

EFFECTIVENESS OF STRUCTURED EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS ON
BATTERED WOMEN'S INTENTIONS TO RETURN TO
THE BATTERER

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A pre-experimental study was conducted to determine the effect of educational sessions on battered women's knowledge of battering relationships. Additionally, the study examined the intent to return or not return to the batterer and the stated reasons for the decision.

The sample for the study consisted of 32 adult women chosen by convenience sampling at a shelter for battered women. All subjects completed a three-part pre-questionnaire, attended six educational sessions on battering relationships, and completed a three-part post-questionnaire. Data were collected and analyzed from the questionnaire information.

The Wilcoxon t-test results (z = 1.16, p = .1) indicated that there was no difference in battered women's knowledge before and after educational sessions. " Also, the educational sessions had no major impact on changing the intent to return to the batterer.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The battering of women dates back to Biblical days (Bradley, 1986). According to NiCarthy (1986) women have always been considered the property of men. Women belonged to their fathers until marriage and then became the property of their husbands. The belief that men could treat their property as they wished has been supported by religion, law, and society until just recently (Bradley, 1986).

There is no typical woman who is the most likely to be battered. Women of all ages, races, religions, and educational and economic backgrounds are potential victims (Dickstein, 1988).

Schechter and Gary (1988) discussed the etiology of battering as created by an imbalance of power within a relationship, which leads to an abuse of power. The pattern of coercive control can be evidenced in the form of physical, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse. The abuse has a purpose in that it allows the abuser to dominate his partner and reminds the victim that she is the subordinate.

The reasons that women stay in these abusive relationships are complex and varied. Walker (1979) stated

that women stay because of fear, emotional ties, economic dependance, and a lack of an alternative place to go.

Shelters, or safe houses, offer a temporary alternative place to stay. In 1972, Erin Pizzey (cited in Walker, 1979) founded the first known battered women's shelter in England. The importance of a shelter is that it provides immediate safety from the batterer, and it is designed to help women gain power over their own lives. The counseling and information provided by the shelter staff can help the battered woman make the decision as to whether or not to return to the batterer.

Problem of Study

The problem of this study was to measure battered women's knowledge about battering relationships and to determine their intentions to return to the batterer following structured educational sessions on battering relationships. Additionally, the study attempted to determine how the subjects arrived at the decision of whether or not to return to the batterer.

Justification of the Problem

It is estimated that over 2,000,000 women in the United States are battered by their husbands each year (Hoff, 1984). Benton (1986) stated that this statistic

fails to reflect that only a fraction of all battering incidents are reported.

Family violence has become so prevalent and carries such a profound social, legal, and health-care impact that it is recognized as a major public health issue. In 1985, the United States Surgeon General, Everett Koop (cited in Tilden & Shepherd, 1987), declared interpersonal violence to be a threat to the integrity of our social system and a priority public health problem.

Roberts (1981) stated that each year thousands of battered women make the decision to escape to a safe place. Roberts indicated that a woman's most difficult decisions come after she enters a shelter. The battered woman is faced with the realities of her situation through individual and/or group counseling sessions. She is made aware of her legal rights and options and is given alternatives for future living arrangements.

According to Lewis (1983), one of the anxiety-provoking issues battered women must face while in the shelter is whether to stay in the current relationship or to leave it. Lewis further stated that a battered woman has basically three alternatives: (a) she can leave and try to make a life on her own, (b) she can stay and hope

the batterer will change, or (c) she can remain in the relationship as it is.

Okun's (1986) study with shelter residents showed that battered women may make four or five attempts to end the battering relationship before actually doing so. The study showed that for many women the separations and reconciliations were part of a process through which they gathered resources that enabled them finally to succeed in ending the relationship.

Schutte, Malouff, and Doyle (1987) reported results from a study that identified factors related to the return of women to the battering relationship. The study found that more highly educated women had a higher potential for self-sufficiency, which allowed them the opportunity to escape the battering relationship. A conclusion of the study was that providing opportunities or counseling about employment and educational options might be a useful part of aiding battered women. Another finding of the study was that there was a correlation between the number of prior separations and the number of returns to the shelter. This was cited as an indication that some women develop a pattern of leaving the batterer, going to a shelter, and then returning to the batterer. The conclusion was that

this pattern was necessary in moving toward terminating the relationship (Schutte et al., 1987).

It is apparent that shelters are a temporary safe environment for battered women. Shelter staff can also provide access to knowledge about battering relationships and the alternatives to returning to the batterer.

Theoretical Framework

The framework for this study was based on Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance. Festinger stated that human beings strive for consistency within their lives. Related opinions or attitudes are consistent with one another.

Festinger contended that there is consistency between what a person knows or believes and what the person does. He used the example of a person who stops smoking because of a belief that the associated health problems are a real consequence of smoking. According to Festinger, consistency is the usual state; but there are exceptions to the norm. Inconsistencies are the result of going against a consistency. A person then attempts to rationalize the actions leading to the inconsistencies. A smoker may continue to smoke knowing the consequences and rationalizing that the enjoyment of smoking outweighs the risks of health problems.

The theory points out that people are not always successful in explaining away or in rationalizing inconsistencies to themselves. As attempts to achieve consistency fail, or in the presence of inconsistency, there is psychological discomfort.

Festinger terms inconsistency as "dissonance" and consistency as "consonance." The theory proposes that dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate a person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance.

Festinger used the term cognition to mean any knowledge or belief about the environment or about one's behavior. When two cognitions are inconsistent with each other, there is cognitive dissonance. The term cognitive dissonance can be seen as a preceding condition that leads to activity oriented toward reducing dissonance.

Festinger referred to the elements of cognition as knowledge. Some of the elements represent knowledge about oneself and other elements of knowledge concern the world or the environment in which one lives. The theory uses the word "knowledge" to include elements to which the word does not ordinarily refer, such as opinions, beliefs, attitudes, or values. Festinger indicated that a person keeps an opinion or belief only if they feel it is correct, and so,

psychologically, it is the same as knowledge. The theory states that if dissonance exists between two elements of knowledge, the dissonance can be eliminated by changing one of the elements of knowledge. The theory of cognitive dissonance served as the framework for this study on battered women.

The proposition tested in this study was that reduction of dissonance is contingent upon a person's motivation to obtain consonance. The battered woman's element of knowledge (cognition) about herself and her element of knowledge (cognition) about her environment may be in sharp contrast to each other, causing psychological discomfort. This discomfort may motivate her actions to try and reduce the dissonance by going to the shelter. It was proposed that education about battering relationships would stimulate motivation to reduce dissonance in those women who, as they enter the shelter, have already made the decision to return to the batterer or in those who were uncertain if they would return to the batterer. It was also proposed that education would reinforce consonance in those women who have already decided they will not return to the batterer.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the following assumptions were made:

1. Women stay in abusive relationships for many reasons.
2. Battering is a major health care issue in the United States.
3. Shelters offer a temporary safe environment for battered women (Walker, 1979).
4. Human beings strive for consistency (consonance) in their lives (Festinger, 1957).

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What is the battered woman's knowledge level about battering relationships before and after the structured educational sessions?
2. Will the battered woman change her decision about returning to the batterer following structured educational sessions?
3. What factors influence the battered woman's decision to return or not return to the batterer?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined:

1. Battered woman--a battered woman is a woman who is repeatedly subjected to physical or psychological behaviors by a man in order to coerce the woman to do something the man wants without concern for the woman's rights (Walker, 1979). For this study a battered woman was a woman seeking safety in a women's shelter in a large city in the south-central United States.

2. Batterer--a man who repeatedly exerts coercive physical or psychological behavior on a woman without concern for the woman's rights (Walker, 1979). For this study, a batterer was the man responsible for causing a woman to seek safety at a women's shelter.

3. Intention to return to the batterer--for this study, the intent to return to the batterer was measured by the chosen responses about exiting destination on the pre- and post-questionnaire (Appendix A).

4. Structured educational sessions on battering relationships--six pre-planned classes which dealt with the legal and psychological aspects of the battering environment and the alternatives to returning to it (Appendix B).

Limitations

The following were limitations of the study:

1. A convenience sample was selected from only one shelter for battered women and may not have been representative of all battered women.
2. Data were gathered through a self-reported questionnaire.
3. The subject's responses may have been affected by circumstances other than the battering relationship, such as prior attempts at leaving the relationship, educational level, individual counselor's method of teaching, and other events in the shelter.
4. The small sample size limited the generalizability of the findings.
5. Subjects may have filled out the pre- and post-questionnaire as they felt the researcher or counselors wished them to answer.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the historical and health-care significance of the battered woman. Battered women do have alternatives to returning to the batterer and research indicates that knowledge related to the battering relationship and the alternatives in living options can effect that return rate.

