Internalized Heterosexism, Outness, Relationship Satisfaction,

and Violence in Lesbian Relationships

BY

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DISSERTATION

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This dissertation is dedicated to the participants who participated in the survey and shared valuable pieces of their stories to help with this research project and to domestic violence researchers and workers in the field.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABI   Abusive Behavior Inventory

ABI-PERP   Abusive Behavior Inventory-Perpetrator

ABI-TARG   Abusive Behavior Inventory-Target

DV   Domestic Violence

IH   Internalized Heterosexism

IPV   Intimate Partner Violence

LGB   Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual

LGBT   Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender

LIHS   Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale

OI   Outness Inventory

PTSD   Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

RAS   Relationship Assessment Scale

SGL   Same Gender Loving

WEB   Women's Experience of Battering

SUMMARY

For the past several decades, research on intimate partner violence has been primarily focused on heterosexual couples. Yet researchers and domestic violence workers are aware that intimate partner violence takes place in lesbian couples as well. Early feminist theories regarding intimate partner violence that have been entrenched in patriarchy and misogyny do not make sense for lesbian relationships. Additionally, lesbians live in a heterosexist world that has historically misunderstood, ignored or disapproved of their relationships. Resources for lesbians in an abusive relationship have been non-existent, scant, heterosexist and inadequate.

As a result of living in a heterosexist society, many lesbians may internalize the negative messages they receive from society regarding their lesbianism and their relationships. This is known as internalized heterosexism. They may also choose to hide their relationship from the different domains in their world such as their family, friends, work place, and religious community. Having and managing these internalized negative feelings and hiding one's sexual orientation and/or relationships can be deleterious to one's psychological well-being as well as one's relationship. Research indicates that there are several adverse associations with these internalized negative feelings that include depression, alcohol, and other substance abuse, conflict regarding sexual orientation, lower levels of disclosure of sexual orientation, less connection and membership in the lesbian/gay community, loneliness, feelings of inferiority, and suicide.

A convenience sample of 904 lesbians was recruited for this study using various methods. Participants completed an anonymous survey containing the following measures; Outness Inventory (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000), Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale (Szymanski & Chung, 2001), The Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988), the Abusive Behavior Inventory (perpetrator and target perspective) (Shepard & Campbell, 1992), and the Women's Experience of Battering (Smith, Earp & DeVellis, 1994). A major finding of the study indicates that higher levels of internalized heterosexism put lesbians at increased risk of violence in their relationships. Findings of the study have relevance for social work practice, social welfare policy, and social work education. Social work practitioners need to be aware of heterosexism and internalized heterosexism and how they may impact a lesbian and her relationship. Social workers can work to challenge and eliminate heterosexism in society in order to help diminish the harmful effects of internalized heterosexism in the lives of lesbians.

I. INTRODUCTION

A.   <u>Background</u>

Research on domestic abuse or intimate partner abuse or violence (IPV) has been primarily focused on heterosexual relationships despite the fact that researchers and practitioners are aware that abuse is not limited exclusively to opposite-gender relationships (Lockhart, White, Causby & Issac, 1994). Until the 1980s, abuse in lesbian relationships had not been well documented and was mostly ignored by family violence researchers. Numerous studies report differing degrees of IPV among lesbian couples varying from 17 to 52% (Brand & Kidd, 1986; Loulan, 1987; Coleman, 1994; Lie & Gentlewarrior, 1991; Lockhart, White, Causby & Isaac, 1994). Many researchers believe that IPV in lesbian relationships occurs at the same rate or possibly even a higher level of frequency than heterosexual IPV (Sorenson & Thomas, 1999; Renzetti, 1992; Waldner-Haugrud, Vaden Gratch & Magruder, 1997). However, much of the research conducted relied on scales that are criticized by feminist and other researchers because they fail to provide a culturally sensitive context to understand the abuse that is being reported by lesbians (Waldner-Haugrud, Vaden Gratch & Magruder, 1997).

Earlier feminist scholars asserted that IPV was primarily embedded in men's desire to control and dominate their female partner (Walker, 1979). Distinguished from theories of domination are family violence researchers asserting that, for the most part, partner violence usually arises from conflicts and arguments. The violence is not centered on patriarchal control and is carried out equally by women and men (Archer, 2000; Straus, 1980; Straus & Gelles, 1986) and that the violence that couples' experience is no

different in theory or dynamics than any other form of family violence (Gilfus, Trabold, O'Brien, Fleck-Henderson, 2010).

Theories regarding heterosexual IPV, particularly when assuming a male perpetrator, and theories considering the roots of abuse in patriarchy, misogyny, male privilege and power, may be limited in their applicability to IPV in lesbian relationships (Koss, Goodman, Browne, Fitzgerald, Puryear, Ketia & Russo, 1994; Kaschak, 2001; Ristock, 2003). Researching same-sex IPV should caution us not to generalize findings from studies of IPV in heterosexual couples to lesbian relationships and not to develop one general theory to explain abuse in all relationships.

Theoretically, abuse in lesbian relationships has an additional factor that serves to further complicate the phenomenon: lesbians experience abuse not only in a patriarchal, misogynist culture, but in a homophobic, heterosexist culture as well. Most likely heterosexism has contributed to the lack of response and the dearth of resources available to abused lesbians (Balsam, 2001). Internalized heterosexism (IH) is the internalization of the negative messages about homosexuality by lesbian, gay, and bisexual people that they receive from society (Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, Meyer, 2008). Continued research is needed to examine the factors of internalized heterosexism and whether IH can affect the unique dynamics in the life of a lesbian and in the relationships of lesbian couples.

B.   <u>Statement of the Problem</u>

Same-sex intimate partner abuse has historically been a largely unrecognized and untreated social problem. Hammond (1989) defines lesbian battering as "a pattern of physical abuse or intimidation in which the batterer uses the actuality or threat of physical force, or violence, to exert control over the victim, thereby increasing the batterer's sense

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of power in the relationship" (p.90). Research is and has been primarily focused on domestic abuse or violence (DV) or intimate partner abuse or violence (IPV) in heterosexual relationships. Social workers and other health professionals are often ignorant of the issues involved with same-sex couples and abuse in same-sex relationships and are unaware as to how to support clients who present with this issue (Poorman, 2001).

Many definitions of stigma exist beginning with Goffman's as an "attribute that is deeply discrediting" and that reduces the bearer "from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one" (Goffman, 1963, p.3). Other definitions include; Stafford and Scott (1986, p.80) "a characteristic of persons that is contrary to a norm of social unit", and Crocker, Major and Steele (1998, p.505) "stigmatized individuals possess (or are believed to possess) some attribute, or characteristic, that conveys a social identity that is devalued in a particular social context." Link and Phelan (2001) add the component of discrimination to the definitions of stigma.

For lesbians and same-sex-loving women, internalized stigma can be directed both outward and inward. Lesbians are capable of holding negative attitudes toward other lesbians, gay men, or bisexuals because they learn society's negative evaluation of homosexuality. They can also direct these negative attitudes toward themselves, their own same-sex desires and the feelings of belonging to a marginalized and stigmatized population (Herek, Gillis & Cogan, 2009). This kind of self-stigma or internalized negativity for lesbians is called internalized heterosexism. The terms *homophobia* and *internalized homophobia* have been criticized recently for not being accurate descriptors of the oppression that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) individuals experience

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(Szymanski, Kashubeck-West & Meyer, 2008). The term *homophobia* has a limited focus on unreasonable fear and the diagnostic term *phobia* and is not a precise means to express the customary reaction of dominant society to homosexuals. Several authors have suggested alternative terms such as *heterosexism* (Herek, 1995), and *internalized heterosexism* (Szymanski, 2004).

Heterosexism refers to the functions of inequity in society by maintaining economic control and power of the dominant group and by reinforcing the notion that the traditional family unit, with a heterosexual couple, is the only presumed and standard unit (Tigert, 2001). *Heterosexism* and *internalized heterosexism* are more appropriate terms because they include a range of disapproving judgments regarding LGB people and include stigmatization from political, cultural, and social perspectives rather than referring to the individual fear of a person. Heterosexism also refers to an ideological system that functions on individual, institutional, and cultural levels to malign, deny, and stigmatize any non-heterosexual way of being (Herek, 1995). Therefore, I will use the terms heterosexism and internalized heterosexism (IH) to categorize the internalized negative attitudes lesbians perceive or exhibit.

Fear of rejection, discrimination, and numerous other factors typically influence a lesbian regarding her self-disclosure of her lesbianism. Lesbians have different levels of *outness* or differ to the extent to which the are *out* or *out of the closet* in that their sexual orientation is known to others (Morris, Waldo & Rothblum, 2001). The problem is that there is inadequate information regarding the occurrence of battering and abuse in lesbian relationships, the presence of IH in lesbians and whether and how this, and other factors such as levels of outness, impacts lesbians relationships.

C.   Purpose of the Study

There is a need for research that focuses on understanding the incidence of and associations with abuse in lesbian and female same-sex-loving relationships in order to provide effective support and services. *Same-gender-loving* (SGL) serves as an alternative to the LGB terms and is often associated with youth (Rankin, 2006) and members of some minority groups, particularly people of African-American or Latino descent (Battle, Cohen, Warren, Fergerson & Audam, 2002). Recent research (Rankin, 2003) suggests that many sexual minorities prefer choices such as *same-gender-loving* and *woman-loving-woman*. Some same-gender-loving people considered the terms *gay* and *lesbian*, to be predominately antiquated, white social constructs of identity, and consequently not germane to their personal experiences (Rankin, 2003; 2006). The term *same-gender-loving* or *women-loving-women* will be used in recruitment materials to better include minorities and young women, but this paper will use the term *same-sex*.

Increased understanding of abuse in relationships can be used to develop partner abuse interventions in the lesbian population, to improve appropriate legal and law enforcement systems and to assist social workers and other health and mental health practitioners in developing and implementing effective treatment and prevention interventions for abusers and targets of violence. A greater understanding of the consequence of internalizing society's negative attitudes toward one's self-identified population and whether and how this impacts intimate partner abuse for lesbians is valuable and needed. Information and insight will afford awareness, assistance, and support, inform prevention strategies, and assist in healing for individuals and couples. Specifically focusing on lesbians or same-sex-loving women in this study, a deeper

understanding of the effects of hiding one's sexual orientation and the impact it has on personal and relational quality and stress levels is critical. Resulting information will advise social work practice and treatment models for working with lesbians and their intimate relationships for perpetrators and targets of abuse. A better comprehension of the theories that can explain abuse in lesbian and same-sex-loving relationships, the impact of internalized heterosexism and hiding one's lesbianism and perception of relationship quality is warranted. Specifically, what is the relationship between internalized heterosexism, levels of outness, relationship satisfaction and lesbian IPV?

D.   Hypotheses

> *1. Internalized heterosexism is negatively associated with relationship satisfaction.*

> *2. Outness is positively associated with relationship satisfaction.*

> *3. Relationship satisfaction is negatively associated with IPV as perpetrator and target.*

> *4. Internalized heterosexism is negatively associated outness.*

> *5. Outness is negatively associated with IPV as perpetrator and target.*

> *6. Internalized heterosexism is positively associated with IPV as target and perpetrator.*

> *7. Relationship satisfaction mediates the relationship between outness and IPV as perpetrator and target.*

> *8. Relationship satisfaction mediates the relationship between IH and IPV as perpetrator and target.*

E.   Significance of the Problem

The minority stress model is an expansion of the social stress theory and speaks to the extreme stress individuals experience as a result of belonging to a minority group that experiences rejection, stigmatization, and discrimination from the majority population. Additionally, the model addresses the adverse effects stigma and prejudice can have on the lives of these individuals (Meyer, 2003). Research has shown that gay men and lesbians are considered one of the most stressed groups of individuals in society (Lewis, Derlega, Griffin & Krowinski, 2003; Malcom, 2002). The pervasiveness of stress in gay men and lesbians is thought to be a consequence of prejudice, lack of social and institutional supports, lack of protection, and from hiding one' s sexual identity (Meyer, 2003; Szymanski & Chung, 2003; DiPlacido, 1998). Lesbians can experience minority stress as a result of external stressors, such as hate crimes and intolerance or from internal stressors, such as internalized heterosexism (DiPlacido, 1998; Meyers, 2003). This high rate of stress may result in negative health effects for lesbians and same-sex-loving women that include depression, substance abuse disorders, anxiety, affective disorders, and suicidal behavior (Cochran, 2001; Lewis, Derlega, Berndt, Morris & Rose, 2002; Savin-Williams & Ream, 2003). Stressful events may adversely influence intimate relationships and increase the risk of intimate partner violence (Cano & Vivian, 2001).

1.   **Heterosexism and internalized heterosexism**

Lesbians live in a world where they experience oppression, homophobia and heterosexism. The term "homophobia" is defined as an irrational fear, hatred, and intolerance of homosexuality (Weinberg, 1972). Heterosexism is a term that was developed within the lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) rights movement and refers to an ideological system that operates on individuals, institutional and cultural levels to stigmatize, deny, and denigrate any non-heterosexual ways of being (Herek, 1995; Kitzinger, 1996; Szymanski, Kashubeck-West & Meyer, 2008). Internalized heterosexism has been defined as the "negative and distressing thoughts and feelings experienced by lesbians and gay men about their sexuality, and which are attributed to experiences of cultural heterosexism and victimization" (Williamson, 2000, p. 104).

Research shows a regularity of negative treatment that lesbians and same-sex-loving women experience in their daily lives including: violence (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2000), work place discrimination and stigma-related experiences (Croteau, 1996; Gates & Mitchell, 2013), social harassment and acts of hatred (Morrow, 2001), acts of prejudice, negative social attitudes, alienation (Meyer, 2003), spiritual shaming (Tigert, 1999), and isolation (Szymanski, Chung & Balsam, 2001). Several authors have indicated that the disclosure of a lesbian identity may be a predictor of victimization (D'Augelli, Hershberger & Pilkington, 1998; Ellis & Riggle, 1995; Griffith & Hebl, 2000).

The pervasiveness of negative messages, violence, and oppression of lesbians is inescapable throughout their social context. As a result, researchers believe lesbians develop internalized heterosexism to one degree or another resulting from living in a

heterosexist society (Szymanski, Chung & Balsam, 2001). Negative feelings, beliefs and attitudes about oneself and other lesbians can become incorporated into an individual's identity and these messages continue to be consistently expressed by society (Balsam, 2001). Lesbians may experience dual or multiple marginalized identities and therefore multiple stigmatizations with possible greater effects of internalized oppression (Williamson, 2000).

2. **Outness**

Hiding or denying one's sexual orientation is a common coping strategy for gay and lesbian people. *Coming out* is the commonly used term for the process or events lesbians experience when they reveal their sexual orientation to their family, friends, and co-workers and openly refer to their lesbianism or, if in a relationship, refer openly to their girlfriend/partner/wife. Lesbians and same-sex-loving women may choose to remain *closeted* or secretive about their sexual orientation to protect their physical safety, job, keep custody of their children or avoid rejection, discrimination and stigma, or because of their own shame. The stress of hiding a significant part of their true self and possibly a partner leads to a sense of disharmony, coping fatigue, and involves a considerable psychic toll (Meyer, 1995) and is another component of minority stress (DiPlacido, 1998). When one or both partners are closeted, the intensity of isolation may be magnified, may be used as a manipulation in a dysfunctional relationship (Balsam, 2001; McLaughlin & Rozee, 2001), and may increase the stress in a lesbian relationship (Balsam & Szymanski, 2005).

F.   <u>**Significance of the Study**</u>

Just as heterosexual couples, many lesbians seek satisfying and enduring relationships. In addition to many of the challenges faced by heterosexual couples, lesbians face unique challenges that can negatively impact their relationships. Minority stress and heterosexism and internalized heterosexism can take a toll on an intimate lesbian relationship resulting in poor relationship quality, and possible battering and abuse.

Literature on lesbian abuse calls for developing new models to explain abuse in lesbian relationships (Balsam, 2001; Bogard, 2005; Coleman, 1994; Elliot, 1996; McLaughlin & Rozee, 2001; Merrill, 1996; Miller, Greene, Causby, White & Lockhart, 2001; Poorman, 2001; Poorman & Seelau, 2001; Ristock, 2002; Renzetti, 1992; Renzetti, 1996). Earlier models of abuse don't easily apply to lesbians, especially lesbians and same-sex loving women of color, and contribute to the lack of knowledge of lesbian abuse (Bowleg, Huan, Brooks, Black & Burkholder, 2003; McLaughlin & Rozee, 2001; Szymanski & Gupta, 2009; Waldron, 1996). An important difference between abuse in lesbian relationships and abuse in heterosexual relationships is that lesbian IPV occurs in a context of homophobia and heterosexism. The lesbian experiences abuse not only within the context of a sexist, white, male privileged world, but also a world that is heterosexist. We need new paradigms that include issues of heterosexism and internalized heterosexism to comprehensively examine violence and abuse in lesbian relationships.

A closer look at the complicated and multifaceted ways that heterosexism and internalized heterosexism influences the experience of lesbian relationships will help us to understand the lack of response and expand our theories and understanding of IPV in

lesbian relationships. This understanding can facilitate appropriate interventions and treatment. This study will specifically examine the role internalized heterosexism and outness may play in relationship satisfaction and abuse in lesbian and female same-sex-loving relationships.

G.   Applications to Practice

This study will assist couple and family therapists so they may increase their awareness regarding the effects of heterosexism, internalized heterosexism, outness, and relationship satisfaction specifically as they relate to lesbians and lesbian relationships. Additionally, this study will inform clinicians regarding the existence of violence and abuse in lesbian relationships and its associations with other factors, such as internalized heterosexism and outness in order to examine theories of abuse and violence and to better offer support and treatment for lesbians and lesbian couples. This study offers insight into the application of theories of abuse in intimate relationships in general, and specifically, how societal factors and oppression can impact individuals and their relationships. Generally, this study will allow practitioners to benefit from additional information and awareness regarding the effects of marginalization on lesbians, homosexuals, and same-sex-loving people. Added knowledge regarding discrimination and its detrimental effects on populations will contribute to social work's overall commitment to be conversant about and advocate for marginalized communities.

H.   Limitations

It is difficult to conduct research on lesbians without using convenience samplings in order to obtain a sizeable sample. However, using a convenience sample is a limitation to the study in that it results in sampling bias and that the sample is not

representative of the entire population. Therefore, a related limitation is in generalization and inference making about the entire population.

As mentioned earlier, identity is multiple and fluid; individuals are complex and multi-faceted and identities may manifest themselves and evolve continuously throughout a lifetime (Campbell, 2003; Dominelli, 2002; McDonald & Coleman, 1999). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that at any point in time individuals may possess numerous identities, and one may identify with more than one oppressed population, such as 'African-American/ Woman/Lesbian/ Disabled/Immigrant.' Individuals that experience multiple minority identities that are stigmatized can also encounter multiple oppressions. The questions in this survey focus on internalized heterosexism and do not investigate sexism, racism, ageism, ableism, or other oppressive 'isms' that may coincide, complicate, or contribute to IH and this is a limitation to this study.

Reaching closeted same-sex loving women and lesbians is a particular challenge for this research project. The very nature of a closeted lesbian is that they are isolated, secretive, and have limited or no disclosure about their lesbianism. While every attempt will be made to contact and include them, closeted lesbians may have limited exposure to the convenience sampling techniques that will be used in this study and the lack of their important input may not be included and is a limitation.

The use of a computer based web survey is a limit to this study, as participants must have a computer, access to a computer, access to the Internet, as well as some technological understanding of how to use the computer. This prevents a group of possibly underserved lesbians and lesbians from a lower socioeconomic class from

participating in this study. A paper survey was an option for participants, but this still is a limitation and contributes to the lack of generalizability of the results of this study. Social desirability and self-deception in answering difficult questions on the survey are limitations to this study, as participants may not answer questions truthfully and honestly. Social desirability bias refers to the tendency to answer self- report items in such a way as to deliberately or unconsciously represent oneself in a favorable light (Holtgraves, 2004). Various factors may motivate respondents to provide responses that they believe are more socially desirable than a truthful answer. However, socially desirable responding is not necessarily a deliberate behavior; it may also reflect an unconscious inclination to create a positive impression, or may betray self-deceptive tendencies (Paulhaus & Reid, 1991).

While this study is examining the relationships between several variables in the lives of lesbians, these proposed correlations have limitations. Correlational research demonstrates an association between two variables. However, a limitation is that we cannot make causal conclusions from correlational findings because we cannot rule out all alternative explanations for correlational findings (O'Grady, 1982; Thompson, Diamond, McWilliam, Snyder & Snyder, 2005). This is an additional contribution to the limits of generalizability of this study.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED LITERATURE

A. **Conceptual Framework**

Minority stress is described as psychosocial stress resulting from minority status (Brooks, 1981). When prejudice and discrimination are legal and practiced overtly it is probable that they will impact most, if not all members of a minority group (Meyer, 2003). Minority stress results from the disparity between minority and dominant culture beliefs and values, particularly as it specifically relates to the status of the minority population, and the ensuing stigmatization the minority group members experience in their daily social life. Minority stress posits that homosexual people experience chronic stress related to their stigmatization, as do any other members of minority or stigmatized populations (Meyer, 1995). These stress levels lead to negative mental health outcomes similar to social stress discourse (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003; Pearlin, 1989), and the indication of social causality of distress (Dohrenwend et al., 1992). The Minority Stress Model informs the theoretical concepts of outness and internalized heterosexism and may have a direct and indirect effect on relationship satisfaction.

Theoretical frameworks used in this study are internalized heterosexism (IH), outness, relationship satisfaction and intimate partner violence in lesbian relationships.

1. **Internalized heterosexism**

According to Meyer (1995), gays and lesbians experience a kind of minority stress as a result of living in a society wherein they encounter a constant conflict between themselves and society that results in psychological distress. Internalized heterosexism (IH) is defined as the internalization of the negative attitudes and assumptions about homosexuality gays and lesbians observe and experience that are prevalent in society

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(Szymanski & Chung, 2001). The intensity of internalized heterosexism, as indicated by levels of connection with the lesbian community, public identification as lesbian, personal feelings about being a lesbian, moral and religious attitudes toward lesbians, and attitudes toward other lesbians by the participant, will be an independent variable in this study.

2. Outness

Outness is conceptualized as the comparative amount of disclosure one has regarding their sexual orientation to family members, lesbian/gay friends, heterosexual friends, and co-workers (Bradford, Ryan & Rothblum, 1997). Outness is also related to and is conceptualized as feelings about the value of outness and fears and concerns relating to one's disclosure (Harry, 1993). Levels of outness have been associated with minority stress, levels of couple satisfaction, and negative health effects (DiPlacido, 1998; Meyer, 2003; Otis, Rostosky, Riggle & Hamrin, 2006; Jordan & Deluty, 2000). The level of outness is an independent variable.

