

EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE ANDFACTORS THAT IMPACT
HELP-SEEKING

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ABSTRACT

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DEFINING VIOLENCE AND EXPLORING FACTORS THAT IMPACT HELP-SEEKING

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Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious problem that has impacted the lives of many individuals in a variety of ways. While we have a general definition of abuse, the behaviors that constitute abuse vary from person to person and it can be presumed that gender and gender stereotypes may influence perceptions of what abuse. For this reason, the current study examined the way that men and women perceive abuse. Additionally, help-seeking behaviors for survivors of IPV have been found to be impacted by various factors, and can be a difficult step for victims to make. Therefore, the present study also analyzed how various factors such as shame and guilt, gender, and gender stereotypes impact help-seeking behaviors in victims of IPV. While gender was not a significant predictor of how individuals perceive abuse or of their help-seeking behaviors, gender stereotypes were found to be a significant predictor of perceptions of abuse and help-seeking behaviors. Further, gender stereotypes, and shame and guilt predicted help-seeking behaviors for individuals in same-sex and different sex relationships. Results from this study will be valuable for mental health professionals to consider when working with IPV survivors. Implications of the findings for mental health professions will be explored and suggestions for practice will be discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Intimate partner violence (IPV) has had a long history of impacting the lives of individuals who find themselves in relationships in which abuse is present. Furthermore, there are a multitude of ways in which IPV can impact individuals including financial, emotional, psychological, and physical (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020; Moorer, 2021; Peterson et al., 2018).

Currently, IPV is a relevant problem for many individuals in the United States, with approximately 1 in 4 women as well as about 1 in 10 men reporting having experienced some type of abuse in their lifetime (CDC, 2020). Additionally, IPV can occur throughout the lifespan, meaning that it impacts individuals of all ages (CDC, 2020). With that being said, IPV also impacts individuals regardless of their sexual orientation. Through the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, it was found that when compared to individuals who identify as heterosexual, lesbian women and gay men are just as likely to experience similar or higher rates of IPV and sexual violence (Walters et al., 2013). Additionally, one fourth of the men who participated in the survey indicated that at least once in their life they had experienced being slapped, pushed, or shoved by their partner (Walters et al., 2013).

How Violence is Perceived

Both IPV and domestic violence (DV) are terms that are associated with abuse and although they have been previously used interchangeably, the terms have different

meanings. One of the most evident differences between the two terms is who is involved. DV refers to violence within any two individuals within a household, while IPV applies to violence that occurs within a romantic relationship regardless of whether the individuals live together (Moorer, 2021). The different types of abuse that may be labeled as IPV can include physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression (CDC, 2020). Research has previously used IPV and DV interchangeably, thus for the current study, the terms will be utilized in that manner.

As time has passed, culture has impacted the way that abuse is viewed. An early example of this was the woman's suffrage movement and how it influenced the perceptions of women's rights in relationships. In 1871, Alabama revoked the right for men to their wives, and not long after Maryland became the first state in the United States to seek legal repercussions when it came to men beating their wives (Thomson, 2018). Despite these steps toward women's rights in relationships many cases that were taken to court were often left unnoticed or reversed (Thomson, 2018). It was not until the 1970s that resources, such as shelter services, became available for women who were victims of abuse (Thomson, 2018).

More recently, there have been an increase of resources and assistance to victims of abuse. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was created in 1994 and has the purpose of working on enhancing the community response and usefulness when it comes to the legal system for individuals who are victims of abuse (Thomson, 2018). The VAWA brought to the forefront the significance of abuse and its consequences underlined the need for increased awareness and a speedy response (Ford et al., 2002;

Jennings et al., 2021). Although VAWA was an act introduced to protect women's rights, male victims of abuse are also included in and protected by the act (The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, 2006). Laws and movements that protect or raise awareness for the abuse that men experience seem limited and are less often discussed.

Furthermore, in addition to VAWA, there have also been other social movements that have addressed abuse and assault, including the #MeToo Movement. Although the #MeToo Movement focused on sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace, it also brought to light just how many individuals are impacted by abuse (Bhattacharyya, 2018), and raised awareness on the obstacles that victims face when attempting to report such situations (Hattery & Smith, 2019). The #MeToo movement was created in 2006 but became popular on social media platforms in 2017 due to the Harvey Weinstein case (Bhattacharyya, 2018). In 2017, multiple sexual harassment accusations against Weinstein were brought into the spotlight (Field et al., 2019). With women coming forward regarding the abuse they had experienced, many women were inspired to disclose the abuse they had experienced. The Weinstein scandal and similar scandals popularized the #MeToo movement bringing worldwide awareness of issues related to sexual abuse and gender-based violence. Additionally, in early 2019, Gillette released an advertisement endorsing the ideals of the #MeToo Movement and addressing toxic masculinity (National Public Radio, 2019). The advertisement received mixed reviews, with some individuals supporting what the advertisement's message was while others claiming it to be unnecessary and offensive. The response to the Gillette advertisement

suggests the impact that the role of masculinity plays in society and that for some individuals behaviors that are labeled as toxic masculinity might not be viewed in the same way they are for others. Specifically, some individuals perceived the advertisement to be an attack on men and/or traits typically associated with being a man in this society. The commercial highlighted the potentially polarizing nature of our attitudes about gender and gender socialization. Thus, there is importance in further examining gender and gender stereotypes within society and more specifically, when it comes the association there may be with abuse. Including the #MeToo movement there have been impactful movements with the intent of raising awareness for violence against women, but to the knowledge of this researcher few movements have addressed violence against men, thus potentially discouraging men from reporting violence or even acknowledging that they might be experiencing abuse.

As previously mentioned, the ways in which abuse is viewed as right or wrong in society has changed over time, thus, the way that individuals perceive abuse may also slightly differ. When considering how women and men perceive violence, researchers have suggested that there may be an association with gender and perceptions of violence. Moreover, research has found that when men are the perpetrators, the abuse may be identified as more serious (Wilson & Smirles, 2020), thus questioning the role that gender and gender stereotypes play regarding how abuse is viewed by others. For some individuals, particularly men, abuse can be normalized to fit with society's expectation of what constitutes being a man or being masculine (Oliffe et al., 2014). Masculinity is a socially constructed concept that applies to the behaviors and characteristics that are

usually related to what it means to be a man (American Psychological Association [APA], 2018; Willie et al., 2018). Further, masculinity can set an expectation for men, specifically as the way that they should behave and thus, can impact the various decisions that they make throughout their lives (APA, 2018). More specifically, masculinity may influence the way that men seek help (APA, 2018) which can potentially impact men who are victims of abuse and may be contemplating seeking help. Parry and O'Neal (2015) looked into help-seeking behaviors of gay male victims of IPV and found that traditional views of masculinity may set the expectation of that men should resolve issues that arise in their lives by themselves.

IPV and Help-Seeking

For victims of abuse, help-seeking can be a difficult step to take. Help-seeking can be distressing for individuals, especially when victims of have negative experiences when attempting to seek help (Douglas & Hines, 2011). Additionally, seeking help requires that an individual be vulnerable and share an experience that is most likely already difficult. When considering the help-seeking process, there are various services that may be available for individuals such as family, friends, or professional services including DV agencies. Both men and women have been found to have a mix of experiences with the sources they seek help from, with men finding DV agencies the least helpful in the process (Douglas & Hines, 2011). In fact, Coker et al. (2000) looked into how women and men seek help from when experiencing physical IPV and found that most women and men are not likely to seek out help from professional services. Further, both men and women who are victims of IPV have found friends and family support to be the

most helpful resource to seek help from (Coker et al., 2002; Douglas & Hines, 2011; McLeod et al., 2010). Various factors are suggested to impact the decision individuals make to seek out help from such services including their knowledge of their existence, and whether they believe that the services will be helpful (Coker et al., 2000). Individuals who do not have many options for seeking help are more likely to remain in their relationship even though they are not safe. Research has suggested that for men it can be difficult to comprehend the seriousness of mental and physical abuse (Warburton & Raniolo, 2020). Additionally, research has noted that some gay men may have the assumption that masculinity is associated with aggression and might celebrate aggressive behaviors (Oliffe et al., 2014), thus potentially normalizing abusive behaviors within their intimate relationships and making it difficult for men to identify abusive behaviors.

