

Abused and Non-abused College Females' Causal Attributions
to Verbally Abusive Partner Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Battered women who choose to remain with their abusive partners tend to blame themselves for the violence that occurs within their relationships. However, no empirical studies have systematically investigated the specific perceptions of battered women who stay in abusive relationships. Since self-blame may influence battered women's decision to stay or leave, a battered woman's assessment of her own behavior within conflict situations may be critical to understanding this process. The present study examined the differences between abused and non-abused women's cognitive attributions of their own behavior as well as their verbally abusive boyfriends' behavior in the context of hypothetical dating scenes. College age women (n=100) were presented with descriptions of dating situations involving conflict between a male and female. Half the women received scenes wherein the female's statement toward her boyfriend provoked anger (i.e., provocative condition). The other half of the women received scenes wherein the female's statement toward her boyfriend did not provoke anger (i.e., non-provocative). Other personality variables which have been shown to be related to the experience of abuse (i.e., self-esteem and feminine gender role beliefs) were additionally assessed in relation to attributional responses. Results suggested that abused women who were exposed to non-provocative

female statements were more inclined to blame themselves than were non-abused women who were exposed to non-provocative female statements. Few differences were found between abused and non-abused women who were exposed to provocative female statements. Low self-esteem was shown to be moderately related to attributions of self-blame. Implications of these findings were discussed with regard to abuse prevention and therapeutic intervention.

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Abused and Non-abused College Females' Causal Attributions to Verbally Abusive Partner Behavior

Statement of Problem

Since intimate violence is a far more prevalent and serious problem than originally thought (Cantrell, Ballard, Nasca, & Guthrie, 1986), research on the cause, continuation, and effect of relationship violence within both marital and courting relationships has grown considerably in recent years (see Dutton, 1995a; Feldman & Ridley, 1995, for review). Intimate violence between partners is estimated to occur annually in one out of every six married couples, with nearly one third of all married women reporting at least one incident of physical aggression during the course of their marriage (Straus & Gelles, 1986). National household survey data further indicate that over 1.5 million women are battered each year (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980; Straus & Gelles, 1986) while victimization studies, conducted by the National Crime Survey, estimate a substantially greater number (approximately 2.1 million). Such differences in prevalence rates are not uncommon, and accurate estimates of intimate violence are often compromised by victims' tendency to under-report violent incidents to legal authorities due to internalized shame, economic dependence, isolation, complications with children, fear of retaliation, etc. (see Miller & Wellford, 1996, for review).

Moreover, prevalence rates of dating violence appear to be similar to prevalence rates of marital violence (see

Miller & Wellford, 1996, for review), with approximately 33% of male students and 40% of female students perpetrating violence against their partners (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). Similar to married couples, young dating couples not only engage in physical assault against one another; they also frequently abuse one another emotionally and psychologically (Raymond & Bruschi, 1989). Further, research has also suggested that approximately one third of women in abusive dating relationships expect to marry their abusers (Lo & Sporakowski, 1989).

In recent years, intimate violence researchers have begun to examine female victim's cognitive interpretations (e.g., attributions, appraisals, expectations, etc.) of violent events within their relationships to better understand the psychological consequences of abuse as well as her reasons for remaining with an abusive partner (Andrews & Brewin, 1990; Herbert, Silver, & Ellard, 1991; Silver & Wortman, 1980; Strube, 1988). Because female victims of dating violence frequently report prolonged emotional disturbances (Riggs, 1993) and are three to four times more likely to experience physical injury as a result of violent conflict than their male partners (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989), studies illustrating how abused women interpret, respond, and cope with abuse in their relationships are important for prevention and intervention efforts.

The purpose of the present study was to compare abused and non-abused college females' cognitive attributions for verbally abusive boyfriend behavior utilizing hypothetical conflict situations. More specifically, this study examined the victim's perception of her own behavior within

verbally abusive situations as that perception is likely related to whom she ascribes blame and responsibility. In addition, developmental experiences and personality variables which may affect women's cognitive interpretations of her partner's abusive behavior, such as childhood exposure to violence, self-esteem, and feminine gender role stress, are explored as potential risk factors for protracted victimization.

Female risk factors

Numerous studies have illustrated various detrimental effects of parental violence on the health and psychological well-being of children (Carroll, 1977; Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl, & Toedter, 1983; Milner, Robertson, & Rodgers, 1990). Within the domestic abuse literature, family of origin violence (i.e., violence perpetrated by parents either against each other or toward their children) is thought to be "transmitted" to future generations through the child's social learning history (Bandura, 1973). Because parents are such powerful and influential models of behavior for their young children, this developmental theory of aggressive behavior asserts that children who witness abuse between their parents may attempt to use similar conflict tactics in their future relationships (Cantrell, MacIntyre, Sharkey, and Thompson, 1995). Moreover, violence within the childhood home also appears to communicate the appropriateness of physical aggression in "love" relationships (Kalmuss, 1984). Some studies have additionally suggested that childhood exposure to domestic violence make it more difficult for battered women to leave their abusive partners (see Overholser & Moll, 1990, for review).

Results from several nationally representative survey samples have indicated that males who observed aggressive acts between their parents were three times more likely to have assaulted their wives than those who had not (Straus, et al., 1980), and both males and females who observed hitting between their parents were twice as likely to engage in marital aggression as either the perpetrator or victim (Kalmuss, 1984). Furthermore, the combination of exposure to abuse in the family of origin, both witnessing interparental aggression and experiencing childhood abuse, dramatically increases the likelihood of marital aggression (approximately 12%) for both males and females in their later relationships (see Feldman & Ridley, 1995, for review). In fact, research has shown that approximately 20% to 30% of battered wives report exposure to violence within their childhood homes (see Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986, for review).

Similarly, some studies have illustrated that women with feelings of low self-esteem are more likely to become involved in an abusive relationships than are women with feelings of higher self-esteem (see Feldman & Ridley, 1995, for review). In general, however, feelings of low self-esteem have repeatedly been shown to be a consistent correlate of experiencing abuse, rather than a predictor of future victimization (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Dutton & Painter, 1993; Frisch & MacKenzie, 1991; Mitchell & Hodsen, 1983; Orava, Mcleod, & Sharpe, 1996; Tutty, Bidgood, & Rothery, 1993). In addition, it appears that self-esteem in abused women is likely related to the severity of the abuse as women who have experienced extremely violent episodes of spousal aggression often exhibit lower self-

esteem (Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Orava, et al., 1996). Moreover, verbal and emotional abuse, including verbal harassment and name-calling, have also been shown to foster significant deleterious effects on victims' mental health and self-esteem (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Follingstad et al., 1990). In fact, Follingstad and colleagues (1990) found that emotional abuse including ridicule (e.g., name-calling) was rated as the worst type of abuse among physically and emotionally abused women. Aguilar and Nightingale (1994) found that emotional/controlling abuse was also strongly related to feelings of low self-esteem. Such experiences with abuse are thought to cause many battered women to feel depressed, resulting in poorer coping skills (Mitchell & Hodsen, 1983; Orava, et al., 1996). Low self-esteem, as a consequence of repeated violent assault of either a physical or verbal nature, can negatively affect battered women's abilities to protect themselves against future incidents of abuse (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Orava et al., 1996; Tutty et al., 1993).

