The Dissertation Committee for Christine Susan Chang Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Perceived Acceptability of Abusive Behavior in the Maintenance of Psychologically Abusive Relationships

Committee:

William B. Swann, Jr., Supervisor

Samuel D. Gosling

Christopher G. Beevers

James W. Pennebaker

Timothy J. Loving

Perceived Acceptability of Abusive Behavior in the Maintenance of Psychologically Abusive Relationships

by

Christine S. Chang, B.S.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

August 2011

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my advisor and mentor, Bill Swann, for believing that this engineer from California could become a psychologist. Thank you to my sister, Cathy, for encouraging me to make the switch. And thank you to my parents for supporting me through the ride, even though you thought I was crazy.

Perceived Acceptability of Abusive Behavior in the Maintenance of Psychologically Abusive Relationships

Christine Susan Chang, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2011

Supervisor: William B. Swann, Jr.

In this series of studies, I hypothesized that people's perceptions of certain psychologically abusive acts as acceptable or not acceptable would impact whether they would remain in psychologically abusive relationships. In Study 1, I explored the historic link between low self-esteem in women and receiving high levels of abuse. I found that women who were low in self-esteem found psychologically abusive behavior depicted in a series of vignettes to be significantly more acceptable than did women who were high in self-esteem. In Study 2, I found that women who were currently in abusive relationships found psychologically abusive behavior depicted in a video to be significantly more acceptable than did women who were currently in non-abusive relationships. Furthermore, I found that the woman's own abusive behavior toward her partner was a stronger predictor than the abusiveness of her partner of whether she endorsed that she would stay in the depicted abusive relationship. Also, I found that among women who were highly abusive toward their partners and high in self-esteem,

the more abuse they were receiving from their current partners, the more acceptable they found the depicted abusive behaviors. Based on these findings, in Study 3 I explored whether priming women's (a) awareness of their own aggressive behaviors and (b) how these behaviors could change might have stronger impact on women's views of the acceptability of their own abusive behaviors than women's awareness of their partner's aggressive behaviors. Furthermore, I explored whether these different foci would have impact on real-life consequences in changing abuse levels in the current relationship. The findings were mixed; short-term effects implied that writing about conflict, no matter whether the focus is on the self's aggression or the partner's aggression, seemed to encourage women to regard leaving an abusive relationship as more acceptable than writing about a neutral topic. Over the long-term, however, writing about conflict, no matter whether the focus was on the self's aggression or the partner's aggression, exacerbated the partner's psychologically aggressive behavior.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Overview

I begin with a broad literature review on abuse between partners, or intimate partner violence (IPV), and previous theories regarding its perpetuation. I then present three studies. In Study 1, I explored the relationship between low self-esteem and perceptions of acceptability of unhealthy patterns in relationships. In Study 2, I then attempted to explore whether these same patterns existed between women who were currently involved in highly abusive relationships versus those who were currently in non-abusive relationships. As will be discussed, I encountered some surprising findings regarding the powerful role of the woman's own pattern of abusiveness toward her partner on her perceptions of the acceptability of abuse. Based on the findings of these studies, in Study 3 I attempted to replicate the findings of Study 2 as well as examine the therapeutic impact of changing these attitudes of a woman's own abusiveness toward her partner in terms of reducing her views of acceptability of abuse and endorsement that she would stay in a depicted abusive relationship. I then conclude with some discussion of the potential implications of this research.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE: DEFINITION AND PREVALENCE

Psychological abuse is defined by O'Leary (1999) as "repeated both coercive verbal behaviors (e.g. insulting or swearing at partner) and coercive nonverbal behaviors that are not directed at the partner's body (e.g. slamming doors or smashing objects)." It is thus distinct from physical abuse, which is defined as "repeated coercive attacks directed toward the partner's body," affects 1 in 6 women, and can leave indicators such as bruising and observable physical injury (Straus, 1999). The two forms of abuse also differ in the consequences associated with them. Unlike physical abuse, whose effects are often readily observable, psychological abuse leaves mostly mental scars that are more difficult to define and therefore detect (O'Leary, et al., 1989). Research suggests that the

difficulty to detect psychological abuse in part leads it to be just as harmful as physical abuse (Follingstad, Rutledge, & Berg, 1990). Psychological abuse has also been found to predict physical abuse in early marriage (Murphy & O'Leary, 1989). In addition, many victims of both physical and psychological violence have reported that the effects of the psychological abuse (e.g., fear, anxiety, loss of self-esteem, depression, post-traumatic stress) are far more debilitating than physical abuse (Kelly & Johnson, 2008; Kirkwood, 1993; Chang, 1996; Smith & Randall, 2007), leading psychological abuse to be a phenomenon worth investigating independently of physical abuse. Because of the dearth of literature focusing on psychological abuse alone, the current literature review will discuss research that combines physical and psychological abuse.

Some researchers have outlined different types of abuse that may exist within the global construct of abusive behavior. Kelly and Johnson (2008) outline four distinct types of IPV: Coercive Controlling Violence, Violent Resistance, Situational Couple Violence, and Separation-Instigated Violence. Coercive Controlling Violence is described as a pattern of emotionally abusive intimidation, coercion, and control coupled with physical violence against partners. According to Kelly and Johnson, this is the type of violence that is most commonly encountered in agency settings and, in heterosexual relationships, is most commonly perpetrated by men. Johnson (2006) claims that this type of violence, although it does not *always* involve frequent and/or severe violence, on average involves more frequent and severe violence than other types of IPV.

Violent Resistance is defined as what would commonly be thought of as self-defense, in which the victim of violence (such as Coercive Controlling Violence) reacts with violence in order to protect herself. This type of violence is relatively short-lived and perpetrated only in response to a prior act of violence by the partner and with the intent to protect oneself or someone else.

Situational Couple Violence is defined as conflict resulting from one or more partners appearing to have poor ability to manage their conflicts or anger and is distinct from Coercive Controlling Violence in that it is not motivated out a desire to control or manipulate the other partner (Ellis & Stuckless, 1996; Johnson, 1995, 2006; Johnston & Campbell, 1993; Johnson & Leone, 2005). According to Kelly and Johnson (2008), this type of violence is the most common type of physical aggression in the general population of married spouses and cohabiting partners and is perpetrated by both men and women equally (Kwong, Bartholomew, & Dutton, 1999), is perpetrated more frequently in adolescent and young adult populations than in the general population, and is more likely to be severe when it occurs more frequently (daily or weekly; Capaldi & Owen, 2001).

Finally, Separation-Instigated Violence is defined as violence that emerges suddenly after a separation (e.g., divorce, betrayal) that occurs in a relationship in which no prior violence existed. This type of violence is more likely to be perpetrated by the individual who is being left, is seen equally in men and women, and is typically limited to one or two incidents immediately following the separation (Johnston & Campbell, 1993; Kelly, 1982; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Although there is good value in differentiating these different types of abuse both with respect to research and therapy, these distinctions are fairly new and therefore are not yet addressed extensively in much of the current research or therapy for IPV. Due to the relatively short-term nature of Violent Resistance and Separation-Instigated Violence, I expect that the current research will explore issues related to some combination of Coercive Controlling Violence and Situational Couple Violence, as the two often share similar verbally aggressive behaviors (Kelly & Johnson, 2008).

These distinctions between different IPV bring to light a fact that is often dismissed or looked over, which is that women can be and often are aggressive toward

their male partners as well (Straus, 1999). Of critical importance is the difference between motivations of men and women in perpetrating violence (Lawson, 2003). Whereas men tend to use violence in order to systematically terrorize and control their partners (Gelles, 1995; Gottman, 1999), women tend to use violence as an expression of frustration, self-defense, or both (Straus, 1999). More implications of female violence will be discussed in Studies 2 and 3.

PERPETUATION OF ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS: PERSONALITY VARIABLES

Some researchers have uncovered personality traits that appear to accompany those who tend to perpetrate abuse (Dutton, 2007; Dutton, 2002). According to Dutton, the central personality organization to an abusive male personality profile is Borderline Personality Organization (BPO). One of Kernberg's (1996) types of psychodynamic personality organization, BPO is characterized by high identity diffusion, primitive defense mechanisms, and intact reality testing (i.e., no psychotic tendencies). This volatile combination of weakness and reactivity ostensibly motivates the male to react violently to internal shifts in mood in order to ward off feelings of potential abandonment and retain the relationship (Gunderson, 1984). Other researchers outline three major types of abusers (Hamberger & Hastings, 1986; Holtzworth-Munroe & Anglin, 1991; Saunders, 1992; Dutton, 2007). The most severe abusers are believed to have experienced the most childhood abuse and manifest aggression in a generalized manner with the intent to control other people, while the second type has received the most parental rejection and manifest their violence more impulsively. These men are emotionally volatile and match closest with the type of batterer outlined by Walker's (1979) three stages of tension-building, violent episode, and contrition (Dutton, 1998). The third type of abusers have experienced the least amount of childhood trauma than the previous two types and tend to be overcontrolled, denying their anger yet experiencing chronic frustration and resentment (Holtwzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Lawson, 2003).

With respect to predicting victimization, few studies have been conducted examining personality qualities that characterize victims, likely because of fear of being accused of "blaming the victim" (Feldman & Ridley, 1995). Some research has been done exploring the role of sex-role orientation (Bernard, Bernard, & Bernard, 1985), stress (Marshall & Rose, 1990; Mason & Blankenship, 1987), and drugs and alcohol abuse (Stets & Henderson, 1991; Tontodonato & Crew, 1992). Nonetheless, some correlational studies reveal that low self-esteem in women has historically been linked to receiving high levels of abuse (Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Gelles & Straus, 1988; Schutte, Bouleige, Fix, & Malouff, 1986).

Some researchers have found that neuroticism in both members of a couple predicts IPV, but that that effect is moderated by problem-solving skills and levels of chronic stress (Hellmuth & McNulty, 2008). In a longitudinal study, Ehrensaft et al. (2006) found that earlier histories of mental health disorders (e.g., anxiety disorders, depression, substance abuse) at age 18 would predict involvement in an abusive relationship for both men and women, at ages 24–26. In this same study, Ehrensaft et al. found that certain clusters of personality disorders (PD) were predictive of different aspects of IPV later on in life. Specifically, they found that Cluster A (paranoid, schizoid and schizotypal) PD's predicted partner violence perpetration in both males and females, Cluster B (narcissistic, borderline, and histrionic) PD's predicted the use of IPV in both males and females but the use of injurious IPV primarily among men, and Cluster C (avoidant, dependent and obsessive compulsive) PD's were actually protective factors with respect to perpetrating IPV. In a recent study, however, Caetano, Vaeth, & Ramisetty-Mikler, (2008) found age to be the only factor found to impact the likelihood of perpetration or victimization across gender. Specifically, they found that the older an individual becomes, the less likely they are to be involved in an abusive relationship, either as a perpetrator or victim of the violence. Meanwhile, Caetano et al. found that

ethnicity, marital status, drinking, impulsivity, depression and powerlessness were found to all be either gender or status-specific in their ability to predict victimization, perpetration or victimization/perpetration. In sum, it seems that characterizing IPV as a phenomenon of static personality traits or even pathology has failed on its own to explain the phenomenon adequately to this point in the literature (Gate and Lloyd, 1992).

PERPETUATION OF ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS: SITUATIONAL VARIABLES

Situationally, low socioeconomic status and financial issues have been shown to be one of the greatest predictors of partner violence (Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980).Financial issues of dependence might therefore play a large role in why certain women might feel compelled to stay in unhealthy relationships. Although this might account for some abusive relationships, however, psychological abuse in relationships has been known to occur across all socioeconomic brackets (Gelles, 1997). My interest in psychological rather than economic predictors therefore involves the exploration of explanations of the maintenance of these abusive relationships above and beyond those of economic dependence.

Researchers posit that one way in which society as a whole tends to perpetuate abusive relationships is through a tendency to "blame the victim" (Walker, 1994). Studies have suggested that this victim-blaming attitude is present throughout the criminal justice system (Hightower & Gorton, 2002), the medical community (Garimella, Plichta, & Houseman, 2000), the mental health community (Walker, 1984), the public in general (Gracia & Herrero, 2006; Walker, 1984), perpetrators of violence (Henning & Holdford, 2006; Smith & Randall, 2007b), and the victims of violence, themselves (Smith & Randall, 2007a). These researchers offer that the public and those in health professions maintain these victim-blaming attitudes either out of ignorance or, more commonly, in order to protect themselves against the awareness of their own vulnerability to such acts of violence (Walker, 1994). Alternatively, victims of violence are believed to blame

themselves in order to have some semblance of control over the unpredictable acts of violence. That is, these individuals hope that if they can avoid making similar mistakes in the future, they can avoid suffering another encounter with their partner (Smith & Randall, 2007a). Attitudes of blaming the victim can therefore contribute to the perpetuation of abusive relationships by manifesting in more lenient consequences to the perpetrators or reluctance to enforce laws against IPV by the criminal justice system, misguided care from health providers, lack of remorse from perpetrators, or a reluctance of the victims to seek help themselves.

Aside from actively blaming the victim, some researchers suggest that the normalizing of abusive behavior toward women also contributes to the perpetuation of abusive relationships. Feminist researchers have argued that tacit attitudes regarding sex-role stereotypes maintained in traditional cultural and social characteristics of Western societies support women's subordinate roles and male domination, resulting in an unspoken condoning of IPV (Dobash and Dobash 1979; Miller and Wellford 1997; Straus, 1979; Bograd, 1988; Kaufman, 1992). Others argue that these attitudes regarding male domination are not relegated only to Western societies and that the conception of women as legitimate victims of violence is perhaps even more readily accepted in Eastern cultures (Tang, Wong & Cheung, 2002).

There is also significant evidence that witnessing IPV during childhood between parents is associated with higher rates of both perpetration and victimization of IPV in later adulthood (Desai et al., 2002; Tjaden and Thoennes, 2000; White and Chen, 2002; White & Widom, 2003; Vatnar & Bjorkly, 2008). Many studies show that women who experience IPV experience higher rates of PTSD (Lang, Kennedy, & Stein, 2002; Ehrensaft, Cohen, & Johnson, 2006), which is not surprising and believed to be an outcome of violence rather than a predictor. In a longitudinal study, Ehrensaft et al., 2003 demonstrated that this link between earlier child maltreatment and harsh parenting on the

risk for future IPV for both males and females was mediated by the development of conduct disorder in adolescence. These findings lend some support for a social-learning model in which IPV is learned through observing that violence and aggression are effective ways to deal with conflicts in relationships or for maintaining control over someone (Bandura, 1979; Dutton, 1988). Scant literature exists, however, on examining the internalization of these schemas of dealing with conflict in relationship, and how to go about changing them among *both* members of the couple.

THE CURRENT RESEARCH

If certain women, for whatever reasons (e.g., personality characteristics, developmental history, or culture), view acts of aggression as more acceptable than others, then these women might be especially inclined to remain in relationships that involve these types of behaviors. Those women who are able to successfully recognize these same behaviors as unacceptable, however, should be more likely to exit the relationship and therefore be in non-abusive relationships. These arguments are akin to those of the learned helplessness approach (Seligman & Maier, 1967). Seligman and Maier demonstrated this effect in a study with dogs who were exposed to electric shocks. Those dogs who felt that they had some control over the shocks recovered from the traumatic experience and found ways to escape the shocks, whereas those dogs that perceived the shocks as "inescapable" sat down passively and accepted the shocks after time.

Walker (1979) linked learned helplessness to partner abuse as a mediator of what she called "Battered Woman Syndrome." Symptoms of this syndrome include low self-esteem and depression that prevents the individual from taking any action that would allow her to escape the abuse she is enduring. According to Walker (2000), a pattern of repeated abuse would lead battered women to believe that they were powerless to change their situation, similar to the dogs in the original learned helplessness studies. These

women would in turn develop an attitude of learned helplessness, which in turn would result in the symptoms of Battered Woman Syndrome and prevent them from exiting the relationship. Since Walker's earlier claims, studies have emerged that have both confirmed and disconfirmed parts of this model. Bargai, Ben-Shakar, and Shalev (2007) found that learned helplessness significantly mediated effects of previous exposure to violence and the development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and depression. Miller (2006) and Palker-Corell and Marcus (2004), however, found no significant difference in learned helplessness between groups of women who had endured versus not endured past abuse.

I therefore sought to test this learned helplessness model in my series of studies. In Study 1 I first sought to examine the relationship of low self-esteem, which as mentioned previously has been linked with receiving high levels of abuse in relationships, with perceptions of acceptability of unhealthy patterns in relationships. Specifically, I examined whether women who were low in self-esteem would find certain unhealthy behaviors, which sometimes included psychological abuse, to be more acceptable than did women who were high in self-esteem. In Study 2, I then attempted to explore whether these same patterns existed between women who were currently involved in highly abusive relationships versus those who were currently in non-abusive relationships, thus testing the learned helplessness model discussed above. As will be discussed, I encountered some surprising findings regarding the powerful role of the woman's own pattern of abusiveness toward her partner on her perceptions of the acceptability of abuse. These findings weakened support for the learned helplessness model and gave rise to a possible cognitive dissonance approach to understanding the tendency to remain in psychologically abusive relationships (Festinger, 1957). That is, the findings from Study 2 suggested that a woman may endorse her partner's abusive behaviors as acceptable in order to justify her own highly abusive behavior toward her

partner. Based on the findings of these studies, in Study 3 I seek to examine the therapeutic impact of changing these attitudes of a woman's own abusiveness toward her partner in terms of reducing her views of acceptability of abuse and endorsement that she would stay in a depicted abusive relationship. This would potentially reveal what sorts of therapeutic measures would be best directed at changing these views of acceptability of abuse in women who tend to gravitate toward abusive relationships.

Chapter 2: Study 1

In this study I explored whether women who are low in self-esteem might be more likely to subscribe to certain explanations for unhealthy behaviors in relationships than those who are high in self-esteem. In a series of written vignettes, I described several different explanations for the same unhealthy behaviors (i.e., arguing intensely, and in some scenarios psychologically abusive behaviors such as calling names, slamming doors, and throwing objects; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996), all of which concluded that the unhealthy behaviors were acceptable. Based on the previously mentioned historical link between low self-esteem in women and receiving abuse (Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Gelles & Straus, 1988; Schutte, Bouleige, Fix, & Malouff, 1986), I predicted that women who are low in self-esteem would find the behaviors of the male significantly more acceptable than would those women who are high in self-esteem. Furthermore, I predicted that women who are low in self-esteem would indicate that, if they were the woman in the abusive relationship, they would be willing to stay in the relationship significantly longer than those women who are high in self-esteem.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 1012 women (317 single, 177 dating casually, 227 dating and cohabiting, 175 married, 114 dating seriously and not cohabiting, 2 did not respond to the item) who volunteered via an online community, *Craig's List,* to complete a survey online through a survey website. Participants were promised feedback about their communication style and how it affected their relationship in exchange for their participation. Because of the nature of this feedback and the design of the vignettes, participants were asked only to participate if they were female and if they were currently in a heterosexual relationship. Regardless of this request, a significant number of women

who identified as "single" still participated in the study. Despite this, we included them in the analysis because the dependent measures did not involve specifics of a current relationship but rather attitudes in general toward relationship issues. Participants provided demographic information about themselves, such as their gender and age but divulged no personally identifying information, such as their name or telephone number. The sample was diverse in terms of age (M = 29.3 years, SD = 8.0; range = 17-62).

Procedure

Participants accessed the website via its web address, through a link from another website, or through a search engine. On arriving at the website, participants indicated whether or not they were in a romantic relationship and if so, how long they had been involved with the partner. They then completed some background questionnaires, as well as Self-Liking/ Self-Competence Scale-Revised (SLCS-R; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). The SLCS-R is a 5-point Likert-type scale that taps two related but distinct components of self-esteem: self-liking (the extent to which people see themselves as having social worth) and self-competence (the extent to which people perceive themselves as competent and effective in accomplishing their goals).