Furthermore, there are also potential factors that may impact the likelihood of victims of IPV seeking help. Hathaway et al. (2002) examined the different factors that women who are victims of IPV may consider when potentially disclosing to health professionals. Four main themes arose from this analyzation including the providers comprehension and understanding of abuse, their intention and care in assisting the patient, taking time to recognize when abuse is present and utilize interventions, and their approach to confidentiality (Hathaway et al., 2002). Research examining men's help-seeking behaviors when they are victims of IPV, found that men are also likely to find medical professionals helpful since in most of their experiences they take their situation seriously and show an interest as to where their injuries originated from (Douglas & Hines, 2011). These findings suggest that further understanding factors that impact help-

seeking behaviors in victims of IPV may aide in providing services that are viewed as more helpful for and by victims.

Along with the main factors found, Hathaway et al. (2002) also found additional factors that arose as they examined the women's responses, including shame. Shame is one such factor that has been found to be part of the reason as to why individuals do not report abuse (Chan, 2011). McNeely et al. (2001) found that women and men can both experience shame due to being a victim of abuse. Although, shame can be experienced by both men and women, it can present for individuals differently. For instance, for men shame can be associated with fear of experiencing embarrassment due to disclosing the abuse they may be experiencing (Tsui et al., 2010). Additionally, male victims of IPV, may experience fear that talking about behaviors going on in their relationship may lead to them being labeled as feminine (Tsui et al., 2010). One of the factors associated with masculinity ideologies is anti-femininity (APA, 2018), which may be categorized as the intentional act of avoiding feminine beliefs or behaviors such as emotional expressions.

Thus, men who may have that expectation of masculinity may avoid anything that can closely represents femininity, including the disclosure of personal problems or even seeking help. Research has suggested that it may be beneficial to analyze what masculinity looks like for men and how that can play a role in their life, specifically for professionals who work closely with men (Serrano, 2011). The purpose of the study was to further examine how gender and gender stereotypes can influence help-seeking behaviors for victims of IPV, thus potentially providing further understanding for how professionals can better assist men facing such situations.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Impact of Abuse

The cost of IPV to society is wide-ranging (Coker et al., 2000; Coker et al., 2002; Reid et al., 2008). Research conducted among women and men who have experienced and reported abuse indicates that although more women reported emotional and physical abuse, both reported being greatly impacted by the abuse. This research also suggests that there may be key gender differences in the types of abuse experienced by women and men (Coker et al., 2000). Specifically, Coker et al. (2000) identified that of those who reported experiencing abuse, women were more likely to report experiencing more physical abuse while men reported more emotional abuse. Additionally, for both female and male victims, physical and psychological IPV is associated with significant physical and mental health consequences including physical injuries, recreational drug use, and developing a chronic disease (Coker et al., 2002).

When conducting a study on women and IPV, Thompson et al. (2006) found that women who reported only experiencing psychological abuse had similar physical health symptoms as women who reported physical abuse. These findings suggest that psychological abuse is just as harmful to the victims as physical abuse (Thompson et al., 2006). Compared to men who deny experiencing IPV, male victims of IPV are also more likely to experience depressive symptoms later in life (Reid et al., 2008). When looking at some of the mental health effects of IPV, women are more likely to report experiencing

panic attacks while men may be more likely to report issues with alcohol (Romito & Grassi, 2007). Men are more likely to externalize symptoms when experiencing stressful events in their life (Hines & Malley-Morrison, 2001). Furthermore, research conducted on how violence impacts women has also indicated that the violence that women experience can impact their current and future relationships (Riger et al., 2002).

There is also a financial cost associated with abuse and victims of abuse. Peterson et al. (2018) found that the lifetime cost for males, who are victims of IPV, is approximately \$23,414, while for females it is approximately \$103,767. This includes costs associated with medical costs, lost productivity cost, criminal justice activities as well as other costs that may arise (Peterson et al., 2018). Victims of IPV are impacted in a multitude of ways, and while research presented demonstrates that women experience higher rates of abuse than men, men are highly impacted by abuse. Warburton and Raniolo (2020) mention that although men reportedly experience mental and physical abuse, they may not have awareness of how serious the issue is. More recently, COVID-19 has impacted individuals in a variety of ways. One of the more specific impacts has been the amount of time individuals spend at home. For some individuals, their home may not be safe, due to the abuse they may experience at the hand of their partner (Evans et al., 2020; Warburton & Raniolo, 2020). The current pandemic has highlighted how victims of IPV may feel more trapped in their own homes (Evans et al., 2020; Warburton & Raniolo, 2020), thus adding to the importance of examining situations of abuse in men as well as women.

Additionally, although there is limited research on incidence and types of abuse experienced in romantic relationships within the lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) community, previous findings have suggested that gay men are more likely to experience this type of abuse than heterosexual men and women in their lifetime (Nowinski & Bowen, 2012). Notably, Oliffe et al. (2014) found that gay men may downplay abuse due to their assumptions that being masculine involves disregarding abuse, ignoring the emotional impact of abuse, and asserting power through physical aggression. Oliffe et al. (2014) explored in depth what men's experiences of IPV can look like and how they may view the abuse that they are experiencing. The 14 participants reported being in same-sex relationships and were from various ages, ranging from 37 to 64 years old. Additionally, the data from the study was qualitative and collected through a series of interviews. Though interview questions were set, the participants from the study were encouraged to share any details that they felt comfortable disclosing which allowed for a greater range of experiences to be included in the study. Oliffe et al. (2014) found that in addition to viewing abuse as acceptable behavior within a romantic relationship, gay men may also view it as acceptable behavior for men to try to take care of it on their own and not seek help. These findings reiterate the importance of further exploring how abuse may be viewed by individuals, including those who experience abuse in opposite-sex relationships as well as those in same-sex relationships.

Defining IPV and DV

While DV and IPV have often been used interchangeably, they are different terms. DV applies to any two individuals who share a household, and is defined as physical,

bodily injury, or assault, sexual assault, stalking, or creating fear that a physical harm may occur in the near future (Moorer, 2021). IPV applies to behaviors between romantic partners that are intended to display power and control and can be financial, emotional, psychological, cultural, physical or sexual violence, and other forms of behavior that is considered controlling (Moorer, 2021). In the past, researchers have utilized the terms of DV and IPV interchangeably. Therefore, throughout this paper the same approach in terminology will be taken. For the purpose of this study, both DV and IPV have been defined as abuse that has happened within an intimate relationship. This type of abuse can present itself in a variety of ways including physical violence, sexual violence, psychological aggression, and stalking (CDC, 2020). While experts have attempted to define abuse within a relationship, there may be variations in the way it is viewed and defined by men and women in society. Similarly, the definition of what constitutes a perpetrator is ambiguous and defined differently by men and women (Chan, 2011; Douglas & Hines, 2011).

Research suggests that when individuals define violence, they take into consideration the gender of the perpetrator and the sexual orientation of the victim (Russell et al., 2015). In part, individuals weigh the seriousness of IPV on the size and strength of the perpetrator (Russell et al., 2015). Individuals in same-sex relationships may be seen as matching in size and strength, therefore, abuse that occurs within the relationship may not be taken as seriously (Russell et al., 2015). Further, Carlson and Worden (2005) found that when presented with a man engaging in abusive behavior, individuals were more likely to label those behaviors as DV. Similarly, men were less

likely to label behaviors such as slapping their significant other as DV when the act was done by a woman (Carlson & Worden, 2005). Previous research has suggested that women consider family violence to be more serious than men and view public responses as more effective (Koski & Mangold, 1988). Admittedly, much of the research on how violence is perceived was conducted years ago (Carlson & Worden, 2005; Follingstad & Rogers, 2013; Johnson, 2011; Koski & Mangold, 1988; Scarduzio et al., 2017). Since then, a considerable number of significant events have occurred in society which may lead to differences in the way violence is viewed and defined.

Social Movements and their Impact on Perceptions of IPV

In the past few years, social movements such as the #MeToo Movement have made an impact to individuals coming forward to tell their experiences of abuse. These movements have also brought to light the dangers of justifying or denying acts of abuse. The #MeToo Movement, which was founded in 2006 by Tarana Burke, has helped gain more awareness to the extent of which abuse, particularly sexual harassment is present in the workplace (Bhattacharyya, 2018). Furthermore, with the rising awareness of the #MeToo Movement individuals in Congress who were familiar with the protocol for sexual harassment made a point that low harassment claims were due not to a low number of cases, but to the many deterrents and obstacles faced by victims of sexual harassment (Hattery & Smith, 2019).

