ONLINE SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE VICTIMS

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Masters of Arts in Education,
Educational Psychology

By

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to Anthony C. Lee, for all his support and help with the technical portion of this project. I couldn’t have done this without you.
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ABSTRACT

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Domestic violence victims are faced with such barriers that prevent them from seeking help; the fear of retaliation, economic hardships, and fear of losing their children. According to Sullivan and Bybee (1999), victims who have reported receiving some sort of help from family, friends or the community declared it assisted them greatly in their ability to leave their batterer’s. Victims were motivated to seek help when their education level was equal or better than their partners, when they feared their children could get abused, or when they feared losing custody of their children. This website will support the community by providing people with pertinent information on domestic abuse. The purpose of this project is to develop a website that will help victims of domestic violence to prevent or escape the abuse.
Chapter One

Introduction to the Project

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior between partners who are in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, or cohabitation. The abusive behavior is used by one partner to gain or maintain control over the other partner. The abuse can be in the form of physical, sexual, emotional, economic, psychological, threats, stalking, and cyber stalking. Domestic violence is one of the most chronically underreported crimes. Approximately one-quarter of all physical assaults, one-fifth of all rapes, and one-half of all stalking’s are perpetuated against females by intimate partners are reported to the police (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, NCADV website). The prevalence of domestic abuse against women has been estimated as high as one in four (Bostock, Plumpton, & Pratt, 2008). The risk is predominantly high in victims who are younger, economically dependent, unemployed and with children (Bostock, Plumpton, and Pratt, 2008). Public awareness about domestic violence has increased due to advocate’s efforts for battered women. Supportive services for victims in the form of emergency shelters and legal consultation, pro-arrest policies, treatment programs for the batterer and legislation such as the Violence Against Woman Act of 1994 (VAWA) have been used to respond to violence in intimate relationships (Cho & Wilke, 2005).

Statement of Need/ Problem

Domestic violence victims have a difficult time escaping the abuse. This is because there are many obstacles preventing them from leaving their abusive partner. Sometimes victims leave their assailants only to be beaten more severely or even killed (Sullivan & Bybee, 1999). Furthermore, domestic violence often increases in intensity
and frequency over time (Sullivan and Bybee, 1999). Victims are often isolated socially and have poor community response to domestic violence which increases their risk of being battered (Bostock, Plumpton, & Pratt, 2008; Sullivan & Bybee, 1999). Abusers use social isolation as a means of controlling the victim so they can assault them with less fear of detection. Abuse victims often report that contact with family and friends have been cut off or severely restricted leaving them with no one to turn to for help. Conversely, victims who have reported receiving help from family or friends state it has assisted them greatly in their ability to leave their batterer’s (Sullivan & Bybee, 1999).

Educating the public, the victims, and the perpetrators that domestic abuse between intimate partners is illegal and that the victim is not to blame may increase the likelihood that woman individuals who are abused by an intimate partner may seek help. Furthermore, abused victims are more likely to seek help from family and friends than formal public services. Public education campaigns may help reduce negative reactions to improve the level of influential emotional support provided by social networks (Flicker, Cerulli, Zhao, Tang, Watts, Xia, & Talbot, 2011). Increasing public awareness of the different types of abuse that may occur in intimate relationships, the mental, and physical health effects of intimate partner violence (IPV) have on victims and their children and what to do when someone close to you reveals they are in an abusive relationship may be especially helpful (Flicker et al., 2011). Information could be distributed in the community via the Internet which will assist the community in helping victims of IPV.

Physical IPV has traditionally been the focus of research and community service efforts. Flicker et al examined concomitant forms of IPV and stated most victims experience violence concurrent with other types of aggression (2011). Concomitant forms
of IPV are an important influence in the seeking of physically abused victims (Flicker et al., 2011). The total context of abuse should be considered regarding help seeking in designing the service outreach systems of deliver.

**Purpose of Graduate Project**

The purpose of this project is to develop a website that will meet the needs and assist victims of IPV to escape the abuse in the San Fernando Valley. The website will also help the public by providing family, friends, or other people in the community with pertinent information on domestic abuse so they can assist people they suspect are being abused. The Stay Safe Website will help victims of domestic violence by providing them with a safe place to receive advocacy services. Victims will be given the Stay Safe website address when they are visited by domestic violence advocates shortly after an incident. Victims will be provided with a packet of information showing the resources available to them and a business card. The business card will have the web address for the Stay Safe Website and an access code. Because abusers isolate their victims to gain control (Sullivan & Bybee, 1999), advocates will instruct victims to keep the business card in a safe place separate from the packet as a safeguard from the batterer finding and destroying the information.

