BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN CHILDREN OF BATTERED WOMEN: THE ROLE OF PARENTING STYLE AND AFFECT

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the Department of Family Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science at the University of Manitoba Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada 1993
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to examine how women who experience high levels of stress and conflict with their partners, discipline their children. More specifically, it was predicted that experiencing abuse influences maternal affect, defined as hostility and depression, and that this affect influences maternal child rearing strategies, which in turn influence child behavior problems. Questionnaires were administered to 30 battered and 30 non-battered women with children between the ages of four and six.

The results of the regression analyses are explained in terms of maternal compensation or buffering. That is, despite experiencing high levels of hostility and depression, battered women seem to provide normative levels of nurturance to their children and low levels of control. These maternal parenting behaviors may reflect an attempt to compensate for the presence of a domineering and controlling man in the home. Their efforts to provide warmth and discipline to children, however, tend to be inconsistent. Also, maternal efforts to buffer the children from domestic violence seem to be somewhat inhibited when the mother experiences hostility. Consistent with findings of parenting research, low levels of parental nurturance, sensitivity, consistency and organization were found to be strongly related to the development of behavior problems in children. These findings highlight the importance of including parent education and training in the counselling of battered women.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The North American family has traditionally been viewed as a source of love, support, nurturance and protection. However, an increasing number of reports of abuse and violence are beginning to shatter this idyllic picture. The extent of abuse is reflected in the development of numerous terms to describe it, such as abuse, violence, assault, domestic violence, intimate violence, wife assault, family violence, interspousal assault, maltreatment, and wife battering. Abuse consists of several forms of injurious or damaging treatment: physical (bodily harm), sexual (forced sexual contact), and emotional (psychological injury consisting of neglect and/or verbal harassment/criticism) (Martin & Walters, 1982). Its victims comprise all age groups including children, adolescents, parents, and the elderly.

All forms of abuse have existed throughout the centuries (Bakan, 1971). However, they were not and perhaps still are not consistently reported because abuse is a delicate and concealed violation. However, there was a 225% increase in reporting of all forms of maltreatment between 1976 and 1987 (Gelles & Conte, 1990). Kennedy and Dutton (1989) reported that prevalence rates of men beating their female partners have increased throughout North America since 1979. These researchers estimate that the number of women who are battered in Canada each year range from 17% to 55% of all Canadian women.
The casualties of spousal abuse include not only the women, but also their children. It is estimated that each year there are 3.3 million American children living in maritally violent homes (Carlson, 1984). These children have been found to be at risk for the development of behavior problems (Hughes & Barad, 1983; Jaffe, Wolfe, & Wilson, 1990; Wolfe & Mosk, 1983). However, it is not clear that the relationship between witnessing abuse and social-emotional maladjustment is a direct one, and all the factors mediating this relationship have not been identified.

It is widely held that children’s exposure to male violence teaches children to employ aggressive problem-solving skills such as using force to obtain goals, intimidating by shouts or threats and manipulating, as taught by their violent fathers (NiCarthy, 1982). Also, children may develop what seem to be dysfunctional behaviors (e.g., running away, intervening in the conflict) in an attempt to alleviate their internal distress created by the violence (Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson, 1990). Another proposed contributor to child behavior problems includes the stress (e.g., health problems, emotional disorders, and low social support) directly associated with male violence. These adverse conditions directly inhibit the appropriate training of life management and developmental skills thus resulting in maladaptive child behaviors (Wolfe, 1987). An additional factor yet to be closely examined is the parenting strategies employed by abused mothers. Women experiencing high levels of stress and conflict with their partners may be less effective in managing their children’s
behavior than are women in supportive and satisfying partnerships. It is this latter issue which will be addressed in the present study.

While the characteristics of battered women and the behavior problems of their children have been examined individually by researchers, relationships between them have not been addressed. The present study is an attempt to bridge isolated research findings through an examination of the ways in which battered women parent their children. The relationships between the experience of abuse, the emotions generated by that experience, and parenting behavior will be examined in an attempt to explain how this one factor may contribute to the development of behavior problems in children of battered women. As abusive behavior has been shown to transmit across generations (Gelles, 1980; Kaufman & Zigler, 1987), an understanding of the specific mechanisms by which these parents socialize their children may facilitate the development of effective interventions to prevent these children from becoming adult perpetrators of violence. Also, more knowledge of how women feel about and interact with their children will assist counsellors in empowering women to effectively discipline their children.

In this chapter, research concerned with characteristics of children of violent couples will be reviewed. Then, research on marital conflict will be reviewed in order to provide possible explanations for these childhood behavior characteristics. Finally, parental discipline strategies and battered women's
affective states will be discussed in order to provide a foundation for understanding how the parenting behavior of battered women may mediate child behavior problems.

**Children of Battered Women**

Since the 1980s, researchers have begun to document the numerous behavioral, affective, and cognitive adverse effects on children of abused women. These children have been found to differ in a number of ways from children of non-abused women. First, they are more likely to develop behavioral difficulties including a greater number of both externalizing and internalizing behaviors (Wolfe & Mosk, 1983). For example, Hughes and Barad (1983) reported higher frequencies of conduct disorders of aggressive and violent forms, while Hughes (1986) found a greater likelihood of withdrawn, passive, clinging and dependent behaviors. Alessi and Hearn (1984) found that preschoolers in shelters for battered women showed signs of terror, such as yelling, irritable behavior, hiding, shaking and stuttering. It has been estimated that approximately 30% of the children of maritally abusive couples become the next generation’s abusive husbands and abused wives (Kaufman & Zigler, 1987), as compared to 2% to 4% of children in the general population (Straus & Gelles, 1986). Also, these children are likely to have serious adjustment problems during adulthood, such as criminal behavior, alcoholism, and mental illness, and tend to die earlier than other people (McCord, 1983).
Second, affective dysfunctions are common among children of battered women. These include anxiety (Jaffe et al., 1990), depression (Wolfe & Mosk, 1983), low empathy (Hinchey & Gavelek, 1982), severe emotional difficulties (Jaffe, Wolfe, Wilson, & Zak, 1986), anger and overt hostility (Hilberman & Munson, 1978), and rage (Jaffe, Wilson & Wolfe, 1986). Elbow (1982) has described these children as displaying internalization of blame, low self-esteem, shame of the hidden violence, and guilt out of a sense that they could have prevented the violence.

Third, cognitive difficulties are frequently found in children of battered women. Hilberman and Munson (1978) found these children to have impaired concentration spans and difficulty with school work. Westra and Martin (1981) reported that children from violent homes scored significantly lower than the general population on measures of verbal, motor, and cognitive abilities. Also, these children often show academic impairment (Haffner, 1979) and impaired concentration spans (Hilberman & Munson, 1978).

The above review provides a sample of the numerous studies which have documented adjustment problems in children of battered women across all areas of functioning. However, behavioral, emotional and cognitive differences between children of battered and non-battered women are not always found (Rosenbaum & O’Leary, 1981; Wolfe, Zak, Wilson, & Jaffe, 1986). Methodological problems including failure to determine if the children of abused women have also been abused, the use of different sampling
criteria, and different measures of child adjustment among studies may account for inconsistent results. Further, the effects of observing male perpetrated violence may be moderated by such factors as child characteristics (e.g., gender, temperament), the amount of social support the child has, and certain parental characteristics (Wolfe, Zak, Wilson, & Jaffe, 1986). For example, Wolfe, Jaffe, Wilson and Zak (1985) found that poor maternal health, high maternal stress, and frequent family crises accounted for 19% of the variance in behavior problems among children exposed to violence. Also, the child’s gender, the frequency of abuse, and the intensity of the abuse helped to account for the association between male perpetrated violence and child adjustment problems. Thus, it seems that children are indirectly affected by observing violence (Wolfe et al., 1985), and that this relationship is modified by several variables.

Clearly, the relationship between battery of a mother and the emergence of behavior problems in her children is a complex one. To date, this relationship has not been adequately examined and research in this area has been more descriptive than explanatory. However, studies of marital conflict (which includes but is not limited to physical conflict) offer some explanations of the development of adjustment problems in children growing up in families experiencing high levels of conflict. In the following section, this literature will be reviewed in an attempt to identify the mechanisms by which
marital conflict and, by extrapolation, wife assault may contribute to the development of behavior problems in children.

**Marital Conflict Research**

**Theory and Research Linking Marital and Child Problems**

Several hypotheses regarding the relationship between male perpetrated violence and childhood disorders have emerged. First, it has been thought that hostility may interfere with a parent’s modeling of appropriate behavior, and thus that the child’s behavior problems may be acquired through imitation of inappropriate behavior (Schwarz, 1979). However, research showing the correspondence between parents’ expressions of hostility and children’s responses to witnessing it provides limited support for this hypothesis. (Emery, 1982). Also, the hypothesis of direct modelling does not account for the internalizing difficulties or the wide range of symptoms often seen in these children (Silvern & Kaersvang, 1989).

A second hypothesis is based on attachment theory. Bowlby (1973) was the first to state that infants who are separated from their mothers are unable to develop a secure mother-child attachment which is crucial for their affective, cognitive and behavioral development. Building on Bowlby’s theory, Ainsworth (1979) argued that insecure attachment is likely to develop not only when the mother and child are separated but also when a mother is insensitive, unresponsive or inappropriately responsive to her infant’s behavioral cues. This emotional insecurity has been linked to numerous child behavior problems, such as
delinquency (Hirschi, 1969), low sense of well-being (Bowlby, 1973), aggression (Veroff & Veroff, 1971), and depression (Brown, 1982). Thus, it has been suggested that marital conflict may interfere with a mother’s ability to respond sensitively to her infant, resulting in the development of insecurity in the child and through this, the development of behavior problems. Indeed, Bond and McMahon (1984) found a trend among maritally distressed mothers toward providing fewer rewards, less praise, less positive contact, and fewer verbal descriptions of the child’s activity than did maritally nondistressed mothers. However, Ainsworth’s research has mainly focused on maternal emotional support behaviors which directly relate to childhood disorders and less on maternal control strategies.

Another hypothesis is that marital turmoil may produce childhood disorders through its effects on discipline practices. As a result of conflict, discipline techniques may change and/or inconsistent strategies (either between parents or in the practices of a single parent) may develop (Emery, 1982). Belsky (1981) has argued that what transpires between the husband and wife might affect a parent’s caregiving attitudes and/or behavior, which in turn could influence the child’s functioning. For example, mothers who are themselves "punished" violently by their partners for minor transgressions may interact negatively and employ harsh disciplinary strategies with their children. Indeed, Bond and McMahon (1984) found a trend among maritally distressed mothers toward providing more commands for which there
was no opportunity for compliance, fewer verbal descriptions of the child's activity, less praise, and less positive physical contact than did maritally nondistressed mothers. Also, children of the former exhibited significantly more inappropriate behavior than children of the latter. Marital distress has been found to contribute to extreme forms of parenting. For example, Patterson (1979) found that marital distress results in a change to overly lax parenting, while Johnson and Lobitz (1974) found a change to more harsh parenting styles and negative parent-child interactions. The importance of the interactions between the parents and children is demonstrated in Hess and Camara's (1979) finding that the quality of parent-child relations predicted a greater proportion of the variance in child adjustment than did interparental conflict.

**Operationalization of Conflict**

It is widely held by both professionals and lay people that marital conflict is the cause of a variety of behavior problems in childhood (Emery, 1982). However, results demonstrating the effects of marital discord on children have been inconsistent. For example, four studies (Ferguson & Allen, 1978; Johnson & Lobitz, 1974; Oltmanns, Broderick & O’Leary, 1977; Porter & O’Leary, 1980) demonstrated that children with higher levels of deviant behavior are more likely to have parents with marital problems than are children with lower levels of deviant behavior. In another study (Griest, Forehand, Wells, & McMahon, 1980), however, marital adjustment was not found to be related to levels
of noncompliant child behavior.

These discrepancies may be the result of poor operationalization of hostility and conflict in the literature and resulting heterogeneity of results. That is, it is unclear whether the couples who were identified as hostile and distressed were also experiencing abuse and violence. Physical aggression must be differentiated from mild and more severe forms of verbal aggression for several reasons. First, abuse, threats, and severe anger are more likely to be associated with extreme conflict than with mild to moderate conflict (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980). Second, conflict almost certainly accompanies violence, while violence does not necessarily accompany conflict (Lloyd, 1990). Third, the nature of disagreements between high conflict couples is different from those between violent couples (see Lloyd, 1990). For example, violent couples are less likely than conflicting couples to engage in squabbles and more likely to engage in high levels of verbal attack, anger and withdrawal strategies making problems difficult to resolve. Fourth, although conflict is an inherent part of human interaction, violence is not (Straus & Gelles, 1990).