Kleinplatz, McCarrey, and Kateb (1992) demonstrated a relationship between low self-esteem and traditional feminine gender values in college age women. They assert that stereotypically "masculine" attributes foster a "strong, stable self-concept" rather than the "communally-oriented" traits and qualities found in traditionally "feminine" women (Kleinplatz et al., 1992). Further, some researchers have suggested that battered women, in particular, are more stereotypically "feminine" in their values and orientations than are nonbattered women (Barnett et al., 1980; Walker, 1978). It is thought that battered women adopt "traditional" sex role orientations, resulting

from abusive conflict, social isolation, and their husbands' use of power to control them (Tutty et al., 1993). According to Walker and Browne (1985), battered women are often encouraged to adapt and submit to their husbands' wishes or demands, producing their propensity to accept victimization as part of being female. Other researchers have suggested the additional possibility that abused women have a strong emotional and psychological need to maintain a love relationship (Bird, Stith, & Schladale, 1991). It is thought that these women identify with gender role ideals causing them to be more emotionally excitable and relationship dependent (Anson & Sagy, 1995; Burke et al., 1989; Ray & Gold, 1996). Further, "traditional" women often believe that it is their responsibility to maintain intimate relationships and make them run smoothly (Strube, 1988). Results of these various studies on traditional feminine gender role and experience of abuse suggest that strict adherence to the feminine gender role may produce certain beliefs about a woman's submissive role within an abusive relationship. These beliefs can be detrimental; they can produce feelings of low self-esteem and may affect a woman's decision to leave her abuser.

Female attributions for relationship violence

In recent years, researchers have studied female victims' attributional styles to better understand their reasons for remaining with their abusive partners (Andrews & Brewin, 1990; Herbert, Silver & Ellard, 1991; Katz, Arias, Beach, Brody, & Roman, 1995; Overholser & Moll, 1990; Shields & Hanneke, 1983). Attribution theory examines the victims' perceptions of responsibility and blame for abuse in order to better understand the

psychological consequences of abuse and the emotional dependence evidenced between battered women and their abusers. However, such empirical attempts have produced conflicting results. Some studies have illustrated a tendency for these women to blame themselves for the abuse (Hilberman, 1980; Walker, 1979), while others have demonstrated their tendency to blame their partners (Holtzworth-Munroe, Jacobsen, Fehrenbach, & Fruzzeti, 1992; Shields & Hanneke, 1983). Andrews and Brewin (1990) explained this apparent discrepancy in a study examining the differences between women who had stayed with their abusive partners and those who had left their abusive partners. These researchers discovered a shift in attributions of blame and responsibility once a battered woman left her abuser. In general, battered women who left their abusive relationships blamed their partners for the abuse whereas women who remained with their abusive partners blamed themselves (Andrews & Brewin, 1990; Herbert et al., 1991). These results supported previous research on marital distress which has suggested that the tendency to partner-blame is frequently associated with negative evaluations of the partner, disharmony and distress within the relationship, lower marital satisfaction, and an increased desire to leave the relationship (Fincham, Beach & Baucom, 1987; Fincham & Bradbury, 1987; Katz et al., 1995).

Battered women who remain with their abusive partners, on the other hand, have illustrated the tendency to attribute responsibility and blame for the abuse to themselves or to some environmental constraint affecting the behavior of their abuser (e.g., alcohol consumption)

(Barnett et al., 1996; see Overholser & Moll, 1990, for review). Researchers argue that such attributions allow battered women to excuse their partners' abusive behavior and perceive their relationships more positively (Herbert et al., 1991). Furthermore, self-blaming and partner-excusing attributions theoretically serve as coping strategies for dealing with the aftermath of abuse (Herbert et al., 1991; Strube, 1988). Chronically-abused women (i.e., women who have suffered repeated physical assault from many men across a variety of situations), in particular, are the most likely to attribute blame to themselves as a way of understanding why the violence re-occurs (Andrews & Brewin, 1990; Hilton, 1987; Silver & Wortmen, 1980). Similarly, women with a history of childhood abuse have also been shown to blame themselves for abuse in their adult relationships (Andrews & Brewin, 1990; Walker & Browne, 1985).

A self-blaming attributional style is consistent with the learned helplessness theory of depression (Seligman, 1975) which suggests that battered women develop feelings of low self-esteem (Peterson & Seligman, 1983), dependency (Bowen, 1982), and hopelessness in response to repeated physical assault. Thus, women who internalize blame and responsibility for abuse risk suffering from low self-esteem and depression, resulting in learned helplessness and ineffective coping responses. Most importantly, these psychological consequences of abuse, namely feelings of low self-esteem, depression, and learned helplessness, can inhibit and/or prevent many battered women from leaving their abusers permanently.

Unfortunately, each of these studies on female attributions of partner violence could be confounded by another, possibly important, factor. None of these studies have specifically examined whether battered women attribute blame to themselves because of their negative perception of their own behavior during an abusive event. It is possible that battered women's perceptions of their own behavior toward their abusive partners affect how they perceive the abuse and to whom they attribute blame and responsibility. Perhaps women who perceive their own behavior as "provoking anger" in their partners believe that they deserve blame and responsibility for the abuse they experience.

Further, most studies on female victims' attributions of abuse have examined attributions retrospectively (e.g., Anderws & Brewin, 1990; Barnett et al., 1996; Herbert et al., 1991, etc.). Recollections of violent situations are likely subject to memory distortion. Moreover, research has illustrated how attributions can change dramatically over time (e.g., Andrews & Brewin, 1990). For these reasons, the present study looked to research literature on male attributions to relationship conflict for possible improvements and/or solutions to these problems.

Research on male batterers has examined violent and nonviolent male attributions for abusive exchanges within hypothetical situation vignettes. These studies have focused on "specific situations, rather than general attributional style, because a man's attributions in a particular situation should be related to his responses in that situation (Holzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993). For this reason, general attributional style was not examined in this study. Thus, the following section will briefly

discuss current research within this paradigm and will explain its applicability to research examining female victim attributions.

Male attributions for relationship violence

The empirical examination of abusive males' causal and responsibility attributions for intimate conflict situations within their relationships (Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993) is a relatively new theoretical perspective within the intimate partner violence literature. Cognitive models (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1969) emphasize the importance of attributions in the context of conflictual interactions between violent males and their partners (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1992; Overholser & Moll, 1990; Sheilds & Hanneke, 1983) as attributions determine the "meanings" violent men ascribe to experiences. Moreover, attitudes, cognitions, attributions, and faulty beliefs are thought to mediate emotional stress, anger arousal, and behavioral responses of violent men toward their partners within conflict situations (Cohn & Sugarman, 1982; Dutton & Browning, 1988). For example, violent men are more tolerant of physical expressions of aggression, maintain distorted reasoning in explaining their use of violence, and believe in their partners' intention to hurt, harm, or "make them mad" to justify their use of violence (see Feldman & Ridley, 1995, for review).