Participants were then asked to read a series of five vignettes that were presented in random order between participants in order to minimize order effects. Each vignette described the same couple, John and Jane, who had been in a serious relationship for four years. The vignettes would then go on to describe some unhealthy behaviors, sometimes involving psychologically abusive behaviors. At the end of each vignette, Jane reaches a different conclusion as to why John's hurtful behaviors toward her are acceptable (See Appendix A for complete vignettes). These explanations that Jane reasons were included to test whether different explanations of the hurtful behaviors might affect how acceptable different women found these behaviors to be. The themes of each vignette's explanation are summarized as follows:

1. Female over-emotionality. Both empirical evidence (McCrae & Costa, 1990) and popular belief support that over the lifespan, women are more emotionally unstable than men. It was hypothesized that this belief, when applied to intense conflict between a man and a woman, might help to excuse the man's behavior in attributing it to the woman's tendency to over-react.
2. Bad modeling. There is strong evidence suggesting that those who, during childhood, witness unhealthy behaviors between their parents are at higher risk to have similar patterns with their relationships as adults (Desai et al., 2002). Also, research has shown that women who are in abusive relationships tend to have peers who are also in abusive relationships (Gwartney-Gibbs et al., 1987). It was hypothesized that a person might see the described psychological abuse as normalized and therefore more acceptable because her parents, peers, and everyone in her environment is experiencing equally unacceptable behavior.
3. Challenge of rehabilitation. Similar to Winter's (1984) idea of "responsibility socialization," this theme centers around the idea that women are taught from a very early age that "attending to another's needs in preference to one's own, vicariously experiencing another's emotions, and inhibition of harmful impulses" are goal behaviors. It was hypothesized that because of the indoctrination of these attitudes, a woman might find the described hostile behaviors of the man more acceptable because it is a woman's job to nurture him out of his bad ways and teach him how to be a better person.
4. Basking in Reflected Glory (BIRGing). Because of the historic link between low self-esteem and receiving high levels of abuse in women (Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Gelles & Straus, 1988; Schutte, Bouleige, Fix, & Malouff, 1986), it was hypothesized that some women might attempt to make up for a

lack of self-worth by being in a relationship with someone of high status and success (Cialdini & de Nicholas, 1989). It was hypothesized that, in order to maintain the associated self-worth, this need to remain associated with the high-status partner might be so strong that the woman would withstand psychologically abusive behavior. Because of the differential in status, a woman might excuse the inappropriate behavior of the man.

5. Self-verification. There is strong evidence that people prefer to receive feedback that is consistent with their self-views, whether or not that feedback is positive (Swann, 1983). It was hypothesized then that a woman who has negative self-views might accept criticism and unhealthy behaviors from her partner either because she finds them to be accurate or because fear of other partners having similar complaints prevent her from seeking alternatives. Because of the perceived accuracy of the comments then, a woman might perceive the negative behaviors to be more acceptable.
6. Control. A counterargument to this method is that women who are low in self-esteem might simply be more likely to indicate that all vignettes are acceptable simply because they are more desperate to remain in a relationship. To ensure that there was not simply a response bias of this nature, I included a control vignette which described an average relationship with "typical" conflicts but no outstanding behaviors or problems. It was predicted that there would be no significant difference between women who are low versus high self-esteem in either how acceptable they found John's behavior in this vignette or how much longer they would likely stay in this relationship if they were Jane.

After reading each scenario, participants were asked to rate on a 6-point Likert-type scale: 1) The acceptability of John's behaviors (1 = Very Unacceptable to me, 6 =

Very Acceptable to me) and 2) If you were Jane, how much longer do you think you would remain in a relationship with John? (1 = Break up right away, 6 = Indefinitely).

Participants were thanked and debriefed once they completed the measures. To guard against the possibility that participants would complete the questionnaire more than once, if an Internet protocol (IP) address appeared twice or more within a 1-hr period, the responses were deleted.

Results

The participants' responses to the questions regarding the vignettes were submitted to a Pearson's correlation with their self-liking scores, which had been calculated from their responses to the SLCS-R. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Acceptability of John's Behavior

Due to an initial technical glitch, the questions regarding the acceptability of John's behavior for vignette #3 (Challenge of Rehabilitation) was not administered to the first 153 participants who completed the survey. The number of participants who responded to each respective vignette is therefore indicated on the table.

Participants' self-liking scores were significantly inversely related ($p < .01$) to how acceptable they found John's behaviors in every vignette except for the control. Women with low self-liking therefore endorsed overall that the unhealthy behaviors displayed by the man in all vignettes were significantly more acceptable than did those women with high self-liking.

How much longer they would remain in the unhealthy relationship

Due to the nature of internet surveys, some participants did not successfully record each response to every vignette. The number of participants who did provide responses is therefore indicated on the table.

Participants' self-liking scores were significantly inversely related ($p < .01$) to how much longer they endorsed that they would be willing to remain in the

described relationship in every vignette except for the control. Women with low self-liking therefore endorsed overall that they would be willing to stay in the unhealthy relationship significantly longer than would women with high self-liking.

DISCUSSION

These results provide evidence that women who are low in self-liking tend to find unhealthy behaviors in relationships more acceptable than do women who are high in self-liking and offers some support for the idea that unhealthy or psychologically abusive behavior is more normalized to some individuals (i.e., women who are low in self-liking) more than others (i.e., women who are high in self-liking). Because of the longstanding relationship between low self-liking and receiving high levels of abuse in relationships, I took these results to be some confirmation that women who are in highly abusive relationships would also tend to indicate that the same unhealthy behaviors are more acceptable than do those women who are in non-abusive relationships. An obvious shortcoming of this study, however, was that I did not directly measure levels of abuse in the current relationship. I therefore set out to do so in the next study as well as increased the salience of the depicted relationships by using a video as the stimulus in place of the written vignettes.

Chapter 3: Study 2

In this study I examined whether women who were currently in highly psychologically abusive relationships would find certain abusive behaviors depicted in a video as more acceptable than would women who were currently in non-abusive relationships. Based on the learned helplessness model discussed above, I predicted that women in highly psychologically abusive relationships would indicate that they would be more likely to remain in the depicted relationship than would women who were currently in non-abusive relationships. I also predicted that, parallel to the findings in Study 1, women who were currently in highly psychologically abusive relationships, or low in self-esteem, would find the same psychologically abusive behaviors in a stimulus video significantly more acceptable than would women who were currently in non-abusive relationships or high in self-esteem.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were women who responded to fliers posted around the university, via *Craig's List Austin,* a local online community, or through *Safeplace,* a local agency offering treatment for female victims of abuse. The fliers distributed throughout the community or on *Craig's List* recruited women who were currently in a romantic relationship and interested in earning $20 (or course credit if they were currently enrolled in the introductory psychology course at the university). Potential participants were instructed to go to a website through which they would complete a brief survey to determine if they were eligible to participate. On this website, participants provided demographic information such as age, gender and duration of the current relationship they were in, as well as an e-mail address which I indicated would be used to contact them if they were eligible to continue in the study but would be kept on confidential

servers and destroyed after the study was completed. They then completed the TIPI (Gosling et al., 2003), Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew's (1998) measure of commitment to the current relationship, the SLCS (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001), the Relationship Assessment Scale, a measure of relationship satisfaction (RAS; Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998), the psychological aggression subscale only of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS-2; Straus, et al., 1996), a 4-item measure of how verified the participant felt by her partner, the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI; Tolman, 1989), the Brief Loquaciousness and Interpersonal Responsiveness Test (BLIRT; Swann & Rentfrow, 2001) and then rated their partner on each of the eight BLIRT items. After the participants completed these questionnaires they received feedback about their relationship via their responses on the BLIRT and the partner-BLIRT, as well as where they fell on a distribution of relationship satisfaction. Participants were thanked and were told that they would be contacted by the experimenters if they were eligible to continue in the study.

The responses from the CTS-2 were then used to determine who would be contacted to participate in the study. The CTS-2 is broken down into acts perpetrated by the person completing the questionnaire (in this case, the woman) and acts perpetrated by the partner (i.e., the man). I summed up the scores of perpetration separately into "female aggression" scores, which reflected how psychologically aggressive the woman reported she was to her partner, and "male aggression scores," which reflected how psychologically aggressive the woman reported her male partner was to her. Only women who reported a male aggression score of 3 or lower (low abuse group) or 50 or higher (high abuse group) were contacted to participate in the study (*range of recruited scores:* 0-130; *maximum possible score:* 200). Responses from the PMWI, although not used as the primary criteria for recruitment, were taken into account as a secondary check for psychological abuse. That is, subjects were primarily screened based on their CTS-2

scores, however, they were not recruited if their PMWI scores were largely inconsistent with their CTS-2 score (i.e., having a CTS-2 score of 100 while only reporting a minimal score on the PMWI), as this indicated either some inconsistency with either one of the scores and therefore was a risk to include in the sample.

The fliers given to *Safeplace* to distribute among their clients, unlike the fliers distributed throughout the local and online community, did not require that the participants currently be involved in a relationship. This was because many of the women who were currently clients at *Safeplace* had left their abusive relationship for the time being in order to seek treatment. Still, I was interested in their opinions of acceptability of abusive behaviors because they ostensibly were recently in an abusive relationship that was severe enough for them to seek help at *Safeplace*, so I allowed anyone who responded to a flier from *Safeplace* to participate in the study but asked them to complete the CTS-2 upon arrival at the laboratory so that I could get an accurate measure of the abuse level either of their current relationship if they were in one, or of their most recent relationship if they currently were not in a relationship.

Across all recruiting domains (i.e., university, local community, and *Safeplace*), a total of 80 participants (40 high-abuse group [3 university, 24 local community, 13 *Safeplace*], 40 low-abuse group [8 university, 26 local community, 6 *Safeplace*]) were invited to continue in the study. All high-abuse groups ($M_{university}$= 85.0, $M_{community}$ = 58.9, $M_{Safeplace}$ = 68.9) were significantly different in abuse level from the low abuse groups ($M_{university}$= .125, $M_{community}$ = 2.54, $M_{Safeplace}$ = 3.83). There was no significant difference between the high-abuse groups; I therefore analyzed all three groups as one "high-abuse group" in the analyses. Between the low abuse groups, there was no significant difference between the local community and *Safeplace* participants, but the university group low-abuse group was significantly lower in psychological abuse than both the local community and *Safeplace* groups. As this would result in a more conservative estimate of

the observed effect, I combined all three groups as one "low-abuse group" in the analyses. The abuse variable was therefore dummy-coded into a "high" and "low" abuse group for each analysis.

Procedure

Participants were either invited to the laboratory at the university or were run in the study at *Safeplace* for their convenience.

University Laboratory Procedure:

After being seated in the lab and signing the informed consent form, participants were asked to complete a baseline measure of mood (Diener & Emmons, 1985). Participants were then asked to watch a 5-minute video depicting a psychologically abusive interaction between a young man, Scot, and woman, Tanya. The video was created as an educational movie to "help teens define what dating abuse or violence means" (Morgan & Blackwell, 1992; p. 6). The particular 5 minute clip I chose depicted a scene in which, as described by the accompanying study guide, the male "abuses [his girlfriend] verbally, terrifies her, and threatens to hit her with [a tennis] racquet, breaking it in two. When he leaves the room in a rage, [the girlfriend] runs after him to comfort him and try to make things right." (Morgan & Blackwell, 1992; p. 6).

After the movie was over, participants were asked to complete a series of questions addressing their reactions to the movie.

1. Mood: Participants were asked to fill out a measure of their mood (Diener & Emmons, 1985).
2. Likelihood to remain in the relationship: Participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale how likely, if they were Tanya, would they be to remain in a relationship with Scot?
3. Acceptability of Behavior: Participants were then asked to complete a series of 5-point Likert style questions regarding the acceptability of various

behaviors they had witnessed in the movie. Among these were 1) Does the fact that Scot is jealous mean that he loves Tanya a lot? 2) How acceptable did they find the yelling behavior by Scot toward Tanya, 3) How acceptable did they find the threat that Scot made to hit Tanya with the tennis racquet? Participants answered 9 additional questions that yielded no effects and will therefore not be discussed further.

As a validity check, participants were then asked to complete a questionnaire assessing on a 5-point Likert-type scale how engaging and convincing they found the movie, as well as how much they believed the movie depicted the following: 1) physical abuse, 2) psychological abuse, and 3) sexual abuse. Participants were then given a 5-minute filler task after which they were asked to complete a series of questionnaires measuring various aspects of personality and relationship quality.

Safeplace procedure:

Participants at *Safeplace* followed an identical protocol as those who participated in the laboratory at the university except that after signing the informed consent, participants began by completing all measures that had been administered to the laboratory participants via the online pre-screening procedure described above. After participants completed these measures, they were given a 5-minute filler task in order to try to minimize the effects of their completion of these measures prior to moving onto the rest of the experiment. After this filler task, the *Safeplace* protocol followed that of the university laboratory exactly.

Results

Movie Validity

On the 5-point Likert type movie validity measures, participants found the video to depict a fair amount of psychological abuse (M= 4.7, $S.D.$ = .68), and to a significantly lesser degree physical abuse (M = 4.01, $S.D.$ =1.07; paired sample-t = 5.79, $p < .001$) and

well as sexual abuse (M =3.20 , $S.D.$ = 1.36; paired sample-t = 9.06, p < .001). In general, participants found the movie engaging (M = 3.54, $S.D.$ = 1.01) and moderately convincing (M = 3.14, $S.D.$ = 1.20).

Mood

The participants' responses to the mood measures after the movie were subtracted from their responses to those same mood measures at baseline. The differences were then submitted to a Pearson's correlation with the participants' male aggression score (i.e., how much abuse they were currently receiving in their relationship from their partner). Women who were currently in highly psychologically abusive relationships appeared to experience significantly more distress from watching the videos, compared to women who were in non-abusive relationships. Specifically, the higher the participant's male aggression score, the larger the decrease the participant experienced in positive affect from before to after the video (r = -.30, p < .01) and the larger the increase the participant experienced in negative affect from before to after the video (r = .22, p <.05).

Likelihood to Remain in the Relationship

A univariate analysis of variance showed that there were no significant differences in responses between the three sub-samples (i.e., university, local community, and *Safeplace*; F = .133, p > .80). There was a marginal difference between women who were recruited from *Safeplace* who were currently in a relationship versus those who were not. Specifically, those who were currently in a relationship endorsed that they would be slightly more willing to remain in the depicted abusive relationship than those who were not currently in a relationship (and had ostensibly left their abusive relationship in order to seek treatment; t = 1.91, p = .07). With respect to levels of abuse reported in the relationship, there was no significant difference among the *Safeplace* women either in male aggression (t = .43, *n.s.*) or in female aggression (t = 1.72, *n.s.)*. The following

analyses were therefore conducted analyzing all three sub-samples as one collective sample.

Women who were currently receiving high levels of psychological abuse in their relationship indicated that they would be significantly more likely to remain in the depicted abusive relationship than did women who were currently in non-abusive relationships (r = .286, p < .05). With my preliminary hypothesis confirmed, I did a subsequent examination of possible mediators of this effect. Surprisingly, I found that although the male aggression score was a strong predictor of how likely the participant was to indicate that she would remain in the abusive relationship, the female aggression score was an even stronger predictor of this effect and in fact fully mediated the effect of male aggression (see Figure 1). That is, I ran an ordinary least-squares regression including male aggression, female aggression, and the male aggression x female aggression interaction as predictors, with likelihood to remain in the depicted abusive relationship as the dependent variable. There was no significant interaction between male and female aggression (p > .90), so the regression was run again without the interaction term as a predictor. Although when it was included alone in the regression, male aggression was a significant predictor of how likely the participant endorsed that she would remain in the depicted abusive relationship (β = .29, p < .05; this and all β values reported subsequently refer to standardized values), male aggression became non-significant as a predictor once female aggression was introduced to the regression, and female aggression remained a marginally significant predictor of the outcome ($\beta_{male\ aggression}$ = .085, p > .70; $\beta_{female\ aggression}$ = .29, =p = .059).

Because of the previous findings in Study 1 regarding self-liking as a predictor of the likelihood to remain in the unhealthy relationships depicted in the vignettes, I also explored whether self-liking played a role in predicting the likelihood of remaining in the abusive relationship depicted in the video. I entered self-liking in an ordinary least-

squares regression along with male and female aggression as predictors, as well as with the appropriate interaction terms. There was no significant interaction between self-liking and any of the other predictors (all *p's* > .20), nor did self-liking act to mediate the effects of male and female aggression on the outcome (β = -.14, p > .20).

Does Jealousy equal Love?

Women who were high in aggression tended to indicate that the fact that Scot was jealous meant that he loved Tanya significantly more than women who were low in aggression (r = .224, p < .05). The level of male aggression did not affect how much participants indicated their endorsement of this idea that jealousy equals love (r = .115, p > .3). Likewise, the participant's self-liking also was not related to this outcome (r = .002, p > .9).

Acceptability of psychologically abusive behaviors

Women who were currently in highly psychologically abusive relationships found the psychologically abusive behaviors of yelling and the threat to hit Tanya with the tennis racquet significantly more acceptable than did women who were currently in non-abusive relationships (r = .30, p < .01, and r = .274, p < .05, respectively).

Because of the previous findings in Study 1 regarding self-liking as a predictor of the likelihood to remain in the unhealthy relationships depicted in the vignettes, I also explored whether self-liking played a role in predicting the acceptability of the abusive behavior depicted in the video. I entered self-liking in an ordinary least-squares regression along with male and female aggression as predictors, as well as with the appropriate interaction terms. There was no significant interaction between male and female aggression, or between male aggression and self-liking (all *p's* > .20). There was, however, a somewhat surprising marginally significant interaction between self-liking and female aggression. Specifically, women who were high in self-esteem found the psychologically abusive behavior more acceptable the more aggressive they were

themselves in their current relationship, whereas women low in self-esteem did not exhibit this effect (t =1.946, p = .056; see Figure 2).

I then ran an ordinary least-squares regression including male aggression, female aggression, and the male aggression x female aggression interaction as predictors, with acceptability of the yelling behavior as the dependent variable. There was no significant interaction between male and female aggression (p > .90), so the regression was run again without the interaction term as a predictor. Although when it was included alone in the regression, male aggression was a significant predictor of how likely the participant endorsed that she would remain in the depicted abusive relationship (β = .27, p < .05; this and all β values reported subsequently refer to standardized values), male aggression became non-significant as a predictor once female aggression was introduced to the regression, and female aggression remained a significant predictor of the outcome ($\beta_{male\ aggression}$ = .013, p > .70; $\beta_{female\ aggression}$ = .36, =p < .05; see Figure 3, below).

Female aggression did not affect how acceptable women found the threat with the tennis racquet (β = -.088, p > .6). When self-liking was entered into the regression along with male aggression, however, there was a similar interaction between self-liking and male aggression (t = 3.10, p < .01), such that women who were receiving high levels of male aggression in their relationship found the threats of the tennis racquet the most acceptable when the women were *high* in self-liking (see Figure 4). Those women who were low in self-liking found the threat of the tennis racquet slightly less acceptable the more abuse they were receiving from their partner.

DISCUSSION

These results yielded surprising information. I learned that the female's abusiveness was an important predictor of how likely she indicated that she would remain in the depicted abusive relationship as well as of how much she endorsed some unhealthy ideas about relationships and how acceptable she found the abusive behavior. Although

the bi-directional nature of IPV has been recognized in previous research (Kelly & Johnson, 2008; Lawson, 2003; Archer, 2000), it has frequently been downplayed or set aside in light of the argument that despite the bi-directional nature of IPV, males are more capable of inflicting serious harm to women (Hotaling, Strauss, & Lincoln, 1990; Stets & Straus, 1990; Zlotnick, Kohn, Peterson, & Pearlstein, 1998; see Holtzworth-Munroe, Meehan, Rehman, & Marshall, 2002 for review). This argument makes sense when considering physical abuse but is more difficult to maintain when considering psychological abuse.

Furthermore, also somewhat contrary to my predictions based on the learned helplessness model, I learned that high self-esteem seems to predict the highest levels of perceived acceptability of the psychologically abusive behaviors after accounting for both male and female abusiveness. These findings suggest that these women have internalized a social norm that deems abusive behavior acceptable, whether they are perpetrated by others or themselves.

This prominent role of a woman's own level of aggression in these effects disconfirmed the learned helplessness model that this research was designed to test. Instead, it appears that cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) offers a superior explanation. In a series of well-known studies, Festinger and his colleagues found that when people behave in ways that they are incongruent with their attitudes, they experience discomfort, or "dissonance." To reduce this dissonance, Festinger posited that individuals could do one of two things: either bring their behaviors into alignment with their attitudes, or adjust their attitudes to become more in line with their behaviors. He demonstrated that given the option, many people would choose to change their attitudes to be more supportive of their previous behaviors even if they had not approved as strongly of such behaviors beforehand. In doing so, these individuals would subsequently feel better about their behaviors, which were no longer so incongruent with their beliefs.

These findings from Study 2 point to the need to examine the role of female abusiveness more closely as a predictor of outcomes that may contribute to the perpetuation of unhealthy relationships. From a cognitive dissonance perspective, if one wants to change the female's views of acceptability of abusive behaviors, the key lies in addressing her own behaviors first and foremost, as they seem to be stronger predictors of her attitudes than even the abusiveness of her partner. After changing a woman's views of her own aggressive behaviors as acceptable, one might then be in a better position to change her attitudes about whether her partner's abusive behaviors are acceptable. I therefore seek to explore the impacts of both female abusiveness and self-liking on the effectiveness of changing beliefs about acceptability of abusive behaviors in the next study.

Chapter 4: Study 3

In this study I attempted to replicate the findings of Study 2 as well as explore the therapeutic implications of the predicted results. That is, the findings that the female's own level of abusiveness toward her partner was a more powerful predictor of how likely she would indicate that she would remain in an abusive relationship as well as how acceptable she found psychologically abusive behaviors was surprising. In addition, these findings raised a question about current treatments that are in place for IPV and how they might be improved.