On an intuitive basis, conflict and violence would seem to be related. However, violence is neither necessary nor sufficient for conflict to occur. Therefore, it is important to differentiate between physical and verbal aggression in couples as these may have differential effects on the children. Jouilres, Murphy, and O’Leary (1989) found that marital physical
aggression contributed unique variance to the prediction of child behavior problems beyond that contributed by marital discord. In the present study, an attempt will be made to address this methodological weakness in the research related to the parenting practices of couples experiencing high levels of conflict through an exclusive focus upon women who have been physically abused by their male partners.

**Abused Women’s Parenting in the Present Study**

It has been seen that marital distress may contribute to the development of child behavior problems through its interference with effective parenting practices. Parenting involves a highly complex set of skills, behaviors and processes, at least some of which may be impaired under conditions of stress and conflict. There is reason to expect, then, that the behavior problems often seen in children of abused mothers may be at least partially related to inappropriate parenting among these women.

Psychological and emotional distress resulting from the men’s abuse may interfere with such desirable parenting behaviors as providing attention, warmth, stimulation, sensitivity, responsiveness and moderate restriction. Further, battered women have been shown to generate fewer and less effective coping strategies (Launius & Jensen, 1987). This deficit may interfere with their ability to cope with the demands of their infants or young children. Thus, it may be hypothesized that the experience of abuse predisposes battered mothers to respond ineffectively to their children’s misbehavior.
The purpose of the present study is to determine whether parenting behaviors are impaired in women who are battered and, if so, which aspects of parenting are impaired. In the following section, a review of the parenting literature and those parenting behaviors that seem to be most relevant to child behavior problems will be presented, as will a comprehensive model of parenting behavior which will provide a framework for the examination of parenting by battered women.

**Parenting Behaviors and Their Relation to Children’s Adjustment**

During the 1910s and 1920s, systematic findings began to emerge on the relations between disciplinary techniques and child behavior (Becker, 1964). Strictness, permissiveness, consistency, and type of reinforcement were explored in relation to child development. Through the 1940s and 1950s most of the parenting variables studied could be classified as falling within two dimensions, control and warmth (for example, Schaefer, 1959, 1961. The control dimension ranges from lax and permissive parenting to restrictive and demanding parenting. The warmth dimension ranges from hostile, critical, unaccepting, and self-centered behaviors to accepting, affectionate, approving, and understanding behaviors. These two dimensions were found to be independent (Schaefer, 1959, 1961). For example, highly controlling parents exhibit varying degrees of warmth. It is the interaction between control and warmth that influences child behavior (Becker, 1964). In general, moderate levels of control combined with high levels of warmth are associated with fewer
child behavior problems than are high levels of control combined with low levels of warmth (Becker, 1964).

Leading the succeeding stage of parenting research, Baumrind (1966, 1967, 1971) constructed a three-factor typology of parenting behavior and related these parenting types to the development of specific child characteristics. Those parents who are flexible, respond to their children's needs, permit child autonomy, and use power and reason to gain obedience (inductive discipline) Baumrind labelled "authoritative". They tended to have children who are self-reliant, purposive, self-controlled and cooperative with adults. Those, parents who impose many rules on their children, are very controlling, provide few explanations for their strictness and rely on punitive tactics, Baumrind called "authoritarian". They tended to have children who are withdrawn and inhibited. Those parents who are lax, make few demands, permit their children freedom of expression and rarely exert firm control Baumrind classified as "permissive". They tended to have children who are hostile, rebellious and delinquent.

Current models of parenting tend to be more elaborate than the earlier 2- and 3-dimensional models. For example, Slater and Power (1987) have constructed what is, arguably, the most complex and comprehensive parenting model to date. It is organized hierarchically, being comprised of three categories of parenting behavior, each of which consists of three dimensions. This model will be presented here in some detail, as it provides a
significant part of the framework of the present study. 

Slater and Power's Parenting Model

The three major categories of parenting behaviors proposed by this model are parental support, control and structure.

Parental support. The parental support category can be operationally defined as praising, approving, encouraging, helping, cooperating, expressing terms of endearment, and giving physical affection (Straus & Tallman, 1971). This category consists of three important and related dimensions. The first is nurturance (i.e., warmth, love, and affection), which refers to the emotional climate of the parent-child relationship. The second dimension is sensitivity to the child's behavior, which refers to the ability of the parent to consider the child. The third dimension is a nonrestrictive attitude which is defined as allowing the child to explore, express feelings, and attempt new activities. These three factors have been found to correlate positively with children's competence, self-reliance and compliance (Baldwin, 1955; Baumrind, 1971; Becker, 1964).

Parental control. This category is defined as behavior of the parent toward the child with the intent of directing the behavior of the child in a manner desirable to the parents (Rollins & Thomas, 1979). Like parental support, parental control is multidimensional. One dimension is type of control, which includes authoritative, flexible, inductive, authoritarian, or restrictive parenting behaviors. The second and third dimensions are amount of control exerted and the parent's
maturity demands for the children. The placements of a parent's behavior along these three dimensions are important correlates of the child's competence. Specifically, parents who are flexible, authoritative, use moderate control, and have reasonable demands for the child's maturity are more likely to have children who are self-reliant, well-adjusted and compliant (Baumrind, 1967; Burger & Armentrout, 1971).

**Parental structure.** The parental structure category refers to the dimensions of involvement, consistency and organization of the child's environment. It is thought that predictable, involved parents who create an organized setting for their children assist their children in creating an internal structure for themselves (Brunner, 1978), and that this is critical for optimal development (Fein & Clarke-Stewart, 1973).

**Parenting Behaviors of Battered Women**

Slater and Power (1987) found that these nine dimensions are core parenting variables and are predictive of child behavior problems. Children with relatively few behavior problems tend to have parents who are more nurturing and emotionally warm, are more open and sensitive, are less restrictive in their parenting attitudes, provide more organization for their children's environment, are more consistent in their parenting behaviors, are not overinvolved, set some rules and assume control, are less reliant on external control strategies to discipline their children, and place higher maturity demands on their children, than those parents whose children display more behavior problems.
The link between parenting behaviors and child adjustment problems may explain the adjustment difficulties often seen in children of battered women. On the basis of the marital conflict research, there is reason to expect that abused mothers use less effective parenting strategies than do non-abused mothers. However, a question that remains is whether battered mothers are more likely to provide higher or lower levels of support, control and structure to their children than do non-battered women. For example, it is possible that these mothers become frustrated and angry toward their abusive partners and that they release their anger onto their children, resulting in harsh authoritarian parenting. However, it is also possible that they become worn by the abuse and lack sufficient energy to parent their children adequately. Therefore, there may not be only one outcome of battery in terms of its effects on parenting. It is hypothesized here that the experience of battery does not by itself determine parenting behavior. Rather, the affective state of the battered women may contribute to the behavior she displays toward her children. In the following section, evidence for the relationship between affective states and parenting characteristics is presented.

Affect and Behavior in Battered Women

To date, the literature describing the affect and behavior displayed by battered women has been unclear, as the results of studies describing general characteristics of these women are discrepant. Failure to control variables (e.g., duration of
abuse experienced), use of unstructured interviews and anecdotal information, and little reporting of the frequency and intensity of responses have prevented a clear understanding of the affective and behavioral functioning of battered women. It has been assumed that battered women are a homogeneous group; however, from the wide range of characteristics reported by battered women, it appears that subgroups may exist. For example, on the basis of results of unstructured interviews with women visiting a shelter, Walker (1979) collapsed several dissimilar features of abused women into a category labeled the Battered Woman Syndrome. These women are said to feel helpless, powerless, passive, compliant, dependent and depressed, and yet report anger and a strong need to control everything in their environment. Such inconsistencies are not uncommon in the research describing battered women. Hofeller (1982), found that her sample of battered women believed that women should ideally be submissive and nonassertive, are inferior to men, should accept whatever the husband’s life brings, and should allow husbands to control many areas of their lives. However, Gelles (1972) found that some battered women report engaging in pitched verbal arguments with their spouses, even resorting to violence themselves at times. Such discrepancies were also found in a study of battered women conducted by Hilberman and Munson (1978); during unstructured interviews, some of their subjects indicated that they displayed outward aggression and aggressive impulses toward their spouses or children, while the majority of women
indicated they consistently directed aggression towards themselves and displayed passive behavior.

These apparently contradictory findings may reflect sampling heterogeneity, in that different groups of women may respond differently to the experience of abuse. It is argued here that some battered women become angry as a result of being abused and display high levels of hostility. Others, however, become depressed and display sadness and passivity. Over a period of time, these groups of women may develop hostile and depressive affective dispositions, respectively. Therefore, a second confound in the research of battered women may be researchers’ failure to control for the length of time over which the abuse has occurred. That is, a stable affective disposition may not have yet formed at the time of a woman’s participation in a given study.

The difference between women who respond with anger and those who respond with sadness may be at least partially attributable to individual differences in social information processing. Some battered women attribute the responsibility for the violence to the batterer while others see themselves as blameworthy (Hofeller, 1982). These different attributions are associated with different affective states (Beck, 1976) which are also associated with different behaviors (Dix & Grusec, 1985; Dix & Lochman, 1990; Weiner, 1980). Externalizing blame is likely to accompany anger towards others (Beck, 1976; Weiner, Graham, & Chandler, 1982), while self-blame (personalization) is a
characteristic of depression (Beck, 1976; Weiner et al., 1982). Further, angry and hostile thoughts are related to harsh and aggressive behavior (Buss, 1961), while depressive thoughts are related to a diminished interest in activities (Beck, 1967).

Therefore, some battered women may form hostile dispositions while others may form depressive dispositions as a result of experiencing abuse over a period of time and these affective dispositions may be related to the behavior displayed toward others, including their children. It is hypothesized that the affective disposition formed from experiencing male violence mediates the effect of battery on parenting behavior which, in turn, mediate the effect of battery on child behavior. In the following sections maternal hostility and depression will be examined, and predictions regarding their influence on parenting behaviors will then be made.

**Maternal Hostility**

Research in health psychology has found that anger and hostility are not just transient emotional states but also stable personality traits (Novaco, 1985). Novaco (1985) states that, "chronic anger responses reflect a mode of coping with stress linked to cognitive structures and behavior patterns."

The occurrence of chronic hostility in many battered women is demonstrated in several studies. Stewart and duBlois (1981) and Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1980) showed that interspousal aggression is strongly associated with aggression between parents and children. Novaco (1985) states that both these types of
aggression are typically prompted by unmanaged anger. Thus, those mothers who respond to male violence with violence against their children may be demonstrating "maternal reciprocity" (Holden & Ritchie, 1991; Pfouts, 1978; Straus, 1983). In other words, some women who are repeatedly assaulted and are subjected to their husbands' anger, power assertion, demands for strict obedience, extreme irrational control, imposition of many rules, and few opportunities for freedom of expression, may experience anger which may impinge on their interactions with their children. Hilberman and Munson (1978) noted that in families in which the women are battered, children were often battered by these women.

Several factors characterize the nature of hostile people's interactions. First, experiencing hostility will likely alter affect expressions. On an intuitive basis, it could be hypothesized that the experience of degradation, physical injury, and fear together with overt anger and hostility will inhibit the expression of warmth, nurturance and sensitivity. Evidence for this argument has been provided in several studies. Pulkkinen (1982) found that anger correlated highly with selfish treatment and negativism towards others. Also, Johnson and Lobitz (1974) found that in a family where marital problems are present, increases in child deviance and parental threats, disapproval, and humiliation are observed as a result of a general increase in parents' anger. Anger is also associated with disapproving, threatening, refusing requests, physical aggression, and ignoring

Battered women learn to be highly submissive to husbands who are very controlling, expect strict obedience from their wives, are punitive and forceful, and use power assertion to gain compliance. In an attempt to gain some control in the family, some of these mothers may employ harsh and controlling behaviors with their children. Walker (1979) found a great need among some of these women to control others in their environment through manipulation, as they believe there is less likelihood of a battering incident if the environment is kept as stress-free as possible. Further evidence that hostile mothers may employ strict control is provided by Dix, Ruble and Zambarano (1989), who found that authoritarian mothers report becoming more upset with their children and respond with greater sternness even after the researchers statistically controlled for mothers' attributions for their children's competence. Also, Dix and Grusec (1985) stated that angry parents are probably more likely to punish or insult their children and are less likely to explain issues carefully than are calm parents.

