THE RESPONSE TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: ARE CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS EFFECTIVE?

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I dedicate this to...

my partner, Camille. Your support and encouragement have proven to be great motivators for me. I am grateful for your insight, intelligence, and love.

my mother, Susie. Endeavoring to provide a safe, healthy, and supportive upbringing for your children has been invaluable. You are truly a role model and living proof that one’s fate does not always determine one’s future.

the human condition. An equal opportunity to survive and function in a caring environment should be a right afforded to all people; families or relationships should not be fearsome things. Society can accomplish great things when shared ends are earnestly pursued.

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ABSTRACT

THE RESPONSE TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: ARE CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS ENOUGH?

Marshall E. Ogren

Under the Supervision of Dr. Amy Nemmetz

Intimate partner violence (IPV) continues to plague our society. Many laws have been passed to control IPV, but it persists as a major problem today. Many laws and procedural changes have shifted the burden of rehabilitation and intervention toward the criminal justice system, which is ill equipped to enact substantive change. This paper utilizes secondary data sources to examine the nature and extent of IPV. This paper explores social structure and social learning theory as possible explanations for IPV, possibly being transmitted from generation to generation, while current interventions are ineffective to control IPV. Outcomes suggest that rehabilitative batterer programs should be more comprehensive in order to lower recidivism rates and increase completion rates. The outcomes also suggest that primary prevention programs targeted toward children and victims are necessary to offset the damaging effects of IPV and prevent IPV from being passed on from generation to generation.

Statement of the Problem

Traditional responses to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) by the criminal justice system have served to draw attention to the problem of IPV but have limited efficacy to prevent future abuse. Updated and innovative methods to control must be supported and implemented. Mandatory arrest laws, restraining orders, and traditional batterer treatment programs have had limited success. Despite current programs designed to mitigate IPV, IPV remains a widespread and detrimental problem to society. More effective and comprehensive programming must be explored as a way to better manage recidivism and reduce future victimization.
Methods and Procedures

An in-depth and comprehensive analysis of secondary data sources will be conducted. Contemporary articles from scholarly journals will be the main data source utilized. Data relating to causation theory, current policies, and emerging intervention trends will be analyzed and synthesized to form the basis for a multidisciplinary approach to IPV. Results will also be applied to formulate a realistic treatment approach for batterers, victims, and children. The basis for intervention options will be supported primarily by the application of social learning theory to explain why IPV continues to happen. Social learning theory will explain why current intervention approaches may not be enough to address IPV. The use of social learning theory will serve as a basis from which effective interventions are developed.

Summary of Results

An analysis of contemporary secondary data sources reveals a general consensus among researchers that IPV programming has a limited deterrent effect on IPV. Programs in use by the criminal justice system to address IPV are antiquated and do not reach the majority of victims. Recent studies have evaluated the effectiveness of and found support for primary prevention programs for children and victims. Additionally, researchers have discovered promising results with couples treatment and multi-level batterer treatment that accounts for chemical dependency and mental health issues. The use of innovative strategies appears to be effective at combating IPV.
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I. INTRODUCTION

Statement and Significance of the Problem

Each year, many people become the victims of crime. Some may be murdered, raped, robbed, physically assaulted, or otherwise victimized. It should be society’s goal to study how people become victims and take steps to prevent victimizations. One area deserving of further study is domestic violence, or intimate partner violence (IPV). Intimate partner violence is pervasive throughout society and millions of individuals experience IPV. In fact, an estimated 5.3 million U.S. women over the age of 18 are victims of non-fatal IPV every year (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2009). These victims experience nearly 2 million injuries because of IPV, 550,000 of which require medical treatment. Because of violence, victims lose an estimated yearly total of 8 million days of paid work and almost 5.6 million days of productivity due to the injuries and various other maladies that victims experience (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2003).

Intimate partner violence among adults often results in many physical and psychological injuries (Randle & Graham, 2011). The precise nature and scope of IPV proves difficult to gauge because there are a wide variety of definitions and behaviors considered IPV (Barner & Carney, 2011; Randle & Graham, 2011; Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon, & Shelley, 2002; Winstok, 2011). The lack of a standard definition for IPV makes it difficult to study IPV. Moreover, disagreements over gender symmetry and representation in research further compound the issues (Winstok, 2011). For the purposes of this paper, intimate partner includes current spouses and current dating couples, former spouses, and former dating couples to include heterosexual and same sex couples (Saltzman et al., 2002). Additionally, for the purpose of this
Violence includes physical and psychological aggression, stalking, sexual violence, and/or the threat of violence (Saltzman et al., 2002).

Eyo (2006) acknowledges that men are sometimes victims of IPV, but asserts that females are more likely to be the victims of IPV, particularly from men they know. Eyo (2006) provides examples on the nature and extent that IPV affects these populations but provides very little information on the incidence of IPV perpetrated against men. Recently, researchers have discovered that men may quite often be victims of IPV (Dutton & Corvo, 2006; Hines & Douglas, 2011; Randle & Graham, 2011). The emerging discovery about men as victims will be addressed during the literature review section of this paper.

Intimate partner violence between parents has an effect on children in profound and irreparable ways. Children who witness abuse between parents are more likely to suffer psychological harm and may learn that violence is an appropriate response to stress. The psychological harm that children are likely to experience includes, “anxiety, depression, poor school performance, low self-esteem, disobedience, nightmares, and physical health complaints,” (Eyo, 2006, p. 201).

Children from abusive households develop dysfunctional ways of interacting with others (Anderson & Kras, 2005). This dysfunctional learning means that children may experience problems relating to others. Children from abusive households may also develop dysfunctional coping mechanisms and engage in unhealthy behavior (Ireland & Smith, 2009). Moreover, children from abusive households may grow up to become abusers or may subconsciously seek out abusive partners (Ehresnaft et al., 2003).
Studying IPV is particularly challenging because it is greatly underreported (Akers & Kaukinen, 2009; Anderson & Kras, 2005). For example, affluence, education level, and employment might affect a victim’s willingness to call the police or discuss the occurrence of abuse (Akers & Kaukinen, 2009). Given the nature of IPV and reporting frequency, it is difficult to accurately gauge the magnitude of the problem. Another factor that prevents accurately viewing the extent of IPV is that there is no unified definition of IPV. Some definitions portray IPV as occurring only between husband and wife. These definitions do not account for dating couples or same-sex couples, both categories of which experience IPV (Barner & Carney, 2011).

Indeed, same-sex couples experience very similar rates of IPV as other populations of couples (Randle & Graham, 2011).

