicide ... and to have attempted it than non-abused women. This is consistent with other research in developing and industrialized nations.... (p.16).

In a study of 3568 women (Bonomi et al, 2009), those who had experienced IPV in the past year had a greatly increased risk of a mental health diagnosis.

An international 2010 study on the psychosocial impact of IPV explored the personal perceptions of health held by 132 women recruited from an IPV service provider (Brewer, Roy & Smith, 2010). The study found a strong association between IPV and health. Fifty percent of the recruited women reported suffering from headaches, migraine, eating disorders and disturbed sleep, and their use of negative coping behaviours such as alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, unsafe sexual behaviour and the absence of social supports, increased the likelihood of illness. Bonomi et al., (2009) found that compared with women who had no history of IPV, women who had experienced IPV had “an almost 6-fold increased risk of

clinically identified substance abuse, a nearly 5-fold increase in family and social problems, a more than 3-fold increase in depression, and a more than 2-fold increase in anxiety/neuroses and tobacco use ...” (p.1694).

Women who experience IPV may also suffer from a lack of belief in their abilities and potential, otherwise known as low self-efficacy due to the violence itself, but also because they may have been prevented from the opportunity to engage in activities that enhance self-efficacy (Crawford et al., 2010).

### ***2.2.2 Impact on parenting***

Women may also be troubled about the influence of IPV on their own parenting. There has been some attention in the literature to mothering in the context of intimate partner violence (Lapierre, 2008; Radford & Hester 2001). However, largely the focus has been on intimate partner violence as a child protection matter with mothers playing a central role in protecting their children; mothers are “seen as a determining factor ... in how children are affected by the violence” (Lapierre, 2008, p.456). Although there are mixed findings about the impact of intimate partner violence on mothering (Peled & Gil, 2011; Radford & Hester, 2006), the emphasis has been on women’s deficiencies as mothers (Lapierre, 2008).

Experiencing IPV does not necessitate poor parenting. Edleson, Mbiliny and Shetty (2003) suggested that overall the literature indicates that women experiencing domestic violence do experience great levels of stress, however, “even in this hostile environment most tend to parent adequately and sometimes even compensate for their perpetrators’ behaviour” (p.15). Similarly, in a study of women from minority groups, Chantler, (2006) found that one of the ways in which women showed resistance in their violent relationship was to provide for their children “in the face of pressure not only from their partners, but also from their family, community, religion and agencies” (p.30).

Conversely, in a study of immigrant, refugee and indigenous women’s experiences of domestic violence, Erez & Copps Hartley (2003) discovered that the controlling behaviour experienced by the women in their study resulted in disrupted relationships with others, including their children. This is supported by a range of literature (Bancroft and Silverman, 2002; Levendosky, Lynch, & Graham-Bermann, 2000). In contrast, strong relationships with others can help women feel they are able to nullify the stigmatisation they may experience as mothers in IPV relationships (Weinzimmer, Bach & Bhandari, 2013).

The perpetrator may attempt to undermine a woman's parenting activities (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002; Jones & Vetere, 2016). This may occur by criticising the mother in front of the children, encouraging the children to be abusive to their mother and to keep the abuse secret from the outside world. In response, women may alter their parenting style. Cunningham and Baker (2007) posited that women may respond in a number of ways: they may become more permissive or alternatively more authoritarian; women may make unreasonable demands on children in an attempt to appease the perpetrator; the woman may refrain from disciplining the children because she believes the children have suffered enough; and, she may take on the role of dealing with the demanding aspects of parenting while the perpetrator takes on the enjoyable parts. Therefore, the upshot of attacks on the mother is "an attack on the relationship between the child and their mother" (Humphreys, 2007, p.9).

Several studies have examined how women in violent relationships perceive the impact of IPV on their parenting. Levendosky, Lynch and Graham Bermann (2000) revealed that a number of women perceived an improved relationship with their children because mothers felt greater empathy for their children and attempted to protect their children from the harmful effects of the violence; and the mothers recognised that parenting

out of a violent context would improve their parenting. Jones and Vetere (2016), also found dual perspectives of the mothering role in their narrative exploration of how women manage the parenting role while in, or having left, a violent relationship. The eight women in this narrative study stated that being a mother provided them with both anxiety and strength.

Parenting was described by the participants as something they had to do and could manage if they accepted there was no choice but to make the best of a very difficult situation. At the same time, however, parenting in the context of IPV was exhausting and challenging.

Peled and Gil (2011) found that the women in their study presented two narratives about mothering in the context of IPV: one narrative about how they would ideally like mothering to be; and one narrative about the violent context in which mothering took place. Peled and Gil (2011) surmise that the ideal mothering narrative is influenced strongly by the pressure women in IPV contexts experience from societal myths about ideal mothers combined with deficit views about abused mothers as parents that are held in society and by some service providers.

The impact of IPV has also been examined from the perspective of economic cost (Laing & Bobic, 2002). Estimating cost is a complex task

and inter-country comparisons are complicated because there are significant international differences in the estimation of the economic cost of IPV depending on the “definitions used, the types of costs included, and the methodologies used” (Waters et al., 2005, p304). Walby (2004) proposed that costs can be divided into three parts: services provided, such as, health care, housing, social services, and criminal justice services; economic losses borne by employers and employees; and, human and emotional costs experienced by the individual victim.

### ***2.2.3 Economic Impact***

Employment losses due to IPV affect the individual women through loss of income, training and promotion potential, and affect the employer through the costs of sick days taken and loss of productivity (Walby, 2004). It is understood that “cumulative IPV can have negative effects on economic capacity many years after the violence occurs” (Lindhorst, Oxford & Rogers Gillmore 2007, p.812). IPV affects women’s employment in a number of ways. Women may be concerned that colleagues will see the visible physical signs of violence. They may be unable to concentrate on the job due to the emotional and psychological stress experienced, or their partner may prevent them from working.

While studies have found that IPV has a negative impact on work attendance, one study found that people who had experienced IPV in the past were likely to have higher rates of absenteeism than current victims (Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2007), reinforcing the idea that the impact of IPV on wellbeing can be long lasting. The authors stated that, for current victims, attending work may be a way of coping with the violence or may be a sign of the victims’ strong motivation to retain employment in order to have the financial means to leave the violence and abuse.

#### ***2.2.4 Impact on Children***

IPV also has an impact on children who may experience the violence by viewing the violent event, hearing the event, being forced to take part in some way, or seeing the results of the violence (O’Brien et al., 2013).

Children may also have been directly harmed as a result of attempting to intervene to protect their mother from the violence.

The New Zealand Hamilton Abuse Intervention Project (HAIPP), from their data collected between 1991 and 1994 (Maxwell, 1994) found that children witnessing IPV may have tried to stop the violence towards their mother by yelling or screaming, and some children had run to tell neighbours, or had contacted the police. In the process of intervening

some children had suffered physical or verbal abuse themselves.

Witnessing violence has an impact on the health and well-being of children, and international and New Zealand literature has found that children may experience sleep disturbances, emotional stress, and reduced appetite (Chapman et al., 2011; Pocock & Cram, 1996).

In the United Kingdom between 1996 and 1999, Mullender et al., (2002) conducted research that explored children's views of living in families where IPV was occurring. Over a thousand children aged between eight and sixteen completed a questionnaire about their understanding of IPV and follow up interviews were completed with forty-five children who lived in family situations where their mothers were experiencing IPV. Approximately one-third of the children in the study could recall specific details about the violence towards their mothers. For a number of children the violence happened so often it was almost a normal part of their lives. Children reported feeling sad and frightened because of the violence.

An Australian study (O'Brien et al., 2013) sought to understand the impact of children witnessing IPV by interviewing adults. Six women recounted their experiences, as children, of witnessing their fathers act violently towards their mothers. The study found that the participants lived in

emotionally charged environments where as children they felt emotionally neglected as their parents were caught up in their dysfunctional relationship with each other. Additionally, while the participants felt that their mothers had managed to meet their physical needs as children, their emotional needs were not met leaving participants with feelings of anger and frustration towards their mothers. As children, the participants had taken a number of survival strategies to cope with the challenging environment which included blocking out the violence, attempting to stop it, and eventually moving on from the violence.

A number of factors mediate the impact of IPV on children. Firstly, the impact of IPV on children will differ depending on the age and stage of development of the child because children's views of IPV and the emotional and physical skills to cope with IPV will vary according to age (Davies, Evans & DiLillo, 2008; Holt, Buckley & Whelan, 2008). Another factor influencing the impact of IPV on children is gender. The extant literature suggests that boys are more likely to externalise problems, by displaying aggressive behaviour and hostility towards others, with girls likely to internalise problems resulting in depression and anxiety (Edleson, 1999; Evans, Davies & DiLillo, 2008; Moffitt & Caspi, 1998; Yates et al., 2003). Other influences that impact children include; the existence of any

other forms of abuse or violence (Gardner, Kelleher, & Pajer, 2009) and the quality of supportive networks surrounding the child (Clements, Oxtoby & Ogle, 2008).

Much of the literature on the impact of IPV on children is focused on children up to the age of eleven, thus adolescents are not well represented in IPV impact research. Studies that have explored the impact of IPV on adolescents have found that adolescents who have experienced IPV are more likely to require mental health treatment than adolescents who have no experience of IPV (Graham-Bermann & Levendosky, 2011), are more likely to be at risk of engaging in violence in adolescence (Fagan & Wright, 2011), of using alcohol and other substances during adolescence (Smith et al., 2010), and at risk of using violence in adult intimate relationships (Black, Sussman & Unger, 2010; Capaldi et al., 2012).

### ***2.2.5 Impact on Families and Friends***

There are limited academic accounts of how IPV affects a woman's informal support networks. It is understood that many women will turn to informal supports before seeking help from formal networks (Goodman et al., 2003) and that family and friends may have mixed reactions to becoming aware of the IPV (Trotter & Allen, 2009). Riger, Raja and

Comacho (2002) conducted a qualitative study of the impact of intimate partner violence on those close to the women who had experienced IPV. The participants consisted of 15 predominantly African-American women. The authors' argument is built on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979) which recognised multiple levels of individual, family, social structure, and social cultural context. Three interconnected categories of IPV impact were identified: first-order effects that impacted on women's health and wellbeing; second-order effects that affected a women's ability to function in the social and physical environment; and, third-order effects that included the impact on the people connected to the woman.

Against the background of IPV women's relationships with their families and friends were sometimes impacted. In terms of third-order effects, some family members took care of children while the women worked or studied. Many families provided a place for the women to live following a shelter stay. The findings reported that families sometimes distanced themselves from a relationship with the woman because of violent threats from the ex-partner. Other research also highlighted the risks to family and friends when violent partners try to keep control over women after separation by gaining access to her informal support networks (Latta & Goodman, 2012).

## **2.3 Feminism and Intersectionality and IPV**

### ***2.3.1 Feminist Explanations of IPV***

While there are a range of feminist views, Bograd (1988) suggested there are ideas that are common to all feminist perspectives of IPV. Firstly, there is the premise that the family is an institution in a society which may promote and maintain IPV. Secondly, in order to comprehend IPV, it must be conceptualised in ways that reflect women's experience. Thirdly and finally, feminist perspectives of IPV are dedicated to advocating for women and developing theories which accurately reflect women's experiences.

Feminist analysis developed from an understanding that, overwhelmingly, IPV is carried out by men towards women. This, feminists suggest, reflects a patriarchal societal structure aimed at subordinating women (McPhail et al., 2007). This patriarchal structure is maintained through the process of socialisation which advocates for traditional male and female roles where "femininity is strongly associated with conquest and masculinity with domination" (Cribb, 1999, p. 51).

Methods of control are not confined to physical violence. According to Schechter (1982) other strategies, including verbal abuse, withdrawing of affection and economic control, are used when men believe it is unacceptable to physically abuse women. This idea is advanced in the development of the Duluth power and control wheel model (Pence & Paymar, 1986), which seeks to describe how a range of tactics are purposefully employed by men to reinforce control (Crichton-Hill, 2001). These tactics include intimidation, verbal abuse, threatening, economic abuse and using children. In this sense, violence is seen to be part of a continuum of methods used to oppress women.

There is debate within the literature surrounding a number of areas as to the utility of feminist explanations. One contention examines the assumption at the core of feminist explanations of IPV, that patriarchy exists and has a powerful influence over the norms and values of men, individually and as a group. A first critical point here concerns the presumption that patriarchy has been historically, and is currently, a universally applicable concept and can be applied cross culturally. This challenges a tendency in the feminist literature to homogenize violence and women's experiences. The 'second wave' of feminism was critiqued by

black feminists for not understanding or addressing the multiple oppressions faced by women who are not white (Mann & Huffman, 2005). Differences of sex, age, race and class and cultural context will influence how IPV is defined and analysed. Similar sentiments have been expressed in New Zealand particularly in relation to Maori. The argument has been made that colonialism has destroyed kinship patterns and the way of life of Maori by imposing a patriarchal system (Hoeata et al., 2011; Mikaere, 1999; Te Puni Kokiri, 2010). Prior to colonisation Maori society was principally tribal and collective (Houkamau, 2010), with whanau as the foundation. In traditional Maori society, safeguarding the people was uppermost and the roles of women and the land as providers of life were highly valued (Balzer et al., 1997). Colonisation, through the legislative confiscation of collectively held Maori land, urbanisation and the subsequent replacement of whanau by a nuclear family structure, served to fragment Maori society. As Pihama et al. (2015, p.46) states, “The idea of individual title and ownership of property, let alone women being treated as property, was completely foreign to Māori people”.

Feminist theorizing conceptualizes IPV as men's use of violence to uphold domination over women in order to "maintain the benefits these bring" (Itzin, 2000, p. 376). It could be argued, however, that men belonging to minority cultures have not gained the rewards and advantages of a patriarchal society in the way men of the dominant cultural group have (Carby, 1997). In addition, the family is described by feminism as the private sphere in which control over women is maintained. This view excludes an alternative reality where for women of minority cultures the family may also be a place of support against the forces of racist oppression. By treating all women's oppression as the same the experiences of women belonging to minority populations is kept invisible.

Feminist theory struggles to explain IPV in same-sex relationships, and women's violence against men (hooks, 2000; Perilla et al., 2003). Sorenson & Thomas (2009, p.338) reported that gay men and lesbian women report 'a nature and scope of IPV similar to that reported by heterosexual partners'. Furthermore, feminism does not adequately explain why some men do not physically or psychologically attempt to maintain control over women with whom they have a relationship. Several

authors (Crenshaw, 1991; McPhail et al., 2003) have been critical in their appraisal of feminist theory in this respect.

There have been challenges to the centrality of gender in explanatory theories of IPV, with scholars emphasizing the need to incorporate other forms of oppression such as racism, heterosexism, and class privilege (Nixon & Humphries, 2010; Sokoloff, 2005). Approaching the analysis of IPV by recognising the multiple dimensions that make up a woman's identity is termed 'intersectionality' or 'intersectional feminism', where the central focus is difference (Sokoloff, 2005). This approach is in contrast to early feminist theorising that emphasised the universal commonality shared by women who had experienced IPV.

### ***2.3.2 Intersectionality, Feminism and Intimate Partner Violence***

Intersectionality has been described as “one of the most significant theoretical contributions of feminist studies” (Mehrotra, 2010, p.419). Building on the work of earlier feminists, a new generation of activists have mobilised their efforts in the IPV arena focusing on their identities as racially diverse, queer and immigrant women (Arnold & Ake, 2013).

In 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw (Crenshaw, 1989) coined the term intersectionality to highlight the marginalisation of black women's experiences in relation to feminist theory. Crenshaw emphasised feminism's inability to recognise that identities intersect to shape one's vulnerability to discrimination. Thus, suggested Crenshaw (1989), categories of discrimination such as race, class and gender, can be likened to traffic traveling from different directions across an intersection. Accidents that occur in the middle of the intersection could be caused by traffic travelling from different directions. Similarly, discrimination towards black women, proposed Crenshaw, could be caused by race, class and/or gender discrimination. Black women's experiences were misinterpreted when examined from a gender-only point of view instead of an analysis that recognised the multidimensionality nature of the discrimination black women encountered. Furthermore, intersectionality examines the amount of privilege and oppression that people may experience based on identity constructs such as gender, class, race, sexual orientation or gender (Hulko, 2009). Thus, Crenshaw did not deny that white and black women may experience discrimination similarly, but she did propose that black women also experienced discrimination differently.

In a later work (Crenshaw, 1991), Crenshaw explored intersectionality specifically as it related to “the race and gender dimensions of violence against women of color” (p.1242). When visiting battered women’s shelters, Crenshaw noted that many of the women were unemployed, lacking in work skills, and poor; all as a result of gender, class and race oppression. Within the same work, Crenshaw addressed the subordinating experiences of immigrant women who spoke limited English and were in IPV relationships, arguing that their ability to seek help was restricted by their status as immigrant women dependent on their American-born husbands. At the same time, women from marginalised ethnic communities weigh up the reporting of IPV against the stereotypical assumptions about their ethnic community. Additionally, minority ethnic women may be reluctant to engage with a police force that is “frequently hostile” (p.1257).

In paying attention to structural issues, Crenshaw (1991) pointed out how gang violence between black men had received media and political attention while violence towards black women by black men and the patriarchal roots of such violence remained largely invisible in the American political discourse.

While the origins of intersectionality theory are Black feminism and critical race theory (Carbado et al., 2013), the literature suggests that it is incorrect to assume that intersectionality refers only to oppression experienced by women of colour or black women (Carbado, 2013). Since Crenshaw's original work, intersectionality has been applied to multiple constructed identities including race, ethnicity, age, class, disability, sexual orientation and citizenship, and to a range of oppressions including sexism, racism and classism (Carbado, 2013). Researchers have explored violence against women using an intersectionality frame to analyse: IPV and disability (Cramer & Plummer, 2009); IPV and HIV/AIDS (Erturk, 2005); IPV and family therapy (Bograd, 1999); IPV and mental health in a European context (Shula, 2015); IPV and immigrant women (Erez, Adelman & Gregory, 2009); and, IPV policy (Murray & Powell, 2009).

#### **2.4 The New Zealand Context and the Influence of Feminism**

In the late 1970s, the women's movement in New Zealand, as it had around the world, brought to light the extent to which women's lives were subjugated and controlled by male domination. The early 1970s was a time of "radicalism and militancy in the cause of women" (Dann, 1985,

p.24). During this time, the Women's Liberation Conference was held; the second women's liberation magazine (Broadsheet) began publication; and, women protested about a number of issues, including IPV. The movement for women's freedom from male oppression gained momentum around the world, influencing New Zealand efforts.

One of the issues highlighted by the women's movement was male violence towards women.

Feminists have done more than simply bring attention to the problems of male violence against women. Feminists have made such violence a central issue in the women's movement around the world (Marin and Russo, 1999, p. 19).

The women's movement contributed greatly to the recognition of IPV as a crucial issue. Furthermore, feminist explanations have made significant contributions to the identification of men's violence against women as a personal and public issue. Building on the work of the women's movement and its focus on making the personal political, the battered women's movement started in America in 1972 when there was an increase in the numbers of women reporting that they were experiencing violence in their homes (Schechter, 1982). Women across America began organising themselves in a movement to end male violence. Alongside the battered women's movement, the shelter movement offered women

experiencing violence in their homes a place of safety for them and their children. The battered women's movement was not only influenced by the women's movement, but by other factors including the black liberation, civil rights and anti-war movements (Schechter, 1982).

#### ***2.4.1 The New Zealand Response***

The first New Zealand women's refuge was established in Christchurch in 1973 (Dann, 1985). By the 1980s a number of women's refuges had been set up around the country. In 1981, the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges (NCIWR) was established as an Incorporated Society with 11 members. There are now 50 refuges in New Zealand (Snively, 2000).

During the 1980s, New Zealand underwent a range of neo-liberal economic changes, which in turn created major social changes. As a result, there was an increase in Maori rates of unemployment and a reduction in Maori rates of household income. Consequently, inequalities between Maori and non-Maori in relation to health, education, income, and housing, expanded (Barnett, Pearce & Moon, 2005; Blakely, Tobias, Atkinson, Yeh & Huang, 2007; Mitchell, 2009). At the first Hui Taumata (Maori

Economic Summit) in 1984 these social and economic issues were discussed; particularly welfare dependency and tino rangatiratanga<sup>1</sup>. Hui Taumata led to what has been termed a “cultural and economic renaissance for Maori” (Hudson cited in Durie 2005, p.ii) and indigenous ideas grew in force as Maori development came to be viewed as a way of being liberated from colonization. One example of ‘renaissance’ was The New Zealand Ministerial Advisory Committee report to the then Minister of Social Welfare entitled, Puaotea (1986). This report signified one of a number of actions that promoted change in the way social services responded to Maori. However, Wihongi (2010) stated that at the time Maori developed a number of iwi service provision initiatives which were then “abandoned, as it became apparent government commitment was tokenistic and paternalistic” (p. 42).

This seemed to be the case as in the 1980s services to women who had experienced IPV were delivered by the government funded National Collective of Independent Women’s Refuges (NCIWR). However,

---

<sup>1</sup> Tino Rangatiratanga is a Maori value that is often translated as meaning full and absolute chieftanship. In contemporary New Zealand tino rangatiratanga refers to power, authority and control of Maori economic, cultural and social development (Wihongi, 2010).

Maori, who had been a part of the refuge movement in New Zealand, voiced their concerns about the absence of Maori women's voices and Maori values in the way services to women were delivered (Haldane, 2009). As a result of the growing recognition of the impact of IPV on Maori women, and the need for more culturally responsive IPV services, the NCIWR transformed its service provision to Maori in 1986 with the introduction of tau iwi and Maori parallel services.

The NCIWR has been effective in promoting legislative changes in relation to violence against women. Until 1970, the Police did not intervene in IPV unless there was a serious injury or death (Ford, 1993). In the 1970s Police became more involved in domestic disputes; however, their involvement was negligible and police generally held a mediating role between the two parties in order to pacify the situation and stop the violence. Generally, charges were not laid (Cross & Newbold, 2010). The 1982 introduction of the Domestic Protection Act was a result of the political and social lobbying carried out by the NCIWR. Further legislative changes were to come including the criminalization of rape within marriage (1985) and, in 1995, the introduction of the Domestic Violence Act which extended the definition of relationships covered by a protection order, provided a

rehabilitative focus, and widened the definition of IPV to include children who witness the violent event (Barwick, Gray & Macky, 2000).

While the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act has advanced positively the judicial response to IPV in New Zealand, there remain discourses about violence that are obstructive to the effective protection of women (Busch & Robertson, 2000). These include defining IPV as the result of communication difficulties in relationships, and identifying provocative behaviour by women as a cause of IPV, thus making a distinction between women who are deserving of protection and those who are not.

In the late 1990s a more collaborative response to violence within families developed. Of significance here was the move towards a 'family' perspective of violence in New Zealand which included a number of forms of violence including child abuse, IPV, elder abuse, sibling abuse, and adolescent violence towards parents (Ministry of Social Development, 2002). The Government policy decision to locate forms of family violence (child abuse, intimate partner violence, elder abuse, and adolescent violence towards parents) under one heading of 'family violence' recognised the location of and commonalities that exist between various

forms of violence within the private sphere of ‘the family’ (Crichton-Hill, 2013). A number of authors have argued that the use of the term ‘family’ places family at the centre of analysis thereby obscuring the fact that the most common form of violence in the home is male against female (Candib 1995; Merry 2009; Saltzman, 2004), and presents violence that occurs in the family as gender neutral. While New Zealand’s reasons for moving to the use of ‘family violence’ were to identify the forms of violence that can occur in families, Wangmann (2010) provides an alternative reason for the use of the terms ‘family violence’ and ‘IPV’. She noted that there are varied views about gender and violence and these understandings have been debated in the academic literature over the past three decades. Wangmann (2010) contended that family violence researchers viewed violence as symmetrical, thus perpetrated by men and women towards each other, while IPV researchers framed violence as asymmetrical, and largely perpetrated by men towards women. However, the use of the term ‘family violence’ recognises that various forms of violence that occur within the family, such as child abuse, elder abuse, sibling violence, intimate partner violence and violence towards parents are interrelated (Anderson, 2010; Crichton-Hill, 2013).

Responses to IPV over the last 40 years have altered considerably. New Zealand now has a range of non-governmental services providing advocacy and support for women alongside support services and programmes for children, and men. There is now recognition that IPV occurs across a range of societies and cultures, and that the nature of IPV and the level of social support for such violence varies greatly from setting to setting (Krug, 2002). This suggests a need for theoretical explanations and practice responses that are strongly connected to the cultural context in which IPV occurs. As a result, New Zealand has experienced a growth in the range of ethnic services responding to the needs of Maori, Pacific, Asian, and refugee and migrant populations.

Changes in service provision signified an incorporation of holistic models of intervention following a growing recognition that perspectives of IPV that have at their core a single disciplinary focus are inadequate in explaining why men's violence towards women occurs. Predominantly, theories used to explain IPV have been one-dimensional and ethnocentric in origin and yet they are employed across a range of cultural and ethnic groups (Bent-Goodley, 2007; Price, 2012). In addition, Goldner (1999) stated that:

feminist psychological/psychiatric and cultural perspectives, which clearly modify and enrich one another, have been framed as mutually exclusive oppositions, creating a polarizing context of forced choices between inadequate alternatives (p.327).

Multifaceted collaborative approaches to IPV propose a synthesis of perspectives, recognising the potential of each perspective to make a valuable contribution to our understanding of the dynamics of IPV, and ultimately in our professional responses to women, men, and children.

## **2.5 Women's Responses to Intimate Partner Violence**

Barnish (2004) outlined a range of responses women have to IPV which include discounting early violence, monitoring the perpetrator's behaviour, becoming immobilised, redefining their relationship with the perpetrator, resisting and disengaging from the relationship, and recovering. Women consider a range of options and safety strategies to progressively move away from the violent relationship. In order to do this, women need financial and social support and access to a range of coordinated services across criminal, justice, health, education and welfare sectors (Hand et.al, 2002). Coordinated services must be able to respond to the unique perspective and experience of individual women. Barnish (2004) suggested that research is needed "to develop and test a range of

innovative, co-ordinated interventions with victims and perpetrators so as to increase the available repertoire of responses, and establish what works best, with whom, in what circumstances, and why” (p.134).

The dominant and socially acceptable view is that moving towards safety from IPV means leaving the relationship (Johnson & Sullivan, 2008) and that staying in the relationship signifies a lack of readiness to move towards safety. Studies examining women’s responses to IPV concentrate on stay/leave decisions rather than on the many ways women resist IPV (Cavanagh, 2003; Chantler, 2006). Cavanagh (2003) posited that focusing on women’s stay or leave decisions is reductionist and ignores the complexity of intimate relationships.

### ***2.5.1 Why doesn’t she leave?***

A commonly asked question of women in violent relationships is “why doesn’t she leave?” This question highlights a number of assumptions about violent intimate relationships, including: that anyone who experiences violence in their relationship would want to leave, and, once the decision is made to leave, leaving is easy (Goodmark, 2011). A further assumption, is that once women leave violent relationships the violence stops (Cavanagh, 2003). These assumptions are indicative of the limited

societal knowledge that exists about how convoluted violent intimate relationships are. Cavanagh (2003) cautioned that intimate relationships are complex and characterised by love and commitment. Thus, responding to IPV is a dynamic process, and one must also consider the social/structural context within which the woman resides.

When IPV is framed around the question ‘why doesn’t she leave?’ the responses are likely to be individualised in nature. In this frame women are positioned as free to leave violent relationships if they want to. Additionally, analysis is focused on the individual psychological characteristics of women (and their perpetrators) and ignores the systemic factors that act as barriers to leaving. Burman and Chantler (2005) speculated that an individualised focus is even more likely when applied to women from minority ethnic populations. In their UK research with minority ethnic women who had experienced IPV, and workers in the IPV field, the authors found that a popular discourse about minority ethnic populations was that ‘they look after their own’, and therefore IPV interventions were seen as the responsibility of those minority ethnic populations. These beliefs alongside possible tenuous immigrant status

leave minority ethnic women with no access to public funds thus curtailing their ability to leave violent relationships.

An alternative question that could be asked is suggested by Murray (2008) who asked, “why doesn’t he leave?” Murray (2008) provided an account of the history of responses to IPV in Australia. She concluded that asking why women do not leave violent relationships minimises the factors that might make it difficult for women to leave home and that Australian courts have been reluctant to force men out of their homes. Murray (2008) postulated that this response by the court system was symptomatic of a society that believes a man is entitled to his home, thus demonstrating the significant position of disadvantage that women in violent relationships experience.

### ***2.5.2 Cultural Narratives and Gender Role***

#### ***Socialisation***

IPV and associated factors such as mental health, entitlement to benefit support (Cheng, 2013; Riger & Staggs, 2004), existing legislation and responses of the criminal justice system to women (Bailey, 2010; Henaghan & Ballantyne, 2010), alongside cultural, class, and racial

oppression, serve to keep women in violent relationships (Burman & Chantler, 2005). These factors act as a reinforcement to the beliefs women may hold about their inability to manage life outside the violent relationship including: that they will not be able to cope on their own; they are not deserving or worthy of love; they will be lonely; leaving will escalate the violence; and hope that the relationship will improve (Alexander et al., 2009; Hendy, Eggen et al., 2003). In addition, cultural norms may determine that women should stay in relationships to preserve the family unit and to support their partners (Goodmark, 2011); as Brosi & Rolling (2010) suggested, “women can be so mired in culturally imposed expectations, that they may not recognize the covert and powerful influence that the dominant cultural narrative has on their personal stories” (p.248).

Women in violent intimate relationships have to tackle abusive and manipulative behaviours by their partners while trying to address economic and family circumstances, and the availability and quality of formal and informal supports (Baly, 2010; Barnett, 2001;). How women deal with violence in their intimate relationships is influenced by their beliefs and attitudes which generally have been moulded by society and culture. A

number of studies have suggested that gender role socialisation has an influence on how women balance their expectations of their role in the relationship and the reality of the violence they experience. Gender role socialisation may be the reason women, when the first violent incident occurs, blame themselves and seek to find ways to make the relationship work (Giles, Curren, & Adamson, 2005).

Gender socialisation was discussed by Towns and Adams (2009) who argued that women have to traverse two conflicting positions: on the one hand, their continuing optimism for equity in the relationship, and on the other, their cultural belief that it is incorrect to defy their partner's place as head of the family. Towns and Adams (2009) described the cultural beliefs that influence women's perceptions of the female and male role in relationships as perfect-love discourses. These culturally maintained beliefs contribute to the silencing of women and encourage women to keep working at their relationship because "the true love of a woman is understood to be able to cure all of the man's problems" (p.580). Perfect-love discourses, also known as 'discourses of romantic love' (Hayes, 2014), are promoted through the media where relationships are depicted as involving tragedy; the enduring message in television and film, argues

Hayes, is that “true romantic love is enduring and worth suffering for” (p.17). When there is ongoing violence in a relationship the romantic love discourse is difficult to maintain. Wood (2001) argued that women may then engage in a ‘dark romantic narrative’ to explain their situation where men are portrayed as sometimes violent and women have no option but to suffer the violence because of the relationship commitment they have, and because the violence is somehow their fault.

Conversely, some societal discourses may empower women to free themselves from violent relationships. Baly (2010) conducted interviews with women who had left violent relationships and found that some societal discourses actually empowered the women interviewed to leave. These discourses depicted ideal relationships as built on a foundation of equality where women are able to assert their needs and be independent and resilient. Baly (2010) concluded that the process of dealing with IPV is not straightforward and that societal and cultural beliefs “can both constrain and empower how abused women think and behave” (p.2309).

### *2.5.3 Resisting IPV*

Early views of women in violent relationships proposed that, over time, women, in determining that they could do nothing about the violence, developed ‘learned helplessness’, becoming self-blaming, passive and inactive (Walker,1984). Seligman (1975) first proposed the theory of learned helplessness, suggesting that traumatic events can debilitate people who become passive and inactive because they have ‘learned’ that responding is ineffective. In suggesting that women developed a state of learned helplessness, Walker (1984) shifted analysis of IPV from an examination of a woman’s intrinsic characteristics to an analysis of the restrictions that the violence itself placed on women. In other words, women were not passive because they were innately victims; rather, women were passive because of the impact of the violence itself (Goodmark, 2011). Walker (1984) concluded that IPV contributed to women’s low levels of self-esteem, depression, and to the view that others were trying to control their lives; this she termed ‘battered women’s syndrome’. While the theory of battered women’s syndrome helped to highlight an alternative view of women in violent relationships there is criticism that it also highlights women’s passivity and weakness (Gondolf

& Fisher, 1988; Goodmark, 2011; Rothenberg, 2002) while ignoring that women do resist and fight back against their abusers.

#### ***2.5.4 Help seeking***

A growing body of research recognises the actions women take to address the violence they experience in intimate relationships. In particular, the work of Gondolf and Fisher (1988) debunked views of women as passive actors in violent relationships and instead described women as taking action to protect themselves and their children by actively seeking help. Help seeking is thus depicted as a form of resistance to IPV.

Women in violent relationships seek support from formal and informal networks. Formal networks include organisations such as legal agencies, social service organisations, refuges, or health professionals. Informal networks include friends, family and acquaintances.

Research has suggested that both types of support are important in ending IPV (Ansara & Hindin, 2010; Barnett, 2001). However, both formal and informal networks can also be obstructive to women leaving violent relationships (Fanslow & Robinson, 2010; Goodkind et al., 2003). As an

example, research has found that women who had left and returned to their violent ex-partner a number of times were less likely to be emotionally supported by friends and family (Goodkind et.al., 2003). Moreover, a woman's capacity and ability to seek formal or informal support is dependent on her social location; that is, her age, sexuality, socioeconomic status, spiritual beliefs, and cultural identity (Taket et al., 2014).

Organisations that women seek help from often do not meet their needs. Goodmark (2011) suggested that women who are perceived by organisations as passive are labelled as non-protective in relation to their children. Conversely, women who are resistant (thereby defying the passive victim stereotype) are labelled as either not having really experienced IPV or that the violence they have experienced has not had an impact on them.

As discussed at the beginning of this section, women may decide to remain in violent relationships because dominant gender role discourses have convinced women that it is their responsibility to remain in the relationship to make it work, despite the violence. There are also strong cultural narratives attached to women who identify as being in a violent intimate

relationship. The resulting stigmatisation can influence women's help seeking efforts. For example, women in violent relationships may be categorised as victims. Victimhood is often constructed as referring to a person who is weak, passive, dependent and responsible for their victimisation. Additionally, victim blaming has been shown to be greater toward women who do not meet dominant gender role expectations (Overstreet & Quinn, 2013). Perceptions held by others about gender roles can influence how IPV is viewed and whether action is taken by others in relation to the violence.

Esqueda and Harrison (2005) explored the influence of sex role stereotypes on perceptions of IPV. Using a sex role inventory known as the Traditional/Egalitarian sex role inventory (TESR), the authors measured individuals' beliefs about traditional sex role stereotypes. The study involved 288 European American men and women. Participants were given a transcript of a police interview detailing an IPV event. The transcript provided variable information about the couple's race, the level of incitement by the woman, and the woman's responses. After reading the transcript the participants completed two questionnaires. The first questionnaire explored views held by the participants about the violent

behaviour and culpability of the couple; the second questionnaire was focused on social attitudes and included the TESR.

Findings indicated that beliefs about gender roles were influenced by the race of the woman in the police transcript. Furthermore, the violence was more likely to be justified when the couple in the police transcript was African American than when the couple was identified as European American. In terms of culpability, the level of provocation displayed by the woman influenced whether participants believed that the male should be arrested. Esqueda and Harrison (2005) suggested that beliefs about gender roles may influence the response of formal networks, such as the police and judiciary, to women experiencing violence in their intimate relationships. This is supported by the work of Overstreet & Quinn (2013) who identified a stigmatisation model specifically related to IPV.

The stigmatisation model demonstrates how cultural stigma towards victims of IPV can influence a woman's motivation to seek help. Overstreet & Quinn (2013) suggested that two other stigma components, anticipated stigma and internalised stigma can, along with cultural stigma, impact on help seeking. Anticipated stigma refers to the expectations

women may have about how others will respond to a disclosure that she is in a violent relationship. Overstreet & Quinn (2013) stressed that anticipated stigma can be experienced when considering potential responses from both formal and informal networks. Internalised stigma relates to “the extent to which people internalize negative IPV beliefs” (Overstreet & Quinn, 2013, p.117). Internalised stigma, as discussed earlier (section 2.3.1), may result in depression and illness as a result of stress as well as reduced self-efficacy in women who are then less able to engage in help seeking activities.

Research in the United Kingdom (Chantler, 2006) has explored service responses to minority women who had experienced IPV. Women who participated in the study described a range of strategies of resistance they had used in their violent relationship. These strategies included, gaining some control over finances; using physical violence as a way of retaliating; developing an awareness of their partners’ mood and then complying in order to keep themselves and their children safe. However, Chantler (2006) reported that often the strategies used resulted in escalating violence.

Later research by Gondolf (2012) focused on the physical strategies that women used against violent partners who were at the time participants in batterer programmes. This quantitative study found sharp differences between the violent tactics used by men and those used by women. Men's tactics were identified as involving more severe use of physical violence. Sixty-seven percent of women in the study said they used physical violence to protect themselves. As Gondolf stated, "The nature of women's tactics could be considered 'resistance' against very violent men amidst failed alternatives" (2012, p.1040). Furthermore, the women's use of physical tactics reduced as the men reduced their use of violence.

Women are resourceful in developing protective strategies when still in violent relationships (Lapierre, 2010), from the first act of violence (Merritt-Gray & Wuest, 1995) and throughout the term of the relationship (Campbell et al., 1998; Goodman, Dutton, & Lapierre, 2010; Wuest & Merritt-Gray, 2008). The literature documents planning and enlisting the help of friends as part of a range of strategies women use to address violence in the home and to eventually move away from the violence (Campbell et al., 1998; Fanslow & Gulliver, 2015; Sylaska & Edwards, 2015; Wuest & Merritt-Gray, 1999).

The majority of women do leave violent relationships, but the process of leaving and the factors that influence leaving or staying are not well understood (Watson & Parsons, 2005; Fanslow & Robinson, 2010). Hamby (2008) argued that women consider a range of risks in their thinking about leaving. The next section examines the risks associated with leaving.

## **2.6 Risks associated with leaving**

In her holistic risk assessment model Hamby (2008) suggested that women evaluate the risks of leaving in relation to three broad categories: the risk of personal physical harm; the risk of harm to others; and, the financial, social, and the legal risks of staying or leaving.

### ***2.6.1 Risk of personal harm***

Research suggests that violence may escalate when women make moves to leave the violent relationship. Seuffert (1996) argued that some women remain in violent relationships because it is “easier to know where he is and have some ability to predict his actions than to always be hiding in fear of his sudden, violent discovery” (p.40). Abrahams (2010) writing about

the context of leaving IPV in England and Wales stated that “leaving may not be the safest course of action” (p. 24) especially because the homicide data from these countries showed that most women were killed by their ex-partner making leaving, or having left, dangerous. Robertson et al., (2007) have described the time of separation as one of the risk factors for future violence. Women have reported that ex-partners continue to intimidate, stalk, and threaten to kill, once they have moved away from the violent relationship (Murphy, 2002). In New Zealand, Fanslow and Robinson’s (2010) study of women who in their lifetime had experienced IPV, found that women sought help or left violent relationships because they had suffered serious injury and feared the violence would escalate resulting in a threat to their lives.

Research has indicated that women may be at risk of personal physical violence if the perpetrator holds beliefs that condone the use of violence towards women. In a New Zealand survey that measured attitudes about family violence (McLean, 2010), 15% percent of respondents agreed that “a man who doesn’t fight when he is pushed around will lose respect as a man” (p.9); 7% believed that in an intimate relationship it is OK to hit if you’ve been hit first” (p.9); and 5% believed that “sometimes hitting is the only way to express your feelings” (p.9). According to survey results, the

participants who held these beliefs were Maori and Pacific men, and men from ‘other’ ethnic groups. For refugees and migrants a pattern of rigid gender expectations may develop that reflects male supremacy and female subservience. According to Nam et al., (2011) this is known as “cultural freezing” and is the result of immigration and resettlement experiences (p.10). Threats to male domination may result in violence within the home.

For some women, the move to leave is associated with a recognition that their own physical and mental health is at risk (Hand et al., 2002).

### ***2.6.2 Risk of harm to others***

A woman’s role as a mother has an impact on any decisions she may make in relation to the violence occurring in her home. The time of separation from a violent partner is the most dangerous time for children (Radford & Hester, 2006; Seuffert, 1996). Ex-partners can threaten to kill the children as a way of trying to maintain control over women (Murphy 2002).

Robin’s (2010) doctoral thesis research into New Zealand mothers’ experiences of separating from an abusive partner reported that post-IPV-separation, mothers, even though the children lived with them, remained concerned for their children’s safety. The violent partner may make

attempts to undermine a woman's parenting activities (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002; Jones & Vetere, 2016). This may occur by criticising the mother in front of the children, encouraging the children to be abusive to their mother and to keep the abuse secret from the outside world.

Women may be motivated to leave the violent relationship because they are concerned for the safety and wellbeing of their children (Fanslow & Robinson, 2010; Haight, Shim, Lin & Swinford, 2007; Moe, 2009).

However, this concern may also translate into a barrier for women wanting to leave a relationship, contribute to women returning to a relationship, or be a critical factor in women's decisions to leave the relationship.

Abrahams (2010) reported, in her study of IPV outcomes for women, that the realisation that their children were in danger was one of the factors that propelled women to move away from the violent relationship.

Moe (2009) interviewed women in a domestic violence shelter to find out how children influenced women's decision-making in terms of ending or leaving a violent relationship. The study found that, for some women, the prospect of losing custody of their children meant they delayed leaving the violent relationship. Moreover, women remained in the relationship as long as they thought it was in the children's best interests to do so.

### ***2.6.3 Financial, social, legal risks***

Women who are contemplating moving away from IPV consider a number of other risk factors. Each of the risks outlined below are considered and balanced in relation to other risks.

#### ***2.6.3.1 Financial Risks***

Women may be concerned that they will not be able to support themselves or their children and that they will not have anywhere to live. A number of authors have highlighted that the biggest obstacle to leaving a relationship is being able to attain suitable accommodation impacting on a woman's ability to leave IPV or facilitating a woman's return to her violent partner (Abrahams, 2010).

Crichton-Hill, Coker, and Taylor (2010) examined how women with protection orders (a legally binding order issued by the court to protect people from IPV), and how women without protection orders used Christchurch Women's Refuge services, and whether the services supplied met the women's needs. The authors described protection orders as "an important legal marker of the ending of an abusive relationship" (p.13) but acknowledged that for a range of reasons, including financial, some women do not access a protection order. The study found that some

women may be eligible for legal aid, but if women were not eligible for aid they funded the protection order themselves. In addition, study findings indicated that women are more likely to stay involved with IPV services if they had a Protection Order. Findings also indicated that funding policies to allow women to attend only one IPV programme may not provide women with the best chance of staying IPV-free:

The current practice of restricting funding to the provision of one programme may limit women's ability to access the information at times when they can best understand and use the knowledge gained (p.13).

#### **2.6.3.2 Social risks**

Women who experience IPV may feel guilt which is reinforced when they are criticised for remaining in violent contexts with their children. Indeed, women are often blamed for the harm that their violent partners have brought to the home (Semaan, Jasinski, Rubriski-McKenzie, 2013). The idealised view of mothers as intuitive nurturers has been criticised by feminist theorists for at least three decades (Krane & Davies, 2007). Mothers have been cast as carrying out a role that is natural and intuitive, no matter what the circumstance, resulting in healthy, well-adjusted citizens. According to this view of mothering, the emotional and physical resources required to mother become invisible. Paradoxically, when home

environments do not fit these perceptions of the mothering role, mothers are cast as responsible for the detrimental home environment. In the context of IPV, attention may move away from the violent behaviour of the male perpetrator and towards the women's inability to parent (Douglas & Walsh, 2010; Terrance, Plumm & Little, 2008). It follows that women weigh up the risk of being identified by child protection authorities and by society as a child abuser knowing that the outcome may be that her children are removed from her care.

### ***2.6.3.3 Legal risks***

Women seek assistance from the legal system for a number of reasons. These include: application for a Protection Order (in New Zealand), legal representation, police assistance, and custody and access arrangements in relation to children.

Robertson et al. (2007) found that while women were positive about aspects of the New Zealand Domestic Violence Act (1995) there were facets that left women feeling frustrated. For example, a number of barriers existed to the acquisition of a Protection Order. Barriers included: lack of information about Protection Orders; the cost of attaining legal aid was described as prohibitive for some women and for non-resident women

whose violent partner was their sponsor, attaining a Protection Order was not an option. For women who were able to acquire a protection order the response of the Police to breaches of the order were described as inadequate.

International research has highlighted the challenges presented by the need to follow strict rules in relation to fathers' access to their children (Holt, 2015; Shalansky, Ericksen & Henderson, 1999; Zeoli, Rivera Sullivan, & Kubiak, 2013). Sometimes women are forced to have contact with their violent ex-partner because of laws related to custody and access. Hunter, Graham-Bermann (2013) explored the contact that fathers', who were perpetrators of IPV, had with children aged 6-12 years of age, post IPV. They found that seventy-two percent of children had contact with their fathers. Similar research by Salisbury, Henning & Holdford (2009) found that fathers who had been convicted of IPV maintained contact with their children. With reference to New Zealand, Robertson et al. (2007) raised a number of factors that can have a detrimental impact on the mother and child. These include: the father attempting to undermine the relationship between mother and child; the father's lack of parenting skills, including neglectful and irresponsible parenting; exposure to threats of violence

towards the mother; and, risk of abduction. Also, children may not wish to spend time with their fathers and may be distressed following access visits (Giles, Cureen, & Adamson, 2005). Post-separation child contact with IPV fathers has implications for women who might be re-traumatised through this process and anxious about the impact that father contact might have on their children.

That women in violent relationships need to continually evaluate a range of risks provides some insight to the difficult and convoluted process that women may need to work through in resisting IPV and moving towards safety.

## **2.7 Moving Away From Intimate Partner Violence**

Women who live with abusive partners reveal that violence can occur at any stage of the relationship. Women actively respond to violence in diverse ways, and these responses may change over time. Responses that women have to IPV are dependent on a range of factors including gender socialisation and perceptions of relationship roles and motherhood. For some women one violent incident may be enough for her to make the decision to end the relationship. For others that first unexpected violent

incident is minimised, and once the partner has promised it will not happen again, the violent incident is perceived as a one-off event. Some authors have suggested that women have a “heightened sense of perceptiveness ... an intuitive sense of something different and threatening emerged that activated the leaving process” (Davis, 2002, p.300). Typically, the first violent incident is followed by other escalating incidents of violence. However, the violent events are interspersed by periods of non-violence in the relationship. Over time, women develop a range of strategies for coping with the violence while simultaneously reflecting on what might happen to their relationship.

Work in the area of women’s responses to IPV has focused on investigating the process of leaving (Chang et.al., 2006; Chang et.al., 2010; Koepsell, Kernic & Holt 2006; Oths & Robertson 2007). Studies have suggested that leaving is a gradual process of change marked by turning points or transitional events resulting in movement from one point of change to another. Two key concepts integrated into the majority of theories used to describe the process of moving away from violence are turning points and trajectories.

### *2.7.1 Turning Points*

A recurrent theme in the literature on the process of moving away from IPV is the idea that for many women a ‘turning point’ is the precursor to leaving a violent relationship. Emanating from life course theory, a turning point is described as a transitional event that redirects a direction in life (Elder, 1985). Morgan, Coombes, Te Hiwi and McGray (2007) described this as one or a number of ‘tipping points’. These points are “specific incidents, factors or circumstances that permanently change how the women view the violence, their relationship, and how they wish to respond” (Chang et.al., 2010, p.252).

International research has identified what the turning or tipping point might be. Chang et.al., (2010) conducted focus groups with women participating in group counselling for IPV followed by individual interviews with women who did not take part in the focus groups but had also experienced IPV. The findings demonstrated that the turning point was when the women’s beliefs were challenged by an “external event or internal realization” (p.255). The idea of an internal sense of change supported by an external precipitating event is supported by earlier research (Eiskovitzs, Buchbinder & Mor, 1998). Chang et al. also reported that through discussion with others the women began to realise the impact of the

violence and this occurred alongside a realisation that their violent partner was not going to change. An awareness of the support available to them empowered women to feel more hopeful that they could escape the violence. Other turning points identified in the study correlate with previous research (Eisikovits, Buchbinder & Mor, 1998) such as escalating violence, unfaithfulness, and the need to protect others; in particular their children.

Brosi and Rollings' (2010) study examined the role of narrative therapy concepts, such as "emphasizing unique outcomes, dominant cultural narratives and support for new narratives" (p.237), in the decision making process of women who had initiated moving away from a violent relationship. Eight women residing in a domestic violence shelter were interviewed. Some of the women identified a specific event as a precursor to leaving. While the study acknowledged the importance of turning points in women's leaving processes, specific turning points were not identified.

As stated in the previous section, protection of children is a common theme throughout the research literature on turning points (Abrahams, 2010) Interviews with mother's in IPV shelters in the United States of America found that:

For women who are able to terminate abusive relationships, concern for the welfare of their children is a driving force behind their decisions to have continued contact with their ex-partners and their attempts to negotiate for material and financial assets from the relationship... (Moe, 2009, p.245)

Research conducted in Tasmania (Patton, 2003) also found that mothers' concern for the impact of IPV on children was identified as a major turning point. The study interviewed fifty-three women in Tasmania noting that the process of leaving violent relationships comprised more than one turning point. Other turning points included changes in belief systems such as acknowledging that the IPV was actually harmful to children, and the potential escalation of or threat of further violence.

The term, 'turning points', is not always used in research examining the motivators for women leaving violent relationships. For example, turning points are often associated with help seeking behaviours (Chang, et.al., 2010). As an example, one study (Randell, Bledsoe, Shroff & Clyde, 2012) conducted focus groups with English- and Spanish-speaking women in order to determine women's motivators for seeking help in relation to IPV. The study found that there were internal and external motivators for leaving. Internal motivators included wanting a better life, recognising that the violence in the relationship was not normal, a revelation that there was

no hope for relationship improvement and fear for their children. External motivators included concern for the children and acknowledgement that the violence was of such a nature that child protective services might become involved. Therefore, there was a risk of losing custody of the children. Other child-related motivators for leaving were identified including: concern for the psychological well-being of children; the violent partner's increasing use of the children to control the women; and, concern that the children may be hurt during a violent event. An additional motivator for help seeking was connection with informal networks and formal services where the women were encouraged to take action to end the violence.