More recently, Wilson and Smirles (2020) also brought to attention the different perceptions of each type of abuse and found that physical abuse is perceived as more serious than psychological abuse, regardless of the gender of the perpetrator. For

instance, gender and sexual orientation has been found to play a significant role in the ways law enforcement evaluate situations of IPV (Russell, 2018). Specifically, Russell (2018) found that law enforcement officers are likely to assess victims distinctly based on gender and sexual orientation. Additionally, Russell (2018) found that law enforcement officers are more likely to believe the victims of male perpetrators, which Russell (2018) suggested may mean that gay men and heterosexual women, who are victims of abuse are more likely to be believed by law enforcement. Further, findings also suggest that abuse within same-sex relationships is less likely to be viewed as serious in comparison to abuse within opposite-sex couples (Russell et al., 2015). These findings suggests that individuals who are in same-sex relationships and are victims of abuse may be more vulnerable in such situations since they may be more hesitant to seek help due to the way violence is perceived in same-sex couples. Therefore, in addition to exploring how individuals perceive violence, it is also critical that researchers take a closer look into barriers that victims have when it comes to seeking help.

Help-Seeking

Help-seeking in situations of IPV is viewed differently by men and women (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Douglas & Hines, 2011; Russell et al., 2015). For the purpose of this study, help-seeking is defined as revealing the violence that has occurred or is occurring to others in order to receive assistance (Lelaurain et al., 2017). The help can be sought out from a variety of sources including family, friends, and other professional resources. Individuals define help-seeking differently depending on various factors, such as, an

individual's culture and cultural norms, since their culture may impact the sources they see as available to them in such situations (Ansara & Hindin, 2010; Liang et al., 2005).

Seeking help in general may be difficult for men and may have impactful consequences. Research suggests that negative help-seeking experiences may be traumatic for victims of IPV (Douglas & Hines, 2011). Additionally, help-seeking has been shown to have a possible negative emotional impact for some men (Machado et al., 2017). For men, the process of seeking help as a victim of IPV is a vulnerable act and may be perceived as a menace to their masculine identity (Choi et al., 2015; Machado et al., 2017). Mental health professionals who have worked towards further understanding the hesitancy of men in seeking help, have listed gender role socialization as a factor that may influence help-seeking in men (APA, 2018). Gender role socialization can impact the way that men seek help as well as how they present symptoms of distress (APA, 2018). Research has suggested that in order to increase the likelihood that men will seek help for their mental and physical health, some changes may need to be made (Mansfield et al., 2003).

Gender role socialization may also play a role in making it more difficult for gay men to identify themselves as victims of violence, thus possibly resulting in a decreased likelihood of reporting the violence (Turell, 2000). Parry and O'Neal (2015) suggested that since masculinity and the concept of gender norms can stress the idea of resolving their problems independently, this can impact how gay men seek help. Findings mention that when men, regardless of their sexual orientation, have personal problems they are more likely to try to fix the issue by themselves and not seek out help from others

(Guadalupe-Diaz, 2013; Parry & O'Neal, 2015). Furthermore, findings suggest that even though gay men have similar experiences to those who are in abusive heterosexual relationships, they may find themselves with fewer viable options for seeking help (Oliffe et al., 2014).

After a review of various studies, Addis and Mahalik (2003) found that on average men are not as likely as women to search for professional help regarding their physical and mental health problems. The researchers did not clarify whether this included both heterosexual and gay men. However, most victims of IPV, both men and women, are more likely to seek support from family and friends rather than from other professional services (Coker et al., 2000). Additionally, both women and men have found family and friend support to be mostly beneficial when in situations of violence (Douglas & Hines, 2011; McLeod et al., 2010). On the other hand, heterosexual men who seek help from DV agencies are less likely to view this support as helpful (Douglas & Hines, 2011; Tsui et al., 2010), which may impact the likeliness of heterosexual men continuing to seek such help. Research suggests that gay men may also be likely to have similar experiences when seeking help from DV agencies (Merrill & Wolfe, 2000). Men may assume that services might be more targeted toward women making it less likely for men to view those services as an option (Oliffe et al., 2014; Tsui et al., 2010), and may stay in the relationship with the perpetrator due to a lack of appropriate resources (Merrill & Wolfe, 2000). Furthermore, Robinson et al. (2020) reviewed literature to identify barriers to help seeking and identified six barriers to seeking out help including consequences of disclosure, lack of material resources, personal barriers, lack of awareness, access

challenges, and system failures. Robinson et al. (2020) also highlighted the need to make services more accessible, specifically for men and individuals who identify within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA) community.

Shame and Help-Seeking

Research has shown that there can be barriers to help-seeking including self-blame and the need to protect loved ones (Beaulaurier et al., 2007). Furthermore, Chan (2011) suggested that social desirability, shame, and guilt may be possible reasons for underreporting of perpetration and victimization. What others might think of the individual can impact the way that they choose to seek help, if that is something they choose to pursue. Research suggests that shame may be experienced by both men and women who are victims of abuse and can impact their decision to not disclose the abuse or seek help (McNeely et al., 2001). Additionally, women are often hesitant to speak to someone about the abuse they experience due to shame (Thaggard & Monayre, 2019) and fear of being criticized by others (Fugate et al., 2005; McCleary-Sills et al., 2016). Shame entails experiencing negative feelings about oneself which can lead to individuals who experience shame to express themselves as being a bad person or being undeserving (Beck et al., 2011). Shame may be something difficult for individuals to live with.

Thaggard and Montayre (2019) looked into the association between shame and IPV in women who were impacted by abuse and found that shame contributes to women's hesitancy to report violence. Shame is also present for male victims of abuse and they may not seek out help to avoid being viewed as weak (McNeely et al., 2001; Tsui et al., 2010). The link between shame and help-seeking for victims of IPV is clear

(Chan, 2011; Fugate et al., 2005; McCleary-Sills et al., 2016), but more research is needed on the interactions between shame, gender, and stereotypes on help-seeking. The limitations in the current literature highlight the need to further examine these interactions that may impact help-seeking in victims of IPV. Therefore, the present study is intended to further add to research regarding the link between shame and help-seeking and how these other factors such as gender, and gender stereotypes might play a role in the hesitancy of individuals to seek help when they are victims of abuse. In addition to examining these factors, the study explored how they appear in both men and women as well as those who identify as part of the LGB community. Adding to this research may potentially provide insight into making resources more available for survivors of IPV regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.

The Impact of Gender on Perception of Perpetrators and Victims

The case has been made in previous sections that gender is a factor that may be of importance when thinking about violence and how it may be viewed. Socially constructed norms regarding masculinity may be a significant construct for understanding what may lead men to use violence against their partner (Willie et al., 2018). Masculinity is socially constructed and refers to the behaviors and qualities typically associated in the current society with being a man (APA, 2018; Willie et al., 2018). Although masculinity may look different depending on cultural factors, some of the typical aspects of masculinity ideology include not being feminine, being tough, being successful, and being a risk taker (APA, 2018; Willie et al., 2018). For many men and boys, this becomes a sort of expectation for how they may want to behave in order to be accepted in society

and impacts the choices they may make such as how they form connections and even how they seek help (APA, 2018).

When men attempt to seek help in situations of IPV, there may be difficulties in doing so due to strong psychological and emotional ties with their partners and children (Hines & Douglas, 2010). More specifically, these findings indicate that one of the primary reasons for men not leaving their abusive relationships and seeking help is the children they share with their perpetrator, since there may be a fear that they may not be able to see their children if they leave (Hines & Douglas, 2010). Furthermore, gay men have been found to face additional barriers when attempting to seek help. Oliffe et al. (2014) described the experience of a man who sought out support and was discriminated against due to his sexual orientation. These sorts of negative interactions with services intended to help victims of abuse impact gay men's willingness to speak up about the abuse they may be experiencing (Oliffe et al., 2014). Additionally, findings suggest that gay men may feel the need to conceal experiences of abuse to fit the expectation that society sets regarding masculinity.

