An exploratory-descriptive study of a group therapy program for male batterers.

Thomas Allen. Rolfe
University of Windsor
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Canada
AN EXPLORATORY-DESCRIPTIVE STUDY
OF A GROUP THERAPY PROGRAM FOR
MALE BATTERERS

by

C Thomas Allen Rolfe

A Thesis
submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the School of
Social Work in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Social Work at
the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1985
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Thesis Committee

Dr. Lola Beth Buckley, Chairperson

Dr. Mary Lorenz Dietz

Professor Robert G. Chandler
DEDICATION

TO

David, Marx, Joe, Sam, Tim, Matt, Larry,
Rick, Barry, Jim, Peter, Jeff, Mike,
and the many others who have
had the courage to go to
therapy.
ABSTRACT

AN EXPLORATORY-DESCRIPTIVE STUDY
OF A GROUP THERAPY PROGRAM FOR
MALE BATTERERS

by

Thomas Allen Holfe

The purpose of this research project was to examine the population of male batterers who were referred to the Hiatus House Fresh Start Program during the period of June 1, 1981, to December 31, 1983.

This study commenced with a computer search of the available literature in the area of men who batter, male batterers, male violence, and other such synonyms.

Although both quantitative and qualitative descriptions are used to describe the population, little concern was given to systematic representativeness. In fact, representativeness was not expected (nor possible) within the limits of this study. Research questions were devised to provide focus and structure to the collection and
analysis of the descriptive data. The population totaled one hundred and twenty-eight men.

The researcher retrieved basic information from 63 men by means of an optional questionnaire that was completed by the group worker/researcher during the man's initial individual intake and assessment interview. The results of the questionnaire provided a profile of the typical man who was referred to the program.

The researcher retrieved information over a ten-month period from the audio tapes of forty group sessions with the men. In addition, the researcher examined the group process as experienced by 13 of the men with particular emphasis on: (a) the conditions under which he chooses to assault his partner, (b) the factors that account for the degree of violence that he uses, (c) the reasons that lead him to seek treatment, (d) the kinds of relationships that exist between participants in the program, and (e) the phases, or stages, that the members go through during their involvement in the program. Two types of observed, articulated or constructed types of male batterers are identified. It is suggested, by this author, that the man's use of violence is a learned problem-solving strategy which he employs as a distance-regulator in his relationship with his partner.

Recommendations are made in the following areas:

* Program development
* Social work education
* Suggestions for further research.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work could not have been accomplished without the support and encouragement, both spoken and unspoken, of a number of people.

My family, especially my mother and father, have been understanding of my lack of visiting and attendance at family functions, and my ability to arrive loaded with books over the past three years.

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Colleagues have been an important part of this work both as models and as consultants:

Donna Miller, MSW, gave me the invitation to work with men who batter and has continued to support, direct, and encourage me. She continues to express enthusiasm and what appears, at times, to be endless amounts of energy to develop and improve services for domestic violent families in this community, or whatever other communities have the
privilege of her presence. She has become not only a trusted and valued colleague but a true friend.

Hiatus House, Inc. Starr, Fran Vigna, Rita Stokes, Nancy Whittle, Glenn Watkins, Pat Drake, Pat Moreau, Suzanne Semenick, Rosita Matthews, Linda English, Margaret Mantua, Moira Kestell, Kathy Whittle, and Sherry Richmond and the auxiliary staff, for their dedication to their work as well as their continued support and belief in my work, with men who latter.

Dolores Gaydos, MSW, who taught me how to listen and hear with more depth and clarity than I thought was possible.

Stan Monaghan, MSW, and Anne Marie Monaghan, MSW, who introduced me to the work of Mary and Robert Goulding and made it come alive before my eyes.

Peter Redpath, CCW, and Heather Redpath, CCW, for their continued interest in my work but mostly their friendship, and baby Ian, who at some very critical times reminded me of the importance of play.

Despite the continued support and encouragement of all these people plus many others, too numerous to mention, this work would not have been completed without the help of the following people:

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research. Her ability to reproduce quoted material, with
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have been: "This is not the most important piece of
research you will ever do; get it done!" "Hire somebody,
and your problem is going to be not in deciding what to use
but in deciding what not to use." Their willingness to meet
initially on a frequent basis, as a committee, provided a
clear direction, to which I was able to return when I
wandered.

David Adams, MEd, and Isidore Penn, MEd, and their
colleagues at EMERGE in Boston, Massachusetts where I
attended training in 1981 on working with men who batter.
Their material was all that was available in the field and was invaluable to us in designing our program here in Windsor.

Lastly, Jane Hillary-Bolfe, CCW, whose ability to either get involved or get lost, with very little notice, along with endless amounts of love and support, especially when the deadlines approached, was greatly appreciated. Her ability to send me on my way with the best lunch as well as her ability to tolerate my preoccupation, quite frankly most of the time, with this work was a monumental cadeau.
I couldn't fall asleep last night. My mind was racing. I left so much behind to find a dream that I was chasing. But now I have a need to take a look at what is real. I need to learn to live and breathe and touch and feel. But all I really know is what I see; and everybody sees it differently. I wish someone could open up my heart and look inside me. But I'm the only one who holds the key. (Cronin, Richrath, Beamish, and Gratzer, 1982)

When I began this work four years ago I had a very explicit fantasy about what a male batterer looked like. One needs to realize that I had three months of pre-planning to develop this fantasy. The fantasy itself relates to my own scare about dealing with this particular client population. While my fantasy was somewhat pejorative and was in no way, as I was to later learn, an accurate description of the typical male batterer, it was, nevertheless, my fantasy.

My fantasy was that he was at least 6'2", which meant that he was taller than I was. He weighed at least two hundred and fifty pounds, which is more than I weighed. He had long hair and a beard that was rather unkempt. He had tattoos on his arms. He wore a dark T-shirt with his cigarette package tucked up under his shirt sleeve. He had a trucker's wallet, with the chain that connected to his belt. He talked tough. Every other word was "fuck this" or
"fuck that." He had been or still was a member of a motorcycle gang.

Of course, as fate would have it, he was there in my first group meeting. After I pulled myself down from the ceiling and came to terms with my own scare I began to look at what I was going to do. As I considered how I was going to form a relationship with him I learned one of the first things I was to learn about male batterers: next to him was the the doctor in the three-piece business suit. This research is an attempt to add some clarity to our understanding and perception of "who is the male batterer." It identifies two major types of men who are violent with their partners, provides a profile of the typical batterer who attended the program, and examines the therapeutic group process of thirteen men.

Thomas A. Rolfe
Windsor, Ontario

13/08/85
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Chapter I
THE SETTING

OVERVIEW

Violence against women by men is not a new phenomenon. Terry Davidson (Roy, 1977) traces the recurrence of wife-beating throughout history. It is, however, an issue which has not been talked about until recently. Allen (1982) examined social work's contribution to the study of family violence. He notes:

During the 1970's a remarkable change occurred in social science's view of the family. Prior to that period... Social psychology and other disciplines analyzed the interpersonal dynamics among family members but ultimately failed to concern themselves with the intrafamilial patterns which constitute violent abuse.

Social work is one discipline which completely ignored the topic of violence between family members, until recently. One of its leading journals, Social Casework, contained no articles specifically addressing the issue of family violence until 1965. Similarly, in the Journal of Marriage and the Family between 1939 and 1969 not a single article contained the word "violence" in its title.

Prominent researchers now recognize that one of the most profound characteristics of the family is that it is, with the exception of military and police organizations, the most violent institution in society. Moreover, the family in North America can be seen as a major contributor to the perpetuation of violence in the society at large. (Allen, 1982, p. 161)
It has been described as a family problem and thus, by implication, is a secret problem. The recent publication of family violence is a result of the increasing permission being given by society to acknowledge, accept, and publicize a change in traditional values.

The tacit approval given by society in making family violence, violence against women, and wife abuse a secret problem had led to the implicit permission that it is alright for a man to beat his wife. This has been supported historically by our society, its norms, social rules, politics, and legal structures. Gelles and Straus (1979) suggest:

The root of family violence lies in the organization of the family and in the implicit cultural norms tolerating approving violence as a means of social control. (p. 9)

It has only been since 1971 that much energy has been devoted by social scientists to the examination and explanation of causes of wife abuse. More major work needs to be done in the area of domestic violence. This research is an attempt to contribute to the gap in knowledge about the latterer.
HIATUS HOUSE

Hiatus House began to provide emergency shelter for battered women and their children on July 12, 1976. The program was initiated through Legal Assistance of Windsor. The original house had a capacity for nine residents and was located on California Avenue on Windsor's west side near the University of Windsor. Hiatus House became incorporated on August 23, 1976. The house moved to its present location at 894 Victoria Avenue, in Windsor during February of 1979. The present bed capacity is 24. Hiatus House has been a member agency of the United Way of Windsor, Essex County since January 1, 1979.

Miller (1982) points out that what one believes about a problem and how one defines it affects the way in which the program is defined and delivered. She identifies three commonly held perceptions regarding the problem of domestic violence (p. 336). The first perception is based on the assumption that it is the woman who causes the violence. The second perception is that it is the man who is blamed for the violence. The third perception is that the couple is caught in an ongoing cycle of violence, which increases both in frequency and severity over time. Hiatus is a mathematical term for a break in the cycle. The purpose of Hiatus House is to break the ongoing cycle of violence in which the couple is involved. When there is violence in the family all members of the family — man, woman, and children
are affected. All are hurt and experience pain as a result. Hiatus House has always defined violence within the family as a family problem and thus views it from a family systems point of view. The philosophy of Hiatus House is listed in Appendix I.

Agency Goals

The following overall program goals have been established by the agency to break the cycle of domestic violence. The program areas within the agency are listed in Appendix II.

* To provide crisis intervention services to battered women and their families.

* To provide temporary shelter for battered women and their children in a group residence.

* To provide the battered woman with information with regard to her legal rights to lay threatening and/or assault charges against her partner and to be supportive throughout the criminal justice process.

* To provide professional counselling to battered women and their families.

* To provide professional child care counselling to the children.

* To provide group therapy for the male batterers.

* To provide public education in the area of domestic violence.

* To do ongoing research in the area of domestic violence.

1 This service was provided by the Complainant Support Program until it was closed in August 1984.
PROGRAM DESIGN

Program Development

It was only recently that the government was willing to make a public declaration of its abhorrence of violence by men against women. Thus society has been given permission to examine its own 'dirty laundry' and its own skeletons in the closet; it's only now that we will begin to deal with some of the major implications that violence against women has had for the children and families of our society. Goode (1971) examines how our culture gives little boys permission to be angry and to use force to influence and control others. Little permission is given for boys to be sad or scared. Goulding and Goulding (1979) explain how children are taught that they are responsible for other people's feelings. These implicit and until recently, unexamined messages have lent support to the maintenance of a symbiotic style of relationship which has destructive consequences for both 'adult' partners.

It is important to recognize the contributions of the women's movement and their undaunted perseverance in face of tremendous resistance by the male population. This movement has forced men at times by legal means, to take responsibility for their violent actions. These efforts to change the status of women as a piece of property which can be loved, honoured and abused have been extremely important in setting the groundwork for future change.
However, one needs to recognize that any change comes slowly, therefore family values that support domestic violence will be slow to change. The struggle towards equality is far from over.

In creating a treatment program for a man who physically abuses his wife, one is struck with the obvious absence of writing, research, and treatment programs in this area. (Gelles and Straus, 1979; Nichols, 1976; Ball, 1977; Flynn, 1972; Stranly, 1977; McCormick, 1980; and Shapiro, 1980) Coleman (1980) noted, "There is still, however, little first hand information about the battering husband; most of what has been learned has been reported by the wives" (p. 207). Most of the available information deals primarily with the abused woman.

There is a tendency to paint a picture of a violent, uncontrolled, heartless monster who attacks without warning or provocation. Despite the acknowledgement that there has been little experience in the helping profession with this kind of person, Ball (1977) still concludes: "The 'violent' client is more difficult to understand and work with than the victim" (p. 5).

It is interesting that the husband's abuse of his partner is rarely chosen as a focus of intervention. Nichols (1976) points to the fact that often case workers... tend to ignore this symptom...[and this] often supports a belief that the wife encourages, provokes or even enjoys abusive treatment (p. 27).
Like many other attempts to ignore this problem, it has been explained away as a problem of the unemployed, the poor, the seriously disturbed or the alcoholic. Flynn (1977) emphasizes that "wife-beating seems to be found at all socioeconomic levels" (p. 17) and Brown (1979) likewise notes that "only a tiny portion of those using violence can be considered mentally ill" (p. 19) (McCormick, 1980; Rounseville, 1978; and Gelles and Straus, 1979).

Star in 1980, pointed to the fact that we legitimize violence in the family by providing the problem "selective inattention" (p. 339) as does Brown (1979), Rosenbaum and O'Leary (1981), and Gelles in 1976.

Since the focus on family violence has begun, researchers have advanced many theories — psychological, sociological, and political — to explain its occurrence. Most of the research has added to our knowledge in the area but has often provided confusing and contradictory evidence, and as Brown (1979) concludes, "no one reason can account for violent acts in the family" (p. 23). Stahly (1977) summarizes that:

Occurrences of violence are multivariate and multi-determinate in nature... [and] suggests that the intense and exclusive dyadic system in which the couple" is emmeshed supports the recurrence of violence in a stable fashion...[but points] to the need for more focused theories to explain why some resort to violence while others do not. (p. 596)

It has been the author's experience that a number of important factors and beliefs have to be taken into account
in dealing with men who batter their partners. First and foremost, it is that the violence is the man's responsibility and as Adams and Penn (1981) note:

While certainly men who batter are troubled by a variety of problems in their relationships with women and while individual and family or couples counselling is rarely contraindicated at some stage in the treatment of the problem, until the violence itself is regarded as the primary focus of treatment, and treated as such, family treatment will remain ineffectual and at the very least and will often be extremely dangerous for the woman. (p. 4)

The author believes it is important to deal with family of origin material in the group setting. Coleman (1980) suggests that the major goal of therapy with violent couples should be to help spouses differentiate. She identifies that:

One prominent characteristic of the men.... was their belief that to be a man, one must be strong and dominant, superior and successful.... They simultaneously desired and feared intense fusions with women. He does not understand the emotional damage his violent outbursts have had upon his wife [and].... sees his major role in the family as that of breadwinner and ultimate decision-maker with little responsibility for the emotional climate of the family (p. 211).

Pre-Planning

Pre-planning began in the spring of 1981. The researcher was approached by Donna Miller, Executive Director of Hiatna House, to test out the concept of group treatment for men who batter during the period from July to December 1981. Providing service to male batterers has always been a part
of Hiatus House's overall long-range program plans. A number of "male batterers" had requested counselling service from Hiatus House in the spring of 1981. Between May and the beginning of the first group in July 1981, the group worker and the executive director received material from EMERGE in Boston, Massachusetts and reviewed and revised it in preparation for the Windsor program proposal.

The proposal was presented to the Hiatus House Board of Directors in March of 1981 and the Board endorsed this new service. The pilot program began in July 1981 and it was agreed that the group worker would start one group between July and December 1981 in order to test out this particular practice concept. This first group started July 7, 1981 and consisted of four men and a group therapist, a social worker. Following the successful completion of this first trial group a Special Project Grant Proposal was submitted to the United Way for 1982. The program was funded in the amount of $9,640 for the first year. A later request resulted in a second year Special Project funding for 1983 in the amount of $12,640. This allowed the program to operate on a part-time basis to test this concept of service delivery.
Referrals

The referrals for this program were taken from the larger population of adult males who have physically assaulted or threatened physical assault of their female partners. The majority of the male batterers who referred themselves to the program were partners of the female residents (labeled women) of Hiatus House. Only those men who resided in either the City of Windsor or the County of Essex were eligible for service from the program. Initially, it was decided that referrals would only be accepted from the residential component of Hiatus House. We felt it was irresponsible to offer, or pretend that we could offer, a full-time service to the community when in fact, a full-time funding base had not been established.

The primary purpose of the program at that time was to verify our belief that males who abused their partners would voluntarily attend a program if one existed. We realized, at the time, there would be numbers of men who would not attend voluntarily. However, we felt that there would be a sufficient number for our program. A number of stereotypes of these abusive men indicated that they would not come for voluntary treatment; that they would not, in fact, take any responsibility for their violence. We did not believe this was true. In October, 1983 we received our first funding, from the Ministry of Correctional Services, for court mandated men. This six-month contract in the amount
of $3,500 was administered through the Windsor office of Probation and Parole. At the time of the writing of this report an annual contract in the amount of $7,000, to be reviewed every six months, had been approved.

Decision to Use Social Group Work

Adams and Penn (1981) identify eight therapeutic functions of the group process for men who batter. They include the following areas:

1. Peer Culture and Support: Much of the social training which men receive in... violence occurs in male peer groups. [It was therefore decided that the group would be the most powerful type of intervention with these type of men.] Such an alternative peer culture... allows [men to form new norms of male behaviour.]

2. Counteracts Primary Defenses: Groups of such a homogeneous composition tend to foster a mutual identification between group members...[with a sense that we are all in this together. As one of the group members stated, "The membership is very diverse in character yet the similarity and commonality is truly remarkable." Having a common problem and common social training counteracts the tendency for abusive men...[to deny or place the blame on others.]

3. New Role Models: [In the beginning the group worker] and then the group members serve as [the] new role models...[that] develop and reinforce new norms for men... [In contrast,] in individual therapy, the client's only source of information is the therapist. The individual therapist's ability to serve as a role model is [frequently] impaired by the client's perception of him as different...In a group of other men who batter, an abusive man is more likely to find role models he can use.

4. New Norms: Because of the restrictive nature of male socialization around feeling, men need to give each other permission to acknowledge and articulate their feelings. In groups when there is appropriate modeling and norm setting by...[the group worker]
and other group members] men are encouraged to learn new ways of expressing and presenting themselves. In addition, until men can identify and ask for what they need (assertion) rather than taking what they want (aggression) it will be impossible for them to negotiate partnerships with their wives or women friends. When a man is not in touch with his own feelings he cannot be there for [other’s needs. Therefore, negotiation within the relationship is not possible.] Such a limitation makes it impossible for the man to have respect for his or any other person’s feelings or needs.

5. Combats Social Isolation: The sharing of deep feelings and the building of trust [helps to break down the social isolation which many men feel. Although these men may enjoy many casual relationships with other men, [they report these relationships have been] quite superficial. The group worker encourages the group members to maintain contact with each other in between group meetings so they can develop more fulfilling relationships with other men.

6. Practicing New Behaviours: In contrast to individual therapy, men in [group counselling] can practice new behaviours with such methods as role plays and giving and receiving feedback from others. The men also have the opportunity to learn and practice new problem solving methods through interpersonal [sic] learning and the practicing of new styles of interacting within the group, abusive men are able to acquire new skills which can then be transferred and applied outside the group.

7. Self-Help: [Group counselling] offers a unique opportunity for [men to] help themselves as well as each other. Certainly by learning to better articulate their feelings and needs, men are helping themselves. Moreover, group members also learn that by helping and becoming involved with others, they are heightening [their own] feelings of self-worth...

