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**Domestic Violence and the State: Abused Women's Perspectives on  
the "New" Integrated Services Approach**

by

**Sharron Lynne Jarvis**

**A Thesis**

**Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
through the Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Masters of Sociology at the  
University of Windsor**

**Windsor, Ontario, Canada**

**2000**



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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this thesis is to hear abused women's perspectives on the new integrated approach to domestic violence and to analyze how the state addresses feminist demands on domestic violence. Three patterns emerged from a literature review on how the state has dealt with feminist demands in the past. Boyd's and Snider's concepts about social change were utilized to examine these three patterns. The three patterns were then compared to the way the state has dealt with feminist demands within the criminal justice system. Using an active interview approach ten abused women were asked if they felt empowered or victimized by the new integrated approach to domestic violence. The women were also asked their thoughts and feelings about having their injuries photographed and about making a video taped statement for the police. Overall, the women felt empowered by the Sexual Assault Treatment Center. They felt both empowered and victimized by the police and felt completely victimized by the court system. It is concluded that until the social and ideological inequalities in our society are changed social policies such as the new integrated approach might be beneficial to women on some level but that simply changing policies to include women will not necessarily benefit women in the long run.

## **DEDICATION**

**This thesis is dedicated to the ten courageous women who took part in this study and spoke out about the domestic violence they endured. Their strength and resilience will always be remembered.**



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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION: A “New” Approach to Domestic Violence**

This study examines the “new” integrated approach to domestic violence<sup>1</sup> in a mid-sized city in Ontario. The aim of this project is both to hear women’s views on the new integrated system and, more generally, to analyze how the state addresses feminist demands related to domestic violence. In May of 1997 the Ontario Government announced an additional allocation of \$27 million over a four year period to help eradicate violence against women. At that time, Dianne Cunningham (Minister Responsible for Women’s Issues) stated that she looked forward to the day when violence against women is unacceptable to each and everyone of us (Government of Ontario, 1997). An Agenda for Action<sup>2</sup> was established with the aim of safety, prevention, and justice for victims of domestic violence. These aims were to be accomplished by streamlining and coordinating services related to domestic violence. An enhancement

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<sup>1</sup> The term domestic violence can have many meanings and in some studies may be gender neutral, however for the purpose of this study, the term domestic violence refers to any physical incident inflicted on a woman by an intimate male partner with whom she is or has cohabited in the past three years.

<sup>2</sup> The Agenda for Action was established to deal with issues related to domestic violence by developing strategies in three main areas: safety, justice, and prevention. Safety-- improving crisis intervention and support such as: funding to Sexual Assault Centers and shelters, enhance Sexual Assault Treatment Center Services, promote flexible service models and address service gaps, provide support to children who have witnessed violence, promote the development and use of protocols by health care professionals, identify and promote effective service coordination models. Justice--hold perpetrators accountable and support victims by improving the justice system response by expanding domestic violence courts, additional support for programs for abusive men, emergency legal assistance for women, services for victims of crime. Prevention—by preventing violence by enhancing education and awareness: expand school-based programs on issues of violence, develop innovative educational resources and approaches, professional training, focus community-based education and awareness activities, develop public education and media campaigns.

and streamlining of services would mean that services which did not work together in the past would start to do so (Government of Ontario, 1997). Under the new integrated approach to domestic violence, shelters, hospital services, police services and the court system would work together for the betterment of victims of domestic violence.

The streamlining and coordination of services related to domestic violence and the beginning of the Enhanced Sexual Assault Treatment Center (SATC) was fueled by the public outcry surrounding the death of Arlene May on March 8, 1996. Ms. May was murdered by her ex-partner Randy Iles who was out of jail on a \$200 bail bond awaiting a court appearance for uttering death threats to Ms. May (Globe & Mail, July 3, 1998: A1). Mr. Iles had a long history of violence towards Ms. May. A police officer reported that Mr. Iles had been in court 14 times between November 1995 and March 8, 1996, and all of these court appearances involved violence against Ms. May (Globe & Mail, July 3, 1998: A1). Due to Ms. May's murder and the inconsistency that it pointed to within the criminal justice system in regards to domestic violence, a public outcry began that called for changes in the system. A coroner's jury inquest into the death of Ms. May made 209 recommendations to assist in the prevention, safety and justice for victims of domestic violence (Globe & Mail, July 3, 1998: A1). A Joint Commission on Domestic Violence was established to look into these recommendations and suggest changes where necessary.

Recently in Ontario the government has implemented two new procedures within the criminal justice system to improve the conviction rate of men who abuse their partners. Part of the new integrated approach to domestic violence includes the Enhanced Sexual Assault Treatment Center (SATC) documenting and taking photographs of an abused woman's injuries, while she is in the emergency room. Just before the new integrated approach to domestic violence was announced the police started video taping abused women's statements against their abusive partners. Before these two procedures were in place the police would, at times, photograph injuries of victims of domestic violence. Also, in court abusive men often did not get convicted for the abuse they inflicted on their intimate partner or did not receive a severe sentence when they were found guilty. It was thought that this new way of documenting physical injuries of the abused woman would strengthen the conviction rate of abusive men. As of January 9, 1999 the Enhanced Sexual Assault Treatment Center reported 100% success rate in convictions of men who assaulted their intimate partners when women went through this program. (Mandal, 1999: A1). However, the question needs to be asked: how successful are these programs from the women's perception and experience?

The Enhanced Sexual Assault Treatment Center has been set up to assist women who are injured due to a domestic violent dispute. If a woman is assaulted and goes to the hospital a nurse trained in the



gathering of forensic evidence documents the injuries in writing and photographs. The woman signs releases of information and the information is passed on to the police and Crown Attorney's office if she so desires. Also, the police now video tape a woman's statement about the abusive incident in which she has been involved so that the physical injuries, as well as the emotional injuries are documented. Gathering evidence in this way is thought to strengthen the woman's case in court. The judge will believe the woman, and the abusive man will be given the maximum sentence.

This new system has been deemed successful in terms of the conviction rate but there is little research on how women think and feel about this new integrated way of gathering and documenting evidence for court. It was hoped by feminists, the government, and advocates working in the field of domestic violence, that this new way of documenting injuries would hold abusive men more accountable for their behavior and empower judges to convict and sentence abusive men. As part of a system to integrate services related to domestic violence, this new integrated system is seen by the government as not only an assistance to women in domestic violent situations but also a more efficient way of managing domestic violent cases (Government of Ontario, 1997).

The enhancement of the Sexual Assault Treatment Center to a mandate that includes wife assault is a new service set up by the Ontario Ministry of Health. It is important to examine this service from a feminist

perspective because, in the past, the services that have been set up to assist abused women have not always met their needs. Since this is a new service for victims of domestic violence, it is important to hear what women who use this service think and feel about it so that, if this service is not meeting the needs of abused women, changes can be implemented.

The two programs that this project will examine are the Enhanced Sexual Assault Treatment Center and the Police Services to see what women who use these services think and feel about these two new procedures in relationship to the outcome their abusive partner receives in court. For this thesis, it is important to determine how women who use this new integrated approach to domestic violence feel about this new system. A feminist analysis is conducted here, focusing on women's thoughts and feelings as they went through the process at the SATC, with the police, while testifying in court, and finally, about the court outcome. Were women empowered or victimized by these processes? An active interview approach (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) is utilized to get at the heart of the woman's experience.

This new way of approaching domestic violence within the criminal justice system raises many questions. In the past the police, the court, and the hospital system has not always listened to or believed an abused woman when she has tried to seek help. Fischer and Rose (1995: 416-417) found that an abused woman felt empowered when someone believed her and tried to help her. Will this new approach to domestic

violence be an ally to women or just be another way the state has to control and monitor women's behavior? Is the state finally meeting feminist demands to listen to abused women's voices after years of silencing the voices of abused women? Does this new way of approaching domestic violence signal that domestic violence will be dealt with differently than in the past? Do these two new programs make a difference to the way women are treated and dealt with in the criminal justice system? Are women empowered by this process or do they feel victimized by it? What do women think and feel about the Enhanced Sexual Assault Treatment Center? By asking women what they think and feel about this new system it will help us to understand the state's new role in resolving or managing domestic violence.

Since the beginning of the second wave of feminism in the late 1960s feminists have demanded and won changes within the criminal justice system for victims of domestic violence. These changes appear to give women more options than ever before. In this thesis, I examine the extent to which the policies and procedures that have been put in place help or hinder women in their quest for social justice. In this sense, this study will also address the broader question of the relationship between feminist demands and the state.

The remainder of this thesis is divided into seven chapters. The following chapter explains two theoretical views on women and social change and examines how the state has dealt with feminist demands in

the past. In this chapter, three themes emerge from the general literature on state policies and procedures. These three themes are then compared to policies and procedures that the state has implemented within the criminal justice system. Chapter three is the methodology chapter which explains the concept of active interviewing, why a feminist approach was chosen, and the details of how this research project was accomplished. In chapter four I present the women who participated in this project and their thoughts and feelings while going through the new integrated approach to domestic violence. Due to the fact that chapter four is organized around the women's comments, in chapter five three narrative accounts are presented to provide specific insight into the experience of the system as a whole which cannot be grasped through the examination of specific themes. Chapter six is an analysis of the women's comments on the new integrated approach to domestic violence. Chapter seven goes beyond the new integrated approach and examines five themes that were found in the women's comments on the new integrated system and analyzes these comments to determine if the new integrated approach meets women's own identified needs. Finally chapter eight discusses policy recommendations and social changes that need to occur for women to be safe in our society.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: Understanding the System from a Feminist Perspective**

The questions posed in chapter one indicate a need to understand how the state has previously dealt with feminist demands in general.

Several feminist theorists discuss the inherent contradictions that can be found in government institutions and how these contradictions can be utilized to create changes that could benefit women (Brophy & Smart, 1985; Snider, 1997; Boyd, 1997; Chunn, 1997). Two theories on the concept of social change that are beneficial to this project are those of Snider (1997) and Boyd (1997). Although there are similarities in these theories there are also differences in how they believe feminists should work towards social change.

Snider (1997: 239) states we must not give more power to the criminal justice system because investing in it means increasing control in women's lives. Snider (1997: 239) believes that this power should be kept in feminist hands because the state has its own agenda which is not consistent with feminist demands and goals. The state's agenda is to increase social control over certain segments of the population that are seen as problematic (i.e. women, children, poor, ethnic or other radical groups). From Snider's perspective, when feminists use the criminal justice system to meet the needs of women they play into the state's hands and allow the state more invisible and unmonitored control over women's

lives. Therefore the state is not a reliable ally to women and it is theoretically, practicably, and morally wrong for feminists to rely on state power to meet their needs (Snider, 1997: 239).

Nevertheless, Snider (1997: 255-57) does state that when feminists place demands on the criminal justice system it will respond to change. However, once the pressure for change is lessened, deflected, or removed to other issues, the criminal justice system will reaffirm itself and go back to the normal pattern of maintaining and servicing its own interests. Snider (1997: 267) concludes that in order to meet feminist demands for equality the present social and economic patterns in society would have to change. She believes that the goal of feminism should be to fight for structural and ideological changes of our society and this goal can only be accomplished through feminists exerting external pressure on the state for change.

Boyd (1997: 20) agrees with Snider that we must be cautious of state action that, often, does little to improve the circumstances of women's lives. However, Boyd believes that the contradictions within the state contains spaces for resistance by social movements. She also states that since hegemony is not static it must be continually renewed and reenacted (Boyd, 1997: 21-22). Consequently, the use of law by progressive social movements represents an important form of resistance to oppression, even if these movements are participating in a process that often reinforces these or other hegemonic forces, (Boyd, 1997: 22) such

as patriarchy and capitalism. We must analyze social policies and laws in combination with other struggles to determine the weak and usable points of these social policies and laws because the exact outcome of a particular struggle is not predictable (Boyd, 1997: 22). Chunn (1997: 79-80) has a similar viewpoint, in that feminists must analyze and exploit the contradictions, within and outside state institutions, which create space for struggle and change.

In summary, on the one hand, Snider thinks that although the state can assist feminists when they demand social change she sees the need for feminists to continually exert external pressure so that changes are enforced. Snider believes that the main goal for feminists should be to change the structure and ideology of society so that equality can be obtained. On the other hand, Boyd believes that feminists should work within the state to create change because the contradictions within the state enable feminists to act upon these contradictions so that change can occur. These ideas will be utilized in this thesis to detect similar patterns in how the state has dealt with past feminist demands and also how the state has dealt with feminist demands within the criminal justice system.

In this chapter how feminist demands for equality have been dealt with by the state in the past will be examined to determine if patterns emerge that could benefit this study. Chunn (1997: 77) states that by looking at past struggles feminists can learn and build upon these struggles. What follows is an examination of the state's responses to

women's past demands in the area of the family and work; women's reproductive capacities, and the court system. This overview is undertaken to seek patterns and themes that could be useful when compared to how women's demands within the criminal justice system, with regards to domestic violence, have been managed. This investigation into feminist past demands and how the state has dealt with them raises the question: will this new approach to domestic violence follow the same pattern as past demands that feminists have made for equality?

The common thread throughout this research is that women's ideas, rights and voices are most often silenced or distorted in our society. This silencing and distortion support structural inequalities through which women are oppressed and exploited. The key issue in the review of past policies is: how does the silencing or distortion of feminist demands occur and what role does the state play in silencing feminist demands for equality?

#### **A. How has the state dealt with feminist demands in the past?**

Since the second wave of the feminist movement in the late 1960s and the early 1970s feminists have challenged the Canadian state to change existing laws and policies that have discriminated against or made certain assumptions about women. Consequently, many new laws and policies have been developed and implemented due to feminist demands for equality. Feminists sought intervention from the state due to the inequalities that existed in the family and the workplace, inequalities that



heightened the distinctions between the public and private domains of society. Feminists demanded changes in all areas of women's lives--work, family and health.

In response to feminist demands for equality, the state has implemented nation-wide policies. However, in practice universal policies get translated differently for different groups of individuals, thereby marginalizing and disadvantaging individuals due to gender, class, race and ethnicity. Thus the impact of universal policies, laws and regulations affects everyone differently. Moreover, as Smart and Brophy (1985) point out, laws may appear to be gender neutral but the effects of the law are not. This is because legal statutes are not simply "read" but are enforced by (historically) patriarchal agents of the law, such as the police, lawyers and judges.

A review of the literature reveals three major patterns of how feminist demands have been dealt with by the state. The first pattern is that, while on the surface many policies appear to be meeting the needs of women, in actuality they often mask stark gender and class inequalities. The second pattern is that policies and laws that the state enacts in the name of helping women at times render women powerless and under state control. The final pattern that is found in the literature on state regulation is that state policies often reinforce the ideology of motherhood and traditional gender values, thereby emphasizing traditional inequalities between the private and public domains. How state regulation has

affected women's lives becomes clear in research and case studies on the following areas of feminist concerns: maternity/paternity benefits, day care benefits, pay equity, reproductive rights, and child custody issues.

## **1. Women's work and family responsibilities**

### **i. Maternity/Paternity benefits**

An examination of how the state has regulated women's work and family responsibilities illustrates how on the surface many policies appear to be universal and gender neutral but in actuality often mask gender and class inequalities. This is the case for maternity benefits, day care policies, and pay equity legislation. As women entered the labor force in greater numbers they demanded to be paid when they were off work due to childbirth, and to have job security when they returned to the labor force. They also demanded the same compensation for the father of the child. An example of this can be found in Iyer's (1997) study of maternity/paternity benefits.

On the surface, maternity benefits appear to be universally applicable to all women. However upon closer examination this is not the case. In the maternity plan, women who work at least 700 hours within a specific 52 week period can collect 55% of their wages (Iyer, 1997: 172). Thus earnings are directly tied to a woman's wages, and women with higher earnings get a larger percentage of benefits. If a woman does not meet these requirements, she will not receive any benefits even though she has been employed and has paid into them (Iyer, 1997: 176).

Women who receive maternity benefits tend to be in heterosexual relationships, in the middle or upper class, have a high school or post secondary education, and to be over the age of 25 (Iyer, 1997: 177). Since women must work a required number of hours to qualify for benefits this plan disadvantages and marginalizes those women who have paid into it but are ineligible to collect because of insufficient hours worked.

Paternity benefits were established to give women the opportunity to return to the work force, and to increase the father's bonding experience with the child (Iyer, 1997: 180-82). However, if a father decides to take paternity leave there is a two week waiting period , whereas if the mother decides to take an extended maternity leave there is no waiting period (Iyer, 1997: 180-2). This policy is neither gender nor class neutral considering both the fact that women earn less than men and the differential ramifications for low income families if they were to lose two weeks' wages.

Another problem with paternity benefits is that it reinforces heterosexual relationships and does not support individuals in alternative relationships. Maternity benefits can be collected by any birth mother regardless of sexual orientation (Iyer, 1997: 171). However, paternity benefits can only be collected by parents. Since lesbians and gay men are still not able to adopt their partner's children they can never qualify for this program (Iyer, 1997: 171). This means that couples in homosexual

relationships are disadvantaged because they do not have the same options for paternity leave as individuals in heterosexual relationships.

**ii. Daycare benefits**

Upon returning to work after maternity leave, one of the issues that women face is that of adequate daycare for their children. Therefore, feminists have been demanding both from the Ontario government and the federal government a universal daycare plan for all women who worked outside the home. By 1993 two thirds of mothers with children under the age of sixteen were in the labor force (Armstrong, 1997: 41). In spite of the fact that both the federal and provincial governments of the last 15 years have promised to establish a fully funded child care plan, they have not followed through, citing economic conditions as the reason. (Teghtsoonian, 1997: 114). At the taxpayers' expense, committees were formed, policy and legislation has been written, but to date no universal day care system is in place.

Since most women are in the work force day care is a societal problem but, by not establishing a universal day care system, the government makes a societal problem an individual responsibility for families who need this service. Also by not establishing a day care program it becomes more difficult for women who are in the work force to take full time jobs or establish a career. Women today often end up in part time, seasonal, temporary or casual employment because of the high cost and difficulty in finding good quality day care. In 1990 women working full

time were paid only 72% of the wages of men (Armstrong, 1997: 47).

Since women earn less than men, if the family is to lose a wage earner it is usually the woman who stays home with the children. This pattern reinforces the ideology of the nuclear family with traditional morals and values.

Although the state does not provide a universal daycare it does provide subsidized daycare for families with low income, single mothers, or women on social assistance. This is because low income families, single mothers and women on social assistance are encouraged to be in paid employment rather than caring for their children at home full time and being a financial burden to the state (Teghtsoonian, 1997: 118). By making day care available for some people and not others, and by paying women less than men this reinforces the class and gender inequality in our society which disenfranchises some individuals.

### iii. Pay Equity

Upon entering the labor force many women soon realized that they were paid considerably less than men for doing the same or similar work. Feminists started to demand that pay equity policies be established and enforced. Since 1951 the Ontario government has had legislation in place mandating equal pay for equal work (Burt, 1993: 220-223). For the past four decades women have battled with the state to have pay equity policies enforced. Although some strides have been gained by women in the public sector and policies such as affirmative action legislation have

been accomplished, many women today still are not paid the same wages as men for the same work. The programs to change the imbalance in the labor force have not been effective because the legislation was weak or the policies were poorly written (Burt, 1993: 220-223).

Today women are demanding that the government be accountable for the pay equity legislation that it has drawn up on behalf of women. When one considers the time, effort, and money that has been spent on pay equity legislation, the question becomes: why has it been so poorly written and not enforced? By not enforcing pay equity legislation the state is keeping women in low paying jobs or in the home and out of the public sphere. Although the state has made some progress in helping women attain pay equity, it does not assist all working women to receive the same wages as men. On the surface it appears that the state has addressed the issue of pay equity, however in actuality many women are still not paid the same wage as men for work of equal value. This disadvantages women in the work force causing gender inequalities in our society.

There is no doubt that maternity/paternity benefits, daycare programs and pay equity legislation have improved women's working conditions both inside and outside the home. Some women enjoy the freedom to work outside the home, have their children cared for adequately while they work, and are paid the same as a man for doing the same or similar work. However, these programs were set up to assist all working women and that is not the case. Some women do not qualify for

maternity benefits; some families cannot afford to take paternity leave; and adequate daycare is not always available or affordable. Therefore a certain segment of the population cannot take advantage of these benefits. The programs that are thought to be universal end up disadvantaging and marginalizing certain groups of women. It is important to consider the possibility of this pattern in the present study to determine if the new integrated approach to domestic violence will assist all women in abusive relationships, or will it also disenfranchise certain groups of women.

The examination of maternity benefits, daycare benefits and pay equity legislation stresses the gender and class inequalities that occur within universal policies. Snider's idea is beneficial here because feminists outside of the institutions are able to see and point out the inequalities in universal policies. Universal policies try to fit everyone into the policies but society is not homogenous and not everyone fits neatly into the categories established by universal policies. Moreover, these policies often mask stark gender and class inequalities. In order to ensure that universal policies do not marginalize some groups of individuals feminists must continue to challenge the state about these issues. As Snider points out once feminists lessen the pressure for changes to occur the state goes back to reaffirming its own agenda of reinforcing the status quo. Therefore, although at times the state meets the demands and goals of feminists external pressure needs to be constantly applied for changes to be maintained and continue to occur.

## **2. Reproductive Rights**

An examination of the literature on women and reproductive rights shows policies and laws that the state enacts in the name of helping women in this respect often render women powerless and under state control. A second pattern emerges when I examined at state responses to feminist demands for control over women's bodies. Birth control was illegal in the 1960s, though most women had access to some form of it. By purchasing birth control methods women sent a clear message to the government that they wanted control over their bodies. Finally in 1969 birth control and abortion were taken out of the Canadian Criminal Code making contraceptive devices and abortion permissible under specific conditions (McLaren and McLaren, 1986: 139). Although women won the right to control their own contraceptive usage, research, development, and technology surrounding women's reproduction abilities are managed and controlled by the government, the scientific community, the medical profession, and the pharmaceutical industry (McLaren and McLaren, 1986: 142). In this sense, women still do not have total control over their own fertility.

Another area where women still do not have control over their bodies is that of childbirth. Women now have children in hospitals, whereas in the first half of the twentieth century it was the norm to give birth at home with other females and a midwife in attendance (Andersen, 1988: 207-217). However with the rise of industrialization, medicine



progressed into a profession with specialties and new scientific techniques that took the pain out of child labor. With the development of obstetrics women started to rely more on doctors than on midwives. Hospital births took childbirth out of the home and the hands of women, putting it in the control of men and medical science (Andersen, 1988: 211). Rather than being viewed as part of a normal process, pregnancy and childbirth became defined as a medical event that took place in hospitals, with the use of drugs, instruments, and cesarean sections.

During the second wave of feminism the women's health movement took root. Women started to object to the medical model of health and started to take back control of their bodies. Women started opting for natural childbirth and recently midwives have been licensed in Ontario (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1996: 43-44). Although the midwives' knowledge comes from a scientific base it is women centered and family oriented with a team approach that stresses a community of care focusing on normal childbirth and health promotion (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1996: 44). However, since the medical profession is dominated by men and the medical model of medicine is still being practiced, the midwife orientation is marginalized and women still do not have complete control over childbirth.

What these examples demonstrate is how feminists have been challenging the state for the right to control their own bodies. The women's health movement developed and highlighted areas of concern within the medical community that were sexist and biased towards women,

not only in areas of reproduction, but also in other areas (McBride, 1993: 315). It was also recognized that women's health is greatly affected by the role they play in society. Since our society is male dominated, women's health has been constrained in a number of ways: females have frequently not been included as subjects in health care research; sociocultural/environmental factors have been ignored; women have experienced sex bias in treatment choices; health has been construed so that male behavior is regarded as normative; and a number of women's health concerns have not been taken seriously (McBride, 1993). Although strides have been made in these areas and some of these concerns have been addressed, women are still not in positions of authority within the medical profession. Since men are in the leadership and decision making roles women's health concerns are still in men's hands.

Even though the state has control over medical science, women today have more options available for when and where to have children due to demands made by feminism. By limiting and spacing their children women can now plan for careers. Also, the women's health movement has done much to heighten the visibility of women's lives and their health concerns. The women's health movement clearly illustrates Boyd's idea of how a progressive social movement can successfully challenge the state, even if this movement participates within hegemonic forces.

Throughout the discussion on reproductive rights and the women's health movement I have showed that women today still do not have total

control over their bodies, often at times this renders women powerless. However, as previously mentioned, women have made great gains in both areas. In these examples, I see both Snider's and Boyd's theories working together to complement each other. During the second wave of feminism much pressure was placed on the external state to meet the needs of women, and feminists working within the health movement pointed out contradictions within the system that created a space for change to occur.