In addition, aggression results from the absence of appropriate alternative response capabilities (Novaco, 1985). Since battered women are shown to generate fewer and less effective coping strategies (Launius & Jensen, 1987) than are non-battered women, it is likely that battered women who
characteristically externalize their anger employ aggressive and physical tactics when disciplining their children. In further support of this view, Trickett and Kuczynski (1986) found that abusive parents were twice as likely as nonabusive parents to feel angry or irritated after disciplining their children.

**Maternal Depression**

A depressed disposition is a second possible outcome of abuse (Walker, 1979). Instead of openly displaying anger and hostility, some women may deny and suppress these emotions and, as a result, may become somewhat depressed. Depressed individuals tend to have difficulty maintaining minimal self-esteem, see themselves as unlovable, feel inadequate to meet the daily demands of life, are compliant, become easily downhearted and remorseful, have a poor evaluation of their personality, and feel inadequate, worthless and of little or no value as a family member (Hartik, 1982).

Depression is viewed as being primarily a thought disorder (Willner, 1985), in that the person’s emotional disturbance follows from distortions in thinking. These cognitions have a causal influence on behavior (Kuczynski, 1984; Weiner, 1980). A leading proponent of this view is Beck (1976), who outlined three main components of depression: negative automatic thoughts, systematic logical errors, and depressogenic schemata. The schemata are described as long-lasting attitudes or assumptions about the world that represent the way in which the individual organizes his or her past experience. For example, some battered
women are told by their husbands that if they cooked better meals or stopped nagging, they would never be hit again. Many women report that they indeed feel the beatings are their fault, and the stability of this depressogenic thought is demonstrated in their stating that they carry the emotional scars all the time (Hofeller, 1982). Further, the feelings of worthlessness induced by these verbal attacks tend to generalize to other interpersonal relationships (Hofeller, 1982).

Depressed people show a diminution of physical and mental drive, exhaustion, a loss of interest in people and activities, a loss of hope, and slowness in thinking and answering (Watts, 1966). Additional studies report that depressed patients talk slowly (Pope, Blass, Seligman, & Raher, 1970), have a high proportion of silence in their speech (Pope et al., 1970), have difficulty in initiating responses and maintaining responses over a period of time (Willner, 1985), and are particularly slow to respond following negative social reactions, such as disagreement or criticism (Grosscup & Lewinsohn, 1980). These characteristics are found to be reflected in reductions in such parental behaviors as monitoring children’s behavior, making demands, and exerting firm control with the children (Zelkowitz, 1982). For example, maternal depression has been associated with low parental nurturance, warmth and affection (Longfellow, Zelkowitz, & Saunders, 1982), and with the use of inconsistent discipline strategies (Zelkowitz, 1982). Also, Patterson (1979) and Wahler (1980) have found that when marital problems cause a parent to
become depressed, a change to overly lax parenting may be particularly likely, and Davidson (1978) has stated that depression in mothers results in diminishing involvement with the physical and emotional needs of their children.

Kochanska and her colleagues have studied maternal depression in relation to parenting (Kochanska, Kuczynski, & Maguire, 1989; Kochanska, Kuczynski, Radke-Yarrow, & Welsh, 1987; Radke-Yarrow, Cummings, Kuczynski, & Chapman, 1985). They have found that in general, depressed parents are less involved in childrearing, choose less effortful resolutions to conflict, and withdraw more in conflict, as compared to non-depressed parents (Kochanska et al., 1987). In one study, however, Kochanska found that mothers of five-year-olds used significantly more direct commands than non-depressed mothers (Kochanska et al., 1989). However, it must be noted that the women included in the sample were of middle to high socioeconomic status (SES), and research has repeatedly shown that low SES mothers employ more control strategies than high SES mothers. Therefore, it is possible that low SES depressed mothers may show different parenting behaviors than high SES depressed mothers. Also, this study reported proportions of commands rather than total frequencies. Thus, it cannot be concluded that depressed mothers are more controlling than non-depressed mothers.

On the basis of these arguments and findings, it is postulated that battered mothers who are depressed will differ from other battered mothers in the following way. Depressed
battered mothers may employ lax and inactive child disciplinary strategies as a result of slow coping responses, suppressed behavior, and a depressed affective state. They may feel inadequate as parents, find little enjoyment in parenting and therefore withdraw from disciplining responsibilities.

**Purpose of the Present Study**

Because the contribution of parenting to the development of behavior problems in children of battered women has not been studied, the objective of the present study is to investigate the specific mechanisms by which abused women socialize their children. The relationships among the experience of male violence, the development of affective dispositions, and parenting behavior will be examined and their relative contributions to the development of behavior problems in children will be assessed. The results will provide an initial step in understanding the relationships between battered mothers and their children, which will facilitate the development of more effective intervention in treating these children’s behavior problems.

**Hypotheses**

On the basis of the above review, a model explaining the relationship between battered women and their children’s behavior problems was constructed. It was hypothesized that battery influences women’s affective dispositions, inducing either hostility or depression; these dispositions, in turn, influence
battered mothers' parenting behaviors. Women who externalize anger would likely provide low levels of support and structure to, and exert high levels of control over their children. On the other hand, women who are depressed are likely to provide low levels of support and structure to, and exert low levels of control over their children. These parenting behaviors were expected to contribute to behavior problems in the children. The combination of male violence, affective state, and parenting behavior was expected to predict behavior problems in children more fully than would each variable in isolation.

The following are specific hypotheses regarding how subgroups (hostile or depressed) of battered women parent their children. The categories of parenting behavior were taken from Slater and Power's (1987) model.

Support Category

Maternal hostility. It was predicted that hostile battered women would show little nurturance and sensitivity to their children because their intense anger inhibits the expression of warmth. As anger has been associated with disapproving of and ignoring others' actions (Biglan et al., 1986), it was expected these women would have a highly restricting attitude where they provide little understanding, patience and encouragement towards their children's explorative activities. Thus, among battered women, high levels of hostility would be associated with low levels of warmth and sensitivity, and high levels of restrictiveness.
Maternal depression. It was predicted that depressed battered women would show low levels of nurturance and sensitivity toward their children because of their overwhelming emotional distress. In contrast to hostile battered women, depressed battered women were expected to exhibit low levels of parental restrictiveness due to their passivity and withdrawal. Therefore, among battered women, high levels of depression would be associated with low levels of warmth and sensitivity, and low levels of restrictiveness.

Control Category

Maternal hostility. As anger has been associated with parental sternness (Dix et al., 1989), parental threats, and physical aggression (Biglan et al., 1986), it was predicted that hostile battered women would employ rigid and highly controlling discipline strategies with their children. Obedience can be immediately obtained by allowing children little freedom and by simply controlling their behavior. It was therefore predicted that among battered women, high levels of hostility would be associated with high levels of control.

Maternal depression. It was predicted that depressed battered women would employ different control strategies than those employed by hostile battered women. More specifically, the depressed women were expected to engage in permissive strategies when interacting with their children as a result of their diminished interest in others and activities. Thus it was hypothesized that high levels of depression would be associated
with low levels of control among battered women.

Structure Dimension

**Maternal hostility.** It was hypothesized that hostile battered women would show overinvolvement, as suggested by findings describing their need to control others in their environment (Walker, 1979). Also, they were expected to provide low levels of consistency and organization of the child’s environment due to the partner’s violent outbursts which result in the disruption of daily duties, roles, decision making, problem solving, and care. Therefore, high levels of hostility were expected to be associated with high levels of involvement, and low levels of consistency and organization.

**Maternal depression.** It was hypothesized that, in contrast to hostile battered women, depressed battered women would show underinvolvement with their children due to their general withdrawal. Like hostile battered women, depressed battered women were expected to provide low levels of consistency or organization of the child’s environment due to the partner’s violent outbursts.

**Child Behavior**

It was predicted that parenting strategies would account for significant variance in child behavior problems. Specifically, the relatively low levels of nurturance expected among hostile and depressed battered women together with high levels of control by the former and low levels of control by the latter were expected to be associated with behavior problems in their
children.
CHAPTER II

Method

Subjects

The sample was comprised of 60 mothers, 30 battered and 30 non-battered. This sample size was selected through power calculations for correlation and regression analyses. A critical effect size of 0.4 was chosen on the basis of Slater and Power’s (1987) finding that parenting accounted for 22% of the variation in children’s behavior problems. To detect a critical effect size of 0.4 using a one-tailed test and an alpha level of 0.05 with 90% power, a minimum sample size of 53 was needed (Kraemer & Thiemann, 1987). To ensure that the sample size was adequate, 60 subjects were recruited.

Demographic Variables

As children’s age has been shown to be related to parenting strategies (Kuczynski, Kochanska, Radke-Yarrow & Girnius-Brown, 1987), and marital status to mediate the development of behavior problems (Forehand, Wierson, McCombs, Brody & Fauber, 1989), the sample was limited to mothers of children between the ages of four and six, and to those who were married or living with a male partner. As gender of the child has been shown to be related to parental behavior in terms of amount of affection displayed and punishment administered (Cherry & Lewis, 1976), demands for independence made (Becker, 1964), number of commands and aversive consequences given (Kuczynski, 1984), and anger-induced negative
interaction shown (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980), gender of the children was equally represented across the battered and non-battered groups. That is, there were 14 boys and 16 girls in the battered group and 15 boys and 15 girls in the non-battered group.

Since disciplinary strategies have been shown to be related to socio-economic status (SES) (Becker, 1964), SES of subjects was recorded (see Appendix A). SES was scored according to the Hollingshead Four-Factor Index of Social Status (1975).

Experimental Groups

Battered group. The battered group was selected from two women's shelters in Calgary, Alberta (n=15) and from one shelter in Winnipeg, Manitoba (n=15). Familial and cultural characteristics of these cities are relatively similar and thus battered women from the two cities were considered similar (Statistics Canada, 1988a, 1988b, 1992a, 1992b). For example, the proportion of family types (Statistics Canada, 1992a), and immigrant verses non-immigrant residents living in Calgary (Statistics Canada, 1988a) is virtually identical to those in Winnipeg (Statistics Canada, 1988b, 1992b). To determine whether differences existed between subjects from the two cities on any of the dependent variables, t-tests were conducted. No significant differences were found on any variables.

The women in the shelters had either decided to leave their abusive relationships permanently or were seeking temporary relief before returning. Over 90% of the sample of women brought
their children with them to the shelters.

Scores on the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) were used to verify the abuse status of women in shelters. The CTS (Appendix B) is the most widely used method of obtaining data about physical violence (Straus & Gelles, 1990). In the 19 items, respondents are asked to recall the times in the past year when they and their partners disagreed on major decisions and how their partners responded (e.g., "How often did your partner throw something at you?"). Factor analyses have yielded three subscales: reasoning (rational discussion), verbal aggression and violence.

The standardization sample (Straus & Gelles, 1990) of the CTS consisted of 6,002 households. Alpha coefficients of internal consistency were 0.50 for the reasoning subscale, 0.80 for aggression, and 0.83 for violence (Straus & Gelles, 1990). Evidence for construct validity has been provided by Szinovacz (1983), who found that higher levels of violence against a spouse, as measured by the CTS, were associated with less affection between partners, and by Resick and Reese (1986), who found that couples who are violent according to the CTS are characterized by higher levels of power asymmetry and conflict and lower levels of organization and sharing of pleasurable activities compared to non-violent couples.

For women to be classified as battered, they had to circle at least one of the items of the violence subscale of the CTS, indicating that they had experienced violence at least once in
the last year. This cut-off score is typically used by researchers conducting research in the area of wife assault (Barnes, Sommer & Murray, 1992).

The demographic characteristics of the battered group are summarized in Table 1. The majority of the battered women were married and between 19 and 39 years of age. The number of Aboriginal women equalled the number of non-Aboriginal women, and only a small number were born outside of Canada. Of the women in this group, the majority were classified as skilled workers.

In order to study women who have had an opportunity to form relatively stable affect dispositions as a result of abuse, an attempt was made to include only those mothers who had experienced a battering episode within the last month and for whom the battering had begun at least two years before their arrival at the shelter. The majority of battered women had experienced physical abuse within the last few months. Only one battered woman indicated physical abuse had last occurred over 2 1/2 years ago. However, within the last year she also was threatened with physical abuse and, it is argued, such a threat is similar to re-experiencing actual abuse itself. She was, therefore, included in the battered group.