8. Individuation: The men we work with have defied upon women to meet their emotional needs. In groups of their peers, men can safely and more readily examine these needs and expectations while developing other trusting, intimate relationships in which to find fulfillment.

[We believe] that groups of all male constitution provide men who battle with an opportunity for social learning [which] would be
nearly impossible to find in other treatment modalities. Although other modalities, such as conjoint therapy and...[family therapy] have other things to offer...we believe that...[group counselling] offers the best hope for men who latter to change (p. 6).

Because of the above concepts as well as the agency's previous experience with group treatment within the residential milieu, and the researcher's eight years of experience and training in the group treatment of emotionally disturbed children, it was decided to use a group model for intervention with this program.

GROUP STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

Pre-Group Process

Initially, men usually contact the residential program of Hiatus House. It is the residential counselling staff who discuss the men's group with the men when they phone or present themselves at the agency. The men are usually phoning to locate their partner and their children. Hiatus House has a high profile within the community and the man quickly finds out about its existence. The address of the agency is not kept secret as is the policy of some shelter programs. The phone number is published in the phone book. The residential staff explain the men's program to the man and ask him to think about it. They tell him that if he is interested he may phone back at a later time, and leave his name or a pseudonym, his phone number
and the best time for the group worker to reach him. The residential staff contact the group worker and gives him the referral.

The group worker returns the call within a twenty-four period and arranges an individual intake interview with the man. The worker arranges intake with attention to the issue of potential suicide. We know that the crisis period for the man generally occurs when he comes home and finds that his wife and children have left. A large percentage of the men report actual suicide attempts or thoughts of suicide during this initial period.

**Individual Intake and Assessment Interview.**

During the initial intake interview with the man, violence is identified as the problem. The worker reviews the basic rules and purpose of the program.

**Treatment Goals**

Seven goals form the basis of the group treatment contract. They are explained as follows:

The first goal is to stop the abusive behavior. It is explained that this is the primary purpose of the group and the reason why men attend.

---

2 These goals were originally developed by EMBRGE in Boston, Mass.
The second goal is to learn alternative behaviours. It is explained to the man that while the expressed purpose of the group is to end the abusive behaviour that it is difficult to just stop doing something and difficult to change. It is pointed out that it is important to have alternatives that one feels are going to work equally as well, before one changes one's present way of problem solving. It is suggested to the man that while he does not like his violence, or the consequences of his violence, that there are some ways in which this behaviour is helpful to him. It is his solution to his problem. He should not give it up until he understands his problem.

The third goal which is identified for the man during the intake process is to learn to express his anger in non-oppressive and more constructive ways. It is not the purpose of the group to teach the man that he should never get angry. We do not believe that this is either realistic or desirable. Anger is a normal feeling that we have; it is okay to be angry. What is important is the way in which we express our anger. The purpose of the group is to help him learn to do so in ways which are not harmful to himself or others.

The fourth goal is to identify and express feelings and self-doubts. It is explained that we all have feelings of self-doubt and that from time to time we all lack confidence in our ability to be successful in
certain areas of our life. Basically, four feelings are identified: sad, glad, sad, and scared. It is felt that it is important to keep the identification of these feelings at a simple level rather than to use a lot of big words. Some men within the group tend to intellectualize about their feelings and do not permit themselves to actually experience them. The use of these simpler words permits them to be more in touch with their feelings.

The fifth goal is to learn new and more effective communication and problem-solving skills. Most of the men have had little training in effective communication. It is also pointed out that we learn different ways to solve problems as we grow up. A lot of times difficulties in our relationships are the result of partners using different problem-solving styles. It is pointed out that there are usually many ways to solve the same problem.

The sixth goal is to learn new and more flexible attitudes and expectations towards women. It is pointed out that within this goal we also look at our roles and expectats of ourselves as men and at the ways we have learned to behave in our society. It is suggested that while we examine the above goals, the man may decide that he does not want to make changes in all, or any, of these.
The seventh and final goal is to identify the roots of anger and violence and its impact on the man himself and others. It is explained to the man that one of the functions of anger often is to distance people and to keep them away. People get scared when other people get angry and it is a good way of preventing intimacy, for instance, not allowing people to get close.

A man is told that these goals will be reviewed again during the first two introductory sessions of the group. It is expected that by the end of the second introductory sessions the man will make a decision about whether or not he wishes to be a part of the group. If he decides to join the group, at that time, he is expected to sign a contract for six weeks and agree to work together with the other men.

It is explained to him that new men are only admitted during these two introductory sessions and then, at that point, membership is closed. Other men will have to wait until the next introductory sessions before getting involved.

The worker during the intake interview also explains other group rules such as confidentiality, taping, etc. It is explained to the man that the purpose of the group is not to force anyone to change. The expectation is that he will be in charge of his own change process. The group worker will present him with opportunities to look at things
differently and to make changes. He is the one who will choose how fast, or how slow, he moves through the process. It is not something that the worker does to, or for, him. He is involved in a process along with the other group members. It is explained that initially the group members have to decide whether the group is a safe enough place for them to do the work that they need to do for themselves.

It is explained that this happens in different ways for different members. It is explained also that no one will force him to say or do anything that he does not want to do and that no one will make fun of him, put him down, or pressure him in any way to do things within the group. He will be given the opportunity to speak but if he does not want to say anything that is perfectly acceptable.

Confidentiality

The group rule about confidentiality is explained in the following way. Some people talk about confidentiality as meaning that what is said in this room stays in this room. It is explained that the worker feels that defining confidentiality in this way is not always helpful. It is explained that he makes the decision with whom he will share his private information. He did that during the intake interview when he decided how much he was going to share with the worker. He does it every day, in conversations with his friends. It is permissible for him to go or making
that decision to share information that he has learned about himself, in the group, with whomever he chooses, including his partner. It is defined that it is helpful for him to share information with his partner to improve their relationship and understanding of each other. It is not alright, however, for him to share any information that any other member has shared about himself during a group session. An example is given of how, at times, confidentiality is broken because people do not take personal responsibility for their behaviour. The example is as follows: Often we are talking with a friend about our experience in group and we start out by saying, "You know, I've been thinking about this in this way because Sam in the group said thus, and such the other night." Often the conversation becomes focused on Sam and "Why did he say that?" and, as a result, confidentiality is broken when the member begins to specifically talk about Sam. An example is given to stress the importance that it is permissible for the man to talk about group but he should do so in certain ways, for instance: "I've been thinking about this since I've been attending group." or 'Just, 'I've been thinking about this." It is stressed that it is not necessary, unless he chooses, to mention what he has learned or is doing is a result of his involvement in the group program.
Taping

It is explained to the man, also during the intake interview, that all group sessions are taped. He will have to decide if he can accept this before deciding to attend. It is explained that taping is done for the following reasons:

* The taping is used primarily by the worker to help him in providing effective service. It is explained that primarily two people review the tapes: one, the executive director, who provides ongoing supervision of the worker and, secondly, from time to time, a consultant may be asked to listen to the tapes if we would like another opinion.

* Often we do not listen to ourselves and the tapes are stopped from time to time and played back so the man can have an opportunity to listen to himself and hear exactly what he has said and whether what he said is what he intended. It is explained that a lot of men use this technique very effectively.

* Men also have individual contracts that they choose to work on within the group. It is explained that if, after doing some individual work, he wishes to listen to the tape of his individual process he may do so.

* If a man is absent from a group meeting he may, if he wishes, listen to a tape in order to find out what happened during his absence from the group. While he will miss the visual, the tape will give him some idea of the material that was covered during the missed session, as well as provide any information that was presented by the worker.

The Invitation to Attend Group

If the man, during the individual intake/assessment session, is assessed as being appropriate he is given an invitation to attend an introductory session and is told when that session will take place. The man is provided with a card,
from the worker, and is given instructions on how to contact the worker should a crisis arise while he is waiting for the group to begin.

The final part of the intake and assessment is the completion of an optional questionnaire. It is explained to the man that this is done for two reasons. From time to time, Hiatus House receives requests to do public presentations on the subject of domestic violence. It is explained that there are a number of myths about domestic violence, i.e. that it only happens to the lower class and the unemployed. It is explained that we use these statistics to talk, in an educated way, during these presentations and thus explain away some of these myths. An example is given of the statistics we collected from the first 36 men. They showed that 69% of them were employed and had been for an average of seven and one-half years. The second reason that we keep a certain number of statistics is to satisfy our funding source. If the man decides to complete the questionnaire he may decide to put his own name on it or he may use a pseudonym if he prefers. The questionnaire is optional and has nothing to do with whether or not he is accepted into the group. The worker uses the questionnaire as an indication of a man's motivation to be involved in treatment.
Attendance Rule

In the beginning an attendance rule was used in the group and if one member did not attend the group the group was cancelled. This was later dropped. It was brought to our attention, by the men, that it was not fair that when they were prepared to do work they were prevented because one member was delinquent in his responsibility to attend group.

Evaluation Session

It is also explained to the men that the eighth and final week is the evaluation session. If he still has contact with his partner at that time, even if they are not living with each other, then he will be asked to ask her to attend the evaluation session with him. She will be asked three questions.

* What changes has she noticed during the eight weeks he has been involved in the program?
* What suggestions if any does she have for him. For example:
  - In what areas does she think he needs to make improvements for himself? It is explained that this does not mean that he has to follow her suggestions but that the evaluation session with his partner provides an opportunity for her to get feedback from her on how she perceives his progress.
His partner will be asked whether or not there has been any physical or verbal abuse during the last eight weeks.

If he no longer has any contact with his partner, or she does not wish to attend the session, then he can bring some other person. This person must be aware of his violence and know him well enough to be able to comment on the changes they have seen over the last eight weeks. He is told that some men have chosen to bring their mothers or other close friends (male or female). This part of the evaluation takes place during the first half of the session. The partners or 'significant others' then leave and the last part of the evaluation is conducted by only the group members and the social worker.

Following that eighth week the group then repeats the cycle beginning with the two introductory sessions. New members are allowed to join and old members decide, if they wish, to continue for another eight sessions.
Chapter II

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

CLASSIFICATION

This research project is an exploratory-descriptive study. Tripodi, Fellin and Meyer define exploratory-descriptive studies as those which:

seek to thoroughly describe a particular phenomenon. Descriptions are in both quantitative and qualitative form, and little concern is usually given to systematic representativeness (1969:49).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were devised to provide a focus for the collection and analysis of the data.

* What are the conditions under which a man chooses to assault his partner?
* What factors account for the degrees of violence used by a man against his partner?
* What reasons lead a man to seek treatment as a solution to his abusive behaviour?
* What types of relationships exist between participants in the Fresh Start program?
* What phases or stages do the members go through during their involvement in the program?
* What observer-articulated or constructed types of male
batterers can be identified?

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Participants
Participants refers to those who actually attended the group and completed a minimum of six sessions including the evaluation session. A total of thirteen of the participants who attended, during the period covered by this research, are studied.

Respondents
Respondents are those men who completed the voluntary questionnaire. They may or may not have ever attended the group. Eighty-three men completed the questionnaire.

POPULATION
This research project comprises all those men who completed the process and referred themselves to the Hiatus House Fresh Start program between June 1, 1981 and December 31, 1983. A total of 428 men referred themselves to the program in those 19 months.
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The data presented in this study provides examples of the wide range and the variety of problems men who batter present during treatment. The descriptions, however, cannot be generalized beyond either the respondents or the participants of this research.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The analysis of data will be divided into five sections.

1. The quantitative data taken from completed questionnaires will be used to provide a profile of the typical male batterer who participated in this program.

2. The process of group therapy will be identified and reported in three categories:
   a) The stages or phases through which the group moves.
   b) The types of relationships formed within the group.
   c) The evaluation of the group
      i) by spouses.
      ii) by the members themselves.

3. Observer-articulated or constructed types of male batterers will be identified and illustrated using descriptive data transcribed from the audio tapes of the sessions.
4. The process utilized by the men in choosing to attend and deciding to continue in the program will be identified and reported.

5. A man's perception of what has motivated him to choose to use violence and degrees of violence used against his partner will be identified and reported.

Quantitative data will be analyzed using the computer. The statistical analysis system, SAS Institute, release 82.4, was used to calculate means, frequencies, and percentages.

**SUMMARY**

This research project is an exploratory-descriptive study. It was designed to describe the participants and the group process involved in the Hiatus House Fresh Start Program for male batterers as well as to develop questions and hypotheses for further study.
Chapter III
ORGANIZATION OF THE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA AND FINDINGS

The collection of data for this research project produced more data than will be analyzed or reported within the framework of this thesis. Only data directly related to the six research questions will be discussed. To facilitate the presentation, the discussion of the data and findings was divided into five chapters:

* The quantitative data taken from the completed questionnaires
* The process of group therapy
* The man's process in deciding to attend and continue in the program
* The man's perception of his use of violence against his partner
* Observer-articulated or constructed types of male batterers

Quantitative data from 83 completed questionnaires was used to provide a profile of the average male batterer who participated in this program.

The qualitative data was taken from the audio tapes of forty group sessions. A total of 13 men were involved in these group sessions. A total of 132 hours of audio tapes
were listened to and analyzed. The names and certain identifying data of the participants were changed or not used to preserve the confidentiality of the members.

The six research questions that were devised to provide focus and structure to the collection and analysis of the qualitative data are:

* What are the conditions under which a man chooses to assault his partner?

* What factors account for the degrees of violence used by a man against his partner?

* What reasons lead a man to seek treatment as a solution to his abusive behaviour?

* What types of relationships exist among participants in the Fresh Start Program?

* What phases, or stages, do the members go through during their involvement in the program?

* What observer-articulated or constructed types of male batterers can be identified?

In conclusion, a summary of the major research findings is provided in Chapter IX.
Chapter IV

THE QUANTITATIVE DATA TAKEN FROM COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES

This chapter uses the quantitative data taken from completed (optional) questionnaires to provide a profile of the typical male batterer who participated in this program.

The population (120) for this research were all those men who referred themselves to the Hiatus House Fresh Start Program during the period of June 1, 1981 to Dec. 31, 1983. Re-referrals were not included in defining the population.

The optional questionnaire was completed at the end of the individual intake and assessment interview. This interview was held with the man following his referral to the program and prior to his acceptance and admission to the group.

A total of 101 (78.91%) individual intake and assessment interviews were completed in the above period. Twenty-four (18.75%) of the men who referred themselves to the program terminated their involvement before attending the individual intake and assessment interview. A total of three (2.34%) men were awaiting an individual intake and assessment interview on December 31, 1983.

Of the 101 (100%) men who were actually seen in an individual and assessment interview, eleven (6.59%)
TABLE 1
Referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disposition</th>
<th>Referrals N=128</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intakes completed</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>78.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminated after referral</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaiting intake</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>128</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

terminated their involvement in the program following that interview. These men were not deemed acceptable for the group for the following reasons:

* There was sufficient indication of alcohol abuse that it was deemed appropriate for the man to seek treatment for his alcohol problem before getting involved in the men's program. This was recommended for four of the men.

* The nature of the violence with their partners indicated that the couple could benefit from marriage counselling. This recommendation was made for three of the men following a consultation with the Hiatta House staff person who had seen the women individually. The staff verified that this was the first occurrence of
violence and that the women were also willing to participate in marriage counselling. Since the woman's safety was not seen to be a major issue, the recommendation was then reviewed with the executive director and approved. In all of these cases this recommendation was contrary to the policy that Hiatus House had established (i.e. that no marriage counselling would be provided to the couple prior to the man's attendance of the Fresh Start Program).

* Three men did not define their abuse as a problem that they wanted to change and therefore were not accepted into the group. The reason the men gave for attending the individual intake and assessment interview was that their partner had told them to come.

* One man was being abused by his wife and therefore was referred for individual counselling following a meeting with his partner and another worker.

A total of 24 (28.71%) men who had been placed on a waiting list did not attend once there was an opening available. A total of 53 (52.48%) men were actually admitted into the group program. Eight (7.92%) men were on the waiting list for group at the end of December 1983. A total of 41 (40.59%) men voluntarily terminated from the group program during the period (19 months) that this research covers. Twelve (11.83%) men were still involved in the group program at the end of December 1983. Table 2
### Table 2
Intakes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disposition</th>
<th>Intakes N=101</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terminated after intake</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminated after waiting for admission to group</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admitted to group</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting for group at end of the period</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

shows the disposition of the 101 men who attended the intake interview. Of the 101 men who were seen in the individual intake and assessment interview, 82 (81.19%) agreed to complete the optional questionnaire.

The following variables are used to provide a profile of the typical male batterer who participated in the program:

- Man's age at the time of intake interview.
- Man's marital status at the time of intake interview.
- Number of children.
- Whether he had previously been separated from his partner because of violence.
The length of his present separation from his partner if he was presently separated.

- Length of time at his present job.

- Amount of education completed.

- Was he physically abused as a child.

- If he was physically abused, by whom.

- Did he witness his father abuse his mother.

- Man's reported frequency of abuse of his partner.

- Is he presently involved in other counselling.

- Was he receiving counselling from any other agency at the time of his intake interview.

- The man's commitment to attend six sessions.

- Referral source.

**MAN'S AGE AT THE TIME OF INTAKE INTERVIEW**

The mean age of the men in the respondents was 31.13 years. As seen in Table 3, the highest percentage was found in the 19-29 years category. The youngest man in the population was 15 and the oldest was 59.

It is possible that the older respondents tend to view their violence as a part of their relationship and therefore acceptable and not a problem. There is also a tendency for men who have been violent within their relationship to see
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Respondents N=82</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>48.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

their violence as the result of factors within that relationship rather than a personal problem. Therefore ending of that relationship in their mind also ends their problem with violence. It is therefore not until they find themselves in another relationship and find themselves using violence to solve problems that they seek counselling as a solution. They may, however, decide that they will not get into another relationship and thus never attend.
MAN'S MARITAL STATUS AT THE TIME OF INTAKE

The mode for marital status for respondents was married. Forty-four (53.66%) respondents were married at the time of the intake interview. Table 4 shows the respondents marital status at the time of intake.