3. Relationship Satisfaction

In studies examining same-sex couples' overall satisfaction with their relationships findings indicate that same-sex couples are at least as satisfied as married heterosexual couples (Kurdek, 2001; Peplau & Cochran, 1990). Higher levels of outness are associated with higher levels of couple satisfaction (Clausell & Roisman, 2009; Foster & Campbell, 2005) and higher levels of internalized heterosexism are negatively associated with relationship satisfaction (Mohr & Daly, 2008). In heterosexual couples, satisfaction with intimate partner relationships is negatively associated with both

battering and violence (Rose, Campbell & Kub, 2000). Level of relationship satisfaction is an independent variable.

4.   <u>**Intimate partner violence in lesbian relationships**</u>

The conceptual definition of intimate partner violence is the actual or threatened abuse perpetrated by one person to gain control over another with whom they have, or have had, an intimate relationship (Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2004). There is some discussion and disagreement regarding the use of the terms 'victim' and 'survivor' in Domestic Violence research. The term 'victim' may be perceived as conferring weakness and defenselessness while 'survivor' is a term that can imply resiliency and the end of all victimization (Meyersfeld, 2003; Morrison, 2005). However, an alternative perception of 'victim' is that of a person who is being victimized by another, a target of victimization that does not imply weakness but is an identifier. And 'survivor' may imply that a person who is the target of abuse and does not leave the relationship and 'survive' is a failure and weak in that they have somehow consented to the abuse, or that there is no additional victimization taking place. As Meyersfeld (2003) states, "I propose that a woman who does not flee and 'survive' is no more weak than one who does" (p.381). Additionally, it is possible that both parties in a relationship may be the abuser and the abused at different times (Renzetti, 1992). The terms 'victim' and 'survivor' can also have meaning as points on a journey of a continuum through a cycle of violence and recovery (Dunn, 2005; Morrison, 2005). The term *target* will be used to identify the person who is the focus of abuse, violence, threats of violence or coercion. The term *target* does not proscribe any point on a continuum of experience but is a neutral descriptor to indicate the person targeted for abuse or violence. A person who is a target

can be the current focus of a perpetrator who is planning on abuse, the current receiver of violence, abuse, or coercion, or a past recipient of violence, abuse, or coercion.

The amount of abuse present in a relationship will be the dependent variable measured in terms of experience of any violence present in a relationship, experienced as a perpetrator, and experienced as a target.

B. **Review of Related Literature**

1. **Introduction**

History tells us that violence and abuse between intimates has been reported since the beginning of recorded time (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). However, in the past 30 years activists, practitioners, researchers, feminists and the public have expressed interest and concern over family and intimate violence in heterosexual relationships. Wife abuse was not considered a serious social problem until the 1970s when research was first published and shelters for battered women were created (Bergen, 1998). Attention and concern regarding this problem has been inconsistent and politically charged at times. The Violence Against Women Act was not passed until 1997, almost 30 years after wife abuse was first brought to the attention of the public by researchers. Contention exists regarding data collection methods, definitions of terms, interventions and prevention programs, and theoretical perspectives surrounding intimate partner violence. A discussion of the involvement of lesbians in the battered women's movement follows along with a brief overview of heterosexual domestic violence as it is the forerunner to focus and research on intimate partner violence in lesbian relationships and on which most theoretical perspectives regarding IPV were, and some still are, based.

2. **Lesbians in the battered women's movement.**

Lesbians were very involved in the beginning of both the feminist movement and the battered women's movement. Lesbians were on the front line of challenging traditional thoughts and perceptions of women in society, women as subordinate to man, women's sexuality, and women's place in the home. In addition, lesbians had successfully experienced life wherein they were not attached to men for their primary emotional relationship. They didn't want or seek men's approval as their partners and they were in an unusual position to envision a personal life without men. Lesbians were adamantly pro-women and pro-women's rights and they worked vigorously for the liberation of all women from the traditional thinking of buying into their dependence and subservience to men. Lesbians were also directly involved in the formation of battered women's movement, raising consciousness and providing support and shelter for battered women (Davis, 1991; Poorman, 2001; Schechter, 1982; Schulman, 2001).

The early feminist perspective of violence that helped to jump-start the battered women's movement focused on patriarchy and misogyny in society. The latter issue plays an important part in the delay in bringing violence in lesbian relationships to light and therefore to lesbians receiving adequate services. The focus and language of the feminists at this time, particularly as it applied to violence against women, did not explain the violence a woman experiences from her lesbian partner.

Del Martin, a forerunner in the lesbian feminist and battered women's movement, argued in her book, *Battered Wives* (1976), that domestic violence is the extreme of sexist gender-role socialization. Because our culture socializes men to be fearless, dominant, forceful, and tough and woman to be submissive, appeasing, dependent, and compliant

and society oppresses any other gender role expressions, our culture has trained men to be aggressive while women have a role of subordinate and a victim. Initial Feminist theory focused on the question of violence at a social level and sought to comprehend why men used physical force against their intimate female partners and what purpose this served society (Chapman & Gates, 1978; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Martin, 1976; Merrill, 1996; Pagelow, 1981; Schechter, 1982; Yllo, 1988) although it had and has its dissenters (Dutton, 1994; McNeely & Robinson-Simpson, 1987; Rosenbaum & Leisring, 2003). While lesbians laid much of the groundwork for the feminist theory as to how and why violence against women occurs, the theory did not assist them in examining the then emerging awareness of lesbian battering and some lesbians did not feel comfortable turning to feminists in the battered women's movement who had made male violence against women their focus of attention (Schechter, 1982).

During the 1970s, as societal awareness of heterosexual domestic abuse increased, lesbian relationships were considered to be free of abuse because the newly proclaimed sociopolitical perspective presumed that abuse towards a woman was the consequence of a misogynist and patriarchal society that understood that men were the abusers and women were the targets or victims. In the 1980s lesbian stories of abuse began to surface in lesbian communities and eventually research and writings began to investigate the phenomenon of intimate partner violence and abuse in lesbian relationships and re-examine the theories that explained abuse. An overview of IPV in lesbian relationships will be presented.

Some theories that explain abuse in heterosexual relationships cannot easily be applied to relationships involving two women. While several theories may overlap in

their applicability to both phenomena, theories that relate specifically to the domination of males over women do not make sense for relationships consisting of two women. The inapplicability of the early feminist perspective, the concerns over this inapplicability and the consequences on IPV in lesbian relationships will be examined.

Minority stress is a theoretical conceptualization assumed to result from a person's minority status that results from culturally approved lower standing, societal prejudice, discrimination and stigmatization (Lindguist & Hirabayashi, 1979). Lesbians experience minority stress from living in a hostile and stressful environment that can lead to physical and mental health problems and impact relationship quality in lesbian couples (Mohr & Daly, 2008). Internalized heterosexism is a unique stressor and result of minority stress on gays and lesbians.

'Homophobia' was first coined in the 1970s describing an irrational fear, hatred, and intolerance of homosexuality. Because homophobic and heterosexist attitudes regarding homosexuals is insidiously prevalent in our society; gays, lesbians, and bisexuals are unable to avoid its influence and as a result, LGB people develop internalized heterosexism to some degree (Szymanski, Chung & Balsam, 2001). Researchers have hypothesized that internalized heterosexism is associated with assorted psychosocial struggles in lesbian, gay, bisexual persons (Szymanski, Kashubeck-West & Meyer, 2008). After a brief discussion of the development of knowledge of IPV in heterosexual relationships, I review the research in IPV in lesbian relationships, minority stress and internalized heterosexism, and the concept of outness and relationship satisfaction as it applies to lesbians.

3.   **Abuse in heterosexual intimate relationships**

Researchers had been aware of wife abuse for centuries but not until the 1970s in the United States did the phenomenon receive public attention as a social problem. Research articles regarding wife abuse were first published in the early 1970s and the first shelters for battered women were created in the United States in 1972 (Bergen, 1998; Schechter, 1982). Significant gains have been made in elucidating and expanding our information and knowledge about violence in intimate relationships over the past 30 years. Along with these helpful gains, there exists considerable contention regarding issues of theorizing, causation, and models used to explain and understand intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships. The discussions continue today in the behavioral science literature regarding applicable theories and models and the addition of same-sex partner abuse serves to add more elements to the discussion.

The battered women's movement was a grassroots response to the lack of appropriate police response to domestic disputes and the harm women encountered when mental health professionals did not identify dangerous and life-threatening situations with their abusive partner. The movement originally consisted of targets and supporters and soon scholarly feminists involved in the development of women's rights united in the cause (Hamel, 2007). Feminists focused on violence as a central issue in the women's movement and expanded the emphasis of rape and violence beyond the limited studies of either psychological characteristics of the perpetrator and target or family relationships to include issues of gender, power, and structural elements of violence. Feminists stressed the social construct of male violence and that male violence against women is theorized to be a mode of social control used to sustain an inferior social and political status for

women generally (Marin & Russo, 1999) and domination and control of husbands over their wives specifically (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Feminists further emphasized that other powerful institutions such as health care, military, criminal justice, media, academia, politics, and religious institutions reflected and exercised this same patriarchal structure to subordinate women and thereby promoted abuse against women. In the 1980s the media, the battered women's movement and public policy interest influenced the evolution of interventions for heterosexual intimate partner violence. Batterer intervention programs were created, and by and large, applied the model created by the Duluth Intervention Project (Pence & Paymar, 1993) that held the man responsible for IPV because, as a male, he is recognized as the dominant partner in a patriarchal culture.

Early perspectives of sociopolitical influences on abuse perpetrated by men have been challenged and criticized from their inception until today. The concept of 'power and control' in a context of gender inequality argues that women are at a greater risk than men for being a target of IPV. The Power and Control Wheel (Pence & Paymar, 1993) continues to be used as tool for teaching and safety planning for targets of abuse (Gilfus, Trabold, O'Brien & Fleck-Henderson, 2010). Researchers have argued that much of the data that supported the original analysis of the 'power and control' abusers comes from those male abusers who had been court mandated to participate in treatment programs. This is estimated to be a minor and biased fraction of the totality of male abusers (Walker, 1999). 'Power and control' has since been also examined as a personal need, perhaps a result of bullying and abuse as a child rather than exclusively a sociopolitical strategy. This history of victimization may impair an abuser's self-esteem and contribute to a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness that becomes a need to exact power and

control over intimates. This then becomes a human need rather than an expression of patriarchy and cultural dominance (Rosenbaum & Leisring, 2003). This is but one example of the critiques of the original feminist theory's explanation for abuse as too limited and simplistic. Other criticisms include the oversight of race and class issues and ignoring the noticeable error that the majority of men do not abuse their wives or partners (Gilfus, Trabold, O'Brien & Fleck-Henderson, 2010; Lundy & Grossman, 2001). The feminist perspective on IPV has evolved and is now described as "IPV is about securing and maintaining dominance by using tactics that may instill fear and terror so that the victim becomes and remains submissive" (Gilfus, Trabold, O'Brien & Fleck-Henderson, 2010, p.251). This perspective has been expanded to include other considerations of marginalization that can result in power inequality including race, class, immigration status, age, disability, and sexual orientation (Gilfus, Trabold, O'Brien & Fleck-Henderson, 2010). Other theories regarding abuse in heterosexual relationships include the sociological perspective or a group behavior approach; systems theory and a focus on the process of interactions within the family; psychodynamic theory that suggests that a mental illness is present in either the abuser or the abused or both; and social learning theory that focuses on actual behavior learned and perpetuated by reinforcement in our society (McCue, 1995). No one theory or perspective fully explains IPV and its variations for heterosexual couples, nor does any one theory or model singly account for the abuse that can occur between lesbians.

4. <u>Intimate partner abuse in lesbian relationships</u>

Some abuse within lesbian relationships occurs in similar patterns as that of heterosexual women. Abuse in lesbian relationships involves physical, sexual and

emotional abuse including intimidation and exertion of power and control over their

partners (McLaughlin & Rozee, 2001). Hart (1986) describes lesbian battering as "a

pattern of violent or coercive behaviors whereby a lesbian seeks to control the thoughts,

beliefs or conduct of an intimate partner or to punish the intimate for resisting the

perpetrator's control" (p. 173). Physical violence may include slapping, punching,

kicking, stabbing, throwing items at partner, and hitting with objects. Lesbians also

experience sexual assault by female partner perpetrators (Lie, Schilit, Bush, Montagne &

Reyes, 1991; Renzetti, 1992; Waldner-Haugrud & Gratch, 1997; Girshick, 2002). The

presence of battering in lesbian and female same-sex-loving relationships can be

minimized by the myth that violence between two women cannot be as dangerous and

intense as violence inflicted by males, however this myth has been disproved by research

that indicates the seriousness of physical abuse in lesbian relationships that can result in

injury, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and death (Hammond, 1989).

Researchers have estimated that between three to four million women (Stark,

1981; Collins, Schoen & Joseph, 1999), or as many as 8.7 million women (Tjaden &

Thoennes, 2000) are battered by their husbands or partners in the United States each year.

While research on same-sex intimate partner abuse and IPV in lesbian relationships has

increased in the past 15 years, we basically do not know the extent of abuse and violence

in the lesbian community. Research on IPV in lesbian relationships has been beset with

methodological challenges, particularly in sampling, because in order to obtain a

sufficient number of lesbian participants, convenience sampling is almost always

necessary. Because of variety of factors, including the stigmatization of lesbians in

society and the shame of reporting abuse in lesbian relationships, only non-random

samples have been used to conduct research on abused lesbians (Renzetti, 1992).

Researchers have also used different time factors (current vs. past relationships) and

instruments to measure violence have differed across studies. Some studies have

measured violence without determining whether the participant is a target, perpetrator, or

both. These limitations make it difficult to interpret findings of lesbian IPV and to

compare occurrences across studies (Burke & Follingstad, 1999; West, 2002). Research

and writings about lesbian IPV have often been based on heteronormative assumptions

and measurements have typically used heterosexist language (Kanuha, 1990; Renzetti,

1992; Ristock, 2003; Waldron, 1996). Lesbian relationships and heterosexual

relationships differ enough so that abuse in these different relationships is not identical

and must be compared with caution. Ristock (2003) suggests that researchers do not try

to fit lesbian battering into most existing models, as these have been designed for

understanding violence in heterosexual relationships.

Bologna, Waterman, and Dawson (1987) found a high incidence of abuse in their

survey responses of a self-selected sample of 174 lesbians. Fifty-nine percent reported

being victims of physical violence and 81% had experienced verbal or emotional abuse.

Additionally, 68% of the respondents reported that they had used violence against their

current or most recent partner. Brand and Kidd (1986) analyzed reports of aggression

from 75 self-identified heterosexual women and 55 self-identified lesbian students

recruited from advertisements and campus groups. Twenty-five percent of the lesbian

respondents reported that their female partners had physically abused them.

Loulan (1987) surveyed a self-selected sample of 1,566 lesbians and found rates of

violence at 17%. Lie, Schlitt, Bush, Montagne, and Reyes (1991) surveyed 174 lesbians

through an organizational mailing. Seventy-three percent reported experiencing physically, sexually, or verbally/emotionally aggressive acts in at least one lesbian relationship in the past and 26% reported experiencing such behaviors in their present relationship. In their non-random, self-selected survey of 1,099 lesbians who attended the Women's Musical Festival held in Michigan in August 1985, Lie and Gentlewarrior (1991) found that 52 percent had been victims of aggression by their partners and 30 % reported abusing a female partner. Just over half of these targets of abuse reported that they also had been abusive toward their partners. Lockhart, White, Causby, and Issac (1994) surveyed lesbians at a women's music festival and a questionnaire on violence in lesbian relationships was returned by 284 women indicating that 31% reported physical abuse in their relationship during the prior year. Coleman (1990) recruited 90 lesbian couples through advertisements, newsletters, fliers, contacts with psychotherapists, support groups, organizations and snowballing and characterized 42 couples (46%) as violent. A nationally representative sample in 1999 reported that lifetime occurrence of same-sex partner abuse was 11% as compared to 20% for heterosexual partner abuse (Tjaden, Thoennes & Allison, 1999). This study also indicates that over their lifetime, lesbians reported being targeted for abuse by male intimate partners at rates of 30% as compared to 11% by female partners.

Early feminist theory helped forge the acceptance of the harmful effects of patriarchal control and male privilege inflicted upon the less powerful, particularly women in heterosexual relationship. Recently it has become clear that IPV also occurs within lesbian and gay male relationships, wherein the power disparity taking place due to the historically typified male/female gender probably does not exist in the same way

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for two women. The original feminist framework concentrates on rehabilitating the abuser and recognizes that the patriarchal power structures enforced by the dominant culture enforce abuse. The lack of recognition and intervention regarding abuse in lesbian relationships has transpired not only in the mainstream, but also within the women's movement (Ristock, 2002).

Historians, researchers, and participants in the early days of the women's movement postulate that the movement had two main motives for resistance to acknowledging abuse in lesbian relationships. First, the early feminist perspective desired to keep the focus on male violence. This powerful resistance from feminist communities resulted from the fear that examining abuse in lesbian relationships would un-do the feminist analysis that assumed a male perpetrator and viewed the roots of abuse in patriarchy and misogyny (Elliot, 1996; Hammond, 1989; McLaughlin & Rozee, 2001; Poorman, 2001; Ristock, 2002). Additionally, the myth of 'lesbian utopia' suggested that because women were essentially non-violent and non-patriarchal, a relationship between two women would be violence-free and power-struggle free (Girshick, 2002; Lobel, 1986; Renzetti, 1992; Ristock, 2002; Wang, 2011; Wilkinson, 1998; Wilson, 2006). The second type of barrier to acknowledging battering in lesbian relationships was the concern that the subject would generate repercussions against feminism and lesbians (Ristock, 2002; Robson, 1990). The battered women's movement has avoided recognizing battered lesbians because of the threat of losing credibility and standing with the inconsistencies lesbian battering brought to the feminist theory of battering as well as heterosexism within the movement (Elliott, 1996; Kanuha, 2005; McLaughlin & Rozee, 2001; Schechter, 1982). Additionally, lesbians did not want to bring any negative

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attention to their community by way of reporting and calling attention to lesbian abuse, as

they already experience stigmatization from the greater society (Elliott, 1996; Renzetti,

1992; Robson, 1990). These ideologies avoided and potentially diminished the issue of

lesbian abuse that exists in our society and actually helped to create conditions to make

IPV in lesbian relationships a hidden issue (Ristock, 2002). The historical lack of

information and deficiency of services for battered lesbians may well be due to the

conformance of most domestic violence programs to initial, established feminist models

and the pervasive reluctance to recognize abuse in lesbian relationships.

5.   **Minority stress**

Stressors are recognized as those environmental stimuli that usually generate

psychological or physical distress in an organism, such as an event that threatens the

physical or psychological integrity of a person (Hobfoll, Schwarzer & Chon, 1998). Life

stressors are also considered difficult events or life issues that people perceive as

exceeding their personal and environmental resources for managing them. Oppression is

a critical life issue that fits the definition of a stressor and often creates more stressors

than are experienced by other non-oppressed groups (Germain & Gitterman, 1995).

Stress is the internal reaction to a life stressor and is typically indicated by

problematic emotional or physiological states, or both (Germain & Gitterman, 1995).

Stress results from experiencing external stressors that are taxing to an individual and

ultimately goes beyond their ability to manage such stressors and therefore can result in

mental or somatic illness (Dohrenwend, 2000).

Brooks (1981) conceptualized minority stress as the chronic, social stress that

results from belonging to a stigmatized social category and is over and above the general

stressors of daily life. Individuals make meaning of their world through social interactions. The minority stress model is a conceptual framework for understanding the negative effects on psychosocial health and well-being that are caused by a stigmatizing social context (Brooks, 1981; Meyer 1995; 2003). Several studies have demonstrated that consistent and pervasive negative regard for a minority group leads to negative self-regard and harmful mental health outcomes (Meyer, 1995; Mirowsky & Ross, 2003; Pearlin, 1989). Studies examining social stress found that discrimination predicted psychological stress when common stressors were held constant (Klonoff, Landrine & Ullman, 1999) and that perceived discrimination undermined psychological health (Taylor & Turner, 2002).

Research regarding minority stress on minority populations has operationalized stress to consider the number of negative life events a minority individual may experience as a result of their minority status. Negative life events have been described as existing in extreme situations such as exposure to combat, or traumatic events that are life threatening or threatening to physical safety. Other negative life events involve loss or perception of loss or an uncontrollable negative change in one's life (Dohrenwend, 2000) or an event requiring readjustment and change in one's usual activities (Dohrenwend, 2006). A common theme with negative life events is that they are associated with some adaptive or coping behavior on the part of the involved individual (Dohrenwend, 2006). Research that has examined negative life events found a greater number of negative life events an indication of greater amounts of stress (Cohen, Tyrrell & Smith, 1993; Dohrenwend, 2006; Jacobs & Charles, 1980; Monroe & Harkness, 2005). Thus, negative life events can occur or persist over time and have a cumulative effect resulting in a

chronic stressor (Lepore, 1997). The lack of control over extreme or ongoing situations contributes to its adverse effects (Dohrenwend, 2000). Germain and Gitterman (1995) state that "prolonged stress, together with ineffective coping and personal vulnerability, can lead to physiological, emotional, or social dysfunction" (p. 817). Negative life events have been associated with headache pain (Kowal & Pritchard, 1990), depression (Brown, Ahmed, Gary & Milburn, 1995), cancer (Jacobs & Charles, 1980), psychiatric disorders (Dohrenwend, 2000), and other psychological symptoms (Cui & Vaillant, 1996).

DiPlacido (1998) examined minority stress on lesbians and the external stressors of pervasive anti-LGB violence, anti-LGB discrimination, societal rejection, and stress in terms of life events and daily hassles of living in a heterosexist society. The author hypothesizes that the constant daily experience of discrimination and stigmatization puts lesbians at greater risk for negative life events. The daily occurrence of hearing anti-gay comments and always being on guard can result in experiencing significant, chronic stressors. Internal stressors differ from external stressors. Self-concealment is hypothesized to be an additional internal stressor and the stress of hiding an essential part of one's self may have harmful effects on well-being. Using a minority stress model, lesbians may experience dual stigmatization, as women and as homosexuals with the probability of greater effects of internalized oppression (Williamson, 2000).

There is limited research regarding the relationship between stress and the individual assessment of the quality of an intimate relationship. In heterosexual relationships, negative life events were found to be a notable factor in the slow destruction of positive views of intimate relationships (Tesser & Beach, 1998). Minority stress has also been associated with relationship quality in same-sex couples (Mohr &

Fassinger, 2006) and in stigmatized relationships in general (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006).