Structured educational sessions can provide battered women with knowledge about battering relationships. This study focused on how structured educational sessions can effect the battered woman's knowledge about battering relationships and her intent to return to the batterer.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The relationship between a battered woman's knowledge about battering relationships and her intention to return to the batterer was the primary focus of this study. This chapter explores published literature on the overview of battering, the cycle of violence (Walker, 1979), variables that effect the decision to leave or stay in a battering relationship, and interventions for the battered woman.

Overview of Battering

Wife battering is defined by Dickstein (1988) as a behavior pattern that occurs in physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and economic forms. It is used to maintain fear, intimidation, control, and power by the batterer. There is no typical woman who is more likely to be battered. Women of all ages; ethnic, racial, religious, and education lifestyles; and economic backgrounds are potential victims.

Many current beliefs about battered women originated from medieval times. According to Billy (1983), a woman was viewed as the property of her husband and the husband had the right to discipline her. When the battered woman

turned to the clergy for help and support, the woman was instructed to be more tolerant of her husband and to give him another chance. Billy stated that remnants of these actions are present today when a battered woman calls the police and the woman is encouraged to reason with the batterer or is offered no intervention at all. A husband's right to control his wife by physical force is not legal, but it still gains widespread social approval.

According to Walker (1979), society's traditional belief is that a woman's primary focus in life is marriage and raising a family. The success of the marriage and family is the woman's responsibility. If the marriage fails, the woman has failed. Walker stated that these factors contribute to the battered woman's low self-esteem and sense of little control over her life.

The Cycle of Violence

Walker (1979) stated that battered women are not constantly being abused. Battered women experience a definite battering cycle which helps explain how battered women become victimized and why they may not attempt to escape. Walker's cycle theory of violence was developed from the case histories of over 400 battered women.

Walker (1979), described the cycle of violence which consists of three phases: the tension building phase, the

acute battering incident, and the loving respite phase. The first phase consists of a series of minor battering incidents. The woman usually attempts to calm the batterer by using techniques that have been successful in the past. In an attempt to keep the batterer from hurting her more, the woman denies to herself that she is angry at being unfairly psychologically or physically battered. Women who have been battered over a long period of time know that these minor incidents will escalate. Fear and anxiety build in anticipation of the second phase.

The acute battering incident is phase two. The phase is characterized by a lack of predictability and a lack of control. The rage within the batterer is so great that all control is lost and the woman usually ends up being severely beaten. After the battering incident occurs, tension is relieved.

Phase three is characterized by a loving and kind behavior by the batterer. The batterer realizes he has gone too far and tries to make up for his actions. During the third phase, the woman's victimization becomes complete. The battered woman wants to believe that she will no longer have to suffer abuse. The batterer uses convincing behavior to make the woman believe that he can and will change. This behavior is the woman's

reinforcement for staying in the relationship. At some point in time though, the tension starts to build again and the cycle begins anew.

Walker's (1984) study results, based on data collected from over 400 battered women, showed that violence escalates in frequency and severity over time. The study showed that one-quarter of the women left home temporarily after each battering incident. As the time between phase one and phase three increases, the woman receives less reinforcement for staying in the relationship and attempts to escape increase. Walker stated that inequality between men and women impacts perceptions of violent behavior for the woman so that adequate skills to escape the relationship are not developed. Walker's findings supported the fact that women in battering relationships are socially and financially isolated.

Variables that Effect the Decision to Stay in a Battering Relationship

Schechter and Gary (1988) stated that battering is caused by an inequality of power within a relationship. This inequality leads to an abuse of power. They stated that battering is a pattern of coercive control that can take physical, emotional, sexual, and economic form. Violence has a purpose in that it allows the batterer to

dominate the partner and reminds the victims that they are subordinate. Violent behavior causes physical and emotional harm and arouses fear. Violent behavior prevents a woman from doing what she wants to do or forces her into doing something she does not want to do.

Schechter and Gary (1988) asserted that women in a violent relationship lose the basic sense of trust and safety. The losses that battered women experience are material and emotional. They stated that the desire not to leave a home that a woman has invested many years in creating should be viewed as a material loss. The decision to remain at home should be interpreted as a reaction to a major loss rather than a denial of reality.

Schutte et al. (1987) studied variables that could be related to the battered woman's cycle of victimization in which the woman leaves the batterer to go to a shelter and then returns to the batterer. The study looked at the variables of the woman's family history of victimization, the effect of her potential self-sufficiency as measured by her level of education and income, how long the battering had been occurring, and the number of times the battered woman had left the batterer previously. The study found that highly educated women were less likely to return to the batterer. They attributed this to the fact that

more educated women have a higher potential for self-sufficiency, which allows them the opportunity to escape the battering relationship. A conclusion of the study was that providing opportunities or counseling about employment and education options might be a useful tool in aiding battered women. The study also found that women who were victims of physical or sexual abuse as children were less likely to return to the batterer. The finding that a large number of prior separations was related to more returns to a shelter was cited as an indication that some women develop a pattern of leaving the batterer, going to a shelter, and then returning to the batterer. The conclusion was that this pattern was necessary in moving toward terminating the relationship. The correlation between the number of separations and the intent not to return to the batterer suggests that battered women may be slow to leave the batterer permanently, but tend to increase their drive in that direction over time.

A second study of 24 battered women by Schutte et al. (1987) examined the persuasive techniques used by batterers to prevent women from leaving the relationship or in coercing them to return to the relationship. The study showed that the majority of batterers used a variety of successful techniques to induce their victims to stay or

return to the relationship. One study conclusion was that if these persuasive techniques of the batterer are a factor in a woman's decision to return to a battering relationship, an effective method of breaking the cycle would consist of teaching the women during counseling how to resist the persuasion techniques.

Gelles (1976) studied the modes of intervention used by women in battering relationships. The modes of intervention included calling the police, going to a shelter, separation, and divorce. Gelles looked at the variables thought to influence the choice of intervention decisions. The variables were: (a) past experience and exposure to violence, (b) severity and frequency of violence, and (c) barriers to leaving which included education level, number of dependent children, and financial status. Study results showed that the more severe the abuse, the more likely that women would use separation or divorce as an intervention. Frequency of abuse was also related to the chosen mode of intervention. The study showed that women who were abused daily to weekly most often called the police for intervention. Women abused less frequently opted for separation or divorce. One conclusion was that women who are abused less often find the unpredictable events more traumatic and seek a

permanent solution. Gelles found little evidence for stating a relationship between past experience or exposure to violence and a mode of intervention. There was no evidence that women who left the relationship were better educated, more financially secure, or had more dependent children than those who chose not to leave the relationship.

NiCarthy (1986) cited fear of poverty as a reason for women deciding to remain in a battering relationship. A woman's belief that she will be provided for by a man may discourage her from seriously looking at the need to earn an adequate income. NiCarthy stated that even a woman with a good job will suffer a big loss in income when she leaves a man, especially if she takes custody of the children. The fear of poverty or a greatly lowered standard of living is a major reason why women stay in battering relationships. They hope year after year that the situation will change and they won't have to risk making it on their own.

Strube and Barbour (1983) studied factors related to the decision to leave a battering relationship. They focused on two variables hypothesized to affect relationship decisions: psychological commitment and economic dependence. They stated that the more committed a

woman is to the relationship, the harder it is to justify a decision to leave. They also stated that the lack of independent employment outside the home would make it difficult for a woman to leave. The study showed that psychological commitment and economic dependence were independent predictors of relationship status. Women who were unemployed and women coming from long-term relationships were less likely to leave the battering relationship.

One tragic, but very final, method of leaving a battering relationship was explored by Foster, Veale, and Fogel (1989) who studied 12 women imprisoned for killing their battering partners. A profile of these women emerged from the study data. The women were acutely aware of the danger they faced. The batterers had threatened to kill them. There were firearms present in the house which enforced the threats. The battered woman's activities were severely restricted and they suffered increased isolation. Most of the women in the study had left the battering relationship at once, but were unable to sustain the separation. The batterer's threats to kill raised the woman's reluctance to leave the relationship. They felt that leaving the situation would not ensure that the violence would end. One conclusion of the study was that

suggesting to a battered woman that her only viable option is to leave the batterer may be simplistic and dangerous.

Interventions for the Battered Woman

Dickstein (1988) stated that battered women feel guilt, shame, and fear of reprisal from the batterer. Battered women feel that if they admit to being battered, they know they should take action, but do not know what action to take or how to proceed. Walker (1979) indicated that the battered woman's first priority must be to seek safety. She stated that safety may be found through family, a close friend, or by leaving the batterer and going to a shelter.