TABLE 4

Man's Marital Status at the Time of Intake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Respondents N=82</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Law</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>53.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>82</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NUMBER OF CHILDREN

The average number of children the man reported at the time of intake was two. The largest number of children reported was five. Table 5 shows the distribution of the number of children reported by the respondents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Respondents N=82</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>100.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHETHER HE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN SEPARATED FROM HIS PARTNER BECAUSE OF VIOLENCE**

Fifty-four men (68.35%) reported that they had been previously separated from their partner because of their violence toward her. Twenty-five (31.65%) respondents reported that they had never separated because of violence in their relationship. Table 6 presents the responses of the respondents to this question.
TABLE 6
Previously Separated Because of Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previously Separated</th>
<th>Respondents N=79</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>68.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE LENGTH OF HIS PRESENT SEPARATION, IF SEPARATED

Sixty-seven (81.71%) of the respondents were separated from their partner at the time of the intake and assessment interview. The mode for length of present separation is less than one week. Twenty-nine (43.28%) of the men reported that they had been separated less than one week from their partner at the time of intake. The median for length of present separation is one week-one month. Twenty-seven (40.30%) of the men reported they had been separated, at the time of intake, one week-one month. The longest separation reported by one man was over one year. Table 7 presents the responses of the respondents to this question.
TABLE 7
Length of Present Separation at Intake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presently Separated</th>
<th>Respondents N = 67</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one week</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One week-one month</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-two months</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-six months</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven-twelve months</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than one year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TIME OF HIS LAST SEPARATION

Fifty-four (68.35%) of the respondents were separated previously separated from their partner. The mode for time of last separation was greater than one year. Twenty-three (42.89%) of the men who reported that they had been previously separated from their partner were separated greater than one year ago. The median for length of time since their last separation was seven-twelve months. Seven (12.96%) of the men reported they had been separated seven-twelve months ago. The longest separation reported was over one year by one man. Table 8 presents the answers of the respondents to this question.
TABLE 8
Time of Last Separation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Separated</th>
<th>Respondents N=54</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one week</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One week-one month</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-two months</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-six months</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven-twelve months</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than one year</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LENGTH OF HIS LAST SEPARATION

Fifty-four (68.35%) of the respondents reported they were previously separated from their partner in the past. The mode for length of past separation is less than one week. Twenty-nine (53.70%) of the men reported that they had been separated from their partner, at that time, for less than one week. The median for length of past separation is also less than week. Ten men reported being last separated from their partner for a period of one week-one month. The longest separation reported was over one year by one man.

Table 9 presents the answers of the respondents to this question.
### TABLE 9
Length of Last Separation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length Separated</th>
<th>Respondents N=54</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one week</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>53.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One week-one month</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-two months</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-six months</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven-twelve months</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than one year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Sixty-four (77.11%) men reported that they were employed at the time of the intake interview. Table 10 shows the distribution of the employment status for the respondents.
TABLE 40
Employment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Respondents N=83</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>77.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LENGTH OF TIME AT HIS PRESENT JOB

The average length of current employment of the respondents was 7.91 years. Of the 64 respondents who were employed, two (3.13%) men had been at their job less than 1 year. One man had been at his present job for 41 years. The mode for length of current employment was 1-3 years and greater than 10 years. The length of employment of the respondents are reported in Table 11.
TABLE 17

Length of Time at Present Job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Respondents N=64</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 10 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EDUCATION COMPLETED

The mode for education completed for the respondents was some secondary school. The median for amount of education completed is secondary school. Seventeen men (20%) indicated that they had some college or university. Ten men (12%) indicated that they had completed college or university. Table 12 shows the distribution of respondents by the variable education. If the data is grouped, 12.05% of the respondents had public school education, 55.42% had some secondary school education, and 32.53% had some college or university education.
TABLE 12
Education Completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Respondents N=83</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Secondary</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Secondary School</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some/College/University</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed College/University</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HAD HE BEEN PHYSICALLY ABUSED AS A CHILD

Fifty-one men (61.45%) indicated that they were not physically abused as a child. Of the 32 (38.55%) men who reported that they were physically abused as a child, 15 reported that they were abused by their mother. Twenty-one (65.63%) of the men who were abused reported that they were abused by their father, and six (18.75%) of the men reported that they were abused by both parents. Table 13 presents the responses of the respondents for this variable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Respondents N=83</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by mother</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by father</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by both</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>36.55</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>61.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>83</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HAD HE WITNESSED HIS FATHER ABUSE HIS MOTHER**

Thirty-nine men (46.99%) indicated that they had witnessed their father abuse their mother when they were a child. Distribution of the respondent's answer to the question are listed in Table 14.
### TABLE 14
Witnessed Father Abuse Mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Witnessed Abuse</th>
<th>Respondents N=83</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>53.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MEN'S REPORTED FREQUENCY OF ABUSE OF HIS PARTNER**

The mode for frequency of abuse reported by the men at the time of intake was innumerable. Thirty-one men (37.81%) reported they could not remember how many times they had abused their partner. The next highest reported category was three times. Table 15 shows the distribution of the frequency of reported abuse by the men at the time of intake.
### Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Respondents N=82</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innumerable</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>82</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.02</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Whether he is presently involved in other counselling**

Thirty-seven (44.58%) men reported that they were involved with other agencies. Table 16 shows the respondents answers to this question. The mode for agency involvement was psychiatric. Twelve men reported they were presently seeing or had seen a psychiatrist.
TABLE 16
Involvement in Other Counselling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Respondents N=37</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSB</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brentwood</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connaught Clinic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.01</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE MAN'S COMMITMENT TO ATTEND SIX SESSIONS AT THE TIME OF THE INTAKE INTERVIEW

Seventy-eight men (98.73%) indicated that they would commit themselves to six weeks of initial counselling. The results are located in Table 17. The high commitment to attend counselling at the time of intake is likely a reflection of the man's present period of crisis. At intake he is often separated from his partner. He is usually either permanently separated or back living with his partner by the
time there is an opening in group. Thus he may decide that he no longer needs counselling because he is once again living with his partner and "everything is going well" or it is no longer necessary to "save the marriage."

### TABLE 17
Commitment to Attend Six Counselling Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Respondents N=79</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>96.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REFERRAL SOURCE**

The mode for referral source was the partner. Thirty-four men (40.96%) indicated that they had been referred by their partner. The next highest reported category was Hiatus House Residential Counselling Staff. Sixteen men (19.28%) reported that they referred themselves to the program following a conversation with a residential counselling staff. A total of 63.05% of the referrals to the program came from either Hiatus House or the men's partners. Table 18 shows the distribution of respondents by referral source.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Respondents N=83</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH Residential Coun.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH Marriage Coun.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>83</strong></td>
<td><strong>95.99</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Profile of Typical Male Batterer
In summary the quantitative data from the 83 respondents provides us with the following quantitative description (using the modal categories) of the average male batterer who has referred himself to the Hiatus House Fresh Start Program.
The typical respondent is between 19 and 29 years of age, is married and has 2 children. He is currently separated from his partner and has been for less than one week. He has previously separated from his partner because of his violence towards her and was last separated greater than one year ago. He was separated at that time for a period of less than one week. He is currently employed and has been at his present job for approximately 1-3 years or for greater than 10 years. He has some secondary school (median) education and does not feel he was abused as a child. He did not witness his father abuse his mother, but has abused his partner so many times that he cannot remember. He is not presently involved in any other kind of counselling, but if he has been it is likely to have been psychiatric counselling. He is willing to commit himself to attending the group program for a minimum of six weeks, and has likely heard about the program from his partner or a counselling staff at Hiatus House.
Chapter V

THE PROCESS OF GROUP THERAPY

For the purposes of this chapter the process of group therapy will be identified and reported in three categories:

a) Stages, or phases, through which the group moved.

b) The types of relationships formed within the group.

c) The evaluation of the group

i) by spouses

ii) by the members themselves.

Qualitative examples will be used throughout this analysis as a way of sharing with the reader the richness and flavour of the process.

STAGES OR PHASES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

Part of the difficulty of outlining the exact stages in this group's development has been that while a structure exists, it is, by design, one that is flexible and not rigid. Men who matter need to see that one can operate within a structure, be flexible and yet still be in control. Flexibility and being in control are often viewed by these men as being at opposite ends of the continuum.

This group moved through basically three stages. These are: Beginning Sessions, Middle Sessions, and Ending
Sessions as identified in earlier work (Buckley, Miller and Wolfe, 1983).

Within these macro levels there is also a micro process which involves each man's individual progress throughout these same stages which may at times be ahead of or behind the overall stages of the total group. This is a result of the ongoing open-closed nature of the group process and is a function of the program's design.

The Pre-Group Process

The pre-group process involves the following points:

1. Man's initial contact with the agency either by telephone or at the back door.

2. Man is given information about the availability of a group therapy program for men who batter. The court-mandated program began on October 1, 1983 and since that time men were also informed of the program when they were ordered by a judge to attend.

3. The man makes the decision to call for information or to arrange an appointment with the group worker.

It is at this point that the man is considered a referral to the program.

4. If available, a worker speaks to the man when he calls and sets a time for the intake and assessment interview. If unavailable, the worker returns the call within a 24-hour period because of the concern about possible suicide.
Individual Intake and Assessment Interview

The individual intake and assessment interview involves the following procedures:

* Identification of the basic purpose of the group.
* Group rules.
* Family history with attention to the possibility of the use of suicide, homicide or psychosis as a way of dealing with life's problems.
* Completion of intake questionnaire (optional). An explanation of the group and the structure including the evaluation process with his partner.
* Explanation of how to contact the worker in an emergency situation prior to group.
* An indication of the length of time that he will be on the waiting list.
* An invitation to attend the introductory sessions for the purpose of enabling his decision of whether or not, the group will be helpful for him. The process is the same for court-mandated clients.
* Completion of the optional intake questionnaire.

The Beginning Stages (Weeks 1-4)

In the beginning stages the following processes take place:

* the formation of the group including the development of cohesion and the formation of more intimate relationships.
* the introduction of concepts which help form the norms, values, and patterns of communication which will develop within the group.
* the role of the worker and the problems he or she must resolve.

Since all of the men have attended the individual intake and assessment interview, those men who decide to attend the group do so with the understanding that the purpose of the group is to deal with their abusive behavior. Existing literature indicates men that batter often deny and minimize the severity and extent of their violence towards their partners. Men, therefore, in the initial stages of group are often hesitant about revealing the full extent of their violence. The researcher believes that this hesitancy results because the fact that violence within the family is seldom shared with non-family members. The worker is active at this point, giving lots of permission to move slowly through this process. It is pointed out to the man that it is normal and okay for him not to trust the worker and other group members. He is also given permission not to share everything about himself.

**The Formation of the Group**

New members are asked to share with the others what has brought them to the group, what they want the group to do for them, and what they feel is the place where they need to
start. Depending on what has taken place during the individual intake and assessment interview, some men, at this point, may be clearer about their individual contract-goals than others.

All the group rules, group structure and other guidelines that were discussed during the intake interview are repeated during these introductory sessions. This provides a reference point which may be used by the group worker if members decide not to follow through on their contract at a later time.

The knowledge that his progress will be evaluated every eight weeks gives the men permission to talk about their abusive behaviour. This knowledge also prevents the worker from having to play the game of catching the man in a lie at some later time. The worker understands that it is normal for the man to minimize the severity of violent incidents in the beginning stages of the group.

If the group is newly formed, the worker is active at this point helping members enter the group, communicate, explore, and yet maintaining some distance. The worker helps them discuss the purpose of the group and helps them see the things that they have in common as well as their differences.
Discovery of Commonalities

By the end of the first meeting men are often amazed at how much they have in common and how much they can share with each other. It is important that the worker be aware that this can happen too quickly for some men. They may decide to terminate treatment because they feel they would be too vulnerable.

Other men summarized their feelings at the end of the first group saying, "You can only hold so much inside," or as one man stated, "I thought we were all so different. It is phenomenal! Amazing! Everything these guys have said—all the things—I feel." Some men make judgments in their heads but don't always share them. One of the men who did share his judgments gave us a clue about what men think about when they first enter the group.

David

I said when I walked in the door, 'Look at all those square heads... (laugh) My fuck, am I going to hate this', but now I am thinking, we are all the same, and I can say that now it doesn't matter what we look like on the outside, we are all the same within. I feel a lot better too.

Members Recognize Their Sense Of Aloneness

One of the things that men who batter have in common is their sense of aloneness, a sense of having to do everything all alone. They feel that it is not okay to be close to other people because being close makes one vulnerable. In the beginning sessions members made comments like "I didn't
know what love is" or when talking about their sense of isolation say, "I chose to cut myself off" or "I cut him off" when speaking of friendships with other men. Members often related comments like, "Everytime I got too close I got a shot in the head" as one member remembered thinking when reporting about his relationship with his father. When we talked about trust one member said, "I can't confide in anybody."

Members Identify Their Need For Therapy.

When the men begin to recognize their sense of aloneness and vulnerability they begin to identify in the group their need for intervention. The worker gave permission for them to express their needs and the group began to become supportive of one another and as a result more cohesive. This happened quickly and was a process of individual members testing reactions from other members about how they would accept them. Some members explored very little and were not sure about committing themselves. They gave themselves lots of opportunity to draw back and keep distant from other members. Some members tested more directly with such comments as, "My squash [head] was fucked up for years" or "Hope this will give insight into our problem." Other comments were more subtle such as "My family was okay but I don't trust anybody." The man simultaneously tested whether the group would meet his needs or he indicated that he did not trust the other members as yet.
During the second session men share how the group has already affected their life and how they have begun to change.

Sam

I thought it made a difference because I was lonely...it was remarkable! I couldn't believe it when I walked out of here.

Joe

I found this past week thinking about everything. When I struck out at her it was really hurting me and I don't know; I really don't know, but I think that when she saw me putting my fist through the wall and stuff like that, I think I was hurting her too.

Members Begin To Assume Responsibility For Their Violence

Men take varying degrees of responsibility for their violence and initially still hold to the belief that their partners are responsible for their behaviour. This is normal and is the result, in the author's opinion, of how we have been socialized to believe that other persons make us think, feel and thus behave. As one member indicates, "She knows how to push the buttons...I have to find out what they are—those buttons that she pushes." Another comments, "She aggravates; keeps going, [I] give her [a] shot in the head."

Some men have identified their violence as a part of another part of themselves, sometimes like a second or split personality. One man, who identified himself as Joe (name changed), stated: "She [his partner] pulls out Joseph [his
violent self], 'I locked him in a closet.' Comments such as 
the above indicate the degree of dependence and confusion as 
to who is responsible for the violence in families who use 
violece to attempt to solve problems.

Introduction of Concepts

The worker introduces different ways for the men to look at 
their problems. The introduction of these concepts sets the stage for the formation of norms, 
values and patterns of communication within the group.

These concepts are:

* Individual work
  a) Permission to change
  b) Their experience of the problem
  c) Sharing time
  d) Choice

* Dependence, independence and interdependence.
  a) Needs versus wants
  b) Roles
  c) Personal responsibility for your own behaviour
  d) Mutuality
  e) Personal space
  f) Control
  g) Trust
  h) Self-concept
  i) Separation
j) Intimacy

* Communication
  a) Problem solving
  b) Information about feelings
     - As one man indicated, "Men don't cry; crying means you're a sausage."
  c) Blame
  d) Stroking [This is a concept from Transactional Analysis]
  e) Asking for what you want

Role of the Worker

Men begin to work on their individual treatment contracts. One man indicates, "I could go home and stay there for a little while but I had to get out of there." Again this is indicative of a crisis period for the man which occurs once he is separated from his partner and is the result of his dependence on her. This dependence also appears to support the continued abuse. By giving permission to examine attitudes and roles, men begin to examine their commitments to their relationships to the group and to themselves. As one man shared, coming to the group for him was "getting the problem out into the open."

The group worker summarizes and also invites the men to be more specific and more intimate at a future time. Comments such as, "how [our attitudes towards females]
affects us concretely in our relationships with "men" and "what we want to do about that specifically," lead the men to set concrete achievable goals for their individual changes.

Dropout and Suicide

Men may terminate their involvement in the group in the beginning because they feel they would be too vulnerable. The following is an example of how this occurred for one man. Initially in the first group he shared:

I have a lot of things in my life nobody ever, ever, ever knew about. Now I am willing to open up.

These kinds of comments should not be accepted at face value, as the worker later realized. The metacommunication is that he is still very much concerned about opening up and while he may be willing to risk it he still is very scared. Towards the end of the third week he shared that he wondered what he is supposed to do now that he is not together with his partner.

Thom

What usually happens when you feel sorry for yourself?

Joe

I get down on myself.

Thom

What do you think about when you get down on yourself?
Joe

I think about it in between the group sessions that week.

This man called one of the members and said that he was thinking about dropping out and then hung up.

Workers need to be alert to the danger of suicide when men consider terminating and every effort should be made to contact them and reaffirm their commitment to the group and to remaining alive. The man contacted the worker and was seen individually between group. He returned to group the following week.

Thom

I want you to talk a bit about what you were feeling in terms of the group and what you were wanting to get out of the group and what that was about.

Joe

I always found it very, very, difficult to get close and I found I was getting too close to you guys too fast. That gave me a feeling that really made me, gave me, a feeling of paranoia—more than just paranoia but fear—and I didn't want to get too close too fast, and I found that happening and I don't know that if you noticed the closeness coming on really quick and that was bothering me and that was one of the things that was scaring me but I realized that I've always ran away from getting too close too fast and it is time to change. [Speaking to the worker] It is time for changes. I was thinking a lot about what you said while we were standing out on the sand on the point, and it is time to change that part of me so ahh... ahh... that is what I am trying to do, change that part of me, change that pattern of running away when it gets too close, too fast. I am opening myself up and I don't like to make myself vulnerable and I saw too much vulnerability coming in there and that vulnerability is scaring me. I don't want too many people to know the inside of me.
Thom:

What were you afraid that people were going to do with that?

Joe:

I was worried about what they would think of me but I don't really give a shit about what people think of me. It is what I think of me. It is what I think of me, but I know I got problems. I thought maybe you guys would think I was a rotten son of a bitch and there is no hope for this asshole and it didn't dawn on me we are all in here cause we got the same problem, but it never dawned on me at all... It is okay what the guys think of me because we are all in here for the exact same reason, to stop this kinda bullshit we've been going through, abusing other people and not considering what we're doing to them, just considering ourselves, being very selfish because that is one of the things we've been, we've been beating our wives and beating everybody. We've been very selfish because all we've been concerned about is us. I might be wrong here but when we beat our wives we are really beating on ourselves; like you said, when you go into the bar and you just wait for some mother fucker to come up and look at you wrong so you can deck him, you are not hitting him; we are hitting us. We really are and it is not right. It is really not right so to stop beating myself. I've got to stop beating other people.

The worker explored whom Joe felt had not accepted him. This leads to a piece of individual work for the man.

He related how he couldn't remember ever doing anything that his father accepted, that his father didn't have some negative comment for. He remembered when he went to school and didn't stand at the top of the class in grade 9. So he had tried harder the next term and he stood second but he still got hit for not standing first. Towards the end of the meeting he decided "I can't let my feelings control my
life as I have been. It wasn't only my wife that I abused it was my parents too." The worker redirected the member to finish and explain what happened when he called the other member in the group.

Thom

What was going through your mind when you called David?

Joe

Well at first I was reaching out. I was reaching out for a rope, some kind of help, someone to help, some kind of help, someone to talk to, and then it went through my mind when I did get through. Holy shit! I am exposing myself again and I don't want to do that and I panicked and that is when I hung up.

David

I was just going to tell you, "Why don't you come over and talk about it?" Too slow!

Thom

Talk a bit about what scared you, because I think it is really important; you reach out for what you know you need and yet you are afraid to move for it because you know you are vulnerable.