### **3. Ideology of Motherhood and Traditional Values**

A third pattern that emerges after an examination of the literature is that state policies reinforce the ideology of motherhood and traditional values. The ideology of motherhood is based on the idea that women who work outside the home (especially if they have young children) are not good mothers (Iyer, 1997: 177). Traditional values refer to women doing women's work in the home, taking care of the household and child care responsibilities while men are considered the heads of the household, the major breadwinners and are privileged in the public sector. The obstacles of returning to work such as low wages, the high cost of child care and working a double day intensify the possibility that some women may not return full time to the work force.

Pay equity, maternity benefits and daycare policies are insidious because on the surface it appears that they are trying to assist women to remain in the work force when in reality they are reinforcing a gendered

labor force, class inequalities, and the ideology of motherhood and the nuclear family.

A good case of how the family and work for women get interwoven to reinforce the ideology of motherhood and traditional values is that of child custody laws. Just as pay equity policies, maternity/paternity benefits, and day care policies appear to be gender neutral so do child custody laws. During the second wave of feminism women's roles were changing both inside and outside the home. The liberalization of the divorce act in 1968 afforded many women the opportunity to leave unhappy marriages (Morton, 1990: 212). When parents separate or divorce child custody becomes an issue. The courts look at the best interests of the child to decide which parent will receive custody. Consequently, the gender of the parents should not be an issue. However, the ideology of motherhood seems to be subtly reinforced in child custody access and decisions (Boyd, 1997: 254).

Today, most women work outside the home, but in child custody cases women who are employed are constructed as selfish and putting their own interests first. For example, Judy Tyabji a woman in the British Columbia legislature lost custody of her three children in 1994 (Boyd, 1997: 253). Despite the fact that two court appointed experts recommended that she retain custody of her children and the trial judge stated that he was satisfied that both parents offered a more than satisfactory level of love, guidance, and security to the children, the mother

lost custody to the father (Boyd, 1997: 258-59). When the judge rationalized his decision to grant custody to the father Ms. Tyabji's career and ambitions were brought to bear on the case (Boyd, 1997: 259). Ms. Tyabji was seen as having a more aggressive career-oriented lifestyle than her ex-husband who lived in a rural area and worked in a grocery store. Ms. Tyabji's public life was seen as hindering her private life of being a mother to her children (Boyd, 1997: 253). This example clearly illustrates that when women fall outside the stereotype of what a mother should be they are handicapped by society's view of them.

Not only are heterosexual working mothers being discriminated against in child custody cases, but so are lesbian women when they try to gain custody of their children. The court room is a very public place and a lesbian's lifestyle is often portrayed as dangerous, criminal and pathological (Millbank, 1997: 282-286). In most custody cases the courts will believe the mother is unfit if she is a lesbian (Pollack, 1993: 265). Custody outcomes depend more on the attitudes of judges about homosexuality than on the facts of the case (Pollack, 1993: 265). Therefore, within the court system if women do not exemplify stereotypically feminine qualities or lead traditional lifestyles they are stigmatized by a judge's attitude of what a good mother should encompass.

The issue of child custody is important in this study because many women in domestic violent relationships have children. There are

numerous reasons for an abused woman who is leaving a domestic violent home to seek custody of her children. First, there is the threat of physical harm to the child. At times the abusive partner may also have abused the children, or through the struggles of a domestic violent dispute the child may have been put in harm's way. Second is the concern that the father may "snatch" the children from the mother or if the woman allows the abusive man visitation when no custody is established he may not return the children. Third, abusive men may use the children as a pawn to try to win back the woman's love and affection. Finally, if for some reason the father gains custody rights before the mother then the woman must fight in court to win back her children from the abusive man. For these reasons it is important for women who flee an abusive relationship to try and establish custody as soon after leaving the home as possible.

As I have shown from the literature review the court system is not always advantageous to women who seek custody of their children. However, when abused women leave the abusive home they need protection to keep their children with them and safe. At present the only way to accomplish this is to work through the court system to obtain legal custody of their children. However, as I have demonstrated when women fall outside of what may be considered the stereotypical pattern of motherhood and traditional values they can be impeded by the court system.

The ideology of motherhood and traditional values is subtly reinforced and permeates every aspect of our society. One of the difficulties when feminists work within areas that reinforce the ideology of motherhood and traditional values is that at times they may not be able to see the mechanisms that subtly work to reinforce these ideologies. Therefore, it is advantageous to have a strong feminist movement working outside these areas to change the social and economic conditions that underlie these mechanisms of reinforcement. As Snider points out it is not until the social and economic fiber of our society changes that feminist demands for equality will be met.

Overall, the case studies that have been presented here illustrate, first, how the state regulation of women's work and family responsibilities show a pattern of universal gender neutral policies and laws that masks gender and class inequalities. Second, that the state's regulation of women's reproductive rights and health issues often leaves women powerless to control their own bodies and reproductive capacities; and finally, that the ideology of motherhood and traditional values is reinforced in society not only by the court system but also by obstacles that are entrenched in our society to keep women in the home such as low wages and lack of affordable daycare. When I looked at the criminal justice system in regards to domestic violence it became important to consider whether or not the same patterns appeared.

Throughout this section I saw many contradictions within state policies that created space for struggle and the potential for change. Will these contradictions and the pockets of resistance for change continue to appear when I examine the criminal justice system? Snider believes that feminists should not rely on the criminal justice system to meet their goals and demands because the criminal justice system has its own agenda of maintaining and servicing the status quo. By utilizing the criminal justice system for change Snider thinks that feminists are playing into the state's hands and this will allow the state more invisible and unmonitored control over women's lives. Does the criminal justice system that deals with domestic abuse create spaces that feminists can use to agitate for change or does the criminal justice system try to monitor and control women's lives?

## **B. Feminist demands of the Criminal Justice System on Domestic Violence**

Just as feminists have been striving towards equality in other areas of their lives they have also been challenging the criminal justice system in regards to violence against women. The anti-violence against women movement brought forth many new laws and policies for abused women, such as mandatory arrest policies, no drop policies, the battered woman's syndrome and the monitoring of battered women's shelters. After a careful examination of these laws and policies I saw the same three patterns



emerging for women in the criminal justice system as those identified in how the state has dealt with feminist demands in the past.

### **1. Mandatory Arrest Policy**

The first encounter that a woman in a domestic violent situation has with the criminal justice system is with the police. Before the late 1970s wife assault was considered a private matter and only in extreme circumstances was a man arrested or charged with an offense. However, the anti-rape movement in the late 1970s heightened the awareness that violence against women was a crime (Faubert and Hinch, 1996: 231). Due to pressure from feminist groups to have wife assault viewed as a crime, on July 15, 1982, the federal Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada sent a directive to the Canadian Association of the Chiefs of Police encouraging its cooperation in ensuring that police officers lay charges in all cases in which there were reasonable and probable grounds to believe that an assault had taken place (Jaffe, Hastings, Reitzel, & Austin, 1993: 71). Also in the early 1980s Tracey Thurman sued the Torrington Police Department for failure to protect her from an abusive partner and was awarded 2.3 million dollars by a federal jury (Sparks, 1997: 42). Since violence against women was now being taken more seriously by the criminal justice system, and due to police fears of being sued for failure to arrest an abusive man, mandatory arrest policies were established.

The criminal justice system is one that is supposed to give fair and equal treatment to everyone regardless of gender and class. However in the case of the mandatory arrest policy this is not always true. Mandatory arrest policies state that an officer will arrest anyone in a domestic assault incident where there is reasonable and probable grounds that an assault has occurred (Sparks, 1997: 42). Although this policy appears to be helpful to abused women, it has many flaws: it can be used against the abused woman if she is trying to defend herself because she can be arrested (Sparks, 1997: 44); it can put a woman's life in danger because, although the police arrest and charge the man, the woman must testify in court against a man who has threatened to kill her if she does testify; it also disempowers a woman because although the mandatory arrest policy states the police are to arrest an abusive man this does not always happen and if the abused woman requests to have her partner arrested it is often not taken seriously by the police (Buzawa, Austin & Buzawa, 1995: 460). For these reasons mandatory arrest policies set up to demonstrate a gender bias against women. What is needed is better protection for women and children when abusive men are arrested.

The police as law enforcement agents have a certain amount of liberty in how they use their power. Police departments are steeped in patriarchy; they are made up mostly of men who have a legitimate authority to use power and control over people (Sparks, 1997: 37). Within many police departments there is a social class stereotyping

(Faubert & Hinch, 1996: 42) so regardless of what the mandatory arrest policy states some officers may use discretionary power to determine whom to arrest and whom not to arrest. For example, in "deviant" groups where violence is part of the lifestyle, the police are hesitant to intervene because violence is considered a normal part of the group's composition and intervention in these cases is viewed as futile (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996: 160). As well, battering in gay and lesbian couples may continue to be ignored due to homophobic police reactions (Ferraro, 1993: 168). With the police not intervening individuals in these groups continue to be abused and not to receive the same protection as other groups in society. However, in the case of lower income and racial and ethnic minority groups rates of arrest are much higher (Ferraro, 1993: 168). Mandatory arrest policies are not gender and class neutral because when police officers attend a domestic dispute they have a certain amount of leniency in how to interpret the policy and bring with them a set of ideas and beliefs about the individuals involved (Ferraro, 1993: 168-70). So, although policies that the state implements appear on the surface to be neutral, these policies mask not only gender inequalities but class inequalities as well.

A lack of consistency in who gets arrested and who does not get arrested can also lead to victim blaming (Roberts, 1985: 100). The mandatory arrest policy states everyone who has assaulted another individual should be arrested; however, the police are authority figures in

our society and if they do not make an arrest the problem is seen as being with the victim, not the police. For women in abusive situations who call the police for assistance during a domestic violent dispute, this raises the question of whether their abusive partners will be arrested. When women have a knowledge about the mandatory arrest policy and if the man is not arrested, the woman may internalize this to mean that she is either not being believed, or is somehow to blame for the violence. Also, the general population may believe that the woman is at fault since the abusive man was not arrested by the police.

Although mandatory arrest policies have enhanced the criminalization of domestic violence, better protection is needed for women and children when abusive men are charged and arrested. In a Canadian study Rigakos (1997: 210) found that breaches of restraining orders rarely resulted in an arrest. Stronger court sentences when a man is found guilty of these charges send an effective message, not only to the individual man, but also to society in general, that this kind of behavior will not be tolerated in our society.

As Snider (1997) has indicated the criminal justice system is not a reliable ally to feminists. She points out that the state's agenda is to increase social control over certain segments of the population that are seen as problematic. Since there is a certain amount of leniency in the mandatory arrest policy on who gets arrested and who does not get arrested, this policy may at times be used as a form of social control that

victimizes certain individuals or groups. The mandatory arrest policy has the potential to get translated differently for different individuals in our society. Domestic violence is a complex issue and due to the inequalities within the structure of our society the mandatory arrest policy does not benefit everyone equally. This means that some individuals are marginalized and disadvantaged by this policy.

## **2. Battered Women's Shelter Movement**

During the second wave of feminism and the heightened awareness of violence against women, the battered women's movement began. This movement provided badly needed services to victims of domestic violence, such as crisis lines, counseling, and shelters for women who wanted to escape from their abusive partners (Schetcher, 1982: 81). Initially, the battered women's movement was organized at the grassroots level and shelters were often in older homes, funded by private donations and run by volunteers; many of these volunteers were battered women themselves. However, as more women sought safety, larger facilities, more staff and improved programs made it necessary to seek financial assistance from various state programs (Schetcher, 1982: 93).

Today, most shelters rely on state money to keep the shelter running. While accepting state money allows the shelter to run continuously, train staff, provide salaries and pay expenses, it also means that the shelter loses some autonomy because the state has a say in the running of the shelter. Many shelters are now organized and run like a

social service agency with professional staff, board members, and a bureaucratic hierarchy (Felter, 1997: 17). For the clients who use these shelters it means that they have little or no say in how the shelter is operated. The Battered Women's shelter movement reflects the second pattern that was identified in state policies and laws: while they claim to help women, they often render women more powerless and place them under state control.

However, shelters do provide a valuable service to women who need to escape an abusive relationship. Shelters have saved many women from severe beatings and even death. Committed front line crisis workers offer knowledge on domestic violence that allows an abused woman to make an informed choice about whether to leave or remain in an abusive relationship. Research indicates that just one day in a shelter, where victims encounter support, encouragement, and counseling, is beneficial in aiding the victim in her decision to leave an abusive relationship (Faubert & Hinch, 1996: 238).

The history of the battered women's shelter movement illustrates Boyd's (1997: 22) idea that progressive social movements can successfully challenge the hegemonic forces within which they often participate. Battered women's shelters have lost some autonomy due to the fact that funding now comes from the state. For example, at times this may mean that shelter workers cannot advocate to other services within the state for resources for abused women because to do so may put the

shelter funding in jeopardy. Funding by the state allows the state to control and monitor a shelter's activities. However shelters still provide an important service to women who need to flee from abusive men.

### **3. "No Drop" Policies**

A policy that was developed that illustrates Boyd's point about progressive social movements is that of the "no drop" policy where an abused woman is compelled to testify against her husband. Legislation regarding wife assault rose out of feminist actions during the 1980s that heightened the awareness of violence against women as a crime. Before 1983 a woman in Canada could not be made to testify in court against her husband. However, in 1983 the Canada Evidence Act was revised to allow battered women to be compelled to testify against their abusive husbands (Jaffe, Hastings, Reitzel, & Austin, 1993: 71). This policy also focuses on crown attorneys and prosecutors and directs them to proceed with a case in court regardless of whether the victim wants to proceed or whether the victim wants the charges dropped (Ursel & Brickey, 1996: 66). This policy was drawn up to enforce rigorous prosecution and to limit the discretionary power of Crown Attorneys (Ursel & Brickey, 1996: 66). What this means for an abused woman is that she will be compelled to testify in court; if she refuses to testify then she can be prosecuted (Cretney & Davis, 1997: 75).

Initially the "no drop" policy was thought to empower women. Since the woman had no choice but to testify her partner could not harass her

into trying to get the charges dropped. However, since this policy has been implemented many other concerns have surfaced. Ford (1991) notes four important ways the law works against women. First, the law may exacerbate a woman's relationship and result in further violence, especially retaliatory violence against her (or her children) for having sought legal help in the first place. Second, prosecution can be costly for the victim because she stands to lose what her partner provides in the way of economic security, child care or even emotional support if he is sent to jail. Third, women have no control over the process; their personal interests have been displaced by legal interests. Finally, the court system may not be able to protect her after court, especially if the man is given a light sentence or no jail time. Juridogenesis refers to the potential of law reforms to produce effects that make the conditions worse for those the reform was intended to assist (Ursel & Brickey, 1996: 58). When the legal system puts a woman's life in danger by making her testify this is juridogenesis.

However, the problem is not with this policy per se but with the position in which it places abused women. Assault of any kind is against the law and any man who assaults his partner should be arrested and charged. When a man is arrested women and children need protection in case of retaliation and they also need economic security and a support system to help them through this difficult time. Therefore, what is needed for abused women is better police protection, immediate economic



assistance from social service agencies and a support system to aid abused women before, during, and after the court case. Does the Enhanced Sexual Assault Treatment Center provide the emotional support that a woman needs so desperately after an abusive incident and while she is going through the court process?

It is significant that the Ontario government has set up a new integrated approach to domestic violence at a time when payments for welfare have been significantly cut and the rules for eligibility altered to make it more difficult for anyone to claim benefits (Armstrong, 1997: 55). From women's perspective, this appears to be a contradiction, because on the one hand, this new way of looking at domestic violence is set up to ensure an abusive man gets a tougher court sentence; yet on the other hand, if he is sentenced to jail time and his partner needs social assistance she is penalized because of cutbacks and harsh eligibility rules. This situation illustrates and raises the issue of how the economic and political contexts in which services for victims of domestic violence operate can limit their effectiveness.

The battered women's shelter movement and the no drop policy demonstrate how programs and policies that are governed by the state at times render women powerless and under state control. Battered women's shelter services are set up to assist victims of domestic violence and yet the women who use this service have little say in how the shelter is run. With the no drop policies women are compelled to testify against

their abusive partner even if this places them in danger from their abusive partner. Due to state involvement women have lost some autonomy over the decision making process when it comes to the running of shelters and whether they want to testify in court against their abusive partner. In the previous literature review I saw that women were also under the influence of state control with regards to whether they had control over their reproductive rights and their bodies. The contradictions that happen when women want more control over situations in their lives and when the state tries to enforce policies, as Boyd has indicated, can allow for potential pockets of resistance that can create a means to enact change. These pockets of resistance are created when shelter policies which work on behalf of the client clash with state policies that reduce funding to shelters and other services that victims of domestic violence need to reestablish safely.

#### **4. The Battered Woman's Syndrome**

A third pattern that was recognized in the previous review of the literature was that state policies often reinforce the ideology of motherhood and traditional gender values. The second wave of feminism brought into focus the problems that battered women who kill their abusive partners face in court. At that time women who killed their abusive partners started to challenge the courts on the traditional assumptions and precedents that had been established regarding homicide and self-defense (Edwards, 1989: 189). The Battered Woman's Syndrome challenged the legal

construction regarding what is reasonable, what constitutes provocation, the psychological effects of battering on a woman over time, a battered woman's perception of imminent danger, how long is "imminent", and under what circumstances is deadly force appropriate (Edwards, 1989: 189).

The Battered Woman's Syndrome was first theorized and developed by a feminist psychologist (Walker, 1984) and was introduced in the courts as a psychological defense for women who kill their abusive partners. Although the battered woman's syndrome demonstrates the horrendous psychological effects that battering has on abused women, it has become distorted and used against women. It has been recognized since 1980 as a subtype of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (De Soto, 1997: 54). Consequently, if this defense is used in court it indicates that the woman has a mental disorder and can be excused from criminal responsibility because she is insane.

De Soto (1997) notes three reasons why many feminists reject this defense. First, it reinforces the negative myths about the sickness or frailty of women. Second, the term syndrome or disorder implies a pathology or diminished capacity and this is not always the case. Third, feminists believe the battered woman's syndrome should be used as a justification for homicide not an excuse, because justified behavior is correct and appropriate, whereas an excusable act is one that is wrong.

It is ironic that the criminal justice system which could not protect the abused woman from her abusive husband now vigorously prosecutes her for his death (De Soto, 1997: 57). On the one hand, if a woman uses the battered women's syndrome as a defense and she is convicted or accepts a plea (this occurs 72-80% of the time) she can receive a long harsh sentence. On the other hand, if she is found not guilty by reason of insanity or if she is found to have a diminished capacity she may end up being committed to a mental institution (Walker, 1989). The message to women is clear: in our society women are not supposed to use violence as a way to protect themselves from abusive men (De Soto, 1997: 60). This is because women in our society are seen as wives and mothers who protect and serve the family. Women who do not follow traditional values and ideology of motherhood and wifehood are punished severely (De Soto, 1997: 54).

The use of battered woman's syndrome in the court system illustrates one way that the criminal justice system reinforces the ideology of motherhood and traditional values. As was shown in the early section with maternity benefits, daycare benefits, pay equity and child custody laws the ideology of motherhood and traditional values are woven into every aspect of our society. As Snider has indicated, inequalities in the criminal justice system mirror inequalities in society so it is important for feminists to work towards changing ideologies such as motherhood and

the structure of society if these systems are going to work for the benefit of women.

### **C. Conclusion**

Representatives of the criminal justice system (police, lawyers, judges, etc.) are gatekeepers to how the laws are enforced (Sparks, 1997: 37). These are the individuals in our society who have power and authority in the legal system. They decide who gets arrested, who gets prosecuted, who goes to jail (Sparks, 1997: 37). We live in a society where the balance of power is in the hands of white, middle and upper class, heterosexual males; anyone falling outside of this group is in a subordinate position and is marginalized and disadvantaged.

During the second wave of feminism women started to challenge the state on many fronts. Before the late 1960s women were defined by their relationship to the family as wives and mothers; however after the 1960s women entered the labor force and educational institutes in greater numbers. They demanded changes in how the state dealt with issues of health, work, and family. From reviewing various literatures on how the state has dealt with these demands it has been found here that policies and laws that appear to be neutral often mask gender and class inequalities, marginalizing certain groups of women. Also many issues that women have fought to change are still under the control of the state. Finally the changes the state has made in the name of women often reinforce the ideology of motherhood, and traditional values. When the

**demands that women have placed on the criminal justice system regarding domestic violence were examined these same three themes became apparent.**

**These three themes became apparent in the criminal justice system when I examined mandatory arrest policies and found that this universal policy to arrest individuals was often ignored causing class and gender inequalities, whereby some individuals were arrested and others were not. With the battered women's shelter movement and the no drop policy I saw the possibility that women could lose autonomy when programs and policies fall under the influence of the state. Finally, the use of the battered woman's syndrome demonstrates that the criminal justice system has the possibility of reinforcing the ideology of motherhood and traditional values.**

**In this chapter I saw the applicability of Snider's and Boyd's concepts about how social change happens. Snider believes that at times the state can meet feminist demands, however feminists need to continually apply external pressure in order for these changes to be maintained. She believes that the structural and ideological nature of society needs to change for equality to occur and that this should be the goal of feminists. Snider's concept is particularly helpful when explaining why mandatory policies do not work for women in abusive situations and how motherhood and traditional values are reinforced in our society. On the other hand Boyd's concept about contradictions within state policies**

creating potential pockets of resistance for change to occur can be seen in the no drop policy and the battered women's shelter movement. Both of these theories are useful for explaining why social change has occurred or has not occurred in our society.

It is important to note that feminists have made significant gains in the area of domestic violence. Abused women now have a place to go when fleeing a domestic violent dispute, charges are laid against an abusive man for assaulting his partner, the onus has been taken off the abused woman to have the charges dropped, and the battered women's syndrome has heightened the awareness of the day to day abuse that many women endure. However, although there are flaws in the system part of the problem with the policies and laws that are now in place is that they do not address the systemic cause of domestic violence; that is they do not directly deal with the power and control that men in our society have over women. The issue of men having power and control over women in our society raises the question of whether the new integrated approach to domestic violence addresses the issue of systemic violence against women in our society or is it simply set up to "manage" domestic violence? Also, will the new integrated approach to domestic violence be an ally to women or will it be a way for the state to control and monitor women's lives?

After an examination of various state policies and procedures other questions also emerge from the literature review. Does the new integrated

approach to domestic violence reinforce the ideology of motherhood and gender traditional values? Are certain groups of women marginalized because of this approach? Are gender and class inequalities masked by these two new procedures? Through the women's comments during the process of an active interview the answers to these questions became apparent.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The technique of active interviewing draws out the women's thoughts and feelings so their voices about their experiences can be heard. Ten women were interviewed who had been involved in a relationship in which their male partner had physically assaulted them and who had contact with either the Enhanced Sexual Treatment Center (SATC), or the police, or the court system. The interview schedule<sup>3</sup> consisted of demographic questions and open ended questions relating to the woman's experience with these services. The open ended questions were varied and modified depending on the woman's experiences and circumstances during her encounter with the SATC, the police or the court system.

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions and experiences of women who have gone through the Sexual Assault Treatment Center and who have made video taped statements for the Police Service after being assaulted by their intimate partner. The program at the Sexual Assault Treatment Center is one of seven pilot programs set up by the Province of Ontario to include domestic violence in its service. The goal of this hospital program and that of the video taped statements of women who have been abused is to provide forensic evidence for their court cases. It is important to ask women who have

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix one

had their physical injuries documented by photographs and who have made a video taped statement how they feel and what they think about this process of gathering evidence for court.

In this study, the technique of active interviewing (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) is being employed as a way of drawing out the sensitive, complex nature of the experience of women who have gone through the new integrated approach to domestic violence. Active interviewing is a technique in which both the interviewer and the subject participate in order to give meaning to the experience that the subject has encountered (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). A feminist perspective and active interviewing have four key components in common. First, they both embody the lived experience of the subject to get to the emotions and feelings of what is being examined. Cole (1995: 25-26) states that women have been robbed of their histories and their names; that ordinary women's voices often are not heard and if they have been heard they are either not taken seriously or discredited. Feminist inquiry has a commitment to taking women's experiences very seriously and to attempting to discern what those experiences mean (Cole, 1995: 26).

An active interview approach allows women's voices to be heard in their own words. The interviewer asks broad questions and the woman narrates her lived experience through a story-telling process. The interviewing process is an interactive, interpretational give and take procedure, whereby, the respondent can ask questions and make

additional clarifications and comments when necessary. However, the interview is not a free-for-all where “anything goes”. Both the interviewer and the respondent are aware of the overall structures of the interview and the subject matter under investigation (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). The approach taken in this study is to listen to the voices of women going through the program at the Sexual Assault Treatment Center and who have been video taped by the police because these are the individuals who the programs were initially set up to help. Through the active interview, women will be invited to give meaning to the treatment they have encountered. The research process is a vehicle to ensure that women’s voices and experiences can be heard.