Walker (1979) stated that the importance of the shelter is that it provides a sense of community and a support system. Walker described that at a shelter, battered women begin to realize that they can have power over their own lives and that other people care enough to risk helping them.

Trimpey (1989) described shelters as a temporary protective living environment. Trimpey stated that shelters also provide crisis intervention, advocacy, counseling, transportation, and referral for battered women and their children. Some shelters provide assistance in obtaining financial aid, housing, job placement, and legal

advice. Walker (1979) stated that the legal alternatives needed for battered women are: adequate police protection, easy access to restraining orders, speedy divorces, regulated child visitation, and legitimate legal procedures for battered women as defendants. Schechter and Gary (1988) stated that the lack of shelters and advocacy services means that limited options are available to many battered women to enable them to escape from a battering relationship.

Benton (1986) stated that once a woman seeks safety in a shelter setting, counseling must be provided. Counseling must clarify options and provide support that meets the particular needs of each individual woman. Benton indicated that the quantity of reasons why women stay in a battering relationship creates a complex problem. Battered women weigh their alternatives in a situation in which their options are few. Benton proposed that the challenge for those providing intervention should be to expose the forces that hold a woman in a battering relationship, explore options, provide the tools necessary for decision-making, and facilitate change. Tilden and Shepherd (1987) stated that patterns of violence repeat themselves across generations as children are socialized to become batterers or victims in adulthood. They asserted that interruption

of the cycle by therapeutic intervention can provide the battered woman with the power of choice. Battered women can be provided with the tools to successfully separate from a battering relationship (Tilden & Shepherd, 1987).

According to Dickstein (1988), most women's shelters are well equipped to accept children of all ages and offer programs appropriate to their ages and needs. While the children are being cared for, the women begin to identify their short- and long-term goals with the guidance of the shelter's professional staff members. Dickstein stated that self-help programs at shelters have been developed within the past decade. They have helped battered women build a more positive self-image. According to Dickstein, the self-help process has enabled psychiatrists and other professionals in the field to encourage the battered woman to leave the situation, to offer opportunities to strengthen coping mechanisms, and to involve the legal system.

Dickstein (1988) described self-help for battered women as the process by which the victim's individual decisions lead to personal growth and strength. The process continues on an individual basis and as part of the group process offered in women's shelters with trained advocates' guidance. Dickstein suggested that the ongoing

violence experienced by the battered woman perpetuates a sense of learned helplessness, hopelessness, and a decreased sense of self-worth. Through self-help groups, battered women work to gain personal strength as they slowly take charge of their lives through decision-making (Dickstein, 1988).

Rosenberg (1984) described the importance of a support group as a valid tool to enhance self-esteem in the battered woman. Rosenberg stated that trained professionals can work effectively with individuals who share similar problems. The group becomes a feedback guidance system and members acknowledge their need for help by participating in the group. Working within the group setting helps to diminish isolation and fosters a positive self-concept through guidance and support from other group members (Rosenberg, 1984).

Schechter and Gary (1988) stated that violence against women will continue as long as there is cultural support and men experience no significant consequences of their behavior. Social approval reinforces the inequality of power in a relationship. Schechter and Gary concluded that if battering results from an inequality of power, the goal is to give power back to the victim. Effective intervention with a battered woman is to help restore a

sense of power, control, and dignity to her life. Empowerment means offering a woman the tools with which she can control her life. Providing options for safety is an essential element of empowerment. Battered women need access to information about shelters and services (Schechter & Gary, 1988). Schechter and Gary stated that interventions help, but will not end violence against women as long as women are treated as unequal and less important. Violence against women will end by seeking social equality on personal, cultural, and institutional levels.

Nursing Interventions for the Battered Woman

Tilden and Shepherd (1987) stated that domestic violence is an issue of growing concern to professional nurses. Patterns of violence repeat across generations as children are socialized to become assailants or victims in adulthood. Interruption of the cycle through accurate identification and therapeutic response is the responsibility of every professional nurse. Nurses are uniquely qualified and placed to be skilled advocates of battered women. Nurses must admit that violence can occur in any home and they must overcome personal and societal barriers to intervention. Nurses must develop the skills

that will enable them to provide sensitive and effective care for the battered victims.

McLeer, Anwar, Herman, and Maquiling (1989) conducted a retrospective study that concluded that while battered women seek health care in multiple settings, the emergency department appears to be a major entry point into the health care system. Nurses have multiple opportunities to intervene with battered women but don't always have the tools or skills necessary to provide intervention. Nursing interventions must include development of useful assessments and implementation of programs, referrals, and evaluation systems. Trust must be the foundation and a common theme used in all nursing interventions. McLeer et al. concluded that treating a battered woman's medical problems without recognizing that she has been chronically battered and without offering essential services or referrals is unacceptable nursing care.

Nursing interventions with battered women occur in a variety of situations which include: the hospital emergency room, a physician's office, a clinic, or the employee health office of a major business organization. Nursing must take a holistic view of the battered woman by providing not only physical care, but also emotional and supportive care (McLeer et al., 1989).

Billy (1983) stated that decision-making and the reduction of post-traumatic injury requires a safe, quiet, and passive environment. The nurse can help foster this through a willingness to listen, remaining objective, showing compassion, and giving reassurance. Battered women must be made aware of available support services. Nurses can provide information and telephone numbers regarding shelters, women's support groups, and helpful community resources.

Tilden and Shepherd (1987) reported results of a study on 28 battered women in which 60% of those who sought medical care had negative opinions regarding the attitudes of the medical personnel who treated them. Study subjects indicated that medical staff were impersonal, hurried, condescending, and if the woman revealed battery, the woman was made to feel responsible. In another study reported by Tilden and Shepherd of 12 shelter residents, the findings were similar. The residents were referred to the shelter by emergency room staff. None of the residents had positive feelings about the emergency room care they received. They reported being treated impersonally and insensitively. Nurses often have unrealistic goals for themselves during intervention. It is not realistic for a nurse to expect that, on the basis of one therapeutic

encounter with a battered woman, she can radically and permanently change the battered woman's situation. Even if the battered woman feels able to discuss the situation with the nurse, she may lack the resources, problem-solving skills, and the ability to leave or change the situation. Nurses can be effective by simply acknowledging that the problem is significant. The nurse can affirm to the battered woman that she is not alone in her problem and that help is available.

Campbell and Sheridan (1989) identified outcome criteria that can be used to evaluate nursing interventions. These criteria included the following: (a) evidence of empowering the battered woman, (b) increased knowledge base, and (c) decrease in feelings of isolation.

Nurses and nursing interventions are active in many forms and settings of psychotherapy and mental health. Walker (1984) indicated that battered women seek psychological services for a variety of reasons. The most common reason is to seek some assistance in coping with a difficult life situation. Indirect reasons for seeking this form of help include problems with the courts, substance addiction, or school problems of the children. Direct reasons for seeking help through a mental health

system include pleading by family, friends, and shelter staff, and the battered woman's own determination to stop the abuse. Interventions in this setting must include a development of a trusting relationship and an unhurried, concerned, and problem-solving environment.

Dickstein (1988) stated that nurses, as advocates within the mental health setting, not only work with battered women, but also for them in community education and awareness programs about ending domestic violence. Nurses as advocates must attempt to build a professional relationship with battered women based on empathy, trust, acceptance, and the potential for healing and growth. Nurses as advocates must be trained and educated in five general areas: (a) support for the battered woman's feelings, (b) self-awareness education for the battered woman's recognition of her strengths and weaknesses, (c) information and instruction of available resources and services, (d) accompaniment of the battered woman to the resources and services, and (e) continued involvement to ensure that the battered woman will not be left stranded when a chosen intervention fails or is inadequate (Dickstein, 1988).

Walker's (1984) studies on battered women indicate that intervention is most successful for women victims when

safe refuge, self-help, and advocacy-support groups are utilized. The role of the nurse within the mental health setting must be to provide early detection of battering because most victims do not admit to the violence out of shame, guilt, and fear. Walker's studies demonstrate that following a protocol with every victim, in every setting, and under every circumstance, nurses must ask about domestic violence when they least suspect it and when another diagnosis seems obvious.

Bradley (1986) stated that the nursing role in primary prevention of battering is essential. Nurses can participate in activities to promote community awareness by speaking to various organizations composed of police, lawyers, and city council members. Nurses must also take an active role to promote intervention within the medical community. This can be accomplished by educating the health care team on the dynamics and facts of battering and teaching ways to confront, intervene, and support battered women within the medical environment. At the state level, the professional nurse can increase legislative awareness and facilitate methods of informing the public about domestic violence issues.