Furthermore, Serrano (2011) suggested that it may be of importance for therapists to consider having discussions regarding masculinity constructs when working with men. This demonstrates the need to further understand how men's masculinity might influence their perceptions of violence and subsequent help-seeking. This context should be taken into consideration when working with men who are involved in IPV. Exploring how masculinity scripts play a role in the life of a man can allow them to identify how to utilize their masculinity scripts in a more effective manner (Mahalik et al., 2003).

Masculinity scripts are the expectations of men (Mahalik et al., 2003), and due to the different identities men hold, not all men hold the same masculinity script (APA, 2018; Mahalik et al., 2003).

When looking into how men and women who are considered perpetrators view violence, Scarduzio et al. (2017) found a theme of chivalry in the responses when asked about men being responsible for violence. Specifically, Scarduzio et al. (2017) brought to attention that with some men and women there is the belief that men should never hit women. However, since it is not the same as the belief that violence in general is never justifiable it leads to a gendered stereotype about violence (Scarduzio et al., 2017). This stereotype brings up the concern that gender stereotypes may significantly impact the way that individuals may identify and view abuse. When looking at gender and abuse, Wilson and Smirles (2020) found that abuse by men is often seen as more severe than abuse perpetrated by women, whether that be in person or electronic format. Furthermore, research has suggested that in situations in which men are victims of IPV, the abuse is not likely to be seen as illegal or something that should be reported to the authorities (Sorenson & Thomas, 2009). This adds to the concern of how gender may be associated with the way that abuse is perceived, both by the victim and by others around them.

After the review of previous literature, it can be determined that violence is an issue that impacts many individuals in various ways. Thus, the intent of this study was to further explore how violence between intimate partners is currently perceived by women and men. In addition, the present study intended to further examine how factors such as

shame, gender, and gender stereotypes may influence help seeking behaviors for victims of violence. The present study also aimed to explore how these factors may impact help seeking behaviors in individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual. The specific research questions addressed in this study are: (1) Do men who endorse a high degree of gender stereotypes perceive violence differently than women? (2) Do shame, gender, and gender stereotypes predict help-seeking behaviors? Additionally, the following question will be examined as an exploratory question: Do shame, gender, and gender stereotypes predict help-seeking behaviors differently for individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) from those who identify as heterosexual?

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Participants

A total of 258 participants were recruited from Mechanical Turk (Mturk) to complete an online questionnaire. Mturk is an Amazon owned website utilized to offer individuals research tasks in exchange for an incentive. Participants who completed the online survey received compensation of \$1.50. Through this method of recruitment, the intent was to recruit a diverse sample by ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. From the 258 participants, 30 were removed from the final dataset after an analysis of survey duration and item variance. A total of 228 (143 males, 95 females) participants were included in the final analysis. Of the 228 participants, the average age was $M = 38.85$ ($SD = 10.44$; age range was 22 to 69 years old). The ethnicity profile was 86% ($n = 196$) White, 8% ($n = 19$) Black/African American, 3% ($n = 6$) Hispanic, 2% ($n = 4$) Asian, and 1% ($n = 3$) preferred to self-identify. The sample also included 55 participants (24%) who identified as LGB.

Measures

The demographic questionnaire was administered along with four other measures to examine how participants perceived abusive behaviors, help-seeking behaviors, shame, gender and gender stereotypes. Participants were not asked about their own experiences with abuse so that they may feel safe to respond to the questionnaires without feeling judgement. Further, the purpose of the current study was not to gather data regarding

current or past experiences of abuse, as such, it was not necessary to gather information about how the current COVID-19 pandemic has impacted participants. However, at the conclusion of the study, participants were provided with a series of resources for any stressors they may be facing related to the pandemic once they completed the survey. The measures that were included are described below.

Demographics

Participants were asked to answer questions regarding their age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education level, and religious affiliation.

Abusive Behaviors

To measure what behaviors individuals identify as abusive, the researcher utilized the Abusive Behavior Inventory – Revised (ABI-R; Postmus et al., 2016) with a few modifications to better fit the research questions for the current study. The ABI-R consists of three subscales including psychological abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse, and is composed of 25 total items. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the ABI-R demonstrates strong internal consistency, $\alpha = .95$ (Postmus et al., 2016). The scale was slightly modified for the purpose of this study. The instructions were adjusted from “Indicate how often a partner had committed specific abusive acts over the last 12 months” to “Indicate to what degree the following behaviors would be considered abusive coming from a partner.” For each item participants were asked to “indicate to what degree the following behaviors would be considered abusive coming from a partner.” The items are measured on a scale from 1 (*typical relationship troubles between intimate partners*) to 5 (*abusive behavior between intimate partners*). Example items

include “Calls the other person a name and/or criticizes them” and threatened to hit or throw something at the other person.” Higher scores indicate a closer alignment to what previous literature and experts consider to be abusive behavior. This scale was revised from the original Abusive Behavior Inventory (ABI; Shepard & Campbell, 1992), which only had two subscales including physical and psychological abuse. Postmus et al. (2016) examined the items and re-organized some of the items to add the sexual abuse subscale and remove items that were outdated. Higher scores on this measure indicate that participants are more likely view problematic behaviors as abuse rather than typical relationship problems between partners. The internal consistency for the ABI was excellent in the current sample, $\alpha = .92$.

Help-Seeking

The researcher used the General Help Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ; Wilson et al., 2005) to measure help-seeking. The GHSQ consists of 2 questions, including (1) personal or emotional problems and (2) suicidal ideation. To better fit the purpose of the study and the research questions, the first question is the only one that was administered. The overall Cronbach’s alpha for the GHSQ is .85, and .70 for the first question (Wilson et al., 2005). The first question consists of 10 items rated on a scale from 1 (*extremely unlikely*) to 7 (*extremely likely*). For each item participants were asked “If you were having a personal or emotional problem, how likely is it that you would seek help from the following people?” Example of the items include “friend” and “parent.” Higher scores indicate that individuals are more likely to see help. The GHSQ reliability in the current sample was good, $\alpha = .84$.

Shame and Guilt

To measure shame and guilt, the researcher utilized the Test of Self-Conscious Affect – Version 3 (TOSCA-3; Tangney et al., 2000). Tangney and Dearing (2002) examined Cronbach's alpha for the TOSCA-3 and found it to be between .77 and .88, and .70 and .83 for the respective subscales of shame and guilt.

The TOSCA-3 consists of 16 different situations and participants were asked to respond to how they would engage in the certain circumstances on a scale from 1 (*not likely*) to 5 (*very likely*). An example of the scenarios presented includes “You break something at work and then hide it.” Then participants were asked to rate how likely they would be to have certain thoughts. In the case of the scenario example from above, some of the thoughts participants were asked to rate include “You would think: “This is making me anxious. I need to either fix it or get someone else to,” as well as “You would think about quitting.” The TOSCA-3 was chosen to be utilized for this study due to the broadness of the measure. With the measure not being associated with abuse, it allows participants to answer the questions in a more general sense and without asking them to identify any personal experiences in regard to abuse. For the purpose of this study, only the total score was considered for analysis. Higher scores indicate that individuals experience higher degrees of shame and guilt. In the sample used, internal consistency for the TOSCA-3 was excellent, $\alpha = .96$.

Gender Stereotypes

To measure gender and gender stereotypes, the researcher used the Gender Role Stereotypes Scale (GRSS; Mills et al., 2012). The scale can be utilized either with 8 or

14-items. The 8-item version was utilized for the current study to minimize the likelihood of participant fatigue. To examine the validation of the scale, Mills et al. (2012) asked participants to complete two online surveys about a week apart. Cronbach's alpha for the 8-item scale was equivalent to .75 the first time individuals completed the measure, while the second time it was .78. The GRSS has two subscales, including the male gender role stereotypes factor and the female gender role factor. Both women and men complete questions for both genders and the subscales demonstrate how many stereotypes the individual holds about women and men, respectively. For the male gender role stereotypes factor, Cronbach's alpha was .66 the first time the measure was completed and .64 the second time. For the female gender role stereotypes factors, Cronbach's alpha was .67 the first time the measure was completed and .72 the second time. The items are measured in a Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (*Should always be done by the man*) to 5 (*Should always be done by the woman*). Example of the items include "Mow the lawn" and "Propose marriage." For the purpose of the study, the subscales were examined in a separate analysis for each research question. This was done considering the recommendation to do so by the authors of the scale (Mills et al., 2012). Higher scores indicate greater alignment with traditional female stereotypes while lower scores indicate greater alignment with traditional male stereotypes. The GRSS demonstrated to have fair internal consistency with the sample utilized, $\alpha = .73$.