The length of time the battered women had been experiencing physical abuse ranged from two years to 16 years with a mean of 7.8 years. However, three battered women had experienced physical abuse for just over a year. As correlations between length of abuse history and the dependent measures remained
Table 1
Demographic Statistics for the Sample of Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Battered (n=30)</th>
<th>Non-Battered (n=30)</th>
<th>Total (N=60)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of Mother*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>30.11&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>33.06&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>31.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>19-41</td>
<td>24-45</td>
<td>19-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Child&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>4.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender of Child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Boys</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Girls</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.63&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.87&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
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<td>02-05</td>
<td>02-05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% unskilled</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>11.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% skilled</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% semi-professional</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>28.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% non-Aboriginal Canadians</td>
<td>43.33&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>80.00&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>61.70</td>
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<td>% Aboriginal Canadians</td>
<td>43.33&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.33&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>23.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Western Europeans</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Married</td>
<td>66.70&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>93.30&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Common-Law</td>
<td>33.33&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.70&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequency of Physical Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minor</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Severe</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>27.13</td>
<td>0-75</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0-75</td>
<td>13.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>24.07</td>
<td>0-127</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0-127</td>
<td>12.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Means with a common subscript differ significantly from one another.

\( ^{a} \) age in years

\( ^{b} p<.05 \)

\( ^{c} p<.01 \)
stable whether these women were included in or eliminated from
the group, these three subjects were included in all analyses.

Non-battered group. The non-battered group consisted of 30
women from the Winnipeg community who responded to poster
advertisements. These ads specifically asked for women who had
at least one child between the ages of four and six years, who
had been living with their current partner for at least the last
two years and who had never experienced physical abuse by their
partners. Women who called the posted telephone number were
asked for this information and, if these criteria were met, an
interview was scheduled. A score of 0 on the CTS were used to
verify that they did not experience physical abuse.

The characteristics of this group are presented in Table 1.
The majority were married and between 29 and 39 years of age.
The majority of these women were born and raised in Canada, and
17% consisted of several ethnic minorities (e.g., Scottish,
Ukrainian, French). Very few were Aboriginal Candians. The
majority of the women were in semi-professional or skilled work.

All of these women reported that they had never been abused.
In addition, all obtained CTS scores of zero on items of minor
and/or severe violence. In order to study women who had an
opportunity to form relatively stable affect dispositions as a
result of interactions with their male partners, only those women
who have lived with their current partner for at least two years
were included in this group.
Demographic differences between the battered and non-battered groups. T-test and chi-square analyses revealed that the groups did not differ on age of children (p > .05) but did differ on age of mothers (p < .05), SES (p < .01), and ethnicity (p < .01). These variables were entered into subsequent analyses as covariates.

Measures

In order to measure hostile and depressive dispositions in the battered and non-battered women, the following measures were selected.

The Aggression Questionnaire (TAQ)

The TAQ (Buss & Perry, 1992) was developed in an attempt to improve the psychometric properties of the Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory (BDHI; Buss & Durkee, 1957), which is one of the most widely used measures of hostility (Buss & Perry, 1992). Each of the 29 items of the TAQ (see Appendix C) is rated on a five-point Likert-type scale. Factor analyses have yielded four factor scales assessing physical aggression (e.g., "If somebody hits me, I hit back."), verbal aggression (e.g., "My friends say I'm argumentative."), anger (e.g., "I have trouble controlling my temper."), and hostility (e.g., "At times I feel I have gotten a raw deal out of life"). In a normative sample consisting of 612 male and 641 female college students (Buss & Perry, 1992), the correlations found among the categories ranged from 0.25-0.48, providing some evidence for construct validity.
Internal consistency (alpha) of the four scales has been estimated to be 0.85 for physical aggression, 0.72 for verbal aggression, 0.83 for anger, 0.77 for hostility, and 0.89 for the total score in a standardization sample (Buss & Perry, 1992). In a study of 372 college students, the test-retest reliabilities over a nine-week interval were found to be 0.80 for physical aggression, 0.76 for verbal aggression, 0.72 for anger, 0.72 for hostility, and 0.80 for the total score (Buss & Perry, 1992). In the present study a total score was calculated in order to obtain an overall score assessing hostile dispositions.

Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)

The BDI (Beck, 1967) has become the inventory of choice for researchers in selecting depressed subjects from a larger population (Stehouwer & Rosenbaum, 1977). It consists of 21 items describing four levels of depressive symptoms or attitudes in order of severity (e.g., "I feel disappointed in myself", "I am not particularly discouraged about the future"). Respondents choose the answers which best describe their thoughts and feelings during the previous week. See Appendix D for the complete scale.

The BDI has been shown to be a highly reliable and valid measure of depression (Stehouwer, 1984). Test-retest reliability is above .90 (Beck, 1970). Estimates of internal consistency of the items average .86 (Stehouwer, 1984). Concurrent validity has been assessed using the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory Depression Scale (MMPI-D; Hathaway & McKinley, 1942)
and varies from .44 to .75 (Schaefer, Brown, Watson, Plemel, DeMottt, Howard, Petrik & Balleweg, 1985). Also, the BDI has been shown to discriminate between psychiatric patients displaying different types of depression (Davies, Burrows, Poynton, 1975).

**Parenting Dimension Inventory (PDI)**

The PDI was developed by Slater and Power (1987) on the basis of their multidimensional parenting model. It is comprised of 54 items yielding scores on nine scales: nurturance, sensitivity, nonrestrictive attitude, type of control, amount of control, maturity demands, involvement, consistency and organization. Appendix E contains the complete inventory. The items were drawn from existing instruments including the Parent Attitude Research Instrument (Schaefer & Bell, 1958), the Block Childrearing Practices Report (Block, 1965), and the Childrearing Practices Questionnaire (Dielman & Barton, 1981). The normative sample consisted of 112 parents who had at least one child between 4 and 14 years of age and who were of various ethnic backgrounds (Slater & Power, 1987). The PDI scales were found to be internally consistent (Cronbach’s alphas ranged from .54 to .79) and predictive of children’s behavior problems ($R = .432; R^2 = .187; F = 3.03; df = 9,199; p < .003; Slater, 1986$). Inter-item correlations ranged from .97 to .99, and test-retest reliabilities for each scale ranged from .54 to .83 (Slater, 1986).
Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)

The CBCL (Achenbach and Edelbrock, 1983) was designed to assess behavior problems in children between the ages of 4 and 16 years. It requires 20 minutes for parents to complete. It yields a total behavior problem score as well as broad-band internalizing and externalizing subscores. The internalizing scale measures anxiety, depression, uncommunicativeness, and obsessive-compulsive and somatizing behaviors. The externalizing scale measures hyperactivity, aggression and delinquency. See Appendix F for the complete measure.

The standardization sample of the CBCL consisted of 2300 children in mental health services: 250 boys and 250 girls at the 4- to 5-year age level; 450 boys and 450 girls at the 6- to 11-year age level; and 450 boys and 450 girls at the 12- to 16-year age level (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983). Normative data were also obtained on a large non-clinical sample of children of different races, social classes and genders.

One-week test-retest reliabilities for the clinical sample ranged from .80 to .95 (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983). The median correlation between mothers’ and fathers’ responses at all ages across all scales was .66 (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983). Also, inter-interviewer reliability of total behavior problem scores among parents and two other interviewers was .959 (p < .001) (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1981). Evidence for content validity has been provided by a study showing that clinic-referred children scored significantly higher on the total behavior problem scales
than nonclinical children (Lewis, Feiring, McGuffog, & Jaskir, 1984). A correlation of 0.91 found between the total behavior problem score on the CBCL and total behavior problem score on the Conners Parent Rating Scale (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983) provides evidence of concurrent validity.

**Procedure**

**Battered Group**

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the shelter director. All staff members of the three shelters were informed about the research project. The researcher telephoned the shelter workers regularly to see if any women had arrived who might be eligible for the study, i.e., had a child between four and six years of age. The researcher visited the shelter at an appropriate time, met with each woman in private to introduce the research project, and invited her to participate.

At a mutually arranged time, each woman was questioned individually by the researcher in a private room. First, the purpose of the study was explained. See Appendix G for the script used. It was emphasized that participation was voluntary and that confidentiality was guaranteed. It was not possible to calculate the refusal rate since the shelter counsellors sometimes presented the research project to the women before the researcher arrived. However, whenever the researcher requested a woman's participation she agreed to participate. Informed consent was obtained (see Appendix H), and then the Family Information Sheet, Conflict Tactics Scale, The Aggression
Questionnaire, Beck Depression Inventory, Parenting Dimensions Inventory and Child Behavior Checklist were administered. To control for order effects, each questionnaire was assigned a number. The Random Number Table was used to generate a random order of presentation was generated for each subject (see Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1985). When mothers had more than one child within the specified age range, the first such mother was asked to complete the PDI and CBCL with reference to the female, and the next such mother completed these measures with reference to the male. If a mother had more than one child of the same gender in the specified age range, the mother completed the measures with reference to a child randomly chosen by the researcher. Understanding and encouragement were provided when appropriate, and the mothers were warmly thanked for their participation.

Non-battered Group

The procedure for the non-battered group was the same as that for the battered group. Each woman was seen individually by the researcher in a private place. First, the purpose of the study was explained. See Appendix I for a script of the explanation that was provided. It was emphasized that participation was voluntary and confidentiality was guaranteed. Informed consent was obtained, and then the Family Information Sheet, BDI, TAQ, CTS, PDI, and CBCL were administered. The order of presentation of the questionnaires was controlled; each subject in the non-battered group was matched to a subject in a
battered group in terms of order of questionnaire presentation. Mothers with more than one child within the specified age range were asked to complete the PDI and CBCL with reference to the child whose gender helped to match the number of boys and girls in the battered group. Understanding and encouragement were provided when appropriate, and the mothers were warmly thanked for their participation.
CHAPTER III

Results

The model proposed in the present study is shown in Figure 1. To test the model, a series of regression analyses were conducted. First, the ability of battery to predict affective states was assessed. Second, the ability of affective states to increase the power of battery to predict specific parenting behaviors was examined. Third, the relationship between child behavior problems and battery, hostility, depression and parental behaviors were evaluated. Finally, the ability of battery, affective state, and parenting behavior together to account for more of the variance in child behavior problems than any one variable alone, was evaluated.

The mean scores and standard deviations for all the dependent variables are presented in Table 2 for the battered and non-battered groups, as well as the total sample. The battered group had significantly higher scores than the non-battered group on depression (p < .01), hostility (p < .01), and child behavior problems (p < .01), and significantly lower scores on sensitivity (p < .05), amount of control (p < .01), and consistency (p < .01).

Prediction of Affective State

To test the hypothesis that battered women form depressive or hostile dispositions, and that they tend to be mutually exclusive, a correlational analysis was conducted between depression and hostility scores for this group. This hypothesis
Figure 1. Model of parenting behaviors of battered women.

Battery -> High Level of Hostility -> Low levels of Nurturance, Sensitivity, Consistency, and Organization. High levels of Restriction, Control, and Involvement.

or

Battery -> High Level of Depression -> Low levels of Nurturance, Sensitivity, Restriction, Control, Involvement, and Organization. High Level of Child Behavior Problems

No Battery -> Moderate or Low Levels of Hostility and Depression -> Moderate to High Levels of Nurturance, Sensitivity, Consistency, and Organization. Moderate Levels of Control, Restriction, and Involvement. Nonclinical Level of Child Behavior Problems
Table 2

Mean Scores of Dependent Variables for Sample of Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Battered (n=30)</th>
<th>Non-Battered (n=30)</th>
<th>Total (N=60)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDI</td>
<td>20.00**</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>4.50**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAQ</td>
<td>70.33**</td>
<td>15.63</td>
<td>50.67**</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Support Category</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nurturance</td>
<td>28.53</td>
<td>15.63</td>
<td>30.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>22.10*</td>
<td>4.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-restrictive attitude</td>
<td>28.80</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>31.47</td>
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<td>Control Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount of control</td>
<td>3.40**</td>
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<td>Structure Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>24.87</td>
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<td>26.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>32.03**</td>
<td>7.78</td>
<td>36.43**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>17.90</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>18.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBCL Total</td>
<td>63.53**</td>
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<td>51.60**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>58.31**</td>
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<td>Externalizing Behaviors</td>
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<td>53.00**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. BDI = Beck Depression Inventory, TAQ = The Aggression Questionnaire, PDI = Parenting Dimensions Inventory, CBCL = Child Behavior Checklist.