Intimate partner violence is not only limited to married couples. Research has discovered that dating couples are more likely to be violent toward one another than married couples (Nabors, Dietz, & Jasinski, 2006). Nabors et al., (2006) sought to examine the prevalence of IPV among college students. They found that 17%-45% of university students had assaulted their partner in the year before the survey. The researchers also found that approximately 25% of both male and female college students approved of IPV. Perhaps most disturbing was the discovery that more than half of the respondents believed that IPV was caused by women starting physical fights, some violence was caused by the way women treat men, and “that most women could find a way to get out of an abusive relationship if they really wanted to,” (Nabors et al., 2006, p. 791). Adding to the difficulty to gauge the exact nature of the problem is the sometimes conflicting interpretation of studies regarding gender as it relates to IPV (Barner & Carney, 2006; Dutton & Corvo, 2006; Eyo, 2006).
As previously mentioned, researchers have recently discovered a paucity of research regarding men as victims of IPV (Dutton & Corvo, 2006; Hines & Douglas, 2011; Randle & Graham, 2011). The emergence and development of the various movements in IPV research resulted in a large body of research about women as victims of IPV. The nature and extent of the problem of women as victims of IPV is quite clear. Stuart et al. (2006) discovered a meta-analysis study that showed women were “slightly more likely to engage in at least one act of physical aggression than men,” (p. 102). However, widespread publication on this issue seems missing. Recently, researchers have noticed that very little research exists about men and the nature of victimization. This may partially be due to the gender stereotypes and cultural norms that have resulted in the perception that men are predominantly immune from emotional suffering or reluctant to report or acknowledge abuse (Randle & Graham, 2011). The lack of knowledge about men as victims may be because men are not physically injured as often as women are during IPV incidents. Women suffer physical injuries more often than men (Ehrensaft, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2004; Randle & Graham, 2011).

As researchers began discovering men as a relatively undiscovered victim population, many similarities between men and women as victims emerged (Barner & Carney, 2011; Hines & Douglas, 2011; Randle & Graham, 2011; Raphael, 2004). For instance, both men and women can experience symptoms of depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal ideation because of IPV (Hines & Douglas, 2011; Randle & Graham, 2011). This finding is significant because women also experience similar symptoms and diagnoses, which demonstrates a similarity between men and women as victims. This shared similarity and relatively new and under-studied victim population presents several difficulties and limitations to intervention programs.
Posttraumatic stress disorder is another problem that IPV and other types of repeated traumatic events elicit. It is important to recognize the distinction between repeated traumatic events and relatively isolated traumatic events because PTSD is sometimes confused with acute stress disorder (ASD) (James, 2008). Acute stress disorder includes symptoms experienced by an individual in-between a two day to four-week timeframe following a traumatic event (Comer, 2007; James, 2008). Acute stress disorder symptoms appear to be very similar to those of PTSD and if not properly diagnosed or caught soon after a traumatic incident can develop into PTSD. PTSD can also develop from repeated incidents or victimizations and can be a very complex problem (Scott & Babcock, 2010). Gender, level of violence experienced during childhood, and the level of attachment of the individual to society and others are factors related rates of PTSD development (Comer, 2007; Hines & Douglas, 2011; Scott & Babcock, 2010). The very nature of PTSD makes it difficult for victims to seek help and certainly compounds the problem of IPV (Comer, 2007).

Victims can sometimes feel powerless with the current mandatory arrest laws and often suffer financial hardships or other ill effects (Cramer, 2005). Offenders continue to perpetrate IPV because they receive ineffectual court-ordered counseling or sentences that do not deter future violence. Offenders do not get the treatment they need or continue to practice their dysfunctional behavior.

The criminal justice response to IPV has become more serious and well structured over time. Current intervention strategies used by law enforcement, courts, and corrections are not enough to effectively combat IPV (Pavlidakis, 2009). The criminal justice system does not reach enough victims to be truly effective. Approximately 75% of all IPV victims are not engaged in the criminal justice system (Cramer, 2005). Emerging research on specialized IPV courts
designed to treat batterers from a multi-level approach seems promising to decrease recidivism (Coulter & VandeWeerd, 2009). The traditional criminal justice response still seems to neglect victims. Emerging research indicates that prevention measures undertaken to protect victims and child witnesses can be effective; however, more needs to happen to garner public support and awareness for these programs.

Traditional criminal justice system responses to IPV have served their purpose but new, more innovative responses need to be supported and implemented. Mandatory arrest laws, no-drop policies, uni-level batterer programs, and restraining orders have had limited success. Despite current programs designed to mitigate IPV, IPV remains a widespread and detrimental problem to society. It is important to explore more robust and comprehensive programming as a way to better manage recidivism and reduce future victimization.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study endeavors to examine the limitations of current intervention programs (mandatory arrest laws). This study will not advocate replacement of any current intervention programs but will advocate for additional strategies designed to augment and compliment current IPV intervention methods. Rather, this study seeks to critically evaluate research and policy designed to combat IPV. Additionally, this paper will examine the history of IPV and strategies to control it and compare those findings against relevant theory. After examination and comparison, burgeoning research will also be compared with theory. Incorporation of growing research will be applied to public policy recommendations and changes.
This study seeks to advocate for a multi-disciplinary approach to IPV. It is believed that involving agencies representing a broad spectrum of services is the most effective way to reduce IPV. Intimate partner violence reduction will have economic, health, and humanitarian benefits. While this goal may seem lofty, it is thought to be realistic and attainable. Results of this study will assist policymakers with development of realistic and achievable strategies to manage IPV and its ill effects. This study will present IPV in a straightforward and accessible manner.

The results of this study will serve as a guide for law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, treatment professionals, and policy makers to better address society’s response to IPV. This study will also serve as an educational tool for victims, offenders, and children to explain why IPV continues to happen. The recommendations of this study should assist with implementation and formulation of a more fundamental approach to IPV response. Furthermore, this study will draw attention to the fact that, despite current intervention strategies, IPV recidivism rates remain high and have dire financial and human costs.

**Methods and Procedures**

An in-depth and comprehensive analysis of secondary data sources will be conducted. Contemporary articles from scholarly journals will be the main data source utilized. Data relating to causation theory, current policies, and emerging intervention trends will be analyzed and synthesized to form the basis for a multidisciplinary approach to IPV. Results will also be applied to formulate a realistic treatment approach for batterers, victims, and children. The basis for intervention options will be supported primarily by the application of social learning theory to explain why IPV continues to happen. Social learning theory will explain why current
intervention approaches may not be enough to address IPV. The use of social learning theory will guide the development of specific treatment options to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.

**Assumptions and Limitations**

Intimate partner violence rates will remain consistent if alternative intervention options are not explored. Society will continue to suffer the ill effects of IPV. Victims and children will continue to suffer and IPV will continue through generations. The recommendations of this study will be lofty and may require society to re-think the traditional approach to IPV. This study’s recommendations may seem radical and receive pushback from the multidisciplinary fields from which it seeks assistance. Nevertheless, beginning to discuss these issues in meaningful and hopeful ways may prove worthwhile and productive.
II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Context of IPV

Intimate partner violence in the United States has not always been recognized as a problem or something to be controlled. Often seen as a private matter between couples, relationships and marriages were not considered an important matter needing regulation. Indeed, when the United States was formed, married women were seen as property belonging to their husband (Zaher, 2002). This concept was based on the English common law tradition. The doctrine known as *coverture* meant that upon marriage, a woman could not own property or enter into contracts. Individual rights were essentially non-existent for women (Zaher, 2002). For example, women who attended law school were not admitted to the bar because the patriarchal polarization of society dictated that since they could not enter into contractual relationships, they would not be able to enter into an attorney-client relationship. Intimate partner violence was tolerated under *coverture* because legally, a husband was responsible for his wife’s actions (Threedy, 2008). According to Threedy (2008), “As the man was responsible for the woman’s actions, he was entitled to discipline her by reasonable means” (p. 184).