Recent studies have explored "responsibility" attributions (i.e., attributions of intent, motivation, and blame) of abusive men to partner behavior. Responsibility attributions are measured by accountability for a negative event (i.e., who is to blame) and/or acceptability of the

outcome (i.e., violent behavior). Violent males' attributions of intent and motivation illustrate whether they believe that their female partners behaved in a way that was intended to produce a negative impact (Camper, et al., 1988) and/or whether she behaved that way for selfish reasons. Holtzworth-Munroe and Hutchinson (1993) showed that physically abusive males interpret their female partner's behavior as selfishly motivated, maliciously intended to harm, and deserving of blame more than do non-abusive men.

In their 1993 study, Holtzworth-Munroe and Hutchinson played audio-taped vignettes of conflicted marital situations to violent, maritally-distressed, and non-violent, non-distressed men. Participants were asked to imagine themselves within the scenes and rate their agreement or disagreement to responsibility and blame questions that followed. Nine vignettes were used in this study; the vignettes varied according to the "negativity" of the woman's behavior (e.g., behavior designed to arouse jealousy or feelings of abandonment in the man). By examining how abusive and non-abusive men perceived their partners' behavior, these researchers were able to discern at least some of the cognitive processes that may explain why abusive men become violent. Holtzworth-Munroe and colleagues accomplished this by examining attributional differences among married men to hypothetical scenes.

Rationale

Previous research has examined factors influencing battered women's attributions for violent events as they affect their decisions to remain in or leave their abusive relationships. In the past, studies have shown that women

who perceive their relationships more favorably by attributing blame and responsibility for the abusive event to themselves, remain with their abusers more often than women who don't. In addition, women who evidence feelings of low self-esteem and traditional feminine gender role beliefs seem to experience greater difficulty leaving their abusive partners than do women with higher self-esteem and fewer traditional gender role beliefs.

Previous studies, however, have not examined whether a battered woman's perception of her own behavior affects to whom she attributes responsibility and blame for an abusive event. Her perception of her own behavior may further explain why battered women blame themselves for their partners' abuse. In addition, no studies to date have specifically examined battered women's "in the moment" attributions for violent events. As research with battered women has shown that attributions change dramatically over time depending on a woman's relationship status (e.g., Andrews & Brewin, 1990), it is likely that battered women's "in the moment" attributions for abuse could be very different from their retrospective reports.

Thus, the present study examined the ways in which a woman's history of abuse affects how she perceives her abuser and their relationship. Specifically, measurements of prior and current abuse were examined in relation to participants' attribution ratings of blame and responsibility. This study also examined whether a woman's perception of her own "provocative" behavior affects to whom she attributes blame and responsibility for an abusive event. To accomplish these goals, hypothetical vignettes were created to illustrate female provocative and female

non-provocative behavior in the context of interpartner conflict situations. Provocative behavior in this study was operationally defined as behavior that has a high probability of arousing anger in a boyfriend. Situations depicting provocative female behavior were hypothesized to produce stronger feelings of self-blame and responsibility, particularly in abused women, due to her greater contribution to the conflict situation. Situations depicting non-provocative female behavior were used as controls.

The vignettes used in this study were adopted from previous research examining the attributions of college-age men to female partner behavior (Moore, Eisler, & Franchina, in press). These particular scenes were used because they have been shown to elicit greater negative attributions in verbally abusive men and may therefore elicit stronger feelings of responsibility and blame in abused women.

Finally, this study examined attributions of college-age women to verbally-abusive boyfriend behavior. In studying younger women and less severe forms of violence, more may be learned about the contribution of attributions to the etiology and development of abusive relationships.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Provocative female statements will elicit greater feelings of responsibility for the conflict situation from all women. Women who were exposed to provocative female statements will be more likely to attribute blame for the event to themselves, attribute less responsibility and negative intent to their partners, excuse their partners' behavior, perceive their partners' behavior more positively, and wish to remain in the

relationship more than women who were exposed to neutral female statements.

Hypothesis 2: Irrespective of female provocation, women who have experienced a combination of prior and current abuse (i.e., chronically abused) will be more likely to attribute less responsibility and negative intent to their partners' behavior, blame themselves, excuse their partners' behavior, perceive their partners' behavior positively, and wish to remain in the relationship more than women who have never experienced abuse.

Hypothesis 3: Feelings of low self-esteem will be differentially related to attributions for the abusive event. For example, low self-esteem will be inversely related to attributions of self-blame, exculpatory attributions, and positive attributions for partners. Conversely, low self-esteem will be positively correlated with the tendency to attribute less blame, responsibility and negative intent to the abusive male partner.

Hypothesis 4: Traditional feminine gender role beliefs and expectations will be differentially related to attributions for the abusive event. For example, traditional feminine gender role beliefs and expectations will be positively correlated with attributions of self-blame, exculpatory attributions, and positive attributions for partners. Conversely, traditional feminine gender role beliefs and expectations will be inversely related to the tendency to attribute blame, responsibility and negative intent to the abusive male partner.

Hypothesis 5: Traditional feminine gender role beliefs and expectations will be inversely related to self-esteem, such that more traditional feminine gender role beliefs and

expectations will be associated with feelings of lower self-esteem.

Method

Design

The design of this experiment was a 2 (high vs. low abuse history) X 2 (provocative female statement vs. neutral female statement) factorial design.

Participants

Two hundred ninety-four undergraduate college females were recruited through the Psychology department subject pool at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Participation was voluntary, and each participant received course credit for her involvement. To qualify for participation, subjects were required to have been in a committed, heterosexual relationship for at least three months. The academic class levels that participated in the project were Freshmen = 33.7%, Sophomore = 33.7%, Junior = 22.1%, and Senior = 9.9%. The majority of participants were Caucasian (86.1%), single (98.3%), and currently dating (77.2%). Religious denominations of participants were Catholic = 36.4%, Protestant = 45.2%, Jewish = 0.7%, Muslim = 0.3%, and other = 15.6%.

Measures

Dispositional Questionnaires The Revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2), (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) is a 78-item inventory which measures the extent to which partners in a dating, cohabiting, or marital relationship engage in psychological and physical attacks on each other and whether they use negotiation strategies to deal with those conflicts. This version includes new items measuring partners' use of negotiation,

sexual coercion, and injury to self/partner as well as modified items measuring psychological and physical aggression. The internal consistency reliability of the CTS2 scales ranges from .79 to .95 (Straus, et al, 1996), and there also appears to be preliminary evidence of construct and discriminate validity. The CTS2 is conceptually and methodologically the same as the original CTS (Straus, 1990), but constitutes a more comprehensive inventory with similar evidence for psychometric soundness. For the present study, the CTS2 was modified to include items that measure abuse inflicted on the subject. Responses were divided into five categories of conflict resolution, namely, reasoning (e.g., my boyfriend explained his side of a disagreement to me), psychological aggression (e.g., my boyfriend called me fat or ugly), sexual coercion (e.g., my boyfriend insisted on sex when I did not want to), injury (e.g., I had a broken bone from a fight with my boyfriend), and physical assault (e.g., my boyfriend kicked me). CTS2 responses to each of these questions ranged from 0 (never) to 7 (not in the past year, but it did happen before). Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this administration of the CTS2 was .81.

Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS-DA) for Father-Mother Conflict Resolution) and (CTS-CA) for Conflict with Parents are two separate 15-item inventories designed to measure reasoning, verbal aggression, and physically violent tactics used in conflict situations between family members. Each instrument contains the same 15 items; however, the Father-Mother Conflict Resolution inventory specifically addresses conflict between parents while the Conflict with Parents inventory addresses parent-child conflict.

Reliability and validity of the original CTS is well-established (Straus, 1979); the CTS remains one of the most widely used instruments in the field of family violence. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for this administration of the CTS-DA and CTS-CA were .83 and .87, respectively.

The Feminine Gender Role Stress Scale (FGRS) was developed to measure empirically the cognitive tendency among women to appraise certain situations as highly stressful due to traditionally feminine gender role beliefs (Gillespie & Eisler, 1992). This measure assesses "potential stressors that are particularly salient for women both as a result of personal agendas consistent with feminine gender role socialization and environmental contingencies that reinforce those agendas" (Gillespie & Eisler, 1992). Theoretically, higher scores on this measure are related to certain types of psychopathology. Higher scores have been shown to be consistent with depression and eating disorders in women (Martz, Handley, & Eisler, 1995; Gillespie & Eisler, 1992). This 39-item inventory is divided into five factors, namely, Fear of Unemotional relationships, Fear of Physical Unattractiveness, Fear of Victimization, Fear of Behaving Assertively, and Fear of Not Being Nurturant. Responses to items on each scale range from 0 (not stressful) to 5 (extremely stressful). Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each of five factors are: .83, .81, .77, .80, and .73, respectively. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this administration of the total FGRS scale was .89.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979) is a widely used 10-item self-report measure of self-esteem with good reliability and validity. Subjects rate their

feelings on a scale from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 4 (Strongly Disagree) to items such as "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself." Scores may range from 10 to 40 with higher scores indicating feelings of higher self-esteem. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this administration was .60.

Attribution Questionnaires The Responsibility Attribution Questionnaire (RAQ) is a 4-item questionnaire used in previous research to assess attributions of responsibility to hypothetical situation vignettes (Fincham & Bradbury, 1992; Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993). Participants use a 6-point scale to rate how much they agree or disagree with a statement that their dating partner behaved with negative intent, acted with selfish motivation, and/or deserved blame for his abusive behavior. Lower scores indicate more disagreement. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this administration of the RAQ was .78.

The Negative Intentions Questionnaire (NIQ) is a 5-item inventory used in research assessing specific responsibility attributions of negative intent to hypothetical situation vignettes (Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993). Participants use a 6-point scale to rate how much they agree or disagree with the statement that their dating partner behaved with negative and/or selfish intentions. Lower scores indicate more disagreement. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this administration of the NIQ was .83.

Additional attribution questions were created for this study. These questions were similar to those of previous studies on battered women. These questions addressed how abused women typically perceive their partners' abusive

behaviors. For example, studies have reported that abused women tend to blame themselves for conflict, excuse their partner's abusive behavior, and perceive their partners' behavior more positively than do non-abused women (Andrews & Brewin, 1990). For this reason, a scale assessing whether women attribute positive qualities to their boyfriend's abusive behavior was developed. This scale, named the Positive Attribution Questionnaire (PAQ), included items such as "My boyfriend was trying to help me out." Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this administration of the PAQ was .84. Other examples of individual attributions questions were, "I deserve to be blamed for what happened" and "He couldn't help himself for acting this way." Further, several studies have shown that self-blaming attributions are often related to the ultimate decision of whether to stay or leave the relationship (Andrews & Brewin, 1990; etc.). Thus, a final question about the woman's intention to return to or leave the abusive partner based on the situation was added.

Hypothetical Dating Vignettes. The present study employed 12 hypothetical vignettes which described dating situations. Half the vignettes contained verbally provocative female statements while the other half contained non-provocative female statements. To determine whether female statements were objectively non-provocative or provocative, participants were required to rate their "provocativeness" (based on the operational definition provided earlier) on a seven point scale for each of the scenes. The mean rating for the non-provocative vignettes was 2.17, and the mean rating for the provocative vignettes was 3.31. Comparison of the mean ratings showed reliable

differences between non-provocative and provocative female statements, $t(293) = -11.58$, $p < .001$.

All 12 scenes contained the same verbally abusive male response to the female's statement. For example, in a vignette about sitting down to the dinner table, a non-provocative female said to her boyfriend, "We haven't had much time to talk this week. Can we talk now?" In the same dinner situation, however, a provocative female shouted, "You've been ignoring me all week. I have some things I want to discuss with you!" In each vignette, provocative and neutral female statements are always followed by a verbally abusive response from the boyfriend. For example, in the dinner scene, the boyfriend response to the female was, "What's wrong now? I don't want to hear about anymore of your problems!" These vignettes were modified from previous research on attributions in violent and nonviolent marriages (Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993) and dating relationships (Moore et al., in press).

Finally, a demographic questionnaire assessed participants' age, academic level, marital status, family background, and intimate relationship history.

Procedures

Female participants were surveyed in groups of 20 to 25. Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form and were given a brief summary of the study's purpose. They were told that this study was designed to investigate women's perceptions of heterosexual dating relationships. After informed consent was obtained, a female experimenter randomly distributed attribution questions, dispositional measures, and vignettes which contained provocative female statements to half the group. To the other half, she

distributed attribution questions, dispositional measures, and vignettes which contained non-provocative female statements. She then explained how to complete the questionnaires. Participants were specifically instructed to answer questions about each scene as though the scene described really happened to them. Participants were also instructed not to speak to one another during the experiment to avoid subject interaction effects. After participants completed attribution questions on all six vignettes, they were told to read the instructions at the top of each dispositional measure and respond accordingly. Participants completed in order, the demographics questionnaire, the CTS2, the CTS Father-Mother and Parent-Child scales, the FGRS scale, and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale. After the packets were completed and collected, participants were debriefed, provided with referrals, and thanked for their cooperation. Experimenters stored packets in a locked cabinet to ensure anonymity.

Results

Descriptive Measures

Frequency distribution scores and descriptive statistics illustrated a positively skewed distribution on measures of abuse. Due to limited variability on measures of abuse, statistical analyses were performed on extreme groups at either end of the distribution. Fifty high abused women who completed questionnaires containing either non-provocative female statements or provocative female statements were identified ($M=83.78$, $SD=44.30$). Similarly, 50 low abused women were identified ($M=4.75$, $SD=1.97$). Thus, 25 women comprising each of the four experimental conditions (i.e., hi abuse/provocative, low

abuse/provocative, hi abuse/non-provocative, low abuse/non-provocative) were examined for a total of 100 subjects. The remaining 194 participants were eliminated from the analyses. The academic class levels of the 100 subjects were Freshmen = 32%, Sophomore = 37%, Junior = 20%, and Senior = 11%. The majority of participants were Caucasian (84%), single (98%), and currently dating (75%). Religious denominations of participants were Catholic = 42%, Protestant = 39%, Jewish = 0%, Muslim = 1%, and other = 17%. Further, High Abused women were not more likely to currently be involved in a relationship than were Low Abused women, $t(98) = -1.62, ns$.