*p < .05

**p < .01
was supported; hostility and depression were uncorrelated (r = .20, p > .05), indicating that they develop independently among battered women.

**Prediction of Parenting Behavior**

To test the hypothesis that hostility mediates the effect of battery on (i.e., increases the ability of battery to predict) levels of nurturance, sensitivity, consistency, organization, restriction, involvement and control, a set of seven simultaneous regression analyses was conducted with the seven parenting scores on the PDI as the criteria, and battery and hostility as the predictors, using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS: Helwig & Council, 1979). Battery was entered into each equation first, followed by hostility.

To examine the hypothesis that depression mediates the effect of battery on levels of nurturance, sensitivity, consistency, organization, restriction, involvement and control, a second set of seven simultaneous regression analyses was conducted with the seven parenting scores on the PDI as the criteria, and battery and depression as the predictors. Battery was entered into each equation first, followed by depression.

In each set of analyses, a Bonferroni correction procedure was implemented to control the Type I error rate. The significance level (p = .05) was divided by seven, which is the number of regression equations in each set, to yield a higher significance level of (p = .007). Also, SES, ethnicity, and age of mother were included as covariates in these analyses. If the
regression coefficients were significant and cell sizes were sufficiently large (n >= 10), analyses of variance (ANOVAs) and Duncan’s Multiple-Range post-hoc tests were then conducted to further specify the relationship among the variables. If the cell sizes were less than 10, only chi-squares could provide specific information on the relationships among the variables.

The results of the regression analyses are summarized in Table 3. Only three of the regression equations met the significance criterion of \( p < .007 \).

**Nurturance**

None of the independent or demographic variables significantly predicted nurturance \( (p > .05) \). Battery explained only 3% of the variance in nurturance and adding hostility or depression to the equation did not greatly increase the explained variance \( (R^2=.03, \ p > .05, \ R^2=.08, \ p > .05 \text{ respectively}) \).

**Sensitivity**

Battery explained a significant amount of the variance in sensitivity \( (R^2=.08, \ p<.05) \), but it did not meet the stringent significance criterion of \( p < .007 \). Ethnicity was a better predictor than battery, explaining 13% of the variance \( (p < .007) \). Adding depression to battery did not increase the amount of variance explained \( (R^2=.08, \ p > .05) \). When hostility was added to battery, a statistically significant proportion \( (.18) \) of the variance in sensitivity was explained \( (p < .007) \). However hostility alone also predicted 18% of the variance in sensitivity \( (p < .001) \), indicating that higher levels of hostility are
Table 3

Prediction of Parenting Behaviors by Demographic Variables, Affect, and Experimental Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Socio-economic Status</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Mother's Age</th>
<th>Hostility</th>
<th>Depression</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>$R^2$</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>nurturance</td>
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<td>.03</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>n-restrictiveness</td>
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<td>.003</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>count of control</td>
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<td>.008</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>involvement</td>
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<td>.07</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nsistency</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ganization</td>
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<td>.003</td>
<td>.67</td>
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<td>renting Behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td>nurturance</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.18</td>
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<td>.11</td>
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<td>.02</td>
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</table>
associated with lower levels of sensitivity ($b=-.10$), regardless of battery. Together, ethnicity and hostility were the best predictors of sensitivity ($p < .001$), accounting for 23% of the variance.

Duncan’s Multiple-Range post-hoc analyses conducted on the total sample revealed that non-Aboriginal Canadians ($M=24.86$) scored significantly higher on the sensitivity scale than Aboriginal Canadians ($M=19.93$, $p = .05$), as did non-Canadians ($M=22.00$, $p < .001$). Also, Aboriginal Canadians ($M=76.43$) scored significantly higher on the hostility scale than both non-Aboriginal Canadians ($M=54.14$) and non-Canadians ($M=61.89$, $p < .0001$). It was not possible to determine the nature of the relationship between hostility and sensitivity scores within each ethnic group because many cell sizes were lower than 5.

**Non-restrictive attitude**

Battery did not explain a significant amount of variance in non-restrictiveness ($R^2=.04$, $p > .05$). Adding hostility increased the power of battery to predict non-restrictiveness ($R^2=.13$, $p < .05$). However, hostility alone explained the same amount of variance ($R^2=.13$, $p < .007$) suggesting that higher levels of hostility are associated with lower levels of non-restrictiveness ($b=-.14$), regardless of battery. Adding depression did not increase the prediction of non-restrictiveness ($R^2=.06$, $p > .05$).

Together, ethnicity and SES were the best predictors of restrictiveness ($R^2=.25$, $p = .001$). Duncan’s Multiple-Range
post-hoc analyses revealed that non-Aboriginal Canadians obtained significantly higher scores on non-restrictiveness ($M = 32.24$) than did Aboriginal Canadians ($M = 26.79$) and non-Canadians ($M = 26.67$, $p < .007$). To determine the nature of the relationship between SES and non-restrictiveness, a chi-square analysis was conducted by classifying restrictiveness into higher and lower categories by means of a median split. SES was not significantly associated with restrictiveness ($X^2 = 4.63$, $p > .05$). It was not possible to determine the true relationship among ethnicity, SES and restrictiveness due to extremely low cell frequencies and the confounding of ethnicity and SES.

**Amount of control**

Condition alone was the best predictor of control ($R^2 = .17$, $p < .001$). A t-test revealed that battered women obtained lower control scores than non-battered women ($p = .001$). Adding hostility and depression to condition in separate regressions did not increase the amount of explained variance in control scores ($R^2 = .17$, $p < .007$, $R^2 = .18$, $p < .007$, respectively). Although control was marginally predicted by hostility and depression when each was entered into the equation by itself ($p < .05$, $p < .05$, respectively), neither of these affect scores accounted for more than 8% of the variance in control scores.

**Involvement**

None of the variables predicted involvement at a statistically significant level. That is, condition explained only 6% of the variance in involvement ($p > .05$), and adding
either hostility or depression to the equation did not increase the explained variance ($R^2=.07, p > .05, R^2=.06, p > .05$, respectively).

**Consistency**

By itself, condition was a strong predictor of consistency ($R^2=.11, p = .01$) but did not meet the significance criterion of $p < .007$. Because condition was a strong predictor, a t-test was conducted and revealed that the non-battered subjects obtained higher consistency scores than the battered subjects ($p = .01$). The addition of hostility to the equation did not increase the amount of variance explained ($R^2=.11, p < .05$). The inclusion of depression in the equation increased the amount of variance explained in consistency scores only slightly ($R^2=.14, p = .01$). By itself, depression was the most highly significant predictor of consistency ($p = .005$) accounting for 13% of the variance, indicating that higher levels of depression are associated with lower levels of consistency ($b = -.23$).

Chi-square analyses of the relationship between consistency and depression among the battered subjects were conducted by classifying consistency scores into higher and lower categories through a median split procedure, and by classifying depression into normal to mild (non-depressed) and moderate to severe (depressed) categories according to clinical cut-off scores (Beck & Steer, 1984). Among the battered group the relationship was non-significant ($X^2=1.08, p > .05$), perhaps due to cell sizes lower than 5. However, there appeared to be a trend for those
battered women with lower depression scores to score higher in consistency. Specifically, 70% of the non-depressed battered women obtained high consistency scores. And 50% of the depressed battered women scored in the low range on consistency. A chi-square analysis could not be conducted for the non-battered group, as only 1 subject was classified as depressed.

**Organization**

None of the demographic or independent variables was able to predict organization at the significance criterion of $p < .007$. Condition explained only 2% of the variance in organization ($p > .05$). Organization and hostility were not significantly correlated ($r = .16$, $p > .05$), and the non-battered women ($M = 18.87$) did not obtain significantly higher organization scores than the battered women ($M = 17.90$, $p > .05$). Together however, condition and hostility accounted for 11% of the variance in organization ($p < .05$); higher levels of hostility were associated with higher levels of organization ($b=.08$). Condition and depression accounted for only 2% of the variance in organization ($p > .05$).

**Prediction of Child Behavior Problems**

The complete model was tested through a series of standard regression analyses (see Table 4). Battery was entered into the equations first to permit an examination of the increase in explained variance in child behavior problems produced by the addition of affect and parenting. Because nurturance and control appear from the literature to be central dimensions of parenting,
Table 4
Prediction of Children's Behavior Problems by Experimental Group, Affect, and Parenting Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Behavior Problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ttery</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ttery &amp; Hostility</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ttery &amp; Hostility &amp; Control &amp; Nurturance</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ttery &amp; Nurturance</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ttery</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.0001</td>
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<td>.35</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ttery &amp; Depression &amp; Nurturance</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
have been the most widely researched parenting dimensions, have been shown to be orthogonal to each other, and interact to account for a wide range of child behaviors (Becker, 1964), they were the dimensions of parenting selected. Preliminary analyses indicated that SES, ethnicity and age of mother were not significantly correlated with child behavior problems; therefore, these variables were not included in any of the regression equations.

In the first regression equation, battery was entered first, followed by hostility, and then by parenting control and nurturance. The total behavior score was the criterion. Battery significantly predicted the total behavior score ($R^2 = .26$, $b = 11.9$, $p = .0001$). Thus, children of battered women had significantly higher levels of behavior problems than did children of non-battered women. Adding hostility to the equation did not increase the amount of explained variance in total behavior scores ($R^2 = .26$, $p = .0001$). When control and nurturance scores were together added to the equation, the amount of variance explained in behavior problem scores increased to 32% ($p = .0001$). However not all of the regression coefficients in the equation were significant at the .05 level, indicating that some variables were extraneous. Therefore, a forward Step-wise regression was conducted to simplify this model. Battery and nurturance emerged as the best significant predictors, together accounting for 34% of the variance in child behavior problems ($p = .0001$). Thus, together, battery and high levels of nurturance
(b = -.29) were strongly related to low levels of children's behavior problems.

In the second regression equation, battery was entered first, followed by depression, and then by parenting control and nurturance scores. The total behavior score was the criterion. Adding depression to battery did not increase the amount of explained variance ($R^2=.26, p = .0001$). The addition of both control and nurturance scores to the equation increased the explained variance to 35% ($p = .0001$), however not all of the regression coefficients in the equation were significant at the .05 level. Therefore, a forward Step-wise regression was conducted to simplify this model. Battery, depression, and nurturance emerged as the best significant predictors, together accounting for 40% of the variance in child behavior problems ($p = .0001$). Thus, battery and high levels of depression ($b = -.34$) and low levels of nurturance ($b = -.34$) in the mother are strongly associated with the development of behavior problems in the child.

A post-hoc regression analysis using the R-Square selection method (Freund & Littell, 1981) was conducted in order to find the best predictors of child behavior problems based on all the affect and parenting variables specified in the hypothetical model (i.e., condition, hostility, depression, and seven parenting variables). The optimum subset model consisted of condition, nurturance, sensitivity, consistency and organization, together accounting for 46% ($p = .0001$) of the variance in
children's behavior problems. Thus, battery together with low levels of maternal nurturance ($b = -.15$), sensitivity ($b = -.19$), consistency ($b = -.28$), and structure ($b = -.20$) are associated with high levels of behavior problems in children.
CHAPTER IV

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to identify variables mediating the development of behavior problems in children of battered women. On the basis of past research and theory, it was hypothesized that battery would be related to the development of hostile and depressed dispositions which would, in turn, be associated with particular parenting styles. These parenting behaviors, mediated by battery and affect, were hypothesized to be related to behavior problems in children of battered women.

Through correlation and regression analyses, the relationships between battery, affect, parenting and child behavior problems were examined. In this chapter, the findings relating to each of the hypotheses will be discussed. Then limitations of the study will be examined. Finally, a summary of the findings followed by their implications will be presented.

The Role of Affect in Mediating Battered Women’s Parenting Behaviors

The prediction that battered women would form either a hostile or a depressed disposition was supported. This sample of battered women cannot be considered as a homogeneous group in terms of their affective states, but rather can be characterized as forming either hostile or depressed dispositions. This finding must be replicated in order to generalize to all battered women, but it is indicative that some battered women openly
display their anger, while others internalize their emotions. Also, the battered group reported significantly higher levels of hostility and depression than the non-battered group even after SES, ethnicity, and age of mother were controlled. Thus the experience of abuse is strongly related to women's affective dispositions.

In the following subsections, the mediating role of affect on battered women's parenting behaviors will be discussed. These parenting behaviors are organized into three major categories (parental support, control, and structure), according to Slater and Power's (1987) Parenting Model. In this model, the support category is comprised of the nurturance, sensitivity and non-restrictiveness dimensions; the control category is comprised of the amount of control dimension; and the structure category is comprised of the involvement, consistency and organization dimensions.