Threedy (2008) stated, “The dynamic of social change seems to operate like a pendulum” (p. 185). The pendulum of social change began to swing during the industrial revolution when women fought for greater independence (Threedy, 2008). The Alabama Supreme Court case, *Fulgham v. Alabama* (1871), was one of the first court cases to challenge this idea of *coverture* and determined the application of common law in the United States (Barner & Carney, 2011). The defendant was George Fulgham who was married to Matilda Fulgham. The incident occurred when Matilda thought George’s punishment of one of their children was excessive. George took exception to this and hit Matilda twice on her back with a board. George was
charged and convicted in circuit court for assault and battery. He appealed the circuit court conviction. The Alabama Supreme Court ruled that the common law practice of spousal abuse carried forth from Great Britain did not apply in Alabama. The English common law practice of spousal abuse was essentially reserved for and practiced by serfdom, a lower class of citizens. Subsequently, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that the equal protection clause of the Constitution afforded all citizens rights to be free from abuse. This was truly one of the first court cases to distinctly recognize equality between husband and wife and differed from high court decisions in North Carolina and Mississippi (Barner & Carney, 2011). After Fulgham, several other states began to recognize equal protections between husband and wife and enacted laws prohibiting spousal abuse (Barner & Carney, 2011). However, society’s way of thinking was slow to change but the momentum of Fulgham carried forth.

The social momentum resulted in sets of deep-rooted supporters of the status quo who remained and engaged in what Threedy (2008) called a “push-back” movement (p. 185). As we have seen with IPV, laws may change (affording more rights to women) but the idea that women are second-class citizens remains. After coverture was no longer legally acceptable, there were still portions of the population who thought of women as property and socially unequal. Social thinking resulted in changes to the law, but continued IPV continued because it was considered a private matter that the law had no business regulating. Slowly, much of American society began to regard IPV as unacceptable and this resulted in a shift toward stigmatizing IPV (Threedy, 2008). A large part of this paradigm shift was due to the feminist movement (Barner & Carney, 2011).

Social norms and gender roles are unique attributes that factor into men as IPV victims (Randle & Graham, 2011). These unique needs seem to be indicative of the same patriarchal and
sexist paradigms that existed and allowed IPV to be viewed as a private matter between couples (Hines & Douglas, 2011). Hines and Douglas (2011) discovered that male victims who sought help from care providers and disclosed that they were in an abusive relationship felt the nature of the care provider’s reaction was a large factor in the healing process. Indeed, male victims who encounter unsympathetic or emotionally clumsy care providers may not seek any additional help or may regress to prior feelings of suicide, depression, or PTSD. This is also true for women who encounter insensitive care providers. There is a demonstrated need for emotionally competent care providers who have special training in dealing with the unique needs of male and female IPV victims.

**Duluth Model and Mandatory Arrest Policies**

Three predominant intervention strategies or movements emerged in the 20th century (Barner & Carney, 2011). The women’s movement began in the late 19th century and continued into the 20th century. The women’s shelter movement served to advance knowledge about IPV and increased awareness about victims’ needs (Barner & Carney, 2011). Women’s shelters began to fill quickly and funding was limited. An increase in demand for the shelters meant that many women who needed to stay at the shelters were turned away.

As far as the criminal justice system was concerned, a shift toward treating IPV as a civil matter began in the mid 20th century (Barner & Carney, 2011). IPV cases were relegated to the civil court system and a series of restraining orders and divorce proceedings were the methods of choice to handle IPV cases. This system functioned separately from the women’s shelter movement but was inadequate because it did not provide any deterrence for offenders.
The role of law enforcement to address IPV became prominent during the 1970s. Law enforcement traditionally considered IPV a private matter, but slowly started to shift toward a response of mediation, separation, and arrest (Hirschel & Hutchison, 2003). Ultimately, law enforcement’s primary response to IPV shifted toward mandatory arrest for offenders coupled with an intervention model.

The Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (Duluth model) began in Duluth, Minnesota in 1981 (Barner & Carney, 2011). The Duluth model aimed to approach IPV using an interdisciplinary model incorporating elements of human services agencies, women’s shelters, police departments, court systems, and prosecutors in order to better serve victims and hold offenders accountable. The Duluth model was largely based on the ideals of the feminist movement. The increasing popularity of the Duluth model signaled a fundamental change toward criminalization of IPV and the need to hold offenders accountable (Barner & Carney, 2011). The Duluth model was predicated on principles of education and view changing to reverse the sexist and patriarchal views that were pervasive at the time. The Duluth model incorporated elements of deterrence and rehabilitation. The Duluth model gained popularity and was widely adopted throughout the United States.

The Duluth model is certainly not without its criticisms. Perhaps the most compelling of which is its relative ineffectiveness on recidivism and lack of empirical support (Day, Chung, O’Leary, & Carson, 2009; Dutton & Corvo, 2006). Unfortunately, the Duluth model has failed to demonstrate deterrent or rehabilitative effects on participants. This result is particularly disturbing because many states continue to rely on the Duluth model for intervention and batterer programming. Many studies continue to show a lack of empirical support for the Duluth model (Day et al., 2009). Dutton and Corvo (2006) argue that a large flaw in the Duluth model is that it
promotes IPV as a male-female issue and that men perpetrate the vast majority of IPV crimes against women. Additionally, Dutton and Corvo (2006) argue that the Duluth model promotes an inappropriate, patriarchal, and largely simplistic view of IPV.

Another strategy that gained popularity in the U.S. was the creation of laws that promote or require mandatory arrests in IPV cases. The Minneapolis Experiment was one of the first studies to examine deterrent effects of mandatory arrest policies on IPV (Sherman & Berk, 1984). The Minneapolis, Minnesota Police Department participated in a study designed to measure the benefits of three responses to IPV assault cases: advising the couple, separation of the couple, or arresting the offender (Hirschel & Hutchison, 2003). Post-intervention interviews of the couples were conducted every two weeks for six months. Sherman and Berk (1984) found that arrest was more effective at reducing recidivism than advising or separating the couple. The results of the Minneapolis experiment received extensive media coverage (Hirschel & Hutchison, 2003). The Minneapolis experiment is often credited with starting a nation-wide preference for mandatory arrest in IPV cases (Hirschel & Hutchison, 2003).