Research in New Zealand has found that there are diverse descriptions of the turning point. For women in Morgan et al.'s (2007) study these points were when women finally realised they "couldn't really tolerate living with him, he was very angry" (p. 83); or the turning point might have been when women realised they did not want to be "treated like shit anymore" (p.84). For women in Murphy's (2002) study turning points occurred when they realised the relationship would not improve, or when they realised that remaining with their violent partner was endangering their life, and the lives of their children.

The People's Report, also known as the Glenn Inquiry (Wilson & Webber, 2014), conducted an independent inquiry in response to the question "If New Zealand was leading the world in addressing child abuse and domestic violence, what would that look like?" (p.10). Five hundred people who had experienced child abuse and/or domestic violence, or who worked in the area contributed to the inquiry through panel interviews, online submissions and Skype interviews. The report focuses its attention on child abuse and domestic violence, however, according to the report, domestic violence does not necessarily relate to IPV:

The term "domestic violence" is also frequently used in this report. However, people's stories indicate that for many their violence occurs within a broader context than just partner violence. It can rightly be argued that family violence would be more appropriate terminology. The Glenn Inquiry question was originally framed within the contexts of child abuse and domestic violence because of the predominately gendered nature of domestic violence. Therefore, the term "domestic violence" was retained (Wilson & Webber, 2014, p.45).

Notwithstanding the lack of specificity on turning points for women in violent relationships, Wilson & Webber (2014) report that often specific events lead to a change in situation; the inquiry calls these events "a defining moment or series of events that acted as a catalyst for change" (p.45). The inquiry identified children as a catalyst for change.

Turning points vary over time and the different pathways that can be taken as a result of turning points are called trajectories. As Khaw and Hardesty proposed (2007), the multiple turning points that women might experience will result in different trajectories or pathways. For example, two women who each realise that their partner has once again been violent, despite promising not to use violence, might respond differently. One woman might decide to leave the relationship, the other might decide to speak with a friend while remaining in the relationship. Both women experience a turning point (the recognition of broken promises), but their individual responses result in different trajectories.

### ***2.7.2 The Process of Moving Away from IPV***

The process of moving on from a violent relationship is not straightforward. How women remain in, and move on from, violent relationships has been conceptualised in the research literature as a process or series of processes (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2009; Enander & Homburg, 2008; Kirkwood, 1993; Landenberger, 1998). Viewing moving on from IPV as a process is more realistic than viewing moving on as a single event. Some studies describe moving away from IPV as consisting of a series of stages or phases – such studies have explored women's emotions, thoughts, and actions throughout the period of the relationship

until leaving; other studies have examined the period of time after a woman has left (post-separation). As is suggested by intersectionality theorists, the experiences of women take shape and are interpreted differently because of how various life experiences intersect (Mehrotra, 2010; Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008; Sokoloff, 2005). The following section explores the relevant literature explaining women's leaving processes.

### ***2.7.3 Phased process of leaving***

An example of a phased process is the work by Church and Church (1981) that highlighted the role that fear plays throughout the course of a violent relationship. Church (1984) suggested that there were four phases of fear and during any of these phases a woman may decide to leave the violent relationship.

According to Church (1984), the pre-fear phase begins with disagreements leading to the first violent incident. Following this first violent assault the violent partner seeks forgiveness and is forgiven by women. In the second phase of selective fear women learn to fear some situations but not others. Women may respond in an assertive way and this may prohibit violence

from occurring in some situations, but at other times her assertive response may serve to escalate the violence. The selective fear phase is followed by generalised fear where women are fearful when in the company of their partners and failure to be agreeable and comply with her partner's demands results in increasingly violent attacks. During this phase women may feel trapped and helpless; leaving her partner becomes an option. Finally, in the gross stress reaction phase, women experience constant fear as the severity of the violent attacks has escalated. During this phase women may leave the relationship. In Church's study, of 45 women who had reached the final fear phase, only four remained in the relationship.

The work of Giles and Cureen (2007) identified five phases that women go through from entering to ending a relationship. The first phase, 'falling for love', describes how women enter a relationship with romanticised ideas and traditional beliefs, and without the skills to manage conflict. When violence occurs women blame themselves and work to maintain the relationship.

In phase two, 'taking control', women become focused on surviving in the relationship; maintaining compliant behaviour and focusing on the

mothering role. As the violent relationship continues, women have periods of anguish and confusion. These periods are highlighted by an awareness that the relationship cannot continue. In this phase some women make plans to leave, while others are more uncertain.

Phase three, 'securing a base', relates to the time after women have left the violent relationship. The violence continues and women are fearful for their own safety and that of their children. This phase is characterised by mounting pressure from the continued abuse, financial burdens, and emotional turmoil; leaving women exhausted. The relationship with the violent partner may continue, especially for women who have children and who believe the children should continue to have contact with their father. During this phase, women may seek support from friends and family, or from social services. The support may be helpful or unhelpful and often there is pressure to reconcile.

In phase four, women reflect on their relationship and their responses to the violence; this phase is called, 'making sense of it'. Women may experience some safety and stability, however, fear and concern for themselves and their children is still present. During this phase, women

resist reconciliation while at the same time mourning the loss of the relationship. Phase four is a time of personal growth and the development of independence and self-sufficiency.

The final phase is 'being myself'. Even though fear remains, women become more future-focused; they are stronger, feel more secure, and are more energetic. Some women may become involved in helping other women who have experienced IPV.

#### ***2.7.4 Social-Psychological Process of Leaving***

The process of leaving violent relationships has been framed by Wuest and Merritt-Gray (1999) as a social psychological process where women are in the process of reclaiming themselves. The authors described the process of regaining the self as cyclical and consisting of four stages: counteracting abuse; breaking free; not going back; and, moving on.

The counteracting abuse stage is where women resist the violence. There are three sub-processes to the counteracting abuse stage. Firstly, *relinquishing parts of self* is identified as a strategy that occurs as a result of IPV where women are left feeling ashamed of themselves and worthless. Secondly, in order to deal with this view of oneself, women may *minimise the violence* and develop other strategies to protect themselves and resist

the violence. Next, Wuest & Merritt-Gray (1999) found that women *fortified defences* against the violence. Fortifying defences included developing a range of defences, both conscious and unconscious including: “experiencing a caring relationship, creating space, making a leaving plan, surviving crises, and enhancing capabilities” (p.117). The authors stressed that this stage sets the basis for the next stage of the cyclical process – breaking free.

The third stage, *breaking free*, signified the women’s attempts to move away from the violent relationship. This is described as a repetitive process, where women may leave the relationship only to return and leave once again. Wuest & Merritt-Gray (1999) suggested that following each separation, women may feel a sense of achievement which is soon replaced by fear and anxiety. Any return to the violent relationship may be damaging to self-esteem as returning women are labelled as failing to stay out of the relationship.

Finally, Wuest & Merritt-Gray (1999) found that *breaking free*, the final part of the cyclical process of reclaiming self, consisted of two processes where women create boundaries to *claim and maintain their territory*, and use resources to maintain safety and achieve financial independence from

the ex-partner. At this stage of the process women are exhausted, however, the focus has moved to remaining apart from the ex-partner. The second process is *getting situated* where women finally reclaim themselves by being financially independent, claiming belongings from the previous relationship, and if there are children, negotiating the boundaries of the ex-partners contact with them. Another part of getting situated is the need to consistently justify the decision to leave the former relationship to informal and formal networks.

#### ***2.7.5 Stages of Change***

The transtheoretical model of change is a behaviour change model developed in the 1980s (DiClemente & Prochaska, 1982). As the name ‘transtheoretical’ suggests, the model incorporates ideologies of change from a range of significant intervention theories in the psychotherapy and behaviour change fields. The model has mostly been utilised in health related areas such as smoking cessation (DiClemente & Prochaska, 1982), alcohol reduction (Chang, McNamara, Wilkins-Haug & Orav, 2007), sun protective behaviour (Borschmann, Lines & Cottrell, 2012), and exercise behaviour (Reed, Pritschet & Cutton, 2013).

DiClemente and Prochaska (1982) conducted research comparing the smoking cessation success of individuals in professional programmes with individuals managing smoking cessation independently. This research identified that behavioural change occurs across a series of stages. The resulting transtheoretical model of change is cyclical rather than linear in progression, where individuals move from one stage of the model to the next and may relapse to the previous stage. The time that individuals spend at each stage of the model varies (Prochaska & Prochaska, 2009). The model comprises five stages

**Table 1. Transtheoretical model of change**

From the initial study, DiClemente and Prochaska (1982) were also able to identify ten processes that contributed to successful behavioural change

Precontemplation	At this stage an individual is not considering a change in behaviour.
Contemplation	At this point in the change process an individual is seriously thinking about changing behaviour.
Preparation	Steps toward behaviour change are taken and a plan is developed.
Action	In this stage an individual is actively engaged in making the behavioural change.
Maintenance	At this point an individual has successfully completed the behaviour change and is working to prevent relapse

and supported individuals to move from one stage of change to the next.

Proponents of the model, Levesque, Gelles & Veliver (2000), have

suggested that understanding the stages of change and the processes an individual goes through in modifying behaviour can assist in intervention planning; each process an individual enters into will require different intervention strategies. The ten processes are (DiClemente & Prachaska, 1982; Prochaska, Redding & Evers, 2008):

*Consciousness-raising* includes an increasing awareness about the reasons for the negative behaviour, the consequences of the behaviour and available remedies.

*Dramatic relief* refers to the emotion that accompanies the negative behaviour.

*Self re-evaluation* is the self-image assessment an individual conducts in relation to the negative behaviour. The assessment is both cognitive and affective and involves evaluation of self, with and without the negative behaviour.

*Environmental re-evaluation* is the cognitive and affective analysis of how the negative behaviour impacts on the social environment.

*Self-liberation* refers to belief and commitment; the belief one has about being able to change the negative behaviour and the commitment to put the belief in to action.

*Social liberation* is the growth in social opportunities, particularly for individuals who are disadvantaged, that comes through social marketing and promotion of the need to reduce the negative behaviour.

*Counterconditioning* is the learning of new behaviours to replace negative behaviours.

*Stimulus control* is when the motivation or cues that trigger the negative behaviour are removed.

*Contingency management* refers to the rewards that are put in place to reinforce positive behaviour. Prochaska & DiClement (1982) found that individuals rely more heavily on reward than punishment.

*Helping relationships* that are positive, accepting, and trusting support behaviour change.

### ***2.7.5.1 Application to IPV***

The transtheoretical model has been applied to women experiencing IPV (Burkitt & Larkin, 2008; Khaw & Hardesty 2007); however, there are differences between changing health behaviours and women coping with a relationship where violence is a feature (Burkitt & Larkin, 2008). Unlike health-related change where the focus is on an individual independently making a personal behaviour change, IPV change “denotes an interdependent dyad wherein individual behaviour must truly be addressed in the context of a two-person relationship” (Burkitt & Larkin, 2008, p.413).

When applied to IPV, the stages of the transtheoretical model are:

*Precontemplation* – at this point women are not considering change.

*Contemplation* – in this stage women are increasingly aware that her intimate partner’s violence is a problem.

*Preparation* –women at this stage understand that the violence is a problem, and have the intention of making change and developing plans accordingly.

*Action* – at this stage women are actively engaged in making change in relation to the violence.

*Maintenance* – at this point the violence has ended and women are focused on preventing relapse.

A number of research studies have sought to determine if the process of moving away from IPV can be understood in terms of the transtheoretical model of change. Burke et.al., (2004) conducted interviews with twenty-three women who were currently in violent relationships or who had recently left abusive relationships. All of the women were African American with an average age of thirty-eight years. The research related women's progression through the stages of the transtheoretical model.

Findings indicated that women used seven of the ten processes of change identified by Prochaska & DiClemente; counterconditioning, contingency management, and dramatic relief were not present in the women's stories.

Burke et.al. (2004) determined that the transtheoretical model is useful for understanding and working with women who have experienced IPV.

Khaw & Hardesty (2007) examined turning points (transitional events redirecting the life course) and trajectories (a mapped pathway of turning points over time) alongside the stages of change transtheoretical model

(Prochaska & DiClemente, 1984). The interview group consisted of nineteen mothers, between the ages of twenty-one to forty four, whose former partners had been violent towards them. From the interviews, the mother's turning points and trajectories were plotted alongside the five stages of the change model.

Khaw and Hardesty (2007) identified women's turning points as 'realisation', 'forced to react' and 'the final exit'. However, between the stages of preparation and action, the clarity of the turning points was varied; some women were clear about the turning point and others were unsure.

In the study, multiple turning points resulted in three different trajectories each with different implications for practice. The first trajectory related to women who vacillated between preparation and action. These women tended to remain in the relationship longer as they needed more time to prepare to leave. Many of the women in this trajectory experienced violence that occurred after the separation.

In the second trajectory, women cycled between preparation and contemplation and were strongly influenced by fear of the consequences of leaving. Often the fear of leaving was related to the impact on their

children. Tension existed between recognition that they needed to protect their children on one hand, and concern that separation would be harmful to the children on the other.

The third trajectory consisted of no preparation and was highlighted by a leap from contemplation to taking action and leaving the violent relationship. The women in this trajectory made their decision to leave spontaneously; some decided to leave because the abuse suddenly became intolerable, others left the first time they were physically assaulted by their partner.

Khaw and Hardesty (2007) concluded that the women's responses were consistent with the stages in the transtheoretical model of change; the women used both cognitive and behavioural methods to begin the change process, and in maintaining change. The most noticeable feature in the application of the stages of change model to IPV was the number of turning points and trajectories experienced by the women. While there has been some criticism about the relevance of stages of change to women moving away from IPV, Khaw and Hardesty suggested that "the incorporation of multiple turning points and trajectories enhances the

model's utility by providing insights on how to tailor stage-based interventions to mothers' unique needs" (2007, p.424).

Even though the transtheoretical model is useful in describing the behaviour change process women might go through in the journey towards leaving a violent partner, some questions remain about the model's applicability to IPV situations. The model focuses very clearly on an individual woman's cognitive and behavioural process when moving away from violence without acknowledging the powerful influence that structures and institutions can have on individual choice and decision making. Not all groups in society have the same access to resources, and the contributions of some groups (for example, male) may be perceived more worthy than the contributions of others (for example, female). Groups whose contribution is perceived as more worthy receive greater reward for their efforts and are more likely to be involved in decision making than those who are from less worthy groups (Deutsch, 2006; Young, 2011).

Women who experience IPV may feel powerless for many reasons. Notably, their social group membership in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, class, or disability, may mean they are marginalised. Additionally, women

may have had no input into institutional policies and therefore, the decision-making about matters that impact their lives (such as IPV). The system, because of the woman's social group membership may not be responsive when help is needed; because the system is not geared to their particular situation, women may feel stigmatised in approaching formal systems for help. Finally, womens' experience of violence may have left them feeling immobilised. The hidden and shameful nature of the IPV, along with the other factors discussed here, may make moving on from violence that much more difficult.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

An examination of the IPV literature reveals a considerable array of work. It covers, for instance, the causes of IPV; the impact of violence on women, children and families; the feminist contribution to IPV theorising and research; and new ideas about the connections between different social locations and IPV. In terms of the moving away from violence literature, much of the work completed in the area has concentrated on leaving as a process rather than a single event and has examined leaving from an individual-psychological view point. The limitations of such an individual focus have been acknowledged. It is clear there is a gap in the literature in terms of the range of factors, both individual and structural, that impact on

the process of moving away from IPV, and on the skills and strategies women use to move past the violent relationship. A better understanding of each of these components will be useful to social work practice with women wherever they are in their journey of moving away from violence.

Chapter three explores the methodological framework for the study.

### **3 Chapter Three: Methodology**

The study explored the narratives of women who had experienced IPV and the factors, contextual and personal, that supported their journey towards safety. Chapter three details the research methodology and theoretical components of the study. I begin by introducing the study's origins as a collaborative research project. The Chapter then addresses the epistemological and theoretical foundation of the study highlighting social constructionism, and critical, feminist, and intersectionality theories. Following this, I discuss the rationale for choosing narrative research methodology for IPV research, highlighting in particular the connections between narrative methodology and the theoretical foundation of the study. In Section 3.5, I describe how narrative methodology can represent the voices of research participants. Following this I provide a discussion on researching sensitive topics such as IPV. The remainder of the chapter details the data collection and data analysis research process and the limitations of the research. At various points in the methodology chapter, I examine the research role and its impact on the research process.

The study obtained research ethics approval from the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee on 17 March, 2010 and the research

was undertaken in adherence to the conditions for approval. Ethics considerations are woven throughout the chapter.

### **3.1 Background to the Study**

In late 2009, I was approached by the then Director of Te Awatea Violence Research Centre at the University of Canterbury, Dr. Annabel Taylor, about an idea for a qualitative research study that had arisen out of discussions between Te Awatea and two non-government organisations working in the field of family violence: Family Help Trust and Christchurch Women's Refuge<sup>2</sup>. Preliminary discussion had raised the possibility of conducting research about women who had addressed IPV in their lives. The group envisaged that such a research project would provide women with an opportunity to share their stories so that professionals working with other women experiencing violence would develop an understanding of the kinds of services that are helpful to women as they address IPV. Dr. Taylor suggested, given my social work practice experience and research in working with families experiencing

---

<sup>2</sup> Women's Refuge Stevetchurch is now known as Aviva.

violence, that I might like to be involved in the project as the lead researcher and that the research could form the basis of my PhD. I agreed and became a part of the group discussions.

Following further discussion, the three organisations decided to enter a collaborative research partnership and apply for funding of the research project from the New Zealand Lottery community sector research funds<sup>3</sup>. The objective of the research was to understand the decision-making process for women in moving away from violence in their relationships and to develop an empowerment resource for women in similar situations.

The collaborative partnership group encountered a number of challenges in defining the project. One such challenge related to the term ‘moving away’. What did the term mean? Did ‘moving away’ refer to women in violent relationships who had discovered ways of keeping themselves and their children safe while still in the relationship? Or did ‘moving away’ mean that women no longer encountered violence in their lives? If

---

<sup>3</sup> The Lottery Community Sector Research committee provides funding for community organisations where the research will benefit both the organisation and the community carrying out the research.

‘moving away’ meant the latter, how long would a woman need to be violence free before it would be appropriate to hear her story about how she moved away from IPV. Family Help Trust and Christchurch Women’s Refuge returned to their organisations and consulted with their staff and returned to the collaborative partnership group with the suggestion that ‘moving away’ be defined as the point when a woman had taken steps to be free from violence and had developed strategies for keeping herself and her children safe. The collaborative partnership group decided that two years post violence would be a reasonable time frame for women to be asked to engage in the research project. It was also decided that the project would take a holistic approach and explore the range of factors that influenced the moving away process. I took on the role of Lead Researcher, with Dr Taylor as Project Leader and Senior PhD Supervisor. The collaborative partnership group provided research support throughout the duration of the study (this is further detailed in Section 3.8). As stated earlier (Section 1.5), the research was completed and reported in *Women moving away from violence: planning it-doing it* (Crichton-Hill, 2012).

This PhD thesis builds on the work of the collaborative partnership group. Greater attention has been paid in the thesis to a number of areas including: the literature review and the theoretical intersections with the woman’s

lives reflected by the content within this Chapter. Additionally, the thesis, unlike the original report, discusses the epistemological and theoretical foundation to the research process, and provides a critical analysis of researcher position.

### **3.2 Research Questions**

The purpose of the study is to generate knowledge to inform social work practice to meet the needs of women who are resisting IPV by moving away from relationships of violence. In order to do this the following research questions were posed.

1. What prompts women to move away and seek safety from intimate partner violence?
2. What skills and strategies did women use in order to address violence in the home and in moving away from violence?
3. What is the process of moving away from intimate partner violence?
4. What have been the helpful and not so helpful responses for women in addressing violence in the home?
5. What are the implications for social service provision?

The next section outlines the theoretical framework for the research.

### **3.3 Epistemology and Theoretical Framework**

Qualitative research is a process involving interrelated activities including ontology, epistemology, theory, and methodology (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). The above authors assert that behind the research process:

stands the personal biography of the researcher, who speaks from a particular class, gender, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective ... [approaching] the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis) (p.21).

As a Samoan/Pakeha Social Worker and Educator in the area of IPV, I have long questioned the application of a universal feminist response to all women who experience IPV. While feminist analyses in the main resonate with much of my experience as a woman, I have grappled with the question of men belonging to ethnic minority groups who have less power than women who identify with the dominant ethnic group. I have asked myself 'How do feminist explanations of gender in relation to IPV make sense here?' I have also wondered how feminist analysis with its reliance on gender as the main category for analysis fits with social work theory

that suggests people locate themselves in a range of social categories including gender, ethnicity, class, and sexuality.

My reflections as a Samoan/Pakeha social work educator led me to think of how these 'Samoan/Pakeha', and 'social work educator' identities are just two of the ways I describe who I am. I have multiple identities related to various social categories that are important to me. I am the product of an inter-racial relationship during a time in New Zealand when racial mixing was not considered appropriate by many. My views of inequality and discrimination were influenced by two key events in New Zealand's history that occurred in my adolescent and young adult years: the 1974 and 1976 dawn raids on mainly Samoan and Tongan immigrants to New Zealand (McLennan, Ryan & Spoonley, 2002), and the protests against the 1981 South African Springbok rugby tour (Deversen & Kennedy, 2005) of New Zealand. These events, along with my social work education, have led to an interest in how structural forces maintain systems of oppression, privileging some and oppressing others, and in how people can overcome systems of oppression.

Grappling with these tensions led me to consider my professional role as a Registered Social Worker. The Aotearoa New Zealand Association of

Social Workers (ANZASW) and the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) identify ten standards to guide social work practice. Of these, two in particular relate to the question of multiple identities: “competence to practice Social Work with Maori” (SWRB, 2011a), and “competence to practice Social Work with different cultural and ethnic groups” (SWRB, 2011b). Inherent in these two practice standards is the acknowledgment that people occupy multiple social categories. The first practice standard relates to the indigenous population of New Zealand highlighting that Social Workers need to have knowledge of diversity within Maori and a knowledge of the concept of biculturalism (SWRB, 2011a). The second practice standard relates to different cultural and ethnic groups and is explained as a Social Worker’s ability to engage “with a range of people in culturally appropriate ways and in an inclusive manner” and to recognise and support “diversity among groups and individuals” (SWRB, 2011b, p.4).

On the matter of oppression and social justice, the SWRB standards for practice identify three related competencies; competence to promote the principles of human rights and social justice; competence to promote social change; and, competence to promote empowerment and liberation of people (2015). These expected standards of practice for Social Work

highlight the need to recognise gender oppressions along with other oppressions in society and actively work to negate their power.

Oko (2008) states

...there should be congruence between our professional values and the way we behave in our professional role. We can therefore understand 'ethics' not just as professional 'codes' or prescriptions about the way we ought to behave, but also as representing coherent systems of thinking or theories about what is right and correct (p.52).

Self-reflection as researcher and social worker led me to consider how I might achieve 'congruence' between my self-beliefs, my identity, social work ethics, and expectations about social work practice, and my role as researcher. I agree with Thomas (2009) who emphasised that a researcher's values, beliefs and privileges influence the research process in a number of ways, such as: what data the researcher highlights; the approaches the researcher selects; the data that are collected and that which is overlooked; and, the process employed for the interpretation of data. In terms of social work practice, and as Brechin (2000) suggested, a central tenet of social work practice is "open-minded, reflective appraisal that takes account of different perspectives, experiences and assumptions" (p.26). Reflective appraisal is part of the process of critical thinking; the practice of considering our means of knowing. The process of critical thinking

facilitates our awareness of the ideologies and beliefs that frame our understandings of social work practice.

I used a similar process for determining the conceptual framework of this research study with the aid of Crotty's (1998) description of the foundations of social research. Crotty (1998) provided a useful description of the relationship between epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and method. He suggested that epistemology is not necessarily the starting point for thinking about the conceptual research framework; instead, he advocated we start with method and ask the following questions:

- What methods will I use?
- What methodology governs my choice of methods?
- What theoretical perspective lies behind the method I will use?
- What epistemology informs this theoretical perspective?

### ***3.3.1 Epistemology***

Epistemology is a branch of study within the field of philosophy.

Epistemology is concerned with the nature, limitations, and sources of

knowledge and is referred to as the study of knowing (Sladana, 2011). All philosophical positions have a view about reality and about what is legitimate knowledge (Walliman, 2011).

### ***3.3.2 Social Constructionism***

The epistemological foundation for the research study is social constructionism. Social constructionism has developed out of postmodern traditions and sits in opposition to positivism. Where positivism argues that we can know things through unbiased, systematic, and accurate observation, measurement, and description of phenomena (Ponterotto, 2005), social constructionism suggests the opposite. Social constructionists take the view that knowledge and reality is created through social interaction, therefore, knowledge does not exist internally, it exists in dialogue. It is through the process of communication that we construct our world. According to Gergen (2009), “what we take to be the world importantly depends on how we approach it, and how we approach it depends on the social relationships of which we are a part” (p.2). Given our understanding of the world is contingent on relationship, context, and communication, more than one account of reality is likely to exist. Social constructionists therefore place emphasis on the diverse meanings people give to their experiences (Turner, 2008). Each woman who shared her

experience of IPV will have a unique reality. This reality is determined by her prior experiences – socialisation, cultural traditions, and social, political, and historical context.

Social constructionism takes a critical position in relation to taken-for-granted knowledge. In IPV research, this means unmasking the way women leaving violent relationships is constructed and the influences this has for social life and Social Work practice in the area (Willig, 2001).

Shared constructions of women's resistance to IPV can become institutionalised as the way IPV is constructed is a powerful influence on the development of responses to IPV.

Language is an important aspect of socially constructed knowledge; it is the medium used to communicate ideas about the world, but it also actively constructs and gives meaning to experience. In relation to IPV research, this necessitates considering the language women use to make sense and attach meaning to their experiences of resisting violence. In addition, I recognise the centrality of language in marginalising women's experiences of IPV.

Sprague (2005) suggested that social constructionism contributes to the creation of knowledge in three ways. Firstly, social constructionism

emphasises the social aspect of knowledge production thereby keeping ‘social’ front and centre. Secondly, social constructionism highlights that the researcher is also a part of the cultural, social, political, and historical context. Researchers must reflect on how being entrenched in culture influences the production of knowledge, and how they consider their roles in the institutions that disseminate knowledge. According to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002), “the researchers’ knowledge production ... is productive – it creates reality at the same time as representing it” (p. 175). Finally, social constructionism can be used to deconstruct ideas, theories, and procedures with the aim of uncovering the multiple, complex, and contradictory meanings that exist about a phenomenon.

### ***3.3.3 Theoretical framework***

The theoretical perspectives influencing this study are critical theory, and two theories in the critical theory tradition; feminist theory and intersectionality. Critical theories are useful foundations for the study of IPV; critical theories aim to influence social change; are cognisant of the role of power in research, and reject traditional Western research methodologies. Whilst feminist theory has developed out of the imperatives of the feminist movement, its development has been influenced by critical theories. The theory of intersectionality goes a step

further by moving away from gender as the singularly most important category for analysis to include other social locations.

### ***3.3.4 Critical Theory***

Critical theory is most often connected with the Institute for Social Research also known as the Frankfurt School. Theorists associated with the Frankfurt School, such as Kant, Hegel, Marx, Adorno, and Horkheimer (Bronner, 2011), were critical of the limits of positivism and its demand that society can be analysed objectively by using systematic scientific method (Ponterotto, 2005). The Frankfurt School facilitated critique of the power of the State and its institutions in everyday life. Critical theory upholds that economic, social, political, and historical forces influence peoples' constructions of the world and over time are accepted as the truth. The idea that reproduction should be the result of a monogamous relationship between one male and one female union is an example of how a range of societal forces create an ideology that is a taken-for-granted assumption (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000).

Critical theory is interdisciplinary; although there is no one source of critical theory, critical theorists hold a number of basic assumptions (Kincheloe & McClaren, 2000, 2005):

- Relations of power that are socially and historically constituted inform all thinking.
- No facts can be isolated from values.
- Relationships between people and concepts are not fixed and are mediated by social relations of capitalist production and consumption.
- Language is central to conscious and unconscious awareness.
- Oppression has many faces. Concentrating on one form of oppression at the expense of others ignores that forms of oppression are interconnected.
- In society, some groups are advantaged over others. Privilege is powerfully reproduced when groups accept their status as inevitable or natural.
- Research practice is inevitably connected to the reproduction of systems of oppression.

Critical research therefore has an emancipatory element (Bronner, 2011); its ultimate goal is to empower people to transform themselves and their social context (Kincheloe & MacLaren, 2000). Furthermore, critical researchers are concerned not only with what 'is', but with how things might be (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000).

Critical theory provides a valuable philosophical basis for the study of women who have moved away from IPV as it enables an appreciation that responses to IPV are situated in a system of institutionalised, intersecting forces such as gender, race, socioeconomic class, and sexual orientation. Moreover, IPV research informed by critical theory acknowledges that perceptions of violence towards women are historically constructed, change over time, and are influenced by culture and circumstance. These perceptions may result in taken-for-granted assumptions that underlie the problem of violence towards women and influence women's perceptions of themselves and intervention responses to them. For example, if a society views men as having the right to dominate women, then it may be seen as acceptable for a man to use violence to maintain control over his female partner. She may perceive the violence as acceptable and may even believe that she is to blame for causing the violence in the first place. Other people she speaks with may also perceive the violence as her fault. Intervention responses may focus on building the communication relationship between the couple, with perhaps individual counselling for each party. As illustrated by the example, the privileging of dominant forms of knowledge about women moving away from IPV can reinforce the oppression and victimisation of women. When conducting research

with historically disenfranchised groups, such as women, the ethic of doing no harm is central. It has been argued “that critical theories and their resultant research are inherently ethically motivated given that their two main areas of interest, power and emancipation, are intrinsically ethical considerations” (Thomas, 2009, p.19).

In the next section I discuss the relevance of feminist and intersectionality theories to the research study.

### ***3.3.5 Feminist Theory***

Feminist theory grew out of the political aims of the feminist movement. The feminist movement consisted of two ‘waves’. The first wave of feminism occurred from the 1840s in the United States of America (De Luzio, 2010; Loveday, 2011) to the 1920’s, originating in the abolitionist movement of the 1930s. The second wave began in the 1960s. The production of feminist knowledge is connected more to the second wave as early feminists did not have access to academia and other social institutions. In New Zealand, feminists inspired by the international feminist movement began critiquing gender in New Zealand society. Feminism in New Zealand focused largely on equal pay for men and

women (Dann, 1985) and gender role distinctions in the home (Mainardi, 1970).

Feminist theories of knowing (epistemology) are varied but all are concerned with the way gender influences what is taken to be knowledge. Of the varied feminist theories of knowing, Harding (1986), twenty years ago advocated for three key feminist approaches; empiricist, standpoint, and postmodernism. Developments since Harding's categorisation twenty years ago have pointed to more of a blurring of feminist thought (Intemann, 2010). However, in the approaches proposed by Harding (1986), gender is the main social category for analysing the pursuit of knowledge.

A number of feminist writers propelled the development of feminist theory through their critique of social science and research arguing that traditional mainstream theories were sexist. In 1963, Betty Friedan criticised the theory of functionalism (Stanley & Wise, 2002). Functionalism advocated the firm division of gender roles between women and men and named any deviation from gender roles as dysfunctional. Friedan argued that functionalism was sexist in its beliefs and assumptions. In 1974, Oakley identified that sociology as a whole was sexist in that it led people to see

the world in sexually stereotyped ways (Stanley & Wise, 2002). Olesen has argued that functionalism “problematizes women’s diverse situations as well as the gendered institutions and material and historical structures that frame those” (2005, p. 236). Of the contribution of second-wave theorists to feminist theory Campbell writes:

When the second-wave theorists first began to use the term ‘feminist epistemology’ the term did not refer to a recognizable body of work. Rather the ‘feminist epistemology’ referred to a set of theoretical and political problems concerning accounts of knowledge (2004, p.7).

Out of the contributions of Friedan, Oakley and others emanated a number of tenets of feminist epistemology (Stanley & Wise, 2002).

Feminist research focuses on gender and gender equality. Moreover, feminist research is on women, for women, with women (DeVault, 1990; Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002; Stanley & Wise, 2002). Therefore, the feminist research approach values the personal experiences of women and aims to empower women to be free from oppression. Thus, feminist research has an emancipatory and political aim:

critical analysis of gender relationships in research and theory ... an appreciation of the moral and political dimensions of research ... and the recognition of the need for social change to improve the lives of women (Ussher 1999, p.99).

In addition to valuing women's experiences, feminist research facilitates women's voices and experiences to be visible. Three questions arise in relation to the privileging of women's voices. Firstly, how does the researcher create a space for voices to be heard? Secondly, how does the researcher encourage marginalised women to become involved in research? Thirdly, what role should women's experiences play in research? (Skinner, Hester & Malos, 2005).

A further tenet of feminist epistemology is its rejection of the distinctions between the researcher and the researched claiming that there is a relationship that is not neutral and passive in the research process (Edwards & Alexander, 2011). In feminist research, subjectivity and objectivity is related. Researchers, therefore, must be reflexive and consider how they impact on the research process. Stanko (1997, p.83) described this as "the process of standing outside and gazing back to see what we can from afar". Ramazanoglu with Holland (2002) has reasoned that researchers must consider how power relations impact on the research process. This includes considering how researchers make ethical decisions and how they account for the knowledge produced from research.

Finally, feminist researchers use a range of research tools from both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In fact, Oakley (2000) advocated that feminist researchers find methods that fit with the research question, while Griffiths & Hanmer (2005) argued that “no one method of research is inherently feminist” (p.38).

Feminist theory provides an acknowledgement that IPV is an issue situated in relations of gender. The sensitive nature of the topic requires a philosophical foundation attuned to the impact of gendered social relations in the context of IPV. Furthermore, feminist theory has been influential in disseminating explanations about IPV, and in contributing the formation of policy and service responses to IPV. However, while the impact of feminist theory on the field of IPV cannot be denied, as stated earlier, there are questions about the attention feminist theory plays to the connections between the multiple identities that women employ to define themselves and the impacts of these various identities on moving away from IPV. For this reason, the theory of intersectionality is central to the study.

### ***3.3.6 Intersectionality***

Intersectionality theory grew out of critiques of the limitations of gender-based research highlighting that singular analyses based on one social

category, such as gender, actually privilege one identity rendering other identities, such as race, age, class, and sexual orientation invisible (McCall, 2005; Savin-Baden & Major, 2010). Therefore, intersectionality is:

...an analytical framework used to understand the way multiple identities (for example, gender, race, class, sexuality) shape people's experiences of oppression and privilege. The analysis exposes the different types of discrimination and disadvantage that occur as a consequence of multiple identities. (Ristock, 2005, p. 19).

Hulko (2009) suggested that intersectionality is a metaphor that has been used in various ways including:

...to describe the entanglement of identity categories that make up an individual, the differential attributions of power that result from such varied configurations, and the need to view intersectional beings holistically rather than try to tease apart different strands of identity (2009, p.48).

According to Davis (2008), intersectionality theory integrates two strands of feminist thought. Firstly, intersectionality is concerned with the impact of race, gender, and class on women's identities and experiences, recognising that originally feminist theory, while concerned with women as marginalised, risked the marginalisation of poor women and women who were not white. People who fall into the marginalised categories "frequently lack the rights, protection, and privilege that come with the preferred categories" (Staunaes & Sondergaard, 2011).

Secondly, intersectionality has been a promising feminist theoretical development for postmodern feminists, who reject essentialist feminist claims concerning gender. For postmodern feminists, intersectionality offers a way of recognising that identity is not static, but that people embody multiple identities that are continually shifting and dynamic (Sampson & Bean, 2006).

Choo & Marx Terree (2010) proposed three defining aspects of intersectionality. Firstly, intersectionality is focused on *inclusion*. This first aspect relates to intersectionality's emphasis on including multiply marginalised people while acknowledging that oppression cannot be ordered neatly into categories of race, class, or gender. A further component of the inclusion aspect is that oppression is not a binary category, that is, people are not either oppressors or oppressed, instead, in some situations we are privileged, and in others we are not (Mullaly, 2002).

The second aspect is *analytic-interaction*. This refers to the idea that any analysis of women's experiences must highlight the forces that shape identities over time. Therefore, intersectionality analyses how components of identity are connected to each other. As Savin-Baden and Major (2010,

p.38) suggested, “context and the negotiation of lived experience can take shape and be interpreted differently because of uniquely intersecting experiences”

The final aspect to intersectionality is that of *systemic intersectionality* which recognises that historical and social structural forces interact with each other. Systemic intersectionality relates to the ways in which social inequality and oppression are expressed in societal power structures (Mehrotra, 2010). One must understand a person by recognising the impact of social forces on that individual’s reality (Stewart & McDermott, 2004) thereby requiring an analysis of existing systems of power, privilege, and access to resources (Anderson & Hill Collins, 2015; Mann & Grimes, 2001).

Using intersectional analyses in the study of women’s experiences of IPV has been discussed by a number of authors (Bograd, 2005; Hiebert-Murphy, Ristock, & Brownridge, 2011; Josephson, 2002; Ristock, 2005). Josephson (2005) contended that intersectional “analyses highlight the ways in which the particular social locations of women based on race, ethnicity, class, immigrant status, and familiar relationships, shape their

experiences of IPV and demarcate the available options for dealing with their situations” (p.4).

Because intersectionality recognizes that individuals claim multiple social identities, it can provide for the most contextualized understanding of women’s resistance through moving away from IPV. Additionally, intersectionality allows for consideration of the systemic influences on IPV and considers questions related to social service responses to women. It is, therefore, a useful theoretical stance for social work research. Savin-Baden and Major (2010) examine the utility of intersectionality theory for social work research, pointing out that:

Approaches to knowing, then, that are based in intersectional understandings, are focused on both individual experiences of multiplicative identities, and the social structures that simultaneously give those identities meaning, and perpetuate privilege and oppression on a larger scale (p.39).

### **3.4 Narrative Research**

The PhD research study employed a qualitative narrative research methodology. Narrative is a distinct form of discourse that takes the story told by research participants as the object of study (Riessman, 1993). The purpose of narrative methodology is to uncover the meanings research participants give to their experiences. The narratives are interpretive

procedures through which people represent themselves and their worlds to others. Narrative draws on constructionist traditions, whereby social reality is perceived as elastic and shaped by how people see it, know it, and interpret it (Spector-Mersel, 2010).

I chose narrative methodology as I concluded that it was particularly suited to a study about women's experiences of moving away from IPV. The term 'moving away' to me indicated a journey that unfolds over time and, a process that I considered to be particularly aligned with story-telling. Stories are told to share the past, take meaning from the present and theorise about the future (Ricoeur, 1984). Stories provide the opportunity for transformation, where the account of a journey may move the storyteller and listener to a place of greater understanding and action. Squire (2015) alludes to a process of action when describing the responses of interview participants who were involved in a study of HIV experiences in the UK where:

participants seemed to use the research situation as a means of extending, through personal narrative, public representation of the overlooked personal suffering, social exclusion, and political neglect around HIV (p.3).

Furthermore, “The narrative forms that we use are always historically and contextually contingent, a production of particular cultural discourses with explicit and implicit rules and legitimating practices” (Arvey, 2002, p.114). So, each narrative is produced by people in the context of their specific social, historical, economic, political, and cultural locations. The culture of the storyteller, therefore, affects the content of the story told. In relation to stories related to IPV, contextual and individual factors will influence how the stories are told; the result can be a range of very different stories (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2008).

Additionally, narrative research seemed to resonate with intersectionality theory. McCall (2005) suggested that early feminist approaches to the study of complex social relations originally followed an *anticategorical complexity* approach focused on the idea that critiquing normative beliefs about social categories, such as race, class, and gender, would ultimately reduce inequality itself. By viewing the very idea of social categories as artificial, feminists took a stance that research employing social categorisation would lead to exclusion and therefore inequality. The question that remained was how does one analyse the complexity of social relations without employing social categories?

At the other end of the continuum, suggested McCall (2005), sits the *intercategorical complexity* approach to research methodology where the focus is on “the complexity of relationships among multiple social groups within and across analytical categories and not on complexities within single social groups, single categories, or both” (McCall, 2005, p.1786). Researchers using this approach will use comparison, so, in studying gender, they will explore both men and women.

Between these two methodological approaches sits the *intracategorical* approach described by McCall (2005) as the “intellectual descendant of narrative studies” (p.1783). This approach to studying intersectionality is most suited to this study as the focus is on the complexity of diversity and difference within a social group (women). Narrative allows for the analysis of different identity configurations and for the exploration of power and agency that are evident in the women’s stories.

### **3.5 Participant Representation**

Qualitative researchers seek to portray people’s experiences, and this is often couched in terms such as ‘giving women a voice’, where the

participant voice may be heard through text or interview. In relation to narrative research, Riessman (1993) argued that we must consider how we depict the participants in our research. She contended that researchers deal with “ambiguous representations” (p.8) of another’s experience. These representations enter at various points in the research process and are divided into five types of representation including: attending to experience; telling about experience; transcribing experience; analysing experience; and, reading experience.

*Attending to experience* involves reflecting and remembering. It is the process of recalling aspects of the experience. *Telling about experience* is essentially the representation of events. The storyteller (research participant) provides an overview of the story, defining a setting, characters, and a plot. Storytellers may tell this story in different ways to different people – essentially the storyteller tells others what he or she wants them to know. Thirdly, *transcribing experience* refers to the way in which the story is recorded. Riessman (1993) made the point that there is no one correct representation of the spoken language; transcribing is “incomplete, partial, and selective” (p.9); the researcher will need to make decisions about how to record and what to record. *Analysing experience* is the process the researcher uses to make sense of stories. Through this

process, the researcher decides what is important by telling what the narrative means. Finally, *reading experience* refers to how the story is presented in the final report. Every text is open to multiple interpretations from readers. Every report of stories is bound in a particular context and time.

Before discussing the recruitment, data collection and analysis of the research I will now move to a discussion about conducting IPV research and the challenges that may arise when participants are ‘attending to’ and ‘telling about’ their personal IPV experiences.

### **3.6 Researching Sensitive Topics**

Renzetti and Lee (1993, p.5) posited that a sensitive research topic is “one that potentially poses for those involved a substantial threat, the emergence of which renders problematic for the researcher and/or the researched the collection, holding, and/or dissemination of research data”. The authors went on to define areas where there is likely to be increased threat, one of these areas being research that imposes on people’s private lives or “delves into some deeply personal experience” (1993, p.60). Researching IPV fits with this description of sensitive research topics. My social work experience in family violence has provided me with some insight as to the

challenges that exist for those who experience family violence, and for those who work in the violence field. In this section I discuss these challenges.

My experience as a social worker and academic led me to conclude that researching IPV could potentially raise safety issues for the women involved in the study and for me as the researcher. With the help of the collaborative partnership group, a research design was developed that would ensure that participants would not be harmed by taking part in the research. A key component of the research design discussions was the need to pay attention to the potential risks of such research. Ellsberg and Heise (2005), in their practical guide for IPV research, identified a number of risks to woman and researchers in researching violence. Issues of confidentiality are noted by Ellsberg and Heise (2005) as being a key concern for women in violent relationships. This concern is relevant also for women who have moved away from IPV. Women may be concerned that ex-partners will find out that they have spoken to someone about the violence they have experienced. Hyden (2008) cited the work of Langford (2000) who took steps to safely contact women who had experienced

violence. I incorporated this approach in my own contact with the women recruited in to the study (see Section 3.7).

Women may also feel pressured to take part in research. I drew on the work of Hyden (2008) who highlighted the similarity between power imbalances that exist between social worker and client and researcher and research participant. Power is embedded in the research relationship; intersectionality researchers recognise the importance of examining power in research relationships (Ropers-Huilman & Winers, 2011) and how a researcher's various social locations intersect to influence the research relationship either negatively or positively. It is perhaps more likely that relations of power can impact the research relationship when the topic of the research is sensitive. In light of this I took care to fully disclose the nature of the research during the informed consent process (as discussed in Section 3.7).

The topic of violence in personal relationships can take an emotional toll for both researcher and participant. The process of sharing a personal IPV narrative may be exhausting for women and it is possible women may become stressed and upset. This necessitates creating private spaces for

the sharing of IPV narratives and making services and supports available for women after the interview (Ellsberg et.al., 2001). In Section 3.8, I discuss the steps taken to provide support to women following the data collection process. In terms of the emotional impact I experienced as a result of hearing the women's stories I had immediate access to Dr Annabel Taylor, supervisor and project leader, and on a few occasions I took the opportunity to share my feelings with her in a safe and confidential environment. Additionally, as noted in Section 3.8, I employed the use of a journal notebook and field notebook as a therapeutic and reflexive tool to manage the emotional stress of the interviews.

Finally, Ellsberg and Heise (2005) suggested that researchers should end the research interview positively. This can be done by clearly acknowledging the violence that occurred, through explicitly recognising the unacceptability of the violence, and by highlighting the courage displayed by the woman in ending the violent relationship. I found that I acknowledged the violence that occurred, and the unacceptability of the violence throughout the research interview rather than at the end of interview as suggested by Ellsberg and Heise (2005). This seemed more

natural and authentic to me and I was conscious of being as natural and present as possible while the women shared their violence narratives.

### **3.7 Recruitment of Participants**

At the inception of the Te Awatea research project, the agencies concerned stated the need to capture a diverse range of experiences of women in moving away from violence. Both the Family Help Trust and Christchurch Women's Refuge (CWR) had a comparatively high proportion of Maori clients and clients of other ethnicities. Both services had a small number of women in same-sex relationships. It was agreed that purposive and snowball sampling be utilised in order to capture a breadth of experience of IPV. Purposeful sampling can be defined as the selection of participants who are knowledgeable of the experience under study, are willing to talk, and represent a diversity of views (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Snowball sampling identifies participants from those known to others who have possible data-rich sources (Creswell, 2007).

The target population for the project was women who had been violence free in their relationships for two years or more. It was determined that all the women would have experienced IPV and been supported through the

process of moving away from violence by the Family Help Trust and CWR. Staff of the Family Help Trust and CWR identified the women and made first contact with them. Following this, each agency went through a process of screening to ensure that the participants were violence free. At this initial call the agency workers explained the project to the women and asked women if they might be interested in participating; it was made clear to women that their involvement in the project was voluntary. At that point, the women were told that I would be in touch with them to further discuss their involvement in the project.

At the beginning of the participant recruitment process, Canterbury, the province in which all three collaborating organisations were based, suffered a number of serious earthquakes, the most devastating of these occurring on the 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2010, and the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011. Participant recruitment was hampered by the widespread damage to the Canterbury area with two of the organisations, Christchurch Women's Refuge, and the University of Canterbury Te Awatea Research Centre being without accommodation. In the Canterbury area, over 9,000 properties were not suitable for living and 16,000 properties had suffered acute damage (Goodyear, 2014). Additionally, the population of Christchurch city declined after the earthquakes:

Between 30 June 2010 and 2012, the population aged 0–19 years in Christchurch city decreased by 9,300 (9.6 percent), while the population aged 35–49 years decreased by 5,700 (7.0 percent). This indicates a net outflow of children and their parents over this period (Statistics New Zealand, p.3).

Over time, in spite of the dreadful conditions in the Canterbury area, Christchurch Women’s Refuge and Family Help Trust were able to make contact with eleven participants.

I engaged with each of the eleven participants first by either phone or email. The participants were asked how they wanted to be contacted. I was mindful of the women’s need for safety and confidentiality and so the participants were asked how they wanted me to make contact. Some women provided a number for me to phone, and others preferred to ring me before giving out any other contact details. Thus, I engaged with each of the eleven participants first by either phone or email and then met each participant at a place of their choosing. By phone I introduced myself and explained the aims of the research.

When meeting the participant in person I again explained the aims of the research, and gained informed consent so the women could participate.

Drawing on the researching sensitive topics and researching IPV literature (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005; Ellsberg et.al., 2001; Liamputtong, 2007;

Renzetti & Lee, 1993), I provided the participant with a copy of the informed consent, read the informed consent information aloud, and let women know that they could withdraw from the study at any time; whether during the interview, or any time after interview. I also gave participants time to ask any questions about the informed consent form. No participant withdrew from the study. Some interviews were held in the women's homes, while others were held in a private location agreeable to the women.

The rest of the chapter discusses the data collection and analysis process and addresses issues of research quality and rigour, and limitations. The following conceptual road map (Fig.1) is built on the work of Lorenzo (2010) who developed a similar framework to illustrate the process of data generation and analysis used in narrative action and reflection workshops with disabled women in Cape Town, South Africa.

The road map has a two-fold purpose: firstly, to illustrate my thinking about the connections between each stage of the research process; and secondly, to provide a framework for how the rest of the chapter is structured.

**Figure 1. Data collection and analysis process**

<b>Data Collection</b>	<b>Facilitated by:</b>	<b>Captured by:</b>
Narrative interviews	One to one interview	Audio recording
Researcher reflections	Self-critical analysis	Written record



**Data gathered:** interview transcripts, field notes, reflective journal notes



<b>Data analysis influence:</b>	<b>Interpretation through:</b>
Riessman (1993)	Appraisal of literature
Bold (2012)	Collaborative partnership group
Arvay (2001)	

### **3.8 Data Collection**

Interviews were organised with each of the women and conducted at a place and time of their choosing. At the beginning of the interview each

participant was once again informed of the purpose of the project and the approximate time commitment expected of them. An information sheet was provided, any questions answered, and then participants signed the informed consent form.

I then provided a brief two sentence statement to the women about why I was interested in intimate partner violence. I explained that this was not about my professional involvement in the field, but about the vague and very uncertain, but still present memories of violence occurring between adult family members once when I was a very young child. I envisaged that sharing with participants' my sense of place in relation to the research topic could be beneficial in establishing a common ground from which to begin the research interview.

The question of whether researchers should self-disclose is a contested issue in the literature. Some authors argue that research participants do not want to hear about the researchers' experience (Cotterill, 1992) and that researcher self-disclosure can affect the participant's response to interview questions. On the other hand, in qualitative research interviewing, the researcher builds an emotional relationship with participants where the researcher "must attend to the relational and emotional interchange that

takes place as we “collect” qualitative data (Josselson, 2013, p.12).