**Support Category**

It was predicted that the emotional trauma resulting from the experience of violence (Klingbeil & Boyd, 1984) would impair mothers' ability to provide appropriate levels of nurturance, sensitivity, and restrictiveness. Levels of nurturance, however, were not found to significantly differ between battered and non-battered women. Despite the experience of battery and the fear, degradation, and physical injury associated with it, even hostile battered women reported providing levels of nurturance to their children that did differ from those of non-battered women. This
is a very encouraging finding in terms of appropriate parenting behaviors, as parental nurturance has been found to be positively related to children's moral values (Saltzstein, 1976), self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1967) and compliance (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Battered women did, however, report lower levels of sensitivity than non-battered women, and this relationship appears to be mediated by hostility. While battery alone did not predict sensitivity at the stringent significance level set in the present study, battery and hostility together accounted for almost one-fifth of the variance in sensitivity scores as did hostility alone. This finding suggests that high levels of hostility in women, whether or not they are battered, inhibits the expression of sensitivity to their children and is consistent with previous research demonstrating that anger is associated with ignoring others' actions (Biglan et al., 1986). Lower levels of parental sensitivity, in turn, have been reported to be related to lower levels of self-reliance and compliance in children (Bourg & Power, 1985, 1986).

The present findings demonstrate, as well, that ethnicity plays an important role in the relationship between hostility and sensitivity. In fact, sensitivity levels appear to be more strongly related to ethnicity than to battery. Together with hostility, ethnicity accounted for almost one-fourth of the variance in sensitivity scores. It appears that non-Aboriginal Canadians display higher levels of sensitivity than either
Aboriginal Canadians or non-Canadians. However, as the
distributions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians differed
significantly across the battered and non-battered groups, firm
conclusions regarding the relationship among battery, ethnicity,
and sensitivity cannot be drawn.

Battered and non-battered women do not appear to differ in
their attitudes toward restrictiveness. Hostility, however, is
strongly associated with higher levels of restrictiveness. This
finding suggests that emotional support and flexibility in
allowing children the freedom to explore, express their feelings,
and attempt new activities is significantly lower in hostile than
in non-hostile women. This result is consistent with Johnson and
Lobitz' (1974) finding that parents exert high levels of parental
threats and disapproval as a result of experiencing anger. Like
low levels of sensitivity, high levels of parental
restrictiveness have been found to be associated with low levels
of self-reliance and compliance in children (Baumrind, 1971). It
is important to note, however, that ethnicity and SES are the
variables most strongly related to the amount of freedom and
restrictions provided. It appears that non-Aboriginal Canadians
are less restrictive than either Aboriginal Canadians or non-
Canadians. However, the nature of the relationship among
ethnicity, SES and restrictiveness cannot be determined due to
the low and unequal distribution of women in each ethnic and SES
group.
In general, these findings suggest that battered women provide a normative level of support in terms of nurturance. The relationship of battery with sensitivity and restrictiveness is unclear due to its confounding by sociocultural variables. According to Brown, Ni Bhrolchain and Harris (1975), the frequency of crises is much greater in poor than rich families, and Patterson (1982) states that the greater the current frequency of crises, the more negative the mother’s behavior. Thus it may be that mothers in the lower SES families provide less support to their children, although low and unequal distributions of scores in the present study precluded a test of this notion. Similarly, the family’s ethnic culture strongly impacts on mother-child interactions (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). For example, Whiting and Whiting (1973) indicate that relatively few interactions occur between parents and children in small, nonindustrialized ethnic groups, while other researchers have found that Aboriginal Canadians provide higher levels of freedom (Green, 1983) and support (Gfellner, 1990) than non-Aboriginal Canadians. The relationship between maternal hostility and support could not be established fully because the effect of hostility was masked by sociocultural characteristics. However, it can be speculated that higher levels of hostility are associated with lower levels of support.

Interestingly, levels of depression were not found to be strongly associated with any of the three dimensions of support, which is in direct contrast to Longfellow, Zelkowitz and
Saunders’ finding (1982) that maternal depression is associated with low parental nurturance, warmth and affection. Perhaps the effects of maternal depression cannot be generalized across battered and non-battered women. That is, maternal depression may hinder a non-battered mother’s expression of affection towards her children, but the experience of physical abuse may heighten a mother’s awareness of her child’s need for nurturance despite her own sadness. In the latter case, the mother may try to compensate for her partner’s hostility by providing high levels of warmth to her children. In other words, these mothers may be attempting to balance the emotional atmosphere in the home. Depressed mothers, instead of reflecting back to the children the cruelty they experience from their male partners, may react to their emotional pain by providing the warmth they themselves desire. Knowledge of the emotional distress caused by physical abuse may motivate them to protect their children from similar emotional suffering. Hostile mothers, on the other hand, may be more likely to react to their emotional pain by reflecting aggressive behaviors they experience with their male partner. That is, hostile mothers may be more likely to react hastily and impulsively to children’s misbehaviors, whereas depressed mothers may be more likely to calmly consider the effects of their parenting behaviors on their children and thus choose more supportive parenting styles.
Control Category

It was hypothesized that the anger, helplessness and stress disorders that are typical of battered women (Klingbeil & Boyd, 1984) would contribute to either higher or lower levels of control over their children as compared to non-battered women. Battered women did indeed report exerting lower levels of control over their children than did non-battered women, and this finding was not affected by hostility or depression levels. This result is somewhat discrepant with Walker’s (1984) finding that 84% of her sample of battered women reported strictly controlling and manipulating the environment (e.g., ‘keeping the kids quiet’) in order to decrease the likelihood of a violent incident.

It is difficult to reconcile these discrepant findings because Walker’s study was not designed to specify how these women managed their children’s behavior. Perhaps hostile abused women find it necessary to strictly control the behavior of their children in order to reduce the likelihood of a battering incident, as Walker suggests, but this need may occur only at the time of the male partner’s explosive anger. In general, it appears that despite experiencing anger and animosity as a result of physical abuse, battered women do not generalize this hostility to their children in the form of severe and strict parenting. Rather, battered mothers attempt to alleviate the rigid control exerted by the male partner by allowing their children freedom, flexibility and exploration. Together with normative levels of nurturance, low levels of control may
compensate for the male partner's excessive hostility.

Depression has been found in other studies to be related to reductions in such parental behaviors as monitoring children's behavior, making demands, and exerting firm control (Zelkowitz, 1982). However, in the present study, only battery is related to these parenting behaviors. That is, women who are battered but not depressed exert similarly low levels of control as do women who are both battered and depressed. Again, battered women do not appear to generalize their depression to their children. Rather, regardless of maternal affect, they may attempt to compensate for and offset the severe controlling behaviors of their male partner by exerting low levels of control over the children.

Although battered women may be trying to buffer the harmful effects of the children's exposure to violence, they may be unwittingly contributing to children's behavior problems. The provision of high levels of nurturance and low levels of control has been labelled 'indulgent-permissive' parenting (Becker, 1964; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Those parents who take a tolerant attitude towards children's misbehaviors and avoid imposing restrictions tend to have children who lack impulse control, social responsibility and self-reliance (Baumrind, 1967, 1971).

Structure Category

It was predicted that the structure of the child's environment, in terms of parental involvement, organization and consistency, would be negatively affected by unpredictable
outbursts of violence in the home. Surprisingly, levels of involvement did not differ between the battered and non-battered women, suggesting that battered women are able to spend an adequate amount of time with their children. Also, affect was not found to mediate the relationship between battery and levels of involvement. Therefore, hostility among battered women is not related to extreme pre-occupation with their children. This is consistent with the finding that hostility is not associated with over-control. Hostile battered women’s normative levels of involvement in combination with normative levels of nurturance and low levels of control seems consistent with and provides an elaboration of the ‘compensation theory’ presented earlier. It is possible that battered women are concerned that their children receive adequate parental nurturance and control in order to compensate for a harsh and controlling male partner. Further, battered women’s parenting does not become over-involved to the extent that they become emotionally dependent on their children to provide the support they too need.

Like involvement, organization did not differ between the battered and non-battered women, suggesting that the former are able to manage home activities as well as the latter. Organization could be predicted from battery, but only when it was combined with hostility, although not at the stringent significance criterion. It may be speculated that non-hostile battered women are able to maintain family organization. However, anger and violence seem to disrupt domestic duties,
decision making and problem solving, just as they interfere with
the exertion of control over children. While hostile battered
women do not appear to generalize their anger to their children
in the form of severe parenting, their organization and control
are reduced. This pattern of parenting can adversely affect
children’s optimal development (Fein & Clarke-Stewart, 1973).

As predicted, battered women were found to provide less
consistency to their children than non-battered women. The
reason for this inconsistency may again be understood in terms of
their attempt to compensate for the male partner’s severe
behavior. That is, when the male partner’s anger and aggression
are rising, the mother may try to control her children in order
to reduce conflict; however, in the absence of danger, she may
try to be lenient and understanding of her children’s behavior in
order to offset the male partner’s severity and control in the
home. Interestingly, Holden & Ritchie (1991) also found ‘within-
mother inconsistency’ in parenting and suggested that this
phenomenon may be an example of ‘parental buffering’ (Belsky,
1984), or a mother’s attempt to protect her children and
compensate for an adverse home environment.

Depression in the mother appears to contribute to even lower
levels of consistency. Thus, depressed women’s difficulty in
initiating and maintaining responses over a period of time
(Willner, 1985), and their slowness in responding following
negative social reactions, such as disagreement (Grosscup &
Lewinsohn, 1980) seem to reduce their ability to follow through
on discipline. Despite depressed women's efforts to alleviate the harm of physical abuse and provide adequate discipline, feelings of sadness and emotional distress from the abuse are apt to hinder effective parenting behaviors at least periodically.

In summary, results from the present study indicate that women who experience physical violence from a male partner display different parenting styles than those women in non-violent relationships. Within an abusive environment, the parent-child relationship can be conceivably explained in terms of maternal compensation or buffering. That is, despite experiencing negative affect in terms of hostility and depression, battered women provide normative levels of nurturance to their children. It is surprising that mothers are able to provide warmth to their children when they themselves receive injury and insult from their male partner. Both hostile and depressed battered women exert relatively low levels of control over their children, which may reflect an attempt to compensate for the presence of a domineering and controlling man in the home. Their efforts to provide warmth and discipline to children, however, tend to be inconsistent.

Maternal efforts to buffer the children from domestic violence seem to be inhibited when the mother experiences hostility. That is, hostility seems to contribute to lower levels of sensitivity as well as higher levels of restrictiveness, although this relationship was difficult to assess due to the interaction of ethnicity and SES. Also,
hostility appears to reduce the level of organization battered women exert in the home.

The present findings provide strong evidence that the mother-child relationship is indeed affected by violence in a couple's relationship. In addition, battery does not by itself determine a mother's parenting behaviors. Rather, the affective state of the battered woman contributes to her parenting style. These findings suggest that the parenting style of a battered woman cannot be predicted easily; battery and affect appear to interact and their interaction varies according to the particular dimension of parenting behavior considered. In the following section the relationship between the parenting behaviors of battered mothers and behavior problems in their children will be discussed.

The Role of Parenting Style
in Mediating Children's Behavior Problems

According to the hypothetical model upon which the present study was based, affective disposition and parenting behaviors were expected to mediate the development of behavior problems in children of battered women. It was predicted that among hostile battered women, low levels of nurturance and high levels of control resulting from the inhibition of warmth and flexibility would be associated with behavior problems in their children. Surprisingly, hostility and control did not significantly mediate the effect of battery on children's behavior problems. However, battery and nurturance accounted for one-third of the variance in
children’s behavior problems. In other words, children of battered women who provide low levels of nurturance, are likely to develop behavior problems.

It was predicted that, among depressed battered women, low levels of nurturance and control resulting from passivity and withdrawal from others would contribute to the development of behavior problems in their children. Again, control was not found to mediate the effect of battery on children’s behavior problems. However, the children of depressed battered mothers who provide low levels of nurturance were found to have a significantly increased likelihood of developing behavior problems. Battery appears to be a more important variable in this relationship than depression. It is therefore concluded that children of battered women, whether hostile or depressed, who exercise low levels of nurturance have an increased probability of displaying behavior problems.