Sherman and Berk (1984) noted many limitations with the Minneapolis experiment and urged replication of the study. As a result, by 1986, the National Institute of Justice provided funding to study mandatory arrest policies in Omaha, NE, Atlanta, GA, Colorado Springs, CO, Dade County, FL, Milwaukee, WI, and Charlotte, NC (Hirschel & Hutchison, 2003). The experiment, known as the Spouse Assault Replication Program (SARP), was designed to validate Sherman and Berk’s (1984) findings (Maxwell, Garner, & Fagan, 2002). SARP’s effort to replicate The Minneapolis Study resulted in lackluster results. SARP resulted in a mixture of results and found that mandatory arrest produced deterrence, null, and escalation effects (Maxwell, Garner, & Fagan, 2002). Nevertheless, widespread preference for mandatory arrest
policies remained nation-wide. Mandatory arrest policies seem to be most effective with offenders who have strong social attachments and offenders who worry about the repercussions following an arrest. (Dutton & Corvo, 2006; Raphael, 2004; Yates, Pillai, & Berry, 2008).

**Protection Orders**

The use of protection orders as a way to shield victims and allow a sense of empowerment has gained popularity since the late 1970s (Kanuha & Ross, 2004). Protection orders (orders for protection or restraining orders) are judicial orders that result from a petition. An abused partner may file for a protection order that bars the respondent from engaging in abusive or harassing behavior. Protection orders were designed to prevent further abuse to victims. Many studies on the use of protection orders reveal that the majority of petitioners are women who have been involved in abusive relationships with men. Studies have also shown that many petitioners had children with the abusive partner. Protection orders have been subject to limited studies and efficacy remains an important issue worthy of further examination.

Kanuha and Ross (2004) examined protections orders issued in the city and county of Honolulu, Hawaii during 1996 to 1998 and police department offender re-arrest statistics during the two years following protection order issuance. The study sought to examine the effectiveness of protection orders. The study found that in the two year period following issuance of the protection order only half of the offenders were re-arrested. The other half engaged in repeated acts of stalking and other violent offences. Furthermore, Kanuha and Ross (2004) found supporting evidence that there are two types of offenders: low level offenders (who
are amenable to various types of intervention) and other offenders (who engage in repeated violence over the course of time despite treatment, intervention, or punishment).

A study conducted in Sweden found support for Kanuha and Ross’s (2004) findings. The Swedish study examined the effects of restraining orders after they were implemented in 1988 (Lindström, 2004). The researchers found that approximately 40% of the respondents violated the protection orders within one year. Furthermore, this finding was consistent with the notion that restraining orders work for certain personality types. Those with little or no criminal history may view protection orders as a serious situation whereas individuals with significant criminal histories may view protection orders as insignificant (Lindstrom, 2004).

Protection orders are not without their limitations. Often times, judicial bias may result with disproportionately high numbers of protection orders granted for women and lower numbers of petitions granted for men (Muller, Desmarais, & Hamel, 2009). Judges may (intentionally or unintentionally) express bias when deciding to grant or deny a protection order. The issuance of protection orders is often preferential toward women. For example, a study of 157 protection order petitions filed in a California district court found that men were “not likely” to be granted protection orders in cases involving low levels of violence (Muller, Desmarais, & Hammel, 2009, p. 633). The study replicated results of previous research on the topic. The study also found that judges’ ruling reflected widely held patriarchal views on gender roles. Perhaps future research would draw attention to this issue thus minimizing future occurrences.

It may be possible that an accurate view of protection order efficacy is difficult to gauge due to racial factors (Burgess-Proctor, 2003). Some researchers have examined police reports of restraining order violations. A positive or negative view or prior experiences with the police
may influence one’s decision to involve the police for a protection order violation. Burgess-Proctor (2003) acknowledged that her study reflected lower rates of protection order violations experienced by African American women and that it is entirely possible that they indeed experienced lower violation rates. However, Burgess-Proctor (2003) underscored the previously mentioned possibilities.

Other limitations relating to protection orders involve cases in which a petitioner uses the protection order for retribution against the respondent. Subsequently, many states have made it a crime for a petitioner to invite (or otherwise contact) the respondent into their home or property (DeJong & Burgess-Proctor, 2006). There exists a real potential for the petitioner to use a protection order as a way to ‘get back’ at the respondent; anecdotal experience supports this position. It is entirely possible that a petitioner will use the protection order as a way to safeguard their interactions with the respondent and attempts to repair the relationship.

**Analysis of Mandatory Arrest Laws**

During the last 30 years, perceptions about and policies toward IPV have changed (Renauer & Henning, 2005). Mandatory arrest laws have been promulgated because of litigation, victim advocacy, and efforts to bring attention to the dangerous problem of IPV. Mandatory arrest laws aimed to restrict law enforcement officers from dismissing IPV as a civil matter and shying away from taking action. Mandatory arrest laws sought to act as a deterrent. Current mandatory arrest laws mean that the police now must intervene in IPV cases, and the arrest sends a message that IPV is not tolerated. As of 2009, 48 states across the nation had implemented IPV mandatory arrest laws (Akers & Kaukinen, 2009). Mandatory arrest laws have
the ability to be effective in identifying batterers and forcing them into the criminal justice system. Mandatory arrest laws have “widened the net” regarding IPV, which means that more perpetrators enter the criminal justice system. Despite mandatory arrest laws, recidivism rates remain high for male batterers (Renauer & Henning, 2005).

Critics cite dual arrest as an undesirable consequence of mandatory arrest laws (Chesney-Lind, 2002; Pavlidakis, 2009). Mandatory arrest laws are more effective when the predominant aggressor is correctly identified and dual arrest scenarios are minimized (Chesney-Lind, 2002; Renauer & Henning, 2005). Yet, dual arrests may occur in situations where both individuals engaged in abusive behavior. Mandatory arrest laws may work against victim empowerment. For instance, dual arrests may occur in circumstances in which a victim fights back against the aggressor and inflicts injury. Abusers do not receive a clear message when both parties are arrested. On the contrary, abusers may actually feel that their actions were justified and rationalize the incident as a mutual combat situation in which both parties are at fault.

Victims may feel they have no control in situations when the police are called (Rajah, Frye, & Haviland, 2006). Victims may feel powerless when they are not consulted by the police, or the police do not explain the process to them (Sampson, 2007). Power dynamics are also a key factor in abusive relationships. The abuser typically has much of the control in the relationship. Mandatory arrests often result with power shifted from the abuser to the police (Pavlidakis, 2009). Rajah et al. (2006) discovered a higher rate of victim cooperation with prosecution when victims felt they had some control in the arrest and court process.

Despite this finding, “no-drop” policies have become increasingly common. No-drop policies mean that prosecutors are not able to stop prosecuting an offender even if the victim
wishes the case dropped (Finn, 2003). No-drop policies began as a way to shield victims from retribution over “pressing charges.” No-drop policies are an effective way to shift prosecution responsibility away from the victim and onto the prosecutor or the state. However, the effectiveness of this strategy received criticism because it resulted with victims feeling even more powerless (Finn, 2003). Moreover, the practice was not evidence-based and did not help protect victims.