Summary

The literature demonstrates that there are many factors related to a battered woman's decision to stay or leave a battering relationship. Interventions for the battered woman must be available and must be developed based on the individual needs of each woman. Nurses have the opportunity to intervene with the battered woman through a variety of work environments. Shelters not only provide temporary safety, they can also provide professional staff members who can plan interventions for the battered woman that will supply the tools needed to guide decision-making about staying in or leaving a battering relationship.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTION AND TREATMENT OF DATA

The problem of this study was to measure battered women's knowledge about battering relationships and to determine their intentions to return to the batterer following structured educational sessions on battering relationships. Additionally, the study attempted to determine how the subjects arrived at the decision of whether or not to return to the batterer. The design for the study was the pre-experimental approach.

According to Polit and Hungler (1987), pre-experimental studies are a type of experimental design which involves manipulation of the independent variable and observation of the dependent variable. The pre-experimental research design does not include controls to compensate for the absence of randomization or absence of a control group.

The independent variable in the study was the effect of structured educational sessions. Measurement of the variable was from information obtained on the pre- and post-questionnaires. The dependent variable was the reported intention of the battered woman to return to the

batterer. This was measured by using the exiting destination information obtained on the pre- and post-questionnaires.

Setting

The setting for this study was a shelter for battered women and children in a large city in the south-central United States. The shelter has a total daily capacity of 56 women and children.

The 24-hour shelter provides a bed, meals, clothing, and personal hygiene items to the residents. In 1989, the shelter provided these services to 640 women and 896 children. Psychological and legal counseling are also offered by the shelter. There is a 24-hour hotline answered by shelter counselors and emergency transportation is available to allow battered women and their children access to safety.

The women and children are allowed to stay for 3 weeks. If a woman does not have a safe place to go at the end of the 3 weeks, she may request extension of the shelter stay. The 1-week extension is granted based on bed availability. The request process can occur on a weekly basis until safe living arrangements are made.

The shelter is a one-story structure in a residential neighborhood. The building looks like a large home from

the outside. The residents' living quarters are away from, but not physically separated from, the shelter offices, reception area, the kitchen area, and the conference rooms.

The residents attend group educational sessions in the largest conference room. The individual educational sessions are conducted in the office of the counselor giving the session. Questionnaires were filled out by residents in the conference room and in the counselors' offices.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was comprised of battered women seeking temporary living arrangements in a shelter for battered women in a large south-central city in the United States. The participants were adult women, 18 years of age or older. The study utilized the convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling involves selection of the most readily available persons as subjects (Polit & Hungler, 1987). There were 165 adult females admitted to the shelter during the 3.5 months of data collection. Pre-questionnaires were given to 75 of the women on admission. Twelve of the 75 refused to participate in the study. There was a total of 32 subjects that met all criteria for inclusion in the study.

Protection of Human Subjects

This study was classified as a Category I study because data were gathered through the use of anonymous questionnaires. Therefore, the study was exempt from review by the Human Subjects Review Committee of Texas Woman's University (Appendix C). Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Texas Woman's University graduate school (Appendix D) and agency permission was obtained from the women's shelter prior to data collection (Appendix E).

Each participant of the study was given a written explanation (Appendix F) containing a brief description of the study, participants' right to refuse to participate at any point, and assurance of anonymity. Each questionnaire had the following statement located at the top of the page: RETURN OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WILL INDICATE YOUR CONSENT TO BE PART OF THIS STUDY.

A sequential numbering system was used as the coding method to ensure that the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire could be matched for data analysis. The upper right-hand corner of each pre-questionnaire and matching post-questionnaire was numbered sequentially. A matched set of numbered pre- and post-questionnaires was paper clipped together along with two written explanations

of the study and placed in an envelope identifying the contents. The envelope was kept at the reception desk. The counselor assigned to the woman on admission took a numbered set of questionnaires and the written descriptions of the study and placed them in the client's file. At the end of the 3.5 month data collection period, all of the sealed envelopes were handed to the researcher by the shelter director. Client anonymity for the study was assured using the coding system because no client names appeared on the questionnaires.

If participants desired a copy of the results, they were informed by the shelter counselors that the study results could be obtained from the women's shelter. If the participants had questions about the study, they were advised that the researcher could be contacted through the shelter counselors.

Instruments

The instrument used in this study was the Knowledge and Beliefs About Battering Relationships Questionnaire (Appendix A). The pre- and post-questionnaire was developed by the shelter director, Marianne MacCormick, with the assistance of the researcher. There were three parts on each questionnaire. The first section involves 20 true/false questions based on content delivered during the

six structured educational sessions related to battering relationships (Appendix B). The second section of the pre- and post-questionnaire is the exiting destination information. This addressed the battered woman's intention to or not to return to the batterer after leaving the shelter. The third section identified the variables involved in making the decision of returning or not returning to the batterer.

Content validity for the pre- and post-questionnaires was established by a panel of experts in the area of battered women. The panel consisted of two master's degree prepared shelter counselors and one doctoral prepared university faculty member. Each panel member was sent a copy of the pre- and post-questionnaire and a form (Appendix G) which asked them to review the questionnaires for validity of each statement to the subject of battering relationships and associated comments. No changes were made in the pre- and post-questionnaires. The instruments were used as originally written. There was no established reliability for this instrument.

The pre- and post-questionnaires were exactly alike with the exception of the pre-questionnaire providing a space for a self-reported age in years. Any participant under the age of 18 years was not included in the study.

Data Collection

Data collection began following permission from the graduate school of Texas Woman's University and the participating agency. The six structured educational sessions on battering relationships (Appendix B) were developed by the shelter director and the counselors. These sessions are currently being offered during the battered woman's shelter stay. The material covered in the six educational sessions is presented by master's degree prepared shelter counselors. There were four group-setting sessions and two individual one-to-one sessions, which make the total of six sessions presented. The case counselor for each woman made the determination of which two sessions would be on an individual basis. The determination was based on the specific learning needs of each woman. The six oral presentations were developed from the literature and presented information specific to the battered woman's situation.

The researcher was responsible for counselor training (Appendix H) at a pre-established time and location and prior to actual data collection. The counselor training included discussion of the purpose of the study, client rights associated with the study, and the procedure for data collection. The home telephone number of the

researcher was given to each counselor at the training session so that the counselors were able to contact the researcher in case of study-related questions or concerns.

The coded pre- and post-questionnaires and the written explanation of the study forms were kept in a labeled folder at the reception desk. As a woman entered the shelter for admission, a counselor was assigned. The case counselor placed the coded pre- and post-questionnaires and the written descriptions in the client chart. The case counselor notified the woman of the date, time, and place of the first educational session. The first session was conducted within 48 hours of the battered woman's arrival at the shelter. The case counselor for each woman knew which session was the first and which was the sixth educational session by the Educational Session Activity Log (Appendix I) which was placed in the client file on admission by the case counselor. These forms were also kept at the reception desk in the folder containing the pre- and post-questionnaires. The case counselor was responsible for communicating the session schedule, dates, times, and location of each educational session.

At the first educational session, either the case counselor or the counselor presenting the session handed the client the written explanation cover letter and a coded

pre-questionnaire. The counselor presenting the session assisted the client in directions for filling out the form, answered questions, and upon completion of the questionnaire, placed it in a large brown envelope and sealed it. The envelope was stored in a locked file cabinet located in the office of the shelter director.

At the time of exit from the shelter, each participant having completed six of the structured educational sessions as identified by the case counselor according to the Educational Session Activity Log, was handed the written description of the study and the corresponding number coded post-questionnaire by one of the trained counselors who obtained it from the client file. The completed questionnaire was placed in a brown envelope and sealed. The envelope was placed in the same locked cabinet drawer in the director's office as the pre-questionnaires. At the end of data collection, the shelter director handed the sealed envelopes to the researcher.

The study was composed of data from the information collected on the pre- and post-questionnaires. Therefore, coded questionnaires that did not have a matching code questionnaire were not used as data. True/false questions on either the pre- or post-questionnaires left blank were considered as an incorrect answer for data collection. The

section on age on the pre-questionnaire was completed and the client must have been 18 years or older for the two coded questionnaires to be included in the data collection. If the section on the pre- and post-questionnaires on exiting destination was left blank, the questionnaires were not used for data collection. If the third section on the pre- and post-questionnaire was left blank, but all other conditions were met, the questionnaires were used and the nonresponse was categorized as such. The study continued until a minimum of 30 acceptable matched sets of pre- and post-questionnaires were gathered.