Feminist theorist, Patti Lather (1986) suggested that research interviews involve reciprocity between the researcher and the narrator. Throughout the interview process, meaning and power is negotiated between researcher and narrator. Feminist researchers are concerned with reducing the power hierarchy that exists between researcher and participant. In order to reduce the power differential, and increase reciprocity, feminist researchers pay attention to the co-construction of meaning; to this end a number of feminist writers (Arvey, 1998; Oakley, 1981; Reinhartz, 1993) have proposed that the feminist researcher should share something of her own experience with the research participant; that when done appropriately authentic dialogue can begin.

Before conducting the interviews I had reflected on my values and attitudes in relation to the research process. I also reflected on how my life experiences resonated with the research topic of IPV, and how these experiences and my position in society might impact on the research process. I adopted the position that in a sensitive research topic such as IPV, brief self-disclosure about my own experience would put a participant at ease and enable her to share her story. While feminist researchers advocate for self-disclosure as an important way to manage the differential

power relationship in research relationships, intersectionality researchers consider self-reflexivity about one's own multiple identities as an important tool for recognising how our own identities influence the research relationship and the development of knowledge (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2010). Strauss (1987) has called this experiential data and that such data relates to the "analysts technical knowledge and experience derived from research, but also their personal experiences" (1987, p.11). Others have recognised the importance of taking notice of experiential data and incorporating that data in the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Each interview was recorded on a digital recorder. The interviews were conducted as open conversations where I asked the participant to tell me about her experience of moving away from IPV and allowed her to choose the direction of her story. Riessman stated that narrative researchers enter into "following participants down their trails" (Riessman, 2001, p.24) and took minimal notes so as not to distract from the participant's storytelling. The time taken for each interview lasted between 1 ½ to 3 hours.

Following each interview I recorded my thoughts and feelings in a notebook. The interviews with participants were sensitive and often

emotionally charged; as the women told their stories they expressed sadness, anger and frustration, joy and laughter. I found that, alongside the women, I experienced a range of emotions and it was important for me to be able to critically reflect on how that emotion influenced how I behaved in the research relationship, how emotions influenced my thinking about what I had heard; including an assessment of how the story resonated with me and how I made sense of each women's story.

In addition to the journal notebook, I kept a field notebook that recorded ideas I had about the research. The notebook included thoughts about the research interview process such as: which questions might have encouraged the participant storytelling, and which questions might have inhibited the developing narrative; whether interview beginnings and endings were appropriate; observations of the participant including non-verbal cues; and, ideas about further interviewing literature that I wanted to explore. An example from the field notebook following the first interview in 2010 is:

Research literature I have read suggests that one way to engage people in telling their story is to offer pens and paper to help with the storying process. Participants can draw as they speak. Well it's just not me and I had thought this before I came to this interview ... but, I thought it would give it a go. Her reaction to the drawing on paper suggestion was pretty clear! Must learn to trust self and social work skills. I won't be doing that again – I didn't think carefully

enough about the beginning, that rather than pen and paper at the beginning, it has to be me; present, engaged ready to korero and to listen. Good lesson – engage my authentic self. Be me!

This field note helped me to fully engage in future interviews without using props that were not normally something I used when engaging with people to talk about sensitive topics. When I moved on to read the transcription of the first interview I referred to the field note. The transcription read:

*Interviewer: I've also got, I don't know, if you prefer to draw things, I've got paper*

*A: Oh no.*

*Interviewer: You just want to talk?*

*A: Yeah, I'll just talk.*

I realised that the way I had introduced the idea of drawing while talking had been vague and uncertain and this may have influenced the participant's willingness to engage with the idea. However, looking at my field note I was able to connect the uncertain way in which I introduced the drawing on paper idea with my thoughts that this is not how I would normally engage with someone. In other words, the uncertainty I felt was transferred into the interview.

Particularly relevant here is the form of ethics known as relational ethics (Austin, 2008; Tracy, 2010). Pertinent to engaging with participants, relational ethics “recognizes and values mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness between researcher and researched, and between researchers and the communities in which they live and work” (Ellis, 2007, p.4). Incorporating a relational ethic stance requires researchers to act in an authentic way and in terms of collecting data for this study I needed to be true to my own character out of respect for the participants and the situations that led to their involvement in the interview process.

Drawing on the work of Ellsberg et.al., (2001) which highlights support for women after interview, I was able to offer the women support from either Family Help Trust or Christchurch Women’s Refuge. This had been organised in the collaborative partnership group discussions; the women interviewed had a previous relationship with each of the agencies and I was able, on one occasion to refer a participant directly to the previous social worker she had been engaged with while she was still in the violent relationship.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim onto a computer that was password protected. Transcribing was shared between a transcriber at the

Family Help Trust and me. The transcriber was required to sign a confidentiality agreement. To make sure the transcriptions were an accurate paper-based recording of the interview, I checked each interview by listening to the digital recording while reading the transcript. Copies of the transcriptions were saved to a USB drive held in a locked file cabinet. Transcripts were printed and kept separate from any identifying data.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

Narrative analysis sits well with social constructionist epistemology and a research framework that incorporates critical theory, feminist theory, and intersectionality.

Narrative analysis of the data provides an in-depth understanding of each participant's point of view. The intention is to capture the stories of the participants to gain insight into their lived experiences. Narrative analysis takes as its focus the participant's telling of the story (Frost, 2009; Kramp, 2004) and involves a process of considering the content and form of narratives and the context in which they are told (Frost, 2009).

Riessman (1993) argued that when interpreting interview data, traditional qualitative approaches break up interview text into snippets that are often not cognisant of the research participants' context thereby eliminating the

“sequential and structural features that characterize narrative accounts”

(p.3). I decided to firstly analyse the women’s stories using an interpretive reading process (Arvay, 2001) and narrative thematic experience analysis (Bold, 2012) to find themes within the narrative stories.

Chase (2005) suggested the following questions as part of narrative data analysis:

- How does power operate in the research relationship?
- In what sense do, or don’t, women’s stories speak for themselves?
- How do social, cultural, historical, and economic conditions mediate women’s stories?
- In what way are women’s voices, multiple, contradictory, muted?
- How should researchers represent women’s voices?

These questions were addressed through a series of interpretive readings of the transcribed data from different standpoints as advocated by Arvay (2001). The first interpretive reading was *reading for coherence* of the content. The data was organised into a temporal order so that there was a coherent timeline for the story.

In the second interpretive reading, I read for the *narrator's sense of self*. The purpose of this reading was to gain insight into the ways the storyteller constructed herself in the story by reading for the various "I" positions the narrator uses. Relevant questions here are: Who is telling the story? What metaphors does she use to describe herself? What are her challenges? What meaning is she trying to express? What parts of herself does she share, and what does she keep hidden and why is this so? As I found parts in the transcript that related to the women's 'I' positions underlined the information and noted it in the page column.

Thirdly, I read for the *response to the research questions*. This reading focused on how the narrator tells her story of resisting IPV through moving away. As I found parts in the women's transcripts that seemed to relate to a research question I used the same process as with the second interpretive reading; I underlined the information in a different coloured pen and made a note in the page column.

The final reading was to look for the *reflection of power and other influences*. This involved reading for the influence of the social, political, economic, cultural, and historical contexts that influenced the meaning the

narrator gave to her story. These contexts were noted with highlighter pen throughout each of the transcripts.

As I was going through the interpretive reading process I transferred the underlined and highlighted information to its relevant column within a table (see Table 2). A table such as the one illustrated in Table 2 was produced for each participant.

**Table 2.**

<b>Coherence of Story</b>	<b>Sense of self: I positions</b>	<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Power and other influences</b>	<b>Researcher Position</b>
-------------------------------	---	-------------------------------	---------------------------------------	--------------------------------

Once I had completed the interpretive readings I started the process of identifying themes surrounding how women constructed themselves and violence. Narrative thematic analysis is described by Riessman (2008) as “keeping a story “intact” by theorizing from the case rather than from component themes (categories) across cases” (p.53). I paid attention to themes that connected with the research questions. I read transcriptions of interviews multiple times with the intention of looking for statements or phrases that seemed particularly relevant to the research questions. I used

different coloured pens to highlight the research question in relevant passages of each narrative. The analysis led to the generation of a number of themes within each research question area. The themes were then examined to see if there were any obvious groupings. The research question themes are presented in the findings chapter of the thesis.

The final column in the data analysis table is named 'researcher position'. As I carried out the series of interpretive readings, and the identification of themes, I noted my reflections as a researcher drawing on my journal notes and field notes.

Once I had completed the narrative thematic analysis I selected passages of text from the transcripts that I had highlighted and asked the collaborative partnership group to talk with me about what they found interesting about the narrative and how they made sense of the narrative. I compared the points identified by the collaborative partnership group with my own analysis, and we discussed some points where there was a difference in meaning making, finally reaching the point where there was an agreed interpretation of the data.

The process of analysing data can be thought of as a function of the perspective of the researcher. The collaborative partnership group consisted of myself, the researcher, the project leader and experienced professionals in IPV from the Family Help Trust organisation, and Christchurch Women's Refuge. The inclusion of professionals in the data analysis process brought an alternative perspective to the data and helped me to question my own assumptions (Cornish, Gillespie & Zittoun, 2014). This reflexive process is "advocated as a step towards transparency" (Cornish, Gillespie & Zittoun, 2014, p.10).

### **3.10 Quality and Rigour**

Determining what makes qualitative research rigorous has been a central feature of discussions amongst the qualitative research community. In this section, I discuss the strategies I took to enhance the rigour of the research study.

To be rigorous is to be very thorough according to exacting standards. Rigour in quantitative research gives emphasis primarily to two ideas: validity, that is, the extent that the research measures what it set out to measure; and, reliability, or the extent to which the research consistently measures what it intended to measure (Hammersley, 1987). In their

influential work on naturalistic inquiry, Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined qualitative rigour as related to producing research outcomes that captured interest, as illustrated by their question:

How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of? (p. 290).

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) view, therefore, was that rigour in qualitative research was about building trust between researcher, participants, and those to whom the research was to be disseminated. Building trust inherently included, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), building worthiness, hence the term 'trustworthiness'. To explicate how rigour can be assessed, Lincoln and Guba developed a series of criteria to guide readers of research.

Others have addressed the question of rigour in qualitative research in relation to: grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967); narrative research (Loh, 2013; Polkinghorne, 2007); the development of criteria for judging quality (Lincoln, 1995); criteria related to specific research paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994); and in relation to, assessment of quality not based on criteria but on the ability of the research to enhance knowledge about

social issues and to provide a way to implement actions to address societal problems (Schwandt, 1996). There are commonalities across the diverse approaches to assessing rigour in qualitative research and Ravenek and Laliberte-Rudman (2013) have suggested that these approaches can be summarised into five areas of common emphasis which they have termed 'bridging criteria' (2013, p.447). The areas of common emphasis are as follows:

- Social value and significance of the research
- Thoroughness of data collection and interpretation
- Reflexivity and transparency
- Coherence of approach to research
- Due regard for research participants

In the remainder of this section I apply the areas of common emphasis to this research project. I determined that relying on one particular view about how to assess quality in qualitative research was limiting and a more comprehensive approach to quality assessment was needed in this case. The areas of common emphasis act as a summary of the discussion which has already occurred in Chapter 3 and a preview of content to be covered in the rest of the thesis.

### ***3.10.1 Social value and significance of the research***

This area of emphasis relates to the societal importance of the research and the value of findings. The research topic of the thesis, with its focus on IPV, is significant socially given the rates of IPV in New Zealand and across the world (Section 1.1, and Chapter Two). Chapter Eight provides a comprehensive discussion of the significance of the findings, and Chapter Nine provides highlights a range of opportunities for implementing findings in the provision of social work and social services who work with women who have experienced IPV.

### ***3.10.2 Thoroughness of Data Collection and Interpretation***

This area of emphasis is concerned with the range of methods used to collect and interpret data. The collection of data, as outlined in Section 3.8, was carefully considered. In summary, data was collected in narrative interviews and through to note booking processes; a journaling notebook and a field notebook. Each notebook served a different process but both contributed to the data collection process.

In terms of the interpretation of data, as discussed in Section 3.9, different levels of analysis occurred including a series of interpretive readings (Arvay, 2001), narrative thematic analysis and collaborative partnership analysis.

### ***3.10.3 Transparency and Reflexivity of Researcher***

Transparency and reflexivity concerns are connected to how the research was carried out and the researcher's consideration of self throughout the research process. The process of the research undertaking and the epistemological and theoretical positions from which the research builds was discussed earlier in Chapter Three. I have highlighted throughout the discussion how reflexivity occurred, through a reflexive process where I considered my professional and personal selves and how these selves impacted on the research process (Sections 3.6, 3.8 and 3.9). I have endeavoured to be both transparent and reflexive throughout the research process by placing the research process itself under critical inquiry.

### ***3.10.4 Coherence of the Research Approach***

This area of quality assessment is concerned with the fit between the nature of the research study, in this case women who have experienced IPV, and the research methodology employed. The narrative approach employed,

underpinned by feminist, intersectional and critical theories, fits well with the sensitive nature of the research topic and with the research aim to understand the personal and contextual factors that influence women's journeys of moving away from IPV. As discussed in Chapter 3, the research approach chosen has facilitated insight into the lived experiences of the participants and the impact the social and cultural setting has had on those experiences.

#### ***3.10.5 Due Regard for Research Participants***

Ravenek and Laliberte-Rudman (2013) have suggested that this area relates to the level of care and responsibility directed towards the wellbeing of research participant. As stated earlier in the chapter, ethics approval was sought and confirmed. Throughout the research process very careful consideration was given to research participants throughout, from the early stages of planning the research project to post dissemination of research findings; consideration towards the women's wellbeing is discussed in Sections 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9. The women have been at the centre of my focus throughout the research process; this commitment to do no harm has been reinforced by my professional obligations as a registered social worker as outlined in Sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2.

Having summarised the areas that highlight the rigorousness of this research I now move to a discussion about the limitations of the research.

### **3.11 Limitations of the Research**

The study was based in Christchurch, New Zealand and its purpose was to generate knowledge to inform social work practice to meet the needs of women who are resisting IPV by moving away from relationships of violence. As stated in Section 3.1, this thesis work arose out of a collaborative partnership research project between two Christchurch organisations, the Family Help Trust and Christchurch Women's Refuge, and the University of Canterbury Te Awatea Violence Research Centre. A qualitative narrative research methodology underpinned by critical, feminist and intersectionality theories was employed to provide participants with the opportunity to construct their personal stories about their moving away from violence experience and to allow for the development of a holistic understanding of how women leave violent relationships. A total of eleven women who had moved away from violent relationships were interviewed; each interview lasting from 1 ½ to 3 hours. The qualitative narrative research design took into account the safety concerns associated with researching a sensitive topic such as IPV.

The number of women interviewed was small in scale, however, the duration of the interviews and the richness of the data collected, and the robust process of analysis enhances the rigor of the study. As Tracy (2010, p.841) suggests “there is no magic amount of time in the field. The most important issue to consider is whether the data will provide for and substantiate meaningful and significant claims”. The data, and the process of analysis, resulted in ‘thick’ descriptions (Geertz, 1973) or personal narratives that were particular, and situated in terms of time and context.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

Careful attention was paid to the design of the research study. Even though the number of participants was small, the level of detail in the women’s stories along with the field journal and field notes provided a rich pool of data to analyse. The process of analysis, consisting of a number of steps resulted in rich data from which to build a deep understanding of the moving away from violence experience and the contribution that social work practice can make to meeting women’s support needs.

The next chapter of the thesis presents the women’s narratives of the moving away from IPV experience.

## **Prologue to Findings, Analysis and Discussion, and Implications**

### **Chapters**

In the following Chapters, I present the women's narratives about moving away from IPV. Findings and implications from the *Women moving away from violence: planning it – doing it* (Crichton-Hill, 2012), mentioned earlier in the thesis (see Section 1.3), are included and extended in the findings and implications chapters of the thesis.

Riessman (1993) stated that there is no particular way to present narrative findings; this decision is made by the researcher and therefore reflects the epistemological position of the researcher. I considered how to keep the women's stories intact and whole, concerned that fragmenting the stories into themes would minimize the importance of each story and the depth of feeling that came with the telling of every narrative. In narrative research, interview text is not portioned into small discrete categories; instead, "longer stretches of talk (are) organized around time and sequencing of events" (Riessman, 1991 cited in Sutherland, Breen & Lewis, 2013). On the other hand, I wanted to be able to highlight the insights that were shared across all of the women's narratives to express the collective view of the women; a view that may not be held by dominant society and that I

thought important to capture. In line with the epistemological foundation of the thesis, I examined each woman's story as a whole and explored themes uncovered within individual narratives as well as across all narratives.

In the findings chapter I have set out to document a broad range of experiences or "thick descriptions" (Denzin, 1989; Geertz, 1973), in order to provide the reader with the opportunity to better understand the experiences of the participants. In keeping with narrative research tradition, quotations taken from interview transcripts are presented in the form of narrative stories. The participant narratives portray multiple perspectives and capture the complexity of moving away from IPV.

I have organized the moving away from IPV narratives into four areas, which are presented as four chapters; turning points; process of separation; skills and strategies; and, help seeking responses. Each area relates to a research question: narratives about turning points resonate with the research question '*What prompts women to move away and seek safety from intimate partner violence?*'; narratives about the process of separation respond to the research question '*What is the process of moving away from*

*intimate partner violence*’; narratives about skill and strategy align with the research question *‘What skills and strategies did women use in order to address violence in the home and in moving away from violence?’*; and, narratives about help seeking responses relate to the research question *‘What have been the helpful and not so helpful responses for women in addressing violence in the home?’* This is demonstrated by the following matrix.

<b>Chapter Heading</b>	<b>Relevant research question</b>
4. Narratives about turning points	What prompts women to move away and seek safety from intimate partner violence?
5. Narratives about the process of separation	What is the process of moving away from intimate partner violence?
6. Narratives about skill and strategy	What skills and strategies did women use in order to address violence in the home and in moving away from violence?
7. Narratives about help seeking responses	What have been the helpful and not so helpful responses for women in addressing violence in the home?

Before moving on to the findings chapters I present an introduction to the women and the violence they experienced. Pseudonyms are used for all participants and place names have been altered in order to preserve confidentiality.

### **Brief Introduction to the Women**

#### ***Sharnie***

Sharnie, a Pakeha<sup>4</sup> woman now in her fifties, met Donald when she was young. They had two children, Kevin and Bella, and spent their married life in Canterbury. During their marriage, when Donald was stressed, he would become threatening and violent towards Sharnie. During their relationship, Donald was diagnosed with a mental illness. Once Sharnie left the relationship she met Callum, who she is now married to. She has spent most of her working life, since her relationship with Donald ended, in the social services field.

---

<sup>4</sup> Pakeha is a Maori term originally used to define English speaking Europeans living in New Zealand.

### *Lisa*

Lisa and Steve met in New Zealand and were married for 6 years. Lisa is from Australia and her husband is from New Zealand. The couple lived both in New Zealand and Australia. Raised in Australia, Lisa attended a performing arts school, performed in a marching band, and was a State aerobics champion, and a State gymnast champion. Lisa and Steve had three children; one was born in New Zealand and two in Australia. Much has changed since Lisa ended her relationship with Steve; is now in a relationship with a man who is very kind, gentle, and supportive. Lisa has started to build a career working with pre-school children, and is working to achieve the great things she has always known she was capable of. She is a strong advocate for women who have experienced Intimate Partner Violence.

### *Ellie*

Ellie is a Pakeha woman who met her former husband, Carlo, when she was 23. Carlo was from the Mediterranean and the two made their home in the Mediterranean. Eventually Ellie and Carlo married and remained in the Mediterranean. Nine years later Ellie became pregnant; when their son, Leo, was six Ellie set up house in New Zealand and Carlo visited her and Leo in New Zealand until their relationship ended. Ellie has been in a

strong and supportive relationship with her partner, Reid, for some time now. She is a confident woman who likes to try new things, has completed a university degree and devoted some of her time to supporting women in violent relationships.

### *Celia*

Celia is a Pakeha woman who met Dion in 1996 – during that time they been married and divorced twice. Celia has three girls from a previous relationship.

The violence in their relationship began a short time after they first married and continued until Celia ended the relationship. The second time the couple married, the violence entered the relationship again. Since leaving Dion, Celia's focus has been on transforming herself and reconnecting with family. She is a strong, feisty, and independent woman who has developed a range of strategies to maintain her strength in difficult times.

### *Adele*

Adele is a Pakeha woman who was married for twelve and a half years to Todd. The couple adopted a baby boy they named Oscar. Not long after, Adele's relationship with Todd began to deteriorate and she began a relationship with a woman Tonya who initially was of great support but

after some time became violent. Eventually, Adele was able to end her relationship with Tonya. It has now been 6 years since Adele was with Tonya. Adele has pursued studies in working with people, has a good relationship with her son and has a positive outlook on life.

### ***Maggie***

Maggie lives in a small town in the South Island. Maggie, a Pakeha woman, met Steve when she was newly out of a long term relationship. She had two small children at the time and was staying with a friend who introduced the two. Steve was ten years younger than Maggie – nineteen at the time.

It has now been about six years since Maggie left her relationship with Steve. Maggie is now in a relationship with Mitchell who has been a great support to her and she has pursued studies in psychology at University.

### ***Vicky***

Vicky, a Pakeha woman, was married at a young age and her marriage was abusive. The couple had twins but they separated when the twins were very young. Vicky then met Tama, who was a bouncer at a local night club and the two began a relationship. Tama was physically, emotionally, and

sexually abusive from the very beginning of their relationship and this continued after Vicki ended the relationship one year after they had met. Since then, Vicky has focused on raising her twin boys and has successfully completed a university degree. She now works in the health sector.

### ***Ana***

Ana, a Pacific woman, was 21 when she first met Levi, who was visiting from overseas. It was about a month into the relationship when Levi confessed his love for Ana. The two had a child; however, physical and emotional violence was a feature of their relationship. After leaving the relationship, Ana has remained on her own and continued to raise her son. She is pursuing a degree at university and hopes to use her degree to help others.

### ***Tui***

Tui is a Maori woman who has one child, Lana, from a previous marriage. That relationship was violent and when the marriage ended Tui returned to New Zealand and met Pita who was also violent. Pita harassed Tui for seven years after she ended the relationship. At the time of interview, Tui was planning on improving her skills and knowledge and getting back into

the workforce. She has since undertaken tertiary study and is positive about the future ahead for herself and her daughter. Tui is committed to supporting other women who have experienced violent relationships.

### ***Briana***

Briana a Pakeha woman in her forties was married to Wayne for 16 years and during that time he was verbally abusive. The couple moved to Australia when their daughter, Morgan, was six years old. In Australia, Wayne continued to be abusive and controlling. Briana eventually left the relationship and returned to New Zealand with her daughter. Morgan has since returned to Australia but keeps in contact with Briana.

Briana now works professionally caring for others, a job that she loves. She is in a relationship with Rick who is extremely supportive. Briana describes herself as more confident and independent than she has ever been.

### ***Rose***

Rose, a Pakeha woman in her forties, was in a relationship with Brad. She has a daughter from a previous relationship, and a son with Brad. Jack, was eight when the violence started. At the time of interview, Rose had been out of the relationship with Brad for approximately two years. She

had found it difficult to develop herself because of the amount of time she had to spend going to court, attending counselling appointments and meetings with lawyers to negotiate Brad's access with Jack and the proceeds from the family home.

Nevertheless, Rose is determined improve her life; she feels exhausted at times but feels a strong responsibility as Jack's mother to make sure that Jack continues to develop and grow in a healthy and supportive environment. She is determined to make the best of life for herself, and in particular, for her son.

## **4 Chapter Four: Narratives of Turning**

### **Points**

This chapter presents the women's narratives about turning points. As stated earlier in the thesis, turning points are transitional points that alter the woman's view of the IPV. The following narratives respond to the research question '*What prompts women to move away and seek safety from intimate partner violence?*'

In terms of the structure of this chapter I present the turning point narratives beginning with an end to coping, then, the possibility of death from violence; protecting children; broken promises; and, external encouragers.

#### **4.1 An end to coping**

Turning points occurred at various points throughout the women's relationships. In her story Sharnie revealed a major turning point in her view of violence in her intimate relationship. It is a turning point mentioned by a number of the women interviewed and relates to the ability to manage the ongoing impact of the violence on health and wellbeing.

We enter Sharnie's story at the point where she, husband Donald, and their

two children Kevin 5, and Bella 10, have moved to a remote fishing town in Australia. The weather is hot, and there exists a culture of drinking.

*So, one night, in the middle of the night, because he was just getting really bad, he was drinking every night, he was threatening. It was like, "you sit up here and you'll talk about this" and this sort of thing, and you just had to sit there, and I'd go to bed and he'd come in and he would take the blankets off me. "No, you'll come up and you'll talk to me about this", so, you'd have nights of not sleeping and it just got really bad and I just couldn't handle it. The drinking was out of control and I thought 'Right, this is it, I'm going home'.*

In this story, Sharnie provided context to the eventual turning point event by outlining Donald's growing reliance on alcohol and how difficult this was for her to manage. In examining the content of Sharnie's story, the reasons for this turning point are clear. Her account of how Donald's drinking was "out of control" suggested that she was at his whim, and that there was no telling what he might do next. Further on in the interview Sharnie provided another story highlighting the, "I can't handle it" theme, but key to this next story is the realisation that Donald could kill her.

#### **4.2 The possibility of death from violence**

Most of the women interviewed described how the threat of severe and potentially fatal violence was a turning point in how they perceived their

relationship. In the following narrative, Sharnie shared her recollection of the first time she realised Donald could kill her.

#### **4.2.1 Sharnie**

*The end of it was one night when I went to bed and again he said 'No, you're not sleeping, we're going to sort this out'. So, I just couldn't... I knew I couldn't have another night of not sleeping, 'cos he'd sit up and he'd be drinking, the whole time he'd be drinking, so I knew that it's going to get worse and worse and worse, and that if I said one thing wrong he's right up in your face or there'd be a punch to the side of the wall, you know, never parked on me, but I tell you what, it's frightening enough if I got a few snaps, he'd kill me.*

In reaching the turning point Sharnie employed two areas of knowledge; firstly, she understood the escalating pattern of Donald's behaviour, and secondly, she appreciated the impact of the ongoing violence on her health and wellbeing. Other women also recognised that their partners did not care for them, as Lisa explained:

*I was assaulted so hard; I had gone through strangulation and being hit in the head, hit in the stomach. I miscarried overseas because of being kicked in the stomach, just because I was standing in front of the TV trying to talk to him about something important; he kicked me in the stomach and I miscarried the next day, horrible things like that. Back here in New Zealand he twisted my arm up behind my back and I heard a pop and a crack, very painful, my whole wrist was swollen and bruised and I was putting ice on it, and I said "I need to go to the hospital my wrist is broken". It was at that point he said "no, because, he said 'the hospital will ask questions and you'll tell them.'" And it was at that point I realized he does not really give a shit about me at all. I could die and he probably just wouldn't care; dump my body somewhere. That was scary.*

Steve was physically and emotionally violent towards Lisa throughout the course of their relationship. Lisa's realisation about the possibility of dying from one of Steve's violent attacks is accompanied by a recognition that Steve does not care for her. Her analysis of the situation is strongly informed, not only by the previous violent events, but also by his overriding need to protect himself, even amidst Lisa's need for hospital attention.

Vicky, who was not living with Tama also expressed the possibility of dying from his violence towards her:

*... but if I'd stayed with him any longer I wouldn't have survived it. I would have killed myself or killed him. And I think he started favouring one of my twins and that was another factor. And they started questioning, and you know spitting in his food and doing that didn't become fun anymore...*

#### **4.2.2 Maggie**

Maggie introduced the following turning point half way through the interview after describing in-depth the violence she had endured;

*And people could have him in the house, even with friends in the lounge, you know, and he would be manipulating and threatening me; no-one had a clue. People just didn't know, because, you know, there were two different sides to him. Simply, the turning points were the realisation that he was going to kill me at this stage, or kill me if I went, so I might as well have a go at going.*

Maggie included in her story the presence of others who were not aware of the violence that characterised her relationship with Steve. Simply put, a second reality, or a second violent Steve, existed alongside the Steve that was shown to friends. However, this excerpt of narrative does not flow smoothly; at one moment Maggie is describing the hidden aspects of her relationship, and in the next moment she has moved quickly to describing turning points and the fear she has for her life. The way in which the story is told appears disjointed. Perhaps the fact that the violence has continued to escalate coupled with the fact that the violence was so well hidden leads Maggie to think that she is in more danger.

#### 4.2.3 Adele

Adele described the recognition that she could die from Tonya's escalating violence.

*I also knew that the reality is 'I'm gonna die.' There's no way out of this, I am gonna die...because she would quite often say 'I'd be happy to do murder for you, blue eyes', things like that, or.... 'I'd be quite happy to kill for you'...you know, and I knew they weren't words spoken lightly either. She knew them. She had another family inside, and she didn't care...she didn't CARE.*

The stories shared by Sharnie, Lisa, and Maggie highlighted that the realisation of the possibility of death from violence came from the acts of

violence themselves. However, Adele's turning point is the result, not only of the acts of violence that have preceded the turning point, but the verbal threats that Tonya used to convey her willingness to kill others on her behalf. Adele recalled in her story that her estimation at the time was that there was no way she could get away from the violence; the possibility of death from violence is firmly stated; "I'm gonna die". Like Sharnie and Lisa, Adele realised that Tonya does not care, but we are left wondering if this means that Tonya does not care about Adele, or whether she does not care about the impact killing Adele would have on Tonya's family.

#### **4.2.4 Ana**

For many of the women, the realisation of the possibility of being killed by their violent partner occurred in the context of attempting to leave the relationship, as Ana explains.

*So I tried to leave and he pretty much stood in my way. "Look, I need space. I need to get away from you." And he wouldn't let me leave and I really got frightened, I think that was a breaking point; This one particular fight was when I tried to leave and it almost got to the point where I was telling myself he is actually prepared to kill me, and that's when I was telling myself I really need to get out. So, I think survival mode kicked in and then I just gave in. I was like, "Fine, I'm going to stay. I don't want to talk about it anymore and you're right and I'm wrong." I mean, had I continued... cos there was no one else in the house, it was just us two, and I literally believed that he was ready and prepared to kill me.*

### 4.3 Protecting my child

All of the women who participated in the research had children at the time the violence occurred. The following stories highlight the ways in which their children provided the impetus for change.

#### 4.3.1 Tui

In the following story Tui outlined one of Cooper's violent attacks and the turning point it became for her.

*So, I think that was the turning point for me -breaking the cycle...he grabbed me real quick, 'cos he was a kick boxer, you see, and he was HUGE, and for some reason he always came from behind. That's to me what I think I found so GUTLESS, was his always coming from behind. He grabbed my pony tail, smashed me onto this thing, and then by the time I came up and went down again, it was just so quick, that the next minute he sort of pulled me back, down on the floor I went, and as I was going down, smacked me; right in the nose so that you're seeing stars. I'm on the ground and I can feel myself going back and being knocked out, and I'm trying to fight being knocked out because my daughter is standing in front SCREAMING 'Leave my mother alone! Leave my mother alone!' And she's screaming at me, knowing that I'm hurt, my only thought was 'You can't do it - why? It's not safe, it's not safe'. Then, having seen my child about to be left so vulnerable, I wouldn't be there to protect her....that was it. That was it for me. No man was ever, EVER going to put me in a situation like this. That was the last straw for me, because that's when I realized how downright low and dirty he was prepared to go.*

As she introduced her story, Tui talks about *breaking the cycle*. She is referring here to an earlier discussion about the abuse she had witnessed and experienced as a child, as well as the violence in her relationships with

her first husband, Todd, and then in her relationship with Cooper. The words in capitals are such because Tui said them with great emphasis. Tui's attempts to resist Cooper had resulted in another violent attack on her that was seen by her daughter, Lana. This story highlighted the awfulness of IPV while simultaneously evidencing the strength of resolve a woman being beaten can find in order to protect her child.

#### 4.3.2 *Sharnie*

In this next story, Sharnie described another turning point in her relationship with husband, Donald. This time the turning point developed out of Donald's tense interaction with both Sharnie, and their son, Kevin who at fourteen had a sleep-out<sup>5</sup>. To escape Donald, Sharnie went out to the sleep-out to sleep on the floor. Donald went out to the sleep out:

*Anyway he came out to the sleep-out and he said "right, you get in the house" and Kevin said "No dad, mum's sleeping here tonight, she's gotta go to work tomorrow, just leave her alone, she's sleeping here." And he said "No, she's coming in" and Kevin got in the way, you know. That's it. And actually I was violent. I just lost it. When he went to push Kevin away, that was it, I just said to Kevin "you get out, you run, you ring the police" and I just held him back, I don't know how, I think I leapt on his back and I just turned into a wild person. Then I thought "right, this is it. Kill me, do whatever you have to. Donald, that's it."*

---

<sup>5</sup> Sleeping quarters separated from the house.

Sharnie's realisation that Kevin was in the way of Donald's violence spurred her into action that took the form of violence, leaping on Donald, and convincing Kevin to run, followed by herself and Bella. In this story, Sharnie identified herself as having "lost it"; she is a "wild person" suggesting loss of rationality and control, although she has the presence of mind to organise what needs to be done next to provide safety for her and the children.

### 4.3.3 Rose

During the interview Rose shared that she had thought every day about how she would get out of the violent relationship. She attempted several times to leave, and would last about a month and then, for various reasons, she would return to Brad. In the following narrative, Rose described one leaving time that impacted on her son Jack, and ultimately influenced what she would do next. This story begins at the end of the school day when the family are living in a town south of Christchurch. Jack had been bullied at school that day and Brad, though drunk, decided to teach Jack how to defend himself.

*He asked him to "come here, and I'll show you how you get out of a strangle hold". I just sat there and looked at him and thought "you bastard" because that's just exactly what you did to me a couple of weeks ago. And Jack was like "no, no, no Dad". And he was like*

*“come here then” and he jumped on the floor with his father and started having a wrestling thing, like they do, in the house. And next minute, Jack’s dad had his arm around his shoulder and his neck, sort of like, a choker hold, and Jack asked him to let him go, and he asked him three times, ‘cos it was starting to hurt him. He didn’t let him go, so Jack bit his father on the arm. Well, his father turned round and bit him on the face. Jack got up, he screamed, he hid underneath the kitchen table, he was too scared to go near his father. The very next day I got him out of the house, brought him up here.*

Rose constructed her story of the turning point around several contextual factors; Jack being bullied at school, Brad’s drinking, and the wrestling where Brad used a technique on Jack that he had used when violent towards Rose. In her account Rose has positioned herself as the observer, a role which we assume Rose remained in until the fight between father and son is over. Two societal narratives (socially and culturally held ideas) are present in Rose’s story; firstly, a gender narrative about how males should stand up for themselves by use of force (*I’ll show you how you get out of a strangle hold*); and secondly, a gender narrative about what is acceptable behaviour for boys and men, in this case the wrestling together (*having a wrestling thing like they do*).

Later on in the interview, Rose shared another story that highlighted the resolve she had to protect her child and in this she is future-focused.

*I didn’t want my boy growing up thinking its normal to disrespect your partner, your children, to hurt them.*

#### **4.3.4 Vicky**

Like Rose, Vicky was very aware of the influence of Tama's violence on her children.

*They (the twins) weren't even at school. They were three. He tried to take them from preschool once, and they wouldn't let him. I was getting beaten up one night and one of them yelled out and said, "Leave her alone." I'll never forget that. And then he never touched them, but he threatened to and he favoured one, and he would go in and shake their bunks. And the times that I thought that he might do something to them, I contacted the police and they came out, and told me to get away from him. But I kept going back, to be honest. We'd separate and I'd keep going back.*

In Vicky's narrative the children witnessed Tama's violence, and are also subjected to it (*he would go in and shake their bunks*). Vicky through her concern for their safety would always contact the police when she thought they were at risk. She doesn't want us to think that this is all there is to this story, so she finished her story by letting us know she will be honest in terms of what happened next – she returned to him even though the police had suggested she stay away from Tama.

#### **4.3.5 Briana**

In the following account Briana identified the point when her child's actions created a turning point moment for her.

*I had 16 years of that marriage, before I did my move, and it was only when Morgan kind of woke up to it, and it made me wake up. She put a plastic bag over her head after we were kind of rowing, kind of, you know, having a disagreement, and I was kind of slowly waking up, and he didn't like that idea. He wanted the power still over me, and she said 'I just don't want any more of this' and put the plastic bag over her head and I nearly died.*

Briana told this story in the first few minutes of our interview. In this account Briana defined the turning point as a waking up created by the actions of her child, Morgan. In her story, Briana described what was happening as a row or disagreement. However, we are not told whether the argument was heated, or what was said because Briana's focus in the telling of the story is her child's actions, the impact on her own awareness, and her feelings about what Morgan did (*I nearly died*). A few minutes later Briana added a little more information relating to her concerns for Morgan.

*She was only 6, or 9 or something. At her school work, her stories, and everything like that, if you look through the lines of her sentences and things, you could see that she didn't like the situation at home, it was affecting her.*

Briana's description of her child's responses as a turning point differs from that shared by Sharnie, Maggie, and Rose. In Briana's account, her child Morgan does something to herself to get her mother's attention; Morgan must have felt desperate about the situation in order to take such drastic

action and potentially harm herself. In Sharnie, Maggie, and Rose's stories it is the child being caught up in the violence that propels the women into action.

#### **4.4 Broken promises**

All of the participants talked repeatedly about the promises their partners had made not to use violence towards the women again. The violent partner, in all cases, made the promise following a violent event. Despite other interventions and support and regardless of promises that had been made, the violence continued, and sometimes escalated. While the theme of broken promises is present for each of the women, the way in which the women framed the breaking of promises as a turning point varied.

##### **4.4.1 Ellie**

Ellie's story about a turning point began after she and Carlo have had a period of time apart.

*In the beginning, and it's all very distant when we haven't seen each other for 6 or 7 months and I really, sexually I had gone off him anyway, which is kind of understandable when somebody treats you and calls you all these things. Yet the sexual side was something that was very strong for him, so, there was actually sexual abuse that went on as well on top of everything else. I mean, it was forced on me on more than one occasion, and, you know, it's just that he had this idea that if he had sex with me enough that was going to cement the relationship and keep it working, whereas it was kind of doing the opposite in many ways, and it was just "oh, I don't want this at*

*all". And I think that was probably the last deciding factor for me because although his behaviour in many ways had become better, he was still trying to control me in this way, and really, I mean, he needed to work on himself, and just wasn't willing to admit or accept that there were things he needed to work on.*

For Ellie, the time apart created distance, not only geographically, but in terms of their emotional connection with each other. Ellie realized she did not want the relationship, and at the same time she appreciated that despite the break they have had in their relationship, Carlo still wished to have control over her. This signalled to Ellie that Carlo had no personal insight to the changes he needed to make.

While Ellie described her analysis of Carlo's broken promise in the context of his lack of insight to how he needed to change, Celia constructed her story around broken promises in terms of her partner Dion's choice to continue to be violent.

#### **4.4.2 Celia**

Here Celia described the broken promises turning point that occurred in her first marriage with Dion. Dion had attended counselling and the couple was on the way home. Celia sensed that Dion was going to be violent because of how he was behaving:

*...so I just pulled into the drive, got out of the car and instead of buying into it, come straight in and rung his Probie, [probation officer]) and said "Look, I think something's going to happen here soon" and I've never done it before. So she unbeknown to me, she called the police. In the interim I called my brother for support, I called a friend for support and they were on their way over, and he was outside storming around kicking stuff around the yard and then coming in and standing over me and going "I'm going to fucking kill you" and I just decided "well, no you're not, you know, this is getting ridiculous Dion". So he would storm outside and do the shit, you know, but I was angry, real angry, real sick of it before I left him for those three and a half years. The last words I said to him, so everybody arrives at one time, the police, my girlfriend, like it's happening in the backyard, and um...I go out and he's sitting on the bench, you know, by this stage, and so I go up and... 'cos what he was saying to me was "I need time out from you" you know, like he's just being an ass. So I go up to him and say "enjoy your fucking time out". And that was the last I saw of him for three and a half years.*

Here Celia introduced the violent event itself as a turning point, however, she chose to focus most of her narration on the number of people that came to support her, and her final statement to him. Further on in Celia's story we find that the couple reunited and married, and this time it took four months until the violence began again.

*...and so it was even more gutting when it did start happening 'cos there was hope, you know, there was a lot of hope. Honestly we had so much help and support from all areas, like friends, whanau, church (at that stage we were both going to church). That changed, we stopped that. But people were really...like, I mean, hours of support. I don't just mean a call and "how you doing", I mean people would just rock up. Like, I'd rung and say I don't want to ring the police; he's getting out of line, so people would rock up and support. We had so much support. Which has been good, it took all that for me to realize that he's had everything ... you know, I haven't seen a person more supported or helped more. Yeah, he still chose violence.*

It is not until the very end of her story that Celia shared her awareness that Dion was going to continue to be violent. Celia's last words indicated her belief that it was possible for Dion to make a choice about violence, but perhaps they also signified her realisation that Dion chose violence over her.

#### **4.4.3 Tui**

In this next story, Tui recounted her relationship with her ex-husband Todd. We pick up her story just after their daughter had been born and Tui had noticed that there were changes in how Todd was treating her.

*He promised me before we had her that we would do this, and then when he went to break the promise that's when the violence started, because I wasn't prepared to put up with someone that had broken a promise, (laughing) and he wasn't prepared to put up with me not wanting to work. See where the father, was that was a big "No, No". Because both of us had talked extensively about our abusive upbringings, so it was already stipulated before we had our child. We had already discussed discipline; we discussed what was to go on; and when the promises were broken after she was born, yeah, that was the biggest insult for me, because I realized "oh my God" even though we agreed on this, his upbringing and what he'd been subjected to, wasn't going to allow him to embrace this new cycle (of non-violence).*

Tui had insight into the impact that witnessing and experiencing violence has had on her life. In this narrative she recounted the process of decision making and the agreement that both she and Todd embraced prior to the

birth of their daughter; and the resulting disappointment she felt when the violence continued. While Ellie and Celia talked about broken promises in the context of their partners' lack of insight and choice to remain violent, Tui believed that the violence Todd experienced as a child was a powerful influence on his behavior as an adult, and would be too difficult for him to change.

#### **4.4.4 Maggie**

In the following narrative, Maggie described the opportunity she took to write to the courts, at his mother's insistence, about her partner Steve's ongoing violence.

*So, I wrote this lovely letter for the lawyer and I took a copy in for the court, I took a copy into his lawyer on the day of the court case, and for Victim Support to put before the judge. The letter basically said that he kept drinking, he'd been court ordered to do alcohol drug counselling, which he'd done; he was always very apologetic when he ended up in court, and he said this will never happen again; but over time he was never apologetic, he was always violent ... I didn't think he was ever going to change.*

A number of points made by Maggie are pertinent to the discussion about broken promises. Maggie pointed out again the two different realities that existed in her relationship with Steve; the apologetic and compliant public

face that Steve showed to the authorities, court, and social services; and the violent person he was in his private relationship with Maggie.

## **4.5 External Encouragers**

The turning point ‘external encouragers’ refers to other people or activities that have provided the motivation to women to make a change in their responses to violence. The women talked about the people and activities as significant turning points.

### **4.5.1 Lisa**

Lisa found motivation through a television advertisement.

*I'd seen the ads on TV that the government brought out that "Violence is not okay" and thought 'if they are putting in all that money, I'm not going to cry over him'; they'd been putting all that money in saying "it's not okay" obviously they mean it. It mustn't be okay, so if I go, someone will help me; and I went to the lawyers, I snuck out ....*

Here Lisa positioned her understanding of the “it’s not ok” campaign in the context of the amount of money that is spent on it. She determined that if this was the message the government would pay to have on the television, then perhaps violence isn’t ok, and if this is the case, then if you seek help it will be there. Lisa’s questioning of whether violence is ok is part of a

larger gender narrative that women should be compliant, while men are in control. Lisa moves on to talk about her eventual meeting with a lawyer.

*When I got to the lawyers I just sobbed and told him my story and he wrote lots of stuff down, and said “do you feel safe to go home?” I said, “Not really”. He said “well, I can ring Refuge and the police and get you out now”, and I said “oh no, we’re alright, all our belongings are in the house, passports and stuff”. He said “well, if that’s the choice you’re making” I said “yes, to go back and get my stuff”. He told me to come back the next day at 10 o’clock, and I did, and he handed me an emergency protection order, a parenting order and tenancy order. I was stoked. It was hard, you had to just pinch yourself... just this magic, almost like a weight off your shoulders, like, God... someone does care, someone’s listening, someone thinks that me and my kids are worthwhile ....*

#### **4.5.2 Briana**

In thinking about how she decided to separate from her husband, Briana related the following story.

*Well, I had been going to my doctor and she’d been kind of counselling me, which was really good for about 4 months, every week. They have Medicare over there, so it didn’t really cost to go, so I could do it. She’d been lovely, she’d been great, and she gave me a question; whether I wanted to stay or go. And I said that I’ve been through enough, I’m sick of it, and I want to get out of it. And she kind of helped me; I said “Oh, look I can’t’ because I’m not very confident”, and I said “I can’t do this, I can’t go to the airport by myself, I need someone with me to tell me what to do”, and she said, “Look, you’ll be fine, you’ll be fine, you’ll DO IT, you’ll DO IT!” She kind of gave me the courage.*

Here Briana’s narrative suggested that she is conflicted about what she should do – should she stay, or leave? Not surprisingly, she is lacking in

confidence, but her belief in herself is encouraged by the Doctor. A number of women talked about how a growth in self confidence coupled with messages from various sources provided them with the impetus to change their situation. An example is the narrative offered by Adele who recounted the following story about a particularly difficult time in her journey towards freedom from violence; her child had just been removed from her care and placed with her ex-husband.

*It kept growing, my sense of self. I knew I could quite easily commit suicide. I actually had the rope, I had a knife, I didn't care if it hurt, I didn't care, at least I'd be feeling something on the way out, because I wasn't feeling anything. I knew bubby was okay 'cos he was with a really good dad. He was a shit husband, but a wonderful dad, and I knew just having those two together was the right thing to do in life. So that's what it was down to, but then there was this voice inside me that also said "But you're worth it too" and it was just little comments say, from that detective, the lawyer, the little messages started to pop up on TV that I'd take out of programmes; just started to highlight to me, started to kind of resonate with me. So it was that and I started to kind of grow within myself.*

The three women's stories demonstrate the power that professionals have to either advance or discourage a woman's movement away from violent relationships. In addition, public education campaigns such as television advertisements had a part to play in whether women considered moving away from violence, or continued in their move to safety.

#### **4.6 Summary**

The women's narratives about turning points reveal that these periods of change may occur at a number of junctures throughout the course of the violent relationship; when the woman is residing with the violent partner, and when she is not; when she has decided to remain in the relationship, and after she has left. The turning points that were salient for the women were the realisation they could die from the violence, a need to protect their children, having promises continuously broken by the violent partner, and encouragement from others.

In the next chapter the women's stories about the process of moving away from violence are presented.

## **5 Chapter Five: Narratives on the Process of Separation**

Chapter five presents the women's stories about the process of separation from their violent partners. For most, the process toward final separation is gradual, taking a number of years. The narratives in this chapter indicate that the process of separation from a violent partner extends beyond the time when women leave the violent relationship. Often harassment, threats of violence and violent behaviour continue past the point when the women had physically left the relationship. The chapter responds to the research question *what is the process of moving away intimate partner violence?*

The women's process of separation stories highlighted the following themes: concern and justification; taking responsibility; loving and needing; family, wife, and motherhood; and, consequences to leaving.

### **5.1 Concern and Justification**

The women's narratives indicated that early on in the relationship their partners behaved in ways that gave the women cause for concern. As well as noting their increasing concerns, the women talked about how they tried to explain away the concerns by justifying their partners' behaviour.

### 5.1.1 Sharnie

Sharnie's account of her concerns began with Donald leaving her.

*It started really with just leaving me, I think, just running, keeping his life going the same, but things would go wrong at his work and he would start going downhill into this depressive state and drinking and then going out and not coming back for a night and things like that. So that's how it started. No physical violence but it was emotional, and the first real fear I had if I can remember it, is when one of his friends told me that he had had an affair with somebody else, and he was going to go out and get them. He was going to go out and shoot them. Yeah, do it to his friend for telling me what he had done. So that was probably the first time I was absolutely freaking out thinking "My God"!*

In this narrative, Sharnie shared how drinking and depression became a part of Donald's behaviour early in the relationship. But her concerns about his behaviour are emphasised by the last few sentences in her story; it was Donald's reaction to the fact that his friend did not keep secret Donald's infidelity that concerned Sharnie.

### 5.1.2 Lisa

At the beginning of her interview Lisa described how Steve's behaviour early in their relationship concerned her.

*...from the beginning there was odd behaviours and he said that he had ADHD, that he had been adopted and that his adoptive parents divorced, and that he had met his biological mother; that he basically had a whole lot of baggage and it's taken me a long time to realise. I thought not my problem and I don't deserve to be treated this way, but he behaved that way, and I thought okay, that was an excuse for his behaviour. Then there was odd behaviours, like going bonkers if you open an umbrella inside the house by accident; he*

*would just go spastic, he would throw things at me hard when he was passing it to me, almost aggressively, he would lose his temper in a split second with other people, although in the early stage of the relationship he wasn't losing it with me. He was losing it with other people, which was a little bit odd, and you could hear the little alarms going "oh well that's a bit weird" but then he just sort of put it down to ADHD. It's like you just keep going back to those excuses and those reasons and how he's so hard done by, and that's why he's so high strung or short tempered.*

The way in which Lisa began her story about her initial concerns provided clues as to how she would eventually interpret Steve's behaviour. She shared how she used her knowledge of Steve's family background to justify his odd behaviour around others, his quick temper, and his aggressive behaviour towards her. In her narrative, Lisa recognised that it was not acceptable that she was treated in an abusive way, but she dismissed this recognition by justifying and then stating "not my problem". Further on in the interview Lisa expanded on the justification of initial concerns.