The active interview gets at the “hows” and “whats” of a particular experience. The “hows” refer to the interactional narrative procedures of knowledge production, not merely to interview techniques. The “whats” refer to the issue guiding the interview, the content of questions and the substantive information communicated by the respondent (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 4). The active interview study has two aims: first, to gather information about what the research project is about and, second to illustrate how knowledge concerning this topic is narratively constructed. Findings then also have two intertwined forms: first, the data of the subject matter under research and, second, how the subject matter is organized in the respondents’ narrative experiences (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 56). Therefore, active interviewing of victims of domestic violence

is a complex interrelated process of the women's experience about domestic violence and also their meaningful construction of experiences and feelings about the programs they have been through that are there to assist in the court process.

A second key common component to both a feminist perspective of research and active interviewing is that they use a more subjective value laden approach to research. Cole (1995: 17) states that to be a feminist is to conduct value laden research and hence not to be properly objective. Although feminist researchers use many different techniques to do research a feminist qualitative approach is being utilized here because as Cole (1995: 17) states objective ideologies sustains the "myth of the neutral man" who is presumed to be able to represent everyone's interests with detached objectivity. She claims that the scientific method not only makes women invisible by lumping them together so that no one individual has a voice, but also, that objectivity and value neutrality are scientific methods that silence women's voices because in the scientific method everyone is only a statistic (Cole, 1995: 20). Holstein and Gubrium (1995: 26) agree that with a quantitative method members of a population are, in a manner of speaking, "just there", without an individual voice.

Each woman who has endured domestic violence has a story to tell about her individual experiences. By allowing her the freedom to discuss it in her own words the interviewer will be given a glimpse into her world. An abused woman often comes from a world where an abusive man

continually tells her what to do, how to do it, what to think and how to feel (Fischer & Rose, 1995: 422). Abusive relationships are about a man trying to gain power and control over a woman. Therefore, in an abusive relationship the woman is not given permission to think, feel, or act on her own. However, in a safe environment of the interview process she can, sometimes for the first time, be able to make sense and give meaning to what has happened to her. Cole (1995: 17-18) believes that feminist research endeavors to understand the everyday manifestations of the gender-inflected power and privilege that permeates every society and social group.

A third common component of both a feminist perspective and active interviewing is that they go beyond the surface meaning of an experience. They delve into the deeper manifestation of the subject matter to get to a diverse, more complete analysis of the subject under investigation. Cole (1995: 20) sees feminism as committed to fostering women's emancipation. This makes it imperative to know women's experiences not just in their surface manifestations but in their deeper implications and effects. In the active interview, Holstein & Gubrium (1995: 30) view the respondent as possessing a fund or stock of knowledge that is simultaneously substantive, reflective, and emergent. One way to get at a respondent's stock of knowledge is to have them shift positions and roles in the interview. This enables the interviewer to extract deeper meanings from the responses the respondents give.

Consequently, active interviewing is seen as a developing process in which links can be made from various roles to the past, present and future experiences the respondent encounters (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 30).

Domestic violence is a complex matter and one way to understand and give meaning to the woman's experience is by investigating the various roles that significant others play in her life. Therefore, during the interview process a woman might speak from not only her various roles as a mother, wife, sister, daughter, employer, friend, but also might take on the perspective of others in her life such as her children, partner, mother, employee, friends, and so on. In the case of this study, by doing this an abused woman may investigate her situation in relation to how and what others were also thinking and feeling about the process she encountered while at the treatment center. Therefore, a woman might discuss her children and how they felt about her experience at the center. Since a woman has accessed various community resources she might also take these into consideration when responding to the interview questions. For example, through the process of the active interview she might discuss links between the home with the hospital, police and court system. Therefore, the interview process provides the opportunity to see how a woman links the experience from the private setting of the home to the public sphere of the hospital, police and court system. By examining the process of going through the center the woman might look back at past

abusive experiences to frame the present situation and link these to future situations.

Holstein & Gubrium (1995: 31-32) state that the knowledge a respondent calls on is always knowledge in the making; it does not purely reflect the respondent's past. The past is linked with what is being made of the present. In the active approach, the respondent is viewed as offering complex descriptions of experience and as having varied funds of information to draw from her situation (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 31-32). Consequently, the complexity of the experience and the varied funds of information may offer a diverse and complex wealth of information in the area of domestic violence.

The fourth key component that a feminist perspective and active interviewing have in common is that they both illustrate the complexity of the subject matter. Domestic violence is a complex issue and the way in which society views it has been convoluted. Holstein & Gubrium (1995: 45) believe that by drawing on background knowledge, active interviewers can make their research more productive, incorporating indigenous interpretive resources, perspectives, and landmarks into their inquiries. The interviewer's background knowledge can be an invariable resource of assisting respondents to explore and describe their circumstances, actions and feelings (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 45). Active interviewing takes advantage of the stockpile or background knowledge that the interviewer collects in prior interviews to pose concrete questions and explore facets

of respondents' circumstances that would otherwise go unnoticed (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 46). A sensitive feminist interviewing style requires competent asking and listening grounded in the background knowledge of women's experiences. (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 46).

In this study both the interviewer and the respondent have accumulated a wealth of background knowledge about domestic violence. In my case, knowledge comes from the academic world and through the experience of counseling women who have been abused. The respondent's knowledge comes from the experience of living the abuse and having to deal with services that are there to help abused women. At times when abused women seek assistance from services set up to help them they find that these services do not meet their needs. Smith (1987: 50) sees a "line of fault" between the world as it is directly experienced and how it is organized, how it is determined and what the social relations are that generate it. In Smith's view, women's experiences are appropriated more or less silently to the descriptive categories and the related practical demands of a world organized in terms of men's lives (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 24).

Unfortunately, women's voices often need expert testimony to give them credibility (Cole, 1995: 24). Victims of domestic violence have been telling their stories to the police and in the court system for years. However, they have not always been believed. What the forensic evidence gathered by the hospital and the police service may do is give



women's stories credibility. Therefore, when interviewing women who have endured domestic violence a researcher needs to flesh out the woman's own voice and story and give it credibility in its own right.

#### **A. Obtaining the sample**

To obtain a sample for this study the Sexual Assault Treatment Center (SATC), the police and the Victim Witness Program (VWP) were contacted. In this section, a review of the problems faced in doing this study is being undertaken to clarify the difficulties involved in hearing women's voices on this particular topic<sup>4</sup>. On February 1, 1999 a letter<sup>5</sup> was sent to the Executive Director of the Sexual Assault Treatment Center asking permission to evaluate their program through the eyes of the women who used this service. Permission was granted and on June 1, 1999 a release of information was put in all of the active charts of women who entered the emergency room due to a domestic assault.

The release of information<sup>6</sup> explained the purpose of the study and authorized the hospital to release to me only the name and phone number of women who might be interested in participating. However, after a month and a half no releases were forthcoming. I asked the Executive Director if I could speak at an upcoming staff meeting to receive feedback as to why no one was signing the release of information. During the staff meeting several nurses indicated they were uncomfortable asking the

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<sup>4</sup> Indeed it occurs to me that the difficulties I encountered in this process in itself could make an interesting and worthwhile research topic.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix two

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix three

woman to sign the release of information for a variety of reasons. First, the woman might be returning to her abusive partner. Second, the woman is often in active crisis due to the trauma of the abuse she has just endured. Third, the Sexual Assault Treatment Center already has several different forms the women must sign. Fourth, the process at the SATC is approximately 2 hours in length and the women are emotionally exhausted. Finally, due to the combination of the beating, the many different forms that need to be signed, and the length of time a woman is at the hospital, it was felt that she was often confused and upset and not sure whether she wanted to participate in the research. Consequently, it was decided to take the releases out of the active charts and ask women who came in for a follow-up visit at the SATC if they would be willing to sign the release so they could participate in this study.

The follow-up meeting occurs approximately 48 hours after the women have been in the emergency room. A woman comes to the SATC to have more pictures taken and to discuss her options<sup>7</sup>. It was hoped that women who came for the follow-up appointment would not be in such active crisis and would agree to participate. However, it was pointed out that not all women follow through and return to the SATC. Those that do return may have had a good experience with the Center, be more

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<sup>7</sup> At the follow-up appointment women are given their options of emotional support, education about the dynamics of abuse, documentation of the episode, documentation of any physical injuries, photographing physical injuries, risk assessment, safety planning for themselves and their children, community resource referrals, planning and transportation to a safe place and finally more follow up appointments for reassessment, documentation, and photographs of injuries.

committed to ending the abusive relationship, and be more committed to having their partners charged. Since not as many women follow through with the follow-up appointment it was also decided that the nurse in charge of follow-ups would access the back files of clients to inquire if any of them would like to participate in the research.

By September 1, 1999 only seven releases of information were signed and only three interviews had been completed. Two women were contacted and appointments set up but the women did not keep the appointments. The women were contacted a second and third time and on all occasions stated they were interested in participating but did not show up for the appointments. After three missed appointments the women were not contacted again. I felt that some of the women who had initially agreed to meet with me and participate in the study upon further reflection did not feel comfortable participating but did not know how to say no when I contacted them a second and third time. However the other two women were interested but the timing was not convenient so they suggested I contact them in a month. I did this and they both completed the research.

Several times throughout the summer and fall I asked the nurse at the Sexual Assault Treatment Center if she had accessed her back files to see about getting some of the clients to do the research. Although extremely busy and under time constraints the nurse did this and sent releases of information to women who might be interested in doing the research. However, when discussing the composition of women who use

the Center, she stated that after an assault many women relocate to other cities, some women return to their partners, and some women can not be contacted because they change either their address or their phone number. Also a woman or her partner may be involved in violent criminal activities making it unsafe to contact them or interview them. Furthermore, other women may have psychiatric conditions and not be taking their medication, and therefore the woman's thought process may be scattered and not focused. Finally, some women who access the Treatment Center lead a transient lifestyle so they have no phone number or address where they could be contacted. For all of these reasons it was difficult to obtain a large number of women who had utilized the Center before this study began.

Since the releases of information were slow in coming from the SATC, other avenues to generate a sample were explored. Since the study was examining both the SATC and the videotaping done by the police, the police were contacted to see if they could help in obtaining some subjects. A phone call was placed to the domestic violence unit of the police and a female police officer I spoke to stated she was more interested in an objective quantitative study looking at the impact of the SATC and the videotaping on the conviction rate of abusive men. The police officer did give me the name and number to contact if I wanted to send my current research proposal in to see if a sample could be obtained from the police. However the officer stated the police would be more

willing to support a project that would benefit them in some way. Taking this to mean that my project would not be supported or approved I decided to approach other services to see if they could help in any way.

The Victim Witness Program (VWP) was contacted at the end of August 1999 to see if they could provide some assistance in generating a sample for my study. Before the local VWP could assist in my project, however, permission had to be granted from their Head Office. Therefore, a letter stating the purpose of my research<sup>8</sup>, a release of information<sup>9</sup>, a consent form<sup>10</sup>, and a copy of the ethics committees approval from the University of Windsor was sent to the head office to be reviewed. Permission from the Head Office for the local VWP to assist in obtaining a sample for my study was granted in October 1999.

The acting executive director informed me she was instructed from the Head Office to generate a list of 40 names of women who had been videotaped by the police and who would be willing to be interviewed for this project. From the time permission was granted to do the research until the first of December many phone calls were placed to the acting executive director so that a meeting could be set up to determine how to go about contacting individuals for this study. At the time that I was trying to reach the acting executive director of the VWP they were in the process of moving into new offices. The acting executive director mentioned on

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix four

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix five

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix six

several occasions that they were too busy to meet with me and that I should call them back the next week.

Finally a meeting took place in early December, in which a letter<sup>11</sup> and a release of information<sup>12</sup> were drafted for the acting executive director to send to women willing to participate in this study. It was decided that each morning when the acting executive director reviewed the court files from the day before she would compile a list of women who had been videotaped. A call would then be placed to the woman asking if she would be willing to be interviewed. If the woman was willing the letter, a release of information and a stamped addressed envelope with my university address would be sent to her. The woman would sign the form and mail it back to me.

Between the time the letter was generated and the end of December more phone calls were placed to the acting executive director to determine the state of progress with contacting women for the study and to determine how many letters had been sent out. By this time the VWP had changed offices and their phones were not working properly. Since I was having difficulty reaching the acting executive director I went down to the office to inquire about the progress she had made. At that time she suggested I contact her within the next week so we could review the progress she had made in contacting women for the study and sending out the letters and releases of information.

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix seven

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix eight

When we met, the acting executive director of the VWP stated that she had tried to contact approximately 35 to 40 women, however only seven or eight were interested in participating in the research. The acting executive director had difficulty in contacting some of the women who had made a video taped statement because many women had changed their phone number, leaving her no way to contact them. Letters and releases were sent out to the women who were interested in participating in the study by the end of January 2000.

I raise the issue of the difficulties I faced with this project not only to indicate the possible limitations of this study but also to highlight potential problems that future researchers might encounter. The difficulties I had in obtaining my sample were due to time constraints of the individuals who were getting the releases of information signed, the difficulties they had in reaching women who had been through their service, the composition of women who used their services, and the sensitivity of the subject matter. Since the individuals involved in obtaining the sample were extremely busy I asked if it would be possible for me to go through the files to collect phone numbers so that I could call the women directly. I was informed that due to confidentiality this was not possible. Due to the difficulties of obtaining a sample, after eight months of active attempts to obtain names from a number of different sources, only ten interviews were completed. A follow-up interview occurred in one case because, at the time of the initial interview, the woman had not gone to court. Another woman

agreed to a follow-up interview but when I tried to contact her she had changed her telephone number and I was unable to obtain the new number. Of the ten women interviewed seven names were obtained from the Sexual Assault Treatment Center, one name was obtained from the Victim Witness Program, one name was obtained from a woman who was interviewed and knew someone else in a similar situation, and one woman's name was given to me by a friend.

## **B. Demographics**

Ten women were interviewed for this project; their ages ranged from 19 to 51 with an average age of 36. Seven of the ten women had attended college or university. The high number of women who have post secondary education is a bias in the sample. Women who have post secondary education might be more willing participants in research projects such as this one because they are more articulate and place a higher value on research. The women came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds (i.e. Irish, French Canadian). One woman described herself as black<sup>13</sup>, and another woman was a landed immigrant with a European background. During the interviews, other than English not being the first language of the immigrant woman, no other issues surfaced surrounding race or ethnicity. Nine of the women were Canadian citizens. At the time of the abusive incident six women were married, two women were

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<sup>13</sup> Issues of ethnicity were not explored with this woman as it was only after the interview (reading the demographic profile wherein she identified herself as black) that I became aware of the different assessment of her ethnic identity.



common-law and two women were single. At the time of the interview, eight women were employed in various occupations, one woman was a student and the other woman stayed home and cared for her small child. Before separation the household incomes ranged from zero to over \$80,000. After separation six of the household incomes dropped, the other four remained the same because three women provided the income for the family and the other woman was a student and her partner did not contribute to her living expenses. The length of the relationships ranged from three months to 10 years. Three of the women did not have any children, four women had one child each, two women had two children each, and one woman had three children. Five of the women stated they had never sought intervention before this abusive incident and only one woman had been through the legal process before.

All of the women had police contact and charges were laid in nine of the incidents. Of these nine women six made videotaped statements for the police. Nine of the women had contact with the Sexual Assault Treatment Center. The woman who did not have contact with the SATC was assaulted before the Center opened so was not part of the new integrated approach to domestic violence. However since her situation reflects many of the same concerns and issues that other women had with the police and the court system I felt it was important for her voice to be heard. At the time of writing this thesis five women had been to court, and the other four court cases were pending.

### **C. Limitations of the Study**

The sample for this study is limited for a number of reasons. First, as mentioned, seven women had post secondary education and the sample was small. Second, since the majority of the women interviewed were referred by the SATC they may have had a good experience with the SATC. Third, the women who have gone through the process at the SATC may be more committed to having their partners charged and sentenced for his abusive behavior. This could be due to the fact that women who go through the SATC are provided with information and counseling about the effects of domestic violence on themselves and their children and also because of the severity of the injuries the woman has endured. Also, if the court outcome was not favorable to the woman she may be more willing to speak out about the unfairness of the sentence.

Finally, the women who were interviewed were in various stages of healing both emotionally and physically from the abusive incident. Some of the women interviewed had just left the relationship, whereas other women had been out of the relationship for up to three years. The emotional differences in these women became apparent during the interviews. Those who had just left the relationship expressed raw emotions often breaking down and crying while discussing certain questions. The women who had some distance between the abusive incident and the interview were passionate about their experiences but had put some closure on the situation and had started to move on with their

lives. These women were better able to compose and articulate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Despite these limitations all the women who were interviewed had very relevant comments to make on the services currently in place to assist victims of domestic violence.

#### **D. The Interview**

Seeking an active sample is part of the active interviewing process (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: 26-27). It suggests that individuals are equally worthy despite individual differences and therefore have worthwhile stories to tell. This study actively interprets the voices of those women who have encountered the process at the SATC, the police, and the court system because their experiences are worthwhile not only to themselves, but also to other women who might go through a similar experience.

Ten face-to-face interviews and one follow-up interview were conducted for this study. To participate in this study the woman had to be over the age of 18, have been involved in a domestic violent relationship within the past three years, be able to speak English, and have been involved with the SATC, or the police or the court system. The tape recorded interviews occurred between August 1999 to February 2000. The interviews were arranged at a convenient time and place for the woman, taking place at the university, the SATC, the woman's home and in one case at a shelter. The interviews lasted from approximately one hour to one and a half hours. Before beginning each interview the purpose of the interview was explained and an Informed Consent Form was signed by

each woman. The women who were interviewed were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. At times to protect the women's identities minor details in the transcriptions were changed. Therefore this thesis contains no real names of participants and no other identifying information.

Active interviewing utilizes a give-and-take method of interviewing, so depending on how the woman answers certain questions other issues and concerns arose that needed clarification. For this reason some of the questions were modified or not asked. After each interview the data was transcribed verbatim with the goal of seeking common themes, topics and patterns of meanings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **WOMEN SPEAK OUT**

By listening to the voices of women who have gone through the process at the Sexual Assault Treatment Center (SATC), the police, and the court system, we hear first hand what they thought and felt about their experiences with the services that are in place to assist victims of domestic violence. The questions that the women in this study were asked primarily focused on whether they felt empowered or victimized when they had contact with these three services. Other questions focused on the women's thoughts and feelings while having their injuries photographed, and their thoughts and feelings while making a video taped statement. Some of the women saw the pictures of themselves and two women saw the video taped statement they made. Questions were asked about their thoughts and feelings when they first saw the pictures or the video taped statements. Through the give-and-take of the interview process several themes other than empowerment and victimization emerged from the women's comments. The women discuss various forms of discrimination that they encountered with the police and court system and how the ideology of motherhood and traditional gender values were reinforced by these systems. Out of these themes other themes emerged that will be examined in chapters six and seven.

What follows is a detailed account of the women's thoughts and feelings about the SATC, the police and the court system. The first theme

that will be examined is whether the women felt empowered or victimized by these services. The second theme that will be examined is the discriminatory character of the police and the court system. Finally, the issue of how motherhood shaped the women's experiences will be examined.

## **A. Empowerment or Victimization?**

### **i. Sexual Assault Treatment Center**

All of the nine women who went through the process of having their injuries photographed and documented at the SATC had positive comments to make about this process. The women were asked if they felt listened to, believed, judged or blamed for the abuse by the SATC. They were also asked if they were given options, their thoughts and feelings about having the pictures taken and their thoughts and feelings upon seeing the pictures of themselves.

**Sharron:** Did you feel the nurses at the SATC listened to you?

**Brenda:** She listened to every one of my words, every one. I think she try to understand me and help me. I'm surprised. I appreciate. She's the best. She's the best she understands like a mother all the time...

**Marie:** They were very compassionate, very compassionate. Very understanding. They listened and asked questions.

**Lisa:** Yeah, it was nice, it was just nice to have someone there to talk to.

**Sharron:** Did you feel the nurses at the SATC believed what you were saying?

**Kaye:** It felt good that she believed me. Here I am crying out for help and this was really a tough thing to go through.

**Sharron:** Did you feel the nurses at the SATC were judging you or blaming you for the abuse?

**Pam:** This<sup>14</sup> is such a warm and relaxed atmosphere and you get the feeling of understanding. I didn't ask to be put in this position and they know that.

**Sharron:** Did the nurse at the SATC explain the process to you and explain your options to you?

**Abby:** Before she did anything she told me about what the process was all about. What she was about to do and would I agree. I did and I signed these forms and she took pictures.

**Kaye:** Yes this was totally my decision, what I wanted to do for the future, what I thought was right, they just guided me.

**Pam:** Here I had a choice I could go this way or that. Do something or not do something and which ever way I went that was completely acceptable. That made me feel good. It was reassuring and empowering.

**Marie:** Yes, actually they gave me a whole package and I took a lot of reading information.

Abby and Jennie clearly expressed how virtually all of the women felt about the SATC:

**Abby:** They showed compassion... I thought the SATC was wonderful.

**Jennie:** The follow-up nurse at the SATC was great. I kind of looked forward every time I went there to see her. The first time I was just

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<sup>14</sup> Pam was interviewed at the Sexual Assault Treatment Center

a little edgy but she was really nice. She's done a lot for me, still, it's almost a year and she is still helping me out...[later Jennie picks up the same theme] She's become a really great friend and I'm glad. I can call her anytime of the day. I can page her and she'll be there for me....

When the women were asked how they felt having their injuries photographed several of the women expressed thoughts such as:

**Abby:** Well I felt, I felt it had to be done but I didn't want it to be, it's like taking off your clothes in front of someone. I felt infringed upon, yet I wanted it done.

**Kaye:** Ashamed I think, being here for one and yet glad that she was there to help me.... I'm glad the pictures were taken I am and at the back of my mind I'm thinking 'oh good someone is going to see these and recognize what's happened.'

Marie expressed a different thought while the pictures were taken.

**Marie:** How did I get myself into this mess.

However Brenda was thinking of more practical concerns.

**Brenda:** All the time I'm thinking I have to find an apartment. I have to change my place. He's going to find me. I have to change the phone number.

Lisa thought the nurses were caring but expressed an interesting concept about having the pictures taken.

**Lisa:** Yeah I thought 'I feel like a criminal...' I felt like a criminal. It was like I was getting my mug shot taken or something, do this do that.

Some of the women had an opportunity to see and keep the photographs of their injuries. The women were asked their thoughts and feelings upon



seeing the pictures for the first time. Although the function of the pictures is to be used as evidence in the court case against the woman's abusive partner the pictures can also serve other functions, such as a source of strength not to return to the abusive relationship and a realization about the severity of the abuse. Some women expressed very strong feelings while other women did not remember any feelings.

**Sharron:** What did you think when you saw the pictures?

**Janice:** I don't know if I've blocked it out, but I really don't feel nothing.

**Kaye:** Shock, shock, I went my, oh my, that is me because you don't really believe it, because they [nurses] say we're going to take pictures and you think it's not really that bad, you know, not that it feels worse, but then once I saw the pictures I thought Oh My....[later in the interview] When I saw them [pictures] at the court house, they [prosecutors] showed me just before I went in for the assault. I looked at them and I think I went back into shock again my eyes just opened up. Wow it was pretty bad but really I was in a state of shock at least two weeks.

Pam discussed the analogy between the pictures and seeing her reflection in the mirror.

**Pam:** Oh I cried, I cried, I still have those pictures...[later Pam discussed what she was thinking a few days after the abuse when she looked in the mirror] I'm looking at myself in the mirror and thinking how could he do this to me and it's not right. There is no way anyone has the right to do this to me and I felt what can I do to fight back. I can't fight him physically but he's not going to get away with this.

When Brenda saw the pictures she expressed confusion about her partner's behavior towards her.

**Brenda:** I think, I don't know. [she is quietly crying] In a way I'm that person who he beat. I don't know who that picture is. I don't understand why this happened to me. I don't know why this happened to me. Because I don't think I'm a bad person. I know what I want in my life. I want make my family happy. I want to take care of my child. When I saw that picture I didn't understand why he did that. Maybe he doesn't love me right now. He told me he loved me. The picture is very ugly. Very ugly. Much blue and red. It reminded me of the war [in her country] where your hands are cut off. Where they take your eyes, your mouth, your nose....