The Stay Safe Website is a valuable instructional tool. Shortly after a traumatic event, domestic abuse victims will view the information on the Stay Safe Website. This website will instruct victims on how to escape the abuse and the importance of making a safety plan. Domestic abuse victims will make and follow a safety plan using all the appropriate resources in order to protect their children and themselves from future abuse. Domestic abuse is a traumatic event. This event triggers high emotions and causes the
victims to be overwhelmed, shocked, and distracted which affects their ability to comprehend the information given to them. The Stay Safe Website will be a life line for victims to receive additional advocacy. According to Sullivan and Bybee (1999), victims who have reported receiving some sort of help from family, friends or the community declared it assisted them greatly in their ability to leave their batterers. This website is a great community resource for victims.

The Stay Safe Website is organized so when victims access it they will reach the home page and start by reading the definition of domestic violence and learn about internet and technology safety. From the home page victims can surf to the other pages, these pages are: What is domestic Abuse, Making a Safety Plan, How Does Domestic Abuse Affect your Child, and Legal Aspects. The first page they will access from the home page is, “What is domestic violence?” On this page the victim will receive instructions on different signs of violent behavior. There will be links to: “Signs of Abuse”, "How could this happen to me?", "Am I being controlled?", "Common threats," and "Could I be killed?" There will be an activity checklist for the user to complete. The user will place a check mark next to the different types of violent behavior that applies to them. This activity will inform victims of the signs of violent behavior in their relationship and asses the danger involved with this behavior. There will also be a scenario activity. There will be different scenarios of abusive relationships. The user will be asked if this scenario is abuse or not. Once the user answers the question a window will pop up and explain why their answer is correct or why it is abuse. Next, the victim can navigate to making a safety plan page. On this page there will be common questions about shelter, local shelter phone numbers, and information on financial assistance. On
this page there will be a safety planning activity. The user will be able to download a safety planning worksheet. This worksheet will help the user make a list of what items they may need when the leave an abusive relationship and help them plan and execute their escape.

**Terminology**

- **Domestic Abuse**—Any physical violence, sexual, emotional or financial abuse between current or former partners in an intimate relationship also known as Intimate Partner Violence (Bostock, Plumpton and Pratt, 2009).

- **Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)** - Any physical violence, sexual, emotional or financial abuse between current or former partners in an intimate relationship also known as domestic violence (Bostock, Plumpton and Pratt, 2009; Randell, Bledsoe, Shroff, and Clyde-Pierce, 2012).

- **Protective Order (PO)** - A domestic Violence Civil Protection Order. (Durfee and Messing, 2012),

This paper will examine the barriers that hinder victims of IPV from seeking help and the motivators that assist help-seeking efforts. The violence against victims is dangerous and often lengthy. Several Victims often make multiple attempts to leave their batterers. Many victims who try to get help by calling the police often recant or not want to take any formal proceedings against their batterer. The Barriers that victims encounter can cause them to want to stop all efforts in seeking help to leave an abusive relationship. The barriers this study will discuss are risk perception, the threat of being cut off economically, and the threat of losing custody of their children.
There are a variety of reasons victims of IPV seek help. Once a victim discloses to someone they are in a violent relationship, they must also have the desire and the ability to seek help. This may include accessing domestic violence related services or call a family or a friend. We will be examining the motivators that assist victims in help-seeking efforts. When a relationship becomes violent, the predictors of help seeking can be very complex and overwhelming for a victim. There are several explanations why victims will seek help. This paper will investigate how education is a predictor of help-seeking and how children can motivate and or prevent a victim from seeking help.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

At some point in a person’s life he or she will have some kind of experience in help seeking. Whether the person is seeking help for medical care, looking for a contractor to build something, or locating a good therapist, seeking help is not unusual social behavior. However, who seeks help and why some people do and others do not is a question that has surfaced as a research topic. When a problem occurs in an individual’s life and he or she has become incapable of solving it on their own, there is an assumption that if help is not sought and successfully found and used, then the problem will remain. In other words, help is crucial for the resolution of the problem, whatever it is. This literature review will examine the barriers and motivators to help-seeking efforts of people who have experienced domestic abuse between intimate partners.