*He had me convinced that he can't help it, that's the way he's programmed or wired, and I suppose in a sense he is, because even after the years we did counselling together, marriage counselling, and we did one-on-one counselling, he'd even break down at times whether it was an act or not, saying, you know "I'm sorry" and "I'll do better". Even in court when we separated here in New Zealand he ... the judge said "is there anything that you have done better or anything you would like to say to Lisa" and he said "I would just like to say sorry I wasn't there to support you". You know, there's a side of insanity he believes he's so hard done by and that his behaviour is this way and he can't change himself while there's*

*another part of him that recognises it, you know, so he was very strange and weird (laughing).*

Lisa was convinced by Steve that his background was the reason for his behaviour. In her narrative, Lisa provided examples of times throughout their relationship where Steve would apologise for his actions and indicate that this will change. However, on reflection at the end of the story, Lisa spoke from the present when she laughingly stated that Steve's perception of himself is a version of "insanity". In the telling of this story Lisa appeared to have drawn a line between the way she saw things in the midst of their relationship, and her more relaxed reflection on Steve's justifications, two years later at the time of interview. The narrative shows us how context has influenced her understanding of the violent relationship.

### **5.1.3 Ellie**

In Ellie's interview the following account is told after she has described a particularly violent beating she received from Carlo. Ellie began her story by contextualising the time of beating in terms of her son's age.

*It was a couple of years later, because my son was only about 2 or 3 when that beating event happened, ... I went back into the relationship trying to look at the positive sides of it, and just appealing to his better nature, because he was also a very loving, caring and kind man. It's just that he had his own horrific history of domestic violence, absolutely horrific. He remembers from 2 years*

*old hiding under the bed while his father beat his mother, and he was the youngest of three children. At 5 years old when they split his father took him for a year and he didn't even speak for that whole year. So, you know, there was absolute psychological damage done to him, the kind of thing, when you are a nurturer, you think I'm reaching out and feeling even more loving towards him. But unfortunately, they come with all of this damage, which when our child was born, this is what started to come out. I think it was the panic, he did not want to be like his father, he did not want to be like his father, but unfortunately, I was a lot like his mother as well, I've been told, you know, very sharp, and quick with answers and things like that, and he just couldn't cope with it. So, you know, it was really history repeating itself and that's not what he wanted.*

In this story Ellie has positioned herself very strongly as nurturer; this role is interpreted by Ellie as a person who reaches out and shows her love and support. To this end, Ellie rationalised Carlos' violent behaviour by talking about the violence he had suffered as a child. This is part of a larger societal narrative, influenced by social learning research (Bandura 1973, 1977, 1979) that links childhood experiences of violence with later use of violence in adult relationships. Ellie positioned Carlo as a loving man, who wanted to be a good father. Perhaps, Ellie seems to have suggested, without the difficult background he could have been that man.

## **5.2 Taking responsibility**

Sometimes, the women explained the abusive behaviour of their partners by taking on blame themselves for what had occurred, or by taking on responsibility in their interpretation of the violent behaviour.

### 5.2.1 Briana

*I thought about leaving a LOT of times, a lot of times, but I just thought "Oh God, it's my head going silly again". I'm a bit more confident now, but I was NOT a confident person then and I was thinking "Don't be silly, don't be silly, it's just pre-menopause or something, you're talking and you're thinking all depression".*

### 5.2.2 Adele

In a similar vein, Adele shared her interpretation of the validity of her assessment of partner, Tonya's, violent behaviour. In Adele's story she described to me the first time that Tonya was violent; it was sudden and unexpected. Adele was grabbed by the hair, dragged outside and her head smashed against the fence – Adele is held captive in the flat under Tonya's control. Adele explained what happened towards the end of the violent episode.

*I was beyond tears and panic, I was just shutting down completely, and I couldn't THINK. I was just a shell, and I'd left my body. I was just like 'captive' you know? And then, all of a sudden, it just seemed to be over, I don't know if it was two days later or what it was. She'd ripped the phone out of the thing, I couldn't get to the door, I...um...she left in my car. She left. She just went. So once again, I left sitting in the flat after all this trauma....*

I asked Adele what she did in this time.

*What do I do? I just went to sleep. Life carried on normal. I had nothing else...no-one else to talk to; who do I go to with this? What do I do? She returned my car, gave me the keys back, and gave me a*

*little touch on the hand and said 'Hope you're okay' and left. So I felt completely mad.*

Sustained violence towards Adele from her partner Tonya left Adele feeling traumatised. Adele described herself as a “shell” after having being held in captivity for one day, perhaps two. Tonya’s behaviour was so erratic – warm and sensitive one moment, extremely violent the next – that Adele found it difficult to make sense of what was going on.

### 5.2.3 Celia

In the following story, Celia talked about her response to a violent event. While the violence described in Celia’s narrative is initiated by Dion, Celia examined her own behaviour resulting in a description of herself and Dion as “volatile”.

*That night that he kicked a hole in the wardrobe door, I'm like “get the fuck out of here”, and so he storms up the hallway and I follow him because I'm mad, to make sure he doesn't make any more noise. And so he does this real violent thing, he takes his time putting his boots on, and I'm getting real bloody mad I'm fuming because I'm like “get out here”, you know, you're not doing this shit, and I don't know what he said to me, but I picked up the TV remote and dinged him on the head. But it was one of those old square ones, he just took it off me and snapped it, that's how strong he was; he was a big boy, 6 foot 4. Eventually he stormed off and did what he did, I don't know where he went, and I went to bed. I didn't sleep. To me, that was a one-off incident. We hate fighting and I've always been a person to look at my own behaviour. So I was lying in bed thinking, yeah well, he could've just left that, 'cos like I said we were both volatile, and I was very aware that perhaps it didn't have to get to that point.*

She extended her story.

*Of course I didn't understand then why, but of course I challenged and what I've learnt since is that amping up the ante because it was a power thing, I would challenge. So the more I challenged, and of course the more he got bad, the more I challenged. So it got worse, because I wasn't going to leave, but I wasn't prepared to bow, and I didn't know about holding my tongue and stuff like that.*

In this story Celia positioned herself as a woman who was strong and was not going to give in to Dion, but at the same time she expressed her belief that she was naïve in her understanding of how she was supposed to behave. Celia's narrative suggests that there is a societal narrative, socially and culturally promoted that holds a particular view about the way she is supposed to behave in this relationship. Celia stated that she was not going to leave the relationship – she was “not going to bow” suggesting that she was not going to give in. Perhaps the societal gender narrative about staying in relationships no matter what is informing this position Celia has taken up. Much later in the interview, Celia described how she changed when after a separation she and Dion met again.

*We bumped into each other, three and a half weeks later we remarried. We were having a ball. My kids aren't, nobody else is, they don't think it's a good idea. But of course, I want to keep them out, because I don't want them to ruin my joy, 'cos like, we're actually like having a ball. We're feeling positive and talked about all the stuff that had gone down. I talked about how horrible it was. So, we got together it was good for longer. I really, really loved him*

*and I decided that someone had to change because all that volatile stuff wasn't working. I knew I could do things, I knew I could do things quieter and milder, and I just knew I could and still be happy. I wasn't resentful about it, and I wasn't selling myself short. I just knew that I could and literally one of us had to, or it wasn't going to work, and I wanted it to work.*

#### **5.2.4 Ellie**

In the following narrative, Ellie responded to a question she has asked herself about why she didn't leave Carlo earlier in the relationship.

*If you think about the myths and realities in domestic violence that, well, I made my bed and now I have to lie in it, I have to do the best I can with this, and I kind of went into it with that attitude. So I thought, well, no, I made these choices, they tried to warn me about them, you know, they'd come over and visited me in the earlier years, and I kind of felt, well I didn't listen to their advice then, and I can't sort of go back crying like this now, you know, I've got to stand on my own two feet and sort this out.*

Even though Ellie was unhappy and struggling in her marriage to Carlo, she accepted responsibility for her situation by utilising a powerful social narrative; she should expect that she will suffer because she made a poor decision in marrying Carlo and moving to the Mediterranean. This is expressed in the saying Ellie used to describe her decision to remain in the relationship; *"I made my bed and now I have to lie in it"*. The power of the social narrative is deepened by Ellie's unease that her family had provided a warning to her and she had paid them little, if any, attention.

### 5.2.5 Ana

At various points throughout the interview, Ana talked about the breakup of her parents and the influence this had on her process of separating from her violent partner. The different discussions are pieced together here into one story.

*Later, during that time I was thinking of my mum, my real mum. Like this is how she must have felt when she found that dad didn't want to be with her anymore. I tell people now that my mum was really devastated because my dad didn't love her the way that she wanted him to love her, when she had given him everything. You know at the time it was like, just the picture of mum and how she looked popped up in my head and I didn't make the connection then at the time but over the time I was like, well you know my sister and my brothers call my mum crazy when she talks about my dad... I think that's part of the reason why I stayed for so long, because I thought I was paranoid and crazy like my mum.*

Ana used her perception of her parents' break up to reflect on her own relationship with Levi. She remembered how her Mum was when her relationship with Ana's father ended. In her story, Ana shared that witnessing her Mum's behaviour, and hearing the interpretation of this behaviour by her siblings probably had an influence on how long she remained in her relationship with Levi. She suggested that her assessment of her relationship with Levi was flawed because she was "crazy and paranoid" and this prevented her from moving on.

### 5.3 Loving and needing

In this section I explore narratives about how the women felt about their partners. The emotional connection in their relationships, and their need for contact with their partners often complicated the women's thoughts and plans about leaving.

#### 5.3.1 Adele

Adele felt a strong emotional connection with Tonya. Here she explained how the emotional connection led her to question the validity of her concerns.

*There was this real protective loving side to her; if she walked in here now, you'd look and go "Oh, she's lovely, she's so humble, so beautiful", but there's this other side that people don't get to see. .. I felt MAD, I felt completely MAD. But, those little moments are what makes you fall in love with them again, that you fall deeper, so the swinging from the lows to the highs, suddenly she became my oxygen tank.*

A little while later in the interview, Adele continued her story about how she felt about Tonya.

*I still had these feelings of being so in love with her, so I completely wanted to stay in this relationship. I just wanted the violence to stop and these anger outbursts. Then, I got a protection order in place for her and I thought "This is going to kill me, she is going to kill me" but at least it's on paper. "I'm gonna get killed for doing this against her" and she broke that Protection Order, I can't remember, I don't know how it worked or what happened, lots and lots of hidings, you know, sort of like that, and she went to prison for 4 months. The cops ended up pressing charges and putting her in jail, and of course, it was ME, out there every Saturday taking her money and magazines, visiting her, and the prison officer said to me "What*

*are you doing here, you know she's got a girlfriend in here as well, don't you? Please stop wasting money on Tonya, please get yourself some help." The prison officers out there were just fantastic and I'd go "I know what she's like, but it's her I fell 'in love' with her", you know? And every time I left that jail I couldn't drive, I couldn't walk to my car; I was literally sobbing and gagging. It was horrible...because 'something' was better than 'nothing'...having someone is better than no-one. And it was hell.*

In this section Adele described her strong feelings for Tonya. Throughout the story Adele described being torn; she accepted that the relationship was not healthy, that there were “lows and highs”, but she was in love. She conceptualised this by describing how there was just one thing to change in the relationship; the violence, “*I just want the violence to stop*”. In the second part of the story, Adele described how she took action in relation to the violence, but the dual conceptualisation remained as Adele continued to visit Tonya in prison when Tonya had breached the protection order. Adele justified the dual position she arrived at by stating that “something was better than nothing ... having someone is better than no-one”. For Adele having a relationship, having someone, is important, even if that person is violent. Perhaps Adele’s interpretation of her feelings for Tonya relate to societal messages about love being irrational and subjective; and her need to be in an intimate relationship may reflect how society places heavy value on intimate relationships.

### 5.3.2 Celia

In the following passage, Celia described how she felt about Dion's abusive behaviour.

*His behaviour was abusive and mind games and that was done deliberately, and the withdrawing, the eye rolling; all the signals that say, 'look out'. I wasn't really making sense of it; I was in my early 30's and I was quite volatile myself so to me it was just a relationship. Sounds weird, doesn't it, but it was, it was just a relationship, and it would be sorted out because I really loved him, you know, I was in love with him. I loved him, and so, you know, I wasn't going to go anywhere. It might as well be sorted out, you know, as if I could. But like, you know, we'll jolly well sort it out*

Celia introduced this story by outlining Dion's behaviour and how this was a warning for her to "look out" but she just could not make sense of it. She stated three times that she was in love with him, suggesting that this was a powerful motivator for her not to recognise the warning signs, or perhaps to recognise the warning signs but then to ignore them. She wanted the relationship to be sorted out, but there was more than uncertainty expressed by Celia when she stated "as if I could". As is the case with Adele in the previous story, Celia expressed a paradoxical conceptualisation involving the warning signs hinting at violence, and her love for Dion.

Ana also talked about her love for Levi.

*I honestly don't know how I managed to survive a year and a half with him. The first three months when he came back we were on honeymoon and he said that to me too ... "We're in a honeymoon period and I'm worried that afterwards we're just gonna end up not liking each other," and, I said, "Well, we'll see when we get there". I said, "That's how people get used to each other. You either do like them or you don't after a while". He was my first boyfriend and I wanted him to be my only boyfriend for the rest of my life. And he was the love of my life for a while, and I did love him. I really did truly love him.*

Later on in the interview Ana explained further.

*All the stuff that both my parents were telling me, my dad being one of the guys ... he's never admitted it, but he was like, "No, I don't like him. There's something about him I don't like. I don't trust him. I just have this feeling". I'm like, "Well then you need to get over your feeling because I love him". And then my dad's like, "You don't love him," and you know, that's what just made me want to stay with him longer. "Do not tell me what to do!" You know, I have this thing, I don't like it when people tell me how to feel and that's because my parents have always told me how I felt was wrong.*

Ana began her story by talking about the feelings she had for Levi; both Ana and Levi used the phrase "*honeymoon period*" to describe the beginning time in their relationship when they were each consumed by the other, and where the other seemed perfect. The use of the phrase "*honeymoon period*" suggests, perhaps, a societal understanding about how relationships work, or rather how long a relationship will work for before things start to go awry. There is an understanding by Ana that the relationship would not always be the same as it was in the beginning; perhaps, this understanding works to prevent Ana from leaving the

relationship when it is no longer positive because she held an expectation that relationships, after the honeymoon period, would deteriorate.

Ana stated very clearly that she wanted to be with Levi for the rest of her life. However, Ana stated that her father shared concerns about Levi, “*I don’t like him*”, he had said. Ana’s response was to state that she loves Levi; her father denied that this was the case. Here Ana provided background information about her relationship with her father and the influence this had on her decision to stay in the relationship with Levi longer. She wanted to prove her father wrong, and she did not want to be seen as having made a mistake, so Ana, despite the violence, tried harder to make her relationship with Levi work.

#### **5.4 Family, wife, and motherhood**

The women in the study shared their experiences as wives and partners, and as mothers. These roles influenced the way in which women measured their relationship and the role they in it, and the choices they made. The following stories illustrate the complex choices made by the women as a result of the violent relationship.

### 5.4.1 Lisa

Lisa tearfully explained how Steve provided her with an ultimatum: she cut contact with her mother, or she would not see the children again.

*When I was having my third son I had to choose between my children or my mum. I was very, very close to my mum, and he didn't like that either. I was close to her and told her everything, so he gave me that ultimatum in the end. The whole pregnancy I never talked to her, didn't see her (crying)... In that situation I thought I was doing the right thing because I was keeping the family together (crying).*

In this narrative, Lisa shared how she had to make a terrible choice; between her mother and her children. She positioned herself, in the telling of the story, as mother and daughter and ultimately chose to have no contact with her mother, believing that she was keeping the family together. She expressed a common societal narrative which is that families should stay together. Lisa went on to talk about the responsibility she took for being a good wife.

*I watched my mum and dad get divorced and I swore I would never get divorced, you know and I tried... and because he had been so hard done by, because he was adopted, because his family broke down, you know, I swore that I would make a wonderful wife for him and, you know... do it right.*

Lisa made a decision that she did not want to get divorced as her parents had. Taking into account Steve's difficult background she made a pact

with herself ... to be a wonderful wife. Next, in response to a question about what being a wonderful wife means to her Lisa said:

*Supporting him. Alright, like, do everything he wanted, I would even neglect the kids sometimes to give him what he wanted; they got shut outside so he could have peace and quiet, all those sorts of things. I had to leave one child screaming because he wanted dinner and the baby needed breastfeeding. The baby missed out, for his own demands, just giving and giving and giving.*

Next Lisa described what would happen if she did not obey Steve's demands.

*He'd become verbally abusive, possibly physically abusive. There was one occasion that stands out; when I would make dinner, when it wasn't ready on time, he came and he took the pot and jug of milk that was there and he threw it all over the kitchen floor and he wouldn't buy me a mop either, so I had to grab clean stuff I had to use and would be scrubbing the floor, and all that sort of stuff. Even though dinner was being made, it wasn't good enough if it wasn't on time, so you would have to start all over again.*

From Lisa's story, her desire to be a perfect wife while based on her past experience, is also informed by her experiences with Steve. She knew that not doing well as a wife would result in verbal and physical abuse. Her view of the perfect wife was also informed by a societal narrative that it is the wife's responsibility to cook meals and have them prepared on time. The messages about Steve's difficult background helped, in Lisa's mind, to explain his violent behaviour; along with the fear of ongoing violence, and

the need to be a good wife, these messages were enough to prevent Lisa from separating from Steve.

#### 5.4.2 Adele

Like Lisa, Adele's role as mother was used by her violent partner, Tonya.

*She played mind games, mind, lots and lots and lots of mind games. And the police would turn up and she'd go "Oh, no, it was a misunderstanding. Sorry". And she would send them away. She knows how to speak their 'speak' and they know her, she knows them. One day when we were watching a TV programme, just being real normal, happy, having dinner, and I was feeling quite contented. I thought she was too; suddenly she's on the phone and I said "Oh who did you just ring?" She said "I just left a message for CYFS, I don't think you're a very good mother, they're going to come and take baby". And I pressed redial, and she really had, she really, really had, so then I was thinking "Oh my God." So there was like these threats that I had no compartment to put them in, so I would just leave it, so I didn't know how to process that, I didn't know what to do about it.*

Adele's story was built around Tonya's manipulation of Adele's role as mother. At a later point in the interview, Adele explained what she wanted as a mother.

*I was fighting to be an authentic mum, to start with, as an adoptive mum; fighting to keep my sanity on some level; fighting somehow to have the freedom to live as I choose; but...give me a chance to find the right way. I was fighting for all these things on the outside, but inside I was just dead, just hollow, and I felt like it was all these "shoulds"... "should be doing this" and "should be doing that" you know, that I was putting on myself as well.*

Adele's words, from the point of view of an adoptive mother, demonstrated how for her an adoptive mother was not as 'authentic' as a birth mother. In emphasising that she should be behaving a certain way, it may be that Adele is influenced by cultural discourses about how mothers should behave. The ideas Adele held about motherhood were reinforced by Tonya who stated "*I don't think you're a very good mother*".

#### 5.4.3 *Ellie*

Ellie, in this story, related her thinking to a time when she returned to New Zealand when she thought that perhaps she need not return to the Mediterranean.

*I only got back to my country like every 4 years for about 3 months in that 17 years. In fact, the first time I was 7 years there before I came back. So, you know, I was fully immersed in this culture, and its deprivation, (laughing) ....one of the times when our son was quite young, in fact I think it was when he was 13 months, the time I came back, alone at that time even, and it's surprising, but because I'm a loyal person, you know, part of me thought "Oh I could just stay here and get a benefit and make myself a life" but I couldn't. I thought, no, this is his only son, he thinks the life of this kid, and he absolutely, loves him to bits. I'm going to give him another chance*  
...

Blame and guilt were terms used by all of the women when referring to their roles as wives and mothers. The women recognised the impact their decisions in relation to the violence had on their relationships with their children. In the following stories, Celia and Tui explained this idea further.

Firstly, Celia described how she responded when her daughter decided to leave home. Celia articulated the conflict she felt between her roles as mother and partner.

*When Ginny turned 18, Dion and I were in our first relationship, she said, “mum, I’m leaving home, I can’t live here and watch this happening to you, watch your spirit die”. So she went flatting, and I was gutted because I knew I wasn’t going to leave him, and here I was having a daughter leaving home. Oh, it’s just its ... it’s ... I cried buckets. And I felt stuck, because I knew I wasn’t going to leave and I felt like such a failure as a mother, I knew I could be doing things differently and should be. I had this thing in my head. I had an idea in my own head of what a mother should be and a mother ... well, a mother wasn’t going to be someone that stayed with someone violent where their children were unhappy. And to me I felt like I was choosing him over them, and that’s what it felt like for them too, because they’ve talked to me about it. And for the woman, for me, it was a horrible place to be; nasty, and so I’m not very well, like emotionally, and I’ve had a breakdown.*

#### **5.4.4 Tui**

In this story Tui explained how IPV had an impact on her relationship with her daughter Lana.

*One night, there was a knock at the door, it was a neighbour. Well, Lana’s standing upstairs and she’s all cotton-eyed. She’s like, “are you alright, mum?” Because she’d done so much of jumping out of windows – “be quiet”, “hide under here”, “hide in there”. She was always prepared, she was ready for it. I turned around and I said to her “Darling, you’re meant to be asleep”, she said “oh well, I thought that was Cooper”. I said, “Come here”. So she came down and I sat her on me and I said “Hey”. She went “what?”, and I said “you don’t ever have to worry about Cooper again”. She said “but mum he could come and hurt us”, and I went “he will not do that again, do you know why?” and she said “why?” and I said “cos if he ever EVER shows his face on our doorstep I’m gonna kill him!” (laughing). I should never have said that, but do you know what, she turned around and she went “yeah, mum, yeah!” The little one, she*

*said “but a little kill” (laughing). Not a serious one, “just a little one, eh mum?” And I went “yes darling” and I said “don’t ever worry, because mum’s going to tell him when he comes here that I’m serious”. I spent years having to convince her I was NOT going to go back to him, ‘cos she saw it happen three times. We split, went back, we split, went back. She didn’t trust me. So I had to spend all those years building her trust back up.*

#### **5.4.5 Ana**

Ana’s view about motherhood and her relationship with Levi differed from those presented by Rose, Ellie, Adele, and Lisa. Ana became pregnant to Levi when they very briefly got together one night after she had left him. She introduced how they met again.

*I was at a party and I got left behind and I was fighting with my friends who looked after me after the break-up and then you know he wanted to have a chat and I was like, sweet [laughter] the opportunist – sweet, “can you pay for my taxi for me to go home?”*

Ana then described her feelings about the night they spent together.

*For me it was just that one night, you know, it was I guess goodbye sex be done with it, out of the system, move on and I felt good [laughs] to be honest. It felt good, like you know and I was finally getting to say goodbye and that’s why I’m happy, happy, happy. And then he texted three days later ... he tried to have a conversation. Next day, I was like what the hell, this is not happening again ... alarm bells, like I don’t want to do this again. I really didn’t trust him, didn’t really want to because you know at that stage I was really over it, I was happy with the life that I was currently living and moving on and getting on with it ... And then in the process I must have said yes because we got there and he took it for, yes we’re back together... And then you know he started doing the manipulating thing...*

Then Ana discovered that she was pregnant.

*I don't want you in my life, ... and he misinterpreted it as being I don't want you in our lives, the baby's life. I said, "You're the baby's dad, that's fine, but for me, I don't want you, I don't need you and please don't be offended. Look, we can do this together, but we're not going to live together." I said that to him, "I don't want to live with you, I don't want to be in a relationship with you, I don't, but you can be a part of your son's life".*

Ana, through this narrative, presented a view of motherhood as something that she could do on her own. She did not seem to hold firm to the view held by some of the other participants that she needed to raise her child while living with the child's father.

Another element to the theme of family, wife and motherhood was the women's preconceived ideas about what a marriage should be like.

Briana, who experienced consistent verbal and emotional abuse from her husband, Wayne described their relationship as normal.

#### **5.4.6 Briana**

*He did have good times, we did have good times, and I was just having a fun life but then what we had was yucky; I was just in a dream and thought it was just natural.*

Briana's interpretation of the nature of her relationship with Wayne was powerful enough to keep her in the relationship.

## **5.5 Consequences to leaving**

All of the women found that there were consequences to leaving their violent partner. Often the consequence of leaving, interpreted by some of the women as dangerous, prevented them from staying away. The women described the threats their violent partners made to them, to their families, friends, and places of employment once they had physically left the relationship. The narratives presented in this section highlight the women's experience that the process of leaving continues after they have physically left their partner.

### **5.5.1 Vicky**

*There was huge consequences... like when I eventually found the courage. What he did to me: like he rang my employer, because I'd graduated and got a job. He rang my employer, he rang my landlord. He got rid of my flatmate. We would be sitting there at night and next thing you know, Tama would be walking in. She just felt so insecure, and he would just walk in. And just like, oh my God, there's Tama there. He was in the ceiling. I'd be lying in bed; I was thinking "What's all those holes in the ceiling?" He was in the ceiling and he'd put holes in so he could see my bedroom*

### **5.5.2 Tui**

Tui explained how Cooper was a threat to her family. In this narrative she shared a conversation she had with her brother.

*I mean, my brother had a Pacemaker and he overheard Cooper ... my brother's inside having a cup of tea with me at my flat, Cooper's*

*outside going "Hey bitch! Tell you fuckin' brother I'll be kick-boxing him in his Pacemaker the next chance I get" or whatever they do in kick-boxing. He was going to GET IT straight to the Pacemaker. And my brother is just sitting there looking at me. "Do you SEE, are you now listening? How long has he been there?" I said "He's been outside for 3 hours now". And he was going "Well, why don't you do something about it, sis?" I says "I did. I just turned the TV up" (laughing). Because I realised at that point that he was holding onto anything he could just to keep in my face all the time, so that there was no me getting over him.*

In this narrative Tui has started calling Cooper "the stalker", indicating that this story is related to a time after she has physically left, and ended the relationship with him. Most notable in this story is that Cooper's threats of violence now extend beyond Tui. Elsewhere in the interview there are other examples of violence directed towards her friends and family. There are also signs of Tui's resistance to Cooper, that she would see whichever man she wanted to see.

*We moved back to my parents, because we can't get a Housing Corp home in between, so we moved back home. He finds us there. He steals the cat. If he couldn't get to me, couldn't get to my daughter, he'd get to anything I cared for. My friends were another one he'd go for. We also believe that he poisoned my mum's cat because this cat wouldn't go to a stranger and there was even a Kentucky Fried chicken, which was her favourite food, he knew this. Bullet hole through mum and dad's window, next minute I get a phone call from a friend saying "Hey be careful, Cooper's in town and he is really mad with you and he reckons he is going to slash your tyres". So I happen to see him, you know, in a public place, he wants to meet so I told him I'll meet you in a public place, and he goes "Bitch, I'm gonna get you", because if I went to a mate's place and she had friends there and we were talking, he would be outside the window listening. On this occasion it was only my mate's dog that alerted us that there was someone out there, so we closed the windows. Well*

*from that point on, I was a 'mongrel mob slut' you know if I was going with another man. Any man I talked to, any man that smiled at me ...*

Leaving created a great deal of stress for the women, so much that leaving was no longer a viable option, as Maggie explained.

### **5.5.3 Maggie**

*So I learnt very quickly, as I said, not to stand my ground and say "You've got to leave". Because if I did that...I would lie on the bed each night and this DID HAPPEN. You could hear it, one night that he driving a Landover, and I heard this Landover coming down the road, and I thought "Oh hell!" and, you know, you lie in bed listening to the sounds, the stress of having him not with me, of wondering when he was going to turn up ...*

Maggie continued her statement about the dangerousness of leaving.

*... All society too, says "Get out". I knew if I got out, if I shifted, or ... not even shifted, if I stood up to him, that that was not the safest option, ... it was everything coming together at the right time.*

Sharnie recalled that her ex-partner, Donald, continued his threatening behaviour, even though both she and Donald had entered in to new relationships.

### **5.5.4 Sharnie**

*It all revved up again when I met Larry, my husband now. I was unaware, but found out by Donald's new girlfriend; she had two children the same ages. She told me, every morning he got up at 4 o'clock and came past our house. Larry had a wooden house and he would come and pick me up from work. We'd go down to his house, he would get ready for work, then*

*he'd take me into work. Donald would be sitting dead centre in the middle of the road as we were going past, just watching every morning. Then one night, the first night that Larry stayed, he got up in the morning and all the tyres of his truck had been slashed, and then it started. Donald burnt my car out; he was going to burn our houses down. This was probably about 5 or 6 months after we separated and it carried on...*

Sharnie's account, along with the others, illustrated some of the critical safety issues that need to be considered when examining the process of separation. The following section summarises the process of separation as shared by the women.

## **5.6 Summary**

One of the options for ending IPV is leaving the relationship. The process of moving away from IPV, as narrated by the women, began at the first sign of violence and continued beyond the point when they had physically left the relationship; and for most of the women moving away took years. A number of factors influenced the moving away process including their love for and need of their partner, a clear understanding of the consequences of leaving, for some, a belief that the IPV was actually their fault.

Chapter six presents the skills and strategies that women implemented during their journey of moving away from violence.

## **6 Chapter Six: Narratives of skill and strategy**

Women who experience IPV employ a range of survival strategies. Often women in violent relationships have to consider a complex set of factors to decide how to best protect themselves and their children from violence. To live with IPV takes a great deal of courage and resolve. This section examines the methods that women used at different times in their process of moving away from violence. The chapter responds to the research question, *what skills and strategies did women use in order to address violence in the home and in moving away from violence?* The skills and strategies used by the women include a mixture of formal and informal strategies. Formal strategies are actions that involve formal providers of services to women in violent relationships such as contact with the police, refuge services or counselling support. Informal strategies are actions the women take to protect themselves, sometimes in conjunction with support from family and friends. In this chapter the themes identified from the women's narratives include: compliance and secretly planning, working to gain independence, personal development and determination, using informal supports, and, contacting the authorities.

## 6.1 Compliance and Secretly Planning

This section elucidates the strategy of compliance used to pacify the violent partner; the strategy is also used as part of a process of separating. Often compliance was used as a strategy while the women were secretly planning to leave the violent relationship.

### 6.1.1 Ana

Ana recounted an escalating argument with Levi that she ascertained would result in physical violence. The theme of this story is how compliance acts as a protective factor by de-escalating the situation.

*... The fight was pretty much drowned out by the need to stay alive right now. It's important for you to figure out how to get out properly. You know, and, [whispers:] don't do anything stupid. I felt like someone was over my shoulder telling me, [whispers:] "Don't do anything stupid." And I said, "Right, I'm tired. I want to go to bed. I don't want to fight any more. You're right, I'm wrong. Can we just go to bed?" He was amazed. He was gearing up for a fight. Like he really wanted to push my buttons ...*

For Ana, behaving in a compliant way with Levi enhanced her safety while planning to leave him; Ana knew that if he was aware that she was planning to leave she would be in danger of further violence. Once Ana made the decision to leave she began to plan how she would make her decision a reality.

*It took a lot of planning [laughs] and it probably sounds quite conniving but it did, it took a lot of planning and it took a lot of*

*confidence building as well to finally stand up and just walk away. It didn't go down very well but I just tried to extricate myself from him slowly.*

Ana's process of leaving the home she shared with Levi took about 3 months. I wanted to know more about how Ana extricated herself from Levi and so I asked "what did you do?"

*I don't know, but I know I was compliant the whole entire time I was with him. So I really didn't want to give him a clue that I was actually in the process of leaving him. So he didn't notice. I don't know if he did notice, but I was pretty much compliant, back to the old me. And there would be, you know, certain times where the strong me would come up and like, "Oh, I can't be fucking bothered, can you just do it yourself?" And then he'd be like, "That's not the you I know." I'm like, "Oh, sorry. I'm just not really," you know, I was always on edge, tense, just waiting.*

At first Ana was unable to articulate exactly what she did to put in action her decision to leave. In her narrative Ana highlighted how difficult it was to maintain her compliant position as she would temporarily revert back to her desire to fight back verbally.

### **6.1.2 Rose**

Rose, like Ana, planned how she would leave her partner. We pick up Rose's story after there was a violent event that was directed towards her son.

*I ended up having to stay down there for a week pretending that everything is fine. I left my car with my daughter and my son, so then I knew that when I left there I could get out and I could get my*

*bike, 'cos I had my own motorcycle. So I organised it to ride up on my bike and spend a week of the holidays as well, and I never went back...*

After a violent event Rose, like Ana, pretended that all was fine and then she put her plan in to action; she planned to leave on her own motorbike.

### **6.1.3 Maggie**

Here Maggie shared the intricacy of the secret planning process, and the importance of having friends available who could help her to put her plans in action.

*One day when I was trying to get away from him and he found another place and had gone there, I was trying to keep it quiet that I was going. I had friends move me out, and he didn't know that morning that I was going. We'd managed to pack the whole house; everything that was packed away that he wouldn't have noticed missing, hopefully, and just had the threadbare stuff in the house. Then friends came in that morning so that I had back-up to tell him I'm going.*

### **6.1.4 Briana**

Briana was living overseas with her husband when she decided it was time to leave him and return to New Zealand.

*I had a case packed, he never knew, it was in the wardrobe right up the top... for about a month or more before...yeah, about a month. Two months before I did do the big move I'd lay in bed and I'd.....me being me, I gotta have things organised, kind of. So I'd be in bed saying 'I'd do this, get a ticket this way, go through customs, and go...'*

### 6.1.5 Adele

As described earlier, Adele did not live with her violent partner, Tonya. However, Tonya would often make contact with Adele and when this happened Adele would contact the police. Here Adele explained how she planned to increase her chances of survival.

*As I heard from her I called the cops. I started to call the cops. I started to buy extra cell phones, money; I had money stashed all round the house. I put a lock on my bathroom door, so if she ever broke into my house I knew I had a cell phone, money and car keys in the bathroom and I could lock the door. So quite often I would ring the police from there and she would be thumping on the wall.*

Later on in her story, Adele described the actions she took to keep herself safe from Tonya.

*...I went home and what I started to do was I got this wire that I had been saving up (laughing) to kill myself with, to put round my neck, but I started to lock all the windows so she couldn't just break in. I just had this ... like, built this fortress around me. I rung my husband and said "Please you know, go get bub, he's here. I want you to keep him until I ring you, and you have to return him, 'cos that's what the judge said, remember? And, you're not allowed to ask any questions" ... So I knew "Right, I just need to do.....play this out" you know. And I got money, I had groceries, I did everything I could to be prepared for a 'war' if you like. And I think I stayed like that for weeks, kept inside in my own house. I couldn't believe, you know, just absolutely petrified. And then, I never heard from her ... so I started to kind of step outside, got life back to normal, decided to go check out a career, you know? Look at training....life started to open up for me.*

*But then what started to happen was, I come home one day with an armful of groceries, oh...it was about 6 o'clock at night, it was fairly dark, and I had my cell phone in my hand, like I always did, ready with finger on 111, turned on the lights, and here she is! 'Cos she*

*was a burglar, so she could get straight into your house, there really was no holding her out, she just appeared, you know? And she just looked at me with these eyes and I'd go "Babe, where have you been?" I started to play the mind games with her. "I miss you, where the hell have you been?" And I'd get in first and throw her off guard, you know? I started to get really, really good at that sort of behaviour. So then she'd go again, go "Alright, okay, just as long as you're alright". She'd go again ... It was all about survival, you know. Carry on with your life Adele, do what you gotta do. I was scared she was going to ruin everything though and I got onto a course. I was scared she was going to turn up and ruin it.*

In this story Adele described a range of tactics she used including hiding car keys and money in different parts of the house, locking windows, and then, deciding to "build a fortress" against Tonya. In preparation for this she returned her baby to her ex-husband, knowing that this was safer for her child; that he could take care of their baby until the "war" was over. She began to play mind games with Tonya and this would sometimes prevent the violence from escalating. Adele's use of the word "war" suggests that she decided she must fight Tonya in order to end the violence. Adele's planning involved developing a mind-set that she was entering a battle and her planning was directed towards winning.

## **6.2 Gaining Independence**

A key theme contributing to the moving away from violence process was how the women worked to gain some form of independence. For the

women interviewed, this was achieved through employment, or through study.

### 6.2.1 Sharnie

In the next passage, Sharnie began her story by talking about finding work while she was still in a relationship with Donald.

*Once I started working I never stopped, because sometimes I'd be left with no money, I'd have to go out and get work. So, once I got a job I was determined, come hell or high water, I was holding onto it; that little bit of independence and money ... and, of course, I kept on working, which of course he knew I had to work, but he didn't like that either...*

Sharnie shared this story early on in the interview. Later on, she spoke again about how important her job was to her.

*But I reckon that my saviour was that job. There was nothing that was going to stop me getting to that job, you know. I think it was about independence, I think it was that I had a break from that person, coping with that at home, you know. We had our uniform, it's not like I had to worry about clothes, you know, 'cos I didn't have money, so I didn't have to have fancy clothes where you had a really lovely uniform. So, I guess I put it on and I walked into the bank and I was a different person. They didn't know anything about what was going on.*

In this passage, Sharnie's reflection indicated that her job provided her with a chance to hold a different identity to the person she was in her relationship with Donald. It appears that maintaining a new identity at work was easier because Sharnie's work colleagues did not know about the

violence she was suffering at home. The job also provided Sharnie with the opportunity to be away from Donald. Sharnie expands further:

*It was completely two lives, and that was what I was wanting to hold on to. Because I'd often thought, even in my work, that there was 100 of us working there then, so I had all those friends. He didn't know them, he couldn't get to them, he couldn't embarrass me in front of them. I can remember once being really brave one New Year's Eve and going to a party and, of course, every time, like Stevetmas, birthdays, any big party, we would be going to, it would come to just before, and he would spit the dummy. I don't know what it was, we either didn't get to go, because he would sabotage it completely. We wouldn't get to go, or he wouldn't go and he would embarrass me so much by drinking and in the end I didn't want to go, I didn't want to. Once I did, I went to a New Year's Eve party. I should have realised that I shouldn't have actually gone, but I went, and he charged in and marched in and grabbed me in front of everybody, threw me over his shoulder and marched out... in front of all my friends, fighting like a demon and ...the humiliation and the embarrassment.*

In the continuation of her story, Sharnie explained how work provided her with a range of friends that Donald knew nothing about. Perhaps Sharnie is concerned that revealing the nature of her relationship at home through either speaking about it at work, or through colleagues actually seeing Donald's behaviour towards her would tarnish the new identity she had created at her workplace. Seeking support from others is considered an important step towards leaving violent relationships (Goodman & Smyth, 2011). However, it appears that for Sharnie, in the earlier days of her relationship maintaining a professional work identity provided her with a

little financial independence and empowered her to be able to cope with the violence at home.

### **6.2.2 Lisa**

While Sharnie found work helpful in coping with IPV early in her relationship, Lisa found that work provided her with much needed confidence following her separation from Steve. In the following narrative Lisa provided an account centred on the benefits of working.

*I started doing in-home childcare. So I didn't have to pay the childcare fees and it boosted up my socialising skills; socialising with other people and families and it boosted up my self-confidence. I hadn't worked for I don't know how long, cos I wasn't allowed to work when I was in the marriage, so now I have this awesome résumé building up with this work experience and these certificates because I am actually achieving aims and goals through the course and becoming course approved, and I'm currently studying for my certificate 3 in Early Childhood Education.*

Lisa's reflection indicated that working and studying had provided her with skills in socialising with others, and self-confidence.

### **6.2.3 Ellie**

For Ellie, studying was something she started once she had left the Mediterranean and returned to New Zealand. In the following story, Ellie outlined the challenges and the benefits of studying.

*The first thing I did was a Certificate in Learning and Behaviour Support at the College of Education, cos I thought, “oh, that looks pretty good”. It was a year part time, and I did it in 6 months, and it still seemed like part time, and I didn’t even know how to turn a computer on at that stage!*

*I think that’s what also started me feeling more empowered within myself; realising that I had the intellect and the courage and the ability to move forward and make a life for myself.*

As was the case for Lisa, study provided Ellie with some much needed confidence. She described in this narrative how she was empowered, but also how she was awakened to her ability; an ability that she had been uncertain about previously. The study Ellie undertook opened up work opportunities and a desire to take part in further study.

### **6.3 Personal development and determination**

Most of the women found ways to develop their sense of confidence and well-being in order that they could find the courage to begin the process of separating, and the strength to maintain the separation. Personal development in this section refers to how the women developed their thinking and analysis of their situation; some described the learning they achieved through attending programmes, and a few described the part that

spirituality played in their journey. The women's stories illustrated the determination they needed have in order to move on from violence.

### **6.3.1 Lisa**

On the day that Lisa decided to seek formal assistance to deal with her situation, despite painful physical injuries she took her children and walked to find a lawyer.

*I wasn't allowed to drive the car. So, I had the newborn, 6 week old, a couple of months old in the carry pouch, on one pack. I had the oldest sitting in the pram, and then I had the next oldest sitting in front of him, this is a single pram, pushed it for 45 minutes with a busted wrist. I had to push with one hand, or if I needed two hands to do a step, up and down footpaths and stuff, I would have to push with my knuckles to keep my wrist straight, cos if I bent it up or down it was just excruciatingly painful. And when I got to the lawyers I just sobbed and told him my story.*

In this brave story, Lisa focused on the range of injuries she experienced and how she found ways to take her children to a lawyer for assistance.

### **6.3.2 Tui**

Having left Cooper and spent some time in a women's refuge safe house, Tui displayed determination in how she alerted other community members about her violent ex-partner.

*When we came back from (name of town) we went straight to ... Women's Refuge ... and we were there for about a good three months. Well, whilst we were there, he was trying to find where the Refuge was, where we were, and we got relocated to (name of place)*

*from the Refuge. I informed ALL my neighbours, showed them a photo, if you see this man around phone 111 – this is the stalker.*

In response to a further question about how she managed to stay away from Cooper, Tui indicated that she had been violence free for nine years because she appreciated the impact of IPV on her daughter, and that she needed to focus on her own personal development.

*I didn't trust myself after that relationship. I realised that I needed to work on ME. I didn't consider myself damaged goods, but the word kept coming back from partners ... them having that picture of me, and they also talk about how you teach people how to treat you. Well, if that's the way I was teaching them, I was teaching WRONG (laughing.) I think I need to sit back and get a new strategy.*

### **6.3.3 Ellie**

In the following story, Ellie provided an account of how Stevetianity is been a feature of her life. Ellie practiced Stevetianity while she was trying to manage the violence in her relationship. In the following narrative, Ellie provided an example of how she would barter with God; however, she found that trying to do God's will and remain in the marriage was not working as she determined that she really did not want to stay in the relationship.

*I had been following the Stevetian religion through these years too. The main reason I kind of hooked back into the Stevetian religion was because of my affirmation of following God's will, and because it brought me here so quickly, I thought "Well, okay God, see...I*

*made a deal with you there, so I'm going to follow your will, and I'm going to join a church and I'm going to make a really lovely healthy moral, atmosphere for my son". So we did do that for the next 5 years, but it really wasn't an atmosphere that was conducive to my son and it didn't really work for him, and I felt quite disappointed by the end of these 5 years because I felt in a way it was holding me in a marriage that I didn't want to be in.*

Ellie continued her narrative, providing context as to the importance of Stevetianity and spirituality in her life.

*I've dabbled in spirituality throughout all of my adult life, I had a sister who was a really strong Stevetian, my sisters were 10 and 12 years older than me, and it was the one 10 years older than me that died. The one that was 12 years older than me is still around and she was a very strong Stevetian from about 20 or 21 so I was sort of initiated into this from quite young. She would say, "If you don't accept Jesus into your heart, you're not going to have eternal life" and had the fear of God put into me from when I was about 10, and I'm like, "Yes, I do", you know, (laughing) and that lasted till I was about 16 and then of course all spiritual discipline went out the window when I discovered boys and things like that. But then I was still interested in music, we were of spirit, you know, I knew that, and I had dabbled in things like tarot card, like I-Ching, I had things like that for many years and read those kind of things, so I guess I was kind of always open to that kind of information coming to me. And it was quite interesting how I chose to return to the Stevetian religion, I mean, I really wish I had discovered what I have now, when I first came to New Zealand, cos it would have been perfect for me and it would have really helped my life go in an even more positive direction.*

For Ellie, Stevetianity was an important part of her experience as a child and as an adult. Ellie constructed this story around what Stevetianity and spirituality meant for her. She positioned herself as an open person who

had always welcomed new spiritual understandings. It is now six years since Ellie left her relationship with Carlo. In her story, Ellie suggested that women considering leaving their violent relationship should enter an introspective process to consider whether they want to stay or leave. Ellie wanted women to realise that they are not a part of their abuser and they have a duty to make a better life for themselves.

*I think you've got to be honest with yourself, you need to do some deep internal work on yourself, looking at what it is that's keeping me here ... what is it that I'm giving up in staying here; doing sort of cost benefit analysis thing, the pros and cons of staying and of going, looking at that kind of thing, looking at the list, what outweighs what, put it down on paper. Having things to look at sometimes really hits you, I mean, I also used a journal and I've looked back on these journals recently and I could see that same theme running through it, there was the same stuff going on, and our memories actually aren't that great, because they are selective, so I think journaling is important; looking at how it is you're left feeling in this relationship, and, really, like I say, be true to yourself, you know, you need to realise you are an individual, you're not part of that other person, and your duty is to yourself. In fact, your life is the best life you can make it, because that's the way you will make it better for everybody else, and if that means leaving a relationship then that might be what needs to be done. But it could also just mean that you choose to start working on yourself. Stop the blame game; stop the complaining thing about what they're doing all the time. Work on what you've got.*

#### **6.3.4 Tui**

Like Ellie, Tui held strong spiritual beliefs. Here she described the origins of those beliefs, and the part they played in helping her to cope with the violence in her relationship.

*We're from the East Coast; and back up that way; it used to be known years ago that they were very spiritual ... Mum was very clairvoyant. She saw, she heard, had dreams... But before she died ... I showed all my sisters a photo of Cooper. Mum takes one look and she's never laid eyes on him, she went "Uh...there's more to a person than looks" and that's all she said. I was quite offended by that and I thought "Oooh, that's not nice, you haven't even met him, that's typical of you being nasty"'. Boy was she right. But, I'll tell you something, when the knockout violence happened, the time when I decided that was it, see, before she died, twice I heard this voice, twice I believe it was my adoptive father that had died. All this voice said was "Tui" REALLY LOUD, and it was at a mad time, like, it was my dad yelling out when I was about to do something naughty, or if I'd done something naughty. It was that yell; enough to make you stop and say, "Shit! Who was that?", "Was that me?" But, when I look back now, the two times that he did it, I was actually about to walk into death. They were warnings. So when I realised, and this was only when Cooper was around, when I realised what was happening, it was like "Oh, okay then, this is a warning".*

The key theme in Tui's narrative is how her understanding of spirituality had developed. She clarified that the sort of spirituality she was referring to was not about going to Church, but was spirituality based on how her birth mother could see, and hear, and dream. In connecting her spiritual belief with the violence she experienced Tui's spirituality became a protective factor, that acted as a warning system against Cooper.

At one point in her relationship with Cooper, Tui used another strategy that seemed to arise from a newfound ability to recognise her own strength and identify Cooper's vulnerability; Tui was able to find the determination to

fight back against Cooper. Once she fought back, Tui realised that Cooper was not as tough as he had made out he was.

*I'd taken so much crap from him that I was no longer scared 'cos I realised the evil of one's mind, what a GUTLESS! GUTLESS person to be doing this to someone smaller, weaker, vulnerable, more vulnerable than oneself. I got mad at the fact "How DARE YOU!" There was one point there where I just got sick of it; I'd got sick of being hit all the time without a reason ... So there was one point there where he went to hit me, and I actually lashed back, and the REACTION on his face was like "Oh....Oh....." you know, a big girl act, and it was "Oohh! ...". I REALLY lost a lot of respect. You know, the big staunch man that I was scared of was no longer. Once I saw that, I realised there and then that "You ain't as tough as you've been making out" and the whole realisation of what he'd been doing to me, in that one moment of seeing him taking ONE hit from me, after me taking HUNDREDS from him, and his reaction to ONE LITTLE HIT from me; I realised there and then, right! I just lost ALL fear ... any fear I had of him was gone.*

It is interesting to note that in her description of what led to the violence, Tui stated that she "got sick of being hit all the time without a reason". Does this indicate that Tui thinks that sometimes violence towards her might have been justified? Perhaps Tui's description is suggestive of taking on the abusers' justification for violence as a truth, or it may be that Tui's life experience of violence, external to this relationship is behind the statement.

### 6.3.5 Celia

Part of Celia's journey to being free of violence included attending a supportive group while she was still in a relationship with Dion. In the following story, Celia described how the group influenced her thinking.

*So I can go there and everything's out; this is happening, that's happening. So I'm getting a realistic view. There's no feelings to hide, I know where I'm at, what I want, I've got a complete view of me, and I'm thinking... I'm starting to think, I'm waking up and thinking I could be getting up out of bed and watching the sunrise by the beach, but I haven't got a loving partner to do it with, and I'm thinking this is not living. I'm not meant to be on this earth to serve one person, because I like people and I'm good with people, I've got a family; I'm making choices just to be with one fucking asshole. At one of the lowest points, I stop being scared of being without him. I start to picture a life; it starts to get exciting the picture of life without him (laughing). I journal, I keep a diary every time I'm going to these groups, I'm talking with friends.*

As well as attending a supportive group, Celia employed a number of other strategies including visualisation, keeping a journal, and talking with friends. In the interview, Celia went on to describe how she felt after she had taken action to make her separation from Dion final.

*It was excruciating to do so, but I had got to a point over those months of realising, I'm worth more, and I choose life ... I choose... I choose... even if it hurts to live without him, I've chosen to have a life with love and people and family and friends, so I knew what I needed to do to protect myself, because of love for him. I was really clear. It hurts, and it hurts so much. And, it's hurt throughout the last two years; there hasn't been a period throughout the last two years or a day where I don't miss him or something, and yet at the same time I'm okay. I'm happy. I'm happy. And there's been excruciating times of just wanting to see him, because we talked so much ... like we were friends... like we talked.*

The narrative that Celia shared demonstrated the personal growth she had experienced over the years of being in, and out, of a relationship with Dion. To make sure I did not miss the point, Celia repeated words for emphasis; “*I choose*”, “*it hurts*”, and “*I’m happy*”. The context surrounding Celia’s personal growth was the knowledge that she had to do what she could to protect herself.

### **6.3.6 Rose**

Rose outlined how strength of character, gained from her father, and from raising her daughter on her own, helped her to move away from violence.