Lisa thought of herself and re-evaluated the relationship

**Lisa:** That I am stupid, for letting him take advantage of me like that. You know not to see it coming. It's happened before, in the short year we've been together this is the fifth time he's raised a hand to me and it will be the last.

The women were also asked if they take the pictures out and look at them and if so why.

**Denise:** It's just a reminder of where I've been and where I'm never going back... I don't do it very often, but sometimes every once in a while..... [when looking at the picture] It's awful, I feel sick when I look at it. I look at it and think 'oh my God, that happened'...

**Lisa:** Yeah, I leave it right on my kitchen table...I don't know. Just it seems like, like 'yeah you are dumb.' Just to let anyone

take control of you like that, like it's abusive  
and it makes you feel like an idiot inside  
because you think how could I possibly  
let this go on this long, for me to have all these  
marks on me. Like I didn't deserve this.

Abby discussed what her partner's lawyer said when he saw the pictures:

**Abby:** Did I tell you about during the discovery  
when he [partner's lawyer] saw the pictures,  
the comment was made that my head wasn't  
torn in half that I just had minor scars...

In sum, while all of the nine women who went through the process at the SATC indicated that it was a positive experience, when having the pictures taken and upon seeing the pictures of themselves, the women expressed a variety of thoughts and feelings. The women's thoughts and feeling and the impact of seeing the pictures will be examined in the chapter six of this thesis.

## ii. The Police

The women expressed their experience with the police differently from that of the SATC. Though some of the women had a positive experience with the police, other women did not. The women were asked the same questions about the police that they were asked of the SATC. Some women had a video taped statement made and they were asked how they thought and felt while they were being video taped. Two women also had an opportunity to view the video tape and they were asked their thoughts and feelings on seeing themselves.

**Sharron:** Did you feel the police listened to you?

**Abby:** he [officer] didn't really listen to me. He really treated me horribly.

Kaye and Marie both went down to the police station after the abusive incident and were not allowed to make statements at first.

**Kaye:** Tuesday and Wednesday I went down to the police department thinking I could see the female officer in charge of the domestic violence unit and I saw a male officer...He said it was too late to press charges...I told him is that possible.

Kaye ended up going to the shelter for safety and the shelter staff called the police to come and take a statement. She made these comments about the male police officers who came out and took the statement.

**Kaye:** They took a statement and wanted to see the bruises and swelling. I think they were in shock, so I knew, they knew. They were excellent. They felt for me...They did their job and that's the most important point I'd like to make, they did their job.

Marie had a similar experience when she went downtown to the police station to make a statement. She made the statement and had pictures taken, then she returned to work thinking her partner was going to be arrested.

**Marie:** When I got back to work I called the constable I had talked to at the front desk. She said there is nothing they could do because I didn't call them last night, so it couldn't have been that threatening. So I said "what am I suppose to do, wait till he gets home, tell him I want a divorce and wait till he hits me again. Then you're going to come and arrest him." Well that changed everything. She said hold on. She put a call through to somebody I don't

know who; but got back to me and said they were going to arrest him that day.

Marie stated that after that everyone was wonderful to her. Of the ten women interviewed six of them felt that in some way the police did not initially listen to what they were saying. However like Kaye and Marie they did feel that after the initial contact with the police that everything went smoothly and that they were heard. Though one woman did not have a positive experience with the police at all three other women had positive experiences with the police right from the beginning.

**Lisa:** They were just excellent. They really seemed to care. They had so many questions...I was very impressed with them.

The women were then asked about whether they thought the police believed what they were saying. Of the ten women six of them thought that the police believed them. However in four incidents the women did not feel believed.

**Sharron:** Did you feel the police believed what you were saying?

**Janice:** He [detective] made a comment that he read both statements. Well that's okay that he read both statements but on the video statement you can't lie, because if I was to lie I could be charged. No, I found that he didn't believe me. He really didn't at all.... So what, you want to believe my husband that's okay but what am I suppose to do.

**Abby:** They refused to come out that night so that I could [make a statement], they didn't have anyone that could handle my statement that night anyway. They suggested I make an appointment and go the next day and I did... But I talked to the staff sergeant and said I was

very disappointed how I was treated and that this person didn't even have the time to talk to me on the phone (that night)... I felt like I was the one attacking my husband. And he had attacked me but they believed his story.

The women who felt they were believed by the police generally indicated this by stating that their partner had been charged and arrested.

**Denise:** I made my police statement and the police officer came back the next day and said "you know we have a search warrant, we need to arrest him, he needs to be charged".

Six of the ten women stated that they did not feel that the police officers judged or blamed them for the abuse.

**Sharron:** Did you feel that the police judged you or blamed you for the abuse?

**Denise:** No, not the police officers that I dealt with, which was a good feeling because if they did I probably would have jumped out of the system right away.

However Denise explained the flippant attitude that other police officers had towards her case.

**Denise:** This man [officer] was wonderful... it was funny because he took flack from people in his department, like "Why are you picking up this case"... like "what are you doing? Leave this" I mean leave this, I was threatened with a sawed off shotgun. "Leave it for what to find out she's dead", so "No I'm not leaving this I'll pick it up and carry it on my own time if I have to".

Although Pam stated she never felt judged or blamed by the police, she expressed her ambivalence about the police on this question.

**Pam:** Not actually, but you always had that thing in the back of your mind that says 'yeah well she must have been asking for it. She wouldn't be with this guy if she didn't like that kind of treatment'... it wasn't pronounced, no but it was an underlying current that was never verbally spoken... just them knowing my ex-husband "Well you know what kind of a person he is."

Abby, on the other hand, thought that the police blatantly judged and blamed her. Abby's partner went to the police and told them his version of what happened before she had an opportunity to explain her side of the incident.

**Abby:** I said 'wait a minute' and told him [police officer] my side of the story and he didn't write a statement down. He did for my husband but didn't for me. Took pictures of my husband's little scratch on his face but didn't take any pictures of my bruises. So I thought, "Wait a minute here" and he had said that my husband wasn't pressing charges anyway so it wasn't important...

Janice's partner also went to the police before she had an opportunity to tell her side of the story. She discussed the police officers attitude towards her.

**Janice:** Of course he [partner talking to police] lied to them and everything else and so I think that when the police officer came up and talked to me he had a bad outlook on me.

Most (7) of the women felt that the police adequately explained their

options<sup>15</sup> to them and felt that they had some control to make an informed decisions about what could happen. However three women felt either that options were not given to them or that they had no choice in the situation.

**Sharron:** Did you feel your options were explained to you by the police and that you had some control to make an informed decision about what could happen?

**Pam:** At that point, No...I was being forced into something and I wasn't sure what it was and I didn't want any part of it.

Carol expressed the confusion that she was in after the assault occurred.

**Carol:** Yeah, somewhat but a lot of it was going in one ear and out the other. So it was kind of hard. But I knew my options. I knew that to stay here [shelter] if he decided to retaliate.

Six women had video taped statements made by the police. They were asked their thoughts and feelings while the statement was being made. Two of the women had an opportunity to view the tape and they were asked what they thought and felt when they saw it. The six women had a range of emotions and thoughts when the video taped statement was made.

**Sharron:** What were you thinking or feeling when the video taped statement was made?

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<sup>15</sup> The police gave options: to remain in the home, to seek alternative accommodations i.e. with family or friends or the shelter, provided a means of transportation to alternate location, explained what would happen if her partner was charged and released, discussed that conditions not to associate with her would be put in place, what to do if he breached the conditions, how to find out if he was released.



**Lisa:** I really didn't think about it, cause I was so angry. I felt like an idiot being in that predicament... I really didn't think about it.

**Pam:** That went pretty well, it was with the female constable from the domestic violence unit and she's good. She made me feel very comfortable. I was sworn in. I was pretty relaxed but it was traumatic going through that again, thinking back

**Marie:** I was nervous. I was trying to remember things and they gave me my statement to read before just so I'd remember. ....I was a little nervous but I was OK. I was wondering where the camera was. They didn't tell me where it was. I was twitching a little bit or something. I was nervous. I was looking around for it [camera] before they started.

**Carol:** It was difficult... I think I left a lot of stuff out but I made my points ...I was thinking I had really pushed my limit [by coming to the police] and he was going to go psycho this time.

Jennie discussed the pain and trauma she was in after the assault and while doing the video taped statement. She expressed many different thoughts that were going through her mind at this time

**Jennie:** My head was just pounding.... I was just in so much pain. I couldn't move my lips I just tried to answer the questions to the best of my ability. But in hindsight I know I didn't do a very good job on it. I didn't, I couldn't say more, I did it. They got what they needed but I couldn't say more. I was just sore. I couldn't talk. I didn't want to listen....My basic thoughts were 'give me something for this pain', 'give me something for this pain'. 'Oh god, go out there to get him, kick his ass', kind of thing. 'Don't worry about video taping me, go get him', sort of a thing.

**Sharron:** What were you thinking and feeling when you saw the video taped statement?

**Jennie:** I noticed I said a lot more than I remembered but I think that's because the incident was so fresh in my mind and stuff. I think they [police] did a good job on it....like I could see in the video tape, which I'm really not like, a helpless scared little girl basically and that's not usually me, like I'm usually the strong type, don't need anybody for anything and I just looked at the tape and it was like Wow, a total different side of me.

**Marie:** I thought I looked nervous. I didn't sound like me either.

Since the comments about the police were mixed, at the end of the interview on the section related to the police I asked the women how they felt overall about how they were treated by the police. Eight women gave positive responses, one woman who had dealt with the police three times gave both positive and negative comments, and one woman felt she was not treated well.

**Sharron:** Overall how did you feel you were treated by the police?

**Lisa:** I was very fortunate....They were really, really nice they made you laugh and joke and made you feel at ease. That's what was nice about them. They didn't make you feel like you were guilty of anything. That was nice.

**Brenda:** The police did the best for me, because they are very fast. They come and they helped me...I called the emergency number, I heard they can help me about this. This is the best job. I think they are the best.

However Abby felt differently

**Abby:** No matter how he [officer] felt about the situation or who he believed, he should have shown an unbiased when he dealt with either one of us. He didn't deal with it professionally at all.

To summarize when many of the women first had contact with the police they indicated that they did not feel listened to or believed but when asked about their overall treatment many women gave positive comments. The women's statements about how they were treated by the police will be examined further in the discussion section of this thesis.

### iii. The Court System

The women were also asked about their experience with the court system. They were asked the same series of questions that they had been asked about the SATC and the police. Of the ten women five of the cases had gone to court by the time these interviews took place, and four of the women knew the outcome. In the last case the women's partner could not be found so the case could not proceed. Of the five remaining cases, one was due for trial shortly after the interviews were completed. Three cases were pending and one women's partner was not charged by the police so there would be no court case. All of the women who dealt with the court system indicated they were not pleased with how the case had been dealt with by the Crown Attorney's office. All of the four women who knew the outcome of the court cases indicated they were not satisfied with the sentence that their abusive partners received for assaulting them.

**Sharron:** Did you feel the court listened to what you were saying?

**Jennie:** I don't know what the judge listened to. I know if we didn't show up the day I testified my ex-partner probably would have got a slap on his hand and walked away.

When Denise's partner went to court it was a joint submission, that is when two charges are put together and one sentence is received for both.

So when asked if the judge listened, Denise told me:

**Denise:** Oh I don't think so, well because it's a joint submission I don't think it matters. I just think it's a procedure. I did see him taking notes. He did take notes. He did write down things. It's not like he'd put his pen down and put his head down. He was taking notes. So while I was giving it [testimony] I thought okay well at least he's paying attention. It might be blocked or going in one ear and out the other, but he was making it look like he was paying attention but with a joint submission they both [defense lawyer and the crown attorney] agreed to it and the judge generally agrees to it. So what does what I have to say have to do with anything. It didn't carry any weight.

Pam discussed her frustration when the judge did not listen to her.

**Pam:** The worse part was that I told the judge he [partner] was going to ask for it [jail sentence] to be served on weekends. He's going to want to go to work, do his time on the weekends... Don't give him that kind of a break. But the judge said "okay you can do it on the weekends..." [near the end of the interview] The judge had closed ears and didn't hear what I said.

Although Kaye was not pleased with the court outcome she did feel the judge listened when she testified.

**Kaye:** He listened to the whole story and he saw both sides and even saw the pictures because the hospital had transferred the pictures and reports and he went through it thoroughly...[later in the conversation] When the judge read the verdict he said he didn't believe him. Thank goodness. He said "nothing matched up" and it's true.....I do know that the courts have looked at it and they could see everything. The courts looked at it, my lawyer, the judge all know what's going on.

However Pam and Jennie had a different experience:

**Pam:** It was my two cents and that's all it was worth and it had no impact. My impact statement had no impact, no impact whatsoever.... He [partner] had already enrolled himself in a anger management program, a six week course which he had successfully passed. He had passed that course successfully by the time we got to court so he was well on his way to being a "good citizen" again.

**Jennie:** The first time we sat all day in court and finally they brought him out and I testified the judge said "okay". One day it's this and the next he wanted a psychological assessment. After those came in he wanted my Doctor's report, after that it was dragged on a lot.

Pam and Denise expressed different feelings about whether they felt blamed or judged by the court system.

**Sharron:** Did you feel the court system blamed or judged you in some way for the abuse?

**Pam:** I don't think so, because I know a judge is supposed to be impartial. But there was no compassion there. Like this was already prearranged, you know and I was there just so I could get my frustrations out and speak to the

court but a lot of good it did me. I don't even think he was listening

When Denise was asked about feeling blamed or judged she said:

**Denise:** 100%, totally it was all my fault. It was all my fault and at the sentencing [her partner] did it because he was under the influence, so let's give him counseling.

All of the five women who dealt with some part of the court process commented on the Crown Attorney's office. The major concern that the women mentioned was that they never met the Crown Attorney that was handling their case and that the same Crown did not handle the case from beginning to end.

**Marie:** Well it would be nice to meet at least one of them and they could talk to you. Because it would be just like getting cross examined by his lawyer. It's intimidating I think....I would just like to have met them though. How can they know about you and defend you if they don't even meet you and know what you look like.

**Pam:** I had no contact, whatsoever, with the prosecutors office. No one ever contacted me and asked me how I felt or what did I think would be a fair deal. I wasn't consulted on that. It was like okay she's a nobody anyway so we will make this decision for her. I heard they are coming to the point where they want the victims involved more. More victim input and "what do you think would be a fair punishment". At the time that my case was going through the system this was supposed to be in actuality, but it wasn't, not in my case, and I'm a little frustrated with that too.

Jennie discusses the number of Crown Attorneys she had and her frustrations with them.

**Jennie:** We had four or five different Crown Attorneys and I had a nitwit that doesn't know nothing....I didn't get along with the Crown Attorney's office...I did not appreciate the way they treated me at all....I was just another case number to them basically... One didn't even know my name. They said the wrong name. It's like no, if you had read your papers you'd know. You can expect that from other people but a lawyer that's representing you and doesn't even know your last name.

Janice also expressed how upset she was when she made an appointment to discuss her case with the Crown Attorney and the Crown Attorney was not prepared.

**Janice:** I made an appointment and when I got there at the Crown Attorney's office they couldn't find the file. So he had nothing in front of him to tell me anything, or what they think is going to happen, or what they are looking at, or anything. Nothing at all... He didn't know what he was charged with... He didn't offer to set up another date or another interview to come in to talk.

Lisa's court case is pending but she had this to say about the Crown Attorney's office.

**Lisa:** They have been really good. I've had two letters to tell me if I want to know what's going on in court just send a letter back and I can find out anything I want to know, which is good to.

The women had mixed comments on one component of the court system, the Victim Witness Program (VWP). This is a program that was set up to help victims go through the court process. Only one woman who was interviewed had positive comments about the VWP.

**Kaye:** Yes, she was wonderful, she listened to me, wrote down a few notes and set up an appointment that day for me to go in [to court] with somebody and the girl who went in with me, I wasn't allowed to tell her my personal stuff, she was only there as a friend.

However other women felt differently about the Victim Witness Program.

All the other women interviewed felt that they were not adequately prepared for court or they had trouble getting in contact with the program to get information about their court case. Denise mentioned the limitations of the program to help victims.

**Denise:** I've told the Director of Victim Witness you can't tell a witness to just tell the truth because that's not adequate, it's not adequate in the court system... Victim Witness was good but I just find that their role is inadequate. Like I was discouraged from going to watch a trial... I went twice on two separate occasions to watch, and it was "no you don't have to do that, that will stress you out." Yes, but it is worse being stressed out on the receiving end of it [cross examination by partner's lawyer] and never having known it's going to come at you that way.

Jennie discussed the problem of the program not working for her.

**Jennie:** You know she's [woman from VWP] supposed to listen to my case and make documents and this and that and she said "don't tell me no more I'm going to get sick, don't tell me no more"... She never called us and we had to call her a hundred million times to finally track her down to find out what the hell was going on. Finally when we went to court she never came with us and she was supposed to and walk us through the court proceedings.



The final question that was asked of the women about the court system was what they thought and felt about the outcome of the court. Of the five women who have dealt with the court process, four of them indicated they were not happy with the outcome. However, Marie stated her satisfaction with the way things turned out for her. Her case was never completed because her partner did not show up for court and cannot be located.

**Marie:** Everything kind of flowed together good. It's just in my instance of him not showing up [for court] it never did get closure. But in my case I think it works out OK for me. If this court case with the charges are in limbo for the rest of my life at least I'll be safe. Who's to say, if we go to court he might win. I'm safer now with it in limbo. I mean I would tell the truth, but he might lie. I would tell the truth but they might not see my side against his or whatever. I mean there are pictures; how could pictures lie? I feel safe, anyway.

Pam's partner pleaded guilty. After being in court seven times, he received ninety days for assaulting her with a weapon. He got to serve his sentence on weekends because he works. Pam's statement sums up the sentiments of the four women who were angry about the court system.

**Pam:** It's very frustrating and when you think about what you've gone through and what you've dealt with and trying to get on with your life, and your children. It's very overwhelming at times. I did everything, I went through all the steps. I had a video taped statement done, I had pictures done, I was speaking out against violence against women and domestic violence, I wrote a victim impact statement to the judge. I made him aware in the letter that I had made a video taped statement, that the pictures are

there and if you wanted to take a look at them please... it's very frustrating, and something has to change in this system, something has to change because it doesn't work, not for victims, it works for offenders.

Whether a woman feels empowered or victimized by the services that she deals with when she is first abused has a significant impact on whether she will follow through and cooperate in the rest of the management of her case, such as, calling the police if her partner breaches his conditions of release, or testifying in court. All of the women felt empowered by the SATC. They felt listened to, believed, not judged or blamed for the abuse and they all felt that they were given options to make an informed decision about what to do next. Many of the women continue to have contact with the nurse from the SATC.

The women gave mixed comments about the police. The most negative comments were given when women first initially had contact with them, such as Kaye and Marie who both wanted to have their partners charged but had difficulty accomplishing this even though both had visible physical injuries. Other women also indicated that they were not initially listened to or believed and that they felt judged or blamed for the abuse. However, after the first negative response by the police the majority of the women suggested they had positive experiences with the police.

The women expressed a variety of emotions and thoughts when making the video taped statement. They discussed such things as self blame, feeling relaxed, nervous, feeling ill because of just being

assaulted, how difficult and traumatic it was, and one woman expressed fear of retaliation from her partner. Only two women have viewed the video taped statement but both indicated in some way that they saw or heard a different side of themselves on the tape.

None of the women who have dealt with the court felt that the court outcome was severe enough. Only Kaye had favorable comments to make in that she felt listened to and believed by the court. However, it is significant that though the judge apparently listened to and believed her, her partner was not given a more severe sentence. Her partner received a fine and probation. He could have been sentenced with jail time but was not. None of the women who have been to court were pleased with the Crown Attorney's office and the comments about the VWP were mixed--some women indicated a good experience and other women felt that they were inadequate.

Overall, it was found that all the women who had contact with the SATC indicated that it was an empowering process, and that it is a valuable and worthwhile program. The women who had contact with the police had mixed comments about whether they felt empowered or victimized. Of the three services examined for this thesis it was with the court system where women felt the most victimized. All of the women who had gone through the court system felt that it needed improvement in order to meet the needs of abused women whose partners had been charged with assaulting them.

## **B. Gender Inequalities**

Though my interviews with the women focused on the question of empowerment/victimization, other important themes emerged through the interview process. In this section I focus on the problem of discrimination. Many women indicated that they felt discriminated against by the police or court system. Three of the women I spoke with specifically mentioned their preference for having a female officer rather than a male officer attend the scene both because they would have preferred dealing with a female officer and because they felt that men and women think differently.

Abby discussed the problem of a male officer who refused to take a statement from her:

**Abby:** I don't know if it was a man/woman equality thing or just lack of education....[later in the conversation]... in this day and age you think that they would be more aware or even have a female officer there.

Jennie stated the same concern but expanded on her thoughts about how men and women are different.

**Jennie:** You see I had male cops, which was kind of hard...I think that whenever cops are there if it's a female victim they should radio a female cop...girls think different than guys do and that's a proven fact. They know where your train of thinking is coming from and they can feel a little bit more than the guy cops can.

Janice made a comparison between two police officers she dealt with one a female and one a male.

**Janice:** The second assault I had a lady who was wonderful and I can still call her to this day

and she is very helpful or whatever. She is just wonderful. The detective [male] who called me that Sunday is in charge of the case and I have not heard from him since that day. Heard nothing!.... Like I said she was phenomenal. I don't know if it's because she was a woman or what it was but she was good, really good. They arrested him immediately on the spot. She even went through the car because he had taken my jewelry... and we found it. She was just really really nice. She even called me the next day to make sure everything was OK.

Janice also found a difference between males and females who worked in the jail when she would call trying to find out if her partner had been released or not.

**Janice:** Some of them wouldn't [give information]. I got lucky and had a couple of women who were fine but a couple of the men would say "I'm too busy right now."

When discussing the court system Jennie also brought up the issue of gender.

**Jennie:** I basically think there should be female judges. Honestly because they are supposed to be on both sides but I mean the judge was on my side but he wasn't, that's how I felt, like just being a guy you know for the other guy's club.

These comments indicate that several of the women who were interviewed felt that gender was an issue when they dealt with the police, the jail system, or the court system. The women suggest that they preferred or would have liked to deal with a female instead of a male.

Another way in which the theme of discrimination was expressed was when Carol discussed the wage difference between herself and her

partner. Carol discussed her concerns when she talked about her partner's emotional and financial control of her. Carol is fearful that her partner will force her through a long court battle if she tries to obtain custody and support. If this happens she will not have any money left over to buy the basic necessities she needs for herself and her children to start over.

**Carol:** He makes more than twice what I make. He knows he's the one who can start over. But for me I'm basically at my wage maximum for many years. I do pretty good for my experience and what I get. I feel I get a good wage but I'm not going to get much more for the next few years. He knows that.

Kaye and Carol discussed the concerns they felt when having to deal with the financial burdens of going through the family court system. Women who want to separate from their abusive partners often go through the legal aid process in order to obtain a separation and custody of their children. Legal Aid is an agency that offers individuals (who do not have the financial resources to pay for a lawyer) a certificate that enables them to receive free legal advice from a lawyer of their choice. However, if a person owns property of any kind then a lien is placed on the property for the amount of the legal aid certificate that was obtained. Kaye discussed concerns she had with the court system and the burden of having to pay Legal Aid back because her partner wanted the case reopened after the judge made a decision to grant a divorce and for her partner not to have visitation with their child.

**Kaye:** He's [partner] bringing me back to court again to default on the divorce, is what they're saying. This is superior court. This is twice now, the first time they threw it out but they [partner and his mother] keep pushing and pushing.

Later on in the discussion Kaye talked about the financial burden of the court on her.

**Kaye:** At first I had to go through Legal Aid because I wasn't working. Once the trial was finished [family court] Legal Aid gave me my bill almost \$8,000. I have to pay that back because there is a lien on the house. Because the trial had ended it's like opening a new storybook or episode and because I'm working, Legal Aid would not cover it. So I had to pay almost \$1700 for one court.

Carol discussed the ramifications of Legal Aid and family court on her children.

**Carol:** Right now I'm trying to work out what's best for the boys about custody. Well he's [partner] offered to give me full custody right now. But if he gets mad at me he'll fight me. I was trying to rule out Legal Aid so I can save what I have; so I don't have to put the little bit of property I have, dole it out to Legal Aid in needless expense. I mean that's all I have and on my income I won't be able to get the boys much. I don't want it all doled out to Legal Aid.

Both Kaye's and Carol's situations demonstrate the financial hardships that are placed on women and children when they have to go through the legal process to end a domestic violent relationship. This inequality in the process is experienced despite the fact that it is the man's abusive behavior that has placed the woman in this position.