Joe

Yeah, you are vulnerable. It made me vulnerable. In being vulnerable while reaching, I didn't want to fall flat. I want to be able to grab and hold on to it and not reach for it and miss it and fall and that is what was scaring me. Do you understand?

One of the other members related how he was feeling he was out on a limb and he wasn't going to make it through the program.

David

I had all the right tools but I was all fucked up.
Joe
You've got all the right equipment. You know, I couldn't have given a shit less if I would have got hit by a truck. It would have felt good. It would have felt a lot better than the way I was feeling. I wasn't going out and walking in front of trucks yet but I was close to it.

The worker must be flexible to meet the individual needs of members and, in the cases of premature termination and possible suicide, be available to meet with men individually between the regularly scheduled group meeting times.

Weekly Sessions
The structure of the weekly sessions varies little from week to week. They are outlined as followed:

* Opening - This includes the group worker starting the group on time regardless of whether all the men are there or not.

* Check In - This includes checking in with each member individually about changes that have occurred since the last group, possible violence, or allows time for men to indicate the progress they have made.

* Individual Work - This includes asking for time, checking on homework, and gathering additional history.

* Closing - This includes ending the group on time or negotiating an extension if necessary. Homework is also assigned during this time.
Individual work

Members begin to identify individual issues for themselves as well as relationship issues and patterns. These issues form the basis of the individual treatment contracts on which the men work during the weekly sessions. As members begin to share, they are exploring and testing the situation, seeing where they fit in the group and sizing themselves up in relation to others. Information about feelings is shared with the members. Four basic feelings are identified: mad, glad, sad, and scared. The idea that feelings are not right or wrong is also shared. It is stressed that we have learned to act in certain ways depending on how we feel and therefore we can learn different responses. Members respond to this information in different ways.

Sam

You can be mad and scared at the same time. That is for sure.

David

I'd smile before I'd punch somebody in the face. I think I am nuts.

The concept of work and taking responsibility for oneself as well as the concept of sharing time within the group is established in the group by the worker. The worker during this time challenges for more specifics. Specific issues within one's own family of origin are identified. Resentments are examined and the process of communication is
also examined. Members begin to help each other problem solve. The supportiveness and confrontativeness of the group develops. Members often share individual history and some of the individual history of their partners at this point, such as how their relationship was formed. The worker helps the men make sense out of this in a new and different way. Most men have not previously felt that this information was important or that the experiences they had growing up in their family has had any affect on what is happening with their partner. The worker slowly begins to help them understand how their past experiences shape their responses to present-day situations. It is stressed that this does not mean that what happened in the past caused their present behaviour.

Communication Problems

Two examples of the type of communication problems experienced by the men and their recognition of them as problems are provided.

Joe

You don't have time to think. Your wife is getting on your back and all of a sudden 'wacko'...and a lot of times you don't have time to think.

Thom

Don't have time or don't take time?

Joe

Probably don't take time. Gets to a certain point and I just say, 'Let's calm eh, let's just calm down, and if it doesn't stop - 'whack'.
David

If we don't pay attention to our feelings how can we pay attention to anybody else?

Tim

I don't think I'll ever forget that--the concept of choice--but it's really true! You always feel like you've got this set of circumstances to deal with and what am I supposed to do about it? Well there is always something you can do about it! There is always choices! You know there is always choice. It is an awareness that choice does exist.

Sam

I get mad at her for nothing!

Sam identifies that she [partner] gets stubborn and doesn't talk about what the problem is. He also identifies that often times when he brings up a problem related to work he ends up with two problems; that is, the one at work and the one at home.

Tim

She doesn't know how to deal with it!

Sam identifies that he would like to have someone at home to talk it over with. He realizes that he keeps things inside and doesn't show them in order to keep peace and prevent arguments. This builds up over time until he gets mad at her for what appears to be nothing and becomes violent.

This is a clear example of how men, because they do not feel that they have permission to express their internal thought processes, see themselves turning to violence as a way of problem solving. This seems to be true, especially
in areas involving communication, dispute-settling and problem-solving with their spouses. An issue for one of the men is how to deal with his in-laws. He identifies that they argue about which family is most important and that there is a lot of leftover resentments and issues that have been avoided.

Peer Support

An example is provided to show how the group provided support for Sam while helping him problem-solve. Sam identifies that one of the things that happens to him when he heads over to see his in-laws is that he gets all uptight by the time he gets there. He's concerned about how his in-laws are going to deal with him because they know about the abuse.

David

You've probably been there two hours by the time you fucking get there and by the time you walk in and you are right in the middle of it.

Sam

When I hit her right then about two weeks after that they moved out of the apartment upstairs. I didn't go over there for about two and a half months ... I would go over there, I'd drive her but I wouldn't go in.

Tom

Have you ever talked to them about it?

Sam

The first time I hit her; well I talked to them. I said I'm sorry I done it eh, and I hope it won't happen again, or something like that.
Thom

This time you haven't talked about it. What do you want to say to them?

Sam

You mean right now? I don't want to say anything to them!

Thom

Yeah, I know! [Laughter]

Sam

I'm pretty disgusted, really, what do I say to them? I'm sorry I done it again; I don't know.

Tim suggests that he tell them that he's coming to the program and does a good piece of problem-solving with him. They explore together some words he could use.

The worker helped Sam explore how he felt when his in-laws moved out of the house after the abuse.

Sam

They had mentioned that before it seems that you guys are having problems because of us and we used to say no.

The group continues to help him explore what he could do and what he could say.

Thom

What are you afraid of? Put some words to that. Do you think they are going to dump on you?

Sam

Yeah.

Thom

Do you think you deserve it?
Sam

In a way.

The worker identified that they may not be that hard on him because they have already identified that they may have been part of the problem and they may have tried to be helpful by moving out of the house.

Tim

Sounds like they are in your corner almost.

Another member asks if his wife has been in on the discussion with parents.

Sam

No.

The group then works together and helps him identify that he knows what he wants to say but he stops himself.

Thom

The anxiety about that [being afraid of the reaction he will get if he speaks] uses up a lot of energy.

Joe

Anxiety burns off energy?

Thom

Rehearsal. It's never the way you rehearse it. Some people rehearse their whole life. Then they wait for the cue and they go with their plan and that isn't what happens. Did your parents defend you? When it happened did they get into taking sides?

Sam

My dad did.

Thom

What did your dad do?
Sam

Well be said, "You know I don't blame you for hitting her. She is just aggravating you know!"

His father's support of his abusive behaviour is examined. It is stressed that there are different levels
to communication, the words we say and the way we say it.
The group helps him identify that he is putting a lot of pressure on himself.

Thom

It sounds like there is a lot of pressure on you too?

Sam

Yeah there is.

Thom

Who is putting the pressure on you?

Sam

Maybe myself! Maybe I am putting too much pressure on myself. Maybe I'm worrying too much about something.

Thom

Do you want it to happen all right away? (PAUSE) Yesterday would have been fine though eh? (LAUGHTER) Do you put a lot of pressure on yourself?

Sam

No, no not too much.

Thom

What is that all about? What is the message you tell yourself?
Sam

I gotta make things work. Things aren't going very well. I thought if I didn't come here I am going to take some of the pressure off. I'm... taking some of the pressure off. I feel better. I gotta make it work!

The worker has him repeat this a number of times.

Thom

Why is it just you that has to make this work?

Sam

I don't know.

Joe

That is just it. It isn't just you, you both gotta make it work.

Sam

But try saying that to her! I am the one that is responsible for everything and I am the one that has to make it work.

Whether this is the reality or not this is his perception of it. It certainly supports the male role model of men taking care of things. This leads to work for the man about how this has come to take place in his relationship. It is based on a belief that women are equally capable of looking after "things" even though men may receive more training at doing so.

The preceding have been examples of how problems are identified in the group and how male batterers help each other solve problems.
Progress in Dealing with Their Violent Behaviour

Men begin to report changes in their values, their thinking and their behaviour sometimes as early as the second or third session.

Joe

I really think that we are a quarter of the way there... and having just admitted that pushes us at least a quarter of the way.

Sam

Getting closer together [with my partner].

Tim

Little bit of progress this week, things going better.

David

Before I would just hear what I wanted to hear. I just heard what I fucking wanted to hear... and wouldn't listen to her when she said, "that isn't how I meant it!".

Once he heard what he wanted to hear he wouldn't listen to the end of the conversation.

Thom

Guys aren't supposed to deal with their feelings anyway. So one of the ways of dealing with them is cutting them off and not listening or pretending you don't have them.

Sam

Yeah.

David

It is easy to say. It was like I never heard the whole conversation, just pieces of it, and what I didn't like I would pick that up and I would jump back on her... on anybody.
Introduction of the Concept of Getting Personal Space

The concept of getting space is introduced. This is the idea that it is okay to make an agreement with your partner about needing to take some space right now to sort out what is going on so you may deal with it more effectively.

Then

Need to take responsibility. "I am having a problem. I am upset right now. I need some space."

Increased Intimacy and Cohesion Develop in the Group

As members share more about themselves and their lives outside the group the level of trust between the group members increases.

Joe shares that he has been going to visit his father and he approached him and began talking to him. He started talking about fishing which is something important to his father. He had never taken an interest in it before. He also asked his father for advice, something he hadn't done for a long time.

Then

How does that make you feel?

Joe

Good, good! It is something that I hardly ever do. We've never been able to talk and when I say never I mean never. I do mean never. This is the first time in my life that I've been able to talk to my dad. I haven't done a lot of it because I am still leary [he is 32 years of age]. I am still a little leary because all it has ever been is snack! One more time and you get it twice! That is what it has been all along. I am still a
little bit leary that that is going to come but I am doing it, doing it slowly, without jumping in. I am testing the water before I jump in; making sure there is no --

Thom

So even the most miserable son of a bitch in the world can sometimes change.

Joe

Yeah!

The sharing of information such as illustrated above increases the intimacy within the group and adds to the group's cohesion. Sometimes members drop out before they reach the middle stage because they feel that they've been too vulnerable and while they want the closeness and the acceptance they are afraid to reveal themselves. They may be afraid they won't be successful at stopping their abusive behaviour. They may have concerns about confidentiality or about not being accepted. Sometimes their partners have left permanently and the man may decide that since the relationship has ended that he no longer has any problems or does not need to attend. Those men who view their lives as being responsible for the abusive behaviour feel they no longer need a group. Men often terminate and change their residence quickly and even though the group worker tries to contact men, at times, the number is disconnected or no longer in service.

Thus, in the beginning stages of the group, the group began to form with the establishment of the role of the
worker and the introduction of the various concepts which helped establish the group rules. Examples of some of the individual work of the members as well as examples of some of the problems encountered by the worker were provided. This stage was characterized by the development of trust which, once established, allowed for the more in-depth work that occurred during the middle stages of this group's development.

**MIDDLE STAGES (WEEKS 5-23)**

During the middle stages individual members do more intensive work. In fact, it is during this stage that the major changes are made by the men. Examples of progress are provided as the men began to (1) accept their partners as individuals, (2) express their regret over having been abusive and (3) accept new members into the existing group. Also, examples of a number of problems encountered by the worker such as separation and regression are shared.

Men begin in this stage by taking an active role in making changes in the way they relate to their partners. This is confirmed by the partners during the evaluation sessions. The men become better at identifying issues and the sessions basically focus on individual work for each man. Sessions usually close with the identification of homework and other issues to be reported on in the next session. One of the members, for example, decides to talk
to his partner and thank her for her support in handling the
situation the other morning. Another member identifies that
his partner never really felt accepted by him. He also
identifies that he doesn't stroke her for the things he
likes. He decides to talk to her next week about how he
felt. Areas such as these are identified as homework on
which the men are expected to report the next week. The
sessions continue with men asking for time to deal with
issues. The workers share information related to the
individual work of the members. Areas such as feelings,
communication and problem solving, and other previously
identified concepts, are shared. Men begin to accept more
responsibility for their behavior.

Individual work often focuses on family of origin issues
and unfinished business with the man's own parents or
siblings. Group exercises help the man become more aware of
what he needs and wants for himself. The strategies he uses
to achieve these are identified as well as are the decisions
he makes about not attaining his goals. These decisions
usually center around issues of dependencies. Intimacy and
its confusion with sex is examined. Many men look to sex to
satisfy their unmet need for love and acceptance.

Often men use their childhood experiences to convince
themselves that they are incapable of acting differently.

Tip

I could make a clear decision if I didn't come
from like a kind of impoverished background and
money wasn't the foremost in my mind. Making a
living has been the most important thing. Primarily monetary considerations. But am I happy doing what I'm doing? I'm making money doing what I am doing - I could do that if I could accept the fact that maybe I did make a mistake and this again comes from my up-bringing, you know? Like you don't make mistakes...[in] social contacts and outside interests. If they would just put the effort into it I would be fine. I realize as far as the sexier life I don't think I have any control of that.

Joe

Oh yes you do, Oh yes you do!

Tim

Well I would have more self respect if I felt that my wife cared more about me because she doesn't seem to care about me at all. I have very little self respect. Same thing with a happier life. I would be happier if I felt she cared about me. As far as the family part that goes with making a decision to either accept the marriage or get out of it, and as far as acceptance yeah, that I tie along with the first one; I don't know what to do about that; I don't know how to be more accepting or how to make a wife happier.

Another member confronts him.

David

You just need to fucking do it!

Sam

I show respect to my wife by listening to her.

They begin to identify changes that they need to make in their life and begin making them. One of the changes is accepting their partner as an individual. They also identify future goals. "What I should do" is go back to school. I feel like the job I am doing right now, I am not getting nowhere."
Acceptance of Their Partner as an Individual

Men begin to examine their roles as men, and some of the things they've learned. One member begins to identify that he has had unrealistic expectations of his partner.

Tim

What it says to me is that I've been giving things a lot of thought because things have gotten a lot worse for me since my mother died and I have like expectations of females that aren't being met anymore by the lack in my wife or what I consider to be the lack in my wife, wasn't necessarily such a problem before I lost my mother. Now that I don't have my mother, I look to my wife for things my mother used to do. My wife is just not naturally that way; she is just not that kind of a person, she never was; the lack was never so evident as it has been in three years now.

Joe

This is what society is doing. This, this is what society teaches us. If you look at women, women are always more patient. Women are always more patient and considerate because society has said that they have to be, whereas as men, you have to be hard, you have to be macho, being able to go cut with the boys and tie one on, me first. You gotta go out and chase that buck and, if somebody comes to you with a problem, you get away from it right away. You don't listen to the problem, you don't get near the problem; that's part of being aloof and withdrawn.

You try to keep your problems to yourself, instead of sharing, instead of seeking help. That's what society has taught us to do and really we have got to say, "Screw you Society, I am an individual! If I want to be considerate, understanding, patient, kind, call me a fag, well it is up to you but I have to be that way."

David

A lot of our fathers didn't know how to be fathers.
Joe

That's right they did the best with what they had, the tools they had.

By the sixth week, they begin to practice releasing termination by discussing the upcoming evaluation. Most men by this time are beginning to have a clearer idea of what they need to learn how to do.

Tim

Handling frustrations and expressing them instead of feeling; just feeling bad about something. Telling the person it is making you feel bad, what they are doing that is making you feel bad so that there is a possibility for change, so that you don't have to keep putting up with what you don't like instead of just feeling bad about it, approach the person about it. Perhaps something will be done.

The men also begin to make some sense about why they are having difficulties with their partners. For example, one man realizes that the difference between his family and her family is that his family didn't talk about problems whereas her family did.

Regret over the Abuse

As the men begin to feel better about themselves as people they begin to express their regret about how they have hurt their partners. This occurs slowly and only when the men feel it is safe to do so. The men would not share these feelings if they felt, they would not be accepted or that what they said might later be used against them.
Tim

It's too bad things had to get so bad before the cards got laid on the table and we realized what the problems were. I find myself really settling down and being able to understand what is happening.

Thom

What do you think the difference is?

Tim

My understanding of what part I had in it, instead of always the blaming.

The men begin to share more specifically about the actual violence, although they are still not dealing with the actual incidents. This usually happens in the introductory sessions. If the group was not structured this way the men would probably not stay involved.

It is important that the group worker does not rush this but allows members to move at their own pace.

Joe

I am totally aware that yeah I did hurt her and I did hurt her in the past... But now I can realize, I can sit back and I'm what I did to her, what I did to her.

David

It turned my stomach, the stuff I did to her. I would bring a bunch of stuff in the house and tell her to clean the fucking shit up and she would clean it up. She's got it in her head and I would take my glass and I'd kick it. Jesus Christ! I can't believe that I could do that but I know that I did it.

The men begin to explain why they came to treatment. One member talks about the strength that it took to tell the worker that he had abused his wife.
David

It was building up; I had to tell someone or you would go fucking crazy. You can't hide it with anything until you admit it.

In the seventh session, members begin to indicate their interest in continuing for another eight weeks. Men realize that they have more issues and need to continue.

During the evaluation (week eight), they practice for their eventual termination. The upcoming evaluation gives them permission to look back at where they were when they started, how far they have progressed, and how many more changes they wish to make. Eventually they will decide they have changed enough and are ready to leave. The open/closed structure or the group facilitates this process with the old members modelling the various stages.

Introduction of New Members

There is a deeper sharing evidenced by the way old members tell new members about the group. If the second set of introductory sessions.

Tim

We can learn from you and you can learn from us.

The introductory sessions include:

* Group rules.
* Group structure.
* Introductions.
* Contracting.
Invitation to new members to attend.

The group rules are reviewed and outlined. Old members talk about their feelings about the group and what has happened during the process for them.

Tim

I've never been judged here. It is another good feeling you get.

Joe

If you feel somebody is chucking shit, you can say that here. We are not here to cover anybody in shit.

Sam

Right after the first week I felt good; as we've been going along I felt even better. I felt I was more open. Like I was sitting there like a bump on a log the first week you know, but the second week and the third week I started to open up more and I felt it was real good.

Joe

That's another one of our objectives. Openness. We've got to be friends here and we want you to be friends too.

Tim

We found that to be a common aspect among all of us. A certain amount of isolation and certain ways each of us went through our own life and especially certain commonalities started coming out and that was one of them.

Part of the worker's role is to direct traffic such as allowing only one person to talk at a time.

The group begins introducing themselves so the new members get a feel for how the group operates. The purpose of the group is explained, i.e., that it is not marriage
counselling and it is not designed to get you back together with your partner.

Members explain what brought them to the group.

Sam

Well the first time, that is going back a little ways. There is a gun downstairs, a 22, and I was drinking whiskey.

Tip

Things got so mixed up they had to be called to a complete stop. Everything around me was going to be destroyed. The tangled web of a lot of things working together.

A new member, Mark, introduces himself. His partner had attempted suicide and he had isolated himself. "I grabbed her and threw her on the ground to calm her down. The time that he doesn't remember but she does, he hit her with an extension cord. He was working 13 hours a day, seven days a week and had just been laid off and all hell broke loose. One of the older members shared what happened for him.

Joe

If I look at the last time I beat Mary, she was black and blue around the neck, she had bruises all over. I was terrified. I had to shift the car and she would jump. I hurt her. I really hurt her. I terrified her! My brutality to her it absolutely terrorized her to the point where she doesn't want to hear, see or have anything to do with me. My fear was doing it again.