Stress that lesbians and same-sex-loving women may experience due to their sexual

minority status not only affects general feelings of overall stress for the individual but for

the partner and the relationship as well. This can influence the individual's perception of

relationship quality (Otis, Rostosky, Riggle & Hamrin, 2006). Additionally, mental

health issues that have been connected with internalized heterosexism may negatively

affect the quality of a relationship in that poorer mental health is associated with poorer

quality relationships (Whisman, Uebelacker & Weinstock, 2004).

6.   Internalized heterosexism

Internalized heterosexism is a manifestation of minority stress as experienced by

lesbians as IH conceptualizes the impact of the cultural ascription of inferior status to this

minority group of people including the resulting influence on health and psychosocial

factors. Psychologist, Dr. George Weinberg, originally coined the term "homophobia" in

1972 in his book, *Society and the Healthy Homosexual*. Homophobia describes an

irrational fear, hatred, and intolerance of homosexuality and has been utilized by the

lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) community to describe their particular experience of

stigmatization by individuals in society. Weinberg describes the phenomenon of

internalized homophobia as "self-loathing" (Weinberg, 1972, p.4). Internalized

homophobia is further defined as the internalization by gays and lesbians of the negative

attitudes and assumptions about homosexuality that they observe and experience that are

prevalent in society (Szymanski & Chung, 2001).

The term *heterosexism* was also created in the early 1970s and describes an

ideology that heterosexism is the standard and norm and only acceptable form of

sexuality including a presumption of heterosexuality for all humans. It also includes an underlying, pervasive negative construction of lesbians and gay males in terms similar to racism and sexism and views homosexuality as inferior to heterosexuality (Herek, 2000). Herek (1990) explains heterosexism as "…an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community" (p. 90). Sears (1997) describes heterosexism as a "…belief in the superiority of heterosexuals or heterosexuality evidenced in the exclusion, by omission or design, of non-heterosexual persons in policies, procedures, events, or activities." (p.16). Griffin (1998) states "The overbearing presence of heterosexism within our society only highlights the hierarchy of heterosexuality as a power over homosexuality. Heterosexuality is given more validity, more location, and infinite space to speak."

Heterosexism can take both subtle and overt forms and is expressed and endorsed on every level of society from laws and policies that presume heterosexuality and specifically exclude sexual minorities to language and casual, daily conversations filled with presumptions of heterosexuality. Political and social institutions can foster a climate of heterosexism thereby maintaining macro implications of anti-homosexual sentiment. Heterosexism can be expressed in the media by presenting exclusively or primarily opposite-gender couples and in forms used in everyday life that allow only choices of married/divorce/separated for status.

Children raised in American society are influenced by prevalent anti-homosexual and heterosexist biases that are accepted in the dominant society (Gonsiorek, 1993). When lesbians realize they do not fall within the heterosexual norm, they must struggle with the internalized negative messages and feelings that now apply to their own identity.

Internalized heterosexism can range from self-doubt to self-loathing (Gonsiorek, 1993). The internalized negative feelings about homosexuality in oneself and others have been found to be associated with depression (Frost & Meyer, 2009; Rosser, Bockting, Ross, Miner & Coleman, 2008; Meyer, 1995; Shidlo, 1994), alcoholism (DiPlacido, 1998; Burris, 1997; Finnega & Cook, 1984), and other substance abuse (Cabaj & Guss, 2000; Glaus, 1988), conflict regarding sexual orientation (Szymanski et al., 2001), lower levels of disclosure of sexual orientation (Herek, Cogan, Gillis & Glunt, 1997; McGregor, Carver, Antoni, Weiss, Yount & Ironson, 2001), less connection and membership in the lesbian/gay/ community (Herek et al., 1997; Szymanski et al., 2001), loneliness (Szymanski & Chung, 2001), feelings of inferiority (Van Den Bergh, 2006), and suicide (D'Augelli, Grossman, Hershberger & O'Connell, 2001; Rivers, 2004; Rofes, 1983).

Meyer (1995) studied the relationship between internalized heterosexism and poor health and argued that minority stress arises from the totality of the person's experience of incongruence between the minority person's culture needs, and the societal structures and messages. Meyer found that "Relative risk estimates suggested that minority stress is associated with a two-to-threefold increase in risk for high levels of distress – clearly a substantial risk" (p.51). In Meyer's model, internalized heterosexism is one of three aspects of minority stress that significantly impacts psychological adjustment, along with perceived stigma and prejudice events. Internalized heterosexism was significantly associated with all five measures of distress used in the study.

Lesbians with high levels of internalized heterosexism are believed to be more susceptible to restricted success in their intimate relationships (Stein & Cabaj, 1996). Studies found that IH predicted destructive responses to conflict, but not constructive

responses (Henderson, 2001; Gaines et al, 2005). In a large sample of lesbian couples Melamed (1992) reported that IH was negatively related to dyadic adjustment, commitment, and investment in the relationship. Piggot (2004) reports several kinds of sexual dysfunctions associated with IH on a study focused on sexual minority women from different countries. Within couples, the amount of discrepancy in IH between partners is also related to relationship satisfaction and quality (McGuire, 1995; Melamed, 1992). Balsam and Szymanski (2005) found that IH was negatively related to relationship quality in a sample of lesbian couples. The findings from these studies suggest that IH is associated with poorer relationship quality.

Balsam and Szymanski (2005) examined IH, relationship satisfaction and abuse in lesbian relationships using the Conflict Tactics Scale, Revised Edition (CTS2) with additional question specific to psychological abuse for lesbians along with the LIHS and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale assessing relationship quality. Their results indicated that higher internalized heterosexism was associated with higher amounts of perpetration of violence in the past year as well as having been the target of abuse in the past year.

7.   Psychosocial correlates of internalized heterosexism

Several studies examined the relationship between IH and self-esteem among lesbian and bisexual women. Significant negative correlations between IH and self-esteem were found in many of the studies indicating that greater levels of IH are related to lower self-esteem (Szymanski, Kashubeck-West & Meyer, 2008). Internalized heterosexism has consistently been found to be significantly related to fewer social supports for sexual minority women (McGregor et al., 2001; Szymanski et al., 2001).

Several studies have considered the relationship between IH and depression and psychological distress. Three of the four studies conducted (Frock, 1999; Piggot, 2004; Szymanski et al., 2001), found significant positive correlations between IH and depression. Researchers have conducted studies regarding the relationship between IH and other psychosocial variables and found that sexual minority women with higher levels of IH were more likely to engage in self-harming behaviors and have feelings of demoralization and loneliness (Szymanski, Kashubeck-West & Meyer, 2008).

Heterosexism and internalized heterosexism may result in a lack of social support and isolation. This isolation can produce a feeling of unhealthy and excessive dependence on a lesbian partner. Renzetti (1992) found that the dependency of the batterer was a risk factor for more brutal and more frequent acts of violence. In her book *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*, Suzanne Pharr (1988) theorizes that there are common elements in all forms of discrimination, including heterosexism and that internalized oppression, such as internalized heterosexism, can result in self-hatred, depression, self-abuse, and horizontal hostility. All of these factors related to IH increase the likelihood of dysfunctional or inadequate relating skills and put lesbian relationships at risk for poor quality, dissatisfaction and possible physical abuse. Lesbians may direct their self-hatred toward their partner in the form of abuse or toward themselves as deserving or accepting abuse from a partner. Isolation stemming from IH prevents perpetrators and targets from receiving the help and support they need to bring healing to their situation. Historical feminist perspectives of patriarchy and misogyny do not speak to the experience of battering in a relationship with two women. Without considering the harm of internalized

heterosexism and the extent of its effect on a person and a relationship, social workers cannot adequately address the source of stress and abuse in a lesbian relationship.

8.   Outness

Concealing an important factor about oneself, such as sexual orientation or the existence of a same-sex partner can result in additional stress and confusion. Continual concealment of a stigma can be an extreme burden on individuals and can result in fatigue, distress, and a reduced sense of self-integrity (Mohr & Daly, 2008). Outness is conceptualized as the relative amount of disclosure regarding sexual orientation one has with family members, heterosexual friends, and coworkers (Morris, Waldo & Rothblum, 2001). Lesbians and same-sex loving women who feel they must hide their sexual identity may experience an elevated degree of stress and this can result in negative health effects (DiPlacido, 1998; Iwasaki & Ristock, 2007; Meyer, 2003). Additionally, the secrecy places an additional stress on the relationship by preventing the couple from experiencing external validation for their relationship. This may take a toll on the relationship and contribute to negative perception of relationship quality, (Otis, Rostosky, Riggle & Hamrin, 2006), and increased risk for abuse (Sophie, 1982). The simple fact of not receiving social support for their relationship compared to other couples may reduce same-sex couples' ability to manage the conflicts that all couples experience (Elizur & Mintzer, 2003). Concealing a relationship may result in a devaluing of the relationship and can contribute to creating anxiety about the relationship (Jordan & Deluty, 2000). Several studies have revealed a positive correlation between being out and psychological and physical health (Jordan & Deluty, 1998).

9. **Relationship Satisfaction**

Mohr and Daly (2008) who write about sexual minority stress and relationship quality in same-sex couples define relationship satisfaction as a "person's overall subjective evaluation of the relationship along a continuum of positive to negative" (p.922). The satisfaction perspective describes relationship satisfaction as the subjective perspective one has as to their feelings about a relationship (Hendrick, 1995; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1997). The adjustment perspective focuses more on actual behaviors within the relationship and how the relationship actually works. Glen (1990) uses the term *success* to refer to how well a relationship endures over time but longevity must include durability and satisfaction to be considered successful.

Several theories regarding relationship satisfaction exist and include the interdependence theory that posits that the inherent nature of the interaction between partners is the essence of a close relationship and is considered in terms of the amount each partner influences the other partner's positive and negative outcomes resulting from the relationship (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). The investment model proposes an individual would describe themselves as satisfied in a relationship if their perceived rewards are high and the perceived costs of the relationship are low as well as the relationship meeting a self-perceived standard of what a good relationship should be (Rusbult, 1983). The problem-solving model associates relationship satisfaction with problem-solving tactics used during conflictual interactions (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Markman, Floyd, Stanley & Storaasli, 1988). The contextual model proposes that appraisals of relationship satisfaction are related to individual difference variables that filter relationship information (Bradbury & Fincham, 1988).

Studies have found similarities and differences between lesbian, gay, and heterosexual couples regarding love and satisfaction in their relationships. Generally, gay and lesbian relationships operate on the same principles as heterosexual couples with some differences (Gottman et al., 2003), and the processes that regulate their relationships are the same as those that regulate heterosexual couples (Kurdek, 2004). Heterosexual men and women, gay men and lesbians tend to value affection, dependability, common interests, and similarity of religious beliefs of their romantic partners correspondingly (Peplau & Fingerhut, 2007; Peplau & Spalding, 2000). Kurdek (2004) notes that while lesbian and heterosexual couples are likely to function comparably, a significant difference is that lesbians perceive little support for their relationships from their family members.

In Kurdek's (1991) study of relationship satisfaction and couple problem-solving, high levels of relationship satisfaction were associated with high levels of satisfaction with social support for lesbian couples. Kurdek's (1998) study examined dimensions of relationship quality in gay, lesbian and heterosexual relationships and found that lesbian couples reported higher levels of intimacy than partners in heterosexual relationships and more equality in their relationships than heterosexually married partners. Additionally, this study used longitudinal data to examine whether gay or lesbian couples differed from heterosexual married couples in relationship satisfaction and stability over time. Kurdek found that lesbian couples did not differ from heterosexual partners in the level of relationship satisfaction with which they started their course of change in relationship satisfaction and did not differ from heterosexual partners in the rate of change in relationship satisfaction over time. Kurdek and others have concluded that married

heterosexual partners are more similar to lesbian partners in reporting relationship satisfaction than they are dissimilar (Brownson, 1998; Ganiron, 2006; Kurdek &Schmitt, 1986a, 1986b; Peplau & Chochran, 1990; Peplau, Padesky & Hamilton, 1982).

Peplau, Padesky and Hamilton (1982) found from all their data taken together that there were high levels of relationship satisfaction among the lesbian women surveyed. Satisfaction was significantly higher with women who perceived themselves to be equally involved in the relationship than those in an unequal relationship. Satisfaction was significantly higher with women in equally committed relationships compared to women in reported unequal relationships. Also, high satisfaction was reported with perceptions of equal power in the relationships versus unequal power.

Additional correlates of relationship satisfaction with lesbians have been identified in prior studies including; high dyadic attachment and shared decision making (Kurdek &Schmitt, 1986), equality of power in the relationship (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Peplau, Padesky & Hamilton, 1982), equality of involvement in the relationship, and similar attitudes and backgrounds (Peplau et al., 1982). Eldridge and Gilbert (1990) found that higher levels of dyadic attachment but lower levels of personal autonomy were associated with greater relationship satisfaction for lesbians. A sense of influence in the relationship was significantly related to relationship satisfaction and all intimacy scales were positively correlated with relationship satisfaction with lesbians (Eldridge & Gilbert, 1990). Mohr and Daly (2008) make the assumption that minority stress, which includes the phenomenon of internalized heterosexism and being closeted, puts same-sex couples at risk for lower relationship quality.

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a.   <u>Relationship satisfaction and internalized heterosexism</u>

In general, a positive LGB identity is positive associated with life satisfaction (Fingerhut, Peplau & Ghavami, 2005), and negatively associated with depressive symptoms (Luhtanen, 2003). Internalized heterosexism has been linked to numerous negative outcomes that can impact a romantic relationship. Research on the topic supports that LGB people with higher levels of IH are more likely to have lower levels of relationship satisfaction (Mohr & Fassinger, 2006). Mohr and Fassinger (2006) offer that IH can lead to misunderstandings, ambivalence, relationship conflict, and incompatible goals in same-sex relationships. Higher amounts of IH are implicated as associated with sexual problems in lesbian relationships (Nichols, 2004), persistent feelings of impermanence (Cleff, 1994), lessened relationship commitment (Keller & Rosen, 1988) and are connected to less social support of a lesbian relationship (Falco, 1991; Szymanski & Chung, 2001).

Frost and Meyer (2009) examined IH in LGB people and posit that the experience of these internalized negative feelings in the context of an intimate relationship is likely to decrease the quality of and the satisfaction with one's relationship. They found that IH, depression and relationship problems were significantly correlated with each other as higher amounts of IH was associated with depressive symptoms and higher amounts of depressive symptoms was associated with relationship problems. With participant couples there was a significant direct effect of IH on relationship strain and all the indirect effects of IH on relationship problems were significant (Frost & Meyer, 2009). Additionally, Frost and Meyer report that it is IH, not outness that has an impact on relationship quality among LGB individuals and state in their conclusion, "Internalization

of such societal discourse into one's self-concept as an LGB individual likely exacerbates the negative effect of internalized homophobia on relationship quality" (p.15). Mohr and Fassinger (2006) found in their study of same-sex couples that individuals reporting the highest level of relationship quality were likely to report low levels of IH. Mohr and Fassinger offered that IH in the form of identity related difficulties, may create a sense of psychological distance between same-sex partners which in turn, may lead to lower levels of relationship quality. Mohr and Daly (2008) found that IH was significantly associated with decreases in relationship attractions and relationship satisfaction in same-sex couples.

Several studies have linked internalized heterosexism to poor relationship quality specifically with lesbian relationships (Balsam & Szymanski, 2005; Otis, Rostosky, Riggle & Hamrin, 2006). Brownson's study of IH and relationship satisfaction among lesbians found that the hypothesis that the more IH the less satisfied the individual will be in a relationship was mildly supported by her data. Additionally, IH was statistically, significantly correlated to dyadic consensus, which indicates that as IH increases there is a decrease in dyadic consensus (Brownson, 1998).

b. Relationship satisfaction and outness

Many authors suggest that concealing one's sexual orientation or a same-sex relationship creates difficulties for a relationship. Remaining closeted could result in a relationship becoming less rewarding (Foster & Campbell, 2005), result in less social support (Elizur & Mintzer, 2003); result in a devaluing of a relationship (Berzon, 1988); could manifest in anxiety about the relationship (Jordan & Deluty, 2000), and could cause a partner to be more likely to tolerate abuse and be reluctant to seek help (Balsam

& Szymanski, 2005). Almeida, Woods, Messineo, Font and Heer (1994) found that being closeted to important people was negatively correlated to relationship satisfaction. Almeida and associates hypothesized that the lack of disclosure can lead to isolation and increased dependency on a partner and the relationship which then motivates one to maintain the status quo and therefore remain in an unhealthy relationship (Almeida et al., 1994). There was no significant statistical association found between relationship satisfaction and levels of outness among friends, relatives, and co-workers in Peplau, Padesky and Hamilton's 1982 study of satisfaction in lesbian relationships. However, in Berger's (1990b) study on passing and outness for same-sex couples, the emotional energy required to create and maintain a constructed lie, as in remaining closeted, led to a decrease relationship quality. The extent to which their significant other's parents, siblings, best friends, and employer knew a respondent as a homosexual was positively related to relationship satisfaction. The nature and extent of passing did not influence a partner's love for each other but did have an effect on a partner's feeling of satisfaction with the relationship. Berger concludes that passing plays at least some role in the history and quality of the same-sex relationship (1990b). Jordan and Deluty (2000) found that lesbians who were more out about their sexual orientation reported a greater degree of relationship satisfaction and that couples who received more social support from friends, relatives, co-workers and other sources reported a higher level of relationship satisfaction.

In general, self concealment is not compatible with relationship quality (Mohr & Daly, 2008; Ossana, 2000), or relationship satisfaction (Caron & Ulin, 1997; Murphy, 1989), and in contrast to the study by Peplau and associates (Peplau et al., 1982), Berger,

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(1990) found that being closeted to significant people in one's life, such as family and friends, is negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction. However, several studies have found no connection or mixed results connecting outness and relationship satisfaction (Balsam & Szymanski, 2005; Beals & Peplau, 2001; Green, Bettinger & Zacks, 1996).

c.   Relationship satisfaction and intimate partner violence

Relationship satisfaction has been associated with domestic violence in heterosexual relationships, particularly in relation to the length of a relationship (Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward & Tritt, 2004). Longitudinal studies in heterosexual women show that poor relationship quality, such as low relationship satisfaction, can be a consequence of domestic violence (Testa & Leonard, 2001) and that experiences of psychological aggression and minor violence are negatively associated with relationship satisfaction (Testa & Leonard, 2001; Testa, Leonard & Livingston, 2003).

Renzetti hypothesized in 1998 that internalized heterosexism could result in violence in a lesbian relationship because it could result in violence against a member of one's own group and therefore against one's partner. Balsam (2001) suggests that internalized heterosexism could increase the dependency on a partner and to feelings of feeling defective, which would allow for tolerating abuse from a partner. Sophie (1982) suggests that secrecy and isolation contribute to stress and decrease validation that leads to an increase of risk for violence in a relationship.

In Balsam and Szymanski's (2005) study examining minority stress and IPV in same-sex relationships, they found that IH was associated with physical and sexual victimization. Internalized heterosexism was not correlated with lifetime perpetration of

violence, but it did approach significance. However, internalized heterosexism was associated with perpetration and victimization of violence in the last year and was associated with lifetime victimization. The authors suggest that internalized heterosexism contributes to the beliefs that one deserves abuse. Internalized heterosexism was a modest predictor of past year IPV and the relationship between IH and past year IPV appears to be fully mediated by relationship quality. Additionally, relationship quality was strongly, inversely associated with all variables of violence in the relationship. Lifetime discrimination was positively correlated to all but one IPV variable. The authors theorize that the stress of living in a heterosexist world and the experience of a lifetime of discrimination can lead to physical and sexual aggression (Balsam & Szymanski, 2005).

10.   Alcohol, Substance Abuse and other Factors

The relationship between substance abuse and woman abuse by their male intimates has been examined to a greater degree than with lesbians and is a fairly complex connection. Research has established several associations between males who batter their female partners and substance abuse. For example, half of the men in batterer intervention programs appear to have substance abuse issues (Gondolf, 1995), and about fifty percent of men entering a substance abuse treatment have battered their female partner in the past year (Chermack, Fuller & Blow, 2000). Female targets of battering from their male partners are also more likely to abuse substances than women in the general population. The occurrence of IPV among substance abusing heterosexual women has been estimated between 40% and 80% (Bennett & Lawson, 1994; Miller, Downs & Gondoli, 1989; Stark & Flitcraft, 1996) and between 67 and 80 percent of heterosexual women receiving substance abuse treatment report being targets of IPV

(Cohen, Dickow, Horner, Zweben, Balabis, Vandersloot & Reiber, 2003; Downs, 2001).

Women who are substance abusers are more likely to live with men who are substance

abusers compared to woman who do not abuse alcohol and drugs. These women who

abuse drugs and alcohol are more likely to use physical violence towards their male

abusers in retaliation that then increases their risk for more serious injury (Bennett,

1998). The relationship between substance abuse and being a target of abuse in

heterosexual relationships appears to be bidirectional; each increases the risk of the other

(Bennett & O'Brien, 2007). Accordingly, substance abuse is one of the many risk factors

for IPV for women in heterosexual relationships (Bennett, 1998).

While research over the past two decades indicate that substance use among

lesbians has declined, lesbians are considered an *at risk* population because of their high

rates of lifetime heavy drinking and other problem-drinking indicators (Hughes &

Eliason, 2002; Parks & Hughes, 2005). Renzetti (1994) found in her study of 100

lesbians that 35% of respondents who were involved in violent relationships reported that

their partners were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time battering took

place. Information regarding substance use will be included in the survey.

Other risk factors for being in an abusive relationship for heterosexual women are

multigenerational effects of violence, income, past or present sexual abuse, and previous

abusive relationships (Coker, Smith, McKeown & King, 2000). It is important to examine

all of these risk factors when studying IPV in lesbian relationships as well and questions

regarding these issues are included in the survey.

11.   Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the concept that individuals may experience multiple marginalized identities and therefore experience multiple dimensions of oppression. These identities and oppressions are inexorably intertwined and cannot be fairly or accurately considered individually. Additionally, intersectionality can be considered by the social context created by the intersections of systems of power and privilege, such as gender, race, class, and sexual orientation (Bogard, 2005). Structures in power tend to reduce people to one category at a time which does not sufficiently address multiple identities and oppressions as the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of all of its singular identities and oppressions (Jordan-Zachery, 2007). Because systems and oppressions are not mutually exclusive, the aspects of each may intensify and worsen the consequences of another (Bogard, 2005). Intersectionality argues that cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated, but they are intertwined and influenced by the systems of society (Collins, 2000). Intersectionality also suggests that the concept of a hierarchy of oppression in relation to other oppressions, rather than a multiple model of oppression is simplistic and short sided (McDonald & Coleman, 1999). The concept of intersectionality was first utilized by feminists to consider how women can simultaneously experience multiple marginalized identities, such as a black, immigrant, poor, and lesbian. Kimberle' Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality in 1989 when she wrote about issues of black women's employment in the United States and further developed the concept in her writings about discrimination, identification, domestic violence and social constructionism (Crenshaw, 1989; 1992; 1997).