Several women mentioned their frustration at the court outcome and the unfairness of it. Pam discussed the injustice when her partner received 90 days when he pleaded guilty to assaulting her with a weapon

**Pam:** It's like he 'pleaded guilty, let's give him a pat on the back, he did a good thing here he didn't waste a whole lot of taxpayers' money and you don't have to go through the trauma of being on trial and all that,' and I thought big deal. I would gladly have done that, if justice was to be served.

Jennie also mentioned her concerns about the unfairness of the court sentence her partner received.

**Jennie:** For his sentencing he got 120 days which you only do two thirds, which is 80 days, three years probation and three years not being able to drink, whoopee shit, like he'll listen. He will never ever in his lifetime be able to possess firearms or explosives and 300 hours I believe of community service. I was pissed, I'm sorry he got charged with aggravated assault it should have been attempted murder. He tried to kill me, if someone has a gun and shoots someone in the leg they get charged with attempted murder. So my neck is out to here [partner choked her] and my eyes are blue and purple because of the pressure. Is that not attempted murder? And the whole thing is, the judge kept saying "your cheek, your cheek" yah, so what he bit my cheek? But what about the point he tried to kill me?

Overall, the women I interviewed indicated in several different ways that they felt they had received unfair treatment by the police and court system. The women mentioned their preference to have a female police officer at the scene, the unfairness of both the family court and the criminal



court. A discussion of the theme of discrimination will be elaborated in chapter six.

### **C. Ideological Inequalities**

Another theme that emerged through the interview process was that of women's responsibilities towards their children. At some point during the interview all five women who had children living in the home mentioned some aspect of the child's welfare and their responsibility towards their children. Two women mentioned comments made by the police and the family court judge. These statements, as we shall see, indicate how the issue of motherhood can be used for and against women. Other women discussed their concerns about referrals to the Children's Aid Society (CAS). One woman explained how she and her children were put in danger by the police and another woman discussed how her male partner uses her love for the children against her. Still other women spoke of the impact of the abuse on their children.

Janice had been separated from her abusive partner for a number of months and had been allowing him access to their child, not knowing that there was a restraining order to keep him from the home. Janice was under the impression that her partner had a right to see his child. During one of her partner's visits with the child he assaulted Janice again. Janice discussed the attitude of the detective when he found out that Janice had allowed her partner in the home. This statement illustrates how the ideology of motherhood is used against Janice.

**Janice:** he [detective] called me Sun. morning and raked and I mean raked me right over the coals. He swore at me and everything. Told me I better get my shit together, told me to get my head screwed on straight and that they were going to take my child away from me. That I was the one putting her in harm's way by letting him in. There was a restraining order against him and he should never have been there. I didn't know that. I had no idea.

Kaye's experience with a family court judge was different. Kaye's partner and his mother wanted visitation with the child on Christmas Eve and petitioned the courts for it. Kaye discussed a comment that the Judge made when he ruled in her favor. This statement illustrates how motherhood can be used in a woman's favor when the judge indicated that it was a negative thing to separate Kaye from her child at Christmas.

**Kaye:** The judge said "no I'm not going to separate a mother and a baby just so that you [partner and his mother] could put the baby underneath the Christmas tree surround him with ornaments and decorate him with tinsel."

Three of the five women I spoke with who had children living in the home stated that referrals had been made to CAS. Referrals are made to CAS when an individual feels that a child has been put in harm's way or if the child has been abused. CAS stays involved with the client until they feel that the child is no longer in danger. In domestic violence situations that usually occurs when the mother stays away from the abusive person. Janice and Kaye discussed how they were referred to CAS and their feelings about that.

**Janice:** They [police] contacted CAS, the detective contacted CAS. They had come out once before when this charge was made but that was because my husband had called. So they came out and looked at me and basically she [CAS worker] said we don't need to be here. Now that the detective called it in they will stay on the case for a maximum of six months. That's fine with me. I have nothing to hide.

Kaye went to the shelter after the abusive incident and discusses how a CAS referral was made and the outcome of their investigation.

**Kaye:** When I was at the shelter... I had told her [shelter worker] the same thing about the baby. Me taking the baby out and him [partner] hitting me in the shoulder and she informed me they were going to call CAS.... So after a few weeks and the courts allowed me to go back home with the baby CAS came out and she interviewed me and I said 'is this just about the incident?' and she said 'yes' and I told her right from the beginning to the end and then she went and interviewed him....[later when discussing the outcome of family court] I got custody of the baby.

When a man is arrested for assaulting his partner he is taken down to the police station charged and released within a few hours. Often the woman is never notified that he has been released. Pam indicated that this was the case in her situation and discussed her fear for herself and her children.

**Pam:** I was assured [by police] that he wouldn't be back that night, but within half an hour of being released he was at the house and he scared the hell out of me and the kids.

Brenda and Pam both discussed the impact of the abuse on their children.

**Brenda:** She [CAS worker] asked my child what happened to him. He told her everything. I didn't expect it, he is very small, you know, he doesn't know nothing. He knows only about toys. But then she asked him what happened between me and my husband he told her everything. I didn't expect it. He knows everything at four years old.

**Pam:** I don't want my children growing up thinking that's how the world works, when you think somebody did something wrong you can go and beat them up....[later Pam discusses her son] He [son] was turning into a real introvert and he was afraid to open his mouth to say anything...

Carol discussed how her partner would rather see her with nothing than give her any money. Carol's comments suggest that her abusive partner uses her love for the children against her. (I asked her how this would affect the children)

**Carol:** He'd rather see me suffer...He won't see that the children would suffer, because he would know that no matter what he dishes out to me I wouldn't let them suffer. I would never let them know the things that would go on because that's not what little kids need to know. He knows that's how I would be. He knows I would protect the children that way...

This section demonstrates that in an abusive relationship the responsibility to keep the children safe is with the mother even though it is her abusive partner's behavior that places the children in jeopardy. In one instant Janice is being berated by the detective for not keeping her child safe and yet in Pam's situation it is the police who place her and the child at risk by not informing her of her partner's release from jail. Overall, what

the above statements indicate is that in our society it is women who are responsible to protect and care for the children even in the case where their ability to do so has been seriously undermined.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Throughout the interviews the women expressed their opinions about the SATC, the police, and the court system. Overall the women felt empowered by the SATC. However with the police the women felt both empowered and victimized by the way the police treated them. Of the women who have gone through the court system all of them felt victimized by it. While exploring the issue of empowerment/victimization with the women I interviewed, two other themes from the women's statements emerged. Several women mentioned feeling discriminated against by the police, the family, and the criminal court system. All of the women who had children living in the home at the time of the abuse discussed various concerns they had with the police and the court system.

Before exploring these three themes further, I have chosen to recount the experiences of Pam, Brenda, and Abby in the following chapter. By so doing the reader has the opportunity to listen more holistically to three women's experiences when dealing with the services related to domestic violence. Each of their experiences illustrates many of the concerns and difficulties that the other women in this project encountered.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Women's Experiences: Three Narrative Accounts**

In the previous chapter we heard the women's comments about the three services related to the new integrated approach to domestic violence. In this chapter we hear three women's narratives as they actually experience the process of the new integrated approach to domestic violence. These three narratives illustrate the patterns within all the women's experiences yet highlight the individuality of each woman's situation. Another issue that is difficult to describe through the format of questions and answers is the emotional impact that the women went through when dealing with the abuse and with the services related to domestic violence. The longitudinal experiences of three women are presented here to give the reader a better comprehension of the complexities of domestic violence and the emotional difficulties that women endure when deciding to leave the relationship and when dealing with services that are in place to assist victims. This approach provides specific insights into the experiences of the system as a whole that cannot be as clearly grasped through the examination of the specific services related to domestic violence.

#### **A. Pam's Experience**

Pam is a 40 year old woman with a university degree who works as a general laborer. She has lived common law with her abusive partner for

10 years. They have two children from their relationship. Pam decided that she wanted to do the interview for this project because:

I don't like the way the system is going overall, being a victim, the system doesn't work for the benefits of victims I find. It works for the benefit of the abusers.

While Pam was being beaten one night by her partner the police showed up. They demanded that she go to the hospital. Pam did not want to go because she did not realize at that time that the injuries were as bad as they were. At the hospital the police wanted to take pictures and wanted Pam to press charges. Pam stated:

At that point I was so scared and so traumatized...I thought this happened over something I didn't do, if I press charges what's going to happen to me then. I was really scared, I was afraid to press charges against him for fear of retaliation and they weren't very sympathetic...

The police ended up laying charges and did take pictures while Pam was laying on the gurney at the hospital. Pam stated that her partner had prior charges longer than her arm and that the police were intent on "getting" her partner. She believed that the police involvement had more to do with the police trying to get her partner than about the violence towards her. At that point Pam felt she had no choices or control over the situation. Pam also felt that the police judged her and blamed her for the abuse. Pam stated that these feelings were never verbally spoken. However she felt there was an underlying current when she dealt with the

police that she must have been asking for it, and she wouldn't be with this guy if she didn't like that kind of treatment.

After five days Pam decided to cooperate with the police. When asked what changed her mind she stated:

Well I was looking at myself and I was looking at my children and their reaction to the whole situation and I thought this can't go on, that's enough.

The night of the incident after her partner was charged Pam and her children ended up going to the local shelter for battered women because after her partner was charged she was assured that he wouldn't be back that night. However, within half an hour of being released he was at the house. After a couple of days in the shelter and looking at herself in the mirror she started to think 'how could he do this to me?' and 'It's not right'. So she started to ask the shelter staff what she could do. The shelter staff suggested she go to the SATC and have pictures taken right away because the swelling was starting to go down. Pam went to the SATC where she said she felt listened to and believed. At the SATC she said she felt like she had control of the situation, whereas, with the police she said she felt pressured and pushed into a corner. At the SATC she felt she had the choice to make decisions for herself and whatever she decided was acceptable. Pam found this approach reassuring and empowering.

The SATC took pictures and arranged for a police officer from the domestic violence unit to come and make a video taped statement of Pam.



Pam's partner had appeared before a judge seven times in the past and plead not guilty. When he found out that Pam had pictures taken and that she had made a video taped statement he decided to plead guilty. After her partner pleaded guilty the Crown Attorney's office made a deal with her partner's lawyer for her partner to serve 90 days. Pam found out about her partner's sentence from his probation officer who needed some information from Pam. Pam was furious and stated:

Ninety days is nothing compared to the living nightmare that I endured...I can't believe this and I sat back and I felt crushed by the whole system. Ninety days they might as well have slapped me in the face.

Pam has started speaking out against violence against women because:

The system has to change I am not satisfied with the way it is. Not that I expect to have to go through anything like that again, but no woman should have to go through that and the let down with the system is just too much.

Pam stated that she was not raised in a violent home and that her family supported her decisions throughout the whole situation. She stated her mother said to her: "I didn't raise you to be somebody's punching bag...you go, girl. Go."

Pam discussed seeing a difference in her children's behavior after leaving the abusive situation. Her son was very introverted. However after leaving her partner Pam said her son is now very outspoken and not afraid to voice his opinions. She said her daughter, who was three at the

time Pam left, did not speak but when she started to talk she was talking in sentences because she did not have the fear of saying the wrong thing anymore.

Throughout the interview Pam's voice was filled with emotions. When describing the abusive incident that led up to her leaving, Pam was holding back tears. When Pam talked about the decision to cooperate and have the pictures and the video taped statement done you could hear pride in her voice. When Pam talked about the system and how it failed her I could hear the anger and outrage in her voice. When she talked about the change in her children her voice softened and you could hear caring and concern for her children.

#### **B. Brenda's Experience**

Brenda is a 25 year old woman with a grade 12 education who works as a housekeeper. She was married to her husband for five years and they have a four year old son together. They are all landed immigrants and have not been in Canada very long. When I first started the interview I was under the impression that Brenda had a better command of the English language than she actually did. After a few initial questions I realized that her English was limited. However I continued with the interview, modifying the questions, because I believed that Brenda had an important story to tell and I also believed that Brenda's experience of an abused immigrant woman needed to be heard.

Brenda called the police one evening after her husband went to work. He had assaulted her and someone had told her the police could help her out. The police came and immediately took a statement and suggested that Brenda and her four year old son go to the local battered women's shelter. Brenda went to the shelter and the shelter called CAS and the SATC to come and take pictures. Brenda was pleased with the way the police, CAS and the SATC assisted her.

Brenda stayed in the shelter for only a few hours, she went home when she found out that her partner had been arrested and charged. Her partner was released from jail with conditions not to associate with Brenda. However her partner started to go to her workplace, her child's daycare and left several messages on her answering machine. Brenda became frightened and called the police. The police arrested him again, this time for breach of the conditions of his release. He spent three days in jail for this and was released. Brenda stated she has not heard from him since that time.

Throughout the interview Brenda quietly cried. Big tears ran down her cheeks and yet she made no noise. Until meeting Brenda I never knew someone could cry so quietly.

Although Brenda is new to this city she has built up a small support system for herself. Brenda has no family and few friends in Canada so her support system consists mainly of acquaintances and individuals in the

various services with whom she has had contact. Brenda talks about going to work when her partner was stalking her.

I went to my work. I didn't work but I told all the people at my work. I didn't want to tell nobody my situation but I had to tell them because if he comes he could make me trouble there. I told the lady at the desk, if he comes tell him I don't work today... Then he comes to my work... and then the lady told him 'she didn't work today'... I working but she said 'no.... I told him you don't work today'.

Brenda's main concern was not with her partner or the abusive incident but with finding another place for herself and her child to live. Currently Brenda is working relief and does not have much money to afford a new place. Brenda has also been in continual contact with the follow-up nurse at the SATC. She calls the nurse on a regular basis to find out if the nurse can help her in any way.

My big problem right now is to find an apartment cause I have only seven days, one week. I have to find apartment and take my stuff, everywhere and I don't know. I called the nurse from the SATC, and she told me call public housing. I call and told them my problem and she told me, I was very surprised, because I am in desperate situation and she told me we can't help you because I have to go there and fill out some application and I have to wait for that... [later Brenda discussed the dilemma of not having money] It's no problem finding an apartment but I need money. Then I have to call Social Assistance and ask them for money.

Later in the conversation Brenda discussed her emotional state:

I didn't sleep too much. I didn't eat too much because I am worried about all the time finding

**an apartment. In a few days I don't know where I can go. I can't sleep...If I find an apartment what about the money?**

**I asked her if she had a worker from Social Services and she explained the dilemma she was in because she works the same hours that Social Service is open.**

**She said I have to give her some papers, then they could give me some money, but you know, but it's hard. I have been working and I can't bring the papers to them and I need the money right now.**

**I tried to ask Brenda how she felt about going to court and testifying against her abusive partner but she had difficulty understanding what I was saying. Again I tried to explain the court system and how it works but the language barrier was too great. Brenda faces many of the same problems that other abused women face. However considering the language barrier and Brenda's uncertainty about how our social system works she is severely disadvantaged.**

### **C. Abby's Experience**

**Abby is a 51 year old woman, who has a university degree and was married at the time of the assault. She had been in the relationship with her partner for six and a half years. Abby's partner came home one evening and started an argument with Abby. He pinned Abby against the couch and they struggled. In the process of trying to free herself she scratched his face. He left the house stating he was going to the police to**

report her for the abuse. Abby was frantic; she had moved out to the country and was not sure how to contact the police.

I was calling 911, they said was this an emergency and I told them and then they gave me the number...they didn't want me calling if it wasn't really an emergency.

When Abby found out who she should be calling she said:

They [police officers] were too busy to talk to me or to come or send someone out. In the meantime they were taking my husband's statement and they didn't want to come and take a statement from me because they were too busy...They suggested I make an appointment and go the next day.

Abby was frantic and started placing calls to family and friends because she did not know what to do.

I was calling all these people that night, everyone, like the lawyer, not knowing where to turn because I didn't want to make a great big 'Hullabaloo' about it, but I wanted it documented about what happened.

Someone suggested she call the local shelter for battered women and the counselor at the shelter directed her to the SATC. Through the SATC Abby had her injuries photographed and documented. Abby stated:

They showed compassion...It really felt good when I went to the hospital and even the nurse at the hospital was caring.

Abby was given the name of a female constable at the domestic violence unit who gave her the names of Government agencies if Abby wanted to lay a complaint about how she was treated. However, the next

day Abby did go to the police station in her area and talked to the Staff Sergeant. She told the Staff Sergeant how disappointed she was with the other police officer she had spoke with the night of the assault . She explained how the other officer refused to take her statement or pictures of her bruises but did take her husband's statement and pictures of the scratch on his face. Abby indicated that she was not treated well by the police and that they did not believe her. Abby went on to say that the officer did not handle the situation in a professional manner. She felt that no matter what the officer thought of the situation or who he believed he should not have shown a bias of any kind.

Abby decided not to follow through with either the complaint to other Government agencies about the police behavior or about pressing charges. In hindsight she now feels that this may have been a mistake. She is currently going through the divorce process. Her lawyer has the pictures and when the pictures were shown to her partner's lawyer, Abby said her partner's lawyer made the comment that "my head wasn't torn in half that I just had minor scars."

The patterns in Abby's experience with the police and her partner's lawyer indicate a feeling about domestic violence that continues to be prevalent in our society. These patterns are the refusal to listen to or believe abused women when they discuss their abusive situations; blaming the victim of a domestic violent incident instead of the abusive partner; and minimizing the abuse that women endure. These patterns reinforce the

concept that the violence is somehow the women's fault. All of these patterns disempower women to change the situation they are in because all of these patterns lead to the victims' blaming themselves. By blaming the victim, the systemic causes of domestic violence are not addressed. Many people say "After all she could just leave". This kind of thinking relieves society as a whole from having to change laws and policies that relate to domestic violence because it is ultimately the victim's fault, not society's fault, that women are in this situation. This kind of thinking not only maintains women in abusive situations but it also prevents the state from developing and providing services that women need in order to leave an abusive situation.

#### **D. Reflections on the Interview Process**

All the women I interviewed were very forthcoming with information about the violence they endured in the relationship. Throughout the interviews the women appeared to want to talk about the relationship more than they wanted to discuss the services for victims. After I was finished asking the questions many women hesitated to leave. With various interviews I ended up summarizing and saying good bye several times before the woman actually left. It seemed to me that the women involved in this project had a real need to discuss their situations with someone. I would often refer the women to the local battered women's shelter so that if they needed to talk, or if the interview triggered flash backs or nightmares, the women had a safe place to discuss their concerns.



Approximately a month after I stopped the interviews I woke up one night and started to think about all the things women have told me through the eight years that I have been a counselor at a battered women's shelter. Not only did I think that no one should have to hear such horrible things but I also thought no one had the right to inflict that kind of abuse on women and children. No human being has the right to do those heinous acts to another. It's against the law and as Pam so eloquently stated "the system has to change."

I worked as a full time counselor at a battered women's shelter for six and a half years and the past year and a half as a relief counselor while I went to school to complete my Masters Degree. When I initially left my full time position and went back to school I felt like I had been in a war zone. Counseling battered women is very worthwhile; the women have strength and resilience beyond belief. Yet at the same time I did not realize the impact that hearing about the abuse had on me. When I first started counseling I often took the women's experiences home with me. However over the years I stopped doing this. I became desensitized to hearing about the abuse. Since working the relief shifts, and not working permanently, I have found that I am more sensitive to the violent episodes that the women describe and that I have again started to take the women's experiences home with me. Since I started working relief and doing my graduate studies research on domestic violence at the same time, I am not sure if the sensitivity to the women's experiences was due to the fact that I

was not hearing about the violence as frequently as when I worked full-time at the shelter or if it is due to the fact that I am doing research on domestic violence and delving deeper into the subject. Perhaps it is a combination of both.

Being a counselor in a shelter is a very isolating situation for two reasons. First, many women who come to the shelter are in high risk situations so confidentiality must be maintained at all times. The second reason is that even if you want to discuss the situations outside of the shelter many of them are so bizarre that no one would believe that that kind of behavior actually happens in our society. Brenda made an excellent comparison when she saw the pictures of her injuries and said it reminded her of the war in her country.

The counselor role and the researcher role are two separate identities. While doing this research project I consciously reminded myself that I was not there in my counselor role. As stated before, the women were very forthcoming with information. From the moment that they entered the room a rapport developed between us. I thoroughly enjoyed the interviews and talking to the women. The closeness I developed with the women I interviewed was greater than any experience I have had with a client in the role of a counselor. I am not sure why this is the case because both roles have barriers and limitations to them and I enjoy both roles. Perhaps it's because in the researcher role there is more freedom and time to listen to and explore other avenues rather than just those

relating to the specific and immediate problems of abused women. Also the expectations that an abused woman has of a counselor is different. In the counselor role it is almost as if the woman expects you to have all the answers and be able to fix everything. As a researcher you ask questions and seek information that the woman willingly wants to give.

As a counselor there is a professional distance that you place between yourself and the client as a way to cope with the overwhelming emotions and appalling experiences that many abused women express. This distance became apparent in the writing format of this project. My advisor noted that when I wrote the section on the women's voices it was very much as if I was writing a report, very objective. As a counselor the recordings that we do are very factual. Recordings are about what the client thought and felt; there is no room for your own interpretations of the situation. In the back of your mind there is always the thought that your recordings could somehow end up in a court case. For this reason the language in the reports are very detailed containing only factual information. The language and writing style used in many of the Social Sciences is more humanistic where the researcher can make informed assumptions and interpretations through the research process. When writing this project I had difficulty stepping outside of the language and writing style that I had used for the past eight years as a counselor.

When I think of battered women and the isolation they feel because of the abuse I am reminded of the isolation I feel as a counselor. Just as

battered women think no one will believe them I often think no one would believe some of the horrendous things that I have heard over the years.

### **E. Conclusion**

Through the three holistic accounts I have tried to demonstrate both the complexities and the subtleties that women go through when dealing with services related to domestic violence. Whether or not a woman is listened to or believed has an impact on whether she will follow through with other services. Therefore it is particularly important when women report incidences of abuse to the police that they be listened to, believed, and not judged or blamed for the abuse. As we saw with Abby, a woman may end up not following through because of the bad experience she has with the police at the time of the attack.

Pam in contrast did everything she was told to do. She had pictures taken, made a video taped statement and still her partner did not receive a harsh sentence. Did the Judge even look at this evidence and, if not, why not? Are pictures and video taped statements just another hoop that women are to jump through? Are they a way of paying 'lip service' to women who are abused and demand that their partners be charged? Are the pictures and video taped statements a way of getting guilty pleas and a higher conviction rate but not real justice?

Brenda's situation demonstrates the problems that many women face when leaving a domestic violent situation. However, Brenda's situation is compounded because of the language barrier and because she

is not familiar with our social service programs. Many women who leave domestic violent situations have difficulties finding safe affordable housing. Many women work for low wages and have to make a decision about whether to lose a day's wages or to go to social services to see if they are eligible for monthly financial help.

The three holistic accounts of the women's experiences demonstrate the process that abused women go through after they are abused. Many women are confused, frantic and traumatized from the emotional and physical impact of the abuse. It is only after a few days when they have calmed down and started to reflect back on what occurred that they feel confident to make informed decisions. Initially, in this study, even in their chaotic state after the abusive incident most women turned to the local battered women's shelter for guidance, assistance and safety. From there they were referred to other related services they might need.

The narratives were presented to show the whole process through which women who have been assaulted must go. Though, in the previous chapter, the services related to domestic violence have been disaggregated for analysis, these services are in practice interwoven so that a woman is often dealing with many services at one time. Because of this practice, women are often given an overwhelming amount of information that they may not be able to process because of their domestic abuse experience.

Within the three accounts here we see the complexities and subtleties of domestic violence at work: a woman's frantic emotions, the isolation and vulnerability of many women; the many and immediate decisions that have to be made in a matter of minutes; the way the police interact with an abused woman to get a statement; and how the police officers' ideologies and belief systems play into whether they even will take a report and arrest the abusive man. Although it is important for the police to get a detailed and comprehensive report from the woman as soon after the abuse as possible, it is also important to show some compassion and give the woman the time she needs to make informed decisions. The women in this study who felt the police did show compassion and allowed them to make their own decisions gave positive feedback about how they were treated by the police.

We also see the impact that the abusive situation has on the rest of the woman's life. Due to the fear of retaliation the abused woman must leave her home with her children and flee to a shelter in order to remain safe. Women also have practical considerations in the days after the abuse. Where do they live? Do they have enough money to start over? Should they get a separation or a divorce? Will they be believed in court? Will they get custody of their children? Will their partner get visitation rights? Women are very vulnerable immediately following an assault and need time and space before being rushed into major decisions that affect the rest of her life and that of her children.