Some argue that mandatory arrest policies have outlived their usefulness and the consequences outweigh the benefits (Pavlidakis, 2009). Mandatory arrest policies may be in need of reorganization or an increased team approach. Pavlidakis (2009) suggests that police departments should form a specialty unit with a primary IPV response focus. Pavlidakis (2009) also suggests that prosecutors and the courts create and maintain specialty units and communicate with law enforcement to improve victim services at the scene in order to strengthen the case against the abuser. The team approach would advance a heartier deterrent effect. However, deterrence theorists argue that deterrent effects are effective only when they meet three criteria: “certainty of apprehension, celerity of prosecution, and severity of sanctions imposed,” (Buzawa, Hotaling, Klein, & Byrne, 2000, p. 1). A team approach would not only advance a deterrent effect, but also assure that the response of the criminal justice system is consistent and effective.

**Batterer Treatment Programs**

Batterer treatment programs, or batterer intervention programs, have become more popular since the 1970s. Traditionally, support programs almost exclusively targeted victims
and survivors of domestic assault and neglected to address batterers (Coulter & VandeWeerd, 2009). It seems apparent that an intuitive strategy to address IPV would be to treat the underlying problem (batterers) instead of focusing solely on victims. Coulter and VandeWeerd (2009) collected and analyzed data from 17,999 individuals from 1995-2004 who received multi-level court-ordered treatment in Hillsborough County, Florida and found recidivism rates among those who completed the program to be only 8.4%. The Florida program involved offenders arrested for IPV. The county court system developed a domestic court branch and delivered sentences specific to community needs. Community members (victim advocates, group members of batterer intervention programs, the district attorney’s office, and a consultant from the University of South Florida) provided input and direction related to desired sentencing outcome (Coulter & VandeWeerd, 2009).

The batterers in Coulter and VandeWeerd’s (2009) study were court ordered for treatment and subsequently underwent a series of tests and screening measures. Once the screening and testing was complete, batterers were placed into one of three levels. The program used a multi-level examination of batterer offense history, severity of their crime, drug/alcohol dependency, etc. Offenders then underwent treatment based on their placement on the three-tiered continuum. Treatment included psychosocial treatment, medication management, and drug/alcohol counseling. Offender “demographics” included both male and female from a variety of racial, educational, and marital backgrounds (Coulter & VandeWeerd, 2009, p. 145). Coulter and VandeWeerd (2009) noted exceptionally positive success rates overall. The authors found that 70% of the offenders studied completed their programming. There was an 8.4% overall recidivism rate for those who completed the program as opposed to a 21.2% overall recidivism rate for those who did not complete the program (Coulter & VandeWeerd, 2009).
These findings were encouraging because the results tended to refute what other studies about batterer intervention programs concluded. A general lack of support or evidence of efficacy is rife throughout the literature (Ehrensaft et al., 2004; Labriola, Rempel, & Davis, 2008). Batterer intervention programs have become widespread and common among sentences for batterers. Thus, the need to invest in efficacious programming is necessary (Labriola et al., 2008). Ehrensaft, Moffitt, and Caspi (2004) found that IPV is not as simple as once thought. Typically, behavior exhibited by both partners contributes to the dysfunction in the relationship and increases the risk of abuse. Dysfunctional ways that couples interact can often lead to an increase in arguments and an escalation of violence. Thus, the complex factors involved with relationship dynamics means that it is also necessary to view IPV as a couple issue. Therefore, couples counseling may be effective at addressing many underlying problems and overcoming learned dysfunctional behavior.

**Drug and Alcohol Use as Compounding Factors**

Another aspect of domestic violence worthy of mention is that drug use and domestic violence coexist in a substantial portion of the population (Thomas & Bennett, 2009). Drug abuse is an increasing risk factor contributing to domestic violence and is tangential to causation. Thomas and Bennett (2009) studied what they called, “dual-problem” men. That is, men who both abused substances (drugs and alcohol) and abused their partners. The researchers studied dual-use men who self-identified as alcoholic/substance abusers and self-reported battering their female partners. More specifically, the sample consisted of 49 dual-problem men in a substance abuse treatment program and 84 men in a domestic violence treatment program. They
interviewed each of the men to determine whether the dual-problem men differed in a substance abuse setting from those in a domestic violence setting.

Thomas and Bennett (2009) found that men who were in a drug abuse treatment program differed only slightly from men in a batterers program. Their study supported two previous studies however, it differed in the sample size (larger) and that they conducted interviews and did not simply rely on self-report surveys. It appears then that drug/alcohol use contributed to domestic violence.

Mutual alcohol abuse among couples can also influence levels of psychological aggression and abuse (Stuart et al., 2006). Alcohol abuse is consistently considered to promote relationship discord. Moreover, alcohol abuse exacerbates a number of problem variables including underlying relationship discord and dysfunctional coping mechanisms. Alcohol (or drug) abuse also has the effect of lowering inhibitions to the point that an otherwise mostly normal relationship can become dysfunctional (James, 2008). Another compounding factor is the mood altering and judgment altering effects that alcohol or drug abuse can have. When couples (or one individual) abuse drugs or alcohol, increased violence can easily result (James, 2008; Stuart et al., 2006).

**Neighborhoods and Disorganization**

Another aspect of domestic violence worth considering is the ways in which neighborhood cultural climates interact with domestic violence rates. It seems consistently apparent that high rates of domestic violence are present with high rates of neighborhood violence (Beeble, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2011; Reed et al., 2009). Reed et al. (2009) gathered data
from a self-report survey administered to African American men between the ages of 18 and 65 who came from high crime areas of Boston. The sample of African American men also included those who demonstrated no cognitive impairment and reported having a female main partner but having had sex with two or more individuals within the past year. Reed et al. (2009) eventually arrived at a sample of 569 African American men.

Reed et al. (2009) found that high rates of domestic violence accompanied neighborhood violence; their findings were consistent with previous studies. More specifically, perceived norms of neighborhood violence were associated with an increased risk for committing domestic violence. The study listed several limitations, including that it was not able to specifically explain why subjects reported high neighborhood violence and domestic violence. Reed et al. (2009) did not consider actual rates of neighborhood violence and domestic violence and did not seek to explain neighborhood violence and domestic violence through available theories (i.e. social disorganization theory).

Other studies have found mixed or very little support for the neighborhood or social disorganization theory (Beeble, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2011; Button, 2008). However, it is important to understand that cultural factors and a general community acceptance or tolerance of violence has some affect on victims’ overall mental health (Beeble et al., 2011). Button (2008) observed correlations between a general community acceptance of IPV and concurring individual attitudes about IPV. A general perspective of high crime in a neighborhood can lead to a victim feeling insecure but this does not have a profound effect on victims’ overall functioning. Thus, Beeble et al., (2011) suggested a need for further research to understand the specific ways in which neighborhood disorganization affects victims.
III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Learning Theory

In order to adequately address the issue of IPV and have some ability to prevent IPV, it is necessary to understand the problem from both a historical and theoretical context. The theoretical context of IPV is outlined in the following section. The importance of theoretical framework should assist the reader with accessing and synthesizing the mechanisms in place that have allowed IPV to continue. An adequate understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of IPV will help provide a foundation for the realistic solutions that are presented in Section IV.