Review of Research

**Leaving abusive relationships risk research.** As stated previously, there are many obstacles that prevent victims of IPV from leaving their abusive partner. Studies have documented the challenges victims of IPV have when leaving an abusive relationship (Bostock, Plumpton, & Pratt, 2008; Harding & Helweg-Larson, 2003). The violence against victims is risky and often prolonged, and of those who try to get help by calling the police, some may recant or not want to take any formal proceedings against their batterer. Many victims of IPV make multiple attempts to leave their batterers (Bostock, Plumpton, & Pratt, 2008). Harding and Helweg-Larson studied battered women’s perception of risk when leaving or staying in their violent relationships. The
women Harding and Helweg-Larson studied were residing in domestic abuse shelters. Harding and Helweg-Larson noted victims who had called the police and left their batterer were interpreting a past behavior that occurred in response to severe violence. Harding and Helweg-Larson stated the women’s current residence is in a domestic violence shelter indicates that after an attempt to leave or an intervention from the police, the violence returned. The relationship between the previous experience and the risk perception may help explain why women often have multiple attempts at ending the relationship. While some woman may correctly perceive low risk in this condition and do not experience more abuse, other women may incorrectly perceive low risk ultimately leaving them vulnerable to potentially more severe forms of retaliatory violence. Victims reported that the fear of retaliation by the batterer. A lot of people hold the assumption that victims can leave an abusive relationship if they want to. However most batterers prevent their victims from calling the police and physically stopped them from leaving (Wolf, Ly, Hobart, & Kermic, 2003). Furthermore, Sullivan and Bybee, stated the violence often increases in intensity and frequency over time and when victims leave their assailants they are sometimes beaten more severely or even killed (1999).

Another barrier that victims of IPV often encounter is the threat of being cut off financially and not being able to take care of themselves or their children. Victims stated they have poor access to economic resources for leaving and starting a new life in combination with being in a state of crisis and poor self-esteem made taking the step of calling the police seem impossible (Wolf et al., 2003). Economic dependence has been reported to be associated with a victim’s decision not to leave; however, it can also play a role in the first steps of getting help (Wolf et al., 2003). Victims who are below poverty
level are more likely to call the police but less likely to consult a lawyer in response to IPV (Durfee & Messing, 2012). The court fees for filing protective orders (PO) prevent some victims from filing. A PO is a civil court order of protection which is signed by a judge and orders the perpetrator to stay 100 yards away from the protected person (Durfee and Messing). Women who have less socioeconomic resources or who are involved with their batterer may face barriers obtaining a PO. According to Macy, Nurius, Kermit, and Holt (2005) these women do not have the access to community services that can provide legal services which facilitates safety. Lower socioeconomic communities need more services to assist women with legal and economic needs.

Finally, many victims who have children stated they did not call the police to seek help because they feared their children would be removed from their home as a result of witnessing domestic violence (Wolf et al., 2008). They believed that Child Protective Services (CPS) would be contacted and once CPS became involved they would lose control of the situation and subsequently their children (Wolf et al., 2008). To better serve domestic violence victims, Wolf et al. set up several focus groups in Seattle to understand how to identify and improve services to victims who do not contact police (2003). This group of researchers wanted to develop targeted programs to address the barriers that prevent victims from reporting IPV. Forty-one participants were obtained from five local social services agencies in Seattle. The agencies were chosen to include a culturally diverse population of women. Two of the agencies served battered women exclusively the other three agencies had specialty client focus for Native Americans, lesbians, and refugee women. The results of this study showed that the victims fears regarding CPS involvement and having their child taken away could be addressed by
having social services agencies educate them on how to protect themselves and their children. The fear of having their children taken away is genuine. However, Wolf et al. (2003) note, this fear can be minimized by training CPS workers to that children’s safety can be increased by helping mothers to escape their batterers.

The research findings helped the design of the Stay Safe Website. The Stay Safe Website will provide information, activities and resources that will support victims by helping to identify violent relationships and assess their potential risk and barriers. This website also provides a safe place where victims can access information easily. Furthermore, with the use of a Smartphone or computer, keyboard, and mouse, victims can access the website information and resources 24 hours a day. This will make help-seeking easier for the victims because they can access the resources when they feel safe from retaliation.

**Help strategy and intervention research.** Victims use a variety of strategies when making a decision to seek help. The availability of victim services has improved in the past several decades. According to Kaukinen, Meyer, and Akers (2012) Informal sources of help and social support are the primary source victims of IPV turn to in dealing with the aftermath of violence. When a relationship becomes violent, the predictors of help seeking can be very complex. Victims can become reluctant to disclose they are experiencing violence in their intimate relationships (Petersen, Moracco, Goldstein, & Clark, 2004). However, disclosure is only the first step in the process of help-seeking. Once a victim discloses to someone they are in a violent relationship, they must also have the desire and the ability to seek help. This may include accessing domestic violence related services. Recent research suggests that victims’ formal help-
seeking strategies regarding IPV are more likely to include private strategies such as, confiding in a family member or a friend as opposed to a more formal organization like a healthcare worker (Kaukinen et al., 2012; Peterson et al., 2004).