The following chapters will discuss the concerns raised by the statements the women made about whether they felt victimized or empowered by the SATC, the police or court system. A discussion will also ensue about how the women felt discriminated against by the police and court system and their concerns and responsibilities towards their children. From the women's comments five other themes emerged that will also be discussed. The women's comments about the various services will also be placed in the context of how the state has dealt with feminist demands in the past.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **ANALYZING THE “NEW” INTEGRATED SYSTEM**

Here in this chapter the new integrated approach to domestic violence will be analyzed from the women's words in association with the three patterns that were found in the literature review. In the literature review on how the state deals with feminist demands, outlined in Chapter two, it was found in Canada that policies and laws that on the surface appear to be gender neutral often mask stark gender and class inequalities. It was also found that issues that women have fought to change are still in the control of the state, at times rendering women powerless and under state control. Finally, a pattern was identified within state regulation that often reinforces the ideology of motherhood and traditional values.

In this chapter each of these patterns will be analyzed in the context of what the women thought and felt about their experience of the new integrated system of domestic violence that has been set up by the Ontario Government to assist victims. The Enhanced Sexual Assault Treatment Center (SATC) is one aspect of this new integrated system and the police and the court system are the two other components. What the women I interviewed for this project thought and felt about the three components of the new integrated system will be analyzed in this chapter. While the questions that the 10 women involved in this study were asked referred primarily to the issues of empowerment and victimization, other concerns



emerged from their statements. In the following chapter these concerns will be discussed under the themes of gender, compassion/consistency, economic security and finally the safety concerns of women and children. The analysis of the women's words and whether the new integrated system reinforces the patterns found in the literature forms the basis of my discussion here.

#### **A. The Court System**

None of the women in this study who have completed the court process felt empowered by the sentence that their abusive partner received. Only Lisa and Kaye made any kind of positive comments about the court system. Lisa made positive comments about the Crown Attorney's office sending her letters if she needed more information about the court proceedings. However Lisa's case is still pending. The case was brought before the courts once and was remanded. At the time of the interview she had not met with either the Crown Attorney's office or the Victim Witness Program (VWP).

Kaye who has completed the court process was the only woman who mentioned she felt the judge listened to and believed her about her situation. However, she was not satisfied with the court's decision regarding her partner's sentencing. If she felt that the judge listened to her and believed her, then why was her partner not given the maximum sentence for assaulting her? He was fined, given probation and told not to associate with Kaye. Kaye felt crushed because he was not given a jail

sentence, especially since he lied on the witness stand and the judge indicated that when Kaye's partner testified "nothing matched up". Other women also felt that their voices were silenced by the court system. On the one hand they were asked to speak out about the violence but on the other hand the court did not listen to what they had to say.

Women in this study felt at a disadvantage when they went through the criminal court process. This is the case where as Smart (1989) states, the law appears to be universal and gender neutral but the effects of the law are not. When Jennie went through the criminal court system she ended up having a breakdown because of the constant delays and continual emotional impact of the situation. Even though some men were given jail sentences the women felt that the sentence was unjust when they considered the extent of the crime against them, what they had to endure through the court process, and the emotional toll it has taken on them. Several of the women who have completed the court process found it unfair and felt that the delays in the court system victimized them and worked to the benefit of the offender. All of the women who encountered the court system felt it should not take so long. Janice had this comment to make about the length of the court case and how it made her feel:

I'm the victim in this and I feel victimized by the court process. By continually allowing him to drag the process out they [courts] are not upholding the law they are suppose to, as a matter of fact they are breaking the law, because what he did was against the law. And he is not being held accountable for it.

Some women discussed the structural inequalities within the court system. Canadian studies suggest that plea bargaining happens in 60% to 70% of the cases that go through the criminal court system (Ursel & Brickey, 1996: 69). Both Denise and Pam mentioned that, because their partner pleaded guilty a plea bargaining process took place. Therefore a compromise was reached between the Crown Attorney's office and their partner's lawyer on the sentencing outcome. Both women made a victim impact statement that they felt had no effect because of the plea bargaining process. Pam was not consulted at all about the plea bargaining process. Denise was consulted and she stated that the only reason her partner received the sentence that he did was because she took an active part and made sure that the Crown Attorney was aware of what had happened previously with the court case. However, Denise raised the concern that during the plea bargaining sessions some of the charges were dropped. When the charges were dropped this meant the sentence her partner could receive would be reduced thereby making the sentence not as severe.

The women were asked if the judge could overturn a plea bargain decision that had been reached by the defense lawyer and the Crown Attorney's office. Both Pam and Denise felt that the judge could overturn a decision if he wanted. Pam stated:

Like this was already prearranged [plea bargain sentence]...the worse part was he [judge] said to the prosecutor "well you put me in a real bind here. You made this deal and this woman is

**saying it's not a fair deal, you've tied my hands"... he [judge] could have but it's a thing between a prosecutor and a judge, he would have made the prosecutor's office look foolish."**

**When Denise was asked if the judge could overturn a plea bargain decision she said:**

**I think the judge can. My impression is that the judge can do whatever the judge wants. But they don't, on average they are cooperative with the lawyers. If both lawyers walk in and agree the judge says 'great'. It's less debate he had to do, it's less rationalizing for what he had to do. They go with it. It's a rarity if they don't.**

**Both of these statements indicate that the judge listened to the lawyers rather than the victims. Neither of these women felt that justice was served.**

**Also both Denise and Jennie felt that their partners should have been charged with other crimes. Jennie wondered why her partner was charged with aggravated assault instead of attempted murder. It is the police who lay the charges, but it is the Crown Attorney's office who decides if there is enough evidence for a court case to proceed. If the Crown does not think there is enough evidence then the charges may be reduced or dropped. However, in a plea bargaining situation, because the abusive person is pleading guilty, charges that would stand if a trial was to proceed are often reduced. Pam felt like her partner was getting a pat on the back for pleading guilty and not wasting the taxpayers' money on a trial. Pam also indicated that she would gladly have testified in court if**

justice was to be served. But in the case of Kaye, even though she did go to court and testify, her partner still did not receive a jail sentence. Jennie was extremely upset that the judge mentioned her most obvious injury on several occasions yet neglected to even consider the fact that her life was in jeopardy because her partner choked her. Considering the impact of the abuse on women one wonders whether justice is served by giving abusive men a lenient sentence. The leniency with which male violence is treated condones violence against women and is an important factor in maintaining gender inequalities in our society (Lees, 1997: 173).

When discussing the court sentence none of the women indicated that their abusive partner was ordered to go for counseling for his abusive behavior. In Pam's situation her partner went to anger management counseling on his own before the court sentence was handed down, showing the judge he was well on his way to being a 'good citizen again'. The men mostly received a fine, a light jail term (of which they serve only two thirds), and probation. Syers & Edleson (1992: 500) found that when police arrest batterers, court system follow-up may be very important. Among arrested men, those who received court-ordered and mandated counseling were the least likely to repeat acts of violence. However, none of the men in this study were ordered to receive treatment of any kind.

Several of the women who had pictures taken of their injuries and a video taped statement made were not sure if the judge even looked at this

evidence. Of the five women who have been to court three of them had both pictures and video taped statements made and two women had only pictures taken. Only one woman commented that the judge examined the pictures. The other women were unsure if the judge had examined the pictures and/or the video taped statements, so they were unsure of whether the pictures and video taped statements had an impact on their abusive partner's sentence. Of the four women who have completed the court process none of them were pleased with the court outcome and the sentence their partner received. As Boyd (1997: 20) points out we must be cautious of state action that does little to improve the circumstances of women's lives.

Pictures and video taped statements were initially taken so that the judge could see the impact of the abuse on the women. Having visible documentation of physical injuries appears to be a beneficial idea because it allows the judge or possibly a jury to see the extent of a woman's injuries. If judges are not viewing these pictures and/or video taped statements then one wonders why are they being done. If the judge does view them, then why are men not receiving stronger sentences?<sup>16</sup> As

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<sup>16</sup> It is outside the scope of this study to examine the conviction rate of abusive men before the pictures and videotaping were being done. It has been reported that with this new way of gathering evidence the conviction rate of abusive men is 100%. In my experience as a counselor at a shelter for battered women, before the pictures and video taping were done abusive men often did not get convicted. On the surface then it appears that the pictures and video taped statements have made an improvement. However what is currently happening is that when pictures and video taped statements are gathered as evidence abusive men are pleading guilty. Due to this fact a plea bargaining process takes place and the abusive man does not receive a harsh sentence. As indicated by the women in this study they thought that their abusive partners should have received a stronger sentence.

**Snider (1997: 239) points out we need to be suspicious of the criminal justice system as a way of invisibly monitoring and controlling women's lives. Since women in our society are already disenfranchised we need to be careful that new state regulations that are set up to help women do not further victimize them.**

**In Abby's situation no charges were laid so the case is not being heard through the criminal courts but she is going through family court to obtain a divorce and a settlement from the relationship. Abby's partner's lawyer made a revealing comment when he saw the pictures of Abby after the abusive incident. The comment was that "her head wasn't torn in half; she just had minor scars". This statement from a lawyer who knows that any kind of assault is a crime is horrendous. It is through the minimization of abuse and attitudes like this that women are discouraged from reporting the abuse. Also it is through the minimization of the abuse that court sentences for abusive men get reduced. These kinds of statements keep women locked into abusive relationships and take the responsibility of the abuse away from the man therefore allowing him not to be accountable for his behavior.**

**The Victim Witness Program (VWP) which is part of the Crown Attorney's office received mixed comments from the women. This program was set up to assist victims who go through the court process. Part of the responsibility of this program is to keep victims informed about court dates and times. Also if the victim feels the need to have someone**

support her when she has to appear in court a person from the VWP is to accompany the victim. Kaye felt that the VWP listened to what she had to say but she did state that if she wanted any information she had to call them. Many of the women did not feel that they were kept adequately informed about their court case. Jennie repeatedly called for information and could never get through. When Jennie did get through and left a message, her calls were never returned.

Janice's court case was pending at the time of the interview. She had called VWP at least a dozen times and each time she was told they would contact her when they had some information. Janice stated she was afraid they would contact her two weeks before the court trial. She wanted information before then so that she could mentally prepare herself for court and arrange a baby sitter for her child. Janice stated "I can't just drop everything at the drop of a hat and go, that's very hard for me". Janice is unsure what the charges are against her abusive partner or what the minimum and maximum sentences are for his charges. Janice stated she feels completely lost. She expressed the fear that somehow the case would get turned around on her. Janice expressed the frustration and fear that many women have with the VWP and the court system. All of the women who had been to court or who had cases pending expressed fear and concern about having to appear. Fischer and Rose (1995: 418) also found this a common theme in their study. One way to eliminate this fear is for the women to gain knowledge and information about the court



proceedings. This is the responsibility of the VWP; however, the VWP does not appear to have met the needs of the women whom I interviewed. One woman suggested that the VWP or the Crown Attorney's office make a package that they send to all victims of domestic violence with both generic and specific information. An example of generic information would be what is a restraining order, what happens if an abusive man breaches it, and what sentencing goes with what charge. Specific information about court dates and times should also be provided.

All of the women who had appeared in court mentioned how intimidated they felt when they had to testify. Part of this intimidation comes from the layout of the court room. Two women mentioned that the prisoner's box needs to be further away from the witness stand because in order to get to the witness stand they had to walk right by the abusive person. Although this would not be an easy problem to solve because of the structure of the courtroom some other accommodations should be made when abused women need to testify against their abusive partner. One woman mentioned she could have asked for a screen to be in place so that she could not see her abusive partner and he could not see her but she felt that if she asked for the screen she was demonstrating that he was still able to control her.

Denise believes that the role of the VWP is currently inadequate because it does not prepare victims to be effective witnesses. She watched two court cases before she went to the preliminary hearing for her

court case. Denise discussed at length how her partner's lawyer tried to twist and turn what she was saying against her. She said: "it wasn't about trying to find out the truth, it was about games and semantics and manipulations". When Denise had contact with the VWP they repeatedly told her to just tell the truth, but Denise feels that it is not adequate to just tell the truth. She believes that when you testify you have to be an effective witness and be aware of the games and manipulations that go on in the court room. Denise stated that after having watched two court cases she felt better prepared when she had to testify.

In sum, none of the women I interviewed felt empowered by the court system. They did not feel listened to or believed. However, only one woman felt judged or blamed by the court system for the abuse. Many women indicated they felt intimidated when having to appear in court. Other women did not feel that their requests for information about court proceedings were taken seriously. Two women indicated that the judge could have overturned a plea bargaining decision if he wanted to, but did not because it was easier to go with the decision that had already been made and avoided making the Crown Attorney's office looking bad. When you consider that our judicial system is based on equality for all, we must ask if equality prevails when a woman who has been abused cannot even find out simple information about the court case against her abusive partner. If she is to testify, why can she not find out the date and time of the trial, the charge against her abusive partner, and the sentence for the

charge? Without this information a woman is made powerless, and that is how the court system made the women whom I interviewed feel. In this sense using the criminal justice system to reduce domestic violence is not a reliable solution. My study supports the view that using it as an integral part of feminist strategies to control domestic violence is highly questionable.

On the surface the law appears to be gender neutral and treat every individual in a similar fashion, but this is not the case. It is important to distinguish between the law and the effects of the law (Smart & Brophy, 1985: 17). The law affects every aspect of our life and is used as a means of social control. We often think of the law as one entity however it is composed of many various components and individuals, from police officers to judges. In court cases everyday experiences get translated into legal scripts and so experiences that are important can get lost or misinterpreted (Smart, 1989: 11). The legal system has enormous power over people. Societal beliefs give us the impression that the law can right wrongs, but the law is imposed by individuals with attitudes that are saturated in patriarchal beliefs. Smart (1984: xi) states the law does not give power to men over women but legitimizes the preconditions that create an unequal power structure in our society. For this reason when women engage with the law they are disadvantaged. The court system aspect of this study confirms this view.

## **B. The Police**

Often the police are the first people whom an abused woman contacts after she is assaulted. Therefore it is important for abused women to be listened to, believed, not judged or blamed for the abuse, and to be given their options by the police. As Denise stated she would have jumped out of the system if the officer to whom she reported the abuse indicated that he was judging or blaming her in any way. Six of the ten women felt that they were not initially listened to and four women felt they were not believed by the police.

Abby never did make a police statement because the officer indicated he believed her husband's version that she attacked him. Kaye and Marie were told that they were not able to make a statement because they did not report the abusive incident soon enough after the attack even though both women had visible physical injuries at the time they approached the police. Studies done on victim preference for arrest indicate that the request by victims to arrest is ignored by the police in 75% of domestic cases compared with 40% of stranger assault cases (Buzawa, Austin & Buzawa, 1995: 460). A woman's request for police to arrest when there was a peace bond or a restraining order was ranked sixth out of 12 situational factors (Rigakos, 1997: 212). Therefore, the woman's request to arrest is on average only "slightly important" in the disposition of police towards effecting an arrest (Rigakos, 1997: 212).

When the police do not arrest it indicates the discretionary power that police officers have when it comes to mandatory arrest policies. Mandatory arrest policies state that an officer will arrest anyone in a domestic assault incident where there is reasonable and probable grounds that an assault has occurred (Sparks, 1997: 42). It is obvious that in Kaye's and Marie's cases, the grounds were considered sufficient by police to make an arrest because when both women pursued the matter arrests were made. Kaye's case has been through the courts and her partner was found guilty of assault. In a 1994 Statistics Canada report 24% of women who contacted the police because of a domestic violence incident felt the police should have been more supportive and 20% of the women felt the police should have laid a charge against the perpetrator (Faubert & Hinch, 1996: 238).

For many women, if they are not listened to or believed by the police and an arrest is not made, this can have a disempowering and indeed a devastating effect on them (Buzawa, Austin & Buzawa, 1995: 40). In Janice and Abby's situation the police officers were very clear that they did not believe what either women were saying. Police officers do not necessarily have to believe what women are saying but as Abby said "no matter how the officer felt or who he believed he should not have shown a bias when dealing with the situation". In Abby's situation her partner reported to the police that Abby had assaulted him. Abby informed the officer that she had been protecting herself against her abusive partner.

De Soto (1997: 54) points out that women in our society are not supposed to use violence as a way to protect themselves because women in our society are seen as wives and mothers who protect and serve the family. Abby's case may indicate how, once again, patriarchal beliefs ensure that women are not treated equally in the criminal justice system.

Whether or not a woman thinks she is believed by the police when she discloses information on abuse is linked to whether she feels judged or blamed. Pam raised the issue of feeling judged and blamed by the police for the abuse. She stated that although it was never verbally spoken she felt an underlying current from the police because they knew her partner. From the police she had the feeling that she must have been asking to be abused and that she would not be with her partner if she didn't like that kind of treatment. Hart (1996: 101) states that battered women are often viewed by the criminal justice system as responsible for the crimes committed against them because battered women are believed to have provoked the perpetrator into violence.

Denise also raised the concern about being judged or blamed in a different context. Denise discussed how the officer in charge of her case "took flack" from other officers in his department because he was pursuing Denise's case. The key issue with Pam and Denise's statements has to do with the attitudes and beliefs of the police towards women in domestic violent relationships. As Sparks (1997: 37) points out, police departments are steeped in patriarchy; they are made up of men who have a legitimate

authority to use power and control over people. When police officers attend a domestic dispute they bring with them a set of ideas and beliefs about the individuals involved (Ferraro, 1993: 168-70). For example, Rigakos (1995: 243) found that "the occupational culture of the Delta Police Department in British Columbia cultivates conservative values towards women, family and marriage which eventually lead to skewed perspectives of battered women as symbolic complainants who are sometimes manipulative, and often unreliable witnesses". My study confirms women's generally negative assessment of how the police deal with domestic violence cases.

Janice's and Kaye's comments about what a police detective and a family court judge said indicate that the ideology of motherhood and traditional values can work for and against women. Although neither the detective nor the judge specifically discussed the ideology of motherhood it is indirectly reinforced by their comments and actions. In Janice's situation the detective threatened to take her child from her if she did not act in a specific way to protect her child. In Kaye's situation the judge refused to separate a mother and child on a traditional holiday that celebrates motherhood and the birth of a child. Although the ideology of motherhood and traditional values are not directly spoken they are reinforced by these comments and actions. Both of these statements indicate that it is the woman who is primarily responsible for the child. From the position that these two women were placed in we can see that the reinforcement of

motherhood and traditional values can lead to women feeling disempowered or empowered in our society.

Another set of questions I asked concerning the police dealt with the making and viewing of video taped statements. Six women had video taped statements made. The women's emotions and thoughts on the subject varied. Some women said that they did not have any feelings or thoughts at all during the making of the video tape, whereas other women used words like traumatic, difficult, and nervous to describe their feelings during the process. One woman had the statement done the night she was assaulted and discussed how ill she felt because of the pain from the attack. Overall, the statements that the women made about how they felt during the video taped statements indicate they did not feel empowered by this process.

The thoughts and feelings that the women expressed about having the video taped statement made demonstrate the various reactions that women go through after an assault. Some women are numb after the attack whereas other women are in shock, traumatized or angry. The different emotions a woman experiences immediately following an attack has major implications for whether women should be making any kind of a statement or report so soon after being assaulted.

Only two women have seen the video taped statement they made. One woman commented that she looked like a scared little girl and that was a side of her she did not recognize. She was also surprised that on



the video taped statement she gave as much information as she did. The other woman thought she looked nervous and said it didn't sound like her. It is significant then that upon viewing themselves and hearing themselves on the video taped statement, the women did not think they acted or sounded like themselves. If women cannot recognize themselves or remember what they said during the process of having the video taped statement made then what does this say about the information being presented as evidence in a court case. Does this mean that in the future if a woman is cross examined in court about her video taped statement that her thoughts and feelings could be used against her by the defense lawyer?

In sum, the women had mixed comments about the treatment they received from the police. Some women made very positive comments indicating feelings of empowerment from the treatment they received from police. For example: Lisa felt that the officers she dealt with made her feel comfortable, and explained her options to her. Carol felt empowered when a police officer disclosed personal information about his family of origin and called her a couple of days later to find out how she was doing. However, other women made negative comments indicating feelings of victimization by the police process. The negative comments and the women's feelings of victimization tend to override the positive comments and feelings of empowerment because of the tremendous impact that police treatment subsequently has on the women's lives. An abused

woman is in a very dangerous situation: to go to the police and not be listened to or to be blamed for the abuse is not only damaging to a woman's sense of self worth, but putting her life in further danger. As Marie told the officer who refused to press charges against her abusive husband:

...What am I supposed to do, wait till he gets home, tell him I want a divorce and wait till he hits me again. Then you're going to come and arrest him...

The women in this study had several suggestions for how to improve the service that the police provide. Many women stated they felt the police did not deal with them in a professional manner. Therefore, some women felt the police needed to be educated about domestic violence. One woman suggested they attend workshops on the topic. Still another woman commented that when victims of domestic violence go to the police station the police should be willing to listen and take a statement. As this woman pointed out not everyone has access to a phone when they are assaulted and not every woman can leave the night she is assaulted because the abusive person is in the house watching them.

In this section on how the police dealt with women who have been in an abusive relationship we can see the three patterns that were found in the literature surface through the women's words. During the making and viewing of the video taped statements the women made victimizing comments. When the police refused to take Abby's statement and

pictures of her bruises but did take a statement from her husband and pictures of his scratches we see the gender inequalities that often exist when the police deal with victims of domestic violence. Finally, when the police detective made remarks to Janice about protecting her child we saw the reinforcement of motherhood and traditional gender values being emphasized.

### **C. The Sexual Assault Treatment Center**

Overall, in this study I have found that all the women who had contact with the SATC felt it was working well and that it is a valuable and worthwhile program. Nine women that were interviewed went through the process at the SATC and all but one woman still has contact with a follow-up nurse at the Treatment Center. When asked why they decided to be interviewed for this thesis many of the women said it was because the SATC had helped them in some way and by taking part in my research they were hoping to educate and help others. Some women expressed the concern that the system needs to change and by speaking out about violence against women they felt that they could initiate changes.

Within the context of the SATC all of the women felt listened to, and believed, they did not feel they were being judged or blamed for the abuse and stated that they had been given sufficient options and alternatives by the SATC. Several women mentioned that the nurse from the SATC encouraged them to contact the local shelter for battered women, or to contact the police about the assault. The SATC gave the

women their options but also gave them the choice to do what they thought was best for themselves. None of the women said that they felt pressured by the SATC to follow through with any of the options that they were given. As Kaye pointed out, the nurses guided her through the process but the choices for the future were hers to make.

Brenda drew a comparison between a follow-up nurse and her own mother. Brenda makes this comment about the nurse:

She's the best, she understands like a mother all the time. 'Cause my mother, she always understands me, but she [nurse] is really better for me. Because for you the feeling is best if somebody can talk with you and ask you what happened with some problem.

In this statement Brenda suggests that the nurse understands her better than her mother because the nurse is willing to ask questions about the abusive relationship. Brenda feels she can confide in the nurse about her situation, whereas she could not do so with her mother even though her mother knows her and understands her. Brenda has no family in Canada so finds the contact with the SATC gives her a sense of support and empowerment.

The women who were interviewed also found other avenues of support within the community that empowered them. Nine of the women interviewed had some contact with the local battered women's shelter. The shelter runs a support group for victims of domestic violence. Janice stated:

**They are phenomenal. Like I know my counselor there said if I ever needed anything I could call them in an instant just to talk. I will definitely continue there for another 12 weeks. Especially while going through the court process. I noticed that there was a week I had to miss and I noticed in the second week I was ready to go and get back in there. Even if I have nothing to say I just need that strengthening. I need that right now in my life. I need that, it's good that they're there.**

**The other eight women had either stayed at the shelter or called the shelter at the time of the assault. All of them mentioned the shelter in a positive way. Two of the women stated that it was through the encouragement and support of the shelter staff that they found the courage to have pictures taken and to follow through with calling the police. Other women commented that they turned to the shelter after being assaulted because they were confused about what to do next. The shelter staff gave them referrals and guidance.**

**Many women found support in their relationship with family and friends, in addition to the formal support systems. Kaye stated:**

**My sisters guided me..... my sisters were there for me. I told them everything ....they know everything and they are so supportive. They go to court with me, for the assault... They go to appointments, they help me out if the baby's sick. I mean they are there and they listen to me.**

**Eight of the ten women mentioned in some way what a support the SATC was for them. The question of whether the SATC would provide emotional support after the abusive incident and throughout the court**

procedure was raised in the second chapter of this thesis. All eight of these women keep in contact with a follow-up nurse, some women more than others. Some women call the SATC nurse on a regular basis while other women only do so occasionally. A good example of this is Brenda who calls a follow-up nurse on almost a daily basis. Jennie also stated that although it has been a year since the abuse, she still calls the SATC occasionally to keep in touch. Jennie knows that, if she needed to, she could call or page a follow-up nurse and a nurse would be there for her. Several women mentioned that a follow-up nurse went to court with them and emotionally supported them through that ordeal. It was clear from the women's comments that the SATC provides emotional support as well as recording the physical injuries.