A foundation to explain IPV should begin with Albert Bandura’s social learning theory. Bandura’s social learning theory explains that people are not necessarily born with abusive qualities or the capacity to abuse. Rather, abusive tendencies and patterns are acquired, or learned as children and carried on to adulthood (Anderson & Kras, 2005; Ireland & Smith, 2009). In order for this dysfunctional learning to occur, there must be a connection made between stimuli and response both in the offender and the environment surrounding the offender.

Social learning theory asserts that seeing an abusive parent being abusive in response to a stressful stimulus shapes the child’s future behavior (Tollefson & Gross, 2006). The child then sees that the abusive parent achieved the desired result through the abusive behavior. The result of the abuse is usually control or catharsis (Anderson & Kras, 2005). Social learning theorists argue that by witnessing violent encounters, children develop a socially dysfunctional way of problem solving and relating to others including partners (Anderson & Kras, 2005).

study of 2,000 adults found that their childhood experiences were directly related to marital violence. During the study, Anderson and Kras (2005) discovered that children witnessed parental behavior not directed at them and later modeled that behavior. The researchers noted, “individuals who witness violent responses to marital conflict, will utilize the same responses to gain resolution of the situation,” (p. 108). Social learning theorists postulated that children who witness specific responses to specific situations might develop only limited ways of responding to particular situations. Many children grow up to become abusers because they see abuse between their parents as normal and the way adults deal with conflict. Children who grow up in abusive households learn distorted methods of conflict resolution and anger management.

Ronald Akers (1994) also made a significant contribution to the field of social learning theory. Akers (1994) partially developed his view of social learning theory based on Sutherland’s Differential Association theory. Elements of Bandura’s social learning theory and principles of operant conditioning were also central to an updated view of social learning theory (Akers, 2009). Akers (2009) has been able to construct such a theory that has passed rigorous testing and validation. The empirical validity of Social Learning and Social Structure (SSSL) theory is one of the benefits to viewing IPV through a sound structural framework such as SSSL.

Akers’ (1994) social learning theory contains four main concepts: differential association, differential reinforcement, imitation, and definitions. Each of the four main concepts provides a framework whereby conforming or deviant behavior is viewed as a product of environmental and temporal factors. The development of our behavior does not occur solely in the home, as it does not occur solely in a vacuum. There are many complex factors that influence how we view the world and interact with others.
Differential association refers to exposure to cultural norms and behavioral definitions that occur through one’s many interactions with others. Humans learn ways of behaving based on interactions with friends, family, and community members (Akers, 1994). Thus, people learn most about interactions from family members and close friends (primary groups) while also reaping social benefits from teachers, authority figures, and role models (Akers, 1994; 2009). People also learn a great deal from the media and learn more with each multimedia device that is developed (television, internet, video games, and cellular telephones). These secondary groups (including media) must not be overlooked or discounted as an integral part of SSSL. For example, violent videogames or multimedia programming that allows one to participate in an alternate society (virtual reality) may cultivate an unhealthy actual reality.

Another important concept regarding the differential association category addresses punishment and behavioral models exhibited by one’s primary group (Akers, 2009). Primary groups are responsible for exposing one to various cultural norms and social norms. These primary groups also exhibit a certain level of modeling through which cultural and social norms are transmitted. Punishment mechanisms may either reinforce or undo learning. People are also influenced by the nature of their group relationships. This nature concept primarily deals with the nature of the relationship and the intensity or attachment associated with the relationship (Akers, 2009).

The second concept of social learning is differential reinforcement. Differential reinforcement refers to the balance of anticipated consequences/rewards and actual experienced consequences/rewards. This category deals extensively with the principles of operant conditioning (Akers, 2009). This category primarily concerns one’s response to a certain stimulus. One example, if one receives a desired outcome (i.e. emotional or behavioral response
to a given stimulus) from engaging in domestic violence and does not receive a punishment or an undesired response, domestic violence is likely to continue. This category also concerns one’s response around other people, or one’s solitary response to a given situation. The engagement in deviance can be a private matter that is reflective of the normative cultural climate. The engagement in deviance is also “mediated by the implied or symbolic presence of others,” (Akers, 2009, p. 71).

*Imitation* refers to behavior that one witnesses in others (Akers, 1994). For instance, a child who witnesses a parent batter in response to stimuli will be more likely to subsequently engage in similar behavior. Imitation can also be behavior based on others’ behavior. Imitation does not necessarily have to happen in person (Akers, 2009). Behavior can (and is) modeled based on exposure to media. Television programs, movies, video games, can all be significant stimuli. Media is but one factor in this category and should not be considered the one causal factor.

Finally, *definitions* refer to the way in which one feels about a certain behavior. A favorable ratio of feelings to behavior is associated with conforming. An example of conforming behavior might include a situation where one disapproves of domestic violence to achieve outcomes; one would be less likely to engage in domestic violence. This concept includes one’s exposure to and adherence to certain beliefs. One’s orientation toward or away from adherence to conforming beliefs will affect one’s level on conformity or deviance (Akers, 2009). Some believe that if one had widely held beliefs that it is better to conform to social norms, one would not engage in deviance. One’s views about society and the various religious and legal methods used to control society also affect the level of conformity. This section directly relates to later discussion on techniques of neutralization that a batterer might employ.
One’s location within a given social structure has a great deal of influence on one’s behavior. Therefore, Akers (1994) proposed a model detailing how social structures have an indirect effect on one’s conduct. SSSL consists of four “dimensions”: differential social organization, differential location in the social structure, theoretically defined structural variables, and differential social location (Akers, 1994, p. 139).

The concept of differential social organization deals primarily with community composition and various community attributes. Things such as population density, age configuration, and other factors that affect a community’s crime rate are part of the differential social organization. Differential location in the social structure refers to a group or individual’s sociodemographic attributes that determine their position within the predominant social structure. Akers (1994) asserted that, “Class, gender, race and ethnicity, marital status, and age locate the positions and standing of persons and theory roles, groups, or social categories in the overall structure” (p. 139). Thus, one’s position or role within a given social structure determines one’s proclivity toward or against deviance.

Theoretically defined structural variables denote the ways in which “anomie, class oppression, social disorganization, group conflict, patriarchy, and other concepts” have appeared in various theories “to define criminogenic conditions of societies, communities, or groups,” (Akers, 1994, p. 139). For instance, someone living in a lower class setting with high rates of group conflict (gangs) may experience things differently than someone in a middle class setting that has well defined or shared norms. Finally, differential social location refers to the amount of attachment one has to “primary, secondary, and reference groups such as the family, friendship/peer groups, leisure groups, colleagues, and work groups,” (Akers, 1994, p. 140).
One’s attitudes (or definitions) regarding crime or deviance may be influenced by social isolation or embeddedness in various social groups.

Akers’ (1994) theory quite significantly supports Anderson and Kras’s (2005) position. Furthermore, social learning theory is able to explain why some children grow up to be abusive and others do not. Furthermore, SSSL may also explain why some children grow up and seek out abusive partners (Saudino & Hines, 2007). In essence, it is a situation where one becomes drawn toward relationships that seem comfortable. If one only has experience with dysfunctional relationships, it is intuitive that one is likely drawn toward the same. This long-term social learning means that familiar environment may be the most comfortable environment.