CURRENT TREATMENT FOR IPV AND EFFECTIVENESS

As there is no single theory of abuse, there is likewise no single theory of what constitutes the most effective treatment for abuse. Nonetheless, a review of recent literature suggests that there is some consensus among clinicians about treatment of IPV. Lawson (2003) outlines current assumptions that appear to underlie current treatment methods:

1. Violence is a learned behavior that can be unlearned.
2. Violent behavior is a choice; the batterer chooses to be aggressive.
3. Violence does not result from a batterer losing control but rather from his way of taking control of a situation he is unable to control through nonviolent means.
4. Violence has a negative impact on every member of the family, including the batterer.
5. Provocation does not justify aggression.
6. Many batterers hold traditional, patriarchal beliefs about family roles.

Consequently, treatment centers around teaching men how to better manage their anger, re-educating men from their supposed norms of patriarchal power and control

(Lawson, 2003; Feldman & Ridley, 1995; LaTaillade, Epstein, & Werlinich, 2006), and re-assessing men's attachment styles and internal models of relating with the intent to change them to be more adaptive (Dutton, 2007; Levenson, 1995).

Victims, too, receive treatment. Treatment for victims of violence, however, center around psychoeducation about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that they may have sustained due to receiving the violence, talking and exposure homework regarding the trauma, stress management, identifying and correcting irrational guilt-related beliefs and negative self-talk, and self-advocacy and empowerment training (Kubany et al., 2004). In sum, as treatment for victim focus mostly around overcoming trauma and learning coping techniques, most treatments today place the lion's share of responsibility to change on the perpetrator (i.e., to become less aggressive). Unfortunately, counting on the perpetrator to change his ways is often difficult and ineffective, as a high percentage of men reoffend after treatment (Babcock & La Taillade, 2000; Murphy & Eckhardt, 2005). Some couples counseling which addresses both members' roles in couples is practiced, but is indicated only for couples who are experiencing low to moderate levels of violence (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 2002) and also who wish to reconcile, which is not always the case (LaTaillade et al., 2006). Furthermore, couple counseling for IPV has often been criticized for promoting a "blaming the victim" attitude (Bograd, 1988) or otherwise perpetuating an imbalance of power in the couple (Walker, 1993; Walker, 1995).

This perpetual apprehension of possibly blaming the victim for the abuse is well-founded and deserves to be a reasonable concern in all matters of considering abusive interactions. Given the instances outlined earlier where those involved should rightfully be wary of agencies or institutions blaming the victim, some degree of vigilance is always merited. There is a distinction to be made, however, between placing blame on someone and acknowledging that she is capable of taking some responsibility not only

for what has occurred but for what may lie in her future. Rather than empowering her, persistently placing the woman in the victim role without acknowledging that she is an active player in any conflict may instead leave her without any control of any future interactions with the abusive partner or any other partner she is to have later in her life. It is estimated that after receiving treatment, approximately 50% of women return to their abusive partners (Griffing et al., 2002). If nothing else, this statistic suggests that there is room for improvement for the current treatment methods that are in practice for victims of violence.

I posited that given the findings from Study 2, focusing a woman's attention on her own abusive behaviors and how those might be changed rather than focusing her attention on her partner's abusive behaviors, which is currently done in treatment, would provide the catalyst needed for abused women to internalize a healthier set of social norms regarding acceptable behaviors. I have found the woman's own abusive behaviors to be a stronger predictor over the abusiveness of her partner of both of how likely she endorsed she would be to stay in an abusive relationship as well as how acceptable she found abusive behavior to be. It therefore stood to reason that if somehow the woman could alter her views about her ability to change her own behaviors in dealing with anger with behaviors that are non-aggressive, perhaps it would be more effective in aiding her to see abusive acts as acts that can, in fact, be controlled and altered.

From a self-verification perspective (Swann, 1983), this approach makes much sense. As mentioned earlier, self-verification theory posits that people prefer feedback that is consistent with their pre-existing view of themselves, regardless of whether that feedback is positive or negative. For individuals who have decidedly negative views of themselves then, this implies that simply feeding them high praise about themselves is likely to result disbelief and lack of internalization on their part. Indeed, Swann, Chang-Schneider, and McClarty (2007) point out that the effective changing of negative self-

views for the better requires long-term treatment. Such treatment would involve behavioral evidence in order for the individual to disprove her previously held negative theories about herself. Applied to therapy for individuals who have sustained violence or hurtful treatment for the greater part of their lives, it is not surprising that simply sitting someone down and telling her, "You do not deserve to be abused. You deserve better than this. Stand up for yourself and be assertive and strong, and have no tolerance for violence," is not effectively internalized. This same argument has been made in the past with respect to self-verification and treatment of drug abusers (Linehan, 1997).

Sitting that same person down and focusing them on their own levels of aggression, however, is neither in agreement nor in disagreement with the victim's views of self-worth. For example, one might tell a victim of violence, "You have a choice when you are angry, not to act aggressively toward your partner. There are other ways to deal with anger; let me tell you about them. Think about your feelings of anger when they come up and where they come from. Are there other ways that you can express how you are truly feeling?" This message, rather than telling someone who has felt a low sense of self-worth all of her life that she is suddenly worthwhile, provides this individual with a tool to manage her own emotions. This set of tools should be equally effective for everyone, regardless of whether they have high or low self-worth (Linehan & Dexter-Mazza, 2008). If the woman is able to recognize that anger and aggression are not one and the same and that more adaptive ways to express her own anger exist and are attainable, then perhaps she will be willing to extend that algorithm to those around her, including her abusive partner.

In this next study I therefore attempted to test this hypothesis. I used the previous paradigm from Study 2 in which a woman who is currently in a high or low abuse relationship views a video depicting a psychologically abusive interaction between a man and a woman and to have her indicate afterwards how likely she would be to remain in

the relationship as well as how acceptable she finds the abusive behaviors. In this study, however, I arranged three different conditions in which prior to viewing the movie, different aspects of the conflict were made salient to the participant. In one condition, a woman's own aggressive behaviors toward her partner and how they might be changed were made salient, while in another condition the woman's partner's aggressive behaviors toward her and how they might be changed were made salient. The third condition was a control. I hypothesized that because a woman's own levels of aggression appear from Study 2 to be a stronger predictor of her attitudes toward abuse, the condition in which her own aggressive behaviors are made salient to her would have a stronger effect in changing her attitudes toward abuse after viewing the video.

Furthermore, I also incorporated an expressive writing manipulation in order to explore whether such methods might have longer term, therapeutic implications. Expressive writing, in which an individual writes about her deepest thoughts and feelings regarding a topic, has been shown to have long-term therapeutic impacts on both mental and physical health (for a review, see Kacewicz, Slatcher, & Pennebaker, 2007). I therefore devised parallel expressive writing conditions (i.e., in one condition the participant wrote about her thoughts and feelings regarding her own role in conflict with her partner, while in another condition she wrote about her thoughts and feelings regarding her partner's role in conflict with her). I measured both the participants' immediate and long-term change of attitude toward abusive behaviors. To measure their immediate change of attitude, I had them complete the expressive writing manipulation and then presented with a video depicting a psychologically abusive interaction. To measure their long-term change of attitude toward abusive behavior, I followed up with them at one- and three- month intervals to assess their current relationship status and levels of abuse in the relationship. I hypothesized that those who were in the condition in which they were instructed to examine their own role in aggressive behavior when in

conflict with their partner would experience a more profound change in attitudes about abusive behavior and would potentially reflect that by either exiting their highly abusive relationships or reducing the levels of abusiveness in their relationship over time.

METHOD

Participants

As in Study 2, participants were recruited via fliers posted around the university and local community, as well as online via *Craig's List* and through *Safeplace* (see Appendix B). As in Study 2, I pre-screened using the psychological aggression subscale of the CTS-2 (Straus, et al., 1996; see Appendix C). In addition, I collected age, gender and duration of the current relationship they were currently in, as well as an e-mail address which I indicated would be used to contact them if they were eligible to continue in the study but would be kept on confidential servers and destroyed after the study was completed (see Appendix D). Participants also completed the TIPI as a measure of big-5 personality traits (Gosling et al., 2003; see Appendix E), Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew's (1998) measure of commitment to the current relationship (see Appendix F), the SLCS measure of self-esteem (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001; see Appendix G), and Hendrick, and Dicke, & Hendrick's (1998) measure of relationship satisfaction (RAS; see Appendix H). After potential participants completed these measures, they received feedback about their relationship and satisfaction levels and were informed that they would be contacted if they were eligible to continue with the study. Only women who were currently in highly psychologically abusive relationships were recruited to the study via an e-mail sent by the PI (see Appendix I). Because I used the same stimulus as I did in Study 2, women who participated in Study 2 were not eligible to participate in this study.

1098 women completed the online questionnaire. Of these, those who scored in the top 25th percentile of male-perpetrated psychological abuse (Male Psychological

Abuse score on CTS2 exceeding 21 out of 200 possible points), were asked to participate in the study. 189 women had scores that qualified them and were contacted by phone. Voicemails were left by the principal investigator if the owner of the phone number did not answer. If the phone number provided was disconnected, these potential participants were contacted via e-mail. Of those contacted, 68 were successfully recruited into the laboratory to participate in the intake session. The remainder of the 189 women either did not return contact to the PI after four attempts by the PI, returned contact but stated that they were no longer interested in participating in the study, or made appointments to come to the laboratory but no-showed three times.

Within the sample that was recruited into the study, distribution of male-perpetrated psychological abuse was heavily positively skewed and ranged from 22 – 170 (M = 57.0, $S.D.$ = 30.9). Two outliers (i.e., those who had Male Psychological Abuse scores over 3 standard deviations over the mean) participated in the intake session. One was omitted from 1-month follow-up analysis because she failed to return to the laboratory. The second returned to the 1-month follow-up but did not respond to the 3-month follow-up questionnaire and therefore was omitted from the final analysis. Intake analyses were run both including the remaining outlier and omitting the outliers. There were no significant differences between the results when the analyses were run with the outliers versus when running without the outliers. The outliers were therefore included in the analysis because there was no compelling reason to omit them.

At intake, the 68 participants' ages ranged from 18 – 55 (M = 26.0, $S.D.$ = 8.13). The majority ethnic background was Caucasian (n = 44), followed by Latina/Hispanic (n = 8), Asian American (n = 6), African American (n = 5), and "Other" (n = 5). Write-in responses for "Other" included "Southeast Asian," "Caucasian and Native American," "Asian and Caucasian," and "Caucasian and Latina/Hispanic."

37 participants reported that their household income was mostly under $30,000 per year followed by 18 reporting between $30,000 and $50,000 per year, and 13 reporting a household income of over $75,000 per year. Participants were divided almost equally in that a 29 reported contributing less than half or none to the household income, 8 reported contributing exactly half, and a 31 reported contributing more than half or all of the income. Taking into account that many of these participants were students, this financial dependence index was relevant only if participants cohabited with their partner. Of those that cohabited with their partner upon intake (n = 42), 24 reported a household income below $30,000 per year, followed by 12 reporting a household income between $30,000 and $50,000 per year, and 6 reported a household income above $75,000 per year. In addition, 13 reported contributing less than half of the household income, 8 reported contributing exactly half, and 21 reported contributing over half or all of the household income, indicating that those who were cohabiting were not overwhelmingly financially dependent on their partners.

Duration of current relationship ranged from 0 to 180 (M = 30.2, $S.D.$ = 32.1). 4 participants reported that they were "Dating Casually", 22 reported that they were "Dating Seriously, but not Cohabiting," 29 reported that they were "Cohabiting," and 13 reported that they were "Married."

Procedure

Upon arrival at the laboratory, participants were greeted and asked to read and sign an informed consent form (see Appendix J). Participants were then asked to complete a baseline mood measure (Diener & Emmons, 1985). Participants were then asked to engage in an expressive writing paradigm (Pennebaker & Beall, 1986). All participants were asked to write for 3 sessions at 15 minutes each, the writing sessions separated by a 10-minute break. Participants were divided into three conditions:

1. *Self's aggressive behavior/role in conflict (i.e., "Self" condition):* In this condition, participants received some psychoeducation from the experimenter regarding anger and aggression. Specifically, they received training regarding recognizing that anger and aggression are not one and the same and were encouraged to examine the consequences that might be involved if *they* acted on anger in aggressive ways versus other ways (Linehan, 1993). Participants were then verbally instructed by the experimenter to focus on her role in conflict with her partner and write for 15 minutes about her deepest *thoughts and emotions* about when she has been aggressive toward her partner (see Appendix K). Participants were asked to explore how their aggression with their partner ties into other areas of their lives, where their feelings and tendencies may have come from, and what sorts of relationships may have given rise or were also affected by these behaviors, as suggestions for subtopics to write about. Participants were encouraged to write freely and per standard expressive writing procedures, were allowed to change topic if necessary, as previous research has shown that therapeutic effects may be diminished if participants are thinking too hard about focusing on a topic (Kacewicz et al., 2007). During each 10-minute break, participants were allowed to stand up, stretch and relax. At the beginning of each subsequent 15-minute writing session, the participant received a new set of instructions in order to refresh their memory of what they had been writing about and were simply instructed to continue writing along those lines.
2. *Partner's aggressive behavior/role in conflict (i.e., "Partner" condition)*: Participants in this condition were also given the same psychoeducation regarding anger and aggression as the previous condition. They were then

verbally instructed by the experimenter to focus on their *partner's* role in conflict with them and write for 15 minutes about their deepest *thoughts and emotions* about when their partner had been aggressive toward them (see Appendix L). Participants in this condition were asked to explore how their partner's aggression with their partner tie into other areas of their lives, where their partner's aggressive tendencies may have come from, or what sorts of relationships may have given rise or are also affected by these behaviors as suggestions of subtopics to write about. As in the other expressive writing conditions, participants were encouraged to write freely and were allowed to change topic if necessary. During each 10-minute break, participants were allowed to stand up, stretch and relax. At the beginning of each subsequent 15-minute writing session, the participant received a new set of instructions in order to refresh their memory of what they had been writing about and were simply instructed to continue writing along those lines.

3. *Control:* To account for the possibility that simply doing expressive writing about any topic might have an effect on participants, a control condition in which the participants were asked to write for three 15-minute sessions, each separated by a break of 10-minutes, was be included (see Appendix M). These participants were asked to write about their deepest thoughts and feelings about time management during their writing sessions. As in the other expressive writing conditions, participants were encouraged to write freely and were allowed to change topic if necessary. During each 10-minute break, participants were allowed to stand up, stretch and relax. At the beginning of each subsequent 15-minute writing session, the participant received a new set of instructions in order to

refresh their memory of what they had been writing about and were simply instructed to continue writing along those lines.

Participants were then asked to watch the same 5-minute video depicting a psychologically abusive interaction between a man and a woman (Morgan & Blackwell, 1992). After the movie was over, participants were asked to complete a series of questions addressing their reactions to the movie.

1. Mood: Participants were asked to fill out a measure of their mood (Diener & Emmons, 1985; see Appendix N).
2. Likelihood to remain in the relationship and Acceptability of Behavior: Participants were then asked to complete a series of 5-point Likert style questions regarding how likely, if they were Tanya, would they be to remain in a relationship with Scot and the acceptability of various behaviors they had witnessed in the movie (see Appendix O).

As a validity check, participants were then asked to complete a questionnaire assessing how engaging and convincing they found the movie, as well as how much they believed the movie depicted the following: 1) physical abuse, 2) psychological abuse, and 3) sexual abuse (see Appendix P). Participants were then asked to complete the physical aggression scale of CTS-2 (see Appendix Q), the Beck Depression Inventory- Short version (BDI-Short; Beck, Rial, & Rickels, 1974, see Appendix R), a modified, abbreviated portion of the CTS-2 to measure how abusive their family of origin was (see Appendix S), and a measure of current income level and economic dependence on the partner (see Appendix T). Participants were also asked whether they preferred to be contacted via phone or e-mail for the follow-up sessions at this point and provided the experimenter with the appropriate information, which was kept confidential and separate from their responses to the measures in the study. Following the completion of these measures, participants were thanked, debriefed, and compensated. In addition, they were

given a referral list of support agencies' phone numbers in case they had experienced distress from either watching the video or from the writing component of the study (see Appendix U).

Following the laboratory session, participants were contacted to collect follow-up data. Follow-ups were conducted at two points: one month following the laboratory session and three months following the laboratory session. At the 1-month follow-up session, participants were asked to return to the laboratory. They watched a second brief video depicting a psychologically abusive interaction between a man and a woman (Movie #2), and then completed questions regarding acceptability of behavior in that movie (see Appendix P). They were asked to complete a mood questionnaire before and after the movie (see Appendix N), a questionnaire tapping validity of the movie (see Appendix Q), and then were asked about their current relationship status (i.e., whether they were still with their partner whom they were with at intake, had they downgraded their relationship) and to complete questionnaires tapping the current levels of abuse in their relationship via the CTS and PMWI (see Appendices R and S). Participants were also asked to complete questionnaires tapping their levels of relationship commitment and satisfaction if they were still with their partner (see Appendices F and H). They were then compensated and dismissed.

At 3-months after intake, participants were contacted either by phone or by e-mail. They were asked about their current relationship status (i.e., whether they were still with their partner whom they were with at intake, had they downgraded their relationship) and to complete questionnaires tapping the current levels of abuse in their relationship via the CTS and PMWI (see Appendices R and S). Participants were also asked to complete questionnaires tapping their levels of relationship commitment and satisfaction if they were still with their partner (see Appendices F and H). They were then compensated and thanked.

Results

Of the 68 participants recruited into the study, 2 were omitted from the analyses because of incomplete data taken at the intake session. At the 1-month follow-up, 64 of the 68 participants returned to the laboratory; 4 did not respond to attempts to be contacted by the PI. A binary logistic regression run on those who did not return to the 1-month follow up revealed no significant effect of condition on those who returned versus did not return with respect to the control condition (odds ratio of "Self" to control condition, likelihood to return to laboratory: $0.0/2E^9$, $p = 1.0$, odds ratio of "Partner" to control condition: $0.0/2E^9$, $p = 1.0$). Of those 64 that returned to the laboratory, 3 were omitted from the analyses because of incomplete data collected at the 1-month follow-up. At the 3-month follow-up, 56 of the remaining participants responded to the questionnaire vie e-mail or by phone; the remainder did not respond to attempts to be contacted by the PI. A binary logistic regression run on those who did not return to the 3-month follow up revealed no significant effect of condition on those who returned versus did not return with respect to the control condition (odds ratio of "Self" to control condition, likelihood to return to laboratory: 6.3/6.3, $p = 1.0$, odds ratio of "Partner" to control condition: 3.0/6.3, $p = .34$).Of those who responded at the 3-month follow-up, 1 was omitted from the analyses because of incomplete data collected at the 3-month follow-up.

In addition, to ensure that the sample was randomly assigned to the three writing conditions, a univariate analysis of variance was run with the writing condition as the fixed factor and the selection criteria (i.e., abuse level in the current relationship) as the dependent variable. A marginally significant difference emerged between the writing conditions, such that the participants who had been assigned to the "Self" condition had marginally significantly higher levels of physical aggression perpetrated by the participant toward her partner (i.e., Female Physical CTS at Intake) than did those in the

"Partner" condition condition (F = 2.97, p = .07; Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 8.71, Std. Error = 3.73, p = .068). Because of this slight imbalance between the conditions at intake, I included the variable "Female Physical CTS at Intake" as a covariate with each subsequent analysis of between conditions effects.

In addition, several demographic and personality variables correlated significantly with many of the outcome variables (i.e., attitudes toward aggressive behaviors, abuse levels in the current relationship). Specifically, age, self-esteem, how self-supportive the participant was financially, how much the participant subscribed to traditional gender roles, and level of depression correlated significantly with several outcome variables. Analyses were first run without these covariates. Because these relationships were consistent with previous findings (see background section), however, these five variables were included as covariates in each of the analyses as a check to see if they impacted the findings significantly. In some cases, results changed from non-significant to marginally significant. In these cases, both sets of analyses are reported. Otherwise, all other analyses reported below do not include the covariates.

Short term effects (Video #1 DV)

Movie Validity

On the 5-point Likert type movie validity measures, participants found the video to depict a fair amount of psychological abuse (M= 4.96, *S.D.* = .207), and to a significantly lesser degree physical abuse (M = 2.71, *S.D.* =1.19; paired sample-t = 16.12, p < .001) as well as sexual abuse (M =2.16, *S.D.* = 1.32; paired sample-t = 17.58, p < .001). In general, participants found the movie engaging (M = 3.81, *S.D.* = .83) and moderately convincing (M = 3.63, *S.D.* = 1.17).

Mood

I predicted that participants would exhibit differences between the three different writing conditions in their responses to the movie through their change in mood. Specifically, I predicted that those who were asked to write about their own aggression in conflict (i.e., in the "Self" condition) would experience greater distress while watching the movie than those who were asked to write about their partner's conflict or about time management (control).

To test this prediction, the participants' responses to the mood measures after the movie were subtracted from their responses to those same mood measures at baseline. These difference scores were then submitted to a univariate analysis of variance, which overall revealed no significant differences between writing conditions with respect to change in positive or negative affect from before to after watching the movie ($F_{Posaffect}$ = .27, p = .77; $F_{Negaffect}$ = .45, p = .64).