*I’ve always been a really strong person, all my life. I’ve always had to be. I brought my daughter up on my own, her father was a violent man, and I ran away from New Zealand, from him, I just vowed and declared. My dad’s always a very strong man. There’s four girls in my family and I was always the tomboy. I got a lot of strength from my dad, and my dad taught me how to take care of myself, because I was only...you know, I’m only a short little bugger!*

At the time of interview, Rose was still in the process of recovering from the violence and becoming violence free. Later in the story, Rose talked about how difficult it was to find the energy or time to improve herself because of exhaustion resulting from the IPV, and the numerous appointments she had to keep with lawyers, court appearances, mediation

meetings, and counsellors. While she was struggling Rose was determined to get through that challenging time.

*At the end of the day I've done nothing wrong here, except for wanting to protect me and my son. If I break, I'm really scared of what I might do. I really am. Because I feel like I have been put through and pushed to my absolute limit, in every way and shape and form. It's like a roller coaster ride. I'm really up, next minute you're down ... I don't feel that I can get out there and do anything at the moment, you know, out into the work force, because things are so unstable. I don't want to commit myself to something and then not be able to do it, because I would just be setting myself up to fail and I couldn't do that to myself, and I couldn't do it to be unreliable to anyone else either. It's unfair because I can't better myself at the moment because of the situations and the court cases and counselling appointments, and lawyer's appointments it's just like, right, well here we go, you know, you're gotta get up and we've gotta do it. You've gotta do it. I mean, at the moment, you know, I could go to bed and I could sleep for a week. I really could. I could stay in bed for a week. I can't ... I can't give up ...*

### **6.3.7 Ana**

Ana's story differs from the other stories presented in this section. She had been kicked out of the home by Levi and then went to stay with a cousin.

Ana's memories of how strong and stubborn she was prior to experiencing IPV provided her with the strength to stay away from Levi.

*I was upset; got all my stuff, don't want to go back to my house because I'm afraid for my life. I mean we had copious amounts of fights, that week leading up to me finally going. He kicked me out, so I was like, right, I'm not going to call him, I literally turned off my phone, I even got a new number. Cos the old me was coming back, I was getting stubborn, like I don't want to put up with this bullshit anymore, I don't want to believe in his lies, I don't want to go back.*

## 6.4 Using informal supports

This section reports on the informal supports the women employed as part of their strategy to cope with and resist IPV. Interestingly, a number of the women found that harnessing the support of a male friend was an effective strategy, as Vicky explains.

### 6.4.1 Vicky

*But how I got out was one day I was at the pub with him, probably looking really shell-shocked and downtrodden and a guy came up to me and said, "If you're ever in trouble, you ring me," and gave me a bit of paper; he just came up to me. They'd had a bit of a confrontation, some fighting outside, and Tama was crying. He was really emotional, he was crying, and Sam, this guy that came and gave me this note, he said, "Oh God this guy's really hung up on you, but he's not good for you. If you're ever in trouble, ring me". Well I rang him two days later. Well I think he was a bit shocked that I rung so quickly. I arrived on his doorstep with two boys and a bag, and he was like, well you can't stay here, "I can't put you up," sort of thing, but he was really the catalyst, and I think it was... I was kind of physically attracted to him and there was no hope there, and he just gave me strength.*

*And Tama just kept stalking and all that sort of thing, and then I started to form a relationship with this guy. Anyway, he was around at my house one day and Tama had left; we weren't together but he was still stalking me, and Tama pulled up and he'd keyed my car and was trying to get in the house. And I thought, well God, Sam's here ...and so I said, "You've got to hide, you've got to hide, you just can't..." So I was just saying, "Just go away Tama," just yelling out at him ...Sam was crouched down and he was leaning against the door, and Tama was trying to get in and he was going, "My God, where did you get your strength from"... I still remember Tama put his arm into the window and he was unlatching the window, and that's when Sam jumped up and Tama said, "Oh you fuckin' bitch, you've got someone in there"...And do you know you wouldn't*

*believe this; I can't actually remember kind of what happened next. I don't know whether Sam went out and confronted him. The result was, I didn't get beaten up. And Sam didn't get beaten up. And I think he just went away. I think Sam was a bit of a match with him. I don't know. But anyway, he continued to stalk and that, and then one day I was on my own, at home, knock knock on the door, knew it was him, and I just thought, I can't deal with this anymore. I opened the door and I looked him straight in the face and I said, "I don't want to be with you. It's over". And he goes, "Tell me a really good reason". And this was not true, but I said, "I've got someone else". And I thought, I'm going to get killed here. I said, "I've got someone else". And you know what he did? He went, "Oh," and walked away. I still can't believe it to this day. And he didn't stalk ... nothing.*

In this lengthy narrative, Vicky explained that her catalyst for leaving Tama was the strength she gained from meeting another man, Sam. Vicky could have told her story without the detail of what happened the day Tama found Sam at her house, but it appears, from the way that Vicky organised the story, that this is a key event.

#### **6.4.2 Maggie**

Like Vicky, Maggie met another partner who was a great support to her. Maggie met Harry while Steve was in prison. Initially, Maggie stated:

*I got into a relationship with Harry and that gave me another body in the house.*

It is interesting that Maggie used the phrase “*another body*” to describe how Harry was a support to her. It may be that Maggie’s experience of

being harassed by Steve in her home for a long time after she had ended the relationship and the fear the harassment generated led her to describe Harry in this way. Another male adult in the home contributed to Maggie's feeling of safety.

Later on in the interview Maggie stated that a number of factors resulted in her finally being able to stay away from Steve. However, Maggie was clear that the major influence was her relationship with Harry.

*I got the Protection Order, I had trespassing orders at some times, ... It was, Harry, my current partner that was the major one. Harry and I, which is not helpful to somebody who doesn't have a partner, but, we worked out, okay, if he turns up, you grab that phone, I'm going to grab this phone, ring 111, and throw that phone onto the bed, then I'm gonna take off out the window with the phone.*

### **6.4.3 Celia**

Throughout her interview, Celia described how her relationship with a male friend helped her to leave and stay away from her partner Dion after he had been unfaithful to her.

*I went round to Craig's and absolutely howled. I rung the Stop Violence to let them know what he'd done, 'cos he was on the course, court ordered, and then I went straight to WINZ and took his name, said he had left and he wouldn't be back ... I'd made the decision and I said to Craig, I need you to hold me accountable, this is what he's done, I told people, this is what he's done. If I say I want to go back to him, please support me through those moments because I'm not doing it. I did set it up so that I couldn't fail.*

While the precipitating factor to leaving in Celia's story is Dion's infidelity, the first person she turned to was her male friend Craig. He was also the one that she asked for help from should she want to turn back to Dion. She enhanced her chances of staying away from Dion by asking Craig to make her accountable for her decision.

Briana identified her family as an important support for her and she was able to maintain contact with them even though she lived in Australia.

#### **6.4.4 Briana**

Briana found that she had support from her parents; they paid for her ticket back from Australia and when she returned she stayed with them because she needed their support.

*I rang mum and dad, we're really close to family, we're really close, and they got a ticket from over their side, so they'd got it through the Flight Centre ... I was in town with mum and dad; I had to be with my family for support because I was just a mess when I came home.*

Family was not always aware of the nature of the women's intimate relationships. The following three women stated that they preferred, for various reasons, not to seek support from family.

#### **6.4.5 Sharnie**

*Well, I tell you, my family ... why I wanted to get away ... I couldn't stand the humiliation of all of them being involved in it anymore, you know. And I mean, it was really putting them in danger sometimes, you know, it was almost like "I can manage this better without having to worry about the rest of you", I can manage him better when, you know, I'm thinking "well, you've got us now, you've got nothing else, we know nobody".*

#### **6.4.6 Vicky**

*I had to hide it from my parents. So, all the doors had holes in them. And the very first time he did it, he saw my response, and from then, it was everywhere. And I was forever trying to cover it up... They knew, but they didn't say anything. They just said, "We don't like him," and I tried to hide the relationship often.*

Vicky's parents looked after the children at times and this gave Vicky a much needed break. However, Vicky worked hard to keep the violence invisible from her parents.

### **6.5 Contacting the authorities: the role of social services**

This section reports on the women's contact with the authorities. This formal contact is a strategy the women used to keep themselves safe while in a violent relationship, and on leaving the relationship. The Police and Women's Refuge featured in many of the women's stories. Views of how

helpful contact with the authorities was to the women are presented in chapter seven: narratives of help seeking responses.

### **6.5.1 Ana**

In the following narrative, Ana described one of the few times she contacted the Police.

*You know I went to the Police a number of times. You see before I moved out of my flat I actually went to the police and reported Levi for stealing my stuff... So he stole some stuff. ...A few months later they get back to me and say look we believe we have sufficient evidence to charge and he was in the room with me when I got the call and I turned round and said, "Look, I'll just drop the charges and we won't go any further". I thought you know this is my gift to you my dear, please, please have changed. [Upset]. And that was the final straw I guess as well. Like I gave you this and you pretty much shit on me again and threw it back in my face. We're done.*

### **6.5.2 Tui**

In the following story, Tui shared her experience of contact with the Police and Battered Women's Trust services.

*When I talk about this experience I had at Battered Women's, the woman, Pania, that was dealing with me at the time, she was a Maori woman, she had been through it before; she had no psychology degree, in those days it was run by women that been there, done that. She knew the signs. She even knew how to get through to me, like, took me round the corner. Never pressured me, she allowed me to open up when I opened up, but in saying that, she knew there was more to the story than I was letting on. One day I positioned my daughter at the shower and said to her "Can you just stand by the door and make sure none of the other ladies come in?" Well, the door went open, I heard my daughter say "Sorry Pania, mums in the shower" and then I heard Pania IN THE SHOWER, saying "Sorry darling, I'm just putting on a load of washing, ...*

*Well, next minute, she's still talking and I'm getting out, and I've got my towel around me and all the bruises are on the back ...and she goes "Come on, get dressed, I'm a woman, seen it before". So, I stepped out, and as I stepped out she quickly looked behind me, and as she noticed she turned to me. She went "I knew it, I KNEW IT", and I just burst into tears, and she said "Why the hell didn't you tell me, Tui?" I went "No, I don't want CYFS involved". "What do you mean you don't want CYFS involved?"(laughing). And I just let it out, and she said "Darling, I've gotta get this photographed, I've got to get this documented". Before I knew it, the police photographer was there.*

Tui shared another story about contact with the Police, when she went to the Police Station to confirm that she was not in a relationship with Cooper.

*...and the police officer said to me "How long have you got, love?" and I said "why's that?", and he said "I want to show you something before you go". You know the data printouts you get? ...He goes to me "See that pile of paper down there?" and I went "Yeah" and he goes "That's Cooper's record", and I'm like "WHAT!" and he goes "we're only half way through", I went "PARDON" and he goes "And at least three-quarters of that is assault against women.". I WAS HORRIFIED! Because if someone had told me this at the beginning...*

Tui's strategy of contacting Battered Women's and on another occasion, the Police, enabled her to gain some useful information about her partner, Cooper, which contributed to her eventually leaving the relationship. Tui also had contact with Women's Refuge on a number of occasions. The following story related to a time when Tui and her daughter were travelling throughout the South Island trying to get away from Cooper.

*We only stayed in the small town the night and, it was quite funny, because once I got there, I rang up and the lady said “Is there any possibility of you going to the motor camp?” I said “Darling, if I could go to the motor camp I would have driven straight there. Financially, I can’t”, and I said “And I’m really too pooped to drive through to Dunedin”, and so they allowed me to have the keys for me and my girl, for the night at the house. She came and settled us in but, unfortunately, the situation at the time was we had to be there on our own, which I didn’t care, because, you know, Oh God! Just having somewhere safe, just to chill out. It was actually awesome to have the place on our own.*

### **6.5.3 Maggie**

Maggie was on the run from Steve who continued to stalk her each time she tried to leave him. On one occasion she moved to a new rural community and decided to take preventative action by visiting the local police station.

*Well, I went to the police here, and I said, you know, new community, and wanting to make friends and that, and not really wanting to be targeted as one of those ... yeah ... I was on the benefit as it was, so, you know, I’ve always been very conscious of how other people view me or view my children, and so I didn’t really want to make a big scene, but I went into the police station here and said “Look”, you know, “I’ve had a bit of a problem with this guy in the past, he’s just found me here, he’s quite violent”.*

In this narrative, Maggie was conscious that being on a benefit may have resulted in her being perceived negatively, but she struggled to put this into words. Even so, Maggie contacted the Police to let them know that in the past her partner had been violent. At a later point in the interview Maggie

provided a description of how she contacted the Police when Steve was violent.

*And I was in the study room, studying, and I heard a vehicle coming down the road, and I thought "No, it can't be" and there's mighty screech of brakes at the driveway and he came up the driveway. So that was the first time he got arrested here. So I went out the back door and locked it, and he came in through the bedroom window, through the house. When the police turned up he thought he'd locked us out, but I actually had the keys still in my hand, I don't know how the hell I managed to do that, I just walked out with the key, locked it and took the key with me, it's amazing (laughing), and the policemen said "are the kids inside?" and I said "Yeah, I don't think he'll touch them though' because they alright asleep". There ended up being a huge kerfuffle with the police and that happened in my son's doorway, and I had a glass table with a big glass vase on it and he went down on top of that ... Steve went down on top of that and there was this glass vase broken and cut him all up through the face and there was blood all up the walls... I'm just glad he got arrested and taken off.*

### ***Ellie***

Ellie found that, once back in New Zealand she could contact Women's Refuge as a safe place to stay if needed when Carlo visited from the Mediterranean.

*I knew that Women's Refuge existed, and I knew if I found a number there would be something like that, because I had been quite aware there was a lack of them in the Mediterranean, whereas I knew this kind of service existed here. That's what I meant, you're now, now that we're in my country, you'll play by my rules, you know, I'm not going to tolerate this kind of thing, maybe in your country I had to, because there wasn't any choice.*

#### **6.5.4 Rose**

Rose explained how her contact with Women's Refuge was through her lawyer.

*I rung them ... my lawyer gave me their number and I rang them 'cos I was staying with the girls and it was just getting ridiculous to the extent that he was turning up all hours of the night, screaming out abuse, going like this ....to my daughter. My son's looking out the window at this the whole time.*

#### **6.5.5 Maggie**

Maggie presented a different view of contact with Women's Refuge than Tui, Ellie, and Rose. Because her home and the area she lived in was important to her, Maggie believed that not leaving her home to go to Women's Refuge was a way of resisting Steve.

*I didn't want to go to Women's Refuge 'cos this was my house where I'd bought this place 'cos we shifted so much, I shifted four times, three times in four months when we got here, and I said to the kids "We're going to stay here for at least 3 years". And this was my house, I was not going to move ... and I'm from this area, I love this area, and I wasn't ... yeah, I wasn't gonna let him chase me from my house. That was one thing I stood up to him on.*

### **6.6 Summary**

The women used a range of skills and strategies to manage the violence and to keep focused on their plans to move away; thus skills and strategies were used at various points in moving away from violence. Compliance

was used to calm down the violent partner and secrecy was often described by the women as a key part of the moving away plan. Gaining independence, such as through employment, and engaging in personal development seems to have been important in maintaining the belief that moving away was possible. Use of both informal and formal supports was important and kept women connected with the world outside of the violent relationship, and informed.

The discussion now moves from the women's narratives about their own skills and strategies to their experiences of help seeking.

## **7 Chapter Seven: Narratives of help seeking responses**

This chapter presents the women's stories about the usefulness of the help received from formal services including: the justice system along with courts and lawyers; the police; IPV providers, and a range of other professionals. The narratives in this chapter respond to the research question, *what have been the helpful and not so helpful responses for women in addressing violence in the home?*

### **7.1 Justice system**

#### **7.1.1 Vicky**

In the following narrative account, Vicky explained that after she had been stalked by boyfriend Tama for some time she realized she should get a protection order.

*I was trying to think about that this morning. I don't think we made a year, but it took longer to get rid of him. Like he stalked me afterwards – like terrible. So I think it was about nine months. I remember going to a lawyer and asking for a protection order, if I could get one. She said, "You're not married to him". Because you know, 17 years ago, if you're not married to him you can't get one... Yeah, I couldn't get one. And then after that it took me longer to get rid of him ...*

Vicky's reflection about the help she sought is set in a time just prior to the implementation of the current Domestic Violence Act, 1995. With respect to the legislation in place to deal with IPV prior to 1995, Vicky's unmarried status barred her from receiving legal protection. From Vicky's point of view, lack of legal protection extended the period of time that she stayed in the violent relationship.

A number of women spoke of a level of frustration with the justice system because they perceived that system was not in place to protect women who were in violent relationships, but to protect the men who were being violent as Rose explained.

### **7.1.2 Rose**

*..it's just been awful, it really has, to the extent that it's ... how much? How much do you actually have to take? How much of the process do you actually have to go through? ... he walks away every time and gets a slap on the wrist. The police and the safety team and Women's Refuge work their butts off, and they work their butts off to make women feel safe, secure. You don't have to do this, you don't have to put up with this, you don't have to live like that. You don't have to live in fear of your life, you know? But the court systems fail them, just about 9 times out of 10, and they literally have to physically God dam harm you, or near God dam kill you...*

Throughout this narrative from Rose was the theme of frustration. She stated that the police, the safety team, and refuge, worked hard but the court system failed *them*. In this part of the narrative, Rose implied that

the court system was a failure on behalf of the agencies mentioned; she did not say the court system failed *her*. It appears that Rose positioned herself as very much external to and powerless in relation to, the court.

### **7.1.3 Maggie**

Like Rose, Maggie was exasperated with the justice system. Maggie perceived that protection orders do not actually protect women.

*I get very angry and annoyed when I hear about people breaching Protection Orders and the courts basically dismiss it, or let them off with a warning. All it does is give the court some teeth. It doesn't actually protect you, ....you cannot always pick up a telephone and ring the police, you'd be able to get your cell phone ... he broke one of my telephones once, just a landline, but it was, a portable landline, and I picked up the phone to ring his mum to come and get him, and he just snapped the phone in two, and I had no phone. I was way out in the country, had no phone, I had nothing to get any help that night ...*

### **7.1.4 Adele**

Adele found that being in a same-sex relationship was a barrier to accessing legal support.

*She kept coming to the new place and that was a nightmare, because what happened then, my husband had the car repossessed, he had these people turn up and take the car, and, and then I was looking for a lawyer, and I'd gone to two or three, and these were male lawyers, and as soon as I started to say that I was in a lesbian relationship that had problems and....yes, it is violent ... "No, we don't want to work with you".*

In Adele's story it appears to be the intersection of the violent relationship and the same sex relationship that stops the lawyers from working with her. Later in the interview Adele recounted how she found, through the Citizens Advice Bureau, a lawyer who was responsive to her needs.

*I then, rang Community Citizens Advice and I spoke to this elderly lady there and I said "I need to find a lawyer that works for women". She said "I've got just the person", and she gave me this lawyer's name ... and I made an appointment with her and went and met her, and I sat there for hours and just talked, and she just listened and she just kept writing, she just kept taking notes, you know? And she never said anything that first meeting, I did the talking, and I told her what I wanted but didn't know how to go about it, and ... anyway, I built up a rapport with this lawyer and she basically said to me "The relationship will take care of itself as you grow stronger" and little moments of wisdom like that I held onto and they became my mantra, you know?*

Adele appeared before the court in relation to custody and access arrangements when their son, Oscar, had been removed from her care as a result of Tonya's violence towards Adele. Adele had a positive experience at court, even though this was not her expectation, as she explained in the following narrative.

*... Going off to court, and then my husband being all sneery with his lawyer, and we sat in this room, me beside my lawyer, ex-husband with his lawyer, and the judge ... old ... as soon as I saw it was a really old man, I just thought "This is it. Welcome to everyone's ego, I'm just going to play along here, that's it". Anyway, this old judge ... my husband went to say something and he said "'Excuse*

*me, I'll just speak to Adele first, if you don't mind". And I remember this judge just looked at me with the most kind eyes that I had seen in a long time, and he just looked so wise, you know? And I thought, this man will make whatever decision is best for the baby, that's okay. And him and my lawyer talked for a bit, and then he asked me a question, I can't remember what the question was, I couldn't tell you, I remember just being wrapped up in this judge's face, and I actually stood up and I just spoke from the heart to this judge and I said to him "I have an abusive partner in my life. I'm trying to get out of it. This is what I've done, and I'm trying to wean myself off, 'cos it's like an addiction". And I just spoke purely and honestly ... and I remember him saying to me (tearful) "What do you need?" And I said to him "I need my son to be safe, and I think my husband can keep him safe, he's a good dad, and I want that to continue, and I want help and support to allow me to do that, but I have a right to be mum. I have a right to be a mum, if I can keep myself safe and my son safe, and I need help to do that 'cos I haven't been able to". And I said so much more, and I remember my lawyer just patting me on the knee as I sat back down, and the judge turned round to my ex-husband and said 'And you need to pull your head in!' And for the first time I felt ... like humour around me. The look of indignation on my ex-husband's face! And he says "Adele, what days would you like your son. If you could assure us in court that your partner won't be around on those days, that gives you room for your partner then too". Great! That's what I've been looking for, I just didn't know it, you know? And I didn't want someone else outside saying "No, you can't be with her". I wanted to do it ... natural progress.*

On the face of it, this is a good news story; the Judge listened to Adele and seemed to understand her plea that Oscar should remain with her ex-husband because of Adele's violent partner, Tonya. But there is also so much sadness here; Adele had planned to kill herself if court did not go well. She had lost strength and described herself as having no *backbone*; her child could not live with her and Adele had, up to that point, been unable to separate herself fully from Tonya.

### 7.1.5 Lisa

Lisa's first escape to the lawyers occurred when Steve was asleep. She had been badly beaten by Steve and was suffering from a broken wrist. In excruciating pain she walked with her children to the nearest lawyers.

*And so I went to the lawyers, the closest lawyers. Then "oh no, we don't do legal aid, you'll have to go to this other one", which was a 45 minute walk away. I had to walk because I wasn't allowed to drive the car. I had the newborn, I wasn't allowed to drive the car, it was his car.*

Lisa continued her difficult walk to the next lawyer who had a positive response to Lisa's situation.

*When I got to the lawyers I just sobbed and told him my story and he wrote lots of stuff down, and said if you feel safe, he said 'do you feel safe to go home'? I said 'not really'. He said 'well, I can ring Refuge and the police and get you out now' and I said 'oh no, we're alright, all our belongings are in the house, passports and stuff', and he said 'well, if that's the choice you're making' ... I said 'yes, to go back and get my stuff'. The next day, he told me to come back the next day at 10 o'clock, and I did, and he handed me an emergency protection order, an urgent protection order, a parenting order and tenancy order. I was stoked.*

Later on in the interview Lisa returned to her experience of the justice system. Lisa's story revolved around Steve's continuous breaching of protection orders and lack of respect for the court process.

*They did nothing again. I mean, this has happened, not this situation, but multiple times he's done things to breach the order or to make things difficult, or not turned up for court, ... And it's not okay, that's not a good enough excuse for him to be able to walk out of court and hold up the process. He went ...he left. So then we had to come back to court a few weeks later which meant that I had to*

*go.....this was before I was working. I had to go to Work & Income; I had to ask them for a food grant so that I had enough money to pay for a babysitter to come here so that I could go to court. It's a ridiculous process that I had to go through as a single mum, I mean, I tried to get support of the court for someone to mind the children. No, nothing there ...*

## **7.2 Police**

The participant narratives about their contact with the Police are mixed. Some women talked about positive experiences with the Police, while others found that the Police minimised the violence. In the stories that highlight minimising of IPV the participants point out that there appears to be a lack of understanding about IPV. Rose's IPV story was representative of this mixed experience. She had positive comments to make about her experience of Police involvement when reflecting on her experience of IPV overall. In other parts of the interview Rose presented another story; this time her view of the Police was changed after they arrive at her home with her drunken ex-partner.

### **7.2.1 Rose**

*I just thought "You disrespectful....do your homework", you know? You got a man here that's drunk. Don't you think you'd get in touch to see who that woman is, have a look see if there's anything going on? You know, use your initiative? What is this man from (name of town) doing up here, drink driving at 5 o'clock in the morning? I was ...I was devastated!*

In this story Brad's harassment of Rose continued when the Police brought him to Rose's home, even though there was a trespass order in place. Rose's description of events illustrated that the Police minimized her concerns until they heard Jack's plea, "Don't go Mum". Rose shared her feelings of devastation and questions Police procedure and competence.

### 7.2.2 Maggie

Maggie shared how her pleas for help from the Police in a rural town were minimized.

*I went into the police station here and said "Look", I've had a bit of a problem with this guy in the past, he's just found me here, he's quite violent". The policeman here, he's now retired, the policeman I spoke to, an elderly Maori chap, very, very nice man, but he leant over and he patted me on the knees "Don't you worry about it dear". And I thought "you've got no understanding of what I'm talking about". This isn't a guy that likes to give you a slap when he's been to the pub, this guy is dangerous. And it was shortly after that, that I had to call the police here, and ... and it ended up he bit one police officer, he bit the dog handler, he put the local policeman off work for a couple of weeks. He was a violent, violent man, and he went to jail after that, um ... and then the police sat up and listened to me, once something had happened to THEM (laughing).*

Maggie, in her next story discussed what it was like living in a small rural area where the abuser's family and the Police were well respected and long serving members of the community.

*He had to take responsibility for his actions, and his mother and everybody else, even the police in (name of town), used to take him home 'cos "he's only a kid, you know, and we don't really want to cause an issue here, and act up kid, you know, we'll take him home". ... He was drinking and on antidepressants at that stage, which you don't do, because it doubles up the effect of alcohol, so he only had a couple of jugs but he was OFF HIS FACE! And the police came along and put him into the car, and then he went in to do something and then he kicked the policeman in his face and broke his nose. Well, that was a stupid thing to do to a policeman, so they put him in the back seat of the car and he booted him up the face, and he said "Well that's it, I wasn't going to lay any charges, but now I will". I mean they weren't going to, you know, they let him away, and they let him away, they were so soft with him and it doesn't help.*

### **7.2.3 Adele**

During her interview, Adele talked about what it was like to ask for help for IPV when in a violent lesbian relationship. Adele shared how a law firm had acted towards her when she had asked for help – they had denied that they could offer any services to people in her situation. Adele went on to describe another situation when she had felt judged on the basis of her sexuality.

*... what I do remember is sitting in a chair in the lounge, and I couldn't stop my body shaking, and I remember this arrogant police officer holding up in the light, my hair with scalp on it, and I've still got the bald patch there, and him putting it into a plastic bag, and I remember seeing the blood dropping off it. I just remember this very, very clearly and I remember this police officer just looking at me like I was dumb, and talking to me really arrogantly "Um, now, well here's the number, I'm not going to get Victim Support to phone you, you can phone them, um ... have you got someone to come and fix your front door?" I was thinking "what's wrong with my front door?" I couldn't think, you know? And he just said "So you don't*

*want to press charges?” And I said “Press charges to what?” And I just kept saying “No”. I said “No” and him leaving...*

Adele had difficulty recalling the violence that occurred to her; however, she very clearly remembered the response of the Police officer that spoke with her about further service involvement and pressing charges. For Adele the intersection of gender and sexuality created a barrier to her receiving the appropriate intervention.

#### **7.2.4 Tui**

There are other participant stories where the police officer plays a key role in protecting women and children. Tui described one police officer as her ‘saviour’.

*I was just so grateful that I came across a gentleman ... and he was an older gentleman. I’ll never forget him, and he basically knocked on the door and he said to me “Is Cooper here?”, and I went “No”. He goes “Are you being instructed to tell me he’s not here?” And I just was wide-eyed and he said “You mind moving aside”. Cooper WAS there, and I’ll never forget that....it was like, Oh my God, you saviour you know, he saw the fear in my eyes, he saw that I was being stood over! So they got him straight out and that’s when he came back to me and he goes “Do you know that he’s a ticking time bomb?” and I just broke down and I said “I’m TRYING, I’m TRYING to get away him. He’s stalking me. No-one’s believing me. I’m TRYING”, and that’s when he turned around and he said “Right, it’s like this, second time we get called out on a person we’re supposed to ring CYFS”. I went “Yeah?” He goes “This is your fourth call-out in ... if you don’t get rid of him, if there’s no way of getting of him, ... and this is going to carry on happening, I’m gonna have to call in CYFS. The only reason I’m not, Tui”, and I went “Why’s that?”. He goes “Cos I do truly believe that you are doing everything in your dam power to get away from this man”. And I said “I AM, I AM, I just don’t know how to dam well do it”.*

Further on in the interview, Tui articulated how this police officer helped her to relocate to another area in New Zealand; where she and her daughter were safe for a little while.

### **7.2.5 Ana**

Ana began the following story after talking about the ongoing threats of violence she had received from Levi. For Ana the process of getting a protection order was straightforward due in part to the work of the police officer involved.

*...well he sent another text you know "I'm going to bomb your So I went and got a protection order and on the advice of the, I can't remember, no, look I don't know how I remembered to get a protection order, but I was like I'm going to the police station and I'm going to report this because I don't know what to do. So I got the protection and then I went in and I sat down, "Look I'm getting these threatening text messages from my ex-boyfriend, I'm carrying his child and I'm actually fearful for my life and the life of my family". Then, you know the police officer was very helpful and he said, "Look we'll get a protection order sorted for you, you need to go and see a lawyer, I'll refer you to this one, you can go and see her in the morning and you'll get that sorted, but you need to take this police report with you". And I said, "Fine, I will do that". I immediately went the next week, booked an appointment on the Monday, took myself to the lawyer, explained my situation, she processed it.*

### **7.2.6 Adele**

I have already explored Adele's experience of unhelpful Police responses. She also had positive experiences such as the one she shared

during the interview. The story occurred at a point in the interview when Adele was talking about her decision to empower herself and survive through her relationship with Tonya.

*So I was losing my house, and then I got this phone call from a detective, I don't know his name, and I heard this lovely soft fatherly voice and he says to me "Can you talk, Adele" and I said "Yeah"; and I was just sitting in the hallway for hours talking ... listening to this man. He said "I'll ring you back again, okay honey. I'll just ring ... and if it's not safe, you just say 'blue' okay?" And I said "Okay". So he had this kind of caring ... I don't know who he is ... I'd love to go and find out, but he was so ... he was very significant, I don't know who he was, but he was a detective, and um ... and then these phone calls, he would ring, he'd go "Can you make contact with your family?" I said "No, they won't have anything to do with me". He goes "What about the church you used to go to, can you go back to them?" He was trying to kind of reconnect me, and I said "No, I'm too ashamed". And he said "You need to find a lawyer that can listen to you", and then he just ... he'd say "Honey with the partner that you've got, there is a million to one of them, they're everywhere. She's not that rare" (laughing). "And she has charges against her that are two forearms length". And it was kind of his, sort of, voice that was kind of giving me strength. I felt like I mattered.*

### **7.3 IPV service providers**

This section presents the views of the women who had contact with IPV service providers.

All but one of the women interviewed reported having contact with IPV providers. Again, as was the case with police contact, the women described mixed experiences with IPV providers.

### **7.3.1 Women's Refuge**

All but one of the women interviewed had contact with Women's Refuge during the process of moving away from violence. The narratives reveal diverse perspectives about the support provided by Women's Refuge professionals.

#### **7.3.1.1 Rose**

Rose talked about the programmes she attended, with her son Jack, at Women's Refuge.

*Every day I used to dread getting up. Every day I used to dread him turning up when I went back there. I only lasted back there 4-6 weeks maximum, and that's when I had to do my planning, and I took my son out of school and he never went to school for at least 3-4 weeks. And the whole time I had my lawyer backing me up. I had Women's Refuge ... I did that course. Jack did the Tamariki Programme, absolutely loved it. I think it's one of the best things in the world for the kids, for them to go. He still talks about it today, and he's actually even spoken about wanting to go and do it again.*

Positive experiences with Women's Refuge are reported when the women gain information from the organisation that is critical to the way in which they perceive the IPV. The information provided appears to have helped the women feel confident about the decision they made to go to Refuge in the first place. Tui revealed that receiving information about the type of relationship context that would need help from Women's Refuge, while a shock to her, was pivotal in expanding her knowledge about IPV. The

information also helped Tui to develop an understanding that IPV was common; that is, there were other women who were also struggling in violent relationships.

#### **7.3.1.2 Tui**

*I think the most powerful thing for me at Women's Refuge was to be sat down and be told by a total stranger, about my partner through and through, ten points that work. Given a pamphlet that said if you have two problems out of those 10, then you need us. I ticked the whole 10 and could add a couple. You know, so to actually have someone hand that information to me, I mean, Oh my God, this sounds just like my ex-husband and the stalker. Oh my GOD! So realising that, oh shit! This is actually more common than I thought and if this is ME, then HOW MANY OTHER WOMEN out there ... in order for this pamphlet to have been put together, then it's more common than I thought ...*

#### **7.3.1.3 Lisa**

Lisa explained how she sought accommodation at a Women's Refuge safe house because some arrangements had not been made, or there was no apparent concern for the children. The Police then suggested that Lisa go and stay at a Women's Refuge.

*I've been to Refuge twice in New Zealand and once overseas, ... you just don't...didn't get the support, didn't get orders in place quick enough and having to cope with the children, or because there was no evidence of the children being hurt when I rang the police and they came ... they said "oh well, all we can do for you is take you to Refuge, we can't take the children out of his hands because we don't think ... we've got no evidence of their being abused" ... just no support... help whatsoever.*

Lisa had experience of Women's Refuge type support both in New Zealand and overseas. Here she described the first experience at Women's Refuge in New Zealand.

*So ... I had to move into Refuge here in New Zealand, for the second time ... but I went but Refuge here was just horrible, not supportive, very pushy, very cranky old ladies, almost like. It was quite....it was "you've done the wrong thing if you stay together, you can do better". But that's not how you see it; it's like by staying there you're doing the right thing by keeping your family together; yeah,that was horrible.*

The second time at Women's Refuge was a little more positive, but there were still aspects about her contact with Women's Refuge that Lisa found difficult to manage.

*This time was a bit more positive; but they ask you a lot of questions ... why didn't you leave? What was going on? What did you experience? I understand that they do some of it for the research and to better understand you and to get to know what's going on ... but it wasn't that helpful. I wanted a safe place, you know, I didn't necessarily want to be there. It's horrible, they've got these other women who are constantly crying or screaming abuse at their own children in front of your children, or, you know, sneaking around at night. You go into Refuge and they say "we'll give you a padlock for your door because sometimes other women steal, or other children". That's really horrible. Or they would take your food out of the cupboards, so you would have to keep your food in this one bedroom where I had me and my three kids crammed into ...*

*They didn't do any positive courses; they did one of those overseas when I ended up in Refuge there, and you had to attend, that was part of the agreement to being in the Refuge you attended, it went for 1 ... 1½ hours one day a week, in the morning, you had to be there, unless of course you had a court hearing or something, that's okay.*

On the basis of Lisa's narratives about her experience with women's refuge service in both Australia and New Zealand, I then asked Lisa what she wanted from a Women's Refuge type service.

*Love and care, you know, concern and support. ... I guess you want someone to listen to you, someone to hug, someone who knows or understands. They were all very stand-offish, whether or not they're in that 'role' because they have experience with domestic violence themselves or not, you don't know, and they don't tell you, they don't ... they're not on a personal level, which is what you need in that situation.*

#### **7.3.1.4 Adele**

Adele spent one night in Women's Refuge, but she was alone in the house and felt unsafe.

*I still felt very much under threat and I was gonna die. This was gonna kill me. I did take myself to the Women's Refuge one night. ... But I was left there, there was no-one else in the house, I was by myself, I felt completely scared and ... vulnerable, that she was going to appear at a window or something. So I left. I thought safer to be at home than here. So I just turned round and left, went home to deal with her.*

*What had happened, the second time that I had taken myself to the Women's Refuge, one of the workers was talking to me, asking me what had happened, what had brought me there, you know, and I remember the phone going, and then this worker saying "Adele, your sister's on the phone" and I remember saying to her "I haven't got a sister", but she kept handing me the phone, and so ... it was her.*

Adele went to Women's Refuge twice; the first time she was left alone and felt vulnerable and so returned home. The second time Adele's

violent partner, Tonya, managed to speak with Adele by pretending she was Adele's sister. In Adele's view, Women's Refuge did not manage to keep her safe from her female abuser and Adele felt that violence in a lesbian relationship was often minimised and perceived as less serious than male violence against women.

#### **7.3.1.5 Ana**

Ana was one of the women who did not use women's refuge, instead she used family support.

*For me I had my mum and I had my family, but sometimes family... I think it was also a blessing that my mum had actually turned a new leaf, that I had come to her at a time when I really needed her and she didn't turn me down. I mean, that's how it felt when my dad reacted the way... I felt like the way he reacted he turned his back on me.*

However, Ana believed it is important to develop safe places that Polynesian women can go to when they need to 'run away'.

*I guess I needed support, to know that it was okay. That it was okay that it happened and not be judged for it, cos no offence, but Polynesians are really good at hiding emotional, personal distress... I do feel there needs to be, I guess, a safe place for Polynesian women especially, anyone in a domestic - there needs to be a safe place that's not obvious. It's hard, it really is hard when there are a lot of women out there who don't think that they're worth what their abusive partner is telling them and they do need to be able to run away somewhere where that person won't find them.*

### **7.3.2 Other Professionals**

While the women were still in the violent relationship, and when they had left, they had contact with a range of professionals.

#### **7.3.2.1 Child Protection Professionals**

##### *7.3.2.1.1 Lisa*

Lisa and Steve had their first child while living in New Zealand. She had to go in to hospital five and a half weeks before the baby was due to be born because he was in foetal distress. At the time Lisa was nineteen years old and very frightened. In the end, Lisa had to have an emergency caesarean. The day after the baby was born, Lisa talked to a counsellor because Steve had assaulted a nurse in the hospital and was then trespassed from the hospital property. Lisa explained to the counsellor and then a social worker about the violence she had experienced during her pregnancy.

*Then we went to a conference meeting with Child Youth and Family and brought everyone into the room including him and me, and his family, and I had no family, and talking about it ... well, I broke down in tears and said 'oh, it's just a mistake', and I was so drugged up on morphine and all that sort of stuff, and ... they said "okay". They did nothing and they left it and they took away the orders and that was it (crying). It was lonely, scary; it was traumatic, absolutely traumatic. It was um...just horrible. I was so alone and I just had to comply, I couldn't do it any other way.*

*I felt I'm not worthwhile you know, that nobody cared, 'cos even though they stepped up and they did follow what the procedures are, ... if they have concerns ... they did that, they followed the legal procedures, but when it came to actually showing care and concern for the child, they didn't believe me, and I had to take responsibility for that, but then that's their job ...especially at 19, I can't even comprehend half of what's going on and at that age still getting a grip of your own feelings, in the sense of being married, the whole....you know, working out..... they really dropped the ball, they didn't step up, they didn't investigate it further, they didn't say "No, I'm sorry I don't believe you, Amanda" and "We're gonna care for your child'" showing that you can't go near Steve without a social worker...*

Lisa shared this story at the beginning of her interview to introduce herself, her relationship with Steve, and their decision to have a child.

The story of introduction turns into a story about her involvement with the Department of Child, Youth and Family (CYF) and the Family Group Conference process. While Lisa understood that CYF had a job to do, and in this case she believed they followed the correct procedure, Lisa found the experience traumatizing.

A number of the women expressed concern that CYF would become involved because of the IPV that was occurring in their relationships; however, no other women described any contact with CYF.

### 7.3.2.2 *Medical Practitioners*

In this section the women described their contact with Medical Practitioners. In the first story Tui explained how she became depressed after leaving her relationship with Cooper. Tui had moved in to a home and was too afraid to leave the house. She described in her interview how “*the four walls started to close in on me*”. In the next narrative Tui explained the General Practitioner’s response to her situation which left her feeling stigmatised.

#### 7.3.2.2.1 *Tui*

*The Doctors say “Oh, you should be on a disability because of domestic violence” you know, straight away you’re branded and you’re gotta take these “dippy pills” I call them. I could never do it. I could do the first week on them, and then when they were making you feel like a “numb nut” you know, where you couldn’t even operate, you know, properly as a mother, I wouldn’t do it. I’d do my two weeks on them, feel like CRAP taking them, and then get to the end and ... nah! It’s not for me.*

Later, Tui explained further.

*So I went to the doctor and I said “I don’t want any more depression pills, I don’t feel that they’re the medicine I should be taking. I want counselling”. And he goes “Pardon?” And I said, “I think I need to talk things out. I think I need counselling more than I need those pills so, could we basically go 6 months’ worth of counselling, and then get me off the depression list” (laughing).*

*The man I did counselling with asked “Have you ever considered counselling yourself?” (Laughing), I said “Pardon?” He said, “because from the story you’ve told me it sounds like you’ve self-counselled yourself to get to this stage”.*

#### 7.3.2.2.2 Maggie

Maggie was also prescribed anti-depressants for her anxiety.

*I learnt, but it took me a long time to lose that level of anxiety, that flight instinct, and both times that he was arrested here for violence, which is only a drop in the bucket of the amounts of times he was violent; but the two times he was arrested here for it, I went into shock afterwards and it would take me a long time to get over each instance. The second time I ended up going to the doctor 'cos after a week or so, my anxiety levels were still pretty high, and if somebody just opened the door unexpectedly I would just jump.*

#### 7.3.2.2.3 Sharnie

Sharnie sought help from a General Practitioner when her husband Donald started drinking. She described the advice as unhelpful.

*His drinking was just really off the wall. He was drinking, he was not getting on with his boss, so he'd start drinking as soon as he finished work, and ... I couldn't stand the kids to see him like that. He was never loud or shouting, very, very quiet, withdrawn, but you know, it was really freaky, you know, it became really freaky, and there was always that threat of the smack, you know, I always sort of waiting for it, because I could see the deterioration. I got a doctor to him when we were there and his answer to it was he gave me pills, he said put some of these in his beer and it will make him go to sleep.*

#### 7.3.2.2.4 Adele

Adele visited her partner Tonya's General practitioner. Both Tonya and Adele went to the appointment and Adele had explained to the General practitioner that Tonya was being violent towards her.

*I even went to the doctors with my partner, to her family doctor, and talked about what was happening and how her eyes would go dark,*

*and my partner would nod, being all humble and beautiful self, you know? Yes, I want it to stop, you know. So he started her on Arapax and these other anti-medications and things, but still I kept thinking "You're not hearing me....how violent this is. I don't know what to do, I'm out of my depth here" you know? And the doctor just sat there and let me cry in his office and left.*

Adele was unclear as to why she chose to make an appointment with her violent partner's General Practitioner. It may be that the sense of isolation she experienced in the relationship, along with Tonya's manipulative control strategies left Adele feeling unable to seek medical assistance from anyone else.

Only one of the women interviewed described her contact with a General Practitioner as helpful. Briana was living in Australia when she made contact with a General Practitioner in relation to her epileptic condition. Eventually Briana, with the support of her General Practitioner, was able to leave Wayne. However, it was a comment from her General Practitioner about the nature of her relationship with Wayne that provided Briana with the idea that perhaps her view of Wayne's emotional abuse was not normal.

#### 7.3.2.2.5 Briana

*The doctor said to me, and I didn't really click until later on, the doctor ... and she said, she shouldn't have said that, she said that I was like his mother, and having him in bed with me (laughing), and I*

*didn't quite click until later on, because I WAS like a mother to him ... looking after him and everything.*

### **7.3.3 Counselling and Group Services**

A number of the women sought counselling and group therapy services provided specifically for victims of intimate partner violence. None of the women attended counselling at any point with their violent partner. Counselling or group therapy was perceived as a way of dealing with the emotional impact of IPV.

#### **7.3.3.1 Tui**

Tui made an interesting point about counselling – that it was not available when she really needed it.

*Because when it was offered to me [counselling] ... “oh, you do realise that you can go to counselling and you're entitled to do counselling after domestic violence for the next 3 years after getting out of it”. I was actually ready to go to counselling for years when it wasn't available to me any longer (laughing). So, yeah, I don't know, I needed more assistance right at that beginning, learning how to live a violence-free life is what I needed.*

#### **7.3.3.2 Celia**

In the next narrative Celia described the support and counselling she received.

*I know that I'm not gonna leave ... I chose to hook up with an organisation ... for women that have alcohol and drug problems... Oh, look, I still go there because I love them, they are incredible. That's what saved me ... no judgments. It's for women; you had to have had an alcohol and drug problem, like I referred myself there. And it's about healing, they do everything, they do absolutely everything ... they had all sorts of groups .... ... And so this organisation saved my life, the staff there saved my life because ... there's no judgment. For the first time in my life one of them ... one of the counsellors said to me "Celia, whose life is this, and is it okay for your children to cut you off, what do you want to do?" And I said "I want to be with my husband, I'm not done yet". She said "well you need to honour yourself". And no-one had ever given me permission before, and I knew she was right, I knew she was right, and it was really hard and really painful, and I thought maybe it to be the wrong decision but it had to be right ... I wasn't done yet, and I knew I wasn't done yet. And I thought I need to do this until I'm done, 'cos I'm not going to let him go until I'm done.*

Celia described her experience with the group she attended in the same way that Tui described the Police officer that offered support; as her "saviour". Celia, when speaking of the group stated it "saved me". It appears that formal services had a powerful influence on the women when the professional working directly with the woman concerned understood the complexity of IPV, the impact of IPV on women children and families, and when the professional was skilled in the delivery of the service. As in the excerpt from Celia's story, a non-judgemental and caring attitude was a strong theme throughout all of the narratives about IPV service provision.

In contrast to the other women interviewed, Briana did not receive a service from any IPV service provider. Instead, Briana found that she was able to develop independence and a feeling of happiness by joining a network once she had left Wayne and returned to New Zealand.

#### **7.3.3.3 Briana**

*I went to a group over there, in (name of town), when I came over and it really helped me and gave me a new group of friends and it really helped me and made me happy ... happier ... it's people from all over the world that have come, newcomers, and it's even New Zealanders, and they all get together and become really good, good friends ... it made me ... a wee bit independent.*

#### **7.3.3.4 Rose**

Rose left her violent relationship two years prior to the interview. At the time of interview Rose was struggling to keep herself and her family safe. Rose had found counselling to be extremely valuable but she found that ten subsidised counselling sessions were not enough; especially in light of the years of violence and trauma she faced in her relationship with Brad.

*I've had family violence counselling, protected persons counselling ... she was absolutely amazing. She did me wonders. I only finished with her about 2 months ago. I could have done with more. I could have done with a lot more. Only 10 sessions, and that's through Family Court. You only get 10 sessions, and 10 sessions for 11 years of shit ...*

## **7.4 Service Provision**

In this section the women shared their ideas for how service provision should be carried out with women in IPV relationships.

### ***7.4.1 Face-to-Face Contact***

A theme that was consistent throughout the women's narratives was the suggestion that face-to-face contact is important for any service that has contact with women in violent relationships, or with women who have physically left a violent relationship. The women all spoke about how isolating IPV was for them and how frightened they were throughout the journey of moving away from violence. The tendency to remain isolated post separation was all too easy for all of the women interviewed.

Additionally, many of the women found it difficult to manage on their own after spending so long under the control of their violent partners. As Tui recounts:

#### ***7.4.1.1 Tui***

*Because what I found when ... how do I put this? When you're kept in a cage and then you've got the opportunity to get out of that cage ... you find it hard going, even though the door's open you find it hard stepping out.*

*See, my case was a bit different because normally in domestic violence, they had to go to jail, but this way round, we were having a*

*bloody boomerang keep coming back, it was really hard to get on with normal living afterwards because you were just running so long on adrenalin, that it was really hard to get back to being normal. Normality is ... I put it this way, I took my daughter to school, I'd get back home and I'd end up on the couch, like that all day, because even though I was free, I didn't know what to with the free, my daughter was totally taken care of. I was being told that there were meetings you could go to with women and things like that. You really need to give yourself a wee bit of time first, before you go straight into the counselling and straight into this or that ... but then again, I don't know, if I had been MADE to do it, maybe it might've given me a bit more up and go a lot sooner than I did*

*I think more hands on at home once they're relocated, to help them adjust back into the norm, ... direct help, because you've gone from making no decisions to all of a sudden you're making all of the decisions, and even though as a mum I knew how to operate on my daughter's behalf, I didn't actually know how to operate on MY behalf.*

*See, when I got relocated, I got one visit. I'd get phone calls, but "Hi, how are you", "Oh, I'm good thank you" ... NOT! (laughing). You're able to hide too much just someone coming into your home and making you realise "Hey kiddo, I'm here for you you know?" "You're not gonna hide any more" (laughing), you know? Having someone actually directly help you ... I had no-one around me at the time to say "Is it normal that you feel like this, is it normal...blah blah blah". I had no-one, because no-one around me at the time had been stalked (laughing).*

#### **7.4.2 Holistic Service**

Across the narratives an ever-present theme related to the perception that many professionals viewed the women only as victims of IPV. The women's narratives indicated that in grappling with developing new lives away from violence the women had a need to be seen as more than just victims. Commonalities across the women's narratives highlighted the

need for services to consider the other identities that the women had; whether it be as students, employees, mothers, or athletes.

#### **7.4.2.1 Adele**

At the time of interview, Adele had been out of her violent relationship for 6 years. Adele highlighted how she focused on first healing herself so that she could be available to have a relationship with others; in particular with her child.

*You have to have a relationship with yourself before you can with anyone else, and that includes even with your children, so you've have to start finding your sense of humour, start finding your absurdity and how absurd life is, and then that will bring little moments of joy that start giving you that little bit more power, a little bit more sleep at night.*

Adele advised women in IPV relationships to take care of themselves physically, and emotionally, and that services need to help women to do this. Adele described this approach as “real basics first”.

*Get back to the primal stuff, start eating properly, drink lots of water, stay off drinks and alcohol, keep your physical strength, and then do something healthy for your mental health. Real, real, basics first.*

#### **7.4.2.2 Ellie**

The need for professionals to be attuned to the range of identities women hold is conveyed in the following excerpt from Ellie's narrative. Ellie

referred to a questionnaire used by Women's Refuge that she found particularly helpful.

*Well, what kinds of things do you do for fun when you're relaxing, you know, do you like to read books, or walk on the beach? You know, what do you like to do?" and then it will say, actually then it asks you what physical activity do you like to, so they make sure there's something physical in there, what kind of places do you like to go that really make you feel good, and what kind of material things make you feel good, because we have certain objects or attachments to some things that we just feel better about when they're around.*

#### **7.4.2.3 Sharnie**

Sharnie's violent relationship ended 20 years ago. Sharnie's narrative about service provision focused on the idea that services can be harmful if they introduce women to a different way of living, for example in rehabilitation, and then place the women straight back into their former life with no way of supporting themselves.