Intersectionality is an important and necessary lens through which to view a women's experience of and responses to domestic violence. Each identity a women experience, including lesbianism, shapes her IPV experience (Erez, Adelman & Gregory, 2008). Hill, Woodson, Ferguson & Parks (2012) state:

> Thus, IPA (Intimate Partner Abuse) does not occur simply because individuals are African Americans or lesbians. Rather abuse and other destructive behaviors are among the many different possible outcomes when individuals experience multiple and intersecting forms of trauma and oppression. Moreover, having a history of trauma along with poverty, mental health symptoms, substance abuse and experiences of oppression do not necessarily cause intimate partner abuse. Rather, the intersecting impact of each of these factors can certainly increase the likelihood that IPA will take place (p. 403).

Intersectionality must be considered as new theories and intervention methods are being investigated and generated. Models, theories, and practice must consider the individuals and population that they are addressing and the context of their experiences (Crenshaw, 1997).

Women of color, lesbians with a disability, lesbians in poverty, lesbians who are immigrant, etc., will experience multiple stigmatizations, multiple minority stressors, and resulting internalized oppressions (Bowleg, Huang, Brooks, Black & Burkholder, 2003). Clearly, women of color have the additional experience of racism and internalized racism. Most research regarding lesbians has primarily focused on White women and most research on internalized racism has been focused on heterosexual African Americans. Numerous separate studies have linked poorer psychological health with assorted internalized oppressions and their particular minority subgroup (Szymanski & Gupta, 2009). However, many people have multiple minority identities and may experience internalized oppression as a result of more than one minority status. The

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experience of multiple forms of oppression can have a powerful impact on mental health (Szymanski & Meyer, 2008). An African American lesbian has at least three minority statuses: being a Black person in a racist society, being a woman in a sexist society, and being a lesbian in a heterosexist society. Bowleg, Huang, Brooks, Black and Burkholder (2003) refer to this as "triple jeopardy." In a qualitative study by Bowleg and associates (Bowleg et al., 2003), participants reported that racism was a more significant stressor than heterosexism and contextualized their experience of sexism and heterosexism through the prism of racism. Szymanski and Gupta (2009) found that internalized racism and internalized heterosexism were each unique predictors of self-esteem, supporting the perspective of multiple oppressions. Also, internalized heterosexism rather than internalized racism was a predictor of psychological distress in African American lesbians (Szymanski & Gupta, 2009).

While additional research is warranted to explore the influence of IH at the same time as investigating other internalized oppressions such as internalized sexism, racism, and classism on the psychosocial health of diverse populations of LGB individuals, this study will not examine the role of racism, internalized racism, and class other than studying the demographics.

12.   Conclusion

The women's movement and especially, the battered women's movement have been pivotal in elucidating the serious social problem of the abuse of women by their male partners. Several models have been used to explain domestic violence in heterosexual relationships including social learning theory, systems theory, and sociological and psychological perspectives. Feminists are responsible for making

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domestic violence a public issue, for opening shelters for battered women, and for advocating for laws to protect targets of violence and make batterers answerable for their actions. One aspect of the feminist perspective suggests that wife abuse can be understood if one comprehends that our society is traditionally structured along the lines of gender with men exercising power over women. Women in society are devalued as inferior and men traditionally have access to more material and symbolic resources of power. Men can feel entitled to this position of authority and our social and legal systems as well as religious institutions may reinforce this position.
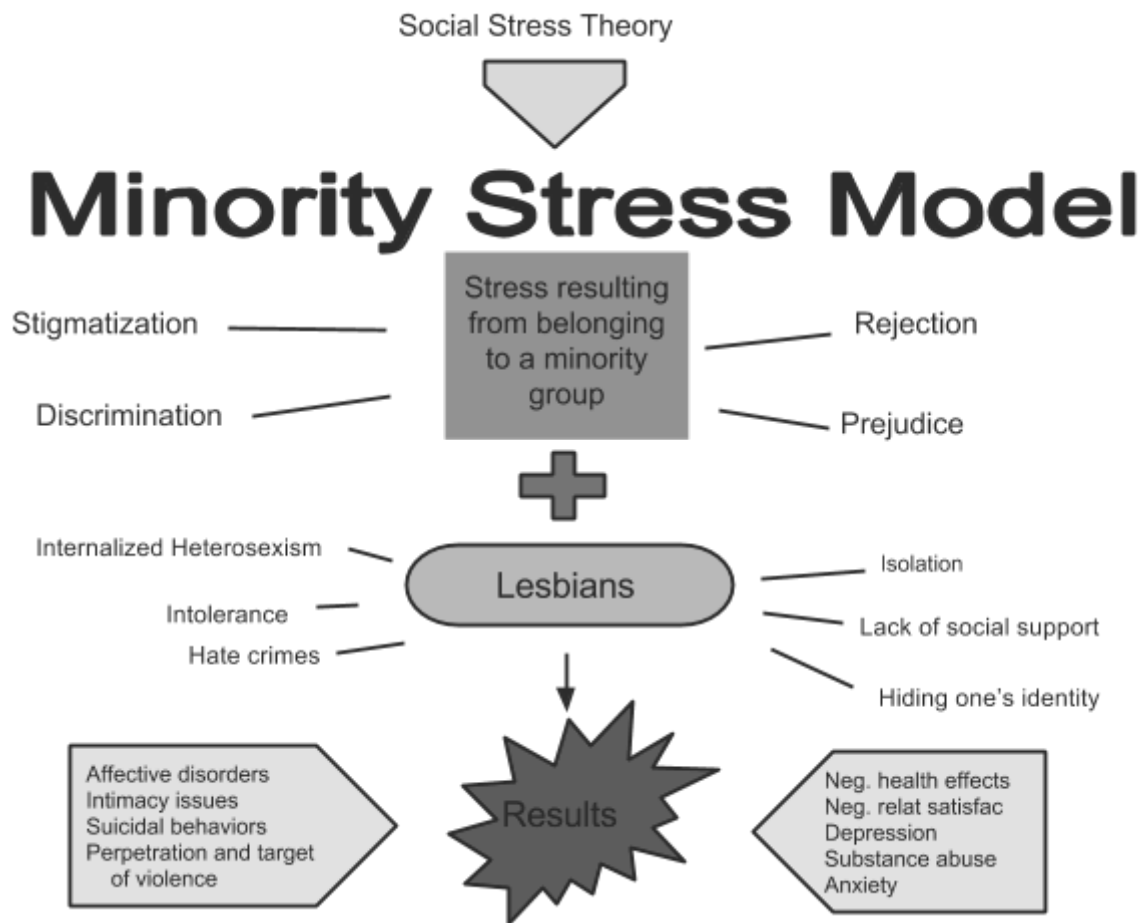
Empirical research regarding domestic violence between opposite-gender partners has steadily increased since the 1970s while research on IPV between same-sex partners has been essentially nonexistent until the 1990s. Researching IPV between lesbian partners is challenging as many forces have contributed to a conspiracy of silence regarding IPV in lesbian relationships. Fearing backlash toward the battered women's movement along with efforts to preclude mainstream society from gaining information that could be used to further stigmatize homosexuality, scholars, the battered women's movement, and the lesbian community have ignored or hidden IPV in lesbian relationships.

Lesbians live in a world that is dominated by oppression, homophobia and heterosexism. A minority stress model is an approach to conceptualize the impact of external and internalized heterosexism on lesbians. Internalized heterosexism consists of negative feelings, beliefs, and attitudes about oneself and other lesbians and can become integrated into one's identity, as the negative messages by society are constant and pervasive. Internalized heterosexism in lesbians has been empirically linked with lower

social support, loneliness, low self-esteem, self-injurious behavior, negative perception of relationship quality, and depression.

An important difference between IPV in a lesbian relationship and abuse in heterosexual relationships is that lesbian abuse occurs in a context of homophobia and heterosexism. The lesbian experiences abuse not only within the context of a misogynist world, but also a world that is heterosexist. A closer look at the complicated and multifaceted ways that heterosexism influences the experience of lesbian IPV may help us to understand the lack of awareness and services and expand our theories and understanding of IPV in lesbian relationships in order to facilitate appropriate interventions and treatment. There are few studies that empirically examine the relationship between internalized heterosexism and IPV in lesbian relationships, either as a target or perpetrator. This study will specifically consider the relationship between internalized heterosexism, outness, relationship satisfaction, and IPV in lesbian relationships.

FIGURE 1

MINORITY STRESS MODEL

Social Stress Theory

Minority Stress Model

Stress resulting from belonging to a minority group

Stigmatization

Discrimination

Rejection

Prejudice

Lesbians

Internalized Heterosexism

Intolerance

Hate crimes

Isolation

Lack of social support

Hiding one's identity

Results

Affective disorders
Intimacy issues
Suicidal behaviors
Perpetration and target
of violence

Neg. health effects
Neg. relat satisfac
Depression
Substance abuse
Anxiety

III. METHODS

A. <u>Design</u>

The research design was non-experimental and cross-sectional, with purposive

sampling to explore lesbians who differ on internalized heterosexism, outness,

relationship satisfaction, and violence and abuse. Figure 1 describes the conceptual model

that guides this study. A survey was administered to women who identify as lesbian or

same-sex-loving and are over 18 years of age. The survey instrument included questions

from the Abusive Behavior Inventory (ABI) (Shepard & Campbell, 1992), the Women's

Experience of Battering (WEB) (Smith, Earp & DeVellis, 1995), the Relationship

Assessment Scale (RAS) (Vaughn & Matyastik Baier, 1999) the Lesbian Internalized

Homophobia Scale (LIHS) (Szymanski & Chung, 2001). Szymanski and Chung entitled

their measure the Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale prior to concluding that

homophobia was not an encompassing and accurate term. The authors argue later in their

2008 article (Szymanski, Kashubeck-West & Meyer, 2008) that *heterosexism* is a more

appropriate term and Dawn Szymanski informed me that while the scale was originally

labeled with the term *homophobia*, researchers may use either term for the scale (D.

Szymanski, personal communication, August 2, 2010). The Outness Inventory (OI)

(Mohr & Fassinger, 2000) will assess outness. Four questions were added regarding

specific kinds of abuse or coercion lesbians might inflict, such as threatening to "out"

their partner.

A paper survey and an online survey were available for this study. A variable

indicating which survey method was utilized was included in the demographics in order

to analyze any differences and similarities in the two survey methods. Using two kinds of surveys would potentially help to reach a wider range of participants and include lesbians who do not have access to a computer, the Internet, are not experienced with computers, or would simply prefer a paper survey for safety or other personal reasons.

Several studies have examined whether there are significant and important differences in the responses between paper and online surveys. Generally the results of studies that compared paper-and-pencil surveys to Internet-based surveys found that they produce data that is similarly reliable, valid and of equal quality (Pasveer & Ellard, 1998; Epstein, Klinkenberg, Wiley & McKinley, 2001; Pealer, Weiler, Pigg, Miller & Dorman, 2001; Harrison & Christie, 2004; Whittier, Seeley & St. Lawrence, 2004; Lewis, Watson & White, 2009). Studies have found that a mixed-mode of data collection can enhance survey participation and quality (Maier, 2005; Dolnicar, Laesser & Matus, 2009; Greenlaw & Brown-Welty, 2009; De Beuckelaer & Lievens, 2009). When exploring the collection of socially sensitive information from a paper survey and an Internet survey, Huang (2006) found that there were no significant differences between the two groups regarding their responses to survey questions. Epstein, Klinkenberg, Wiley and McKinley (2001) found that Internet-based data collection and paper-and-pencil surveys produced equivalent results for psychological research and Carini, Hayek, Kuh, Kennedy and Ouimet, (2003) found that responses of college students to paper surveys and Internet surveys generally revealed small distinctions. One study found that although on the whole, mixed-methods produced similar responses, paper surveys generated more missing answers than the online survey for a very long survey and with some sensitive measures (Woods, Nosko, Desmarais, Ross & Irvine, 2006). Knapp and Kirk (2003)

found that when using self-administered questionnaires with populations that are familiar

with computers, the results were essentially equivalent regardless if the method was

paper or Internet surveys. Figure 2 is a structural model used to depict the hypothesized

relationships.

FIGURE 2

INTERNALIZED HETEROSEXISM, OUTNESS, RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AND LESBIAN INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE MODEL
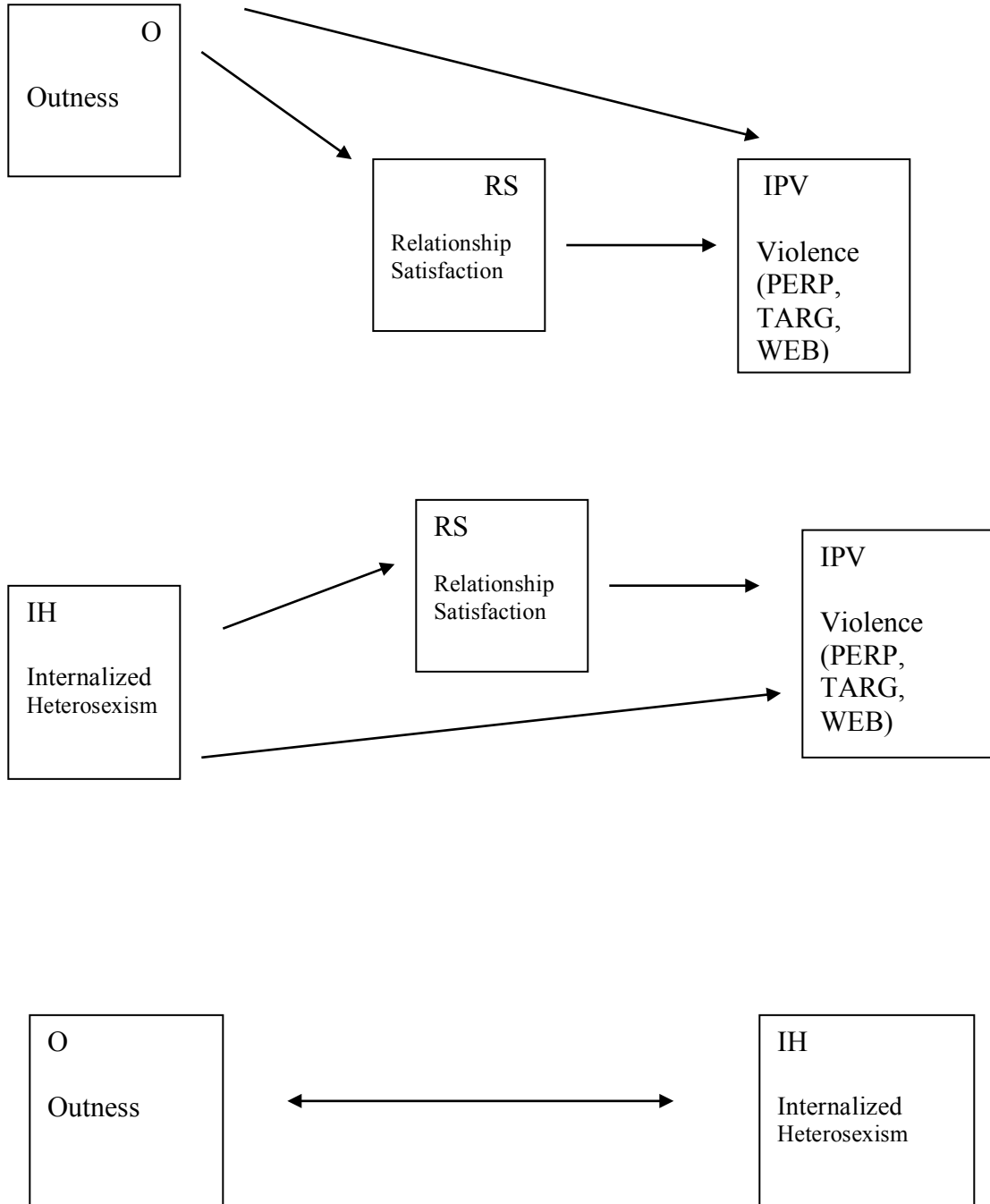
B. Sample

Participants were a non-random, convenience, purposive sample of women who self-identify as lesbian or same-sex-loving and are over the age of 18. The term *same-gender-loving* (SGL) reflects the trend for some people, particularly youth and African-Americans, who do not identify with traditional labels such as *lesbian*, *gay*, or *homosexual* (Eliason, 2010; Savin-Williams, 2005; 2006). Recent research suggests if appropriate language is not used that lesbians of color may be excluded from the onset (Rankin, 2006).

Bisexual women were not included in this study but may have participated if they considered their same-sex relationship a *lesbian relationship* or identify as same-sex-loving. Bisexuals were not sought as participants as their encounters with heterosexism, internalized heterosexism, oppression, and discrimination may be experienced differently than women who identify as lesbians. In a study by Warner and associates (Warner, McKeown, Griffin, Johnson, Ramsay, Cort & King, 2004) LGB respondents reported experiencing at least one act of hostility or discrimination and while bisexuals reported receiving similar levels of hostility, they were less likely to attribute the discrimination to their sexuality. A unique issue for bisexuals is biophobia that can come from negative attitudes from both the heterosexual as well as the gay and lesbian community (Warner et al., 2004; Hutchins & Kaahumanu, 1991). Bisexuals also can experience heterosexual privilege when they date or partner with people of the opposite sex and they are perceived as heterosexual. In their exploratory study of sexual minority stress along the lines of gender and sexual identity, Hequembourg and Brallier (2009) report that bisexuals experienced discrimination in unique ways that differed from gays and lesbians.

Bisexual men and women spoke at length about their invisible status and the effect of negative stereotypes about bisexuals. Bisexual participants also indicated that they often did not reveal their bisexuality in order to fit in more completely in either heterosexual or gay and lesbian social situations (Hequembourg & Brallier, 2009). For these reasons, bisexual women do not have the same experience with heterosexism and internalized heterosexism as lesbians and while their experience with IH, outness, battering and relationship satisfaction is an important study, it was not be specifically considered in this study.

Lesbians did not need to be currently be in a formal relationship, but must have been in at least one lesbian or same-sex-loving relationship in the past 12 months. Lesbians who speak and read English were in the sampling frame so that they could understand the instructions and survey. Past research on lesbian relationships has primarily consisted of college educated, White women as the majority of participants (Symanski & Chung, 2001). A more diverse sample was the objective and social or support groups of lesbians of color and non-college educated lesbians were particularly sought out. Organizations such as Amigas Latinas and the National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization were contacted for the recruitment of Latina lesbians. Organizations such as Zuna Institute, Chicago Black Lesbians and Gays, and Affinity, were contacted for recruitment of African-American lesbians. Organizations such as Queer Asian Spirit, Asian Pacific Gays and Friends, and Trikone were contacted for the recruitment of Asian/Pacific Island lesbians. In order to obtain sufficient data to better explore the phenomenon of abuse in lesbian relationships, lesbians who identify as being involved in an abusive relationship were particularly sought through support groups, from therapists,

snowball sampling procedures, and online support groups and networks. Every feasible and creative attempt to contact and include closeted lesbians was employed such as using the Internet, specific requests for closeted lesbians when snowballing, Facebook, and referrals for closeted lesbians from therapists. Facebook was utilized for recruitment by sending requests for participants to queer and lesbian pages and snowballing requests to forward to other possible, eligible participants.

Social groups, therapists, and lesbian support groups were located and contacted requesting participants through networking, referrals, the Internet and information from local 'pink pages.' Flyers were designed and contained a brief description of the study along with contact information, instructions for receiving a paper survey and a web address for conducting the survey online. Flyers were posted and dispersed at lesbian social gatherings and the snowballing of surveys to other lesbians was made with a request to pass on information regarding the study. Participants were sought at LGBT events in Chicago, and at a lesbian music festival by handing out flyers with Internet and contact information.

To provide for the privacy and confidentiality of potential participants, language was included to emphasize that this survey was anonymous and that no identifying information was sought or was kept or connected with any survey. Additionally, language was included that recruitment information regarding the survey was only to be passed on to potential participants and that the principal investigator was never to be contacted with the names of potential participants. If this should occur, the names and any identifying information were destroyed and the principal investigator did not contact the potential participant.

The sample was a group of lesbians and same-sex-loving women with differing levels of IH, outness, and relationship satisfaction that they personally experience. Men and heterosexuals were excluded, as the purpose of the study is to focus on lesbian behaviors and relationships. Any individuals under the age of 18 were excluded as this study's focus is on the behaviors of lesbian adults.

A website was created (studyoflesbians.com) with information and details about the research and the survey and a link to the survey. The link to the online survey was included via email snowballing and as a post in listservs and other websites frequented by lesbians. Participants could request that a paper survey be sent to them via the U.S. postal mail with return postage included. The website address was on all posters, flyers, and printed material advertising the research project. Participants using both the Internet and paper survey self-administered the survey. Both surveys had step-by-step instructions. All surveys were anonymous. I received a waiver of documented consent and the participants were informed that their participation in filling out the survey implied their consent.

C.   Measurement

The measurement plan included the Abusive Behavior Inventory (ABI), the Women's Experience of Battering (WEB), The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), the Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale (LIHS), and the Outness Inventory (OI).

1.   Lesbian intimate partner abuse and violence (dependent variable).

The Abusive Behavior Inventory (ABI) was used to measure violence and abuse in lesbian relationships. The ABI contains 30 items, uses a 5-point Likert-type scale to measure the frequency of abusive behaviors and is designed to include physical and

psychological forms of abuse (Shepard & Campbell, 1992). The ABI was based on information provided by battered women identifying different kinds of psychological abuse including; emotional abuse, isolation, intimidation, threats, economic abuse, and male privilege. These behaviors are considered abusive in the context where physical abuse has occurred. Heterosexist language is removed and 'male privilege' will instead be presented as 'privilege within the relationship'. Ten items that are considered assaultive behaviors, including forceful sexual activity, represent physical abuse. Shepard and Campbell (1992) report alpha coefficients ranging from .70 to .92 and subsequent researchers report alpha coefficients of .92 for the entire scale, .86 and .87 for physical abuse and .91 for psychological abuse (Zink, Klesges, Levin & Putnam, 2007; Katz, Moore & May, 2008). The ABI has good criterion-related validity. The variance between the abuse and non-abuse groups was a statistically significant difference, and alpha coefficients for factor validity of the subscales ranged from .80 to .92 for physical abuse and from .76 to .91 for psychological abuse (Shepard & Campbell, 1992). Convergent Validity for the ABI was established by correlating with the Conflict Tactic Scale-R (CTS2) (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy & Sugarman, 1996). Total scores for the ABI and CTS2 correlated .76 (p< .001) and subscales of ABI psychological abuse and CTS2 verbal aggression correlated .74 (p< .001) while ABI physical subscale with the CTS2 physical aggression, injury and sexual coercion subscales correlated .71 (p< .001) (Zink, Klesges, Levin & Putnam, 2007).