An interesting pattern emerged, however, when analyzing only those women who were in what could be considered Kelly and Johnson's (2009) "Coercive Controlling Violence" relationships. Recall that Kelly and Johnson outlined several different types of abusive behavior, some in which both parties perpetrate equally (i.e., Situational Couple Violence) and another, more nefarious type of violence that is motivated out of a desire to control or manipulate the other partner (i.e., Coercive Controlling Violence [CCV]). Women who were in the former type of relationship as opposed to the latter were isolated in the analysis via their score on Female Psychological Aggression at intake. Those who fell in the lowest 25th percentile on this score were considered to be in CCV relationships due to the fact that they were sustaining high levels of psychological aggression from their partner but not reciprocating the aggression. When analyzed separately, a univariate analysis of variance yielded that women who were in the "Partner" condition and in CCV relationships endorsed significantly different change in positive affect than did those who were either in the "Self" or control conditions and also in CCV relationships (F = 4.28, p

= .04; Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 2.13, Std. Error = 0.784, p = 0.05). Specifically, those who were in the "Partner" condition actually experienced a *positive* change in positive affect (i.e., meaning that they reported higher levels of positive affect after watching the movie), whereas those who were in the "Self" or control conditions reported negative changes in positive affect.

Similarly, a marginally significant effect emerged in the change in negative affect experienced by women in CCV relationships. A univariate analysis of variance yielded that women who were in the "Partner" condition and in CCV relationships endorsed significantly different change in negavite affect than did those who were either in the "Self" or control conditions and also in CCV relationships (F = 2.81, p = .10; Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 1.41, Std. Error = 0.644, p = 0.14). Specifically, those who were in the "Partner" condition actually experienced a *negative* change in negative affect (i.e., meaning that they reported lower levels of negative affect after watching the movie), whereas those who were in the "Self" or control conditions reported positive changes in negative affect. The prediction that those who wrote in the "Self" condition would experience greater distress from watching the movie was therefore somewhat supported when analyzing only those women who were in CCV relationships.

Likelihood to Remain in the Relationship

I hypothesized that participants in the "Self" condition would express significantly less likelihood to remain in the depicted psychologically abusive relationship than would those in the "Partner" or control conditions. A univariate analysis of variance yielded no significant difference between conditions on participants' endorsements of how likely they would hypothetically remain in the depicted relationship (see Table 2). When asked how acceptable it was for Stephanie, the female depicted in the abusive relationship in the video, to leave her husband at the end of the video, a

marginally significant difference emerged. A univariate analysis of variance yielded that those who were in the "Partner" condition endorsed that it was significantly more acceptable for Stephanie to leave her husband than did those in the Control condition (F = 4.89, p = .01; Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 1.00, Std. Error = 0.33, p = 0.01). There was at best a marginal difference between the "Self" and Control condition (Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 0.75, Std. Error = 0.34, p = 0.10). Despite this difference in the endorsement of the acceptability of Stephanie leaving her husband, there were no significant differences between groups regarding whether they believed that Stephanie should return to her husband (F = 0.04, p = 0.96).

The results suggest that writing about one's partner's aggression causes individuals to see leaving an abusive relationship to be more acceptable than does writing about neutral information. The hypotheses regarding the effectiveness of writing about one's own aggression in conflict on attitudes toward remaining in hypothetical abusive relationships, however, were not supported.

Acceptability of psychologically abusive behaviors

I hypothesized that participants in the "Self" condition would find the psychologically abusive behaviors depicted in the movie to be significantly less acceptable than those who were in the "Partner" and control conditions. This was confirmed to some degree when the sample was broken into two groups: those who were cohabiting at intake (i.e., fell under the relationship status of "Dating seriously and cohabiting" or "Married), and those who were not cohabiting (i.e., fell under the relationship status of "Dating casually" or "Dating seriously but not cohabiting"). In this case, these differences were observed only with respect to opinions of swearing behavior. Specifically, those who were not cohabiting and in the "Partner" condition found it marginally more acceptable for Sean, the husband in the movie, to swear at his wife,

Stephanie than did those who were not cohabiting and in the "Self" condition (F= 3.24, p= .06, Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = .48, Std. Error = .20, p = .08). This difference did not emerge to be significant among those who were cohabiting (F= .31, p= .74). Alternatively, those who were cohabiting and in the "Partner" condition found it significantly less acceptable for Stephanie to swear at her husband than did those who were cohabiting and in the "Self" condition (F = 3.324, p = .05, Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 1.85, Std. Error = .72, p = .042). No other significant differences emerged as a result of splitting the sample based on cohabitation status. All other analyses reported therefore reflect results from analysis of the sample as one group, regardless of cohabitation status.

A univariate analysis of variance of yielded no significant difference between the conditions in participants' endorsements of how acceptable they found the overall behaviors of Sean, (see Table 2). Similar analyses also yielded no significant differences between the conditions in participants' endorsements of how acceptable they found the specific yelling behavior. A significant effect, however, emerged when age was entered into the analyses as a moderator. Specifically, there was a significant interaction between age and condition such that age moderated the effect of how acceptable subjects found Sean's behavior overall (t = -2.51, p = .015). Those who were in the "Partner" condition and were younger (age was divided into high and low groups via a median split) endorsed Sean's behaviors to be slightly more acceptable than those who were in the "Partner" condition and were older. Those who were not in the "Partner" condition (i.e., those who were either in the "Control" or "Self" condition), exhibited no such pattern and overwhelmingly endorsed that the behavior was completely unacceptable (i.e., -3 on a scale of -3 to 3; see Figure 5). The hypotheses were therefore partially confirmed in that being in the "Partner" condition did motivate younger subjects to endorse the abusive behaviors to be more acceptable than did being in either the "Self" or control conditions.

Long term effects (1-month Follow-up)

Attrition Analyses

Return rate was high, with 94.1% of the participants returning to the lab for the 1-month follow-up (i.e., 4 participants did not return). Independent samples *t*-tests of means revealed some significant differences between the participants who returned versus those who did not. Specifically, those who returned were significantly more conscientious (t = 3.43, p = .01), more satisfied with their current relationship at intake (t = 2.32, p = .02), less depressed (t = 2.38, p = .04), and described their partner as significantly less aggressive at intake via one (but not all) abuse measure (t = 4.86, p = .00) than did those who did not return. In addition, those who returned were perpetrating significantly more psychological aggression toward their partner at intake (t = 2.40, p = .02), and were marginally more verified by their partner at intake than those who did not return (t = 1.93, p = .06).

Movie Validity

At one month after the initial session, participants were called back into the laboratory and asked to watch a second video also depicting a psychologically abusive interaction between a man and a woman. On the 5-point Likert type movie validity measures, these participants found the video to depict a fair amount of psychological abuse (M= 4.70, *S.D.* = .540), and to a significantly lesser degree physical abuse (M = 3.70, *S.D.* =1.09; paired sample-t = 6.67, p < .001) as well as sexual abuse (M =2.64, *S.D.* = 1.42; paired sample-t = 10.97, p < .001). In general, participants found the movie engaging (M = 3.45, *S.D.* = .97) and moderately convincing (M = 3.38, *S.D.* = 1.15).

Mood

I predicted that participants in the "Self" condition would experience significantly greater distress after watching the movie as compared to those in the "Partner" or control conditions. To test this prediction, the participants' responses to the mood measures after

the movie were subtracted from their responses to those same mood measures at baseline. These difference scores were then submitted to a univariate analysis of variance, which revealed no significant differences between writing conditions with respect to change in positive or negative affect from before to after watching the movie when analyzed over the entire sample ($F_{Posaffect} = 0.97$, $p = 0.39$; $F_{Negaffect} = 0.43$, $p = 0.66$). The prediction that those who wrote in the "Self" condition would experience greater distress from watching the movie was therefore not supported in this case.

Likelihood to Remain in the Relationship

I hypothesized that participants in the "Self" condition would express significantly less likelihood to remain in the depicted psychologically abusive relationship than would those in the "Partner" or control conditions. A univariate analysis of variance yielded no significant difference between conditions on participants' endorsements of how likely they would hypothetically remain in the depicted relationship (See Table 3). Furthermore, in an inspection of the means of each of conditions, there is no clear pattern that one condition is consistently higher than others. The hypothesis was therefore not supported.

Acceptability of Abusive Behaviors

I hypothesized that participants in the "Self" condition would find the psychologically abusive behaviors depicted in the movie to be significantly less acceptable than those who were in the "Partner" and control conditions. A univariate analysis of variance with Female Physical CTS at intake as a covariate yielded no significant difference between the conditions in participants' endorsements of how acceptable they found the overall behaviors of Scot, the boyfriend in the movie (See Table 3). Similar analyses also yielded no significant differences between the conditions in participants' endorsements of how acceptable they found the specific yelling behavior (See Table 3). A significant pattern emerged, however, when subscription to traditional

gender roles was entered into the analyses as a moderator. Specifically, there was a significant interaction between age and condition such that subscription to traditional gender roles moderated the effect of how acceptable subjects found Scot's behavior overall (t = 2.89, p = .005). Those who were in the "Partner" condition and subscribed strongly to traditional gender roles (attitudes toward traditional gender roles were divided into high and low groups via a median split) endorsed Scot's behaviors to be significantly more acceptable than those who were in the "Partner" condition and did not subscribe strongly to traditional gender roles. Those who were not in the "Partner" condition (i.e., those who were either in the "Control" or "Self" condition), exhibited no such pattern and overwhelmingly endorsed that the behavior was completely unacceptable (i.e., approximately 1 on a scale of 1 to 5; see Figure 6). The hypotheses were therefore partially confirmed in that being in the "Partner" condition may have motivated subjects who cleave strongly to traditional gender roles to endorse the abusive behaviors to be more acceptable than did being in either the "Self" or control conditions.

Behavioral Outcomes: Levels of Abuse in Current relationship at 1-month follow-up

I predicted that participants in the "Self" condition would experience a significantly greater decrease in abusive behavior, perpetrated both by their partners and by themselves, in their current relationship over time as compared to those in the "Partner" or control conditions. Three analyses were run: one that included only participants who endorsed that they were still with their partner (59 participants; 2 were not included in the analyses because of incomplete data; N = 57), another including all participants who returned to the study (64 participants; 3 were not included in the analyses because of incomplete data; N = 61), and a third using estimated data via multiple imputation to account for missing data corresponding to those who did not return for the follow-up session (N = 66). The rationale behind first two analyses was

because I thought levels of aggression might appear to be inflated if I only considered the portion of the sample that remained with their partners. Those participants who were no longer with their partners were still asked how much aggression they were experiencing from and toward their previous partner over the past month. Although some participants who had broken up with their partner no longer had any contact with their former partners, some who had broken up with their partners still had regular contact with their former partners and experienced some amount of aggression with them. The third analysis was included to address any concern that significant differences might be present but not surfacing due to lack of power because of attrition of subjects.

The univariate analysis of variance run on the abuse outcomes measured by the CTS of only participants who reported that they were still with their partner yielded no significant difference between conditions (see Table 4). When the analysis was run with the aforementioned covariates, however (i.e., age, self-esteem, how self-supportive the participant was financially, how much the participant subscribed to traditional gender roles, and level of depression), weak, non-significant trend emerged (see Table 5). A univariate analysis of variance of a second measure tapping psychological aggression, the PMWI, revealed an almost marginally significant difference between the conditions on the Emotional/Verbal Aggression subscale, which taps behaviors related to verbal attacks, attempts to demean the partner, and withholding emotional resources. Specifically, participants in the "Partner" condition reported marginally higher scores than those in the control condition ($F = 2.26$, $p = .12$; Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 1.51, Std. Error = 1.43, $p = .12$). There was no significant difference between the "Self" and Control condition (Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 1.43, Std. Error = 1.37, $p = .91$). Notably, a different pattern was observed in the other subscale of the PMWI (Dominance/Isolation, which taps behaviors related to isolation from resources, demands for subservience, and rigid

observances of traditional sex roles. Specifically, participants in the "Partner" condition reported non-significantly higher scores than those in the "Self" condition ($F = 1.84$, $p = .17$; Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 1.9, Std. Error = 1.07, $p = .21$), which reported the lowest scores of all three conditions.

The second analysis, which included all returning participants, similarly yielded no significant differences between conditions on abuse outcomes measured by the CTS (see Table 6). When run with the aforementioned covariates, however (i.e., age, self-esteem, how self-supportive the participant was financially, how much the participant subscribed to traditional gender roles, and level of depression), a marginally significant pattern emerged (see Table 7). A univariate analysis of variance of a second measure tapping psychological aggression, the PMWI, still revealed a marginally significant difference between the conditions on the Emotional/Verbal Aggression subscale, as demonstrated with the previously restricted sample. Specifically, participants in the "Partner" condition reported almost marginally higher scores than those in the control condition ($F = 2.29$, $p = .11$; Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 2.95, Std. Error = 1.38, $p = .11$). There was no significant difference between the "Self" and Control condition (Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 1.26, Std. Error = 1.29, $p = 1.0$). Notably, this same pattern was not observed in the other subscale of the PMWI (Dominance/Isolation; $F = 1.02$, $p = .37$).

The third analysis, which included all participants and also estimated data to account for participants who did not return for the follow up, similarly yielded no significant differences between conditions on abuse outcomes measured by the CTS (see Table 8). Furthermore, unlike in the previous analysis, no significant differences were found between conditions on abuse outcomes measured by the PMWI.

When run with the covariates, the results of the PMWI, Emotion/Verbal subscale from the first and second analyses seem to imply that writing about the partner's role in

conflict serves to aggravate levels of aggression in an already abusive relationship marginally more than writing about a neutral topic. It is important to note that unlike the CTS, the PMWI does not also tap levels of psychological aggression from the woman toward the man. It is therefore difficult to determine if the trends tapped by the PMWI are also bi-directional in nature. More implications of these findings are discussed in the general discussion of this paper.

Behavioral Outcomes: Exiting the relationship by 1-month follow-up

I hypothesized that participants in the "Self" condition would be more likely to exit their relationship by 1-month after the intake session than would those in the "Partner" or control conditions. Of those participants who reported that they had broken up with their partner (n = 5), 3 were in the "Self" condition, 0 were in the "Partner" condition, and 2 were in the control condition. Subjected to a binary logistic regression with writing condition entered as a categorical covariate, this was not a statistically significant difference with respect to the control condition (odds ratio of "Self" to control condition, likelihood to be single: 1.67/.10, p = .10, odds ratio of "Partner" to control condition: 0.0/.10, p = 1.0).

I also considered, however, that some participants might have downgraded their relationship (e.g., moved to a less serious status, ceased cohabiting, etc.) by the time of the 1-month follow-up but not fully broken-up from their partner. I therefore looked at a second index of "Downgraded Relationship" (of which "Broken-up" was a subset) in which participants endorsed that their current relationship status was less committed than it was at intake and hypothesized that those in the "Self" condition might have been more likely to downgrade their relationship by 1-month after intake than those in the "Partner" or control conditions. Of these participants (n = 7), 4 were in the "Self" condition, 0 were in the "Partner" condition, and 3 were in the control condition. Subjected to a binary logistic regression with writing condition entered as a categorical covariate, this was not a

statistically significant difference with respect to the control condition (odds ratio of "Self" to control condition: 1.49/.16, $p = .63$, odds ratio of "Partner" to control condition: 0.0/.16, $p = 1.0$). The hypotheses were therefore not supported.

Commitment and Satisfaction at 1-month follow-up

I predicted that participants in the "Self" condition would experience significantly less commitment to their partners over time than would those in the "Partner" or the control conditions. A univariate analysis of variance on Commitment at 1-month follow-up with Commitment at intake as a covariate yielded no significant differences between the conditions ($F = 0.58$, $p = 0.57$). Similarly, a univariate analysis of variance on Relationship Satisfaction at 1-month follow-up with Relationship Satisfaction at intake as a covariate yielded no significant differences between the conditions ($F = 0.75$, $p = 0.48$). The hypotheses were therefore not supported.

Long-term effects (3-month follow-up)

Attrition Analyses

Return rate was moderately high, with 82.4% of the participants returning to the lab for the 3-month follow-up (i.e., 12 participants did not return). Independent samples *t*-tests yielded no significant differences between the participants who returned to the 3-month follow-up and those who did not.

Levels of abuse in current relationship at 3-month follow-up

I predicted that participants in the "Self" condition would experience a significantly greater decrease in abusive behavior, perpetrated both by their partners and by themselves, in their current relationship over time as compared to those in the "Partner" or control conditions. Of the 56 participants who responded to the questionnaire at 3-month follow-up, only 47 were still with their partner whom they were with at intake. Three analyses were run: one that included only participants who endorsed that they were still with their partner (47 participants; 1 was not included in the analyses

because of incomplete data; N = 46), another including all participants who returned to the study (56 participants; 1 was not included in the analyses because of incomplete data; N = 55), and a third using estimated data via multiple imputation to account for missing data corresponding to those who did not return for the final follow-up session (N = 66). The rationale behind first two analyses was because I thought levels of aggression might appear to be inflated if I only considered the portion of the sample that remained with their partners. Those participants who were no longer with their partners were still asked how much aggression they were experiencing from and toward their previous partner over the past 2 months. Although some participants who had broken up with their partner no longer had any contact with their former partners, some who had broken up with their partners still had regular contact with their former partners and experienced some amount of aggression with them. The third analysis was included to address any concern that significant differences might be present but not surfacing due to lack of power because of attrition of subjects.

No significant differences emerged between the conditions with respect to psychological or physical aggression as tapped by the CTS (see Table 9). A univariate analysis of variance of the PMWI, however, revealed a marginally significant difference between the conditions upon examination of the Dominance/Isolation facet of psychological aggression (F = 2.49, p = .10). Specifically, participants in the "Partner" condition reported that their partners were perpetrating marginally significantly higher levels of dominance and isolation behaviors toward them within the past two months than did those in the control condition (Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 1.98, Std. Error = 0.89, p = .10). A similar but weaker pattern was observed in the other subscale of the PMWI (Emotional/Verbal; F = 1.93, p = 0.16; Bonferroni corrected pairwise comparison: Mean difference = 3.48, Std. Error = 1.77, p = 0.17).

The second analysis, which included all returning participants, similarly yielded no significant differences between conditions on abuse outcomes measured by the CTS (see Table 10). A univariate analysis of variance of a second measure tapping psychological aggression, the PMWI, this time revealed no significant difference between the conditions on either the Dominance/Isolation or the Emotional/Verbal Aggression subscales.

The third analysis, which included all participants and also estimated data to account for participants who did not return for the follow up, similarly yielded no significant differences between conditions on abuse outcomes measured by the CTS (see Table 11). Furthermore, unlike in the previous analysis, no significant differences were found between conditions on abuse outcomes measured by the PMWI.

The results from the PMWI in the first analysis suggest that writing about conflict in any capacity, whether it be about one's own aggression or about one's partner's aggression, may exacerbate the amount of dominance and isolation behavior perpetrated by the partner toward the woman significantly more than writing about a neutral topic.

Behavioral Outcomes: Exiting the relationship by 3-month follow-up

I hypothesized that participants in the "Self" condition would be more likely to exit their relationship by 3 months after the intake session than would those in the "Partner" or control conditions. Of those participants who reported that they had broken up with their partner (n = 9), 4 were in the "Self" condition, 2 were in the "Partner" condition, and 3 were in the control condition. Subjected to a binary logistic regression with writing condition entered as a categorical covariate, this was not a statistically significant difference with respect to the control condition (odds ratio of "Self" to control condition, likelihood to be single: 1.42/.19, p = .68, odds ratio of "Partner" to control condition: .67/.19, p = .68).

I also considered, however, that some participants might have downgraded their relationship (e.g., moved to a less serious status, ceased cohabiting, etc.) by the time of the 3-month follow-up but not fully broken-up with their partner. I therefore looked at a second index of "Downgraded Relationship" (of which "Broken-up" was a subset) in which participants endorsed that their current relationship status was less committed than it was at intake and hypothesized that those in the "Self" condition might have been more likely to downgrade their relationship 3 months after intake than those in the "Partner" or control conditions. Of these participants (n = 14), 5 were in the "Self" condition, 3 were in the "Partner" condition, and 6 were in the control condition. Subjected to a binary logistic regression with writing condition entered as a categorical covariate, this was not a statistically significant difference with respect to the control condition (odds ratio of "Self" to control condition: .77/.46, p = .72, odds ratio of "Partner" to control condition: .43/.46, p = .30). The hypotheses were therefore not supported.

Commitment and Satisfaction at 3-month follow-up

I predicted that participants in the "Self" condition would experience significantly less commitment to their partners over time than would those in the "Partner" or the control conditions. A univariate analysis of variance on Commitment at 1-month follow-up with Commitment at intake as a covariate yielded no significant differences between the conditions (F = 0.48, p = 0.62). Similarly, a univariate analysis of variance on Relationship Satisfaction at 1-month follow-up with Relationship Satisfaction at intake as a covariate yielded no significant differences between the conditions (F = 0.02, p = 0.98). The hypotheses were therefore not supported.