Treatment of the Data

The study was composed of data from the information collected on the pre- and post-questionnaires. The true/false questions were each worth 1 point. The scores for the pre- and post-questionnaires could each be from 0-20 and the difference in the pre- and post-questionnaire score was used as data to test the first research question of the study. The Wilcoxon t-test used the ordinal data to address the knowledge level of the battered woman before and after the structured educational sessions. According to Polit and Hungler (1987), ordinal data are a measurement that rank orders a variable along a specified dimension. The level of significance for this test was set at .1.

Research questions two and three utilized descriptive statistics to describe and summarize the data which were nominal level data. Polit and Hungler (1978) described nominal measure as the assignment of characteristics into categories. Research question two assessed whether or not the battered woman changed her decision to return to the batterer following the six structured educational sessions. Research question three identified factors, which were categorized, that influenced the battered woman's decision of whether or not to return to the batterer.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This pre-experimental study was conducted to examine the battered woman's knowledge about battering relationships and to determine the battered woman's intentions to return to the batterer following structured educational sessions on battering relationships. The study also examined reasons given by battered women about their decision of whether or not to return to the batterer after leaving the shelter. Subjects were selected using a convenience sampling technique from adult females entering a shelter for battered women. Subject age distribution, analysis of the scores obtained by the subjects on the pre- and post-questionnaire, descriptive statistics to summarize the subject's decision intentions, and a summary of the findings are presented in this chapter.

Description of the Sample

The study sample consisted of 32 battered women, 18 years of age or older, admitted to a battered women's shelter. This convenience sample was acquired from voluntary subjects who stayed at the shelter long enough to complete a pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire.

The actual age of each subject was obtained on the pre-questionnaire. The subjects ranged in age from 19 to 59 years of age. The mean age was 29.7 years with a standard deviation of 8.2 years. Table 1 indicates the distribution of subjects by age range.

Table 1

Distribution of Subjects by Age Range

Age range	Total <u>n</u>	Percent
18-24	10	32
25-29	8	25
30-34	8	25
35-39	2	6
40-44	3	9
45-49	0	0
50-54	0	0
55-60	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	32	100

Findings

The purpose of this study was to measure battered women's knowledge about battering relationships and to determine their intentions to return or not return to the batterer following structured educational sessions on

battering relationships. Additionally, the study examined the reasons given for the decision to return or not return to the batterer.

The 32 subjects were administered the Knowledge and Beliefs about Battering Relationships pre- and post-questionnaires. The three-section instrument was developed by the investigator and the shelter director. Section I of the questionnaire was used to compare the subject's test scores on 20 true/false questions before and after attendance at six structured educational sessions. Section I on the pre-questionnaire provided space for self-reported age. Section II compared the decision intentions of the subject to return to the batterer or not return to the batterer before and after the six structured educational sessions. Section III of the questionnaire asked the subjects to give reasons for their decision to return or not return to the batterer. The same instrument, with the exception of deletion of the subject's age, was used as the post-questionnaire.

There were 20 true/false questions presented in section I on the pre- and post-questionnaires. The mean score was 73.75% correct on the pre-questionnaire. The maximum score was 95% correct and the minimum was 40% correct. The standard deviation was 13.50%.

Following attendance at six structured educational sessions, each subject completed the post-questionnaire. The mean post-questionnaire score was 75.47% with a standard deviation of 14.28%. The maximum score was 95% and the minimum score was 45%. Table 2 compares the pre- and post-questionnaire scores for each subject. There were 17 subjects that increased their score on the post-questionnaire, 10 subjects' scores decreased, and 5 subjects scored the same on the pre-and post-questionnaires.

Table 2

Pre- and Post-Questionnaire Score Results

Subject number	Pretest score	Posttest score
1	85	95
2	80	85
3	85	95
4	75	85
5	60	75
6	80	60
7	65	75
8	50	70
9	75	75

(table continues)

Subject number	Pretest score	Posttest score
10	50	45
11	70	95
12	80	90
13	80	60
14	75	65
15	95	90
16	80	85
17	40	45
18	85	90
19	90	80
20	60	65
21	90	90
22	70	65
23	80	90
24	50	60
25	80	90
26	85	75
27	85	75
28	70	75
29	75	75

(table continues)

Subject number	Pretest score	Posttest score
30	55	55
31	80	60
32	80	80

There were three research questions for this study. The first research question was: What is the battered woman's knowledge level on battering relationships before and after structured educational sessions? The Wilcoxon t-test (adapted from Siegel, 1956) for correlated samples was used to consider the relative magnitude and the direction of the score differences on the pre- and post-questionnaires. Table 3 depicts the signed rank for each subject's score difference. The difference score is obtained by subtracting the posttest score from the pretest score. A minus sign in front of the number indicates a decrease in the subject's knowledge deficit on battering relationships.

Table 3

Subject Score Differences and Signed Rank

Subject number	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference score	Absolute	Rank	Signed rank
1	85	95	-10	10	15.5	-15.5
2	80	85	-5	5	5	-5
3	85	95	-10	10	15.5	-15.5
4	75	85	-10	10	15.5	-15.5
5	60	75	-15	15	22	-22
6	80	60	20	20	24.5	24.5
7	65	75	-10	10	15.5	-15.5
8	50	70	-20	20	24.5	-24.5
9	75	75	0	0	drop	drop
10	50	45	5	5	5	5
11	70	95	-25	25	27	-27
12	80	90	-10	10	15.5	-15.5
13	80	60	20	20	24.5	24.5
14	75	65	10	10	15.5	15.5
15	95	90	5	5	5	5
16	80	85	-5	5	5	-5
17	40	45	-5	5	5	-5
18	85	90	-5	5	5	-5
19	90	80	10	10	15.5	15.5

(table continues)

Subject number	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference score	Absolute	Rank	Signed rank
20	60	65	-5	5	5	-5
21	90	90	0	0	drop	drop
22	70	65	5	5	5	5
23	80	90	-10	10	15.5	-15.5
24	50	60	-10	10	15.5	-15.5
25	80	90	-10	10	15.5	-15.5
26	85	75	10	10	15.5	15.5
27	85	75	10	10	15.5	15.5
28	70	75	-5	5	5	-5
29	75	75	0	0	drop	drop
30	55	55	0	0	drop	drop
31	80	60	20	20	24.5	24.5
32	80	80	0	0	drop	drop

Note. $T (+) = 150.5$; $T (-) = 227.5$.

The subjects who showed no difference between pre- and post-questionnaire test scores were automatically dropped from this analysis. This reduced the overall total to $N = 27$. The total of the positive ranks was 150.5 or $T(+) = 150.5$. The total of the negative ranks was 227.5 or $T(-) = 227.5$. The Wilcoxon t -test statistic (z) for this study

was calculated at $z = -1.26$ with $p = .1$. The null hypothesis tested was that there is no difference between the pre- and post-questionnaire scores. Rejection of this null hypothesis required $z = -1.64$ and the results of the study were $z = -1.26$. Therefore, there was no statistically significant difference in the Knowledge and Beliefs About Battering Relationships scores before and after the presentation of the six structured educational sessions.

The second research question in this study stated: Will battered women change their decision about returning to the batterer following structured educational sessions? This was addressed in section II of the pre- and post-questionnaire. Of the 32 subjects, 25 indicated on the pre-questionnaire and then again on the post-questionnaire that they probably would NOT return to the man they lived with before going to the shelter. Only one subject responded on the pre- and post-questionnaire that she probably would return to the man she lived with before going to the shelter. One subject indicated uncertainty about returning to the batterer after leaving the shelter. There were two subjects that indicated on the pre-questionnaire that they probably would return to the batterer and changed their response on the

post-questionnaire to probably would not return to the batterer. Of the 32 subjects, 78% indicated on the pre-questionnaire that they would not return to the batterer and did not change their response to the question following the structured educational sessions.

Research question three of the study stated: What factors influence the battered woman's decision to return or not return to the batterer? Of the subjects that responded they would not return to the batterer on the pre-questionnaire and did not change their response following the educational session, the following indicates the most frequently given reasons for the decision: (a) 50% stated that they did not want the children to remain in a battering environment, (b) 21% felt that they deserved more out of life than being abused, (c) 18% felt that the batterer would never change and that the abuse would never stop, and (d) 9% feared for their lives or the lives of their children.

There were two subjects that indicated they would return to the batterer after leaving the shelter. Fear of the unknown and fear of financial isolation were the reasons they identified for returning to the batterer.

Additional Findings

An item analysis was performed on each question in the questionnaire test in order to delineate the distribution of errors across all subjects. Figure 1 demonstrates the error distribution of the pre- and post-questionnaire questions. Question number nine was the most frequently missed true/false question on the pre-questionnaire.