The same member later on in the group shares a situation where he was angry and handled his anger appropriately.

Another member indicates he has made contact with his father. A new member makes a comment about the man
mentioning his father because he said he didn’t have a very good relationship with his father either. One of the other members identifies that this is something that they all have in common.

Tim

My dad and I don’t have much of a relationship. (Dad was primarily the breadcrum winner in the family). I find a big void in my life that my mother used to fill. I am somewhat reluctant in terms of inviting my dad into that space.

Towards the end of the session another member sums up what he feels he has learned in his first eight weeks in the program.

Tim

I've learned assertiveness through the last eight weeks. I have asserted myself in a non-aggressive manner.

New members are still ambivalent as evidenced by the contradictory nature of what they share.

Mark

I've never really abused her physically.

Although last week he had mentioned hitting her with an extension cord this is not challenged by the worker or the other members. There is no relationship base (trust) on which to do so. Premature confrontation is likely to result in premature termination. One of the members asked Mark when he was most likely to abuse his partner.

Mark

It is more likely to happen after I am pissed off at someone. Like somebody else at work or at school and I come home and I don’t like getting to
the point where I lose control. I feel jittery when I lose control and I can't walk straight. My speech is slurred and that really scares me. Trouble controlling myself when I am sober.

As the man shares further areas are identified for future work.

Towards the end of the meeting members agree to call an absent member. He has given a lot to the group and all were concerned about his absence. Even though there is permission to miss the introductory sessions, they all felt it was important to call to make sure things were all right.

Phone numbers are exchanged during the last introductory session and the group now closes down to new members. During the first week those members who have not already signed the contract do so.

While most members continue to make progress the worker must be constantly aware of two problems, separation and regression which may occur at any time. While both problems may result in suicide attempts by the men they may also be a positive indication of his overall progress in treatment.

**Separation**

It is not unusual for members to separate from their partners during the middle stages of the group.

During the first week a new member reports that he has separated from his partner.

**Thom**

Well how did you decide to leave?
Mark

Well it was on friendly terms. Like nothing thrown at me, nothing like that. We talked about it, had supper together. I packed my bags, kissed her on the cheek and [said], "Goodbye. Keep in touch." We made definite plans to keep in touch. Our friends were having problems with the kids. We wanted them back and Mary Ann thought that she could take care of them, but with me around there was too much stress.

Thom

Did she say that or are you saying that?

Mark

I agree.

Sometimes members separate because there has been further violence. It is normal for members to regress or have minor setbacks during this time.

David

Joy left Saturday night; ... I apologized after I started whipping shit around and I realized what the fuck I was doing. I don't know what she said just hit me wrong... before the fucking table would have been right out the window and everything.

Thom

Is it kind of scary?

David

Yeah, it scares her and it scares me after I realize what the fuck I am doing.

This leads to a piece of individual work for the man.

David

I know my boiling point is low.

Thom

Bullshit! I don't think your boiling point is any different that any one else.
David

Yeah but what I mean is that if I can get a word in edgewise that is what I am trying to get at. I was talking like I wanted to get my point across but she wouldn't let me.

Thom

I don't think it matters whether it was her or anybody else.

David

That's true. I'll sit there and let them get their point across. I'll listen before I tell them they are a fucking asshole! You know I like the same thing too, but Joy always been like that even with other people. She can't let, even with other people, somebody just says a few words and she knows it all! (LAUGH) You know what I mean?.... She just seems to like [to] try and put it together all by herself you know.

The worker directs him back to the issue.

David

It could be with Joy, it could be with anybody. If I feel like I can't get my point across, I try and show it to them. That's what I do. That's the basic strategy. If you are hurt you hurt back; that's the way it is, that's the way everybody is. If you are threatened you have a choice to stand and fight, or you run away.

The group explores different possible choices such as fight, flight, pairing, and dependency. It is important that these periods of regression not be defined as failures but rather be used by the therapist to lead the man to a greater understanding and eventual control of his own behaviour.
Acceptance of Responsibility for Violent Behaviour

Men who batter who decide to come for treatment have started to accept responsibility for their violent behaviour. It sometimes takes many months before they are able to be in charge of their own anger and still feel okay about themselves as human beings. The process is slow and not without pain. It requires careful listening on the part of the therapist.

The following example of a piece of individual work is presented to show that men are not taught to pay attention to their own bodies. Many pieces of work are attempted but are often not completed because the man is not ready or the therapist misses important information.

One of the members reports that he was out with a couple of other people and one of the girls was teaching him this handshake.

Mark

She started applying pressure on my hand and I just laughed. She is just trying to hurt me and then I reacted. I felt really bad after. I absolutely could not hit our sisters, could not touch them. They could beat the shit out of us but if we laid a finger on them we got it! We got a licking. He had to do this, with three older boys cause we could really hurt them [because they were male]. But even throughout school I would never touch girls; ever. I've never hit a girl until I hit my wife.

The worker asks if he is willing to do an experiment. He agrees.
Thom

If your hand had words what is it going to say to her hand? What is it feeling? Start with "I am a hand. I have five fingers." Tell me about what the five fingers can do.

Mark

I can do nice things and I can hurt. (Sigh)

Thom

How do you comfort people?

Mark

I can caress and I can work. I can make a fist. I can scratch. I can pinch. I can grab.

Thom

What do you feel when you are holding another hand?

Mark

Warm, tender. I feel warm.

Thom

How does it feel when you are feeling warm and tender?

Mark

Sometimes it feels good and sometimes it feels bad. Feels good, feels warm, comforting. It is hard to separate my feelings from my hand.

Thom

Don't try to separate them.

Mark

Angry. Destructive. I feel angry, and I feel destructive! I feel like breaking something!

Thom

I have the power to break something!
Mark

Yeah! I have the power to break something. A lot of times I don't realize.

Thom

I have the power to hit and hurt and maim!

Mark

And maim. I can also discipline.

Thom

I hurt when?

Mark

I hurt when I hurt and when I am challenged. I hurt sometimes by a mistake without meaning to; by being stronger than I anticipated.

Thom

I hurt when I am feeling?

Mark

I hurt when I am hurt, when I am threatened, when I am challenged.

Thom

Switch these, I love when...

Mark

I love when I am being comforted or comforting, when I am helping, when I am healthy, when I am useful. Touch. I love to caress.

Thom

Talk about useful. You feel useful when...

Mark

I feel useful when I am helping in some way, I am helping to do, like, the dishes, doing something constructive with my hands.
Mark

I feel useful when I have done something good, I feel useful when I have accomplished something. A lot of it is just feeling.

Thom

I want you to talk to your hand and I want you to ask it when the last time was that it felt useful.

Mark

Mmm... when was the last time I felt.

Thom

I felt useful when...

Mark

I felt useful when... I felt useful on the bus today. There was a girl with an armful of books, and I had a seat and she was standing. I held her books for her while she was standing.

It was interesting he didn't give up the seat which is traditional; he just helped her out. She has a pair of legs and can stand up by herself but she had an extra load and it was the extra load he helped with rather than potentially making her feel useless or inferior. The work concludes.

Thom

When was the last time that you didn't feel very useful or you didn't feel very good?

Mark

Mmm, mmm, that was when I hurt her when I squeezed too hard.

All the other group members have been silent through this whole process.

Thom

Let's break off, let's talk about it.
Mark

Afterwards how I felt?

Thom

No right now how you feel.

Mark

Fine! I feel like I am not all bad! I feel pretty good now! I felt pretty bad every time I thought about it; every time I thought of it I felt bad about it but now, now I am feeling better.

Thom

So you have the capacity to do both?

Mark

Yeah! I never really put it that way before. You know a lot of times I put myself down.

This work is not introduced to glorify the worker's intervention skill but rather to show the intensity of work the members are willing to complete once there is trust within the relationship. It also reinforces the point that men who batter can change.

The bias and the framework for this analysis is based on the belief which is supported by Gestalt psychology that we are a total organism and function as a total organism. Things that go wrong in the organism are often those things that we need to pay attention to in order to help the organism to function more effectively. By learning how to pay more attention to his feelings, and being clear about what they are, what his process is, Mark will be able to deal more effectively and choose more appropriate solutions,
rather than just using physical force. As Dietz (1984) in her work on felony homicide in Detroit points out, the invitations to violence are very subtle. This process is unique because it is a blend of the researcher's own experiences and approaches, which was one of the reasons why it was important to finish this study.

Thom

What was that like for everybody else?

Joe

That was useful! I felt it was useful. I got into thinking about how my hand feels when softness, when different feelings.

Sam

The good part says, warm, feel loved, that is what I thought. A lot of love, caressing. The bad part you can destroy, you can kill. Like you know I almost went to that point eh? You can use the hand to grab a gun!

Thom

How does that feel, that power. How does that feel?

Sam

Scary!

Joe

Scary!

Tim

Very scary! It fits with idea of choice that you are trying to bring out a lot. That we choose, which, is something that I never knew. You are trying to bring out a lot. The fact, that we choose what we do. We choose what we do.
Joe

We make a decision whether conscious or unconscious, we make a decision.

Mark

And I can see now where I can just drop her hand and say: "That is enough," without hurting her.

One of the members mentions that he saw a movie Please Don't Hit Me Mommy and one of the guys that he was watching it with said: "It is a fuck of a coward that would hit his kid like that or his wife."

Joe

I was thinking to myself, yeah you are right, but it takes more of a man to admit what he has done and seek help. At first it hurt, and I thought back and hurt. A good hand and a bad hand; I put a lock on it.

The group continues to talk about touch and the fact that when you're hurting a lot it is not hard to hurt others. It is a way of dealing with your hurt. Although it is not a very effective way, it is a way of dealing with it. It is a strategy. It is one of those things that you have learned to do to get by. It doesn't mean it wasn't effective; it was effective, at that point in time, but if you keep using it in present situations, it prevents intimacy. The fact that we all need touch, as well as the fact that as an adult we are generally able to choose the kind of touch we want, is also examined. We have the ability to choose something that feels good or you can get that smack. The group explores that arguing is often a part of one's way to make contact
with your partner. If you can't get good contact then often times you get bad contact.

**Progress: Making New Decisions**

Throughout the middle stages of the group's development there are examples that the men are continuing to make progress. The following examples are taken from weeks twelve, thirteen, and twenty-one respectively.

**Tim**

I just had to completely back off. Before I would try to analyze and sit down and talk with her. What is bothering you? Why is that bothering you? I was her psychologist. This time I decided I was going to back off. Just go up on my own and if she wants to be crabby let her be. I did it. At least there wasn't any problems whereas before the pressure would build into the period of three days where by the last night things would have blown up. To the point where she came up to me and I asked: "What is the matter with you?". She couldn't figure out why I wasn't doing what I normally do. She thought it was weird that I was being so quiet and withdrawn for a change. It worked; at least there was nothing to feel bad about this morning. Sometimes you just have to accept that the other person is just in a bad mood.

He begins to find out new information and makes sense out of it in a different way.

**Tim**

She was the kind of child, supposedly, according to her mother that they used to have to surprise her when they were taking her out to a visit to her grandmother. They could never tell her, in advance, because she would get sick to her stomach she would get so excited.
Another member gives an example of how they are making progress.

Mark

I was doing my homework the other night and she was running the vacuum down the stairs and opened my mouth; didn't matter what I was going to say, she just blew up. She said "I'm sorry" and she walked out. Before then I would have taken that personally and I would have blown up. And we are both realizing that.

Another member realizes one of the reasons why his relationship with his partner ended.

Joe

Something that I was never able to say to Joanne was, "Joanne I am afraid, I am afraid of your leaving." I was never able to say that. And now, I said, "Joanne I am really afraid of your leaving and your taking off with somebody else." I don't think she would have done it. Breaking down that barrier of my fear and tearing that wall down might have weakened the other walls around me to the point where I would have been able to instead of pounding on her, beating on her and abusing her verbally, I would have been able to tell her what my feelings, what my fears, what my frustrations were instead of taking them out on her. You call that responding instead of reacting. I would have been able to respond to her about my fears, having my fears or calling her a slut or tearing her apart... I was fantasizing things that weren't happening.

David

You drove her right out the door.

Joe

Yeah I did! No doubt about it and he is doing the same thing by neglecting her.

(LATER)
Joe

The one thing I didn't consider when we got married was the responsibility. We will have a good time then the responsibilities started coming, house payments. Joanne was going to school, tuition payments, books, clothing, food. Social life definitely has to be included and it got frustrating and I wasn't able to share that frustration with her. I was ending up in the red never having anything in the black. And things I wanted to do, I wasn't able to do. Points back there I had made plans where I'd be in xx number of years. I couldn't even see those plans anymore they were so far cut of sight. The 'ifs' get me. I can do this if this doesn't happen. I let the 'ifs' get me because as soon as I started mentioning if this that and the other thing happened what would happen? The 'ifs' did happen.

Thom

How do you relate that to the 'ifs'?

Joe

The 'ifs' stopped me when I was a kid...you'll get the new bicycle if you get good marks in school. 'If' is the condition...there was always deals when I was a kid. My dad would say you'll get this, if you accomplish, if you bend to my way of doing things you will have what you want. If I brought up my math score the bicycle...I would have bicycle. Every other subject was good it was just the arithmetic that was the shits.

The worker asks him to do a two chair exercise talking to his father.

Joe

Joe: You mean I can't even voice my own opinions.
Father: Smack!
Joe: Discussion over!

Thom

What do you want to do?
Joe

What I'd do when I was 18 or 19; I belted him back. "I am sick and tired of doing things you want me to do and I want to do my own way. Being perfect! Being all things to all people at all times. On top of every problem having all the answers. Not ever being angry. We wait a minute. Being angry, not hurting anyone in your anger. Never being frustrated; always frustrated at everybody. I am 7 or 8 years old do you expect me to know things know things that you don't know and may never know? Get yourself out! I am not you, I am me. I do my things my way; if I screw it up it's my fuck-up not yours, Dad. I can live life the way I want."

Thom

What's the fuck up about?

Joe

My dad, everybody fucks up!

Thom

You are out to prove it! To them! To be perfect you try and do more than what you can or you give up or you fuck up.

David

Excuses are like assholes! [Everyone has one]

Regression

Sometimes there is regression and sometimes there is even another incident of further violence. Some men progress for three to eight months before there is another violent episode. It is important for the therapist to be aware of this and give men permission to make mistakes along the way. Otherwise some men feel they have to be perfect and they may decide that being perfect means never ever getting angry
again. This, of course, is impossible! Men who attempt to control their anger this way usually become abusive again. The incidents are usually a lot more severe.

Some men regress by not being successful at accomplishing the goals they or the therapist have set. The following is an example which illustrates the importance of men deciding to make changes at their own pace. The man had been talking about calling his father and asking him to come for a visit for a number of months. He was confronted the week before and agreed to phone his father as part of his homework.

Tip
I've given a lot of thought to my homework.

Thom
What you really want to tell us is that the reason why you didn't call him is because you aren't ready to.

(SILENCE)

Thom
How old are you?

Tip
Thirty-four.

Thom
I think you can decide on your own when it is time to call your father.

One member relates how he realizes that his partner is still scared.

Thom
We start throwing things around whether we intend it or not is that, "Hey I am in charge and you listen!" and that is part of the threat issue.
Joe

And we have all come a long ways and that's part of reverting back to the way we were.

Mark

My wife is still scared. I was playing with the kids and I threw a ball at her and she really got pissed off. "Don't ever throw anything at me!" she said. This was all in fun and she really reacted.

One man indicates that they've had an argument and he has thrown pop bottles all over the kitchen.

David

I don't want to control it because I can't get my point across. Sometimes I feel like smashing stuff! It takes the pressure off, I guess.

Thom

Put some words to the pressure.

David

Feels like I want to scream.

Thom

So where do you feel that in your body?

David

In the arms. I feel it all over. I tighten up. I wanna scream!

Thom

You feel like someone's got you like that [and he puts his hands around his own throat]? 

David

Yeah... So I just look around; things get violent.

Thom

Put some words to your throat. From the throat, this is what I wanna say.
David

I feel like I am tight and I wanna scream, but I can't scream. I think when I get to that point, fist hits out at something.

Thom

It is not your fist that wants to talk, it's your throat that wants to talk.

(LONG SILENCE)

David

Yeah.

Thom

What's it want to say?

David

I want to say what's bothering me.

Thom

Part of the sense I get, is that you can't find the words.

David

I wanna say something, but I don't know what to say.

Thom

I tried to tell her but I couldn't...

(LONG SILENCE)

Thom

So I tried to tell you but I couldn't find the words.

David

Yeah it is different. I was doing the way I always done, the way I was brought up, what my old man always said, you know, if something was bugging us, he said, when my brother and I were fighting, [I] hit both of you guys that way I knew I got the right one.
Thom

Part of what you want to say is I didn't do that.

His father would hit him with the belt and he would curl up in a fetal position and get all tense while he kept hitting him. He realizes that he tenses up to protect himself and the work concludes with a solution. He will communicate with her. He will speak with her when it is convenient, when they are not in an argument, to get her agreement so that he can leave until he gets back into control, and is able to return and deal with the situation. He can deal with fact, that it is not the same situation with his father; he is not helpless and he is not threatened. Another piece of work is done with the same situation.

Thom

Where is your mom in this situation? How did she feel?

David

Scared to death!

Thom

How did you feel about your mom's attempt to help you?

David

Nice try... but...

His mother could not prevent the abuse. So part of his experience of women at the time, in his life, is that they are useless, even though she tried.
Sometimes members regress because they are trying to change too quickly. They may not feel that they are in charge of their changing so they return to using their old familiar ways of behaving. At other times they may think they have so much to change that they will never accomplish all of it.

One of the members raises the issue about whether or not it is normal to feel like you don't want to come sometimes.

Mark

I look at how much I got to change and I get discouraged...for myself I put this wall up around myself for so long. Hey! Stop breaking down my wall.

Another member shares his scare.

David

Feel like a hollow log. It is a shake... It is a shaky hollow log. I am cold and I am shaky.

Thom

You get a scary feeling.

David

I know that I am doing the wrong fucking thing. I thought of suicide for about five seconds that was enough. Didn't know which way to turn. Couldn't trust what I was seeing in front of my eyes. [Her way versus his way].

Thom

Either way you lose.

David

Too many fucking changes, I am scared to fucking death of them.
Another member tells why he works so long. He is afraid he will come home and find her dead.

Mark

I told her that! I told her that I didn't feel like going to work because I was scared I would come back and she would be laying on the floor.

He realizes that he can't stop her from committing suicide if she decides to kill herself but he is afraid she will if he changes or separates. As we explore further we find that her suicide attempts brings them closer together afterwards. He realizes:

Mark

She gets everything from me and when I am not there she isn't getting anything.

Whether this is reality or not, this is his perception and it is this perception from which he decides to act.