**Techniques of Neutralization**

While social learning theory explains how abusers develop, Sykes and Matza’s (1957) *Techniques of Neutralization* theory explains the various ways abusers may justify the abuse. Neutralization theory applies to domestic violence because research has shown that offenders often blame the victim, deny that there is any wrongdoing, and minimize the abuse (Scott & Straus, 2007). Sykes and Matza assert that law-breaking individuals adhere to the same set of moral codes as law-abiding citizens. Lawbreakers develop methods of minimizing their acts and develop ways to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. Sykes and Matza (1957) categorize the types of “justifications” or “rationalizations” into five groups: the denial of responsibility, the denial of injury, the denial of victim, the condemnation of the condemners, and the appeal to higher loyalty (p. 668).
The denial of responsibility occurs when individuals claim that their actions were the result of larger forces outside of their control (i.e. “unloving parents, bad companions, or a slum neighborhood”) (Sykes & Matza, 1957, p. 667). The denial of injury occurs when an individual feels their actions did no harm and the law should not apply to the situation. The denial of the victim occurs when the individual acknowledges that there was harm or “injury” but views their actions as justified because the victim did something to the individual (Sykes & Matza, 1957). The condemnation of the condemners happens when an individual “shifts the focus of attention from his own deviant acts to the motives and behavior of those who disapprove of his violations” (Sykes & Matza, 1957, p. 668). Finally, the appeal to higher loyalties happens when individuals believe that their actions are needed to protect “the smaller social groups” to which the individuals belong (Sykes & Matza, 1957, p. 669). The individual may act against society in order to protect or avenge a perceived wrong against his “sibling pair, the gang, or the friendship clique” (Sykes & Matza, 1957, p. 669).

Abusers may exhibit the denial of responsibility by blaming their actions on an abusive father or norms of the community in which they reside. Abusers might also exhibit the denial of victim by arguing that the victim will not allow them certain freedoms to which they feel entitled. Appealing to higher loyalties may be seen in neighborhoods where cultural norms center around power and respect. Some may justify violence because they felt they were not respected and needed to send a message. Furthermore, abusers may try to neutralize their actions by claiming that the police and the criminal justice system were disrespectful to them or did not listen to their side of the story. The abuser may not take responsibility for their actions and claim that the “system” is not fair (Pavlidakis, 2009). Scott and Straus (2007) provide greater understanding of why abusers continue to abuse – denial, minimization, and partner blame.
Genetics Factors Influencing Transmission of Violence

As scientific advances progress forward, researchers will be able study the specific genetic and biological causes of crime in more detail. Some genetic studies have used twins and family histories to study criminal involvement (Beaver, DeLisi, Wright, & Vaughn, 2009; Frisell, Lichtenstein, & Långström, 2011; Saudino & Hines, 2007). These studies supported the idea that crime traits are passed from parents to children through genetic means. Strong evidence suggesting a combination of social environment and genetic predisposition explained deviance in youthful offenders (Beaver et al., 2009; Saudino & Hines, 2007). The combination of genetic predisposition and environmental factors may allow researchers to tailor specific treatments based on a variety of environmental and familial characteristics. Additional genetic research will provide greater insight into the genetic factors responsible for personality and behavioral traits. Compelling findings from gene-related intergenerational transmission of criminogenic tendencies may yield germane results in the future.

Beaver et al., (2009) examined data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to consider delinquency and crime from a genetic perspective involving twins. The researchers discovered that “gene-environment interplay” was present. Low self-control had a genetic explanation and the measure of genetic risk was a statistically significant predictor of antisocial behavior. They recommended that their research is applicable to social learning theory as a way to explain why some people learn to become criminal while others do not (Beaver et al., 2009). Their research suggested reexamining social learning theory from a biosocial standpoint. Future research may be able to examine why some children with a genetic pre-disposition to criminogenic tendencies engage in crime or deviance and why others do not.
IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the 1970s, the criminal justice system has become largely responsible for punishing and treating batterers. There seems to be stagnation regarding treatment and intervention programs used by the criminal justice system. Reliance on antiquated practices (mandatory arrest and traditional batterer treatment models) has resulted in stable and high recidivism rates. While these programs were a good start, more needs to happen and perhaps a shift toward the treatment and prevention side of public programming should occur to include multi-level batter programs and primary prevention programs.

**Multi-level Batterer Programs**

There is a demonstrated need to treat batterers on multiple levels and account for gender, racial, and mental health factors (Barner & Carney, 2011; Corvo, Dutton, & Chen, 2008; Coulter & VandeWeerd, 2009; Gondolf, 2004). Comprehensive batterer programs that can manage the variety of special needs batterers have presents a very difficult problem because programs can be very limited in funding, staffing, and flexibility. Emerging research about program attendance, completion, and recidivism questions the effectiveness of conventional programming, such as the Duluth model (Dutton & Corvo, 2006). These results suggest it is important to explore other options to create a way to deal with offenders and minimize recidivism.

The importance of intervention in IPV must not be understated. Preventing children from witnessing parental violence is necessary to stop them from resorting to violence as a way to solve problems. The unimpressive empirical evidence about mandatory arrest laws as a deterrent suggests that other, perhaps rehabilitative, means deserve exploration (Renauer & Henning,
The Duluth model began to accomplish this, but empirical support for that model has also had unimpressive results. This does not mean that communities need to abandon the model altogether (Gondolf, 2007). Coulter and VandeWeerd (2009) found support and encouragement for a multi-faceted program.

Strategies that reach batterers on the fringe of society and ensure they “buy into” the batter program should be included as part of a batterer intervention program (Roffman, Edelson, Neighbors, Mbilinyi, & Walker, 2008). For offenders who are generally attached to society or have high cultural identification, arrest and sanctions have relatively positive treatment outcomes, whereas offenders who are isolated or from diverse cultural backgrounds have poor completion rates (Gondolf, 2004). Offenders who perceive they have very little to lose are usually the offenders who are not reached by conventional programming. Offenders who are unemployed or care very little about the stigma of arrest are more likely to reoffend. These socially unattached individuals are also among the least likely to complete batterer’s program (Raphael, 2004; Yates et al., 2008).

Recent research has suggested the possibility that a shift in treatment styles will result in positive outcomes for batterers (Aguirre, Lehmann, & Patton, 2011). Traditional batterer programs have focused on education and confrontation as a basis for treatment. A shift from a negative and confrontational to a positive and reinforcing perspective may yield promising results (Aguirre et al., 2011). Research about batterer intervention programs might also benefit from the experience of field workers. Anecdotal experience and knowledge from practitioners can be very complimentary to empirical evidence (Gondolf, 2007).
Treatment programs should also account for past victimization and alcohol and drug abuse (Tollefson & Gross, 2006). Specialty training for police officers, social service workers, judges, and prosecutors aimed at education on ways to reach generally detached offenders would be beneficial at reducing recidivism and maximizing the effectiveness of batterer programs. Couples counseling as a way to augment traditional batterer model is promising (Ehrensaft et al., 2004). Offenders may have improved outcomes as a result of correcting underlying dysfunctional relationship dynamics.