Figure 2 depicts the error distribution of the post-questionnaire questions. Question number nine was also the most frequently missed true/false question on the post-questionnaire.

The results indicate that the questions answered incorrectly were the same for the two distributions with questions numbers 6 through 10, number 13, and number 17 being the seven most often questions answered incorrectly. This suggested that those specific questions may have been loaded or written in some way as to over-ride or mask the effect of the six structured educational sessions. The item analysis also suggests that the greatest increase in the post-questionnaire scores occurred with these same seven questions. This finding suggested that the next structured educational programs might be designed to include sessions which focus on the content represented by those types of questions.

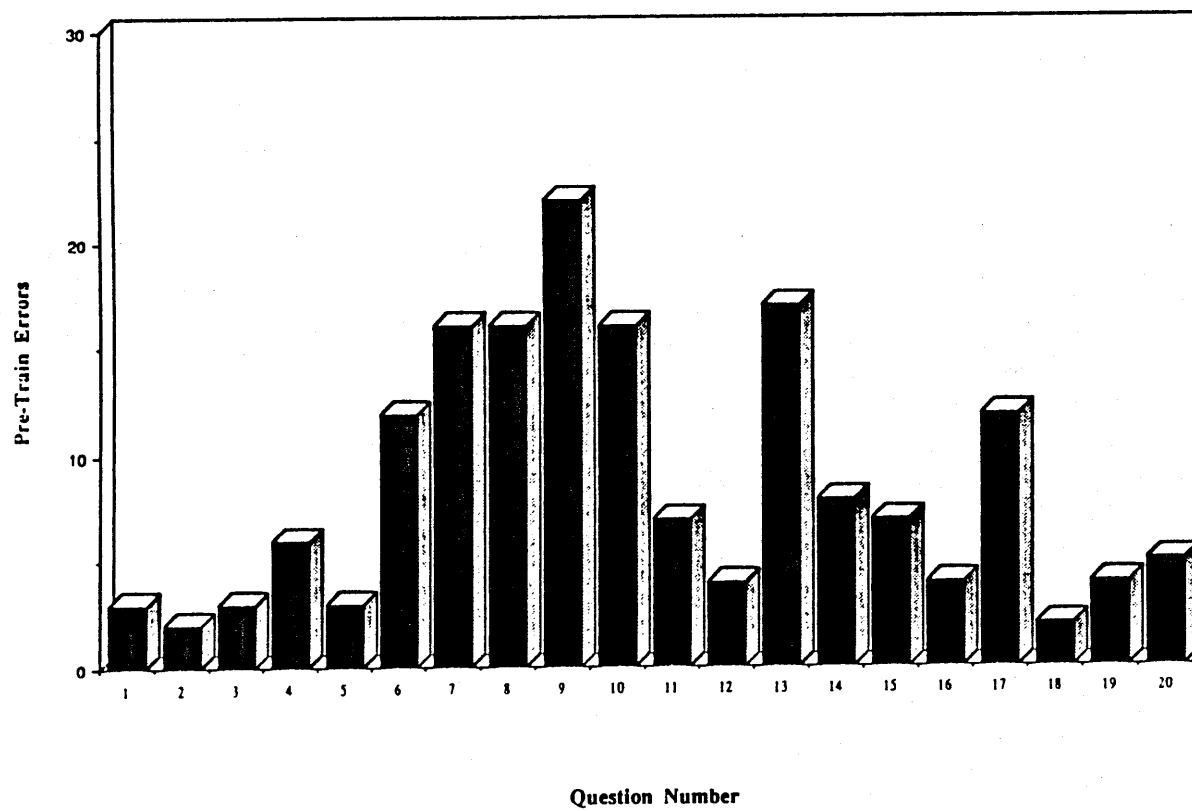


Figure 1. Item analysis of error distribution on pretest.

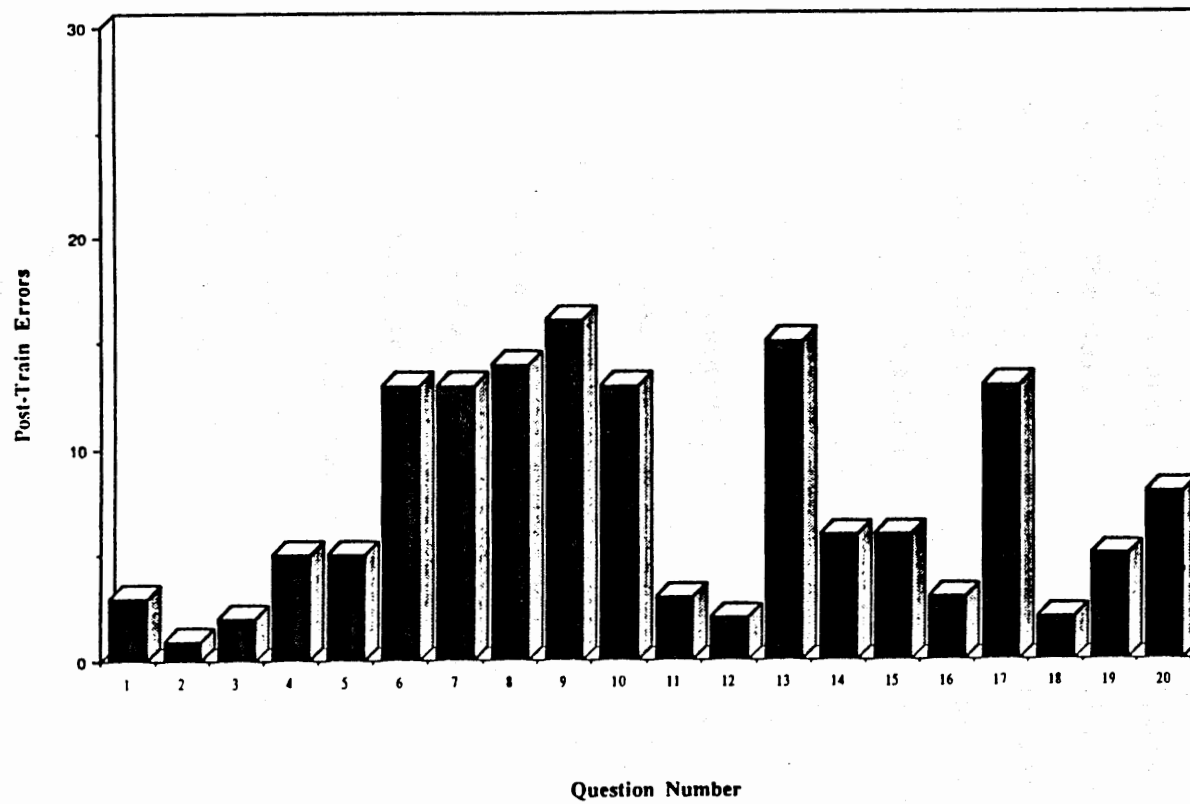


Figure 2. Item analysis of error distribution on posttest.

Summary of Findings

A convenience sample of 32 adult women admitted to a shelter for battered women provided data for this pre-experimental study. The data were collected in an effort to gain more understanding about the knowledge battered women have about battering relationships and the decisions made by battered women to return or not return to the batterer.

The findings of the study indicated that there was no significant difference found for battered women's knowledge of battering relationships before versus after an educational program about battering relationships. There was no significant difference found for battered women changing their decision to return to the batterer following a structured educational program. The major reason given by battered women in the study for not returning to a battering relationship was wanting their children to live in a battering-free environment.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this investigation was to evaluate if battered women have an increase in knowledge about battering relationships following structured educational sessions on battering relationships. The study also focused on the battered woman's intentions to return or not return to the batterer following the educational sessions and the reasons stated for the decision. Discussion of the study results, conclusions, and implications are incorporated within this chapter. The concluding section presents recommendations for further study.

Summary

A pre-experimental study was conducted to determine the effect of structured educational sessions on battered women's knowledge of battering relationships and the intent to return or not return to the batterer after leaving the shelter. A three-part pre- and post-questionnaire, developed by the investigator and the shelter director, was utilized to collect data on the study's three research questions. Prior to the study, a panel of experts reviewed the pre- and post-questionnaires for content validity.

The sample for the study consisted of 32 adult battered women chosen by convenience sampling at a shelter in a large city in the south-central United States. The subjects ranged in age from 19 to 59 years old. The data were collected over a 3.5 month period of time.

All study subjects completed a three-part pre-questionnaire, attended six structured educational sessions on battering relationships, and completed the same three-part instrument as a post-questionnaire. The study's three research questions were tested from data analyzed on the pre- and post-questionnaires.