Domestic violence researchers are increasingly aware that there are many abusive behaviors that can be used to intimidate and control a target that do not involve physical force (Shepard & Campbell, 1992). Additionally, DV researchers are more sensitive to

the need to consider manifestation and perceptions of domestic violence in distinct

sociocultural contexts and allow targets to establish what represents violence and abuse

and its severity within their own context (Yoshihama, 1999). Therefore, four questions

from the Lesbian Partner Abuse Scale will be included to ascertain abuse and coercion

specific to lesbians according to literature on violence and abuse in lesbian relationships

(McClennen, Summers & Daley, 2002; Hester & Donovan, 2009).

The Women's Experience of Battering (WEB) was utilized to focus on the

psychological vulnerability lesbians experience in their abusive intimate relationship. The

WEB focuses on the chronic experience of battering and the psychological terror a target

may experience related to IPV (Bennett & O'Brien, 2007). The WEB is scored in a Likert

format raging from 'agree strongly' to 'disagree strongly' with a lower scale indicating

more vulnerability. The WEB has good construct validity, accurately discriminates

known battered women from non-battered women and shows strong internal consistency

($\alpha = .99$) (Smith, Earp & DeVellis, 1995). In a subsequent study, the Cronbach α

coefficient was .95 (Coker, Smith, McKeown & King, 2000).

2.   Internalized heterosexism (independent variable). The Lesbian

Internalized Homophobia Scale (LIHS) contains 52 items reflecting five dimensions of

internalized heterosexism (Szymanski, Chung & Balsam, 2001). Before this scale was

created, research regarding IH was focused almost exclusively on gay men. Shidlo (1994)

reported that IH in gay men correlates with psychological distress, loneliness, low self-

esteem, depression, somatic symptoms, and distrust. The Lesbian Internalized

Homophobia Scale was specifically designed to address IH in lesbians. Internalized

heterosexism in lesbians manifests itself in a number of ways. Chung and Balsam (2001)

hypothesized that IH in lesbians would correlate significantly with depression, somatic

symptoms, passing as heterosexual, overall social support, satisfaction with social

support, and overall gay social support and their results support these hypotheses.

Symanski and Chung (2001) reviewed the literature and previously published scales and

propose that IH include five dimensions:

> (a) connection with the lesbian community; isolation versus
> social support (Gartrell, 1984, Pharr, 1988, Pearlman, 1987;
> Sophie, 1987); (b) public identification as a lesbian: passing
> and fear of discovery versus disclosure (Gartrell, 1984;
> Margolies, Becker & Jackson-Brewer, 1987; Nungesser, 1983;
> Pharr, 1988; Ross & Rosser, 1996); (c) personal feelings about being
> a lesbian: self-hatred versus self-acceptance (Cass, 1979;
> Lewis, 1984; Neisen, 1993; Nungesser, 1983; Pharr, 1988);
> (d) moral and religious attitudes toward lesbianism; condemnation
> versus tolerance and acceptance (Gramick, 1983; Herek, 1984;
> Nungesser, 1983; Ross & Rosser, 1996): and (e) attitudes toward
> other lesbians: horizontal oppression/hostility versus group
> appreciation (Pearlman, 1987; Pharr, 1988. (p.41)

These five dimensions of IH were used to guide the selection and creation of the subscale

items in the LIHS. The LIHS expands the construct of IH by including the subscales that

assess the different behaviors and conduct that are considered various expressions of IH

and how it manifests in lesbians' lives.

Sample items in the LIHS are "When speaking of my lesbian lover/partner to a

straight person I change pronouns so that others will think I'm involved with a man rather

than a woman" and "I am proud to be a lesbian." Each statement is rated on a 7-point

Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Average total and subscale

scores are interval level and higher scores indicate a greater degree of internalized

heterosexism. The LIHS has reverse-scored items to lessen the effect of response sets.

The five subscales have coefficient αs of .87 (Connection With the Lesbian Community),

.92 (Public Identification as a Lesbian), .79 (Personal Feelings About Being a Lesbian), .74 (Moral and Religious Attitudes Toward Lesbianism), and .77 (Attitudes Toward Other Lesbians) in the original study (Szymanski & Chung, 2001b) indicating very good to adequate internal consistency reliability. The inter subscale correlations range from .37 to .57 indicating internal consistency but correlating only moderately with each other, which supports that the five subscales are distinct but correlated dimensions. The alpha for the scores on the LIHS total scale was .94. Correlations between the total and subscale scores ranged from .60 to .94. Construct validity of the scores on the LIHS are supported by significant correlations between the LIHS subscales and Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale and the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau & Cutrona, 1980) (Szymanski, Chung & Balsam, 2001). The samples used to support reliability and validity were primarily White, well educated, and middle to upper class. Piggot (2004) created a 39-item short form of the LIHS. The alphas for the subscale ranged from .72 to .92 and the alpha for the full scale was .93. Piggot validated the LIHS short form by using a cross-cultural sample of 803 sexual minority women from 20 countries. Validity was supported by exploratory factor analysis and by correlating the scale with measures of depression, self-esteem, and psychosexual adjustment (Piggot, 2004). The five subscales that represent different dimensions of IH in lesbians provide the opportunity to examine the different arenas in which lesbians experience IH while the aggregate score is representative of an overall level of IH.

      3.   **<u>Levels of outness (independent variable).</u>** The Outness Inventory (OI) was used to measure degrees of outness (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000). The Outness Inventory consists of 10 items reflecting the degree to which individuals are open and

talk about their sexual orientation in three areas of their lives; religion, work, and family. The scale uses a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (person definitely does not know about your sexual orientation status) to 7 (person definitely knows about your sexual orientation status, and it is openly talked about). A total outness score will be calculated by taking the mean of the three subscale scores (Out to Family, Out to Religion, and Out to World). The OI has reported alphas ranging from .74 to .97 and validity was indicated by association of the OI with variables such as connection with the LGB community and time spent involved in the coming out process (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000).

      4.   **Relationship Satisfaction (independent variable).** The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) (Hendrick, 1988) is a seven-item Likert scale measure of overall relationship satisfaction. Revisions from the original version make it applicable to anyone in an intimate relationship. Internal consistency of the current version of the RAS is high ($\alpha = .86$). The RAS is a brief, simple measure to be used with a battery of instruments in order to provide a concise picture of individuals' perceptions of a relationship (Vaughn & Matyastik Baier, 1999).

E.   **Data Analysis Plan**

      Univariate analysis was conducted on all measures to describe the data. The occurrence of abuse, IH, outness, and relationship satisfaction were calculated within each scale and for each participant. The Pearson's r will was conducted to assess the relationship between:

1. IH and relationship satisfaction

2. Outness and relationship satisfaction

3. IPV (perpetrator) and relationship satisfaction

4. IPV (target) and relationship satisfaction

5. IPV (WEB) and relationship satisfaction

6. IH and outness

7. Outness and IPV (perpetrator)

8. Outness and IPV (target)

9. Outness and IPV (WEB)

10. IH and IPV (perpetrator)

11. IH and IPV (target)

12. IH and IPV (WEB)

13. RS as mediator for Outness on IPV (perpetrator),

14. RS as mediator for Outness on IPV (target) and WEB)

15. RS as mediator for Outness on IPV (WEB)

16. RS as mediator for IH on IPV (perpetrator)

17. RS as mediator for IH on IPV (target)

18. RS as mediator for IH on IPV (WEB)

Regression analysis was used in this study to examine if the independent variables predict the dependent variables in a mediation model. Kachigan (1991) states that a regression analysis equation "describes the nature of the relationship between two variables" and "regression analysis supplies variance measures which allow us to assess the accuracy with which the regression equation can predict values on the criterion variable…"(p. 160). Regression analysis is used for forecasting and predicting because it measures the degree of the relationship between the predictor variable and the criterion variable. Two regression models were tested. The first examined Outness as a predictor

of IPV (target, perpetrator, WEB) and with RS as a mediator. The second model examined IH as a predictor of IPV (target, perpetrator WEB) and with relationship satisfaction as a mediator.

A mediation model hypothesizes that the independent variable influences the mediator variable, which then influences the dependent variable. In this way, the mediator variable clarifies the nature of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (MacKinnon, 2008). Relationship satisfaction will be examined as having a mediation effect for both Outness and IH on IPV as target, perpetrator and WEB.

The literature review illustrates a lack of understanding about lesbian and same-sex-loving women's use of violence in intimate relationships. Extant research has estimated the occurrence of violence in lesbian relationships, however it lacks a comprehensive understanding of factors related to lesbian's use of violence in intimate relationships. There are several gaps revealed in the research regarding lesbian IPV. Some important gaps in our knowledge of lesbian IPV is a lack of understanding of the impact that internalized heterosexism could have on the amount of outness and on violence lesbians experience within their intimate relationships, and how these factors are related to relationship satisfaction. This study examined these factors and their possible relatedness.

IV. RESULTS

This study explored the relationship between internalized heterosexism, outness, and relationship satisfaction with intimate partner violence in lesbian relationships. Data collection, a description of the sample, and analysis are discussed. This chapter also presents the key results of the study.

A.   <u>Data collection</u>

Data collection and recruitment for the study occurred between August 3, 2012 and January 1, 2013 for a total of 23 weeks. Data was collected and managed using REDCap electronic data capture tools hosted at the University of Illinois at Chicago. REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture) is a protected, web-based application designed to support data capture for research studies (Harris, Taylor, Thielke, Payne, Gonzalez & Conde, 2009).

A total of 1,560 logins to the survey website was reported by REDCap, and a total of 951 people completed the survey as indicated by clicking on 'submit' at the end of the online survey or by mailing their anonymous survey to a P.O. box, which was then entered into REDCap. Participants could stop and return to their online survey at a later time with an individual code if they desired. Eleven paper surveys were sent in to the P.O. Box and were included in the sample. To qualify for the research a participant needed to identify as lesbian or woman-loving-woman, be over the age of 18, and either currently be in a relationship or had been in a relationship in the past 12 months.

Participants indicated that they learned about the survey through email, handouts, listservs, advertisements, Facebook, support groups, friends or acquaintances, and at Michigan Women's Festival. A majority ($N = 568$, 63%) of the participants indicated that

they learned of the survey via Facebook, as well as friends or acquaintances with $N =$

104, 12%, and Michigan Women's Festival with $N = 58$, 6% (See Table 1).

B.   **Data cleaning**

Data from REDCap was entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

(SPSS) version 21.0. The REDCap website had 1561 log in entries. Six hundred and ten

log in entries did not click on the submit button, which leaves 951 submitted surveys.

Thirty-nine cases were eliminated because they did not meet all three of the requirements

for the study (identify as lesbian/over 18 years of age/in a relationship with a woman or

was in a relationship in the past 12 months). Four cases were removed because the

participant did not answer any of the questions in an entire measure, such as the

Women's Experience of Battering. This left 908 cases. A Missing Values Analysis was

tested on SPSS to determine whether the missing values were random or non-random.

The results were not significant indicating that the missing values were random (Little's

MCAR test, $p =$ ns). Participants were then eliminated based on an amount of

missingness of data according to the authors of each measure, or if the author left it up to

the judgment of the researcher. Elimination based on missingness of data was determined

for each measure as follows: WEB- three out of ten missing answers eliminated a

response, LIHS – 20% or more missing answers eliminated a response, Relationship

Assessment Scale – one missing answer out of seven eliminated a response, ABI- 20% or

more missing answers eliminated a response, Outness Inventory – 20% or more missing

answers eliminated a response. As a result, four more responses were eliminated. Simple

mean imputation was used for cases with missing items less than 20%. Data was

available for 904 participants.

Several categories within variables were collapsed to help simplify the data analysis. In the employment status question: *Working for wages* and *Self-employed* were collapsed into *'Employed;'* *Out of work-looking*, *Out of work-not looking*, and *Unable to work* were collapsed into *'Unemployed;'* and *Retired*, *Student*, and *Homemaker* were collapsed into *'Other.'* For the variable education status, *'PhD'* and *'Professional Degree'* were collapsed into one category. Due to insufficient responses in each racial/ethnic group other than *'white/Caucasian,'* the other choices for racial/ethnic group, which represented people of color, were collapsed into one group, *'People-of-Color.'*

The dependent variable of violence was divided into three separate variables; violence as perpetrator from the Abusive Behavior Inventory (ABI-PERP), violence as target from the Abusive Behavior Inventory (ABI-TARG), and the Women's Experience of Violence (WEB) in order to better and more clearly assess the different kinds of abuse and direction of abuse that these three separate variables of violence represent.

The five dimensions of the Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale include a dimension entitled 'Public Identity as a Lesbian.' This is closely related, if not conceptually identical, to the information gathered relating to the Outness Inventory. The 'Public Identity as a Lesbian' subscale was removed from the Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale so as not to reproduce information gathered regarding a participant's outness.

Four questions were removed from the Abusive Behavior Inventory because the questions focused on using children for the purpose of coercion and psychological abuse. However over 72% of respondents indicated that they did not have children so I decided

to remove these questions because of the small amount of participants that provided information.

C.   **Demographic characteristics**

Demographics of the sample are summarized in the Appendix. The ages of the women ranged from 18 to 81 years with the largest group of women between 30 and 33 (N= 144, 16%) and 26-29 (N=139, 15%). Most of the women who responded were employed in some fashion, (N=720, 80%) and 32% (N= 285) reporting having a bachelor's degree, while 25% (N= 230) reported having a master's degree. Participants reported earning between less than $10,000 a year to over $200,000 with the largest group earning between $34,000 and $75,000 (N=335, 37%). Participants came from 46 states in the union plus Washington D.C. and from twenty-four other countries.

Sixty-four percent of lesbians initially identified their own lesbian sexual orientation between the ages of ten and twenty-one years of age (10-13 years, N=118, 13%; 14-17 years, N= 227, 25%; and 18-21 years, N= 239, 26%). Women self-identified as follows: 6% butch, 16% soft butch, 20% butch/femme combination, 13% femme, as well as none of these 19%, and I'd prefer not to identify 7%. The majority of women indicated that they live in the city (N=491, 54%) and the vast majority completed an online survey vs. a paper survey (N=889, 99% vs. N=11, 1%). Most of the women reported their current legal status as single (N=597, 66%) with 104 (11.5%) indicating that they were in a civil union, 72 (8.0%) divorced, 18 (2.0%) separated and 4 (.4%) widowed. 'Married' was an option on the survey and 104 (11.5%) answered yes, but in hindsight, it was not clear if the respondents were legally married to men while having a relationship with a woman to whom their answers were related or if they were married to

women. At the time of the survey only nine states and Washington D.C. and 10 countries recognized marriage between same-sex couples.

Participants reported small amounts of drinking/drug usage taking place during violent episodes with their partner, either on their part (half the time 18, 2%; often 16, 1.8%; always 15, 1.7%) or on the part of their partner (half the time 18, 2%; often 36, 4%, always 24, 2.7%). Partner drinking was reported slightly more often than respondent drinking. A substantial number of participants reported that while they did not experience violence or abuse in their current relationship, they had experienced violence in a past relationship (393, 43.5%) and 113 (12.5%) said their past relationship with violence was with men, 223 (24.7%) said their past relationship with violence was with women and 66 (7.3%) indicated that their past relationships with violence were with both men and women. Lesbians who reported experiencing violence in their current or relationship in the past 12 months also reported experiencing violence in a previous relationship (90, 10%).

Regarding seeing emotional abuse between their parents, 504 (55.8%) respondents replied no and 391 (43.3%) replied yes. When asked if their father (step-father, etc.,) hit their mother (step-mother, etc.,) 194 (21.5%) indicated yes and when asked if their mother (step-mother, etc.,) hit their father (step-father, etc.,) 114 (12.6%) indicated yes. Eight (.9%) participants reported that their same-sex parent hit their other same-sex parent. The majority of participants reported that they were spanked as a child, (N=745, 82.4%), and 208 (23%) reported that they were physically abused by a family member other than a sibling. Forty percent of lesbians reported that they had been

touched in an inappropriate manner when they were younger with 202 (22.4%)

respondents indicating this first happened between the ages of five and ten.

D.   Univariate and Bivariate Analysis

1. Independent Variables

a.   Among the 904 study participants the mean score for relationship

satisfaction was 34 and the standard deviation was 10. The range was 35 with the lowest

score a 7 and the highest score a 42.

b.   Outness scores were obtained by averaging the scores of the three domains

of outness (Family/World/Religion) and then averaging the final scores of the three

domains for a final average score. Scores of '0' indicated that this person or situation did

not exist for the participant and were not included in the averaging so as not to lower a

person's outness score simply because this situation did not exist for them. One

exception was for a participant who only reported 0 scores for all questions. For outness

scores in this study the mean was 5.6 and the standard deviation was 1.23. The reported

range was 7 with 0 being the lowest score and 7 the highest score.

c.   Scores for internalized heterosexism minus the Public Identity as a

Lesbian subscale for this study had a mean of 64 and a standard deviation of 20. The

range was 113 with a minimum score of 35 and a maximum score of 149 reported.

2. Dependent Variables

In this study, 28% of respondents reported experience some violence as a

target and 22% of respondents reported that they perpetrated some violence.

a. Abusive Behavior Inventory – Perpetrator scores for this study had a mean score of 39 and a standard deviation of 6. There was a range of 70 points from a low of 32 to a high of 102.

b. Abusive Behavior Inventory – Target scores for this study had a mean sore of 42 and a standard deviation of 12. The range 100 points with a minimum score of 32 and the maximum score of 132.

c. The Women's Experience of Battering scores for this study had a mean score of 15 and a standard deviation was 10. The range was 50 points with a low score of 10 and a maximum score of 60. These scores indicate that 60% of the participants reported experience no fear of or sense of coercion by their partner.

As is common in research and data regarding aggressive behavior and domestic violence, the variables regarding abuse were skewed and kurtotic (Brendgen, Vitaro, Tremblay & Lavoie, 2001; Chase, Treboux & O'leary, 2002; Taylor, Guterman, Lee & Rathouz, 2009). Variables in violence and deviant behavior research are frequently skewed because many individuals report no violence (Hamby, Poindexter & Gray-Little, 1996; Osgood, Finken & McMorris, 2002). It is common to transform the data to reduce the skewness and kurtosis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). However, this can result in confounding the analysis. Therefore, it was decided not to transform and allow the data to speak for itself as the skewness of the measures probably reflects the skewed distribution of violence in the lesbian population (Hamby, Poindexter & Grey-Little, 1996).

The scale inter-item reliability test of internal consistency uses the Cronbach's alpha statistic. A score of 0.90 and greater is considered excellent, a score of 0.80-0.89 good, and a score of 0.70-0.79 is acceptable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). All of the

scales in the study had acceptable to excellent internal consistency. The results of the

internal consistency tests are provided in Table I.

TABLE I

BASIC DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND CRONBACH'S ALPHA

Variable	M	SD	α	N
RelatSat	3.4	10	.94	904
Outness	5.6	1.2	.72	904
IH	64	20	.87	904
ABI-PERP	39	6	.83	904
ABI-TARG	42	12	.93	904
WEB	15	10	.95	904

E.   Analysis by hypothesis

1.   Internalized heterosexism is negatively associated with relationship satisfaction.

H1 posited that internalized heterosexism was negatively associated with relationship satisfaction. A correlation matrix of Pearson's *r* was conducted for the independent and dependent variables (Table II). H1 is supported. Internalized heterosexism and relationship satisfaction are significantly negatively correlated, $r = -.203$, *p*< .01.

TABLE II

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ALL VARIABLES

	Outness	IH	RelatSat
Outness			
IH	-.013		
RelatSat	-.055*	-.203**	
ABI-PERP	.034	.311**	-.404**
ABI-TARG	.089**	.262**	-.612**
WEB	.067*	.205**	-.602**

  * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

2.   Outness is positively associated with relationship satisfaction.

H2 postulated that outness was positively associated with relationship satisfaction. Table 3 indicates the results of this analysis. H2 was not supported. The correlation between outness and relationship satisfaction was significant, but it was a negative

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correlation and the hypothesis called for a positive association, $r = -.055$, $p < 05$. See Table II.

3. **Relationship satisfaction is negatively associated with IPV for both perpetrator and target.**

H3 examined the negative association with relationship satisfaction and all three measures of IPV representing the perspective of perpetrator and target. H3 was supported. Table II denotes the results of this analysis.

4. **Internalized heterosexism is negatively associated with outness.**

H4 tested the association between internalized heterosexism and outness. Table II conveys the results of this analysis. H4 was not supported. The correlation between internalized heterosexism and outness was not significant, $r = -.013$, $p > .05$.

5. **Outness is negatively associated with IPV for both perpetrator and target.**

H5 examined the association between outness and all three measures of IPV representing the perspective of perpetrator and target. H5 was not supported. Table II sets out the results. The correlation between outness and the Abusive Behavior Inventory as perpetrator (ABI-PERP) was not significant, $r = .034$, $p > .05$. The correlation between outness and the Abusive Behavior Inventory as target (ABI-TARG) was positively correlated, $r = .089$, $p < .01$. Outness and the Women's Experience of Battering (WEB) were positively correlated, $r = .067$, $p < .05$. However the hypothesis predicted a negative correlation, thus the hypothesis was not supported for all three variables of IPV.

6. **Internalized heterosexism is positively associated with IPV for both target and perpetrator.**

H6 assessed the association between internalized heterosexism and IPV for all three variables of violence representing both perpetrator and target. H6 was supported. The results are found in Table II. The correlation between internalized heterosexism and the Abusive Behavior Inventory as perpetrator (ABI-PERP) was significant, $r = .311$, $p < .01$. The correlation between internalized heterosexism and the Abusive Behavior Inventory as target (ABI-TARG) was significant, $r = .262$, $p < .01$. Internalized heterosexism was significantly correlated with the Women's Experience of Battering (WEB), $r = .205$, $p < .01$. Thus, internalized heterosexism was positively associated with all three variables of IPV.

7. Relationship Satisfaction mediates the relationship between outness and IPV as perpetrator and target.

H7 examined the extent to which relationship satisfaction mediated the association between outness and IPV as both a perpetrator and target. Relationship satisfaction was tested as a mediator for the effect of outness on violence using Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation model.

Baron and Kenny's (1986) model of mediation requires that (1) the regression of the mediating variable on the independent variable be statistically significant, and (2) the regression of the dependent variable on the independent variable be statistically significant, and (3) when the dependent variable is regressed on the independent and mediating variable the association of the mediating variable must be significant.