Bivariate correlations were obtained for participants' scores on the CTS2, CTS-DA, CTS-CA, FGRS, and RSE. Results showed statistically significant positive correlations among abuse measures and lower but statistically significant negative correlations for the measures of abuse and self-esteem (see Table 1). No relationships were found between the measure of gender role stress (FGRS) and any other measure.

Attribution Composite Scores (NIQ, RAQ, and PAQ)

The means for the NIQ, RAQ, and PAQ were compared using ANOVA with group (High Abused, Low Abused) and statement (Provocative, Non-provocative) as the between subject factors. Table 2 illustrates mean attribution ratings for the NIQ, RAQ, and PAQ for abuse history (Low Abused vs. High Abused) and female statement (Provocative vs. Non-provocative). Results of the ANOVA showed no main effects for group, statement, or the group X statement interaction on NIQ data. Results of the ANOVA showed no main effects for group or the group X statement interaction

on RAQ data. However, ANOVA of the RAQ data showed that women who were exposed to provocative female statements reported reliably fewer responsibility attributions to verbally abusive boyfriend behavior than did women who were exposed to non-provocative female statements, $F(1, 99) = 8.97, p < .01$. ANOVA of the PAQ data yielded a reliable interaction for female statement and abuse history, $F(1, 99) = 6.78, p < .01$. Simple effect analyses demonstrated that High Abused women, exposed to non-provocative statements, endorsed more positive attributions for their boyfriends' abusive behavior than did Low Abused women, $t(48) = -2.76, p < .01$. No reliable attribution differences were found for women who were exposed to provocative female statements. Simple effect analyses also demonstrated that Low Abused women, exposed to provocative female statements, endorsed more positive attributions for their boyfriends' behavior than did Low Abused women, exposed to non-provocative female statements, $t(48) = -3.87, p < .001$. No reliable attribution differences were found for High Abused women.

Individual Attribution Items

The means for individual attribution items were compared using ANOVA with group (High Abused, Low Abused) and statement (Provocative, Non-provocative) as the between subject factors. Table 3 illustrates mean attribution ratings for the individual attribution items for abuse history (Low Abused vs. High Abused) and female statement (Provocative vs. Non-provocative).

Results of the ANOVA showed no main effects for group or the group X statement interaction on exculpatory data. However, ANOVA of the exculpatory data showed that women

who were exposed to provocative female statements reported reliably greater exculpatory attributions to verbally abusive boyfriend behavior than did women who were exposed to non-provocative female statements, $F(1, 99) = 7.67, p < .01$.

Results of the ANOVA showed no main effects for group or the group X statement interaction on "feeling bad" data. However, ANOVA of the "feeling bad" data showed that women, exposed to provocative female statements, reported reliably fewer "feeling bad" attributions for verbally abusive boyfriend behavior than did women, exposed to non-provocative female statements, $F(1, 99) = 5.33, p < .05$.

Results of the ANOVA showed no main effects for statement or the group X statement interaction on the "ending the relationship" data. However, ANOVA of the "ending the relationship" data showed that High Abused women reported fewer inclinations to leave their relationships based on the content of the scene than did Low Abused women, $F(1, 99) = 11.91, p < .001$.

ANOVA of the self-blame data yielded a reliable interaction for female statement and abuse history, $F(1, 99) = 4.00, p < .05$. Simple effect analyses revealed that High Abused women, exposed to non-provocative statements, were more likely to blame themselves than were Low Abused women, $t(48) = -3.00, p < .01$. No differences were found between High and Low Abused women who were exposed to provocative female statements on measures of self-blame. Simple effect analyses also revealed that Low Abused women, exposed to provocative statements, were more likely to blame themselves than were Low Abused women, exposed to non-provocative statements, $t(48) = -4.95, p < .001$. No

differences were found for High Abused women who were exposed to either provocative or non-provocative female statements on measures of self-blame.

ANOVA of the "provoking anger" data yielded a reliable interaction for female statement and abuse history, $F(1, 99) = 3.96$, $p < .05$. Simple effect analyses revealed that High Abused women, exposed to non-provocative statements, were more likely to perceive themselves as provoking anger in their boyfriends than were Low Abused women, $t(48) = -4.63$, $p < .001$. No differences were found between High and Low Abused women who were exposed to provocative female statements on measures of provoking anger. Simple effect analyses also revealed that Low Abused women, exposed to provocative statements, were more likely to perceive themselves as provoking anger in their boyfriends than were Low Abused women, exposed to non-provocative statements, $t(48) = -6.76$, $p < .001$. High Abused women, exposed to provocative statements, were also more likely to perceive themselves as provoking anger in their boyfriends than were High Abused women, exposed to non-provocative statements, $t(48) = -2.34$, $p < .05$.

Effect Size Analyses

Due to the relatively small number of subjects per experimental cell, effect size analyses were performed to determine the degree to which the phenomenon is present in the population (Cohen, 1988). Effect sizes were computed by subtracting the higher mean from the lower mean and dividing that number by the average standard deviation. Cohen's (1988) criteria were used to determine the relative size of each effect (e.g., small = 0-.3, medium = .3-.7, large = .7 and higher).

Large effect sizes were found for the PAQ (.77), self-blame question (.87), provoking anger question (1.36), and the decision to end the relationship question (.95) for the non-provocative female statement condition only (see Table 4). This finding suggests that attributional differences between high and low abused women are most profound in non-provocative situations. Similarly, a medium sized effect was shown for the question assessing female's willingness to excuse her boyfriend's abusive behavior (.64) in the non-provocative condition. Post-hoc t-tests revealed that High Abused women, exposed to the non-provocative female statements, excused their boyfriends' behavior more than did Low Abused women, exposed to non-provocative female statements, $t(48) = -2.27, p < .05$.

Several other medium effect sizes were demonstrated by the effect size analysis. In the provocative condition, for example, medium sized-effects were found for the provoking anger question (.45), the feeling bad question (.41), and the decision to end the relationship question (.51). High Abused women believed that they provoked their boyfriend's anger more, their boyfriends were not trying to make them feel bad, and were less inclined to leave their boyfriends than were Low Abused women, in the provocative condition.

All other effect sizes proved to be quite small, especially those for the NIQ and RAQ. These results are contrary to hypotheses.

Correlation Analyses

To answer hypotheses three and four, bivariate correlations were conducted between measures of self-esteem and gender role stress on attribution composite scores and

individual attribution items. Separate correlations were conducted for non-provocative versus provocative female statements on each attribution measure (see Table 5). As predicted, reliable inverse relationships were found between self esteem and the PAQ ($r = -.38$), the self-blame item ($r = -.46$), provoking anger item ($r = -.42$), and the excusing his behavior item ($r = -.46$) for non-provocative female statements. These results suggest that women who exhibit low self-esteem are more inclined to attribute positive qualities to their boyfriends, blame themselves for an abusive exchange, believe that they provoked their boyfriends' anger, and excuse their boyfriends' abusive behavior. Reliable positive correlations were also found for the feeling bad item ($r = .32$), the feeling controlled item ($r = .45$), and the ending the relationship item ($r = .27$). Women who exhibit lower self esteem seem to be less inclined to feel as though their boyfriends' are trying to make them feel bad or are controlling them. Low self esteem women are also less inclined to leave the relationship. Unfortunately, no strong associations were found for the NIQ or RAQ and self-esteem. Further, no relationship was found for measures of self esteem and the FGRS.