Kaukinen et al. examined 250 of the most violent cases from the Canadian General Social Survey, Personal Risk to determine women’s decisions to seek help in a male perpetrated IPV. The results of this study showed education is the most consistent predictor of help-seeking. Women whose educational level is equal with or exceeding their partner’s education will seek help from a variety of sources which include family, friends, police, and health professionals Kaukinen, et al. Furthermore, women who are in reverse status relationship, meaning they are the main source of the family’s income, were less likely to tolerate abuse and would access support services (Kaukinen et al., 2012). It was also noted that women who were employed increases the odds they will seek help from family or friends, whereas the unemployed are less likely to call the police because they are dependent on their partners income (Kaukinen et al., 2012). This is in contrast with women who have higher income levels. Kaukinen et al. reported that the higher levels of income for women reduce the likelihood of health, social service and legal help seeking. This is in conflict with the martial dependency perspective which suggests women who are dependent on male partners for economic security are less likely to leave or end their violent relationships. Perhaps women with higher income levels do not tell others their experience with IPV to others for fear of the consequences to their employment and economic standings. Furthermore, these women may be more capable to address IPV without using the support services given their access to financial assets.
Children can also be a motivator for IPV help-seeking (Randell et al., 2011). There are many issues a parent who is a violent relationship considers when they are deciding to leave or stay in the abusive relationship. For example, a parent might worry about whether or not the children will also get abused. They may also be concerned their children are unhappy living in a violent home. Another consideration a parent may have is how dependent they are on the abuser for housing, food, and other basic needs. They may also wish to keep their children with their father/mother. Furthermore, children who witness violence are five times more likely to develop serious emotional and behavioral difficulties than those who have not experienced violence in their home (Bostock, Plumpton, & Pratt, 2009). Research shows these factors influence decision making for mothers and the perceived benefits of leaving the relationship may be outweighed by the dangers and vice versa depending on the moment they decide to leave the violent relationship (Kelly, 2009). Children can be both a motivator and a barrier to IPV help-seeking by mothers (Randell et al., 2011; Petereson et al. 2004: Kelly, 2009).

Randell et al. recruited 62 women and set up eight focus groups to study motivators for help seeking as a whole among English and Spanish speaking mothers who were victims of IPV. Six of the focus groups spoke English and two of the groups spoke Spanish. All of the participants responded to a flyer posted in a local shelter and resource center and had at least one child. The researchers found that the effects of IPV on the participants’ children were commonly mentioned as the reason for help-seeking. (Randell et al). In this study some of the women stated they sought help when they had a realization that the abuse was very bad. The women also stated they were worried about losing custody of their children because child protective services were involved (Randell
et al). Some women stated they sought help when their partner began to involve their children in the efforts to control and manipulate or they worried their children would be physically hurt either as a bystander or as a victim. Finally, some women stated it was a severe episode of abuse that brought women to the point of help-seeking (Randell et. al. 2011).

The majority of the women affirmed their children were the most important motivator for help seeking but they were also influenced by other reasons to seek help. The woman stressed that interventions of others were critical in the help seeking processes. The importance of informal resources such as family and friends suggests that educating the general public of the signs of IPV and the community resources that are available may improve the efficacy of the interventions (Randell et al., 2011). The Spanish speaking participants stressed reassurance from others that immigration status would not prevent them from receiving assistance and that IPV disclosure and help seeking would not result in deportation (Randell et al., 2011). Addressing immigration early in the IPV interventions will facilitate the help seeking in immigrants.

The research states that IPV victims are more likely to disclose the violence to family and friends (Kaukinen et al., 2012. This Stay Safe Website is designed so when a friend or family member accesses the website they will learn how to help the victims escape an abusive relationship. The website will teach people the signs to look for in an abusive relationship and how to help the victims. There is a scenario activity that will instructs friends and family to spot an abusive encounter. The website will include information on the effects of witnessing domestic violence has on children and it will provide information for victims on how to get counseling services for themselves or their
The Stay Safe website will be a great community resource for family and friends.

**Motivation to help-seek research.** Peoples beliefs about their academic environment helps motivate them to learn. According to Gordon-Rouse (2003), cognitive and social environments have an impact on academic achievement. It would follow then that academic environment would have an impact on motivation. Positive beliefs about achievement and experiences give people a sense of well-being and will enhance their achievement and motivation (Gordon-Rouse, 2003). Motivating people to help-seek is highly valued because of its consequences. If a person has a low motivation to help seek they can become defeated. Ryan and Deci (2000) stated when competence, autonomy and relatedness are satisfied it produces enhanced self-motivation and mental health and when impeded reduced motivation and well-being.