Previous research has shown that children of battered women display more behavior problems than children of non-battered women (Alessi and Hearn, 1984; Hughes, 1986; Hughes and Barad, 1983; Westra and Martin, 1981; Wolfe & Mosk, 1983). These findings were supported by those of the present study. The importance of maternal abuse as a mediating variable was suggested by the finding that one-quarter of the variance in children’s behavior problems is explained by maternal battery. However, this finding also demonstrates that battery is not sufficient by itself to explain the development of behavior
problems in these children. Rather, the parenting style of the mother appears to mediate the effect of battery. Specifically, nurturance, sensitivity; consistency and organization were able to double the amount of variance in children’s behavior problems explained by battery to almost 50%. These four parenting variables and battery were the most important determinants of children’s behavior problems of all the affect and parenting variables examined in the present study.

Consistent with findings of parenting research, low levels of parental nurturance, sensitivity, consistency and organization were found to be strongly related to the development of behavior problems in children. Parenting behaviors which are non-nurturant and insensitive may inhibit a child’s sense of self-worth and initiative. These feelings increase the likelihood of the occurrence of externalizing and internalizing behavior problems (Baldwin, 1955; Baumrind, 1971; Becker, 1964). Inconsistency and disorganization seem to hinder children’s construction of a stable internal structure, which Fein and Clarke-Stewart (1973) found to be critical for optimal development. Failure to provide consequences consistently for rule infractions teaches children that it is sometimes acceptable to engage in inappropriate behavior and even increases the occurrence of behavior problems as children learn to manipulate their parents for their own benefit. The importance of parental consistency is further substantiated by Holden and Ritchie’s (1991) finding that this variable was the only measure of
parenting which differentiated battered and non-battered women.

In the present study, the emergence of maladaptive patterns of parenting was found to be related to the development of affective dispositions as well as ethnicity. High levels of hostility among Aboriginal battered women were associated with low levels of sensitivity; high levels of hostility among all battered women were related to low levels of organization; and high levels of depression among battered and non-battered women contribute to low levels of consistency. Therefore, it appears that the relationship between maternal battery and child behavior problems can be more fully understood when maternal affect and parenting style are taken into account.

Limitations and Recommendations

The findings of this study may be generalizable to battered women who share the same demographic characteristics as the present sample and who reside in shelters. Those women who are battered and do not seek refuge in a shelter were not included in this sample and may differ from those living in shelters. For example, battered women in shelters may be more frequently exposed to appropriate parenting behaviors, and may feel supported and safe and thus be more successful in controlling their negative affect when interacting with their children than battered women living at home. Thus, caution should be taken in generalizing this study’s findings about battered women’s parenting behaviors to the general population of battered women.
This sample seems to reflect the relationship of battery with age, socio-economic status and ethnicity. That is, the age and socio-economic status of battered women were significantly lower than those of non-battered women. This finding is consistent with those of Kennedy and Dutton (1989), who demonstrated that battery is more frequent among younger than older women and among lower than higher income households in Alberta. Also, approximately half of the sample of battered women consisted of Aboriginal Canadians, as compared to approximately 3% of the sample of non-battered women. This finding is consistent with reports stating that the incidence of family violence among Aboriginal groups is eight times higher than that among non-Aboriginal populations (McLeod, 1989). It is imperative that researchers examine the dynamics of this high risk group and the inter-generational cycle of violence.

Findings from this study seem to indicate that affect and parenting also vary as a function of ethnicity. That is, Aboriginal Canadians report higher levels of hostility and restrictiveness and lower levels of sensitivity. However, since most of the Aboriginal Canadians were battered, conclusions concerning the parenting styles of Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal and non-Canadian women could not be drawn. It is recommended that in future research the parenting behaviors of battered women belonging to each ethnic population be examined.

It is unfortunate that, despite adequate group sizes for regression analyses, cell sizes were often too small for valid
post hoc within-group examinations. Thus, the results from the present study should be considered to be preliminary; validation with larger sample sizes is needed.

Agencies providing support to battered women are understandably very protective of their clients. Many precautions were taken by the researcher to prevent the women from feeling blamed for their children’s behavior problems. As a result, it was impossible to ascertain whether or not the children of the sampled women were physically abused. If the children were indeed abused by their parents or relatives, this factor alone could influence their behavior. For example, abused children have been found to show more aggression and negative emotions, and less self-control than non-abused children (George & Main, 1979; Egeland, Sroufe, & Erickson, 1983). In view of these findings, an attempt was made to control for child abuse by eliminating any cases under investigation by Child and Family Services from the sample. It is recommended that in future research more information about each family’s history be obtained in order to better define their children.

Children’s behavior problem scores in this study were based on maternal reports. Despite high inter-interviewer reliability on CBCL behavior problem scores among parents and other interviewers (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1981), mothers’ reports of their children’s behaviors are likely somewhat subjective. Also, given the vulnerability of these women and their intense need for assistance, it is possible that group differences were, in some
cases, obscured by socially desirable responding. The present findings, then, should be generalized with caution until they are corroborated by observational data.

When asked to complete the Child Behavior Checklist on a particular child, mothers frequently reported that their responses would have been quite different had another of their children been selected as the target child. It is expected that the effects of such between-child differences were minimized by means of random selection of the target child. However, in order to obtain a more accurate picture of the parenting styles of battered women, it is recommended that in future research, they complete behavioral measures on all of their children.

The perspective of the study was focused on how battered women’s parenting behaviors influence children’s behavior problems. However, relationships are bi-directional; the child’s behaviors also influence the parent’s behaviors. For example, the finding that some battered women exert low levels of control over their children may not necessarily be explained as compensating for over-control by a male partner, but rather as a means of responding to children’s unruly behavior problems. In future research the influence of children on their mothers’ affect and parenting must be explored in order to more completely understand mother-child interactions. Qualitative research could provide a wealth of detailed information concerning the nature of these relationship dynamics.
The compensation theory was used to explain why battered women did not provide lower levels of support or higher levels of control over their children than non-battered women. That is, it was argued that battered mothers attempt to buffer their children by employing parenting behaviors which counterbalance the severe behaviors of the male in the home. However, the father's behaviors with his children have yet to be studied. Are men who are abusive to their partners also harsh and controlling when interacting with their children? This question must be answered in order to better understand the nature of the parent-child interactions in the context of an abusive home.

The finding that the control dimension of parenting does not appear to be related to the development of behavior problems in children was unexpected. Slater and Power's (1987) dimension of control is rather complex; it is operationalized as the type and amount of control and level of maturity demands. However, only the amount of control dimension was measured in the present study due to the questionable face validity of the two other dimensions. It is recommended that researchers further explore the control dimension by utilizing other, perhaps simpler parenting scales.

Counsellors at the women's shelters included in this study define physical abuse as an invasion of personal space which causes injury. Thus a single slap, hit or push is considered abusive. Straus and Gelles (1990) define spousal abuse as any hitting of the partner, but note that the general public defines
physical abuse as repeated and serious attacks. It is interesting that 3 of the 30 battered women indicated that they were not 'physically abused' but circled violence items on the CTS. Therefore, some battered women, including some who seek help at shelters, do not consider themselves to be physically abused. It is recommended that researchers either avoid using the term "physical abuse" or specify its definition when asking women about their histories. For example, when determining when the abuse began, the question should be worded, "When did he first start to hit/push you?"

Implications

On the basis of the present findings, several recommendations can be provided. First, battered women report significantly higher levels of hostility or depression than do non-battered women, and these affective dispositions were found to be related to their parenting styles. Therefore, battered women need to be helped to understand how the cognitive, emotional and behavioral components of their negative dispositions influence their parenting behaviors. Reducing maternal hostility may increase maternal sensitivity and organization and decrease restrictiveness, while reducing maternal depression may increase consistency in parenting. Such changes in parenting styles may, in turn, decrease the likelihood of children developing behavior problems.

Second, cognitive and behavioral strategies can assist battered women in developing more effective and appropriate
parenting styles. Wolfe and his colleagues (Wolfe & Sandler, 1981; Wolfe, Sandler, & Kaufman, 1981; Wolfe, Kaufman, Aragona, & Sandler; 1981) have developed a comprehensive parent training program for abusive mothers which could be applied to battered mothers. This program involves modelling and training of specific child management techniques together with unstructured parent-child interactions, so that parents can develop and practice adaptive parenting styles. Battered women who provide low levels of nurturance and sensitivity to their children may benefit from observing and modelling contingent, consistent and supportive responses to children's behaviors. Such training has been shown to produce desired changes in mothers' and children's behaviors in clinic and home settings (Wolfe, Lawrence, Graves, Brehony, Bradlyn & Kelly, 1982).

Third, through peer support groups, battered women can receive and provide encouragement and generate alternative parenting strategies. Also, participation by mother and child in enjoyable activities will facilitate emotional bonding and reduce parenting anxiety.

Fourth, teaching battered women time and home management techniques will assist them in providing an organized and consistent environment for their children. Since regular, consistent parenting behaviors are difficult to establish, long-term follow-up of the parents and children is crucial. Home visits would be valuable in encouraging, modelling and maintaining appropriate parenting styles.
In general, carrying out optimal parenting behaviors is particularly difficult for mothers dealing with abusive partners. Goals for women who choose to continue living with their partners should be realistic to maximize their achievement within their violent, disorganized homes. Those who choose to leave their partners must learn new patterns of relating to their children in the context of a new family structure.

The present study has demonstrated that a relationship exists among battery, maternal affect, parenting behaviors, and children’s behavior problems. Women who suffer violence at the hands of their male partners experience high levels of hostility and depression. These negative dispositions seem to mediate parenting styles. That is, high levels of maternal hostility are related to low levels of sensitivity and organization, and high levels of restrictiveness; whereas high levels of maternal depression are related to low levels of consistency. Further, those battered women who exert low levels of consistency, organization, nurturance and sensitivity are likely to report high levels of behavior problems in their children. It is important to recognize that these results do not suggest that battered women are to blame for their children’s behavior problems. Rather, the male partner’s abuse plays an extremely important role in explaining battered women’s parenting styles and children’s behavior patterns. By removing the experience of abuse, maternal parenting is likely to be altered as well as their children’s behaviors. It is therefore recommended that the
mandates of social service agencies encompass battered women’s childrearing practices so that these women can be strengthened and encouraged in their role as parents.
SU# _____

Appendix A
Family Information Sheet

Date: _______________________

Marital Status:
(Please check one)
Never married ....... ____
Married ............... ____
Living with Mate ... ____
Divorced ............... ____
Separated ............. ____
Widowed .............. ____

Experienced Physical Abuse: Yes No
(Please circle one)

Date Physical Abuse First Began With Current Partner: _____/_____/______
Month Day Year

Date of Last Episode of Physical Abuse: _____/_____/______
Month Day Year

Your Date of Birth: _____/_____/______
Month Day Year

Highest Education Received By:
(Please check one) You Male
Less than seventh grade .............. ____ ____
Junior High School (9th grade) ....... ____ ____
Some High School (10th or 11th grade). ____ ____
High School completed ............... ____ ____
Some College or special training...... ____ ____
University or college completed ...... ____ ____
Some Post-Graduate Work ............. ____ ____
Mater’s Degree or Doctorate completed. ____ ____

In your most recent job what is:
Your Title _______________________

Male Partner’s Title _______________________

Ethnic Background: _______________________
Country of Birth: _______________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Children</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Birthdate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Month / Day / Year</td>
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Appendix B

The Conflict Tactics Scale

No matter how well a couple get along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, or just have spats or fights because they're in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason. They also use many different ways of trying to settle their differences. Please read the following list of some things that your partner might do when you have an argument. I would like you to tell me how many times (once, twice, 3-5 times, 6-10 times, 11-20 times, or more than 20 times) in the past 12 months your current male partner did the following things. If it has not happened in the last year, then indicate if it has ever happened by circling b or if it has never happened by circling a.

1. He discussed an issue calmly .................. 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
2. He got information to back up his side of things .................. 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
3. He brought in, or tried to bring in, someone to help settle things ............... 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
4. He insulted or swore at you ..................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
5. He sulked or refused to talk about an issue 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
6. He stomped out of the room or house or yard 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
7. He cried ............................................ 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
8. He did or said something to spite you ...... 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
9. He threatened to hit or throw something at you ........................................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
10. He threw or smashed or hit or kicked something ............................................ 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
11. He threw something at you ...................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
12. He pushed, grabbed, or shoved you .......... 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
13. He slapped you ...................................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
14. He kicked, bit, or hit you with a fist .... 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
15. He hit or tried to hit you with something 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
16. He beat you up ..................................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
17. He choked you ...................................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
18. He threatened you with a knife or gun ...... 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
19. He used a knife or fired a gun .............. 1 2 3 4 5 6 0 a b
Appendix C

The Aggression Questionnaire

This questionnaire was developed to learn about the different feelings people have. People answer these questions differently due to varying circumstances. Therefore, there are no right or wrong answers. Please read each item carefully. If an answer does not exactly reflect your own response then choose the response that is closest. Your answers are completely confidential.