Men who have separated from their partner, permanently, or are currently separated, sometimes view regression within those members that are still connected to their partners as an indication that the group is failing. It is important for the worker at these times to check in with these men around issues of suicide and loneliness. One particular man terminated prematurely after two of the member's partners were re-admitted to the residential program. In both these cases there was no physical abuse and the re-admission was viewed as preventative. In one case the man realized that he needed to separate for a period of time. He moved out of the house, obtained an apartment, and
phoned his partner at the shelter to let her know she could move back home with the two children.

The man who left prematurely refused to return to a group meeting to deal with his concerns despite the efforts of the worker and other members to convince him to do so. He stated he could not trust the other members because the confidentiality had, in his perception, been broken. He terminated without coming to a meeting to deal directly with the group about his concerns. His concern that confidentiality had been broken may have been related to the fact that the group had agreed that one of the member's partner would be asked to contact another member's partner to let her know about a program for women. This was clearly a mistake. The man who left, however, had also been separated from his partner for an extended period of time and had held tenaciously to the belief that she would return despite the fact that the group confronted him that he was being unrealistic. One of the other members reported that he had spoken to him briefly outside before the meeting.

Sam

He felt that Joanne wasn't coming back and that was the first time I heard him say that.

The group decided that there were other things happening for him and that is why he has decided to leave. They decided that they were not responsible for his decision to leave. This was an important piece of work for the members.
It is also important during this time that meetings be regular. This is one of the reasons why the attendance rule was later dropped. Enforcement of the rule would often mean that the men would not meet for two weeks. When they are working hard at trying to make changes it is very easy for them to slide back and go either way. It is very important, therefore, that meetings be regular. Members themselves noted that two weeks between meetings, at these times, was often too long.

Thus, during the middle stages, men continued to make changes in their thoughts, feelings and actions which helped them reach their major goal in treatment; that is, stopping their abusive behaviour. Once men felt they had reached this goal and were no longer afraid they would be abusive they prepared to terminate from the group.

**ENDING STAGES (WEEKS 24-32)**

During the ending stages the amount of problem-solving work decreased for those members who were preparing to terminate. Instead, they shared more of the successes they were experiencing outside the group. Changes in their self-image were noticed and they talked more clearly about their initial reasons for attending the group as they reviewed their progress during these sessions. The evaluation in weeks eight, 16 and 24 provide periods of practice for the members eventual termination. They also keep the group focused on their goals and the overall purpose of the group.
Really to ask for what I need and be more assertive. Really what I have been learning is to ask for what I need, be more assertive. That is the biggest thing that I have gotten after all of these. Almost like I have been looking for things from people and never really letting them know that that is what I am looking for and kinda expecting that it is going to come. Kinda like expecting them to be mind readers. I've just learned to speak up a little bit. It seems to be working.

Members Share Their Successes

More time is spent with the members sharing their successes outside the group with other members. Another member indicated that he had an incident with a guy who tried to rip his shirt and he didn't hit him. The member said he told the guy to calm down and then he talked to him. The same member also indicated that he was supposed to go to work out of town. He was all packed and ready to go and his boss told him he wasn't going at the last minute. He said he told his boss that he was disappointed, which he never would have done before. He was pleased with the way he handled the situation.

Changes in Members Self Image

Often at this time men begin to make changes in their self image. Some men who have long hair get it cut shorter or styled. Other men spend money on new clothing and pay more attention to their personal appearance. This is part to
suggest that all men who batter are not concerned about how they are dressed. Professionals or men employed in white collar jobs often come more casually dressed during this period.

Members Review Their Progress

The members who are ready to terminate began to talk about what they have learned in the group as they shared experiences with new members who join in weeks 25 and 26.

Tim

One of the things that I've realized since I've been in the group is that some things don't change. You just have to handle it. I notice things in my wife that she is still doing that I really wish she wouldn't do. Just before something special she will blow up and start to get ugly. The situation happened on Sunday again.

In the past I never knew how to respond but I thought it was important to let her know exactly how that makes me feel. I just came out and told her. Now I have learned how to tell her how it makes me feel rather than let it build up because that is what really causes me to lash out at her. I think that is why we are getting along better. She viewed it all as my fault and I viewed it all as her fault. If I ask her something she really doesn't want to answer, she will hit my head off as a way of controlling me. You can either leave or you can learn how to accept them for the way they are and how to deal with the way they are.

David

Yeah but I have been all over that fucking chalkboard... Now I am trying to go straight. It don't bother me now if I get off track. I know how to get back on. I take the fucking action right away. If I fuck with it I know where I am going to be, way off fucking track. I don't want that. That is what I need to do. You figure it out yourself after you tell somebody. That is being responsible. I know all about that. It took me ten fucking months to get to where I am now.
In the final introductory sessions, as men prepared for termination, they become clearer and more concise about what brought them to the group.

David

What brought me to the group was beating on people, especially my first wife.

New members when confronted with such directness by the other members tended to move more quickly through the previously outlined stages.

Peter

I've got a similar problem. You forget. You like to put it out of your mind, you don't think you do it. You don't think you could have problems for seventeen years now. I've lost two women by it and I am just about to lose my third one.

The men dealt with what was important for them as a way of leaving. One man spoke about the telephone numbers that were exchanged.

Tim

Because that just means a lot. I know that when I came from the group, just having those numbers, whether utilized or not, it immediately gives you somewhat of a family support system. All of a sudden you are not alone, you have... phone numbers. You may never even use them. I think I will be leaving. I am happy to say that I feel comfortable with things, I can handle things. As you see she [partner] thinks that I am still going to do something. That is just going to take positive experience. She has had negative experience repeatedly so she is going to think that it is going to happen. When she sees over and over again that it doesn't happen, well I will take care of that. Also I might add that there is something else that I have not shared with anybody. I believe that Jean has sought psychological help and this is something that I suggested because I was starting to get very frustrated. Because I myself thought I was making
progress but I noticed some problems on her end, but I didn't think that I could deal with or straighten out for her. So I made a couple of suggestions to her about calling a psychologist... and I told her that she didn't have to tell me whether she had done it or not or what and she hasn't but I think she has because I have noticed changes in her. That is why I feel now as though I am better, I feel as though she is better. Because I think she is getting some personal help. But I think I can pull it off now where as before I wouldn't be willing to.

In the ending stages members reviewed what brought them to the group and what they have accomplished both inside and outside the group sessions.

**RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE GROUP**

The members, once they decided that the group was a safe place to do the work they needed to do for themselves, shared intimate details of their life. These are often things that they have never shared with another human being. For some of the men the other group members are the first people they have let get that close to them. Some members established relationships outside of the group. Other men, once they begin to trust others, established relationships in other social groups or organizations. One man, for example, became involved in work with children with special needs.

Comments such as "I've never been judged here!" and "We can learn from you and you can learn from us" gave the members permission to share at this intimate level. Tim summed it up in one of the early introductory sessions:
We tend to be isolated types or something like that and that is what we need to change.

The exchanging of phone numbers gave men permission to begin to break down the barriers. It is still their choice when, how, and with whom this occurred.

The intensity of the individual work that gets accomplished in the group depends on the establishment and maintenance of trust and openness in the group. This does not occur in every group and is a subject for further research.

Changing values does not happen quickly or easily. Values and cultural differences are examined. One of the members pointed out that it may be the result of our North American culture that men don't touch each other whereas in some European cultures, they do. One member stated that his partner's parents never touched in front of the children. Another member noted: "I never even saw my parents hold hands". One of the men redefined "racho" as being able to cry and being able to feel. The men talked about "being tough". One of the examples that was shared was their behaviour in high school when they always wore their jackets and shirts open even in cold weather. When someone asked you where you had been you couldn't say "Oh in the hospital 'being tough'" and how stupid it was, or you'd joke about the fact that you didn't take care of yourself. Or as one member says:

Joe:

Walking around with a broken wrist for two weeks.
Burt like hell but I was tough.
It is interesting to note that at this point in the group, one of the members also reported that the World Soccer Association that week had banned hugging and kissing after the games between players.

Tim:
How does touch relate with everyone for their relationships?

Joe:
With sex I didn't touch enough. I wanted to get it over with.

He indicated that he had talked to his partner and she said she would stop herself sometimes from touching as much as she wanted because he was uncomfortable.

The group examined the importance of communication and mutual respect in sexual relationships. One of the members indicated that he has begun to give more physical affection to his children and to his partner which he never used to do. Another member related how a rumour started at work that he was "queer" and how he almost got fired because he talked about his feelings. David summed up the type of relationships he had with others and how he viewed talking about problems.

I always dealt with everything myself. I never consulted anybody. You got enough problems of your own or the other way around. When somebody would come to me: "Look I got enough problems of my fucking own. Fuck off!"

Newer members were not usually as clear or as direct but instead they kept to themselves and kept others at a safe
distance. This was supported by the worker. It should be noted, however, that members who are introduced into an existing group tend to move more quickly through the process than is reported in this research.

Generally, the degree of intimacy established within the group is the result of the trust which has developed between the individual members, including the group worker. If this trust is not established or is violated, or perceived as broken, during the beginning or middle stages of the group's development members will terminate prematurely.

THE EVALUATION OF THE GROUP

The group is evaluated by the members, their spouses and the group worker. The spouses initially were hesitant to share their perception of the changes in their partners. However, over time they clearly indicated both the changes they had noticed as well as the changes they would like to see in the future.

The Evaluation of the Group by Spouses

The same group rules applied for the couples' evaluation. These were explained to the partners at the beginning of the evaluation session. The partners or significant others were given permission to be nervous, not to answer, and permission to ask for clarification. One other rule was introduced at this time and that is that only one member of
the dyad may speak at once. Partners were asked to sit in the centre of the group and speak directly to each other in the first person singular. Three questions were asked:

* What kinds of changes are you aware of that have happened in the last eight weeks?
* What suggestions for changes do you have for your partner?
* Has there been any physical or verbal abuse during the eight week period?

Two of the men were permanently separated. One man brought a female friend on three occasions while another man brought his mother for his evaluation. One man separated from his girlfriend and did not bring anyone to his evaluation. On one occasion two of the partners could not attend because they were hospitalized (not the result of abuse). After an evaluation was held the other attending partners agreed to return the next week to hear the other couple do their evaluation.

Changes Reported by The Partners

Initially the women who attend evaluation sessions with abusers were hesitant to say very much. They had no reason to trust the worker and many still feared there would be further abuse. A number of the women spoke so softly that it was impossible to hear their comments on the tapes. By the end of the first eight weeks the women had noticed changes in the men.
David's Partner
He is much more tolerant. [He] has become aware that other people are individuals. You still lose your temper but immediately you step back and look at it.

Sam's Partner
There is more communication. Communication is more specific.

Joe's Friend
He is more peaceful.

In week 24 one of the new member's partners states:
He has been trying to keep his mouth shut....He's been doing better with the kids.

Another partner noted: "When he comes home from here things are so much better." By the end of the sixteenth week, the partners were more enthusiastic about the changes that have occurred. As one of the partners stated "things are a lot different than the way they were before." The men began to thank their partners for the support and for being there and for being, as one man said, "someone to talk to." When the women became more comfortable and felt it was safe to speak without fear of further abuse, their evaluative comments became more specific.

He is changing, changing in his attitude and the way he looks at things. You see him struggling on something and working on some things. I don't always know what they are. Seems to be different.

She felt he was getting more things done and that he was being more assertive about what he needs. One of the members brought his mother. He had reported that not only
was she aware of his abusive behaviour but that he had abused her. She reported that she noticed "a big difference in the way he handles his anger" but indicated she thought he still needed to keep coming for a while. "One day I expected him to blow up and he didn't."

It was largely the result of these evaluation sessions that led to the identification of the need for a couples' group program. Once the violence stopped couples often become aware of other marital problems to be resolved.

Spouses Suggest Changes to Their Partners
In the first evaluation sessions the major concern expressed by the man's partner was usually whether he would remain involved in the program and recontract for another six weeks. The partner was usually guarded about getting too excited about the changes that had taken place. She had not been abused, in some cases, for a year, or longer, but knew that it could happen again.

Tim's partner expressed concern over his not renegotiating "because of the fact that he doesn't have many friends".

Tim
I think you are right.

Another partner pointed out that she felt that her partner "needs more self confidence". In the second evaluation session (week 16) Tim responded to the concerns his partner expressed in week eight.
Tim

Just that you've been right all along. And that while things were difficult, at least it led us into some help. It led me into this group which has done quite a bit for me. You were right about me needing more of a social life. I don't find myself as resistant as coming as I did in the first eight weeks. I find that I really have gotten used to it. I really enjoy coming. It is something that is really different. It helped me to be more assertive. It has really been beneficial not only in our relationship but in business relationships and things like that. I learned to be a bit more up front. I have things inside that I'd turn into resentments and all they'd do is fester inside, and then there is an explosion. I can talk about what is on my mind as I go along. Thank you for being patient. I know I haven't been perfect in eight weeks time.

Women requested other changes such as:

* going out more
* not working as many hours.
* spending more time together as a family
* going away together
* spending less time with in-laws
* helping more around the house
* listening to me more
* taking better care of yourself physically
* looking after the children while I go out
* not drinking as much
* involving me in major (money) decisions
* not putting me down verbally
* apologize
Changes in Patterns of Physical Abuse

There were no reports of physical abuse by the partners of the thirteen participants during or after the forty sessions (19 months) reported on in this research.

While the researcher acknowledges that readmission to the residential program is not necessarily an accurate measure of whether there have been further occurrences of abuse, it was the only available data other than self-report at the time of this study. There were only three readmissions of partners of group members during the period covered by this research. Two partners reported that there was no physical abuse. Both partners chose to readmit themselves because of their concern for their own safety. The other partner was admitted when the man grabbed her, pushed her out of the house and locked the door. He had expressed ambivalent feelings about remaining in the relationship when he terminated treatment two months before. The incident occurred after his partner had been absent from the home overnight. There is no way of knowing whether partners left and went elsewhere. We do know, though, that women who know about the shelter tend to use it more than once. The average number of readmissions for women to the shelter is three times.
Changes in Patterns of Verbal Abuse

There were occurrences of verbal abuse reported. The frequency of verbal abuse was not measured. Part of the difficulty in measuring verbal abuse is obtaining agreement on what constitutes verbal abuse. For example, the term "wife" can be considered a "putdown" because it suggests that the woman is a piece of property to be used as the possessor sees appropriate. Generally it took considerably longer before the partners reported changes in patterns of verbal abuse than changes in patterns of physical abuse.

While the results were very positive overall, the researcher suggests that this is not an accurate measure of the program's effectiveness and these results should not be generalized beyond this specific group of men. The researcher has run other groups of spouse abusers where both physical and verbal abuse have continued during the man's involvement in the program.

During the evaluation sessions partners and significant others reported changes in the men in the areas of attitudes, feelings and behaviour. They also made suggestions for changes such as requesting more time together as a couple, more sharing of household responsibilities and more family involvement by their partners. There was only one readmission to the residential program because of physical abuse and there were no occurrences of physical abuse reported by the women during
the evaluation sessions. Although there was verbal abuse reported initially by the women, it decreased or disappeared over time.

The Evaluation of the Group by Members

While a structured evaluation was part of the eighth week contract, comments in this section are taken from throughout the entire program. Generally, the men perceived the group as effective in helping them to stop their abusive behavior as well as in making other changes in their lives. Evaluative comments occurred most frequently during the introductory sessions when old members were introducing themselves to new members and explaining how the group operated and what they have found helpful.

That's something this is really done is helping me to listen.

Another man who had only been in the group for eight weeks reported:

I have had a chance to express myself and come out in the open. Each person has their problem and I have a little piece of it too which I didn't realize.

Another member gave his opinion as to why the group had come as far as it had.

Tim

It is really that trust that is here among us as a group that allows us to open up and unless we open up we are not going to get very far. But the trust has to be there before; so that members will open up.
Sometimes men said that they never realized that they could just leave the situation. It is important that the therapist, in the beginning stages, provide some realistic guidelines so that the members can evaluate their progress.

Then

The ultimate goal is to sit and talk about your anger while it is happening but people don't usually get to that stage initially. Often times it takes three months to get to the point where they can at least stay and express themselves.

Tim

We've had problems all along; lack of communication. Things were getting bad. We weren't sleeping together. To pass up the time I took up drinking. Things have been really good since Christmas. Things are getting really better. It is a place for me to come and say what is on my mind. The group has really had everything to do with it. This place gives you the opportunity to talk to somebody about it; what is really going on. And the wives notice the change in their husbands. They often times are interested in counselling for themselves.

One of the new members, after being in the group for four weeks, commented:

[Even] if you don't say anything when you come here. Last week I don't think I said more than three words. Just being here and listening and talking for a while. Just watching what is going on. I really felt good about it. The feeling was right. I really felt good about it.

He went on to talk about how he and his partner had an argument that week and he decided to leave. He did so without breaking anything or hitting his girlfriend.

The members were asked at one point if they would write a letter of support for the funding proposals that the agency
was going to submit. The letters are included in the appendices. Probably the clearest evaluative statement that the men made was the creation of the name for their group. They developed the acronym FRESH START which stands for:

* Feeling
* Risking
* Encouraging
* Sharing
* Helping
* Stopping
* The
* Abusive
* Recurring
* Tragedy

This name speaks to the men's experience in the group. They found the group a helpful place to express their feelings and their concerns. As a result, they learned to trust each other. There were no occurrences of physical abuse during the forty sessions reported in this research, and verbal abuse decreased significantly or was eliminated.
Chapter VI.

THE MAN'S PROCESS IN DECIDING TO ATTEND AND CONTINUE IN THE PROGRAM

Men come to the program because they are in crisis. The crisis is serious enough that many men have considered taking their own and/or their partner’s life as a way of solving (ending) their pain. Approximately one-third (33.34%) decide, at least initially, not to choose therapy as a solution. Sometimes they do not attend the intake interview because their partner has returned home and the abuser has promised it (the violence) will not happen again. Sometimes they believe that if the separation is permanent, that there is no point in going to therapy because it is too late; that is, that the relationship has ended. Some men attend the intake interview but do not come to the introductory group session, probably for similar reasons. Another possibility is they had hoped that the worker would “talk to her (their partner) to convince her to come back” and when they discovered, he would not, they were no longer interested. It is possible that they are not in enough pain to take such a drastic step as attending therapy. One member shared that although he had decided it would be helpful for him to attend, then he spent half an hour outside before the first group meeting deciding whether he would come into the
meeting or not. People who do not have a problem as "severe" as violence, agonize for years about whether they should seek professional help. The researcher believes that the stigma of people in therapy being "sick" is still prevalent in our society.

Mark

We weren't talking, we weren't sleeping together. I am not sure what happened. It is still pretty vague. She kicked me out of something and I just kinda let go. I don't really remember; she said I was pretty upset at the time. I hit her in the head with an extension cord. She didn't do anything about it. I couldn't remember what I had done. I'd come home and she would be sleeping on the couch. I was working a lot of overtime. She'd been keeping to herself. I was on layoff for two weeks. She started throwing chairs through the door. She went to Hiatus House and called and [he came and talked to the worker]. I have been here since September. It has helped me a lot. I am starting to realize how things happened and what I need to do to prevent my lack of control from happening again.