Procedure

The researcher obtained Institutional Review Board approval for the study. Participants completed the study online via PsychData. Informed consent was gathered

from participants, and they were given the option to stop the study at any time. The participants were provided with a demographic questionnaire followed by a series of measures including the ABI-R (modified; Postmus et al., 2016), the GHSQ (Wilson et al., 2005), the TOSCA-3 (Tangney et al., 2000), and the GRSS (Mills et al., 2012). The completion time for the study was approximately 20 minutes.

Statistical Analyses

To examine how violence was perceived the following question was used: Do men who endorse higher degrees of gender stereotypes perceive violence differently than women? The researcher hypothesized that there would be differences in the way that violence was perceived by women and men who endorsed a high level of gender stereotypes. More specifically, men who endorsed a high degree of gender stereotypes would be more likely to view behaviors associated with physical abuse as typical behaviors within a relationship. To analyze the first research question, the researcher used a multiple linear regression to determine whether gender and gender stereotypes have an effect on perceptions of abuse, specifically looking at physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

To explore factors that may impact help-seeking behaviors the following question was utilized: Do shame and guilt, gender, and gender stereotypes predict help-seeking behaviors? The hypothesis to this research question was that shame and guilt, gender, and gender stereotypes would have an impact on help-seeking behaviors. More specifically, the more shame and guilt individuals endorsed, the less likely they would be to seek help. Additionally, the more closely individuals align with gender stereotypes, particularly the

stereotypes reflective of their own gender, the less likely they would be to seek help. For the second research question, a multiple linear regression was utilized to examine the relationship between shame and guilt, gender, and gender stereotypes, and their impact on help-seeking.

To further examine help-seeking behaviors in individuals who identify as LGB, the following exploratory questions was used: Do shame and guilt, gender, and gender stereotypes predict help-seeking behaviors differently for individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) than for those who identify as heterosexual? The hypothesis to this research question was that the factors of shame and guilt, gender, and gender stereotypes would more negatively impact help-seeking behaviors for LGB individuals compared to heterosexual individuals. To analyze the exploratory question, a hierarchical regression was utilized to examine the relationship between shame, gender, and gender stereotypes, and their impact on help-seeking for LGB participants. A new variable was computed to differ participants who identified as heterosexual from those who identified as LGB. Participants who identify within the LGB community were included in all the analyses. Further, for all analyses examining gender stereotypes, traditional female stereotypes and traditional male stereotypes were examined separately as suggested by Mills et al. (2012). Therefore, all analyses were conducted twice, once for traditional female stereotypes and second time for traditional male stereotypes. Higher scores indicated that participants aligned more with traditional female stereotypes while lower scores indicated that participants aligned more with traditional male stereotypes. The researcher checked that the assumptions for the multiple regressions were met.

Assumptions were checked for a linear relationship, multicollinearity, normal distribution, and outliers.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Prior to conducting the proposed analyses, descriptive statistics and frequencies were calculated on all demographic variables including age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, level of education, and region participants reside in. All 228 participants indicated their gender with 143 participants identifying as male and 95 participants as female. Two participants out of the 228 did not report their age, and of the 226 remaining the ages of the participants ranged from 22 to 69 years old. When examining sexual orientation, five participants did not respond to the question asking about their sexual orientation. Of the 223 participants who reported their sexual orientation they identify with, 73.7% ($n = 168$) identified as heterosexual while the others identified as lesbian ($n = 1$ or 0.4%), bisexual ($n = 52$ or 22.8%), or gay ($n = 2$, 0.9%). Additionally, participants lived across the United States, with 35.5% ($n = 81$) indicating they lived in the southern region, 26.3% ($n = 60$) in the northeast region, 25% ($n = 57$) in the midwest region, and 13.2% ($n = 30$) in the west region. Further, 54.4% ($n = 124$) of participants completed a bachelor's degree, 39.9% ($n = 91$) completed a master's degree, 2.6% ($n = 6$) completed their associate's degree, 1.3% ($n = 3$) completed a high school diploma or less, .9% ($n = 2$) completed a professional/technical school degree, and 0.4% ($n = 1$) completed some college.

Assumptions

Structure coefficients were used to assist in interpreting the model in the face of multicollinearity. Another assumption was that the data is normally distributed, and this was checked. This was evaluated by running the normal probability plot to view the distribution of residuals. Additionally, the data was assessed to ensure that the variance of the residuals was constant. Further, data was also reviewed for significant outliers. All assumptions were met.

Summary of Major Findings

For all analyses conducted, the variable of gender stereotypes was split into traditional female stereotypes and traditional male stereotypes; therefore, analyses were conducted separately. To test the first hypothesis that there will be differences in the way that violence is perceived by men and women who endorse a high degree of gender stereotypes a multiple regression was conducted to examine the relationship between gender, gender stereotypes, and perception of abuse. When answering the demographic questionnaire, participants were asked to identify their gender and had the options of “female”, “male”, “transgender”, and “I prefer to self-identify.” Gender was dummy coded prior to running the regression analysis. The results of the analysis demonstrated that when examining both traditional male stereotypes and gender there was a significant relationship with perceptions of abuse, $F(2, 225) = 3.45, p = .034, R^2 = .03$. Results also revealed that traditional female stereotypes and gender also had a significant association with perceptions of abuse, $F(2, 225) = 12.77, p < .001, R^2 = .102$. When examining correlations of the predictors individually, gender was not found to be significantly

related to perceptions of abuse, $p = .847$. However, as can be seen in Table 1, traditional male stereotypes were found to have a significant negative correlation with perceptions of abuse, $p=.010$. Traditional female stereotypes were also found to be significantly positively correlated with perceptions of abuse, $p < .001$.

Table 1

Regression Results for ABI and GHSQ

Model – DV – R^2	Variable	r_s	B	b	p -value
1a – ABI – R – $R^2=.10$	Gender	-.02	-.03	-.04	.643
	GRSS Female	.32	.32	.35	< .001
1b – ABI – R – $R^2=.03$	Gender	-.02	-.01	-.02	.847
	GRSS Male	-.17	-.17	-.14	.010
	TOSCA3	.67	.87	.54	< .001
2a – GHSQ - $R^2=.49$	Gender	.05	.03	.01	.776
	GRSS Female	.53	.25	.38	< .001
	TOSCA3	.67	.55	.88	< .001
2b – GHSQ - $R^2=.48$	Gender	.05	.03	.06	.525
	GRSS Male	-.52	-.28	-.25	< .001
	TOSCA3	.91	.55	.89	< .001
	Gender	.07	.02	.03	.735
3 – GHSQ - $R^2=.49$	GRSS Male	-.71	-.23	-.25	< .001
	GRSS				
	Male*LGB	-.30	.21	.52	< .001
	TOSCA3 *				
	LGB	.63	.30	.97	< .001
	Gender * LGB	.04	.06	-.17	.421

Note. r_s = structure coefficient; β = standardized coefficient; b = unstandardized

coefficient; **Bold** indicates statistically significant at $\alpha = .05$.

ABI – R = Abusive Behavior Inventory – Revised; GHSQ = General Help-Seeking

Questionnaire; GRSS Female = Gender Role Stereotypes-Female Subscale; GRSS Male

= Gender Role Stereotypes-Male Subscale; TOSCA3 = The Test of Self-Conscious Affect

1a and 2a = the results for the multiple regression with the GRSS traditional female stereotypes subscale

1b and 2b = the results for the multiple regression with the traditional male stereotypes subscale

3 is the results of the hierarchical regression for traditional male stereotypes; no significant results were found when the analysis was conducted with traditional female stereotypes.

The second hypothesis that shame and guilt, gender, and gender stereotypes have a significant impact on help-seeking behaviors was tested using a multiple regression.

The results indicated that shame and guilt, gender, and traditional male stereotypes, when examined together, predicted help-seeking behaviors, $F(3, 223) = 69.62, p < .001, R^2 = .48$. Together shame and guilt, gender, and traditional female stereotypes also predicted help-seeking behaviors, $F(3, 223) = 72.12, p < .001, R^2 = .49$. When analyzing the correlations of the predictor variables separately, shame and guilt was found to be related to help-seeking behaviors ($p < .001$). Further, traditional female stereotypes were also found to be significantly correlated with help-seeking behaviors ($p < .001$), as well as traditional male stereotypes ($p < .001$). Gender was not related to help-seeking behaviors ($p = .525$).