Regarding the issue of empowerment the women made some notable comments about having their injuries photographed and when they saw the pictures of their injuries. The one comment made by Lisa that she felt like a criminal having a mug shot taken was revealing. Lisa's comment was not a reflection on the nurse or the service that the SATC provided because Lisa made other comments such as, "the nurse was so caring and nice, she.. tried to comfort me." I tried to explore the issue of why it felt to Lisa like she was having a mug shot taken, but Lisa had difficulty expressing why she felt this way, except to say it was "this way and that way". Lisa made this statement while she turned her head from side to side. Lisa was one of the last women I interviewed and it would have

been interesting to explore this comment with other women to see if they had similar feelings. Other women had stated that they felt ashamed or embarrassed about having the pictures taken but no one else made the same analogy as Lisa.

Many women discussed the impact of seeing the pictures of their injuries for the first time. The women appeared to use the pictures as a way of self reflection, looking back at how far they have come, or as a strength not to return to that situation again. One woman said it was not until she saw the pictures that she realized how badly she was beaten. So, although the women felt ashamed and embarrassed about having the pictures taken, when the women viewed the pictures, the pictures provided a confirmation about the severity of the abuse they had endured. The pictures also provided a source of strength to the women not to return to the abusive situation.

Although the pictures were generally seen as a source of strength, two women made what are sometimes referred to as "self victim blaming" comments. One woman throughout the interview used statements like "I'm stupid, I'm dumb, It makes you feel like an idiot". Women in abusive situations often blame themselves for the situation (Barnett, Martinez, & Keyson, 1996: 227). This is because women in our society are generally seen as caregivers and nurturers so if something is wrong in the relationship they are blamed. The other woman in this study who made relevant comments on this issue stated she did not think anyone would

listen to or believe her. When asked why she felt she would not be believed or listened to she said it was because her partner continually told her the abuse was her fault. Consequently, she felt no one would believe or listen to her when she described the abuse to the nurse or shelter staff. She expressed amazement that the police, shelter staff and the nurse actually listened to and believed her. While her case shows the impact that living with an abusive man has on a woman's self confidence, it also demonstrates that if women are listened to and believed their self esteem is enhanced (Dutton, 1992 : 77).

The women in this study were asked if they could think of any changes that the SATC could implement that would benefit other women who would use this service in the future. Two women had these suggestions. One woman indicated that she would like to see the office hours at the hospital extended to a 24 hour service. Currently the office is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday. After hours and on weekends a nurse is on call to attend at the emergency room of the hospital if she is needed. After this was explained to the woman I interviewed she still felt it was necessary to have the office more accessible to the public.

The other suggestion about the SATC involved the book that they gave one of the women. The woman was disappointed in the book's content and she did not feel it met her needs. She stated the book listed services for victims of domestic violence and what she needed at the time



was something more related to the emotional impact of abuse and the feelings she was experiencing upon leaving an abusive situation.

Overall, the women in this study found their experience with the SATC to be empowering. By giving abused women the option to call the police or shelter, by advocating to other services on behalf of abused women, by supporting women through the court case, and by educating women about domestic violence through the emotional support of follow-up counseling, the SATC is challenging the way domestic violence has been managed before in our society.

The comments that the women in this study made about the SATC are in direct contrast to the police and court system when we examine the three patterns that were found in the previous literature review. In this study the women who experienced the process of the SATC felt empowered, they did not feel marginalized or disenfranchised and the ideology of motherhood and traditional gender values was not reinforced. The SATC is able to avoid these patterns because it was set up to meet the needs of individual women who are victims of domestic violence. The primary reason the SATC avoids reinforcing the patterns found in the literature is that it starts with the identified needs of the women who use this service and works with the women to meet their needs. By allowing women the time and space to determine exactly what they want the SATC is an empowering program for abused women.

#### **D. Conclusion**

In sum, the women who went through the SATC felt empowered by this process. However with the police, some women felt empowered and others did not. None of the women who went through the court process felt empowered—many of them made statements related to feeling powerless and victimized. Although the terms empowerment/victimization are often thought of as dichotomous, in this study, we find that this may not be the case. It is important to dissect the services related to the new integrated system because if we were to plot these services on a continuum of empowerment and victimization, we would find the women had different views on the various parts of the system. On the one end the SATC forms an important part of the empowerment process, while the police are on either side of the center, with women experiencing a range of both empowering and victimization situations. The court system, on the other hand, is on the opposite end where women identified it clearly as part of the victimization process. All of the women who had gone through the court system felt that it needed improvement in order to meet the needs of abused women whose partners had been charged with assaulting them. By plotting the new integrated approach to domestic violence on a continuum of empowerment to victimization we see the many contradictions within the system. The contradictions that occur within the new integrated approach to domestic violence feed into and perpetuate the three patterns that were analyzed in this section.

The Enhanced SATC is a relatively new service to victims of domestic violence. It is in its initial stages of growth and development so although it is monitored by the state it has a certain amount of autonomy to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence. According to the women in this study it is a very valuable service with the potential to assist women who need it. However, services in the past that have started out being beneficial to women and with a lot of autonomy end up falling heavily under state control and state regulation. As we saw with the battered women's shelter movement, as the state becomes more involved autonomy is lost or severely reduced. When we consider the other two services that have been examined for this thesis, the police have more state regulations and state control and did not meet the needs of victims of domestic violence to the same extent as the SATC. Furthermore, the court system which is totally under state control and state regulation never met the needs of women, in this study. From these examples we can determine that as services fall under state control and regulation they may not meet the needs of the women whom they were initially set up to assist.

As Snider (1997) points out the criminal justice system has its own agenda, so too does the state. The new integrated approach to domestic violence was set up to assist victims of domestic violence but also to create a more efficient way to manage and streamline services related to domestic violence. The potential for emphasis to be placed on the latter goal rather than the former is great. In order to continually meet the needs

of the victims of domestic violence the new integrated system needs constant monitoring and evaluation, with the inclusion of women's critical perspective on the system. For, as Snider (1997) states once the pressure for change is lessened or deflected, the state reverts back to maintaining and servicing its own needs.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **BEYOND THE NEW INTEGRATED SYSTEM**

As we have seen in this study women felt empowered by the Enhanced Sexual Assault Treatment Center (SATC) and indicated that they felt they were treated fairly. The SATC empowered women because it has been set up to meet the different needs of victims of domestic violence. The SATC starts from the perspective of women and works with women to ensure that their needs are met. Taking into consideration the many differences that women in a domestic violent situation face allows for individual differences to be respected and for abused women to receive fair and equal treatment. However part of the problem with the police and court system is that their mandate is to provide a universal and gender neutral service into which everyone must fit. Also the police and court system are based on a hierarchy and steeped in patriarchy. This provides obstacles to women who need to utilize these services. Women in our society are not viewed as the same as men and do not have the same privileged position that men do; when women interact with state regulations that assume everyone is equal they therefore receive unequal treatment.

Through listening to women's comments on the new integrated approach to domestic violence certain themes become apparent that do not fit into an evaluation of the new integrated system of domestic violence. One of the aims of this study was to hear women's thoughts and

feelings about the new integrated system of domestic violence. This chapter will go beyond the new integrated system and start with the needs of women that are not met within this system. Some of the needs that the women expressed in this study were issues related to gender, compassion/consistency, children's safety, safety concerns for women, and the economic security of women who leave an abusive relationship. How these concerns arose for the women in this study will be examined and then a broader view of how the state has dealt with these issues before will be taken into consideration.

#### **A. Gender**

The issue of gender is an important one when it comes to domestic violence. Domestic violence is about men having power and control over women. One in two Canadian women have suffered from some form of physical or sexual violence, since the age of 16 (Rodgers, 1994: 2). Of those women who have ever been married or lived with a man in a common-law relationship, 29% have been physically or sexual assaulted by a marital partner at some point during the relationship (Rodgers, 1994: 2). Although domestic violence is a crime that occurs to women on a large scale, many police services and court officials are composed mainly of men.

Several women in this study discussed the issue of a preference for a female police officer, or judge. Abby wondered why a female officer was not present when she tried to make a statement about the abusive incident

that she experienced. Jennie clearly expressed the fact that she would have preferred dealing with a female officer and thinks that female officers should be called in whenever there is a female victim. Jennie also expressed the fact that she thought there should be female judges. Janice drew a comparison between the way a female officer assisted her and the way a male detective spoke to her. Janice presented the female officer as caring and compassionate while the male officer was presented as using his power and influence over her.

Jennie clearly expressed why she thought female officers and judges should be available if the victim is a female. Jennie believes that males and females think differently and she makes a reference to the “other guy’s club” and how men are “for” men. The issue of men and women thinking differently has been researched by Carol Gilligan (Matlin, 1987: 220). She proposes that men see their relationships with other people as part of a hierarchy, in which some people have more power and influence than others. Women on the other hand, see their life as dependent on connections sustained by the activities of care, based on a bond of attachment.

In Janice’s situation the male and female officers she dealt with demonstrated the characteristics that Gilligan proposes. The male detective used power and control when swearing at Janice about letting her partner see her child. The female officer showed Janice care and compassion in looking for Janice’s jewelry and by calling her the next day

to make sure she was all right. Janice feels comfortable enough with the female police officer because Janice knows if she needed assistance the female officer would help her.

However, many of the women I interviewed dealt only with male officers and they had positive comments to make about them. Lisa explained how the officers she dealt with made her laugh and gave her their cards in case she needed to contact them for further assistance or information about her case. Carol described how the one male officer she had contact with told her about his childhood experiences to encourage her to consider leaving the abusive situation. Carol stated the male officer called the shelter twice to see how she was doing because 'she was on his mind'. What these contradictions between the way the women in this study were treated by male and female officers indicate is that caring and compassion can occur in both males and females. The attributes of power and control and caring and compassion are learned attributes. These attributes are learned through childhood experiences and through the training process that police officers receive. Buzawa & Buzawa (1996: 81) concluded that classic patterns of police training may reinforce dominant occupational ideology towards domestic violence and that traditional police training still fails to provide officers with any basic skills required for successful domestic violence intervention.

Even though some of the women in this study had a good experience dealing with male police officers, the issue of women dealing



with males directly after being assaulted by a male is a crucial issue. What the question of gender shows is that how police officers or judges deal with abused women has more to do with their personality and attitudes and beliefs about women in society, than about their gender. However the gender of the officer does raise the question: how comfortable can a woman feel with a male officer after she has just been assaulted by an abusive male partner? As Jennie stated as soon as a female victim is involved a female police officer should be radioed to assist. When policies and procedures are established that deal with women then women should be involved in every aspect of the development and carrying out of these policies and procedures.

Domestic violence is a problem that is about men controlling women, therefore it is important to deal with women not men around issues of domestic violence. As we have seen with the SATC when services around domestic violence are set up by women for women, women feel more empowered when dealing with these services. When setting up services related to domestic violence the criminal justice system needs to look to the women's health movement and the SATC to find solutions that are women centered.

#### **B. Compassion and Consistency**

From the comments that the women made in the pervious section we see the concepts of compassion and consistency playing an important role in how women felt they had been treated by the police and court

system. All of the women felt that the nurses at the SATC showed compassion and caring. It appears through the comments of the women that an important aspect for them when they deal with services related to domestic violence is that what they need at the time of an assault is someone that understands what they are going through. The SATC was set up to deal with victims of domestic violence, the majority of whom are women. Also it is implemented through the Ministry of Health by nurses who have been trained to meet the needs of victims. It was clear through my contact with the nurses from the SATC that they care about the women that they are trying to help. The nurses from the SATC work with the woman from the time that she is assaulted, through the court process and even after the court process if the woman so desires. Through this process a bond is established between the nurse and the woman.

It appears from this study that the women who had positive contacts with police officers also felt that some kind of a bond was established. This bond was achieved in different ways, such as giving the woman a business card, or calling her the next day. However, in other incidents with the police many women did not feel a bond was developed. This meant that women often felt that their questions and concerns were not addressed by the police. As one woman in this study mentioned she saw the need for the police to get their reports and pictures immediately following the abusive incident but that the police officers could have shown her some consideration.

The lack of compassion and consistency can also be seen when women talked about how they were shuffled between people in the Crown Attorney's office. Two major complaints that the women had about the criminal court system was that they had many Crown Attorneys and that they did not get an opportunity to meet with the Crown Attorney before the court case. Jennie stated she had four or five Crown Attorneys and that she felt as if she was just a case number to them. She said one Crown Attorney did not even know her name. Marie made a worthwhile point when she asked how Crown Attorneys can defend a woman when they have not talked to them and don't even know what they look like. Denise stated that every time a new Crown Attorney took over, the circumstances of the case were changed and the sentence that her partner was to receive was reduced.

When Janice made an appointment herself to see the Crown Attorney he could not even find her file; she felt that going to see him was a waste of her time because she ended up telling him what was happening. It is clear from the women's statements that dealing with the Crown Attorney's office was not an empowering process for the women who have gone through the court system. Many women in this study felt that the Crown Attorney's office should meet with every victim and that only one Crown should deal with each case.

The difference between the ways the SATC and the police and court system operate indicates that when services are set up to meet the

needs of women this can happen. However, when an existing agency or service just adds women's needs into an already existing patriarchal system it does not always work to the benefit of women. What is necessary here is for women to deal with one police officer or one crown attorney as much as possible. This would enable the woman to work with the police and legal system to establish a rapport and work towards achieving a solution that would satisfy both the woman and the legal system.

It is also important to continually assess services related to abused women because, as Snider points out, the state is not always a reliable or consistent ally to women. Therefore a feminist independent committee to monitor and help women in domestic violent situations deal with other facilitates could be beneficial. From the women in this study who have dealt with the SATC, we have heard that it is doing an excellent job of meeting the needs of women. However, in the past, state policies and procedures that have been set up to assist women have not always continued to do so. As we have seen previously this is the case with policies and programs such as the no drop policy and battered women's shelters.

### **C. Economic Security**

Another concern that arose out of the discussion with the women in this study is that of economic security which includes such matters as the cost of the legal process, the financial impact that proceeding through the

legal system has on their children and on the women's jobs, the implications of the wage differential between men and women, and finally, the financial burden of having to find somewhere else to live.

Kaye and Carol discussed the financial burden that going through the family court system places on them and their children. The concern was raised in chapter two about whether the new integrated approach to domestic violence disenfranchises some women. As can be seen from Kaye and Carol's situation due to a lack of economic resources they felt disadvantaged by the court system. Kaye's partner brought her back to court for "default for the divorce" after a judge had already granted Kaye a divorce and custody of their child. At the time that Kaye's divorce and custody battle was going on she was also going to court for the assault charges related to the abuse by her partner. Kaye stated at one point she was going to court every week for several weeks and each time Kaye had to appear in court or go and see her lawyer she needed to take time off work. This placed Kaye's job in jeopardy. Kaye stated her work place was very good about giving her time off. However because the court cases dragged on for so long Kaye stated that her work place required documentation from the court system to substantiate why Kaye was taking so much time away from work.

Carol raises the point about the wage differential between herself and her husband. As Armstrong (1997: 47) pointed out women earn only about 72 cents for every dollar a man earns. Therefore if a man wants to

pursue a lengthy court battle over divorce and custody issues he has more financial resources to be able to do so. All of the women I interviewed raised the point of the length of time that both family and criminal court cases take. Janice discussed the issue of the length of the court case and how, by dragging the court case on, she felt the inequality of the court system because her partner was not being held accountable for his actions.

Continually going to court not only drains the woman's financial resources but also her emotional stamina. Women who are leaving an abusive situation are usually going through both the family court and criminal court simultaneously and this often takes a toll on the woman's health. Kaye discussed how her health suffered because of the stress of the whole situation. She started out with a simple ear and throat infection that lasted for over six weeks. She ended up having to take time off work and said she thought her illness was prolonged because of the emotional stress she was enduring. She stated she had never been that ill before and could not even go to the store to get milk for her child.

Leaving an abusive relationship is a traumatic experience for the woman and enduring the financial burden of the court places an added hardship on the woman and her children. In Kaye's situation, because her partner has prolonged the family court case, she now has a large debt that she needs to pay, along with supporting herself and her child. Carol also discussed this concern when she stated she does not want the little bit of

money she has to be doled out to Legal Aid because of the legal fees.

Because of their limited economic resources, when women go through the court system they do not do so as equals.

Not all lawyers accept legal aid and if they do they are only granted a limited number of hours. If an abusive man continues to drag the case on then the lawyer must apply for more hours or do the work on a pro-bono basis. If the lawyer does apply for more hours through legal aid then this postpones the case even further until legal aid makes a decision about whether to grant the lawyer the extended hours.

From the examples above we see the economic strain that ending an abusive relationship has on the woman and her child. This can be seen in the financial burden the court case places on the woman, the impact that it has on her job, and in the unequal wage differential between men and women. One of the main strains on women who leave domestic violence situation is that they are the ones that have to leave the house and find a new place to live with little or no financial resources available to them.

The issue of women's economic resources plays a large role in the decisions that abused women make on whether to stay or leave an abusive relationship. Today women are more educated than ever before. However, though many women hold post secondary school degrees or diplomas, they are segregated at the bottom of the labor force (Armstrong, 1997: 40-42). Not only do the jobs that women hold fall into traditional

female industries and occupations but also numerous women today work part-time, contract and seasonal work. This means in many cases that they do not qualify for work related benefits such as holidays, health and dental coverage, and pension plans (Teghtsoonian, 1997: 116). For women who are leaving or considering leaving an abusive relationship, whether or not they have a good paying job with benefits can be a major decision-making factor. For women who do not work outside the home the situation of trying to reestablish on their own is even more bleak since welfare payments have been significantly cut and the rules for eligibility altered making it more difficult to claim benefits (Armstrong, 1997: 55). Until the economic structure of our society changes women who are trying to leave an abusive relationship will be at a severe disadvantage.

#### **D. Concern for Children**

Five of the ten women I interviewed had children living in the home at the time of the abuse. Through the women's comments about their children we see not only the reinforcement of the ideology of motherhood and traditional values but also the women's concern about their children's safety, custody issues and economic issues related to the children. One of the interesting points that kept surfacing through the interviews was that the women did not feel that they were given adequate information from the police or the court system to keep themselves and their children safe. Janice did not know that there was a restraining order against her husband, nor was she informed when he was released from jail. In fact



none of the women whose partners went to jail were ever informed of their release. Pam was assured by the police that her partner would not be back that night. However he was released and within half an hour of his release he was back at the house. Pam and her children fled to a shelter for safety. In order to formulate a safety plan and remain safe, women who are mothers especially need advance information on when their partner is released from jail.

When the police do not give abused women the information they need to keep themselves and their children safe the police are reinforcing the ideology that abused women are helpless and do not want to change their situation. The messages to women in abusive situations are contradictory. On the one hand, abused women are told they need to cooperate and assist the police to arrest and lay charges so the abusive man cannot harm them again, but on the other hand the police do not cooperate with the women by giving them information that could help them to protect their children and themselves. Women in our society are often seen as powerless and helpless and these messages are reinforced by a system that refuses to empower them.

If anyone feels a child is being abused or put in harm's way a Children's Aid Society (CAS) referral is made by the person receiving this information. CAS stays involved in the situation until they feel the child is no longer in danger. In domestic violence cases CAS usually stays involved until they are assured that the woman is staying away from the

abusive man. CAS places the responsibility for protecting the child onto the mother yet it is the man's abusive behavior that has put the child at risk in the first place. The implied message when CAS becomes involved is that women cannot make good decisions for themselves and their children so they need monitoring.

All three of the mothers who had CAS involvement did not quite understand the necessity for the involvement since the referral was made because of their partner's behavior. But, as Janice stated, having CAS involved was okay with her because she had nothing to hide. Brenda welcomed CAS involvement hoping that they could assist her in some way to work through the social service process and maybe assist her with finding appropriate housing for her and her son.

However, when the issue of custody goes before the family court the abusive man usually gets visitation rights. The mother must allow these visits or be held in contempt of court. On the one hand the mother is told not to allow the man visitation because she is putting her child at risk. On the other hand, the court often grants visitation to the man who has put the child at risk. The message to women is a mixed one. A mother needs to protect and be responsible for her child yet she must allow visitation of the child with the man who has put the child in harm's way. If she does not allow visitation then she can be charged with contempt of court. The underlying message from CAS and the family court system is that women are 'bad' mothers if they go back to their abusive partners, but

if the courts grant him visitation rights it is all right for the child to visit with the father. In this way the father appears to be rewarded for placing the child in danger.

The issue of abusive men having visitation with their children is an interesting one because on the one hand the abusive man has rights to see his child but on the other hand to allow a child visitation with an abusive man condones and perpetuates violence against women. In a Statistics Canada survey on wife assault done in 1994, it was found that women whose partners had witnessed violence by their fathers endured more severe and repeated violence than women whose fathers-in-law were not violent (Rodgers, 1994: 1). This finding has major implications for whether abusive men should have visitation with their children. So the question of whether abusive men should have visitation with their children goes to a much deeper level of societal concern about the ideological inequalities of our society and the implications that this has for women.

All of the women mentioned the impact that the abuse had on their children. Pam discussed her children's behavior both before and after she separated from her abusive partner. Brenda was surprised that her four year old son knew so much about the abuse and could relate it to the CAS worker. Brenda also discussed how her son would follow his father's example and hit her. The tendency for Brenda's son to repeat his father's behavior may be high because studies indicate that boys who grow up witnessing fathers hitting their mothers are more likely to assault their

wives or girlfriends (Pagelow, 1992: 110). Through learned behavior we see how the generational perpetuation of the cycle of violence continues. The societal impact of how the father treats the child's mother is tremendous because when a boy watches his father assault his mother what the child is learning is a disrespect for women in our society. This is an ideology that stays with that child into adulthood and has ramifications for how he lives his life and how he treats the women in his life.

Carol discussed how her partner uses her love for the children against her. She said her partner would rather see her with nothing than give her any support money. Carol stated that her partner knows she will protect the children and that she would do without rather than see the children suffer in any way. In this way her partner is using the love that Carol has for her children against her. Most mothers would do anything to protect their children and abusive men know this and use this as a weapon against the woman. In this way the abusive man is subtly reinforcing the ideology of motherhood and traditional values, in which women are seen as protectors and caregivers of children.

Women are at a disadvantage when custody cases go to court because a woman's private life is thrust into the public arena of the court room. In the court room everyday experiences get translated into legal discourse and legal procedures. The woman's voice and power is lost in the court room because she is represented by a lawyer who speaks for her. If a woman does not display traditional gendered behavior this can be

used against her and she runs the risk of losing her children. In chapter two, this point was discussed in the case of Judy Tyabji and lesbian women who fought to gain custody of their children. By bringing a woman's life into the courtroom this allows the state to invisibly monitor and control women's behavior. For these reasons women are marginalized and must be cautious when engaging with the family court process.

In sum, all five of the women with children in the home at the time of the abuse raised concerns about the child's welfare or their responsibility towards their child. The issue of CAS being involved with the mother after she has left the abusive home illustrates that in our society it is a mother's responsibility to protect her child. However it was the father's behavior that put the child in harm's way and the court sentence he receives is a lenient one. In chapter two the question was raised about whether the new integrated approach to domestic violence reinforces the ideology of motherhood and traditional values. From the women's comments we have seen the ideology of motherhood and traditional values reinforced in many different ways. We have also seen the impact that abusive behavior can have on children and that the safety needs of children are not always met by the police and court system.

#### **E. Women's Safety**

A major concern that women expressed in this study was that their safety needs were not being met after their abusive partner was arrested,

charged and released from jail. Fear of retaliation is a major issue for women when their abusive partner is charged. Abused women need information from the police on when their partners are released from jail. Women need to formulate a safety plan; if they think their partner is in jail they have more confidence to be out on their own. However if they know he is out of jail they will be more cautious with their activities. The police can play an important role in helping woman formulate a safety plan. However, to date, this does not appear to be happening because women are not informed of their partners' release from jail. By not giving women the knowledge they need to keep themselves and their children safe this further victimizes them.