Please rate on a scale from 1-5 where:

1. not at all like me
2. a little like me
3. fairly like me
4. quite like me
5. highly like me

1. ___ Once in a while I can’t control the urge to strike another person.
2. ___ I tell my friends openly when I disagree with them.
3. ___ I flare up quickly but get over it quickly.
4. ___ I am sometimes eaten up with jealousy.
5. ___ I often find myself disagreeing with people.
6. ___ Given enough provocation, I may hit another person.
7. ___ When frustrated, I let my irritation show.
8. ___ At times I feel I have gotten a raw deal out of life.
9. ___ If somebody hits me, I hit back.
10. ___ When people annoy me, I may tell them what I think of them.
11. ___ I sometimes feel like a powder keg ready to explode.
12. ___ Other people always seem to get the breaks.
13. ___ I get into fights a little more than the average person.
14. ___ I can’t help getting into arguments when people disagree with me.
15. ___ I am an even-tempered person.
16. ___ I wonder why sometimes I feel so bitter about things.
17. ___ If I have to resort to violence to protect my rights, I will.
18. ___ My friends say that I’m somewhat argumentative.
19. ___ Some of my friends think I’m a hothead.
20. ___ I know that “friends” talk about me behind my back.
21. ___ There are people who pushed me so far that we came to blows.
22. ___ Sometimes I fly off the handle for no good reason.
23. ___ I am suspicious of overly friendly strangers.
24. ___ I can think of no good reason for ever hitting a person.
25. ___ I have trouble controlling my temper.
26. ___ I sometimes feel that people are laughing at me behind my back.
27. ___ I have threatened people I know.
28. ___ When people are especially nice, I wonder what they want.
29. ___ I have become so mad that I have broken things.
Appendix D
Beck Depression Inventory

This questionnaire may be obtained from the Center for Cognitive Therapy, Room 602, 133 South 36th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104 U.S.A.
Appendix E
Parenting Dimensions Inventory
CHILD REARING INVENTORY

This questionnaire was developed to learn about how parents think and what they do with regard to their children. Different parents will answer these questions differently due to varying circumstances, therefore there are no right or wrong answers. Please read and answer each item according to your personal views or behavior. Even if an answer does not exactly reflect your own opinion or behavior, please choose the response that is closest. Your answers to this questionnaire will be completely confidential.

I. Preliminary Information

1. For the questionnaires that follow, you will be asked about your attitudes and behavior toward one of your children. The researcher will specify which child to think about when answering the questions. This child must be between the ages of 4-6 inclusive.

Gender of the selected child _______ Age of the selected child ___

2. This child is your...(please check one)
   ___ Biological child
   ___ Adopted child
   ___ Step-child

II. The following statements represent matters of interest and concern to some parents. Not all parents feel the same way about them. Circle the number which most closely applies to you and your 4-6 year old child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all Descriptive</th>
<th>Slightly Descriptive</th>
<th>Somewhat Descriptive</th>
<th>Fairly Descriptive</th>
<th>Quite Descriptive</th>
<th>Highly Descriptive</th>
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<td>of Me</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. I encourage my child to talk about his or her troubles. 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. I always follow through on discipline for my child, no matter how long it takes. 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. Sometimes it is so long between the occurrence of a misbehavior and an opportunity for me to deal with it that I just let it go. 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. I do not allow my child to get angry with me. 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. There are times I just don’t have the energy to make my child behave as he/she should. 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. My child can often talk me into letting him/her off easier than I had intended. 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. My child convinces me to change my mind after I have refused a request.  1 2 3 4 5 6

8. I think a child should be encouraged to do things better than others.  1 2 3 4 5 6

9. My child and I have warm intimate moments together.  1 2 3 4 5 6

10. I encourage my child to be curious, to explore, and to question things.  1 2 3 4 5 6

11. I find it interesting and educational to be with my child for long periods.  1 2 3 4 5 6

12. I don’t think children should be given sexual information.  1 2 3 4 5 6

13. I believe that a child should be seen and not heard.  1 2 3 4 5 6

14. I believe that parents who start a child talking about his/her worries don’t realize that sometimes it is better to leave well enough alone.  1 2 3 4 5 6

15. I encourage my child to express his/her opinions.  1 2 3 4 5 6

16. I make sure my child knows that I appreciate what he tries to accomplish.  1 2 3 4 5 6

17. I let my child know how ashamed and disappointed I am when he or she misbehaves.  1 2 3 4 5 6

18. I believe in toilet training a child as soon as possible.  1 2 3 4 5 6

19. I believe that most children change their minds so frequently that it is hard to take their opinions seriously.  1 2 3 4 5 6

20. I have little or no difficulty sticking with my rules for my child even when close relatives (including grandparents) are there.  1 2 3 4 5 6

21. When I let my child talk about his/her troubles, he/she ends up complaining even more.  1 2 3 4 5 6

22. I expect my child to be grateful and appreciate all the advantages he or she has.  1 2 3 4 5 6
Not at all Descriptive of Me Slightly Descriptive of Me Somewhat Descriptive of Me Fairly Descriptive of Me Quite Descriptive of Me Highly Descriptive of Me

1 2 3 4 5 6

23. Once I decide how to deal with a misbehavior of my child, I follow through on it. 1 2 3 4 5 6

24. I respect my child’s opinion and encourage him/her to express it. 1 2 3 4 5 6

25. I never threaten my child with a punishment unless I am sure I will carry it out. 1 2 3 4 5 6

26. I believe that once a family rule has been made, it should be strictly enforced without exception. 1 2 3 4 5 6

III. Listed below are pairs of statements concerning parents’ attitudes toward childrearing. For each pair, choose the one statement (A or B) that most represents your attitude, and place a checkmark in front of the letter that precedes that statement. Make sure that you choose A or B for each pair, even if you agree with neither or with both. In these cases, choose the opinion that is closest to or best represents your point of view.

1. ___ A. Nowadays too much emphasis is placed on obedience for children. ___ B. Nowadays parents are too concerned about letting children do what they want.

2. ___ A. Children need more freedom to make up their own minds about things than they seem to get today. ___ B. Children need more guidance from their parents than they seem to get today.

3. ___ A. I care more than most parents I know about having my child obey me. ___ B. I care less than most parents I know about having my child obey me.

4. ___ A. I try to prevent my child from making mistakes by setting rules for his/her own good. ___ B. I try to provide freedom for my child to make mistakes and learn from them.

5. ___ A. If children are given too many rules, they will grow up to be unhappy adults. ___ B. It is important to set and enforce rules for children to grow up to be happy adults.
IV. Listed below are activities that you may do with your child. Some of these activities are ones which may occur frequently, some occasionally, and some never. Please indicate, as shown below, how often you did the following activities with your child in the past month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never in the Past Month</th>
<th>Once in the Past Month</th>
<th>2-3 Times in Past Month</th>
<th>Once or Twice a Week</th>
<th>3-4 Times a Week</th>
<th>5 Times or More</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Help child care for clothing</td>
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<td>(e.g. assist in hanging clothes, shining shoes)</td>
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<td>2. Visit friends or relatives with child</td>
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<td>3. Supervise child playing by himself/herself</td>
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<td>4. Help child with a play activity (e.g. playing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Comfort when he/she is upset</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Explain something to child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Discipline child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. For each of the following statements, circle the number which indicates how often the statement is true of your family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>One in a While</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Most of the Time</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. We have a regular dinner schedule each week.  | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
2. Our house is clean and orderly.              | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
3. Our family is organized and "together".      | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
4. We get everything done around the house that needs to be done. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
VI. Circle the number of regular assigned chores in the following areas that your child is responsible for.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>One</th>
<th>Two</th>
<th>Three or More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Meals (e.g., buy groceries, cook, set table, wash dishes, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Housekeeping (e.g., clean room, make bed, dust, put out garbage, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Laundry (e.g., put dirty clothes in hamper, wash the clothes, fold clothes iron, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Yardwork (e.g., mow, pull weeds, sweep walks, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pet care (e.g., feed pet, take pet for walk, clean up after pet, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Other (e.g., Babysit, water plants, wash car, bring in mail, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VII. Listed below are several situations which frequently occur in childhood. You may or may not have had these experiences with your child. Imagine that each has just occurred and rate how likely it is that you would do each of the responses listed below the situation.

1. Your child has gone outside without picking up his or her toys as you requested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Very Unlikely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Let situation go .................</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take away a privilege (e.g. no TV tonight).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign an additional chore</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take away something material (e.g. no dessert tonight).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send to room</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Punishment</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason with child</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground child</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yell at child</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List and circle anything else you might do: Other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. After arguing over toys your child strikes a playmate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
<th>Very Unlikely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Let situation go</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take away a privilege (e.g. no TV tonight)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign an additional chore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take away something material (e.g. no dessert tonight)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send to room</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Punishment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason with child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yell at child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List and circle anything else you might do: Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Your child becomes sassy while you discipline him or her.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
<th>Very Unlikely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Let situation go</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take away a privilege (e.g. no TV tonight)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign an additional chore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take away something material (e.g. no dessert tonight)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send to room</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Punishment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason with child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yell at child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List and circle anything else you might do: Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. You receive a note from your child’s teacher that your child has been disruptive at school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
<th>Very Unlikely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Let situation go</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take away a privilege (e.g. no TV tonight)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign an additional chore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take away something material (e.g. no dessert tonight)</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send to room</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Punishment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason with child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground child</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List and circle anything else you might do: Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. You catch your child lying about something he or she has done that you would not approve of.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Very Unlikely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Let situation go</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take away a privilege (e.g. no TV tonight)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign an additional chore</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take away something material (e.g. no dessert tonight)</td>
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<td>Send to room</td>
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<td>Yell at child</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List and circle anything else you might do: Other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. You see your child playing at a busy street which you have forbidden him or her to go near for safety reasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Very Unlikely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Let situation go</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take away a privilege (e.g. no TV tonight)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign an additional chore</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Send to room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Punishment</td>
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<td>Ground child</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yell at child</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List and circle anything else you might do: Other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F
Child Behavior Checklist

This checklist may be obtained from T.M. Achenbach
University of Vermont
1 S. Prospect St.
Burlington, VT 05401 U.S.A.
Appendix G
Script for Battered Women

My name is Tanya. I'm a graduate student at the University of Manitoba. I'm doing a research project on women in shelters. The purpose of the project is to better understand how women in situations like yours and their children are feeling in order to help them.

Your participation would involve signing a consent form, and filling out some questionnaires on yourself and your children.

Could we set up a time and place where I could give you these questionnaires? It will take about one hour to complete.
Dear Participant:  

March 30, 1992

I am a Master’s student at the University of Manitoba conducting research with women who have experienced violence in their relationships. My interest is in learning about your feelings after having this experience, as well as how you think as a parent and about how you view your children’s behavior. Participation in this research will involve your filling out a series of questionnaires which will take approximately one hour to complete. This research is very important as it will assist counsellors to better understand how women in shelters view their parenting role and any difficulties that their children may be having. All answers are completely confidential, read only by the researcher. Thus in no way will counselling at the shelters be affected. No individual assessments of well-being will be made on the women or children because the questions are not sensitive enough, and it is not the purpose of this project. Participants will be allowed to withdraw at any time, and refusal to participate will not affect treatment at the shelter in any way. Participation is completely voluntary, but your participation is immensely appreciated.

If you have any questions about the research please call Tanya Gabille at 281-0959, or

Dr. Joan Durrant  
University of Manitoba  
Faculty of Human Ecology  
(204) 474-6702
I have read, and I understand the procedure described.

Please circle one:

1) I agree to participate in the study, and I have received a copy of this description.

2) I do not consent to participation in this study.

Signatures:  

____________________  ______________________  
Participant  Date

____________________  ______________________  
Researcher  Date
Appendix I

Script for Community Women

My name is Tanya. I'm a graduate student at the University of Manitoba. I'm doing a research project talking to many women in relationships with male partners and who are mothers. The purpose of the project is to better understand how women feel and how they parent their children.

Your participation would involve signing a consent form, and filling out some questionnaires on yourself and your children.

Could we set up a time and place where I could give you these questionnaires? It will take about one hour to complete.
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