*I think you've got to have; they've gotta have something, you know. I really get really sad when you put someone into rehabilitation, like into a drug and alcohol programme. They've come from a grotty little flat and they've been living alone. They go into a rehab, they get all these friends, they have all this nice food, they're living in a sunny little place. It's like you pick them right up and then you put them back in there, and you drop them from up, you know, from a higher place.*

*I think we need to give them something to do, because if you put them back in that house where that partner can come round and all day they've got to think about being at home and they're miserable and they've got no money and they are seeing nobody else, and their partner can get easy access to them.*

### **7.4.3 Non-Judgemental Approach**

#### **7.4.3.1 Maggie**

Maggie had been out of her violent relationship for six years at the time of interview. Maggie's story was directed towards the professionals working with women, and towards women who are coping with IPV in their relationship. She stressed that women do not invite violence upon themselves. In terms of the time it takes women to escape the violence, Maggie was determined to stress that women in violent relationships are trying to do the best for themselves and their children; they should not be judged as the process of moving away from violence is complex.

*I would never ever judge any female that's in that situation .... so those women who are in that situation are doing their best, they are doing their best just to survive and they are doing what they think is the right thing. Judging them, their knowledge of the circumstances, they are doing what they believe is the right thing for them, and if there are children, also the right thing for their children, they are not willingly submitting their children to violence.*

Similarly, the need for non-judgemental treatment of women, and support to allay their fears as mothers is reflected in Adele's story.

#### **7.4.3.2 Adele**

*We're here for you. We are here to walk with you, not against you. We aren't just here to take your kids from you, and you won't see that yet, if your kids are removed and you're caught up in that emotion and grief, that's okay, but let us do some thinking for you too, and let us take you by the hand for a while. Trust us enough to do that. Please don't feel threatened by us.*

#### **7.4.4 Accessible services**

##### **7.4.4.1 Adele**

*I think services out there, for starters, are so inaccessible, I couldn't find anyone. Where do you find them? Where do you find them? And yet, I've spoken to other women who have had amazing outcomes with Women's Refuge and have built up that rapport and relationship and I actually ... I look back and seem jealous and think "Oh, you lucky thing!" That what it comes down to, is building up relationships outside of that intimate relationship that you're in. Services need to be thoroughly more visible, more accessible.*

##### **7.4.4.2 Rose**

The following excerpt from Rose reflects a concern about accessible services that many of the women emphasised in their stories. The lack of funding for ongoing counselling support was viewed as prohibiting access for the women. In addition, the women perceived the lack of funding as unfair especially when considered in light of: the years the women had to cope with the violent relationship; the consistent stalking and breaching of protection orders by the women's ex-partners post separation; and the subsequent court appearances and mediation processes the women had to attend as a result of their ex-partners behaviour.

*I think it's unfair that there has to be a time limit, you know, in two years... You get left at some point, is that what it feels like? And I've had family violence counselling, protected persons counselling. (Name), she was absolutely amazing. She did me wonders. I only finished with her 6 weeks ago maybe. I could have done with more. I could have done with a lot more. Only 10 sessions, and that's*

*through Family Court. You only get 10 sessions, and 10 sessions for 11 years of shit ...*

#### **7.4.5 Consistent Workforce**

For each of the women who engaged IPV services there was a strong sentiment of frustration at the number of different professionals who were involved in supporting them through their journey away from IPV.

##### **7.4.5.1 Adele**

*...they keep changing workers too. You know, no sooner have you built up a rapport with one, you've suddenly got this other worker that's managing your case. It needs to be solid, for at least 6 months, you know, you can't just come and go. It's gotta be 6 months at least to build up that rapport and trust. Because if you keep changing the workers you're not going to reach the women's side, they're not going to help you make changes in their life, or...and that will only happen when they are ready to, and then they start picking up the messages.*

#### **7.5 Summary**

In this chapter I have presented the women's views of the responses they received from professionals when seeking help with some aspect of the violent relationship. The women had contact with a range of professionals including, those in the justice system, refuge services, counsellors, doctors, the police and the Department of Child, Youth and Family. Overall, the women seem to have mixed views about the responses to their help seeking.

This chapter concludes the presentation of the women's stories. In Chapter eight I provide an analysis of the research findings.

## **8 Chapter Eight Analysis and Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to explore women's experiences of 'moving away from intimate partner violence'. An examination of the factors that prompt women to move away from situations of intimate partner violence would provide insight as to how social workers can address women's individual needs and the part that social institutions play in either impeding or facilitating the women to move away from violence.

I have attempted to draw upon theories that highlight the importance of contextual factors to the women's journeys of moving away from violence.

The women who shared their stories sought to make sense of their experiences of moving away from IPV through reinterpreting their experiences. The reinterpretation provided at the time of interview is reflective of the social location of the women at the time of story-telling. For all of the women, their responses to being in a violent relationship are multifaceted and embedded in the social, historical and cultural context of New Zealand.

The study employed narrative research methodology. Data was collected via in-depth interviews with participants who shared their stories of moving away from IPV. Eleven women who had experienced IPV, and

had been violence free for two years or more, participated in the study. The data were organised and analysed through a combination of thematic narrative analysis (Bold, 2012) and a narrative process of interpretive readings (Arvey, 2001) as outlined in chapter three. The study explored the following research questions:

1. What prompts women to move away and seek safety from intimate partner violence?
2. What skills and strategies did women use in order to address violence in the home and in moving away from violence?
3. What is the process of moving away from intimate partner violence?
4. What have been the helpful and not so helpful responses for women in addressing violence in the home?
5. What are the implications for social service provision?

This chapter analyses and synthesizes the research findings. Thus, the findings are discussed within the context of related findings within the literature on women moving away from violence. The chapter is organised in the following way:

- Turning points (*Research Question 1*)

- Skills and strategies used to cope with and move away from IPV (*Research Question 2*)
- Supports and barriers that influence the moving away from violence process (*Research Question 4*)
- The process of moving away from IPV (*Research Question 3*)

The final research question “*What are the implications for social service provision?*” will be explored in the implications for practice and conclusions chapter.

The following table (Table 3) provides a summary of the findings that will be discussed in this chapter. Each column heading denotes the research question and the column content lists the key findings. The chapter is divided into sections; each section dealing with a specific column, as indicated by shading in that particular table column.

<b>Table 3: Turning Points Findings</b>			
<b>Turning Points</b>	<b>Skills &amp; Strategies</b>	<b>Supports and Barriers to Leaving</b>	<b>Process of Leaving</b>
Turning points occur pre- and post-leaving the relationship	Women acted compliantly in order to act on their plans	Mixed experiences in dealing with formal supports	Leaving is a gradual process
Turning points arise from a critical analysis of the violence context	Women developed a self with 'attitude' Spiritual belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justice</li> <li>• Police</li> <li>• Other services</li> </ul>	Early leaving is prevented by how women explain early signs of violence
Violence and Loss	Engagement in education and employment	Stigma and discrimination are prevalent in women's experiences	Leaving is complicated by gender role expectations
Protecting children	Informal support (physical, emotional, practical)		Contact post relationship is unwanted but in many cases, necessary.
Others influence turning points	Formal help seeking from the Police and Women's Refuge		

### 8.1 Findings: Turning Points

The first research question sought to understand the specific circumstances that led the participants to consider leaving the violent relationship. The content covered in this section is that in the shaded table column.

As described in chapter two (see Section 2.6.1), turning points are those influences that permanently alter how the women view the violence, the relationship, and their responses to IPV (Chang et al., 2010). While the women

shared similar turning points, the narratives presented by each of the participants indicate that context, cultural values, violence experience, and partner characteristics influence how the turning point is perceived by each woman, and what they might decide to do about it. Simply put, turning points, while shared, are recognised differently by different women.

What women recognise as turning points is influenced by the intersection of cultural factors (Crichton-Hill, 2012). The findings reported in the present study provide support to other studies (Campbell, Rose, Kub & Nedd, 1998; Chang et al., 2010; Morgan et al., 2007; Wilson & Webber, 2014;) that have identified turning points in terms of: an escalation in violence, concern for the well-being of children, and availability of support.

### ***8.1.1 Turning points occur pre- and post-leaving the relationship***

Another finding from the present study is that turning points may occur at a number of junctures throughout the course of the violent relationships; when the woman is residing with the violent partner, and when she is not; when she has decided to remain in the relationship, and after she has left. For example, Tui identified one turning point as occurring following

several attempts to escape her ex-partner Cooper, and then later in the interview, Tui highlighted the turning point that occurred once she had been away from Cooper for a period of time. Both turning points are framed around her fear for her daughter, but each turning point fulfils a different purpose. The earliest turning point provided Tui with the strength and courage to fight back and finally end the relationship, while the final turning point provided Tui with information about how she should manage the memories her daughter has of the violence.

It is evident that much of the literature on turning points (Brosi & Rolling, 2010; Chang et al. 2010; Moe, 2009; Randell, Bledsoe, Shroff & Clyde, 2012) is focused on the point at which women take the first step to move away from the violent relationship. However, as is demonstrated in the present study, transitional events such as turning points occur long beyond the point where women physically, and emotionally separate from their violent partner. This finding suggests that responses to women after they have left the violent relationship need to be cognisant that a woman's view of their past violent relationship, the violence, and their responses are likely to change. Factors influencing the various transitional turning points are likely to be related to women's roles as mothers, alongside other contextual factors that are personal, interpersonal or structural in nature.

### *8.1.2 Turning points arise from a critical analysis of the violence context*

Throughout the narratives many of the women demonstrated their analytical ability to assess the patterns of their partner's violent behaviour, how the violence begins, how it progresses, and where it could end. The turning points narratives indicate the potential risk to life that many of the women experienced. This recognition, for some of the women, spurred them on to think more seriously about getting out of the relationship. For others the recognition that they could die meant that they reassessed their strategy for handling the violence in the moment they recognized the danger; it might be that the women decided to calm the situation down in order to keep themselves safe (as is expressed by Ana); or, as in Maggie's case, she realized she may as well leave as the possibility of being killed was there if she left, or stayed. The ability to harness this knowledge at times of crisis, especially expressed in the 'possibility of death from violence narratives', provides some indication of the strength of the women's desire to survive.

There is limited research on the ability of women, in the context of extreme stress and violence, to critically *analyse* their situation, and recognise the turning point as significant, as the women did in the present study.

Cavanagh (2003) suggested that there is limited literature on women's

critical responses to IPV. Her study on women's responses to IPV found that women:

read their partners like books; they came to know the patterns of men's behaviour; they recognized the cues and the danger signals... Women made decisions about these responses while simultaneously thinking about the possible outcomes for themselves and their children (p.246).

While there is limited literature on women's ability to analyse their violent relationship context, there is some work on women's coping strategies.

Rivas, Kelly & Feder (2013) interviewed twenty Black Caribbean, African, and White British women about their experiences of suffering psychological abuse in their relationships. The study found that women actively set role identity boundaries within their relationships with their partners. A person's ability to negotiate expected roles was originally explored by Goffman (1959) who proposed that how people perform their identities varies depending on the context and the audience. For example, a woman may act on culturally embedded narratives about how the role of wife, partner and mother should be performed. Goffman (1971) suggested that when persons perceive that they have engaged in actions that are outside the expected norm, those persons engage in remedial actions. By transferring blame for her actions to others, minimising the violence, or

making apologies for the violence, women are taking remedial action to attempt to adhere to cultural narratives about the roles she inhabits. Rivas, Kelly & Feder (2013) found in their study that as women reset the boundaries of their relationships they emotionally separated themselves from their partner and then became empowered to take action to reduce the impact of the psychological abuse.

While Rivas, Kelly Feder (2013) focused on women who had experienced psychological abuse and had remained in their relationships, it is conceivable that women in the current study enacted the same remedial work and emotional distancing (see 8.2.1) enabling them to analyse the relationship, engage strategies to resist the violence and eventually leave the relationship.

### ***8.1.3 Violence and loss as turning points***

The women in the present study identified that '*the possibility of death from violence*' was a turning point, and this occurred alongside the comprehension that their partner did not care for them. Prior to '*the possibility of death*' turning point, the women had forgiven their partners violence but the possibility of death, coupled with the realisation that their partners demonstrated a callous lack of care for them, altered how the

women viewed their intimate relationship. This is a good example of how responses to turning points are influenced by how women view the transitional turning point and their relationship (Chang et al., 2010). In the present study the two themes '*the possibility of death from violence*' and '*broken promises*' connected to create a powerful turning point that encouraged the women to take action.

The theme '*broken promises*' connects with research that has identified a number of personal and interpersonal losses that occur for women leading up to the turning point (Eiskovits, Buchbinder & Mor, 1998). Most relevant to the present study are the interpersonal losses which Eiskovits, Buchbinder & Mor (1998) identified as consisting of three types of loss: loss of faith that the partner will change; loss of the ability to recognise positive traits in each other; and loss of love.

In the present study the reported theme of '*broken promises*' lends credence to Eiskovits, Buchbinder & Mor's (1998) three types of loss. Specifically, a woman's loss of faith in the ability of her partner to change was evidenced across the narratives in the present study. Inevitably, this loss of faith, along with the continuing violence meant that the women did find it difficult to identify positive traits in their partner. The final category

of loss identified by Eiskovitzs, Buchbinder & Mor (1998), loss of love, is identified as contributing to the turning point the '*possibility of death from violence*' in the present study. At this point women have lost love for their partner.

#### ***8.1.4 Protection of children is a powerful turning point***

Another finding in the current study was that '*protection of children*' was a powerful turning point for all of the women. This turning point highlights that alongside the women's fight to survive was their need to protect their children. The women interviewed privileged the protection of their children at the height of extreme violence. The literature on women's concerns about the impact of the violence on the children currently and in the future is particularly relevant to the findings of the present study. A majority of the women identified that the turning point, '*protection of children*', was primarily about keeping the children safe from immediate violence. The women described the specific context of violence that motivated the turning point: children being in the room when their mother is being beaten; children unwillingly being a part of overly-aggressive play-fighting with the violent partner which escalated to being out of hand; children trying to stop their father from beating their mother; or, a young

child placing a plastic bag over her head in an attempt to express her view of the violence occurring between her parents. That children in the present study were exposed to IPV is consistent with New Zealand and Australian literature (Maxwell, 1994; O'Brien, Cohen, Pooley & Taylor, 2013). In particular, a retrospective study in New Zealand (Martin, Langley & Millichamp, 2006) found that one quarter of young adults had witnessed violence or threats of violence between one parent and another. In New Zealand, children are present at about half of all family violence callouts by police. Police have reported that in approximately 70% of family units where IPV exists, the children are also direct victims of some form of violence (Murphy, Paton, Gulliver & Fanslow, 2013).

The protection of children as a turning point in the present study is strongly connected to the women's role as mothers. As discussed in chapter two (see 2.2.2), the literature recognises that IPV will have an impact on the mothering role, although there are differing conclusions as to whether the impact is negative or positive (Peled & Gil, 2011). In terms of turning points, the women's stories in the present study suggest that overall, women acted positively in their mothering role to protect their children.

### ***8.1.5 Others influence turning points***

The present study highlights how others can either motivate or de-motivate women to move away from IPV (for further discussion on the impact of formal and informal supports on women in violent relationships see Section 8.3). Attitudes of others towards IPV can have a significant impact on how women respond to IPV (Flood & Pease, 2009). While the literature tends to frame the influence of others as help seeking responses related to women in violent relationships (Gondolf & Fisher, 1998; Postmus, Seversen, Berry & Ah You, 2009; Taylor, 2002), it does not specifically recognise how responses from others might influence women's perception of the violence, the relationship, and her responses. That is the literature does not explicitly recognise women's turning points. The findings in the present study highlight the positive and negative contributions of others to women's turning points. For example, Lisa viewed the advertisement for the New Zealand "It's not ok" campaign and this motivated her to re assess her understanding of the violent relationship and the views that New Zealand society might have about violence in intimate relationships. The New Zealand "It's not ok" campaign endeavours to change attitudes towards family violence and campaign survey findings suggested that mass media is a useful vehicle for

publicising key messages about family violence (McLaren, 2010).

Primary prevention actions, such as social marketing campaigns are recognised as critical to addressing IPV (Coker, 2004).

#### ***8.1.6 Turning points are interconnected***

The turning points identified in the current study, while presented under different themed headings, do not operate in isolation from one another. For example, a woman may be experiencing a severe beating while her child is watching (as in Tui's story), and sometime soon after she may see the advertisements on the television as part of the New Zealand Government's Family Violence, "It's Not Ok campaign" (as was the case for Lisa). During this time, as the narratives demonstrate, she is resisting by considering the likelihood of her partner's potential for change and how the result of this assessment will determine her next course of action.

The next section of the findings chapter explores the skills and strategies women used in their journey of moving away from IPV.

## 8.2 Findings: Skills and Strategies

<b>Table 4. Skills and Strategies</b>			
<b>Turning Points</b>	<b>Skills &amp; Strategies</b>	<b>Supports and Barriers to Leaving</b>	<b>Process of Leaving</b>
Turning points occur pre- and post-leaving the relationship	Women acted compliantly in order to act on their plans	Mixed experiences in dealing with formal supports	Leaving is a gradual process
Turning points arise from a critical analysis of the violence context	Women developed a self with 'attitude'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justice</li> <li>• Police</li> <li>• Other services</li> </ul>	Early leaving is prevented by how women explain early signs of violence
Violence and Loss	Spiritual belief	Stigma and discrimination are prevalent in women's experiences	Leaving is complicated by gender role expectations
Protecting children	Engagement in education and employment		Post-relationship contact is unwanted but in many cases, necessary.
Others influence turning points	Informal support (physical, emotional, practical)		
Turning points are interconnected	Formal help seeking from the Police and Women's Refuge		

The current study aimed to understand the skills and strategies women employed whilst in the violent relationship, and in moving away from violence. As stated earlier in the thesis (see Section 2.5), women are sometimes portrayed as inactive in response to IPV (Cavanagh, 2003; Hayes, 2013); however, the participants in this study used a range of skills and strategies that were employed at various points in their journey away from violence. Some skills and strategies were used to cope with violence

while they were living with the abuser; others were employed after the women had physically left the relationship. Each woman's use of skills and strategies was influenced by her past and present context; her understanding of the resources available to her; and the physical, emotional, and cognitive impact the abuse had on her wellbeing. These two findings, which highlight multiple points of resistance and the influence of women's social location on resistance strategies, are consistent with other research in the area (Hayes, 2013). The women also considered their strategies in light of the knowledge they held about the patterns and personal characteristics of their violent partner.

### ***8.2.1 Women acted compliantly in order to action plans***

Compliance was employed both as a strategy to calm potentially escalating violence and as a way of making sure that plans to leave remained concealed. To protect themselves while they planned, the women planted money, car keys, and extra cell phones in various parts of their home. In planning to leave, the women were careful and secretive because of a clear understanding that leaving was dangerous to them and their families. This method of resistance is described by Rajah (2007) as a way of creating

safety zones for personal belongings and has the effect of leaving women with a sense of accomplishment.

For many of the women in the current study, the planning process could not be rushed; the time between planning to putting the plan into action, varied. The women drew on their skills of pretence; they carried on as though nothing had changed, sometimes becoming more compliant than usual so that their partner would not become suspicious of their plans to leave. In the stories shared, the women carefully considered their plans, rehearsing them in their minds. The plans made often included enlisting the help of friends. To gather belongings the women packed up small amounts at a time, and never anything large or conspicuous; again, so that their partners would not catch on to their plans to leave. In Wuest & Merritt- Gray's (1999) cyclical process of leaving and reclaiming self, as discussed in section 2.7.4, making plans is considered to be one strategy women use to counteract abuse.

While some of the women in the present study did make connections with others as part of the planning and leaving, most specifically the women talked about how they gave others specific tasks. For example, one participant engaged her friends to help her secretly move things out of the

home at a time when her partner was not there. Another participant made sure that her ex-husband (not the violent partner) had the care of their child while she “*played this out*”. Every aspect of the planning the participants carried out in the present study was thoughtfully designed and purposefully carried out.

As with other research studies (Chantler, 2006; Riddell, Ford-Gilbroe & Leipert, 2009) acting compliantly was a feature of the strategizing carried out by the women in the current study. As stated at the beginning of this section, women have sometimes been labelled as inactive in response to IPV. It may be, as suggested by Yoshihama (2002) and as revealed in the present study, that what is viewed as inaction or passivity is actually a women’s strategy of placating or acting compliantly in order to keep the abuser from knowing about her plans to leave (Strier & Binyamin, 2010). Women thus developed a ‘self’ with ‘attitude’.

### ***8.2.2 Self with attitude***

The study findings highlight personal development and determination as key components of managing IPV, leaving IPV, and building healthy lives once IPV had ended. Being determined, was a personal mind-set and attitude that motivated many of the women to take action. A determined

attitude is displayed by Lisa when she has to walk a long way, bruised and injured, with her children to seek legal support.

This finding best connects with Bandura's (1977, 1995) work on self-efficacy which is defined as one's belief in their ability to achieve goals. One of the impacts of IPV is reduced self-efficacy. Bandura's (1977, 1995) theory defined self-efficacy as a person's belief in their ability to achieve a particular goal. People with low self-efficacy, such as women in violent relationships, expect that their efforts to achieve a specific goal will be futile (Crawford, Brown, Walsh & Pullar, 2010; Wetterston et.al., 2004). Successfully securing and maintaining employment can enhance self-efficacy thereby strengthening a woman's resolve that she can stay out of the violent relationship.

In another example, Tui's demonstration of determination included physically fighting back against her partner. Using physical aggression to fight back is reflected in a range of studies (Banwell, 2010; Chantler, 2006). Johnson (2008), in his typology of violence in relationships determined that both men and women may use violence in relationships for different reasons. Johnson identified four types of violence that occurred in intimate relationships: *intimate terrorism* or violence used to control a

partner; *violent resistance* where the abused partner uses physical violence to protect themselves, not to control; *situational couple violence* where a partner is violent towards another (or both are violent) but not for the purpose of gaining control; and, *mutual violent resistance* where both partners are violent and controlling.

Examined from the perspective of Johnson's typology of violence frame, Tui's physical aggression towards her partner can be identified as violent resistance because she was attempting to resist her partner's control over her. There were limited choices available to Tui. In her relationship with Cooper there were gender inequalities that existed in terms of: her small stature in relation to Cooper's size and strength; his history of using violence and control against her and her extended family; and his stalking of her past the point when Tui had separated from him. When one considers that when Tui used violence as a form of resistance she was being beaten, and felt she was likely to be unconscious and therefore unable to protect her child, it seems there was no other viable option for Tui. Johnson (2008) suggests that violent resistance by the abused partner may be used as a way of escaping the violence and that some women may kill their partners as a way of stopping the violence.

### ***8.2.3 Spiritual belief***

For some women in the study, having a spiritual belief system provided the means to find motivation and determination within themselves. Spiritual beliefs also acted as a protective factor that warned one participant of impending violence. Spirituality provided the foundation for the development of strength and courage providing the women with the ability to view their current situation in a different light and enabled them to believe in a future without violence. Research on how women cope with IPV has found that spirituality or a belief in a ‘higher power’ can bolster a woman’s belief in her ability to leave violent relationships (Anderson, Renner & Danis, 2012). However, unlike other studies where women in violent relationships found support from religious leaders and attendance at church (Anderson, Renner & Danis, 2012; Hage, 2006; Senter & Caldwell, 2002), the women in the current study described their spirituality as private and were not connected with any religious institutions.

Previous studies have also identified spirituality and religiosity as a: central coping mechanism for indigenous populations (Mark & Lyons, 2010); a coping mechanism for people in managing life stressors (Fiala, Bjorck & Gorsuch, 2002; Pargament, Desai & McConnell, 2006); and, as a resource

for dealing with intimate partner violence (Boehm, Gotec, Krahn & Smith, 1999; Gillum, Sullivan & Bybee, 2006).

#### ***8.2.4 Engagement in education and employment***

Another strategy employed both during the violent relationship and after physically leaving the relationship was the gaining of independence; through undertaking study after leaving the relationship and through gaining employment. For two of the women securing employment was a crucial part of becoming financially independent and confident.

Employment provided an opportunity for Sharnie to get out of the house and have less contact with her abusive partner, Donald. The contacts made in the workplace provided Sharnie with the opportunity to forge a new work identity; one that was not tainted by Donald's violence, or by his often embarrassing and humiliating public behaviour. For Lisa, gaining employment and studying after she had left her relationship with Steve helped her to develop her skills in socialising with others. This gave her personal confidence.

New Zealand research has identified that maintaining employment is often difficult for women in IPV relationships (Pouwhare, 1999). Moreover, the impact of violence can last for years, even after women have left the

relationship, and sometimes this has an impact on a woman's ability to work (Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly 2007). Only one of the participants in the current study stated that their ability to work was effected by IPV.

However, both Sharnie and Lisa's stories provide an alternative view; that employment can be an activity that enhances wellbeing during and after IPV.

The women interviewed in the current study experienced employment as having different benefits depending on when, in relation to relationship context, they were employed; that is, whether the woman was still in the violent relationship or had moved away. While still in their relationships, some of the women found that employment provided an opportunity to escape the violence. Relatedly, a range of literature points to employment being used by women as a way to stay away from their violent partner (Bybee & Sullivan, 2005; Sabina & Tindale, 2008; Wetterston et.al., 2004). In the present study, after having left the violent relationship, employment helped the women regain belief in their abilities and potential.

### 8.2.5 *Informal support: physical, emotional, practical*

Seeking informal help from friends and family was an important survival strategy for most of the women. This finding is consistent with the research literature discussed in chapter two (Section 2.5.4) that recognises the impact informal support can have on the moving away from violence process (Goodkind et al. 2003). Some women found that they did not enlist the practical support of family because they felt ashamed, they didn't want their family to worry, and because the women feared that their violent partner would turn their violence towards family members. My analysis of the women's narratives revealed that the help sought and provided could be organised into three areas: (1) physical support; (2) emotional support; and, (3) practical support.

*Physical support* that was provided directly in relation to a violent event was critical. In this context the friend or new partner physically and emotionally resisted the abuser on the woman's behalf. Interestingly, I found that a number of the women found physical support through the presence of another male, for example, Maggie said "*Harry ...gave me another body in the house*". The reference to Harry as a "body" perhaps objectifies him while signifying also the level of security Maggie felt with

Harry's presence in the home. When a male friend or new partner was around, the violent ex-partner refrained from harassing or being abusive towards the women as is shared by Vicky who stated "*I didn't get beaten up. And Sam didn't get beaten up. And I think he just went away. I think Sam was a bit of a match with him. I don't know*".

Objectification literature emphasises the connection between objectification and dehumanisation where the person being objectified is viewed as lacking in two distinct ways. Firstly, as lacking in qualities associated with human nature, such as warmth, compassion and emotion. Secondly, as deficient in attributes, such as rational thought and intelligence, that distinguishes humans from other animals, (Fiske, 2013; Haslam, Loughnan & Holland, 2013). In addition, objectification has been connected to stereotyping which is viewed as a way of dehumanising (Fiske, 2013). Perhaps Maggie is activating a stereotype of New Zealand men as tough, rugged, physical and brave providers for their families (Morin, Longhurst & Johnston, 2001; van Campenhout & van Hoven, 2013) in her description of Harry as a "body".

The presence of another male as a physical support for women moving away from violent relationships is not well addressed in the literature.

Scheffer Lindgren and Renck (2008) in their interviews with women about the leaving process found that some of the woman had built a new relationship with a non-violent male partner who was an important support to them.

The women in the current study appear to suggest that their violent ex-partners acted differently when they became aware another male was involved in the woman's life. This could mean that the ex-partner considered that they could no longer have control over the woman anymore or were unwilling to challenge another male. However, this is at odds with the literature on the connection between constructions of manhood and IPV. Research has explored how threatened masculinity may be linked to IPV (Bosson, et.al, 2009; Bosson & Vandello). The authors defined manhood as a tenuous social status that is earned through securing resources, competitiveness and defensiveness, as opposed to womanhood that is earned physically and biologically when a female reaches a particular milestone in her life. Manhood is described as tenuous because it can be easily lost; men need to continually prove their manhood, often through demonstrating their physical dominance, hence the reason for violent aggression towards others (Bosson et. al, 2009; Bosson & Vandello, 2011). According to the narratives in the present study, violent

ex-partners were hesitant to try to engage with the women once they knew another male was involved, thus there was no attempt to validate their masculinity. Or conceivably, the presence of another male signified to the ex-partner that he is no longer in control.

*Emotional support* sustained the women throughout the violent relationship and through the process of separating from violence. Being in a violent relationship and planning to leave was emotionally exhausting for all of the women in the study. The support the women gained from friends and family was especially important because of the caring and understanding way in which the support was provided. The emotional support provided the women with reassurance and a growth in confidence in their ability to cope with and then leave the violent relationship. Emotional support was also important for accountability in terms of the decisions made; for example, Celia asked her friend to keep her accountable. Celia says, “*I’d made the decision and I said to Craig, I need you to hold me accountable, this is what he’s done*”.

*Practical support* provided by others comprised being a part of separating plans; helping taking care of children; assisting in the packing up of household items; and providing a place to stay or finding accommodation

for women. Some of the women found that the presence of a male friend enhanced their own skills in strategies in coping with the violent relationship. The practical support offered by the male friends acted as a catalyst for some women in two ways; motivating women to stand up to their abuser and by acting as a deterrent to the abuser. As stated earlier, there is scant literature about the role of male friends who support women in violent intimate relationships.

#### ***8.2.6 Formal help seeking: Police and Women's Refuge***

The Police and Women's Refuge were the two key agencies that women most often used in the process of resisting and strategizing to move on from violence. The majority of women identified numerous contact times with both agencies. The Police were contacted by the women mostly when there was a violent event, but sometimes contact was made by the women (outside of a violent event) to alert the Police as a prevention measure, or to clarify information. Women's refuge was mostly contacted by the women when they needed a safe place to reside for a while.

The strategies women have used raise some interesting questions in relation to service provision; should IPV social service programmes

provide vocational training and prepare women to enter the workforce?  
How do formal services encourage personal growth and determination in women and how is emotional support, physical support, and practical support encouraged? Extending on from this, how do providers support extended family and friends, to support the women? These questions are addressed in Chapter nine where I suggest a holistic emancipatory approach as a foundation for working with women.

Against the background of IPV, the women in the current study have shown that they consistently resist violence by using a diverse and context driven set of skills and strategies. It is not useful, then, to think of one set of skills and strategies as the most advantageous, rather, it is important to think of skills and strategies as unique to the women and their situations.

### 8.3 Findings: Supports and Barriers to Leaving Violent Relationships

<b>Table 5: Findings Supports and Barriers to Leaving</b>			
<b>Turning Points</b>	<b>Skills &amp; Strategies</b>	<b>Supports and Barriers to Leaving</b>	<b>Process of Leaving</b>
Turning points occur pre- and post-leaving the relationship	Women acted compliantly in order to act on their plans	Mixed experiences in dealing with formal supports	Leaving is a gradual process
Turning points arise from a critical analysis of the violence context	Women developed a self with 'attitude' Spiritual belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justice</li> <li>• Police</li> <li>• Other services</li> </ul>	Early leaving is prevented by how women explain early signs of violence
Violence and Loss	Engagement in education and employment	Stigma and discrimination are prevalent in women's experiences	Leaving is complicated by gender role expectations
Protecting children	Informal support (physical, emotional, practical)		Contact post relationship is unwanted but in many cases, necessary.
Others influence turning points	Formal help seeking from the Police and Women's Refuge		
Turning points are interconnected			

### ***8.3.1 Mixed experiences in dealing with formal supports***

The women interviewed showed strength and resilience while in violent relationships and during the process of moving away from violence, and in their ability to contact formal supports. The formal supports that women interacted with included the justice system (courts and lawyers), the Police, women's IPV services (such as Women's Refuge or Battered Women's Trust), child protection services (such as the Department of Child, Youth and Family) and medical and counselling services. The present study found that women had mixed experiences in dealing with formal supports while coping with and moving on from IPV.

#### ***8.3.1.1 Justice system***

Women who experience IPV are involved in court processes in relation to protection orders and child custody issues. Generally, the women who talked about the justice system had different experiences. The justice system response in New Zealand has changed over time (see 2.4); in the past, as described by one participant, help was not offered by the justice system if the couple were not married. Now, with the Domestic Violence Act, 1995, provision is made for a wider range of people to gain protection

from violence. As in other industrialized nations, New Zealand, in part, has taken a criminal justice approach to IPV where victims are to be protected; however, there have been questions about how sufficiently the justice system responds to women in violent relationships. In a Canadian study (Letourneau, Duffy & Duffet-Leger, 2012):

Negative experiences were far more common for these women and reflected the convoluted bureaucratic system and ineffectual services that made it challenging for them to access effective support within the criminal justice system, as well as negative attitudes and ineffective systems that left them feeling revictimized (p.593).

The women in the current study expressed frustration in the court system which, in their experience, did not do enough to contain their abusive partners. A strong theme throughout the women's narratives is that protection orders did not actually protect victims as the court system did not punish the offender. Lisa (see 7.1.5) in her experience of how the court system works highlighted how the needs of the offender can be privileged over the needs of female victims of IPV. In her story, Lisa's ex-partner had breached the protection order on multiple occasions and when he did attend court he managed to find ways to delay the court process creating further emotional stress and financial pressure for her.

A positive experience is shared by one participant who had expected an insensitive approach but instead found that the Judge presiding over her custody case was perceptive in his understanding of the challenges facing her. In terms of the legal advice received, some women found experienced lawyers who were unfair in their response. This was particularly the case for one participant who was in a lesbian relationship and was refused assistance. Others were fortunate to engage with lawyers who were understanding of their situation and able to offer practical and emotional support.

As discussed earlier ( see 2.4.1), research in New Zealand (Robertson et al., 2007) has found that there are aspects of securing a protection order that are prohibitive for women. Additionally, laws related to the legal custody of children post parental separation mean that women are sometimes forced to have contact with their violent ex-partners. This was a common theme throughout the women's stories of moving away from IPV.

### ***8.3.1.2 Police***

Participants in the current study had contact with the Police when they informed the police about the possibility of violence; when they wanted to clarify information, for example, the whereabouts of their ex-partner; when

a violent event occurred; and, in between violent events when the Police may have been in ongoing contact with a woman in order to offer support. The women's stories indicated a wide variety of responses from the Police. One participant described a Police Officer as her 'saviour', and another described Police officers that were supportive and encouraging. However, there were also stories of Police Officers who minimised violent events and this was devastating to the women concerned. For another participant, Rose (7.2.1), the Police mistakenly brought her ex-partner to her home without checking their records first. Concern was raised by one participant who lived in a rural area when in a violent relationship (7.2.2). She questioned whether Police who are members of small rural communities are able to be impartial professionals when involved in policing violent individuals who belong to long standing, well respected rural families in that community.

Studies have indicated that Police use discretion (professional judgment) in apprehending IPV offenders (Cross & Newbold, 2010; Green & Kelso, 2010). A number of factors influence discretion, including race and ethnicity; the severity of the offence; the demeanour of the offender; whether the complainant wants apprehension to occur, or not; the rule of law; police policy and organisational customs; and finally, community

characteristics (Green & Kelso, 2010). In one study (Horwitz et al., 2011) it was found that Police officers felt powerless when some IPV offenders were not punished and therefore the wider *justice* system has an influence on the decision making of Police officers in IPV situations.

### **8.3.1.3 Women's Refuge**

The main IPV provider the women had contact with was Women's Refuge. In the main, participants found the experience of staying in a refuge safe house challenging. While the availability of a safe house to go to when escaping violence was valuable for participants, the stay at the house was generally described as stressful and uncomfortable. For one participant, whose abuser was female, the refuge safe house was not a place of safety as her abuser knew the location of the house and was able to make contact; most probably because she was female.

Participants included in their narratives positive experiences with Women's Refuge. The information provided was enlightening for one woman, while for another the course that her child attended was extremely valuable. There is disparity in the experiences the women had with refuge workers. Some expressed positive and supporting experiences, while others suggested that workers were cold and 'cranky', and asked a lot of questions about the IPV experience. The women's narratives indicated that

they would have liked to see a demonstration of care from refuge workers. Overseas literature has suggested that living in a refuge environment can be challenging (Glenn, 2010) and sometimes having to live within the rules stipulated in the refuge environment can leave women feeling powerless, disheartened and alone (Glenn, 2010).

#### **8.3.1.4 *Other services***

Medical practitioners, child protection services, and individual and group counselling services were also accessed by participants. Again, the women described mixed experiences of all of the services provided except for the experience of child protection services. Only one woman had direct contact with the statutory child protection agency (7.3.2.1.1), the Department of Child, Youth and Family (CYF). She described her experience of a Family Group Conference process in relation to her newborn child as traumatic because the conference was held with her abusive partner's family present and none of her own. Other participants, even though they did not have direct contact with CYF, were in fear that CYF would be informed that they were living in a violent relationship and their children would be removed. The women's narratives demonstrated that they were very aware of the role of CYF. The difference between refuge services and child protection services is well documented and these

differences are exacerbated in work with women and their children, thus child protection services would “focus on the child’s needs first, with the women’s role as mother as the emphasis in the situation” (Appel & Kim-Appel 2006, p.233).

Medical practitioners were sought for help with the violent relationship generally and for help with levels of anxiety experienced by participants. The help received in terms of the violent relationship is described by women as unhelpful and empowering. For instance, for the women who sought help for anxiety, medication was prescribed but neither woman stayed on the medication for long because it left them feeling depressed. In the participants’ experience, medication was prescribed because being an IPV victim was like having a disability; the women felt stigmatised by the IPV victim label. On the other hand, one woman found that contact with her medical practitioner was positive and provided the support and motivation for her to move away from the violence.

Participants entered into individual and/or group counselling at various stages of their moving on from violence journey and reported in their stories that counselling was a positive experience. Counselling provided the women with an opportunity to explore their inner selves in order to

reach a better understanding of their situation and decision making processes. The experiences of counselling shared by the women integrate with the personal development strategies used to manage, leave, and stay away from violent relationships.

Unfortunately, the women reported that the number of counselling sessions available under mandated programmes was insufficient. In one woman's words, "10 sessions for 10 years of shit" alluded to the many years of accumulated traumatic stress she had been under. Counselling was described by the women as assisting the healing process and in "learning how to live a violence-free life". In regard to the children's support programme, the number of sessions was also reported as inadequate; even though the women viewed the counselling as instrumental in helping children heal from IPV.

### ***8.3.2 Stigma and discrimination***

Coming through most strongly in the women's stories about the support and barriers that influenced their move away from IPV are narratives of stigma and discrimination. Throughout the process of moving away from violence the women faced discrimination from formal and informal supports that served to strengthen their belief that they did not deserve

help. For some of the women the discrimination did not deter their desire to continue to seek help to leave their violent relationship. For all participants the discrimination reinforced the power of their violent partner over their thoughts, feelings and actions.

#### **8.3.2.1 *Gender stigma***

Strong societal messages about the expected role of women in relationships, as dutiful partners and mothers, amplified the women's feelings of guilt at not meeting their relationship and parenting responsibilities. This finding is similar to findings discussed in the literature (see Section 2.5.2).

#### **8.3.2.2 *Victimhood stigma***

Additionally, the participants in this study were strongly categorised by both informal and formal supports as 'victims'. Even though a woman may have been studying, or holding down a full time job, the fact that she had experienced IPV tainted every interaction she had with IPV services. Generally, services that work with women who have experienced IPV, in New Zealand and the Western world are influenced by a discourse of patriarchy that positions violence against women as the result of men's struggle for control and dominance over women (see 2.3.1). This feminist explanation for IPV positions women as either victims or survivors. The

articulation of women as victims of IPV was a powerful tool used to support the feminist movement and draw attention to the issue of IPV. However, as stated earlier (see 2.5), victimhood has been constructed as referring to women as passive, dependent, and weak in their response to IPV.

Extant literature indicates that professionals working with women who have experienced IPV are influenced by myths about IPV; in particular, interpretations of victimhood will influence service delivery interventions (McMullan, Corlan & Nored, 2010; Policastro, 2013).

### ***8.3.2.3 Stigma in rural settings***

Maggie experienced stigma in the way the Police in her rural town responded to her violent ex-partner (see 7.2.2). In Maggie's situation the Police, who knew the violent partners family well, on one occasion excused his violent behaviour towards Maggie as occurring because he was "just a kid". The labelling of a violent young man in this way could reflect the Police officers long and friendly association with the perpetrators family and/or the Police officer's view of the difference in age between Maggie and her partner (with Maggie being older). This example highlights that not only can professionals be influenced by myths about IPV and perceptions of victimhood, but also by their personal connections.

Maggie's experience of stigma and discrimination in a rural setting reflects findings from rural IPV studies which indicate that rural contexts can foster barriers to moving away from IPV. Some of the barriers include gender stereotypical views of women, a lack of confidentiality for women due to an 'everybody knows everybody' climate, or alternatively, the existence of a rural culture that views IPV as a private family matter, and the existence of strong traditional male networks that privilege and support men in the area (Anderson, Renner & Bloom, 2013; Riddell, Ford-Gilboe, & Leipert, 2009; Schafer & Giblin, 2010). The confluence of these contextual factors can impact on a woman's ability to report the violence or move away from the violence.

#### **8.3.2.4 *Sexual identity stigma***

One participant experienced stigma and discrimination in relation to her sexual identity. On each occasion (as described in 7.2.3 and 7.1.4) the professionals concerned ignored Adele's need for assistance. The same sex IPV literature emphasises the scarcity of research in this area and this is particularly the case in New Zealand (Lievore & Mayhew, 2007). International literature points to a number of factors that impact women in violent same sex relationships.

IPV has traditionally been constructed as a gendered issue (see 2.3.1) so that the dominant view of IPV is that men are the perpetrators and women are the victims. This heterosexist view, if held by formal and informal supports, will impact on the moving away from IPV process for women in same sex relationships (Brown, 2008). There may exist heterosexist myths about lesbian relationships (Little & Terrance, 2010) where there is an assumption that lesbian relationships are egalitarian and harmonic (Duke & Davidson, 2009) and that any violence by women, because they are physically weaker than men, will not be physically damaging (Seelau, Seelau & Poorman, 2003). All of these uninformed heterosexist views can lead to IPV in same sex lesbian relationships being minimised. Anticipated discrimination may be a factor that inhibits reporting of same sex IPV; where women choose not to report the violence knowing that they will not be believed and that they will face IPV services that are unprepared and ignorant about the dynamics of lesbian IPV (Simpson & Helfrich, 2007).

<b>Table 4. Moving Away From Violence Findings</b>			
<b>Turning Points</b>	<b>Skills &amp; Strategies</b>	<b>Supports and Barriers to Leaving</b>	<b>Process of Leaving</b>
Turning points occur pre- and post-leaving the relationship	Women acted compliantly in order to act on their plans	Mixed experiences in dealing with formal supports	Leaving is a gradual process
Turning points arise from a critical analysis of the violence context	Women developed a self with 'attitude' Spiritual belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justice</li> <li>• Police</li> <li>• Other services</li> </ul>	Early leaving is prevented by how women explain early signs of violence
Violence and Loss	Engagement in education and employment	Stigma and discrimination are prevalent in women's experiences	Leaving is complicated by gender role expectations
Protecting children	Informal support (physical, emotional, practical)		Safety concerns impact on the leaving process
Others influence turning points	Formal help seeking from the Police and Women's Refuge		Contact post relationship is unwanted but in many cases, necessary.
Turning points are interconnected			

## **8.4 Findings: The Process of Moving Away from Violence**

The following section discusses the findings related to the research question, *what is the process of moving away from intimate partner violence?*

### ***8.4.1 Leaving is a gradual process***

One of the options for ending the violence is to leave the violent relationship. The process of separation is described by the women as an emotional, cognitive, and physical process that began at the first sign of violence and continued beyond the point when they had physically left the relationship. Moving out of the relationship to safety from violence took years for most of the women. Early indications of violence are described by the women as both verbal and physical, and either directed at the women or towards friends.

Social context influenced each woman's reading of their violent partner's behaviour. An example is the societal narrative influenced by social learning theory that had an impact on Lisa's view of the violence. A social learning analysis suggests that IPV is learned, therefore, men learn when, where and against whom to use violence. Bakker (1998) in a critical examination of social learning theory, stated that men learn to use violence

against women “in order to achieve certain goals, when they feel frustrated or angry, or when they have been drinking” (1998, p. 65). According to social learning theories, men learn to use violence “in the privacy of their own home” (Bakker, 1998, p. 65) and learn to use violence against “a subordinate, or less powerful person” (1998, p. 65). Violence towards women is maintained by the rewards or reinforcements that men perceive are gained as a result of the violence. There may be differences in how male and female children perceive IPV, for example boys may feel pressure to behave in ways that meet societal expectations of what it is to be male (O’Leary, 1988). Youth exposed to IPV hold normative stereotypical views about gender roles (Phillips & Phillips, 2010), and exposure to severe IPV during adolescence increases the possibility of being in an adult relationship where IPV is a feature (Smith et al., 2011).

#### ***8.4.2 How women explain early signs of violence can prevent leaving***

The women proposed a range of restrictive explanations to make sense of the violence that was occurring in their relationships, which seemed to contribute to their predicament. Early violent events were justified by the women who on the basis of their analysis of the violence forgave their partner while at the same time taking responsibility themselves for the

violence occurring in the first place. For some of the women taking responsibility for the violence centred around blaming themselves; coming to the conclusion that they were mad, depressed, unwell in some way, or, as Celia described, volatile herself.

This finding is consistent with the literature explored earlier in section 2.6.4 of the thesis (Church, 1984; Giles, Cureen & Adamson, 2005; Wuest & Merritt-Gray, 1999). However, the reasons given for justification and self-blame in the current study are in contrast to findings noted in the other studies. For example, Giles, Cureen & Adamson (2005) in their phased process of leaving model, noted that the women in violent relationships have romanticised ideas of love and thus take responsibility and blame themselves for the occurrence of violence. In Wuest & Merritt-Gray's work (1999), women minimised the violence as a way of protecting themselves. However, Wuest & Merritt-Gray's research highlights that the reason women minimise the occurrence of violence is because they are ashamed of themselves.

In the current study, the women overwhelmingly identified their views of the role of women in intimate relationships and their love for their partner as leading to taking responsibility for their partner's violence. Acceptance

of blame stemmed from the women's ideas about how they should behave in the relationship. As discussed earlier in the thesis (section 2.5.2) societal narratives underpin women's views of their role in relationships. In the current study, when women took responsibility for the violence themselves, they believed that the impetus for changing the relationship must also come from them. Explanations for the violence were also influenced by past experiences. For Ana, it was her family's labelling of her mother's behaviour as "crazy" that had an impact on how long she remained in the violent relationship.

#### ***8.4.3 Leaving is complicated by gender role expectations***

Role expectations are also a powerful influence on the leaving process. The women in the current study explained that leaving was influenced by their views of relationships, in particular their role within the relationship, and their role as mother. The stories have highlighted the influence that societal narratives have on the construction of motherhood; if the women did not measure up to widely held views of motherhood they perceived themselves as faulty and therefore as 'bad' mothers. Societal narratives, therefore, had the impact of further victimising the women (see Sections 2.5.2 & 8.3.2). Celia's story is a good example of the result of struggling

with societal narratives of motherhood alongside her need to stay in her relationship with Dion because she loved him; the consequence for her was an emotional breakdown. The women's stories emphasise the importance of considering gender roles in any analysis of IPV. The positioning of the self as a culpable actor who contributes to the violence runs parallel with constructing the man as "less responsible."

IPV is likely to have an impact on the mother-child relationship. Tui reports that she had to build trust again with her daughter; Celia knew that her decision to remain in the violent relationship would have an impact on her relationship with her daughter. Of relevance here is whether mothers who have experienced domestic violence talk to and help their children cope with their feelings and emotions about the IPV. There will be variation in how women and children perceive the IPV and their relationships with each other. How women manage relationships with their children will also be influenced by the cultural context in which the parent grew up, the experiences they have had with their own parents, other parents in their environment, and the experiences they have with their own children (Xiong, Detzner, Cleveland, 2004).

The women, through their stories, expressed personal views about how wives should behave in intimate relationships. Lisa expressed this view in her story about her partner's reaction to dinner not being ready on time; and exposure to further verbal and physical violence. Her ability to care for her child was also impacted. Briana too had a particular view about how her marriage should be and determined that her husband's violence towards her was something that was "natural". These views about the role of women in relationships were so powerful that the women were unable to act to end the violence or the relationship.

Love and needing was a strong finding presented by all of the women in the study. Each of the women had made an emotional commitment to their relationship. Their love and need for their partner impacted on the separation process; a number of the women were of the view that they needed their partner and would not be able to survive without them. On the issues of love in relationships and intimate partner violence, gender is a symbolic, social, and cultural category that structures the way romantic partners experience being a couple (Goldner, 1985; Goldner, Penn, Sheinberg & Walker, 2004). Part of the expectation about being a couple is informed by the societal narrative about femininity that promotes passive loving, caring, and nurturing roles for women. Boonzaier (2008) suggested

that women's narratives about violent relationships "contain culturally embedded stories of romance or fairy tale, employed in order to make sense of the violence" (2008, p.184). An impact of this narrative for some abused women is that they may view an acceptable self-construction as one where they accept blame, take responsibility for dealing with the abuser's problems, and deny or minimize the partner's abusive behaviour.

Ana and Adele presented different experiences of motherhood and IPV. Ana was firmly of the view that she would no longer have a relationship with her partner once she became pregnant. Perhaps this is because she became pregnant once she had already left the relationship. Adele demonstrated how her partner, Tonya, used a traditional concept of motherhood as a tool of violence towards her, knowing that any reports of poor mothering could be followed up by the authorities. In addition, Adele highlighted that there is a societal narrative about women who are unable to have their own children and then adopt. For her the societal narrative suggested that women who adopt are less authentic than women who can conceive a child. Adele's perception that conceiving and raising one's own child is valued by society over adoption had a powerful influence on Adele's leaving process. Adele's positioning of herself as a

less than authentic mother, coupled with Tonya's violence immobilised Adele's actions with respect to leaving.