A.   ABI-Perpetrator. In the mediation model with the IPV variable ABI-PERP, the regression of the mediating variable, relationship satisfaction, on the independent variable, outness, was not significant $b = -.426$, $p = .100$. The regression of the dependent variable, ABI-PERP on the independent variable, outness, was not

significant $b = .178$, $p = .305$. The regression of ABI-PERP on both outness and

relationship satisfaction revealed that outness was not a significant predictor of violence b

$= .063$, $p = .692$, and relationship satisfaction was significant $b = -.270$, $p < .001$. In order

to establish mediation, all three conditions must be met. Since two of the three conditions

for mediation were not met, the Sobel test was not done and the hypothesis for ABI-

PERP was not supported. An online calculator uses the Sobel test to determine whether a

mediator variable significantly carries the influence of an independent variable to a

dependent variable, (Soper, 2014). See Table III.

TABLE III

REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE (ABI-PERP) ON RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AND OUTNESS

Variable	Relationship Satisfaction (Mediating Variable)			ABI-PERP (Model 1)			ABI-PERP (Model 2)		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Outness	-.426	.259	-.055	.178	.174	.034	.063	.159	.012
Relationship Satisfaction							-.270	.020	-.403***
R^2		.033			.001			.160	

*$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

      B.   **<u>ABI-Target.</u>** Regarding the violence variable ABI-TARG, the regression

of the mediating variable, relationship satisfaction, on the independent variable, outness,

was not significant $b = -.426$, $p = .100$. The regression of the dependent variable, ABI-TARG on the independent variable, outness, was significant, $b = .870$, $p < .01$. The regression of ABI-TARG on both outness and relationship satisfaction indicated that outness was a significant predictor of violence $b = .544$, $p < .05$, as well as relationship satisfaction, $p = -.764$, $p < .001$. However since all three conditions were not met, a Sobel test was not conducted and the hypothesis for the violence variable ABI-TARG was not supported. See Table IV.

TABLE IV

REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE (ABI-TARG) ON RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AND OUTNESS

Variable	Relationship Satisfaction (Mediating Variable)			ABI-TARG (Model 1)			ABI-TARG (Model 2)		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Outness	-.426	.259	-.055	.870	.325	.089*	.544	.258	.056*
Relationship Satisfaction							-.764	.033	-.609***
R^2	.003			.008			.38		

*$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

    C.   **Women's Experience of Battering (WEB).** Regarding the violence variable WEB, the regression of the mediating variable, relationship satisfaction, on the independent variable, outness, was not significant $b = -.426$, $p = .100$. The regression of

the dependent variable, WEB, on the independent variable, outness, was significant, $b =$ .520, $p =$. 044. The regression of WEB on both outness and relationship satisfaction revealed that outness was not a significant predictor of violence $b = .266$, $p < .001$, and relationship satisfaction was significant $b = -.597$, $p = .001$. However since all three conditions were not met, a Sobel test was not done and the hypothesis was not supported for the violence variable WEB. See Table V. H7 was not supported for any of the three IPV variables.

TABLE V

REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE (WEB) ON RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION ON OUTNESS

Variable	Relationship Satisfaction (Mediating Variable)			WEB (Model 1)			WEB (Model 2)		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Outness	-.426	.259	-.055	.520	.258	.067*	.266	.206	.034
Relationship Satisfaction							-.597	.026	-.600***
R^2		.003			.004			.360	

$*p < .05.$ $** p < .01.$ $***p < .001.$

8. **Relationship satisfaction mediates the relationship between IH and**

IPV as perpetrator and target.

H8 examined the extent to which relationship satisfaction mediated the

association between internalized heterosexism and IPV as both a perpetrator and target.

H8 was supported for a partial mediation. Relationship satisfaction was tested as a

mediator for the effect of internalized heterosexism on violence using Baron and Kenny's

(1986) procedure with the online Sobel test (Sobel, 1982, Soper, 2014). This online

calculator uses the Sobel test to determine whether a mediator variable significantly

carries the influence of an independent variable to a dependent variable, (Soper, 2014).

A. **ABI-Perpetrator.** Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation test was used

with the variable Abusive Behavior Inventory as perpetrator (ABI-PERP). The regression

of the mediating variable, relationship satisfaction, on the independent variable,

internalized heterosexism, was significant, $b = -.100$, $p < .001$. The regression of the

dependent variable, Abusive Behavior Inventory as perpetrator (ABI-PERP), on the

independent variable, internalized heterosexism, was also significant, b = .102, $p < .001$.

The regression of violence as Abusive Behavior Inventory as perpetrator (ABI-PERP) on

both the mediator and the independent variable, internalized heterosexism, $b = .079$, $p <$

.001, was still a significant predictor of Abusive Behavior Inventory as perpetrator (ABI-

PERP) scores, but the magnitude of the association was reduced. A Sobel test was

conducted and found partial mediation in the model (z =5.7, $p < .001$). See Table VI.

TABLE VI

REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE (ABI-PERP) ON RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AND INTERNALIZED HETEROSEXISM

Variable	Relationship Satisfaction (Mediating Variable)			ABI-PERP (Model 1)			ABI-PERP (Model 2)		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Internalized Heterosexism	-.100	.016	-.203***	.102	.010	.311***	.079	.010	.239***
Relationship Satisfaction							-.238	.020	-.355***
R^2		.041			.097			.220	

*$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

B.   **ABI-Target.** Using the Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure for examining the mediation effect with the violence variable Abusive Behavior Inventory as target (ABI-TARG), the hypothesis was supported for a partial mediation. The regression of the mediating variable, relationship satisfaction, on the independent variable, internalized heterosexism, was significant, $b = -.100$, $p < .001$. The regression of the dependent variable, Abusive Behavior Inventory as target (ABI-TARG) on the independent variable, internalized heterosexism, was also significant, $b = .162$, $p < .001$. The regression of violence as Abusive Behavior Inventory as target (ABI-TARG) on both the mediator and the independent variable was revealed that internalized heterosexism was still a significant predictor of Abusive Behavior Inventory as target (ABI-TARG) scores, $b = .089$, $p < .001$, but the magnitude of the association was reduced. A Sobel test

was conducted and found partial mediation in the model ($z = 6.04$, $p < .01$). See Table VII.

TABLE VII

REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE (ABI-TARG) ON RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AND INTERNALIZED HETEROSEXISM

Variable	Relationship Satisfaction (Mediating Variable)			ABI-TARG (Model 1)			ABI-TARG (Model 2)		
	B	*SE*	β	*B*	*SE*	β	*B*	*SE*	β
Internalized Heterosexism	-.100	.016	-.203***	.162	.020	.262***	089	.016	.143***
Relationship Satisfaction							-.732	.033	-.583***
R^2		.041			.068			.400	

*$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

C. **Women's Experience of Battering (WEB).** Using the Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure for examining the mediation effect with the violence variable the Women's Experience of Battering (WEB), the hypothesis was supported for a partial mediation. The regression of the mediating variable, relationship satisfaction, on the independent variable, internalized heterosexism, was significant, $b = -.100$, $p < .001$. The regression of the dependent variable, Women's Experience of Battering (WEB), on the independent variable, internalized heterosexism, was also significant, $b = .100$, $p < .001$. The regression of violence as Women's Experience of Battering (WEB) on both the mediator and independent variable, indicated that internalized heterosexism was still a

significant predictor of Women's Experience of Battering (WEB) scores, $b = .042$, $p < .001$, but the magnitude of the association was reduced. A Sobel test was conducted and found partial mediation in the model ($z = 4.42$, $p < .001$). See Table VIII.

TABLE VIII

REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE (WEB) ON RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AND INTERNALIZED HETEROSEXISM

Variable	Relationship Satisfaction (Mediating Variable)			WEB (Model 1)			WEB (Model 2)		
	B	*SE*	β	*B*	*SE*	β	*B*	*SE*	β
Internalized Heterosexism	-.100	.016	-.203***	.100	.016	.205***	.042	.013	.087***
Relationship Satisfaction							-.582	.027	-.585***
R^2		.041			.042			.370	

*$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

V. DISCUSSION

This study surveyed whether or not and how the phenomena of outness, internalized heterosexism and relationship satisfaction are associated with violence and abuse in lesbian relationships. This chapter presents the findings of the study by hypotheses. Implications for social policy, social work education, limitations of the study, and implications for future research about lesbians and intimate partner violence are discussed. Among the participants in this study 28% of them reported that they experienced some violence as a target, and 22% of respondents reported that they perpetrated some violence.

A.   Discussion by Hypotheses

1.   **Hypothesis One**. *Internalized heterosexism is negatively associated with relationship satisfaction.*

The results of this study indicate that internalized heterosexism and relationship satisfaction are negatively linked to each other. Internalized heterosexism is a form of self-devaluing (Meyer, 2003) and has been found to correlate with poor outcomes related to sexual identity formation and the coming out process (Kahn, 1991; Nungesser, 1983) body image (Kimmel & Mahalik, 2005), substance abuse (Amadio & Chung, 2004; Cabaj, 2008), mental and physical health (Symanski, Chung & Balsam, 2001; D'Augelli, Grossman, Hershberger & O'Connell, 2001); and relationship quality (Frost & Meyer, 2009; Mohr & Daly, 2008). In addition, low self-esteem and low self-acceptance, shame, guilt, depression and anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy and rejection are common feelings that are associated with internalized heterosexism (Weber-Gilmore, Rose & Rubinstein, 2011). According to Bobbe (2002), these negative feelings and behaviors

linked with internalized heterosexism can have a more painful and troublesome influence on the health of a lesbian than blatant forms of oppression such as discrimination.

Consistent with other studies regarding internalized heterosexism and relationship satisfaction, this study points to a negative connection between the two phenomena. Research that finds these negative associations with internalized heterosexism implies that internalized heterosexism may have a major impact on lesbian relationships (Spencer & Brown, 2007). Couples where both partners report high degrees of internalized heterosexism reported significantly lower relationship satisfaction than couples that reported different or low levels of internalized heterosexism in Spencer and Brown's (2007) study. Balsam and Szymanski (2005) also found that, consistent with clinical and theoretical reports, internalized heterosexism was negatively associated with relationship quality. Other studies have found higher levels of internalized heterosexism to be associated with more symptoms of psychological distress (Carroll, 1995; Frock, 1999; Piggot, 2004; Szymanski et al., 2001). Any kind of internalized negativity about oneself may be destructive, draining, and harmful to an individual, including internalized heterosexism. It is not difficult to foresee that all of the poor outcomes of higher levels of internalized heterosexism could negatively impact a person and this could result in difficulty in a relationship and in lower relationship satisfaction. This study supports the hypothesis that they are negatively connected.

2.   **Hypothesis Two**. *Outness is positively associated with relationship satisfaction.*

The results of this study revealed a significant relationship between outness and relationship satisfaction. Contrary to my hypothesis, however, it was a negative

association. Thus Hypothesis Two was not supported. Previous research on outness and relationship satisfaction and relationship quality has generated varied results. Several authors have suggested that the stress of staying closeted can negatively affect the quality of lesbian's same-sex relationships and aggravate other relationship difficulties (Brown, 1995; Ossana, 2000). Being out and open about one's lesbian relationship can contribute to the value of a relationship and remove the angst that hiding a relationship may bring to the individuals personally and the relationship as well (Jordan & Deluty, 2000). Balsam and Szymanski (2005) found that outness was not correlated with overall relationship quality for lesbians and bisexual women. Balsam and Szymanski speculate that outness may influence women's same-sex relationships in a more circumscribed manner. Additionally, Green, Bettinger, and Zacks (1996), Beals and Peplau (2001), and Knoble and Linville (2012) did not find a correlation between outness and relationship satisfaction. Frost and Meyer (2009) theorize that it is internalized heterosexism not outness that has an impact on LGB relationships and Eliason and Schope (2007) recommend that researchers not consider outness as an indication of internalized heterosexism.

Knoble and Linville (2012) suggest that the presumed correlation between outness and relationship satisfaction may not function as expected. "Participant themes suggest that outness influences relationship satisfaction, but not in the sense that the more out people are, the happier they are in their relationship. Likewise, causality cannot be inferred"(p. 337). In their study, couples acknowledged that discrepancies in outness had been the demise of past relationships but there was no critical theme that indicated that outness had a specific effect on relationship satisfaction in their current relationship.

Perhaps satisfaction with one's own current level of outness, considering personal circumstances, the outness level of one's partner, and the support that two lesbians can provide each other regarding their levels of outness and circumstances, is more important than the amount of outness itself (Knoble & Linville, 2012).

Disclosure can have drastically different consequences depending on the personal lives of lesbians, from acceptance and encouragement to hostility and disaffection (Smith, 2011). Some lesbians may find it more valuable to maintain the connection and support they receive from their parents, family, and other significant sources and so chose to conceal their sexual identity in order to sustain this support. Women tend to relate to the world through their relationships and lesbians may decide that being cut off from their family due to disapproving reactions is too high a price to pay for their outness (Smith, 2011). If they are sufficiently satisfied with their relationship, they may forgo coming out to maintain relationships with their family and friends. Lesbians who have been raised in a conservative religious setting and still have beliefs, friends, and emotional ties with their religious roots and community may decide to remain closeted within their religious group in order to continue the affiliation untouched by religious disapproval or even persecution or expulsion. Lesbians may also experience different cultural attitudes regarding their sexual orientation and may choose to remain connected to their ethnic and cultural communities without revealing their lesbianism.

Conversely, perhaps being out has brought tension to the relationship and resulted in less relationship satisfaction. If lesbians do receive a negative reaction from being out, this may result in more personal or relational stress and anxiety that impacts the relationship. This theory is contrary to the general theory that being out is positive for a

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lesbian relationship, but may explain the results in this study. There is the possibility that the measures and methods of this project were not sufficient to capture relationships between these variables, or that the relationships are not linear. Also, perhaps levels of outness are not specifically related to relationship satisfaction and this may explain different results from different studies of different populations of lesbians.

3. **Hypothesis Three.** *Relationship satisfaction is negatively associated with IPV as perpetrator and target.*

The results of this study indicate that IPV experienced by a perpetrator or toward a target is associated with reduced relationship satisfaction an individual feels toward the relationship. Hypothesis Three was supported. An individual's relationship satisfaction is negatively correlated with the extent of abuse and violence. Given the data and analysis are correlation in nature, the causal direction of this negative association is unclear. It is possible that if an individual in a relationship experiences conflict, distress and safety issues, they will have adrenal, cardiovascular, metabolic and immune system responses. The increase of the secretion of stress hormones will increase with anticipation, worry, or hypervigilance in a person who feels threatened or in danger because of past or current episodes of IPV (Black, 2011). Additional health issues can result from being in a relationship with an abuser such as greater risk of infectious disease, higher amounts of wound healing time, depression, sleep disturbances, hostility, cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome, and somatic syndromes (Black, 2011). The most visible consequences of IPV are physical injuries ranging from minor injuries to permanent disability, life-threatening injuries and death (Black, 2011). Understandably, experiencing this amount of stress and discomfort in one's relationship as a result of the actions of a

partner would impact relationship satisfaction. While bystanders may not always understand why a targeted partner does not leave an abuser, everyone can easily comprehend that the level of satisfaction with that relationship could be greatly diminished.

Relationship satisfaction is negatively correlated with all three variables of violence in this study. Less relationship satisfaction is associated with higher tendency of abuse and violence whether as the perpetrator based on the Abusive Behavior Inventory-Perpetrator questions or the target as in the Women's Experience of Battering and Abusive Behavior Inventory-Target. This study supports the hypothesis that relationship satisfaction is negatively associated with violence in a lesbian relationship.

4. **Hypothesis Four.** *Internalized heterosexism is negatively associated with outness.*

Contrary to the hypothesis, internalized heterosexism was not significantly associated with outness in this study. Perhaps for these lesbians, a degree of outness is not correlated with their internal feelings regarding their lesbianism. This study indicated an overall moderate level of outness among participants. Possibly as acceptance of out lesbians has changed in recent years, the fears associated with being out are reduced and, lesbians in general, are inclined to be more open about their sexual orientation and relationships. However, more outness may not necessarily reduce the negative feelings about their lesbianism or negate the toll that the internalization of some of society's outspoken disapproval and persecution of homosexuals, particularly from conservative and some religious groups. Internalized heterosexism may well persist and continue to affect a lesbian's life even after she has successfully come out and found connection

(Cox, Dewaele, vanHoute & Vincke 2011; Gonsiorek, 1988). As acceptance of homosexuality continues to grow in society, so can the opposition increase their efforts to thwart the rights of LGBT people. This increase in attacks, arguments and campaigns against gay supportive legislation does not go unnoticed by LGBT people. While the positive changes that take place can bolster a lesbian's feelings about her sexuality and its acceptance, the continued outspoken opposition often requires a lesbian to manage these words and attacks, even if she is familiar with the experience from the past. Simply handling the negative attacks may require a lesbian to manage her internalized heterosexism and can increase minority stress. This may result in lesbians having higher levels of outness but still grappling with the internalization of society's negative perception of their lesbianism.

Conversely, lesbians associated with conservative anti-gay religious groups, older lesbians who have grown up and spent most of their lives closeted, certain ethnic lesbians and adolescents who are dependent on their families, may choose to remain closeted as a protective factor. These disclosure decisions may be separate from an internal identification and acceptance process (Frost & Meyer, 2009). Beals and Peplau (2001) suggest that their results indicate that, for some lesbians, keeping one's identity a secret may be a way to preserve the continuation of support from parents and significant others. If their parents and families openly reject them, lesbians usually have to actively manage this negative experience, or deal with the active work of suppressing it. Some lesbians may choose to avoid the external and internal conflict arising from the possible rejection.

Lesbians who choose to be more closeted about their lesbianism and their relationships may be as a thoughtful protective mechanism to buffer themselves from

overt discrimination and hatred (Patishnock, 2012). Lesbians may carefully evaluate their own prospective risks and benefits of coming out and decide when this is most advantageous to them, and this is not necessarily associated with negative internalized feelings about their lesbianism (Frost & Meyer, 2009).

It is important to consider that outness may have both benefits and liabilities, depending on specific circumstances and social setting. For some lesbians, disclosing may represent a protective decision that reduces stress and concerns as it reduces the likelihood of rejection or discrimination. While a positive result of coming out may be seen as an increase in community support and connection, it may also increase negative consequences related to sexual minority stress (Carvalho, Lewis, Derlega, Winstead & Viggiano, 2011). Individuals who are more out report more stress associated with parenting, harassment and discrimination, but less stress associated with vigilance and isolation (Balsam, Beadnell & Molina, 2012). In Knoble and Linville's (2012) study many participants stated that increased visibility as a GLB person and same-sex couple amplified their experience of gay associated tension, such as stress with their family, verbal harassment, work place strain, and physical violence.

Coming out may indicate that a lesbian has prevailed over private shame and devaluing, but some researchers argue that an absence of outness should not be taken to indicate the opposite and should not be conceptualized as a part of internalized heterosexism (Eliason & Schope, 2007; Frost & Meyer 2009). While outness and internalized heterosexism are associated constructs, they are not synonymous or identical constructs (Carroll, 1995). In a 1995 study of 208 lesbians and outness it was found that lesbians with high levels of outness did not have significantly better psychological

adjustment than those with low levels of outness about their lesbian sexual orientation (Carroll, 1995).

Lesbians may stay closeted at work, or choose to come out to only a few, trusted co-workers due to fears of harassment and the concern that being out may hurt their career, or may even result in their dismissal. While a lesbian may have no control over how her boss or co-workers may react or feel about her lesbianism, or the laws in her state regarding work place discrimination of lesbians, she can control whether or not to disclose this detail about herself. Being closeted at work may be an indication of a healthy modification to environmental limitations and not symptomatic of internalized heterosexism (Frost & Meyer, 2009).

Coming out can be a constant state for lesbians as they circumvent all areas and episodes of their lives. Wondering and worrying how a person may react and respond to coming out, and how to respond to that reaction, along with how it may impact their life may be draining and cumulatively exhausting for a lesbian. Most likely, lesbians come out on their own terms, when they are ready or they have deemed the situation worthy of the coming out risk and possible consequences. All of this may not be associated with negative internal feelings about being a lesbian, but an unfortunate coping technique of dealing with a stigmatized identity. Therefore, a lesbian's degree of outness may be a more complex ongoing decision. Consideration would include the psychological benefits as well as the difficult issues involved, such as experiencing discrimination at work or strain with a family relationship. Additional contemplation would incorporate an individual's ego strength, patience, and available support at different times in their life to handle the negatives of coming out.

Alternatively, a lesbian may choose to be out in many situations while still grappling with the internalization of negative feelings about lesbianism that outspoken groups in society still proscribe for her. In a 1999 study of lesbians, internalized heterosexism, outness and depression, it was found that IH was statistically correlated with depression but levels of outness failed to correlate with depression (Earle, 1999). The analysis indicated that attitudes about one's lesbianism were more highly correlated with levels of depression than were respondents' concerns about disclosure of their lesbianism (Earle, 1999). These phenomena could result in a lack of association with outness and internalized heterosexism constructs as found in this study.

    5.   **<u>Hypothesis Five</u>**. *Outness is negatively associated with IPV as perpetrator and target.*

Levels of outness were not negatively correlated with any of the three variables of IPV in lesbian relationships in this inquiry. Thus, lower levels of outness were not associated with higher amounts of violence in a lesbian relationship as a perpetrator or target and Hypothesis Five was not supported. This is consistent in this study with the variable outness and its connection or lack of connection with the other variables. Outness is not connected with negative experiences such as internalized heterosexism and it is not negatively connected with relationship satisfaction in this study.

However, outness was positively correlated with being a target of abuse as measured by the Abusive Behavior Inventory-Target and the Women's Experience of Battering, albeit a weak correlation. This is an unexpected result, and speaks to the curious nuances of outness. Balsam and Szymanski (2005) completed a study that examined similar concepts regarding lesbians and intimate partner violence. They also

examined outness and IPV as perpetrator and target and did not find a significant correlation. Additionally, they did not find a connection between outness and internalized heterosexism, but did find an association between internalized heterosexism and IPV, similar to this study. The theory that the secrecy of concealment derives a couple of support and validation that may lead to a higher amount of risk for intimate partner violence as theorized by Sophie (1982) was not supported in this study.

As mentioned previously, the proposition of coming out is complex and nuanced (Bowleg, Burkholder, Teti & Craig, 2008). As the world changes and LGBT people become more visible and accepted, outness may not be the highly charged, circumspect, and literally life-threatening experiences it once was. Lower levels of outness, for some lesbians, may not be connected with lesbians at risk for IPV. While internalized heterosexism was associated with intimate partner violence in this study, outness was not correlated with internalized heterosexism. It could follow then, that outness was not negatively correlated with IPV. The positive correlation may be a result of the changing nature of outness for lesbians. Perhaps as recognition of out lesbians has changed in recent years, lesbians are tending to be more open about their sexual orientation. This may be related to lesbians who are targets of abuse, as perpetration was not correlated.