Discussion of Findings

The following were the research questions tested in the study:

1. What is the battered woman's knowledge level on battering relationships before and after the structured educational sessions?
2. Will the battered woman change her decision about returning to the batterer following structured educational sessions?
3. What factors influence the battered woman's decision to return or not return to the batterer?

Research question one was analyzed using the data on the 20 true/false questions answered before and after six

educational sessions on battering relationships. The scores served as indicators for measuring the change in knowledge about battering relationships following the educational sessions. The Wilcoxon t-test value (z) of the scores was z = -1.26. This value, based on the scores of 32 subjects, indicated that statistical results were non-significant at the .1 level. Therefore, the study results indicated that there was no difference in battered women's knowledge about battering relationships before and after educational sessions were presented. According to Polit and Hungler (1987), non-significant findings represent a lack of evidence to support truth or falsity of a hypothesis.

The nonsignificant findings of the study's first research question may be attributed to some of the limitations of the study. Tighter control of extraneous variables may be important. The number of previous visits to a shelter might impact the battered woman's knowledge level of battering relationships. It is possible that test scores could differ between women entering the shelter for the first time and women returning to the shelter after previous visits. The educational level of each woman could have impacted the results if the women had varying degrees of comprehension of written and verbal material. The

sentence structure of the pre- and post-questionnaires could have impacted the study results. The true/false test items were worded in a flat affect and the subjects could have been in a highly emotional state. The discrepancy of emotional state could have led to invalid answers of an emotional, instead of cognitive, nature. The structure and presentation of the six educational sessions could be reviewed for the possible effect on the study findings. The findings indicate that the same questions that were missed on the pre-questionnaire were also missed on the post-questionnaire. This could indicate that the information presented in the educational sessions related to those specific questions was not clear or in-depth enough to meet the learning needs of the subjects. The investigator found no studies in the literature specific to the effect of educational sessions on the knowledge level of battered women about battering relationships.

Research question two compared the subjects' intentions to return or not to return to the batterer following the educational sessions. The results indicated that the majority of the subjects responded that they would probably not return to the batterer before and after the educational sessions. This could indicate that the educational sessions had no effect on the decision to

return or not return to the batterer because most of the women had already made the decision not to return to the battering situation. This might also indicate though, that the structured educational sessions reinforced the subject's decision not to return to the batterer. The number of previous visits to a shelter may have impacted the study's outcome in that some subjects may have been preparing to leave the batterer for some period of time. The study investigated only the stated intentions to return or not return to the batterer and did not validate the subject's exiting destination.

Study findings by Schutte et al. (1987) support the concept that battered women develop a pattern of leaving the batterer, going to a shelter, and then returning to the batterer. They concluded that this pattern is necessary in moving toward terminating the relationship. The findings could be supported by the present investigation by accepting that the majority of the subjects were actually prepared to leave the batterer. Another study by Schutte et al. (1987) examined the persuasive techniques used by batterers to coerce women into returning to the relationship. The study concluded that teaching battered women about the persuasion techniques and how to resist them could be an effective method of breaking the cycle

of leaving and then returning to the batterer. This investigation was unable to support or refute these findings since the majority of subjects indicated before the educational sessions and then again after the educational sessions that they would not return to the batterer.

Research question three supplied data related to the reasons the subjects intended to return or not return to the batterer. The major reason for returning to the batterer was financial instability of the woman attempting to survive on her own. The present study supports Walker's (1979) finding that women return to the batterer because of financial concerns. The major reason given for not returning to the batterer was the effect of the situation on the children. Strube and Barbour (1988) support that studies related to the reasons that battered women return or do not return to the batterer are limited in the data representing the percentage of women who choose to remain in the relationship and in the battered woman's ability to identify the basis of the decision.

The present investigation supports the use of Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance as the theoretical framework. The subjects validated that they felt some type of discomfort which motivated them to enter

the shelter. Possibly, the educational sessions sustained dissonance in those women who had already made the decision to return to the batterer or in those women who were uncertain about returning to the batterer. It is also possible that the structured educational sessions did reinforce consonance in those subjects who indicated they would not return to the batterer on the pre- and post-questionnaires.

Conclusions and Implications

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are offered:

1. The majority of subjects indicated they would not return to the batterer before and after the educational sessions were presented. Therefore, the educational sessions had no measurable effect on the battered woman's decision to return or not return to the batterer.

2. The major reason that battered women decide to return to the batterer is based on financial status. The major reason that battered women decide to not return to the batterer is related to their children.

3. There were 75 pre-questionnaires distributed. Twelve subjects refused to participate, leaving 63 possible subjects. Only 32 subjects stayed at the shelter long

enough to complete the requirements of the study. This finding suggests a drop-out rate of almost one-half.

Implications based on the study findings suggest that health care workers must continue to seek appropriate interventions for battered women. Interventions must include elements that will motivate the woman to stay long enough to receive the help offered by shelters. Assessing the individual needs of each battered woman is critical. Health workers at shelters have the responsibility to be knowledgeable about the problem of battering, the etiology of battering, and the resources available for battered women in the community. The battered woman's decision to return or not return to the batterer can be enhanced by the health care professional, but the final decision must be made by the battered woman. The role of the health care professional is to support the woman and her decision. Health care professionals must be active in data collection and research on this tragic way of life.

Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. A more stringent study with further instrument development.
2. A study using a new approach to interventions.

3. A study using tighter selection control, specifically controlling for the number of previous visits to a shelter.

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APPENDIX A

Pre- and Post-Questionnaire

RETURN OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WILL INDICATE YOUR CONSENT
TO BE PART OF THIS STUDY.

Shelter Program: Women's Haven of Tarrant County
Pre-questionnaire

Score _____

- I. Please answer each True/False question by making an X on the appropriate line to the left of each question. Please indicate your age and expected exiting destination in the spaces provided at the bottom of this page.

KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS ABOUT BATTERING

RELATIONSHIPS QUESTIONNAIRE

- | T | F | |
|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | 1. As many as 50% of all marriages involve at least one episode of violence between spouses. |
| ___ | ___ | 2. Battering will get worse unless those involved get help. |
| ___ | ___ | 3. Women are the primary victims of battering. |
| ___ | ___ | 4. Middle class women get battered as frequently and as violently as do poorer women. |
| ___ | ___ | 5. Religious beliefs will prevent battering. |
| ___ | ___ | 6. Battered women are often highly educated and successful. |
| ___ | ___ | 7. Batterers are violent in all their relationships. |
| ___ | ___ | 8. Batterers are usually violent because they are unsuccessful and lack resources to cope with the world. |
| ___ | ___ | 9. Drinking causes battering behavior. |
| ___ | ___ | 10. Batterers are not in control of their violent actions. |

- ___ 11. A battered woman will usually call the police.
- ___ 12. The batterer can also be a loving partner.
- ___ 13. A wife batterer also beats his children.
- ___ 14. Battered women tend to continually get involved in other battering relationships.
- ___ 15. Long-standing battering relationships can change for the better.
- ___ 16. Battered women usually do something that causes the batterer to lose control.
- ___ 17. Battered women can always leave home.
- ___ 18. Batterers will usually decrease their premarital violence after marriage.
- ___ 19. Children need their father even if he is violent.
- ___ 20. Most battered women seek help immediately after a battering incident.

Your Age: _____ years

II. Exiting destination: Please circle one.

Think about where you will go when you leave the shelter. Circle the answer that best describes your decision at this moment.

- 1. I will probably return to the man that I lived with before coming to the shelter.
- 2. I probably will not return to the man that I lived with before coming to the shelter.
- 3. I am uncertain if I will return to the man that I lived with before coming to the shelter.

III. Please give your reasons on how you reached this decision. Be honest--there are no good or bad reasons.

RETURN OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WILL INDICATE YOUR CONSENT
TO BE PART OF THIS STUDY.

Shelter Program: Women's Haven of Tarrant County
Post-questionnaire

Score _____

- I. Please answer each True/False question by making an X on the appropriate line to the left of each question. Please indicate your age and expected exiting destination in the spaces provided at the bottom of this page.

KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS ABOUT BATTERING

RELATIONSHIPS QUESTIONNAIRE

- | T | F | |
|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | 1. As many as 50% of all marriages involve at least one episode of violence between spouses. |
| ___ | ___ | 2. Battering will get worse unless those involved get help. |
| ___ | ___ | 3. Women are the primary victims of battering. |
| ___ | ___ | 4. Middle class women get battered as frequently and as violently as do poorer women. |
| ___ | ___ | 5. Religious beliefs will prevent battering. |
| ___ | ___ | 6. Battered women are often highly educated and successful. |
| ___ | ___ | 7. Batterers are violent in all their relationships. |
| ___ | ___ | 8. Batterers are usually violent because they are unsuccessful and lack resources to cope with the world. |
| ___ | ___ | 9. Drinking causes battering behavior. |
| ___ | ___ | 10. Batterers are not in control of their violent actions. |

- ___ 11. A battered woman will usually call the police.
- ___ 12. The batterer can also be a loving partner.
- ___ 13. A wife batterer also beats his children.
- ___ 14. Battered women tend to continually get involved in other battering relationships.
- ___ 15. Long-standing battering relationships can change for the better.
- ___ 16. Battered women usually do something that causes the batterer to lose control.
- ___ 17. Battered women can always leave home.
- ___ 18. Batterers will usually decrease their premarital violence after marriage.
- ___ 19. Children need their father even if he is violent.
- ___ 20. Most battered women seek help immediately after a battering incident.

II. Exiting destination:

Think about where you will go when you leave the shelter. Circle the answer that best describes your decision at this moment.

- 1. I will probably return to the man that I lived with before coming to the shelter.
- 2. I probably will not return to the man that I lived with before coming to the shelter.
- 3. I am uncertain if I will return to the man that I lived with before coming to the shelter.

III. Please give your reasons on how you reached this decision. Be honest--there are no good or bad reasons.

APPENDIX B

**Structured Educational Sessions on
Battering Relationships**

EDUCATIONAL SESSION OUTLINE

- I. Dynamics of Family Violence
 - A. Three types of family violence
 - B. The cycle of violence
 - C. The power and control wheel
 - D. The myths of battering
- II. Dynamics of Spouse Abuse
 - A. The effects of battering on women
 - 1. Emotional
 - 2. Social
 - 3. Financial
 - 4. Physical
 - B. Characteristics of batterers
 - 1. Behavioral
 - 2. Social
 - C. The warning signs of spouse abuse
 - 1. Behavioral
 - 2. Family history
- III. Effects of Abuse on Children (First Session)
 - A. Characteristics of children from violent homes
 - 1. Behavior
 - 2. Physical
 - 3. Social
 - 4. Educational

- B. Long term effects of abuse on children
- IV. Effects of Abuse on Children (Second Session)
 - A. Non-abusive parenting styles
 - B. Single parenting
- V. Alcohol and Drug Abuse
 - A. Effects of substance abuse on battering
 - B. Common factors of battery and substance abuse
 - C. Male substance abusers/accepting the responsibility for the behavior
- VI. Victim Blaming
 - A. Accepting responsibility
 - B. Taking action
 - C. Moving beyond abusive relationships

APPENDIX C

Human Subjects Review Committee Exemption

This prospectus proposed by: Martha Steinbauer
and entitled:

Has been read and approved by the member of (~~his~~/hers)
Research Committee.

xx Is exempt from Human Subjects Review Committee review because it is classified as Category I research because an anonymous questionnaire was used.

_____ Requires Human Subjects Review Committee review
because

Chairperson, Susan Goad
Member, Rose Nesherademy
Member, Lois Hough

Date: 12/6/90

Dallas Campus xx Denton Campus Houston Campus

APPENDIX D

Graduate School Permission to Conduct Study

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
DENTON DALLAS HOUSTON

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

P.O. Box 22479, Denton, Texas 76204 817/898-3400, 800-338-5255



February 21, 1991

Ms. Martha Steinbauer
10804 Gable Drive
Dallas, TX 75229

Dear Ms. Steinbauer:

I have received and approved the Prospectus for your research project. Best wishes to you in the research and writing of your project.

Sincerely yours,

Leslie M Thompson

Leslie M. Thompson
Dean for Graduate Studies
and Research

dl

cc Dr. Susan Goad
Dr. Carolyn Gunning

APPENDIX E

Agency Permission to Conduct Study

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF NURSING

AGENCY PERMISSION FOR CONDUCTING STUDY*

THE Women's Haven of Tarrant County, Inc.

GRANTS TO Martha Steinbauer

a student enrolled in a program of nursing leading to a Master's Degree at Texas Woman's University, the privilege of its facilities in order to study the following problem.

Effectiveness of Structured Educational Sessions on Battered Women's Intentions to Return to the Batterer

The conditions mutually agreed upon are as follows:

1. The agency (may) (may not) be identified in the final report.
 2. The names of consultative or administrative personnel in the agency (may) (may not) be identified in the final report.
 3. The agency (wants) (does not want) a conference with the student when the report is completed.
 4. Other:
Final copy of study.
- _____
- _____
- _____

Jan. 15, 1991
Date

Martha Steinbauer
Signature of Student

Marianne MacCormick
Signature of Agency Personnel

Susan Goad
Signature of Faculty Advisor

- * Fill out & sign 3 copies to be distributed:
Original: Student, 1st copy: Agency
2nd copy: TWU School of Nursing

APPENDIX F

Written Explanation of Study

WRITTEN EXPLANATION OF THE STUDY

Dear Participant:

My name is Martha Steinbauer. I am a nursing graduate student at Texas Woman's University. I am interested in how knowledge about battering relationships effects your decision of returning to the batterer. I am asking you to participate in a study which involves you answering statements on two questionnaires. Your participation is voluntary and all of your responses are kept confidential. The results of the study will make no mention of you as a participant. Do not write your name on either questionnaire.

If, after you have agreed to participate, you decide that you do not wish to continue, you may withdraw at anytime without effecting your treatment at the shelter. Return of the questionnaires to the shelter staff will indicate your consent to be a subject in this study. A report of this study will be available to the shelter.

You will receive the pre-questionnaire at the first educational session you attend at the shelter. The post-questionnaire will be given to you on the day you exit the shelter. You must have attended at least six educational sessions to fill out the questionnaire. The educational sessions are structured around battering relationships and are presented by the shelter counselors. These counselors will be available to answer any questions you may have about filling out the questionnaires.

The counselors will be able to contact me if you have any questions about this study. Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Martha Steinbauer, R.N.

APPENDIX G

Panel of Experts Letter and
Validity Form

I am a graduate student at Texas Woman's University. I have been working with Marianne MacCormick on developing a study about return rates of battered women from the shelter to the batterer and what effect structured educational sessions would have on the return rates.

I am requesting that you serve as an expert on battered women by reviewing the enclosed pre- and post-questionnaires. These forms will be used to gather data on knowledge and beliefs about battering relationships.

Please use the enclosed validity form to indicate whether each of the 20 true/false questions on the questionnaire are valid or not valid related to battering relations and include your comments on each question. Please return the signed validity form in the pre-addressed and stamped envelope provided. Please contact me if you have questions.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Martha Steinbauer, R.N.

QUESTIONNAIRE VALIDITY FORM

Please make an X under either valid or not valid for each question.

<u>Question Number</u>	<u>Valid</u>	<u>Not Valid</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____
5	_____	_____	_____
6	_____	_____	_____
7	_____	_____	_____
8	_____	_____	_____
9	_____	_____	_____
10	_____	_____	_____
11	_____	_____	_____
12	_____	_____	_____
13	_____	_____	_____
14	_____	_____	_____
15	_____	_____	_____
16	_____	_____	_____
17	_____	_____	_____
18	_____	_____	_____
19	_____	_____	_____

<u>Question Number</u>	<u>Valid</u>	<u>Not Valid</u>	<u>Comments</u>
20	_____	_____	_____

Your signature _____

Your title _____

APPENDIX H

Outline of Counselor Training

OUTLINE OF COUNSELOR TRAINING

- I. Explanation and Purpose of the Study
 - A. Effect of structured education about battering relationships on the knowledge level of battered women.
 - B. Effect of structured educational sessions on the battered woman's intent to return or not to return to the batterer.
 - C. Identification of the variables involved with making the decision whether or not to return to the batterer.
- II. Client Rights
 - A. Right of the client to refuse to participate without consequences during the shelter stay.
 - B. Discussion of the written explanation of the study.
 - C. Assuring anonymity of the client.
 - D. Methods of resolving client questions and concerns related to the study.
- III. Procedure for Data Collection
 - A. Explanation of the pre- and post-questionnaires.
 - B. Methodology of the study
 - 1. Distribution of the forms to the client files.

2. Distribution of the forms to the client.
3. Collection of the completed forms from the client.
4. Storage of the completed forms.
5. Method of contacting the researcher for questions or concerns related to the study.

APPENDIX I

Educational Session Activity Log

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS

ACTIVITY LOG

<u>Educational Session</u>	<u>Date completed</u>
I. Dynamics of Family Violence	_____
II. Dynamics of Spouse Abuse	_____
III. Effects of Abuse on Children (First Session)	_____
IV. Effects of Abuse on Children (Second Session)	_____
V. Alcohol and Drug Abuse	_____
VI. Victim Blaming	_____