Discussion

The results of this study are mixed. At intake, it appears that the immediate effects of writing about one's partner's aggression in conflict helped women to see leaving an

abusive relationship in movie #1 as marginally more acceptable than would women who had written about a neutral topic. Although there was no significant difference between those who wrote about their own role in conflict and those that wrote about a neutral topic on this same issue, inspection of the means reveals that those who wrote about their own aggression in conflict also tended to endorse, though non-significantly, slightly higher acceptability of a woman's leaving an abusive relationship than did those who wrote about a neutral topic. These findings may imply that writing about conflict, no matter whether the focus is on one's own aggression or on one's partner's aggression, may be helpful in helping women to endorse the acceptability of one's leaving an abusive relationship on a short-term basis. Unfortunately, these trends were not consistent throughout all or most of the dependent variables measured with respect to movie #1. As the remainder of the analyses emerged non-significant, the means indicated in some instances that the experimental conditions were more effective in shifting attitudes against abusive behavior, while in other instances it appeared that the control condition was more effective in doing so than the experimental conditions. The findings from movie #1 can therefore be considered to either weakly disconfirm the hypothesis that writing about one's own aggression in conflict might have more benefit in helping women to recognize the unacceptability of abusive behaviors in a depicted hypothetical relationship or be inconclusive.

At the 1-month follow-up, no differences were observed between conditions with respect to attitudes toward acceptability of the abusive behaviors depicted in movie #2. Behaviorally in their own relationships, however, some almost marginally significant effects emerged. Specifically, one index (the PMWI) reflected that writing about one's partner's role in conflict seemed to marginally exacerbate psychological aggression from the participant's partner over the last month, specifically in the domain of emotional/verbal aggression. These findings remained almost marginal when the analysis

was run both with only the participants who were still in the original relationship, as well as when all returning participants were included in the analysis. It is interesting that the CTS, which also taps emotional and verbal aggression, did not reveal any significant differences of this nature between conditions. One difference between the measures that could contribute to this is that CTS taps aggression through a base rate count (i.e., "How many times has this happened in the past month?"), whereas the PMWI uses a Likert scale of frequency (i.e., "How often has this happened in the past month?" with responses such as "Never", "Rarely," "Occasionally," "Frequently," and "Very Frequently"). It is possible that the differences between conditions can be accurately captured through these more global assessments of frequency rather than a turn-by-turn base rate count.

These findings were marginally replicated at the 3-month follow-up mark. At the 3-month follow-up, for those who remained in their relationships, there were no observable differences between the conditions with respect to psychological aggression in the current relationship as measured by the CTS. The PMWI, in the domain of dominance/isolation behavior by the partner, again reflected a marginally significant difference between the conditions. Specifically, participants in the "partner" writing condition reported marginally higher dominance and isolation behavior by their partner in the two months following intake than did those who wrote about a neutral topic. This finding suggests that writing about a partner's aggression exacerbates levels of psychological aggression perpetrated by the partner over time. These effects were marginally significant when only the participants who were still in a relationship with their partner from intake were included in the analyses and became non-significant when the entire returning sample was included.

The behavioral findings from the 1-month and 3-month follow-up marks (i.e., long-term effects) seem to contradict the findings at intake in response to the video depicting an abusive relationship (i.e., short-term effects). That is, the short-term effects

of writing about conflict, no matter whether the focus is on the self's aggression or the partner's aggression in the conflict, seemed to allow women to see leaving an abusive relationship as more acceptable than those who wrote about a neutral topic. On a long-term basis, however, these effects seem to be reversed (although marginally) for those who write about their partner's aggression, to suggest that focusing on the partner's aggression exacerbates psychologically aggressive behavior in the current relationship, as perpetrated by the partner. Information on whether the participant was also perpetrating more psychological aggression toward her partner is unavailable given the unidirectional nature of the measure that yielded these results (PMWI), but evidence of differences in psychological aggression from either side was noticeably absent in analyses of the primary abuse measure, the CTS.

Chapter 5: General Discussion

Study 1 provides evidence that women who are low in self-liking tend to find unhealthy behaviors in relationships to be more acceptable than do women who are high in self-liking. In addition, it offers some support for the idea that unhealthy or psychologically abusive behavior is construed to be more acceptable to some individuals (i.e., women who are low in self-liking) than to others (i.e., women who are high in self-liking). This evidence is significant because it suggests that some aspects of people's personalities may cause them to see the very same behavior in significantly different ways than others. This is important because anecdotally, when people observe the perpetuation of abusive relationships, they often ask questions such as, "Doesn't she see how badly she is being treated?" The implications of the results of Study 1 suggest that, in fact, perhaps not all women are able to see such things due to a lifetime of normalization of this behavior, which lowers their feelings of self-liking. Apparently, it is not so much that some women understand fully the mistreatment that they are withstanding and still choose to endure it. Rather, some women actually *perceive* this mistreatment as less harmful than those who are used to being in healthier relationships. This perception of the mistreatment as normal may be undermining the woman's instinctive reaction to exit the relationship. If so, then the most appropriate treatment for such women is to find a way to alter these perceptions of acceptability of abusive behaviors, then challenging the behaviors that ensnare women in these relationships.

Study 2 provides evidence that abuse from the male's displays of aggressiveness is important in predicting a female's likelihood to remain in an abusive relationship as well as her acceptance of psychologically abusive relationship behaviors. Nevertheless, an even more important predictor is the female's own level of aggression. Furthermore, the results from Study 2 indicate that high self-esteem seems to predict the highest levels of acceptability of the psychologically abusive behaviors after accounting for both male

and female abusiveness. These findings are surprising and again provocative with respect to implications for potential areas of focus for existing interventions for women who are in abusive relationships. The surprising aspects of these findings are twofold. First, the link of *high* self-esteem to higher acceptability of psychologically abusive behaviors runs contrary to the findings of past research and Study 1, which indicated a relationship of *low* self-liking to higher acceptability of abusive behaviors. Second, the additional dimension that was added in Study 2 that allowed this nuance to be teased apart was the inclusion of the aggression of the woman, or historically, the "victim" of the abuse in the relationship. The results from Study 2 reflected that the *more* aggressive the woman is in the relationship and the higher self-esteem she has, the more acceptable she finds psychologically abusive behavior, whereas those who are low in self-esteem do not exhibit such an effect. This not only alters one's imagery of the archetypal woman in an abusive relationship (e.g., helpless, not fighting back, weak), but it also sheds light on an important aspect of abusive relationships that has long been acknowledged but has also been somewhat overlooked when considering interventions. That is, abuse in relationships is more often than not bi-directional, and the aggression of the woman in the relationship not only plays a key role in perpetuating the abuse in the relationship, but may also play a key role in ending the abuse. This highlights the provocative aspect of the findings, which is that perhaps adjusting the focus of current treatments for IPV might help women to internalize more readily the need and potential for change. Focusing only on the man as an agent in perpetrating aggression places control over change of the behavior solely in the hands of the man in the couple. To incorporate the bi-directional aspect of the abuse in treatment not only acknowledges the woman as an active agent in the cycle of aggressive behavior but more importantly places her in a position of control over change of this behavior.

Study 3 provides some tentative evidence that writing about one's partner's aggression versus focusing on one's own role in the conflict can have deleterious effects with respect to accepting abusive behaviors from a partner. First, the mood findings at intake in which women who were in CCV relationships and who wrote about their partner's role in conflict seemed to experience an *increase* in positive affect after watching the movie depicting abusive behaviors and a *decrease* in negative affect after watching the movie are puzzling and disturbing. Why anyone might experience increased positive affect after watching such a movie is unclear; perhaps this represents a defensive reaction. The causes of such reactions, however, are not so important as are the consequences of having such reactions. These emotional reactions might provide a buffer in recognizing the severity of such behaviors when they are observed and may result in higher tolerance of abusive behaviors.

Also, when age is taken into account, focusing on one's partner's, as opposed to one's own role, in conflict may allow higher acceptance of abusive behaviors. Women who were younger and wrote about their partner's role in their conflicts endorsed significantly higher acceptance of the abusive husband's behavior in the movie than did those who did not write about their partner's role in the conflict. This provides some support for the initial hypotheses that focusing only on the partner's aggression and his need for change may contribute to fostering less healthy attitudes by younger women toward acceptability of abusive behaviors.

In addition, writing about one's conflict may help a woman to see the act of leaving an abusive relationship to be more acceptable than someone who writes about neutral topics, but also that doing so may exacerbate psychological aggression from her partner over time. Immediately after participating in the expressive writing paradigm, women who wrote about their partner's aggression in conflict endorsed that it was slightly more acceptable for a woman they had observed in a movie to leave her

psychologically abusive husband than did women in a control condition. This difference was marginally significant, and this pattern was mimicked but non-significant among those who wrote about their own aggression in conflict. This suggests that writing about conflict in one's relationship and having it salient while viewing someone else's abusive relationship may compel people to see more clearly in that moment that the recipient of the abuse would be justified in leaving the relationship. It is not clear from these findings that the focus on the partner's aggression or on the self's aggression makes much of a difference in eliciting this effect; simply having the details of the conflict salient may be enough. This points to the possibility that being willing to "forgive and forget" may hinder the recovery process when women are deliberating leaving an abusive relationship. A future direction then for this research might be to attempt to tease apart if the active agent in helping women to realize that such relationships should be abandoned is the failure to recognize the unacceptability of the behavior, or the dismissal of it via forgetting.

Similarly, long-term results seem to indicate that writing about the details of the partner's aggression may continue to have negative effects on women's perceptions of abusive behaviors when taking into account their adherence to traditional gender roles. When subscription to tradition gender roles was accounted for, women who subscribed to traditional gender roles and had focused on their partner's aggression in the intake session continued to endorse significantly more acceptable behavior from the abusive husband depicted in the movie at 1-month follow up. This again provides some support of the original hypotheses that, when taking into account attitudes toward gender roles, focusing solely on one's partner's aggression in conflict may encourage higher acceptance of abusive behaviors.

In addition, the findings overall suggest that focusing on the partner's aggression may have deleterious effects, at least on levels of aggression in the relationship. Although

only statistically significant in one instance of several measures administered, some evidence emerged that those who wrote about their partner's role in conflict experienced greater dominance/isolation behavior perpetrated from their partner at the 3-month follow-up than did those who wrote about a neutral topic. One possible explanation for the seemingly opposing nature of the findings from Study 3 is that in actuality, both experimental writing conditions (i.e., "Self" and "Partner") effectively change attitudes toward leaving abusive relationships (as demonstrated at intake with measures regarding the movie), but that behaviorally, these changed attitudes toward abuse instigate more conflict with the partner over time. For this conclusion to hold true, however, one might expect to have also seen differences in attitude toward other related variables that were administered at the same time, such as acceptability of the man's behavior, and how likely they might have stayed in the depicted relationship if they were the woman in the movie. These differences, however, were not observed. In addition, for this explanation to hold true, one might also expect to see differences between writing conditions related to endorsements of how acceptable it was to leave the relationship depicted in the second movie, which was played for the participants at the 1-month follow-up. The differences were not observed, either. The lack of any significant differences between writing conditions with respect to questions regarding this movie combined with the weak nature of the effects and inconsistent trends between means in the remaining dependent variables in both movies therefore may instead suggest that these findings are more likely due to measurement or Type I error.

Because of the open-ended instructions, the nature of the content of the writings varied widely. In the writings of those who wrote about their own aggression and role in conflict, themes that emerged included detailed descriptions of their behavior when they are angry (e.g., "On several occasions, I have thrown my phone against a wall or floor."), feelings of shame over their behavior (e.g., "I get frustrated with myself for not being

able to control my temper like it seems other 'normal' people can"), denial of their behaviors ("To change my aggressive behavior towards him . . . I don't really have aggressive behavior towards him"), potential causes of their behavior (e.g., "Growing up around this behavior taught me that that's what you do when you are angry"), feelings that they experience that motivated their aggression (e.g., "Each time [I have hit my boyfriend], I did this out of anger and feelings of helplessness"), and observations of techniques that have helped to improve conflict, (" . . . I have more experience with what happens when we give ourselves time to cool down before restarting discussion . . .", "we took turns writing and traded a notebook back and forth, responding each time to each other's points and adding our own needs and feelings"). Writings of those who focused on their partner's aggression included themes such as describing their feelings during the conflict (e.g., "It upsets me the most when he keeps repeating why he is mad or why I was wrong . . . it's like he is trying to 1) make me feel stupid by assuming I can't understand the first time, and 2) like he's better or smarter than me by not letting me interrupt him or really say anything", "my biggest feeling associated with this type of behavior are anger, righteous indignation"), justifying their partner's behavior (e.g., "He was very angry at himself for doing what he did . . . so, feeling like he did towards himself, he couldn't exactly treat me nicely", "Usually I'm able to step back and realize that he is hungry or upset about something else and I don't take it as personally"), and resignation to the partner's behavior ("I would love it if [xxx] . . . would catch himself before he move across the line from being angry to being just mean. I don't have too much hope of that though"). Although a formal analysis of the writing content was not conducted for the purposes of this study, a future direction for research would be to systematically code and analyze the content of the different writing conditions in hopes of uncovering mechanisms that may or may not act as agents of therapeutic change.

Another potential future direction for this research is to attempt a similar paradigm but with a stronger intervention. Although expressive writing has been associated with improved psychological health with respect to anxiety and depression, coping with stress, and physiological health outcomes (Graf et al., 2008; Smyth & Pennebaker, 2008), less has been shown to demonstrate expressive writing's effectiveness in changing problematic interpersonal behaviors. The effectiveness of expressive writing on changing aggressive behaviors is further called into question when taking into consideration that one's aggressive behaviors are so necessarily dependent upon one's partner's aggressive behaviors. It is questionable whether one day of expressive writing would be powerful enough to cause an individual to internalize firmly enough different strategies of dealing with anger and also of altering behaviors that have been ingrained since possibly childhood. Multiple sessions of cognitive behavioral therapy, combined with skills training for new coping strategies, may be more effective in achieving the desired behavioral results.

The quest for more effective interventions to address IPV is one that continues to be a priority to researchers and clinicians alike. Moving away from a single perpetrator-single victim model may open the door to a whole range of new research questions. Investigating the woman's role in the past has been largely avoided due to fear of appearing to "blame the victim" for aggression that is being inflicted on her by her partner. Recognizing that acknowledging her role in the aggressive cycle can put her in a seat of power to change these behaviors and the relationship may be a first step in overcoming this fear and producing more effective interventions.

Table 1. Correlations of participants' rated acceptability of John's behavior versus their self-liking score.

Vignette	r acceptability of John's behavior vs. self-liking score	$N_{John\ ratings}$	r how much longer would stay in relationship vs. self-liking score	$N_{stay\ in\ relationship}$
Over-emotionality	-.11**	992	-.21**	991
Bad Modeling	-.13**	996	-.21**	997
Rehabilitation	-.10**	843	-.14**	996
BIRGing	-.09**	994	-.19**	997
Self-verification	-.09**	953	-.25**	994
Control	-.01 (n.s.)	990	-.04 (n.s.)	994

**p <.01 (two-tailed)

Table 2. Differences in attitudes toward abusive behavior depicted in Movie #1. (N = 66), df = 57. All items were scored on a Likert scale of -3 to 3. All reported means are Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons.

Variable	*F*	*p*	M_{Self}	σ_{Mself}	$M_{Partner}$	σ_{Mpart}	$M_{Control}$	σ_{Mcon}
Acceptability of Sean's behavior	1.32	0.28	-3.00	0.11	-2.79	0.10	-3.00	0.11
Acceptability of Stephanie's behavior	0.65	0.53	-0.68	0.48	0.04	0.46	-0.05	0.47
Likely to remain in relationship with Sean	0.63	0.54	-2.07	0.32	-2.52	0.30	-2.13	0.31
Acceptability of Sean yelling	0.29	0.75	-2.53	0.20	-2.56	0.19	-2.73	0.20
Acceptability of Sean swearing	0.63	0.54	-2.82	0.13	-2.71	0.13	-2.91	0.13
Acceptability of Stephanie yelling	0.69	0.51	0.36	0.44	0.14	0.42	-0.32	0.43
Acceptability of Stephanie swearing	1.47	0.24	0.05	0.41	-.088	0.39	-0.73	0.40
Acceptability of Stephanie leaving	**4.89**	**0.01**	2.61	0.24	**2.87**	**0.23**	**1.86**	**0.24**
Stephanie should return to Sean	0.04	0.96	-2.04	0.34	-1.97	0.33	-1.90	0.34

Table 3. Differences in attitudes toward abusive behavior depicted in Movie #2. ($N = 62$) All items were scored on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. All reported means are Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons.

Variable	F	p	M_{Self}	σ_{Mself}	$M_{Partner}$	σ_{Mpart}	$M_{Control}$	σ_{Mcon}
Acceptability of Scot's behavior	1.50	0.23	1.40	0.19	1.65	0.19	1.18	0.19
Acceptability of Tanya's behavior	0.59	0.56	2.97	0.35	3.49	0.35	3.38	0.34
Likely to remain in relationship with Scot	0.68	0.51	1.84	0.24	1.63	0.24	2.01	0.23
Jealousy equals love	0.16	0.86	1.89	0.26	1.87	0.25	1.71	0.24
Acceptability of Scot yelling	0.58	0.57	1.43	0.20	1.57	0.20	1.27	0.19
Acceptability of Scot threatening with tennis racquet	0.82	0.44	0.99	0.14	1.24	0.14	1.05	0.14
Acceptability of Tanya's apology	0.03	0.97	2.36	0.31	2.25	0.31	2.33	0.30
New info makes Scot's behavior more acceptable	0.71	0.50	3.06	0.21	2.79	0.21	2.73	0.20

Table 4. Differences in abuse levels at 1-month follow-up, participants who are still with their partners. ($N = 57$). CTS range is from 0 to 200. PMWI is a sum score from 0 to 56. All reported means are Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons.

Variable	F	p	M_{Self}	σ_{Mself}	$M_{Partner}$	σ_{Mpart}	$M_{Control}$	σ_{Mcon}
Female Psychological Aggression (CTS)	0.44	0.65	20.6	4.12	18.1	3.70	15.3	3.79
Male Psychological Aggression (CTS)	0.85	0.43	22.3	4.42	22.2	3.97	15.5	4.11
Female Physical Aggression (CTS)	1.05	0.36	1.04	1.56	2.27	1.40	4.08	1.43
Male Physical Aggression (CTS)	0.85	0.43	1.51	2.02	3.60	1.80	5.16	1.85
Male Psychological Aggression-Dominance/Isolation (PMWI)	1.18	0.32	3.76	0.70	5.22	0.63	4.78	0.65
Male Psychological Aggression-Emotion/Verbal (PMWI)	1.12	0.33	9.89	0.98	11.3	0.88	9.52	0.91

Table 5. Differences in abuse levels at 1-month follow-up, participants who are still with their partners, including age, self-esteem, how self-supportive the participant was financially, how much the participant subscribed to traditional gender roles, and level of depression as covariates. (N = 57). CTS range is from 0 to 200. PMWI is a sum score. from 0 to 56. All reported means are Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons.

Variable	F	p	M_{Self}	σ_{Mself}	$M_{Partner}$	σ_{Mpart}	$M_{Control}$	σ_{Mcon}
Female Psychological Aggression (CTS)	.73	.50	22.3	4.31	15.9	4.02	15.9	4.05
Male Psychological Aggression (CTS)	.66	.52	22.1	4.72	21.2	4.35	15.3	4.41
Female Physical Aggression (CTS)	1.63	.21	1.33	1.70	1.44	1.58	5.01	1.60
Male Physical Aggression (CTS)	.92	.41	1.68	2.18	3.01	2.01	5.65	2.03
Male Psychological Aggression-Dominance/Isolation (PMWI)	1.84	.17	3.70	0.74	5.69	0.69	4.24	0.70
Male Psychological Aggression-Emotion/Verbal (PMWI)	2.26	.12	10.1	0.98	11.6	0.93	8.71	0.93

Table 6. Differences in abuse levels at 1-month follow-up, all returning participants. (N = 61). CTS range is from 0 to 200. PMWI is a sum score from 0 to 56. All reported means are Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons.

Variable	F	p	M_{Self}	σ_{Mself}	$M_{Partner}$	σ_{Mpart}	$M_{Control}$	σ_{Mcon}
Female Psychological Aggression (CTS)	0.72	0.49	21.9	3.80	18.9	3.78	15.6	3.63
Male Psychological Aggression (CTS)	0.87	0.42	21.8	3.95	22.9	3.91	16.1	3.82
Female Physical Aggression (CTS)	0.90	0.41	1.19	1.39	2.25	1.37	3.79	1.35
Male Physical Aggression (CTS)	1.47	0.24	0.86	1.84	3.79	1.82	5.25	1.79
Male Psychological Aggression-Dominance/Isolation (PMWI)	0.60	0.55	4.11	0.70	5.21	0.70	4.74	0.67
Male Psychological Aggression-Emotion/Verbal (PMWI)	0.85	0.43	10.1	0.94	11.6	0.94	10.1	0.90

Table 7. Differences in abuse levels at 1-month follow-up, all returning participants including age, self-esteem, how self-supportive the participant was financially, how much the participant subscribed to traditional gender roles, and level of depression as covariates. ($N = 61$). CTS range is from 0 to 200. PMWI is a sum score from 0 to 56, All reported means are Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons.