Motivational Systems Theory (MST) defines motivation as the organized patterning of an individual’s personal goals, emotional arousal process and personal agency beliefs (Ford, 1992). All three elements need to be present and work together in order to guide decision making, however, stronger elements can compensate for weaker ones. IPV victims draw on Personal agency beliefs. Personal agency belief refers to whether a person believes if an action will direct them towards a desired goal (Ford, 1992). Personal agency belief is divided in two sub group, capability and context beliefs. Capability beliefs are an expectation a person needs to attain the goal and context beliefs is the expectation of whether the environment will support the efforts to attain the goal. The Stay Safe Website enhances motivation in victims by identifying and teaching victims what domestic violence is and what they can do to change and escape the abusive
relationship. Victims will be utilizing the websites information and resources to strengthen their beliefs and their competency. MST states individuals who believe they are more competent in preforming an action are more likely to repeat the action (Ford, 1992). By helping victims to identify abuse and show them how to break the cycle of violence will build motivation based upon their capability beliefs.

The MST approach stems from the belief that a variety of actions can lead to a desired result (Ford, 1995). MST states there is an oversimplification to contend that a specific action will produce a particular motivational result. MST emphases the key to effective intervention is to pay attention to the functional consequences of the action rather than the action itself. In other words, focusing on objectives rather than techniques is an important for motivational interventionist. The Stay safe website engages the victims by teaching them about abuse and how to escape it.

Research has also identified the relationship between goal orientation and help-seeking patterns of students (Kozanitis, Desbiens, & Chouinard, 2007). In other words, research has identified the importance the effects of goal orientation on students’ level of help-seeking. Studies have shown that students who adopt mastery goals are more likely to engage in instrumental help-seeking, whereas those who adopt performance-approach goals either avoid seeking help or seek immediate or expedient help (Kozanitis et al., 2007).

Kozanitis et al. recruited 1,558 Canadian college students from 32 different classrooms to participate a self-report questionnaire. Their research was based on three main goals: The first goal was to determine direct and indirect effects of student perceptions of teacher reactions and support of questioning on students’ self-reported
instrumental help-seeking strategies. Second, they wanted to investigate the relationships between student perceptions of their teacher reaction and support of questioning and the various motivational components of learning (i.e., self-efficacy, task value, mastery goal, and performance goal). Third, the researchers wanted to examine how the four motivational components are related to one another and how each component is related to students’ help-seeking strategies. The results of the study showed the perception of teacher support and perception of teacher reaction to questioning were related in important ways to student motivation components that mediated the effects instrumental help-seeking (Kozanitis et al., 2007). Students are more likely to use strategies that characterize self-regulated learning when they perceive more support from instructors (Kozanitis et al., 2007). The motivation components measured in this study were affected. The influence of perception of teacher support was only mediated by task value. However, the task value exerts a very strong effect on mastery goal orientation, which in turn, directly predicts instrumental help-seeking (Kozanitis et al., 2007).

In an earlier study on motivation, Hancock, (1995) hypothesized matching low conceptual level people with direct instruction and high conceptual level people with non-direct instruction. Conceptual level relates to direct and non-direct instruction effects on student’s motivation to learn content. Someone who has a low conceptual level will have few cognitive structures and tend to minimize or avoid uncertainty. Someone who has high conceptual level is structurally more complex and use alternative thinking process. Hancock theorized matching direct teaching methods with low conceptual level people and non-direct teaching methods with high conceptual people would enhance the student’s academic achievement (1999). Sixty-three, third and fourth year students at the
United Stated Military Academy at West Point enrolled in a Motivation and Performance course. These students took a paragraph completion method test to assess conceptual level and placed into groups according to their scores. The results suggested that for students with low conceptual levels and a highly structured teaching method maximized their motivation to learn (Hancock, 1995). The Stay Safe is good for both low and high conceptual level people. The website is highly structured so it can maximize motivation to learn, however; it has all the information and resources for high conceptual level peoples who are motivated to work independently.

In order to increase motivation to help seek a person needs to increase their engagement level. When engagement levels are increased, people will become more competent in the skill being taught. This will ultimately lead people to believe they are more competent want to continue working towards achieving their goal. If a person does not think they are competent in an activity they will not be motivated to learn it.

According to Ford, (1995), people need to believe they are competent in the skill being taught to have motivation to initiate and maintain a goal related activity. IPV Victims need to be motivated to seek help. Victims who feel they are competent enough to take care of themselves and their children will able to leave an abusive relationship. The Stay Safe Website will give victims the tools to successfully leave their abusers which will ultimately motivate them to seek help.