Finally, a hierarchical regression was conducted to test the hypothesis of the exploratory question which is that the factors of shame and guilt, gender, and gender stereotypes are expected to more negatively impact help-seeking behaviors for LGB individuals compared to heterosexual individuals. Prior to the analysis, a variable was

created to identify the participants who identified as LGB. A hierarchical regression was conducted to determine if interactions between LGB and the independent variables were significant to the model. When examining the interaction effect between the variables of shame and guilt, gender, and traditional female stereotypes with LGB as a moderation variable no significant moderation effect was found, $p = .080$. However, when examining the interaction between shame and guilt, gender, and traditional male stereotypes with LGB as a moderation variable a significant moderation effect was found, $\Delta R^2 = .49$, $p < .001$. When the variables were examined individually, shame and guilt was found to be a significant predictor of help-seeking behaviors in individuals who identified as LGB, $\beta = .30$, $r_s = .63$. Traditional male stereotypes were also found to be a significant predictor of help-seeking behaviors, $\beta = .21$, $r_s = -.30$. Correlations for all the variables of interest in the present study have been included in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlations for All Variables of Interest

Variable	Gender	LGB	TOSCA3	GRSS Female	GRSS Male
Gender	1.00	-.19	.06	.03	.04
LGB	-.19	1.00	.09	-.05	-.09
TOSCA3	.06	.09	1.00	.52	-.54
GRSS Female	.03	-.05	.52	1.00	-.28
GRSS Male	.04	-.09	-.54	-.28	1.00

Note. **Bold** indicates statistically significant at $\alpha = .05$.

LGB = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, TOSCA3 = The Test of Self-Conscious Affect – 3,

GRSS Female = Gender Role Stereotype Scale – traditional female stereotypes, GRSS

Male = Gender Role Stereotype Scale – traditional male stereotypes

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Major Findings and Implications

In the present study, the researcher analyzed the impact that gender and gender stereotypes may have on perceptions of abuse. Two multiple regression analyses were run for gender stereotypes, one for traditional female stereotypes and a second for traditional male stereotypes. When reviewing the results of the analysis with gender and traditional male stereotypes, the association between the two variables looked to be significant. However, when looking closer into the correlations of the variables individually, traditional male stereotypes were found to be negatively correlated with perceptions of abuse while gender was not. Traditional female stereotypes were also found to be positively correlated with perceptions of abuse. That is, higher endorsement of traditional female stereotypes led to more accurate perceptions of abusive behaviors. The findings did not support the hypothesis that there would be a difference in how men and women perceive abuse.

Scarduzio et al. (2017) explored gender stereotypes in regard to IPV and examined how this may impact the way that abuse is perceived. The results of the present study further explored whether gender stereotypes influence the way abuse is perceived and found that traditional male stereotypes were a significant predictor that a person would not perceive abusive behaviors as abusive regardless of their gender. On the other hand, traditional female stereotypes were a significant predictor that a person would

perceive abusive behavior as abusive regardless of their gender. In addition to these findings, the current study also found gender stereotypes, both traditional male stereotypes and traditional female stereotypes, are significant of help-seeking behaviors. This means that in the current study, gender stereotypes have an impact on help-seeking behaviors. The difference between the results found with traditional female stereotypes and traditional male stereotypes may be due to the differences in beliefs that an individual holds. Further, the experiences and values an individual holds may impact the way that they align with gender stereotypes, and this may impact whether they align with higher degrees of traditional male stereotypes, traditional female stereotypes, or both.

Further, the current study also intended to examine the impact that factors such as gender, gender stereotypes, and shame and guilt have on help-seeking behaviors. Gender stereotypes, both traditional male stereotypes and traditional female, and shame and guilt were found to be positively correlated with help-seeking behaviors, meaning that these factors had a significant impact on help-seeking behaviors. The results align with previous research that mentions the influence that gender socialization may have on men (APA, 2018). The gender socialization experiences men may have influence how they view their role as men (APA, 2018). This perspective may then build on to the expectations that both men and women have about what it means to be a man as well as the gender stereotypes they align with. Their identity and experiences with gender stereotypes can potentially influence the way individuals then seek help. Expectations and beliefs of what comes with the role the individual holds may influence the way they respond to various situations. If society holds the ideal that men should be independent or

should handle issues alone, then they may be more hesitant to seek out help. Research conducted has also urged for cultural shifts aimed at reducing the stigma of asking for help, that can improve the likelihood that men will seek help (APA, 2018). Findings with the current study, may provide further evidence for this suggestion as gender stereotypes were shown to influence help-seeking behaviors for the sample used.

LGB Individuals and Help-Seeking Behaviors

In addition to observing these variables in all participants, the study also explored how these factors might impact individuals who identify as LGB. This was done by examining the interaction between LGB and the factors of gender, gender stereotypes, and shame and guilt. Findings indicated that shame and guilt was positively correlated with help-seeking behaviors when LGB was added as an interaction. The data suggests that feelings of shame and guilt may predict the likelihood that LGB individuals will seek psychological help. Additionally, traditional male stereotypes were negatively related to help-seeking behaviors for individuals who identified as LGB, meaning that a higher endorsement of traditional male stereotypes was related to decreased help-seeking behaviors for LGB individuals. That is, individuals who align with higher traditional male stereotypes are less likely to seek help. The results demonstrate that there is a difference present in LGB individuals, help seeking behaviors and potential factors that may contribute to the likelihood of seeking help from others. Shame and guilt may be associated with help-seeking behaviors in LGB individuals due to the impact that disclosing abuse may have. Such disclosure can be a vulnerable and potentially unsafe experience, and individuals who identify as LGB may experience shame and guilt

differently due to their different identity in terms of sexual orientation. The unique experiences individuals may have due to their sexual orientation may influence the way they seek help and may make it feel less safe to do so (Oliffe et al., 2014). Gender stereotypes, in this case, traditional male stereotypes may also be experienced by LGB individuals differently when it comes to help-seeking behaviors. For example, abuse may be normalized for gay men who hold traditional gender stereotypes, which along with fearing being discriminated against due to their sexual orientation, might result in hesitancy to seek help (Oliffe et al., 2014). This finding is critical in our understanding of help-seeking behaviors for LGB individuals who experience abuse by their intimate partner, especially since previous literature has suggested the need to make resources more accessible for LGB individuals (Robinson et al., 2020). Understanding the differences in the way they may experience gender stereotypes and shame and guilt may aid in improving the approach and make resources available to individuals who identify as LGB.

Limitations

When it comes to the sample utilized, one potential limitation might be that out of the 228 participants, 215 of them had completed either a bachelor's or master's degree. Thus, most of the participants came from similar educational backgrounds. Additionally, another limitation that may be considered in the present study is that only 24.1% of participants identified as LGB. With a larger sample of individuals who identified as LGB, further exploration could have been made on help-seeking behaviors and factors that may influence such behavior. Another potential limitation to the study may be that

most of the participants, 86% to be exact, identified as White questioning whether the results may have looked differently if the sample was more ethnically diverse. The way that the data was obtained may also be considered a limitation. There has been some distrust in the validity of data obtained from Mturk (Aguinis et al., 2021). Further, the internal consistency of the GRSS was acceptable for the current sample ($\alpha = .73$), but lower than would have been ideal.

Strengths

The diversity of the participants by age, gender, and region was a strength in this study. The youngest participant identified to be 22 years old while the oldest identified to be 69 years old. Further, participants were diverse in gender with about equal numbers of men and women. Another strength of the study is that participants from the sample identified to reside from places all over the United States. Given these strengths, the results of this study can be generalized to a wide range of individuals.

Clinical Implications

As previous research has already highlighted it may be of importance to consider making changes in the way that individuals are helped, specifically when it comes to men. Further, it may be of significance for mental health professionals to consider what changes might be beneficial, specifically with keeping gender stereotypes and the influence they have in mind. Additionally, exploring how these factors have specifically impacted the client being worked with may be helpful in identifying how the client perceives abuse and seeks help. Another potential way to approach making changes or making help more easily available is taking into account the messages that society sends

individuals in regard to gender. This approach may be helpful in understanding more of the reasoning behind why individuals may be hesitant to seek out help and in working with clients to be more willing to seek out resources that may be available to them.