Variable	F	p	M_{Self}	σ_{Mself}	$M_{Partner}$	σ_{Mpart}	$M_{Control}$	σ_{Mcon}
Female Psychological Aggression (CTS)	1.23	.30	24.0	4.05	16.5	4.16	15.8	3.89
Male Psychological Aggression (CTS)	.73	.49	22.2	4.19	21.5	4.26	15.8	4.01
Female Physical Aggression (CTS)	1.45	.24	1.57	1.53	1.35	1.56	4.61	1.49
Male Physical Aggression (CTS)	1.30	.28	1.22	1.95	2.93	1.99	5.64	1.90
Male Psychological Aggression-Dominance/Isolation (PMWI)	1.02	.37	4.08	0.77	5.65	0.80	4.27	0.74
Male Psychological Aggression-Emotion/Verbal (PMWI)	**2.29**	**.11**	**10.4**	**0.93**	**12.1**	**0.95**	**9.15**	**0.89**

Table 8. Differences in abuse levels at 1-month follow-up, all returning participants and estimated data. ($N = 66$). CTS range is from 0 to 200. PMWI is a sum score from 0 to 56. All reported means are Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons.

Variable	F	p	M_{Self}	σ_{Mself}	$M_{Partner}$	σ_{Mpart}	$M_{Control}$	σ_{Mcon}
Female Psychological Aggression (CTS)	1.44	.25	23.8	3.85	17.3	3.70	14.8	3.80
Male Psychological Aggression (CTS)	.696	.50	22.7	4.09	20.1	3.91	16.0	3.97
Female Physical Aggression (CTS)	1.42	.25	1.62	1.42	1.57	1.37	4.51	1.40
Male Physical Aggression (CTS)	1.08	.35	1.88	1.87	2.91	1.83	5.60	1.84
Male Psychological Aggression-Dominance/Isolation (PMWI)	.084	.92	4.63	0.80	4.88	0.77	4.41	0.79
Male Psychological Aggression-Emotion/Verbal (PMWI)	1.51	.23	11.0	0.96	11.3	0.93	9.08	0.95

Table 9. Differences in abuse levels at 3-month follow-up, participants who are still with their partners. ($N = 46$). CTS range is from 0 to 200. PMWI is a sum score from 0 to 56. All reported means are Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons.

Variable	F	p	M_{Self}	σ_{Mself}	$M_{Partner}$	σ_{Mpart}	$M_{Control}$	σ_{Mcon}
Female Psychological Aggression (CTS)	0.21	0.81	19.2	6.31	24.2	5.92	24.2	5.93
Male Psychological Aggression (CTS)	1.13	0.33	26.0	6.56	31.8	6.14	18.6	6.29
Female Physical Aggression (CTS)	0.23	0.79	2.99	2.89	5.19	2.71	2.82	2.72
Male Physical Aggression (CTS)	0.01	0.99	4.46	3.22	3.91	2.97	2.98	2.98
Male Psychological Aggression-Dominance/Isolation (PMWI)	**2.49**	**.10**	**5.73**	**0.67**	**5.52**	**0.63**	**3.54**	**0.64**
Male Psychological Aggression-Emotion/Verbal (PMWI)	1.93	.16	9.59	1.34	11.3	1.25	7.83	1.27

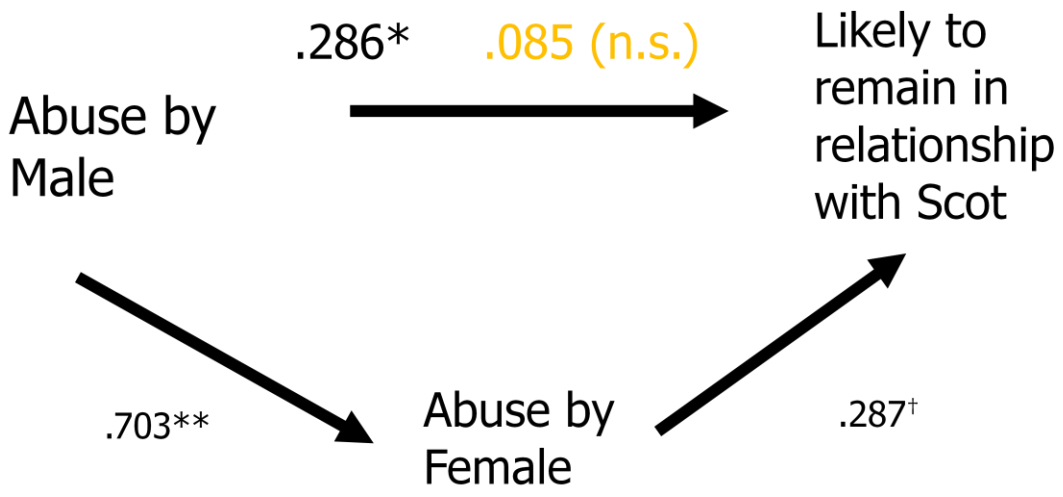
Table 10. Differences in abuse levels at 3-month follow-up, all returning participants. (*N* = 54). CTS range is from 0 to 200. PMWI is a sum score from 0 to 56. All reported means are Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons.

Variable	*F*	*p*	M_{Self}	σ_{Mself}	$M_{Partner}$	σ_{Mpart}	$M_{Control}$	σ_{Mcon}
Female Psychological Aggression (CTS)	0.14	0.87	21.1	5.46	24.7	5.44	24.5	5.23
Male Psychological Aggression (CTS)	1.19	0.31	26.9	5.94	33.8	5.88	21.2	5.72
Female Physical Aggression (CTS)	0.24	0.78	3.16	2.42	4.93	2.41	2.70	2.32
Male Physical Aggression (CTS)	0.06	0.95	3.28	2.62	3.87	2.61	4.49	2.50
Male Psychological Aggression-Dominance/Isolation (PMWI)	0.32	0.73	4.36	0.97	5.33	0.92	4.48	0.89
Male Psychological Aggression-Emotion/Verbal (PMWI)	0.58	0.57	9.51	1.68	11.0	1.59	8.67	1.54

Table 11. Differences in abuse levels at 3-month follow-up, all returning participants and estimated data. ($N = 66$). CTS range is from 0 to 200. PMWI is a sum score from 0 to 56. All reported means are Bonferroni corrected for multiple comparisons.

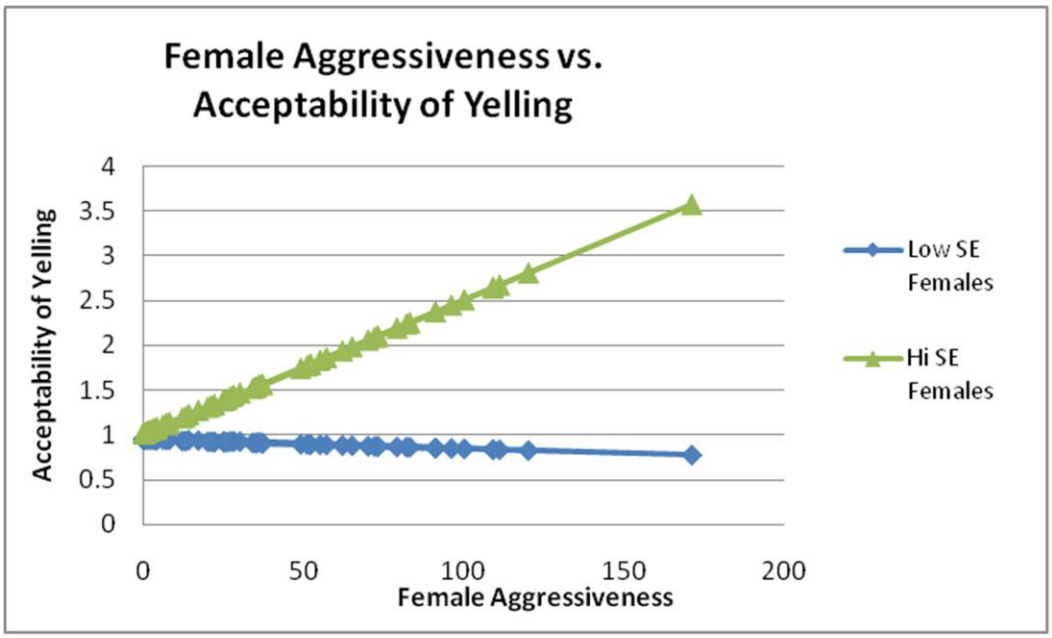
Variable	F	p	M_{Self}	σ_{Mself}	$M_{Partner}$	σ_{Mpart}	$M_{Control}$	σ_{Mcon}
Female Psychological Aggression (CTS)	0.50	0.61	27.5	5.39	20.3	5.19	21.3	5.31
Male Psychological Aggression (CTS)	0.68	0.51	30.4	6.13	26.5	5.86	20.5	5.95
Female Physical Aggression (CTS)	0.16	0.86	3.88	2.14	3.77	2.07	2.37	2.11
Male Physical Aggression (CTS)	0.04	0.96	3.54	2.44	3.21	2.38	4.16	2.40
Male Psychological Aggression-Dominance/Isolation (PMWI)	0.01	0.99	4.64	1.02	4.48	0.99	4.69	1.01
Male Psychological Aggression-Emotion/Verbal (PMWI)	0.32	0.73	10.2	1.61	10.2	1.55	8.62	1.59

Figure 1. Effects of male and female aggression on likelihood to remain in depicted abusive relationship.



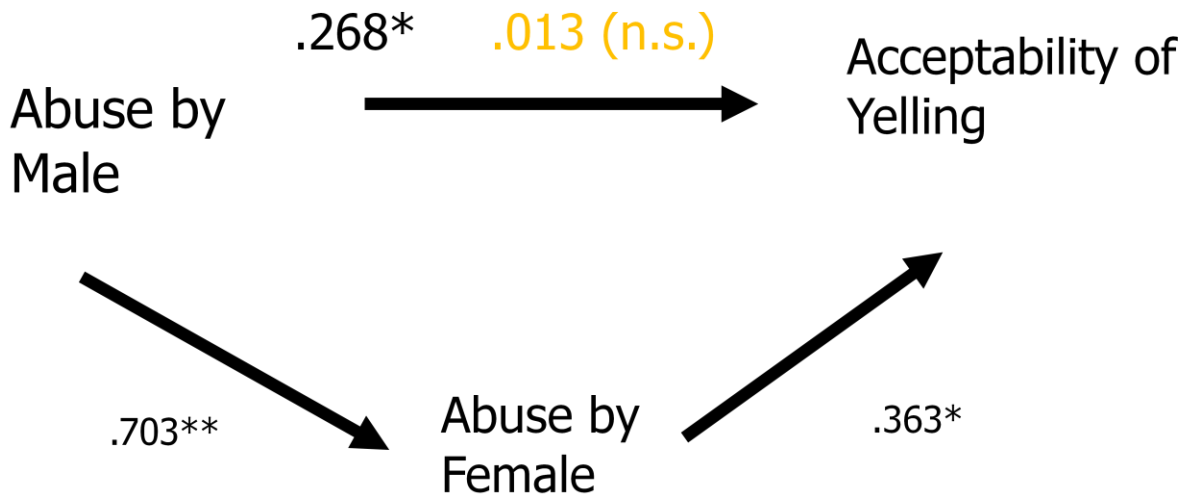
** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, † $p = .059$

Figure 2. Self-liking moderates the effect of female aggression on how acceptable the participant finds the yelling behavior.



$t_{\text{abuse from female x self-esteem}} = 1.946,\ p = .056$

Figure 3. Female aggression mediates the effect of male aggression on the acceptability of the yelling behavior in the video.



** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Figure 4. Acceptability of Scot's threat with the tennis racquet.

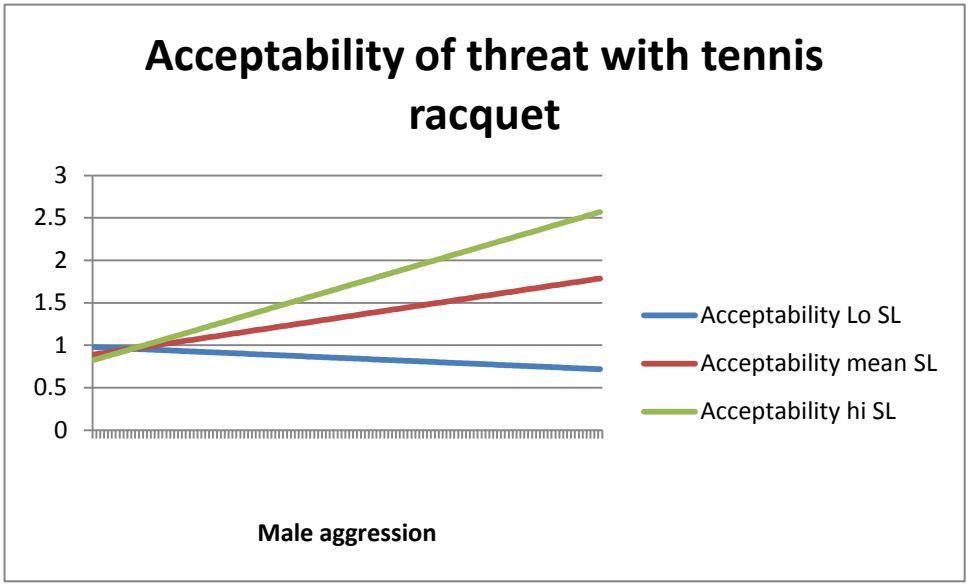
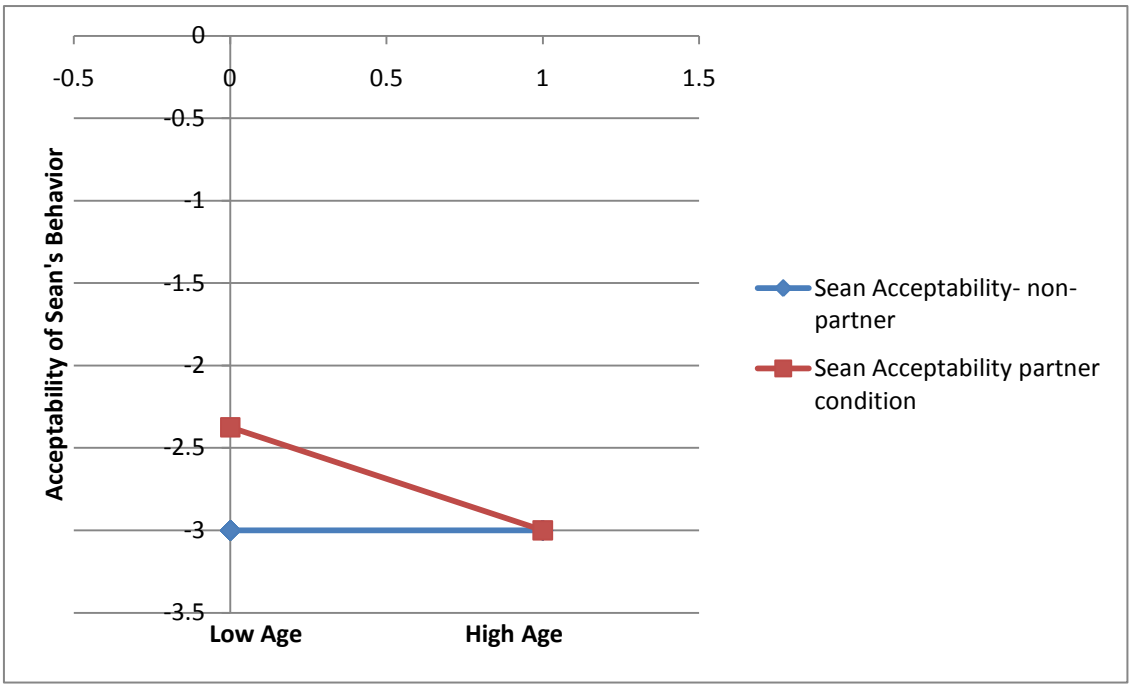
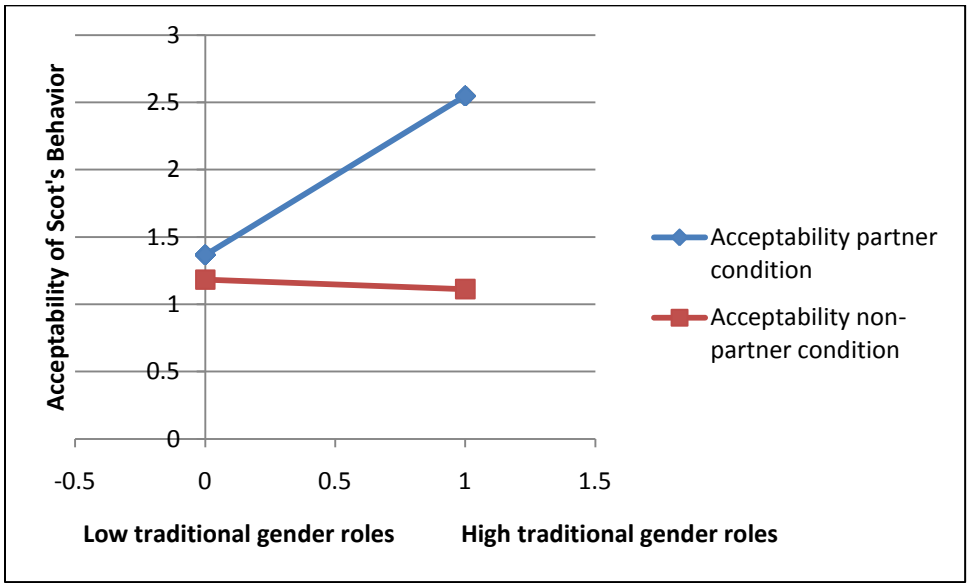


Figure 5. Acceptability of Sean's behavior, with age as moderator. Age ranged from 18 to 55 years and was split into "Low" and "High" group via median split. Acceptability was measured on scale of -3 (Highly unacceptable) to 3 (Very Acceptable).



$t = -2.51, p = .015$

Figure 6. Acceptability of Scot's behavior, with subscription to traditional gender roles as moderator. Subscription to traditional gender roles ranged from 1.20 to 3.55 and was split into "Low" and "High" group via median split. Acceptability was measured on scale of -3 (Highly unacceptable) to 3 (Very Acceptable).



$t = 2.89$, $p = .005$

Appendices

APPENDIX A: STUDY 1 VIGNETTES

Scenario 1

Jane and John have been in a serious, exclusive dating relationship now for 4 years. They argue intensely almost every day, resolving each time that to try to avoid fighting again the "next time," Jane must really learn to control her volatility and not be so overemotional all the time. Jane realizes that women are generally more emotional than men- she feels that she has been "overemotional" all her life. She really appreciates that John sticks around and puts so much energy into helping her stabilize her emotions. In fact, she stays with John primarily because she feels like he keeps her "under control."

Scenario 2

Jane and John have been in a serious, exclusive dating relationship now for 4 years. They argue frequently, sometimes very loudly and to the point where John will call her names, slam doors as he storms out of the house, and sometimes throw inanimate objects, not directly at her but with enough force to break them and startle her. Jane has asked her mother and friends for advice and they have all told her similar things: "Couples fight, Jane, that's just a fact of life. My husband does the same things all the time. I have just learned to live with it and remember that it doesn't mean that he doesn't love me, it's just that he gets angry." After commiserating with her mother and friends, Jane accepts that relationships are not always fun and games, and that sometimes you just have to deal with fighting and feeling crummy about it. So she stays with John because she feels that it is normal to put up with men who occasionally "lose it".

Scenario 3

Jane and John have been in a serious, exclusive dating relationship now for 4 years. When Jane asks a simple question such as "Where are the water bottles?" John will snap back with something to the effect of, "How should I know, what do you think I lost them? You were the last one to use them!" Jane knows that John's violent reactions

aren't against her personally—it is just that he had a bad childhood. She is determined to help him get better by providing him with a loving environment and teaching him that the world is not such a horrible place. She looks forward to the day when John will come around and settle down in response to her kindness toward him.

Scenario 4

Jane and John have been in a serious, exclusive dating relationship now for 4 years. John is a world-class athlete, having won several competitive races and recently being offered a sponsorship by Reebok. They argue frequently, sometimes very loudly and to the point where John will call her names, slam doors as he storms out of the house, and sometimes throw inanimate objects, not directly at her but with enough force to break them and startle her. Although these incidents hurt her, Jane is convinced that John really does love her and that eventually they will end up getting married. Jane has always been so proud to be dating John- how many girls get to boast about dating a world class athlete? She was *never* able to get a guy this good in college- back then they all thought she was nerdy and skinny. Jane feels great to know that such a successful and powerful celebrity chose *her* to be his girlfriend, and she is determined to make this relationship with John work and not to lose this opportunity.