**Synthesis of Literature Review**

Domestic violence poses many consequences for victims, their children and families, communities, and society. Many victims do not report the violence, therefore, they are not known to law enforcement, shelters, hospitals, and other social services
agencies (Mears, 2003). Domestic violence agencies offer important and unique services for IPV survivors. The contact a victim has with these agencies and organizations represent a unique and critical opportunity to intervene in the cycle of violence. Domestic violence agencies provide services for victims to overcome the barriers they may encounter when they are considering their options. Victims can access crisis services, legal advocacy, medical advocacy, support groups, individual counseling, and shelters when seeking help through a domestic violence agency (Macy, Johns, Rizo, Martin, & Giattina, 2011). It is essential that effective interventions be implemented to reduce the barriers victims encounter and prevent them from re-victimization.

The Stay Safe website was designed to reduce the barriers victims encounter and help motivate them to seek out help. The Safety Planning, Signs of Abuse, and the Shelters activities were designed to teach victims about violence and motivate victims to seek help. The website is designed to give victims options on how to remove the barriers that prevent them from leaving the violent relationship. Victims often do not know how to obtain a PO or they need help financially to move out or find shelter. Victims can access this information on the website 24 hours a day on the internet. This makes seeking help easier for victims to receive help because they can access the website when their batterer is away or use a safe computer at a library or work. Having this kind of access to information removes the barrier worrying about being caught and receiving retaliation.

The development of the Stay Safe Website is unique and important because it will not only assist potential clients in leaving an abusive relationship, it will also educate the community on the signs of domestic violence. Educating the community and our victims will help victims to overcome their barriers which will ultimately assist them in their...
efforts to escape the abuse. The website is set up so that victims can access services easily and will know what services are needed and are available to them. For example, a victim may not know how to get their abuser to move out of their residence. The Stay Safe website will educate victims of the need to obtain a PO and how these orders can assist them in leaving their abuser. Furthermore, interventions will be more effective if the victims are educated about the effects that the violence has on their children (Randell et. al., 2012). The Stay Safe website will address how domestic abuse affects the children. The Stay Safe website will walk the victims through a self-help process with an emphasis on getting advocacy assistance.

The Stay Safe website will be structured so that it will be easy for victims of IPV to learn how to break the cycle of violence. The website will achieve this by implementing current resources which promote safety, and legal planning. The three main performance objectives are: First, after accessing the Stay Safe website, domestic abuse clients will make a safety plan. Second, through a self-assessment procedure, clients utilize the current programs available to obtain financial assistance and safe shelter. Finally, the Stay Safe website, through a self-check process, domestic abuse clients will correctly answers questions about legal procedures and domestic violence programs available to protect child custody, immigration status, and obtaining a restraining order.

The Stay Safe Website is different than other domestic violence websites because it not only informs victims of the services that are available it also educates the community about the signs of domestic violence and how to identify people who may need help. A similar website The National Domestic Violence Hotline discusses and
identifies abuse but lacks information on local services a victim can access when seeking help. Victims of IPV are often isolated from friends and family and do not always have the knowledge of the services available. The Stay Safe Website will make help-seeking efforts easier for victims because he or she can access information on the web from any private or public computer about the different services available. Furthermore, The Stay Safe Website will educate friends and family on ways they can help. The Stay Safe Website will lists services for victims to overcome the barriers they may encounter when they are considering their options. Victims can access crisis services, legal advocacy, medical advocacy, support groups, individual counseling, and shelters and court advocacy when seeking help. It is essential that effective interventions be implemented to reduce the barriers victims encounter.
Chapter Three

Project Audience and Implementation Factors

Introduction

The Stay Safe Website will be an essential tool to help victims of IPV. The Stay Safe Website will motivate victims of IPV to seek help by educating them and the community on the severity of domestic violence and support victims of IPV can receive to overcome their barriers. Research shows there are many barriers victims of IPV encounter when trying to leave an abusive relationship (Kelly, 2009; Bostock et al., 2008; Harding & Helweg-Larson, 2003). Domestic violence agencies offer important and unique services for IPV survivors. Many victims do not report the violence, therefore, they are not known to law enforcement, shelters, hospitals, and other social services agencies (Macy et al., 2011). These agencies and organizations have a unique and critical opportunity to intervene in the cycle of violence. It is essential that effective interventions be implemented to reduce the barriers victims encounter and prevent them from future abuse and re-victimization. This chapter will discuss the developmental process, the target audience, environment and equipment, personal qualification, and a project outline for the Stay Safe Website.

Development of Project

The instructional design model being used for this product is the Dick and Carey Model. The model is a procedural system including ten major process components. (It includes nine basic steps in an iterative cycle and a culminating evaluation of the effectiveness of the instruction).
1. A needs analysis was done and an instructional goal was written on domestic abuse victims. The instructional goal is, when given the Stay Safe Website address, domestic abuse clients will access the site and complete the procedures necessary for promoting self-confidence, safety, and legal.

2. A procedural analysis was done on the steps domestic abuse victims take when implementing pertinent information given to them. Research was found at the library on advocacy services. An analysis was done on the mental operations victims would use when applying complex skills.