**Primary Prevention Programs**

Mandatory arrest laws appear to treat the symptoms of abuse but not address the more pervasive problem of IPV that occurs outside the criminal justice system’s control. Moreover, there seems to be a general overreliance on the criminal justice system to manage and treat IPV (Cramer, 2005). This overreliance on the criminal justice system means that the criminal justice system may only be catching a small number of offenders, because victims (and perpetrators) are often disenfranchised with the criminal justice system or hesitant to involve the system for help. Therefore, it is very likely that a large number of batterers are not involved with any type of intervention (Cramer, 2005).

Social Learning theorists assert that dysfunctional behaviors learned early in life and cultural norms influence one’s behavior and problem-solving abilities later in life. Prevention programs aimed at children who grow up in disorganized neighborhoods or abusive households appear promising (Barner & Carney, 2011). Yet there is a lack of research regarding efficacy of
prevention programs. The absence of comprehensive research regarding prevention programs is likely due to the seemingly recent and slow paradigm shift from intervention to prevention.

Unfortunately, there are very few formalized domestic violence prevention programs for children. In 2002, The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) implemented a Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancements and Leadership through Alliances (DELTA) project. The project supported several communities in forming coordinated community response (CCR) teams in various cities (Conway et al., 2010). CCRs were comprised of representatives from various community organizations. A CCR’s purpose was to help ensure a consistent response to domestic violence from the various agencies. Research results regarding DELTA are quite limited. The CDC expected to report results of the DELTA project in 2009; however, no results have been published to date.

Project FREE (Family Rejuvenation, Education, and Empowerment) is a program developed by Paula McWhirter and her colleagues. The program focuses on group-based therapy treatment of mothers and their children who are abuse victims or witness abuse (McWhirter & McWhirter, 2010). Project FREE was a study conducted in clinic settings and domestic abuse shelters, and consisted of group sessions with mothers and children.

The course of intervention consisted of three types of sessions: a mothers’ session, a child’s session, and a group session with mother and child. The mothers’ session consisted of treatment relating to emotional health and various skills to help lessen the future events of domestic violence. The child session focused on very similar themes. The child’s group also included therapy designed to reverse the effects of witnessing domestic violence. The group session’s focus was mother-child bonding and reinforcement of the lessons in the individual
sessions. The empirically supported group theory approach was more effective than child-only sessions (McWhirter & McWhirter, 2010). Project FREE has received external validation and data showed Project FREE provided positive change in the health of mothers and children.

McWhirter (2011) noted positive results with additional testing of a primary prevention model utilizing women victims of IPV and their children. The study population consisted of women and children exposed to IPV. The study participants were mostly staying at homeless shelters. Although the women and children were itinerant and only in the shelter for a relatively short time, the short-term (five week) was seen to be an adequate amount of time to achieve desired goals. The results of the treatment showed an increase in positive mood and decrease in negative emotions. Specifically, children’s overall mental health functioning improved and McWhirter (2011) reported fewer behavioral and mood problems. The nature of the programming helped equip women with more productive and positive coping mechanisms. These coping mechanisms were able to replace alcohol usage as a primary coping mechanism. Women received treatment to overcome isolation (as a control tactic used by abusers) in order to increase overall quality of life.

The study’s method of reaching mothers and children at a shelter may overcome many privacy or ethical issues. Many of the batterer programs that the criminal justice system uses rely on police or courts to reach offenders as a method of intervention. An important consideration with primary prevention programs is balancing privacy with the interest of preventing or modifying dysfunctional learning. The framework exists for an effective screening, intervention, and treatment model.
V. DISCUSSION

Conclusion

This paper contributes to the literature by presenting what facts about IPV and by identifying what future research needs are. This paper also contributes to the literature by identifying strategic goals that are needed to prevent IPV at a fundamental level. A historical view of IPV shows that society has come a long way toward advancing women’s rights. This was no small feat and there is still clearly room for improvement. Professionals in the criminal justice system are starting to realize that men (as a victim population) should be studied. Many interventions, (protection orders, uni-level court-ordered batterer programs, mandatory arrest laws) have proven to be minimally effective and the over-reliance on these strategies is misguided.

The need to rehabilitate offenders is still very important. Multi-level batterer programs that aim to treat offenders as individuals and address their underlying problems are promising. The system has also underestimated the role that child witnesses and child victims play in continuation of IPV in subsequent generations (Anderson & Kras, 2005; Ireland & Smith, 2009). The application of social learning and social structure theory demonstrates the importance that family structure, the media, and peer associations has in the continuation of IPV. Primary prevention programs aimed at identifying and treating children who witness (or are victims) IPV show promise. Identifying and treating victims of IPV in meaningful and effective ways that increase effective coping mechanisms and parent-child bonding are also promising.
**The Need for Modern Policies**

Implications from primary prevention and treatment programs provide a very promising direction for future policymakers. Primary prevention programs are a way to serve populations that are typically unreached by the criminal justice system under the current model. By viewing the IPV problem through an empirically supported and tested social learning and social structure model, criminal justice (and related) professionals can begin to address IPV in meaningful ways. Coordinated community response groups should also be included and encouraged to view such change with an open and willing mind. The criminal justice system should also be part of any policy change because the professionals are in a unique position to be able to affect change and community buy-in.

**Implications and Limitations**

A few limitations to the idea of primary prevention programs exist. One limitation is that in order to make effective change, multiple agencies or partners would have to acknowledge that the current system needs fixing. This paper provides evidence that some programs do not work and need to be changed. The system of change would have to include the correct partners or agencies and each of these partners would need to engage in substantive behaviors to affect meaningful change (Cox, Ortega, Cook-Craig, & Conway, 2010). Sometimes it is difficult to ponder seemingly upsetting 20-30 years of homeostasis. The problem is deep, but as is abundantly clear, radical change is not necessary in order to appreciate meaningful results. Rather, the pendulum shift toward prevention must be gradual.
Another limitation includes funding sources for primary prevention programs. A necessary element of prevention programs and effective batterer treatment programs includes education for professionals. Additionally, prevention programs that only happen in shelters might miss a large segment of the population. Prevention and intervention programming in schools would reach a large amount of the child victim population. Treatment and correcting dysfunctional learning could take place at schools but this might create a financial burden. An additional school program may tax already short-staffed school districts.

Despite these limitations, it seems that now is as good a time as any to begin synthesizing theoretical knowledge with evidence-based practice. Society has progressed a long way from the days of treating women like property. Fortunately, IPV has been identified as a devastating and pervasive problem. Mandatory arrest laws have drawn much attention to the problem. It is essential to keep moving forward. Is it not a societal obligation to put forth decisive and thoughtful actions to ensure that future generations have the best possible outcomes?
VI. REFERENCES


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