In contrast, few reliable relationships were found for attributions and gender role stress (FGRS). Contrary to hypotheses, the RAQ composite score was positively associated with FGRS ($r = .42$), meaning that higher FGRS women were more likely to attribute responsibility to their boyfriends than were low FGRS women. Higher FGRS women were also less likely to attribute positive qualities to their boyfriends ($r = -.33$).

Discussion

The present study investigated the effects of abuse experience and female "provocation" on college women's attributions about their own behavior in conflictual situations with their boyfriends as well as their boyfriends' verbally abusive behavior toward them. The main contentions of this study were that women who had experienced abuse or women who were exposed to provocative female statement vignettes would attribute more blame to themselves, less responsibility and intent to their partners, excuse their partners' behavior more, perceive their partners' behavior more positively, and be less inclined to leave their relationships than would women who had not experienced abuse or were exposed to non-provocative female statement vignettes. Findings generally supported both of these hypotheses with some important exceptions.

Results illustrated moderate support for this study's first hypothesis which stated that all women would blame themselves more for abuse when they were exposed to provocative female statements. Women who were exposed to provocative female statement vignettes were more likely to blame themselves, excuse their partners' behavior, perceive their partners' behavior positively, and feel bad as a result of their partners' behavior than were women who were exposed to non-provocative female statement vignettes. Moreover, women who were exposed to provocative female statements also attributed less responsibility to their partners for their abusive behavior than did women who were exposed to non-provocative female statements. Thus, when women, irrespective of their abuse history, believe that

their behavior provoked anger in their partners, they will feel more responsible and more to blame for their partners' abusive behavior than when they believe their behavior is not provoking anger. This contention is somewhat consistent with prior research on female to male violence (Barnett et al., 1996). These researchers suggested that battered women may not blame themselves for self-protective physical violence as much as they blame themselves for nonphysical behaviors (e.g., swearing at partner).

It is interesting to note, however, that exposure to provocative female statements did not differentially affect attributions of negative intent. Both women exposed to non-provocative female statements and provocative female statements attributed approximately equal amounts of negative intent to their partners' behavior. In general, women tended to "agree somewhat" with the questions contained in the NIQ, suggesting that they believed their partners' behavior was intentional, deliberate, and negative. This finding is consistent with research on marital distress (see Overholser & Moll, 1990, for review), and is thought to maintain the distress and dissatisfaction of both partners in the relationship.

Results also illustrated moderate support for the second hypothesis which stated that High Abused women would blame themselves more for abuse than would Low Abused women. High Abused women were more likely to blame themselves, excuse their partners' behavior, perceive their partners' behavior positively, and indicate a stronger desire to maintain their relationships than were Low Abused women. These findings support prior attribution studies which have reported higher rates of self-blame, exculpatory

attributions (Andrews & Brewin, 1990, Barnett et al., 1996; Overholser & Moll, 1990) and positive relationship appraisal (Herbert et al., 1991) among battered women. Possible explanations for abused women's self-deprecating, relationship-enhancing attributions may be that such cognitions are "passive" coping responses to the experience of abuse, or are the result of their partners' and society's victim-blaming propensity (Barnett et al., 1996). Furthermore, these kinds of attributions have also been shown to be related to an abused woman's decision to remain with or leave her abusive partner (Andrews & Brewin, 1990). The present study assessed the relationship between a woman's history of abuse and this decision. This was accomplished in the context of the hypothetical scenes. High Abused women were much more likely to indicate that they would be inclined to stay with their verbally abusive boyfriends (as depicted in the scenes) than were Low Abused women.

Contrary to expectations, however, there were no differences with regard to attributions of partner responsibility and negative intent between High Abused and Low Abused women. Both groups were equally likely to attribute responsibility and negative intent to their partners' behavior. Perhaps one explanation for these contradictory findings is that studies have differentially operationalized and measured self-blame and partner-blame attributions (Barnett et al., 1996). Some studies have examined general attributional style while others have specifically examined self-blame for violence. One study even measured many possible reasons why battered women might be more inclined to blame themselves (e.g., you were

too moody, etc.) (Barnett et al., 1996). Clearly, these differences in operationalization and measurement of blaming attributions may account for this study's different findings.

Another possible explanation relates to the methodology used in this particular study. Women were asked to report their "in the moment" attributions for abusive events, rather than their attributions for past events. It may be that all women's "in the moment" attributions for abusive partner behavior tend to be more partner-blaming than self-blaming. Over time, however, abused women who remain with their abusive partners may begin to attribute blame and responsibility to themselves as a means of coping with the aftereffects of abuse. Moreover, self-blaming attributions may theoretically alleviate abused women's cognitive dissonance regarding their decision to remain with their abusive partners. Certainly, this interpretation is consistent with prior research which has shown that battered women's attributions for abusive events frequently change over time and often reflect battered women's relationship status (Andrews & Brewin, 1990).

Further, "in the moment" attributions may be as important to study as recollective attributions because they might better predict abused women's behavioral responses to the abusive event. Following McFall's (1982) social information-processing model of cognition and behavior, he theorized that the processing of social information (i.e., attributions) directly influences behavioral responses. If McFall's theory is accurate, then partner-blaming attributions might possibly lead to

behavioral retaliation from the woman, leading to an escalation of the abusive situation.

Perhaps one of the most interesting and unexpected findings of the present study was that High Abused and Low Abused women's mean attribution ratings were most different when they were exposed to non-provocative female statements. High Abused women who were exposed to non-provocative female statements were much more inclined to blame themselves, feel as though they provoked anger, and excuse their boyfriend's abusive behavior than were Low Abused women. In scenes where High and Low Abused women were "provoking anger," however, no significant differences were found in mean attribution ratings. Thus, it appears that abused women, in general, may blame themselves equally for their partners' abusive behavior, irrespective of their own behavior, in an abusive conflict. Further, this finding would seem to support the contention that abused women do not necessarily perceive their own behavior as "neutrally" as do non-abused women.

Results of this study also provide moderate support for hypothesis three which stated that self-esteem would be related to attributions. Feelings of low self-esteem were moderately related to attributing more positive regard to boyfriends, more self-blame, provoking anger more, excusing their boyfriends' abusive behavior, and feeling less controlled by their boyfriends. These findings suggest that women who have feelings of low self-esteem are more inclined to perceive themselves as responsible and blameworthy for the abuse they experience. Because feelings of low self-esteem tend to be correlated strongly with the experience of abuse for most women, this finding

further supports the contention that a history of abuse and feelings of low self-esteem place women at greater risk for protracted victimization. Low self-esteem, like abuse history, was not significantly related to women's negative perceptions of their partner's behavior (i.e., NIQ and RAQ).