#### ***8.4.4 Safety concerns impact on the process of leaving***

The study found that the women's process of leaving from their violent partners was influenced by their fear for the safety of their families. This finding is consistent with findings from other research as discussed in Section 2.5.5 (Abrahams, 2010; Murphy, 2002; Robertson et al., 2007; Seuffert, 1996; Towns & Adams, 2009). Leaving a violent relationship can be extremely dangerous for women and their family and friends and as discussed earlier in the thesis (2.5.5) women assess the level of risk of harm to themselves and others should they decide to leave. Tui expressed the threats of violence that were directed at her brother, while Lisa told the story of the 'choice' she had to make between contact with her mother, or keeping her children. She found herself having to make an impossible decision, one that served to further compromise her ability to separate from her partner.

Safety concerns may also propel women to make the decision to leave. In sections 2.6.1 and 8.1.4, I have discussed how the protection of children

can be a powerful turning point in women's decision to leave a violent relationship. Other research also indicates that the risk of harm to others can influence the leaving process (Amanor-Boadu, 2012; Matlow & DePrince, 2015).

#### ***8.4.5 Contact post relationship: unwanted and necessary***

Even after the women separated there were processes that forced them to remain in some form of formal contact with their ex-partner. Rose highlighted one such process by describing the mediation process she had to enter with her ex-partner over child access arrangements. While the process was stressful for Rose, she believed that all children have the right to contact with their parents and so in some way she puts her own concerns aside and takes responsibility for maintaining father-child relations. The post relationship contact experiences of the women in this study replicate findings discussed in the literature (see Section 2.5.5.3.3 and 2.6.6.5) where the women felt forced to have contact with their ex-partner; even though they felt pressured by the contact. The women in this study accepted the father-child contact by perceiving it as necessary and of value to their children.

Much of what is stated in the IPV literature is reflected here: separating from a violent relationship can be a dangerous time for women. Almost all of the women suffered from ongoing threats of violence post-separation, and threats were often extended to friends and family. The continuing violence hampered the women's ability to be completely free of their violent relationship.

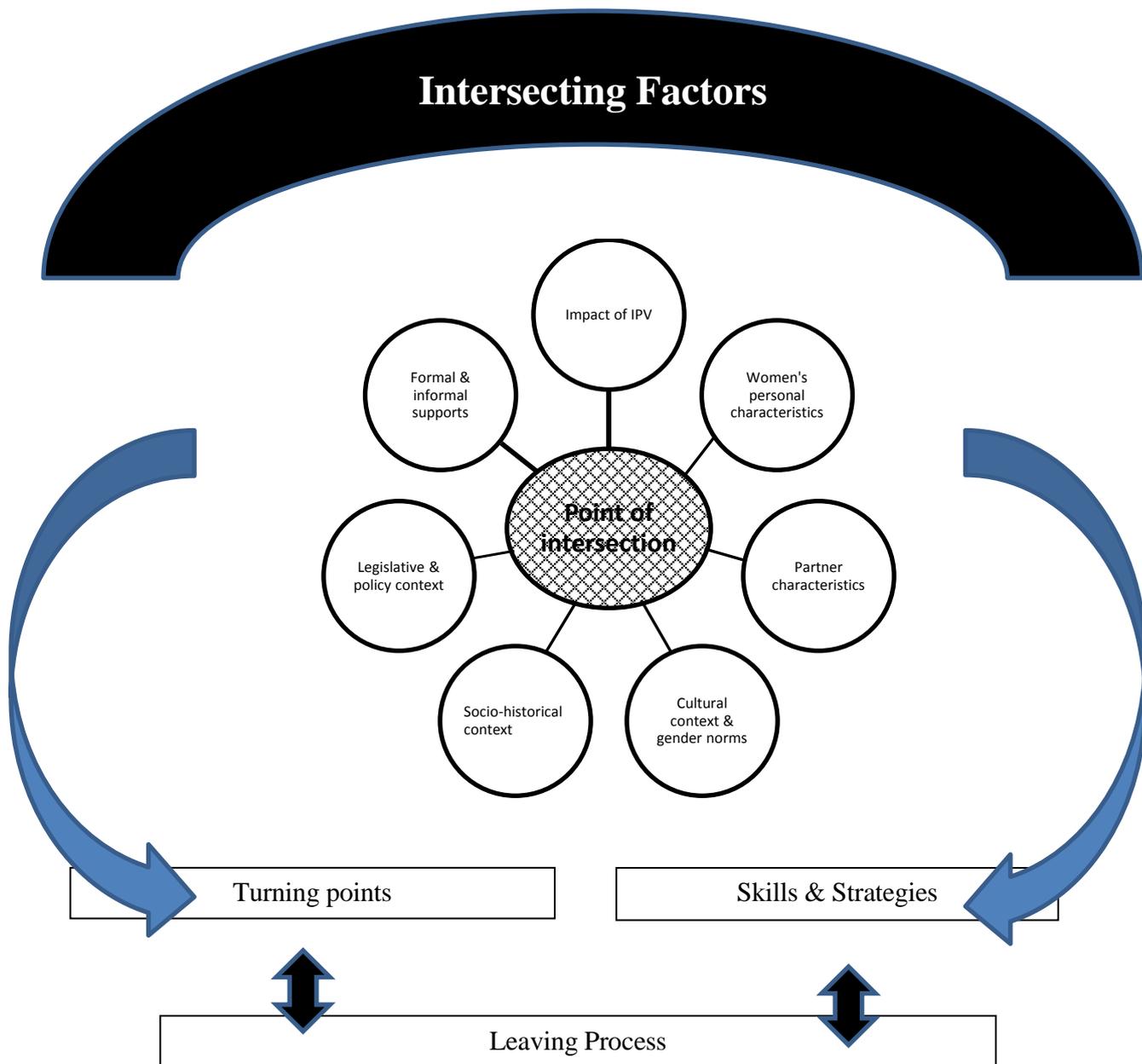
## **8.5 Intersections**

In examining what prompts women to move away from IPV, the skills and strategies used to move away, the moving away process itself, and the responses to women, this study has found that there are a number of factors that have shaped the everyday lives of women who have experienced IPV and have influenced their journey away from IPV. Chapter 3 (see 2.3.2) introduced how the theoretical framework of intersectionality can be used to highlight the forces that shape identity over time, and how applying only a gender lens to violence against women may neglect the multiple facets that influence women's experiences of moving away from IPV.

Figure 2 introduces the idea that there are multiple factors that influence how women move away from IPV. The diagram, *intersecting factors and leaving violent relationships*, illustrates that turning points and the strategies and skills employed by women are influenced by intersecting factors including: the impact of IPV; personal characteristics; partner characteristics; cultural context and gender norms; socio-historical context; legislative and policy context; and, formal and informal supports. The intersecting factors comprise personal, relationship, and structural elements thereby recognising the influence of each of these elements on a woman's journey away from violence. As stated earlier (see Section 3.2.6), intersectionality can be thought of as having three defining aspects (Choo & Marx Terree, 2010), each acknowledged in Figure 2. These defining aspects emphasise that: experience is influenced by multiple factors; different forces shape a person's identity over time; and, systems of power and privilege will shape experience over time.

The turning points and strategies influence the overall leaving process, and can also impact on the intersecting factors.

Figure 2. Intersecting Factors and Leaving Violent Relationships



The process of moving away from violence is unique for each woman, and influenced by multiple intersecting factors; this suggests alternative options, which take into account the intersections, for social work practice in the field of IPV. The implications of the current research study findings on IPV practice are discussed in the next chapter.

## **9 Chapter Nine: Implications for Practice and Conclusions**

A number of findings have emerged from this research that have implications for service and policy development and future research in the area. This chapter concludes the thesis by addressing the question “*what are the implications for social service provision?*”

The process of moving on from IPV occurs over a period of time: while women are physically still in the relationship; when women have physically separated from the relationship; and after the violence has stopped. Support for women living with IPV can be based around the various needs of women at different stages of the moving away process.

### **9.1 Containment of violent partners**

Death from IPV was a realistic concern for most of the women who participated in the study. Two of the women’s stories pre-date New Zealand’s 1995 Domestic Violence Act, however, a number of women had left their violent relationship within the last ten years; and, their abusers continued to stalk and harass the women and their families. In one instance, the stalking continued for eight years. The New Zealand approach to dealing with IPV has been to afford the women protection

through protection orders; however, according to the women in this study, more needs to be done by the justice system to contain violent partners.

A few of the women managed to make their move away from the violent relationship when their partner or ex-partner was sentenced to prison.

With their partner 'behind bars' the women were safe and had time to build their formal and informal support networks, settle on living arrangements, engage with supportive services, and essentially cement their move away from their partner in prison. Other women said that the leaving process took a long time because their attackers were not contained (section 8.3.1.1).

New Zealand has traditionally engaged in a criminal justice approach to IPV, favouring protection orders and rehabilitative court ordered programmes for perpetrators and victims. However, there were concerns expressed by the women in this study that this approach has not been successful in protecting women or reducing IPV. In recent years, an alternative, restorative justice, approach to IPV has been suggested (Hayden, 2012), even though there are concerns that moving away from a

criminal justice response to IPV may vitiate IPV being dealt with as a serious crime (Belknap & McDonald, 2010; Proietti-Scifoni & Daly, 2011).

Restorative justice processes give victims the opportunity, in a safe setting, to confront their perpetrator face to face, and to share their experience of the violence. It has been argued that a restorative justice process encourages perpetrators of IPV to be accountable and allows the women to tell her story about the violence; an opportunity that she would not have through the criminal justice process. In a restorative justice process there are consequences agreed to, and often the wider community is involved in the outcomes which are geared towards rehabilitation of the violent offender (Tisdall, Farmer, Robinson, Wells & McMaster, 2007). Dickson-Gilmore (2014) points to the challenges of a restorative justice approach in IPV situations stating that IPV is “uniquely resistant to restorative processes that rely on trust, apology and meaningful communication” (p.418). If perpetrators of IPV are to remain in the community the following responses could be considered as long as strong partnerships exist between the community, the police, courts, and refuge services.

## **9.2 Safe housing alternatives**

The stalking and harassment that continued for women after they had physically left the relationship suggests that more is required in terms of safe housing for women. Access to immediate shelter and support during the moving away from violence process was critical for the majority of the women. Women's Refuge was one alternative for housing, and while the experience of residing in the shelters was mixed there was strong acknowledgement that these houses are necessary for women to be able to leave. Women who had fewer positive experiences to report still acknowledged the key role of the refuge safe houses. These women, however, found it difficult to stay with others who in some instances were more traumatised than they were, or who seemed to be abusing the hospitality of the service. The cramped facilities were also difficult to manage where they felt their children needed extra support.

Current refuge safe houses in the Canterbury and South Canterbury regions are not necessarily culturally responsive to the needs of Polynesian women, and perhaps to the needs of other ethnic groups. Additionally, refuge safe houses are provided in various locations throughout the South Island, but for rural women safe housing is limited. This is especially the case in

small rural areas where the abuser may be part of a family who are long-time members of the community and are well known to the police and service providers. Other alternatives for safe housing need to be found; perhaps a gated community where women can feel they are protected, and where they do not have to share a home with other women and children.

### ***9.2.1 Security technology***

Security technologies have been used as a way of protecting women in their own homes with cell phones supplied and CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) systems in operation, at least until the violence has stopped. There are programmes in place internationally that use security technology to protect women. The Abused Women's Active Response Emergency (AWARE) has been in operation since 1992 in the United States and Canada. The AWARE programme strategy is collaboration between law enforcement, security services, court services, and IPV providers. ADT, a security company, donates and installs security systems in the homes of victims of IPV; victims are also provided with electronic necklace device which is monitored twenty four hours a day, seven days a week (National Crime Prevention Council, 2012). Another example of security technology protection for women is an ankle bracelet worn by the abuser. Phone

triangulation and global positioning systems help to indicate if the abuser is in a prohibited area. Economic constraints impact on the provision of such services; the AWARE programme is government funded with a sizeable contribution from the security systems company.

In New Zealand, the Ministry of Justice is planning to introduce a range of actions designed to keep victims of IPV safe (Tolley & Collins, 2014). Some of the ideas suggested by the New Zealand government include: strengthening homes by making doors and windows stronger and by improving locking systems; making mobile safety alarms available to victims; equipping police with GPS technology to track victims' location, along with tracking and monitoring offenders.

### **9.3 Funding**

Funding issues underlie many of the experiences reported above. Refugees rely on a mixed funding environment where they are funded by the family court to provide sets of mandated services which are strictly contained. The quality of the housing is determined by access to appropriate facilities and the ability to provide consistent, skilled staffing is reliant on pay scales and level of staff support available. All these factors rely on considerable

resources. The ability of refuges and safe houses to respond more effectively to IPV is reliant on increased funding of mandated programmes and recognition that the harm many women have sustained over many years will take years to repair for both the women and their children. The provision of parallel services to Maori women offers a flexible response that can be tailored to cultural needs.

## **9.4 Service Provision**

### ***9.4.1 Accessibility of services***

In general, participants maintained that services for women leaving IPV relationships should be easily accessible. This is especially important in rural areas where IPV services are not available; for women who are disabled; for women who are not heterosexual; and, for women who do not belong to the dominant ethnic group in society. Socially just societies ensure right of access to resources for all citizens (see Section 1.2.1). In the stories shared by the women in this research study, access to resources was inhibited either by geographical location, funding limitations, or by the discriminatory responses of professionals. Women experiencing IPV need access to coordinated health, education, justice and welfare services.

Women living with IPV need to have access to safe advice and support relevant to their IPV context; whether they have experienced early indications of violence, are still in the relationship and managing the violence, or, have left the violent relationship.

#### ***9.4.2 Acknowledging women's competency***

Through the strategies and skills employed to resist IPV and leave violent relationships the women demonstrated that they are competent, strong and determined. Competence has been described in the literature as relating to the range of knowledge, skills and attitude demonstrated by workers (Beckett, 2008; Fernandez et al., 2012). A case can also be made for competence to refer to the attitude, knowledge and skills demonstrated by the women in this study. While there is no question that IPV has a traumatic impact on women emotionally, physically, cognitively, and spiritually, the women in this study revealed how able they were in managing extremely complex and frightening situations. The women employed a particular attitude, and used their knowledge and skills to manage their IPV situations. The attitude displayed was expressed in the determination and motivation to survive that is evident throughout the women's stories; knowledge relates to the women's understanding of their violent partners personality characteristics and patterns of behaviour, and

their knowledge of themselves; and finally, skill was demonstrated in the way the strategies for resisting and moving away from violence were put into place.

Participants in this study consistently expressed their desire to be viewed as competent women who had multiple identities; as student, as mother, as sister, as employee. Instead, the women found that professional services viewed them only as victims. Services delivered to women may be more successful if professionals working in the field acknowledge that women who experience IPV, whether still in the relationship or having left, possess a range of competencies that they employ to resist IPV and are much more than just an IPV victim.

## **9.5 Specific Service Provision**

The following section makes suggestions, based on the research findings, for specific services that women included in their narratives: the police; primary health care; and programmes and counselling for women and children. The following implications apply also to social work practice.

### ***9.5.1 Police***

Police were often the frontline agency called on by the women and their friends and families, and they are commissioned with responding to IPV by New Zealand's criminal justice and family court systems. Police should have flexibility in their practice to support women moving away and the resources to provide consistent and persistent responses. While it is likely to be frustrating to police if women return to their violent partners, the accounts shared by participants show how critical support from police staff was in helping women to make changes. Where police actions were based on empathy, on providing practical assistance, and when the Police were skilful in recognising the potential for key turning points; their actions contributed to women moving away from violence and towards safety. Conversely, where Police actions failed to recognise the seriousness of the violence, and where the violence was minimised, the women's lives were put at further risk. Monitoring of attitudes towards victims of IPV would assist in ensuring that police responses are at all times professional. There were unsung heroes in the individual police staff who exercised their professionalism and competence and played a key role in women moving away from IPV.

### ***9.5.2 Primary Health Care***

Primary health care offers another frontline response for women. General practitioners and accident and emergency departments featured in women seeking treatment for injuries sustained in the home. The tendency to medicate the symptoms of violence rather than offer counselling and other forms of intervention seemed to do little to assist women; rather the prescription drugs involved affected their decision-making capacity. Ongoing education and training of health personnel is necessary to ensure that responses are effective and appropriate. A number of the women recounted experiences of being knocked unconscious and years of sustained physical violence. A comprehensive assessment of traumatic brain injury and other injuries needs to be considered by practitioners dealing with women victims. In addition, children who are present in long term violent situations need to be assessed as a matter of course for potential injuries they may have sustained. Close working relationships between the police and health services are necessary to protecting women and children in IPV situations and to attending to the potential long term health consequences.

### ***9.5.3 Programmes and counselling for women and children***

The process of separation from IPV can take years and during this time women may move in and out of a relationship with the violent partner. The women managed the violence as best they could, whether they were living with the abusive partner or not, and at the same time did their best to care for, and protect their children. Many of the women in the study described the impact IPV had on their relationships with their children; how they had struggled with maintaining a strong mother-child relationship. There is scope to develop programme and counselling responses that provide women with the skills to maintain or rebuild their relationships with their children.

Hearing the women in the study speak about their experiences of moving away from IPV highlighted the recognition that there needs to be ongoing training in this area. The following section explores the possible implications for professional education.

## **9.6 Educating Professionals about IPV**

Professional responses in the current study were varied and whether women received useful services and support appeared random; professional responses within any system or service area could not be guaranteed. This perhaps indicates a need for education to be provided to IPV providers and other workers in the field. Professional education about IPV should include information about the dynamics of violent heterosexual and same sex relationships, as well as content on non-stigmatising approaches to working with women and children victims of IPV. A ‘one size fits all’ approach to women who have experienced IPV is unsuitable given that women’s views and responses to the violence are likely to be heterogeneous. Professionals should have an understanding of the intersecting factors (see Figure 2) that influence a woman’s journey through IPV.

In terms of the communication medium used to make contact with women, the narratives in this research suggest that face to face contact is important because it is too easy to tell an anonymous worker on the phone that everything is going well, even when it is not. Additionally, the women’s narratives share their experience of being in communication with

professionals. Some professionals were described as standoffish and cranky, others as patronising, and some were described as arrogant. The findings indicate that women want to work with professionals who are personable and caring (see 7.3.3.2).

A common theme throughout the women's stories was that women preferred to work with professionals who were naturally engaging. This suggests that there is a need for specific micro skills professional development for working with the diverse range of IPV situations professionals might find themselves in. Women who have experienced IPV may have a range of social, psychological, and physical impacts (see 2.2.) from the violence and will feel more confident if they know that the professional they are dealing with is understanding and capable. In addition, there is a dearth of literature about moving away from IPV experiences from ethnic specific groups, as was raised by two of the participants in the current study. Nevertheless, the literature and practice evidence would suggest that professionals should also be culturally aware by being cognisant of the ethnic background and cultural values of the women they are working with and by translating that knowledge into culturally responsive professional practice (Crichton-Hill, 2001).

## **9.7 Implications for social work**

Social workers are employed in government and not-for-profit organisations that engage with women who have experienced IPV across the health, welfare, education, and justice sectors. Within these organisations social workers may be engaged in a range of activities including individual and family support, therapy and counselling, group work, and community work. Social work practice will include individual actions as well as actions that promote the social change and social justice aims of the social work profession.

One way to challenge discrimination and unjust policies is to employ a critical social work practice approach. Critical social work developed as an approach to counter what was seen as a paternalistic approach to social work practice that began with the professionalization of social. Arising from critical theory traditions, critical social work recognises that social, economic and political systems influence lived experience (Healy, 2000). The purpose of critical social work is emancipatory, that is, to address power inequalities and to challenge societal structures to reduce the oppression and discrimination that exists in the policies and processes that

impact on social work service delivery (Burke & Dalrymple, 2009; Fook, 2012; Healy, 2000; Morley, Macfarlane & Ablett, 2014; Weiss-Gal, Levin & Krumer-Nero, 2014).

### ***9.7.1 Holistic Emancipatory Approach***

Critical social work approaches advocate a holistic emancipatory approach that connects the personal and the political. Moving away from IPV is complex and requires a holistic response system, consisting of diverse organisations connected by their activities in the family violence field.

The holistic response system takes into account the range of intersecting factors that influence women's move away from violence. The components of work that could be incorporated into a holistic response system for women are shown in Table 6..

Table 6 organises four areas of work with women who are moving, or who have moved away from IPV. The first three areas of practical needs, assessment needs, and personal development needs, address the support requirement for women moving away from IPV. The final area, pragmatic activism, relates to work that social workers can undertake to improve awareness about moving away from IPV at a community and societal level.

**Table 6. Components of a holistic response system**

Practical Needs	<p>Immediate and ongoing safety needs</p> <p>Housing and accommodation needs</p> <p>Food needs</p> <p>Financial needs</p> <p>Transport, childcare needs</p> <p>Legal support</p>
Assessment Needs	<p>Comprehensive physical and psychological health assessment of women and their children</p> <p>Comprehensive drug and alcohol assessment</p> <p>Nutrition and exercise assessment and support for women and children</p> <p>Comprehensive assessment of formal and informal supports</p>
Personal Development Needs	<p>Individual and group counselling opportunities to assist with healing</p> <p>Independence enhancing activities that prepare women for employment, and or study</p> <p>Meaningful connection enhancing activities that support women to build relationships with others who share similar interests, or to explore new interests</p>

Pragmatic activism	Identify informal and formal barriers  Consciousness raising and possibilities for action with women  Contributing to public discourse about IPV – community engagement  Challenging discriminatory internal and external organisational practice
--------------------	---

Together, the components that make up the holistic approach recognise the dual focus of social work practice; the empowerment and liberation of people through social justice.

In Table 6, the *practical needs* area of work builds on the women’s stories about the skills and strategies they used and the practical supports that were helpful to them as they moved away from violence.

The *assessment needs* area of work is the opportunity to gather information about the woman’s situation and analyse this information to determine what changes may be made. A form of assessment will be common practice for many professionals that work with women who are leaving

violent relationships. Assessment tools used may include data gathering and analysis of the woman's physical and psychological health, any substance dependence, and an analysis of the informal and formal supports available to her. The nutrition and exercise component of the assessment needs area may not be a common part current assessment practice in IPV situations; however, the women in this study were clear that leaving a violent relationship is exhausting (see 8.2.4) and it is important for women to look after themselves nutritionally and physically.

Several of the women in this study pointed out the importance of employment or study to their moving away from violence process (see 6.2 & 6.3). The *personal ongoing development needs* section refers to a range of actions aimed at providing women with the opportunity to equip themselves with the resources to gain independence and to develop the belief that they can achieve any goals they set for themselves. For some women the goal might be employment, for others it might be gaining a qualification. The *personal ongoing developmental needs* section is intended to recognise the range of skills and knowledge that women have; in this way women are defined as more than victims. Avoiding language

that promotes the victimhood discourse is one way to ensure that social workers do not pathologise women's experience and further oppress them.

The pragmatic activism section in Table 5 refers to the role that social workers can play in empowering women and influencing political systems. Social workers have a responsibility to challenge unjust policies and practices, and promote policies that improve social conditions. As stated earlier in the thesis (see 1.2.1), a society's level of justice is determined by the policies in place that influence how services are delivered (Gil, 2010). The women's narratives highlighted the stigma and discrimination they faced from formal and informal supports and in relation to the structural processes that were in place, such as being required to have child custody and access discussions with a violent ex-partner, which made moving away from IPV extremely difficult.

Unfortunately, as noted earlier (see 1.2.2) it is difficult for social workers to effect grand social and political change in the context of an under-funded and under-resourced welfare system. Pragmatic activism (Healy, 2000) refers to practical, localised, and context relevant ways of achieving emancipatory practice within the confines of lean funding regimes. One way of practising pragmatic activism is to value the knowledge and

experience that women have about moving away from IPV. As the present research found, the women's experience of IPV raised their sensitivity to the barriers that exist within informal and formal systems. Working in partnership with women to identify the barriers to their moving away from IPV experience is the first step to developing a strategy for pragmatic activism.

In their work with women, social workers can consciousness-raise with women - this action already occurs in some education programmes with women who have experienced IPV. Teaching women to externalise the problem by examining the unique intersecting factors that have influenced her violence experience may help women to better understand the aspects of her IPV experience that were not within her control, as well as the multiple points of resistance she enacted through her competent use of a range of skills and strategies.

At the organisational and community level, social workers can engage in promoting information about the complexity of IPV situations and the need for adequate funding and resourcing of IPV services for women and children in urban and rural areas. Social workers can work with women who are involved with the service to identify ways to politicise action in

relation to IPV – this does not require marching down the street with a placard, but it could include writing a submission about IPV services, or writing to the Ministers of Parliament who have oversight of IPV services, or to *local* Ministers of Parliament who are have a responsibility to serve the population of the area.

Responses are needed that provide services for women and children throughout the course of the violent relationship; from the early indications of violence through to the point when violence has ceased. Even at the end point of violence, services may be needed to help women and children manage the longer term impacts of the violence.

As explored earlier (Section 8.4), the process of moving on from IPV is complex and influenced by a range of intersecting factors. Societal narratives that question why women stay in violent relationships are ignorant of how the abusers power and control permeates violent relationships, and do not comprehend the range of intersecting factors that can influence a woman's response to IPV. Additionally, social or cultural narratives may discredit the agency of women to decide for themselves and their children on a course of action. Professionals that come in to contact with women who have experienced IPV should adopt a positive and non-

judgemental attitude; they should demonstrate that they care about their IPV clients; and they should work in ways that are supportive of the woman's time frames while doing all they can to protect her and her children.

## **9.8 Further research**

### ***9.8.1 The role of extended family in the moving away process***

The turning points that the women described that occurred throughout the process of moving away from violence provide some useful indicators as to factors that may support women throughout the process. There is little New Zealand research about the role that families have played in supporting or inhibiting women from moving on from IPV. Interestingly, there is also sparse literature on the work that social workers do with the extended families of women who are in IPV relationships. The women in this study out of shame or from not wanting to cause concern protected their extended families from having knowledge about the IPV, and/or limited contact with their family members in order to protect them from the abuser. In addition, some family members managed to maintain threads of relationship with their abused loved one in such a way that a door was

always open for women to find protection. Furthermore, some families may want to know more about how they can support their loved one.

New Zealand's philosophy of practice with women has strong feminist foundations focused on gender analysis and individual empowering work with women and children. However, this approach seems to sit at odds with New Zealand's bicultural origins and in particular the values of Te Ao Maori (Maori worldview), which honours extended family connections and collective responsibility of family issues (Hollis-English, 2012; Webber-Dreardon, 1997). Some organisations have developed parallel services for Maori and there are Maori organisations that specifically cater to the Maori community. These services use a kaupapa<sup>6</sup> Maori approach underpinned by Maori values and Maori assessment and intervention techniques and a key part of this practice is enabling family to seek solutions (Boulton, Tamehana, & Brannelly, 2013; Hollis-English, 2012). It may be that such an approach can work with other populations. Research that explores the experience of women and service providers in engaging with families and the influence of this engagement on the moving away process would be

---

<sup>6</sup> *Kaupapa* refers to ideas or principles.

useful. Possible research questions might be, what skills and knowledge did families apply in supporting their family member? How can services include extended family in the work they do with women?

### ***9.8.2 Engaging with men***

The suggestions made in the implications for practice section of this chapter are an acknowledgment of the level of risk of further harm that is a feature for the women who end their violent relationships. Containment of violent partners, safe housing and improved security technologies were the implications for practice that arose from the findings of this research study. However, more understanding about the male perpetrators' experience of the women's leaving process may help us to understand what might work for men. Understanding the needs of men who perpetrate IPV may provide us with a better understanding of how to protect women.

## **9.9 Conclusion**

The women who participated in this research each responded to the IPV in their violent relationship in different ways. Each woman's response was dependent on the interaction of seven intersecting factors comprising: the impact of IPV, the woman's personal characteristics, her partner's

characteristics, cultural context and gender norms, socio-historical context, the legislative and policy context, and existing formal and informal supports. These intersecting factors influenced the turning points the women experienced and the skills and strategies they employed to move away from the violent relationship. While there existed many different ways of responding to the violence, there were some themes that united the women's stories. One theme that became apparent was that turning points occur throughout the violent relationship, during the moving away process, and after the violence and relationship have ended. Another theme was found in the importance of education and employment in the women's lives and the women's wish to be viewed by professionals as more than just victims of IPV.

The openness and generosity of the women who wanted to share their stories of moving away from IPV is a testament to their courage, their tenacity and their spirit. The stories of the strategies they employed will offer other women knowledge and hope that it is possible to escape potentially lethal situations without further lethal violence. The techniques they employed and the resources they called on tell us all something about how we might support women in the moving away process. There is no

question that better systems and resources are needed to increase their safety and this is the other powerful message contained in the stories. The ability of many individuals to know exactly what to do and what to offer at the right time was critical for helping to precipitate change.

The thesis contributes to the work, not only of social workers, but of any professionals who engage with women in violent intimate relationships. A better understanding of the intersecting factors can contribute to a greater understanding about the complex reasons as to why women stay in violent relationships and consequently less stigmatised attitudes towards women who seek help; whether while still in violent relationships, or in the process of moving away from violence.

Since conducting the research I have heard further from some of the women who participated in the study. Meeting the women was not intended or planned; I unexpectedly crossed paths with some participants while going about daily activities. They have shared with me the new developments in their lives. Some are running their own businesses, others have become involved in working in the violence field, and many have built new and supportive relationships with new partners, extended

families, and their children. When I embarked on this research I had no idea about the extent of the skills and knowledge that would become apparent in the women's stories, for I too had fallen for the common constructions of women in IPV relationships as victims. This construction captured the impact of the IPV on women, and was useful when feminism was trying to increase public awareness about the issue of IPV. However, when we identify women as victims, certain behaviours and emotional states are attributed to the label 'victim'. As discussed earlier in the study, victimhood is often constructed as meaning passiveness, weakness, and dependency. What the women are doing now in their lives is a reminder about how victimhood can be rearticulated to acknowledge the difficulty of the journey away from violence along with the unique set of knowledge, skills, and personal determination each woman brings to her moving away from IPV story.

I am honoured to have been a part of the collaborative research project and to share in the women's stories.

## References

- Abbott, A. (1988). *The system of professions. An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Abrahams, H. (2010). *Rebuilding lives after domestic violence: understanding long-term outcomes*. London: Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley.
- Agnew, E. N. (2004). *From charity to social work: Mary E Richmond and the creation of an American profession*. Illinois: University of Illinois.
- Alexander, P. C., Tracy, A., Radek, M., & Koverola, C. (2009). Predicting stages of change in battered women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 24(10), 1652-1672.
- Alvesson, M., & Skoldberg, K. (2000). *Reflexive methodology: new vistas for qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Amanor-Boadu, Y., Messing, J. T., Stith, S. M., Anderson, J. R., O'Sullivan, C. S., & Campbell, J. C. (2012). Immigrant and nonimmigrant women: factors that predict leaving an abusive relationship. *Violence Against Women*, 18(5), 611-633.
- Anderson, Deborah K., & Saunders, Daniel G. (2003). Leaving an abusive partner: an empirical review of predictors, the process of leaving,

and psychological well-being. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 4(2), 163-191. doi: 10.1177/1524838002250769

Anderson, K. L. (2010). Conflict, power, and violence in families. *Journal of Marriage & Family*, 72(3), 726-742.

Anderson, K. M., Renner, L. M., & Bloom, T. S. (2013). Rural women's strategic responses to intimate partner violence. *Health Care for Women International*, 35(4), 423-441.

Anderson, K. M., Renner, L. M., & Danis, F. S. (2012). Recovery: Resilience and growth in the aftermath of domestic violence. *Violence Against Women*, 18(11), 1279-1299.

Anderson, M. L., & Hill Collins, P. (2015). Why race, class and gender still matter. In M. L. Anderson & P. Hill Collins (Eds.), *Race, Class & Gender. An Anthology* (pp. 1-14). UK: Cengage Learning.

Andrews, M., Squire, C., & Tamboukou, M. (2008). *Doing narrative research*. London: Sage.

Ansara, D. L., & Hindin, M. J. (2010). Formal and informal help seeking associated with women's and men's experiences of intimate partner violence in Canada. *Social Science & Medicine*, 70(7), 1011-1018.

- Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers. (n.d). *Code of Ethics of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers*. Retrieved from [http://anzasw.org.nz/social\\_work\\_practice/topics/show/158-summary-of-the-code-of-ethics](http://anzasw.org.nz/social_work_practice/topics/show/158-summary-of-the-code-of-ethics)
- Appel, J. K., & Kim-Appel, D. (2006). Child maltreatment and domestic violence: Human services issues. *Journal of Health and Human Services Administration*, 29(1), 228-244.
- Arnold, G., & Ake, J. (2013). Reframing the narrative of the battered women's movement. *Violence Against Women*, 19(5), 557-578.
- Arvay, M. (1998). *Narratives of secondary traumatic stress: Stories of struggle and hope*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.
- Arvay, M. J. (2001). Shattered beliefs. Reconstituting the self of the trauma counsellor. In R. A. Neimeyer (Ed.), *Meaning reconstruction and the experience of loss*. (pp. 213-230). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- Arvay, M. (2002). Talk as action: A narrative approach to action theory. *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, 36(2), 113-120.

- Austin, W. J. (2008) *Relational Ethics. The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods. SAGE Publications, Inc.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Aveyard, H. (2010). *Doing a literature review in health and social care: a practical guide* (Vol. 2nd). New York;Maidenhead, Berkshire, England: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press.
- Bailey, K. D. (2010). Lost in translation: domestic violence, "the personal is political," and the criminal justice system. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 100, 1255+.
- Bakker, S. F. (1998). *Explanations of male abuse of female partners: An explication, evaluation and integration.* Master of Arts, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.
- Balzer, R., Haimona, D., Henare, M., & Matchitt, V. (1997). *Maori family violence in Aotearoa.* Wellington, NZ: Te Puni Kokiri
- Bancroft, L., & Silverman, J. G. (2002). *The batterer as parent: addressing the impact of domestic violence on family dynamics.* Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84, 191-215.

- Bandura, A. (1995). Self-efficacy. In A. S. R. Manstead & M. Hewstone (Eds.), *Blackwell encyclopedia of social psychology* (pp. 453-454). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Banwell, S. (2010). Gendered narratives: Women's subjective accounts of their use of violence and alternative aggression(s) Within Their Marital Relationships. *Feminist Criminology*, 5(2), 116-134.
- Barbour, R. S. (2014). *Quality of Data Analysis. The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis. SAGE Publications Ltd.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Barnett, O. W. (2001). Why battered women do not leave, part 2: External inhibiting factors-social support and internal inhibiting factors. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 2(1), 3-35.
- Barnett, R., Pearce, J., & Moon, G. (2005). Does social inequality matter? Changing ethnic socio-economic disparities and Maori smoking in New Zealand, 1981-1996. *Social Science & Medicine*, 60(7), 1515-1526.
- Barnish, M. (2004). *Domestic violence: A literature review.* London HM Inspectorate of Probation.
- Barnoff, L., & Moffatt, K. (2007). Contradictory tensions in anti-oppression practice in feminist social services. *Affilia*, 22(1), 56-70.

- Barwick, H., Gray, A., & Macky, R. H. (2000). Domestic Violence Act 1995: Process evaluation. Wellington, N.Z: Ministry of Justice ; Dept. for Courts.
- Beckett, D. (2008). Holistic competence: Putting judgements first. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 9(1), 21-30
- Belknap, J., & McDonald, C. (2010). Judges' attitudes about and experiences with sentencing circles in intimate-partner cases. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Crimimal Justice*, 52 (4), 369-395.
- Bent-Goodley, T. B. (2007). Health disparities and violence against women: Why and how cultural and societal influences matter. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 8, 90-104.
- Black, D. S., Sussman, S., & Unger, J. B. (2010). A further look at the intergenerational transmission of violence: Witnessing interparental violence in emerging adulthood. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 25(6), 1022-1042.
- Blakely, T., Tobias, M., Atkinson, J., Yeh, L.-C., & Huang, K. (2007). Tracking disparity: Trends in ethnic and socioeconomic inequalities in mortality, 1981–2004. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

- Boaz, A, & Sidford, A. (2006). Reviewing existing research. In N. Gilbert (Ed.), *From Postgraduate to Social Scientist*. (pp. 7-25). London, England: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Boehm, R., J. Golec, R. Kahn and D. Smyth (1999). *Lifelines: Culture, spirituality and family violence: Understanding the cultural and spiritual needs of women who have experienced abuse*. Edmonton, AB: The University of Alberta Press.
- Bograd, M. (1988). Feminist perspectives on wife abuse: An introduction In K. Yllo & M. Bograd (Eds.), *Feminist Perspectives on Wife Abuse*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Bograd, M. (1999). Strengthening domestic violence theories: Intersections of race, class, sexual orientation, and gender. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 25(3), 275-289.
- Bograd, M. L. (2005). Strengthening domestic violence theories. Intersections of race, class, sexual orientation, and gender. In N. J. Sokoloff & C. Pratt (Eds.), *Domestic Violence at the Margins* (pp. 25-38). London: Rutgers University.
- Bold, C.(2012) *Analysing narrative data. Using narrative in research*. SAGE Publications Ltd. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

- Bonomi, A. E., Anderson, M. L., Reid, R. J., Rivara, F. P., Carrell, D., & Thompson, R. S. (2009). Medical and psychosocial diagnoses in women with a history of intimate partner violence. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, *169*(18), 1692-1697.
- Boonzaier, F. (2008). 'If the man says you must sit, then you must sit': The Relational construction of woman abuse: Gender, subjectivity and violence. *Feminism & Psychology*, *18*(2), 183-206.
- Borschmann, R., Lines, K., & Cottrell, D. (2012). Sun protective behaviour, optimism bias, and the transtheoretical model of behaviour change. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, *64*(4), 181-188.
- Bosson, J. K., & Vandello, J. A. (2011). Precarious manhood and its links to action and aggression. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *20*(2), 82-86.
- Bosson, J. K., Vandello, J. A., Burnaford, R. M., Weaver, J. R., & Arzu Wasti, S. (2009). Precarious manhood and displays of physical aggression. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *35*(5), 623-634.
- Boulton, A., Tamehana, J., & Brannelly, T. (2013). Whanau-centred health and social service delivery in New Zealand. The challenges to, and opportunities for, innovation. *Mai Journal*, *2*(1), 18-32.

- Brechin, A. (2000). Introducing critical practice. In A. Brechin, H. Brown & M. Eby (Eds.), *Critical Practice in Health and Social Care*. (pp. 25-47). London.: Open University/Sage.
- Brewer, G., Roy, M., & Smith, Y. (2010). Domestic violence: the psychosocial impact and perceived health problems. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, 2(2), 4-15.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Bronner, S. E. (2011). *Critical Theory: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA.
- Brosi, M. W., & Rolling, E. S. (2010). A narrative journey for intimate partner violence: From victim to survivor. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 38(3), 237-250.
- Brown, C. (2008). Gender-role implications on same-sex intimate partner abuse. *Journal of Family Violence*, 23(6), 457-462.
- Buchbinder, E., & Birnbaum, L. (2010). Strength trapped within weakness/ weakness trapped within strength: The influence of family of origin experiences on the lives of abused women. *Violence Against Women*, 16(6), 658-678.

Bundock, L., Howard, L. M., Trevillion, K., Malcolm, E., Feder, G., & Oram, S. (2013). Prevalence and risk of experiences of intimate partner violence among people with eating disorders: A systematic review. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 47(9), 1134-1142. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2013.04.014>

Burke, B., & Dalrymple, J. (2009). Critical intervention and empowerment. In R. Adams, L. Dominelli & M. Payne (Eds.), *Social work: themes, issues and critical debates, 3rd edn* (pp. 261-270). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Burke, J. G., Denison, J. A., Gielen, A. C., McDonnell, K. A., & O'Campo, P. (2004). Ending intimate partner violence: an application of the transtheoretical model. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 28(2), 122-133.

Burkitt, K. H., & Larkin, G. L. (2008). The transtheoretical model in intimate partner violence victimization: Stage changes over time. *Violence and Victims*, 23(4), 411-431.

Burton, B., Duvvury, N., & Varia, N. (2000). *Justice, change, and human rights*: International Center for Research on Women & The Centre for Development and Population Activities.

Busch, R., & Robertson, N. R. (2000). Innovative approaches to child custody and domestic violence in New Zealand; the effects of law reform on the discourses of battering. In R. A. Geffner, & P. G. J.

A. M. Sudermann (Eds.), *Children Exposed to Domestic Violence* (pp. 269-299). New York: The Haworth Press.

Bybee, D., & Sullivan, C. M. (2005). Predicting re-victimization of battered women 3 years after exiting a shelter program. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 36(1), 85-96.

Campbell, J. C. (2002). Health consequences of intimate partner violence. *The Lancet*, 359(9314), 1331-1336. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(02)08336-8

Campbell, J., Rose, L., Kub, J., & Nedd, D. (1998). Voices of strength and resistance: A contextual and longitudinal analysis of women's responses to battering. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 13(6), 743-762. doi: 10.1177/088626098013006005

Campbell, K. (2004). *Jacques Lacan and feminist epistemology*. London & New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Candib, L. (1995). *Medicine and the family: A feminist perspective*. Family Medicine and Community Health Publications and Presentations. Paper 119. USA: Basic Books.

Capaldi, D. M., Knoble, N. B., Shortt, J. W., & Kim, H. K. (2012). A systematic review of risk factors for intimate partner violence. *Partner Abuse*, 3, 231-280.

- Carastathis, A. (2014). The concept of intersectionality in feminist theory. *Philosophy Compass*, 9(5), 304-314. doi: 10.1111/phc3.12129
- Carbado, D. W. (2013). Colorblind intersectionality. *Signs*, 38, pp. 811-845): University of Chicago Press.
- Carbado, D. W., Crenshaw, K. W., Mays, V. M., & Tomlinson, B. (2013). Intersectionality. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 10(2), 303-312. doi: 10.1017/S1742058X13000349
- Cavanagh, K. (2003). Understanding women's responses to domestic violence. *Qualitative Social work*, 2(3), 229-249.
- Chang, J. C., Dado, D., Hawker, L., Cluss, P. A., Buranosky, R., Slagel, L., Scholle, S. H. (2010). Understanding turning points in intimate partner violence: Factors and circumstances leading women victims toward change. *Journal of Women's Health*, 19(2), 251–259.  
<http://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2009.1568>
- Chang, G., McNamara, T., Wilkins-Haug, L., & Orav, E. J. (2007). Stages of change and prenatal alcohol use. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 32(1), 105-109. doi:  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jsat.2006.07.003>

- Chang, J. C., Dado, D., Ashton, S., Hawker, L., Cluss, P. A., Buranosky, R., & Hudson Scholle, S. (2006). Understanding behavior change for women experiencing intimate partner violence: Mapping the ups and downs using the stages of change. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 62, 330-339.
- Chantler, K. (2006). Independence, dependency and interdependence: struggles and resistances of minoritized women within and on leaving violent relationships. *Feminist Review*, 82(82), 27-49. doi: 10.1057/palgrave.fr.9400261
- Chapman, Daniel P., Wheaton, Anne G., Anda, Robert F., Croft, Janet B., Edwards, Valerie J., Liu, Yong, Liu., Perry, Geraldine S.(2011). Adverse childhood experiences and sleep disturbances in adults. *Sleep Medicine*, 12(8), 773-779. doi: 10.1016/j.sleep.2011.03.013
- Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative Inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches and voices. In N. K. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. 3rd Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cheng, T. C. (2013). Intimate partner violence and welfare participation: A longitudinal causal analysis. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 28(4), 808-830.
- Choo, H. Y., & Ferree, M. M. (2010). practicing intersectionality in sociological research: a critical analysis of inclusions, interactions,

and institutions in the study of inequalities. *Sociological Theory*, 28(2), 129-149.

Chu, W. C. K., Tsui, M.-s., & Yan, M.-c. (2009). Social work as a moral and political practice. *International Social Work*, 52(3), 287-298. doi: 10.1177/0020872808102064

Church, J. (1984). *Violence against wives: Its causes and effects: Results of the Christchurch family violence study*. Christchurch: New Zealand: Author.

Church, J., & Church, D. (1981). *Listen to me please*. Christchurch, New Zealand: Author.

Clements, C. M., Oxtoby, C., & Ogle, R. L. (2008). Methodological issues in assessing psychological adjustment in child witnesses of intimate partner violence. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 9(2), 114-127. doi: 10.1177/1524838008315870

Coker, A. L. (2004). Primary prevention of intimate partner violence for women's health: A response to Plichta. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 19(11), 1324-1334.

Cornish, F., Gillespie, A., & Zittoun, T. (2014). Collaborative analysis of qualitative data. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 79-94). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Cotterill, P. (1992). Interviewing women. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 15(5), 593-606. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(92\)90061-Y](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(92)90061-Y)

Cramer, E. P., & Plummer, S.-B. (2009). People of color with disabilities: intersectionality as a framework for analyzing intimate partner violence in social, historical, and political contexts. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 18(2), 162-181. doi: 10.1080/10926770802675635

Crawford, M., Brown, K., Walsh, K., & Pullar, D. (2010). From domestic violence to sustainable employment. . *Forum of Public Policy*, (2), 1-12.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscriminatory doctrine, feminist theory and anti-racist politics. *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 140 (139-167).

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43 (6), 124-1299. Doi: 10.2307/1229039

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design : choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Crichton-Hill, Y. (2001). Challenging ethnocentric explanations of domestic violence: Let us decide, then value our decisions - a Samoan response. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 3(July), 203-214.
- Crichton-Hill, Y. (2010). Changing landscapes: Responding to domestic violence in New Zealand. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 22(4), 12-19.
- Crichton-Hill, Y. (2012). Women moving away from violence: planning it - doing it. Christchurch Women's Refuge and The Family Help Trust. (pp. 196). Christchurch, New Zealand: Te Awatea Violence Research Centre.
- Crichton-Hill, Y., Coker, V. and Taylor, A. (2010) Reviewing domestic violence responses: An analysis of Christchurch Women's Refuge contact data and how women access services. *Te Awatea Review* 8(1&2): 9-14. [http://www.vrc.canterbury.ac.nz/docs/SAPS355\\_Te\\_Awatea\\_Review\\_December%202010%20Volume%208%20Numbers%2012.pdf](http://www.vrc.canterbury.ac.nz/docs/SAPS355_Te_Awatea_Review_December%202010%20Volume%208%20Numbers%2012.pdf).
- Crichton-Hill, Y., & Taylor, A. (2013). Intimate partner violence. Understanding violence: Context and practice in the human services. In M. Connolly & A. Taylor (Eds.), *Understanding Violence: Context and Practice in the Human Services* (pp. 102-117). Christchurch: Canterbury University Press.

- Crichton-Hill, Y., & Wurtzburg, S. J. (2003). Community membership: Considerations for New Zealand health research. *Pimatziwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health*, (2), 27-39.
- Cross, J., & Newbold, G. (2010). Presumptive arrest in partner assault: Use of discretion and problems of compliance in the New Zealand Police. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 43, 51-75.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Cunningham, A., & Baker, L. (2007). *Little eyes, little ears: How violence against a mother shapes children as they grow*. London ON: Centre for Children & Families in the Justice System.
- Dann, C. (1985). *Up from under: women and liberation in New Zealand, 1970-1985*. Wellington, N.Z: Allen & Unwin.
- Davis, K. (2008). Intersectionality as buzzword: A Sociology of Science Perspective on What Makes a Feminist Theory Successful. *Feminist Theory*, 9(1), 67-85. doi: 10.1177/1464700108086364

- Davis R 2002. Leave-taking experiences in the lives of abused women.  
*Clinical Nursing Research* 11(3): 285–305
- Davies, C. A., Evans, S. E., & DiLillo, D. K. (2008). Exposure to domestic violence: A meta-analysis of child and adolescent outcomes.  
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/psychfacpub/321>: Faculty Publications, Department of Psychology.
- De Luzio, C. (2010). *Women's rights: People and perspectives*. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO.
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive interactionism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, California.: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research (Vol. 3rd)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- DeKeseredy, W. S., & Schwartz, M. D. (2009). *Dangerous exits: Escaping Abusive Relationships in Rural America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Deutsch, M. (2006). Justice and conflict. In M. Deutsch, P. T. Coleman & E. C. Marcus (Eds.), *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice*. (pp. 43-68). San Fransisco, California. United States: Jossey-Bass.

DeVault, M. L. (1990). Talking and Listening from women's standpoint: Feminist strategies for interviewing and analysis. *Social Problems*, 37, 96-116.

Deversen, T., & Kennedy, G. (2005). *The New Zealand Oxford Dictionary*. Retrieved from [http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.canterbury.ac.nz/view/10.1093/acref/9780195584516.001.0001/m-en\\_nz-msdict-00001-0051155](http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.canterbury.ac.nz/view/10.1093/acref/9780195584516.001.0001/m-en_nz-msdict-00001-0051155)

Dickson-Gilmore, J. (2014). Whither restorativeness? Restorative justice and the challenge of intimate violence in Aboriginal communities. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Crimimal Justice*, 56(4), 417-446.

DiClemente, C. C., & Prochaska, J. O. (1982). Self change and therapy change of smoking behavior. A comparison of processes of change in cessation and maintenance. *Addictive Behavior*(7), 133-142.