3. An analysis was done on domestic abuse victims and contexts by identifying their present skills, preferences and attitude as well as the characteristics of the instructional setting. The victim’s personality traits were identified and implemented.

4. Performance objectives were written and set to convert needs and goals into explicit and detailed objectives.

5. An assessment instrument was developed to determine if the website is easy to use and the content is complete.

6. Outline how the instructional activities will relate to completing the objectives.

7. An instructional strategy was developed for domestic abuse victims. An instructional sequence was developed for victims of how to implement domestic abuse information. A safety planning practice session was developed for victims to make an escape plan to know where and when it is safe to leave and what to bring with them when they do get away.
8. A formative evaluation was done of the information gathered on domestic abuse advocacy. Data was collected that was used to identify how to improve the instruction for victims. Instructions were revised so as to make the website as effective as possible.

9. A summative evaluation was done to study the effectiveness of the design as a whole. If needed, revise instruction for domestic abuse victims by evaluating data collected from the summative evaluation.

**Intended Audience**

The target audience is mainly adult women age 20 and older. However, the audience could be friends, relatives, professional in the field of domestic violence and anyone in the general public that wants to learn about domestic violence. The ethnic and cultural backgrounds are primarily Caucasians, African American, and Hispanics. Some of the audience will not speak English. The social economic status encompasses all ranges. However, there will be more clients from the middle and lower class. Their relevant prior knowledge and experience are mainly employed women with some education. Their attitude and motivation is worried about experiencing additional violence and suspicious of the programs actually working. The victims will be anxious and traumatized. Finally, they will have some misconceptions about domestic violence. They have no goals or expectations about the information at the time of the instruction. They can read and write English, however, some need assistance translating and understanding content. Technology skills are novice level for most clients. The majority of the clients are able to log onto a computer or use their smartphone to access a website but not much more.
**Personal Qualifications**

The professionals who will be maintaining the contents of Stay Safe Website are domestic violence advocates with a bachelor’s degree in Social Work or Psychology and are working with domestic violence victims. The Advocates will have the certificate from the State of California showing they have completed the 40 hour domestic violence training course. The Domestic Violence Advocates will be supervised by a Licensed Social Worker.

**Environment and Equipment**

Domestic Violence victims will access the website by using a private or public computer. The environmental conditions of access to the website will vary between victims. Prior knowledge of content will be limited for most victims. Most victims the website will assist will be able to read and write English. However, some clients will need assistance translating and understanding the websites content. There will be some clients who have had a past experience of domestic violence and will know the terminology and some of the services offered. Most clients have the motor skills and sensory ability to log on to a smartphone or computer and use a keyboard and mouse to access the website. The victims will have very basic knowledge of computers or smartphones but can maneuver on the internet.

**Project Outline**

Domestic Abuse victims will access the Stay Safe Website using a Smartphone or using computer, mouse, and a keyboard. Contents for the Stay Safe Website are outlined below.
1. What is the definition of domestic abuse and safety?
   1.1 What is the official definition of domestic abuse?
   1.2 What is internet and technology safety?

2. What is Domestic Abuse?
   2.1 What are the signs of abuse?
   2.2 How could this happen?
   2.3 Am I being controlled?
   2.4 What are some common threats?
   2.5 Could I be killed?

3. What is a Safety Plan?
   3.1 What do items I need to bring with me?
   3.2 What are some of the common questions about shelters?
   3.3 Can I call the shelter directly?
   3.4 What if I need financial assistance?

4. How does Domestic violence affect your child?
   4.1 How can I help my child to cope with the trauma?
   4.2 How does domestic abuse affect my Teen?

5. What can I do legally to help escape the abuse?
   5.1 What is the vine program?
   5.2 What is a restraining order and how can I obtain one?
   5.3. How will domestic violence affect child custody?
Chapter Four

Conclusion

Summary

The purpose of this project is to develop a website which will assist victims of IPV to escape the domestic abuse. The Stay Safe website will be a life line for victims in the San Fernando Valley to receive additional advocacy. The website will assist the community by providing family, friends, or other people in the public with pertinent information on domestic abuse and what they should do if they suspect someone is being abused.

Evaluation

Formative Evaluation. A formative assessment survey was developed to evaluate the effectiveness and ease of usability Stay Safe Website. Five adult people view the content and completed a survey. The participants are all live in the Los Angeles area. To assess whether the participants liked the website, a likert scale was used. The likert was rated on a scale of one to five. A rating of one means the participant disliked the website. A rating of three means the participant neither liked nor disliked the website. A rating of five means the participants liked the website. Six questions regarding ease of navigation, clarity of content, effectiveness of content, educational aspects, locating recourses quickly, the overall view of the website were asked. The participants all rated the Stay Safe Website a five. There was one open ended question in the survey. This question asked the participant to briefly state what could be improved on the Stay Safe Website. One participant stated he liked the website but noted the punctuation needed to be consistent throughout the website. A thorough content check for grammar and
punctuation was performed to correct any errors. Two participants stated the charts were unclear. To give victims a better understanding of the charts, a concise explanation will be added to all pages containing them.