Scenario 5

Jane and John have been in a serious, exclusive dating relationship now for 4 years. They argue frequently, John criticizing Jane for being unattractive, overbearing or having other shortcomings. Although he often seems rejecting of her, he doesn't leave her, and she is grateful for that. Despite his bad points, Jane realizes that at some level John is right about some of his complaints. In addition, she is not convinced that other men wouldn't have similar—or even more serious-- complaints about her. So she puts up with his negative side and tries to enjoy John's positive qualities.

Control

Jane and John have been in a serious, exclusive dating relationship now for 4 years. They face the typical conflicts that most couples face on a daily basis. On the basis of conversations with their friends, they have concluded that they have no more or no less problems than other couples in general. Jane and John both stay in the relationship because it is fairly normal.

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT FLIER

ARE YOU A WOMAN IN A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP??

If you are, you may be eligible to participate in a UT Psychology Department study on relationships!

If you are interested, go to www.relationshipsstudyatUT.com and complete some questionnaires. Upon completing these questionnaires, if you are eligible, you will be contacted to come to the psychology department to participate in a 1 hour study and a 1 hour follow up one week later.

If you are chosen to participate, you will earn up to $40 in compensation for your time spent on the study. If you are currently enrolled in PSY 301 at UT Austin, you may elect to earn 2 hours of experimental compensation in place of the monetary compensation.

APPENDIX C: PSYCHOLOGICAL AGGRESSION SUBSCALE OF THE CONFLICT TACTICS SCALE-2 (CTS-2; Straus, et al., 1996).

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. Couples also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. This is a list of things that might happen when you have differences. Please see the table for how to indicate how many times you did each of these things in the past year, and how many times your partner did them in the past year.

How often did this happen?	
1 = Once in the past year	5 = 11-20 times in the past year
2 = Twice in the past year	6 = More than 20 times in the past year
3 = 3-5 times in the past year	P = Not in the past year, but it did happen before
4 = 6-10 times in the past year	N = This has never happened

1. I insulted or swore at my partner.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

1 2 3 4 5 6 P N

2. My partner insulted or swore at me.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

1 2 3 4 5 6 P N

3. I called my partner fat or ugly.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

1 2 3 4 5 6 P N

4. My partner called me fat or ugly.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

1 2 3 4 5 6 P N

5. I destroyed something belonging to my partner.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

1 2 3 4 5 6 P N

6. My partner destroyed something belonging to me.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

1 2 3 4 5 6 P N

7. I shouted or yelled at my partner.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

1 2 3 4 5 6 P N

8. My partner shouted or yelled at me.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ P ○ N

9. I stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ P ○ N

10. My partner stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ P ○ N

11. I accused my partner of being a lousy lover.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ P ○ N

12. My partner accused me of being a lousy lover.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ P ○ N

13. I did something to spite my partner.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ P ○ N

14. My partner did something to spite me.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

1 2 3 4 5 6 P N

15. I threatened to hit or throw something at my partner.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

1 2 3 4 5 6 P N

16. My partner threatened to hit or throw something at me.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

1 2 3 4 5 6 P N

APPENDIX D: PRE-TESTING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please fill in the following demographic information:

E-mail address (REQUIRED): _____

Verify E-mail address (REQUIRED): _____
NOTE: We will not share your e-mail address with any other party, but need to contact you via e-mail if you wish to continue to the next phase of the study

Your age in years : _____

What is your gender? ○ **Female** ○ **Male**

Current relationship status

How long (in months) have you been in your current relationship? (If in years, count the total number of months: 2 years, 3 months is 2 x 12 + 3, which is 27.):

_____

APPENDIX E: TEN-ITEM PERSONALITY INVENTORY (TIPI; Gosling et al., 2003)

Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.

Disagree strongly	Disagree moderately	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I see myself as:

1. _____ Extraverted, enthusiastic.
2. _____ Critical, quarrelsome.
3. _____ Dependable, self-disciplined.
4. _____ Anxious, easily upset.
5. _____ Open to new experiences, complex.
6. _____ Reserved, quiet.
7. _____ Sympathetic, warm.
8. _____ Disorganized, careless.
9. _____ Calm, emotionally stable.
10. _____ Conventional, uncreative.

APPENDIX F: COMMITMENT Items from Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew's (1998) Investment Model Scale

Commitment Level Items

1. I want our relationship to last for a very long time (please circle a number).

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Do Not Agree At All				Agree Somewhat				Agree Completely

2. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Do Not Agree At All				Agree Somewhat				Agree Completely

3. I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Do Not Agree At All				Agree Somewhat				Agree Completely

4. It is likely that I will date someone other than my partner within the next year.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Do Not Agree At All				Agree Somewhat				Agree Completely

5. I feel very attached to our relationship-very strongly linked to my partner.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Do Not Agree At All				Agree Somewhat				Agree Completely

6. I want our relationship to last forever.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Do Not Agree At All				Agree Somewhat				Agree Completely

7. I am oriented toward the long-term future of my relationship (for example, I imagine being with my partner several years from now).

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Do Not Agree At All				Agree Somewhat				Agree Completely

APPENDIX G: SELF-LIKING AND SELF-COMPETENCE SCALE (SLCS; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001)

SLSC-16

The questions below focus on your general thoughts and feelings about yourself. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of these statements, using the scale below. Please be as honest and accurate as possible. Do not skip any questions. Thank you.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5

Strongly disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Strongly agree

1. I tend to devalue myself. _____

2. I am highly effective at the things I do. _____

3. I am very comfortable with myself. _____

4. I am almost always able to accomplish what I try for. _____

5. I am secure in my sense of self-worth. _____

6. It is sometimes unpleasant for me to think about myself. _____

7. I have a negative attitude toward myself. _____

8. At times, I find it difficult to achieve the things that are important to me. _____

9. I feel great about who I am. _____

10. I sometimes deal poorly with challenges. _____

11. I never doubt my personal worth. _____

12. I perform very well at many things. _____

13. I sometimes fail to fulfill my goals. _____

14. I am very talented. _____

15. I do not have enough respect for myself. _____

16. I wish I were more skillful in my activities. _____

APPENDIX H: THE RELATIONSHIP ASSESSMENT SCALE (RAS; Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998)

For each of the following items, please select the answer that best describes that item for you.

1. How well does your partner meet your needs?

1	2	3	4	5
Poorly				Extremely well

2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
Unsatisfied				Extremely satisfied

3. How good is your relationship compared to most?

1	2	3	4	5
Poor				Excellent

4. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten in this relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
Never				Very often

5. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?

1	2	3	4	5
Hardly at all				Completely

6. How much do you love your partner?

1	2	3	4	5
Not much				Very much

7. How many problems are there in your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
Very few				Very many

APPENDIX I: RECRUITMENT E-MAIL SENT TO PARTICIPANT BY PI

Hello!

Thank you very much for participating in University of Texas at Austin's Relationship Study. Your scores on the initial screening questionnaires have qualified you to participate in the second phase of the study, if you are interested. This next phase of the study would require you to come to the Psychology Department at UT Austin that should last approximately 1.5 hours, during which you will watch some videos, write about your personal experience, thoughts and emotions, and complete a series of questionnaires. As compensation for your time in the study, you will be given $20 by the department. In addition, we will follow up with you at 1 and 3 months after the study and ask you to complete a brief measure on your current relationship. For each successful completed checkpoint, you will receive an additional $10, totaling to up to $40 for your participation in the entire study.

Please let us know if you are interested in continuing onto this exciting next phase of the study, and we will then set up an appointment!

Thank you!

-Christine Chang-Schneider
The University of Texas at Austin
Department of Psychology
1 University Station A8000
Austin, Texas 78712-0187
Ph: 512.471.0691
e-mail: chang-schneider@mail.utexas.edu

APPENDIX J: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

IRB# 2006-08-0007

Informed Consent to Participate in Research
The University of Texas at Austin

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The Principal Investigator (the person in charge of this research) or his/her representative will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Title of Research Study: Emotion Regulation in Relationships- Standardized

Principal Investigator(s):
Christine S. Chang-Schneider, Graduate Student, (512) 471-0691
Professor William B. Swann, Jr., Department of Psychology, (512) 471-3859

Funding source: UT Psychology

What is the purpose of this study? *To explore how women deal with conflict in their relationships. 120 persons will participate.*

What will be done if you take part in this research study?
In this portion of the study you will write about conflict in your relationship and your thoughts and feelings as well as view two short films depicting a conflict between romantic partners and then complete a series of questionnaires. The videos you will view may contain strong language. This portion of the study should last approximately 1.5 hours. After the study we will follow up with you via e-mail or phone, whichever you choose, to obtain measures on your current relationship. We will contact you at 1-month and 3-months after you have participated in the study. You will receive $10 for each of these checkpoints that you successfully complete.

What are the possible discomforts and risks? *Some participants may experience some discomfort while viewing the movie of the couple in conflict. If counseling support services become necessary during the study because of emotional discomfort that may arise for any reason, the experimenter will instruct you on how to call the appropriate crisis hotline and will stay with you to ensure your well-being. A list of referrals will also be provided.*

There are other remote risks associated with internet electronic cached/stored information, and subject-provided email addresses (e.g. security breach via internet hacker, accidental disclosure of e-mail addresses), however, the principal investigator has taken the necessary precautions to keep these risks at the utmost minimum (e.g. using a password-protected server,

limiting access to e-mails only to key personnel in the project and storing them on protected university servers). If you wish to discuss any risks you may experience, you may ask questions now- please ask the experimenter or contact the Principal Investigator, Christine Chang-Schneider, at 512.471.0691.

What are the possible benefits to you or to others? *You may enhance a valuable pool of knowledge by contributing your thoughts and experiences and helping to meet the goals of the research.*

If you choose to take part in this study, will it cost you anything? *No.*

Will you receive compensation for your participation in this study? *Upon successful completion of the study, you will receive $20 as compensation. You will also receive $10 compensation for each successful follow-up check in, totaling to $40 if you complete the entire study. If you are currently enrolled in PSY 301, you may opt to receive 2 hours of experimental credit for your participation as opposed to the monetary compensation.*

What if you are injured because of the study? *In the very unlikely case that injuries occur as a result of study activity, no payment can be provided in the event of a medical problem.*

If you do not want to take part in this study, what other options are available to you?
Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to be in the study, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin.

How can you withdraw from this research study and who should I call if I have questions?

If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, simply tell the experimenter who is conducting the study or contact the Principal Investigator, Christine Chang-Schneider at 512.471.0691 You should also call the principle investigator for any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research. You are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits for which you may be entitled. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or if you have complaints, concerns, or questions about the research, please contact Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685 or the Office of Research Support and Compliance at (512) 471-8871.

How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected?

If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review your research records, then the University of Texas at Austin will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

Will the researchers benefit from your participation in this study? *No.*

Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

_____

Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent **Date**

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form if you so requested. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

_____

Printed Name of Subject **Date**

_____

Signature of Subject **Date**

Signature of Principal Investigator **Date**

APPENDIX K: EXPRESSIVE WRITING INSTRUCTIONS: SELF'S ROLE IN CONFLICT CONDITION

Writing session 1 Instructions:

Couples often have conflicts during the course of the relationship. Sometimes, one or both members of the couple can become angry and behave in an aggressive manner toward the other in order to express their anger.

Today, you will be asked to write three times about your thoughts and feelings about when *you* are aggressive toward your partner. This can involve non-physical aggression, such as yelling, swearing, calling names, throwing things, slamming doors, and it can also involve physical aggression such as pushing, slapping, holding your partner down, scratching, kicking, using a weapon, etc. Each 15-minute writing task will be slightly different.

For the next 15 minutes, your task will be to write about *your* aggressive behavior itself. What is it like for you and your partner when you are aggressive?

When you write, ***focus on your thoughts and emotions*** about your aggressive behavior. How does this aggressive behavior tie into other parts of your life: your relationships with other people you love and care about, how you get along in the workplace and elsewhere in life, etc.

You might also explore how your aggressive behavior is related to who you and your partner would like to become, might have been in the past, or who the two of you are now. Where do these feelings come from when you are aggressive?

Be honest with yourself. In general, the more that people put into this kind of writing task, the more useful it can be.

Also, don't worry about spelling or grammar. The most important thing is that once you start writing, KEEP WRITING for the full 15 minutes, and don't stop.

Writing session 2 Instructions:

For the second writing task, continue to write about your thoughts and emotions about your aggressive behavior toward your partner. It could be about the same issues that you wrote about in the previous session, or it could be different ones. For example: you might discuss how your spouse is thinking and feeling when you are aggressive toward him. How might this aggressive behavior tie into other parts or times in your life? **Again, be honest with yourself.**

Writing session 3 Instructions:

This is your third and final writing task. Continue to write about your thoughts and emotions about your aggressive behavior toward your partner. It could be the same issues that you wrote about in one of the previous sessions or it could be a different one. You might also tie your thoughts together and wrap everything up. Remember that this is your

last opportunity as part of this to explore your aggressive behavior when you are in conflict with your partner. As before, be honest with yourself.

APPENDIX L: EXPRESSIVE WRITING INSTRUCTIONS: PARTNER'S ROLE IN CONFLICT CONDITION

Writing session 1 Instructions:

Couples often have conflicts during the course of the relationship. Sometimes, one or both members of the couple can become angry and behave in an aggressive manner toward the other in order to express their anger.

Today, you will be asked to write three times about your thoughts and feelings about when *your partner* is aggressive toward you. This can involve non-physical aggression, such as yelling, swearing, calling names, throwing things, slamming doors, and it can also involve physical aggression such as pushing, slapping, holding your partner down, scratching, kicking, using a weapon, etc. Each 15-minute writing task will be slightly different.

For the next 15 minutes, your task will be to write about your partner's aggressive behavior itself. What is it like for you and your partner when your partner is aggressive?

When you write, ***focus on your thoughts and emotions*** about your partner's aggressive behavior. How does his aggressive behavior tie into other parts of your life: your relationships with other people you love and care about, how you get along in the workplace and elsewhere in life, etc.

You might also explore how his aggressive behavior is related to who you and your partner would like to become, might have been in the past, or who the two of you are now. Where do these feelings come from when he is aggressive?

Be honest with yourself. In general, the more that people put into this kind of writing task, the more useful it can be.

Also, don't worry about spelling or grammar. The most important thing is that once you start writing, KEEP WRITING for the full 15 minutes, and don't stop.

Writing session 2 Instructions:

For the second writing task, continue to write about your thoughts and emotions about your partner's aggressive behavior toward you. It could be about the same issues that you wrote about in the previous session, or it could be different ones. For example: you might discuss how your spouse is thinking and feeling when he is aggressive toward you. How might this aggressive behavior tie into other parts or times in your life? **Again, be honest with yourself.**

Writing session 3 Instructions:

This is your third and final writing task. Continue to write about your thoughts and emotions about your partner's aggressive behavior toward you. It could be the same issues that you wrote about in one of the previous sessions or it could be a different one. You might also tie your thoughts together and wrap everything up. Remember that this is

your last opportunity as part of this to explore your partner's aggressive behavior when you are in conflict with your partner. As before, be honest with yourself.

APPENDIX M: EXPRESSIVE WRITING INSTRUCTIONS: CONTROL CONDITION

Writing session 1 Instructions:
People often live very complex, busy lives. Today, you will be asked to write three times about your thoughts and feelings about how you manage your time in your daily life. Each 15-minute writing task will be slightly different.

For the next 15 minutes, your task will be to write about your time and how you deal with it. What is it like for you to have to prioritize different responsibilities during the day?

When you write, ***focus on your thoughts and emotions*** about how you manage your time on a daily basis. How does the way that you deal with daily responsibilities tie into other parts of your life: your relationships with other people you love and care about, how you get along in the workplace and elsewhere in life, etc.

You might also explore how the way in which you manage your time is related to who you and would like to become, might have been in the past, or who you are now. Where do your feelings come from when you are called upon to prioritize your day?

Be honest with yourself. In general, the more that people put into this kind of writing task, the more useful it can be.

Also, don't worry about spelling or grammar. The most important thing is that once you start writing, KEEP WRITING for the full 15 minutes, and don't stop.

Writing session 2 Instructions:
For the second writing task, continue to write about your thoughts and emotions about your partner's aggressive behavior toward you. It could be about the same issues that you wrote about in the previous session, or it could be different ones. For example: you might discuss how your spouse is thinking and feeling when he is aggressive toward you. How might this aggressive behavior tie into other parts or times in your life? **Again, be honest with yourself.**

Writing session 3 Instructions:
This is your third and final writing task. Continue to write about your thoughts and emotions about your partner's aggressive behavior toward you. It could be the same issues that you wrote about in one of the previous sessions or it could be a different one. You might also tie your thoughts together and wrap everything up. Remember that this is your last opportunity as part of this to explore your partner's aggressive behavior when you are in conflict with your partner. As before, be honest with yourself.

APPENDIX N: MOOD MEASURE (Diener & Emmons, 1985).

Please indicate the degree to which you are feeling each of these moods *right now* using this scale:

1----------2----------3----------4----------5----------6----------7
(Not at all) (Extremely much)

_____Happy	_____Glad
_____Joy	_____Depressed
_____Angry	_____Annoyed
_____Fear/Anxiety	_____Delighted
_____Pleased	_____Sad
_____Frustrated	_____Contented
_____Enjoyment/Fun	_____Gloomy

APPENDIX O: MOVIE #1 REACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read each question and answer each one independently of the next one. Please do **not** go back and change your answers to any question after you have answered it. Circle the number after each question which corresponds best with how you feel in response to each question:

1) Overall, how acceptable did you find Sean's behavior in this interaction?

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Very unacceptable	Somewhat unacceptable			Somewhat acceptable		Very acceptable

2) Overall, how acceptable did you find Stephanie's behavior in this interaction?

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Very unacceptable	Somewhat unacceptable			Somewhat acceptable		Very acceptable

3) If you were Stephanie, how likely would you be to remain in a relationship with Sean?

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Very likely to break up						Very likely to remain

[PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE QUESTIONS]

4) In this interaction, Sean yells at Stephanie. How acceptable do you find his behavior?

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Very unacceptable	Somewhat unacceptable			Somewhat acceptable		Very acceptable

5) In this interaction, Sean swears at Stephanie. How acceptable do you find his behavior?

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Very unacceptable	Somewhat unacceptable			Somewhat acceptable		Very acceptable

[PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE QUESTIONS]

6) In this interaction, Stephanie yells at Sean. How acceptable do you find his behavior?

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Very unacceptable	Somewhat unacceptable			Somewhat acceptable		Very acceptable

7) In this interaction, Stephanie swears at Sean. How acceptable do you find this behavior?

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Very unacceptable	Somewhat unacceptable			Somewhat acceptable		Very acceptable

[PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE QUESTIONS]

8) At the end of this video, Stephanie apparently leaves Sean. How acceptable do you think it was for Stephanie to leave Sean?

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Very unacceptable	Somewhat unacceptable			Somewhat acceptable		Very acceptable

9) At the end of the video, Sean seems sorry for his behavior after he realizes that Stephanie has left. How much do you believe that Stephanie should return to Sean?

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Not at all; she should not return to him	Somewhat			Somewhat		Very much; she should return to him

[PLEASE LET THE EXPERIMENTER KNOW YOU ARE DONE WITH THIS PORTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.]

APPENDIX P: QUESTIONS REGARDING LIKELIHOOD TO STAY IN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP AND ACCEPTABILITY OF ABUSE, MOVIE #2

Please read each question and answer each one independently of the next one. Please do not go back and change your answers to any question after you have answered it.

Circle the number after each question which corresponds best with how you feel in response to each question:

10) Overall, how acceptable did you find Scot's behavior in this interaction?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very unacceptable					Very acceptable

11) Overall, how acceptable did you find Tanya's behavior in this interaction?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very unacceptable					Very acceptable

12) If you were Tanya, how likely would you be to remain in a relationship with Scot?

1	2	3	4	5
Very likely to break up				Very likely to remain

[PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE QUESTIONS]

13) In this interaction, Scot seems jealous that Tanya has plans to go play tennis with her friend Sharon rather than be there for him. Does the fact that Scot is jealous mean he loves Tanya a lot?

1	2	3	4	5	6
No, there is no relation					Yes, very much

14) In this interaction, Scot yells at Tanya. How acceptable do you find his behavior?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very unacceptable					Very acceptable

15) In this interaction, Scot threatens to hit Tanya with the tennis racquet. How acceptable do you find his behavior?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very unacceptable					Very acceptable

16) Tanya apologizes after the interaction and tries to smooth things over. How acceptable do you find her behavior?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Very unacceptable					Very acceptable

[PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE QUESTIONS]

17) After the argument, Scot shares with Tanya that his parents were fighting again last night, which is why he needs her right now, as she is the only one who understands. Does this new information make his previous behavior more or less acceptable?

1	2	3	4	5
This information makes his behavior much ***less*** acceptable		This information has no impact on the acceptability of his behavior		This information makes his behavior much ***more*** acceptable

APPENDIX Q: MOVIE VALIDITY QUESTIONNAIRE

1) How engaging did you find this video?