Generally, because the service is so specialized and so clearly described, men decide to come to the group because they have a problem with violence even if, initially, they minimize it or do not admit that they batter their partners. As one man shared towards the end of the introductory session:

I didn't realize [believe] that I had a problem until I started to talk to you guys.

Men continue to attend because they found it helpful in learning alternative ways of expressing their anger and solving problems.

Groups help me to see a lot of different ways I didn't see it before. I see it coming and I get cut of it.
Chapter VII

THE MAN'S PERCEPTION OF HIS USE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST HIS PARTNER

Initially, men believe their partners are responsible for or cause their violent behaviour; that it is not alright for them to be angry; that they are supposed to be in charge in their relationship; and it is permissible to use physical force to maintain their control. Their use of violence to control their partners often forces them to leave, which is the very thing they fear. This fear often escalates their use of violence to keep their partner from leaving. The men learn that, although therapy does not provide a magic solution to their problem, that it is helpful in helping them to choose to be non-violent.

MEN BELIEVE THEIR PARTNER IS RESPONSIBLE

Initially, men want to believe that their partner is responsible for or causes their abusive behaviour. If she is responsible then there is nothing he can do; it is not up to him to find a solution. If he is responsible then he faces what he may see as a monumental task, at least initially. Frequently he has learned not to trust or depend on women or anyone else. He communicates his needs in a violent rage which his partner does not understand and does not listen to.
because her main concern at that time is, or should be), her own safety and survival. His feelings of isolation and frustration spiral downward as he attempts continually to meet his own needs with outdated and ill-adapted skills. He presents a strong front and continues to use his anger to express the pain he feels, using this as his only trusted defense. It often keeps away helpers who are also often ill-prepared, who would be there to help him. Unless someone asks about the sadness and the fear that the anger hides, he will not share it. Partners rarely ask. Maybe it is because they sense the depth of their partners' pain and are afraid they will be unable to meet what is perceived as an insatiable need. The researcher believes that they may feel, as their partner does at times, that they have too many of their own needs that are unsatisfied, and that these should come first. Is it any wonder that after what is sometimes years of this continuing pattern that one or both consider suicide?

MEN REALIZE WHAT THERAPY DOES AND DOES NOT DO

Therapy does not provide a magic cure. It is possibly a solution for those who are willing to struggle through the process to risk, finding out who they are and how they make sense of the world they see. Many are unwilling or do not believe the effort to be worthwhile.
Tim

I was out doing everything else and doing a good job and tending to everything, all that wasn't what she wanted. So all that equalled nothing.

Thom

Do you do a lot of guessing in terms of what she wants?

Tim

I used to! I try to speak a lot more frankly and openly.

Mark

I never used to ask, wouldn't think of asking.

Tim

I had to reorganize my thinking.... I could never figure out why she was putting the screws to me, why she was that unhappy. Most of the things that she cared about were never being done.

MEN REALIZE ANGER CAN BE HANDLED

The men realize that there is nothing wrong with being angry. They learn that it is healthy to be angry and that often what happens when they keep everything bottled up and get "pissed off", is that sooner or later they explode. Then that happens usually somebody is severely injured.

Tim

I can honestly say that the times I hit my wife... I thought that, she was ungrateful. What is the matter with you? I will give you a smack and maybe you will come around a little bit you know?
Some men are very clear about the purpose that violence serves in their relationships. As one member states: "I try to solve my problems by beating up my wife." Another shares that he is here because he wants to learn how to talk to her: "I want my wife to be my friend."

Other men are not as clear about the purpose of their violent behaviour until confronted by other group members.

Thom

The message I am getting is that once you get married, your relationship ended.

Matt

Not quite like that. I just get up, I go home, sleep... eat, work.

Thom

You're satisfied with that?

Matt

No.

Thom

What do you think that says to her?

Matt

My work was more important. My work is my life.

Mark

I work 13 hours a day, seven days a week.

David

The family is all shot to shit.
Joe:
The scare is getting too close to each other. Getting into what each other's feelings and needs are and wants.

Mark:
The risk of rejection.

Joe:
The risk of taking off your skin and letting them know who you are.

David:
Blowing your cover.

David:
Yeah. Yeah, it is a big fear of blowing the macho image, you know, like it is the way men are supposed to be. You start opening up and risking.

Thom:
It makes you give up some of your power.

David:
You don't know what you're all about.

One of the members indicates that he buys his partner things, like a dishwasher, after he has hit her as a way of getting her to stay. Having to pay for it puts more strain on their relationship because they are already in financial difficulties. One of the other members challenges him about hitting her and then buying her something to appease her.

Joe:
You do those things because you want to, not because you are buying off the pain you've inflicted on her.

Matt:
You are right I agree.
MEN REALIZE THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE MACHO

Some men believed that men were supposed to be in charge and
women were to listen to instructions and take orders.

Frank

I don't wanna hear what she has to say because she
just maybe might be right.

Then

Women aren't supposed to have good ideas!

Frank

I guess you can probably say that. My dad never
let my mother say a word.

Part of why we are here, says one man is:

[We are] finding new ways to deal with our
problems. The way you grew up is not an excuse
for not changing your life.

MEN ARE OFTEN AFRAID OF THEIR ANGER

Initially when men come to the program they are confused
about what happens when they get angry. It is often a
muddled blur of actions. They are unsure of the sequencing
and the timing of the events. Questions like "what happened
the last time you hit her," begin to force them to deal with
the violent episodes in a more structured way. It is often
this confusion of events that gets misinterpreted as denial
or minimization. Some men, indeed, do not remember what
transpired. This is often an indication to the therapist
that, in fact, the violence was extremely severe. Gately
(1981) refers to these as "red outs" which she states are
similar to black outs. The researcher has worked with men who could not remember. Some of these men as they progress in treatment will remember in their dreams. One man remembered that his partner's face fell off but was later able to recall how he had kicked her repeatedly in the face. This is slow and difficult work which requires a great deal of trust and patience on the part of the therapist and the man. It is not always necessary that the man remember in order for him to make changes.

Rick

I was at the racetrack and lost a fair amount of money. When we came out of the racetrack she kept hounding me about losing it. I told her to be quiet and she just wouldn't. We got in the car and we were set to go home. She kept saying how much money we lost and kept going on and on, yelling at me. 'Yelling at me is not going to get it back.' She kept going on and I lashed out at her and really hit her and right in front of her mother and all that. I told her I hated her, got out of my life and she did get out of the car and she took off. It has never been the same since. Another time I don't remember how we got in there, but we ended up in the bathroom, and I was choking her. She went to Hiatus House and I found out about the group. We are separated right now. This will be the third week. I hit her a few Fridays ago. Stuck in the car again. Seems I am always in the car and I can't get away.

MEN ARE AFRAID OF SEPARATION

The men are often afraid of being left alone, that is, without a partner. Thus, on the one hand, they push her away with their violence and yet they also realize that she stays sometimes because she is afraid to leave. Often the violence has little, if anything, to do with their partner.
Barry
You guys, when you go, do you break things? Or does she just go after momma? I have so many god
damn holes in the wall at my house you wouldn't believe it. You know, kicking cars, wrecking cars.
So that is not uncommon then, eh? Every now and again she is in the way and she is the closest
thing so she is the one who is going to get it.

David
Scared the shit out of her.

Another man, as he looks back on how he used to deal with
other people, states,

Mike

Somebody would say some little stupid thing and
now I look back and think I don't like being
that way. I like being happy-go-lucky. I was just
a prick sometimes.

He goes on to talk about how he used to keep "his old
lady" at home by taking the front wheels off the car. "I
used to take the coil wire and pull" as a way of preventing
her from leaving.

MEN RECOGNIZE THEY CHOOSE TO BE VIOLENT

As members become more aware of their own processes and how
they get themselves in trouble they report that they are in
charge of themselves in a different way.

Mike

I am really watching now. I know what to look for
now. Where I don't think I can handle it, I back
off. I back off and I sit and think about things,
and then I go back and I give her a big hug.

In contrast, the new member states:
Sometimes at the end of the whole situation I will shake my head. I don't even—it is hard to recall what the hell happened.

One of the members shares his feelings about his father and how he used to take life really seriously and never laughed, never joked, never did things together like he is doing now, like going fishing. Instead his father used to beat his mother and on the children. Another member shares that he decided to stay away from his children and his first wife so that he wouldn't do the same thing his father did; abuse them.

Throughout the course of therapy the men begin to understand their use of violence against their partner in a different way. They realize that they are capable of being in charge of their anger while still expressing it in ways that do not hurt their partners or others they care about.
Chapter VIII

OBSERVER ARTICULATED OR CONSTRUCTED TYPES OF MALE BATTERERS

This analysis generated two types of male batterers. The two types are men who are
* Violent only with their partner
* Violent with partners and others

Both types of men appear to use their violence in the same way, that is, as a distance-regulating mechanism. It is a self-imposed reaction to perceived stress, either real or imagined, and is a protection against becoming too intimate.

VIOLENCE ONLY WITH THEIR PARTNERS

These men, except when they are violent, tend not to express their anger. They are likeable, friendly, helpful, and go out of their way to be nice and often are to other people. The residential staff often report, "was he ever a nice guy," after this type of man has visited his partner when she is staying at Hiatus House. Of the thirteen men in the group eight were identified in this category.

Matt

She call everybody until she finds out where I am to come home.
Thom

How does that make you feel?

Matt

Makes me feel like a little boy... I don't like it.

David

You are going to have to get to the meat of the problem or you are going to have fucking hash potatoes.

Matt

I know if I walk out, she could probably kill herself.

Mark

My wife held that over my head for two years. She tried it four or five times.

These men rarely appear frustrated (or at least do not express it outwardly) and are likely to have more psychosomatic illnesses. Their partners often report that they never know what they are thinking or feeling. This tendency is often misinterpreted as the men not knowing how to express themselves. Some of the men themselves believe they do not know how to do this. These men have been able to do so when given enough time. This tendency would be better defined as a failure to share their internal thought processes, rather than an inability to express their thoughts and feelings.

This group of men keep a tight lid on their pain. It opens when they are violent.
One member is asked to do an exercise. He remembers a scene in which he was angry with his mother for having gouged him with her nails and hurt him.

Mark

I think that is what happened...I think that is what happened when I hit Samantha.

Thom

The door opened?

Mark

Yeah and at that time I didn't want to close it.

There does not appear to be any connection between how the men experienced violence as children and their choice of this style of problem solving. Two men reported they were abused by their father and witnessed fathers abusing their mothers. Two men reported they were not abused but did witness their fathers abusing their mothers. One of these men later, in group, remembered an incident where he had been stabbed by his father. Three men reported they were not abused and did not witness their fathers abusing their mothers. One of these men indicated, at intake, that he had been hit by his mother. One man indicated that he had been abused by both parents but had not witnessed his father abusing his mother.

The major goal in treatment for these men is to have them express their needs verbally in a clear way rather than allowing their frustration to build up until they finally decide to be violent. Mark used to hold all his anger
inside until he would blow up at his partner. The following is an example of the first time he came to group after having asserted himself.

I got pissed off and I told her how I felt. "I don't think it is fair you calling me all kinds of names" and she realized and she said she was sorry.

VIOLENCE WITH PARTNERS AND OTHERS

This type of man tends to express his anger outwardly most of the time. It is not clear, however, with what, or whom, he is angered. They talk tough and present themselves as being in control of their lives. They project the impression that one should not challenge them, unless, of course, you wish to do battle. These men often use language, effectively, as well as physical violence to control others. Other people do not usually like them for one reason or another. This fact supports the idea of their continued use of this strategy to keep others at a safe distance.

Of the thirteen men in the group, five men were identified by the researcher as being in this category. These men often appear frustrated, aggravated, or agitated and are easily or quickly provoked into an altercation. They are concerned with proving themselves. They report that they "used to fight with just about anybody" and rarely acknowledge the feelings that they have. In fact,
David

If I still let things bother me or if I start, you know... If I want to choke... somebody pisses me off! I could light up until I go over and beat up on the fucking... I can build that up until I go over and start beating on the fucker, but I don't do that. But I used to. I don't know why. I did it. Or I can take it out on everybody. Everybody I fucking run into I can take it out on. Just walk down the street. If you can't live with yourself you can't live with nobody.

He gives an example of how he used to play backgammon with his partner and he would get so upset, and she would get really nervous. She would beat him and he would say:

"Set 'em up! We are not fucking quitting now!" Game after game until three or four in the morning pissed off because she is beating me. I am a good loser now.

David

Like I told ya if I had a problem I'd go and see my dad and usually it was my dad or somebody else and if he didn't like it - crack. So I decided to keep it to myself and started thinking more about it and the more you think about the more you make it part of your fucking opinion. I always dealt with everything myself. I never consulted anybody. You got enough problems of your own or the other way around. When somebody would come to me: 'Look I got enough problems of my fucking own. Fuck off!'

They Have Convinced Themselves They Do Not Feel

In fact, some of these men have convinced themselves that they do not feel, or experience feelings. They are thinkers and actors. They may be excluded from treatment groups for men who batter because of their violence towards others. This, in the researcher's opinion, is not necessary and in
fact further supports their continued use of violence to protect themselves. As one member summarizes:

She filed for divorce. I haven't seen her for six weeks. It's been like this all my life. I hit my mother and my father. She didn't deserve it.

They Send Out Warning Signals

This group of men send out all kinds of warning signals. They are violent when someone either accepts these signals as an invitation to fight or when someone or something is perceived to be, interfering with their getting in their way.

Barry

I have so many god damn holes in the wall at my house you wouldn't believe it. You know, kicking cars, wrecking cars. So that is not uncommon then, eh? Every now and again she is in the way and she is the closest thing so she is the one who is going to get it.

David

Scares the shit out of her.

They Project They Do Not Care

These men often project that they are not aware, or do not care, about the affect that their actions have on others.

Again, there does not appear to be any direct connection between their experience with violence as a child and their choice of this method of dealing with the world. The men reported they were abused by their fathers and witnessed their fathers abusing their mothers. One man reported that
he was abused by his father but did not witness his father abusing his mother. One man reported he was not abused nor did he witness his father abusing his mother. One man did not complete the questionnaire.

Lastly, a piece of individual work with David is shared. It provides, the researcher believes, an illustration of the complex family dynamics which need to be examined and understood if we are ever going to be able to answer the question of "Why some men resort to violence and others do not?". Clearly, as this data indicates, there are problems with suggesting that merely experiencing violence as a child predisposes one to be violent. It fails to explain why some men have been violent, while others are not, and conversely, it fails to explain why some men who have not been exposed to violence decide to use it as a problem-solving strategy.

David

You know what I used to do? When my old man used to even reach for his belt buckle—piss my pants because I know he was going to whip the fucking shit out of me. Fuck, I will tell ya, he used to go on and on and on. Holy fuck I thought I was going to fucking die. All I used to do was say "Fuck I wish you'd stop! Terrified! I don't know what the fuck to do." I couldn't do anything without him freaking. Sometimes nobody would do anything and all of a sudden—bang. What the fuck happened? Just massive confusion around, that house, that is all it was, and it is still like that.

Thom

What is different?
David

Now... I am bigger than he is. I still get that uncomfortableness going around him when I am at that house with him. I don't know whether I can talk freely or not with him. I still feel that way and I have put him in the hospital a couple of times. But I bet you I got beat in every fucking room, in the garage, outside, all over; because he'd just bum out any time. You never knew. You could very seldom relax. Only when he was gone and then you could sit down and watch T.V. and relax.

Thom

What is it like not being able to relax?

David

I had a hard time making decisions. You don't know whether you should open your mouth...As I got older I decided to get the fuck out of here. Even before my mother died...she used to give me a punch in the face and I would say," Ok, you want to get it on? Come on." My mother would stop us. After she was gone, the first time he cracked me I could feel the blood running down the side of my mouth. I don't ever remember what happened. When I come out of it, he was lying on the floor and then the second time was easier and the third time I cut his head. His head is still cut all over the place. I had him and I was just drilling him and I told him, I says: "I got to fucking leave or I am going to kill you." We can't stay in the same fucking house," but he still wanted to have control over my life. He still figured he could beat me and make me do what he wanted to. [Pause, long pause] He bothers me when I go there...When I was still married to my ex-wife, she spilled a glass of wine they had for a toast at Christmas time. Big fucking deal! He'd bum out. I felt like just going over there and - smack - you big fucking goof. That is what I felt like doing but I was just fucking laughing at him. "You are a fucking asshole," I said, "but every little fucking thing bothers ya" and that is the way I was! That is the way I was.

Thom

What is that like?
David

What is that like? Confused! Totally confused all the time. One little fucking thing happens and your head just splatters all over the place. You can't see what is happening right in front of your eyes.

Thom

So one of the messages you got from up here was don't make a move.

David

Um, or else you are going to fucking pay the consequences.

Thom

What does that say to you about making decisions?

David

I'd make all the wrong decisions. That's what I'd end up doing. I'd make all the wrong decisions. I wouldn't make the right one. I was maybe too scared to make the right one, or whatever, because I was fucking confused, totally confused. I couldn't make a decision, I couldn't. I am just beginning to now, to make decisions, responsible ones. Right ones just for me, for me, that is right just for me!

Thom

Not for him?

David

Yeah that is right! [Long pause] Feels good! [Laughter] Now I can see it different now. I couldn't have nothing before, nothing, not a fucking thing. Now I jump at it. I want everything. I want everything for me, greed. I want it all, not a fucking piece, I want it all.

Thom

Why is this guy so god damn selfish?

David

Because he never had nothing!
Thom

So what is he trying to do?

David

He is trying to get all that he missed!

The worker works with him to get him to accept the part of him that he wants to reject because, in its own way, it tries to look after him. The worker points out that he needs both parts in order to be successful.

David

You are right, you do need both parts. Sometimes I uh, I uh, argue with myself before I do anything but when I do it, I know that I am doing the right thing, the responsible thing. Because of the confusion of doing it his way for so fucking long and so fucking often, his way is not always right but he does give me the drive. Most of the time he sees what is at the other end of the fucking line, where we are going to end up. [Referring to the other part of him] This guy sees everything in between.

While two types of male batterers were identified in this research, they both used their violence in the same way, as distance-regulating, problem-solving strategies. It was seen as a self-imposed reaction to perceived stress, either real or imagined, and is believed to be a protection used by the men to prevent intimacy within their relationships.
Chapter II
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to describe the group process of participants involved in the Hiatus Fresh Start Program for male batterers as well as to develop questions and hypotheses for further study.

The population for this study was all men who referred themselves to the program for the first time during the period of June 1, 1981 to December 31, 1983. The population totalled 128.

The data collection instrument was an optional questionnaire which was completed with the man during an individual intake and assessment. Eighty-three (64.64%) completed the questionnaire. The quantitative data was used to provide a profile of the typical male batterer who participated in the program.