Results of this study provided no support for hypothesis four which stated that FGRS would be related to attributions. High levels of feminine gender role stress were not related to individual attribution scores and only moderately related to the RAQ and PAQ. However, the direction of the relationships between the RAQ and PAQ with FGRS were diametrically opposed to initial predictions. Women who scored high on the FGRS measure were more likely to attribute responsibility and blame to their boyfriends and less likely to attribute positive regard to their boyfriends than were women who scored low on the FGRS. One possible reason why the FGRS measure did not produce expected results could be that the FGRS does not measure the same construct of feminine gender role as has been measured in previous studies. Prior studies have used measures of traditionally female personality qualities (Kleinplatz et al., 1992), attitudes toward women (Frisch & MacKenzie, 1991), women's emotional dependency (Anson & Sagy, 1995), traditional attitudes toward marriage (Tutty et al., 1993), and hyperfeminine behavior in relationships (Ray & Gold, 1996). Moreover, the FGRS has not been validated against any of these or other measures of feminine gender role identity and attitudes. For these reasons, it is understandable why the FGRS, a conceptually

different measure of feminine gender role, may not have been the most appropriate scale for this particular study.

Results of this study additionally suggest that self-blaming and exculpatory attributions are problematic for college-age women in the dating stages of abusive relationships. This finding is particularly noteworthy because this sample of college women did not report experiencing the severity of abuse (particularly physical abuse) that most battered women frequently report. Moreover, this sample of college-age women likely has more opportunities for receiving support from friends and family than do most battered women. In that Barnett and colleagues (1996) found that self-blaming attributions are effectively reduced with social support, college-age women by definition may be better protected from the experiences and aftereffects of abuse that most battered women encounter. While results showed that abused college women are susceptible to feelings of self-blame, they may not be as vulnerable as battered women who are married, less educated, isolated from friends and family, and have suffered from more severe forms of abuse. The use of a non-clinical sample of abused women is one limitation of the design and outcome of this study.

Related to the above, results from measures of abuse illustrated a positively skewed distribution of abuse experience scores for this sample of college women. There are several possible interpretations of this limitation. First, it may be that our college sample, a highly selective sample of women who volunteered participation for extra credit in their psychology courses, experienced less abuse than most other college samples in studies on dating

violence. Conversely, it may be that the women who participated in this study underreported their true experiences with abuse. Underreporting abuse is often a concern in studies on violent behavior in relationships. Nonetheless, the skewed distribution of abuse scores affected data analysis, and as a result, nearly two-thirds of subjects who completed questionnaires were dropped from later analyses.

Another limitation of this study resulted from the dearth of research on "in the moment" attributions for violent events and the varying operationalizations of self-blame used in prior studies. Future research should address these issues and develop a more comprehensive inventory of questions designed to examine the woman's perceptions of her own behavior. Single-item questions, as were used in this study, may not accurately reflect the complexity of attributions for violent behavior. Moreover, the use of the NIQ and RAQ may not be particularly useful in studying women's perceptions of abusive relationships. Perhaps blaming questions allowing women to choose between partner-blame and self-blame would better assess their attributions of blame than the questionnaires used in this study. Further, results showed small differences in women's ratings of provocative versus nonprovocative scenes. Future studies should carefully examine and choose scenes that elicit higher ratings of "provocativeness" from women. In addition, future studies might consider the use of a different measure of feminine gender role. In general, future studies should address these various design and measurement concerns. Further, longitudinal research

should be conducted to determine whether abused women's "in the moment" attributions change over time.

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Table 1. Bivariate Correlations for Scores Obtained on the CTS2, CTS-DA, CTS-CA, FGRS, and RSE.

	CTS2	CTS-DA	CTS-CA	FGRS	RSE
CTS2	1.00	.4643***	.4693***	.1233	-.2823**
CTS-DA		1.00	.6460***	.0060	-.2174*
CTS-CA			1.00	-.0023	-.2386*
FGRS				1.00	-.0726
RSE					1.00

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 2. Composite Attribution Means and Standard Deviations for High and Low Abused Women exposed to Non-provocative and Provocative Female Statements.

	High Abused		Low Abused	
Attribution	M	(SD)	M	(SD)
NIQ				
Non-provocative	3.85	(.67)	3.94	(.79)
Provocative	3.62	(.71)	3.79	(.79)
RAQ				
Non-provocative	4.35	(.58)	4.31	(.52)
Provocative	3.94	(.60)	4.07	(.50)
PAQ				
Non-provocative	1.84	(.59)	1.45	(.42)
Provocative	1.86	(.50)	2.03	(.63)

n = 100

Table 3. Individual Attribution Means and Standard Deviations for High and Low Abused Women exposed to Non-provocative and Provocative Female Statements.

Attribution	High Abused		Low Abused	
	M	SD	M	SD
Excusing his Behavior				
Non-provocative	2.38	(.98)	1.81	(.79)
Provocative	2.59	(.92)	2.61	(.93)
Feeling Bad				
Non-provocative	3.95	(.86)	4.09	(.97)
Provocative	3.38	(.91)	3.78	(1.06)
Feeling Controlled				
Non-provocative	4.64	(.93)	4.79	(.71)
Provocative	4.42	(.70)	4.57	(.70)
Ending the Relationship				
Non-provocative	3.99	(.92)	4.91	(1.14)
Provocative	3.91	(1.16)	4.49	(1.12)
Self-Blame				
Non-provocative	1.95	(.82)	1.39	(.47)
Provocative	2.25	(.80)	2.27	(.75)
Provoking Anger				
Non-provocative	2.90	(.99)	1.87	(.52)
Provocative	3.53	(.91)	3.15	(.79)

n = 100

Table 4. Effect Sizes for Attributional Differences
between High and Low Abused Women.

<u>Attribution</u>	<u>Effect Size</u>	
NIQ		
Non-provocative	.12	Small
Provocative	.23	Small
RAQ		
Non-provocative	.07	Small
Provocative	.24	Small
PAQ		
Non-provocative	.77	Large
Provocative	.30	Small
Excusing his Behavior		
Non-provocative	.64	Medium
Provocative	.02	Small
Feeling Bad		
Non-provocative	.15	Small
Provocative	.41	Medium
Feeling Controlled		
Non-provocative	.18	Small
Provocative	.21	Small
Self-Blame		
Non-provocative	.87	Large
Provocative	.03	Small
Provoking Anger		
Non-provocative	1.36	Large
Provocative	.45	Medium
Ending the Relationship		
Non-provocative	.95	Large
Provocative	.51	Medium

Table 5. Bivariate Correlations for Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) and Feminine Gender Role Stress Scale (FGRS).

	Self-Esteem (RSE)	Gender Role (FGRS)
Attribution	r =	r =
NIQ		
Non-provocative	.2217	.2375
Provocative	-.2091	.0641
RAQ		
Non-provocative	.1543	.4210**
Provocative	-.1790	-.0643
PAQ		
Non-provocative	-.3803**	-.3332*
Provocative	-.2304	-.2120
Excusing his Behavior		
Non-provocative	-.4635**	-.0650
Provocative	-.0950	-.1892
Feeling Bad		
Non-provocative	.3157*	.1516
Provocative	-.1938	-.0616
Feeling Controlled		
Non-provocative	.4525***	.1726
Provocative	-.0722	.1380
Self-Blame		
Non-provocative	-.4556***	-.0313
Provocative	-.4057**	.0260
Provoking Anger		
Non-provocative	-.4236**	-.0541
Provocative	-.3990**	.1854
Ending the Relationship		
Non-provocative	.2652*	-.0948
Provocative	.0979	.0952

n = 50, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

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Date of Birth: August 17, 1969; Mineola, NY

Education:

1996-present Virginia Polytechnic Institute and
 State University (Virginia Tech),
 Blacksburg, VA
 Degrees Expected: Master of Science
 and Doctor of Philosophy
 Program: Clinical Psychology
 Specialization: Clinical-Adult

Psychology

1995-1996 University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
(UNC-CH)

 Chapel Hill, NC
 Continuing Studies in psychology.