1	2	3	4	5
Not very engaging at all				Extremely engaging

2) How convincing did you find this video?

1	2	3	4	5
Not very convincing at all				Extremely convincing

3) How much do you feel the scene depicted **sexually** abusive behavior?

1	2	3	4	5
Not very much at all				Very much

4) How much do you feel the scene depicted **psychologically** abusive behavior?

1	2	3	4	5
Not very much at all				Very much

5) How much do you feel the scene depicted **physically** abusive behavior?

1	2	3	4	5
Not very much at all				Very much

APPENDIX R: CTS-2 PHYSICAL AGGRESSION SUBSCALE (Straus et al., 1996)

RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIORS

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. Couples also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. This is a list of things that might happen when you have differences. Please circle how many times you did each of these things in the past year, and how many times your partner did them in the past year. If you or your partner did not do one of these things in the past year, but it happened before that, circle "7".

How often did this happen?

1= once in the past year
2= Twice in the past year
3= 3-5 times in the past year
4 = 6-10 times in the past year
5= 11-20 times in the past year
6= More than 20 times in the past year
7= Not in the past year, but it did happen before
0= This has never happened

1.	I threw something at my partner that could hurt.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7** **0**
2.	My partner did this to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7** **0**
3.	I twisted my partner's arm or hair.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7** **0**
4.	My partner did this to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7** **0**
5.	I pushed or shoved my partner.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7** **0**
6.	My partner did this to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7** **0**
7.	I used a knife or gun on my partner.	**1** **1**	**2** **2**	**3** **3**	**4** **4**	**5** **5**	**6** **6**	**7** **0** **7** **0**
8.	My partner did this to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7** **0**
9.	I punched or hit my partner with something that could hurt.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7** **0**
10.	My partner did this to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7** **0**

11. I choked my partner.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**0**
12. My partner did this to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**0**
13. I slammed my partner against a wall.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**0**
14. My partner did this to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**0**
15. I beat up my partner.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**0**
16. My partner did this to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**0**
17. I grabbed my partner.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**0**
18. My partner did this to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**0**
19. I burned or scalded my partner on purpose.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**0**
20. My partner did this to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**0**
21. I kicked my partner.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**0**
22. My partner did this to me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**0**

APPENDIX S: PSYCHOLOGICAL MALTREATMENT OF WOMEN INVENTORY (PMWI; Tolman, R.M., 1989)

PMWI-F-SHORT

This questionnaire asks about actions you may have experienced in your relationship with your partner. Answer each item as carefully as you can by circling a number next to each statement according to the following scale:

0= NEVER
1= RARELY
2= OCCASIONALLY
3= FREQUENTLY
4= VERY FREQUENTLY
NA= NOT APPLICABLE

IN THE PAST MONTH:

1. My partner called me names.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
2. My partner swore at me.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
3. My partner yelled and screamed at me.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
4. My partner treated me like an inferior.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
5. My partner monitored my time and made me account for my whereabouts.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
6. My partner used our money or made important financial decisions without talking to me about it.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
7. My partner was jealous or suspicious of my friends.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
8. My partner accused me of having an affair with another person.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
9. My partner interfered in my relationships with other	

family members.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
10. My partner tried to keep me from doing things to help myself.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
11. My partner restricted my use of the telephone.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
12. My partner told me my feelings were irrational or crazy.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
13. My partner blamed me for his problems.	0 1 2 3 4 NA
14. My partner tried to make me feel crazy.	0 1 2 3 4 NA

REFERENCES

Archer, J. (2000). Sex differences in aggression between heterosexual partners: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*, 651–680.

Bandura, A. (1979). The social learning perspective: Mechanisms of aggression. In A. Toch (Ed.), *Psychology of crime and criminal justice* (pp. 298-336). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Bargai, N., Ben-Shakhar, G., & Shalve, A.Y. (2007). Posttraumatic stress disorder and depression in battered women: The mediating role of learned helplessness. *Journal of Family Violence, 22,* 267-275.

Beck, A.T., Rial, W.Y., & Rickels, K. (1974). Short form of depression inventory: A rapid technique. *Postgraduate Medicine, 52,* 81-85.

Bernard, J.L., Bernard, S.L., & Bernard, M.L. (1985). Courtship violence and sex-typing. *Family Relations, 34,* 573-576.

Bograd, M.J. (1988). Feminist perspectives on wife abuse: An introduction. In M. Bograd & K. Yllo (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on wife abuse* (pp. 11-26). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Caetano, R., Vaeth, P.A.C., & Ramisetty-Mikler, S. (2008). Intimate partner violence victim and perpetrator characteristics among couples in the United States. *Journal of Family Violence, 23,* 507-518.

Capaldi, D. M., & Owen, L. D. (2001). Physical aggression in a community sample of at-risk young couples: Gender comparisons for high frequency, injury, and fear. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *15*, 425–440.

Cascardi, M. & O'Leary, K.D. (1992). Depressive symptomology, self-esteem, and self-blame in battered women. *Journal of Family Violence, 7,* 245-259.

Chang, V. N. (1996). *I just lost myself: Psychological abuse of women in marriage*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Cialdini, R.B. & de Nicholas, M.E. (1989). Self-presentation by association. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57,* 626-631.

Cunradi, C.B., Caetano, R., & Schafer, J. (2002). Socioeconomic predictors of intimate partner violence among White, Black, and Hispanic couples in the United States. *Journal of Family Violence, 17,* 377-389.

Desai, S., Arias, I., Thompson, M. P., & Basile, K. C. (2002). Childhood victimization and subsequent adult revictimization assessed in a nationally representative sample of women and men. Violence and Victims, 17, 639–653.

Dobash, R. E., & Dobash, R. P. (1979). *Violence against wives: A case against the patriarchy.* New York: Free.

Dutton, D.G. (1988). *Domestic assault of women: Psychological and criminal justice perspectives.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Dutton, D.G. (1998). *The abusive personality.* New York: Guilford.

Dutton, D.G. (2002). Personality dynamics of intimate abusiveness. *Journal of Psychiatric Practice, 8,* 216-228.

Dutton, D. G. (2007). *The abusive personality: Violence and control in intimate relationships (2nd ed.).* New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.

Diener, E. & Emmons, R.A. (1985). The independence of positive and negative affect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 47,* 1105-1117.

Ehrensaft, M. K., Cohen, P., Brown, J., Smailes, E., Chen, H., & Johnson, J. (2003). Intergenerational transmission of partner violence: A 20-year prospective study. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 71, 741−753.

Ehrensaft, M. K., Cohen, P., & Johnson, J. G. (2006). Development of personality disorder symptoms and the risk of partner violence. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 115, 474−483.

Ellis, D.,& Stuckless, N. (1996). *Mediating and negotiating marital conflicts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Feldman, C.M. & Ridley, C.A. (1995). The etiology and treatment of domestic violence between adult partners. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 2,* 317-348.

Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Follingstad, D.R., Rutledge, L.L., Berg, B.J. (1990). The role of emotional abuse in physically abusive relationships. *Journal of Family Violence, 5,* 107-120.

Garimella, R., Plichta, S. B., & Houseman, C. (2000). Physician beliefs about victims of spouse abuse and about the physician role. *Journal of Women's Health & Gender-Based Medicine*, *9*, 405-411.

Gate, R.M., & Lloyd, S.A. (1992). *Courtship.* New York: Sage.

Gelles, R.J. (1995). *Violence toward men: Fact or Fiction?* (Report prepared for the American Medical Association, Council on Scientific Affairs). Kingston: Family Violence Research Program, University of Rhode Island.

Gelles, R.J. (1997). *Intimate violence in families.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gelles, R.J. & Straus, M.A. (1988). *Intimate violence.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Gosling, S. D., Rentfrow, P. J., & Swann, W. B., Jr. (2003). A Very Brief Measure of the Big Five Personality Domains. Journal of Research in Personality, 37, 504-528.

Gottman, J.M. (1999). *The marriage clinic.* New York: Norton.

Gracia, E. & Herrero, J. (2006). Acceptability of domestic violence against women in the European Union: A multilevel analysis. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, 60,* 123-129.

Graf, M.C., Gaudiano, B.A., & Geller, P.A. (2008). Written emotional disclosure: A controlled study of the benefits of expressive writing homework in outpatient psychotherapy. *Psychotherapy Research, 18,* 389-399.

Griffing, S., Ragin, D.F., Sage, R.E., Madry, L., Bingham, L.E., Primm, B.J. (2002). Domestic violence survivors' self-identified reasons for returning to abusive relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17,* 306-319.

Gunderson, J.G. (1984). Borderline personality disorder. Washington, D.C. American Psychiatric Press.

Gwartney-Gibbs, P. A., Stockard, J., & Bohmer, S. (1987). Learning courtship aggression: The influence of parents, peers, and personal experiences. *Family Relations,36*, 276-282.

Hamberger, L.K., & Hastings, J.E. (1986). Personality correlates of men who abuse their partners: A cross-validation study. *Journal of Family Violence, 1,* 323-341.

Hellmuth, J.C.; McNulty, J. K. (2008). Neuroticism, marital violence, and the moderating role of stress and behavioral skills. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95*, pp. 166-180.

Hendrick, S.S., Dicke, A., & Hendrick, C. (1998). The relationship assessment scale. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships,15,*pp. 137-142.

Henning, K & Holdford, R. (2006). Minimization, Denial, and Victim Blaming by Batterers: How Much Does the Truth Matter? *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 33,* 110-130.

Hightower, N.R., & Gorton, J. (2002). A case study of community-based responses to rural woman battering. *Violence Against Women*, *8*, 845-812.

Holtzworth-Munroe, A., & Anglin, K. (1991). The competence of responses given by martially violent versus nonviolent men to problematic marital situations. *Violence and Victims, 6,* 257-269.

Holtzworth-Munroe, A., Meehan, J. C., Rehman, U., Marshall, A. D. (2002). Intimate partner violence: An introduction for couple therapists. In: *Clinical handbook of couple therapy* (3rd ed.). A. S.Gurman & N.S. Jacobson. New York, NY: Guilford Press. pp. 441-465.

Holtzworth-Munroe, A., & Stuart, G.L. (1994). Typologies of male batterers: Three subtypes and the differences among them. *Psychological Bulletin, 116,* 476-496.

Hotaling, G.T., Straus, M.A., & Lincoln, A.J. (1990). Intrafamily violence and crime and violence outside the family. In M.A. Straus & R.J. Gelles (Eds.), *Phsyical violence in American families* (pp. 431-470). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Johnson, M. P. (1995). Patriarchal terrorism and common couple violence: Two forms of violence against women. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *57*, 283–294.

Johnson, M. P. (2006). Conflict and control: Gender symmetry and asymmetry in domestic violence. *Violence Against Women*, 12, 1003–1018.

Johnson, M. P., & Leone, J. M. (2005). The differential effects of intimate terrorism and situational couple violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women survey. *Journal of Family Issues*, *26*, 322–349.

Johnston, J. R., & Campbell, L. E. G. (1993). A clinical typology of interparental violence in disputed-custody divorces. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *63*, 190–199.

Kacewicz, E., Slatcher, R.B., & Pennebaker, J.W. (2007). Expressive writing: An alternative to traditional methods. In L. L'Abate (Ed)., *Low-cost approaches to promote physical and mental health* (pps 271-284). New York: Springer.

Kaufman, G. (1992). The mysterious disappearance of battered women in family therapists' offices: Male privilege colluding with male violence. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 18,* 233-243.

Kelly, J. B. (1982). Divorce: The adult experience. In B. Wolman & G. Stricker (Eds.), *Handbook of developmental psychology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Kelly, J.B., & Johnson, M.P. (2008). Differentiation among types of intimate partner violence: Implications for interventions. *Family Court Review, 46,* 476-499.

Kernberg, O.F. (1996). A psychoanalytic theory of personality disorders. In J.F. Clarkin & M.F. Lenzenweger (Eds.), *Major theories of personality disorder* (pp.106-140). New York: Guilford Press.

Kirkwood, C. (1993). *Leaving abusive partners: From the scars of survival to the wisdom for change*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Kubany, E. S., Hill, E. E., Owens, J. A., Iannce-Spencer, C., McCaig, M.A., Tremayne, K.J. (2004). Cognitive Trauma Therapy for Battered Women With PTSD (CTT-BW). *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 72,* pp. 3-18.

Kwong, M. J., Bartholomew, K., & Dutton, D. G. (1999). Gender differences in patterns of relationship violence in Alberta. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, *31*, 150–160.

Lang, A.J., Kennedy, C.M. & Stein, M.B. (2002). Anxiety sensitivity and PTSD among female victims of intimate partner violence. *Depression and Anxiety,16,* 77-83.

LaTaillade, J.J., Epstein, N.B., Werlinich, C.A. (2006). Conjoint Treatment of Intimate Partner Violence: A cognitive Behavioral Approach. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International Quarterly, 20,* 393-410.

Lawson, D.M. (2003). Incidence, Explanations, and Treatment of Partner Violence. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 81,* 19-32.

Levenson, H. (1995). *Time-limited dynamic psychotherapy.* New York: Basic Books.

Linehan, M.M. (1997). Self-verification and drug abusers: Implications for Treatment. *Psychological Science, 8,* pp. 181-183.

Linehan, M.M. (1993). *Skills training manual for treating borderline personality disorder.* New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.

Linehan, M. M.; Dexter-Mazza, E. T. (2008). *Dialectical behavior therapy for borderline personality disorder.*In: Clinical handbook of psychological disorders: A step-by-step treatment manual (4th ed.). D. H. Barlow (Ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press, pp. 365-420.

Marshall, L.L., & Rose, P. (1990). Premarital violence: The impact of family of origin violence, stress, and reciprocity. *Violence and Victims, 5,*51-64.

Mason, A., & Blankenship, V. (1987). Power and affiliation motivation, stress, and abuse in intimate relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52,* 203-210.

Miller, D.K. (2006). The effects of childhood physical abuse or childhood sexual abuse in battered women's coping mechanisms: Obsessive-compulsive tendencies and severe depression. *Journal of Family Violence, 21,* 185-195.

Miller, S. L., & Wellford, C. F. (1997). Patterns and correlates of interpersonal violence. In A. P. Cardarelli (Ed.) Violence between intimate partners: Patterns, causes, and effects (pp. 16–28). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

McCrae, R. R. & Costa, P.T. Jr. (1990). *Personality in adulthood.* New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.

Murphy, C.M., & O'Leary, K.D. (1989). Psychological aggression predicts physical aggression in early marriage. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 5*, 579-582.

O'Leary, K.D. (1999). Psychological Abuse: A Variable Deserving Critical Attention in Domestic Violence. *Violence and Victims, 14,* 3-23.

O'Leary, K.D., Barling, J., Arias, I., Rosenbaum, A., Malone, J. & Tyree, A. (1989). Prevalence and stability of marital aggression between spouses: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *57*, 263-268.

Palker-Corell, A. & Marcu, D.K. (2004). Partner abuse, learned helplessness, and trauma symptoms. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 23,* 445-462.

Pelham, B. W, & Swann, W B., Jr. (1989). From self-conceptions to self-worth: The sources and structure of self-esteem. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57, 672-680

Pennebaker, J. W., & Beall, S. (1986). Confronting a traumatic event: Toward an understanding of inhibition and disease. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 95, 274–281.

Pennebaker, J.W. & Seagal, J. (1999). Forming a story: The health benefits of narrative. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 55,* 1243-1254.

Rusbult, C.E., Martz, J.M., & Agnew, C.R. (1998). The investment model scale: Measuring commitment level, satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size. Personal Relationships, 5, 357-391.

Saunders, D.G. (1992). A typology of men who batter: Three types derived from cluster analysis. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 62,* 264-275.

Schutte, N.S., Bouleige, L., Fix, J.L., & Malouff, J.M. (1986). Returning to partner after leaving a crisis shelter: A decision faced by battered women. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality, 1,* 295-298.

Seligman, M.E.P. and Maier, S.F. (1967). Failure to escape traumatic shock. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 74, 1–9.

Sharpe, D. & Taylor, J.K. (1999). An examination of variables from a social-developmental model to explain physical and psychological dating violence. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 31,* 165-175.

Smith, M. E.; Randall, E. J. (2007a). Batterer intervention program: The victim's hope in ending the abuse and maintaining the relationship. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, *28,* 1045-1063.

Smith, Marilyn E.; Randall, E.J. (2007b). Self-deception among men who are mandated to attend a batterer intervention program. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care, 43,* 193-203.

Smyth, J.M. & Pennebaker, J.W. (2008). Exploring the boundary conditions of expressive writing: In search of the right recipe. *British Journal of Health Psychology, 13,* 1-7.

Stets, J.E., & Henderson, D.A. (1991). Contextual factors surrounding conflict resolution while dating: Results from a national study. *Family Relations, 40,*29-36.

Stets, J.E., & Straus, M.A. (1990). Gender differences in reporting marital violence and its medical and psychological consequences. In M.A. Pirog-Good & J.E. Stets (Eds.),

Physical violence in American families: Risk factors and adaptations to violence in 8,145 families (pp. 151-166). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Straus, M.A. (1979). Measuring intrafamily conflict and violence: The Conflict Tactics (CT) Scales. *Journal of Marriage & the Family, 41*, 75-88.

Straus, M.A. (1999). The controversy over domestic violence by women: A methodological, theoretical, and sociology of science analysis. In X.B. Arriaga & S. Oskamp (Eds.), *Violence in intimate relationships* (pp. 17-44). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Straus, M. A., Gelles, R. J., & Steinmetz, S. K. (1980). Behind closed doors: Violence in the American family. New York: Doubleday/Anchor.

Straus, M.A., & Gelles, R.J. (1986). Societal change and change in family violence from 1975 to 1985 as revealed by two national surveys. *Journal of Marriage & the Family, 48,* 465-479.

Straus, M.A., Hamby, S.L., Boney-McCoy, S., & Sugarman, D.B. (1996). The revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2): Development and preliminary psychometric data. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 41, 75-86.

Swann, W. B., Jr. (1983). Self-verification: Bringing social reality into harmony with the self. In J. Suls & A. G. Greenwald (Eds.), *Social psychological perspectives on the self (Vol. 2, pp. 33-66)*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Swann, W.B., Chang-Schneider, C.S., & McClarty, K.L. (2007). Do our self-views matter? Self-concepts and self-esteem in everyday life. American Psychologist, 62, 84-94.

Swann, W.B. & Rentfrow, P.J. (2001). Blirtatiousness: Cognitive, behavioral, and physiological consequences of rapid responding. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81,* 1160-1175.

Tafarodi, R. W., & Swann, W. B., Jr., (2001). Two-dimensional self-esteem: Theory and measurement. *Personality and Individual Differences, 31*, 653-673.

Tang, C.S., Wong, D., & Cheung, F.M. (2002). Social construction of women as legitimate victims of violence in Chinese societies. *Violence against women, 8,* 968-996.

Tjaden, P., & Thoennes, N. (2000). Full report of the prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. Research report, National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Washington, D.C.

Tolman, R.M. (1989). The development of a measure of psychological maltreatment of women by their male partners. *Violence and Victims, 4,*159-177.

Tontodonato, P., & Crew, B.K. (1992). Dating violence, social learning theory, and gender: A multivariate analysis. *Violence and Victims,* 7, 3-14.

Vatnar, S.K.B. & Bjorkly, S. (2008). An interactional perspective of intimate partner violence: An in-depth semi-structured interview of a representative sample of help-seeking women. *Journal of Family Violence, 23,* 265-279.

Wallerstein, J. S., & Kelly, J. B. (1980). Surviving the breakup: How children and parents cope with divorce. New York: Basic Books.

Walker, L.E. (1984). *Women and mental health policy.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Walker, L.E. (1993). The battered woman syndrome is a psychological consequence of the abuse. In R.J. Gelles & DR. Loseke (Eds.), *Current controversies on family violence* (pp. 133-153). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Walker, L.E. (1995). Current perspectives on men who batter women- Implications for intervention and treatment to stop violence against women: Comment on Gottman et al. (1995). *Journal of Family Psychology, 9,* 264-271.

Walker, L.E. (1994). *Abused women and survivor therapy.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

White, H. R., & Chen, P. H. (2002). Problem drinking and intimate partner violence. Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 63, 205–214.

White, H. R. & Widom, C. S. (2003). Intimate partner violence among abused and neglected children in young adulthood: The mediating effects of early aggression, antisocial personality, hostility and alcohol problems. *Aggressive Behavior, 29,* 332-345.

Winter, D.G. (1984). The power motive in women- and men. Unpublished manuscript, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT.

VITA

Christine Susan Chang received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in 1999 from Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. During the following years she was employed as a development engineer at biotechnology companies in Redwood City, California, and Austin, Texas. In August, 2004, she entered the Graduate School at The University of Texas at Austin. At the time of this publication, she is completing internship at the Central Texas VA and will be pursuing a post-doctoral fellowship at the South Texas VA in Primary Care/Behavioral Health.

Permanent E-mail Address: christinechangphd@gmail.com

This manuscript was typed by the author.