**Summative Evaluation.** There will be a study conducted on the victims one year after the intervention and access to the Stay Safe Website. Researchers will study a group of domestic abuse victims who have not received intervention through a website (control group) and compare it to victims who use the Stay Safe site (experimental group). The control group sample will be taken from police department statistical database on domestic abuse calls where advocates were not present when police spoke with the victim. Surveys will be sent to the control and experimental groups. The surveys will examine the knowledge and effectiveness victims have on, making and successfully completing a safety plan, the effectiveness of the escape from the abusive partner, knowing and utilizing the services available for domestic abuse victims, and understanding and maneuvering the legal system. Statistical test wills be done to compare and determine if intervention made with assistance through the Stay Safe website is effective.

**Discussion**

The project supports victims of IPV by making help-seeking easier and educating the community on domestic violence so they can assist victims during this traumatizing event. Since the 1970’s public awareness of domestic violence increased due to the devoted efforts of domestic violence advocates. Society has responded to violence occurring in an intimate relationship. However, victims still have barriers that prevent them from seeking help. Domestic violence has been perceived as a private matter. Most
family and friends do not know how to help their loved one escape the abuse. The Stay Safe Website will educate the public on domestic abuse and offer the proper resources that will enhance the help-seeking process.

One question this research project raised is what specific element of the website intervention served to protect the victims from further abuse and increase their quality of life. This project cannot give a definitive answer to that question, however; we will give an interpretation. Interventions are unique to each individual and are based on the personal need. Most interventions have some common threads. Here are three examples of interventions with shared needs. First, the victims, not the advocate, guide the direction of the intervention. Second, the website activities were designed to make the community more responsive to the victim’s needs, not to change survivors thinking or their belief system. Finally, domestic abuse survivors are all competent adults who are capable of making decisions. It is believed that the success of this website will be due to providing non-judgmental, supportive, and active assistance to victims.

**Future Work/Research**

The Stay Safe Website will be used to advocate and assist victims of domestic violence in the help seeking process. More research needs to be done on the effectiveness of domestic violence websites, the information would help to improve the website and make it easier for victims to access information and resources. Changes in technology have made it easier to educate the community on domestic violence. In the future, the website should work together with the courts and provide a link to upload PO applications for domestic abuse victims to make it easier for them to protect themselves. The victims will not have to take time off work to go to court to get these PO. Victims
would only have to access the website, click the link restraining orders, then click upload
restraining order application. Next, the victims complete the application and file it with
the court. This improvement will make the obtaining a PO easier and done in a less
stressful environment.
References


National Coalition Against Domestic Violence Facts, NCADV. (n.d.) Retrieved November 13, 2012 from National Coalition Against Domestic Violence website: 


Appendix A

Screen Shots of Stay Safe Website.

Screen Shot for Stay Safe Website, Home Page.
Screen Shot of Stay Safe Website, What is Domestic Violence Page.

If you are scared and want to speak to a counselor please call the Domestic Abuse Center at 818-904-1700

Screen Shot of Stay Safe Website, Am I being Controlled Page.
Screen Shot of Stay Safe Website, Am I being Controlled Page, Power and Control Wheel.

Screen Shot of Stay Safe Website, Making a Safety Plan Page.
Screen Shot of Stay Safe Website, Making a Safety Plan Page, Safety Planning Worksheet.
Screen Shot of Stay Safe Website, How Does Domestic Violence Effect Your Child Page.
Screen Shot of Stay Safe Website, Legal Aspects Page.

Screen Shot of Stay Safe Website, Contact Us Page.
Appendix B

Stay Say Website Evaluation Survey

Please answer the questions on a scale of 1 – 5,

1= Dislike 2. = You dislike most but not all 3. = Neither like nor dislike . 4. = like most but not all 5. Like

1. Was it easy to navigate the Stay Safe Website?

   1  2  3  4  5

2. Was the content clear and easy to locate.

   1  2  3  4  5

3. Was the content informative?

   1  2  3  4  5

4. Did you learn new information about domestic violence?

   1  2  3  4  5

5. Were you able to locate resources quickly and easily?

   1  2  3  4  5

6. What was your overall view of the Stay Safe Website?

   1  2  3  4  5

7. Briefly tell what you think could improve the Stay Safe Website.