Douglas, H., & Walsh, T. (2010). Mothers, domestic violence, and child protection. *Violence Against Women*, 16(5), 489-508. doi: 10.1177/1077801210365887

Duke, A., & Davidson, M. M. (2009). Same-sex intimate partner violence: Lesbian, gay, and bisexual affirmative outreach and advocacy. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 18(8), 795-816. doi: 10.1080/10926770903291787

- Durie, M. (2005). *Te tai tini transformations 2025* (CIGAD Working Paper Series 5/2005). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Centre for Indigenous Governance and Development.
- Edleson, J., L. (1999). Children's witnessing of adult domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 14*(8), 839-870. doi: 10.1177/088626099014008004
- Edleson, J. L., Mbilinyi, L. F., & Shetty, S. (2003). Parenting in the context of domestic violence. San Francisco: Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts, Center for Families, Children & the Courts.
- Edwards, R., & Alexander, C. (2011). Researching with peer/community researchers – ambivalences and tensions. In M. Williams & W. P. Vogt (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Innovation in Social Research Methods* (pp. 269-292). London: Sage.
- Eisikovits, Z., Buchbinder, E., & Mor, M. (1998). "What it was won't be anymore": Reaching the turning point in coping with intimate violence. *Affilia, 13*(4), 411-434. doi: 10.1177/088610999801300403
- Elder, G. H. (1985). Perspectives on the life course. In G. H. Elder (Ed.), *Life Course Dynamics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- Ellis, C. (2007). Telling secrets, revealing lives: Relational ethics in research with intimate others. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(1), 3-29. doi: 10.1177/1077800406294947
- Ellsberg, M., & Heise, L. (2005). *Researching violence against women: a practical guide for researchers and activists*. Washington, D.C. United States: World Health Organisation, PATH.
- Ellsberg, M., Heise, L., Pena, R., Agurto, S., & Winkvist, A. (2001). Researching domestic violence against women: Methodological and ethical considerations. *Studies in Family Planning*, 32(1), 1-16.
- Enander, V., & Holmberg, C. (2008). Why does she leave? The leaving process(es) of battered women. *Health Care for Women International*, 29(3), 200-226.
- Esqueda, C. W., & Harrison, L. A. (2005). The influence of gender role stereotypes, the woman's race, and level of provocation and resistance on domestic violence culpability attributions. *Sex Roles*, 53(11), 821-834.
- Erez, E., Adelman, M., & Gregory, C. (2009). Intersections of immigration and domestic violence: Voices of battered immigrant women. *Feminist Criminology*, 4(1), 32-56. doi: 10.1177/1557085108325413

- Erez, E., & Copps Hartley, C. (2003). Battered immigrant women and the legal system: A therapeutic jurisprudence perspective. *Western Criminology Review*, 4(2), 155-169.
- Erturk, Y. (2005). Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective: Violence against women. Intersections of violence against women and HIV/AIDS. E/CN.4/2005/72. New York: United Nations Economic and Social Council.
- Evans, I. (2007). *Battle-scars: Long-term effects of prior domestic violence*: Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research, Monash University Clayton.
- Evans, Sarah E., Davies, Corrie, & DiLillo, David. (2008). Exposure to domestic violence: A meta-analysis of child and adolescent outcomes. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 13(2), 131-140. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2008.02.005>
- Fagan, A. A., & Wright, E. M. (2011). Gender differences in the effects of exposure to intimate partner violence on adolescent violence and drug use. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 35(7), 543-550. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2011.05.001
- Fanslow, J., & Robinson, E. M. (2004). Violence against women in New Zealand: prevalence and health consequences. *The New Zealand*

*Medical Journal*, 117(1206). Retrieved from  
<http://journal.nzma.org.nz/journal/117-1206/1173/>

Fanslow, J., & Gulliver, P. (2015). Exploring risk and protective factors for recent and past intimate partner violence against New Zealand women. *Violence and Victims*, 30(6), 960-983. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.canterbury.ac.nz/docview/1737493284?accountid=14499>

Fenrich, J., & Contesse, J. (2008). "It's not ok": New Zealand's efforts to eliminate violence against women. New York: Leitner Center for International Law and Justice.

Fernandez, N., Dory, V., Ste-Marie, L.-G., Chaput, M., Charlin, B., & Boucher, A. (2012). Varying conceptions of competence: an analysis of how health sciences educators define competence. *Medical Education*, 46(4), 357-365. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2923.2011.04183.x

Fiala, W. E., Bjorck, J. P., & Gorsuch, R. (2002). The Religious Support Scale: Construction, validation, and cross-validation. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30, 761-786.

Fink, A. (1998). *Conducting research literature reviews: From paper to the internet*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Fischer, M., & Whipps, J. D. (2006). *Jane Addam's essays and speeches on peace*. London & New York: Continuum Publishing Group.
- Fiske, S. T. (2013). Varieties of (de)humanization: Divided by competition and status. In S. Gervais (Ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* (Vol. 60, pp. 53-71). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Ford, G. (1993) A review of the 1987 police policy on domestic violence. Policing Development Group, Wellington.
- Flood, M. G., & Pease, B. (2009). Factors influencing Attitudes to violence Against Women. *Trauma, Violence and Abuse: A review journal*, 10(2), 125-142.
- Flora Cornish, A. G., Tania Zittoun. (2014). Collaborative analysis of qualitative data. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Fook, J. (2012). *Social Work. A critical approach to practice. 2nd Edition*. London: Sage.
- Frías, S. M., & Angel, R. J. (2007). Stability and change in the experiences of partner violence among low-income women. *Social Science Quarterly*, 88, 1281-1306.

- Frost, N. (2009). 'Do you know what I mean?': The use of a pluralistic narrative analysis approach in the interpretation of an interview. *Qualitative Research*, 9, 9-29.
- Gao, W., Paterson, J., Abbott, M., Carter, S., & Iusitini, L. (2010). Pacific Islands families study: Intimate partner violence and postnatal depression. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 12(2), 242-248. doi: 10.1007/s10903-008-9190-y
- Gao, W., Paterson, J., Abbott, M., Carter, S., Iusitini, L., & McDonald-Sundborn, G. (2010). Impact of current and past intimate partner violence on maternal mental health and behaviour at 2 years after childbirth: Evidence from the Pacific Islands families study. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 44(2), 174-182 179p. doi: 10.3109/00048670903487126
- Garcia-Moreno, C., & Stockl, H. (2013). Violence against women, its prevalence and health consequences. In A. Reicher-Rossler & C. Garcia-Moreno (Eds.), *Violence against women and mental health* (pp. 1-11). Geneva: Karger Medical & Scientific Publishers.
- Gardner, W., Kelleher, K., & Pajer, K. (2009). Effects of intimate-partner violence on child psychopathology. In M. Bruce Webb, K. Dowd, B. Jones Harden, J. Landsverk & M. Testa, F (Eds.), *Child welfare and child well-being: New perspectives from the national survey of child and adolescent well-being* (pp. 133-154). New York.: Oxford University Press.

- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gergen, K. J. (2009). *An invitation to social construction*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Gil, D. G. (2012). Social work, social policy and welfarism. In M. Gray, J. Midgley & S. Webb, A (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of social work* (pp. 19-32). London, UK: Sage.
- Giles, J., & Curreen, H. M. (2007). Phases of growth for abused New Zealand women: A comparison with other studies. *Affilia*, 22, 371-384.
- Giles, J. R., Curreen, H. M., & Adamson, C. E. (2005). The social sanctioning of partner abuse: perpetuating the message that partner abuse is acceptable in New Zealand. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*(26), 97-116.
- Gillum, T. L., Sullivan, C. M., & Bybee, D. I. (2006). The importance of spirituality in the lives of domestic violence survivors. *Violence Against Women*, 12(3), 240-250.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine.

- Glenn, C. R. (2010). *Living with and within the rules of domestic violence shelters: A qualitative exploration of residents' experiences*. Masters PhD, Boston College, Boston.
- Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers. An introduction*. New York: Longman.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Goffman, E. (1971). *Relations in public: Microstudies of the public order*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Goldner, V. (1985). Feminism and family therapy. *Family Process*, 24, 31-47.
- Goldner, V., Penn, P., Sheinberg, M., & Walker, G. (1990). Love and violence: Gender paradoxes in volatile attachments. *Family Process*, 29(4), 343-364.
- Goldner, V. (1999). Morality and multiplicity: Perspectives on the treatment of violence in intimate life. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 25(3), 225-336.
- Gondolf, E. W. (2012). Physical tactics of female partners against male batterer program participants. *Violence Against Women*, 18(9), 1027-1044. doi: 10.1177/1077801212460755

- Gondolf, E. W., & Fisher, E. R. (1988). *Battered women as survivors: An alternative to treating learned helplessness*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Goodkind, J. R., Gillum, T. L., Bybee, D., & Sullivan, C. M. (2003). The impact of family and friends' reactions on the well-being of women with abusive partners. *Violence Against Women, 9*, 347-373.
- Goodman, L. A., Dutton, M. A., Weinfurt, K., & Cook, S. (2003). The Intimate Partner Piolence Strategies Index: Development and application. *Violence & Victims, 9*(2), 163-186.
- Goodman, L. A., & Smyth, K. F. (2011). A call for a social network-oriented approach to services for survivors of intimate partner violence. *Psychology of Violence, 1*(2), 79-92.  
doi:10.1037/a0022977
- Goodmark, L. (2011). *A troubled marriage. domestic violence and the legal system*. New York: New York University Press.
- Goodyear, R. (2014). *Housing in greater Christchurch after the earthquakes: Trends in housing from the Census of Population and Dwellings 1991–2013*. Retrieved from [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz) website: [www.statistics.govt.nz](http://www.statistics.govt.nz)
- Graham-Bermann, S. A., & Levendosky, A. A. (2011). *How intimate partner violence affects children: developmental research, case*

*studies, and evidence-based intervention* (Vol. 1st). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

- Green, T., & Kelso, C. (2010). Police discretion in domestic violence incidents. *The American Association of Behavioral and Social Sciences Journal*, 14, 24-44.
- Griffiths, S., & Hanmer, J. (2005). Feminist quantitative methodology: Evaluating policing of domestic violence. In T. Skinner, M. Hester & E. Malos (Eds.), *Researching Gender Violence. Feminist Methodology in Action*. Devon, UK: Willan Publishing.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Haeseler, L. A. (2013). Themes of coping in the spectrum of domestic violence abuse: A review of the literature. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 10(1), 25-32. doi: 10.1080/15433714.2013.751230
- Hage, S. M. (2006). Profiles of women survivors: The development of agency in abusive relationships. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 84 (1), 83-94.
- Haight, W. L., Shim, W. S., Linn, L. M., & Swinford, L. (2007). Mothers' strategies for protecting children from batterers: The perspectives

of battered women involved in child protective services. *Child Welfare*, 86(4), 41-62.

Haldane, H. J. (2009). The provision of culturally specific care for victims of family violence in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Global Public Health*, 4(5), 477-489. doi:10.1080/17441690902930816

Hamby, S. (2008). *A holistic approach to understanding the coping strategies of victims*. Paper presented at the 13th International Conference on Violence, Abuse, & Trauma. Portsmouth, NH.

Hammersley, M. (1987). Some notes on the terms 'validity' and 'reliability'. *British Educational Research Journal*, 13(1), 73-81.

Hand, J., Elizabeth, V., Martin, B., Rauwhero, H., Burton, M., Selby, S., & Falanitule, L. (2002). *Free from abuse. What women say and what can be done*. Auckland: Public Health Promotion.

Harding, S. (1986). *The science question in feminism*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Hare, I. (2004). Defining social work for the 21st century: The International Federation of Social Workers' revised definition of social work. *International Social Work*, 47(3), 407-424. doi: 10.1177/0020872804043973

- Harrington, M. (2010). *Feminist interpretations of Jane Addams*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Haslam, N., Loughnan, S., & Holland, E. (2013). The psychology of humanness. In S. Gervais (Ed.), *Objectification and (de)humanization: The 60th Nebraska Symposium on motivation* (pp. 25-51). New York: Springer.
- Hayden, A. (2012). Safety issues associated with using restorative justice for intimate partner violence. *Women's Studies Journal*, 26(2), 4-16.
- Hayes, B. E. (2013). Women's resistance strategies in abusive relationships. [10.1177/2158244013501154]. *SAGE Open*, 3(3).
- Hayes, S. (2014). *Sex, love and abuse : Discourses on domestic violence and sexual assault*. Retrieved from <http://canterbury.ebib.com.au/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=1699387>
- Healy, K. (2000). *Social work practices: Contemporary perspectives on change*. London: Sage.
- Henaghan, M & Ballantyne, R., (2010). Legal responses to violence in the home in New Zealand. *University of New South Wales Law Journal*, 33(3), 870-894.

- Hendy, H. M., Eggen, D., Gustitus, C., McLeod, K. C., & Ng, P. (2003). Decision to Leave Scale: Perceived reasons to stay in or leave violent relationships. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 27(2), 162-173. doi: 10.1111/1471-6402.00096
- Hiebert-Murphy, D., Ristock, J., & Brownridge, D. A. (2011). The meaning of “risk” for intimate partner violence among women in same-sex relationships. In J. Ristock (Ed.), *Intimate partner violence in LGBTQ lives* (pp. 37-55). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hoeata, C., Waimarie Nikora, L., Li, W., Young-Hauser, A., & Robertson, N. (2011). Māori women and intimate partner violence: Some sociocultural influences. *MAI Review*(3), 1-12.
- Hollis-English, A. N. R. (2012). *Maori social workers: Experiences within social service organisations*. Doctor of Philosophy, University of Otago, Dunedin.
- Holt, S., Buckley, H., & Whelan, S. (2008). The impact of exposure to domestic violence on children and young people: A review of the literature. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 32(8), 797-810. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.02.004
- Holt, S. (2015). Post-separation fathering and domestic abuse: challenges and contradictions. *Child Abuse Review*, 24(3), 210-222. doi: 10.1002/car.2264

- Hong, B. (2001). *Improving the knowledge base for social policy: Strategic knowledge needs*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.
- Horwitz, S. H., Mitchell, D., LaRussa-Trott, M., Santiago, L., Pearson, J., Skiff, D. M., & Cerulli, C. (2011). An inside view of police officers' experience with domestic violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, 26(8), 617-625.
- Houkamau, C. A. (2010). Identity construction and reconstruction: The role of socio-historical contexts in shaping Māori women's identity. *Social Identities*, 16(2), 179-196. doi:10.1080/13504631003688872
- Houry, D., Kaslow, N. J., & Thompson, M. P. (2005). Depressive symptoms in women experiencing intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20, 1467-1477.
- Hughes, F. (2004). Domestic violence statistics: What can they tell us? *Te Awatea Review*, 2, 3-6.
- Hulko, W. (2009). The time and context-contingent nature of intersectionality and interlocking oppressions. *Affilia*, 24(1), 44-55. doi: 10.1177/0886109908326814
- Humphreys, C. (2007). Talking to my mum: Strengthening relationships between mothers and children in the aftermath of family violence. .

*Developing Practice: The Child, Youth and Family Work Journal*,  
19, 12-15.

Hunter, E., & Graham-Bermann, S. (2013). Intimate partner violence and child adjustment: Moderation by father contact? *Journal of Family Violence*, 28(5), 435-444. doi: 10.1007/s10896-013-9517-x

Hyden, M. (2008). Narrating sensitive topics. In M. Andrews, C. Squire & M. Tamboukou (Eds.), *Doing narrative research* (pp. 121-136). London: Sage.

IFSW. (2014). *Global definition of social work*. Retrieved from  
<http://ifsw.org/policies/definition-of-social-work/>

Intemann, K. (2010). *25 years of feminist empiricism and standpoint theory: Where are we now?* *Hypatia-A Journal of feminist Philosophy*, 25(4), 778-796. doi: 10.1111/j.1527-2001.2010.01138.x

International Federation of Social Workers, & International Association of Schools of Social Work. (2007). *International definition of the social work profession ; Ethics in social work, statement of principles ; Global standards for the education and training of the social work profession*. [s.l.]: International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)/International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW).

Itzin, C. (2000). Gendering domestic violence. The influence of feminism on policy and practice. . In J. Hanmer & C. Itzin (Eds.), *Home truths about domestic violence. Feminist influences on policy and practice* (pp. 356-380). London: Routledge.

Johnson, M. P. (2008). *A typology of domestic violence: Intimate terrorism, violent resistance, and situational couple violence*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Johnson, N. (1995). Domestic violence: An overview. In P. Kingston & B. Penhale (Eds.), *Family violence and the caring professions* (pp. 101-126). London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

Johnson, S. P., & Sullivan, C. M. (2008). How child protection workers support or further victimize battered mothers. *Affilia*, 23(3), 242-258. doi: 10.1177/08861099083191

Jones, Alexandra, & Vetere, Arlene. (2016). ‘You just deal with it. You have to when you’ve got a child’: A narrative analysis of mothers’ accounts of how they coped, both during an abusive relationship and after leaving. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. doi: 10.1177/135910451562413113

Jørgensen, M., & Phillips, L. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. Thousand Oaks, Calif;London;: Sage Publications.

Josephson, J. (2002). the intersectionality of domestic violence and welfare in the lives of poor women. *Journal of Poverty*, 6(1), 1-20. doi: 10.1300/J134v06n01\_01

Josselson, R. (2014). *Interviewing for qualitative inquiry : A Relational Approach* Retrieved from <http://canterbury.ebib.com.au/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=1137446>

Kam, P. K. (2014). Back to the ‘social’ of social work: Reviving the social work profession’s contribution to the promotion of social justice. *International Social Work*, 57(6), 723-740.

Karger, H. J., & Hernandez, M. T. (2004). The decline of the public intellectual in social work. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 31(3), 51-68.

Kemp, S. P., Marcenko, M. O., Hoagwood, K., & Vesneski, W. (2009). Engaging parents in child welfare services: Bridging family needs and child welfare mandates. *Child Welfare*, 88(1), 101-126.

Khaw, L., & Hardesty, J. L. (2007). Theorizing the process of leaving: Turning points and trajectories in the stages of change. *Family Relations*, 56, 413-425.

Kim, Jinseok, & Gray, Karen A. (2008). Leave or stay?: Battered women's decision after intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 23(10), 1465-1482. doi: 10.1177/0886260508314307

Kincheloe, J.L. & McLaren, P. (2000). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 279-313). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kincheloe, J., & McLaren, F. (2005). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 303-342). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Kirkwood, C. (1993). *Leaving abusive partners*. London, UK: Sage Publications Inc.

Knickerbocker, L., Heyman, R. E., Slep, A. M. S., Jouriles, E. N., & McDonald, R. (2007). Co-occurrence of child and partner maltreatment: Definitions, prevalence, theory, and implications for assessment. *European Psychologist*(12), 36-44.

Koepsell, J. K., Kernic, M. A., & Holt, V. L. (2006). Factors that influence battered women to leave their abusive relationships. *Violence and Victims*, 21(2), 131-147. doi: 10.1891/088667006780644299

Koloto, A. H. (2003). *The needs of Pacific peoples when they are victims of crime*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Justice.

- Koziol-McLain, J., Gardiner, J., Batty, P., Rameka, M., Fyfe, E., & Giddings, L. (2004). Prevalence of intimate partner violence among women presenting to an urban adult and paediatric emergency care department. *The New Zealand Medical Journal*, *117*(1206), U1174.
- Koziol-McLean, J., Rameka, M., Giddings, L., Fyfe, E., & Gardiner, J. (2007). Partner violence prevalence among women attending a māori health provider clinic. , 2007; 31(2):143-148. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, *31*(2), 143-148.
- Kramp, M. K. (2004). Exploring life and experience through narrative inquiry. In N. Silverman (Ed.), *Foundations for research: methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences* (pp. 103-121). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Krane, J., & Davies, L. (2007). Mothering under difficult and unusual circumstances: challenges to working with battered women. *Affilia*, *22*(1), 23-38.
- Križ, K., Slayter, E., Iannicelli, A., & Lourie, J. (2012). Fear management: How child protection workers engage with non-citizen immigrant families. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *34*(1), 316-323. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.11.001>
- Krug, E. G., Dahlberg, L. L., Mercy, J. A., Zwi, A. B., & Lozano, R. (2002). World report on violence and health. Geneva: World Health Organisation.

Laing, L., & Bobic, N. (2002). *Economic costs of domestic violence: Literature review*. Sydney, NSW: Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, University of New South Wales.

Landenberger, K.M. (1998) The dynamics of leaving and recovering from an abusive relationship. *Journal of Obstetric Gynecologic and Neonatal Nursing*, 27(6):700–706.

Lapierre, S. (2008). Mothering in the context of domestic violence: the pervasiveness of a deficit model of mothering. *Child & Family Social Work*, 13(4), 454-463. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2206.2008.00563.x

Lapierre, S. (2010). Striving to be 'good' mothers: Abused women's experiences of mothering. *Child Abuse Review*, 19(5), 342-357. doi: 10.1002/car.1113

Lather, P. (1986). Research as praxis. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(3), 257-278.

Latta, R. E., & Goodman, L. A. (2011). Intervening in partner violence against women: A grounded theory exploration of informal network members' experiences. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 39(7), 973-1023. doi: 10.1177/0011000011398504

- Letourneau, N., Duffy, L., & Duffett-Leger, L. (2012). Mothers affected by domestic violence: Intersections and opportunities with the justice system. *Journal of Family Violence*, 27(6), 585-596.
- Levendosky, A. A., Lynch, S. M., & Graham-Bermann, S. A. (2000). Mother's perceptions of the impact of women abuse on their parenting. *Violence Against Women [H.W. Wilson - SSA]*, 6(3), 247.
- Levesque, D. A., Gelles, R. J., & Velicer, W. F. (2000). Development and validation of a stages of change measure for men in batterer treatment. *Cognitive Therapy & Research*, 24(2), 175-199.
- Liamputtong, P., & Ebooks, C. (2007). *Researching the vulnerable: a guide to sensitive research methods*. Thousand Oaks, Calif; London: SAGE.
- Lietz, C. A. (2009). Examining families' perceptions of intensive in-home services: A mixed methods study. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(12), 1337-1345. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2009.06.007>
- Lievore, D., & Mayhew, P. (2007). *The scale and nature of family violence in New Zealand: A review and evaluation of knowledge*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

- Lincoln Y.S., Guba E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications, Newbury Park CA.
- Lindhorst, T., Oxford, M., & Rogers Gillmore, M. (2007). Longitudinal effects of domestic violence on employment and welfare outcomes *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22, 812-828.
- Little, B., & Terrance, C. (2010). Perceptions of domestic violence in lesbian relationships: Stereotypes and gender role expectations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 57(3), 429-440.
- Loh, J. (2013). Inquiry into issues of trustworthiness and quality in narrative studies: A perspective. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(33), 1.
- Lorenzo, T. (2010). Listening spaces: connecting diverse voices for social action and change In M. Savin-Baden & C. H. Major (Eds.), *New approaches to qualitative research: Wisdom and uncertainty* (pp. 131-144). London: Routledge.
- Loveday, V. (2009). *Feminism and the women's rights movement*. Ipswich, MA, USA.: Great Neck Publishing.
- Lundy, C., & van Wormer, K. (2007). Social and economic justice, human rights and peace: The challenge for social work in Canada and the USA. *International Social Work*, 50(6), 727-739. doi: 10.1177/0020872807081899

- Mainardi, P. (1970). *The politics of housework*. Retrieved from <https://caringlabor.wordpress.com/2010/09/11/pat-mainardi-the-politics-of-housework/>
- Mann, S. A., & Grimes, M. (2001). Common and contested ground: marxism and race, gender & class analysis. *Race, Gender & Class*(8), 3-22.
- Mann, S. A., & Huffman, D. J. (2005). The decentering of second wave feminism and the rise of the third wave. *Science & Society*, 69(1), 56-91. doi: 10.1521/asis.69.1.56.56799
- Marin, A., & Russo, N. F. (1999). Feminist perspectives on male violence against women. Critiquing O'Neil and Harway's Model. In M. Harway., J. M. O'Neill. & J. R. Biden (Eds.), *What causes men's violence against women?* (pp. 18-35). Thousand Oaks, California.: Sage Publications.
- Mark, G., & Lyons, A. (2010). Maori healers' view on wellbeing: the importance of mind, body, spirit, family, and land. *Social Science & Medicine*, 70, 1756-1764.
- Martin, J., Langley, J., & Millichamp, J. (2006). Domestic violence as witnessed by New Zealand children. . *The New Zealand Medical Journal*, 119(1228), 28-41.

- Matlow, R. B., & DePrince, A. P. (2015). The impact of appraisals and context on readiness to leave a relationship following intimate partner abuse. *Violence Against Women*, 21(9), 1043-1064. doi: 10.1177/1077801215590668
- Maxwell, G. (1994). *Children and family violence: The unnoticed victims*. Wellington, New Zealand: Office of the Commissioner for Children.
- Mayhew, P., Reilly, J., & New Zealand. Ministry of Justice. (2007). *The experience of e-crime. Findings from the New Zealand Crime & Safety Survey 2006*, pp. 1 electronic document (37 ). Wellington, N.Z: Ministry of Justice.
- McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs*, 30(3), 1771-1800. doi: 10.1086/426800
- McLaren, F. (2010). *Community study summary report, the campaign for action on family violence*. Wellington, NZ: New Zealand Centre for Social Research and Evaluation.
- McLean, F. (2010). Attitudes, values and beliefs about violence within families 2008 survey findings. Wellington: Centre for Social Research and Evaluation.

- McLennan, G., Ryan, A., & Spoonley, P. (2002). *Exploring society: Sociology for New Zealand students*. Auckland, NZ: Pearson Education.
- McMullan, E. C., Carlan, P. E., & Nored, L. S. (2010). Future law enforcement officers and social workers: Perceptions of domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 25*(8), 1367-1387. doi: 10.1177/0886260509346062
- McPhail, B. A., Busch, N. B., Kulkarni, S., & Rice, G. (2007). An integrative feminist model: The evolving feminist perspective on intimate partner violence. *Violence Against Women, 13*(8), 817-841. doi: 10.1177/1077801207302039
- Mehrotra, G. (2010). Toward a continuum of intersectionality theorizing for feminist social work scholarship. *Affilia, 25*(4), 417-430. doi: 10.1177/0886109910384190
- Merritt-Gray, M., & Wuest, J. (1995). Counteracting abuse and breaking free: the process of leaving revealed through women's voices. *Health Care For Women International, 16*(5), 399-412.
- Merry, S. E. (2009). *Gender violence. a cultural perspective*. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons.
- Meyer, Silke. (2012). Why women stay: A theoretical examination of rational choice and moral reasoning in the context of intimate

partner violence. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 45(2), 179-193. doi: 10.1177/0004865812443677

Mikaere, A. (1999). Colonization and the destruction of gender balance in Aotearoa. *Native Studies Review*, 12(1), 1-28.

Ministry of Justice. (2010). *The New Zealand crime and safety survey: 2009. Main findings report* Wellington: Ministry of Justice.

Ministry of Social Development. (2002). *Te Rito: New Zealand family violence prevention strategy*. Wellington, New Zealand: Author.

Ministry of Social Development. (2013). *Pasefika proud research plan 2013-2018*. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Social Development.

Mitchell, L. (2009). *Maori and welfare. Working paper 5. Te oranga o te iwi Maori; A study of Maori economic and social progress*. Wellington: New Zealand Business Roundtable.

Moe, A. M. (2009). Battered women, children, and the end of abusive relationships. *Affilia*, 24(3), 244-256.

Moffit, T. E., & Caspi, A. (1999). *Research in brief. Findings about partner violence from the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study*. Washington DC: National Institute of Justice.

- Morgan, M., Coombes, L., Te Hiwi, E., & McGray, S. (2007). *Accounting for safety: A sample of women victims' experiences of safety through the Waitakere Family Violence Court*. Palmerston North: Massey University.
- Morin, K. M., Longhurst, R., & Johnston, L. T. (2001). (Troubling) spaces of mountains and men: New Zealand's Mount Cook and Hermitage Lodge. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 2(2), 117-139
- Morley, C., Macfarlane, S., & Ablett, P. (2014). *Engaging with social work. A critical introduction*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Morris, A., Reilly, J., Berry, S., & Ransom, R. (2001). *New Zealand National Survey of Crime Victims*. Wellington, N.Z: Ministry of Justice.
- Mullaly, B. (2002). *Challenging oppression. A critical social work approach*. Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- Mullender, A., Hague, G. L., Iman, U., Kelly, L., Malos, E., & Regan, L. (2002). *Children's perspectives on domestic violence*. London: SAGE.
- Murphy, C., Paton, N., Gulliver, P., & Fanslow, J. (2013). Understanding connections and relationships. Child maltreatment, intimate partner

violence and parenting. *Issues paper 3*. April 2013. Auckland:  
New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse.

Murray, S. (2008). "Why doesn't she just leave?" Belonging, disruption  
and domestic violence. *Women's Studies International Forum*,  
31(1), 65-72. doi: 10.1016/j.wsif.2007.11.008

Murray, S., & Powell, A. (2009). "What's the problem?": Australian Public  
Policy Constructions of Domestic and Family Violence. *Violence  
Against Women*, 15(5), 532-552. doi: 10.1177/1077801209331408

Nam, B., Waldvogel, J., Stonie, J., & Levine, M. (2011). *Family violence  
in migrant and refugee families and successful models of  
prevention and intervention: A Summary Analysis and Annotated  
Bibliography*. Wellington, NZ.: Ministry of Social Development.

National Crime Prevention Council. (2012). *Strategy: Responding  
immediately to domestic violence calls*. Retrieved 16 December  
2012 [http://www.ncpc.org/topics/violent-crime-and-personal-  
safety/strategies/strategy-responding-immediately-to-domestic-  
violence-calls/?searchterm=aware](http://www.ncpc.org/topics/violent-crime-and-personal-safety/strategies/strategy-responding-immediately-to-domestic-violence-calls/?searchterm=aware)

New Zealand. Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Maori Perspective for  
the Department of Social Welfare. (1986). *Puao-te-ata-tu: Day  
break : the report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a  
Maori Perspective for the Department of Social Welfare*.  
Wellington, N.Z: The Committee.

- Nixon, J., & Humphreys, C. (2010). Marshalling the evidence: Using intersectionality in the domestic violence frame. *Social Politics. International studies in gender, state and society.*, 17(2), 137-158.
- Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms. In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing Feminist Research* (pp. 31-61). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Oakley, A. (2000). *Experiments in knowing: Gender and method in the social sciences*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- O'Brien, K., Cohen, L., Pooley, J. A., & Taylor, M. (2012). Lifting the domestic cloak of silence: Resilient Australian women's reflected memories of their childhood experiences of witnessing domestic violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, 28(1), 95-108.
- O'Brien, M. (2011). Equality and fairness: Linking social justice and social work practice. *Journal of Social Work*, 11(2), 143-158. doi: 10.1177/1468017310386834
- O'Leary, K. D. (1988). Physical aggression between spouses: A social learning theory perspective. In V. B. Van Hasselt, R. L. Morrison, A. S. Bellack & M. Hersen (Eds.), *Handbook of Family Violence* (pp. 31-65). New York: Plenum Press.

- Oko, J. (2008). *Understanding and using theory in social work*. Exeter: Learning Matters.
- Oths, K. S., & Robertson, T. (2007). Give me shelter: Temporal patterns of women fleeing domestic abuse. *Human Organization*, 66(3), 249-260.
- Overstreet, N. M., & Quinn, D. M. (2013). The intimate partner violence stigmatization model and barriers to help seeking. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 35, 109-122. doi: 10.1080/01973533.2012.746599
- Pargament, K. I., Desai, K. M., & McConnell, K. M. (2006). Spirituality: A pathway to posttraumatic growth or decline? In Calhoun, L. G., & Tedeschi, R. G., (Eds.), *Handbook of posttraumatic growth: Research and practice* (pp. 121-137). Mahway, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Paterson, J., Feehan, M., Butler, S., Williams, M., & Cowley-Malcolm, E. T. (2007). Intimate partner violence within a cohort of Pacific mothers living in New Zealand. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(6), 698-721.
- Patton, S. (2003). *Pathways: How women leave violent men*. Hobart: Women Tasmania.

Pence, E., & Paymar, M. (1986). *Power and control: Tactics of men who batter*. Duluth, MN: Minnesota Program Development, Inc.

Phillips, B., & Phillips, D. A. (2010). Learning from youth exposed to domestic violence: Decentering DV and the primacy of gender stereotypes. *Violence Against Women*, 16(3), 291-312.

Pihama, L., Te Nana, R., Cameron, N., Smith, C., Reid, J., and Southey, K. (2015). *Maori cultural definitions of sexual violence* [online]. *Sexual Abuse in Australia and New Zealand*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 43-50. Availability: <<http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=201551294325546;res=IELFSC>> ISSN: 1833-8488

Pocock, T., & Cram, F. (1996). Children of battered women. *Waikato Law Review* 4(1), 77-100.

Policastro, C., & Payne, B. K. (2013). The blameworthy victim: Domestic violence myths and the criminalization of victimhood. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 22(4), 329-347. doi: 10.1080/10926771.2013.775985

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2007). Validity issues in narrative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(4), 471-486

Ponterotto, J. G. (2005). Qualitative research in counseling psychology: A Primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 126-136

Postmus, J. L., Severson, M., Berry, M., & Yoo, J. A. (2009). Women's experiences of violence and seeking help. *Violence Against Women*, 15(7), 852-868. doi: 10.1177/1077801209334445

Pouwhare, T. (1999). *Maori women and work: The effects of family violence on maori women's employment opportunities*. Wellington: National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges

Pratt, R., Burman, E., & Chantler, K. (2004). Towards understanding domestic violence: Reflections on research and the 'domestic violence and minoritization' project. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 14(1), 33-43. doi: 10.1002/casp.758

Price, Joshua M. (2012). *Structural violence: hidden brutality in the lives of women*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Prochaska, J. O., & DiClemente, C. C. (1984). *The transtheoretical approach: Crossing traditional boundaries of change*. Homewood, IL: Dow Jones/Irwin.

Prochaska, J. O., & Prochaska, J. M. (2009). Change (stage of). In S. J. Lopez (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Positive Psychology*. Oxford, UK.: Wiley-Blackwell.

- Prochaska, J. O., Redding, C. A., & Evers., K. W. (2008). The transtheoretical model and stages of change. In K. Glanz, B. K. Rimer & K. Viswanath (Eds.), *Health behavior and health education: Theory, research*. (pp. 98-121). Hoboken: Wiley.
- Proietti-Scifoni, G., & Daly, K. (2011). Gendered violence and restorative justice: the views of New Zealand Opinion Leaders. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 14(3), 269-290
- Radford, L., & Hester, M. (2006). *Mothering through domestic violence*. London;Philadelphia;: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Ramazanoglu, C., with Holland, J. (2002). *Feminist methodology. challenges and choices*. London, Thousand Oaks California: SAGE Publications
- Randell, K. A., Bledsoe, L. K., Shroff, P. L., & Clyde Pierce, M. (2012). Mothers' motivations for intimate partner violence help seeking. *Journal of Family Violence*. Retrieved from doi:10.1007/s10896-011-9401-5
- Rajah, V. (2007). Resistance as edgework in violent intimate relationships of drug-involved women. *British Journal of Criminology*, 47, 196-213.

- Ravenek, M. J., & Laliberte-Rudman, D. (2013). Bridging conceptions of quality in moments of qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 12(1), 436-456.
- Raya, P. (2014). Intimate partner abuse typology and intersectionality. [Article]. *Journal of Psychohistory*, 41(3), 209-221.
- Reed, J., Pritschet, B. L., & Cutton, D. M. (2013). Grit, conscientiousness, and the transtheoretical model of change for exercise behavior. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 18(5), 612-619.
- Reeves, C., & O'Leary-Kelly, A. (2007). The effects and costs of interpersonal violence for work organizations. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(3), 327-344.
- Reinharz, S. (1993). Research Note. Neglected voices and excessive demands in feminist research. *Qualitative Sociology*, 16(1), 69-76.
- Renzetti, C. M., & Lee, R. M. (1993). *Researching sensitive topics*. Newbury Park, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Riddell, T., Ford-Gilboe, M., & Leipert, B. (2009). Strategies used by rural women to stop, avoid, or escape from intimate partner violence. *Health Care for Women International*, 30(1-2), 134-159.
- Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Riger, S., Raja, S., & Camacho, J. (2002). The radiating impact of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17*(2), 184-205. doi: 10.1177/0886260502017002005
- Riger, S., & Staggs, S. L. (2004). Welfare reform, domestic violence, and employment: What do we know and what do we need to know? . *Violence Against Women, 10*(9), 961-990.
- Ristock, J. (2005). *Relationship violence in lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer [LGBTQ] communities. Moving beyond a gender-based framework*. Violence Against Women Online Resources. Retrieved from [www.mincava.umn.edu/documents/lgbtqviolence/lgbtqviolence.pdf](http://www.mincava.umn.edu/documents/lgbtqviolence/lgbtqviolence.pdf)
- Rivas, C., Kelly, M., & Feder, G. (2013). Drawing the line: How African, Caribbean and White British women live out psychologically abusive experiences. *Violence Against Women, 19*, 1104-1132.
- Roberts, G. L., Lawrence, J. M., Williams, G. M., & Raphael, B. (1998). The impact of domestic violence on women's health. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Public Health*(22), 796-801.

- Ropers-Huilman, R., & Winters, K. (2011). Feminist research in higher education. 82(6), 667-690. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 82(6), 667-690.
- Rubin, H., & Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: the art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sabina, C., & Tindale, R. S. (2008). Abuse characteristics and coping resources as predictors of problem-focused coping strategies among battered women. *Violence Against Women*, 14(4), 437-456.
- Saldaña, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Salisbury, E. J., Henning, K., & Holdford, R. (2009). Fathering by partner-abusive men: Attitudes on children's exposure to interparental conflict and risk factors for child abuse. *Child Maltreatment*, 14(3), 232-242. doi: 10.1177/1077559509338407
- Saltzman, L. E. (2004). Definitional and methodological issues related to transnational research on intimate partner violence. *Violence Against Women*, 10(7), 812-830. doi: 10.1177/1077201204265553
- Sampson, R. J., & Bean, L. (2006). Cultural mechanisms and killing fields: A revised theory of community-level racial inequality. In R. Peterson, L. Krivo & J. Hagan (Eds.), *The Many Colors of Crime: Inequalities of Race, Ethnicity and Crime in America* (pp. 8-36). New York: New York University Press.

- Samuels, G.M., & Ross-Sheriff, F. (2008). Identity, oppression, and power: Feminisms and intersectionality theory. *Affilia* , 23, 5-11.
- Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C. H. (2010). Qualitative research synthesis. In M. Savin-Baden & C. H. Major (Eds.), *New Approaches to Qualitative Research: Wisdom and Uncertainty* (pp. 108-118). London: Routledge.
- Semaan, I., Jasinski, J. L., & Bubriski-McKenzie, A. (2013). Subjection, subjectivity, and agency: The power, meaning, and practice of mothering among women experiencing intimate partner abuse. *Violence Against Women*, 19(1), 69-88. doi: 10.1177/1077801212475335
- Schafer, J. A., & Giblin, M. J. (2010). Policing intimate partner violence in rural areas and small towns: Policies, practices, and perceptions. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 20(4), 283-301. doi: 10.1080/08974454.2010.512226
- Schechter, S. (1982). *Women and male violence: the visions and struggles of the battered women's movement*. Boston: South End Press.
- Scheffer Lindgren, M., & Renck, B. (2008). Intimate partner violence and the leaving process: Interviews with abused women. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 3, 113-124.

Scheffer Lindgren, M., & Renck, B. (2008). Intimate partner violence and the leaving process: Interviews with abused women. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health & Well-Being*, 3(2), 113-124. doi: 10.1080/17482620801945805

Schneider, E. M. (2008). Domestic violence law reform in the twenty-first century: Looking back and looking forward. *Family Law Quarterly*, 42(3), 353-363.

Schreiber, J. C., Fuller, T., & Paceley, M. S. (2013). Engagement in child protective services: Parent perceptions of worker skills. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35(4), 707-715. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.01.018>

Schwandt, T. A. (1996). Farewell to criteriology. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(1), 58-72.

Seligman, M. (1975). *Helplessness: Depression, development and death*. New York: W.H. Freeman.

Senter, K. E., & Caldwell, K. (2002). Spirituality and the maintenance of change: A phenomenological study of women who leave abusive relationships. *Contemporary Family*, 24(4), 543-564.

Seuffert, N. (1996). Lawyering for women survivors of domestic violence. *Waikato Law Review*, 4, 1-57.

- Shalansky, J., Ericksen, J., & Henderson, A. (1999). Abused women and child custody: the ongoing exposure to abusive ex-partners. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 29, 416-426.
- Shula, R. (2015). Intersectionalities: Intimate partner domestic violence and mental health within the European context. *Intersectionalities: A global Journal of Social Work Analysis, Research, Polity and Practice*, 4(2), 76-100.
- Shurman, L. A., & Rodriguez, C. M. (2006). Cognitive-affective predictors of women's readiness to end domestic violence relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 21(11), 1417-1439. doi: 10.1177/0886260506292993
- Simpson, E. K., & Helfrich, C. A. (2014). Oppression and barriers to service for black, lesbian survivors of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 26(4), 441-465. doi: 10.1080/10538720.2014.951816
- Skinner, T., Hester, M., & Malos, E. (2005). Methodology, feminism and gender violence. In T. Skinner, M. Hester & E. Malos (Eds.), *Researching gender violence: Feminist methodology in action*. UK: Willan Publishing.
- Smith, C. A., Elwyn, L. J., Ireland, T. O., & Thornberry, T. P. (2010). Impact of adolescent exposure to intimate partner violence on

substance use in early adulthood. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 71(2), 219-230.

Snively, S., National Collective of Independent Women's, R., & PricewaterhouseCoopers. (2000). *Improving outcomes for women and children using refuge services / PricewaterhouseCoopers*. Wellington [N.Z.]: National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges.

Social Workers Registration Board. (2011a). *Competence to practice social work with Maori. Policy statement*. Wellington: Social Workers Registration Board.

Social Workers Registration Board. (2011b). *Competence to practice social work with different cultural and ethnic groups*. Wellington.: Social Workers Registration Board.

Social Workers Registration Board. (2015). *Core competence standards*. Retrieved from <http://www.swrb.govt.nz/competence-assessment/core-competence-standards>

Sokoloff, N. J., & Dupont, I. (2005). Domestic violence at the intersections of race, class, and gender: Challenges and contributions to understanding violence against marginalized women in diverse communities. *Violence Against Women*, 11(1), 38-64.

- Spector-Mersel, G. (2010). Narrative research. Time for a paradigm. *Narrative Inquiry*, 20(1), 204-224.
- Sprague. (2005). *Feminist methodologies for critical researchers. Bridging differences*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.
- Squire, C. (2015). Partial secrets. *Current anthropology*, 56(S12), S201-S210. doi:10.1086/683299
- Statistics New Zealand. (2012). *Subnational population estimates: At 30 June 2012*. Retrieved from [www.statistics.govt.nz](http://www.statistics.govt.nz) website:
- Staunaes, D., & Sondergaard, G. M. (2011). Intersectionality: A theoretical adjustment In R. Buikema, G. Griffin & N. Lykke (Eds.), *Theories and Methodologies in Postgraduate Feminist Research* (pp. 45-59). London, UK: Routledge.
- Stanko, E. A. (1997). "I Second That Emotion": Reflections on feminism, emotionality, and research on sexual violence'. In M. D. Schwartz (Ed.), *Researching sexual violence against women: Methodological and personal perspectives* (pp. 74-85). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stanley, L., & Wise, S. (2002). *Breaking out again: Feminist ontology and epistemology*. London, UK: Routledge.

- Stewart, A. J., & McDermott, C. (2004). Gender in psychology. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 519-44. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.canterbury.ac.nz/docview/205826130?accountid=14499>
- Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Strier, R., & Binyamin, S. (2010). Developing anti-oppressive services for the poor: A Theoretical and organisational rationale. *British Journal of Social Work*, 40(6), 1908-1926. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcp122
- Sussex, B., & Corcoran, K. (2005). The impact of domestic violence on depression in teen mothers: Is the fear or threat of violence sufficient? *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention*(5), 109-120
- Sutherland, O., Breen, A. V., & Lewis, S. P. (2013). Discursive narrative analysis: A Study of online autobiographical accounts of self-injury. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(48), 1.
- Sylaska, Kateryna M., & Edwards, Katie M. (2014). Disclosure of intimate partner violence to informal social support network members: A review of the literature. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 15(1), 3-21. doi: 10.1177/1524838013496335

- Taket, A., O'Doherty, L., Valpied, J., & Hegarty, K. (2014). What do Australian women experiencing intimate partner abuse want from family and friends? *Qualitative Health Research*, 24(7), 983-996. doi: 10.1177/1049732314540054
- Taylor, J. Y. (2002). The straw that broke the camel's back. *Women & Therapy*, 25(3-4), 79-94. doi: 10.1300/J015v25n03\_06
- Terrance, C., Plumm, K., & Little, B. (2008). Maternal Blame: Battered Women and Abused Children. *Violence Against Women*, 14(8), 870-885. doi: 10.1177/1077801208321331
- Te Puni Kokiri (2010). *Rangahau tūkinō whānau: Māori research agenda on family violence*. Wellington, N.Z
- Theoharis, G. (2007). Social justice educational leaders and resistance: Toward a theory of social justice leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 43(2), 221-258. doi: 10.1177/0013161x06293717
- Thomas, V. G. (2009). Critical race theory: Ethics and dimensions of diversity in research. *The Handbook of Social Research Ethics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Tisdall, M., Farmer, S., Robinson, M., Wells, A., & McMaster, K. (2007). *Review of the use of restorative justice in family violence cases in the Rotorua district*. Wellington: Ministry of Justice.

- Tolley, A., & Collins, J. (2014). *Chief Victims Advisor underpins package to prevent family violence*. Retrieved from <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/chief-victims-advisor-underpins-package-prevent-family-violence>
- Towns, A., & Adams, P. J. (2000). "If I really loved him enough, he would be okay": Women's accounts of male partner violence. *Violence Against Women*, 6(6), 558-585.
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837-851. doi: 10.1177/1077800410383121
- Trevillion, K., Oram, S., Feder, G., & Howard, L. M. (2012). Experiences of domestic violence and mental disorders: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLoS ONE*, 7(12), e51740. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0051740
- Trotter, J., & Allen, N. E. (2009). The good, the bad, and the ugly: Domestic violence survivors’ experiences with their informal social networks. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 43(3-4), 221-231.
- United Nations Centre for Human Rights. (1994). *Human rights and social work. A manual for schools of social work and the social work profession*. New York & Geneva: United Nations.

Ussher, J. M. (1999). Feminist approaches to qualitative health research. In M. Murray & K. Chamberlain (Eds.), *Qualitative Health Psychology. Theories and Methods* (pp. 98-114). London. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

van Campenhout, G., & van Hoven, B. (2013). 'It is where blokes can be blokes': Making places in a New Zealand rugby club. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 21(9), 1090-1107.

Velonis, Alisa J., Daoud, Nihaya, Matheson, Flora, Woodhall-Melnik, Julia, Hamilton-Wright, Sarah, & O'Campo, Patricia. (2015). Strategizing safety: Theoretical frameworks to understand women's decision making in the face of partner violence and social inequities. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. doi: 10.1177/0886260515598953

Walby, S. (2004). *The cost of domestic violence*. Leeds, UK: Women and Equality Unit.

Waldrop, A. E., & Resick, P. A. (2004). Coping among adult female victims of domestic violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, 19(5), 291-302. doi: 10.1023/B:JOFV.0000042079.91846.68

- Walker, L. (1984). Violence against women: Implications for mental health policy. In L. Walker (Ed.), *Women and Mental Health*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications.
- Walliman, N. (2011). *Research methods: the basics*. New York;London;: Routledge.
- Wangmann, J. (2010). Gender and intimate partner violence : a case study from NSW. *University of New South Wales Law Journal*, 33 (3). Retrieved from <http://search.informit.com.au/fullText;dn=20111221;res=AGISPT>
- Ward, R. E., & Muldoon, J.P. (2007) Female tactics and strategies of intimate partner violence: A study of incident reports. *Sociological Spectrum*, 27, 337-364.
- Waters, H., Hyder, A., Rajkotia, Y., Basu, S., Rehwinkel, J. A., & Butchart, A. (2004). *The economic dimensions of interpersonal violence*. Geneva, Switzerland: Department of Injuries and Violence Prevention.
- Watson, D., & Parsons, S. (2005). *Domestic abuse of women and men in Ireland: Report on the national study of domestic abuse*. Dublin: National Crime Council.
- Webber-Dreardon, E. (1997). Matua whakapai tou Marae, ka whakapai ai i te Marae o te tangata. *Te Komako Social Service Review*, 18(1), 7-11.

- Weinzimmer, J. M., Bach, R., & Bhandari, S. S. (2013). Motherhood, empowerment, and resilience within the context of intimate partner violence. [Article]. *Sociation Today*, 11(2), 6-6.
- Weiss-Gal, I., Levin, L., & Krumer-Nevo, M. (2014). Applying critical social work in direct practice with families. *Child & Family Social Work*, 19(1), 55-64.
- Wettersten, K.B., Rudolph, S.E., Faul, K., Gallagher, K., Trangsrud, H.B., Adams, K., Graham, S., & Terrance, C. (2004). Freedom though self-sufficiency: A qualitative examination of the impact of domestic violence on the working lives of women in shelter. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 51, 447-462.
- Wihongi, H. (2010). *Tino rangatiratanga in health policies and practises. I A Kaupapa Māori analysis of the 1996 National Cervical Screening Programme's Policy document – the years 1990 to 2000*  
A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy University of Waikato, Waikato.
- Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology. Adventures in theory and method*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

- Wilson, W., & Webber, M. (2014). *The people's report: The people's inquiry into addressing child abuse and domestic violence*. New Zealand: The Glenn Inquiry.
- Wood, J. T. (2001). The normalization of violence in heterosexual romantic relationships: Women's narratives of love and violence. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 18*(2), 239-261. doi: 10.1177/0265407501182005
- World Health Organization. (2005). *WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women: Full report*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- Wuest, J., & Merritt-Gray, M. (1999). Not going back: Sustaining the separation in the process of leaving abusive relationships. *Violence Against Women, 5*(2), 110-133.
- Wuest, J., & Merritt-Gray, M. (2008). A theoretical understanding of abusive intimate partner relationships that become non-violent: shifting the pattern of abusive control. *Journal of Family Violence, 23*, 281-293.
- Xiong, Z. B., Detzner, D. F., & Cleveland, M. J. (2005). Southeast Asian adolescents' perceptions of immigrant parenting practices. *Hmong Studies Journal, 5*(1), 1-20.

- Yates, T. M., Dodds, M. F., Sroufe, L. A., & Egeland, B. (2003). Exposure to partner violence and child behavior problems: A prospective study controlling for child physical abuse and neglect, child cognitive ability, socioeconomic status, and life stress. *Development and Psychopathology, 15*(1), 199-218. doi: 10.1017/S0954579403000117
- Yoshihama, M. (2002). Battered women's coping strategies and psychological distress: differences by immigration status. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 30*(3), 429-452.
- Young, I. M. (2011). *Justice and the politics of difference*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Zanville, H. A., & Cattaneo, L. B. (2012). The nature of risk and its relationship to coping among survivors of intimate partner violence. *Psychology of Violence, 2*(4), 355-367. doi: 10.1037/a0028198
- Zeoli, A., Rivera, E., Sullivan, C., & Kubiak, S. (2013). Post-Separation abuse of women and their children: Boundary-setting and family court utilization among victimized mothers. *Journal of Family Violence, 28*(6), 547-560. doi: 10.1007/s10896-013-9528-7