Trainings on the impact of gender stereotypes on help-seeking behaviors may help professionals be better equipped when working with this population. It may be suggested that clinicians familiarize themselves with common stereotypes and the impact they may have on the beliefs of individuals. For example, individuals may hold the belief that men are not able to control their emotions or that they lack self-control (Scarduzio et al., 2017). If a clinician is aware of these common stereotypes that an individual holds, they may be able to more clearly identify an effective approach for the specific client. Additionally, they may need to prioritize building rapport with the client as well as establishing safety prior to challenging the stereotypes they may hold or how they may impact their decisions. This may also support the need to check any biases the clinicians themselves may hold surrounding gender stereotypes to be able to provide a service free of judgement.

Further, there may also be a need to pay more attention to the way that services are advertised to individuals and attempting to make them more accessible for all individuals who have experienced abuse. One way that this may be approached is by having discussions about how abuse occurs to any individual regardless of gender or sexual orientation, and having agencies include this in whichever method they utilize when advertising their services. Most services are advertised towards heterosexual women, however, this may lead individuals who identify as men or as part of the LGB community

to feel that the services will not be useful for them. Considering that LGB individuals may face different barriers when seeking help, it may be of importance to pay attention to factors such as language inclusivity to assure that LGB individuals feel safe when seeking out help and that shame and guilt are minimized in their help seeking experience. Positive help-seeking experiences can impact the likelihood of individuals seeking help when needed, however, for a positive experience to occur it is of significance that a sense of safety is established. Further, research has found how impactful engaging in art therapy can be in addressing shame and silencing for children who witness DV (Mills & Kellington, 2012). This suggests the potential usefulness of alternative therapeutic options and addressing themes such as shame in this way can be beneficial in their healing process. Additionally, it addresses these underlying themes that may be present for the individual but may be difficult to identify. Further, when it comes to the impact that gender stereotypes may have on help-seeking, it may be of significance for mental health practitioners to explore what gender stereotypes the individual may align with to help in understanding the impact that it may have on them and their help seeking behaviors. Working with individuals in becoming more aware of this may also assist in establishing methods in which they might feel comfortable seeking help.

Findings about the significant association between shame and guilt and help-seeking behaviors are consistent with previous research (Chan, 2011; Hathaway et al., 2002). Through a series of interviews with individuals who experienced DV, Hathaway et al. (2002) found shame to be a factor that influenced the decision to disclose the abuse that was occurring. This suggests the importance of considering how this factor may

impact individuals who are experiencing abuse as evidence has demonstrated through both the current study and previous literature that shame is a factor that influences how individuals seek help. It can be a difficult decision for individuals to disclose any form of abuse that they may be experiencing which can bring on shame. A potential approach to applying these findings may include opening up discussion about resources available. For mental health practitioners it may also be of importance to prioritize non-judgement and building safety with the individual seeking help so that they are more likely to return should they ever need help again.

Training focusing on working with clients who experience shame or even techniques to utilize when working with clients who are experiencing shame may be another to help prepare professionals to provide the best care possible. More specifically, it may be useful to consider the different identities and values individuals hold. Their sexual orientation and the gender stereotypes they may align with have been demonstrated to impact the help seeking behaviors of individuals, therefore, gaining insight on these topics and how to work with individuals from various backgrounds can be beneficial in providing a safe resource for all individuals. By attempting to further understand what these individuals experience when experiencing abuse or seeking help, they are setting the stage to be better prepared when working with these individuals. Additionally, gaining this insight may help lessen the stigma of seeking help in such situations and making help seeking a more positive experience for anyone experiencing abuse. There may also be importance in exploring various alternative therapeutic

interventions that are helpful in exploring shame and guilt, and genderstereotypes specifically.

Research Implications

Further, results also may bring future directions for researchers. One potential direction would be to further explore gender stereotypes and how they impact perceptions of abuse. The results of the present study demonstrated that both traditional female stereotypes and traditional male stereotypes were significant predictors of perceptions of abuse but in differing ways. That is, individuals with traditional male stereotypes were less likely to perceive abusive behaviors as abusive while individuals holding traditional female stereotypes were more likely to perceive abusive behaviors as abusive. The latter finding is not supported by the research (Scarduzio et al., 2017). In fact, research would suggest the opposite (Scarduzio et al., 2017). It is unclear if this finding is a result of actual differences or the sampling method utilized for the current study. Taking this into account, the current study should be reproduced utilizing a non-Mturk sample.

When considering limitations of the present study, future research may be expanded by continuing to explore how individuals who identify as LGB seek help, specifically considering the factors of gender stereotypes and shame and guilt. Gaining a larger sample of individuals who identify as LGB may be helpful in further examining how individuals may be impacted in such situations and in identifying how to adjust resources to be more easily accessible for individuals. Specifically, future research may focus on more participants who identify as lesbian and gay since most of the participants for the present study who identified as LGB, identified as bisexual. Future research may

also focus only specifically on the factors of shame and guilt and gender stereotypes. A different approach to examining these factors may be conducting a qualitative study to gain more insight on how shame and guilt and gender stereotypes play a role in the decision to seek help. Exploring the stories of individuals who have faced such situations may be helpful knowledge to gain, specifically when it comes to thinking about what changes need to be made and what might be helpful for individuals going through these difficult experiences. Examining the variables from this study may be a good start for where to go next, considering the impact that gender stereotypes and shame and guilt may have on perceptions of abuse and help-seeking behaviors. Additionally, the results from the current study also bring significance to need to explore such factors and their impact on the LGB community. Gathering this information may provide a sense of direction for next steps for clinicians and other professionals as they provide services for individuals who are victims of abuse.

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APPENDIX A
Informed Consent

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: Exploring Perceptions of Violence and Factors that Impact Help-seeking

Investigator: Rosario Olguin-Aguirre
rolguinaguirre@twu.edu

Faculty Advisor: Claudia Pyland, PhD.....cporras@twu.edu

Summary and Key Information about the Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Rosario Olguin-Aguirre, a student at Texas Woman's University, as a part of her thesis. This study consists of an online questionnaire and is intended to examine how abuse is perceived by women and men, in addition to analyzing various factors that may influence help-seeking behaviors for victims of abuse.

Description of Procedures

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to spend approximately 20 minutes of your time responding to a series of questions. You will first be indicated to complete a short demographic questionnaire. Then you will be directed to complete a series of questions in regard to abusive behavior, shame and guilt, and gender stereotypes. In order to be a participant in this study, you must be at least 18 years of age or older.

Potential Risks

The researcher will ask you questions about abusive behaviors. A few possible risks in this study

are discomfort with the questions you are asked, distress if questions are relevant to personal experience and fatigue. If you become tired or upset you may take breaks as needed. You may also stop answering questions at any time. Resources for participants will also be provided at the end of the survey. Another risk in this study is loss of confidentiality. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law. All identifying information of the individuals participating in the study will be deleted at the completion of the study. Any results of the study which are presented will be done without any identifying information. There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, electronic meetings and internet transactions. The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researchers know at once if there is a problem and they will try to help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

Participation and Benefits

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

Questions Regarding the Study

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the TWU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu.

I agree to participate

I do not agree to participate

APPENDIX B

Demographic Questionnaire

Please respond the following questions as they best apply to you.

1. Age: _____

2. Gender

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- I prefer to self-identify, please specify: _____

3. Please indicate your ethnicity:

- Asian/Asian American
- Black/African/African American
- Hispanic/Latin American
- White/Caucasian/European American
- Pacific Islander
- I prefer to self-identify, please specify: _____

4. Please indicate your sexual orientation:

- Heterosexual
- Lesbian
- Bisexual

- Gay
- I prefer to self-identify, please specify: _____

5. What is your highest level of education?

- High school diploma or less
- Some college
- Associates degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Professional/Technical school degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree or equivalent (Ph.D., M.D., J.D.)
- Other: _____

6. What region in the U.S. do you currently live in?

- Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania)
- Midwest (Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota)
- South (Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas)

- West (Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Montana, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington)

APPENDIX C

Abusive Behavior Inventory-R (ABI-R)

Instructions: On a scale from 1 (typical relationship troubles between intimate partners) to 5 (abusive behavior between intimate partners), indicate to what degree the following behaviors would be considered abusive coming from a partner.