Another theme that the women discussed in the interviews was the problem that, after their abusive partner is arrested and charged, he is released within a few hours. In five of the cases discussed here the abusive man breached his conditions of release by contacting the woman. Carol's partner called her and left a message. While the police were at Janice's house making a video taped statement her partner called her from jail at least 15 times. He was finally warned by the police to stop calling. In Pam's case her partner returned home and "scared the hell" out of her and her children. The fact that Jennie's partner had conditions placed on him by the police not to associate with her did not stop him from assaulting her. Brenda's partner was stalking her and leaving messages on her answering machine. He was arrested for breach of the conditions and

released in three days. The women in this study felt that they should be kept informed of when their abusive partner was released from jail and what his conditions of release involved.

At the time of leaving her relationship a woman is at the highest risk for being hurt because the man has nothing to lose; he has already lost his wife and children (Fischer & Rose, 1995: 418). When men breach the conditions of release or a restraining order it shows that they do not take these protective orders seriously. The problem of men being released from jail with conditions and restraining orders needs to be examined more fully by the criminal justice system because currently these protective orders do not keep women safe.

Many of the women in this study talked about fear of retaliation, nightmares and flashbacks. Some women mentioned health concerns of not being able to eat or sleep. One woman had a nervous breakdown and ended up in the psychiatric ward of the hospital and three other women stated they were on some kind of medication for their nerves. In this sense, and as Pam states, the system has to change because it works for the offender not the victim.

Fear of retaliation was an ongoing concern with most of the women in this study. When discussing this issue most women indicated that their partner had threatened them, saying that if they told anybody about his abusive behavior he would either assault them again or kill them. This is a threat that Jennie's partner continually used. After an assault, Jennie

called the police and charges were laid against her partner. Her partner was arrested and charged then he was released on conditions not to associate with her. He came to her house one night and assaulted her again. During the assault he threatened her "if you call the cops this time, I'll make sure you're dead". Jennie is terrified her partner will come back and assault her still again. As she said "he followed through on his threat the first time; what's stopping him from doing that again?". Lees (1997: 110) states that over half of the women who are assaulted and who leave their abusive partners were followed and harassed or assaulted again by them. Even those women who have been separated for two or three years are still terrified that their partner will somehow retaliate against them because they laid charges. When a woman is in an abusive relationship fear of the abusive man can work to motivate her to leave the relationship (Fischer & Rose, 1995: 420), but fear of retaliation can work to keep a woman in the relationship (Barnett & LaViolette, 1993: 48). Either way it has detrimental emotional and physical consequences for the woman and points to the need for better police protection if such fears are to be reduced.

As previously stated, 29% of women who have lived either common-law or were ever married have been sexually or physically assaulted by a marital partner at some time during the relationship (Rodgers, 1994: 2). As the murder of Arlene May indicates, just because a woman leaves an abusive relationship does not mean that she is free



from danger. A Canadian study found that 55% of all women who were murdered in Canada in 1998 died as a result of domestic violence (Fedorowycz, 1999: 1). The ability of the police to not protect women who leave abusive men is a major problem. This raises the problem of how abused women can be safe from abusive men. The women in this study suggested that they need to receive more information from the police, such as a phone call to the victim at the time of the abusive man's release from jail, and details of the conditions of his release.

In sum, although there are currently more state policies and programs in place to assist victims of domestic violence and to try to keep women safe, the reality of the society in which we live is that women today are still not safe from abusive men. Mandatory arrest policies, no drop policies, civil and criminal restraining orders, shelter programs, counseling programs for men and women and so on and so on, still have not reduced or eliminated the problem of domestic violence in our society. The bottom line is that although state policies have helped certain women, to a certain degree, they have not solved the problem of domestic violence in our society. Domestic violence is the overt accumulation of the much larger and covert societal problems that women still face today: we live in a society that is patriarchal where women are not valued. State policies and procedures that are drawn up and implemented by men do not address the structural and ideological changes that must occur if women are to be safe. The tensions within the existing system can make some difference

and give feminists within the state the opportunity to work towards change, however until the structure and ideology of society change the problem of men having power and control over women will not stop.

#### **F. Conclusion**

Overall, when we consider the three major patterns that were found in the literature on how the state has dealt with feminist demands in the past, and how the state has dealt with feminist demands within the criminal justice system, we see the same three patterns emerging in the new integrated system of domestic violence. The first pattern that was found in the literature was how universal apparently gender-neutral policies and laws mask gender and class inequalities. Although none of the women in this study discussed the SATC as having any inequalities, both the police and court system were found to contain gender and structural and ideological inequalities. The women in this study questioned why there were not more female police officers and judges to deal with domestic violence. The women also indicated that they felt the structure of the court system disadvantaged and marginalized them. None of the women were pleased with the outcome of the criminal court cases. The women felt discriminated against and felt that justice had not been served because their abusive partners received lenient sentences.

The second pattern that was found in the previous literature review was that feminist demands often get dealt with by the state in ways that leave women feeling powerless. This concern was addressed when I

asked the women in this study questions about empowerment and victimization regarding the services related to the new integrated system of domestic violence. The women felt that the SATC met their needs. They felt empowered by the process of having their physical injuries documented, and although embarrassed and ashamed at having the injuries photographed, the women also felt a sense of strength when they saw the photographs. However, the women's comments about the treatment they received from the police was contradictory. Some women felt empowered by the treatment whereas other women felt victimized by it. All of the women made comments about the video taping that could be construed as victimizing. None of the women felt that the criminal court system met their demands.

The final pattern that was found in the literature was that the state resolves feminists demands in ways that reinforce the ideology of motherhood and traditional gender values. From the women's comments we saw how the ideology of motherhood and traditional values was subtly reinforced in the new integrated system by the police, the court system, CAS and an abusive man. This suggests that the ideology of motherhood is still emphasized in all levels in our society and unless counteracted is likely to pervade state policies regarding domestic violence in the future.

Although the new integrated system of domestic violence was initially set up to assist victims of domestic violence, it is currently not

meeting this mandate. The SATC, the police and the court system are all working together. They are sharing and providing information to each other that could assist victims of domestic violence. However the goals and aims of these three services are vastly different. The SATC offers support and encouragement to women to cooperate with the police and have the abusive man arrested and charged. It also provides the photographs to the court and emotionally supports the women through the court process. The police have their own agenda of making sure that abusive men are charged, arrested, and convicted. The court system seems to be working at cross purposes: on the one hand, they convict abusive men but, on the other hand, according to the women in this study the sentence that men receive for the abuse is not strong enough to deter them from further abusing women. Although this study has brought forth many valuable contributions it is limited by its small sample size and, since only one city with the new integrated approach to domestic violence was investigated further research on this topic could prove beneficial.

The results of this study have indicated four main pragmatic concerns related to the new integrated system of domestic violence. The first concern is that the pictures and video taped statements that the SATC and the police are taking may not be viewed by the judge in the court cases. The second concern is that when women report incidents of abuse, the police are not always taking them seriously. A third concern is that many women feel that they are not being given adequate information

either from the police or the court system about their abusive partner and the court case. Finally, there is the concern that abusive men do not take seriously either the conditions of their release after being charged with assaulting their partners or the restraining order telling them not to associate or go near their intimate partners. Bringing forth these considerations is not to suggest that more research needs to be undertaken on these issues because some of these issues have had extensive research done on them already (i.e. mandatory arrest policies and effectiveness of restraining orders). Why are these policies not working to help abused women? This study suggests that a change in focus—to the needs of women rather than to the needs of society—is required.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **CONCLUSION: Policy Recommendations and Social Changes**

Through listening to the women's voices on their thoughts and feeling surrounding their experience with the new integrated approach to domestic violence important issues surfaced that suggest both policy recommendations and social change need to occur if the services related to domestic violence are to meet women's needs. On the basis of this study there are five policy recommendations that I would like to propose. The first recommendation arose out of one of the women's comments about a central location for all of the agencies involved in this new integrated approach to domestic violence. After listening to the women discuss the difficulties they have in trying to obtain information from the various agencies it would be effective to have a central office where women can get the information they need about their case, with a liaison officer or someone to coordinate the services for the women. This would mean that if a woman wanted information on her situation she would not have to go to each of the services separately. This would save the victim the time and effort of approaching various individuals about her case. It could also eliminate the possibility of the victim receiving mixed and conflicting messages from various services.

The second recommendation comes from some of the comments that the women made about the police service. The police service currently has in place a department that deals solely with domestic

violence. This service is invaluable to women who want charges laid and because of this service more men are being arrested and charged.

However this service is severely under staffed when you consider the number of domestic violence incidents that take place in any given year.

This service needs not only more resources to carry out this valuable task but also more officers trained in the sensitive and complex issues of domestic violence. It should be a 24 hour service and it is not so at this time.

The third recommendation concerns the Victim Witness Program, a program that has the potential to do very worthwhile work. It was initially started to assist victims who are going through the court process. From the women in this study who used this service it appears not to be meeting the needs of those who need it. Several women mentioned that they could not get information on their cases from this office and that phone calls were not returned. Clearly, there is a problem with this program but what is unclear is exactly what the nature of the problem is with this program. Are women not getting the information and assistance they need because of the limited staff resources or does the program need to be restructured to meet the needs of victims? What may be called for is a further evaluation of this service.

The fourth recommendation involves the excellent work that the SATC is currently doing. In order to ensure that this service continues to meet the needs of abused women, it should be evaluated and monitored

by an independent body on an ongoing basis. In the past services that have been set up to assist victims start out doing so but often end up by not meeting the needs of the individuals they initially were set up to help. As Snider suggested the state may initially meet the demands of feminists but when attention is lessened, deflected or removed the state reverts to maintaining and servicing its own agenda. One way to ensure that the agenda of the SATC does not get distorted is to have continual monitoring by an independent body outside of the state.

The final recommendation comes from my concern that the women who I interviewed still needed to discuss the abusive relationship and the impact it had on their lives two or three years after the abusive relationship ended. One woman who had been in the abusive relationship for only three months said that the experience of being in the abusive relationship and having to deal with the services related to domestic violence still is having a profound negative impact on her life, three years after the relationship ended. The need that the women had to discuss the relationship indicates that they need a safe place to discuss and digest exactly what has happened to them. The local battered women's shelter runs group counseling sessions for anyone who has experienced domestic violence and, although all the women in this study who had contact with the shelter had positive comments to make about it, obviously for some women it is not meeting their needs. Perhaps what is needed is a combination of individual and group counseling where the women can



gather the support of others in the group but also where they can have an opportunity in private to resolve some other concerns they have about what occurred in their abusive relationship.

Overall then we can see both Boyd's theoretical perspective that women should work within the state to try and make changes and Snider's theoretical perspective that feminist should work outside the state to enact structural and ideological changes can be beneficial to women. Both of these theories have advantages and disadvantages. When feminists work within the state they can seek opportunities when contradictions and tensions arise to challenge the state and try to implement changes. This can also be a disadvantage because it is the state that provides the financial backing for services related to women. This means that there is always the risk that the state will withdraw its financial support if you protest or challenge its authority in any way. When feminists work outside the state they have the potential to be more objective or to stay more woman-centered and to see obstacles that are hindering women from receiving the services that they need. Feminists outside the state also do not have the threat of having state funds pulled out from under them. Because of this they are able to organize outside resistance to state regulations. Yet, working outside the state hinders feminists because when the opportunity for changes within the state do occur they may not be in a position to help enact these changes. The ideal would be to have

feminists working together both inside and outside the state to enact social change.

Many feminist theorists such as Boyd (1997) see the contradictions within institutions as creating pockets of resistance for change to occur. These changes are currently taking place within the new integrated system because we see the SATC as trying to challenge the way domestic violence in our society has been managed and treated before by the criminal justice system. However, we must heed Snider's comment that feminists must be cautious of relying on the criminal justice system to meet their needs. Until the ideological and structural inequalities within our society change feminists are working within a hegemonic system that will not likely meet feminist demands and goals of equality for and empowerment of women. Feminists must always be critical of changes that add women into an already existing patriarchal system, and it appears that the new integrated system for domestic violence is no exception.

If we reflect back to the beginning of the second wave of feminism, we saw a strong feminist movement that has invoked the changes from which women today profit. Part of the evolutionary process of the second wave of feminism is that many feminists started to work in institutions and government offices for change. The difficulty becomes that, once inside government agencies and once feminist projects and organizations started relying on state funding, they fell under state regulations and lost some of their autonomy. An additional difficulty is that today many women have

grown up in a society where women have more opportunities than ever before, and numerous women today are mistaken in believing equality has been achieved. As this study demonstrates, women today still have not achieved total equality and until we do what is needed is a strong feminist voice from outside the state to keep the focus on women's needs in the forefront.

## Appendix One

### Interview Question Schedule

#### Demographic Questions

	You	Partner's
1. Age	_____	_____
2. Highest level of education completed	_____	_____
3. Ethnic Background	_____	_____
4. Martial Status (married, single, common law)	_____	_____
5. Occupation	_____	_____
6. Household Income before separation	\$ 0 - 9,999 _____ 10,000 - 19,999 _____ 20,000 - 29,000 _____ 30,000 - 39,999 _____ 40,000 - 49,999 _____ 50,000 - 59,999 _____ 60,000 - 69,999 _____ 70,000 - 79,999 _____ over 80,000 - _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
7. Household income after separation	\$ 0 - 9,999 _____ 10,000 - 19,999 _____ 20,000 - 29,000 _____ 30,000 - 39,999 _____ 40,000 - 49,999 _____ 50,000 - 59,999 _____ 60,000 - 69,999 _____ 70,000 - 79,999 _____ over 80,000 - _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
8. How long were you in the relationship?		
9. How many children do you have?		
10. Have you ever sought intervention before coming to the Sexual Treatment Center	called police	went to hospital ER
Hiatus House	Legal Process	court

### **Open ended questions**

11. Why did you decide to participate in this research project?

### **Sexual Assault Treatment Center**

12. Have you ever been through the treatment center before? When? Why?

13. Why did you come to the Treatment Center this time?

14. Tell me about your experience at the treatment center?

15. Do you think the process of the center was helpful to you? In what way?

16. Did you feel the nurses believed what you were saying? What made you think so?

17. Did you feel the nurses listened to what you were saying? Why did you think they were or were not listening?

18. Did you feel in any way that the nurses were judging you for what happened to you i.e. violence? If so, why did you think this?

19. Did you feel that the nurses blamed you for the violence? If so, what made you think this?

20. How did you feel when the nurses were taking the photographs of your injuries? Numbed, shocked, shamed, pleased that something was being done to stop the violence?

21. Did you feel that you had control over what was happening at the Treatment Center? Did the nurses explain the procedure to you? Give you choices?

22. Did you feel the nurses respected and supported your decisions? How do you know this?

23. What did you like/dislike about the SATC?

24. If you could make changes to the procedure at the SATC what would they be?

## **Police**

25. How did you become involved with the police?
26. Were the Police supportive of your decision to lay charges?
27. Have you ever laid charges before? When? Why?
28. Tell me about your experience with the police this time? Compared to last time.
29. Do you think the process of making a video taped statement was helpful to you? Why? In what way was it helpful or not helpful to you?
30. Did you feel the police believed what you were saying? Example?
31. Did you feel the police listened to what you were saying? What made you think this?
32. Did you feel in any way that the police were judging you for what happened to you i.e. violence? If so, why? What indication did you have that this was happening?
33. Did you feel that the police blamed you for the violence?
34. How did you feel when you were being video taped by the police? Scared, nervous, ashamed, pleased?
35. Did you feel that you had control over what was happening when you were making the video taped statement? What made you think this?
36. Did you feel the police respected and supported your decisions? Example?
37. Overall, what did you think about the way you were treated by the WPS?
38. If you could make changes to the procedure of laying charges and video taping statements what would they be?

## **Court Procedure**

39. Have you ever been involved with the court system before due to violence from an intimate partner? When?
40. Did you have to testify in court (this time)? What was that like for you?
41. Do you think the court sentence that your partner received was adequate? Why or why not?
42. Can you think of any way to change the process to help other women who might go through a similar experience?
43. Tell me about your experience with the court system?
44. Did you feel the court believed what you were saying? If so, why?
45. Did you feel the court listened to what you were saying? What made you think this?
46. Did you feel in any way that the court was judging you for what happened to you i.e. violence? If so, why or why not?
47. Did you feel that the court blamed you for the violence? What gave you this indication?
48. Did you feel that you had control over what was happening with regards to the court process?
49. Were you able to make a victim impact statement to the courts?  
i.e. effect of violence on you after the incident.  
Physical/psychological impact of violence.
50. Did you feel the court respected and supported your decisions?  
Why?
51. Overall, what did you think about the way the court process works?
52. If you could make changes to the court procedure what would they be?

## **Appendix Two**

### **Letter sent to the Sexual Assault Treatment Center**

**February 1, 1999**

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that I would like to evaluate the Sexual Assault Treatment Center from the perspective of the women going through this program. Currently, I am enrolled in the Masters Program in Sociology at the University of Windsor and would like to take this project on for my theses topic. I feel that hearing from the women themselves about their experience with your program could be beneficial to the hospital and the center, not only, by strengthening your mandate to help victims of domestic violence, but also, by strengthening your ties to the community at large.

Whenever research is conducted through the University of Windsor, the research project must first be approved by the Ethics Committee at the University. The Ethics Committee is well versed in ethical issues and well grounded in ethical dimensions of research, therefore, you can be assured that both confidentiality and anonymity of the research clients will be well protected. Also, for the past seven years, as a Residential Counselor at a shelter for battered women and their children, I am well aware of the sensitive nature of working with domestic violence and the need for confidentiality as well as anonymity

Even though, my research proposal is in the preliminarily stage it is my intention to be prepared to start in-depth interviews by July 1, 1999. Therefore, I am requesting permission from the Sexual Assault Treatment Center to allow me to interview women that have been part of your treatment program. Consequently, my request to you is to have a release of information signed by women upon entering the program, so that I can obtain their names to ask them if they would like to be part of my research project.

Thank you for considering my request. I believe this project could be a valuable contribution to the excellent service you already provide. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sharron Jarvis



## **Appendix Three**

### **Release of Information**

I am conducting a study on the Sexual Assault Treatment Center for my Master's Thesis in Sociology at the University of Windsor. In order to conduct this study I have asked the Treatment Center to provide me with the names and phone numbers of women who have been involved with their program. I feel the Treatment Center offers a valuable service to women who have endured domestic violence and I believe this study could be of great benefit to other women who might use the service in the future. Any information that you provide for my study would be kept in strict confidence, and any identifying information will not be included in the study. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you might consider signing the release so that I may contact you in the future to assist me with this evaluation.

This release of information authorizes the Treatment Center to release to me only your name and phone number, so that I can contact you when I am ready to begin my research. If for some reason you do not want to participate in the study when I contact you there is no obligation to follow through with the research just because you have signed this form today.

Thank you very much for considering to be part of the study.

Sharron Jarvis

name of client (please print)  
phone number

signature of client  
date

## **Appendix Four**

### **Sample letter sent to the Victim Witness Program**

**August 31, 1999**

**Sharron Jarvis  
Sociology & Anthropology Dept.  
University of Windsor  
401 Sunset Street  
Windsor, Ontario  
N9B 3P4**

**I am a Sociology student at the University of Windsor doing my Master's thesis on how forensic evidence is gathered in domestic assault cases. What I am specifically interested in exploring is how women who have been assaulted by an intimate partner think and feel about making a video taped statement for the police and how women who have been to the Sexual Assault Treatment Center think and feel when photographs are being taken of their injuries. The main goal of my research is to see if women who are video taped and photographed feel empowered or victimized by these procedures. Another important aspect of my research project involves how women who have been abused by their intimate partners think and feel about the court sentence their partner receives when photographs and video taped statements are used as evidence in court.**

**It is my plan to conduct twenty active in-depth interviews with women who are over the age of 18 years, who have been involved in a domestic dispute with an intimate partner of the opposite sex, and who speak English or have a good command of the English language. The sample of women must also have made video taped statements for the police, they must have had their injuries documented by photographs at the Sexual Assault Treatment Center, and the case has to have gone to court or the abusive person pleaded guilty.**

**In order to facilitate my research project what I am requesting of you is to contact women who meet the criteria asking them if they are interested in the research and would they sign the attached release of information allowing their names and phone numbers to be forwarded to me. The women could either be telephoned directly by a staff member in your office asking them to come down and sign the release of information**

or this letter could be mailed along with the release of information asking women to sign it and return it to your office. If these options are not feasible any other suggestions you have that would assist me in obtaining a sample would be greatly appreciated.

Whenever research is conducted through the University of Windsor, the research project must first be approved by the Ethics Committee at the University. The Ethics Committee is well versed in ethical issues and well grounded in ethical dimensions of research, therefore, you can be assured that both confidentiality and anonymity of the research clients will be well protected. Enclosed is a copy of the approval letter I received from the Ethics Committee granting permission for this research project to commence. I have also enclosed a copy of the Consent Form that I will be asking women who do the interviews to sign.

Thank you for considering my request. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me at my e-mail address at [jarvis@uwindsor.ca](mailto:jarvis@uwindsor.ca).

Sincerely,

Sharron Jarvis

## **Appendix Five**

### **Release of Information**

I am conducting a study on the Sexual Assault Treatment Center for my Master's Thesis in Sociology at the University of Windsor. In order to conduct this study I have asked the Treatment Center to provide me with the names and phone numbers of women who have been involved with their program. I feel the Treatment Center offers a valuable service to women who have endured domestic violence and I believe this study could be of great benefit to other women who might use the service in the future. Any information that you provide for my study would be kept in strict confidence, and any identifying information will not be included in the study. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you might consider signing the release so that I may contact you in the future to assist me with this evaluation.

This release of information authorizes the Treatment Center to release to me only your name and phone number, so that I can contact you when I am ready to begin my research. If for some reason you do not want to participate in the study when I contact you there is no obligation to follow through with the research just because you have signed this form today.

Thank you very much for considering to be part of the study.

Sharron Jarvis

name of client (please print)  
phone number

signature of client  
date

## **Appendix Six**

### **Consent Form**

#### **Purpose of Research**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Sexual Assault Treatment Center from the perspective of women who go through this program. This research is being conducted for my Masters Thesis in Sociology at the University of Windsor.

#### **Purpose of the Interviews**

The purpose of the interviews is to examine your thoughts and feelings as evidence is gathered from you for a potential court case against your abusive partner. The interview consists of demographic questions, questions related to the form and severity of the abuse you have endured in the past, and open ended questions which will ask you to reflect on the process you encountered at the Sexual Assault Treatment Center. You will also be asked for any suggestions or recommendations you might have to improve the service at the Treatment Center. The interviews will take approximately 1 to 2 hours and with your permission the interview will be taped.

Confidentiality of your responses will be strictly protected. At all times the interviewer will maintain control over the tapes and transcripts. Each person interviewed will be given an identifying code number known only to the interviewer. In any report or publication your name or any identifying information will not be used. When information is used it will be presented in such a manner to prevent identification of the original source.

#### **The Right to Refuse and Withdraw Participation**

Participation in this research project is voluntary. If, for any reason, you do not feel comfortable answering particular questions, or do not want to continue participating in this project, you may withdraw at any time without explanation.

#### **Participant's Statement of Consent**

Having read and understood the purpose of the research, that my confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained, and that I have the right to refuse or withdraw from the research project at anytime, I consent to participate in this study.

NAME

(please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix Seven**

### **Sample letter sent to women**

**Sharron Jarvis  
Sociology & Anthropology Dept.  
University of Windsor  
401 Sunset Street  
Windsor, Ontario  
N9B 3P4**

**I am currently conducting a study about services related to victims of Domestic Violence for my Masters thesis at the University of Windsor. The purpose of this study is to find out what women who use these services think and feel about them. I would like to interview you. The interview will be tape recorded, last approximately one to two hours, and be held at a time and place that is convenient to you. Your identity and the information you provide will be held in the strictest confidence. By being part of this study it will give you the opportunity to discuss your experiences with the services related to domestic violence. Also, my research will incorporate your suggestions and recommendations for change.**

**If interested please sign and return the enclosed release of information in the stamp addressed envelope. Thank you for agreeing to be part of this study.**

**Sincerely**

**Sharron Jarvis**

## **Appendix Eight**

### **Release of Information**

I am conducting a study on services related to victims of domestic violence for my Masters Thesis in Sociology at the University of Windsor. In order to conduct this study the Victim Witness Program has contacted you on my behalf. Any information that you provide for my study would be kept in strict confidence, and any identifying information will not be included in the study.

This release of information authorizes the Victim Witness Program to release to me only your name and phone number, so that I can contact you to set up an interview. If for some reason you do not want to participate in the study when I contact you there is no obligation to follow through with the research just because you have signed this form today.

**Sharron Jarvis**

name of client (please print)  
phone number

signature of client  
date

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## **VITA AUCTORIS**

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**Education:**

- 1968 - Completed High School at  
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- 1992 - BA (general) in Family Studies,  
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- 1995 - Certificate in Women's Studies  
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