6. **Hypothesis Six.** *Internalized heterosexism is positively associated with IPV as target and perpetrator.*

This study found that higher amounts of internalized heterosexism were associated with higher amounts of violence as a target and a perpetrator. A lesbian with higher levels of internalized heterosexism may have some feelings of self-loathing or self-deprecation and may believe that she deserves to be treated abusively or does not

deserve to be treated with respect because she is inherently unacceptable. Additionally, a

lesbian with more internalized negative feelings about herself and her lesbianism may be

less inclined to leave an abusive relationship because she may believe that she deserves

the abuse (Balsam & Szymanski, 2005) or that she has few other options. Girshick (2002)

found in her qualitative study of women with past sexual victimization by a female

partner that several participants commented that they ascribed their maltreatment to being

a lesbian.

Suzanne Pharr (1988) writes that a common element of all forms of

discrimination is the internalized oppression that results from being outside the

established, accepted, and the defined norm. This internalized oppression can result in

some measure of self-hatred, depression, self-abuse, and horizontal hostility (Tigert,

2001). Renzetti (1998) hypothesizes that internalized heterosexism may be associated

with violence against members of one's own marginalized community. As a result, a

lesbian with her own internalized negative feelings about lesbianism might engage in

violence against her partner.

Renzetti (1992) also found that a perpetrator's dependency on her partner was a

risk factor for more numerous and brutal acts of violence. This dependency could result

from isolation that is associated with internalized heterosexism. If a perpetrator has

negative feelings about herself and lesbians, this may be a barrier for her to make

valuable connections with other lesbians, thereby creating a greater need for dependency

on her partner (Balsam, 2001). Additionally, living with the persistent stress of

heterosexism and internalized heterosexism may possibly increase the potential for

violence in a lesbian relationship (Balsam 2001).

Seeking help by a target or perpetrator may be significantly impacted by internalized heterosexism. Internalized heterosexism and the resulting isolation could impact whether or not a lesbian seeks help from friends, family, or professionals regarding a violent relationship. A lesbian target with higher rates of internalized heterosexism may not feel deserving of help or sense that she does not want to bring any disparaging thoughts from others regarding her lesbian partner or their relationship. Similarly, a batterer may be isolated and feel shame and embarrassment and not feel either she is worthy of obtaining help or that her relationship is not worthy of support.

Tigert (2001) suggests that same sex domestic violence stems from internalized heterosexism and the lack of tools to cope effectively with cultural trauma. While Tigert (2001) does think that lesbians need to be held responsible for their actions, she states that battering in a lesbian relationship could be lesbian's acting out of society's prescription for abusive behavior toward lesbians. Tigert (2001) further states, "In sum, the reality of violence within intimate lesbian partnerships may be a result of the acting-out patterns of internalized psychological and spiritual homophobia and shame. Oppression is violent and violence is traumatizing" (p. 84). This study supports the hypothesis that the more negatively a lesbian feels about herself and her lesbianism due to the negative messages she has received from society, the more at risk she may be for experiencing violence in her relationship.

7. **Hypothesis Seven.** *Relationship satisfaction mediates the relationship between outness and IPV as perpetrator and target.*

Hypothesis Seven examined the extent to which relationship satisfaction mediated the association between outness and IPV as both a perpetrator and target. Hypothesis

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Seven was not supported. As indicated previously, outness was not associated positively with relationship satisfaction and was not associated negatively with any of the IPV variables. None of the elements of this hypothesis were supported, so it follows that the hypothesis of mediation was not supported.

8. <u>**Hypothesis Eight.**</u> *Relationship satisfaction mediates the relationship between IH and IPV as perpetrator and target.*

This study found that the variable, relationship satisfaction, partially mediated the relationship between IH and all three variables of IPV. Lesbians value affection, dependability, shared interests and attractive personality characteristics in their partners (Peplau & Spalding, 2000). In Eldrige and Gilbert's (1990) study of relationship satisfaction correlates in lesbian relationships they found that a sense of one's influence in the relationship was significantly related to relationship satisfaction. Additional positive correlations included: emotional intimacy, intellectual intimacy, recreational intimacy, sexual intimacy, social intimacy, and life satisfaction. Discrepancy of power, the difference in partner's self-esteem and career commitment were all negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction. Clearly relationship satisfaction is correlated with positive individual strengths as well as positive couple interactions. Having positive satisfaction with one's relationship has a strong impact on the functioning of lesbians and their relationships. In this study, the strong, positive influence of a satisfying relationship mediated the effect of internalized heterosexism on IPV. Therefore, this intimates that an increase in the level of relationship satisfaction with all of its positive aspects has a strong and positive effect on how lesbians manage their world and the negative influence of internalized heterosexism.

This does not mean that relationship satisfaction is somehow positively correlated with abuse in a relationship. Hypothesis Three indicates exactly the opposite of this. What this mediating hypothesis suggest is that the higher levels of relationship satisfaction a lesbian experiences, the less of a negative association internalized heterosexism has on IPV. Their higher amounts of relationship satisfaction affect how their lower levels of IH impact the connection to IPV. This merely speaks to the strength and important impact relationship satisfaction has for lesbians.

B.   **Major Findings of the Study**

The major findings of this study are simple; higher amounts of internalized heterosexism may increase the risk for IPV for lesbians. As described previously, IH is associated with a myriad of negative outcomes for lesbians. This study finds negative correlations between IH and relationship satisfaction and positive correlations between IH and all three variables of IPV. Thus, higher amounts of internalized heterosexism are connected to negative consequences for lesbians and disconnected from good aftermaths, such as relationship satisfaction. Having negative feelings about oneself and one's sexual orientation may wreak havoc on one's relationships and puts one at greater risk for intimate partner violence.

C.   **Implications of study**

1.   **Implications for social work practice.** The findings of this study support the phenomenon of the negative effects internalized heterosexism has on lesbians and on their relationships relative to IPV. Social workers who are engaged in any kind of direct practice are likely to encounter lesbians, or women who identify as same-gender-loving, who are seeking support either for themselves or their relationship. It will behoove social

workers and other helping professionals to be cognizant of the very real existence of internalized heterosexism and the negative impact that internalized heterosexism may have on lesbians and their current or potential relationships. Particularly if there is violence or abuse involved, social work practitioners need to take the time to delve into the existence of internalized heterosexism for the sake of their lesbian clients. If a lesbian has manifested any negative feelings about her sexual identity due to the pervasive negative, heterosexist messages that she has received throughout her life, the social work practitioner and client can work together to challenge this construction and recognize the contribution society has made to its creation. The transformation that can result in healing results when a client "decodes" the heterosexist and anti-gay messages embedded in society and then "grasps the mechanisms of oppression and dehumanization" (Martin-Baró, 1994, p. 40). This decoding involves facilitating the identification and naming of the political power that undercuts every day occurrences and oppression with the lesbian client. This has important implications when working with issues of internalized heterosexism with lesbians. This examination means that lesbian clients do not have to accept the pathology of self-hatred. Rather, these negative attitudes and behaviors about their identities are rejected. When a lesbian can assimilate this change in perception, she may be liberated from harboring self-hating beliefs and may assume responsibility for her own future attitudes and behaviors free from large scale and dominant heterosexism she may encounter in her world. A social worker may affirmatively support a lesbian client throughout this process, particularly if they are aware of the levels of heterosexism and internalized heterosexism a lesbian may experience throughout her lifetime and of the personal, negative impact of internalized heterosexism.

When lesbians experiencing violence and abuse seek assistance from a social worker or other helping practitioner, the information gained from this study can be vital to inform their practice. Confronting and examining the amounts of internalized heterosexism that each individual experiences, and how that influences their relationship can be crucial to supporting the healing process for lesbian couples in therapy. Additionally, programs that support lesbian targets and/or lesbian perpetrators may be more efficient and their paradigms more germane if they understand and incorporate the associations between internalized heterosexism and IPV in their treatment.

      2.   **Implications for social policy.** On a much larger scale, the implications for this study includes how social workers need to confront and dismantle heterosexism and heterosexist practices whenever they are encountered in order to impact social policy. Heterosexism begets internalized heterosexism and heterosexist acts, policies, and language should be challenged and removed. This follows the tenants of social work included in our Code of Ethics that state:

6.04 (d) Social and Political Action. Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability. (NASW, 2008)

If social workers and gay-affirmative people work to undertake to reduce and eliminate heterosexist and anti-gay policies, laws and influences, heterosexism may decline and hopefully it would follow that internalized heterosexism by lesbians, gay and bisexual people will decline as well. This study points to the deleterious effects that internalized heterosexism may have on lesbian couples and this information warrants a

response by society and helping practitioners to do their best to work to eliminate heterosexism in our worlds.

      3.   **Implications for social work education.** Social work education emphasizes cultural competence and that includes LGBT people. Instruction on lesbians and the LGBT community should not be limited to elective, specified courses on human sexuality and gender identification, but rather should be integrated within and throughout the social work curriculum (Gates, 2012). The presence of internalized heterosexism in the lives of lesbians must be presented and future social workers, particularly straight, privileged students, should be exposed to these phenomenon and the deleterious effects that can ensue as a result. This result of discrimination and marginalization of a minority and stigmatized population must be part of the cultural competency valued in social work education.

      4.   **Implications for future research.** Additional work remains to understand the unique factors of battering in lesbian relationships. Future research must take into account the impact of the sociocultural context of the ways battering in lesbian relationships manifests and is experienced by targets and perpetrators. Battering in lesbian relationships has been studied and acknowledged, but we must also continue to study and acknowledge the invasive and negative effects of heterosexism and internalized heterosexism on individuals and how this impacts their relationships. Perhaps the specific effect of anti-gay religious upbringing, influence and beliefs need to be examined more closely as to whether or how they might specifically affect internalized heterosexism. Age and the changing attitudes of new generations is another area that may bring enlightenment to the study of heterosexism and internalized heterosexism. It is valuable

to consider how these phenomena may be changing as societies, including some religious communities, are more accepting of lesbians and their relationships. Privilege of any kind needs to be examined as to its effects on internalized heterosexism and battering and future research should examine class, race, and cultural related differences in internalized heterosexism and battering for lesbians, including differences within two individuals in a relationship. Future research on lesbians must include the concept of intersectionality of all identity, affiliation, and marginalizing factors.

The nuances and complexities of outness need to be examined to better understand the experience and how it affects lesbians and their relationship with the world. Contrary to my hypothesis, there was a positive correlation between outness and IPV as target and the Women's Experience of Battering. This association needs further exploration. Studies that can examine what outness means to LGBT people in different aspects of their worlds are warranted. Additionally, how levels of outness have changed over the years, and the decision making process of coming out need to be studied. Tools for measuring outness need to be assessed and updated if necessary, to reflect more nuances of outness and society's changing perception of out lesbians.

D.   Limitations

As with most research regarding special, minority populations, sampling is usually conducted with a convenience sample. This is the best method of obtaining a larger sample size, but the lack of randomness is a limitation of this study and limits generalizability of the findings.

Recruitment methods are also a limitation of this study. Several recruitment methods focused on lesbian or LGBT groups that were gay affirmative and supportive.

Finding lesbians who were associated with an LGBT organization may be more likely to result in women with higher levels of outness and lower levels of internalized heterosexism. They doubtless received positive affirmations from their support/social group or were in a healthier place in their lives wherein they wanted to be associated with an LGBT affirming group.

In order to include closeted lesbians, several methods were used including placing advertisements in newspapers and posting on Facebook. Also, through snowball emails closeted lesbians may have been contacted. However, due to the complex nature of being closeted, contacting more closeted women is problematic and this is a limitation with this study.

Measurements of internalized phenomena are always a kind of limitation because of the restrictions of considering all the ways an internal experience can be captured in a survey question. The Outness Inventory measured the degree to which one is out to others but it did not gauge the reaction or attitude of the person or group in the respondent's life. Additionally, it does not measure the person's intrapsychic reaction to the fact that others know that she is a lesbian, and therefore the resulting score does not include other important information about being out.

The overwhelming majority of participants used the online survey. A paper survey was available and the few participants who chose to use the paper survey requested one through the Internet by email. A P.O. Box was made available for written requests but not one request was made through the USPS mail. This could be a limitation for people who did not have access to a computer or the Internet and may have limited

the sample by class, privilege and income level, and other unknown reasons. Thus, the use of an almost exclusive online survey instrument is a limitation of this study.

Many attempts were made to recruit lesbians of color and while a representative of African-American women was obtained (approximately 14%), groups of women of any other minority were too statistically small to study as a group and the majority of participants were white/Caucasian (71%). This is a limitation as to race. Additionally, while 18% had a high school diploma or less and 17% had an associate's degree, the majority of participants had a bachelor's or master's degree (57%), and this is a limitation of the study, as it does not represent a realistic picture of the general population.

Self-reporting can be a limitation to a study as participants may have motivations for under reporting violence in their relationship or on their own behalf. The tendency for people to present a more favorable image of themselves in a survey is called socially desirable responding and it can obscure relationships between variables (Bardell & Dimsdale, 2001; van de Mortel, 2008). Partners may under report as well, not wanting to think realistically about the amount of violence that exists in their relationship or that they personally endure or inflict. Self-reporting can be hampered by perception as to physiological and physical violence and be influenced by faulty or self-deceiving memory. While recruiting attempts were made in a variety of methods and venues to expand on the different types of lesbians involved, the majority of participants were obtained through Facebook. Facebook may afford a variety of demographics, but it is still a kind of participant who most likely owns a computer and is drawn to the experience Facebook affords. This could be a limitation as to the kind of person participating and the diversity of participants.

Missing data is a limitation of this study. Cases that were eliminated because of the amount of missing data also eliminated their answers that were present and that could have contributed to the analysis. Participants that had less than 20% missing answers had their missing answers imputed with simple mean imputation. This weakens covariance and correlation estimates in the data and this is a limitation. Additionally, the skewness of the data regarding abuse is a limitation in that it was not normally distributed.

This is a cross sectional study and this is a limitation. Cross sectional studies cannot infer a casual relationship and cannot measure population changes over time.

E.   **Summary**

Future research regarding intimate partner violence must consider the intersectionality of numerous influences on relationships including class, race, poverty, oppression, stigmatization, societal and family support, culture, religion, and other phenomenon that can undermine a person's self-value and undermine the value of a relationship. Relationships that struggle with abuse and violence must be examined to determine if stigmatization of any kind exists. Then, whether or not stigmatization negatively affects the individuals in a couple and their psychological health must be studied. Finally, how the negative effects may influence their relationship should be assessed. People in relationships are usually seeking comfort, support and affection that a healthy coupling can bring. Violence and abuse are painful and harmful. Anything we can do as social workers and a society to bring about healing to abusive relationships and healing to people to prevent abuse benefits us all. Anything we can learn from research that examines the negative and positive associations with violence in certain relationships

informs us all and may bring us closer to finding helpful paradigms that can lead to

effective interventions with any relationship.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SAMPLE

Variable	Sampling N	%
Age		
18-21	43	4.8
22-25	136	15.1
26-29	139	15.4
30-33	144	15.9
34-37	105	11.6
38-41	85	9.4
42-45	67	7.4
46-49	59	6.5
50-53	54	6.0
54-57	34	3.8
58-61	22	2.4
62-65	12	1.3
66-69	1	.1
70-73	1	.1
78-81	1	.1
Missing	1	.1
Total	904	100%

How did you learn of the survey?

Facebook	568	63
Friend or Acquaintance	104	12
Michigan Women's Music Festival	58	6
LGBT Group	53	5
Internet (other than Facebook)	41	5
Email	43	5
Handout	8	1
Listserve	7	1
Advertisement	6	1
Other	12	1
Therapist/Support Group	2	<1
I forgot	2	<1
Total	904	100

Income

< $10,000	133	14
10,000-14,999	79	9
15,000-24,999	135	15
25,000-34,999	110	12
34,000-49,000	179	20
50,000-74,999	156	17
75,000-99,999	66	7
100,000-149,000	34	4
150,000 or more	14	2
Total	904	100

Education

Grade School	4	<1
High School/GED	162	17.9
Associates/Certificate	154	17
Bachelor's	285	31.5
Master's	230	25.4
PhD/Professional Degree	69	7.6
Total	904	100

Employment

Employed (full/part)	720	79.6
Unemployed	46	5.1
Other (student/homemaker/retired)	138	15.3
Total	904	100

Race

White	639	70.7
People-of-Color	265	29.3
Total	904	100

Where do you live?

City	491	54.3
Suburbs	294	32.7
Country/Rural	98	10.8
Other	17	1.9
Missing	4	<1
Total	904	100

Age when you realized you were a lesbian?

2-5	28	3.1
6-9	87	9.6
10-13	118	13.1
14-17	227	25.1
18-21	239	26.4
22-25	97	10.7
26-29	37	4.1
30-33	29	3.2
34-37	20	2.2
38-41	11	1.2
42-45	4	<1
46-49	2	<1
50-53	4	<1
54-57	1	<1
Total	904	100

Amount of Drinking/Drug by Partner During Violent Episodes

No abuse or violence	735	81.3
Never	53	5.9
Not Often	35	3.9
Half the Time	18	2
Often	36	4
Always	24	2.7
Missing	3	<1
Total	904	100

Amount of Drinking/Drug by Participant During Violent Episodes

No abuse or violence	744	82.3
Never	61	6.7
Not Often	45	5.0
Half the Time	18	2.0
Often	16	1.8
Always	15	1.7
Missing	5	<1
Total	904	100

Touched sexual or uncomfortable?

Yes	362	40
No	542	60
Total	904	100

If yes, what age first experience?

3	19	2.1
4	24	2.6
5	45	5
6	31	3.4
7	34	3.8
8	41	4.5
9	24	2.7
10	27	3
11	17	1.0
12	31	3.4
13	15	1.7
14	9	1
15	11	1.2
16	11	1.2
17	3	<1
18	4	<1
19	3	<1
20	1	<1
21	1	<1
23	4	<1
Unchecked	547	60.5
Total	904	100

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Study of Lesbians and Women Loving Women Questionnaire

Use the following rating scale to indicate how open you are about your sexual orientation to the people listed below. Try to respond to all of the items, and circle 0 if they do not apply to you.

1 =Person <u>definitely</u> does NOT know about your sexual orientation status
2 =Person <u>might</u> know about your sexual orientation status, but it is NEVER talked about
3 =Person <u>probably</u> knows about your sexual orientation status, but it is NEVER talked about
4 =Person <u>probably</u> knows about your sexual orientation status, but it is RARELY talked about
5 =Person <u>definitely</u> knows about your sexual orientation status, but it is RARELY talked about
6 =Person <u>definitely</u> knows about your sexual orientation status, and it is SOMETIMES talked about
7 =Person <u>definitely</u> knows about your sexual orientation status, and it is OPENLY talked about

0 = Not applicable to your situation; there is no such person or group of people in your life

A1. Mother	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
A2. Father	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
A3. Siblings (brothers, sisters)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
A4. Relatives/extended family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
A5. My <u>newer</u> straight friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
A6. My work peers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
A7. My work boss/supervisor(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

A8. Members of my religious community (e.g. church, temple)
      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   0

A9. Leaders of my religious community (e.g. church, temple)
      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   0

A10. My <u>old</u> straight friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

~~~~~~

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements by circling the number that best describes how you feel from the scale below. There are no right or wrong answers; however, for the data to be meaningful, you must answer each statement given below as honestly as possible. Please state how you actually feel, not how you wish you felt. Your responses are completely anonymous. Please do not leave any statement unmarked. Some statements may talk about situations that you have not experienced; please *imagine* you in those situations when answering those statements.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

B1. Many of my friends are lesbians.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

B2. I try not to give signs that I am a lesbian. I am careful about the way I dress, the jewelry I wear, the places, people and events I talk about.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

B3. I can't stand lesbians who are too "butch." They make lesbians, as a group, look bad.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

B4. Attending lesbian/gay events and organizations is important to me.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

B5. I hate myself for being attracted to other women.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

B6. I believe female homosexuality is a sin.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

B7. I am comfortable being an "out" lesbian woman. I want others to know and see me as a lesbian woman.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

B8. I feel comfortable with the diversity of women who make up the lesbian community.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

B9. I have respect and admiration for other lesbians.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

B10. I feel isolated and separate from other lesbians.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

B11. I wouldn't mind if my boss knew that I was a lesbian.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B12. If some lesbians would change and be more acceptable to the larger society, lesbians as a group would not have to deal with so much negativity and discrimination.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B13. I am proud to be a lesbian woman.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B14. I am **not** worried about anyone finding out that I am a lesbian woman.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B15. When interacting with members of the lesbian/gay/bisexual community, I often feel different and alone, like I don't fit in.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B16. Female homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B17. I feel bad for acting on my lesbian desires.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B18. I feel comfortable talking to my straight/heterosexual friends about my everyday home life with my female partner/lover or my everyday activities with my lesbian friends.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B19. Having lesbian friends is important to me.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B20. I am familiar with lesbian/gay/bisexual books and/or magazines.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B21. Being a part of the lesbian/gay/bisexual community is important to me.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B22. As a lesbian woman, I am loveable and deserving of respect.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B23. It is important for me to conceal the fact that I am a lesbian from my family.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B24. I feel comfortable talking about homosexuality in public.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B25. I live in fear that someone will find out I am a lesbian woman.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B26. If I could change my sexual orientation and become heterosexual, (change from gay to straight), I would.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B27. I **do not** feel the need to be on guard, lie, or hide my lesbianism to others.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B28. I feel comfortable joining a lesbian/gay/bisexual social group, lesbian/gay/bisexual sports team, or lesbian/gay/bisexual organization.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B29. When speaking of my female lover/partner to a straight person, I change the pronouns so that others will think I'm involved with a man rather than a woman.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B30. Being a lesbian makes my future look bleak and hopeless.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B31. Children should be taught that being gay is a normal and healthy way for people to be.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B32. My feelings toward other lesbians/gay/bisexuals are often negative.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B33. If my friends or peers knew of my lesbianism, I am afraid that many would not want to be friends with me.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B34. I feel comfortable being a lesbian woman.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B35. Social situations with other lesbians make me feel uncomfortable.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B36. I wish some lesbians wouldn't "flaunt" or show off their lesbianism. They only do it for shock value and it doesn't do or accomplish anything positive.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B37. I **don't** feel disappointment in myself for being a lesbian.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B38. I am familiar with lesbian/gay/bisexual movies and/or music.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B39. I am aware of the history concerning the development of lesbian/gay/bisexual communities and/or the lesbian/gay/bisexual rights movement.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B40. I act as if my female lovers are merely friends.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B41. Lesbian lifestyles are a viable and legitimate way of life for women.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B42. I feel comfortable discussing my lesbianism with my family.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B43. I don't like to be seen in public with lesbians who look "too butch" or are "too out" because others will then think I am a lesbian.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B44. I could **not** confront a straight friend or acquaintance if she or he made a homophobic, heterosexist, or anti-gay statement to me.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B45. I am familiar with lesbian music festivals and conferences.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B46. When speaking of my female lover/partner to a straight person, I often use neutral pronouns so the sex of the person is unclear or vague.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B47. Lesbian couples should be allowed to adopt children the same as heterosexual couples.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B48. Lesbians are too aggressive.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B49. I frequently make negative comments about other lesbians.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B50. Growing up in a lesbian family is detrimental for children.

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

B51. I am familiar with community resources for lesbians (i.e., bookstores,
       support groups, bars, etc.).

Strongly Disagree 1	Moderately Disagree 2	Slightly Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Slightly Agree 5	Moderately Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

~~~~~~

Circle the number that best represents your closest estimate of how often each of the behaviors happened in your relationship with your partner/girlfriend or happened with a former partner/girlfriend during the previous twelve months.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5

D1. Called you a name and/or criticized you.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5

D2. I called my partner/girlfriend a name and/or criticized her.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5

D3. Tried to keep you from doing something you wanted to do (E.g., going out with friends,
    going to meetings).

Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5

D4. I tried to keep her from doing something that she wanted to do (E.g. going out with
    friends, going to meetings).

Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5

D5. Gave you angry stares or looks.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5

D6. I gave her angry stares or looks.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5

D7. Prevented you from having money for your own use.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5

D8. I prevented her from having money for her own use.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5

D9. Ended a discussion with you and made the decision herself.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5

D10. I ended a discussion with her and made the decision myself.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5

D11. Threatened to hit or throw something at you.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Very Frequently 5

D12. I threatened to hit or throw something at her.

| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D13. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved you.

| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D14. I pushed, grabbed, or shoved her.

| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D15. Put down your family and/or friends.

| N ever | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D16. I put down her family and/or friends.

| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D17. Accused you of paying more attention to someone/something else.

| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D18. I accused her of paying more attention to someone/something else.

| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D19. Put you on an allowance.

| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D20. I put her on an allowance.

| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D21. Used your or her children to threaten you (e.g., told you that you would lose custody, said that she would leave town with the children).

| We don't have children | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D22. I used my or her children to threaten her (e.g., told her that she would lose custody, said that you would leave town with the children).

| We don't have children | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D23. Became very upset with you because dinner / housework was not done the way she thought it should be or when she wanted it done.

| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D24. I became very upset with her because dinner/housework was not done the way I thought it should be done or when I wanted it done.

| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D25. Said things to scare you (e.g., told you something "bad" would happen, threatened to commit suicide).

| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D26. I said things to scare her (e.g., told her something "bad" would happen, threatened to commit suicide).

| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Very Frequently |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

D27. Slapped, hit, or punched you.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D28. I slapped, hit, or punched her.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D29. Made you do something humiliating or degrading (e.g. beg for forgiveness, ask for permission to use the car or to do something).

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D30. I made her do something humiliating or degrading (e.g. beg for forgiveness, ask for permission to use the car or to do something).

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D31. Checked up on you (e.g., listened to your phone calls, checked the mileage on your car, called you repeatedly at work).

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D32. I checked up on her (e.g., listened to her phone calls, checked the mileage on her car, called her repeatedly at work).

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D33. Drove recklessly when you were in the car.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D34. I drove recklessly when she was in the car.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D35. Pressured you to have sex in a way you didn't want.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D36. I pressured her to have sex in a way she didn't want.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D37. Refused to do housework or child care.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D38. I refused to do housework or child care.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D39. Threatened you with a knife, gun, or other weapon.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D40. I threatened her with a knife, gun or other weapon.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D41. Spanked you without your consent.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D42. I spanked her without her consent.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D43. Told you that you were a bad parent.

We don't have children	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
0	1	2	3	4	5

D44. I told her that she was a bad parent.

We don't have children	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
0	1	2	3	4	5

D45. Stopped or tried to stop you from going to work/school.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D46. I stopped or tried to stop her from going to work/school.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D47. Threw, hit, kicked, or smashed something.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D48. I threw, hit, kicked, or smashed something.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D49. Kicked you.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D50. I kicked her.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D51. Physically forced you to have sex.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D 52. I physically forced her to have sex.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D53. Threw you around.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D54. I threw her around.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D55. Physically attacked the sexual parts of your body.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D56. I physically attacked the sexual parts of her body.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D57. Choked or strangled you.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D58. I choked or strangled her.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D59. Used a knife, gun, or other weapon against you.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D60. I used a knife, gun, or other weapon against her.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D61. Threatened to tell people, who do not know, that you're a lesbian, or "out" you.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D62. I threatened to tell people, who do not know, that she was a lesbian, or "out" her.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D63. Threatened to hurt or kill herself or tried to in front of you.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D64. I threatened to hurt or kill myself or tried to in front of her.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D65. Threatened to take or hurt pet(s).

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D66. I threatened to take or hurt pet(s).

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D67. She threatened to "take" our friends if we broke up, or turn friends against me.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D68. I threatened to "take" our friends if we broke up, or turn friends against her.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D69. Told you no one would believe you if you sought or asked for help for abuse from her.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D70. I told her no one would believe her if she sought or asked for help from my abuse of her.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D71. Does not want me to discuss our relationship with my friends.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D72. I do not want her to discuss our relationship with her friends.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D73. Partner/girlfriend experienced sexual abuse by family member(s).

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D74. Partner/girlfriend experience physical abuse by family member(s), other than a sibling.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D75. Partner/girlfriend experienced emotional/psychological abuse by family member(s).

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D76. Partner/girlfriend observed family violence as a child.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D77. Partner/girlfriend experienced a religious family or background.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D79. <u>You</u> experienced a religious family or background.

Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
1	2	3	4	5

D80. In the above section (questions D1-D79), are you referring to a current partner/girlfriend or a previous partner/girlfriend in the past 12 months?

    1   current partner/girlfriend   2   former partner/girlfriend in past 12 months

~~~~~~

Select the response that best describes how your partner/girlfriend or partner/girlfriend from a previous relationship in the last 12 months makes (made) you feel.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

C1. She makes me feel unsafe even in my own home.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

C2. I feel ashamed of the things she does to me.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

C3. I try not to rock the boat because I am afraid of what she might do.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

C4. I feel like I am programmed to react a certain way to her.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

C5. I feel like she keeps me prisoner.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

C6. She makes me feel like I have no control over my life, no power, no protection.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

C7. I hide the truth from others because I am afraid not to.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

C8. I feel owned and controlled by her.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

C9. She can scare me without laying a hand on me.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

C10. She has a look that goes straight through me and terrifies me.

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

~~~~~~

Circle the number that best describes the amount of satisfaction you feel in your relationship with your current partner/girlfriend or recent partner/girlfriend in past 12 months.

Very Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Slightly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

E1. Communication and openness

Very Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Slightly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

E2. Resolving conflicts and arguments

Very Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Slightly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

E3. Degree of affection and caring

Very Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Slightly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

E4. Intimacy and closeness

Very Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Slightly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

E5. Satisfaction with your role in the relationship

Very Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Slightly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

E6. Satisfaction with the other person's role in the relationship

Very Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Slightly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

E7. Overall satisfaction with your relationship

Very Dissatisfied	Moderately Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Slightly Satisfied	Very Satisfied
0	1	2	3	4	5

E8. Are your answers to E1- E7 about your current relationship or a past relationship in the last 12 months?

    1. r Current relationship   2. r Past Relationship in 12 months

~~~~~~

Please fill in the following information about yourself. Please answer all the questions and please don't leave any answers blank.

F1.   At what age did you first use alcohol?____ years old

F2.   In a typical month, estimate the number of days you use any alcohol, in any
       amount?_____ days

F3.   In a typical day of drinking, estimate the number of drinks you usually have?
       _____ drinks

When thinking about drug use, include illegal drug use and the use of prescription drug use other than prescribed.

F4.   Have you ever felt that you ought to cut down on your drinking or drug use?

       __ Yes   __ No

F5.   Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking or drug use?

       __ Yes   __ No

F6.   Have you ever felt bad or guilty about your drinking or drug use?

       __Yes   __No

F7.   Have you ever had a drink or used drugs first thing in the morning?

       __Yes   __No

F8. If there is violence/abuse in your current relationship or there was violence/abuse in a previous relationship in the past 12 months, when there was violence/abuse, how often had **you** been drinking or using drugs?

No Abuse/ Violence	Never	Not Often	Half the Time	Often	Most of the time	Always
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

F9. If there is violence/abuse in your current relationship or there was violence/abuse in a previous relationship in the past 12 months, when there was violence/abuse, how often had your partner/girlfriend or former partner/girlfriend been drinking or using drugs?

No Abuse/ Violence	Never	Not Often	Half the Time	Often	Most of the time	Always
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

G1. If you **do not** experience violence or abuse neither in your **current** relationship, nor in any relationship over the past 12 months, have you experienced violence/abuse in any **previous** romantic relationship?

       __Yes   __No

       G1a. **If yes to G1**, how many years ago was the last violent/abusive act? _____

       G1b. **If yes to G1,** did you experience violence in a relationship(s) with a male or a female?
       __Male   __Female   __Both, I have experienced violent/abusive
                                                    with both men and women in the past.

G2. If you **do** experience violence/abuse in your **current** relationship with a woman, have you experienced violence/abuse in a **previous** relationship(s)?

       __Yes   __No

G2a. **If yes to G2**, did you experience violence in a previous relationship(s) with a male or female?

__Male   __Female   __Both, I have experienced violent/abusive
with both men and women in the past.

G3. If you have experienced violence/abuse in previous relationships, please approximate the number of previous violent/abusive relationships. _____(with female(s))_____(with male(s)).

H1.   Emotional abuse includes name-calling, demanding people to do as they are told, treating people as if they are inferior, mocking them, embarrassing them in front of friends, not letting them use the phone or car, making them tell where they have been or are going, and so forth. Did you see emotional abuse between your parents in your family?
__Yes   __No

H2.   Did your father/stepfather/mother's boyfriend, ever hit your mother?

__Yes   __No

H3.   Did your mother/stepmother/father's girlfriend ever hit your father?

__Yes   __No

H4.   Were you ever physically punished (e.g., spanked)?

__Yes   __No

H5.   Did parents or family members physically abuse you
other than your siblings?

__Yes   __No

H6.   Did anyone ever touch you in ways you felt were
sexual or uncomfortable?

__Yes   __No
H6a.   If Yes to H6, at what age? ____ years old.

~~~~~~

I1.   What is your LEGAL marital status?
1.   Single (never married)
2.   Married
3.   Civil Union
4.   Divorced
5.   Separated
6.   Widowed

I2.   What racial/ethnic group do you identify as your own? You may choose more than one.

1. East Asian (Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.)
2. West Asian (Indian, Pakistani, etc.)
3. Black or African-American
4. Latino/Hispanic
5. Native American
6. White/European
7. Mixed Heritage (specify): _____
8. Other (specify): _____

I3.   Are you:
1 .Employed for wages/money
2. Self-Employed
3. Out of work and looking for work
4. Out of work but not looking for work
5. A homemaker
6. A student
7. Retired
8. Unable to work

I4.   What is your current **personal** (just yours) annual income from any source (check one):

[ ] A: Less than 10,000	[ ] F: 50,000 to 74,999
[ ] B: 10,000 to 14,999	[ ] G: 75,000 to 99,999
[ ] C: 15,000 to 24,999	[ ] H: 100,000 to 149,000
[ ] D: 25,000 to 34,999	[ ] I: 150,000 to 199,999
[ ] E: 35,000 to 49,000	[ ] J: 200,000 or more

I5.   What is your current **household** (include everyone's) annual income from any source (check one):

[ ] A: Less than 10,000	[ ] F: 50,000 to 74,999
[ ] B: 10,000 to 14,999	[ ] G: 75,000 to 99,999
[ ] C: 15,000 to 24,999	[ ] H: 100,000 to 149,000
[ ] D: 25,000 to 34,999	[ ] I: 150,000 to 199,999
[ ] E: 35,000 to 49,000	[ ] J: 200,000 or more

I6.   Last Year of education completed (circle one):

Grade school: 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

High school/GED: 9   10   11   12

College/Technical School: 13   14 (Certificate/Associates)
                           15   16 (Bachelors)
                           17   18 (Masters)
                           >20   (Ph.D.)

I7. Which of the following best describes the age at which you realized and began to personally
    identify as lesbian, women-loving, queer, gay, or homosexual?

A.   2-5
B.   6-9
C.   10-13
D.   14-17
E.   8-21   M.   50-53
F.   2-25   N.   4-57
G.   6-29   O.   8-61   U.   82^
H.   0-33   P.   62-65
I.   4-37   Q.   66-69
J.   8-41   R.   70-73
K.   42-45   S.   4-77
L.   46-49   T.   78-81

I8. Do you live in:
1.   City
2.   Suburbs
3.   Country
4.   Other _____

I9. Is your current relationship with someone of the same gender, transgender, or different gender?

1.   same gender
2.   transgender
3.   different gender

I10. If you are currently in a relationship, how long have you been in your current relationship?
_____

I11. Your age

A.   18-21   I.   50-53
B.   22-25   J.   54-57
C.   26-29   K.   58-61   Q.   82^
D.   30-33   L.   62-65
E.   34-37   M.   66-69
F.   38-41   N.   70-73
G.   42-45   O.   74-77
H.   46-49   P.   78-81

I12. How do you identify?

Butch	Soft Butch	Butch/Femme combination	Femme	I would rather not identify	None of these
1	2	3	4	5	6

I13. What was your religious affiliation <u>growing up</u>?

1.   Protestant Christian (Denomination _____)
2.   Evangelical Christian
3.   Catholic
4.   Mormon
5.   Jewish
6.   Muslim
7.   Hindu
8.   Buddhist
9.   None
10. Other_____

I15. What is your religious affiliation <u>now</u>?

1.   Protestant Christian (Denomination _____)
2.   Evangelical Christian
3.   Catholic
4.   Mormon
5.   Jewish
6.   Muslim   9.   None
7.   Hindu   10. Spiritual, Not Religious
8.   Buddhist   11. Other_____

I16. In what state do you live? _____Or if not the USA, what country?_____

I17. Did you fill out a paper survey or an on-line survey on the Internet?

1.   Internet on-line survey
2.   Paper survey

I18. How did you learn about this survey?
     Email
     Handout/Flyer
     Poster
     Listserve
     Advertisement
     Poster/Sign

Facebook
Therapist/Support Group
LGBT Group
Internet (other than Facebook)

Please take a moment and be sure you answered all the questions.
Thank you, thank you, and thank you!

If you would like to learn more about the survey or the results or get information about support you may go to the website www.studyoflesbians.com.

If you need help because you are in an abusive relationship: National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1−800−799−SAFE(7233)** or **TTY 1−800−787−3224**

If you are feeling distressed after answering questions on this survey you may contact the hotline or seek help from a therapist in your area.

SAFETY ALERT!
Computer use can be monitored and is impossible to completely clear. If you are afraid your Internet and/or computer usage might be monitored, please use a safer computer, and/or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1−800−799−SAFE(7233)** or **TTY 1−800−787−3224.**

If you do not want the history of sites you have visited to be found on your computer, these are some steps you can take to delete your activity on the computer.

Computer Safety

Erasing your Internet "Footprints"

It is not possible to delete or clear all computer "footprints". An Abuser can discover your internet activities. Here are some information and guideline to reduce the chances that your internet use is traced.

Warning - Computers track Everything

Computers, browsers, and other software programs store history about what you have done, what documents you have used, what web sites you have visited, what images you have seen, and other activities.

All History is stored in your hard disk. Both your browser and computer keep tracks of your computer and Internet activity. It may be impossible to completely clear this stored information from your computer.

Abusers Monitor Computes

If you think your computer activities are being monitored, they probably are. Abusive people are often controlling and want to know your every move.

You don't need to be a computer programmer or have special skills to monitor someone's computer activities - anyone can do it and there are many ways to monitor your computer use.

Safe Computers

Use a safer computer that your abuser does not have direct access, or even remote (hacking) access to. Public library, at community center, at a friend's house, or an Internet Cafe are some locations that will be safer than your home.

Computers History

Browser history, forms AutoComplete, address bar history, search history (Yahoo search history, Google search history, etc), toolbar search history, index.dat files content, index.dat files, browser cache (Temporary Internet files), stored passwords, and cookies are files that store your history tracks.

Email

Email is a not secure or confidential means of communication. Changing your access passwords may help to keep an abuser from gaining access to your email. Calling Turning Point, the Crisis Line, or going in person are safer ways to get help.

Internet

Web Browser keeps copies of the Web pages that you visit. It is called caching and information is kept on your hard drive. You can access those settings to delete cached files. Web browser also tracks addresses of the Web pages that you've visited. You can manually clear different tracks of Internet activity in Internet Explorer, Netscape, Mozilla Firefox and Opera.

Additional Tip

When you clear the cache and the history list, you erase not only the information on where you've been, but any other information that had been previously stored there.

So, if your partner checks and sees that the cache and the history list have been completely emptied, she'll not only know that you know how to do this, but she might guess that you're trying to hide something.

One possible way to avoid suspicion is to clear the cache and history once you're done looking at information you don't want your partner to know about. After they're cleared, spend some time visiting sites that you think your partner wouldn't object to. This way, the cache and history list start to get filled up and your partner might be less likely to notice that old information is missing.

Clear web browser's cache

Browser Help Menu

The best place to get information about clearing your cache is in your Browsers help menu. Also you can search the Internet to find how to clear your cache.

After you have read these instructions and understand what to do, please close your Internet browser. Restart your browser and then follow the instructions to clear your cache making sure that you are not currently on the Turning Point web site.

Internet Explorer for Windows:

- · Open the Tools menu.

- · Select Internet Options.

- · Click Delete Temporary Internet Files.

Mozilla Firefox for Windows

- · From the Tools men, select Options.

- · In the Options window, select Privacy.

- · Next to Cache, click the Clear button, and then OK.

Netscape for Windows, Linux, and Macintosh:

- · Open the Edit menu.

- · Select Preferences.

- · Click on the + next to Advanced.

- · Select Cache.

- · Click Clear memory Cache.

- · Click Clear Disk Cache.

- · Click OK.

Microsoft Internet Explorer for Macintosh OS 8-9:

- · Choose Preferences from the Edit menu.

- · Choose Advanced from the Web browser heading on the left side.

- · In the Cache section, click the Empty Now button. Click OK to close the Preferences window.

- · Next, click the Go menu from the IE's menu bar and choose Open History.

- · Holding down the shift key, select each of the pages that pertain to Yahoo! from the current day's history.

- · Release the shift key and drag the selected items into the trash.

- · Close the History window and empty the trash.

Microsoft Internet Explorer for Macintosh OS X:

- · Choose Preferences from the Explorer menu

- · Choose Advanced from the Web browser heading on the left side.

- · In the Cache section, click the Empty Now button.

- · In the History section, click the Clear History button.

Mozilla Firefox 1.0 for Mac OS X:

- · From the Firefox menu, select Preferences.

▪ · From the sheet that drops down, select Privacy. Next to Cache, click the Clear button, and then OK.

More

Traditional "corded" phones are more private than cell phones or cordless phones.

Taking all of the actions on this page may not prevent an abuser from discovering your email and Internet activity.

For Your Safety

Erase Internet Footprints - prevent abusers finding where you visit online.

1-800-799-SAFE National Crisis Hotline

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Juris Doctor, The John Marshall Law School, Chicago, Illinois, 1981

Bachelor of Science, Special Education: Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Mac Murray College, *cum laude*, Jacksonville, Illinois, 1978

Experience

2003-Present, School Social Worker for Special Education Students, School Association for Special Education in DuPage County (SASED), Naperville, IL and LaGrange Area Department of Special Education (LADSE), LaGrange, IL

2011-Present, Reviewer, *School Social Work Journal*

2011-Present, Adjunct Faculty, Behavioral Sciences, College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL

2011-Present, Behavioral Science Division Advisory Board, College of DuPage, Glen Ellen, IL

2006-Present, Open & Affirming Committee-Bethel United Church of Christ, Elmhurst, IL

2003-Present, Leadership Council, Fundraising Committee, Consultant for Transgender Youth Playgroup with Youth Outlook (f/k/a Questioning Youth Center), Naperville, IL; provides services for LGBTQ youth in the western suburbs of Chicago.

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2001-2009 Sexual Assault Advocate, Child Assault Prevention Presenter, YWCA, Glen Ellyn, IL

2002 & 2003, Organizer and Moderator, Sexual and Gender Minority Symposium at Aurora University, Aurora, IL

1999-2003, Member and Vice President ('01-'03), GLOBAL-T (Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual and Allies & Transgender) at Aurora University, Aurora, IL

Publications

Hines, J. M. (2012), Using an Anti-oppressive Framework in Social Work Practice with Lesbians. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services, 24,* 23-39.

Hines, J.M. & Krieglstein, M. (2007). Center provides support for LGBTQ youth. *Social Work Networker*, *NASW, Illinois Chapter*. *45* (2), 11-12.

Presentations

April, 2014, *"*Internalized Heterosexism, Outness, Relationship Satisfaction, and Violence in Lesbian Relationships," UIC Lavender Research Forum, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.

February, 2013, "The Triple Jeopardy for Black Lesbians," Midwest Minority Health Conference, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.

October, 2011, "The CSWE and Social Workers Contribute to the Oppression of LGBTQ People," NASW Illinois Statewide Conference, Oak Brook, IL

April, 2012, "The 'Outing' of Battering in Lesbian Relationships," UIC Lavender Research Forum, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.

August, 2011, "Intentional Adoption of a Vision for a Community," Social Constructionism and Disabilities; Midwest Popular Culture Association & Midwest American Culture Association Annual Conference, Milwaukee, WI.

July, 2011, "Battering in Lesbian Relationships," National LGBTI Health Summit, Bloomington, IN.

April, 2010, "Using an Anti-oppressive Framework with Lesbians," UIC Lavender Research Forum, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL.

September 2007, with Maryann Krieglstein, PhD, and Darlene Lynch, PhD. "Questioning Youth Center: The Little Agency That Could", NASW-IL Social Work Symposium, Chicago, Illinois.

2006-2007 "Coping Mechanisms of Queer Youth," Questioning Youth Center, Naperville, IL; Rape Crisis Volunteers, YWCA, Glen Ellyn, IL

Honors

2nd place Award, UIC Lavender Research Forum, April 2014

UIC Chancellor's Committee on the Status of LGBT Issues, Graduate Award for Contribution to LGBT Research and Scholarship, 2010

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Professional Affiliations

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