As well, qualitative data collected in the form of audio tapes of forty group sessions, involving a total of thirteen men, was used to describe the participants and the group processes involved in the Hiatus House Fresh Start Program for male batterers. Six research questions were developed and used to provide focus and structure to analysis of the qualitative data.
The results of this research cannot be generalized beyond the respondents and the participants. This research is not intended to provide the reader with enough information to allow him or her to work effectively with men who batter. There is, however, specialized training available for those professionals who wish to work with men who batter.

The findings, as discussed in Chapters IV-VIII, are related to the quantitative data that provides a profile of the men who batter and to the six research questions:

* What are conditions under which a man chooses to assault his partner?
* What factors account for the degrees of violence used by a man against his partner?
* What reasons lead a man to seek treatment as a solution to his abusive behaviour?
* What types of relationships exist among participants in the Fresh Start Program?
* What phases or stages do the members go through during their involvement in the program?
* What observer articulated or constructed types of male batterers can be identified?
A PROFILE OF THE TYPICAL MAN WHO BATTERS

A profile of the typical male batterer emerged from the demographic data. This profile however, since it is not statistically representative, can not be generalized to the entire population of male batterers.

He's thirty-one years of age, he's married, and has two children. He is currently separated from his partner and has been for less than one week. He has previously separated from his partner because of his violence towards her and was last separated three to six months ago. He was separated at that time for a period of one week to one month. He is currently employed and has been at his present job approximately eight years. He has some secondary school education and does not feel he was abused as a child yet in all likelihood he was. He did not witness his father abuse his mother, but abused his partner so many times that he cannot remember. He is not presently involved in any other kind of counselling but he has likely been to see a psychiatrist at some point in his life. He is willing to commit himself to attending the group treatment program for a minimum of six weeks and has likely heard about the program from his partner.
WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH A MAN CHOOSES TO ASSAULT HIS PARTNER?

The man who batters uses his violence to solve problems with his partner and at times with other members of the community. His violence is learned from his own experiences as a child, either directly from his parents, or other significant adults in his life. He has been supported in his use of violence, up until recently, by the society in which he lives.

His violence is only used to maintain or regain control and he perceives it is "necessary" to restore order. He does not like to use violence but feels there is no alternative. He tries to deal with this by blaming his partner for his abusive behaviour. The violence usually occurs during an argument with his partner and is generally his way of stopping the argument.

WHAT FACTORS ACCOUNT FOR THE DEGREES OF VIOLENCE USED BY A MAN AGAINST HIS PARTNER?

No major factors appear to account for the degrees of violence used by a man against his partner. The researcher has two suggestions for further research in this area. First, it appeared that those men who were abused by their fathers might be more likely to be violent with their partners and with other members of the community than are those men who were abused by their mothers. This, however, may only be true for the men who participated in these group
sessions. Secondly, those men who were more frequently and more severely abused as a child appeared more likely to be more frequently and more severely abusive with their partner. It is important to note, however, that over time the frequency and severity of the abuse appears to increase for all men. It appears to be an escalating cycle which is fed by the man's perception that his life is continually filled with more stress than he is able to deal with.

**WHAT REASONS LEAD A MAN TO SEEK TREATMENT AS A SOLUTION TO HIS ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR?**

The man who batter come to treatment because he is in crisis. He wants to stop his abusive behaviour but because of his isolation are usually not aware of any services that are available, if any exist in his community. Thus, it is often only when a partner leaves and makes contact with the shelter program or other community agency that the man is given information, or seeks it out himself, about services available in the community. By this time the violence has often been going on for years. He may have had involvement in other community agencies but his violence was not defined as a problem to change. He decides to continue in treatment because of his desire to change despite his fear that it is too big a job and he will not be successful. Frequently, men drop out of treatment at this stage only to return at a later date when there has been another incident of violence. The single most important factor in influencing the man to come to treatment is that his partner has left.
WHAT TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS EXIST AMONG PARTICIPANTS IN THE FRESH START PROGRAM?

Men, once they decide the group is a safe place, share the details of their life. These are often things they have never shared with any other human being and possibly never admitted to themselves. For some of the men the other group members are the first people that they have allowed themselves to get close to. Men reported that they felt that they were not judged by other group members and were comfortable with reaching out to them at other points during the week other than just during the meetings. Some men develop relationships with each other outside of the group.

WHAT PHASES OR STAGES DO THE MEMBERS GO THROUGH DURING THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROGRAM?

Three major stages were identified. During the beginning stage, the men were initially hesitant about becoming involved in the group and sharing information about their abuse. A certain percent of the men terminated from the group at this point or before this point. The middle stage was where the men became invested in the group and where the major clinical part of the work is done. Men in this stage took an active role in making changes in the way they related to their partners. New members were introduced at two periods during the middle stages and there tended to be a lower drop out rate with these men and, as well, they tended to move more quickly through the treatment process.
The ending stage occurred when men were terminating from the group.

WHAT OBSERVER-ARTICULATED OR CONSTRUCTED TYPES OF MALE BATTERERS CAN BE IDENTIFIED?

Two types of observer articulated or constructed types of male batterers were identified by the researcher. One type, was only violent with his partner and another type, was violent with his partner but was also violent with other members of the community. There appeared to be no difference, however, in either group's willingness to change their violent behaviour. It was identified that more data needed to be collected so that more research could be done in the area of dealing with and identifying differences in these, and possibly other types, of men who batter.

CONCLUSIONS

This group was chosen for this study because it showed clearly that it was possible to engage men who batter in a treatment program. It also showed that they are capable of changing; that is, stopping their abusive behaviour. It is the researcher's opinion that the most effective measure of successful programming for this population will be the longitudinal studies which have been incorporated as part of the overall program design. Other suggestions for further research and the improvement of the present service will be discussed at the end of this chapter.
Thus, the research showed that men who batter can be helped to change their abusive behaviour. It indicated that the men respond well to a social group work approach which used peer support and, an initially non-critical worker, who recognized that there is no acceptable reason for the violence to continue and who helped them to find non-violent ways to express their anger and problem solve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings and related readings, the research presents recommendations in the following areas:

* Program development.
* Social work education.
* Suggestions for further research.

Program Development

* An increased funding base needs to be established so that services to men who batter within the community can be expanded. Once established, public relation efforts could reach cut to potential, yet underdeveloped, referral sources. The profile of the counselling program should be increased in the community. An open house should be held and a media presentation organized to inform the community at large.
* An integrated model should be developed and implemented for working with domestic violent families. This model should minimally provide staff and facilities to meet the existing service demand and should be able to provide separate therapy groups for children, women, and men as well as couples' groups and total family groups.

* Staff should continue to be involved in training of other professionals in the community.

* Frontline staff should continue to be involved in the public relations of the agency and that this should not become the job of one person in particular (i.e., a public relations person.)

* Services for men who batter should be expanded to provide individual assessment meetings and groups for men in the County of Essex.

**Social Work Education**

The curriculum within Schools of Social Work at the undergraduate level should include a required course in intervention with families who are experiencing domestic violence.
Suggestions for Further Research

* Research in the area of the types of male batterer. While the study provided some initial probing into that area the sample was too small to generate any more than two major types.

* Research on the affects of domestic violence on children. While more is beginning to be done in this area there are few comprehensive studies.

* Research in the area of program evaluation (i.e., effective treatment for working with domestic violent families.) Program evaluation should be funded and conducted as part of the ongoing program delivered to these families. The emphasis should be placed on longitudinal research. More research is necessary in the patterns of interactions of violent couples.
Appendix A

HIATUS HOUSE PHILOSOPHY

* No person (male or female) deserves to be physically abused or have his/her life threatened.
* The issue of battered women is a family and societal issue.
* Battered women have the right to an alternative to remaining within the violent relationship (safety).
* When one family member is hurting, all family members are affected and therefore it is important to provide programming for all family members.
* The battered woman and batterers have a right to information as to what their alternatives include.
* The battered woman and batterers have a right to make their own decisions regarding their future and the future of their family (freedom of choice).
* The battered women have a right to supportive services no matter what her decision is. These decisions include:
  i) To reestablish as a single family
  ii) To return to her partner in a chaotic unplanned manner with no counselling.
iii) To return to her partner in a planned way with individual or group counselling.

* Physical abuse takes many forms and physical indicators of abuse or verification by a witness or third party is not required to be eligible for service.

* Battered women and their partners are rarely involved in a sado-masochistic relationship. This is the exception versus the rule.

* The battered women and batterer perceive themselves in the victim role (helpless and hopeless to change) and focus is required to help them become disillusioned with the victim role.

* To "Rescue" the person further reinforces the victim's position.

* Shelter is only one of a network of comprehensive services required to meet the needs of battered women and their families.

* Domestic violence is frequently an indicator of inter-generational violence (children experiencing domestic violence have special needs).

* Male batterers have a right to specialized counselling services.
Appendix B
HIATUS HOUSE PROGRAMS.

* The Pre-Residential Program includes counselling for battered women without their having to make use of the residential facilities.

* The Residential Program provides emergency shelter to women and children. Within that component is the Child Care Program which provides specialized services to meet the needs of children living in domestic violent families.

* The Post Residential Program provides follow-up to women in the form of continued individual and/or group counselling once they have left the residential program.

* The Hiatus House Complainant Support Program provides legal counselling to those women who decide to pursue the criminal justice system in the way of laying an assault or threatening charge against their spouse.

* The Hiatus House "Fresh Start" Program provides group therapy to male batterers.

3 This program closed in August 1984 when the Minister of Justice of Ontario, Gordon Walker O.C., recommended not to continue its funding.
Appendix C
HIATUS HOUSE MEN'S GROUP INTAKE FORM

1. DATE:__________

2. NAME:____________ or PSEUDONYM: ______________

3. AGE:__________

4. PHONE NUMBER:__________

5. MARITAL STATUS:
   a) Separated ( )
   b) Widowed ( )
   c) Single ( )
   d) Common law ( )
   e) If married, what was the date of the marriage? ________________________________

6. NUMBER OF CHILDREN:____

7. IF SEPARATED:
   a) When did you separate this time? ________________________________
   b) Have you separated previously? Yes ( ) No ( )
   c) When was your last separation? ________________________________
   d) How long were you separated? ________________________________
e) What do you think caused the separations?

8. PARTNER'S NAME: _______________________________________
   {item may be incomplete if client is unwilling to provide this information.}

9. ARE YOU CURRENTLY EMPLOYED? YES ( ) NO ( )

10. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED AT YOUR PRESENT JOB?
    ____________________________

11. HOW MUCH EDUCATION HAVE YOU COMPLETED?
    ____________________________

12. WERE YOU PHYSICALLY ABUSED BY EITHER OF YOUR PARENTS?
    a) Mother ( )
    b) Father ( )
    c) Both ( )

13. DID YOU EVER SEE YOUR FATHER PHYSICALLY ABUSE YOUR MOTHER?
    a) Yes ( )
    b) No ( )

14. WHAT FORMS OF ABUSE HAVE YOU USED WITH YOUR PARTNER MOST OFTEN?
    a) Threat of physical abuse ( )
    b) Slapping ( )
c) Kicking ( )

d) Throwing objects ( )

e) Pushing, shoving ( )

f) Hitting ( )

g) Hair pulling ( )

h) Forceably isolated ( ) (e.g., kept in a locked room):

i) Use of weapon ( ) Specify ______________________

j) Sexual assault ( ) Specify ______________________

15. How many times would you say you have abused your partner? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Innumerable.

16. What do you think leads to your violence with your partner?

17. Are you presently involved in any form of counselling?

a) Yes ( ) (if yes) with what agency?

Worker's name: _______________________
b) No ( )

18. WHO SUGGESTED THAT YOU ATTEND THIS MEN'S GROUP?

19. ARE YOU WILLING TO COMMIT YOURSELF TO SIX WEEKLY GROUP MEETINGS? Yes ( ) No ( )

20. Time spent completing intake interview: _________

21.

Signed by:________________
September 22, 1981

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been a member of Fresh Start for nine weeks now and have just committed myself to six additional weeks.

The need for a program such as Fresh Start as a companion program to Hiatus House, to me, is totally obvious. The really apparent nature of the program stems from the fact that whenever there is marital distress, two persons, not one, hurt, have feelings, are confused and need help.

Fresh Start has been tremendously helpful to me. The membership of Fresh Start is very diverse in character yet the commonality and similarity is truly remarkable. This is very comforting when a person is feeling like an anti-social misfit who hits his wife. It is hard to feel like you are all alone and tremendously comforting to know that others have felt exactly the way you have.

If the problem of wife beating is to be addressed it must be addressed completely, not half way.

Hiatus House meets the needs of the woman. Fresh Start recognizes that men have feelings too and offers an open forum for exchange.

Group Member
September 22, 1981

Mr. Tom Rolfe
Men's Group Leader
Hiatus House, Inc.
694 Victoria Street
Windsor, Ontario N9A 4M3

Dear Tom:

This program is very important to me because it gives me a chance to express my feelings and to talk about my feelings with other men who are having the same problems I am having.

We can see the problems and get to the source of the problems or find a solution to the problems and it helps me and my wife for me to have a program to get these problems out, instead of holding them in and blowing up on her.

I thank you very much for this program, Tom.

Thank you,

Group Member
September 22, 1981

Mr. Tom Rolfe  
Men's Group Leader  
Hiatus House, Inc.  
694 Victoria Street  
Windsor, Ontario N9A 4N3

Dear Tom:

I find the group "Fresh Start" has helped me a lot. I can show my true feelings of what has happened to me. It gives me a chance to be open towards the group and to others.

When I first came to these meetings I felt a better person after coming out. It seems I've accomplished something here and I'm somebody. To me, I'm twice the better person than I was and turned to the more assertive person.

I like listening to the things Tom and the other guys have to say relating to our problems. I think that Tom Rolfe has a good group here and it's going to be very successful in the future.

The group is the best for people who have this problem that I do "wife abusing."

Group Member
September 22, 1981

Mr. Tom Rolfe  
Men's Group Leader  
Hiatus House, Inc.  
694 Victoria Street  
Windsor, Ontario N9A 4N3

Dear Tom:

I think that "Fresh Start," the men's group, is telling me to understand myself and to change to be the person that I want to be.

I am thankful that it was available to me and wish that other men who wish to change will have the means to do so.

The knowledge that I am not alone is reassuring. I'm human and that I can correct my faults.

Group Member
September 22, 1981

Mr. Tom Rolfe
Men's Group Leader
Hiatus House, Inc.
69A Victoria Street
Windsor, Ontario N9A 4N3

Dear Tom:

This is just a couple of lines of thanks to you and also to Hiatus House for the Men's Group "Fresh Start."

I have had an abuse problem for many years. Both being abused and abusing others.

The group is helping me to cope with the abuse I received and is teaching me how not to abuse others. I feel this is a good program and hope it will continue; not only to help me, but also to help others in the future and continue to help me.

I would be interested in helping in whatever capacity I can and would like to know what organizations we can turn to, to sponsor and fund further group activity in this field in other areas, be they governmental or private or corporate groups. (i.e. United Way)

Tom, thanks again, the group is making me feel better about myself and is helping me to learn other ways of dealing with problems rather than beating up on my friends and loved ones.

Thanks.

Your friend,

Group Member
October 4, 1982

To Whom It May Concern:

This is referring to the Men's Group "Fresh Start" in which I was one of the first members in the group about 1 1/2 years ago. At that time before going into the group I was mixed up. Things weren't going right at work due to the situation in which I was focusing more on things that happened instead of concentrating on work. I had to miss time from work to get my head straight. As time went on my wife and I had seen a marriage counsellor who referred me to Tom Rolfe, who was the counsellor for "Fresh Start." I later went and saw Tom the same day we started the group.

The group was a place for me to meet some people that were in the same boat as I was. It (the group) helped me to resolve the situation I was in and also I felt more relaxed as the group was continuing. Also I felt I was getting my confidence back in myself in which before I had none at all. During this time I was going to the group I noticed a change in my wife which made me feel good. When I went to the group I noticed I had friends in which I did not have many. Tom helped out extremely and I appreciate him for helping me. We had the wives' visit us at the end of every six weeks which was helpful. To me I think that the group "Fresh Start" is the best thing that happened to me. Now I have advanced from the group in which I am now in the Auxiliary Staff helping people who were in the same situation as I was in. It's going to be a pleasure being helpful to other people.

Sincerely,

Auxillary Staff
October 4, 1982

To Whom It May Concern:

Fresh Start has saved my marriage, as well as my ability to have relationship.

I feel that there is a need in our community for Fresh Start and I have volunteered for the Auxiliary Staff of Fresh Start. I'm now taking the course and finding it very rewarding.

Sincerely,

Group Member
Auxiliary Staff
October 5, 1982

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been going to this Men's Group meeting for 10 months now and I feel this is very beneficial to me and the other people that attend. Coming here helps me a lot with my anger and my hurts which in turn help me to understand myself better. So as a person I need ... I ask you for your support.

Sincerely,

Group Member
October 5, 1982

To Whom It May Concern:

Due to the needs of many citizens in this community, I feel it has been necessary to fund these group sessions to the fullest. The meetings are giving [me-us] a greater understanding of ourselves and respecting other people's wants in which we so greatly take advantage of.

Speaking for myself, funding of these sessions would be greatly appreciated and needed.

Sincerely,

Group Member
October 5, 1982

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been attending the group "Fresh Start" since the beginning of the year because of my abusive behavior towards my wife. The program has been very beneficial in curbing the abuse, helping me understand myself and other's feelings and would like to see the program continued.

Sincerely,

Group Member
October 5, 1982

To Whom It May Concern:

I think the program is a very worthwhile thing and should be continued. Help from sources like the United Way would be appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely Yours,

Group Member.
October 5, 1982

To Whom It May Concern:

I sincerely feel there is a definite necessity for a continuation of the Fresh Start program in the Windsor and surrounding area. I personally feel the group has a viable offering to the individuals to whom it is supplying counselling; dealing with the extremely submerged issue of woman battering.

I am not trying to sell Fresh Start as an "end all," although it is succeeding in being a resource for those people such as myself who would have no alternate program in which to seek assistance in the event of the program's termination.

Sincerely,

Group Member
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


VITA AUCTORIS

Thomas Allen Rolfe was born in Windsor, Ontario on December 14, 1952. Having attended elementary schools there, he graduated from Riverside Secondary School in Windsor, in 1971. He was enrolled at the University of Windsor from 1971-1979 receiving his Bachelor of Sociology degree in June of 1979. From 1973-1977, he also attended St. Clair College in Windsor and received his Child Care Worker Diploma in May of 1978. Returning to the University of Windsor in 1978-1979 and again in 1980-1982, he completed his Bachelor of Social Work degree, graduating in October 1982. He plans to graduate in the fall of 1985 with his Master of Social Work degree.

He has been employed with the Regional Children's Centre, Windsor Western Hospital Centre from 1971-1979 and again from 1980-1982. During 1979 and 1980, he was employed by Renfrew County Youth Services in Pembroke, Ontario. From 1982 to 1983, he worked with the Children's Aid Society of the County of Essex. Since May of 1981 he has been Coordinator of the Hiatus House Fresh Start Program.

He has co-authored one publication with Dr. L.B. Buckley, and D. Miller, which is listed in the bibliography.