Calls the other person a name and/or criticizes them Gives the other person angry stares or looks

Puts down the family or friends of the other person

Tries to keep the other person from doing something they want to do Ends a discussion with the other person and made the decision themselves Accused the other person of paying too much attention

Checked up on the other person

Told the other person that they were a bad person Said thing that scare the other person

Prevent the other person from having money for their own use Refused to do housework or child care

Became very upset with the other person because dinner . . . Made the other person do something humiliating or degrading Threatened to hit or throw something at the other person Threw, hit, kicked, or smashed something

Threatened the other person with a knife, gun, or other weapon Pushed, grabbed, or shoved the other person

Slapped, hit, or punched the other person Threw the other person around

Choked or strangled the other person Kicked the other person

Used a knife, gun, or other weapon against the other person Pressed the other person to have sex

Physically forced the other person to have sex

Physically attacked the sexual parts of the other person's body

APPENDIX D

General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ)

If you were having a personal or emotional problem, how likely is it that you would seek help from the following people?

Please indicate your response by selecting the number that best describes your intention to seek help from each help source that is listed on a scale from 1-7.

1 = Extremely 3 = Unlikely 5 = Likely 7 = Extremely Likely

- a. Intimate partner (e.g., girlfriend, boyfriend, husband, wife, de'facto)
- b. Friend (not related to you)
- c. Parent
- d. Other relative/family member
- e. Mental health professional (e.g., psychologist, social worker, counsellor)
- f. Phone helpline (e.g., Lifeline)
- g. Doctor/General Practitioner
- h. Minister or religious leader (e.g., Priest, Rabbi, Chaplain)
- i. I would not seek help from anyone
- j. I would seek help from another not listed above (please list in the space provided, (e.g., work colleague. If no, leave blank) _____

APPENDIX E

Test of Self-Conscious Affect – Version 3 (TOSCA-3)

Below are situations that people are likely to encounter in day-to-day life, followed by several common reactions to those situations.

As you read each scenario, try to imagine yourself in that situation. Then indicate how likely you would be to react in each of the ways described. There are multiple items for the different scenarios, because people may feel or react more than one way to the same situation, or they may react different ways at different times. Please rate your responses to the different items of the scenario. You are not required to answer all of the questions.

For example:

A. You wake up early one Saturday morning. It is cold and rainy outside.

a) You would telephone a friend to catch up on news.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would take the extra time to read the paper.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would feel disappointed that it's raining.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would wonder why you woke up so early.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

In the above example, I've rated ALL of the answers by marking a number. I marked a "1" for answer (a) because I wouldn't want to wake up a friend very early on a Saturday morning -- so it's not at all likely that I would do that. I marked a "5" for answer (b) because I almost always read the paper if I have time in the morning (very likely). I circled a "3" for answer (c) because for me it's about half and half. Sometimes I would be disappointed about the rain and sometimes I wouldn't -- it would depend on what I had planned. And I marked a "4" for answer (d) because I would probably wonder why I had awakened so early.

a) You make plans to meet a friend for lunch. At 5 o'clock, you realize you stood him/her up.

a) You would think: "I'm inconsiderate."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would think: "Well, they'll understand."

c) You'd think you should make it up to him/her as soon as possible.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would think: "My boss distracted me just before lunch."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

2. You break something at work and then hide it.

a) You would think: "This is making me anxious. I need to either fix it or get someone else to."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would think about quitting.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would think: "A lot of things aren't made very well these days."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would think: "It was only an accident."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

3. You are out with friends one evening, and you're feeling especially witty and attractive. Your best friend's spouse seems to particularly enjoy your company.

a) You would think: "I should have been aware of what my best friend is feeling."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would feel happy with your appearance and personality.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would feel pleased to have made such a good impression.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would think your best friend should pay attention to his/her spouse.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

e) You would probably avoid eye-contact for a long time.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

4. At work, you wait until the last minute to plan a project, and it turns out badly.

a) You would feel incompetent.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would think: "There are never enough hours in the day."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would feel: "I deserve to be reprimanded for mismanaging the project."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would think: "What's done is done."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

5. You make a mistake at work and find out a co-worker is blamed for the error.

a) You would think the company did not like the co-worker.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would think: "Life is not fair."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would keep quiet and avoid the co-worker.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would feel unhappy and eager to correct the situation.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

6. For several days you put off making a difficult phone call. At the last minute you make the call and are able to manipulate the conversation so that all goes well.

a) You would think: "I guess I'm more persuasive than I thought."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would regret that you put it off.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would feel like a coward.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would think: "I did a good job."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

e) You would think you shouldn't have to make calls you feel pressured into.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

7. While playing around, you throw a ball and it hits your friend in the face.

a) You would feel inadequate that you can't even throw a ball.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would think maybe your friend needs more practice at catching.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would think: "It was just an accident."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would apologize and make sure your friend feels better.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

8. You have recently moved away from your family, and everyone has been very helpful. A few times you needed to borrow money, but you paid it back as soon as you could.

a) You would feel immature.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would think: "I sure ran into some bad luck."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would return the favor as quickly as you could.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would think: "I am a trustworthy person."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

e) You would be proud that you repaid your debts.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

9. You are driving down the road, and you hit a small animal.

a) You would think the animal shouldn't have been on the road.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would think: "I'm terrible."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would feel: "Well, it was an accident."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You'd feel bad you hadn't been more alert driving down the road.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

10. You walk out of an exam thinking you did extremely well. Then you find out you did poorly.

a) You would think: "Well, it's just a test."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would think: "The instructor doesn't like me."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would think: "I should have studied harder."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would feel stupid.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

11. You and a group of co-workers worked very hard on a project. Your boss singles you out for a bonus because the project was such a success.

a) You would feel the boss is rather short-sighted.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would feel alone and apart from your colleagues.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would feel your hard work had paid off.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would feel competent and proud of yourself.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

e) You would feel you should not accept it.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

12. While out with a group of friends, you make fun of a friend who's not there.

a) You would think: "It was all in fun; it's harmless."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would feel small...like a rat.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would think that perhaps that friend should have been there to defend himself/herself.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would apologize and talk about that person's good points.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

13. You make a big mistake on an important project at work. People were depending on you, and your boss criticizes you.

a) You would think your boss should have been more clear about what was expected of you.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would feel like you wanted to hide.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would think: "I should have recognized the problem and done a better job."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would think: "Well, nobody's perfect."

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

14. You volunteer to help with the local Special Olympics for handicapped children. It turns out to be frustrating and time-consuming work. You think seriously about quitting, but then you see how happy the kids are.

- a) You would feel selfish and you'd think you are basically lazy.
not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely
- b) You would feel you were forced into doing something you did not want to do.
not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely
- c) You would think: "I should be more concerned about people who are less fortunate."
not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely
- d) You would feel great that you had helped others.
not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely
- e) You would feel very satisfied with yourself.
not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely
15. You are taking care of your friend's dog while they are on vacation and the dog runs away.
- a) You would think, "I am irresponsible and incompetent."
not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely
- b) You would think your friend must not take very good care of their dog or it wouldn't have run away.
not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would vow to be more careful next time.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would think your friend could just get a new dog.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

16. You attend your co-worker's housewarming party and you spill red wine on their new cream-colored carpet, but you think no one notices.

a) You think your co-worker should have expected some accidents at such a big party.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

b) You would stay late to help clean up the stain after the party.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

c) You would wish you were anywhere but at the party.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

d) You would wonder why your co-worker chose to serve red wine with the new light carpet.

not likely 1---2---3---4---5 very likely

APPENDIX F

Gender Role Stereotypes Scale (GRSS)

Respond to each of the following statements indicating to what degree the activities listed should be done by a man or a woman on a scale from 1-5, whereby: 1 (Should always be done by the man), 2 (Should usually be done by the man), 3 (Equal responsibility), 4 (Should usually be done by the woman), and 5 (Should always be done by the woman).

1. Mow the lawn
2. Prepare meals
3. Propose marriage
4. Perform basic maintenance of vehicles, such as changing the oil
5. Perform household cleaning
6. Wash, fold, and put away laundry
7. Decorate the house
8. Shovel snow to clear driveway and sidewalks