1987-1991 The College of New Jersey
 Trenton, NJ
 Bachelor of Arts in English literature with
 psychology minor

Awards and Honors:

1998 Graduate Assistantship, Tuition Waiver
1997 Graduate Assistantship, Tuition Waiver
1996 Graduate Assistantship, Tuition Waiver

1991 Graduate Cum Laude
1987-1991 Dean's List
1986 National Honor's Society

Professional

Affiliations: American Psychological Association
Student Member
Association for the Advancement of Behavior
Therapy
Student Member

Clinical Positions:

6/98-8/98 Sierra Vista Hospital, Sacramento, CA.
Student Intern. Duties: Assisted licensed psychologist
with cognitive relapse prevention counseling groups for
substance abusers, attended bi-weekly supervision meetings,
and discussed procedures for admission of inpatients to
hospital program.

Supervision: Dr. Spencer Rosenberg, Ph.D., Licensed
Clinical Psychologist, 70 hours total.

6/98-8/98 Controlling Anger through Learning and
Mastery (CALM) group, Auburn, CA. Student Intern. Duties:
Lead weekly anger-control/domestic violence meetings with
court-mandated female domestic abusers.

Supervision: Dr. Michael Elliott, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical
Psychologist and Dr. Claudia Lake, Psy.D.

8/97-5/98 Department of Psychology, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Graduate Clinician. Duties: Attended weekly supervision meetings, conducted therapy as part of clinical training, supervised first year graduate clinician on psychotherapy cases.

Supervision: Richard M. Eisler, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist, 300 hours total.

8/97-5/98 Department of Psychology, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Child Study Center. Duties: Conducted comprehensive psychoeducational assessments of children experiencing behavioral and/or academic difficulties.

Supervision: Thomas H. Ollendick. Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist, 250 hours total. Graduate Supervisors: Andrew T. Butcher, M.S. and Laura Seligman, M.S.

1/98-5/98 Women's Resource Center, Radford, VA. Volunteer Counselor Duties: Completed 40-hour training on working with abused women living in a shelter environment, answered 24-hour abuse hotline calls.

Supervision: Mary Forti, M.S.W.

5/97-8/97 Department of Psychology, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Summer Clinician. Duties: Attend weekly supervision meetings and conduct therapy as part of clinical training and additional summer experience.

Supervision: Thomas H. Ollendick, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist, 360 hours total. Andrew T. Butcher, M.S., graduate supervisor

8/96-5/97 Department of Psychology, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Graduate Clinician. Duties: Attend weekly supervision meetings and conduct therapy as part of clinical training.

Supervision: George A. Clum, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist, 300 hours total.

6/95-6/96 Residential Services, Carrboro, NC
Duties: Supervised developmentally disabled adults in an intermediate care facility, helped residents improve independent living skills, contributed to revisions in behavior plans.

Supervision: Carey Jefferson

9/94-12/94 Dorothea Dix State Hospital, Raleigh, NC
Duties: Taught basic academic skills to schizophrenic adult population in supervised setting.

9/94-12/94 Women's Center, Raleigh, NC
Duties: Counseled women using Rogerian techniques of active listening and unconditional positive regard while providing information on public services available to those with various personal, financial, and legal problems.

9/93-10/95 HopeLine, Inc., Raleigh, NC

Duties: Counseled callers on a 24-hour crisis hotline and trained new volunteers to handle calls via 40-hour training program.

Supervision: Marta Zaineddin, M.P.H.

Research Experience:

1/98-present Department of Psychology, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. "Effects of level of self-esteem and female gender role perceptions on cognitive attributions about abusive behavior in courtship and dating." Duties: Contribute to conceptualization of an original project and manuscript preparation.

1/98-present Department of Psychology, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. "Attributional and physiological responses of abusive males to intimate partner conflict." Duties: Development of audio-tape stimulus, data input and analysis, and manuscript preparation.

1/97-11/98 Department of Psychology, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Master's Thesis: "Abused and Non-abused College Females' Causal Attributions to Verbally Abusive Partner Behavior." Duties: Proposed, designed, and ran an original project, defend before an ethics committee, data input and analysis using SPSS (Statistical Program for the Social Sciences), trained and supervised undergraduate assistants (n=4) in data entry and running of subjects.

9/95-5/96 Department of Psychology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) with Deidre Russell, M.S. Research area: Instructing fathers with developmentally delayed children. Duties: Coded behavioral interaction between father and his developmentally delayed child (ages 3-5).

5/95-5/96 Department of Psychology, UNC-CH with Dr. Frank Floyd, Ph.D. Family Interaction Project, part-time position. Duties: Coded family interaction during problem solving discussions using comprehensive coding system.

1/95-5/95 Department of Psychology, UNC-CH with Dr. Caryl Rusbult, Ph.D. Newlywed study, part-time position. Duties: Coded marital interaction during problem-solving discussions based on number of positive vs. negative exchanges, and data entry.

Teaching Positions:

8/96-5/97 Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. Teaching Assistant for Introductory Psychology. Duties: Present material and facilitate discussions on various psychology-related topics in four recitation sections, proctor exams, develop and administer weekly quizzes, grade assigned essays, and compile a total letter grade for each student contingent on his/her progress in the course.

9/97-5/98 Virginia Tech Psychological Services Center and Child Study Center, Blacksburg, VA. Assessment trainer. Duties: Train undergraduate research assistants

in the administration of child assessment tools including the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) and the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT).

Administrative Responsibilities:

5/97-present Virginia Tech Psychological Services Center and Child Study Center, Blacksburg, VA. Teaching Assistant. Duties: Supervise graduate clinicians in assessment and clinical training, inventory, organize, and reorder assessment tools for training facility, contribute to newly developed training facility web page, research empirically validated treatments for clinic library.

Works in Progress:

Doane, C., Rhatigan, D.L., & Franchina, J.J. Effects of level of self-esteem and female gender role perceptions on cognitive attributions about abusive behavior in courtship and dating.

Rhatigan, D.L., Franchina, J.J., & Eisler, R.M. Abused and Non-abused College Females' Causal Attributions to Verbally Abusive Partner Behavior.

Invited Address:

Rhatigan, D.L., & Moore, T.M. (1998). "Assessment and treatment of male batterers," Women's Resource Center, Radford, VA.

Presentations and Posters:

Moore, T.M., Rhatigan, D.L., Cosenzo, K., & Eisler, R.M. (Nov. 1998). Attributional and physiological responses of abusive males to intimate partner conflict. Poster accepted at the annual meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Behavior Therapy, Washington, D.C.

Rhatigan, D.L. & Eisler, R.M. (April 1998). Abused and nonabused college females' cognitive attributions about heterosexual relationships: A preliminary analysis. Poster accepted at the annual graduate and undergraduate research meeting at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA.

References:

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